

# **Tranent 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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*“Tranent town centre will tackle its traffic issues resulting in a more attractive place in which to spend time and do business encouraging its greater use by residents old and new and those from outlying areas.”*

# TRANENT TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

## 1.0 Purpose of the Tranent Town Centre Strategy

- 1.1 The Tranent 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 Tranent 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 Tranent Town Centre Strategy draws on the work done by the Tranent Town Centre Charrette in 2015 and takes account of the Council's approved Local Transport Strategy and Local Housing Strategy as well as the Fa'side 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 Tranent town centre is:
- 1.5 *"Tranent town centre responds to the expanding population of the town and surrounding villages with opportunities and investment in the shopping and leisure offer. Repair and improvement of buildings, spaces and the environment help make Tranent an accessible town centre which is attractive to residents and visitors, both old and new."*

## 2.0 Policy Context

### Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres

- 2.1 The 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.

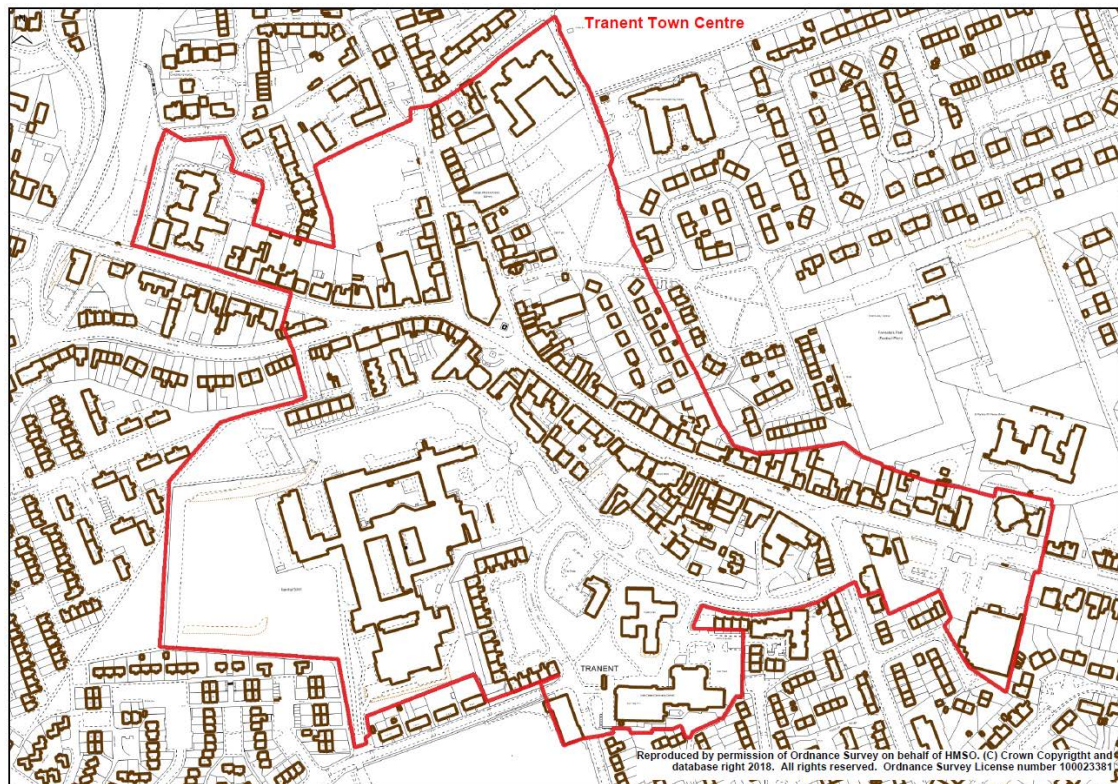
### **3.0 Form and Content of the Tranent Town Centre Strategy**

- 3.1 The Tranent Town Centre Strategy adopts a strategic approach to guide the improvement of Tranent 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 Tranent 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 Tranent Town Centre Area**



- 4.2 Tranent has experienced significant growth over the last 15 years with the completion of the Windygoul development to the south and its population has increased to an estimated 12,582 people. The LDP plans for further growth in Tranent with housing allocations at Windygoul South (550), Lammermoor Terrace (120) Bankpark Grove (80) an increase of circa 750 houses in the period to 2025. Further housing is also planned at Macmerry, Gladsmuir, Ormiston, Elphinstone and Pencaitland in the Ross High School catchment area. The LDP also allocates approximately 28 hectares of land for employment at Tranent and Macmerry.
- 4.3 Much of the town centre is included in the designated Tranent Conservation Area which covers the oldest parts of the town around Church Street as well as the High Street. The purpose of a conservation area is to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the architectural and historic character of the area. This should ensure that, over time the area is improved and enhanced. The Tranent Conservation Area Character Statement is contained in LDP Supplementary Planning Guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment, which contains guidance on development in conservation areas including shopfronts and advertisements which are important in setting standards for improving the overall environment of the Conservation Area.

## 5.0 Tranent Town Centre Analysis

- 5.1 Tranent 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 The ward of Tranent includes Tranent, Wallyford, Macmerry and Elphinstone. Almost half of the Ward's population live in Tranent. The population is set to grow, with a total of 1513 houses planned for Tranent by 2025. The town centre is centrally located and is in an ideal location to draw the existing and new population to its shops and businesses. The town has seen the recent development of Asda and Aldi stores within walking distance of High Street. Tranent High Street footfall remained at a similar level from 2011/2012 until 2016/2017. There has been a 10% drop in the footfall in the latest figures from 2017/18. Town Centre vacancy rates have varied since 2008, but recently they are below the average for East Lothian. There are a wide range of uses represented in the town centre, although the number of shops (Class 1) is lowest in East Lothian. There are a high proportion of sui generis<sup>1</sup> uses (which can include pubs and bookmakers). Over 60% of the Tranent population choose not to visit the town centre after 6pm, citing the need for more/better restaurants/cafes and pubs/winebars. Currently a very high proportion of expenditure on food items from Tranent residents is spent outside of Tranent, primarily in Musselburgh and Haddington. There is an excellent bus service from Tranent to Musselburgh and Edinburgh. Blindwells new town is planned with 1,600 houses and associated facilities to serve their needs immediately to the north of Tranent and land is safeguarded for major expansion of Blindwells if required post 2030. The future development of Blindwells could see further retail choice within easy reach of Tranent. The challenge is therefore to promote a sustainable future for the centre of Tranent, which encourages its use by both the existing and future populations and, critically, encourages the retention of local expenditure and business activity.
- 5.4 The town centre has on-street short stay parking and a number of car parks behind the High Street with easy access to the main shopping area. However, lack of enforcement can see low turnover of spaces. More/better parking is identified by residents as a much needed improvement. Tranent High Street is busy with vehicles and there is opportunity to develop an alternative route through new development to the south.
- 5.5 In 2015 a design charrette was held in Tranent to examine in detail the issues of the town centre. The results provide an informed public view expressed at a point in

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

time and established a strategic set of principles for the town centre and ideas for change. Having an attractive environment that draws people in and feels safe and relaxing would be key to the quality of life of Tranent's residents and attracting investment, footfall and spend. Additionally it was felt that Tranent lacked a proper community centre.

- 5.6 The Citizen's Panel survey (2018) identified a need for a wider range of shops, a more attractive town centre environment and more parking.

## **6.0 Regeneration Strategy for Tranent Town Centre**

6.1 A regeneration initiative is currently underway in Tranent Conservation Area. The Tranent Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) <sup>2</sup>commenced in Tranent Conservation Area in 2015 and runs until 2020. The priority area for grant expenditure is within the core town centre focusing on High Street, the former Coop premises in the centre of the town and targeting shopfront and building repairs and improvement. Through the scheme a total of £380,000 had been awarded by 2018 for ten projects.

6.2 As part of its requirement to leave a legacy of better understanding of the heritage of the town, the Tranent CARS scheme has involved all ages of the local community in history and heritage events and creative learning projects focusing on the High Street buildings and their redevelopments. It has also hosted traditional skill training sessions for local residents and building professionals in order for them to learn how to repair and maintain historic buildings. This has used buildings in poor condition or existing community spaces as live training projects. A community led walk and talk group has evolved and has been mapping out historic routes and stories from around Tranent with an aim to creating a series of local audio walks around the town.

6.3 Tranent has grown with new residents bringing their spending power to the town. However, only a proportion of this spending is spent within the town with leakage elsewhere including Edinburgh. The town centre will only attract people if it is a safe, attractive place to visit with good facilities and access including available parking. That is the basis for the regeneration of the town centre which needs to adapt to cater for the needs of both the existing and new population. To do this the town centre requires investment in the following:

- Long vacant buildings – these harm the overall appearance of the centre and usually deteriorate over time. They can also affect the overall image of a town centre and can put off other investment. The major building that requires investment and a new use is the former Co-op buildings block between Church Street and Winton Place right in the heart of the town. The vacant former Infant School on Sanderson's Wynd is another large building that requires a new use.

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<sup>2</sup> Grants to support heritage-led regeneration in Conservation Areas

- Vacant sites/derelict buildings - the former Fa'side Lodge site in Church Street, the former Grants Lounge off Well Wynd and vacant buildings in Civic Square.
- Town centre buildings - Repair and improvement of buildings in Tranent Town Centre 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.
- Open spaces – not all open spaces are useable or attract people to use them. Civic space is needed to allow places where people can gather or sit to appreciate their surroundings. Quieter, often green, spaces can benefit town centre users seeking respite from busy streets. Spaces that require improvement through redesign include Civic Square, Winton Place and the open space between Lindores Drive and the former Infant School.

## 7.0 Main Issues Tranent Town Centre

- 7.1 This section outlines the main issues and actions required within Tranent 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 Tranent is classified as an Interdependent town<sup>3</sup> i.e. it attracts people from neighbouring towns who come to access assets and jobs but is also reliant on neighbouring towns for other assets and jobs.
- 7.3 The population of Tranent is increasing. In 2016, there were 8,043 dwellings in the Tranent ward, 17.1% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian. This is proposed to increase to 1513 potential new homes in Tranent ward by 2025. Additional employment land is allocated at Windygoul and Kingslaw as well as at Macmerry.
- 7.4 Blindwells new town is planned with 1,600 houses and associated facilities to serve their needs immediately to the north of Tranent and land is safeguarded for major expansion of Blindwells. This may, in the longer term, attract people away from Tranent Town Centre.
- 7.5 A high proportion of retail expenditure made outwith the town (79% for convenience goods). Residents are choosing to travel to other shopping areas

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<sup>3</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland's Towns Partnership  
<https://www.scotlandstowns.org/understanding-scottish-places>

(primarily Musselburgh and Haddington). Additionally there is no branding/marketing of the town centre or coordination of businesses.

7.6 Traffic flows are high and the impact of traffic on the town centre was identified at the charrette as a factor that deters people from using the town centre, though that has not been repeated in other surveys. The high volumes of traffic could cause air pollution to rise triggering the need for an Air Quality Management Zone.

## 8.0 ACTIONS FOR TRANENT TOWN CENTRE

### Movement and Access

8.1 Planned housing and employment growth in Tranent will increase vehicle movements in and around the town. To address this the LDP proposes a programme of transport improvements at Tranent Town Centre to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality. Actions include:

- A programme of transport improvements at Tranent Town Centre to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality (LDP Policy T26).
- Introduction of a one way system of traffic flow incorporating Loch Road, High Street and Bridge Street by linking Loch Road to Bridge Street/High Street through Civic Square (LDP Policy T27).
- New segregated high quality cycle and walking path (LDP Proposal T3)
- Winton Place Improved Civic Space
- Reorganisation of town centre car parking
- Assessment of the implications, constraints and viability of a town bypass

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 1 One Way System of Traffic Flow and Civic Square				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Creation of a Tranent Gyrotory one – way Traffic flow system	East Lothian Council Road Services and Development teams/developers	1. Draft Design Proposals 2. Consult 3. Identify funding 4. Detailed Design 5 Prepare Traffic Orders		Preparatory work has commenced on draft design proposals. Developer Contributions will be sought.

8.2 The proposal would redistribute traffic and may lead to a reduction of traffic on High Street which would be of benefit to the town centre. Traffic flow has been raised as an issue affecting the overall experience of using High Street. It may also increase traffic flow on Well Wynd and Loch Road as single flow traffic would also use this



street, as it used to do prior to the creation of Civic Square in the 1960s. An issue that will require careful management in the design of the traffic scheme will be the management of pedestrian flow from Ross High School at times when students are able to access the town centre.

- 8.3 This project requires demolition works at Civic Square and the design of a connecting road to Well Wynd. The Council owns the buildings at Civic Square apart from the Post Office Sorting Office building and the commercial unit adjacent to it. The design of the link road through Civic Square will allow space for new development including civic landscaped space. It would be desirable to include all buildings in Civic Square in a new redevelopment of the square but this may not be possible.

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 2 High Street Re-Landscaping				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Re-Landscaping of Tranent High Street following introduction of one way system	ELC / Area Partnership / external funders	1 Draft Design Proposals 2 Consult 3 Identify funding		This project has not yet commenced
		4 Detailed design stage 5. Traffic Orders		

- 8.4 The introduction of a one way traffic flow system in to High Street could mean that less road space is required with potential for more space for footways, parking, active travel and public transport. There is scope to significantly enhance the environment of High Street making it a more pleasant place to use and therefore to encourage higher footfall.
- 8.5 Detailed design is required to find the most advantageous design for High Street that meets the needs of its users and produces an attractive and high quality street environment. The economic needs of the street must be catered for, including sufficiently wide footways, places where service vehicles can stop, bus stops, and an appropriate amount of public parking.
- 8.6 Proposal T3 of the Local Development Plan proposes a new segregated high quality cycle and walking path running east west through East Lothian between towns and villages including Tranent. This is intended to encourage more people to be active and to undertake some commuting journeys by cycle. Cyclists will be directed from the path to the town centre.

- 8.7 This work will be undertaken by the Council's Road Services team in association with other Council services. Public consultation will be required once detailed designs are prepared before implementation. A major project such as this will be expensive and will require significant funding including from sources other than East Lothian Council. The need to undertake detailed design, further consultation and to source external funding for implementation will mean that the project can only be fully implemented in the medium to longer term.
- 8.8 In 2015, the town centre charrette discussed different options for improving High Street. The following sketch image from the final charrette report shows no parked vehicles, retained two-way traffic and wider footways with colour delineation between surfaces in a shared surface proposal:



Indicative sketch from charrette report on how Tranent High Street might look without parked vehicles and with wider footways. Priority is given to the pedestrian with vehicle movement slowed by narrow lanes and crossing points.



How High Street looks currently (2015 photo)

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 3 Winton Place Improved Civic Space				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Winton Place is currently a road. This proposal will remove the road and re-allocate the space as part of an enlarged civic space at Winton Place	ELC Road Services / ELC Planning Service / Area Partnership	1 Confirm Winton Place no longer required as a through road and close. 2 Prepare detailed design for civic space		Traffic modelling being undertaken to assess closure options.

- 8.9 An additional implementation of Action 1 will impact on the landscaped Civic Square which has been a feature of Tranent Town Centre since the early 1960s and was relandscaped in the 1990s when the statue of local historical figure Jackie Crookston was installed. Winton Place, opposite Civic Square also provides some civic space, currently in a smaller area and has commercial premises on both its sides. The former Co-op buildings on the west side are due to be converted to mixed uses including residential use on the upper floors and commercial use (shop and café) on those parts of the ground floor closest to Bridge Street and also facing on to Winton Place. These uses would complement civic space at Winton Place. The opportunity to enlarge the open civic space at Winton Place should be considered.

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 4 Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Reorganisation of town centre car parking	ELC Road Services	1. Approval of Parking Management Strategy as part of Local Transport Strategy 2. Implementation of short, medium and long stay proposals		The Local Transport Strategy has been adopted, therefore this work will commence.

- 8.10 The Parking Management Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Strategy has been adopted. The town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre car parks. An additional new car park is due to be created at

Forresters Park which will serve the football club on match days and be open to all on other days.

### Built Environment and Public Spaces

8.11 Most of Tranent Town Centre is located within the designated Tranent Conservation Area. This includes all of High Street, Winton Place, Church Street but excludes Civic Square and Well Wynd/Loch Road. The conservation area boundary was extended in 2001 to specifically include High Street with the aim of improving the overall quality of buildings in High Street including shopfronts and advertisements. The character and appearance of the conservation area requires to be preserved or enhanced. Actions include:

- Shopfronts and Advertisements
- Improving Open Space

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 5 Shopfront and Advertisements				
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

8.12 Further improvements are required to some shopfronts and advertisements in the High Street to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of High Street. Advertisement consent is granted for a five year period. This 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.

8.13 The Tranent CARS project has awarded grants to improve buildings on High Street, particularly shopfronts and has had some notable successes including the restoration of the shop at 55 High Street (below) which shows how a simple traditional shopfront can be transformed:



55 High St: Before improvement



55 High St: After restoration with a signwritten sign. The owner reported an increase in business after work was done.

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 6 Improving Open Space				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Investigate the feasibility of creating a small town centre park on underused land between the infant school and Lindores Drive	Area Partnership / ELC / external funders	1 Develop some conceptual ideas for a small park 2 Identify feasibility for funding including from within and external to ELC		This project has not started

8.14 An issue that arose during the Tranent charrette was that there was a lack of public space within Tranent Town Centre for a quiet spot to sit on a bench and eat a lunch. It was therefore identified that the space between Lindores Drive and the historic former Tranent Infant School was poorly laid out but offered potential to be reorganised and landscaped to provide a small park with play area and informal recreational area for that quiet spot off High Street.

8.15 The space between Lindores Drive and the historic former Tranent Infant School contains two existing car parks, the town centre car park at Lindores Drive and the George Johnston centre car park. The former infant school building has two wings to the rear that reach out to a potential park. This historic building is due to be repurposed as an early years educational nursery facility by 2021 though this will require its own enclosed outdoor play area.

8.16 A community park could be created by removing the George Johnson Centre car park and repositioning its parking requirement (16 spaces) at the Lindores Drive car

park (60 spaces). The former road that crosses the site as a rough path can potentially be incorporated into an area of open space and also include a play park. A park would also improve the outlook from the Crookston Care Home. This project should be community led.



Potential before and after of improved open space looking towards Crookston Care Home. Image from Tranent Town Centre Charrette Report 2015

### Regeneration of Buildings at Risk

8.17 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 condition. Where necessary the Council has powers to intervene and require owners to undertake works. In some situations this can lead to the compulsory acquisition of affected buildings. Compulsory purchase of buildings or land can be an option to undertake a significant improvement to a town centre. Actions to help the regeneration of buildings and attract investment to the town centre include:

- New Uses for Old Buildings – Former Co-op Buildings
- New Uses for Old Buildings – Fraser Centre
- Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and infill sites
- Improve access to the Town Centre
- Public Wi-Fi

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 7 New Uses for Old Buildings – Former Co-op Buildings				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Old Coop Buildings bridge Street/Winton	Building Owner/developer / ELC Planning Service and ELC EDSI	Phase 1 due for completion late 2018		Work has commenced on the conversion of the ground



Place/Church Street		Full completion is scheduled for 2020		floor units to new commercial space
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8.18 At the heart of Tranent Town Centre, the long term vacant former Co-op buildings have been deteriorating and detracting from the overall quality of Tranent Town Centre for several years. Planning permission was granted in 2018 for their change of use to form 17 flats, 3 shops (Class 1 use), 1 cafe, 1 bistro (Class 3 use), children’s soft play area with associated cafe (Class 11 use), events hall (Class 11 use), Recharge community building (Class 10 use) and associated works. The new residential units will bring additional people to the town centre and the businesses will add new business space to the town centre as well as a boost for local employment. The main shop frontage is being grant assisted through the Tranent CARS to restore the stonework of the original frontage on this listed building. The overall investment will be circa £4m with grant contributions from the Tranent CARS fund, East Lothian Council and Leader.

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 8 New Uses for Old Buildings – Fraser Centre				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Redevelopment of the Fraser Centre to form a new community centre	Fraser Centre Community Trust	The centre is likely to be completed in 2019		Demolition work has started as part of phase one works

8.19 The use of the Fraser Centre was a concern flagged by residents at the charrette. The old cinema building in Winton Place, accessed from Winton Place, and extending to the rear by more than 50m to the backsides path, is to be redeveloped to form a new community centre for Tranent, the Fraser Centre. This will be a centre for learning, development, arts and entertainment. Funds have been raised for the work by the Fraser Centre Community Trust including contributions from the Big Lottery Fund and will result in circa £3m investment in the town’s community facilities. Its location will also benefit footfall in the town centre.

<b>Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 9 Encourage the Redevelopment of Vacant and Infill Sites</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1 Encourage development of infill and vacant sites within the town centre 2 Investigate the viability of re positioning Well Wynd to create additional development.	Private land owners / ELC Development / ELC Estates	The Fa'side Lodge site should be completed by 2021 Investigate the cost of repositioning of Well Wynd slightly to the south using underused land which could create additional developable land on its south side along Well Wynd.		Ongoing

8.20 Within Tranent Town Centre there are few empty properties above shops with most space occupied by residential accommodation. Where there is vacant accommodation it is most beneficial for the town centre to have it occupied by people to encourage additional use and spend within the town centre. The proposal to investigate the repositioning of Well Wynd should be undertaken to establish its feasibility. The potential to develop further small sites to attract new people to live in the town centre is a desirable objective to support a sustainable and vibrant community in the town centre.

<b>Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 10 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 Tranent town centre	ELC Road Services / ELC Housing Services	Investigate the feasibility of widening sections of the backsides lanes to encourage greater use of footpath access to the High Street. Consider environmental improvement to other path routes to the town centre		Early work to identify land ownership on one side of the backsides path has commenced.



8.21 As Tranent High Street lies in the centre of the town, it is accessible by walking and cycling along several path routes. Some routes would benefit from improvement to encourage their use. For example the backside lanes to the south of High Street are narrow in places and if widened could feel safer to use. Other paths may benefit from additional lighting. To encourage cycling more, safe cycle parking must also be provided in locations where cyclists would use it. While cycle parking is available at destinations such as the George Johnston Centre and the Loch Sports Centre additional town centre cycle parking should be available as part of access improvements.



Back side lane leading from Lindores Place to High Street as it is currently and how it could look if widened and improved. Image from final Charrette report, 2015<sup>4</sup>

Tranent Town Centre Strategy: Action 11 Public Wi-Fi				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Provision of public Wi-Fi in Tranent Town Centre	ELC Development	Establish the feasibility of and funding for free public Wi-Fi provision to support the town centre		Initial survey work has been undertaken

8.22 The availability of public Wi-Fi would be an asset to Tranent Town Centre. It offers the 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.

<sup>4</sup> Tranent Town Centre Charrette Final Report, 2015, Kevin Murray Associates

## **9.0 The Way Forward**

- 9.1 This strategy forms statutory Supplementary Guidance to the Local Development Plan. The health checks (Appendix 2) can be updated regularly and the strategy should be monitored and revised in line with revisions to the LDP Action Programme.

## TRANENT APPENDIX 1 – SWOT AND HEALTH CHECK

### STRENGTHS

- The town centre is located centrally in the town and its uses draw people located to it e.g. health centre, library, sports centre and High School.
- Characterful street with shops and businesses
- New residents will be living in Tranent following extensive new housing developments (1513 units by 2025) and may use the town centre, supporting businesses and potentially helping to create new ones
- Good number of town centre car parks and access lanes to the town
- Proximity of Ross High School provides additional High Street spend
- Good public transport links by bus
- Community group Blooming Belters has enhanced the town's appearance using floral displays
- Low business vacancy rate
- Good quality exemplar building restorations through CARS
- New supermarkets within walkable distance of town centre
- Range of sizes of commercial units
- Improving variety of shops and restaurants

### WEAKNESSES

- Volume of traffic within High Street detracts from the enjoyment of the street by pedestrians (although national Air Quality Standards are met)
- Vacant former Coop buildings detract from the look of the town centre
- High proportion of retail expenditure made outwith the town (81% for convenience goods)
- Some poor quality shopfronts and advertisements detract from the appearance of the street
- Residents are choosing to travel to other shopping areas (primarily Musselburgh and Haddington)
- Can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long
- No branding/marketing of the town centre or coordination of businesses
- Perception that there should be a wider range of shops
- Pedestrian footways narrow in places
- Tranent Town Centre has the lowest proportion of shops compared to the other East Lothian town centres
- Over half Tranent residents do not visit the town centre after 6pm
- Restaurants/cafes represent only 3% of the total units in Tranent

### OPPORTUNITIES

- CARS offers grants for high quality repair and restoration projects for buildings and shops
- The former Coop Buildings in the centre of the town are being converted to new shops and residential properties
- Re-landscaping of civic space within the town centre
- Re-landscaping and tidying up of the open space between Lindores Drive and the former Infants School to create more useable and attractive space
- Proposed new Fraser Centre will attract more people to the town centre
- Former Infants School requires a new use to support the town centre
- 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
- Installation of public wi-fi could allow specific marketing, attract people and allow businesses further advertising opportunity
- Encourage path links from new residential developments to town centre
- Claw back leaked expenditure through increasing range/quality of shops
- Encourage Class 3 uses in an attempt to increase the evening offer
- New development could provide an alternative through route, thereby reducing the volume of traffic in the town centre.
- Parking charges could raise income that could benefit the town centre

### THREATS

- Volume of new traffic in Tranent as a result of new development could continue to adversely affect the town centre until a one way gyratory traffic flow scheme can be introduced
- High volumes of traffic could cause air pollution to rise triggering the need for an Air Quality Management Zone
- Lack of maintenance by building owners could harm the appearance of town centre buildings making it less attractive to new businesses
- In longer term Blindwells new settlement may also attract people away from Tranent Town Centre
- Loss of civic space at Civic Square to create one way system and link Bridge Street to Well Wynd
- Parking charging could be introduced which may deter people from visiting the town centre
- Changes of use from shops (Class) 1 may increase sui generis (hot food take-away offer) instead of restaurants (Class 3)
- Online shopping

## TRANENT Health Check

### POPULATION

The 2016 mid-year population estimates state that 21,504 people live in the Tranent, Wallyford, Macmerry (TWM) ward, which is 20.7% of the population of East Lothian.

#### Population Distribution

- 10,536 people (49% of the ward population) live in Tranent
- 2,916 people (13.6% of the ward population) live in Wallyford
- 1,821 people (8.5% of the ward population) live in Macmerry
- 431 people (2.2% of the ward population) live in Elphinstone

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

	Tranent Ward	East Lothian	Scotland
% of the population (0-15)	19.8	18.2	16.9
% of the population that are (16-64)	65.1	62.2	64.6
% of the population that are 65 or over	15.1	19.6	18.5

### 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 8,043 dwellings in the Tranent ward, 17.1% of the total number of dwellings across East Lothian.

The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in Tranent will yield **312** units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for the ward will yield **1,201** units taking the total to **1,513** potential new homes in Tranent ward by 2025.

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3 people.

## **RETAIL PATTERNS**

Town centre catchments:



### **CONVENIENCE – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Table 5.3 of the Retail Capacity Study (2015) shows convenience shopping patterns (with main food and top-up combined). This highlights the following from 2015:

In Zone 3 (Tranent) only a limited proportion of convenience shopping is retained in the zone (19%). Most is done in stores outside East Lothian and also in Musselburgh and Haddington. The 2015 study was conducted pre-Asda and it is assumed that the new ASDA (supported by the Aldi store) will substantially reduce the high outflows from Zone 3. The scope for additional convenience floorspace in Tranent is likely to support mainly small store developments and extensions to the existing supermarkets.

### **COMPARISON – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The majority (70%) of comparison expenditure takes place outside East Lothian, namely at Ford Kinnaird (Edinburgh) and Edinburgh Town Centre. The Retail Capacity Study (2015) concludes that there is substantial forecast comparison expenditure growth relating to the residents of East Lothian, so capacity is not a barrier to new comparison retail development in the Council area. However, forecast for expenditure indicate that only a small proportion of the leakage could be retained in East Lothian. The reason is that East Lothian does not have any major shopping centres. It is more probable that leakage of comparison 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.

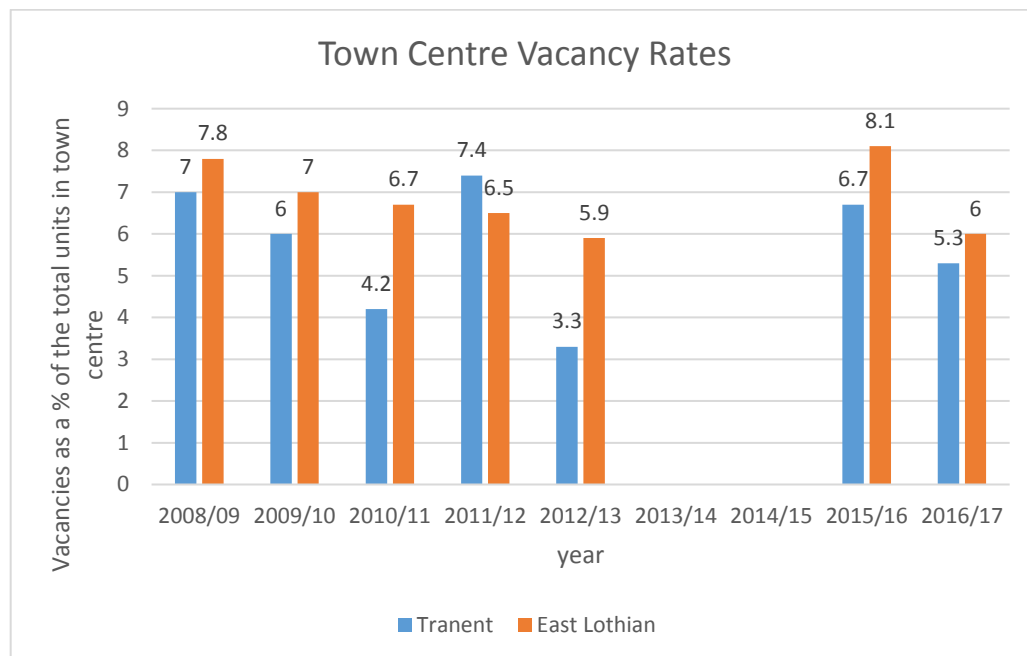
## **BLINDWELLS**

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 (measures as a percentage of available retail units in the area)**

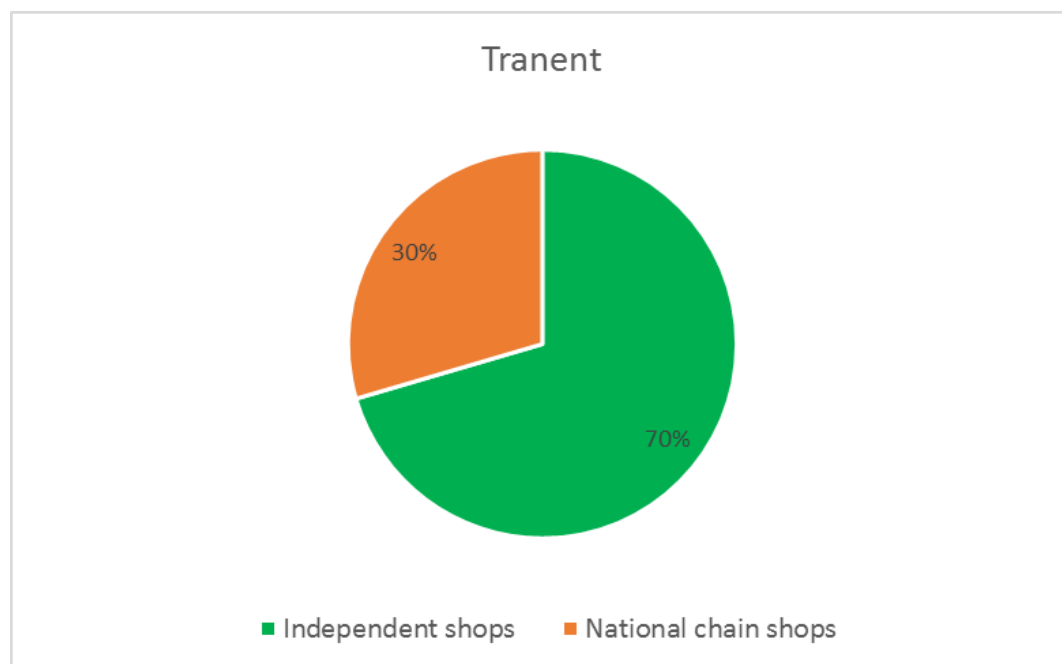
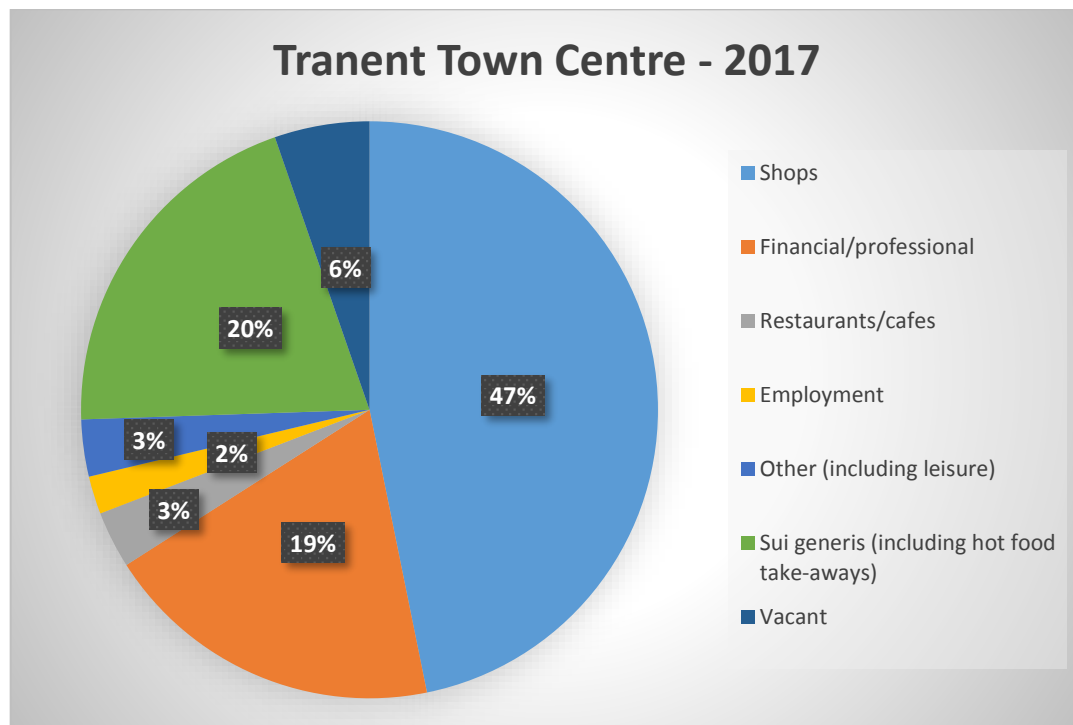
- Vacancy rates have varied in Tranent, from a high of 7.4% (2011/12) to a low of 3.3% (2012/13)
- In 2015/16 figures show the Tranent vacancy rates to be lower than the East Lothian average
- The number of vacancies dropped again in 2017.



## **Town Centre uses**

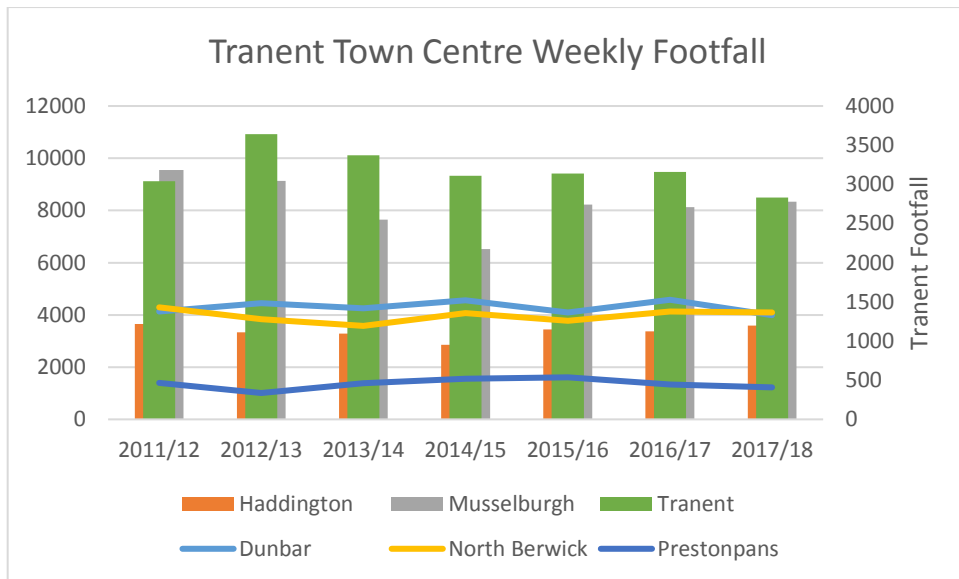


It is of interest to monitor the uses currently occupying the town centre units. The following charts demonstrate the spread of use classes in each centre, using data from the 2017 retail survey:



**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.



Tranent High Street footfall remained at a similar level from 2011/2012 until 2017/2018. There has been a 10% drop in the footfall in the latest figures from 2017/18.

The weekly footfall rate per head of ward population in Tranent High Street was 0.15 visits per person, compared to an East Lothian average of 0.24 visits per person.

### **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.

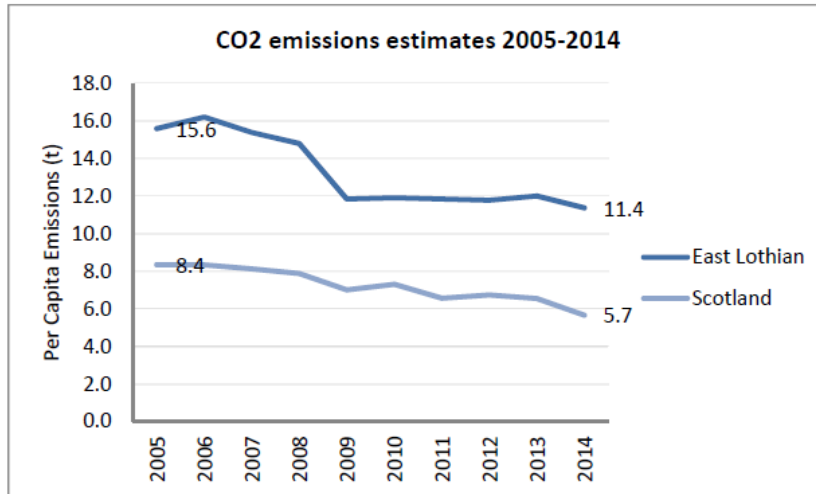
Currently air quality in East Lothian is very good. The Council has been annually reviewing and assessing local air quality since 2003. The majority of pollutants have been screened out in assessments and exceedences of air quality objectives for these pollutants across East Lothian are not considered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

Air quality continues to be monitored at a number of other locations, including Tranent High Street and currently National Air Quality Standards are being met. Additionally Monitoring of NO<sub>2</sub> in Tranent will continue as many of the vehicle trips that generate issues at Tranent High Street (A199) originate from development along the B6414 (e.g. Elphinstone) the B6371 (e.g. Ormiston) and the B6355 (e.g. Pencaitland) road corridors. Trips also originate from further east along the A199 (e.g. Macmerry) although the Gladsmuir A1(T) Interchange provides an alternative route to access the trunk road for trips that originate further east. The cumulative impact of new development in these areas will introduce a significant amount of additional vehicle trips to Tranent High Street and to the Bankton and Dolphinstone A1(T) Interchanges. Current monitoring does not indicate any exceedence of air quality objectives at this time.

In East Lothian there has been an overall decrease of 27.1% in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita. This was the second highest rate in Scotland out of the 32 local authorities. Industry and

commercial accounted for 62.6% of CO2 emissions, followed by Transport (16.7%) and Domestic (16.5%).

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

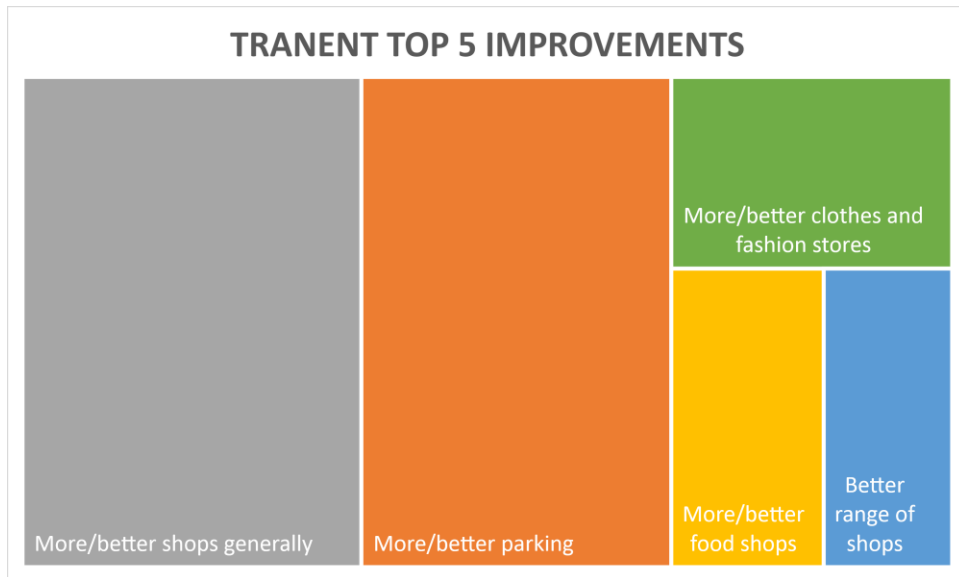
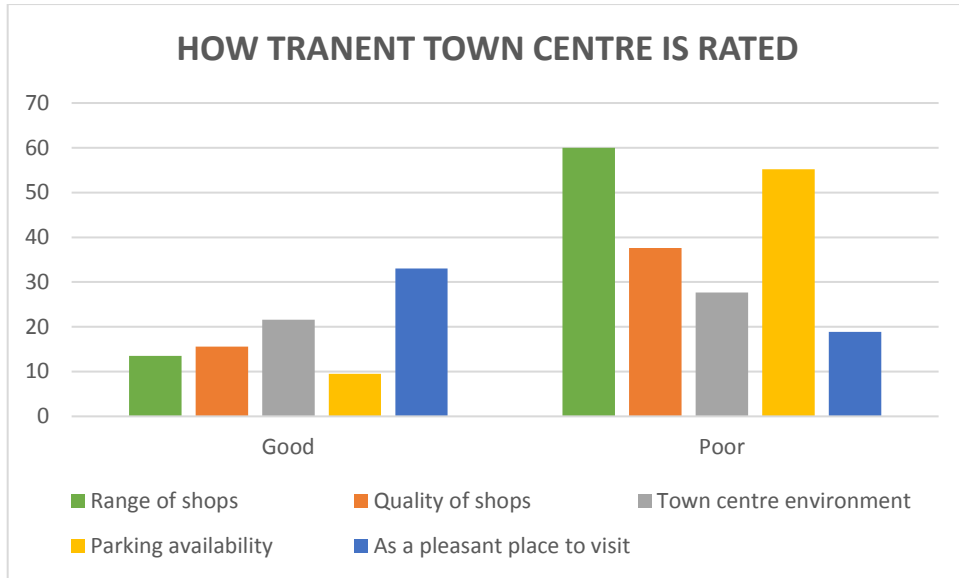


The East Lothian Residents Survey (2017) reported that 6% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, compared to 10% across East Lothian.

**TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

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

56% of people who live in Tranent visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently, 18% visit daily, 47% people walk to the centre, 36% travel by car and 14% travel by bus. The range of shops and parking availability are perceived to be poor by the survey respondents. A large proportion of respondents also think the quality of shops is poor. The top 5 improvements which would make people visit more are based on shop quality and quantity and more (or better) parking.



63% of people who live in Tranent, **never** visit Tranent 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. More things to do generally
4. More family orientated facilities
5. More evening events

#### **Discussion**

The analysis from the RCS demonstrates an apparent east/west split in East Lothian. Whilst a high proportion of convenience shopping from Musselburgh residents is undertaken in Musselburgh, there is also leakage to Edinburgh. Convenience shopping in Prestonpans and

Tranent is lower in these centres. Some focusing their shopping in Musselburgh, others in Haddington or Edinburgh. In Tranent there is demand for a better range and better quality of shops. Over 60% of residents do not visit Tranent Town Centre in the evening. This may be because of the limited offer, or could be influenced by the proximity to the wider Edinburgh area. Across East Lothian, a large proportion of comparison expenditure is spent in Edinburgh, this trend is unlikely to change.

Whilst all town centres support approximately 50% shops (Class 1 retail). Tranent has the lowest proportion at 47%. The previous Local Plan supported retailing and restricted change of use in town centres, but the newly adopted 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.

Currently restaurants/cafes represent only 3% of the total units in Tranent (which is 3 units). Whilst restaurants/cafés is not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer some insight. It is therefore not surprising to see that Tranent, where 63% of residents do not visit the town centre after 6pm, has few 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, they are defined as sui generis. However, sui generis 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.

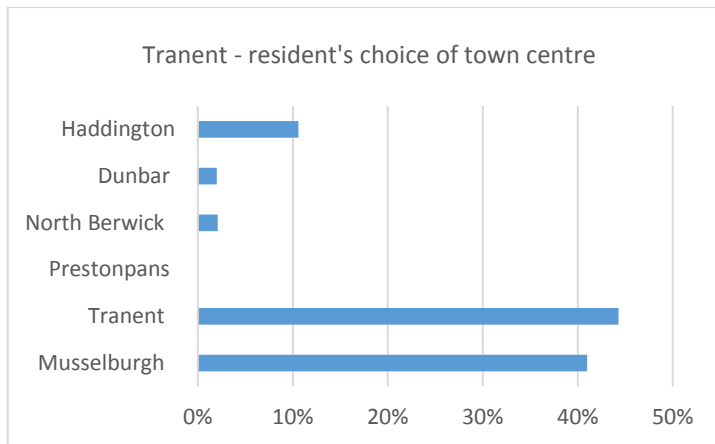
For residents the top priorities for improving the evening economy are *more/better restaurants and cafes and more/better pubs and wine bars.*

### **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.

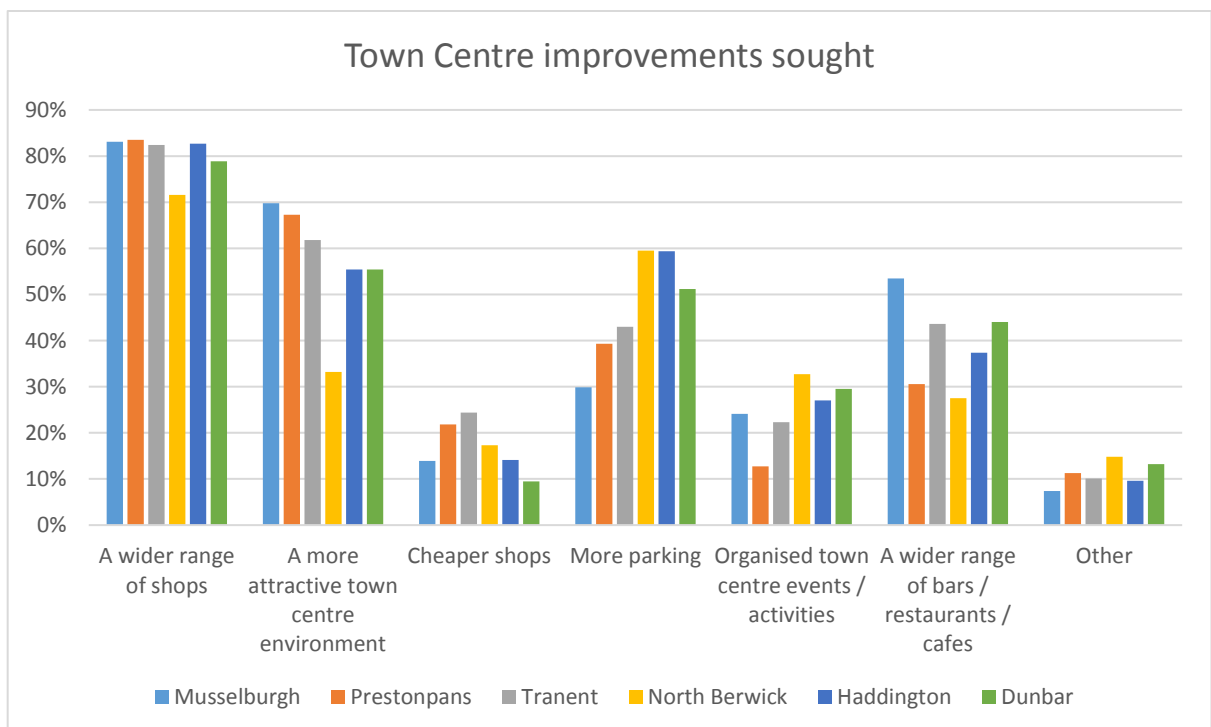
Question 5 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel questionnaire asked 'which of the following town centres do you visit most often for shopping, leisure and to access services'? Possible answers were Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, North Berwick, Dunbar and Haddington. It should be noted that there is 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 use.

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



Less than 50% of Tranent residents visit Tranent most often for shopping, leisure or services. The remainder of residents choose to visit Musselburgh, Haddington and a small proportion, Dunbar and North Berwick. This is interesting as the RCS undertaken in 2015 found similarly that only 56% of people who live in Tranent visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. The RCS findings in 2015 were prior to the full trading of Asda and Aldi in Tranent and ahead of the opening of Giancarlo's Italian restaurant. There appears to be little difference over the last 3 years. Whilst the Citizen's Panel survey does not measure convenience expenditure, the fact that less than 50% of residents choose to visit Tranent Town Centre highlights the continuation of a previous trend even after new retail floorspace is in place.

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:

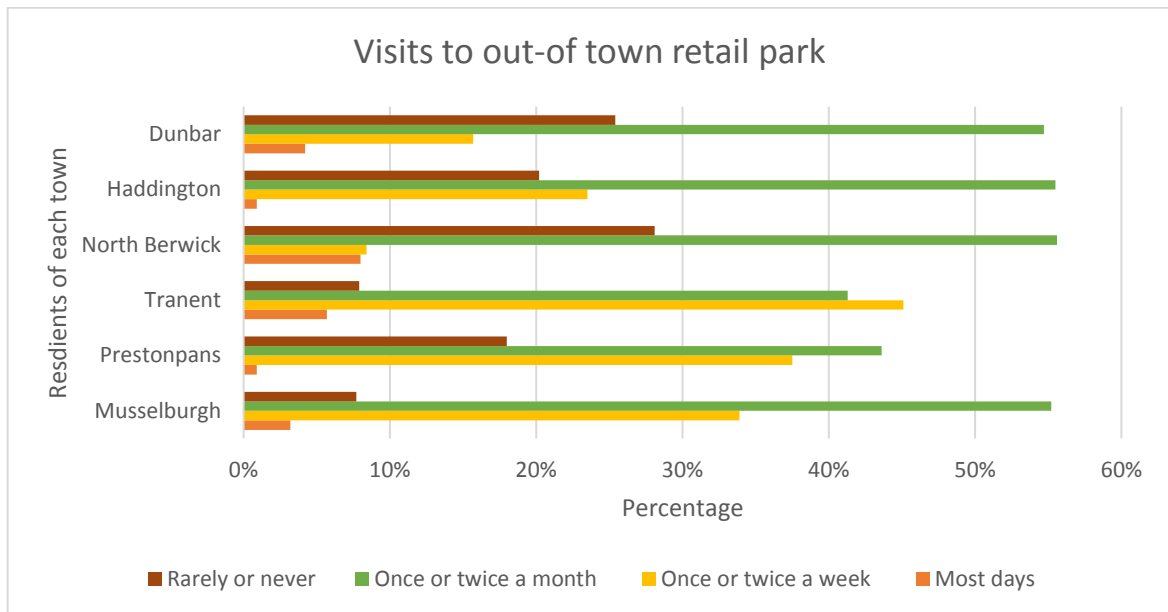


The results are similar for each town centre with the top three issues for Tranent showing:

1. A wider range of shops
2. A more attractive town centre environment
3. A wider range of bars/retaurants/cafes

There is also a requirement for a more parking. The town centre environment was voted as 'good' for all town centres, except Tranent and indeed the residents would like to see a more attractive town centre environment.

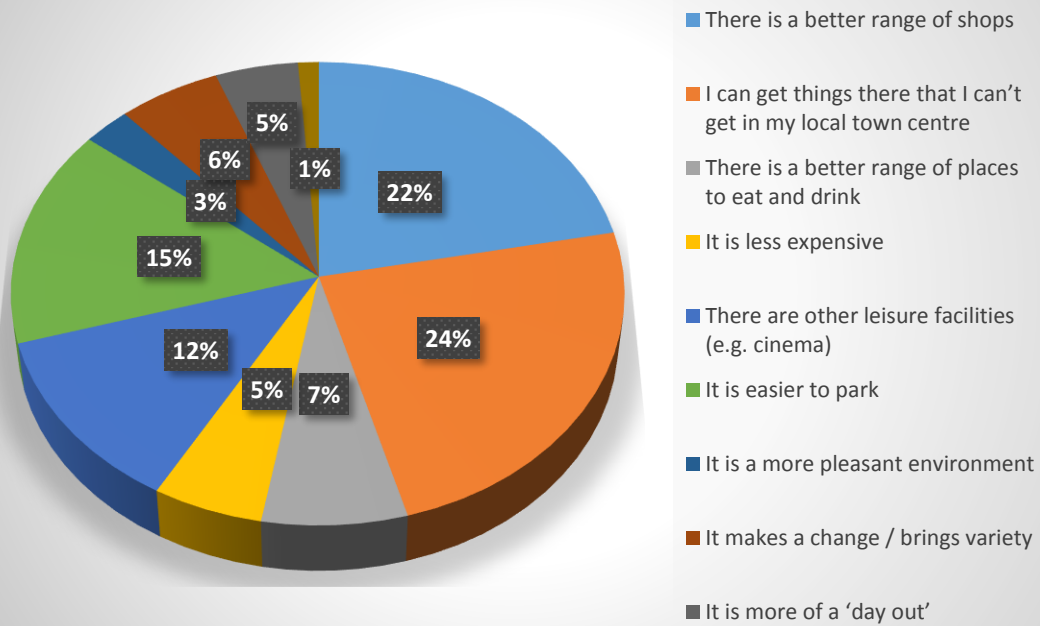
Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asks *'how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?'*



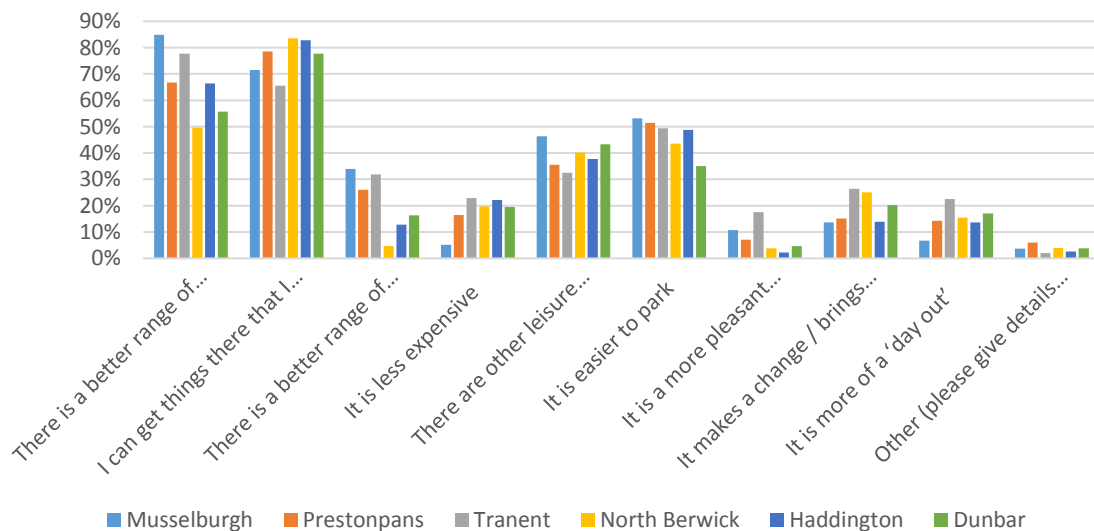
As would maybe be expected a large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a week and once or twice a month. The highest proportion of residents visiting an out-of-town retail park on a weekly basis are from Tranent. Proximity to the east of Edinburgh, good bus and road links will encourage this, but the town centre offer will also reflect these trends. Over 50% of recent respondents from Tranent choose not to shop in Tranent Town Centre. More/better shops and more/better parking are the main improvements sought.

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 Council area. 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

- There is a lack of parking provision on High Street and a low turnover of spaces as existing parking restrictions suffer from a lack of enforcement
- Problems relate to availability of servicing and loading facilities on the High Street causing difficulties for retailers. Loading bays are frequently abused. Lack of kerbside provision in general leads to conflicts between parking and loading demand, particularly on High Street
- Layout of off-street car parks could be improved
- On-street parking problems in the vicinity of the football pitches (Polson Park) and bowling green (Polson Park and Blawearie).
- Church Street suffers from parking on the footway and does not have waiting restrictions in place
- Short-term on-street problems at peak school travel periods around schools
- Lack of Blue Badge parking on High Street
- Informal Park & Ride is also taking place in the vicinity of Loch Road

### 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
- Implementation of parking management hierarchy defining designated short-stay, medium-stay and long-stay parking locations
- Implementation of a coherent and hierarchical approach to parking supply
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Implementation of appropriate measures associated with the Footway Parking and Double Parking (Scotland) Bill
- Application of national and regional parking standards where appropriate and local parking standards where developments do not meet the requirements for these standards
- Ongoing review of Blue Badge parking
- Potential new Park & Ride site on Edinburgh Road will formalise this provision
- Tranent subject to town centre regeneration proposals including better functioning of parking spaces

## **Tranent Charrette**

In 2015 a design charrette was held in Tranent to examine in detail the issues of the town centre. The community, professional advisors and consultants worked together to identify the changes they wished to see happen in the town centre. The results provide an informed public view expressed at a point in time.

The Tranent charrette outputs formulated a strategic set of principles for the town centre. The principles that were established for the regeneration of Tranent Town Centre were:

<i>Principles</i>	<i>Mechanisms to draw Principles together</i>
<b><i>Improving the function of traffic in High Street</i></b>	<b>A New civic square</b>
<b><i>Better pedestrian spaces, paths and crossings</i></b>	<b>Improving the High Street</b>
<b><i>A new square and a sense of a 'heart'</i></b>	<b>Small Spaces around High Street</b>
<b><i>A community hall and performance venue</i></b>	<b>Loch Road and the Lanes</b>
<b><i>Better 'back side' links and spaces behind the High Street</i></b>	<b>A new park and car park</b>
<b><i>Make much more of the Tranent heritage and identity</i></b>	<b>Improving the historic environment</b>
<b><i>Maintain and increase the variety of shops and cafes</i></b>	
<b><i>Parking that facilitates a vibrant town centre</i></b>	

Ideas for change included:

A cinema with comfy chairs	3G football pitch, well used but other activities could also be offered
Need for more activities for both youth and elderly	
Space for clubs to have own lock-up and storage facility	Rugby club, popular and with strong school connections, but changing rooms need attention, as do rugby posts. Could it be the location of a skatepark?
Indoor spaces for kids to hangout	
A skate park	
Clothes shops in the town centre	Fraser Centre, considered a good venue, but could be bigger and have a more obvious street front.
Make High Street a one way system with traffic returning via Loch Road and through Civic Square	Loch Centre, another popular venue that was seen as a fun and safe place.
High Street was considered to be dangerous	
A safe crossing point near the mini roundabout at Church Street/High Street is needed	Concerns were raised about feeling unsafe out and about in Tranent after dark due to older youth and outdoor drinking
Clothing and shoe shop in Tranent to prevent people from having to travel to make purchases, particularly important to elderly residents	
Polson Park needs regenerated.	

## Outputs and Implications

Peter Brett Associates considered the implications for Tranent from transport and economic perspectives. In terms of traffic, there are longer-term aspirations for traffic movement around Tranent, particularly beyond the town centre and related to future development. Roads that functionally bypass the town centre will have a positive effect in reducing non-user traffic. There are several approaches that are discussed that have implications.

**Approach 1**

New Connections Around the Town: longer term developments could provide alternative routes to travelling directly through the town centre, reducing the volume and type of traffic (HGVs etc.)

**Approach 2**

Active Travel Initiatives: improved local walking and cycling routes and an active travel campaign to encourage a modal shift from car to walking and cycling for local journeys to town centre facilities. This would relieve pressure on the road network and town centre parking.

**Approach 3**

High Street Traffic Calming: Traffic engineering measures could be introduced to slow traffic on the High Street and encourage heavier vehicles to take an alternative route along the A1, bypassing the town altogether. This could involve some reallocation of road space away from vehicular traffic to pedestrians and active travel modes. However this could lead to significant congestion in the absence of alternative through routes from the south and east in particular.

**Approach 4**

Town Centre One-way System: A one-way system with traffic running from Church Street to Ormiston Road on High Street and returning via Loch Road (this would remain 2-way to the new link road) and through Civic Square would allow for the reallocation of road space for pedestrians on High Street.

**Delivery and Funding**

- Establish the Tranent Delivery Team within the Fa'side Partnership structure, bringing in other delivery agencies and specialists as necessary to project manage the process
- Undertake further detailed design, costing and policy support work to progress the delivery process
- Deliver on committed projects as funding and/or staffing becomes available, including trial or temporary projects.

**Economic Implications**

The structure of Tranent's economy has changed radically in recent decades, influenced by a combination of factors. These have included:

What has happened?	Response
The closure in traditional industries	Most food and convenience retailing now takes place outside the High Street (in supermarkets nearby or in centres benefitting from A1 proximity); shopping facilities for fashion, electricals, hardware, DIY, etc tend to be restricted to niche or specialist retailers
Edinburgh's continued growth as a financial and service centre	
Related population growth extending across the Lothians and beyond	
Realignment and improvement of key road and rail Infrastructure	The evening economy is limited to a small number of pubs, few restaurants and some fast food outlets, the latter becoming increasingly dominant
The development of the digital economy	
	While there are few vacancies, the increasing concentration of fast food and other non-retail outlets further restricts the appeal of the centre, particularly to newer suburban residents

## **Future Role of Tranent**

In implementing plans for residential and employment growth in the wider area, development will need to be accompanied by increased levels of retail and leisure provision. Employment growth will generate demand and opportunity for business support services. Ideally, these should all be captured locally, both to enhance the quality of life and the local economy, avoiding or minimising a commuter dormitory effect.

The challenge is therefore to promote a sustainable future for the centre of Tranent, which encourages its use by both the existing and future populations and, critically, encourages the retention of local expenditure and business activity. This should anticipate the centre's relationship with proposed facilities at Blindwells. Without proactive effort and investment to improve the centre as a place to spend time and money, changing perceptions and attracting increased footfall and spend, the significance of the centre as a place will continue to diminish, damaging the brand of Tranent, and the quality of life of its residents.

Supporting project submissions will require clarity over the role of Tranent Town Centre and its catchment for different uses. Having an attractive environment that draws people in and feels safe and relaxing would be key to this. Additionally it was felt that Tranent lacked a proper community centre. Addressing this absence could assist the aim of retaining people in Tranent Town Centre for instance with a multi-use facility, potentially in the Old Infant School, with uses that cross-subsidised creating a viable hub for the community.