

# **Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy**

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2019

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

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*“Prestonpans town centre will celebrate the town’s heritage and be a welcoming and accessible place for its residents and visitors with good signage to the town’s attractions”*

# PRESTONPANS TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

## 1.0 Purpose of the Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy

- 1.1 The Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy forms a part of the adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP). It is Supplementary Guidance focusing on the changes that the LDP is planning to the town of Prestonpans and the implications of that change for the town centre. The LDP introduces new planning policies adopting the 'Town Centre First Principle' (Policy TC2) and has detailed planning policies for town centres to guide development.
- 1.2 This strategy looks in more detail than the LDP into the town centre. A health check of the town centre, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered and its performance as a place with coordinated actions for improvement and regeneration are provided.
- 1.3 In addition to the LDP and its supporting documents, the Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy takes account of the Council's approved Local Transport Strategy and Local Housing Strategy as well as the Preston Seton Gosford Area Partnership Area Plan. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centre.
- 1.4 The Vision for Prestonpans Town Centre is:
- 1.5 *"The attractive coastal centre of Prestonpans has a wealth of history and heritage to be celebrated with good access and signposting to places of interest within the town centre and beyond. Prestonpans town centre will become a place that people wish to visit and spend time, focusing on its coastal assets and historic legacy."*

## 2.0 Policy Context

### Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres

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

cumulatively with other existing take-aways in the area and are consistent with other LDP policies including in relation to parking and road safety.

- 2.4 The Town Centre Strategy once approved will be Supplementary Guidance to the LDP in place until the East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate, based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective.

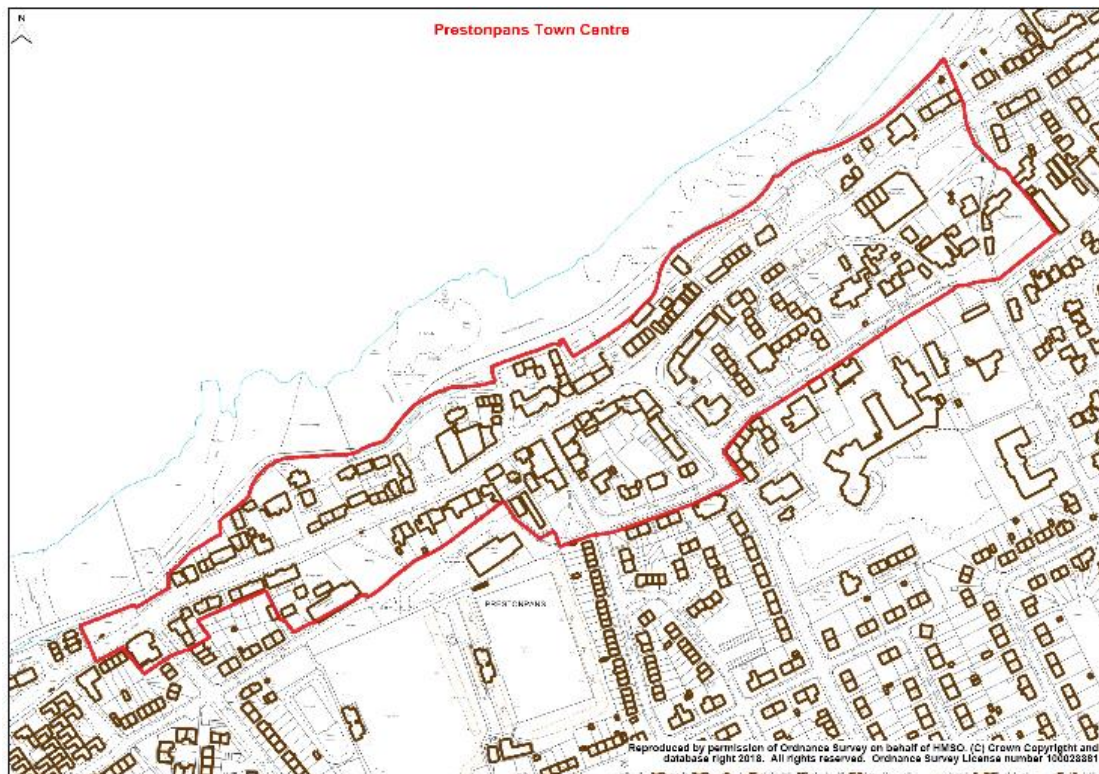
### **3.0 Form and Content of the Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy**

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

### **4.0 Background**

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

**Map1. Designated Prestonpans Town Centre Area**



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

- 4.3 Prestonpans Town Centre is linear with High Street on the busy A198 coast road and only a small number of businesses off High Street on Ayres Wynd. Geographically the town centre is to the north of most of the town's housing areas and well away from the large areas of new housing on Edinburgh Road. Local centres in the town tend to serve the residential areas with the Co-op/Scotmid having no fewer than five stores in the town. The High Street no longer contains many of the facilities that attract people to a town centre such as a bank and the critical mass of shops is lacking. The main supermarkets are the Coop and Lidl stores, the former in the town centre and the latter within walking distance at the east entrance to the town.

## **5.0 Prestonpans Town Centre analysis**

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

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<sup>1</sup> Sui generis in planning terms means a use that is in a class of its own

## 6.0 Regeneration Strategy for Prestonpans Town Centre

6.1 New residents of housing areas provide the potential for additional spending power as new housing is developed. The challenge for the town centre is to attract them to use it, but the evidence from the health check is that this is not happening. The convenience shopping level in Prestonpans is one of the lowest in East Lothian with some residents focusing their shopping in Musselburgh, others in Haddington or Edinburgh. Over 60% of residents do not visit Prestonpans Town Centre in the evening. The town centre will only attract people if it is a safe, attractive place to visit with good access and facilities including available parking. To do this Prestonpans Town Centre requires further investment in the following:

- Redevelopment of vacant sites and buildings – buildings such as Harlaw Hill House and grounds need brought back into positive use as they can harm the overall image of the town centre and deter other investment.
- Improvements to the repair and external appearance of buildings within the town centre - Repair and improvement of buildings can be very effective in enhancing the overall appearance of the town centre. For example, the appearance of some businesses on High Street could benefit from improved advertisements more in keeping with the traditional character of the street.
- Make the most of its heritage – Prestonpans is rich in heritage and needs to make the most of it to help to improve it as a place for people to live and to visit.
- Open Spaces – improvements to public spaces within the town centre where people can sit and relax, or gather or hold a market. This includes improvements to the shoreline which is increasingly well used as a result of the John Muir Way long distance path.

## 7.0 Main Issues for Prestonpans Town Centre

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

### Diversity of Land Use

7.2 Prestonpans is classified as an interdependent to dependent town<sup>2</sup> which has a low number of assets in relation to its population and reliant on neighbouring towns for some assets and jobs. It has a low diversity of retail offering and a high number of people per shop.

7.3 In 2016, there were 8,042 dwellings in the Prestonpans ward, 17.4% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian. This is proposed to increase to 679 potential new homes in Preston Seton Gosford ward by 2025.

7.4 Prestonpans Town Centre commercial premises vacancy rates are consistently higher than the East Lothian or Scottish average at around 9.6%. There are few

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<sup>2</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland's Towns Partnership, 2017

vacant properties above commercial premises. A very high proportion of retail expenditure continues to be made outwith the town (primarily in Musselburgh or Edinburgh).

- 7.5 Footfall within Prestonpans Town Centre declined in line with a falling trend elsewhere as fewer people visit the High Street for retail purposes. It has the lowest footfall in East Lothian’s main towns. Some poor quality shopfronts and advertisements detract from the appearance of the street.
- 7.6 In 2017 just over half (51%) of commercial premises in Prestonpans Town Centre were shops, 9% services and 2% café/restaurant (1 Unit) use with 26% sui generis (including hot food take-aways). The town centre has relatively few commercial premises compared with towns of similar size.

## 8.0 Actions for Prestonpans Town Centre

### 8.1 Movement and Access

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

Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 1 Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Introduction of a controlled parking zone	ELC Road Services	1. Approval of Parking Management Strategy as part of Local Transport Strategy 2. Implementation of stay lengths		The Local Transport Strategy has been adopted, therefore this work will commence.

- 8.3 Surveys indicate that Prestonpans Town Centre is used by 43% of its residents weekly or more frequently with 13% visiting daily. While the majority walk, 56% travel by car and 6% use a bus. The town centre must continue to be accessible to residents from its housing areas and in line with the East Lothian Local Transport Strategy. Encouragement to do so by means of active travel should be made.
- 8.4 There is no town centre car park as such but on street parking is available and car parks at the Scotmid and Co-op. The Parking Management Strategy which forms

part of the Local Transport Strategy has been adopted and the town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre car parking. This may require additional signage and every effort should be made to keep permanent signs to a minimum to minimise sign clutter. Parking in Prestonpans is currently free to use along the length of High Street, Ayres Wynd, New Street and Kirk Street and it is here that the Parking Management Strategy proposes to have a controlled parking zone. By limiting length of stay this will ensure that parking is available when it is required to access the town centre.

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 2 Improve Access to the Town Centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Encourage pedestrian and cycle access to Prestonpans Town Centre	ELC Road Services / ELC Housing Services	1. Identify access paths and routes that require environmental enhancement to make them more user friendly 2. Identify funding		High quality improvement work has been undertaken to Mill Wynd and Kirk Wynd. A scheme to improve Cookie's Wynd has been prepared but not implemented

8.5 Prestonpans High Street lies in the centre of the town and is accessible by walking and cycling along several path routes but mainly by road from newer housing areas to the south of the town. In 2010 environmental improvements were made to two access paths to the town centre; Kirk Wynd and Mill Wynd with new street furniture, new steps and wall repairs. Similar improvements could be undertaken to other wynds and paths.

8.6 Some paths however would benefit from improvement to encourage their use. To encourage cycling more, safe cycle parking must also be provided as part of access improvements.

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

8.7 Prestonpans Town Centre broadly follows the shoreline and part of its character is the occasional glimpse of the sea to the north. Several public spaces where sea views are available are landscaped and the flat roofed row of shops at 138-146 High Street allows sea views over it from Ayres Wynd. LDP policy CH9: High Street/Inch View, Prestonpans requires that development proposals on the north side of High Street/Inch View do not result in the loss of these important seaward views.

8.8 Only a small part of High Street lies within the Harlaw Hill designated Conservation Area as this conservation area is centred on Kirk Street and Harlaw Hill, parallel with High Street to the south. It extends northwards from the Kirk to include the

Coronation Garden and on the north side of the street, the Burns Memorial open space. That part of the conservation area north of Kirk Street lies within the town centre. Improvement and enhancement of the conservation area is required particularly towards Harlaw Hill. Work to upgrade and improve Mill Wynd and Kirk Wynd was undertaken in 2010. Additional actions include:

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

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

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

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 4 Shopfront and Advertisements</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements in High Street	ELC Planning Service and Economic Development and Strategic Investment / Commercial premises owners, occupiers and lessees	Improvements will be encouraged at the time of advertisement consent applications or planning applications to alter shopfronts		Ongoing

8.10 The built environment of High Street could be improved by works to some shopfronts and advertisements to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of the town centre. Advertisement consent is granted for a five year period therefore should, in time improve as further



applications for advertisement consent are made. Shopfront alterations and advertisements must comply with the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment.

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 5 Public Wi-Fi</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Provision of public Wi-Fi in Prestonpans Town Centre	ELC / Community	Establish the feasibility of and funding for free public Wi-Fi provision to support the town centre		Detailed survey work has been undertaken

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

**Regeneration of Buildings at Risk**

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

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

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 6 Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and infill sites for housing and commercial use in line with LDP</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Encourage development of infill and vacant sites within the town centre to uses that support the town centre	Private land owners / ELC Development / ELC Estates	This work is only required as development proposals are made		Ongoing

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

<b>Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 7 New Uses for Old Buildings – Harlaw Hill House</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Conversion and restoration of Harlaw Hill House to support the town centre	ELC/private owners/National Trust for Scotland/HES	1. Secure ownership of the building and grounds with restoring purchasers		The building remains privately owned at this stage
		2. Identify new uses that can use the building		
		3. Prepare programme of restoration and identify an overall funding package		

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



Harlaw Hill House

### Celebrating the Heritage of the Area

8.15 Prestonpans is rich in heritage including seven Category A<sup>3</sup> listed buildings of national importance, two conservation areas, a national battle site, its salt panning history and one of the earliest industrial sites at Prestongrange Museum. However, this history is spread throughout the town rather than being concentrated in the town centre as is often the case. The Heritage Lottery has funded a two year Heritage Connections project in the ward to draw all the different strands of heritage (built, cultural, natural, intangible) together and explore common themes to improve local outcomes and create better places for people to live and visit. By strengthening the networks between heritage, civic and community organisations, and by involving citizens and local businesses, projects will enhance the role that heritage plays in the future of each place. Actions include:

- Making the Most of Prestonpans Heritage

Prestonpans Town Centre Strategy: Action 8 Making the Most of Prestonpans Heritage				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Work with local groups and individuals to identify the significance of local heritage assets and develop plans for sustainable use.	ELC Economic Development and Strategic Investment / Area Partnership / Community	1. Identify heritage assets and significance 2. Identify / link local community groups to assets / activities.		Launch of the project will take place early in 2019
		3. Develop capacity / ideas / activities into 'projects'. 4. Testing of projects and evaluation.		

<sup>3</sup> Buildings of national or international importance, either architectural or historic, or fine little-altered examples of some particular period, style or building type.

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

## **9.0 The Way Forward**

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

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

**STRENGTHS**

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

**WEAKNESSES**

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

## OPPORTUNITIES

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

## THREATS

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





## **POPULATION**

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

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

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

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

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

## **HOUSING**

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

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

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

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

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3 people.



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

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

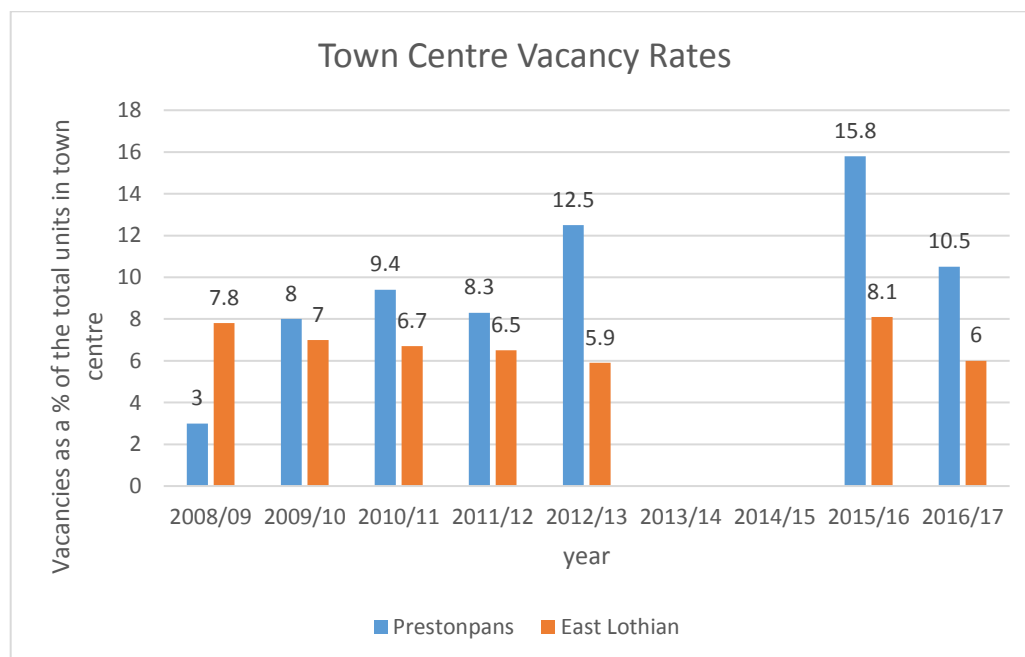
### **BLINDWELLS**

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

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

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

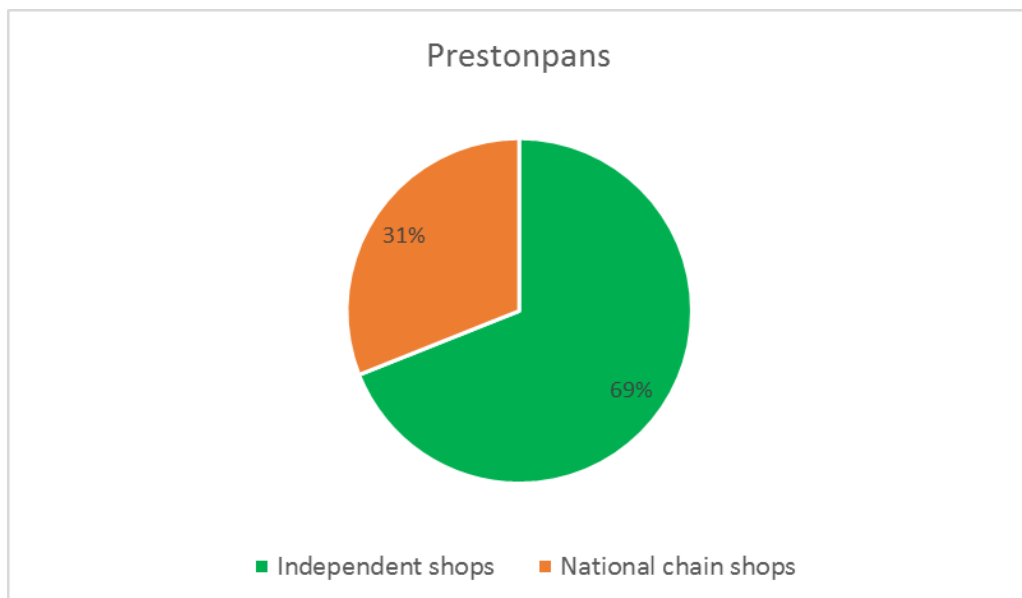
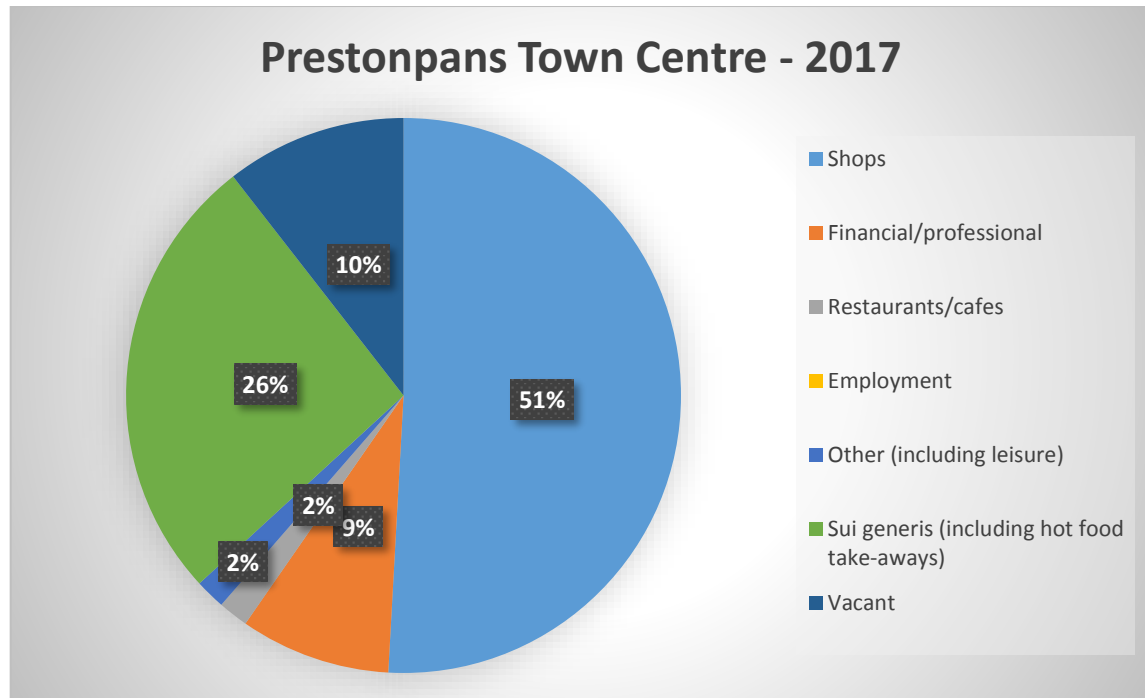
- Vacancy rates in Prestonpans Town Centre have been higher than average vacancies across East Lothian’s six towns in recent years.
- Vacancy rates in Prestonpans have increased by over 3.3% between 2012/13 and 2015/16
- The 2016/17 figure shows Prestonpans vacancy rates to be higher than the East Lothian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



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

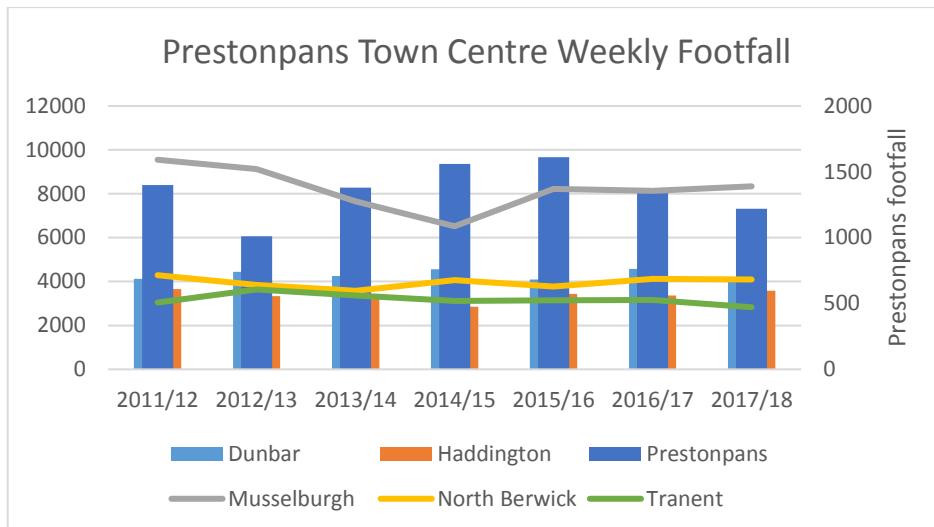
Town Centre uses

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



Footfall

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



Weekly footfall rates per head of ward population are 0.09 visits per person, the lowest in East Lothian. The weekly footfall for 2017/18 has dropped to its lowest since 2012/13.

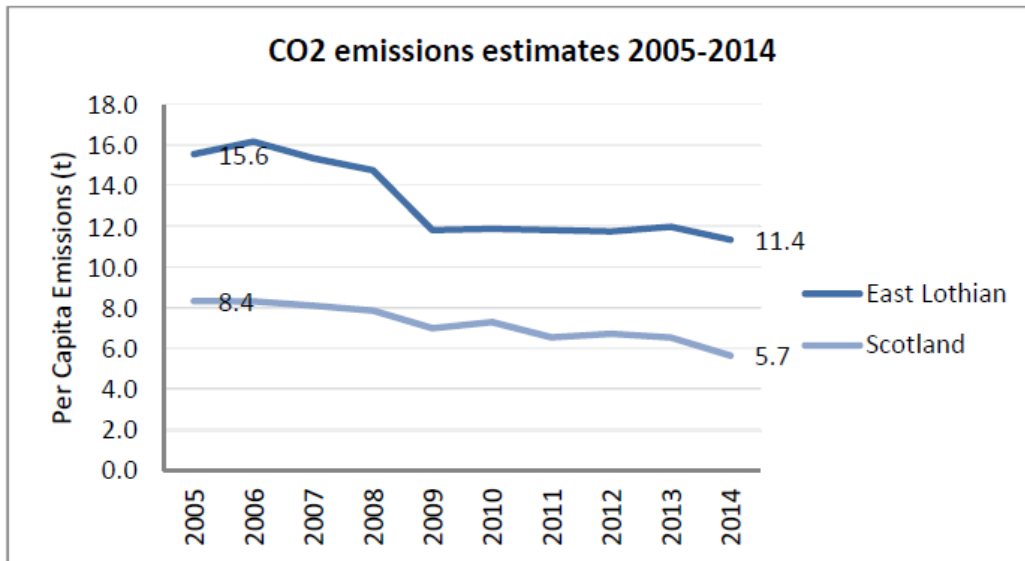
### **AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION**

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

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

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

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



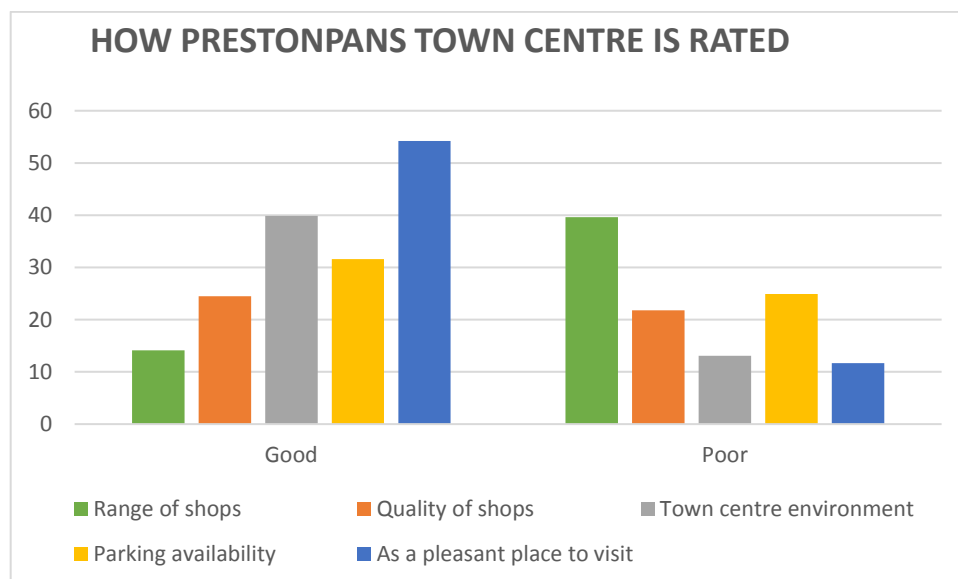
The East Lothian Residents Survey (2017) reported that 23% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live. This was the highest percentage of all the wards, with an overall East Lothian average of 10%.

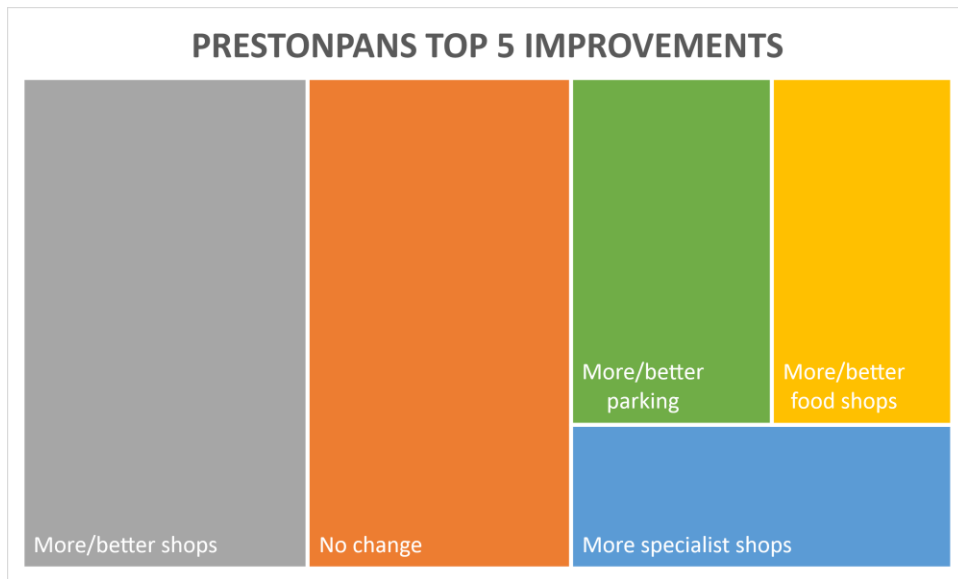
**TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

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

**PRESTONPANS**

43% of people who live in Prestonpans visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently and 13% visit daily. Approximately 36% people walk to the centre, 56% travel by car and 6% travel by bus. A large proportion of respondents from Prestonpans like the town centre environment and think the town centre is a good place to visit. The range of shops on offer scored poorly. Therefore, perhaps not surprisingly, the top 5 improvements include better shops in general as well as requests for more/better food stores and more specialist shops.





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

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

### **Discussion**

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

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

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

Restaurants and cafes represent only 2% of town centre uses in Prestonpans (which equates to 1 unit). Whilst restaurant/cafés are not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer

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

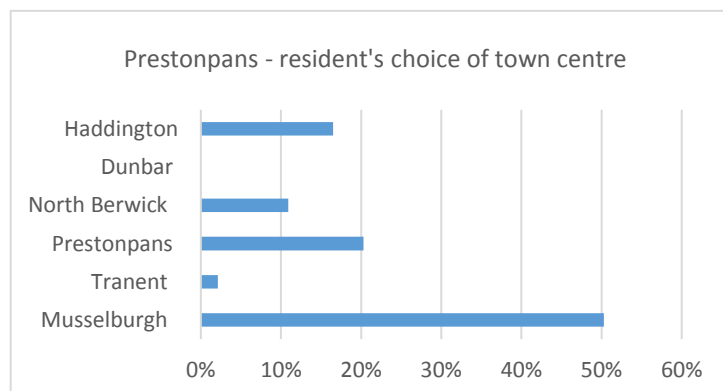
The town of Prestonpans provides a very poor evening offer in terms of restaurants, although there are a large number of public houses and take-aways. For residents the top priority for improving the evening economy are *more/better restaurants* and *cafes and more/better pubs and wine bars*.

### **Citizen's panel – Survey 2018**

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

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

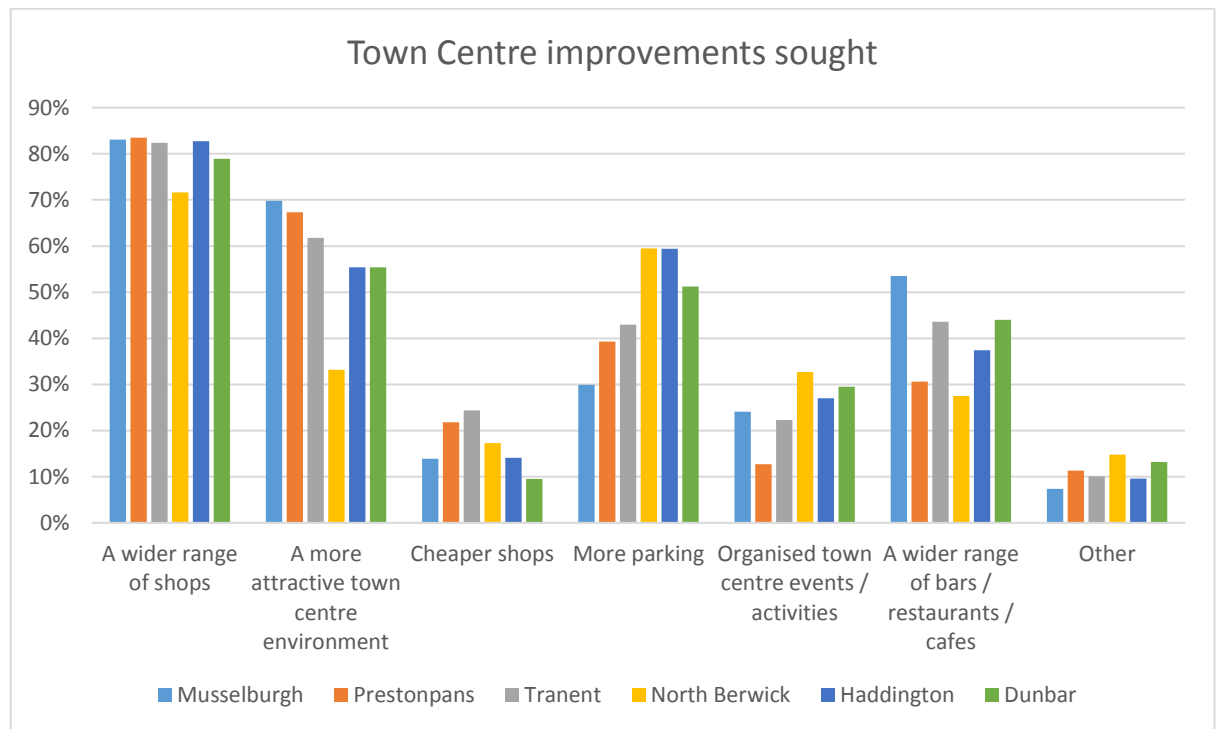
*Which town centre do people visit most often for shopping, leisure and services?*



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



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

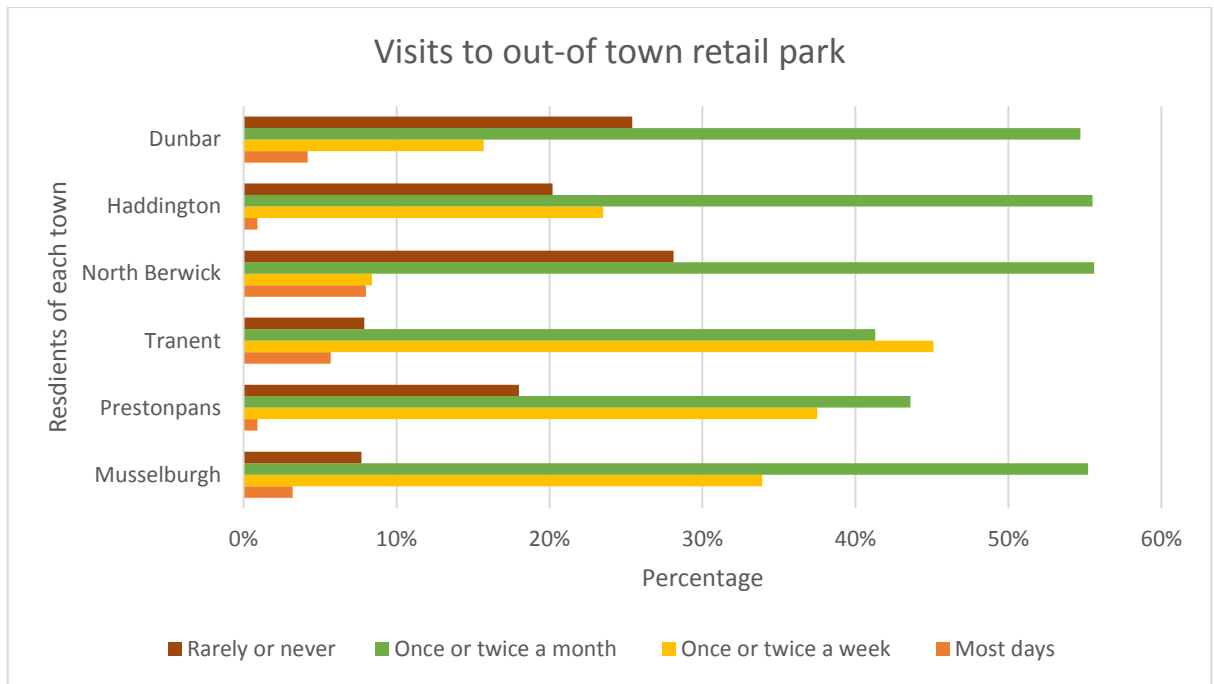


The results are similar for each town centre with the top three issues for Prestonpans showing:

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

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

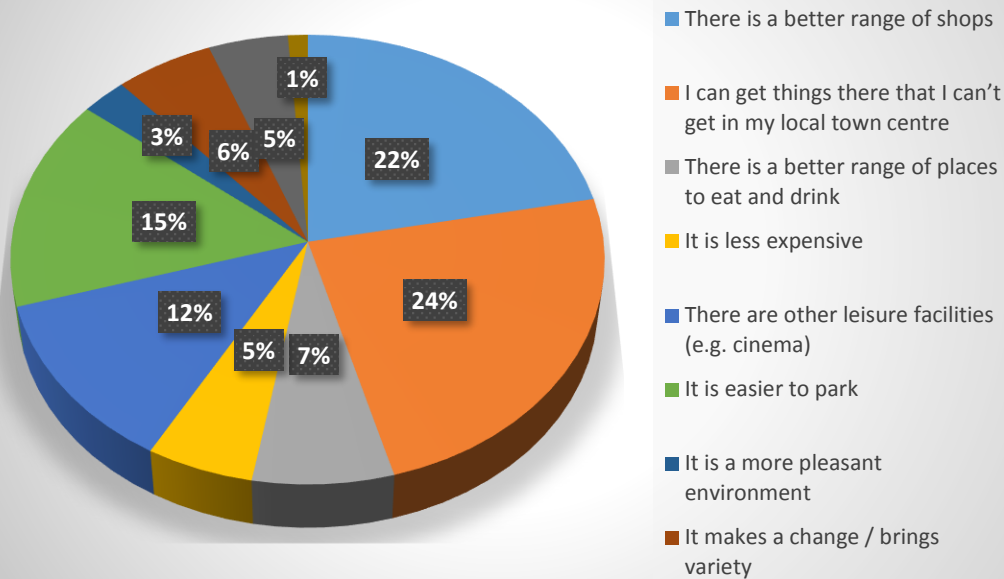
Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asks ‘how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?’



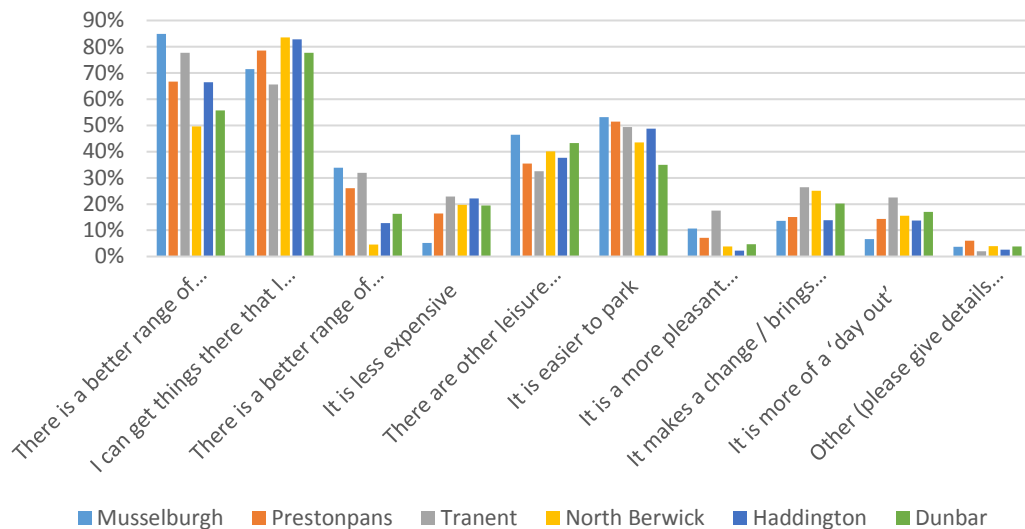
As would maybe be expected a large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a week and once or twice a month. A higher proportion of residents from Dunbar, Haddington and North Berwick rarely or never visit an out-of-town retail park, most likely because proximity to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

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

## All respondents



## Respondents by town centre



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

## **Parking**

### Problems & Issues

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

### Potential Parking solutions

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