Topic 8: Centres of Business and Culture

Engagement version March 2025

Requirements addressed in this section:

Information required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, regarding the issue addressed in this section

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended

Section	Requirement
Section 15(5)(a)	the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district,
Section 15(5)(b)	the principal purposes for which the land is used,

National Planning Framework

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

LDPs should support sustainable futures for city, town and local centres, in particular opportunities to enhance city and town centres. They should, where relevant, also support proposals for improving the sustainability of existing commercial centres where appropriate.

LDPs should identify a network of centres that reflect the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the town centre vision.

LDPs should be informed by evidence on where clustering of non-retail uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities. They should also consider and if appropriate, identify any areas where drive-through facilities may be acceptable where they would not negatively impact on the principles of local living or sustainable travel.

LDPs should provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in city and town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential development.

Retail

LDPs should consider where there may be a need for further retail provision. This may be:

- where a retail study identifies deficiencies in retail provision in terms of quality and quantity in an area; or
- when allocating sites for housing or the creation of new communities, in terms of the need for neighbourhood shopping, and supporting local living.

LDPs should identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drink outlets can be supported.

Tourism

LDPs should support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector. The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment. Relevant national and local sector driven tourism strategies should also be taken into account.

The spatial strategy should also identify areas of pressure where existing tourism provision is having adverse impacts on the environment or the quality of life and health and wellbeing of local communities, and where further development is not appropriate.

Culture & Creativity

LDPs should recognise and support opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage and the arts.

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Links to Evidence

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development and Use Classes) (Scotland) Miscellaneous Amendment Order 2023
- Community Planning Aberdeen's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh – Engagement Report - 2023
- Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023
- Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan 2022
- Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme 2015
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices (Volume A and Volume B)
- Aberdeen Retail Centre Health Checks 2024

Retail

- Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan 2022
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices (Volume A and Volume B)

Tourism

- The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024
- Visit Scotland Regions - Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Speyside
- Visit Aberdeenshire Quarterly Business Monitors
- National Tourism Strategy: Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism for A Sustainable Future
- Destination Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire: A Framework for Growth 2022 - 2030
- Regional Economic Strategy – A sustainable economic future for the North East of Scotland
- Aberdeen City Events 365
- Aberdeen City Steam Report 2019 - 2022
- Aberdeen City Steam Report 2019 - 2023
- Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023
- Planning Application 211263/DPP
- Planning Application 200033/DPP
- Planning Application 210984/DPP

- Aberdeen Planning Guidance – Short Term Lets
- Aberdeen City Data Observatory

Culture & Creativity

- Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982
- Human Rights Bill Consultation
- Scotland's Creative Learning Plan
- Culture Counts Budget Tracker
- Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement – Working in Partnership for Aberdeen
- Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026
- Culture Aberdeen – A Cultural Strategy for the City of Aberdeen 2018-2028
- Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023
- Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums Annual Review 2023-24
- Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Executive Summary
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 1
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Volume 2
- Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2023 Appendices (Volume A and Volume B)
- Aberdeen City Cultural Market Analysis

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Summary of Evidence

Policy context

Purpose and Scope of Evidence Report Chapter

Supporting Aberdeen's centres through a town centre first approach, while supporting retail, tourism and culture and creative industries will ensure positive economic, social and cultural benefits to the residents of Aberdeen, while ensuring sustainability is paramount.

This section is structured in the following order:

- City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres
- Retail
- Tourism
- Culture & Creativity

Land use planning has no influence over issues such as recruitment, weather, national taxation, energy, food or petrol prices. However, there is a role for land use planning in putting in place a policy framework and/or land allocations to ensure that significant footfall generating developments are located following a town centre first principle.

It is not the intention of this chapter to repeat the content of other chapters. It should be read in conjunction with other chapters.

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City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2024

In recognition that Aberdeen serves as the regional centre, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council commissioned a joint retail study in 2023 to assess retail capacity, turnover, and opportunities for both local authority areas. The study aimed to gather data for the Evidence Report for the upcoming Local Development Plans, requiring robust empirical data on retail expenditure patterns and identifying any deficiencies or potential for retail growth until 2038.

The study also considered National Planning Framework 4 and Local Development Planning Guidance, identified prime locations for retail opportunities, forecasted future retail trends, conducted household surveys, and assessed each centre listed in current Local Development Plans. Additionally, it included an analysis of commercial leisure trends due to their close relationship with retailing.

Network of Centres

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 sets out the current network of centres. This consists of a regional centre (City Centre including the Retail Core), two Town Centres, five District Centres, 32 Neighbourhood Centres and five Commercial Centres.

Regional Centre	Town Centre	District Centre	Neighbourhood Centre			Commercial Centre
City Centre	Rosemount	Danestone	Bieldside	Haudagain	Rosemount	Garthdee
	Torry	Dyce	Braehead Way	Holburn	Sclattie Park	Kittybrewster Retail Park
		Middleton Park	Bucksburn	King Street	Scotstown	Links Road/ Boulevard Retail Park
		Rousay Drive	Byron	Kingswells	Seafield	Denmore Road
		Berryden	Chatton Place	Kittybrewster / Clifton	Seaton	Bridge of Don Retail Park
			Cornhill	Lang Stracht	Sheddocksley	
			Cove	Leadside Road	St Swithin Street	
			Cults	Mastrick	Urquhart Road	
			Culter	Hayton	Victoria Street, Dyce	
			George Street	Mannofield	Woodside	

Table 1: Network of Centres – Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

The locations are shown below.

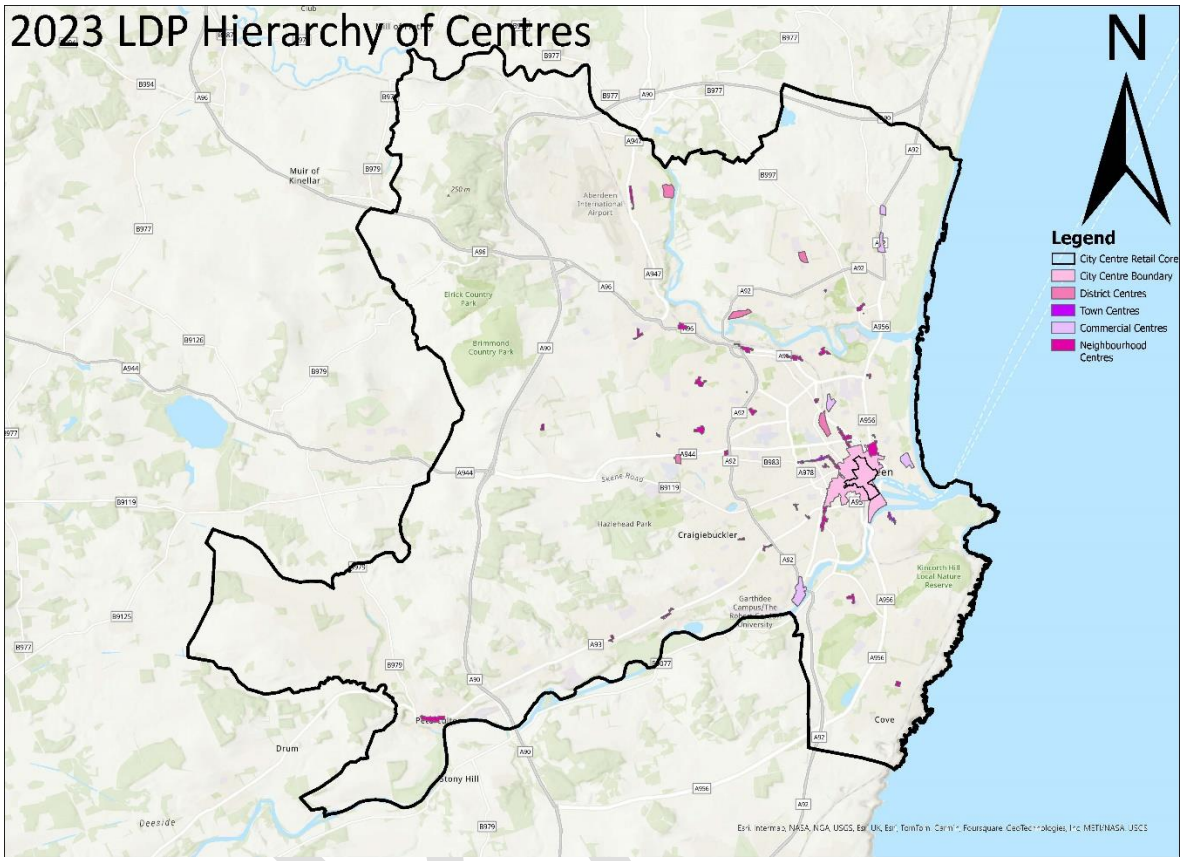


Figure 1: Network of Centres – Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

The Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2024 reviewed the network of retail centres, recommending reclassification of King Street Neighbourhood Centre to King Street District Centre due to its larger floorspace and significant turnover compared to other neighbourhood centres. Additionally, a moderate boundary extension at Haudagain Neighbourhood Centre was suggested to include adjacent retail sites. No other changes were recommended.

The recommended network of centres is as follows:

Regional Centre	Town Centre	District Centre	Neighbourhood Centre			Commercial Centre
City Centre	Rosemount	Berryden	Bieldside	Haudagain	Sclattie Park	Bridge of Don Retail Park
	Torry	Danestone	Braehead Way	Holburn	Scotstown	Denmore Road
		Dyce	Bucksburn	Kingswells	Seafield	Garthdee
		King Street	Byron	Kittybrewster / Clifton	Seaton	Kittybrewster Retail Park

Topic 8: Centres of Business and Culture

		Middleton Park	Chattan Place	Lang Stracht	Sheddocksley	Links Road/ Boulevard Retail Park
			Cornhill	Leadside Road	St Swithin Street	
			Cove	Mastrick	Urquhart Road	
			Cults	Hayton	Victoria Street, Dyce	
			Culter	Mannofield	Woodside	
			George Street	Rosemount		

Table 2: Recommended network of centres

Retail Centre Health Checks

The Retail Centre Health Check 2023 provides information on the vitality and viability of Aberdeen's City Centre and other retail centres using indicators like vacancy rates, diversity of uses, retailer representation, accessibility, and pedestrian footfall. The results show that these centres continue to support a variety of retail, service, and leisure uses. The City Centre was divided into six survey areas for the health check.

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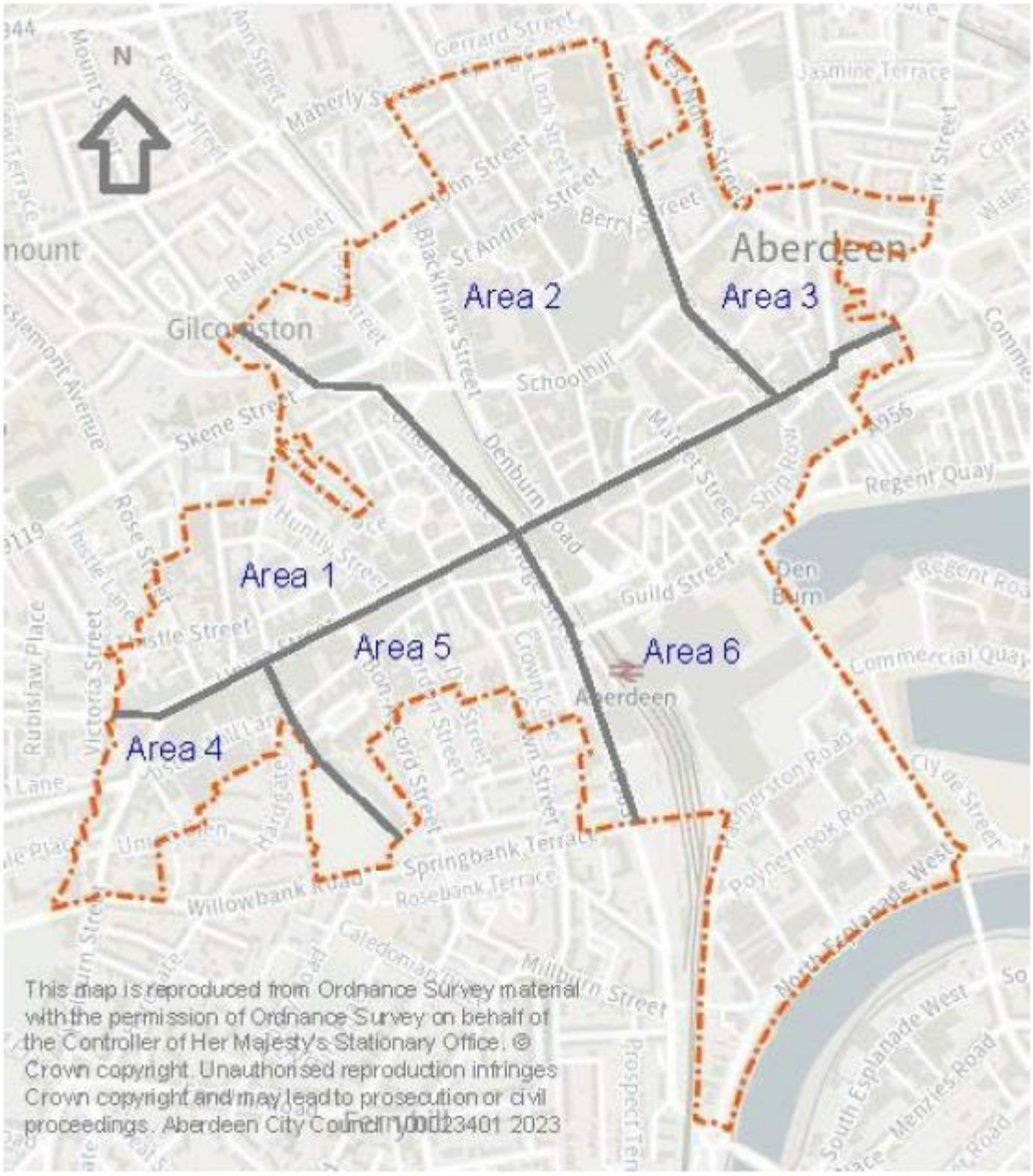


Figure 2: Retail Centre Health Check Survey Areas

Pedestrian counts in seven locations in the City Centre showed steady movement on a Saturday morning, with Guild Street, Union Street (south side), and George Street having the highest numbers. This aligns with the concentration of retail goods shops between George Street and Union Square. However, the Thursday evening count showed a 34% decrease in pedestrian numbers, suggesting late night shopping may be less popular or unavailable.

Topic 8: Centres of Business and Culture

Common with trends across Scotland, Aberdeen's City Centre has seen a shift from traditional retail to leisure, service uses, and offices, while maintaining convenience shopping to support local living. The City Centre offers various food, drink, and entertainment options, with a notable café culture. There is potential for City Centre living , through upper floor conversions along Union Street and the City Centre Masterplan Intervention Areas.

Diversity of Uses and Vacancies

The Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study Volume 2 highlights a diverse range of uses within Aberdeen's City Centre, including retail, retail services, commercial leisure/entertainment, public services, and other uses. Retail services and commercial leisure are vital to the City Centre economy and are expected to remain in demand long term.

GOAD Classification	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6
Convenience	9	14	1	4	3	14
Comparison	32	43	3	12	9	22
Retail Services	47	52	4	23	20	28
Financial & Business Services	34	10	2	6	34	37
Leisure	58	80	30	23	77	66
Health & Medical	13	10	3	2	6	1
Religious Services	7	3	4	1	3	5
Public Service	3	3	8	2	6	3
Other	2	4	3	4	5	16
Vacant	37	46	11	23	25	29
Total Occupied Units	205	219	58	77	163	192
Total Units	242	265	69	100	188	221
(% vacant)	15%	17%	16%	23%	13%	13%

Table 3: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check summarising GOAD Classification per Area

Retail Centre Health Checks 'Table 3' show leisure as the most prevalent use in the City Centre, with areas 1, 2, and 4 having a proportional split of key classifications. Area 3 has the highest percentage of leisure and lower levels of traditional retail and

retail services. Area 5 has high leisure and financial/business services, while Area 6 has higher "Other" uses due to the fishing and oil industries in the area. Around 45% of units in four areas consist of convenience, comparison, retail services, financial & business services, and leisure uses. Vacant units are consistent across five areas, with area 4 having the highest vacancy rate at 23%. Overall, leisure is the highest use at 31%, and vacancies are at 16%.

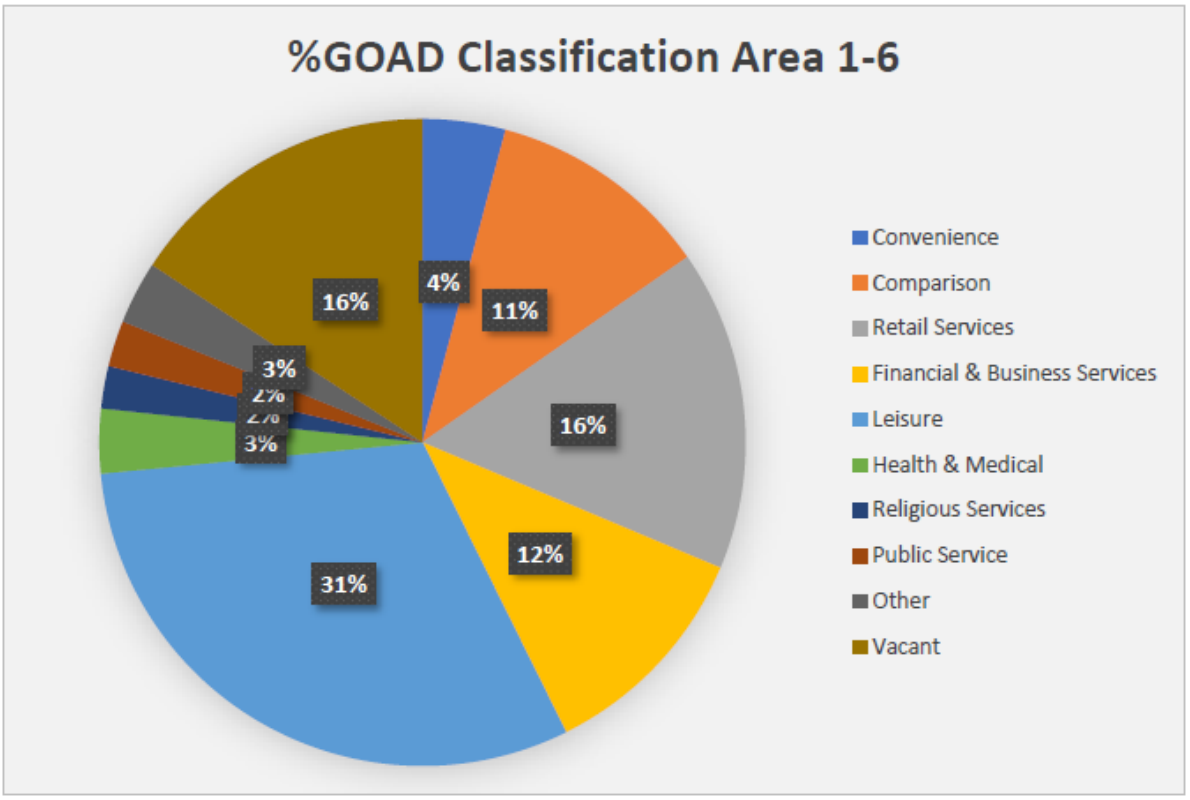


Figure 3: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check showing GOAD Classification of City Centre overall.

GOAD Classification	**The Academy** (Area 2)	**Bon Accord** (Area 2)	**Galleria** (Area 5)	**Former St Nicholas** (Area 2)	**Trinity Centre** (Area 6)	**Union Square** (Area 6)
Convenience	0	0	1	3	1	1
Comparison	0	23	0	11	15	42
Retail Services	0	3	2	3	2	7
Financial & Business Services	0	0	1	1	1	0
Leisure	4	9	4	0	0	31
Health & Medical	0	2	0	0	0	0
Religious Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Service	0	0	0	0	2	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vacant	1	16	1	4	7	8
Total Occupied Units	4	37	8	18	21	81
Total Units	5	53	9	22	28	89
(% vacant)	20%	30%	11%	18%	25%	9%

Table 4: Extract from Retail Centre Health Check summarising GOAD Classification per Shopping Centre.

As part of the Retail Centre Health Check, a GOAD survey revealed varying vacancy rates among Aberdeen's shopping centres, with Union Square having the lowest at 9% and Bon Accord Centre the highest at 30%. Table 4 demonstrates a lack of diversity within all shopping centres.

The Aberdeen City and Retail Study Volume 2 noted a significant increase in vacant units and floorspace, primarily due to the closures of John Lewis and Debenhams, which have impacted footfall and concentrated vacancies in the former John Lewis/Bon Accord area. Footfall has reduced since 2012, and major development plans for Bon Accord Centre and Union Square have not been implemented.

Clustering of non-retail uses

The Retail Centre Health Check found no significant issues with the clustering of betting shops, high interest money lenders, or takeaways in the City Centre. There are 11 betting shops (1%), 2 high interest money lenders (0.18%), and 34 takeaways (3%) in the areas monitored, with Area 5 having the highest number (12) of takeaways. These uses will continue to be monitored. The analysis of takeaways does not include

restaurants or cafes who offer takeaway services in addition to traditional “sit in” offer. In addition, specific analysis will be undertaken on takeaways within the local authority boundary area.

The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study Volume 1 noted difficulty in identifying specific categories of uses (pay-day loans, hot-food carry-outs etc) but acknowledged their importance as local facilities in smaller centres. Future policies might address clustering, although defining a cluster/concentration is challenging.

Aberdeen City and Shire Retail Study 2024

The Retail Study identifies the City Centre as the principal concentration of retail/service uses, accounting for significant portions of retail floorspace, turnover, and total units within the wider study area. Despite its regional importance, the City Centre does not dominate provision, though it is much larger than other locations like Inverurie town centre. The City Centre accounts for approximately 40% of the city's retail turnover, with varying percentages across different types of retail goods.

Town centres have a smaller share of retail/service floorspace and turnover compared to District and Commercial Centres, with combined overall turnover less than the City Centre. Limited changes in retail/service floorspace were observed, with some centres increasing in turnover while others declined slightly.

Householder surveys

Householder surveys were conducted as part of the Retail Study, where respondents were asked about the City Centre and the two town centres.

<u>City Centre</u>

Views on the City Centre were slightly positive, especially regarding the comparison goods offer, despite an increase in vacant units. Parking was considered difficult and expensive, but public transport access was seen as easy.

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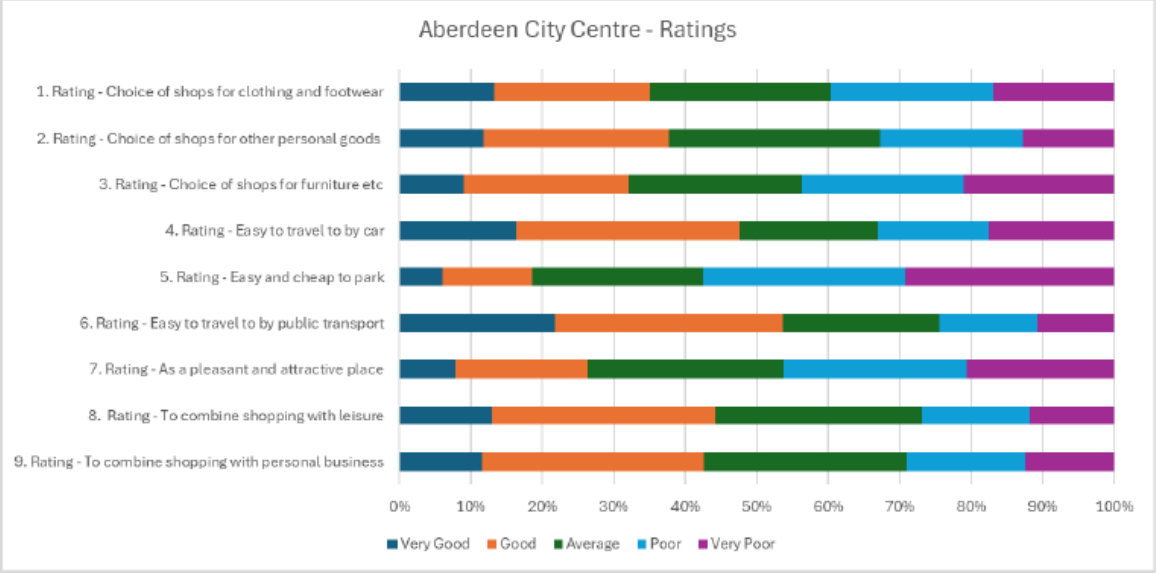


Figure 4: Householder survey – City Centre – Ratings

<u>Rosemount Town Centre</u>

Overall, the views expressed were slightly positive, but there were perceived weaknesses in the poor offering for general and bulky comparison goods.

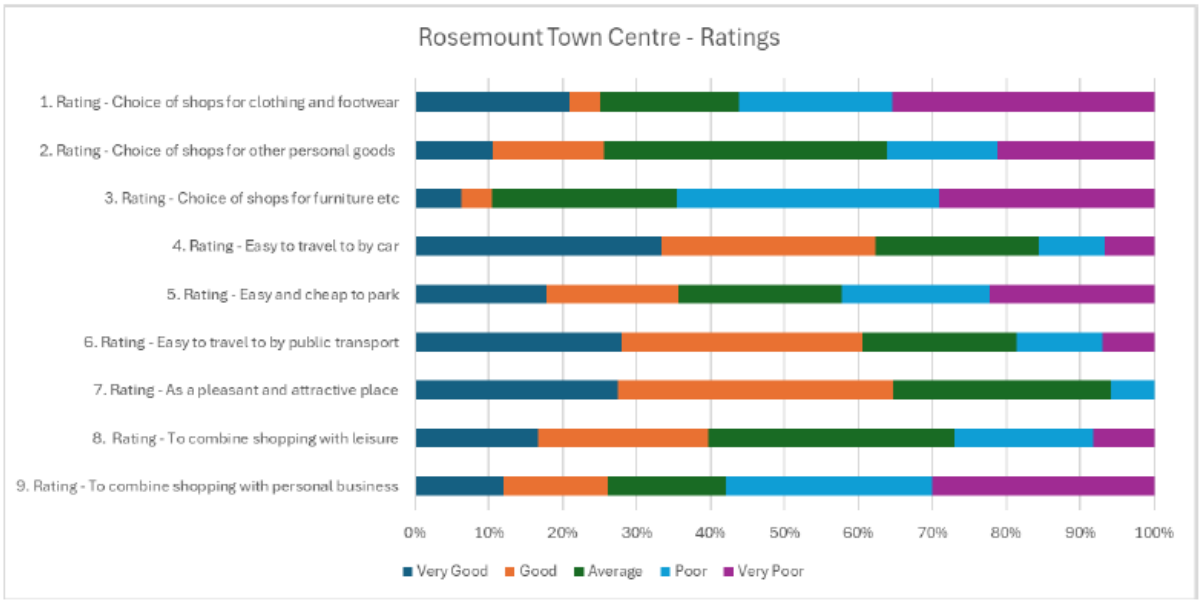


Figure 5: Householder survey – Rosemount Town Centre – Ratings.

Torry Town Centre

Despite its limited size, the centre was viewed positively by visitors despite higher vacancy rates, limited retail goods, and a decline in comparison shopping.

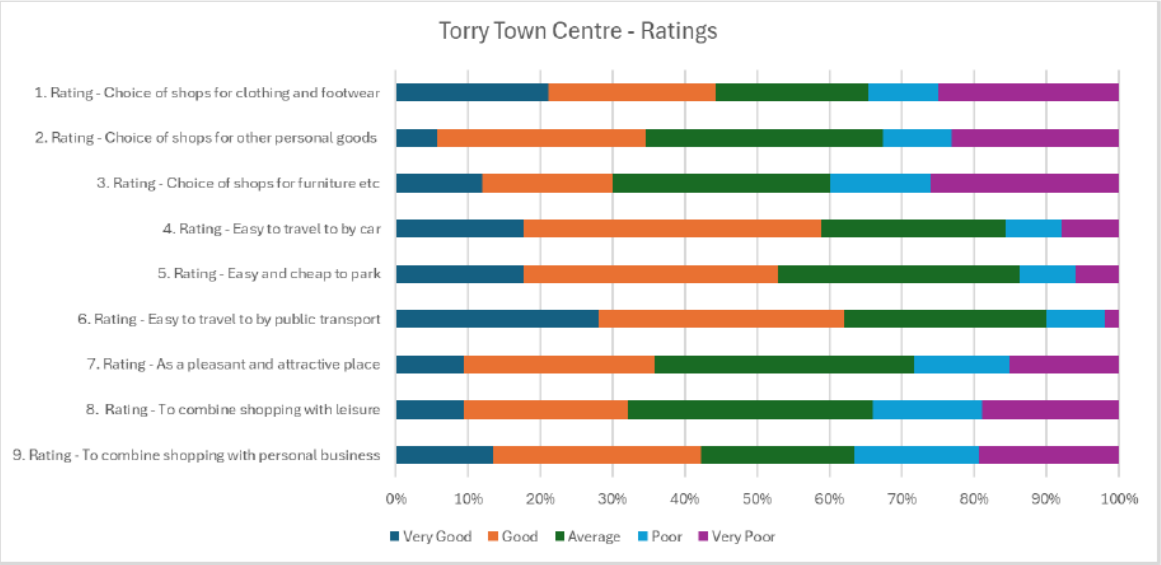


Figure 6: Householder survey – Torry Town Centre – Ratings.

Drive Throughs

Aberdeen has 15 drive throughs, mostly located on radial routes near the A96, A956, and A92. Exceptions include drive throughs in retail centres at Berryden, Kittybrewster, and the Beach & Leisure area. Table 5 and Figure 7 set out the locations of the Drive Throughs.

McDonalds	KFC	Tim Hortons	Burger King	Costa	Starbucks	Popeyes
Bucksburn	Haudagain Neighbourhood Centre	West Tullos Ind Est	Berryden District Centre	Bridge of Don Commercial Centre	Bridge of Don	West Altens Ind Est
Kittybrewster Commercial Centre	Bridge of Don		Beach & Leisure	West Tullos Ind Est	West Altens Ind Est	
West Tullos Ind Est			West Altens Ind Est			
Bridge of Don						

Table 5: Location of Drive Throughs.

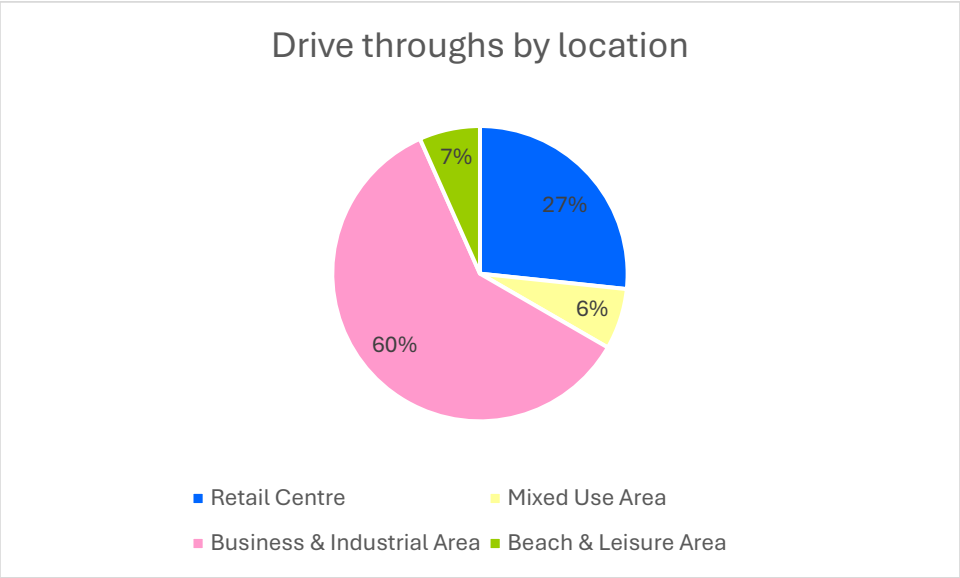


Figure 7: Location of Drive Throughs by location

Spatial distribution is set out in Figure 8 below. Notably most are not close to residential areas and generally require crossing busy roads. Consideration should be given to whether these locations positively contribute to local living and whether local policies should be included in future Local Development Plans to guide the determination of future applications.

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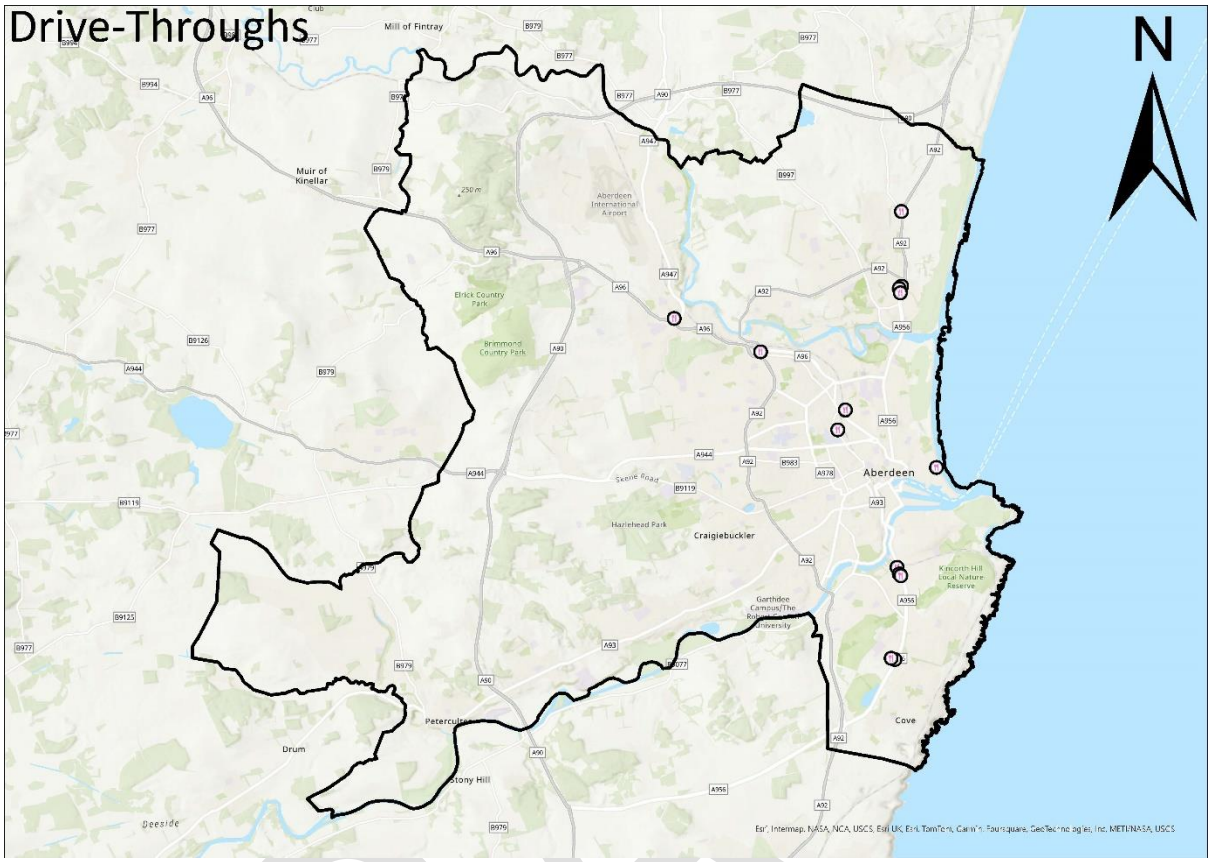


Figure 8: Distribution of Drive Throughs

Place Standard Assessments

Between 5 October and 6 November 2023, 470 participants took part in online and six in person Place Standard assessments for Community Planning. The full results and more information on this are found in the Place Topic Paper. The Place Standard assess places and is split into 14 themes. Places are assessed, awarded a score out of 7, and people asks for comment on what is good now and what can be improved about their local area. The results for Aberdeen are split into north, south and central, with “all” noting where these comments were present on all three areas. The results from the Place Standard are paramount for assessing quality of place and understanding the positive and negative perception of local areas. The Place Standard assessments were completed with adults and children.

The Work and Local Economy theme of the Place Standard are relevant here. The results are as follows: A score of 3.91 out of 7 was achieved, and the comments submitted are noted below.

Place Standard Theme	"Good" now	"Improve" for the future
Work and Local Economy	• Good training opportunities, volunteering opportunities and availability of jobs. (All) • Local businesses and independents opening (Central) • Range of retail services (Central)	• Type and range of job opportunities available locally (North and Central) • Improve employment support and training (North and Central) • Volunteering opportunities (North) • Training especially for retraining and skills development (South and Central) • Empty buildings grants and incentives(South and Central)

Table 6: Comments relating to good aspects and what can make Aberdeen better. Summary of Community Planning Aberdeen's "Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023".

The children and young people results on work and local economy noted: 62.3% felt they were okay, 32.1% felt they were not good, and 5.7% felt they were great.

Place Standard Theme	What is good now?	Percentage	What would make it better?	Percentage
Work and Local Economy	Volunteering	20.8%	Training to learn new things	29.3%
	Jobs for my family	17.9%	Jobs nearby	27.4%
	Jobs nearby	14.2%	Jobs for my family	17%

Table 7: Top 3 responses for 'What is good now' and 'What would make it better?' Extract from Community Planning Aberdeen's "Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans for North, South and Central Refresh Engagement Report 2023

Topic 8: Centres of Business and Culture

City Centre and Beach Masterplan

Aberdeen City Council approved a comprehensive document in 2015 outlining a 25-year vision for transforming the City Centre. The masterplan focuses on creating a living, vibrant, connected, and resilient city through various projects and interventions, including new residential and mixed-use areas, improved retail and leisure offer, enhanced connectivity, and sustainability efforts. The masterplan has potential to support tourism and the visitor economy. A review of the masterplan was conducted in 2021 alongside the development of a new Beach Masterplan.

The Masterplan outlines projects to boost economic growth and benefit Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire communities. Key projects include changes to Union Street, a new city market, revitalising the beach area, Queen Street proposals, and West End improvements. The goal is to increase footfall and dwell time for visitors and residents whilst enhancing the City Centre's prosperity. The beach development plans focus on enhancing both the built and natural assets of the area which is already a tourism focus in its own right. Phase 1 includes creating a beach park, a large events field, and improving Broadhill as a natural landmark.

Work began in April 2024 to improve the City Centre streetscape and urban realm by widening pavements on a section of Union Street. Recent interventions include bus priority measures on Bridge Street, Market Street, and Guild Street, and a low emission zone (LEZ) in the City Centre to enhance air quality and promote sustainable transport. Permanent changes to the streetscape following implementation of physical distancing measures during COVID-19 have included the closure of Schoolhill to motorized vehicles. Construction on the new market commenced in 2024 with aspirations for the building to become a destination venue for the City Centre. It received £20million funding from the Government's Levelling Up Fund.

Online and in person stakeholder engagement has been undertaken related to the George Street Area (2022) and associated mini masterplan (2023), Queen Street Urban Park and Castlegate (2024).

City Region Deal

The Aberdeen City Region Deal, signed in 2016, committed the UK and Scottish governments to invest up to £250m to support economic regeneration in the region. The deal, signed in 2016, aims to encourage investment in innovation, internationalisation, digital connectivity, and infrastructure across the region. Investments includes £90 million to support an Oil and Gas Technology Centre, and £15 million towards new innovation hubs focusing on research, development and growth in the life sciences and food and drink sectors. Key projects include the Aberdeen South Harbour (National Planning Framework 4 – National Development 14 completed in 2023), BioHub (opened in 2023), SeedPod (under construction and due

for completion in 2025), Net Zero Technology Centre (formerly the Oil and Gas Technology Centre), 5G digital technology and transport projects.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development and Use Classes) (Scotland) Miscellaneous Amendment Order 2023

The General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 and the Use Classes (Scotland) Order 1997 were amended on 31 March 2023 to introduce changes that provide greater flexibility in changing the use of certain buildings. A new use class, Class 1A, replaces Class 1 and Class 2, allowing changes between retail, business, financial/professional services, food and drink, and other high street uses without planning consent. Additionally, buildings can change to use class 3 (food and drink) from class 1A. Rights for betting shops, payday loan shops, and hot food takeaways to change to use class 3 have also been introduced, along with the placement of furniture on public roads adjacent to class 3 premises, pubs, and bars. These changes aim to support the vitality and vibrancy of town centres. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 largely supported these changes in principle, although consent would have been required, and the "Retail Core" designation may need to be reviewed in future plans.

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Retail

The principle requirement for the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils' Retail Study was to provide robust data on retail expenditure patterns and identify deficiencies or capacity for retail growth until 2038. It includes identifying locations for retail opportunities, forecasting future retail trends, conducting household surveys, and assessing centres in the Local Development Plans. An assessment of trends in commercial leisure is also included due to its close interrelationship with retailing.The retail industry is impacted by social, economic, and technological factors, leading to higher vacancy rates due to brand consolidation and the rise of internet shopping/click and collect.Aberdeen City, as the regional centre for the North East, has the highest gross floor space in the region at 667,887 sqm and a turnover of £1,656.24m. See Figure 9.

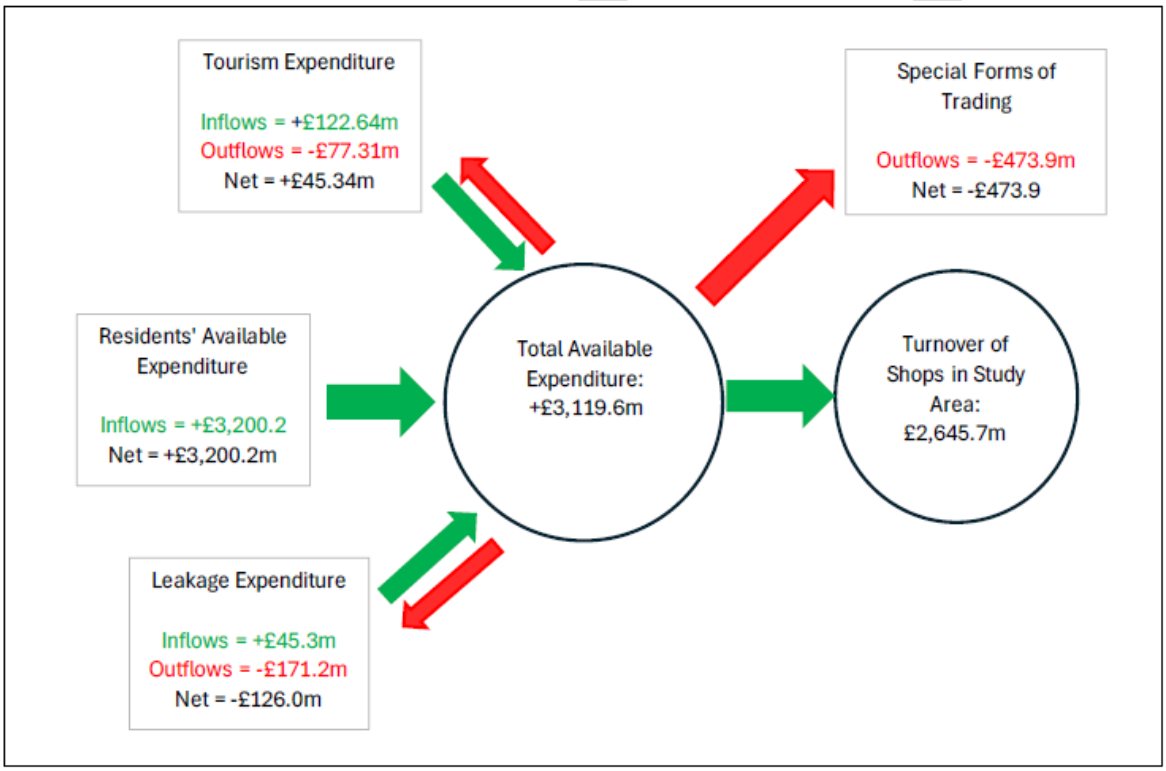


Figure 9: Extract from Retail Study showing retail expenditure flows and turnover for the North East Region in 2023.

Summary of Retail and Services Provision in Aberdeen City 2023

Retail and service provision – number of units.

Type	Number	Gross Floor Area (sqm)
Retail Goods Shops	856	429,296
Retail Services	1054	148,158
Vacant	200	68,752
Total	2110	667,887

Table 8: Type of retail and service provision by number and area

Across Aberdeen City, in terms of number of units, there is a 9% vacancy rate and the split between retail good shops and retail services is 41%/50%.

Vacancy rates by number of units and gross floor space:

Centre	No. units	No. %	Gross floor space (sqm)	Gross floor space
City Centre	111	11%	55,300	17%
Town Centre	22	14%	1,483	10%
District Centre	6	11%	1,333	2%
Commercial Centre	3	8%	2,463	2%
Remainder	58	6%	8,173	5%
Total	200	9%	68,752	10%

Table 9: Vacancy rates by retail centre

Table 9 above demonstrates that town centres had the highest vacancy rates in terms of units at 14%. However, by gross floor space it was the City Centre with the highest rate of vacancies at 17%.

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Retail goods shops – retail type and turnover

	Convenience		Comparison		Bulky Goods		All	
	Sqm	Turnover	Sqm	Turnover	Sqm	Turnover	Sqm	Turnover
City Centre	47,033	152.29m	114,658	475.34m	11,267	62.07	172,958	692.69m
Town Centres	3,619	18.29m	2,838	9.29m	932	2.83m	7,388	30.41m
District Centres	264,112	171.01m	26,269	96.23m	5,830	44.17m	58,511	311.41m
Commercial Centres	20,170	119.98m	24,083	83.73m	47,714	118.94m	91,967	322.66m
Remainder	50,534	223.07m	26,500	44.33m	21,438	31.68m	98,472	299.08m
Retail Goods Shops Total	147,768	684.63m	194,347	708.93m	87,181	262.69m	429,296	1656.24m

Table 10: Retail goods shops by type and turnover

Principal retail destinations in Aberdeen City Centre, including Union Square, Bon Accord Centre, Trinity Centre, and the former John Lewis, have recently been sold. The future of the City Centre depends on decisions made by the new owners, with a significant land parcel in the northern retail core owned by one entity.

Retail Deficiencies and Capacity

The Retail Study 2024 updated the Strategic Retail Model and analysed demand and supply for retail expenditure and turnover up to 2038. It examined quantitative and qualitative retail deficiencies by comparing expenditure and average turnover for the study area, individual councils, and market areas.

Convenience Goods

There was no significant quantitative retail deficiency identified to support additional convenience goods floorspace for the study area as a whole. However, additional floorspace could address local deficiencies in Loirston/south Aberdeen. Significant new convenience floorspace is, however, expected to adversely impact existing food stores in the study area.

General Comparison Goods

Although no overall quantitative deficiency was found in the study area, a deficiency was identified in the City Centre where market demand is unlikely to address it. Comparison retail will remain attractive but will not replace the lost floorspace. Significant investment outside the City Centre could undermine its long-term growth.

Bulky Comparison Goods
Broad levels of quantitative retail deficiency for bulky goods as well as market demand was identified.

Leisure Space
Commercial leisure space is expected to grow significantly in the City, Town and District Centres due to long term demand. This has potential to offset the decline in comparison goods retailing. There is also significant potential for additional leisure space to support tourism growth.

Local Accessibility to Retail and Related Services
The Retail Study found that some residential areas (both existing and major new housing areas) lack easy walking access to retail and local services, which is not aligned with the 20-Minute Neighbourhood principle in National Planning Framework 4. Recommendations were made for new retail/service provisions in major housing proposals to improve local accessibility, including areas such as Grandhome (OP9), Newhills (OP20-22), Maidencraig (OP28, 31-33), Countesswells (OP38), and Loirston (OP59).

Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan
Aberdeen City Council approved the Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan in 2022 with the principle aim to repopulate vacant units on Union Street. The initiative supports small businesses to open up pop up shops, test the market/products, encourages entrepreneurism, reuses previously vacant units, increases dwell time and spending in the local economy whilst linking with Community Wealth Building (see also Topic Paper Wellbeing and Community).

Empty Shops Grant Scheme
In 2023 Aberdeen City Council launched a £1million fund for City Centre regeneration to support the Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan. The fund offers grant awards of up to 50% of project costs towards eligible physical works required for internal reconfiguration of vacant shops on Union Street to enable reoccupation by new businesses and tenants.

The core objectives of the Union Street Empty Shops Grant Scheme are to:

- Reduce the number of vacant shops on Union Street through supporting eligible physical works required for internal reconfiguration for new uses - be that retail, cultural, hospitality or office space;
- Leverage private investment in vacant shops on Union Street to bring them back into use; and

- Support new business start-ups and entrepreneurs, and create new employment opportunities, through enabling the provision of suitable premises on Union Street.

All grants awarded from the fund must be paid out be the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

Aberdeen City Heritage Trust
At the time of writing, discretionary grants are available towards Building Repair, Shopfront and Community Heritage Grants within designated priority areas of Aberdeen City Centre. Types of work that can be applied for include general structural repairs, timber repairs, re-roofing and high level repairs, stonework repairs, windows, doors, external joinery, shop fronts, professional fees, thermal improvements. There will be types of work that will not be supported including internal works, alterations, redecoration, stone cleaning, general maintenance/running costs.

Heritage Grants Schemes
Historic Environment Scotland's Heritage & Place Programme aims to develop vibrant and sustainable places in Scotland through community-led regeneration of the historic environment. Aberdeen City has received initial grant funding for the regeneration of the east end of Union Street, which suffers from high vacancy rates and deterioration. If additional funding is approved, repairs to priority buildings and public realm improvements will be made, along with a community engagement and skills development programme. This programme replaces the Union Street Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) which operated between 2017 and 2023. Please see the Place topic paper for further information.

Our Union Street
Launched in 2023 and based on 10,000 ideas submitted by local residents, Our Union Street is a community-led organisation with the purpose to regenerate, repopulate and reinvigorate the Granite Mile. The aim is for Union Street to be a safe, busy, energetic, thriving thoroughfare that compares favourably with the best of the UKs small cities. It sets out 17 key themes to be addressed via 5 key action areas:

- Brighten the street
- Fill the units
- Use the space
- Tell the story
- Engage the people

Investment funding will include fit out grants for new businesses and free rents and rates. Also part of the programme of investment is an international food and drink market (under construction), Union Terrace Gardens (complete), streetscape improvements (underway), Art Gallery redevelopment (complete), Ultimate Masterclass Festival and street art festival Nuart. Free and discounted professional

services are also available. Volunteers are also undertaking maintenance and clean-up operations.

Aberdeen Business Improvement District

Aberdeen Business Improvement District (BID), known as 'Aberdeen Inspired', is led and funded by the City Centre business community. Established in 2011 and renewed for a third 5-year term in 2021, the BID aims to reinvigorate the City Centre with four themes: Safe and Welcoming City Centre, Promoting our City Centre, Attractive City Centre, and Helping Your Business. Key projects include the Nuart Festival, Christmas Village, Restaurant Week, Umbrella Project, SPECTRA Festival of Light, Tall Ships Races, Aberdeen Gift Card, Curated in the Quad, suspended illuminated signage, floral enhancements, Purple Flag award, deep cleaning of Union Street, and various advocacy and partnership initiatives.

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Tourism

Context

Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire attract visitors with their coastlines, castles, historic and cultural offerings, and golf courses. Aberdeen International Airport provides domestic and international flights and hosts the heliport for the North Sea Oil and gas industry. The city boasts a rich history, art galleries, museums, sculptures, monuments, parks, gardens, historic buildings, towns, and the beach. Further information can be found in the Culture & Creativity section below.

Union Terrace Gardens and the Port of Aberdeen South Harbour (National Planning Framework 4 - National Development 14) are two notable projects in recent years. Union Terrace Gardens was refurbished to improve accessibility, add amenities and restore historic features, reopening in 2022 with multiple awards. The Port of Aberdeen, completed in 2023, now accommodates cruise ships and supports economic diversification. The Port of Aberdeen received 43 cruise calls between May and October 2023, 58 in 2024 and 64 scheduled for 2025.

In 2022, Aberdeen experienced 1.3 million overnight trips by international and GB visitors, and 5.9 million day trips by GB residents, with a total spend of £747 million. The city is a popular destination for conferences, exhibitions, and meetings, benefiting from its strong academic and industrial base, and has significant tourism links with Germany, Norway, and the Netherlands due to the oil industry.

VisitAberdeenshire is the main tourism agency for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Their Quarterly Business Monitors have identified various trends over the past year, including rising business costs, recruitment challenges, weather impacts on trading performance, the cost of living crisis, increased international visitors, and short-term lets legislation.

Based on VisitScotland data collected in 2023, Aberdeen had a 41%/59% split of domestic and international overnight visitors, with retirees or older couples making up 72% of the visitors. The most popular accommodation was serviced accommodation, and 64% of visitors were repeat visitors. The main attractions were the scenery/landscape and history/culture, with museums/art galleries and architecture/buildings being the top activities. In alignment with the town centre first approach most tourist attractions are located in or near the City Centre – see Figure 10.

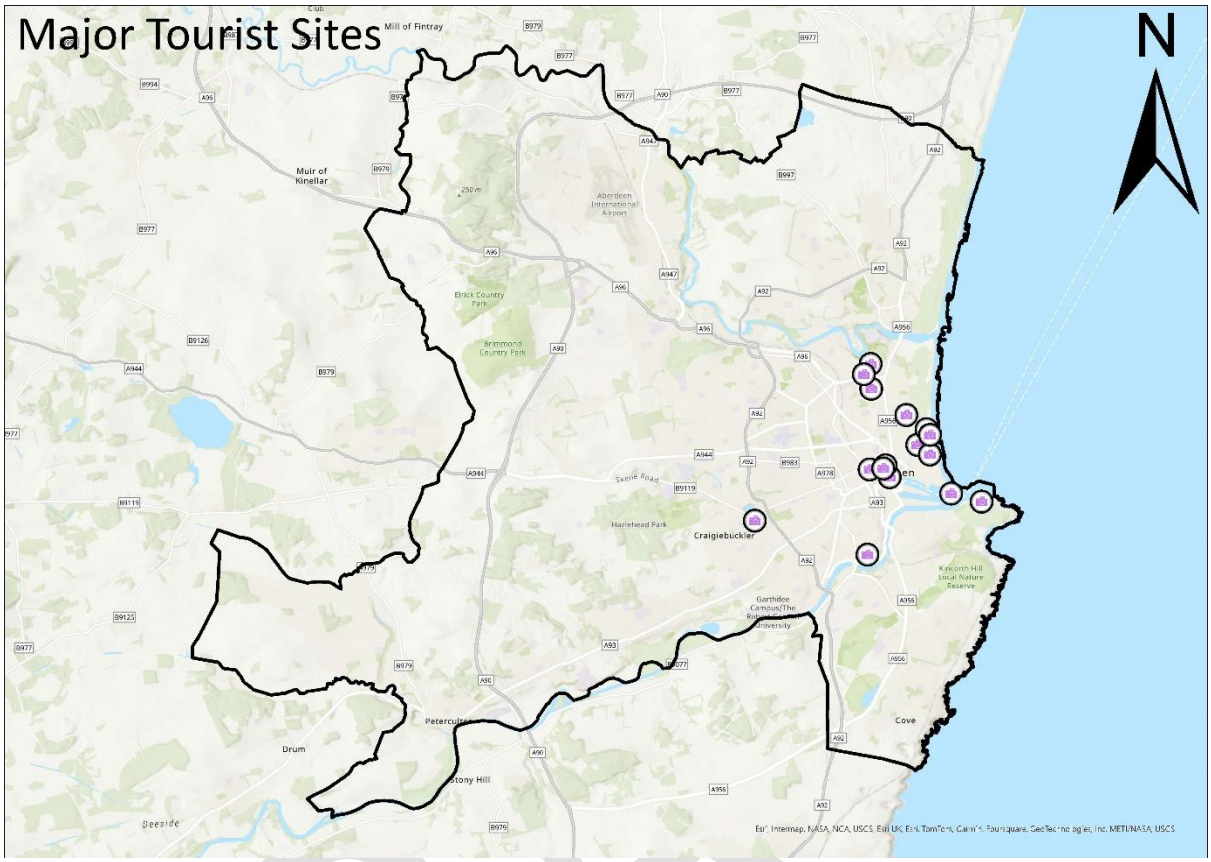


Figure 10: Distribution of Major Tourist Sites

The hotel market in Aberdeen is linked to tourism and the oil and gas industry/business market, leading to a cluster of hotels in Dyce. Most accommodation is in the City Centre, with some hotels recently converted to student housing. Aberdeen Planning Guidance on short-term lets supports the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023. Limited opportunities for caravan/camping sites exist due to Aberdeen's small hinterland.

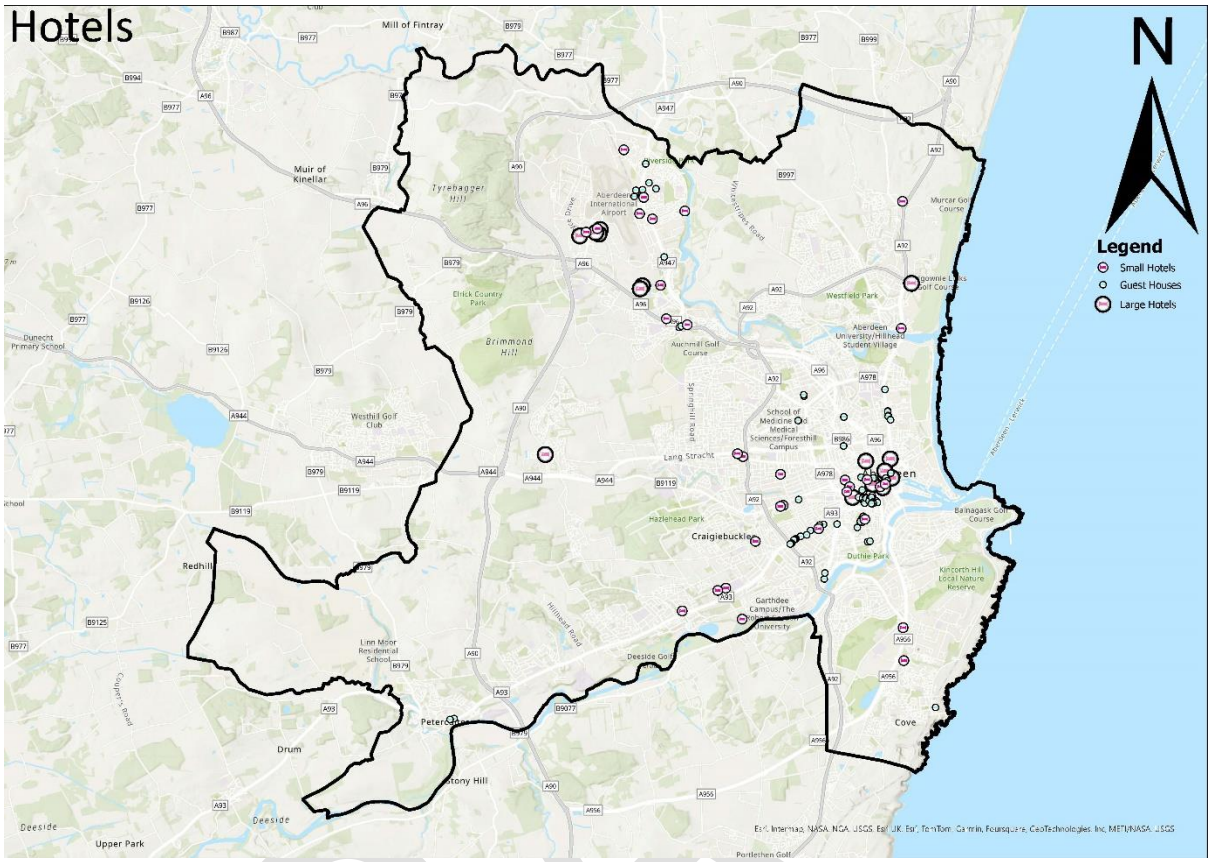


Figure 11: Distribution of Hotels

Aberdeen City STEAM Report

STEAM is a tourism economic impact modelling process which quantifies the local economic impact of tourism through a variety of sources. Data for Aberdeen indicates positive trends relating to local economic impact of tourism. Table 11 below shows that Aberdeen is year on year experiencing a higher number of visitors and higher expenditure by visitors which is resulting in a higher economic impact and number of persons employed.

Comparative Headlines STEAM data 2019 – 2023

	2023	2022	2019	2019 v 2023 (%)
Direct expenditure (£Millions)	468.27	384.31	278.61	+68.1 %
Economic Impact (£Millions)	700.58	574.61	416.15	+68.3 %

Topic 8: Centres of Business and Culture

Day Visitor Numbers (Millions)	1.490	1.327	1.182	+26.1 %
Staying Visitor Numbers (Millions)	1.856	1.457	1.257	+47.7 %
Direct Employment (FTE)	5,663	5,214	4,623	+22.5 %
Total Employment (FTE)	8,349	7,710	6,647	+25.6 %

Table 11: Extracted from Aberdeen City Steam Report for 2019-2023 (CDXX) and Aberdeen City Steam Report for 2019-2022

Hotel occupancy and average room rates in Aberdeen have returned to, and now exceeded, pre-COVID19 levels in line with higher visitor numbers.

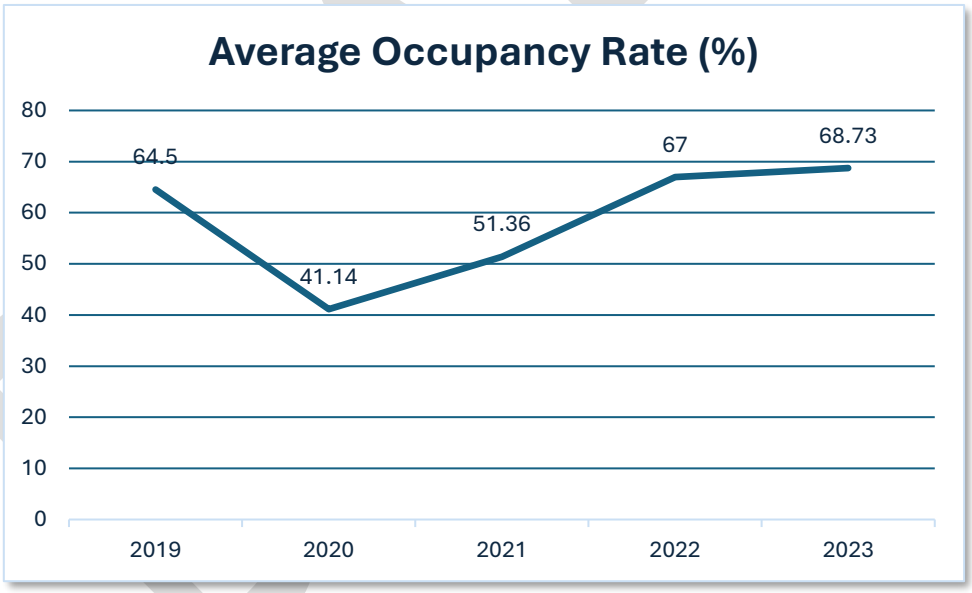


Figure 12: Aberdeen Occupancy Rate 2019 – 2023, Extract from Aberdeen Data Observatory

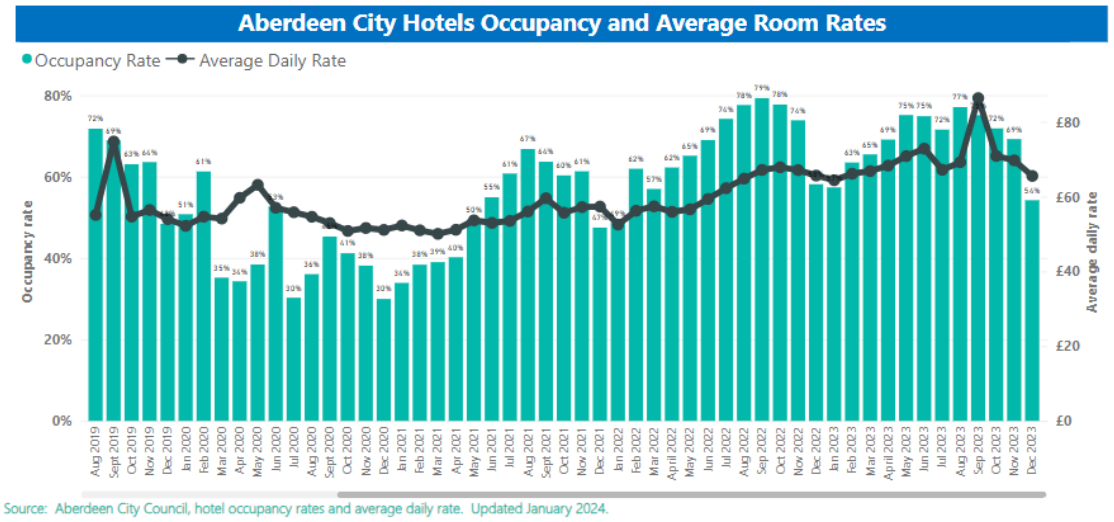


Figure 13: Aberdeen City Hotel Occupancy and Average Room Rates, Extract from Aberdeen Data Observatory.

The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024

The Act received Royal Assent on 5 July 2024 and gives discretionary powers to Local Authorities in Scotland to charge a fee or tax on overnight stays in some types of accommodation. It allows councils to invest more in tourism facilities and services that benefit visitors and residents. The rate set is discretionary and could result in different rates for different areas or purposes. A draft Visitor Levy Scheme for Aberdeen was approved for consultation, lasting twelve weeks, at a meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee on 12 February 2025.

Just Transition Fund

The fund is a £500m ten-year commitment to support projects across the North East and Moray which contribute towards the region's transition to net zero. Within Aberdeen City, funding has been secured by One North East and towards the North East Adventure Tourism project to create a new pump track at Transition Extreme's beachfront site.

Destination Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire: A Framework for Growth 2022-2030

VisitAberdeenshire, supported by Scottish Enterprise, has created a framework to make Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire Scotland's leading visitor destination by 2030. The plan emphasizes sustainable growth for the environment, society, and economy, and includes principles of leadership, people & skills, and partnerships. It aims to support

the transition to a net zero economy, provide employment opportunities, and make the region competitive.

The north-east aims to lead tourism growth in Scotland by encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more, while building on its reputation for innovation and high-quality experiences. Extensive consultation with private and public sectors informed recommendations that align with market trends. Future action plans will focus on investment and innovation, with input from key partners and experts to achieve targets by the end of the decade. Data demonstrates that visitor numbers and spending are already increasing.

Regional Economic Strategy: A sustainable economic future for the North East of Scotland

Published in 2024, the strategy provides a shared vision and ambition for the future of north east Scotland to align commitment, investment and action for economic growth and diversification.

"Our vision is for a regional economy that enables us to thrive. It is leading a just energy transition, diversifying our economy, enabling entrepreneurship and innovation, and delivering a wellbeing economy for our people – a post fossil-fuel future. By 2035, our economy will be leading the transition to and production of future energy solutions, new green energy and will be diversifying through growth in our digital technology, food and drink, tourism, life sciences and creative sectors."

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There are 5 strategy objectives to support delivery of the vision:

	Objective	How will we measure success?	Most recent baseline	Target by mid-point review (2029)
1)	To establish the North East as a pioneer of the energy transition, by delivering an 80% reduction in carbon emissions per head	• Co2 emissions/ capita • Renewables jobs (work required to establish these data at regional level)	4.8 tCO2e per person North East: 2020	3 tCO2e per person
2)	Maintain regional GVA as a share of Scotland's overall GVA while increasing the share of regional GVA from region's growth sectors.	• Regional GVA as a percentage of Scottish GVA • Maintain regional GVA as a share of Scotland's overall GVA while increasing the share of regional employment from the region's growth sectors.	11.3% North East: 2020 27.5%	≥ 11.3% 30.3%
3)	Maintain a healthy, sustainable, working age population through increasing economic participation rates	• Economic Activity Rate 16-64 and 16-24 • Economic Activity Absolute 50+	16-64 Rate: 78.7% 16-24 Rate: 64.1% 50+ Absolute: 86,900 North East: July 21–June 22	16-64 Rate: 80.1% 16-24 Rate: 66.5% 50+ Absolute: 90,376
4)	Become a Real Living Wage region with 95% of overall employment offering a real living wage or higher.	• % of employees earning above the real living wage	84% North East: 2021	≥ 90%
5)	Protect and enhance the natural capital of the region by aligning to national ambitions to manage 30% of the region for people and nature by 2030	• % of region's area managed for people and nature	20%	30%

Table 12: Extract from Regional Economic Strategy – 5 Strategy Objectives

Topic 8: Centres of Business and Culture

Four work programmes will support delivery of the high-level strategic objectives:



1 | A thriving, innovation driven economy:

Growth across our key sectors will be driven by innovation, entrepreneurship and internationalisation so that high quality jobs are created. Investment in decarbonisation will be maximised through unlocking private capital for investment in the transition.

2 | An outstanding natural environment:

Our natural environments and biodiversity will be preserved, protected and restored, to ensure we retain their value and integrity, allowing them to continue providing all the essential services we need to support and strengthen our economy, people and places. The region remains a stunning, healthy and productive place to live, work and visit, and accessible to all. The North East's nature underpins many industries providing sustainable raw materials to businesses, supplying a world renowned food and drink sector, strengthening the health and wellbeing of our people and the natural beauty that is the most cited reason for visiting by tourists – outdoor activity, natural environment, marine and adventure tourism are all unique features that the North East can capitalise on.

3 | A healthy and skilled population:

There will be investment in education, skills, technology and employment opportunities that help residents benefit from the transition to net zero. Individuals will be able to access high-quality education and training at all life stages. This, combined with a focus on Fair Work and a reduction in inequality, will ensure that all residents and communities are equipped to fulfil their potential, contributing to an improvement in wellbeing and ultimately life expectancy.

4 | A strong community and cultural identity:

There is a vibrant culture and creative sector that is championed to enhance our distinctiveness with a successful arts and cultural sector that capitalises on new investments such as P&J Live or Aberdeen Art Gallery and forthcoming Levelling Up investments to create a new museum in Peterhead and expansion of Macduff Marine Aquarium.

Figure 14: Extract from Regional Economic Strategy – 4 Work Programmes

Aberdeen Events 365 Plan 2023 – 2026

Aberdeen City Council has updated the Events 365 Plan to 2026 to support regional economic and tourism strategies. Despite challenges from COVID-19, changing audience expectations, rising costs, and budget pressures, the plan aims to deliver diverse events year-round, activate new City Centre venues, and grow the number and scale of events. It seeks to provide clarity and certainty for the sector and business community, ensuring opportunities can be maximized and affirming Aberdeen's ambition as an events, conferencing, tourism, and leisure destination.

The document outlines eight objectives aimed at positively impacting Aberdeen's economy, businesses, and venues by making the city a stage, inspiring creativity, connecting Aberdeen to the world, shaping the city's creative and sporting future, promoting skills and volunteering, increasing wellbeing and active lifestyles, encouraging sustainable travel, and measuring and reporting impacts and outcomes.

Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023

Published in January 2024, the report on Aberdeen's economy emphasizes the need for a long-term strategic approach to successfully transition to renewable energy. Key areas for achieving success include diversification, attracting and retaining skills, investing in infrastructure, improving the quality of life, and implementing a regional economic strategy. Despite improvements in business confidence, City Centre footfall, and employment in 2023, these metrics still lag behind pre-pandemic levels. Sustainable Tourism is highlighted as a potential growth sector for future employment, with a Destination Tourism Strategy Action Plan underway and a newly reformed Tourism Forum.

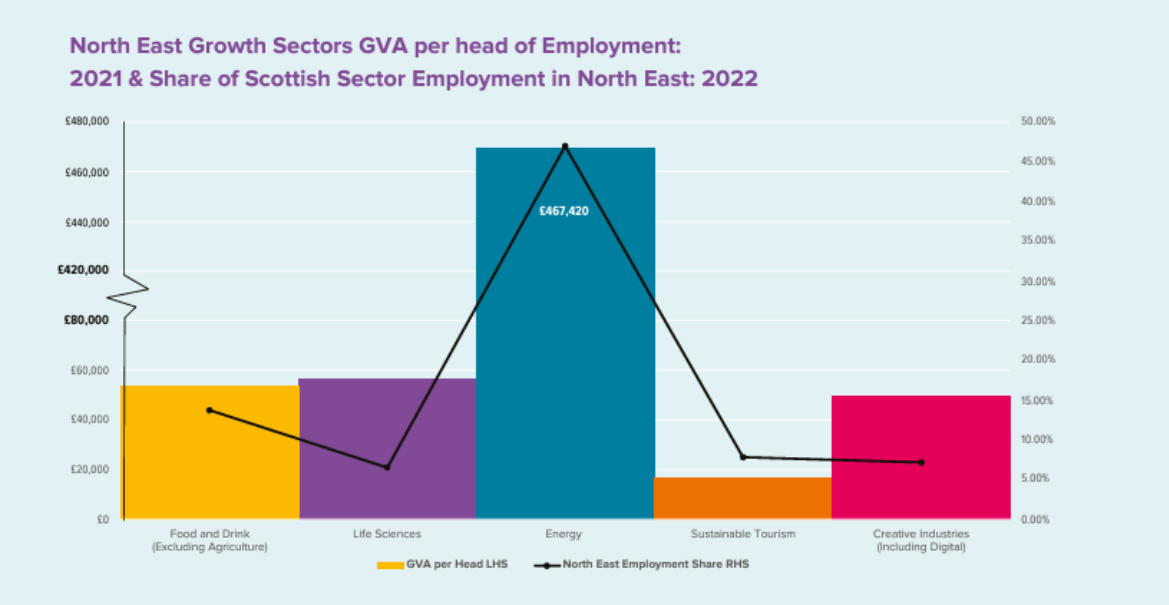


Figure 15: Extract from Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023 showing Growth Sectors GVA per head of Employment in North East

National Tourism Strategy: Scotland Outlook 2030: Responsible Tourism For A Sustainable Future

Launched in March 2020, Scotland's tourism strategy aims to be a leader in 21st-century tourism by promoting responsible tourism that benefits communities, businesses, and visitors. The strategy includes commitments to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045, improve community wellbeing, and ensure tourism contributes to economic prosperity. It emphasizes sustainable growth and a strategic approach to managing tourism effectively.

Culture & Creativity

Aberdeen, known for its nicknames such as the Granite City and Energy Capital of Europe, has a unique culture where traditions and contemporary creative activities coexist. Aberdeen City Council values the arts for their intrinsic worth and benefits, such as improving citizen wellbeing, attracting tourism, and encouraging new businesses. There is a strong desire to retain and nurture emerging talent to enrich the city's culture. Continued investment and supportive policies are necessary to sustain a vibrant cultural and creative atmosphere.

National Planning Framework 4 policy 31 supports job and investment opportunities in the creative sector, culture, heritage, and the arts, aligning with local outcomes like the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026 and the Cultural Strategy 2018-2028. COVID-19 has disrupted delivery of the Culture Aberdeen Strategy but has also led to lower rents, making business spaces more accessible to practitioners that may previously have been unavailable or prohibitive.

The Culture Investment Programme will replace Aberdeen City Council's current grant schemes for arts and culture in 2025, supporting sustained creative or cultural activities. Additionally, the Council is investing in community and cultural assets through the Place Based Investment Fund, which focuses on community-led regeneration, town centre revitalisation, community wealth building, and 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Theatrical, comedy and music events are on offer at a variety of venues across the city:

- Cinemas: Cineworld (Beach & Union Square), Vue and Belmont (currently closed but work underway to reopen).
- Museums: Gordon Highlanders Museum, Maritime Museum, Tolbooth, Zoology Museum, and Provost Skenes House.
- Art Galleries: Aberdeen Art Gallery and Peacock Visual Arts.
- Stage, screen & music: Aberdeen Music Hall, His Majestys Theatre, Tivoli Theatre, The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA), Lemon Tree and Aberdeen Arts Centre.
- Other: Aberdeen Science Centre, Deemouth Artists Studios, Anatomy Rooms, Langstane Studios, Eagle House Studios.

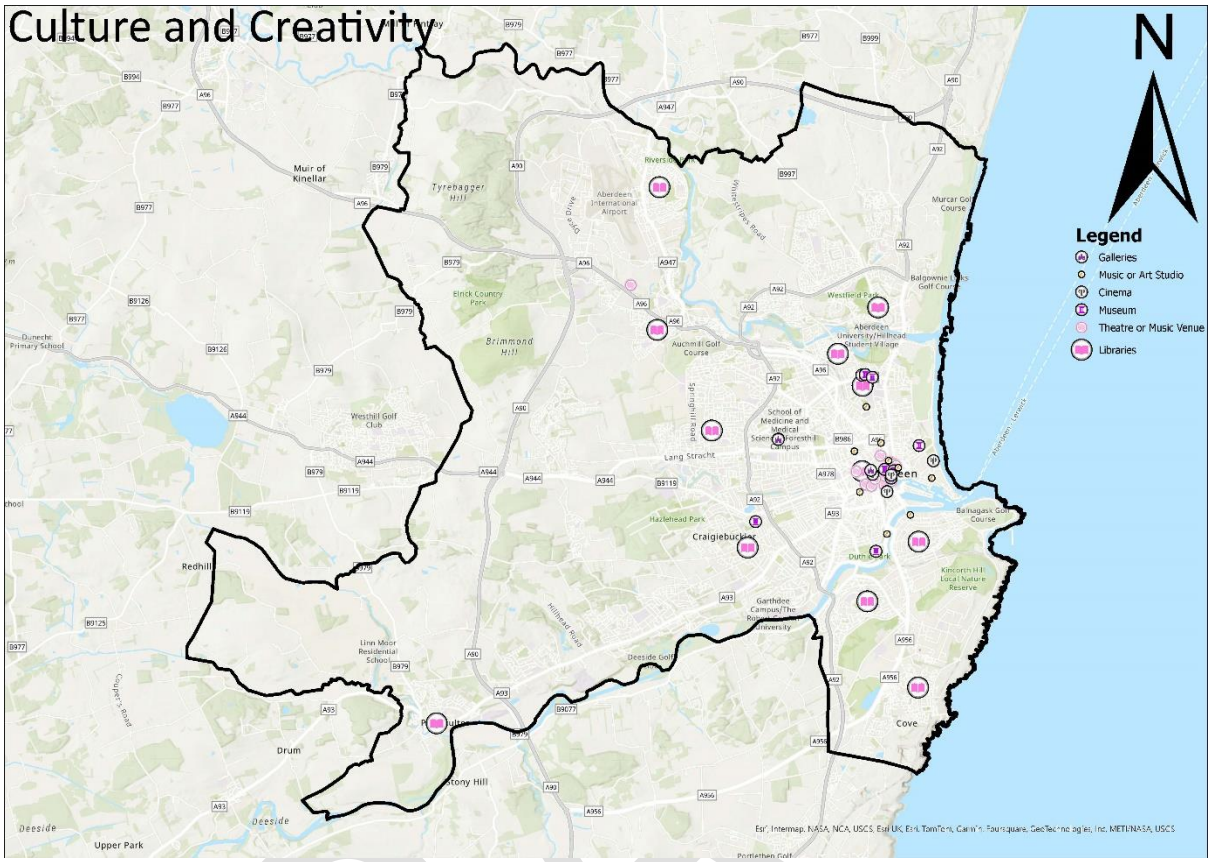


Figure 16: Distribution of culture and creativity locations

Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement – Working in Partnership for Aberdeen
Following a Local Government Election in 2022, a partnership between the Scottish National Party and Scottish Liberal Democrat groups was formed. Their Policy Statement states the priorities of Aberdeen City Council for the next five years. "A Vibrant City" is one of the 13 priority areas identified and states:

"We will work tirelessly to make Aberdeen a more attractive place to live, work, report and visit with a vibrant cultural offering." And;

"Our city should become distinguished by the range and depth of active creative expression and artistic enjoyment experienced by those who live here and by visitors. By supporting and working with cultural partners, we will ensure there is richness and diversity of arts activities."

Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982
Under section 14 the Council has a duty to "ensure that there is adequate provision of facilities for the inhabitants of their area for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities".

Human Rights Bill

The Scottish Government has proposed a Human Rights Bill to incorporate various rights into Scots law, aiming to protect economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights similar to civil and political rights. It will hold public bodies and private organisations delivering public services accountable for actions that fail to uphold people's rights, with plans to introduce the Bill to Scottish Parliament before the end of the current parliamentary session in 2026.

Scotland's Creative Learning Plan

Scotland's Creative Learning Plan, first published in 2013, aims to enhance creative learning opportunities across Scotland by fostering partnerships and government support. The plan emphasises the importance of creativity in education and seeks to embed it at the core of Scottish education. In October 2023, the First Minister announced that the Scottish Government will invest at least £100 million more annually in culture and the arts by the financial year 2028/29.

Culture Counts Budget Tracker

Figures 17 and 18 visualise changes in Scottish Government culture budgets over time and provides an indication of funding available to local authorities.

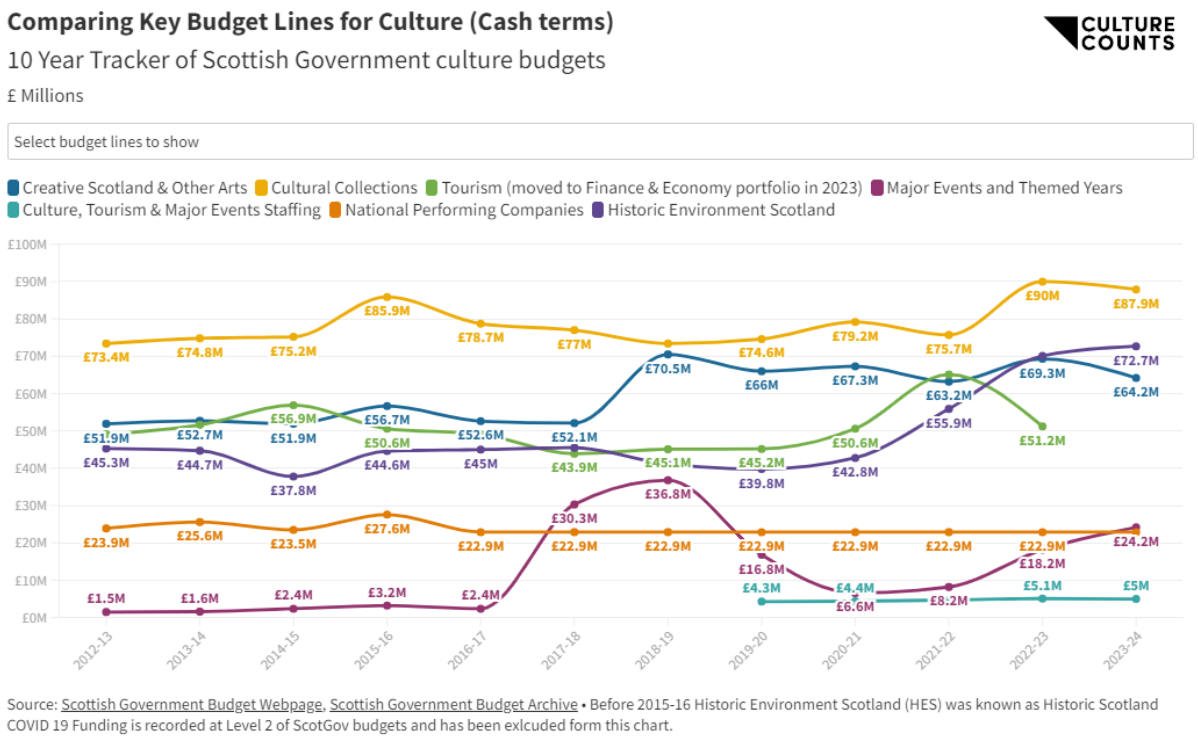


Figure 17: Culture Counts Budget Tracker

Comparing Key Budget Lines for Culture (Cash terms)

10 Year Tracker of Scottish Government culture budgets

£ Millions

CULTURE COUNTS

Search...

Level 3 Budget Heading	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Creative Scotland & Other Arts	51.9	52.7	51.9	56.7	52.6	52.1	70.5	66.0	67.3	63.2	69.3	64.2
Cultural Collections	73.4	74.8	75.2	85.9	78.7	77.0	73.4	74.6	79.2	75.7	90.0	87.9
Tourism (moved to Finance & Economy portfolio in 2023)	49.1	51.6	56.9	50.6	49.1	43.9	45.1	45.2	50.6	65.1	51.2	
Major Events and Themed Years	1.5	1.6	2.4	3.2	2.4	30.3	36.8	16.8	6.6	8.2	18.2	24.2
Culture, Tourism & Major Events Staffing								4.3	4.4	4.7	5.1	5
National Performing Companies	23.9	25.6	23.5	27.6	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9
Historic Environment Scotland	45.3	44.7	37.8	44.6	45.0	45.5	41.1	39.8	42.8	55.9	70.1	72.7

Source: Scottish Government Budget Webpage, Scottish Government Budget Archive • Before 2015-16 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) was known as Historic Scotland
COVID 19 Funding is recorded at Level 2 of ScotGov budgets and has been exlcuded form this chart.

Figure 18: Comparison of key Scottish Government budget lines for Culture

Aberdeen City – Cultural Market Analysis

A Cultural Market Analysis conducted by Charlotte Wilson Research Services in 2024 for Aberdeen City Council revealed that cultural attendance in Aberdeen City and surrounding areas is higher than the Scottish average. This includes attendance at cinemas, art galleries, street art events, comedy shows, and concerts. The increased attendance may be due to recent investments in cultural venues such as the Art Gallery, Music Hall, and Provost Skene's House, with the Art Gallery being named Scotland's building of the year in 2021.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026

States that “vital to diversifying the economy is the retention of the talent and transferable skills that currently exist within our businesses and educational institutions, as well as the creation of opportunities for upskilling/reskilling so that residents are able to move into, within and between economic opportunities that become available.” This will include the retention of students attending the city’s universities and college.

<u>Culture Aberdeen</u>

An independent network of the city’s cultural organisations and also the title of the area’s Cultural Strategy. The network and strategy have in common a collaborative spirit and shared responsibilities.

- Aberdeen’s Remembering Together Project will create a COVID-19 memorial in Bon Accord Gardens using upcycled local granite
- The North East Culture Collective (NECC) was a Cultural Aberdeen project funded by Creative Scotland until March 2024, aiming to explore new models of cultural engagement.

Culture Aberdeen – A Cultural Strategy for the City of Aberdeen 2018-2028
It outlines five key ambitions for the next 10 years to enhance Aberdeens cultural sector: releasing creativity, becoming Scotland's creative lab, making the city a stage, connecting to the world, and shaping the future through collaboration and cultural leadership.

Creative Learning | Aberdeen City Council
A city-wide service prioritising projects based on need and collaborating with others using arts, culture, and creativity. Initiatives include the Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards (VACMA) in partnership with Creative Scotland, a professional development program for established creatives, creative learning networks, creative residencies, and ABZWorks workshops to empower young people interested in art and design.

Creative Funding Awards | Aberdeen City Council
Offers cultural organisations with not for profit status, community groups, charities and individual artists or creatives the opportunity to apply for support to develop and/or deliver creative activity.

Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel Report 2023
Published in January 2024, the report discusses Aberdeen's economy, noting challenges for the Creative Industries and Culture. Despite difficulties, there is cautious optimism as employment in the creative industries has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, reaching its highest since 2016. The region hosts over 10% of Scotland's creative industry companies, and the repurposing of empty shop units by RGU/Look Again is seen positively.

Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums Annual Review 2023-2024
The annual review showcases the impact of Aberdeen's cultural and creative life, economy, and sustainable future through various venues like the Art Gallery, Maritime Museum, Provost Skene's House, Archives, and Treasure Hub. Highlights include 319,765 admissions, 15,337 participants in public programs, 543 new objects acquired, and a royal visit by Queen Camilla. The Gordon Highlanders Museum won the "Best Visitor Attraction" award at the Aberdeen City and Shire Thistle Awards 2024.

Summary of Implications for Proposed Plan

City, Town, Local & Commercial Centres

The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2024 identifies key issues and recommendations that need to be considered, including updates to the network of centres and addressing qualitative and quantitative deficiencies.

Significant developments that generate footfall should be located according to the town centre first approach and sequentially assessed against the network of centres.

We will consider the necessity of City Centre Retail Core zoning in light of revised permitted development rights and evaluate the value of maintaining active ground floor frontages by restricting residential uses etc on ground floors.

We will reflect plans and strategies to support the regeneration and revitalisation of the network of centres, including projects within the City Centre and Beach Masterplan.

We will consider ways to enhance leisure, entertainment, tourism, and cultural activities to complement the retail offerings in the City Centre.

Retail

The Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study 2024 identifies key issues and recommendations that need to be considered, including updates to the network of centres and addressing qualitative and quantitative deficiencies.

Recommendations for retail provision in new neighbourhoods and expansion areas should be considered and reflected in the Proposed Plan, supporting local living and neighbourhood shopping.

There is a need for a plan-led approach to address convenience shopping based on 20-minute neighbourhood principles in NPF4. We will review the necessity of new local centres to serve new developments or existing population areas that are distant from services, depending on the spatial strategy and any new housing land allocations.

We will consider if a local position is required to prevent increase in the number of, and clusters of, takeaways/betting shops/high interest money lenders. There may not be a case for the Proposed Plan to take further action in relation to these uses, but this will need to be considered in its preparation. There is a case for the Proposed Plan to consider further policy control on hot take away uses to preserve residential amenity, but this will have to be balanced against the need to maintain vibrancy and occupancy rates in town centres. The location of nearby uses, such as schools, will need to be included in this consideration.

Consider whether express policies should be included in the Proposed Plan to provide a framework for determination of drive-through proposals.

Tourism

NPF4 Policy 30 requires Local Development Plans (LDPs) to support the tourism sector's recovery, growth, and resilience. The Proposed Plan should ensure this while safeguarding the assets in Aberdeen that attract tourists.

Consider the need for new tourism facilities and accommodation, and potential policy framework that supports appropriate developments in suitable locations.

Culture & Creativity

The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations for tourism and culture opportunities, with specific allocations proposed where necessary.

The Proposed Plan should support existing arts and cultural venues in line with NPF4 Policy 31. It must consider registered Local Place Plans and their cultural aspirations and potential policy framework that supports appropriate developments in suitable locations.

Marmot Principles

Aberdeen, along with North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire, has been confirmed as one of three Marmot Places in Scotland. Aberdeen will seek to embed the eight Marmot Principles within the Proposed Plan. The table below identifies where the topic paper aligns with the Marmot Principles.

Principle	**Potential implication for the Plan**
Give every child the best start in life.	
Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.	
Create fair employment and good work for all.	x
Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.	
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.	x
Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.	
Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.	
Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.	