Frome

2016 Town Benchmarking Report

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Executive Summary

General

- **A1 Shops;** Frome has a higher proportion of A1 Shops (61%) than the National (52%), Regional (55%) and Typology (56%) averages.
- **Comparison Shops;** 89% of the A1 Shops mainly sell comparison goods which is 7% higher than the National Small Towns figure.
- **A Local Town;** Frome is a local town centre with 72% of the A1 shops being independent and only 21% key attractors or multiples, a 5% decrease on the National Small Towns average. 44% of Town Centre Users reported that they visited Frome at least once a week and 49% on foot. 61% of the Post Codes gathered by businesses at the 'point of sale' were from those living within a 30 minute drive of Frome.
- **Vacancy rates;** Only 2% of the commercial units in the town centre were vacant at the time of the 2016 retail audit which is a decrease on 2015 figure of 4% and much lower than the National (9%), Regional (7%) and Typology (7%) averages.
- **Zone A Rents;** Zone A Rents are slightly higher in Frome (£32.5 per sq. ft.) compared to the National (£28), Regional (£28) figures but is similar to Typology (£33).

Positive

- **Market with impact;** The weekday market in Frome houses more traders (37) than the National (15), Regional (23) and Typology (33) averages. The market has grown in size from 33 traders in 2015. It also has a positive impact upon footfall in the town centre providing a 22.5% increase from the Non Market Day counts. Car parks are also busier on a Market Day with vacancy rates of 24% compared to 40% on Non Market days.
- **High Footfall;** Footfall in Frome is much higher than the National, Regional and Typology averages on both a Market Day and Non Market Day. The Market Day figure of 218 persons per ten minutes is noticeably higher than the National and Regional figures of 98 and 120 respectively. Perhaps a greater indication of healthy footfall is that the Non Market Day figure (169), one taken as a baseline for normal trading conditions, is double the National Small Towns average (86).
- **High average spend;** 58% of town centre users spent over £10.01 on an average visit to Frome, which is 2% higher than the National Small Towns figure.
- **A Safe Town Centre;** 83% of town centre users reported that Safety was a positive aspect of the locality, which is a great improvement to 68% in 2015 This also compares favorably with the national average of 18%.

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- **Customer Service;** 95% of town centre users rated customer service as a positive aspect of Frome, which is over treble the National Small Towns average (24%).
- **Cafes/ Restaurants;** Nationally 32% of town centre users reported that Cafes/ Restaurants were a positive aspect, in Frome this figure is noticeably higher at 93%.
- **Retail Offer;** In Frome, 62% of town centre users rated the retail offer as a positive aspect of the locality, more than treble the National Small Towns average of 19%.
- **Access to Services;** A positive response from 86% of those surveyed compares favourably with the national average of 56% and confirms Frome's role as a local service centre.
- **Convenience;** 83% respondents rated Frome as a convenient place to visit.

Room for Improvement

- **Perceptions about Parking**; 71% of businesses considered parking to be a negative issue compared to 50% nationally. This is by far the most negative consideration for businesses although it is a decrease on the 2015 figure of 73% of businesses. In contrast, 74% of town centre users consider parking in Frome to be a positive factor.
- **Free Car Parking;** Following on from the 2013, 2014, and 2015 Benchmarking suggestions from Businesses, when asked to comment on how Frome could be improved, cheaper car parking continues to be the key theme.

  Leisure Facilities; 34% of town centre users reported that leisure facilities was a negative aspect of Frome, which compares to 16% reported in 2015.
- **Shoe Shops;** As in 2014 and 2015, a significant theme of the town centre user qualitative comments was the need to improve the overall retail offering in Frome, with 45% of town centre users reporting Retail offer as a negative of Frome. A desire for more shoe shops and larger brand shops was apparent.

Conclusion

The indication from the data in this report is that Frome continues to be a successful and popular local service centre. It has a considerably low shop vacancy rate and the amount of independent shops has become a leading characteristic of the town. Many businesses have reported that they would like free parking to be available in the town, at least for the first hour. However, interestingly, 74% of town centre users have reported car parking as a positive of the town.

Introduction

The Approach

The People and Places Insight Limited Town Benchmarking System has been developed to address the real issues of how to understand measure, evaluate and ultimately improve town centres. The approach offers a simple way of capturing data on up to 12 Key Performance Indicators selected by those involved in town centre management. By having the tools to measure performance, strategic decision making is both encouraged and improved. By considering performance, forward strategies and action planning can be more focused and effective.

The process works by either People and Places Insight Limited be commissioned to complete the study or as in this case the client purchases an annual license for £350 plus VAT, collects the data and sends to People and Places for data entry, analysis and reporting.

The System

The Benchmarking system is divided into two sections:

- National Large Towns; consisting of those localities with more than 250 units
- National Small Towns; consisting of those localities with less than 250 units

Towns, depending on their size, contribute to either the Large or Small Town analysis. The defined town centre area of **Frome** consisted of **214** units and is thus classed as a **Small** Town.

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The analysis provides data on each KPI for the Benchmarked town individually and in a Regional, National and where possible Typology context. The National figure is the average for all the towns which participated in Benchmarking during 2016. The Regional figure is the average for all the South West towns from the 2016 cohort. Whilst in 2009, national charity Action for Market Towns commissioned Birkbeck University to classify towns from across England into eight groups depending on certain demographic criteria, **Frome** is classed as a **Typology 2** town, a description of which is highlighted below;

Group 2: Single Persons, Routine Jobs

261 places (16.3%)

Places in this group are particularly characterized by persons living alone (separated/divorced and pensioners), as well as people in routine and lower supervisory and managerial occupations and people living in rented accommodation. Car ownership is low whilst travel to work by public transport is relatively high. Geographically this group is well scattered across the rural areas of the country but particularly in the East of England (Norfolk and Suffolk), in the South West (Wiltshire, Cornwall and Devon). There are few examples of this type of place around the main population centres.

*Please note that the Typology classification is only an indicator and certain aspects described in the explanation provided by Birkbeck University may not represent all locations within the criteria.

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The Reports

The People and Places Insight Limited Town Benchmarking report provides statistical analysis of each of the KPI's. The reports are used by a variety of key stakeholders such as Local Authorities, Town and Parish Councils, Business Improvement Districts, Local Partnerships, Retailers and Universities to;

- benchmark clusters of towns to ascertain high performers / under achievers
- understand their locality in a Regional, National and Typology context
- measure town centre performance year on year
- identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement
- measure the impact of initiatives and developments within the town centre
- act as an evidence base for funding applications
- create an action plan for town centre improvements

Space is left within the reports for the client to add commentary to the tables which are produced and an Appendix is available for the Business Unit Information, Footfall, Car Parking Data and Qualitative comments to be included.

Case Studies of good practice in the use of Benchmarking data include;

Settle Area Regeneration Partnership; commissioned a Benchmarking exercise in 2012. Alongside providing a detached review of town centre performance, the Partnership wanted to understand the impact of HGV traffic flow on the town centre. Using the standardised questions within the Benchmarking system the quantitative and qualitative feedback from Business and Town Centre User Surveys identified the HGV traffic flow as being hugely negative to the visitor experience in the Settle, specifically first time visitors. Using the data as part of a wider economic assessment, Settle Area Regeneration Partnership were able to use the evidence to work with local transport companies and the Local Authority to install an out of town railhead and reduce HGV traffic flow by up to 40%.

Ourburystedmunds; Bury St Edmunds BID initially used Benchmarking to create a deliverable project plan for which the organisation could use for the first 12 months of inception. Subsequently the Key Performance Indicators have been measured each year to ascertain the impact of a wide range of projects and initiatives. Most noticeably the Town Centre User Surveys identified that a large number of visitors were unhappy over an increase in car parking fees throughout the locality. As a result the BID were able to present the information to their Local Authority and oversaw the introduction of a 'Free Parking After 3pm' policy. Data from the Business Confidence, Footfall and Town Centre Users Surveys was also used to improve signage for first time visitors throughout the town centre.

Southam First; Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) used Section 106 money to commission a Benchmarking review of Southam town centre. Key points from the analysis included improving the business economy, marketing the locality, the creation of a calendar of events and festivals and the development of a Farmers Market. SDC used the data as a detached, evidence based tool to create a Town Centre Partnership consisting of a private and public mix to address the issues raised from the Benchmarking Report. A public event both highlighted the findings of the report and asked for nominations for Board and Working Group members. Within 2 months 'Southam First' was a fully functioning organisation delivering actions on a project plan which was based on the Benchmarking Review. The evidence led approach allowed for Southam First to apply successfully for funding from a wide range of bodies to ensure sustainability.

Methodology

Each KPI is collected in a standardized manner as highlighted in the Table below.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
KPI: Commercial Units; Use Class	Visual Survey of ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: Commercial Units; Comparison/Convenience	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: Commercial Units; Trader Type	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: Commercial Units; Vacancy Rates	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: Zone A Retail Rents and Prime Retail Property Yields	Commercial letting agent information.
KPI: Markets	Visual Survey of total number of traders.
KPI: Footfall	Footfall Survey on a Market Day and Non Market Day or in the case of there being no Market a Busy weekday and a Quiet weekday.
KPI: Car Parking	Audit of total number of spaces and vacancy rate on a Market Day and Non Market Day or in the case of there being no Market a Busy weekday and a Quiet weekday.
KPI : Business Confidence Surveys	Can include a combination of face to face, postal, hand delivered and online.
KPI: Town Centre Users Surveys	Can include a combination of face to face, paper based and online.
KPI: Shoppers Origin Surveys	Distributed with Business Confidence Surveys and Businesses are asked to record the first 5 digits of a Post Code when a customer visits the unit over a set time period.

Key Findings

KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; USE CLASS

It is important to understand the scale and variety of the "commercial offer" throughout the town. A variety of shops and a wide range of services in a town are important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. Sustaining a balance between the different aspects of buying and selling goods and services ensures that the local population (and visitors from outside) can spend time and money there, keeping the generated wealth of the town within the local economy. Importantly, it forms the employment base for a substantial proportion of the community too, helping to retain the population rather than lose it to nearby towns and cities.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of each of the Use Classes

Class	Type of Use	Class Includes
A1	Shops	Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes
A2	Financial and Professional Services	Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices
A3	Restaurants and Cafes	Food and drink for consumption on the premises- restaurants, snack bars and cafes
A4	Drinking Establishments	Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not nightclubs)
A5	Hot Food Takeaways	Sale of hot food for consumption off the premises
B1	Businesses	Offices (other than those that fall within A2) research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area
B2	General Industrial	General Industrial
B8	Storage and Distribution	Warehouses, includes open air storage

C1	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels)
C2	Residential Institutions	Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.
C2A	Secure Residential Institution	Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.
D1	Non Residential Institutions	Clinics, health centres, crèches, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres.
D2	Assembly and Leisure	Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not nightclubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).
SG	Sui Generis ("unique" establishments)	Theatres, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/ or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, laundrettes, taxi business, amusement centres, casinos, haulage yards, transport depots, veterinary clinics, dog parlours, tanning and beauty salons and tattoo studios.

The following table provides a detailed analysis of the commercial offering in the town centre by Use Class. The figures are presented as a percentage of the **209** occupied units recorded.

	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
A1	52	55	565	61
A2	14	13	13	13
A3	8	8	8	9
A4	4	3	3	1
A5	4	3	4	1
B1	3	2	2	3
B2	1	1	1	0
B8	0	0	0	0
C1	1	1	1	1
C2	0	1	0	0
C2A	0	0	0	0
D1	6	7	6	2
D2	1	1	1	1
SG	5	5	5	6
N/R	0	1	0	0

KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; COMPARISON VERSUS CONVENIENCE

A1 Retail units selling goods can be split into two different types Comparison and Convenience.

Convenience goods – low-cost, everyday items that consumers are unlikely to travel far to purchase. Defined as;

- food and non-alcoholic drinks
- tobacco
- alcohol
- newspapers and magazines
- non-durable household goods.

2. **Comparison goods** – all other retail goods.

- Books
- Clothing and Footwear
- Furniture, floor coverings and household textiles
- Audio-visual equipment and other durable goods
- Hardware and DIY supplies
- Chemists goods
- Jewellery, watches and clocks
- Bicycles
- Recreational and Miscellaneous goods
- Hairdressing

The presence of a variety of shops in a town centre is important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. A balance of both comparison and convenience retail units is therefore ideal in terms of encouraging visitors / potential customers.

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The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which sell mainly Comparison Goods/ Convenience Goods.

	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Comparison	82	83	82	89
Convenience	18	17	18	11

KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; TRADER TYPES

The vitality of a town centre depends highly on the quality and variety of retailers represented. National retail businesses are considered key attractors and are particularly important in terms of attracting visitors and shoppers to a town. However, the character and profile of a town often also depends on the variety and mix of independent shops that can give a town a "unique selling point" and help distinguish it from other competing centres. A sustainable balance of key attractors and multiple names alongside local independent shops is therefore likely to have the greatest positive impact on the vitality and viability of a town.

The following shops are considered Key attractors by Experian Goad.

Department Stores	**Clothing**
BHS	Burton
Debenhams	Dorothy Perkins
House of Fraser	H & M
John Lewis	New Look
Marks and Spencer	Primark
	River Island
Mixed Goods Retailers	Topman
Argos	Topshop
Boots	
TK Maxx	**Other Retailers**
WH Smith	Carphone Warehouse
Wilkinson	Clarks
	Clintons
Supermarkets	HMV
Sainsbury's	O2
Tesco	Superdrug
Waitrose	Phones 4 U
	Vodafone
	Waterstones

Multiple traders have a countrywide presence and are well known household names. Regional shops are identified as those with stores / units in several towns throughout one geographical region only and Independent shops are identified as those that are specific to a particular town.

The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which are Key Attractors, Multiples, Regional and Independent to the locality

	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Key Attractor	7	10	10	4
Multiple	19	15	16	17
Regional	10	14	10	7
Independent	64	61	63	72

KPI; COMMERCIAL UNITS VACANCY RATES

Vacant units are an important indicator of the vitality and viability of a town centre. The presence of vacant units over a period of time can identify potential weaknesses in a town centre, whether due to locational criteria, high rent levels or strong competition from other centres.

The following table provides the percentage figure of vacant units from the total number of commercial units.

	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Vacancy %	9	7	7	2

To place the data in further context, in October 2016, The Local Data Company reported that throughout all town centres in Great Britain the vacancy rate was 11%.

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KPI; MARKETS

Good quality markets provide competition and choice for consumers. A busy and well-used street market can therefore be a good indicator of the vitality of a town centre. Conversely, if a market is in decline (e.g. empty pitches reducing numbers), it can be an indication of potential weaknesses in the town centre e.g. a lack of footfall customers due to an inappropriate retail mix or increased competitor activity. Street markets can also generate substantial benefits for the local economy. Markets can also provide a local mechanism for a diverse range of local enterprises to start, flourish and grow, adding to the sustainable mix of shops services on offer throughout the town.

The following table provides the average number of market traders at the main regular (at least once a fortnight) weekday market within the locality.

	National Small Towns	Regional Small Towns	Typology	Frome
Traders	15	23	33	37

KPI: ZONE A RETAIL RENTS AND PRIME RETAIL PROPERTY YIELDS

The values for prime retail property yield and Zone A rentals are the "industry" benchmarks for the relative appeal of a location with its users and with the owners or investors in property. All real estate has a value and this value is based on the return on investment that can be levered out of the site. As these indicators rise and fall, they provide a barometer of success or failure and, because the same property dimensions are assessed to determine them, they can be used as an indicator of improving or declining fortunes for towns. In particular retail rents can provide a useful indication of a town's performance and highlight how attractive it is to businesses. Conversely, where rents are falling it can be an indicator of decline.

Zone A rents are expressed as £ per sq. ft. and the Prime Retail Property Yield is a Net Percentage figure.

	National Small Towns	Regional Small Towns	Typology	Frome
Zone A	28	28	33	32.5
Prime Retail Yield	8	8	7	7.5

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KPI: FOOTFALL

The arrival and movement of people, whether as residents, workers, visitors or a shopper is vital to the success of the majority of businesses within the town centre. The more people that are attracted to the town, the better it trades and the more prosperous the businesses in it become, provided there is ample available disposable income in that population. Measuring passing people in a consistent manner in the same place, at the same time builds up a picture of the town, its traders and their relative success over the weeks and months.

Benchmarking footfall is conducted in specific locations for a set period, between 10.00am to 1.00pm, counting the people passing in both directions through a fixed point (e.g. an imaginary line across the road) for a precise ten minutes in every hour (e.g. 10.00–10.10am, 11.20am-11.30am, 12.40pm-12.50pm). Aside from the above basic rules are applied to the process;

- *An accurate stopwatch and a hand operated mechanical counter are used*
- *If a person walks passed more than once they are included in the count each time they pass through the 'line'*
- *Children under 12 are not included in the count*
- *Footfall counts are not conducted in the rain*

The following table provides the average number of people per 10 minutes between 10am and 1pm from the busiest footfall location in the locality on the relevant days recorded.

	National Small Towns	Regional Small Towns	Typology	Frome
Market Day	98	120	198	218
Non Market Day	86	83	121	169

KPI: CAR PARKING

A large proportion of spending customers in a town centre come by car. In the rural setting, the car tends to be an essential tool, used by both those who come to spend and those who come to work. The provision of adequate and convenient car parking facilities is therefore a key element of town centre vitality. An acceptable number of available spaces with a regular, quick turn-over for shoppers are the ideal while adequate longer stay, less convenient spaces for local owners/ workers and visitors must be considered too.

Within the town on street and off parking within the core commercial offering were identified as being integral to the study. The following tables provide a summary of the Car Parking offering broken down into the;

- Percentage number of spaces in the designated car parks.
- Percentage number of short stay, long stay and disabled spaces in designated car parks
- Percentage of vacant spaces in designated car parks on a Market Day and on a Non Market Day
- Percentage number of on street car parking spaces
- Percentage number of on street short stay, long stay and disabled spaces
- Percentage of vacant on street spaces on a Market Day and on a Non Market Day
- Overall percentage of short stay, long stay and disabled spaces
- Overall percentage of vacant spaces on a Market Day and on a Non Market Day

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	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Car Park:				
Total Spaces:	84	80	87	92
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	29	41	48	29
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	61	55	49	66
Disabled Spaces:	7	4	3	5
Not Registered	4	0	0	0
Vacant Spaces on a Market Day:	35	31	24	24
Vacant Spaces on a Non Market Day:	40	37	36	40
On Street:				
Total Spaces:	16	20	13	8
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	82	74	86	30
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	12	21	6	64
Disabled Spaces:	6	5	7	7
Not Registered	1	1	2	0
Vacant Spaces on a Market Day:	15	15	16	18
Vacant Spaces on a Non Market Day:	20	18	16	16

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Overall	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Total Spaces:	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	38	47	53	29
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	53	48	43	66
Disabled Spaces:	7	4	4	5
Not Registered	3	0	0	0
Vacant Spaces on a Market Day:	31	27	23	24
Vacant Spaces on a Non Market Day:	37	33	24	38

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KPI: BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEY

In regards to the 'business confidence' by establishing the trading conditions of town centre businesses, stakeholders can focus their regeneration efforts on building on existing strengths and addressing any specific issues. The following percentage figures are based on the **21** returned Business Confidence Surveys.

	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Nature of Business				
Retail	63	62	63	100
Financial/ Professional Services	12	14	15	0
Public Sector	2	2	2	0
Food and Drink	13	10	8	0
Accommodation	1	1	2	0
Other	9	11	10	0
Type of Business				
Multiple Trader	10	8	4	0
Regional	8	5	6	0
Independent	82	86	90	100
How long has your business been in the town				
Less than a year	6	6	3	5
One to Five Years	22	27	24	43
Six to Ten Years	13	14	15	14
More than Ten Years	58	54	59	38

Compared to last year has your turnover	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Increased	38	39	39	48
Stayed the Same	31	27	29	38
Decreased	31	34	32	14
Compared to last year has your profitability				
Increased	31	34	36	50
Stayed the Same	35	29	27	30
Decreased	34	38	37	20
Over the next 12 months do you think your turnover will…				
Increase	44	41	36	48
Stay the Same	38	35	37	29
Decrease	19	23	27	24

What are the positive aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Physical appearance	44	47	49	67
Prosperity of the town	39	43	42	52
Labour Pool	10	7	8	5
Geographical location	39	46	43	33
Mix of Retail Offer	40	42	50	86
Potential tourist customers	36	45	49	81
Potential local customers	77	81	80	86
Affordable Housing	15	10	11	0
Transport Links	34	22	19	14
Footfall	26	34	24	43
Car Parking	32	33	24	24
Rental Value/ Property Costs	16	17	17	33
Market(s)	14	20	28	52
Events/ Activities	22	27	26	52
Marketing/Promotions	10	13	8	10
Local Partnerships/ Organisations	17	13	15	10
Other	3	4	1	5

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What are the negative aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Physical appearance	22	10	7	5
Prosperity of the town	29	18	20	5
Labour Pool	14	11	10	0
Geographical location	7	5	4	0
Mix of Retail Offer	21	17	13	10
Number of Vacant Units	41	44	40	19
Potential tourist customers	11	6	3	0
Potential local customers	3	4	4	5
Affordable Housing	10	9	6	0
Transport Links	14	20	32	29
Footfall	20	20	18	24
Car Parking	50	57	56	71
Rental Value/ Property costs	29	34	42	33
Market(s)	10	8	5	0
Local business competition	17	20	18	14
Competition from other localities	25	19	16	19
Competition from out of town shopping	40	30	31	43
Competition from the internet	37	38	44	38
Events/ Activities	7	5	8	0
Marketing/ Promotions	5	4	7	0
Local Partnerships/ Organisations	2	0	1	0
Other	6	8	10	0

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Has your business suffered from any crime over the last 12 months	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Yes	26	22	27	33
No	74	78	73	67
Type of Crime				
Theft	73	71	63	57
Criminal Damage	25	22	34	43
Abuse	14	14	13	29
Other	4	8	6	0

What two suggestions would you make to improve the town's economic performance?

*Please note all comments have been copied directly from respondents submission so may contain grammatical errors.

- *Do not risk the market traders through increasing their costs. I have spoken with many and the "independents" are struggling. More "branded" stalls who can afford more will undermine its uniqueness. Don't chase the money. Continue to lead the disparate independents with informed, council led initiatives, particularly in marketing, web site*
- *Sort out car parking costs! At least 1 hour free car parking as in other Mendip towns would be fair! Support and encourage the development of a bigger variety of retail premises. There are many small retail shops but bigger locations would enable successful shops to more and allow start ups to develop.*
- *Better signage for Catherine Hill area for sure!! Sunday market needs to change the stalls frequently, same ones each time otherwise people are going to lose interest and stop coming. (Its at the moment 10% of my turnover)*
- *Bring back the option to park for half an hour. Better still, make the first hour free.*
- *Make the town centre road- from Justice Lane through to Eagle Lane more attractive- the chains do not do Frome justice for people driving through. Less expensive parking charges- good luck.*
- *More economical, free parking. Pedestrianisation of the High Street.*
- *Street cleaning up the Catherine St/ Hill area. The rubbish that is in the town and the emptying of bins on Catherine St especially before a market as they always look a mess and smell in the summer. Would be good to have the buses running more from Shepton, Bath etc rather than them being cut as our customers find it hard to get here. Make the car parking cheaper or free for an hour or two.*

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- *Free parking. More free parking.*
- *Free car parking. Lower rent for shops.*
- *More advertising and promotion around the Christmas period. Promoting late night shopping event and Sunday opening. More promotion given to retail areas other than Catherine/ Stony St*
- *Cheaper car parking charges. Increased marketing.*
- *Towns which charge visitors/ residents to park lose out to other towns which provide free parking to attract new people to their town. High rents and rates make it very difficult to compete with the internet and the towns which don't have high rents and rates. Poor bus services also deter potential customers from coming into the town. A successful town will offer free parking and strong transport links to attract visitors and to the town. High rents and rates hinder a small business in its attempts to provide competitive prices with the local community. Very little money spent online comes back to the local community.*
- *Better mix of retail shops i.e. clothing etc. Free car parking.*
- *Improved parking and cost of.*
- *Asking businesses to keep more reliable trading hours to avoid disappointment for people that travel here form out of town, particularly Mondays and Tuesdays.*
- *Cheaper car parking.*
- *Better transport. Cheaper car parking/ Free first hour parking.*
- *Free parking. More promotion.*

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KPI: TOWN CENTRE USERS SURVEY

The aim of the Town Centre Users Survey is to establish how your town is seen by those people who use it. By asking visitors, of all types, a more detailed picture can be obtained as what matters to regular visitors can be very different to someone who has never been to the place before. In total **62** Town Centre User Surveys were completed. The following percentage figures are based upon the total number of respondents to each question.

	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Gender				
Male	32	34	35	28
Female	67	65	64	72
Prefer not to answer	1	1	1	0
Age				
16-25	7	6	6	12
26-35	15	14	15	8
36-45	24	22	21	20
46-55	22	23	23	10
56-65	16	17	15	20
Over 65	14	17	19	30
Prefer not to answer	1	1	1	0
What do you generally visit the Town Centre for?				
Work	10	12	14	2
Convenience Shopping	43	52	46	32
Comparison Shopping	6	5	7	7
Access Services	19	14	14	25
Leisure	11	10	8	27
Other	11	9	10	7

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How often do you visit the Town Centre	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Daily	21	25	24	31
More than once a week	35	41	40	44
Weekly	21	19	19	8
Fortnightly	7	5	7	5
More than once a Month	6	4	4	2
Once a Month or Less	10	6	6	10
How do you normally travel into the Town Centre?				
On Foot	31	38	37	49
Bicycle	1	1	1	0
Motorbike	0	0	0	0
Car	62	58	60	46
Bus	4	1	1	3
Train	0	0	0	2
Other	2	1	1	0
On average, on your normal visit to the Town Centre how much do you normally spend?				
Nothing	3	2	4	5
£0.01-£5.00	11	12	14	9
£5.01-£10.00	23	25	26	29
£10.01-£20.00	32	32	32	38
£20.01-£50.00	24	23	19	20
More than £50.00	5	5	5	0

What are the positive general aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Physical appearance	36	44	36	76
Cleanliness	35	42	35	90
Retail Offer	19	23	22	62
Customer Service	24	27	29	95
Cafes/ Restaurants	32	41	43	93
Access to Services	56	56	55	86
Leisure Facilities	10	14	22	48
Cultural Activities/Events	14	19	20	81
Pubs/ Bars/ Nightclubs	20	22	21	52
Transport Links	18	15	13	45
Ease of walking around the town centre	56	62	60	88
Convenience e.g. near where you live	64	68	58	83
Safety	18	24	24	83
Car Parking	32	31	27	74
Markets	25	19	26	0
Other	7	7	8	11

What are the negative general aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Physical appearance	37	28	39	28
Cleanliness	25	19	23	17
Retail Offer	53	48	55	45
Customer Service	9	6	9	7
Cafes/ Restaurants	20	16	14	7
Access to Services	13	16	18	3
Leisure Facilities	25	21	21	34
Cultural Activities/Events	19	17	20	0
Pubs/ Bars/ Nightclubs	22	18	17	14
Transport Links	15	18	27	34
Ease of walking around the town centre	6	6	6	7
Convenience e.g. near where you live	4	3	3	7
Safety	12	8	9	17
Car Parking	39	40	46	7
Markets	25	19	22	10
Other	16	19	20	14

How long do you stay in the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Less than an hour	41	42	42	31
1-2 Hours	41	41	39	42
2-4 Hours	10	9	11	22
4-6 Hours	2	2	1	0
All Day	4	4	5	5
Other	2	1	2	0
Would you recommend a visit to the Town Centre?				
Yes	59	66	58	86
No	41	34	42	14

What two suggestions would you make to improve the town centre?

*Please note all comments have been copied directly from respondents submissions so may contain grammatical errors.

- *More signs.*
- *Better crossing.*
- *More trees. Planters.*
- *Improve disabled access to shops.*
- *Dingy shops. Market good- not charity shops.*
- *Lower rates for shops.*
- *All good.*
- *Places to sit.*
- *More greenery.*
- *Loos did not work.*
- *Seating in shopping precinct.*
- *More lighting on Riverwalk.*
- *Aldi- saving money.*
- *Mens shop- shoes.*
- *Bus timetable times.*
- *Rubbish and dog mess!*
- *Market Street slope.*
- *Sunday market congestion.*
- *Trains….*
- *Iceland.*

- *More flowers, statues, trees.*
- *Less chain. (Shoe Zone)*
- *Unbalanced infrastructure.*
- *Always liked Frome but too many houses, 3 weeks to see a GP.*
- *Flood lights by river.*
- *Community service for taggers.*
- *Dog mess.*
- *Strict rules on cyclists.*
- *Groups.*
- *More unique shops.*
- *More community shops.*
- *More clothes shops.*
- *Less charity shops.*
- *Nothing comes to mind.*
- *Better pedestrian crossings on main road.*
- *More mainstream shops- too many quirky.*
- *More litter bins.*
- *More for little ones, soft play.*
- *Parking too expensive.*
- *Better standard of shops e.g. shoes and mens.*
- *Nothing obvious.*
- *Sports shop*
- *Improve...aspect.*
- *Nothing coming to mind.*
- *More major shops.*
- *Control traffic, slow it down.*
- *Need arcade development.*
- *Westway is not attractive. Stark.*
- *Free and reduced parking.*
- *Better shops e.g. Primark and B and M.*
- *Too many empty shops.*
- *Better shop selection.*
- *Cheaper car parking.*
- *More youth leisure.*
- *Evening transport for cultural activities and other needs.*
- *Westway too stark.*
- *More shops for younger generated- less charity shops.*
- *Cost of parking.*
- *More standard shops e.g. Next etc.*
- *Cheaper parking. More disabled parking.*
- *Better pedestrian crossings.*
- *Less parking cost.*
- *More artwork.*

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- *More affordable shops.*
- *Shoe shops.*
- *Better market and advertising.*
- *Free 1 hour parking.*
- *Want some cheaper shops, especially men.*
- *Shoe shops.*
- *No market advertising so needs more.*
- *Parking metres not giving change.*
- *Transport to improve.*
- *No nightclub.*
- *Less charity shops and more clothes shops.*
- *Prefer less traffic through and buses cause congestion.*
- *High Street has 1 or 2 shops that bring it down e.g. Shoe Zone, Iceland.*
- *Access to all shops for the disabled.*
- *Needs shoe shop.*
- *More flowers.*
- *Like seeing chairs and tables outside cafes.*
- *More clothes shop for children.*
- *More chain shops.*

KPI: SHOPPERS ORIGIN SURVEY

The Shoppers Origin Survey tracks the general area that your town centre visitors originate from. The data can be used to target local marketing or promotional literature. It can also be used as evidence of the success of such campaigns by gauging the penetration into the population.

The **471** postcodes gathered from businesses are split into 3 categories to be able to compare with other towns. The categories are:

- Locals; those who live within a Post Code covering the town
- Visitors; those who live within a Post Code less than a 30 minute drive away
- Tourists; those who live within a Post Code further than a 30 minute drive away

	National Small Towns %	Regional Small Towns %	Typology %	Frome %
Locals	66	62	58	61
Visitors	27	30	25	33
Tourists	7	8	27	6

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Appendix

Business Unit Database

Footfall

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Car Parking Database

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Business Confidence Survey Comments

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Town Centre Users Comments