

Appendix 4: Town Centre Healthchecks

Gedling Borough Council

Arnold Town Centre

Description

Arnold town centre is the largest centre within the Gedling authority area, comprising a total of 46,180 sq.m of commercial floorspace, across 202 units.

The centre is relatively linear in nature, focused around Front Street to the north, through to Worrall Avenue and south on to High Street. The northern tip of the centre features the Arnold Library and Arnold Leisure Centre, with the new AMP development off Market Place in the centre, surrounded by predominantly pedestrianised streets. To the south, along Nottingham Road is the large Sainsbury's store. This store is outside the defined town centre boundary but within the Experian/Goad area shown on the appended composition map.

Overall, the centre was busy on the days of our visits, with an attractive public realm, particularly around the library to the north and the AMP in the centre. Accessibility is good, and there were clear signs of safe pedestrian movement throughout.



Figure 1: Large convenience operator to the north of Arnold town centre, with on street car parking and wider public realm



Figure 2: Pedestrian crossing, public realm and commercial units along Front Street



Figure 3: Principally pedestrianised area within the centre of Arnold, with public seating and wider hard landscape features



Figure 4: Arnold town centre library off Front Street, to the north of the centre

Table 1 Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2023 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2023 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2023 (%)
Comparison	11,340	24.6%	29.8%
Convenience	14,450	31.3%	15.5%
Financial	2,040	4.4%	6.4%
Leisure	10,000	21.7%	26.6%
Retail Service	3,620	7.8%	7.2%
Vacant	4,730	10.2%	13.9%
TOTAL	46,180	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Composition of Arnold town centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of December 2023; UK Average from Experian Goad Report December 2023.

Table 2 Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2023	Units at 2023 (%)	Units UK Average at 2023 (%)
Comparison	58	28.7%	26.6%
Convenience	20	9.9%	9.3%
Financial	10	5.0%	8.5%
Leisure	51	25.2%	25.6%
Retail Service	44	21.8%	15.8%
Vacant	19	9.4%	14.1%
TOTAL	202	100.0%	100.0%

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of December 2023; UK Average from Experian Goad Report December 2023.

Uses

The Experian/Goad area of Arnold accommodates 202 commercial units which collectively provide 46,180 sq.m of floorspace.

Including the Sainsbury's store which is outside the defined town centre boundary but within the Experian/Goad area, the centre's convenience use accounts for a total of 14,450 sq.m or 31.3% of the total floorspace (significantly above the national average of 15.5%), occupying a total of 20 or 9.9% of units (compared to a national average of 9.3%). The lower proportion of units occupied by convenience operators when compared to the floorspace, is due to Arnold's largest units being two nationally operating convenience stores, with Asda measuring 5,610 sq.m (located to the north of the centre off Front Street), and the Sainsbury's store measuring 6,440 sq.m (located towards the south of the town centre off Sir John Robinson Way). The remaining convenience store units comprise a mix of operators including bakers, butchers, confectioners, tobacconists, and news agents.

The comparison goods offer within Arnold comprises 11,340 sq.m or 24.6% of floorspace, and 58 units or 28.7% of the total units, compared to a national average of 29.8% and 26.6% respectively. There are a wide range of comparison good services available both in terms of national multiples such as Boots, Poundland, Peacocks and independent operators selling a range of clothing and footwear, jewellery and gifts. The units vary in size and are well dispersed throughout the centre.

Arnold also benefits from a strong retail service presence, with 3,620 sq.m or 7.8% of the total commercial floorspace and 44 units or 21.8% of the total available units, which are higher than the national averages in both cases. The retail units are well dispersed throughout the centre and contain a range of services including health and beauty, opticians, funeral services and dry cleaners.

Leisure services account for 21.7% of Arnold's commercial floorspace and 25.2% of its units, which are slightly below the national average figures of 26.6% and 25.6% respectively. There are however a good range of services available throughout the centre, including public houses, restaurants, cafes and take aways. The majority of the leisure units are occupied by independent operators, with national operators including Costa, Domino's and Papa John's within the defined town centre and McDonald's outside the centre boundary but within the Experian/Goad area.

In terms of financial services, Arnold comprises 2,040 sq.m or 4.4% of floorspace and 10 units or 5.0% of the total number of units. In both cases, the proportion of financial businesses falls below the national average. The financial offer principally comprises three banks (Halifax, Natwest and Lloyds), a building society and estate agents.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Arnold contains a good selection of services open during the day, with its daytime economic offer based around its role as a hub for convenience, retail, comparison and financial services. These facilities generally operate from 9am to 6pm, however the larger national convenience units, including Asda within the town centre and Sainsbury's within the wider Experian/Goad area, have opening hours that extend into the evening.

In terms of its evening economy, Arnold contains a range of public houses, restaurants and takeaways which operate late into the evening. The evening economy is principally focused around drinking and eating (whether that be on the premises or takeaway) and that there are few licensed premises, including the Cross Keys, Robin Hood & Little John and the Eagles Corner, alongside bars and restaurants.

Vacancies

The vacancy rate in Arnold is below the national average, both in respect to floorspace and units. The floorspace vacancy rate is 10.2% compared to a UK average of 13.9%, and the unit vacancy rate is 9.4% compared to a UK average of 14.1%.

There is a particularly high concentration of vacant units located towards the northern periphery of the centre off Front Street, and further to the south including the former Wilko. Whilst these vacant units are generally well-maintained, the concentration detracts from the environmental quality of the town centre as a whole.

The largest of the vacant units at the time of our survey was the former Wilko, which is a dominant unit to the south of the centre. During our visit, this prominent closure detracted somewhat from the vitality to the south of the market place. We understand that the unit has since been reoccupied by B&M.

The remainder of the vacant units are dispersed along the southern and northern ends of the centre. These are generally well-maintained and, given the smaller nature of these units, the vacancies do not have a meaningful impact on the appearance of Arnold.

None of the vacant units are currently subject to any planning applications.

Opportunity Sites

The Council purchased the vacant Working Men's Club and properties at 135-141 Front Street, as part of a wider scheme to help rejuvenate the northern part of the town centre. The Council is currently working with partners to formulate a masterplan using pooled funding from business rates, which will then be used to help apply for grants and wider funding to bring the proposals to life. The idea is to bring forward a leisure cultural hub fronting on to High Street, which draws together the current leisure offer in the north, whilst improving the wider town centre aesthetics of this part of the centre.

Furthermore, town centre car parking is good, with a number of off-street car parks provided throughout the centre in various ownerships. As such, there may be opportunities to explore the repurposing of some of the available car parking for alternative uses, although ensuring available parking is not significantly impacted on is key.

At the time of our survey, we noted that securing the future reuse of the former Wilko store would also significantly enhance the aesthetics of the southern part of the town centre. We understand that this unit has since been reoccupied by B&M, which is a positive indicator of continued investor confidence in Arnold.

We are also aware that the Council has commissioned a Masterplan for Arnold town centre. We understand that the Vision for the centre is still emerging, but that initial feedback from the consultants has noted the importance of a stronger emphasis/focus on the following:

- Greater Connectivity to and from Arnold
 - Wayfinding
 - Recommendations for improvements to shopfronts/accommodation above shops
 - Pedestrianisation of certain key sections of the town centre
 - New housing within the town centre
 - Car park re-configuration (noting that some car parks are at full capacity while others have less usage)
-

- Improvements to support active travel and public transport provision from outlying Gedling Borough areas (e.g. Burton Joyce, Lambley, Colwick Newstead, etc.)
- Improvements to the public realm, including lighting scape
- Improvement to green spaces in and around the town centre.
- Public art
- Opportunities to bring more public services into the town centre to support the long-term sustainability which could improve the Boroughs HQ
- Identifying opportunities to embed the heritage of Arnold town centre into key interventions.

In addition, the Council intends to consult on the permanent location of Arnold Market, and the type of market provision to be included. A key constraint in this regard is the City Council Market Charter, which impacts on affordability, and the Council seeks to resolve this issue.

Pedestrian Flows

Footfall in Arnold on the day of the site visit was relatively high. The majority of the pedestrian activity was focused to the north of the centre off Front Street, with the many users seen browsing the commercial units and seated outside the various leisure facilities. A number of pedestrians were travelling to and from the Asda in particular, and using the bus stops along Front Street.

Pedestrian movement through the centre of Arnold around the AMP and the Market Place was also observed to be high, but there was an apparent issue between pedestrian movement and vehicle movement on what appears to be a pedestrianised area.

The very southern part of the centre was observed to be quieter.

Accessibility

On the whole, Arnold is relatively well-served by public transport, with a number of bus stops located throughout the town centre both along Front Street and to the west along High Street. The bus stops link the centre to Nottingham, Killisick and Clifton, and depart at very regular times throughout the day and into the evening.

However, unlike other defined town centres in Greater Nottingham, Arnold does not benefit from a train or tram stop within or in proximity to the town centre.

Arnold benefits from a good provision of on and off-street parking, with parking available at the Asda, at dedicated town centre car parks off High Street and to the south as part of the Wilko (now B&M) and Poundland units and the Sainsbury's store (with the latter being outside of the defined town centre boundary but within the wider Experian/Goad area). There is also a small amount of on-street parking available along Front Street in particular.

Worrall Avenue and on to Front Street are one way systems, meaning that some traffic is diverted around the heart of the centre, reducing traffic movements in some cases. The largely pedestrianised area around Market Place also deters traffic from travelling through the town centre, which instead principally travels up High Street.

Cycle stands are available throughout the centre, although on the day of our visit these were not being well-used overall (albeit that the survey was undertaken in December).

Perception of Safety

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

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

Environmental Quality

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

There are some areas of lower environmental quality, particularly where units have remained closed for longer periods of time, and in particular the terrace of units to the west of Front Street. Furthermore, there is a general feeling that the Arnold Leisure Centre and Bonington Theatre does not make the most of its entrance and almost puts it back to the centre.

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

To the south of the centre along Nottingham Road, the environment changes to a more dispersed and functional character constructed around road infrastructure. This area feels slightly disconnected / independent to Arnold town centre (albeit that the Sainsbury’s store is reasonably well-connected with the defined centre both physically and visually).

Overall, there appears to be a lack of green infrastructure, with limited planting particularly in the northern half of the centre.

Conclusions

Overall, Arnold is a town centre which is well-connected by public transport and benefits from a strong walking catchment. The offer is

mixed, and provides a good range of retail, leisure, service and wider community uses to meet the residents' needs.

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

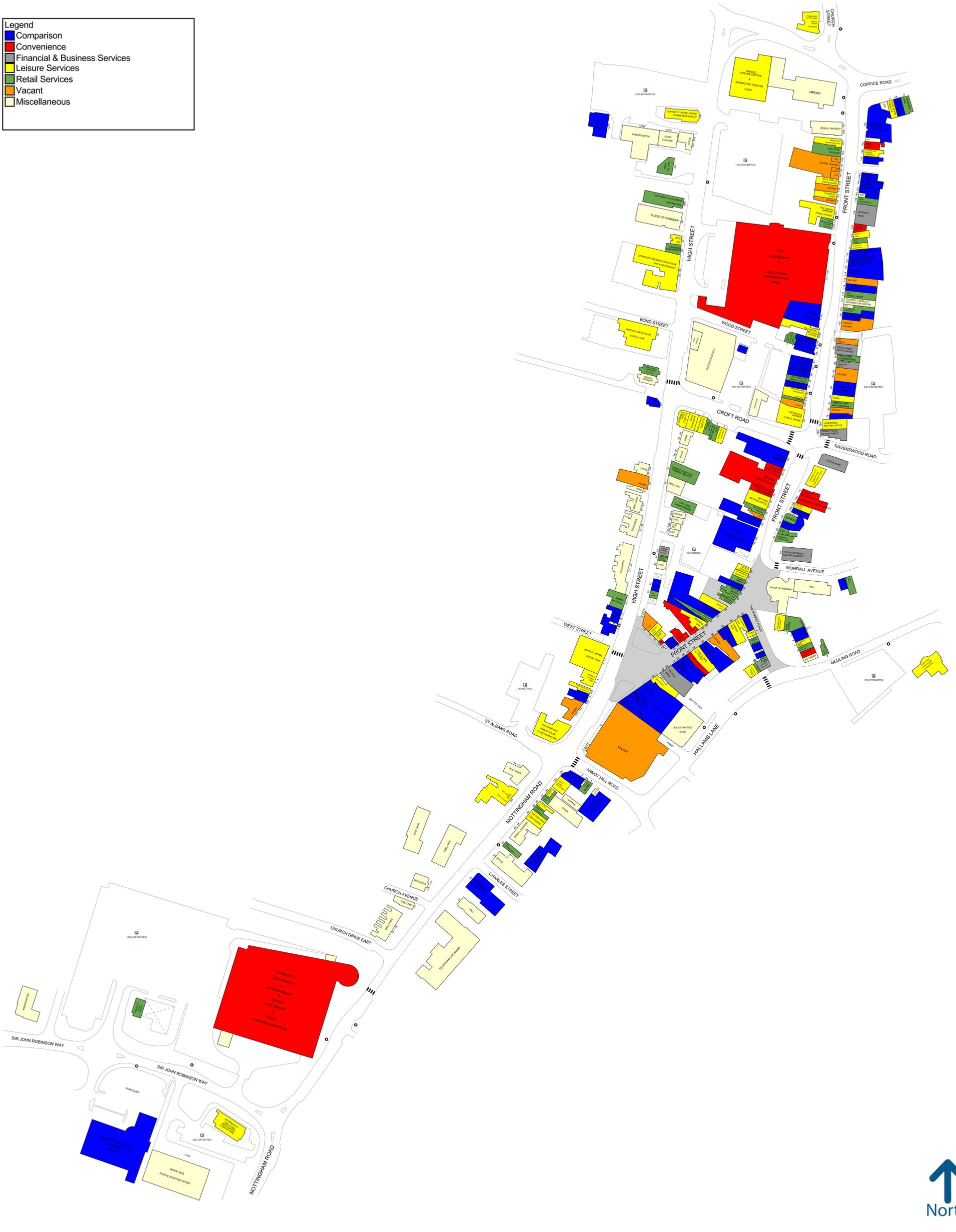
The centre is well suited towards pedestrians with low volumes of traffic passing through centre and traffic calming measures in place ensuring low speeds. Wide pavements and ample off-street planting and furniture also contribute to a pleasant urban environment overall. There may be opportunities to enhance the green infrastructure throughout the centre, providing linkages to the surrounding green spaces.

At the time of our visit, the vacant Wilko store detracted from the overarching environmental quality to the south, although we understand that this unit has since been reoccupied by B&M. To the north, there are areas of more predominant vacancies, and an opportunity to tie in the library and leisure centre better into the centre. Drawing on these important elements of the centre and encouraging trips to and from the wider leisure and community offer will enhance the centre overall.

Overall, Arnold is performing well in meeting the day-to-day needs of local residents and contains a good variety of services, serving both its daytime and evening economies. Its vacancy level is below the national average and there is a good sign of investment overall. The streetscape is generally pleasant and well-maintained. It is considered to be generally vital and viable.

Legend

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



50 metres

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Broxtowe Borough Council

Beeston Town Centre

Description

Beeston town centre is located in the south east of the Broxtowe authority area, approximately 4.5km to the south west of Nottingham city centre.

The town centre comprises a total of 42,330 sq.m of commercial floorspace, or 211 units. The centre is formed around High Road, which is a pedestrianised area of the town centre and which includes a wide range of commercial units including retail, service, leisure and financial uses.

The centre includes large Tesco Extra and Sainsbury's convenience stores, with adjacent expanses of car parking. The Arc Cinema opened its doors in 2021, and provides eight cinema screens and a wider commercial leisure offer and previously, work was undertaken at The Square to refurbish and part redevelop the former shopping centre to create modern format commercial units fronting onto The Square.

The Beeston Town Centre Plan SPD was adopted by the Council in June 2008. The 2008 SPD sought to enhance the quality of the centre through the encouragement of diverse uses, a strong evening economy and the promotion of high quality developments. We comment further on the implications of the 2008 Plan later in the healthcheck.



Figure 1: Pedestrianised area of High Road, providing good public realm with both hard and soft landscaping.



Figure 2: The Square redevelopment in the town centre has seen the partial demolition and refurbishment of the former 1970s shopping centre.



Figure 3: Bicycle stands are present at the new tram and bus interchange, providing space to securely park bikes.



Figure 4: The tram line and tram stop within Beeston town centre, linking the town centre to Nottingham city centre and Hucknall.

Table 1 Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2023 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2023 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2023 (%)
Comparison	8,420	19.9%	29.8%
Convenience	14,830	35.0%	15.5%
Financial	2,510	5.9%	6.4%
Leisure	9,930	23.5%	26.6%
Retail Service	3,590	8.5%	7.2%
Vacant	3,050	7.2%	13.9%
TOTAL	42,330	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Composition of Beeston town centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of December 2023; UK Average from Experian Goad Report December 2023.

Table 2 Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2023	Units at 2023 (%)	Units UK Average at 2023 (%)
Comparison	56	26.5%	26.6%
Convenience	21	10.0%	9.3%
Financial	20	9.5%	8.5%
Leisure	51	24.2%	25.6%
Retail Service	43	20.4%	15.8%
Vacant	20	9.5%	14.1%
TOTAL	211	100.0%	100.0%

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of December 2023; UK Average from Experian Goad Report December 2023.

Uses

Beeston town centre accommodates a total of 211 commercial units which collectively provide 42,330 sq.m of commercial floorspace.

The centre’s convenience use accounts for a total of 14,830 sq.m or 35.0% of the total floorspace (significantly above the national average of 15.5%), occupying a total of 21 or 10.0% of units (compared to a national average of 9.3%). Beeston town centre includes a Lidl, Sainsbury’s and Tesco Extra, which accounts for the significantly higher proportion of convenience floorspace when compared to the proportion of units. There are also a wide range of newsagents, bakers, butchers and grocers.

The comparison goods offer within Beeston comprises 8,420 sq.m or 19.9% of floorspace, and 56 units or 26.5% of the total units, compared to a national average of 29.8% and 26.6% respectively. The comparison offer within Beeston is mixed, with a range of retailers selling gifts, jewellery, clothing and mobile telephones, alongside a number of charity shops (11 in total, or 20% of the total comparison operators).

In terms of the retail service provision, Beeston’s offer is dominated heavily by the health and beauty sector, with a number of hairdressers, barbers and beauty salons. Overall, the retail service offer is greater than the national average in terms of units and floorspace within the centre.

Leisure services account for 23.5% of Beeston’s commercial floorspace and 24.2% of its units, which are very slightly below the national average figures of 26.6% and 25.6% respectively. There are however a good range of services available throughout the centre, including public houses, restaurants, cafes and take aways.

In terms of financial services, Beeston’s offer comprises 5.9% of floorspace and 9.5% of the total number of units. At the time of our survey, Beeston included four banks (Halifax, HSBC, Santander and Lloyds, although the latter has since closed), alongside estate agents and solicitors.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Beeston’s daytime offer is good overall, with a range of commercial operators open during the day. The daytime economy is spread throughout the centre, and therefore it is busy throughout, with good levels of activity witnessed within the centre. Some of the larger convenience operators have longer opening hours, and therefore also add to the evening economy.

The centre’s daytime economy is further enhanced by Beeston’s general outdoor markets which run every Monday and Wednesday, and the Beeston farmers’ market which runs every third Saturday of each month.

Turning to the evening economy, Beeston has a range of public houses, restaurants and bars which encourage activity into the evening. The operators are spread well throughout the centre, adding to its feeling of safety and activity. These food and drink venues, alongside the cinema and gym which both open into the evening, create a general positive level of activity.

Vacancies

The vacancy rate in Beeston is below the national average, both in respect to floorspace and units. The floorspace vacancy rate is 7.2% compared to a UK average of 13.9%, and the unit vacancy rate is 9.5% compared to a UK average of 14.1%.

The largest vacant unit is the former Wilkos unit located at The Square in proximity to the Arc Cinema and surrounding commercial uses. Other vacancies within the centre are spread relatively evenly, with no particular area suffering more from concentrations of vacancies.

Opportunity Sites

The principal opportunity site within the centre is the area to the front of the Arc Cinema, currently consisting of informal car parking and hardstanding, known as Beeston Square.

Permission has been granted for the construction of new student accommodation on the site, bringing forward commercial units at ground floor and 419 studio apartments above. The redevelopment of this important site will not only improve the environmental aesthetics of the centre, but will also bring with it additional footfall and expenditure which will help to support the centre moving forward.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian activity was relatively good throughout the centre on the days of our visit. Strong linkages were made between the larger convenience operators and the rest of the businesses within the centre, drawing visitors in from the large car parks on the periphery.

The principally pedestrianised area at the heart of the centre also encourages pedestrian movement along High Road, providing safe access for those on foot.

Accessibility

Beeston town centre is considered to be accessible overall, with Beeston tram stop located to the south west, linking the centre with Nottingham city centre and Hucknall. Trams run at frequencies of four to eight an hour throughout the day and evening.

In addition, Beeston is served by a series of accessible bus stops located around the centre, linking Beeston to Nottingham and further afield. The bus stops are positioned around the periphery of the centre, away from the pedestrianised area along High Road, but are still within walking distance from the commercial offer of the centre.

Beeston railway station is located approximately 0.6km to the south east of Beeston town centre, which although is within walking distance, may not be easily accessible to all. The station links Beeston with Leicester, Nottingham, Matlock, Cardiff and London, with trains departing at regular intervals throughout the day.

Pedestrian accessibility is good throughout the centre, with the level and wide pedestrianised areas along High Road providing safe access for those on foot or in mobility scooters and pushing prams.

Parking is available principally at dedicated off-street car parks, with the largest being available at the Sainsbury's and Tesco convenience stores. These car parks are within an accessible distance to the commercial operators within the centre.

Perception of Safety

Beeston had a good perception of safety, with no area feeling unsafe on the days of our visit, including both during the day and into the evening. The overarching feeling of safety was helped by the evening commercial offer, which includes areas of outdoor seating fronting onto High Road.

Whilst higher levels of traffic pass along the peripheral roads, crossings, wide pavements and sufficient room for movement for pedestrians, ensure that safety is maintained even in these areas.

Environmental Quality

Overall, Beeston has a good environmental quality, with a good level of well maintained public realm, hard and soft landscaping throughout and well kept shopfronts.

The pedestrianised areas around The Square and up along High Road include good quality public realm features such as benches, sculptures

and other elements, and the areas also include trees and flower beds which add to the overarching feel.

To the north of the centre, although not of poor quality, the shop fronts do reduce in quality somewhat, with some areas which may benefit from a more uniformed approach in terms of design.

The centre links to Broadgate Park to the north, providing accessible greenspace for visitors to the centre. To the south west, St John the Baptist Church provides an attractive setting for the centre.

Conclusions

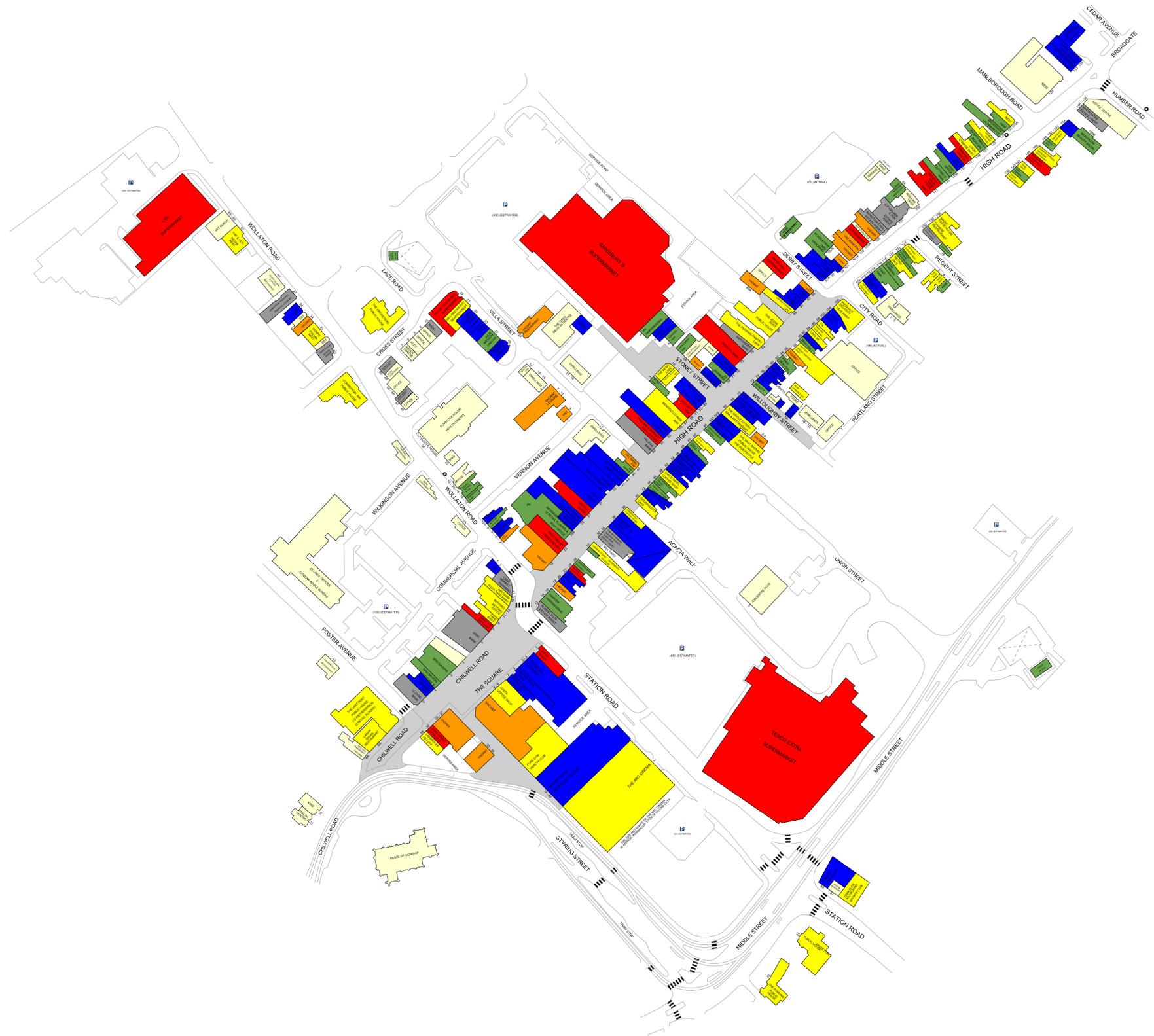
Overall, Beeston town centre is considered to be meeting its catchments' needs in providing key retail, leisure, service and financial facilities to meet residents' day to day needs.

The centre's offer in terms of floorspace is dominated heavily by the large convenience operators, which include adjacent car parks serving the town centre. Ensuring that shoppers are drawn into the wider centre from these operators and the adjacent car parking is key, although we did witness linked trips on the days of our visits.

The pedestrianised areas around High Road and The Square provide a pleasant town centre environment for shoppers, providing space to sit and enjoy the centre.

Beeston has a low vacancy rate both in terms of floorspace and units and a good commercial offer overall. Its leisure offer is good, providing a range of facilities which serve both the daytime and evening economy, and with generally positive levels of activity in the evenings.

Beeston is performing well in meeting the day-to-day needs of local residents and contains a good variety of services, serving both its daytime and evening economies. The streetscape is generally pleasant and well maintained. It is considered to be generally vital and viable.



Legend

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



50 metres

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Nottingham City Council

Bulwell Town Centre

Description

Bulwell town centre is located to the north west of Nottingham city centre, and to the south of Hucknall. Bulwell is a relatively linear centre, with the Market Place to the south off Main Street, moving north to the Springfield Retail Park and Morrisons foodstore.

Bulwell comprises a total of 50,300 sq.m of commercial floorspace, and 149 units. The centre's floorspace composition is dominated by the large format convenience provision comprising the Tesco Extra foodstore within the centre and the Morrisons to the north.

Other operators are focused along Main Street heading to Market Place and then off Commercial Road. Beyond the Town Square to the south is the Bulwell Bus Station, Riverlyn Medical Centre alongside Bulwell Railway Station and Bulwell Riverside Library. There are therefore a range of wider community uses accessible from the commercial 'core' of Bulwell.

It was announced in November 2023, that the authority's bid to the Levelling Up Fund for a £20m project to improve the town centre had been given the 'green light'. The original bid for Bulwell involved improvements to key amenities and links to transport services including enhancing green space and public realm alongside the River Leen; improvements to the market place and better connectivity.



Figure 1: The Wetherspoons unit along Holborn Place.



Figure 2: Operators along Commercial Road, a pedestrianised route off Bulwell Town Square



Figure 3: the former Wilko unit is still accessible from the adjacent car park, with smaller commercial operators (Post Office, mobility scooters) still present within the unit.



Figure 4: Bulwell Market is held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays throughout the week.

Table 1 Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2023 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2023 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2023 (%)
Comparison	14,460	28.7%	29.8%
Convenience	20,070	39.9%	15.5%
Financial	880	1.7%	6.4%
Leisure	5,810	11.6%	26.6%
Retail Service	2,870	5.7%	7.2%
Vacant	6,210	12.3%	13.9%
TOTAL	50,300	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Composition of Arnold town centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of December 2023; UK Average from Experian Goad Report December 2023.

Table 2 Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2023	Units at 2023 (%)	Units UK Average at 2023 (%)
Comparison	44	29.5%	26.8%
Convenience	18	12.1%	9.3%
Financial	8	5.4%	8.7%
Leisure	32	21.5%	25.3%
Retail Service	28	18.8%	15.9%
Vacant	19	12.8%	13.9%
TOTAL	149	100.0%	100.0%

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of December 2023; UK Average from Experian Goad Report December 2023.

Uses

Bulwell town centre accommodates a total of 149 commercial units which collectively provide 50,300 sq.m of commercial floorspace.

In terms of its convenience offer, Bulwell includes a Lidl, Morrisons and Tesco Extra, alongside a Heron and Iceland frozen food offer. The proportion of commercial floorspace occupied by convenience operators is 39.9%, which is significantly above the national average, and 12.1% of the total number of units in the centre, again above the national average. Other convenience operators within the centre include newsagents, butchers and bakers.

Turning to the comparison offer in the centre, Bulwell has a below average proportion of comparison floorspace but an above average proportion of comparison units. Bulwell’s comparison offer is dominated by the value end of the market, with discounters such as B&M, Poundland, Card Factory and Shoezone, alongside operators including Superdrug and Matalan. Bulwell also includes a range of independent comparison operators selling clothing and footwear, furniture, DIY goods and mobiles. There are also a total of six charity shops within the centre.

Bulwell’s financial offer is relatively limited, with 1.7% of total floorspace occupied by such operators and eight units. The centre does include a Halifax and Lloyds bank, alongside The Nottingham building society.

Bulwell’s leisure offer is significantly below the national average in terms of the proportion of floorspace at 11.6%, but the proportion of units occupied by leisure operators is higher at 21.5%. This indicates that although the proportion of leisure operators does fall below the national average, the operators that are present are principally trading from smaller units. The nature of the leisure offer within Bulwell includes a range of food and drink uses, within public houses, cafes and takeaways, alongside a range of amusements and a gym. There are 13 takeaways in total, comprising 40.6% of Bulwell’s leisure units.

In terms of the retail service offer within Bulwell, the number of units occupied by such operators falls above the national average, although the proportion of floorspace falls below the national average. Bulwell’s retail service offer is focused predominantly on the health and beauty sector, with a range of beauty salons, hairdressers and barbers present within the centre.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Bulwell’s daytime economy is focused around the day-to-day retail, service, leisure and financial services which underpin the offer of the centre. The facilities ensure that on the whole, pedestrian activity is present throughout the centre.

The evening economy in the centre is heavily focused on its takeaway offer, which results in some cases, with shutters being drawn down during the day. Although the overarching food and drink offer is lacking somewhat in diversity, the presence of the public houses and takeaways does mean that there will be some activity into the evening.

Vacancies

Bulwell’s vacancy rate in terms of the proportion of floorspace is currently 12.3% and in terms of the proportion of units is currently 12.8%. In both cases, the vacancy rate is under the national averages (13.9% and 14.1% respectively).

The vacant units are broadly spread throughout the town centre, although there are higher numbers at the periphery of the centre.

The largest of the vacant units is the former Wilko unit located to the south of the centre. Although small commercial units are still trading internally within the pedestrian walkway, the large expanse of commercial floorspace is still vacant.

Opportunity Sites

The principal opportunity site within Bulwell is the former Wilko unit, which dominates Market Place somewhat and, although it is vacant, still provides a through-route from the adjacent car park to the east.

Bulwell town centre has successfully bid for funding from central government’s Levelling Up Fund and been awarded £19.8 million in Round 3. The funding will be used to facilitate physical improvements to the town centre in three main parts;

1. Improve the central market and high street areas and connections to green space, strengthening the 'beating heart' of the Town through a series of place-making interventions including a new marketplace, green space enhancements and creation of a 'Bulwell Promenade', creating a new Green Corridor through the heart of the Town Centre.
2. Improving the look and feel of hidden heritage helping to 'preserve the soul', restoring the rich heritage and culture of the market town, reinstating original features to dramatically improve historic buildings.
3. Reconnecting Bulwell through public realm improvements easing access for all and creating better connectivity between key leisure, retail, transport, and green space, unlocking the Town Centre

Investment will create jobs, increase footfall, improve trade, increase access to high quality green space, restore heritage, unlock a programme of culture and creative events, helping Bulwell restore its pride. The funding needs to be spent by end of March 2026 which coincides with the completion of all physical works.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian activity was relatively high throughout the town centre on the days of our visits. The market was operating, and therefore footfall and general activity was present around the Town Square and out onto the surrounding pedestrianised streets.

Moving north, the pedestrian flows were less, particularly as you travel northwards along Main Street, despite the presence of the Lidl store off Jennison Street. There was evidence of pedestrian activity between the Tesco store and Montague Street, with the wider pedestrianised area outside the Mount Zion 7th Day Church of God.

Pedestrian activity to the south of the centre between the bus station and the Town Square was also good, with pedestrian footpaths, crossings and a general pleasant public realm present. This route draws shoppers up along Main Street to the commercial operators in this part of the town centre.

Some activity was also witnessed between the town centre car parks and the wider offer of the centre.

Accessibility

Overall, Bulwell is very well-served by public transport. Bulwell Bus Station is located to the south off Main Street, which provides dedicated bus stops linking the centre with Nottingham, Arnold, the surrounding areas of Bulwell and further afield. Buses depart at very regular intervals throughout the day and into the evening.

Bulwell’s Railway Station is also located to the south of the town centre, to the east of Main Street. The Station also has its own dedicated car park. Trains run from Bulwell to Nottingham and Worksop throughout the day and evening on the EMR line. In addition, the railway station also includes Bulwell Tram Stop which links the centre to Toton Lane and Hucknall at very regular intervals throughout the day.

Bulwell benefits from a good provision of on and off street parking, with parking available at the Lidl and Tesco, at dedicated town centre car parks to the east off Jennison Street and to the west off Gilead Street. On-street parking is not as available, principally due to the pedestrianised areas along Main Street and the busy arterial route along Bulwell High Road.

The pedestrianised area within the centre of Bulwell, along with wider pedestrian paths along Main Street, provide good and safe access for those on foot, in mobility scooters and pushing prams in the centre. There is a good provision of safe crossings along Main Street, linking the commercial operators and wider uses either side of Main Street. In this regard, both the bus station and railway station are within easy walking distance of the town centre commercial offer, with links from the railway station across the River Leen.

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

Perception of Safety

Bulwell town centre is generally well-maintained, and its open, linear layout allows for a good degree of both natural and passive surveillance. As a consequence, the centre generally feels safe and secure.

Towards the periphery of the centre and particularly to the north of Commercial Road as you cross under the bridge, the feeling of safety drops slightly due to the reduction in natural surveillance and lighting.

Environmental Quality

Although there are a range of relatively well-kept shopfronts and more modern developments, including the Tesco Extra foodstore, overall, the environmental quality within the centre is mixed. This is due to the presence of vacant units and operators which only open in the evening and therefore have their shutters down in the day.

However, the streets are kept clean overall, and there is limited evidence of graffiti or litter, which does assist in enhancing the overarching aesthetics within the centre.

The large vacant former Wilko store is also detracting somewhat from the overarching environmental quality of the centre, and the adjacent car park is not particularly well-maintained.

However, the pedestrianised streets provide good quality and attractive paving, whilst pavements to the south are generally wide. Street furniture is generally functional. The centre benefits from its proximity to the River

Leen, particularly in the south of the centre near the bus and train station and the Riverside Centre. To the south of the railway station is a play park and a wider attractive greenspace, adding to the overarching environmental aesthetics of the centre.

In this regard, the River Leen is lined by green infrastructure, leading up to further greenspace on the east of Main Street. Some green infrastructure is present along the pedestrianised areas on Main Street, but there may be opportunities to enhance this.

Conclusions

Overall, Bulwell town centre is considered to be meeting its catchment's needs in providing key retail, leisure, service and financial facilities to meet residents' day-to-day needs. The wider offer of the centre also includes the Riverside Library, health centre and play park to the south, alongside the Bulwell railway and tram station.

The centre is very accessible via public transport and also has a very good provision of off-street car parking available. The pedestrianised area around the Town Square and Main Street provide good, safe access for those on foot, pushing prams or in mobility scooters. Linkages to the north towards the Tesco and Lidl could potentially be improved through better signage and wayfinding.

The environmental quality of the centre is good overall, but there are elements particularly in terms of the built fabric which could be improved. The vacant Wilko also does not add to the overarching environmental quality in the centre, and its reoccupation or redevelopment needs exploring further. There may be opportunities to introduce a wider mixed-use offer on the site, with residential and commercial uses both enhancing the offer of the centre.

The vacancy rate within Bulwell is below the national average in terms of both floorspace and unit composition, but is considered to be on the higher side. However, the wider offer of the centre is considered to generally meet residents' needs and overall, the centre is considered to be vital and viable.

Legend

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



50 metres

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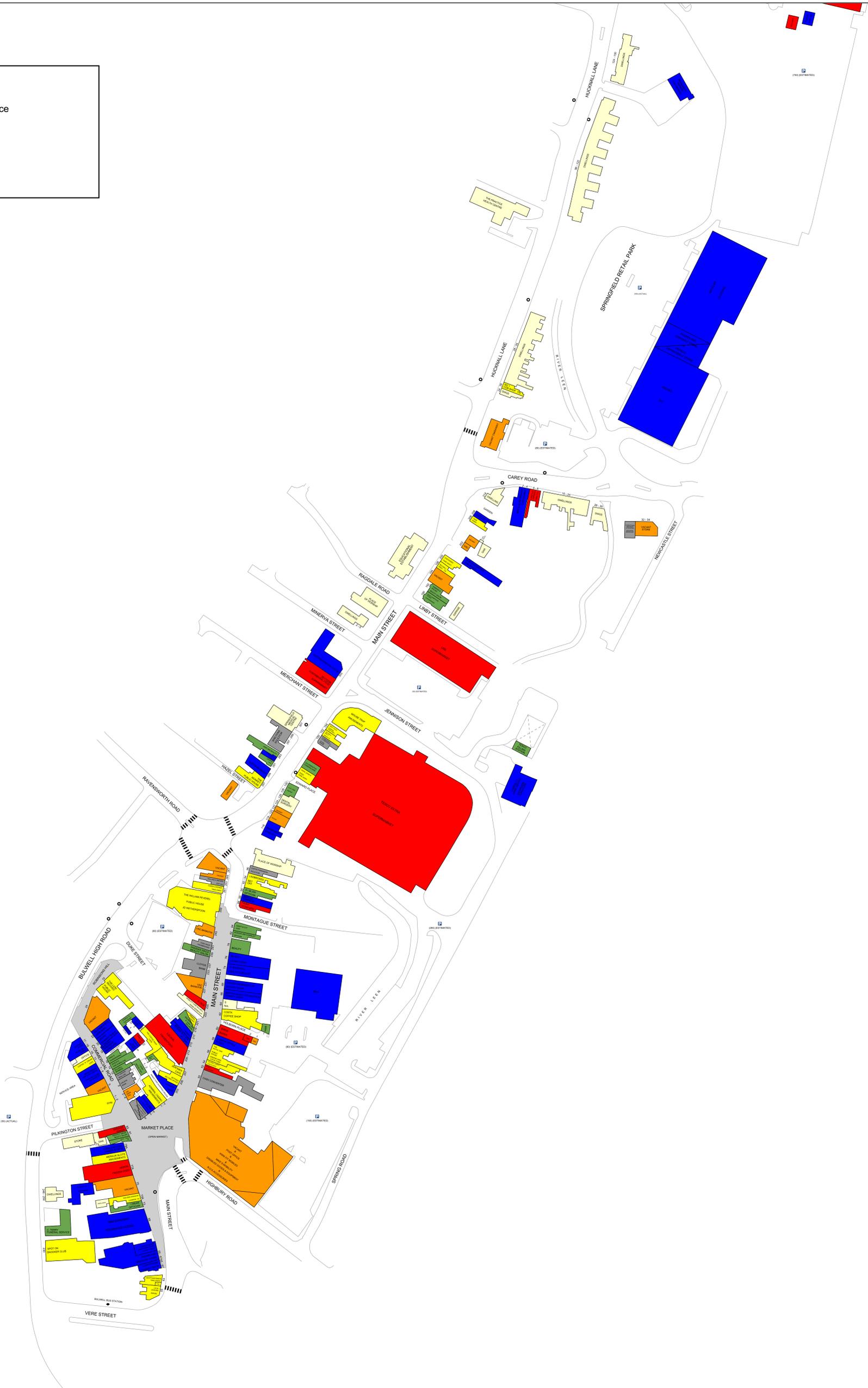


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