

## **PEMBERTON TOWN CENTRE**

### **General Description of Pemberton Town Centre**

- PEM.01 Pemberton is located in the west of the Borough, approximately two miles from Wigan Town Centre. The local area is predominantly made up of privately owned homes and local authority maintained housing, including Worsley Mesnes, Norley Hall, Marsh Green, Kitt Green and Pemberton itself. It adjoins the district of Orrell to form a continuous residential area.
- PEM.02 The adopted Wigan UDP defines Pemberton as a town centre in retail terms. The defined Town Centre is predominately linear in form, stretching along the A577, from Orrell Road at the junction with Loch Street in the west and Ormskirk Road at the junction with Major Street to the east. A Principal Shopping Area is also defined which comprises Ormskirk Road from the junction with Pigot Street to the west to the junction with Gore Street in the east.

### **Diversity of Uses**

- PEM.03 In January 2007 WYG undertook a survey of all retail units in Pemberton Town Centre, based on the boundary defined in the Wigan UDP. The results of the survey were then categorised on the basis of use, using categories defined by GOAD. This enables comparisons to be made with the national average for UK Town Centres at January 2007, as recorded by GOAD. The diversity of uses present in Pemberton are shown in Figure PEM.1. Unfortunately no comparison can be drawn with the results of the previous retail study in 2001. This is because in 2001 the Pemberton and Newtown areas were surveyed together and the results combined, as whilst in 2007 it is only Pemberton itself which has been surveyed. This is a result of the change in designation of centres in the Borough through the Wigan

UDP review. The floorspace figures shown are based on the building footprint at ground-floor level only.

**Figure PEM.1 Retail Composition of Pemberton Town Centre, 2007**

Sector	No. of Outlets	% of Outlets		Floorspace (sq. m)	% of Floorspace	
		Pemberton	GB		Pemberton	GB
Convenience	11	12.09	8.46	1,321	13.37	13.72
Comparison	31	34.07	36.67	3,485	35.26	39.53
Retail Service	13	14.29	12.70	1,206	12.20	6.98
Leisure Services	17	18.68	20.88	2,085	21.09	22.51
Financial & Business Services	10	10.99	11.62	1,086	10.99	9.26
Vacant	9	9.89	9.67	701	7.09	8.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9,884</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: WYG (2007)

PEM.04 At January 2007 convenience units in Pemberton occupied 12.1% of total commercial units, which is significantly above the GOAD national average of 8.5%. With regard to the proportion of floorspace 13.4% is in use for convenience retail purposes which compares to a national average of 13.7%. As such the town centre is adequately provided for in convenience retailing terms. The town centre contains two small supermarkets; Tesco Express and Costcutter are both situated on Ormskirk Road. Additionally in the convenience sector Pemberton contains three CTN (Confectionary, Tobacco and News) traders, two bakers, one butcher, one greengrocer, one off licence and one shoe repairers.

PEM.05 In terms of the comparison sector, 34.1% of retail units and 35.3% of retail floorspace are in use by comparison traders, which compares to respective national averages of 36.7% and 39.5%. Whilst this would suggest that comparison retailing is under-provided in Pemberton, due to the size of the Town Centre it would not be expected to have a large comparison sector. The comparison sector in Pemberton is dominated by independent operators. From analysis of the more detailed category of uses recorded by the WYG survey (**Appendix 7**) it is evident that Pemberton contains representation from a broad range of comparison retailers in a range of sub-categories, indicating that the centre does adequately meet the needs of its catchment population. It should be

noted however that the centre does not contain a single chemist or drugstore unit.

PEM.06 Retail services, as defined by GOAD, constitute such services such as dry cleaners, vehicle repairers and hairdressers. The retail service sector in Pemberton is well provided for, with both the proportion of retail service units (14.3%) and the proportion of floorspace occupied (12.2%) being above the national averages (12.7% and 7.0% respectively). In addition to the retail services recorded in the WYG site survey, Pemberton also contains a Post Office which is situated in the convenience store on Fleet Street.

PEM.07 With regard to the leisure service sector as derived from the 2007 survey, such uses occupied 18.7% of all retail units against a national average of 20.9%. In floorspace terms, leisure services accounted for 21.1% of all retail floorspace which is marginally below the national average of 22.5%. From more detailed analysis of this sub-category it is apparent that leisure representation is dominated by fast food and take away units (which includes sandwich bars), who represent eleven out of the seventeen leisure services traders (or 65%). Fast food and take away occupiers comprise 12.1% of all outlets and 8.3% of floorspace, both of which are above the national average for such units of 5.0% and 2.4% respectively, as recorded by GOAD. The centre contains just one restaurant and one public house.

PEM.08 Financial and business services account for 11.0% of all outlets in Pemberton compared to an average of 11.6%. With respect to floorspace, financial and business services represent some 11.0% of total retail floorspace against a national average of 9.3%. The town centre contains a number of retail banks: Royal Bank of Scotland; Natwest; and Lloyds TSB. There is also a Halifax Building Society. As such Pemberton is adequately served by outlets in this sector.

## Street Level Vacancies

- PEM.09 The proportion of vacant units within any centre can provide a good indication of how the town centre is performing. However, care should be taken when interpreting figures. Vacancies can occur for positive as well as negative reasons e.g. the opening of a new retail centre elsewhere in a town may draw retailers from older properties or more peripheral areas of the town. Vacant units will be found in even the strongest town centre and are simply an indicator of the natural rotation of occupancy and the level of demand in a centre. For example some properties may lay vacant because they are poorly maintained, unsuited to modern retailing requirements or simply not being actively marketed. Conversely a low vacancy rate does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing well. For example, if there is a proliferation of charity shops (which are low value uses in nay town centre) it may be a sign of decline, particularly where these uses are located in prime locations. Despite these issues, it is still a useful indicator of town centre performance.
- PEM.10 Figure PEM.1 indicates that at 2007 there were a total of 9 vacant units, which occupy 701 sq. m of floorspace. This equates to 9.9% of all outlets which is comparable to the national average of 9.7%. The proportion of vacant floorspace in the town centre (7.1%) is marginally below the national average (8.0%). Vacancies are located throughout the town centre and are all small units (up to 70 sq. m) except for one large vacancy, the former Old White Swan public house, which accounts for 277 sq. m of floorspace. However this unit is currently under renovation suggesting that it will soon be brought back into use. This will be beneficial for the town due to the highly visible location which this building occupies.

## Commercial Rents and Yields

PEM.11 There is no published data available on rents or yields achieved in Pemberton due to the size of the centre. Notwithstanding this Donaldson's estimate prime Zone A rents to be around £200/ sq m.

## Accessibility

PEM.12 Pemberton is a predominately linear centre situated on either side of the A577, which forms the major access route into Wigan from the west. The A577 connects to Junction 26 of the M6 and to the M58 located less than a mile to the west. As a result it is easily accessible by vehicular transport. Parking in the town centre consists of one large off-road



Figure PEM.3: Off-street parking

facility, located to the north of Ormskirk Road (Figure PEM.3), with several off-road spaces available on Church Street. These are well connected to the town centre. Parking in the centre is free and is signposted from the A577. Additional on-street parking is available on adjacent residential streets.

PEM.13 Pemberton benefits from a railway station which is situated approximately one mile to the south-east of the defined Town Centre on Billinge Road. The railway station links to Wigan and Manchester to the east and to Kirkby to the west. There is an hourly service Monday to Saturday daytime, both eastbound and westbound, but no service during the evenings and on Sundays.

PEM.14 Several major bus routes operate through the Town Centre, including numbers 352, 362, 375, 385, 622, 641 and 664. The night-bus (number 695) also serves the Town. These connect Pemberton to Wigan Town Centre and Skelmersdale and other local destinations. A

covered bus stop is located along Ormskirk Road with space provided for buses to pull off-road when loading and unloading passengers (Figure PEM.4).



Figure PEM.4: Ormskirk Road

PEM.15 Pavements around the town centre are adequately wide to enable easy pedestrian

movement, although much construction work is ongoing in the town centre, causing some temporary difficulties for pedestrians. The A577 itself is busy with vehicular traffic which can be intimidating for pedestrians, although the traffic is not generally fast moving. Pedestrian crossings linked to traffic lights are provided at various points throughout the centre.

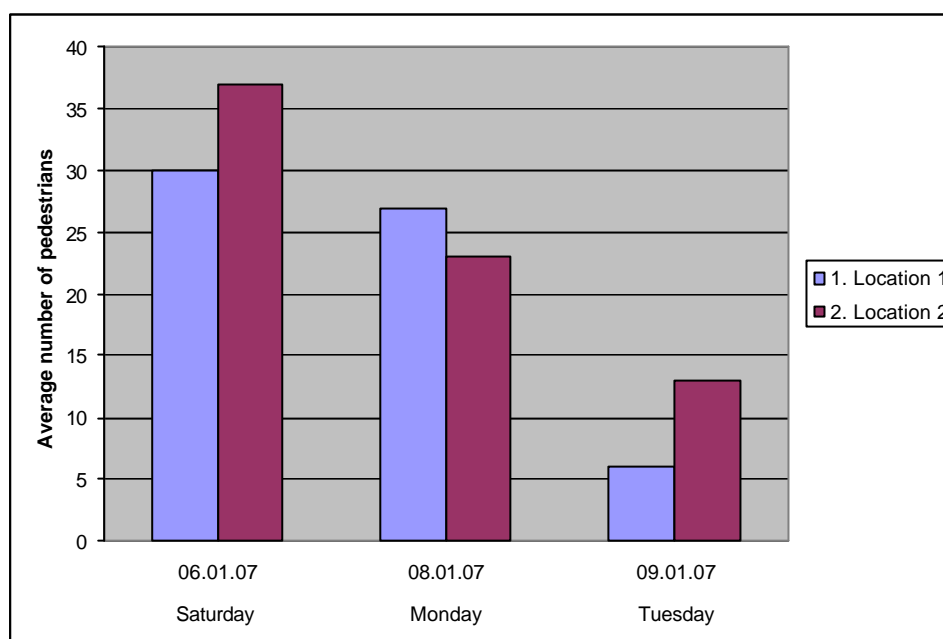
PEM.16 A more detailed analysis of pedestrian movement in Pemberton has been undertaken by NEMS Market Research Company. In January 2007 NEMS conducted a pedestrian survey in Pemberton. Two count points were used on Ormskirk Road: outside Gee Tees Discount Store (Location 1); and outside of Tesco Extra (Location 2). The number of passing pedestrians in both directions was counted over a five minute period at three points during the day: once in the morning (between 10.00 and 11.00), once at midday (between 12.00 and 13.00) and once in the afternoon (between 14.00 and 15.00). This process was repeated over three days: a Saturday (06.01.07), a Monday (08.01.07) and a Tuesday (09.01.07). The results were then indexed with the destination having the highest overall level of footfall being afforded a top score of 100, and the subsequent indexed footfall being calculated accordingly. Figures PEM.5 and PEM.6 below show the results obtained through this process.

**Figure PEM.5 Pemberton pedestrian count (average number of pedestrians recorded)**

Location	Date of count			Total Count	Total Index
	Saturday 06.01.07	Monday 08.01.07	Tuesday 09.01.07		
1. Location 1	30	27	6	64	87
2. Location 2	37	23	13	73	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: NEMS Market Research, 2007

**Figure PEM.6 Pemberton pedestrian count**



PEM.17 The pedestrian count indicates that out of the three days Saturday was busiest, with a score of 67 at the two locations combined. This compares to a score of 50 on Monday, and 19 on Tuesday. Overall, Figure PEM.5 demonstrates that Location 2 had the highest level of footfall with a cumulative score of 73 recorded over the three survey days compared to 64 recorded at Location 1. However, whilst Location 2 experienced the greater levels of footfall on both Saturday (06.01.07) and Tuesday (09.01.07), Location 1 recorded a higher level of footfall on the Monday (08.01.07)

PEM.18 The in-street survey undertaken by NEMS Market Research Company identified the following in respect of Pemberton:

- 65% of visitors surveyed in Pemberton had regular access to a car for personal use during the day and during the evening/ night;
- 43% of visitors reached the centre by car or van, with 30% arriving by bus, minibus or coach and 27% arrived on foot;
- Of those that drove to the centre, 31% parked on Church Street with a further 31% parking in-street. Other popular places to park included Howard Street (12%), Woodford Street (12%) and Enfield Street (8%);
- None of those surveyed indicated that they had encountered any difficulties in obtaining a car parking space;
- 47% of people travelled for 10 minutes or less to reach the centre, with a further 33% having travelled for between 11 and 20 minutes;
- A notable 45% of visitors rated accessibility by public transport to be either 'better' or 'much better' than other centres which they visited, with 38% deeming it to be 'about the same' as other centres; and
- 48% of visitors considered car parking provision in Pemberton to be either 'much better' or 'better' than in other shopping centres which they visited, with 23% considering it to be 'about the same'.

### **Perception of Safety and Occurrence of Crime**

PEM.19 The in-street survey undertaken by NEMS Market Research asked visitors about their perceptions of day-time and evening/ night-time safety in Pemberton. Day-time safety in Pemberton was considered by the majority of respondents (62%) to be 'about the same' as other shopping centres which they visited. However, 35% deemed day-time safety to be either 'better' or 'much better' in Pemberton than in other centres, with no residents whatsoever considering it to be either 'worse' or 'much worse' than in other centres. In respect of evening/ night-time safety 38% of visitors believed that this was 'about the same' in Pemberton as in other centres, although 32% deemed it to be either 'better' or 'much better' than in other centres. Compared to other

centres in Wigan, this is a good performance indicating that Pemberton is felt to be a safe town centre.

### **Customer Views and Behaviour**

PEM.20 The in-street survey revealed the following with regard to Pemberton:

- 85% of visitors travelled to the centre directly from home;
- 38% of those interviewed in Pemberton were visitors to the local area;
- A significant 70% of visitors indicated that they were in Pemberton to undertake food and grocery shopping;
- 45% of visitors planned to stay in the centre for up to half an hour, with a further 25% planning to stay for up to two hours. 22% of visitors planned to stay in Pemberton for half a day;
- Three-quarters of visitors (75%) frequented the centre at least once a week to carry out their main food and grocery shop;
- The majority of respondents (70%) indicated that they would not be undertaking their clothing and footwear shopping on the day of the survey. Of these, 52% last visited Wigan Town Centre for such purposes; and
- Most visitors (68%) stated that they visited the centre 'about as frequently' today when compared with five years ago.

PEM.21 Visitors were asked to compare Pemberton with other centres which they used in relation to a number of different aspects. Generally visitors indicated that different aspects, including cleanliness, choice and range of shops and the shopping environment, were 'about the same' as other centres. No aspects were rated as either 'better' or 'much better' or 'worse' or 'much worse' than other centres by a majority of visitors.

## Environmental Quality

PEM.22 In general, retail units in the Principal Shopping Area are well maintained. Units are generally two-stories in height with upper floors appearing to be used for office and residential purposes. However despite the high design quality of the area, the busy A577 running through the centre does



Figure PEM.7: Ormskirk Road

serve to detract from it, producing negative externalities of noise and pollution whilst serving as a barrier to pedestrian movement (Figure PEM.7). Traffic does tail back along Ormskirk Road in both directions.

PEM.23 Away from the Principal Shopping Areas units are still adequately maintained for the most part. Footfall in peripheral area, particularly the area retail area on Orrell Road to the west the Town Centre (Figure PEM.8), appeared to be significantly lower than that experienced in the Principal Shopping Area. There is no litter or graffiti evident in Pemberton.



Figure PEM.8: Orrell Road

PEM.24 There is considerable construction work underway in Pemberton at the current time, with a large number of apparent residential developments under construction along Ormskirk Road. At the present time this does serve to detract from the environmental quality of the area, although this is a somewhat unavoidable situation and in the long-term such developments should add to the town centres visual amenity. In addition, such developments will underpin the future of the centre by providing more customers for local shops and services.

## **Business Survey**

PEM.25 WYG in conjunction with Wigan Council distributed a business survey to all businesses within Pemberton. Through this process a total of 122 business surveys were delivered with 23 being returned: a response rate of 19%. The business survey found that:

- Most respondents (55%) had been trading in Pemberton for over ten years, with no respondents having been in operation for under one year;
- Non-food retailers comprised the greatest proportion (43%) of respondents. The remaining respondents were split between retail services (19%), professional services (19%), food retailers (14%) and leisure services (5%);
- 91% of businesses in Pemberton had always operated from the town centre;
- A little over half of respondents (55%) indicated that their business had 'grown moderately' since start-up;
- When asked to rate current trading performance, 55% of respondents stated that they were trading 'moderately';
- 61% of traders leased their premises, with 39% being owner occupiers;
- Respondents employed a total of 173 people: 58% on a part-time and 42% full-time;
- Local respondents were relied upon by 55% of respondents as their primary source of business;
- 65% of respondents considered Pemberton to have a good balance between shops and other non-retail uses;
- The main constraints on business performance were deemed to be high rents/ overheads which 16% of respondents registered as their biggest constraint. This was followed by competition from elsewhere (14%) and lack of footfall outside premises (13%);
- 42% of respondents had no plans to alter their business in any way

over the next five years, a further 17% planned to relocate in the town centre and 17% planned to refurbish their existing process; and

- Wigan was considered to be their main competitor by the greatest proportion of respondents (39%).

PEM.26 Respondents were asked to rate the town centre in a number of different areas. Access by public transport was considered by over half of respondents (61%) as being good, although the majority of respondents considered the following aspects as being 'poor': public toilets (77%), town centre police presence (70%), security/ CCTV coverage (57%), marketing and promotion (57%), public seating/ litter bins (52%) and traffic congestion (52%). Respondents were also asked to consider a range of measures to improve the town centre. Most measures were seen to be beneficial for the town centre, with the most popular measures being quantity of parking spaces, which 93% of respondents felt would improve the centre, followed by reduced traffic congestion (89%) and greater town centre police presence (84%).

### **Conclusions on Vitality and Viability**

PEM.27 Pemberton has been shown to be a healthy centre. The proportion of floorspace occupied by retail services and financial and business services is above the national average; whilst the proportion of convenience floorspace, comparison floorspace and leisure service floorspace are only slightly below the national average. Vacant floorspace is also below the national average. The town contains a good mix of traders, and is easily accessible by public transport and by private car. Pedestrian movement around the centre is relatively unproblematic, although the large volumes of traffic do have the potential to create vehicular/ pedestrian conflict. Furthermore the A577 which runs through the centre is frequently congested, which does detract from the environmental quality of the centre.

## **STANDISH TOWN CENTRE**

### **General Description of Standish Town Centre**

- STA.01 Standish is a former mining and market village in the north-west of the Borough. It is located between Wigan, which is four miles to the south, and Chorley situated approximately four miles to the north.
- STA.02 The Town Centre of Standish is defined by Policy S1B of the adopted Wigan UDP. This consists of Pole Street and Market Street together with parts of High Street, School Lane and Preston Road. A Principal Shopping Area is also defined (under Policy S1A) which comprises the Somerfield supermarket and part of Preston Road and High Street. Much of the Town Centre is also designated as a Conservation Area.

### **Diversity of Uses**

- STA.03 WYG has undertaken a site survey of the defined Town Centre to establish the diversity of uses present (**Appendix 7**). The size of retail units is determined using the ProMap mapping system which measures the footprint of buildings and gross floorspace. The results obtained have been grouped on the basis of the GOAD categorisation of town centre uses, and have been compared to the national average for UK town centres at 2007. It should be noted that the UDP town centre boundaries have changed since 2001, and so the information contained in Figure STA.2 is included for indicative purposes only. The floorspace figures shown are based on the building footprint at ground-floor level only.

**Figure STA.1 Retail Composition of Standish Town Centre, 2007**

Sector	No. of Outlets	% of Outlets		Floorspace (sq. m)	% of Floorspace	
		Standish	GB		Standish	GB
Convenience	4	5.48	8.46	2,524	31.18	13.72
Comparison	22	30.14	36.67	1,225	15.13	39.53
Retail Service	14	19.18	12.70	1,084	13.39	6.98
Leisure Services	15	20.55	20.88	1,869	23.09	22.51
Financial & Business Services	9	12.33	11.62	798	9.86	9.26
Vacant	9	12.33	9.67	594	7.34	8.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8,094</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: WYG (2007)

**Figure STA.2 Retail Composition of Standish Town Centre, 2001**

Sector	No. of Outlets	% of Outlets	Change (2001-2007)
Convenience	6	8.96	-0.50
Comparison	18	26.87	+9.80
Service (A1)	13	19.40	-0.22
Vacant	7	10.45	+1.88
Other (inc. A2/A3)	23	34.33	-1.45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Wigan Council- Town Centre Surveys (2001)

STA.04 The centre survey indicates that 5.5% of commercial outlets in Standish were in use for convenience trading purposes, which is below the national average of 8.5%. Notwithstanding this, convenience floorspace represents 31.2% of floorspace compared with 13.7% nationally. Convenience trading in Standish is dominated by the Somerfield supermarket on School Lane, which occupies a floorspace of 1,551 sq. m or 19% of total retail floorspace in the centre. Other convenience retailers in the town centre are Spar, a Co-op and a health food store. Figure STA.2 indicates that since 2001 the number of convenience units has declined by 2 units (or 33%).

STA.05 Figure STA.1 illustrates that in Standish 30.1% of units and 15.1% of floorspace are in use for comparison retailing, which compares with national averages of 36.7% and 39.5% respectively. As such, comparison trading is somewhat under-provided for in the town centre, although this is not unexpected given the size of the centre. A broad range of comparison goods are sold in the town centre. Since 2001 the number of comparison outlets has increased by four, a rise of 22%.

- STA.06 Retail services in Standish are well represented, occupying 19.2% of all units compared with a national average of 12.7%; 13.4% of total floorspace against 7.0% nationwide. This sector is dominated by 'health and beauty' traders which comprise uses such as hairdressers, nail salons and tanning salons, occupying 10 units out of the 14 in this category. A Post Office is also situated within the Town Centre in the Co-op convenience store on Pole Street. Between 2001 and 2007 the number of retail service units has increased by one.
- STA.07 Leisure services as defined by GOAD comprise such uses as restaurants, cafes and public houses. Such uses are adequately provided for in Standish, with this category representing 20.6% of all units and 23.1% of all outlets, against national averages of 20.9% and 22.5% respectively. Included in this category are eight 'fast food & take away' units (which includes sandwich bars), three 'casino & betting offices', and one each of: 'cafes'; 'clubs'; 'public houses'; and 'restaurants'.
- STA.08 In the financial and business service sector, both the proportion of units occupied (12.3%) and the proportion of floorspace (9.9%) in use for such purposes are above the national average (11.6% and 9.3% respectively). The town centre is well served by banks and building societies, comprising: Bradford and Bingley; Halifax; Lloyds TSB; Natwest; and Royal Bank of Scotland.
- STA.09 Comparing the total number of financial and business service sector and the leisure service sector outlets (24) at 2007 with the number of 'other' uses art 2001 (23), it can be seen that Standish has experienced little change in this sector.
- STA.10 Overall, comparing Figure STA.1 and Figure STA.2 it can be seen that between 2001 and 2007 the total number of commercial outlets has increase by six (or 9%). In addition to the retailing facilities on offer within the town centre, it contains a number of office units within the

Standish Centre located off Cross Street. Standish library is situated just outside the town centre boundary on Cross Street. Retailing in the town centre is dominated by independent traders.

### **Street Level Vacancies**

- STA.11 The proportion of vacant units within any centre can provide a good indication of how the town centre is performing. However, care should be taken when interpreting figures. Vacancies can occur for positive as well as negative reasons e.g. the opening of a new retail centre elsewhere in a town may draw retailers from older properties or more peripheral areas of the town. Vacant units will be found in even the strongest town centre and are simply an indicator of the level of demand in a centre. For example some properties may lay vacant because they are poorly maintained, unsuited to modern retailing requirements or simply not being actively marketed. Conversely a low vacancy rate does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing well. For example, if there is a proliferation of charity shops and other low value uses it may be a sign of decline, particularly where these uses are located in prime locations. Despite these issues, it is still a useful indicator of town centre performance.
- STA.12 At 2007 nine units in Standish Town Centre were vacant, which accounted for 594 sq. m of floorspace. As such 12.3% of all units were vacant, above the national average of 9.7%, whilst 7.3% of floorspace was vacant compared to a national average of 8.0%. Vacancies are scattered throughout the town centre, although along Market Street there is a concentration of three adjacent vacant units. Most vacant units are small (below 60 sq. m), with the largest being the recently vacated former HSBC outlet on High Street, which is 127 sq. m. Figure STA.2 indicates that since 2001 the number of vacant units has increase by two (or 29%), whilst the proportion of vacant units has increased by 1.9 percentage points.

## Commercial Rents and Yields

- STA.13 There is no published data available on yields achieved in Standish due to the size of the centre, although Donaldson's indicate rents to be around £200/ sq m (at 2005).

## Accessibility

- STA.14 Standish is situated at the intersection of four roads: Preston Road; High Street; Market Street; and School Lane. Preston Road and High Street (Figure STA.3) run north to south and form the A49 which connects directly to Wigan Town Centre. School Lane forms part of the A5209 which links to



Figure STA.3: High Street

Junction 27 of the M6, some 2 miles to the west of Standish. It is also close to the M58. As such, it is easily accessibility by vehicular transport.

- STA.15 The largest car parking facility in Standish is situated adjacent to the Somerfield supermarket and offers free parking for customers for up to two hours. An additional off-road car park is located on School Lane, provided free for customers of nearby businesses, whilst the Labour Club on Pole Street also has a dedicated car park. Several other parking spaces are provided around the town centre, including outside the Co-op store and outside the Standish Centre, whilst limited in-street parking is available.
- STA.16 Regular bus services run through Standish connecting it to nearby towns including Wigan, Shevington, Worthington and Chorley and other local destinations. Services which operate through the town centre include numbers 113, 362, 635, 638, 639, 640 and 641. Standish is not served by a railway station although Appley Bridge

railway station is situated approximately four miles to the west and Wigan railway station is located some four miles to the south.

STA.17 The pedestrian environment around Standish Town Centre is variable. Movement around the Principal Shopping Area can be problematic due to the busy nature of School Lane (the A5209) and High Street (the A48). Elsewhere traffic flow is less busy making the environment less hazardous for pedestrians.



There is evidence of recent paving work on Market Street. Pedestrian crossings linked to traffic lights are provided at the main road intersection (Figure STA.4).

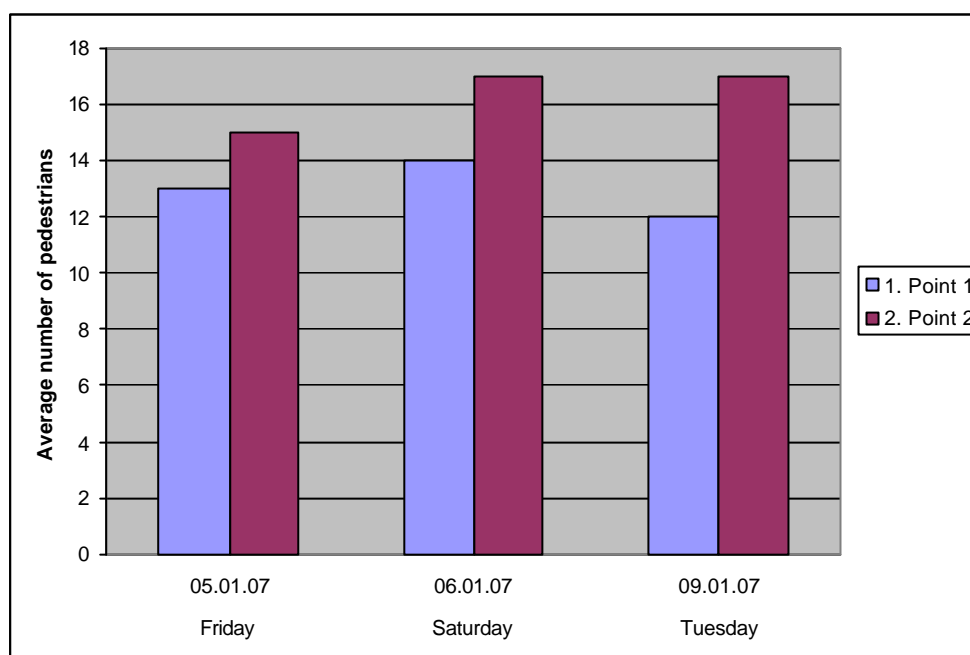
STA.18 A pedestrian count was undertaken in Standish to give an insight into pedestrian movement through the area. Two count points were used: Preston Road outside the front entrance to Somerfield (Point 1) and Preston Road outside Galloways (Point 2). The number of passing pedestrians in both directions was counted over a five minute period at three points during the day: once in the morning (between 10.00 and 11.00), once at midday (between 12.00 and 13.00) and once in the afternoon (between 14.00 and 15.00). This process was repeated over three days: a Friday (05.01.07), a Saturday (06.01.07) and a Tuesday (09.01.07). The results were then indexed with the centre having the highest level of footfall being afforded a score of 100, and the subsequent indexed footfall being calculated accordingly. Figures STA.5 and STA.6 show the results obtained from the pedestrian counts.

**Figure STA.5 Standish pedestrian count (average number of pedestrians recorded)**

Location	Date of count			Total Count	Total Index
	Friday 05.01.07	Saturday 06.01.07	Tuesday 09.01.07		
1. Point 1	13	14	12	40	81
2. Point 2	15	17	17	49	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: NEMS Market Research, 2007

**Figure STA.6 Standish pedestrian count**



STA.19 It is evident from the information presented above that the busiest count point in terms of pedestrian users was Point 2 (Preston Road outside Galloways), which was consistently busier than Point 1 (Preston Road outside front entrance to Somerfield). Overall a total average of 49 people were recorded at Point 2, compared to 40 at Point 1. There was a limited variation in the number of pedestrians recorded on each day, with a total of 28 recorded on Friday (05.01.07), 31 recorded on Saturday (06.01.07) and 29 on Tuesday (09.01.07).

STA.20 An in-street survey of visitors to Standish was carried out by NEMS Market Research. It revealed the following in respect to accessibility in the centre:

- 70% of visitors to the town centre had regular access to a car for personal use during the day and in the evening/ night-time;
- Most visitors (62%) arrived by car or van, with 30% arriving on foot;
- The majority of drivers (87%) parked in the Somerfield car park;
- Of those that drove, 94% had no difficulty in obtaining a car parking space;
- 80% of visitors travelled for 10 minutes or less to reach the centre, with a further 12% travelling for between 11 and 15 minutes;
- The provision of car parking in Standish was rated as being either 'worse' or much worse' than in other centres by 52% of visitors, with 30% considering parking to be 'about the same' as in other centres; and
- Accessibility by public transport was considered by 42% of visitors to be 'about the same' as in other centres, although 47% indicated that they did not know either way.

### **Perception of Safety and Occurrence of Crime**

STA.21 The in-street survey also asked visitors about their opinions on safety within Standish Town Centre both during the day and in the evening/ night-time. The overwhelming majority of visitors (97%) considered day-time safety in Standish to be 'about the same' as in other centres which they visited, with the remaining 3% indicating that they did not know either way. Safety during the evening/ night-time was deemed by 60% of visitors to be 'about the same' in Standish as in other shopping centres, with 23% stating that they did not know either way. Consequently Standish does not appear to have any exceptional issues in terms of safety.

### **Customer Views and Behaviour**

STA.22 The in-street survey, undertaken by NEMS Market Research, indicates the following with regard to customer views and behaviour:

- 95% of respondents travelled to Standish directly from home;
- Most visitors (83%) were residents of the local area;
- 70% of visitors to Standish indicated that the main reason for their presence in the town centre was to undertake food and grocery shopping;
- Two-thirds of respondents (67%) stated that they planned to stay in the town centre for up to half an hour, with an additional 28% planning to stay for up to 2 hours;
- 37% of visitors were to undertaking their main food shop on the day of the survey. Of these, 73% shopped in the centre once a week or more for such purposes;
- Of those that were not conducting their main food shop on the day of the survey, 58% last visited Wigan to conduct this activity. When asked why they chose Wigan over Standish for their main food shop, 57% of visitors indicated that this was due to the choice of food goods available; and
- 70% of respondents indicated that they visited Standish 'about as frequently' today as they did five years ago.

STA.23 Visitors to Standish were asked to rate a number of different aspects of the town centre against other shopping centres which they visited. A majority of visitors rated the following aspects as being 'about the same' in Standish as other centres: quality of shops; range of services such as banks and other financial services; cleanliness; and public information/ signposts/ public facilities. The following aspects of Standish were rated by most respondents as being 'worse' or 'much worse' than other centres: choice of shops; range and choice of pubs/ restaurants; leisure facilities; shopping environment and entertainment/ events/ performances.

## Environmental Quality

STA.24 As highlighted above, the majority of the town centre, excluding the Somerfield supermarket and part of Preston Road, is designated as a Conservation Area, reflecting the attractive and historic nature of the area (Figure STA.7). Retail outlets



Figure STA.7: Pole Street

throughout the town centre are of high quality, with units being predominately two storeys and maintained to a good standard. St. Wilfrid's Church situated just outside the town centre on forms a particularly attractive feature of the built environment. Despite the attractive visual amenity of the town centre, it is affected by heavy traffic along School Lane and High Street. Tailbacks are frequent in this area, creating a hazard for pedestrians and causing noise and fumes which affect the shopping experience. The pedestrian crossings in this area do help to mitigate against pedestrian/ vehicular conflict however, and away from this area traffic is less busy (Figure STA.8). Residential units are mixed in with retail units around the town centre.



Figure STA.8: Market Street

## Business Survey

STA.25 A business survey was distributed to 120 businesses in Standish as part of this assessment. 47 were received back, providing a response rate of 39%. It revealed the following in respect of the town centre:

- Most respondents (74%) had been trading in Standish for in excess of ten years;

- Since trading began, the majority of respondents (65%) felt that business had grown either 'moderately' or 'significantly';
- The greatest proportion of respondents (37%) felt that currently their performance was trading 'very well', with a further 24% indicating that their business was trading 'well';
- 58% of respondents leased their premises, with the remaining 42% being owner occupiers;
- Of the 285 people employed by respondents, 48% were employed on a full-time basis and 52% on a part-time basis;
- Local residents were considered by 52% of respondents as being their primary source of trade;
- 60% of respondents felt that there was an appropriate mix of shops and other non-retail uses in the town centre;
- When asked to consider the main restraint on business performance, 31% of residents deemed this to be poor customer car parking which was the largest proportion recorded;
- 38% of respondents had no plans to alter their business over the next five years, although a further 24% planned to refurbish their existing floorspace; and
- Manchester was felt by the highest proportion of traders (41%) as being their major competitor.

STA.26 Respondents were asked to rate the town centre in a number of different areas. Through this process half of all aspects were considered to be 'average' by the greatest proportion of traders. It is significant to note however that 87% of respondents considered the quantity of parking spaces to be 'poor', whilst 73% considered public toilets to be 'poor'. In terms of measures to improve the town centre, the most popular measures were: quantity of parking spaces (93%), reduce traffic congestion (89%) and greater town centre police presence (84%).

STA.27 Space was provided at the end of the survey for respondents to make

any additional comments. A significant 16 traders (34% of all respondents) highlighted concern over a lack of parking in Standish as being a major issue.

### **Conclusions on Vitality and Viability**

STA.28 Standish is a vital and viable centre. In terms of the proportion of floorspace occupied, the provision of convenience goods, retail services, leisure services and financial and business services are all above the national average. Furthermore the proportion of vacant floorspace is below the national average, although the proportion of vacant outlets is above the national average. Overall the retail sector in Standish has grown by some six retail units since 2001 and is accessible by a range of means of transport. Environmental quality in the centre is good although it frequently suffers from congestion. In addition the business survey indicated that businesses in the centre have a strong trading position with most trading either 'well' or 'very well'. Notwithstanding this it is evident that a lack of car parking in the centre is of major concern to traders in Standish.

## **TYLDESLEY TOWN CENTRE**

### **General Description of Tyldesley Town Centre**

- TYL.01 Tyldesley is situated in the east of the Borough, approximately eight miles to the south-east of Wigan Town Centre and ten miles to the west of Manchester. The centre had a population of approximately 34,022 persons at the time of the 2001 census.
- TYL.02 Tyldesley is defined as a Town Centre under Policy S1 of the adopted Wigan UDP. The defined retail area stretches along either side of Elliott Street and incorporates part of Castle Street. These roads form one of the major road arteries into Wigan, the A577. A Principal Shopping Area is identified in the UDP which stretches along Elliott Street from High Street (at its western end) to Blossom Street (at its eastern end) incorporating a Co-op foodstore.

### **Diversity of Uses**

- TYL.03 Figure TYL.1 below shows the diversity of uses present in Tyldesley at 2007, based on site visits undertaken by WYG in January 2007. The area surveyed is Tyldesley Town Centre, as defined in the adopted Wigan UDP. The results obtained have been categorised on the basis of the GOAD definition of town centre uses in order to allow comparison with the national average. Figure TYL.2 illustrates the number of retail outlets recorded in a previous survey conducted by Wigan Council in 2001. This survey identified the number of retail outlets only, so we are not able to compare the floorspace composition of Tyldesley at 2001 and 2007. However, it should be noted that the UDP town centre boundaries have changed since 2001 as a result of the UDP review; consequently the information contained in Figure TYL.2 is included for indicative purposes only. The floorspace figures shown are based on the building footprint at ground-floor level only.

**Figure TYL.1 Retail Composition of Tyldesley Town Centre, 2007**

Sector	No. of Outlets	% of Outlets		Floorspace (sq. m)	% of Floorspace	
		Tyldesley	GB		Tyldesley	GB
Convenience	8	6.90	8.46	2,310	16.95	13.72
Comparison	27	23.28	36.67	2,283	16.75	39.53
Retail Service	18	15.52	12.70	1,620	11.89	6.98
Leisure Services	32	27.59	20.88	4,722	34.65	22.51
Financial & Business Services	13	11.21	11.62	939	6.89	9.26
Vacant	18	15.52	9.67	1,754	12.87	8.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,628</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: WYG (2007)

**Figure TYL.2 Retail Composition of Tyldesley Town Centre, 2001**

Sector	No. of Outlets	% of Outlets	Change (2001-2007)
Convenience	12	9.02	-2.12
Comparison	34	25.56	-2.28
Service (A1)	19	14.29	+1.23
Vacant	25	18.80	-3.28
Other (inc. A2/A3)	43	32.33	+6.47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Wigan Council- Town Centre Surveys (2001)

TYL.04 Figure TYL.1 indicates that at the time of the 2007 survey 6.9% of outlets were in use for convenience purposes compared to a national average of 8.5%. Notwithstanding this, the proportion of convenience floorspace in the town centre is 17.0% which is above the GOAD national averages for town centres of 13.7%. It is apparent that convenience retailing in the centre is dominated by the Aldi supermarket, which covers 1,060 sq m (gross) of floorspace (46% of total convenience floorspace) and the Co-op convenience store which covers a floorspace of 863 sq. m (gross) (or 37% of total convenience floorspace). Other types of convenience traders located in Tyldesley include: a 'bakers & confectioner'; one 'butchers'; two 'CTN' (Confectionary, Tobacco and News) stores; one 'grocers and delicatessens'; and one 'off licence'. Additional convenience provision is provided by the weekly market which operates every Friday from The Square. It is important to note that a further supermarket, Somerfield, is located outside UDP defined town centre but within close proximity to it. Figure TYL.2 indicates that since 2001 the number of convenience outlets in Tyldesley Town Centre has declined by 4 units (or 33%).

- TYL.05 In terms of comparison retail provision, 23.3% of outlets and 16.8% of retail floorspace are in use for such purposes. This compares to a national average of 36.7% and 39.5% respectively, indicating that the town centre is under-provided for in comparison retailing terms. Tyldesley contains a variety of comparison retailers, predominantly from the independent sector. A variety of traders are present within the Town Centre, including: four 'DIY and home improvement' retailers; two 'chemists and pharmacies'; two 'florists'; two 'pet shops'; and two 'textile and soft furnishing' traders, in addition to many other comparison traders. Since 2001, Figure TYL.2 indicates that the number of comparison traders has declined by seven units or 21%. Once again additional comparison provision is provided by the weekly market.
- TYL.06 According to our site survey there were 18 retail service units within Tyldesley Town Centre at 2007, who cumulatively occupied 1,620 sq. m of retail floorspace. This represents 15.5% of all units and 11.9% of all floorspace which compares with a national average of 12.7% and 7.0% respectively. This category includes such traders as hairdressers, petrol filling stations and opticians. These are clearly well accounted for within the town centre. 'Health and beauty' retailers dominate this sector, of which there are nine units in the centre or 50% of total retail service units. Since 2001 the number of retail service units has declined by one unit, although as highlighted above the town centre boundaries have changed since the 2001 survey.
- TYL.07 At 2007, 27.6% of all retail units present within Tyldesley were in use for leisure service purposes, which is above the national average of 20.9%. The floorspace accounted for by leisure services is 34.7% which is also greater than the national average for UK town centres of 22.5%. This sector is dominated by public houses, which occupy 1,456 sq. m of floorspace (or 31% of total leisure service floorspace) and fast food and take away units which cover 1,180 sq. m of floorspace (or 25% of total leisure service floorspace). Cafes and restaurants are

also well represented in Tyldesley.

- TYL.08 Financial and business services include such town centre uses as estate agents, high street banks and accountants. Such uses comprise 11.2% of all units in Tyldesley and 6.9% of total retail floorspace, against an expected national average of 11.6% and 9.3% respectively. It is notable that the town centre contains just one retail bank, a Lloyds TSB on The Square.
- TYL.09 Although there are no directly comparable results from the 2001 survey of leisure services and financial and business services present in Tyldesley, if these sectors are combined it is comparable with the 'other' category from the 2001 survey. As such, it is clear that this category has strengthened over the 2001 to 2007 period, increasing representation from 43 units to 45 units.
- TYL.10 Overall between 2001 and 2007 the number of recorded retail units within the Town Centre has declined by 17, from 133 retail units in 2001 to 116 retail units in 2007. However, there is no way of knowing what has happened to retail floorspace over this period.
- TYL.11 In addition to the retail facilities located in the town centre, Tyldesley contains a number of residential properties and there is evidence of further residential development on streets leading from the defined town centre. A library is also situated within the town centre on Stanley Street, whilst several doctors' surgeries and a dentist's surgery are both present in Tyldesley. In addition, the historic Top Chapel is situated on Elliott Street opposite the Square, although this appears to be under renovation at the current time. In addition St George's Church is located just outside the defined town centre on Squires Lane. Tyldesley Town Hall is situated on Elliott Street.

## Retailer Requirements

TYL.12 Figure TYL.3 sets out retailer requirements within Tyldesley Town Centre as derived from the Focus Database (January 2007). This list should be treated with a degree of caution as some retailers may put forward their requirements on the Database whilst not having an active desire to locate there. Additionally, the list includes retailers who are already present in the town but are seeking new premises. Furthermore a single retailer may express more than one requirement in a town centre for different sizes of units. Nevertheless it does serve as a useful indicator of the level of demand a centre is experiencing.

**Figure TYL.3 : Summary of Retailer Requirements within Tyldesley Town Centre, 2007**

	Number of Requirements	Minimum Floorspace (sq. m)	Maximum Floorspace (sq. m)
Convenience	3	195	520
Comparison	1	56	111
Service	2	84	223
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>854</b>

Source: Focus Report (January 2007) - uses falling within specific retail trade categories from Experian GOAD definitions

TYL.13 Figure TYL.3 indicates that there is a healthy level of demand from businesses seeking representation in Tyldesley. The Focus Database (January 2007) identifies demand from six retail businesses seeking representation in the town, seeking floorspace of up to 854 sq m (gross). The retailers seeking representation within the town centre comprise Cheque Centres (two requirements listed), Jack Fulton (two requirements listed), the British Heart Foundation and Health Rack.

TYL.14 Comparing the number of current requirements in Tyldesley with previous years, current retailer demand (six) is seen to be the highest level ever recorded and is notably higher than the average number of requirements over the past five years (one).

## Street Level Vacancies

TYL.15 The proportion of vacant units within any centre can provide a good

indication of how the town centre is performing. However, care should be taken when interpreting figures. Vacancies can occur for positive as well as negative reasons e.g. the opening of a new retail centre elsewhere in a town may draw retailers from older properties or more peripheral areas of the town. Vacant units will be found in even the strongest town centre and are simply an indicator of the level of demand in a centre. For example some properties may lay vacant because they are poorly maintained, unsuited to modern retailing requirements or simply not being actively marketed. Conversely a low vacancy rate does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing well. For example, if there is a proliferation of charity shops and other low value uses within a town centre it may be a sign of decline, particularly where these uses are located in prime locations. Despite these issues, it is still a useful indicator of town centre performance.

TYL.16 Figure TYL.1 indicated that at 2007 there were 18 vacant units in Tyldesley, occupying 1,754 sq. m of retail floorspace. This equates to 15.5% of all retail outlets and 12.9% of all retail floorspace, against national averages of 9.7%



Figure TYL.4: Vacant Fireplace Warehouse

and 8.0% respectively. As such, the town centre does have a significant number of vacant properties. Vacancies themselves are distributed throughout the town centre and are a variety of sizes. However one large vacancy, the former Fireplace Warehouse on Johnson Street (Figure TYL.4), accounts for 21% of all vacant floorspace. Many vacant units are of poor quality and the visual amenity of Tyldesley would be improved if such units could be brought back into use. According to Figure TYL.2 however the number of vacant units has actually fallen by seven (or 28%) since 2001.

## Commercial Rents and Yields

TYL.17 Unfortunately due to the size of Tyldesley there is no published data on rents or yields achieved. However, Donaldson's estimate prime Zone A rents to be approximately £161/ sq m.

## Accessibility

TYL.18 Tyldesley is situated on the A577, a major arterial route into Wigan.

Wigan itself is situated seven miles to the north-west of Tyldesley. The A577 connects the town centre directly with Atherton to the west and with Junction 1 of the M62 located four miles to the north-east. It also benefits from easy access to the A580 Manchester to



Figure TYL.5: Elliott Street

Liverpool dual carriageway which allows access to M60 and M66. The town centre contains a number of off-road car parks which are available free of charge and which are signposted from Elliott Street. Limited on-street parking is also available on Elliott Street. Elliott Street itself is one-way (Figure TYL.5).

TYL.19 Regular bus services run through Tyldesley, including numbers 12, 32, 33, 132, 577, 592, 651 and 686, together with the night-bus (39). These connect the town to destinations including Leigh, Wigan, Bolton and Manchester. Although the bus stops adjacent to The Square are covered, bus stops elsewhere in the centre are not.



Figure TYL.6: Elliott Street

Pedestrian movement around the town centre is made easy by wide pavements and pedestrian crossings linked to traffic lights (Figure TYL.6). Tyldesley is surrounded by residential properties, and there is evidence of people walking from surrounding areas to use the retailing

facilities present.

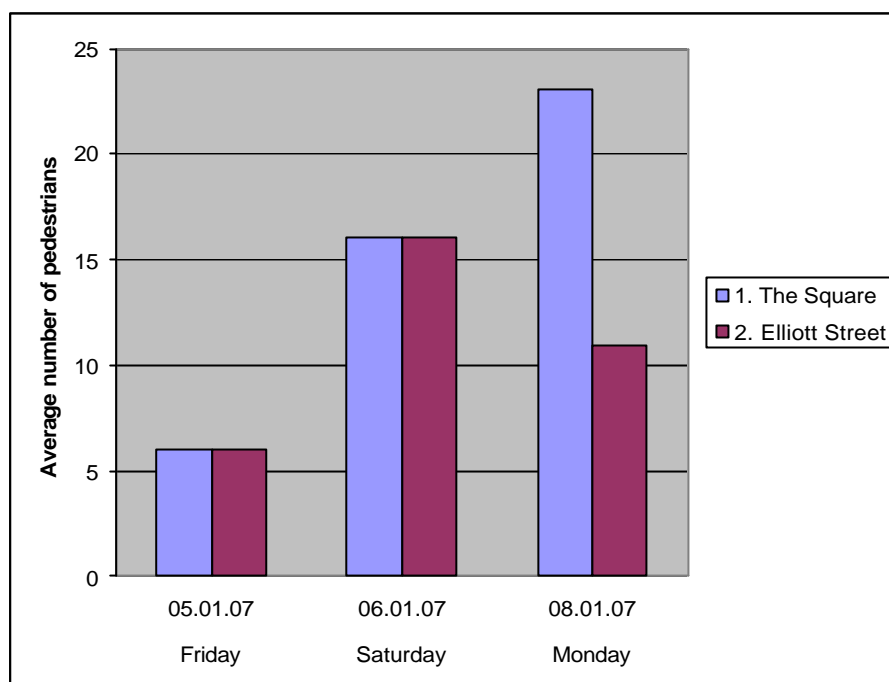
TYL.20 In order to gain an understanding of pedestrian movement around Tyldesley, NEMS Market Research undertook a pedestrian count within the Town Centre. Two count points were chosen: The Square outside the Co-op and Elliott Street outside Interflora. The number of passing pedestrians in both directions was counted over a five minute period at three points during the day: once in the morning (between 10.00 and 11.00), once at midday (between 12.00 and 13.00) and once in the afternoon (between 14.00 and 15.00). This process was repeated over three days: a Friday (05.01.07), a Saturday (06.01.07) and a Monday (08.01.07). The results were then indexed with the location having the highest level of footfall being afforded a top score of 100, and the subsequent indexed footfall being calculated accordingly. Figures TYL.7 and TYL.8 below show the results obtained through this process.

**Figure TYL.7 Tyldesley pedestrian count (average number of pedestrians recorded)**

Location	Date of count			Total Count	Total Index
	Friday 05.01.07	Saturday 06.01.07	Monday 08.01.07		
1. The Square	6	16	23	45	100
2. Elliott Street	6	16	11	33	73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: NEMS Market Research, 2007

Figure TYL.8 Tyldesley pedestrian count



TYL.21 The pedestrian counts indicate that overall The Square is slightly busier than Elliott Street, with an average of 45 pedestrians recorded at The Square compared to 33 at Elliott Street (outside Interflora). However, it is apparent that both count points experienced the same average number of pedestrians on Friday (05.01.07) and Saturday (06.01.07) were exactly the same, at six and 32 respectively, and it is only on Monday (08.01.07) that the number of pedestrians counted at The Square (23) is significantly greater than those recorded at Elliott Street (eleven). Overall Monday (08.01.07) was seen to be the busiest day with an average of 34 pedestrians counted, followed by 32 recorded on Saturday (06.01.07). Friday (05.01.07) was the quietest day by far with an average of just six pedestrians recorded, which is surprising given that this is the day of the town's market.

TYL.22 In addition in respect of accessibility issues, the in-street survey undertaken as part of this study identified the following:

- 58% of those surveyed within Tyldesley had regular access to a car for personal use during the day and during the evening/ night;

- 58% of visitors travelled into the centre on foot, with 27% accessing the centre by car or van and 15% by bus, mini-bus or coach;
- Of those that arrived by car, the majority (71%) parking on-street, with 23% parking on High Street and 6% parking on Derby Street;
- 71% of drivers encountered no difficulty in obtaining a car parking space in the centre;
- 42% of visitors travelled for less than five minutes to reach the centre, with 31% travelling for between 6 and 10 minutes;
- 47% of visitors surveyed indicated that car parking provision in Tyldesley was 'about the same' as other shopping centres which they visited; and
- 47% of visitors stated that car parking provision in Tyldesley was 'about the same' as other shopping centres.

### **Perception of Safety and Occurrence of Crime**

TYL.23 The in-street survey of visitors to Tyldesley undertaken as part of the retail study probed visitors on their views regarding safety in the centre. The majority of visitors (82%) deemed day-time safety in Tyldesley to be 'about the same' as other shopping centres although the remaining 18% considered safety during the day to be either 'worse' or 'much worse' than other centres. However, with respect to safety during the evening/ at night a 37% stated that this was 'about the same' as other centres, with 23% considering it to be 'worse' than other centres and 21% 'much worse' than other centres. No respondents indicated that evening/ night-time safety was either 'better' or 'much better' than elsewhere.

### **Customer Views and Behaviour**

TYL.24 In terms of shopping patterns, the in-street survey revealed the following with regards to Tyldesley.

- 89% of visitors had travelled to the centre directly from home;
- Most respondents (79%) indicated that they were not a visitor to the local area;
- 37% of visitors stated that their main reason for visiting the centre was to buy undertake food and grocery shopping , with 13% stating that they were in Tyldesley to visit the bank/ building society/ Post Office;
- Two-thirds of respondents (66%) planned to stay in the centre for up to half an hour, with a further 29% planning to stay for up to two hours;
- 32% of visitors planned to undertake their main food shop on the day of the survey;
- 75% of visitors visited the centre once a week or more for their main food grocery shopping, with the remaining 25% never visiting the centre to undertake their main food shop;
- The vast majority of visitors to Tyldesley (89%) were not planning to buy clothing or footwear on the day of the survey. Of these, 31% last visited Leigh Town Centre for such purposes. When asked why this was so, 56% indicated that it was due to the choice of shops nearby selling non-food goods; and
- 53% of visitors stated that they visited Tyldesley 'about as frequently' today as they did five years ago.

TYL.25 The in-street survey asked visitors to rate Tyldesley against other shopping centres which they visited. Through this process a number of issues were highlighted as being either 'worse' or 'much worse' than elsewhere by a majority of visitors. These were: choice of shops; quality of shops; range of services such as banks and other financial services; range and choice pubs/ restaurants; leisure facilities; shopping environment; cleanliness; and entertainment/ events/ performances.

## Environmental Quality

TYL.26 Tyldseley is a linear centre with steep residential terraces branching off the main street. Tyldseley Square (The Square) forms the focal point of the town centre and provides a wide area of public open space. This area is well maintained and pedestrian friendly including a variety of street furniture: bins, recycling bins, bike racks, street light and benches, in addition to trees and a water fountain.

TYL.27 Properties along the length of the town centre are generally two-stories in height, but rise to three-stories and above in parts. The town centre also contains a number of historic buildings, including Top Chapel which is currently subject to renovation. CCTV is in operation throughout the town centre. Upper floors within the town centre appear to be used for storage, office and residential purposes. The Principal Shopping Area falls within a wider Conservation Area, as defined in the Wigan UDP.

TYL.28 To the eastern end of the town centre (Figure TYL.9) units are generally of good quality, although as highlighted previous several poor quality vacancies do exist in the area which detract from the street-scene. Independent and specialist retailers dominate retail provision, and some residential units are mixed in with



Figure TYL.9: Units on Elliott Street

retail uses. To the western end of Tyldesley units are of more variable quality with some being maintained to a high standard and others less so. Once again the presence of unattractive vacancies in the area does serve to detract from environmental amenity. Some fly-posting is visible in the town centre.

TYL.29 As the centre has a strong night-time economy many units, particularly fast-food and take-away units, use steel roll-shutters during the day to

cover their fascias. Whilst this is understandable from a security point of view, it does serve to create a dead and unattractive frontage during the day-time (Figure TYL.10). In addition the important nature of the A577 which runs through Tyldesley means that there is a constant flow of vehicular traffic, which causes associated problems of noise and fumes.



Figure TYL.10: Shuttered units on Elliott Street

### **Business Survey**

TYL.30 A postal questionnaire was distributed to all local businesses within Tyldesley, in order to obtain their opinions on the centre on how the centre is performing and the future direction it should take. Their opinions are important due to the significant role they play in contributing to the local economy and they will be crucial in unlocking the town's potential in the future.

TYL.31 111 questionnaires were distributed with 30 being returned; a response rate of 27%. Full details of the results obtained are contained at **Appendix 6**, however the key findings of the business surveys were:

- 59% of respondents have traded in Tyldesley for over ten years;
- 57% of respondents indicated that business had either 'grown moderately' or 'grown significantly' since they began trading;
- 47% of respondents considered themselves to be trading either 'well' or 'very well' at the current time, with a further 37% trading 'moderately';
- 57% of respondents were leaseholders with 43% being owner occupiers;
- 116 people were employed in total by respondents. Most (52%) were employed on a part-time basis;

- Local residents were relied upon by the majority of traders (69%) as their primary source of trade;
- In terms of the mix of shops and other non-retail uses present in Tyldesley 48% of respondents felt that there were too many non-retail uses, with 26% stating that there was a good balance and 48% indicating that there were not enough non-retail uses;
- An additional 53% of respondents noted that there were too many fast food outlets in Tyldesley;
- The main constraints on business performance were deemed to be: poor quality of the town centre shopping environment (19%) and lack of day visitors/ tourists to the town (16%);
- 47% of respondents had no plan to alter their business in any way over the next five years; and
- Leigh was felt by the highest proportion of traders (29%) to be their biggest competitor.

TYL.32 In terms of retailers' perception of the town centre, the following aspects were considered to be 'poor' by a majority of respondents: the market (87%), public toilets (81%), traffic congestion (66%), public seating/ litter bins (64%), town centre police presence (61%) and range of shops and services (50%). Respondents were subsequently asked to rate a number of measures to improve the town centre. All the measures listed were popular with respondents, although the most popular were: town centre events/ activities (76%); greater town centre police presence (73%); and more marketing and promotion (73%).

### **Conclusions on Vitality and Viability**

TYL.33 A number of strengths and weaknesses in Tyldesley have been identified in this assessment. The proportion of floorspace in use for convenience retailing, retail services and leisure services are above the national average. However the proportion of floorspace in use for comparison retailing and financial and business services is less than

the national average. Overall the number of retail units present in Tyldesley has declined by 13% since 2001, and the proportion of vacant floorspace and vacant units are both above the national average. The centre can be reached easily by public transport and by car, and pedestrian movement around the centre is relatively easy. Environmental quality in the centre is variable and improvements in this regard would benefit the centre. As such, whilst it can be considered to adequately fulfil its role as a designated town centre, the vitality and viability of Tyldesley shows signs of decline.

## WIGAN TOWN CENTRE

### Wigan's position within the Regional Hierarchy

WIG.01 Figure WIG.1 below indicates the position of Wigan in the sub-region based on the Management Horizons Europe's (MHE) UK Shopping Index. This index ranks 1,672 shopping centres in the UK using a weighted scoring system which takes into consideration multiple retailers and anchor stores present in each centre. The index includes stand alone malls, retail warehouse parks and factory outlet centres in addition to town centres.

**Figure WIG.1: The Sub-Regional Shopping Hierarchy**

Centre	MHE score	Rank 2003-2004	Rank 2000-2001	Change in Rank
Manchester	354	2	3	+1
Liverpool	259	14	13	-1
Preston	201	34	53	+19
Bolton	166	64	65	+1
Warrington	151	83	91	+8
St Helens	146	92	111	+19
<b>Wigan</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>+10</b>
Leigh	63	307	331	+24
Skelmersdale	42	462	398	-64
Robin Park Retail Park, Wigan	31	602	-	-
Ashton-in-Makerfield	16	1120	880	-240

Management Horizons Europe: UK Shopping Index (2003/2004)

WIG.02 Figure WIG.1 indicates that at 2003/ 2004 Wigan Town Centre was ranked 111<sup>th</sup> out of the 1,672 shopping centres surveyed within the UK, which places it in the top 7% of all UK shopping venues. It achieves a score of 131 based on the number and type of multiple retailers present in the town centre. Since the 2000/ 2001 period Wigan has moved up in the rankings by 10 places, showing a strengthening of the centre. The MHE Index also gives a 'glam-glum' rating of shopping centres based on the relative market position (i.e. discount-orientation through to luxury brands) of the fashion offer in each venue. Within this rating Wigan is defined as 'mister average', indicating it has a middling market position.

WIG.03 In comparison with other sub-region centres included in Figure WIG.1 Wigan faces considerable competition from Manchester, Liverpool, Preston, Bolton, Warrington and St Helens, all of which have a higher MHE score. Aside from Liverpool, all of these centres have strengthened since 2000/2001.

### **General Description of Wigan Town Centre**

WIG.04 Wigan has a population of 81,203 (2001 census). It is the administrative centre of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan, covering an area of around three and a half square miles (8.75 square kilometres). Wigan is a former industrial centre for textile manufacture, having experienced rapid growth during the Industrial Revolution.

WIG.05 Wigan is an established commercial centre lying on the western edge of the Greater Manchester conurbation some 18 miles north west of Manchester City Centre and 15 miles south of Preston. The centre benefits from excellent road communications with junction 6 of the M61 being 6 miles to the east and junctions 25, 26 and 27 of the M6 all within four miles of the town centre.

WIG.06 The centre is characterised by a series of shopping centres and arcades including the Galleries Shopping Centre, Grand Arcade (opened March 2007) and the Marketgate Shopping Centre. It is a vibrant centre with a strong retail sector.

WIG.07 Wigan is defined as a main town centre along with Leigh in the adopted Wigan UDP. The UDP defines the Primary Shopping Area as comprising Standishgate, Market Place, Mesnes Street and the Galleries Shopping Centre.

## Diversity of Uses

WIG.08 Figure WIG.2 and WIG.3 demonstrate the composition of uses in Wigan at 2006 and 2003 respectively. This is based on information provided by GOAD. The composition of the centre at 2006 has been compared to the latest GOAD national averages for UK town centres (at January 2007). A map of the area surveyed in 2006 is included in this report at **Appendix 7**. The GOAD survey area correlates almost exactly with the Town Centre as defined in the Wigan UDP. Unfortunately a map of the 2003 survey area is not available, so we are unable to tell whether the GOAD town centre boundary has changed over the 2003- 2006 period. The floorspace figures shown are based on the building footprint at ground-floor level only.

**Figure WIG.2 Retail Composition of Wigan Town Centre, 2006**

Sector	No. of Outlets	% of Outlets		Floorspace (sq. m)	% of Floorspace	
		Wigan	GB		Wigan	GB
Convenience	36	7.35	8.46	10,842	9.54	13.72
Comparison	181	36.94	36.67	51,347	45.19	39.53
Retail Service	51	10.41	12.70	4,608	4.06	6.98
Leisure Services	93	18.98	20.88	25,660	22.58	22.51
Financial & Business Services	45	9.18	11.62	8,203	7.22	9.26
Vacant	84	17.14	9.67	12,969	11.41	8.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>113,629</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Experian GOAD (2006)

**Figure WIG.3 Retail Composition of Wigan Town Centre, 2003**

Sector	No. of Outlets	% of Outlets		Floorspace (sq. m)	% of Floorspace	
		Wigan	Change 03-06		Wigan	Change 03-06
Convenience	32	6.23	+1.12	10,470	8.78	+0.76
Comparison	217	42.22	-5.28	61,047	51.18	-5.99
Retail Service	52	10.12	+0.29	5,184	4.35	-0.29
Leisure Services	90	17.51	+1.47	25,158	21.09	+1.49
Financial & Business Services	48	9.34	-0.16	8,027	6.73	+0.49
Vacant	75	14.59	+2.55	9,383	7.87	+3.54
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>119,269</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Experian GOAD (2003)

WIG.09 At 2006 7.4% of units in Wigan were in use for convenience purposes, which compares to a national average of 8.5%. Meanwhile 9.5% of retail floorspace is in use for convenience purposes, which compares to a figure of 13.7% nationally. This indicates that the town centre is

slightly under provided for by convenience provision. A large part of this sector is taken up by the Morrisons supermarket on Wigan Square, The Galleries Shopping Centre and the Iceland supermarket, Standishgate, which when combined, account for 3240 sq m of floorspace, or 29.9% of total convenience floorspace. Additionally, out of centre is a Tesco Extra store, which also takes up a large part of the town's convenience and comparison sector, (as defined by GOAD). It should be noted that people use the Tesco car park and walk into the town centre, as the car park provides 2.5 hours of free parking. Other convenience traders in the centre are predominantly independents and include: eleven 'bakers and confectioners'; eight 'CTN' retailers; and four 'health foods' stores. Wigan has both an indoor and outdoor market, which both operate in the town centre Monday to Saturday, providing additional convenience provision. The indoor market is included in the GOAD assessment of town centre floorspace.

WIG.10 Figure WIG.3 indicates that at 2003 there were 32 convenience retailers in the town centre accounting for 10,470 sq m of retail floorspace. As such over the period the number of convenience operators in Wigan has increased by 4 units or (12.5%) and by 372 sq m. In addition, the relative proportion of retail floorspace for which convenience traders account has marginally increased.

WIG.11 Comparison retailing in Wigan is adequately represented when considered against the national average. Such traders occupy 36.9% of outlets against a national average of 36.7%, and 45.2% of floorspace compared to a national average of 39.5%. It should also be noted that these Experian GOAD figures pre-date the opening of the Grand Arcade, which has increased comparison floorspace in the town by a third. The town contains a mixture of multiple and independent comparison traders; the six day market provides further provision as well as the Morrisons supermarket which sells some non-food goods. Since 2003 the number of comparison units has declined by 36, whilst comparison floorspace has declined by 9,699 sq m.

- WIG.12 Retail services, which comprise uses such as hairdressers, dry cleaners and petrol filling stations, account for 10.4% of outlets and 4.1% of floorspace in Wigan, which compares to a national average of 12.7% and 7.0% respectively. 'Health and beauty' traders are particularly dominant in this sector, accounting for 23 (or 45.1%) of all outlets. Importantly the town centre contains a Post Office on Wallgate. Since 2003 the number of retail service outlets has fallen by one unit, with retail floorspace in this sector falling by 567 sq m.
- WIG.13 Wigan has 13 retailers present in the town centre, which are in the top 20 national retailers, as identified by Focus. These include Boots, BHS and Debenhams, all of which have relocated to the Grand Arcade.
- WIG.14 Leisure services as defined by GOAD include uses such as restaurants, cafes, bookmakers and public houses. Wigan is slightly under provided in this sector with the proportion of outlets (19%) being below the national average (20.9%). However the proportion of floorspace (22.6%) is slightly higher than the national average (22.5%) in this sector. Fast-food and takeaway units are the most prolific, occupying 20 units or 4.1% of total units in the centre, against a national average for this type of trader of 5.0% at 2007. Other well represented traders include cafes (nineteen units) and public houses (seventeen units). The area around King Street/Rodney Street, very much serves the evening economy, boasting numerous night clubs, public houses and late night bars. Between 2003 and 2006 the number of leisure service traders has increased by three units and the level of floorspace by 502 sq m.
- WIG.15 In terms of the proportion of the retail units occupied, financial and business services are under provided in Wigan, occupying 9.2% of all outlets compared to a figure of 11.6% nationally. Additionally, with regard to the proportion of floorspace which they occupy, financial and business services account for 7.2% of total floorspace which is below

the national average for UK town centres of 9.3%. A number of well known national multiples are present in the town centre in this sector, including: Barclays Bank; HSBC; Lloyds TSB; Nat West; and the Royal Bank of Scotland; all are in the Wallgate area. Comparing the composition of Wigan at 2003 and 2006, the number of financial and business service outlets has decreased by three units, whilst the amount of floorspace has increased by 177 sq m.

WIG.16 Overall, comparing the town centre at 2003 and 2006 using Figures WIG.2 and WIG.3, the total number of retail units in the town centre, as defined by GOAD, has declined by twenty four units (again this is pre-Grand Arcade opening). This equates to a decline of 4.7%. Additionally, in terms of the total amount of retail floorspace this has declined by 5,640 sq. m, a fall of 4.7%. The Grand Arcade development will result in a net increase in floorspace of some 15% overall (over the period 2003 to 2007)

WIG.17 Wigan does not just provide a role in the provision of retail goods and services to the population which it serves. It also provides a number of additional services to local people, including a JobCentre Plus, community centre and a museum and art gallery. In addition a number of residential dwellings are located within the GOAD defined town centre boundary.

### **Unit Sizes**

WIG.18 GOAD also compiles information on the size of units present in the town centre for which it conducts surveys. Figure WIG.4 below shows the size of retail units present in Wigan at 2006. However, it is important to note that this refers to units present in the town centre as a whole and therefore includes non-retail units which were excluded from the diversity of uses analysis above.

**Figure WIG.4: Size of Units**

Size of Unit (ground floor area)	Number of units	Proportion of Total (%)	
		Wigan	GB
Under 1,000 sq. ft	206	42.04	39.08
1,000- 2,499 sq. ft	164	33.47	39.63
2,500- 4,999 sq. ft	56	11.43	12.63
5,000- 9,999 sq. ft	30	6.12	5.08
10,000- 14,999 sq. ft	13	2.65	1.49
15,000- 19,999 sq. ft	8	1.63	0.68
20,000- 29,999 sq. ft	9	1.84	0.67
Above 30,000 sq. ft	4	0.82	0.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: Experian GOAD (2006)

WIG.19 The area of the town centre surveyed by GOAD included a total of 490 units. Figure WIG.4 indicates that the numbers of units in Wigan which are below 5,000 sq. ft (86.9%) are slightly below the national average (91.3%). Conversely, the town centre contains a higher than average representation of larger units (13.1%), specifically those between 5,000 and 14,999 sq ft and those above 20,000 sq ft.

### **Retailer Representation**

WIG.20 The presence of national multiple retailers (defined as being part of a network of nine or more outlets) can greatly enhance the appeal of a centre to consumers and investors. Other retailers in a centre can also benefit from the increased pedestrian traffic generated by the presence of national multiples. However, multiples also provide strong competition for rivals and over concentration may threaten the independent sector in a town, undermining diversity and local identity. An appropriate balance between multiples and independents is therefore desirable. The national average (GOAD) figure for the proportion of national multiples in town centres is 34% which is a useful benchmark for comparing centres. However, it should be noted that larger centres are expected to contain a higher than average proportion of multiple retailers than lower order centres characterised by lower levels of footfall which are therefore less attractive to 'footloose'

multiple retailers.

WIG.21 Retailing in Wigan is dominated by national multiples, however there are also independents throughout the centre. It contains 13 of the top 20 national retailers as defined by Focus. These retailers include: Boots; Marks and Spencer; Argos; Debenhams; WH Smith; BHS; and Next. Other multiples present in the town centre include: Superdrug; Lloyds Pharmacy; Primark; New Look; Dorothy Perkins; and Rosebys. In addition the town centre contains a number of national retail banks including: Abbey; Barclays Bank; Bradford and Bingley; Co-operative bank; HSBC; Halifax; Household Bank; Lloyds TSB; Nat West; the Royal Bank of Scotland; Woolwich; and the Yorkshire Bank.

WIG.22 As noted, a major new town centre development opened in March 2007, which includes BHS, Boots, Debenhams, and Marks and Spencer stores. The existing Debenhams and Marks and Spencer stores are small and constrained. But will be reoccupied by other retailers including Wilkinsons (former Debenhams).

### **Retailer Requirements**

WIG.23 Figure WIG.5 sets out retailer requirements within Wigan Town Centre as derived from the Focus Database (February 2007). This list should be treated with a degree of caution as some retailers may state a requirement whilst not having an active desire to locate there. Additionally, the list may include retailers who are already present in the town but are seeking new premises. Furthermore, a single retailer may express more than one requirement in a town centre for different sizes of units. Nevertheless it does serve as a useful indicator of the level of demand a centre is experiencing.

**Figure WIG.5: Summary of Retailer Requirements within Wigan Town Centre, 2007**

	Number of Requirements	Minimum Floorspace (sq. m)	Maximum Floorspace (sq. m)
<b>Convenience</b>	3	367	627
<b>Comparison</b>	23	10,837	21,553
<b>Service</b>	22	8,682	16,453
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>19,886</b>	<b>38,633</b>

Source: Focus Report (February 2007) - uses falling within specific retail trade categories from Experian GOAD definitions

WIG.24 Figure WIG.5 indicates that at February 2007 there were 48 retailers seeking representation within Wigan, collectively requiring up to 38,633 sq m (gross) in retail floorspace. Comparison traders account for the highest number of requirements in outlet terms (23) and comparison traders are seeking the highest amount of floorspace; up to 21,553 sq m, or 56% of the total floorspace sought. A full list of requirements is included in this report at **Appendix 8**, and traders include the Body Shop, Dunelm Soft Furnishings, Jack Fulton and Maplin Electronics.

WIG.25 It is evident from examining Focus data that the current level of requirements (48) is a particularly high level for Wigan. However, the Grand Arcade will have satisfied many of these requirements.

### **Street Level Vacancies**

WIG.26 The number of vacant units within any centre can provide a good indication of how the town centre is performing. However, care should be taken when interpreting figures. Vacancies can occur for positive as well as negative reasons e.g. the opening of a new retail centre elsewhere in a town may draw retailers from older properties or more peripheral areas of the town. Vacant units will be found in even the strongest town centre and are simply an indicator of the level of demand in a centre. For example some properties may lay vacant because they are poorly maintained, unsuited to modern retailing requirements or simply not being actively marketed. Conversely a low vacancy rate does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing well. For example, if there is a proliferation of charity shops and other low value uses, this may be a sign of decline, particularly where these

uses are located in prime locations. Despite these issues, it is still a useful indicator of town centre performance.

WIG.27 At 2006 Figure WIG.2 demonstrated that there were 84 vacant retail units in the town centre, which occupied a floorspace of 12,969 sq m. This represented 17.1% of all outlets and 11.4% of floorspace, compared to respective national averages of 9.7% and 8%. This indicates the presence of a high number of small vacant properties in the town centre. From examining the GOAD plan of Wigan it can be seen that the vacancies are dispersed throughout the centre. The exception to this is some of the smaller arcades without visible frontage to main thoroughfares. Specifically, Market Street Mall in the Marketgate Shopping Centre is almost completely empty, except for Specsavers and the Continental Diner Café which have a frontage onto Market Street. It is notable that since the time of the GOAD survey in 2006, some units have since been occupied, suggesting that the vacancy rate may be lower than that suggested in this survey. Since 2003 Figure WIG.3 indicates that the number of vacant units has increased by nine units (or 12%), whilst the amount of vacant floorspace has increased by 3,586 sq m (or 38.2%) over the 2003 to 2006 period. That having been said, the Grand Arcade has created a number of new (and probably only temporary) vacancies throughout the town.

### **Commercial Rents and Yields**

WIG.28 Zone A rents (the rental value of the first six metres depth of floorspace in retail units from the shop window) reflects retailers' perception of the town centre. As retailers consider rent to reflect the margin between turnover and operational costs (plus profit), the better the trading prospects the higher the rent that the operator will be willing to pay.

WIG.29 Table WIG.6 below records the changes in prime pitch Zone A rents in Wigan Town Centre over the period relative to other centres in the sub-region.

**Figure WIG.6 Prime Pitch Zone A Rents (£/sq m)**

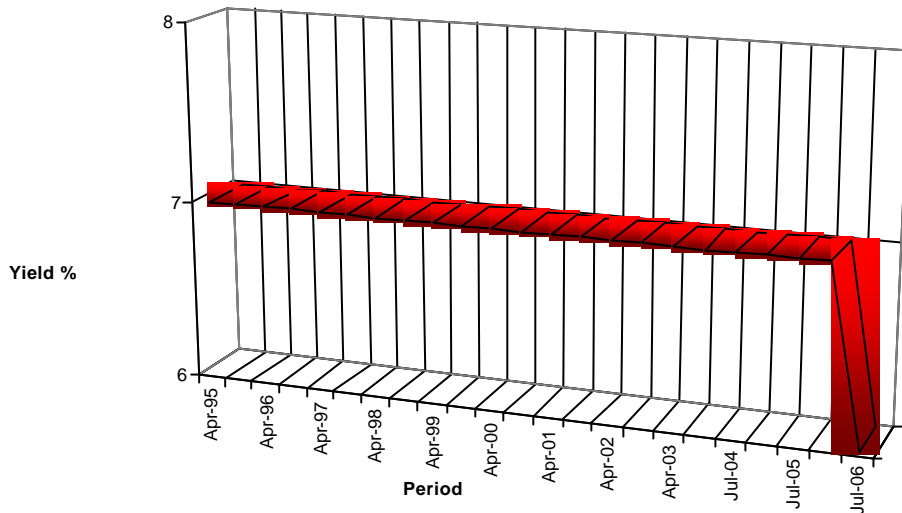
Centre	June '97	June '98	June '99	June '00	June '01	June '02	June '03	June '04	June '05	June '06	%
Leigh	377	377	377	377	377	377	431	431	431	538	43
Runcorn	431	431	431	431	592	592	646	646	646	646	50
St Helens	807	915	969	1076	1076	1076	1076	1076	1076	1076	33
Warrington	1130	1130	1184	1399	1507	1561	1561	1561	1561	1561	38
Widnes	323	323	484	484	484	484	538	538	700	700	117
<b>Wigan</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>1130</b>	<b>50</b>

WIG.30 Zone A rents for Wigan Town Centre have been recorded since June 1997 when they were £754/sq m, rising to £1130/sq m at June 2006. This represents a 33% increase over the period. When compared to other centres included in WIG.6, Wigan had the highest overall Zone A rents. In addition, the increases in rents experienced in Wigan are relatively steep when compared to the centres above. It is notable however that Donaldson's indicate rents in Wigan Town Centre to be range from £1,290- 1,400/ sq m in the Grand Arcade, £1,022 in The Galleries and to around £311- 430/ sq m in the Marketgate Shopping Centre.

WIG.31 A 'yield' represents the relationship between the rental income that a property is likely to command and its capital value, expressed as a percentage. Town centre yields broadly represent the market's assessment of the risk attached to investing in a particular centre; the higher the yield, the greater the risk involved in investment. Yields provide a simple bench mark which the property market uses to assess the comparative attractiveness of different shopping centres. Many considerations determine the yield an investor will require for a particular property, including: the physical condition of the building; the potential for rental growth; the certainty of income; lease arrangement; and the range of uses to which the building can be put.

WIG.32 Figure WIG.7 shows the yields recorded in Wigan since April 1995 based on the information recorded by the Valuation Office Agency.

**Figure WIG.7 Retail Yields in Wigan**



Apr-95	Oct-95	Apr-96	Oct-96	Apr-97	Oct-97	Apr-98	Oct-98	Apr-99	Oct-99	Apr-00	Oct-00	Apr-01	Oct-01	Apr-02	Oct-02	Apr-03	Jan-04	Jul-04	Jan-05	Jul-05	Jan-06	Jul-06
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	6

Source: Valuation Office Agency (VOA): Property Market Report (PMR), July 2006.

WIG.33 The information detailed in WIG.7 shows that since April 1995 yields have stayed constant at 7%. In July 2006, yields dropped to 6%, the lowest ever recorded level, indicating improved investor confidence in the town centre. However work recent deals in the town centre, as highlighted by the work undertaken by Donaldson's, record lower yields than 6%, although this relates to property in prime retail locations.

### **Accessibility**

WIG.34 Wigan is situated on the A577 which connects to Pemberton to the west and Bolton to the east. The town centre has easy access to the M62, M1 and M6 via the A579 nearby.

WIG.35 The town centre has three multi-storey car parks including Galleries multi-storey car park (625 spaces) which runs Monday to Saturday,

Water Street multi-storey car park (520 spaces) which runs Monday to Sunday and Mesnes Terrace multi-storey car park (325 spaces) which runs Monday to Sunday. In addition, there are six other car parks: Chapel Lane (320 spaces); Harrogate Street (107 spaces); Mona Street (81 spaces); Civic Centre (48 spaces); Sovereign Road (36 spaces); and Pepper Mill Lane (30 spaces). The car park charges are as follows: up to 3 hours (£1.30), 3 to 4 hours (£1.70), 4 to 6 hours (£4.30) and 6+ hours (£6.50). There is also on-street parking available (324 spaces) with the following charges: up to 0.5 hours (60p), 0.5 to 1 hour (80p), 1 to 2 hours (£1.30) and 2 to 3 hours (£2.20). The new Grand Arcade Shopping Centre also incorporates two new multi-storey car parks off Millgate.

WIG.36 The town centre also benefits from good accessibility by public transport. A network of local buses serves Wigan and district, co-ordinated by Greater Manchester PTE. They depart from a bus station in the town centre, located through Lever Street (off Market Street) which is very accessible. This is also served by National Express long distance services. Since deregulation and privatisation of the bus industry in the 1980s and 1990s, a number of different bus companies have operated in Wigan, some big, some small. At present two larger national operators are First Manchester and Arriva. First Manchester operates routes generally to the north-east, east and south-east of the town, including buses to Leigh, Bolton and Manchester. Arriva, which operates north and west of Wigan to Bolton, Chorley, Leigh, Preston, Skelmersdale, Southport, St Helens and Warrington. South Lancs travel also provide services around the borough of Wigan.

WIG.37 There are two railway stations in Wigan. These are located virtually across the street from each other in Wallgate in the southern fringe of the town centre. Wigan North Western is linked to the electrified north-south West Coast Main Line. Virgin Trains provides express trains to London Euston, Birmingham, Lancaster, Carlisle, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Northern Rail has trains to Preston and Blackpool and a

regular local service along the line to St Helens and Liverpool Lime Street. Wigan Wallgate serves lines running east and west of Wigan. Northern Rail provides trains to Southport and Kirkby (with connections to Liverpool Central and the Merseyrail system). A frequent local service also operates to Bolton and Manchester (Victoria and Piccadilly), with most trains continuing through to other destinations such as Manchester Airport, Stockport, Oldham and Rochdale. Pemberton railway station serves that suburban area of town.

WIG.38 The Principal Shopping Area of Wigan is pedestrian friendly and provides a safe shopping environment (Figure WIG.8). The Tesco supermarket at present functions more as a standalone shopping facility however, and could be better integrates into the rest of the town by signage and pedestrian crossings to encourage linked trips.



WIG.39 As part of the health check NEMS Market Research have undertaken a pedestrian count of movement around Wigan Town Centre. Four count points were identified: Makinson Arcade outside no 17/19 Health Rack (location 1); Standishgate outside Marks and Spencer (location 2); Standishgate outside Primark/or Leigh Arcade outside Body Shop (location 3); and Market Place outside no. 32/34 Nationwide (location 4). The number of passing pedestrians in both directions was counted over a five minute period at three points during the day: once in the morning (between 10.00 and 11.00), once at midday (between 12.00 and 13.00) and once in the afternoon (between 14.00 and 15.00). This process was repeated over five days a Wednesday (03.01.07), Friday (05.01.07), Saturday (06.01.07), Monday (08.01.07) and a Tuesday (09.01.07). The results were then indexed with the location having the highest level of footfall being afforded a top score of 100, and the subsequent indexed footfall being calculated accordingly. Figures WIG.9 and WIG.10 below show the results obtained through this

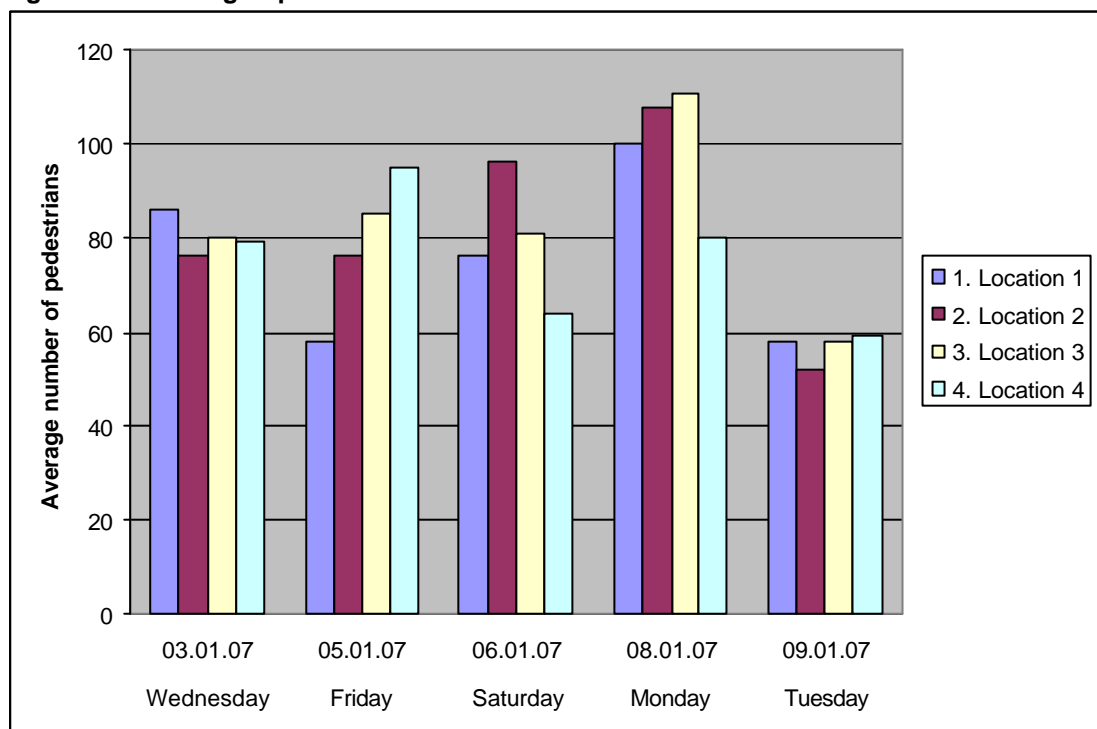
process.

**Figure WIG.9 Wigan pedestrian count (average number of pedestrians recorded)**

Location	Date of count					Total Count	Total Index
	Wednesday 03.01.07	Friday 05.01.07	Saturday 06.01.07	Monday 08.01.07	Tuesday 09.01.07		
Location 1	86	58	76	100	58	377	92
Location 2	76	76	96	108	52	408	100
Location 3	80	85	81	56	58	360	88
Location 4	79	95	64	80	59	376	92
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>1,521</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: NEMS Market Research, 2007

**Figure WIG.10 Wigan pedestrian count**



WIG.40 The pedestrian count data indicates that Monday was the busiest of the five days in terms of footfall, with 344 pedestrians recorded in total for the four count points, compared to 321 on the Wednesday, 317 on the Saturday, 314 on the Friday and 227 on the Tuesday. Location 2 recorded the greatest number of pedestrians overall with a total count for the five survey days of 408 persons, compared to 377 persons counted at Location 1, 376 persons counted at Location 4 and 360 persons counted at Location 3.

WIG.41 In respect of accessibility, the in-street survey undertaken by NEMS identified the following:

- 58% of visitors to Wigan had regular access to a car for personal use during the day and during the evening/night-time;
- The most common method of arriving in the centre was driving a car or van (40%). This was followed by bus, minibus or coach (32%) and on foot (16%);
- Of those that drove the most popular place to park was seen to be in the Galleries Shopping Centre Multi Storey, with 26% of drivers leaving their vehicle here. 13% of drivers parked on-street and 13% parked in other places;
- The majority of drivers (82%) had no difficulty in obtaining a car parking space on the day of the interview;
- 29% of people travelled for eleven to fifteen minutes to reach Wigan, 28% travelled for over twenty minutes and 18% for between sixteen to twenty minutes;
- Car parking provision was deemed to be 'about the same' in Wigan compared to other centres by 34% of visitors, although 34% didn't know and 17% considered it to be 'worse' than in other centres; and
- Accessibility by public transport was considered by 46% of visitors to Wigan to be 'about the same' as other centres, although 27% didn't know and 16% indicating that it was 'better' in Wigan than in other centres.

### **Perception of Safety and Occurrence of Crime**

WIG.42 In terms of shopper safety during the daytime, the majority of visitors interviewed through the in-street survey (76%) deemed this to be 'about the same' as in other centres which they visited. However, 9% considered daytime safety in Wigan to be 'better' than in other centres. With respect to safety during the night-time/evening 46% indicated that this was 'about the same' as in other centres, with 10% stating that

night-time/evening safety in Wigan was 'worse' than in other centres. 39% of respondents did not know either way.

### **Customer Views and Behaviour**

WIG.43 The in-street survey undertaken by NEMS Market Research indicated the following in respect of visitors to Wigan:

- The vast majority of visitors to Wigan (89%) had travelled to the centre directly from home;
- Almost half of those interviewed (50%) indicated that they were not a visitor to the local area;
- The most popular responses recorded when visitors were asked why they were in Wigan were: to undertake clothes/shoes shopping (23%), to undertake food and grocery shopping (21%) and due to work/school/college (10%);
- Over half of visitors (54%) planned to stay in the centre for up to two hours, with a further 27% planning to stay for half the day;
- 32% of visitors indicated that they planned to undertake their main food shop on the day of the survey. Of these, 59.4% stated that they visit Wigan at least once a week for such purposes;
- 43% of visitors planned to purchase clothing and footwear goods on the day of the survey, with the majority of these people (54%) last visited Wigan for such purposes;
- When visitors were asked how often they visited the centre today compared to five years ago, 56% stated that they visited Wigan 'about as frequently'. However, 14% visited 'more frequently than before', whilst 12% visited 'less frequently than before'.

WIG.44 Visitors to Wigan were asked to rate the centre on a number of aspects, compared to other shopping centres which they visited. The aspects identified by more than half of respondents as being either 'about the same' in Wigan than in any other centres were as follows: choice of shops; quality of shops; banks and other financial services;

the shopping environment; cleanliness; public information/signposts/public facilities; and daytime safety. The aspects which most respondents as being either 'worse' or 'much worse' than in other centres were: range and choice of pubs/restaurants; leisure facilities; car parking provision; car parking prices; accessibility by public transport; entertainment/events/performances and evening/ night safety.

### **Environmental Quality**

WIG.45 Wigan is the main town centre within the Borough, The majority of the shopping area is pedestrianised, restricting vehicular/ pedestrian conflict and providing an attractive shopping environment (Figure WIG.11). Additionally, a significant proportion of town centre units within Wigan is under cover, including arcades and shopping centres, for example Market Gate Shopping Centre and the



Figure WIG.11: Standishgate/ Market Place

Galleries Shopping Centre. Pavements in the area are wide, and pedestrian crossings are provided to aid movement by foot. The streets are clean with no evidence of litter, whilst shop units themselves are maintained to a good standard. Street furniture is well integrated and there are plenty of seating areas within the town centre. There is a good standard of lighting and CCTV is in operation.

WIG.46 There is a mixture of architectural styles within Wigan Town Centre including a number of historic buildings.

### **Business Surveys**

WIG.47 It is useful in assessing the vitality and viability of a town centre to consider the views of businesses. A total of 468 surveys were

delivered by WYG to businesses in Wigan Town Centre. 115 responses were returned equating to a response rate of 25%.

WIG.48 The survey revealed the following:

- Of the businesses who responded to the survey, 41% had been trading in the town centre for over twenty years, whilst 30% had been trading for ten to twenty years. Notably, only four businesses had been operating for one year or less;
- Respondents to the survey comprised 35% comparison retailers, 22% retail services, 20% professional services, 15% convenience retailers and 8% leisure services;
- 60% of respondents considered business to have either grown significantly or grown moderately since they began trading, with 20% considering trade to have remained largely static;
- 37% of respondents believed their business to be trading either well or very well. Additionally, 50% of respondents believed their business to be trading moderately;
- The overwhelming majority of respondents (87%) leased their premises;
- Respondents relied on local residents for 40% of their trade;
- The majority of respondents (76%) deemed there to be an appropriate mix of shops and other non-retail uses in the town centre;
- Inadequate customer car parking was considered by the highest proportion of businesses (21%) to be the main constraint on current performance. This was followed by high rents/overheads (14%) and the lack of footfall outside premises (13%);
- 47% of respondents had no plans to alter their business in any way over the next five years; and
- The biggest competitor to business in Wigan was seen to be Bolton.

WIG.49 When asked to rate a number of different aspects of the town centre, access by public transport was seen to be good by 31% of respondents, whilst 78% considered traffic congestion in Wigan to be poor and a further 74% believed the level of parking provision to be poor. Significantly, 95% of respondents considered that cheaper town centre parking would improve Wigan. In addition, 90% indicated that increasing the quantity of parking spaces and reducing traffic congestion would improve Wigan.

### **Conclusions on Vitality and Viability**

WIG.50 This study has shown Wigan to be a vital and viable town centre. Over the past few years, its ranking in the sub-regional shopping hierarchy has increased and commercial yields have decreased, indicating a strengthening retail sector. A strong demand was shown by retailers seeking to locate to the town, accessibility was seen to generally be good, and the town centre shopping environment was attractive. Additionally, the comparison retail sector in the town was shown to be strong when compared to the national average.

WIG.51 Notwithstanding these positive attributes, the convenience sector, retail services, leisure services and financial and business services in the town centre are below the UK national average. Additionally, vacancy rates in Wigan have increased in the past few years and are very high, highlighting a weakness in Wigan's retail sector.