



APPENDIX 1

Town Centre Health Check – Huyton Town Centre (September 2024)

Scope & Purpose

- 1.1 This town centre 'health check' has been prepared to understand the role and function of Huyton town centre. In undertaking this assessment, where information is available, the broad indicators set out in the Planning Practice Guidance that supports national planning policy have been considered and follows a site visit by Quod in September 2024.

Huyton

- 1.2 Huyton town centre is located approximately 1.8 kilometres northwest of the Application Site and is defined in the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (2016)¹ as a Town Centre.
- 1.3 The main retail offer within Huyton is focused on Derby Road, which is pedestrianised, along with Cavendish Walk. Huyton town centre comprises wider facilities such as offices (including the Council offices), community uses and Municipal Buildings.

Diversity of Uses

- 1.4 Huyton Town Centre comprises 40,830 square metres of floorspace (as identified by Experian Goad²) within a total of 125no. units. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the uses within the Town Centre (as defined by Goad) and compares this to the national average (also derived from Goad).

Table 1: Retail Composition of Huyton Town Centre

Sector	Floorspace (sqm)	Proportion of Floorspace	Units	Proportion of Units	National Average	
					Floorspace	Units
Comparison	7,040	17.4%	28	22.4%	30.2%	27.0%
Convenience	10,720	26.3%	12	9.6%	25.5%	9.3%
Retail Services	3,100	7.6%	22	17.6%	7.2%	15.7%
Leisure Services	4,590	11.2%	23	18.4%	26.0%	25.1%
Financial & Business Services	960	2.3%	8	6.4%	6.7%	8.9%
Other	5,460	13.4%	10	8.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Vacant	8,960	21.9%	22	17.6%	13.8%	13.8%
Total	40,830	100.0%	125	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Experian Goad (updated by Quod September 2024)

¹ Under Policy CS6

² Updated September 2024



Note continued

- 1.5 There are 28no. comparison retail units, representing a total of 22.4% of all units. Collectively, comparison goods retailers provide approximately 7,040 square metres of floorspace at ground floor, which amounts to 17.4% of all floorspace (Experian Goad). The comparison retail sector is identified to fall below the national average, both in terms of floorspace and units (17.4% and 22.4% respectively).
- 1.6 In contrast, the convenience (food) retailing sector occupies 10,720 square metres (or 26.3%) of total floorspace within 12no. units (9.6% of the total units). The convenience sector is slightly above the national average (9.3%) for units and floorspace (25.5%). This suggests that Huyton's convenience retailing is well-represented and includes representation from Asda and Iceland.
- 1.7 The retail services sector extends to 3,100 square metres occupying 22no. units. This sector represents 17.6% of all units and 7.6% of floorspace. This compares favourably to the national average (15.7% and 7.2% respectively).
- 1.8 In contrast the leisure service sector is less well represented equating to 4,590 square metres (or 11.2%) of floorspace and 23no. units (18.4%). This is well below the national average of 25.1% for units and 26.0% for floorspace. This sector includes representation from takeaways, cafes and pubs, including representation from McDonalds.
- 1.9 The financial and business services sector occupies 960 square metres (2.3%) of total floorspace and comprises 8no. units (6.4%), both of which are below the national average (6.7% and 8.9% respectively).
- 1.10 Overall, the composition of the Town Centre suggests that Huyton performs an important role as a service destination with more than half (51%) of occupied units falling within the service sector. The retail offer, particularly the convenience retail sector, provides an important offer.

Vacancies

- 1.11 Vacancies in Huyton town centre account for 8,960 square metres (or 21.9%) of floorspace occupying 22no. (or 17.6%) of units. This level of vacancies compares to a national average of 13.8% for both floorspace and units.
- 1.12 Whilst the proportion of vacancies is above the national average it is important to note that is in part due to units being left vacant ahead of redevelopment. This includes units within Cavendish Walk, part of which has recently been purchased by Knowsley Council. Consequently, several units are vacant due to regeneration proposals coming forward in Huyton rather than reflective of the centre's poor performance.
- 1.13 Similarly, the largest vacant unit in the town centre (Unit 20, Cavendish Walk) was formerly occupied by Wilko, since their well-publicised administration in September 2023. Again, this vacancy has been due to the failure of a retailer nationally rather than reflective of the performance of Huyton.



Note continued

- 1.14 Furthermore, the number of vacancies has reduced since May 2023 from 25no to 22no. units. This suggests an improving level of viability.

Retailer Representation

- 1.15 Huyton Town centre is well represented by a mix of national and independent retailers. This includes representation from Peacocks, Iceland, Home Bargains, B&M, Asda and Decathlon. Within the service sector there is also representation from Dominoes and McDonalds. Overall, Huyton is represented by a number of key attractors, which anchor its retail and leisure offer.

Pedestrian Flows

- 1.16 Derby Road is the pedestrian hub of Huyton town centre. This is due to the excellent pedestrian friendly design which links Huyton Station to Archway Road, as retail corridor. There are positive frontages along Derby Road which continues to Cavendish Walk, which provides essential leisure, convenience and comparison retail uses and good levels of footfall.

Accessibility

- 1.17 Huyton town centre has a good level of accessibility by car, public transport, walking and cycling. Archway Road / Huyton Lane travels across from the southwestern part of the site to the northeastern part of the site. This serves as a main vehicular route outside of Huyton; to link with the M57 and Liverpool Road.
- 1.18 Huyton town centre railway station is located approximately 200 metres to/from the primary shopping area, which provides frequent services to Liverpool, Manchester Airport, Wigan and Blackpool.
- 1.19 Huyton bus station is also located off at Huyton Hey Road to the south of the town centre s short walk from the primary shopping area. There are also bus stops located throughout the Town Centre, providing services to neighbouring towns and villages.
- 1.20 Overall, Huyton town centre is highly accessible.

Perception of safety and occurrence of crime

- 1.21 Some anti-social behaviour was witnessed during the site visit in such as noise and smoking from students from nearby areas. However, no significant adverse issues were identified with regards to safety or security during the site inspections, which were conducted during the day.

Environmental Quality

- 1.22 Huyton town centre is well used and provides a good quality shopping environment, aided by the pedestrianisation of the core shopping streets. Most retail units are well maintained and there is street furniture within the town centre.



Note continued

1.23 Whilst there are a number of vacant units within the centre, a number of these are due to the ongoing redevelopment of the town centre and do not represent a long-term issue, and the number of vacancies has declined in recent months.

1.24 Derby Road and Cavendish Walk boasts modern, high-quality facades. This is coupled with the modern well-kept street furniture which include a good provision of seating, street lighting, litterbins and planters which have been respected by the public.

Summary

1.25 Overall, Huyton town centre provides an important retail and service destination. It contains a number of key attractors, which anchor the centre, particular in the convenience retail sector.

1.26 Whilst vacancies within the centre are above the national average, this is largely due to ongoing regeneration of the town centre rather than representing a notable decline in the town centre. These ongoing improvements, which includes a new headquarters for Knowsley Council will have a positive impact on the long-term vitality and viability of Huyton.

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