

Blackpool Town Centre

Description

Blackpool town centre is the principal commercial hub within the borough, providing a mix of retail, leisure, service and other main town centre uses. The centre is an important destination for both residents and tourists, which combines both traditional features as well as modern amenities. The town centre comprises a total of 175,390 sq.m of commercial floorspace, across 737 units.

The retail offer in the town centre is underpinned by a range of key national multiple comparison operators, which are generally located within the Houndshell Shopping Centre and in the central part of the town centre, within a concentration running broadly around Victoria Street, Church Street, Abingdon Street Talbot Road and Deansgate. These locations provide a sizeable quantum of high-quality, modern retail units. There are, however, areas of the centre, particularly towards the periphery, where vacancies are more prominent, the public realm is not as pleasant and footfall is witnessed to generally fall away.

The town centre benefits from a thriving leisure scene which includes Blackpool Tower and the Winter Gardens as well as a number of hotels concentrated along Albert Road, Adelaide Street and Springfield Road. The centre is irregular in shape, focused around Talbot Road to the north, through to Albert Road to the south.

Blackpool town centre has and is currently going through a period of transition, with a number of key schemes being brought forward for a variety of uses on brownfield sites. One such example is the multiversity, which will form Phase four of the Talbot Gateway project. Once delivered, the multiversity will provide a state-of-the-art educational facility to drive skills development, innovation, and collaboration with local businesses. The refurbished Abingdon Street Market and IMAX cinema have also contributed to the increase in leisure facilities and have become popular alternative destinations for residents and visitors alike.

Overall, the centre was busy on the day of our visit, with areas of attractive public realm particularly around the Winter Gardens along Church Street. Accessibility is very good, and there were clear signs of safe pedestrian movement throughout.



Figure 1: Blackpool has a lot of well pedestrianised areas, spread across the town centre.



Figure 2: Bank Hey Street enjoys high footfall leading to the Houndshill Shopping Centre.



Figure 3: The Houndshill Shopping Centre provides a diverse range of retail, dining and leisure options.



Figure 3: Public realm outside the Winter Gardens and Abingdon Street Market.

Table 1 Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2024 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2024 (%)	Floorspace at 2017 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2017 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2024(%)
Comparison	38,000	21.7%	53,220	29.0%	29.2%
Convenience	16,080	9.2%	20,520	11.2%	15.6%
Financial and Business Service	4,120	2.3%	7,440	4.1%	6.2%
Leisure	89,180	50.8%	78,500	42.8%	26.7%
Retail Service	7,330	4.2%	4,460	2.4%	7.4%
Vacant	20,680	11.8%	19,270	10.5%	14.3%
TOTAL	175,390	100%	183,410	100%	100.0%

Source: Composition of Blackpool town centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024; Floorspace at 2017 taken from Blackpool Retail and Leisure Study 2018

Table 2 Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2024	Units at 2024 (%)	Units at 2017	Units at 2017 (%)	Units UK Average at 2024(%)
Comparison	174	23.6%	198	27.4%	26.3%
Convenience	56	7.6%	56	7.7%	9.3%
Financial and Business Service	26	3.5%	45	6.2%	8.3%
Leisure	269	36.5%	235	32.5%	25.8%
Retail Service	59	8.0%	51	7.1%	16.0%
Vacant	153	20.8%	138	19.1%	14.1%
TOTAL	737	100%	723	100%	100.0%

Source: Town centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024; Units at 2017 taken from Blackpool Retail and Leisure Study 2018

Table 3 Primary Shopping Area Composition at 2024

GOAD Category	Floorspace (sq.m)	Floorspace (%)	Floorspace UK Average (%)	Units (sq.m)	Units (%)	Units UK Average (%)
Comparison	25,790	54.1%	29.2%	86	48.3%	26.3%
Convenience	1,490	3.1%	15.6%	12	6.7%	9.3%
Financial and Business Service	50	0.1%	6.2%	2	1.1%	8.3%
Leisure	14,740	30.9%	26.7%	41	23.0%	25.8%
Retail Service	1,950	4.1%	7.4%	13	7.3%	16.0%
Vacant	3,680	7.7%	14.3%	24	13.5%	14.1%
TOTAL	47,700	100%	100.0%	178	100%	100.0%

Source: Composition of Blackpool town centre primary shopping area based on boundary as defined by Blackpool Borough Council and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024

Uses

Blackpool accommodates 737 commercial units, collectively providing for 175,390 sq.m of floorspace. Since 2017, the number of units has increased from 723, while the total floorspace has decreased from 183,410 sq.m over the same period. This trend may be attributed to the redevelopment and/or subdivision of larger commercial spaces into smaller units to accommodate more businesses. Despite these changes, the overall totals have remained relatively stable between 2017 and 2024.

The centre's convenience uses account for a total of 16,080 sq.m or 9.2% of the total floorspace, which is below the national average of 15.6%. This marks a decrease from the 20,520 sq.m, or 11.2% of floorspace recorded in 2017.

Convenience operators occupy a total of 56 units or 7.6% of all units in the centre, which is also below the national average of 9.3% and remains consistent with the 56 units (7.7%) recorded in 2017. The Sainsbury's store accounts for 62.4% of the convenience floorspace recorded at the time of our visit, indicating the dominance of the store in terms of its offer and scale in the context of the wider convenience offer. Other national multiple convenience operators include Heron Foods, Iceland, the Co-op, Holland & Barrett and Greggs.

The remaining convenience units comprise a mix of operators, including bakers, butchers, confectioners, tobacconists, and newsagents.

The comparison goods offer within Blackpool comprises 38,000 sq.m or 21.7% of floorspace and 174 units or 23.6% of the total units. Both figures are below the national averages of 29.2% for floorspace and 26.3% for units and represent a decline from the 53,220 sq.m (29.0%) of floorspace and 198 units (27.4%) recorded in 2017. Despite this decline, there remains a wide range of comparison goods services available, including national multiples such as Frasers, Primark, Superdrug, Flannels, Footasylum, New Look, Boots, Poundland, and Peacocks, alongside independent operators selling a variety of clothing and footwear, jewellery, and gifts. The units vary in size and are generally well dispersed throughout the centre, but with a concentration principally within and on the adjacent streets of Houndshell.

In terms of the types of operators in the town centre, these are generally mixed but there is a general 'sway' towards the budget end of the market, with a number of operators offering discounted goods. However, there are also a range of higher-end operators such as Frasers and Flannels which operate at the upper end of the market.

Blackpool has a relatively low retail service presence, with 7,330 sq.m or 4.0% of the total commercial floorspace and 59 units or 7.9% of the total available units. Both metrics remain below the national averages of 7.4% for floorspace and 16.0% for units but show an increase from the 4,460 sq.m (2.4% of floorspace) and 51 units (7.1%) recorded in 2017. The retail units are well dispersed throughout the centre and contain a range of services, including health and beauty, opticians, funeral services, and dry cleaners.

Leisure services account for 89,180 sq.m or 50.8% of Blackpool's commercial floorspace and 269 units or 36.5% of its total units, which are both significantly above the national averages of 26.7% for floorspace and 25.8% for units. These figures represent a notable increase from the 78,500 sq.m (42.8%) of floorspace and 235 units (32.5%) recorded in 2017.

The town centre's proportion of leisure floorspace, in particular, has risen slightly since 2017. This increase can be attributed to two principal factors. Firstly, the decline in comparison retail floorspace observed over this period, driven by the well-documented challenges to the UK non-food shopping market, coincided with the growth of the leisure sector, particularly food and beverage uses. As such, a number of former comparison units within

the centre have been reoccupied by leisure operators, which has resulted in the shift in figures in the centre.

Secondly, the size of the Experian/Goad area for Blackpool expanded since 2017, particularly to the south along Albert Road and Adelaide Street and east along Church Street.

There is a good range of leisure services available throughout the centre, including hotels, amusement and entertainment centres, public houses, restaurants, cafes, and takeaways. The majority of the leisure units are occupied by independent operators, with national operators including Costa and McDonald's.

Blackpool's leisure service offer clearly has a function and draw beyond that of many non-resort town centres. For example, Blackpool Tower, the Winter Gardens, Madame Tussauds and the Sea Life Centre are key examples of the town's unique offer as a tourist destination.

In terms of financial services, Blackpool comprises 4,120 sq.m or 2.3% of floorspace and 26 units or 3.5% of the total number of units. Both figures are below the national averages of 6.2% for floorspace and 8.3% for units and represent a decline from the 7,440 sq.m (4.1% of floorspace) and 45 units (6.2%) recorded in 2017. The financial offer principally comprises three banks (Halifax, NatWest, and Lloyds), a building society, and estate agents.

Vacant units in Blackpool town centre account for 20,680 sq.m or 11.8% of total floorspace and 153 units or 20.8% of all units. These figures are higher than those recorded in 2017, when vacancies accounted for 19,270 sq.m (10.5% of floorspace) and 138 units (19.1% of total units). In terms of the proportion of vacant floorspace, the 2024 figure is less than the national average but in terms of vacant units, the recorded figure exceeds the national average. This indicates that a number of the vacant units are smaller in scale.

That said, vacancy rates vary across the centre, with notably lower rates recorded within the Primary Shopping Area (PSA), where retail and leisure uses remain well-represented.

The PSA is primarily characterised by comparison retail, which accounts for 54.1% of total floorspace and 48.3% of all units. This reflects a concentrated and robust retail offer centred on the Houndhill Shopping Centre, which includes a range of national multiples such as New Look, JD Sports, TK Maxx, and Primark.

The PSA also accommodates a substantial proportion of leisure uses, which make up 30.9% of its floorspace. These uses contribute significantly to the vitality and footfall of the area, encouraging linked trips and increased staying time, as observed during our visit. While leisure uses occupy fewer units than retail, they play a key supporting role in the overall offer of the PSA.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Blackpool town centre contains a good selection of services open during the day, with its daytime economic offer based around its role as a hub for convenience, retail, comparison and financial services. The daytime economic offer is primarily focused around the key comparison operators, especially around the Houndshell Shopping Centre and along Victoria Street. This offer is supported by extensive food and drink provision, which (during daylight hours) is primarily focused on cafés and restaurants. These operators act to drive and sustain footfall during the day, resulting in a robust daytime economy within Blackpool.

The town's tourism economy is bolstered by its iconic attractions – such as Blackpool Tower, the Pleasure Beach and the Winter Gardens – which draw footfall at different times of the year.

A number of the town's evening-time leisure operators, particularly its amusement and entertainment centres, cater to visitors across the country and of all ages. At the time of our visit, there was a dance competition that had taken place over the weekend at the Winter Gardens. Such events bring trade and business to the centre, although the reliance on tourist trade can result in seasonal fluctuations in footfall and sales.

In addition, Blackpool's theatres and cinemas draw from a large catchment area, attracting significant footfall and ensuring that there is activity in the town centre until late into the evening. The 53 hotels within the town centre further support both the daytime and evening economies by encouraging additional spending and increasing the available expenditure ready to support businesses throughout the area.

Moreover, there is a noticeable lack of family-friendly dining options in the town centre. The majority of food establishments are takeaways, with relatively few places available for sit-down dining. Given Blackpool's status as a major tourist destination, particularly for families, enhancing the availability of such dining options would significantly increase the town centre's appeal.

Nonetheless, overall, Blackpool town centre benefits from strong daytime and evening economic offers.

Vacancies

The vacancy rate in Blackpool town centre is below the national average in terms of floorspace. The vacancy rate for floorspace is 11.8%, compared to a UK average of 14.3%, while the unit vacancy rate is 20.8%, notably higher than the national average of 14.1%. This finding indicates that the majority of Blackpool's vacancies are relatively small in scale.

Some of the larger vacant units within the centre comprise former office uses or those currently under alteration for new office uses, and are therefore excluded from the vacancy rates. A key opportunity for redevelopment is the former post office site, which is understood to have recently been subject to a grant funding agreement between the Council and developer to bring forward a new hotel in the town centre.

The vacant units are dispersed throughout the town centre. Despite this, they are generally well-maintained, which helps to preserve the environmental quality of the town centre. This is particularly advantageous, as the relatively smaller size of most vacant units means they do not have a significant visual impact on the overall appearance of Blackpool.

Vacancies in the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) account for 7.7% of total floorspace and 13.5% of units, both of which are lower than the wider town centre average. This supports the view that the PSA remains relatively active and commercially resilient, particularly when compared to broader town centre trends.

At present, none of the vacant units are subject to any active planning applications.

Opportunity Sites

Blackpool town centre is undergoing substantial investment to transform its economic and social landscape, with a series of ambitious projects designed to enhance its role as a regional hub for business, education, and leisure. Central to these efforts is the Talbot Gateway regeneration scheme, a multi-phase development that is revitalising the heart of the town.

Phase one of the project, completed in 2014, delivered the Number One Bickerstaffe Square Council Office, a Sainsbury's supermarket, and the refurbishment of a 650-space multi-storey car park. Building on this success, phase two has introduced a new tramway extension, enhancing sustainable public transport in Blackpool. The extension allows commuters and visitors to travel directly from Fleetwood to Blackpool North Station, connecting seamlessly with various destinations across the town via the Promenade. This improvement has increased transport capacity and frequency, particularly along the busy seafront tramway network.

Phase three, currently near completion (application refs: 20/0751 and 21/0654), will see the delivery of a seven-storey, 215,000-square-foot sustainable office building. This development will house a Civil Service Hub, consolidating 3,500 Fylde-based civil service jobs into central Blackpool by 2025. Located west of Cookson Street, the new hub is set to increase footfall and inject renewed vitality into the area.

Looking ahead, Phase five includes approved plans (ref: 24/0215) for a new office building adjacent to Blackpool North Station, on a site cleared since the demolition of the Apollo 2000 store. This development, approved in May 2024, will further bolster the town's business infrastructure.

A pivotal component of Blackpool's long-term vision is the multiversity, forming Phase four of the Talbot Gateway project. An outline planning application (ref: 23/0830) is currently under consideration, with Blackpool Council actively acquiring properties to facilitate the scheme. Over 60% of the required properties have already been secured, while a Compulsory Purchase Order is in progress. A recent public inquiry has assessed the suitability of the site, which is backed by Town Deal funding.

Once delivered, the multiversity will provide a state-of-the-art educational facility to drive skills development, innovation, and collaboration with local businesses.

Another major success story is the refurbishment of Abingdon Street Market, which reopened in May 2023 as a vibrant food and retail destination. Featuring an open-plan seating area, six street food vendors, two bars, a coffee house, and ten independent retail units, the market has become a thriving community hub. Events such as the 'Blackpool Makers Market' and the Blackpool Record Fair have further boosted its popularity, drawing hundreds of visitors and supporting local businesses.

Tourism and leisure remain integral to Blackpool's economy, and the town's regeneration momentum is set to continue into 2025. Significant milestones in 2024 include the completion of the Holiday Inn hotel, tramway extension, Showtown museum, and the Backlot Cinema and Diner. In 2025, further developments will include the demolition of the former police station and courts, paving the way for new leisure opportunities, and the completion of the £100 million Civil Service Hub on Cookson Street.

New residential and hospitality projects are also adding to the town centre's transformation. Plans (ref: 24/0591) have been approved to convert the upper floors of The Albert and The Lion pub, located next to Blackpool Tower, into 65 apartments. The development, set to retain the ground floor and basement as a JD Wetherspoon pub, is expected to boost footfall and benefit local businesses.

Additionally, an outline application (ref: 24/0131) for a hotel adjacent to the Winter Gardens was approved in June 2024. The hotel, to be built on a current car park between Adelaide Street, Leopold Street, and Alfred Street, will support the Winter Gardens by providing accommodation for conference attendees, enhancing Blackpool's appeal as a conference destination.

Pedestrian Flows

Footfall in Blackpool on the day of the site visit was relatively high. The majority of the pedestrian activity was focused to the north of the centre on Talbot Road, with the many users seen travelling to and from the train station.

There was also good footfall around Promenade, leading towards Bank Hey Street and Victoria Street where pedestrians were observed browsing the commercial units and seated outside the various leisure facilities.

Pedestrian movement through the centre was also observed to be high and relatively free flowing due to the well pedestrianised areas and very little vehicular flow within most parts of the centre.

The northwestern part of the centre was observed to be quieter and as is perhaps expected, the more peripheral areas of the centre were quieter in terms of the level of footfall. There are also a number of streets which are

considered less popular to travel down, particularly in light of the numbers of vacancies, and therefore footfall is less strong in these areas.

Accessibility

Blackpool town centre enjoys a good standard of accessibility by public transport. Blackpool Railway Station lies within the north-eastern section of the town centre. It provides regular and direct train services to destinations such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and York.

In addition, the town centre is served by trams, which form part of the Blackpool Transport Services (BTS) network. BTS services run as frequently as every fifteen minutes at peak times and connect the town centre to destinations as far as Fleetwood, Thornton Cleveleys, Lytham St Anne's and Poulton-le-Fylde. A new tram track extension was recently opened which connects to the town's main railway station as part of the Talbot Gateway area development.

A number of bus stops are located throughout the town centre both along Abingdon Street, Market Street and Corporation Street. The bus stops link the centre to Poulton-le-Fylde, Fleetwood and Lytham, and depart at very regular times throughout the day and into the evening.

Blackpool benefits from a good provision of on and off-street parking, with parking available at the Sainsbury's and next to the train station, and to the south as part of the Coral Island Amusement Centre and the Houndshell Shopping Centre. There is also a small amount of on street parking available along Blackpool Promenade in particular.

The principally pedestrianised area around Market Place also deters traffic from travelling through the town centre, and instead principally travels up High Street.

Cycle stands are available throughout the centre, although on the day of our visit, these were not being well used overall.

Perception of Safety

Due to the high levels of pedestrian activity and low levels of traffic around Market Place in particular, these areas generally feel safe with a good level of passive surveillance generated by its commercial activity during the daytime and into the evening.

Whilst higher volumes of traffic pass along Talbot Road, Topping Street to the north of the centre and Coronation Street to the south of the centre, to allow for safe access, wide pavements and bollards increase the impression pedestrian safety.

However, certain areas of the town centre, including Clifton Street and Market Street, were observed to have inadequate street lighting which may contribute to anti-social behaviour. Business owners have reported that these doorways are being used as places to sleep and, in some instances, as public toilets, creating additional challenges for local employees.

There are also safety perceptions related to poorly lit areas, which are viewed as potential magnets for criminal activity. Recent vandalism incidents, including smashed windows at the Hive Cafe on Church Street, Clifton Street, and Sainsbury's on Talbot Road, have heightened these concerns. Addressing these issues is essential to improving public safety and ensuring the town centre remains a welcoming space for residents and visitors alike.

Environmental Quality

Overall, Blackpool's environmental quality is good. The shopfronts are generally well maintained, and the wider urban environment contributes to a pleasant atmosphere. The built form varies in height between one to three storeys, creating a varied skyline.

However, there are some areas of lower environmental quality, particularly where units have remained closed for longer periods of time. One such example is the terrace of units to the south of Coronation Street.

Furthermore, there is a general perception that the Houndshill Shopping Centre does not effectively utilise signages to its entrance, particularly for shoppers approaching from Coronation Street.

The design and layout of this entrance appear confusing, with shopfronts that display signage but lack visible or accessible entrances, creating the impression that these stores are closed. This issue detracts from the shopping centre's appeal and could potentially discourage footfall from this key approach.

It is noted that wayfinding and signage improvements were identified in the Town Centre Action Plan (2023) which seek to create a comprehensive and integrated strategy throughout the town centre. This will assist in ensuring that footfall is encouraged across the town centre. Furthermore, the 2022 'Modern Streets' project led by the Council has seen some positive improvements made to footpaths, street furniture, pavings and public art within the town centre, alongside improvements to shopfronts.

The streets are generally clean and litter free, and there was limited graffiti spotted on our visits. Given the low volume of traffic experienced around Queen Street in particular, the centre generally feels suited towards pedestrians, and this is evidenced in the number of users 'enjoying' the atmosphere of the street. The benches located to the west of the centre, along the Promenade were well used by users, and the outside seating areas of cafes / restaurants was generally busy.

Overall, there appears to be a lack of green infrastructure, with limited planting across the town centre and no notable green spaces. It is noted that this was identified as a key action within the Town Centre Action Plan (2023), which includes a series of specific recommendations to help enhance the green infrastructure within the town centre.

Conclusions

Overall, Blackpool is a town centre which is well connected by public transport and benefits from a strong walk-in catchment from the surrounding residential areas. The offer is mixed, and provides a good range of retail, leisure, service and wider community uses to meet the residents' needs.

Blackpool's daytime economy is based around its offer of comparison, convenience, leisure and retail uses and its large pull of independent retailers. Its evening economy is slightly less varied, predominantly being based around food services including takeaways, restaurants and convenience stores, although there are a series of public houses throughout the centre which add to its offer, Blackpool also boasts of a series of amusement and entertainment centres.

While the proportion of vacant units is higher than the national average in terms of the number of units, we consider that some of these units are under alteration and will be occupied in the near future. Additionally, with the redevelopment of the Talbot Gateway could considerably drive more business to the town centre. We recommend ongoing monitoring of vacancy rates to ensure that the impacts of the ongoing redevelopment projects are fully understood, and that the local authority is well placed to adapt to the demands of the rapidly changing market.

The ongoing redevelopment of the Talbot Road area represents a significant opportunity to regenerate and transform the north of the town centre. After a long period of decline, the Talbot Road area over the last few years has seen the development of a Sainsbury's Supermarket, a Holiday Inn Hotel, several council offices as well as the extension of the tramline to Blackpool railway station.

A considerable amount of pedestrian activity was observed throughout all areas of Blackpool town centre at different parts of the day and evening. During the daytime, activity was generally busiest along the Houndshell Shopping Centre and along Victoria Street. The pedestrianised nature of the main shopping streets in the town centre results in a compact and walkable environment, which accommodates easy movement on foot. We observed a number of linked trips between different operators in this central part of the town centre especially from Church Street to Victoria Street. Overall, the town centre benefits from a good level of footfall driven by its strong comparison retail and leisure services offer and a number of key anchors.

Blackpool town centre enjoys good standard of accessibility by public transport. Road access to the town centre by private car is set to be improved through works associated with Town Centre Access Scheme. With regard to accessibility for people with impairments or mobility requirements, travelling through the town centre will not prove difficult as majority of the pedestrianised areas are well adapted for such purposes. In general, however, the pavements are even and well-maintained, the streets are wide and clutter free, and there is good provision of benches and other street furniture available for those who need to stop and rest.

The public realm in the town centre is generally of good standard, with Blackpool benefitting from a number of valuable heritage assets including numerous of Grade II listed buildings. Notwithstanding, there are very few parts of the town centre where the environmental quality is of a somewhat poorer standard.

Blackpool town centre is also somewhat lacking in green/open space, although there is tree planting in the pedestrianised areas. However, it is noted that improvements to the town centre's environmental quality is a key focus of the Town Centre Action Plan (2023), and should these improvements be brought forward, it is considered that the town centre's overarching vitality and viability will be enhanced.

Overall, Blackpool town centre is considered to be generally vital and viable, benefitting from robust daytime and night-time economies that befit its status as a regional centre, good accessibility and elements indicating that the centre has a positive environmental quality.

The number of regeneration opportunity sites across the town centre and the positive signs of both public and private sector investment, means that there are substantial positive indicators for Blackpool's future.

Legend

Comparison

Convenience

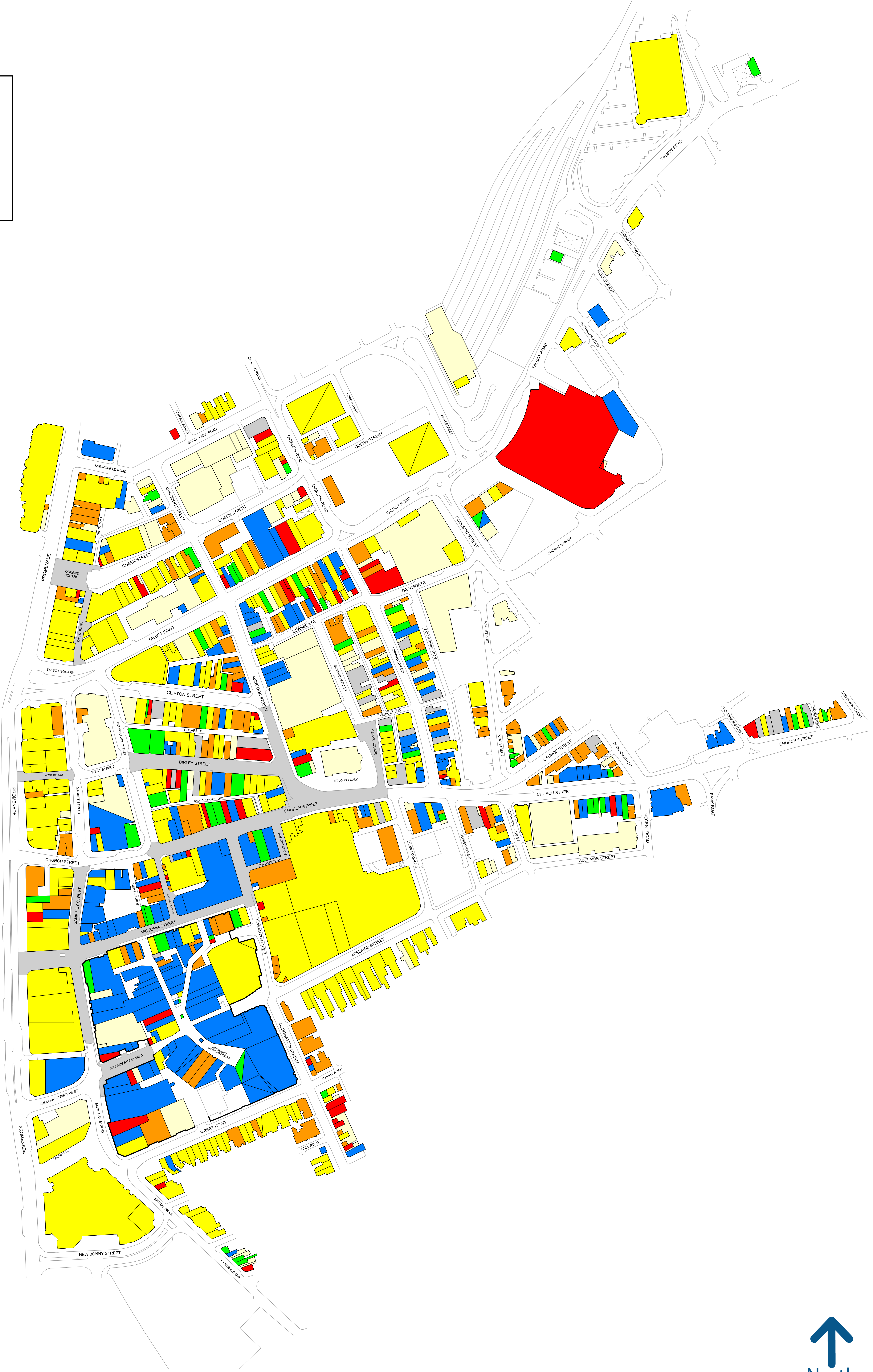
Leisure

Retail Services

Financial & Business Services

Vacant

Miscellaneous



73 metres

Legend

Comparison

Convenience

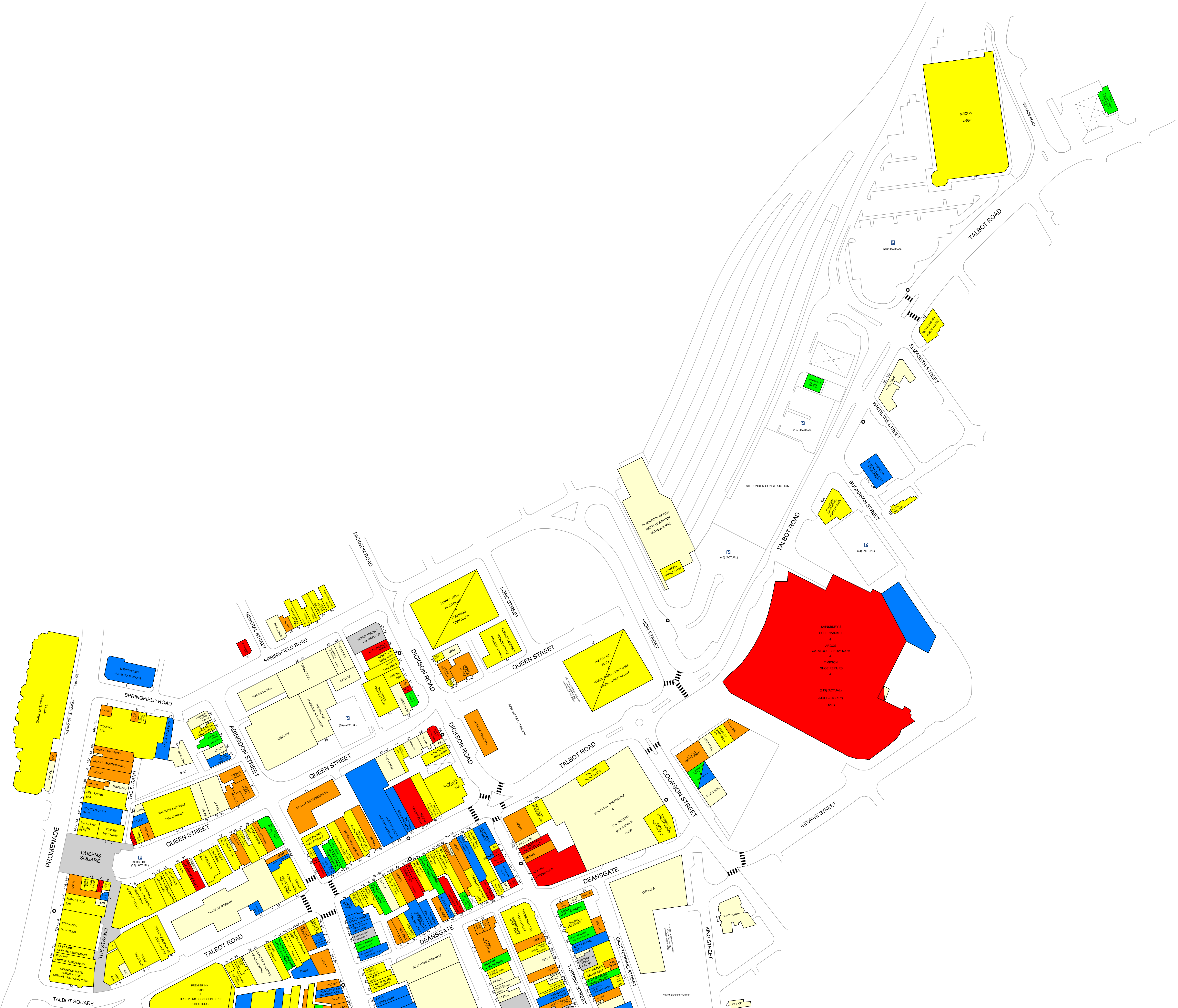
Leisure

Retail Services

Financial & Business Services

Vacant

Miscellaneous



50 metres

Experian Goad Plan Created: 03/02/2025
Created By: Nexus Planning Ltd

Legend

Comparison

Convenience

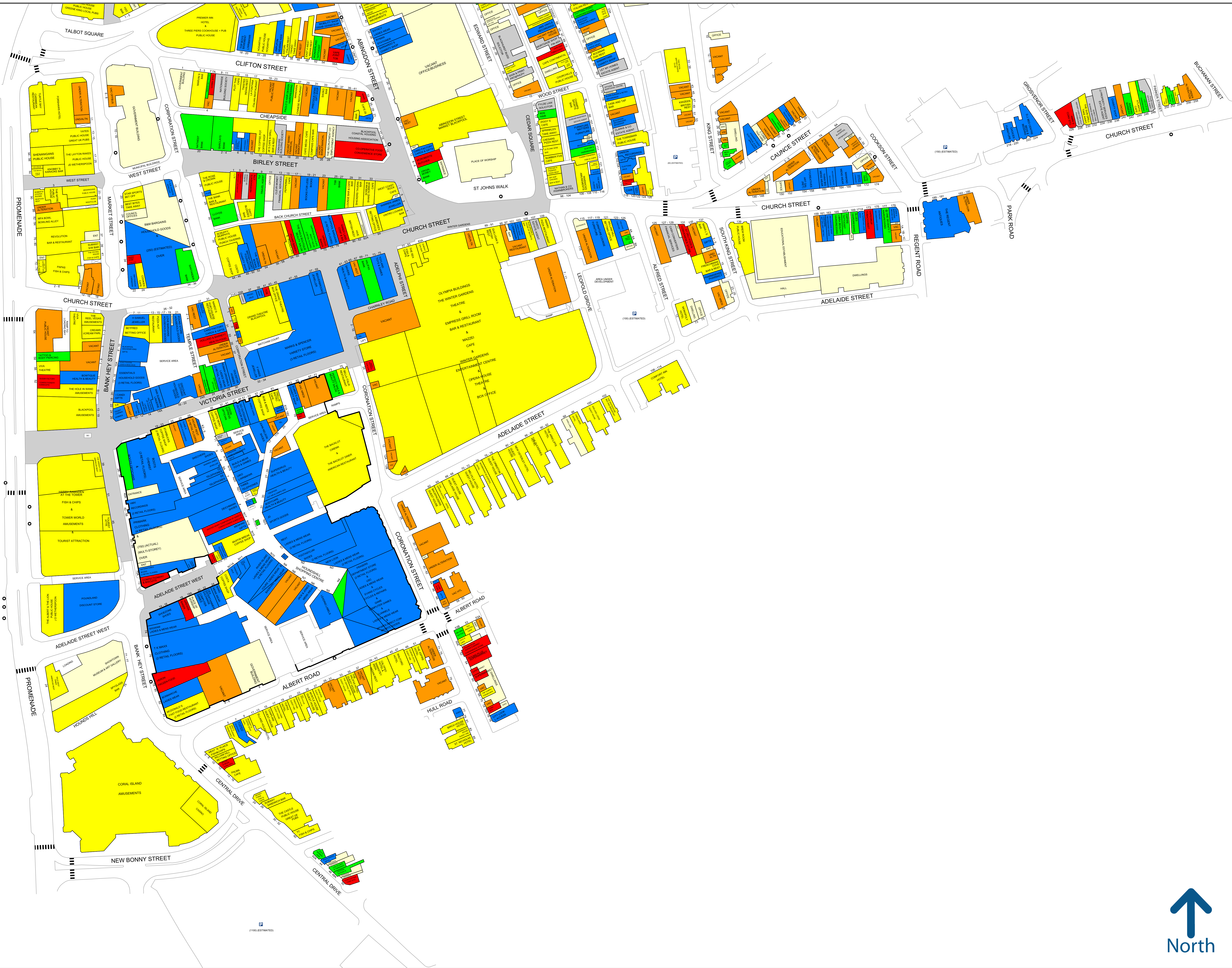
Leisure

Retail Services

Financial & Business Services

Vacant

Miscellaneous



50 metres

Experian Goad Plan Created: 03/02/2025
Created By: Nexus Planning Ltd

Highfield Road District Centre

Description

Highfield Road district centre is located approximately 4km south of Blackpool town centre.

The centre is linear in form, beginning with the terrace of commercial units at Lytham Road, leading to Highfield Road on the west, and the junction of Abbey Road and Highfield Road to the east.

The centre comprises a total of 9,350 sq.m of commercial floorspace and 93 units. It is not 'anchored' by a larger convenience operator but does include a Tesco Express, alongside a range of smaller convenience, comparison, leisure and service uses.



Figure 1: Cycle parking facilities



Figure 2: Shopfronts with wide pavements



Figure 3: Provision of bus stops and shutters



Figure 4: Cycle parking and shopfronts

Table 1 Highfield Road District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2024 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2024 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	2,270	24.3%	29.2%
Convenience	940	10.1%	15.6%
Financial & Business	490	5.2%	6.2%
Leisure	3,660	39.1%	26.7%
Retail Service	1,240	13.3%	7.4%
Vacant	750	8.0%	14.3%
TOTAL	9,350	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Table 2 Highfield Road District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2024 (no.)	Units at 2024 (%)	Units UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	23	24.7%	26.3%
Convenience	9	9.7%	9.3%
Financial & Business	7	7.5%	8.3%
Leisure	32	34.4%	25.8%
Retail Service	17	18.3%	16.0%
Vacant	5	5.4%	14.1%
TOTAL	93	100.0	100.0

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Uses

Highfield Road district centre's composition is relatively diverse, particularly in light of its district centre status. In this regard, the comparison offer in terms of both the proportion of floorspace and units is high at 24.3% and 24.7% respectively. Although this is lower than the national average, this is not unusual for centres of Highfield Road's scale. The comparison offer is dominated by charity shops and second hand retailers, but there are also a range of independent chemists, florists and clothing and footwear operators.

In terms of the convenience offer, the proportion of floorspace occupied by convenience operators falls slightly above the national average at 10.1%, and above the national average in terms of number of units at 9.7%. The convenience offer includes the Tesco Express, alongside a range of independent convenience retailers such as greengrocers, a bakery, confectioners and a deli.

Looking at the leisure offer, this exceeds the national average in terms of both the proportion of floorspace and number of units at 39.1% and 34.4% respectively. The leisure offer is dominated by bars and wine bars, restaurants, cafes and fast food operators. The leisure offer is considered to be good, particularly for a centre of this size and scale.

In terms of the retail service offer, the provision in terms of the proportion of floorspace and units falls below the national average. The retail service offer is dominated heavily by the health and beauty sector, which occupy a total of 12 of the 17 units. Other retail service operators include a laundrette, an opticians, a dog grooming parlour and an undertaker.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Highfield Road's offer is principally focused around the daytime economy, with typical opening hours of between 9am and 6pm. However some operators do open later in the evening, including a range of restaurants, bars and public houses.

Due to the presence of a number of takeaways, shutters remain closed during the day but these operators do draw in footfall and activity into the evening.

Overall, the mix of daytime and evening economy is considered to be good for a centre of Highfield Road's size, and provides a good range of uses for the local catchment.

Vacancies

At the time of our survey, Highfield Road district centre's vacancy rate in terms of floorspace equated to 8.0% and in terms of units, equated to 5.4% of the total provision in the centre. In terms of both the proportion of floorspace and units, the vacancy rates fall well below the national averages at 14.3% and 14.1% respectively.

The vacancies are broadly scattered through the centre, although there is a higher agglomeration in the western half of the centre. The largest vacant unit is located on Lytham Road and is a former restaurant.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian flows were relatively evenly spread throughout the centre at the time of our visit, with a slight concentration present outside of the Tesco Express where there was an increase in footfall purchasing goods.

Footfall was also present around the bus stops within the centre and due to the wider pavements in some instances within the centre, pedestrians are able to easily navigate the centre.

There were also instances of footfall linking the centre with Highfield Park (and vice versa), which may in some instances act as a short cut for residents from the residential areas to the south of the centre.

Accessibility

The centre benefits from a number of bus stops along Highfield Road which are served by the Route 5 bus (Victoria Hospital to Halfway House), with five buses an hour between 7am and 6pm, reducing to two per hour until 11pm. The bus stops are also served by Route 18, which links the centre with Victoria Hospital.

The centre is easily accessible on foot from the surrounding residential area and there is on-street parking set back from the highway, along with provision in the surrounding side roads.

Cycle stands are also available in a number of places throughout the centre, which were being actively used at the time of our survey.

The Pleasure Beach train stop is located less than a kilometre walk from the centre, providing rail services towards Blackpool and further afield to Colne and Preston.

Perception of Safety

The centre conveyed a general perception of safety and security. Pillar mounted CCTV cameras are present near to both the western and eastern boundaries of the district centre.

Whilst Highfield Road is subject to relatively high levels of vehicular traffic, there are regular pedestrian crossing points allowing shoppers to cross the road safely at convenient intervals.

Environmental Quality

The quality of the environment was relatively good, with the majority of shopfronts appearing well-maintained. The areas directly outside of the commercial units were litter-free and provided some good areas within which businesses are able to expand their offer onto the street in some instances.

There was a good provision of litter bins and low evidence of litter. Efforts appear to have been made to improve the appearance of the centre, with seating provided at regular intervals and a number of seasonal planters.

There are however opportunities to further enhance the centre's environmental quality through the provision of more green infrastructure, improvements to shopfronts in some cases and the wider encouragement of outdoor seating where appropriate.

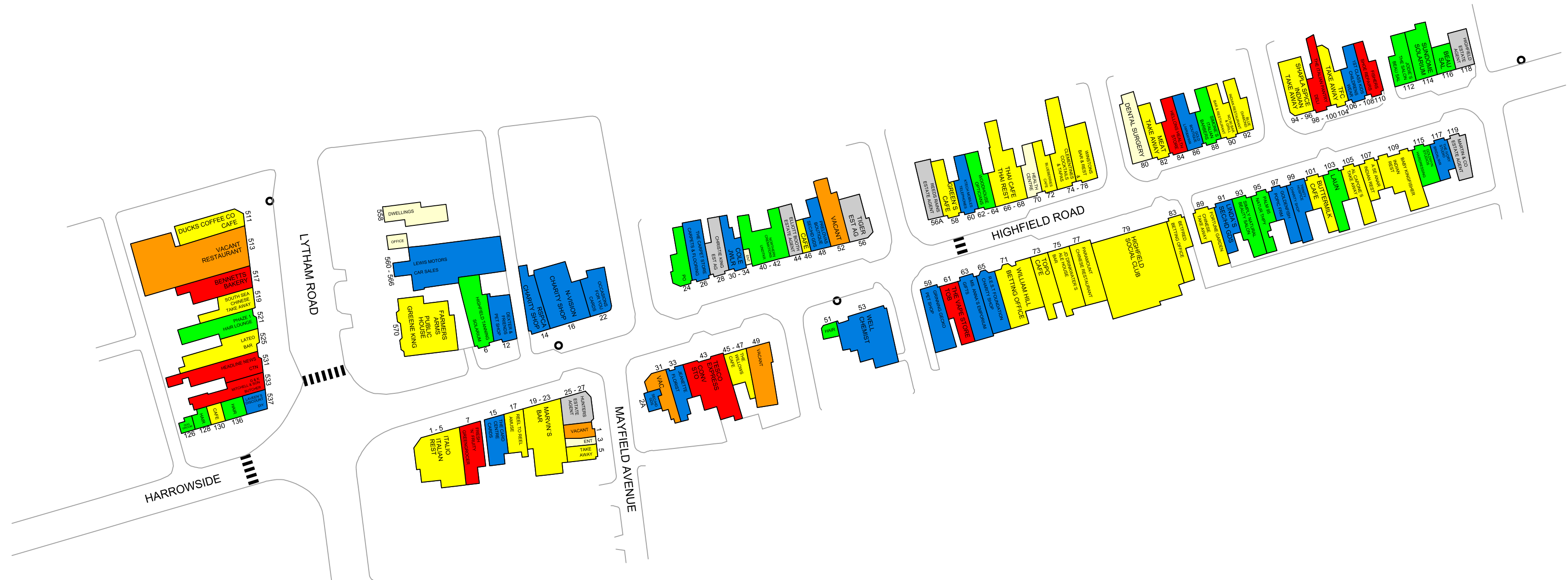
Conclusions

Highfield Road is linear in form, beginning with the terrace of commercial units at Lytham Road, leading to Highfield Road on the west, and the junction of Abbey Road and Highfield Road to the east.

The centre comprises a total of 9,350 sq.m of commercial floorspace and 93 units. It is not 'anchored' by a larger convenience operator but does include a Tesco Express, alongside a range of smaller convenience, comparison, leisure and service uses. The centre's comparison and leisure offer is particularly strong in terms of the proportion of units, and the vacancy level is lower than the national average.

There is an opportunity to enhance the centre through public realm improvements including additional green infrastructure, street furniture and the encouragement of outdoor seating for leisure operators, where appropriate and the physical environment allows.

Overall, the centre is performing its role as a district centre, meeting the needs of the local residents in the walk-in catchment. It is considered to be vital and viable.



Legend

- Comparison
- Convenience
- Financial & Business Service
- Retail Service
- Leisure Service
- Vacant
- Miscellaneous



Layton District Centre

Description

Layton district centre is located approximately 2 km to the north-east of Blackpool town centre. Talbot Road adjoins the south-western boundary of the district centre, linking Layton with Blackpool town centre.

The centre comprises a total of 4,871 sq.m of commercial floorspace, across a total of 48 units. It is not the largest district centre in the borough but provides a good diversity of uses, particularly focused around the leisure and retail service offer.

The centre also includes both a Co-op foodstore and a Morrisons Daily, providing a good local convenience provision for the catchment.



Figure 1: Central reservations of the centre



Figure 2: Instances of outdoor seating



Figure 3: Green infrastructure



Figure 4: The Layton Institute

Table 1 Layton District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2024 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2024 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	875	18.0%	29.2%
Convenience	1,042	21.4%	15.6%
Financial & Business	98	2.0%	6.2%
Leisure	1,394	28.6%	26.7%
Retail Service	1,392	28.6%	7.4%
Vacant	69	1.4%	14.3%
TOTAL	4,871	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Table 2 Layton District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2024 (no.)	Units at 2024 (%)	Units UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	11	22.9%	26.3%
Convenience	6	12.5%	9.3%
Financial & Business	1	2.1%	8.3%
Leisure	14	29.2%	25.8%
Retail Service	15	31.3%	16.0%
Vacant	1	2.1%	14.1%
TOTAL	48	100.0	100.0

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Uses

Layton district centre comprises a total of 4,871 sq.m of commercial floorspace and 48 units. The centre is dominated by the financial and business and leisure offer.

In terms of the comparison offer, both in terms of the proportion of floorspace and units, the centre performs below the national average. The offer however is relatively diverse, including clothing and footwear retailers, greeting card and gifts, discount operators and charity shops.

Looking at the convenience offer, the centre is well provided for in terms of national multiples with both a Morrisons Daily and a Co-op store present. Other convenience operators include a butchers, an off licence and a continental store. The proportion of units occupied by convenience operators falls above the national average at 12.5% (compared to 9.3%) and the proportion of floorspace occupied by convenience operators is substantially higher at 21.4%, compared to the national average of 15.6%.

Turning to the financial and business offer, this falls below the national average with just one single unit occupied by a law firm. There are ATM facilities present in the centre which helps to address this deficiency in some respect.

The leisure sector within Layton district centre is relatively diverse, particularly for the size of a district centre. In this regard, the proportion of leisure floorspace and units falls above the national average at 28.6% and 29.2% compared to 26.7% and 25.8% respectively. Although the offer is mixed, the leisure sector is dominated by takeaway operators, with seven of the 14 units occupied by such operators. Other leisure operators include a pub, restaurant and café.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Layton district centre has a good range of businesses open during the day, encouraging footfall throughout the centre and linked-trips between the operators.

During the evening, there are a number of operators open within the centre, including bars, restaurants, takeaways and the Layton Institute. These uses are scattered throughout the centre and therefore provide

activity along the A586. There are opportunities within Layton to further build on the strong leisure offer, encouraging additional uses and the level of footfall throughout the daytime and evening

It is considered that the mix of daytime and evening uses are appropriate for a centre of Layton's nature and scale.

Vacancies

Layton district centre has a vacancy rate in terms of both floorspace and units significantly below the national average. In this regard, at the time of our visit, the centre had just one vacant unit, measuring approximately 69 sq.m.

The very low vacancy rates ensure that in the most part, there are active ground floor uses throughout. The vacancy rate is also the lowest of the borough's district centres.

Pedestrian Flows

The centre was relatively quiet on the day of our visit, but footfall was more dominant outside of the Morrisons Daily and Co-op foodstores. It was clear that the operators draw in footfall from the surrounding residential areas.

Pedestrian safety is a key positive of the centre, particularly through the positive investment that's been made in the public realm. Although the centre is relatively busy in terms of vehicular traffic, pedestrians are prioritised, which provides an attractive destination for visitors, and which encourages linked-trips throughout the centre.

Accessibility

Layton district centre is considered to be a pedestrian friendly centre with wide pavements and a pedestrianised strip running between the vehicle lanes which accommodates public seating and planters.

On-street parking bays are also provided and set back from the main highway, allowing free parking for one hour with no return within two hours.

Cycle parking is also present throughout the centre, which although appeared under-utilised on the day of our visit, does provide space for those who may wish to travel on bike to the centre.

There are two bus stops present in the centre at the Layton Institute which provide regular services to Blackpool town centre, Fleetwood and Cleveleys.

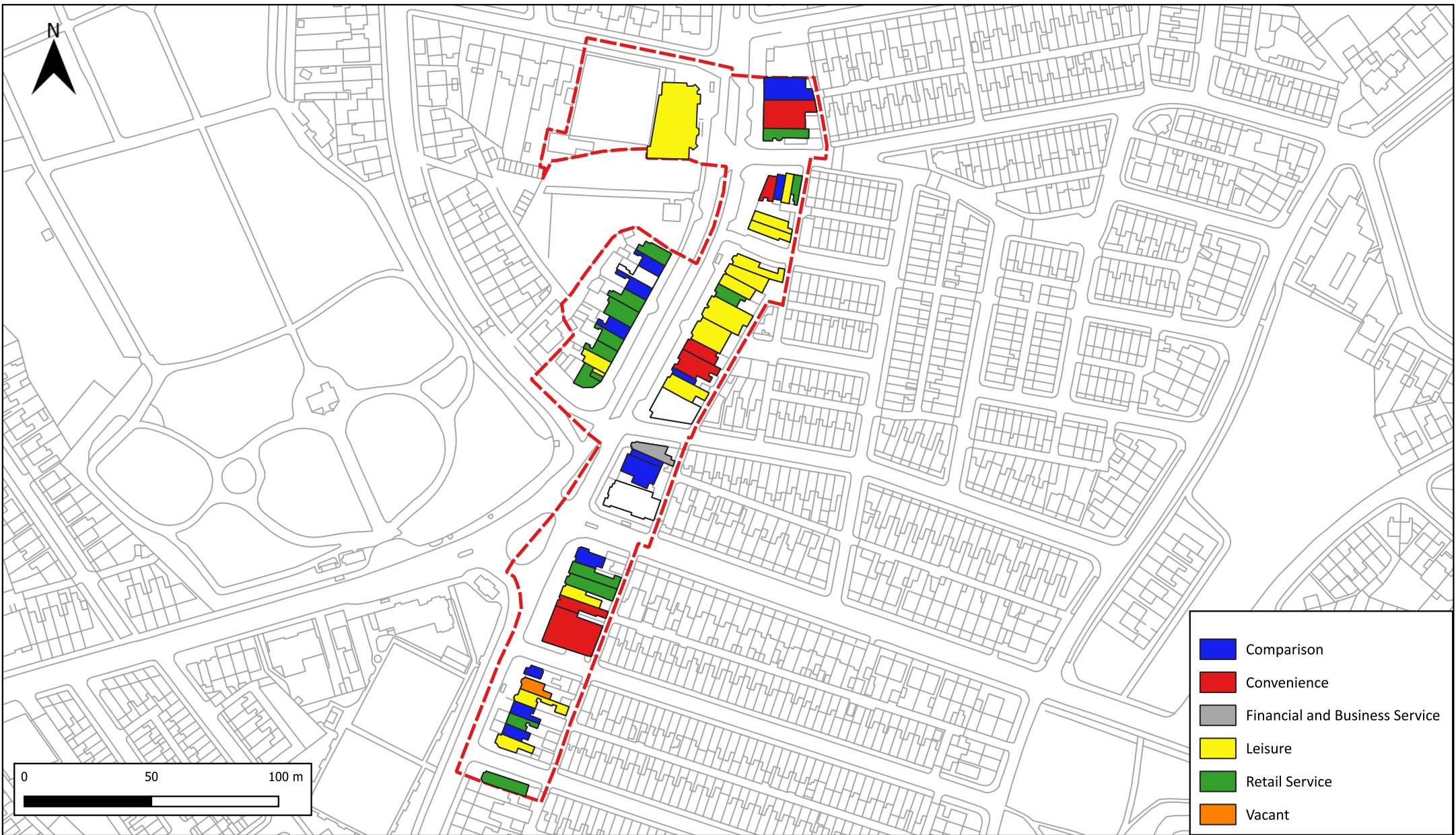
Perception of Safety

Layton district centre was considered to be a safe centre with no obvious signs of anti-social behaviour or instances where it felt particularly unsafe.

A pole mounted CCTV camera is located on a landscaped island fronting northwards into the centre.

Bollards are placed around both informal and formal pedestrian crossings, providing a degree of additional safety for those on foot within the centre.

	<p>The range of uses within the centre also provides additional natural surveillance for visitors, both during the day and into the evening.</p>
<p>Environmental Quality</p>	<p>Overall it is considered that Layton district centre has a high environmental quality.</p> <p>The pedestrianised strip running between the vehicle lanes provides attractive seating for pedestrians and helps reduce the dominance of the highway running through the centre. However, it is considered that these may not be used fully due to the presence of vehicular traffic which may put people off from sitting on the furniture.</p> <p>Shopfronts were generally well maintained but there may be opportunities to further enhance the overarching environmental quality to encourage visitors to spend longer in the centre.</p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	<p>Layton district centre is located approximately 2 km to the north-east of Blackpool town centre. Talbot Road adjoins the south-western boundary of the district centre, linking Layton with Blackpool town centre.</p> <p>The centre comprises a total of 4,871 sq.m of commercial floorspace, across a total of 48 units. It is not the largest district centre in the borough but provides a good diversity of uses, particularly focused around the leisure and retail service offer. The centre also includes both a Co-op foodstore and a Morrisons Daily, providing a good local convenience provision for the catchment.</p> <p>The centre benefits from a good quality public realm, which has sought to encourage people to sit and enjoy the centre. However, there are instances where this is perhaps not designed with safety in mind, and the location of benches and areas to meet are not within the optimal places within the centre.</p> <p>Overall however, although one of the smaller centres in the borough, it provides for its local catchment well, and includes a good offer of commercial uses predominantly for the walk-in catchment. It is considered to be a vital and viable centre and continues to perform its role as a district centre well.</p>



Bispham District Centre

Description

Bispham district centre is located approximately 5 km north of Blackpool town centre.

The western boundary of the centre adjoins the Queen's Promenade which runs southwards towards Blackpool town centre.

The centre comprises a total of 12,579 sq.m or 78 units, and other than the financial sector, is relatively diverse. The centre is one of the few anchored by a larger format convenience operator, which serves an important role in encouraging journeys into the centre.

The centre is in walking distance of the seafront, and the Bispham tram stop is located adjacent to the Promenade. The centre is formed either side of Red Bank Road, with some on street parking and a quantum of off street parking available adjacent to the Sainsbury's store.



Figure 1: Shopfronts within the centre



Figure 2: Instances of parking on pavements



Figure 3: On-street parking in the centre



Figure 4: Evidence of cycle parking

Table 1 Bispham District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2024 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2024 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	2,174	17.3%	29.2%
Convenience	3,142	25.0%	15.6%
Financial & Business	477	3.8%	6.2%
Leisure	3,404	27.1%	26.7%
Retail Service	1,946	15.5%	7.4%
Vacant	1,435	11.4%	14.3%
TOTAL	12,579	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Table 2 Bispham District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2024 (no.)	Units at 2024 (%)	Units UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	17	21.8%	26.3%
Convenience	3	3.8%	9.3%
Financial & Business	4	5.1%	8.3%
Leisure	20	25.6%	25.8%
Retail Service	21	26.9%	16.0%
Vacant	13	16.7%	14.1%
TOTAL	78	100.0	100.0

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Uses

Bispham district centre has a relatively diverse comparison offer, although the proportion of floorspace and units falls below the national average. In terms of floorspace, this comprises 17.3% of the floorspace compared to a national average of 29.2%. In terms of units, the proportion is 21.8% compared to a national average of 26.3%. Operators include clothing and footwear retailers, carpets and flooring, furniture, cycles, gift shops and charity shops.

The convenience offer, although higher than the national average in terms of floorspace, is below the national average in terms of the number of units. This is due to the presence of the Sainsbury's store, located towards the eastern part of the centre. In addition to the Sainsbury's, there are two additional newsagents.

In terms of the financial and business offer, the operators are independent and provide financial, property and legal services.

The leisure offer within Bispham includes a range of takeaways, which occupy nine out of the 20 units. Additionally, the leisure offer includes cafes, restaurants, casinos and a hotel. In total, the proportion of leisure floorspace at 27.1% is just above the national average of 26.7% and the total proportion of units is 25.6%, just below the national average of 25.8%.

The retail service offer within the centre is focused heavily on the health and beauty sector, which occupy a total of 15 of the 21 units. The health and beauty offer includes hairdressers, barbers, nail salons and a sunbed operator. In total, the retail service sector comprises a total of 15.5% of the floorspace and 26.9% of the total number of units.

Daytime/Evening Economy

The daytime offer of Bispham is considered to be good and diverse, attracting footfall throughout the centre.

Although the leisure provision is around the national average, this is dominated heavily by the provision of takeaway operators. Such uses do bring in footfall in the evening, but are not considered to contribute overly positively to the evening economy.

Vacancies

At the time of our survey, we identified a total of 13 vacant units, equating to 16.7% of the total number of units which falls above the national average of 14.1%. However, the proportion of vacant floorspace falls below the national average at 11.4%, compared to 14.3%.

The vacant units are broadly scattered throughout the centre, with no area overly impacted on by a proliferation of vacancies. However, it does appear to be the case that the vacant units are concentrated slightly more to either the eastern or western third of the centre, and therefore towards the periphery.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian flows were considered to be good throughout the centre at the time of our visit, with a concentration up towards the seafront visiting the leisure operators, and travelling to and from the Sainsbury's foodstore from the adjacent car park. The centre felt bustling and well-used on the day of our visit, although flows did reduce to the eastern edge of the centre.

There is a clear opportunity to enhance the linkages from the Sainsbury's store to the remainder of the centre, and it would be worthwhile exploring options as part of any future public realm works within the centre.

Accessibility

The district centre is well served by a number of bus services which can be accessed from bus stops within the centre or just beyond the western boundary from Queens Promenade, as well as the Blackpool Tramway in which regular services are provided between Bispham and Starr Gate (South Shore).

The centre itself benefits from on street parking bays which allows 1 hour with no return within 2 hours, as well as informal parking in front of a number of the retail units. A customer car park is also provided at the Sainsbury's supermarket. Bispham also boasts a high provision of secure cycle stands.

Perception of Safety

There was no visible evidence of crime being a prevalent issue within and around the Bispham district centre.

The centre benefits from pole mounted CCTV close to the entrance to Sainsbury's car park. The centre would benefit from an increased provision of formal pedestrian crossing points.

Environmental Quality

Bispham was observed to have a moderate environmental quality at the time of our visit. Shopfronts were generally of a good quality, excluding one of the two vacant units in which the fascia had been ripped out.

The bowling green is a positive contributor to the centre's overarching offer, providing space to play bowls for all, and adds to the environmental quality of the centre.

There is an opportunity to further build on the outdoor seating provision within the centre, encouraging leisure operators to consider their options.

This will encourage longer dwell times and provide more activity throughout the centre.

There could also be an opportunity around opening up the relatively extensive blank elevation of the Sainsbury's along Red Bank Road.

Public seating is provided in parts of the centre, along with seasonal planters. There are considered to be areas of the centre where the roads and pavements could benefit from resurfacing.

Conclusions

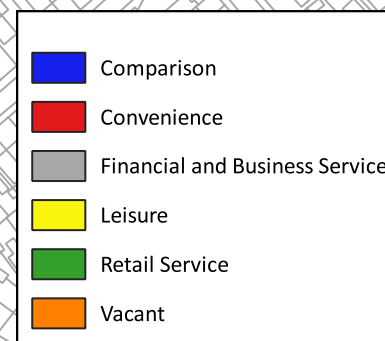
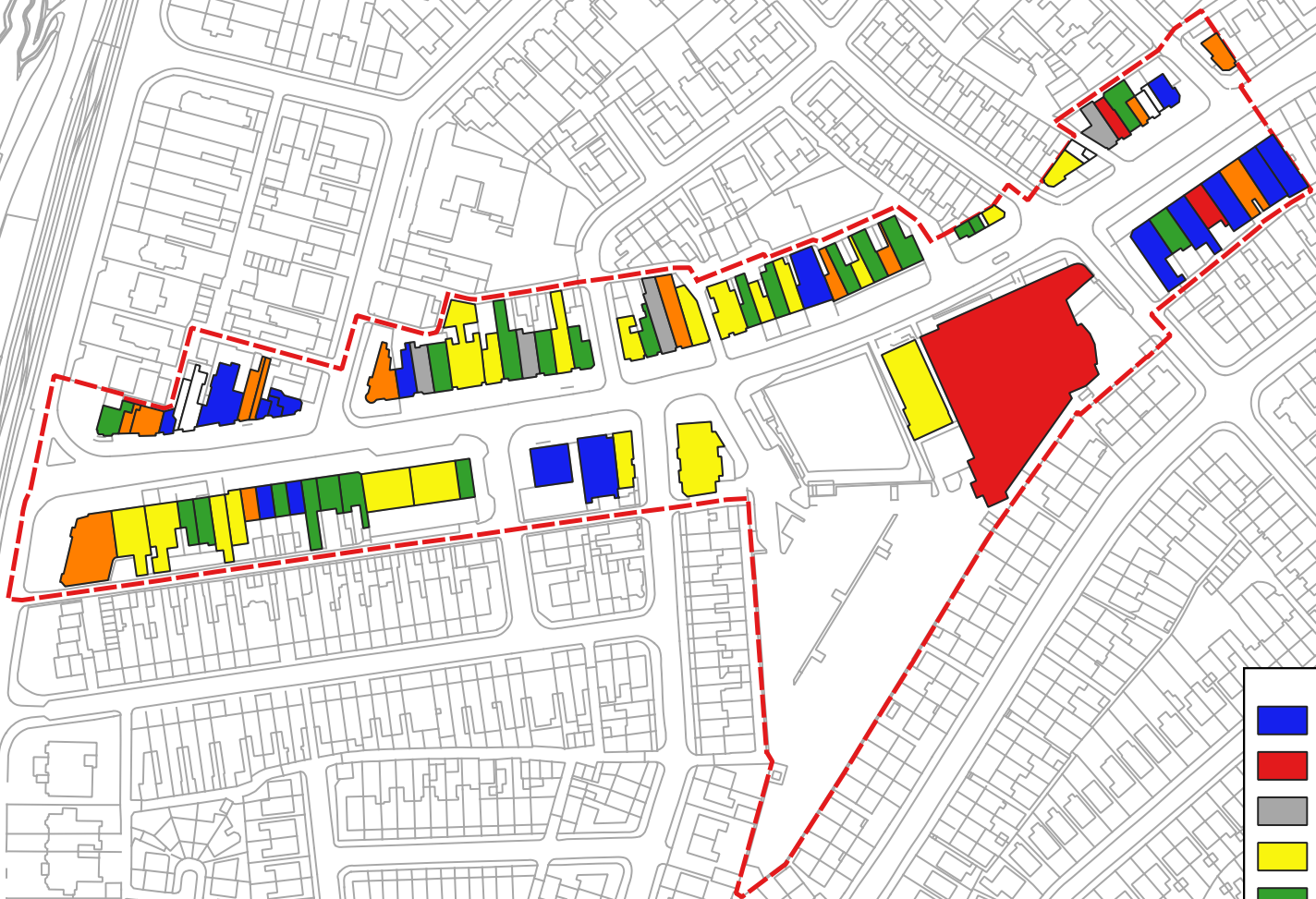
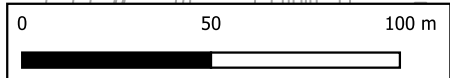
Bispham district centre is located approximately 5 km north of Blackpool town centre. The western boundary of the centre adjoins the Queen's Promenade which runs southwards towards Blackpool town centre. The centre is in walking distance of the seafront, and the Bispham tram stop is located adjacent to the Promenade.

The centre is formed either side of Red Bank Road, with some on street parking and a quantum of off street parking available adjacent to the Sainsbury's store.

The centre comprises a total of 12,579 sq.m or 78 units, and other than the financial sector, is relatively diverse. The centre is one of the few anchored by a larger format convenience operator, which serves an important role in encouraging journeys into the centre.

The Sainsbury's foodstore, although a positive contributor to the overarching composition and offer of the centre, does not add much to the visual appearance. In this regard, the store has its back to Red Bank Road, with the main access point directly off the dedicate car park. As such, the linked trips to the wider centre may not be as frequent as if the store had an active frontage along Red Bank Road.

Overall, it is considered that the centre functions well as a district centre and is vital and viable overall, despite the relatively high number of vacant units



Waterloo Road (South Shore) District Centre

Description

Waterloo Road district centre is located approximately 2.1 km south of Blackpool town centre. The western edge of the centre joins the Promenade which runs towards the town centre.

It is a relatively large district centre, which runs alongside Waterloo Road and Lytham Road, alongside the surrounding side roads.

The Goad area of the centre is more extensive than the area within the adopted town centre boundary, encompassing Bond Street and extending further along Lytham Road to the north. The Goad boundary also includes Parkinson Way Retail Park to the east, which provides larger-format units occupied by The Range and Farmfoods.

There are some relatively large vacant units and sites within the centre which are degrading the environmental quality somewhat.

The centre is in walking distance of the seafront and the Waterloo Road tram stop, connecting the centre with other parts of Blackpool.



Figure 1: Prominent buildings in the centre



Figure 2: Mixed shopfronts



Figure 3: On-street parking and vacant unit



Figure 4: One-way system

Table 1 Waterloo Road District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2024 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2024 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	12,960	29.6%	29.2%
Convenience	4,370	10.0%	15.6%
Financial & Business	3,030	6.9%	6.2%
Leisure	10,020	22.9%	26.7%
Retail Service	2,380	5.4%	7.4%
Vacant	11,010	25.2%	14.3%
TOTAL	43,770	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Table 2 Waterloo Road District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2024 (no.)	Units at 2024 (%)	Units UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	52	21.7%	26.3%
Convenience	17	7.1%	9.3%
Financial & Business	11	4.6%	8.3%
Leisure	63	26.3%	25.8%
Retail Service	21	8.8%	16.0%
Vacant	76	31.7%	14.1%
TOTAL	240	100.0	100.0

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Uses

Waterloo Road district centre's comparison offer falls below the national average in terms of its proportion of units but above the national average in terms of floorspace. The comparison floorspace, which comprises 29.6% of the total commercial floorspace in the centre, is just above the national average of 29.2%. The floorspace is skewed slightly due to the presence of Parkinson Way Retail Park which includes The Range. Although towards the 'budget' end of the market, the offer and range of comparison operators is considered to be varied.

The convenience offer is below the national average in terms of both the proportion of floorspace and the number of units. Although the proportion of units occupied by convenience operators is below the national average, the nature of operators meets residents' needs, including both top-up and main food shopping opportunities.

In terms of the financial and business offer, the operators are independent and provide financial, property and medical services.

The leisure offer within Waterloo Road is just under the national average in terms of both floorspace and units. The offer is dominated by hotels and guest houses, pubs and restaurants which meets the needs of the tourists visiting the area.

The retail service offer within the centre is focused heavily on the health and beauty sector, which occupy a total of 15 of the 21 units. The health and beauty offer includes hairdressers, barbers, tattooists, nail salons and a sunbed operators.

Daytime/Evening Economy

The daytime and evening economy is broadly mixed, with the majority of retail and service operators opening 'traditional' hours during the day. However, the provision of leisure operators does ensure that the centre is open into the evening.

The centre benefits from an existing good local walk-in catchment, along with some inflow from tourism spending which can help to support businesses in the future.

The centre's location in proximity to the seafront provides opportunities to encourage additional leisure uses within the centre to encourage additional footfall along Waterloo Road.

Vacancies

The centre experiences very high vacancy rates, in terms of both the proportion of units and floorspace. Vacant units are of a variety of scales and located throughout the centre, although vacancies along Bond Street are particularly present. In terms of the proportion of vacant floorspace, this equates to 25.2% and in terms of units, this equates to 31.7%, compared to a national average of 14.3% and 14.1% respectively.

The vacant units and inactive frontages detract from the environmental quality of the centre, leaving some particularly noticeable 'holes' along Waterloo Road. However, the vacant units and sites present opportunities to introduce new and alternative uses within the centre which could help to draw in additional spending.

Ongoing long-term vacancies and lengthy marketing for some of the larger units and sites indicates a lack of investment interest. There may be opportunities to encourage investment through some wider public funding streams which could bring larger sites back into economically viable use.

Pedestrian Flows

Waterloo Road was subject to relatively high levels of pedestrian activity, particularly within the eastern part of the centre.

Lower levels were monitored on Bond Street which is to be expected, given the secondary nature of the street in the context of the wider district centre, along with the high proportion of vacant units.

Accessibility

A one-way system is in place along Waterloo Road which helps to control traffic levels. This improves pedestrian accessibility by promoting a semi-pedestrianised environment. This is further assisted by wide pavements.

There are a number of bus stops conveniently located along Waterloo Road which provide regular services to the surrounding residential area and Blackpool town centre.

The Waterloo Road tram stop is also located approximately 50 metres to the north-west of the district centre boundary and is served by a high volume of regular tram services which improves connectivity with the Blackpool town centre and the wider Fylde Coast.

Secure cycle stands are also dispersed throughout the centre. There are a number of parking bays available along Waterloo Road, set back from the street, which allow for 30 minutes parking with no return within 1 hour.

Perception of Safety

There were some signs of crime and anti-social behaviour observed in the centre. Furthermore, the vacant units which are dominant, do add a sense of unsafeness within the centre, and a feeling of unease when walking through.

There is however pole mounted CCTV within the centre and the central stretch along Waterloo Road was not observed to be subject to adverse impacts from crime.

Environmental Quality

Waterloo Road has a low to moderate environmental quality overall, with some areas of concern and which need substantial enhancement in the future.

There is a good provision of bins with low levels of litter observed. The shopfronts significant detract from the environmental quality in some cases, alongside the vacant units which are in some cases surrounded by hoarding.

However, there are a high provision of secure cycle stands which helps to promote the use of sustainable transport methods which could potentially be contributing to decreasing road traffic in the centre (which is also assisted by the 1-way traffic system).

There are a number of poor quality retail facias which detract from the overall environmental quality, particularly on Bond Street where there is a high volume of vacant retail and service units.

Conclusions

Overall, we consider the centre to still be performing its designated role as a district centre in terms of meeting the needs of local residents within the catchment, by providing facilities for convenience shopping and service uses (hairdressers, health and beauty salons and so on).

However, the centre has a high vacancy rate in terms of both units and floorspace, with some particularly prominent units and sites detracting significantly from the centre's environmental quality.

Further work to enhance the shopfronts and public realm within the centre could assist in improving the overall vitality of the district centre, along with the encouragement of alternative uses for the otherwise vacant units.

Given the above, although it is not considered that the centre can be classed as 'vital and viable' it does continue to perform an important role, and with investment, it is considered that there are opportunities for centre to improve in the future.



Legend

- Comparison
- Convenience
- Financial & Business Service
- Retail Service
- Leisure Service
- Vacant
- Miscellaneous



50 metres

Experian Goad Plan Created: 12/11/2024
Created By: Nexus Planning Ltd

Whitegate Drive District Centre

Description

Whitegate Drive district centre is located less than 1 km to the east of Blackpool town centre.

Church Street runs west, from the north of the district centre, directly linking with Blackpool town centre.

Whitegate Drive district centre is a relatively diverse centre with a below average vacancy rate in terms of both the number of units and the proportion of floorspace.

In terms of the level of floorspace, the centre is one of the smaller district centres in the authority area. However, the composition and offer of the centre ensures that it still meets the needs of the local catchment.



Figure 1: Morrisons Daily



Figure 2: Shopfronts and public realm



Figure 3: Variety of building styles



Figure 4: Large crossroads

Table 1 Whitegate Drive District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2024 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2024 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	2,070	19.2%	29.2%
Convenience	1,180	10.9%	15.6%
Financial & Business	1,520	14.1%	6.2%
Leisure	2,780	25.7%	26.7%
Retail Service	2,180	20.2%	7.4%
Vacant	1,070	9.9%	14.3%
TOTAL	10,800	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Table 2 Whitegate Drive District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2024 (no.)	Units at 2024 (%)	Units UK Average at 2024 (%)
Comparison	17	17.7%	26.3%
Convenience	8	8.3%	9.3%
Financial & Business	14	14.6%	8.3%
Leisure	19	19.8%	25.8%
Retail Service	28	29.2%	16.0%
Vacant	10	10.4%	14.1%
TOTAL	96	100.0	100.0

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of August 2024; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2024.

Uses

The comparison offer in terms of both the proportion of floorspace and units is below the national average, which is not unusual for centres of Whitegate Drive's scale. In terms of floorspace, the proportion occupied by comparison operators is 19.2% compared to a national average of 29.2% and in terms of units, the proportion is 17.7% compared to the national average of 26.3%. The types of operators are not considered to be overly diverse, with a dominance of electrical and other durable goods operators. There does appear to be a lack of diversity in the comparison sector within Whitegate Drive.

In terms of the convenience offer, the proportion of floorspace and units occupied by convenience operators falls below the national averages. The convenience offer includes the Morrisons Daily, Tesco Express, Best One and Premier, alongside a range of independent convenience retailers.

Looking at the leisure offer, this is broadly at the national average in terms of the proportion of floorspace but below the national average in terms of the number of units. The leisure offer is dominated by takeaways, which occupy a total of eight out of the 19 leisure units in the centre. There are also pubs, restaurants and cafes present within the centre.

In terms of the retail service offer, the provision in terms of the proportion of floorspace and units falls above the national average. The retail service offer is dominated heavily by the health and beauty sector, which occupy a total of 20 of the 28 units. Other retail service operators include dry cleaners, opticians and a taxi service.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Whitegate Drive's daytime economy is underpinned by its role as a convenience shopping and service centre which meets the day-to-day needs of its local residents.

The operators which open into the evening are dominated quite heavily by the takeaway businesses, which although provide some activity into the evening, do not provide for a strong diversity of uses for the centre.

Vacancies

Vacancy rates in Whitegate Drive are below the national averages with regard to both floorspace and the proportion of units. The vacancies in the district centre are generally small in scale and the empty units are generally

well-maintained, which reduces their adverse impact on the look and feel of the centre.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian activity was observed to be moderate throughout the district centre, although the areas to the north and the south were subject to lower levels of activity than the central area where retail and service uses intensify slightly.

Increased levels of footfall were observed around the convenience operators which are clear attractors within the centre.

Accessibility

Whitegate Drive is subject to high levels of vehicular traffic although sufficient pedestrian crossing points are provided throughout the centre, which allow pedestrians to safely cross the road in order to access retail/service units.

The centre benefits from wide pavements in parts and retailers were parking in front of their units. On street parking bays are also provided in parts of the centre which allow for 1 hour parking with no return within 2 hours. Additional parking is available to the rear of Morrisons Daily and at the Belle View pub. There are a number of bus stops present within the centre which are served by regular services to Blackpool town centre (no. 61) and Cleveleys (no. 4).

Perception of Safety

As noted above, Whitegate Drive can feel car-dominated and the congested traffic, on-street parking and layout can contribute to a lack of safety for both drivers and pedestrians.

On the other hand, the number of cars, together with the consistent footfall, contribute to high levels of natural and passive surveillance that reduce any perceived threat of crime.

There was no visible evidence of crime and anti-social behaviour being prevalent in the centre. A pole mounted CCTV camera is located on the pavement near the Belle Vue pub.

Whitegate Drive was observed to be a busy vehicle route and it is only safe to cross the road at designated crossings in which there are several, interspersed throughout the centre.

Environmental Quality

The centre has a reasonable environmental quality and there was little evidence of graffiti or litter.

A number of retail fascias appeared tired and would benefit from an uplift. In contrast, Reids Greengrocer, which displays plants and flowers on the street adds attractive greenery to the streetscene.

The centre is formed either side of a busy arterial route, resulting in a dominance of vehicular traffic through the centre.

Conclusions

Whitegate Drive district centre is a relatively diverse centre with a below average vacancy rate in terms of both the number of units and the proportion of floorspace.

In terms of the level of floorspace, the centre is one of the smaller district centres in the authority area. However, the composition and offer of the centre ensures that it still meets the needs of the local catchment.

The centre is particularly well provided for in terms of the financial and business offer and the retail service offer, and provides a good top-up convenience offer for residents.

Due to the centre's location and formation around a busy road, vehicular traffic dominates somewhat and there are instances of car parking on the pavement which can impact on pedestrian safety. There are some instances where green infrastructure benefits the centre and it may be that there are opportunities to enhance this further throughout the length of Whitegate Drive.

Overall, the centre is considered to be healthy, and is meeting the needs of the local catchment well.



- Legend
- Comparison
 - Convenience
 - Financial & Business Service
 - Retail Service
 - Leisure Service
 - Vacant
 - Miscellaneous

50 metres

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