

# North Lanarkshire Town Centre Health Checks Case Study

Project Name	Town Centres Health Check
Local Authority	North Lanarkshire Council
Date Completed	Ongoing
Web link	<a href="http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk">www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk</a>

## Introduction

This case study is based on North Lanarkshire Council's experience of preparing Town Centre Health Checks as the first stage to help shape and inform the development of strategies for the future regeneration and management of its town centres.



## Project Summary

Town Centre Health Checks for two of the seven North Lanarkshire town centres have been carried out and these will inform the process for the remaining five town centres.

The Town Centre Health Check process involved the systematic collection of information on the vitality and viability of town centres this will enable a comparative analysis of performance between centres and provide data that can be monitored over time.

Vitality and viability indicators such as type and range of uses and pedestrian flow counts have been recorded on an annual basis for comparison over time. This health check data, together with customer and business surveys, will support the preparation and implementation of Town Centre Strategies and associated Action Plans, importantly, allowing the impact of intervention and investment to be monitored and the town centres to be benchmarked against comparable towns.

### Issue / Challenge

It is important to ensure that the information gathered for Health check indicator purposes is consistent and robust and that it can be updated and compared over time. The indicators should be relevant to the specific issues and concerns of the town centre areas and should be time and cost effective and readily comparable.



### *Main issues and challenges identified were:*

- Ensuring information is accurate, relevant and robust.
- Ensuring consistency in the way information is recorded and interpreted over time for benchmarking both with similar town centres and the same town centre at different dates.
- Striking a balance between cost and benefit.
- Balancing subjective and objective information.
- Managing interpretation of presented data by third parties.

### Different / New way of working

- Increased cross department working and sharing of data gathered by other council departments.
- Planning authority working closely with Town Centre Managers, whose role it is to meet regularly with the businesses, retailers and community groups, this had the benefit of improving the opportunity to engage and consult with the key town centre stakeholders.
- This led to partnership working with town centre stakeholders, with shared responsibility for producing and delivering the town centre strategy and action plan.
- Collaboration with Improvement Service.
- Better use of ITC, such as using electronic survey machines that were placed in public places such as supermarkets and libraries to encourage a wide spectrum of people to complete the customer survey.

### Resource Implications

Time and costs of data gathering, collating and analysis of information.



### Key outcomes

The annual town centres health check report will help councils to establish a baseline to inform the future vision and strategy for each town centre and set out the key indicators to be used to monitor and compare performance over time as a precursor to benchmarking against other towns.

North Lanarkshire Council have started identifying suitable towns to benchmark against through the Scottish Government Town Centres and Local High Streets Learning Network.

### Lessons learnt / Tips

- It is worth making full use of existing relevant data that the Council or its partners have collected for other purposes.
- Always be clear as to how information was recorded and compiled so that meaningful comparisons can be made.
- Working with various stakeholders on the role of health checks provided different perspectives and ideas and led to a shared vision.
- Establishing a clear role for the health checks ensured that the data recorded would directly inform the Town Centre Strategies.
- Communicating the role of health checks to all potential users allowed further engagement and understanding of the health check process.
- Lastly, it is important to ensure that adequate time and cost resources are available for the preparation and ongoing review and monitoring of the data.

### Further Information

Lorna Ogilvie - [ogilvyl@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:ogilvyl@northlan.gov.uk) or Lyndsay Noble - [NobleLy@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:NobleLy@northlan.gov.uk)  
Environmental Services  
North Lanarkshire Council  
Fleming House, 2 Tryst Road, Cumbernauld, G67 1JW