

The information in this document has been used to support the preparation of the Local Plan. If you need assistance reading this document, or require it in a different format, please contact us via [email planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk) or call on 0116 454 0085.

Appendix 5 Town and District Centre Health Checks

Beaumont Leys Town Centre

Description

Beaumont Leys town centre is situated in the northern part of the authority area and is situated to the north of the city's outer ring road (A563). The centre is surrounded by Beaumont Park to the east, commercial uses to the west and residential uses to the north and south. A number of large format commercial uses also surround the centre, with Matalan and Buzz Bingo to the south and Beaumont Leys Library and Leicester Leys Leisure Centre to the north.

The centre is focused around the Beaumont Leys shopping centre, a modern purpose built shopping centre which is part internal and part external. The centre is situated within the middle, with extensive car parking surrounding it on all sides. The market is situated to the west, with the Tesco Extra forming the eastern element of the centre and further car parking beyond the store.

It is anchored by the Tesco Extra store which is situated to the east of the centre and accessed off Bradgate Mall. The remainder of the centre is principally focused around national multiple comparison operators, with a selection of convenience, retail service and financial service operators. Externally fronting onto the car park to the west are a series of leisure services such as Subway.

In addition, the town centre also includes a covered outdoor market to the west located off Fletcher Mall. To the north of the mall outside of the defined town centre boundary is the Leicester Leys Leisure Centre and Beaumont Leys Library.

Given the extensive car parking surrounding the centre, the centre is accessed by private modes of vehicle but does also benefit from good public transport access through the bus network and is accessible on foot from the surrounding residential areas.

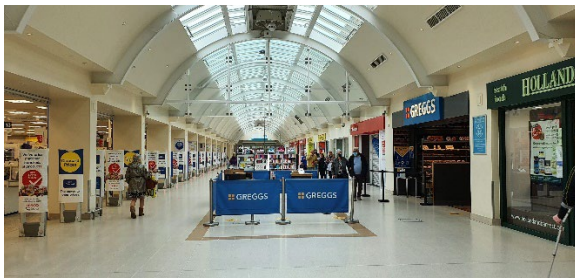


Figure 1: Internal Mall at Beaumont Leys



Figure 2: External Pedestrian Walkway



Figure 3: External Pedestrian Walkway



Figure 4: Beaumont Market

Table 1 Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2021 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2021 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2021 (%)
Comparison	9,900	27.3%	31.4%
Convenience	12,600	34.7%	15.4%
Financial	340	0.9%	7.0%
Leisure	8,230	22.7%	25.7%
Retail Service	3,310	9.1%	7.2%
Vacant	1,900	5.2%	12.8%
TOTAL	36,280	100	100

Source: Composition of Town Centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2021; UK Average from Experian Goad Report July 2021

Table 2 Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2021	Units at 2021 (%)	Units UK Average at 2021 (%)	Units at 2014 (%)
Comparison	22	37.9%	27.4%	47.2%
Convenience	7	12.1%	9.1%	11.3%
Financial	2	3.4%	9.2%	3.8%
Leisure	8	13.8%	24.5%	11.3%
Retail Service	13	22.4%	15.6%	20.8%
Vacant	6	10.3%	13.9%	5.7%
TOTAL	58	100	100	100

Source: Composition of Town Centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2021; UK Average from Experian Goad Report July 2021

Uses

Beaumont Leys is focused around a substantial Tesco Extra store located to the east of the Mall. The town centre is a key destination for both convenience food shopping and comparison shopping needs, through a range of national multiple operators, anchored by a Tesco Extra and Aldi foodstore, the latter of which has been developed following the completion of the 2015 Retail Study. Beaumont's convenience offer has therefore considerably improved since the previous survey.

Convenience shopping opportunities are provided by a large Tesco Extra store which forms the eastern side of the shopping centre as well as the Aldi foodstore and an Iceland. The Tesco Extra and now the Aldi act as a key customer draw into the centre, alongside the wider comparison offer.

The majority of the centre's units are occupied by national operators, with key representation provided by Boots, Bonmarche, H Samuel, New Look, Matalan, Superdrug, Shoezone and Wilko.

In terms of the proportion of convenience floorspace, this is substantially above the national average at 34.7% compared to 15.4%. The higher than average convenience floorspace is due to the extensive Tesco Extra and Aldi stores, which together account for 10,750 sq.m or 85% of the total convenience floorspace within the centre. In terms of the proportion of units however, the proportion is just above the average at 12.1% compared to 9.1%.

In terms of comparison floorspace, the centre includes approximately 27.3% of comparison floorspace, compared to a national average of 31.4%. In terms of units, the proportion is considerably above the national average at 37.9% compared to 27.4%, indicating the strong composition of comparison

operators as set out above. In this regard however, the proportion of comparison units has fallen since 2014 from 47.2% to 37.9%.

The focus of Beaumont Leys as principally a shopping destination is illustrated in the number of leisure service (13.8%) and financial and business service (3.4%) outlets being well below the respective national averages of 24.54% and 9.2% respectively.

The outdoor market provides a space for independent retailers, encompassing over 60 stalls. The market is open from Wednesdays through to Saturday, with a regular car boot sale held on Sundays. The market was closing at the time of our visit, but footfall was still present around the facility and visitors were sat chatting and drinking coffee.

A standalone Matalan store is located adjacent to the shopping centre on the opposite side of Beaumont Way, within the town centre's boundary. This store benefits from its own car park. A large standalone Buzz Bingo is found adjacent to the Matalan store, again with its own car park.

Adjacent to the shopping centre to the north, yet outside the boundary of the town centre, is Leicester Leys Leisure Centre and Beaumont Leys Library. The leisure centre includes swimming pools and a fitness suite/sports hall.

Vacancies

At the time of our visit in June 2021, the vacancy rate in terms of floorspace was 5.2%, compared to a national average of 12.8% and for proportion of units, the vacancy rate is 10.3% compared to a national average of 13.9%.

Although the vacancy rate in terms of proportion of units has increased since the 2014 survey (from 5.7% to 10.3%), the vacancy rate is still below the national average, indicating a strong performance of the centre. In this regard, there are six current vacant units, with the largest measuring approximately 1,120 sq.m. The remaining vacant units all measure under 300 sq.m, with the smallest measuring 20 sq.m.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian activity and footfall was considered to be healthy at the time of our visit to the town centre. The balance of both a strong convenience and comparison shopping offer allows the centre to benefit from a continual flow of shoppers with a strong potential for linked trips from the principal convenience and comparison operators with the remainder of the centre.

During a mid-week visit to the centre the main focus of activity was observed to be derived from shoppers visiting the Tesco Extra store and the Aldi foodstore. The covered pedestrian street which incorporates the entrance to the Tesco store was observed to be busiest in terms of footfall, with activity slower on the other main pedestrian street through the centre.

The shopping centre closes at 8:00pm Monday to Friday, 7:00pm on Saturdays and 4:00pm on Sundays. The Tesco store retains activity late into the night operating 24 hours Monday to Friday and being open until midnight on Saturdays. Other than the Tesco store, little activity will be attracted to the centre during the late evening, with no significant evening economy in place.

The majority of people are considered to access the centre by car, with the car parks observed to be very well used at the time a survey was completed.

Relatively limited interaction was observed between users of the shopping centre and the adjacent community facilities to the north of the leisure centre and the library, but it is important to note that our visit was during the relaxation of lockdown measures and therefore the full operation of leisure uses had not yet taken place.

A pedestrian connection is provided in the form of a footbridge across Beaumont Way linking the shopping centre to these facilities. Despite this link, these buildings are not particularly visible, and as a reflection of this are not well incorporated into the activity of the shopping centre as a whole.

Accessibility

The centre benefits from a good location in terms of connections to the road network. The shopping centre is just a short distance from Leicester's outer ring road and the A46 which passes to the north. The location can also be easily reached from the M1, providing opportunities for shoppers from further afield to travel to the centre relatively quickly.

The centre has three main public car parks on the perimeter of the centre which together provide circa 1,500 parking spaces. Parking is free for up to four hours. Disabled bays are provided in each of the car parks, with wheelchairs also available to hire from within the centre. A taxi rank is found close to the entrance to the Tesco store. The parking arrangements are very convenient, allowing quick access. At the time of a visit to the centre, the car parks were seen to be operating well. Judging from the popularity of the car parks, the centre may experience periods of high demand for car parking spaces at peak times.

The centre is well serviced by a number of local bus services which pass through many of the surrounding communities. Key routes include the 26 and 54 buses which provide very regular service towards the city centre. The 40 bus service provides a service every hour to destinations around the city's outer ring road.

All bus services are accessible from a designated bus terminal area to west of the centre. The facilities are conveniently located, with a number of bus shelters provided. The bus terminal area is well integrated as part of the shopping centre, with there being a clear and legible route across a zebra crossing into the shopping centre.

The shopping centre's environment is on the whole excellent for pedestrians. All of the shops and services are in close proximity to each other connected by a pleasant and easy to navigate environment.

A weakness of the centre is its pedestrian connectivity with the surrounding area. The surrounding commercial land uses and busy connecting highways surrounding centre do not provide an attractive environment for access on foot. Despite measures being in place to help encourage visitors to access the centre on foot, including zebra and pelican crossings being located across the roads which immediately surround the centre, access by car or bus appears to be favoured by the majority of visitors.

Perception of Safety

There is a good sense of security within the centre, provided by a well maintained environment, free from litter or signs of deterioration. The shopping centre has few vacant units and none of the shopping premises were found to have heavy duty security measures in place which would indicate problems with crime.

A safe environment for shoppers is provided within the centre, due to the wholly pedestrianised nature of the shopping mall. The car parks are very well used and provide areas with plenty of activity. These areas have an open feel, located close to the activity associated to the shopping centre and with good visibility of the surroundings.

CCTV monitoring the surroundings is also in evidence. The car parks as such have the perception of being safe and secure. Police statistics show that vehicle crime is not a major problem for the centre.

Levels of activity during the late evening once the shopping centre has closed will be greatly reduced, as the centre largely does not possess an evening economy in the form of bars or restaurants. It is therefore likely that any user anxiety around safety will be most likely to occur around these times.

Environmental Quality

The indoor element of the centre is bright and welcoming, which provides visitors with the impression of a good quality, modern shopping destination.

Shopfronts and signage are relatively modern, well maintained and of a good quality and there are no individual units which stand out in terms of poor quality. The covered market is of less high quality when compared to the remainder of the centre and could benefit from some refurbishment or regeneration, which could include a diversity of uses to encourage longer dwell-times, such as food and beverage uses.

The car parks of the centre are entirely well maintained and signposted. The public realm in the surroundings is again well planned and maintained. Although they are of a simple design and provide only limited opportunities for seating, the surrounding external areas are fit for purpose. No apparent environmental issues relating to anti-social behaviour or vandalism were observed.

Conclusions

Beaumont Leys town centre is situated in the northern part of the authority area and is situated to the north of the city's outer ring road (A563). The centre is surrounded by greenspace to the west in the form of Beaumont Park, commercial uses to the west and residential to the north and south. A number of large format commercial uses also surround the centre, with Matalan and Buzz Bingo to the south and Beaumont Leys Library and Leicester Leys Leisure Centre to the north.

The centre is focused around the Beaumont Leys shopping centre, a modern purpose built shopping centre which is part internal and part external. The centre is situated within the middle, with extensive car parking surrounding it on all sides. The market is situated to the west, with the Tesco Extra forming the eastern element of the centre and further car parking beyond the store.

It is anchored by the Tesco Extra store which is situated to the east of the centre and accessed off Bradgate Mall. The remainder of the centre is principally focused around national multiple comparison operators, with a selection of convenience, retail service and financial service operators. Externally fronting onto the car park to the west are a series of leisure services such as Subway.

At the time of our visit in June 2021, the vacancy rate in terms of floorspace was 5.2%, compared to a national average of 12.8% and for proportion of units, the vacancy rate is 10.3% compared to a national average of 13.9%. Although the vacancy rate in terms of proportion of units has increased since the 2014 survey (from 5.7% to 10.3%), the vacancy rate is still below the national average, indicating a strong performance of the centre.

The indoor part of the centre is bright and welcoming, which provides visitors with the impression of a good quality, modern shopping destination. The covered pedestrian street within the centre provides a sheltered and comfortable environment for visitors. There is a good sense of security within the centre provided by a well maintained environment, free from litter or signs of deterioration. The shopping centre has few vacant units and none of the shopping premises were found to have heavy duty security measures in place which would indicate problems with crime.

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Appendix 5 Town and District Centre Health Checks

Belgrave Road/Melton Road District Centre

Description

The Belgrave Road/Melton Road district centre is a vibrant and unique retail/leisure destination along a one mile stretch of Belgrave Road and Melton Road, known as 'the Golden Mile'.

The centre comprises a range of retail, leisure and service uses with additional community facilities. It is a relatively busy centre with a high volume of pedestrian footfall but is also a busy route for vehicles, which can sometimes result in difficulties with parking, particularly on the side of the main roads. Vehicular movement throughout the centre was busy on the day of our visit, with a constant stream of traffic observed. As social distancing measures were still in place on the day of our visit, pedestrians were moving perhaps more freely along the sides of the roads, with barriers providing wider pavements than usually in place.

As a large district centre, Belgrave Road/Melton Road has a relatively diverse range of retail and service operators. This is underpinned by a comparatively strong comparison goods offer, with 101 of such operators accounting for 11,710 sq.m of retail floorspace, which equates to 32.3% of the total quantum of floorspace.

Belgrave Road/Melton Road provides a focus for key celebrations, including Diwali. The Diwali celebrations in Leicester are one of the biggest largest outside of India, making this centre a national and international destination. The majority of businesses are independently run, with a limited number of national retailers present. Shop units vary in size, with the majority being accommodated in small terrace units fronting on to Melton and Belgrave Road.

The shopping strip occupies a substantial length of a key arterial route into the city from the north. A break in the shopping frontage occurs mid-way along the centre, with a stretch of residential properties dividing the shopping environment into two separate definable areas. However, the centre principally functions as one, and there is an overall continuity feeling from one area to the next.

The busy roundabout at the junction of Abbey Park Road and Belgrave Road creates a very identifiable boundary which marks the end of the shopping environment.

The former Sainsbury's site within the centre has been largely cleared prior to the commencement of a major redevelopment of the site which has extant permission for ten new retail units fronting Belgrave Road. We understand that an alternative scheme may come forward on this site but it is clear that the redevelopment will add a new focus and offering at the southern end of the centre. These improvements will improve connectivity between the Golden Mile and the city centre. Furthermore, the redevelopment and refurbishment of the Belgrave Commercial Centre will bring with it significant enhancements to the environmental aesthetics and offer for the centre.



Figure 1: Tesco Express, Melton Road



Figure 2: Belgrave Road Historic Buildings



Figure 3: Melton Road Discount Store



Figure 4: Belgrave Commercial Centre

Table 1 Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2021 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2021 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2021 (%)
Comparison	11,710	32.3%	31.4%
Convenience	5,660	15.6%	15.4%
Financial	4,680	12.9%	7.0%
Leisure	8,250	22.8%	25.7%
Retail Service	3,340	9.2%	7.2%
Vacant	2,570	7.1%	12.8%
TOTAL	36,210	100%	100

Source: Composition of district centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2021; UK Average from Experian Goad Report July 2021

Table 2 Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2021	Units at 2021 (%)	Units UK Average at 2021 (%)	Units at 2014 (%)
Comparison	101	30.0%	27.4%	33.2%
Convenience	43	12.8%	9.1%	10.7%
Financial	37	11.0%	9.2%	17.1%
Leisure	74	22.0%	24.5%	18.3%
Retail Service	49	14.5%	15.6%	15.9%
Vacant	33	9.8%	13.9%	4.9%
TOTAL	337	100%	100%	100.0%

Source: District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2021; UK Average from Experian Goad Report July 2021

Uses

As a large district centre, Belgrave Road/Melton Road has a relatively diverse range of retail and service operators. This is underpinned by a comparatively strong comparison goods offer, with 101 of such operators accounting for 11,710 sq.m of retail floorspace, which equates to 32.3% of the total quantum of floorspace.

These operators are diverse and include a number of specialist retailers, alongside key operators such as pharmacies which provide for the more day-to-day needs of the local community. Alongside this is a varied range of 43 convenience goods operators which account for 5,660 sq.m of floorspace (equating to 15.6% of the retail floorspace).

Belgrave Road/Melton Road also benefits from a strong and diverse range of service operators.

Respectively, leisure, retail, and financial and business services account for 22.8%, 9.2% and 12.9% of retail floorspace in the centre. Again, these operators are diverse but are strengthened by a varied range of food operators, primarily restaurants and hot-food takeaways that are located throughout the local centre. In addition to this, the financial and business service offer is comparatively strong and is considered reflective of a centre that is capable of drawing from a wide catchment area.

Vacancies

At the time of our visit there were 33 vacant units located in the district centre, equating to 9.8% of all units in the centre. In respect of floorspace, a total of 2,570 sq.m of vacant floorspace was recorded accounting for 7.1% of the total quantum of retail floorspace. The proportion of vacant units within the centre falls below average in terms of both floorspace and numbers of units.

The largest single vacant unit in the district centre is located at 198 Melton Road, with this unit accounting for 220 sq.m of floorspace. All other vacant units are relatively modest in scale.

The 33 vacant units are fairly widely distributed throughout the district centre by virtue of which there is no single area of the centre which feels 'dominated' by vacant units. There are also positive signs of investment through the refurbishment of units and clear forthcoming reuse of some of the otherwise vacant units.

Although the number of vacant units has almost doubled since the 2014 survey of the centre, the below average vacancy rate is a positive sign of overall vitality and viability within the centre, indicating a market confidence in the centre and that the offer is broadly meeting the catchment's needs.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian flows were observed to be very good at the time of our visit, with a general constant flow throughout the centre and to the surrounding car parks and other public transport modes. Despite social distancing still being observed, pedestrians would also often congregate along the streets and there was a general feeling of community throughout the centre.

The district centre's wide range of goods and services provides excellent opportunities for linked trips, observed through the healthy footfall experienced along the length of centre.

Footfall was observed to be busiest at the core of each of the centre's two halves on Belgrave Road and Melton Road respectively. Footfall along the shopping frontage on the southern half of the centre was fairly consistent at the time of our visit, although, pedestrian travel between the retained B&M Home Store and the shops on Belgrave Road was observed to be very limited, principally due to the distance and route between the two.

Pedestrian activity was greatest around the Tesco Express store in the northern half of the centre and around the Belgrave Commercial Centre in the southern half of the centre, where pay and display parking is available and a number of leisure uses are present.

Accessibility

The length of the centre, in being close to a mile long, creates a barrier to users accessing the full extent of the shops/services conveniently and in a single trip. The linear form of the centre may encourage visitors to access only parts of the centre in a visit rather than its whole, or seek to visit one end and then travel to the other by car.

Parking opportunities are limited to on street parking along the surrounding residential side streets. However, a sizable pay and display car park at the Belgrave Commercial Centre provides convenient paid provision for visitors of shops at the southern half of the centre along Belgrave Road. Further free

parking is available at the B&M Home Store alongside the former Sainsbury's site, where there is extensive free parking available for shoppers. Further encouragement for linked trips between the two should be explored, which may be enhanced if and when the development opportunity progresses.

Bus stops are regularly located along the length of the shopping strip, reflective of Belgrave Road being a key route in to and out of the city. A number of bus routes, providing regular services towards the city centre and to outlying locations within the local authority, can be easily accessed.

The pedestrian environment is generally satisfactory and benefits from regular pelican crossing points. Pavements are on the whole suitably maintained and devoid of unnecessary clutter or street furniture.

Designated cycle parking stands are located at a number of different locations within the centre but were often not used to their full potential.

Perception of Safety

There is a good feeling of safety within the centre, with a healthy level of pedestrian and vehicle activity occurring throughout the day and during the evening hours. The high levels of activity provide a degree of surveillance which is beneficial to levels of personal security. The designated parking areas similarly benefit from healthy levels of activity in their surrounds and are well illuminated.

The pedestrian environment at the southern end of the centre is furthest removed from surrounding residential streets and the activity occurring at the heart of the centre, as such perceptions of safety are weakest at this point. The development of the former Sainsbury's site provides an opportunity to attract greater activity and pedestrian movement to this location.

Environmental Quality

Shops within the centre are generally accommodated in traditional terrace properties which have been converted and often extended for commercial use. In this regard, works to a number of shopfronts were observed on the day of our visit, with positive signs of investor confidence in the centre as a whole and further new uses coming forward.

There are instances of poorer quality shopfronts which adversely impacts on the visual amenity of the area. Whilst many shopfronts are well maintained, other units, largely on the periphery of the centre, are visually poor and detract from the centre's overall environmental quality.

The centre has a unique character and qualities, primarily as result of its concentration of Asian specialist businesses. However, the long linear format of the centre, with shop units in the most part facing onto Belgrave Road or Melton Road means that visitors are exposed to passing traffic and associated noise. The physical form of the centre also means that the pedestrian public realm is limited to pavements on either side of Belgrave Road and Melton Road which provide few seating opportunities.

Conclusions

The Belgrave Road/Melton Road district centre is a vibrant and unique retail/leisure destination along a one mile stretch of Belgrave Road and Melton Road, known as 'the Golden Mile'. The centre comprises a range of retail, leisure and service uses with additional community facilities. It is a bustling centre with a high volume of pedestrian footfall but is also a busy route for vehicles, which can sometimes result in difficulties with parking, particularly on the side of the main roads.

As a large district centre, Belgrave Road/Melton Road has a relatively diverse range of retail and service operators. This is underpinned by a comparatively strong comparison goods offer, with 101 of such operators accounting for 11,710 sq.m of retail floorspace, which equates to 32.3% of the total quantum of floorspace.

Belgrave Road/Melton Road provides a focus for key celebrations, including Diwali. The Diwali celebrations in Leicester are one of the biggest largest outside of India, making this centre a national and international destination.

At the time of our visit there were 33 vacant units located in the district centre, equating to 9.8% of all units in the centre. In respect of floorspace, a total of 2,570 sq.m of vacant floorspace was recorded accounting for 7.1% of the total quantum of retail floorspace. The proportion of vacant units within the centre falls below average in terms of both floorspace and numbers of units.

Although the number of vacant units has almost doubled since the 2015 survey of the centre, the below average vacancy rate is a positive sign of overall vitality and viability within the centre, indicating a market confidence in the centre and that the offer is broadly meeting the catchment's needs.

Appendix 5 Town and District Centre Health Checks

Evington Road District Centre

Description

Evington Road district centre is dominated by service uses, with over half of all units in the local centre being in such use. Leisure, retail and financial and business services account for 36.4%, 10.8% and 2.8% of floorspace respectively in the district centre. The centre clearly serves a key service role for the local community.

Evington Road's retail frontage is interrupted at regular intervals by the numerous side roads that lead into the surrounding terraced residential areas. However, the side roads also accommodate the majority of the centre's parking requirements. However, a small amount of off street parking that is provided on Evington Place.

Evington Road can become quite congested during busy periods of the day, as the road connects the city centre to Evington village, which is located just over a mile to the east. The topography within the shopping area has a gentle inline rising from the east. Although Evington Road has one lane in each direction, the highway width is still fairly wide as the footways front of the shops are extended and in some places incorporate parking bays on the northern side of the road.

The local community has a large ethnic composition, which is reflected in the types of shop that are present within the centre. For example, there are a number of middle eastern restaurants and takeaways, halal butchers, as well as several milkshake and shisha cafes. In addition, there are no public houses within the commercial centre boundary.



Figure 1: Co-op, Evington Road

Figure 2: Social distancing measures



Figure 3: Refurbished unit, Evington Road

Figure 4: Public Transport Modes

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Table 1 Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2021 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2021 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2021 (%)
Comparison	1,342	17.3%	31.4%
Convenience	1,855	23.9%	15.4%
Financial	219	2.8%	7.0%
Leisure	2,824	36.4%	25.7%
Retail Service	840	10.8%	7.2%
Vacant	675	8.7%	12.8%
TOTAL	7,755	100%	100%

Source: District centre figures derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2021; UK Average from Experian Goad Report July 2021

Table 2 Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2021	Units at 2021 (%)	Units UK Average at 2021 (%)	Units at 2014 (%)
Comparison	19	20.4%	27.4%	22.0%
Convenience	13	14.0%	9.1%	19.8%
Financial	3	3.2%	9.2%	11.0%
Leisure	37	39.8%	24.5%	27.5%
Retail Service	13	14.0%	15.6%	16.5%
Vacant	8	8.6%	13.9%	3.3%
TOTAL	93	100	100%	100%

Source: District centre figures derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2021; UK Average from Experian Goad Report July 2021

Uses

Evington Road district centre is dominated by service uses, with over half of all units in the local centre being in such use. Leisure, retail and financial and business services account for 36.4%, 10.8% and 2.8% of floorspace respectively in the local centre. These operators are diverse, but are focused around a strong food offer underpinned by a number of hot-food takeaways, restaurants and cafés. The centre clearly serves a key service role for the local community.

In addition the strong service offer, Evington Road also has a reasonably strong range of convenience and comparison operators.

There are 13 convenience operators which account for 1,855 sq.m of floorspace, or 23.9% of the total quantum of retail floorspace. These operators are anchored by a Co-operative Foodstore and One Stop convenience store, alongside a number of smaller, independent convenience retailers.

The comparison range is more limited than at other district centres in the city, with 19 comparison operators accounting for 1,342 sq.m of floorspace. This equates to 17.3% of all retail floorspace in the centre. Operators are fairly diverse, and include key facilities for the local community such as a pharmacy and a florist, as well as more specialist clothing stores and auto parts retailers.

Vacancies

At the time of our visit, a total of eight vacant units were recorded at Evington Road. This figure represents an increase on the three vacant units recorded at 2014, but is still lower than the current national average as a proportion of vacant units at 8.6%. These eight units account for 675 sq.m of floorspace, which equates to a vacancy rate in respect of floorspace of 8.7%.

Although the vacancy rate has increased since 2014, it remains lower than the national average and as such is not considered to represent cause for concern. Indeed, the current vacancy rate is considered reflective of a vital and viable district centre that broadly provides for the retail and service needs of the local community.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian activity was witnessed throughout the centre, with higher levels outside of key operators and service uses. The social distancing measures adopted within the centre have aided good movement along what were otherwise some narrow pedestrian footpaths in some cases.

Pedestrian flows were considerably lower around the eastern part of the centre, which appears to be a more peripheral part of the shopping area. This is the location of a concentration of restaurants and takeaways, many of which were closed at the time of our visit. It can therefore be expected that pedestrian activity would increase in this part of the centre at different periods of the day.

It was noted that Evington Road acts as a main pedestrian thoroughfare between the residential areas to the east and west of the district centre. The strong footfall from surrounding residential areas encourages activity and provides for natural surveillance throughout the centre, and therefore improving the overall perception of safety.

Accessibility

There are several bus stops within the shopping area and several stops are also located on the adjacent side roads. Towards the west of the centre, there are bus stops on either side of Evington Road between its junctions with St Stephen's Road and Evington Place. These are served by the 22A, 22A, 22B, 54, 54A and 81 bus services. The westbound side has a shelter and good timetable information but the eastbound side has a stand only.

Although Evington Road is on a slight incline, the district centre is relatively accessible on foot. There are footpaths on both sides of the road throughout the shopping area. These all appeared to be sufficiently wide to enable people to move between the shops with ease, particularly in light of the ongoing social distancing measures in place on the day of our visit.

There is only very limited provision for cyclists within Evington Road within a general lack of designated cycle lanes and very few cycle parking facilities.

The centre does not have a designated customer car park. However, there are several free parking bays on the north side of Evington Road towards the eastern part of the centre.

These have a 1 hour limited waiting restriction, which enables a high turnover of parked cars within the shopping area whilst allowing sufficient time for people to visit the shops.

People wishing to use the shops for longer periods of time are able to do so by parking on one of the many adjoining side streets. The majority of these do not have any parking restrictions and are within a short walk of the shops. However, these spaces are shared with the surrounding houses and spaces seem to be in high demand.

Perception of Safety

There did not appear to be any particular concentrations of vandalism or graffiti and the general perception of safety was good on the day of our visit.

The wider retail frontage appears to be in reasonably good condition. The buildings along the High Street are two storeys high and have plenty of windows. In addition, Evington Road has good pedestrian flows, which collectively helps to create a good overall sense of natural surveillance within and around the shopping area.

The area with the best sense of safety and security is on the northern side of Evington Road, close to the Co-op. This is mainly because this area is the busiest part of the shopping area. However, the rest of the shopping area also generally feels safe and secure.

Environmental Quality

The quality of the shop frontages is generally of a reasonable standard. There are very few examples of notably good quality building facades, although that of the Santander bank is considered to contribute positively to the general street-scene. However, there are very few particularly poor examples of building facades, although the frontages of some units could be better maintained, particularly at a first floor level.

The busy road running through the middle of the district centre does in some way detract from the overall environmental quality, but given the important vehicular route, this will be in some extent unavoidable. However, there may be opportunities to introduce some additional public realm improvements, encourage slower vehicular speeds through sympathetic and modern traffic calming measures and perhaps the inclusion of new and improved public seating areas.

The security features employed by the majority of the shops were modest and were respectful of the shopping environment. However, there is an almost complete lack of green features, such as seasonal planted areas, trees or hanging baskets, within the shopping area.

Conclusions

Evington Road district centre is dominated by service uses, with over half of all units in the local centre being in such use. Leisure, retail and financial and business services account for 36.4%, 10.8% and 2.8% of floorspace respectively in the local centre. These operators are diverse, but are focused around a strong food offer underpinned by a number of hot-food takeaways, restaurants and cafés. The centre clearly serves a key service role for the local community.

At the time of our visit, a total of eight vacant units were recorded at Evington Road. This figure represents an increase on the three vacant units recorded at 2014, but is still lower than the current national average as a proportion of vacant units at 8.6%. These eight units account for 675 sq.m of floorspace, which equates to a vacancy rate in respect of floorspace of 8.7%.

Although the vacancy rate has increased since 2014, it remains lower than the national average and as such is not considered to represent cause for concern. Indeed, the current vacancy rate is considered reflective of a vital and viable district centre that broadly provides for the retail and service needs of the local community.

Pedestrian activity was witnessed throughout the centre, with higher levels outside of key operators and service uses. The social distancing measures adopted within the centre have aided good movement along what were otherwise some narrow pedestrian footpaths in some cases.

Appendix 5 Town and District Centre Health Checks

Narborough Road District Centre

Description

Narborough Road district centre comprises 284 retail units located within the inner city part of Leicester, approximately 500 metres walking distance to the south-west of the city centre's commercial boundary. The district centre is separated from the city centre by Castle Park and the course of the Old and New River Soar.

Narborough Road (A5460) is an arterial route that connects Leicester city centre with south-west Leicester, Fosse Shopping Park, as well as the M1 and M69 motorways. The road is extremely busy and is two to four lanes wide as it passes through the shopping area.

The shops are located on both sides of the road and form a more or less continuous retail frontage. However, the northern part of the commercial area branches out onto Braunstone Gate to the north-east and Hinckley Road to the north-west.

The centre is surrounded mainly by dense terraced housing. However, there is also a large modern leisure centre on the centre's north-western edge. The centre benefits in part from the local student population from both Leicester and De Montfort Universities, which have helped guide some areas of the centre to diversify their uses and now include a range of bars and restaurants.

The shopping area mainly comprises smaller format units that are occupied by independent operators. However, there are several larger units located throughout the shopping area and a number of well-known brands, including several supermarkets and banks. The buildings along the retail frontage are mainly two storeys in height with ground floor retail and first floor residential uses.



Figure 1: Leisure units and social distancing measures



Figure 2: Leisure Units



Figure 3: Community facility within the centre



Figure 4: Fashion Retailer within the centre

The information in this document has been used to support the preparation of the Local Plan. If you need assistance reading this document, or require it in a different format, please contact us via [email \[planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk\]\(mailto:planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk\)](mailto:planning.policy@leicester.gov.uk) or call on 0116 454 0085.

Table 1 Town Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2021 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2021 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2021 (%)
Comparison	6,330	18.5	31.4%
Convenience	9,840	28.8	15.4%
Financial	2,110	6.2	7.0%
Leisure	9,190	26.9	25.7%
Retail Service	4,230	12.4	7.2%
Vacant	2,480	7.3	12.8%
TOTAL	34,180	100	100

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2021; UK Average from Experian Goad Report July 2021.

Table 2 Town Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2021	Units at 2021 (%)	Units UK Average at 2021 (%)	Units at 2014 (%)
Comparison	54	19.0	27.4%	22.1%
Convenience	44	15.5	9.1%	12.5%
Financial	21	7.4	9.2%	10.6%
Leisure	88	31.0	24.5%	30.1%
Retail Service	55	19.4	15.6%	17.3%
Vacant	22	7.7	13.9%	7.4%
TOTAL	284	100	100	100.0%

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of June 2021; UK Average from Experian Goad Report July 2021

Uses

Narborough Road is a relatively large centre which is anchored by a diverse range of service operators and retailers. There are 44 convenience operators in the district centre which account for 9,840 sq.m of floorspace, or 28.8% of the total quantum of retail floorspace. These operators are anchored by a Tesco superstore at the northern end of the centre, alongside a range of smaller, independent operators including a number of specialist food stores, such as those providing Eastern European products.

Comparison operators account for 6,330 sq.m of floorspace, which equates to 18.5% of all retail floorspace in the centre. Operators are also diverse, and include specialist retailers selling items such as furniture, alongside florists, clothing shops and mobile phone shops.

Service operators account for over half of all units in the local centre, with leisure, retail and financial and business services accounting for 26.9%, 12.4% and 6.2% of total retail floorspace respectively.

Leisure service operators are relatively diverse, and include both national operators such as Subway and Papa John's alongside independent operators. The specific uses are also diverse, but as is the case with other district centres in the city, these are primarily focused on a strong food and drink offer. The centre also has a strong retail and financial and business offer which is considered commensurate with the scale of the district centre and its role in serving the day-to-day needs of the local community.

Vacancies

The proportion of vacant units at Narborough Road is lower than the national average in respect of

both the proportion of units and quantum of floorspace. At the time of our survey, 22 vacant units were recorded. This equates to a vacancy rate of 7.7%. The total number of vacant units is largely unchanged from that at 2014, when 23 vacant units were recorded. In regards floorspace, 2,480 sq.m of floorspace is vacant, a figure which equates to 7.3%. The largest single vacant unit in the centre is at 118 – 120 Narborough Road, which has a floorspace of 260 sq.m.

Vacant units are located throughout the district centre, with no one area being dominated by such units. This is welcome as it ensures that there is a reasonable level of vibrancy throughout the district centre and provides for a generally attractive and pleasant retail environment. Indeed, by virtue of the centre's vacancy rate being lower than the current national average this is considered indicative of a vital and viable retail destination that contains a broad offer capable of serving the local community's needs.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian flows were observed to be relatively good and consistent throughout the centre on the day of our visit, particularly as the bars and pubs were beginning to open up for lunch service. Higher proportions of footfall were present outside of the convenience operators in particular.

Pedestrian flows were slightly higher along the northern end of Narborough Road and in particular between the Tesco store and the remainder of the centre. In addition, a higher number of people were observed walking in both directions along Narborough Road on both sides of the road. However, the pedestrian flows in the part of the centre could be expected to be higher at different times of the day.

The area to the south of the railway bridge also had reasonable pedestrian flows, with relatively high proportions of shoppers visiting the Co-op store in particular.

Accessibility

There are numerous bus stops located along Narborough Road, Hinckley Road and Braunstone Gate. The bus stops are generally located no more than 400 metres from each other, meaning that someone shopping within the centre rarely has to walk more than 200 meters to the nearest bus stop.

Narborough Road has a number of bus services (16, 18, 50, 51 and 52) running along its duration. These operate regularly to many destinations, including the city centre, Leicester General Hospital, St Peter's Road, Braunstone (via Hinckley Road), Braunstone Crossroads, Enderby, Narborough, Huncote, Thorpe Astley and Fosse Park. Hinckley Road also has several bus services (18, 104, 158 and 162), which operate to the city centre, Braunstone, Fosse Park, Earl Shilton, Hinckley and Nuneaton.

Narborough Road has a more or less continuous retail frontage on both sides of the road with a high concentration of retail units within the different parts of the centre. This means that the surrounding residential areas generally have good access to a large amount of services and facilities and there is a good local walk-in catchment, benefiting the operators within the centre.

Accessibility around the shopping area is generally good. There are footpaths on both sides of the road throughout the centre.

Perception of Safety

We considered there to be a generally good sense of safety and security within Narborough Road district centre, with good natural surveillance from ground floor shopfronts. However, the majority of the retail units' security shutters are closed when the shops shut. As a consequence, the perceived level of natural surveillance within the street reduces at night time. However, there seemed to be ample provision of street lighting throughout the centre, which would help to create a sense a safety and security during hours of darkness.

There are a few locations where surveillance levels are lower. The stretch of Narborough to the south of the railway bridge has a much more open feel and is less overlooked, particularly beneath the railway bridge itself. Some of car parks that adjoin Narborough Road also reduce the sense of surveillance within the street, owing to their lack of building frontage. However, these areas did not appear to have a severe negative impact on the centre's sense of safety and security.

Environmental Quality

The environmental quality within the centre varies, but is generally reasonably good. A major influencing factor is the constant flow of traffic that passes through the shopping area, and the high level of footfall.

The shopfronts are generally attractive and of good quality throughout the centre. Some of the signs and facades could be of better quality but there were very few examples of particularly poor shop frontages. However, there were some instances at the southern end of the district centre where shops had become into disrepair and efforts to bring these back into economically viable use should be explored further.

Several of the shops, such as the greengrocers, have stands outside their entrances selling produce. Some of the cafes also have outdoor seating areas and awnings, which again add value to the appearance of the street and help to create a sense of vibrancy. The railway bridge to the south of the centre incorporates some community artwork, which perhaps conveys some sense of civic pride.

Conclusions

Narborough Road district centre comprises 284 retail units located within the inner city part of Leicester, approximately 500 metres walking distance to the south-west of the city centre's commercial boundary. The district centre is separated from the city centre by Castle Park and the course of the Old and New River Soar.

Narborough Road (A5460) is an arterial route that connects Leicester city centre with south-west Leicester, Fosse Shopping Park, as well as the M1 and M69 motorways. The road is extremely busy and is two to four lanes wide as it passes through the shopping area.

The commercial centre itself is linear in nature and spans a distance of nearly 1,500 metres from north to south. The shops are located on both sides of the road and form a more or less continuous retail frontage. However, the northern part of the commercial area branches out onto Braunstone Gate to the north-east and Hinckley Road to the north-west.

The proportion of vacant units at Narborough Road is lower than the national average in respect of both the proportion of units and quantum of floorspace. At the time of our survey, 22 vacant units were recorded. This equates to a vacancy rate of 7.7%. The total number of vacant units is largely unchanged from that at 2014, when 23 vacant units were recorded.

We considered there to be a generally good sense of safety and security within Narborough Road district centre, with good natural surveillance from ground floor shopfronts. However, the majority of the retail units' security shutters are closed when the shops shut.

In summary, Narborough Road district centre is considered to be a vital and viable centre.