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**Urban Enterprise  
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draft

guidance



**Draft East  
Lothian  
Town  
Centre  
Strategies  
SG**

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2018

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**Supplementary  
Guidance to the East  
Lothian Local  
Development Plan  
2018**

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# EAST LoTHIAN TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIES

## 1.0 Purpose of the Town Centre Strategies

- 1.1 East Lothian's town centres are a key element of the area's economic and social fabric, acting as service hubs for the areas around them and contributing to local identity. East Lothian has 6 town centres: Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar. These 6 town centres act as the heart of each community. A key aim for the planning system is to ensure that new development contributes to providing a range of uses within the town centres that supports their vibrancy, vitality and viability. To maintain resilient, sustainable and vibrant communities and to continue attracting people and investment, town centres must offer alternative choices that reflect our changing habits and lifestyles. They need continuing support and investment to allow them to develop new functions other than retail. It is therefore important that East Lothian town centres are better equipped to thrive and prosper, meeting the needs of all its residents, businesses and visitors.
- 1.2 There is a draft town centre strategy for each of the 6 settlements. The purpose of these draft strategies is to adopt a strategic approach to guide the improvement of town centres in East Lothian. Following analysis from a health check of each town centre a series of actions are made to address the issues arising in each town centre. Each action is given an indicative short, medium or long timescale with identified lead and joint working parties for its implementation. The health check can be regularly updated and actions can be monitored and if required revised in future. The health check for each town centre is appended to the back of each strategy within this document.
- 1.3 The town centre strategies incorporate the requirement from the Local Housing Strategy for a Regeneration Strategy for each town centre.
- 1.4 Once adopted this Supplementary Guidance will replace the Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy, approved by the Council on 10 December 2013.
- 1.5 Once adopted, they will provide an agreed strategic approach to the issues faced by the town centre, and will inform future decision making to help achieve sustained long-term improvement.

## 2.0 Policy Context

- 2.1 This strategy has been prepared within the context of the Scottish Government's 'Town Centre First Principle', which is set out in Scottish Planning Policy (2014). This principle promotes a broader perspective to decision making that considers the vitality, viability and vibrancy of town centres. The East Lothian Local Development



leisure, office, community or cultural use is directed towards the town centre first and then sequentially to the edge of the town centre and beyond as necessary. These strategies therefore support Policy TC2 of the Local Development plan by setting out a long term vision for each town centre.

- 2.2 The draft East Lothian Town Centre Strategies SG forms part of the East Lothian Local Plan 2018 (LDP). It is supplementary guidance focusing on the changes that the Local Development Plan is planning to the 6 main settlements in East Lothian and the implications of that change for their town centres.
- 2.3 The SG is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centres.
- 2.4 The preparation of town centre strategies is one of the actions required to successfully deliver the Local Development Plan. It forms part of the Action Programme for the Local Development Plan to provide a vision for each town centre to help address local environmental issues as well as their vibrancy, vitality and viability.
- 2.5 The town centre strategy is approved as supplementary guidance to the LDP. It therefore remains approved until the East Lothian Local Development Plan is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective.

# **Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy 2**

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2018

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**Supplementary Guidance  
to the East Lothian Local  
Development Plan 2018**

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# MUSSELBURGH TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

## 1.0 Purpose of the Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy

- 1.1 Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy 2 forms a part of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2018 (LDP). It is supplementary guidance focusing on the changes that the Local Development Plan is planning to the town of Musselburgh and the implications of that change for the town centre. The LDP introduces new planning policies adopting the town centre first principle and has detailed planning policies for town centres to guide development.
- 1.2 The strategy looks in more detail than the LDP into the town centre. A health check of the town centre is provided, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered and its performance as a place with coordinated actions for improvement and regeneration.
- 1.3 In addition to the LDP and its supporting documents, the town centre strategy draws on the work planned by the first Musselburgh Town Centre approved in December 2013 and takes account of the Council's emerging Local Transport Strategy and Local Housing Strategy as well as the Musselburgh Area Partnership Area Plan. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centre.

## 2.0 Policy Context

### Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres

- 2.1 The adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) promotes the Town Centre First Principle which requires that uses that would attract significant footfall must consider locating to a town or local centre first and then, sequentially, to an edge of centre location, other commercial centre or out of centre location. This is designed to support town centres in the long term and help to ensure that they are vibrant and sustainable.
- 2.2 To further support town centres and to minimise the length of time commercial premises lie vacant the principle of a change of use between retail, business, office, restaurant leisure and entertainment is supported. As town centres evolve there could be pressure to change uses to residential; this may be acceptable in non-ground floor or backland locations but will only be acceptable in a ground floor location where there is evidence that it is no longer viable as a town or local centre use.
- 2.3 The policy on hot food outlets supports hot food outlets in town and local centres provided that there will be no significant impact on local amenity, including cumulatively with other existing take-aways in the area and are consistent with other LDP policies including in relation to parking and road safety.
- 2.4 The town centre strategy is proposed to be approved as supplementary guidance to the LDP. It therefore remains approved until the East Lothian Local Development

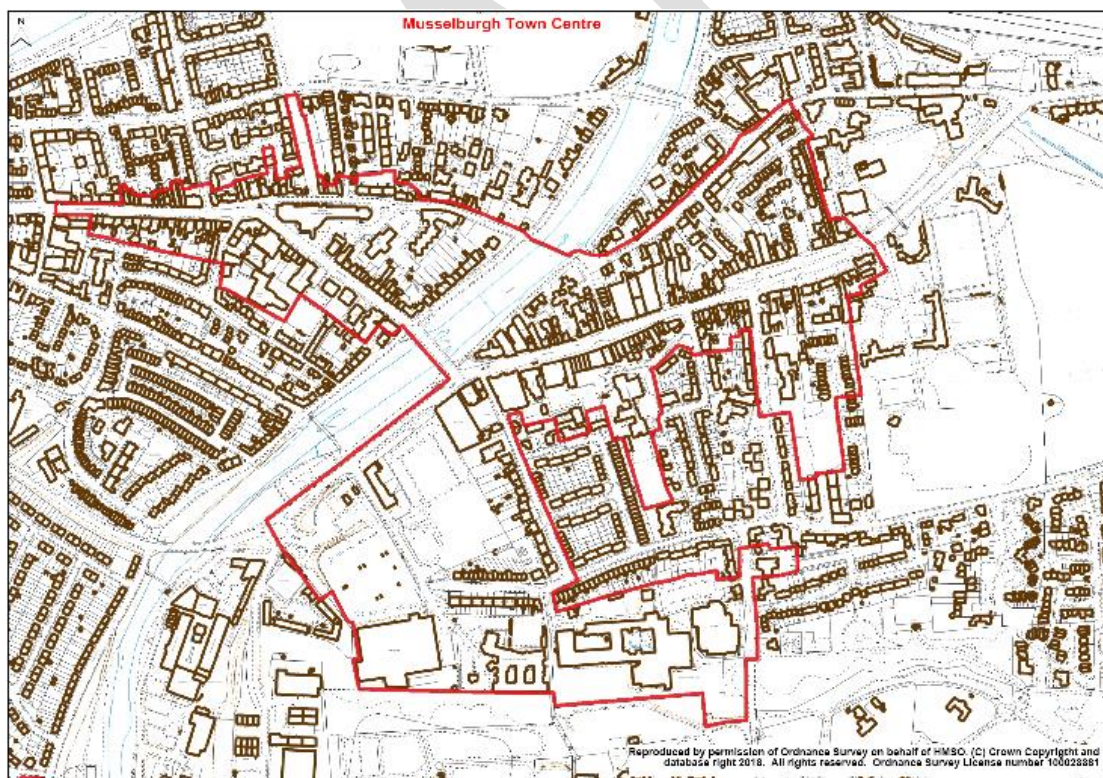
Plan 2018 is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective

### 3.0 Form and Content of the Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy

3.1 The Musselburgh town centre strategy adopts a strategic approach to guide the improvement of Musselburgh town centre. Following analysis from a health check of the town centre a series of Actions is made to address the issues arising in the town centre. Each action is given an indicative short, medium or long timescale with identified lead and joint working parties for its implementation. The health check can be regularly updated and actions can be monitored and if required revised in future.

### 4.0 Background

4.1 The LDP defines the Musselburgh town centre, one of six defined town centres in East Lothian. This is the spatial area where the LDP policies outlined in Section 2 above apply and also the spatial area where the town centre strategy actions that follow apply.



4.2 Musselburgh has experienced some growth over the last 10 years with the completion of housing developments at Wallyford and the ongoing housing development at Pinkie Mains. Queen Margaret University has also established itself at Musselburgh. The town's population is 22,264, including Wallyford, and is set to continue growing. The LDP has made substantial new land allocations at

Musselburgh with a potential 4,981 new homes by 2025. Musselburgh will grow to the south west at Craighall, and to the south east at Wallyford and Dolphingstone, with a new secondary school planned at Wallyford. Whitecraig is also set to grow with 500 houses allocated there. Land at Craighall is also allocated for substantial employment land growth at the Queen Margaret Innovation Park.

- 4.3 Musselburgh town centre lies approximately 2.5 miles from the furthest point of new housing at Craighall and approximately 2 miles from the furthest away housing at Dolphingstone. The Musselburgh town centre may not be so much of an attraction for houses so far away unless there is good accessibility and it has the right facilities to attract users. Nevertheless, new housing offers new markets and spending power for town centre businesses.
- 4.4 Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy 1, approved in 2013, aimed to keep the town centre busy and vibrant; to encourage improvements to support existing business and town centre users and encourage investment; to enhance the setting of the town centre which is the unique selling point of the town and to build on the unique identity of Musselburgh by explaining more of its history and heritage.

## **5.0 Musselburgh Town Centre Analysis**

- 5.1 Musselburgh town centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are included in a table contained in Appendix 1. This has helped to inform the proposed actions for the town centre strategy.
- 5.2 The SWOT analysis has been prepared following the collection of data in an up-to-date Health Check for Musselburgh. The following points have been identified in the Health Check and subsequent SWOT:
- 5.3 Musselburgh is home to over 18% of East Lothian's population. Currently dwellings in Musselburgh are generally smaller than across East Lothian overall. Musselburgh is set to grow substantially, with 2036 houses already committed and 2945 planned by 2025. Much of this development will take place at Wallyford, which has excellent bus links into Musselburgh Town Centre. Musselburgh has the largest town centre in East Lothian and the highest footfall, with weekly footfall having increased by 27.9% since 2014/15. Footfall can be expected to increase further with the Wallyford developments.
- 5.4 The Town Centre is well used with residents doing the majority of convenience food shopping in Musselburgh. Any additional expenditure appears to go outside of East Lothian. Given the proximity of Musselburgh to the East of Edinburgh and Fort Kinnaird, this could be expected. In fact, taking account of the proximity to Edinburgh and the excellent public transport links, it can be concluded that Musselburgh is performing extremely well as a Town Centre. It should also be noted that Musselburgh absorbs some 20% of convenience expenditure from Prestonpans.
- 5.5 The Town Centre offers a range of businesses with shops and financial/professional services occupying the most units. Vacancy rates are low and are lower than the East Lothian average. Musselburgh demonstrates an interesting pattern, where 8% of the town centre offer is restaurants/cafes but there is low Town Centre usage after 6pm, with 68% of those living in Musselburgh never visiting the town centre after

6pm. The likelihood is that the close links to Edinburgh, easy bus and train access to Edinburgh Town Centre and close proximity to Fort Kinnaird offer Musselburgh residents a wider choice. However, the fact that 8% of the Musselburgh town centre is restaurants and cafes, suggests that Musselburgh pulls some customers from the outlying Edinburgh areas such as Joppa, Portobello and Newcraighall. The Newcraighall area is set to grow substantially in terms of residential and this will offer more opportunity to claw in some evening expenditure.

- 5.6 Musselburgh High Street and, to some extent Bridge Street and North High Street, are often very congested with vehicles moving slowly through the centre. New developments may further compound this problem, although support for active travel improvements could significantly change movement patterns. As a result of the current congestion, air quality issues have been identified on the High Street and Bridge Street, close to bus stops. Musselburgh is designated as an Air Quality Action Plan area where a 21% reduction in transport emissions is sought. Improving air quality and reducing congestion will make the town centre a more attractive place to visit. There are opportunities to encourage increased tourism in and around Musselburgh Town Centre with links to the Race course and Brunton Theatre. Decriminalised parking enforcement should see an improvement in town centre parking and vehicle turnover.

## **6.0 Regeneration Strategy for Musselburgh town centre**

- 6.1 Musselburgh is set to grow significantly with new residents bringing their spending power to the town. The challenge for the town centre will be to ensure that new residents use and support the town centre. The town centre will only continue to attract people if it is a safe, attractive place to visit with good facilities and access including available parking. That is the basis for the regeneration of the town centre which needs to adapt to cater for the needs of both the existing and new residents. To do this Musselburgh town centre requires investment in the following:

Town Centre Streetscape – to ensure that streets are busy and vibrant, easy to use by pedestrians with free flowing traffic and an overall high quality of design

Long vacant or under used buildings – these need to be brought back into positive use as they harm the overall appearance of the centre and usually deteriorate over time. They can also affect the overall image of a town centre and can put off other investment.

Town centre buildings - Repair and improvement of buildings can be very effective in enhancing the overall appearance of the town centre. For example, the appearance of some businesses on High Street could benefit from improved advertisements more in keeping with the traditional character of the street.

Open spaces – improvements to spaces within town centres where people can sit and relax, or gather and hold a market

Townscape – the east end of High Street and Bridge Street currently lie within the Musselburgh Conservation Area. High Street has some attractive buildings and could be considered for an extension to the conservation area. The overall townscape in the town centre could benefit from repair and enhancement, with several shopfronts

that would benefit from restoration of original features and in places more coordinated signage. Restoration of original window style is required in some buildings along with general repairs to roofs and chimneys and other common elements of buildings. External funding to assist with the cost of these works should be sought.

## **7.0 Main Issues in Musselburgh Town Centre**

7.1 This section outlines the main issues and actions required within Musselburgh town centre. It provides an indication of timescale and details of who will lead action to implement each project.

### **Diversity of Land Use**

7.2 Musselburgh is classified as an Interdependent town<sup>1</sup> i.e. it attracts people from neighbouring towns who come to access some assets and jobs but is also reliant on neighbouring towns for other assets and jobs.

7.3 The population in Musselburgh has increased by 7.7% in one year 2016-2017 and is forecast continue rising after completion of the potential 4,981 houses planned to 2025.

7.4 Within Musselburgh town centre commercial premises vacancy rates are consistently lower than the East Lothian or Scottish average at around 5.3%. There are few vacant properties above commercial premises, apart from the Co-op buildings. Footfall trends over the last 7 years, are relatively stable within Musselburgh compared with a falling trend elsewhere as fewer people visit the High Street for retail purposes. High proportion of comparison retail expenditure continues to be made outwith the town due to proximity of the Fort and Edinburgh city centre.

7.5 Blindwells new town is planned with 1,600 houses and associated facilities to serve their needs immediately to the south of Musselburgh and land is safeguarded for major expansion of Blindwells.

7.6 Considering the use classes at play in Musselburgh, the town centre supports almost 50% shops (class 1 retail). This is a trend replicated across East Lothian with shops occupying between 47%-55% across the six town centres. A high proportion (68%) of residents do not visit the town centre in the evening.

7.7 Can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long.

7.8 High volume of traffic within High Street/Bridge Street/ North High Street deters people from using the town centre and it is an Air Quality Management Area.

## **8.0 ACTIONS FOR MUSSELBURGH TOWN CENTRE**

### **8.1 Movement and Access**

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland's Towns Partnership  
<https://www.scotlandstowns.org/understanding-scottish-places>



- 8.2 Planned housing and employment growth in Musselburgh will increase vehicle movements in and around the town. To address this the LDP Policy T19: Transport Improvements at Musselburgh Town Centre supports a programme of transport improvements at Musselburgh town centre to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality, including the management of vehicles, parking provision, public transport improvements and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 8.3 LDP Proposal T20: Transport related Air Quality Measures refers to air quality issues within Musselburgh, requiring investigation into the relocation of bus stops to improve air quality and that air quality is maintained to an acceptable standard in association with new development. Proposal T21 Urban Traffic Control System requires developers to contribute to the urban traffic control system and other planned improvements at junctions to manage traffic flows through the town centre to acceptable levels.
- 8.4 An integral part of the transport modelling for the Local Development Plan Transport Appraisal was the production of a micro-simulation traffic model for Musselburgh. This allows accurate predictions of traffic flow taking into account existing and future traffic flows taking into account of traffic generated by new development that may impact on Musselburgh town centre. Actions to address Transport and Air quality issues are:
- Transport and Environmental Improvements in Musselburgh Town Centre
  - Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 1: Transport and Environmental Improvements in Musselburgh Town Centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1.Planned programme of transport improvements to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality 2.Environmental work to street design to make the town centre pedestrian friendly and an attractive place to visit	East Lothian Council Road Services / Planning Service/ developers/ SUSTRANS/ Community	1. Implement planned works to junctions and Urban Traffic Control System 2. Consider the final report on the indicative masterplan for active and sustainable travel and decide on any detailed design proposals for streets. 3. Consult. 4. Prepare Traffic Orders and implement in phases	Short Medium Long Ongoing	Work has commenced on the planned programme of transport improvements to junctions. Consultants are finalising a report on an indicative masterplan for active and sustainable travel in and around Musselburgh.



- 8.5 If approved, the Local Transport Strategy has a range of planned signalised controlled junction improvements in Musselburgh to regulate demand in the town centre, measures to mitigate town centre demand, the management of vehicle and indiscriminate parking, the promoting of traffic regulation orders and the provision of enhanced walking and cycle infrastructure. Other improvements are planned at rail stations to improve train capacity and provide additional parking.
- 8.6 Transport consultants have been working for East Lothian Council and Sustrans to prepare an indicative masterplan for a network of active and sustainable travel (walking, cycling, public transport) routes throughout the town and beyond to places where people need to travel. Greater use of active travel routes could ease traffic impacts on the town centre if they are sufficiently safe and welcoming to use. While decisions on the indicative masterplan have still to be taken, the principle of active travel and how it could impact on the town centre is important. To make the town centre more attractive for people to use, traffic needs to flow within the centre rather than be held up and pedestrians need to feel that they are well catered for within the overall town centre environment. Taken together this will mean some design changes to streets within the town centre which will have multiple objectives:
- To improve traffic flow
  - To provide an environment where pedestrians feel welcome and can get to where they want to easily
  - To provide a street landscape that enhances the appearance of the town centre
- 8.7 As an integral part of street design work, consideration should be given to the coordination of street furniture throughout the town centre. The simple use of black coloured poles for traffic signs, traffic lights, street lighting columns, tree guards and bins can have a strong unifying effect. Directional signage is part of street furniture and the town centre should be correctly signposted not only from roads but also from the National Cycle Route and John Muir Way.
- 8.8 A part of High Street is a designated Air Quality Management Area with a separate action plan for air quality improvement.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 2: Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Reorganisation of town centre car park stay length	ELC Road Services	1. Approval of Parking Strategy as part of Local Transport Strategy 2. Implementation of stay lengths		If the ELC Parking Strategy is approved this work will commence

8.9 If the Parking Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Strategy is approved, Musselburgh town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre parking. These car parking areas will be reorganised to define them as short, medium and long stay car parks to ensure that parking is available when it is required and for the requisite length of time that people want. The availability of parking is important to support the town centre and encourage footfall and usage. This may require additional signage and every effort should be made to keep permanent signs to a minimum to minimise sign clutter. Musselburgh is served by the following parking areas, currently all free to use and the Parking Strategy management proposals for these areas are:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Proposed Duration</i>
<i>On street limited waiting; Shorthope Street car park; Town Hall parking</i>	proposed as short stay
<i>Millhill; health centre; Kerr's Wynd; sports centre; Newbigging church and flats</i>	proposed as medium stay
<i>Gracefield; Fisherrow East and West</i>	proposed as long stay

**8.10 Built Environment and Public Spaces**

8.11 One of its main actions were to improve the east end of High Street from the Town Hall to the Pinkie Pillars by reorganising street space and providing more parking. This work, costing circa £600k, was finished in 2015 and also created the outline of a space outside the Town Hall and around the Mercat Cross which is used for car parking most of the time but is available, through road closure procedures, for civic and commercial events. This area is where Musselburgh has traditionally held its civic events and gatherings since it was created by its town council in 1753 and provided with the Mercat Cross that still stands today. The Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy 1 proposed this area as a permanent landscaped civic space for pedestrian use with parking reprovided in reorganised road space to the east. The work completed to date was a first phase and the permanent landscaped civic space would be a future phase of investment. Other Actions include:

- Civic Space at the Mercat Cross
- Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan
- Shopfront and Advertisements
- Improving Open Spaces and taking account of the Flood Protection Works
- Public Wi-Fi

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 3: Civic Space at the Mercat Cross</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress

Create civic space at the Mercat Cross in the form of a landscaped square as second phase streetworks to the east end of High Street	ELC Road Services / Development	1.Evaluate the success of the present scheme and the need for parking at the Mercat Cross 2. Consider whether to implement phase two: pedestrian landscaped square to support the town centre		This will need to be considered with other active travel improvements to High Street. No current commitment.
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8.12 The first town centre strategy for Musselburgh proposed a full landscaped square for pedestrian and event use at the mercat cross in the corner adjacent to the Town Hall and Tolbooth. This was a part of a wider landscape plan for the east end of High Street. The framework for such a square was laid out as part of the works undertaken and the space has been used regularly for markets. However, a permanent civic space such as this would enhance the setting of the historic civic buildings and mercat cross and would be likely to encourage more events. An indicative plan for discussion purposes, prepared in 2013, is attached at **Appendix 2** to show what the area could look like.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 4: Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Undertake a comprehensive conservation area character appraisal and management plan for Musselburgh Conservation Area to include boundary review	ELC Planning Service with support from Musselburgh Conservation Society	1.Prepare a draft appraisal and plan  2.Consult  3.Adopt final plan as supplementary planning guidance		Work has not yet started

8.13 Further improvements are required to some shopfronts and advertisements in High Street, Bridge Street and North High Street to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of the town centre. Advertisement consent is granted for a five year period therefore should in time

improve as further applications for advertisement consent are made. Shopfront alterations and advertisements must comply with the Council’s supplementary planning guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 5: Shopfront and Advertisements</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements in the town centre	ELC Planning Service / ELC EDSI /Commercial premises owners, occupiers and lessees	Improvements will be encouraged at the time of advertisement consent applications or planning applications to alter shopfronts and enforcement taken as necessary		Ongoing

8.14 Musselburgh town centre is split by the river, but the riverside also offers an attractive place to step away from the town centre for quieter space. Opportunities to enhance the riverside, including buildings that address the river, should be taken. One section of riverside that would benefit from coordinated improvement including street furniture and pathworks is the stretch between the Shorthope Street car park and the Rennie Bridge. Recent work by the Area Partnership has successfully repaired the war memorial and its retaining wall.

8.15 However, the town centre is also at risk from flooding and Musselburgh is a priority area for a new flood protection scheme. Flood protection proposals are being developed and could have a major impact on the overall riverside environment. There could also be opportunities and once the proposals are known there will be a need to see where flood protection works can also benefit the environment of the riverside, for example if an embankment is required new paths and seating areas might also be able to be provided. The riverside is a key corridor for people walking and cycling.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 6: Improving Open Spaces and taking account of the Flood Protection Works</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1.Small public spaces throughout the town centre should be	Area Partnership / ELC / external funders	Musselburgh Flood Protection Work is ongoing		Work on the flood protection

considered for environmental improvement 2. Flood prevention works may provide opportunity to relandscape the riverside and this should be a requirement of the work		When its proposals are known work to enhance the riverside should be assessed before the detailed scheme is finally developed		scheme is underway
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8.16 The availability of public wi-fi would be an asset to Musselburgh town centre. It offers potential to boost tourism with information potentially available via the internet and potential for direct marketing by businesses within the town centre. It would also help generally towards increased digital inclusion.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 7: Public Wi-Fi</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Provision of public wi-fi in Musselburgh town centre	ELC / Community	Establish the feasibility of and funding for free public wi-fi provision to support the town centre		Detailed survey work has been undertaken

### Regeneration of Buildings at Risk

8.17 Privately owned buildings, often those in multiple ownership, in town centres can be vulnerable to disrepair and this is common across Scotland. Where any building is in disrepair its owners are responsible for its condition. In a town centre the appearance of a building in disrepair can affect the overall attractiveness of the town centre therefore it is important that buildings are kept in good repair. Actions include:

- Encourage the Re use of Vacant and Underused Buildings in the town centre
- Statutory action to require external repair of privately owned buildings in multiple ownership

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 8: Encourage the Re use of Vacant and Underused Buildings in the town centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress

Work with the owners of vacant and underused buildings to identify potential solutions to bring buildings back into positive use	East Lothian Council/ private owners	1. Identify the owners of vacant and under used buildings 2. Discuss what is preventing investment for re use		A decision on the options appraisal for the Tolbooth/ Town Hall has yet to be made
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8.18 Within any town centre there are buildings that are either vacant or under used. It is important that positive new uses are found for such buildings before they deteriorate and deter investment in the town centre. Within Musselburgh there is a long standing disused former public house at 72-74 High Street which is a category C listed building within the conservation area. Its appearance has deteriorated and it would benefit from reuse. It received planning permission and listed building consent permission in 2017 for alterations and change of use of public house to restaurant (class 3) use including installation of extract duct.

8.19 The historic buildings at the heart of the town, the old Tolbooth and the Town Hall are community facilities that are lightly or under used. The buildings incorporate three phases of civic buildings in Musselburgh. Although the ground floor of the old Tolbooth building that fronts on to High Street is occupied by shops and the ground floor of the Georgian elevation that faces the mercat cross is currently a restaurant, the upper floors of the tolbooth are vacant and there are lightly used rooms on the upper floor of the town hall. Externally the buildings are in a reasonable condition. A community group received funding and commissioned a conservation architect's options appraisal for the buildings in 2017, which showed how a lift could be sensitively inserted into the building to allow access to all floors which could encourage greater level of use.

8.20 Within Musselburgh town centre there are few empty properties above shops with most space occupied by residential accommodation. Where there is vacant accommodation it is most beneficial for the town centre to have it occupied by people to encourage additional use and spend within the town centre. While most buildings are fully occupied there are some where there is vacant space on upper floors that could be used more positively. There are few vacant sites within Musselburgh town centre.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 9: Statutory action to require external repair of privately owned buildings in multiple ownership</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress

Consider statutory action to occupied town centre buildings to ensure common repairs	ELC EDSI and Planning Service / private owners	1 Consider buildings that require repairs to common elements for statutory action if necessary		This project has not yet started
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8.21 In addition to empty buildings at risk, some occupied buildings in the town centre can suffer from lack of maintenance to common areas, most commonly where a building has multiple private owners. To prevent this and any subsequent adverse effect on the appearance of the town centre, statutory action may be required to require that repairs are completed.

8.22 Most, but not all of Musselburgh town centre is located within the designated Musselburgh Conservation Area. The purpose of a conservation area is to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the architectural and historic character of the area and that should ensure that over time the area is improved and enhanced. The Musselburgh Conservation Area Character Statement and other supplementary planning guidance to the LDP on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment, which contains guidance on development in conservation areas including shopfronts and advertisements are important in setting standards for improving the overall environment of the Conservation Area. There is scope to review the boundaries of the conservation area during the preparation of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan to replace the conservation area character statement contained within the previous local plan. Its purpose is identify the special architectural and historic character of the area, review its boundary and indicate how it is managed.

## 9.0 The Way Forward

9.1 This strategy forms statutory supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan. The health checks can be updated regularly and the strategy should be monitored and revised in line with revisions to the LDP Action Programme.

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### STRENGTHS

- Largest town centre in East Lothian with many commercial premises
- High proportion of convenience shopping is undertaken in Musselburgh
- Characterful street with good range of different types shops and businesses
- High quality eastern end of town centre has Conservation Area and historic buildings
- New people will be living in and around Musselburgh following new housing developments and can be expected to use the town centre, supporting businesses and potentially helping to create new ones.
- Footfall is increasing
- Range of town centre car parks
- Excellent public transport links to Edinburgh and further into East Lothian
- Low business vacancy rate
- Large supermarket within walkable distance of town centre
- Range of sizes of commercial units
- Visitor attractions include theatre, racecourse, and Levenhall Links
- Attractive riverside runs through town centre

### WEAKNESSES

- High volume of traffic within High Street/Bridge Street/ North High Street
- High proportion of comparison retail expenditure continues to be made outwith the town due to proximity of the Fort and Edinburgh city centre
- No civic space in the form of a town square
- Some poor quality shopfronts and advertisements detract from the appearance of the town centre
- Can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long
- No branding or marketing of the town centre in a coordinated way and no business association.
- John Muir Way long distance path and National Cycle route lie outwith the town centre
- Vacant property (formerly The Stand public house and function room) on High Street detracts from the appearance of the street
- Air quality is low

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Re-landscaping of civic space within the town centre
- On and off street parking needs managed to identify short, medium and long stay parking to ensure that town centre users can find parking easily
- Several vacant upper floor spaces within the town centre
- Musselburgh has a range of attractions that could be marketed in the form of a Day Out in Musselburgh
- Vacant property such as the upper floors of the block between 105-109 High Street offer development opportunity for redevelopment
- Reuse of the underused historic asset of the Tolbooth and Town Hall as part of a refurbished building project
- Active travel improvements could radically change movement patterns
- Installation of public wi-fi could allow specific marketing, attract people and allow businesses further advertising opportunity
- Parking charges could raise income that could benefit the town centre

### **THREATS**

- Volume of new traffic in Musselburgh as a result of new development could discourage use of the town centre
- High volumes of traffic reduce the ability of the Air Quality Management Zone to reduce air pollution
- Lack of maintenance by building owners could harm the appearance of town centre buildings
- Parking charging could be introduced which may deter people from visiting the town centre
- Online shopping

DRAFT

## MUSSELBURGH Health Check

### POPULATION

The 2016 mid-year population estimates state that **19,551** people live in the Musselburgh ward, which accounts for 18.8% of the county's population.

#### Age Distribution (National Records of Scotland, 2016 mid-year estimates)

	Musselburgh Ward	East Lothian	Scotland
% of the population (0-15)	16.4	18.2	16.9
% of the population that are (16-64)	64.9	62.2	64.6
% of the population that are 65 or over	18.7	19.6	18.5

The Musselburgh area has a higher concentration of people of working age than East Lothian and Scotland overall. The 2016 mid-year population estimate shows that there are 3,655 people aged 65 years and over living in the Musselburgh ward, which is 18.7% of the ward population. 1,675 of them, or 8.6% of the total population of the ward, are aged 75 or over.

### HOUSING

In 2017, the number of households in East Lothian was 45,301. This is a 1.2% increase from 44,749 households in 2016. In comparison, the number of households in Scotland overall increased by 0.7%.

Between 2016 and 2026, the number of households in East Lothian is projected to increase from 44,749 to 50,070. This is an 11.9% increase, which compares to a projected increase of 6.4% for Scotland as a whole.

In 2016, there were 11,811 dwellings in the Musselburgh area. Dwellings across Musselburgh are generally smaller than across East Lothian overall – with 53% of homes in Musselburgh West having just 1-3 habitable rooms (compared to 36% across the county).

The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in Musselburgh will yield **2036** units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for the ward will yield **2945** units taking the total to **4981** potential new homes in Musselburgh ward by 2025.

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3.

## **RETAIL PATTERNS**

Town centre catchments:



### **CONVENIENCE – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Table 5.3 of the Retail Capacity Study 2015 (RCS) shows convenience shopping patterns (with main food and top-up combined). This highlights the following from 2015:

Residents of Zone 1 (Musselburgh) do the majority of their convenience shopping in Musselburgh, any additional expenditure appears to go to stores outside of East Lothian (19%) (given Musselburgh's close connections to Edinburgh – this is probably to be expected.) It is unlikely that much leakage from Musselburgh could be recaptured, mainly because of the proximity to large supermarkets in the east of Edinburgh. Forecast spare capacity could support additional small store developments or store extensions.

### **COMPARISON – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The majority (70%) of expenditure takes place outside east Lothian, namely at Ford Kinnaird (Edinburgh) and Edinburgh Town Centre. The Retail Capacity Study (2015) concludes that there is substantial forecast comparison expenditure growth relating to the residents of East Lothian, so capacity is not a barrier to new comparison retail development in the Council area. However, forecast for expenditure indicate that only a small proportion of the leakage could be retained in East Lothian. The reason is that East Lothian does not have any major shopping centres. It is more probable that leakage of comparison expenditure to major destinations outside East Lothian will increase. Trends in internet shopping are also having a major effect.

The main issue will be to support the existing comparison retail floorspace in the town centres in East Lothian, through encouraging improvements to the quality and range of comparison shopping, in conjunction with other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town centres as destinations.

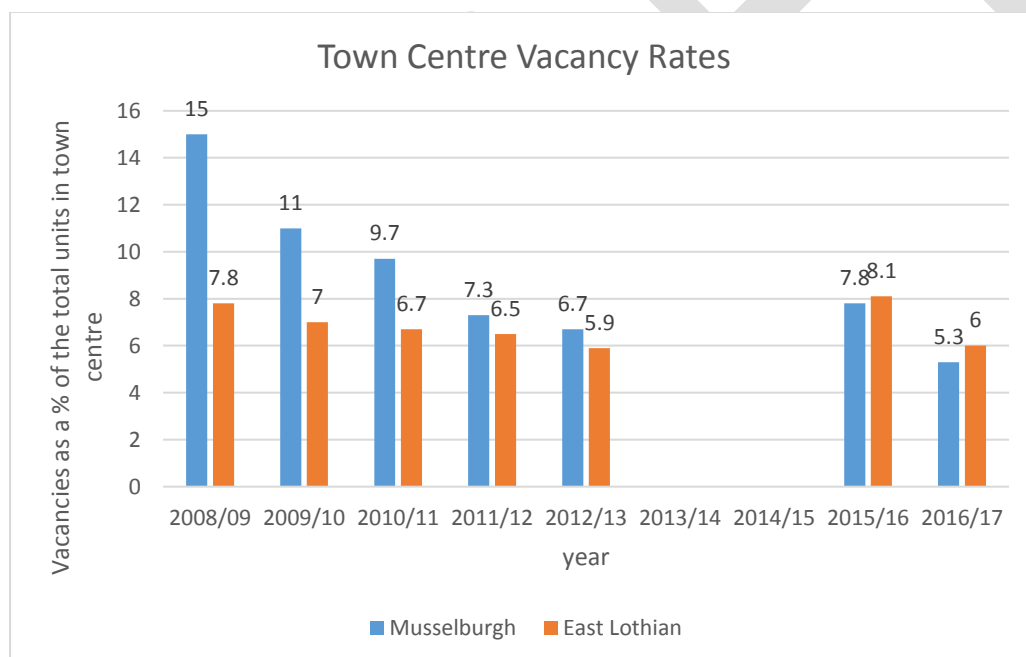
### **BLINDWELLS**

The RCS concludes that under 2015 market conditions there is limited scope for a larger supermarket (despite the leakage in surrounding zones of Prestonpans and Tranent), however, as Blindwells develops out there may be opportunity for a larger supermarket over the longer term. In terms of major non food retail development, a key factor is the location of Blindwells relatively close to Fort Kinnaird. It is only just over 6 miles or 11 minutes drive time with very good accessibility.

### **TOWN CENTRE ASSESSMENTS (quantitative)**

**Vacancy data** (measured as a percentage of available retail units in the area)

- Vacancy rates (measured as a percentage of available retail units in the area) decreased in Musselburgh, from a high of 15% in 2008/09 to a low of 6.7% in 2012/13
- By 2015/16 figures show the Musselburgh vacancy rate to be lower than the East Lothian average for the first time, this has continued into 2016/17

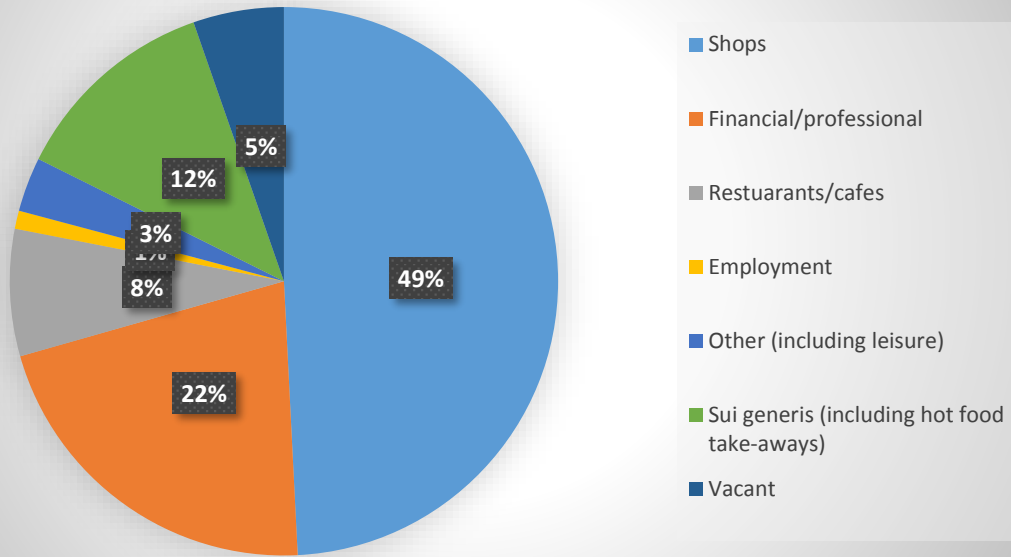


The 2017 Retail Survey undertaken by East Lothian Council shows the vacancies in each town centre. The number of vacant units across the district is relatively low, with the highest number being in Prestonpans (one of the smallest centres). Overall vacancy levels are low.

### **Town Centre uses**

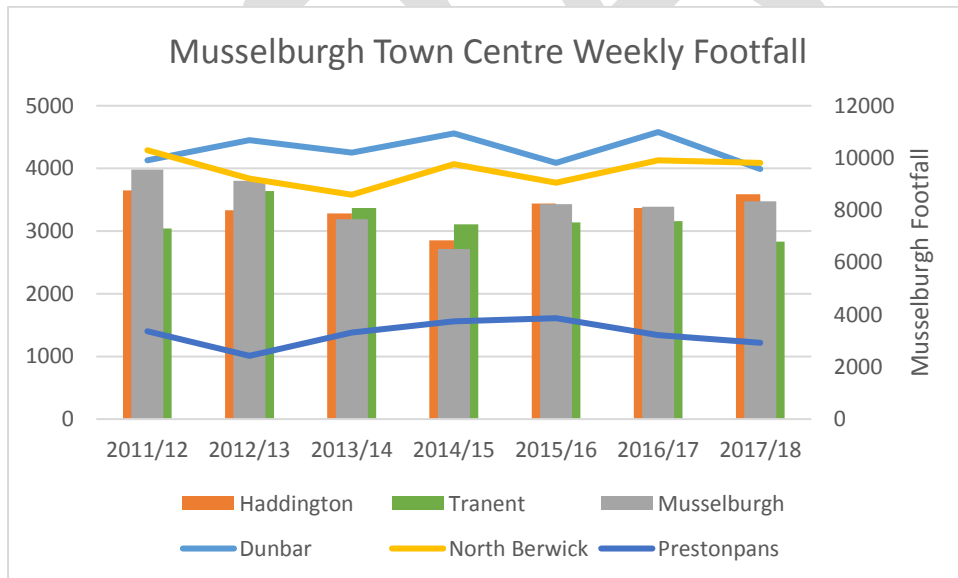
It is of interest to monitor the uses currently occupying the town centre units. The following charts demonstrate the spread of use classes in each centre, using data from the 2017 retail survey:

## Musselburgh Town Centre 2017



### Footfall

Pedestrian counts are undertaken annually in each town centre to establish weekly footfall rates for East Lothian's High Streets. The observations are November based and are not reflective of seasonal differences.



Town centre vacancy rates have decreased to level a below the overall average for East Lothian, and weekly footfall on Musselburgh High St. has increased by 27.9% since 2014/15.

The Weekly footfall rates per head of ward population are 0.41 visits per person, the highest in East Lothian.

## **AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION**

In association with other plans the LDP will help to maintain or enhance air quality objectives. It will do this because it has taken these factors into account when selecting locations for development and by ensuring its development strategy is complemented by air quality mitigation measures. It will seek to integrate land use and transport and minimise the need to travel as well as the distance travelled. It will do this by promoting town centres as accessible locations for a mix of land uses and services and providing community services locally.

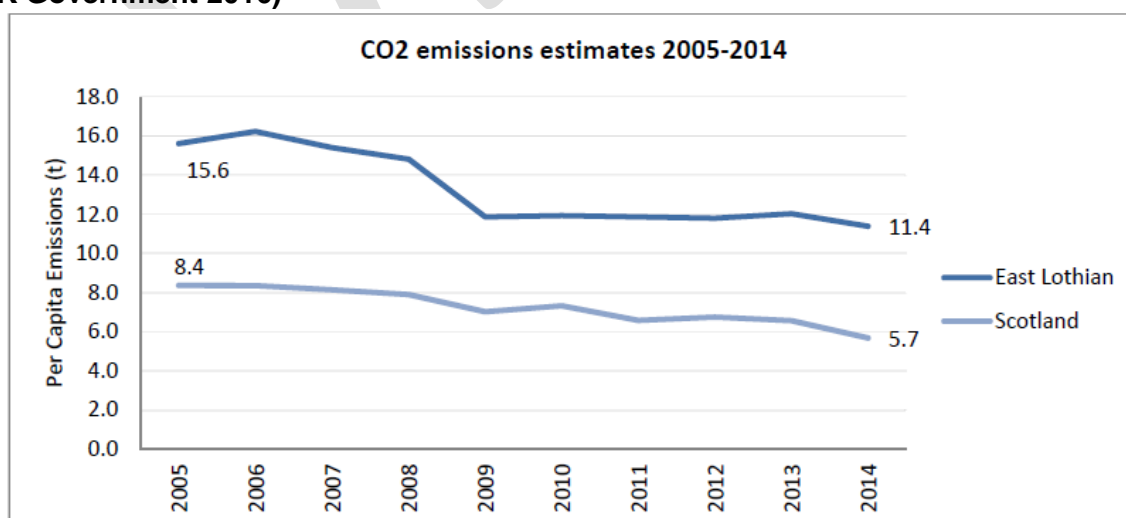
Currently air quality in East Lothian is very good. The Council has been annually reviewing and assessing local air quality since 2003. In June 2012, the Air Quality Detailed Assessment for Musselburgh was completed. It concluded that there are currently air quality issues in Musselburgh, mainly from receptors located on High Street and Bridge Street close to bus stops. Musselburgh Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is an area of Musselburgh Town Centre that has been subject to a formal order defining it as an area where an air quality objective is not being achieved.

The plan aims to reduce transport emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> in the AQMA by approximately 21%. It is anticipated that a reduction of this scale will lead to the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> air quality standard (40 µg m<sup>-3</sup>) within the Musselburgh AQMA being achieved and maintained. East Lothian Council will continue to review and assess air quality to monitor the situation and success of the plan.

The approved Air Quality Action Plan, inter-alia, sets out short and longer term measures for improving local air quality and includes measures seeking emissions improvements to local bus and commercial fleets and also the relocation of bus stops. An Urban Traffic Control system will be introduced to Musselburgh to regulate the flow of vehicles through the town centre. This will ensure that levels of through traffic, and thus vehicle emissions, are minimised in future and that air quality is not compromised, while maintaining appropriate and acceptable levels of local road network performance. This, in combination with improvement to the bus fleet and a more appropriate positioning of bus stops, will help ensure that air quality in the area is maintained at acceptable levels.

In East Lothian there has been an overall decrease of 27.1% in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita. This was the second highest rate in Scotland out of the 32 local authorities. Industry and commercial accounted for 62.6% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, followed by Transport (16.7%) and Domestic (16.5%).

### **CO<sub>2</sub> Emission estimates per capita (tonnes per capita) in East Lothian and Scotland (UK Government 2016)**



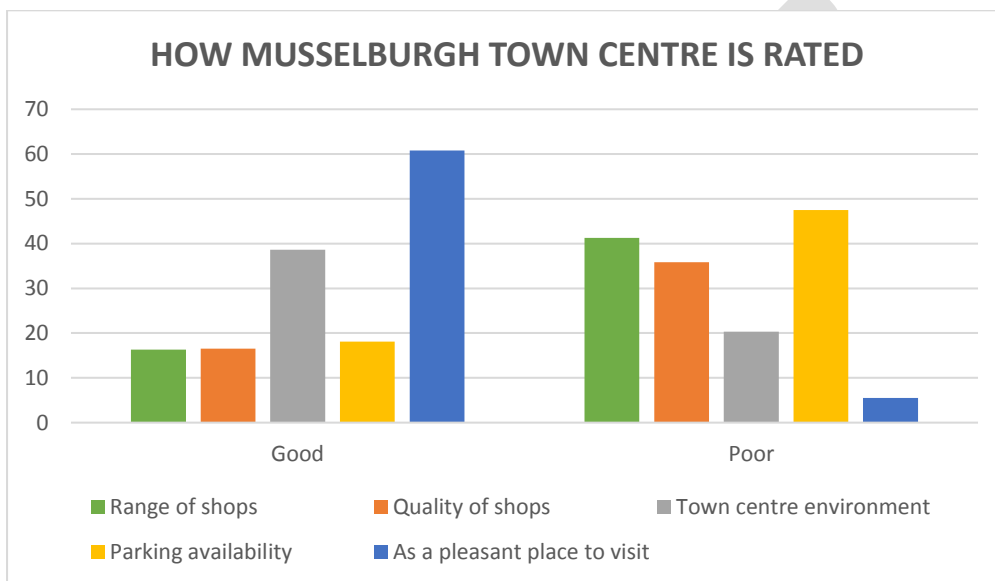


The East Lothian Residents Survey (2017) reported that 4% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, compared to 10% across East Lothian.

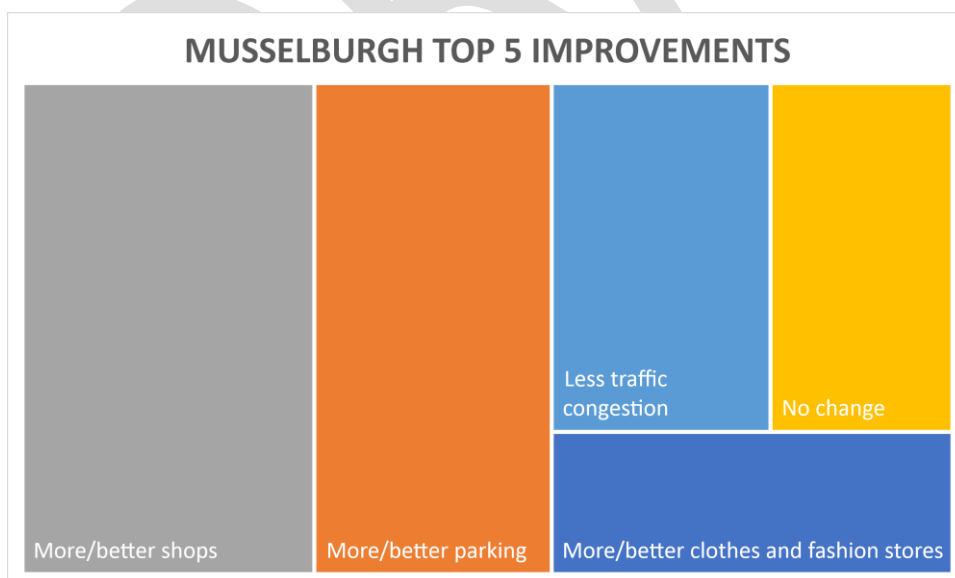
**TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

The following are the results from the 2015 RCS telephone survey:

61% of people who live in Musselburgh visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. 16% visit daily. 38% people walk to the centre, 40% travel by car and 19% travel by bus. A large proportion of Musselburgh residents think Musselburgh Town centre has a good environment and is a pleasant place to visit. There is concern about the range and quality of shops and car parking.



The top 5 improvements sought are shown below:



68% of people who live in Musselburgh, **never** visit Musselburgh Town Centre in the evenings (after 6pm). The top 5 things that would make people visit the Town Centre in the evening are:

1. More/better restaurants and cafes
2. More/better pubs and wine bars
3. More evening events
4. More things to do generally
5. Shops open later

### **Discussion**

In terms of Musselburgh, a high proportion of convenience shopping from Musselburgh residents is undertaken in Musselburgh, but there is also leakage to Edinburgh. Musselburgh clearly performs well in terms of convenience shops – hosting a large Tesco superstore, and Aldi and Lidl, together with other large stores such as Iceland and Home Bargains. In Musselburgh there is demand for a better range and better quality of shops. 68% of residents do not visit Musselburgh town centre in the evening, this is similar in Prestonpans and Tranent. This may be because of the limited offer, or could be influenced by the proximity of these centres to the wider Edinburgh area. This contrasts with the west of the East Lothian where in Haddington, Dunbar and North Berwick at least 50% of the population visit the town centre in the evening at least once a month. In North Berwick the figure is as high as 82%. These centres are more geographically remote and distanced from Edinburgh.

Across East Lothian, a large proportion of comparison expenditure is spent in Edinburgh, this trend is unlikely to change.

Considering the use classes at play in Musselburgh, the town centre supports almost 50% shops (class 1 retail). This is a trend replicated across East Lothian with shops occupying between 47%-55% across the six town centres. The previous Local Plan supports retailing and restricts change of use in town centres, but the newly adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan (2018) introduces greater flexibility (Policy TC2) allowing for change of use between retailing, restaurants, businesses and offices and leisure and entertainment. This may see a wider mix of uses over the coming years and is something to consider in future monitoring. Greater flexibility may assist in increasing the night time offer, particularly important in Musselburgh where the residents are not making full use of the town centre in the evening.

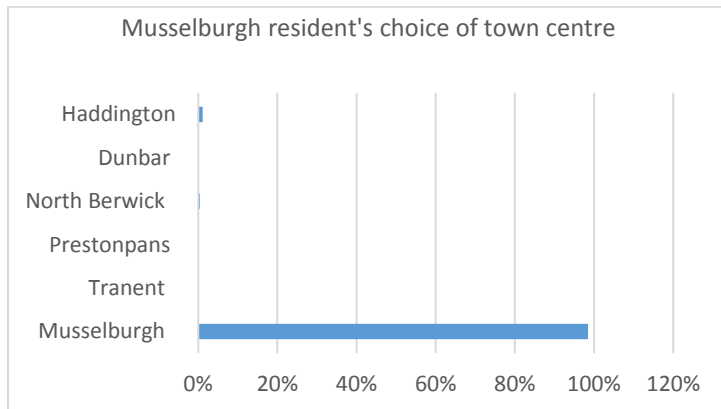
Currently restaurants/cafes represent 8% of the overall town centre uses in Musselburgh, which is higher than in Prestonpans and Tranent and similar to Haddington and Dunbar. Whilst restaurants/cafés is not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer some insight. Musselburgh demonstrates an interesting pattern, where 8% of the town centre offer is restaurants/cafes but there is low usage after 6pm, with 68% of those living in Musselburgh never visiting the town centre after 6pm. The likelihood is that the close links to Edinburgh, easy bus and train access to Edinburgh Town Centre and close proximity to Fort Kinnaird offer Musselburgh residents a wider choice. However, the fact that 8% of the Musselburgh town centre is restaurants and cafes, suggests that Musselburgh pulls some customers from the outlying Edinburgh areas such as Joppa, Portobello and Newcraighall. The Newcraighall area is set to grow substantially in terms of residential and this will offer more opportunity to claw in some evening expenditure.

### **Citizen's panel – Survey 2018**

East Lothian Citizens' Panel survey from Spring 2018 provides the most up-to-date information available on town centre usage and perceptions. A total of 682 responses were received – 193 postal and 489 online. The emerging patterns are shown in the following analysis.

Question 5 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel questionnaire asked ‘which of the following town centres do you visit most often for shopping, leisure and to access services’? Possible answers were Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, North Berwick, Dunbar and Haddington. It should be noted that there is no option to provide an alternative town centre, so the results show 100% results across the 6 centres. It is of most use to monitor which town centre local residents use to those centres use.

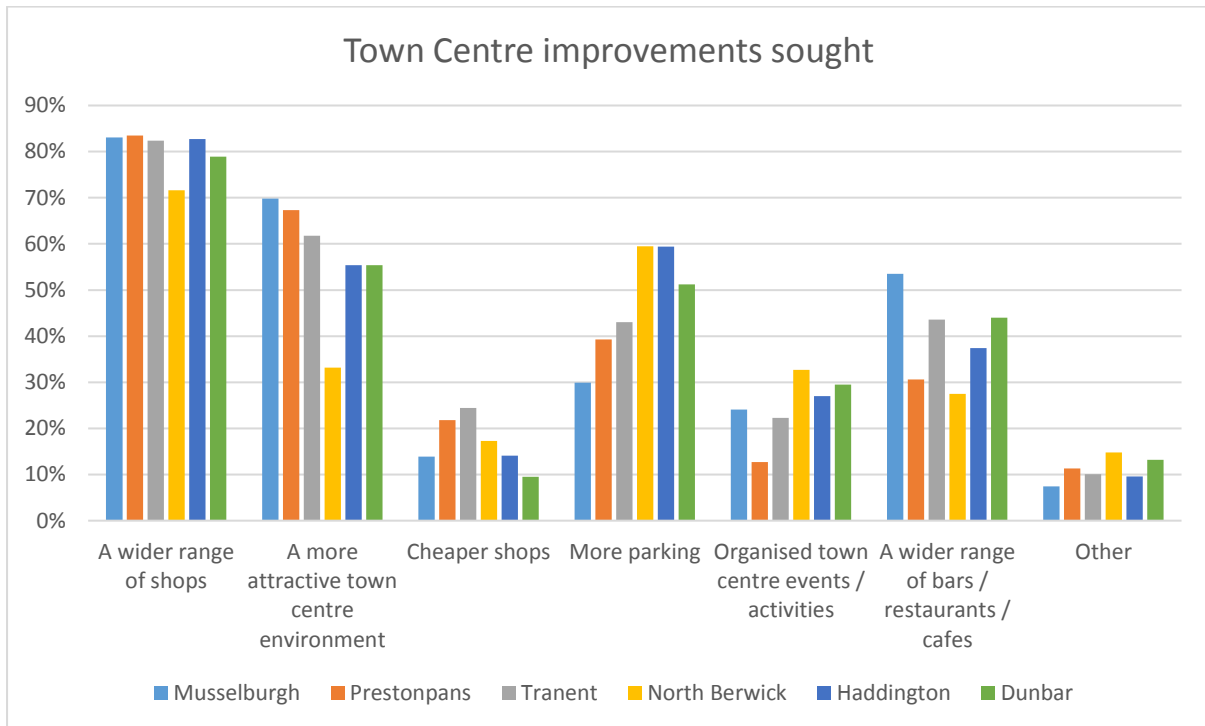
*Which town centre do people visit most often for shopping, leisure and services?*



A huge proportion of residents in Musselburgh use Musselburgh town centre over any of the other 5 centres. This corresponds with the RCS findings of 2015, which conclude that Musselburgh residents do the majority of their convenience shopping in Musselburgh. Any additional expenditure appears to go to stores outside of East Lothian. This is consistent with the Citizen’s Panel results which show that the Musselburgh population make virtually no use of the other east Lothian town centres. Proximity to Edinburgh and good public transport to east Edinburgh and beyond will be a contributing factor.

Three years on and the survey results indicate similar trends – Musselburgh residents choose to visit Musselburgh town centre, the remainder looking towards Edinburgh for their shopping and leisure. Both Prestonpans and Tranent are losing visits to other east Lothian centres, namely Musselburgh and Haddington. Musselburgh is therefore supporting Tranent and Prtestonpans to some extent.

Question 8 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asks ‘which 3 factors would be most likely to encourage you to use your local town centre more?’ The results are highlighted below:

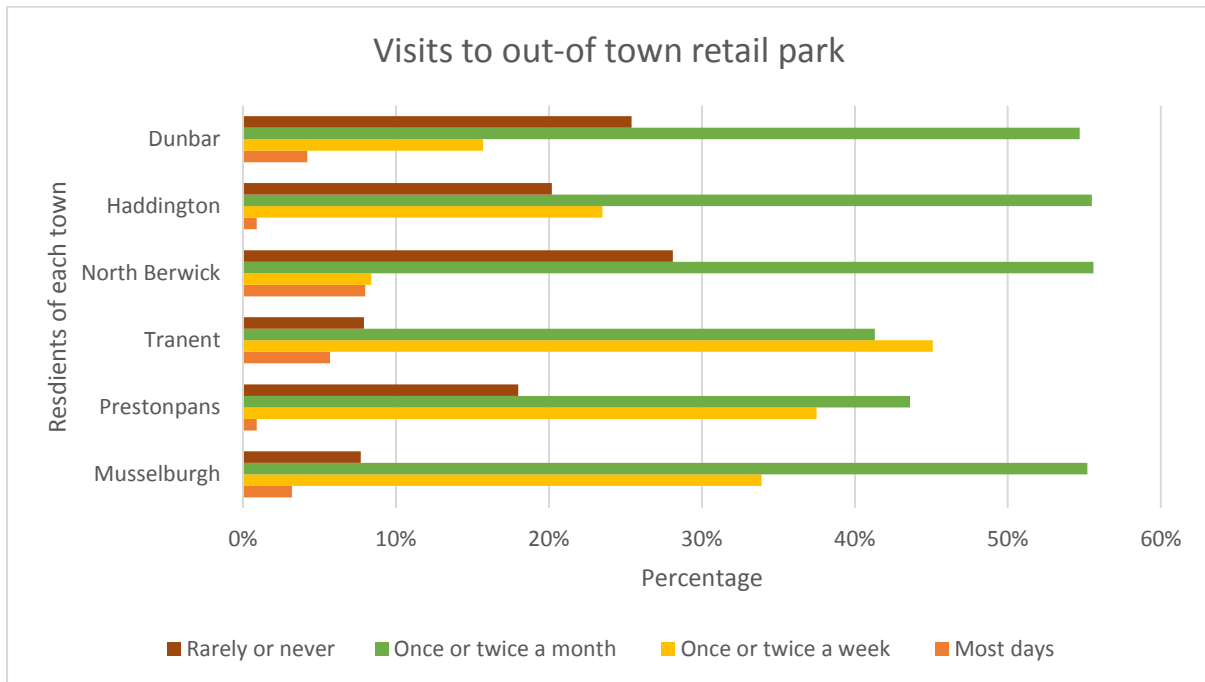


The results are similar for each town centre with the top three issues across the board showing:

1. A wider range of shops
2. A more attractive town centre environment
3. More parking

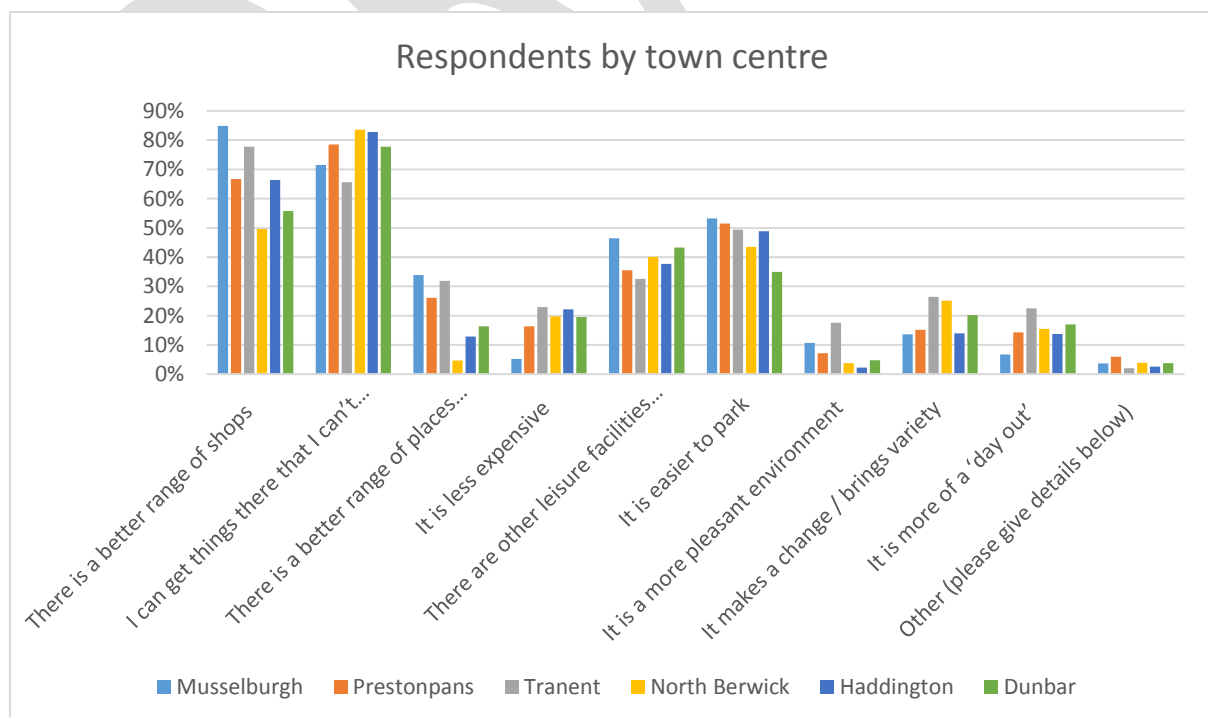
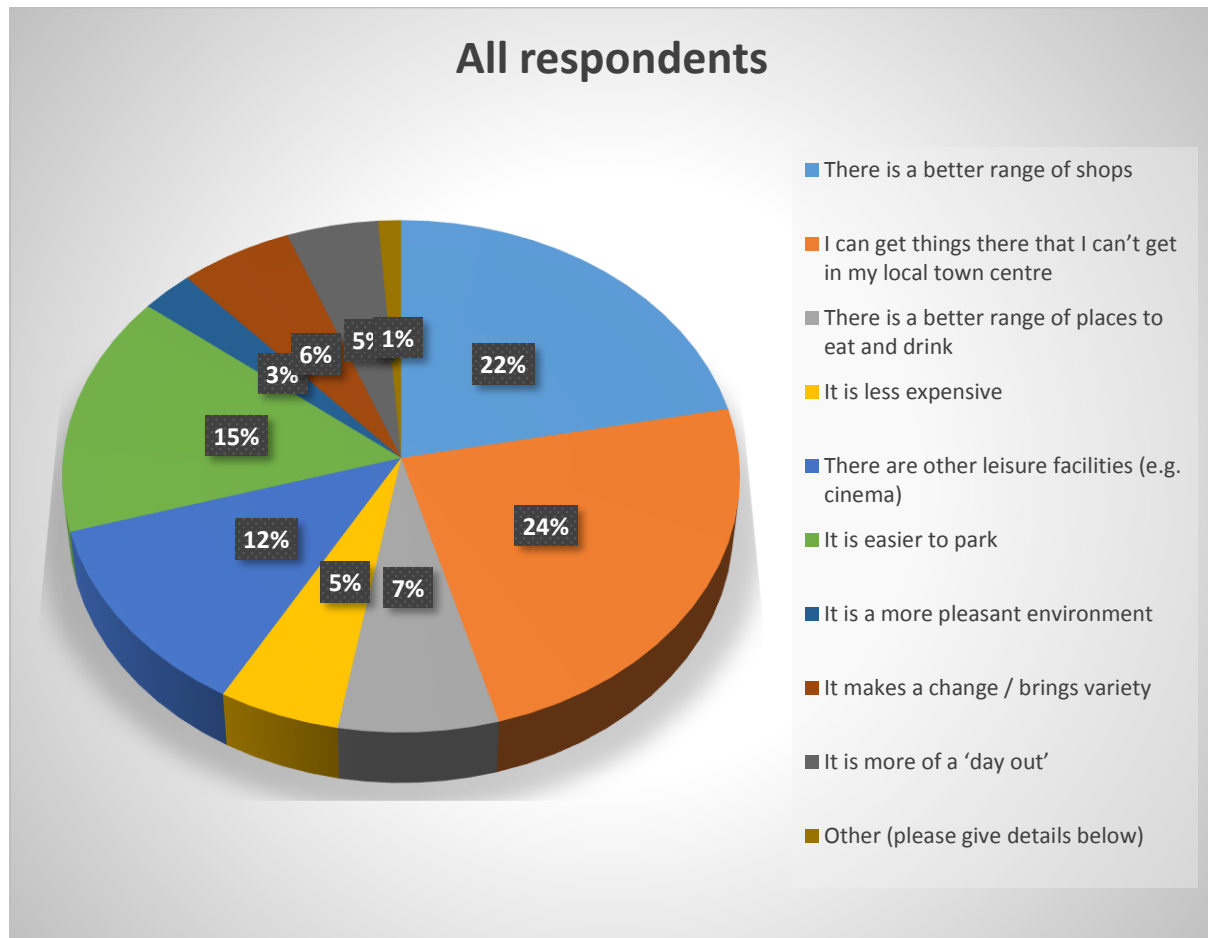
There is also a requirement for a wider range of bars/restaurants and cafes, particularly in Musselburgh. This reinforces the 2015 RCS findings and may also help explain the current limited use of Musselburgh town centre in the evening. A more attractive town centre is sought – the highlighted traffic congestion will play a part in unattractiveness. The Musselburgh Air Quality Management Area should assist in improving this.

Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asks ‘how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?’



As would maybe be expected a large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a week and once or twice a month. Over 30% of Musselburgh residents choose to visit an out-of-town retail park once or twice a week. A higher proportion of residents from Dunbar, Haddington and North Berwick rarely or never visit an out-of-town retail park, most likely because proximity to Edinburgh and the available out-of-town centres is further than the community of Musselburgh. Few people use an out-of-town retail centre daily. This is a good sign that suggests town centre usage, however, it should be borne in mind that the majority of out-of-town retail centres, such as Fort Kinnaird, are predominantly the sale of convenience goods, which few people buy daily.

Question 10 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asked 'If you go to an out-of town retail park for some shopping or leisure activities, rather than to your local town centre, what would be your reasons for doing so?'



As expected people refer to a better range of shops and more places to eat and drink as well as there being other leisure facilities to access. Whilst it is possible to encourage an increased range of shops, restaurants and leisure facilities in Musselburgh, proximity to the Edinburgh offer and, in particular, Fort Kinnaird will always play a part. It is extremely accessible, especially for the west of the district. The only other consideration to be highlighted is the availability of parking. 15% of respondents claim it is easier to park at out-of-town centres than town centres. Whilst this is not an overwhelmingly large response, previous analysis indicates town centre parking is considered an issue.

## **Parking**

### Parking Problems

- Long-stay on-street parking at locations where limited waiting operates.
- Parking problems in side streets around main commercial streets - on-street parking restrictions displaced vehicles from main streets. Need to better manage and enforce the supply and turnover of short-stay parking
- Off-street car parks lack management with poor turnover of spaces along with a lack of awareness and usage of them. Out of date signage to off-street car parks
- Need for better management of residents parking in some areas particularly around Queen Margaret University. Abuse of on-street parking in residential areas, particularly in terms of long-stay parking by non-residents
- Overflow parking around railway station
- Some difficulties for servicing and loading access to retailers in the town centre
- Need to accommodate major public transport corridor through the town centre
- Specific parking issues on race days although existing restrictions seem to function fairly well
- Short-term on-street problems at peak school travel periods around schools
- Lack of Blue Badge spaces

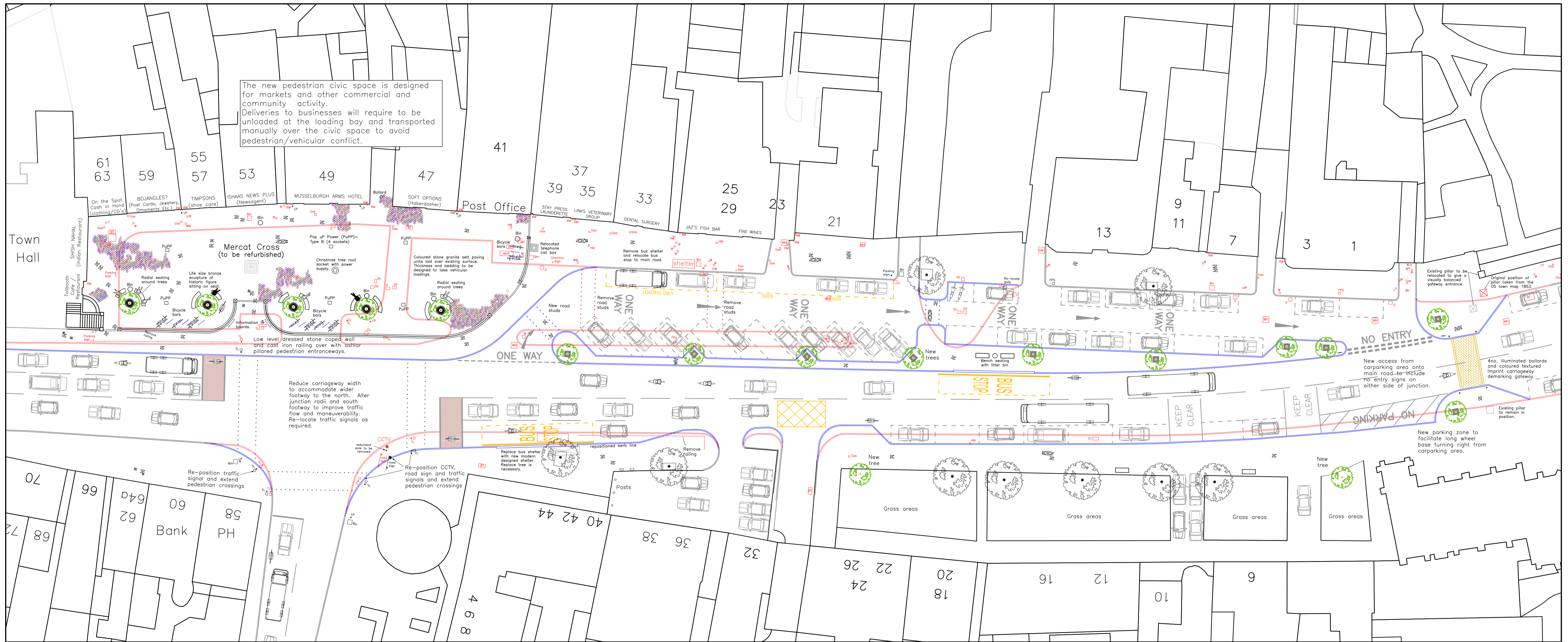
### Potential Parking Solutions

- Control through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- Provision of designated long-stay car parks
- Provision of designated short-stay and medium-stay car parks
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Implementation of parking management hierarchy defining designated short-stay, medium-stay and long-stay parking locations
- Review and implementation of improved signage to off-street car parks where required
- Consider the introduction of on-off street parking charges
- Ongoing review of Resident's Parking Schemes and consideration of CPZ
- Ongoing review of waiting and loading provision
- Provision of clearway on key streets through town centre
- Provision of event management parking services
- Ongoing review of Blue Badge parking

DRAFT



# MUSSELBURGH HIGH STREET EAST OF THE TOWN HALL



The new pedestrian civic space is designed for markets and other commercial and community activity. Deliveries to businesses will require to be unloaded at the loading bay and transported manually over the civic space to avoid pedestrian/vehicular conflict.

Existing mapping affected by proposed works is shown in red. Proposed carriageway alignment for discussion is shown in blue.

**PREPARED FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY**

LIFE SIZE BRONZE SCULPTURAL FIGURES  
(Famous people with connections to Musselburgh such as Roman figures to 4th C, Thomas Randolph 14th C / David Macbeth Moir 18th C plus modern day figure with laptop)

BLACK METAL GUARD AND GRILLE  
(CIRCULAR FOR CIVIC SPACE/SQUARE WITHIN STREET SPACE)

NEW TREE SPECIES TO BE PYRUS CALLERYANA "CHANTICLEER"

CONTEMPORARY STYLE BUS SHELTER



LEGEND			
	Unknown service cover		Traffic Signal
	Gas valve cover		Traffic Signal control box
	Road gully		Lamp Post
	Water valve cover		Closed Circuit Television Camera
	Water Meter cover		Rain Water down pipe
	Telephone Call Box		Finger Post directional signage
	British Telecom Chamber		New tree
	Electricity Chamber		New tree in guard & grille
	Fire Hydrant		Pop-up electrical power
	Scour Valve		Curved seating around trees
	Drainage Manhole		Seated figure in bronze
	Hit & Miss drainage cover		
	Illuminated Bollard		
	Flag Pole Socket		



**Tranent  
Town  
Centre  
Strategy**

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2018

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**Supplementary  
Guidance to the East  
Lothian Local  
Development Plan  
2018**

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# **TRANENT TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY**

## **1.0 Purpose of the Tranent Town Centre Strategy**

- 1.1 The Tranent Town Centre Strategy forms a part of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2018 (LDP). It is supplementary guidance focusing on the changes that the Local Development Plan is planning to the town of Tranent and the implications of that change for the town centre. The LDP introduces new planning policies adopting the town centre first principle and has detailed planning policies for town centres to guide development.
- 1.2 The strategy looks in more detail than the LDP into the town centre. A health check of the town centre is provided, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered and its performance as a place with coordinated actions for improvement and regeneration.
- 1.3 In addition to the LDP and its supporting documents, the town centre strategy draws on the work done by the Tranent Town Centre Charrette in 2015 and takes account of the Council's emerging Local Transport Strategy and Local Housing Strategy as well as the Fa'side Area Partnership Area Plan. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centre.

## **2.0 Policy Context**

### **Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres**

- 2.1 The adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) promotes the Town Centre First Principle which requires that uses that would attract significant footfall must consider locating to a town or local centre first and then, sequentially, to an edge of centre location, other commercial centre or out of centre location. This is designed to support town centres in the long term and help to ensure that they are vibrant and sustainable.
- 2.2 To further support town centres and to minimise the length of time commercial premises lie vacant the principle of a change of use between retail, business, office, restaurant leisure and entertainment is supported. As town centres evolve there could be pressure to change uses to residential; this may be acceptable in non-ground floor or backland locations but will only be acceptable in a ground floor location where there is evidence that it is no longer viable as a town or local centre use.
- 2.3 The policy on hot food outlets supports hot food outlets in town and local centres provided that there will be no significant impact on local amenity, including cumulatively with other existing take-aways in the area and are consistent with other LDP policies including in relation to parking and road safety.

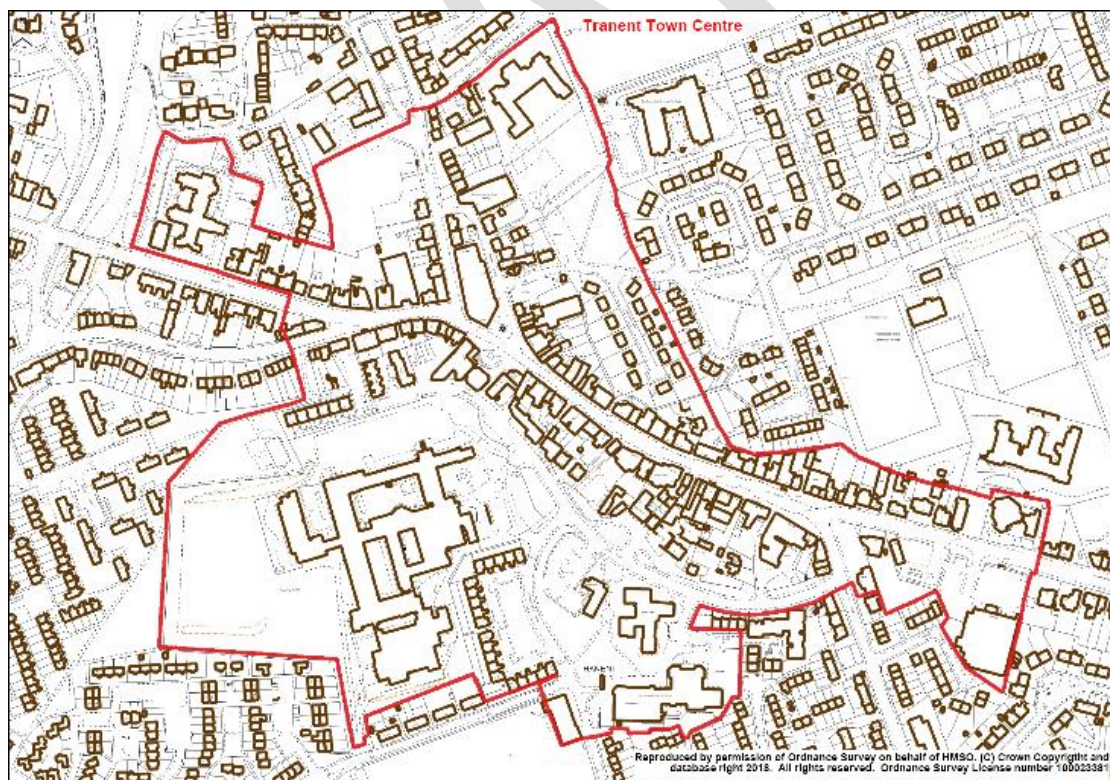
- 2.4 The town centre strategy is proposed to be approved as supplementary guidance to the LDP. It therefore remains approved until the East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective.

### **3.0 Form and Content of the Tranent Town Centre Strategy**

- 3.1 The Tranent town centre strategy adopts a strategic approach to guide the improvement of Tranent town centre. Following analysis from a health check of the town centre a series of Actions is made to address the issues arising in the town centre. Each action is given an indicative short, medium or long timescale with identified lead and joint working parties for its implementation. The health check can be regularly updated and actions can be monitored and if required revised in future.

### **4.0 Background**

- 4.1 The LDP defines the Tranent town centre, one of six defined town centres in East Lothian. This is the spatial area where the LDP policies outlined in Section 2 above apply and also the spatial area where the town centre strategy actions that follow apply.



- 4.2 Tranent has experienced significant growth over the last 15 years with the completion of the Windygoul development to the south and its population has

increased to an estimated 12,582 people. The LDP plans for further growth in the town with housing allocations at Windygoul South (550), Lammermoor Terrace (120) Bankpark Grove (80) an increase of circa 750 houses in the period to 2024. Further housing is also planned at Macmerry, Gladsmuir, Ormiston, Elphinstone and Pencaitland in the Ross High School catchment area. The LDP also allocates approximately 28 hectares of land for employment at Tranent and Macmerry.

- 4.3 Much of the town centre is included in the designated Tranent Conservation Area which covers the oldest parts of the town around Church Street as well as the High Street. The purpose of a conservation area is to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the architectural and historic character of the area and that should ensure over time ensure that the area is improved and enhanced. The Tranent Conservation Area Character Statement and other supplementary planning guidance to the LDP on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment, which contains guidance on development in conservation areas including shopfronts and advertisements are important in setting standards for improving the overall environment of the Conservation Area.

## **5.0 Tranent Town Centre Analysis**

- 5.1 Tranent town centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are included in a table contained in Appendix 1. This has helped to inform the proposed actions for the town centre strategy.
- 5.2 The SWOT analysis has been prepared following the collection of data in an up-to-date Health Check for Tranent. The following points have been identified in the Health Check and subsequent SWOT:
- 5.3 The ward of Tranent includes Tranent, Wallyford, Macmerry and Elphinstone. Almost half of the Ward's population live in Tranent. The population is set to grow, with a total of 1513 houses planned for Tranent by 2025. The town centre is centrally located and is in an ideal location to draw the population (and new population) to its shops and businesses. The town has seen the recent development of ASDA and Aldi stores within walking distance of the main High Street. Tranent High Street footfall remained at a similar level from 2011/2012 until 2016/2017. There has been a 10% drop in the footfall in the latest figures from 2017/18. Town Centre vacancy rates have varied since 2008, but recently they are below the average for East Lothian. There are a wide range of uses represented in the town centre, although the number of shops (Class 1) is lowest in East Lothian. There are a high proportion of Sui Generis uses (which can include pubs and bookmakers). There are few restaurants for use after 6pm. Over 60% of the Tranent population choose not to visit the town centre after 6pm, citing the need for more/better restaurants/cafes and pubs/winebars. Currently a very high proportion of expenditure on food items from Tranent residents is spent outside of Tranent, primarily in Musselburgh and Haddington. There is an excellent bus service from Tranent to Musselburgh and Edinburgh. Blindwells new town is planned with 1,600

houses and associated facilities to serve their needs immediately to the south of Tranent and land is safeguarded for major expansion of Blindwells if required post 2030. The future development of Blindwells could see further retail choice within easy reach of Tranent. The challenge is therefore to promote a sustainable future for the centre of Tranent, which encourages its use by both the existing and future populations and, critically, encourages the retention of local expenditure and business activity.

- 5.4 The street has on-street short stay parking and a number of car parks behind the High Street with easy access to the main shopping area. However, lack of enforcement can see low turnover of spaces. More/better parking is identified by residents as a much needed improvement. Tranent High Street is busy with vehicles and there is opportunity to develop an alternative route through new development to the south.
- 5.5 In 2015 a design charrette was held in Tranent to examine in detail the issues of the town centre. The results provide an informed public view expressed at a point in time and established a strategic set of principles for the town centre and ideas for change. Having an attractive environment that draws people in and feels safe and relaxing would be key to the quality of life of Tranent's residents and attracting investment, footfall and spend. Additionally it was felt that Tranent lacked a proper community centre.
- 5.6 The Citizen's panel survey (2018) identified a need for a wider range of shops, a more attractive town centre environment and more parking.

## **6.0 Regeneration Strategy for Tranent town centre**

- 6.1 A regeneration initiative is currently underway in Tranent Conservation Area. The Tranent Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) commenced in Tranent Conservation Area in 2015 and runs until 2020. The priority area for grant expenditure is within the core town centre centred on High Street and targeting shopfront and building repairs and improvement and the former Coop premises in the centre of the town. Through the scheme a total of £380,000 has been awarded to date for ten projects.
- 6.2 As part of its requirement to leave a legacy of better understanding of the heritage of the town, the Tranent CARS scheme has involved all ages of the local community in history and heritage events and creative learning projects focusing on the High Street buildings and their redevelopments. It has also hosted traditional skill training sessions for local residents and building professionals in order for them to learn how to repair and maintain historic buildings. This has used buildings in poor condition or existing community spaces as live training projects. A community led walk and talk group has evolved and been mapping out historic routes and stories from around Tranent with an aim to creating a series of local audio walks around the town.

- 6.3 Tranent has grown with new residents bringing their spending power to the town. However, only a proportion of this spending is spent within the town with leakage elsewhere including Edinburgh. The town centre will only attract people if it is a safe, attractive place to visit with good facilities and access including available parking. That is the basis for the regeneration of the town centre which needs to adapt to cater for the needs of both the existing and new population. To do this the town centre requires investment in the following:

Long vacant buildings – these harm the overall appearance of the centre and usually deteriorate over time. They can also affect the overall image of a town centre and can put off other investment. The major building that requires investment and a new use is the former Co-op buildings block between Church Street and Winton Place right in the heart of the town. The vacant former Infant School on Sanderson’s Wynd is another large building that requires a new use.

Vacant sites/derelict buildings - the former Fa’side Lodge site in Church Street, the former Grants Lounge off Well Wynd and vacant buildings in Civic Square.

Town centre buildings - Repair and improvement of buildings in Tranent town centre which the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme has demonstrated can be very effective in enhancing the overall appearance of the town centre. For example, the appearance of some businesses on High Street could benefit from improved advertisements more in keeping with the traditional character of the street.

Open spaces – not all open spaces are useable or attract people to use them. Civic space is needed to allow places where people can gather or sit to appreciate their surroundings. Quieter often green spaces can benefit town centre users seeking respite from busy streets. Spaces that require improvement through redesign include Civic Square, Winton Place and the open space between Lindores Drive and the former Infant School.

## **7.0 Main Issues Tranent Town Centre**

- 7.1 This section outlines the main issues and actions required within Tranent town centre. It provides an indication of timescale and details of who will lead action to implement each project.

### **Diversity of Land Use**

- 7.2 Tranent is classified as an Interdependent town<sup>1</sup> i.e. it attracts people from neighbouring towns who come to access some assets and jobs but is also reliant on neighbouring towns for other assets and jobs.
- 7.3 The population of Tranent is increasing. In 2016, there were 8,043 dwellings in the Tranent ward, 17.1% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian. This is

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland’s Towns Partnership  
<https://www.scotlandstowns.org/understanding-scottish-places>

proposed to increase to 1513 potential new homes in Tranent ward by 2025. Additional employment land is allocated for at Windygoul and Kingslaw as well as at Macmerry.

- 7.4 Blindwells new town is planned with 1,600 houses and associated facilities to serve their needs immediately to the south of Tranent and land is safeguarded for major expansion of Blindwells. This may, in the longer term, attract people away from Tranent town centre.
- 7.5 A high proportion of retail expenditure made outwith the town (79% for convenience goods). Residents are choosing to travel to other shopping areas (primarily Musselburgh and Haddington). Additionally there is no branding/marketing of the town centre or coordination of businesses.
- 7.6 Traffic flows are high and the impact of traffic on the town centre was identified at the charrette as a factor that deters people from using the town centre, though that has not been repeated in other surveys. The high volumes of traffic could cause air pollution to rise triggering the need for an Air Quality Management Zone.

## 8.0 ACTIONS FOR TRANENT TOWN CENTRE

### Movement and Access

- 8.1 Planned housing and employment growth in Tranent will increase vehicle movements in and around the town. To address this the LDP proposes a programme of transport improvements at Tranent town centre to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality. Actions include:
  - A programme of transport improvements at Tranent town centre to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality (LDP Policy T26).
  - Introduction of a one way system of traffic flow incorporating Loch Road, High Street and Bridge Street by linking Loch Road to Bridge Street/High Street through Civic Square (LDP policy T27).
  - New segregated high quality cycle and walking path (LDP Proposal T3)
  - Winton Place Improved Civic Space
  - Reorganisation of town centre car parking
  - Assessment of the implications, constraints and viability of a town bypass

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 1: One Way System of Traffic Flow and Civic Square				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress



Creation of a Tranent Gyrotory one – way Traffic flow system	East Lothian Council Road Services and Development teams/developers	1. Draft Design Proposals 2. Consult 3. Identify funding 4. Detailed Design 5 Prepare Traffic Orders		Preparatory work has commenced on draft design proposals. Developer Contributions will be sought.
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8.2 The proposal would redistribute traffic and may lead to a reduction of traffic on High Street which would be of benefit to the town centre as traffic flow has been raised as an issue affecting the overall experience of using High Street. It may also increase traffic flow on Well Wynd and Loch Road as single flow traffic would also use this street, as it used to do prior to the creation of Civic Square in the 1960s. An issue that will require careful management in the design of the traffic scheme will be the management of pedestrian flow from Ross High School at times when students are able to access the town centre.

8.3 This project require demolition works at Civic Square and the design of a connecting road to Well Wynd. The Council owns the buildings at Civic Square apart from the Post Office Sorting Office building and the commercial unit adjacent to it. The design of the link road through Civic Square will allow space for new development including civic landscaped space. It would be desirable to include all buildings in Civic Square in a new redevelopment of the square but this may not be possible.

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 2: High Street Re-Landscaping				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Re-Landscaping of Tranent High Street following introduction of one way system	ELC / Area Partnership / external funders	1 Draft Design Proposals 2 Consult 3 Identify funding 4 Detailed design stage 5. Traffic Orders	Short Medium Long Ongoing	This project has not yet commenced

8.4 The introduction of a one way traffic flow system in to High Street could mean that less road space is required with potential for more space for footways, parking, active travel and public transport. There is scope to significantly enhance the

environment of High Street making it a more pleasant place to use and therefore to encourage higher footfall.

- 8.5 Detailed design is required to find the most advantageous design for High Street that meets the needs of its users and produces an attractive and high quality street environment. The economic needs of the street must be catered for, including sufficiently wide footways, places where service vehicles can stop, bus stops, and an appropriate amount of public parking.
- 8.6 Proposal T3 of the Local Development Plan proposes a new segregated high quality cycle and walking path running east west through East Lothian between towns and villages including Tranent. This is intended to encourage more people to be active and to undertake some commuting journeys by cycle. Cyclists will be directed from the path to the town centre.
- 8.7 This work will be undertaken by the Council's Road Services team in association with other Council services. Public consultation will be required once detailed designs are prepared before implementation. A major project such as this will be expensive and will require significant funding including from sources other than East Lothian Council. The need to undertake detailed design, further consultation and to source external funding for implementation will mean that the project can only be fully implemented in the medium to longer term.
- 8.8 In 2015, the town centre charrette discussed different options for improving High Street. The following sketch image from the final charrette report shows no parked vehicles, retained two-way traffic and wider footways with colour delineation between surfaces in a shared surface proposal:



**Indicative sketch from charrette report on how Tranent High Street might look without parked vehicles and with wider footways. Priority is given to the pedestrian with vehicle movement slowed by narrow lanes and crossing points.**



How High Street looks currently (2015 photo)

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 3: Winton Place Improved Civic Space				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Winton Place is currently a road. This proposal will remove the road and re-allocate the space as part of an enlarged civic space at Winton Place	ELC Road Services / ELC Planning Service / Area Partnership	1 Confirm Winton Place no longer required as a through road and close. 2 Prepare detailed design for civic space		Traffic modelling being undertaken to assess closure options.

8.9 An additional implementation of Action 1 will impact on the landscaped Civic Square which has been a feature of Tranent town centre since the early 1960s and was relandscaped in the 1990s when the statue of historical figure Jackie Crookston was installed. Winton Place, opposite Civic Square also provides some civic space, currently in a smaller area and has commercial premises on both its sides. The former Coop buildings on the west side are due to be converted to a mixed uses including residential use on the upper floors and commercial use (shop and café) on those parts of the ground floor closest to Bridge Street and also facing on to Winton Place. These uses would complement civic space at Winton Place. The opportunity to enlarge the open civic space at Winton Place should be considered.

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 4: Reorganisation of town centre car parking				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress

Reorganisation of town centre car parking	ELC Road Services	1. Approval of Parking Strategy as part of Local Transport Strategy 2. Implementation of short, medium and long stay proposals		If the ELC Parking Strategy is approved this work will commence
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8.10 If the proposed Parking Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Strategy is approved, the town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre car parks. An additional new car park is due to be created at Forrester's Park which will serve the football club on match days and be open to all on other days.

#### Built Environment and Public Spaces

8.11 Most of Tranent town centre is located within the designated Tranent Conservation Area. This includes all of High Street, Winton Place, Church Street but excludes Civic Square and Well Wynd/Loch Road. The conservation area boundary was extended in 2001 to specifically include High Street with the aim of improving the overall quality of buildings in High Street including shopfronts and advertisements. The character and appearance of the conservation area requires to be preserved or enhanced. Actions include:

- Shopfronts and Advertisements
- Improving Open Space

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 5 Shopfront and Advertisements				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements in High Street	ELC Planning Service and Economic Development and Strategic Investment / Commercial premises owners, occupiers and lessees	Improvements will be encouraged at the time of advertisement consent applications or planning applications to alter shopfronts		Ongoing

8.12 Improvements are required to some shopfronts and advertisements in the High Street to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the

overall quality of High Street. Further improvements are required to some shopfronts and advertisements in the High Street to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of High Street. Advertisement consent is granted for a five year period therefore should in time improve as further applications for advertisement consent are made. Shopfront alterations and advertisements must comply with the Council’s supplementary planning guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment.

8.13 The Tranent CARS project has awarded grants to improve buildings on High Street, particularly shopfronts and has had some notable successes including the restoration of the shop at 55 High Street below which shows how a simple traditional shopfront can be transformed:



55 High St: Before improvement



55 High St: After restoration with a signwritten sign. The owner reported an increase in business after work was done.

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 6 Improving Open Space				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Investigate the feasibility of creating a small town centre park on underused land between the infant school and Lindores Drive	Area Partnership / ELC / external funders	1 Develop some conceptual ideas for a small park 2 Identify feasibility for funding including from within and external to ELC		This project has not started

8.14 An issue that arose during the charrette was that there was no place to go within Tranent town centre for a quiet spot to sit on a bench and eat a lunch. Responding to this it was identified that the space between Lindores Drive and the historic former Tranent Infant School was poorly laid out but offered potential to be

reorganised and landscaped to provide a small park with play area and informal recreational area for that quiet spot off High Street.

- 8.15 The space between Lindores Drive and the historic former Tranent Infant School contains two existing car parks, the town centre car park at Lindores Drive and the George Johnston centre car park. The former infant school building has two wings to the rear that reach out to a potential park. This historic building is due to be repurposed as an early years educational nursery facility by 2021 though this will require its own enclosed outdoor play area
- 8.16 A community park could be created by removing the George Johnson Centre car park and repositioning its parking requirement (16 spaces) at the Lindores Drive car park (60 spaces). The former road that crosses the site as a rough path can be incorporated into an area of open space potentially also including a play park. A park would also improve the outlook from the Crookston Care Home. This project should be community led.



Potential before and after of improved open space looking towards Crookston Care Home. Image form Cranent Town Centre Charrette Report

### **Regeneration of Buildings at Risk**

- 8.17 Privately owned buildings, often those in multiple ownership, in town centres can be vulnerable to disrepair and this is common across Scotland. Where any building is in disrepair its owners are responsible for its condition. In a town centre the appearance of a building in disrepair can affect the overall attractiveness of the town centre therefore it is important that buildings are kept in good repair. Where necessary the Council has powers to intervene and require owners to undertake works. In some situations this can lead to the compulsory acquisition of affected buildings. Compulsory purchase of buildings or land can be an option to undertake a significant improvement to a town centre. Actions to help the regeneration of buildings and attract investment include:

- New Uses for Old Buildings – Former Co-op Buildings
- New Uses for Old Buildings – Fraser Centre
- Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and infill sites



- Improve access to the Town Centre
- Public wi-fi

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 7: New Uses for Old Buildings – Former Co-op Buildings				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Old Coop Buildings bridge Street/Winton Place/Church Street	Building Owner/developer / ELC Planning Service and ELC EDSI	Phase 1 due for completion late 2018 Full completion is scheduled for 2020		Work has commenced on the conversion of the ground floor units to new commercial space

8.18 At the heart of Tranent town centre, the long term vacant former Coop buildings have been deteriorating and detracting from the overall quality of Tranent town centre for several years. Planning permission was granted in 2018 for their change of use to form 17 flats, 3 shops (Class 1 use), 1 cafe, 1 bistro (Class 3 use), childrens soft play area with associated cafe (Class 11 use), events hall (Class 11 use), Recharge community building (Class 10 use) and associated works. The new residential units will bring additional people to the town centre and the businesses will add new business space to the town centre as well as a boost for local employment. The main shop frontage is being grant assisted through the Tranent CARS to restore the stonework of the original frontage on this listed building. The overall investment will be circa £4m with grant contributions from the Tranent CARS fund, East Lothian Council and Leader.

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 8: New Uses for Old Buildings – Fraser Centre				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Redevelopment of the Fraser Centre to form a new community centre	Fraser Centre Community Trust	The centre is likely to be completed in 2019		Demolition work has started as part of phase one works

8.19 The old cinema building in Winton Place which is accessed from Winton Place but extends to the rear by more than 50m to the backsides path, is to be redeveloped to form a new community centre for Tranent, the Fraser Centre. This will be a centre

for learning, development, arts and entertainment. Funds have been raised for the work by the Fraser Centre Community Trust including contributions from the Big Lottery fund and will result in a circa £3m investment in the town’s community facilities. Its location will also benefit footfall in the town centre and the use of the Fraser centre was a concern flagged by residents at the charrette.

<b>Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 9: Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and infill sites</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1 Encourage development of infill and vacant sites within the town centre 2 Investigate the viability of re positioning Well Wynd to create additional development.	Private land owners / ELC Development / ELC Estates	The Fa’side Lodge site should be completed by 2021 Investigate the cost of repositioning of Well Wynd slightly to the south using underused land which could create additional developable land on its south side along Well Wynd.		Ongoing

8.20 Within Tranent town centre there are few empty properties above shops with most space occupied by residential accommodation. Where there is vacant accommodation it is most beneficial for the town centre to have it occupied by people to encourage additional use and spend within the town centre. The proposal to investigate repositioning Well Wynd should be investigated to establish its feasibility. The potential to develop further small sites to bring in new people to live in the town centre is a desirable objective to support a sustainable and vibrant community in the town centre.



Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 10: Improve access to the Town Centre				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Encourage pedestrian and cycle access to Tranent town centre	ELC Road Services / ELC Housing Services	Investigate the feasibility of widening sections of the backsides lanes to encourage greater use of footpath access to the High Street. Consider environmental improvement to other path routes to the town centre		Early work to identify land ownership on one side of the backsides path has commenced.

8.21 As Tranent High Street lies in the centre of the town, it is accessible by walking and cycling along several path routes. Some routes would benefit from improvement to encourage their use. For example the backside lanes to the south of High Street are narrow in places and if widened could feel safer to use. Other paths may benefit from additional lighting. To encourage cycling more, safe cycle parking must also be provided in locations where cyclists would use it. While cycle parking is available at destinations such as the George Johnston Centre and the Loch Sports Centre additional town centre cycle parking should be available as part of access improvements.



Back side lane leading from Lindores Place to High Street as it is currently and how it could look if widened and improved. Image from final Charrette report, 2015<sup>2</sup>

<b>Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 11: Public wi-fi</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Provision of public wi-fi in Tranent town centre	ELC Development	Establish the feasibility of and funding for free public wi-fi provision to support the town centre		Initial survey work has been undertaken

8.22 The availability of public wi-fi would be an asset to Tranent town centre. It offers potential to boost tourism with information potentially available via the internet and potential for direct marketing by businesses within the town centre. It would also help generally towards increased digital inclusion.

## 9.0 The Way Forward

9.1 This strategy forms statutory supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan. The health checks (Appendix 3) can be updated regularly and the strategy should be monitored and revised in line with revisions to the LDP Action Programme.

<sup>2</sup> Tranent Town Centre Charrette Final Report, 2015, Kevin Murray Associates

**TRANENT APPENDIX 1 – SWOT AND HEALTH CHECK**

DRAFT

**STRENGTHS**

- The town centre is located central in the town and has uses that draw people located within it e.g. health centre, library, sports centre and High School.
- Characterful street with shops and businesses
- New people will be living in Tranent following extensive new housing developments (1513 units by 2025) and may use the town centre, supporting businesses and potentially helping to create new ones.
- Good number of town centre car parks and access lanes to the town
- Proximity of Ross High School provides additional High Street spend
- Good public transport links by bus
- Community group Blooming Belter's has enhanced the town's appearance using floral displays
- Low business vacancy rate
- Good quality exemplar building restorations through CARS\* scheme
- New supermarkets within walkable distance of town centre
- Range of sizes of commercial units

**WEAKNESSES**

- Volume of traffic within High Street detracts from the enjoyment of the street by pedestrians (although national Air Quality Standards are met)
- Vacant former Coop buildings detract from the look of the town centre.
- High proportion of retail expenditure made outwith the town (79% for convenience goods)
- Some poor quality shopfronts and advertisements detract from the appearance of the street
- Residents are choosing to travel to other shopping areas (primarily Musselburgh and Haddington)
- Can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long
- No branding/marketing of the town centre or coordination of businesses
- Perception that there should be a wider range of shops
- Pedestrian footways narrow in places
- Tranent Town Centre has the lowest proportion of shops compared to the other East Lothian town centres.
- Over half of all Tranent residents do not visit the town centre after 6pm
- Restaurants/cafes represent only 3% of the total units in Tranent

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme offers grants for high quality repair and restoration projects for buildings and shops
- The former Coop Buildings in the centre of the town are being converted to new shops and residential properties
- Re-landscaping of civic space within the town centre
- Re-landscaping and tidying up of the open space between Lindores Drive and the former Infants School to create more useable and attractive space
- Proposed new Fraser Centre will attract more people to the town centre
- Former Infants School requires a new use to support the town centre
- On and off street parking can be managed to enforce short, medium and long stay parking to ensure that town centre users can find parking easily
- Installation of public wi-fi could allow specific marketing, attract people and allow businesses further advertising opportunity
- Encourage path links from new residential developments to town centre
- Claw back leaked expenditure through increasing range/quality of shops
- Encourage Class 3 uses in an attempt to increase the evening offer
- New development could provide an alternative through route, thereby reducing the volume of traffic in the town centre.
- Parking charges could raise income that could benefit the town centre

### THREATS

- Volume of new traffic in Tranent as a result of new development could continue to adversely affect the town centre until a one way gyratory traffic flow scheme can be introduced
- High volumes of traffic could cause air pollution to rise triggering the need for an Air Quality Management Zone
- Lack of maintenance by building owners could harm the appearance of town centre buildings making it less attractive to new businesses
- In longer term Blindwells new settlement may also attract people away from Tranent town centre
- Loss of civic space at Civic Square to create one way system and link Bridge Street to Well Wynd
- Parking charging could be introduced which may deter people from visiting the town centre
- Changes of use from shops (Class) 1 may increase Sui Generis (hot food take-away offer) instead of restaurants (Class 3)
- Online shopping

## TRANENT Health Check

### POPULATION

The 2016 mid-year population estimates state that 21,504 people live in the TWM ward, which is 20.7% of the population of East Lothian.

#### Population Distribution

- 10,536 people (49% of the ward population) live in Tranent
- 2,916 people (13.6% of the ward population) live in Wallyford
- 1,821 people (8.5% of the ward population) live in Macmerry
- 431 people (2.2% of the ward population) live in Elphinstone

#### Age Distribution (National Records of Scotland, 2016 mid-year estimates)

	Tranent Ward	East Lothian	Scotland
% of the population (0-15)	19.8	18.2	16.9
% of the population that are (16-64)	65.1	62.2	64.6
% of the population that are 65 or over	15.1	19.6	18.5

### HOUSING

In 2017, the number of households in East Lothian was 45,301. This is a 1.2% increase from 44,749 households in 2016. In comparison, the number of households in Scotland overall increased by 0.7%.

Between 2016 and 2026, the number of households in East Lothian is projected to increase from 44,749 to 50,070. This is an 11.9% increase, which compares to a projected increase of 6.4% for Scotland as a whole.

In 2016, there were 8,043 dwellings in the Tranent ward, 17.1% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian.

The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in Tranent will yield **312** units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for the ward will yield **1201** units taking the total to **1513** potential new homes in Tranent ward by 2025.

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3.

## **RETAIL PATTERNS**

Town centre catchments:



### **CONVENIENCE – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Table 5.3 of the RCS (2015) shows convenience shopping patterns (with main food and top-up combined). This highlights the following from 2015:

In zone 3 (Tranent) only a limited proportion of convenience shopping is retained in the zone (19%). Most is done in stores outside east Lothian and also in Musselburgh and Haddington. The 2015 study was conducted pre-ASDA and it is assumed that the new ASDA (supported by the Aldi store) will substantially reduce the high outflows from zone 3. The scope for additional convenience floorspace in Tranent is likely to support mainly small store developments and extensions to the existing supermarkets.

### **COMPARISON – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The majority (70%) of expenditure takes place outside east Lothian, namely at Ford Kinnaird (Edinburgh) and Edinburgh Town Centre. The Retail Capacity Study (2015) concludes that there is substantial forecast comparison expenditure growth relating to the residents of East Lothian, so capacity is not a barrier to new comparison retail development in the Council area. However, forecast for expenditure indicate that only a small proportion of the leakage could be retained in East Lothian. The reason is that East Lothian does not have any major shopping centres. It is more probable that leakage of comparison expenditure to major

destinations outside East Lothian will increase. Trends in internet shopping are also having a major effect.

The main issue will be to support the existing comparison retail floorspace in the town centres in East Lothian, through encouraging improvements to the quality and range of comparison shopping, in conjunction with other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town centres as destinations.

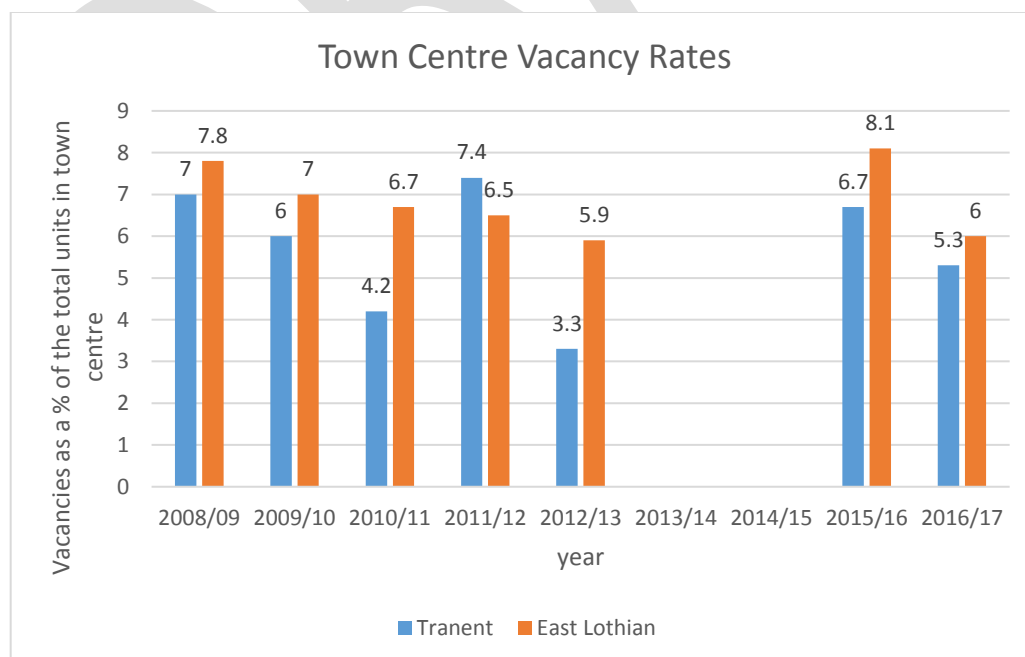
### **BLINDWELLS**

The RCS concludes that under 2015 market conditions there is limited scope for a larger supermarket (despite the leakage in surrounding zones of Prestonpans and Tranent), however, as Blindwells develops out there may be opportunity for a larger supermarket over the longer term. In terms of major non food retail development, a key factor is the location of Blindwells relatively close to Fort Kinnaird. It is only just over 6 miles or 11 minutes drive time with very good accessibility along the A1. It is probably too close for any major comparison retail development at Blindwells to succeed. From the appraisal, provision for development of a local centre to mainly serve the expanding population at Blindwells appears the most likely scenario to succeed.

### **TOWN CENTRE ASSESSMENTS (quantitative)**

#### **Vacancy Data**

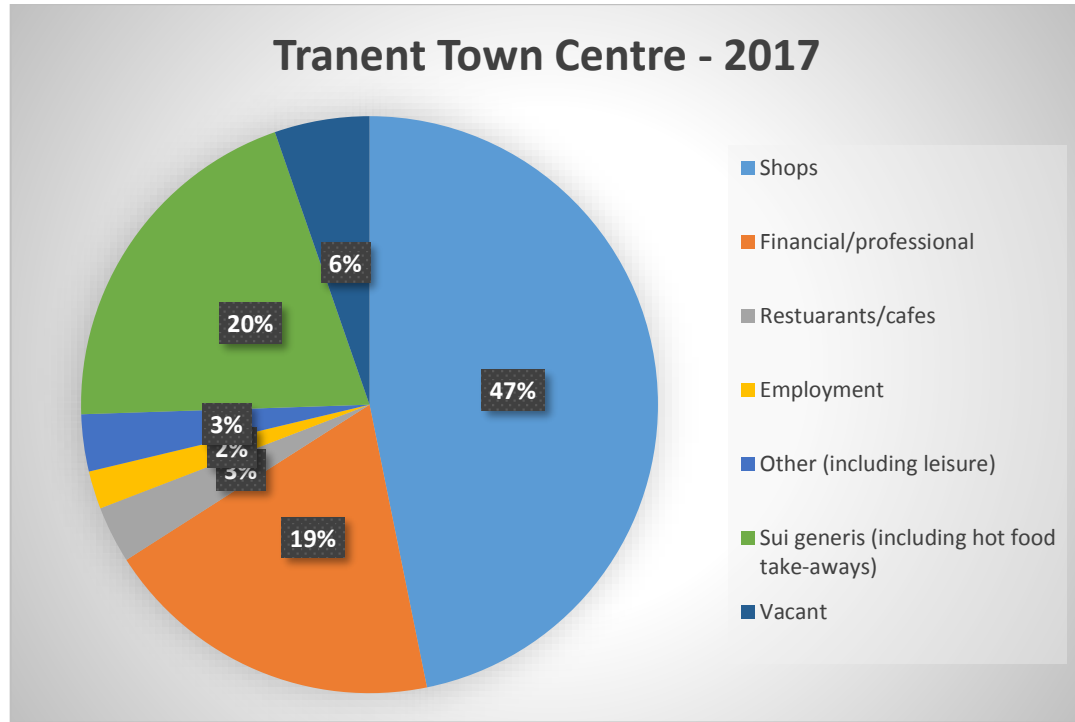
- Vacancy rates have varied in Tranent, from a high of 7.4% to a low of 3.3%
- In 2015/16 figures show the Tranent vacancy rates to be lower than the East Lothian average
- The number of vacancies has dropped again by 2017.





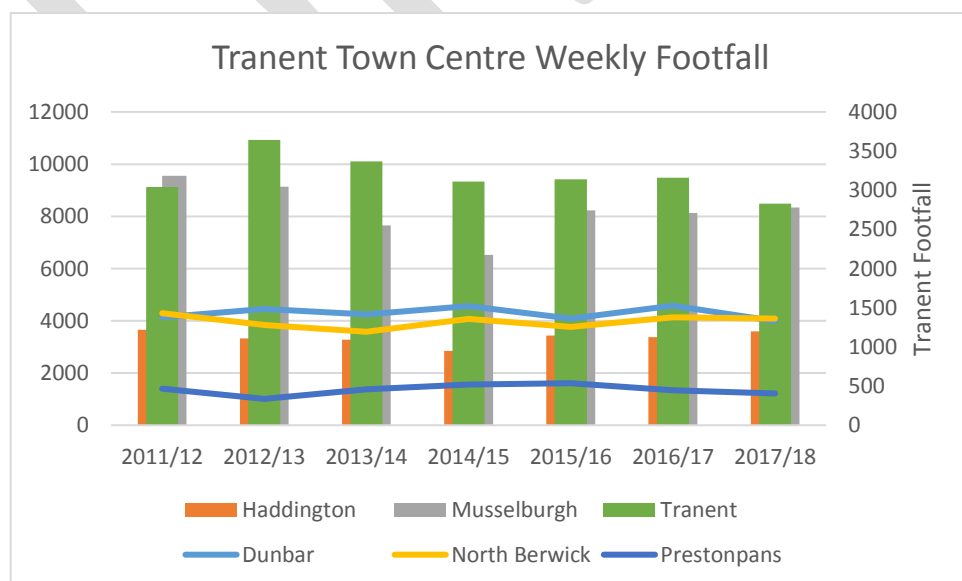
**Town Centre uses**

It is of interest to monitor the uses currently occupying the town centre units. The following charts demonstrate the spread of use classes in each centre, using data from the 2017 retail survey:



**Footfall**

Pedestrian counts are undertaken annually in each town centre to establish weekly footfall rates for East Lothian’s High Streets. The observations are November based and are not reflective of seasonal differences.



Tranent High Street footfall remained at a similar level from 2011/2012 until 2016/2017. There has been a 10% drop in the footfall in the latest figures from 2017/18.

Weekly footfall rates per head of ward population in 2015/16 weekly town footfall in Tranent High St. was 0.15 visits per person, compared to an East Lothian average of 0.24 visits per person.

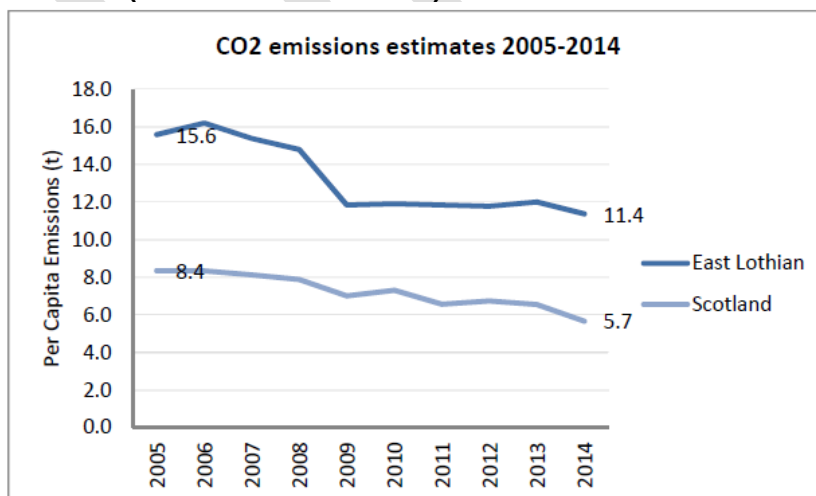
### **AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION**

In association with other plans the LDP will help to maintain or enhance air quality objectives. It will do this because it has taken these factors into account when selecting locations for development and by ensuring its development strategy is complemented by air quality mitigation measures. It will seek to integrate land use and transport and minimise the need to travel as well as the distance travelled. It will do this by promoting town centres as accessible locations for a mix of land uses and services and providing community services locally.

Currently air quality in East Lothian is very good. The Council has been annually reviewing and assessing local air quality since 2003. The majority of pollutants have been screened out in assessments and exceedences of air quality objectives for these pollutants across East Lothian are not considered likely

Air quality continues to be monitored at a number of other locations, including Tranent High Street and currently National Air Quality Standards are being met. Additionally Monitoring of NO<sub>2</sub> in Tranent will continue as many of the vehicle trips that generate issues at Tranent High Street (A199) originate from development along the B6414 (e.g. Elphinstone) the B6371 (e.g. Ormiston) and the B6355 (e.g. Pencaitland) road corridors. Trips also originate from further east along the A199 (e.g. Macmerry) although the Gladsmuir A1(T) Interchange provides an alternative route to access the trunk road for trips that originate further east. The cumulative impact of new development in these areas will introduce a significant amount of additional vehicle trips to Tranent High Street and to the Bankton and Dolphinstone A1(T) Interchanges. Current monitoring does not indicate any exceedence of air quality objectives at this time.

### **CO<sub>2</sub> Emission estimates per capita (tonnes per capita) in East Lothian and Scotland (UK Government 2016)**

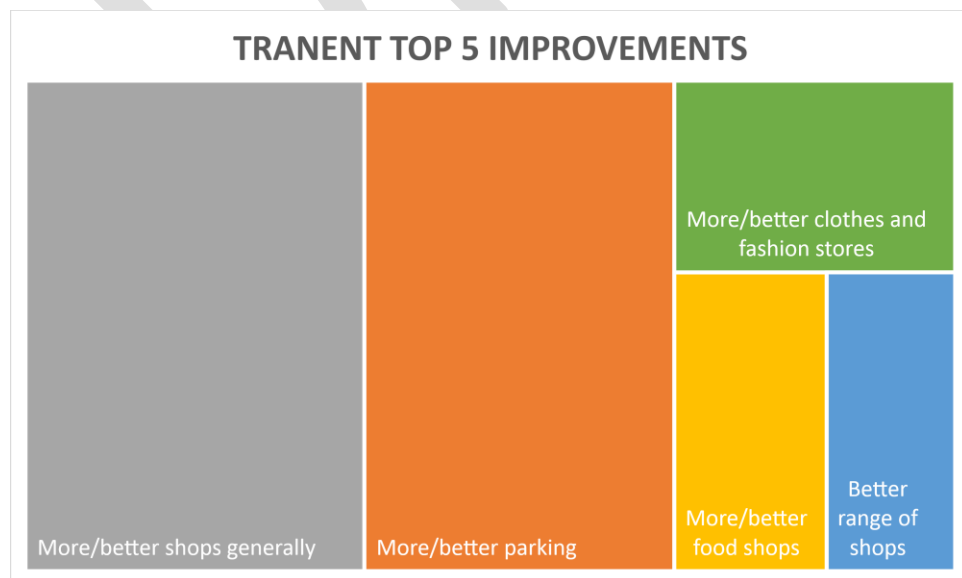
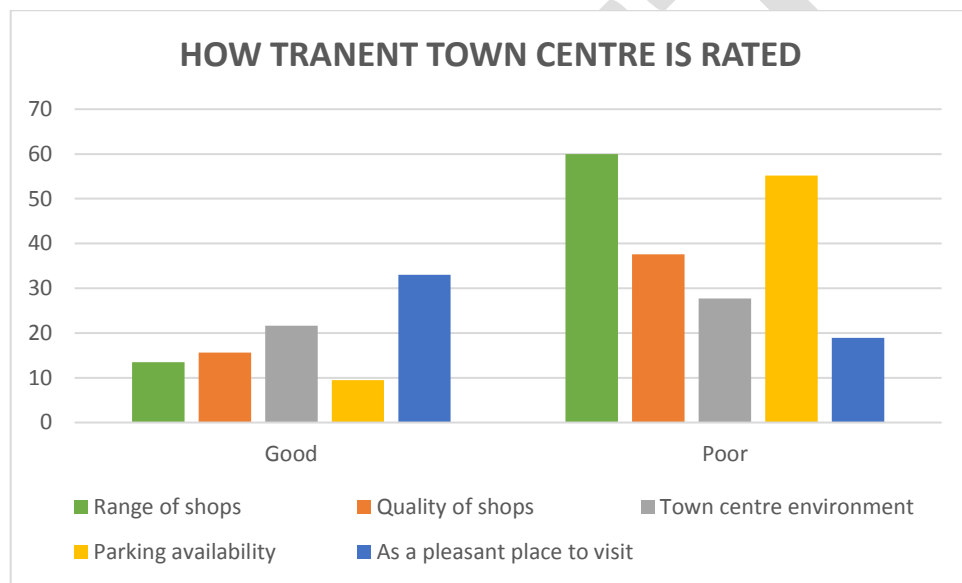


The East Lothian Residents Survey (2017) reported that 6% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, compared to 10% across East Lothian.

**TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

The following are the results from the 2015 RCS telephone survey:

56% of people who live in Tranent visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. 18% visit daily. 47% people walk to the centre, 36% travel by car and 14% travel by bus. The range of shops and parking availability are perceived to be poor by the survey respondents. A large proportion of respondents also think the quality of shops is poor. Unsurprisingly the top 5 improvements which would make people visit more are based on shop quality and quantity and more (or better) parking.



63% of people who live in Tranent, **never** visit Tranent Town Centre in the evenings (after 6pm). The top 5 things that would make people visit the Town Centre in the evening are:

1. More/better restaurants and cafes
2. More/better pubs and wine bars
3. More things to do generally
4. More family orientated facilities
5. More evening events

### **Discussion**

The analysis from the RCS demonstrates an apparent east/west split in East Lothian. Whilst a high proportion of convenience shopping from Musselburgh residents is undertaken in Musselburgh, there is also leakage to Edinburgh. Convenience shopping in Prestonpans and Tranent is lower in these centres. Some focusing their shopping in Musselburgh, others in Haddington or Edinburgh. In Tranent there is demand for a better range and better quality of shops. Over 60% of residents do not visit Tranent town centre in the evening. This may be because of the limited offer, or could be influenced by the proximity to the wider Edinburgh area.

Across East Lothian, a large proportion of comparison expenditure is spent in Edinburgh, this trend is unlikely to change.

Whilst all town centres support approximately 50% shops (Class 1 retail). Tranent has the lowest at 47%. The previous Local Plan supports retailing and restricts change of use in town centres, but the newly adopted Local Plan (2018) introduces greater flexibility (Policy TC2) allowing for change of use between retailing, restaurants, businesses and offices and leisure and entertainment. This may see a wider mix of uses over the coming years and is something to consider in future monitoring. Greater flexibility may assist in increasing the night time offer.

Currently restaurants/cafes represent only 3% of the total units in Tranent (which is 3 units). Whilst restaurants/cafés is not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer some insight. It is therefore not surprising to see that Tranent where 63% of residents do not visit the town centre after 6pm have few restaurants to offer. Another side of the evening economy is represented by public houses/wine bars. These are difficult to identify when analysing use classes as, along with other uses, are defined as sui generis. However, sui generis includes hot-food take-aways, the majority of which provide an evening service. Interestingly the towns with the largest proportion of sui generis uses, as a total of all town centre uses, are Tranent and Prestonpans. These centres have low evening use after 6pm. It may be that people do not perceive a 'quick stop' at a take-away as a visit to the town centre.

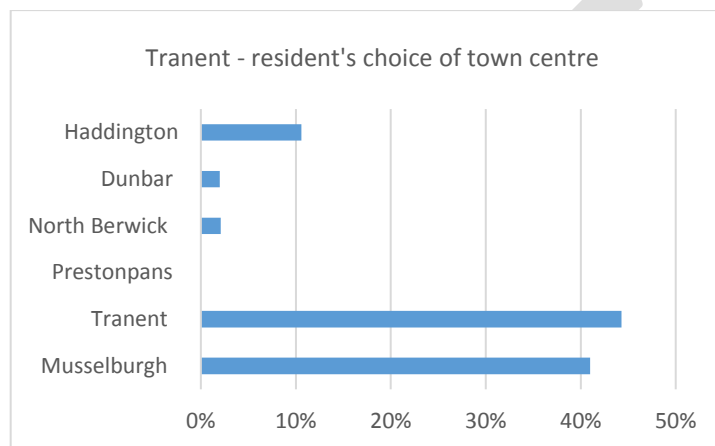
The town of Tranent provides a very poor evening offer in terms of restaurants, although there are a large number of public houses and take-aways. For residents the top priorities for improving the evening economy are *more/better restaurants and cafes and more/better pubs and wine bars*.

### Citizen's panel – Survey 2018

East Lothian Citizens' Panel survey from Spring 2018 provides the most up-to-date information available on town centre usage and perceptions. A total of 682 responses were received – 193 postal and 489 online. The emerging patterns are shown in the following analysis.

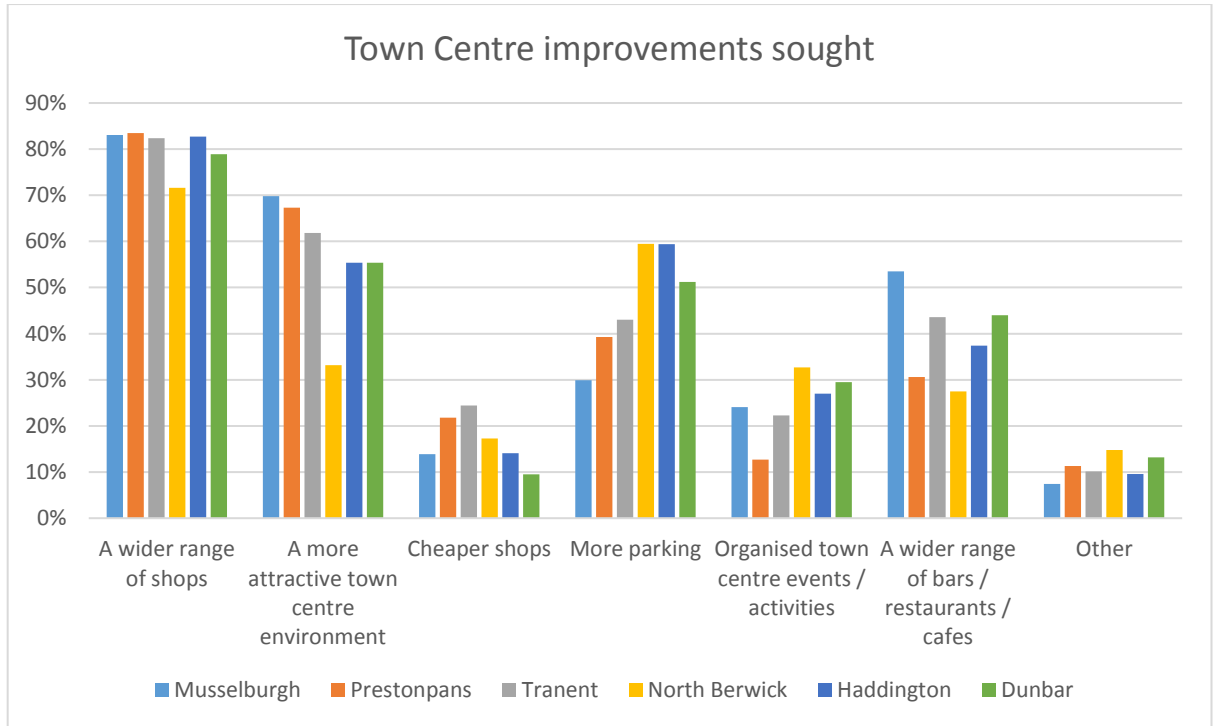
Question 5 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel questionnaire asked 'which of the following town centres do you visit most often for shopping, leisure and to access services'? Possible answers were Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, North Berwick, Dunbar and Haddington. It should be noted that there is no option to provide an alternative town centre, so the results show 100% results across the 6 centres. It is of most use to monitor which town centre local residents use.

*Which town centre do people visit most often for shopping, leisure and services?*



Less than 50% of Tranent residents visit Tranent most often for shopping, leisure or services. The remainder of residents choosing to visit Musselburgh, Haddington and a small proportion, Dunbar and North Berwick. This is interesting as the RCS undertaken in 2015 found similarly that only 56% of people who live in Tranent visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. The RCS findings were three years ago prior to the full trading of Asda and Aldi in Tranent and ahead of the opening of Giancarlo's Italian restaurant. There appears to be little difference over the last 3 years. Whilst the Citizen's Panel survey does not measure convenience expenditure, the fact that less than 50% of residents choose to visit Tranent town centre highlights the continuation of a previous trend even after new retail floorspace is in place.

Question 8 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asks 'which 3 factors would be most likely to encourage you to use your local town centre more?' The results are highlighted below:

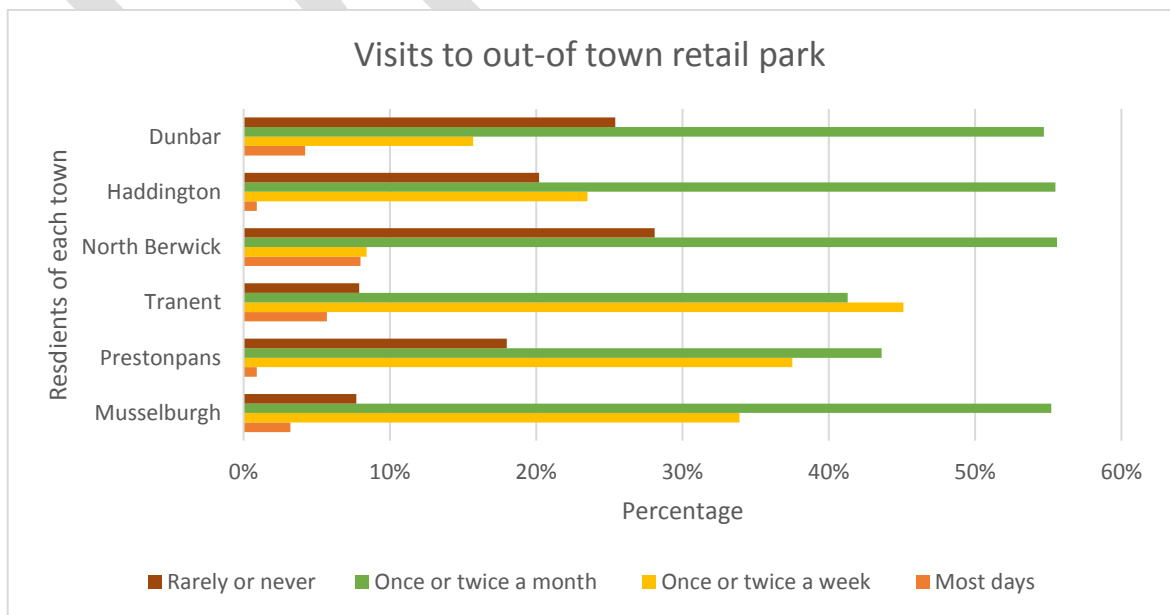


The results are similar for each town centre with the top three issues across the board showing:

1. A wider range of shops
2. A more attractive town centre environment
3. More parking

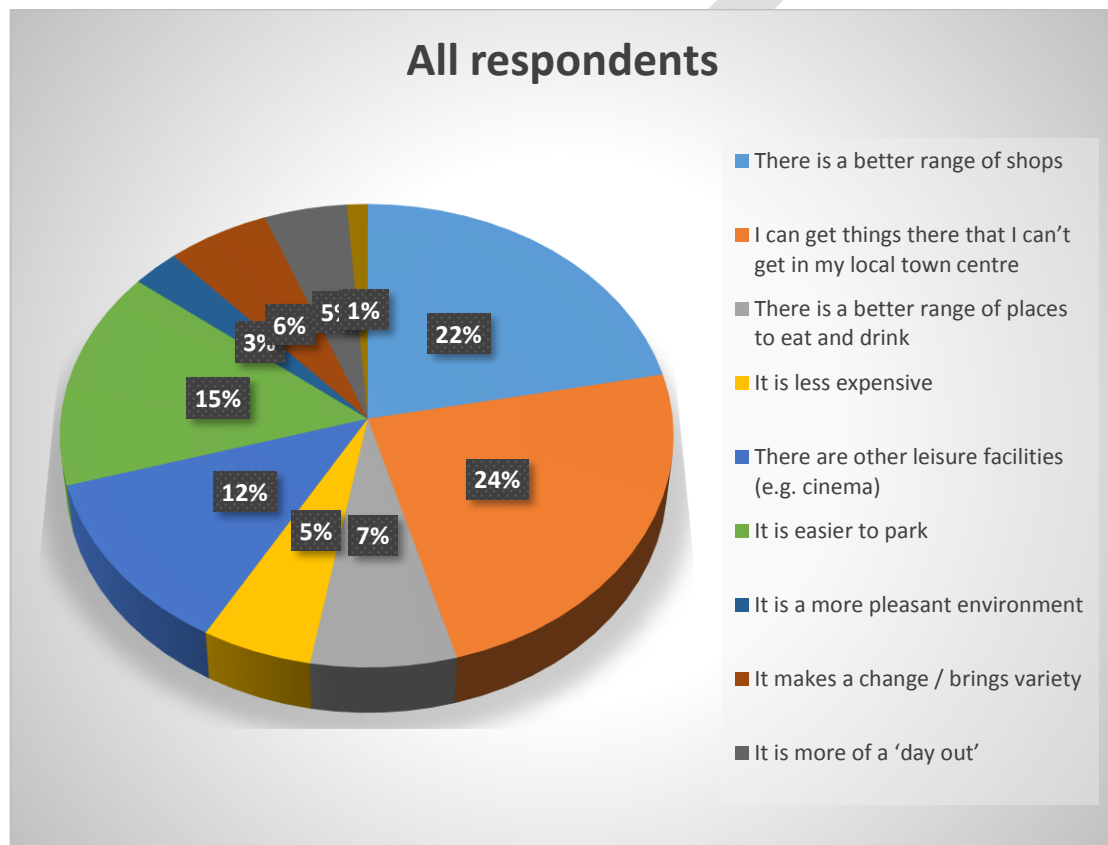
The town centre environment was voted as 'good' for all town centres, except Tranent and indeed the residents would like to see a more attractive town centre environment.

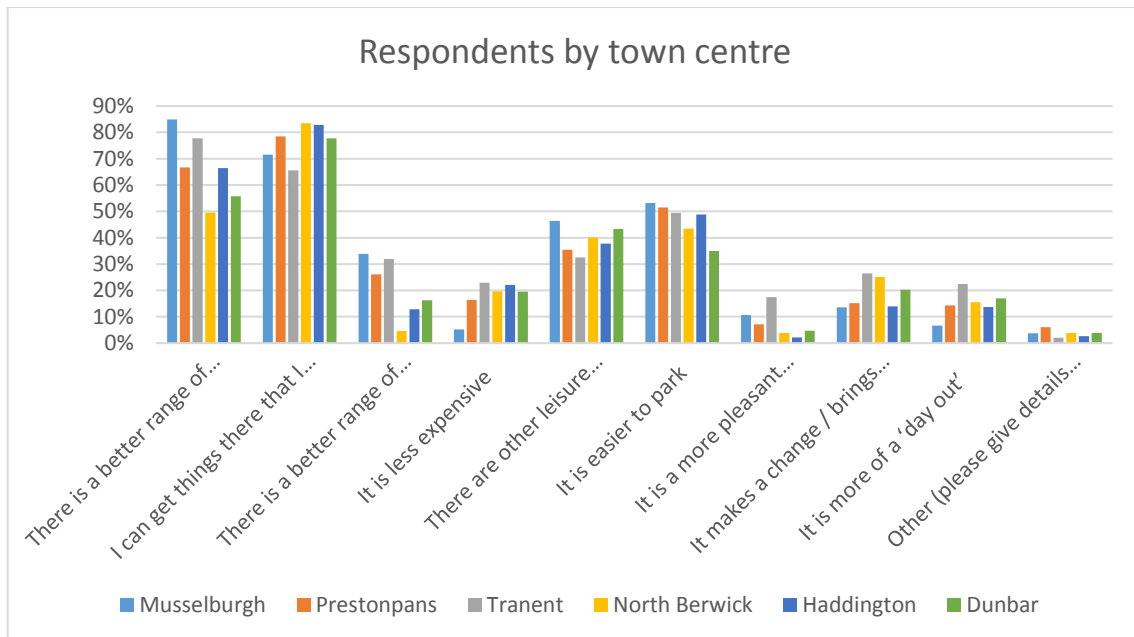
Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asks 'how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?'



As would maybe be expected a large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a week and once or twice a month. The highest proportion of residents visiting an out-of-town retail park on a weekly basis are from Tranent. Proximity to the east of Edinburgh, good bus and road links will encourage this, but the town centre offer will also reflect these trends. Over 50% of recent respondents from Tranent choose not to shop in Tranent town centre. More/better shops and more/better parking are the main improvements sought.

Question 10 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asked ‘If you go to an out-of town retail park for some shopping or leisure activities, rather than to your local town centre, what would be your reasons for doing so?’





As expected people refer to a better range of shops and more places to eat and drink as well as there being other leisure facilities to access. Whilst it is possible to encourage an increased range of shops, restaurants and leisure facilities in the East Lothian town centres, proximity to the Edinburgh offer and, in particular, Fort Kinnaird will always play a part. It is extremely accessible, especially for the west of the district. The only other consideration to be highlighted is the availability of parking. 15% of respondents claim it is easier to park at out-of-town centres than town centres. Whilst this is not an overwhelmingly large response, previous analysis indicates town centre parking is considered an issue.

## Parking

### Problems

- There is a lack of parking provision on High Street and a low turnover of spaces as existing parking restrictions suffer from a lack of enforcement
- Problems relate to availability of servicing and loading facilities on the High Street causing difficulties for retailers. Loading bays are frequently abused. Lack of kerbside provision in general leads to conflicts between parking and loading demand, particularly on High Street
- Layout of off-street car parks could be improved
- On-street parking problems in the vicinity of the football pitches (Polson Park) and bowling green (Polson Park and Blawearie).
- Church Street suffers from parking on the footway and does not have waiting restrictions in place
- Tranent subject to town centre regeneration proposals including better functioning of parking spaces
- Short-term on-street problems at peak school travel periods around schools
- Lack of Blue Badge parking on High Street
- Informal Park & Ride is also taking place in the vicinity of Loch Road

### Potential Parking Solutions



- Control through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Ongoing review of waiting and loading provision
- Consider the introduction of on-off street parking charges
- Implementation of parking management hierarchy defining designated short-stay, medium- stay and long-stay parking locations
- Implementation of a coherent and hierarchical approach to parking supply
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Implementation of appropriate measures associated with the Footway Parking and Double Parking (Scotland) Bill
- Application of national and regional parking standards where appropriate and local parking standards where developments do not meet the requirements for these standards
- Ongoing review of Blue Badge parking
- Potential new Park & Ride site on Edinburgh Road will formalise this provision

### Tranent Charrette

In 2015 a design charrette was held in Tranent to examine in detail the issues of the town centre. The community, professional advisors and consultants worked together to identify the changes they wished to see happen in the town centre. The results provide an informed public view expressed at a point in time.

The Tranent charrette outputs formulated a strategic set of principles for the town centre. The principles that were established for the regeneration of Tranent Town Centre were:

<i>Principles</i>	<i>Mechanisms to draw Principles together</i>
<i>Improving the function of traffic in High Street</i>	A New civic square
<i>Better pedestrian spaces, paths and crossings</i>	Improving the High Street
<i>A new square and a sense of a 'heart'</i>	Small Spaces around High Street
<i>A community hall and performance venue</i>	Loch Road and the Lanes
<i>Better 'back side' links and spaces behind the High Street</i>	A new park and car park
<i>Make much more of the Tranent heritage and identity</i>	Improving the historic environment
<i>Maintain and increase the variety of shops and cafes</i>	
<i>Parking that facilitates a vibrant town centre</i>	

Ideas for change included:

A cinema with comfy chairs	3G football pitch, well used but other activities could also be offered
Need for more activities for both youth and elderly	
Space for clubs to have own lock-up and storage facility	Rugby club, popular and with strong school connections, but changing rooms need attention, as do rugby posts. Could it be the location of a skatepark?
Indoor spaces for kids to hangout	
A skate park	

<p>Clothes shops in the town centre</p> <p>Make High Street a one way system with traffic returning via Loch Road and through Civic Square</p> <p>High Street was considered to be dangerous</p> <p>A safe crossing point near the mini roundabout at Church Street/High Street is needed</p> <p>Clothing and shoe shop in Tranent to prevent people from having to travel to make purchases, particularly important to elderly residents</p> <p>Polson Park needs regenerated.</p>	<p>Fraser Centre, considered a good venue, but could be bigger and have a more obvious street front.</p> <p>Loch Centre, another popular venue that was seen as a fun and safe place.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about feeling unsafe out and about in Tranent after dark due to older youth and outdoor drinking</p>
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## Outputs and Implications

Peter Brett Associates considered the implications for Tranent from transport and economic perspectives. In terms of traffic, there are longer-term aspirations for traffic movement around Tranent, particularly beyond the town centre and related to future development. Roads that functionally bypass the town centre will have a positive effect in reducing non-user traffic. There are several approaches that are discussed that have implications.

<b>Approach 1</b>	<b>Approach 2</b>
New Connections Around the Town: longer term developments could provide alternative routes to travelling directly through the town centre, reducing the volume and type of traffic (HGVs etc.)	Active Travel Initiatives: improved local walking and cycling routes and an active travel campaign to encourage a modal shift from car to walking and cycling for local journeys to town centre facilities. This would relieve pressure on the road network and town centre parking.
<b>Approach 3</b>	<b>Approach 4</b>
High Street Traffic Calming: Traffic engineering measures could be introduced to slow traffic on the High Street and encourage heavier vehicles to take an alternative route along the A1, bypassing the town altogether. This could involve some reallocation of road space away from vehicular traffic to pedestrians and active travel modes. However this could lead to significant congestion in the absence of alternative through routes from the south and east in particular.	Town Centre One-way System: A one-way system with traffic running from Church Street to Ormiston Road on High Street and returning via Loch Road (this would remain 2-way to the new link road) and through Civic Square would allow for the reallocation of road space for pedestrians on High Street.

## Delivery and Funding

- Establish the Tranent Delivery Team within the Fa'side Partnership structure, bringing in other delivery agencies and specialists as necessary to project manage the process
- Undertake further detailed design, costing and policy support work to progress the delivery process
- Deliver on committed projects as funding and/or staffing becomes available, including trial or temporary projects.

## Economic Implications

The structure of Tranent’s economy has changed radically in recent decades, influenced by a combination of factors. These have included:

What has happened?	Response
The closure in traditional industries	Most food and convenience retailing now takes place outside the High Street (in supermarkets nearby or in centres benefitting from A1 proximity); shopping facilities for fashion, electricals, hardware, DIY, etc tend to be restricted to niche or specialist retailers
Edinburgh’s continued growth as a financial and service centre	
Related population growth extending across the Lothians and beyond	
Realignment and improvement of key road and rail Infrastructure	The evening economy is limited to a small number of pubs, few restaurants and some fast food outlets, the latter becoming increasingly dominant
The development of the digital economy	
	While there are few vacancies, the increasing concentration of fast food and other non-retail outlets further restricts the appeal of the centre, particularly to newer suburban residents

### Future Role of Tranent

In implementing plans for residential and employment growth in the wider area, development will need to be accompanied by increased levels of retail and leisure provision. Employment growth will generate demand and opportunity for business support services. Ideally, these should all be captured locally, both to enhance the quality of life and the local economy, avoiding or minimizing a commuter dormitory effect.

The challenge is therefore to promote a sustainable future for the centre of Tranent, which encourages its use by both the existing and future populations and, critically, encourages the retention of local expenditure and business activity. This should anticipate the centre’s relationship with proposed facilities at Blindwells. Without proactive effort and investment to improve the centre as a place to spend time and money, changing perceptions and attracting increased footfall and spend, the significance of the centre as a place will continue to diminish, damaging the brand of Tranent, and the quality of life of its residents.

Supporting project submissions will require clarity over the role of Tranent town centre and its catchment for different uses.

Having an attractive environment that draws people in and feels safe and relaxing would be key to this. Additionally it was felt that Tranent lacked a proper community centre. Addressing this absence could assist the aim of retaining people in Tranent town centre for instance with a multi-use facility, potentially in the Old Infant School, with uses that cross-subsidised creating a viable hub for the community.

**Prestonpans  
Town  
Centre  
Strategy**

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2018

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**Supplementary  
Guidance to the East  
Lothian Local  
Development Plan 2018**

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# PRESTONPANS TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

## 1.0 Purpose of the Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy

- 1.1 The Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy forms a part of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2018 (LDP). It is supplementary guidance focusing on the changes that the Local Development Plan is planning to the town of Prestonpans and the implications of that change for the town centre. The LDP introduces new planning policies adopting the town centre first principle and has detailed planning policies for town centres to guide development.
- 1.2 The strategy looks in more detail than the LDP into the town centre. A health check of the town centre is provided, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered and its performance as a place with coordinated actions for improvement and regeneration.
- 1.3 In addition to the LDP and its supporting documents, the town centre strategy takes account of the Council's emerging Local Transport Strategy and Local Housing Strategy as well as the Preston Seton Gosford Area Partnership Area Plan. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centre.

## 2.0 Policy Context

### Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres

- 2.1 The newly adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) promotes the Town Centre First Principle which requires that uses that would attract significant footfall must consider locating to a town or local centre first and then, sequentially, to an edge of centre location, other commercial centre or out of centre location. This is designed to support town centres in the long term and help to ensure that they are vibrant and sustainable.
- 2.1 To further support town centres and to minimise the length of time commercial premises lie vacant the principle of a change of use between retail, business, office, restaurant leisure and entertainment is supported. As town centres evolve there could be pressure to change uses to residential; this may be acceptable in non ground floor or backland locations but will only be acceptable in a ground floor location where there is evidence that it is no longer viable as a town or local centre use.
- 2.3 The policy on hot food outlets supports hot food outlets in town and local centres provided that there will be no significant impact on local amenity, including cumulatively with other existing take-aways in the area and are consistent with other LDP policies including in relation to parking and road safety.
- 2.4 The town centre strategy is proposed to be approved as supplementary guidance to the LDP. It therefore remains approved until the East Lothian Local Development

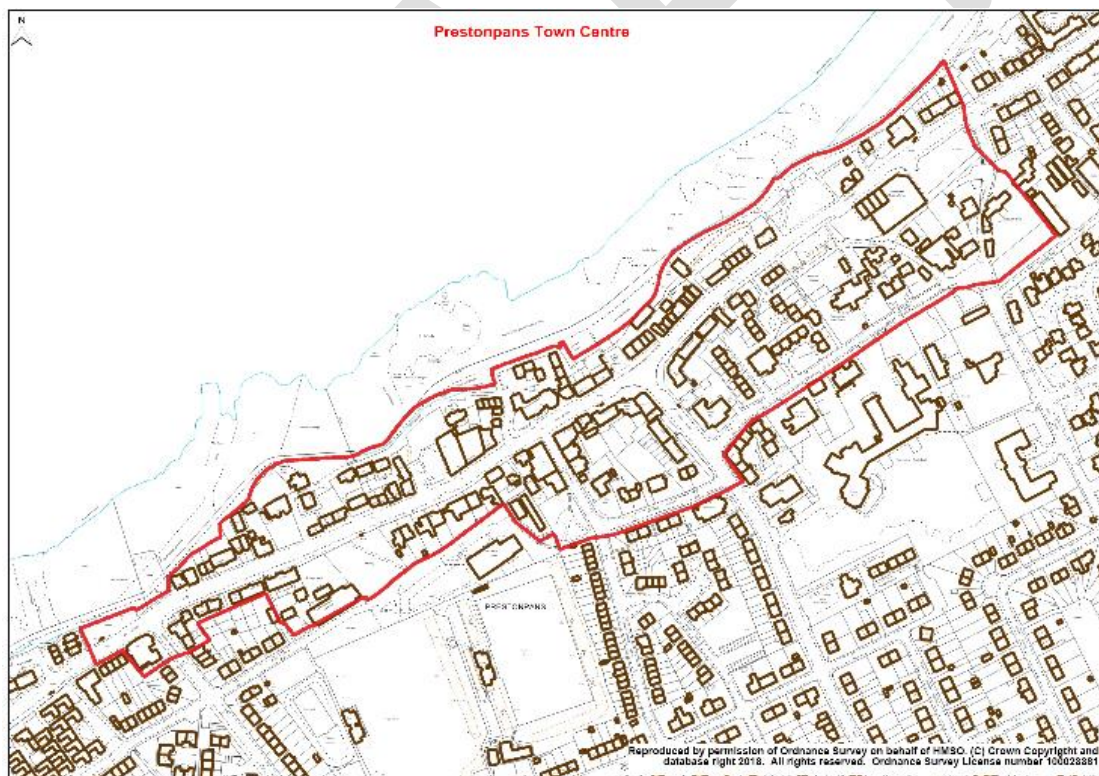
Plan 2018 is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective.

### 3.0 Form and Content of the Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy

3.1 The Prestonpans town centre strategy adopts a strategic approach to guide the improvement of Prestonpans town centre. Following analysis from a health check of the town centre a series of Actions is made to address the issues arising in the town centre. Each action is given an indicative short, medium or long timescale with identified lead and joint working parties for its implementation. The health check can be regularly updated and actions can be monitored and if required revised in future.

### 4.0 Background

4.1 The LDP defines the Prestonpans town centre, one of six defined town centres in East Lothian. This is the spatial area where the LDP policies outlined in Section 2 above apply and also the spatial area where the town centre strategy actions that follow apply.



4.2 Whilst Prestonpans has grown rapidly over previous years, the expected future yield is much lower than other areas of East Lothian, with only 679 houses planned by 2025.

4.3 Prestonpans town centre is linear with High Street on the busy A198 coast road and only a small number of businesses off High Street on Ayres Wynd. Geographically the town centre is to the north of most of the town's housing areas and well away from the large areas of new housing on Edinburgh Road. Local centres in the town

tend to serve the residential areas with the Coop having no fewer than four stores in the town. The High Street no longer contains many of the facilities that attract people to a town centre such as a bank and the critical mass of shops is lacking. The main supermarkets are the Coop and Lidl stores the former in the town centre and the latter within walking distance at the east entrance to the town.

## **5.0 Prestonpans Town Centre analysis**

- 5.1 Prestonpans town centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are included in a table contained in Appendix 1. This has helped to inform the proposed actions for the town centre strategy.
- 5.2 The SWOT analysis has been prepared following the collection of data in an up-to-date Health Check for Tranent. The following points have been identified in the Health Check and subsequent SWOT:
- 5.3 Prestonpans is within the ward of Preston Seton Gosford, the majority of residents live in Prestonpans. The Town Centre is bounded by the firth of forth to the north and is some distance from some of the newer residential developments in the south, this may be a factor in town centre usage. Furthermore, the high school, primary schools, community centre, health centre and leisure centre are located some distance from the town centre with other small local centres serving those local needs.
- 5.4 A very high proportion of food shopping is undertaken outside of Prestonpans, primarily in Musselburgh and Edinburgh, with some spending taking place in Haddington also. Future development at Blindwells may offer further retail choice. Prestonpans town centre is relatively small, but has the highest percentage of vacant units in East Lothian. Whilst 50% of commercial units are shops, there is also a high percentage of Sui Generis uses (which include public houses and bookmakers). Footfall has been falling since 2015/16 and has dropped to its lowest since 2012/13. The Town Centre has a very poor evening offer (1 unit in restaurant use) and 61% of residents do not visit the Town Centre after 6pm. For residents the top priority for improving the evening economy is more/better restaurants and cafes. There is a larger Co-op and Lidl on the edge of centre, but these are not of equal scale as the supermarkets found in Musselburgh and Haddington.
- 5.5 Public transport links are good with buses serving both the High Street and developments to the south of the centre. This provides opportunity for residents to shop elsewhere and, in particular, Musselburgh absorbs some 20% of convenience expenditure from Prestonpans. Musselburgh also provides a larger evening offer and public transport links (both bus and train) go beyond into Edinburgh.

## **6.0 Regeneration Strategy for Prestonpans town centre**

- 6.1 New residents of housing areas have spending power as new housing is developed. The challenge for the town centre is to attract them to use it, but the evidence from the health check is that this is not happening. Convenience shopping in Prestonpans is one of the lowest in East Lothian with some residents focusing their shopping in Musselburgh, others in Haddington or Edinburgh. Over 60% of residents do not visit Prestonpans town centre in the evening. The town centre will only attract people if

it is a safe, attractive place to visit with good access and facilities including available parking. To do this Prestonpans town centre requires further investment in the following:

Redevelopment of vacant sites and buildings – buildings such as Harlaw Hill House and grounds need to be brought back into positive use as they can harm the overall image of the town centre and deter other investment.

Improvements to the repair and external appearance of buildings within the town centre - Repair and improvement of buildings can be very effective in enhancing the overall appearance of the town centre. For example, the appearance of some businesses on High Street could benefit from improved advertisements more in keeping with the traditional character of the street.

Make the most of its heritage – Prestonpans is rich in heritage and needs to make the most of it to help to improve it as a place for people to live and to visit.

Open Spaces – improvements to public spaces within the town centre where people can sit and relax, or gather or hold a market. This includes improvements to the shoreline which is increasingly well used as a result of the John Muir Way long distance path.

## **7.0 Main Issues for Prestonpans Town Centre**

- 7.1 This section outlines the main issues and actions required within Prestonpans town centre. It provides an indication of timescale and details of who will lead action to implement each project.

### **Diversity of Land Use**

- 7.2 Prestonpans is classified as an interdependent to dependent town<sup>1</sup> which has a low number of assets in relation to its population, reliant on neighbouring towns for some assets and jobs. It has a low diversity of retail offering and a high number of people per shop.
- 7.3 In 2016, there were 8,042 dwellings in the Prestonpans ward, 17.4% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian. This is proposed to increase to 679 potential new homes in Preston Seton Gosford ward by 2025.
- 7.4 Prestonpans town centre commercial premises vacancy rates are consistently higher than the East Lothian or Scottish average at around 9.6%. There are few vacant properties above commercial premises. A very high proportion of retail expenditure continues to be made outwith the town (primarily in Musselburgh or Edinburgh)
- 7.5 Footfall within Prestonpans town centre declined in line with a falling trend elsewhere as fewer people visit the High Street for retail purposes. Lowest footfall in East Lothian. Some poor quality shopfronts and advertisements detract from the appearance of the street.
- 7.6 In 2017 just over half (51%) of commercial premises in Prestonpans town centre were shops, 9% services and 2% café/restaurant (1 Unit) use with 26% sui generis

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland's Towns Partnership, 2017



(including hot food take-aways). Relatively few commercial premises compared with towns of similar size.

## 8.0 Actions for Prestonpans Town Centre

### 8.1 Movement and Access

8.2 Prestonpans town centre is linear and spread out along the A198. Whilst it contains around 40 shops and businesses there are stretches of houses in between groups of shops rather than a concentrated group of business premises. Actions to improve movement and access include:

- Reorganisation of town centre car parking

Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 1: Reorganisation of town centre car parking				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Introduction of a controlled parking zone	ELC Road Services	1. Approval of Parking Strategy as part of Local Transport Strategy 2. Implementation of stay lengths		If the ELC Parking Strategy is approved this work will commence.

8.3 Surveys indicate that Prestonpans town centre is used 43% of its residents weekly or more frequently with 13% visiting daily. While the majority walk, 56% travel by car and 6% use a bus. The town centre must continue to be accessible to residents from its housing areas and in line with the emerging Local Transport Strategy, encouragement to do so by means of active travel should be made.

8.4 There is no town centre car park as such but on street parking is available and car parks at the Scotmid Coop to the west. If the Parking Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Strategy is approved, the town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre car parking. This may require additional signage and every effort should be made to keep permanent signs to a minimum to minimise sign clutter. Parking in Prestonpans is currently free to use along the length of High Street, Ayres Wynd, New Street and Kirk Street and it is here that the Parking Strategy proposes to have a controlled parking zone. By limiting length of stay this will ensure that parking is available when it is required to access the town centre.

### Built Environment and Public Spaces

8.5 Prestonpans town centre broadly follows the shoreline and part of its character is the occasional glimpses of the sea to the north. Several public spaces where sea views are available are landscaped and the flat roofed row of shops at 138-146 High

Street allows sea views over it from Ayres Wynd. LDP policy CH9: High Street/Inch View, Prestonpans requires that development proposals on the north side of High Street/Inch View do not result in the loss of important seaward views.

8.6 Only a small part of High Street lies within the Harlaw Hill designated Conservation Area as this conservation area is centred on Kirk Street and Harlaw Hill parallel with High Street to the south. It extends northwards from the Kirk to include the Coronation Garden and on the north side of the street, the Burns Memorial open space. That part of the conservation area north of Kirk Street lies within the town centre. Improvement and enhancement of the conservation area is required particularly towards Harlaw Hill. Work to upgrade and improve Mill Wynd and Kirk Wynd was undertaken in 2010. Additional actions include:

- Improve Small Public Spaces
- Shopfront and Advertisements
- Public Wi-Fi

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 2 Improve Small Public Spaces</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of the small public spaces within the town centre	Area Partnership /ELC	1. Identify where improvements are required 2. Prepare ideas for environmental works 3. Identify funding		Ongoing

8.7 The War Memorial has been repaired and improved and the small public square in which it is located now requires improvement and enhancement. Other spaces within the town centre have been identified by the community that could be improved by greening and planting.

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 3 Shopfront and Advertisements</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements in High Street	ELC Planning Service and Economic Development and Strategic Investment / Commercial premises owners, occupiers and lessees	Improvements will be encouraged at the time of advertisement consent applications or planning		Ongoing

		applications to alter shopfronts		
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8.8 The built environment of High Street could be improved by works to some shopfronts and advertisements to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of the town centre. Advertisement consent is granted for a five year period therefore should, in time improve as further applications for advertisement consent are made. Shopfront alterations and advertisements must comply with the Council’s supplementary planning guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 4: Public Wi-Fi</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Provision of public wi-fi in Musselburgh town centre	ELC / Community	Establish the feasibility of and funding for free public wi-fi provision to support the town centre		Detailed survey work has been undertaken

8.9 The availability of public wi-fi would be an asset to Musselburgh town centre. It offers potential to boost tourism with information potentially available via the internet and potential for direct marketing by businesses within the town centre. It would also help generally towards increased digital inclusion.

#### **Regeneration of Buildings at Risk**

8.10 Privately owned buildings, often those in multiple ownership, in town centres can be vulnerable to disrepair and this is common across Scotland. Where any building is in disrepair its owners are responsible for its condition. In a town centre the appearance of a building in disrepair can affect the overall attractiveness of the town centre therefore it is important that buildings are kept in good repair. Actions to help the regeneration of buildings and attract investment include:

- Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and infill sites for housing and commercial use in line with LDP
- Improve access to the Town Centre
- New Uses for Old Buildings – Harlaw Hill House

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 5 Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and infill sites for housing and commercial use in line with LDP</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1 Encourage development of infill and vacant sites within the town centre to uses that support the town centre	Private land owners / ELC Development / ELC Estates	This work is only required as development proposals are made.		Ongoing

- 8.11 Within Prestonpans town centre there are few empty properties above shops with most space occupied by residential accommodation. Where there is vacant accommodation it is best for the town centre to have it occupied by people to encourage additional spend within the town centre. Should sites become available for development within the main part of the town centre then, in line with LDP policy, these should have commercial use on the ground floor. If there are underused sites then these may be able to be redeveloped for uses that support the town centre.

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 6 Improve access to the Town Centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Encourage pedestrian and cycle access to Prestonpans town centre	ELC Road Services / ELC Housing Services			

- 8.12 Prestonpans High Street lies in the centre of the town and is accessible by walking and cycling along several path routes but only by road from newer housing areas to the south of the town. In 2010 environmental improvements were made to two access paths to the town centre; Kirk Wynd and Mill Wynd with new street furniture, new steps and wall repairs. Similar improvements could be undertaken to other wynds and paths.
- 8.13 Some however would benefit from improvement to encourage their use. To encourage cycling more, safe cycle parking must also be provided as part of access improvements.

Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 7: New Uses for Old Buildings – Harlaw Hill House				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Conversion and restoration of Harlaw Hill House to support the town centre	ELC/private owners/National Trust for Scotland	1. Secure ownership of the building and grounds with restoring purchasers 2. identify new uses that can use the building 3. Prepare programme of restoration and identify an overall funding package	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: #FF9800; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: #F44336; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	The building remains privately owned at this stage

8.14 One of the most architecturally important buildings in Prestonpans is the 16th C Harlaw Hill House. However, the house is in a dangerous condition and the public are prevented from access. It lies within the designated town centre and is included within the Harlaw Hill Conservation Area. Although in an extremely dilapidated condition the house and its outbuildings could be restored if a suitable new use can be identified and confirmed and if ownership is transferred to parties interested in its restoration. A restored Harlaw Hill House, outbuildings and grounds would be a significant asset to the town centre, especially if a use within it allowed for some public access. It would also significantly enhance the conservation area.



Harlaw Hill House

### Celebrating the Heritage of the Area

8.15 Prestonpans is rich in heritage including seven category A listed buildings of national importance, 2 conservation areas, a national battle site, its salt panning history and one of the earliest industrial sites at Prestongrange Museum. But geographically this

history is spread throughout the town rather than being concentrated in the town centre as is often the case. The Heritage Lottery has funded a two year Heritage Connections project in the ward to draw all the different strands of the heritage (built, cultural, natural, intangible) together and explore common themes to improve local outcomes and create better places for people to live and visit. By strengthening the networks between heritage, civic and community organisations, and by involving citizens and local businesses, projects will enhance the role that heritage plays in the future of each place. Actions include:

- Making the Most of Prestonpans Heritage

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 8: Making the Most of Prestonpans Heritage</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Work with local groups and individuals to identify the significance of local heritage assets and develop plans for sustainable use.	Strategic Investment and Regeneration / Area Partnership / Community	1. Identify heritage assets and significance 2. Identify / link local community groups to assets / activities. 3. Develop capacity / ideas / activities into 'projects'. 4. Testing of projects and evaluation.	<div style="background-color: #76b82a; height: 50px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: #e67e22; height: 50px; width: 100%;"></div>	Launch of the project will take place early in 2019

- 8.16 The natural heritage is important too and an advantage Prestonpans town centre has, is its close proximity to the John Muir Way which is attracting an increased number of walkers following its connection from East Lothian to Helensburgh. Walkers should be encouraged to stop and visit the town centre by way of information boards on the historical areas of the town including the museum at Prestongrange as well as the facilities in the town centre, including its public toilets.
- 8.17 Prestonpans is now a part of a Heritage Connections Heritage Lottery Funded Programme that covers the heritage of Preston Seton and Gosford Area Partnership area.

## 9.0 The Way Forward

- 9.1 This strategy forms statutory supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan. The health checks can be updated regularly and the strategy should be monitored and revised in line with revisions to the LDP Action Programme.

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## STRENGTHS

- Recent and continuing population increase in the town
- Very good public transport links by bus and train
- Larger supermarkets (Co-op and Lidl) within walkable distance of town centre
- Proximity of the sea leads to attractive sea views, glimpses and landscaped areas overlooking the sea
- John Muir Way runs along shore by town centre
- Prestongrange Museum, Scotland's Murals Town, the Gothenburg and historic buildings add historical perspectives to the town
- Royal Musselburgh Golf Course and Meadowmill Sports Centre attract visitors to the town

## WEAKNESSES

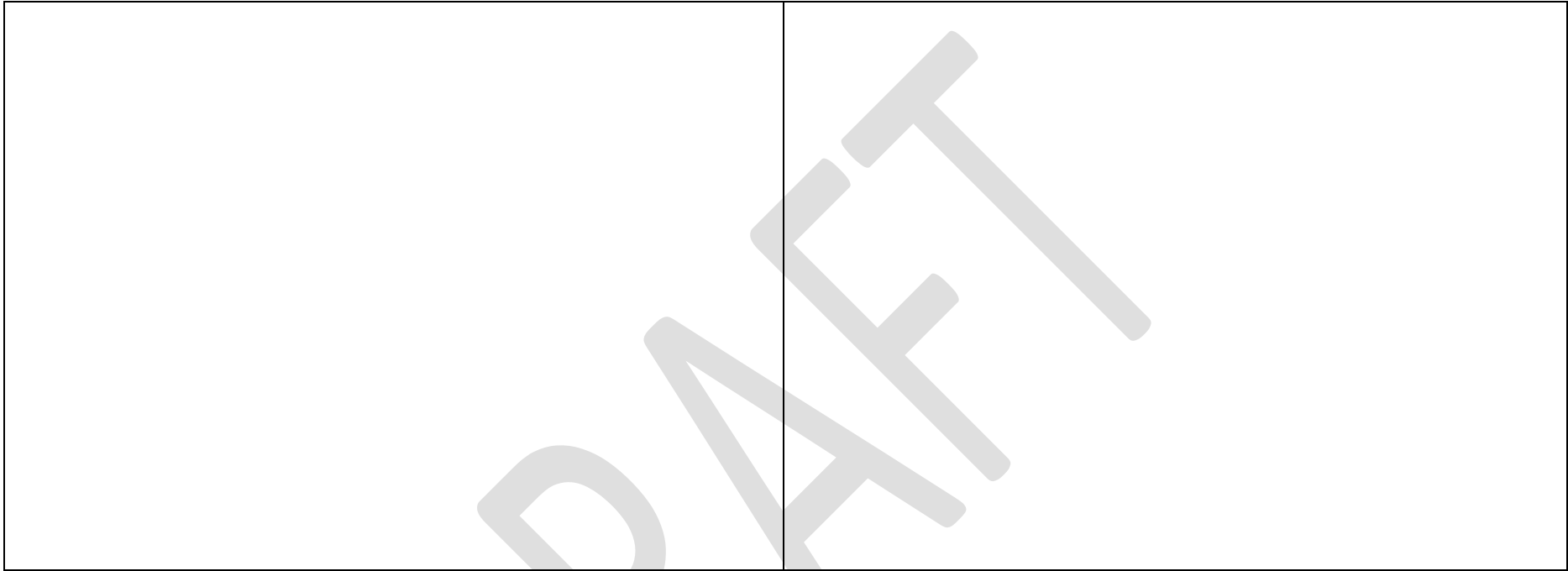
- A very high proportion of retail expenditure continues to be made outwith the town (primarily in Musselburgh or Edinburgh)
- Volume of through traffic within High Street detracts from the enjoyment of the street by pedestrians (perception of traffic congestion)
- Relatively few commercial premises compared with towns of similar size
- Highest rate of commercial vacancies compared to the other East Lothian town centres.
- Large proportion of the town centre is in Sui Generis use (pubs and take-aways)
- Only one unit is Class 3 use (restaurant/café)
- Lowest footfall in East Lothian
- Some poor quality shopfronts and advertisements detract from the appearance of the street
- Lack of turnover on High Street parking spaces
- Abuse of loading bays and bus stops for parking
- No branding or marketing of the town centre and no business association to represent businesses in a coordinated way
- Perception that there should be a wider range of shops
- No bank
- High School, primary schools, community centre, health centre, leisure centre located too far away from town centre to support it
- Other local centres within town servicing neighbourhood needs

## OPPORTUNITIES

- New residents of housing developments can be encouraged to use the town centre supporting businesses and potentially helping to create new ones. There will be 679 new units by 2025
- On and off street parking can be managed to enforce short, medium and long stay parking to ensure that town centre users can find parking easily
- Review the need for Controlled Parking Zones
- John Muir Way has an increasing number of users that could be attracted to use the town centre
- Prestongrange Museum masterplan to encourage additional visitors
- Museum, murals and the presence of many fine historic buildings offer scope for day visits to be marketed
- Installation of public wi-fi could allow specific marketing, attract people and allow businesses further advertising opportunity
- Better links between attractions e.g. Meadowmill and the town centre
- Capacity to recapture convenience expenditure leakage e.g. new supermarket – footfall has increased by 59% since 2012.
- Consider a hierarchy of town centres and a new role for Prestonpans.
- Encourage Class 3 uses in an attempt to increase the evening offer
- Parking charges could raise income that could benefit the town centre

## THREATS

- Lack of maintenance by building owners could harm the appearance of town centre buildings
- In longer term Blindwells new settlement may attract people away from Prestonpans town centre
- Parking charging could be introduced which may deter people from visiting the town centre
- Loss of critical mass to attract people as a town centre with removal of only bank and high vacancy rate could result in a spiral of decline
- Re-capturing retail expenditure may harm the neighbouring town of Musselburgh, where expenditure currently leaks.
- Changes of use from shops (Class) 1 may further increase Sui Generis (hot food take-away) offer instead of restaurants (Class 3)
- Online shopping



## **POPULATION**

The 2016 mid-year population estimates state that **18,191** people live in the Preston Seton Gosford ward – equal to 17.5% of the population of East Lothian.

- 9,973 people (54.8% of the population of the ward) live in Prestonpans
- 5,284 people (29% of the population of the ward) live in Port Seton/Cockenzie
- 2,385 people (13.1% of the population of the ward) live in Longniddry

### **Age Distribution (National Records of Scotland, 2016 mid-year estimates)**

	<b>PSG Ward</b>	<b>East Lothian</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
% of the population (0-15)	18	18.2	16.9
% of the population that are (16-64)	62.8	62.2	64.6
% of the population that are 65 or over	19.3	19.6	18.5

Overall the age distribution in the Preston Seton Gosford ward is similar to East Lothian as a whole. However when compared to Scotland there are proportionally more children and fewer people of working age.

## **HOUSING**

In 2017, the number of households in East Lothian was 45,301. This is a 1.2% increase from 44,749 households in 2016. In comparison, the number of households in Scotland overall increased by 0.7%.

Between 2016 and 2026, the number of households in East Lothian is projected to increase from 44,749 to 50,070. This is an 11.9% increase, which compares to a projected increase of 6.4% for Scotland as a whole.

In 2016, there were 8,042 dwellings in the PSG ward, 17.4% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian.

The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in Prestonpans will yield **69** units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for the ward will yield **610** units taking the total to **679** potential new homes in Prestonpans ward by 2025.

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3.

## **RETAIL PATTERNS**

Town centre catchments:



### **CONVENIENCE – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Table 5.3 of the Retail Capacity Study 2015 (RCS) shows convenience shopping patterns (with main food and top-up combined). This highlights the following from 2015:

Prestonpans is Zone 2. The 2015 study highlights that more than half the convenience shopping in Zone 2 is undertaken at stores in other areas, notably in Musselburgh (20%) and outside East Lothian (26%). On a high scenario there is potential to recapture half the leakage to stores outside East Lothian, however, assuming any greater clawback may put stores/centres in other East Lothian zones at risk as about half the leakage goes to other zones in East Lothian. Furthermore there is sufficient undertrading to accommodate the potential claw back. As a result, the scope is mainly for improvements to the quality of the existing offer.

### **COMPARISON – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The majority (70%) of expenditure takes place outside east Lothian, namely at Ford Kinnaird (Edinburgh) and Edinburgh Town Centre. The Retail Capacity Study (2015) concludes that there is substantial forecast comparison expenditure growth relating to the residents of East Lothian, so capacity is not a barrier to new comparison retail development in the Council area. However, forecast for expenditure indicate that only a small proportion of the leakage could be retained in East Lothian. The reason is that East Lothian does not have any major shopping centres. It is more probable that leakage of comparison expenditure to major

destinations outside East Lothian will increase. Trends in internet shopping are also having a major effect.

The main issue will be to support the existing comparison retail floorspace in the town centres in East Lothian, through encouraging improvements to the quality and range of comparison shopping, in conjunction with other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town centres as destinations.

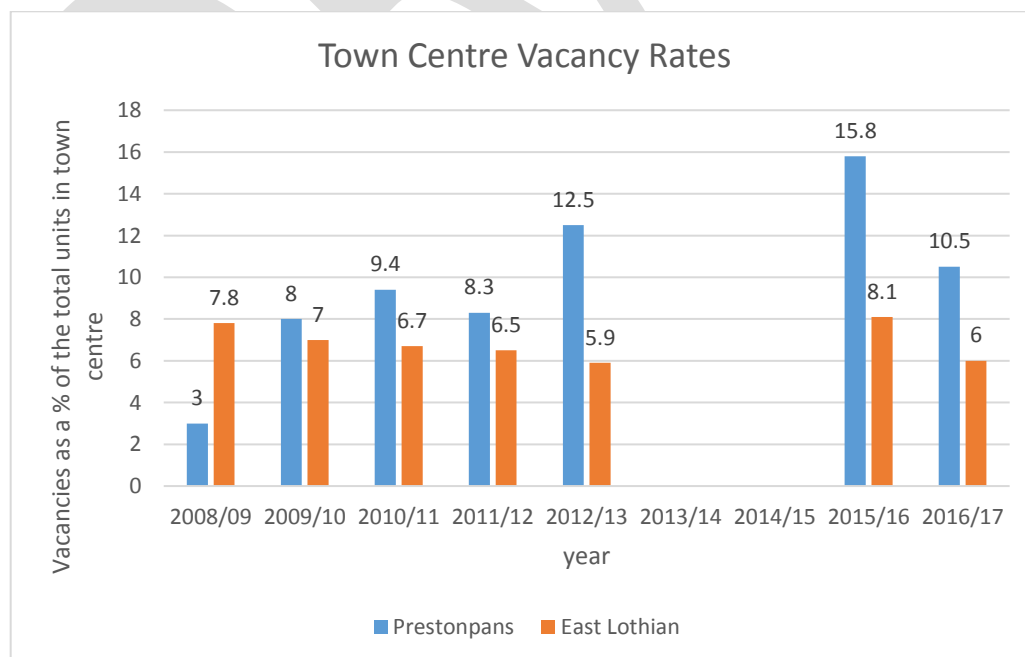
### **BLINDWELLS**

The RCS concludes that under 2015 market conditions there is limited scope for a larger supermarket (despite the leakage in surrounding zones of Prestonpans and Tranent), however, as Blindwells develops out there may be opportunity for a larger supermarket over the longer term. In terms of major non food retail development, a key factor is the location of Blindwells relatively close to Fort Kinnaird. It is only just over 6 miles or 11 minutes drive time with very good accessibility along the A1. It is probably too close for any major comparison retail development at Blindwells to succeed. From the appraisal, provision for development of a local centre to mainly serve the expanding population at Blindwells appears the most likely scenario to succeed.

### **TOWN CENTRE ASSESSMENTS (quantitative)**

**Vacancy Data** (measured as a percentage of available retail units in the area)

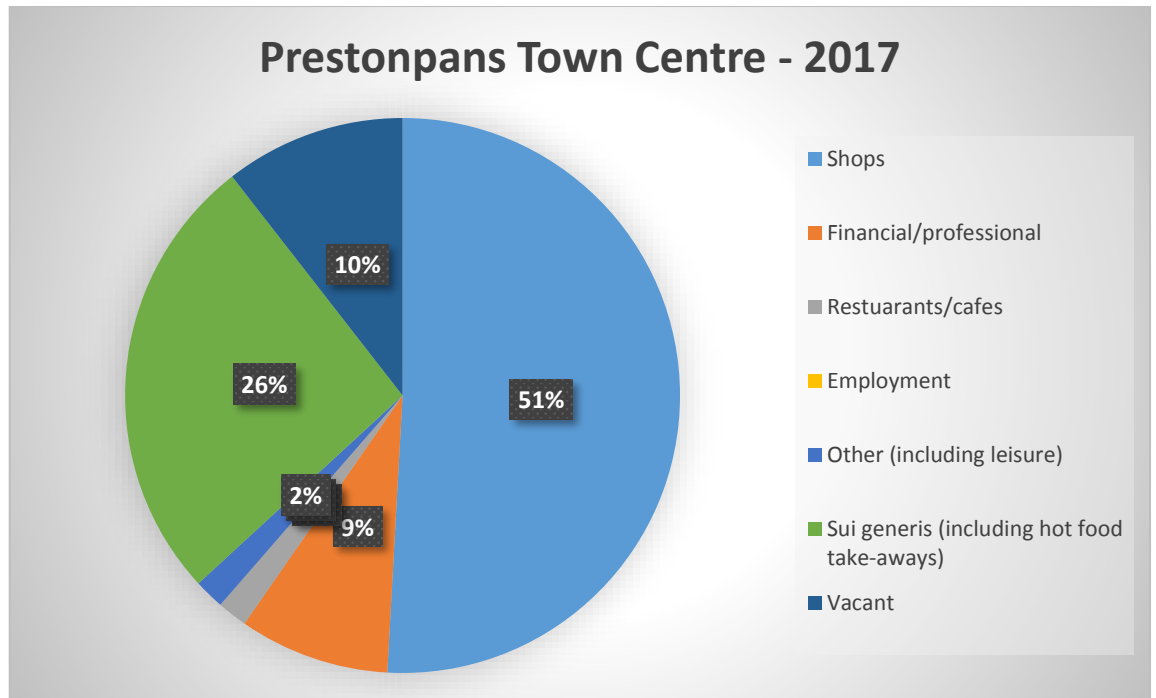
- Vacancy rates in Prestonpans Town Centre have been higher than average vacancies across East Lothian’s six towns in recent years.
- Vacancy rates in Prestonpans have increased by over 3.3% between 2012/13 and 2015/16
- The 2016/17 figure shows Prestonpans vacancy rates to be higher than the East Lothian average, although lower than the previous year of 2015/16.



Vacancy rates are monitored annually. The number of vacant units across the district is relatively low, with the highest number being in Prestonpans. Prestonpans is one of the smallest centres.

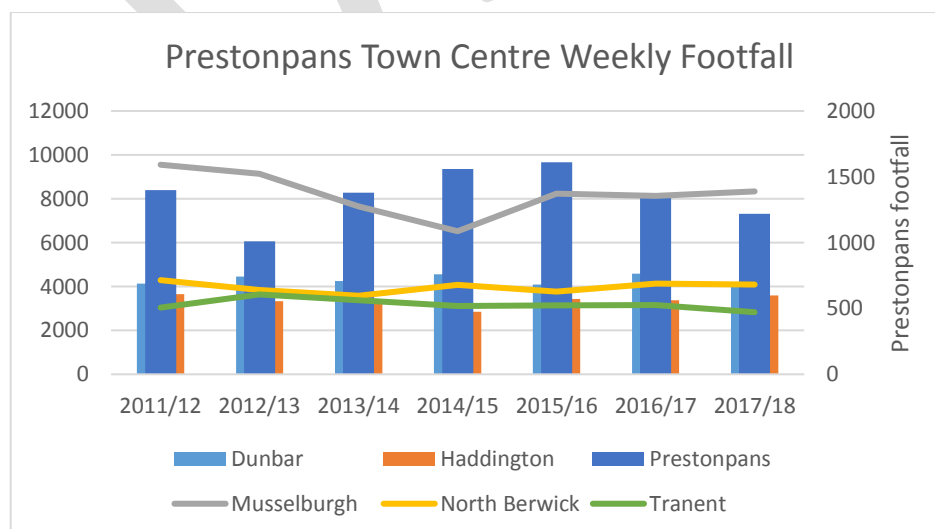
Town Centre uses

The following chart demonstrates the spread of use classes in each centre, using data from the 2017 retail survey:



Footfall

Pedestrian counts are undertaken annually in each town centre to establish weekly footfall rates for East Lothian’s High Streets. The observations are November based and are not reflective of seasonal differences.



Weekly footfall rates per head of ward population are 0.09 visits per person, the lowest in East Lothian. The weekly footfall has dropped to its lowest since 2012/13.

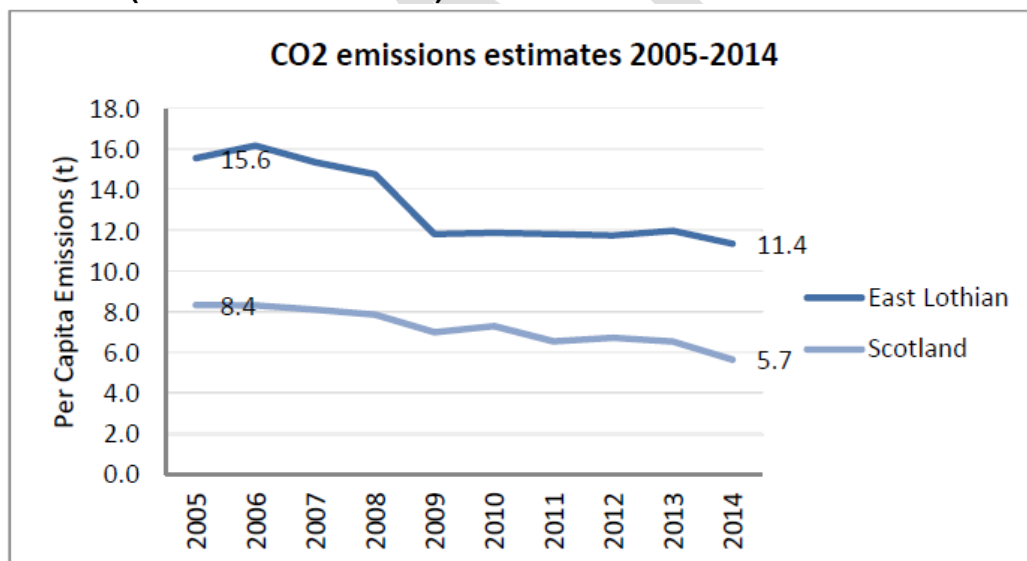
### **AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION**

In association with other plans the LDP will help to maintain or enhance air quality objectives. It will do this because it has taken these factors into account when selecting locations for development and by ensuring its development strategy is complemented by air quality mitigation measures. It will seek to integrate land use and transport and minimise the need to travel as well as the distance travelled. It will do this by promoting town centres as accessible locations for a mix of land uses and services and providing community services locally.

Currently air quality in East Lothian is very good. The Council has been annually reviewing and assessing local air quality since 2003. The majority of pollutants have been screened out in assessments and exceedences of air quality objectives for these pollutants across East Lothian are not considered likely.

In East Lothian there has been an overall decrease of 27.1% in CO2 emissions between 2005 and 2014. However in 2014 East Lothian had an estimated 11.4 tonnes of CO2 emissions per capita. This was the second highest rate in Scotland out of the 32 local authorities.

### **CO2 Emission estimates per capita (tonnes per capita) in East Lothian and Scotland (UK Government 2016)**



The East Lothian Residents Survey (2017) reported that 23% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live. This was the highest percentage of all the wards, with an overall East Lothian average of 10%.

### **TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

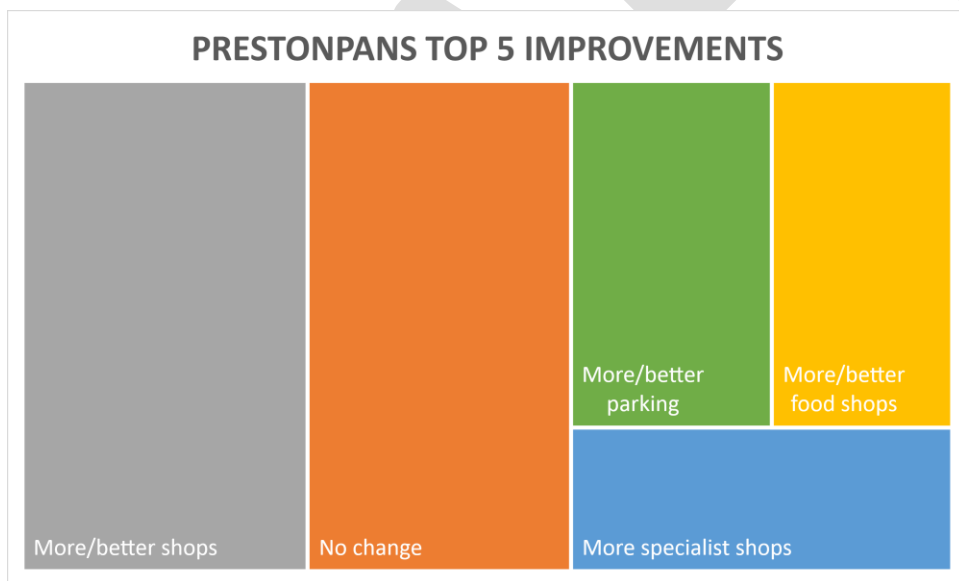
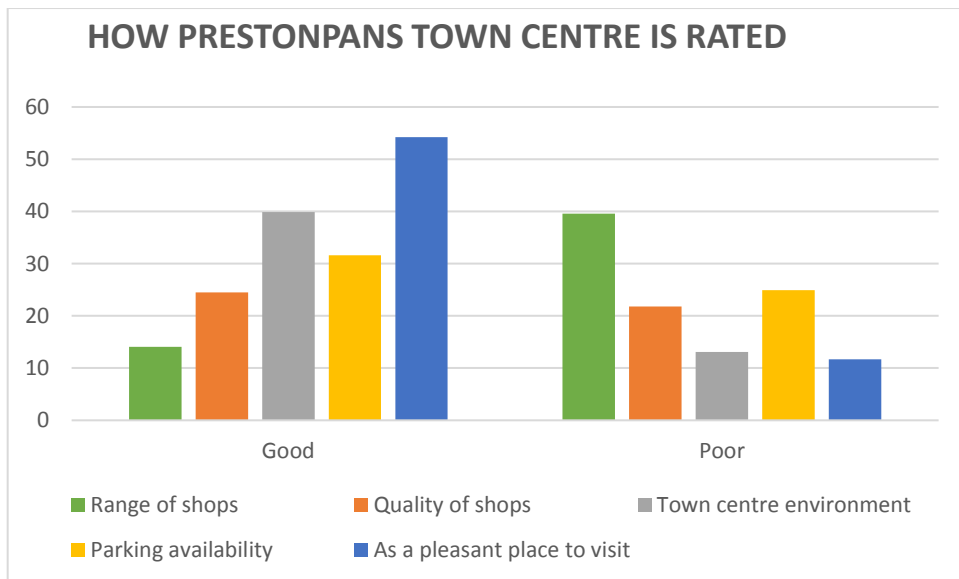
The following are the results from the 2015 RCS telephone survey:

#### **PRESTONPANS**

43% of people who live in Prestonpans visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. 13% visit daily. 36% people walk to the centre, 56% travel by car and 6% travel



by bus. A large proportion of respondents from Prestonpans like the town centre environment and think the town centre is a good place to visit. The range of shops on offer scored poorly. Therefore, perhaps not surprisingly, the top 5 improvements include better shops in general as well as requests for more/better food stores and more specialist shops.



61% of people who live in Prestonpans, **never** visit Prestonpans Town Centre in the evenings (after 6pm). The top 5 things that would make people visit the Town Centre in the evening are:

1. More/better restaurants and cafes
2. More/better pubs and wine bars
3. Longer/later opening hours
4. More things to do generally
5. More family orientated facilities

## **Discussion**

Convenience shopping in Prestonpans is one of the lowest in East Lothian with some residents focusing their shopping in Musselburgh, others in Haddington or Edinburgh. There is demand for a better range and better quality of shops. Over 60% of residents do not visit Prestonpans town centre in the evening. This may be because of the limited offer, or could be influenced by the proximity of the centre to the wider Edinburgh area and Musselburgh. This contrasts with the west of the East Lothian where in Haddington, Dunbar and North Berwick at least 50% of the population visit the town centre in the evening at least once a month.

Across East Lothian, a large proportion of comparison expenditure is spent in Edinburgh, this trend is unlikely to change.

Considering the use classes at play in each town centre, all town centres support approximately 50% shops (class 1 retail). The previous Local Plan supports retailing and restricts change of use in town centres, but the newly adopted Local Plan (2018) introduces greater flexibility (Policy TC2) allowing for change of use between retailing, restaurants, businesses and offices and leisure and entertainment. This may see a wider mix of uses over the coming years and is something to consider in future monitoring. Greater flexibility may assist in increasing the night time offer.

Restaurants and cafes represent only 2% of the town centre in Prestonpans (which equates to 1 unit). Whilst restaurants/cafés is not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer some insight. It is therefore not surprising to see that Prestonpans 61% of residents do not visit the town centre after 6pm has the fewest restaurants to offer. Another side of the evening economy is represented by public houses/wine bars. These are difficult to identify when analysing use classes as, along with other uses, are defined as sui generis. However, sui generis includes hot-food take-aways, the majority of which provide an evening service. Interestingly the towns with the largest proportion of sui generis uses, as a total of all town centre uses, are Tranent and Prestonpans. These centres have low evening use after 6pm. It may be that people do not perceive a 'quick stop' at a take-away as a visit to the town centre.

The town of Prestonpans provides a very poor evening offer in terms of restaurants, although there are a large number of public houses and take-aways. For residents the top priority for improving the evening economy are *more/better restaurants and cafes and more/better pubs and wine bars*.

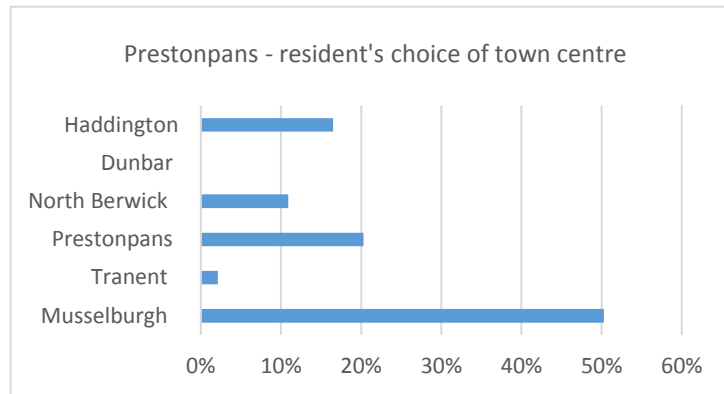
## **Citizen's panel – Survey 2018**

East Lothian Citizens' Panel survey from Spring 2018 provides the most up-to-date information available on town centre usage and perceptions. A total of 682 responses were received – 193 postal and 489 online. The emerging patterns are shown in the following analysis.

Question 5 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel questionnaire asked 'which of the following town centres do you visit most often for shopping, leisure and to access services'? Possible answers were Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, North Berwick, Dunbar and Haddington. It should be noted that there is no option to provide an alternative town centre, so the

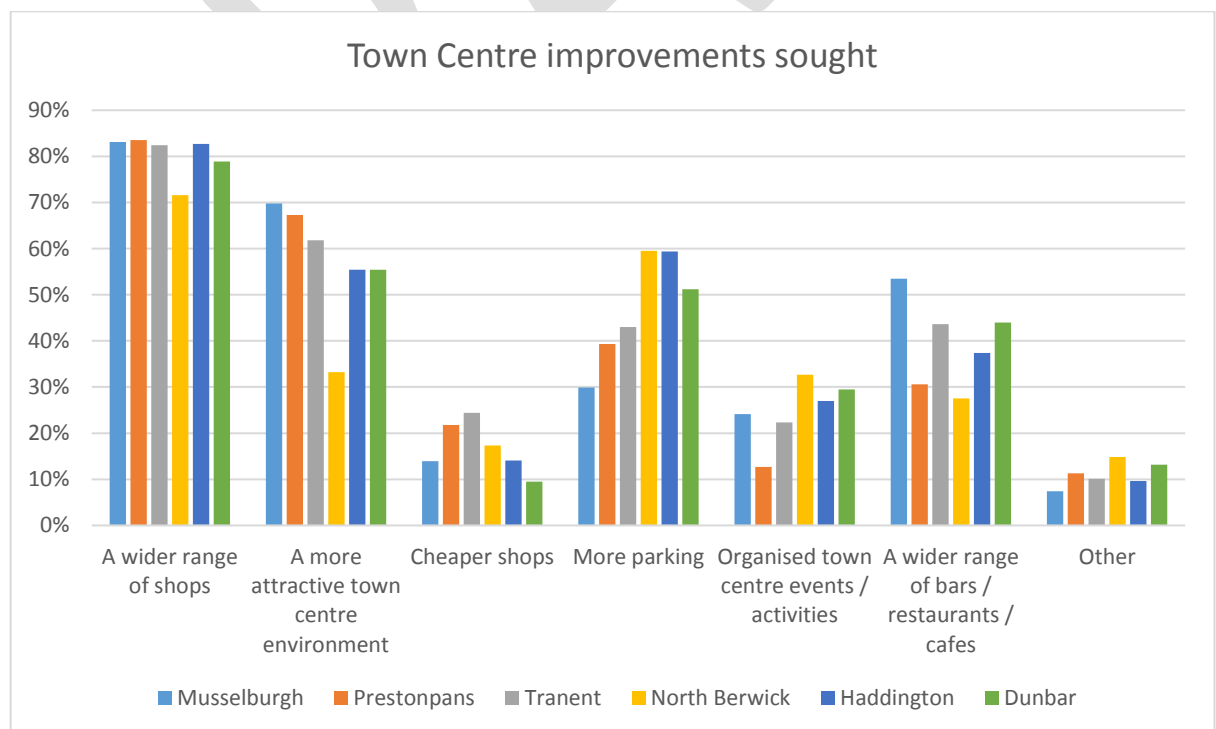
results show 100% results across the 6 centres. It is of most use to monitor which town centre local residents to those centres use.

*Which town centre do people visit most often for shopping, leisure and services?*



In 2018 the survey findings reveal that only 20% of Prestonpans residents choose Prestonpans town centre as the East Lothian centre they visit most often. The majority choose Musselburgh. In 2015 the RCS identified that more than half the convenience shopping in the Prestonpans area is done at stores in other areas, notably Musselburgh and outside east Lothian. There was noted to be sufficient undertrading to accommodate potential claw back, but caution was advised as this could be at the expense of Musselburgh stores.

Question 8 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asks 'which 3 factors would be most likely to encourage you to use your local town centre more?' The results are highlighted below:



The results are similar for each town centre with the top three issues across the board showing:

1. A wider range of shops
2. A more attractive town centre environment
3. More parking

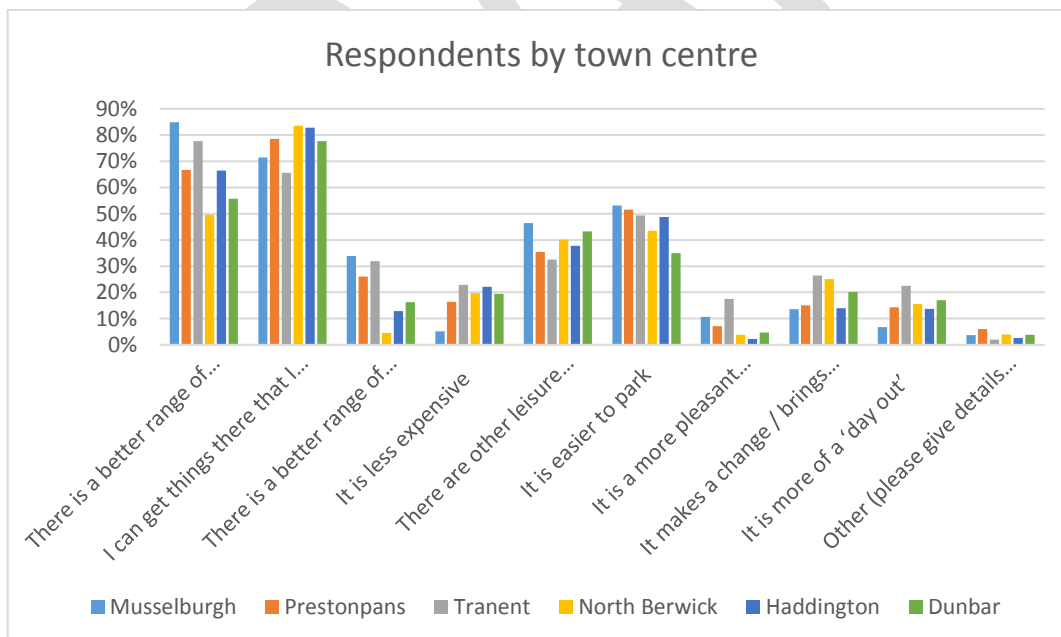
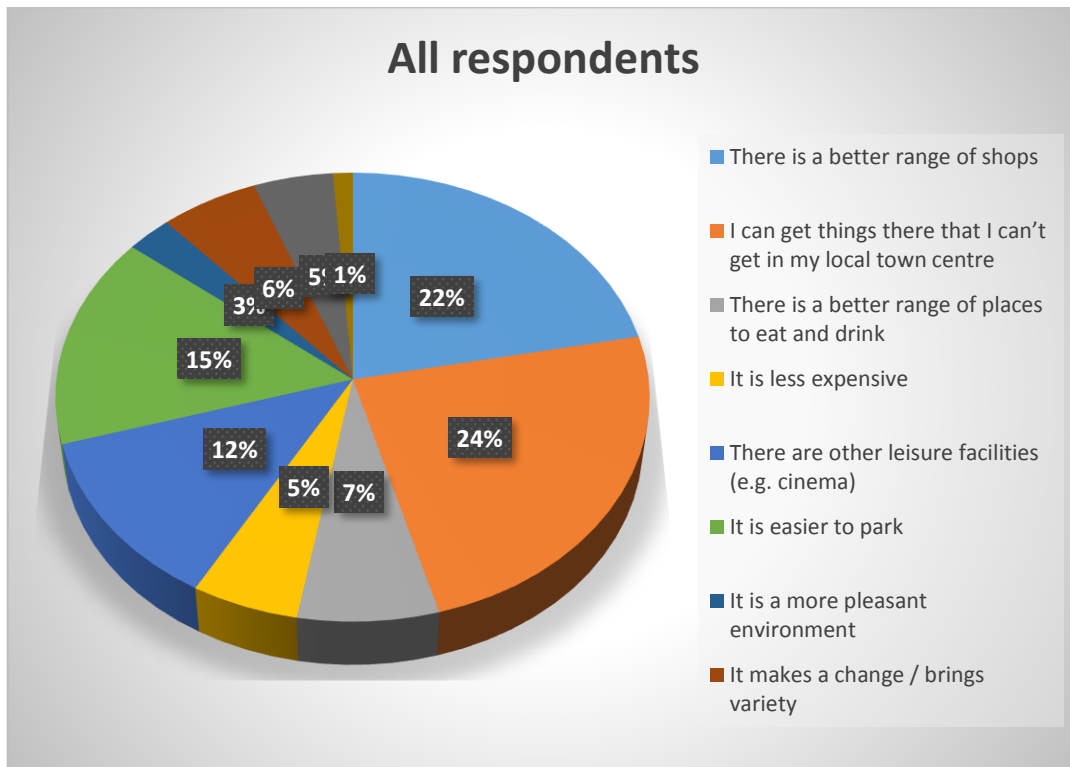
There is also a requirement for a wider range of bars/restaurants and cafes. There is less concern in respect of town centre events and activities in Prestonpans. More and better shops and more parking were identified as key areas for improvement in the 2015 RCS.

Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asks 'how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?'



As would maybe be expected a large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a week and once or twice a month. A higher proportion of residents from Dunbar, Haddington and North Berwick rarely or never visit an out-of-town retail park, most likely because proximity to Edinburgh and the available out-of-town centres is further than the communities of Musselburgh, Prestonpans and Tranent. Few people use an out-of-town retail centre daily. This is a good sign that suggests town centre useage, however, it should be borne in mind that the majority of out-of-town retail centres, such as Fort Kinnaird, are predominantly the sale of convenience goods, which few people buy daily. In Pretonpans over 30% of respondents use an out-of-centre retail park once or twice a week, this could reflect proximity to Fort Kinnaird, but possibly also reflects the limited offer in the small town centre and high vacancy rate.

Question 10 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asked 'If you go to an out-of town retail park for some shopping or leisure activities, rather than to your local town centre, what would be your reasons for doing so?'



As expected people refer to a better range of shops and more places to eat and drink as well as there being other leisure facilities to access. Whilst it is possible to encourage an increased range of shops, restaurants and leisure facilities in the East Lothian town centres, proximity to the Edinburgh offer and, in particular, Fort Kinnaird will always play a part. It is extremely accessible, especially for the west of the district. The only other consideration to be highlighted is the availability of parking. 15% of respondents claim it is easier to park at

out-of-town centres than town centres. Whilst this is not an overwhelmingly large response, previous analysis indicates town centre parking is considered an issue.

## **Parking**

### Problems & Issues

- Overflow parking on nearby streets around the railway station car park.
- Commuter parking in the southern station car park inhibits access to the station.
- On-street parking problems linked to residents, school and church parking.
- Affected locations do not have on-street waiting restrictions
- Illegal on-street parking on Ayres Wynd where people seek to park as close as possible to the town centre
- Lack of turnover in spaces on High Street
- Abuse of loading bays and bus stops on High Street
- Perception of a lack of on-street parking although this may be more representative
- of a problem of a lack of turnover in spaces
- Short-term on-street problems at peak school travel periods around schools
- Waiting restriction too short

### Potential Parking solutions

- Control through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Ongoing review of waiting and loading provision
- Consider the Introduction of on-off street parking charges

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**Haddington  
Town  
Centre  
Strategy**

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**2018**

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**Supplementary  
Guidance to the East  
Lothian Local  
Development Plan  
2018**

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# HADDINGTON TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

## 1.0 Purpose of the Haddington Town Centre Strategy

- 1.1 The Haddington Town Centre Strategy forms a part of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2018 (LDP). It is supplementary guidance focusing on the changes that the Local Development Plan is planning to the town of Haddington and the implications of that change for the town centre. The LDP introduces new planning policies adopting the town centre first principle and has detailed planning policies for town centres to guide development.
- 1.2 The strategy looks in more detail than the LDP into the town centre. A health check of the town centre is provided, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered and its performance as a place with coordinated actions for improvement and regeneration.
- 1.3 In addition to the LDP and its supporting documents, the town centre strategy takes account of the Council's emerging Local Transport Strategy and Local Housing Strategy as well as the Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership Area Plan. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centre.

## 2.0 Policy Context

### Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres

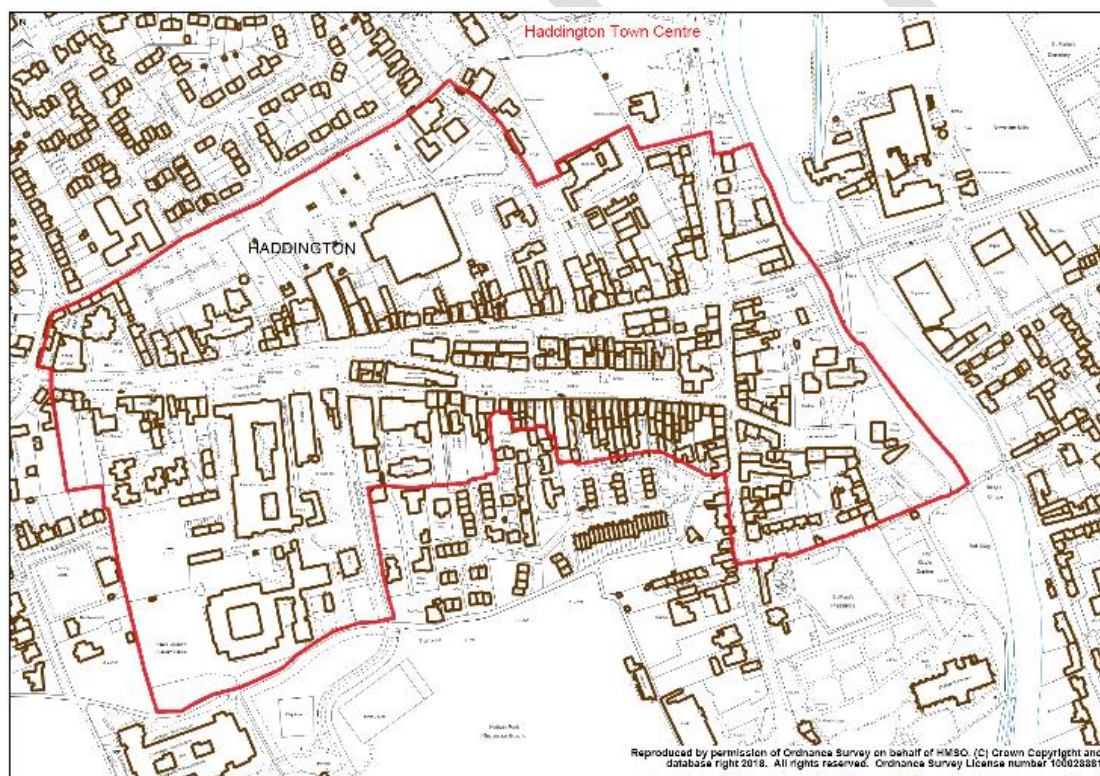
- 2.1 The newly adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) promotes the Town Centre First Principle which requires that uses that would attract significant footfall must consider locating to a town or local centre first and then, sequentially, to an edge of centre location, other commercial centre or out of centre location. This is designed to support town centres in the long term and help to ensure that they are vibrant and sustainable.
- 2.2 To further support town centres and to minimise the length of time commercial premises lie vacant the principle of a change of use between retail, business, office, restaurant leisure and entertainment is supported. As town centres evolve there could be pressure to change uses to residential; this may be acceptable in non ground floor or backland locations but will only be acceptable in a ground floor location where there is evidence that it is no longer viable as a town or local centre use.
- 2.3 The policy on hot food outlets supports hot food outlets in town and local centres provided that there will be no significant impact on local amenity, including cumulatively with other existing take-aways in the area and are consistent with other LDP policies including in relation to parking and road safety.
- 2.4 The town centre strategy is proposed to be approved as supplementary guidance to the LDP. It therefore remains approved until the East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective.

### 3.0 Form and Content of the Haddington Town Centre Strategy

3.1 The Haddington town centre strategy adopts a strategic approach to guide the improvement of Haddington town centre. Following analysis from a health check of the town centre a series of Actions is made to address the issues arising in the town centre. Each action is given an indicative short, medium or long timescale with identified lead and joint working parties for its implementation. The health check can be regularly updated and actions can be monitored and if required revised in future.

### 4.0 Background

4.1 The LDP defines the Haddington town centre, one of six defined town centres in East Lothian. This is the spatial area where the LDP policies outlined in Section 2 above apply and also the spatial area where the town centre strategy actions that follow apply.



4.2 Haddington has begun a period of sustained expansion. The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in Haddington will yield 1198 units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for the ward will yield 355 units taking the total to 1553 potential new homes in Haddington ward by 2025.

4.3 The town centre is wholly included in the designated Haddington Conservation Area. Haddington is renowned for the quality of its historic burgh architecture and layout. The purpose of a conservation area is to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the architectural and historic character of the area and that should ensure

over time ensure that the area is improved and enhanced. The Haddington Conservation Area Character Statement and other supplementary planning guidance to the LDP on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment, which contains guidance on development in conservation areas including shopfronts and advertisements are important in setting standards for improving the overall environment of the Conservation Area.

## **5.0 Haddington Town Centre Analysis**

- 5.1 Haddington town centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are included in a table contained in Appendix 1. This has helped to inform the proposed actions for the town centre strategy.
- 5.2 The SWOT analysis has been prepared following the collection of data in an up-to-date Health Check for Haddington. The following points have been identified in the Health Check and subsequent SWOT:
- 5.3 The Haddington and Lammermuir ward is the largest geographically in East Lothian. 16.4% of the population of East Lothian live in the ward. The population is set to grow, with a total of 1553 houses planned for Haddington by 2025. The town centre easily accessible however new developments are being built further away from the town centre.
- 5.4 Town Centre vacancy rates have varied since 2008, but are steadily dropping and are below the average for East Lothian. Footfall has risen each year since 2014/15. There are a wide range of uses represented in the town centre, with a high percentage of shops and businesses.
- 5.5 81% of people who live in Haddington visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. Over half of the respondents from Haddington do visit Haddington Town Centre in the evenings (after 6pm). However, the majority of those visit once a month or less (29%).
- 5.6 Even though Haddington is geographically further from Edinburgh it retains a significant proportion of convenience expenditure and any losses from North Berwick and Dunbar appear to be leaking to Haddington. There is an excellent bus service from Haddington to Musselburgh and Edinburgh. Any future developments away from the town centre could see further retail choice within easy reach at the new Blindwells.
- 5.7 The Haddington CARS project (2009-2014) significantly improved the appearance of buildings within the town centre with comprehensive high quality and long lasting repair and enhancement of most of the tenemental buildings in the town centre that were in the worst condition. There are floral displays which enhance the streetscape.
- 5.8 The street has on-street short stay parking and a number of car parks off the High Street with easy access to the main shopping area. However, while off-street car parks are well utilised there are limited restrictions in force in them. This leads to a lack of control over the balance of short-stay and long-stay parking with over

utilisation of long-stay car parks creating overflow parking in neighbouring streets. More/better parking is identified by residents as a much needed improvement.

- 5.9 The Citizen's panel survey (2018) identified a need for a wider range of shops, more parking and a more attractive town centre environment.

## **6.0 Regeneration Strategy for Haddington town centre**

- 6.1 The first Haddington town centre strategy (2009-2014) sought to increase the vibrancy and vitality of Haddington town centre by encouraging new mixed use development on vacant sites and the comprehensive repair of historic buildings. Significant progress was made on the repair of buildings with grant assistance under the Historic Environment Scotland Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (2010-15). Over 50 grants were made to eligible buildings resulting in the comprehensive repair and enhancement of 14 core town centre tenements in identified priority areas. The two town centre redevelopment sites remain in need of investment. The CARS legacy was to set a standard for comprehensive building repair and to encourage other buildings to be repaired. Private schemes to repair and convert buildings in Kilpair Street to housing use and a key landmark building, the former George Hotel now the mixed use George Court building followed and the town centre enhanced as a result.

- 6.2 The potential to develop further small sites to bring in new people to live in the town centre is a desirable objective to support a sustainable and vibrant community in the town centre.

- 6.3 New residents will start to bring their spending power to Haddington as new housing is developed. The challenge for the town centre is to attract them to use it. While Haddington retains 85% of its retail expenditure on convenience goods much of its expenditure on comparison goods, is spent elsewhere, in common with other towns in East Lothian. The town centre will only attract people if it is a safe, attractive place to visit with good access including available parking. To do this Haddington town centre requires further investment in the following:

Redevelopment of vacant sites and buildings – sites at the east end of Market Street/Brown Street and the corner of Hardgate and Victoria Terrace should be redeveloped for mixed uses

Public realm improvement – the quality of the spaces between buildings in Haddington High Street, Market Street and Hardgate requires improvement to complement the quality of its townscape.

Continued improvements to the repair and external appearance of buildings within the town centre.

Re use of vacant buildings - including vacant shop units and the former Sherriff Court which is to become the new location for the Police who will vacate their current premises (confirm that is the case) leaving it requiring re use.

## **7.0 Main Issues in Haddington Town Centre**

- 7.1 This section outlines the main issues followed by actions required within Haddington town centre. It provides an indication of timescale and details of who will lead action to implement each project.
- 7.2 Haddington is classified as an Independent to Interdependent town<sup>1</sup> which means that it has a good number of assets in relation to its population, a good diversity of jobs, and residents on the whole travel shorter distances to travel to work and study. These towns attract people from neighbouring towns to access some of their assets and jobs.
- 7.3 Haddington town centre commercial premises vacancy rates are consistently lower than the East Lothian or Scottish average at around 5%. There are few vacant properties above commercial premises. There is however, low quality of public realm space between buildings within the town centre with most space devoted to vehicles
- 7.4 Footfall within Haddington town centre declined between 2011 and 2014 but has risen since and in 2017 returned to the 2011 level. This compares favourably with a falling trend elsewhere as fewer people visit the High Street for retail purposes. In 2017 just over half of commercial premises in Haddington town centre were shops, 24% services and 8% café/restaurant use.
- 7.5 Surveys indicate that Haddington town centre is used by 81% of its residents weekly or more frequently with 33% visiting daily. While the majority walk, 41% travel by car and 1% use a bus. The town centre must continue to be accessible to residents from its housing areas and in line with the emerging Local Transport Strategy, encouragement to do so by means of active travel is required. It can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long through lack of enforcement.
- 7.6 A proposal of application notice for retail uses at Gateside may lead to an application for a proposal which is a significant walking distance from the town centre and a consideration in the assessment of any application is therefore whether or not it would attract people away from the town centre.

## **8.0 Actions for Haddington Town Centre**

### **8.1 Movement and Access**

8.2 Planned housing and employment growth in Haddington will increase vehicle movements in and around the town. To address this the LDP proposes a programme of transport improvements at Haddington town centre to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality. Actions include:

- Haddington Town Centre Design Project
- Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking

**Haddington Town Centre Strategy: Action 1: Haddington Town Centre Design Project**

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland's Towns Partnership, 2015

Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Preparing a detailed landscape design for the public realm on High Street, Court Street, Market Street and Hardgate	East Lothian Council / Sustrans/ Community	1 Access Strategy 2. Agreement of area to be designed 3. Draft Design concepts 4.. Consultation 5. Detailed Design 6. Permissions 7. Funding applications 8. Traffic orders 9. Implementation in phases	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; width: 100%; height: 50%;"></div> <div style="background-color: #FF9800; width: 100%; height: 50%;"></div>	This project has progressed to the point where a detailed design for phase 1 High Street is in preparation and anticipated to be prepared by March 2019.

- 8.3 A one way traffic flow system was introduced in Haddington town centre in 2014, to aid vehicle flow and growth. Vehicles no longer require the same space as they did when movement was two-way and there is scope to reorganise the space between buildings giving more space to pedestrians.
- 8.4 Work began with an Access Strategy for Haddington town centre and subsequently on an iterative town centre design project involving the community and funded by East Lothian Council and Sustrans. Consultants have been appointed to coordinate the design work in consultation with the community. The public realm design must take account of traffic flow and access, commercial vehicle deliveries, bus stop positioning and access, pedestrian flow, cycle provision, parking and provision for future town centre events as well as ensuring that the overall design is complementary to the high quality of historic townscape within Haddington town centre.
- 8.5 This design work is a major project for the town centre that should, subject to identifying funding, result in a significant enhancement to the town centre that will encourage people to use it and be of benefit to the town centre economy.

Haddington Town Centre Strategy: Action 2: Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Reorganisation of town centre car park stay length	ELC Road Services	1. Approval of Parking Management Strategy as part of Local Transport Strategy 2. Implementation of stay lengths 3. Creation of additional parking to support the town centre		If the ELC Parking Strategy is approved this work will commence

8.6 Although Haddington is well served by car parks not all are available to the public at all times. Reorganisation of car parking is required to better manage the existing car parks. There is potential for an additional long stay car park to serve the town centre's needs though this would be located just outwith the defined town centre at West Road and/or at Whittingehame Drive and is subject to land availability.

8.7 If the Parking Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Strategy is approved, the town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre car parks. This may require additional signage and every effort should be made to keep permanent signs to a minimum to minimise sign clutter. Haddington is served by the following car parks, currently all free to use:

<i>Where</i>	<i>Proposed Duration</i>
<i>Parking on street</i>	short stay
<i>Newton Port</i>	short stay
<i>Court Street via Tesco car park</i>	short stay
<i>Tesco long stay</i>	short stay
<i>Sports centre</i>	medium stay
<i>John Muir House (part)</i>	medium stay
<i>Mill Wynd</i>	long stay
<i>Tesco car park</i>	long stay

#### **Built Environment and Public Spaces**



8.8 The entire area of Haddington town centre is located within the designated Haddington Conservation Area the character and appearance of which requires to be preserved or enhanced. The Haddington Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) project (2009-2014) significantly improved the overall appearance of the town centre with comprehensive high quality and long lasting repair and enhancement of most of the tenemental buildings in the town centre that were in poor condition. However, not all buildings were able to be assisted under the grant scheme and it is important that where building defects are noticed that further repairs are encouraged. Actions include:

- Shopfront and Advertisements
- Improving small spaces within the town centre

<b>Haddington Town Centre Strategy: Action 3 Shopfront and Advertisements</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements in High Street	ELC Planning Service and Economic Development and Strategic Investment / Commercial premises owners, occupiers and lessees	Improvements will be encouraged at the time of advertisement consent applications or planning applications to alter shopfronts Traditional symbolic signs and canopies will be encouraged where appropriate		Ongoing

8.9 Improvements are required to some shopfronts and advertisements in the High Street to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of High Street. Advertisement consent is granted for a five year period therefore this should in time improve as further applications for advertisement consent are made. Shopfront alterations and advertisements must comply with the Council's supplementary planning guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment. A number of symbolic three dimensional shop signs exist in Haddington and these were commonplace in the 1960s after a town improvement scheme at that time. Haddington is a market town, albeit currently with only one regular monthly market, and if the town centre had more traditional elements to its shops such as symbolic shop signs, and shop canopies put out on sunny days it could reach a stage where it could enable it to be a town marketing feature.

**Haddington Town Centre Strategy: Action 4 Improving small spaces within the town centre**



Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of small recreational spaces in town centre	Community/ELC	1. Some spaces will be identified in the town centre will be identified by the Haddington Town Centre Design Project 2 Other spaces may be for the community to consider how they could be improved and external funding sought.		Consultants are working on the Haddington Town Centre Design Project which is due to report in 2019. Blooming Haddington has received planning permission for the restoration of railings at Memorial Park

8.10 Every town has differently used spaces within the town centre; these might include civic space suitable for gatherings or events and smaller, landscaped spaces often quieter space off the main streets where people can sit and rest. While High Street is an enclosed civic space in its own right it does not have any public gathering area and is used mainly for vehicle movements and parking. Court Street provides the main civic space outside John Muir House and the former Sherriff Court, which is where markets are held.

8.11 Haddington has several smaller spaces within the town centre including the square at Tesco accessed from Market Street through Dickson's Close/Shiell's Close; St Anne's Place; the open area on the corner of Market Street and Hardgate and the gardens with the old custom stone to the rear of George Court. Further afield are Neilson Park, Haddington House gardens, the open space at Lady Kitty's garden and the Ba' Alley. Not all of these spaces are well used and improvements could be considered. The space adjacent to Tesco could potentially house an outdoor coffee stall or occasional market; the custom stone garden could have seats and Lady Kitty's could be encouraged by signage to be better used. The Memorial Park's railings and low walls could be restored to their original design. Taken together improvements to such spaces can encourage people to spend longer in the town centre.

#### **Buildings at Risk**

8.12 Financial assistance in the form of grants for general building repair buildings within Haddington is no longer generally available. Owners of buildings remain responsible for their repair including to the common elements of a building such as the roof, chimneys, stair, gutters and downpipes. Where buildings, including listed buildings, fail to be kept in a good state of repair a statutory notice can be served on owners

requiring its repair. If the notice is not complied with then the Council must undertake the work and claim costs back in full from the owners. Actions Include:

- External Repair of Privately Owned Buildings in Multiple Ownership
- Encourage the Redevelopment of Sites at the East End of Market Street
- Improve access to the Town Centre

<b>Haddington Town Centre Strategy: Action 5: External Repair of Privately Owned Buildings in Multiple Ownership</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Consider statutory action if necessary to occupied town centre buildings to ensure common repairs	ELC EDSI and Planning Service / private owners	1 Consider buildings that require repairs to common elements for statutory action if necessary		This work will be ongoing.

- 8.13 Privately owned buildings, often those in multiple ownership, in town centres can be vulnerable to disrepair and this is common across Scotland. Where any building is in disrepair its owners are responsible for its condition. In a town centre the appearance of a building in disrepair can affect the overall attractiveness of the town centre therefore it is important that buildings are kept in good repair. Where necessary the Council has powers to intervene and require owners to undertake repairs. In some situations this can lead to the compulsory acquisition of affected buildings. Compulsory purchase of buildings or land can be an option to undertake a significant improvement to a town centre.
- 8.14 Within Haddington town centre there are few empty properties above shops with most space occupied by residential accommodation. Where there is vacant accommodation it is best for the town centre to have it occupied by people to encourage additional spend within the town centre.

<b>Haddington Town Centre Strategy: Action 6: Encourage the Redevelopment of Sites at the East End of Market Street</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1 Encourage development of infill and vacant sites that can be sensitively designed to	Private land owners / ELC Development / ELC Estates	1. Where the Council is land owner to actively pursue redevelopment 2. Where sites are privately		Ongoing

support the town centre		owned the Council will engage with interested parties to bring forward plans for the sites		
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8.15 Haddington town centre continues to be adversely affected by the vacant buildings and sites at the east end of Market Street which require redevelopment to support the town centre. These include the small car park on the corner of Brown Street and Market Street and the former garage site on the corner of Victoria Terrace and Hardgate. In line with LDP town centre policy both sites should be for mixed use development with commercial use on the ground floor and residential use above.



The former car park site and the adjacent vacant building are owned by East Lothian Council but the vacant plot to the south is privately owned. The Council has prepared development guidelines for the site which require a frontage on to both Market Street and Brown Street to complete the building line and townscape form.



The former garage site contains existing buildings in the form of garage workshop, shop and filling station. Redevelopment of this prominent site will require a design that provides frontages on to both streets and that addresses the corner well. The design should be in keeping with its surrounds.

8.16 From time to time other proposals for redevelopment of sites or buildings will come forward. In line with the LDP all new development must be of a high quality that preserves or enhances the conservation areas and will be expected to use building materials common to Haddington town centre on the exterior of the building.

Haddington Town Centre Strategy: Action 7 Improve access to the Town Centre				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Encourage pedestrian and cycle access to	ELC / Community	1.Active travel improvements within the town		Consultants are working on the

Haddington town centre		centre will be identified by the Haddington Town Centre Design Project 2.Funding to be identified for path link improvements where required		Haddington Town Centre Design Project which is due to report in 2019
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8.17 Haddington High Street lies in the centre of the town and is accessible by walking and cycling along several path routes. New housing developments must provide path links into existing paths to encourage walking and cycling to and from the new houses. Where path links to and in and around the town centre would benefit from, for example, surface or lighting improvement this should be undertaken to encourage their use. To further encourage cycling more, safe cycle parking must also be provided.

## 9.0 The Way Forward

9.1 This strategy forms statutory supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan. The health checks can be updated regularly and the strategy should be monitored and revised in line with revisions to the LDP Action Programme.

DRAFT

### STRENGTHS

- County town and administrative centre for East Lothian
- History and Historic Buildings in Conservation Area provide a very high quality historic town centre setting
- Attractions/facilities such as Knox Academy, Aubigny Sports centre and pool, archives, museum and library in or close to town centre
- Growing town with a further 1553 homes by 2025 whose residents can be expected to use the town centre
- Strong and active community
- 81% of residents visit the town centre frequently
- Community group Blooming Haddington has enhanced the town's appearance using floral displays
- Low commercial unit vacancy rate
- Good range of shops and businesses on offer which retains retail expenditure and attracts expenditure from other town centres
- CCTV coverage discourages town centre crime
- Over half of all Haddington Residents visit the town centre after 6pm
- Corn exchange provides a large function space
- Town attracts inward commuting
- Several town centre tenements and other buildings enhanced through recent CARS scheme
- Free public wi-fi in town centre

### WEAKNESSES

- High proportion of retail expenditure particularly on comparison goods made outwith the town
- Low quality of public realm space between buildings within town centre with most space devoted to vehicles
- Some lower quality shopfronts and advertisements
- Limited choice of hotels and tourist accommodation
- High levels of commuting from Haddington particularly to Edinburgh
- New housing is relatively far from town centre
- Can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long through lack of enforcement
- Road side parking currently reduces some roads to one-way operation creating a bottleneck that causes congestion and safety problems

### OPPORTUNITIES

- On and off street parking can be managed to enforce short, medium and long stay parking to ensure that town centre users can find parking easily
- Good bus service to allow day trips from Edinburgh and surrounds to Haddington
- Residents of new housing will increase disposable income
- More speciality shops
- Further interpretation information for visitors
- Improved path links to town centre
- Encourage more town centre living in undeveloped buildings and sites
- Proposed retail park at Gateside will attract more people to Haddington and should allow more expenditure retention within town. New hospital will attract people to it who could use the town centre
- Haddington subject to town centre regeneration proposals
- Parking charges could raise income that could benefit the town centre

### THREATS

- Proposed retail park at Gateside is too far to walk to town centre and it could attract people away from the town centre
- Lack of maintenance and investment by building owners could harm the appearance of town centre buildings making it less attractive to new businesses.
- Parking charging could be introduced which may deter people from visiting the town centre
- Internet shopping
- Residents of new housing may not feel the need to use the town centre
- Lack of investment in the repair of town centre buildings harms its appearance and economic prospects
- Proposed development site at Peppercraig could provide retail that attract people away from town centre.

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## HADDINGTON Health Check

### POPULATION

The 2016 mid-year population estimates state that **17,084** people live in the Haddington & Lammermuir ward:

- The ward is the largest geographically in East Lothian
- It is 16.4% of the population of East Lothian
- 52.4% of the population live in the town of Haddington

### **Age Distribution (National Records of Scotland, 2016 mid-year estimates)**

	<b>Haddington &amp; Lammermuir Ward</b>	<b>East Lothian</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
% of the population (0-15)	17.9	18.2	16.9
% of the population that are (16-64)	61.3	62.2	64.6
% of the population that are 65 or over	20.8	19.6	18.5

The Haddington area has a higher concentration of people of working age than East Lothian overall.

### HOUSING

In 2017, the number of households in East Lothian was 45,301. This is a 1.2% increase from 44,749 households in 2016. In comparison, the number of households in Scotland overall increased by 0.7%.

Between 2016 and 2026, the number of households in East Lothian is projected to increase from 44,749 to 50,070. This is an 11.9% increase, which compares to a projected increase of 6.4% for Scotland as a whole.

In 2016, there were 6,104 dwellings in the H & L ward, 13% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian.

The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in Haddington will yield **1198** units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for the ward will yield **355** units taking the total to **1553** potential new homes in Haddington ward by 2025.

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3.

## **RETAIL PATTERNS**

Town centre catchments:



### **CONVENIENCE – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Table 5.3 of the RCS (2015) shows convenience shopping patterns (with main food and top-up combined). This highlights the following from 2015:

In zone 4 a very high proportion of convenience expenditure is retained within the zone (85%). At the time of the study a planning consent was in place for a Sainsbury's supermarket which would both increase expenditure inflows to Haddington and consume the existing over trading. However, Sainsbury's have now confirmed they will not move forward with this site. There is likely to be smaller scale retail development, some of which would be convenience.

### **COMPARISON – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The majority (70%) of expenditure takes place outside East Lothian, namely at Ford Kinnaird (Edinburgh) and Edinburgh Town Centre. The Retail Capacity Study (2015) concludes that there is substantial forecast comparison expenditure growth relating to the residents of East Lothian, so capacity is not a barrier to new comparison retail development in the Council area. However, forecast for expenditure indicate that only a small proportion of the leakage could be retained in East Lothian. The reason is that East Lothian does not have any major shopping centres. It is more probable that leakage of comparison expenditure to major destinations outside East Lothian will increase. Trends in internet shopping are also having a major effect.

The main issue will be to support the existing comparison retail floorspace in the town centres in East Lothian, through encouraging improvements to the quality and range of comparison shopping, in conjunction with other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town centres as destinations.

### **BLINDWELLS**

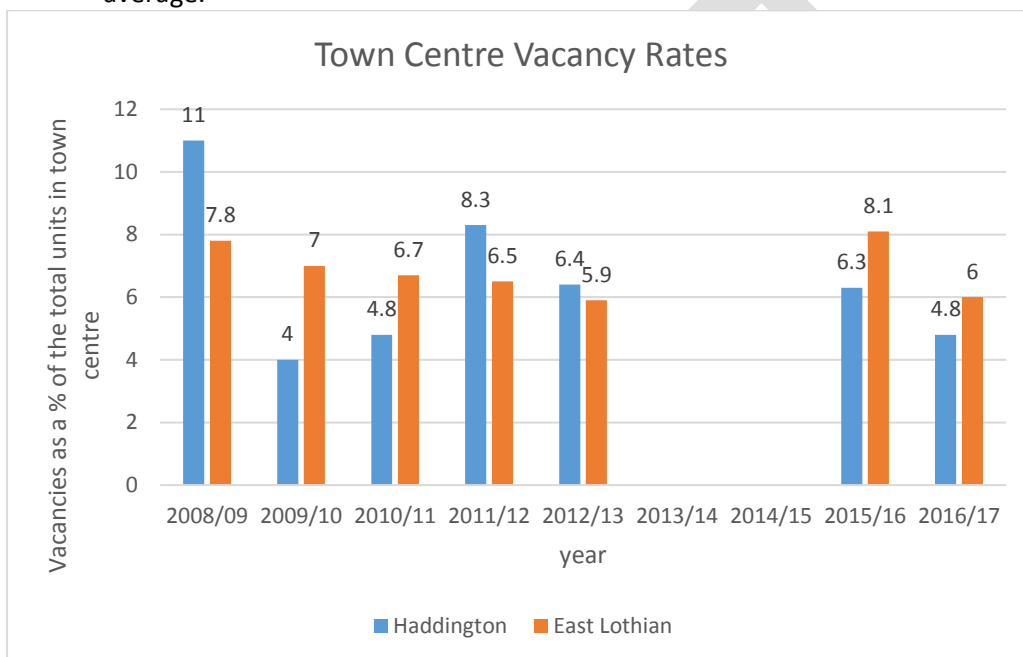
The RCS concludes that under 2015 market conditions there is limited scope for a larger supermarket (despite the leakage in surrounding zones of Prestonpans and Tranent), however, as Blindwells

develops out there may be opportunity for a larger supermarket over the longer term. In terms of major non-food retail development, a key factor is the location of Blindwells relatively close to Fort Kinnaird. It is only just over 6 miles or 11 minutes' drive time with very good accessibility along the A1. It is probably too close for any major comparison retail development at Blindwells to succeed. From the appraisal, provision for development of a local centre to mainly serve the expanding population at Blindwells appears the most likely scenario to succeed.

**TOWN CENTRE ASSESSMENTS (quantitative)**

Vacancy data (measured as a percentage of available retail units in the area)

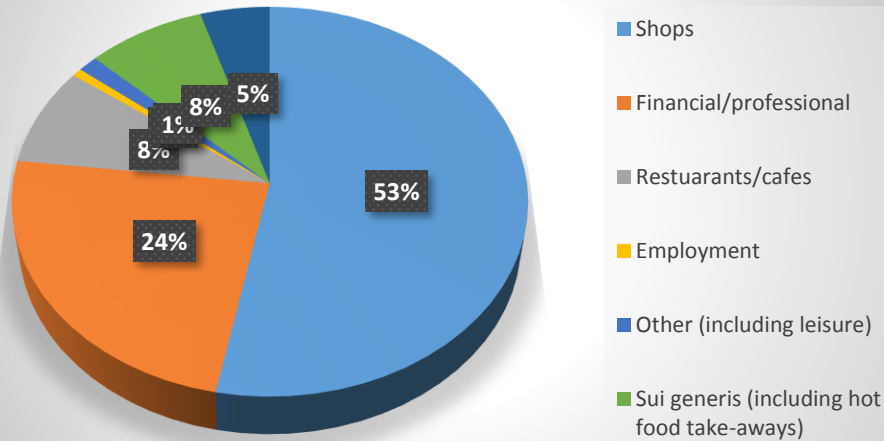
- Vacancy rates have varied in Haddington, from a high of 11% in 2008 to a low of 4.8% in 2017.
- The 2016/17 figure shows Haddington vacancy rates to be lower than the East Lothian average.



**Town Centre uses**

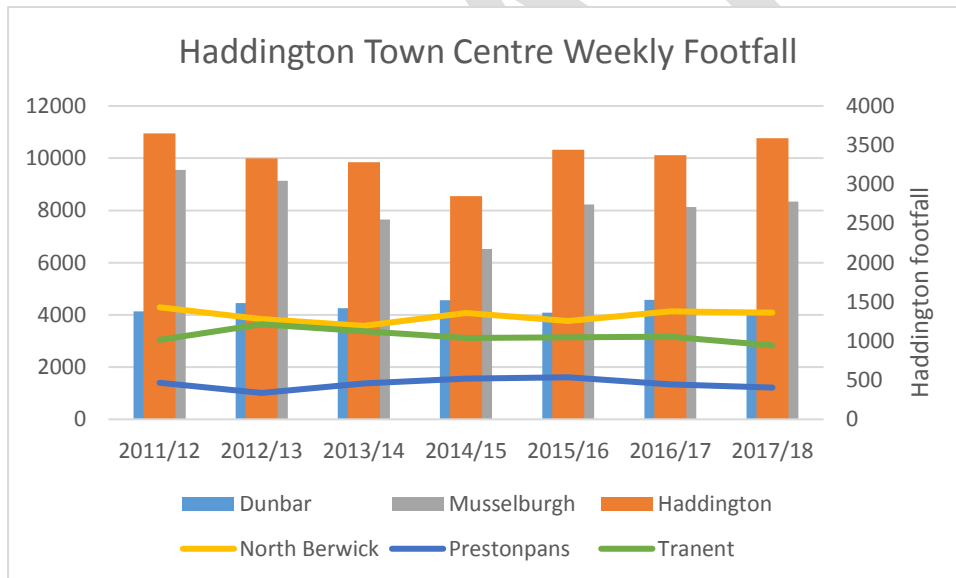
It is of interest to monitor the uses currently occupying the town centre units. The following charts demonstrate the spread of use classes in Haddington, using data from the 2017 retail survey:

## Haddington Town Centre 2017



### **Footfall**

Pedestrian counts are undertaken annually in each town centre to establish weekly footfall rates for East Lothian’s High Streets. The observations are November based and are not reflective of seasonal differences.



Weekly footfall on Haddington High St are on the rise and are back to a similarly high number since 2011/12. Weekly footfall rates per head of ward population are 0.20 visits per person, behind Musselburgh (at 0.41 visits per person), Dunbar (at 0.29 visits per person) and North Berwick (at 0.28 visits per person).

### **AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION**

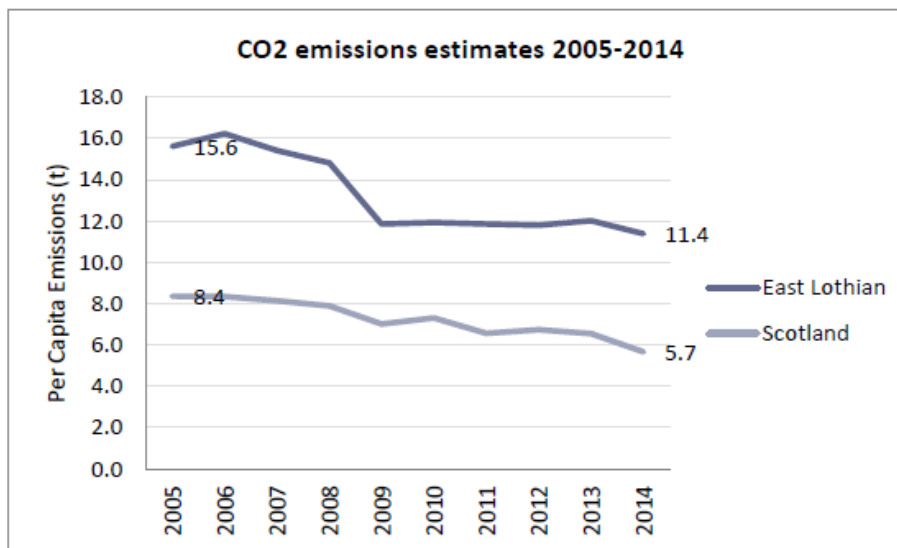
In association with other plans the LDP will help to maintain or enhance air quality objectives. It will do this because it has taken these factors into account when selecting locations for development and by ensuring its development strategy is complemented by air quality mitigation measures. It will seek to integrate land use and transport and minimise the need to travel as well as the distance travelled.

It will do this by promoting town centres as accessible locations for a mix of land uses and services and providing community services locally.

Currently air quality in East Lothian is very good. The Council has been annually reviewing and assessing local air quality since 2003. The majority of pollutants have been screened out in assessments and exceedences of air quality objectives for these pollutants across East Lothian are not considered likely.

In East Lothian there has been an overall decrease of 27.1% in CO2 emissions between 2005 and 2014. However in 2014 East Lothian had an estimated 11.4 tonnes of CO2 emissions per capita. This was the second highest rate in Scotland out of the 32 local authorities.

### **CO2 Emission estimates per capita (tonnes per capita) in East Lothian and Scotland (UK Government 2016)**

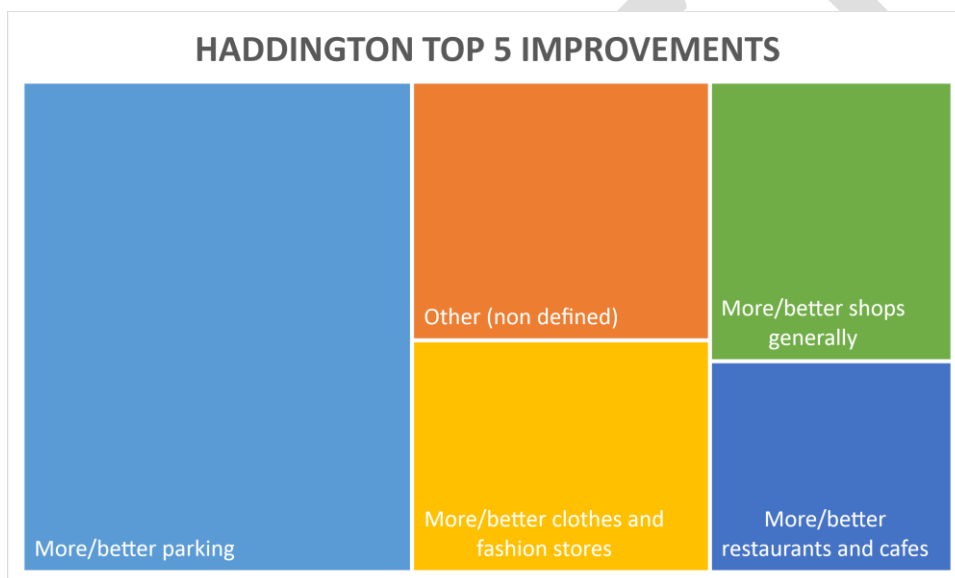
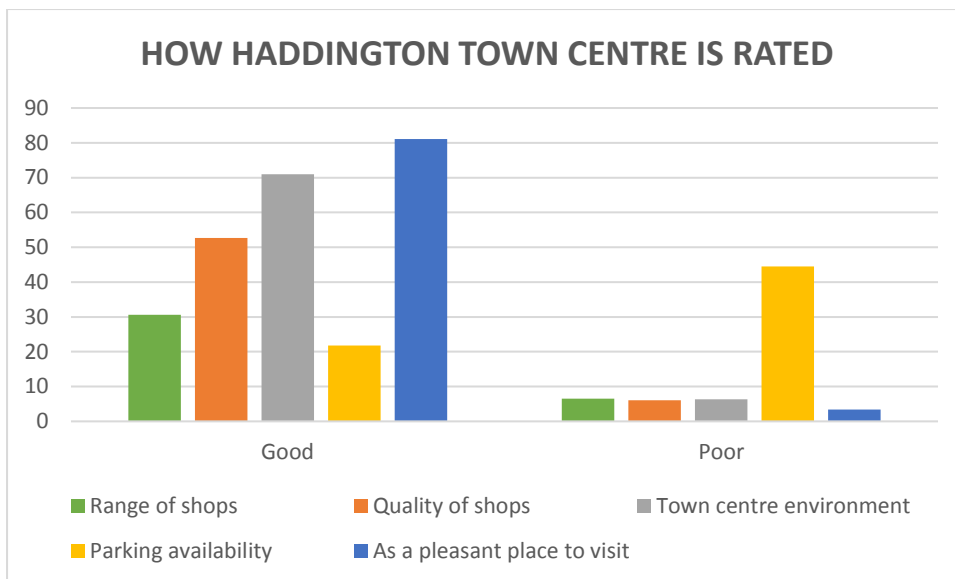


The East Lothian Residents Survey (2017) reported that 8% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, compared to 10% across East Lothian.

### **TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

The following are the results from the 2015 RCS telephone survey:

81% of people who live in Haddington visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. 33% visit daily. 57% people walk to the centre, 41% travel by car and less than 1% travel by bus. The majority of survey respondents think Haddington Town Centre is a pleasant place to visit with a good environment. The quality and range of shops are described as 'good' or 'average'. The only poor scoring feature is parking availability. More/better parking is top of the list of preferred improvements.



Over half of the respondents from Haddington do visit Haddington Town Centre in the evenings (after 6pm). However, the majority of those visit once a month or less (29%). The top 5 things that would make people visit the Town Centre in the evening are:

1. More/better restaurants and cafes
2. Shops open later
3. More leisure facilities
4. More evening events
5. More/better pubs and wine bars

#### **Discussion**

In Haddington, Dunbar and North Berwick at least 50% of the population visit the town centre in the evening at least once a month. In North Berwick the figure is as high as 82%. These centres are more geographically remote and distanced from Edinburgh. This is also reflected in the convenience expenditure, where a significant proportion is retained in the local centres of Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar, and any losses from North Berwick and Dunbar appear to be leaking to Haddington. In all three centres the improvement sought is more/better parking.

Considering the use classes at play in each town centre, all town centres support approximately 50% shops (class 1 retail). The previous Local Plan supports retailing and restricts change of use in town centres, but the new Local Development Plan 2016 introduces greater flexibility (Policy TC2) allowing for change of use between retailing, restaurants, businesses and offices and leisure and entertainment. This may see a wider mix of uses over the coming years and is something to consider in future monitoring. Greater flexibility may assist in increasing the night time offer.

Restaurants/cafes represent 8% of the overall town centre uses in Haddington. Whilst restaurants/cafés is not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer some insight. Another side of the evening economy is represented by public houses/wine bars. These are difficult to identify when analysing use classes as, along with other uses, are defined as sui generis. However, sui generis includes hot-food take-aways, the majority of which provide an evening service.

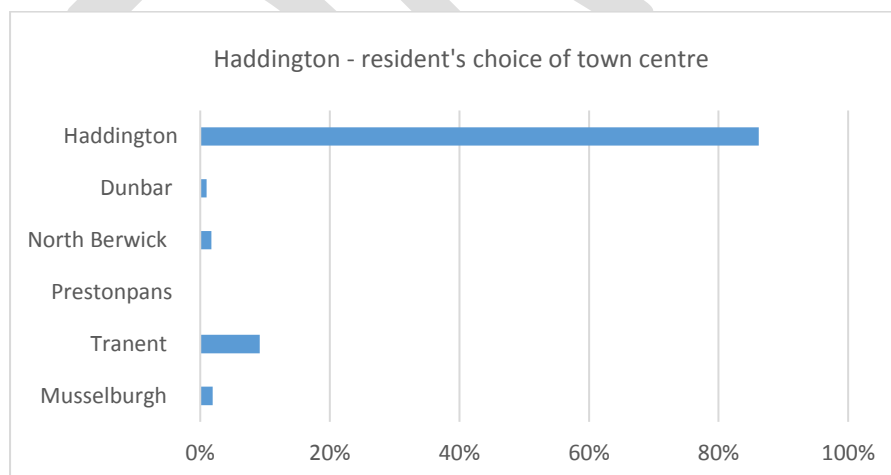
In conclusion it can be seen that the highest proportion of restaurants/cafes are located in the centres of Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar – where there is the greatest use of the centres after 6pm. For residents of Haddington the top priority for improving the evening economy are *more/better restaurants and cafes and shops open later*.

### **Citizen’s panel – Survey 2018**

East Lothian Citizens’ Panel survey from Spring 2018 provides the most up-to-date information available on town centre usage and perceptions. A total of 682 responses were received – 193 postal and 489 online. The emerging patterns are shown in the following analysis.

Question 5 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel questionnaire asked ‘which of the following town centres do you visit most often for shopping, leisure and to access services?’ Possible answers were Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, North Berwick, Dunbar and Haddington. It should be noted that there is no option to provide an alternative town centre, so the results show 100% results across the 6 centres. It is of most use to monitor which town centre local residents to those centres use.

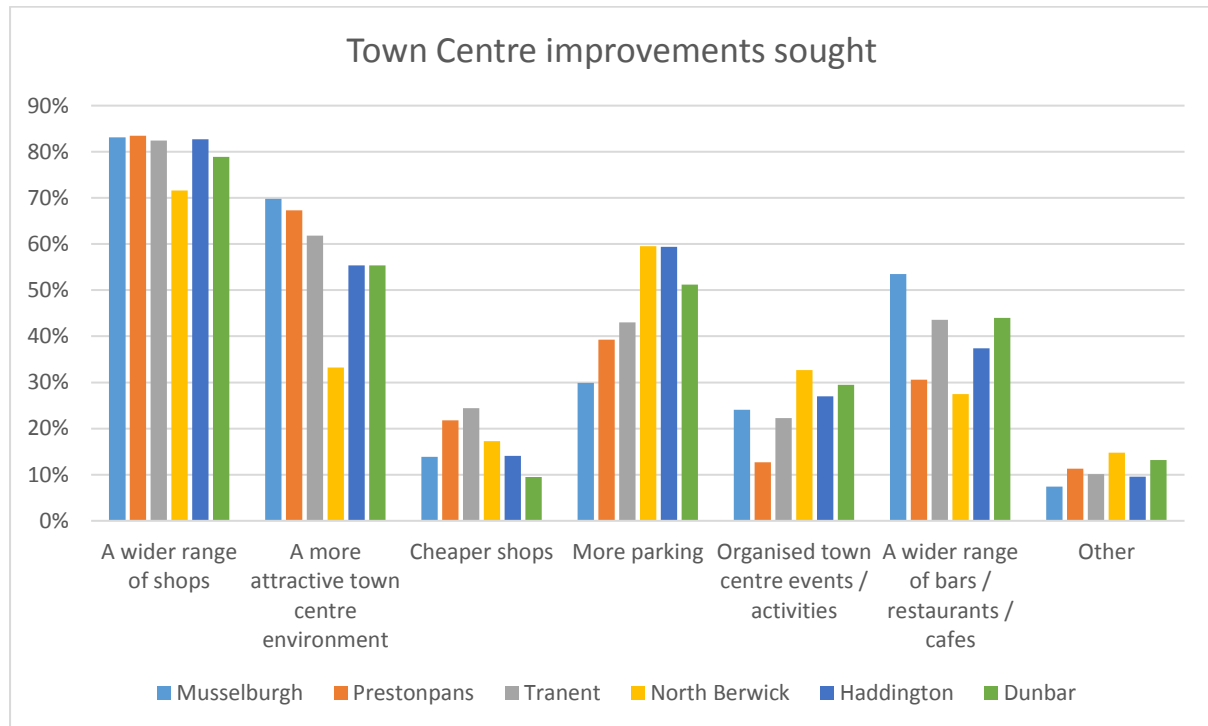
*Which town centre do people visit most often for shopping, leisure and services?*



The citizen’s panel results show that the majority of residents in Haddington choose Haddington as their preferred town centre to visit for shops, leisure and services. This corresponds with the findings of the RCS which concluded that 85% of convenience expenditure is retained within Haddington and 81% of people who live in Haddington visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently.

Three years on and the survey results indicate similar trends – Dunbar, North Berwick and Haddington residents choose to shop in their local town centre, although Haddington does also attract some visits from residents of North Berwick and Dunbar. Both Prestonpans and Tranent are losing visits to other East Lothian centres, namely Musselburgh and Haddington.

Question 8 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asks ‘which 3 factors would be most likely to encourage you to use your local town centre more?’ The results are highlighted below:



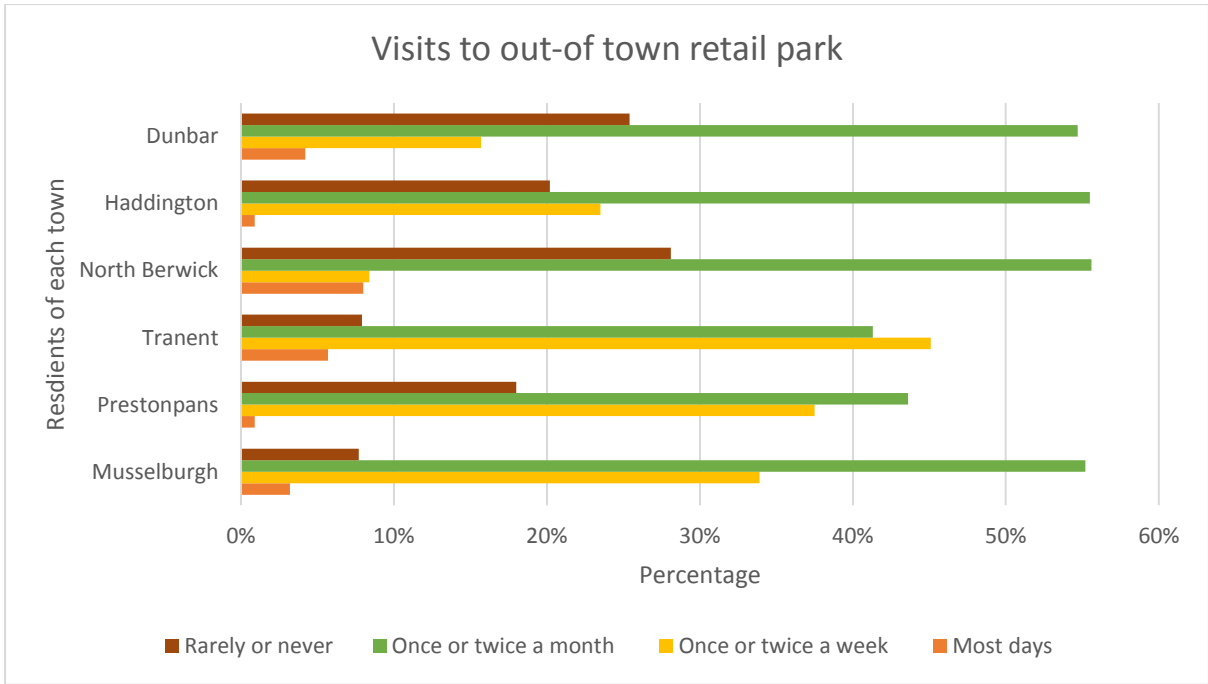
The results are similar for each town centre with the top three issues for Haddington showing:

1. A wider range of shops
2. More Parking
3. A More Attractive Town Centre Environment

There is also a requirement for a wider range of bars/restaurants and cafes. There is less concern in respect of cheaper shops. Whilst a wider range of shops and more parking were identified in the 2015 RCS telephone survey, the town centre environment was voted as ‘good’ for the town centres.

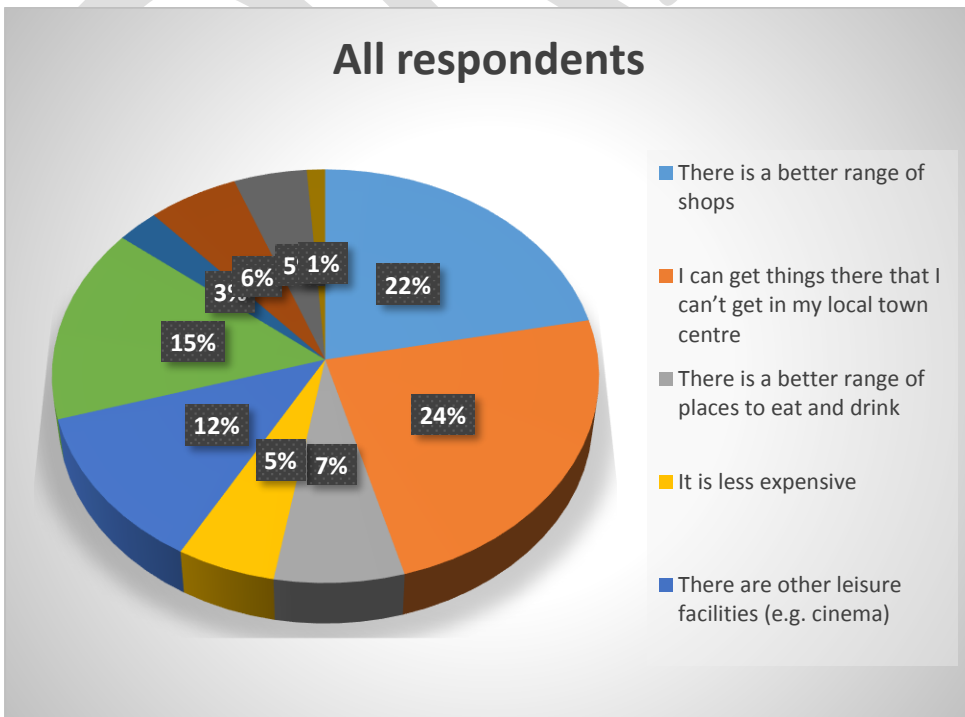
Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asks ‘how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?’

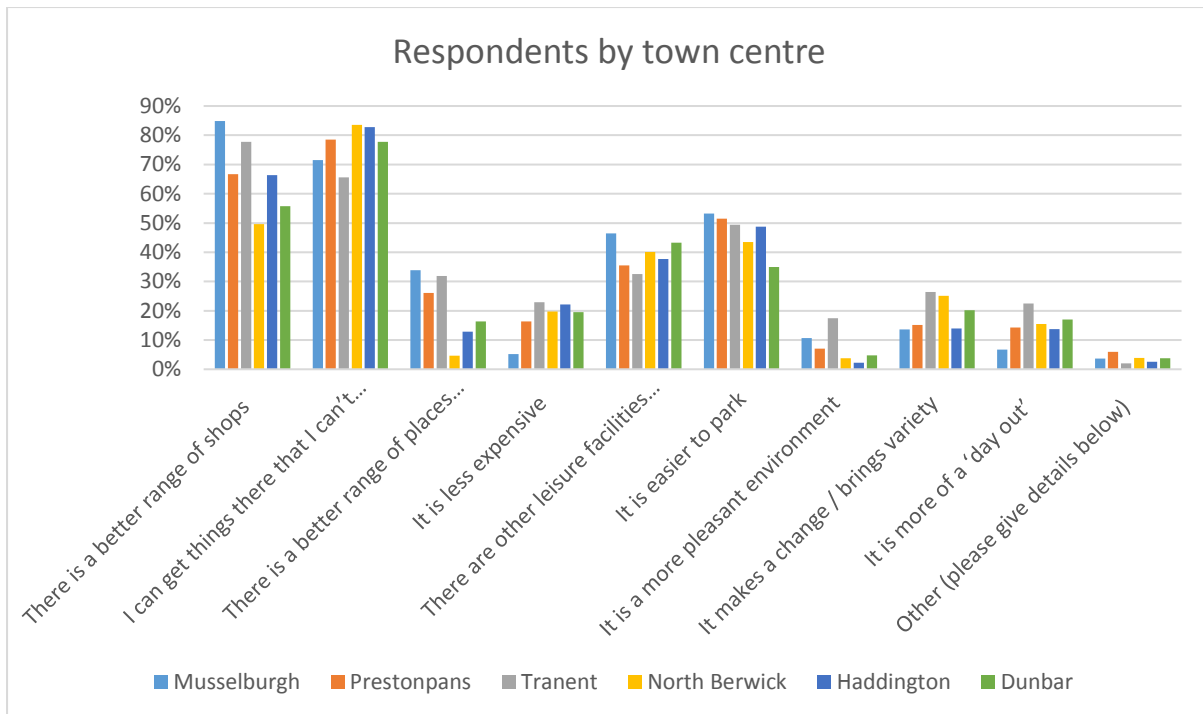




A large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a week and once or twice a month. A higher proportion of residents from Dunbar, Haddington and North Berwick rarely or never visit an out-of-town retail park, most likely because proximity to Edinburgh and the available out-of-town centres is further than the communities of Musselburgh and Tranent. Few people use an out-of-town retail centre daily. This is a good sign that suggests town centre usage, however, it should be borne in mind that the majority of out-of-town retail centres, such as Fort Kinnaird, are predominantly the sale of convenience goods, which few people buy daily.

Question 10 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asked 'If you go to an out-of town retail park for some shopping or leisure activities, rather than to your local town centre, what would be your reasons for doing so?'





As expected people refer to the ability to can get things there that they can't in their local town centre such as food, drink outlets and leisure facilities and a better range of shops. Whilst it is possible to encourage an increased range of shops, restaurants and leisure facilities in the East Lothian town centres, proximity to the Edinburgh offer and, in particular, Fort Kinnaird will always play a part. It is extremely accessible, especially for the west of the district. The only other consideration to be highlighted is the availability of parking. 44% of respondents in Haddington claim it is easier to park at out-of-town centres than town centres. Whilst this is not an overwhelmingly large response, previous analysis indicates town centre parking is considered an issue.

## Parking

### Problems & Issues

- Off-street car parks are well utilised but there are limited restrictions in force in them. Leads to a lack of control over the balance of short-stay and long-stay parking with over utilisation of long-stay car parks creating overflow parking in neighbouring streets
- Parking on Hardgate, Sidegate and Victoria Terrace currently reduces the road to one-way operation creating a bottleneck that causes congestion and safety problems
- Lack of turnover of on-street spaces in the town centre despite a 90 minute waiting restriction - particularly on Market Street due to lack of enforcement of waiting restrictions
- Traders identified problems associated with deliveries including double parking
- On-street parking around schools a problem
- Balance of traffic flow, road safety and parking issues in town centre (Hardgate, Market Street & High Street)
- Haddington subject to town centre regeneration proposals which could include amendments to parking provision

Proposed solutions to identified parking problems in Haddington are;

- Implementation of parking management hierarchy defining designated short-stay, medium-stay and long-stay parking locations
- Control through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement

- Removal of bottlenecks to ensure smooth and efficient traffic flow
- Ongoing review of waiting and loading provision
- Implementation of appropriate measures associated with the Footway Parking and Double Parking (Scotland) Bill
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Control through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- Consider the Introduction of on-off street parking charges
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Ongoing review of waiting and loading provision
- Implementation of a coherent and hierarchical approach to parking supply
- Application of national and regional parking standards where appropriate and local parking standards where developments do not meet the requirements for these standards

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**North  
Berwick  
Town  
Centre  
Strategy**

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2018

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**Supplementary  
Guidance to the East  
Lothian Local  
Development Plan  
2018**

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# **NORTH BERWICK TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY**

## **1.0 Purpose of the North Berwick Town Centre Strategy**

- 1.1 The North Berwick Town Centre Strategy forms a part of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2018 (LDP). It is supplementary guidance focusing on the changes that the Local Development Plan is planning to the town of North Berwick and the implications of that change for the town centre. The LDP introduces new planning policies adopting the town centre first principle and has detailed planning policies for town centres to guide development.
- 1.2 The strategy looks in more detail than the LDP into the town centre. A health check of the town centre is provided, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered and its performance as a place with coordinated actions for improvement and regeneration.
- 1.3 In addition to the LDP and its supporting documents, the town centre strategy draws on the work done by the North Berwick Town Centre Charrette in 2015 and takes account of the Council's emerging Local Transport Strategy as well as relevant parts of the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership Area Plan. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centre.

## **2.0 Policy Context**

### **Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres**

- 2.1 The adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) promotes the Town Centre First Principle which requires that uses that would attract significant footfall must consider locating to a town or local centre first and then, sequentially, to an edge of centre location, other commercial centre or out of centre location. This is designed to support town centres in the long term and help to ensure that they are vibrant and sustainable.
- 2.2 To further support town centres and to minimise the length of time commercial premises lie vacant the principle of a change of use between retail, business, office, restaurant leisure and entertainment is supported. As town centres evolve there could be pressure to change uses to residential; this may be acceptable in non-ground floor or backland locations but will only be acceptable in a ground floor location where there is evidence that it is no longer viable as a town or local centre use.
- 2.3 The policy on hot food outlets supports hot food outlets in town and local centres provided that there will be no significant impact on local amenity, including cumulatively with other existing take-aways in the area and are consistent with other LDP policies including in relation to parking and road safety.
- 2.4 The town centre strategy is proposed to be approved as supplementary guidance to the LDP. It therefore remains approved until the East Lothian

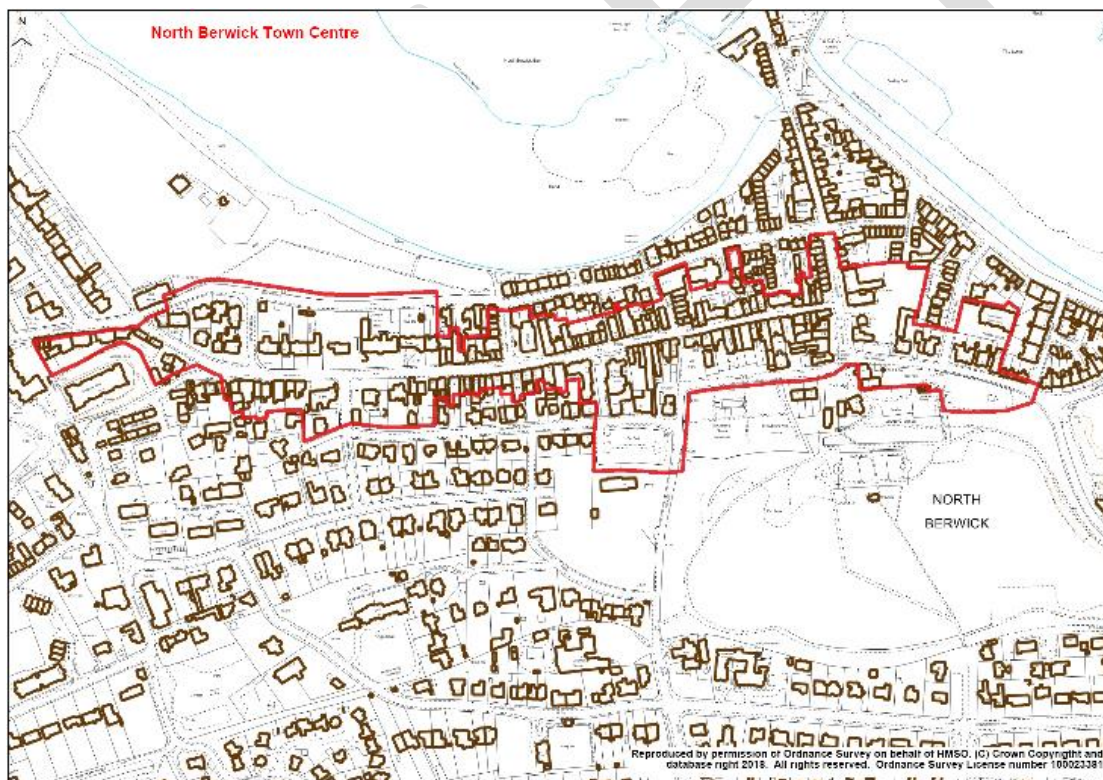
Local Development Plan 2018 is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective.

### 3.0 Form and Content of the North Berwick Town Centre Strategy

3.1 The North Berwick town centre strategy adopts a strategic approach to guide the improvement of North Berwick town centre. Following analysis from a health check of the town centre a series of Actions is made to address the issues arising in the town centre. Each action is given an indicative short, medium or long timescale with identified lead and joint working parties for its implementation. The health check can be regularly updated and actions can be monitored and if required revised in future.

### 4.0 Background

4.1 The LDP defines the North Berwick town centre, one of six defined town centres in East Lothian. This is the spatial area where the LDP policies outlined in paragraph 2.0-2.5 above apply and also the spatial area where the town centre strategy actions that follow apply.



4.2 North Berwick has experienced significant growth over the last 20 years with new residential areas completed and under construction within and on the edge of the town. The LDP housing sites at Ferrygate and mixed use site at Tantallon Road are under construction in 2018 and planned to complete in 2020 and Mains Farm, the previous Local Plan mixed use site is also due to complete in 2020 There is also further smaller scale housing development planned or under construction at Aberlady, Gullane and Dirleton in the North Berwick High School catchment area.

- 4.3 North Berwick town centre is wholly included in the designated North Berwick Conservation Area which covers not only the oldest parts of the town around the harbour, but the High Street and much of the town's expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it developed as a holiday and recreational area on completion of the town's railway. The purpose of a conservation area is to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the architectural and historic character of the area and that should ensure over time ensure that the area is improved and enhanced. The North Berwick Conservation Area Character Statement and other supplementary planning guidance to the LDP on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment, which contains guidance on development in conservation areas including shopfronts and advertisements are important in setting standards for improving the overall environment of the Conservation Area.

## **5.0 North Berwick Town Centre Analysis**

- 5.1 North Berwick town centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are included in a table contained in Appendix 1. This has helped to inform the proposed actions for the town centre strategy.
- 5.2 The SWOT analysis has been prepared following the collection of data in an up-to-date Health Check for North Berwick. The following points have been identified in the Health Check and subsequent SWOT:
- 5.3 The North Berwick ward is the smallest in East Lothian with 13.2% of the population of East Lothian living there. Overall the age distribution in North Berwick Ward when compared to Scotland has proportionally more non-working population, 6.9% more than the East Lothian rate. The population is set to grow, with a total of 1220 houses planned for North Berwick by 2025. An additional 2 hectares of land is allocated for employment. The town centre is located to the north of the settlement and is in an ideal location to draw existing and new population to its shops and businesses as it is so close to the sea. Vacancy rates have varied in North Berwick ward and showed the 2015/16 figure increased to an 8 year high, however these vacancy rates are still lower than the East Lothian average. Weekly footfall on North Berwick High St has increased by 14.25% since 2013/2014 and remains steady. However, with more people residing in the town it is to be expected that more will use its central facilities. It is also one of the busiest High Streets in East Lothian similar to Dunbar which has a larger population.
- 5.4 The town centre is well used and there are a wide range of uses represented in the town centre. Residents do the majority of their convenience food shopping in North Berwick. Any additional expenditure appears to go to Haddington. 83% of people who live in North Berwick visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently, 26% visit daily and 59% travel by car but parking availability has been classed a poor by residents.
- 5.5 North Berwick has the highest proportion of shops out of all 6 settlements in East Lothian. Additionally North Berwick currently has the highest proportion of restaurants/cafes in any town centre (This equals 19 class 3 units). Therefore 60% of the North Berwick population visit the town centre after 6pm, showing that North

Berwick is adapting to modern trends. For residents of North Berwick the top priority for improving their area is more/better parking.

- 5.6 The street has on-street short stay parking and a number of car parks behind the High Street with easy access to the main shopping area. However, lack of enforcement can see low turnover of spaces. More/better parking is identified by residents as a much needed improvement.
- 5.7 In 2017 a design charrette was held in North Berwick to examine in detail the issues of the town centre. The results provide an informed public view expressed at a point in time. The charrette covered improving walking with wider footpaths and access at the east end of High Street, improvements to help people get around, street and public realm improvements, traffic and parking, character of the town centre, quality and amenities, sustainable and active travel and safer streets that reduced the feeling of threat from moving vehicles and making the town centre more orientated towards people. North Berwick High Street is busy with vehicles and there is opportunity to provide a new car park to increase capacity and reduce cars circulating the town centre searching for parking.
- 5.8 The Citizen's panel survey (2018) identified a need for a wider range of shops, more parking and a more attractive town centre environment.
- 5.9 Overall, North Berwick has relatively strong town centre, one which was shortlisted in 2017 for a Great British High Street Award, but it could also be more vibrant and even better used by local residents and visitors alike. A sustainable and vibrant community is an important objective for the future of the town centre.

## **6.0 Regeneration Strategy for North Berwick town centre**

- 6.1 North Berwick has grown with new residents bringing their spending power to the town. In North Berwick 83% of the population visit the town centre in the evening at least once a month. This is reflected in the convenience expenditure, where a significant proportion is retained in the local centre of North Berwick and any losses from North Berwick and Dunbar appear to be leaking to Haddington. The town centre will only continue to attract people if it is a safe, attractive place to visit with good access including available parking. That is the basis for a successful town centre which needs to adapt to cater for the needs of both the existing and new population.
- 6.2 The town centre is performing well in terms of having few vacancies, the average vacancy rate over the last few years is circa 3%, well below the East Lothian and Scottish average. Footfall has varied, increasing in the last two years, which is to be expected given the arrival of new residents to the town and bucks the national trend of declining footfall. The local evening economy is the most successful of any town in East Lothian with 60% of residents using the town in the evening. However, to continue to be successful and to make the most of its assets the town centre requires investment in the following:



High Street public realm – North Berwick High Street is the focus of the town centre but retains its medieval characteristics at its eastern end with a narrow space between its buildings that has to accommodate one-way traffic, horizontal parking on one side and narrow footways on either side. With limited space there is insufficient pavement width to allow people to window shop without other passers by forced in to the road to get past. Although slow moving the through traffic is constant and there is conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

Town centre buildings and closes - Repair and enhancement of buildings in North Berwick town centre for example, the appearance of some businesses on High Street could benefit from improved advertisements more in keeping with the traditional character of the street and some parts of the town centre could benefit from coordinated exterior colour schemes, in keeping with the tradition of painted buildings elsewhere in the town.

Making the most of its heritage – while North Berwick town centre is attractive, most of its buildings are small scale and vernacular. Its landmark buildings are those built as churches, some of which are in need of further repair and could be better interpreted for visitors.

Public spaces – within the town centre there is very little civic space pushing more events towards the harbour. Civic space is needed to allow places where people can gather or sit to appreciate their surroundings. Quieter often green spaces can benefit town centre users seeking respite from busy streets. Some spaces require some improvement and enhancement.

## **7.0 Main Issues and Actions in North Berwick Town Centre**

- 7.1 This section outlines the main issues and actions required within North Berwick town centre. It provides an indication of timescale and details of who will lead action to implement each project.

### **Diversity of Land Use**

- 7.2 North Berwick is classified as an Independent town<sup>1</sup> i.e. it has a high number of assets in relation to its population; a strong diversity of jobs and residents travel shorter distances to travel to work and study. It attracts people from neighbouring towns to access its assets and jobs. It is a town that has a high level of commuting which is to be expected when it has a rail line with direct services to Edinburgh, and is also a town that attracts significant numbers of tourists and visitors, particularly in the summer months.
- 7.3 The population of the town is older than the national average with a high proportion of the town's residents of retired and over 75.
- 7.4 With a static number of commercial units within the town centre and a range that is diversifying slightly away from retail towards more service and café/restaurant uses,

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland's Towns Partnership  
<https://www.scotlandstowns.org/understanding-scottish-places>

North Berwick town centre is adjusting to modern trends. A high proportion of residents visit the town centre in the evening.

- High Street is narrow and congested with cars, pedestrians and bins
- High levels of commuting particularly to Edinburgh
- Insufficient parking
- Relatively high number of holiday lets that are not occupied all year round in town centre
- Walking conditions along the eastern end needs improvement

## 8.0 ACTIONS FOR NORTH BERWICK TOWN CENTRE

### Movement and Access

8.1 Planned housing and employment growth in North Berwick will increase vehicle movements in and around the town but the town will be able to cope with this increase. Actions for this include:

- High Street Improvements
- Environmental Improvements to Forth Street and Market Place
- Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking

North Berwick Town Centre Strategy: Action 1: High Street Improvements				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
High Street Action Plan	East Lothian Council Road Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess and address competence of recommendations of the charrette report for High Street.</li> <li>2. Confirm final design</li> <li>3. Identify funding</li> <li>4. Prepare detailed design</li> <li>5. Traffic Orders as necessary</li> </ol>		Preparatory work has commenced on assessment of recommendations

8.2 Detailed design is required to find the most advantageous design for High Street that meets the needs of all its users and produces an attractive and high quality street environment. A traffic model is being prepared to test future proposed changes. The economic needs of the street must be catered for, including sufficiently wide footways, places where service vehicles can stop, and an appropriate amount of public parking. The High Street needs to be properly accessible to everyone and improvements will be required to encourage more people to walk or cycle to the town centre.

8.3 However, North Berwick town centre has a historic street pattern that physically constrains space within its streets. This results in narrow streets with narrow footways and a one way traffic flow system in Forth Street and High Street. Given the high number of older people in the town (26.5%) it is important that the town centre caters for everyone and that people feel it is safe to use. The charrette findings suggested that between Quality Street and Market Place improvements should be made for pedestrians to make it a more accessible and walkable place with removal and repositioning of parking space and introduction of a low speed design approach. To be successful these works should also be installed using high quality materials.

<b>North Berwick Town Centre Strategy: Action 2: Environmental Improvements to Forth Street and Market Place</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1.Prioritise pedestrian movement on Forth Street with footway level crossings over access and lightly used roads. 2.Consider one way traffic flow in Market Street and additional parking 3.Improvement to pends and closes between High Street and Forth Street	ELC Road Services/ Area Partnership / external funders	1.Examine feasibility 2.Draft Design Proposals 3. Consult 4. Seek funding 5.Detailed design 6.Prepare Traffic Orders		This project has not yet commenced

8.4 Improvements were proposed for pedestrian and traffic movements and parking in Forth Street and Market Place with the latter potentially providing additional parking to replace any lost on High Street and with the suggestion that it be made a one way street. On Forth Street the proposal was to give priority to pedestrians walking on footways alongside the road where there were crossing points over access and lightly used roads, by making the crossing points flush with the footways and requiring vehicles to drive up and over them when they crossed. Improvements were also proposed to pends and closes leading from High Street to Forth Street and to those to which the public have access between Forth Street and the sea. These measures would improve the experience of walking around North Berwick town centre. A visual example of what was proposed is shown below:



Indicative sketch (R) from charrette report on how North Berwick High Street might look without parked vehicles and with wider footways. Priority is given to the pedestrian with vehicle movement slowed by narrow lanes and crossing points.

North Berwick Town Centre Strategy: Action 4: Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Reorganisation of town centre car parking	ELC Road Services	1. Approval of Parking Strategy as part of Local Transport Strategy 2. Implementation of short, medium and long stay		If the ELC Parking Strategy is approved this work will commence

8.5 If the proposed Parking Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Strategy is approved, the town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre car parks. This may require additional signage and every effort should be made to keep permanent signs to a minimum to minimise sign clutter. The Parking Strategy has proposed designation of different parking areas for different parking stay periods, indicated below:

<i>Where</i>	<i>Proposed Duration</i>
<i>On street</i>	limited waiting
<i>The Glebe car park</i>	short stay
<i>Kirk Ports/Law Road car park</i>	short stay
<i>The Lodge</i>	short stay
<i>Quality Street</i>	short stay
<i>School Road car park</i>	short stay
<i>Community Centre car park</i>	medium stay
<i>Sports Centre</i>	medium stay
<i>Castle Hill</i>	medium stay
<i>Recreation ground</i>	long stay
<i>High School</i>	long stay

#### **Built Environment and Public Spaces**

8.6 North Berwick town centre is located within the designated North Berwick Conservation Area the character and appearance of which requires to be preserved or enhanced. Actions to maintain its character are:

- Shopfronts and Advertisements
- Improving Small Spaces, Environmental improvements and Making the Most of the Heritage
- External Repair of Privately Owned Buildings in Multiple Ownership
- Improve Access to the Town Centre
- Public Wi-fi

<b>North Berwick Town Centre Strategy: Action 5 Shopfronts and Advertisements</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements in High Street	ELC Planning Service and Economic Development and Strategic Investment / Commercial premises owners,	Improvements will be encouraged at the time of advertisement consent		Ongoing

	occupiers and lessees	applications or planning applications to alter shopfronts		
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8.7 The charrette report also proposed that further improvements are required to some shopfronts and advertisements in the High Street to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of High Street, Market Place, Westgate and Quality Street. Advertisement consent is granted for a five year period therefore should in time improve as further applications for advertisement consent are made. Shopfront alterations and advertisements must comply with the Council’s supplementary planning guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment.

<b>North Berwick Town Centre Strategy: Action 6 Improving Small Spaces, Environmental improvements and Making the Most of the Heritage</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improving the appearance small spaces within the town centre as identified in the Charrette report e.g. lighthouse corner; undertake repairs to the ruined structure of St Andrews Kirk and improving understanding of its role in the history of the town	Community/Area Partnership / ELC / external funders/private owners	1.Explore support for and feasibility of whole wall painting and/or other improvements at lighthouse corner 2. Update conservation architect’s survey report for St Andrews Kirk structure and seek external funding 3.Develop ideas for future town trails or similar projects to help make the most of the heritage of the town.		A new interpretation board has been installed at St Andrews Kirk

8.8 North Berwick is an attractive and historic town centre. Every town has differently used spaces within the town centre; these might include civic space suitable for gatherings or events and smaller, landscaped spaces often quieter space off the main streets where people can sit and rest. North Berwick town centre does not have any sizeable civic spaces which is why many events are held elsewhere such as the harbour. The charrette identified that the town’s narrow streets do make it a

friendly place to be in and small spaces such as the round seating area by the Blackadder Church in High Street are important for social meetings. These small spaces are important to a town centre and need to be kept in good order. Taken together improvements to such spaces can encourage people to spend longer in the town centre. The heritage of the town is important too and old St. Andrews Kirk and graveyard on Kirk Ports is an asset to the town as a green area as well as for its heritage value. Even ruined buildings require some maintenance to ensure public safety and it would be desirable if its distinctive domed tower roof could be reinstated. Further understanding of the importance of such buildings is necessary.

9.25 North Berwick Town Centre Strategy: Action 7: External Repair of Privately Owned Buildings in Multiple Ownership				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Consider statutory action if necessary to occupied town centre buildings to ensure common repairs	ELC EDSI and Planning Service / private owners	1 Consider buildings that require repairs to common elements for statutory action if necessary		This work will be ongoing.

- 8.9 Privately owned buildings, often those in multiple ownership, in town centres can be vulnerable to disrepair and this is common across Scotland. Few buildings in North Berwick town centre appear to be in poor external condition with only one building on the national Buildings at risk register, the Baptist Church Hall on Victoria Street. Where any building is in disrepair its owners are responsible for those repairs. In a town centre the appearance of a building in disrepair can affect the overall attractiveness of the town centre therefore it is important that buildings are kept in good repair. Where necessary the Council has powers to intervene and require owners to undertake repairs. In some situations this can lead to the compulsory acquisition of affected buildings. Compulsory purchase of buildings or land can be an option to undertake a significant improvement to a town centre.

9.24 North Berwick Town Centre Strategy: Action 8: Improve Access to the Town Centre				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Encourage pedestrian and cycle access to	ELC /Community	1. Connect local and longer distance routes		Ongoing



North Berwick town centre		to improve access to North Berwick town centre by bike 2.Improve paths where necessary		
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- 8.10 The North Berwick charrette identified a need to improve walking and cycling routes to and from North Berwick town centre. New housing areas are always connected to any existing paths in the area to ensure active travel is encouraged but some paths require improvement or new links to encourage their use.

8.28 North Berwick Town Centre Strategy: Action 9: Public Wi-fi				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Provision of public wi-fi in North Berwick town centre	ELC Development	Establish the feasibility of and funding for free public wi-fi provision to support the town centre		Survey work has been undertaken

- 8.11 The availability of public wi-fi would be an asset to North Berwick town centre. It offers potential to boost tourism with information potentially available via the internet and potential for direct marketing by businesses within the town centre. It would also help generally towards increased digital inclusion.

## 9.0 The Way Forward

- 9.1 This strategy forms statutory supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan. The health checks can be updated regularly and the strategy should be monitored and revised in line with revisions to the LDP Action Programme.



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### **STRENGTHS**

- The town centre is located central in the town and has uses that draw people located within it e.g. health centre, library, sports centre and High School.
- Characterful street with shops and businesses
- New people will be living in North Berwick following extensive new housing developments (1513 units by 2025) and may use the town centre, supporting businesses and potentially helping to create new ones.
- Good number of town centre car parks and access lanes to the town
- Proximity of Ross High School provides additional High Street spend
- Good public transport links by bus
- Community group Blooming Belters has enhanced the town's appearance using floral displays
- Low business vacancy rate
- Good quality exemplar building restorations through CARS\* scheme
- New I supermarkets within walkable distance of town centre
- Range of sizes of commercial units

### **WEAKNESSES**

- Volume of traffic within High Street detracts from the enjoyment of the street by pedestrians (although national Air Quality Standards are met)
- Vacant former Coop buildings detract from the look of the town centre.
- High proportion of retail expenditure made outwith the town (79% for convenience goods)
- Some poor quality shopfronts and advertisements detract from the appearance of the street
- Residents are choosing to travel to other shopping areas (primarily Musselburgh and Haddington)
- Can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long
- No branding/marketing of the town centre or coordination of businesses
- Perception that there should be a wider range of shops
- Pedestrian footways narrow in places
- North Berwick Town Centre has the lowest proportion of shops compared to the other East Lothian town centres.
- Over half of all North Berwick residents do not visit the town centre after 6pm
- Restaurants/cafes represent only 3% of the total units in North Berwick

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme offers grants for high quality repair and restoration projects for buildings and shops
- The former Coop Buildings in the centre of the town are being converted to new shops and residential properties
- Re-landscaping of civic space within the town centre
- Re-landscaping and tidying up of the open space between Lindores Drive and the former Infants School to create more useable and attractive space
- Proposed new Fraser Centre will attract more people to the town centre
- Former Infants School requires a new use to support the town centre
- On and off street parking can be managed to enforce short, medium and long stay parking to ensure that town centre users can find parking easily
- Installation of public wi-fi could allow specific marketing, attract people and allow businesses further advertising opportunity
- Encourage path links from new residential developments to town centre
- Claw back leaked expenditure through increasing range/quality of shops
- Encourage Class 3 uses in an attempt to increase the evening offer
- New development could provide an alternative through route, thereby reducing the volume of traffic in the town centre.
- Parking charges could raise income that could benefit the town centre

### **THREATS**

- Volume of new traffic in North Berwick as a result of new development could continue to adversely affect the town centre until a one way gyratory traffic flow scheme can be introduced
- High volumes of traffic could cause air pollution to rise triggering the need for an Air Quality Management Zone
- Lack of maintenance by building owners could harm the appearance of town centre buildings making it less attractive to new businesses
- In longer term Blindwells new settlement may also attract people away from North Berwick town centre
- Loss of civic space at Civic Square to create one way system and link Bridge Street to Well Wynd
- Parking charging could be introduced which may deter people from visiting the town centre
- Changes of use from shops (Class) 1 may increase Sui Generis (hot food take-away offer) instead of restaurants (Class 3)
- Online shopping

## NORTH BERWICK Health Check

### POPULATION

The latest available population estimates state that **13,719** people live in the North Berwick Coastal (NBC) ward, 13.2% of the population of East Lothian as a whole, making it the smallest ward in the county.

Across the ward approximately:

- 42.9% of the population live in the town of North Berwick
- 17.5% of the population live in Gullane
- 11.3% in Aberlady
- 28.3% reside in smaller rural settlements

### **Age Distribution (National Records of Scotland, 2016 mid-year estimates)**

	<b>North Berwick Coastal Ward</b>	<b>East Lothian</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
% of the population (0-15)	17.4	18.2	16.9
% of the population that are (16-64)	56.1	62.2	64.6
% of the population that are 65 or over	26.5	19.6	18.5

Overall the age distribution in North Berwick Ward when compared to Scotland has proportionally more non-working population, 6.9% more than the East Lothian rate and fewer people of working age.

### HOUSING

In 2017, the number of households in East Lothian was 45,301. This is a 1.2% increase from 44,749 households in 2016. In comparison, the number of households in Scotland overall increased by 0.7%.

Between 2016 and 2026, the number of households in East Lothian is projected to increase from 44,749 to 50,070. This is an 11.9% increase, which compares to a projected increase of 6.4% for Scotland as a whole.

In 2016, there were 6,292 dwellings in the NBC ward.

The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in North Berwick will yield **482** units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for the ward will yield **738** units taking the total to **1220** potential new homes in North Berwick ward by 2025.

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3.

## **RETAIL PATTERNS**

Town centre catchments:



### **CONVENIENCE – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Table 5.3 of the RCS (2015) shows convenience shopping patterns (with main food and top-up combined). This highlights the following from 2015:

#### **NORTH BERWICK**

In Zone 5,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of expenditure is kept inside North Berwick with the majority of the remainder going into Haddington (Zone 4). The Aldi is now trading in North Berwick and it was projected that this would consume the over trading. There will be minimal spare convenience expenditure in North Berwick.

### **COMPARISON – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The majority (70%) of expenditure takes place outside East Lothian, namely at Ford Kinnaird (Edinburgh) and Edinburgh Town Centre. The Retail Capacity Study (2015) concludes that there is substantial forecast comparison expenditure growth relating to the residents of East Lothian, so capacity is not a barrier to new comparison retail development in the Council area. However, forecast for expenditure indicate that only a small proportion of the leakage could be retained in East Lothian. The reason is that East Lothian does not have any major shopping centres. It is more probable that leakage of comparison expenditure to major destinations outside East Lothian will increase. Trends in internet shopping are also having a major effect.

The main issue will be to support the existing comparison retail floorspace in the town centres in East Lothian, through encouraging improvements to the quality and range of comparison shopping, in conjunction with other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town centres as destinations.

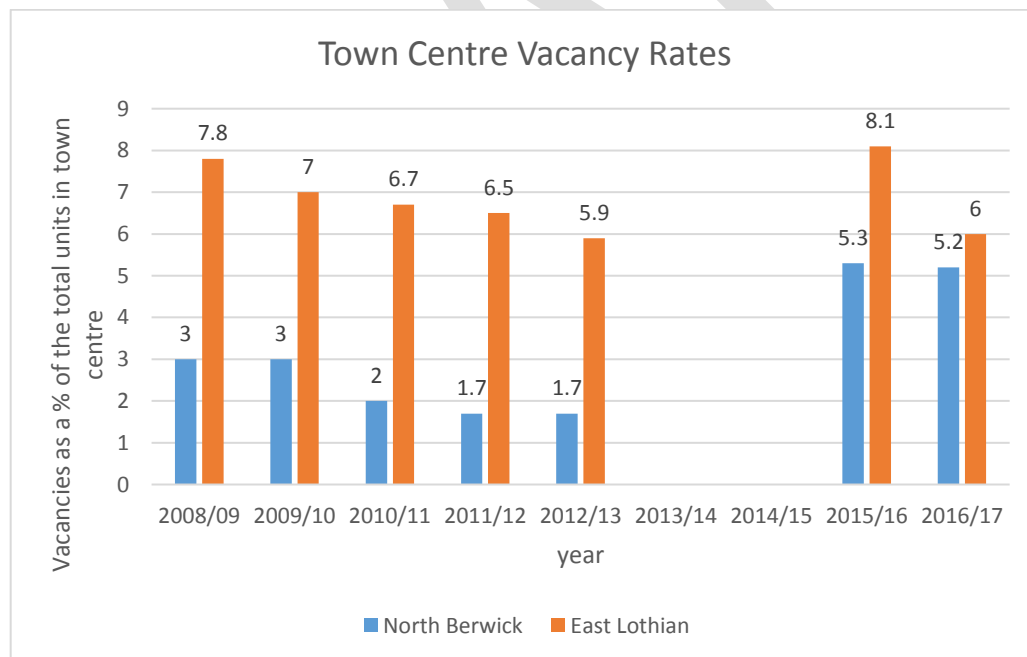
**BLINDWELLS**

The RCS concludes that under 2015 market conditions there is limited scope for a larger supermarket (despite the leakage in surrounding zones of Prestonpans and Tranent), however, as Blindwells develops out there may be opportunity for a larger supermarket over the longer term. In terms of major non-food retail development, a key factor is the location of Blindwells relatively close to Fort Kinnaird. It is only just over 6 miles or 11 minutes drive time, with very good accessibility along the A1. It may be too close for major comparison retail development at Blindwells to succeed, however, an updated appraisal inclusive of non-retail town centre uses is required.

**TOWN CENTRE ASSESSMENTS (quantitative)**

**Vacancy data** (measured as a percentage of available retail units in the area)

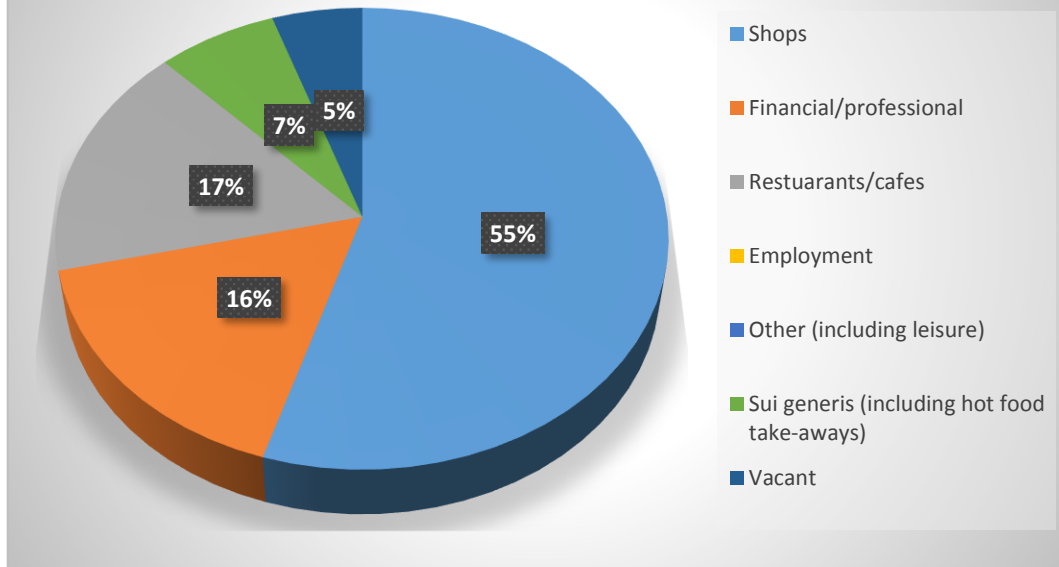
Vacancy rates have varied in North Berwick ward and showed a decline between 2008/09 and 2012/13, however the 2015/16 figure increased to an 8 year high. The 2016/17 figure shows North Berwick vacancy rates to be lower than the East Lothian average.



**Town Centre uses**

It is of interest to monitor the uses currently occupying the town centre units. The following charts demonstrate the spread of use classes in North Berwick, using data from the 2017 retail survey:

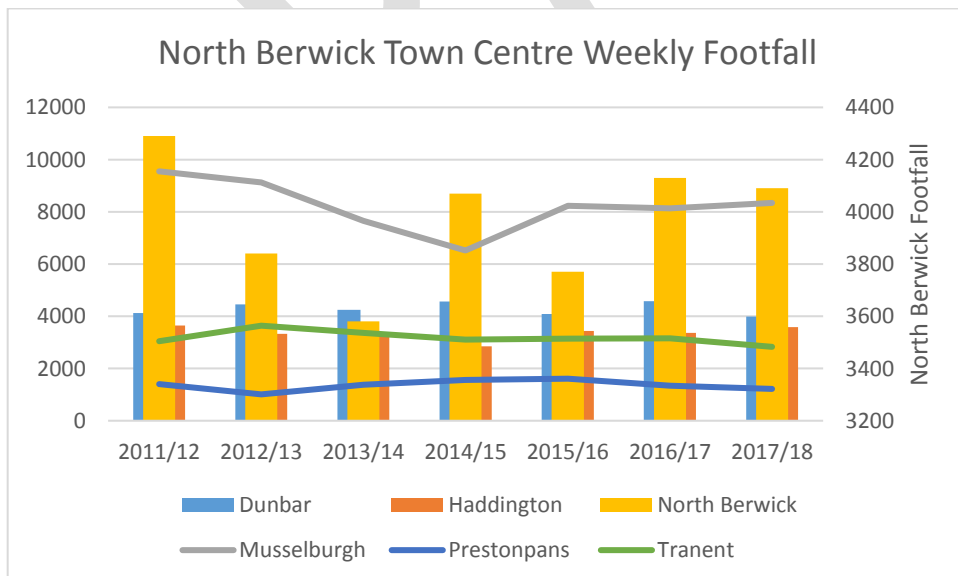
## North Berwick Town Centre - 2017



### Footfall

Pedestrian counts are undertaken annually in each town centre to establish weekly footfall rates for East Lothian's High Streets. The observations are November based and are not reflective of seasonal differences.

### **NORTH BERWICK**



Weekly footfall on North Berwick High St has increased by 14.25% since 2013/2014 and remains steady. In 2015/16 vacancy rates in the NBC ward were at an 8 year high of 5.3%.

Weekly footfall rates per head of ward population are 0.28 visits per person, behind Musselburgh (at 0.41 visits per person) and Dunbar (at 0.29 visits per person).

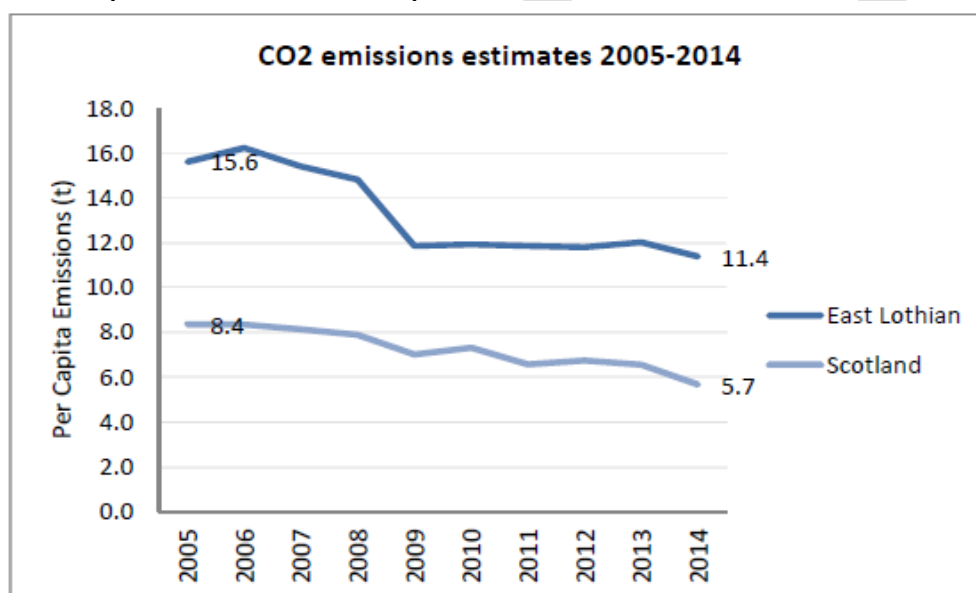
## **AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION**

In association with other plans the LDP will help to maintain or enhance air quality objectives. It will do this because it has taken these factors into account when selecting locations for development and by ensuring its development strategy is complemented by air quality mitigation measures. It will seek to integrate land use and transport and minimise the need to travel as well as the distance travelled. It will do this by promoting town centres as accessible locations for a mix of land uses and services and providing community services locally.

Currently air quality in East Lothian is very good. The Council has been annually reviewing and assessing local air quality since 2003. The majority of pollutants have been screened out in assessments and exceedences of air quality objectives for these pollutants across East Lothian are not considered likely.

In East Lothian there has been an overall decrease of 27.1% in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions between 2005 and 2014. However in 2014 East Lothian had an estimated 11.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita. This was the second highest rate in Scotland out of the 32 local authorities.

### **CO<sub>2</sub> Emission estimates per capita (tonnes per capita) in East Lothian and Scotland (UK Government 2016)**



The East Lothian Residents' Survey (2017) reported that 8% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, compared to 10% across East Lothian.

### **TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

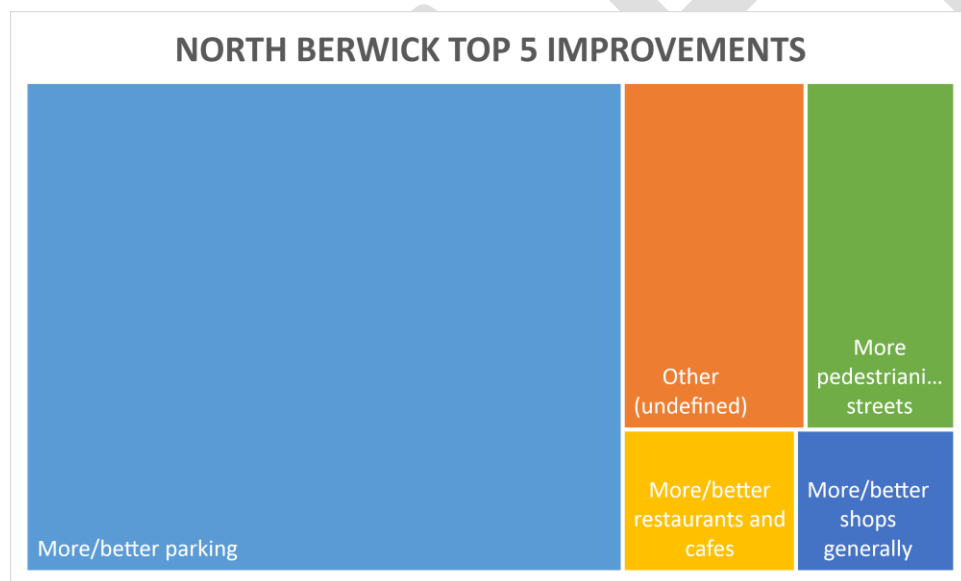
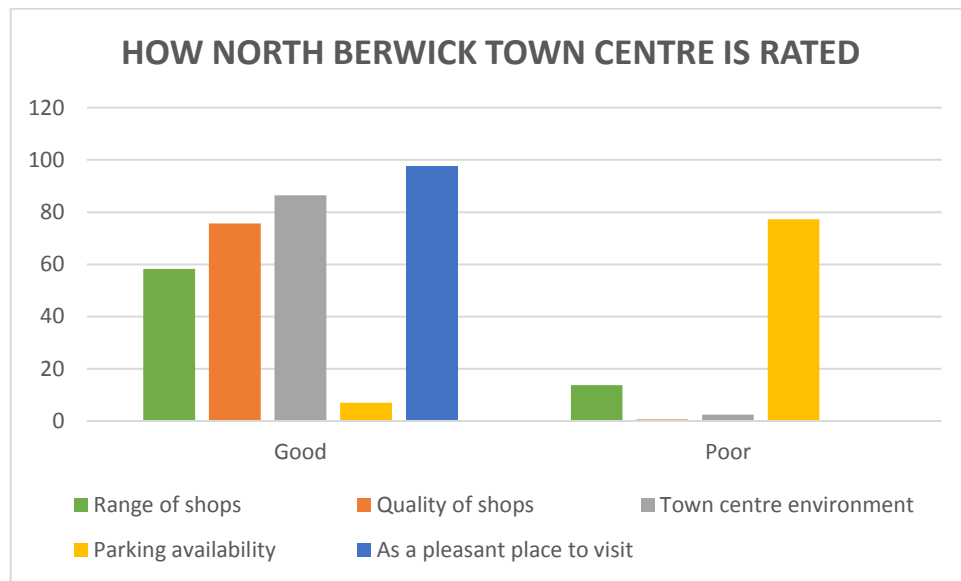
The following are the results from the 2015 RCS telephone survey:

#### **NORTH BERWICK**

83% of people who live in North Berwick visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. 26% visit daily. 34% people walk to the centre, 59% travel by car and less than 3% travel by bus. The majority of respondents recognise North Berwick Town centre as a pleasant place to visit with a good town centre environment. The quality and range of shops are also classed as good. Parking availability is the only feature of the town centre to be classed as



'poor'. Unsurprisingly there was overwhelming support (58%) for more/better parking as a feature of the town centre which would make people visit more often.



60% of people who live in North Berwick visit North Berwick Town Centre in the evenings (after 6pm). 14% do so on a weekly basis. The majority of respondents stated 'nothing' or 'don't know' to the question *what would make you visit North Berwick Town Centre more often in the evenings?* There is not therefore a top 5 list of improvements sought. Instead it is useful to measure what the night time economy offers. In this respect, 83% of those who use the town centre in the evening do so to visit restaurants or cafes, others to buy take-aways, visit pubs or wine bars or for a walk/stroll.

**Discussion**

In Haddington, Dunbar and North Berwick at least 50% of the population visit the town centre in the evening at least once a month. In North Berwick the figure is as high as 83%. These centres are more geographically remote and distanced from Edinburgh. This is also reflected

in the convenience expenditure, where a significant proportion is retained in the local centres of Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar, and any losses from North Berwick and Dunbar appear to be leaking to Haddington. In all three centres the improvement sought is more/better parking.

Considering the use classes at play in each town centre, all town centres support approximately 50% shops (class 1 retail). North Berwick has the highest proportion of shops at 55%. The previous Local Plan supports retailing and restricts change of use in town centres, but the new Local Development Plan 2016 introduces greater flexibility (Policy TC2) allowing for change of use between retailing, restaurants, businesses and offices and leisure and entertainment. This may see a wider mix of uses over the coming years and is something to consider in future monitoring. Greater flexibility may assist in increasing the night time offer.

Currently the highest proportion of restaurants/cafes in any town centre is found in North Berwick (This equals 19 class 3 units). Whilst restaurants/cafés is not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer some insight. Another side of the evening economy is represented by public houses/wine bars. These are difficult to identify when analysing use classes as, along with other uses, are defined as *sui generis*. However, *sui generis* includes hot-food take-aways, the majority of which provide an evening service.

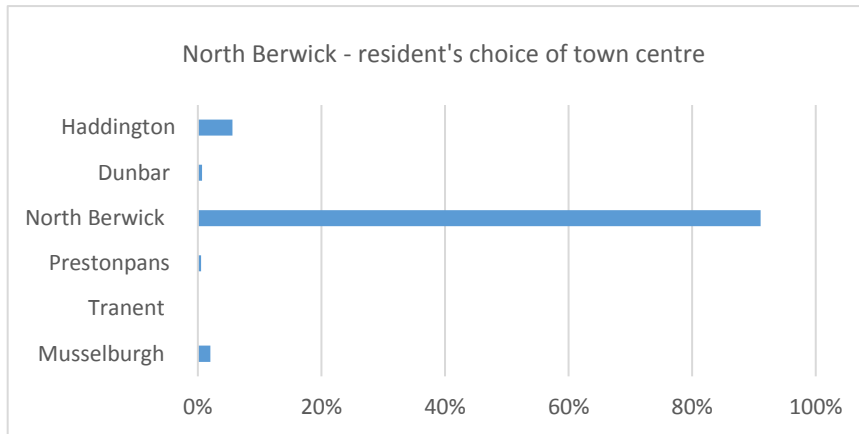
In conclusion it can be seen that the highest proportion of restaurants/cafes are located in the centres of North Berwick, Haddington and Dunbar – where there is the greatest use of the centres after 6pm. For residents of North Berwick the top priority for improving their area is *more/better parking*.

### **Citizen's panel – Survey 2018**

East Lothian Citizens' Panel survey from Spring 2018 provides the most up-to-date information available on town centre usage and perceptions. A total of 682 responses were received – 193 postal and 489 online. The emerging patterns are shown in the following analysis.

Question 5 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel questionnaire asked 'which of the following town centres do you visit most often for shopping, leisure and to access services'? Possible answers were Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, North Berwick, Dunbar and Haddington. It should be noted that there is no option to provide an alternative town centre, so the results show 100% results across the 6 centres. It is of most use to monitor which town centre local residents to those centres use.

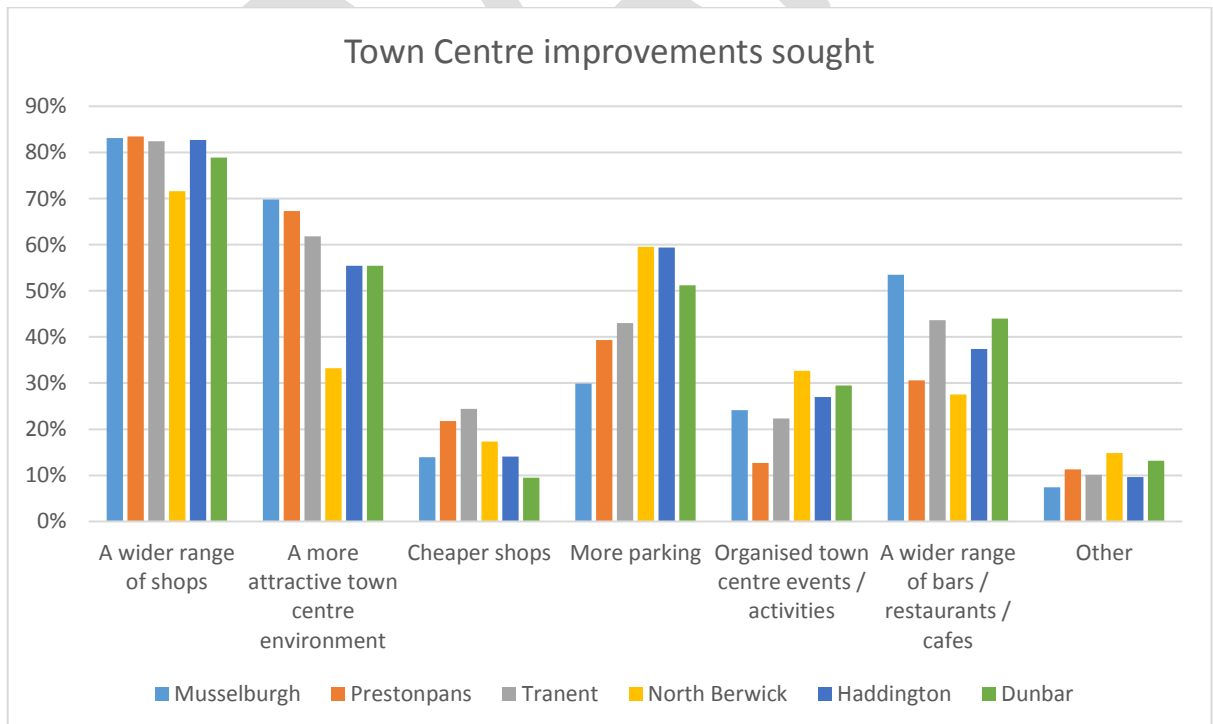
*Which town centre do people visit most often for shopping, leisure and services?*



Around 90% of North Berwick residents choose North Berwick town centre to visit most often. Again, this reinforces the 2015 RCS findings which found that ¾ of convenience expenditure is kept inside the North Berwick zone (Zone 5) and the majority of the remainder goes to Haddington. A number of North Berwick residents chose Haddington as their preferred centre to visit in the Citizen’s Panel survey.

Three years on and the survey results indicate similar trends –North Berwick residents choose to shop in their local town centre, although North Berwick residents do also visit Haddington.

Question 8 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asks ‘which 3 factors would be most likely to encourage you to use your local town centre more?’ The results are highlighted below:

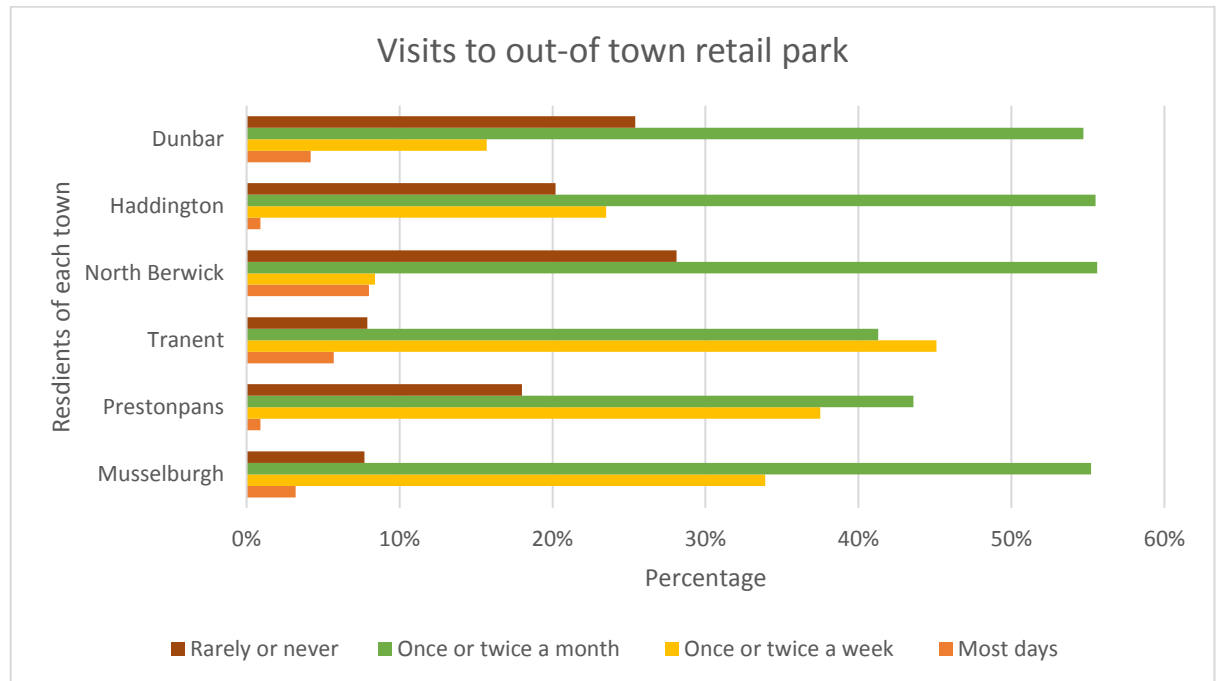


The results for each North Berwick’s top three issues show:

1. A wider range of shops
2. More parking
3. A more attractive town centre environment

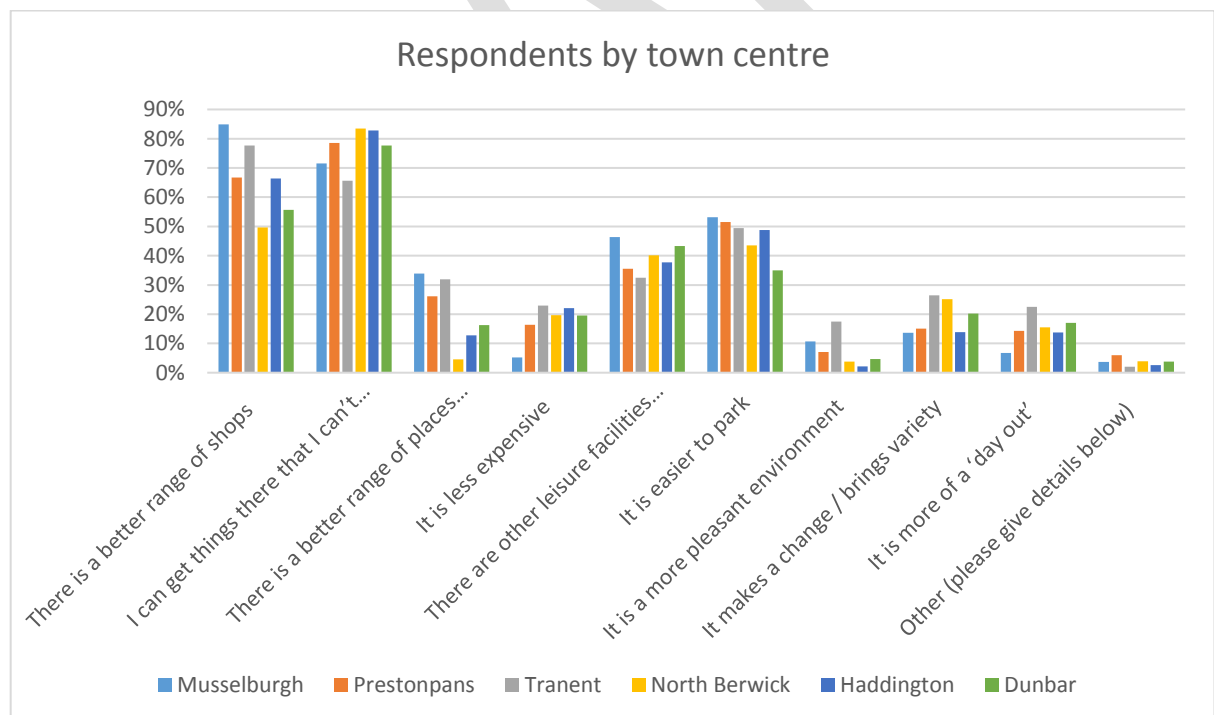
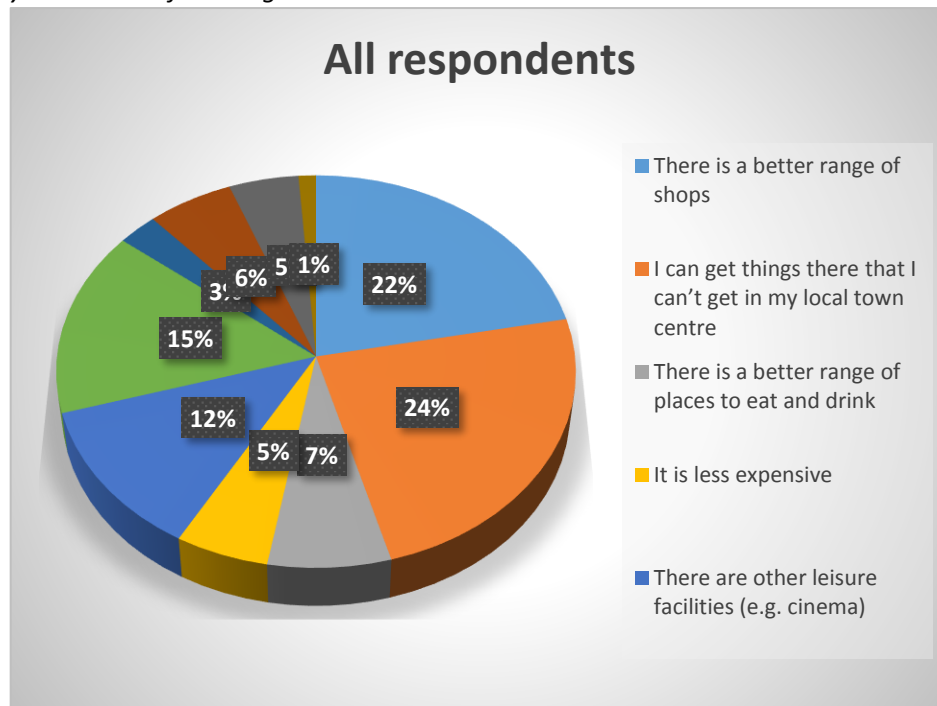
There is also a requirement for organised town centre events/activities. There is less concern in respect of cheaper shops for North Berwick. Whilst a wider range of shops and more parking were identified in the 2015 RCS telephone survey, the town centre environment was voted as 'good' for North Berwick.

Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asks 'how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?'



A large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a month or rarely/never. This is most likely because proximity to Edinburgh and the available out-of-town centres is further to travel. Very few people use an out-of-town retail centre daily. This is a good sign that suggests town centre usage, however, it should be borne in mind that the majority of out-of-town retail centres, such as Fort Kinnaird, are predominantly the sale of convenience goods, which few people buy daily.

Question 10 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asked 'If you go to an out-of town retail park for some shopping or leisure activities, rather than to your local town centre, what would be your reasons for doing so?'

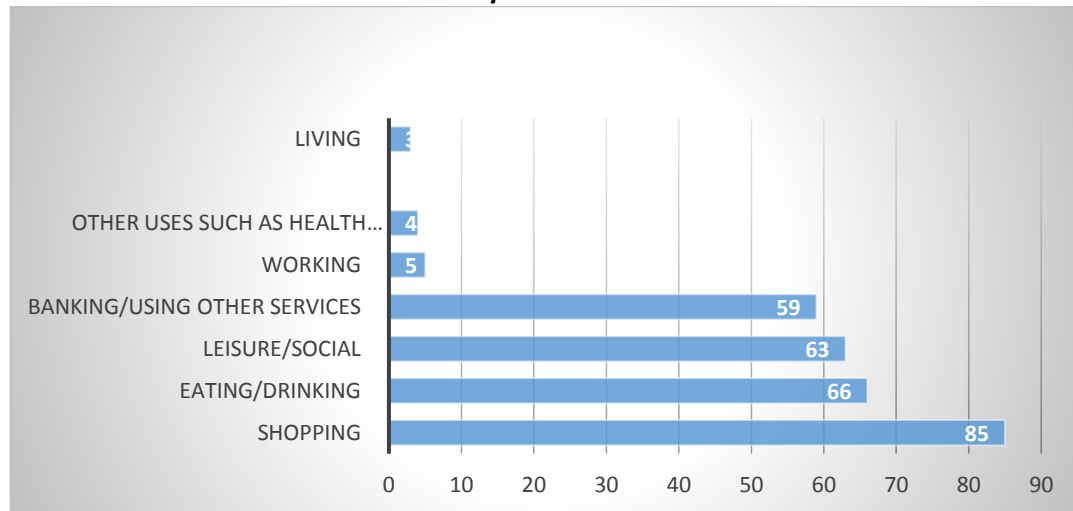


As expected people 84% refer to the ability to get things that are not available in their town centre and 50% state a better range of shops. Whilst it is possible to encourage an increased range of shops, restaurants and leisure facilities in the East Lothian town centres, proximity to the Edinburgh offer and, in particular, Fort Kinnaird will always play a part. It is extremely accessible, especially for the west of the district. The only other consideration to be

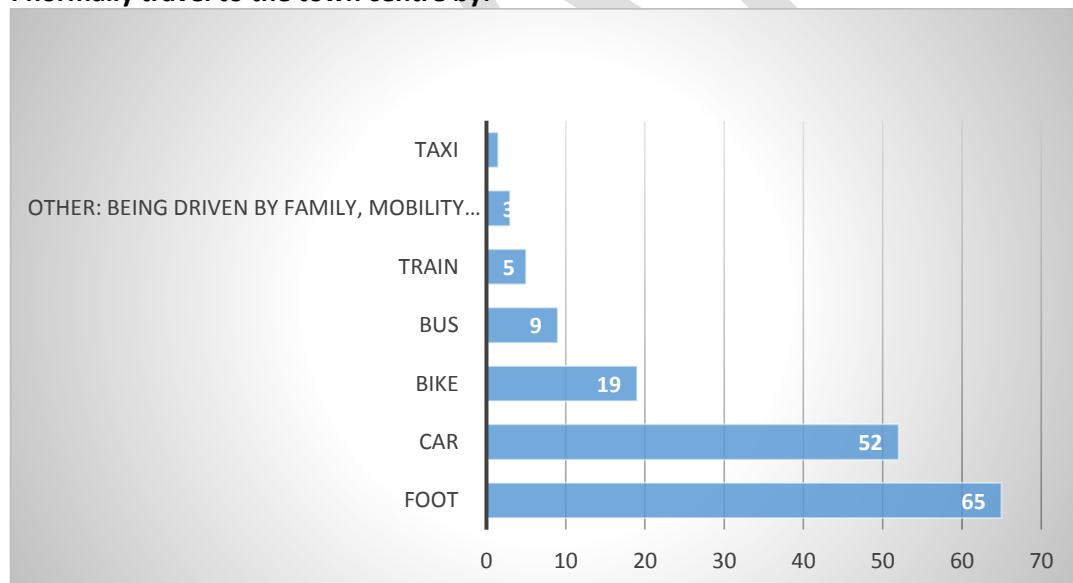
highlighted is the availability of parking. 44% of respondents claim it is easier to park at out-of-town centres than their own town centre. Whilst this is not an overwhelmingly large response, previous analysis indicates town centre parking is considered an issue.

### **North Berwick Charrette**

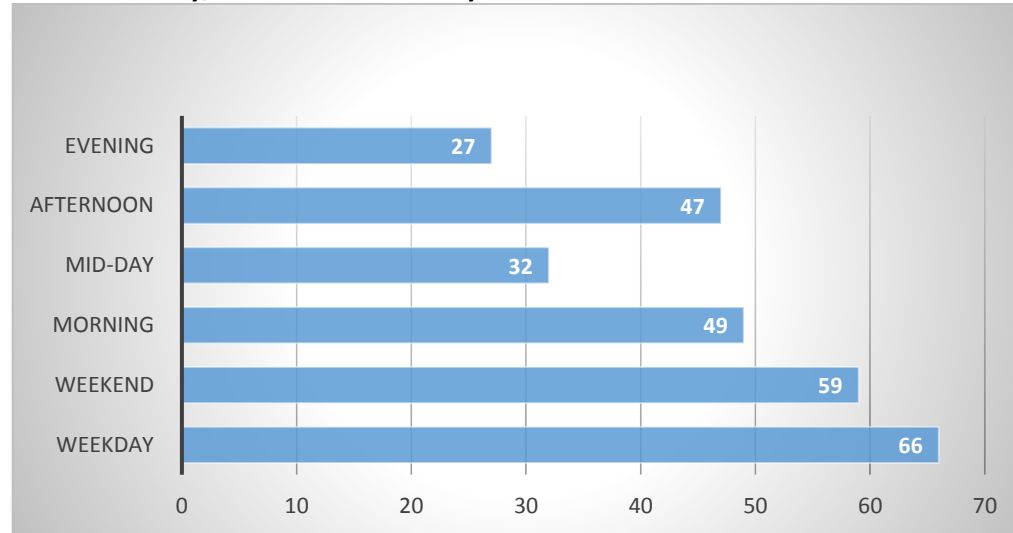
**I use North Berwick Town Centre mostly for:**



**I normally travel to the town centre by:**



### The time of day/week I am most likely to visit the town centre is:



### If I could make one improvement for North Berwick Town Centre, it would be...

#### North Berwick Town Centre would be perfect for me if...

#### I hope that in 10 years time North Berwick Town Centre will...

Analysis of the responses to these questions highlighted the following:

- **Pedestrianisation** in different forms is suggested, from **full to limited-time pedestrianisation** with consideration for Blue Badge and servicing access.
- A need to **retain car access** is felt, with a range of options suggested from keeping **access as it currently is, to limiting access by time** or for Blue Badge or servicing only.
- **Safer streets** are wanted, reducing the feeling of threat from moving vehicles through **wider pavements, with even surfaces**.
- **New uses** in the Town Centre are sought such as **markets or festivals**.
- The **character and vibrancy** of the Town Centre needs to be retained. This includes ensuring that there is a **diversity of retail** in the Town Centre and preventing the street from being filled entirely with one type, such as coffee shops.
- **Independent shops** are popular and being able to retain the ones that are there and attract new independent shops was identified as an important aspect of the Town Centre's character.
- **High Street quality** needs to remain high. Some shop fronts and buildings require maintenance or to be cleaned to ensure that the quality of the Town Centre remains high.
- **Community transport** including Park and Ride was suggested. A community bus service that serves the town with a regular route was mentioned multiple times.
- **Social spaces** – people inevitably meet others then know when they are in the Town Centre, having more places that are pleasant to stop and chat without having to step into the roadway to let people by were suggested.
- There are many other ideas for the Town Centre included additional toilets and changing facilities, clean pavements, more cycle racks and venues for arts and performances.

On the matter of Pedestrianisation, while a full range of options were discussed, the analysis of responses highlighted that the majority of viewpoints sit in the middle range, viewing this

as more nuanced than as a straight yes/no issue, rather something that needs to have degrees of flexibility built into it.

### **Town centre walk and talk**

The elements that scored low (3 or less), were:

- Moving around: difficulty for pedestrian movement, especially around the east end of the High Street and Law Road.

Traffic and parking: Parking was not considered an issue in itself, the management was considered poor and people do not know where to park.

- Housing and community: the range of housing was considered very restricted, mostly higher priced properties. One of the main reasons was the presence of holiday/second homes, which removes housing stock.

The elements that scored high (5 or more), were:

- Public transport: the area is very well connected with a good train and bus service
- Street and space
- Natural space: the area is rich in natural space i.e. the Lodge, the beach etc.
- Play and recreation
- Identity and belonging: the area has a strong identity but some felt that not everyone feels included

### **Movement and Connectivity**

- Create wider footways, particularly on the east end of High Street, to make the place more attractive and accessible.
- A low speed town centre, ideally lower than 20mph. This is to reduce the threatening feeling some people experience around traffic.
- Encourage different modes of transport – walking, cycling, and bus. This could include shuttle buses from the station to the town centre, and a wander bus that runs a route around the town.

Improved cycle routes into the town centre, such as along Beach Road.

- Explore pedestrianisation using timing to manage it, for example a seasonal pedestrianisation or restricted from 10am to 4pm.
- Improve wayfinding, with signage to the beach, centre, greenspaces, community facilities and other key points of interest.

### **Traffic and Parking**

- Ticketed parking in the town centre – first 20 minutes free, then charge after this.
- Manage the existing car parks more efficiently, prevent all day parking to free up more spaces for people visiting or shopping in the town centre.
- Ensure Blue Badge access to the town centre is retained.
- Enhance use of car parks that are under-used such as at the Recreation Park or the High School at weekends.
- Car park expansions, including multi-storey, at station, St Andrew Street, Imperial car parks.
- Resident parking schemes if a more restrictive parking regime is introduced in the town centre.

### **Equal Access**

- Improve access between train station and the Town Centre by marking out and enhancing a pedestrian route for those with restricted mobility.
- Note that not all who have additional access needs will have a Blue Badge.



- Planning for a dementia friendly town centre – consider the design, keeping consistency and familiarity as much as possible. Consult with these groups prior to finalising change.
- Benches and rest areas for people to sit and relax – including the idea of friendship or buddy benches, an idea for creating sociable places as sitting indicates you would like conversation or companionship.
- Improve the position and availability of Blue Badge parking including considering how to increase turnover of some Blue Badge spaces for those ‘popping in’.
- Improved access to the beach for wheelchair users.

### **Facilities**

- Business space somewhere in the Town Centre – collaborative, hot-desk space for small companies, home workers, tele-commuters etc. Potential at the Police Station.
- Shoe shop in Town Centre
- Indoor play centre – that has provision and activities for full age range. Nothing has replaced Space skatepark leaving a gap for those who used this.
- Arts centre with performance space.
- Additional public toilets at the station and western end of the Town.

### **Sustainability**

- Moving away from car travel to active forms of travel, such as walking and cycling, would be a primary way of making the Town more sustainable.
- Sustainability should permeate every decision about change, it should be a key category that projects are measured against.

### **Outcomes:**

- General footway widths
- Dealing with side street junctions that are excessively wide, with relatively high traffic flows
- Marked, informal, possibly raised crossings to help people walk between the sea front and the High street.
- Continuous footways across very lightly-used side streets
- More comprehensive remodelling of junctions that are busier than those junctions in point 2.
- Major improvements to walking conditions along whole street sections (the eastern end of High Street was identified as a priority for the Town Centre)
- Creation of a Town-wide 20 mph zone
- Signalised crossings and junctions to be re-timed to reduce waiting times for pedestrians

### **Parking**

Comments from the Charrette exercise on parking were;

- **Width of the pavements** needs to be addressed; currently they are a barrier to access. Getting the space to add width was more difficult, with a range of ideas being proposed from removing car parking to ‘herring-bone’ parking in specific areas and more radical solutions such as rebuilding one side of the high street 2 metres back to create more space.
- **Crossings on High Street** – both old and young people highlighted the lack of crossings on High Street as an issue. This has an impact on the confidence that these

groups have in using and accessing the town centre. Introducing crossing points where people are sure that they have priority would make a positive difference.

- **Managing deliveries and waste collection**, this is an issue that can create a rolling road block down the High Street, as well as having an impact on the character and amenity of the town centre. School pupils had some very creative ideas for changing this, from using management to ensure these activities take place at suitable times, to conveyor belts or tracks that run down the street for deliveries which could double up as transport for people with mobility issues.
- **Seasonal events**, creating space in the town centre by removing car traffic would allow for markets, festivals or street parties to take place seasonally.
- Other innovative ideas suggested included: **push-cart hire** scheme for carrying equipment to the beach, a **community bus loyalty scheme** to encourage people to use community bus schemes, **attractive walking and cycling routes** to make this a better option than the car and **using technology to limit the number of vehicles** that are on High Street at any one time.

The proposed Parking Strategy for East Lothian notes the following for North Berwick

#### Problems & Issues

- Significant seasonal parking problems linked to tourism. Insufficient off-street parking to accommodate peak demand leading to on-street overflow parking affecting residential parking.
- On-street overflow parking around The Glebe car park and North Berwick railway station
- Lack of enforcement of parking restrictions leading to deliberate violation
- Lack of provision for long-stay parking creating long-stay on-street parking
- Lack of Blue Badge parking on High Street
- Retailers experience difficulties with deliveries including abuse of loading bays and double parking on the carriageway
- Signage to off-street car parks could be improved
- Short-term on-street problems at peak school travel periods around schools
- Aspirations to promote High Street as a pedestrian area with limited parking

#### Parking Solutions

- Control through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- Implementation of parking management hierarchy defining designated short-stay, medium-stay and long-stay parking locations
- Proposed extension to existing resident's parking area along with ongoing review of Resident's Parking Schemes
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Potential new car park to increase capacity and reduce cars circulating the town centre searching for parking
- Consider the introduction of on –off street parking charges
- Provision of designated long-stay car parks
- Ongoing review of Blue Badge parking
- Ongoing review of waiting and loading provision
- Review and implementation of improved signage to off-street car parks where required

DRAFT

**Dunbar  
Town  
Centre  
Strategy**

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2018

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**Supplementary  
Guidance to the East  
Lothian Local  
Development Plan  
2018**

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# DUNBAR TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

## 1.0 Purpose of the Dunbar Town Centre Strategy

- 1.1 The Dunbar Town Centre Strategy forms a part of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2018 (LDP). It is statutory supplementary guidance focusing on the changes that the Local Development Plan is planning to the town of Dunbar and the implications of that change for the town centre. The LDP introduces new planning policies adopting the town centre first principle and has detailed planning policies for town centres to guide development.
- 1.2 The town centre strategy looks in more detail than the LDP into the town centre analysing its strengths and weaknesses, its performance as a place and will coordinate actions to it can be improved and regenerated.
- 1.3 In addition to the LDP and its supporting documents, the town centre strategy takes account of the Council's emerging Local Transport Strategy and Local Housing Strategy as well as the Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership Area Partnership Area Plan and the Dunbar Conservation Area Management Plan. The town centre strategy will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centre.

## 2.0 Policy Context

### Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres

- 2.1 The adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) promotes the Town Centre First Principle which requires that uses that would attract significant footfall must consider locating to a town or local centre first and then, sequentially, to an edge of centre location, other commercial centre or out of centre location. This is designed to support town centres in the long term and help to ensure that they are vibrant and sustainable.
- 2.2 To further support town centres and to minimise the length of time commercial premises lie vacant the principle of a change of use between retail, business, office, restaurant leisure and entertainment is supported. As town centres evolve there could be pressure to change uses to residential; this may be acceptable in non-ground floor or backland locations but will only be acceptable in a ground floor location where there is evidence that it is no longer viable as a town or local centre use.
- 2.3 The policy on hot food outlets supports hot food outlets in town and local centres provided that there will be no significant impact on local amenity, including cumulatively with other existing take-always in the area and are consistent with other LDP policies including in relation to parking and road safety.
- 2.4 The town centre strategy is proposed to be approved as supplementary guidance to the LDP. It therefore remains approved until the East Lothian Local Development

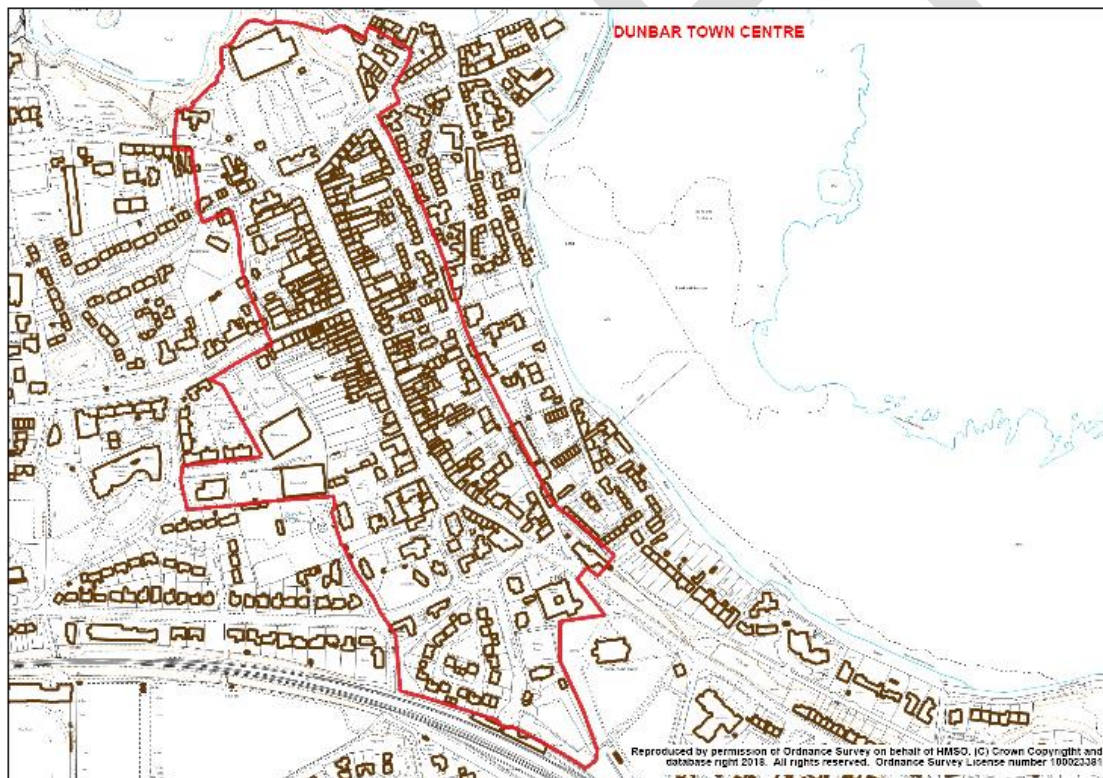
Plan 2018 is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective.

### 3.0 Form and Content of the Dunbar Town Centre Strategy

3.1 The Dunbar town centre strategy adopts a strategic approach to guide the improvement of Dunbar town centre. A health check of the town centre is undertaken followed by a series of Actions to address the issues arising in the town centre. Each action is given an indicative short, medium or long timescale with lead and joint working parties for its implementation identified. These can be regularly updated in future.

### 4.0 Background

4.1 The LDP defines the Dunbar town centre, one of six defined town centres in East Lothian. This is the spatial area where the LDP policies outlined in Section 2 above apply and also the spatial area where the town centre strategy actions that follow apply.



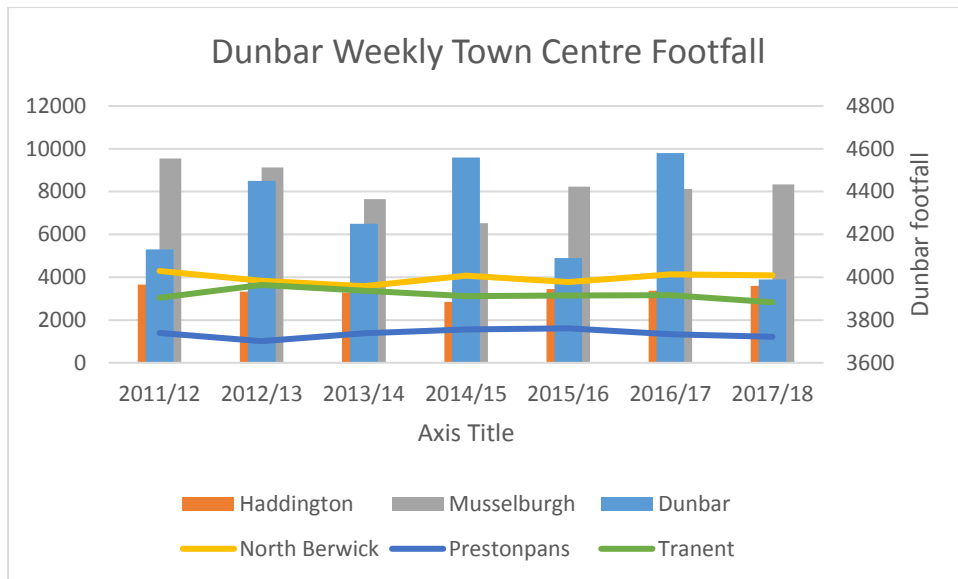
4.2 Dunbar has experienced significant growth over the last 15 years with the Hallhill developments to the south and expansion to the south east and at Belhaven and its population has increased to an estimated 9,421. The LDP plans for further growth in the town with housing allocations at Hallhill North (250), Brodie Road (50), Newtonlees (250) and Beveridge Row (90). Land at Hallhill South West is still being built out for 500 houses. These developments will increase the population. Further housing is also planned at East Linton, Innerwick and Spott within the catchment

area of Dunbar Grammar School. The LDP also allocates approximately 22 hectares of land for employment at Dunbar and East Linton.

- 4.3 Much of the town centre is included in the designated Dunbar Conservation Area which covers the oldest parts of the town around High Street and towards the harbour as well as some of its Georgian and Victorian expansion. The purpose of a conservation area is to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the architectural and historic character of the area and that should ensure over time ensure that the area is improved and enhanced. The Dunbar Conservation Area Character Statement and other supplementary planning guidance to the LDP on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment, which contains guidance on development in conservation areas including shopfronts and advertisements are important in setting standards for improving the overall environment of the Conservation Area.

## **5.0 Dunbar Town Centre Analysis**

- 5.1 Dunbar town centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are included in a table contained in Appendix 1. This has helped to inform the proposed actions for the town centre strategy.
- 5.2 The SWOT analysis has been prepared following the collection of data in an up-to-date Health Check for Dunbar. The following points have been identified in the Health Check and subsequent SWOT:
- 5.3 The ward of Dunbar includes Dunbar and East Linton, with 67.1% living in Dunbar/West Barns. The population is set to grow, with a proposed total of 1350 houses planned for Dunbar by 2025. Dunbar is easily accessible by road since the A1 was upgraded to dual carriageway to Edinburgh though there is scope for improvement southbound towards Berwick on Tweed and Newcastle. Local rail services have improved though there are fewer stopping long distance trains than a number of years ago. Bus services have received significant investment since East Coast Buses took over from First Group in 2015 leading to faster and more comfortable journeys between Dunbar and Edinburgh. Border Buses provide daytime links to Eyemouth and Berwick on Tweed and there is a local town service provided by a number of services.
- 5.4 Tourism is still significant to the town's economy. Dunbar's strengths relate to being the birthplace of John Muir, the founder of America's National Parks with the John Muir Birthplace visitor attraction in High Street and the long distance footpath, now running from Dunbar to Helensburgh, the John Muir Way. The path is attracting additional tourists and visitors to the town and in so doing contributing to the local economy. Other attractions such as East Links Family Park, John Muir Country Park and the Leisure Pool also attract significant numbers of visitors.
- 5.5 The town has seen a rise in vacant buildings. Town Centre vacancy rates are higher than the average for East Lothian. The footfall has fluctuated from year to year going from the highest in 4 years in 2014/15 to the lowest the next year, then rising to the highest in 6 years in 2016/2017 and recently dropping to a 7 year low in 2017/18.



- 5.6 There are a wide range of uses represented in the town centre, with almost half representing shops (Class 1). There are a higher proportion of Sui Generis uses (which can include pubs and bookmakers) than there are restaurants for use after 6pm. Although over 50% of residents visit the Town Centre after 6pm, this is not frequently and the majority go once a month or less.
- 5.7 Dunbar is more geographically remote and distanced from Edinburgh and reflects in the convenience expenditure, where a significant proportion (66%) is retained in the local centre of Dunbar, and any losses appear to be leaking to Haddington. The improvement sought for the centre is more/better parking with 56% citing parking availability as poor.
- 5.8 The Town Centre has benefitted from an initiative in 2018 by the Community Council to facelift High Street buildings by repainting building facades which has significantly benefitted the town’s appearance though has not remedied underlying building defects such as defective gutters and downpipes or render that is reaching the end of its life. The town needs to ensure that parking space is available for the length of stay that drivers require. Lack of enforcement currently can see low turnover of spaces. More/better parking is identified by residents as a much needed improvement.
- 5.9 The Citizen’s panel survey (2018) identified a need for a wider range of shops, a more attractive town centre environment and more parking.

**6.0 Regeneration Strategy for Dunbar town centre**

- 6.1 Dunbar’s heyday as a popular tourist destination fell away in the late 1970s and the town entered a period of economic decline. Revived by investment in the town’s infrastructure through the Dunbar Initiative, which won a British Urban Regeneration Award in 1999 and by a Townscape Heritage Initiative 2004-2010, Dunbar has undergone periods of regeneration.
- 6.2 However, significant problems still remain in the town centre with many buildings, often those in multiple ownership, in poor external condition. Some upper floor and backland accommodation is long vacant and sub standard. The former Abbey



Church, a landmark listed building at the south end of High Street, has been mostly disused for the last 50 years and is in need of investment and a new purpose. Other buildings within the town centre such as the former Assembly Rooms on Church Street are also long vacant and in poor condition. Although the main streets were comprehensively re-landscaped in the 1990s under the Dunbar Initiative many historic private closes off High Street would benefit from environmental improvement.

- 6.3 Dunbar's town centre can benefit from the presence of new residents when new houses are occupied. However, the town centre will only continue to attract people if it is attractive to users, residents and investors. An initiative in 2018 by the Community Council to facelift High Street buildings by repainting building facades has significantly benefitted the town's appearance though has not remedied underlying building defects such as defective gutters and downpipes or render that is reaching the end of its life. The town also needs to ensure that parking space is available for the length of stay that drivers require and that the town also encourages easy access to the town centre on foot or by cycle.
- 6.4 To be successful the town centre requires investment to provide the following:
- A positive new use for long vacant buildings that harm the overall appearance of the centre such as the former Abbey Church, 86-88 High Street, Assembly Rooms, The Dolphin building and 46-48 High Street
  - Redevelop vacant sites and derelict buildings including small sites within the backlands off High Street, Castle Street and Church Street including the Black Bull Close buildings
  - Encourage owners to undertake comprehensive repair and restoration work to several buildings in the town centre which previous grant awarding initiatives have demonstrated can be very effective in enhancing the overall appearance of the town centre. Examples of tenement properties in need of repair include but are not limited to, nos. 82-84, 63-67, 46-48, 74-78, 1 West Port, 86-88, etc.
  - Encourage visual improvements to the quality of shopfronts and advertisements on High Street to be more in keeping with the traditional nature of the street.

## **7.0 Main Issues in Dunbar Town Centre**

- 7.1 This section outlines the main issues and actions to address them within Dunbar town centre following the analysis. It provides an indication of timescale and details of who needs to lead action to implement each project.

### **Diversity of Land Use**

- 7.2 Dunbar is classified as an independent to interdependent town i.e. it has good diversity of jobs and residents generally travel shorter distances to work or to study. The town attracts people from neighbouring towns to access some of its assets and

jobs. Statistically, Dunbar has circa 2,000 jobs an increase of 3% between 2009 and 2014.<sup>1</sup>

- 7.3 Dunbar town centre is located within the historic core of the town. Since the town has expanded the town centre is no longer in the physical centre of the built up area and therefore has to work harder to encourage all the town's residents to use it. No town centre can compete well unless it is an attractive place to be in and contains a good range of attractions for people. The town centre therefore needs to be in good repair and to pay attention to detail to keep it as such, including the maintenance of buildings and the streetscape, its commercial frontages and advertisements, and its ability to provide parking and access to public transport for its users.
- 7.4 Footfall trends within Dunbar town centre over the last 7 years, are very varied (see 5.5 above) within Dunbar compared with a steady growth since 2013/14 elsewhere in East Lothian as generally fewer people visit the High Street for retail purposes. However with a larger population to draw on the town centre it should be capable of attracting its new residents on a more frequent basis.
- 7.5 With a static number of commercial units within the town centre and a range that is diversifying slightly away from retail towards more services and café/restaurant uses, Dunbar town centre is adjusting to modern trends.
- 7.6 Dunbar town centre is centred on High Street and West Port. The town centre contains 106 commercial premises most of which are located on the ground floor of historic buildings. While this adds character to the overall shopping experience it also limits the ability of premises to expand. Dunbar's population has been steadily expanding since 2001 and this trend will continue until at least 2024. The town centre has an expanding catchment population to draw on however this has not prevented a rise in vacancy rates.
- 7.7 A local centre has also been established at Spott Road on the edge of the town with a supermarket, garden centre, fast food restaurant and hotel and as well as servicing A1 traffic is a local draw for houses to the south of the town, this may be a cause of reduced footfall and increased vacancy in the town centre. With increasing population there is no need to consider the reduction in size of the town centre commercial area and the strategy concentrates on improving conditions within the town centre to make it as attractive an environment as possible for the town.
- 7.8 Analysis has shown that there is a range of retail, services and café restaurant uses in Dunbar town centre. There are fewer leisure and office uses. There is currently no shared business hub facility in the town centre though this has been under discussion for some time and could be an additional facility that could benefit the town if the right location can be identified.

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland's Towns Partnership  
<https://www.scotlandstowns.org/understanding-scottish-places>

## 8.0 ACTIONS FOR DUNBAR TOWN CENTRE

### Movement and Access

#### 8.1 Actions include:

- Street surface material repairs within Dunbar town centre
- Reorganisation of town centre car parking
- Improve access to the Town Centre

Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 1: Street surface material repairs within Dunbar town centre				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
The materials used in street works to each street in the town centre will be those in contained in Appendix I of the Dunbar Conservation Area Management Plan	East Lothian Council	This work is ongoing on an as necessary basis		The streets are being maintained on this basis.

8.2 Dunbar High Street was landscaped to a consistent design using high quality materials for footways, kerbs, parking areas and crossing points in the 1990s. Street furniture was colour coordinated with black lighting columns, posts for traffic signs, benches and bins. The design of the street uses mini roundabouts and on street servicing to slow traffic. Wide footways and short crossing points gives plenty space for pedestrians and has allowed for the placing of flower containers. Nameplates based on historic names or uses of closes were installed. The design qualities of this streetscape should be maintained. Although street furniture should be kept to a minimum to minimise clutter, where new street furniture is required it should be of a design that complements the materials used in the street. The footways at West Port, Victoria Street and Abbeylands were also relaid in materials that match the High Street.

8.3 The Area Partnership prioritised maintenance for High Street infrastructure in its Area Plan and this work is ongoing. Appendix 1 of the Dunbar Conservation Area Management Plan contains a section on approved street finishes on each street in the conservation area and this will be carried forward for Road Services to implement as and when necessary.

<b>Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 2 : Reorganisation of town centre car parking</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Reorganisation of town centre car park stay length	ELC Road Services	Subject to approval of the Parking Strategy		Following approval of the ELC Parking Strategy this work will commence

8.4 Subject to confirmation of the Parking Strategy as part of the Local Transport Strategy, the town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre car parks. Dunbar is served by the following currently free to use parking spaces:

<i>Where</i>	<i>Proposed Duration</i>
<i>On street spaces</i>	short stay
<i>Abbeylands</i>	short stay
<i>Bleachingfield</i>	medium stay
<i>Hallhill Sports Centre</i>	medium stay
<i>The Vennel</i>	medium stay
<i>Dunbar Leisure Pool</i>	medium stay
<i>Countess Crescent (Blue badge holders only)</i>	medium stay
<i>Lauderdale Park car park</i>	Medium / part long stay

8.5 These car parks will be reorganised to define them as short, medium and long stay car parks to ensure that parking is available when it is required and for the requisite length of time that people want. Some may be trialed first to test that they are of the correct duration. Availability of parking is important to the success of the town centre and this measure is aimed at ensuring that people who are using the town centre can find parking.

<b>Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 3: Improve access to the Town Centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Encourage pedestrian and cycle access to Dunbar town centre	ELC Road Services / Sustrans / Area Partnership	Investigate the need for additional or improved foot and cycle path links to access Dunbar town centre from		The need for path links are assessed and required to be installed as part of the planning approval

		outlying residential areas		process for new development. New path links are being considered.
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8.6 Dunbar High Street lies in the centre of the town and is accessible by walking and cycling along several path routes. Some however would benefit from improvement to encourage their use and new path routes or links should be identified. Sustrans is working with ELC to look at new path routes within Dunbar. A new path access to the south side of Dunbar Rail Station is to be implemented following a feasibility study. To encourage cycling more, safe cycle parking must also be provided. While cycle parking is available at some destinations additional town centre cycle parking should be available as part of access improvements.

#### Built Environment and Public Spaces

8.7 Dunbar town centre is located within its designated Dunbar Conservation Area the character and appearance of which requires to be preserved or enhanced. This includes improving the overall quality of buildings in High Street including shopfronts and advertisements. Actions include:

- Shopfront and Advertisements
- Encourage the repair of stone walls within the town centre
- Public wi-fi

Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 4: Shopfront and Advertisements				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements in Dunbar town centre	ELC Planning Service and Economic Development and Strategic Investment / Commercial premises owners, occupiers and lessees	Improvements will be encouraged at the time of application for advertisements or shop alterations		Ongoing

8.8 Further improvements could be made to some shopfronts and advertisements in the High Street to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of High Street. New advertisements almost always require advertisement consent and shopfront alterations and advertisements must comply with the Council's LDP supplementary planning guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment.

<b>Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 5: Encourage the repair of stone walls within the town centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Encourage the repair of the stone boundary walls that contribute to the built character of Dunbar	The Ridge / ELC /Historic Environment Scotland	1.The Ridge is to seek funding to develop its traditional skills training and can then bid for other stone wall repair work.		Training schemes are well underway with seven trainees to date and walls repaired in the Ridge Garden project backlands.

- 8.9 One of the built features that makes up much of the character of Dunbar town centre is the historic use of natural stone boundary walls. A programme of stone mason training undertaken by The Ridge begun in 2017 and supported by Historic Environment Scotland has begun to address the repair of these walls within and adjacent to the Black Bull Close. This work is supported in principle as it adds to the historic character of the town. Behind the west side of High Street and adjacent to the Coop supermarket grounds lies an old retaining wall, known as the Monk’s Walk, which is formed of two walls that once had a narrow path along them. The path has long been closed off but the high walls remain though in places are in poor condition. If the wall were repaired and cleared of some of the unmanaged trees and bushes that have grown up alongside the path could be reopened with entry gates as a medieval walkway that would allow an appreciation of the historic burgh layout and allow a circular path to and from High Street. This would be an addition to the town’s tourist and visitor attractions.

<b>Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 6: Public wi-fi</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Provision of public wi-fi in Dunbar town centre	ELC Development	Establish the feasibility of and funding for free public wi-fi provision to support the town centre		Initial survey work has been undertaken

- 8.10 The availability of public wi-fi would be an asset to Dunbar town centre. It offers potential to boost tourism with information potentially available via the internet and potential for direct marketing by businesses within the town centre. It would also help generally towards increased digital inclusion.

## Regeneration of Buildings at Risk

- 8.11 A main issue for the town centre is to encourage the repair and reuse of those buildings that require improvement and the continued maintenance of the rest to ensure that the historic High Street continues to act as the unique selling point for the town centre.
- 8.12 Most of the buildings in High Street are statutorily listed buildings with several listed for their value as a group. These include buildings at 51-64, 76-82, 84-97, 137-140 High Street. Actions for improvement include:
- Sourcing Funding for Repairs to Buildings
  - Encourage Buildings at Risk to be brought into Positive Use
  - Statutory action to require external repair of privately owned buildings in multiple ownership
  - Encourage the redevelopment of vacant sites within Dunbar town centre

Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 7: Sourcing Funding for Repairs to Buildings				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Seek national funding to award grants for repairs to buildings in Dunbar Town Centre	East Lothian Council in partnership with The Ridge	1. Preparation of a bid for a CARS for an appropriate part of Dunbar Conservation Area 2. Consider applications for other funding opportunities as they arise for Dunbar Town Centre		Survey work has commenced to identify potential projects

- 8.13 Financial assistance in the form of grants for general building repair buildings is no longer generally available. Owners of buildings remain responsible for their repair including to the common elements of a building such as the roof, chimneys, stair, gutters and downpipes. Where buildings, including listed buildings, fail to be kept in a good state of repair a statutory notice can be served on owners requiring its repair. If the notice is not complied with then the Council must undertake the work and claim costs back in full from the owners.
- 8.14 Periodically, funding organisations such as Historic Environment Scotland's Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS), have funding programmes to which bids can be made that provide grants to support the repair and enhancement of property within a conservation area. The Council supports such bids where there is

both an identified heritage need and a strong economic case that supports the regeneration of the area. Despite the last major grant awarding programme in Dunbar completing in 2010, there are still a significant number of buildings in need of repair within the heart of the town centre that would justify a bid for a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. Accordingly, a bid will be submitted for Dunbar Conservation Area for 2019.

- 8.15 The Ridge, a local third sector organisation, runs traditional skills training in stone masonry and has repaired several old rigg walls in the backlands off High Street. This work should be an integral part of a proposed CARS bid for the town.

<b>Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 8: Encourage Buildings at Risk to be brought into Positive Use</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Work with private owners to identify potential solutions to bring buildings back into positive use	East Lothian Council /Private Owners/The Ridge	1. Consider how a bid for a CARS scheme in 2019 or similar could help owners realise repair and reuse of their buildings 2. Explore all other means of encouraging the repair and reuse of these buildings		ELC and The Ridge has undertaken a feasibility study into the conversion of Black Bull Close into community uses

- 8.16 There are a number of buildings at risk within Dunbar town centre. These include:

Building	Details	Ownership
Abbey Church, High Street	Vacant B Listed former church	Privately owned
The Dolphin, 2 Queen's Road	Vacant three storey building with planning permission for conversion to 4 flats and 2 shops	Privately owned
46-48 High Street	Vacant three storey building	East Lothian Council
52 High Street (former Lothian Hotel)	-	Privately owned
86 High Street – upper floors above the Dunbar Value shop	Listed Building	Ownership unknown
Black Bull Close – derelict buildings to rear of 72-78 High Street	Listed Building	East Lothian Council



Old Stores to rear of 102-104 High Street	Listed building	Privately owned
Buildings to rear of Cossar's Wynd	Planning permission granted for conversion of warehouse to a house	Privately owned
Corn Exchange, off High Street	Used by the town maintenance team and by the community Christmas Lights group	East Lothian Council

- 8.17 If repair work fails to be undertaken, buildings may deteriorate to the point where the building presents a public danger, such as the threat of a part of the building falling to the ground. When property becomes uninhabitable because of its condition this is detrimental to the overall appearance of the town centre.
- 8.18 Positive reuse of these buildings would benefit the town centre both in terms of its appearance but also by their town centre use. There is opportunity to consider office or workshop use including use as a shared business hub, community use or by providing new residential accommodation that in turn provides new residents within the town centre to help support its economy. The Corn Exchange is to undergo external repairs to make it wind and watertight due for completion by the end of 2018.

<b>Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 9: Statutory action to require external repair of privately owned buildings in multiple ownership</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Consider statutory action to occupied town centre buildings to ensure common repairs	ELC EDSI and Planning Service / private owners	1 Consider buildings that require repairs to common elements for statutory action if necessary		This project has not yet started

- 8.19 In addition to empty buildings at risk, an increasing number of occupied buildings in the town centre are becoming at risk from lack of maintenance to common areas, most commonly where a building has multiple private owners. If a grants scheme becomes available again in the town centre then owners of such properties may be eligible to apply for the larger proportion of the cost of external building repairs. However some owners may not apply and their buildings, if not maintained, could deteriorate to the point where they become dangerous or unfit for occupation. To prevent this and any subsequent adverse affect on the appearance of the town centre, statutory action may be required to require that repairs are completed. Such action would be most effective if there was a grants programme available that could

assist with the costs of repair and therefore action should be considered in the short term.

<b>Dunbar Town Centre Strategy: Action 10: Encourage the redevelopment of vacant sites within Dunbar town centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Work with private owners to identify potential solutions to bring vacant sites into positive use in line with LDP policies	East Lothian Council /Private Owners	1. Identify the vacant sites within the town 2. Work proactively with owners on potential solutions		This project will be ongoing

8.20 Dunbar town centre also contains small areas of underused, vacant land. Much of this sits in the backlands behind High Street and therefore in less prominent locations, but other sites are more prominent. Where land is suitable for redevelopment in line with relevant LDP policies, and can be adequately accessed and serviced it should be developed, either to provide commercial space or residential development to attract additional people to the town centre. In the backlands sites may not always be possible to access safely or may be difficult and expensive to build on. Public garden space or pocket park use may be a possible interim or longer term use on a suitable site.

## 9.0 The Way Forward

9.1 This strategy forms statutory supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan. The health checks can be updated regularly and the strategy should be monitored and revised in line with revisions to the LDP Action Programme.

**DUNBAR APPENDIX 1 – SWOT AND HEALTH CHECK**

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### STRENGTHS

- Railway station and bus stops close to the town centre
- History and Historic Buildings in Conservation Area
- High quality landscaped town centre streets
- Sea and attractive harbours a short walk from centre
- John Muir Way ends in Dunbar town centre
- Attractions and facilities such as the Swimming Pool, John Muir Birthplace and Town House Museum, Health Centre located centrally
- Growing town with a further 2,500 people after new housing development who can be expected to use the town centre supporting businesses and potentially helping to create new ones.
- Strong and active community including Dunbar Trades Association
- Community group Dunbar In Bloom has enhanced the town's appearance using floral displays
- Low commercial unit vacancy rate
- CCTV coverage discourages town centre crime

### WEAKNESSES

- High proportion of retail expenditure particularly on comparison goods made outwith the town
- Town centre is relatively remote from new housing areas
- Buildings in poor repair in High Street
- Vacant and derelict buildings detract from town centre
- Vacancy rates on the rise.
- Commercial premises are restricted in size on High Street
- Some lower quality shopfronts and advertisements
- Limited choice of hotels
- No large public function hall
- No business hub for co-working space
- Few multiple commercial businesses
- High levels of commuting from Dunbar particularly to Edinburgh
- Town centre closes are often dark and unwelcoming
- Footfall is low

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- On and off street parking needs managed to identify short, medium and long stay parking to ensure that town centre users can find parking easily
- People can day trip from Edinburgh to Dunbar
- John Muir Way walkers increasing year on year
- Residents of new housing will increase disposable income
- Belhaven Brewery developing more of a tourist and visitor role to historic brewery
- More speciality shops
- Further interpretation information for visitors
- Improved path links to town centre
- Encourage more town centre living in undeveloped buildings and sites
- Installation of public wi-fi could allow specific marketing, attract people and allow businesses further advertising opportunity
- Parking charges could raise income that could benefit the town centre

**THREATS**

- If the local centre at ASDA/Garden Centre expanded it could attract residents away from the town centre
- Parking charging could be introduced which may deter people from visiting the town centre
- On line shopping
- Residents of new housing south of town may not feel the need to use the town centre
- Lack of investment in the repair of town centre buildings harms its appearance and economic prospects
- Lack of larger retail premises on High Street deters some investors

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## DUNBAR Health Check

### POPULATION

The 2016 mid-year population estimates state that **14,041** people live in the Dunbar and East Linton ward

As of 2016 mid year population estimates 13.5% of the population of East Lothian live in the Dunbar and East Linton Ward, meaning it is one of the least populated wards in East Lothian. 67.1% of the population of the ward live in Dunbar/West Barns.

Across the ward approximately:

- 67.1% of the population of the ward live in Dunbar/West Barns
- 27.8% reside in rural settlements
- 5.1% reside in East Linton
- In the Dunbar & East Linton ward 48.6% are male and 51.4% are female

### **Age Distribution (National Records of Scotland, 2016 mid-year estimates)**

	<b>Dunbar and East Linton Ward</b>	<b>East Lothian</b>	<b>Scotland</b>
% of the population (0-15)	19.9%	18.2%	16.9%
% of the population that are (16-64)	60.2%	62.2%	64.6%
% of the population that are 65 or over	20.0%	19.6%	18.5%

The 2016 mid-year population estimates showed that 20% of the population in the ward are aged 65 or over, this is projected to increase to 23.2% in 2027. Overall the age distribution in the Dunbar Ward is similar to East Lothian as a whole. However when compared to Scotland there are proportionally more children and those of a non-working age in Dunbar with fewer people of working age.

### HOUSING

In 2017, the number of households in East Lothian was 45,301. This is a 1.2% increase from 44,749 households in 2016. In comparison, the number of households in Scotland overall increased by 0.7%.

Between 2016 and 2026, the number of households in East Lothian is projected to increase from 44,749 to 50,070. This is an 11.9% increase, which compares to a projected increase of 6.4% for Scotland as a whole.

In 2016 there were 6,320 dwellings in the Dunbar & East Linton ward, equal to 13.5% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian.

The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in Dunbar will yield **468** units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for

the ward will yield **882** units taking the total to **1350** potential new homes in Dunbar ward by 2025.

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3.

### **RETAIL PATTERNS**

Town centre catchments:



### **CONVENIENCE – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Table 5.3 of the RCS (2015) shows convenience shopping patterns (with main food and top-up combined). This highlights the following from 2015:

In zone 6, Dunbar, 66% of the convenience shopping is undertaken in the area, most of the balance is done in Haddington. There is some under trading in Dunbar. The main opportunity is to strengthen the quality of the convenience shops in the town centre.

### **COMPARISON – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The majority (70%) of expenditure takes place outside East Lothian, namely at Ford Kinnaird (Edinburgh) and Edinburgh Town Centre. The Retail Capacity Study (2015) concludes that there is substantial forecast comparison expenditure growth relating to the residents of East Lothian, so capacity is not a barrier to new comparison retail development in the Council area. However, forecast for expenditure indicate that only a small proportion of the leakage could be retained in East Lothian. The reason is that East Lothian does not have any major shopping centres. It is more probable that leakage of comparison expenditure to major destinations outside East Lothian will increase. Trends in internet shopping are also having a major effect.



The main issue will be to support the existing comparison retail floorspace in the town centres in East Lothian, through encouraging improvements to the quality and range of comparison shopping, in conjunction with other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town centres as destinations.

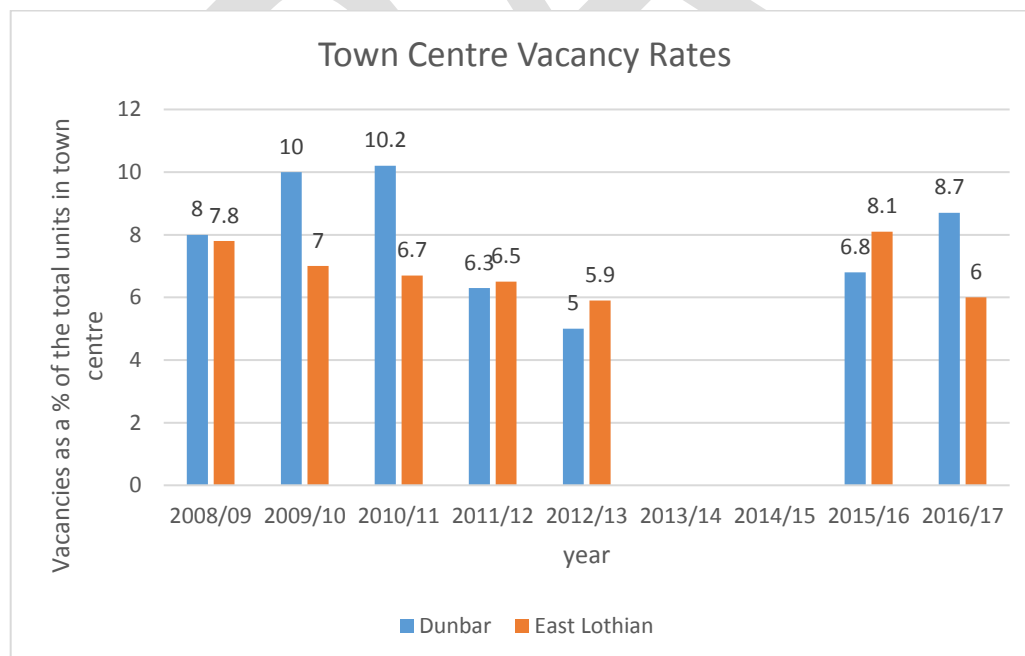
## **BLINDWELLS**

The RCS concludes that under 2015 market conditions there is limited scope for a larger supermarket (despite the leakage in surrounding zones of Prestonpans and Tranent), however, as Blindwells develops out there may be opportunity for a larger supermarket over the longer term. In terms of major non-food retail development, a key factor is the location of Blindwells relatively close to Fort Kinnaird. It is only just over 6 miles or 11 minutes drive time with very good accessibility along the A1. It is probably too close for any major comparison retail development at Blindwells to succeed. From the appraisal, provision for development of a local centre to mainly serve the expanding population at Blindwells appears the most likely scenario to succeed.

## **TOWN CENTRE ASSESSMENTS (quantitative)**

Vacancy data (measured as a percentage of available retail units in the area)

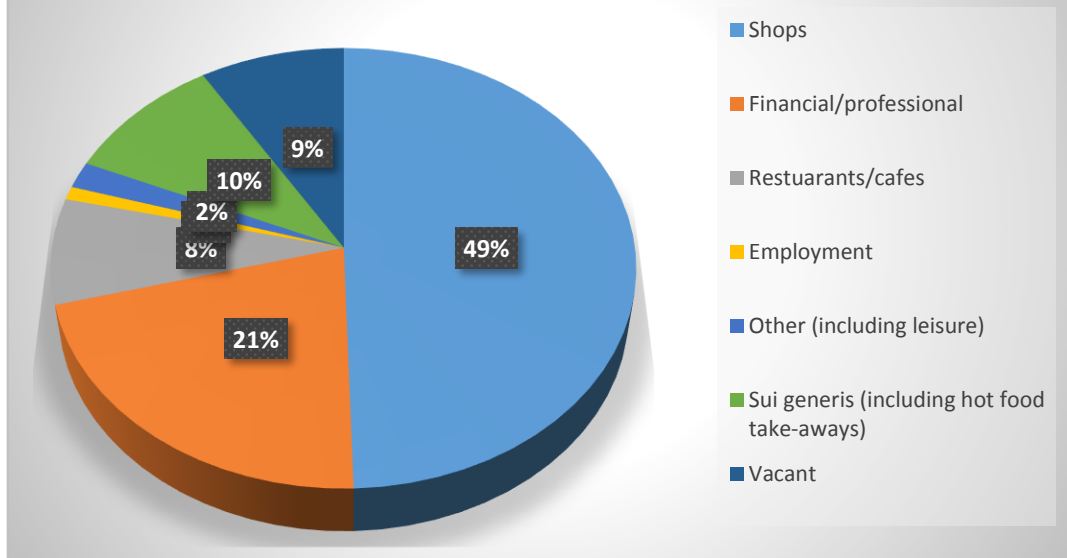
- Vacancy rates increased by 1.9% in 2016/17 when compared to the last available figure in 2015/16
- The 2016/17 figure shows Dunbar & East Linton vacancy rates to be higher than the East Lothian average



## **Town Centre uses**

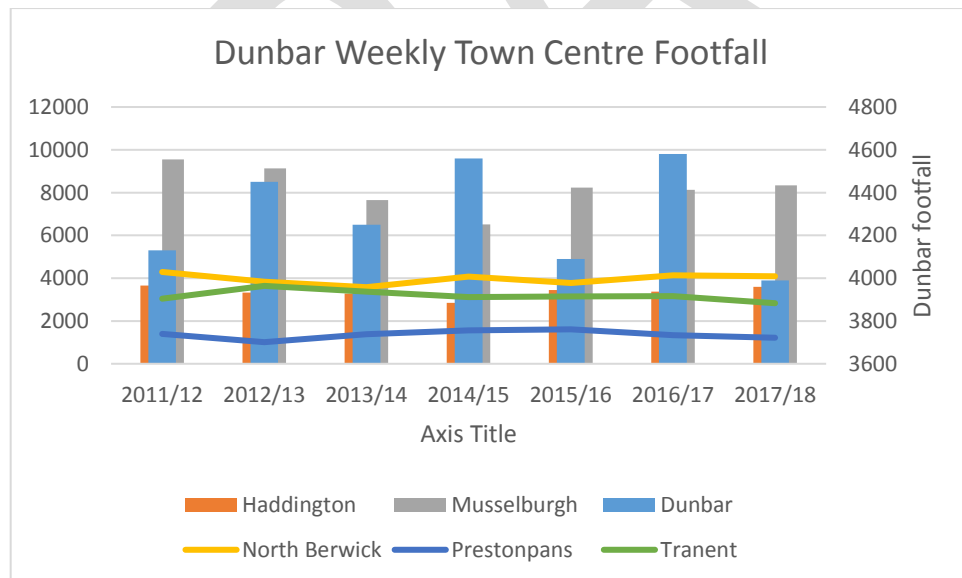
It is of interest to monitor the uses currently occupying the town centre units. The following charts demonstrate the spread of use classes in Dunbar, using data from the 2017 retail survey:

## Dunbar Town Centre 2017



### Footfall

Pedestrian counts are undertaken annually in each town centre to establish weekly footfall rates for East Lothian's High Streets. The observations are November based and are not reflective of seasonal differences.



Weekly town footfall in Dunbar town centre is at its lowest since 2011/12 and decreasing by 12.8% in one year (2016/17-2017/18), with vacancy rates increasing by 1.9% in the same year.

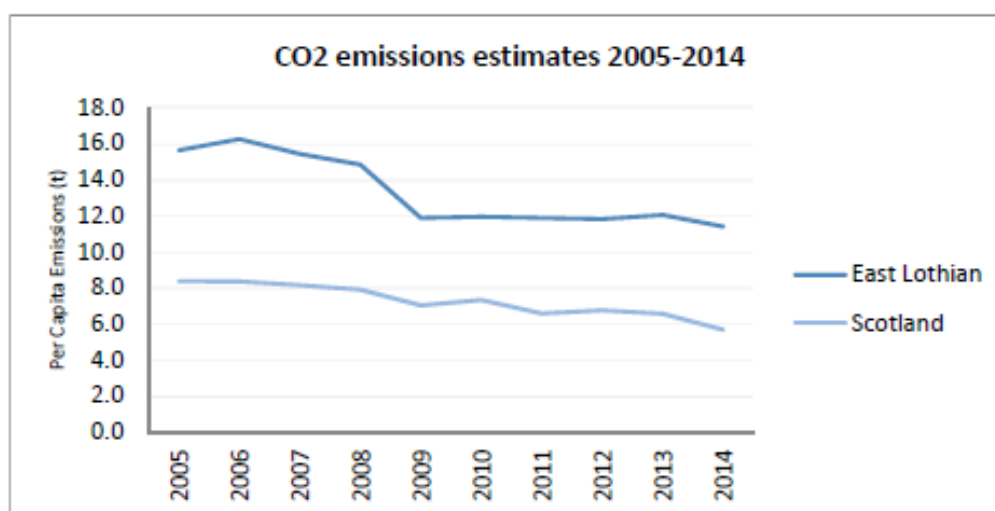
## **AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION**

In association with other plans the LDP will help to maintain or enhance air quality objectives. It will do this because it has taken these factors into account when selecting locations for development and by ensuring its development strategy is complemented by air quality mitigation measures. It will seek to integrate land use and transport and minimise the need to travel as well as the distance travelled. It will do this by promoting town centres as accessible locations for a mix of land uses and services and providing community services locally.

Currently air quality in East Lothian is very good. The Council has been annually reviewing and assessing local air quality since 2003. The majority of pollutants have been screened out in assessments and exceedences of air quality objectives for these pollutants across East Lothian are not considered likely.

In East Lothian there has been an overall decrease of 27.1% in CO2 emissions per capita. This was the second highest rate in Scotland out of the 32 local authorities. Industry and commercial accounted for 62.6% of CO2 emissions, followed by Transport (16.7%) and Domestic (16.5%).

### **CO2 Emission estimates per capita (tonnes per capita) in East Lothian and Scotland (UK Government 2016)**

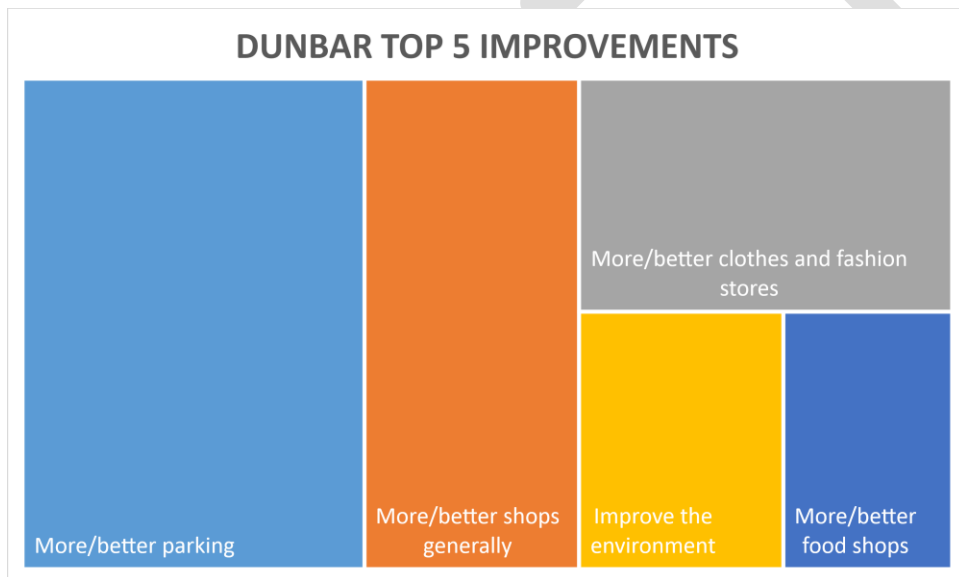
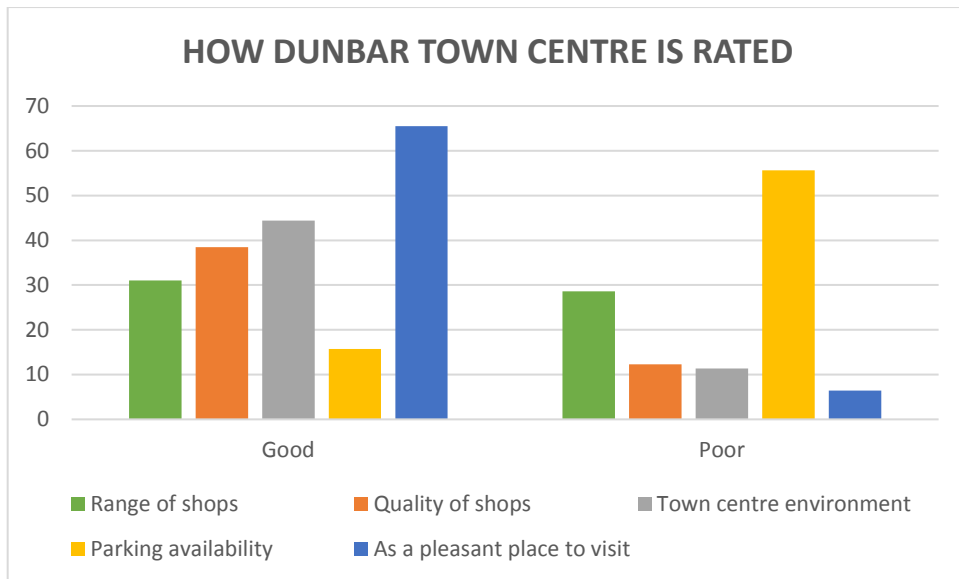


The East Lothian Residents' Survey (2017) reported that 8% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, compared to 10% across East Lothian.

### **TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

The following are the results from the 2015 RCS telephone survey:

68% of people who live in Dunbar visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. 12% visit daily. 39% people walk to the centre, 50% travel by car and less than 5% travel by bus. Dunbar is rated as a good place to visit with a good town centre environment. Parking availability is the biggest issue for respondents with 56% citing parking availability as poor. The top 5 improvements sought are more/better parking, more/better shops and improvement to the environment.



Over 50% of the respondents from Dunbar visit Dunbar Town Centre in the evenings (after 6pm). However, the majority of those visit once a month or less (43%). The top 5 things that would make people visit the Town Centre in the evening are:

1. More/better restaurants and cafes
2. More/better pubs and wine bars
3. Other (Undisclosed)
4. More leisure facilities
5. Shops open later

#### **Discussion**

In Haddington, Dunbar and North Berwick at least 50% of the population visit the town centre in the evening at least once a month. In North Berwick the figure is as high as 82%. These centres are more geographically remote and distanced from Edinburgh. This is also reflected in the convenience expenditure, where a significant proportion is retained in the local centres

of Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar, and any losses from North Berwick and Dunbar appear to be leaking to Haddington. In all three centres the improvement sought is more/better parking.

Considering the use classes at play in each town centre, all town centres support approximately 50% shops (class 1 retail). The previous Local Plan supports retailing and restricts change of use in town centres, but the new Local Development Plan 2016 introduces greater flexibility (Policy TC2) allowing for change of use between retailing, restaurants, businesses and offices and leisure and entertainment. This may see a wider mix of uses over the coming years and is something to consider in future monitoring. Greater flexibility may assist in increasing the night time offer.

Restaurants/cafes represent 8% of the overall town centre uses in Dunbar. Whilst restaurants/cafés is not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer some insight. Another side of the evening economy is represented by public houses/wine bars. These are difficult to identify when analysing use classes as, along with other uses, are defined as sui generis. However, sui generis includes hot-food take-aways, the majority of which provide an evening service.

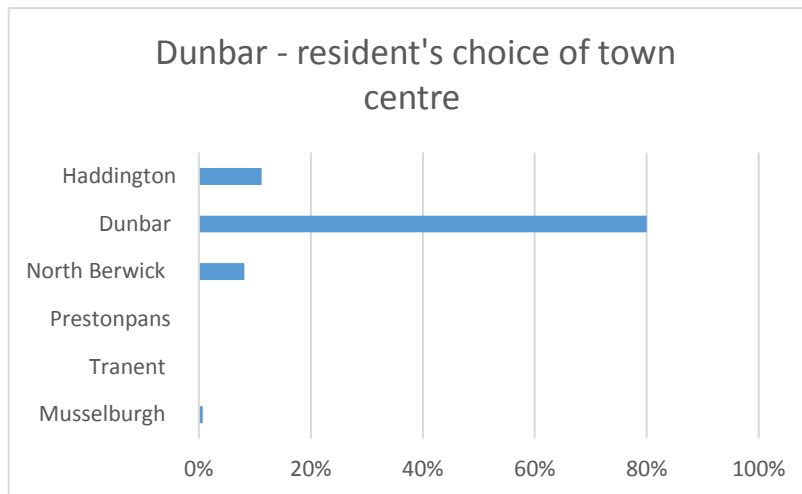
It can be seen that the highest proportion of restaurants/cafes are located in the centres of North Berwick, Haddington and Dunbar – where there is the greatest use of the centres after 6pm. For residents of Dunbar the top priority for improving the evening economy are *more/better restaurants and cafes and more/better pubs and wine bars*.

#### **Citizen's panel – Survey 2018**

East Lothian Citizens' Panel survey from Spring 2018 provides the most up-to-date information available on town centre usage and perceptions. A total of 682 responses were received – 193 postal and 489 online. The emerging patterns are shown in the following analysis.

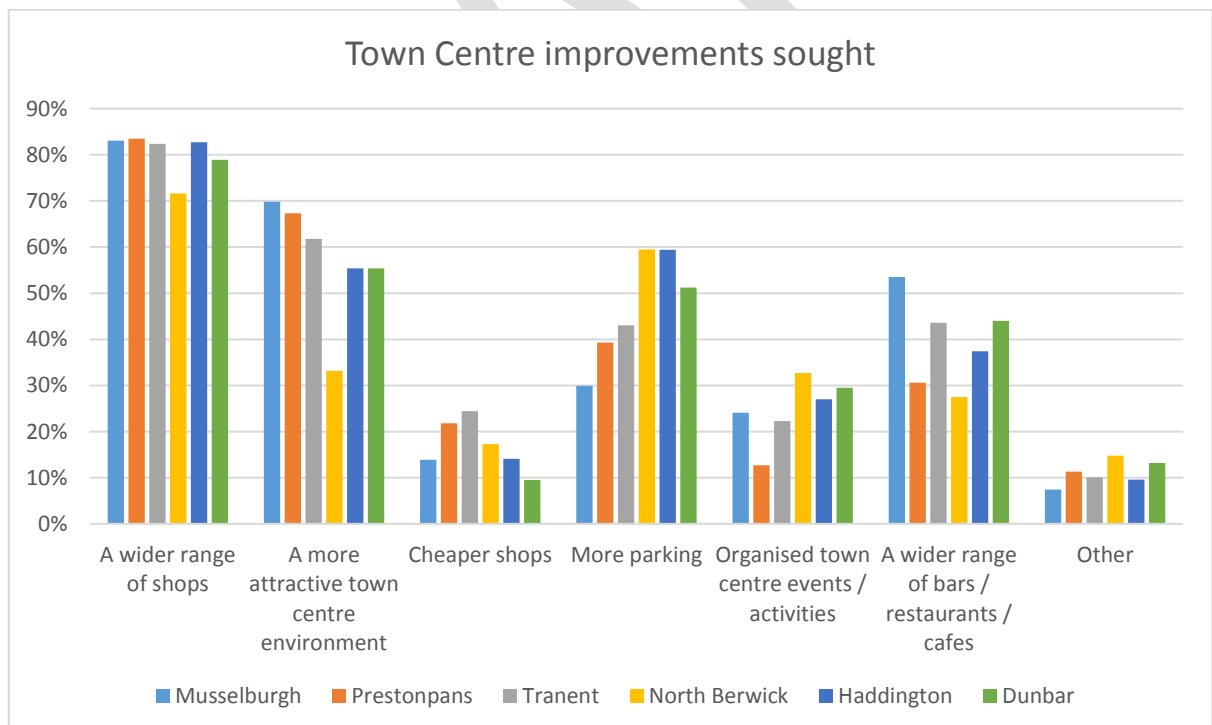
Question 5 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel questionnaire asked 'which of the following town centres do you visit most often for shopping, leisure and to access services'? Possible answers were Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, North Berwick, Dunbar and Haddington. It should be noted that there is no option to provide an alternative town centre, so the results show 100% results across the 6 centres. It is of most use to monitor which town centre local residents to those centres use.

Which town centre do people visit most often for shopping, leisure and services?



The findings of the Citizen's panel questionnaire indicate that 80% of Dunbar residents visit Dunbar town centre more often than other East Lothian centres. Over 10% of residents choose to visit Haddington. This reinforces the 2015 RCS convenience expenditure assessment which found that 66% of convenience shopping is undertaken in Dunbar, most of the balance is done in Haddington.

Question 8 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asks 'which 3 factors would be most likely to encourage you to use your local town centre more?' The results are highlighted below:

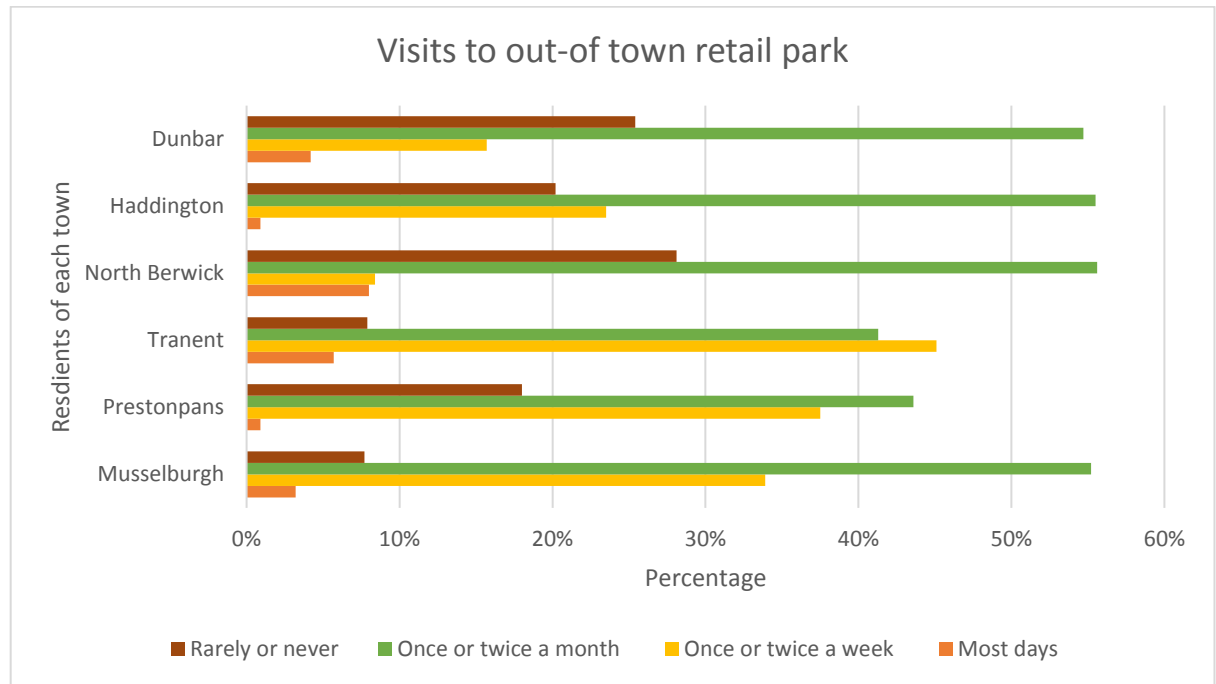


The results are similar for each town centre with the top three issues across the board showing:

1. A wider range of shops
2. A more attractive town centre environment
3. More parking

There is also a requirement for a wider range of bars/restaurants and cafes. There is less concern in respect of cheaper shops. Whilst a wider range of shops and more parking were identified in the 2015 RCS telephone survey, the town centre environment was voted as 'good' for the town centre.

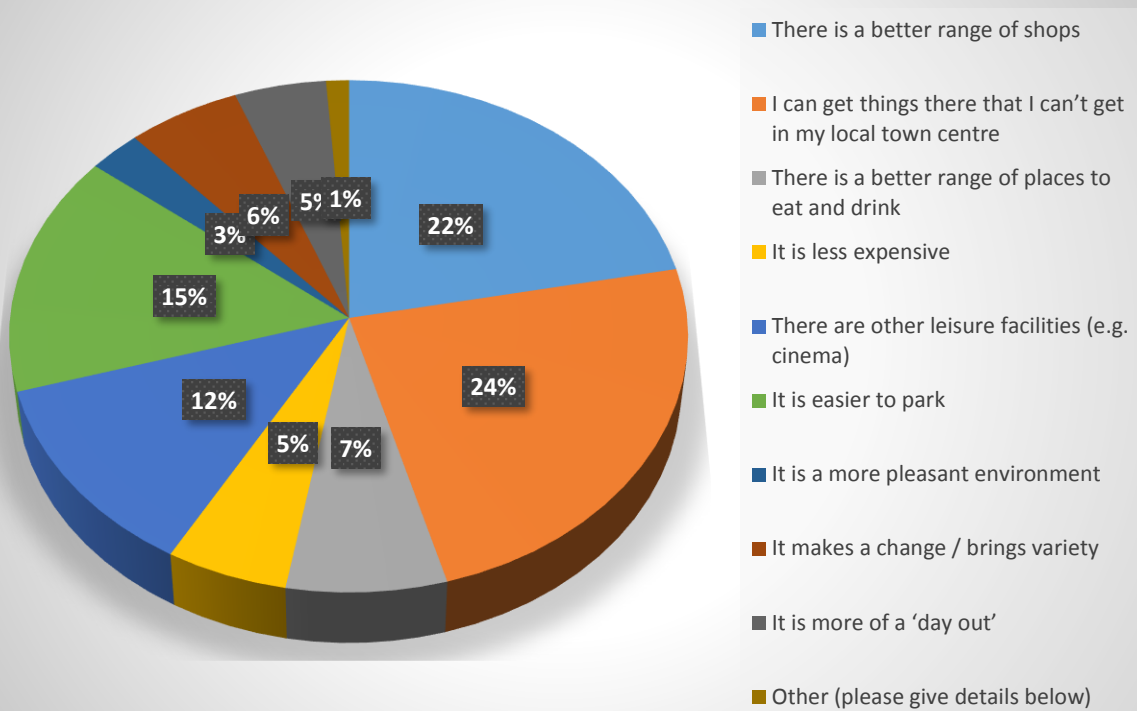
Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asks 'how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?'



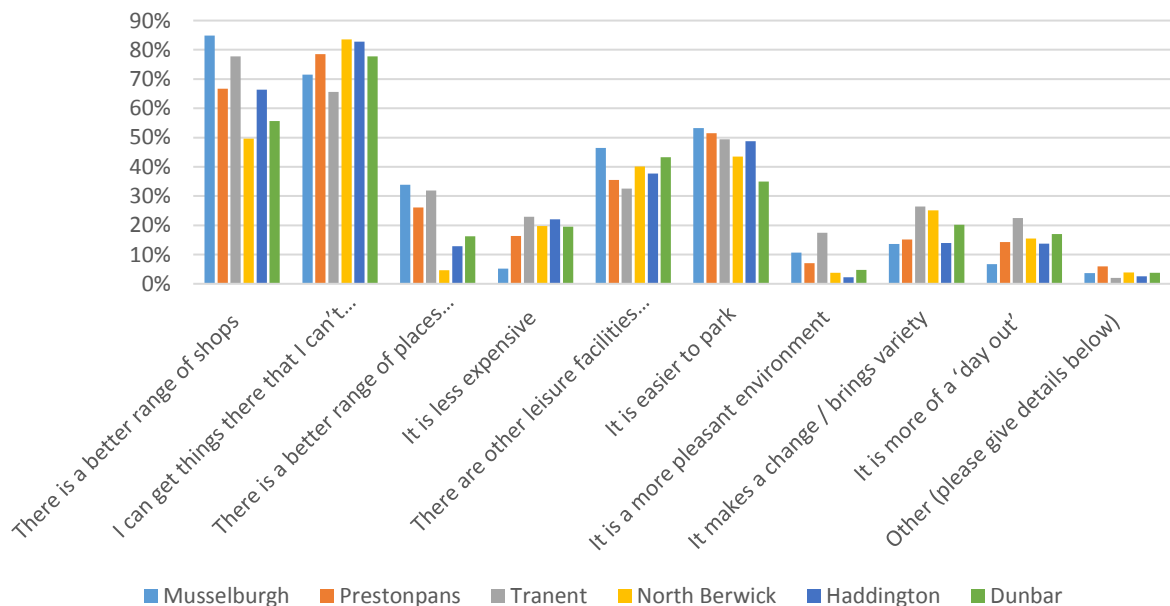
A large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a month with a high proportion of residents from Dunbar rarely or never visit an out-of-town retail park, most likely because proximity to Edinburgh and the available out-of-town centres is further than the communities of Musselburgh and Tranent. Few people use an out-of-town retail centre daily. This is a good sign that suggests town centre usage, however, it should be borne in mind that the majority of out-of-town retail centres, such as Fort Kinnaird, are predominantly the sale of convenience goods, which few people buy daily.

Question 10 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asked 'If you go to an out of town retail park for some shopping or leisure activities, rather than to your local town centre, what would be your reasons for doing so?'

## All respondents



## Respondents by town centre



78% refer to the ability to get things that cannot be gotten in Dunbar, whilst 56% state there is a better range of shops. Whilst it is possible to encourage an increased range of shops, restaurants and leisure facilities in the East Lothian town centres, proximity to the Edinburgh offer and, in particular, Fort Kinnaird will always play a part. It is extremely accessible,



especially for the west of the district. The only other consideration to be highlighted is the availability of parking. 35% of respondents in Dunbar claim it is easier to park at out-of-town centres than town centres. Whilst this is not an overwhelmingly large response, previous analysis indicates town centre parking is considered an issue.

## Parking

### Problems & Issues

- Lack of off-street car park management and on-street enforcement creating problems. In particular, long-stay parking by town centre traders and passengers using the railway station is leading to overflow parking on nearby streets around the railway station, within the town centre and around the harbour
- Lack of enforcement of existing parking restrictions causing congestion and bottlenecks, particularly around Church Street and Castle Street. Resident parking problems around Lammermuir Crescent and overflow on-street parking around Belhaven Hospital and Belhaven Brewery
- Safety concerns in relation to the layout of parking on High Street
- Lack of Blue Badge parking on High Street
- Current waiting restriction (60 minutes) is too short to allow people to undertake a range of activities in the town centre
- Difficulties with loading and servicing
- Difficulty introducing a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) designed to rationalise and consolidate a number of historic TROs
- Short-term on-street problems at peak school travel periods around schools

### Proposed solutions to identified parking problems in Dunbar are:

- Control through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- Implementation of parking management hierarchy defining designated short-stay, medium- stay and long-stay parking locations
- Proposed creation of new resident's parking scheme
- Removal of bottlenecks to ensure smooth and efficient traffic flow
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Ongoing review of waiting and loading provision
- Ongoing review of Blue Badge parking
- Consider the Introduction of on-off street parking charges
- Delivery of TRO amendments to ensure they are robust and legally enforceable

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