



Angus Council

Town Centre Health Checks

ARBROATH

BRECHIN

CARNOUSTIE

FORFAR

KIRRIEMUIR

MONIFIETH

MONTROSE



June 2017

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1. Introduction

The seven town centres within Angus all make an important contribution to sustainable economic development by providing opportunities for people to access goods and services and employment. The individual character of each town centre adds to its community, economic and social role, creating a sense of place and belonging for many people. The central areas provide a focus for transport and are often the most accessible part of the town, making them the best location for a wide range of activities and services such as banking, shopping, work and leisure.

The planning system has an important role to play in supporting successful town centres, through influencing the form and type of future development to help town centres continue to thrive and meet the needs of their residents, businesses and visitors. However, in order to assess how a town centre ought to develop in the future, it is first of all important to gain evidence of its current performance and change over time.

An effective and efficient means of gaining evidence of a town centres current performance is to carry out a town centre health check. The main purpose of a town centre health check is to assess a town centre's strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience (Scottish Planning Policy 2014, Paragraph 64). Town centre health checks provide information which can be compared with past and future town centre health checks. It is important to acknowledge that Angus Council last carried out a town centre health check in 2010. However, it is intended that town centre health checks will be regularly updated, preferably every two years, to monitor town centre performance more effectively in the future.

This report will present data in terms of the indicators which have been included, before summarising these findings and drawing on conclusions regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each town centre. The results are not to be considered definitive of the well-being of a town centre, but rather they are intended to provide an evidence based comparative perspective of the indicators which have been included and will assist in identifying actions that could be undertaken to improve that particular town centre.

In addition to the above, the town centre health checks will also be generally used to:

- Provide an evidence base for use in other studies and strategies such as a review of town centre boundaries and town centre strategies;
- Inform the preparation and support the implementation of local development plans, particularly town centre and retailing policies; and
- Provide data for assessing the impacts of proposed retail development proposals on town centres.

2. Methodology

The methodology used for the town centre health checks 2017 was devised with the primary aim of providing both meaningful and comparable results for the seven towns within Angus. The town centre health checks were limited to the town centre boundaries as defined within the Angus Local Development Plan 2016 for Arbroath, Brechin, Carnoustie, Forfar, Kirriemuir, Monifieth and Montrose.

The following indicators, all of which are mentioned within Scottish Planning Policy 2014 (Annex A - Town Centre Health Checks) were taken into consideration during the town centre health checks 2017:

- Pedestrian counts (footfall) - the number of pedestrians passing pre-defined locations. Three counts were undertaken at 11:00, 12:00 and 13:00. Each count lasted for five minutes and included pedestrians passing in both directions and on both sides of the street.
- Quantity of floorspace in use per broad retail category - the quantity of floorspace in use was determined via the survey of all commercial properties (i.e. non residential) within each town centre. The survey was carried out via a single on-site observation from the public realm. The broad retail categories, which are consistent with those used within Angus Council's Retail Floorspace Survey 2017, were then used to describe the distribution of uses present and consisted of:
 - * convenience retailing - includes shops for the purchase of food, alcohol, news and magazines etc;
 - * comparison retailing - includes shops for the purchase of clothes, jewellery and electronic goods etc;
 - * services - includes businesses, leisure and uses which are ancillary to retailing e.g. a hairdressers etc; and
 - * others - includes educational institutions, warehouses and vacant units etc.
- Retailer representation in use per selected type - the number of units in use per selected type was determined via the survey of all commercial properties (i.e. non residential) within each town centre. The survey was carried out via a single on-site observation. The selected retailer types were then used to describe the distribution of selected retailers within each town centre and consisted of:
 - * national multiples - includes a unit which is occupied by a retailer or service provider that has outlets across Scotland or the U.K. (excluding charity, discount stores and retail units such as Premier and Spar etc);
 - * specialist independent retailers - includes units which are defined as 1) selling products which are unique in terms of their quality, style, or purpose,

- relative to other retailers in the centre; 2) selling high-value products; and 3) would constitute a reason for visiting the centre (considered as a destination in their own right);
- * discount retailer - includes units that sell low-value items and market these items as being value for money or very low cost; and
 - * charity shop - a unit where second-hand goods are sold to raise money for a charity.
- Vacant units - the number of units was determined via a survey, carried out by a single on-site observation, of all commercial properties (i.e. non residential) within each town centre.
 - Accessibility and the Physical Environment - each town centre was surveyed by answering a number of questions which were specific to a range of qualitative indicators in order to give an impression of its accessibility and physical environment. The survey was carried out via a single on-site observation from the public realm by two or three employees from the Environment and Development Plan Team. The range of qualitative indicators included:
 - * overall cleanliness;
 - * property appearance, condition and maintenance;
 - * quality of built heritage;
 - * evidence of recent investment by retailers;
 - * availability and quality of visitor infrastructure;
 - * presence and quality of open space;
 - * ease of movement for pedestrians;
 - * access to/from/within the town centre; and
 - * availability of drink, food and evening economy facilities.
 - Crime levels - the number of recorded crimes between April 2016 to March 2017 were provided by the Angus Community Safety Partnership Team. The particular types of criminal offences and incidents of anti-social behaviour recorded included:
 - * breach of the peace/threatening behaviour;
 - * crime of indecency;
 - * domestic housebreaking;
 - * drugs offence;

- * minor/petty assault;
- * serious violent crime;
- * shoplifting;
- * vandalism and fireraising; and
- * vehicle crime.

Further details regarding the methodology used for the town centre health checks 2017, including the on-site surveys and subsequent analysis of data, is detailed within Angus Council's Town Centre Health Check - Statement of Methodology (June 2017). This document informed the study throughout; however, where alternative actions were found to be preferable, the methodology was not implemented.

3. Arbroath Town Centre

3.1 Context

Arbroath is the largest town in Angus. It contains a number of centres, such as West Port and West Way, which demonstrates its importance as a location for comparison shops whilst also providing local services, community facilities and convenience shops. Due to the decline of the fishing and fish processing industry, the town now relies heavily upon the commercial, manufacturing and public sector for its employment opportunities and economic prosperity. In addition, soft fruit production and

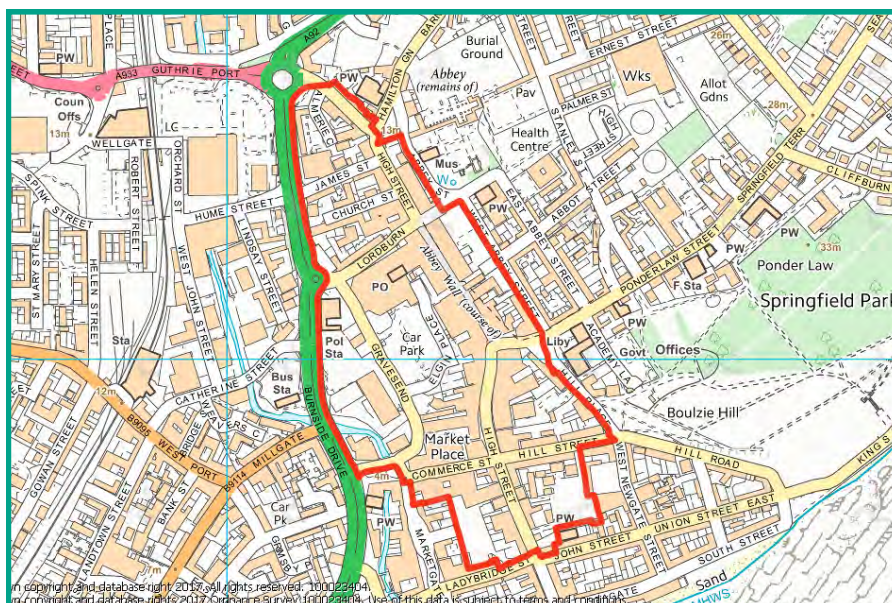


processing attracts many seasonal workers to the area. The town also remains a popular visitor destination due to attractions such as the beach, harbour and the historic Arbroath Abbey.

The town centre, which contains the second highest number of commercial units of all the town centres in Angus, primarily serves Arbroath and a number of surrounding villages such as Frickheim. The town centre features an elongated High Street with the historic Arbroath

433 residential properties

238 retail/commercial units



Abbey located to the north, and the North Sea and harbour located to the south. The majority of the town centre, with the exception of the central western section, lies within a conservation area which reflects its architectural and historic importance. It is also the only town centre in Angus which contains an indoor shopping centre known as the Abbeygate. The central pedestrianised section of the High Street, between Kirk Square and Lordburn, ensures good accessibility for pedestrians.

3.2 Residential Properties

Since 2010, the number of residential properties in the town centre has slightly increased by 8. This is likely to be due to the change of use of premises such as the former office/store at 56A High Street, which has been converted into residential use, and the development of new residential properties at Church Street.

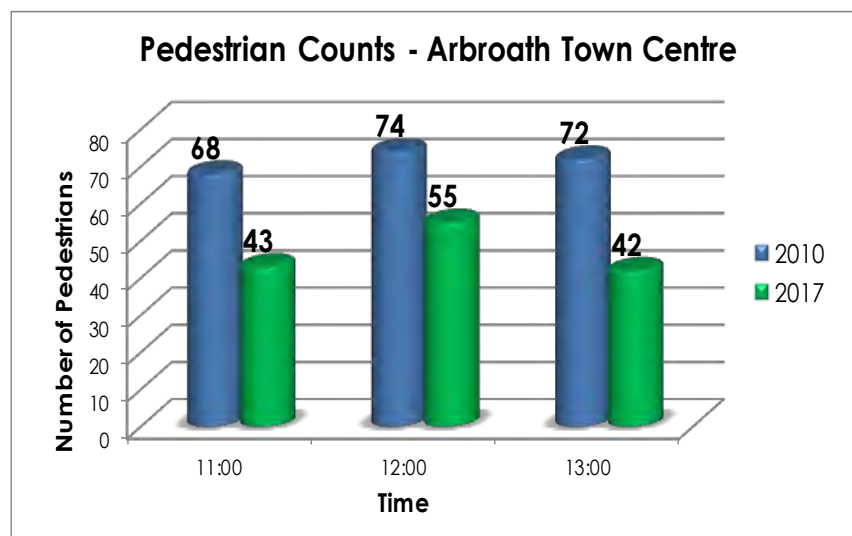


Residential properties are generally located throughout the town centre with the majority of the High Street characterised by commercial properties occupying the ground floors with flats above. The edges of the town centre and side streets contain a mix of one, two, three and four storey buildings.

- 4.5% of the residential properties are identified as being long-term unoccupied.
- 5 of these properties have been registered as unoccupied for longer than 12 months and the majority of these residential properties are flats and are either 1 or 2 bedrooms.

3.3 Pedestrian Counts

Footfall is measured through pedestrian counts and two predefined locations at the north and south ends of the High Street. During the town centre health check 2010, an average total of 214 pedestrians passed by the two predefined pedestrian count locations. This has decreased to an average total of 140 pedestrians, still the second highest average of all the



town centres in Angus. A higher average total of pedestrians in comparison to the other town centres is to be expected considering Arbroath is the largest town in Angus. Both of the predefined locations recorded similar numbers of passing pedestrians.

A decline in the average total of pedestrians could be explained by the total number of commercial units in the town centre decreasing by 16. Although this is a slight reduction, it includes the closure of a number of important civic services such as the former sheriff court, fiscal's office and church hall etc. In addition, the continual rise in the number of online retail sales, along with the development of out of centre retail parks such as Westway, are likely to affect pedestrian footfall in the town centre as they provide increased competition to the commercial properties in the town centre.

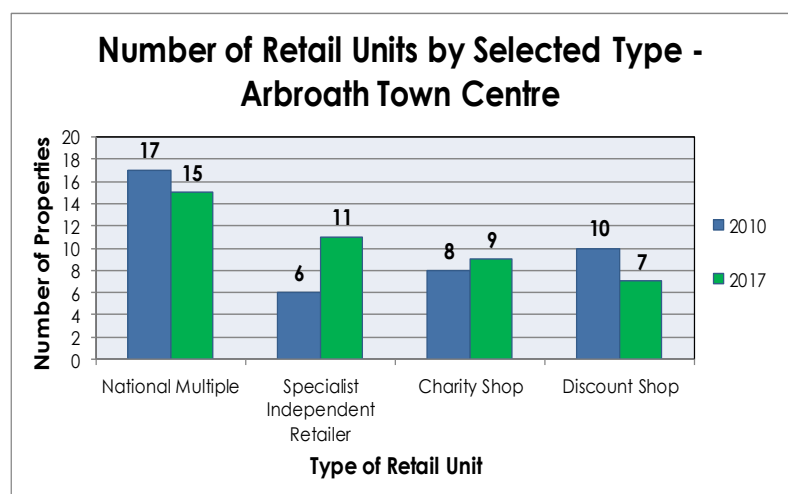
3.4 Uses and Vacancies

The 2017 survey showed a slight decrease in the number of commercial units in the town centre from 16 to 238 units. There appears to have been a trade off with the number of convenience, comparison and other units slightly decreasing replaced by an increase in service units.

As the largest town in Angus, Arbroath still acts as a location for comparison shops, and the number has remained largely the same since 2010. The number of national multiples has also slightly reduced from 17 to 15, although the town centre still possesses the highest number of national multiples of all the town centres in Angus. The national multiples which are still present include Argos, Boots, Farmfoods, Lidl, Semi-Chem and WH Smith etc. This trend appears to be in line with the national picture across Scotland due to the failure of chains and as they continue to close smaller, more remotely located units in order to cut their store portfolio amid rising rents, rates and other bills. A decline in the number of comparison shops and national multiples could also be explained by consumers expenditure being affected by austerity etc. Therefore, it will be interesting to note whether these trends continue within future health checks.

Despite a reduction from 17 to 14 convenience units since 2010 Arbroath still has a presence of bakers, butchers, convenience stores, fishmonger, newsagents, sandwich bars and a supermarket etc in the town centre.

There has been a marginal increase in the number of specialist independent retailers in the town centre from 6 to 11 which is a promising sign as a decrease in comparison and convenience units has perhaps provided an



opportunity for specialist independent retailers to occupy units which may have previously been unavailable.

There has been an increase in the number of vacant units by 6 to approximately 39 units since the town centre health check in 2010. In line with other town centres across Scotland, there have been recent closures such as The Money Shop, Happit (women's clothing) and the Resin Art Gallery. This equates to approximately 16% of all commercial properties being vacant which is above the UK average of 9% (Springboard – January 2017). When referring to the Angus Council Retail Floorspace Survey 2017, the vacancy rate of all commercial properties was 16% in 2012 and 25% in 2014. Therefore, although the vacancy rate of all commercial properties seems to vary, there is a trend appearing where it consistently remains above the UK average.

Other buildings/units which are also vacant include previous important civic and service uses such as the former sheriff court, fiscal's office, church hall and part of the former post office. In particular, the former sheriff court is viewed as one of the most important civic buildings within the town centre and its redevelopment is important as it occupies a central destination within the middle and lower parts of the High Street.

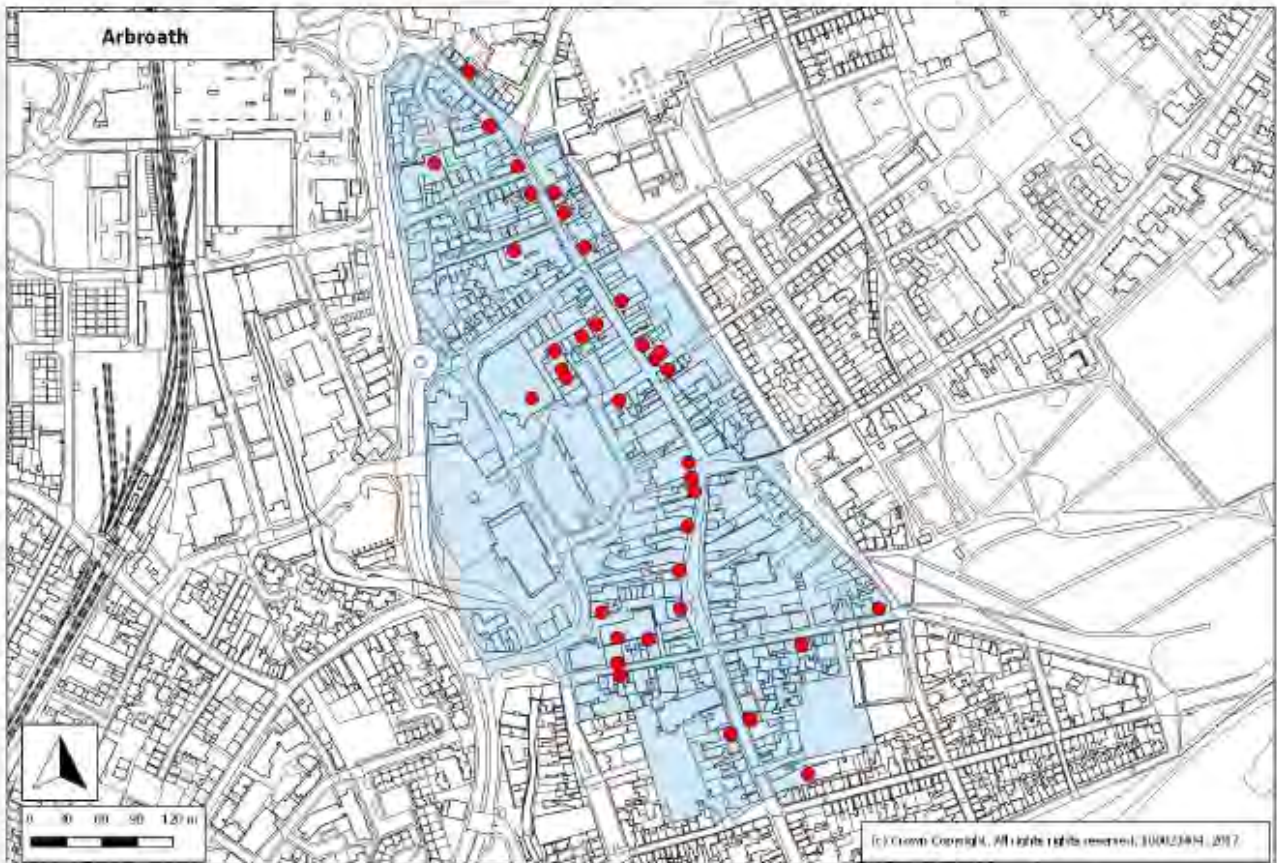
The vacant units are distributed throughout the town centre (as can be seen from the map on Page 11) but the central and northern sections of the town centre are generally more susceptible to vacant units than the southern section of the town centre. The majority of the vacant units are primarily small and traditional with the exception of two larger more modern units within the indoor Abbeygate shopping centre.

Service uses (39%) continue to predominate in Arbroath town centre. Further analysis reveals that the service uses can be broken down into retail services (18%), leisure services (15%) and financial and business services (6%). This is not unexpected when considering that there has been a decrease in the number of convenience and comparison units. Therefore, it would appear that new personal services such as Harpers (barber) and Aurora (beauty treatment) along with new leisure services such as Seven (café) and Delights Deli (sandwich bar) are seizing the opportunity to fulfil the vacancies.

For further information regarding uses and vacancies in Arbroath town centre please refer to the Angus Council Retail Floorspace Survey 2017.

3.5 Accessibility and the Physical Environment

The completion of a survey questionnaire from a single on-site observation from the public realm is a simple way of gaining an impression of the accessibility and the physical environment of Arbroath town centre. It is important to acknowledge that no averages or totals were calculated; the score is only the expression of a qualitative judgement.



Overall Cleanliness

Throughout the town centre the streets and closes are relatively free of litter and there is little appearance of graffiti. There are a good number of public bins however the standard plastic public bins located to the north of Kirk Square appear dirty.

Arbroath town centre is well served by street furniture (fingerposts, lampposts, railings, seating, tree guards and bollards), which are well maintained and nicely painted. However, there does appear to be a mix of styles. Those located at the northern end of the High Street appear to be of a poorer quality than elsewhere. There is also vegetation growing along the kerbs and along the side of the buildings located at the northern end of the High Street.

Score: 4

Property Appearance, Condition and Maintenance

Overall, properties appear to be well cared for particularly within the central pedestrianised section and at the southern part of the High Street. However, there are a number which are in need of improvement via the replacement of rainwater goods and the removal of vegetation etc. Guthrie Port is a poor entrance to the town with the properties here requiring maintenance.

Market Square and the Corn Exchange closes into the square are in poor condition and do not create good entry points to an interesting and historic 'precinct' within the town centre.

The quality of window displays varies across the town.

Score: 3

Presence and Quality of Open Space

There are no green areas in the town centre but there is a small area of open space located at Kirk Square, which features some trees and seating which is clean and well maintained. It has limited functionality but currently works well as a place to sit and meet etc.

There are opportunities to enhance existing areas of open space such as those outside the Websters Theatre etc. through some landscaping, lighting and seating etc.

The use of bunting throughout the High Street, which materialised as a follow up from the Arbroath Town Centre Charrette, helps create a distinctive commercial environment.

Score: 3

Quality of Built Heritage

The majority of the town centre, with the exception of the central western section, lies within a conservation area. The town benefits from key landmark buildings such as the historic Arbroath Abbey and The Old Parish Church Steeple. The elongated High Street slopes downhill from north to south which culminates in a striking southerly vista across the North Sea.

Throughout the town centre there is appropriate and extensive use of local stone, slate and red brick chimneys. It is also evident that sash and case windows predominate in properties located at the southern end of the town centre. The Victorian style buildings located in the southern part of the town centre add visual interest for pedestrians.

Throughout the town centre there is no common colour or style of signs and fascia's and some of poor quality and design.

Score: 3

Evidence of Recent Investment by Retailers

Some evidence of recent investment within the town centre such as Colin M Smith's and Wardhaugh's which have both relocated from elsewhere within the town. The unit previously occupied by Wardhaugh's has already re-let/sold which may suggest that although there are long-term vacancies there remains natural turnover in some units. Other examples of recent investment include Barry's Shoe Repair, Heather Cottage Crafts and The Salon etc.

The Arbroath Town Centre Charrette identified that the town centre needs to evolve as a more distinctive and compelling destination where enterprise, commercial, retail, public, arts/cultural and social functions overlap with a diverse range of uses. Future investments in economic infrastructure such as high speed broadband and projects that diversify uses to encourage arts/culture, music and business start-ups etc will be crucial.

Although there is some evidence of recent investment there are still a number of vacant units.

Score: 3

Availability and Quality of Visitor Infrastructure

There are several benches located throughout the town centre including those within the central pedestrianised section, between Kirk Square and Lordburn. There is a set of public toilets located at Market Square/Corn Exchange.

Several visitor information boards are located throughout the town centre at Kirk Square, Gravesend and opposite the Corn Exchange. There are also several fingerposts located at the southern end of the High Street.

The tourist information centre is located at the Harbour Visitor Centre which is some distance outwith the town centre. However, VisitScotland are due to close this facility and opportunities are being considered for its reuse as it is a striking building.

Score: 4



Ease of Movement for Pedestrians

The vehicular traffic within the town centre was relatively high but quieter towards the northern part of the High Street.

The pavements are fairly wide and the hard surfaces are generally flat which offers easy access for pedestrians. The central pedestrianised section, between Kirk Square and Lordburn, also ensures good accessibility. However, issues regarding dropped kerbs have been raised in an Accessibility Audit which has materialised as a follow up from the Arbroath Town Centre Charette.

The majority of properties offer easy access for disabled customers due to street-level access with only a few properties featuring stepped entrances. However, issues regarding A Boards have been raised in the recent Accessibility Audit as mentioned above.

The town centre generally slopes from south to north but is generally wide and open and feels safe to walk through.

Score: 4



Access to/from/within the Town Centre

There are a number of car parks within and adjacent to the town centre which are conveniently located and well used. The car parks, such as West Abbey Street, are well connected to the town centre and are easily accessible. There is on-street car parking provision on most of the main streets and it appears to be well used.

Bus stops are located within the town centre and within close proximity to the town centre. The main bus station is located on the edge of the town centre although it is not visually well connected to the town centre.

The railway station is approximately 500 – 750 metres away which is not a significant distance but similar to the bus station is not visually well connected to the town centre. Both are separated from the town centre by the A92 which acts as a physical barrier.

Storage for bicycles is provided outside Lidl, in the central pedestrianised section between Kirk Square and Lordburn, and at the public library on Hill Place although this is located just outside of the town centre.

Score: 4



Availability of Food and Drink Facilities

There a range of different facilities such as bakers, butchers, cafes, convenience stores, fishmonger, sandwich bars and supermarket in the town centre. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas.

The evening economy includes facilities such as the bingo hall, webster's theatre, restaurants, takeaways, public houses and a nightclub.

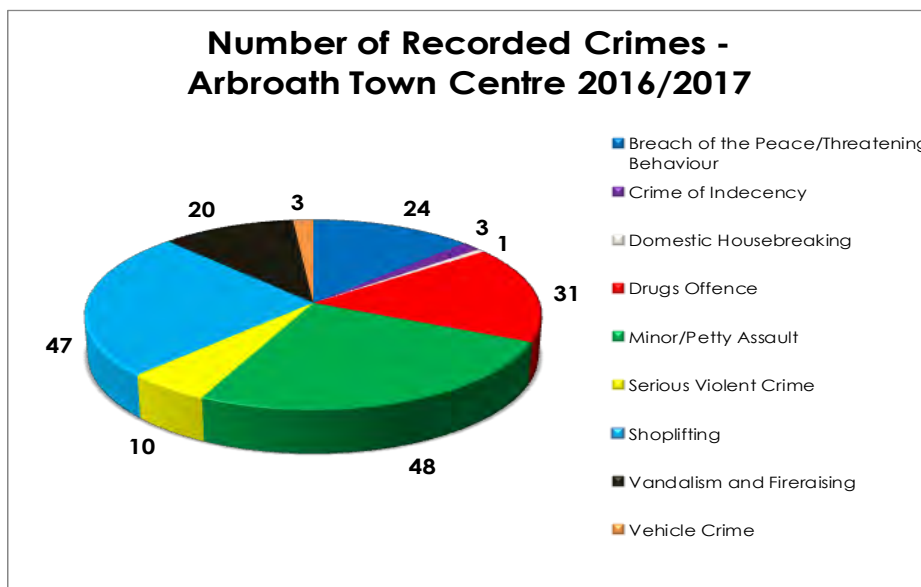
There are also a few vacant public houses such as 14 Market Place and 268 High Street which suggest that the evening economy may not be as vibrant as it once was. Furthermore, there are limited opportunities for young people within the town centre if you were either too young to enter public houses or did not wish to.

Score: 4

3.6 Crime

The numbers of recorded crimes in Arbroath town centre have all increased between the town centre health checks 2010 and 2017 with the exception of minor/petty assaults, shoplifting, and vandalism and fireraising. However, when referring to the number of recorded crimes in other town centres across Scotland, all of the town centres in Angus remain very low.

With specific regards to the number of shoplifting crimes, they have almost halved from 80 to 47 since the town centre health check in 2010. This demonstrates the good work being carried out by Police Scotland and other partners who are continuing to work closely with businesses to improve security, together with working with offenders to tackle the underlying causes. A significant reduction in the number of shoplifting crimes will help to improve a shoppers experience along with the viability of individual shops and services.



3.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A design charrette was commissioned by Angus Council to consider ways to regenerate and rejuvenate Arbroath town centre in 2016. This process sought to combine socio-economic and physical planning to consider the issues affecting the town and then suggested areas for focus and action. The publication of the Arbroath Town Centre Charrette included actions which could help realise some of the opportunities identified on Page 15. For instance, the suggestion to trial an alternative single carriageway layout and allowing parking on the A92 could provide evidence of the proof of the concept of reduced carriageways. Furthermore, the establishment of a visible town centre enterprise incubator would provide ready-to-move-into space in an existing vacant unit. This would offer opportunities for up to a twelve month period for start-up businesses to test-trade their business idea etc. Therefore, the Arbroath Town Centre Charrette along with the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan should be read in conjunction with this town centre health check.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landmark buildings such as the historic Arbroath Abbey and The Old Parish Church Steeple add interest and distinction to the built environment. The elongated town centre acts as a linkage between the historic Arbroath Abbey and the harbour. • A high number of national multiples such as Argos, Boots, Farmfoods, Semi-Chem and WH Smith reinforce its scale and function as a location for comparison shops. • A good quality provision of benches, public bins, toilets, payphones and information boards will help encourage pedestrians to linger which may be an advantage in relation to the vitality of the town centre. • The central pedestrianised section, between Kirk Square and Lordburn, provides a large quantity of open space within the heart of the town centre whilst limiting the effects of traffic (noise, pollution and poor ease of pedestrian movement etc) upon the commercial environment. • There are a good range of different facilities distributed across the town centre with good potential for the evening economy (bingo hall, webster's theatre, restaurants, takeaways, public houses and a nightclub). 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decrease in the number of convenience and comparison retail units and a high number of charity and discount shops limits the quality of the retail offer (high value/quality items etc). • There is no consistent style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment. • An increase in the number of vacant units has resulted in a vacancy rate of 16%. • There are a few vacant public houses such as 14 Market Place and 268 High Street which suggest that the evening economy may not be as vibrant as it once was. Furthermore, there are limited opportunities for young people within the town centre. • The A92 acts as a physical barrier between the town centre and facilities such as the bus and railway stations. It discourages pedestrians from accessing the town centre and provides an unattractive first impression.
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The repair, repainting and removal of vegetation from the gutters of several properties, particularly around the northern end of the High Street, would improve the quality of the built environment. • The improvement of areas of public realm such as those within the central pedestrianised section between Kirk Square and Lordburn, and located outside the webster's theatre etc through better landscaping, lighting and seating etc. • The redevelopment of vacant, previously important civic buildings such as the former sheriff court which occupies a central location would help the vitality of the High Street. • To bring unoccupied residential properties back into use which can contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre whilst also contributing to the supply of housing and affordable housing. • The proposed improvement in rail service by Scotrail will introduce more seats and services in 2018 which may increase the vitality of the commercial environment. 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall decline in the number of commercial units reduces the range of shops and services available in the town centre. • The development of out of centre retail parks such as Westway attracts pedestrians away from the town centre and provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre. • A continual rise in the number of online retail sales attracts pedestrians away from the town centre and provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre. • There are fewer pedestrians within the town centre during 2017 than there were during 2010. However, this statement requires to be interpreted with caution as the results are limited and impacted upon by the weather and time of day. A time series of results gained by future town centre health checks will help determine any potential trends.

4. Brechin Town Centre

4.1 Context

The town centre primarily serves Brechin and a number of surrounding villages such as Edzell and some of the surrounding Angus Glens. Due to its close proximity to Montrose it provides local services, community facilities and convenience shops.

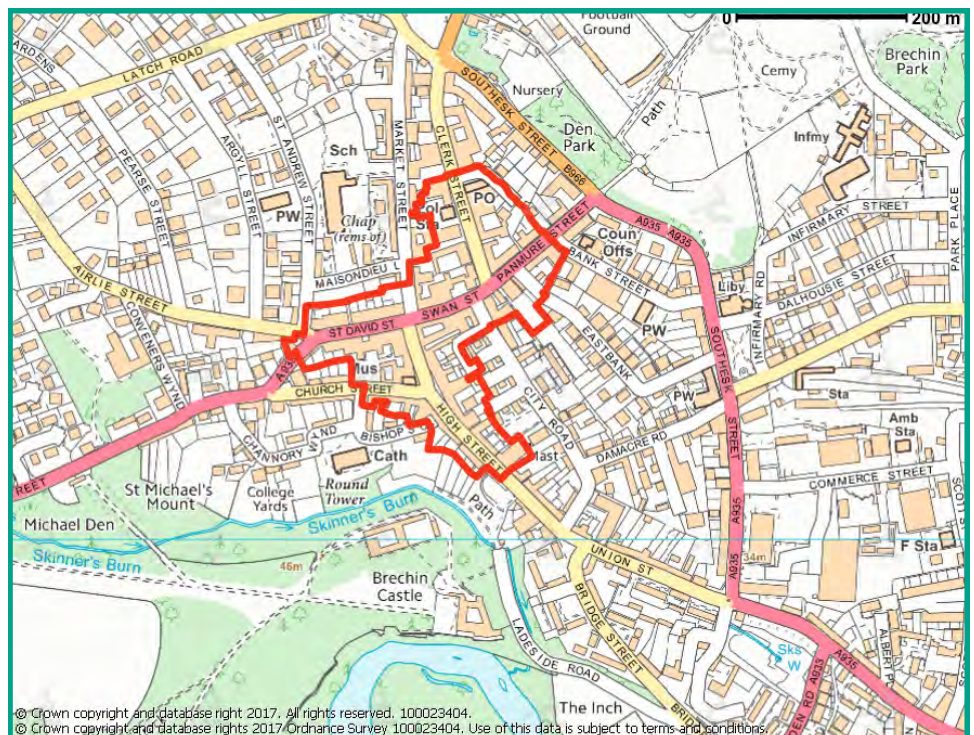
The town centre is very compact and distinctive as the historic core focusses on the High Street,



curves around the Cathedral and its historic precincts. The majority of the town centre lies within a conservation area which reflects its architectural and historical importance. Due to the town centre being located on the south facing slopes on the northern banks of the South Esk River, the topography creates some striking long southerly vistas from the town centre out onto the surrounding agricultural landscape.

185 residential properties

126 retail/commercial units



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4.2 Residential Properties

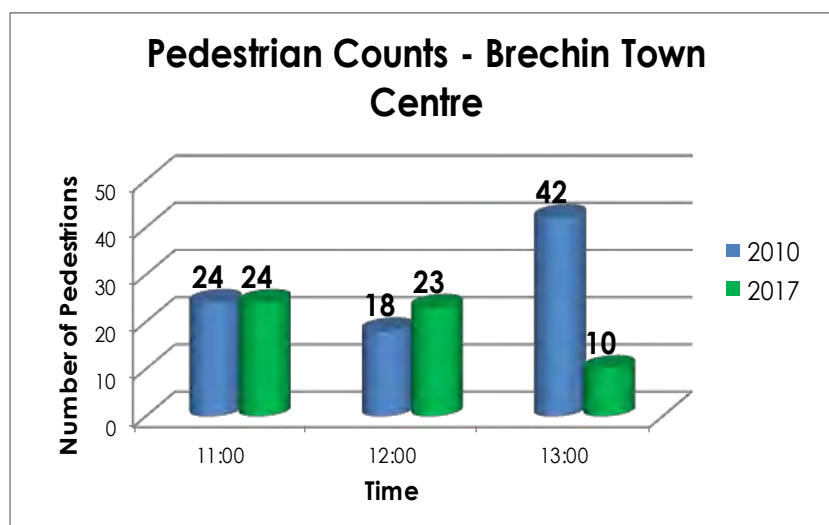
Residential properties are located throughout the town centre. The central historic core is characterised by commercial properties occupying the ground floors with flats occupying the majority of floors above. This trend continues throughout with the exception of several residential properties which occupy both the ground and floors above.



There has been an increase of 3 residential properties since 2010. This is likely to be from the change of use of commercial units to residential properties such as the former store(s) at 9 Blackbull Close. Of the residential properties, 12 (6.5%) are long term unoccupied and of these 3 have been registered as unoccupied for longer than 12 months.

4.3 Pedestrian Counts

Footfall is measured by carrying out pedestrian counts at 3 predefined locations. During the town centre health checks 2010, an average of 84 pedestrians passed by the 3 predefined locations within Brechin town centre. This has fallen to 57 for the 2017 survey.



All three of the predefined locations recorded similar numbers of passing pedestrians which suggests that the northern, central and southern ends of the town centre are equally busy. However, the pedestrian count at 11:00 on Clerk Street was influenced by a number of pedestrians who departed off the 11:00 public bus and who then entered into the town centre. Furthermore, all three of the pedestrian counts at 11:00, 12:00 and 13:00 on the High Street were influenced by a number of pedestrians who approached from the south heading north into the town centre but who were not included as they did not pass the pedestrian count location. There was also a similarity regarding the number of pedestrians which passed by the three predefined locations during the pedestrian counts at 11:00 and 12:00 but not 13:00. This suggests that the northern, central and southern ends of the town centre were busier during late morning as opposed to early afternoon.

A decline in the average total of pedestrians could be explained by the total number of commercial units in the town centre decreasing by 3 to 123 units. Although this is a slight reduction, it includes the closure of a number of important financial services such as the Clydesdale Bank and Royal Bank of Scotland which will have had a significant effect as previously they would have created pedestrian footfall within the town centre. In addition, the continual rise in the number of online retail sales, the availability of more shops and services nearby within Montrose town centre and out of centre developments such as Lidl and the Co-op etc are likely to affect pedestrian footfall within the town centre as they provide increased competition to the commercial properties within the town centre.

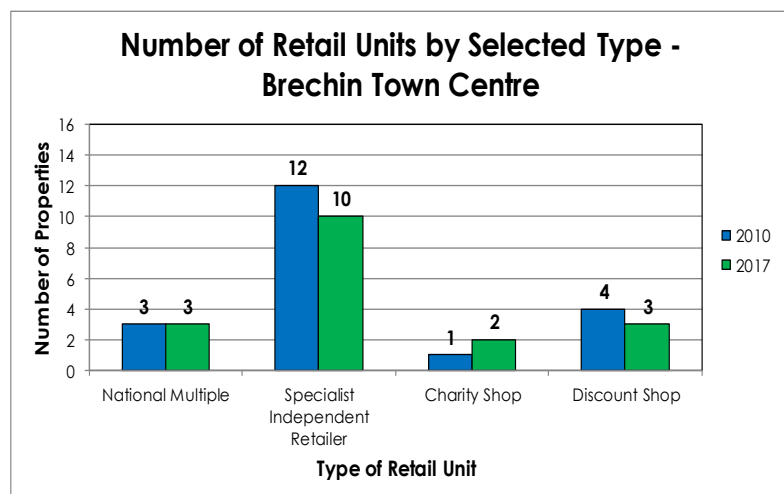
4.4 Uses and Vacancies

The 2017 survey showed a slight decrease of 3 retail/commercial units since 2010 to 126. The number of convenience, comparison, service and other units have all remained relatively similar during the 2010 and 2017 town centre health checks. Service uses continue to predominate Brechin town centre.

When considering the function of the town centre a slight increase in the number of convenience units from 10 to 13 since the town centre health check in 2010 is not unexpected. This increase will include new convenience uses such as A Portuguesa at 17 St. David Street.

Although the number of specialist independent retailers has declined from 12 to 10, this is still the second highest of all the smaller town centres in Angus (excluding Arbroath, Forfar and Montrose) which demonstrates the ability of the town centre to still retain a range of independent retailers.

The number of national multiple units within Brechin town centre has remained consistent at 3. When referring to trends across Scotland, the number of national multiples is generally decreasing within town centres as they continue to close smaller, more remotely located units in order to cut their store portfolio amid rising rents, rates and other bills. It is therefore encouraging that the number of national multiple has remained consistent.

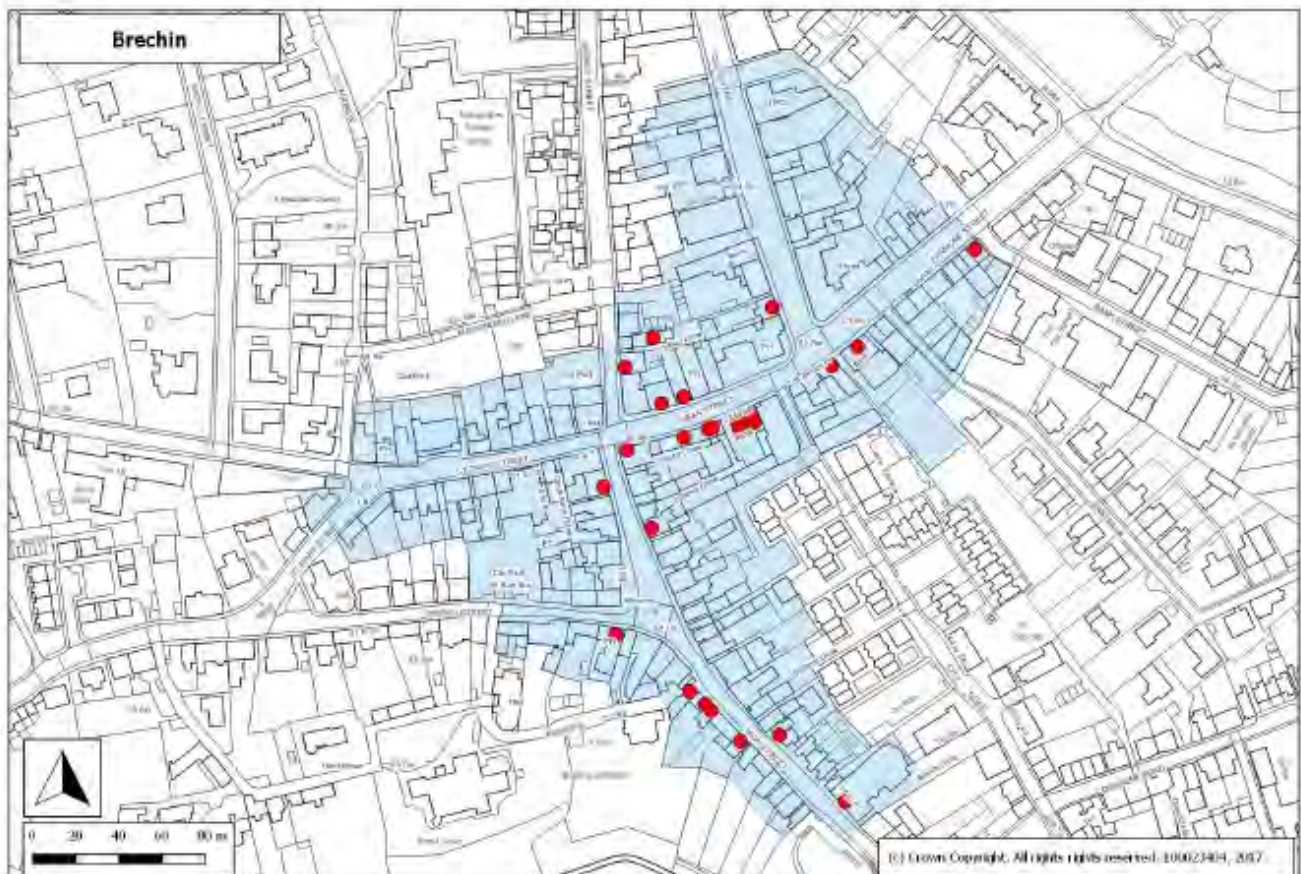


When considering that there has been a decline in the number of comparison units from 32 to 26 since the town centre health check in 2010, it is interesting that the number of national multiples has remained consistent at 3 which ensures that Brechin has the joint highest number of national multiples of all the smaller town centres in Angus (excluding Arbroath, Forfar and Montrose). The national multiples which are still present include Boots, Farmfoods and Semi-Chem. When referring to trends across Scotland, the

number of national multiples is generally decreasing in town centres due to the failure of chains and as they continue to close smaller, more remotely located units in order to cut their store portfolio amid rising rents, rates and other bills. Therefore, it is encouraging that the number of national multiples has remained consistent albeit that 3 is a relatively low number.

There has been an increase in the number of vacant units by 3 to approximately 27 units since the town centre health check in 2010. In line with other town centres across Scotland, there have been recent closures such as Blockbusters, Try Bite Café and the Savoy Café and Takeaway. This equates to approximately 22% of all commercial properties being vacant in the town centre (the highest percentage of all town centres in Angus) which is above the UK average of 9% (Springboard – January 2017). When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, the vacancy rate of all commercial properties was 18% in 2012 and 20% in 2014. Therefore, a trend which is appearing is that the vacancy rate of all commercial properties is increasing.

The vacant units are distributed throughout the town centre but it is considered that Swan Street and the most southern part of the High Street are more susceptible to vacant units than other parts of the town centre (as can be seen from the map below). The majority of these units appear to be dirty and in poor condition which causes a detrimental impact upon the appearance of the individual units but also upon the overall built environment. The majority of these units are primarily small and traditional with the exception of buildings such as the former flicks nightclub. Other units which are also vacant include the former Clydesdale Bank and Royal Bank of Scotland etc.



It is evident that service uses (37%) continue to predominate in Brechin town centre. Further analysis reveals that the service uses can be broken down into retail services (15%), leisure services (15%) and financial and business services (7%). This is not unexpected when considering that there has been a decrease in the number of comparison units along with an increase in the number of vacant units. Therefore, it would appear that new personal services such as The Barber and The Tan Inn along with new leisure services such as Bread and Butter (takeaway) are seizing the opportunity to fulfil the vacancies.

For further information regarding uses and vacancies in Brechin town centre please refer to the Angus Council Retail Floorspace Survey 2017.

4.5 Accessibility and the Physical Environment

The completion of a survey questionnaire from a single on-site observation from the public realm was a simple way of gaining an impression of the accessibility and the physical environment of Brechin town centre. It is important to acknowledge that no averages or totals were calculated; the score is only the expression of a qualitative judgement.

Overall Cleanliness
The streets are relatively free of litter and there is no clear evidence of graffiti. There are a good number of public bins which do not appear to be overflowing. However, the standard plastic public bins, single public payphone located outside of The Auld Bake House, and several closes such as Lindsay Place appear to be dirty. The majority of the vacant units appear to be dirty and in poor condition.
Score: 4

Property Appearance, Condition and Maintenance
Number of properties appear to be well-cared for, particularly those within the town centre conservation area, improved via the Townscape Heritage Initiative and the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund. Properties such as Flick's and The Savoy are in poor condition. Most commercial properties have some form of window displays but many are poor and uninspiring. Prominent corner properties active displays.
Score: 4

Presence and Quality of Open Space
There are no areas of green space in the town centre. However, there are several small areas of open space such as those located at the junction between Airlie Street and St. David Street (please refer to section 'Availability and Quality of Visitor Infrastructure'). The main area of open space is located in The Mercat Cross which is predominantly hard-surfaced, well maintained and features several benches, bicycle racks, visitor information boards and a public payphone etc. However, neither of the above areas function as areas which would encourage pedestrians to linger which may be a disadvantage in relation to the vitality of the commercial environment.
Score: 2



Quality of Built Heritage

The town centre is fortunate to have such an array of built heritage and rich historic townscape which combine to create an attractive urban setting within a compact town. This is reflected by the majority of the town centre lying within a conservation area. The town also benefits from key landmark buildings such as the Mechanics Institute, St. Columba's Church Spire and the historic Cathedral which add interest and distinction to the built environment.

Throughout the town centre there is appropriate and extensive use of sandstone and slate roofs on properties. It is also evident that there is a strong building line, particularly within the historic central part of the town centre.

There is no common colour or style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment. There are also some properties which have really poor signage and frontages.

Score: 5



Evidence of Recent Investment by Retailers

There is some evidence of recent investment as the signage on certain units on the High Street appear relatively fresh. There are also a number of new convenience uses such as Robertson's (bakers), retail services such as Ingram Models and leisure uses such as La Sia (hairdresser and sunbeds). All of the above shops and services are now occupying previously occupied units which may suggest that although there are long-term vacancies in the town centre, there is natural turnover and perhaps certain units are more likely to be re-occupied quicker than others.

However there are still a number of vacant units throughout the town centre, particularly on Swan Street, which may explain why there are some 'to let' notices. However, some of these vacant units appear to be currently undergoing renovation which suggests that the town centre is attracting new investment.

All of the above suggests that the town centre is still viewed as being attractive and viable as a commercial destination otherwise new uses would not locate or relocate in the town centre. However, the Brechin Town Centre Charrette identified that the town centre needs to enliven and enrich through a mixture of civic, community, cultural and leisure activities.

Score: 3

Availability and Quality of Visitor Infrastructure

There are several benches throughout the town centre such as the one at the junction between Airlie Street and St. David Street. This bench benefits from a long easterly vista along St. David Street and is generally clean and in good condition. There is one single public payphone located outside of The Auld Bake House. There is one set of public toilets located near the car park off of Church Street which are generally in good condition.

There are several visitor information boards throughout the town centre such as the one in the car park at Maisondieu Lane. The visitor information boards are generally in good condition and provide good information for passing pedestrians.

There is no tourist information centre as VisitScotland are in the process of closing tourist information centres as they are being replaced with high regional impact hubs, information partners such as bed and breakfasts and local retailers etc and coo vans which will tour the country providing tourist information at popular events etc. Therefore, pedestrians are able to gain basic tourist information within the public library which is located within St. Ninians Place which is within close proximity to the east of the town centre, and the Brechin Town House Museum which is located at The Mercat Cross.

Score: 3

Ease of Movement for Pedestrians

The vehicular traffic in the town centre was relatively high but quiet enough so that pedestrians were not forced to use the pedestrian crossings located in Swan Street and St. David Street. The vehicular traffic was considered to be higher within the central part of the town centre on St. David Street and Swan Street.

The pavements are fairly wide but narrow in places such as at the southern end of Market Street and on the southern side of St. David Street outside Boots. However, narrow pavements are to be expected within the central historic core of the town centre. Due to the topography of the town centre, the hard surfaces generally slope from the north down to the High Street which is relatively flat. The hard surfaces then generally slope from the High Street down to the south.

The majority of units offer easy access for disabled customers due to street-level access particularly on St. David Street and Clerk Street. However, several units do not offer easy access for disabled customers due to stepped entrances particularly on Swan Street and the High Street. In addition, buildings such as the Brechin City Hall also feature stepped entrances.

Score: 3

Access to/from/within the Town Centre

There are a number of car parks within and adjacent to the town centre which are conveniently located and well used. However, the car park at Maisondieu Lane can be difficult to access due to the pedestrian stepped entrance from St. David Street and the car park at City Road can be difficult to access due to the stepped pedestrian entrance from the High Street. There is on-street car parking provision on most of the main streets which appears to be well used. However, the majority of St. David Street does not feature any on-street car parking due to double yellow line markings on the public road. These double yellow lines are required as to ensure that there is no unnecessary vehicular traffic congestion as you enter the town centre from the west as St. David Street is relatively narrow.

There a number of bus stops located throughout the town centre which are all conveniently located for allowing pedestrians to access the shops and services which may enhance the vitality of the commercial properties. There is some storage for bicycles such as the bicycle racks located outside The Auld Bake House at 26 – 28 High Street.

Score: 2

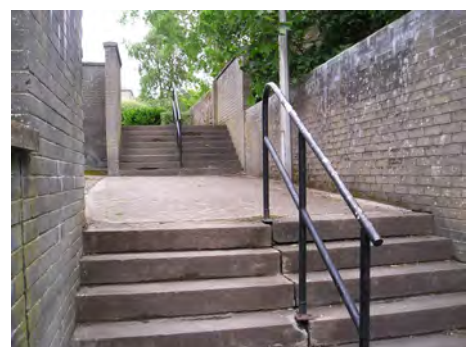


Availability of Food and Drink Facilities

There are a range of different facilities such as bakers, butcher, cafes, convenience stores and a supermarket etc which are located throughout the town centre. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas.

With specific regards to the potential evening economy, there are a range of different facilities such as a restaurant, public houses, a hotel and takeaways and again they are generally located throughout the town centre. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas. However, the closure of the former nightclub known as Flicks at 79 – 81 High Street has ensured that there is now no nightclub within the town which has reduced the evening economy facilities. There are also limited opportunities for young people within the town centre if you were either too young to enter public houses or did not wish to.

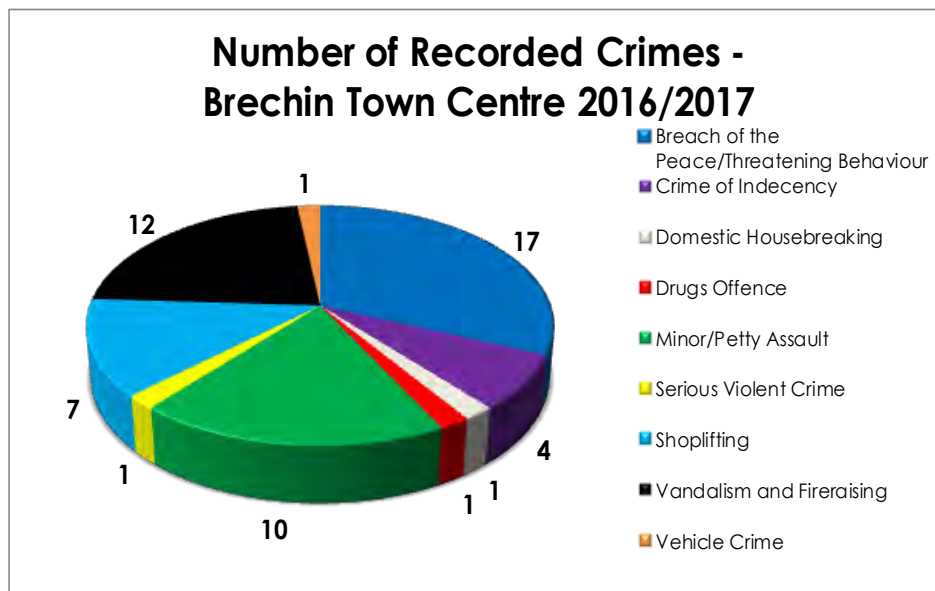
Score: 4



4.6 Crime

The number of recorded crimes within Brechin town centre have all increased between the town centre health checks 2010 and 2017 with the exception of minor/petty assaults, serious violent crime, shoplifting and vehicle crime. However, when referring to the number of recorded crimes within other town centres across Scotland, all of the town centres in Angus remain very low.

With specific regards to the number of minor/petty assaults, they have almost halved from 18 to 10 since the town centre health check in 2010. It is considered that a high incidence of minor/petty assaults could have a detrimental effect upon a pedestrians perception of a town centre as a safe place to be. However, further analysis reveals that most of the minor/petty assaults can be attributed to either alcohol related altercations linked to the night time economy, or to domestic offences committed within private households.



4.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A design charrette was commissioned by Angus Council to consider ways to regenerate and rejuvenate Brechin town centre in 2015. This process sought to combine socio-economic and physical planning to consider the issues affecting the town and then suggested areas for focus and action. The publication of the Brechin Town Centre Charrette included actions which could help realise some of the opportunities identified on Page 24. For instance, the requirement to review the visitor accommodation within the town could help support the town's visitor attractions, and the potential use of proactive planning could help enable the development of difficult sites such as the former nightclub on 79 – 81 High Street. Therefore, the Brechin Town Centre Charrette along with the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan should be read in conjunction with this town centre health check.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A compact and distinctive town centre as the historic core focusses on the High Street, curves around the Cathedral and its historic precincts. • The number of national multiples (the joint highest of the smaller town centres in Angus) has remained consistent at 3 which improves the retail offer and helps create a reason for visiting the town centre. • The number of independent specialist retailers (10) is the second highest of all the smaller town centres in Angus. • There is evidence of recent investment within the town centre as the signage on certain units appears relatively fresh. • There are a good range of different facilities distributed across the town centre with good potential for the evening economy. 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decline in the number of comparison retail units reduces the retail offer within the town centre. • Vacancy rate of 22% above the UK average of 9%. • No consistent style of signs and fascia's . • The majority of vacant units appear to be dirty and in poor condition. • The car parks at Maisondieu Lane and City Road are difficult to access due to stepped pedestrian accesses.
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop vacant buildings such as the former nightclub at 79 – 81 High Street which will improve the built environment. • Improve property window displays, particularly prominent corner properties. • The creation of a focal area of open space where pedestrians could linger and relax may then help increase the vitality and viability of the town centre. • An increase in the resident population of Brechin along with an increase in the number of residential properties within the town centre may increase vitality and provide a local customer-base for shops and services. • To promote and support the niche retail offer of the town centre which is demonstrated by its ability to retain a range of independent retailers. • To promote and support the town's visitor attractions. • To bring unoccupied residential properties back into use. 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall decline in the number of commercial units reduces the range of shops and services available in the town centre. • A continual predominance of service uses may limit the future retail offer. • A continual rise in the number of online retail sales provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre. • Out of centre developments such as Lidl and the Co-op attract pedestrian footfall away from the town centre and provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre. • There are fewer pedestrians within the town centre during 2017 than there were during 2010. However, this statement requires to be interpreted with caution as the results are limited and impacted upon by the weather and time of day. A time series of results gained by future town centre health checks will help determine any potential trends.

5. Carnoustie Town Centre

5.1 Context

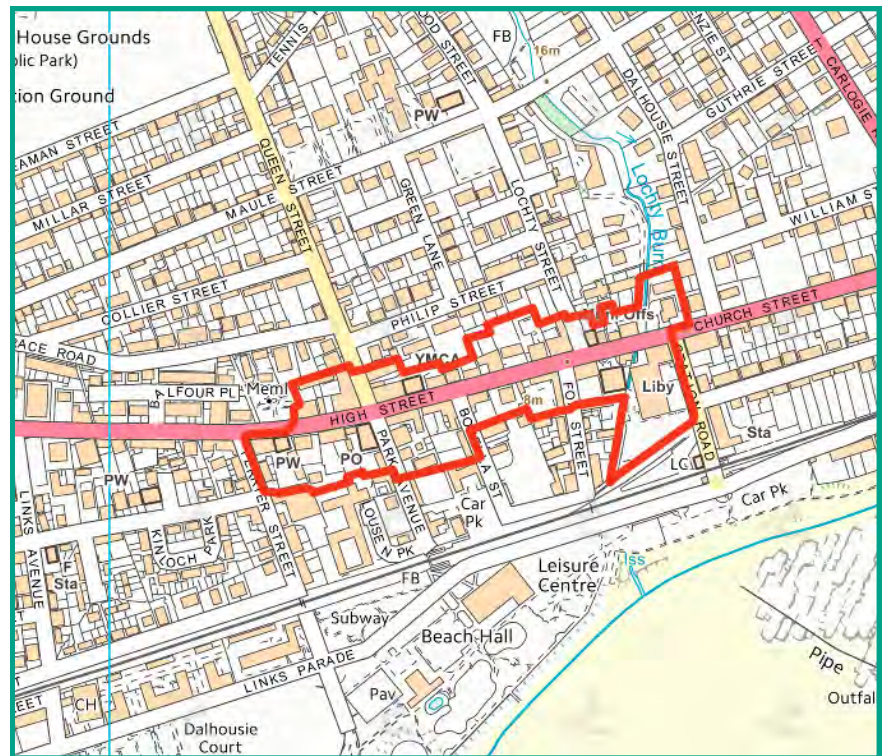
The town centre primarily serves Carnoustie and a number of surrounding villages such as Monikie. It primarily provides local services, community facilities and convenience shops. The town centre is compact and features an elongated High Street stretching from Ferrier Street in the west to Station Road in the east. Carnoustie is one of the very few town centres in Angus which does not feature a conservation area which reflects its lack of quality built heritage and rich historic townscape which do not combine to create a distinctive urban setting.



The resident population of Carnoustie has increased by approximately 1,136 people since the town centre health check in 2010. The reasons for this increase are likely to be net migration and the development of new housing on sites such as Newton Road which is located to the north of the town centre, and part redevelopment of the former maltings on Victoria Street which is located to the west of the town centre.

88 residential
properties

68 retail/
commercial units



5.2 Residential Properties

Since 2010, the number of residential properties in the town centre has slightly increased by 6 to 88. This increase is likely to be due to the change of use from commercial units to residential properties such as the former retail unit at 16 High Street.

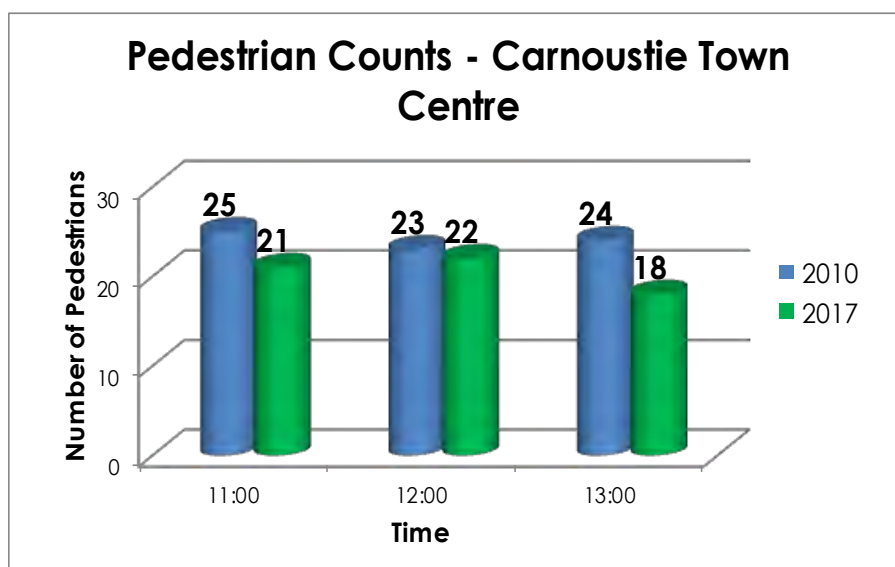
The residential properties are located throughout the town centre. The elongated High Street is predominantly characterised by commercial properties occupying the ground floors with flats occupying the floors above. However, it is also characterised by several semi-detached and detached residential properties such as 87 High Street. Some of these residential properties benefit from private front gardens which adjoin the High Street, enhancing the public realm.



The majority of the side streets such as Bonella Street and Fox Street are predominantly characterised by single and double storey residential properties. However, side streets such as Park Avenue and Queen Street are similar to the High Street with commercial properties occupying the ground floors and flats above. From the 88 residential properties in the town centre, 5 (5.7%) are identified as being long-term unoccupied properties with the majority of these being 1 bed detached properties located within close proximity to the High Street.

5.3 Pedestrian Counts

During the town centre health check in 2010, an average total of 72 pedestrians passed by the two predefined pedestrian count locations in Carnoustie town centre. In 2017, this decreased to an average total of 61 pedestrians which is the highest of all the smaller town centres in Angus (i.e. excluding Arbroath, Forfar and Montrose).



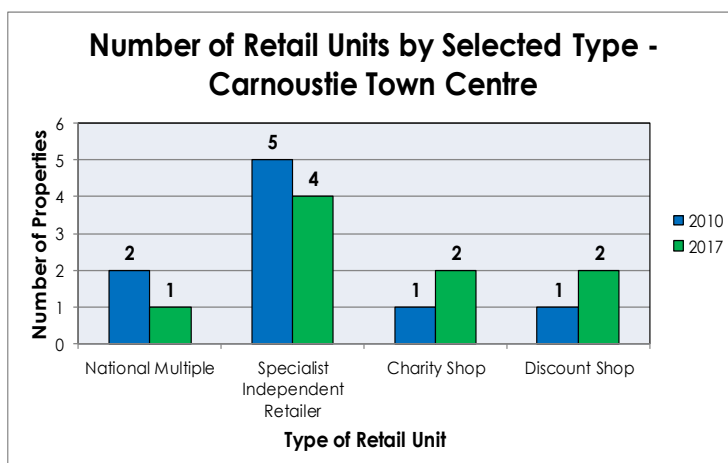
Both of the predefined locations recorded similar numbers of passing pedestrians which suggests that the western and eastern ends of the High Street are equally busy. There was also a similarity regarding the number of pedestrians which passed by the two predefined locations during each individual count at 11:00, 12:00 and 13:00. This suggests that both the western and eastern ends of the High Street are equally busy during the duration of the pedestrian counts. This is to be expected considering that the High Street represents the main commercial street in the town centre whereas the majority of the side streets are predominantly characterised by residential properties with the exception of Park Avenue and Queen Street.

A decline in the average total of pedestrians could be explained by the total number of commercial units in the town centre decreasing by 6 to 68 units. Although this is a slight reduction, it includes the closure of important former financial services such as the Royal Bank of Scotland which will have an effect as previously they would have created pedestrian footfall in the town centre. In addition, the continual rise in the number of online retail sales and the availability of more shops and services nearby within Arbroath town centre and Dundee are likely to ensure that there will be less pedestrian footfall in the town centre as they provide increased competition to the commercial properties in the town centre.

5.4 Uses and Vacancies

The total number of commercial units in the town centre has slightly decreased by 6 to 68 units since the town centre health check in 2010. Further analysis reveals that the number of comparison and other units have slightly decreased, the number of convenience units has slightly increased and the number of service units has remained the same.

When considering that the town centre primarily provides convenience shops, a slight increase in the number of convenience units from 7 to 10 since the town centre health check in 2010 is not unexpected. The type of convenience shops which are present in the town centre consist of bakers, a butcher, newsagents, a supermarket and a confectionary unit etc. When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, there were 11 units in 2012 and in 2014. Therefore, it appears that a trend in the increase of convenience shops, albeit that it is a very slight increase, is occurring in Carnoustie town centre.



When considering that the town centre is not regarded as a location for comparison shops, a slight decrease in the number of comparison units from 16 to 14 since 2010 is not unexpected. The town centre has the second lowest number of comparison shops of all the town centres in Angus. This may be due to the availability of more shops and services nearby within Arbroath town centre and Dundee. The type of comparison shops which are still present in the town centre consist of a DIY shop, a florist, a gift shop, a shoe shop and a ladies accessory shop etc.

Similar to comparison shops, there has also been a decline in the number of national multiples from 2 to 1. The only national multiple still present in the town centre is the Co-op which is located at 3 High Street. However, in line with trends across Scotland the number of national multiples is generally decreasing in town centres due to the failure of chains and as they

continue to close smaller, more remotely located units in order to cut their store portfolio amid rising rents, rates and other bills.

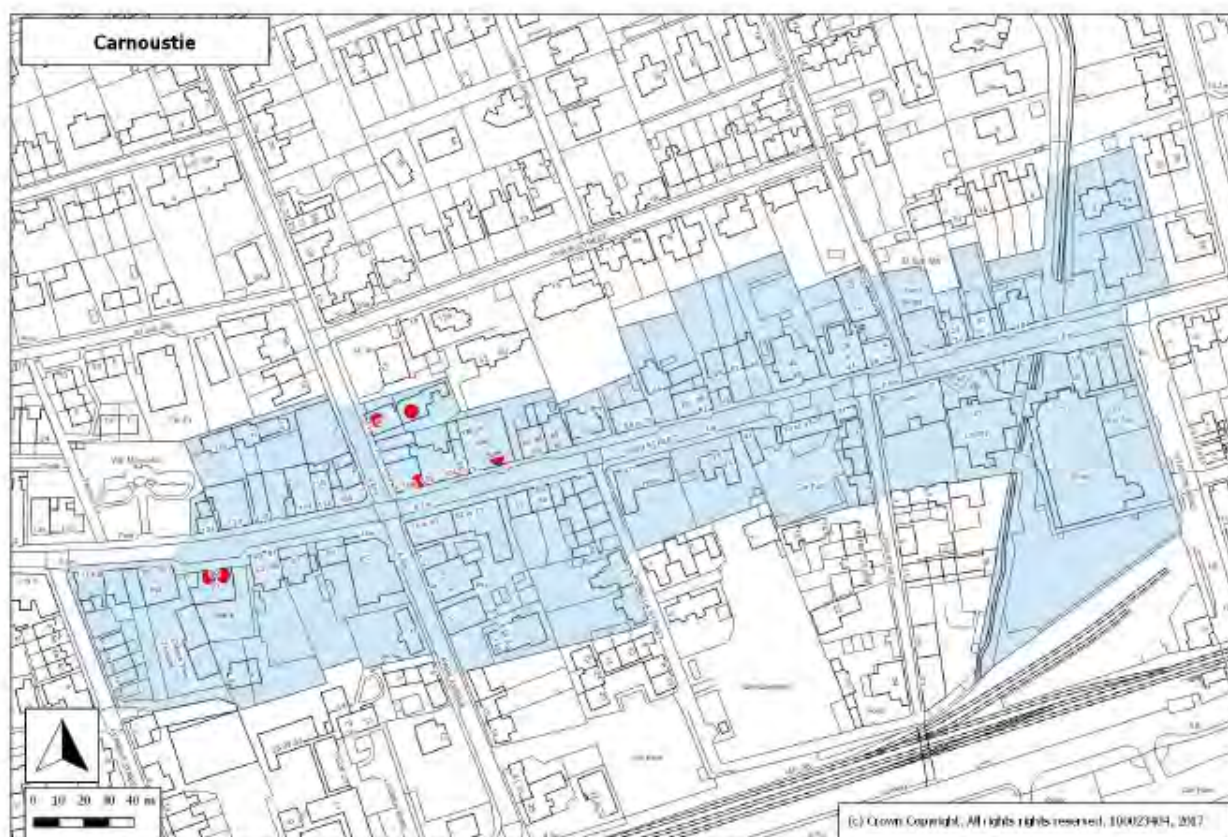
Although the number of specialist independent retailers has declined from 5 to 4, this is still the third highest of all the smaller town centres in Angus which demonstrates the ability of the town centre to still retain a range of independent retailers.

There has been a slight increase in the number of charity shops and discount units. There has been a decline in the number of vacant units by 4 since 2010. A decline in the number of vacant units is evidence of recent investment in the town centre as previous vacant units such as 30 High Street are now occupied by retail uses such as Little Feet – Pitter Patter etc.

Further analysis reveals that 4 of these vacant units, such as the former office unit at 99 High Street, were also vacant in 2010. This equates to approximately 9% of all commercial properties being vacant which is comparable with the UK average of 9% (Springboard – January 2017). When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, the vacancy rate of all commercial properties was 6% in 2012 and 12% in 2014. A time series of vacancy rates gained by future town centre health checks will help determine any potential trends.

The vacant units are distributed within the western end of the town centre which appears to be more susceptible than other parts of the town centre (as can be seen from the map below). The vacant units consist of a mixture of small and traditional units to large and non-traditional units such as the former Royal Bank of Scotland at 97 High Street.

It is evident that service uses (50%) continue to predominate in Carnoustie town centre. Further analysis reveals that the service uses can be broken down into retail services (19%), leisure services (25%) and financial and business services (6%). This is not unexpected when considering that there has been a decrease in the number of comparison and other units (which includes



vacant units) but the number of service units has remained the same. Therefore, it would appear that new personal services such as Findlay's (hair and beauty) along with new leisure services such as the Two Sister's Café and Titanic Pizza Co (takeaway) are seizing the opportunity to fulfil the vacancies.

For further information regarding uses and vacancies in Carnoustie town centre please refer to the Angus Council Retail Floorspace Survey 2017.

5.5 Accessibility and the Physical Environment

The completion of a survey questionnaire from a single on-site observation from the public realm was a simple way of gaining an impression of the accessibility and the physical environment of Carnoustie town centre. It is important to acknowledge that no averages or totals were calculated; the score is only the expression of a qualitative judgement.

Overall Cleanliness

Throughout the town centre the streets are relatively free of litter and there is no clear evidence of graffiti. There are a good number of standard plastic public bins which did not appear to be overflowing and are generally in good condition.

The public toilets which are located at the eastern end of the town centre on Station Road are dirty and in poor condition due to the fading of colours etc.

The majority of benches, lampposts, planters, seating and tree guards etc are clean and generally in good condition.

Score: 4



Property Appearance, Condition and Maintenance

Overall, the properties appear to be well cared for and in reasonable condition particularly the recent redevelopment of the ground, first and second floors at 108 High Street. However, there are a number of properties in the town centre, particularly on the southern side of the High Street, which are in poor condition and would benefit from being repaired, repainted and removing vegetation from the gutters etc.

Most commercial properties have some form of window displays which are generally clean and intact. However, there are a number of properties which have poor and uninspiring window displays due to furniture being stacked up against windows and curtain rails hanging down etc. Some commercial properties also have outside seating areas such as Franco's Café at 1B High Street.

Score: 3

Presence and Quality of Open Space

There are no areas of green space in the town centre. This does not encourage pedestrians to linger which may be a disadvantage in relation to the vitality of the commercial environment.

There is an area of open space located at the eastern end of the High Street across from Nickel 'n' Dime. This area is partly hard-surfaced with some soft landscaping, is well maintained and features several benches. There is also an area of open space located at the War Memorial but this is just outwith the town centre boundary.

The elongated High Street is characterised by several semi-detached and detached residential properties such as 87 High Street. Some of these residential properties benefit from private front gardens which adjoin the High Street. Although these private residential gardens do not form part of the public open space, they do enhance the public realm.

Score: 3

Quality of Built Heritage

Carnoustie is one of the very few town centres in Angus which does not feature a conservation area.

Although there are no major landmark buildings, the turret on top of the recently redeveloped ground, first and second floors at 108 High Street does add some visual interest to the town centre and provides a point of reference. The former petrol station which has been redeveloped into residential properties also adds some visual interest.

The majority of buildings are built from local stone, render and slate roofs. It is also evident that many properties in the town centre feature dormer windows, particularly within the central part of the High Street. The elongated High Street provides uninterrupted vistas which are aided by a strong building line, particularly on the northern side of the High Street. However, as the topography of the High Street is relatively flat, there are no vistas which can be enjoyed by looking out from the town centre.

Throughout the town centre there is no common colour or style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment. There are also some properties which have really poor signage and frontages.

Score: 3



Evidence of Recent Investment by Retailers

There is some evidence of recent investment in the town centre as some units have relatively fresh looking signage such as Scotch Corner Café on 28 High Street. The attraction of new uses such as Little Feet – Pitter Patter which is now occupying the previously vacant unit at 30 High Street, along with a decline in the number of vacant units by 4 to 6 is also evidence of recent investment in the town centre.

In addition to the above, the recent redevelopment of the ground, first and second floors at 108 High Street into a mixture of commercial and residential properties; the refurbishment of the interior of the library; and the redevelopment of the former retail units at 16 High Street into residential properties are all other examples of recent investment in the town centre.

All of the above suggests that the town centre is still viewed as being attractive and viable as a commercial destination otherwise new uses would not locate in the town centre. However, the Carnoustie Town Centre Charette identified that the town centre needs to evolve to become more sustainable and to more adequately cater for its social and economic needs and ambitions.

There are still 4 vacant units in the town centre. There are also a number of poorly maintained properties which could be improved via some investment.

Score: 3

Availability and Quality of Visitor Infrastructure

There are several benches located throughout the town centre such as those at the eastern end of the High Street within the area of open space opposite Nickel 'n' Dime. There are also several benches located in the area of open space at the War Memorial just outwith the town centre boundary. There are no benches or areas to linger within the central part of the High Street which does not encourage pedestrians to linger.

There are no public payphones in the town centre. There is one set of public toilets located at the eastern end of the High Street on Station Road which are dirty and in poor condition. The public toilets are also not well signposted.

There is only one visitor information board in the town centre which is located outside the redeveloped former petrol station. The visitor information board is generally in good condition and provides good information for pedestrians passing by.

There is no tourist information centre as VisitScotland are in the process of closing tourist information centres as they are being replaced with high regional impact hubs, information partners such as bed and breakfasts and local retailers etc and coo vans which will tour the country providing tourist information at popular events etc. Therefore, pedestrians are able to gain basic tourist information in the refurbished public library at 21 High Street.

Score: 3

Ease of Movement for Pedestrians

The vehicular traffic in the town centre was relatively high but quiet enough so that pedestrians were not forced to use either of the two pedestrian crossings. The two pedestrian crossing are located outside the Titanic Pizza Co towards the western end of the High Street, and outside Nickel 'n' Dime towards the eastern end of the High Street. The vehicular traffic was considered to be equally high throughout the town centre which is not unexpected when considering that the High Street functions as the main route through the town centre.

The pavements are generally wide but become narrower where there is the provision of on-street parking. However, there are relatively narrow pavements on several of the side streets such as Bonella Street and Fox Street which may prove difficult to access for some disabled customers.

There are some units in the town centre which offer easy access for disabled customers due to street-level access. However, there are also some which feature stepped entrances and doorways which are relatively narrow.

The town centre generally slopes from north to south. Overall it feels safe to walk through although the railway underpass at the bottom of Fox Street could be improved by better lighting etc to attract pedestrians into the town centre from the opposite side of the railway line.

Score: 4

Access to/from/within the Town Centre

There is one public car park in the town centre which is located to the rear of the redeveloped former petrol station. This car park is conveniently located for pedestrians accessing the shops and services and seems to be well used.

There is a public car park located within close proximity at Park Avenue which is also conveniently located and appears to be well used. A further car park located at Station Road also provides good access via the pedestrian railway crossings at Station Road and Park Avenue and the pedestrian railway underpass at Fox Street. This car park also appears to be relatively well used.

There is on-street car parking provision on both sides of the High Street but less so on the majority of the side streets such as Bonella Street and Fox Street which have double yellow line markings on the public road. Bonella Street and Fox Street are both very narrow so the lack of on-street car parking provision is not unexpected. The on-street car parking provision seems to be well used but where it is provided, the pavements are narrower.

There are a number of bus stops located throughout the High Street which are all conveniently located for pedestrians accessing the shops and services. There is also a railway station which is located outwith but within close proximity to the town centre on Station Road. A number of bicycle racks are located outside the Co-op and the Spar.

Score: 4

Availability of Food and Drink Facilities

There are a range of different facilities such as bakers, a butcher, cafes, newsagents, supermarkets and a confectionary unit which are generally located throughout the town centre. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas.

With specific regards to the potential evening economy, there are a range of different facilities such as a theatre, restaurants, hotels and takeaways which again are generally located throughout the town centre. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas. However, there are limited opportunities for young people within the town centre if you were either too young to enter public houses or did not wish to.

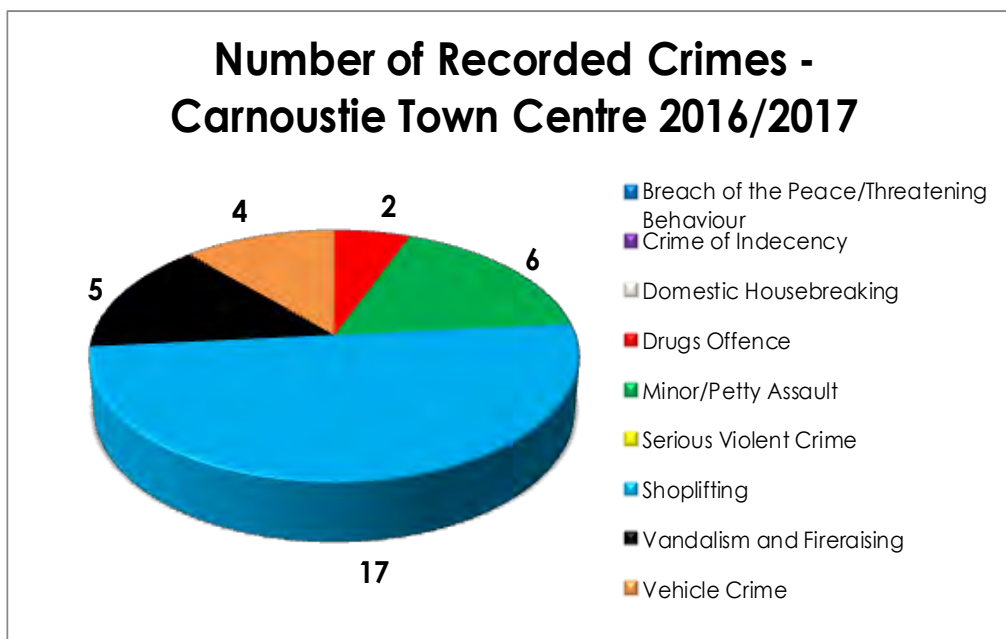
Score: 3



5.6 Crime

The number of recorded crimes in Carnoustie town centre have all either remained the same or decreased between the town centre health checks 2010 and 2017 with the exception of drugs offences, shoplifting and vehicle crime. Carnoustie has the second lowest number of recorded crimes of all the town centres in Angus. However, when referring to the number of recorded crimes in other town centres across Scotland, all of the town centres in Angus remain very low.

With specific regards to breach of the peace/threatening behaviour, crime of indecency, domestic housebreaking and serious violent crimes, there were no recorded crimes in the town centre which resembles the low number of recorded crimes which are carried out.



5.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A design charrette was commissioned by Angus Council to consider ways to regenerate and rejuvenate Carnoustie town centre in 2015. This process sought to combine socio-economic and physical planning to consider the issues affecting the town and then suggested areas for focus and action. The publication of the Carnoustie Town Centre Charrette included actions which could help realise some of the opportunities identified on Page 33. For instance, the requirement to create feature entrances at the pedestrian railway underpass at the bottom of Fox Street would help encourage pedestrian flow from the opposite side of the railway line into the town centre. Therefore, the Carnoustie Town Centre Charrette along with the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan should be read in conjunction with this town centre health check.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An average total of 61 pedestrians passed by the two predefined locations which represents relatively high levels of pedestrian footfall in comparison to the other smaller town centres in Angus (i.e. excluding Arbroath, Forfar and Montrose). • A decline in the number of vacant units. • There are a low number of recorded crimes (the second lowest of all the town centres in Angus) which ensures that the town centre is a safe place to be. • The internationally renowned links golf course provides a strong tourist and visitor draw along with other attractions such as the beach etc. 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decline in the number of comparison retail units and an increase in the number of charity and discount shops limits the quality of the retail offer (high value/quality items etc). • There is no consistent style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment. • There are no benches or areas to linger within the central part of the High Street. • Although the number of vacant units has decreased, the current town centre vacancy rate of 9% is still comparable with the UK average.
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The repair, repainting and removal of vegetation from the gutters of several properties, particularly on the southern side of the High Street, would improve the quality of the built environment. • The creation of a focal area of open space where pedestrians could linger and relax may then help increase the vitality and viability of the town centre. • The creation of a better relationship (both in terms of pedestrian and vehicular access and the range of shops and services) between the town centre and the important beach/golf course. • To promote and support the town's visitor attractions which will help develop the visitor economy. • To bring unoccupied residential properties back into use which can contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre whilst also contributing to the supply of housing and affordable housing. • The proposed improvement in rail service by Scotrail will introduce more seats and services in 2018 which may increase the vitality of the commercial environment. 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall decline in the number of commercial units reduces the range of shops and services available in the town centre. • There are fewer pedestrians in the town centre during 2017 than there were during 2010. However, this statement requires to be interpreted with caution as the results are limited and impacted upon by the weather and time of day. A time series of results gained by future town centre health checks will help determine any potential trends. • A continual predominance of service uses may limit the retail offer. • A continual rise in the number of online retail sales attracts pedestrians away from the town centre and provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre. • The availability of more shops and services nearby in Arbroath town centre and Dundee.

6. Forfar Town Centre

6.1 Context

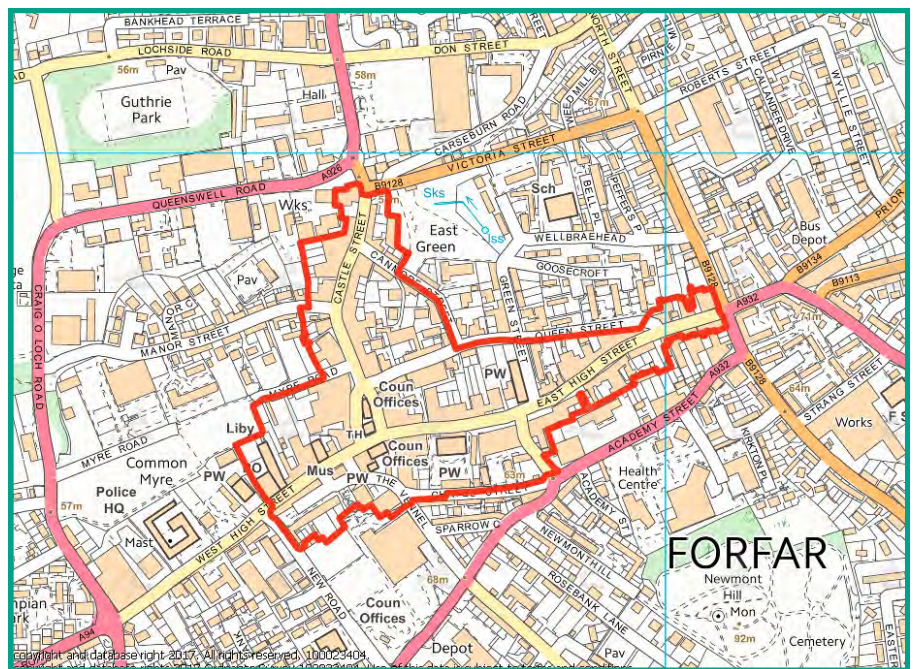
The town centre, which contains the highest number of commercial units of all the town centres in Angus, primarily serves Forfar and a number of surrounding villages such as Letham. It provides a location for comparison shops whilst also providing local services, community facilities and convenience shops. The town centre is distinctive as the three main streets which consist of West High Street, Castle Street and East High Street all connect around the Forfar Town and County Hall which forms part of a central, triangular core. The historic architecture in this central area of the town centre adds interest and distinction to the built environment. The majority of the town centre, with the exception of the most eastern section of East High Street, lies in a conservation area which reflects its architectural and historic importance.



The resident population of Forfar has increased by approximately 885 people since the town centre health check in 2010. It is considered that the reasons for this increase are likely to be due to net migration and the development of new housing on sites such as Wester Restenneth which is located to the north east of the town centre.

273 residential properties

244 retail/commercial units



6.2 Residential Properties

Since 2010, the number of residential properties in the town centre has slightly increased by 8 to 273 which is the third highest of all the town centres in Angus. This increase is likely to be due to the change of use from commercial units to residential properties such as the former store at 169A East High Street.

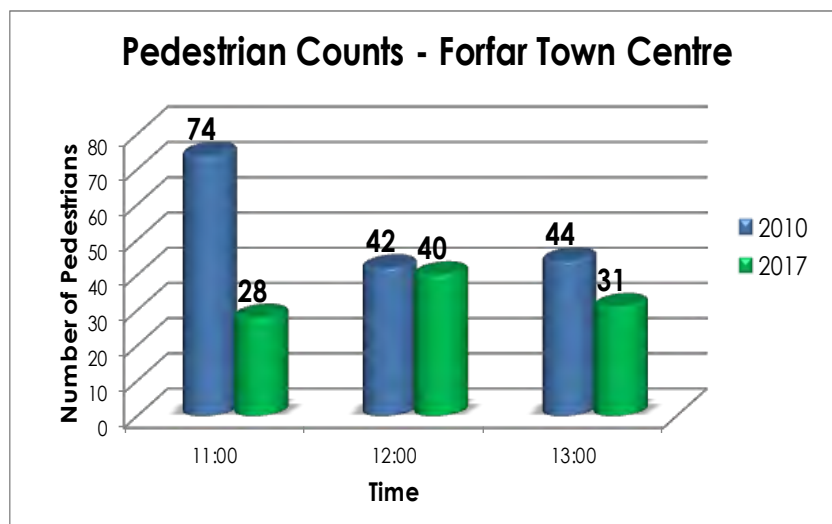
The residential properties are located throughout the town centre. The majority of West High Street, East High Street and Castle Street which together form the main commercial streets in the town centre, are characterised by commercial properties occupying the ground floors with predominantly flats occupying the floors above. However, there are some double storey residential properties located in these streets such as 130 Castle Street and 107-109 Queen Street. The majority of the side streets such as Green Street and Canmore Street are predominantly characterised by single and double storey residential properties.



From the 273 residential properties in the town centre, 9 (3.3%) are identified as being long-term unoccupied properties which is the second lowest percentage of all the town centres in Angus. The majority of these unoccupied properties are located on either Castle Street or East High Street and are flats with 2 bedrooms. 4 of these residential properties have been registered as unoccupied for longer than 12 months.

6.3 Pedestrian Counts

During the town centre health check in 2010, an average total of 160 pedestrians passed by the three predefined pedestrian count locations in Forfar town centre. In 2017, this decreased to an average total of 99 pedestrians which is the lowest average of all the larger town centres in Angus.



All three of the predefined locations recorded similar numbers of passing pedestrians which suggests that the western, central and eastern areas of the town centre are equally busy. This is to be expected considering that West High Street, East High and Castle Street together form the main commercial streets in the town centre which will attract the most pedestrians.

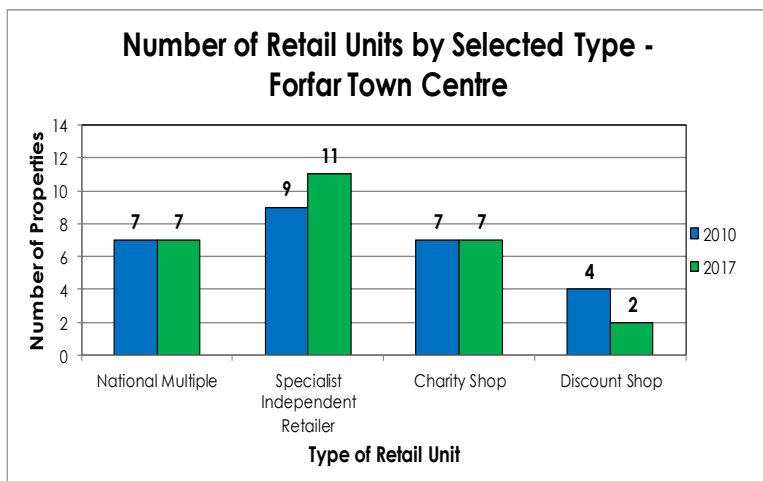
There was also a similarity regarding the number of pedestrians which passed by the three predefined locations during the pedestrian counts at 11:00 and 13:00 but not 12:00. This suggests that the northern, central and southern areas of the town centre were busier at 12:00 as opposed to 11:00 and 13:00.

A decline in the average total of pedestrians could be explained by the total number of commercial units in the town centre decreasing by 8. Although this is a slight reduction, it is considered that the closure of important former financial services such as the Clydesdale Bank and leisure services such as the former swimming pool will have an effect as previously they would have created pedestrian footfall in the town centre. In addition, the continual rise in the number of online retail sales along with edge of centre developments such as Aldi, Asda, B&M, Home Bargains, Lidl and Tesco are all likely to ensure that there will be less pedestrian footfall as they provide increased competition to the commercial properties in the town centre.

6.4 Uses and Vacancies

The total number of commercial units in the town centre has slightly decreased by 8 to 244 units. Further analysis reveals that the number of convenience, comparison and service units have decreased whereas the number of other units have increased.

The number of comparison shops has slightly reduced from 70 to 56. When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, the number of comparison shops reduced to 63 units in both 2012 and 2014. Therefore, it appears that a trend in the decline of comparison shops is occurring in Forfar town centre.



Although there has been a decline in the number of comparison shops, the number of national multiples have remained the same at 7 although the town centre possesses the lowest number of national multiples of all the larger town centres in Angus. The national multiples which are still present include Boots, Farmfoods, Semi-Chem and M&Co. etc.

The number of convenience units has slightly decreased from 23 to 19 since the 2010. The type of convenience shops which are present in the town centre

consist of bakers, butchers, a fishmonger, newsagents and several confectionary units etc.

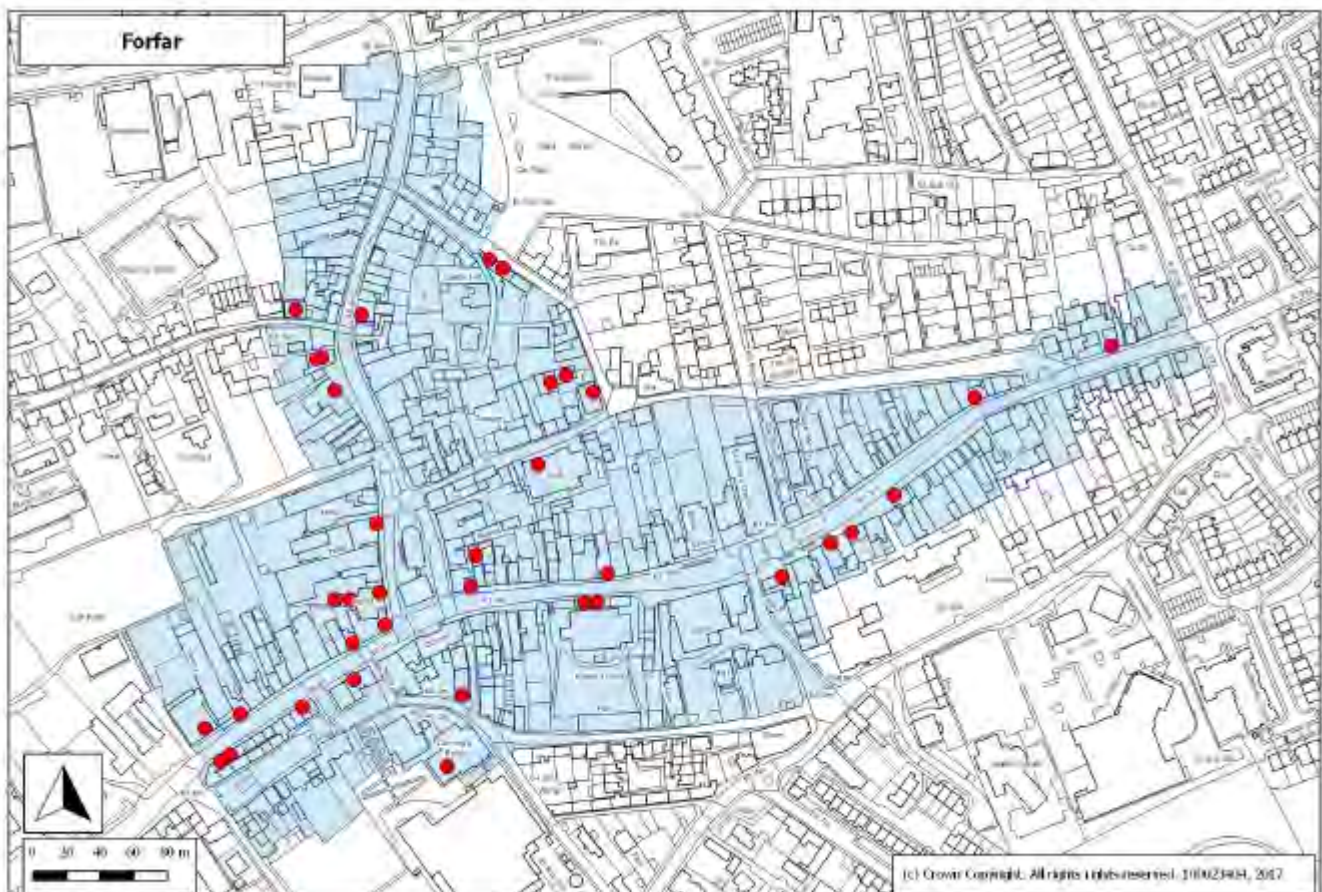
The number of specialist independent retailers in the town centre has increased from 9 to 11 which is the joint second highest of all the town centres in Angus. It is considered that this increase may be an attempt by retailers to capitalise on the main activities of agriculture and tourism. It could also be argued that a decrease in the number of comparison units has then provided an opportunity for specialist independent retailers to occupy units which may have previously been unavailable.

The number of charity shops has remained the same at 7 units but the number of discount stores has declined from 4 to 2. With specific regards to discount stores, this is the lowest number of all the larger town centres in Angus.

In line with other town centres across Scotland, there have been recent closures such as Premier Computers, Cheque Centre and G & B Watch and Jewellery Repairs etc. This equates to approximately 15% (the third joint highest percentage of all the town centres in Angus) of all commercial properties being vacant in the town centre which is above the UK average of 9% (Springboard – January 2017). When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, the vacancy rate of all commercial properties was 7% in 2012 and 12.5% in 2014. Therefore, a trend which is appearing is that the vacancy rate of all commercial properties is increasing.

The vacant units are distributed throughout the town centre but it is considered that West High Street and the central, triangular core are generally more susceptible to vacant units than other parts of the town centre (as can be seen from the Map below). The majority of these units are primarily small and traditional with the exception of a few larger units such as the former Clydesdale Bank on 73 Castle Street. Other buildings/units which are also vacant include previous important leisure uses such as the former bingo hall and swimming pool. Although the number and percentage of vacant units has doubled, a number of units are currently vacant due to the relocation of uses such as Nickel 'n' Dime from 43 East High Street to 26 Castle Street.

It is evident that service uses (40%) continue to predominate in Forfar town centre. Further analysis reveals that service uses can be broken down into retail services (14%), leisure services (17%) and financial and business services (9%). This is not unexpected when considering that there has been a decline in the number of convenience and comparison units. Therefore, it would appear that new personal services such as Studio 92 Hair Design (hairdresser), new





financial services such as Bluefin Insurance and new leisure services such as Costa are seizing the opportunity to fulfil the vacancies.

For further information regarding uses and vacancies in Forfar town centre please refer to the Angus Council Retail Floorspace Survey 2017.

6.5 Accessibility and the Physical Environment

The completion of a survey questionnaire from a single on-site observation from the public realm was a simple way of gaining an impression of the accessibility and the physical environment of Forfar town centre. It is important to acknowledge that no averages or totals were calculated; the score is only the expression of a qualitative judgement.

Overall Cleanliness	Property Appearance, Condition and Maintenance	Presence and Quality of Open Space
<p>Throughout the town centre the streets are relatively free of litter and there is no clear evidence of graffiti. There are a good number of 'heritage' style public bins and standard plastic public bins which did not appear to be overflowing and are generally in good condition.</p> <p>Throughout the town centre the hanging baskets, lampposts, planters and seating are clean and in good condition, particularly those located directly outside the Forfar Town and County Hall. However, the Forfar Town Centre Charrette identified that more attractive street lighting, benches and community planting is required in order to maximise the town centre environment.</p>	<p>Overall, the properties appear to be well cared for and in reasonable condition. However, there are a number of properties in the town centre, particularly vacant properties such as the former bingo hall, certain properties on the southern side of East High Street and in the northern section of Castle Street, which could be improved by being repaired, repainted and removing vegetation from the gutters etc.</p> <p>Most commercial properties have some form of window displays which are generally clean and intact. Some window displays have recently been refurbished and are attractive but the majority of window displays are poor and uninspiring.</p>	<p>There are no areas of green space in the town centre. However, there is an area of open space located at the Little Causeway which is located to the south of West High Street. This area is predominantly hard-surfaced and features some bollards, bins and trees. This area is clean and well maintained but has limited functionality and is not well signposted.</p> <p>There is also an area of open space outside the Forfar Town and County Hall. This area is hard-surfaced, well maintained and features several benches, bicycle racks, bins, hanging baskets and planters etc. This area may encourage pedestrians to linger which may be an advantage in relation to the vitality of the commercial environment.</p>
<p>Score: 4</p>	<p>Score: 3</p>	
		<p>In addition to the above, there are several other small areas of open space such as those located outside the Santander Bank at 79 Castle Street. This area is hard-surfaced, is well maintained and feature several benches and planters etc.</p> <p>Score: 3</p>

Quality of Built Heritage

The majority of the town centre, with the exception of the most eastern section of East High Street, lies within a conservation area which reflects its architectural and historic importance. The town also benefits from key landmark buildings such as the Forfar Town and County Hall and The Cross.

There is generally a strong building line throughout the town centre with the exception of a few variations on the southern side of East High Street. This helps create several important vistas such as looking east on West High Street, looking west on East High Street and looking south on Castle Street which all look into the central, triangular core around the Forfar Town and County Hall. These long uninterrupted views are aided by the predominantly three storey buildings which are situated on either side of the streets.

Throughout the town centre there is appropriate and extensive use of local stone, sandstone and slate roofs on properties. It is also evident that many properties feature dormer windows.

There is no common colour or style of signs and fascia's. Although some properties have relatively attractive and distinctive frontages, other properties have really poor signage and frontages. The Forfar Town Centre Charrette identified the requirement to improve the shopfronts throughout the town centre.

Score: 4

Evidence of Recent Investment by Retailers

There is some evidence of recent investment in the town centre as some shop window displays such as Begg's Shoe Shop and the Canvas Art gallery appear relatively fresh. There is also some evidence of recent investment by the attraction of some new uses such as Peacock's (clothing), Auntie Jacqui's Sweets and Cards and Costa etc. There is also evidence of the reconfiguration of some traditional units such as David Irons to Nickel 'n' Dime on 26 Castle Street.

All of the above suggests that the town centre is still viewed as being attractive and viable as a commercial destination otherwise new uses would not locate or relocate in the town centre. However, the Forfar Town Centre Charrette identified the requirement for the town centre to evolve and offer something distinctive and different in order to ensure that the town centre is the future central hub of the town.

Although there is some evidence of recent investment there are still a number of vacant units throughout the town centre. There are also a number of poorly maintained properties which could be improved via some investment.

Score: 4



Availability and Quality of Visitor Infrastructure

There are several benches located throughout the town centre such as those on the southern side of East High Street and those outside the Forfar Town and County Hall. There is also a bench located on the northern side of West High Street. All of the benches are generally clean and in good condition, particularly the benches which are located outside the Forfar Town and County Hall. There are public payphones located on Queen Street and outside the Forfar Town and County Hall. Alongside the public toilet which is generally clean and in good condition.

There are very limited visitor information boards throughout the town centre although there is one within the Myre Car Park, located just outwith the town centre.

Pedestrians are able to gain basic tourist information within the Meffan Institute (museum) which is located at 20 West High Street.

Score: 4



Ease of Movement for Pedestrians

The vehicular traffic in the town centre was relatively high but quiet enough so that pedestrians were not forced to use any of the pedestrian crossings which are located on West High Street and East High Street. However, the Forfar Town Centre Charrette identified that there are problems associated with inappropriate vehicle speeds, aggressive driving and the through traffic of heavy vehicles in key streets.

The pavements are generally wide throughout the town centre, particularly outside Goodfellow & Steven at 35 Castle Street and M&Co at 62 – 72 East High Street. However, there are also locations in the town centre where pavements are narrower such as outside 82 Castle Street. The hard surfaces are generally flat which offers easy access for pedestrians.

The majority of properties offer easy access for disabled customers due to street-level access with only a few properties featuring a stepped entrance.

Overall, the town centre feels safe to walk through although some closes such as the close leading from East High Street into Osnaburg Street may be uninviting during the darker hours.

Score: 3

Access to/from/within the Town Centre

There are a number of car parks in the town centre such as Green Street and Myre Road which are relatively small. These car parks are conveniently located for pedestrians accessing the shops and services and seem to be well used. There are also a number of car parks immediately adjacent to the town centre such as East Greens Car Park and the Myre Car Park which are large.

There are sections of on-street car parking provision throughout the town centre which appear to be well used. However, side streets such as Canmore Street, Chapel Street and Myre Road do not feature any on-street car parking due to double yellow lines on the public road.

There are a number of bus stops particularly on West High Street and East High Street which are conveniently located for pedestrians accessing the shops and services. There are no bus stops on Castle Street which may reduce the number of pedestrians passing by the shops and services within the northern section of the town centre. There are several bicycle racks located throughout the town centre such as those outside the Forfar Town and County Hall.

Score: 4

Availability of Food and Drink Facilities

There are a range of different facilities such as bakers, butchers, cafes, convenience stores and a fishmonger etc which are generally located throughout the town centre. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas.

With specific regards to the potential evening economy, there are a range of different facilities such as hotels, public houses, restaurants, takeaways, a snooker club and a nightclub which again are generally located throughout the town centre. There is a general nucleus of public houses and the nightclub around the central, triangular core at the Forfar Town and County Hall. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas.

However, the Forfar Town Centre Charrette suggested that it would be beneficial for the town centre to contain a late opening café. It also suggested that there are limited opportunities for young people in the town centre if you were either too young to enter public houses or did not wish to.

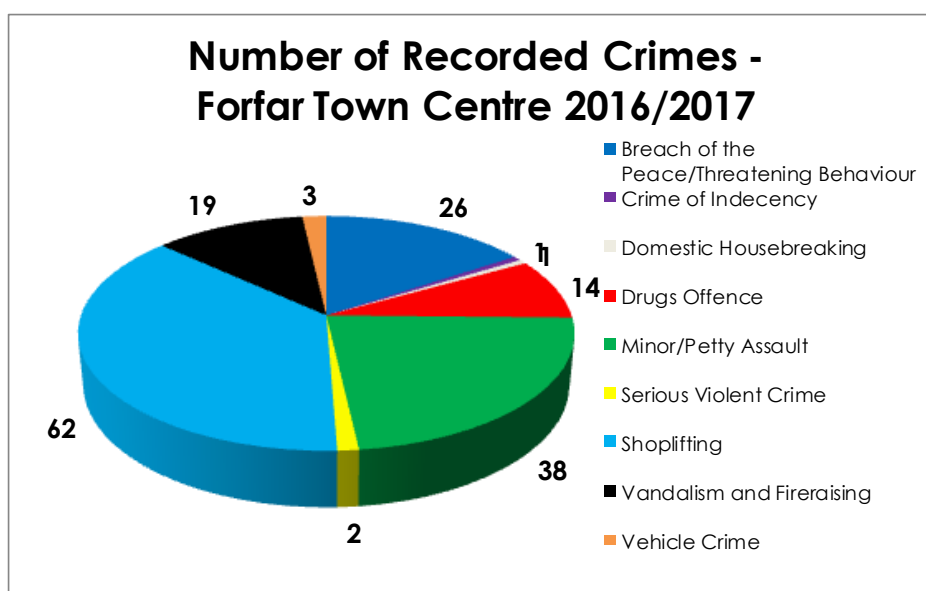
Score: 5



6.6 Crime Levels

The number of recorded crimes in Forfar town centre have all increased between the town centre health checks 2010 and 2017 with the exception of vandalism and fireraising and domestic housebreakings. However, when referring to the number of recorded crimes in other town centres across Scotland, all of the town centres in Angus remain very low.

With specific regards to the number of vandalism and fireraising crimes, they have decreased from 28 to 19. Further analysis reveals that the majority of these crimes consist of a mixture of damage committed in an open space situation such as minor damage to a parked vehicle, and vandalism within private residences. This demonstrates the good work being carried out by Police Scotland and other partners who are continuing to work closely with businesses to improve security, together with working with offenders to tackle the underlying causes. A reduction in the number of vandalism and fireraising crimes will help to improve a shoppers experience as well as the viability of individual shops and services.



6.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A design charrette was commissioned by Angus Council to consider ways to regenerate and rejuvenate Forfar town centre in 2015. This process sought to combine socio-economic and physical planning to consider the issues affecting the town and then suggested areas for focus and action. The publication of the Forfar Town Centre Charrette included actions which could help realise some of the opportunities identified on Page 42. For instance, the opportunity to create a focal area of open space between the Forfar Town and County Hall and Manor Street via the implementation of a low speed environment would prioritise pedestrians over vehicles whilst retaining vehicle access at all times. Furthermore, incentives could be offered to property owners to improve the lighting, signage and window displays etc of shopfronts throughout the town centre. Therefore, the Forfar Town Centre Charrette along with the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan should be read in conjunction with this town centre health check.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distinctive town centre as the three main streets (West High Street, Castle Street and East High Street) all connect around the Forfar Town and County Hall which forms part of the central, triangular core. • A high number of specialist independent retailers (the joint second highest of all the town centres in Angus) provides the town centre with a retail variety and creates a reason for visiting the town centre. • There is evidence of recent investment in the town centre as the signage on certain units appears relatively fresh. • There are a good range of different facilities distributed across the town centre with good potential for the evening economy. 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decrease in the number of convenience and comparison retail units reduces the retail offer in the town centre. • Current town centre vacancy rate of 15% (the joint third highest of all the town centres in Angus) is above the UK average of 9%. • Relatively low levels of pedestrian footfall in comparison to the other larger town centres in Angus. • No consistent style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment. • There are a limited number of visitor information boards in the town centre which does not encourage visitors to linger in the town centre or support the local visitor economy.
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The repair, repainting and removal of vegetation from the gutters of several properties, particularly vacant properties such as the former bingo hall, certain properties particularly on the southern side of East High Street and in the northern section of Castle Street, would improve the quality of the built environment. • An increase in the resident population along with an increase in the number of residential properties may increase the local customer-base for shops and services. • The redevelopment of vacant, previously important financial buildings such as the former Clydesdale Bank and leisure buildings such as the former bingo hall, both of which occupy central locations in the town centre, would help the vitality of the town centre. • To bring unoccupied residential properties back into use which can contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre whilst also contributing to the supply of housing and affordable housing. 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall decline in the number of commercial units reduces the range of shops and services available in the town centre. • A continual predominance of service uses may limit the retail offer. • There are fewer pedestrians in the town centre during 2017 than there were during 2010. However, this statement requires to be interpreted with caution as the results are limited and impacted upon by the weather and time of day. A time series of results gained by future town centre health checks will help determine any potential trends. • A continual rise in the number of online retail sales attracts pedestrians away from the town centre and provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre. • Edge of centre developments such as Aldi, Asda, B&M, Home Bargains, Lidl and Tesco attract pedestrians away from the town centre and provide increased competition to shops and services in the town centre.

7. Kirriemuir Town Centre

7.1 Context

The town centre, which contains the highest number of specialist independent retailers of all the town centres in Angus, primarily serves Kirriemuir, a number of surrounding villages such as Glamis and some of the surrounding Angus Glens. Due to the town centre being located within close proximity to Forfar which is located approximately 7 miles to the south east and which benefits from a larger town centre, it primarily provides local services, community facilities and convenience shops. The town centre is very distinctive as the majority of buildings are finished in red sandstone. The town centre still retains much of its medieval street pattern around the Old

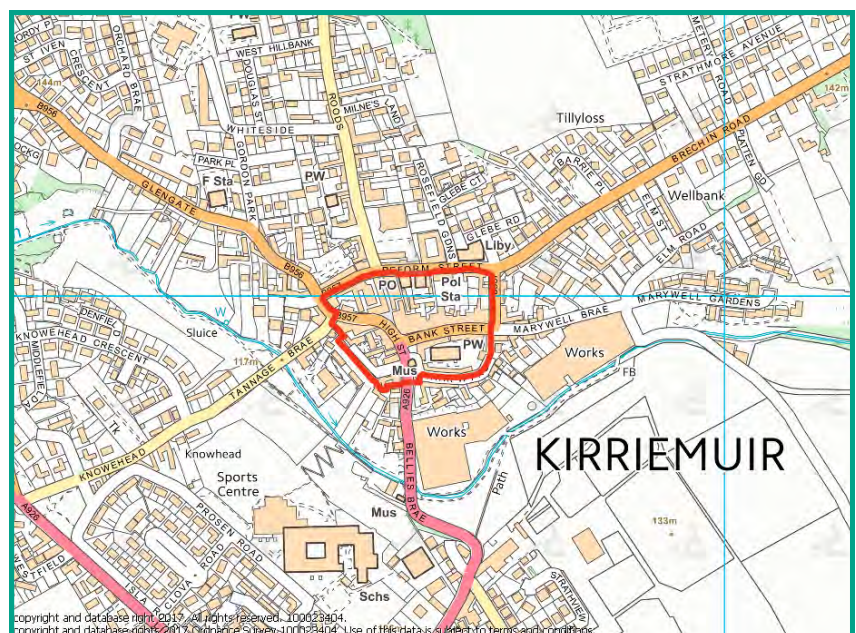


(Barony) Parish Church and the boundary of the town centre reflects the town's distinctive historical layout. The entirety of the town centre constitutes a conservation area which reflects its architectural and historical importance. Recently, a number of properties and areas of public realm have been improved through the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.

The resident population of Kirriemuir has increased by approximately 305 people since the town centre health check in 2010. It is considered that the reasons for this increase are likely to be due to net migration and the development of new housing on sites such as Hillhead which is located to the north of the town centre, and Platten Gardens which is located to the east of the town centre.

146 residential
properties

86 retail/
commercial units



7.2 Residential Properties

Since 2010, the number of residential properties has slightly increased by 6. This increase is likely to be due to the change of use from commercial units to residential properties such as the former church hall at 19 Glengate which has been redeveloped into residential flats.

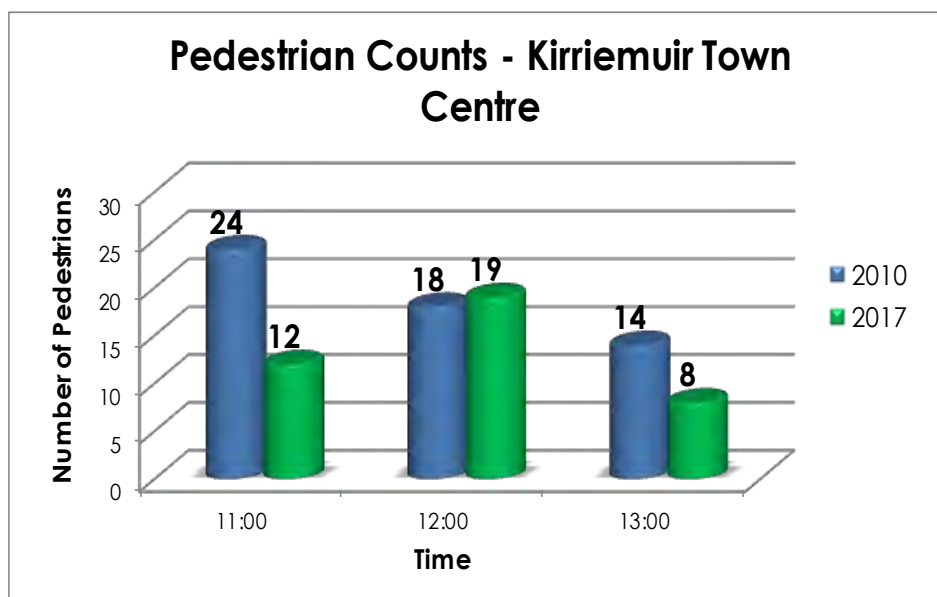


Residential properties are located throughout the town centre. The majority of the High Street, Bank Street and Glengate which together form the main commercial streets in the town centre, are characterised by commercial properties occupying the ground floors with predominantly flats occupying the floors above. The majority of the most southern and western areas of the town centre such as Kirk Wynd and Croffthead are largely characterised by single and double storey residential properties.

From the 146 residential properties in the town centre, 10 (6.8%) are identified as being long-term unoccupied properties which is the highest percentage of all the town centres in Angus. Further analysis reveals that the majority of these unoccupied properties are located within close proximity to the High Street and are flats with 2 bedrooms. 5 of these residential properties have been registered as unoccupied for longer than 12 months.

7.3 Pedestrian Counts

During the town centre health check in 2010, an average total of 56 pedestrians passed by the three predefined pedestrian count locations in Kirriemuir town centre. In 2017, this decreased to an average total of 39 pedestrians which represents the lowest average total of all the town centres in Angus which is not unexpected considering Kirriemuir is the smallest town in Angus.



Both of the predefined pedestrian count locations on Bank Street and Glengate recorded similar numbers of passing pedestrians which suggests that both the eastern and central sections of the town centre are equally busy. However, the predefined pedestrian count location at the top of Bellies Brae recorded a lower number of passing pedestrians which suggests that the southern section of the High Street has fewer pedestrians.

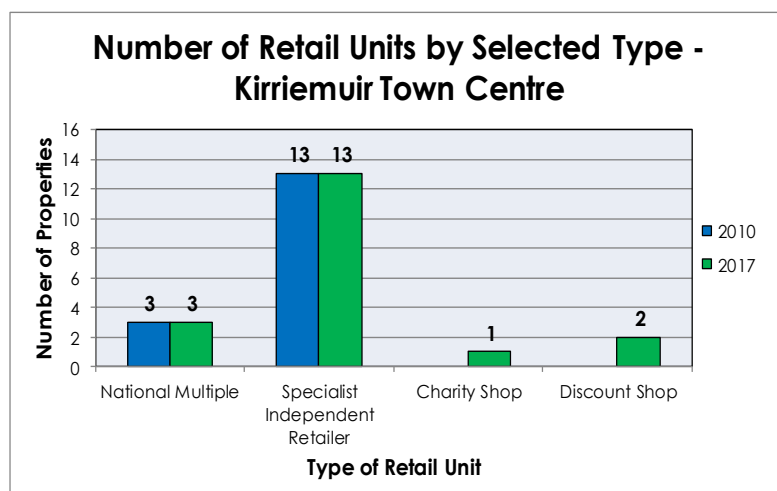
There was also a similarity regarding the number of pedestrians which passed by the three predefined locations during the pedestrian counts at 11:00 and 13:00 but not at 12:00. This suggests that the northern, central and southern sections of the town centre are busier at 12:00 as opposed to 11:00 and 13:00.

A decline in the average total of pedestrians could be explained by the total number of commercial units in the town centre decreasing by 6 to 86 units. Although this is a slight reduction, it is considered that the closure of important former financial services such as the former Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds TSB will have an effect as previously they would have created pedestrian footfall in the town centre. In addition, the continual rise in the number of online retail sales, the availability of more shops and services nearby in Forfar town centre, and edge of centre developments such as the Co-op are likely to affect pedestrian footfall in the town centre as they provide increased competition to the commercial properties in the town centre.

7.4 Uses and Vacancies

The total number of commercial units in the town centre has slightly decreased by 6 to 86 units. The number of convenience, comparison and other units have all decreased whereas the number of service units has slightly increased.

The type of comparison shops which are still present in the town centre consist of art galleries, clothes shops, a shoe shop, a jewellery shop, hardware shops and florist shops etc. When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, the number of comparison shops remained the same at 27 units in 2012 but then reduced to 23 units in 2014. Therefore, it appears that a trend in the decline of comparison shops is occurring in Kirriemuir town centre.



Although there has been a decline in the number of comparison shops, the number of national multiples in the town centre has remained consistent at 3. The national multiples which are still present include Boots, the Co-op and Lloyds Pharmacy.

The number of convenience units has slightly decreased from 9 to 7 since 2010. The type of convenience shops which are present in the town centre consist of a baker, a butcher, a newsagent and several confectionary units etc.

The number of specialist independent retailers in the town centre has remained consistent at 13 which is the highest number of all the town centres in Angus. It is considered that they may have remained consistent as they attempt to capitalise on the tourism sector which is based on the

scenic value and outdoor activities offered in the Strathmore valley and surrounding Angus Glens. It could also be argued that a decrease in the number of comparison units has then provided an opportunity for specialist independent retailers to occupy units which may have previously been unavailable.

Since 2010, a charity shop and a discount store are now operating in the town centre.

Similar to Carnoustie and Monifieth, there has been a decline in the number of vacant units by 2 to 11 units since 2010. A decline in the number of vacant units is evidence of recent investment in the town centre as previous vacant units such as 12 – 14 Bank Street is now occupied by Kirrie Horse and Country Function etc.

Further analysis reveals that 5 of the 11 current vacant units, such as the former hotel known as Hook's at 1 – 3 Bank Street, were vacant during both the 2010 and 2017 town centre health checks. This equates to approximately 13% of all commercial properties being vacant which is above the UK average of 9% (Springboard – January 2017). When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, the vacancy rate of all commercial properties was 16% in 2012 and 20% in 2014.

The vacant units are distributed throughout the town centre but it is considered that the northern side of Bank Street and the southern side of Reform Street are more susceptible to vacant units than other parts of the town centre (as can be seen from the Map below). The vacant units consist of a mixture of small and traditional units such as 15 – 16 High Street and larger units such as the former Royal Bank of Scotland at 23 Bank Street.

It is evident that service uses (45%) continue to predominate in Kirriemuir town centre. Further



analysis reveals that the service uses can be broken down into retail services (17%), leisure services (21%) and financial and business services (7%). This is not unexpected when considering that there has been a decrease in the number of convenience, comparison and other units (which includes vacant units) but an increase in the number of service units from 31 to 39. Therefore, it would appear that new personal services such as The Hair Lab (hairdresser) along with new leisure services such as Granny Annie May (gifts and baking/tearoom) are seizing the opportunity to fulfil the vacancies.

For further information regarding uses and vacancies in Kirriemuir town centre please refer to the Angus Council Retail Floorspace Survey 2017.

7.5 Accessibility and the Physical Environment

The completion of a survey questionnaire from a single on-site observation from the public realm was a simple way of gaining an impression of the accessibility and the physical environment of Kirriemuir town centre. It is important to acknowledge that no averages or totals were calculated; the score is only the expression of a qualitative judgement.

Overall Cleanliness	Property Appearance, Condition and Maintenance	Presence and Quality of Open Space
<p>Throughout the town centre the streets are relatively free of litter and there is no clear evidence of graffiti. However, the majority of the close at the rear of The Ogilvy Bar and down from Buddies nightclub was dirty as it contained litter and was clustered by wheelie bins which makes it uninviting and difficult to access etc.</p> <p>Throughout the town centre there are a good number of standard plastic public bins which did not appear to be overflowing and are generally in good condition.</p> <p>Elements of street furniture such as the bicycle racks, benches, standard plastic public bins and tree guards etc are clean and in good condition, particularly those located in the main town square which were recently refurbished via the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.</p>	<p>Overall, the properties appear to be well cared for, particularly those which have been improved via the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme such as the former church hall at 19 Glengate. However, there are some properties which are in poor condition and could be improved by being repaired, repainted and removing vegetation from the gutters etc.</p> <p>Most commercial properties have some form of window displays which are clean and intact with the exception of the vacant former hotel known as Hook's at 1 – 3 Bank Street. This is disappointing as this property occupies a prominent location opposite the main town square. Some of the window displays are attractive but many are poor and uninspiring.</p>	<p>There are no areas of green space in the town centre. The main area of open space is the main town square which is predominantly hard-surfaced, well maintained and features several bicycle racks, benches, bins and tree guards. This area of open space would encourage pedestrians to linger which may be advantageous in relation to the vitality of the town centre.</p> <p>In addition to the above, there are also several small, discrete areas of open space such as those located to the north of Cumberland's Close and at the junction between Brechin Road and School Wynd. The area of open space to the north of Cumberland's Close is not obvious to visitors. Both of the above areas are predominantly hard-surfaced, well maintained and feature several benches.</p>
Score: 4	Score: 4	Score: 4

Quality of Built Heritage

The town centre benefits from an array of built heritage and rich historic townscape which combine to create an attractive and distinctive urban setting within a compact town. This is reflected by it being the only town in Angus where the entirety of the town centre constitutes a conservation area which demonstrates its architectural and historical importance. The town also benefits from key landmark buildings such as the Gateway to the Glens Museum and the Old (Barony) Parish Church.

The town centre is very distinctive as the majority of buildings are finished in red sandstone which reflects why it is often referred to as the 'wee red toon'. The majority of buildings also feature slate roofs and dormer windows. It is also evident that there is generally a strong building line, particularly along the northern side of Bank Street.

Due to the town centre being located at the bottom of the Roods but at the top of Bellies Brae, the topography creates a long northerly vista up the Roods as well as a long southerly vista across the Gairie Burn Valley.

Throughout the town centre there is no common colour or style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment. There are also some properties which have really poor signage and frontages.

Score: 5

Evidence of Recent Investment by Retailers

There is evidence of recent investment in the town centre as several properties have recently been refurbished via the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. In addition, there is also some evidence of recent investment by the attraction of other new occupiers such as Elemental (cards and gifts) and Johanna Woodhand Chocolatier at 2 Cumberland Close.

A decline in the number of vacant units is evidence of recent investment in the town centre as previous vacant units such as 12 – 14 Bank Street is now occupied by Kirrie Horse and Country Function etc.

All of the above suggests that the town centre is still viewed as being attractive and viable as a commercial destination. However, the Kirriemuir Town Centre Charrette identified the requirement for the town centre to continue to build on the economic and social regeneration which has been created by the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. It also identified that the town centre has to evolve and become a more distinctive and compelling destination where an appreciation of the heritage, enterprise, commercial, retail, public, arts/ cultural and social functions overlap with a diverse range of uses.

Although there is some evidence of recent investment there are still 11 vacant units. There are also a number of poorly maintained properties which could be improved via some investment.

Score: 4

Availability and Quality of Visitor Infrastructure

There are several benches located throughout the town centre such as those at the junction between Brechin Road and School Wynd and those which are located in the main town square. These benches are generally clean and in good condition.

There are a number of public payphones located throughout the town centre. The public payphones are in reasonable condition when considering their likely age. There is a public toilet located at the entrance to the car park on Reform Street which is in a reasonable condition.

There is only one visitor information board in the town centre which is located in the car park on Reform Street. However, it is not obvious to visitors unless you had parked in the car park. The visitor information board is generally in good condition and provides good information for pedestrians passing by.

Pedestrians are able to gain basic tourist information in the Gateway to the Glens Museum which is conveniently located in the main town square.

Score: 4



Ease of Movement for Pedestrians

The vehicular traffic in the town centre was relatively high but quiet enough so that pedestrians were not forced to use the pedestrian crossing on Reform Street. The vehicular traffic was equally high in all parts of the town centre which is to be expected due to the one way circular route around the town centre.

The pavements are relatively wide throughout the town centre, particularly in locations such as outside A.B. McIntosh Ironmongers at 22 – 24 High Street. However, the pavements can also be very narrow in locations such as outside The Thrums on School Wynd and in the Glengate. However, narrow pavements are to be expected in the historic core of the town centre. The Kirriemuir Town Centre Charette identified that an Accessibility Audit should be carried out to consider issues regarding the narrowness of pavements and some missing dropped kerbs etc.

The majority of units offer easy access for disabled customers due to street-level access. However, several units do not offer easy access for disabled customers due to stepped entrances.

Due to the topography of the town centre, the hard surfaces generally slope from the north down to the main town square which is relatively flat. The hard surfaces then slope more steeply from the main town square down to the south onto Bellies Brae.

Score: 4

Access to/from/within the Town Centre

There is one public car park in the town centre which is located on Reform Street. This car park is conveniently located for pedestrians accessing the shops and services and appears to be well used. However, a close which provides pedestrian access from Bank Street through to the car park will be dark, narrow and uninviting particularly during the darker hours.

There are also a number of public car parks located within close proximity but outwith the town centre. Bellies Brae car park is located to the south of the town centre and there is another car park which is located on the opposite side of the Gairie Burn from the doctor's surgery. Both of these car parks seem to be well used but are a short walk uphill to the town centre. There is also a further car park at Glengate which is located to the north of the town centre. This car park also seems to be well used but there is a close which provides pedestrian access from St. Malcolm's Wynd through to the car park which will be dark, narrow and uninviting particularly during the darker hours.

There is on-street car parking provision on parts of Reform Street, School Wynd, Bank Street and Glengate which seem to be well used.

There are two main bus stops located within close proximity to the main town square which ensures that they are conveniently located for pedestrians accessing the shops and services. There are also bicycle racks located in the main town square.

Score: 4

Availability of Food and Drink Facilities

There are a range of different facilities such as a baker, a butcher, cafes, confectionary's and newsagents etc which are generally located throughout the town centre but particularly within close proximity to the main town square. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas.

With specific regards to the potential evening economy, there are a range of different facilities such as restaurants, hotels, public houses, takeaways and a nightclub etc. These facilities are generally located throughout the town centre but there is a small grouping of public houses, hotels and a nightclub around the Roods and St. Malcom's Wynd. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas. However, there are limited opportunities for young people within the town centre if you were either too young to enter public houses or did not wish to.

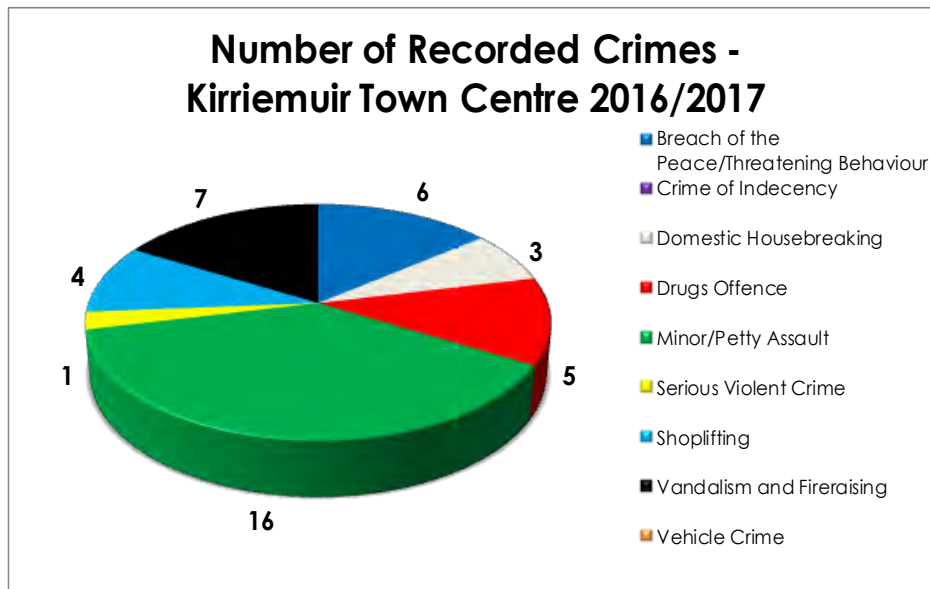
Score: 4



7.6 Crime Levels

The number of recorded crimes in Kirriemuir town centre have all decreased between the town centre health checks 2010 and 2017, with the exception of domestic housebreakings and drugs offences which have both increased and serious violent crimes which remained the same. However, when referring to the number of recorded crimes in other town centres across Scotland, all of the town centres in Angus remain very low.

With specific regards to the number of shoplifting crimes in Kirriemuir town centre, they have almost halved from 9 to 4 since the town centre health check in 2010. This demonstrates the good work being carried out by Police Scotland and other partners who are continuing to work closely with businesses to improve security, together with working with offenders to tackle the underlying causes. A significant reduction in the number of shoplifting crimes will help to improve a shoppers experience along with the viability of individual shops and services.



7.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A design charrette was commissioned by Angus Council to consider ways to regenerate and rejuvenate Kirriemuir town centre in 2017. This process sought to combine socio-economic and physical planning to consider the issues affecting the town and then suggested areas for focus and action. The publication of the Kirriemuir Town Centre Charrette included actions which could help realise some of the opportunities identified on Page 51. For instance, the opportunity to promote and support the town's visitor attractions may help develop the visitor economy. This could be achieved by initiatives such as the provision of better coach parking. Therefore, the Kirriemuir Town Centre Charrette along with the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan should be read in conjunction with this town centre health check.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distinctive town centre as the majority of buildings are finished in red sandstone. The historic architecture and landmark buildings such as the Gateway to the Glens Museum and the Old (Barony) Parish Church add interest and distinction to the built environment. • There is evidence of recent investment in the town centre primarily via the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. • A high number of specialist independent retailers (the highest of all the town centres in Angus) provides the town centre with a retail variety and creates a reason for visiting the town centre. • The main town centre square provides a focal area of open space which benefits from good quality street furniture and good accessibility to the basic tourist information located in the Gateway to the Glens Museum. • There are a good range of different facilities distributed across the town centre with good potential for the evening economy (hotels, public houses, restaurants, takeaways and a nightclub). 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decline in the number of convenience (the lowest of all the town centres in Angus) and comparison retail units reduces the retail offer in the town centre. • Although the number of vacant units has decreased, the current town centre vacancy rate of 13% (the third highest percentage of all the town centres in Angus) is above the UK average of 9%. • 7% of residential properties are identified as being long-term unoccupied properties which is the highest percentage of all the town centres in Angus. • There is no consistent style of signs and fascia's. • The pavements are very narrow for pedestrians in locations such as the Glengate.
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve properties and areas of public realm through the Kirriemuir Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme. • An increase in the resident population of Kirriemuir along with an increase in the number of residential properties in the town centre may increase vitality and provide a local customer-base for shops and services. • The redevelopment of vacant previously important financial services such as the former Royal Bank of Scotland and Lloyds TSB, and leisure services such as the former hotel known as Hook's, would help the vitality of the town centre. • To promote and support the niche retail offer of the town centre. • To promote and support the town's visitor attractions which will help develop the visitor economy. • To bring unoccupied residential properties back into use which can contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre whilst also contributing to the supply of housing and affordable housing. 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall decline in the number of commercial units reduces the range of shops and services available in the town centre. • A continual predominance of service uses may limit the retail offer in the town centre. • An average total of 39 pedestrians (the lowest percentage of all the town centres in Angus) passed by the three predefined pedestrian count locations in the town centre. However, this statement requires to be interpreted with caution as the results are limited and impacted upon by the weather and time of day. A time series of results gained by future town centre health checks will help determine any potential trends. • A continual rise in the number of online retail sales attracts pedestrian footfall away from the town centre and provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre.

8. Monifieth Town Centre

8.1 Context

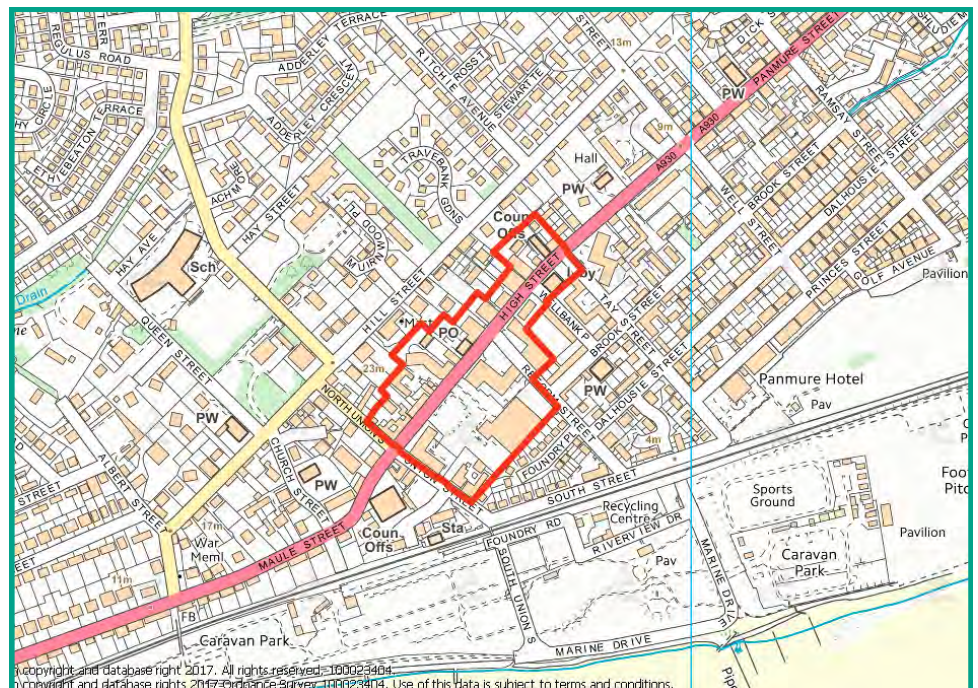
The town centre primarily serves Monifieth and a number of surrounding villages such as Wellbank. It primarily provides local services, community facilities and convenience shops. The town centre features an elongated High Street which stretches from Union Street in the south west to Tay Street in the north east. The northern side of the High Street is relatively compact with a strong building line. However, the southern side of the High Street is less compact with an irregular building line. Monifieth is one of the very few town centres in Angus which does not feature a conservation area which reflects its lack of quality built heritage and rich historic townscape which do not combine to create a distinctive urban setting.



The resident population of Monifieth has increased by approximately 333 people since the town centre health check in 2010. It is considered that the reasons for this increase are likely to be due to net migration and the development of new housing on sites such as Ashludie Hospital which is located to the north of the town centre, and Milton Mill which is located to the west of the town centre.

134 residential properties

47 retail/commercial units



8.2 Residential Properties

Since 2010, the number of residential properties has slightly increased by 4 to 134. This increase is likely to be due to the change of use from commercial units to residential properties such as the former office at 79 High Street which has been redeveloped into a residential property.



The residential properties are primarily located on the northern side of the High Street which is characterised by predominantly flats above commercial premises, apart from the 4 storey blocks directly opposite the entrance to Tesco and the odd standalone residential property. There are also standalone residential properties on the southern side of the High Street, of 2 and 3 storeys, which are located in the most south western section of the town centre and on various side streets.

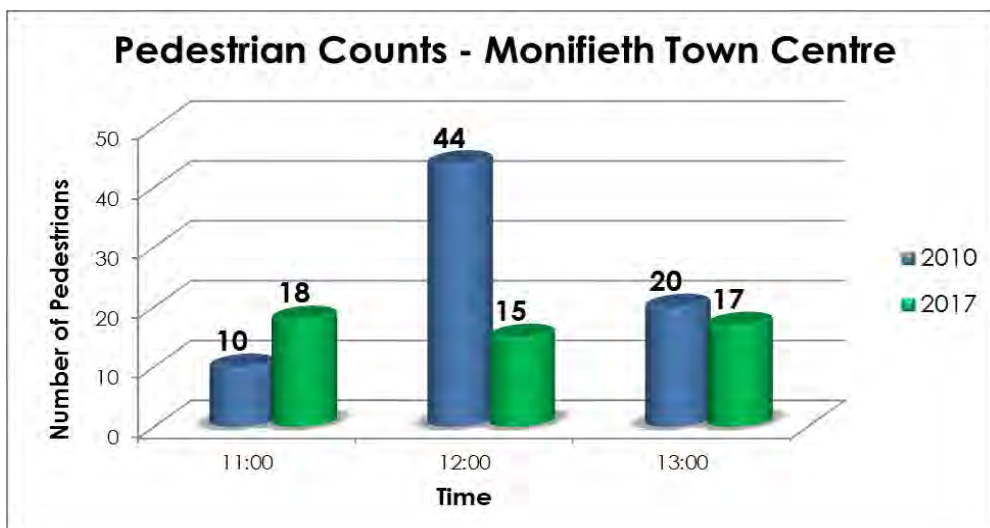
The majority of the southern side of the High Street is characterised by single storey commercial properties such as Tesco and those located within the shopping arcade.

From the 134 residential properties in the town centre, 4 (3%) are identified as being long-term unoccupied properties which is the lowest percentage of all the town centres in Angus. Further analysis reveals that 1 of these residential properties has been registered as unoccupied for longer than 12 months.

8.3 Pedestrian Counts

During the town centre health check in 2010, an average total of 74 pedestrians passed by the two predefined pedestrian count locations in Monifieth town centre. In 2017, this decreased to an average total of 50.

Both of the predefined pedestrian count locations recorded similar numbers of passing pedestrians which suggests that both the northern eastern and southern western sections of the High Street are equally busy. There was also a similarity regarding the number of pedestrians



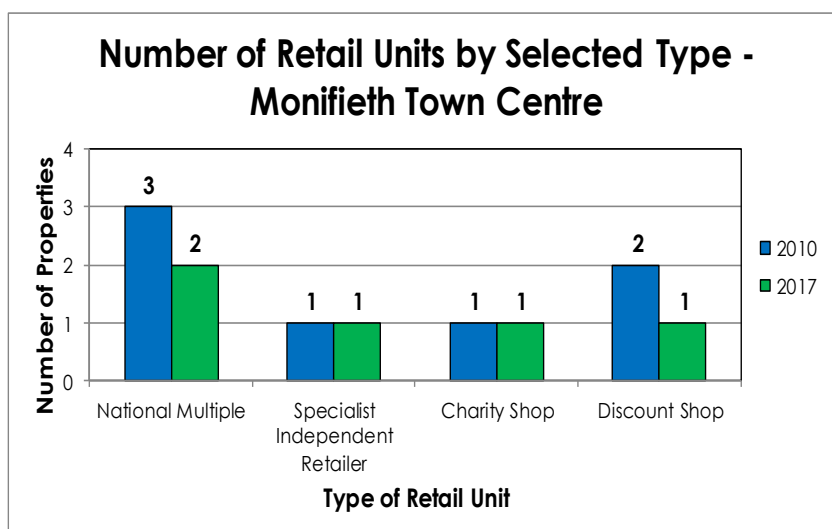
which passed by the two predefined locations during each individual count at 11:00, 12:00 and 13:00.

A decline in the average total of pedestrians could be due to a slight reduction in the number of commercial units or is more likely to be due to the continual rise in the number of online retail sales, out of centre commercial developments such as Ethiebeaton Park and the close proximity of larger commercial destinations such as Dundee.

8.4 Uses and Vacancies

The total number of commercial units in the town centre has slightly decreased by 4 to 47 units since the last town centre health check in 2010. Similar to other towns, Monifieth has seen a minor decrease in the number of comparison and convenience units and subsequent increase in service uses.

Due to its proximity to Dundee, Monifieth is generally not regarded as a main location for comparison shops therefore a slight decrease in the number of comparison units from 12 to 7 is not unexpected. The type of comparison shops which are still present in the town centre consist of a chemist, a kitchen design shop, a flooring shop, a kitchen and bathroom design shop and a children's clothes shop etc.



Similar to the number of comparison shops, there has also been a decline in the number of national multiples from 3 to 2 units. The national multiples which are still present in the town centre consist of Farmfoods which is located in the shopping arcade, and Tesco which is located in the central, southern part of the High Street.

There has also been a slight decrease in the number of convenience shops from 9 to 8 units. The type of convenience shops which are still present in the town centre consist of bakers, a butcher and newsagents etc.

There has been minimal change in the number of specialist independent retailers, charity shops and discount shops within the town centre.

Similar to Carnoustie and Kirriemuir, there has been a decline in the number of vacant units by 1 to 2 units since 2010. A decline in the number of vacant units is evidence of recent investment in

the town centre as a previous vacant unit at 1 – 3 High Street is now occupied by Little Sew and Sews. This equates to approximately 4% of all commercial properties being vacant which is below the UK average of 9% (Springboard – January 2017). This is the only town centre in Angus where the vacancy rate of all commercial properties is below the UK average. When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, the vacancy rate of all commercial properties was 2% in 2012 and 4% in 2014.

One of the vacant units is located in the northern central section of the town centre and is a small and traditional unit. The other vacant unit is located in the north eastern section of the town centre and is a small and non-traditional unit (the location of the vacant units can be seen from the Map below).



It is evident that service uses (53%) continue to predominate in Monifieth town centre. Further analysis reveals that the service uses can be broken down into retail services (21%), leisure services (30%) and financial and business services (2%). This is not unexpected when considering that there has been a decrease in the number of convenience and comparison units. Furthermore, there are also a number of new retail services in the town centre such as The Sun Lounge (beauty salon), Benjamin Barker (barber) and Evoke (photography studio).

For further information regarding uses and vacancies in Monifieth town centre please refer to the Angus Council Retail Floorspace Survey 2017.

8.5 Accessibility and the Physical Environment

The completion of a survey questionnaire from a single on-site observation from the public realm was a simple way of gaining an impression of the accessibility and the physical environment of Monifieth town centre. It is important to acknowledge that no averages or totals were calculated; the score is only the expression of a qualitative judgement.

Overall Cleanliness	Property Appearance, Condition and Maintenance	Presence and Quality of Open Space
<p>Throughout the town centre the streets are relatively free of litter and there is no evidence of graffiti. There are a good number of public bins which appeared to be generally in good condition. The majority of public bins are finished in timber which is unlike any of the other town centres in Angus.</p> <p>Elements of street furniture such as benches, bicycle racks, planters, public bins and tree guards etc are clean and generally in good condition.</p>	<p>Throughout the town centre the properties appear to be well cared for. However, there are a few properties which could be improved via the repainting of facades and the removal of vegetation from the gutters etc.</p> <p>Most commercial properties have some form of window displays which are generally clean and intact. Some are attractive as they have been freshly painted, however, there are a number of properties which have poor and uninspiring window displays as they are cluttered by advertising posters and A-boards leaning against them etc.</p>	<p>There are no areas of green or open space in the town centre, with the exception of the small area of softly landscaped ground directly outside the library. This area of open space is accessible and prominently located when accessing the town centre from the north east but it offers very little recreational value. It is largely grass and trees, is well maintained and features one bench which is in reasonable condition. This area also contains the former public toilets which are now closed.</p> <p>There are a mixture of planters and trees particularly on the southern side of the High Street which contribute to the street scene.</p>
<p>Score: 4</p>	<p>Score: 3</p>	<p>Score: 2</p>



Quality of Built Heritage

Monifieth is one of the very few town centres in Angus which does not feature a conservation area.

Although there are no major landmark buildings, the red sandstone properties which are located on the northern side of the High Street, across from Ewatts Butchers, are relatively distinctive and add visual interest. The majority of the other buildings are built from local stone, render and slate roofs. As the topography of the High Street is relatively flat there are no vistas which can be enjoyed by looking out from the town centre. However, the elongated High Street does provide uninterrupted vistas from one end of the High Street to the other.

The northern side of the High Street benefits from a strong building line and a continuous frontage from a mixture of uses. However, the south side steps back from the High Street on several occasions to accommodate Tesco, the shopping arcade and the petrol filling station etc. The Monifieth Town Centre Charrette identified that the southern side of the High Street could be improved by infill development along with improvements to the public realm etc.

There is no common colour or style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment. There are also some properties which have really poor signage and frontages.

Score: 2

Evidence of Recent Investment by Retailers

There is some evidence of recent investment in the town centre as Selwood Funeral Directors at 21 High Street were in the process of refurbishing their property during the on-site observation. There is also some evidence of recent investment by the attraction of some new uses (please refer to section 'Uses and Vacancies'). In addition, the former vacant petrol filling station at 40 – 42 High Street has now been redeveloped into a car wash business known as Prestige.

All of the above suggests that the town centre is still viewed as being attractive and viable as a commercial destination. However, the Monifieth Town Centre Charrette identified that the town centre needs to evolve to become a thriving, inclusive and accessible High Street with quality shops, leisure, events, enterprise and town centre living.

Score: 3

Availability and Quality of Visitor Infrastructure

There are several benches located throughout the town centre. All of the benches are generally clean and in good condition.

There is one public payphone which is located outside Selwood Funeral Directors which is in relatively good condition when considering its likely age. A public toilet is located in the library towards the north eastern section of the High Street at 48 – 50 High Street.

There are several visitor information boards throughout the town centre.

Pedestrians are able to gain basic tourist information in the library.

Score: 3



Ease of Movement for Pedestrians

The vehicular traffic was relatively high which is not unexpected considering that it functions as the main route through the town centre. The Monifieth Town Centre Charrette identified that there were a lack of pedestrian crossings in the town centre and more traffic calming measures are required due to speeding traffic.

The pavements are relatively wide becoming wider where bus stops are provided and narrower where there is on-street car parking provision.

The majority of units offer easy access for disabled customers due to street-level access. However, there are a few which have stepped entrances. A few units particularly within the shopping arcade have goods spilling outside of the unit and onto the pavement which restricts pedestrian movement.

The Monifieth Town Centre Charrette identified that pedestrian signage throughout the town centre was poor and could be improved.

Score: 3



Access to/from/within the Town Centre

There are no public car parks in the town centre which was identified as an issue in the Monifieth Town Centre Charrette. However, there are two privately operated car parks located directly outside the shopping arcade, and a further private car park at Tesco all available for customers on a short stay basis.

There is a public car park located within close proximity but outwith the town centre at Marine Drive. To access the town centre from this car park pedestrians have to walk through pedestrian railway underpasses at Marine Drive or South Union Street. Both of these pedestrian railway underpasses are uninviting as they are dark and narrow.

There is on-street car parking provision throughout the majority of the High Street which seems to be well used.

All three of the bus stops benefit from bus shelters which are generally in good condition and they are conveniently located for pedestrians accessing the shops and services.

The railway station is located to the south of the town centre and is convenient for pedestrians accessing the shops and services.

Bicycle racks are located outside Tesco and directly across from the Monifieth Convenience Store at 35 High Street.

Score: 4

Availability of Food and Drink Facilities

There are a range of different facilities such as bakers, a butcher, cafés, newsagents and shops such as Farmfoods and Tesco which are generally located and easily accessible from adjacent areas.

With specific regards to the evening economy, there are a range of different facilities such as public houses, a restaurant and takeaways. These facilities are generally located in the shopping arcade.

There does not appear to be the offer of any overnight accommodation in the town centre. The issue regarding the lack of opportunities for young people was identified as an issue in the Monifieth Town Centre Charrette.

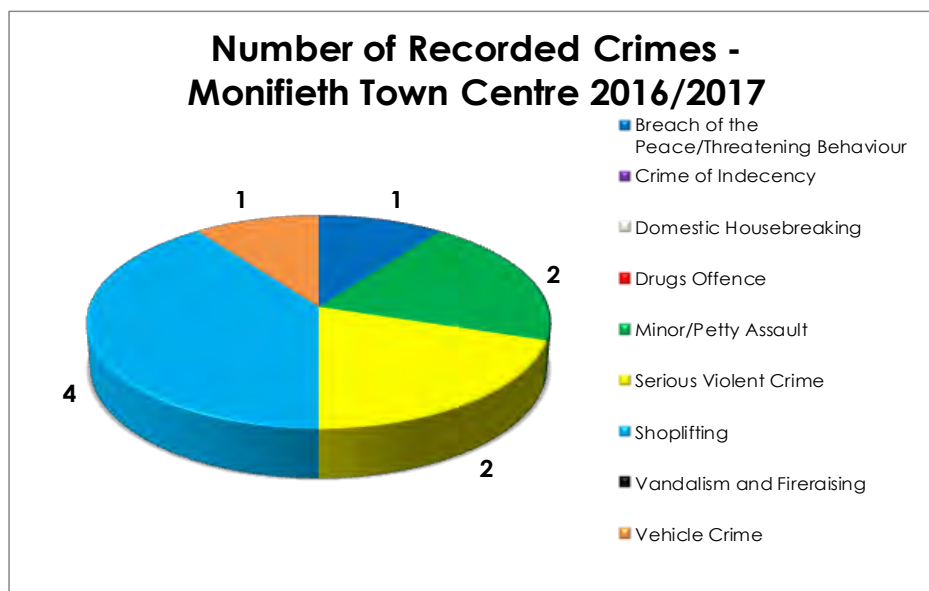
Score: 3



8.6 Crime Levels

Monifieth town centre has the lowest number of recorded crimes of all the town centres in Angus. The number of recorded crimes have all decreased or remained consistent between the town centre health checks in 2010 and 2017 with the exception of domestic serious violent crimes which have increased. However, when referring to the number of recorded crimes in other town centres across Scotland, all of the town centres in Angus remain very low.

With specific regards to the number of breach of the peace/threatening behaviour disorders and the number of minor/petty assaults, they have decreased from 5 to 1 and 7 to 2 respectively. Further analysis reveals that most of the breach of the peace/threatening behaviour disorders and minor/petty assaults can be attributed to either alcohol related altercations linked to the night time economy, or to domestic offences committed in private households.



8.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A design charrette was commissioned by Angus Council to consider ways to regenerate and rejuvenate Monifieth town centre in 2016. This process sought to combine socio-economic and physical planning to consider the issues affecting the town and then suggested areas for focus and action. The publication of the Monifieth Town Centre Charrette included actions which could help realise some of the opportunities identified on Page 60. For instance, the opportunity to promote and support the town's visitor attractions and the opportunity to create a focal area of open space could be realised outside the modern arcade to the south of the High Street. The Monifieth Town Centre Charrette report should be read in conjunction with this town centre health check.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is evidence of recent investment in the town centre. • There are a low number of charity shops and discount shops. • A decline in the number of vacant units. • A low number of recorded crimes. 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mixture of building materials, no landmark buildings and untraditional forms of development to the south of the High Street. • A decrease in the number of convenience shops and comparison shops reduces the retail offer in the town centre. • The design of the shopping arcade to the south of the High Street is an environment which is dominated by vehicles which then creates a poor relationship between pedestrian movement, public space and the movement of traffic. • There does not appear to be the offer of any overnight accommodation in the town centre. • A lack of public car parks in the town centre discourages pedestrian footfall.
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The repainting, removal of vegetation from the gutters and replacement of signage on certain properties would improve the quality of the built environment. • To bring unoccupied residential properties back into use which can contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre whilst also contributing to the supply of housing and affordable housing. • The creation of a focal area of open space. • To promote and support the town's visitor attractions. • A review of signage in the town centre will help wayfinding to and between attractions, facilities and services etc. • The proposed improvement in rail service by Scotrail will introduce more seats and services in 2018 which may increase the vitality of the commercial environment. 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continual predominance of service uses may limit the retail offer in the town centre. • The retail offer in the town centre relies heavily upon the provision of the supermarket and the shopping arcade to the south of the High Street. The loss of either or both of the above would undermine the vitality and viability of the town centre. • There are fewer pedestrians in the town centre during 2017 than there were during 2010. However, this statement requires to be interpreted with caution as the results are limited and impacted upon by the weather and time of day. • Out of centre developments such as Ethiebeaton Park and the close proximity of larger commercial destinations such as Dundee, attract pedestrians away from the town centre which provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre.

9. Montrose Town Centre

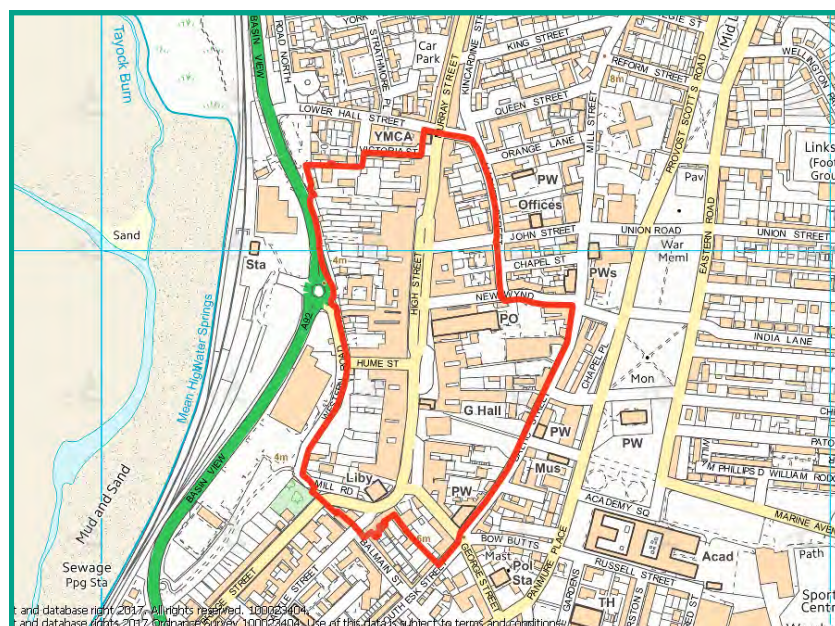
9.1 Context

Montrose is the third largest town in Angus. The town centre primarily serves Montrose and a number of surrounding villages such as Ferryden and Hillside. The town centre is distinctive as the main High Street, which is very long and wide, is characterised by a strong north-south axis which then features a number of east-west routes on both the eastern and western sides of the High Street. The historic architecture within the central area adds interest and distinction to the built heritage and commercial environment. The



majority of the town centre, with the exception of a small area in the upper north western section, lies within a conservation area which reflects its architectural and historic importance.

The resident population of Montrose has increased by approximately 715 people since the town centre health check in 2010.



480 residential properties

197 retail/
commercial units

9.2 Residential Properties

Since 2010 the number of residential properties has slightly increased by 10 to 480. This increase is likely to be due to the change of use of existing commercial premises, such as the former guest house at 112 High Street, which has been redeveloped into residential properties.

The majority of Castle Place, High Street and Murray Street which together form the main commercial streets in the town centre, are characterised by commercial properties occupying the ground floors with flats predominantly then occupying the floors above.



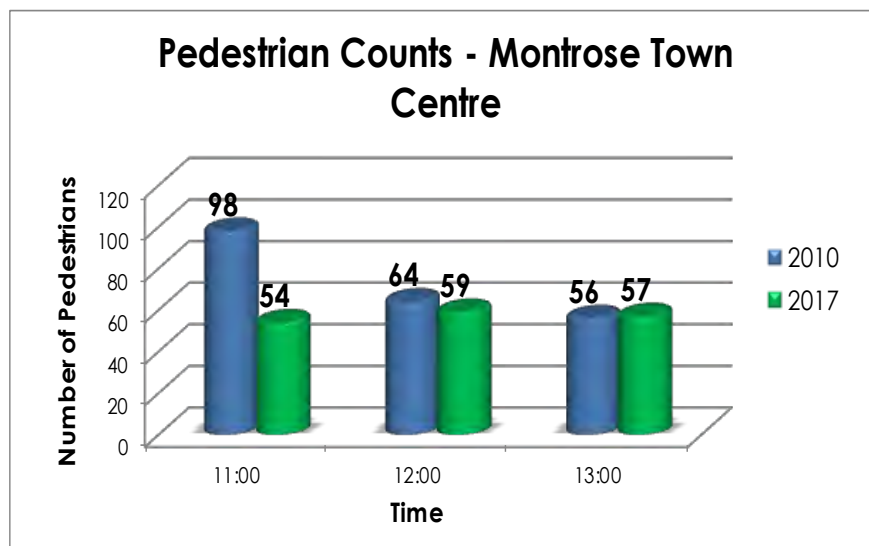
Most of the side streets such as John Street, Baltic Street, Victoria Street and New Wynd are characterised by a mixture of one, two, three and four storey residential properties.

From the 480 residential properties in the town centre, 25 (5.2%) are identified as being long-term unoccupied properties. Further analysis reveals that 11 of these residential properties have been registered as unoccupied for longer than 12 months. The majority of these unoccupied properties are located within the High Street, Hume Street and New Wynd and are predominantly semi-detached dwellinghouses and maisonettes flats with either 2 or 3 bedrooms. The presence of any unoccupied residential properties represents an opportunity to bring them back into use which can contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre.

9.3 Pedestrian Counts

During the town centre health check in 2010, an average total of 218 pedestrians passed by the three predefined pedestrian count locations in Montrose town centre. In 2017, this decreased to an average of 170 pedestrians which is the highest average of all the town centres in Angus.

All three of the predefined locations recorded similar numbers of passing pedestrians which suggests that the northern, central and southern areas of the town centre are equally busy. This



is to be expected considering that the High Street and Murray Street form part of the main commercial streets in the town centre which will attract the most pedestrians.

There was also a similarity regarding the number of pedestrians which passed by the three predefined locations during the pedestrian counts at 11:00, 12:00 and 13:00. This suggests that the northern, central and southern ends of the town centre are equally busy during the duration of the pedestrian counts.

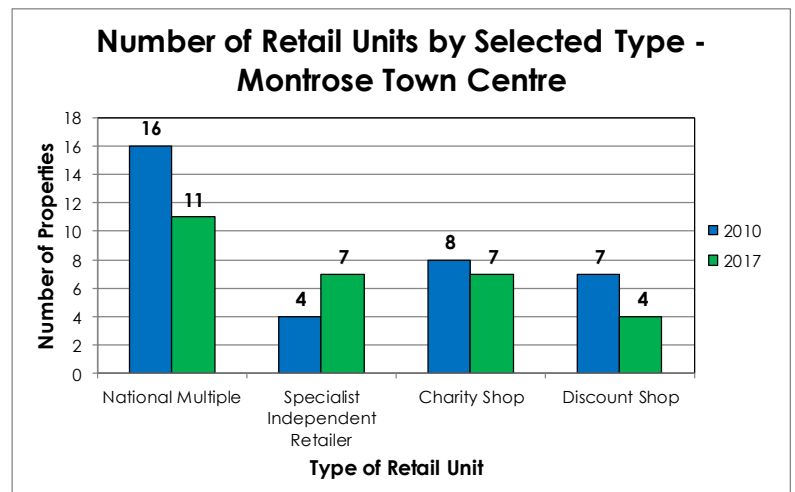
A decline in the average total of pedestrians could be explained by the total number of commercial units in the town centre decreasing by 3 to 197 units and the total number of vacant units increasing by 7 to 30. In addition, the continual rise in the number of online retail sales along with edge of centre developments such as Tesco on Western Road are likely to affect the pedestrian footfall in the town centre as they provide increased competition to the commercial properties in the town centre.

9.4 Uses and Vacancies

The total number of commercial units in the town centre has slightly decreased by 3 to 197 units since the town centre health check in 2010. Further analysis of the breakdown of uses reveals that the number of comparison units has decreased whereas the number of convenience, service and other units have slightly increased.

There has been quite a shift downwards in the number of comparison units in Montrose since 2010 from 67 to 46. This is quite a high number when compared to trends in other Angus towns. When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, there were 54 units in 2012 and 56 units in 2014. Therefore, it appears that with the exception of 2014, there is a trend in the decline of comparison shops in Montrose town centre.

The number of national multiples has also slightly reduced from 16 to 11. The national multiples which are still present include Argos Extra, Boots, New Look, Semi-Chem and WH Smith etc. However, in line with trends across Scotland the number of national multiples is generally decreasing in town centres due to the failure of chains and as they continue to close smaller, more remotely located units in order to cut their store portfolio amid rising rents, rates and other bills and more to online.



Montrose has quite a good proportion of convenience stores and there has been a slight increase since 2010. These include a bakers, a butcher, a fishmonger and confectionary units etc. Two of the three new convenience stores are e-cigarette shops which are both located on the High Street and are becoming more common in town centres.

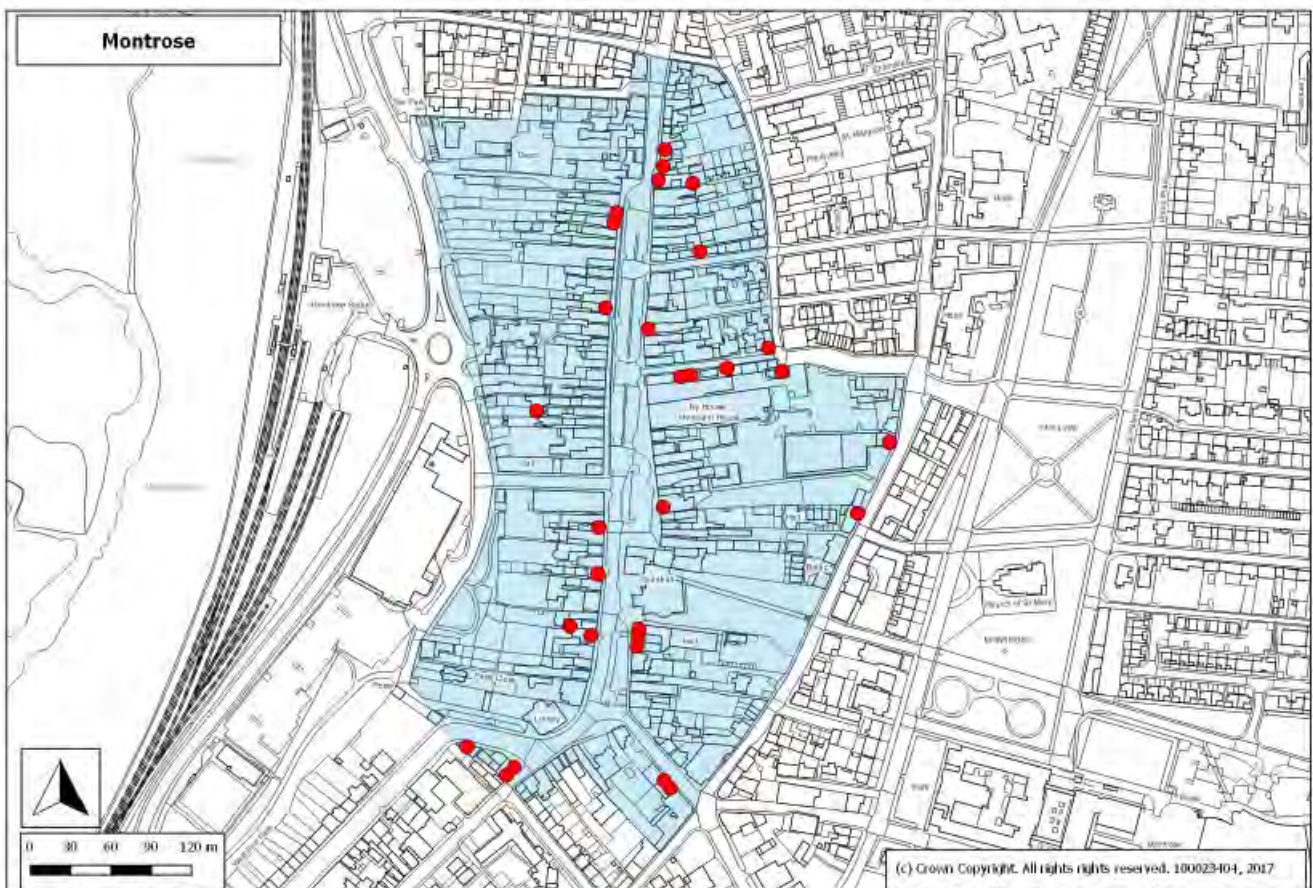
A positive change has been an increase in the number of specialist independent retailers from 4 to 7 which includes convenience uses such as Paula Polish Shop at 109 High Street. This demonstrates the ability of the town centre to attract and retain a range of independent retailers. It could also be argued that a decrease in the number of comparison units has then provided an opportunity for specialist independent retailers to occupy units which may have previously been unavailable.

There has been a slight decline in the number of charity shops from 8 to 7 units whilst the number of discount stores have also declined from 7 to 4 units. Montrose is the only town centre in Angus where there has been a decline in the number of charity shops.

There has been an increase in the number of vacant units by 7 to 30 units since the town centre health check in 2010. There have been recent closures such as Bridge Street Newsagent, Crafty Cat Crafts, The Money Shop and Pathology Ink (tattoo parlour). This equates to approximately 15% of all commercial properties being vacant which is above the UK average of 9% (Springboard – January 2017). When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys, the vacancy rate of all commercial properties was 9% in 2012 and 12% in 2010. Therefore, this increase in the vacancy rate seems to be a continuing trend.

The vacant units are distributed throughout the town centre but the northern part of the High Street and eastern side of Murray Street, New Wynd and the southern part of the High Street seem to be more susceptible to vacant units than other parts of the town centre (as can be seen from the Map below). The majority of these units are primarily ground floor, small and traditional units such as Crafty Cat Crafts at 135 High Street. However, there are some slightly larger and more modern vacant units such as Unit 3 at New Wynd. Other buildings/units which are currently vacant include previous civic and leisure services such as the former Bethany Gospel Hall, the former Albert Bar and the former Corner House Hotel.

It is evident that service uses (39%) continue to predominate in Montrose town centre. Further analysis reveals that the service uses can be broken down into retail services (16%), leisure services (17%) and financial and business services (6%). This is not unexpected when considering that there has been a decrease in the number of comparison units along with an increase in the





number of vacant units. Therefore, it would appear that new retail services such as Kai's (turkish barber) and 3SIXTY (hair and beauty), new leisure services such as Nature's Garden (café) and Yummy (restaurant) and financial services such as MMG Archbold (accountant) are seizing the opportunity to fulfil the vacancies.

For further information regarding uses and vacancies in Montrose town centre please refer to the Angus Council Retail Floorspace Survey 2017.

9.5 Accessibility and the Physical Environment

The completion of a survey questionnaire from a single on-site observation from the public realm was a simple way of gaining an impression of the accessibility and the physical environment of Montrose town centre. It is important to acknowledge that no averages or totals were calculated; the score is only the expression of a qualitative judgement.

Overall Cleanliness	Property Appearance, Condition and Maintenance	Ease of Movement for Pedestrians
<p>The streets are relatively free of litter and there is no clear evidence of graffiti. However, this was a mixed picture for the closes with some dirty, full of litter and clusters of wheelie bins making them uninviting and difficult to access.</p> <p>There are a good number of public bins which are generally in good condition. However, those located within close proximity to Madisons Café were overflowing.</p> <p>Elements of street furniture such as public bins, benches and planters etc are generally clean and in good condition although the area of public realm at the northern end of the High Street could be improved as the benches, public payphone and broadband/telecom cabinets were relatively dirty.</p>	<p>Overall properties appear to be well cared for as many have recently been repainted. However, there are numerous instances of properties, particularly historic buildings, which are in need of improvement, particularly the upper floors. Some of the vacant units such as the Corner Hotel appear to be in a poor condition. In most instances, improvements to the facades of these buildings could be achieved by replacing damaged gutters and downpipes.</p> <p>Most commercial properties have some form of window displays which are generally clean and intact. Some properties also have street displays such as Huckleberry and outside seating areas such as Madison's Café.</p>	<p>Vehicular traffic within the town centre was relatively high particularly within the High Street and Murray Street. The Montrose Town Centre Charette identified that the street-scene is greatly diminished by the impact of road vehicles as there is an over-provision of road space in comparison to footway space.</p> <p>The pavements are relatively wide throughout. However, the pavement on the western side of the High Street from Hume Street to Murray Street becomes split level which requires pedestrians to use steps or ramped accesses. The majority of the pavements on side streets such as New Wynd and Hume Street are narrower.</p> <p>The Montrose Town Centre Charette has identified that an Accessibility Audit is required to look at the above issues as well as missing dropped kerbs, footway obstructions and difficult underfoot conditions etc.</p>
<p>Score: 3</p>	<p>Score: 3</p>	
		<p>Score: 4</p>

Presence and Quality of Open Space

The main areas of open space in the town centre are located outside the library on Castle Place, within the play area at Western Road and outside the job centre at Castle Place. The two areas of open space located outside the library and the job centre are predominantly hard-surfaced, well maintained and feature several benches, bins, planted borders and trees etc. The area of open space at Western Road provides opportunities for children's play and an area to relax. This area is predominantly grass, trees, planted borders, benches, bins and visitor information boards etc. However, this area is relatively poorly located in terms of accessibility to the High Street.

An advantage of having a very long and wide High Street is that there is a relatively wide central reservation which features a mixture of statues, trees, box planters and planted borders etc. However, there were some free standing structures which are meant for hanging baskets which were empty.

There are some areas of public realm which could be improved throughout the town centre such as at the northern end of the High Street and around the Town House, with opportunities for benches, landscaping and lighting etc.

Score: 3

Quality of Built Heritage

The town centre benefits from an array of built heritage and rich historic townscape which includes a particularly wide High Street all of which create an attractive and distinctive urban setting. This is reflected by the majority of the town centre, with the exception of a small area in the upper north western section, lying within a conservation area. Key landmark buildings include the Town House and the Old and St Andrews Church.

In contrast to the above, areas such as the southern side of Hume Street features a single building with a blank gable and unsightly rear open storage area, creating a poor impression at the western entry to the town centre.

The majority of buildings are built from local stone, brick, render and slate roofs. Many properties also feature sash and case windows and dormer windows. It is evident that there is a strong building line throughout the town centre which helps create long uninterrupted vistas from one end of the High Street to the other, aided by the predominantly three storey buildings on both the western and eastern sides of the High Street which provide a means of enclosure.

There is no common colour or style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment. Although some properties have relatively attractive and distinctive frontages, others have really poor signage with oversized fascia signs covering up the original.

Score: 5

Evidence of Recent Investment by Retailers

There is some evidence of recent investment in the town centre as several properties have recently been altered (split/combined) and/or repainted. In addition to the new uses described within the section 'Uses and Vacancies', there is also some evidence of recent investment by the attraction of other new uses such as Sparkles (gift shop) and Scoops of Moo (confectionary) etc.

All of the above suggests that the town centre is still viewed as being attractive and viable as a commercial destination otherwise new uses would not locate in the town centre. However, the Montrose Town Centre Charrette identified that the town centre needs to evolve to become a proactive centre for the civic economy, enterprise, living, culture, entertainment, leisure, shopping, business and civic activity.

Although there is some evidence of recent investment there are still a number of vacant units throughout the town centre which may explain why there are some 'to let' notices. There are also a number of poorly maintained properties which could be improved via some investment.

Score: 4



Availability and Quality of Visitor Infrastructure

There are several benches such as those in the High Street, the two outside the library on Castle Place, the one on the southern side of George Street and the two on the northern side of Victoria Street etc. The majority of these benches are generally clean and in good condition.

A number of public payphones are located throughout the town centre, these are relatively dirty with fading colours. There is a public toilet which is located within the Baltic Street Car Park which is in reasonable condition.

Several visitor information boards are located throughout the town centre. There are also several fingerposts throughout and on the fringes of the town centre which provide useful directions. There are also a number of information plaques on the side of several closes which provide pedestrians with information regarding the history of the close. However, the Montrose Town Centre Charrette identified that on the whole, the signage within the town centre is relatively poor and disjointed.

Visitors are able to gain basic tourist information within the museum which is located on Panmure Place. The museum is located outwith but within close proximity to the town centre and is well signposted.

Score: 4

Access to/from/within the Town Centre

There is a public car park within the town centre at Baltic Street. This car park is conveniently located for accessing the shops and services and appears to be well used. However, the close which provides pedestrian access from the car park through to the High Street is dark, narrow and uninviting particularly during the darker hours.

The other main car park within the town centre is the privately operated car park at New Wynd. However, this car park is for customers of Scotmid only and is restricted to a 2 hour stay.

There are 2 further public car parks in close proximity but outwith the town centre at Murray Lane and Lower Hall Street to the north. Both of these seem to be well used. There is on-street car parking provision throughout the majority of the High Street and on sections of side streets such as George Street and Baltic Street etc.

Bus stops are located within the central part of the High Street and Hume Street. These are generally in good condition, particularly those on the High Street which feature shelters. All the bus stops are conveniently located for pedestrians accessing the shops and services.

There is a railway station outwith but within close proximity to the town centre to the west and is easily accessible. However the poor townscape within Hume Street creates a poor impression as pedestrians enter into the town centre.

Score: 4

Availability of Food and Drink Facilities

There are a range of different facilities such as bakers, a butcher, cafés, confectionary shops, convenience stores and a fishmonger which are generally located throughout the High Street. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas.

With specific regards to the potential evening economy, there are a range of different facilities such as hotels, hostels, public houses, restaurants and takeaways. These facilities are generally located throughout the town centre but particularly within the central area of the High Street, Hume Street and the southern end of the town centre. These facilities are easily accessible from adjacent areas. However, there are limited opportunities for young people within the town centre if you were either too young to enter public houses or did not wish to.

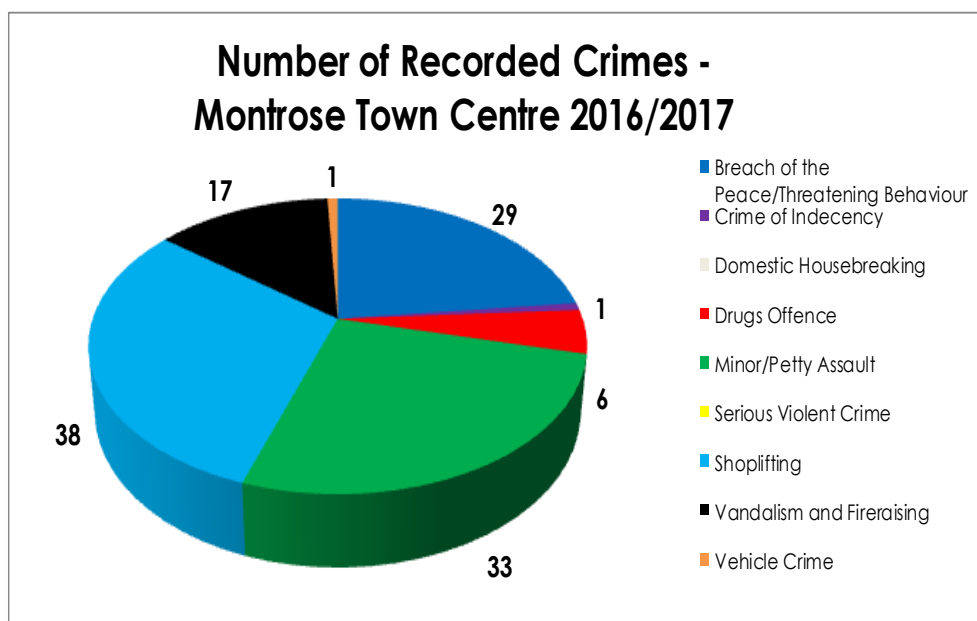
Score: 4



9.6 Crime Levels

The number of recorded crimes in Montrose town centre have all decreased between the town centre health checks in 2010 and 2017 with the exception of breach of the peace/threatening behaviour which have increased and domestic housebreakings which have remained the same. However, when referring to the number of recorded crimes within other town centres across Scotland, all of the town centres in Angus remain very low.

With specific regards to the number of serious violent crimes, they have decreased from 4 to 0. Further analysis reveals that most serious violent crimes take place in private houses and in most cases the offender is known to the victim. While incidents do occur where visitors to town centres are the victims of violence by strangers, they are extremely rare in all of the town centres in Angus.



9.7 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A design charrette was commissioned by Angus Council to consider ways to regenerate and rejuvenate Montrose town centre in 2016. This process sought to combine socio-economic and physical planning to consider the issues affecting the town and then suggested areas for focus and action. The publication of the Montrose Town Centre Charrette included actions which could help realise some of the opportunities identified on Page 69. For instance, the requirement to restore closes such as Locarno Close via a 'Festival of Closes', which could feature art/lighting installations and guided tours etc, would showcase the town's history and creativity. Furthermore, external built heritage funding could make a significant positive contribution to maintaining/conserving the historical and heritage buildings. The retention and reuse of historic buildings would help preserve the historic character of the town centre. The Montrose Town Centre Charrette should be read in conjunction with this town centre health check.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centre benefits from an array of built heritage and rich historic townscape including a wide High Street which all combine to create an attractive and distinctive built environment. • An average total of 170 pedestrians passed by the three predefined pedestrian count locations which represents relatively high levels of pedestrian footfall in comparison to the other town centres in Angus. • There is evidence of recent investment within the town centre as the signage on certain units appears relatively fresh. • There are a good range of different facilities distributed across the town centre with good potential for the evening economy (hotels, hostels, public houses, restaurants and takeaways). 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decrease in the number of comparison retail units. • A significant increase in the number of vacant units has resulted in a current town centre vacancy rate of 15%. • There are some areas within the town centre which demonstrate poor examples of townscape such as the southern side of Hume Street. This area creates a poor impression as pedestrians enter into the town centre from the west. In addition, there are also a number of gable ended properties which front onto the High Street but do not integrate into the streetscape. • No consistent style of signs and fascia's which detracts from the quality of the built environment.
<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain/conservate historical and heritage buildings particularly those which are vacant such as the Corner Hotel and some upper floor properties particularly on the High Street. The retention and reuse of historic buildings will help preserve the historic character of the town centre. • Improve areas of public realm, such as those located outside the Town House, with benches, landscaping and lighting etc to create a more attractive area where pedestrians could linger. • A review of signage in the town centre will help wayfinding to and between attractions, facilities and services etc. • Restore closes such as Locarno Close to make them more attractive and welcoming. These closes add interest and distinction to the built environment as well as forming important linkages throughout the town centre. • To promote and support the town's visitor attractions which will help develop the visitor economy. • To bring unoccupied residential properties back into use which can contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre whilst also contributing to the supply of housing and affordable housing. 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall decline in the number of commercial units reduces the range of shops and services available in the town centre. • A continual predominance of service uses may limit the retail offer in the town centre. • There are fewer pedestrians in the town centre during 2017 than there were during 2010. However, this statement requires to be interpreted with caution as the results are limited and impacted upon by the weather and time of day. A time series of results gained by future town centre health checks will help determine any potential trends. • A continual rise in the number of online retail sales attracts pedestrians away from the town centre and provides increased competition to shops and services in the town centre. • Edge of centre developments such as Tesco on Western Road attract pedestrians away from the town centre and provide increased competition.

10. Conclusions

When taking into consideration all of the indicators and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which have been analysed and appraised as part of this town centre health check, a number of broad conclusions can be formed regarding the seven town centres in Angus.

There has been a slight increase in the resident population and the number of residential properties in all of the town centres. Residential properties are a major feature in all of the town centres which is positive as the residents can often help to increase a town centre's vitality, providing a local customer-base for shops and services. The Scottish Government's Town Centre Toolkit encourages the creation of more residential properties in town centres.

In contrast to the above, the presence of unoccupied residential properties can reduce a town centre's vitality and they can detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area due to potential poor maintenance etc. However, there is generally a low percentage of unoccupied residential properties in all of the town centres, ranging from 6.8% to 3%. Initiatives such as the Empty Homes Loan Fund and Shared Service Empty Homes Officers demonstrate the commitment by the Scottish Government to encourage unoccupied residential properties back into use.

There are fewer pedestrians in all of the town centres during the town centre health checks in 2017 than there were during 2010. However, any results need to be interpreted with caution as they are limited and impacted upon by the weather and time of day. A time series of results gained by future town centre health checks will help determine any potential trends.

Vacancies within a town centre is often a key measure of its performance. The vacancies for town centres in Angus are generally all above the UK average and of specific concern is the significant increase in vacancies in Forfar. This is in line with trends across the UK where town centres no longer provide the same functions they once did with a move to online and alternative approaches require to be found. It also raises queries around the scale of the town centre boundary and a review of these may assist to define more clearly their role and provide opportunities.

The number of commercial units has slightly decreased in all of the town centres. Furthermore, there has also been a decrease in the number of comparison shops in all of the town centres. When referring to recent Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys and with specific regards to the larger town centres of Arbroath, Forfar and Montrose, it appears that there is a general trend in the decline of comparison shops.

The difference in the number of convenience units in all of the town centres is small. The Angus Council Retail Floorspace Surveys demonstrates that the diversity in the range of shops and services in the smaller town centres is narrower but heavily dependent on the continuing existence of individual businesses.

The town centres of Arbroath, Brechin, Forfar and Kirriemuir have a higher number of specialist independent retailers than the other town centres in Angus. Similar to the town centre health checks in 2010, Kirriemuir has the highest number of specialist independent retailers which has remained the same at 13. It is considered that this may be due to independent retailers attempting to capitalise on the tourism sector which is based on the scenic value and outdoor activities offered in the Strathmore valley and surrounding Angus Glens.

The time period which has spanned between the 2010 and 2017 town centre health checks has experienced a tough economic climate. This has ensured that longer-term structural challenges are arising in all of the town centres which are being caused by the continual rise in the number of online retail sales, edge of centre developments and consumers expenditure being affected by austerity etc. However, it appears that one of the ways which all of the town centres are adapting to these challenges is by the predominance of service uses. The combination of new retail services such as barbers etc, leisure services such as café's etc, and financial and business services such as accountants etc, are seizing the opportunity to fulfil vacancies or occupy comparison units which previously would not have been available.

As would be expected, the seven town centres are diverse in character and each one has its own particular strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, the opportunities for improving the future vitality and viability of each town centre are different in each case. Although each town centre also has its own particular threats, there are a number of threats which apply to all seven town centres such as fewer pedestrians and a decline in the number of commercial units which reduces the range of shops and services which are available etc.

When taking all of the above into consideration, current policy and emerging market trends are now aligning around the requirement to diversify town centres beyond convenience and comparison shopping in order to become proactive centres for a mix of uses such as business, civic, community, culture, entertainment, residential and leisure. However, the challenge going forward will be to facilitate their evolution and diversification to ensure that they meet the broader needs of the communities that they will serve in the future. Town centres of the future will need to offer something for everybody including the young, families, elderly and visitors while maintaining a focus on people and how they interact with and utilise places.

In order to help achieve the above, the Scottish Government have demonstrated their commitment to considering ways to regenerate and rejuvenate town centres via the Town Centre Action Plan. Furthermore, Angus Council in combination with the Scottish Government have also demonstrated their commitment via the Town Centre Charrettes which have recently been held in all of the town centres. It is evident that partnership working between central government, local government, local government partner agencies in the voluntary, private and public sectors, commercial businesses, community organisations and the local community will be required in order to improve town centres.

