Dronfield Town Centre Health Check 2013

Contents

1.0 Introduction

Planning Policy

1.1 NPPF does not require Town Centre Health Checks to be undertaken, however, it does emphasise the need for local authorities to monitor the health of their town centres and determine how they are changing over time. The NPPF, along with the draft NPPG on Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres, has replaced the former guidance for town centres (PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth).

1.2 The NPPF chapter 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' states that planning should promote competitive Town Centre environments that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of the Town Centre. Town Centres should be recognised as the heart of the community and their viability and vitality supported. Suitable sites should be allocated to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in the Town Centre. Where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.

1.3 Although PPS4 has been deleted regarding the methodology for health check process and identifying indicators, the accompanying practice guidance on 'Planning for Town Centres' still exists, detailing the benefits of regular auditing and monitoring of town centres. The useful indicators for Health Check monitoring that were established as part of PPS4 will continue to be used.

1.4 One of the key objectives of regular monitoring and town centre health checks (in addition to providing important baseline data for retail/town centre assessments) is to consider a centre's performance over time. It will also be relevant to consider how the centre has performed relative to national trends, and to similar sized centres elsewhere. This type of analysis provides an important insight into whether the centre is improving, stable or declining, and will have a bearing when considering the potential/need for new development and the likely impact of new developments.

National Trends

1.5 Recent experience and research suggests that the future context for retailing in town centres will be very different and that centres must adapt to the changing policy and economic landscape. Along with the growth of out-of-centre retail development, the economic climate has had an impact on consumer spending which in turn has had a negative impact on the vitality of town centres and an increase in vacancy rates.

1.6 Experian's (2012) report entitled 'Town Centre Futures 2020' sets out how the UK's town centres will have changed by the end of the decade and what town centres, high streets and retailers need to do to survive and thrive. Though facing tough challenges Experian's report stresses that the UK's town centres can survive and thrive beyond 2020, provided they understand and cater to the distinct needs of their local communities, while embracing technology to boost the high street experience.

1.7 For example, town centres will need to market themselves as convenient hubs for picking up products ordered online. They must also cater for an ageing population, including the provision of face-to-face service and opportunities for socialising and leisure activities. The latest Census data shows that the population is indeed ageing, and therefore town centres will need to offer the kind of facilities valued by older people, such as health services, and safe and accessible shopping areas.

Purpose of Town Centre Health Check

1.8 The main purpose of this Town Centre Health Check is to monitor the vitality and viability of Dronfield Town Centre to help ensure an adequate supply of services and facilities to meet the requirements of the local population both currently and in the future. This Health Check assessment will form part of the evidence base for policies and proposals in the Local Plan. As explained earlier, the advice previously contained within PPS4 regarding the types of evidence and indicators Local Authorities should collect still provide a relevant and useful basis to measure the health of town centres. The following indicators are used to help gain a proper understanding of the vitality and viability of each centre:

i. Diversity of uses;
ii. Amount of retail, leisure and offices in edge and out-of-centre locations;
iii. The potential capacity for growth;
iv. Retailer representation;
v. Shop rents;

vi. Proportion of vacant property;
vii. Pedestrian flows;
viii. Accessibility;
ix. Perception of safety / occurrence of crime;
x. Environmental quality

1.9 However, due to the lack of information available, some of the indicators are less obtainable than others. Some indicators are therefore less detailed than others or not reported on at all, such as pedestrian flows (vii). As work progresses on the emerging Local Plan, this information may become more readily available. The findings of each indicator are presented below and summarised as part of a SWOT analysis which highlights the import issues towards the future development of the town centre.

2.0 <u>Dronfield</u>

2.1 Dronfield town centre is the district's largest town centre, and the only one with a train station. It is highly constrained by Green Belt. Dronfield is a town located between Chesterfield, to the south, and Sheffield, to the north. As a retail and service centre it serves the needs of local residents and residents of the villages between the two major centres of Chesterfield and Sheffield. Dronfield also attracts passing trade from the B6158, though this is limited due to the A61 Dronfield-Unstone bypass.

2.2 Dronfield needs to play an important role in serving the requirements of the local community and surrounding smaller settlements on a day-to-day basis. It forms a focal point for the surrounding area and provides a wide range of services that are accessible to the population, including retail, employment, leisure along with such things as financial and health services.

2.3 The extent of the town centre surveyed in 2008 and 2013 did extend beyond the 2005 Local Plan Town Centre boundary in order to provide information on edge of centre developments and to inform the Town Centre boundary in the emerging new Local Plan. The analysis is based on uses within the 2005 town centre boundary.

3.0 <u>Scale and Diversity of Uses</u>

3.1 The NPPF defines main town centre uses as follows:

- Retail development
- Leisure, entertainment facilities, and the more intensive sport and recreation uses
- Offices, and
- Arts, culture and tourism development

3.2 This section (covering indicator i set out in paragraph 1.8) provides a breakdown of town centre units by type, including use class and goods type, in order to monitor the amount and type of town centre uses to inform emerging planning policies. Information has been sourced from retail audits undertaken in 2008 and August 2013.

3.3 Scale and function are important factors in assessing the health of town centres. Scale is typically measured by assessing the quantity of floorspace and number of outlets in various town centre uses and assessments of function take into account quantitative and qualitative considerations including the types and diversity of uses for example in retail, leisure, offices and other town centre functions.

Table 1: Town Centre Units by Use Class 2008 and 2013

	2008				**2013**			
Use Class	**Sq Metres**	**% Total**	**Units**	**% Total**	**Sq Metres**	**% Total**	**Units**	**% Total**
A1 Shops	8919.28	34.2%	55	25.5%	8827.51	36.1%	62	28.3%
A2 Financial Prof. Services	1583.36	6.1%	20	9.3%	1397.28	5.7%	17	7.8%
A3 Food/Drink	892.33	3.4%	11	5.1%	1119.93	4.6%	9	4.1%
A4 Drinking	938	3.6%	5	2.3%	938	3.8%	5	2.3%
A5 Hot Food Takeaway	585.7	2.2%	10	4.6%	358.67	1.5%	8	3.7%
B1 Business	3127.46	12.0%	32	14.8%	1485.85	6.1%	19	8.7%
B2 General Industry	314.62	1.2%	6	2.8%	872.2	3.6%	8	3.7%
B8 Storage Distribution	497.9	1.9%	11	5.1%	308.3	1.3%	8	3.7%
C1 Hotels	514	2.0%	2	0.9%	514	2.1%	2	0.9%
C2 Residential Institutions	837	3.2%	1	0.5%	837	3.4%	1	0.5%
C3 Dwellings		0.0%	28	13.0%		0.0%	29	13.2%
D1 Non-residential Inst.	2274.9	8.7%	7	3.2%	1749.4	7.2%	9	4.1%
D2 Assembly Leisure	4391.1	16.8%	3	1.4%	4402.3	18.0%	3	1.4%
Sui Generis	104.23	0.4%	6	2.8%	218.09	0.9%	6	2.7%
Vacant	1135.85	4.3%	19	8.8%	1398.98	5.7%	33	15.1%
Total	**26115.73**	**100%**	**216**	**100%**	**24427.51**	**100%**	**219**	**100%**

3.4 Since 2008 the number of units in the town centre has increased only marginally as there have been such limited opportunities for new development. There have been increases in A3, B2, sui generis and vacant floorspace, and increases in the number of A1, B2, D1, and vacant units. The number of A1 units has increased, but the floorspace has remained broadly the same. The most significant change is the drop in B1 floorspace and units by almost 50%.

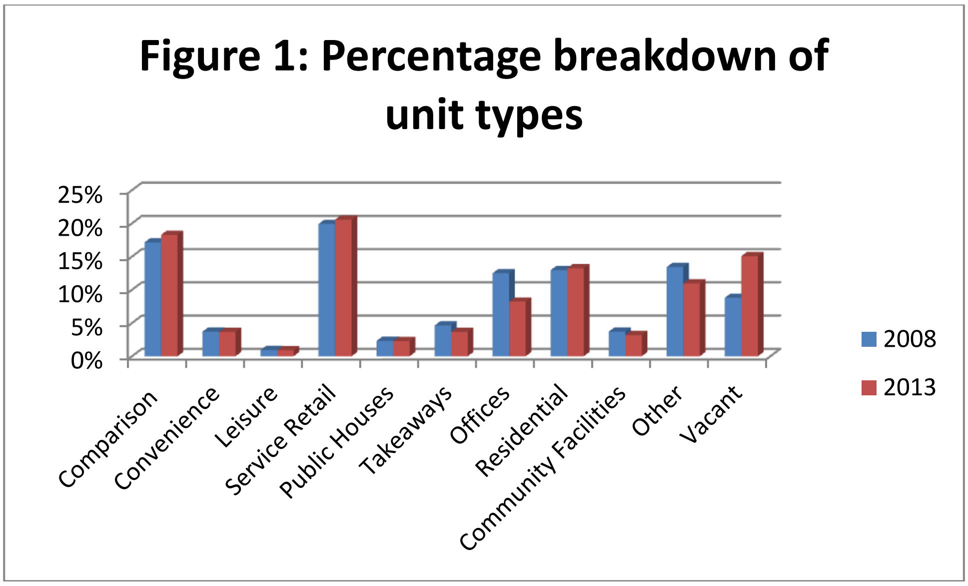
Table 2: Town Centre Units by type 2008 and 2013

	2008				2013			
Town Centre Units by Type 2008	**Sq Metres**	**% total**	**units**	**% total**	**Sq Metres**	**% total**	**units**	**% total**
Comparison	1864.08	7.1%	37	17.1%	1732.21	7.1%	40	18.3%
Convenience	6520.1	25.0 %	8	3.7%	6498.3	26.6%	8	3.7%
Leisure	4047.5	15.5 %	2	0.9%	4058.7	16.6%	2	0.9%
Service Retail	2992.44	11.5 %	43	19.9%	3364.9	13.8%	45	20.5%
Public Houses	938	3.6%	5	2.3%	938	3.8%	5	2.3%
Takeaways	585.7	2.2%	10	4.6%	358.67	1.5%	8	3.7%
Offices	2344.46	9.0%	27	12.5%	1232.75	5.0%	18	8.2%
Residential		0.0%	28	13.0%		0.0%	29	13.2%
Community Facilities	2618.5	10.0 %	8	3.7%	1910	7.8%	7	3.2%
Other	3069.1	11.8 %	29	13.4%	2935	12.0%	24	11.0%
Vacant	1135.85	4.3%	19	8.8%	1398.98	5.7%	33	15.1%
Total	**26115.73**	**100%**	**216**	**100%**	**24427.51**	**100%**	**219**	**100%**

3.5 The town centre outlets have been split into different types to better gauge the function of the town centre. Public Houses and Takeaways have been separated from Service Retail due to the particular issues they can pose in town centres. For this reason, where there was a mixed use, such as Public House with restaurant or café with hot food takeaway, the public house or takeaway aspect has been used.

3.6 As the floorspace has not changed significantly, it is useful to look at the changes in the number of each type of unit to understand how the town centre has changed.

Fig 1 Percentage breakdown of unit types



3.7 It is clear that the increases have been in comparison and service retail, but most significantly in vacant units. Takeaways are an insignificant element of the town centre offer at 3.7% of units.

Evening Economy

3.8 Leisure floorspace in centres comprises a range of activities including cinemas, theatres, concert halls, restaurants, cafes, takeaways, pubs, bars, night clubs and a range of other leisure facilities. Leisure services can add vitality and viability to a centre and ensure it remains lively after shops close. A significant quantum and range of leisure facilities, or a cluster of leisure/evening economy uses can be an important component of a town centre's role and function.

3.9 In 2008, evening uses comprised a total of approximately 2455 sq.m of floorspace across the town (9.4% of total town centre floorspace and 11.1% of total premises). In 2013 there were 3 less evening use units than in 2008, reducing the percentage of total premises to 9.6%, with a slight reduction in floorspace to 2382 sq m. Evening uses remain at 9.4% of total floorspace. See Appendix 2 for the full breakdown of data on evening uses.

3.10 The majority of evening uses in 2008 was cafes and takeaways, at almost 62% of the evening use floorspace, and there was no leisure at all. The picture in 2013 is broadly the same, with 60% of evening use floorspace from cafes and takeaways, and again, no leisure uses. There is a particular concentration of activities on Chesterfield Road.

4.0 Retail

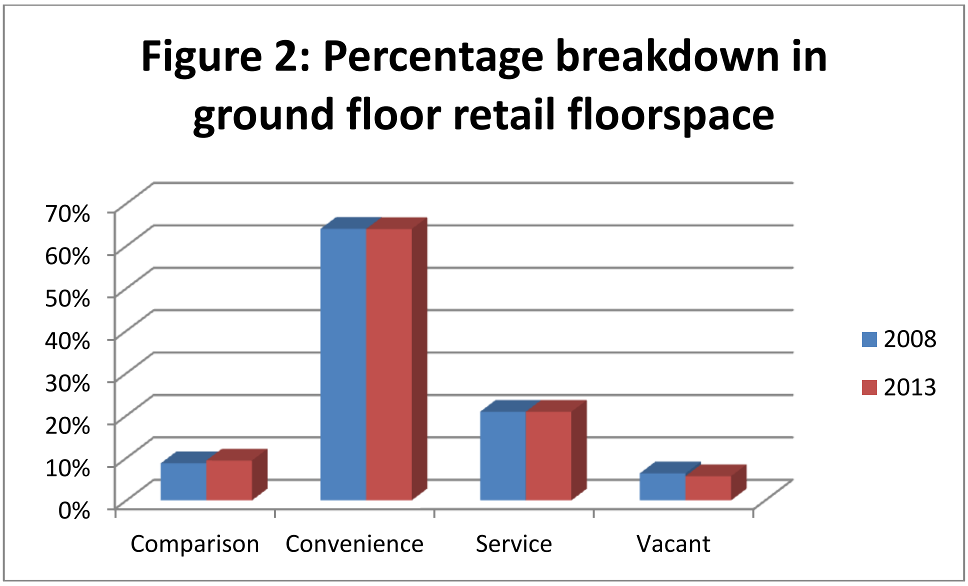
4.1 Tables 1 and 2 use total floorspace data (including basements, upper floors and non-sales areas). This provides a picture of the potential floorspace in buildings and premises that could be used for town centre uses. In order to get a more accurate picture of the floorspace in active retail use, there is available data on A1 uses for ground floor retail sales areas (covering indicators i and iv).

Table 3: Ground Floor Retail Floorspace 2008 and 2013

	2008				2013			
Ground Floor Retail Floorspace	**Floorspace**	**% Total**	**No Units**	**% Total**	**Floorspace**	**% Total**	**No Units**	**% Total**
Comparison	881.5	8.7%	28	30.8%	952.5	9.4%	32	34.0 %
Convenience	6462.6	64.0%	8	8.8%	6483.3	64.0%	8	8.5%
Service*	2109.39	20.9%	43	47.3%	2117.19	20.9%	45	47.9 %
Vacant	642.7	6.4%	12	13.2%	578.8	5.7%	9	9.6%
Total	**10096.19**	**100%**	**91**	**100%**	**10131.79**	**100%**	**94**	**100%**

**Note: Service includes takeaways.*

Fig 2 Percentage Breakdown of Ground Floor Retail Floorspace



4.2 As set out in Table 3, the breakdown of floorspace in 2008 and in 2013 was dominated by the amount of convenience floorspace in the co-op and Sainsbury's supermarkets. Although comparison floorspace has risen very slightly from 8.7 to 9.5%, this is low.

4.3 It is interesting to note that vacancy rates of ground floor retail floorspace have decreased from 6.4% to 5.7%, in a period where many towns have seen a significant increase in vacancy rates.

Table 4: GOAD Report Outlet Type National Averages

Outlet Type	National Average Units	National Average Floorspace
Comparison	32.8%	36.39%
Convenience	8.21%	14.75%
Retail Service	13.94%	7.36%
Leisure Service	22.22%	23.08%
Financial and Business	10.97%	8.29%
Vacant	11.55%	9.4%

4.4 Comparison with the GOAD data is more direct when considering ground floor retail, as the GOAD survey data was based on building footprint area and did not take into account other floors. In relation to the national averages (see Table 4), ground floor retail figures (Table 3) show that in 2013 comparison retail was well below the national average for floorspace, balanced by the level of convenience floorspace which is significantly higher than the national average. It is important to note that although limited, both supermarkets will sell a range of comparison goods, but this is not reflected in these figures. As well as a decline in vacancies, the levels of vacant ground floor retail, both floorspace and units, are well below the national average. Service retail is broadly in line with the national average for units, and slightly under in terms of floorspace.

GOAD 2012 Survey of Dronfield

4.5 The 2012 GOAD survey of the town did not cover the whole of the town centre area. The categories used varies slightly to those used in this health check, but comparison, convenience and vacant are the same, therefore comparisons can be made.

	Units		
	National Average	2012 GOAD survey	2013 Health Check
Comparison	32.8%	27.03%	34%
Convenience	8.21%	13.51%	8.5%
Vacant	11.55%	8.11%	9.6%

Retailer Representation

4.6 This section assesses the presence of national retail multiples in the town centre area. This gives a good indication of how the centre is performing in relation to attracting national retail outlets and its current performance in the retail hierarchy. For the purposes of the health check process, national multiple retailers are defined as being part of a network of nine or more outlets (as used in Goad Category Reports), whose presence in a town centre is recognised as enhancing the retail attractiveness to local consumers.

4.7 In 2008 there were no national multiple retailers as defined by GOAD, although some other well-known national multiple retailers were represented in Dronfield town centre in 2008:

- Natwest
- Betfred
- Yorkshire Building Society
- Co-op Travel
- HSBC
- Ilkeston co-op travel
- Cooplands
- Halifax and Blundells
- Clinton Cards
- Somerfield
- Saxton Mee
- Domino's Pizza
- Sainsbury's

4.8 In 2008 national multiple retailers took up 71% of total ground floor retail floorspace. This is made up of 88% convenience, 1% comparison and 11% service. Two of the GOAD Major Retailers were present - Sainsbury's and Clinton Cards.

4.9 In 2013, national multiple retailers continued to make up around 71% of total ground floor retail floorspace. The break down is has not changed, as shown in figure 3. There has been little change in the presence and make up of multiple retailers, with one loss of service (one of two Betfred units) and gain of a comparison (Barnardos charity shop).

Fig 3 **Percentage breakdown of National Multiple Retailers Floorspace**

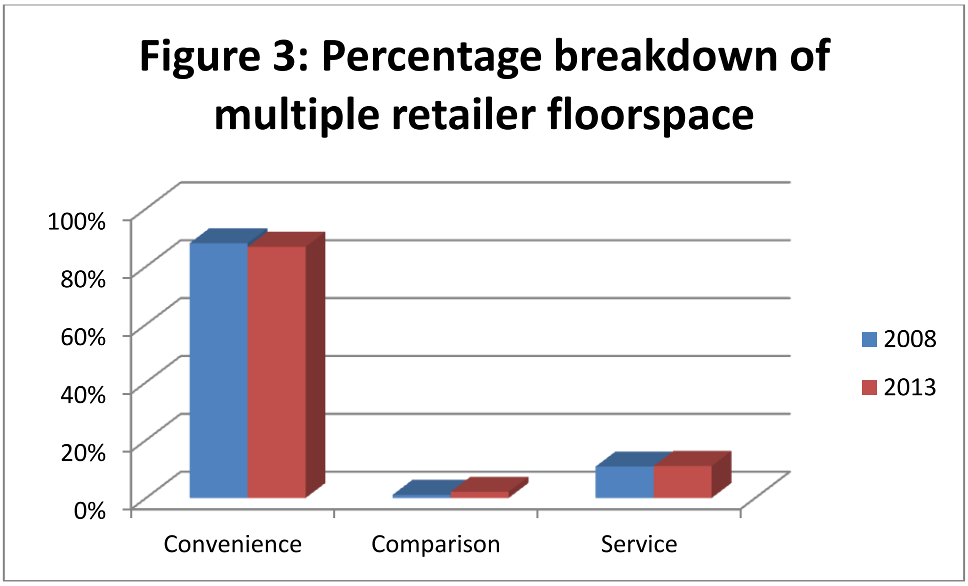


Table 5: Multiple Retailer representation 2008 and 2013

	2008				**2013**			
National Multiple Retailers	**Ground floor retail**	**% Total**	**Units**	**% Total**	**Ground floor retail**	**% Total**	**Units**	**% Total**
Convenience	6282.1	88%	3	21%	6282.1	87%	3	21%
Comparison	77.1	1%	1	7%	154.2	2%	2	14%
Service	775.5	11%	10	71%	799.4	11%	9	64%
Total	**7134.7**	**100%**	**14**	**100%**	**7235.7**	**100%**	**14**	**100%**

5.0 Capacity for Growth or Change

5.1 The ability of a town centre to grow in terms of regeneration, consolidation or expansion is imperative in maintaining the health and diversity of uses in a centre. The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the need for local authorities to maintain a supply of suitable sites to cater for the needs of town centre expansion to 'allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres'.

5.2 This section covers indicators ii, iii and v as set out in paragraph 1.8. It is important to consider of edge of centre & out of centre locations in terms of any impact on the health of the centre itself, alongside the potential capacity and indicators of market demand such as shop rents. There are no edge or out of centre retail or town centre use schemes around Dronfield, and non planned, although the Barn project is on the edge of the centre. However, since the data was collected, an out of centre Aldi and Pets at Home unit were completed on Sheffield Road. The other edge of centre units were either in office use of vacant at the 2013 survey. Due to the fragmented nature of the town centre, extensions to the boundary are unlikely to be appropriate.

Capacity

5.3 The 2008 Retail Capacity Study quantitative capacity analysis concluded that even allowing for the re-occupation of vacant shop units in the north of the District (2,000 sq m gross), development opportunities in Dronfield, Eckington and Killamarsh (3,500 sq m gross) may not be capable of accommodating the need for new retail floorspace in the northern part of the District up to 2016 (6,900 sq m gross), although the Aldi development will provide for some of this.

5.4 The 2008 study identified 6 sites at Dronfield for new retail development, but none of them offered reasonable/good potential. The study concluded that Dronfield does not provide a compact or coherent centre. The Council could consider defining a more compact centre boundary around the existing Somerfield store (now the Co-operative store) and adjacent parade and the Sainsbury store. Other shopping areas in Dronfield could be defined as separate local parades. Within Dronfield town centre limited development opportunity sites have been identified.

Shop Rents and Demand

5.5 Comprehensive information was unavailable for retail yields and rental values. In March 2014 there was one unit being marketed for retail or office for £550per calendar month (£6600 per annum) for 600 sq feet.

6.0 Vacancy Rates

6.1 The distribution of vacant units and other associated uses (i.e. charity and other outlets with rate rebates) provide an indicator of the attractiveness of an area to new business, although it should be noted that vacancies in outlets occur not only when an area is economically unattractive to potential businesses, but also due to redevelopment, building renovation or changeovers between tenants. This section covers indicator vi as set out in paragraph 1.8.

6.2 The ground floor retail vacancy rate in Dronfield in 2008 was 13.2% by premises and 6.4% percent by floorspace. In 2013, the rates are 9.6% by premises (national average is 11.54% GOAD data 2012), and 5.7% by floorspace (national average is 9.38% [1]GOAD data 2012). The number of empty units has decreased from 12 to 9.

6.4 In 2008 the vacant units were mainly located in Church Street, Chesterfield Road and the Riverside Studios on Mill Lane. In 2013, the picture is broadly the same, with most vacancies on Church Street (particularly The Grange), Chesterfield Road and a number of units vacant in the Riverside Studios.

6.5 In 2013 there were 3 charity shops in the town centre, accounting for 3.2% of ground floor retail units (due to missing floorspace data for a large charity shop in The Forge, comparison on this aspect cannot be made). This compares favourably to both the 2012 GOAD survey where charity shops accounted for 4% of units, but less well when compared to the national averages of 2.6% for units.

7.0 Accessibility

Travel and Accessibility

7.1 Dronfield is well served by public transport, with regular buses to and from surrounding large urban areas of Sheffield and Chesterfield as well as smaller settlements including Coal Aston, Apperknowle, Barlow and Holmesfield. The

[1] GOAD floorspace data is footprint floorspace, and the site area without the building lines. It is not directly comparable to the data in this health check but provides a useful national average benchmark.

town centre benefits from a train station providing good links to Sheffield, Chesterfield, Derby and Beyond on the Midland Mainline. There is a good amount of public and private surface car parks in the town, with much of it free. In 2013 there were 15 public car parks providing 468 spaces, 19 of which are disabled bays. Private car parks can accommodate 588 vehicles(223 of which is at Sainsbury's), and offer 23 disabled bays (of which 16 are at Sainsbury's). There is also on-street parking, on mainly on Chesterfield Road, providing around 46 spaces.

7.2 Facilities for cyclists are limited.

7.3 In May 2013 a questionnaire on the health of the districts town centres was sent out to the Citizens Panel. 544 responses were received. 34.7% of respondents visited Dronfield most often out of the four town centres. The majority (76.9%) use the car to travel to Dronfield, only 3.5% choosing the bus, the lowest of all four centres. Around 19% walk, slightly above the average for the four towns, and although minimal at 0.6%, Dronfield has the highest proportion of those who cycle into town.

7.4 78.7% are satisfied with the footpath routes into the town centre, with dissatisfaction lowest out of the four towns. With regard to the road network access, most respondents were satisfied (84.7%), the highest of the four towns. A significant number of people (70.2%) were satisfied with road traffic with regard to accessing the town centre, again, the highest of the four towns.

7.5 17.6% were dissatisfied with the local bus service in accessing the town centre, the highest of the four towns, although over 50% were satisfied with the location of bus stops. Out of the four towns, there is the highest level (68.8%) of satisfaction with amount of carparking space and the location of car parking in relation to the town centre (79.8%) in Dronfield.

7.6 Of those that expressed a view about cycle routes and cycle parking, there was generally slightly more dissatisfaction than satisfaction, but nothing significant.

7.7 70.8% of respondents were satisfied with footpaths/paving, which the highest of the four towns, and the highest level of satisfaction with pavement repairs at 53.3%. The same applies to street furniture, with 64% satisfied.

Shopmobility

7.8 Shop-mobility is a service that helps all people who consider themselves to have mobility problems (whether through disability, illness or injury) to continue to get around the town centre independently, with freedom, confidence and dignity. The Chesterfield area Shopmobility scheme does not include Dronfield.

7.9 In the town centre in 2013 around 4% of car parking bays were disabled bays. This is below the recommended 6% of bays (or 3 bays per carpark) as set out in the DETR Advisory Leaflet 5/95.

8.0 Perception of safety/ occurrence of crime

8.1 The actual occurrence of crime and anti-social behaviour and the public perception of safety are important factors for the health of a town centre. Dronfield town centre is served by the Dronfield and North East Policing Section of Derbyshire Constabulary Division. Figures from January 2014 confirm that 27 crimes were reported in the town centre, 9 of these were incidences of anti-social behaviour. There are no current priorities for the Dronfield Safer Neighbourhood relating to the town centre.

8.2 The results of the May 2013 Citizens Panel survey showed that in terms of feeling safe within the town centre, 84.3% of respondents were satisfied.

8.3 In terms of security, there are a limited number of CCTV cameras in the town centre, some operated by the Town Council at their own buildings.

9.0 Environmental quality

9.1 Air Quality is monitored by the council (the nearest locations being Sheards Close and Garth Close at Dronfield Woodhouse). Reporting for 2013 showed that pollutant levels are below the air quality objective.

9.2 The built environment of the town centre is of a good quality (with a Conservation Area in part), but offers very limited access to open spaces, particularly public spaces benefiting from trees and landscaping.

9.3 The May 2013 Citizens Panel survey found that a considerable 76.3% were satisfied with the cleanliness of the town centre and a similar proportion (79.5%) were satisfied with the street lighting (in both cases the highest of all four towns by some margin). With sculptures and public art, most respondents were neutral or did not know, but of those that expressed a view it was more positive than negative. Over 60% were satisfied with regard to open space, and 74.4% with trees, landscaping and planting, both the highest levels of satisfaction of the four towns.

9.4 Around half felt that Dronfield town centre had a distinctive character and was well defined, above the average across the four towns. 68.2% agree that the buildings and/or layout make it easy to find your way around the town centre, and 55.6% feel that the streets in the town centre are pedestrian friendly.

9.5 Over 70% felt that neither graffiti and property damage or litter were a problem, and only 7.1% felt that the smell from traffic or other pollution in the town centre was a big problem.

10.0 Town Centre Initiatives

10.1 There are limited town centre initiatives in Dronfield, although Dronfield Heritage Trust and the Town Council are both active and the Barn project is a positive addition to the town.

11.0 Customer and residents' views and behaviour

11.1 Consultation responses from the 2013 Citizens Panel survey highlighted a number of issues relevant to the analysis of Dronfield Town Centre. Respondents were asked about frequency of visits to the town centre for different reasons/facilities, and most commonly used Dronfield for daily and weekly food shopping. Dronfield has the highest proportion of respondents visiting regularly for non-food shopping of the four towns. Significant numbers of respondents only rarely visit to use services and leisure facilities or eat and drink (around 50%), while financial and professional services are used slightly more regularly.

11.2 It is interesting that although Dronfield has the highest use for non-food shopping, only around 13% that think that the choice of shops is good/excellent, with eating/drinking places faring better at around 26%. A similar proportion (27.5%) think the choice of services is good/excellent, the highest of the four towns. Choice is obviously an issue, indeed nearly 70% of respondents would like to see a wider variety of shops in the town centre, particularly small independent shops and clothes shops.

11.3 When asked about favourite thing about Dronfield town centre, there were many comments, but the most often cited were the character of the town and historic buildings, the library, the ease of access, and facilities such as the leisure centre and civic hall. 'Least favourites' were not enough long stay parking, the spread out nature of the town centre, poor variety and empty shops.

11.4 Opportunities were varied, although the Barn project, market and historic aspects to the town were cited by a number of respondents. The sloping topography, spread out / fragmented nature of the town and the run down civic centre were seen as problems.

12.0 Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Historic aspects and character	**Fragmented**
Train Station	**Insufficient disabled parking**
Generally clean and well maintained	**Limited comparison shopping**
Low ground floor retail vacancy rates	**Limited evening leisure uses**
Opportunities	**Threats**
Consolidating the centre	**Poor development opportunities**

	Decline in offices and pressure for residential development

Appendix 1: Note on Outlet Types

Convenience Retail:
A1 shops which are visited for daily needs including Bakers, Butchers, Greengrocers & fishmongers, Grocery and frozen foods, Off-licences and home brew, Confectioners, tobacconists, newsagents

Comparison includes
A1 shops which are visited only occasionally for higher order goods which people often compare prices for from different retailers. These include shops selling Footwear & repairs, Men's & boys wear, Women's, girls, children's clothing, Mixed and general clothing, Furniture, carpets & textiles, Booksellers, arts/crafts, stationers/copy bureaux, Electrical, home entertainment, telephones and video DIY, hardware & household goods, Gifts, china, glass and leather goods, Cars, motorcycles & motor accessories Chemists, toiletries & opticians, Variety, department & catalogue showrooms, Florists and gardens, Sports, toys, cycles and hobbies Jewellers, clocks & repair Charity shops, pets and other comparison

Service Retail includes
A more diverse category which includes Restaurants, cafes, Hairdressers, beauty parlours & health centres, Laundries & drycleaners, Travel agents, Banks & financial services (incl. accountants), Building societies, Estate agents & auctioneers and Transport Services (which include sui generis taxi offices, rail/bus ticket offices etc); (Takeaways are normally included within this category, but have been separated into their own category due to the particular issues associated with this use.)

Leisure includes Clubs, sports, amusement arcades

Community Facilities includes religious buildings, health and education and community halls

Office includes B1 use offices – both private and public sector.

Other
Employment, Advice/info, Post Office

Appendix 2 – Evening Uses 2008 and 2013

Evening Uses (Sq M Floorspace)

	2008			**2013**		
Type	**Sq M**	**% Evening Uses**	**% Total Floorspace**	**Sq M**	**% Evening Uses**	**% Total Floorspace**
A3/A5 Food	1516.93	61.8%	5.8%	1443.7	60.6%	5.9%
A4 Public House	938	38.2%	3.6%	938	39.4%	3.8%
D2 Leisure	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total	2454.93	100%	9.4%	2381.7	100%	9.8%

Evening Uses (Units)

	2008			**2013**		
Type	**Sq M**	**% Evening Uses**	**% Total Floorspace**	**Sq M**	**% Evening Uses**	**% Total Floorspace**
A3/A5 Food	19	79.2%	8.8%	16	76.2%	7.3%
A4 Public House	5	20.8%	2.3%	5	23.8%	2.3%
D2 Leisure	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total	24	100%	11.1%	21	100%	9.6%