

Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 2 March 2017

Supplementary Guidance: Nicolson Street/Clerk Street, Portobello, Stockbridge – drafts for consultation

Item number	6.4
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	City Centre, Inverleith, Portobello/Craigmillar, Southside/Newington

Executive Summary

The Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 24 November 2016. The LDP requires statutory Supplementary Guidance to be prepared for individual town centres. It will be used to determine planning applications for the change of use of shop units to non-shop uses and help deliver the Council's wider placemaking and sustainability aims.

Links

Coalition Pledges	P15
Council Priorities	CP5 , CP8 , CP9
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 , SO4

Supplementary Guidance: Nicolson Street/Clerk Street, Portobello, Stockbridge – drafts for consultation

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- 1.1.1 approves for consultation the draft Supplementary Guidance for Nicolson Street/Clerk Street Town Centre (Appendix 1);
 - 1.1.2 approves for consultation the draft Supplementary Guidance for Portobello Town Centre (Appendix 2); and
 - 1.1.3 approves for consultation the draft Supplementary Guidance for Stockbridge Town Centre (Appendix 3).

2. Background

- 2.1 The Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) has now been adopted. Policy Ret 9 requires that statutory Supplementary Guidance (SG) is prepared to set out criteria for assessing the proposals for the change of use of a shop unit to a non shop use within the city centre retail core and town centres. Statutory Supplementary Guidance is prepared under Section 22 of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and aims to deliver the policies and principles as set out in the LDP.
- 2.2 The SG aims to deliver two objectives in Part 2, Section 6 (Shopping and Leisure) of the LDP:
- to maintain the existing and proposed distribution of centres throughout the city and sustain their vitality and viability; and
 - to improve the appearance, quality and attractiveness of all centres of the development.
- 2.3 Once adopted, following consultation, they will form part of the statutory development plan.
- 2.4 The LDP identifies nine town centres with their boundaries shown on the Proposals Map. Of the nine town centres, six SG have already been finalised (City Centre, Corstorphine, Gorgie/Dalry, Tollcross, Bruntsfield/Morningside and Leith).

- 2.5 The SG will demonstrate the Council's requirement to apply the Scottish Government's Town Centre First Policy and the desire to promote the town centres as the heart of the community and a hub for a range of activities.
- 2.6 It is intended to review the guidance regularly to take account of changes of use over time.

3. Main report

- 3.1 The overall aim of the SG is to deliver the Council's strategic priorities to improve the quality of life, ensure economic vitality and build excellent places.
- 3.2 The process of preparation has included:
- analysing the results of the 1986, 1996, 2004, 2010 and 2016 Shop Surveys, including trends in the proportion of non-shop uses and vacancy rates;
 - assessing effectiveness of previous policies in the Edinburgh City Local Plan; and
 - meetings with the relevant Locality Teams and Community Councils.
- 3.3 Public Life Street Assessments have been carried out for each of the town centres. The assessments were carried out by urban design consultants using direct observation techniques to assess both the place and movement function of the town centres.
- 3.4 A Place Standard exercise within the Southside has informed the preparation of the Nicolson Street/Clerk Street SG. The exercise involved two public events and an online survey and provided an opportunity for people to put forward their views on the Southside as a place.
- 3.5 Portobello Community Council carried out a survey on relevant aspects of the town centre, which has informed the preparation of the SG.
- 3.6 The three appended SG are similar to one another in structure and style, but some of their content differs as a reflection of their distinct characteristics and the tailored processes.
- 3.7 Based on the evidence above, the draft SG set out policy on the change of use of units within defined shopping frontages and policy on the change of use of units elsewhere within the town centre.
- 3.8 The approach for all three SG is to increase flexibility and provide greater scope for non-shop uses, which includes food and drink.
- 3.9 The SG set out a series of principles that help to deliver a vision for the town centres. The SG also make reference to other Council plans and programmes that align to the wider vision.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The vitality and viability of the three town centres are preserved and enhanced. A clear, consistent and adaptable policy context is provided to communities and businesses.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no direct financial impacts arising from this report.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no perceived risks associated with this report.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 The impacts of this report in relation to the Public Sector Equalities Duty and the ten key areas of rights have been considered. The report has no significant direct impact on the Council's three equalities duties. The SG will have positive impacts on rights. The process of preparing the SG enhances the rights to participation, influence and voice by allowing people to participate in the formation of policy. The Guidance will enhance the rights to health, physical security and standard of living.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The proposals in this report will:
- reduce carbon emissions because they support and provide local services in sustainable locations, reducing the need for travel;
 - increase the city's resilience to climate change impacts because supporting town centres reduces the need to travel for services;
 - help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because town centres are places for social and economic interaction, and fostering their vitality and viability will protect their identity within our communities;
 - help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because it supports the town centres where many local businesses choose to locate; and
 - help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because they promote the continued use of shop units in beneficial use.
- 8.2 All the SG are subject to a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) screening process.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation in the principle of preparing SG for town centres was undertaken via the LDP process. Pre-draft engagement has taken place with the relevant Locality Teams and Community Councils.
- 9.2 Further consultation on the draft SG will take place prior to their finalisation. The following groups and organisations will be consulted: Community Councils, citywide amenity bodies, property investors, commercial property letting agents, traders associations and the local residents and businesses.
- 9.3 The intention is to hold public engagement events for residents and local businesses in each of the town centres.
- 9.4 The draft SG will be available on the Council's Consultation Hub for a minimum of six weeks.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Edinburgh Local Development Plan November 2016](#)
- 10.2 [Edinburgh Local Development Plan Main Issues Report \(October 2011\)](#)

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P15 Work with public organisations, the private sector and social enterprise to promote Edinburgh to investors
Council Priorities	CP5 Business growth and investment CP8 A vibrant, sustainable local economy CP9 An attractive city
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all SO4 Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	Appendix 1 - Draft Supplementary Guidance Nicolson Street/Clerk Street Appendix 2 - Draft Supplementary Guidance Portobello Appendix 3 - Draft Supplementary Guidance Stockbridge



Nicolson Street/Clerk Street Town Centre

Draft Supplementary Guidance

March 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nicolson Street / Clerk Street is one of Edinburgh's nine town centres (including the City Centre) defined, protected and promoted as the hub for a wide range of activities from shopping, providing local services and as a leisure destination. This Supplementary Guidance sets out an **approach to the change of use of shop units within the Town Centre**.

The Local Development Plan (LDP) provides a framework for a tailored approach for individual town centres. Statutory Supplementary Guidance is prepared under Section 22 of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and aims to deliver the policies and principles as set out in the LDP. The Supplementary Guidance has been prepared in accordance with **Policy Ret 9: Alternative Use of Shop Units in Defined Centres** and applies to all shop units within the town centre. It aims to deliver two LDP objectives set out in Part 2, Section 6 (Shopping and Leisure) of the Plan:

- To maintain the existing and proposed broad distribution of centres throughout the city and sustain their vitality and viability; and,
- To improve the appearance, quality and attractiveness of all centres.

Once adopted, following consultation, the Supplementary Guidance will form part of the statutory development plan. Applications for change of use must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. To assist in interpreting the LDP the Council issues non-statutory guidance. [Guidance for Businesses](#) provides guidance on change of use. This is a material consideration in the determination of applications and should be considered alongside this Supplementary Guidance.

The Supplementary Guidance has been informed by a 'public life street assessment' carried out by design consultants for the Council, which explored how the town centre should evolve to maximise the potential for benefitting public life and a Place Standard exercise carried out within the Southside, which includes the town centre of Nicolson Street/Clerk Street, to gain views of quality of place from residents and those who use the town centre.

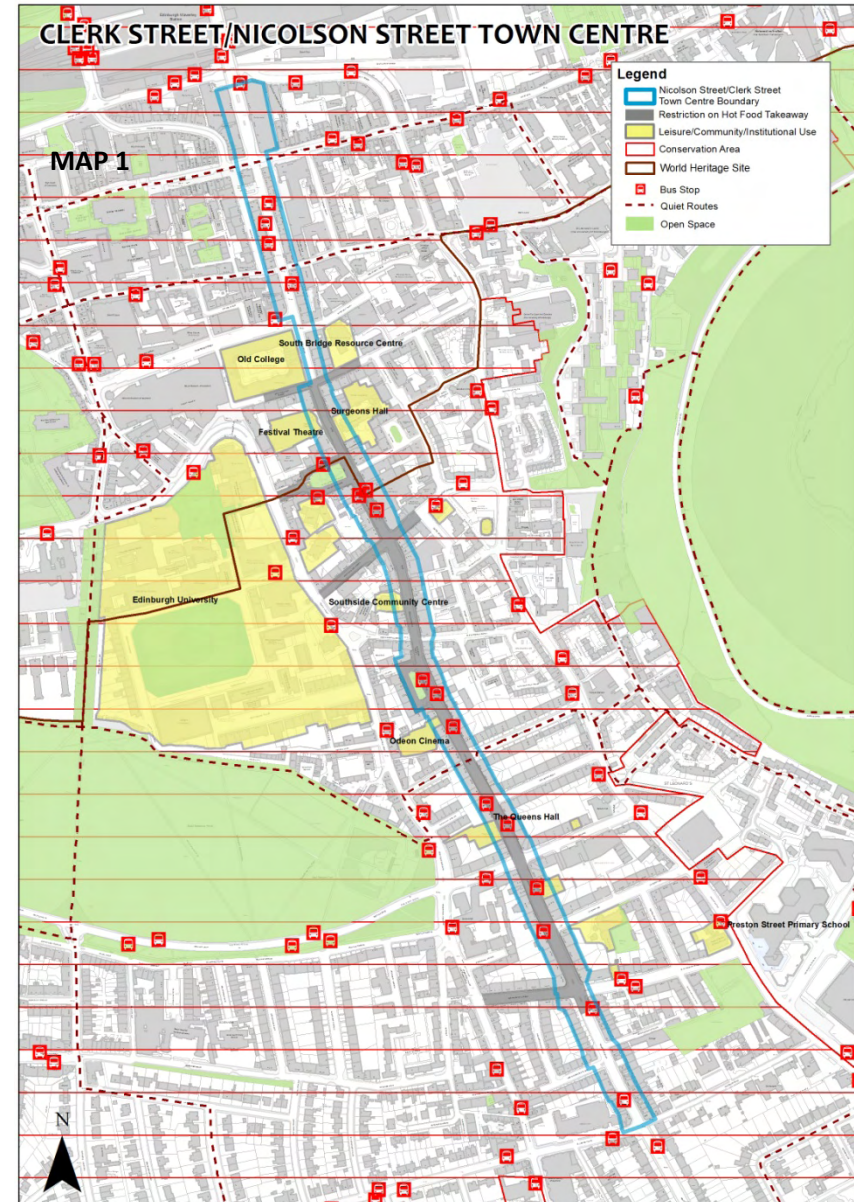
2. THE TOWN CENTRE

Nicolson Street/Clerk Street Town Centre is located on a main arterial route leading from Edinburgh’s historic Old Town through the inner suburb of the Southside. The town centre extends for 1.7km from North Bridge south to the junction of Newington Place and Salisbury Place.

Retail activity along the main thoroughfare is supported by the extension of the town centre down side streets to the west of Nicolson Street/Clerk Street towards Edinburgh University and the Meadows.

The Town Centre lies within the Conservation Areas of Old Town and Southside and contains a number of listed buildings. The northern section is located within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site. There are a number of prominent buildings and the proximity of Arthur’s Seat and Salisbury Crags allow dramatic views from a large number of points throughout the area.

The area is densely populated with approximately 15,400 people within approximately 400 metres of the Town Centre. The University



of Edinburgh has a major presence and reflecting the high student population more than half of the resident population is aged 16 to 24. This is much higher than that of Edinburgh as a whole.

It is a diverse lively area with a number of active evening uses including the Festival Theatre. There are three public squares within the town centre – Nicolson Square, St Patrick Square and Hunter Square.

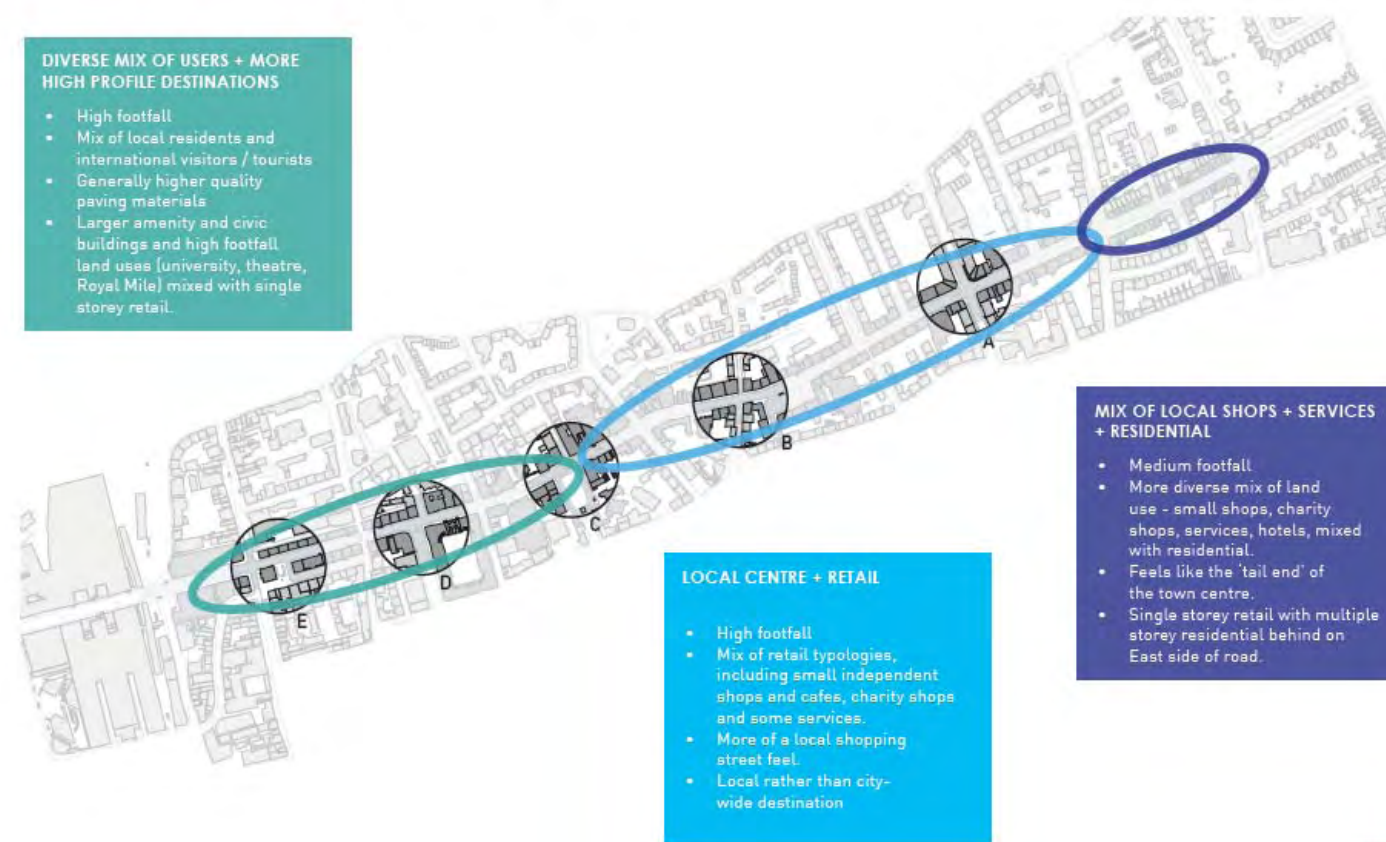
There are a number of community cafes and churches which provide a focus for the community. There is a strong sense of identity within the area. There is an active Community Council and a well established amenity group - The Southside Association are also active in the area.

An assessment¹ identified three distinct character areas along the length of the centre as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

¹ Public Life Street Assessment, Nicolson Street and Clerk Street, HERE+NOW, May 2016

Figure 1

CHARACTER AREAS

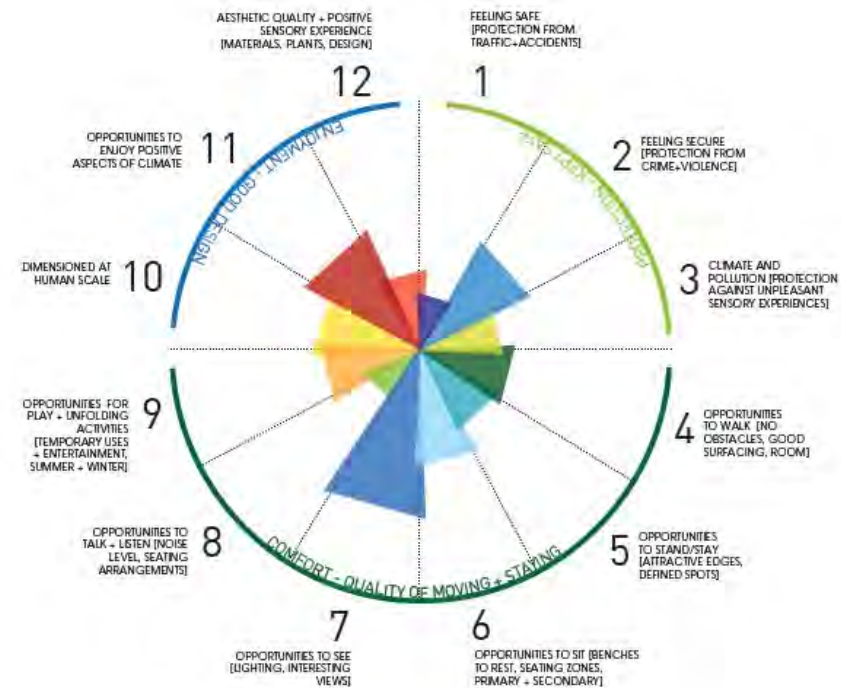


KEY FINDINGS

A health check has been carried out to assess the town centre’s strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience. To assess how the town centre functions in terms of pedestrian and cyclist movement and as a place a study was undertaken² which used a mix of techniques including user interviews, land use and activity surveys. The results are summarised below and in the accompanying graphics.

Place

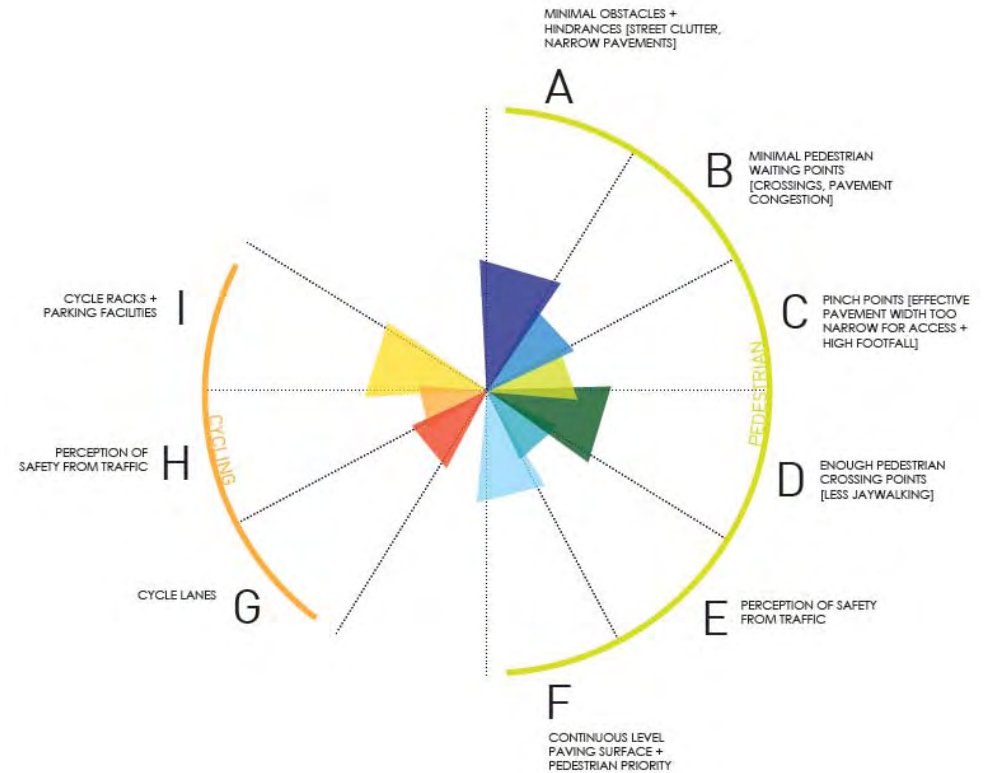
The place function was assessed against 12 Quality Criteria. The town centre scored favourably for opportunities to see- particularly referring to the views of Arthur’s Seat and towards the Royal Mile. It scored less well for other qualities, especially perception of safety from traffic, opportunities to talk and listen and aesthetic quality and positive sensory experience. The biggest hindrance was the presence and dominance of vehicles and traffic, which had a knock on effect on other place qualities through its noise, air and visual pollution, creation of a barrier between sides of the streets, perceived threat to users and its dominance in the street environment at the expense of pedestrians and cyclist priority.



² Public Life Street Assessment, Nicolson Street/Clerk Street, HERE+NOW, May 2016

Movement

Nicolson Street/Clerk Street scored poorly or averagely for all aspects of pedestrian and cyclist movement. Key issues related to cyclist perception of safety from traffic. A more favourable score was attained from cycle facilities in terms of bike racks, although there was still a demand for more bike racks in many places along the town centre. Pedestrian scores were average in terms of movement function for obstacles and hindrances and pedestrian crossings, but scored less favourably for perception from safety from traffic, pinch points and waiting points for pedestrians, with many junctions causing pedestrian congestion on narrow corners with railings fencing in pedestrians and long waits to cross the road.



Overview map

The analysis diagram overleaf taken from the public life street assessment has been compiled based on a synthesis of researcher observations and diaries, sub studies by the research team and analysis of the data collected from test walks and direct observation at key locations.

Overview of analysis



Shop and other town centre uses

The Town Centre consists of a mix of primarily smaller shops and eating places, bars and different types of takeaway combined with a few larger cultural institutions. Shop units range in size from relatively small shop units up to small supermarket sized units. The majority of units are located within traditional tenement buildings with residential units above. Residential is therefore a major town centre use.

National retailers are represented in the Town Centre, particularly in the South Bridge area. A number of these operators have multiple units along the length of the centre. There are also a number of independent operators.

The northern section of the Town Centre intersects with the Royal Mile. Around this location there are a number of hotels. This area is increasingly focussed on the service for visitors.

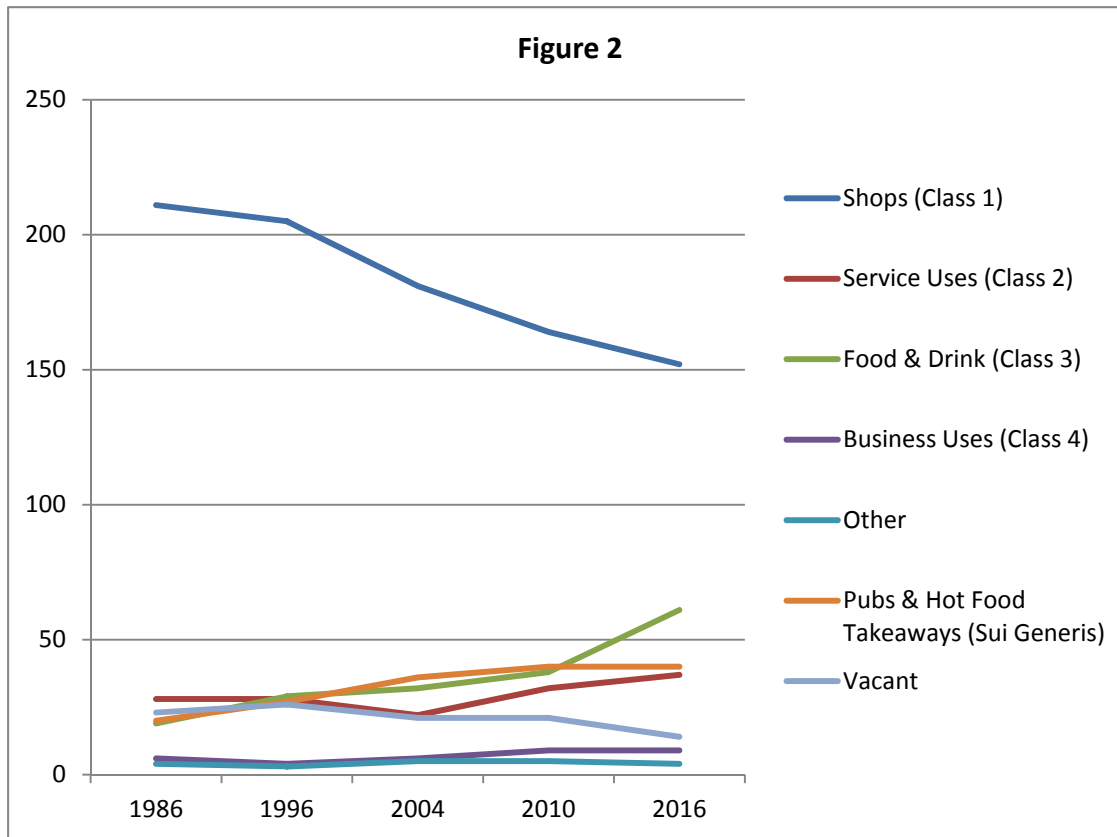
Eating places are well represented and spread out fairly evenly throughout the Town Centre. The area is well served with services such as hairdressers, pharmacies, opticians, banks and a post office. There is no dentist or doctors within the town centre boundary, although there are practices within the surrounding area.

There has been some change in the composition of the centre since 1986. Between 1986 and 2016 Figure 2 below shows that there has been a steady decline in class 1 (retail) use and a subsequent increase in class 2 (office), class 3 (food and drink) and pubs and hot food take-aways.

The current vacancy rate is 4%, which is significantly below the 2015 Edinburgh average of 7% and below the national average which is between 9 and 13%.

The number of units in shop use has fallen to 48% from 68% in 1986. This is a trend which is evident across other town centres. Within those units used as shops there has been a decline in a number of uses including butchers, bakers, fishmongers, grocers, furniture stores, clothing stores and off licences. There has been an increase in the number of charity shops and the centre now has 4 small supermarkets compared with 2 in 1986. The proportion of units in use for professional services such as opticians, banks, solicitors and beauty salons has increased overall since 1986. This is mainly due to an increase in the number of beauty salons and tanning salons. The proportion of units in Class 4 business use has changed little over the period. 3% of units were in this category at 2016 which includes tour operators, printers and office services. There has been an increase in the proportion of units in use as cafes and restaurants from 6% in 1986 to 19% in 2016. The number of pubs has almost doubled from 11 to 20 and take-aways have more than doubled from 9 to 21 in this period.

The University of Edinburgh has a significant presence in the area. There are a number of cultural and social venues including The Tron, Festival Theatre, Talbot Rice Gallery, Royal College of Surgeons, Old College and Queens Hall. There are active proposals to bring the former Odeon cinema back into cinema use.



Physical structure

The Town Centre is a highly developed urban area. A number of the properties in South Clerk Street were originally built as residential properties with front gardens. Most of these properties have lost their front boundary walls and railing and the garden is given over to car parking.

A facade study ³categorised facades as: active; friendly; boring or inactive. In general the facades were considered friendly and some active though some were identified as being in poor condition. Narrow shop frontages were considered to have a positive impact in creating variation in the townscape.

Place Standard Exercise

The Place Standard is a tool to evaluate the quality of a place. It consists of 14 questions which cover both the physical and social elements of a place. Each question is rated by participants on a scale of 1 to 7. The results are then plotted on a diagram which

³ Public Life Street Assessment, Nicolson Street and Clerk Street, HERE+NOW, May 2016

shows at a glance the areas where a place is performing well and where there is room for improvement. Where a place has been assessed as good, the shape will be fuller, reaching towards the edge of the circle. Where it is viewed as performing poorly the shape will be smaller, remaining towards the centre.

A Place Standard exercise was carried out within the Southside. The results of the exercise demonstrated a strong sense of identity and a desire to ensure that the identity of the area is maintained. The need to try to highlight the history of the Southside and provide more information to passers by through signage and maps was raised.

The influence of the student population in the area was reflected across a number of themes, including housing, identity and belonging, facilities, sense of control and the local economy. There were some feelings of lack of integration between students and other residents. The opportunity for more involvement of the University with the local community was raised, in particular in relation to facilities for social interaction. The impact of the volume of student accommodation in the area was raised as a concern, with a feeling that greater consideration needs to be given to the housing needs of the whole community. The positive aspect which the large student population presents for the local economy was recognised.

Figure 3 below illustrates the results. It indicates that the centre is viewed as performing well in the areas of public transport, natural spaces, play and recreation, work and economy and streets and spaces.

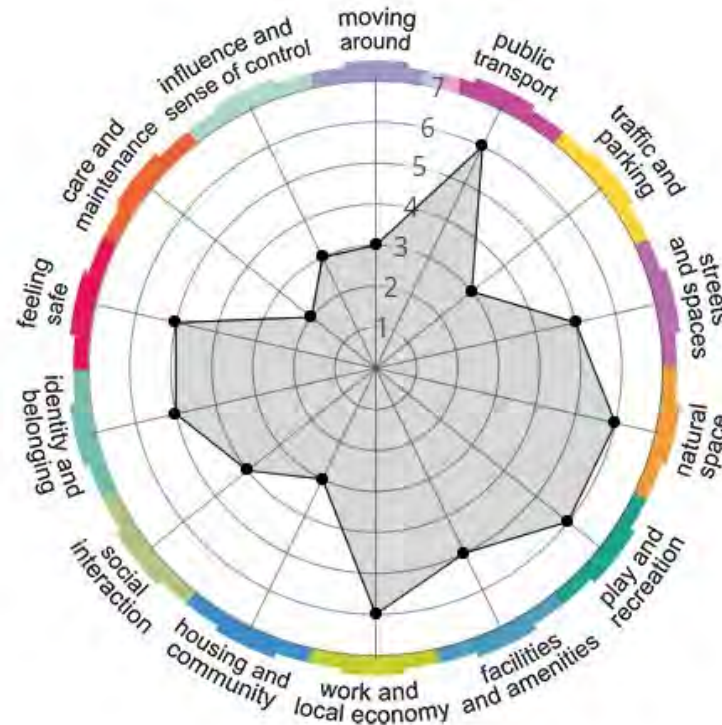
Views on public transport were generally positive with most people satisfied with provision. Issues were raised with regard to a need for an east to west route and concerns about evening services.

While streets and spaces scored high the condition of shop fronts and street clutter were issues.

The areas where the Southside was considered to be performing less well were influence and control, care and maintenance, moving around, housing and community, traffic and parking.

Refuse was the predominant issue in relation to care and maintenance of the town centre. A shortage of residents parking and disabled parking were raised. Obstructions on pavements such as advertising boards, bus shelters and bins along with cars on pavements were concerns.

Figure 3



SWOT Analysis

The overall analysis is summarised here in a SWOT analysis of the town centre.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Strong sense of local identity	Narrow footpaths and pinch points	Build on high footfall	Traffic noise, volume and pollution
High footfall	Traffic noise and air pollution	Enhance spaces	Length of centre
Good public transport	Linear centre inhibiting wayfinding	Build on existing retail	Perceptions of threat in terms of anti social behaviour
Access to natural space	Poor quality materials	Improve quality of materials	
Diverse mix of shops and services	Integration of communities	Improve cross connections	
Low vacancy rate	Perceived threat of anti-social behaviour	Improve conditions and facilities for cyclists	
		Safeguarded tram route	

Current health

The health check shows that the Town Centre provides a range of services and retail outlets. A decline in the number of units in retail use is evident, however this reflects trends across most town centres. Just under half of the shop units in the Town Centre are in retail use. Vacancy rate is low and footfall is high indicating a relatively healthy centre overall.

3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The public life street assessment and health check highlight areas for potential improvement in the Town Centre, particularly relating to the movement and place function. The vision for Nicolson Street/Clerk Street is to:

- enhance the appearance and comfort of the centre;
- facilitate movement; and
- ensure a mix of shopping and other services for residents and visitors to encourage people to spend time in the town centre.

The Supplementary Guidance goes some way to achieve the wider vision through the following principles, which should be considered when submitting and assessing a planning application for a change of use within the Town Centre:

1. Supporting high quality shopfront design (see the Council's Guidance for Businesses and Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Guidance). Particular attention should be given to measures which could reduce anti-social behaviour such as gates on recessed doors and frontages that allow natural surveillance.
2. Ensuring active frontages to the street by permitting glazing which will allow for natural surveillance, whilst prohibiting the change of use from shop use to residential in ground floor units.
3. Supporting outdoor seating where pavements are wider.
4. Supporting Class 3 food and drink uses around public squares and on corner sites where there is opportunity to activate the public street life and encourage people to spend time in the town centre.
5. Ensuring development makes a positive contribution to the public realm by meeting the Street Design Guidance and Edinburgh Design Guidance.
6. Incorporating and enhancing natural and built features where they can contribute positively to the Town Centre

7. Supporting additional cycle parking facilities at key points along the Town Centre.
8. Taking opportunities to remove street clutter and other redundant items identified in any relevant street audits prepared by the Council or Living Streets.
9. Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for storage of waste, internally and externally.

A number of programmes and plans have the potential to address some of the other issues:

- The area is within defined Conservation Areas. A review of the Old Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal is underway. Appraisals are intended to manage change and set out opportunities for enhancement.
- Part of the area is within the World Heritage Site. The World Heritage Site Management Plan is under review and will set out future actions within the site.
- A bus shelter replacement programme has recently taken place, including replacement bus shelters with advertising panels in the town centre. Future replacement programmes may present an opportunity to improve placement of shelters.
- Review of Air Quality Action Plan
- Road and Footway Investment – Capital Programme
- The Council and other stakeholders are currently progressing a Wayfinding system for the City and the intention would be to include town centres as part of the project.
- Quiet Routes – Edinburgh’s local walking and cycling routes.
- A 20mph speed limit has applied to much of the town centre since July 2016. The remainder of the centre introduced a 20mph limit in February 2017. Reduced traffic speed will improve the sense of security for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The Town Centre has also benefitted from the [trade waste policy](#) that only allows trade waste to be presented on the street/outside premises for one-hour within set collection windows.

- A locality based approach to service delivery operates in Edinburgh. The town centre is part of the South East Locality and the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership area. Locality Improvement Plans are due to be in place by October 2017. These will set out the future priorities for the locality area and consider opportunities to enhance the local sense of identity and belonging. The Locality Improvement Plan may provide a context for the future review of this supplementary guidance.

4. POLICIES FOR CHANGE OF USE OF SHOP UNITS WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE

TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY

The LDP defines the boundary of the Town Centre within which Policy Ret 9 and this Supplementary Guidance applies. Paragraph 261 of the LDP states that the Supplementary Guidance may recommend changes to the Town Centre boundary to be included in the next LDP. The following have been identified as *potential* changes to the town centre boundary to be considered in the next LDP:

- Extend the boundary around Nicolson Square. This would provide a consistent policy for the entire square, part of which is currently excluded from the town centre.
- Shorten the town centre by redrawing boundary at East/West Preston Street. A facade study⁴ identified a change in the facades to the south of E/W Preston Street where the ground floor shop units face onto the street with a mix of residential use above which are often set back from street level. The change in character along the town centre combined with more inactive facades and vacant shopfronts indicates a potential to shorten the town centre to those more active areas and to focus retail within those areas.

PREVIOUS APPROACH

The policy approach set out in the Edinburgh City Local Plan (ECLP) (now superseded by the LDP) was to restrict changes of use in shop units within identified 'shopping frontages'. The ECLP identified seven 'primary frontages'⁵. Within these areas policy restricted the change of use to a non-shop use to those circumstances where no more than one third of all units would be in non-

⁴ Public Life Street Assessment, Nicolson Street and Clerk Street, HERE+NOW, May 2016

⁵ Group of addresses for the purpose of calculating the proportion of shop and non-shop uses.

shop use and would not result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses. The percentage of non-shop uses in each of the frontages defined in the ECLP is shown in the table below. With the exception of 85-108 South Bridge, where there was a minor decrease, the proportion of shop units in non-retail use has increased in each of the frontages since 2010.

Frontage defined in ECLP	% of frontage in non-shop use ⁶	Number of vacant units ⁷
47-87 Nicolson Street	46	0
36-76 Nicolson Street	10	1
78a-140 Nicolson Street	25	0
37-85 Clerk Street and 2-10 Clerk Street	41	0
44-46 Clerk Street and 1-29 South Clerk Street	30	0
1-52 South Bridge	63	0
85-108 South Bridge	11	1

Three of the primary frontages exceed the previous policy of no more than a third of shop units in non-retail use. Vacancy rates within these frontages are low. Each of these primary frontages forms the opposite side of the street from a primary frontage which is within the previous policy threshold. One of these primary frontages, 1-52 South Bridge, has 63% of shop units currently in non-retail use.

⁶ September 2016

⁷ September 2016

PROPOSED APPROACH

This Supplementary Guidance proposes to retain a frontage approach to ensure that a minimum percentage of units are retained in shop use to meet the basic shopping needs of the local population. Nicolson Street/Clerk Street is a linear town centre which extends over 1.7km. The identification of frontages will assist in ensuring distribution of retail facilities throughout the centre to provide for the needs of the local population.

It is proposed that all frontages with the exception of 1-52 South Bridge are retained. This frontage currently has a very high proportion of units in non-shop use. 85-108 South Bridge forms the opposite side of the street, conversely it has a high proportion of units in retail use. Due to proximity to the Royal Mile and city centre retail core this part of the town centre provides a high proportion of restaurant uses. It is not considered necessary to provide a high level of retail protection within this area of the town centre. It is proposed that 1-52 South Bridge is removed as a frontage, however to maintain a certain level of retail within this northerly part of the town centre that 85-108 South Bridge is retained as a frontage.

Outwith the frontages defined above, 53% of units are in non-shop use. If the remaining streets in the town centre are roughly divided into blocks which could form frontages each block has a fairly even distribution of café and takeaway uses, with no apparent grouping of retail uses in any given location within the town centre. It is not proposed to identify additional frontages.

The proposed approach also removes the need to assess the change of use against whether it will result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses, and in doing so, provides greater flexibility in where non-shop uses can be located within the frontage.

CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

Changing a shop to a non-shop use will always require planning permission. Some other changes of use are permitted development, for example, a cafe (Class 3) being turned into a shop unit (Class 1). The Scottish Government Circular 1/1998 contains guidance on use classes.

Policy NCTC1 Alternative Use of Shop Units - Primary Retail Frontages

In the primary retail frontages defined in Table 1, the change of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will be permitted provided:

- a) as a result of permitting the change of use, **no more than one third** of the total number of units will be in non-shop use; and
- b) the proposal is for an appropriate commercial, community or leisure use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

Table 1

Primary Retail Frontages
36-76 Nicolson Street
78a-140 Nicolson Street
44-46 Clerk Street and 1-29 South Clerk Street
85-108 South Bridge

Justification

The identification of primary retail areas provides a focus for retail use within the town centre. Within each of the individual frontages vacancy levels are low as are the proportion of shop units in non-retail use (10-30%). The policy will continue this focus and protect these frontages that are currently concentrated on retail use while allowing an element of other uses which are appropriate to town centres and can add or maintain vitality and viability.

Policy NCTC2 Alternative Use of Shop Units - Secondary Retail Frontages

In the secondary retail frontages, defined in Table 2, the change of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will be permitted provided:

- a) as a result of permitting the change of use, **no more than 45%** of the total number of units will be in non-shop use; and
- b) the proposal is for an appropriate commercial, community or leisure use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

Table 2

Secondary Retail Frontages
47-87 Nicolson Street
37-85 Clerk Street and 2-10 South Clerk Street

Justification

The frontages retain a majority of units in shop use (54% and 59%), however at lower levels than the primary frontages identified above. The policy recognises that the frontages provide a significant retail function and protect this function by aiming to preserve

the retail provision within these frontages around current levels and ensure that the majority of shop units within the frontages are retained in retail use.

Policy NCTC3 - Alternative use of shop units - elsewhere

For those locations not within an identified frontage, but elsewhere within the Nicolson Street/Clerk Street Town Centre boundary, a change of use from a shop to a non-shop use will be permitted provided a proposal is:

- Class 2 – financial, professional or other services
- Class 3 – food and drink uses
- An appropriate commercial, community or leisure use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

Justification

Frontages are used to ensure that a minimum percentage of units are retained in shop use to meet the basic shopping needs of the local population. Outwith the areas defined in Policy NCTC1 and NCTC2 there is a wide range of uses which contribute to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. This policy will provide a flexible approach which will allow appropriate uses, while accepting that retailing and the role of town centres are changing, to ensure the vitality and viability of the town centre overall. This should allow for units to capitalise on the outdoor street spaces, improving the public realm and providing for an active public life.

Residential use

National planning policy states that planning for town centres should consider opportunities for promoting residential use where this fits with local need and demand. All of Edinburgh's town centres, including Nicolson Street/Clerk Street, have an already large residential population despite the boundary being tightly drawn around the main concentrations of the shopping offer.

For placemaking purposes it is important that ground floor uses help bring activity onto the street. Residential units at ground floor level tend to add little vitality to the town centre. Nicolson Street/Clerk Street already has a large population living within walking distance of the main shopping streets and within the town centre itself, changes from shop use to residential is not supported.

5. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

LDP POLICIES

Other relevant policies in the Local Development Plan include:

- Ret 1 Town Centres First
- Ret 3 Town Centres
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- Ret 11 Food and Drink Establishments; and
- Des 13 Shopfronts
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- Hours of operation
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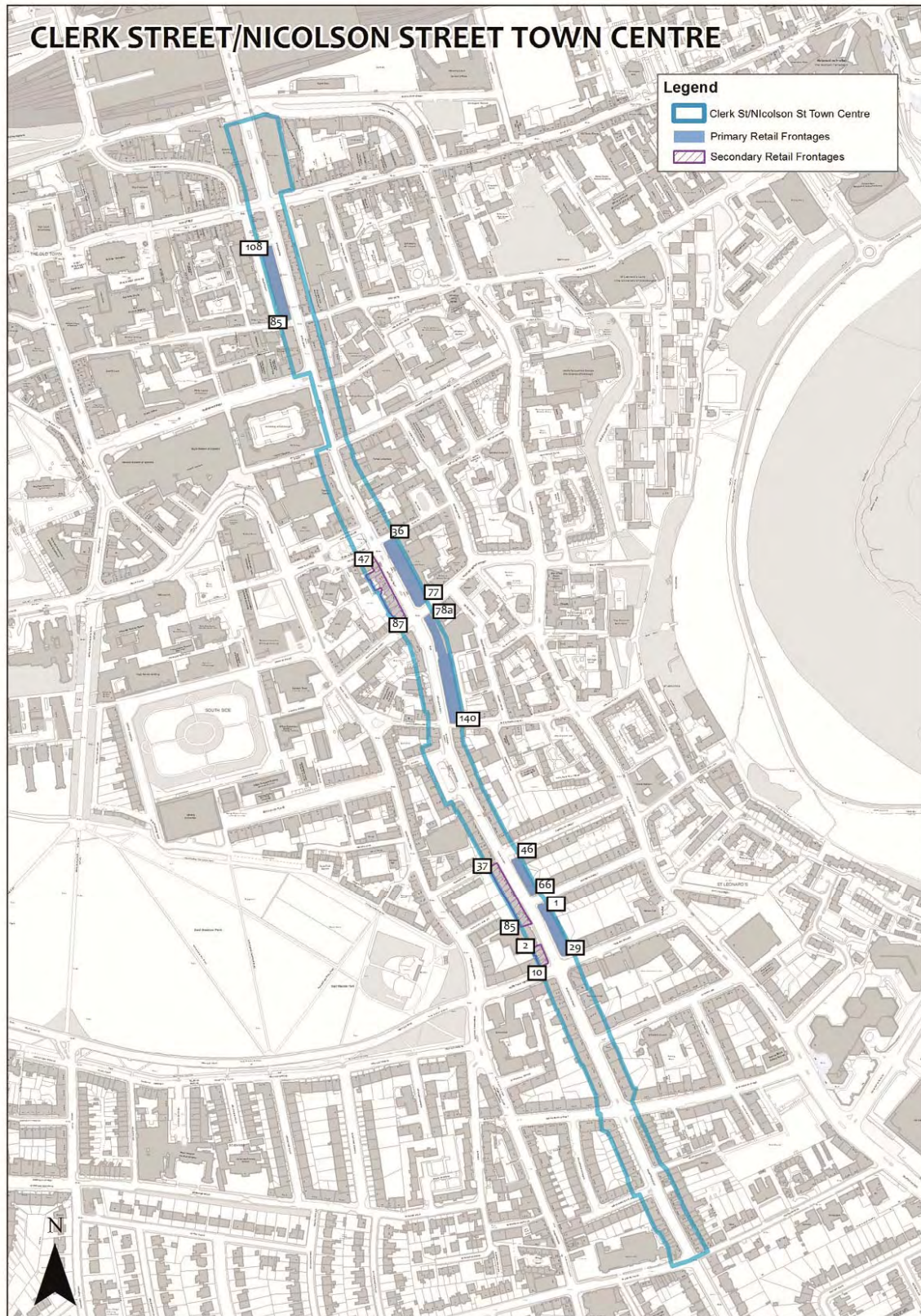
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Some changes of use are permitted development, for example, a cafe (Class 3) being turned into a shop unit (Class 1). The Scottish Government Circular 1/1998 contains guidance on use classes.

MAP 2: FRONTAGES





Portobello Town Centre

Supplementary Guidance – Draft

March 2017

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1. Introduction
2. Portobello Town Centre
3. Opportunities for improvement
4. Change of use policies
5. Links to other policies and guidance
6. Definitions

Map 1 – Town Centre

Map 2 - Frontages

Appendix A – Summary of responses to online survey carried out by Portobello Community Council

1. INTRODUCTION

Portobello Town Centre is one of Edinburgh's nine town centres (including the City Centre Retail Core) defined, protected and promoted as hub for a wide range of activities from shopping and providing local services and as a leisure destination. This draft sets out an approach to the **change of use of shop units** within Portobello Town Centre.

The LDP provides a framework for a tailored approach for individual town centres set out in Supplementary Guidance. Statutory Supplementary Guidance is prepared under Section 22 of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and aims to deliver the policies and principles set out in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP). The Supplementary Guidance has been prepared in accordance with **Policy Ret 9: Alternative Use of Shop Units in Defined Centres**, in the Local Development Plan (LDP) and applies to all shop units within the town centre. It aims to deliver two LDP objectives set out in Part 2, Section 6 (Shopping and Leisure) of the Plan:

- To maintain the existing and proposed broad distribution of centres throughout the city and sustain their vitality and viability; and
- To improve the appearance, quality and attractiveness of all centres.

Once adopted, following consultation, the Supplementary Guidance will form part of the statutory development plan. Applications for change of use must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. To assist in interpreting the LDP the Council issues non-statutory guidance. Guidance for Businesses provides guidance on change of use. This is a material consideration in the determination of applications and should be considered alongside this Supplementary Guidance.

The Supplementary Guidance has been informed by the public life street assessment carried out by design consultants for the Council, which explored how the town centre should evolve to maximise the potential for benefitting public life.

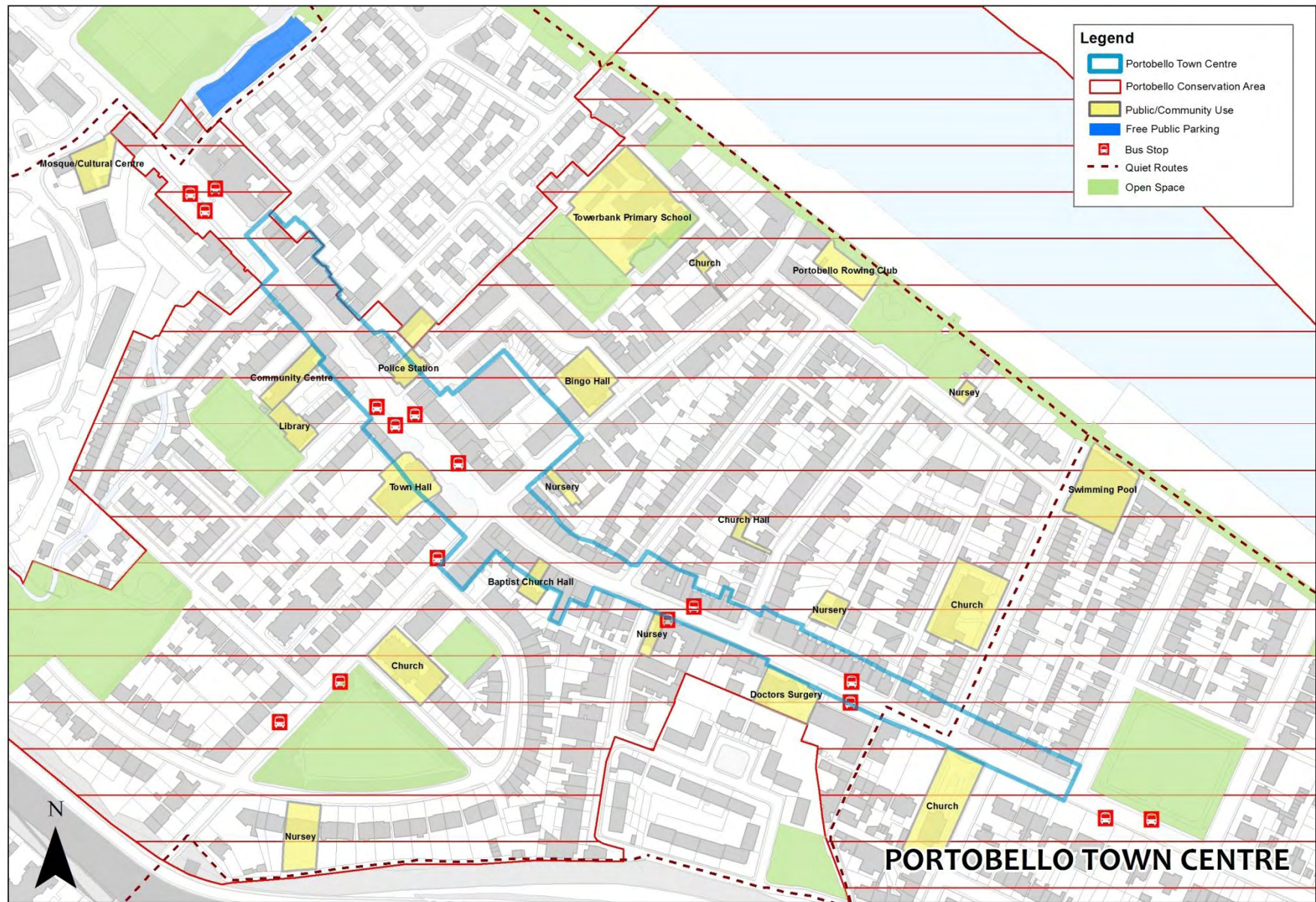
2. PORTOBELLO TOWN CENTRE

Portobello Town Centre (defined in Map 1) lies to the north east of the city centre and takes in Portobello High Street starting from Pipe Street to the west and ends at Pittville Street at Abercorn Park in the east. Portobello High Street is an arterial route into Edinburgh from the east and serves as the main shopping and commercial street for Portobello. The village of Portobello grew with the development of its early mineral deposit based industries. The pottery kilns are an important part of the area's heritage. The entire town centre falls within the Portobello Conservation Area. The promenade and beach plays a key role in giving Portobello its unique setting and identity. It retains its village feel with an engaged community that promotes local initiatives such as the community buyout of the former Portobello Old Parish Church, in Bellfield Street, and Brighton Park hosts a monthly market.

Portobello is a relatively small town centre: by number of units it is the second smallest town centre after Corstorphine. In the north east corner of the city, running parallel to the coast, it is in a slightly more peripheral location. It has less through pedestrian traffic than other centres, and can be described as serving its walk-in resident population, despite the fact that the Promenade and beach make Portobello a popular destination for daytrips, especially in the summer months. The total number of people observed on the street was low compared to other town centre. There are 4,800 residents that are within an easy walking distance of the town centre boundary. The resident population and visitors to Portobello are set to increase with the following developments:

- The redevelopment of the Baileyfield site for housing and wider masterplan for redevelopment along Fishwives Causeway
- The new Aldi supermarket
- Redevelopment of office block to housing, on Portobello High Street, opposite Marlborough Street
- Other potential housing development in the area.

The average quoting retail rent (2 years ending Sep 2015) (£/sq ft) is £12 which, along with Leith, is the lowest rent of the town centres in the city and equates to half the average rent of Bruntsfield/Morningside and Stockbridge Town Centres.



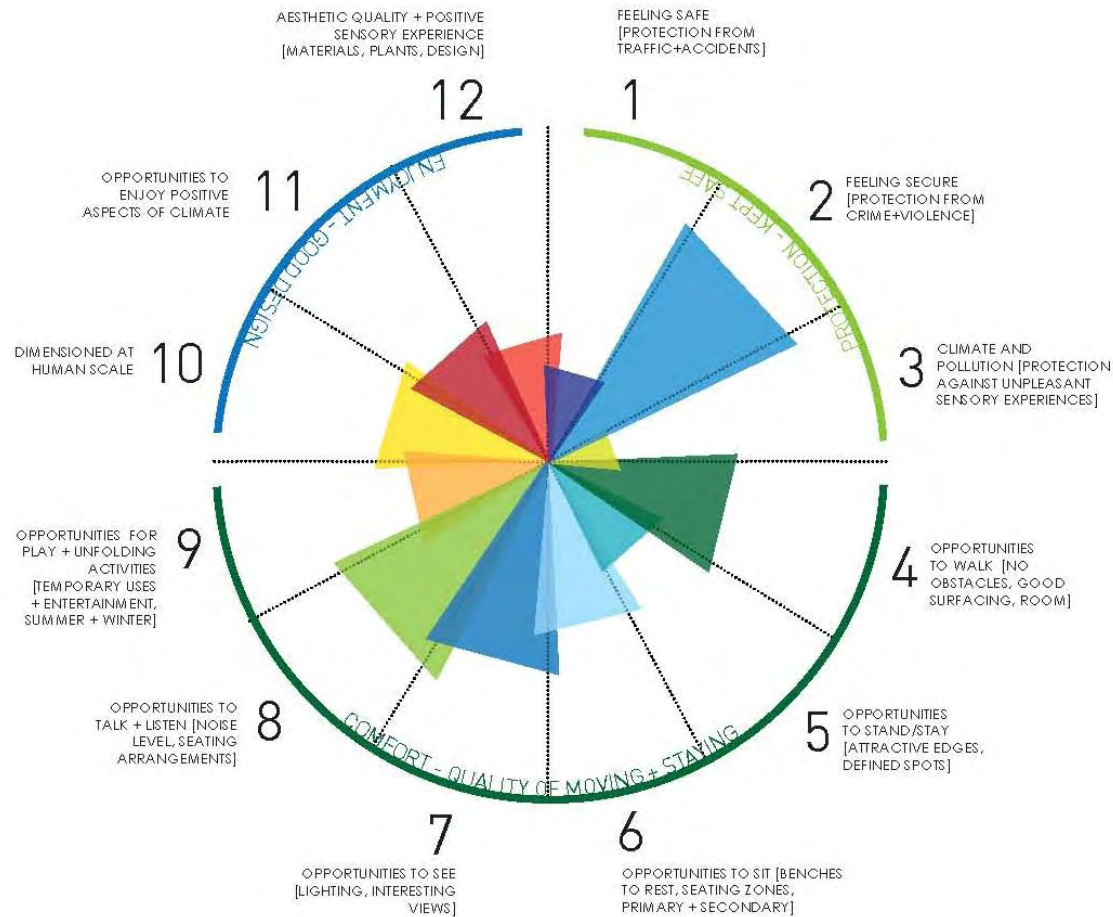
KEY FINDINGS

A health check has been carried out to assess the Town Centre's strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience. To assess how the Town Centre functions in terms of pedestrian and cyclist movement and as a place to visit, a study called a public life street assessment has also been undertaken. This study used a mixture of techniques, including direct observation (pedestrian counts, behavioural mapping and tracing studies), user interviews and land use surveys.

Public Life Street Assessment

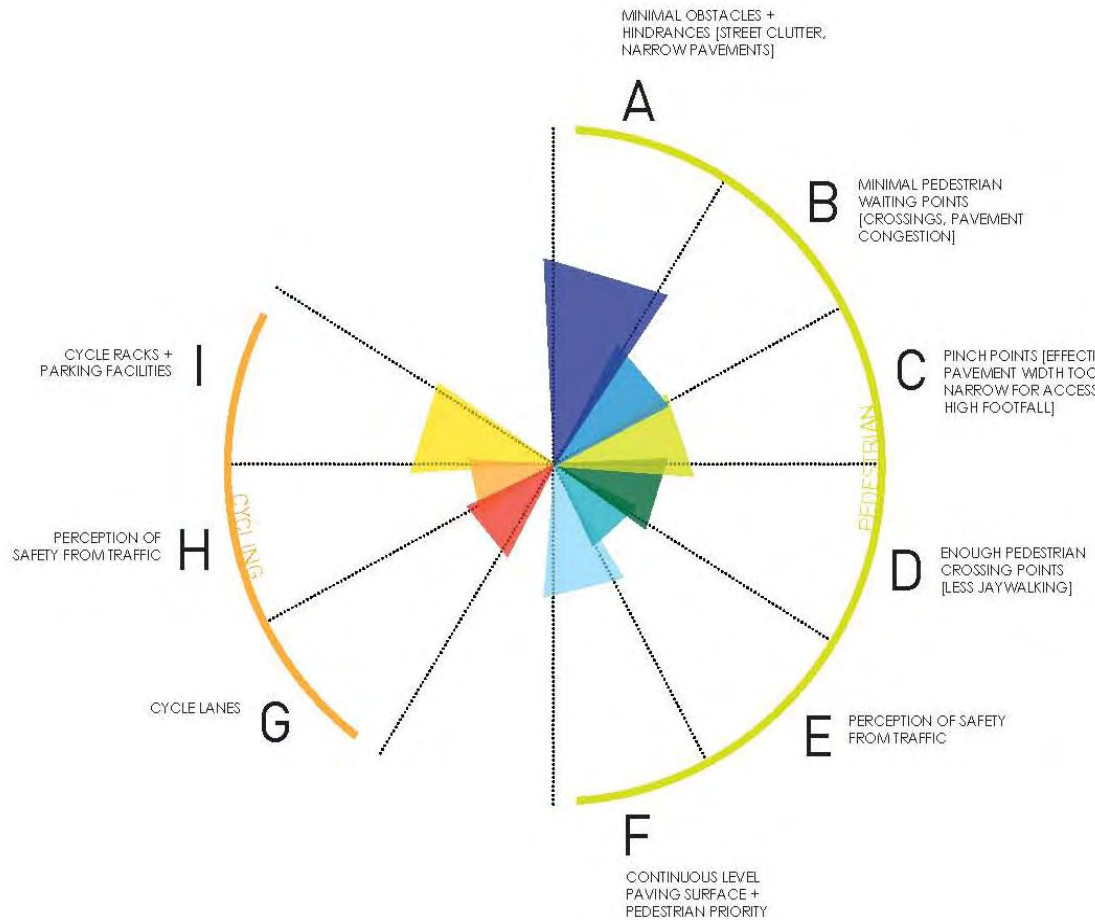
A systematic methodology using direct observation techniques (pedestrian counts, behavioural mapping and tracing studies) was used to assess both the place and movement function of the Portobello Town Centre. The results are summarised below and in the accompanying graphics.

Place Function Analysis



The place function was assessed against 12 quality criteria. Generally the place function score is mixed. As identified in the 'wheel' diagram below, Portobello scored very well for 'feeling secure' and 'opportunities to talk and listen'. However, the assessment highlights a need to address the perception of feeling safe - from traffic and accidents and protection from climate and pollution. It also showed there is a lack of opportunities to play and for unfolding activities, opportunities to stand and stay and a lack of aesthetic quality and positive sensory experience. It also highlights the need to improve the opportunities to walk free from obstacles, to rest, to see, to sit and for spaces to be at a scale that is comfortable in relation to human senses, movements and behaviours. Improving these would result in an increased potential for public life.

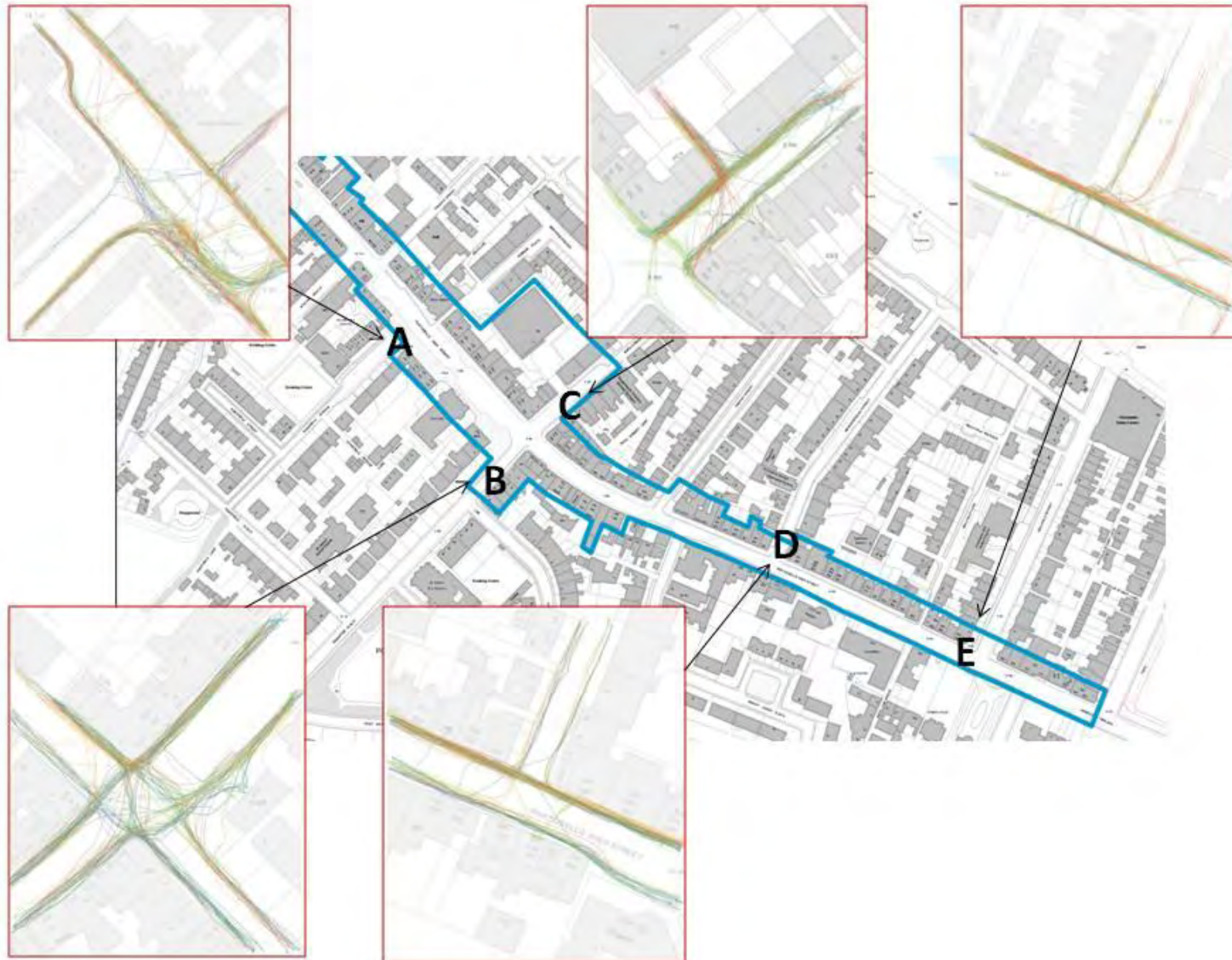
Pedestrian Movement Function



As described in the 'wheel' diagram, Portobello generally enjoys minimal pedestrian congestion. However, there are some stretches of narrow pavements and bollards/railings creating an obstacle. There are few waiting points for pedestrians and reasonable provision for cycle parking. Where there was a lower score this related to perception of safety from traffic, lack of cycle lanes, pedestrian pinch points for example at the access into the Cooperative supermarket. The busiest part of Portobello was the main junction with Brighton Place where the footfall peaks at noon.

The map and images below show the observational tracing studies carried out at the five locations (A-E) within the town centre boundary. The tracing studies mark pedestrian movement lines. As these build up, pedestrian desire lines and highly trafficked routes become more obvious, giving a graphical representation of the volume and direction of pedestrian movement.

User interviews expressed concern with regards to litter, especially at location A near the busy bus stop and where school pupils used in lunch hour; reduction in traffic and pedestrian priority given and wanted to see a greater diversity in local shops.



Overview



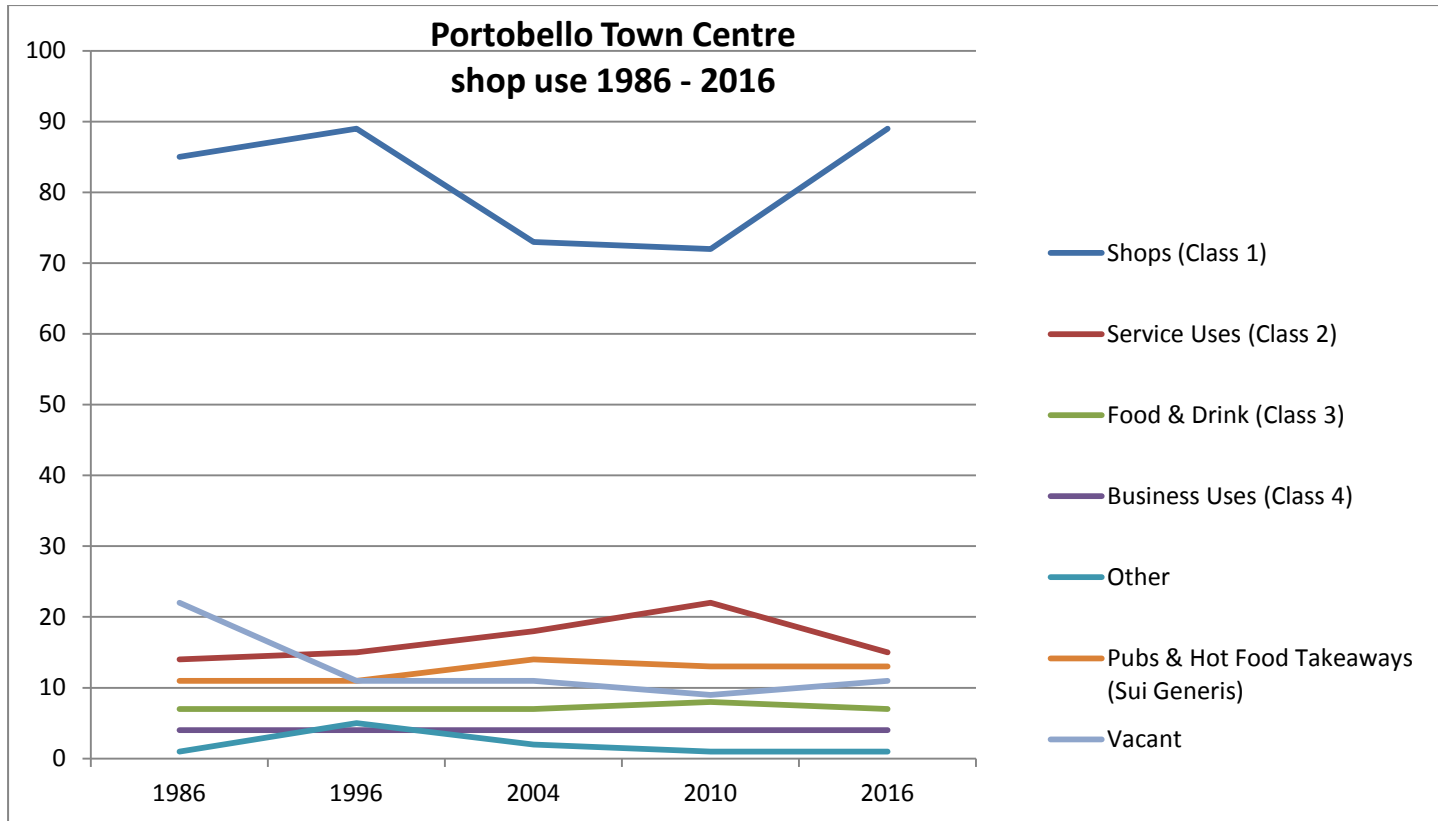
Shops and other town centre uses

Similar to Edinburgh's other town centres, the shop units are predominantly ground floor units under traditional tenemental housing or purpose built shop units with terraced housing to the rear. The shopfront design is of varying quality across the centre. Of the Class 1 shops use, about 10% are national chains. The south side of the street has a variety of uses and buildings other than shop units. The main anchor supermarket is located off Bath Street and is not visually connected to the main high street. The second main food retailer to enter is the new purpose built medium sized supermarket with car park located a short distance outwith the town centre boundary to the west.

The town centre boundary excludes the southern side of the High Street east of Regent Street. This results in a number of shop units that are adjacent to the town centre, but outwith the scope of the retail policies that follow in this guidance. Changes of use would be assessed with LDP policy Ret 10: Alternative uses of shop units in other locations. It is noted that this row of shops is where the pavement is at its narrowest and causes difficulties for buggies and wheelchairs to move with ease.

Where a unit is used as a shop it is necessary to get planning permission from the Council to change to another use. However, the planning system has limited control of what goods shops are selling, nor can it control which company occupies a shop. The mix of uses has been monitored in [city-wide shop surveys](#) periodically undertaken since 1986. As the graph below shows, the mix of uses follows trends seen in other town centres like a small loss in shops contrasting with an increase in service uses and food and drink uses. Pubs and hot food takeaways have remained more stable over the years.

Shop use in the centre has decreased by 4% since 2010. However, the loss of shops has not been the result of an increase in food and drink, pubs or hot food take-ways (these uses have remained the same), but an increase in services and a small increase in the vacancy rate from 7% to 8%.



Portobello Community Council online survey

Portobello Community Council carried out a survey on relevant aspects of the town centre, with over 100 responses, which has informed the preparation of the SG. Six questions were posed:

1. What is your view about the range of shops, services, facilities and food and drink establishments along the High Street? How balanced is the current mix? Are there too many similar types of shops/services or gaps in what’s available?
2. What impact, if any, do you think the new Aldi store has had, or will have, on Portobello town centre?
3. How easily can pedestrians and cyclists move around or along the high street? (e.g. opportunities to cross the road, pavement and road widths, space to cycle safely)
4. What opportunities are there for the public to use existing sites or spaces to sit outdoors or shelter from the weather?
5. How, if at all, does parking affects the feel and flow of the place and how people use it?
6. Do you have any suggestions on how the town centre could be improved for people on foot or bike?

The responses are summarised in Appendix A of this guidance.

Summary of strengths and weaknesses

A health check has been carried out to assess the town centre’s strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Village feel with presence of civic buildings with architectural landmarks eg police station and town hall.	Slightly high vacancy rate.
Portobello Promenade and beach makes it a	Limited crossing points, parts of the street

destination.	feels one-sided.
High proportion of independent shops.	Poor wayfinding from the Promenade to the High Street.
	Narrowest section of the street between Brighton Place/Bath Street and Windsor Place, is perceived as a pinch point and area of conflict between cyclists, buses and on-street parking.

Current Health

The beach as a popular outdoor leisure destination and its proximity to the active travel route along the Promenade provides the place with a significant positive draw factor. However, the High Street could do more to capitalise on these positive attributes: the connections north-south along roads such as Bath Street, Pipe Street or Bellfield Street could be better in terms of wayfinding/signage, and there may be a need to improve visual connections between the Baileyfield site/new Aldi supermarket and the town centre proper. Portobello could build on its substantial community capital to test making more use of its outdoor space for example for play, seating, shelter or an alternative location for the monthly market. The shopping offer in relation to its non-shop offer has been stable over the last five years. However, the range of non-shop uses, for example more restaurants to extend day trippers’ use of the town centre and to meet residents’ demand, is noted (see responses to the community council survey).

3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The public life street assessment and health check highlight areas for improvement in the town centre, particularly relating to the movement and place function. In common with other town centres, there is great potential to improve the movement and place function of Portobello Town Centre. The vision for Portobello is to create and promote:

- a place with an active public street life with a quality public realm that is comfortable for all users and thereby would encourage people to stay longer;
- streets and public realm that prioritises pedestrians and cyclist and thereby increases the ease of movement and increases footfall; and
- a mix of shopping and other town centre services that supports the resident community and creates a destination for visitors.

The Supplementary Guidance goes some way to achieve the wider vision through the following ten principles, which should be considered when submitting and assessing a planning application for a change of use within the Town Centre:

1. Supporting high quality shopfront design (see the Council's Guidance for Businesses and Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Guidance).
2. Ensuring active frontages to the street by permitting glazing which will allow for natural surveillance, create a visual interest on the street and encourage street users to linger, whilst prohibiting the change of use from shop use to residential in ground floor units.
3. Supporting outdoor seating where pavements are wider and micro-climate is favourable.
4. Supporting Class 3 food and drink uses on corner units where there is an opportunity to activate the public street life.
5. Maximising opportunities for formal and informal outdoor seating incorporating shelter or shop front awnings at key points along the town centre.

6. Ensuring development makes a positive contribution to the public realm by meeting the Street Design Guidance and Edinburgh Design Guidance.
7. Incorporating and enhancing natural and built features where they can contribute positively to the Town Centre, for example the connections to the Promenade/beach.
8. Supporting additional cycle parking facilities at key points along the Town Centre.
9. Taking opportunities to remove street clutter and other redundant items identified in any relevant street audits prepared by the Council or Living Streets.
10. Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for storage of waste, internally and externally.

A number of other programmes and plans have the potential to address some of the other issues raised in the Public Life Street Assessments:

- A bus shelter replacement programme has recently taken place, including replacement bus shelters with advertising panels in the town centre. Future replacement programmes will present an opportunity to improve placement of shelters.
- The recently reviewed Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisals provides the context to manage change that affects the conservations areas unique characteristics and set out opportunities for enhancement.
- Road and footway investment – Capital Programme
- The Council’s Wayfinding Project. This could improve navigation, wayfinding and appreciation of assets such as the Promenade/beach.
- A locality based approach to service delivery operates in Edinburgh. The town centre is within the North East Locality. Locality Improvement Plans are currently being prepared and are due to be in place by October 2017. These will set out the future priorities for the area and consider opportunities to enhance the local sense of identity and belonging.
- From March 2017 the 20mph programme will be introduced in the Portobello area. Reduced traffic speed will improve the sense of security for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Portobello has benefitted from the [trade waste policy](#) that only allows trade waste to be presented on the street/outside premises for one-hour within set collection windows. This has significantly reduced pavement clutter and improved pedestrian movement, especially at peak times of the day.

4. CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

Town Centre Boundary

The Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) defines the boundary of Portobello Town Centre within which Policy Ret 9 and this Supplementary Guidance applies. Paragraph 261 of the LDP states that supplementary guidance may recommend changes to the Town Centre boundary to be included in the next LDP. It is considered that there is the potential to include:

- The south side of Portobello, eastwards from 307 Portobello High Street, has the potential to be included given that it has a number of shop units in use and other town centre/community uses.
- Extend the boundary westwards up to Fishwives Causeway, as units on the north of the street are in contiguous commercial use from Pipe Street to Fishwives Causeway. This would result in the boundary extending to the new development proposed at Baileyfield, existing garages, new supermarket and the development under construction.

Previous Approach

The policy approach set out in the Edinburgh City Local Plan (ECLP), now superseded by the LDP, was to restrict changes of use in shop units within identified ‘shopping frontages’. The ECLP identified four ‘frontages’, within which the change of use to a non-shop use was only permitted where no more than one third of all units would be in non-shop use and it would not result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses. The percentage of non-shop uses in each of the frontages defined in the ECLP is shown in the table below.

Frontage	% of frontage in non-shop use	Number of vacant units
100 – 162 Portobello High Street	35%	2
164 – 208 Portobello High Street	20%	1
210 – 240 Portobello High Street	27%	0
111 – 153 Portobello High Street	22%	1

Based on the 2016 shop survey, only one frontage has slightly exceeded the third allowance. Since 2010, the proportion of non-shop uses in all of the frontages has remained the same. However, three have seen an increase in vacancy rates.

Change of Use Policies

The policies below (**Policy PTC1 and Policy PTC2**) set out when a shop unit can change from a shop use to a non-shop use.

Policy PTC 1 – Alternative Use of Shop Units in Defined Frontages

In the frontages at defined in the table below (and see Map 2), the change of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will be permitted provided:

- a) as a result of permitting the change of use, **no more than one third** of the total number of units in the frontage will be in non-shop use; and
- b) the proposal is for an appropriate commercial or community use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

Frontages
100 – 162 Portobello High Street
111 – 153 Portobello High Street
164 – 208 Portobello High Street
210 – 240 Portobello High Street

Justification:

Defining frontages allows the retail policy to determine where the core shopping activity occurs and to determine a level of protection of shop uses, more so than other areas of a centre. Despite Portobello having a slightly higher vacancy rate, three of the frontages still are below the third non-shop use threshold. An increase in the policy to allow more non-shop uses is not proposed to manage the vacancy rate. Keeping this level of protection should ensure that the town centre meets the shopping needs and demands, whilst balancing the benefits of extending economic activity and footfall into the evening. One of the frontages is already exceeding the established threshold for non-shop use, however, only marginally. To put this in context, of the 130 units in total in the town centre, a total of 48% are in non-shop use. No change in the number or extent of the defined frontages is proposed.

Policy PTC 2 – Alternative Use of Shop Units Elsewhere in Portobello Town Centre

For those locations not within a ‘frontage’, but elsewhere within the Portobello Town Centre boundary, a change of use from a shop to a non-shop use will be permitted provided a proposal is:

- Class 2 – financial, professional or other services
- Class 3 – food and drink uses
- An appropriate commercial or community use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability

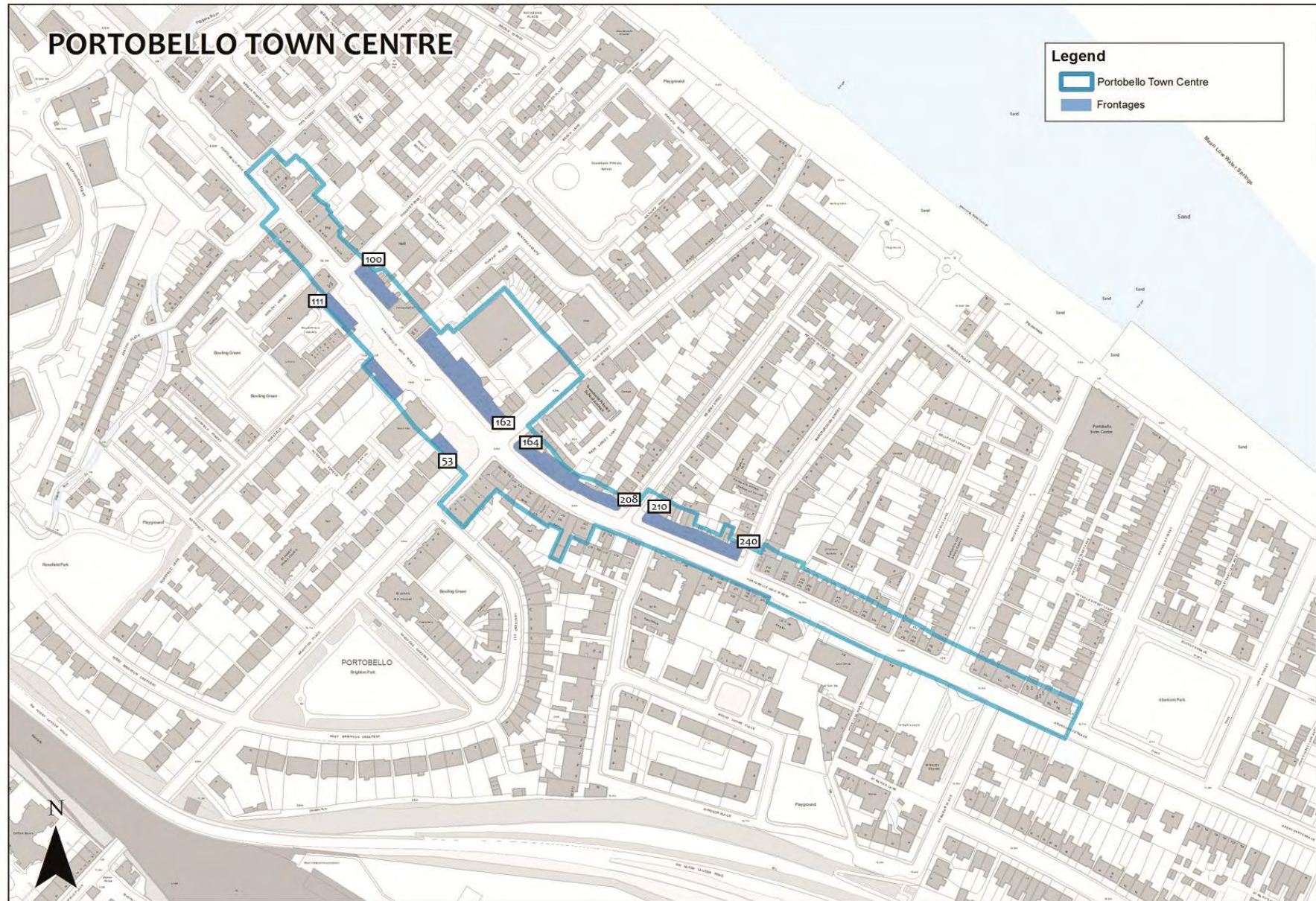
Justification:

Frontages are used to ensure that a minimum percentage of shop uses are retained in shop use to meet the basic shopping needs and provision of the walk-in population. Elsewhere, there is more flexibility to allow shop units to provide a destination, speciality shops, associated uses such as services and food and drink uses. This should allow corner units to capitalise on the outdoor street

spaces, for example towards the eastern end of the centre with streets leading perpendicular to the Promenade, to encourage food and drink with outdoor seating permits.

Residential use

National planning policy states that planning for town centres should consider opportunities for promoting residential use where this fits with local need and demand. All of Edinburgh's town centres, including Portobello, have an already large residential population despite the boundary being tightly drawn around the main concentrations of the shopping offer. For placemaking purposes it is important that ground floor uses help bring activity onto the street. Residential units at ground floor level tend to add little vitality to the town centre. Portobello already has a significant population living within walking distance of the main shopping streets and within the town centre itself, changes from shop use to residential is not supported. However, opportunities should be considered for promoting residential use above shop units in any new development or redevelopment schemes within and on the edge of the town centre boundary.



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Generally happy with the mix and range of uses and valued the independent traders, and have seen an improvement in recent years. Most people commented that there were too many charity shops, hairdressers/barbers/beauty salons. Regret for the lack of greengrocer. Would like to see more restaurants, not cafes. Quite a few people would like to see clothes/shoe shops, bookshop and toypshops. Concern that RBS branch closing, near to children's shoe shop that is also closing.

What impact, if any, do you think the new Aldi store has had, or will have, on Portobello town centre?

The general feeling is that the impact of Aldi will be felt greatest by Scotmid and Sainsbury's, and only to a lesser extend the independent shops. However, there is noted concern about the impact on the some specialists such as the butcher and fishmonger. Generally a good thing for consumer choice, and opening times suit daytime workers. Some feel that this will bring more people into Portobello, and it provides an anchor to the west side of town. It reduces the need to travel further by car to other larger supermarkets, and retains spending within Portobello. Concern however that it is a car oriented development that it will encourage more car trips and the impact on road congestion. Suggest that an effort to connect to the rest of town is needed.

How easily can pedestrians and cyclists move around or along the high street? (e.g. opportunities to cross the road, pavement and road widths, space to cycle safely)

General perception is that Portobello town centre works well for pestestrians but is very poor for cyclists. However, there is room for improvement for pedestrian safety and comfort - notably the crossings take a long time to change, another crossing point is required east of Bath Street and at the Aldi development where the new junction is a concern for pedestrians. Pavements are generally wide enough on the north side, but not the south side. Better use of the wide pavement in front of the town hall. The traffic is felt to be heavy. Delivery trucks, parked cars and narrow section east of Bath St to Bellfield Street makes cycling here unpopular. Most opt to detour to the Prom. There is a lack of cycle parking. The setts on Brighton Place is uncomfortable for cyclists and suggestion to drop the kerb at Rosenfield Avenue to use as an alternative route.

What opportunities are there for the public to use existing sites or spaces to sit outdoors or shelter from the weather?

Most people note that there are benches along the high street, especially outside the Bank of Scotland. However, there is nowhere to shelter from the wind/rain, other than bus shelters. Opportunity to improve the space here, and more seating at the row of shops to the west of Rosefield Avenue. Despite some concern about air pollution impacting outside seating, some are keen for more seats and encouraging cafes to have tables and chairs.

How, if at all, does parking affects the feel and flow of the place and how people use it?

Parking is seen as a problem that slows down traffic, adversely affects cycling and lack of parking on the high street puts pressure on narrow side streets with cars parked on pavements become an obstacle. Some feel that more restrictions on parking would be detrimental to the viability of the town centre.

Do you have any suggestions on how the town centre could be improved for people on foot or bike?

Suggestions include: segregated cycle paths, more bike parking, more planting and outdoor seating. Better enforcement of parking and speed limits. Street design should allow cars to keep moving even when two buses are at the stop. Information boards and better signage to attract people from the beach to the High Street. Allow vacant units to be allowed to display goods and services. More food and drink uses so that people stay for longer after trip to beach. Introduce yellow lines along length of High Street (alternating sides). Widen pavements (especially southern side) and encourage traders to use them. Pilot car-free days. Redesign of Fishwives Causeway and Bath St junctions with raised tables for pedestrian priority.

Other comments:

Comments and suggestions include: Smarten up shop fronts (design, colours, awnings) and vacant units to strengthen sense of character and place. Portobello has great community feel. Create gateway feature to the town, with local artists. More development of the beach and promenade as it an extension of the High Street. Reduce traffic flow. Keep public toilets open. Improve pavement surfaces. Improve the public space at the Brighton Place junction to create meeting/market space. Improve coordination of local businesses. Explore continuation of the High Street down Bath St.



Stockbridge Town Centre

Draft Supplementary Guidance

March 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

Stockbridge is one of Edinburgh's nine town centres (including the City Centre) defined, protected and promoted as a hub for a wide range of activities from shopping, providing local services and as a leisure destination. This draft sets out an approach to the **change of use of shop units** within Stockbridge Town Centre.

The LDP provides a framework for a tailored approach for individual town centres set out in Supplementary Guidance. Statutory Supplementary Guidance is prepared under Section 22 of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and aims to deliver the policies and principles set out in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP). The Supplementary Guidance has been prepared in accordance with **Policy Ret 9: Alternative Use of Shop Units in Defined Centres** and applies to all shop units within the town centre. It aims to deliver two LDP objectives set out in Part 2, Section 6 (Shopping and Leisure) of the Plan:

- To maintain the existing and proposed broad distribution of centres throughout the city and sustain their vitality and viability;
and
- To improve the appearance, quality and attractiveness of all centres.

Once adopted, following consultation, the Supplementary Guidance will form part of the statutory development plan. Applications for change of use must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. To assist in interpreting the LDP the Council issues non-statutory guidance. Guidance for Businesses provides guidance on change of use. This is a material consideration in the determination of applications and should be considered alongside this Supplementary Guidance.

This Supplementary Guidance has been informed by a public life street assessment carried out by design consultants for the Council, which explores how the town centre should evolve to maximise the potential for benefitting public life.

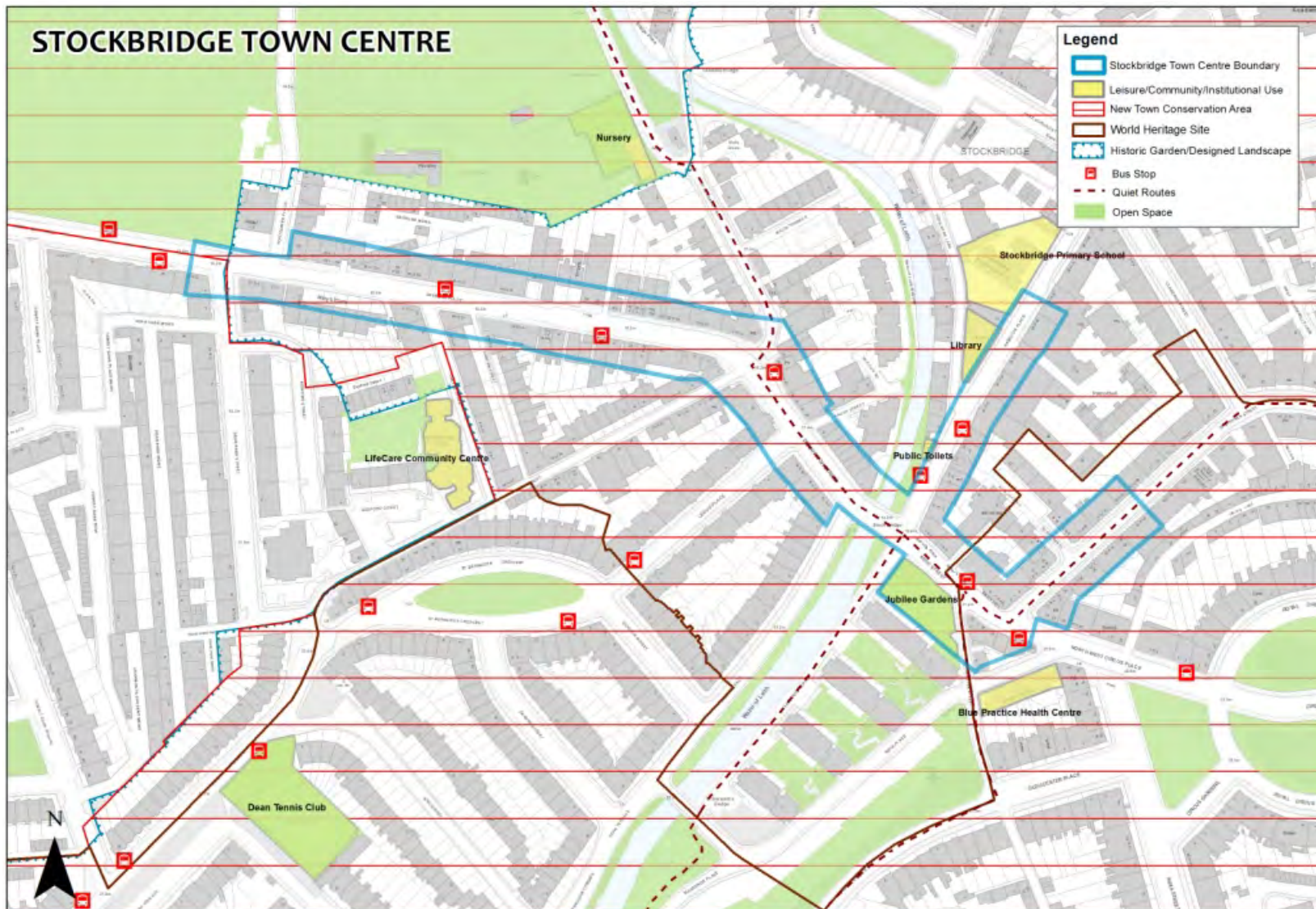
2. THE TOWN CENTRE

Stockbridge Town Centre is located north of the city centre. As illustrated in map 1 overleaf, it starts at the junction of St Stephen Street and Kerr Street, and continues along Raeburn Place, taking in side streets such as Hamilton Place. The historical expansion of the New Town from around 1813 increased the demand for property, leading to the incremental replacement and development of Stockbridge village. Despite such historical changes, Stockbridge has retained much of its village character and atmosphere, comprising of small shop units and a variety of house types including low rise colonies and terraces. For this reason, it is not quite as densely populated as some of the other town centres (approx 5,000 people within a walking distance of approximately 400m).

The area has a number of listed buildings. Being within close proximity to the Water of Leith, there are also a number of prominent historical buildings and features of interest. The Town Centre itself lies within the New Town Conservation Area and the New Towns Garden and Dean Historic Garden/Designed Landscape Inventory Site. The southern part of the Town Centre along St Stephen Street, is located within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site. The World Heritage Management Plan is under review. Within these designations, specific LDP policies apply to protect and enhance the appearance and setting of the city.

It is a diverse friendly Town Centre with a village identity, supported by a community council. Jubilee Gardens is located within the Town Centre, home to the popular Stockbridge Market; a central meeting place for public life every Tuesday and Sunday. The average number of pedestrians observed per day from the public life street assessment was found to be lower than some of the other town centres. Stockbridge is smaller in size, with fewer people to draw on for local shopping needs, and by its location adjacent to the Water of Leith, it successfully performs the role of both leisure and shopping destination.

Map 1: Stockbridge

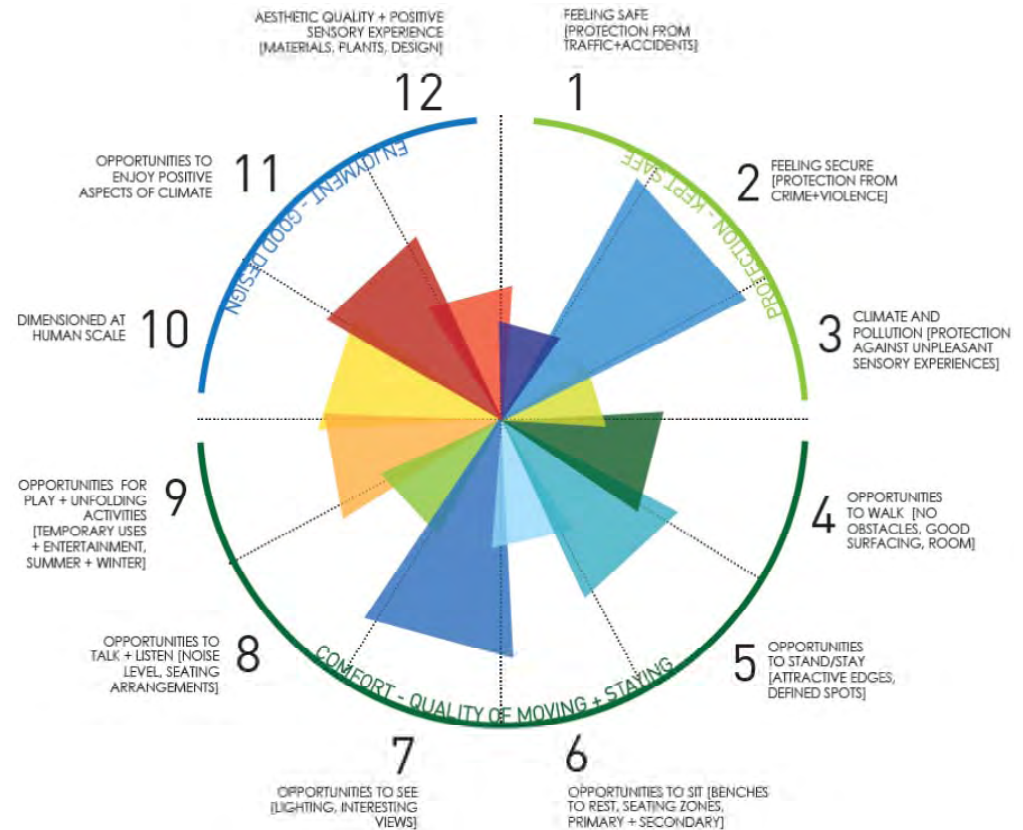


KEY FINDINGS

A health check has been carried out to assess the Town Centre’s strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience. To assess how the Town Centre functions in terms of pedestrian and cyclist movement and as a place to visit, a study called a public life street assessment has also been undertaken. This study used a mixture of techniques, including direct observation (pedestrian counts, behavioural mapping and tracing studies), user interviews and land use surveys.

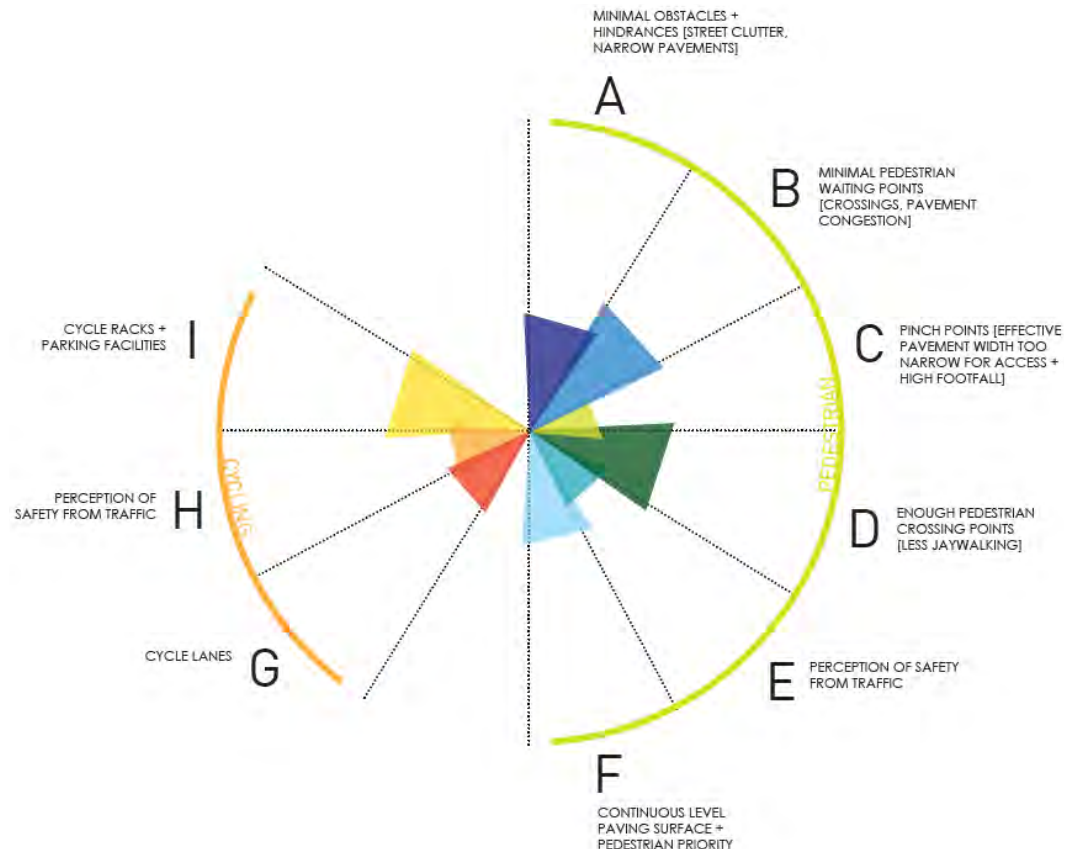
Place

The place function was assessed against 12 quality criteria. Stockbridge had mixed results in terms of place function. The town centre scored highly for opportunities to see and protection from crime and violence. The diversity of small scale shops also provide visual interest and a desire to stop and stay. It scored less well for other qualities, including aesthetic quality, perception of safety from traffic, and protection against climate and pollution. The biggest hindrance is the prioritisation of vehicles and narrow corner pavements, as well as the prominence of parked cars, risk of traffic to cyclists/pedestrians and limited opportunities to sit often restricting people’s desire to stop and stay, and talk and listen.



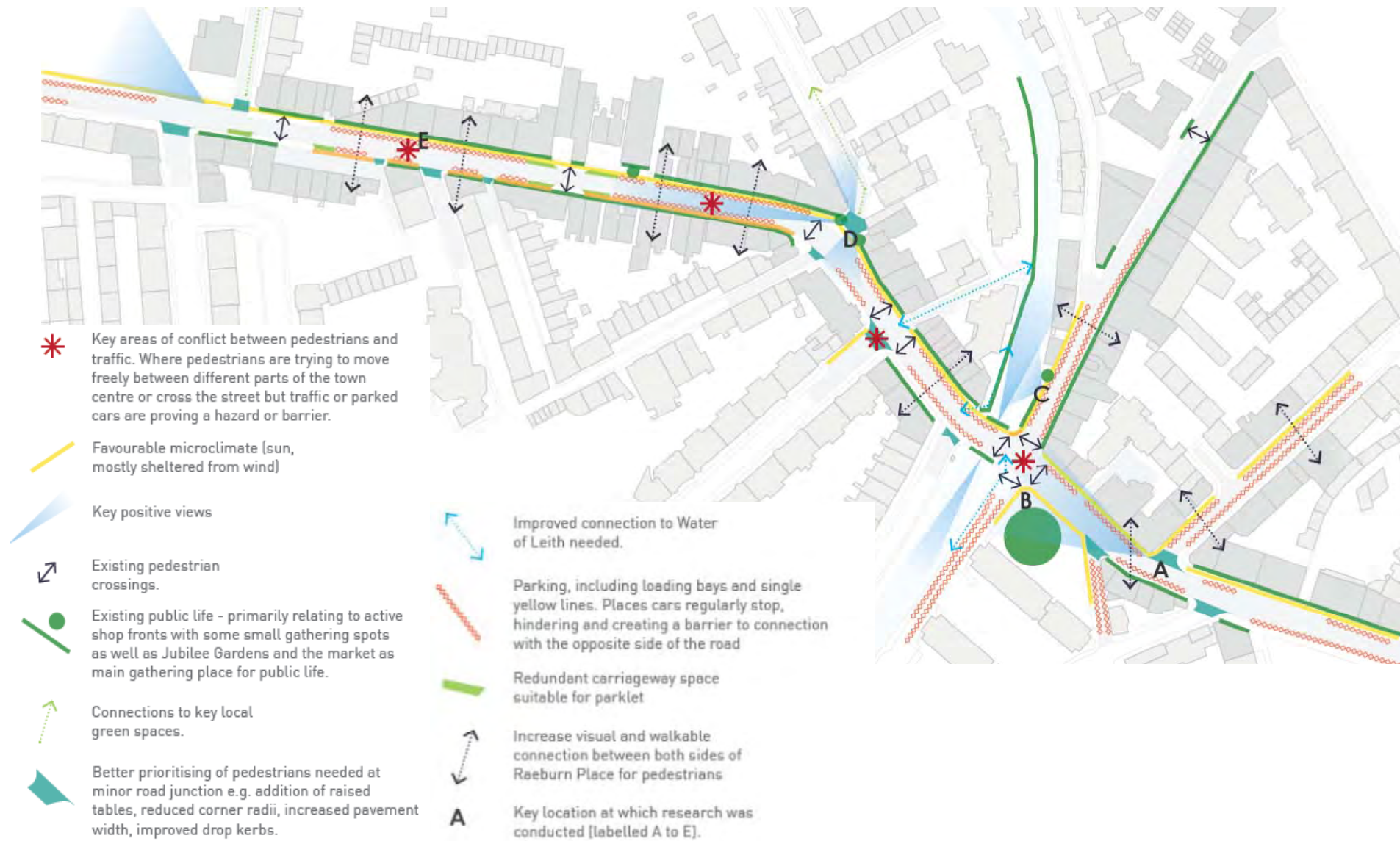
Pedestrian movement

Stockbridge scored very low for most aspects of pedestrian and cyclist movement, despite cycle routes passing through. A key issue relates to perceptions of safety from traffic. These low scores are the result of narrow pavements, pinch points, street clutter, unlevel paving surfaces, a lack of pedestrian priority and a lack of dedicated cycle lanes. Medium scores were found for minimum pedestrian waiting points, enough pedestrian crossing points and cycle racks. These elements scored better due to slightly improved pedestrian walking conditions along the north side of Raeburn Place.



Overview map

The analysis diagram overleaf taken from the public life street assessment has been compiled based on a synthesis of researcher observations and diaries, sub studies by the research team and analysis of the data collected from test walks and direct observation at key locations.



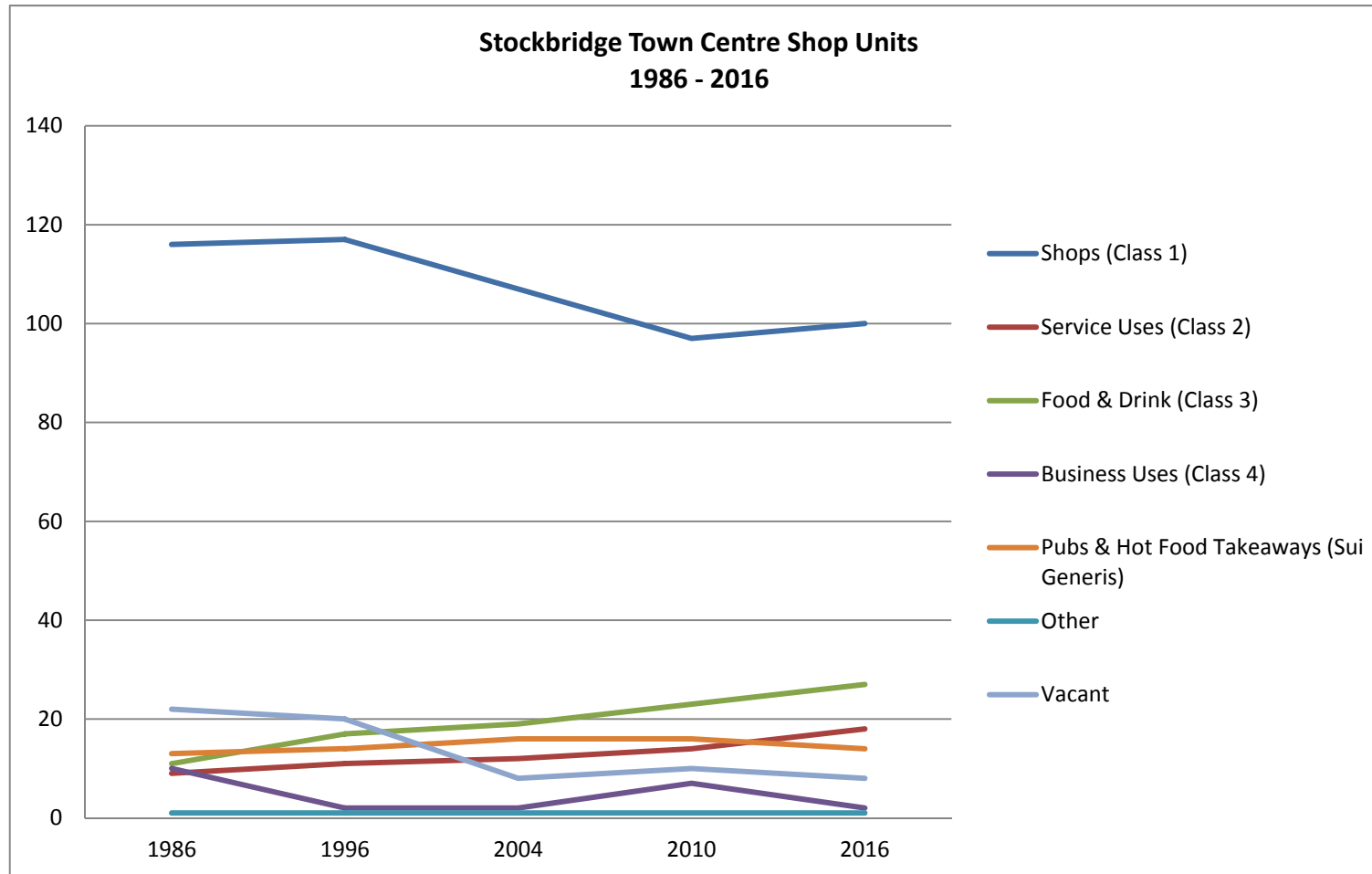
Shops and other town centre uses

Stockbridge Town Centre consists of a mix of mostly smaller shops and eating places. There are also two small supermarket sized units. Similar to Edinburgh's other town centres, the shops and other uses are predominantly located in ground floor units under traditional tenements. The exceptions to this are Raeburn Place where single storey projections from terraces are common, and the northern side of Deanhaugh Street, where the majority of the units are single storey in height with no residential above.

Where a unit is used as a shop it is necessary to get planning permission from the Council to change to another use. However, the planning system has limited control over what shops sell or which company occupies a shop. National retailers are commonplace, particularly along sections of Deanhaugh Street and Raeburn Place. There are also a number of high-end independent specialist operators within the Town Centre. These are particularly concentrated towards the southern end of the Town Centre, along streets such as St Stephen Street. Cafes and restaurants are well represented and spread out fairly evenly throughout the town centre, resulting in a well distributed level of active evening uses. The area is also well served by services such as hairdressers, pharmacies, a post office, a bank, an opticians, and repair shops. There are no dentists or doctors within the town centre boundary itself, but are located within the surrounding area.

The mix of uses has been monitored in city-wide shop surveys periodically undertaken since 1986. As identified in the chart below, the survey shows a steady decline in class 1 (retail) use and subsequent increase in other uses since 1986. It also shows a decrease in the vacancy rates, with a slight increase in 2010. The current vacancy rate is 5%, which is below the 2015 Edinburgh average of 7% and significantly below the national average which is between 9 and 13%. Overall, the proportion of units in shop use has fallen to 58% from 64% in 1986. This is a trend which is evident across other town centres. Within those units used as shops there has been a decline in the number of butchers, bakers, fishmongers, and grocers. There has also been a significant increase in the number of charity shops; 15 in 2016, compared with only 5 in 1986. The proportion of units in use for professional

services such as opticians, banks, solicitors, beauty salons has increased from 5% in 1986 to 11% in 2016. The proportion of units in business use (class 4) has declined over the period between 1986 and 2016; 1% of units were in this category at 2016, compared to 5% in 1986. There has been an increase in the proportion of units in use as cafes and restaurants from 6% in 1986 to 16% in 2016.



Notwithstanding the number of shop uses, the area also benefits from having some community, leisure and public uses located within and in close proximity, such as Water of Leith, Botanic Gardens, Inverleith Park, Edinburgh Academicals Sport Ground, Stockbridge Library, Stockbridge Market and LifeCare Community Centre. Employment in Stockbridge Town Centre is relatively high at 1,200. Re-letting potential is also high. Rents have increased or remained stable over recent years. The retail rent (2 years ending September 2015) is £24/sq ft; the highest of all eight town centres outside the city centre.

Physical structure

Stockbridge is a compact, non-linear Town Centre which enables more of a nucleus of activity and identity. There is a positive architectural and historic character with many features and assets of interest within the Town Centre itself and the wider area, for example the Water of Leith, Old Stockbridge Meat Market and the Stock Bridge. The condition of most buildings and features within the Town Centre is good. Where buildings have been traditionally constructed from stone they are generally in good condition.

The public life street assessment found that overall, Stockbridge Town Centre could, with its older facade structure and great diversity of high quality frontages, be considered as having almost exclusively active facades compared to the other town centres. There is rich detailing in the Town Centre with potted plants along the facades and awnings extending shops into the street, all adding to the village atmosphere. There are, however, few trees and soft landscaping within the public realm, with the exception of the Water of Leith.

SWOT analysis

The overall analysis is summarised here in a SWOT analysis of the town centre.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Compact non-linear town centre provides for a friendly village atmosphere and strong sense of community	Narrow pavements and prevalence of bollards hinder pedestrian movement	Make the connection clearer to the Water of Leith to enhance wayfinding.	Heavy traffic at weekday rush hour
Nearby parks, walking routes and green space	Priority of vehicles over pedestrians, cyclists and place function.	Remove bollards	Perception of drivers is that it is an arterial route rather than a place for people.
Jubilee Gardens and Stockbridge Market act as a central meeting place for public life	Parking has been prioritised throughout the town centre	Extend the public realm at key points along the Town Centre, for example at the entrance to Bernard’s Row.	Resistance from businesses/residents to reduce parking.
Low vacancy rate and diverse mix of shops and services	Lack of cycle facilities including dedicated cycle lanes and enough cycle parking.		
Positive architectural and historic character and features of interest			
Good public transport			

Current health

The overall analysis from the public life street assessment and shop survey is summarised in the above SWOT analysis of the town centre. A decline in the number of units in retail use is evident, however, this reflects trends across all town centres. Just over half of the shop units in the Town Centre are still in retail use, and the vacancy rate is low, indicating a relatively healthy centre overall.

3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The public life street assessment and health check highlight areas for improvement in the Town Centre, particularly relating to the movement and place function. In common with other town centres, there is great potential to improve the movement and place function of Stockbridge Town Centre. The vision for Stockbridge is to;

- increase the relative importance of pedestrian and cycle movement, whilst recognising the importance of Raeburn Place and Deanhaugh Street as important through traffic routes;
- promote and facilitate staying times by enhancing the character, identity, visual interest and comfort; and
- ensure a mix of uses to meet the needs and demands of the population.

The Supplementary Guidance goes some way to achieve the wider vision through the following 10 principles, which should be considered when submitting and assessing a planning application for a change of use within Stockbridge Town Centre;

1. Supporting high quality shopfront design (see the Council's Guidance for Businesses and Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Guidance for details).
2. Ensuring active frontages to the street by permitting glazing which will allow for natural surveillance, visual interest on the street and encourage street users to stay. This may also prohibit the change of use from shop use to residential in ground floor units.
3. Supporting outdoor seating where pavements are wider and micro-climate is favourable, for example the junction of Raeburn Place and St Bernard's Row.
4. Supporting class 3 food and drink uses on corner units where there is an opportunity to activate the public street life.
5. Maximising opportunities for formal and informal outdoor seating incorporating shelter in the form of trees, planters or shop front awnings at key points along the town centre.

6. Ensuring development makes a positive contribution to the public realm by meeting the Street Design Guidance and Edinburgh Design Guidance.
7. Incorporating and enhancing natural and built features where they can contribute positively to the Town Centre, for example the Water of Leith.
8. Supporting additional cycle parking facilities at key points along the Town Centre.
9. Taking opportunities to remove street clutter and other redundant items identified in any relevant street audits prepared by the Council or Living Streets.
10. Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for storage of waste, internally and externally.

A number of other programmes and plans have the potential to address some of the other issues highlighted in the public life street assessment:

- A bus shelter replacement programme has recently taken place, including replacement bus shelters with advertising panels in the town centre. Future replacement programmes will present an opportunity to improve placement of shelters.
- A review of Conservation Area Character Appraisals is underway. Appraisals are intended to manage change and set out opportunities for enhancement.
- The World Heritage Site Management Plan is currently under review.
- Road and Footway Investment – Capital Programme
- The Council's Wayfinding Project. This could improve navigation, wayfinding and appreciation of assets such as Water of Leith.

- A locality based approach to service delivery operates in Edinburgh. The town centre is within the North West Locality. Locality Improvement Plans are currently being prepared and are due to be in place by October 2017. These will set out the future priorities for the area and consider opportunities to enhance the local sense of identity and belonging.
- QuietRoutes – Edinburgh’s local walking and cycling routes.
- Stockbridge will introduce a 20mph speed limit at the end of February 2017. Reduced traffic speed will improve the sense of security for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The Town Centre has also benefitted from the [trade waste policy](#) that only allows trade waste to be presented on the street/outside premises for one-hour within set collection windows.

4. CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY

The Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) defines the boundary of Stockbridge Town Centre within which Policy Ret 9 and this draft Supplementary Guidance applies. Paragraph 261 of the LDP states that supplementary guidance may recommend changes to the Town Centre boundary to be included in the next LDP. It is considered that there is the potential to include:

- The ground floor units proposed as part of the new Accie’s development along the north side of Raeburn Place; and
- The units on the north side of North West Circus Place (1-8).

PREVIOUS APPROACH

The policy approach set out in the Edinburgh City Local Plan (ECLP) (now superseded by the LDP) was to restrict changes of use in shop units within identified ‘frontages’. The ECLP identified three ‘primary frontages’, within which the change of use to a non-shop use was only permitted where no more than one third of all units would be in non-shop use and it would not result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses. Using the 2016 shop survey, the percentage of non-shop uses in each of the frontages defined in the ECLP is shown in the table below.

Frontage defined in ECLP	% of frontage in non-shop use	Number of vacant units
4 to 102 Raeburn Place	25%	0
1 to 47 Deanhaugh Street	31%	1
1 to 77 Raeburn Place	25%	1

Based on the shop survey carried out in 2016, none of the frontages defined in the ECLP exceed the threshold of no more than one third (33%) of shop units in non-retail use. Vacancy rates within these frontages are also low. Outwith the frontages defined above, 45% are in non-shop use, still leaving the remainder of the Town Centre in majority shop use.

PROPOSED APPROACH

This Supplementary Guidance proposes to retain a 'frontage' approach to ensure that a minimum percentage of units are retained in shop use to meet the basic shopping needs of the local population. The identification of frontages will assist in ensuring distribution of retail facilities throughout the centre to provide for the needs of the local population.

It is proposed that all frontages are retained, as it is considered that they each perform an important retail function. The remainder of the Town Centre outwith these frontages provide for more speciality shopping needs. For these reasons, the Supplementary Guidance does not propose that any of the frontages are removed or no new ones are added.

The proposed approach also removes the need to assess the change of use against whether it will result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses, and in doing so, provides greater flexibility in where non-shop uses can be located within the frontage, so long as the overall percentage of non-shop use remains under 33%.

CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

Changing a shop to a non-shop use will always require planning permission. Some other changes of use are permitted development, for example, a cafe (Class 3) being turned into a shop unit (Class 1). The Scottish Government Circular 1/1998 contains guidance on use classes.

The two draft policies below (**Policy S1 and Policy S2**) set out when a shop unit can change from a shop use to a non-shop use.

Policy STC 1 – Alternative Use of Shop Units in Defined Frontages

In the frontages defined in the table below (Map 2), the change of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will be permitted provided:

- a) as a result of permitting the change of use, **no more than one third** of the total number of units in the frontage will be in non-shop use; and
- b) the proposal is for an appropriate commercial or community use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

Frontages
4 - 102 Raeburn Place
1 - 47 Deanhaugh Street
1 – 77 Raeburn Place

Justification

The identification of frontages provides a focus for retail use within the town centre. This policy continues this focus by protecting the areas where there is an identified concentration of retail use. These frontages are below the 33% non-shop use threshold, meaning that there is still potential for other uses to locate here should there be demand. To ensure continued protection of core retail within these frontages, the draft Supplementary Guidance proposes to continue this threshold, which still allows for a diverse mix of other appropriate uses. This is critical to the continued health of the Town Centre.

This policy also removes the need to assess the change of use against whether it will result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses, and in doing so, provides greater flexibility in where non-shop uses can be located within the frontage, so long as the overall percentage of non-shop use remains under 33%.

Policy STC 2 – Alternative Use of Shop Units – Elsewhere

For those locations not within a designated Frontage, but elsewhere within the Town Centre boundary, a change of use from a shop to a non-shop use will be permitted provided a proposal is:

- Class 2 – financial, professional or other services
- Class 3 – food and drink uses
- An appropriate commercial, community or leisure use which would complement the character of the centre, support the main shopping function, and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

Justification

Frontages are used to ensure that a minimum percentage of units are retained in shop use to meet the basic shopping needs and provision of the local population. Outwith the areas defined in Policy S1 and S2, there are a wide range of uses. This policy will provide a flexible approach which will allow appropriate uses, whilst accepting that retailing and the role of town centres are changing, to ensure vitality and viability of the town centre overall. This should allow for units to capitalise on the outdoor street spaces, improving the public realm and providing for an active public life, particularly at key nodes like St Bernard's Row.

Residential use

National planning policy states that planning for town centres should consider opportunities for promoting residential use where this fits with local need and demand. All of Edinburgh's town centres, including Stockbridge, have an already large residential

population despite the boundary being tightly drawn around the main concentrations of the shopping offer. For placemaking purposes it is important that ground floor uses help bring activity onto the street. Residential units at ground floor level tend to add little vitality to the town centre. Stockbridge already has a large population living within walking distance of the main shopping streets and within the town centre itself, changes from shop use to residential is not supported.

5. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

LDP POLICIES

Other relevant policies in the Edinburgh [Local Development Plan](#) include:

- Ret 1 Town Centres First
- Ret 3 Town Centres
- Ret 7 Entertainment and Leisure Developments
- Ret 11 Food and Drink Establishments
- Des 13 Shopfront
- Env 1 World Heritage Sites
- Env 3 Listed Buildings - Setting
- Env 4 Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions
- Env 5 Conservation Areas – Demolition of Buildings
- Env 6 Conservation Areas - Development

Policy Ret 3 generally supports shop uses in town centres. Policy Ret 7 supports leisure and entertainment facilities in town centres. Policies Ret 11 considers the impact on nearby residents for proposals such as public houses and hot-food takeaways. Des 13 supports improvements to shop fronts.

GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESSES

The document interprets policies in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan. It provides guidance to assist businesses in preparing applications to change the use of a property.

ONE-DOOR APPROACH

The One Door Approach to Development Consents aims to give the customer all the information they need at the start of the development process. Food and drink, public house and hot-food takeaway uses will often require other consents and are subject to separate controls by licensing for:

- [Alcohol](#)
- [Hours of operation](#)
- [Outdoor pavement seating](#)

For more information on these, see the Council's website on the [One Door Approach](#) to development consents, the [Council's Guidance for Businesses](#) or contact the [Business Gateway](#).

EDINBURGH STREET DESIGN GUIDANCE

[Edinburgh's new Street Design Guidance](#) brings together previously separate CEC guidance on street design to achieve coherence and co-ordination across the city, with the ultimate goal of providing the people of Edinburgh with a world-class network of vibrant, safe, attractive, effective and enjoyable streets. The guidance will apply to a range of Council services who manage streets for various purposes.

EDINBURGH DESIGN GUIDANCE

The [Edinburgh Design Guidance](#) sets out the Council's expectations for the design of new development in Edinburgh. The guidance is intended for all new buildings and should be used as a point of reference, a basis for the planning, design and communication of new development proposals and a material consideration in assessing planning applications. It aims to provide guidance on how to comply with the policies in the local plans, explain the key ideas which need to be considered during the design

process, give examples of good quality design, and set out the requirements for design and access statements. The guidance is currently under review.

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Conservation Area Character Appraisals help to manage change in a conservation area. They describe what is special about each conservation area. They help in making decisions on proposals that affect the area's special character. The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal covers Stockbridge.

WORLD HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

There is a management plan for the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage site which covers the period 2011-2016. UNESCO requires every World Heritage Site to have a plan which says how the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the site will be protected. OUV is the collection of things which make the area special. The management plan informs a separate action plan. The management plan is currently being reviewed.

6. DEFINITIONS

Class 1 shop use - A unit used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public, for example, post office, sale of tickets, cold food for consumption off the premises, and hairdressing. This is further defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997.

Shop unit - As defined in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016), a shop unit is a premises accessed directly onto the street and designed primarily for shop use.

Non-shop uses - Changing a shop to a non-shop use is known as a 'change of use' and will always require planning permission. Examples of non-shop uses are:

- **Class 2 Service Uses** – e.g. lawyers, accountants, estate agents, health centres, tanning salons and pawn brokers.
- **Class 3 Food and Drink** (consumed on premises) – e.g. restaurant, cafe, snack bar (not a public house or hot food take-away).
- **Class 4 Business Use** – general office, light industry or research and development, which can be carried out without detriment to the amenity of any residential area.
- Betting shops, pay day loan shops, pubs and hot food takeaways are classified as **Sui Generis**.
- **Commercial Use** – e.g. Office
- **Community Use** – e.g. Social and cultural activities
- **Leisure Use** – e.g. Cinema and gymnasium

Some changes of use are permitted development, for example, a cafe (Class 3) being turned into a shop unit (Class 1). The Scottish Government Circular 1/1998 contains guidance on use classes.

MAP 2: FRONTAGES

