

# **Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy 2**

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2018

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**Supplementary Guidance  
to the East Lothian Local  
Development Plan 2018**

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# MUSSELBURGH TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

## 1.0 Purpose of the Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy

- 1.1 Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy 2 forms a part of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2018 (LDP). It is supplementary guidance focusing on the changes that the Local Development Plan is planning to the town of Musselburgh and the implications of that change for the town centre. The LDP introduces new planning policies adopting the town centre first principle and has detailed planning policies for town centres to guide development.
- 1.2 The strategy looks in more detail than the LDP into the town centre. A health check of the town centre is provided, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are considered and its performance as a place with coordinated actions for improvement and regeneration.
- 1.3 In addition to the LDP and its supporting documents, the town centre strategy draws on the work planned by the first Musselburgh Town Centre approved in December 2013 and takes account of the Council's emerging Local Transport Strategy and Local Housing Strategy as well as the Musselburgh Area Partnership Area Plan. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications that affect the town centre.

## 2.0 Policy Context

### Local Development Plan Policy for Town Centres

- 2.1 The adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) promotes the Town Centre First Principle which requires that uses that would attract significant footfall must consider locating to a town or local centre first and then, sequentially, to an edge of centre location, other commercial centre or out of centre location. This is designed to support town centres in the long term and help to ensure that they are vibrant and sustainable.
- 2.2 To further support town centres and to minimise the length of time commercial premises lie vacant the principle of a change of use between retail, business, office, restaurant leisure and entertainment is supported. As town centres evolve there could be pressure to change uses to residential; this may be acceptable in non-ground floor or backland locations but will only be acceptable in a ground floor location where there is evidence that it is no longer viable as a town or local centre use.
- 2.3 The policy on hot food outlets supports hot food outlets in town and local centres provided that there will be no significant impact on local amenity, including cumulatively with other existing take-aways in the area and are consistent with other LDP policies including in relation to parking and road safety.
- 2.4 The town centre strategy is proposed to be approved as supplementary guidance to the LDP. It therefore remains approved until the East Lothian Local Development

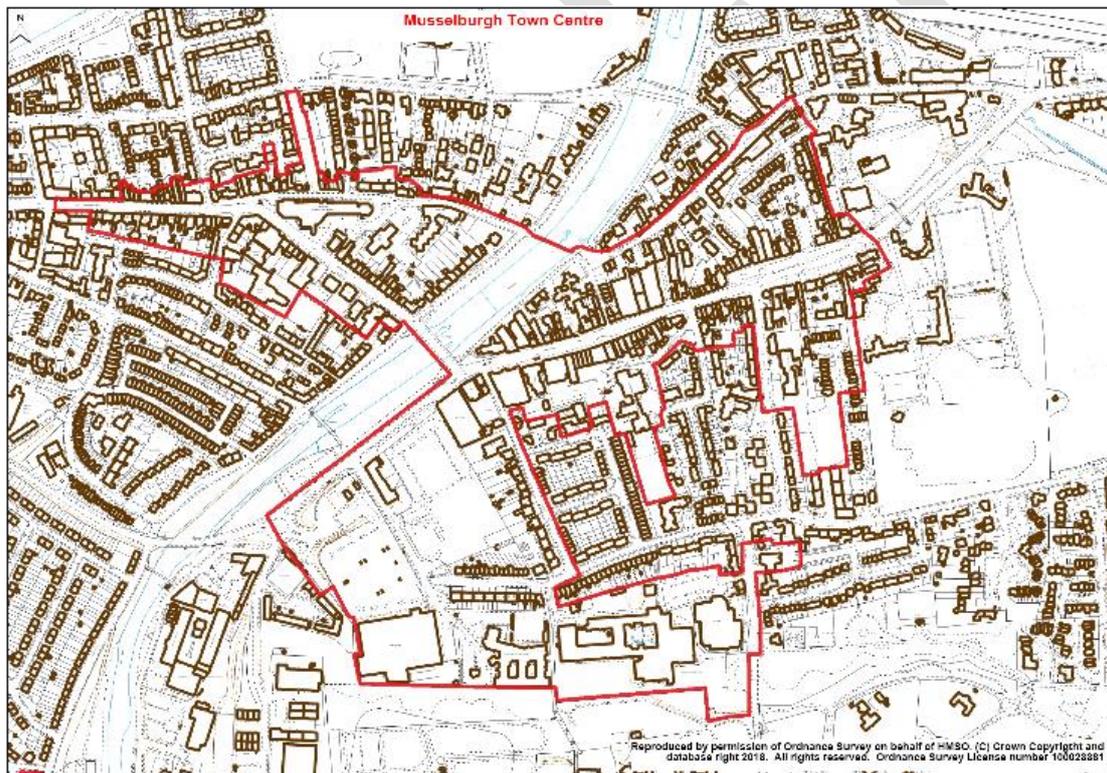
Plan 2018 is replaced. The strategy will be reviewed and updated as appropriate based on regular health checks to ensure it remains up to date and effective

### 3.0 Form and Content of the Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy

3.1 The Musselburgh town centre strategy adopts a strategic approach to guide the improvement of Musselburgh town centre. Following analysis from a health check of the town centre a series of Actions is made to address the issues arising in the town centre. Each action is given an indicative short, medium or long timescale with identified lead and joint working parties for its implementation. The health check can be regularly updated and actions can be monitored and if required revised in future.

### 4.0 Background

4.1 The LDP defines the Musselburgh town centre, one of six defined town centres in East Lothian. This is the spatial area where the LDP policies outlined in Section 2 above apply and also the spatial area where the town centre strategy actions that follow apply.



4.2 Musselburgh has experienced some growth over the last 10 years with the completion of housing developments at Wallyford and the ongoing housing development at Pinkie Mains. Queen Margaret University has also established itself at Musselburgh. The town's population is 22,264, including Wallyford, and is set to continue growing. The LDP has made substantial new land allocations at Musselburgh with a potential 4,981 new homes by 2025. Musselburgh will grow to the south west at Craighall, and to the south east at Wallyford and Dolphingstone,

with a new secondary school planned at Wallyford. Whitecraig is also set to grow with 500 houses allocated there. Land at Craighall is also allocated for substantial employment land growth at the Queen Margaret Innovation Park.

- 4.3 Musselburgh town centre lies approximately 2.5 miles from the furthest point of new housing at Craighall and approximately 2 miles from the furthest away housing at Dolphingstone. The Musselburgh town centre may not be so much of an attraction for houses so far away unless there is good accessibility and it has the right facilities to attract users. Nevertheless, new housing offers new markets and spending power for town centre businesses.
- 4.4 Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy 1, approved in 2013, aimed to keep the town centre busy and vibrant; to encourage improvements to support existing business and town centre users and encourage investment; to enhance the setting of the town centre which is the unique selling point of the town and to build on the unique identity of Musselburgh by explaining more of its history and heritage.

## **5.0 Musselburgh Town Centre Analysis**

- 5.1 Musselburgh town centre's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are included in a table contained in Appendix 1. This has helped to inform the proposed actions for the town centre strategy.
- 5.2 The SWOT analysis has been prepared following the collection of data in an up-to-date Health Check for Musselburgh. The following points have been identified in the Health Check and subsequent SWOT:
- 5.3 Musselburgh is home to over 18% of East Lothian's population. Currently dwellings in Musselburgh are generally smaller than across East Lothian overall. Musselburgh is set to grow substantially, with 2036 houses already committed and 2945 planned by 2025. Much of this development will take place at Wallyford, which has excellent bus links into Musselburgh Town Centre. Musselburgh has the largest town centre in East Lothian and the highest footfall, with weekly footfall having increased by 27.9% since 2014/15. Footfall can be expected to increase further with the Wallyford developments.
- 5.4 The Town Centre is well used with residents doing the majority of convenience food shopping in Musselburgh. Any additional expenditure appears to go outside of East Lothian. Given the proximity of Musselburgh to the East of Edinburgh and Fort Kinnaird, this could be expected. In fact, taking account of the proximity to Edinburgh and the excellent public transport links, it can be concluded that Musselburgh is performing extremely well as a Town Centre. It should also be noted that Musselburgh absorbs some 20% of convenience expenditure from Prestonpans.
- 5.5 The Town Centre offers a range of businesses with shops and financial/professional services occupying the most units. Vacancy rates are low and are lower than the East Lothian average. Musselburgh demonstrates an interesting pattern, where 8% of the town centre offer is restaurants/cafes but there is low Town Centre usage after 6pm, with 68% of those living in Musselburgh never visiting the town centre after 6pm. The likelihood is that the close links to Edinburgh, easy bus and train access to Edinburgh Town Centre and close proximity to Fort Kinnaird offer Musselburgh

residents a wider choice. However, the fact that 8% of the Musselburgh town centre is restaurants and cafes, suggests that Musselburgh pulls some customers from the outlying Edinburgh areas such as Joppa, Portobello and Newcraighall. The Newcraighall area is set to grow substantially in terms of residential and this will offer more opportunity to claw in some evening expenditure.

- 5.6 Musselburgh High Street and, to some extent Bridge Street and North High Street, are often very congested with vehicles moving slowly through the centre. New developments may further compound this problem, although support for active travel improvements could significantly change movement patterns. As a result of the current congestion, air quality issues have been identified on the High Street and Bridge Street, close to bus stops. Musselburgh is designated as an Air Quality Action Plan area where a 21% reduction in transport emissions is sought. Improving air quality and reducing congestion will make the town centre a more attractive place to visit. There are opportunities to encourage increased tourism in and around Musselburgh Town Centre with links to the Race course and Brunton Theatre. Decriminalised parking enforcement should see an improvement in town centre parking and vehicle turnover.

## **6.0 Regeneration Strategy for Musselburgh town centre**

- 6.1 Musselburgh is set to grow significantly with new residents bringing their spending power to the town. The challenge for the town centre will be to ensure that new residents use and support the town centre. The town centre will only continue to attract people if it is a safe, attractive place to visit with good facilities and access including available parking. That is the basis for the regeneration of the town centre which needs to adapt to cater for the needs of both the existing and new residents. To do this Musselburgh town centre requires investment in the following:

- Town Centre Streetscape – to ensure that streets are busy and vibrant, easy to use by pedestrians with free flowing traffic and an overall high quality of design
- Long vacant or under used buildings – these need to be brought back into positive use as they harm the overall appearance of the centre and usually deteriorate over time. They can also affect the overall image of a town centre and can put off other investment.
- Town centre buildings - Repair and improvement of buildings can be very effective in enhancing the overall appearance of the town centre. For example, the appearance of some businesses on High Street could benefit from improved advertisements more in keeping with the traditional character of the street.
- Open spaces – improvements to spaces within town centres where people can sit and relax, or gather and hold a market
- Townscape – the east end of High Street and Bridge Street currently lie within the Musselburgh Conservation Area. High Street has some attractive

buildings and could be considered for an extension to the conservation area. The overall townscape in the town centre could benefit from repair and enhancement, with several shopfronts that would benefit from restoration of original features and in places more coordinated signage. Restoration of original window style is required in some buildings along with general repairs to roofs and chimneys and other common elements of buildings. External funding to assist with the cost of these works should be sought.

## **7.0 Main Issues in Musselburgh Town Centre**

7.1 This section outlines the main issues and actions required within Musselburgh town centre. It provides an indication of timescale and details of who will lead action to implement each project.

### **Diversity of Land Use**

- 7.2 Musselburgh is classified as an Interdependent town<sup>1</sup> i.e. it attracts people from neighbouring towns who come to access some assets and jobs but is also reliant on neighbouring towns for other assets and jobs.
- 7.3 The population in Musselburgh has increased by 7.7% in one year 2016-2017 and is forecast continue rising after completion of the potential 4,981 houses planned to 2025.
- 7.4 Within Musselburgh town centre commercial premises vacancy rates are consistently lower than the East Lothian or Scottish average at around 5.3%. There are few vacant properties above commercial premises, apart from the Co-op buildings. Footfall trends over the last 7 years, are relatively stable within Musselburgh compared with a falling trend elsewhere as fewer people visit the High Street for retail purposes. High proportion of comparison retail expenditure continues to be made outwith the town due to proximity of the Fort and Edinburgh city centre.
- 7.5 Blindwells new town is planned with 1,600 houses and associated facilities to serve their needs immediately to the south of Musselburgh and land is safeguarded for major expansion of Blindwells.
- 7.6 Considering the uses classes at play in Musselburgh, the town centre supports almost 50% shops (class 1 retail). This is a trend replicated across East Lothian with shops occupying between 47%-55% across the six town centres. A high proportion (68%) of residents do not visit the town centre in the evening.
- 7.7 Can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long.
- 7.8 High volume of traffic within High Street/Bridge Street/ North High Street deters people from using the town centre and it is an Air Quality Management Area.

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<sup>1</sup> Understanding Scottish Places, Scotland's Towns Partnership  
<https://www.scotlandstowns.org/understanding-scottish-places>

## 8.0 ACTIONS FOR MUSSELBURGH TOWN CENTRE

### 8.1 Movement and Access

8.2 Planned housing and employment growth in Musselburgh will increase vehicle movements in and around the town. To address this the LDP Policy T19: Transport Improvements at Musselburgh Town Centre supports a programme of transport improvements at Musselburgh town centre to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality, including the management of vehicles, parking provision, public transport improvements and enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes.

8.3 LDP Proposal T20: Transport related Air Quality Measures refers to air quality issues within Musselburgh, requiring investigation into the relocation of bus stops to improve air quality and that air quality is maintained to an acceptable standard in association with new development. Proposal T21 Urban Traffic Control System requires developers to contribute to the urban traffic control system and other planned improvements at junctions to manage traffic flows through the town centre to acceptable levels.

8.4 An integral part of the transport modelling for the Local Development Plan Transport Appraisal was the production of a micro-simulation traffic model for Musselburgh. This allows accurate predictions of traffic flow taking into account existing and future traffic flows taking into account of traffic generated by new development that may impact on Musselburgh town centre. Actions to address Transport and Air quality issues are:

- Transport and Environmental Improvements in Musselburgh Town Centre
- Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 1 Transport and Environmental Improvements in Musselburgh Town Centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1.Planned programme of transport improvements to improve traffic flow and maintain air quality 2.Environmental work to street design to make the town centre pedestrian friendly and an	East Lothian Council Road Services / Planning Service/ developers/ Sustrans/ Community	1. Implement planned works to junctions and Urban Traffic Control System 2. Consider the final report on the indicative masterplan for active and sustainable travel and decide on any detailed design	Short Medium Long Ongoing	Work has commenced on the planned programme of transport improvements to junctions. Consultants are finalising a report on an indicative masterplan for active and

attractive place to visit		proposals for streets. 3. Consult. 4. Prepare Traffic Orders and implement in phases		sustainable travel in and around Musselburgh.
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- 8.5 If approved, the Local Transport Strategy has a range of planned signalised controlled junction improvements in Musselburgh to regulate demand in the town centre, measures to mitigate town centre demand, the management of vehicle and indiscriminate parking, the promoting of traffic regulation orders and the provision of enhanced walking and cycle infrastructure. Other improvements are planned at rail stations to improve train capacity and provide additional parking.
- 8.6 Transport consultants have been working for East Lothian Council and Sustrans to prepare an indicative masterplan for a network of active and sustainable travel (walking, cycling, public transport) routes throughout the town and beyond to places where people need to travel. Greater use of active travel routes could ease traffic impacts on the town centre if they are sufficiently safe and welcoming to use. While decisions on the indicative masterplan have still to be taken, the principle of active travel and how it could impact on the town centre is important. To make the town centre more attractive for people to use, traffic needs to flow within the centre rather than be held up and pedestrians need to feel that they are well catered for within the overall town centre environment. Taken together this will mean some design changes to streets within the town centre which will have multiple objectives:
- To improve traffic flow
  - To provide an environment where pedestrians feel welcome and can get to where they want to easily
  - To provide a street landscape that enhances the appearance of the town centre
- 8.7 As an integral part of street design work, consideration should be given to the coordination of street furniture throughout the town centre. The simple use of black coloured poles for traffic signs, traffic lights, street lighting columns, tree guards and bins can have a strong unifying effect. Directional signage is part of street furniture and the town centre should be correctly signposted not only from roads but also from the National Cycle Route and John Muir Way.
- 8.8 A part of High Street is a designated Air Quality Management Area with a separate action plan for air quality improvement.

Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 2 Reorganisation of Town Centre Car Parking				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Reorganisation of town centre car park stay length	ELC Road Services	1. Approval of Parking Management Strategy as part of Local Transport Strategy 2. Implementation of stay lengths		If the ELC Parking Management Strategy is approved this work will commence

8.9 The Parking Management Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Strategy has been approved and Musselburgh town centre will be served by the reorganisation of the existing town centre parking. These car parking areas will be reorganised to define them as short, medium and long stay car parks to ensure that parking is available when it is required and for the requisite length of time that people want. The availability of parking is important to support the town centre and encourage footfall and usage. This may require additional signage and every effort should be made to keep permanent signs to a minimum to minimise sign clutter. Musselburgh is served by the following parking areas, currently all free to use and the Parking Management Strategy proposals for these areas are:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Proposed Duration</i>
<i>On street limited waiting; Shorthope Street car park; Town Hall parking</i>	proposed as short stay
<i>Millhill; health centre; Kerr's Wynd; sports centre; Newbigging church and flats</i>	proposed as medium stay
<i>Gracefield; Fisherrow East and West</i>	proposed as long stay

#### 8.10 Built Environment and Public Spaces

8.11 One of its main actions were to improve the east end of High Street from the Town Hall to the Pinkie Pillars by reorganising street space and providing more parking. This work, costing circa £600k, was finished in 2015 and also created the outline of a space outside the Town Hall and around the Mercat Cross which is used for car parking most of the time but is available, through road closure procedures, for civic and commercial events. This area is where Musselburgh has traditionally held its civic events and gatherings since it was created by its town council in 1753 and provided with the Mercat Cross that still stands today. The Musselburgh Town

Centre Strategy 1 proposed this area as a permanent landscaped civic space for pedestrian use with parking reprovided in reorganised road space to the east. The work completed to date was a first phase and the permanent landscaped civic space would be a future phase of investment. Other Actions include:

- Civic Space at the Mercat Cross
- Shopfront and Advertisements
- Improving Open Spaces and taking account of the Flood Protection Works
- Public Wi-Fi

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 3 Civic Space at the Mercat Cross</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Create civic space at the Mercat Cross in the form of a landscaped square as second phase streetworks to the east end of High Street	ELC Road Services / Development	1. Evaluate the success of the present scheme and the need for parking at the Mercat Cross 2. Consider whether to implement phase two: pedestrian landscaped square to support the town centre		This will need to be considered with other active travel improvements to High Street. No current commitment.

8.12 The first town centre strategy for Musselburgh proposed a full landscaped square for pedestrian and event use at the mercat cross in the corner adjacent to the Town Hall and Tolbooth. This was a part of a wider landscape plan for the east end of High Street. The framework for such a square was laid out as part of the works undertaken and the space has been used regularly for markets. However, a permanent civic space such as this would enhance the setting of the historic civic buildings and mercat cross and would be likely to encourage more events. An indicative plan for discussion purposes, prepared in 2013, is attached at Appendix 2 to show what the area could look like.

8.13 Further improvements are required to some shopfronts and advertisements in High Street, Bridge Street and North High Street to complement the buildings in which they are located and to enhance the overall quality of the town centre. Advertisement consent is granted for a five year period therefore should in time improve as further applications for advertisement consent are made. Shopfront alterations and advertisements must comply with the Council's supplementary planning guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 4 Shopfront and Advertisements</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Improve the quality of shopfronts and advertisements in the town centre	ELC Planning Service / ELC EDSI /Commercial premises owners, occupiers and lessees	Improvements will be encouraged at the time of advertisement consent applications or planning applications to alter shopfronts and enforcement taken as necessary		Ongoing

- 8.14 Musselburgh town centre is split by the river, but the riverside also offers an attractive place to step away from the town centre for quieter space. Opportunities to enhance the riverside, including buildings that address the river, should be taken. One section of riverside that would benefit from coordinated improvement including street furniture and pathworks is the stretch between the Shorthope Street car park and the Rennie Bridge. Recent work by the Area Partnership has successfully repaired the war memorial and its retaining wall.
- 8.15 However, the town centre is also at risk from flooding and Musselburgh is a priority area for a new flood protection scheme. Flood protection proposals are being developed and could have a major impact on the overall riverside environment. There could also be opportunities and once the proposals are known there will be a need to see where flood protection works can also benefit the environment of the riverside, for example if an embankment is required new paths and seating areas might also be able to be provided. The riverside is a key corridor for people walking and cycling.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 5 Improving Open Spaces and taking account of the Flood Protection Works</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
1.Small public spaces throughout the town centre should be considered for environmental improvement 2. Flood prevention works may provide opportunity to	Area Partnership / ELC / external funders	Musselburgh Flood Protection Work is ongoing When its proposals are known work to enhance the riverside should be assessed before the		Work on the flood protection scheme is underway

relandscape the riverside and this should be a requirement of the work		detailed scheme is finally developed		
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8.16 The availability of public wi-fi would be an asset to Musselburgh town centre. It offers potential to boost tourism with information potentially available via the internet and potential for direct marketing by businesses within the town centre. It would also help generally towards increased digital inclusion.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 6 Public Wi-Fi</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Provision of public wi-fi in Musselburgh town centre	ELC / Community	Establish the feasibility of and funding for free public wi-fi provision to support the town centre		Detailed survey work has been undertaken

#### **Regeneration of Buildings at Risk**

8.17 Privately owned buildings, often those in multiple ownership, in town centres can be vulnerable to disrepair and this is common across Scotland. Where any building is in disrepair its owners are responsible for its condition. In a town centre the appearance of a building in disrepair can affect the overall attractiveness of the town centre therefore it is important that buildings are kept in good repair. Actions include:

- Encourage the Re use of Vacant and Underused Buildings in the town centre
- Statutory action to require external repair of privately owned buildings in multiple ownership
- Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 7 Encourage the Re use of Vacant and Underused Buildings in the town centre</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Work with the owners of vacant and underused buildings to identify	East Lothian Council/ private owners	1. Identify the owners of vacant and under used buildings		A decision on the options appraisal for the Tolbooth/ Town Hall has yet to be made

potential solutions to bring buildings back into positive use		2. Discuss what is preventing investment for re use		
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- 8.18 Within any town centre there are buildings that are either vacant or under used. It is important that positive new uses are found for such buildings before they deteriorate and deter investment in the town centre. Within Musselburgh there is a long standing disused former public house at 72-74 High Street which is a category C listed building within the conservation area. Its appearance has deteriorated and it would benefit from reuse. It received planning permission and listed building consent permission in 2017 for alterations and change of use of public house to restaurant (class 3) use including installation of extract duct.
- 8.19 The historic buildings at the heart of the town, the old Tolbooth and the Town Hall are community facilities that are lightly or under used. The buildings incorporate three phases of civic buildings in Musselburgh. Although the ground floor of the old Tolbooth building that fronts on to High Street is occupied by shops and the ground floor of the Georgian elevation that faces the mercat cross is currently a restaurant, the upper floors of the tolbooth are vacant and there are lightly used rooms on the upper floor of the town hall. Externally the buildings are in a reasonable condition. A community group received funding and commissioned a conservation architect's options appraisal for the buildings in 2017, which showed how a lift could be sensitively inserted into the building to allow access to all floors which could encourage greater level of use.
- 8.20 Within Musselburgh town centre there are few empty properties above shops with most space occupied by residential accommodation. Where there is vacant accommodation it is most beneficial for the town centre to have it occupied by people to encourage additional use and spend within the town centre. While most buildings are fully occupied there are some where there is vacant space on upper floors that could be used more positively. There are few vacant sites within Musselburgh town centre.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 8 Statutory Action to Require External Repair of Privately Owned Buildings in Multiple Ownership</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Consider statutory action to occupied town centre buildings to ensure	ELC EDSI and Planning Service / private owners	1 Consider buildings that require repairs to common elements for statutory		This project has not yet started

common repairs		action if necessary		
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8.21 In addition to empty buildings at risk, some occupied buildings in the town centre can suffer from lack of maintenance to common areas, most commonly where a building has multiple private owners. To prevent this and any subsequent adverse effect on the appearance of the town centre, statutory action may be required to require that repairs are completed.

<b>Musselburgh Town Centre Strategy: Action 9 Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan</b>				
Action and Location	Lead and Joint Working	Timing and Next Steps	Timescale: Short Medium Long Ongoing	Progress
Undertake a comprehensive conservation area character appraisal and management plan for Musselburgh Conservation Area to include boundary review	ELC Planning Service with support from Musselburgh Conservation Society	1.Prepare a draft appraisal and plan  2.Consult  3.Adopt final plan as supplementary planning guidance		Work has not yet started

8.22 Most, but not all of Musselburgh town centre is located within the designated Musselburgh Conservation Area. The purpose of a conservation area is to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the architectural and historic character of the area and that should ensure that over time the area is improved and enhanced. The Musselburgh Conservation Area Character Statement and other supplementary planning guidance to the LDP on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment, which contains guidance on development in conservation areas including shopfronts and advertisements are important in setting standards for improving the overall environment of the Conservation Area. There is scope to review the boundaries of the conservation area during the preparation of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan to replace the conservation area character statement contained within the previous local plan. Its purpose is identify the special architectural and historic character of the area, review its boundary and indicate how it is managed.

## 9.0 The Way Forward

9.1 This strategy forms statutory supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan. The health checks can be updated regularly and the strategy should be monitored and revised in line with revisions to the LDP Action Programme.

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### STRENGTHS

- Largest town centre in East Lothian with many commercial premises
- High proportion of convenience shopping is undertaken in Musselburgh
- Characterful street with good range of different types shops and businesses
- High quality eastern end of town centre has Conservation Area and historic buildings
- New people will be living in and around Musselburgh following new housing developments and can be expected to use the town centre, supporting businesses and potentially helping to create new ones.
- Footfall is increasing
- Range of town centre car parks
- Excellent public transport links to Edinburgh and further into East Lothian
- Low business vacancy rate
- Large supermarket within walkable distance of town centre
- Range of sizes of commercial units
- Visitor attractions include theatre, racecourse, and Levenhall Links
- Attractive riverside runs through town centre

### WEAKNESSES

- High volume of traffic within High Street/Bridge Street/ North High Street
- High proportion of comparison retail expenditure continues to be made outwith the town due to proximity of the Fort and Edinburgh city centre
- No civic space in the form of a town square
- Some poor quality shopfronts and advertisements detract from the appearance of the town centre
- Can be difficult to find a parking space as many are occupied all day long
- No branding or marketing of the town centre in a coordinated way and no business association.
- John Muir Way long distance path and National Cycle route lie outwith the town centre
- Vacant property (formerly The Stand public house and function room) on High Street detracts from the appearance of the street
- Air quality is low

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Re-landscaping of civic space within the town centre
- On and off street parking needs managed to identify short, medium and long stay parking to ensure that town centre users can find parking easily
- Several vacant upper floor spaces within the town centre
- Musselburgh has a range of attractions that could be marketed in the form of a Day Out in Musselburgh
- Vacant property such as the upper floors of the block between 105-109 High Street offer development opportunity for redevelopment
- Reuse of the underused historic asset of the Tolbooth and Town Hall as part of a refurbished building project
- Active travel improvements could radically change movement patterns
- Installation of public wi-fi could allow specific marketing, attract people and allow businesses further advertising opportunity
- Parking charges could raise income that could benefit the town centre

### **THREATS**

- Volume of new traffic in Musselburgh as a result of new development could discourage use of the town centre
- High volumes of traffic reduce the ability of the Air Quality Management Zone to reduce air pollution
- Lack of maintenance by building owners could harm the appearance of town centre buildings
- Parking charging could be introduced which may deter people from visiting the town centre
- Online shopping

## MUSSELBURGH Health Check

### POPULATION

The 2016 mid-year population estimates state that **19,551** people live in the Musselburgh ward, which accounts for 18.8% of the county's population.

#### Age Distribution (National Records of Scotland, 2016 mid-year estimates)

	Musselburgh Ward	East Lothian	Scotland
% of the population (0-15)	16.4	18.2	16.9
% of the population that are (16-64)	64.9	62.2	64.6
% of the population that are 65 or over	18.7	19.6	18.5

The Musselburgh area has a higher concentration of people of working age than East Lothian and Scotland overall. The 2016 mid-year population estimate shows that there are 3,655 people aged 65 years and over living in the Musselburgh ward, which is 18.7% of the ward population. 1,675 of them, or 8.6% of the total population of the ward, are aged 75 or over.

### HOUSING

In 2017, the number of households in East Lothian was 45,301. This is a 1.2% increase from 44,749 households in 2016. In comparison, the number of households in Scotland overall increased by 0.7%.

Between 2016 and 2026, the number of households in East Lothian is projected to increase from 44,749 to 50,070. This is an 11.9% increase, which compares to a projected increase of 6.4% for Scotland as a whole.

In 2016, there were 11,811 dwellings in the Musselburgh area. Dwellings across Musselburgh are generally smaller than across East Lothian overall – with 53% of homes in Musselburgh West having just 1-3 habitable rooms (compared to 36% across the county).

The Housing Land Audit for 2017 states the total committed sites in Musselburgh will yield **2036** units. In accordance with the LDP the potential new housing development sites proposed for the ward will yield **2945** units taking the total to **4981** potential new homes in Musselburgh ward by 2025.

The average household size for East Lothian is 2.3.

## **RETAIL PATTERNS**

Town centre catchments:



### **CONVENIENCE – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Table 5.3 of the Retail Capacity Study 2015 (RCS) shows convenience shopping patterns (with main food and top-up combined). This highlights the following from 2015:

Residents of Zone 1 (Musselburgh) do the majority of their convenience shopping in Musselburgh, any additional expenditure appears to go to stores outside of East Lothian (19%) (given Musselburgh's close connections to Edinburgh – this is probably to be expected.) It is unlikely that much leakage from Musselburgh could be recaptured, mainly because of the proximity to large supermarkets in the east of Edinburgh. Forecast spare capacity could support additional small store developments or store extensions.

### **COMPARISON – EXPENDITURE AND POTENTIAL SPARE EXPENDITURE AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The majority (70%) of expenditure takes place outside east Lothian, namely at Ford Kinnaird (Edinburgh) and Edinburgh Town Centre. The Retail Capacity Study (2015) concludes that there is substantial forecast comparison expenditure growth relating to the residents of East Lothian, so capacity is not a barrier to new comparison retail development in the Council area. However, forecast for expenditure indicate that only a small proportion of the leakage could be retained in East Lothian. The reason is that East Lothian does not have any major shopping centres. It is more probable that leakage of comparison expenditure to major destinations outside East Lothian will increase. Trends in internet shopping are also having a major effect.

The main issue will be to support the existing comparison retail floorspace in the town centres in East Lothian, through encouraging improvements to the quality and range of comparison shopping, in conjunction with other measures to improve the attractiveness of the town centres as destinations.

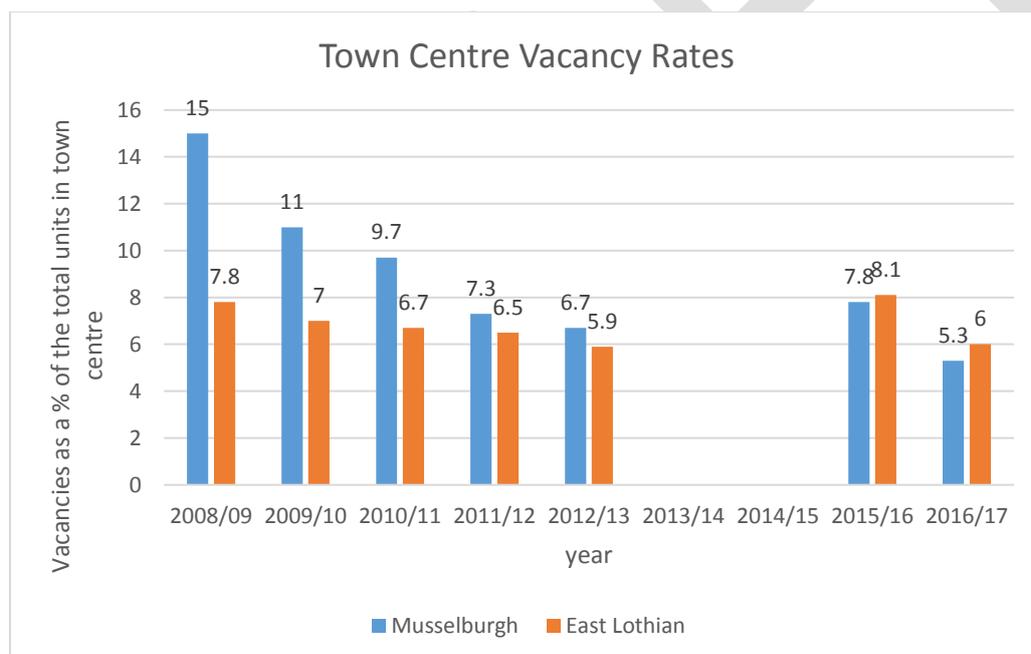
### **BLINDWELLS**

The RCS concludes that under 2015 market conditions there is limited scope for a larger supermarket (despite the leakage in surrounding zones of Prestonpans and Tranent), however, as Blindwells develops out there may be opportunity for a larger supermarket over the longer term. In terms of major non food retail development, a key factor is the location of Blindwells relatively close to Fort Kinnaird. It is only just over 6 miles or 11 minutes drive time with very good accessibility.

### **TOWN CENTRE ASSESSMENTS (quantitative)**

**Vacancy data** (measured as a percentage of available retail units in the area)

- Vacancy rates (measured as a percentage of available retail units in the area) decreased in Musselburgh, from a high of 15% in 2008/09 to a low of 6.7% in 2012/13
- By 2015/16 figures show the Musselburgh vacancy rate to be lower than the East Lothian average for the first time, this has continued into 2016/17

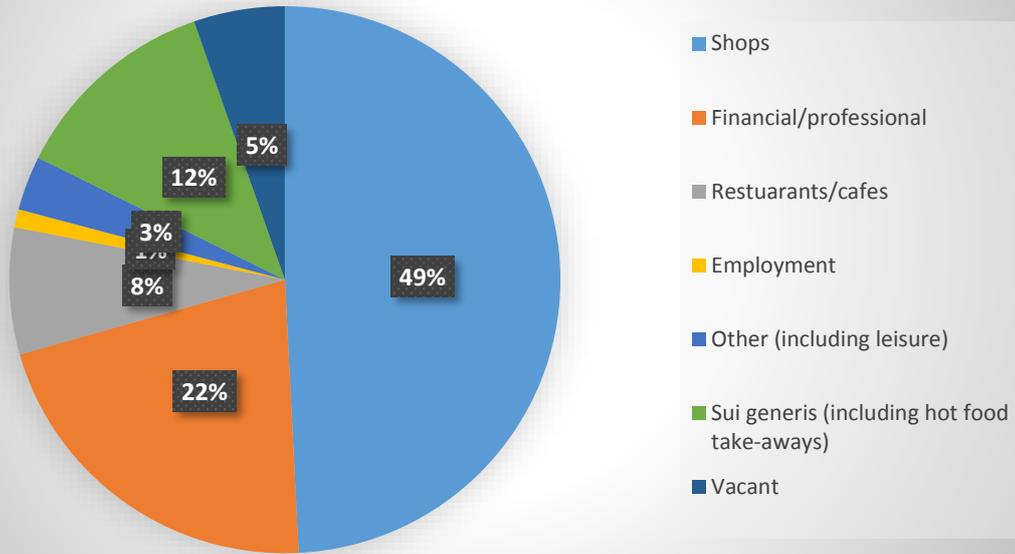


The 2017 Retail Survey undertaken by East Lothian Council shows the vacancies in each town centre. The number of vacant units across the district is relatively low, with the highest number being in Prestonpans (one of the smallest centres). Overall vacancy levels are low.

### **Town Centre uses**

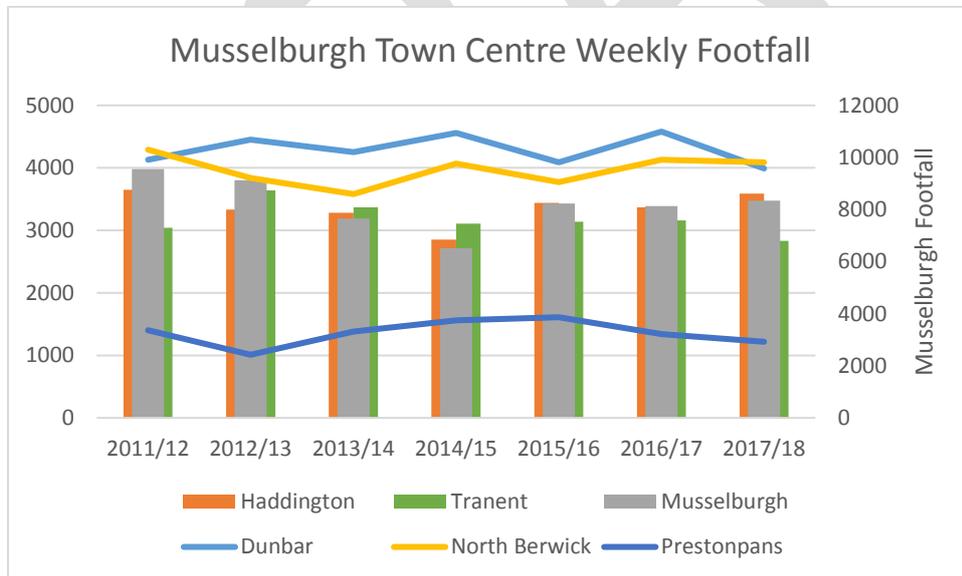
It is of interest to monitor the uses currently occupying the town centre units. The following charts demonstrate the spread of use classes in each centre, using data from the 2017 retail survey:

## Musselburgh Town Centre 2017



### Footfall

Pedestrian counts are undertaken annually in each town centre to establish weekly footfall rates for East Lothian's High Streets. The observations are November based and are not reflective of seasonal differences.



Town centre vacancy rates have decreased to level a below the overall average for East Lothian, and weekly footfall on Musselburgh High St. has increased by 27.9% since 2014/15.

The Weekly footfall rates per head of ward population are 0.41 visits per person, the highest in East Lothian.

## AIR QUALITY AND POLLUTION

In association with other plans the LDP will help to maintain or enhance air quality objectives. It will do this because it has taken these factors into account when selecting locations for development and by ensuring its development strategy is complemented by air quality mitigation measures. It will seek to integrate land use and transport and minimise the need to travel as well as the distance travelled. It will do this by promoting town centres as accessible locations for a mix of land uses and services and providing community services locally.

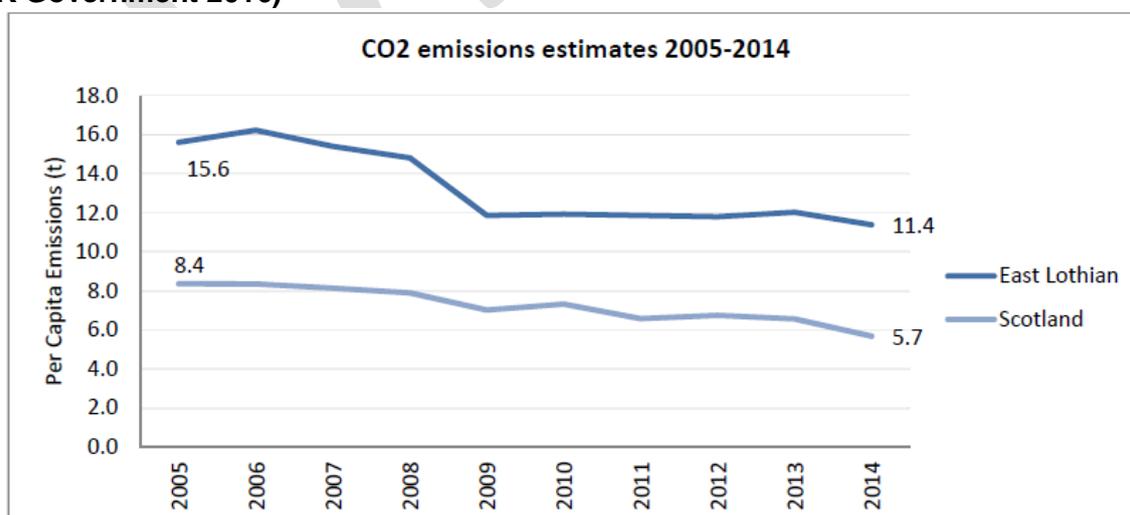
Currently air quality in East Lothian is very good. The Council has been annually reviewing and assessing local air quality since 2003. In June 2012, the Air Quality Detailed Assessment for Musselburgh was completed. It concluded that there are currently air quality issues in Musselburgh, mainly from receptors located on High Street and Bridge Street close to bus stops. Musselburgh Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is an area of Musselburgh Town Centre that has been subject to a formal order defining it as an area where an air quality objective is not being achieved.

The plan aims to reduce transport emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> in the AQMA by approximately 21%. It is anticipated that a reduction of this scale will lead to the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> air quality standard (40 µg m<sup>-3</sup>) within the Musselburgh AQMA being achieved and maintained. East Lothian Council will continue to review and assess air quality to monitor the situation and success of the plan.

The approved Air Quality Action Plan, inter-alia, sets out short and longer term measures for improving local air quality and includes measures seeking emissions improvements to local bus and commercial fleets and also the relocation of bus stops. An Urban Traffic Control system will be introduced to Musselburgh to regulate the flow of vehicles through the town centre. This will ensure that levels of through traffic, and thus vehicle emissions, are minimised in future and that air quality is not compromised, while maintaining appropriate and acceptable levels of local road network performance. This, in combination with improvement to the bus fleet and a more appropriate positioning of bus stops, will help ensure that air quality in the area is maintained at acceptable levels.

In East Lothian there has been an overall decrease of 27.1% in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita. This was the second highest rate in Scotland out of the 32 local authorities. Industry and commercial accounted for 62.6% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, followed by Transport (16.7%) and Domestic (16.5%).

### **CO<sub>2</sub> Emission estimates per capita (tonnes per capita) in East Lothian and Scotland (UK Government 2016)**

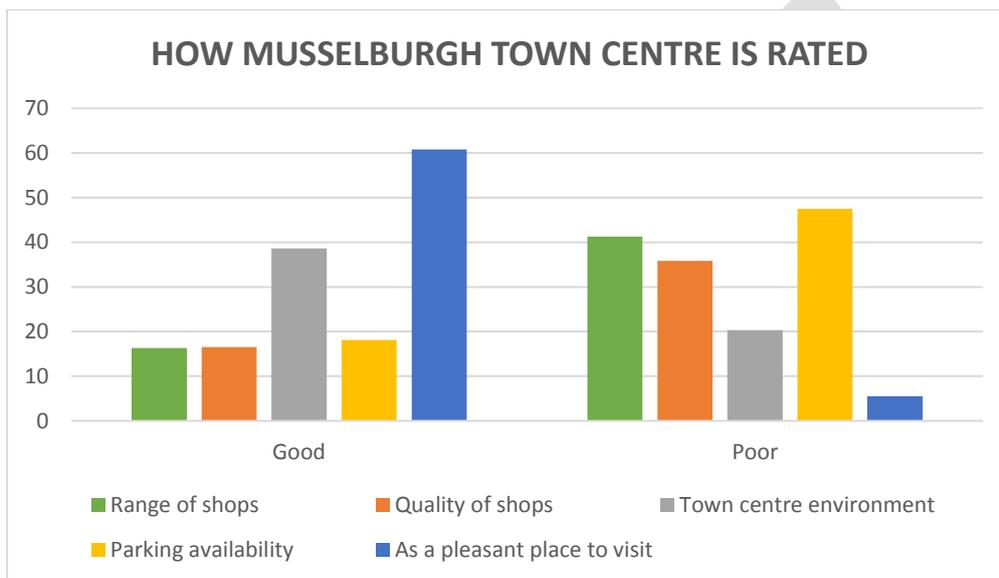


The East Lothian Residents Survey (2017) reported that 4% of respondents in the ward felt that traffic congestion was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, compared to 10% across East Lothian.

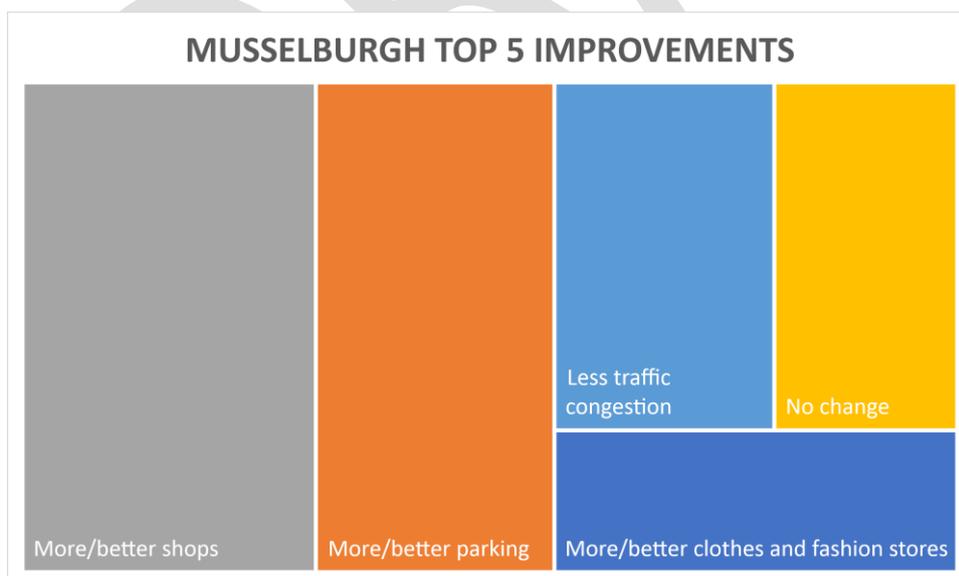
**TOWN CENTRE PERCEPTIONS (qualitative)**

The following are the results from the 2015 RCS telephone survey:

61% of people who live in Musselburgh visit the town centre on a weekly basis or more frequently. 16% visit daily. 38% people walk to the centre, 40% travel by car and 19% travel by bus. A large proportion of Musselburgh residents think Musselburgh Town centre has a good environment and is a pleasant place to visit. There is concern about the range and quality of shops and car parking.



The top 5 improvements sought are shown below:



68% of people who live in Musselburgh, **never** visit Musselburgh Town Centre in the evenings (after 6pm). The top 5 things that would make people visit the Town Centre in the evening are:

1. More/better restaurants and cafes
2. More/better pubs and wine bars
3. More evening events
4. More things to do generally
5. Shops open later

### **Discussion**

In terms of Musselburgh, a high proportion of convenience shopping from Musselburgh residents is undertaken in Musselburgh, but there is also leakage to Edinburgh. Musselburgh clearly performs well in terms of convenience shops – hosting a large Tesco superstore, and Aldi and Lidl, together with other large stores such as Iceland and Home Bargains. In Musselburgh there is demand for a better range and better quality of shops. 68% of residents do not visit Musselburgh town centre in the evening, this is similar in Prestonpans and Tranent. This may be because of the limited offer, or could be influenced by the proximity of these centres to the wider Edinburgh area. This contrasts with the west of the East Lothian where in Haddington, Dunbar and North Berwick at least 50% of the population visit the town centre in the evening at least once a month. In North Berwick the figure is as high as 82%. These centres are more geographically remote and distanced from Edinburgh.

Across East Lothian, a large proportion of comparison expenditure is spent in Edinburgh, this trend is unlikely to change.

Considering the use classes at play in Musselburgh, the town centre supports almost 50% shops (class 1 retail). This is a trend replicated across East Lothian with shops occupying between 47%-55% across the six town centres. The previous Local Plan supports retailing and restricts change of use in town centres, but the newly adopted East Lothian Local Development Plan (2018) introduces greater flexibility (Policy TC2) allowing for change of use between retailing, restaurants, businesses and offices and leisure and entertainment. This may see a wider mix of uses over the coming years and is something to consider in future monitoring. Greater flexibility may assist in increasing the night time offer, particularly important in Musselburgh where the residents are not making full use of the town centre in the evening.

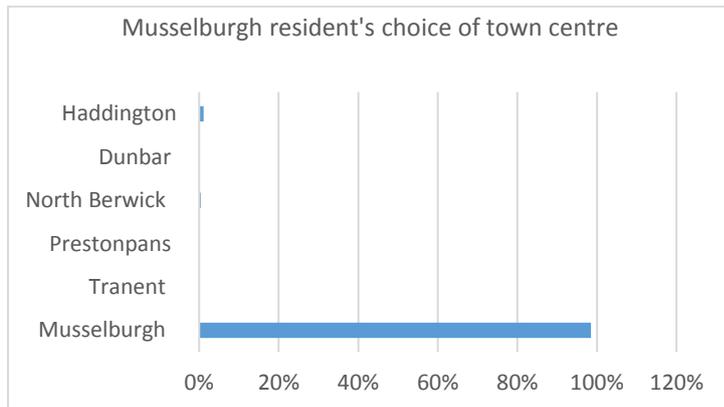
Currently restaurants/cafes represent 8% of the overall town centre uses in Musselburgh, which is higher than in Prestonpans and Tranent and similar to Haddington and Dunbar. Whilst restaurants/cafés is not a full indicator of the evening offer, it does offer some insight. Musselburgh demonstrates an interesting pattern, where 8% of the town centre offer is restaurants/cafes but there is low usage after 6pm, with 68% of those living in Musselburgh never visiting the town centre after 6pm. The likelihood is that the close links to Edinburgh, easy bus and train access to Edinburgh Town Centre and close proximity to Fort Kinnaird offer Musselburgh residents a wider choice. However, the fact that 8% of the Musselburgh town centre is restaurants and cafes, suggests that Musselburgh pulls some customers from the outlying Edinburgh areas such as Joppa, Portobello and Newcraighall. The Newcraighall area is set to grow substantially in terms of residential and this will offer more opportunity to claw in some evening expenditure.

### **Citizen's panel – Survey 2018**

East Lothian Citizens' Panel survey from Spring 2018 provides the most up-to-date information available on town centre usage and perceptions. A total of 682 responses were received – 193 postal and 489 online. The emerging patterns are shown in the following analysis.

Question 5 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel questionnaire asked ‘which of the following town centres do you visit most often for shopping, leisure and to access services’? Possible answers were Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, North Berwick, Dunbar and Haddington. It should be noted that there is no option to provide an alternative town centre, so the results show 100% results across the 6 centres. It is of most use to monitor which town centre local residents use to those centres use.

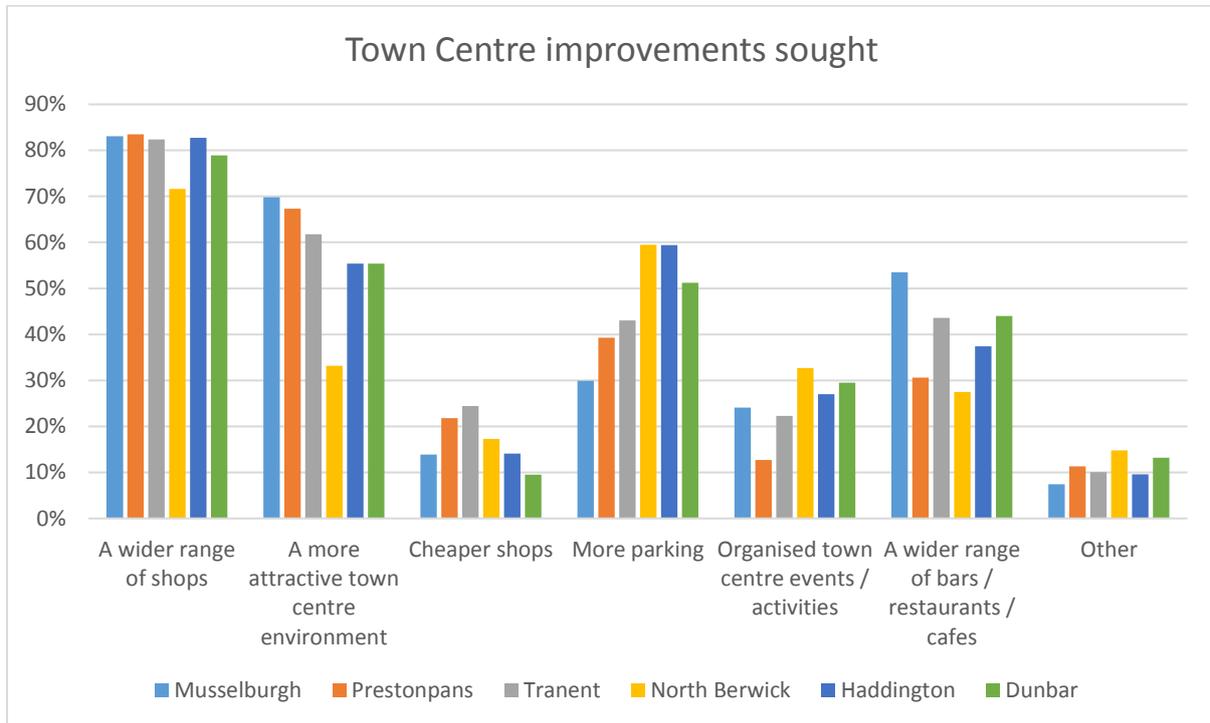
*Which town centre do people visit most often for shopping, leisure and services?*



A huge proportion of residents in Musselburgh use Musselburgh town centre over any of the other 5 centres. This corresponds with the RCS findings of 2015, which conclude that Musselburgh residents do the majority of their convenience shopping in Musselburgh. Any additional expenditure appears to go to stores outside of East Lothian. This is consistent with the Citizen’s Panel results which show that the Musselburgh population make virtually no use of the other east Lothian town centres. Proximity to Edinburgh and good public transport to east Edinburgh and beyond will be a contributing factor.

Three years on and the survey results indicate similar trends – Musselburgh residents choose to visit Musselburgh town centre, the remainder looking towards Edinburgh for their shopping and leisure. Both Prestonpans and Tranent are losing visits to other east Lothian centres, namely Musselburgh and Haddington. Musselburgh is therefore supporting Tranent and Prestonpans to some extent.

Question 8 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asks ‘which 3 factors would be most likely to encourage you to use your local town centre more?’ The results are highlighted below:

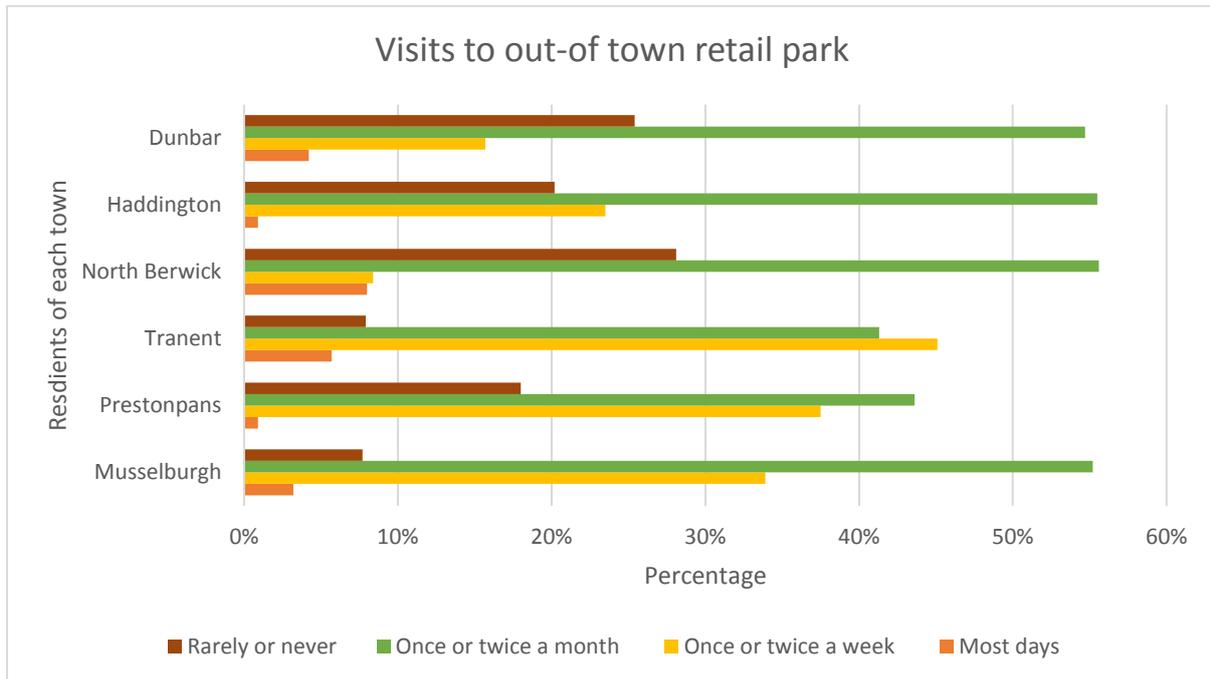


The results are similar for each town centre with the top three issues across the board showing:

1. A wider range of shops
2. A more attractive town centre environment
3. More parking

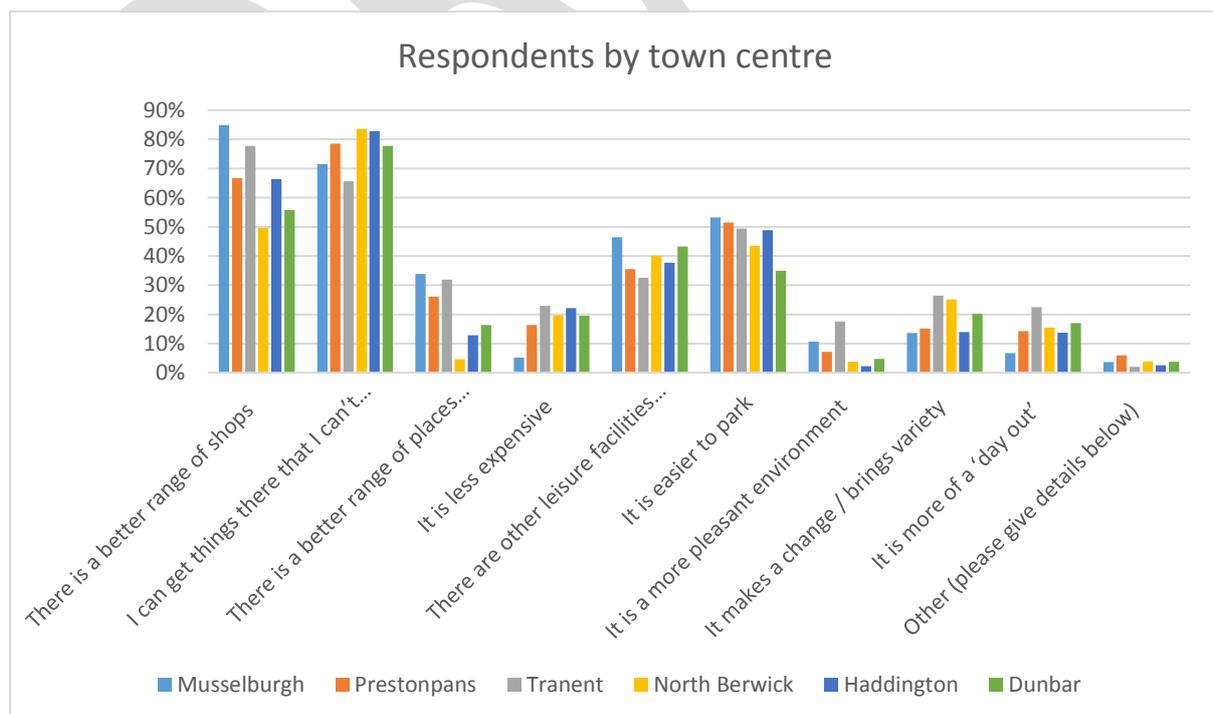
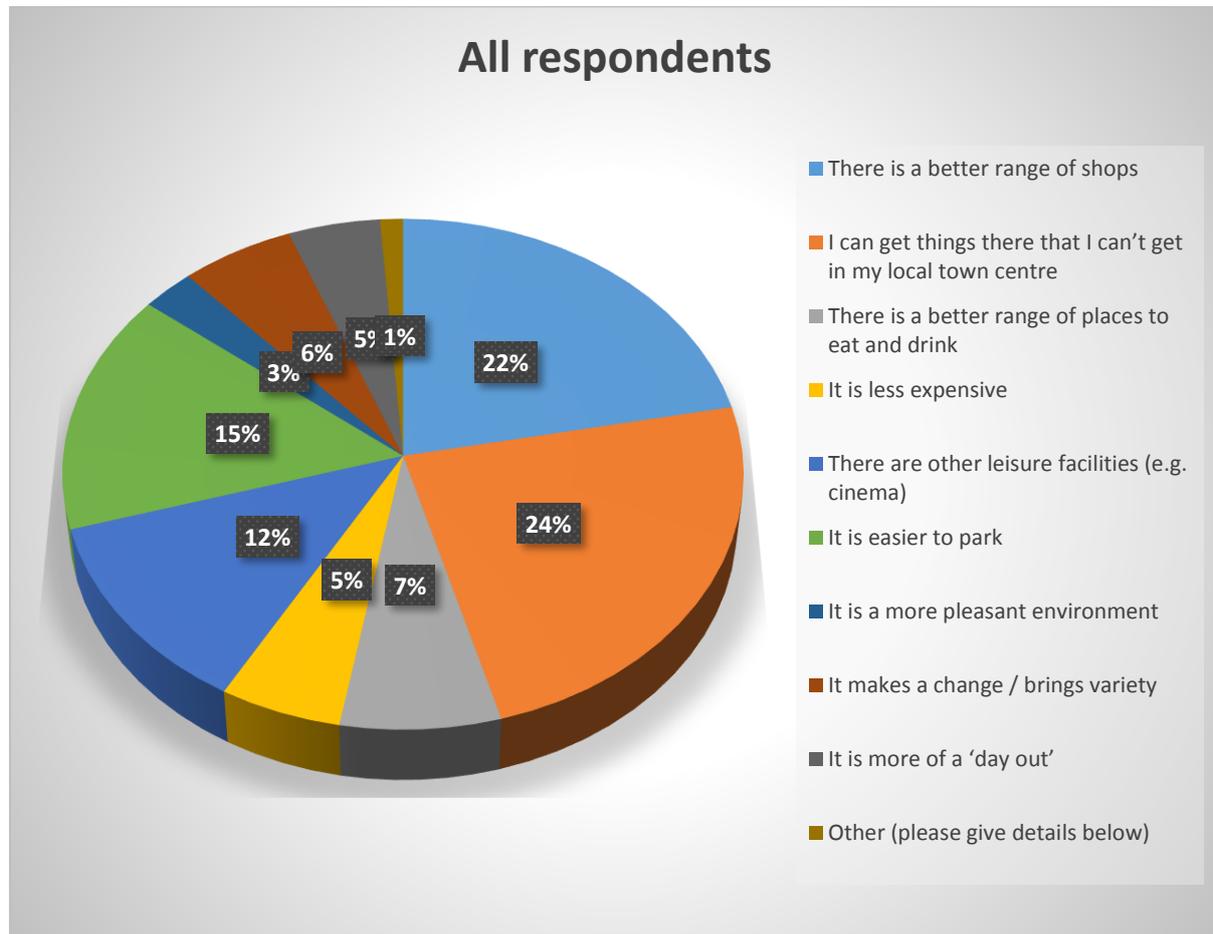
There is also a requirement for a wider range of bars/restaurants and cafes, particularly in Musselburgh. This reinforces the 2015 RCS findings and may also help explain the current limited use of Musselburgh town centre in the evening. A more attractive town centre is sought – the highlighted traffic congestion will play a part in unattractiveness. The Musselburgh Air Quality Management Area should assist in improving this.

Question 9 of the spring 2018 Citizen’s Panel asks ‘how often do you visit an out-of town retail park for shopping or leisure activities?’



As would maybe be expected a large proportion of people visit an out of town retail park between once or twice a week and once or twice a month. Over 30% of Musselburgh residents choose to visit an out-of-town retail park once or twice a week. A higher proportion of residents from Dunbar, Haddington and North Berwick rarely or never visit an out-of-town retail park, most likely because proximity to Edinburgh and the available out-of-town centres is further than the community of Musselburgh. Few people use an out-of-town retail centre daily. This is a good sign that suggests town centre usage, however, it should be borne in mind that the majority of out-of-town retail centres, such as Fort Kinnaird, are predominantly the sale of convenience goods, which few people buy daily.

Question 10 of the spring 2018 Citizen's Panel asked 'If you go to an out-of town retail park for some shopping or leisure activities, rather than to your local town centre, what would be your reasons for doing so?'



As expected people refer to a better range of shops and more places to eat and drink as well as there being other leisure facilities to access. Whilst it is possible to encourage an increased range of shops, restaurants and leisure facilities in Musselburgh, proximity to the Edinburgh offer and, in particular, Fort Kinnaird will always play a part. It is extremely accessible, especially for the west of the district. The only other consideration to be highlighted is the availability of parking. 15% of respondents claim it is easier to park at out-of-town centres than town centres. Whilst this is not an overwhelmingly large response, previous analysis indicates town centre parking is considered an issue.

## **Parking**

### Parking Problems

- Long-stay on-street parking at locations where limited waiting operates.
- Parking problems in side streets around main commercial streets - on-street parking restrictions displaced vehicles from main streets. Need to better manage and enforce the supply and turnover of short-stay parking
- Off-street car parks lack management with poor turnover of spaces along with a lack of awareness and usage of them. Out of date signage to off-street car parks
- Need for better management of residents parking in some areas particularly around Queen Margaret University. Abuse of on-street parking in residential areas, particularly in terms of long-stay parking by non-residents
- Overflow parking around railway station
- Some difficulties for servicing and loading access to retailers in the town centre
- Need to accommodate major public transport corridor through the town centre
- Specific parking issues on race days although existing restrictions seem to function fairly well
- Short-term on-street problems at peak school travel periods around schools
- Lack of Blue Badge spaces

### Potential Parking Solutions

- Control through Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- Provision of designated long-stay car parks
- Provision of designated short-stay and medium-stay car parks
- Continuous review of the requirement for Controlled Parking Zones
- Implementation of parking management hierarchy defining designated short-stay, medium-stay and long-stay parking locations
- Review and implementation of improved signage to off-street car parks where required
- Consider the introduction of on-off street parking charges
- Ongoing review of Resident's Parking Schemes and consideration of CPZ
- Ongoing review of waiting and loading provision
- Provision of clearway on key streets through town centre
- Provision of event management parking services
- Ongoing review of Blue Badge parking

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