



Calderdale Health Check Assessments

On behalf of:
Calderdale Council

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creative minds safe hands

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HEALTH CHECK ASSESSMENTS

Introduction

Set out below is WYG's assessment of the vitality and viability of the six main centres within Calderdale: Brighouse, Elland, Halifax, Hebden Bridge, Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden.

The Importance of Town Centres

The six main centres have an important role to play in Calderdale serving the needs of the local community. They form a focal point for the community and provide a wide range of services that are accessible to the local population, including retail, employment, leisure, education and transport.

Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) 'Planning for Town Centres', emphasises the need for local authorities to monitor the 'health' of their town centres and how they are changing over time. Indeed, vital and viable town centres help to foster civic pride and local identity and can contribute towards the aims of sustainable development.

In May 2009 the Government published the draft Planning for Prosperous Economies 4 (PPS4) for consultation purposes. The main purpose of the draft PPS is to encourage regional bodies and local authorities to plan positively for economic development, which includes town centre uses. Building on the objectives of PPS1 and PPS6, the Government's objectives for prosperous economies include improving the economic performance of towns, delivering more sustainable patterns of development, promoting high quality design, ensuring that new development is accessible and well-served by a choice of means of transport, new development to be focussed in existing centres to promote vitality and viability, competition between retailers and enhancing consumer choice through the provision of innovative and efficient shopping in town centres, conserving or enhancing the historic and architectural heritage of centres, promoting social inclusion and ensuring that communities have access to key town centre uses.

Since the turn of the century, town centres nationally have witnessed high levels of vitality and viability with strong retail sales growth and the implementation of major town centre redevelopment schemes. Therefore, despite the ongoing growth of out-of-centre retail development there has been resurgence in development activity with established centres primarily linked to the ambitious expansion plans of national department stores and key retailers such as Debenhams, Next, Primark, etc. However, recent indications appear to suggest that the "credit crunch" could negatively impact on consumer spending which may in turn impact on the vitality of the high street nationally.



Purpose

It is important that the main established centres in Calderdale remain competitive in light of increased competition and continue to attract shoppers, visitors and businesses. To achieve this, town centres must continually strive to build on their strengths, alleviate their weaknesses and continually improve the facilities they provide to the community. Successful town centres must respond effectively to the changing needs and demand of their users.

The Town Centre Health Checks in Calderdale serve a number of important functions:

1. help assess the success of retail policies in the existing Calderdale UDP and will assist in the formulation of new policies where necessary;
2. provide a starting point for any retail strategy that may be produced in the future;
3. provide useful baseline data that will facilitate a process of monitoring that can be undertaken each year to assess how the town centre is performing over time;
4. allow positive and negative aspects of the town centre to be identified and appropriate action taken;
5. provide data that can be used to compare the performance of town centres in the Borough to other neighbouring centres in the region and to ensure that Calderdale's centres remain competitive.

Regional Hierarchy

Table 1 illustrates Brighouse's, Elland's, Halifax's, Hebden Bridge's, Sowerby Bridge's and Todmorden's position within the hierarchy of centres based on the Management Horizons Europe's (MHE) UK Shopping Index (2008). The index ranks the top 7,000 retail venues within the UK (including town centres, stand-alone malls, retail warehouse parks and factory outlets) based on current retail provision. This data represents the most up to date national ranking.

Table 1: The Sub-Regional Shopping Hierarchy

Centre	MHE Score	Location Grade	Rank 2008	Rank 2004	Change in Rank 2004 - 2008
Manchester	655	Major City	4	2	-2
Leeds	490	Major City	8	4	-4
The Trafford Centre, Manchester	286	Major Regional	38	32	-6
Huddersfield	222	Regional	86	73	-13
Bradford	195	Regional	113	89	-24
Wakefield	184	Sub-Regional	124	118	-6
Burnley	175	Sub-Regional	145	143	-2
Halifax	138	Sub-Regional	204	174	-30
Brighouse	48	Minor District	754	575	-179
Sowerby Bridge	19	Local	1,789	-	-
Todmorden	17	Local	1,950	1,348	-602
Elland	7	Minor Local	3,321	-	-
Hebden Bridge	4	Minor Local	4,226	-	-
Hipperholme	4	Minor Local	4,226	-	-
King Cross	2	Minor Local	5,257	-	-

Source: Management Horizons Europe: UK Shopping Index (2008)

Of approximately 7,000 shopping venues surveyed, Halifax is ranked 204th, which places it within the top 2% of all UK shopping venues and is identified as a 'sub regional centre' by Management Horizons Europe. However, it is evident that Halifax's position has fallen since 2004 (by 30 places) when it was previously ranked 174th. However, in the same period other centres within the sub-region have witnessed a decline including Bradford, Huddersfield and Leeds.

Brighouse, in comparison is ranked 754th of retail venues surveyed, placing it within the top 11% of UK shopping venues. In contrast to Halifax, Brighouse is identified as a 'minor district centre' by Management Horizons Europe. In addition, Brighouse's ranking has decreased by 179 places since 2004, when it was ranked 575th. While this is a large fall, other centres nearby have also witnessed a decline. Todmorden is ranked 1,950th of retail venues surveyed, placing it within the top 28% of UK shopping venues. Todmorden is identified as a 'local centre' by Management Horizons Europe. Todmorden's ranking has greatly decreased by 602 places since 2004, when it was ranked 1,348th. Sowerby Bridge is identified as a 'local centre' by Management Horizons Europe and is ranked 1,789th of retail venues surveyed. Elland and Hebden Bridge are both identified as a 'minor local centre' by Management Horizon's Europe and are ranked 3,321st and 4,226th respectively. Sowerby Bridge, Elland and Hebden Bridge were not surveyed in 2004.