Town Centres Team, Planning Services

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN CENTRE
ANNUAL STATEMENT OF KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS
SEPTEMBER 2007

INTRODUCTION

The health and vitality of shopping centres in the Kirklees District is monitored on an annual basis through the Town Centre Audit Programme undertaken by the Council's Planning Services. Performance data is collected and analysed to allow the role of individual town centres to be assessed and to identify scope for change, renewal and diversification.

Since 1996 the performance of Huddersfield town centre against 7 key economic indicators has been reported in annual publications. In this 2007 edition, the following indicators are assessed:

- Shop unit and floorspace occupancy
- Vacancy rates
- Pedestrian footfall
- Development activity
- Demand for representation
- Prime retail rental levels
- Prime retail yields

In addition, this year's document also includes an assessment of Sunday trading in the town, along with a section on accessibility covering car park usage and the success of the free town bus.

FLOORSPACE, SHOP UNITS AND VACANCY RATES

The annual survey of shop unit occupancy was undertaken in May 2007. This revealed that within the Huddersfield Town Centre Study Boundary (shown on the map on page 11), there are 718 shop units trading in either food goods (6.5%), non-food goods (50.6%) or as a traditional town centre service (32.5%), with a unit vacancy rate of 9.7%. This year, in order to indicate the level of small scale investment activity in the town, the number and size of units under refurbishment at the time of the survey has been quantified. This shows that 5 units, contributing over 1000sq.m. of net floorspace, is currently undergoing refurbishment or re-fit which will bring either new or refreshed input to the town's economy. In total, the occupied and vacant retail units provide around 85,600sq.m. of net floorspace. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of units and floorspace in the town compared to 2006.

Figure 1: Huddersfield shop unit and floorspace statistics

	2006		2007		% change 06-07	
	Sales floorspace '000 sq.m	Shop units	Sales floorspace '000 sq.m	Shop units	Sales floorspace '000 sq.m	Shop units
Convenience (food)	15.67 (18.2%)	43 (6.0%)	16.70 (19.5%)	47 (6.5%)	+6.6	+9.3
Comparison [1] (non-food)	60.07 (69.6%)	373 (51.9%)	58.69 (68.6%)	363 (50.6%)	-2.3	-2.7
Service	n/a	226 (31.4%)	n/a	233 (32.5%)	n/a	+3.1
Vacant	10.51 (12.2%)	77 (10.7%)	9.10 (10.6%)	70 (9.7%)	-13.4	-9.1
Under refurbishment	Not available	Not available	1.10 (1.3%)	5 (0.7%)	Not available	Not available
TOTAL	**86.25 (100%)**	**719 (100%)**	**85.59 (100%)**	**718 (100%)**	**-0.8**	**-0.1**

Between the ‘snapshots’ of 2006 and 2007, 144 units changed use or occupier which illustrates the health of the town in terms of active investment. These changes have resulted in the net decline in both shop unit and floorspace vacancy of 9.1% and 13.4%, respectively. The former Tradex store on Beck Road remains unoccupied and contributes a considerable portion of the vacant floorspace. Notably this year, there has been an increase in the proportion of convenience (food) goods floorspace and unit numbers – this is principally due to the opening of the new Netto store on Wakefield Road; the occupation of the vacant unit on the Queensgate stretch of the ring road to provide a Majestic Wine Warehouse; and the establishment of two smaller convenience retailers in the centre of town.

Majestic Wine Warehouse - Queensgate

During the last 7 years, there has been a growth in the occupation of town centre shop units by service uses including pubs/wine bars/restaurants and amusement arcades, and office-based uses such as estate agents and solicitors. Within the audit study boundary, there has been an increase of 24% in the numbers of these types of occupier, amounting to an overall growth of 45 units since 2000.

Figure 2: Percentage of floorspace/shop units in Huddersfield compared with national averages [2] and showing trend since last year

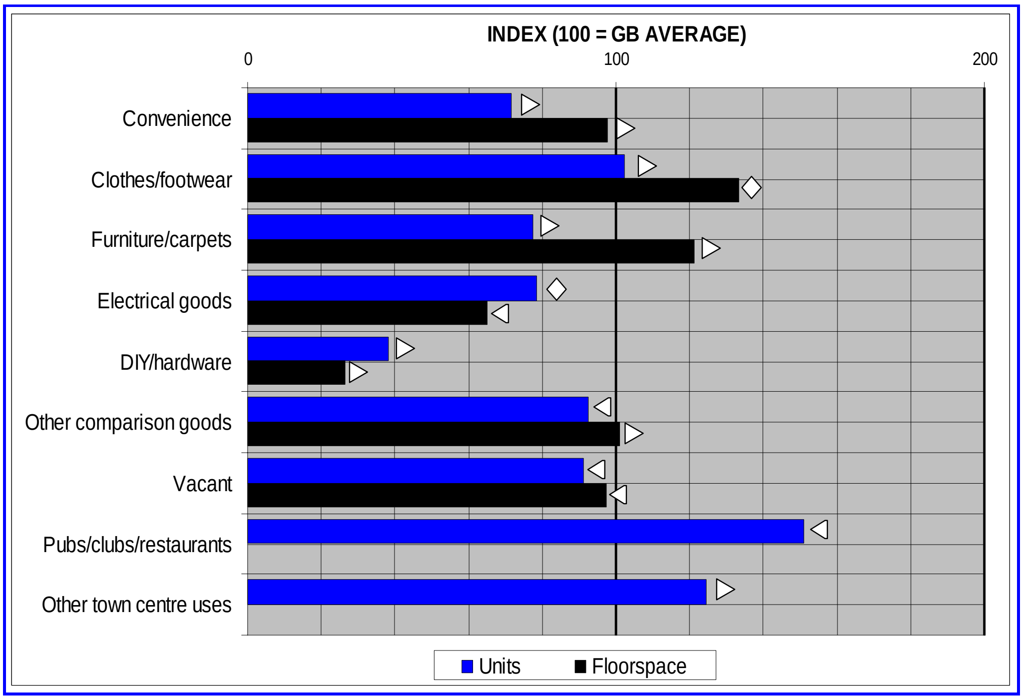


Figure 2 compares the occupancy of the town in terms of both shop units and floorspace with the national average. It also indicates the trend in level of representation since last year. In contrast to 2006, many of the core retail occupiers have increased in both number and proportion of floorspace in 2007. This is coupled with a healthy downward trend in vacancy which is now below the national average in terms of both units and floorspace.

SUNDAY TRADING

Huddersfield town centre has seen a growth in the number of retailers taking the opportunity to trade on a Sunday in recent years. At the time of the 2007 pedestrian counts, an assessment of Sunday trading was undertaken. This revealed that, of the A1 retail businesses within the ring road, 30% were trading on the Sunday – a total of 119 shops. The principal locations for Sunday trading include the prime pitches of Kingsgate shopping centre, King Street, New Street and the Piazza. At each of these locations the majority of retailers present were trading. Other retail activity in the town was more sporadic with some secondary shopping streets only having single retailers open. Service uses such as bookmakers, estate agents and amusement arcades were notable in their absence from the Sunday trading pattern although some were operating.

This assessment does not take account of eating and drinking establishments which are not subject to the same trading hours restrictions on Sundays as retail outlets. Most of the pubs, cafes and restaurants in Huddersfield were open or due to open at some point during the Sunday assessment.

Figure 3: Sunday retailing categories 2007

Category	No. of units trading on Sunday	Percent of total Sunday traders	Percent of total traders in town by category
Convenience (food)	14	11.8	29.8
Clothing/footwear	39	32.8	41.9
Furniture/textiles	6	5.0	26.1
Electrical	5	4.2	18.5
DIY/hardware	1	0.8	12.5
Variety/department	12	10.1	85.7
Specialist comparison	40	33.6	29.0
Personal retail services	2	1.7	3.4
TOTAL	**119**	**100**	**30.0**

Figure 3 gives a breakdown of the types of goods available from Sunday retailing. Over 30% of Sunday retailers are trading in clothing/footwear, whereas only around 2% of personal retail services such as hairdressers and tanning salons were open. More than 85% of the total department store/variety goods stores in the town were open on Sunday but only around 30% of the total food stores in the town were trading. An assessment of the levels of pedestrian activity on Sundays in Huddersfield is given in the next section. The levels of retail activity on Sundays will continue to be monitored on an annual basis.

PEDESTRIAN FOOTFALL

The volume and pattern of movement of visitors and shoppers in Huddersfield town centre have been monitored annually since 1996. 14 count locations are assessed covering primary and secondary shopping frontages, key pedestrian routes and access points into the town. The count locations are shown on the map on page 11. It is important to note that the pedestrian figures given in this document do not represent the total numbers of people visiting the town – the assessment is designed to measure movement and volume of pedestrians at key locations in a comparable way to previous years to indicate trends. Since 2004, assessments of Sunday pedestrian footfall have also been undertaken and the results of these are included in a separate section below.

Figure 4: Comparison of pedestrian numbers 2006-2007 [3]

		2006	2007	% change
Market day	a.m.	13,241	13,290	+0.4
	p.m.	11,510	13,309	+15.6
Non-market day	a.m.	10,599	9,978	-5.9
	p.m.	10,777	11,057	+2.6
Saturday	a.m.	16,888	18,638	+10.4
	p.m.	21,832	22,433	+2.8
TOTAL		**84,847**	**88,705**	**+4.5**

This year's assessment reveals a continued strengthening of the market day afternoon numbers which recorded a 20% rise last year and a further 15.6% this year (Figure 4). Saturday numbers consistently out-perform the weekday levels and have this year recovered from the drop of 10.4% recorded during the morning count in 2006. Overall, Huddersfield has seen an increase of nearly 5% in pedestrian numbers during the last 12 months. The total recorded level of footfall at the standard 8 key locations over 3 days is higher this year than in any other previous assessment back to 1996. Notwithstanding the fluctuations during that period, this equates to an overall growth of around 20% across the town. Much of this growth has occurred since the opening of the Kingsgate shopping centre.


The Piazza

Figure 5 shows the change in total pedestrian numbers over time. This clearly shows the overall rising trend in the volume of visitors, particularly on a Saturday. All 3 days have this year reached a level that is above that first recorded in 1996, despite the fluctuations in both market and non-market weekdays.

Figure 6 gives a breakdown of volumes of people recorded on a street by street basis during the hour-long sample counts both in the morning and afternoon. It is clearly evident that the most well used streets are King Street, New Street and the Kingsgate shopping centre all of which have considerably higher footfall on a Saturday compared to the weekdays. In comparison to last year, King Street increased its overall footfall level by 17% whilst recorded volumes in the Pack Horse Centre and at the steps down to Queensgate from the Piazza were both down by 20%.

Figure 5: Pedestrian numbers 1996-2007 (count points 1 – 8 only) [3]

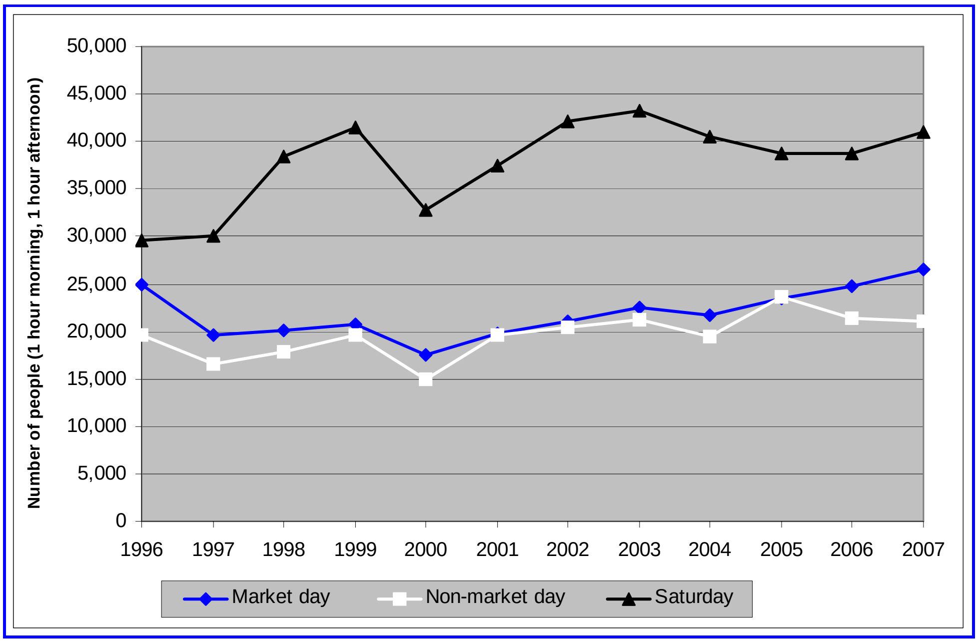
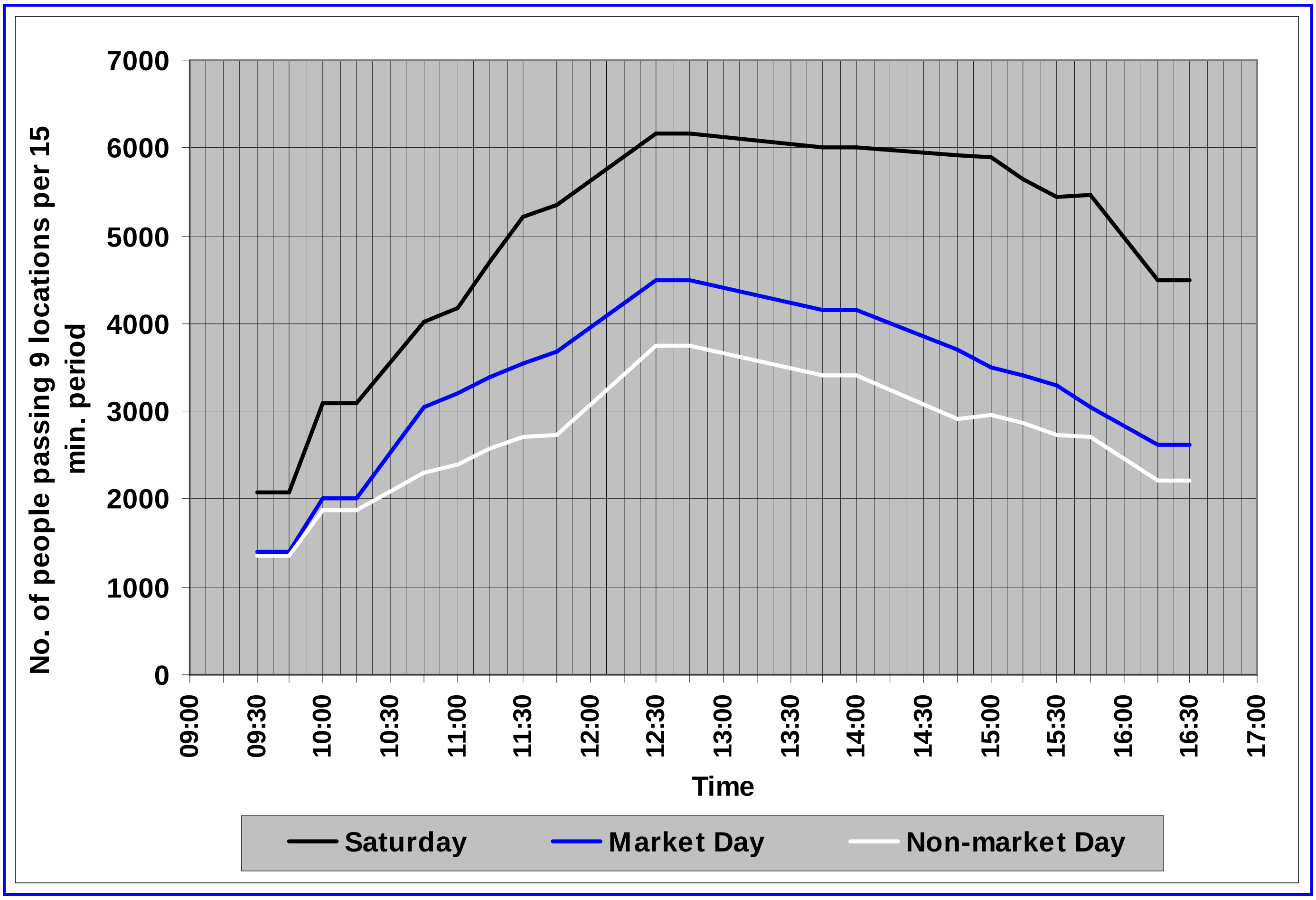


Figure 6: Street by street pedestrian numbers 2007

Date	Mon 16th April Market Day		Wed 18th April Non-Market Day		Sat 21st April	
Weather	Dry, warm, sunny		Sunny, cool		Dry, warm, windy	
Time	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.	a.m.	p.m.
1. Bus Station (out only)	727	643	782	496	1,423	1,125
2. New Street (Primark)	2,587	2,526	1,918	1,868	3,545	3,931
3. Piazza	1,228	1,101	857	990	2,146	2,787
4. New Street (M&S)	2,579	2,673	2,151	2,578	3,569	4,587
5. King Street	2,854	3,332	2,301	2,790	4,600	6,482
6. Westgate	860	1,144	744	1,097	1,123	1,382
7. Byram Street	1,772	1,350	622	489	1,576	1,426
8. John William Street	683	540	603	749	656	713
SUB TOTAL	**13,290**	**13,309**	**9,978**	**11,057**	**18,638**	**22,433**
9. Queensgate Steps	213	274	221	302	130	211
10. Kingsgate	1,877	2,485	1,758	2,297	3,398	5,077
11. Market Street	1,579	1,683	1,181	1,588	2,090	1,898
12. High Street	1,864	1,539	1,196	1,141	1,612	1,697
13. Pack Horse Centre	1,773	1,612	1,002	531	2,312	937
14. Cross Church Street	539	786	963	769	2,827	1,419

Figure 7 shows the change in the volume of visitors though the course of each survey day. Compared to 2006, the profile of the Saturday numbers shows a more sustained period of afternoon activity stretching from a peak at around 12:30pm to well after 3.30pm when it starts to fall. In 2006 Saturday numbers did not reach their peak until around 2:00pm and tailed off much quicker.

Figure 7: Daily profile of pedestrian numbers 9.30am to 4.30pm - April 2007



SUNDAY PEDESTRIAN FOOTFALL

Assessment of pedestrian volumes and movement on Sundays has been undertaken since 2004. Figure 8 gives the number of people recorded on a street by street basis in the 2007 survey – it must be noted that the count locations differ from those used during the week and on Saturdays and therefore aggregated data is not comparable to these days.

Figure 8: Sunday footfall by street 2007

Date	Sunday 22nd April	
Weather	Dry, cold	
Time[4]	a.m.	p.m.
Bus station (out only)	333	247
New Street (Primark)	1,155	1,957
Piazza	313	588
New Street (M&S)	712	1,455
King Street	1,073	1,832
Westgate	218	480
Kingsgate (main entrance)	1,163	1,796
Market Street	533	843
Pack Horse Centre	216	304
Cross Church Street	190	389
TOTAL	**5,906**	**9,891**

Sundays attract quite significant numbers of pedestrians into Huddersfield town centre – principally into the main shopping streets of New Street, King Street and the Kingsgate Centre, which reflects the weekday and Saturday patterns. However, the volumes of pedestrians differ to the other survey days most noticeably by the low morning counts and high afternoon counts. Activity in the town does not peak until around 2.00pm, despite traders being open for business from around 10.30am.

The bus station performs an important role as an access point to the town with a total of 580 people exiting from the station during the morning and afternoon hour samples. This equates to more people than were recorded using the Pack Horse Centre or Cross Church Street during the same period, and is comparable to Westgate and the Piazza for activity levels. Notably, more pedestrians were recorded at the southern end of New Street during the afternoon than in the Kingsgate shopping centre or on King Street.

Figure 9: Sunday pedestrian numbers 2004 – 2007

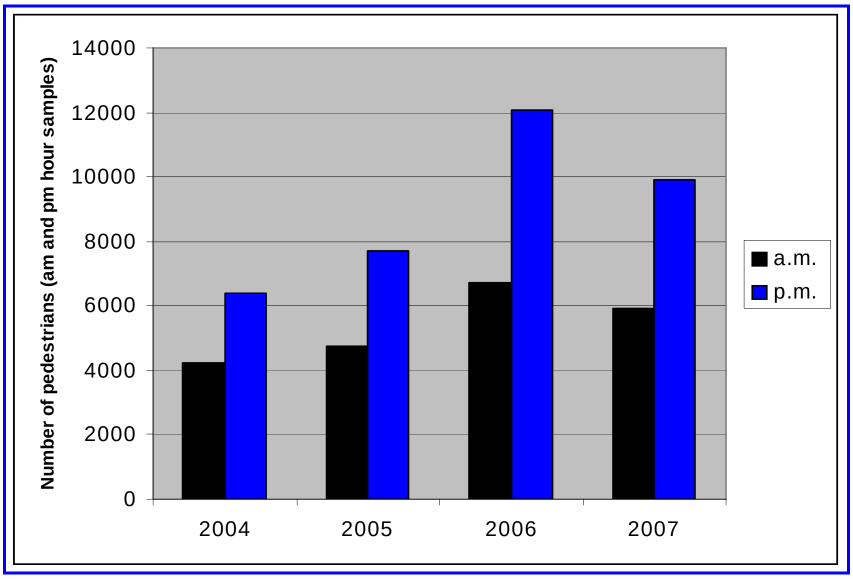


Figure 9 shows the changes in pedestrian numbers recorded on Sundays since 2004. This illustrates the increasing popularity of Sundays as a shopping day in the town with a total growth over 3 years of 49%. The level of footfall growth reached a high in 2006 when an increase of 51% was recorded on the previous assessment. In 2007, the volume of pedestrians recorded on a Sunday dropped by 16% on 2006 but remained higher than initial records in 2004.

As of June this year, charges have been introduced for car parking on Sundays in Huddersfield. Assessments of both trading levels and the number of pedestrians in the town on Sundays will continue to be monitored in the coming years to identify any effects of this or other influences on the town.

ACCESSIBILITY

Government guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 6 (Town Centres) states that visitors to town centres should have easy and convenient access to a range of means of travel including quality car parking, frequent public transport serving a good range of origins around the local area, and good quality provision for pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CYCLING

Huddersfield is well served by public transport with both the train and bus stations being centrally located. Bus and train services are frequent and regular, serving a wide range of destinations throughout the district and beyond. Within the town centre, the free town bus has been operating for almost 12 months. This service links together the key attractions and transport interchanges in the town and runs every 10 minutes throughout the day, Monday to Saturday. Funding for this service, which is a joint venture between the Council and West Yorkshire Metro, has recently been secured for a further 4 years.

Free Town Bus

During the 9 month trial period, surveys were conducted with passengers using the free town bus service. The results revealed that 34% of travellers were using the service at least once or twice a week with the most popular boarding point being the bus station (23% of survey respondents). The train station (20%), Town Hall (14%), Kingsgate (12%) and the outdoor market (11%) were also well used boarding points. A similar level of usage was found at these stops for alighting, with 14% of respondents also alighting at the University. The most popular journey taken by respondents to the survey was from the train station to the university, despite 62% of journeys being made for shopping purposes. The linkage between key locations around the town that is provided by this service is proving a valuable addition to the experience of visitors to the town.

Those visitors to Huddersfield that arrive by cycle have free access to cycle parking facilities around the town. In total, 30 cycle parking spaces are provided within the town centre study boundary, 10 of which are under CCTV surveillance.

CAR PARKING

In terms of car parking, there are a total of 5,107 off street car parking spaces within the town centre study boundary, 63% of which are council owned. Within these car parks, 86 spaces are reserved for disabled visitors. A further 642 cars can be accommodated on street throughout the town. A comparative measure of the level of car parking provision is the number of off street parking spaces per thousand sq.m. of retail floorspace within the town. Currently in Huddersfield there are 59.7 spaces per '000sq.m. which represents an improvement in the level of provision compared to both 2002 (57.1) and 1998 (55.8).


Huddersfield Outdoor market

Information from Kirklees Highways Service shows that, in terms of shoppers car parks (short stay), Albion Street, Civic Centre, New North Parade, Kingsgate and Pine Street all achieved more than 60% weekday occupancy during assessments in May this year. The links between these car parks and the shopping areas of the town experience high levels of pedestrian footfall on weekdays – in particular along High Street where visitors parking in Albion Street or Civic Centre may pass. However, footfall on Saturdays along High Street has dropped by around 30% this year perhaps indicating changing behaviour in the parking habits of visitors. This may also have been affected by a substantial rise in car park charges on long stay car parks in April this year. Saturday occupancy of Springwood and Spring Grove car parks in 2006 was registered at around 80% but has fallen significantly to just 30% in 2007.

DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITY

Huddersfield town centre and its immediate surroundings is currently the focus for a number of major redevelopment and investment projects. These are aimed at improving the town's regional status in terms of education, employment, business and commerce, as well as the retail sector. Some of these schemes which incorporate a retail/commercial element, along with smaller scale development activity which has taken place during the last 12 months, are summarised below:

Phase III of the Media Centre

- **St George's Warehouse:** permission for conversion of this former railway warehouse off New North Parade has now been granted and the scheme will comprise 70 apartments and a range of office, leisure and retail units. Work is due to start in spring 2008.
- **Britannia Buildings:** this building, located in St George's Square and formerly housing the Yorkshire Building Society, is being re-furbished to accommodate a new dental practice and restaurant on the ground floor – both due to open shortly – with upper floor apartments.
- **Media Centre phase III:** the 5-storey office development off Northumberland Street is now complete

- **University Creative Arts Building:** construction of the new addition to the University campus (located just outside the town centre study boundary) is now well underway.
- **Waterfront quarter:** a decision has yet to be made regarding the application for a large scale mixed use development just off Chapel Hill (outside the town centre study boundary) which could include a range of office, commercial, leisure and residential uses.
- **Queensgate revival:** plans for a large scale redevelopment scheme around the Piazza, Queensgate market and library area of the town centre are still at the discussion stage. Proposals are likely to include retail, a new library, hotel and residential uses.
- **Kingsgate phase II:** an application to extend the existing shopping centre by a net total of 7,800 sq.m. of retail floorspace with additional car parking was submitted in May 2007. A decision is yet to be made.
- **Sainsbury supermarket extension:** permission was granted in July 2007 for the extension of the existing foodstore at Shorehead to provide an additional net retail floorspace area of 1,200sq.m. with a re-located petrol filling station.
- **The Shambles:** refurbishment work to install glazed canopies over the existing pedestrianised precinct adjacent to the Piazza is currently being undertaken.

Construction of the new Creative Arts Building

During the last 12 months there has also been some smaller scale retail investment activity including the re-fitting and refurbishment of existing shop units and the formation of some new retail accommodation to attract additional occupiers into the town (e.g. Macaulay Street).

DEMAND FOR REPRESENTATION

In August 2007 an assessment of the current registered interest for representation in Huddersfield was undertaken. Information from FOCUS Information Ltd and Kirklees Planning Service reveals that, in total, there are 58 businesses registered as requiring space in the town. Figure 10 breaks down these interests into categories of business and also gives the maximum registered floorspace requirement for each type of use.

Figure 10: Floorspace requirements 2007

Category of use	Number of interests	Maximum floorspace requirement sq.m.
Convenience (food)	9	11,140
Clothing/footwear	8	8,890
Furniture/carpets	5	6,130
Electrical goods	3	1,720
DIY/Hardware	2	2,790
Variety/department	6	14,630
Specialist comparison	3	290
Personal retail services	2	470
TOTAL RETAIL FLOORSPACE	**38**	**46,060**
Pubs/wine bars	5	2,710
Restaurant/cafe	13	7,000
Leisure/entertainment	2	5,570
OVERALL TOTAL (Inc. service use)	**58**	**61,340**

Source: FOCUS Information Ltd and Kirklees Planning Service

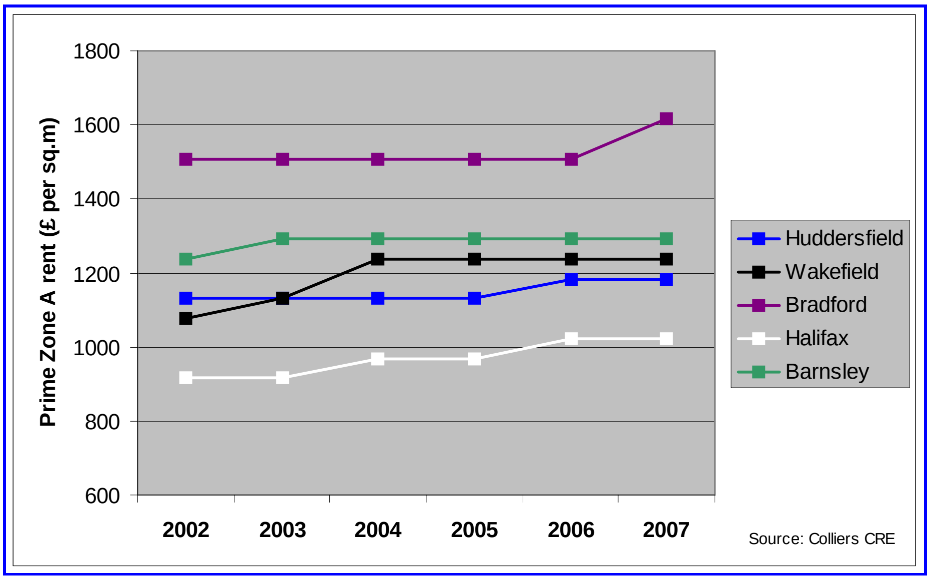
The total floorspace requirement for retail uses amounts to more than 46,000sq.m. with a further 15,200sq.m. of unit area required by service uses such as pubs, restaurants and leisure operators. In total, there are 4 more registered requirements this year compared to 2006 which illustrates the town's continuing strength of draw and potential for growth.

Of the 58 requirements this year, 74% have expressed interest in town centre property in prime pitch locations (53%), secondary frontages (26%) or prominent main roads (21%). Only 15 of the overall interests are for out of town accommodation on retail warehouse parks or leisure/business parks. Further requirements may exist from other retailers who wish to relocate or establish themselves within Huddersfield but have not registered their interest. This assessment does not include the demand for office accommodation from financial, professional or other commercial uses.

PRIME RETAIL RENTAL LEVELS

During the 12 months to May 2007, the average UK prime retail rent rose by 2.9%. This rate of growth represents a weakening of the market which has seen slowing growth rates for 3 consecutive years. In the Yorkshire and Humber region, rental gain during the same period reached only 1.5% compared to the 4.0% of the previous year.

Figure 11: Prime zone A retail rents for selected towns [5]



At the local level, Huddersfield has seen no change in its prime rental levels during the past 12 months, remaining at £1,184 per sq.m. (£110 per sq.ft.). Selected towns within the region are compared against Huddersfield in Figure 11. This shows that only Bradford has experienced a growth in prime retail rents during the 12 months to May 2007. Relatively static performance across the region this year reflects the slow down in the national trend.

PRIME RETAIL YIELDS

Prime retail yields for selected towns in West Yorkshire are given in Figure 12. This shows the Huddersfield's 'all risk' yield has reached 7.0% during the last 12 months. Despite the static performance in prime retail rents, this is a reflection of increasing investor confidence in the town's commercial property market. This will be further strengthened by the range of investment and development schemes that are planned or agreed in and around the town centre during the coming years (see Development and Investment section above).

Figure 12: Prime retail yields for selected towns (%) [6]

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Huddersfield	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.0
Wakefield	8.0	7.5	7.0	6.25	6.5
Bradford	7.5	7.5	7.0	7.0	6.5
Halifax	9.0	9.0	8.0	8.0	7.5
Leeds	5.5	5.0	5.0	4.75	4.5
Barnsley	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25

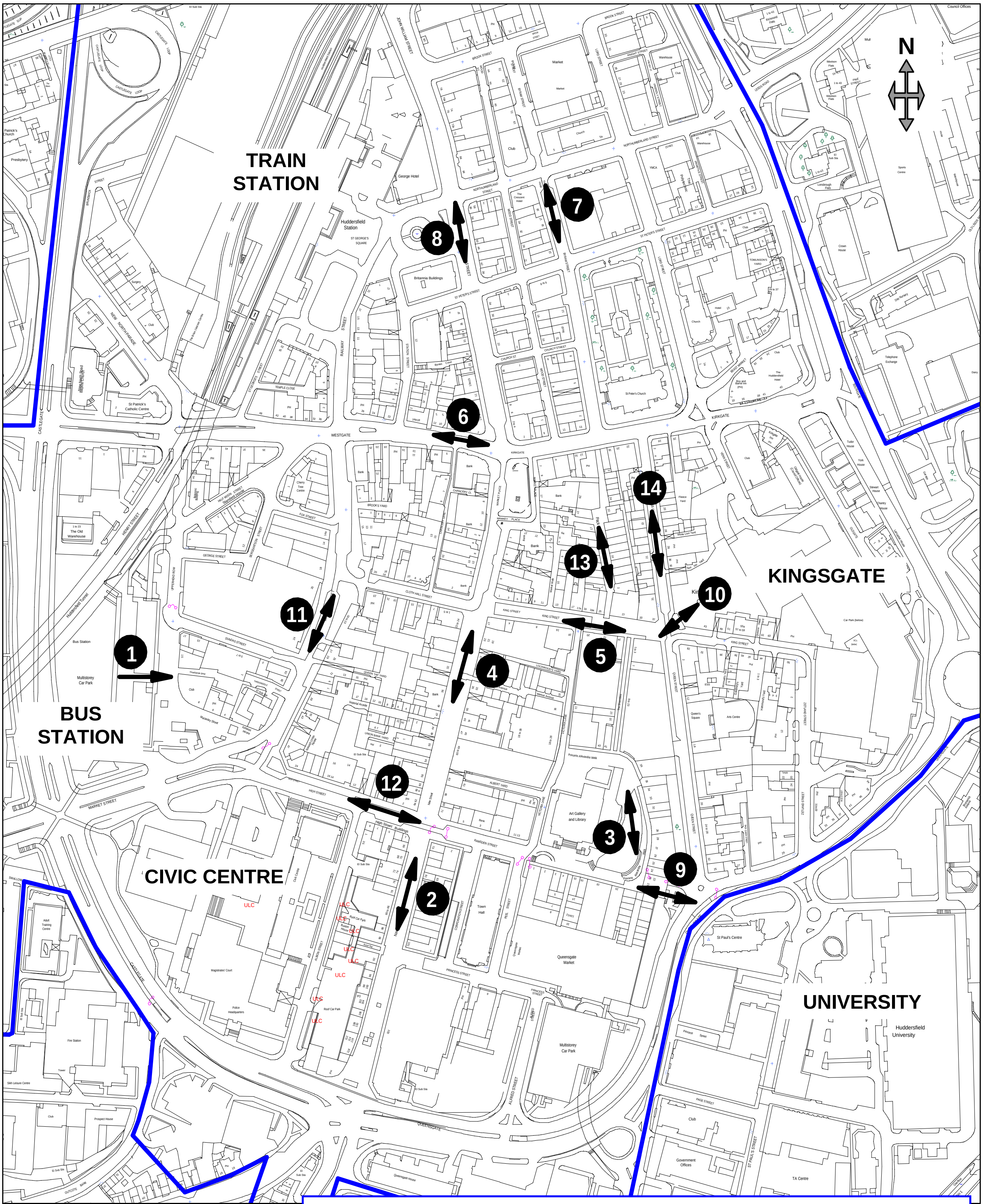
Source: Valuation Office Property Market Report, January 2007

In regional terms, Huddersfield performs well with a stronger commercial yield than its neighbouring towns. The town is only out performed by the cities of Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield. The growing impact of investment in the town on its commercial property values will continue to be monitored.

New or re-located occupiers in the town

Notes:
[1] The comparison goods (non-food) category includes A1 uses such as opticians, travel agents and hairdressers etc.
[2] Based on the UK average, where 100 represents the average proportion of floorspace or number of units for certain categories of use in a UK town, not including markets.
[3] These figures include snapshots of only count points 1 to 8 for historical comparison. Additional count points were added subsequent to 1996 in response to town centre change and development.
[4] Based on hour-long samples taken both morning and afternoon.
[5] Prime zone A values relate to the rental level of a typical modern standard sized shop unit in the prime pitch of the town. The assessment date is May of each year.
[6] 'All risk yield' is calculated by dividing the annual rent although 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.

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN CENTRE PEDESTRIAN COUNT POINTS (weekdays and Saturdays)



Key to map:

Position/direction of count

Study boundary

1 – Bus station
2 – New Street (Primark)
3 – Piazza
4 – New Street (M&S)
5 – King Street
6 – Westgate
7 – Byram Street
8 – John William Street
9 – Queensgate steps
10 – Kingsgate main entrance
11 – Market Street
12 – High Street
13 – Packhorse Centre
14 – Cross Church Street

This document has been produced by:

The Town Centres Team
Planning Services
Kirklees M.C.
P.O. Box B93
Civic Centre III
Huddersfield
HD1 2JR

Tel: 01484 221628
Fax: 01484 221613
E-mail: carol.dean@kirklees.gov.uk
Website: www.kirklees.gov.uk/towncentres