Calderdale Town Centre Reports

Local Development Framework

Qualitative Assessments

April 2012

Everyone Matters
Different Everyone

Calderdale Council

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Introduction and Overview

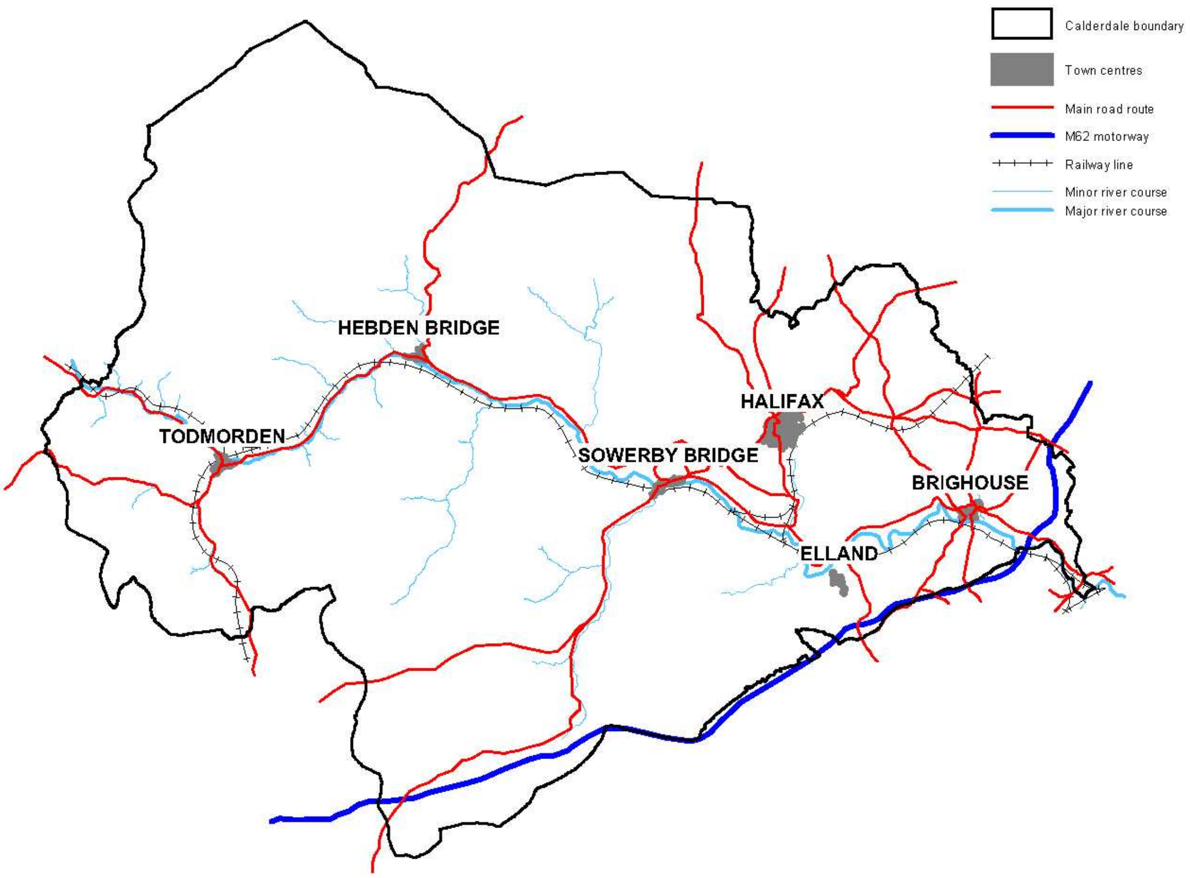
1. Context

1.0 In December 2009, with the release of PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic, the Government placed a much greater emphasis on assessing the qualitative need for retail and leisure uses in town centres than in previous policy statements. The Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment (RNA), a key element of the evidence base for the Calderdale Local Development Framework (LDF) dealing with town centres, retail and leisure issues, was completed and published in 2009, prior to the release of PPS4.

1.1 Part of the Calderdale RNA included health check assessments of the 6 main town centres, and these covered some qualitative issues. However with the publication of PPS4 it was felt that further work was necessary for the purposes of the LDF to bring together a more comprehensive statement for each town centre. As well as meeting the more detailed requirements of PPS4, the creation of town centre qualitative assessments for each town centre could feed into the relevant area strategies and policies for inclusion in the LDF Core Strategy document.

1.2 With these requirements and benefits in mind, detailed qualitative assessments have been created for the six main town centres in Calderdale; Halifax, Brighouse, Elland, Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge, and Todmorden (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Town Centres in Calderdale



2. Requirements

2.0 Paragraph EC1.4 of PPS4 states:

> 'd. when assessing qualitative need for retail and leisure uses:
> i. assess whether there is provision and distribution of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the whole community, particularly those living in deprived areas, in light of the objective to promote the vitality and viability of town centres and the application of the sequential approach
> ii. take into account the degree to which shops may be overtrading and whether there is a need to increase competition and retail mix'

2.1 Specifically Policy EC4 (Planning for consumer choice and promoting competitive town centres) of PPS4 deals with the more qualitative aspects of town centre development both for the day-time and night-time economies:

> 'EC4.1 Local planning authorities should proactively plan to promote competitive town centre environments and provide consumer choice by:
>
> a. Supporting a diverse range of uses which appeal to a wide range of age and social groups, ensuring that these are distributed throughout the centre
> b. Planning for a strong retail mix so that the range and quality of the comparison and convenience retail offer meets the requirements of the local catchment area, recognising that smaller shops can significantly enhance the character and vibrancy of a centre
> c. Supporting shops, services and other important small scale economic uses in local centres and villages
> d. Identifying sites in the centre, or failing that on the edge of the centre, capable of accommodating larger format developments where a need for such development has been identified
> e. Retaining and enhancing markets and, where appropriate, re-introducing or creating new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive by investing in their improvement
> f. Taking measures to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the established character and diversity of their town centres'

2.2 The associated PPS4 Practice Guidance on Need, Impact and the Sequential Approach provides further guidance on some specific issues to consider in relation to qualitative need.

> '3.10 Qualitative need is a more subjective concept. Five factors are frequently identified, although others may be relevant.
>
> - Deficiencies or 'gaps' in existing provision;
> - Consumer choice and competition;
> - Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores;
> - Location specific needs such as deprived areas and underserved markets, and
> - The quality of existing provision.'

3. Content

3.0 Each town centre qualitative assessment report brings together the qualitative data from the town centre health checks in the RNA (which focused on the vitality and viability aspects detailed in Chapter 4 of the former Planning Policy Statement 6), together with additional qualitative data required in PPS4, acquired from other sources.

3.1 The structure of each report is as follows:

- Section 1: Town Context
    - Governance and strategies

- Section 2: Retailer Representation/Diversity of uses/Consumer choice and competition
    - Diversity of uses – town centre composition
    - Consumer choice – survey results
    - Breakdown of retail size
    - Retailer representation – independent/national

- Section 3: Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

- Section 4: Location specific needs (deprived areas/underserved markets)
- Section 5: Quality of existing provision/rents and commercial yields/vacant property
    - Quality of existing provision
    - Rents/valuation rates
    - Vacant property

- Section 6: Customer experience
    - Accessibility
    - Pedestrian flows, crime and safety

- Section 7: Environmental quality and urban design

- Section 8: Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night time economy

- Section 9: Planning permissions and recent developments

- Section 10: Summary

3.2 Where relevant, tables and figures are included comparing results of all 6 town centres in Calderdale. Although this means that much of this data is repeated between town centre reports, it enables useful comparisons to be made. In particular, with regard to some of the more ‘perception’ based survey responses, more value can be gained through comparison of centres rather than looking at one set of responses in isolation.

4. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.0 In July 2011 the coalition government published the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) document, intending to replace the suite of PPGs and PPSs. Although the document is currently only a consultation draft, Planning Inspectorate advice is that the NPPF should hold some weight and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Policy within the NPPF indicates the general direction of travel that the Government is looking to take.

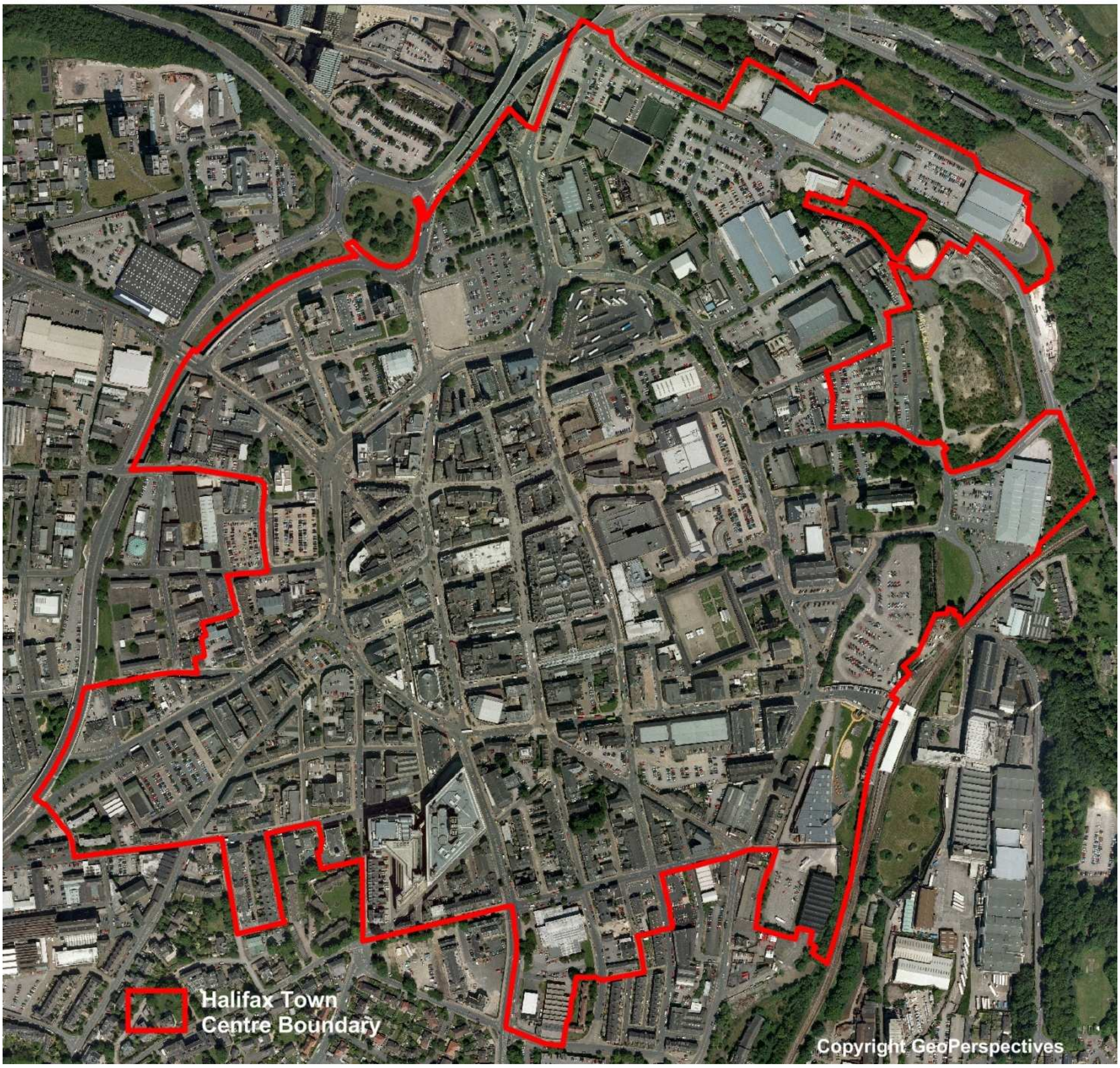
4.1 The NPPF refers to Local Authorities having a proportionate evidence base. With regards to town centre policy it states that Local Authorities should use their evidence base to assess:

- The role and function of town centres and the relationship between them; and
- The capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development.

4.2 Although the requirements for qualitative assessments are less explicit, there is still a need to consider qualitative issues, perhaps not in such a detailed and comprehensive way as advocated in PPS4 and the Practice Guide. The town centre assessments will still however hold significant value in the evolution of relevant area policies in the Core Strategy, and serve as useful contextual reference reports for other services and audiences.

4.3 The process of collating and analysing the comprehensive data sets on the town centres within these reports help to highlight the most pressing issues that they face at the moment, and potentially in the future as well.

Halifax Town Centre



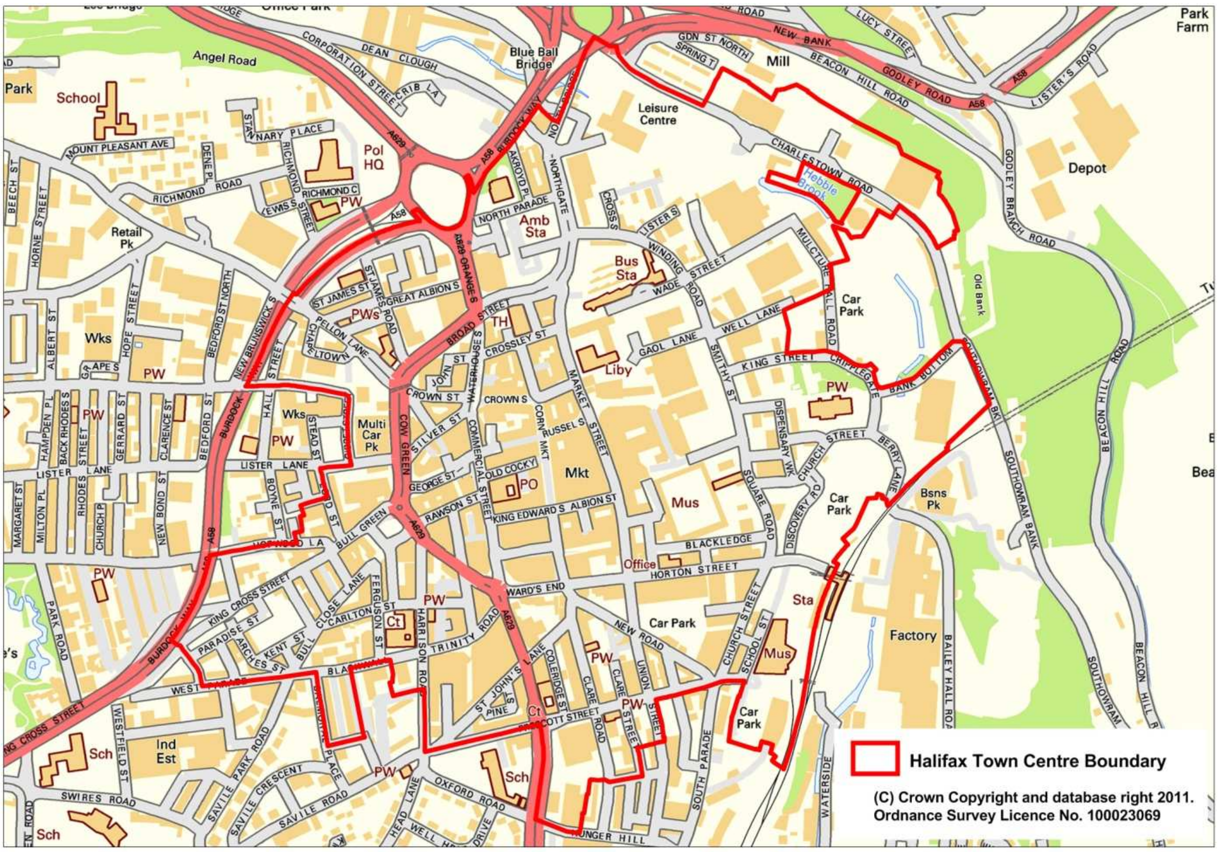
1. Context

1.0 Halifax is a town of sub-regional significance. It is located on the A629, north of the M62 in West Yorkshire, approximately 10km to the north of Huddersfield and 22km to the south west of Leeds. According to the last Census, Halifax and its wider area had a population of 94,209 in 2001. Mid-year population estimates suggest this may have risen to just fewer than 100,000 by 2009, a rise of approximately 6%[1].

1.1 Halifax is the largest town centre in Calderdale. It is defined as a major town centre in the Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (2006) and is identified as a sub-regional centre in the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy (2008). In terms of overall retail provision, the town was ranked the 204th venue nationally, of approximately 7000, when surveyed by Management Horizons Europe in 2008.

1.2 Being the administrative centre for Calderdale, Halifax town centre performs a range of civic functions, containing the Council Offices, Law Courts, and the central public library. It also contains significant cultural assets such as the Piece Hall, the Victoria Theatre, and Eureka! National Children's Museum.

1.3 The main focus of retailing within Halifax is located within the pedestrianised areas of the Woolshops, Cornmarket and Southgate, with the Borough Market and Russell Street connecting these areas. Market Street is a pedestrian zone open to bus and taxi traffic. Numerous other streets, a mix of pedestrianised and vehicular routes, provide further retail offer.



[1] Population data for the Halifax area is taken from the Core Strategy Refined Issues and Options Consultation report (January 2011). Population growth is calculated using August 2010 Patient register data, adjusted to the official mid-2009 population estimates.

Governance and strategies

1.4 The town centre is managed by the Halifax Town Centre Forum, an independent not for profit company established in 1996 (www.halifaxtown.co.uk/about_us.htm). The Town Centre Forum work towards the following aims for Halifax:

- Encouraging more tourist visitors;
- Developing a comprehensive marketing plan for the town;
- Improving the physical environment;
- Building on safety initiatives;
- Highlighting the proven strengths as a business location; and
- Promoting the cultural side of the evening economy.

1.5 In addition the Halifax Town Team (Halifax Renaissance) body exists as a proactive voice for Halifax. The Town Team were set up and tasked with developing and implementing the Halifax: Streets Ahead! strategy published in 2004. Its main themes are:

- Recognising the unique landscape setting and making it accessible to all;
- Re-populating the valley bottom;
- Connecting Dean Clough Mill;
- Integrating West Central Halifax;
- A new life for Halifax heritage;
- Making the town centre a good place to walk; and
- Showing off the town; towards a lighting strategy.

1.6 Calderdale Council has the adopted Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (RCUDP) that provides the current policy framework for town centres in the District, including some specific policies for Halifax. More recently work has been undertaken on a Supplementary Planning Document/Masterplan for Halifax, however work is now on hold on this until the Core Strategy is adopted, the key document in the Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.7 In terms of other recent town centre documents, an extensive Town Centre Audit report was published for Halifax in 2007, prepared by the Halifax Town Centre Forum. The report covered most of the qualitative aspects covered in this assessment, however, more recent and new sources of data have since become available. A health check assessment of each town centre in Calderdale was also undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment in 2009. Where relevant, parts of both these sources are included and referenced within this report.

2. Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

Diversity of uses - Town centre composition

2.1 Recent surveys of town centre occupancy have been undertaken in both 2009 and 2010. The surveys complement each other in the data that they provide and collectively provide a wealth of information on the composition of all town centres in Calderdale.

a. 2009 Survey – undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment by White Young Green (WYG) planning consultants.
b. 2010 Survey – undertaken by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (CMBC) to update the Accessibility Survey, previously completed in 2006.

2.2 In 2009 Halifax contained a total of 473 occupied units within the defined central shopping area, occupying a total of 111,890m^2 of floorspace. Of this total floorspace, 53,690m^2 was in retail use. The highest proportion of this was for comparison goods, both in terms of number of outlets (29.6%) and in terms of floorspace (34.7%). However both these figures were below the UK averages (Table 2.2). As a result the town had a higher proportion of leisure services provision in the town centre (27%) compared to the national average (22.7%) together with a higher vacancy rate (discussed further in Section 5 of this report).

2.3 Overall Halifax contains a wide variety of other commercial retail and leisure uses. In relation to other town centres in Calderdale, Halifax has the highest percentage of comparison goods floorspace and one of the lowest percentages of convenience goods floorspace. This is to be expected due to the position of Halifax at the top of the retail hierarchy in Calderdale, and the town's sub-regional significance.

2.4 In addition to the high street retail provision in the town, Halifax retains the impressive indoor Victorian Borough Market. With around 180 stalls, the market is open 6 days a week from Monday to Saturday providing a wide variety of general retail goods including comparison and convenience goods.

Table 2.1: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Number of Outlets

	Halifax (No.)	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	35	7.4	9.8	8.0	8.5	7.5	10.8	8.8
Comparison	140	29.6	31.6	23.3	43.3	25.4	16.7	34.6
Retail Service	57	12.1	13.5	14.7	11.0	17.2	19.2	13.0
Leisure Services	116	24.5	17.6	28.7	24.4	17.9	25.0	21.5
Financial & Business Services	50	10.6	9.8	12.0	7.3	8.2	10.0	11.2
Vacant	75	15.9	17.6	13.3	5.5	23.9	18.3	10.6
Total	473	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Table 2.2: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Existing Floorspace

	Halifax (m^2)	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	14,830	13.3	28.5	17.2	12.6	19.6	24.0	14.2
Comparison	38,860	34.7	26.0	28.5	33.0	16.1	11.8	37.8

Retail Service	7,720	6.9	6.6	8.1	6.6	10.3	12.0	7.0
Leisure Services	30,220	27.0	18.3	30.9	36.8	18.9	28.8	22.7
Financial & Business Services	8,610	7.7	7.5	8.2	6.5	6.4	12.4	8.7
Vacant	11,650	10.4	13.0	7.1	4.5	28.8	11.0	8.9
Total	111,890	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

2.5 In 2010, more detailed data was collected on the type of occupant. Table 2.3 summarises floorspace by planning Use Class.

Table 2.3: Use Class mix - floorspace

	Halifax Floorspace (m^2)	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
A1 (Shops)	52,802	30.2	57.5	43.7	32.9	27.8	42.9
A2 (Financial & Professional)	14,718	8.4	7.3	7.4	8.6	5.3	7.8
A3 (Restaurants & Cafes)	5,735	3.3	4.6	7.5	7.2	5.4	5.0
A4 (Drinking Establishments)	6,243	3.6	4.0	7.9	7.4	5.4	3.5
A5 (Hot Food Takeaway)	1,463	0.8	1.9	1.6	1.2	1.3	3.3
B1 (Business)	34,671	19.8	2.2	3.6	0.9	3.2	3.3
B2 (General Industry)	2,507	1.4	1.2	1.7	0.8	1.7	1.2
B8 (Storage or Distribution)	950	0.5	-	-	-	0.3	-
C1 (Hotels)	4,232	2.4	3.2	-	1.8		-
C2 (Residential Institutions)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
D1 (Non-residential Institutions)	13,065	7.5	7.3	8.5	25.0	27.7	13.9
D2 (Assembly & Leisure)	12,241	7.0	4.1	8.6	7.3	1.9	7.3
Sui Generis	10,692	6.1	2.6	3.2	5.2	8.4	3.4
Vacant	15,522	8.9	4.4	6.3	1.7	11.6	8.3
Total	174,841	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

2.6 In terms of the occupancy category, Table 2.4 demonstrates the top 10 most common categories within Halifax Town Centre at the time of the survey.

Table 2.4: Occupancy Categories

	Occupancy Category	No. of instances
1	Cafe/Restaurants	83
2	Clothes/Wool and Needlework/Travel Goods	65
3	Administrative and other offices	45
4	Public Houses/Wine bars	38
5	Hairdressers/Barbers/Beauty Salons/Tattoo Artist	36
6	Solicitors	34
7	TV and Electricals/Video/Computer/Mobile Phones	31
8	Hot food takeaways	25

9	Accountants/Financial advisors	21
10	Estate agents	21

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Consumer Choice - Survey Results

2.7 In 2009 the WYG in-street (consumer) survey results showed that a majority of visitors to Halifax (57%) rated the choice of shops as being either ‘worse’ or ‘much worse’ than other centres. In response to the types of shops that visitors would like to see more of, the most popular responses were clothing stores (44%) and department stores (31%).

2.8 The WYG business survey also revealed that, when asked about measures that would improve the town centre, the majority of retailers (76%) feel that an increased choice / range of shops would have this affect. 62% of respondents stated that more independent / specialist traders would be good for the town.

Breakdown of retail size

2.9 Halifax has a much larger proportion of small units of less than 93m^2 (51.6% of the total) compared to the national average (39.1%) (Table 2.5). As a result there is a large under-representation of the next size of unit up, 93m^2-232m^2, in the town (25.4%) compared to the national average (39.6%). Units above this size in all categories broadly reflect the UK average.

Table 2.5: Diversity of Uses - Unit Sizes

	Halifax (No. of units)	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Under 93m^2 (1,000ft^2)	244	51.6	59.6	68.7	70.7	68.7	64.2	39.1
93-232m^2 (1,000-2,499ft^2)	120	25.4	27.5	22.7	21.3	23.1	27.5	39.6
232-464m^2 (2,500-4,999ft^2)	61	12.9	7.3	4.7	6.1	3.7	5.0	12.6
465-929m^2 (5,000-9,999ft^2)	28	5.9	3.6	2.7	1.2	2.2	1.7	5.1
930-1,393m^2 (10,000-14,999ft^2)	10	2.1	0.5	0.7	0.6	2.2	0.8	1.5
1,394-1,858m^2 (15,000-19,999ft^2)	3	0.6	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.7
1,859-2,787m^2 (20,000-29,999ft^2)	2	0.4	0.5	0.7	0	0	0	0.7
Above 2,787m^2 (30,000ft^2)	5	1.1	1.0	0	0	0	0	0.8
Total	473	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Retailer Representation - Independent/national

2.10 Halifax contains some 45% of the top-twenty national high street retailers (as identified by FOCUS – 2008) and a range of other multiple retail, leisure and financial and business service operators. Details of whether units were occupied by independent or national operators were collected as part of the CMBC town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. This enabled an assessment of a centre’s wider independent/national mix, as well as a more focused 'clone town' assessment to be made[2] on the make-up of the principal high street or primary frontage areas.

2.11 Halifax's clone town assessment[3] (Clone Town score of 30.8) highlights it as being a typical clone town - over half the stores counted were chain stores and there was relatively little diversity on offer. It is the only town centre in Calderdale identified as a clone town (Table 2.6). All other centres score 'home town' status, indicating that at least two thirds of the stores were independent, and that the centre has a wide range of outlets.

Table 2.6: Clone town assessments

Category	Town Centre	Clone Town Score
'Clone' Towns (Scores 50 or less)	Cambridge	11.6
	Halifax	**30.8**
	Huddersfield	49.7
'Border' Towns (Scores 50-65)	Weymouth	52.0
	Sherbourne	64.1
'Home' Towns (Scores 65+)	Brighouse	67.4
	Sowerby Bridge	75.5
	Hebden Bridge	76.1
	Todmorden	76.5
	Elland	79.8

Source: Re-imagining the High Street, NEF (Sep 2010) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Summary
Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

- Halifax is a town of sub-regional significance and therefore has the highest proportion of comparison floorspace in Calderdale, however this is still below the national average;
- The centre has the highest proportion of B1 floorspace in Calderdale;
- A majority of both businesses and shoppers would like to see improved consumer choice in the town;
- There is a lack of medium sized premises ($93m^2$-$232m^2$) compared to the national average; and
- Despite Halifax being classified as a 'clone town' (the only centre in Calderdale), less than half of the top-twenty national retailers have premises.

[2] The Clone Town Britain report was first published in 2005 by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and looked at the increasing domination of large chain stores in Britain's high streets. The report provided a means of assessing any high street's homogenisation and lack of distinctiveness in terms of its retail offer, looking at both identity and diversity. A follow up 2010 Clone Town Report was more recently published containing updated assessments of towns across Britain.

[3] Survey included 60 units along primary frontage areas in the Woolshops and along Market Street and Russell Street.

3. Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

3.1 Overtrading from a quantitative perspective for convenience shopping is discussed in the Retail Needs Assessment (Table 8.3 deals with Halifax) and is built into the overall conclusions on new floorspace requirements (based on the shoppers' survey and assumptions on average turnover etc.). From a qualitative perspective however, evidence on overcrowding and congestion is a lot harder to obtain data on.

3.2 Although anecdotal evidence is available, objective evidence on overcrowding and congestion would have to be collected first hand through extensive survey work. The investment required both in cost and time to undertake this work could not be justified in relation to the benefit received. Therefore in the absence of such work, responses to the business survey (undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment) indicating general trader confidence and success, seems the most appropriate available data to give an indication of trading levels.

3.3 Of those who were surveyed and responded in Halifax (148 businesses), 50% indicated that their business had grown since they began trading in the town centre, however this is the lowest rate of all town centres in Calderdale. In addition, 16% of respondents felt that their business was performing poorly or very poorly, similarly this is the highest (poorest) rate of all the town centres in Calderdale (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Trading levels / Business Confidence

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DURING TIME TRADING IN THE TOWN CENTRE:						
Business has grown moderately or significantly	50.0	58.1	72.8	63.1	58.8	72.2
Business has remained largely static	23.0	16.1	9.1	23.1	23.5	11.1
Business has declined moderately or significantly	27.0	25.8	18.2	13.9	17.6	16.7
HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR BUSINESS IS PERFORMING?						
Well or very well	40.9	47.6	81.8	53.7	53.1	66.6
Moderately	43.0	37.7	9.1	34.3	34.4	25.9
Poorly or very poorly	16.1	14.8	9.1	12.0	12.6	7.4

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – Business Survey Q1g and Q1h

Summary
Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

- From Halifax businesses surveyed in 2009 there was relatively low confidence in terms of growth and performance, particularly in relation to other town centres in Calderdale.

4. Location specific needs (e.g. deprived areas / underserved markets)

4.1 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) dataset every 3 years. This gives a relative deprivation ranking of small areas around the UK based on a number of different measurements; income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

4.2 In the latest IMD dataset for 2010 the Halifax town centre area ranked 2,221 of 32,482. This places the immediate area within the 7% most deprived areas of the country, however this has improved from the ranking of 1,560th in 2004 (then within the 5% most deprived areas). Further significant areas of the wider town to the north and west of the centre (Park and Ovenden wards) fall within the 10% of most deprived areas nationally.

4.3 Table 4.1 demonstrates the small improvement in ranking between 2004 and 2010, relative to the other centres in Calderdale.

Table 4.1: Measures of deprivation

	IMD Ranking (and % rank)			
	2004	2007	2010	% Change 2004-2010
Halifax	1,560 (4.8%)	1,883 (5.8%)	2,221 (6.8%)	+2.0
Brighouse	9,037 (27.8%)	10,783 (33.2%)	9,995 (30.8%)	+3.0
Sowerby Bridge	6,374 (19.6%)	7,406 (22.8%)	6,831 (21.0%)	+1.4
Hebden Bridge	10,296 (31.7%)	13,607 (41.9%)	14,283 (44.0%)	+12.3
Todmorden	8,178 (25.2%)	8,655 (26.6%)	8,325 (25.6%)	+0.4
Elland	8,308 (25.6%)	9,394 (28.9%)	8,248 (25.4%)	-0.2

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, 2007, 2010

4.4 Although the direction of travel over the period 2004-2010 has shown small improvement for the immediate town centre area in terms of its IMD ranking, additional areas in West Halifax have fallen within the 10% most deprived whilst no areas have risen out of this band. It also remains by far the most deprived centre of all six town centres in Calderdale.

4.5 Proposals that are likely to bring significant improvements to the range, choice and quality of everyday shopping to serve the needs of those living in deprived areas should be encouraged. However, other non-retail town centre uses and development play an equally important role in helping to improve the areas health and disability deprivation, living environment, and employment potential.

Summary
Location specific needs

- There is significant deprivation within the immediate Halifax town centre area, together with much wider areas of west and north Halifax that fall within the 10% most deprived areas of the country.

5. Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

Quality of existing provision

5.1 The buildings within Halifax town centre are from a variety of different eras. From No. 1 the Woolshops, the only surviving town centre timber-framed building (16^{th} Century), to the Woolshops shopping centre itself built in the late 20^{th} Century. Much of the town centre however remains 19^{th} Century building stock. Indeed Halifax is often quoted as having one of the best preserved Victorian town centres in the country.

5.2 Where the retention of the historic core and much of the older architecture may provide a distinctive and attractive town centre, for the larger modern retailers the older and traditionally smaller properties found in Halifax represent less attractive locations for stores.

Rents/Valuation Rates

5.3 The most recent data on the rateable value of properties within town centres is available on the Valuation Office Agency website (www.voa.gov.uk). Rateable value represents the open market annual rental value of a business/non-domestic property. This means the rent the property would let for on the valuation date, if it was being offered on the open market. The rateable value is used by the local council when calculating business rates bills.

5.4 When viewed across a town centre, valuation rates provide a general picture of the desirability and attractiveness of particular areas – those streets commanding higher valuation rates are those with the higher rents and therefore likely higher footfall and higher sales. Looking at the spatial variation of valuation rates in conjunction with change in rates over time can also highlight areas that may be more vulnerable within a centre and potentially in decline.

5.5 Figure 5.1 demonstrates the spread of prime Retail Zone A valuation rates in and around Halifax town centre. The highest rates are found in the Woolshops, Market Street and Southgate areas. Peripheral areas to the north and north-west of the main town centre area (e.g. Crossley Street, Waterhouse Street, Broad Street, and further out St James Road and Pellon Lane) show the lowest Zone A Retail rates.

5.6 Some units within this area have also shown no increase in rates between 2005 and 2010 (Figure 5.2). Lower Crown Street and the Square in the Woolshops have also

Figure 5.1 – Halifax Town Centre Valuation Rates 2010-15

Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

Figure 5.2 – Halifax Town Centre Valuation Rates % change 2005-10

Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

shown no increase in rates over this period. A further area between King Edward Street and Wards End to the south of the town centre has shown either no increase or a decline in rates.

Vacant Property

5.7 Data on vacant properties within town centres is not collected on a regular basis in Calderdale. However data is available for the years 2000 and 2009 (from the WYG Health Check assessment) and 2006 and 2010 (from the Calderdale town centre surveys undertaken by the planning policy team). Although other data on smaller areas is available these 4 surveys provide comparable data over time.

5.8 Since 2000, many of the vacant units have been recycled, which is a positive sign for the centre. However, there are still a high proportion of small vacant outlets which may be unsuitable to the demands of modern retailing. Vacancies in the town centre increased by twenty one units between 2000 and 2009 (Experian GOAD), rising from 11.3% of the total number of units to 15.9% (higher than the national average of 10.6%). In terms of floorspace, vacancy rates have increased from 7.1% to 10.4% over the same period (again higher than the national average of 8.9%).

5.9 A vacant town centre unit is not necessarily an issue in itself as there will always be natural churn within a centre with some units closing and others opening, and also the wider economic situation having an impact. It is persistent, long-term vacancies in certain areas within a centre that cause greater concern however and may be an indication of an area failing or falling into decline.

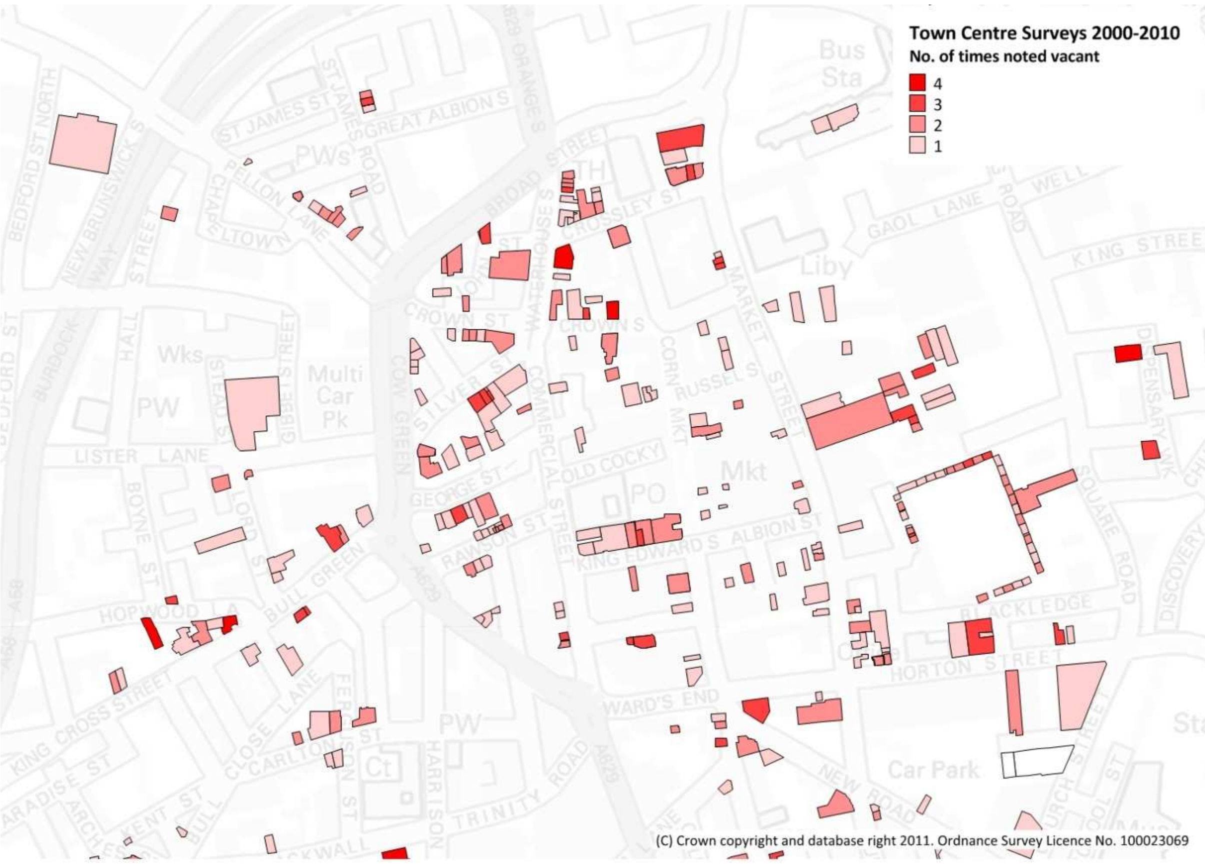
5.10 Figure 5.3 shows the cumulative vacancies across the town centre during the last decade, and highlights those units that have been vacant on multiple surveys. Although there is no one single area that stands out as having a concentration of long term vacant units, there are multiple units across the town that have been vacant on 3 or 4 of the survey occasions.

Summary

Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

- The Woolshops, Market St. and Southgate have the highest prime Zone A Retail rates along with very low vacancy rates;
- Peripheral areas of the town centre such as Crossley St., Waterhouse St. and Broad St. have experienced decreasing valuation rates and long-term vacancies between 2000 and 2010; and
- Bull Green and the western edge of the town centre have seen the highest rates of increase in rates 2005-2010 however they still remain low.

Figure 5.3 – Halifax vacancy rates 2000-2010



Source: Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment (2009) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Surveys

6. Customer experience

6.1 Looking at the general customer experience of Halifax town centre, of the 202 shoppers interviewed in 2009 as part of the Retail Needs Assessment on-street survey (Q32), the top 5 weaknesses of Halifax town centre were perceived to be; the choice/range of non-food shops (34.2%); leisure facilities (12.4%); none mentioned (11.4%); car parking (9.9%); and undesirable people (5.4%). A further 17.3% of respondents did not know.

Accessibility

6.2 General accessibility to the town centre is good and available by a range of means of transport, with the largest proportion of visitors interviewed in the on-street survey in 2009 having arrived in the centre by bus, minibus or coach (38.6%). Buses provide direct services to all towns in Calderdale and destinations beyond such as Bradford, Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Keighley, Burnley and Rochdale. The railway station on Horton Street provides direct services terminating at Blackpool, York, Manchester, Leeds and Wakefield.

6.3 The majority (82%) of visitors arriving by car did not encounter any difficulty in obtaining a car parking space. However only 5.4% of respondents felt that the car parking provision is better or much better than other centres and 6.4% better or much better in terms of prices (Table 6.1). Halifax has a total of around 1,554 public off-street parking spaces which equates to approximately one space per 72m^2 of retailing, one of the highest provisions (relative to the size of the retailing centre) in Calderdale centres[4].

Table 6.1: Customer experience - Accessibility

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
METHOD OF TRAVEL						
Travelled by car/van	33.7	55.0	28.3	38.3	26.0	29.4
Travelled by bus, minibus or coach	38.6	22.0	30.3	21.6	20.0	9.8
Travelled by foot	22.3	21.0	40.4	29.4	49.0	57.8
DURATION OF TRAVEL TO CENTRE						
0-5 min journey	17.3	23.0	33.3	25.5	20.0	44.1
6-10 min journey	31.7	28.0	37.4	18.6	38.0	20.6
11-15 min journey	24.3	23.0	14.1	8.8	14.0	8.8
16-20 min journey	12.9	8.0	8.1	6.9	9.0	14.7
21-30 min journey	5.9	14.0	4.0	12.7	3.0	7.8
31-60 min journey	5.4	3.0	3.0	12.7	5.0	2.0
Over 60 min journey	1.5	1.0	0.0	14.7	7.0	2.0
CAR PARKING						
Did you have difficulty obtaining a parking space? Yes:	18.0	29.4	13.0	51.4	13.6	18.5
Car parking provision – better/much better than others?	5.4	19.0	4.0	1.0	15.0	25.5
Car parking prices – better/much better than others?	6.4	24.0	4.0	1.0	17.0	23.6

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q3, Q5, Q6 & Q28

6.4 Accessibility also incorporates public accessibility issues within town centres. For example, knowing that some-one will be able to access a well-maintained and properly equipped public toilet, can make the difference between them choosing to visit one town over another[5].

6.5 In Halifax there are 4 separate public convenience facilities; Commercial Street, Borough Market, Piece Hall and the Bus Station. Although these facilities incorporate disabled toilets, there are currently no Changing Places facilities in Halifax which provide extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as other serious impairments[6].

Pedestrian flows, crime and safety

6.6 Various factors combine to help the creation of a sense of safety and security for business and visitors at all times of the day and night in our town centres: the layout and design of streets, buildings, and open spaces, the attractiveness of public spaces, the visibility of a uniformed presence on the streets[7]. Civic Trust research

[4] Map 2.7 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009
[5] Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, April 2009
[6] http://changing-places.org/
[7] Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, 2009

has also shown consensus amongst practitioners and policy makers that a balance or diversity of town centre land uses, and users, help to make centres safer and more attractive[8].

6.7 Many of the main shopping streets in Halifax town centre are pedestrianised, aiding pedestrian flow and improving safety. However, Market Street does have a regular flow of buses and taxis as it is the main town centre through route. There are also particular issues with pedestrian access to the town centre across busy junctions of the ring road such as at Bull Green and Cow Green to the west, and the Horton Street junction to the east (from the train station).

6.8 The need to make Halifax town centre a good place to walk was one of the key themes of the Streets Ahead Strategy adopted by Halifax Renaissance in 2005. Introducing improvements to pedestrian flow in the town is therefore part of the existing long-term strategy. The Retail Needs Assessment notes that Cow Green to the west of the centre is on a steep hill, making it difficult for some groups to negotiate. On a positive note however, it is highlighted that the pavements are wide, and where the centre meets busy roads, pedestrian crossings currently help to aid movement by foot.

6.9 The on-street visitor's survey in 2009 asked specific questions to visitors about their perceptions of crime in Halifax. During the day-time, some 74% of visitors indicated that safety in Halifax felt 'about the same' as that in other centres, with 16% considering it to be 'better' or 'much better' than in other centres. However, with respect to the evening/night-time economy, the proportion of visitors who deemed safety to be 'about the same' as in other centres fell to 38.1%, with some 25% considering safety to be either 'worse' or 'much worse' than that in other centres. Whilst 30% indicated that they did not know either way, this represents the biggest variation of all the Calderdale centres between day and night-time (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Customer experience - Perception of safety

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DAY-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	15.9	28.0	0.0	7.8	23.0	9.8
About the same as other centres?	74.3	60.0	54.5	84.3	66.0	73.5
Worse or much worse than other centres?	7.4	6.0	44.4	2.9	8.0	7.9
NIGHT-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	7.8
About the same as other centres?	38.1	29.0	46.5	74.5	43.0	55.9
Worse or much worse than other centres?	25.2	18.0	45.5	12.7	27.0	14.7

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

6.10 Whilst responses to the survey shows the perception of crime, data on actual occurrences of crime are available from West Yorkshire Police, though by electoral

[8] Better Town Centres at Night, ATCM and BCSC, 2010

Ward and not by town centre. Halifax town centre is located within Town ward which showed the highest rates of criminal damage and violent crime within Calderdale, 54.7 reported crimes per 1,000 population, and 57.1 respectively, in the year to 31st July 2009[9].

Summary
Customer experience

- In terms of customer experience, the most significant issues identified by shoppers are the poor choice/range of non-food shops, the lack of leisure facilities, and car parking;
- A reasonable quantity of car parking available in the town is not reflected in the perception of users (both in terms of accessibility and cost);
- Accessibility to the centre by public transport is good with direct connections from multiple regional destinations by train or bus;
- Pedestrian links to the town centre are problematical in places; and
- 1 in 4 night-time users of the town centre perceive the safety to be worse or much worse than other centres, whilst actual figures demonstrate Halifax as having the highest rates or criminal damage and violent crime within Calderdale.

7. Environmental quality and urban design

7.1 Well designed and well-maintained buildings and public spaces, including parks, streets and squares, play a vital role in creating attractive and welcoming town centre environments for people of all ages. Public spaces, including green spaces, can help to attract investment into town centres, enhance community spirit and cohesiveness, promote community health and wellbeing, and manage the effects of climate change[10].

7.2 Despite the large area covered by the Halifax town centre boundary there are very few green spaces, the only designated areas of open space in the current development plan (UDP) include an area around the Halifax Minster and a further area of amenity open space on Charlestown Road. There is no green space located within the primary shopping area. However, pedestrianised areas in the Woolshops and on Corn Market and Southgate provide improved environmental quality away from vehicle noise and pollution. The Piece Hall also serves as the main town square and public space during its hours of opening.

7.3 The health check assessment undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment summarised Halifax as being a very attractive, busy, large town set in a valley. It found that the streets are generally clean with no evidence of litter and shop units themselves are maintained to a high standard, creating an attractive shopping environment. Street furniture is plentiful and includes: lighting; benches; bins; bike racks; and flowers. Furthermore Halifax has a good level of signage. It noted that there are adequately maintained public toilets in the centre.

[9] Maps 2.71-2.73 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009
[10] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

7.4 The study went on to say that units are a mixture of old and new build and most are made of local stone. The majority of the town centre lies within a Conservation Area and there are 2 Grade I Listed Buildings (The Piece Hall and Halifax Minster), 21 Grade II* and 271 Grade II. In the on-street survey, Halifax was recognised as having good environmental quality in the main, providing an attractive shopping environment for customers.

Summary
Environmental quality and urban design

- Good environmental quality in the main, providing an attractive shopping environment for customers
- Significant pedestrianised areas although very limited green space within the town centre

8. Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night time economy

8.1 Town centres that offer a range of uses during the day, into the evening and beyond, are more likely to attract a diverse mix of people; broadening of the evening and night-time offering also stands to build stronger connections with local people and attract more people from further afield[11].

8.2 The town centre of Halifax contains some major cultural and tourist attractions including the Piece Hall, Square Chapel Centre for the Arts, EUREKA! National Children's Museum, the Victoria Theatre and Halifax Playhouse. Beyond restaurants, bars and nightclubs, leisure provision within the town centre includes Halifax Swimming Pool, North Bridge Leisure Centre, the bowling alley on Portland Place and Bingo Hall on Broad Street.

8.3 Table 8.1 summarises the total number of different premises by each category of leisure, culture and tourism facility noted during the latest town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. It demonstrates that Halifax has some provision of all leisure categories listed (the only town centre in Calderdale to offer all categories) and one of the highest proportion of cafes/restaurants of all Calderdale centres.

8.4 The location of cafe / restaurant facilities and public houses / wine bars are spread across areas of the town centre to the north, south and west of the prime Zone A retail areas (Figure 8.1). Theatres and nightclub facilities are generally focused around the ring road (Broad St, Cow Green and Bull Green) and sports facilities around the periphery of the town centre.

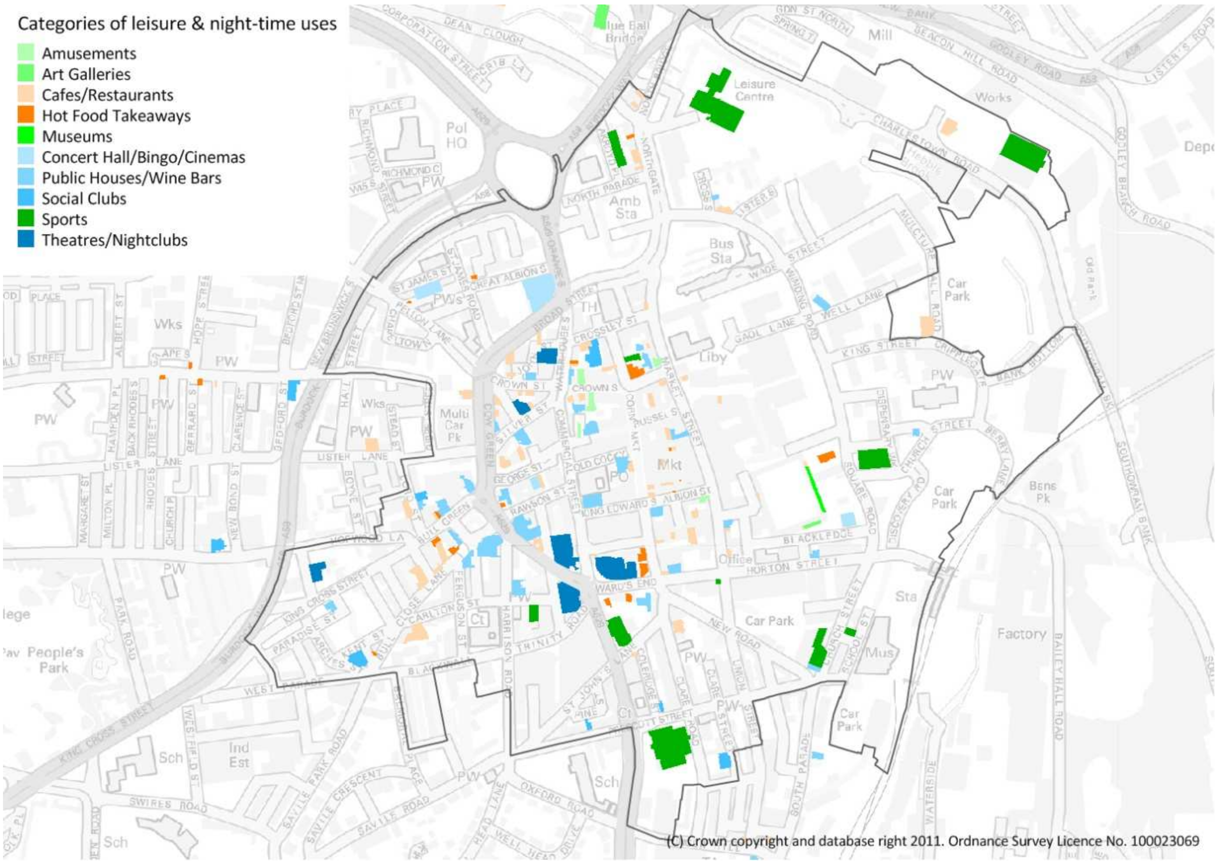
[11] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

Table 8.1 – Halifax culture, leisure, tourism and night-time offer

Survey Categories	Halifax				% of all leisure uses				
	Town Centre Premises	Edge of Centre Premises	Total no. of premises	% of all leisure	Brighouse	Sowerby Bridge	Hebden Bridge	Todmorden	Elland
Amusement Centres (AMU)	5	-	5	2.7	3.3	-	-	-	-
Art Galleries (ART)	1	1	2	1.1	1.7	-	10.2	8.9	-
Cafes/Restaurants (CAF)	67	9	76	40.4	33.3	35.7	40.7	37.5	19.5
Hot Food Takeaways (HOT)	24	3	27	14.4	26.7	19.6	10.2	17.9	36.6
Museums (MUS)	1	-	1	0.5	-	-	3.4	1.8	-
Concert Halls/Bingo Halls/Cinemas (PEN)	4	1	4	2.7	5.0	-	1.7	-	4.9
Public Houses/Wine Bars (PUB)	36	3	39	20.7	18.3	28.6	18.6	17.9	24.4
Social Club/Working Mens Club (SOC)	7	2	9	4.8	5.0	5.4	5.1	8.9	7.3
Sports Clubs/Gyms/Swimming Pools/Dance & Sports Halls/Sports Stadia (SPO)	15	1	17	8.5	6.7	10.7	8.5	3.6	7.3
Theatres/Nightclubs (THE)	8	-	8	4.3	-	-	1.7	3.6	-
TOTAL	**168**	**20**	**188**						

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Figure 8.1 – Location of leisure and night-time uses in Halifax



Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

8.5 In terms of the public's view on leisure provision within Halifax town centre, in 2009 40.1% of respondents felt that Halifax was worse or much worse than other centres. Visitors were happier with the range and choice of pubs and restaurants although still 22.3% responded that this area was worse or much worse than other centres (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 – Public perceptions of the Halifax leisure offer

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
RANGE & CHOICE OF PUBS/RESTAURANTS						
Much better or better than other centres?	18.9	14.0	5.1	30.4	14.0	5.9
About the same as other centres?	37.1	33.0	57.6	64.7	41.0	45.1
Worse or much worse than other centres?	22.3	24.0	36.4	3.9	28.0	43.2
LEISURE FACILITIES						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	2.0	9.8	11.0	2.9
About the same as other centres?	29.2	16.0	40.4	68.6	41.0	31.4
Worse or much worse than other centres?	40.1	46.0	53.5	11.8	26.0	56.9

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

8.6 Despite this perception, Halifax was awarded a Purple Flag Award in 2010 by the Association of Town Centre Management. The scheme assesses an area's crime rates, hygiene standards and range of visitor attractions and is a general sign of a high quality and enjoyable night-time experience. As at September 2011 only 16 towns nationally have so far acquired Purple Flag Status[12].

8.1 The development currently underway on Broad Street will further significantly improve the night-time offer of Halifax with a multi screen cinema, new restaurants and potential new bowling alley due to open in Autumn 2012.

Summary

Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night-time economy

- Halifax offers a good range of cultural, leisure and tourism facilities from regional attractions such as the Piece Hall and Eureka! to more local arts facilities such as the Square Chapel and Victoria Theatre.
- The perception of town centre users is that the leisure offer is poorer than the range and choice of pubs and restaurants.
- Survey data confirms that Halifax has a high proportion of cafes/restaurants compared to other Calderdale town centres.
- The town acquired Purple Flag Award status in 2010 highlighting a high quality and enjoyable night-time experience.

[12] http://www.purpleflag.org.uk/projects/index.php

9. Planning permissions and recent developments

9.1 In the previous monitoring year (1st April 2010-31st March 2011) there have been 2 newly completed developments and 3 new commencements within the town centre boundary for Halifax affecting town centre uses. Most significant is the commencement of the mixed use Broad Street scheme providing a mix of retail, and predominantly leisure floorspace.

Table 9.1 - New completions (1/4/10-31/3/11)

Address	Development	Floorspace
12 Clare Road	A3 - Single storey extension to A3 unit	32sqm (A3)
Lower Cross Street (opposite Sainsbury's entrance)	Loss of A1 - Demolition of existing retail unit (Floors 2 Go) and construction of surface car park for Sainsbury's store colleagues	-527sqm (A1)

Source: CMBC monitoring

Table 9.2 - New commencements (1/4/10-31/3/11)

Address	Development	Floorspace
Broad Street (Block 1)	Mixed use development comprising retail and/or other uses including demolition of existing buildings,	1,123sqm (A1) 3,325sqm (B1a)
Broad Street (Block 2)	Mixed use development and multi storey car parking with access roads, including modifications to existing network and landscaping (Amended plans)	1,495sqm (A1) 1,266sqm (A3) 383sqm (A4) 6,696sqm (D2)
14-18 Pellon Lane	Loss of A1 - Change of use from commercial premises to 3 residential dwellings	-102sqm (A1)

Source: CMBC monitoring

9.2 In terms of outstanding (not commenced) planning permissions within Halifax town centre, there are a total of 28 separate applications relating to town centre use classes. The most significant developments with permission in terms of new floorspace include:

- Extension to Sainsburys Supermarket (2,910sqm A1) – work has started in the 2011/12 monitoring period;
- Hopwood Lane Gateway Site (3,238sqm mixed use); and
- Assembly and leisure (D2) in Piece Hall environs; the Square Chapel Arts Centre extension (890sqm) and the MyPlace Young People's Centre on Thomas Street 1,004sqm).

Table 9.3 - Summary of outstanding planning permissions (as at 31/3/11)

Use Class	No. of permissions	Floorspace (sqm)		
		New Gross	Loss	New Net
A1 (Shops)	15	3,383	1,161	2,222
A2 (Financial & Professional Services	9	167	1,065	-898
A3 (Restaurants and Cafes)	12	1,134	63	1,071
A4 (Drinking establishments)	2	190	0	190
A5 (Hot food takeaway)	2	81	0	81
B1a (Business - offices)	8	3,765	2,632	1,133
D2 (Assembly and leisure)	2	1,894	0	1,894
Total*	28			**4,381**

Source: CMBC monitoring
*Total may not add up to individual figures as many applications relate to more than one Use Class

9.3 The Retail Needs Assessment notes a significant increase of 15,100sqm (approximately 16%) in the total amount of floorspace for town centre uses over the period 2000 to 2009. The majority of this increase has come from increased leisure services provision and also vacant floorspace, however comparison retail floorspace has also increased, predominantly through the opening of the Matalan store on Berry Lane in 2002.

Summary
Planning permissions and recent developments

- Floorspace provision for town centre uses in the town centre has increased over the past decade by around 16%, primarily through leisure services, vacant floorspace, and comparison retail;
- A number of planning permissions remain outstanding as at 31/3/11, for all main town centre uses, most significantly A1 (convenience), A3, B1a and D2 use classes; and
- The commencement of the Broad Street mixed-use retail and leisure development is a significant investment in the town centre and will help to improve the night-time economy and offer of the town centre.

10. Summary

10.1 This qualitative assessment has sought to bring together key information and data sets to highlight the qualitative aspects of Halifax town centre, within the context of planning related issues and the emerging Calderdale LDF.

10.2 In summary, whilst Halifax is a busy, sub-regional centre, various aspects of how the town centre functions could be addressed to help improve its attractiveness, diversity and competitiveness. This is particularly important within the context of Halifax's drop in the national retail rankings from 174 to 204 between 2004 and 2008, as highlighted in the 2009 Retail Needs Assessment. The reversing of this trend should be a key aim, by addressing some of the issues highlighted in this report.

10.3 The key findings detailed in this report can be summarised as follows:

- Both business and consumers would like to see improved consumer choice within the town centre;
- There is a lack of medium and larger sized premises restricting modern retailers' from locating in the town;
- Relatively low confidence exists amongst businesses in terms of growth and performance in the centre;
- Significant deprivation is located within the immediate town centre area and wider areas to the north and west of the town centre;
- Some peripheral areas of the town centre are performing poorly demonstrated through valuation and vacancy rates data;
- Parking provision and pedestrian links to the town centre currently affect the overall customer experience in a negative way;
- There is very limited green space within the town centre, although pedestrianisation is relatively widespread;
- The town centre provides a good range of cultural, leisure and night-time facilities however the leisure offer is currently considered poor for a town of its size - recent commencement of the mixed-use Broad Street scheme however is a very significant development for the town and will expand the night-time and leisure offer considerably; and
- Purple Flag Award status granted in 2010 showcases the town centre as a generally high quality and enjoyable night-time experience.

Brighouse Town Centre

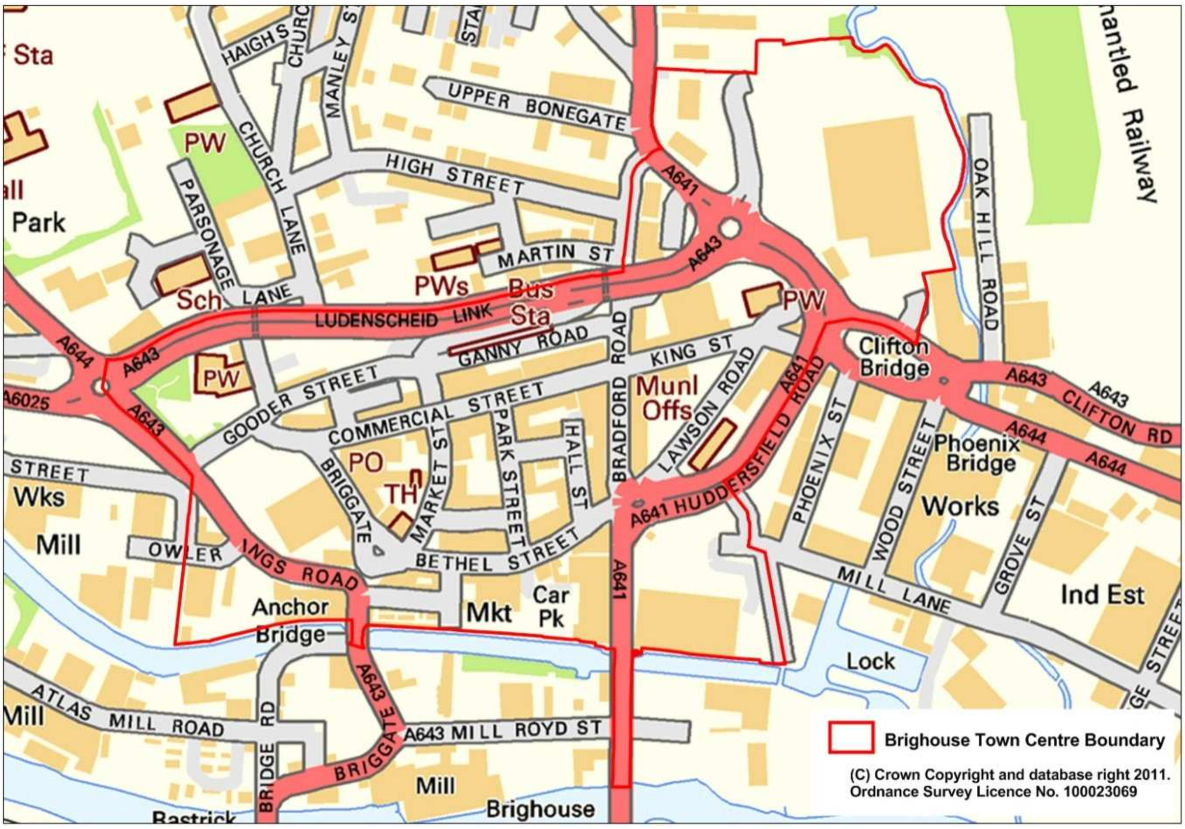
1. Context

1.0 Brighouse is the second largest town in Calderdale, and is highlighted as a 'Principal Town' within the Regional Spatial Strategy settlement hierarchy. It is located on the A641, just off the M62 in West Yorkshire, approximately 8km south east of Halifax and 8km to the north of Huddersfield.

1.1 According to the last Census, Brighouse and its wider area (including Rastrick, Bailiff Bridge and Hipperholme) had a population of 33,906 in 2001. Mid-year population estimates suggest this may have risen to around 34,600 by 2009, a rise of only around 2%[13], the lowest in Calderdale.

1.2 Brighouse town centre is defined as a 'town centre' in the Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (2006), together with Elland, Hebden Bridge, Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden. In terms of overall retail provision, the town was ranked the 754th venue nationally, of approximately 7000, when surveyed by Management Horizons Europe in 2008, placing it within the 'minor district' centre category in this ranking. This represents a fall in ranking from 575th in 2004.

1.3 The main focus of retailing within Brighouse is along Commercial Street with Bradford Road and Bethel Street having the main active secondary and tertiary shopping frontages. Large retail units are located to the west, south-east and north-east of the retail core, occupied by Wilkinsons, Sainsbury and Tesco respectively. All routes within the town centre are open to vehicles however the majority of the town centre roads operate one way systems to manage traffic flow.



[13] Population data is taken from the Core Strategy Refined Issues and Options Consultation report (January 2011). Population growth is calculated using August 2010 Patient register data, adjusted to the official mid-2009 population estimates.

1.4 Beyond the retail side, Brighouse town centre has a range of other facilities including Council Offices, a Customer First Centre, a Civic Hall and a Health Centre. In edge-of-centre locations there are numerous sports and social clubs, the Brighouse Library and Art Gallery (Smith Art Gallery), the High School and Further Education Centre and Fire and Ambulance Stations.

Governance and strategies

1.5 There is currently no formal town centre management organisation in place for Brighouse. United Brighouse is the local body working proactively to develop and implement improvements in the town, primarily comprising business and local councillor membership. The Brighouse Business Initiative also operates with the aim of promoting the town and raising the profile of Brighouse in the wider area, particularly with regards to town centre and retail aspects.

1.6 Calderdale Council has the adopted Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (RCUDP) that provides the current policy framework for town centres in the District. A health check assessment of each town centre in Calderdale was also undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment in 2009. Where relevant, parts of the town centre health check report are included and referenced within this report.

2. Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

Diversity of uses - Town centre composition

2.12 Recent surveys of town centre occupancy have been undertaken in both 2009 and 2010. The surveys complement each other in the data that they provide and collectively provide a wealth of information on the composition of all town centres in Calderdale.

a. 2009 Survey – undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment by White Young Green (WYG) planning consultants.
b. 2010 Survey – undertaken by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (CMBC) to update the Accessibility Survey, previously completed in 2006.

2.13 In 2009 Brighouse contained a total of 193 occupied or vacant units within the defined central shopping area, occupying a total of 35,440m^2 of floorspace. Of this total floorspace, 19,340m^2 was in retail use. The highest proportion of this was for comparison goods in terms of number of outlets (31.6%), but convenience goods in terms of floorspace (28.5%) (Table 2.2). Whereas the number of comparison outlets is broadly comparable to the national average, the percentage of floorspace in the town centre given over to convenience retailing is double the national average, a significant proportion. This is predominantly down to the location of both the Sainsbury's and Tesco superstores being located within the town centre boundary.

2.14 In addition to the permanent retail provision in the town, Brighouse retains a twice weekly outdoor market. With around 50 stalls available, the market operates on

Wednesdays and Saturdays from its location on Briggate and Ship Street alongside the canal.

Table 2.1: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Number of Outlets

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (No.)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	7.4	19	9.8	8.0	8.5	7.5	10.8	8.8
Comparison	29.6	61	31.6	23.3	43.3	25.4	16.7	34.6
Retail Service	12.1	26	13.5	14.7	11.0	17.2	19.2	13.0
Leisure Services	24.5	34	17.6	28.7	24.4	17.9	25.0	21.5
Financial & Business Services	10.6	19	9.8	12.0	7.3	8.2	10.0	11.2
Vacant	15.9	34	17.6	13.3	5.5	23.9	18.3	10.6
Total	100	193	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Table 2.2: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Existing Floorspace

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (m^2)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	13.3	10,11	28.5	17.2	12.6	19.6	24.0	14.2
Comparison	34.7	9,230	26.0	28.5	33.0	16.1	11.8	37.8
Retail Service	6.9	2,330	6.6	8.1	6.6	10.3	12.0	7.0
Leisure Services	27.0	6,490	18.3	30.9	36.8	18.9	28.8	22.7
Financial & Business Services	7.7	2,660	7.5	8.2	6.5	6.4	12.4	8.7
Vacant	10.4	4,620	13.0	7.1	4.5	28.8	11.0	8.9
Total	100	35,44	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

2.15 In 2010, more detailed data was collected on the type of occupant. Table 2.3 summarises floorspace by planning Use Class.

Table 2.3: Use Class mix - floorspace

Use Class	Halifax (%)	Brighouse floor space (m^2)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
A1 (Shops)	30.2	16,948	57.5	43.7	32.9	27.8	42.9
A2 (Financial & Professional)	8.4	2,138	7.3	7.4	8.6	5.3	7.8
A3 (Restaurants & Cafes)	3.3	1,343	4.6	7.5	7.2	5.4	5.0
A4 (Drinking Establishments)	3.6	1,181	4.0	7.9	7.4	5.4	3.5
A5 (Hot Food Takeaway)	0.8	565	1.9	1.6	1.2	1.3	3.3

B1 (Business)	19.8	634	2.2	3.6	0.9	3.2	3.3
B2 (General Industry)	1.4	344	1.2	1.7	0.8	1.7	1.2
B8 (Storage or Distribution)	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.3	-
C1 (Hotels)	2.4	950	3.2	-	1.8		-
C2 (Residential Institutions)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
D1 (Non-residential Institutions)	7.5	2,141	7.3	8.5	25.0	27.7	13.9
D2 (Assembly & Leisure)	7.0	1,197	4.1	8.6	7.3	1.9	7.3
Sui Generis	6.1	754	2.6	3.2	5.2	8.4	3.4
Vacant	8.9	1,289	4.4	6.3	1.7	11.6	8.3
Total	100.0	29,483	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

2.16 In terms of the occupancy category, Table 2.4 demonstrates the most common categories within Brighouse Town Centre at the time of the 2010 survey.

Table 2.4: Occupancy Categories

	Occupancy Category	No. of instances
1	Cafe/Restaurants	14
2	Clothes/Wool and Needlework/Travel Goods	14
3	Hairdressers/Barbers/Beauty Salons/Tattoo Artist	13
4	Vacant	11
5	Hot Food Takeaways	11
6	Banks/Building Societies (Branches)	10
7	Charity Shops	8
8	Estate Agents	6
9	Beauty Salons, Nail bars and Tanning	6

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Consumer Choice - Survey Results

2.17 In 2009 the WYG in-street (consumer) survey results showed that more visitors to Brighouse (39%) rated the choice of shops as being either 'worse' or 'much worse' than other centres, than rated them 'better' or 'much better' (22%). In response to the types of shops that visitors would like to see more of, the most popular responses were clothing stores (33%) and department stores (26%).

2.18 The WYG business survey also revealed that, when asked about measures that would improve the town centre, the majority of retailers (78%) feel that an increased choice / range of shops would have this affect. 62% of respondents stated that more independent / specialist traders would be good for the town.

Breakdown of retail size

2.19 Brighouse has a much larger proportion of small units of less than $93m^2$ (59.6% of the total) compared to the national average (39.1%). As a result there is an under-representation of most medium sized and larger units compared to the national averages (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Diversity of Uses - Unit Sizes

Unit Size	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (No. of units)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Under 93m^2 (1,000ft^2)	51.6	115	59.6	68.7	70.7	68.7	64.2	39.1
93-232m^2 (1,000-2,499ft^2)	25.4	53	27.5	22.7	21.3	23.1	27.5	39.6
232-464m^2 (2,500-4,999ft^2)	12.9	14	7.3	4.7	6.1	3.7	5.0	12.6
465-929m^2 (5,000-9,999ft^2)	5.9	7	3.6	2.7	1.2	2.2	1.7	5.1
930-1,393m^2 (10,000-14,999ft^2)	2.1	1	0.5	0.7	0.6	2.2	0.8	1.5
1,394-1,858m^2 (15,000-19,999ft^2)	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.7
1,859-2,787m^2 (20,000-29,999ft^2)	0.4	1	0.5	0.7	0	0	0	0.7
Above 2,787m^2 (30,000ft^2)	1.1	2	1.0	0	0	0	0	0.8
Total	100	193	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Retailer Representation - Independent/national

2.20 Brighouse contains only 15% (3) of the top-twenty national high street retailers (as identified by FOCUS – 2008). However a range of other multiple retail, leisure and financial and business service operators are present in the town. Details of whether units were occupied by independent or national / multiple operators were collected as part of the CMBC town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. This enabled an assessment of a centre's wider independent / national mix, as well as a more focused 'clone town' assessment to be made[14] on the make-up of the principal high street or primary frontage areas.

2.21 Brighouse's clone town assessment[15] (Clone Town score of 67.4) highlights it as being a 'home' town – along with all of Calderdale's main centres barring Halifax (Table 2.6). 'Home' town status indicates that at least two thirds of the stores are independent, and that the centre has a wide range of outlets.

Table 2.6: Clone town assessments

Category	Town Centre	Clone Town Score
'Clone' Towns (Scores 50 or less)	Cambridge	11.6
	Halifax	30.8
	Huddersfield	49.7
'Border' Towns (Scores 50-65)	Weymouth	52.0
	Sherbourne	64.1

[14] The Clone Town Britain report was first published in 2005 by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and looked at the increasing domination of large chain stores in Britain's high streets. The report provided a means of assessing any high street's homogenisation and lack of distinctiveness in terms of its retail offer, looking at both identity and diversity. A follow up 2010 Clone Town Report was more recently published containing updated assessments of towns across Britain.

[15] Survey included 60 units along primary frontages on Commercial Street.

‘Home’ Towns (Scores 65+)	**Brighouse**	**67.4**
	Sowerby Bridge	75.5
	Hebden Bridge	76.1
	Todmorden	76.5
	Elland	79.8

Source: Re-imagining the High Street, NEF (Sep 2010) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Summary

Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

- Brighouse is a town of district significance with a very high proportion of convenience floor space in the town centre, twice the national average;
- The centre has the highest proportion of A1 floorspace of any centre in Calderdale;
- Assembly and leisure (D2) uses are low compared to other Calderdale town centres;
- A majority of both businesses and shoppers would like to see improved consumer choice in the town;
- There is a lack of medium ($93m^2$-$232m^2$) to large ($232m^2$-$929m^2$) sized premises in the town centre; and
- Brighouse is classified as a ‘home town’ indicating a healthy mix of independent and multiple occupiers within the town centre. Only 3 of the top 20 national high street retailers have a presence.

3. Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

3.4 Overtrading from a quantitative perspective for convenience shopping is discussed in the Retail Needs Assessment (Table 8.7 deals with Brighouse) and is built into the overall conclusions on new floorspace requirements (based on the shoppers’ survey and assumptions on average turnover etc.). From a qualitative perspective however, evidence on overcrowding and congestion is a lot harder to obtain data on.

3.5 Although anecdotal evidence is available, objective evidence on overcrowding and congestion would have to be collected first hand through extensive survey work. The investment required both in cost and time to undertake this work could not be justified in relation to the benefit received. Therefore in the absence of such work, responses to the business survey (undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment) indicating general trader confidence and success, seems the most appropriate available data to give an indication of trading levels.

3.6 Of those who were surveyed and responded in Brighouse (62 businesses), 58% indicated that their business had grown since they began trading in the town centre. However, nearly 26% suggested that trade had declined moderately or significantly, the 2nd highest of all centres in Calderdale. Similarly around 15% of respondents felt that their business was performing poorly or very poorly, the second highest (poorest) rate of all the town centres in Calderdale (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Trading levels / Business Confidence

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
Business has grown moderately or significantly	50.0	58.1	72.8	63.1	58.8	72.2
Business has remained largely static	23.0	16.1	9.1	23.1	23.5	11.1
Business has declined moderately or significantly	27.0	25.8	18.2	13.9	17.6	16.7
HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR BUSINESS IS PERFORMING?						
Well or very well	40.9	47.6	81.8	53.7	53.1	66.6
Moderately	43.0	37.7	9.1	34.3	34.4	25.9
Poorly or very poorly	16.1	14.8	9.1	12.0	12.6	7.4

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – Business Survey Q1g and Q1h

Summary

Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

- From Brighouse businesses surveyed in 2009 there was relatively low confidence in terms of growth and performance, particularly in relation to other town centres in Calderdale.

4. Location specific needs (e.g. deprived areas / underserved markets)

4.6 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) dataset every 3 years. This gives a relative deprivation ranking of small areas around the UK based on a number of different measurements; income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

4.7 In the latest IMD dataset for 2010 the Brighouse town centre area ranked 9,995th of 32,482. This places the immediate area around the 31st percentile of most deprived areas of the country, a decline from the ranking of 10,783rd in 2007 but an improvement over the 2004 ranking of 9,037th. One area of the wider town to the north falls within the 10% of most deprived areas nationally.

4.8 Table 4.1 demonstrates the change in ranking between 2004 and 2010, relative to the other centres in Calderdale.

Table 4.1: Measures of deprivation

	IMD Ranking (and % rank)			
	2004	2007	2010	% Change 2004-2010
Halifax	1,560 (4.8%)	1,883 (5.8%)	2,221 (6.8%)	+2.0
Brighouse	9,037 (27.8%)	10,783 (33.2%)	9,995 (30.8%)	+3.0
Sowerby Bridge	6,374 (19.6%)	7,406 (22.8%)	6,831 (21.0%)	+1.4
Hebden Bridge	10,296 (31.7%)	13,607 (41.9%)	14,283 (44.0%)	+12.3
Todmorden	8,178 (25.2%)	8,655 (26.6%)	8,325 (25.6%)	+0.4
Elland	8,308 (25.6%)	9,394 (28.9%)	8,248 (25.4%)	-0.2

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, 2007, 2010

4.9 Although the direction of travel over the period 2004-2010 has shown an improvement for the immediate town centre area in terms of its IMD ranking, the ranking has fluctuated significantly between assessment periods. In addition the area north of the town centre now ranked within the 10% of most deprived areas nationally had previously not been ranked as poorly.

4.10 Proposals that are likely to bring significant improvements to the range, choice and quality of everyday shopping to serve the needs of those living in deprived areas should be encouraged. However, other non-retail town centre uses and development play an equally important role in helping to improve the areas health and disability deprivation, living environment, and employment potential.

Summary
Location specific needs

- The immediate town centre area is not identified as a deprived location, however the overall ranking has declined since 2007 and a specific area to the north of the town centre is ranked within the 10% most deprived areas of the country.

5. Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

Quality of existing provision

5.11 The buildings within Brighouse town centre are from a variety of different eras, however much of the town centre 19th Century building stock remains. Where the retention of the historic core and much of the older architecture may provide a distinctive and attractive town centre, for the larger modern retailers the older and traditionally smaller properties found in Brighouse represent less attractive locations for stores.

Rents/Valuation Rates

5.12 The most recent data on the rateable value of properties within town centres is available on the Valuation Office Agency website (www.voa.gov.uk). Rateable value represents the open market annual rental value of a business/non-domestic property. This means the rent the property would let for on the valuation date, if it was being offered on the open market. The rateable value is used by the local council when calculating business rates bills.

5.13 When viewed across a town centre, valuation rates provide a general picture of the desirability and attractiveness of particular areas – those streets commanding higher valuation rates are those with the higher rents and therefore likely higher footfall and higher sales. Looking at the spatial variation of valuation rates in conjunction with change in rates over time can also highlight areas that may be more vulnerable within a centre and potentially in decline.

5.14 Figure 5.1 demonstrates the spread of prime Retail Zone A valuation rates in and around Brighouse town centre. The highest rates are found in Commercial Street (up to £386/m^2) and King Street. Bethel Street and southern areas of the town centre have considerably lower rates despite their location on a main town centre thoroughfare. Of particular note are the very low rates in evidence in the Wellington Arcade and Park Row; however the lowest rates of all are found on Canal Street (£100/m^2).

Figure 5.1 – Brighouse Town Centre Valuation Rates 2010-15

Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

5.15 The largest increase in rates has generally been seen along frontages in Market Street, Park Street and Bradford Road (Figure 5.2). A significant proportion of the units on King Street have seen no rise or a decrease in rates, perhaps linked to recent long term vacancies in these units. Vacancy rates on King Street have however improved significantly through 2011.

Figure 5.2 – Brighouse Town Centre Valuation Rates % change 2005-10

Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

Vacant Property

5.16 Data on vacant properties within town centres is not collected on a regular basis in Calderdale. However data is available for the years 2001 and 2009 (from the WYG Health Check assessment) and 2006 and 2010 (from the Calderdale town centre surveys undertaken by the planning policy team). Although other data on smaller areas is available these 4 surveys provide comparable data over time.

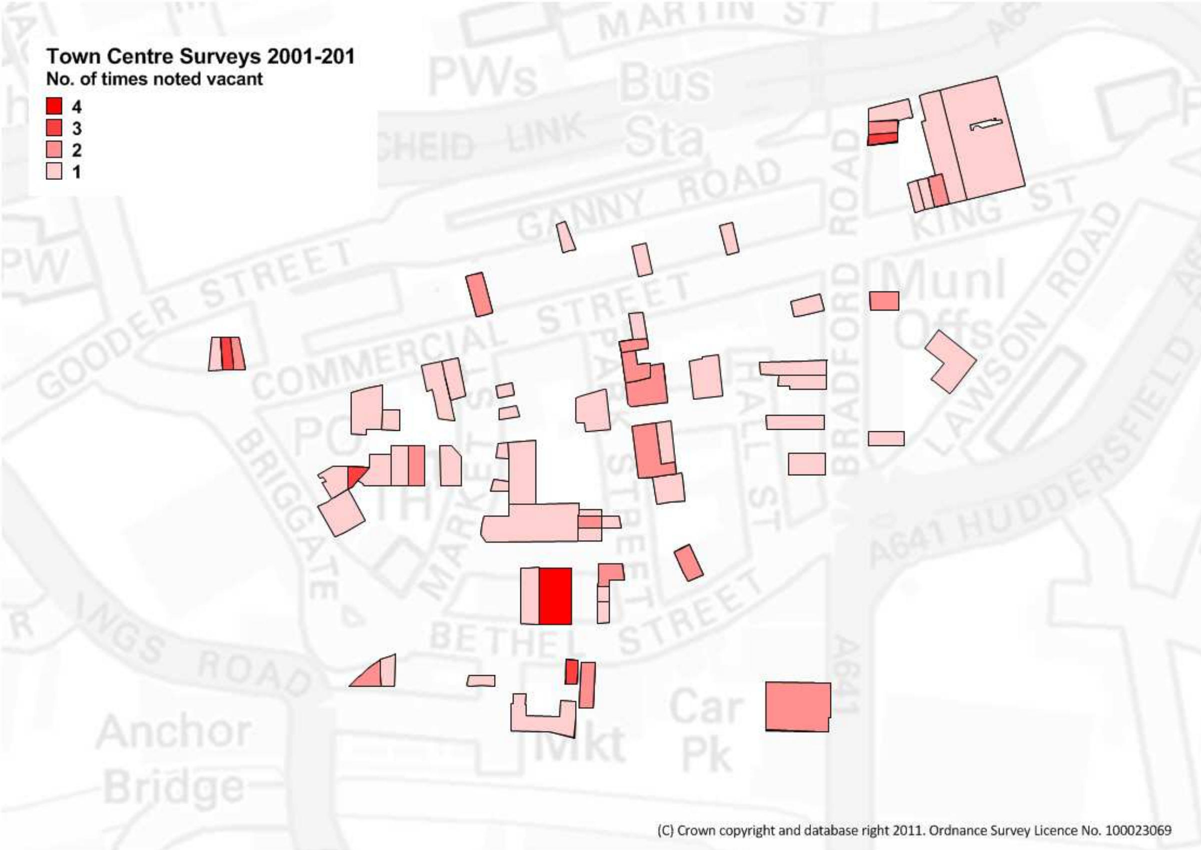
5.17 Since 2001, many of the vacant units have been recycled, which is a positive sign for the centre. However, there are still a high proportion of small vacant outlets which may be unsuitable to the demands of modern retailing. Vacancies in the town centre increased by thirteen units between 2001 and 2009 (Experian GOAD), rising from 10.9% of the total number of units to 17.6% (significantly higher than the national average of 10.6%). In terms of floorspace, vacancy rates have increased from 5.9% to 13.0% over the same period (again higher than the national average of 8.9%).

5.18 A vacant town centre unit is not necessarily an issue in itself as there will always be natural churn within a centre with some units closing and others opening, and also the wider economic situation having an impact. It is persistent, long-term vacancies in certain areas within a centre that cause greater concern however and may be an indication of an area failing or falling into decline.

5.19 The Local Data Company[16] also undertake town centre surveys on a national basis and published updated vacancy rates for Brighouse in September of 2011. These indicated that Brighouse was one of the five most improved towns in the country for vacancy rates. Although not directly comparable to CMBC data, this survey showed a welcome improvement in rates between 2010 and 2011[17].

5.20 Of the 4 surveys undertaken by CMBC, Figure 5.3 shows the cumulative vacancies across the town centre during the last decade, and highlights those units that have been vacant on multiple surveys. Although there is no one single area that stands out as having a concentration of long term vacant units, there are a number of units across the town that have been vacant on either 3 or 4 of the survey occasions.

Figure 5.3 – Brighouse vacancy rates 2001-2010



Source: Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment (2009) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Surveys

[16] http://www.localdatacompany.com/
[17] Reported in the Brighouse Echo on Saturday 24th September 2011, 'Booming Brighouse bucks the trend'

Summary
Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

- Commercial Street has the highest prime Zone A Retail rates along with the lowest vacancy rates over the last decade;
- King Street also has high prime Zone A Retail rates however rates appear to be more volatile than on Commercial Street and vacancy rates higher;
- Bethel Street has significantly lower Zone A Retail rates than the other primary town centre areas however vacancy rates are not significantly worse; and
- The data in general does not indicate any peripheral areas of the town centre showing potential decline, perhaps due to its relatively compact nature.

6. Customer experience

6.11 Looking at the general customer experience of Brighouse town centre, of the 100 shoppers interviewed in 2009 as part of the Retail Needs Assessment on-street survey (Q32), the top 5 weaknesses of Brighouse town centre were perceived to be; none mentioned (20%); the choice/range of non-food shops (15%); too many charity shops (11%); car parking (7%); and leisure facilities (6%). A further 12% of respondents did not know.

Accessibility

6.12 Accessibility to the town centre is available through a range of means of transport. The bus station is located immediately to the north of Commercial Street and provides good, immediate access through to the main shopping street. Brighouse also has a train station however this is located approximately 400m south of the town centre.

6.13 When questioned about how visitors arrived in the centre (Q03 of the on-street Retail Needs Assessment survey), the majority replied by car (55%, the highest of any of Calderdale’s town centres). Buses conveyed 22% of visitors interviewed and 21% arrived on foot. None of the 100 people interviewed had arrived by train.

6.14 Buses provide direct services to Halifax, through either Elland or Southowram, as well as destinations outside of Calderdale including Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds and Wakefield. The railway station provides services along 3 routes; the Caldervale line running between Manchester and Leeds; the Huddersfield line running from Huddersfield through to Halifax, Bradford and Leeds; and a 3 times daily service from Bradford to London Kings Cross calling at Brighouse.

6.15 Brighouse has a total of around 514 public off-street parking spaces which equates to approximately one space per $69m^2$ of retailing, one of the highest provisions (relative to the size of the retailing centre) in Calderdale centres[18]. Although the majority (71%) of visitors arriving by car did not encounter any difficulty in obtaining a car parking space, 29% did which is the second highest of all the centres in Calderdale. Parking was highlighted as one of the top 5 weaknesses of the centre but at the same time had the most positive responses of all centres in relation to people's perceptions of parking provision and cost in the town (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Customer experience - Accessibility

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
METHOD OF TRAVEL						
Travelled by car/van	33.7	55.0	28.3	38.3	26.0	29.4
Travelled by bus, minibus or coach	38.6	22.0	30.3	21.6	20.0	9.8
Travelled by foot	22.3	21.0	40.4	29.4	49.0	57.8
DURATION OF TRAVEL TO CENTRE						
0-5 min journey	17.3	23.0	33.3	25.5	20.0	44.1
6-10 min journey	31.7	28.0	37.4	18.6	38.0	20.6
11-15 min journey	24.3	23.0	14.1	8.8	14.0	8.8
16-20 min journey	12.9	8.0	8.1	6.9	9.0	14.7
21-30 min journey	5.9	14.0	4.0	12.7	3.0	7.8
31-60 min journey	5.4	3.0	3.0	12.7	5.0	2.0
Over 60 min journey	1.5	1.0	0.0	14.7	7.0	2.0
CAR PARKING						
Did you have difficulty obtaining a parking space? Yes:	18.0	29.4	13.0	51.4	13.6	18.5
Car parking provision – better/much better than others?	5.4	19.0	4.0	1.0	15.0	25.5
Car parking prices – better/much better than others?	6.4	24.0	4.0	1.0	17.0	23.6

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q3, Q5, Q6 & Q28

6.16 Accessibility also incorporates public accessibility issues within town centres. For example, knowing that some-one will be able to access a well-maintained and properly equipped public toilet, can make the difference between them choosing to visit one town over another[19].

6.17 In Brighouse there is currently only 1 set of public convenience facilities, located in Thornton Square. There are no Changing Places facilities which provide extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as other serious impairments[20].

Pedestrian flows, crime and safety

6.18 Various factors combine to help the creation of a sense of safety and security for business and visitors at all times of the day and night in our town centres: the layout

[18] Map 2.7 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009
[19] Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, April 2009
[20] http://changing-places.org/

and design of streets, buildings, and open spaces, the attractiveness of public spaces, the visibility of a uniformed presence on the streets[21]. Civic Trust research has also shown consensus amongst practitioners and policy makers that a balance or diversity of town centre land uses, and users, help to make centres safer and more attractive[22].

6.19 None of the main shopping streets in Brighouse town centre are pedestrianised, therefore traffic is a barrier to pedestrian flow and safety, however the main routes within the retail core only allow one-way traffic. Unusually for a town centre, a major dual carriageway road splits the Tesco superstore from the older retail core. This represents a significant barrier to easy pedestrian access from the north and east, not just from the Tesco site but surrounding residential and employment areas as well (Elland Road (Ludenscheid link) to the north and Huddersfield Road to the east). The Brighouse health check assessment undertaken in 2009 notes that, in general, the centre is a fairly safe environment for shoppers, and where there is fast moving traffic, pedestrian crossings aid movement by foot.

6.20 The on-street visitor's survey in 2009 asked specific questions to visitors about their perceptions of crime in Brighouse. During the day-time, some 60% of visitors indicated that safety in Brighouse felt 'about the same' as that in other centres, with 28% considering it to be 'better' or 'much better' than in other centres. However, with respect to the evening/night-time economy, the proportion of visitors who deemed safety to be 'about the same' as in other centres fell to only 29% (the lowest of all Calderdale centres), with 18% considering safety to be either 'worse' or 'much worse' than that in other centres (Table 6.2). A significant number (46%) indicated that they did not know either way.

Table 6.2: Customer experience - Perception of safety

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DAY-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	15.9	28.0	0.0	7.8	23.0	9.8
About the same as other centres?	74.3	60.0	54.5	84.3	66.0	73.5
Worse or much worse than other centres?	7.4	6.0	44.4	2.9	8.0	7.9
NIGHT-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	7.8
About the same as other centres?	38.1	29.0	46.5	74.5	43.0	55.9
Worse or much worse than other centres?	25.2	18.0	45.5	12.7	27.0	14.7

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

6.21 Whilst responses to the survey shows the perception of crime, data on actual occurrences of crime are available from West Yorkshire Police, though by electoral Ward and not by town centre. Brighouse town centre is located within Brighouse ward which showed fairly average rates of all crimes in comparison to the rest of

[21] Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, 2009
[22] Better Town Centres at Night, ATCM and BCSC, 2010

Calderdale in the year to 31st July 2009[23]; 22.6 reported crimes per 1,000 population for criminal damage; 10.6 reported violent crimes per 1,000 population.

Summary

Customer experience

- In terms of customer experience, the most significant issues identified by shoppers are the poor choice/range of non-food shops, car parking and the lack of leisure facilities;
- Accessibility to the centre is mainly by private car, with equal numbers arriving by bus or by foot;
- Conflicting perceptions of parking provision are demonstrated with a relatively high number of visitors having difficulty in parking, despite generally good perceptions of parking provision and pricing in the town;
- Pedestrian links to the town centre are problematical in places, and the Huddersfield Road serves as a significant barrier between the Tesco store and the older retail core. Generally however the area is a safe environment; and
- Crime rates in the town centre area are not particularly high however 1 in 5 visitors perceive safety at night to be worse or much worse than other centres.

7. Environmental quality and urban design

7.5 Well designed and well-maintained buildings and public spaces, including parks, streets and squares, play a vital role in creating attractive and welcoming town centre environments for people of all ages. Public spaces, including green spaces, can help to attract investment into town centres, enhance community spirit and cohesiveness, promote community health and wellbeing, and manage the effects of climate change[24].

7.6 The Brighouse town centre boundary contains only 1 small area of green space, designated amenity land in the current development plan (UDP), west of the Central Methodist Church. The Calder and Hebble Navigation runs along the southern boundary of the town centre providing a particularly attractive feature of the town. The lack of any proper pedestrianised areas or public squares however limits the opportunity to escape vehicle noise and pollution.

7.7 The health check assessment undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment summarised Brighouse as a busy, compact town. It found that the streets were clean with no evidence of litter and shop units themselves were maintained to a high standard, creating an attractive shopping environment (with the exception of Wellington Arcade). Street furniture includes: lighting; benches; bins; flowers; and CCTV.

7.8 The study went on to say that units are a mixture of old and new build. The town centre is not covered by any Conservation Areas, and there are no Grade I or Grade

[23] Maps 2.71-2.73 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009

[24] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

II* listed buildings. However there are 8 Grade II Listed Buildings within the town centre boundary.

Summary

Environmental quality and urban design

- Good environmental quality in the main, providing an attractive shopping environment for customers; and
- Very limited green space or pedestrianised areas within the town centre.

8. Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night time economy

8.7 Town centres that offer a range of uses during the day, into the evening and beyond, are more likely to attract a diverse mix of people; broadening of the evening and night-time offering also stands to build stronger connections with local people and attract more people from further afield[25].

8.8 The poor leisure offer in Brighouse was highlighted as one of the most significant issues for the town centre (highlighted in Section 6). The town centre contains no significant cultural, tourist or leisure attractions. The Brighouse Civic Hall provides a multi-purpose venue for concerts, shows, meetings and private hire and there are numerous restaurants, pubs, and hot-food take-aways that remain open during the evening.

8.9 Table 8.1 summarises the total number of different premises by each category of leisure, culture and tourism facility noted during the latest town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. It demonstrates that Brighouse has some (if limited) provision of most leisure categories listed, except for museums and theatres/nightclubs. Of the facilities present, hot food takeaways represent the highest proportion of any town centre in Calderdale with 16 in total in town or edge of centre locations.

8.10 The location of the leisure and night-time facilities is predominantly focused in the central areas of the town centre between Market Street and Bradford/Huddersfield Roads (Figure 8.1).

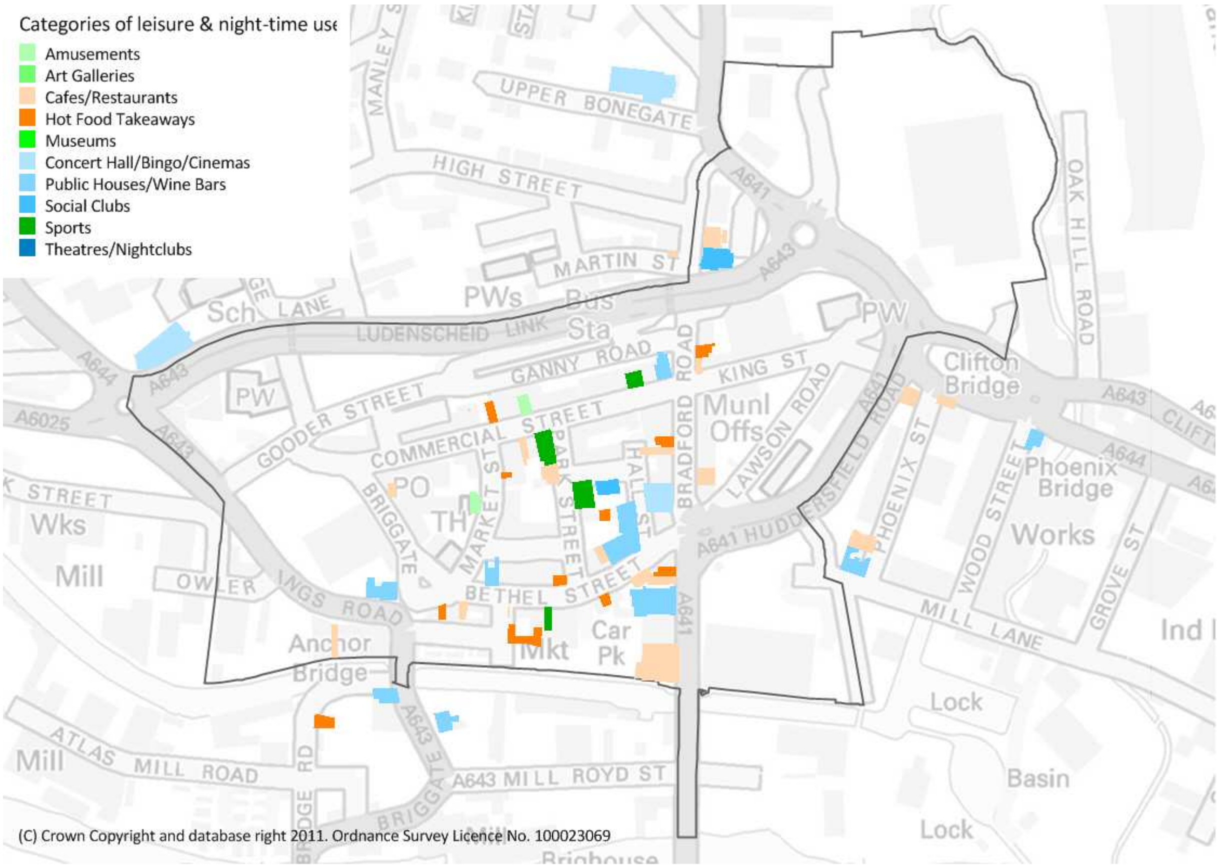
[25] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

Table 8.1 – Brighouse culture, leisure, tourism and night-time offer

Survey Categories	Brighouse				% of all leisure uses				
	Town Centre Premises	Edge of Centre Premises	Total no. of premises	% of all leisure	Halifax	Sowerby Bridge	Hebden Bridge	Todmorden	Elland
Amusement Centres (AMU)	2	-	2	3.3	2.7	-	-	-	-
Art Galleries (ART)	-	1	1	1.7	1.1	-	10.2	8.9	-
Cafes/Restaurants (CAF)	14	6	20	33.3	40.1	35.7	40.7	37.5	19.5
Hot Food Takeaways (HOT)	11	5	16	26.7	14.4	19.6	10.2	17.9	36.6
Museums (MUS)	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	3.4	1.8	-
Concert Halls/Bingo Halls/Cinemas (PEN)	1	2	3	5.0	2.7	-	1.7	-	4.9
Public Houses/Wine Bars (PUB)	5	6	11	18.3	20.7	28.6	18.6	17.9	24.4
Social Club/Working Mens Club (SOC)	2	1	3	5.0	4.8	5.4	5.1	8.9	7.3
Sports Clubs/Gyms/Swimming Pools/Dance & Sports Halls/Sports Stadia (SPO)	4	-	4	6.7	8.5	10.7	8.5	3.6	7.3
Theatres/Nightclubs (THE)	-	-	-	-	4.3	-	1.7	3.6	-
TOTAL	**39**	**21**	**60**						

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Figure 8.1 – Location of leisure and night-time uses in Brighouse



Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

8.11 In terms of the public's view on leisure provision within Brighouse town centre, in 2009 46% of respondents felt that Brighouse was worse or much worse than other centres. Visitors were happier with the range and choice of pubs and restaurants although still 24% responded that this area was worse or much worse than other centres (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 – Public perceptions of the Brighouse leisure offer

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
RANGE & CHOICE OF PUBS/RESTAURANTS						
Much better or better than other centres?	18.9	14.0	5.1	30.4	14.0	5.9
About the same as other centres?	37.1	33.0	57.6	64.7	41.0	45.1
Worse or much worse than other centres?	22.3	24.0	36.4	3.9	28.0	43.2
LEISURE FACILITIES						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	2.0	9.8	11.0	2.9
About the same as other centres?	29.2	16.0	40.4	68.6	41.0	31.4
Worse or much worse than other centres?	40.1	46.0	53.5	11.8	26.0	56.9

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

Summary
Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night-time economy

- Brighouse town centre offers a reasonable range of dining and drinking facilities, however other cultural, leisure and tourism facilities are lacking;
- The perception of town centre users is that the leisure offer is significantly poorer than other centres;
- Leisure and night-time facilities that are provided are focused around the central core of the town centre; and
- Survey data confirms that Brighouse has a very high proportion of hot-food takeaways compared to other Calderdale town centres.

9. Planning permissions and recent developments

9.4 In the previous monitoring year (1st April 2010-31st March 2011) there have been no newly completed developments or new commencements within the town centre boundary for Brighouse affecting town centre uses.

9.5 In terms of outstanding (not commenced) planning permissions within Brighouse town centre, there are only 4 separate applications relating to town centre use classes.

Table 9.3 - Summary of outstanding planning permissions (as at 31/3/11)

Use Class	No. of permissions	Floorspace (sqm)		
		New Gross	Loss	New Net
A1 (Shops)	2	253	52	201
A2 (Financial & Professional Services	1	52	-	52
A3 (Restaurants and Cafes)	-	-	-	-
A4 (Drinking establishments)	-	-	-	-
A5 (Hot food takeaway)	-	-	-	-
B1a (Business - offices)	1	162	-	162
D2 (Assembly and leisure)	1	43	-	43
Total*	**5**	**510**	**52**	**458**

Source: CMBC monitoring
*Total may not add up to individual figures as many applications relate to more than one Use Class

9.6 The Retail Needs Assessment notes a significant increase of 7,320sqm (approximately 25%) in the total amount of floorspace for town centre uses over the period 2001 to 2009. A large proportion of this can be attributed to the opening of the Tesco store; however the leisure services category of floorspace provision contributes 1,660sqm of the increase.

Summary
Planning permissions and recent developments

- Floorspace provision for town centre uses in the town centre has increased over the past decade by around 25%, primarily through convenience and leisure services; however
- There has been no development activity in the past year, and very few planning permissions remain extant in the town centre, amounting to 458sqm of new town centre use floorspace in total.

10. Summary

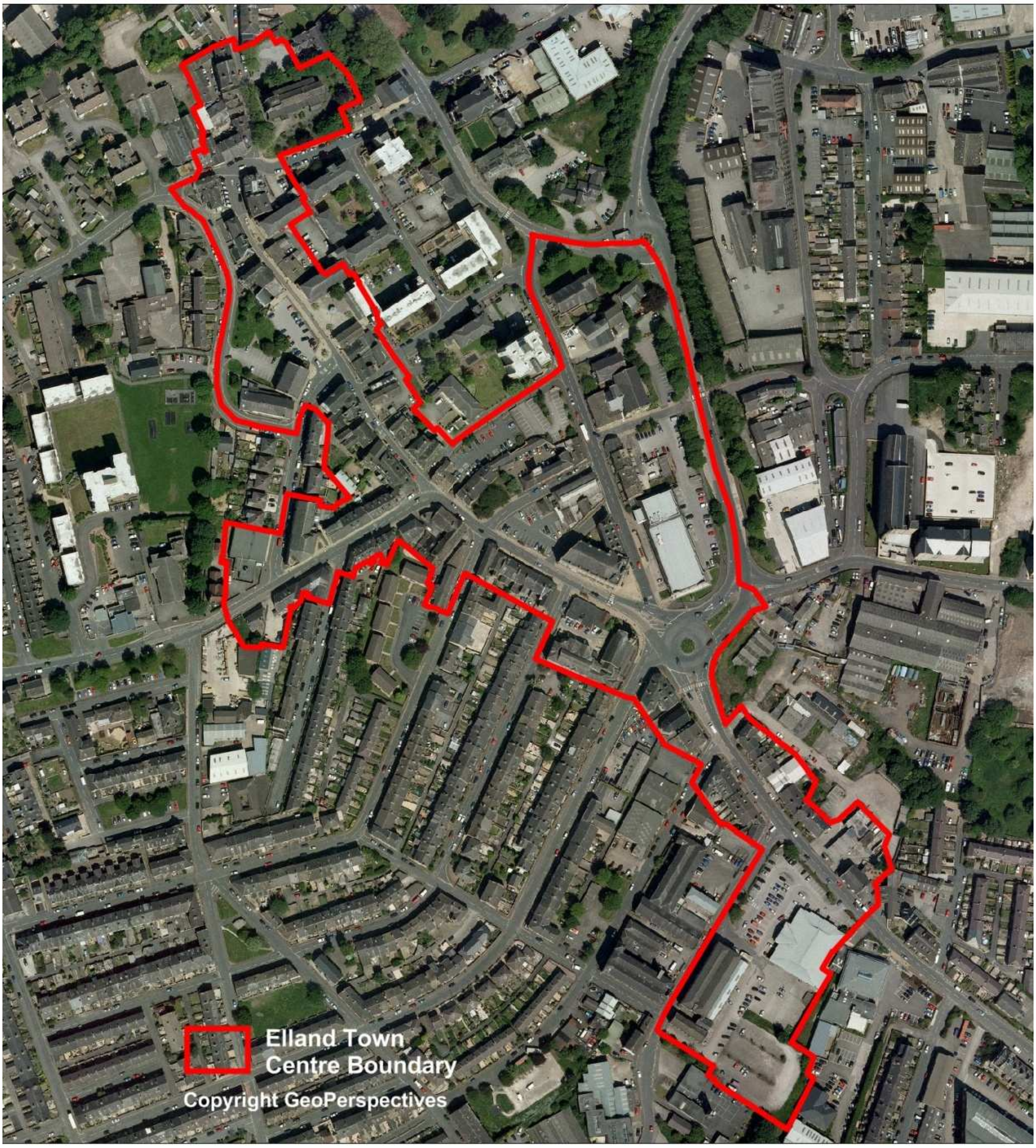
10.4 This qualitative assessment has sought to bring together key information and data sets to highlight the qualitative aspects of Brighouse town centre, within the context of planning related issues and the emerging Calderdale LDF.

10.5 In summary, Brighouse is a major town centre in Calderdale, being the second largest both in terms of size and population. In recent years it has shown a fall in the national retail rankings, along with other centres in Calderdale. The close proximity of the larger centres of Halifax, Huddersfield and Bradford limit the catchment potential of Brighouse, and as a result aspirations for the future of the town should be realistic. However this report has highlighted a number of issues that could be addressed to help improve the centre overall and enhance the experience for users and visitors.

10.6 The key findings detailed in this report can be summarised as follows:

- The centre has a very high proportion of its floorspace taken over by retail uses, however it has a healthy mix of independent and multiple retailers;
- Both business and consumers would like to see improved consumer choice within the town centre;
- There is a lack of medium and larger sized premises in the town;
- Leisure provision in general is very poor within the town centre;
- Relatively low confidence exists amongst businesses in terms of growth and performance in the centre;
- Visitors to the centre predominantly arrive by car;
- There is very limited green space within the town centre boundary, nor is there any public open space or square for community events;
- No significant town centre uses development is currently proposed in the town.

Elland Town Centre



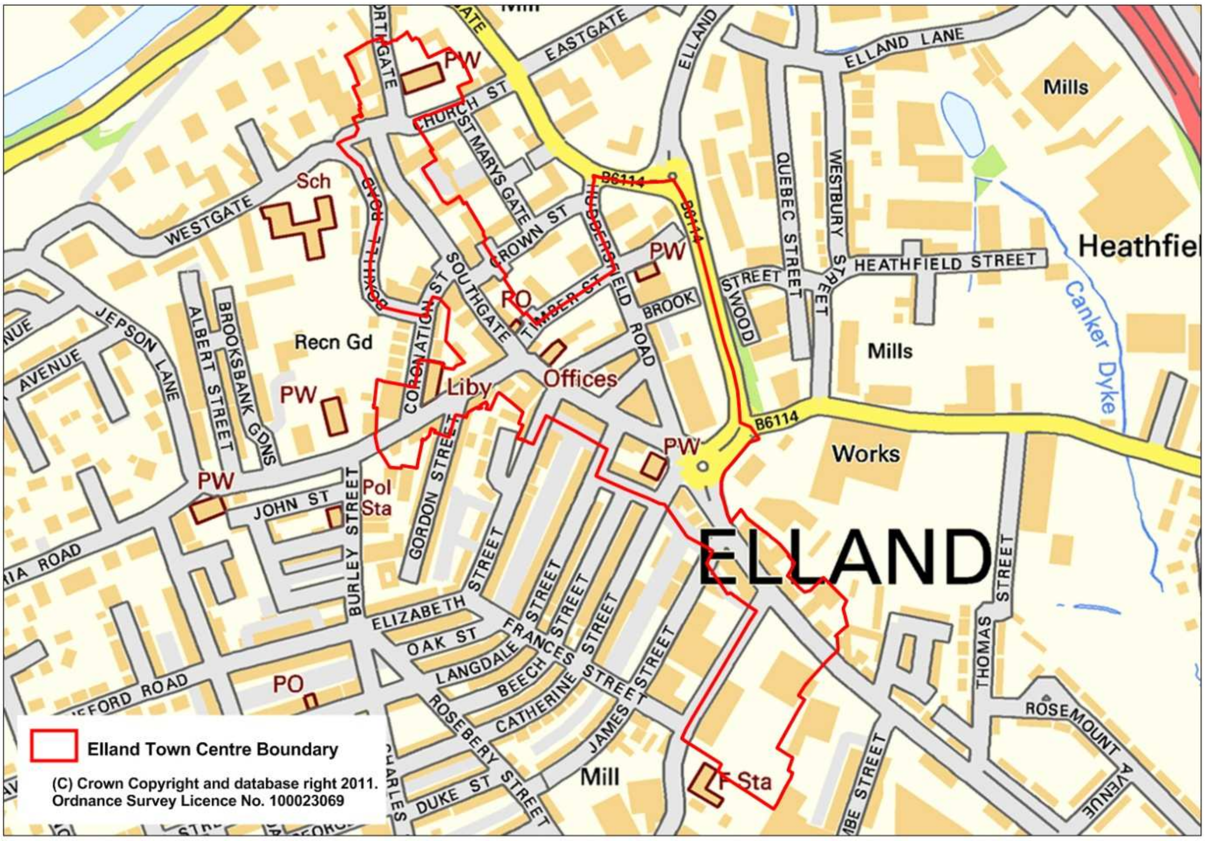
1. Context

1.0 Elland is a traditional West Yorkshire market town located off the A629 (Huddersfield Road), less than a mile from J24 of the M62. The town lies in close proximity to other much larger centres, only 4km south of Halifax, 4km west of Brighouse and 5km north of Huddersfield.

1.1 According to the last Census, Elland and its wider area (including Greetland, Holywell Green and Stainland) had a population of 21,732 in 2001. Mid-year population estimates suggest this may have risen to around 22,715 by 2009, a rise of around 4.5%[26], fairly typical for areas across Calderdale. Within this population catchment lies the additional local centre of West Vale.

1.2 Elland town centre is defined as a ‘town centre’ in the Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (2006) (RCUDP), together with Brighouse, Hebden Bridge, Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden. In terms of overall retail provision, the town was ranked the 3,321st venue nationally, of approximately 7000, when surveyed by Management Horizons Europe in 2008, placing it within the ‘minor local’ centre category in this ranking. No previous ranking data is available for comparison.

1.3 The main focus of retailing within Elland is along Southgate with further provision on parts of Victoria Road and Huddersfield Road. There are currently no frontages defined in Elland in the RCUDP. All routes within the town centre are open to vehicles however Southgate operates a one way system to manage traffic flow.



26 Population data is taken from the Core Strategy Refined Issues and Options Consultation report (January 2011). Population growth is calculated using August 2010 Patient register data, adjusted to the official mid-2009 population estimates.

1.4 Beyond the retail side, Elland town centre has a range of other facilities including council offices, a community hall (Wainwright Hall), library, cinema, swimming pool, children's centre, social clubs and a youth club and various clinics and health practices.

Governance and strategies

1.5 There is currently no formal town centre management organisation in place for Elland. Elland and District Partnership is the local body working proactively to develop and implement improvements in the town, primarily comprising business and local councillor membership.

1.6 Calderdale Council has the adopted Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (RCUDP) that provides the current policy framework for town centres in the District. A health check assessment of each town centre in Calderdale was also undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment in 2009.

1.7 A Central Elland Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was also adopted in April 2008 setting out the context of the town, its historical development and key issues from both past and present. The SPD then looked in detail at various sites both in and outside of the town centre boundary, setting out various development proposals. Where relevant, parts of the town centre health check report and SPD are included and referenced within this report.

2. Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

Diversity of uses - Town centre composition

2.22 Recent surveys of town centre occupancy have been undertaken in both 2009 and 2010. The surveys complement each other in the data that they provide and collectively provide a wealth of information on the composition of all town centres in Calderdale.

a. 2009 Survey – undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment by White Young Green (WYG) planning consultants.
b. 2010 Survey – undertaken by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (CMBC) to update the Accessibility Survey, previously completed in 2006.

2.23 In 2009 Elland contained a total of 120 occupied or vacant units within the defined central shopping area, occupying a total of 14,900m^2 of floorspace. Of this total floorspace, 5,330m^2 was in retail use. The highest proportion of total floorspace was for leisure services both in terms of number of outlets (25%), and in terms of floorspace (28.8%). Convenience retailing is the second largest component of town centre floorspace (24%).

2.24 In terms of the structure of Elland's high-street offer in comparison with other centres in Calderdale and the UK, the most striking characteristic is the very low proportion of comparison retailing available. It is the lowest in Calderdale by some margin (less than 12% of total floorspace), and less than a third of the average UK figure of 37.8% (Table 2.2). Correspondingly Elland has higher proportions of service provision (particularly retail service provision and financial and business services provision) than other centres in Calderdale and the UK.

2.25 In addition to the permanent retail and service provision in the town, Elland retains a weekly outdoor market. It is the smallest of all Calderdale's markets with only 18 stalls available, and is held on a Friday on Southgate.

Table 2.1: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Number of Outlets

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (No.)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	7.4	9.8	8.0	8.5	7.5	13	10.8	8.8
Comparison	29.6	31.6	23.3	43.3	25.4	20	16.7	34.6
Retail Service	12.1	13.5	14.7	11.0	17.2	23	19.2	13.0
Leisure Services	24.5	17.6	28.7	24.4	17.9	30	25.0	21.5
Financial & Business Services	10.6	9.8	12.0	7.3	8.2	12	10.0	11.2
Vacant	15.9	17.6	13.3	5.5	23.9	22	18.3	10.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	120	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Table 2.2: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Existing Floorspace

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (m^2)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	13.3	28.5	17.2	12.6	19.6	3,570	24.0	14.2
Comparison	34.7	26.0	28.5	33.0	16.1	1,760	11.8	37.8
Retail Service	6.9	6.6	8.1	6.6	10.3	1,790	12.0	7.0
Leisure Services	27.0	18.3	30.9	36.8	18.9	4,290	28.8	22.7
Financial & Business Services	7.7	7.5	8.2	6.5	6.4	1,850	12.4	8.7
Vacant	10.4	13.0	7.1	4.5	28.8	1,640	11.0	8.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	14,90	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

2.26 In 2010, more detailed data was collected on the type of occupant. Table 2.3 summarises floorspace by planning Use Class.

Table 2.3: Use Class mix - floorspace

Use Class	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland floor space (m2)	Elland (%)
A1 (Shops)	30.2	57.5	43.7	32.9	27.8	5,849	42.9
A2 (Financial & Professional)	8.4	7.3	7.4	8.6	5.3	1,065	7.8
A3 (Restaurants & Cafes)	3.3	4.6	7.5	7.2	5.4	678	5.0
A4 (Drinking Establishments)	3.6	4.0	7.9	7.4	5.4	479	3.5
A5 (Hot Food Takeaway)	0.8	1.9	1.6	1.2	1.3	447	3.3
B1 (Business)	19.8	2.2	3.6	0.9	3.2	456	3.3
B2 (General Industry)	1.4	1.2	1.7	0.8	1.7	170	1.2
B8 (Storage or Distribution)	0.5	-	-	-	0.3	-	-
C1 (Hotels)	2.4	3.2	-	1.8		-	-
C2 (Residential Institutions)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
D1 (Non-residential Institutions)	7.5	7.3	8.5	25.0	27.7	1,893	13.9
D2 (Assembly & Leisure)	7.0	4.1	8.6	7.3	1.9	999	7.3
Sui Generis	6.1	2.6	3.2	5.2	8.4	464	3.4
Vacant	8.9	4.4	6.3	1.7	11.6	1,133	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	13,634	100.0

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

2.27 In terms of the occupancy category, Table 2.4 demonstrates the most common categories within Elland Town Centre at the time of the 2010 survey.

Table 2.4: Occupancy Categories

	Occupancy Category	No. of instances
1	Vacant	16
2	Hot Food Takeaways	12
3	Hairdressers/Barbers/Beauty Salons/Tattoo Artist	11
4	Cafes/Restaurants	8
5	Clothes Shops/Wool and Needlework/Travel Goods	7
6	Beauty Salons, Nail bars and Tanning	7
7	Banks/Building Societies (Branches)	5
8	Supermarket	5

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Consumer Choice - Survey Results

2.28 In 2009 the WYG in-street (consumer) survey results showed that over three quarters of visitors to Elland (77.5%) rated the choice of shops as being either ‘worse’ or ‘much worse’ than other centres, with only 2% rating them ‘better’, the joint poorest response of all centres in Calderdale. In response to the types of shops that visitors would like to see more of, the most popular responses were food stores (39.2%) and clothing stores (28.4%).

2.29 The WYG business survey also revealed that, when asked about measures that would improve the town centre, the majority of businesses (73.3%) feel that an increased choice / range of shops would have this affect. 60% of respondents stated that improved security/CCTV would be good for the town, and 55% that more independent/specialist traders would be beneficial.

Breakdown of retail size

2.30 Elland has a much larger proportion of smaller units of less than 93m^2 (64.2% of the total) compared to the national average (39.1%) (Table 2.5), however this is typical for a town of Elland's size, and compares with the other smaller town centres in Calderdale. The demand for medium and larger sized units is generally limited in this size of centre.

Table 2.5: Diversity of Uses - Unit Sizes

Unit Size	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (No. of units)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Under 93m^2 (1,000ft^2)	51.6	59.6	68.7	70.7	68.7	77	64.2	39.1
93-232m^2 (1,000-2,499ft^2)	25.4	27.5	22.7	21.3	23.1	33	27.5	39.6
232-464m^2 (2,500-4,999ft^2)	12.9	7.3	4.7	6.1	3.7	6	5.0	12.6
465-929m^2 (5,000-9,999ft^2)	5.9	3.6	2.7	1.2	2.2	2	1.7	5.1
930-1,393m^2 (10,000-14,999ft^2)	2.1	0.5	0.7	0.6	2.2	1	0.8	1.5
1,394-1,858m^2 (15,000-19,999ft^2)	0.6	0	0	0	0	1	0.8	0.7
1,859-2,787m^2 (20,000-29,999ft^2)	0.4	0.5	0.7	0	0	0	0	0.7
Above 2,787m^2 (30,000ft^2)	1.1	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	120	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Retailer Representation - Independent/national

2.31 Details of whether units were occupied by independent or national / multiple operators were collected as part of the CMBC town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. This enabled an assessment of a centre's wider independent / national mix, as well as a more focused 'clone town' assessment to be made[27] on the make-up of the principal high street or primary frontage areas.

2.32 Elland's clone town assessment[28] (Clone Town score of 79.8) highlights it as being a 'home' town – along with all of Calderdale's main centres barring Halifax (Table 2.6).

[27] The Clone Town Britain report was first published in 2005 by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and looked at the increasing domination of large chain stores in Britain's high streets. The report provided a means of assessing any high street's homogenisation and lack of distinctiveness in terms of its retail offer, looking at both identity and diversity. A follow up 2010 Clone Town Report was more recently published containing updated assessments of towns across Britain.

[28] Survey included 59 units primarily located along Southgate and Huddersfield Road.

'Home' town status indicates that at least two thirds of the stores are independent, and that the centre has a wide range of outlets. Elland scores highest in the clone town assessment of all Calderdale centres.

Table 2.6: Clone town assessments

Category	Town Centre	Clone Town Score
'Clone' Towns (Scores 50 or less)	Cambridge	11.6
	Halifax	30.8
	Huddersfield	49.7
'Border' Towns (Scores 50-65)	Weymouth	52.0
	Sherbourne	64.1
'Home' Towns (Scores 65+)	Brighouse	67.4
	Sowerby Bridge	75.5
	Hebden Bridge	76.1
	Todmorden	76.5
	Elland	**79.8**

Source: Re-imagining the High Street, NEF (Sep 2010) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Summary

Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

- Elland is a local market town with a very high proportion of service provision floorspace (leisure services, retail services and financial and business services);
- As a result the town has a very low proportion of retailing in relation to other centres, particularly comparison retailing (less than 12% of total floorspace);
- Of all town centres in Calderdale, visitors to Elland rated the shops the worst when compared to other centres. Most of all visitors would like to see more food stores, followed by clothing stores in the town;
- Local businesses would also like to see improved consumer choice in the town, together with more independent / specialist traders; and
- Despite the wishes of local businesses for more independent/specialist traders, Elland is classified as a 'home town', with the highest score of any Calderdale centre indicating a very healthy mix of independent and multiple occupiers within the town centre.

3. Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

3.7 Overtrading from a quantitative perspective for convenience shopping is discussed in the Retail Needs Assessment (Table 8.11 deals with Elland) and is built into the overall conclusions on new floorspace requirements (based on the shoppers' survey and assumptions on average turnover etc.). From a qualitative perspective however, evidence on overcrowding and congestion is a lot harder to obtain data on.

3.8 Although anecdotal evidence is available, objective evidence on overcrowding and congestion would have to be collected first hand through extensive survey work. The investment required both in cost and time to undertake this work could not be justified in relation to the benefit received. Therefore in the absence of such work, responses to the business survey (undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment) indicating general trader confidence and success, seems the most appropriate available data to give an indication of trading levels.

3.9 Of those who were surveyed and responded in Elland (54 businesses), 72.2% indicated that their business had grown since they began trading in the town centre, the second highest rate of centres in Calderdale. Only 16.7% suggested that trade had declined moderately or significantly, the second lowest of all centres in Calderdale. Only 7.4% of respondents felt that their business was performing poorly or very poorly, the lowest (i.e. best) response rate of all the town centres in Calderdale (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Trading levels / Business Confidence

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DURING TIME TRADING IN THE TOWN CENTRE:						
Business has grown moderately or significantly	50.0	58.1	72.8	63.1	58.8	72.2
Business has remained largely static	23.0	16.1	9.1	23.1	23.5	11.1
Business has declined moderately or significantly	27.0	25.8	18.2	13.9	17.6	16.7
HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR BUSINESS IS PERFORMING?						
Well or very well	40.9	47.6	81.8	53.7	53.1	66.6
Moderately	43.0	37.7	9.1	34.3	34.4	25.9
Poorly or very poorly	16.1	14.8	9.1	12.0	12.6	7.4

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – Business Survey Q1g and Q1h

Summary

Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

- From Elland businesses surveyed in 2009 there was relatively high confidence in terms of growth and performance, particularly in relation to other town centres in Calderdale.

4. Location specific needs (e.g. deprived areas / underserved markets)

4.11 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) dataset every 3 years. This gives a relative deprivation ranking of small areas around the UK based on a number of different measurements; income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

4.12 In the latest IMD dataset for 2010 the Elland town centre area ranked 8,248th of 32,482. This places the immediate area around the 25th percentile of most deprived areas of the country, a similar ranking to that in 2004 but a decline from the ranking of 9,394th in 2007. There are no areas of Elland that fall within the 10% of most deprived areas nationally.

4.13 Table 4.1 demonstrates the change in ranking between 2004 and 2010, relative to the other centres in Calderdale.

Table 4.1: Measures of deprivation

	IMD Ranking (and % rank)			
	2004	2007	2010	% Change 2004-2010
Halifax	1,560 (4.8%)	1,883 (5.8%)	2,221 (6.8%)	+2.0
Brighouse	9,037 (27.8%)	10,783 (33.2%)	9,995 (30.8%)	+3.0
Sowerby Bridge	6,374 (19.6%)	7,406 (22.8%)	6,831 (21.0%)	+1.4
Hebden Bridge	10,296 (31.7%)	13,607 (41.9%)	14,283 (44.0%)	+12.3
Todmorden	8,178 (25.2%)	8,655 (26.6%)	8,325 (25.6%)	+0.4
Elland	8,308 (25.6%)	9,394 (28.9%)	8,248 (25.4%)	-0.2

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, 2007, 2010

4.14 Proposals that are likely to bring significant improvements to the range, choice and quality of everyday shopping to serve the needs of those living in deprived areas should be encouraged. However, other non-retail town centre uses and development play an equally important role in helping to improve the areas health and disability deprivation, living environment, and employment potential.

Summary
Location specific needs

- The immediate town centre area is not identified as a deprived location, and the overall ranking of Elland has changed little since 2004, remaining in the 25th percentile of most deprived areas in the country.

5. Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

Quality of existing provision

5.21 The buildings within the Elland town centre boundary are from a variety of different eras, with much of the town centre's 19th Century building stock remaining. A significant area between Southgate and Huddersfield road in the northern part of the town was comprehensively redeveloped in the 1960s, however little of this involved town centre structures. The Central Elland SPD concludes that whilst the town has a few attractive streets, buildings and spaces it is interspersed with sites and structures that have fallen into neglect or have not been developed to their full potential.

5.22 Responses to the business survey indicate that 28.3% of respondents would like to see an 'improved built environment' as part of improvement measures to the town centre. This is the highest response rate for this option out of all Calderdale centres, suggesting a relatively high level of dissatisfaction from a business perspective in the quality of provision.

Rents/Valuation Rates

5.23 The most recent data on the rateable value of properties within town centres is available on the Valuation Office Agency website (www.voa.gov.uk). Rateable value represents the open market annual rental value of a business/non-domestic property. This means the rent the property would let for on the valuation date, if it was being offered on the open market. The rateable value is used by the local council when calculating business rates bills.

5.24 When viewed across a town centre, valuation rates provide a general picture of the desirability and attractiveness of particular areas – those streets commanding higher valuation rates are those with the higher rents and therefore likely to have higher footfall and higher sales. Looking at the spatial variation of valuation rates in conjunction with change in rates over time can also highlight areas that may be more vulnerable within a centre and potentially in decline.

5.25 Figure 5.1 demonstrates the spread of prime Retail Zone A valuation rates in and around Elland town centre. Not surprisingly the highest rates are found in Southgate, however compared with other Calderdale centres there is little variation across the town. The highest rates on Southgate of £160/$m^{2,}$ compared to the lowest rates of £90/m^2 for some units located on Huddersfield road, represent a difference of less than 80% between the upper and lower figures. This compares with differences of nearly 400% in Brighouse and over 1300% in Halifax, due to much higher prime zone A rents found in these centres.

5.26 The largest increase in rates has generally been seen along frontages with lower rates, generally the more peripheral areas around Southgate. Increases were felt in all units in Elland between 2005 and 2010, ranging from 12% up to 78%.

Vacant Property

5.27 Data on vacant properties within town centres is not collected on a regular basis in Calderdale. However data is available for 2009 (from the WYG Health Check assessment) and 2006 and 2010 (from the Calderdale town centre surveys undertaken by the planning policy team). Although other data on smaller areas is available these 3 surveys provide comparable data over time.

Figure 5.1 – Elland Town Centre Valuation Rates 2010-15

Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

Figure 5.2 – Elland Town Centre Valuation Rates % change 2005-10

Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

5.28 Since 2006, some of the vacant units have been recycled, however vacancies in the town centre increased from 12 units in 2006, to 22 in 2009, and remained at 22 in 2010. The 2009 survey (Experian GOAD) identified that 18.3% of the total number of units in the town centre were vacant (significantly higher than the national average of 10.6%). In terms of floorspace, vacancy rates were 11% (again higher than the national average of 8.9%, however less markedly so).

5.29 A vacant town centre unit is not necessarily an issue in itself as there will always be natural churn within a centre with some units closing and others opening, and also the wider economic situation having an impact. It is the long-term trends however, and persistent, long-term vacancies in certain areas within a centre, that cause greater concern and may be an indication of an area failing or falling into decline.

5.30 Of the 3 surveys undertaken by CMBC, Figure 5.3 shows the cumulative vacancies across the town centre during the last 5 years, and highlights those units that have been vacant on multiple surveys. There are a number of units across the town that have been vacant on all 3 occasions, with particular concentrations around the Town Hall buildings between Southgate and Huddersfield Road, and also at the northern end of Southgate into Northgate.

Figure 5.3 – Elland vacancy rates 2006-2010

Source: Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment (2009) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Surveys

Summary
Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

- A high proportion of businesses would like to see the built environment improved in Elland;
- Southgate has the highest prime Zone A retail rates, however these are relatively low and therefore variation across the centre is limited;
- All areas of the town centre have seen increases in rates between 2005-2010 with the peripheral areas generally seeing higher increases; and
- Vacant units across the centre have almost doubled between 2006 and 2010, with areas at each end of Southgate showing the largest concentrations of longer-term vacant units.

6. Customer experience

6.22 Looking at the general customer experience of Elland town centre, of the 102 shoppers interviewed in 2009 as part of the Retail Needs Assessment on-street survey (Q32), the top 5 weaknesses of Elland town centre were perceived to be; the choice/range of non-food shops (38%); foodstore provision (15%); leisure facilities (15%); car parking (7%); and shopping environment (6%). A further 12% of respondents replied that they did not know.

Accessibility

6.23 Accessibility to the town centre by public transport is only available by bus. Although there is no bus station in Elland, buses stop regularly on Southgate and Huddersfield Road. Buses provide direct services to Halifax and Brighouse, as well as destinations outside of Calderdale including Bradford and Huddersfield. There is currently no train station in the town, although there are ambitions in the long-term to re-instate rail links to the town centre via a new station on the Caldervale line.

6.24 When questioned about how visitors arrived in the centre (Q03 of the on-street Retail Needs Assessment survey), the majority replied by foot (58%, by far the highest of any of Calderdale's town centres). Cars conveyed 29% of people with 10% arriving by bus (Table 6.1).

6.25 Elland has a total of around 182 public off-street parking spaces which equates to approximately one space per 82m^2 of retailing, average provision (relative to the size of the retailing centre) when compared to other Calderdale centres[29]. The majority (82%) of visitors arriving by car did not encounter any difficulty in obtaining a car parking space. In addition visitors to Elland had the most positive responses of all centres in relation to the perceptions of parking provision and cost in the town (Table 6.1).

[29] Map 2.7 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009

6.26 Accessibility also incorporates public accessibility issues within town centres. For example, knowing that some-one will be able to access a well-maintained and properly equipped public toilet, can make the difference between them choosing to visit one town over another[30].

6.27 In Elland there is currently only 1 set of public convenience facilities, located next to the swimming baths in the public car park off Town Hall Street and Elizabeth Street, including a disabled facility. There are no Changing Places facilities which provide extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as other serious impairments[31].

Table 6.1: Customer experience - Accessibility

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
METHOD OF TRAVEL						
Travelled by car/van	33.7	55.0	28.3	38.3	26.0	29.4
Travelled by bus, minibus or coach	38.6	22.0	30.3	21.6	20.0	9.8
Travelled by foot	22.3	21.0	40.4	29.4	49.0	57.8
DURATION OF TRAVEL TO CENTRE						
0-5 min journey	17.3	23.0	33.3	25.5	20.0	44.1
6-10 min journey	31.7	28.0	37.4	18.6	38.0	20.6
11-15 min journey	24.3	23.0	14.1	8.8	14.0	8.8
16-20 min journey	12.9	8.0	8.1	6.9	9.0	14.7
21-30 min journey	5.9	14.0	4.0	12.7	3.0	7.8
31-60 min journey	5.4	3.0	3.0	12.7	5.0	2.0
Over 60 min journey	1.5	1.0	0.0	14.7	7.0	2.0
CAR PARKING						
Did you have difficulty obtaining a parking space? Yes:	18.0	29.4	13.0	51.4	13.6	18.5
Car parking provision – better/much better than others?	5.4	19.0	4.0	1.0	15.0	25.5
Car parking prices – better/much better than others?	6.4	24.0	4.0	1.0	17.0	23.6

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q3, Q5, Q6 & Q28

Pedestrian flows, crime and safety

6.28 Various factors combine to help the creation of a sense of safety and security for business and visitors at all times of the day and night in our town centres: the layout and design of streets, buildings, and open spaces, the attractiveness of public spaces, the visibility of a uniformed presence on the streets[32]. Civic Trust research has also shown consensus amongst practitioners and policy makers that a balance or diversity of town centre land uses, and users, help to make centres safer and more attractive[33].

30 Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, April 2009
31 http://changing-places.org/
32 Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, 2009
33 Better Town Centres at Night, ATCM and BCSC, 2010

6.29 None of the main shopping streets in Elland town centre are fully pedestrianised, although parts of Southgate are in effect a shared pedestrian/vehicular space. The high volumes of visitors to the centre who arrive on foot (see Table 6.1) make the connections into the town from peripheral areas particularly important in Elland.

6.30 The majority of visitors arriving on foot are likely to arrive from areas bordering the town to the west as there are significant housing areas to this side of the town. This approach provides a reasonably straightforward journey into town, however pedestrians arriving from the north are required to climb a steep hill, a barrier to some people with walking difficulties, and those from the south or east to cross the Elland Riorges link and / or Huddersfield Road, significant pedestrian severances.

6.31 The Elland health check assessment undertaken in 2009 notes that, in general, the centre is a safe environment for shoppers, as only slow moving traffic runs through the centre. It does note however that due to the north of the centre being located on a steep hill, this could be a barrier to some people with walking difficulties. Elsewhere in the centre pavements are identified as being narrow in places. However where the town centre meets busy roads there are pedestrian crossings to aid movement by foot.

6.32 With regards to safety, 60% of the businesses who responded to the business survey in 2009 referred to the need for greater use of CCTV, implying that crime / safety is a concern. Visitors who responded to the on-street visitor's survey were also asked specific questions about their perceptions of crime in Elland.

6.33 During the day-time, 73.5% of visitors indicated that safety in Elland felt 'about the same' as that in other centres, with 10% considering it to be 'better' or 'much better' than in other centres. However, with respect to the evening/night-time economy, the proportion of visitors who deemed safety to be 'about the same' as in other centres fell to 56%, with around 15% considering safety to be either 'worse' or 'much worse' than that in other centres (Table 6.2).

6.34 Although this is a fairly large drop in confidence in terms of visitors' perception of safety between the day time and night-time, this is common for all centres and in fact, from responses received to the survey, Elland is seen as the 2nd safest centre in Calderdale at night after Hebden Bridge.

Table 6.2: Customer experience - Perception of safety

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DAY-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	15.9	28.0	0.0	7.8	23.0	9.8
About the same as other centres?	74.3	60.0	54.5	84.3	66.0	73.5
Worse or much worse than other centres?	7.4	6.0	44.4	2.9	8.0	7.9
NIGHT-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	7.8

About the same as other centres?	38.1	29.0	46.5	74.5	43.0	55.9
Worse or much worse than other centres?	25.2	18.0	45.5	12.7	27.0	14.7

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

6.35 Whilst responses to the survey shows the *perception* of crime, data on *actual occurrences* of crime are available from West Yorkshire Police, though by electoral Ward and not by town centre. Elland town centre is located within Elland ward which showed fairly average rates of all crimes in comparison to the rest of Calderdale in the year to 31st July 2009[34]; 22.9 reported crimes per 1,000 population for criminal damage; 14 reported violent crimes per 1,000 population.

Summary
Customer experience

- In terms of customer experience, the most significant issues identified by shoppers are the poor choice/range of non-food shops, food store provision, and leisure facilities;
- The majority of visitors to the centre (59%) arrive on foot;
- Visitors to Elland are generally happy with parking provision and the cost of parking in the town;
- The centre is generally a safe environment for pedestrians, however narrow pavements and steep hills to the north of the centre can act as barriers to those with walking difficulties; and
- Crime rates in the town centre area are not particularly high and visitors' perceptions reinforce this; however businesses rate additional CCTV as one of the priorities for the town in the future.

7. Environmental quality and urban design

7.9 Well designed and well-maintained buildings and public spaces, including parks, streets and squares, play a vital role in creating attractive and welcoming town centre environments for people of all ages. Public spaces, including green spaces, can help to attract investment into town centres, enhance community spirit and cohesiveness, promote community health and wellbeing, and manage the effects of climate change[35].

7.10 The Elland town centre boundary contains 1 area of green space, designated churches / churchyards / cemeteries / crematoria in the current development plan (UDP), around St. Mary's Church, off Northgate and Church Street. There is also a small pedestrianised public square off Southgate outside of Quarmby House and Calder House providing an opportunity for small public gatherings and events.

7.11 The health check assessment undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment summarised Elland as a quiet, attractive town. It found that the streets were clean with no evidence of litter and shop units themselves were maintained to a

[34] Maps 2.71-2.73 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009
[35] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

high standard, creating an attractive shopping environment. Street furniture includes: lighting; benches; bins; and flowers.

7.12 The study went on to say that units are mostly old build and made of local stone. Most of the town centre area is located within the Elland Conservation Area, however English Heritage have identified the conservation area as 'at risk' and in a 'very bad' condition and deteriorating. There is one Grade I Listed Building (St. Mary's Church), and a further 27 Grade II Listed Buildings (12 of which are separate elements of the Old Town Hall and associated Buildings).

Summary
Environmental quality and urban design

- Conflicting reports on environmental quality are obtained from different sources;
- English Heritage have identified the town centre, within a conservation and built environment context, as being 'at risk', in a 'very bad' condition and deteriorating; and
- The town centre offers limited green space, however a small public square is located off Southgate.

8. Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night time economy

8.12 Town centres that offer a range of uses during the day, into the evening and beyond, are more likely to attract a diverse mix of people; broadening of the evening and night-time offering also stands to build stronger connections with local people and attract more people from further afield[36].

8.13 Table 8.1 summarises the total number of different premises by each category of leisure, culture and tourism facility noted during the latest town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. It demonstrates that Elland has some (if limited) provision of cultural/leisure attractions, such as the Rex Cinema, the Wainwright Hall and the Victoria Swimming Baths. However of the leisure and night-time facilities that are present in the town, hot food takeaways represent the highest proportion of any town centre in Calderdale with 15 in total in town or edge of centre locations, (37% of all cultural/leisure/night-time provision). Public houses/wine bars represent a further 24% of provision.

8.14 The location of the leisure and night-time facilities is distributed fairly evenly across the town with no obvious core or concentration of night-time activities (Figure 8.1).

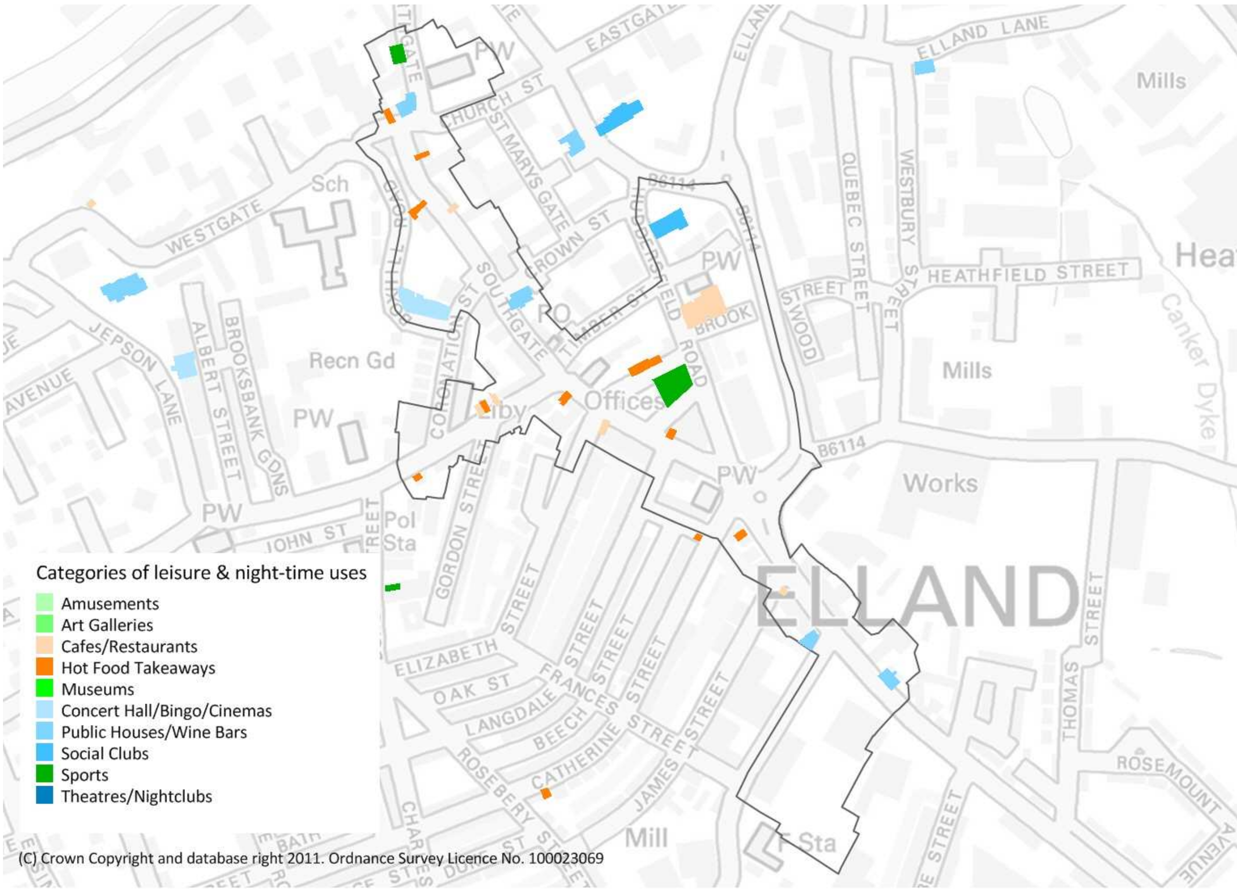
[36] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

Table 8.1 – Elland culture, leisure, tourism and night-time offer

Survey Categories	Elland				% of all leisure uses				
	Town Centre Premises	Edge of Centre Premises	Total no. of premises	% of all leisure	Halifax	Sowerby Bridge	Hebden Bridge	Todmorden	Brighouse
Amusement Centres (AMU)	-	-	-	-	2.7	-	-	-	3.3
Art Galleries (ART)	-	-	-	-	1.1	-	10.2	8.9	1.7
Cafes/Restaurants (CAF)	7	1	8	19.5	40.4	35.7	40.7	37.5	33.3
Hot Food Takeaways (HOT)	12	3	15	36.6	14.4	19.6	10.2	17.9	26.7
Museums (MUS)	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	3.4	1.8	-
Concert Halls/Bingo Halls/Cinemas (PEN)	1	1	2	4.9	2.7	-	1.7	-	5.0
Public Houses/Wine Bars (PUB)	4	6	10	24.4	20.7	28.6	18.6	17.9	18.3
Social Club/Working Mens Club (SOC)	1	2	3	7.3	4.8	5.4	5.1	8.9	5.0
Sports Clubs/Gyms/Swimming Pools/Dance & Sports Halls/Sports Stadia (SPO)	1	2	3	7.3	8.5	10.7	8.5	3.6	6.7
Theatres/Nightclubs (THE)	-	-	-	-	4.3	-	1.7	3.6	-
TOTAL	**26**	**15**	**41**						

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Figure 8.1 – Location of leisure and night-time uses in Elland



Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

8.15 In terms of the public's view on leisure provision within Elland town centre, in 2009 57% of respondents felt that Elland was worse or much worse than other centres, the poorest response of all Calderdale centres. Visitors were marginally happier with the range and choice of pubs and restaurants although still 43% responded that this area was worse or much worse than other centres, again the poorest response of all Calderdale centres (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 – Public perceptions of the Elland leisure offer

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
RANGE & CHOICE OF PUBS/RESTAURANTS						
Much better or better than other centres?	18.9	14.0	5.1	30.4	14.0	5.9
About the same as other centres?	37.1	33.0	57.6	64.7	41.0	45.1
Worse or much worse than other centres?	22.3	24.0	36.4	3.9	28.0	43.2
LEISURE FACILITIES						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	2.0	9.8	11.0	2.9
About the same as other centres?	29.2	16.0	40.4	68.6	41.0	31.4
Worse or much worse than other centres?	40.1	46.0	53.5	11.8	26.0	56.9

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

Summary

Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night-time economy

- Elland town centre has a very high proportion of pubs/wine bars and hot food takeaways compared to other centres in Calderdale;
- Other leisure/cultural/night-time offer in the town is limited;
- Survey data confirms that the leisure facilities and the choice of pubs/restaurants in the town are rated the worst of any Calderdale centre by visitors.

9. Planning permissions and recent developments

9.7 In the previous monitoring year (1st April 2010-31st March 2011) there have been no newly completed developments or new commencements within the town centre boundary for Elland affecting town centre uses.

9.8 In terms of outstanding (not commenced) planning permissions within Elland town centre, there are only 3 separate applications relating to town centre use classes, all of which are relatively small scale, change of use or conversion applications.

Table 9.3 - Summary of outstanding planning permissions (as at 31/3/11)

Use Class	No. of permissions	Floorspace (sqm)		
		New Gross	Loss	New Net
A1 (Shops)	2	-	76	-76
A2 (Financial & Professional Services	-	-	-	-
A3 (Restaurants and Cafes)	1	50	-	50
A4 (Drinking establishments)	1	-	212	-212
A5 (Hot food takeaway)	1	51	-	51
B1a (Business - offices)	1	138	-	138
D2 (Assembly and leisure)	-	-	-	-
Total*	**6**	**239**	**288**	**-49**

Source: CMBC monitoring
*Total may not add up to individual figures as many applications relate to more than one Use Class

9.9 The Retail Needs Assessment did not provide survey data from 2001 for Elland, therefore a general comparison in terms of growth of town centre floorspace is not possible with figures that were supplied for 2009.

9.10 An additional major planning permission has been approved during 2011, however this is not a town centre development as it lies in an edge of centre location off Briggate, to the northeast of the town centre and St. Mary's Church. It is a significant development for Elland providing a new Morrisons foodstore of 2,278sqm net sales area, petrol filling station, car park and relocation of NuSwift International Ltd to a new factory on Wistons Lane. An additional planning permission received by Asda for the redevelopment of land at Dewsbury Road for a foodstore of 1,856sqm net sales area, to the south east of the centre, was refused planning permission at the same time.

Summary
Planning permissions and recent developments

- There has been no recent development activity within the town centre boundary. Very few planning permissions remain extant in the town centre, amounting to a net loss of 49sqm of town centre use floorspace; and
- Permission was granted in 2011 for an edge of centre Morrisons foodstore of 2,278sqm net sales floorspace.

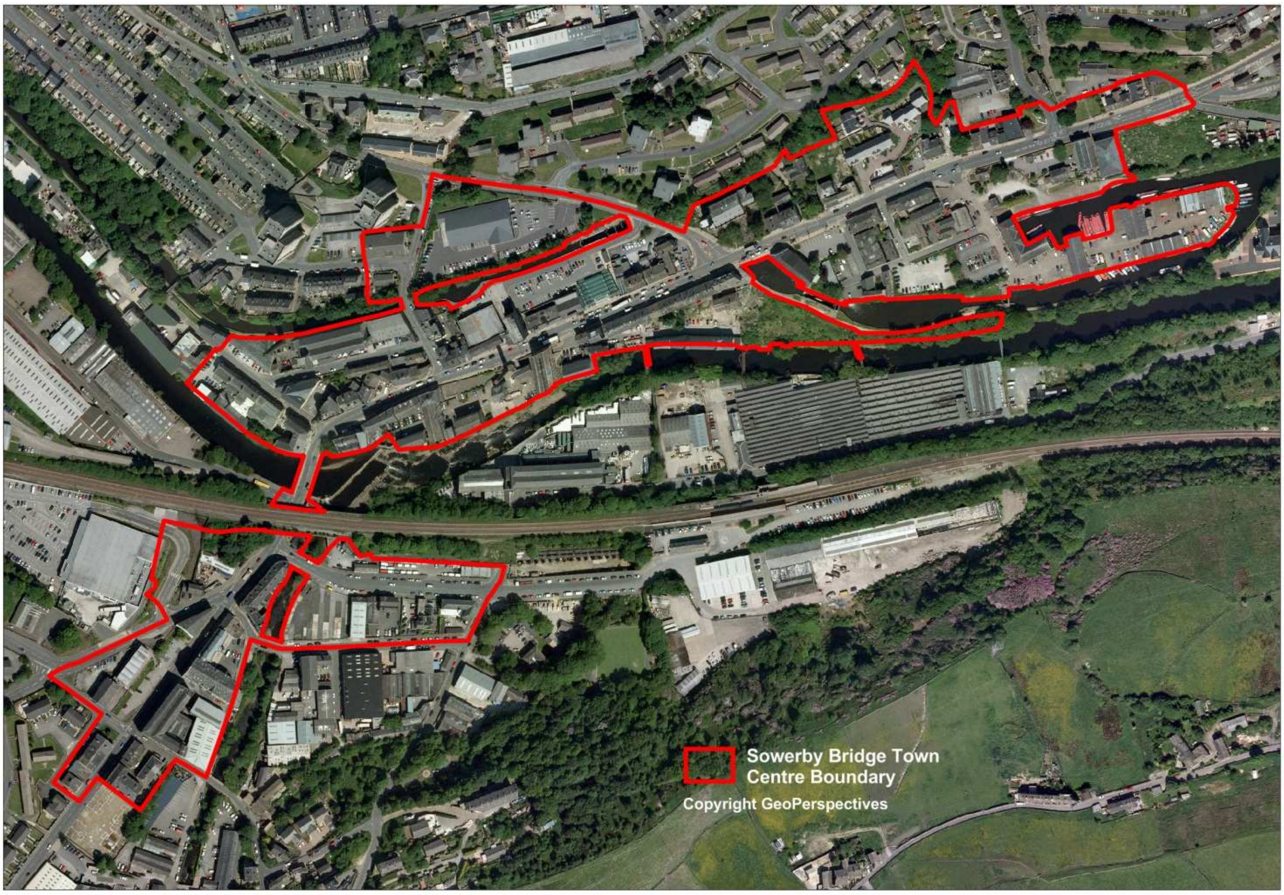
10. Summary

10.7 This qualitative assessment has sought to bring together key information and data sets to highlight the qualitative aspects of Elland town centre, a small market town in Calderdale, within the context of planning related issues and the emerging Calderdale LDF. This report has highlighted a number of issues that could be addressed to help improve the centre overall and enhance the experience for users and visitors.

10.8 The key findings detailed in this report can be summarised as follows:

- Elland has a very high proportion of service provision floorspace, and as a result a particularly low proportion of comparison goods retailing;
- The town has the healthiest mix of independent to multiple occupiers of any centre in Calderdale;
- Shoppers would most like to see more food and clothing stores in town and rate the shops the worst of all centres in Calderdale;
- Survey results reveal that local businesses have relatively high confidence in terms of the growth and performance of their business, particularly in relation to other town centres in Calderdale;
- The majority of visitors to the centre (59%) arrive on foot, significantly higher than any other centre in Calderdale highlighting the very local nature of the centre's catchment;
- The number of vacant units in the town has almost doubled over the previous 5 years, with clusters at each end of Southgate showing the highest concentrations of vacant units;
- Local businesses would like to see the built environment improved in Elland and English Heritage have identified the Conservation Area as being 'at risk', in a 'very bad' condition and deteriorating;
- Safety and crime are not particular issues for the town, however local businesses would rate CCTV as one of the priorities for the future;
- The town centre has a very high proportion of pubs/wine bars and hot food takeaways;
- Visitors rate the pubs/restaurants and leisure facilities the worst of all centres in Calderdale; and
- Recent development activity in the town has been very limited however planning permission was granted in 2011 for a 2,278sqm net floorspace Morrisons foodstore in an edge of centre location off Briggate.

Sowerby Bridge Town Centre



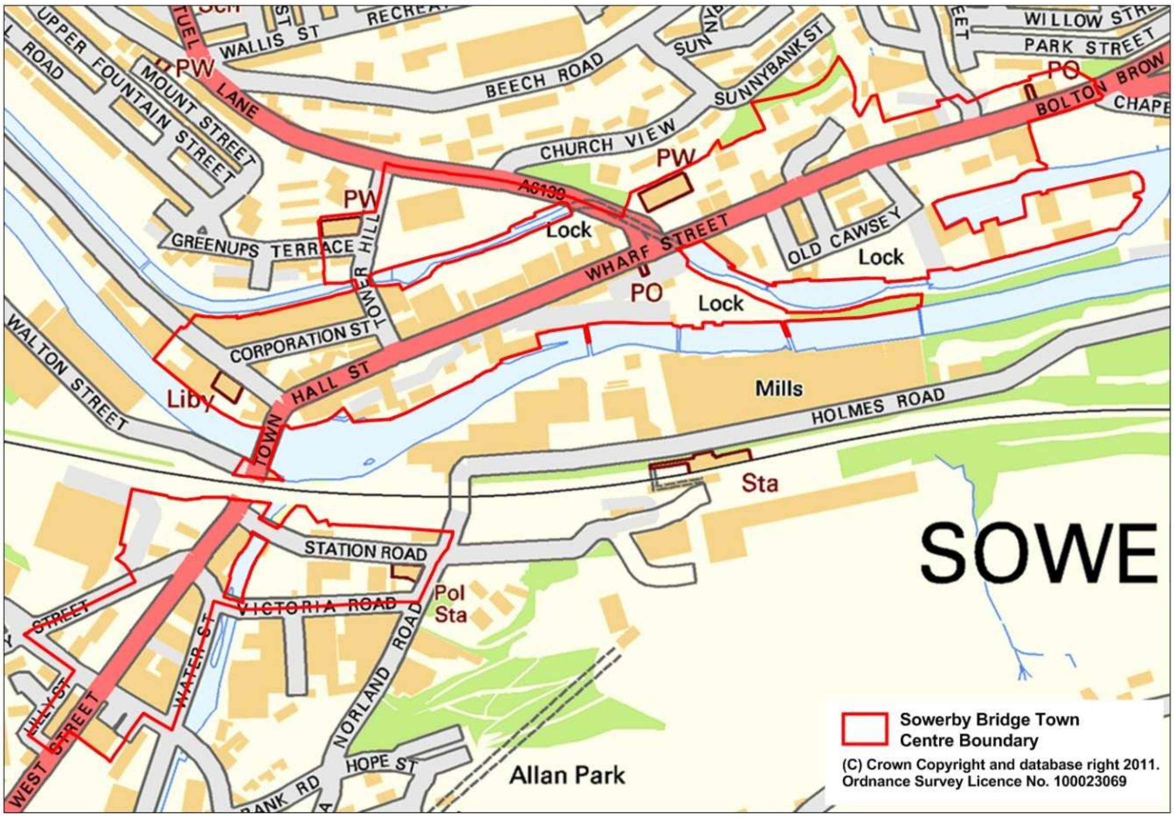
1. Context

1.0 Sowerby Bridge is a market town, with its centre located just 2 miles west of Halifax centre at the junction of the Calder and Ryburn valleys. The main road through the town is the A58, the former main route between Yorkshire and Lancashire.

1.1 According to the last Census, Sowerby Bridge and its surrounding area (including the villages of Sowerby, Triangle, Norland and Warley) had a population of 18,018 in 2001. Mid-year population estimates suggest this may have risen to around 19,100 by 2009, a rise of around 6%[37], fairly typical in Calderdale.

1.2 Sowerby Bridge town centre is defined as a 'town centre' in the Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (2006), together with Brighouse, Elland, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden. In terms of overall retail provision, the town was ranked the 1,789th venue nationally, of approximately 7000, when surveyed by Management Horizons Europe in 2008, placing it within the 'local' centre category in this ranking, along with Todmorden. No previous ranking data is available for comparison.

1.3 The main focus of retailing within Sowerby Bridge is along the A58 (West Street – Town Hall Street – Wharf Street – Bolton Brow), although there are currently no frontages defined in Sowerby Bridge in the RCUDP. No area of the town is pedestrianised and vehicular traffic on the A58 through town is heavy, this is reflected in the fact that the majority of the A58 through the town centre falls within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).



[37] Population data is taken from the Core Strategy Refined Issues and Options Consultation report (January 2011). Population growth is calculated using August 2010 Patient register data, adjusted to the official mid-2009 population estimates.

1.4 Beyond the retail side and usual services associated with a centre of this size, Sowerby Bridge town centre has a range of other facilities including a library, a new swimming pool opened in 2011, and a youth and community centre.

Governance and strategies

1.5 There is currently no formal town centre management organisation in place for Sowerby Bridge. Sowerby Bridge Community Forum are a local business and community group working alongside Upper Calder Valley Renaissance, Calderdale MBC and local councillors to make the town safer, cleaner, and a thriving place to grow up in, work in and grow old in and a place to be proud of.

1.6 Calderdale Council has the adopted Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (RCUDP) that provides the current policy framework for town centres in the District. A health check assessment of each town centre in Calderdale was also undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment in 2009. Where relevant, parts of the town centre health check report are included and referenced within this report.

2. Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

Diversity of uses - Town centre composition

2.33 Recent surveys of town centre occupancy have been undertaken in both 2009 and 2010. The surveys complement each other in the data that they provide and collectively provide a wealth of information on the composition of all town centres in Calderdale.

a. 2009 Survey – undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment by White Young Green (WYG) planning consultants.
b. 2010 Survey – undertaken by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (CMBC) to update the Accessibility Survey, previously completed in 2006.

2.34 In 2009 Sowerby Bridge contained a total of 150 occupied or vacant units within the defined central shopping area, occupying a total of 19,006m^2 of floorspace. Of this total floorspace, 8,691m^2 was in retail use. The highest proportion of all town centre floorspace was for leisure services both in terms of number of outlets (28.7%), and in terms of floorspace (30.9%) (Table 2.2). The proportion of convenience retail provision was found to be in line with the UK average, however this excluded the recently opened Tesco store in an edge of centre location. Comparison retail provision, in terms of the number of outlets, is almost the lowest in any of Calderdale's centres.

2.35 In addition to the permanent retail provision in the town, Sowerby Bridge retains an outdoor market of up to 37 stalls, many from purpose built huts, on Wharf Street. The market is open Tuesday and Friday for fresh produce and general retail, and Thursday and Saturday for fresh produce and second hand goods.

Table 2.1: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Number of Outlets

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (No.)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	7.4	9.8	12	8.0	8.5	7.5	10.8	8.8
Comparison	29.6	31.6	35	23.3	43.3	25.4	16.7	34.6
Retail Service	12.1	13.5	22	14.7	11.0	17.2	19.2	13.0
Leisure Services	24.5	17.6	43	28.7	24.4	17.9	25.0	21.5
Financial & Business Services	10.6	9.8	18	12.0	7.3	8.2	10.0	11.2
Vacant	15.9	17.6	20	13.3	5.5	23.9	18.3	10.6
Total	100	100	150	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Table 2.2: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Existing Floorspace

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (m^2)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	13.3	28.5	3,268	17.2	12.6	19.6	24.0	14.2
Comparison	34.7	26.0	5,423	28.5	33.0	16.1	11.8	37.8
Retail Service	6.9	6.6	1,535	8.1	6.6	10.3	12.0	7.0
Leisure Services	27.0	18.3	5,864	30.9	36.8	18.9	28.8	22.7
Financial & Business Services	7.7	7.5	1,559	8.2	6.5	6.4	12.4	8.7
Vacant	10.4	13.0	1,357	7.1	4.5	28.8	11.0	8.9
Total	100	100	19,006	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

2.36 In 2010, more detailed data was collected on the type of occupant. Table 2.3 summarises floorspace by planning Use Class.

Table 2.3: Use Class mix - floorspace

Use Class	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge floor space (m^2)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
A1 (Shops)	30.2	57.5	8,054	43.7	32.9	27.8	42.9
A2 (Financial & Professional)	8.4	7.3	1,367	7.4	8.6	5.3	7.8
A3 (Restaurants & Cafes)	3.3	4.6	1,379	7.5	7.2	5.4	5.0
A4 (Drinking Establishments)	3.6	4.0	1,452	7.9	7.4	5.4	3.5
A5 (Hot Food Takeaway)	0.8	1.9	299	1.6	1.2	1.3	3.3
B1 (Business)	19.8	2.2	661	3.6	0.9	3.2	3.3
B2 (General Industry)	1.4	1.2	317	1.7	0.8	1.7	1.2
B8 (Storage or Distribution)	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.3	-

C1 (Hotels)	2.4	3.2	-	-	1.8		-
C2 (Residential Institutions)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
D1 (Non-residential Institutions)	7.5	7.3	1,568	8.5	25.0	27.7	13.9
D2 (Assembly & Leisure)	7.0	4.1	1,581	8.6	7.3	1.9	7.3
Sui Generis	6.1	2.6	586	3.2	5.2	8.4	3.4
Vacant	8.9	4.4	1,170	6.3	1.7	11.6	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	18,434	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

2.37 In terms of the occupancy category, Table 2.4 demonstrates the most common categories within Sowerby Bridge Town Centre at the time of the 2010 survey.

Table 2.4: Occupancy Categories

	Occupancy Category	No. of instances
1	Cafe/Restaurants	19
2	Hairdressers/Barbers/Beauty Salons/Tattoo Artist	14
3	Vacant	11
4	Public Houses/Wine Bars	11
5	Hot Food Takeaways	9
6	Clothes Shops/Wool and Needlework/Travel Goods	6

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Consumer Choice - Survey Results

2.38 In 2009 the WYG in-street (consumer) survey results showed that the vast majority of visitors to Sowerby Bridge (80%) rated the choice of shops as being either ‘worse’ or ‘much worse’ than other centres. Only 1% of visitors rated them ‘better’ or ‘much better’, the poorest response of any centre in Calderdale. In response to the types of shops that visitors would like to see more of, the overwhelming responses were for more clothing stores (49%) and footwear stores (44%).

2.39 The WYG business survey also revealed that, when asked about measures that would improve the town centre, the majority of retailers who responded (91%) feel that an increased choice / range of shops would have this affect. 45% of respondents stated that more independent / specialist traders would be good for the town.

Breakdown of retail size

2.40 Sowerby Bridge has a much larger proportion of small units of less than 93m^2 (68.7% of the total) compared to the national average (39.1%) (Table 2.5), however this is typical for a town of Sowerby Bridge’s size, and compares with the other smaller town centres in Calderdale. The demand for medium and larger sized units is generally limited in this size of centre.

Table 2.5: Diversity of Uses - Unit Sizes

Unit Size	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (No. of units)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Under 93m² (1,000ft²)	51.6	59.6	103	68.7	70.7	68.7	64.2	39.1
93-232m² (1,000-2,499ft²)	25.4	27.5	34	22.7	21.3	23.1	27.5	39.6
232-464m² (2,500-4,999ft²)	12.9	7.3	7	4.7	6.1	3.7	5.0	12.6
465-929m² (5,000-9,999ft²)	5.9	3.6	4	2.7	1.2	2.2	1.7	5.1
930-1,393m² (10,000-14,999ft²)	2.1	0.5	1	0.7	0.6	2.2	0.8	1.5
1,394-1,858m² (15,000-19,999ft²)	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.7
1,859-2,787m² (20,000-29,999ft²)	0.4	0.5	1	0.7	0	0	0	0.7
Above 2,787m² (30,000ft²)	1.1	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8
Total	100	100	150	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Retailer Representation - Independent/national

2.41 Details of whether units were occupied by independent or national / multiple operators were collected as part of the CMBC town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. This enabled an assessment of a centre's wider independent / national mix, as well as a more focused 'clone town' assessment to be made[38] on the make-up of the principal high street or primary frontage areas.

2.42 Sowerby Bridge's clone town assessment[39] (Clone Town score of 75.5) highlights it as being a 'home' town – along with all of Calderdale's main centres barring Halifax (Table 2.6). 'Home' town status indicates that at least two thirds of the stores are independent, and that the centre has a wide range of outlets.

Table 2.6: Clone town assessments

Category	Town Centre	Clone Town Score
'Clone' Towns (Scores 50 or less)	Cambridge	11.6
	Halifax	30.8
	Huddersfield	49.7
'Border' Towns (Scores 50-65)	Weymouth	52.0
	Sherbourne	64.1
'Home' Towns (Scores 65+)	Brighouse	67.4
	Sowerby Bridge	**75.5**
	Hebden Bridge	76.1
	Todmorden	76.5

[38] The Clone Town Britain report was first published in 2005 by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and looked at the increasing domination of large chain stores in Britain's high streets. The report provided a means of assessing any high street's homogenisation and lack of distinctiveness in terms of its retail offer, looking at both identity and diversity. A follow up 2010 Clone Town Report was more recently published containing updated assessments of towns across Britain.

[39] Survey included 50 units along Wharf Street and Town Hall Street.

	Elland	79.8

Source: Re-imagining the High Street, NEF (Sep 2010) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Summary
Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

- Sowerby Bridge is a local market town with a high proportion of leisure services floor space in the town centre;
- The centre has a proportionately low number of comparison retail outlets compared to other centres in Calderdale;
- The percentage of vacant floorspace is one of the lowest of all Calderdale centres;
- Assembly and leisure (D2) and Drinking Establishments (A4) uses are the highest of all Calderdale town centres;
- A majority of both businesses and shoppers would like to see improved consumer choice in the town, with the overwhelming majority of visitors to the centre (80%) rating the choice 'worse' or 'much worse' than other centres;
- There is a lack of medium ($93m^2$-$232m^2$) to large ($232m^2$-$929m^2$) sized premises in the town centre; and
- Sowerby Bridge is classified as a 'home town' indicating a healthy mix of independent and multiple occupiers within the town centre.

3. Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

3.10 Overtrading from a quantitative perspective for convenience shopping is discussed in the Retail Needs Assessment (Table 8.20 deals with Sowerby Bridge) and is built into the overall conclusions on new floorspace requirements (based on the shoppers' survey and assumptions on average turnover etc.). From a qualitative perspective however, evidence on overcrowding and congestion is a lot harder to obtain data on.

3.11 Although anecdotal evidence is available, objective evidence on overcrowding and congestion would have to be collected first hand through extensive survey work. The investment required both in cost and time to undertake this work could not be justified in relation to the benefit received. Therefore in the absence of such work, responses to the business survey (undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment) indicating general trader confidence and success, seems the most appropriate available data to give an indication of trading levels.

3.12 Of those who were surveyed and responded in Sowerby Bridge (only 11 businesses), 73% indicated that their business had grown since they began trading in the town centre, the highest of any of the 6 town centres. 18% suggested that trade had declined moderately or significantly, the 3rd highest of all centres in Calderdale. Only 9% of respondents felt that their business was performing poorly or very poorly, almost the lowest (best) rate of all the town centres in Calderdale (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Trading levels / Business Confidence

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DURING TIME TRADING IN THE TOWN CENTRE:						
Business has grown moderately or significantly	50.0	58.1	72.8	63.1	58.8	72.2
Business has remained largely static	23.0	16.1	9.1	23.1	23.5	11.1
Business has declined moderately or significantly	27.0	25.8	18.2	13.9	17.6	16.7
HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR BUSINESS IS PERFORMING?						
Well or very well	40.9	47.6	81.8	53.7	53.1	66.6
Moderately	43.0	37.7	9.1	34.3	34.4	25.9
Poorly or very poorly	16.1	14.8	9.1	12.0	12.6	7.4

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – Business Survey Q1g and Q1h

Summary

Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

- From Sowerby Bridge businesses surveyed in 2009 there was relatively high confidence in terms of growth and performance, particularly in relation to other town centres in Calderdale.

4. Location specific needs (e.g. deprived areas / underserved markets)

4.15 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) dataset every 3 years. This gives a relative deprivation ranking of small areas around the UK based on a number of different measurements; income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

4.16 In the latest IMD dataset for 2010 the Sowerby Bridge town centre area ranked 6,831st of 32,482. This places the immediate area around the 21st percentile of most deprived areas of the country, a small decline from the ranking of 7,406th in 2007 but an improvement over the 2004 ranking of 6,374th. There are no areas of Sowerby Bridge that fall within the 10% of most deprived areas nationally.

4.17 Table 4.1 demonstrates the change in ranking between 2004 and 2010, relative to the other centres in Calderdale.

Table 4.1: Measures of deprivation

	IMD Ranking (and % rank)			
	2004	2007	2010	% Change 2004-2010
Halifax	1,560 (4.8%)	1,883 (5.8%)	2,221 (6.8%)	+2.0
Brighouse	9,037 (27.8%)	10,783 (33.2%)	9,995 (30.8%)	+3.0
Sowerby Bridge	6,374 (19.6%)	7,406 (22.8%)	6,831 (21.0%)	+1.4
Hebden Bridge	10,296 (31.7%)	13,607 (41.9%)	14,283 (44.0%)	+12.3
Todmorden	8,178 (25.2%)	8,655 (26.6%)	8,325 (25.6%)	+0.4
Elland	8,308 (25.6%)	9,394 (28.9%)	8,248 (25.4%)	-0.2

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, 2007, 2010

4.18 Proposals that are likely to bring significant improvements to the range, choice and quality of everyday shopping to serve the needs of those living in deprived areas should be encouraged. However, other non-retail town centre uses and development play an equally important role in helping to improve the areas health and disability deprivation, living environment, and employment potential.

Summary

Location specific needs

- The immediate town centre area is not identified as a deprived location, and the overall ranking has improved slightly since 2004. The town centre area as a whole ranks in the 21st percentile of most deprived areas in the country.

5. Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

Quality of existing provision

5.31 The buildings within Sowerby Bridge town centre are from a variety of different eras; however as with many of the local town centres much of the 19th Century building stock remains. Where the retention of the historic core and much of the older architecture may provide a distinctive and attractive town centre, for the larger modern retailers the older and traditionally smaller properties found in Sowerby Bridge represent less attractive locations for stores.

5.32 Responses to the business survey did not indicate an ‘improved built environment’ as being a priority for businesses unlike other town centres in Calderdale. In addition, responses to the in-street survey puts the ‘shopping environment’ as one of the most common reasons for visiting the centre after the choice of shops and goods that are available. These elements suggest that the built environment should not be an issue high on the agenda for the town centre and its users.

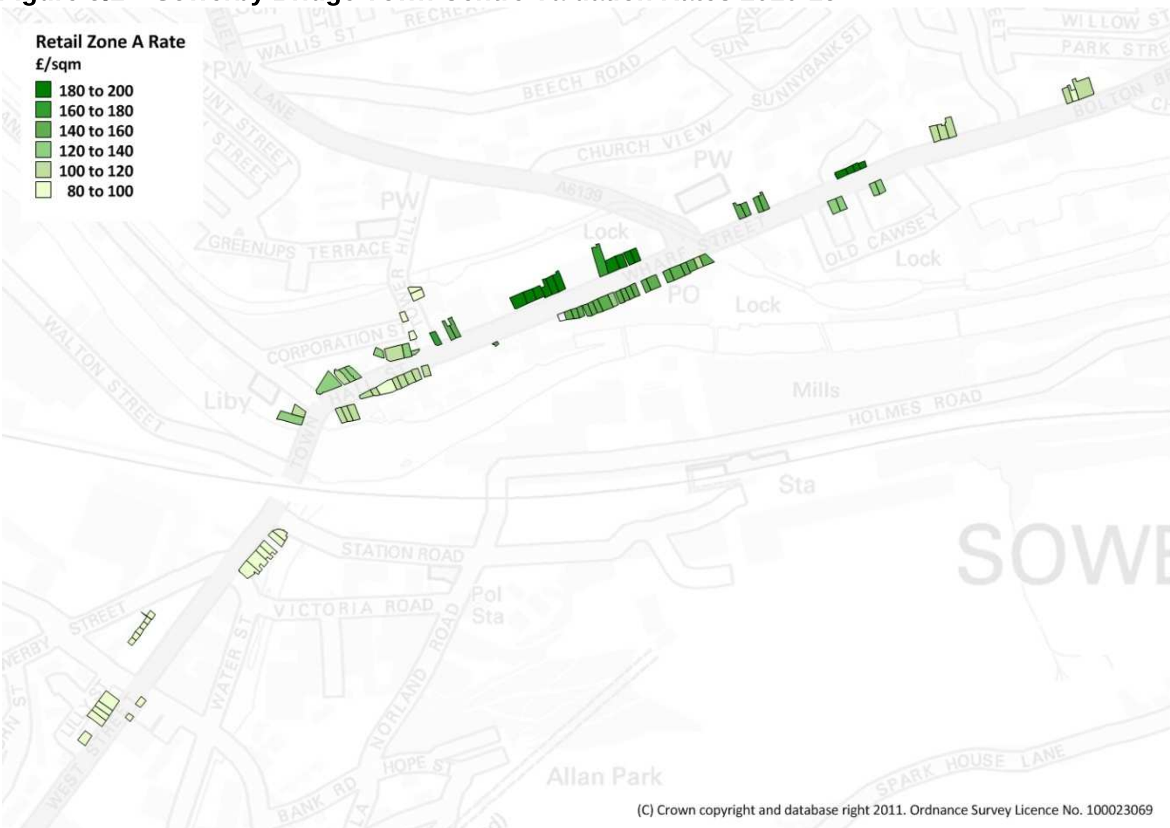
Rents/Valuation Rates

5.33 The most recent data on the rateable value of properties within town centres is available on the Valuation Office Agency website (www.voa.gov.uk). Rateable value represents the open market annual rental value of a business/non-domestic property. This means the rent the property would let for on the valuation date, if it was being offered on the open market. The rateable value is used by the local council when calculating business rates bills.

5.34 When viewed across a town centre, valuation rates provide a general picture of the desirability and attractiveness of particular areas – those streets commanding higher valuation rates are those with the higher rents and therefore likely higher footfall and higher sales. Looking at the spatial variation of valuation rates in conjunction with change in rates over time can also highlight areas that may be more vulnerable within a centre and potentially in decline.

5.35 Figure 5.1 demonstrates the spread of prime Retail Zone A valuation rates in and around Sowerby Bridge town centre. The highest rates are found along Wharf Street (up to £200/m^2). Town Hall Street and particularly areas of West Street beyond Station Road have considerably lower rates despite their location on a main town centre thoroughfare. The lowest rates of all are found on West Street (£90/m^2).

Figure 5.1 – Sowerby Bridge Town Centre Valuation Rates 2010-15



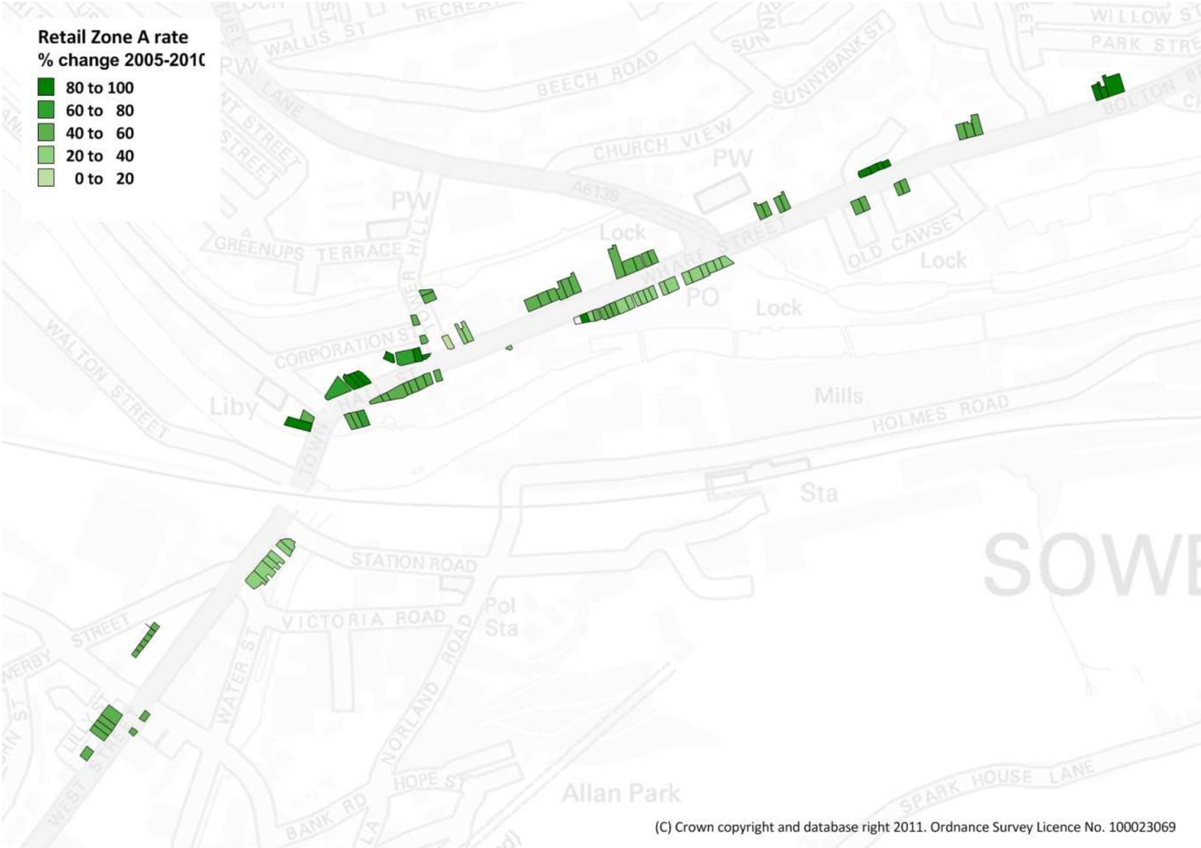
Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

5.36 The largest increase in rates has been seen along units on Town Hall St, Wharf St and Bolton Brow however this has not been restricted to one specific area of town. Increases were felt in all units in Sowerby Bridge between 2005 and 2010, ranging from 36% to 100% with the exception of one unit on Tower Hill that only saw a 6% rise.

Vacant Property

5.37 Data on vacant properties within town centres is not collected on a regular basis in Calderdale. However data is available for 2006 and 2010 (from the Calderdale town centre surveys undertaken by the planning policy team). Although other data on smaller areas is available these 2 surveys provide comparable data over time.

Figure 5.2 – Sowerby Bridge Town Centre Valuation Rates % change 2005-10



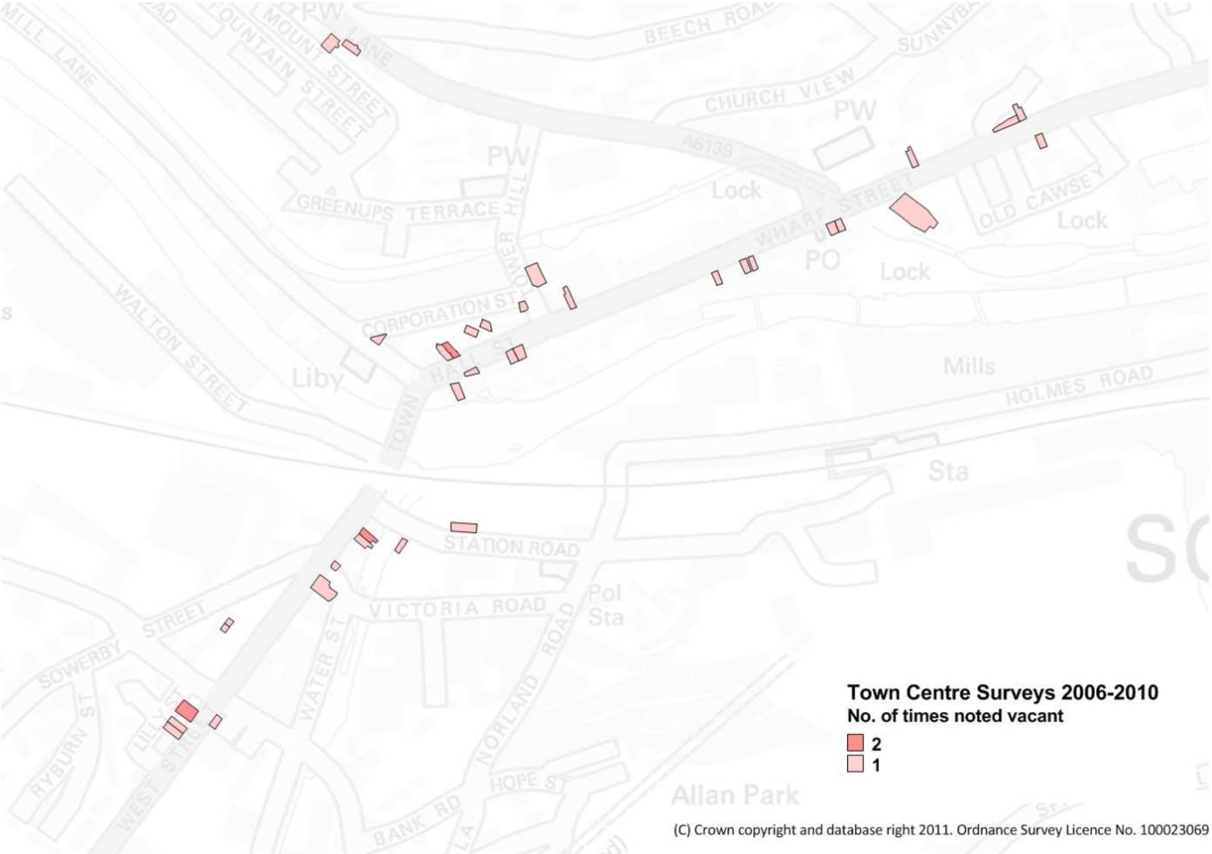
Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

5.38 Since 2006 the number of vacancies in the town centre has more than doubled, increasing from 15 units in 2006 to 34 in 2010. In the intervening years, the Retail Needs Assessment identified that 13.3% of outlets in the town centre were vacant (higher than the 10.6% national average). In terms of floorspace however vacancy rates were actually lower than the national average of 8.9%, at only 7.1% of surveyed units.

5.39 A vacant town centre unit is not necessarily an issue in itself as there will always be natural churn within a centre with some units closing and others opening, and also the wider economic situation having an impact. It is persistent, long-term vacancies in certain areas within a centre that cause greater concern however and may be an indication of an area failing or falling into decline.

5.40 Of the 2 surveys undertaken by CMBC, Figure 5.3 shows the cumulative vacancies across the town centre, and highlights a few units that were identified as vacant on both surveys.

Figure 5.3 – Sowerby Bridge vacancy rates 2006-2010



Source: Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment (2009) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Surveys

Summary

Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

- The built environment in general in the town centre is not seen as a particular issue that requires improvement.
- Wharf Street has the highest prime Zone A retail rates, however these are relatively low at £200/sqm and therefore variation across the centre is limited;
- The lowest rates are found south of the railway line along West Street, together with some of the few recurrent vacant units from the surveys undertaken;
- All areas of the town have seen increases in rates between 2005-2010 with the central areas along Town Hall Street and Wharf Street, along with the far eastern periphery of the town centre at Bolton Brow, seeing the highest increases.
- The data on cumulative vacancies is not significant enough to indicate any peripheral areas of the town centre showing potential decline.

6. Customer experience

6.36 Looking at the general customer experience of Sowerby Bridge town centre, of the 99 shoppers interviewed in 2009 as part of the Retail Needs Assessment on-street survey (Q32), the top 5 weaknesses of Sowerby Bridge town centre were perceived to be; traffic congestion (37%); choice/range of non-food shops (14%); car parking (8%); none mentioned (7%); and the market (5%). A further 9% of respondents replied that they did not know.

Accessibility

6.37 Accessibility to the town centre is available through a range of means of transport. Although there is no bus station in Sowerby Bridge, buses stop regularly along the A58, with a few different stops within the town centre boundary. Additional bus services provide access to the upper Calder Valley towns however these do not stop in the town centre, but run along the A646, half a mile walk north of the town centre up a significant hill (Tuel Lane). The town also has a train station located a short walk to the south of the town centre. At present access from the main shopping street is restricted by the closure of the footbridge over the river Calder from Holmes Road, meaning that access is only available via Station Road.

6.38 When questioned about how visitors arrived in the centre (Q03 of the on-street Retail Needs Assessment survey), the most common method was on foot (40%), followed by bus (30% - the second highest of all Calderdale's centres) and car (28%). None of the 99 people interviewed had arrived by train.

6.39 Buses provide direct services to Halifax and Ripponden, as well as destinations outside of Calderdale including Littleborough and Rochdale. The railway station provides direct services along 2 routes between Manchester and Leeds; one via Halifax and Bradford; the other via Brighouse and Dewsbury.

6.40 Sowerby Bridge has a total of around 136 public off-street parking spaces which equates to approximately one space per 140m^2 of retailing, the poorest provision by far (relative to the size of the retailing centre) in Calderdale centres[40]. Parking was highlighted as one of the top 5 weaknesses of the centre (8% of responses) and had the second most negative responses of all centres in relation to people's perceptions of parking provision and cost in the town (Table 6.1) Despite this, only 13% of those who drove to the centre stated that they had difficulty parking, the lowest response of all Calderdale centres.

Table 6.1: Customer experience - Accessibility

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
METHOD OF TRAVEL						
Travelled by car/van	33.7	55.0	28.3	38.3	26.0	29.4

[40] Map 2.7 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009

Travelled by bus, minibus or coach	38.6	22.0	30.3	21.6	20.0	9.8
Travelled by foot	22.3	21.0	40.4	29.4	49.0	57.8
DURATION OF TRAVEL TO CENTRE						
0-5 min journey	17.3	23.0	33.3	25.5	20.0	44.1
6-10 min journey	31.7	28.0	37.4	18.6	38.0	20.6
11-15 min journey	24.3	23.0	14.1	8.8	14.0	8.8
16-20 min journey	12.9	8.0	8.1	6.9	9.0	14.7
21-30 min journey	5.9	14.0	4.0	12.7	3.0	7.8
31-60 min journey	5.4	3.0	3.0	12.7	5.0	2.0
Over 60 min journey	1.5	1.0	0.0	14.7	7.0	2.0
CAR PARKING						
Did you have difficulty obtaining a parking space? Yes:	18.0	29.4	13.0	51.4	13.6	18.5
Car parking provision – better/much better than others?	5.4	19.0	4.0	1.0	15.0	25.5
Car parking prices – better/much better than others?	6.4	24.0	4.0	1.0	17.0	23.6

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q3, Q5, Q6 & Q28

6.41 Accessibility also incorporates public accessibility issues within town centres. For example, knowing that some-one will be able to access a well-maintained and properly equipped public toilet, can make the difference between them choosing to visit one town over another[41].

6.42 In Sowerby Bridge there is currently only 1 set of public convenience facilities, located in the car park behind the market stalls on Wharf Street. There are no Changing Places facilities which provide extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as other serious impairments[42].

Pedestrian flows, crime and safety

6.43 Various factors combine to help the creation of a sense of safety and security for business and visitors at all times of the day and night in our town centres: the layout and design of streets, buildings, and open spaces, the attractiveness of public spaces, the visibility of a uniformed presence on the streets[43]. Civic Trust research has also shown consensus amongst practitioners and policy makers that a balance or diversity of town centre land uses, and users, help to make centres safer and more attractive[44].

6.44 No part of Sowerby Bridge town centre is currently pedestrianised, therefore traffic is a barrier to pedestrian flow and safety. This is a particular issue in light of the very busy nature of the A58 as a town centre through route. Traffic congestion was identified by visitors as the biggest weakness of the town centre by a significant margin (37% of respondents). The Sowerby Bridge health check assessment undertaken in 2009 notes that, in general, the centre is a fairly safe environment for shoppers.

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41 Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, April 2009
42 http://changing-places.org/
43 Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, 2009
44 Better Town Centres at Night, ATCM and BCSC, 2010

6.45 The on-street visitor's survey in 2009 asked specific questions to visitors about their perceptions of crime in Sowerby Bridge. During the day-time, only 54.5% of visitors indicated that safety in Sowerby Bridge felt 'about the same' as that in other centres, with none considering it to be 'better' or 'much better' than in other centres. This is the worst perception of day-time safety of all centres in Calderdale.

6.46 With respect to the evening/night-time economy, the proportion of visitors who deemed safety to be 'about the same' as in other centres fell to 46.5%, with 45.5% considering safety to be either 'worse' or 'much worse' than that in other centres, again the worst perception of safety of all centres in Calderdale (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Customer experience - Perception of safety

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DAY-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	15.9	28.0	0.0	7.8	23.0	9.8
About the same as other centres?	74.3	60.0	54.5	84.3	66.0	73.5
Worse or much worse than other centres?	7.4	6.0	44.4	2.9	8.0	7.9
NIGHT-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	7.8
About the same as other centres?	38.1	29.0	46.5	74.5	43.0	55.9
Worse or much worse than other centres?	25.2	18.0	45.5	12.7	27.0	14.7

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

6.47 Whilst responses to the survey shows the perception of crime, data on actual occurrences of crime are available from West Yorkshire Police, though by electoral Ward and not by town centre. Sowerby Bridge town centre is located within Sowerby Bridge ward which showed fairly average rates of all crimes in comparison to the rest of Calderdale and other town centres in the year to 31st July 2009[45]; 15.8 reported criminal damage crimes per 1,000 population; 13.8 reported violent crimes per 1,000 population.

[45] Maps 2.71-2.73 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009

Summary

Customer experience

- In terms of customer experience, the most significant issues identified by shoppers are traffic congestion and the choice/range of non-food shops;
- Accessibility to the centre is primarily on foot (40%), followed by similar numbers arriving by bus (30%) and car (28%);
- Parking provision is the poorest of all Calderdale centres, however only 8% of visitors perceive it to be a weakness and only 13% of visitors have difficulty parking;
- The A58 is a busy route through the town centre and impacts negatively on pedestrian flow and safety; and
- Crime rates in the town centre area are not particularly high however the perception of safety in the town centre both during the day-time and night-time is the worst of all Calderdale centres.

7. Environmental quality and urban design

7.13 Well designed and well-maintained buildings and public spaces, including parks, streets and squares, play a vital role in creating attractive and welcoming town centre environments for people of all ages. Public spaces, including green spaces, can help to attract investment into town centres, enhance community spirit and cohesiveness, promote community health and wellbeing, and manage the effects of climate change[46].

7.14 The Sowerby Bridge town centre boundary contains 3 areas of green space designated in the current development plan (UDP). Two small areas of amenity space are located off Bolton Brow, either side of the junction with Gratrix Lane. The larger piece of open space is designated as churches / churchyards / cemeteries / crematoria and includes Christ Church, and land around it, at the junction of Wharf Street and Tuel Lane.

7.15 The lack of any proper pedestrianised areas or public squares however limits the opportunity to escape vehicle noise and pollution. Air pollution is an issue within the town centre as almost the entire stretch of the A58 through the town centre is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), meaning that pollution levels exceed Government standards. An action plan is in place to reduce the levels of nitrogen dioxide in the Sowerby Bridge town centre area.

7.16 The health check assessment undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment summarised Sowerby Bridge as an attractive, small town. It found that the streets were clean with no evidence of litter, with shop units maintained to high standards creating an attractive shopping environment. Street furniture includes: lighting; benches; bins; and flowers.

7.17 The study went on to say that units are mostly old build and made of local stone. The town centre is nearly all included within the Sowerby Bridge Conservation Area, and there are no Grade I listed buildings. However there is 1 Grade II* listed building (Wet

[46] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

Dock on Canal Wharf) and 28 Grade II Listed Buildings within the town centre boundary.

Summary
Environmental quality and urban design

- Good environmental quality in the main, providing an attractive shopping environment for customers;
- Limited green space provision and no pedestrianised areas within the town centre;
- Air pollution issues as a result of heavy vehicular traffic through the centre; and
- Significant heritage assets within the town centre and the majority of the centre is designated as conservation area status.

8. Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night time economy

8.16 Town centres that offer a range of uses during the day, into the evening and beyond, are more likely to attract a diverse mix of people; broadening of the evening and night-time offering also stands to build stronger connections with local people and attract more people from further afield[47].

8.17 Table 8.1 summarises the total number of different premises by each category of leisure, culture and tourism facility noted during the latest town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. It demonstrates that Sowerby Bridge has the poorest range of cultural, leisure and tourism facilities of all Calderdale centres with only 5 of the 10 categories located in the town centre. There is no provision in the following categories; amusement centres, art galleries, museums, concert halls/bingo halls/cinemas, and theatres/nightclubs.

8.18 Of the facilities present, cafes/restaurants represent the highest proportion with 20 separate premises located in the town centre or in edge of centre locations (38% of all cultural, leisure and tourist provision). Sowerby Bridge has the highest proportion of pubs and wine bars (16 separate premises), and sports facilities (6 separate facilities) of any of the town centres in Calderdale.

8.19 The location of leisure and night-time facilities is spread fairly evenly throughout the town centre north of the river; however there is limited provision in the area south of the railway line and river (Figure 8.1). Since the time of the survey a new leisure centre has opened south of the river on Station Road and the old swimming pool adjacent to the library has closed.

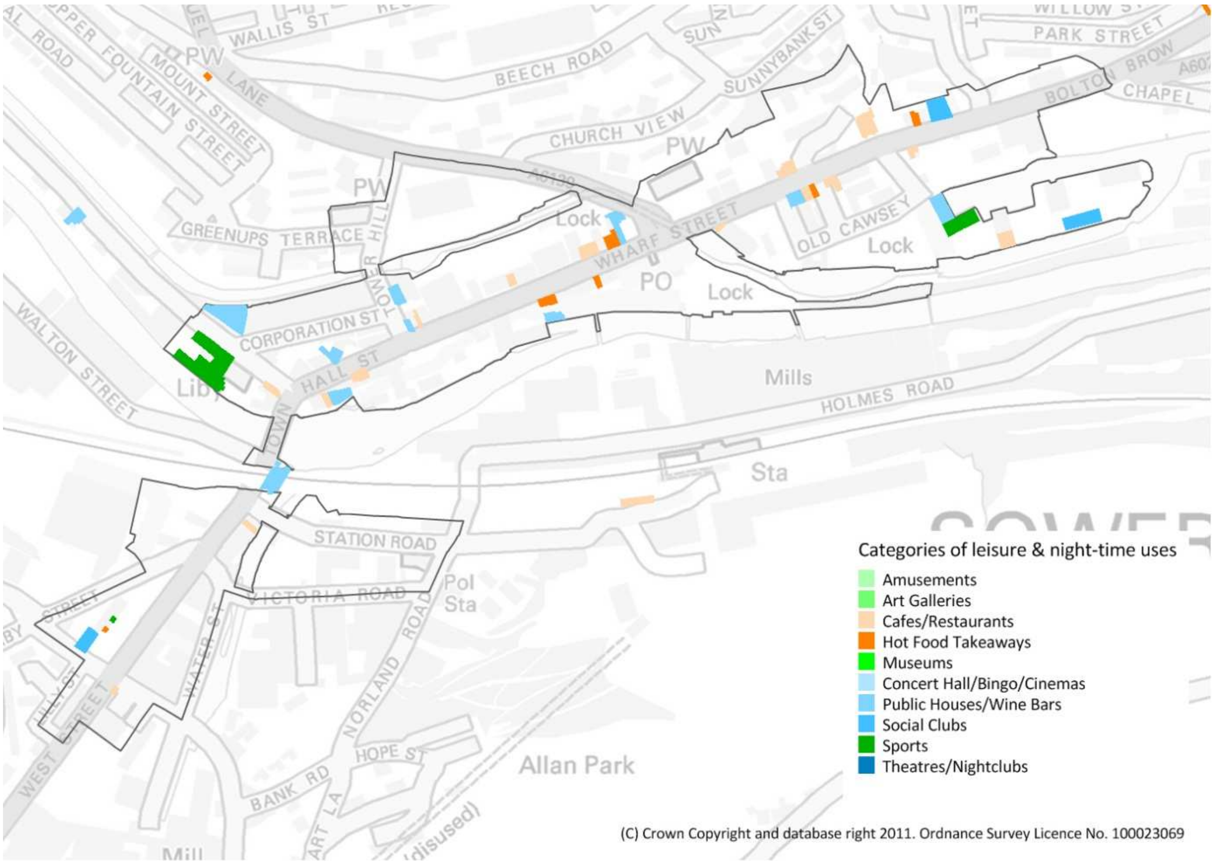
[47] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

Table 8.1 – Sowerby Bridge culture, leisure, tourism and night-time offer

Survey Categories	Sowerby Bridge				% of all leisure uses				
	Town Centre Premises	Edge of Centre Premises	Total no. of premises	Sowerby Bridge	Halifax	Brighouse	Hebden Bridge	Todmorden	Elland
Amusement Centres (AMU)	-	-	-	-	2.7	3.3	-	-	-
Art Galleries (ART)	-	-	-	-	1.1	1.7	10.2	8.9	-
Cafes/Restaurants (CAF)	17	3	20	35.7	40.4	33.3	40.7	37.5	19.5
Hot Food Takeaways (HOT)	9	2	11	19.6	14.4	26.7	10.2	17.9	36.6
Museums (MUS)	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	3.4	1.8	-
Concert Halls/Bingo Halls/Cinemas (PEN)	-	-	-	-	2.7	5.0	1.7	-	4.9
Public Houses/Wine Bars (PUB)	11	5	16	28.6	20.7	18.3	18.6	17.9	24.4
Social Club/Working Mens Club (SOC)	3	-	3	5.4	4.8	5.0	5.1	8.9	7.3
Sports Clubs/Gyms/Swimming Pools/Dance & Sports Halls/Sports Stadia (SPO)	4	2	6	10.7	8.5	6.7	8.5	3.6	7.3
Theatres/Nightclubs (THE)	-	-	-	-	4.3	-	1.7	3.6	-
TOTAL	**44**	**12**	**56**						

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Figure 8.1 – Location of leisure and night-time uses in Sowerby Bridge



Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

8.20 In terms of the public's view on leisure provision within Sowerby Bridge town centre, in 2009 54% of respondents felt that Sowerby Bridge was worse or much worse than other centres. Visitors were happier with the range and choice of pubs and restaurants although still 36% responded that this area was worse or much worse than other centres (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 – Public perceptions of the Sowerby Bridge leisure offer

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
RANGE & CHOICE OF PUBS/RESTAURANTS						
Much better or better than other centres?	18.9	14.0	5.1	30.4	14.0	5.9
About the same as other centres?	37.1	33.0	57.6	64.7	41.0	45.1
Worse or much worse than other centres?	22.3	24.0	36.4	3.9	28.0	43.2
LEISURE FACILITIES						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	2.0	9.8	11.0	2.9
About the same as other centres?	29.2	16.0	40.4	68.6	41.0	31.4
Worse or much worse than other centres?	40.1	46.0	53.5	11.8	26.0	56.9

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

Summary
Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night-time economy

- Sowerby Bridge town centre offers a very good range of dining, drinking and sports facilities, however other cultural, leisure and tourism facilities are lacking;
- The perception of town centre users is that the leisure offer is significantly poorer than other centres; and
- Leisure and night-time facilities that are provided are spread fairly evenly across the town centre areas north of the river and railway line.

9. Planning permissions and recent developments

9.11 In the previous monitoring year (1st April 2010-31st March 2011) there was development activity of a small scale nature. 1 newly completed development and 2 new commencements, affecting town centre uses, took place within the town centre boundary.

Table 9.1 - New completions (1/4/10-31/3/11)

Address	Development	Floorspace
86 Wharf St	Change of use from shop and dwelling to shop and cafe	15sqm (A1) 40sqm (A3)

Source: CMBC monitoring

Table 9.2 - New commencements (1/4/10-31/3/11)

Address	Development	Floorspace
9 West St	Change of use from store and office to shop – deli bar	48sqm (A1)
13 West St	Refurbishment and change of use from dwelling to retail unit including A2 permission	-41sqm (A1) 85sqm (A2)

Source: CMBC monitoring

9.12 In terms of outstanding (not commenced) planning permissions within Sowerby Bridge town centre, there are 6 separate applications relating to town centre use classes. Half of these involve the creation of new bar/restaurants, the most significant of which is conversion of the former Bingo Hall to a 410sqm restaurant/bar facility.

Table 9.3 - Summary of outstanding planning permissions (as at 31/3/11)

Use Class	No. of permissions	Floorspace (sqm)		
		New Gross	Loss	New Net
A1 (Shops)	2	143	137	6
A2 (Financial & Professional Services	1	-	211	-211
A3 (Restaurants and Cafes)	3	695	-	695
A4 (Drinking establishments)	-	-	-	-
A5 (Hot food takeaway)	-	-	-	-
B1a (Business - offices)	2	228	-	228
D2 (Assembly and leisure)	1	-	410	-410
Total*	**9**	**1,066**	**758**	**308**

Source: CMBC monitoring
*Total may not add up to individual figures as many applications relate to more than one Use Class

Summary
Planning permissions and recent developments

- There has been some small scale development activity in the town centre in the past year, along with new commencements, and a number of outstanding permissions that would help contribute to the leisure and night-time economy should they come forward.

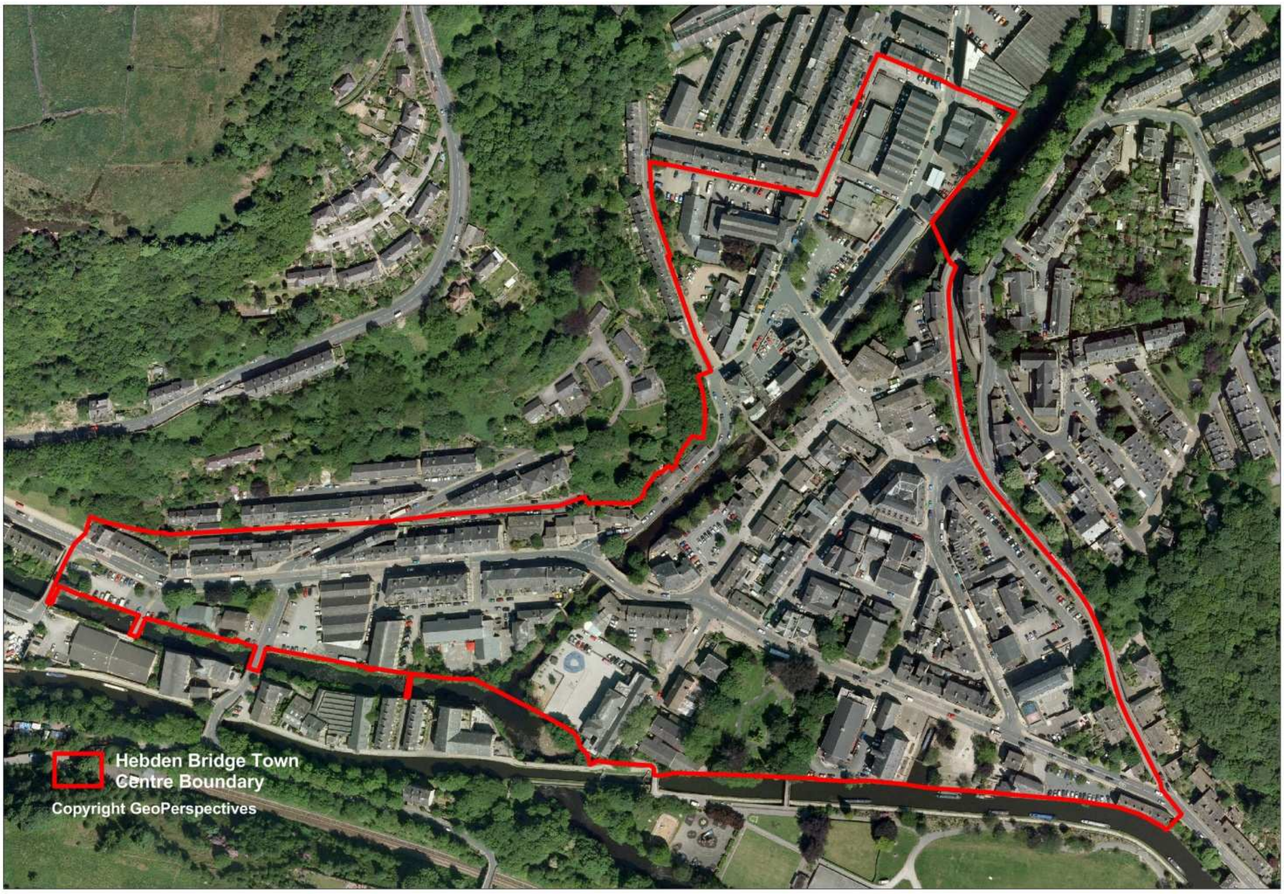
10. Summary

10.9 This qualitative assessment has sought to bring together key information and data sets to highlight the qualitative aspects of Sowerby Bridge town centre, a small town centre in Calderdale, within the context of planning related issues and the emerging Calderdale LDF. The report has highlighted a number of issues that could be addressed to help improve the centre overall and enhance the experience for users and visitors.

10.10 The key findings detailed in this report can be summarised as follows:

- Sowerby Bridge has a high proportion of leisure services floorspace, low number of comparison retail outlets and low vacant floorspace compared to other centres in Calderdale;
- Local business and shoppers would like to see improved consumer choice in the town, with the overwhelming majority feeling that the current choice is worse or much worse than other centres;
- The town has a healthy mix of independent and multiple occupiers;
- Local businesses had relatively high confidence in growth and performance, compared to other centres in 2009 when surveyed;
- Traffic congestion is seen as a major problem in the town centre and impacts negatively on the general shopping experience, pedestrian flow and safety, and air pollution;
- There are significant number built heritage assets within the town centre that help to provide a generally attractive shopping environment;
- Perception of crime in the town centre is particularly bad despite actual crime rates not reflecting this;
- Sowerby Bridge offers a very good range of dining, drinking and sports facilities, however other cultural, leisure and tourism facilities are lacking; and
- Some small scale development activity has taken place in the town centre in the past year, and a number of outstanding planning permissions could contribute further to the leisure and night-time economy should they come forward.

Hebden Bridge Town Centre

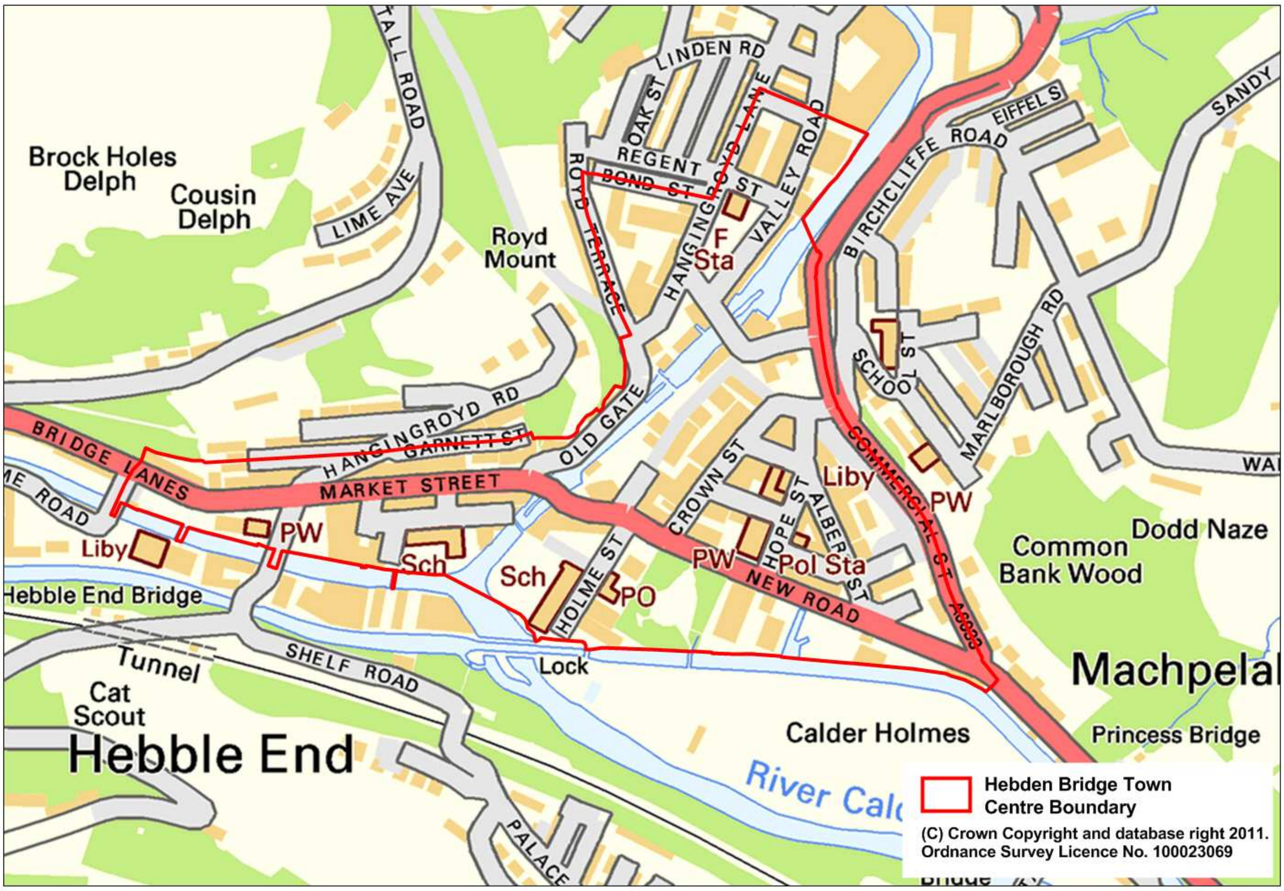


1. Context

1.0 Hebden Bridge is a small market town located in the upper Calder Valley, in the heart of the South Pennines. It sits on the confluence of the River Calder and Hebden Water. The main route through the town is the A646 valley route connecting the upper Calder Valley towns and villages with Halifax (8 miles east) and Burnley (13 miles northwest). The A6033 runs north out of the town, over high moorland to Keighley.

1.1 According to the last Census, Hebden Bridge and its surrounding area (including the villages of Heptonstall, Pecket Well, Chiserley, Old Town and Blackshawhead) had a population of 8,270 in 2001. Mid-year population estimates suggest this may have risen to around 8,642 by 2009, a rise of around 4.5%[48], fairly typical in Calderdale.

1.2 Hebden Bridge town centre is defined as a 'town centre' in the Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (2006), together with Brighouse, Elland, Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden. In terms of overall retail provision, the town was ranked the 4,226th venue nationally, of approximately 7000, when surveyed by Management Horizons Europe in 2008, placing it within the 'minor local' centre category in this ranking, along with Elland. No previous ranking data is available for comparison.



48 Population data is taken from the Core Strategy Refined Issues and Options Consultation report (January 2011). Population growth is calculated using August 2010 Patient register data, adjusted to the official mid-2009 population estimates.

1.3 The main focus of retailing within Hebden Bridge is along Bridge Gate and St. Georges Square, which are designated as primary shopping frontages, and Market Street, West End and Crown Street which are designated secondary frontages. There are no designated tertiary frontages however further retail units are present elsewhere in the town centre.

1.4 Beyond the retail side and usual services associated with a centre of this size, Hebden Bridge town centre has a range of other facilities including a library, a cinema, galleries and art studios, sports and social clubs, a small theatre, tourist information centre, and youth and community centres.

Governance and strategies

1.5 There is currently no formal town centre management organisation in place for Hebden Bridge. Organisations and forums working to improve the town include Hebden Royd Town Council, the Hebden Bridge Business Association, and the Hebden Bridge Partnership – an umbrella organisation of local community organisations working to improve life in the community. These partnerships work alongside the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance, Calderdale MBC and local councillors to help improve the town through various local initiatives.

1.6 Calderdale Council has the adopted Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (RCUDP) that provides the current policy framework for town centres in the District. A health check assessment of each town centre in Calderdale was also undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment in 2009. Where relevant, parts of the town centre health check report are included and referenced within this report.

2. Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

Diversity of uses - Town centre composition

2.43 Recent surveys of town centre occupancy have been undertaken in both 2009 and 2010. The surveys complement each other in the data that they provide and collectively provide a wealth of information on the composition of all town centres in Calderdale.

a. 2009 Survey – undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment by White Young Green (WYG) planning consultants.
b. 2010 Survey – undertaken by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (CMBC) to update the Accessibility Survey, previously completed in 2006.

2.44 In 2009 Hebden Bridge contained a total of 164 occupied or vacant units within the defined central shopping area, occupying a total of 17,350m^2 of floorspace. Of this total floorspace, 7,910m^2 was in retail use. The highest proportion of all town centre floorspace was for comparison retailing in terms of number of outlets (43.3%), and in leisure services in terms of floorspace (36.8%) (Table 2.2). For a town of its size it is unusual for such a high proportion of floorspace to be in comparison use. The town centre has the lowest proportion of retail service, financial and business services, and vacant units of all Calderdale Centres.

2.45 In addition to the permanent retail provision in the town, Hebden Bridge retains a twice weekly outdoor market, of up to 40 stalls, on Valley Road. The market is open Wednesday for second hand goods and Thursday for general retail goods and food.

Table 2.1: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Number of Outlets

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (No)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	7.4	9.8	8.0	14	8.5	7.5	10.8	8.8
Comparison	29.6	31.6	23.3	71	43.3	25.4	16.7	34.6
Retail Service	12.1	13.5	14.7	18	11.0	17.2	19.2	13.0
Leisure Services	24.5	17.6	28.7	40	24.4	17.9	25.0	21.5
Financial & Business Services	10.6	9.8	12.0	12	7.3	8.2	10.0	11.2
Vacant	15.9	17.6	13.3	9	5.5	23.9	18.3	10.6
Total	100	100	100	164	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Table 2.2: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Existing Floorspace

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (m^2)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	13.3	28.5	17.2	2,180	12.6	19.6	24.0	14.2
Comparison	34.7	26.0	28.5	5,730	33.0	16.1	11.8	37.8
Retail Service	6.9	6.6	8.1	1,150	6.6	10.3	12.0	7.0
Leisure Services	27.0	18.3	30.9	6,380	36.8	18.9	28.8	22.7
Financial & Business Services	7.7	7.5	8.2	1,130	6.5	6.4	12.4	8.7
Vacant	10.4	13.0	7.1	780	4.5	28.8	11.0	8.9
Total	100	100	100	17,350	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

2.46 In 2010, more detailed data was collected on the type of occupant. Table 2.3 summarises floorspace by planning Use Class.

Table 2.3: Use Class mix - floorspace

Use Class	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge floor space (m^2)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
A1 (Shops)	30.2	57.5	43.7	5,823	32.9	27.8	42.9
A2 (Financial & Professional)	8.4	7.3	7.4	1,528	8.6	5.3	7.8
A3 (Restaurants & Cafes)	3.3	4.6	7.5	1,273	7.2	5.4	5.0

A4 (Drinking Establishments)	3.6	4.0	7.9	1,304	7.4	5.4	3.5
A5 (Hot Food Takeaway)	0.8	1.9	1.6	220	1.2	1.3	3.3
B1 (Business)	19.8	2.2	3.6	160	0.9	3.2	3.3
B2 (General Industry)	1.4	1.2	1.7	146	0.8	1.7	1.2
B8 (Storage or Distribution)	0.5	-	-	-	-	0.3	-
C1 (Hotels)	2.4	3.2	-	326	1.8		-
C2 (Residential Institutions)	-	-	-	-	-	-	
D1 (Non-residential Institutions)	7.5	7.3	8.5	4,434	25.0	27.7	13.9
D2 (Assembly & Leisure)	7.0	4.1	8.6	1,288	7.3	1.9	7.3
Sui Generis	6.1	2.6	3.2	923	5.2	8.4	3.4
Vacant	8.9	4.4	6.3	297	1.7	11.6	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	17,722	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

2.47 In terms of the occupancy category, Table 2.4 demonstrates the most common categories within Hebden Bridge Town Centre at the time of the 2010 survey.

Table 2.4: Occupancy Categories

	Occupancy Category	No. of instances
1	Cafe/Restaurants	24
2	Clothes Shops/Wool and Needlework/Travel Goods	19
3	China/Glassware/Fancy Goods/Gift Shop	13
4	Hairdressers/Barbers/Beauty Salons/Tattoo Artist	10
5	Public Houses/Wine Bars	10
6	Hospitals/Health Centres/Clinics/Chiropodists etc	9
7	Vacant	7
8	Estate Agents	7

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Consumer Choice - Survey Results

2.48 In 2009 the WYG in-street (consumer) survey results showed that 21.6% of visitors rated the shops ‘better’ or ‘much better’ than other centres and only 21.5% thought they were ‘worse’ or ‘much worse’, the most positive response of shoppers in any centre in Calderdale by a significant margin. The remaining 56.9% felt they were ‘about the same’. In response to the types of shops that visitors would like to see more of (Q29), the most common responses were for both food stores (12%) and clothes stores (12%), however the majority (51%) did not mention any, reinforcing the satisfaction of shoppers in terms of consumer choice.

2.49 The WYG business survey also reinforced this point in that an ‘increased choice/range of shops’ was only the 5th most common response, from the 67 businesses that responded in Hebden Bridge, in relation to measures that would improve the town centre. In all of the other 5 centres in Calderdale, an ‘increased choice/range of shops’ was consistently the most common response from businesses.

Breakdown of retail size

2.50 Hebden Bridge has the highest proportion of small units of less than 93m^2 of any centre in Calderdale (70.7% of the total), and significantly higher than the national average (39.1%) (Table 2.5). Typically, for towns of Hebden Bridge's size, there will be a higher percentage of small units than the national average and the historical nature and development of Hebden Bridge in its tight valley space has restricted larger retail developments. However the demand for medium and larger sized units is generally limited in this size of centre.

Table 2.5: Diversity of Uses - Unit Sizes

Unit Size	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (No. of units)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Under 93m^2 (1,000ft^2)	51.6	59.6	68.7	116	70.7	68.7	64.2	39.1
93-232m^2 (1,000-2,499ft^2)	25.4	27.5	22.7	35	21.3	23.1	27.5	39.6
232-464m^2 (2,500-4,999ft^2)	12.9	7.3	4.7	10	6.1	3.7	5.0	12.6
465-929m^2 (5,000-9,999ft^2)	5.9	3.6	2.7	2	1.2	2.2	1.7	5.1
930-1,393m^2 (10,000-14,999ft^2)	2.1	0.5	0.7	1	0.6	2.2	0.8	1.5
1,394-1,858m^2 (15,000-19,999ft^2)	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.7
1,859-2,787m^2 (20,000-29,999ft^2)	0.4	0.5	0.7	0	0	0	0	0.7
Above 2,787m^2 (30,000ft^2)	1.1	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8
Total	100	100	100	164	100	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Retailer Representation - Independent/national

2.51 Details of whether units were occupied by independent or national / multiple operators were collected as part of the CMBC town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. This enabled an assessment of a centre's wider independent / national mix, as well as a more focused 'clone town' assessment to be made[49] on the make-up of the principal high street or primary frontage areas.

2.52 Hebden Bridge's clone town assessment[50] (Clone Town score of 76.1) highlights it as being a clear 'home' town – along with all of Calderdale's main centres barring Halifax (Table 2.6). 'Home' town status indicates that at least two thirds of the stores are independent, and that the centre has a wide range of outlets. Although Hebden Bridge does not score the highest of Calderdale centres in this clone town assessment, it is renowned for being the town of 'great little shops' and having a particularly healthy independent retail sector, a draw for tourists in itself.

[49] The Clone Town Britain report was first published in 2005 by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and looked at the increasing domination of large chain stores in Britain's high streets. The report provided a means of assessing any high street's homogenisation and lack of distinctiveness in terms of its retail offer, looking at both identity and diversity. A follow up 2010 Clone Town Report was more recently published containing updated assessments of towns across Britain.

[50] Survey included 55 units along Market Street, West End, Bridge Street, St. George's Square and Crown Street.

Table 2.6: Clone town assessments

Category	Town Centre	Clone Town Score
'Clone' Towns (Scores 50 or less)	Cambridge	11.6
	Halifax	30.8
	Huddersfield	49.7
'Border' Towns (Scores 50-65)	Weymouth	52.0
	Sherbourne	64.1
'Home' Towns (Scores 65+)	Brighouse	67.4
	Sowerby Bridge	75.5
	Hebden Bridge	**76.1**
	Todmorden	76.5
	Elland	79.8

Source: Re-imagining the High Street, NEF (Sep 2010) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Summary

Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

- Hebden Bridge is a small market town with a very high proportion of comparison retailing in the town centre, for a centre of its size and type;
- The centre has the lowest proportion of vacant units, retail service units and financial and business service units of all centres in Calderdale;
- 25% of the total floorspace in the town is taken by non-residential institutions (D1) uses, similar to Todmorden but otherwise significantly higher than all other centres in Calderdale.
- A twice weekly market is held in addition to the permanent retail provision in the town;
- Cafe/Restaurants, Clothes Shops/Wool and Needlework/Travel Goods shops, and China/Glassware/Fancy Goods/Gift Shops are the most prevalent types of premises found in the town centre;
- Both businesses and shoppers are generally satisfied with the consumer choice in the town centre, however the most common replies for which types of shops people would like to see more of include food stores and clothes stores;
- Hebden Bridge has the highest proportion of small units (less than $93m^2$) of all centres in Calderdale; and
- Hebden Bridge is classified as a 'home town' indicating a healthy mix of independent and multiple occupiers within the town centre.

3. Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

3.13 Overtrading from a quantitative perspective for convenience shopping is discussed in the Retail Needs Assessment (Table 8.14 deals with Hebden Bridge) and is built into the overall conclusions on new floorspace requirements (based on the shoppers' survey and assumptions on average turnover etc.). From a qualitative perspective however, evidence on overcrowding and congestion is a lot harder to obtain data on.

3.14 Although anecdotal evidence is available, objective evidence on overcrowding and congestion would have to be collected first hand through extensive survey work. The investment required both in cost and time to undertake this work could not be justified in relation to the benefit received. Therefore in the absence of such work, responses to the business survey (undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment) indicating general trader confidence and success, seems the most appropriate available data to give an indication of trading levels.

3.15 Of those who were surveyed and responded in Hebden Bridge (67 businesses), 63% indicated that their business had grown since they began trading in the town centre. Only 14% suggested that trade had declined moderately or significantly, the lowest (therefore most healthy) of all centres in Calderdale. 54% of respondents felt that their business was performing well or very well, around average for centres in Calderdale, with 12% having poor or very poor performance (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Trading levels / Business Confidence

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DURING TIME TRADING IN THE TOWN CENTRE:						
Business has grown moderately or significantly	50.0	58.1	72.8	63.1	58.8	72.2
Business has remained largely static	23.0	16.1	9.1	23.1	23.5	11.1
Business has declined moderately or significantly	27.0	25.8	18.2	13.9	17.6	16.7
HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR BUSINESS IS PERFORMING?						
Well or very well	40.9	47.6	81.8	53.7	53.1	66.6
Moderately	43.0	37.7	9.1	34.3	34.4	25.9
Poorly or very poorly	16.1	14.8	9.1	12.0	12.6	7.4

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – Business Survey Q1g and Q1h

Summary

Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

- From Hebden Bridge businesses surveyed in 2009 there were average levels of confidence in terms of performance; however businesses experiencing an actual decline (either moderately or significantly) were proportionately the lowest of all centres in Calderdale.

4. Location specific needs (e.g. deprived areas / underserved markets)

4.19 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) dataset every 3 years. This gives a relative deprivation ranking of small areas around the UK based on a number of different measurements; income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

4.20 In the latest IMD dataset for 2010 the Hebden Bridge town centre area ranked 14,283rd of 32,482. This places the immediate area around the 44th percentile of most deprived areas of the country, a significant increase in ranking from 10,296th in 2004 and 13,607th in 2007. The percentage change in ranking of +12.3% between 2004 and 2010 is by far the greatest in Calderdale and puts Hebden Bridge as the least deprived of all centres in Calderdale by a significant margin. There are no surrounding areas that fall within the 10% or 20% of most deprived areas.

4.21 Table 4.1 demonstrates the change in ranking between 2004 and 2010, relative to the other centres in Calderdale.

Table 4.1: Measures of deprivation

	IMD Ranking (and % rank)			
	2004	2007	2010	% Change 2004-2010
Halifax	1,560 (4.8%)	1,883 (5.8%)	2,221 (6.8%)	+2.0
Brighouse	9,037 (27.8%)	10,783 (33.2%)	9,995 (30.8%)	+3.0
Sowerby Bridge	6,374 (19.6%)	7,406 (22.8%)	6,831 (21.0%)	+1.4
Hebden Bridge	10,296 (31.7%)	13,607 (41.9%)	14,283 (44.0%)	+12.3
Todmorden	8,178 (25.2%)	8,655 (26.6%)	8,325 (25.6%)	+0.4
Elland	8,308 (25.6%)	9,394 (28.9%)	8,248 (25.4%)	-0.2

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, 2007, 2010

4.22 Despite deprivation not being an issue for Hebden Bridge or its surrounding areas, proposals that are likely to bring significant improvements to the range, choice and quality of everyday shopping to serve the needs of those living in deprived areas should still be encouraged. However, other non-retail town centre uses and development play an equally important role in helping to improve the areas health and disability deprivation, living environment, and employment potential.

Summary

Location specific needs

- The immediate town centre area is the least deprived location of all centres in Calderdale, and the overall ranking has improved significantly since 2004. The town centre area as a whole only ranks in the 44th percentile of most deprived areas in the country.

5. Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

Quality of existing provision

5.41 The buildings within Hebden Bridge town centre are predominantly from the Victorian era, with the retention of the historic core and much of the older architecture providing a distinctive and attractive town centre. The principal, traditional building material in the town is local natural stone, and there is consistency in both colour and texture of the stone which contributes a strong cohesive character of the town. The Conservation Area Appraisal for Hebden Bridge notes that most properties in the town centre area appear reasonably well-maintained; however some upper floors of properties show signs of poor maintenance or lack of investment (often associated with a lack of use of upper floors).

5.42 Responses to the business survey did not indicate an 'improved built environment' as being a priority for businesses unlike other town centres in Calderdale. In addition, responses to the in-street survey puts the 'shopping environment' as one of the most common reasons for visiting the centre after the choice of shops and goods that are available, and the proximity of the centre to home. These elements suggest that the built environment should not be an issue high on the agenda for the town centre and its users.

Rents/Valuation Rates

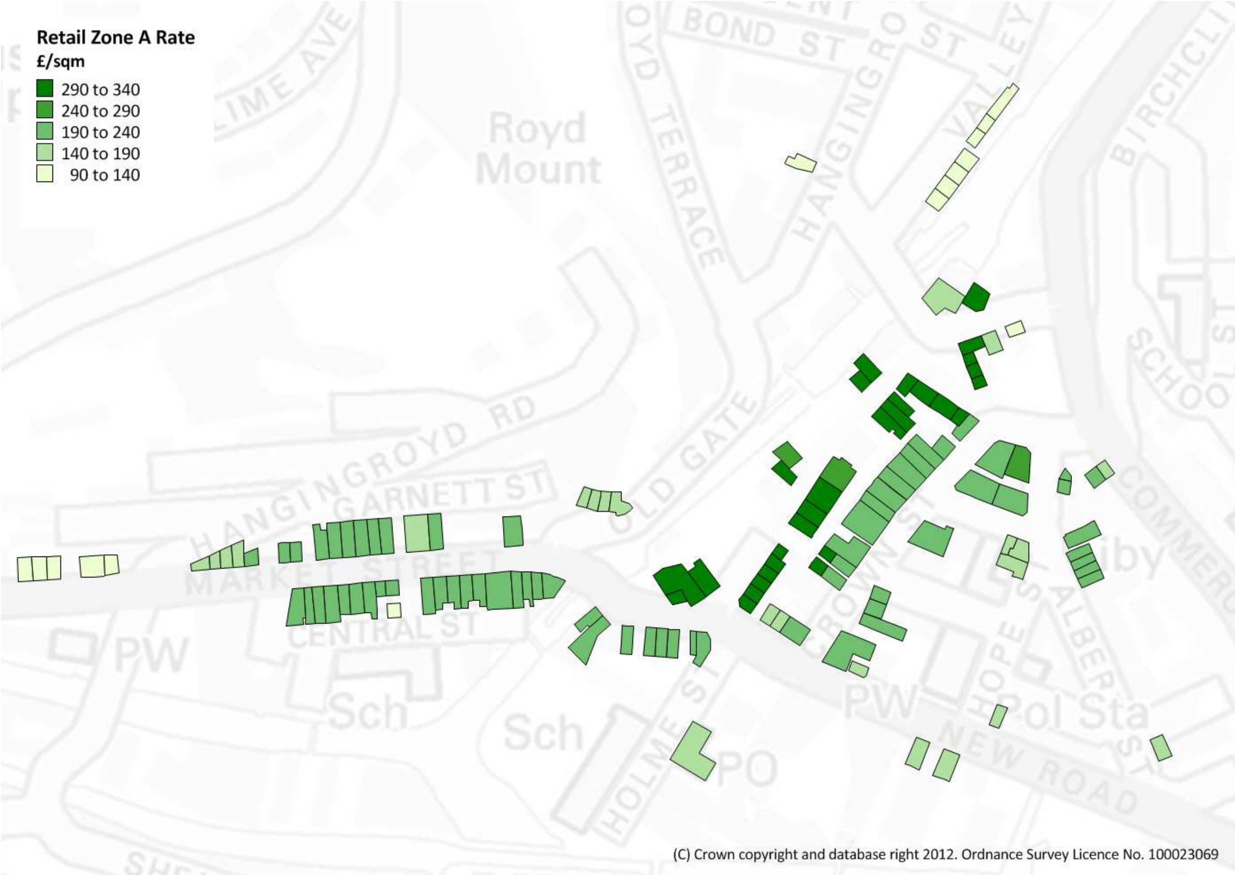
5.43 The most recent data on the rateable value of properties within town centres is available on the Valuation Office Agency website (www.voa.gov.uk). Rateable value represents the open market annual rental value of a business/non-domestic property. This means the rent the property would let for on the valuation date, if it was being offered on the open market. The rateable value is used by the local council when calculating business rates bills.

5.44 When viewed across a town centre, valuation rates provide a general picture of the desirability and attractiveness of particular areas – those streets commanding higher valuation rates are those with the higher rents and therefore likely higher footfall and higher sales. Looking at the spatial variation of valuation rates in conjunction with change in rates over time can also highlight areas that may be more vulnerable within a centre and potentially in decline.

5.45 Figure 5.1 demonstrates the spread of prime Retail Zone A valuation rates in and around Hebden Bridge town centre. The highest rates are found along Bridge Gate and around St. George's Square (up to £336/m^2). The peripheries of the commercial town centre on Market Street and Valley Road have the lowest rates, falling to £90/m^2 in places.

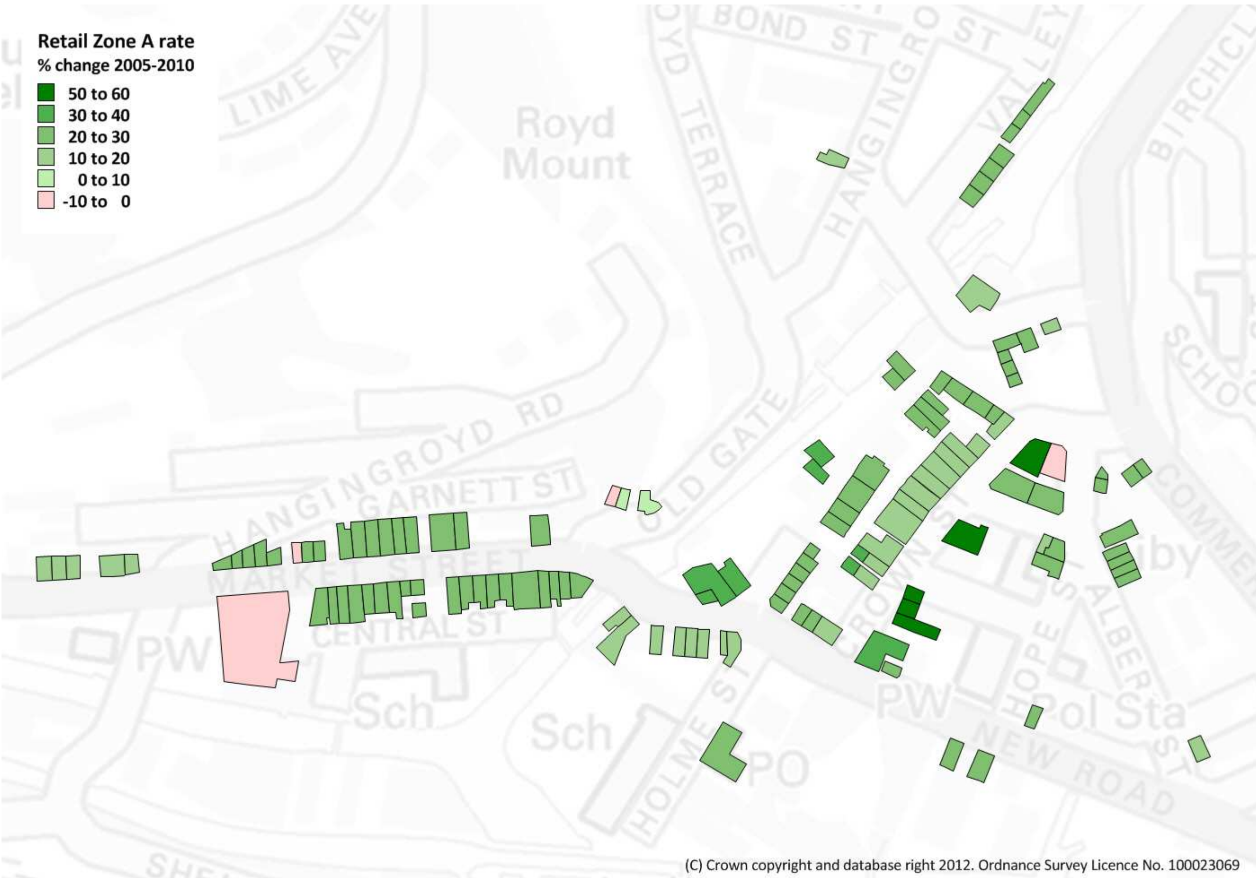
5.46 The largest increase in rates has been seen along units on Crown St, up to 60% increase over the 5 year valuation period. A small number of units saw decreases in rates however these were not focused in any one area of town.

Figure 5.1 – Hebden Bridge Town Centre Valuation Rates 2010-15



Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

Figure 5.2 – Hebden Bridge Town Centre Valuation Rates % change 2005-10



Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

Vacant Property

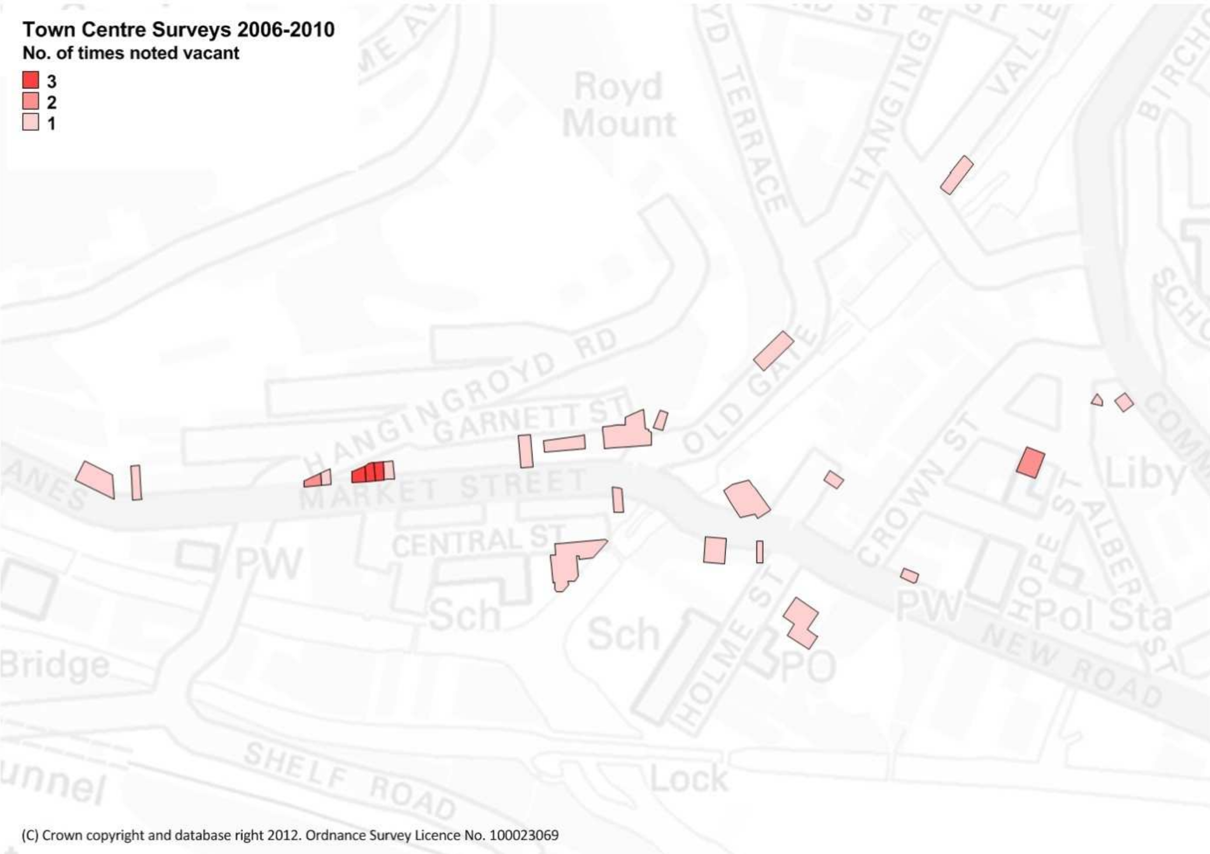
5.47 Data on vacant properties within town centres is not collected on a regular basis in Calderdale. However data is available for 2009 (from the WYG Health Check assessment) and 2006 and 2010 (from the Calderdale town centre surveys undertaken by the planning policy team). Although other data on smaller areas is available these 3 surveys provide comparable data over time.

5.48 Since 2006 the number of vacancies in the town centre has remained low in Hebden Bridge, decreasing slightly from 13 units in 2006 to 11 in 2010. In the intervening years, the Retail Needs Assessment identified that 5.5% of outlets (9 units) in the town centre were vacant (almost half the national average of 10.6%). In terms of floorspace vacancy rates were similarly half the national average of 8.9%, at only 4.5% of surveyed units.

5.49 A vacant town centre unit is not necessarily an issue in itself as there will always be natural churn within a centre with some units closing and others opening, and also the wider economic situation having an impact. It is persistent, long-term vacancies in certain areas within a centre that cause greater concern however and may be an indication of an area failing or falling into decline.

5.50 Of the 3 surveys undertaken by CMBC, Figure 5.3 shows the cumulative vacancies across the town centre, and highlights only a handful of units that were identified as vacant on more than 1 survey. A collection of units on Market Street have remained vacant over the full 5-year period, however these are not in a location where low, or declining business rates are evident.

Figure 5.3 – Hebden Bridge vacancy rates 2006-2010



Source: Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment (2009) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Surveys

Summary
Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

- The built environment in general in the town centre is not seen as an issue that requires improvement.
- Bridge Gate and St. George's Square has the highest prime Zone A retail rates at £336/sqm;
- The lowest rates are found at the western and northern peripheries of the commercial town centre, on Market Street and Valley Road;
- Most areas of the town have seen increases in rates between 2005-2010 with Crown Street seeing the highest increases (up to 60%); although a small number of premises have seen falls in rates these are not concentrated in any one particular area; and
- Vacancies in general in Hebden Bridge are low and have been historically; however a handful of long term vacant units on Market Street are highlighted.

6. Customer experience

6.48 Looking at the general customer experience of Hebden Bridge town centre, of the 102 shoppers interviewed in 2009 as part of the Retail Needs Assessment on-street survey (Q32), the top 3 weaknesses of Hebden Bridge town centre were perceived to be; car parking (33%); none mentioned (28%); and traffic congestion (18%).

Accessibility

6.49 Accessibility to the town centre is available through a range of means of transport. Although there is no bus station in Hebden Bridge, the town does act as a hub for local bus services serving the surrounding smaller settlements such as Old Town, Heptonstall and Blackshawhead. Mainline buses also stop regularly along the A646, connecting Halifax and Todmorden. Further longer distance bus routes connect the town centre to Haworth and Keighley. There are multiple bus stops within the boundary of the town centre, with services tending to wait at the New Road stop.

6.50 The town also has a train station located a short walk (approximately 300m) to the southeast of the town centre. Access is either via Calder Holmes park or along Burnley Road and Station Road approach. The railway station provides services along 2 routes between Manchester and Leeds; one via Halifax and Bradford; the other via Brighouse and Dewsbury. A third rail route connects Blackpool to York.

6.51 When questioned about how visitors arrived in the centre (Q03 of the on-street Retail Needs Assessment survey), the most common method was by car (38%), followed by on foot (29%) and bus (22%). 7% of visitors had arrived by train, the highest figure of any centre in Calderdale, and 2% by bicycle. Visitors to Hebden Bridge travelled on average a longer journey than to any other centre, with 40% of visitors travelling over 20 minutes (Table 6.1) to reach the centre.

6.52 Hebden Bridge has a total of around 180 public off-street parking spaces which equates to approximately one space per 96m^2 of retailing, the second poorest provision (relative to the size of the retailing centre) of Calderdale centres[51]. Parking was highlighted as the top weakness of the centre (33% of responses) with over 50% of visitors having difficulty parking. The centre also had the most negative response by far of all centres in relation to people's perceptions of parking provision and cost in the town (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Customer experience - Accessibility

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
METHOD OF TRAVEL						
Travelled by car/van	33.7	55.0	28.3	38.3	26.0	29.4
Travelled by bus, minibus or coach	38.6	22.0	30.3	21.6	20.0	9.8
Travelled by foot	22.3	21.0	40.4	29.4	49.0	57.8
DURATION OF TRAVEL TO CENTRE						
0-5 min journey	17.3	23.0	33.3	25.5	20.0	44.1
6-10 min journey	31.7	28.0	37.4	18.6	38.0	20.6
11-15 min journey	24.3	23.0	14.1	8.8	14.0	8.8
16-20 min journey	12.9	8.0	8.1	6.9	9.0	14.7
21-30 min journey	5.9	14.0	4.0	12.7	3.0	7.8
31-60 min journey	5.4	3.0	3.0	12.7	5.0	2.0
Over 60 min journey	1.5	1.0	0.0	14.7	7.0	2.0
CAR PARKING						
Did you have difficulty obtaining a parking space? Yes:	18.0	29.4	13.0	51.4	13.6	18.5
Car parking provision – better/much better than others?	5.4	19.0	4.0	1.0	15.0	25.5
Car parking prices – better/much better than others?	6.4	24.0	4.0	1.0	17.0	23.6

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q3, Q5, Q6 & Q28

6.53 Accessibility also incorporates public accessibility issues within town centres. For example, knowing that some-one will be able to access a well-maintained and properly equipped public toilet, can make the difference between them choosing to visit one town over another[52].

6.54 In Hebden Bridge there are currently 2 sets of public convenience facilities, including disabled facilities, located on New Road and Valley Road. There are no Changing Places facilities which provide extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as other serious impairments[53].

[51] Map 2.7 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009
[52] Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, April 2009
[53] http://changing-places.org/

Pedestrian flows, crime and safety

6.55 Various factors combine to help the creation of a sense of safety and security for business and visitors at all times of the day and night in our town centres: the layout and design of streets, buildings, and open spaces, the attractiveness of public spaces, the visibility of a uniformed presence on the streets[54]. Civic Trust research has also shown consensus amongst practitioners and policy makers that a balance or diversity of town centre land uses, and users, help to make centres safer and more attractive[55].

6.56 Parts of Hebden Bridge town centre were recently pedestrianised (Bridge Gate and St. George's Square), improving the environment for pedestrian flow and safety in these areas; however traffic congestion was identified by visitors as one of the biggest weakness of the town centre outside of these areas.

6.57 The on-street visitor's survey in 2009 asked specific questions to visitors about their perceptions of crime in Hebden Bridge. During the day-time, only 2.9% of visitors indicated that safety in Hebden Bridge felt 'worse or much worse than other centres', with the majority (84.3%) perceiving it to be 'about the same'. This is the best perception of day-time safety of all centres in Calderdale.

6.58 With respect to the evening/night-time economy, the proportion of visitors who deemed safety to be 'about the same' as in other centres fell to 74.5%, with 12.7% considering safety to be either 'worse' or 'much worse' than that in other centres, still the best perception of safety of all centres in Calderdale (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Customer experience - Perception of safety

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DAY-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	15.9	28.0	0.0	7.8	23.0	9.8
About the same as other centres?	74.3	60.0	54.5	84.3	66.0	73.5
Worse or much worse than other centres?	7.4	6.0	44.4	2.9	8.0	7.9
NIGHT-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	7.8
About the same as other centres?	38.1	29.0	46.5	74.5	43.0	55.9
Worse or much worse than other centres?	25.2	18.0	45.5	12.7	27.0	14.7

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

6.59 Whilst responses to the survey shows the perception of crime, data on actual occurrences of crime are available from West Yorkshire Police, though by electoral Ward and not by town centre. Hebden Bridge town centre is located within Calder ward which showed the lowest rates of all crimes in comparison to the rest of

[54] Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, 2009

[55] Better Town Centres at Night, ATCM and BCSC, 2010

Calderdale's town centre areas in the year to 31st July 2009[56]; 15.1 reported criminal damage crimes per 1,000 population; 7.9 reported violent crimes per 1,000 population.

Summary
Customer experience

- In terms of customer experience, the most significant issues identified by shoppers and visitors are car parking and traffic congestion;
- Accessibility to the centre is primarily by car (38%), followed by people arriving on foot (29%) and then by bus (22%);
- Although still small numbers, Hebden has the highest proportion of visitors, of any centre in Calderdale, arriving by train (7%) and bicycle (2%);
- Visitors to Hebden Bridge travelled on average a longer journey than those to any other centre;
- Parking provision is relatively poor in comparison to the size of the centre, with a majority of people having difficulty parking and negative perceptions of both the provision and cost of parking in the town;
- Parts of the town centre are pedestrianised providing a safe and quiet pedestrian environment; and
- Crime rates in the town centre area are the lowest of all Calderdale centres, and public perception of safety in the town centre both during the day-time and night-time is also the best.

7. Environmental quality and urban design

7.18 Well designed and well-maintained buildings and public spaces, including parks, streets and squares, play a vital role in creating attractive and welcoming town centre environments for people of all ages. Public spaces, including green spaces, can help to attract investment into town centres, enhance community spirit and cohesiveness, promote community health and wellbeing, and manage the effects of climate change[57].

7.19 The Hebden Bridge town centre boundary contains 5 separate areas of green space designated in the current development plan (UDP). Three small areas of amenity space are located off Old Gate and Hollins Place. A larger, cobbled and flagged area of amenity space is located adjacent to the Visitor and Canal Centre and the Rochdale Canal, and New Road Memorial Gardens are designated as Other Open Space in the UDP.

7.20 Additional, undesignated areas of public space have been created following pedestrianisation of parts of the town centre. St. George's Square provides a small public square for events and gatherings, and an additional landscaped and terraced area lies adjacent to Hebden Water off Bridge Gate.

[56] Maps 2.71-2.73 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009
[57] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

7.21 Although pedestrianised areas allow immediate escape from the vehicle noise and pollution, the A646 corridor through the town centre is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), meaning that pollution levels exceed Government standards. An action plan is in place to reduce the levels of nitrogen dioxide in the Hebden Bridge town centre area.

7.22 The health check assessment undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment summarised Hebden Bridge as a very attractive town offering an excelling living and shopping environment. It found that the standards of cleanliness were excellent with no litter apparent throughout the town, and that the very attractive communal spaces helped Hebden Bridge's status as a tourist destination as well as a popular place to live.

7.23 The entire town centre is located within a designated Hebden Bridge Conservation Area. There are no Grade I listed buildings, however there is 1 Grade II* listed building (Old Bridge across Hebden Water from Old Gate) and a further 20 Grade II Listed Buildings within the town centre boundary.

Summary

Environmental quality and urban design

- Very good environmental quality, providing an excellent shopping environment for customers;
- Good provision of public and green spaces, including pedestrianised areas away from noise and traffic;
- Air pollution issues along the immediate A646 corridor through the town centre as a result of heavy vehicular traffic; and
- Numerous heritage assets within the town centre and the whole of the centre is designated as conservation area status.

8. Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night time economy

8.21 Town centres that offer a range of uses during the day, into the evening and beyond, are more likely to attract a diverse mix of people; broadening of the evening and night-time offering also stands to build stronger connections with local people and attract more people from further afield[58].

8.22 Table 8.1 summarises the total number of different premises by each category of leisure, culture and tourism facility noted during the latest town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. It demonstrates that Hebden Bridge has the best range of cultural, leisure and tourism facilities of all Calderdale centres after Halifax, with 9 of the 10 categories located in the town centre. The only category with no provision is 'amusement centres'.

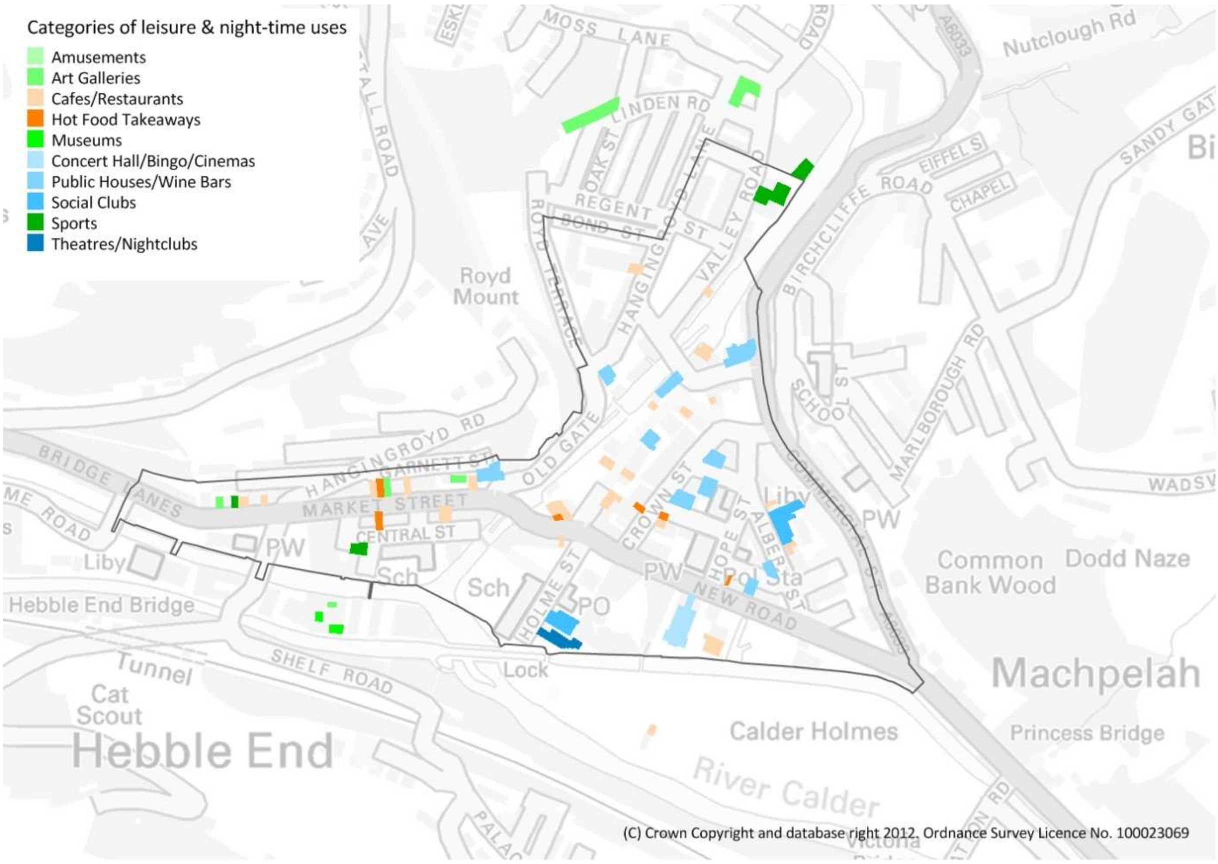
Table 8.1 – Hebden Bridge culture, leisure, tourism and night-time offer

58 Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

Survey Categories	Hebden Bridge				% of all leisure uses				
	Town Centre Premises	Edge of Centre Premises	Total no. of premises	Hebden Bridge	Halifax	Brighouse	Sowerby Bridge	Todmorden	Elland
Amusement Centres (AMU)	-	-	-	-	2.7	3.3	-	-	-
Art Galleries (ART)	3	3	6	10.2	1.1	1.7	-	8.9	-
Cafes/Restaurants (CAF)	22	2	24	40.7	40.4	33.3	35.7	37.5	19.5
Hot Food Takeaways (HOT)	6	-	6	10.2	14.4	26.7	19.6	17.9	36.6
Museums (MUS)	-	2	2	3.4	0.5	-	-	1.8	-
Concert Halls/Bingo Halls/Cinemas (PEN)	1	-	1	1.7	2.7	5.0	-	-	4.9
Public Houses/Wine Bars (PUB)	10	1	11	18.6	20.7	18.3	28.6	17.9	24.4
Social Club/Working Mens Club (SOC)	3	-	3	5.1	4.8	5.0	5.4	8.9	7.3
Sports Clubs/Gyms/Swimming Pools/Dance & Sports Halls/Sports Stadia (SPO)	4	1	5	8.5	8.5	6.7	10.7	3.6	7.3
Theatres/Nightclubs (THE)	1	-	1	1.7	4.3	-	-	3.6	-
TOTAL	**50**	**9**							

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Figure 8.1 – Location of leisure and night-time uses in Hebden Bridge



Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

8.23 Of the facilities present, cafes/restaurants represent the highest proportion with 24 separate premises located in the town centre or in edge of centre locations (41% of all cultural, leisure and tourist provision). Hebden Bridge has the highest proportion of art galleries (6 separate premises), and museums (2 separate premises) of any of the town centres in Calderdale.

8.24 The location of the leisure and night-time facilities is clustered more than in other centres in Calderdale; cultural and sports provision (galleries, museums and sports facilities) are located to the north and west of the town centre area and drinking and eating facilities are generally located in the central area of the town centre, east of Hebden Water (Figure 8.1).

8.25 In terms of the public's view on leisure provision within Hebden Bridge town centre, in 2009 only 12% of respondents felt that Hebden Bridge was worse or much worse than other centres. Visitors were also very happy with the range and choice of pubs and restaurants with only 4% responding that the area was worse or much worse than other centres (Table 8.2). These responses were the most positive of any of the centres in Calderdale.

Table 8.2 – Public perceptions of the Hebden Bridge leisure offer

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
RANGE & CHOICE OF PUBS/RESTAURANTS						
Much better or better than other centres?	18.9	14.0	5.1	30.4	14.0	5.9
About the same as other centres?	37.1	33.0	57.6	64.7	41.0	45.1
Worse or much worse than other centres?	22.3	24.0	36.4	3.9	28.0	43.2
LEISURE FACILITIES						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	2.0	9.8	11.0	2.9
About the same as other centres?	29.2	16.0	40.4	68.6	41.0	31.4
Worse or much worse than other centres?	40.1	46.0	53.5	11.8	26.0	56.9

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

Summary

Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night-time economy

- Hebden Bridge town centre offers a very good range of cultural, leisure and tourism facilities;
- The centre is particularly well served by cafes/restaurants, art galleries, and museums;
- Drinking and dining facilities tend to be concentrated in the central area of the town centre, with cultural and sports facilities located to the edge and periphery of the town centre; and
- The perception of town centre users is that the leisure offer is generally comparable or better than other centres

9. Planning permissions and recent developments

9.13 In the previous monitoring year (1st April 2010-31st March 2011) there was development activity of a relatively small scale nature in the town centre. 1 newly completed development and 2 new commencements affected town centre uses.

Table 9.1 - New completions (1/4/10-31/3/11)

Address	Development	Floorspace
Hebden Royd Adult Education	Change of use from current D1 to D2 for the use of a children's indoor recreational facility	-293sqm (D1) 293sqm (D2)

Source: CMBC monitoring

Table 9.2 - New commencements (1/4/10-31/3/11)

Address	Development	Floorspace
7 Market Street	Change of use of ground floor dwelling to shop, extension to rear	24sqm (A1)
4 Albert Street	Change of use of vacant premises (Sui Generis) to offices	52sqm (B1a)

Source: CMBC monitoring

9.14 In terms of outstanding (not commenced) planning permissions within Hebden Bridge town centre, there are 5 separate applications relating to town centre use classes. 3 small scale schemes involve the creation of new cafes; a small scale extension to the Little Theatre; and a significant application for the extension of the town hall to provide extended D1 and B1 floorspace uses for business and community use.

Table 9.3 - Summary of outstanding planning permissions (as at 31/3/11)

Use Class	No. of permissions	Floorspace (sqm)		
		New Gross	Loss	New Net
A1 (Shops)	2	-	95	-95
A2 (Financial & Professional Services	1	-	70	-70
A3 (Restaurants and Cafes)	3	158	-	158
A4 (Drinking establishments)	-	-	-	-
A5 (Hot food takeaway)	-	-	-	-
B1a (Business - offices)	1	1,100	-	1,100
D2 (Assembly and leisure)	1	79		79
Total*	**5**	**1,337**	**165**	**1,172**

Source: CMBC monitoring
*Total may not add up to individual figures as many applications relate to more than one Use Class

Summary
Planning permissions and recent developments

- There has been some small scale development activity in the town centre in the past year, along with new commencements; and
- A number of outstanding permissions remain within the town centre, mainly small scale; however a significant extension is planned for the town hall that will provide 1,100sqm of new office and community space.

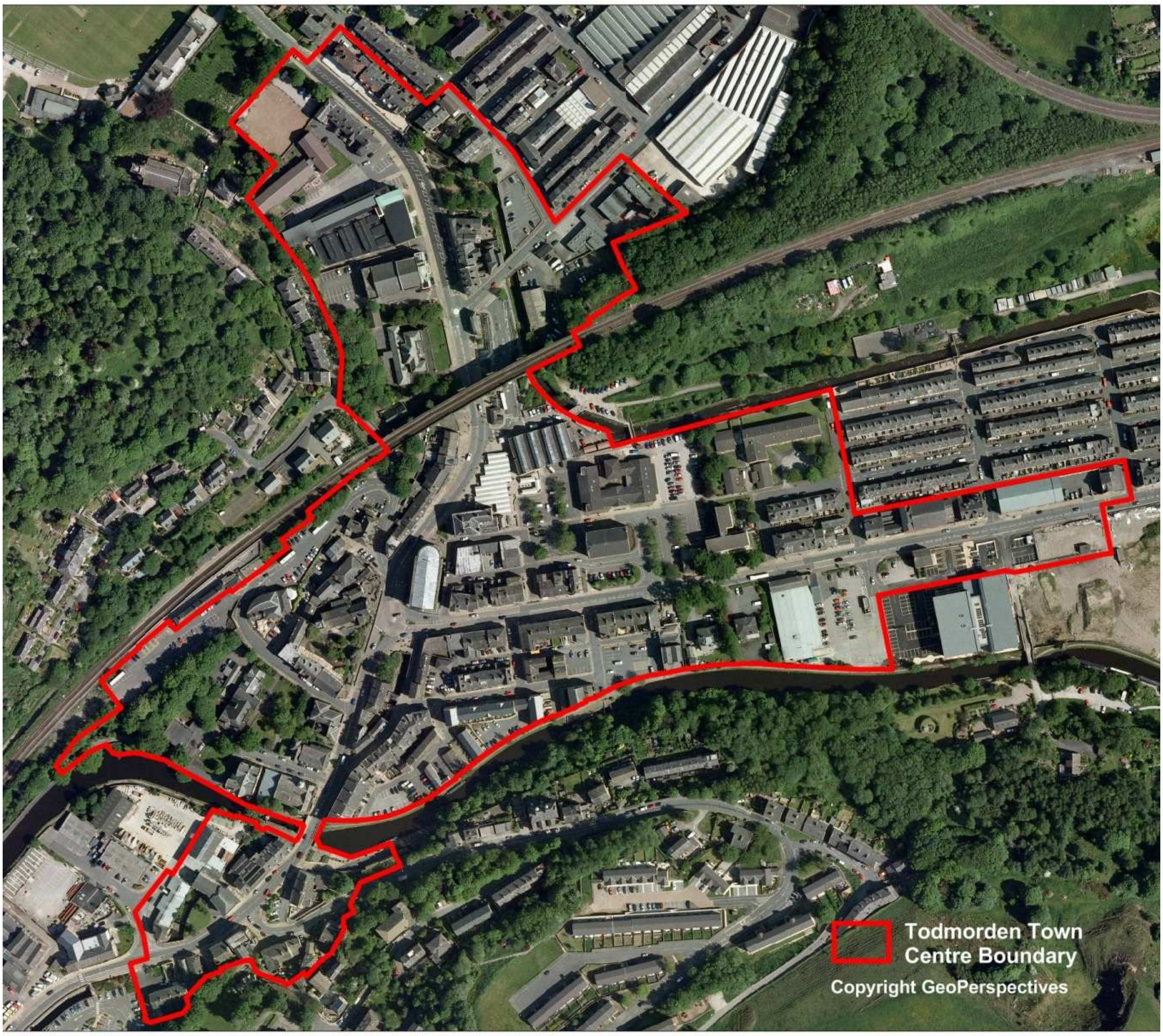
10. Summary

10.11 This qualitative assessment has sought to bring together key information and data sets to highlight the qualitative aspects of Hebden Bridge town centre, a small town centre in Calderdale, within the context of planning related issues and the emerging Calderdale LDF. The report has highlighted a number of issues that could be addressed to help improve the centre overall and enhance the experience for users and visitors.

10.12 The key findings detailed in this report can be summarised as follows:

- Hebden Bridge is a centre with a very high proportion of comparison retailing for a centre of its size and type;
- Vacancy rates in the town have historically been very low, and they remain so today;
- Cafes/Restaurants, clothes shops and gift shops are the most common types of premises in the centre;
- The town has a healthy mix of independent and multiple occupiers;
- Businesses experiencing a decline in trade since setting up in the town are proportionately the lowest of all town centres in Calderdale;
- The town centre built environment is in very good condition and pedestrianised areas and green spaces provide safe and quiet spaces away from vehicular noise and pollution;
- The entire town centre is designated as conservation area status;
- Car parking and traffic congestion are seen as the most significant issues in the town centre;
- Parking provision is proportionately lower than in most other centres and visitor's perception of provision and cost is poor;
- Air pollution issues are evident along the immediate A646 corridor through the town;
- The town provides a very good cultural, leisure and tourism offer being well served by cafes/restaurants, art galleries and museums; and
- Small scale development activity has taken place in the town centre over the past year, with a significant extension to the town hall planned that will provide new office and community space in the heart of the town.

Todmorden Town Centre

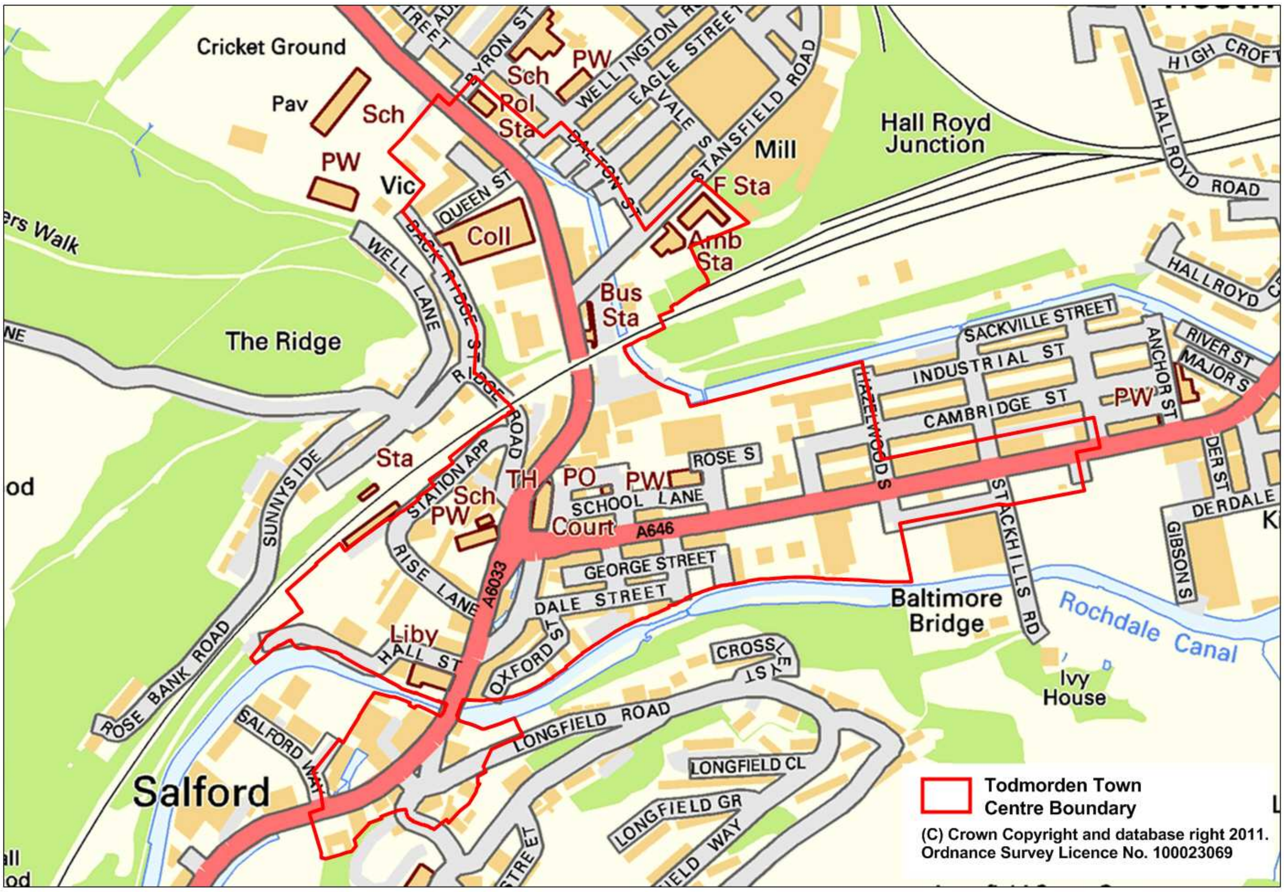


1. Context

1.0 Todmorden is a market town located at the top of the Calder Valley, in the heart of the South Pennines. It sits on the confluence of the River Calder and Walsden Water. The main routes into town include the A646 from Halifax (12 miles east) and Burnley (9 miles northwest), and the A6033 from Rochdale (9 miles south).

1.1 According to the last Census, Todmorden and its surrounding area (including the villages of Walsden, Portsmouth and Cornholme, Eastwood and Harvelin Park) had a population of 15,763 in 2001. Mid-year population estimates suggest this may have decreased to 15,595 by 2009, a fall of around 1.1%[59], the only area of Calderdale to have seen a decline in population over this period.

1.2 Todmorden town centre is defined as a 'town centre' in the Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (2006), together with Brighouse, Elland, Sowerby Bridge and Hebden Bridge. In terms of overall retail provision, the town was ranked the 1,950th venue nationally, of approximately 7000, when surveyed by Management Horizons Europe in 2008, placing it within the 'local' centre category in this ranking, along with Sowerby Bridge. This represents a significant fall in ranking from 1,348th in 2004, a fall of almost 45% in 4 years.



1.3 The primary areas of retailing within Todmorden are around the Market Hall, Market Place and Bramsche Square. There are secondary shopping frontages along Burnley

59 Population data is taken from the Core Strategy Refined Issues and Options Consultation report (January 2011). Population growth is calculated using August 2010 Patient register data, adjusted to the official mid-2009 population estimates.

Road, Halifax Road and Water Street. There are no designated tertiary frontages however further retail units are present elsewhere in the town centre. An edge-of-centre Morrisons foodstore is located on the Rochdale Road.

1.4 Beyond the retail side and usual services associated with a centre of this size, Todmorden town centre has a range of other facilities including a library, a theatre, galleries and art studios, a small museum, tourist information centre, and sports and social clubs.

Governance and strategies

1.5 There is currently no formal town centre management organisation in place for Todmorden. Organisations and forums working to improve the town include Todmorden Town Council, Todmorden Business Association and Todmorden Pride - a voluntary group including representatives from all sectors of the community. These partnerships work alongside the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance, Calderdale MBC and local councillors to help improve the town through various local initiatives.

1.6 Calderdale Council has the adopted Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (RCUDP) that provides the current policy framework for town centres in the District. A health check assessment of each town centre in Calderdale was also undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment in 2009. Where relevant, parts of the town centre health check report are included and referenced within this report.

1.7 In addition to the statutory development plan, a Development Brief for Todmorden Town Centre was approved by Cabinet in 2009, as a material consideration in assessing planning applications, and as the basis of a marketing exercise to select a preferred developer for the proposed redevelopment of Bramsche Square.

2. Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

Diversity of uses - Town centre composition

2.53 Recent surveys of town centre occupancy have been undertaken in both 2009 and 2010. The surveys complement each other in the data that they provide and collectively provide a wealth of information on the composition of all town centres in Calderdale.

a. 2009 Survey – undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment by White Young Green (WYG) planning consultants.
b. 2010 Survey – undertaken by Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council (CMBC) to update the Accessibility Survey, previously completed in 2006.

2.54 In 2009 Todmorden contained a total of 134 occupied or vacant units within the defined central shopping area, occupying a total of 16,170m^2 of floorspace. Of this total floorspace, only 5,770m^2 (35.7%) was in retail use. The highest proportion of all town centre floorspace was for comparison retailing in terms of number of outlets (25.4%), and in vacant units in terms of floorspace (28.8%) (Table 2.2). Vacancies were significantly above the UK average and all other Calderdale centres both in terms of number of outlets and floorspace. Vacancies are discussed in more detail in Section 5 of this report.

2.55 In addition to the permanent retail provision in the town, Todmorden retains an indoor and outdoor market, of up to 72 stalls, on Burnley Road. The market is open 5 days a week from Wednesday to Sunday selling general retail goods, with Thursday and Sunday including second hand goods.

Table 2.1: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Number of Outlets

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (No.)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	7.4	9.8	8.0	8.5	10	7.5	10.8	8.8
Comparison	29.6	31.6	23.3	43.3	34	25.4	16.7	34.6
Retail Service	12.1	13.5	14.7	11.0	23	17.2	19.2	13.0
Leisure Services	24.5	17.6	28.7	24.4	24	17.9	25.0	21.5
Financial & Business Services	10.6	9.8	12.0	7.3	11	8.2	10.0	11.2
Vacant	15.9	17.6	13.3	5.5	32	23.9	18.3	10.6
Total	100	100	100	100	134	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Table 2.2: Diversity of Uses 2009 - Existing Floorspace

Category of use	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (m^2)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Convenience	13.3	28.5	17.2	12.6	3,170	19.6	24.0	14.2
Comparison	34.7	26.0	28.5	33.0	2,600	16.1	11.8	37.8
Retail Service	6.9	6.6	8.1	6.6	1,670	10.3	12.0	7.0
Leisure Services	27.0	18.3	30.9	36.8	3,050	18.9	28.8	22.7
Financial & Business Services	7.7	7.5	8.2	6.5	1,030	6.4	12.4	8.7
Vacant	10.4	13.0	7.1	4.5	4,650	28.8	11.0	8.9
Total	100	100	100	100	16,170	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

2.56 In 2010, more detailed data was collected on the type of occupant. Table 2.3 summarises floorspace by planning Use Class.

Table 2.3: Use Class mix - floorspace

Use Class	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden floor space (m^2)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
A1 (Shops)	30.2	57.5	43.7	32.9	5,873	27.8	42.9

A2 (Financial & Professional)	8.4	7.3	7.4	8.6	1,112	5.3	7.8
A3 (Restaurants & Cafes)	3.3	4.6	7.5	7.2	1,140	5.4	5.0
A4 (Drinking Establishments)	3.6	4.0	7.9	7.4	1,152	5.4	3.5
A5 (Hot Food Takeaway)	0.8	1.9	1.6	1.2	271	1.3	3.3
B1 (Business)	19.8	2.2	3.6	0.9	673	3.2	3.3
B2 (General Industry)	1.4	1.2	1.7	0.8	361	1.7	1.2
B8 (Storage or Distribution)	0.5	-	-	-	70	0.3	-
C1 (Hotels)	2.4	3.2	-	1.8	-	-	-
C2 (Residential Institutions)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D1 (Non-residential Institutions)	7.5	7.3	8.5	25.0	5,868	27.7	13.9
D2 (Assembly & Leisure)	7.0	4.1	8.6	7.3	407	1.9	7.3
Sui Generis	6.1	2.6	3.2	5.2	1,785	8.4	3.4
Vacant	8.9	4.4	6.3	1.7	2,444	11.6	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	21,157	100.0	100.0

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

2.57 In terms of the occupancy category, Table 2.4 demonstrates the most common categories within Todmorden Town Centre at the time of the 2010 survey.

Table 2.4: Occupancy Categories

	Occupancy Category	No. of instances
1	Cafe/Restaurants	18
2	Hairdressers/Barbers/Beauty Salons/Tattoo Artist	16
3	Clothes Shops/Wool and Needlework/Travel Goods	11
4	Vacant	11
5	Public Houses/Wine Bars	8
6	Estate Agents	8
7	Hot Food Takeaways	7
8	Stationers/Booksellers/Cardshops	7

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Consumer Choice - Survey Results

2.58 In 2009 the WYG in-street (consumer) survey results showed that the majority of visitors to Todmorden (56%) rated the choice of shops as being either ‘worse’ or ‘much worse’ than other centres. Only 9% of visitors rated them ‘better’ or ‘much better’. In response to the types of shops that visitors would like to see more of, the most common responses were for more clothing stores (37%) and footwear stores (24%), although 28% responded that they did not know.

2.59 The WYG business survey also revealed that, when asked about measures that would improve the town centre, the most common response of the 34 businesses who replied was that an increased choice / range of shops would have this affect (37% of respondents). 32% of respondents stated that more independent / specialist traders would be good for the town.

Breakdown of retail size

2.60 Todmorden has a much larger proportion of small units of less than 93m^2 (68.7% of the total) compared to the national average (39.1%) (Table 2.5), however this is typical for a town of Todmorden size, and compares with the other smaller town centres in Calderdale. The demand for medium and larger sized units is generally limited in this size of centre.

Table 2.5: Diversity of Uses - Unit Sizes

Unit Size	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (No. of units)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)	UK (%)
Under 93m^2 (1,000ft^2)	51.6	59.6	68.7	70.7	92	68.7	64.2	39.1
93-232m^2 (1,000-2,499ft^2)	25.4	27.5	22.7	21.3	31	23.1	27.5	39.6
232-464m^2 (2,500-4,999ft^2)	12.9	7.3	4.7	6.1	5	3.7	5.0	12.6
465-929m^2 (5,000-9,999ft^2)	5.9	3.6	2.7	1.2	3	2.2	1.7	5.1
930-1,393m^2 (10,000-14,999ft^2)	2.1	0.5	0.7	0.6	3	2.2	0.8	1.5
1,394-1,858m^2 (15,000-19,999ft^2)	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0.8	0.7
1,859-2,787m^2 (20,000-29,999ft^2)	0.4	0.5	0.7	0	0	0	0	0.7
Above 2,787m^2 (30,000ft^2)	1.1	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8
Total	100	100	100	100	134	100	100	100

Source: Experian GOAD, taken from the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment 2009 (White Young Green)

Retailer Representation - Independent/national

2.61 Details of whether units were occupied by independent or national / multiple operators were collected as part of the CMBC town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. This enabled an assessment of a centre's wider independent / national mix, as well as a more focused 'clone town' assessment to be made[60] on the make-up of the principal high street or primary frontage areas.

2.62 Todmorden's clone town assessment[61] (Clone Town score of 76.5) highlights it as being a clear 'home' town – along with all of Calderdale's main centres barring Halifax (Table 2.6). 'Home' town status indicates that at least two thirds of the stores are independent, and that the centre has a wide range of outlets.

Table 2.6: Clone town assessments

Category	Town Centre	Clone Town Score
'Clone' Towns	Cambridge	11.6

[60] The Clone Town Britain report was first published in 2005 by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and looked at the increasing domination of large chain stores in Britain's high streets. The report provided a means of assessing any high street's homogenisation and lack of distinctiveness in terms of its retail offer, looking at both identity and diversity. A follow up 2010 Clone Town Report was more recently published containing updated assessments of towns across Britain.

[61] Survey included 48 units along Halifax Road, Water Street, Burnley Road and Bramsche Square.

(Scores 50 or less)	Halifax	30.8
	Huddersfield	49.7
'Border' Towns (Scores 50-65)	Weymouth	52.0
	Sherbourne	64.1
'Home' Towns (Scores 65+)	Brighouse	67.4
	Sowerby Bridge	75.5
	Hebden Bridge	76.1
	Todmorden	**76.5**
	Elland	79.8

Source: Re-imagining the High Street, NEF (Sep 2010) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Summary

Retailer Representation / Diversity of uses / Consumer choice and competition

- Todmorden is a local market town with a relatively low proportion of retail floor space in the town centre;
- In terms of the number of units however, comparison retail is the most common type of town centre unit;
- Almost 28% of the total floorspace in the town is taken by non-residential institutions (D1) uses, similar to Hebden Bridge but otherwise significantly higher than all other centres in Calderdale.
- In addition to permanent fixed town centre units, the town has an indoor and outdoor market open 5 days of the week;
- Vacancy rates were very high in 2009 both in terms of floorspace and number of units, the highest by far of all Calderdale centres;
- Financial and Professional (A2) and Assembly and leisure (D2) uses are the lowest of all Calderdale town centres;
- Cafe/Restaurants and Hairdressers/Barbers/Beauty Salons/Tattoo Artists are the most prevalent occupiers in the town centre;
- A majority of both businesses and shoppers would like to see improved consumer choice in the town, particularly clothing and footwear stores;
- There is a high proportion of small sized (under 93m^2) retail premises in the town centre; and
- Todmorden is classified as a 'home town' indicating a healthy mix of independent and multiple occupiers within the town centre.

3. Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

3.16 Overtrading from a quantitative perspective for convenience shopping is discussed in the Retail Needs Assessment (Table 8.24 deals with Todmorden) and is built into the overall conclusions on new floorspace requirements (based on the shoppers' survey and assumptions on average turnover etc.). From a qualitative perspective however, evidence on overcrowding and congestion is a lot harder to obtain data on.

3.17 Although anecdotal evidence is available, objective evidence on overcrowding and congestion would have to be collected first hand through extensive survey work. The investment required both in cost and time to undertake this work could not be justified in relation to the benefit received. Therefore in the absence of such work, responses to the business survey (undertaken as part of the Retail Needs Assessment) indicating general trader confidence and success, seems the most appropriate available data to give an indication of trading levels.

3.18 Of those who were surveyed and responded in Todmorden (34 businesses), 59% indicated that their business had grown since they began trading in the town centre. 18% suggested that trade had declined moderately or significantly, around average for all centres in Calderdale. 53% of respondents felt that their business was performing well or very well, with 13% have poor or very poor performance (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Trading levels / Business Confidence

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DURING TIME TRADING IN THE TOWN CENTRE:						
Business has grown moderately or significantly	50.0	58.1	72.8	63.1	58.8	72.2
Business has remained largely static	23.0	16.1	9.1	23.1	23.5	11.1
Business has declined moderately or significantly	27.0	25.8	18.2	13.9	17.6	16.7
HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR BUSINESS IS PERFORMING?						
Well or very well	40.9	47.6	81.8	53.7	53.1	66.6
Moderately	43.0	37.7	9.1	34.3	34.4	25.9
Poorly or very poorly	16.1	14.8	9.1	12.0	12.6	7.4

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – Business Survey Q1g and Q1h

Summary

Overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores

- From Todmorden businesses surveyed in 2009 there were average levels of confidence in terms of growth and performance in relation to other town centres in Calderdale, with a majority of businesses responding positively on both fronts.

4. Location specific needs (e.g. deprived areas / underserved markets)

4.23 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) dataset every 3 years. This gives a relative deprivation ranking of small areas around the UK based on a number of different measurements; income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

4.24 In the latest IMD dataset for 2010 the Todmorden town centre area ranked 8,325th of 32,482. This places the immediate area around the 26th percentile of most deprived areas of the country, a very slight improvement from the ranking of 8,178th in 2004 but a decline from the ranking of 8,655th in the intervening years (2007). Much of the area within the town centre, and parts of the town to the north of the town centre fall within the 20% of most deprived areas nationally.

4.25 Table 4.1 demonstrates the change in ranking between 2004 and 2010, relative to the other centres in Calderdale.

Table 4.1: Measures of deprivation

	IMD Ranking (and % rank)			
	2004	2007	2010	% Change 2004-2010
Halifax	1,560 (4.8%)	1,883 (5.8%)	2,221 (6.8%)	+2.0
Brighouse	9,037 (27.8%)	10,783 (33.2%)	9,995 (30.8%)	+3.0
Sowerby Bridge	6,374 (19.6%)	7,406 (22.8%)	6,831 (21.0%)	+1.4
Hebden Bridge	10,296 (31.7%)	13,607 (41.9%)	14,283 (44.0%)	+12.3
Todmorden	8,178 (25.2%)	8,655 (26.6%)	8,325 (25.6%)	+0.4
Elland	8,308 (25.6%)	9,394 (28.9%)	8,248 (25.4%)	-0.2

Source: Neighbourhood Statistics ONS Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, 2007, 2010

4.26 Proposals that are likely to bring significant improvements to the range, choice and quality of everyday shopping to serve the needs of those living in deprived areas should be encouraged. However, other non-retail town centre uses and development play an equally important role in helping to improve the areas health and disability deprivation, living environment, and employment potential.

Summary
Location specific needs

- Much of the immediate town centre area is identified as being within the 20% of most deprived areas nationally; however the overall ranking has improved slightly since 2004. The town centre area as a whole ranks in the 26th percentile of most deprived areas in the country.

5. Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

Quality of existing provision

5.51 The buildings within Todmorden town centre are from a variety of different eras; however as with many of the local town centres much of the 19th Century building stock remains. In the centre of Todmorden, and around Bramsche Square, significant clearance was undertaken in the later 20th century to provide town centre parking and retail units adjacent to the town hall. Further clearance and reconstruction of Victorian building stock was undertaken along Halifax Road and Burnley Road for facilities such as a supermarket, petrol station (now a health centre) and a community college.

5.52 The Todmorden conservation area character appraisal identifies the Bramsche Square area as lacking architectural quality and having a negative effect on the setting of the town hall. It also states the general built fabric of the town centre as being varied, and deteriorating. In particular the upper storeys of town centre properties are identified as being poorly maintained. The conservation area is identified by English Heritage as being 'at risk' due to the deteriorating quality of the built environment within its heritage context.

5.53 Despite these findings however, responses to the business survey, nor the in-street visitor survey, did not indicate an 'improved built environment' as being a particular priority unlike in other town centres in Calderdale.

Rents/Valuation Rates

5.54 The most recent data on the rateable value of properties within town centres is available on the Valuation Office Agency website (www.voa.gov.uk). Rateable value represents the open market annual rental value of a business/non-domestic property. This means the rent the property would let for on the valuation date, if it was being offered on the open market. The rateable value is used by the local council when calculating business rates bills.

5.55 When viewed across a town centre, valuation rates provide a general picture of the desirability and attractiveness of particular areas – those streets commanding higher valuation rates are those with the higher rents and therefore likely higher footfall and higher sales. Looking at the spatial variation of valuation rates in conjunction with change in rates over time can also highlight areas that may be more vulnerable within a centre and potentially in decline.

5.56 Figure 5.1 demonstrates the spread of prime Retail Zone A valuation rates in and around Todmorden town centre. The highest rates are found around Calder Street, adjacent to Bramsche Square (up to £263/m^2). Rates fall to around £100/m^2 or less away from the commercial core of the town centre, beyond Water Street to the south and along the Burnley Road and Halifax Road, where the lowest rates of all are found (£75/m^2).

5.57 The largest increase in rates has been seen along units on Halifax Road; however these were only 36% over the 5 year valuation period, significantly less than increases in all other town centres in Calderdale. Units in peripheral areas to the south and east of the commercial core with lower rates (Figure 5.1) have seen larger increases than those frontages on Burnley Road, to the north of the town centre.

Figure 5.1 – Todmorden Town Centre Valuation Rates 2010-15

Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

Figure 5.2 – Todmorden Town Centre Valuation Rates % change 2005-10

Source: Valuation Office Agency (2011)

Vacant Property

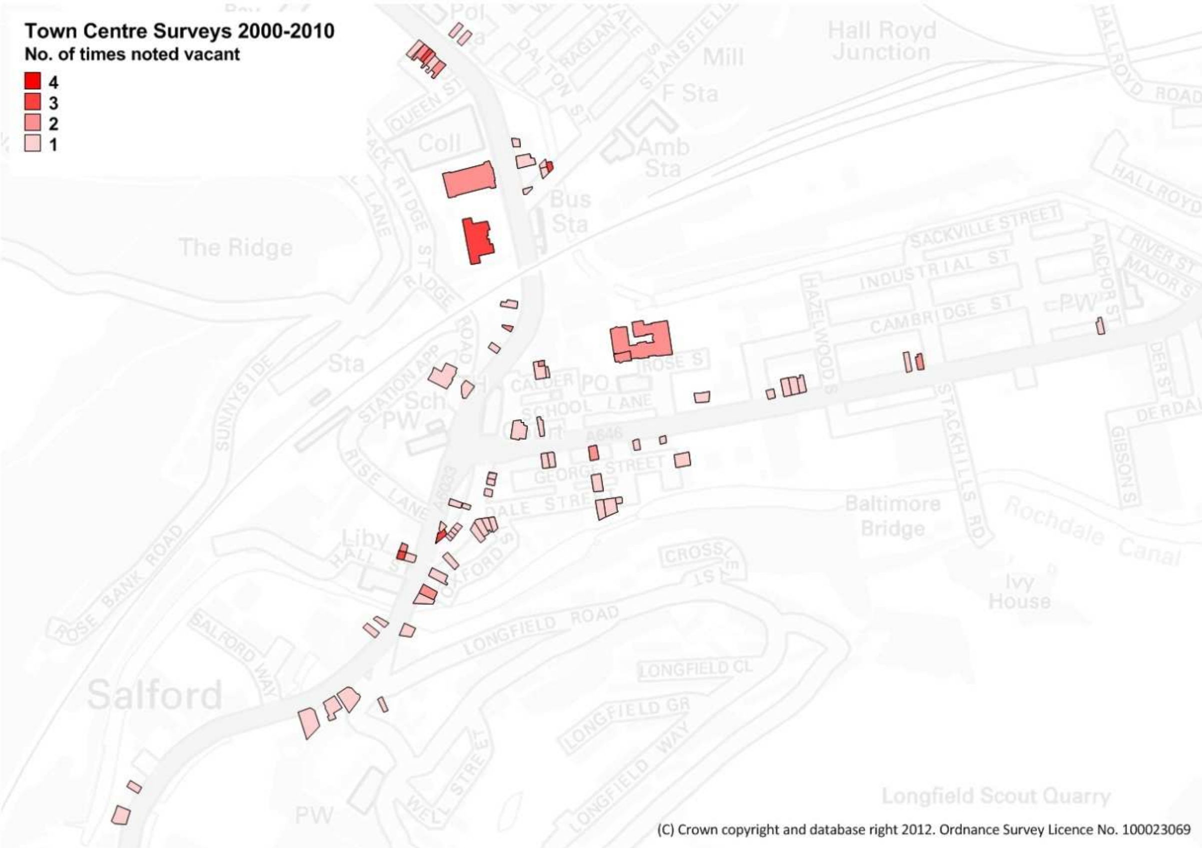
5.58 Data on vacant properties within town centres is not collected on a regular basis in Calderdale. However data is available for the years 2000 and 2009 (from the WYG Health Check assessment) and 2006 and 2010 (from the Calderdale town centre surveys undertaken by the planning policy team). Although other data on smaller areas is available these 4 surveys provide comparable data over time.

5.59 Since 2000 the number of vacancies in the town centre has remained steady, decreasing from 20 units in 2000 to 19 in 2010. In the intervening years however, the Retail Needs Assessment identified that this increased significantly, to 23.9% of outlets in the town centre (32 units) being vacant (more than twice the national average of 10.6%). In terms of floorspace, vacancy rates were even higher at over 3 times the national average of 8.9% at 28.8% of town centre floorspace.

5.60 A vacant town centre unit is not necessarily an issue in itself as there will always be natural churn within a centre with some units closing and others opening, and also the wider economic situation having an impact. It is persistent, long-term vacancies in certain areas within a centre that cause greater concern however and may be an indication of an area failing or falling into decline.

5.61 Of the 4 surveys undertaken by CMBC, Figure 5.3 shows the cumulative vacancies across the town centre, and highlights a scattering of units that were identified as vacant on 3 or 4 separate surveys. The northernmost row of shops on Burnley road are highlighted as high vacancy, low rates, and relatively low increase in rates over the previous 5 years, suggesting a potential decline in viability.

Figure 5.3 – Todmorden vacancy rates 2000-2010



Source: Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment (2009) and Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Surveys

Summary
Quality of existing provision / rents and commercial yields / vacant property

- The built environment in general in the town centre is in variable and declining condition, however, from survey data available it is not seen as a particular issue that requires improvement from visitors or local businesses.
- Calder Street, around Bramsche Square, has the highest prime Zone A retail rates, at £263/sqm;
- The lowest rates are found at the peripheries of the town centre, south of Water Street and along Burnley Road and Halifax Road (down to £75/sqm);
- All areas of the town have seen modest increases in rates between 2005-2010 with the commercial core and southern and eastern peripheries seeing the higher increases; and
- The data on cumulative vacancies highlights various units identified as vacant on multiple survey occasions – data on vacancies and business rates indicates a potential decline in viability of the shopping frontage on the south side of Burnley Road at the periphery of the town centre.

6. Customer experience

6.60 Looking at the general customer experience of Todmorden town centre, of the 100 shoppers interviewed in 2009 as part of the Retail Needs Assessment on-street survey (Q32), the top 5 weaknesses of Todmorden town centre were perceived to be; choice / range of non-food shops (29%); leisure facilities (8%); undesirable people (7%); car parking (6%); and shopping environment (6%). A further 22% of respondents replied that they did not know.

Accessibility

6.61 Accessibility to the town centre is available through a range of means of transport. There is a bus station in Todmorden, located centrally just to the north of Bramsche Square and the market hall. Direct bus services are available to Halifax, Burnley and Rochdale, as well as to Bacup and Rawtenstall in Rossendale. Local services operate from the bus station serving the villages around Todmorden such as Mankinholes, Lumbutts and Harvelin Park.

6.62 The town also has a train station located centrally on Rise Lane / Station Approach. The railway station provides direct services along 2 routes between Manchester and Leeds; one via Halifax and Bradford; the other via Brighouse and Dewsbury.

6.63 When questioned about how visitors arrived in the centre (Q03 of the on-street Retail Needs Assessment survey), the most common method was on foot (49% - the second highest in Calderdale), followed by car/van (26%) and by bus (20%). 3% of the 100 people interviewed had arrived by train.

6.64 Todmorden has a total of around 255 public off-street parking spaces which equates to approximately one space per 63m^2 of retailing, the best provision (relative to the size of the retailing centre) of any of Calderdale's centres[62]. Parking was highlighted as one of the top 5 weaknesses of the centre, although this involved only 6% of respondents. Only 14% of respondents had difficulty obtaining a parking space and people's perceptions of parking provision and cost are fairly good compared to other centres in Calderdale (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Customer experience - Accessibility

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
METHOD OF TRAVEL						
Travelled by car/van	33.7	55.0	28.3	38.3	26.0	29.4
Travelled by bus, minibus or coach	38.6	22.0	30.3	21.6	20.0	9.8
Travelled by foot	22.3	21.0	40.4	29.4	49.0	57.8
DURATION OF TRAVEL TO CENTRE						
0-5 min journey	17.3	23.0	33.3	25.5	20.0	44.1
6-10 min journey	31.7	28.0	37.4	18.6	38.0	20.6
11-15 min journey	24.3	23.0	14.1	8.8	14.0	8.8
16-20 min journey	12.9	8.0	8.1	6.9	9.0	14.7
21-30 min journey	5.9	14.0	4.0	12.7	3.0	7.8
31-60 min journey	5.4	3.0	3.0	12.7	5.0	2.0
Over 60 min journey	1.5	1.0	0.0	14.7	7.0	2.0
CAR PARKING						
Did you have difficulty obtaining a parking space? Yes:	18.0	29.4	13.0	51.4	13.6	18.5
Car parking provision – better/much better than others?	5.4	19.0	4.0	1.0	15.0	25.5
Car parking prices – better/much better than others?	6.4	24.0	4.0	1.0	17.0	23.6

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q3, Q5, Q6 & Q28

6.65 Accessibility also incorporates public accessibility issues within town centres. For example, knowing that some-one will be able to access a well-maintained and properly equipped public toilet, can make the difference between them choosing to visit one town over another[63].

6.66 In Todmorden there is currently only 1 set of public convenience facilities, located on Bramsche Square adjacent to the outdoor market stalls, which include disabled facilities. There are no Changing Places facilities which provide extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as other serious impairments[64].

Pedestrian flows, crime and safety

[62] Map 2.7 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009
[63] Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, April 2009
[64] http://changing-places.org/

6.67 Various factors combine to help the creation of a sense of safety and security for business and visitors at all times of the day and night in our town centres: the layout and design of streets, buildings, and open spaces, the attractiveness of public spaces, the visibility of a uniformed presence on the streets[65]. Civic Trust research has also shown consensus amongst practitioners and policy makers that a balance or diversity of town centre land uses, and users, help to make centres safer and more attractive[66].

6.68 No part of Todmorden town centre is currently pedestrianised; therefore traffic is a barrier to pedestrian flow and safety. Due to the topography of the local area, traffic is concentrated on the main valley routes and the A646 (Halifax Road and Burnley Road) and A6033 (Rochdale Road) can be busy at peak times with congestion, however congestion was not identified as a particular issue from visitors who partook in the on-street survey.

6.69 The on-street visitor's survey in 2009 asked specific questions to visitors about their perceptions of crime in Todmorden. During the day-time, 66% of visitors indicated that safety in Todmorden felt 'about the same' as that in other centres, with 23% considering it to be 'better' or 'much better' than in other centres. This is the second best perception of day-time safety of all centres in Calderdale (Table 6.2).

6.70 With respect to the evening/night-time economy, the proportion of visitors who deemed safety to be 'about the same' as in other centres fell to 43%, with 27% considering safety to be either 'worse' or 'much worse' than that in other centres, the second worst perception of safety of all centres in Calderdale (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Customer experience - Perception of safety

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
DAY-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	15.9	28.0	0.0	7.8	23.0	9.8
About the same as other centres?	74.3	60.0	54.5	84.3	66.0	73.5
Worse or much worse than other centres?	7.4	6.0	44.4	2.9	8.0	7.9
NIGHT-TIME SAFETY						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	7.8
About the same as other centres?	38.1	29.0	46.5	74.5	43.0	55.9
Worse or much worse than other centres?	25.2	18.0	45.5	12.7	27.0	14.7

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

6.71 Whilst responses to the survey shows the perception of crime, data on actual occurrences of crime are available from West Yorkshire Police, though by electoral Ward and not by town centre. Todmorden town centre is located within Todmorden ward which showed fairly high rates of all crimes in comparison to the rest of Calderdale and other town centres in the year to 31st July 2009[67]; 25.5 reported

65 Looking After our Town Centres, CLG, 2009
66 Better Town Centres at Night, ATCM and BCSC, 2010
67 Maps 2.71-2.73 of the Calderdale Spatial Atlas, November 2009

criminal damage crimes per 1,000 population; 17.8 reported violent crimes per 1,000 population.

Summary
Customer experience

- In terms of customer experience, the most significant issue identified by shoppers is the choice/range of non-food shops;
- Accessibility to the centre is primarily on foot (49%), followed by similar numbers arriving by car (26%) and bus (20%);
- There are good bus and train services available from the centre of the town;
- Parking provision is the best of all Calderdale centres, and this is generally reflected in people's perceptions of provision and cost, which is good, and the general lack of difficulty in obtaining a parking space; and
- Crime rates in the town centre area are relatively high in comparison to other centres in Calderdale, and the perception of night-time safety is relatively poor. 'Undesirable people' was highlighted as one of the weaknesses of the town by visitors. Perception of day-time safety is relatively good however.

7. Environmental quality and urban design

7.24 Well designed and well-maintained buildings and public spaces, including parks, streets and squares, play a vital role in creating attractive and welcoming town centre environments for people of all ages. Public spaces, including green spaces, can help to attract investment into town centres, enhance community spirit and cohesiveness, promote community health and wellbeing, and manage the effects of climate change[68].

7.25 The Todmorden town centre boundary only contains 2 areas of green space designated in the current development plan (UDP); St. Mary's Church and grounds in the very centre of town opposite the town hall is designated as churches / churchyards / cemeteries / crematoria; and Patmos Gardens on Burnley Road is designated as an area of Other Open Space and is a community garden with seating areas inside. The Rochdale Canal runs through the south side of the town centre and provides an attractive feature of the town, although it is mainly hidden from the key transport routes through the town.

7.26 The lack of any proper pedestrianised areas or public squares limits the opportunity to escape vehicle noise and pollution close to commercial spaces, however the area around the Market Hall is set back from the road, and Water Street has limited traffic. In addition Fielden Wharf (adjacent to the Golden Lion public house) and the pathway along the Rochdale canal from Rochdale Road to Lever Street do provide further quiet pedestrian spaces.

7.27 The health check assessment undertaken as part of the Calderdale Retail Needs Assessment summarised Todmorden as an attractive town. It found that the streets

[68] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

and roads were well maintained and there was very little litter on the pavements. It concluded that the centre offers good areas of public realm, including a pocket park at the junction of Hall Street and Rochdale Road, and that Water Street offered a particularly attractive location for pedestrians boasting a well maintained, traditional cobbled street.

7.28 The majority of the town centre lies within the boundary of the Todmorden Conservation Area, however English Heritage have identified the conservation area as ‘at risk’, in a ‘poor’ condition, and deteriorating. Within the town centre there is 1 Grade I listed building (Todmorden Town Hall), and 1 Grade II* listed building (the Post Office and Old Hall on Rise Lane). There are a further 17 Grade II listed buildings.

Summary

Environmental quality and urban design

- Good environmental quality in the main, providing an attractive shopping environment for customers;
- Some limited green space provision in the centre but no fully pedestrianised areas or town square for events and gatherings; and
- Some significant heritage assets are located within the town centre, and the majority of the centre is designated as conservation area status. However English Heritage have serious concerns over the condition of the conservation area, identifying it as ‘at risk’, in ‘poor’ condition, and deteriorating.

8. Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night time economy

8.26 Town centres that offer a range of uses during the day, into the evening and beyond, are more likely to attract a diverse mix of people; broadening of the evening and night-time offering also stands to build stronger connections with local people and attract more people from further afield[69].

8.27 Table 8.1 summarises the total number of different premises by each category of leisure, culture and tourism facility noted during the latest town centre surveys undertaken in 2010. It demonstrates that Todmorden has a good range of cultural, leisure and tourism facilities of all Calderdale centres with 8 of the 10 categories located in the town centre. There is no provision in the following categories; amusement centres, and concert halls/bingo halls/cinemas.

8.28 Of the facilities present, cafes/restaurants represent the highest proportion with 21 separate premises located in the town centre or in edge of centre locations (37.5% of all cultural, leisure and tourist provision, fairly typical for centres in Calderdale). Todmorden has the highest proportion of social clubs/working mens clubs (5 separate premises), and the second highest proportion of art galleries after Hebden Bridge (5 separate premises).

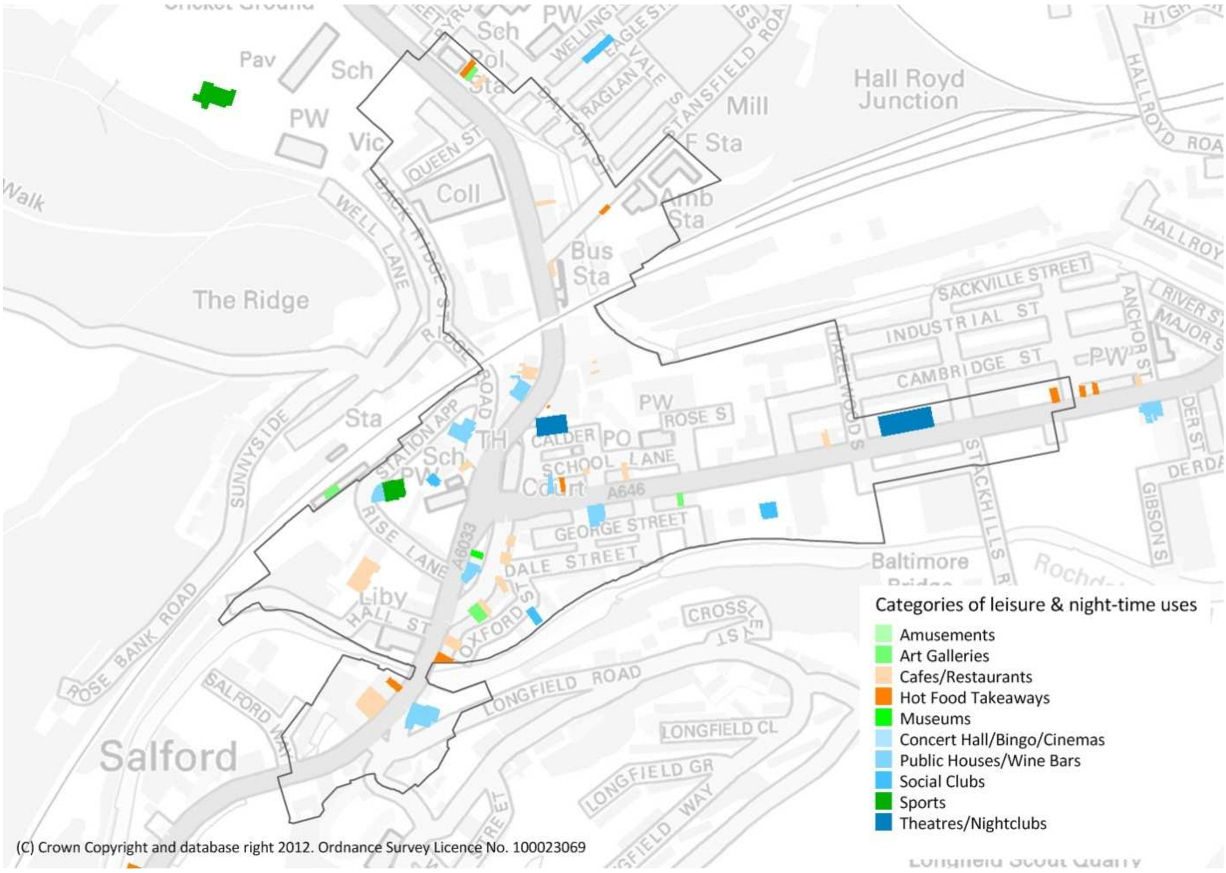
[69] Looking after our town centres, CLG, April 2009

Table 8.1 – Todmorden culture, leisure, tourism and night-time offer

Survey Categories	Todmorden				% of all leisure uses				
	Town Centre Premises	Edge of Centre Premises	Total no. of premises	Todmorden	Halifax	Brighouse	Hebden Bridge	Sowerby Bridge	Elland
Amusement Centres (AMU)	-	-	-	-	2.7	3.3	-	-	-
Art Galleries (ART)	4	1	5	8.9	1.1	1.7	10.2	-	-
Cafes/Restaurants (CAF)	18	3	21	37.5	40.4	33.3	40.7	35.7	19.5
Hot Food Takeaways (HOT)	7	3	10	17.9	14.4	26.7	10.2	19.6	36.6
Museums (MUS)	1	-	1	1.8	0.5	-	3.4	-	-
Concert Halls/Bingo Halls/Cinemas (PEN)	-	-	-	-	2.7	5.0	1.7	-	4.9
Public Houses/Wine Bars (PUB)	8	2	10	17.9	20.7	18.3	18.6	28.6	24.4
Social Club/Working Mens Club (SOC)	3	2	5	8.9	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.4	7.3
Sports Clubs/Gyms/Swimming Pools/Dance & Sports Halls/Sports Stadia (SPO)	1	1	2	3.6	8.5	6.7	8.5	10.7	7.3
Theatres/Nightclubs (THE)	2	-	2	3.6	4.3	-	1.7	-	-
TOTAL	**44**	**12**							

Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

Figure 8.1 – Location of leisure and night-time uses in Todmorden



Source: Calderdale Accessibility (Town Centre) Survey 2010

8.29 The location of the leisure and night-time facilities does not highlight any particular clustering of provision by category. Facilities are located fairly evenly across the town centre area (Figure 8.1).

8.30 In terms of the public's view on leisure provision within Todmorden town centre, in 2009 11% of respondents felt that Todmorden was better or much better than other centres, the most positive response received in any centre. With regards to the range and choice of pubs and restaurants, 14% responded that this area was better or much better than other centres; a fairly typical response for Calderdale centres (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 – Public perceptions of the Todmorden leisure offer

	Halifax (%)	Brighouse (%)	Sowerby Bridge (%)	Hebden Bridge (%)	Todmorden (%)	Elland (%)
RANGE & CHOICE OF PUBS/RESTAURANTS						
Much better or better than other centres?	18.9	14.0	5.1	30.4	14.0	5.9
About the same as other centres?	37.1	33.0	57.6	64.7	41.0	45.1
Worse or much worse than other centres?	22.3	24.0	36.4	3.9	28.0	43.2
LEISURE FACILITIES						
Much better or better than other centres?	6.9	7.0	2.0	9.8	11.0	2.9
About the same as other centres?	29.2	16.0	40.4	68.6	41.0	31.4
Worse or much worse than other centres?	40.1	46.0	53.5	11.8	26.0	56.9

Source: CMBC Retail Needs Assessment 2009 – On-street survey Q28

Summary

Culture, leisure and tourism offer and the night-time economy

- Todmorden town centre offers a good range of cultural, leisure and tourism facilities with 8 out of 10 categories of facility located in the town;
- The town is particularly well served by social clubs/working mens clubs and art galleries, when compared with other centres in Calderdale; and
- The perception of town centre users is that the leisure offer is better than any other centre in Calderdale, however the range and choice of pubs and restaurants are fairly typical.

9. Planning permissions and recent developments

9.15 In the previous monitoring year (1st April 2010-31st March 2011) there was development activity of a small scale nature. 1 newly completed development and 1 new commencement, affecting town centre uses, took place within the town centre boundary.

Table 9.1 - New completions (1/4/10-31/3/11)

Address	Development	Floorspace
Todmorden Conservative Club	Change of use of former club to offices on ground and first floor	364sqm (B1a) -364sqm (D2)

Source: CMBC monitoring

Table 9.2 - New commencements (1/4/10-31/3/11)

Address	Development	Floorspace
35 Burnley Road	Change of use from storage/office on 1st and 2nd floors to residential flat	-45sqm (B1a)

Source: CMBC monitoring

9.16 In terms of outstanding (not commenced) planning permissions within Todmorden town centre, there are 4 separate applications relating to town centre use classes, 2 of which involve small scale changes of use applications. The remaining 2 permission relate to the same site, the former Abraham Ormerod Hospital and cinema on Burnley Road. The proposals are for a new foodstore, only 1 of which can be built out. A further application for a larger foodstore on an edge of centre site on Halifax Road was refused in August 2011.

Table 9.3 - Summary of outstanding planning permissions (as at 31/3/11)

Use Class	No. of permissions	Floorspace (sqm)		
		New Gross	Loss	New Net
A1 (Shops)	4	851	80	771
A2 (Financial & Professional Services	1	28	-	28
A3 (Restaurants and Cafes)	1	26	-	26
A4 (Drinking establishments)	-	-	-	-
A5 (Hot food takeaway)	1	26	-	26
B1a (Business - offices)	-	-	-	-
D2 (Assembly and leisure)	-	-	-	-
Total*	**7**	**931**	**80**	**851**

Source: CMBC monitoring
*Total may not add up to individual figures as many applications relate to more than one Use Class

Summary
Planning permissions and recent developments

- There has been new office provision in the town in the previous monitoring year and permission remains outstanding for a new foodstore; otherwise only a handful of small scale change of use permissions currently have planning permission in the town centre.

10. Summary

10.13 This qualitative assessment has sought to bring together key information and data sets to highlight the qualitative aspects of Todmorden town centre, a market town in Calderdale, within the context of planning related issues and the emerging Calderdale LDF. The report has highlighted a number of issues that could be addressed to help improve the centre overall and enhance the experience for users and visitors.

10.14 The key findings detailed in this report can be summarised as follows:

- Todmorden has a relatively low proportion of retail floorspace in the town centre, partly due to the high proportion of non-residential institution (D1) uses in the centre;
- The town has an indoor and outdoor market, held 5 days a week;
- Both businesses and shoppers would like to see improved consumer choice in the town, particularly clothing and footwear stores;
- Todmorden has a healthy mix of independent and multiple occupiers;
- The town has good bus and train services available from central locations;
- Parking is not seen as a significant issue in the town centre and provision, relative to commercial floorspace, exceeds all other centres in Calderdale;
- Much of the immediate town centre area is identified as being within the 20% of most deprived areas nationally;
- The built environment of the town centre is in variable, and declining, condition;
- Vacancy rates have been very high over recent years although this has improved since 2009;
- Persistent vacancies, along with very low and stagnating business rates, suggest potential viability issues for some commercial frontages on Burnley Road;
- Crime rates in the town centre are relatively high in comparison to other centres in Calderdale, and the public perceive ‘undesirable people’ and night-time safety to be issues;
- Some significant heritage assets are located within the town centre, however the conservation area is classes as ‘at risk’, in ‘poor’ condition, and deteriorating by English Heritage;
- The town provides a very good range of cultural, leisure and tourism facilities for its size; and
- Recent significant development in the town has included new office space on Rochdale Road, and permissions granted for a new foodstore on Burnley Road.