Merthyr Tydfil Retail and Commercial Leisure Study

Final Report

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

14 June 2017

LICHFIELDS

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1.0 Introduction

Study Objectives

1.1 Lichfields has been commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) to prepare a Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study.

1.2 The study has been prepared in line with Chapter 10, Retail and Commercial Development of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 9, November 2016 and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 4: Retail and Commercial Development (2016).

1.3 The key objective of the Merthyr Tydfil Retail and Leisure Study is to provide a robust and credible evidence base to inform the Council's work on the emerging Local Development Plan, which will guide development up to 2031, taking into account changes since previous evidence was prepared. The replacement Local Development Plan will reflect the emerging housing, employment, retail and leisure needs for the next 15 years, running from 2016 until 2031.

1.4 The Retail and Leisure Study is based on up to date and sound research. The study establishes existing shopping patterns, based on sound empirical evidence and comprehensive customer survey research, including both customers who use facilities in MTCB and those who shop elsewhere.

1.5 This report provides a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the need for new retail, leisure and other main town centre uses within MTCB. It provides a description of existing retail facilities within MTCB, and it identifies the role the main town of Merthyr Tydfil and the local centres play in meeting the needs of customers. The assessment of need includes both food and non-food retailing and eating/drinking away from the home.

1.6 The study includes an assessment of:

1. changes in circumstances and shopping patterns since the previous studies were undertaken, not least the effects of the recession, the availability of 2011 Census data and the requirements of the recently updated PPW/TAN4;
2. the future need and (residual) capacity for retail, food and beverage and leisure floorspace for the period up to 2031;
3. the potential implications of emerging developments both within and outside MTCB, in terms of impact on town centres and potential changes to shopping patterns;
4. the existing retail hierarchy and network of centres and advises whether any changes are required; and
5. development plan policies, allocations and recommendations on how each centre can develop its role.

Report Structure

1.7 Section 2 of this report describes the hierarchy of centres and retail context within and surrounding the County Borough. Section 3 sets out an analysis of retail trends and shopping needs within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. Section 4 assesses the scope for other main town centre uses i.e. food and beverage and commercial leisure uses. Section 5 explores the implications of the findings for the future strategy and policies within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. Section 6 sets out recommendations and conclusions.

1.8 Throughout this report and to ensure consistency Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council will be referred to as MTCBC, the County Borough will be referred to as MTCB and Merthyr Tydfil town centre will be referred to as Merthyr Tydfil town centre.

2.0 Hierarchy of Centres and Local Context

2.1 PPW states that local planning authorities should develop through their development plans a clear strategy and policies for retail development which seek to achieve vibrant, attractive and viable retail and commercial centres. They should set out a framework for the future of retail and commercial centres in their area which promotes a successful retailing sector supporting existing communities. This section provides an overview of the shopping hierarchy in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough and the surrounding areas.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough and the Surrounding Area

2.1 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough (MTCB) is surrounded by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Powys County Council to the north, Caerphilly to the south and east and Rhondda Cynon Taff to the south and west.

2.2 Policy AS18 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021 sets out the retail hierarchy of the County Borough comprising **Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre** as the favoured location for retail development followed by the seven local centres of **Dowlais**, **Gurnos**, **Cefn Coed**, **Brecon Road/Morgantown**, **Troedyrhiw**, **Aberfan** and **Treharris**. These main centres are shown in Figure 2.1 below. The adopted study area is set out in Appendix 1.

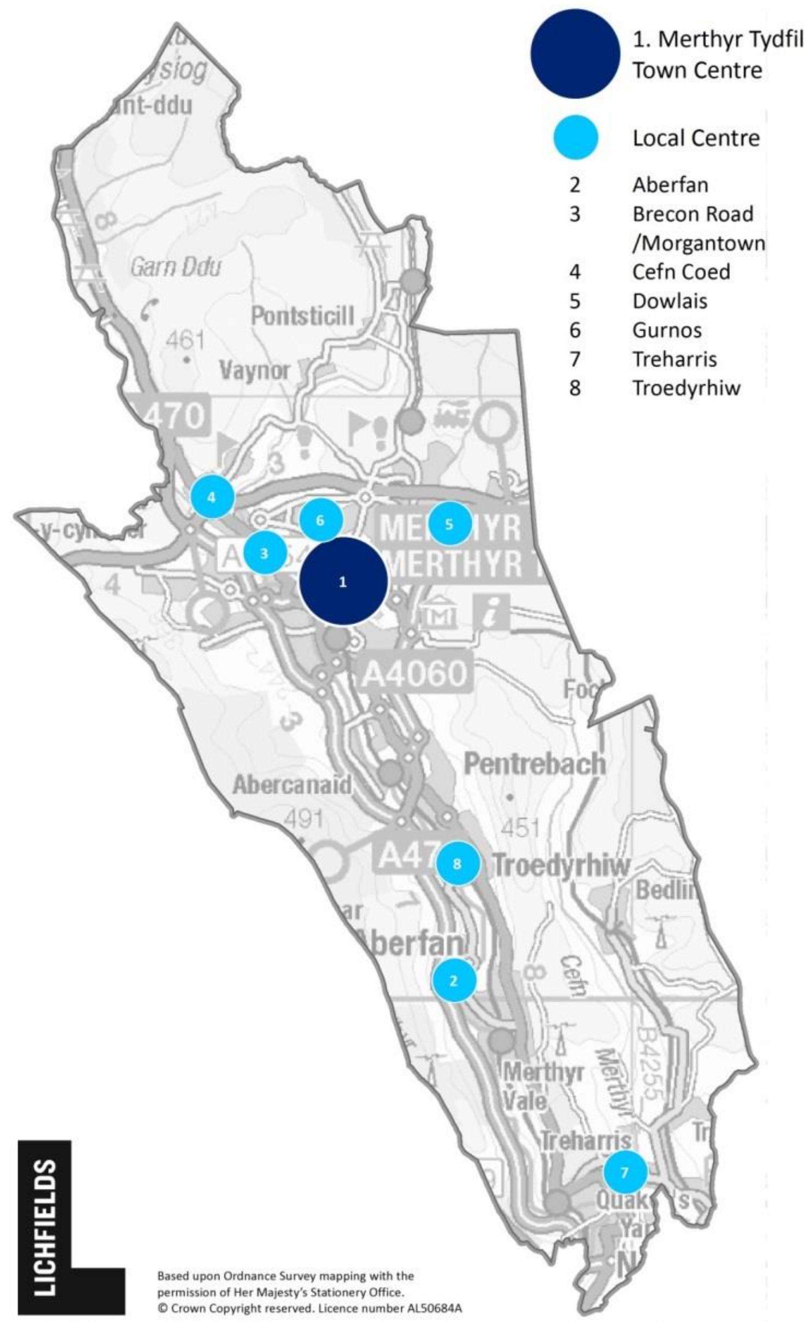
2.3 The existing Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out policies on retail and town centres, which are supportive of new retail and commercial leisure proposals within defined centres, provided that their location and scale complies with policy criteria relating to a specific quantitative or qualitative need within the catchment area served by the town.

2.4 The Javelin Group's Venuescore ranks over 3,500 retail destinations in the UK including town centres, malls, retail warehouse parks and factory outlet centres across the country. Each destination is given a weighted score based on the number of multiple retailers present, including anchor stores, fashion operators and non-fashion multiples. The score attached to each retailer is weighted depending on their overall impact on shopping patterns, for example a department store will achieve a high score. The results for Merthyr Tydfil town centre, the local centres, out of centre shopping destinations and other relevant centres outside MTCB are shown in Table 2.1.

2.5 Cardiff is the major regional city centre at the top of the hierarchy. Swansea, Newport and Cwmbran are at the next tier in the hierarchy, and are significantly larger than the rest of the town centres in South East Wales.

2.6 Merthyr Tydfil town centre achieves the highest Venuescore in the County Borough at the top of the local hierarchy. Cyfarthfa Retail Park ranks second highest in MTCB. , Elsewhere within MTCB, only Pentrebach Retail Park and Dowlais Top Retail Park within MTCB have been ranked by Javelin. The rest of the local centres are small with few multiple retailers, and are therefore not included within Javelin's analysis, i.e. Gurnos, Cefn Coed, Brecon Road/Morgantown, Troedyrhiw, Aberfan and Treharris.

Figure 2.1 MTCB Hierarchy of Centres



Source: MTCB Local Development Plan

2.7 The location of Venuescore centres are shown in Figure 2.2. Figure 2.2 indicates that residents in MTCB have good access to a number of larger centres, as well as having a choice of smaller centres to meet their day to day shopping needs.

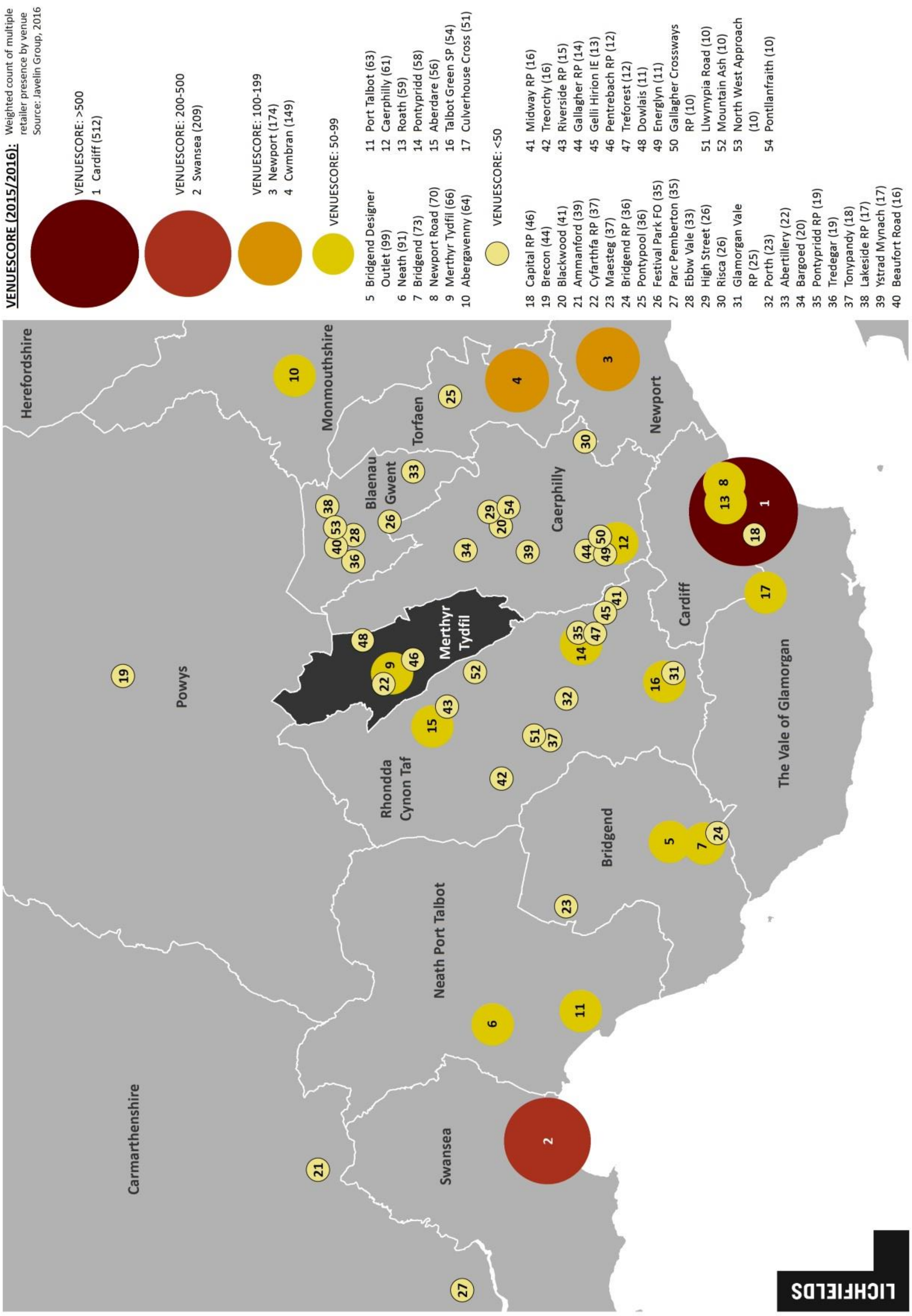
2.8 Venuescore data closely correlates to the actual market size of the shopping destination in terms of consumer expenditure. Javelin also assesses the market position of centres based on the retailers present and the centre's relative position along a spectrum running from discount to luxury or down-market to aspirational (i.e. lower, middle to upscale), as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Venuescore Ranking of Town Centres 2017

Centre	Venuescore	Rank	Market Position
Cardiff	512	9	Upper Middle
Swansea	209	80	Middle
Newport	174	122	Middle
Cwmbran	149	157	Lower Middle
Bridgend Designer Outlet	99	267	Upper Middle
Neath	91	297	Lower Middle
Bridgend	73	390	Lower Middle
Newport Road	70	412	Middle
Merthyr Tydfil	66	435	Lower Middle
Abergavenny	64	453	Middle
Port Talbot	63	460	Lower Middle
Caerphilly	61	480	Lower Middle
Roath, Cardiff	59	503	Lower Middle
Pontypridd	58	516	Lower Middle
Aberdare	56	547	Lower Middle
Talbot Green S P	54	562	Middle
Culverhouse Cross	51	600	Middle
Capital Retail Park	46	675	Middle
Brecon	44	702	Middle
Blackwood	41	757	Lower Middle
Cyfarthfa R P	37	858	Middle
Bridgend Retail Park	36	882	Middle
Pontypool	36	882	Lower Middle
Festival Park F O	35	918	Upper Middle
Ebbw Vale	33	974	Lower Middle
High St	26	1,232	Lower Middle
Risca	26	1,232	Lower Middle
Glamorgan Vale Retail Park	25	1,281	Lower Middle
Porth	23	1,372	Lower Middle
Abertillery	22	1,429	Lower Middle
Bargoed	20	1,548	Lower Middle
Pontypridd R P	19	1,618	Middle
Tredegar	19	1,618	Lower Middle
Tonypandy	18	1,709	Lower Middle
Lakeside Retail Park	17	1,789	Lower Middle
Ystrad Mynach	17	1,789	Lower Middle
Treorchy	16	1,908	Lower Middle
Pentrebach R P	12	2,577	Lower Middle
Treforest	12	2,577	Middle
Dowlais	11	2,827	Lower Middle

Source: Javelin's Venuescore 2016

Figure 2.2 Shopping Hierarchy - Javelin's Venuescore 2016



2.9 This Javelin information is used in the retail industry to assess the relative strength of shopping destinations. The market position measures the degree each venue's offer has a high-end or discount focus (High=Bias towards High-end retailers; Low=Bias towards Discount-oriented retailers). Javelin also provides other measures of the strength of centres as outlined below.

2.10 The main centre in the sub-region, Cardiff is categorised as having an "Upper Middle" market position, which suggests they cater for a wide customer base. Merthyr Tydfil town centre on the other hand is categorised as having a "Lower Middle" market position, which suggests it caters predominantly for less affluent customers.

2.11 In qualitative terms, Festival Park Outlet Shopping centre, Ebbw Vale has the highest market position "Upper Middle" in the sub region, despite its relatively low Venuescore. This indicates Festival Park Outlet Shopping centre has a good provision of high quality shops that are not recorded in the Venuescore. Cyfarthfa Retail Park ("Middle") is categorised below Merthyr Tydfil town centre in terms of Venuescore rank, but above Merthyr Tydfil, Pentrebach Retail Park and Dowlais in market position, which are categorised as having a "Lower Middle" market position.

2.12 In addition to its market position and Venuescore, each destination is also assessed in terms of a range of other attributes, as follows:

1 age focus (is the offer targeting younger or older consumers?);

2 fashionability of its offer (is the clothing offer traditional or progressive?); and

3 food/service bias (how strong is the food and beverage offer?).

2.13 The Javelin Group measures the degree to which each venue's offer is biased towards Fashion (High=Bias towards Fashion; Low=Bias away from Fashion). It classifies retailers in terms of their "fashionability" ranging from "traditional" at one end, then "updated classic", "fashion moderate", "fashion forward" through to "progressive" at the other, i.e. least fashionable to the most fashionable. Shopping destinations in London dominate the most "progressive" venues, such as Carnaby Street and Bond Street.

2.14 Javelin measures the degree to which each venue's offer is biased towards retailers with a Young or Old focus (High=Bias towards Older-focused retailers; Low=Bias towards Younger-focused retailers) - where there is a sufficient sample of retailers with a discernible age position. The age position of the fashion offer is also classified ranging from "young", "middle" to "old", for example shops such as Hollister, H&M, Miss Selfridge and Superdry appealing more to the young and others such as Evans and Edinburgh Woollen Mill appealing more to the old. The results for the main centres within MTCB and the surrounding area are shown in Table 2.2 below.

2.15 The centres within MTCB cater predominantly for older and middle aged customers, with moderate tastes. Most centres within the sub-region tend to cater for older customers, with moderate tastes.

2.16 All of the centres within MTCB have a below average food/service offer. Merthyr Tydfil town centre and Cyfarthfa Retail Park achieve an index of 64 and 66 respectively. This is some way below the index average of 100. The analysis of centres in Appendix 5 provides a more detailed analysis of the food/service offer within the retail centres.

Table 2.2 Venue Score Fashionability Ranking

Centre	Age	Fashion Position	Food/ Service Index (Avg. = 100)
Cardiff	Mid	Fashion Moderate	141
Swansea	Mid	Fashion Moderate	113
Newport	Mid	Fashion Forward	115
Cwmbran	Mid	Fashion Moderate	53
Bridgend Designer Outlet	Old	Fashion Moderate	73
Neath	Mid	Fashion Moderate	33
Bridgend	Mid	Updated Classic	50
Newport Rd, Cardiff	Old	Fashion Moderate	43
Merthyr Tydfil	Mid	Updated Classic	64
Abergavenny	Old	Traditional	95
Port Talbot	Old	Updated Classic	48
Caerphilly	Mid	Updated Classic	79
Roath, Cardiff	Old	Traditional	185
Pontypridd	Mid	Fashion Moderate	42
Aberdare	Mid	Fashion Moderate	65
Talbot Green S P	Mid	Fashion Forward	11
Culverhouse Cross	Old	Fashion Moderate	36
Capital Retail Park	Mid	Fashion Forward	53
Brecon	Old	Traditional	69
Blackwood	Mid	Fashion Moderate	15
Cyfarthfa Retail Park	Mid	Fashion Forward	66
Bridgend Retail Park	Old	Fashion Moderate	17
Pontypool	Mid	Fashion Moderate	67
Festival Park F O	Old	Updated Classic	17
Ebbw Vale	Old	Updated Classic	73
High St	Old	Traditional	117
Risca	Old	Fashion Moderate	70
Glamorgan Vale R P	Old	Updated Classic	24
Porth	Mid	Progressive	53
Abertillery	Mid	Updated Classic	138
Bargoed	Mid	Updated Classic	30
Pontypridd R P	Old	Fashion Moderate	0
Tredegar	Mid	Fashion Forward	32
Tonypandy	Mid	Fashion Moderate	67
Lakeside R P	Mid	Updated Classic	36
Ystrad Mynach	Old	Fashion Moderate	0
Treorchy	Old	Fashion Moderate	38
Pentrebach R P	Old	Fashion Moderate	0
Dowlais	Old	Fashion Moderate	0

Source: Javelin Venuescore

Existing Retail Provision in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough

2.17 An assessment of the existing retail and service provision in the main centres is provided in Appendix 5. A summary of existing retail provision in provided in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 Existing retail and service provision

Centre	Retail Hierarchy	Class A1-A3 Units	Convenience Sq.M Gross Floorspace	Comparison Sq.M Gross Floorspace
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	Principal Centre	257	10,195	16,152
Dowlais (Victoria St)	Local Centre	18	303	296
Dowlais Local Centre	Local Centre	7	203	286
Gurnos	Local Centre	12	678	147
Cefn Coed	Local Centre	17	377	209
Brecon Road/Morgantown	Local Centre	21	513	89
Troedyrhiw	Local Centre	27	624	380
Aberfan	Local Centre	14	216	50
Treharris	Local Centre	36	955	208
Town Centre Total		**409**	**14,064**	**17,817**
Out-of-centre stores		48	16,824	44,164
TOTAL		**457**	**30,088**	**61,981**

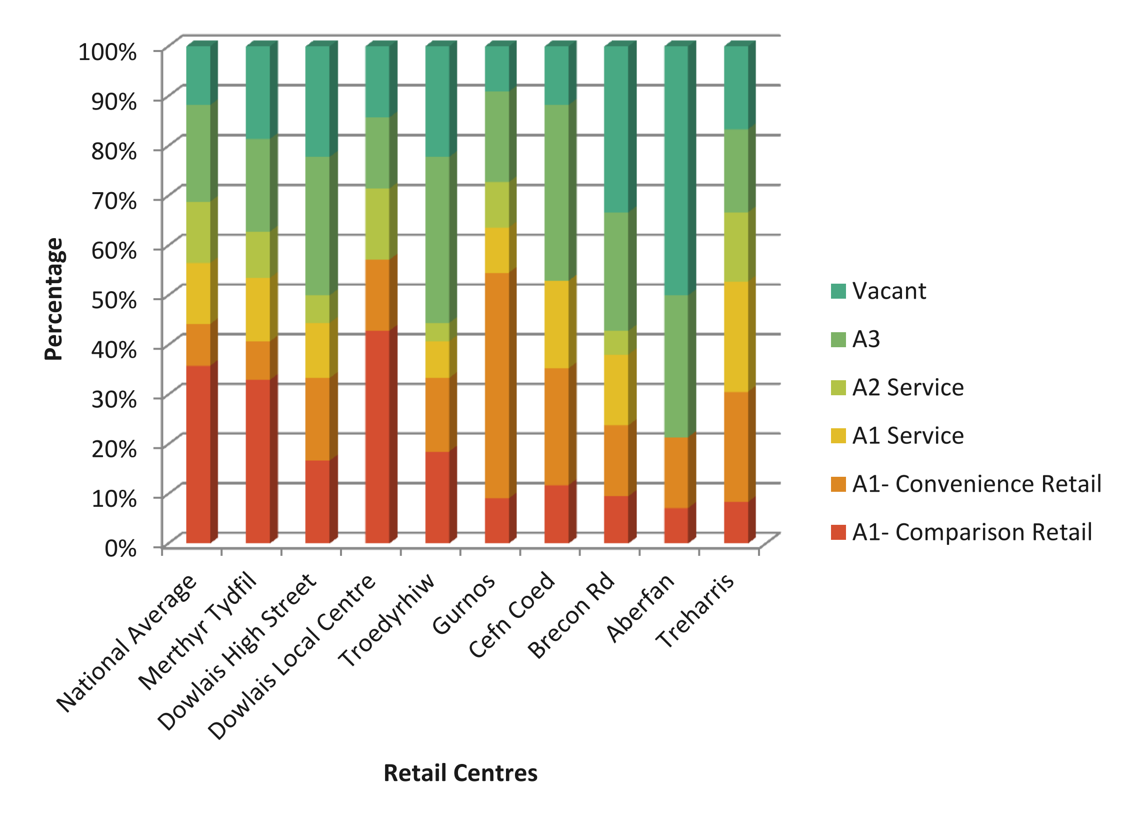
Source: MTCB land use, GOAD, VOA and ORC's StorePoint.

2.18 Table 2.3 demonstrates that in terms of the number of units and the amount of retail floorspace, Merthyr Tydfil town centre is the principal centre within MTCB. Over 70% of comparison goods retail floorspace is concentrated within out-of-centre stores located on retail parks. Based on Lichfields' experience this distribution of comparison floorspace is unusual. Normally retail parks would account for 20%-30% of comparison retail floorspace.

2.19 The other designated centres are small, ranging from 7 units at Dowlais Local Centre to 36 at Treharris. As demonstrated by the convenience sales floorspace for the smaller centres, there are no large food stores present. These centres include small scale convenience shops that provide top up shopping for local residents, rather than main/bulk food shopping facilities.

2.20 Figure 2.3 shows the proportional mix of Class A uses within the nine centres. It should be noted that smaller centres tend to have a lower proportion of Class A1 comparison shops than larger centres, and conversely a higher proportion of convenience retailing and non-retail services, which reflect their different roles and position within the shopping hierarchy. Nevertheless the comparison with the UK national average data provides a useful benchmark.

Figure 2.3 Use Class Breakdown by Settlement



Source: Goad Plans and Lichfields Analysis

2.21 MTCB has 92,069 sq.m gross of Class A1 comparison and convenience goods floorspace. The convenience goods stores/shops provide 30,088 sq.m gross, with a net sales area of 21,819 sq.m net as shown in Table 9 in Appendix 2. This sales floorspace includes 5,955 sq.m net of comparison goods sales within food stores (27% of total sales floorspace).

2.22 Comparison goods shops within the designated centres provide 17,817 sq.m gross. Based on an average net to gross ratio of 65% the net sales area is estimated to be 11,581 sq.m net. Taking into account comparison sales in Tesco and Iceland this increases to 13,200 sqm net. Out of centre retail warehouses provide 44,164 sq.m gross. Based on an average gross to net ratio of 85% and taking into account comparison floorspace in foodstores the net sales area is estimated to be around 39,000 sq.m net.

2.23 The mix of uses in the centres varies significantly. Merthyr Tydfil town centre is most similar to the national average. Most of the other centres have a low proportion of comparison goods shopping. The convenience offer in the smaller centres is strong, indicating that these centres serve local needs.

2.24 The vacancy rate varies between 9% in the Gurnos to 50% in Aberfan. However the low number of units within these centres should be taken into account when analysing these figures.

2.25 A more detailed audit of the town centre is contained within Appendix 5.

3.0 Retail Need Assessment

3.1 This section assesses the quantitative and qualitative need for new retail floorspace within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough (MTCB) in the period from 2016 to 2031. The approach follows the key steps identified within Planning Policy Wales and adopts economic growth forecasts widely used for development plan preparation and accepted as robust at planning inquiries and local plan examinations. This section also considers the changes in the retail sector nationally and the potential implications for MTCB.

3.2 Paragraph 10.2.1 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) indicates that local planning authorities should develop through their development plans a clear strategy and policies for retail development which seek to achieve vibrant, attractive and viable retail and commercial centres.

3.3 Paragraph 10.3.1 of PPW states that development plans should allocate sites for retail and commercial centre uses where there is assessed to be a quantitative or qualitative need and where size and scale are in accordance with the retail strategy. Sites should be identified using the sequential approach and, where appropriate, assessed for their impact on other centres.

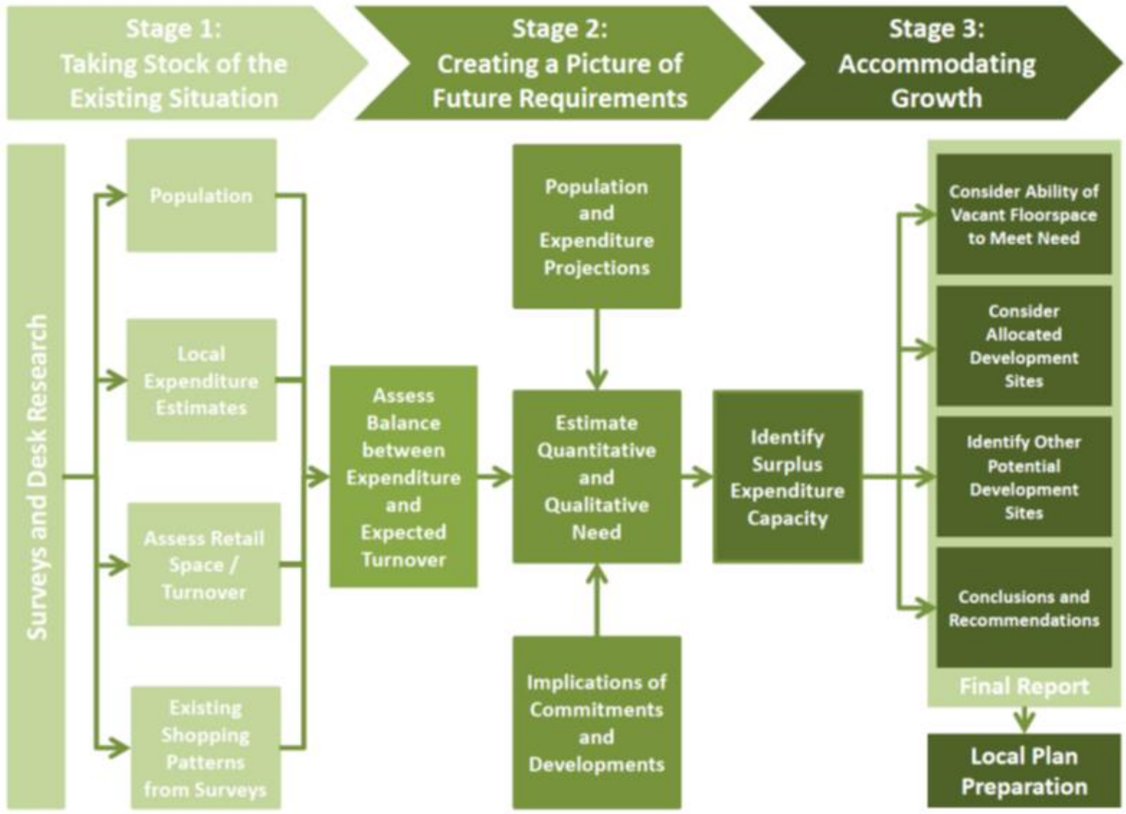
3.4 Paragraph 5.2 of Technical Advice Note 4 (Retail and Commercial Development) states that if a need has been identified then the local planning authority will need to express through their retail strategy and development plan allocations how that need should be accommodated. This can be through the provision of one large store or over several smaller stores. Paragraph 5.3 continues to state that if the need requires new sites to be identified then local planning authorities should seek to identify sites within established retail and commercial centres depending on the scale of provision. If after investigation suitable sites within established centres are not available local authorities should consider whether a centre's boundaries should be extended in order to meet the need identified before out of centre sites are considered.

3.5 This section objectively assesses the quantitative and qualitative scope for new retail floorspace in MTCB. It sets out the methodology adopted for this analysis and provides a quantitative capacity analysis in terms of levels of spending for convenience and comparison shopping. The methodology is summarised in Figure 3.1 below. A qualitative assessment of the range and scale of existing shopping facilities has been undertaken as part of the analysis of town centres in Appendix 5.

Study Area

3.6 The quantitative analysis is broadly based on the study area defined in the 2010 Retail Study, although it has been extended further north to include parts of Brecon, in order to explore MTCB's draw as a shopping and leisure destination from this area. The amended Study Area covers the primary catchment areas of the centres in MTCB. The study area has been sub-divided into 7 zones for more detailed analysis as shown in Appendix 1, based on postcode sectors.

Figure 3.1 Study Methodology



Source: Lichfields

Retail Trends

3.7 The economic downturn had a significant impact on the retail and leisure sectors. A large number of national operators failed (e.g. BHS, Comet, HMV, JJB Sports, Jessops, Clinton Cards, Woolworths, MFI, Land of Leather, Borders, Game, Firetrap, Peacocks, La Senza, Past Times, Barratts and Habitat), leaving major voids within centres and retail parks. BHS and Austin Reed are recent operators to experience difficulties, which suggest market conditions are still challenging.

3.8 Many town centre development schemes were delayed and the demand for traditional bulky goods retail warehouse operators has been affected. This is evident in Merthyr Tydfil town centre where the bus station redevelopment has been slow to materialise despite the LDP allocation. Even some of the main food store operators have seen a reduction in growth, with discount operators taking market share from the main operators.

3.9 Assessing future expenditure levels within this study needs to take into account the likely speed of the economic recovery along with the new economic uncertainty of Brexit, particularly in the short term (2017 to 2021). Careful consideration is needed to establish the appropriate level of expenditure growth to be adopted over the plan period. This study takes a long term view for the plan period recognising the cyclical nature of expenditure growth. Trends in population growth, home shopping/internet sales and growth in turnover efficiency also need to be carefully considered and a balanced approach taken. An overview of national tends within the retail sector is set out below.

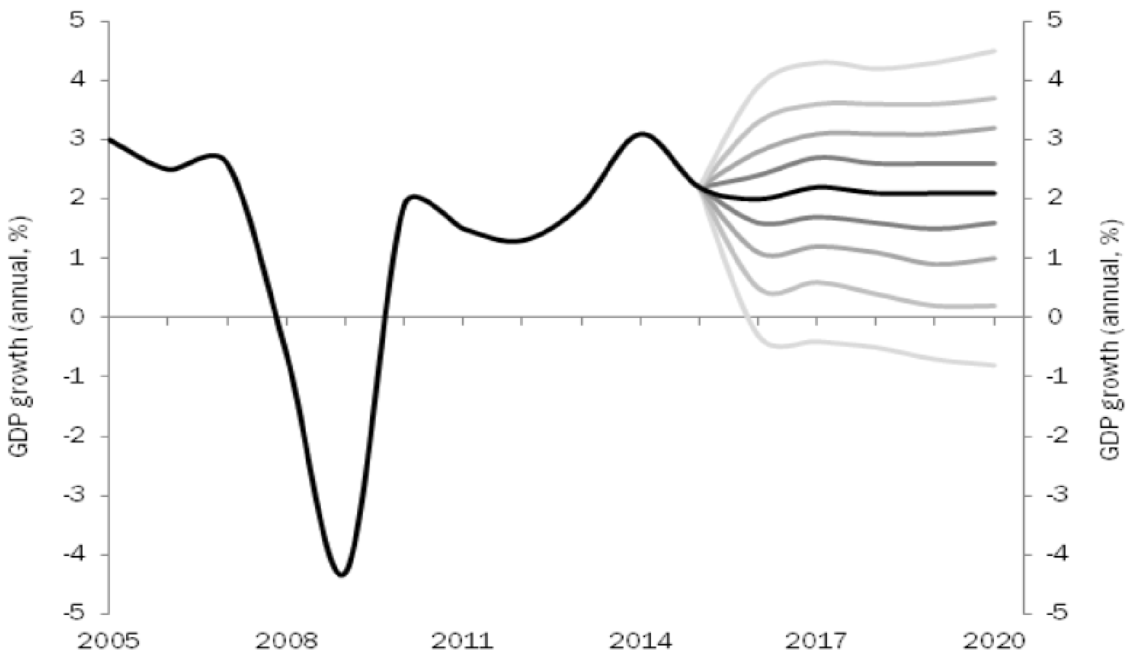
Expenditure Growth

3.10 Historic retail trends indicate that expenditure has consistently grown in real terms in the past, generally following a cyclical growth trend. The underlying trend shows consistent growth and this trend is expected to continue in the future. However the impact of the EU Referendum is expected to result in slower growth in the short term.

3.11 Figure 3.2 shows the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR) forecast for GDP up to 2020. After the recession in 2008, growth rebounded and from 2012 grew to the high of 3% in 2014 and 2% in 2015. The OBR forecasts that growth will be slightly above 2% per year from 2016 onwards. In terms of future growth the black line has a 50% probability of coming to fruition. The grey lines show the probability splay i.e. 60%, 70%, 80% and 90% around the projection line.

3.12 In the past, expenditure growth has fuelled growth in retail floorspace, including major out-of-centre development, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s. The speed of recovery from the economic downturn has been slow. The high pre-recession growth rates are unlikely to be achieved in the short term, but the underlying trend over the medium and long terms is expected to lead to a need for further modern retail floorspace, even allowing for continued growth in home shopping and turnover efficiencies. These national trends are anticipated to be mirrored in MTCB.

Figure 3.2 Forecast GDP Growth to 2020



Source: ONS, OBR

3.13 For convenience goods, Experian's forecasts (November 2016) anticipate limited growth (0.1% per annum) from 2024. For comparison goods, higher levels of growth are expected in the future (3% per annum from 2019), still at a lower rate than previous pre-recession trends (8% per annum between 1997 and 2007). Historically comparison goods expenditure has grown significantly more than convenience goods expenditure, and Experian's latest national growth rate recommendations are consistent with these past trends.

3.14 Experian's latest expenditure projections take into account the implications of the EU referendum result, indicating this has created major uncertainties regarding the long term outlook for the UK economy. Experian's baseline forecasts reflect a small downgrade in the UK's long term projections for trade, investment and GDP. However the revisions to the consumer spending forecast are minimal, with long term growth expected to remain around 2.3%, underpinned by rises in population and household incomes. Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 14 (November 2016) states:

"The expansion in comparison goods volumes, averaging 3.2% per head to 2035, will be less buoyant than in the three decades to 2015 as key factors that boosted growth, notably the globalisation that subdued audio-visual prices significantly, will not be repeated to the same degree.

Convenience goods recorded a marginal decline in the decade leading up to the 2008 recession. Volumes were severely hit during the recession and its aftermath..... Our central forecast has a renewed squeeze in convenience goods in the short term, before sales per head growth settles at 0.1% a year from 2019 to 2035."

3.15 Low expenditure growth and deflationary pressures (i.e. price cutting) in the non-food sector have had an impact on the high street in the last few years. As a result of these trends, the national average shop vacancy rate (based on Goad Plan data) has increased from around 10% in 2005 to about 14% in 2012. Vacancy rates have recovered to 11.2% in 2016.

3.16 There were 48 vacant Class A shop units within Merthyr Tydfil town centre in January 2017 which represents a vacancy rate of 18.6% which is much higher than the GOAD national average[1] (11.2%). There are 34 vacant Class A shop units in the other centres which on average is a vacancy rate of 22.4%, although there is a concentration of 7 (50%) vacant units in Aberfan. Gurnos Local Centre is the only centre that has a vacancy rate below the GOAD national average although Cefn Coed Centre is only slightly above the average. These figures suggest retail centres within MTCB are struggling to attract new operators and investment. This suggests supply (floorspace) currently exceeds demand (expenditure/operator requirements).

New Forms of Retailing

3.17 New forms of retailing (multi-channel shopping) have continued to grow. Home/electronic shopping has increased with the growth in the use of personal computers, smart phones and the internet. Click and collect shopping has become more popular. The future growth of multi-channel retailing including home computing, internet connections and interactive TV will continue to have an effect on retailing in the high street and from traditional stores. Trends within this sector will have implications for retailing within MTCB, because they will affect the amount of expenditure growth that will be potentially available to support new development and the strength of operator demand for new floorspace.

Special Forms of Trading/Home Shopping

3.18 Recent trends suggest continued strong growth in this sector. Experian's Retail Planner Briefing Note 14 (November 2016) states:

"The strong increase in online shopping in the past decade has lifted the share of special forms of trading (SFT) to a level where it now accounts for close to 15% of total retail sales.

The rising share of internet sales in total retail transactions dominates the picture of SFT. Internet sales' share of total retail sales stood at 11.7% in mid-2016 against 4.7% in June 2008...

[1] Calculated by Lichfields (Based on December 2016 data)

…non-store retailing continues to grow rapidly, outpacing traditional forms of spending. We retain our assumption that non-store retailing will increase at a faster pace than total retail sales well into the long term. There were 59.3 million internet users in the UK (representing 91.6% of the population) in November 2015 according to Internet World Stats. So growth of the internet user base will be less of a driver than in the past decade. But growth momentum will be sustained as new technology such as browsing and purchasing through mobile phones and the development of interactive TV shopping boost internet retailing. We expect that the SFT market share will continue to increase over the forecast period, although the pace of e-commerce growth will moderate markedly after about 2022. Our forecast has the SFT share of total retail sales reaching 18.6% by 2022 rising to 20.4% by the mid-2030s."

3.19 This retail update makes an allowance for future growth in e-tailing based on Experian projections. It will be necessary to monitor the amount of sales attributed to home shopping in the future in order to review future policies and development allocations. The implications of these trends on the demand for retail space have been carefully considered. Some retailers operate on-line sales from their traditional retail premises e.g. food store operators and click and collect operations (i.e. John Lewis), therefore growth in on-line sales may not always mean there is a reduction in the need for retail floorspace. Given the likelihood that multi-channel shopping is likely to grow at a faster pace than total retail expenditure, the retail study assessment has adopted relatively cautious growth projections for retail expenditure, and allowance has been made for retailers to increase their turnover density, due to growth in home shopping and click and collect.

Trade Counters

3.20 The Experian retail expenditure data adopted in this report does not include trade sales made through trade counter businesses. The retail capacity analysis does not take into account trade counters e.g. Pant Industrial Estate. In reality these trade counters are also used by the general public as well as trade customers, and these facilities make a contribution towards meeting the needs of customers, particularly for bulky comparison goods (e.g. Travis Perkins) and cash and carry. However activity is offset by trade sales main through retail businesses. For example B&Q has a trade counter.

3.21 The omission of trade counter sales expenditure and facilities from the capacity analysis therefore is unlikely to alter the retail floorspace projections. Trade Counter Sales in MTCB are concentrated at Pant Industrial Estate and Merthyr Tydfil Industrial Park in Pentrebach.

Food Store Operators

3.22 In addition to new forms of retailing, operators have responded to changes in customers' requirements. A number of proposed larger food stores have not been implemented across the country. There has been a move away from larger stores to smaller formats. Retailers have also changed their trading formats to include smaller store formats capable of being accommodated within town and local centres (such as the Tesco Express/Metro, Sainsbury's Central/ Local store and Marks and Spencer's Simply Foods formats). The number of Tesco Express, Sainsbury's Local and Little Waitrose stores has increased significantly during the last decade. To date these small convenience stores have not emerged in MTCB.

3.23 The expansion of European discount food operators Aldi and Lidl has been rapid during the last decade. This trend is evident in Merthyr Tydfil town centre with Aldi and Lidl stores. The Aldi offer was strengthened in 2005 by a 320 sq.m extension and a full refurbishment in 2016. The discount sector is actively expanding and may look for further opportunities in MTCB in the future. The Lidl at Penygarnddu was demolished and rebuilt[2] in 2016 to increase the floorspace from 739 sq.m to 1,286 sq.m net.

Comparison Retailers

3.24 Comparison retailers have also responded to market conditions. The bulky goods warehouse sector has rationalised, including a number of mergers and failures, and scaled down store sizes. Other traditional high street retailers often seek large out-of-centre stores, for example Boots, Next, TK Maxx and Poundstretcher. Matalan has also opened numerous discount clothing stores across the UK. Sports clothing retail warehouses including Decathlon have also expanded out-of-centre.

3.25 The demand for premises within the bulky goods sector, i.e. furniture, carpets, electrical and DIY goods, has been particularly weak during and after the recession. This has led to voids on retail warehouse parks and proposals to extend the range of goods sold to non-bulky goods.

3.26 The retail warehouse sector is well represented on large retail parks in MTCB, i.e. Cyfarthfa Retail Park, Pentrebach Retail Park and Dowlais Top Retail Park (see Appendix 5 for a list of current operators). Cyfarthfa appears to be trading well with only two vacant units out of 24. This represents a vacancy rate of 8.2%. One unit is located on the recent extension to Cyfarthfa, Cyfarthfa North. Pentrebach and Dowlais Top have no vacant units.

3.27 Within town centres, many high street multiple comparison retailers have changed their format. For over a decade, high street national multiples have increasingly sought larger modern shop units (over 200 sq. m) with an increasing polarisation of activity into the larger national, regional and sub-regional centres, e.g. Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Bristol. In general, operator demand for space has decreased during the recession and, of those national multiples looking for space, many prefer to locate in larger centres. Much of the occupier demand in smaller centres has come from the discount and charity sectors or non-retail services, rather than higher order comparison goods shopping.

3.28 The continuation of these trends will influence future operator requirements in MTCB with smaller vacant units becoming less attractive for new multiple occupiers, and retailers increasingly looking to relocate into larger units in higher order centres. However, smaller vacant units could still be attractive to independent traders and non-retail services.

Charity and Discount Shops

3.29 The charity shop sector has grown steadily over the past 20 years and there is no sign this trend will end. In many centres, charity shops have occupied vacated shop premises during the recession. This trend is evident in Merthyr Tydfil town centre with 8.2% of the comparison offer made up of charity shops. Charity shops can often afford higher rents than small independent occupiers because of business rate discounts, therefore it does not follow that these charity shops will be replaced by traditional shops when the market recovers, particularly in secondary frontages. Charity shops in MTCB appear to be concentrated in Merthyr Tydfil town centre. A charity shop is located at Dowlais Local Centre but otherwise there are no charity shops in the local centres.

Non Retail Services

3.30 The growth of money lending/pay day loan shops and betting shops has also raised concerns amongst planning authorities, and in England has resulted in a change to permitted

[2] Planning Application Reference: P/15/0014

development rights in order to control the growth of these uses in town centres. However in Wales the uses remain in Use Class A2. Four of the national bookmakers are represented in Merthyr Tydfil town centre and these are also located in prominent locations. Coral is located in the Primary Shopping Area. Betting shops can attract people into town centres and they can contribute towards the vitality and viability of the centre.

3.31 Recent changes to Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 4 (Retail and Commercial Development) may also have an impact on town centres. These measures allow for greater flexibility for non-retail uses within town centres. The most recent iteration of PPW acknowledges that A1 uses are not the only attractions within town centres. Paragraph 10.1.5 states:

"Although retailing (A1 uses) should continue to underpin retailing and commercial centres, it is only one of the factors which contribute towards their vibrancy. Policies should encourage a diversity of uses in centres. Other appropriate retail and commercial centre uses are financial and professional services (A2), food and drink (A3), offices (B1), hotels (C1), educational and other non-residential establishments (D1), leisure (D2) and certain other sui generis uses such as launderettes and theatres."

Para 10.3.3 continues:

"Retail opportunities should continue to underpin retail and commercial centres. However, vibrant and viable centres are distinguished by a diversity of activity and use which should contribute towards a centre's well-being and success, whilst also reducing the need to travel."

3.32 Paragraph 10.3.6 states that an over emphasis on A1 uses in either primary or secondary areas may undermine a centre's prospects, potentially leading to a high vacancy rate. It states that:

"In such circumstances local planning authorities should consider how non-A1 uses may play a greater role in retail and commercial centres to increase diversity and reduce vacancy levels."

3.33 There is therefore an acknowledgement that non-retail uses are important in town centres especially in centres where there is a high vacancy rate. The introduction of these complimentary uses may provide a welcome boost to the vitality and viability of a centre.

3.34 Section 6 provides an analysis of the LDP town centre policies to understand how it aligns with the recent amendment to PPW and TAN4.

Conclusion on retail trends

3.35 The trends highlighted above are not new and have been affecting the high street for many years. In response to these trends, town centres have changed and diversified. The food and beverage, leisure and non-retail service sectors have been successful in occupying space no longer attractive to retail tenants. There have been cyclical trends in vacancy rates reflecting the macro economic trends, but in most cases town centres recovered during periods of stronger growth. The high street is more resilient than many commentators give it credit. Nevertheless there is evidence of high vacancy rates within MTCB, which suggests centres within the County Borough have struggled during difficult trading conditions.

3.36 Shopping behaviour will continue to change and the high street will need to continue to respond. All town centres will need to focus on the advantages they have over other forms of multi-channel shopping, for example using the internet as an extended shop window, click and collect facilities and providing a combined retail and leisure experience. There will always be demand for a day out.

Population and Expenditure

Price Base

3.37 All monetary values expressed in this study are at 2015 prices, consistent with Experian's base year expenditure figures for 2015 which is the most up to date information available.

Study Area

3.38 The adopted study area covers the catchment areas of centres, and a household telephone survey has been undertaken to quantify existing shopping and leisure patterns within these catchment areas. The study area previously adopted has been reviewed, and as a result an extended study area has been adopted i.e. extending further north towards Brecon.

3.39 The study area has been sub-divided into seven different zones as shown in Appendix 1, based on postcode sectors. MTCB is primarily located in Zone 1 and 2 although some peripheral areas with no significant population are located within other Zones.

Population

3.40 The projected population within the study area between 2016 to 2031 is set out in Table 1 in Appendix 2. Base year population data has been obtained from Experian for each zone based from the 2011 Census. The 2011 base year population for each zone has been projected forward up to 2031 based on the Welsh Government's 2014 population projections (released October 2016) for Zones 3 to 7. For Zones 1 and 2 which comprise the vast majority of the area of MTCBC we have used Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's LDP Preferred Strategy population projections.

3.41 The base year 2016 population within the study area is 313,538. This population is projected to increase to 316,105 by 2021, to 318,618 by 2026, and 320,399 in 2031. Population in Zones 1 and 2, which account for the majority of MTCB, is projected to increase from 64,529 to 69,415 between 2016 and 2031.Retail Expenditure

3.42 The level of available expenditure to support retailers is based on first establishing per capita levels of spending for the study area population. Experian's local consumer expenditure estimates for comparison and convenience goods for each of the study area zones for the year 2016 have been obtained.

3.43 Experian's EBS national expenditure information (Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 14 - November 2016) has been used to forecast expenditure within the study area. Experian's forecasts are based on an econometric model of disaggregated consumer spending. This model takes a number of macro-economic forecasts (chiefly consumer spending, incomes and inflation) and uses them to produce forecasts of consumer spending volumes, prices and value, broken down into separate categories of goods. The model incorporates assumptions about income and price elasticities.

3.44 Experian's EBS growth forecast rates for 2016 to 2018 reflect the current economic circumstances and post Brexit forecasts. Experian provides an appropriate growth rate for the short term (for convenience goods: 0% for 2016, -0.2% for 2017 and -0.9% for 2018; for comparison goods: +3.3% for 2016, +1.4% for 2017 and +1.0% for 2018).

3.45 In the longer term it is more difficult to forecast year on year changes in expenditure. Experian's longer term growth average forecasts have been adopted i.e. 0% per annum for convenience goods between 2019 and 2023, and 0.1% per annum after 2023. For comparison goods Experian recommends a growth rate of 3% per annum between 2019 and 2023, and 3.2% per annum after 2023.

3.46 These growth rates are relatively cautious when compared with past growth rates, but in our view represent realistic forecast for future growth. These growth figures relate to real growth and exclude inflation.

3.47 Special Forms of Trading (SFT) or non-store activity is included within Experian's Goods Based Expenditure (GBE) estimates. SFT includes other forms of retail expenditure not spent in shops e.g. mail order sales, some internet sales, vending machines, party plan selling, market stalls and door to door selling. SFT needs to be excluded from retail assessments because it relates to expenditure not spent in shops and does not have a direct relationship with the demand for retail floorspace. The growth in home computing, internet connections and interactive TV may lead to a growth in home shopping and may have effects on retailing in the high street. Experian provides projections for special forms of trading and e-tailing. This Experian information suggests that non-store retail sales in 2017 is:

- 10.7% of convenience goods expenditure; and
- 18.5% of comparison goods expenditure.

3.48 Experian predicts that these figures will increase in the future. However, Experian recognises that not all of this SFT expenditure should be excluded from a retail capacity analysis, because some of it relates to internet sales through traditional retail businesses, rather than internet companies. The turnover attributable to e-tail through retail businesses is included in the company average turnovers, and therefore expenditure figures should not exclude this expenditure. Experian has provided adjusted deductions for SFT and projections. These projections have been used to exclude only e-tail expenditure attributed to non-retail businesses, which will not directly impact on the demand for retail floorspace. The adjusted figures suggest that SFT sales in 2017 are:

- 3.2% of convenience goods expenditure; and
- 13.8% of comparison goods expenditure.

3.49 The projections provided by Experian suggest that these percentages will increase to 3.9% and 15.6% by 2021 respectively. In the longer term, the growth is predicted to fall or reverse slightly for comparison goods. The long term projections are 5% and 16.3% by 2031. These figures have been adopted in this assessment.

3.50 Home/electronic shopping has also emerged with the increasing growth in the use of personal computers and the internet. This study makes an allowance for future growth in e-tailing based on Experian projections. It will be necessary to monitor the amount of sales attributed to home shopping in the future in order to review future policies and development allocations.

3.51 On-line shopping has experienced rapid growth over the last 20 years, but in proportional terms the latest available data suggests it remains a relatively low percentage of total retail expenditure. Experian state that they expect that the SFT market share will continue to grow. Experian's forecasts suggest that the SFT share of total retail sales will reach 18.6% by 2022, rising to 20.4% by the mid-2030s.

3.52 The implications on the demand for retail space are unclear. For example, some retailers operate on-line sales from their traditional retail premises e.g. food store operators. As a result, growth in on-line sales may not always mean there is a reduction in the need for retail floorspace. Given the uncertainties relating to internet shopping and the likelihood that it will increase in proportional terms, this assessment has adopted relatively cautious growth projections for retail expenditure.

3.53 Table 2 in Appendix 2 sets out the forecast growth in spending per head for convenience goods within each zone in the study area up to 2031. Forecasts of comparison goods spending per capita are shown in Table 2 in Appendix 3. Forecasts of food and beverage spending per capita is shown in Table 2 in Appendix 4.

3.54 Table 3 in Appendix 2 sets out total convenience goods expenditure within the study area up to 2031 (population multiplied by average expenditure per capita). Forecasts of comparison goods spending are shown in Table 3 in Appendix 3. Forecasts of food and beverage spending are shown in Table 3 in Appendix 4.

3.55 As a consequence of population change, an increase SFT and a reduction in per capita spending, convenience goods spending within the study area is forecast to decrease by 0.33%% from £569.57 million in 2016 to £567.70 million in 2031, as shown in Table 3 in Appendix 2. Comparison goods spending is forecast to increase by 50.31% between 2016 and 2031, increasing from £680.26 million in 2016 to £1,022.49 million in 2031, as shown in Table 3 (Appendix 3). These figures relate to real growth and exclude inflation.

3.56 It should be noted that comparison goods spending is forecast to increase more than convenience spending as the amount spent on groceries does not necessarily increase proportionately with disposable income, whereas spending on non-food goods is more closely linked to income.

Market Shares/Penetration Rates

3.57 To assess the capacity for new retail floorspace, penetration rates are estimated for shopping facilities within the study area. The assessment of penetration rates are based on a range of factors but primarily information gathered through the December 2016 household survey.

3.58 The total turnover of shops within MTCB is estimated based on penetration rates. For convenience goods shopping turnover estimates are then compared to average company benchmark or average sales floorspace densities derived from Mintel's Retail Rankings and Supermarkets UK Report (November 2015), which provide an indication of how individual retail stores and centres are performing against expected turnover averages. This allows the identification of potential surplus or deficit capacity for retail sales floorspace.

3.59 The results of the household shopper questionnaire survey undertaken by NEMS in December 2016 have been used to estimate existing shopping patterns within the study area zones. The results are summarised in Appendix 6.

3.60 The results of the household shopper survey relating to main and top-up food and grocery shopping have been used to estimate existing convenience goods shopping patterns. The estimates of market share or penetration within each study area zone for convenience goods shopping are shown in Table 4 in Appendix 2. The market shares in Table 4 are a combined rate for both main and top up shopping based on a 70:30 split between main and top-up shopping.

3.61 The market shares for comparison goods shopping are shown in Table 4 in Appendix 3, and food and beverage (Class A3) are shown in Table 4 in Appendix 4.

Floorspace Benchmark Turnover Levels

3.62 Existing convenience goods retail sales floorspace within MTCB is over 15,800 sq.m net, as set out in Table 9 in Appendix 2. This floorspace figure excludes comparison sales floorspace within food stores. Comparison goods retail floorspace within MTCB is estimated to be around 54,500 sq.m net.

3.63 Company average turnover to sales floorspace densities are available for major food store operators and are compiled by Mintel. Company average sales densities (adjusted to exclude petrol and comparison sales and include VAT) have been applied to the sales area of the large food stores, and a benchmark turnover for each store has been calculated. This benchmark turnover is not necessarily the actual turnover of the food store, but it does provide a useful benchmark for assessing existing shopping patterns and the adequacy of current floorspace in quantitative terms.

3.64 The estimated convenience goods sales areas have been derived from a combination of the Institute of Oxford Retail Consultants (ORC) StorePoint database, GOAD Data, Valuation Office data and Lichfields' own on site surveys. Estimates for comparison sales floorspace within large food stores has been deducted, for consistency with the use of goods based expenditure figures.

3.65 Average sales densities are not widely available for small convenience shops, particularly independent retailers. Based on the mix of shops present in each centre within MTCB and Lichfields' experience of trading levels of small independent shops informed by household shopper surveys elsewhere, an average sales density of between £4,000 and £5,000 per sq.m net for convenience shops/stores in MTCB. The total benchmark turnover of identified convenience sales floorspace within MTCB is £153.3 million (Table 9 in Appendix 2).

3.66 Mintel's Retail Rankings provides company average sales density information for a selection of national comparison retailers. Based on Lichfields' experience, the average sales density for high street comparison retailers usually ranges between £5,000 to £8,000 per sq.m net. The average sales density for food and beverage outlets is usually around £5,000 per sq.m gross.

Existing Spending Patterns

3.67 The results of the household shopper questionnaire survey undertaken by NEMS in early December 2016 have been used to estimate existing shopping patterns within the study area zones. The tabulated results are summarised in Appendix 6.

Convenience Shopping

3.68 The results of the household shopper survey relating to main and top-up food and grocery shopping have been used to estimate existing convenience goods shopping patterns. The estimates of market share or penetration within each study area zone are shown in Table 4 in Appendix 2. The market shares are a combined rate for both main and top up shopping based on a 70:30 split between main and top-up shopping.

3.69 A summary of food and grocery shopping patterns is shown in Table 3.1. The survey results suggest nearly 85% of convenience goods expenditure is retained within the core zones (1 and 2). This is a high retention rate and is likely to be as a result of the wide range and choice of food stores in the County Borough. Zone 1 includes Merthyr Tydfil town centre and a number of large stores i.e. Asda, Aldi, Lidl and Tesco Extra. The only large food stores in Zone 2 are the M&S Simply Food at Cyfarthfa Shopping Centre and Co-op at Pentrebach. The main destination for Zone 1/2 residents is the Asda Superstore at Dowlais Top, followed by Tesco Extra in the town centre and Aldi on the edge of the town centre.

3.70 MTCB's market share in the study area as a whole is much lower at 24.9%. Other zones within the study area retain a high market share, which suggest most households use their local food stores store e.g. in Aberdare, Pontypridd, Blackwood/Bargoed, Ebbw Vale and Brecon. Over 7% of expenditure leaks from the study area, e.g. to large food stores in Cardiff, Talbot Green, Caerphilly or Cwmbran. There appears to be limited potential to increase MTCB's convenience goods market share.

3.71 The level of convenience goods expenditure attracted to shops/stores in MTCB is estimated to be £152.55 million as shown in Table 5 in Appendix 2, applying the market shares set out in Table 4. The main food stores in Merthyr Tydfil (Asda, Aldi, Tesco and Lidl) attract £119.69 million, 79% of MTCB total. Most of the expenditure (£134.45 million) is attracted to facilities in Zone 1, with only £18.1 million attracted to Zone 2.

Table 3.1 Convenience Goods Market Shares

Local Authority	Destination	Zone 1 and 2 (%)	All Zones (%)
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	Aldi, Merthyr	14.2	4.7
	Asda, Merthyr	25.4	7.8
	Lidl, Penygarnddu, Merthyr	4.2	1.4
	Tesco Extra, Merthyr	22.9	5.8
	Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	10.1	2.4
	Pentrebach	1.7	0.6
	Treharris	3.0	0.5
	Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	3.3	1.7
	Sub Total	**84.7**	**24.9**
Outside MTCB	Zone 2 (Outside MTCB)	1.5	0.3
	Zone 3 (Aberdare)	1.7	12.9
	Zone 4 (Pontypridd)	3.9	15.8
	Zone 5 (Blackwood/Bargoed)	3.8	19.2
	Zone 6 (Ebbw Vale)	0.4	14.1
	Zone 7 (Brecon)	0.1	5.3
	Other Outside Catchment Area	3.8	7.5
	Sub Total	**15.3**	**74.8**
	Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: NEMS Market Research

3.72 The total benchmark turnover of facilities in Zone 1 equates to £124.10 million (Table 9 in Appendix 2), compared with the actual 2016 turnover of £134.45 million. These figures suggest facilities in Zone 1 are trading on average8% above benchmark, and there is a surplus of convenience expenditure totalling £10.35 million. The total benchmark turnover of Zone 2 equates to £29.2 million, compared with an actual 2016 turnover of only £18.1 million. These figures suggest facilities in Zone 2 are trading on average 38% below benchmark, and there is a convenience expenditure deficit of -£11.1 million. Overall within Zones 1 and 2 combined there is an expenditure deficit of -£0.75 million.

Comparison Shopping

3.73 A summary of comparison goods shopping patterns is shown in Table 3.2. The survey results suggest around 73% of comparison goods expenditure is retained within the core zones (1 and 2). This is a reasonably high retention rate, recognising this area falls within Cardiff's regional catchment. The main comparison goods attractions in the core zones (1 and 2) are Merthyr Tydfil town centre (31.6%), Cyfarthfa Retail Park (36.1%) and Cardiff (17.2%). The retention rate for comparison goods (73%) is less than that for convenience goods (85%). This reflects the propensity of customers to do food and grocery shopping locally, whilst for comparison shopping, customers are more likely to shop around and travel longer distances to visit larger centres (primarily Cardiff) that have more range and choice of shops. Cyfarthfa Retail Park has a reasonable market share (25.8%) in the study area as a whole, which indicates this destination serves a wider catchment area, extending well beyond MTCB.

3.74 Within the study area as a whole 61% of the comparison goods expenditure is spent outside of MTCB, but this is because MTCB is only a small part of the study area. Expenditure leakage from the study area is about 32%, of which the majority (18.8%) relates to Cardiff. As indicated earlier Cardiff is ranked 9th for UK retail centres and has a significant draw for comparison goods spending.

Table 3.2 Comparison Market Shares (All Zones)

Destination	Zone 1 & 2 (%)	All Zones (%)
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	31.6	11.4
Cyfarthfa Retail Park	36.1	25.8
Pentrebach Retail Park	0.7	0.6
Dowlais Top Retail Park	2.1	0.6
Zone 1 (excluding Merthyr TC and Dowlais Top RP)	1.0	0.3
Zone 2 (excluding Cyfarthfa and Pentrebach RP)	1.5	0.5
Sub Total	**73.0**	**39.2**
Cardiff	17.2	18.8
Zone 3 (Aberdare)	0.8	4.4
Zone 4 (Pontypridd)	3.0	9.1
Zone 5 (Blackwood/Bargoed)	1.2	7.0
Zone 6 (Ebbw Vale)	0.3	5.8
Zone 7 (Brecon)	0.1	2.8
Other outside study area	4.5	13.0
Sub Total	**27.1**	**60.9**
Total	**100.1**[3]	**100.1**

Source: NEMS Market Research

3.75 The level of comparison goods expenditure attracted to shops/stores in MTCB is estimated to be £291.52 million as shown in Table 5 in Appendix 3, applying the market shares set out in Table 5. Cyfarthfa Retail Park attracts £201.23 million, i.e. 69% of the MTCB total. Merthyr Tydfil town centre attracts £76.90 million (26%).

3.76 The average sales density for existing comparison goods sales floorspace in MTCB (around 52,600 sq.m net) is £5,785 per sq.m net, as shown in Table 3.1. The sales density within the retail parks is marginally lower, because large bulky goods retail warehouses tend to trade at a much lower sales density than other comparison stores.

Table 3.3 Average Sales Density 2016 (£ per sq.m net)

	Approximate Sales Floorspace Sq.M Net	Average Sales Density
Designated town centres	13,200	£6,195
Out-of-centre retail parks	39,000	£5,377
Total	**52,200**	**£5,786**

Source: Table 5 in Appendix 3

[3] Figures may not add up due to rounding.

3.77 Based on Lichfields' recent experience across the UK average sales densities for comparison floorspace can vary significantly. Average sales densities around or above £7,000 per sq.m net are usually only achieved by very successful shopping centres. Smaller centre, usually where the property costs are much lower, do not normally achieve these high sales densities. Average sales densities for most centres of a reasonable size (comparable with Merthyr Tydfil town centre) of between £4,000 to £6,000 per sq.m net are generally achieved.

3.78 Overall trading levels are reasonable in MTCB. Existing floorspace appears to be trading satisfactorily in difficult market conditions. There is no evidence to suggest existing comparison sales floorspace is over-trading, or that there is surplus comparison expenditure available to support new development at present.

Future Retail Potential

Capacity for Convenience Goods Floorspace

3.79 The total level of convenience goods expenditure available for shops in the County Borough between 2016 and 2031 is summarised in Table 10 (Appendix 2). Convenience expenditure available to shopping facilities in MTCB is expected to increase from £152.55 million in 2016 to £156.45 million in 2031. This increase is due to population growth in MTCB although the increase is limited due to Experian's convenience goods expenditure forecasts shows a decrease in expenditure per person between 2016 and 2031.

3.80 Table 10 subtracts the benchmark turnover of existing floorspace and from available expenditure to calculate the amount of surplus/deficit expenditure. Within MTCB there is a small existing expenditure deficit of -£0.75 million convenience goods expenditure at 2016. The deficit expenditure is converted into a floorspace estimate based on an assumed average sales density figure of £11,000 per sq.m, the approximate average turnover density of the main food supermarket operators (Aldi, Asda, Lidl, Morrison's, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose). On this basis there is a small over-supply of floorspace at 2016 i.e. 68 sq.m net (98 sq.m gross). These figures indicate there is a more than adequate supply of convenience goods sales floorspace within MTCB in 2016.

3.81 The convenience goods expenditure deficit is projected to increase to 2021 (-£1.51m) but will then change to a surplus in 2026 and 2031 of £0.37m and £3.15m respectively. These projections suggest there is a very small quantitative capacity for further convenience goods retail floorspace over latter stages of the plan period.

Capacity for Comparison Goods Floorspace

3.82 As indicated earlier, the retention rate for comparison goods (73%) in zones 1 and 2 is lower than for convenience goods (85%). The lower level of comparison expenditure retention is due to the strength of competing comparison goods facilities in nearby authorities, in particular Cardiff. The proposed Trago Mills development (now under construction) will help to increase MTCB's draw of comparison goods expenditure across the study area and will draw trade from further afield.

3.83 Future comparison goods market shares have been adjusted to take the Trago Mills development into account. The Trago Mills outlet is expected to have a net sales area of 17,995 sq.m. The Trago Mills company average sales density is £3,318 per sq.m net (source: Mintel Retail Ranking). The expected turnover of Trago Mills is £59.7 million. This outlet is expected to have wide trade draw and is expected to be trading by the Spring of 2018[4]. Lichfields has

[4] http://visit.trago.co.uk/our-stores-1-w.asp

assumed that about 25% of its trade will come from MTCB (Zones 1 and 2); 50% will come from the remainder of the study areas and 25% will come from beyond the study area. The adjusted market shares area shown in Table 6 in Appendix 3. The Trago Mills development is expected to increase MTCB's overall market share of comparison expenditure within the study area from 42.9% in 2016 to 47.2% in 2021.

3.84 Comparison goods shopping patterns are projected to 2021, 2026 and 2031 with the Trago Mills store in Tables 7, 8 and 9 in Appendix 3. The results are summarised in Table 10. For the purposes of this capacity assessment, the existing comparison goods floorspace is estimated to be trading at equilibrium in 2016 (i.e. satisfactory levels). Table 10 assumes that the turnover of comparison floorspace will increase in real terms in the future. A growth rate of 2% per annum is adopted, and this growth is required to maintain the health and viability of town centres, as recommended by Experian (Retail Planner Briefing Note 14 – November 2016). Trends indicate that comparison retailers historically will achieve some growth in trading efficiency. This is a function of spending growing at faster rates than new floorspace provision and retailers' ability to absorb real increases in their costs by increasing their turnover to floorspace ratio. The projected turnover of existing floorspace is subtracted from the expenditure projections to provide an estimate surplus/deficit expenditure.

3.85 Trago Mills will create a comparison goods expenditure deficit of -£27.85 million in 2021. The turnover of existing comparison goods floorspace is projected to increase marginally from £290.52 million in 2016 to £294 million between 2016 and 2021, and will not achieve the expected 2% per annum growth in trading efficiency.

3.86 By 2026, future growth reduces the expenditure deficit to -£7.16 million. Long term growth generates a surplus of £22.63 million in 2031. The comparison goods expenditure surplus is converted into net comparison sales floorspace projections at Table 10 in Appendix 3, adopting an average sales density of £6,000 per sq.m net in 2016, which is projected to grow by 2% in the future due to improved turnover efficiency. The surplus expenditure at 2031 (£22.63 million) could support 2,802 sq.m net of sales floorspace (3,736 sq.m gross).

Qualitative Need for Retail Floorspace

3.87 The analysis above quantifies the theoretical capacity to support new retail floorspace within MTCB, based on the population and expenditure projections. The qualitative need for retail facilities also needs to be considered. Qualitative need can be assessed through consideration of the following factors:

- the diversity of uses and deficiencies or 'gaps' in existing provision;
- consumer choice and competition;
- levels of expenditure retention and leakage;
- overtrading, congestion and overcrowding of existing stores;
- location specific needs such as underserved markets; and
- the quality of existing provision.

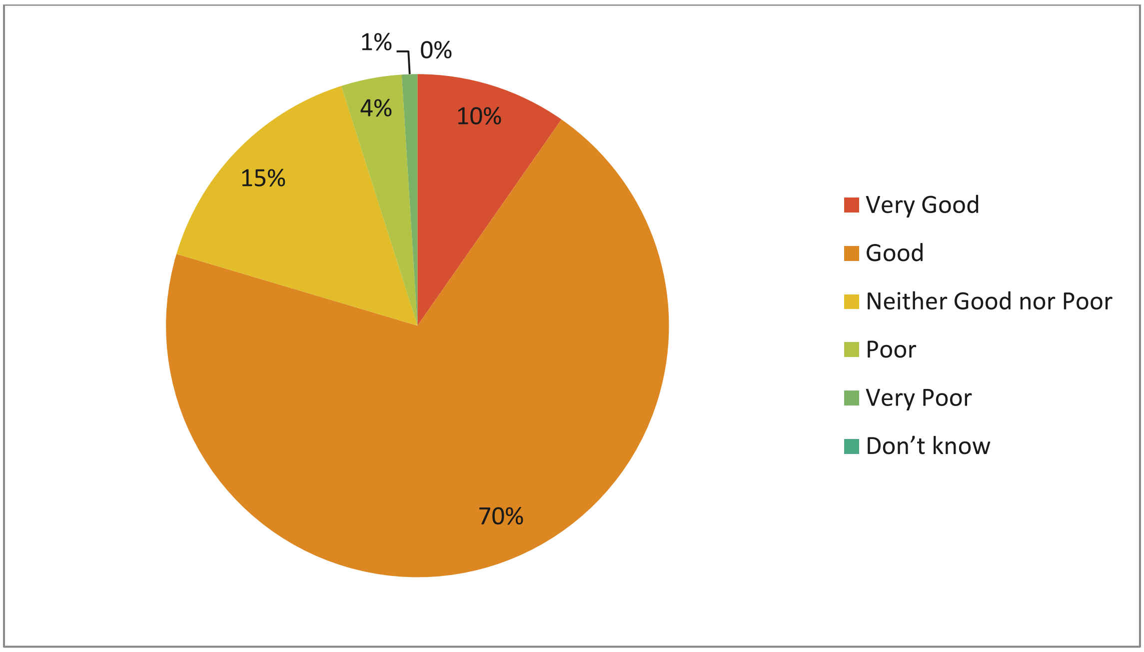
Convenience Shopping

3.88 Most households undertake two types of food and grocery shopping trips i.e. a weekly or less frequent main or bulk shopping trip and more regular top-up shopping trips. The availability of a wide range of products and free car parking are important requirements for bulk food shopping trips. Large supermarkets or superstores are the usual destination for these types of main shopping trip. Accessibility and convenience are more important for top up shopping trips.

3.89 Merthyr Tydfil town centre as well as the local centres of Cefn Coed, Dowlais, Brecon Road and Gurnos are located in Zone 1. Cyfarthfa Retail Park, whilst in Zone 2 is in close proximity. Residents in MTCB have good access to six large food stores that are suitable for main and bulk food shopping i.e. Tesco Extra, Asda, Co-op, Lidl, Aldi and Marks & Spencer. These large stores are supported by smaller supermarkets comprising two Iceland stores and a Farmfoods store.

3.90 The retention rate of convenience expenditure within Zones 1 and 2 is high (85%). The Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre visitor survey asked respondents to rate the size/quality of supermarkets. Around 80% of respondents said that the size and quality of supermarkets were "good" or "very good". No respondents said that they would like to see an improvement in food store provision. This suggests local people are satisfied with the quality of convenience shops within the centre and that there is no qualitative need for additional convenience goods floorspace. The results are summarised in the graph below:

Figure 3.3 Comment on size and quality of supermarkets



Source: NEMS Market Research Town Centre Survey

Comparison Shopping

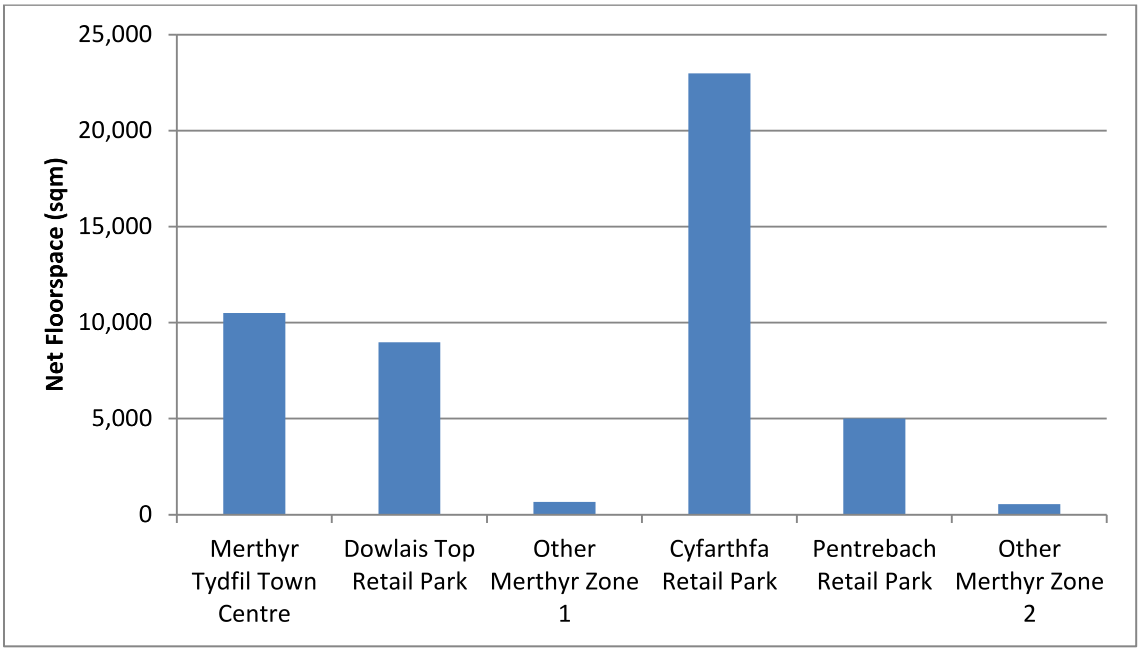
3.91 As indicated in Section 2, Cardiff is the main comparison centre in the sub-region and is categorised as having an "Upper Middle" market position, catering for a wide customer base. Merthyr Tydfil town centre is categorised as having a "Lower Middle" market position, which suggests it caters predominantly for less affluent customers.

3.92 Within Merthyr Tydfil town centre, the eight local centres and the retail parks there are 136 comparison units. These provide a total comparison goods sales floorspace of over 48,500 sq.m net. This doesn't take into account comparison floorspace in food stores (estimated to be 5,955 sq.m net). Trago Mills will increase the comparison goods sale floorspace by 17,955 sq.m net.

3.93 Figure 3.4 demonstrates that the majority of comparison floorspace is focused at Cyfarthfa Retail Park, with Merthyr Tydfil town centre and Dowlais Top Retail Park following in second and third respectively. The local centres have a limited amount of comparison units reflecting their local role in the retail hierarchy. Within Cyfarthfa, Dowlais Top and Pentrebach the comparison offer is dominated by national retailers trading from large format stores. Within

Merthyr Tydfil town centre there is a combination of independent and national retailers. The units here are generally smaller than at the retail parks.

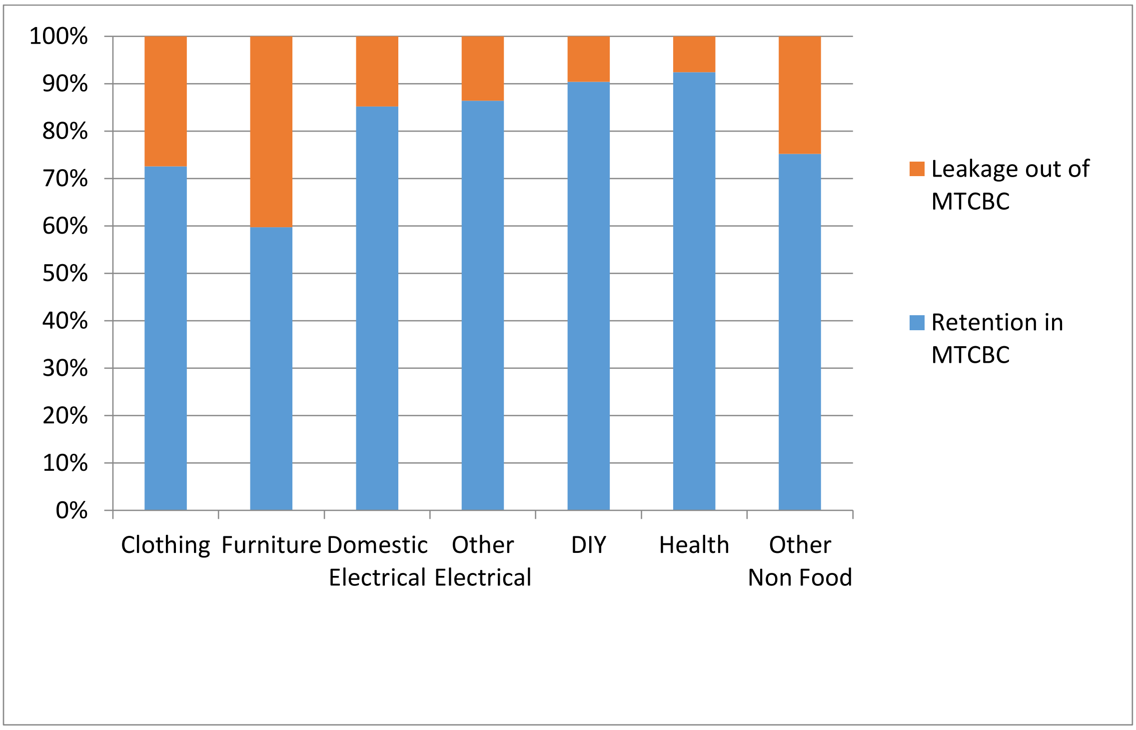
Figure 3.4 Distribution of Comparison Sales Floorspace (excluding sales within food stores)



Source: MTCB land use survey, VOA and Lichfields

3.94 The level of comparison goods expenditure retention within MTCB (zones 1 and 2) for different product categories is shown in Figure 3.5. There is a reasonably high level of expenditure retention for all product categories. The lowest level of retention is for furniture products (around 60%). This could be explained by the absence of some national furniture brands such as IKEA, Dunelm Mill, Harveys/Bensons for Beds, The Range, John Lewis and Oak Furniture Land. Cardiff attracts most market share of the furniture expenditure leakage from MTCB. This leakage is expected to reduce significantly with the new Trago Mills outlet.

Figure 3.5 Comparison Expenditure Retention/Leakage within MTCB (Zone 1 and 2)



Source: NEMS Market Research Household Survey Results 2016

3.95 In summary, comparison goods retail provision is reasonably strong in MTCB and residents are adequately served, recognising Cardiff's regional catchment area extends across MTCB. Residents have an excellent choice of large format stores within retail parks, trade counters and traditional high street shopping within Merthyr Tydfil town centre.

3.96 Cardiff is reasonably accessible from MTCB but despite this access to a large range and choice of shopping facilities, MTCB retains a sustainable market share of comparison goods expenditure. Given the scale, quality and range of shopping facilities available in Cardiff, comparison expenditure will continue to be spent outside MTCB, although the Trago Mill outlet will reduce leakage.

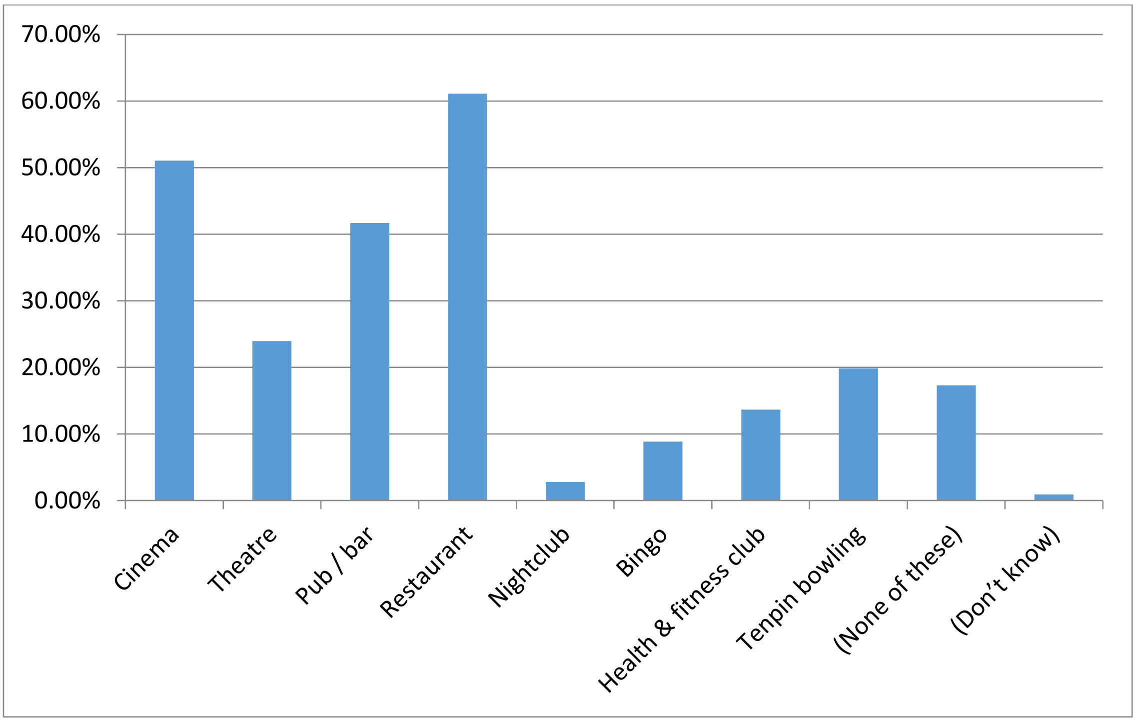
3.97 Qualitative improvements and investment will be needed in MTCB in order to maintain existing levels of comparison goods expenditure. The objective of the development strategy for MTCB should be to maintain its shopping role and market share within the sub-region, in the face of increasing competition.

4.0 Other Town Centre Uses

4.1 This section assesses the potential for commercial leisure and town centre uses in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough, including theatres, cultural facilities, cinemas, ten pin bowling, bingo, health and fitness, restaurants/cafes, pubs/bars and takeaways/fast food.

4.2 Household survey respondents were asked about their family's leisure activities. The participation rates within the study area are shown in Figure 4.1. An assessment of these sectors is set out in this section.

Figure 4.1 Leisure Participation (% of households)



Source: NEMS Market Research

4.3 The household survey indicates that visiting restaurants (61%) is the most popular leisure activity within the study area, followed by visiting cinemas (51%), pubs/bars (42%) and theatres (24%).

Commercial Leisure Uses

4.4 Residents in MTCB have access to a good range of commercial leisure and entertainment facilities within the County Borough and in the surrounding area. Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village is the main leisure attraction within MTCB, with a Vue Cinema and Superbowl UK Ten Pin Bowling supported by food and beverage outlets e.g. Nandos, Frankie and Benny's and Harvester. Within the town centre there is Redhouse Cymru, Theatr Soar as well as bars/pubs, clubs and restaurants.

4.5 Based on Lichfields' experience of household surveys from across the country, commercial leisure facilities usually draw the main part of their trade from residents up to a 20 minutes travel time. Major leisure facilities such as multiplex cinemas, ten-pin bowling centres and family entertainment centres require a large catchment population, and often benefit from clustering together for example on out of centre leisure parks such as the Leisure Village.

Cinemas

4.6 Cinemas are important because they often anchor leisure developments, providing footfall for other uses to prosper. Growth in this sector slowed a few years ago. Despite the domination of the three main operators (Odeon, Vue and Cineworld) some operators such as City Screen, Mainline Pictures, Everyman, Premier and Reeltime Cinemas have opened new or taken over small cinemas in recent years.

4.7 Cinema admissions in the UK declined steadily during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, a period when the ownership of televisions increased significantly. Cinema admissions continued to decline in the early 1980s, but increased steadily after 1984 up to 2002. There was a peak in cinema admissions in 2002 at 175.9 million. Total admissions in 2015 were 171.9 million. Cinema trips have plateaued since 2002, despite population growth of 9.6% during this period (59.4 million to 65.1 million). This could be as a result of the rising popularity of streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime meaning that people prefer to enjoy films and other programmes at home. The 2015 national average was 2.64 trips per person.

4.8 The Cinema Advertising Association identities 771 cinema facilities with 4,115 screens in the UK. Lichfields' national CINeSCOPE model identifies approximately 800,000 cinema seats in the UK. The CINeSCOPE model assesses the provision of cinema screens/seats against projected customer cinema trips across the country, in order to identify areas of under and over-provision. The latest (2015) national average is about 42,000 cinema trips per screen per annum, or 215 trips per seat per annum.

4.9 Residents in MTCB and the wider study area have a choice of cinemas. Vue at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village provides 8 screens and 1,212 seats. Other cinemas within sub-region include:

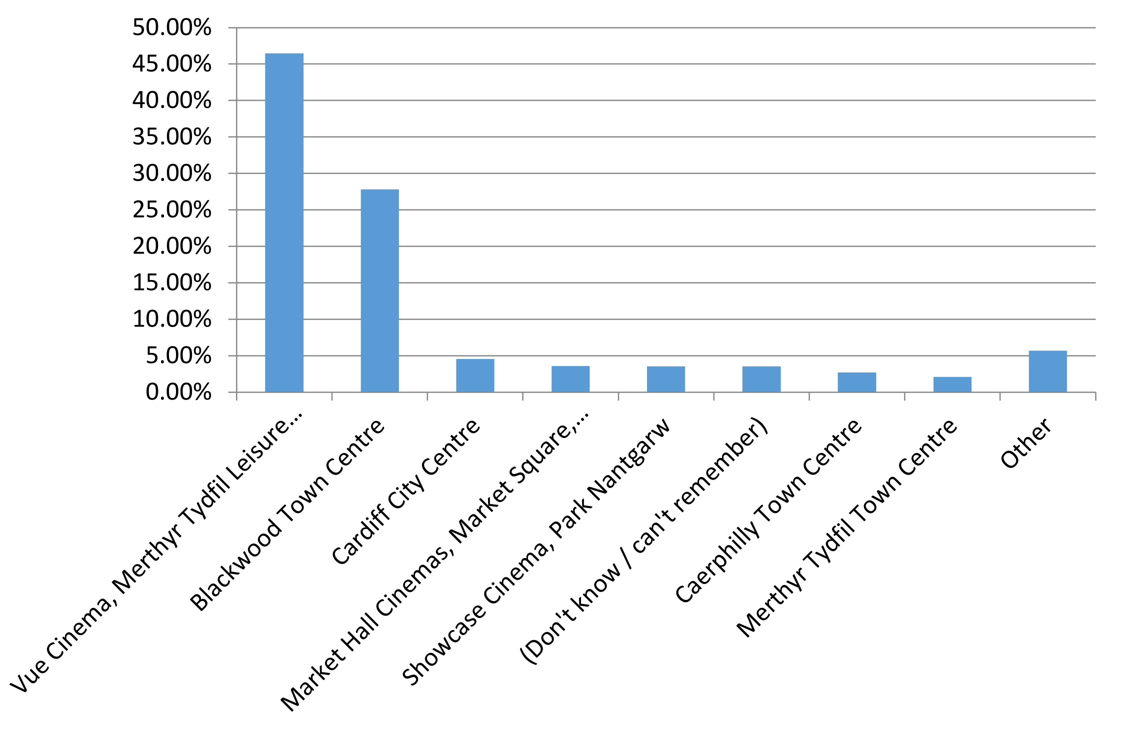
1. Showtimes at Nantgarw (12 screens and 2,592 seats);
2. Cineworld, Cardiff (15 screens and 3,177 seats);
3. Odeon, Cardiff (18 screens and 2,730 seats);
4. Vue, Cardiff (14 screens and 2,773 seats);
5. Colliseum, Brecon (2 screens and 308 seats);
6. Vue, Cwmbran (8 screens and 1,229 seats); and
7. Maxime Cinema, Blackwood (5 screens and 598 seats).

4.10 The household survey indicates that over 51% of households within the study area visit cinemas. The main destinations visited by those participating households are set out in Figure 4.2.

4.11 The main cinema destinations for the study area respondents are Vue Cinema at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village (46%) and Maxime Cinema (28%) at Blackwood Town Centre.

4.12 Vue at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village attracts a relatively high (about 73%) market share of cinema trips within MTCB (Zone 1 and Zone 2). Most of the trips leaking from MTCB are to Blackwood, which is accessible from Zone 2. There appears to be limited potential to increase MTCB's market share of cinema trip in the future.

Figure 4.2 Main Cinema Trip Destinations



Source: NEMS Market Research

4.13 The study area population in 2016 (313,538 people) will generate 827,700 cinema trips per annum, based on the UK average visitation rate (2.64 trips per annum). Assuming 50% of all study area cinema trips are attracted to MTCB, suggests about 413,800 trips were attracted in 2016. Based on the UK average of 215 trips per seat per annum, 413,000 trips could support 1,925 cinema seats in 2016, compared with the existing provision of 1,212 seats. There may be a current under-supply of around 700 seats with MTCB.

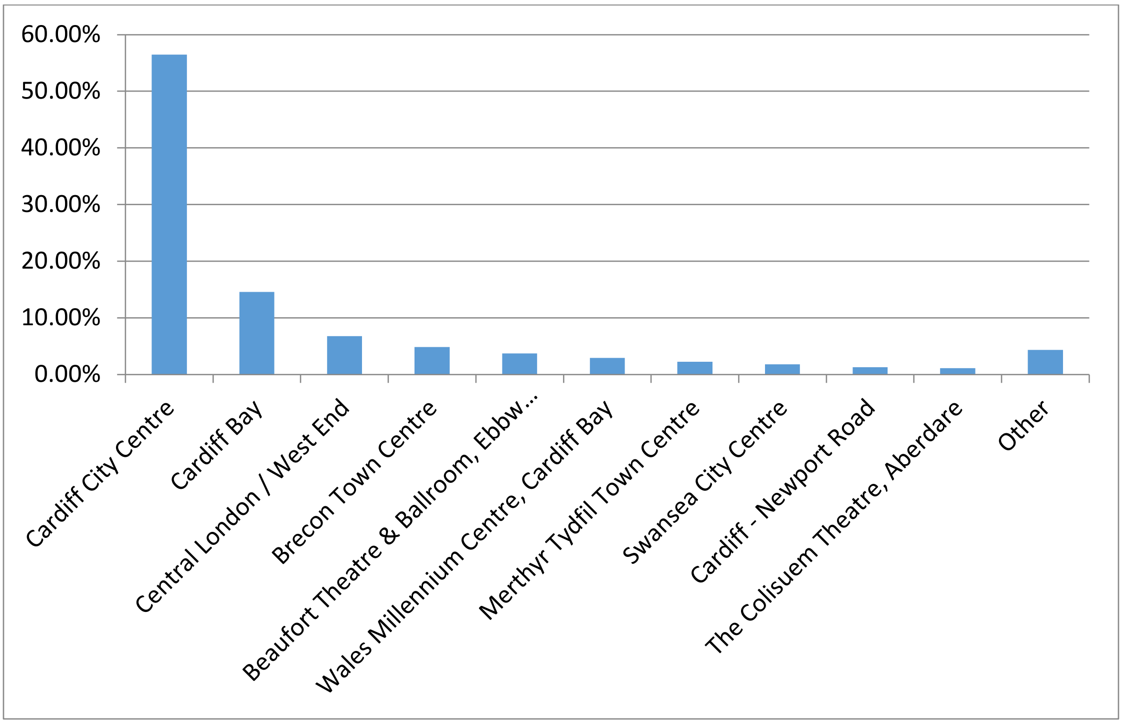
4.14 The study area population is projected to increase to 320,399 by 2031. The under-supply could increase to around 750 by 2031. These projections suggest that there is a theoretical capacity for a medium sized cinema (3-5 screens) in MTCB.

Theatres

4.15 In total 24% of respondents to the household survey indicated that they visit the theatre. Figure 4.3 provides a breakdown of where the respondents had last visited the theatre.

4.16 The main theatre attractions are in Cardiff city centre (56%), Cardiff Bay (15%) and Central London (7%). Only 2% of respondents stated that they last visited the theatre in Merthyr Tydfil town centre, which is surprisingly low given that Theatre Soar and Redhouse Cymru are located within the town centre.

Figure 4.3 Theatre Visit Breakdown



Source: NEMS Market Research

4.17 Data from the British Theatre Consortium, British Theatre Repertoire (2014) indicated British theatres presented 59,386 performances attracting over 33 million theatre visits, around 121,000 visits per venue (274 venues with SOLT/UKTheatre's membership).

4.18 Assuming an average of 0.5 trips to the theatre per person per annum, as implied by the British Theatre Consortium data, the MTCB study area population in 2016 (313,538 people) will generate 156,800 theatre trips per annum, compared with the average of 121,000 visits per venue. The household survey results suggest most of these trips will be attracted to Cardiff and London.

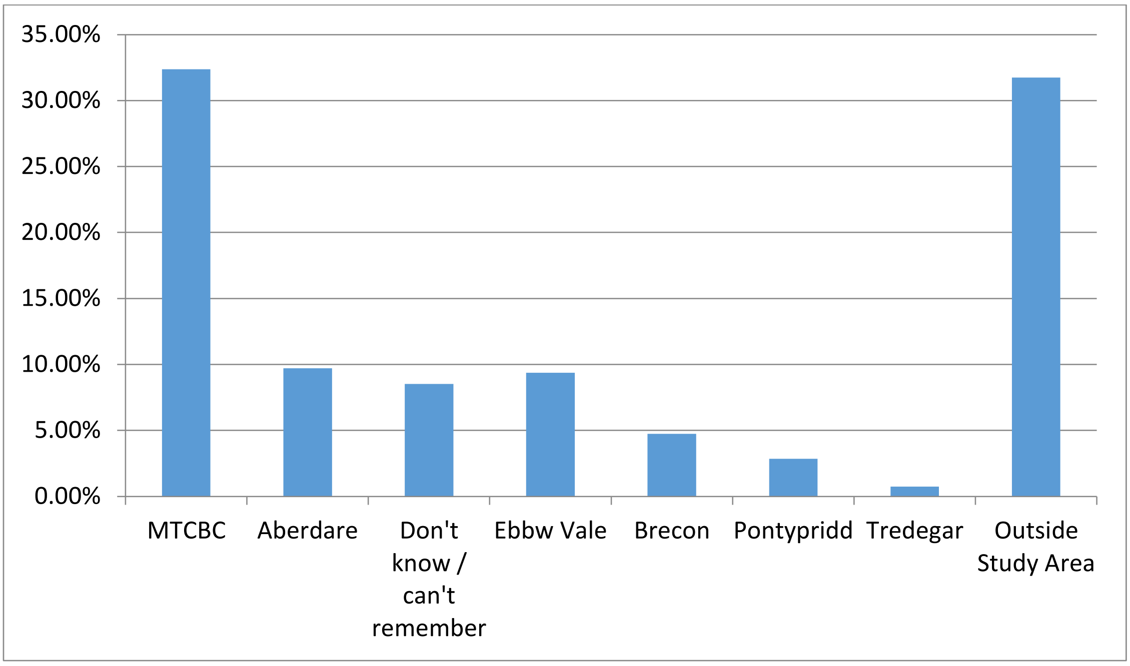
4.19 There is no clear need for additional theatre provision in MTCB.

Private Health and Fitness Clubs

4.20 The household survey indicates that 14% of respondents or their families visit health/fitness clubs. Of the participating households, the main destinations mentioned are summarised in Figure 4.4.

4.21 MTCB attracts 32% of health and fitness facilities trips within the study area. DW Fitness at Cyfarthfa Retail Park was the most popular with 17% of participating respondents visiting the health club. The household survey results suggest respondents tend to use local facilities close to home.

Figure 4.4 Health/Fitness Clubs Breakdown



Source: NEMS Market Research

4.22 Health and fitness clubs within MTCB are shown in Table 4.1. Data from Sport Wales indicates there are seven registered health and fitness suites in MTCB, of which two are located within local schools (Afon Taf and Pen y Dre). There are 430 fitness stations in total.

Table 4.1 MTCB Health and Fitness Clubs

Destination	Centre	Type	Number of Stations
DW Fitness	Cyfarthfa Retail Park	Registered Membership	120
Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre	Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village	Pay and play	80
Aberfan Leisure Centre	Aberfan		50
Dowlais Community Centre	Dowlais	Pay and play	16
Gurnos Community Centre	Gurnos	Pay and play	24
Afon Taf High School	Troedyrhiw		12
Pen y Dre High School	Merthyr Tydfil	Pay and play	28
Inspire Fitness	Merthyr Tydfil	Registered membership	-
Crossfit 470	Merthyr Tydfil	Registered membership	-
Total			430

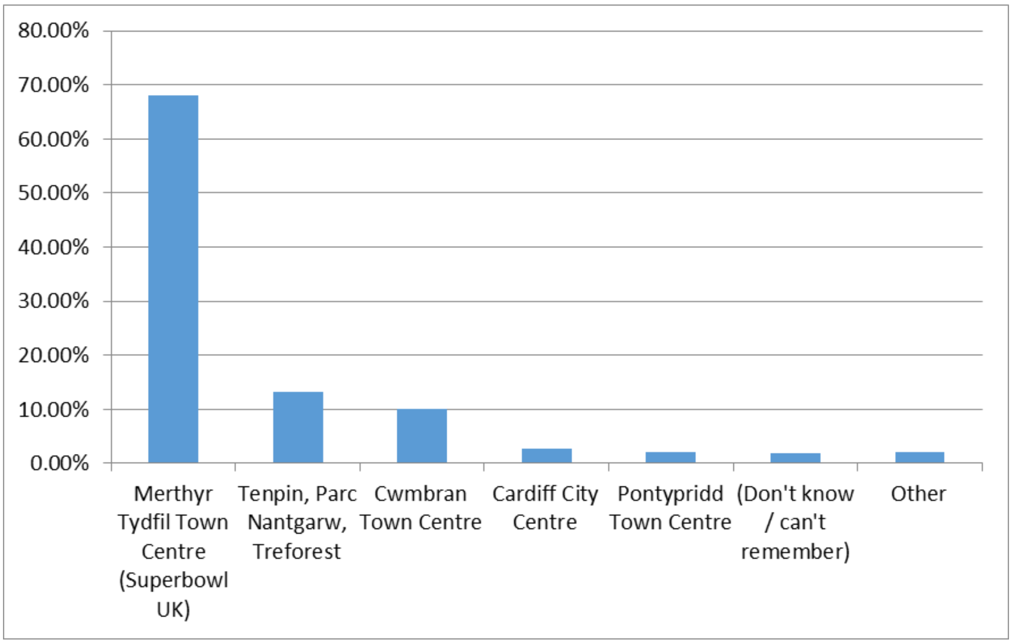
Source: Sport Wales

4.23 The study area population in 2016 is 313,538 people. Health and fitness facilities in MTCB attracts 32% of respondents in the study area, which suggests a catchment population of around 100,300 in 2016. This catchment population suggests MTCB has 4.29 fitness stations per 1,000 people (430 stations in total), within Sport Wales registered facilities. This is below the Welsh average (5.2 stations) per 1,000 people, which suggests there is scope for additional health and fitness facilities in the Borough of around 90 fitness stations. This is projected to increase to around 100 fitness stations by 2031.

Ten Pin Bowling

4.24 The household survey results suggest that about 20% of households in the study area visit tenpin bowling facilities. The main destinations are set out in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Tenpin bowling breakdown



Source: NEMS Market Research

4.25 Superbowl UK at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village is the most popular venue for ten pin bowling with 68% of participation respondents. Superbowl UK has 14 lanes and opened in 2015. The main competitors are Tenpin at Parc Nantgarw, Treforest which attracts 13% of the study area respondents and Bowlplex in Cwmbran which attracts 10% of the study area respondents. Some parts of the study area are closer to Nantgarw and Cwmbran than Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village.

4.26 The study area population in 2016 is 313,538 people. If MTCB can attract 50% of ten pin bowling trips within the study then this suggests a catchment population of about 157,000 people. This catchment population can in theory support 13 tenpin bowling lanes, based on the UK average of one lane per 12,000 people. The Superbowl UK appears to be sufficient to meet of existing and projected demand in MTCB.

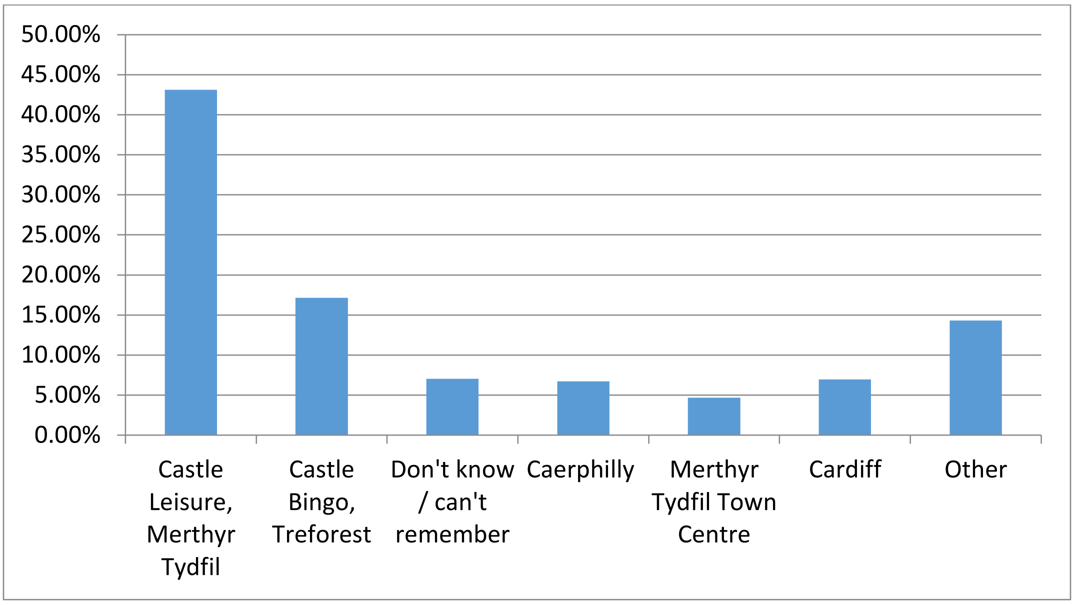
4.27 There is no theoretical capacity for additional ten pin bowling facilities over the plan period.

Bingo, Games of Chance and Gambling

4.28 The household survey results suggest that 8.9% of households in the study area visit bingo facilities. The main destinations are set out in Figure 4.6.

4.29 The household survey shows that Castle Leisure in Merthyr Tydfil is the most popular Bingo Venue (43%) with Castle Bingo in Treforest the second most popular with 17%. Castle Bingo is a Cardiff based Bingo chain with 11 purpose built bingo halls throughout Wales and England.

Figure 4.6 Bingo breakdown



4.30 Gala and Mecca are the main bingo operators, controlling over half of the UK market but these operators are not present in MTCB. Marketing of the bingo sector has been more proactive in recent years and Gala and Mecca have invested in premises, moving out of dated premises (i.e. converted cinemas) into purpose built units. Bingo clubs have become increasingly sophisticated, and have actively sought to attract all age groups. The bingo sector usually prefers central locations that are accessible by public transport and by foot. Major bingo operators require a catchment population of 50,000 - 70,000 (source: Business in Sport and Leisure BISL).

4.31 MTBC retains around 50% of bingo trips within the study area. The adult (over 18) population in the MTCB study area (around 250,000 people) would generate about 440,000 admissions, based on the UK participation rate (1.75 trips per adult).

4.32 If MTCB retains around 50% of all bingo trips (220,000 trips), then there would be theoretical capacity for one new bingo facility in MTCB, based on the UK average figures (113,000 admissions per club).

Emerging Leisure Activities

4.33 In addition to the traditional/long established leisure activities assessed above, there are new forms of leisure activities emerging and this sector is fast moving and innovative. In recent years the new uses have included trampoline centres, escape rooms and virtual golf centres. The most prevalent is the recent rise in trampoline centres throughout the UK. The first trampoline centre in the UK opened in Camberley in Surrey in 2014. According to Continental (The UK's leading manufacturer of equipment for trampolining) there are 172 trampoline parks open or opening soon within the UK. This demonstrates the speed at which these centres have established in the UK. The centres tend to locate in large industrial or commercial units which may have an impact upon the employment stock of some local authorities. However there is no reason why a trampoline centre cannot locate within or adjacent to town centres if a suitable site is available.

4.34 In MTCB there is one trampoline facility which has recently opened - the Vertigo Trampoline Park at Cyfarthfa Industrial Estate which measures around 4,000 sq.m.

4.35 Other forms of leisure uses are also emerging such as Escape Rooms which is a physical adventure game in which players solve a series of puzzles using clues, hints and strategies in order to be able to escape from the room. An escape room facility (Mystery Rooms) has recently opened on High Street in Merthyr Tydfil. The facility only opens in the evenings and weekends and therefore does not contribute to the vibrancy of the centre during the day. The Council should be wary of leisure uses locating in the town centre that do not contribute to the vitality and viability of the centre throughout the day.

Services, Restaurants, Bars and Takeaways

4.36 Service uses perform an important role in the overall offer of a centre, and encourage customers to shop locally. The service uses are categorised as follows:

- **Class A1 services** cover a range of uses, including hairdressers, dry cleaners, travel agents, some sandwich shops (those not categorised as Class A3), funeral parlours and post offices;
- **Class A2 services** include banks, building societies, financial services, betting offices, pawnbrokers, estate agents and employment agencies; and
- **Class A3** including restaurants, cafes, takeaways, pubs and bars.

4.37 Food and beverage is a fast moving and creative sector, with a steady flow of new concepts emerging. Within this sector there has been a significant increase in the number of national multiple chains. These national chains have sought to increase their geographical coverage. These types of food and drink operators i.e. restaurants, bars and pubs have supported other major leisure uses, in particular cinema developments. Within town centres, the demand has increased, including a significant expansion in the number of coffee shops, such as Coffee No. 1, Starbucks, Costa Coffee and Café Nero. National branded pub/restaurant chains have invested heavily and not exclusively in larger centres. Themed restaurants have also expanded rapidly.

4.38 The key categories for food and beverage offers are:

- **Impulse:** characterised by their produce range that is typically highly visual and hand-held so that it can be eaten “on the go”;
- **Speed eating fast food:** food that can be purchased and consumed quickly, therefore price is low and ambience is less important. This sector is dominated by traditional high volume fast food offers such as burgers and fried chicken;
- **Refuel and relax:** drinks, snacks and short break in a pleasant environment rather than focusing on eating a main meal; and,
- **Casual dining/leisure dining:** incorporating a number of food styles, types and ethnic origins. The ambience and environment of casual dining is as important as the food, drink and service provided. The style is informal but is normally table service.

4.39 Food and beverage establishments including restaurants, bars and pubs have supported other major leisure uses on leisure and retail parks and are important services within town and local centres. National information available from Experian Goad indicates that the proportion of non-retail uses within town centres across the country has increased significantly. A balance between Class A1 and Class A3 uses needs to be maintained.

Food and Beverage Expenditure

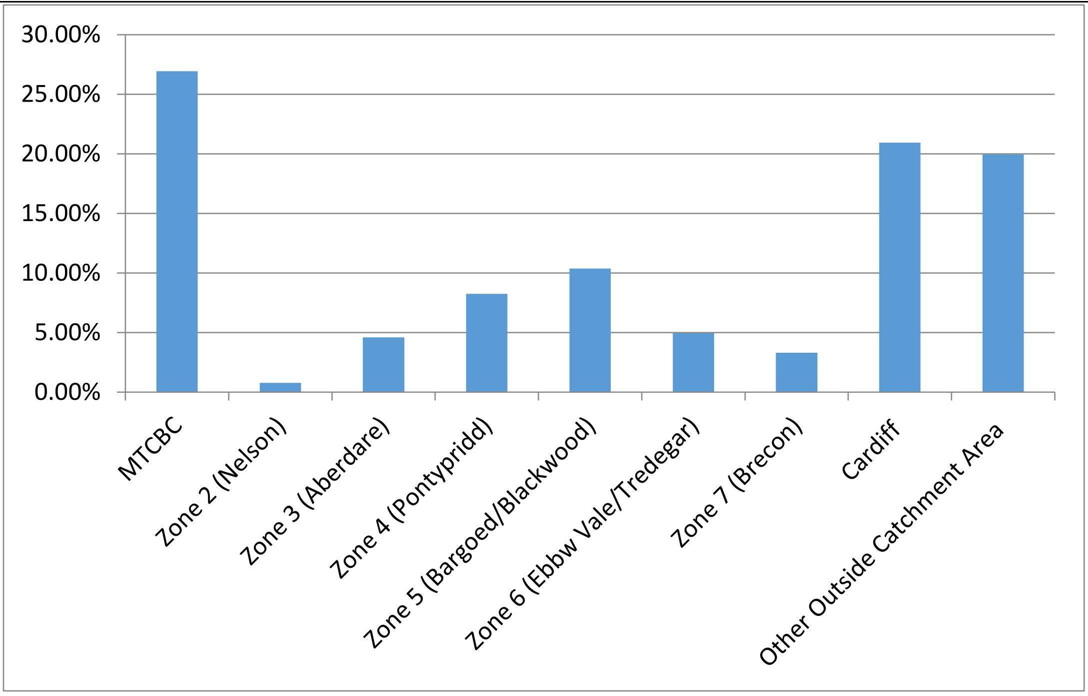
4.40 Experian’s food and beverage expenditure per capita projections are shown in Table 3 in Appendix 3. The total food and beverage expenditure in the study area is £248.27 million in 2016 in Table 4.

4.41 Food and beverage expenditure per capita is expected to increase in real terms (excluding inflation) by 23.5% between 2016 and 2031. Taking into account limited population growth, total food and drink expenditure within the study area is expected to increase from £248.27 million in 2016 to £306.62 million in 2031, as shown in Table 3 in Appendix 3.

4.42 A summary of food and beverage expenditure patterns is shown in Table 4 in Appendix 4. The household survey results indicate that the retention of food and beverage expenditure within MTCB is 27%. Households within the study area have good access to a number of different destinations and there is a propensity to visit different destinations. The catchment areas of centres overlap to a significant extent, and no single centre is dominant. The ability to increase MTCB's food and beverage market share will be constrained by these overlapping catchment areas, and the accessibility of Cardiff. After destinations in MTCB, Cardiff (21%) is the most popular destination.

4.43 Existing food and beverage expenditure patterns have been modelled based on the household survey results within the study area zones. Base year (2016) penetration rates are shown in Table 4 in Appendix 4 and expenditure patterns are shown in Table 5. The estimated expenditure currently attracted to facilities within MTCB is £67.37 million in 2016.

Figure 4.7 Breakdown of Food and Beverage Expenditure across the study area



Source: NEMS Market Research

Future Capacity for Food and Beverage Floorspace

4.44 Available food and beverage expenditure has been projected forward to 2021, 2026 and 2031 in Tables 6 to 8 in Appendix 3, and summarised in Table 9. Available food and beverage expenditure within MTCB is expected to increase from £67.37 million in 2016 to £84.11 million in 2031.

4.45 For the purposes of this assessment, the existing food and beverage floorspace is estimated to be trading at equilibrium in 2016 (i.e. satisfactory levels). Table 9 assumes that the turnover of food and beverage facilities will increase in real terms in the future. A growth rate of 0.5% per annum is adopted.

4.46 By 2021 there will be a small food and beverage expenditure surplus of £2.19 million, which will increase to £6.49 million in 2026 and £11.51 million by 2031.

4.47 These surplus expenditure projections have been converted into floorspace projections in Table 9 in Appendix 4, adopting an average sales density of £5,000 per sq.m gross in 2016, which is projected to grow by 0.5% in the future due to improved turnover efficiency. The surplus expenditure at 2026 could support 1,235 sq.m gross floorspace. In the longer term, surplus expenditure at 2031 could support 2,136 sq.m of gross floorspace in MTCB.

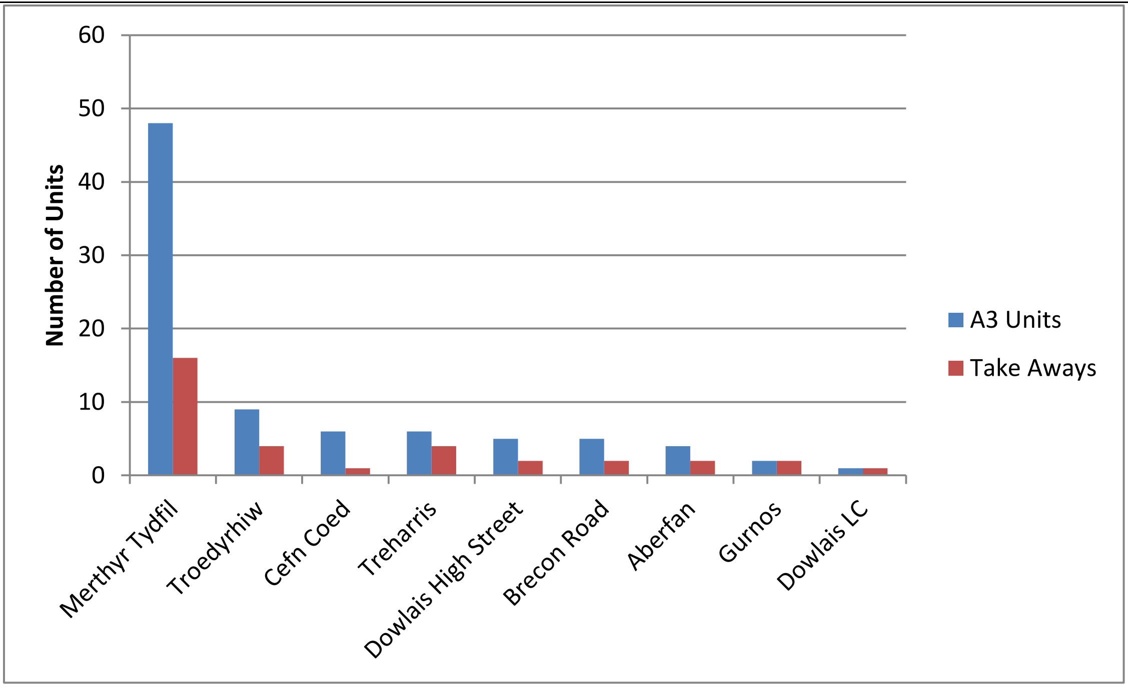
Qualitative Need

4.48 Merthyr Tydfil town centre's Venuescore food/service index is 41 compared with the national average of 100. Cyfarthfa Retail Park has an index of 46. By way of comparison Cardiff city centre has a food/service index of 146. Merthyr Tydfil town centre has a slightly below average proportion of Class A3 uses. The food and beverage offer is predominantly independent outlets.

4.49 No other centres within MTCB have been given a Venuescore food/service ranking.

4.50 There are 47 food and beverage outlets within Merthyr Tydfil town centre with a further 38 within the smaller centres. There are also seven outlets at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village and four outlets at Cyfarthfa Retail Park. The town centre audits in Appendix 5 provide a more detailed analysis of food and beverage provision within the centres. The smaller centres provide a mixture of independent outlets including takeaways, public houses, cafés and restaurants. The number of units varies from 9 in Troedyrhiw to 2 in the Gurnos. The number of food and beverage outlets within each town centre is illustrated in Figure 4.8.

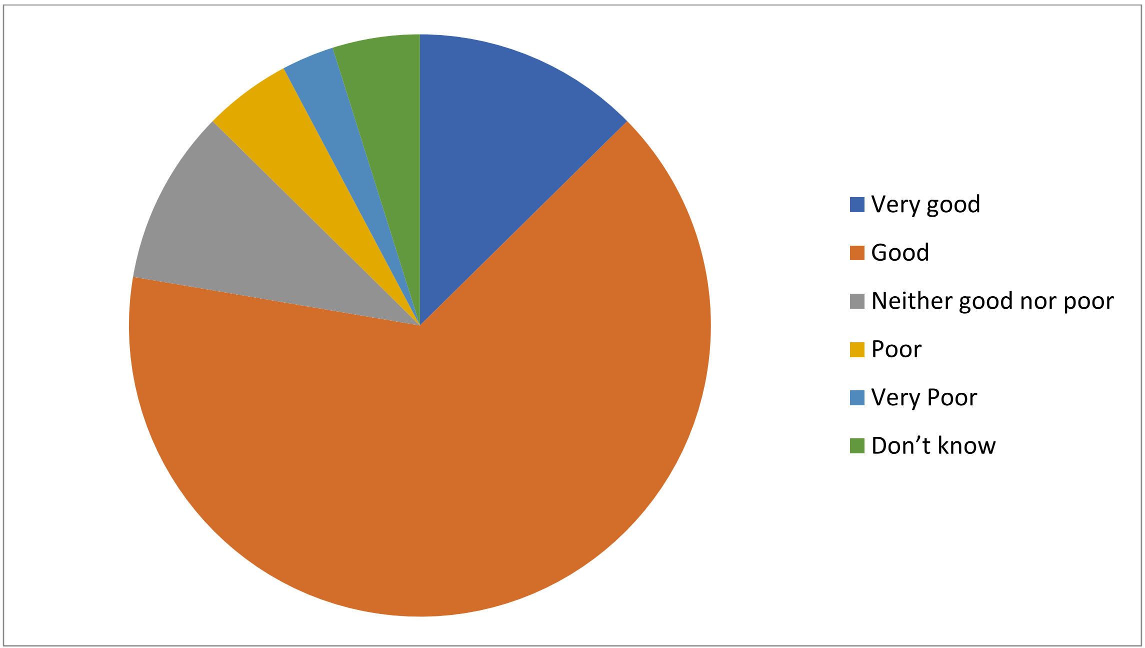
Figure 4.8 Class A3 outlets in each retail centre



Source: Lichfields Land Use Survey, January 2017

4.51 Respondents to the town centre survey were asked their opinion on the quality/number of places to eat and drink in Merthyr Tydfil. The responses are as follows:

Figure 4.9 Opinion of respondents on the quality/number of places to eat/drink



Source: NEMS Market Research

4.52 The majority, 78% of respondents considered that the quality/number of places to eat/drink in Merthyr Tydfil town centre was either good (65%) or very good (13%). Only 8% of respondents considered that the quality/number of places to eat/drink in Merthyr Tydfil town centre was either poor (5%) or very poor (3%). These results suggest local residents are in general satisfied with food and beverage provision.

Conclusions

4.53 The analysis in this section suggests:

- there is a theoretical capacity for a medium sized (3-5 screens) cinema in MTBC;
- there is scope for additional health and fitness facilities in MTCB of around 100 fitness stations;
- there is theoretical scope for one further bingo facility in MTCB; and
- there is capacity for additional food and beverage outlets in MTCB; 1,235 sq.m gross could be provided by 2026 increasing to 2,136 sq.m in 2031.

5.0 Implications for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough

5.1 This section draws together the analysis set out in previous sections and highlights the potential implications for MTCB. It explores how any identified growth could be accommodated and the potential distribution of development and the future policy approach.

5.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) indicates that when preparing development plans, local planning authorities should take a positive approach, in partnership with the private sector, in identifying sites which accord with the sequential approach and are in line with a development plan's retail strategy in terms of the size, scale and format of new developments needed.

5.3 PPW further recognises that in allocating sites for different types of retail and commercial uses local planning authorities should take account of factors such as floorspace, quality, convenience, attractiveness of the site and traffic generation. They should not prescribe rigid floorspace limits on allocated sites that would unreasonably inhibit the retail industry from responding to changing demand and opportunities.

5.4 PPW advises LPAs to identify changing retail pressures and opportunities and devise appropriate responses to them. In some situations it may be necessary to take pro-active steps to identify retail and commercial locations for expansion. In others it may be necessary to identify measures to reinvigorate centres or to manage a change in the relative importance of a centre as other centres' roles expand. Dealing with change may mean redefining the boundaries of centres or identifying acceptable changes of use. Where appropriate, local planning authorities should also consider policies relating to the re-use of redundant retail space for alternative uses.

5.5 Mixed use should also be encouraged with Development Plans including policies/allocations that encourage diversity of uses in centres including the combining of retailing with entertainment, restaurants and, where appropriate, residential in order to promote lively centres during both the day and the evening.

5.6 This section assesses the scope to accommodate growth within MTCB as well as potential amendments required to the policy approach.

Floorspace Projections

5.7 The floorspace projections set out in the previous sections assume that new shopping and leisure facilities within MTCB can maintain and in some cases improve current market share of expenditure within the study area, recognising that other competing centres will improve in the future. There are a number of issues that may influence the scope for new floorspace and the appropriate location for this development, as follows:

- major retail developments in competing centres;
- the re-occupation of vacant retail floorspace;
- the availability of land to accommodate new development;
- the reliability of long term expenditure projections;
- the effect of internet/home shopping on the demand for retail property;
- the level of operator demand for floorspace in MTCB;

- the likelihood that MTCB's existing market share of expenditure will change in the future in the face of increasing competition; and
- the potential impact new development may have on existing centres.

5.8 The expenditure projections in this study take into account home shopping made through non-retail businesses, because special forms of trading have been excluded. The study assumes that special forms of trading will increase in the future, including the growth of internet shopping.

5.9 The quantitative and qualitative assessments of the potential for new retail and leisure floorspace within the previous sections suggest there is limited quantitative scope for new convenience floorspace within MTCB over the plan period up to 2031, because existing facilities are trading on average below benchmark levels and there is no projected expenditure growth over the plan period.

5.10 For comparison good shopping, the new Trago Mills development is expected to absorb expenditure growth up to and beyond 2026, even allowing for an increase in MTCB's market share, population growth and increased expenditure inflow. Longer term growth between 2026 and 2031 could provide scope for 2,802 sq.m net (3,736 sq.m gross) of comparison goods floorspace in MTBC. In terms of food and beverage there is quantitative capacity for 1,235 sq.m gross by 2026 increasing to 2,136 sq.m gross by 2031.

5.11 The global retail (Class A1 to A3) floorspace projections suggest that there is capacity for 6,281 sq.m gross by 2031.

5.12 The existing stock of premises should have a role to play in accommodating projected growth. The retail capacity analysis in this report assumes that existing retail floorspace can increase its turnover to sales floorspace density. For comparison goods, a growth rate of 2% per annum is assumed and 0.5% per annum is adopted for food/beverage uses. In addition to the growth in sales densities, vacant shops could help to accommodate future growth.

5.13 Lichfields' land use survey (January 2017) suggests there are 48 vacant shop units within Merthyr Tydfil town centre which equates to an overall vacancy rate of 18.6%, which is significantly above the Goad UK average (11.2%). Vacant premises should help to accommodate growth. For example, if the current vacancy level in Merthyr Tydfil town centre is reduced to 10% then the number of reoccupied units could accommodate about 2,600 sq.m gross of Class A1 to A3 retail space (assuming an average of 100 sq.m per unit). The vacancy rate could also be reduced in other centres in MTCB. There are also vacant units that could be re-occupied within Cyfarthfa Retail Park

5.14 If this reduction in vacant units can be achieved then there is only limited need for further Class A retail floorspace projection in MTCB over the plan period.

5.15 The priority should be the reoccupation of vacant floorspace in Merthyr Tydfil town centre and the smaller local centres, but this should not preclude investment within appropriate town centre locations. The modernisation and replacement of outdated retail units (such as St Tydfil's Shopping Centre) should be promoted, although the overall net increase in floorspace may be limited. Mixed use developments, including leisure uses e.g. food and beverage, health/fitness, cinema and bingo, should be considered to broaden the attraction of the town centre. The Merthyr Bus Station and the former Police Station are potential sites that could deliver these types of facilities along with replacement retail floorspace.

5.16 Policy As20 allocates land at the Central Bus Station for 5,300 sq.m gross of comparison goods floorspace. The policy states that any scheme would require the remodelling of the existing bus station. The policy's supporting text discusses the opportunity at the site of the

Hollies Health Centre combined with the adjacent Central Police Station site. These buildings have now been demolished and the site is now vacant. The updated retail projection floorspace projections in this report, suggest this quantum (5,300 sq.m gross) is more than sufficient to meet retail capacity for the foreseeable future.

5.17 A planning application (P/16/0048) was approved on 21 July 2016 which approved the construction of a new bus station and public realm improvements at the site of the former Police Station and Hollies Health Centre. The construction of a new bus station at this location will assist the retail allocation proposed for the existing bus station in coming forward. Policy AS20 should be retained to enable a qualitative improvement in retail provision, although a broader mix of uses, in addition to comparison goods retailing, should be considered.

5.18 The application of shop frontage policies will protect existing retail uses, but should also promote the reoccupation of vacant shop units by encouraging appropriate new uses. Long term vacant premises could be targeted and more actively marketed and shopfront/fit-out grants could be considered to assist their reoccupation. The continuation of the Building Enhancement Scheme would assist in meeting this objective[5].

The Hierarchy of Centres

5.19 PPW (10.3.1) requires planning policies to establish a local retail hierarchy that identifies the nature, type and strategic role to be performed by retail and commercial centres. This should include the identification of those centres which fulfil specialist functions.

5.20 The current development plan (Policy AS18) designates Merthyr Tydfil town centre as the principal town centre supported by the seven local centres of Dowlais, Gurnos, Cefn Coed, Brecon Road/Morgantown, Troedyrhiw, Aberfan and Treharris. The explanatory text attached to Policy AS18 also recognises the three out-of-centre retail parks at Cyfarthfa, Pengarnddu and Pentrebach and the roles they play in accommodating bulky goods retailing albeit that they do not fall within the defined hierarchy of centres.

5.21 Policy AS18 indicates that Merthyr Tydfil town centre is the favoured location for retail development due to its status at the top of the hierarchy followed by the local centres. AS18 states that *"proposals for new and enhanced retail provision in all these centres will be permitted where they improve the vitality and viability of the centre(s) concerned"*.

5.22 Merthyr Tydfil town centre is clearly the largest designated centre in terms of number of retail units and the quantum of floorspace, and it should be maintained at the top of the hierarchy. The remaining retail centres are either small towns or suburbs of Merthyr Tydfil. They vary in terms of number of units from 36 in Treharris to 11 at the Gurnos, but generally service the needs of the local communities.

5.23 The current retail hierarchy remains appropriate and no changes are required. The wording of Policy AS18 is in accordance with PPW and TAN4.

Town Centre Boundaries/Primary Shopping Area

5.24 The current Development Plan defines a Town Centre Boundary and a separate Primary Shopping Area for Merthyr Tydfil town centre. These designations relate to Policies AS18 and AS19 of the development plan. Retail Centre Boundaries are defined for smaller centres

[5] 50% grant funding for building renovations and improvements to external street frontages which are in keeping with the age and style of the property.

e.g. Treharris, Troedyrhiw and Dowlais. The Development Plan does not define separate primary or secondary shopping frontages in any centre.

5.25 Based on Lichfields' experience town centre boundaries usually relate to the area where a broad range of town centre uses are concentrated i.e. retail, leisure, office and community uses. The primary shopping areas (PSA) is normally located within the town centre boundary and is usually the area where Class A retail uses are concentrated. Separate primary and secondary shopping frontages can be designated to control the mix of retail and non retail uses, and are located within the PSA. Usually only larger centre have separate town centre boundaries, PSA, primary and secondary frontages.

5.26 The designation of a PSA and/or town centre boundary is important when applying the sequential approach, in order to direct retail and town centre uses to sustainable locations and determining whether a retail need/impact assessment is required.

5.27 PPW (10.3.1) recommends that development plans identify the boundaries of retail and commercial centres and recognise where changes to stimulate growth may mean redefining the boundaries of centres or identifying acceptable changes of use.

5.28 PPW (10.3.5) recognises that where the right balance of use and activity is not being achieved, local planning authorities should consider making changes to the acceptable uses in primary or secondary areas, the location of retail and commercial centre boundaries or, if necessary, the removal of these boundaries altogether. PPW (10.3.6) also warns against over emphasis on Class A1 uses in either primary or secondary areas to a level which could undermine a centre's prospects, potentially leading to high vacancy rates. The limited Class A1 floorspace projections in this report suggest overly restrictive shopping frontage policies could lead to an increase in shop vacancies.

Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre

5.29 The Merthyr Tydfil town centre boundary is relatively widely drawn. It includes the main retail area and other areas where other town centre uses are concentrated e.g. civic offices and education establishments. It excludes most surrounding residential areas. The main purpose of the town centre boundary is to define the area where retail, leisure and other town centre uses should be concentrated in accordance with the sequential approach (Policy AS18), and the uses that will be protected under the retail impact test.

5.30 The PSA covers a small part of the town centre, including both sides of High Street between John Street in the north and Swan Street in the south together with properties in Victoria Street, Market Square, Beacons Place and the St. Tydfil's Square Shopping Centre.

5.31 Policy AS19 (Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre) seeks to protect the vitality and viability of the PSA. Proposals for changes of use to the ground floor of Class A1 retail premises are only permitted where:

- the proposal is for Class A2 or Class A3 retail use;
- the proposal does not lie adjacent to a non-A1 retail unit;
- the proposal does not involve an A1 retail unit with a frontage length of 10 metres or more, or a corner retail unit; and
- the proportion of A1 retail units will not be less than 83 per cent of the total number of commercial premises in the PSA.

5.32 The current proportion of A1 retail units within the current PSA is 82%, including vacant units which have a lawful A1 use. This 82% figure suggests Policy AS19 has helped to retain a predominance of Class A1 use within the PSA, and is just under the Policy AS19 minimum threshold (83%). As a result there is limited potential for new non-A1 uses to locate in the PSA because the threshold appears to have been breached.

5.33 In total, 14 of the Class A1 units in the PSA are vacant, which suggests that Policy AS19 could have contributed to the high shop vacancy rate, because it may restrict changes of use to allow reoccupation by other uses. However, there are a large number of vacant shop units outside the PSA, where there is a more flexible approach to changes of use, which suggests the high vacancy rate is due to an imbalance between the supply and demand for floorspace rather than overly restrictive policy constraints within the PSA.

5.34 Outside the PSA the vacancy rate is high at around 21%. The proportion of A1 units (when taking into account the lawful use of vacant units) is around 54%. Overall Merthyr Tydfil town centre has retained a reasonable proportion of Class A1 uses, comparable with the Goad UK average, but the vacancy rate is high.

5.35 An extension to the PSA or the introduction of a more restrictive shopping frontage policy could be counterproductive, because it may lead to a continuation of the high shop vacancy rate in the town centre. The expansion of the PSA also appears to be inappropriate due to the high shop vacancy rate, both within and outside the PSA.

5.36 As indicated above, the PSA covers a small area and a contraction of the PSA would in our view undermine the viability of the PSA. In order to reduce the vacancy rate within the PSA the Council could consider a more flexible approach in Policy AS19, which would accord with the latest PPW (Edition 9) and the TAN4 (Retail and Commercial Development). Both of these documents emphasise that retailing (A1 uses) should continue to underpin the role of town centres, but these uses are only one element that contributes towards a centre's vibrancy and policies should encourage a diversity of uses in centres.

5.37 The Council could consider increasing flexibility with the PSA in order to encourage the reoccupation of vacant shops units, which could include one or a combination of the following:

1. reducing the minimum Class A1 threshold e.g. down to from 83% to 75%;
2. allowing changes of use for long term vacant premises (that have been actively marketed);
3. removing the reference to corner unit as these units will most probably have a retail frontage of more than 10m;
4. removing or replacing the adjacent unit criteria e.g. from no adjoining non-A1 units to not more than two adjoining units, provided there are not more than 3 non-A1 units in any 5 units.

5.38 Within the town centre boundary, but outside the PSA, Policy AS19 provides limited control over changes of use. Secondary shopping frontages could be introduced to provide some control over the mix of uses. However due to the high shop vacancy rate and the relatively low retail floorspace projections within this report, this approach appears to be unnecessary, particularly if Policy AS19 continues to restrict changes of use within the PSA.

5.39 There is a concern about the proliferation of fast food/takeaways on Pontmorlais and upper High Street. These uses can create amenity issues during the evenings and do not contribute positively to vitality and viability of this area during the day because many of the units have shutters creating dead frontages. There are also a number of vacant units in this area.

5.40 The Council could consider a specific policy in this area to control the further proliferation of Class A3 uses. However a more restrictive approach could exacerbate the high vacancy rate in this area. In order to improve the appearance of this area during the day time the Council could consider introducing a policy and or Article 4 direction that restricts the installation of roller shutters (or particular types of roller shutters) on units in the Pontmorlais and upper High Street part of the Town Centre Conservation Area. This may assist in reducing the amount of dead frontage in the area during the day. This approach would help to ensure that uses on Pontmorlais and upper High Street should provide an active frontage throughout the day in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.[6]

Other Retail Centres

5.41 As indicated above, the designation of a retail centre boundary is important when applying the sequential approach, in order to direct retail and town centre uses to sustainable locations and determining whether a retail need/impact assessment is required. Retail centre boundaries should continue to be designated for the local centres in MTCB. These boundaries should be tightly drawn around the retail and commercial uses within each centre.

5.42 There is currently no policy to assess applications for the change of use of units within the local centres. These local centres are important in providing a mix of retail and non-retails services accessible on foot by local residents. The number of commercial units within some centres is small. Some policy protection should be considered to safeguard these commercial units so that they are not lost to non-commercial uses. The commercial uses provide a valuable service for the local community and should be safeguarded for future residents.

5.43 Given that the retail centres are relatively small and the commercial uses in some centres are interspersed with residential uses, the designation of a separate PSA or primary/secondary frontages is unnecessary. The following amendments to the retail centre boundaries could be considered:

1. Troedyrhiw Town Centre - the retail centre boundary to include the old police station;
2. Dowlais (Victoria Street) - the retail centre boundary to incorporate the retail units along Pant Road, opposite the surface level car park that provides access to the centre; and
3. Aberfan Centre - the area south of the car park off Bronheulog Terrace is predominantly residential and could be excluded from the centre boundary.

Future Local Plan (Review) Allocations

5.44 MTCBC is considering allocating a strategic site as part of their Local Plan Review. We understand that the site will deliver approximately 800 dwellings (approx. 1,880 new residents[7]). It is also envisaged that the site will also accommodate up to 15 ha of land for employment uses that could potentially create 1,500 jobs. In order to assess whether the retail and food/beverage expenditure will generate a local floorspace requirement the following assumptions have been adopted:

1. residential development will be completed by 2031 and an average household size of 2.35 people per dwelling[7] is adopted;

[6] A planning inspector, in dismissing appeal (APP/U6925/A/16/3162524) considered that an application to change the use of an unit from a hairdresser (A1) to a takeaway (A3) would neither preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.
[7] Based on Welsh Government 2014 based average household size

2 available convenience, comparison and food/beverage expenditure per person is based on Zone 2 where the proposed allocation is located;

3 not all of the convenience, comparison, food/beverage expenditure will be available to support local retail facilities in the developments, as expenditure will continue to be attracted to existing facilities;

4 up to 30% of convenience goods expenditure, predominantly top-up shopping could be retained by local shopping facilities;

5 up to 10% of comparison goods expenditure could be retained for lower order comparison goods i.e. day to day goods such as health/beauty items; and

6 up to 30% of food and beverage expenditure could be retained within local restaurants, bars and takeaways.

Table 5.1 Strategic Site Analysis

Potential Allocation	800 Dwellings
Population (assuming 2.35 people per dwelling)	1,880
Convenience goods expenditure per capita at 2031	£1,731
Total convenience goods expenditure	£3.25 million
Retained convenience goods expenditure (30%)	£0.98 million
Convenience goods floorspace turnover, £ per sq.m at 2031	£11,000
Convenience goods sales floorspace	**89 sq.m**
Convenience goods gross floorspace	**127 sq.m**
Comparison goods expenditure per capita at 2031	£3,139
Total comparison goods expenditure	£5.90 million
Retained comparison goods expenditure (10%)	£0.59 million
Comparison goods floorspace turnover, £ per sq.m at 2031	£8,075
Comparison goods sales floorspace	**73 sq.m**
Comparison goods gross floorspace	**97 sq.m**
Food and beverage expenditure per capita at 2031	£927
Total food and beverage expenditure	£1.74 million
Retained food and beverage expenditure (30%)	£0.52 million
Food and beverage floorspace turnover, £ per sq.m at 2031	£5,388
Food and beverage gross floorspace	**97 sq.m**

5.45 The above table indicates that a strategic development of 800 dwellings would be sufficient to support local facilities around 224 sq.m gross of Class A1 retail floorspace and about 97 sq.m of Class A3 floorspace (based on the retention rates assumed above). The total Class A1 to Class A3 estimate for 800 dwellings is 321 sq.m gross suggesting there could be scope for a small local centre.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 This report provides an update of the MTCB wide needs assessment for retail and commercial leisure development in MTCB. The principal conclusions of the analysis contained within this study are summarised below.

Meeting MTCB's Need

6.2 PPW states that local planning authorities should assess the quantitative and qualitative needs for land or floorspace for retail and commercial leisure development over the respective plan period, which for MTCB is up to 2031.

6.3 When planning for growth in their town centres, local planning authorities should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail development needed. It is important that the needs for retail and other main town centre uses are met in full and not compromised by limited site availability.

6.4 Long term forecasts beyond 2026 are more susceptible to change, due to unforeseen circumstances. Long term projections should be monitored and kept under review. The implications of major retail development within and surrounding MTCB should be monitored along with the effect proposals may have on the demand for additional development in MTCB.

6.5 The expenditure projections in this study take into account home shopping made through non-retail businesses, because special forms of trading have been excluded. The study assumes that special forms of trading will increase in the future, including the growth of internet shopping. However, the impact of internet growth and the ageing population on the demand for retail floorspace is not entirely clear. Nevertheless the floorspace projections within this study are considered to be a robust assessment of the need for new development, and reflect the uncertainties inherent with long term forecasts.

6.6 The quantitative assessment of the potential capacity for new retail floorspace suggests that there is scope for limited new development within MTCB over the plan period and that any growth is long term, between 2026 and 2031. The priority should be the reoccupation of vacant floorspace in Merthyr Tydfil town centre and the smaller local centres, but this should not preclude investment within appropriate town centre locations.

6.7 The modernisation and replacement of outdated retail units should be promoted, although the overall net increase in floorspace may be limited. Mixed use developments, including leisure uses e.g. food and beverage, health/fitness, cinema and bingo, should be considered to broaden the attraction of the town centre. The Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station and the former Police Station are potential sites that could deliver these types of facilities along with replacement retail floorspace.

Convenience Goods Development

6.8 The quantitative assessment of the potential capacity for retail floorspace suggests that there is only limited scope (409 sq.m gross) for new convenience goods development within MTCB and this is by 2031. In qualitative terms, food store and convenience retail provision is strong across the County Borough with most of the national food stores represented. There are no obvious areas of qualitative deficiency in food provision. No allocation for the development of new convenience goods stores is required.

Comparison Goods Development

6.9 The Trago Mills outlet will create a comparison goods expenditure deficit up to 2026. Longer term growth should generate a moderate expenditure surplus, which could support 2,802 sq.m net of sales floorspace (3,736 sq.m gross) by 2031.

6.10 Merthyr Tydfil town centre is the principal centre and the Council should seek to concentrate new investment in this centre, to meet wider regeneration objectives. Cyfarthfa Retail Park is the dominant comparison goods shopping destination within MTCB, with a market double that of Merthyr Tydfil town centre. Future growth should be concentrated in the town centre to address this imbalance. The bus station site and vacant units can accommodate projected growth.

6.11 In qualitative terms, residents have a choice of visiting larger centres for higher order comparison goods shopping, particularly for clothing/fashion shopping. Cardiff is easily accessible along the A470 or via train. This will restrict the potential for MTCB to increase its retail market share. The objective of the development strategy for MTCB should be to maintain the County Borough's shopping role and market share within the sub-region.

Commercial Leisure and Other Town Centre Uses

6.12 MTCB has a reasonable range of commercial leisure, entertainment and culture facilities. The analysis suggests there is:

- theoretical capacity for a medium sized (3-5 screens) cinema in MTCB;
- scope for additional health and fitness facilities in MTCB of around 100 fitness stations;
- theoretical scope for one further bingo facility in MTCB; and
- there is capacity for additional food and beverage outlets in MTCB and 1,235 sq.m gross could be provided by 2026 increasing to 2,136 sq.m in 2031.

Accommodating Growth

6.13 In accordance with the sequential approach set out in PPW and TAN4, local authorities should adopt a sequential approach to the selection of new sites in their development plans. The sequential approach supports the principle that retail and commercial centres are in the most readily accessible location, and promotes combined trips for shopping, business, leisure and services.

6.14 Consistent with the sequential approach, Merthyr Tydfil town centre as the largest town centre would be expected to be the main focus for retail and leisure development given it has the best prospects for attracting in-centre investment from developers and multiple operators.

6.15 The existing stock of premises should have a role in accommodating projected growth. Vacant shops within designated centres could accommodate the long term retail and food/beverage floorspace projections. The reoccupation of vacant commercial units should be the priority in the town centre and local centres. The Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station site should continue to be allocated to accommodate any remaining floorspace requirement especially now that plans to relocate the bus station benefit from planning permission.

6.16 Out of centre development site allocations are not required to accommodate projected needs.

Impact Thresholds

6.17 PPW and TAN4 advise that when assessing applications for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses, development outside of town centres which are not in accordance with an up to date local plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is 2,500 sq.m gross or over, but there is a caveat that a LPA's can seek impact assessments for smaller retail applications/site allocations where LPAs believe it will have a significant impact on a retail and commercial centre.

6.18 The limited retail floorspace capacity projections within this report and potential cumulative impact with Trago Mills, suggests retail developments smaller than 2,500 sq.m gross could have a significant impact, particularly developments close to the local centres. The Council should continue to consider the need for an impact assessment based on the individual merits of each planning application and this requirement could be set out in the supporting text of any future policy

Centre Boundaries and Frontages

6.19 The current retail hierarchy remains appropriate and no changes are required. The wording of Policy AS18 is in accordance with PPW and TAN4.

6.20 The designation of a Primary Shopping Area (PSA) and a town centre boundary remains important when applying the sequential approach, in order to direct retail and town centre uses to sustainable locations and determining whether a retail need/impact assessment is required.

6.21 The limited retail floorspace projections in this report suggest overly restrictive shopping frontage policies could lead to an increase in shop vacancies. An extension to the PSA or the introduction of a more restrictive shopping frontage policy would be inappropriate.

6.22 The Council could consider a more flexible approach within the PSA as part of Policy AS19, which could include one or a combination of the following:

1 reducing the minimum Class A1 threshold e.g. down to from 83% to 75%;

2 allowing changes of use for long term vacant premises (that have been actively marketed);

3 removing the reference to corner unit as these units will most probably have a retail frontage of more than 10m;

4 removing or replacing the adjacent unit criteria e.g. from no adjoining non-A1 units to not more than two adjoining units, provided there are not more than 3 non-A1 units in any 5 units.

6.23 Retail centre boundaries should continue to be designated for the local centres in MTCB. These boundaries should be tightly drawn around the retail and commercial uses within each centre. Some policy protection should be considered to safeguard commercial uses within local centres. The following amendments to the retail centre boundaries could be considered:

1 Troedyrhiw Town Centre - the retail centre boundary to include the old police station;

2 Dowlais (Victoria Street) - the retail centre boundary to incorporate the retail units along Pant Road, opposite the surface level car park that provides access to the centre; and

3 Aberfan Centre - the area south of the car park off Bronheulog Terrace is predominantly residential and could be excluded from the centre boundary.

6.24 The Council could also consider a specific policy in the Pontmorlais and upper High Street area to control the further proliferation of Class A3 uses. In order to improve the appearance of this area during the day time the Council could consider introducing a policy and or Article 4 direction that restricts the installation of roller shutters (or particular types of roller shutters).

Future Monitoring

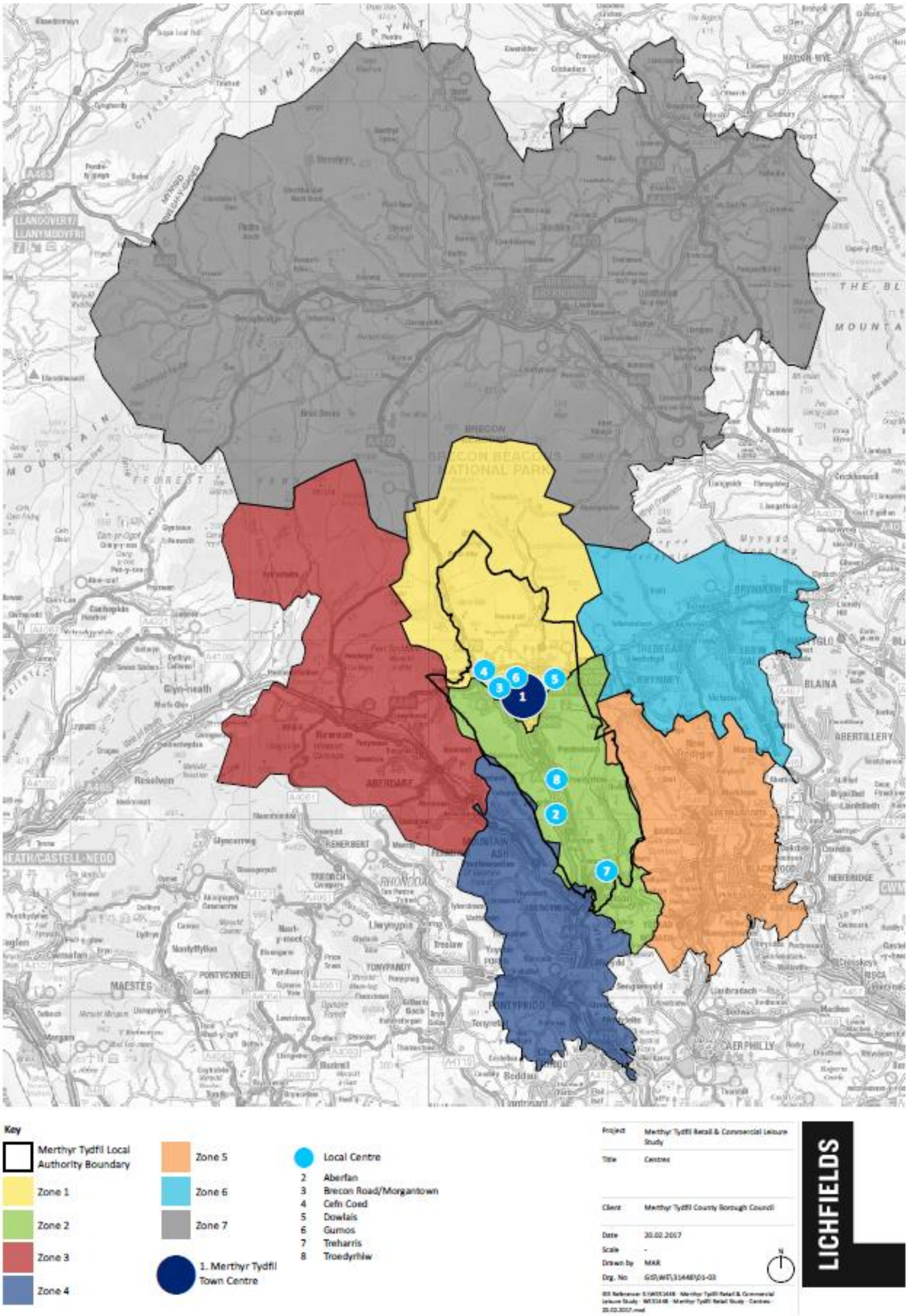
6.25 The recommendations and projections within this study are expected to assist the Council in reviewing development plan policies over the coming years and to assist development control decisions during this period. The study provides a broad overview of the potential need for further retail development in the short – medium term up to 2026, with longer term forecast up to 2031. Projections are subject to uncertainty and forecasts may need to be amended to reflect emerging changes as and when new information becomes available, in particular longer-term projections after 2026 should be treated with caution.

6.26 Projections should be monitored and the floorspace projections rolled forward. The following key assumptions should be updated as necessary:

1. population projections;
2. local expenditure estimates (information from Experian or other recognised data providers);
3. growth rate assumptions for expenditure per capita (information from Experian or other recognised data providers);
4. the impact of potential increases in home and internet shopping (Experian regularly provides projections for internet shopping and these projections will need to be updated at the same time as expenditure and population figures);
5. existing retail floorspace and average turnover to floorspace densities; and
6. implemented development within and around the study area.

6.27 These key inputs into the retail capacity assessment can be amended to provide revised capacity projections.

Appendix 1: Study Area


Key
Merthyr Tydfil Local Authority Boundary
Zone 1
Zone 2
Zone 3
Zone 4
Zone 5
Zone 6
Zone 7
1. Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre
Local Centre
2 Aberfan
3 Brecon Road/Morgantown
4 Cefn Coed
5 Dowlais
6 Gurnos
7 Treharris
8 Troedyrhiw
Project Merthyr Tydfil Retail & Commercial Leisure Study
Title Centres
Client Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Date 20.02.2017
Scale -
Drawn by MAR
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Appendix 2: Convenience Goods Analysis

Table 1 **Study Area Population**

Zone	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	32,516	33,075	33,809	34,635	35,579
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	30,923	31,454	32,153	32,938	33,836
Zone 3 - Aberdare	39,173	39,717	40,103	40,521	40,845
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	57,907	58,711	59,281	59,900	60,379
Zone 5 - Blackwood	75,226	75,941	76,501	76,916	76,998
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	55,468	55,259	55,023	54,669	54,044
Zone 7 - Brecon	19,494	19,381	19,235	19,038	18,717
Total	**310,707**	**313,538**	**316,105**	**318,618**	**320,399**

Sources: *Experian 2011 Census of Population*
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough LDP Preferred Strategy population projections (Zones 1 and 2)
Welsh Assembly Population Projections 2014 based local authority projections

Table 2 **Convenience Goods Expenditure per person per annum (£)**

Zone	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	1,685	1,651	1,644	1,645
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	1,773	1,737	1,730	1,731
Zone 3 - Aberdare	1,811	1,774	1,767	1,768
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	1,858	1,820	1,812	1,814
Zone 5 - Blackwood	1,811	1,774	1,767	1,768
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	1,807	1,771	1,763	1,764
Zone 7 - Brecon	2,047	2,005	1,997	1,998

Sources:
Experian Local Expenditure 2015 (2015 prices)
Growth Rates:-1.1% 2014-2015, 0% 2015-2016,-0.2% 2016-2017, -0.9% 2017 to 2018, 0% p.a. from 2019 to 2023 and 0.1% from 2024
Excludes Special Forms of Trading

Table 3 **Total Convenience Goods Expenditure (£m)**

Zone	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	£55.73	£55.82	£56.94	£58.53
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	£55.77	£55.85	£56.98	£58.57
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£71.93	£71.14	£71.60	£72.21
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£109.08	£107.89	£108.54	£109.53
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£137.53	£135.71	£135.91	£136.13
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£99.85	£97.45	£96.38	£95.33
Zone 7 - Brecon	£39.67	£38.57	£38.02	£37.40
Study Area Total	**£569.57**	**£562.43**	**£564.37**	**£567.70**

Source: Tables 1 and 2

Table 4 **Base Year 2016 Convenience Goods Market Shares (%)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow
Aldi, Merthyr	14.5%	13.9%	3.4%	0.3%	4.5%	0.9%	0.4%	5.0%
Asda, Merthyr	37.8%	13.0%	0.9%	0.6%	1.2%	11.8%	2.4%	10.0%
Lidl, Penygarnddu, Merthyr	6.4%	1.9%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	5.0%
Tesco Extra, Merthyr	25.7%	20.0%	3.6%	0.5%	0.8%	1.5%	2.8%	10.0%
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 1	8.3%	12.0%	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%	0.8%	0.5%	5.0%
Pentrebach	0.4%	3.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Treharris	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 2	4.3%	2.3%	1.2%	1.8%	0.4%	2.1%	2.3%	15.0%
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**97.4%**	**72.0%**	**9.5%**	**4.8%**	**6.9%**	**20.2%**	**8.4%**	
Zone 2 - Nelson	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Zone 3 - Aberdare	0.3%	3.1%	85.7%	7.0%	0.8%	0.2%	0.5%	
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	1.2%	6.5%	1.7%	67.3%	9.0%	0.7%	0.0%	
Zone 5 - Blackwood	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	1.7%	71.5%	0.9%	0.6%	
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	0.9%	0.0%	0.3%	2.6%	1.6%	76.3%	0.4%	
Zone 7 - Brecon	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	80.8%	
Outside Study Area	0.0%	7.6%	2.8%	16.2%	10.2%	1.2%	9.3%	
Other Total	**2.6%**	**28.0%**	**90.5%**	**95.2%**	**93.1%**	**79.8%**	**91.6%**	
TOTAL	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	

Source: NEMS Household Survey December 2016 (weighted results)

Table 5 **Base Year 2016 Convenience Goods Expenditure (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2016	**55.73**	**55.77**	**71.93**	**109.08**	**137.53**	**99.85**	**39.67**		**569.57**
Aldi, Merthyr	8.08	7.75	2.45	0.33	6.19	0.90	0.16	1.36	27.21
Asda, Merthyr	21.07	7.25	0.65	0.65	1.65	11.78	0.95	4.89	48.89
Lidl, Penygarnddu, Merthyr	3.57	1.06	0.14	0.00	0.00	3.10	0.00	0.41	8.28
Tesco Extra, Merthyr	14.32	11.15	2.59	0.55	1.10	1.50	1.11	3.59	35.91
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 1	4.63	6.69	0.14	0.98	0.00	0.80	0.20	0.71	14.15
Pentrebach	0.22	1.67	0.00	0.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	2.80
Treharris	0.00	3.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	3.46
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 2	2.40	1.28	0.86	1.96	0.55	2.10	0.91	1.78	11.84
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**54.28**	**40.15**	**6.83**	**5.24**	**9.49**	**20.17**	**3.33**	**13.05**	**152.55**
Zone 2 - Nelson	0.00	1.73	0.00	0.44	0.00	0.00	0.00		2.17
Zone 3 - Aberdare	0.17	1.73	61.64	7.64	1.10	0.20	0.20		72.67
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	0.67	3.62	1.22	73.41	12.38	0.70	0.00		92.01
Zone 5 - Blackwood	0.00	4.29	0.00	1.85	98.33	0.90	0.24		105.62
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	0.50	0.00	0.22	2.84	2.20	76.19	0.16		82.10
Zone 7 - Brecon	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	32.06		32.67
Outside Study Area	0.00	4.24	2.01	17.67	14.03	1.20	3.69		42.84
Other Sub-Total	**1.45**	**15.62**	**65.09**	**103.85**	**128.04**	**79.68**	**36.34**		**430.07**
TOTAL	**55.73**	**55.77**	**71.93**	**109.08**	**137.53**	**99.85**	**39.67**		**582.62**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 6 **Future 2021 Convenience Goods Expenditure (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2021	**55.82**	**55.85**	**71.14**	**107.89**	**135.71**	**97.45**	**38.57**		**562.43**
Aldi, Merthyr	8.09	7.76	2.42	0.32	6.11	0.88	0.15	1.35	27.09
Asda, Merthyr	21.10	7.26	0.64	0.65	1.63	11.50	0.93	4.86	48.56
Lidl, Penygarnddu, Merthyr	3.57	1.06	0.14	0.00	0.00	3.02	0.00	0.41	8.21
Tesco Extra, Merthyr	14.35	11.17	2.56	0.54	1.09	1.46	1.08	3.58	35.83
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 1	4.63	6.70	0.14	0.97	0.00	0.78	0.19	0.71	14.13
Pentrebach	0.22	1.68	0.00	0.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	2.79
Treharris	0.00	3.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	3.47
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 2	2.40	1.28	0.85	1.94	0.54	2.05	0.89	1.76	11.71
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**54.37**	**40.21**	**6.76**	**5.18**	**9.36**	**19.68**	**3.24**	**12.98**	**151.78**
Zone 2 - Nelson	0.00	1.73	0.00	0.43	0.00	0.00	0.00		2.16
Zone 3 - Aberdare	0.17	1.73	60.97	7.55	1.09	0.19	0.19		71.89
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	0.67	3.63	1.21	72.61	12.21	0.68	0.00		91.02
Zone 5 - Blackwood	0.00	4.30	0.00	1.83	97.03	0.88	0.23		104.28
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	0.50	0.00	0.21	2.81	2.17	74.35	0.15		80.20
Zone 7 - Brecon	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.49	31.16		31.76
Outside Study Area	0.00	4.24	1.99	17.48	13.84	1.17	3.59		42.31
Other Sub-Total	**1.45**	**15.64**	**64.38**	**102.71**	**126.35**	**77.76**	**35.33**		**423.62**
TOTAL	**55.82**	**55.85**	**71.14**	**107.89**	**135.71**	**97.45**	**38.57**		**575.41**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 7 **Future 2026 Convenience Goods Expenditure (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2026	**56.94**	**56.98**	**71.60**	**108.54**	**135.91**	**96.38**	**38.02**		**564.37**
Aldi, Merthyr	8.26	7.92	2.43	0.33	6.12	0.87	0.15	1.37	27.44
Asda, Merthyr	21.52	7.41	0.64	0.65	1.63	11.37	0.91	4.90	49.05
Lidl, Penygarnddu, Merthyr	3.64	1.08	0.14	0.00	0.00	2.99	0.00	0.41	8.27
Tesco Extra, Merthyr	14.63	11.40	2.58	0.54	1.09	1.45	1.06	3.64	36.39
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 1	4.73	6.84	0.14	0.98	0.00	0.77	0.19	0.72	14.36
Pentrebach	0.23	1.71	0.00	0.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	2.84
Treharris	0.00	3.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.18	3.54
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 2	2.45	1.31	0.86	1.95	0.54	2.02	0.87	1.77	11.78
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**55.46**	**41.03**	**6.80**	**5.21**	**9.38**	**19.47**	**3.19**	**13.13**	**153.67**
Zone 2 - Nelson	0.00	1.77	0.00	0.43	0.00	0.00	0.00		2.20
Zone 3 - Aberdare	0.17	1.77	61.36	7.60	1.09	0.19	0.19		72.37
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	0.68	3.70	1.22	73.05	12.23	0.67	0.00		91.56
Zone 5 - Blackwood	0.00	4.39	0.00	1.85	97.18	0.87	0.23		104.50
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	0.51	0.00	0.21	2.82	2.17	73.54	0.15		79.42
Zone 7 - Brecon	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.48	30.72		31.31
Outside Study Area	0.00	4.33	2.00	17.58	13.86	1.16	3.54		42.47
Other Sub-Total	**1.48**	**15.96**	**64.80**	**103.33**	**126.53**	**76.91**	**34.82**		**423.84**
TOTAL	**56.94**	**56.98**	**71.60**	**108.54**	**135.91**	**96.38**	**38.02**		**577.51**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 8 **Future 2031 Convenience Goods Expenditure (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inlfow	Total
Expenditure 2031	**58.53**	**58.57**	**72.21**	**109.53**	**136.13**	**95.33**	**37.40**		**567.70**
Aldi, Merthyr	8.49	8.14	2.46	0.33	6.13	0.86	0.15	1.40	27.94
Asda, Merthyr	22.12	7.61	0.65	0.66	1.63	11.25	0.90	4.98	49.81
Lidl, Penygarnddu, Merthyr	3.75	1.11	0.14	0.00	0.00	2.96	0.00	0.42	8.38
Tesco Extra, Merthyr	15.04	11.71	2.60	0.55	1.09	1.43	1.05	3.72	37.19
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 1	4.86	7.03	0.14	0.99	0.00	0.76	0.19	0.74	14.70
Pentrebach	0.23	1.76	0.00	0.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15	2.90
Treharris	0.00	3.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.18	3.64
Other Merthyr Tydifl Zone 2	2.52	1.35	0.87	1.97	0.54	2.00	0.86	1.78	11.89
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**57.01**	**42.17**	**6.86**	**5.26**	**9.39**	**19.26**	**3.14**	**13.36**	**156.45**
Zone 2 - Nelson	0.00	1.82	0.00	0.44	0.00	0.00	0.00		2.25
Zone 3 - Aberdare	0.18	1.82	61.89	7.67	1.09	0.19	0.19		73.01
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	0.70	3.81	1.23	73.71	12.25	0.67	0.00		92.37
Zone 5 - Blackwood	0.00	4.51	0.00	1.86	97.34	0.86	0.22		104.79
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	0.53	0.00	0.22	2.85	2.18	72.74	0.15		78.66
Zone 7 - Brecon	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.48	30.22		30.81
Outside Study Area	0.00	4.45	2.02	17.74	13.89	1.14	3.48		42.72
Other Sub-Total	**1.52**	**16.40**	**65.35**	**104.27**	**126.74**	**76.08**	**34.26**		**424.62**
TOTAL	**58.53**	**58.57**	**72.21**	**109.53**	**136.13**	**95.33**	**37.40**		**581.06**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 9 **Convenience Goods Floorspace and Benchmark Turnover 2016**

Area	Store	Sales Floorspace (sq.m net)	Convenience Goods Floorspace (%)	Convenience Goods Floorspace (sq.m net)	Turnover (£ per sq.m)	Total Turnover (£m)
Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	Aldi	787	90%	708	£11,557	£8.19
	Asda	7,240	50%	3,620	£15,213	£55.07
	Iceland, St. Tydfil Square	364	95%	346	£8,045	£2.78
	Lidl, Penygarnddu	1,578	80%	1,262	£7,723	£9.75
	Tesco Extra	4,488	65%	2,917	£11,058	£32.26
	Farmfoods	654	95%	621	£7,000	£4.35
	Other Merthyr Tydfil town centre	1,300	100%	1,300	£5,000	£6.50
	Other Zone 1	1,300	100%	1,300	£4,000	£5.20
	Sub Total	**17,711**		**12,075**		**£124.10**
Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	Iceland, Pentrebach	418	95%	397	£8,045	£3.19
	Co-op, Pentrebach	1,697	85%	1,442	£8,903	£12.84
	Treharris	620	100%	620	£4,000	£2.48
	Other Zone 2	500	100%	500	£4,000	£2.00
	M&S Cyfarthfa	873	95%	829	£10,474	£8.69
	Sub-Total	**4,108**		**3,789**		**£29.20**
TOTAL		**21,819**		**15,864**		**£153.30**

Source: *MTBC land use survey 2016, VOA, ORC StorePoint and Mintel*

Table 10 **Convenience Goods Floorspace Capacity**

Area	2016	2021	2026	2031
Available Expenditure (£M)	152.55	151.78	153.67	156.45
Benchmark Turnover of Existing Facilities (£M)	153.30	153.30	153.30	153.30
Surplus/Deficit Expenditure (£M)	-0.75	-1.51	0.37	3.15
Turnover Density New Floorspace (£ psm)	£11,000	£11,000	£11,000	£11,000
Floorspace Projection (Sq.M net)	-68	-138	34	286
Floorspace Projection (Sq.M gross)	-98	-197	49	409

Source: Tables 5 to 9

Appendix 3: Comparison Goods Analysis

Table 1 **Study Area Population**

Zone	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	32,516	33,075	33,809	34,635	35,579
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	30,923	31,454	32,153	32,938	33,836
Zone 3 - Aberdare	39,173	39,717	40,103	40,521	40,845
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	57,907	58,711	59,281	59,900	60,379
Zone 5 - Blackwood	75,226	75,941	76,501	76,916	76,998
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	55,468	55,259	55,023	54,669	54,044
Zone 7 - Brecon	19,494	19,381	19,235	19,038	18,717
Study Area Total	**310,707**	**313,538**	**316,105**	**318,618**	**320,399**

Sources: *Experian 2011 Census of Population*
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough LDP Preferred Strategy popluation projections (Zones 1 and 2)
Welsh Assembly Population Projections 2014 based local authority projections

Table 2 **Comparison Expenditure per person per annum (£)**

Zone	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	1,912	2,080	2,411	2,816
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	2,131	2,319	2,688	3,139
Zone 3 - Aberdare	2,104	2,289	2,653	3,098
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	2,197	2,390	2,771	3,236
Zone 5 - Blackwood	2,236	2,433	2,821	3,294
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	2,026	2,205	2,556	2,985
Zone 7 - Brecon	2,873	3,126	3,624	4,232

Sources:
Experian Local Expenditure 2015 (2015 prices)
Growth Rates: 3.3% in 2016, 1.4% 2017, 1.0% in 2018, 3% per annum 2019 to 2023 and 3.2% from 2024
Excludes Special Forms of Trading

Table 3 **Total Comparison Expenditure (£m)**

Zone	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	£63.24	£70.32	£83.50	£100.19
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	£67.03	£74.56	£88.54	£106.21
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£83.56	£91.80	£107.50	£126.54
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£128.99	£141.68	£165.98	£195.39
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£169.80	£186.13	£216.98	£253.63
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£111.95	£121.33	£139.74	£161.32
Zone 7 - Brecon	£55.68	£60.13	£68.99	£79.21
Study Area Total	**£680.26**	**£745.94**	**£871.24**	**£1,022.49**

Source: Tables 1 and 2

Table 4 **Base Year 2016 Comparison Market Shares (%)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	39.5%	23.7%	7.2%	4.9%	2.9%	10.0%	6.7%	5.0%
Dowlais Top Retail Park	1.8%	2.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	2.5%
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	0.9%	1.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Cyfarthfa Retail Park	35.5%	36.7%	42.9%	7.7%	16.9%	30.6%	27.4%	15.0%
Pentrebach Retail Park	0.3%	1.1%	0.8%	0.1%	1.2%	0.1%	0.0%	2.5%
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	0.3%	2.7%	0.1%	0.7%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	2.5%
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**78.3%**	**67.7%**	**51.2%**	**13.7%**	**21.5%**	**41.2%**	**34.1%**	
Cardiff	18.1%	16.2%	15.4%	27.6%	21.0%	14.8%	9.3%	
Zone 3 - Aberdare	0.7%	1.0%	26.2%	3.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	0.6%	5.30%	0.2%	44.1%	1.1%	0.2%	0.0%	
Zone 5 - Blackwood	0.0%	2.30%	0.0%	0.0%	28.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.9%	32.5%	0.1%	
Zone 7 - Brecon	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	43.4%	
Outside Study Area (ex Cardiff)	2.1%	6.9%	6.5%	11.6%	27.2%	11.0%	12.9%	
Other Total	**21.7%**	**32.3%**	**48.8%**	**86.3%**	**78.5%**	**58.8%**	**65.9%**	
TOTAL	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	

Source: NEMS Household Survey December 2016 (weighted results).

Table 5 **Base Year 2016 Comparison Expenditure Patterns (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2016	**£63.24**	**£67.03**	**£83.56**	**£128.99**	**£169.80**	**£111.95**	**£55.68**		**£680.26**
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	£24.98	£15.89	£6.02	£6.32	£4.92	£11.20	£3.73	£3.84	£76.90
Dowlais Top Retail Park	£1.14	£1.61	£0.17	£0.00	£0.85	£0.45	£0.00	£0.22	£4.43
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	£0.57	£0.74	£0.00	£0.39	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.03	£1.73
Cyfarthfa Retail Park	£22.45	£24.60	£35.85	£9.93	£28.70	£34.26	£15.26	£30.18	£201.23
Pentrebach Retail Park	£0.19	£0.74	£0.67	£0.13	£2.04	£0.11	£0.00	£0.20	£4.08
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	£0.19	£1.81	£0.08	£0.90	£0.00	£0.11	£0.00	£0.06	£3.16
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**£49.52**	**£45.38**	**£42.78**	**£17.67**	**£36.51**	**£46.13**	**£18.99**	**£34.55**	**£291.52**
Cardiff	£11.45	£10.86	£12.87	£35.60	£35.66	£16.57	£5.18		£128.18
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£0.44	£0.67	£21.89	£3.87	£0.00	£0.34	£0.11		£27.32
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£0.38	£3.55	£0.17	£56.88	£1.87	£0.22	£0.00		£63.07
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£0.00	£1.54	£0.00	£0.00	£47.55	£0.00	£0.00		£49.09
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£0.13	£0.20	£0.25	£0.00	£1.53	£36.39	£0.06		£38.55
Zone 7 - Brecon	£0.00	£0.20	£0.17	£0.00	£0.51	£0.00	£24.17		£25.04
Outside Study Area (ex Cardiff)	£1.33	£4.62	£5.43	£14.96	£46.19	£12.32	£7.18		£92.03
Other Total	**£13.72**	**£21.65**	**£40.78**	**£111.32**	**£133.30**	**£65.83**	**£36.70**		**£423.29**
TOTAL	**£63.24**	**£67.03**	**£83.56**	**£128.99**	**£169.80**	**£111.95**	**£55.68**		**£714.81**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 6 **Future Comparison Market Shares (%)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow
Trago Mills	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	3.0%	25.0%
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	37.6%	22.6%	6.9%	4.8%	2.8%	9.8%	6.6%	5.0%
Dowlais Top Retail Park	1.5%	2.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	5.0%
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	0.9%	1.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Cyfarthfa Retail Park	30.4%	31.4%	37.2%	7.2%	15.7%	28.7%	26.0%	15.0%
Pentrebach Retail Park	0.3%	0.9%	0.7%	0.1%	1.1%	0.1%	0.0%	5.0%
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	0.3%	2.6%	0.1%	0.7%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	2.0%
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**81.0%**	**70.7%**	**55.1%**	**17.1%**	**24.1%**	**43.1%**	**35.6%**	
Cardiff	15.5%	13.7%	13.2%	25.8%	18.5%	13.6%	8.6%	
Zone 3 - Aberdare	0.6%	0.9%	24.5%	2.9%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	0.6%	4.9%	0.2%	42.6%	1.1%	0.2%	0.0%	
Zone 5 - Blackwood	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	28.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.9%	32.0%	0.1%	
Zone 7 - Brecon	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	42.8%	
Outside Study Area (ex Cardiff)	2.1%	6.9%	6.5%	11.6%	27.1%	10.8%	12.7%	
Other Total	**19.0%**	**29.3%**	**44.9%**	**82.9%**	**75.9%**	**56.9%**	**64.4%**	
TOTAL	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	

Source: NEMS Household Survey December 2016 (weighted results) and Lichfields' adjustments for Trago Mill.

Table 7 **Future 2021 Comparison Expenditure Patterns (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2021	**£70.32**	**£74.56**	**£91.80**	**£141.68**	**£186.13**	**£121.33**	**£60.13**		**£745.94**
Trago Mills	£7.03	£7.46	£9.18	£5.67	£7.45	£4.85	£1.80	£14.48	£57.92
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	£26.44	£16.85	£6.33	£6.80	£5.21	£11.89	£3.97	£4.08	£81.58
Dowlais Top Retail Park	£1.05	£1.57	£0.18	£0.00	£0.93	£0.49	£0.00	£0.22	£4.44
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	£0.63	£0.82	£0.00	£0.43	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.04	£1.92
Cyfarthfa Retail Park	£21.38	£23.41	£34.15	£10.20	£29.22	£34.82	£15.63	£29.79	£198.61
Pentrebach Retail Park	£0.21	£0.67	£0.64	£0.14	£2.05	£0.12	£0.00	£0.20	£4.04
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	£0.21	£1.94	£0.09	£0.99	£0.00	£0.12	£0.00	£0.07	£3.42
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**£56.96**	**£52.72**	**£50.58**	**£24.23**	**£44.86**	**£52.29**	**£21.41**	**£48.88**	**£351.92**
Cardiff	£10.90	£10.22	£12.12	£36.55	£34.43	£16.50	£5.17		£125.89
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£0.42	£0.67	£22.49	£4.11	£0.00	£0.36	£0.12		£28.18
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£0.42	£3.65	£0.18	£60.36	£2.05	£0.24	£0.00		£66.91
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£0.00	£1.71	£0.00	£0.00	£52.12	£0.00	£0.00		£53.83
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£0.14	£0.22	£0.28	£0.00	£1.68	£38.82	£0.06		£41.20
Zone 7 - Brecon	£0.00	£0.22	£0.18	£0.00	£0.56	£0.00	£25.73		£26.70
Outside Study Area (ex Cardiff)	£1.48	£5.14	£5.97	£16.44	£50.44	£13.10	£7.64		£100.20
Other Total	**£13.36**	**£21.85**	**£41.22**	**£117.45**	**£141.27**	**£69.03**	**£38.72**		**£442.91**
TOTAL	**£70.32**	**£74.56**	**£91.80**	**£141.68**	**£186.13**	**£121.33**	**£60.13**		**£794.82**

Source: Table 3 and 6

Table 8 **Future 2026 Comparison Expenditure Patterns (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2026	**£83.50**	**£88.54**	**£107.50**	**£165.98**	**£216.98**	**£139.74**	**£68.99**		**£871.24**
Trago Mills	£8.35	£8.85	£10.75	£6.64	£8.68	£5.59	£2.07	£16.98	£67.91
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	£31.40	£20.01	£7.42	£7.97	£6.08	£13.69	£4.55	£4.80	£95.91
Dowlais Top Retail Park	£1.25	£1.86	£0.22	£0.00	£1.08	£0.56	£0.00	£0.26	£5.23
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	£0.75	£0.97	£0.00	£0.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.05	£2.27
Cyfarthfa Retail Park	£25.39	£27.80	£39.99	£11.95	£34.07	£40.10	£17.94	£34.81	£232.04
Pentrebach Retail Park	£0.25	£0.80	£0.75	£0.17	£2.39	£0.14	£0.00	£0.24	£4.73
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	£0.25	£2.30	£0.11	£1.16	£0.00	£0.14	£0.00	£0.08	£4.04
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**£67.64**	**£62.60**	**£59.23**	**£28.38**	**£52.29**	**£60.23**	**£24.56**	**£57.20**	**£412.14**
Cardiff	£12.94	£12.13	£14.19	£42.82	£40.14	£19.00	£5.93		£147.17
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£0.50	£0.80	£26.34	£4.81	£0.00	£0.42	£0.14		£33.01
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£0.50	£4.34	£0.22	£70.71	£2.39	£0.28	£0.00		£78.43
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£0.00	£2.04	£0.00	£0.00	£60.75	£0.00	£0.00		£62.79
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£0.17	£0.27	£0.32	£0.00	£1.95	£44.72	£0.07		£47.49
Zone 7 - Brecon	£0.00	£0.27	£0.22	£0.00	£0.65	£0.00	£29.53		£30.66
Outside Study Area (ex Cardiff)	£1.75	£6.11	£6.99	£19.25	£58.80	£15.09	£8.76		£116.76
Other Total	**£15.87**	**£25.94**	**£48.27**	**£137.60**	**£164.69**	**£79.51**	**£44.43**		**£516.31**
TOTAL	**£83.50**	**£88.54**	**£107.50**	**£165.98**	**£216.98**	**£139.74**	**£68.99**		**£928.44**

Source: Table 3 and 6

Table 9 **Future 2031 Comparison Expenditure Patterns (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2031	**£100.19**	**£106.21**	**£126.54**	**£195.39**	**£253.63**	**£161.32**	**£79.21**		**£1,022.49**
Trago Mills	£10.02	£10.62	£12.65	£7.82	£10.15	£6.45	£2.38	£20.03	£80.11
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	£37.67	£24.00	£8.73	£9.38	£7.10	£15.81	£5.23	£5.68	£113.60
Dowlais Top Retail Park	£1.50	£2.23	£0.25	£0.00	£1.27	£0.65	£0.00	£0.31	£6.21
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	£0.90	£1.17	£0.00	£0.59	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.05	£2.71
Cyfarthfa Retail Park	£30.46	£33.35	£47.07	£14.07	£39.82	£46.30	£20.60	£40.88	£272.54
Pentrebach Retail Park	£0.30	£0.96	£0.89	£0.20	£2.79	£0.16	£0.00	£0.28	£5.57
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	£0.30	£2.76	£0.13	£1.37	£0.00	£0.16	£0.00	£0.10	£4.81
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**£81.15**	**£75.09**	**£69.72**	**£33.41**	**£61.13**	**£69.53**	**£28.20**	**£67.33**	**£485.56**
Cardiff	£15.53	£14.55	£16.70	£50.41	£46.92	£21.94	£6.81		£172.87
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£0.60	£0.96	£31.00	£5.67	£0.00	£0.48	£0.16		£38.87
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£0.60	£5.20	£0.25	£83.23	£2.79	£0.32	£0.00		£92.41
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£0.00	£2.44	£0.00	£0.00	£71.02	£0.00	£0.00		£73.46
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£0.20	£0.32	£0.38	£0.00	£2.28	£51.62	£0.08		£54.88
Zone 7 - Brecon	£0.00	£0.32	£0.25	£0.00	£0.76	£0.00	£33.90		£35.24
Outside Study Area (ex Cardiff)	£2.10	£7.33	£8.23	£22.66	£68.73	£17.42	£10.06		£136.54
Other Total	**£19.04**	**£31.12**	**£56.82**	**£161.98**	**£192.51**	**£91.79**	**£51.01**		**£604.26**
TOTAL	**£100.19**	**£106.21**	**£126.54**	**£195.39**	**£253.63**	**£161.32**	**£79.21**		**£1,089.82**

Source: Table 3 and 6

Table 10 **Comparison Floorspace Capacity**

	2016	2021	2026	2031
Available Expenditure (£M)	291.52	351.92	412.14	485.56
Turnover of Existing Facilities (£M)	291.52	321.87	355.37	392.35
Turnover Trago Mills* (£M)	0.00	57.90	63.93	70.58
Available Expenditure Surplus (£M)	0.00	-27.85	-7.16	22.63
Turnover Density New Floorspace (£ per sq.m)	£6,000	£6,624	£7,314	£8,075
Floorspace Projection (sq.m net)	0	-4,204	-978	2,802
Floorspace Projection (sq.m gross)	0	-5,605	-1,305	3,736

Source: Tables 5 to 8

** 17,995 sq.m net at £3,318 psm - Trago Mills company average trading density*

Appendix 4: Food and Beverage Analysis

Table 1 **Study Area Population**

Zone	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	32,516	33,075	33,809	34,635	35,579
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	30,923	31,454	32,153	32,938	33,836
Zone 3 - Aberdare	39,173	39,717	40,103	40,521	40,845
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	57,907	58,711	59,281	59,900	60,379
Zone 5 - Blackwood	75,226	75,941	76,501	76,916	76,998
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	55,468	55,259	55,023	54,669	54,044
Zone 7 - Brecon	19,494	19,381	19,235	19,038	18,717
Study Area Total	**310,707**	**313,538**	**316,105**	**318,618**	**320,399**

Sources: *Experian 2011 Census of Population*
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough LDP Preferred Strategy population projections (Zones 1 and 2)
Welsh Assembly Population Projections 2014 based local authority projections

Table 2 **Food and Beverage Expenditure per person per annum (£)**

Zone	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	684	716	768	828
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	766	802	860	927
Zone 3 - Aberdare	763	799	857	923
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	855	895	960	1,035
Zone 5 - Blackwood	807	845	906	977
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	728	762	818	881
Zone 7 - Brecon	1,008	1,055	1,132	1,220

Sources:
Experian Local Expenditure 2015 (2015 prices)
Growth Rates: 1.3% 2014-2015, 1.9% 2015-2016, 0.5% 2016-2017, 0.2% 2017 to 2018, 1.3% p.a. from 2019 to 2023 and 1.5% from 2024

Table 3 **Total Food and Beverage Expenditure (£m)**

Zone	2016	2021	2026	2031
Zone 1 - Merthyr Tydfil North	£22.62	£24.21	£26.61	£29.45
Zone 2 - Merthyr Tydfil South	£24.09	£25.78	£28.34	£31.36
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£30.30	£32.03	£34.73	£37.71
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£50.20	£53.06	£57.53	£62.47
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£61.28	£64.63	£69.72	£75.19
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£40.23	£41.93	£44.70	£47.61
Zone 7 - Brecon	£19.54	£20.30	£21.56	£22.83
Study Area Total	**£248.27**	**£261.93**	**£283.19**	**£306.62**

Source: Tables 1 and 2

Table 4 **Base Year 2016 Food and Beverage Market Shares (%)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	66.6%	25.3%	9.9%	10.2%	3.1%	19.7%	8.3%	5.0%
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	6.1%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	1.7%	0.0%	5.0%
Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	3.7%	17.9%	9.0%	3.0%	1.9%	11.4%	22.9%	5.0%
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**76.4%**	**44.5%**	**18.9%**	**13.2%**	**7.1%**	**32.8%**	**31.2%**	
Cardiff	15.9%	29.1%	31.8%	21.8%	23.8%	12.7%	3.2%	
Zone 2 - Nelson	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	
Zone 3 - Aberdare	0.0%	1.5%	33.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	1.9%	6.9%	0.0%	41.5%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	
Zone 5 - Blackwood	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	37.9%	0.2%	0.0%	
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	26.4%	0.8%	
Zone 7 - Brecon	0.6%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	55.1%	
Outside Study Area	5.2%	12.6%	14.0%	23.5%	27.4%	27.1%	9.7%	
Other Total	**23.6%**	**55.5%**	**81.1%**	**86.8%**	**92.9%**	**67.2%**	**68.8%**	
TOTAL	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	

Source: NEMS Household Survey December 2016 (weighted results).

Table 5 **Base Year 2016 Food and Beverage Expenditure Patterns (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2016	**£22.62**	**£24.09**	**£30.30**	**£50.20**	**£61.28**	**£40.23**	**£19.54**		**£248.27**
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	£15.07	£6.10	£3.00	£5.12	£1.90	£7.93	£1.62	£2.14	£42.87
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	£1.38	£0.31	£0.00	£0.00	£1.29	£0.68	£0.00	£0.19	£3.86
Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	£0.84	£4.31	£2.73	£1.51	£1.16	£4.59	£4.47	£1.03	£20.64
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**£17.28**	**£10.72**	**£5.73**	**£6.63**	**£4.35**	**£13.19**	**£6.10**	**£3.37**	**£67.37**
Cardiff	£3.60	£7.01	£9.64	£10.94	£14.59	£5.11	£0.62		£51.51
Zone 2 - Nelson	£0.00	£0.53	£0.00	£0.00	£1.29	£0.00	£0.00		£1.82
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£0.00	£0.36	£10.27	£0.00	£0.00	£0.32	£0.00		£10.96
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£0.43	£1.66	£0.00	£20.83	£0.86	£0.00	£0.00		£23.78
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£0.00	£0.58	£0.00	£0.00	£23.23	£0.08	£0.00		£23.89
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£0.00	£0.19	£0.00	£0.00	£0.18	£10.62	£0.16		£11.16
Zone 7 - Brecon	£0.14	£0.00	£0.42	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£10.77		£11.33
Outside Study Area	£1.18	£3.04	£4.24	£11.80	£16.79	£10.90	£1.89		£49.83
Other Total	**£5.34**	**£13.37**	**£24.58**	**£43.57**	**£56.93**	**£27.03**	**£13.44**		**£184.27**
TOTAL	**£22.62**	**£24.09**	**£30.30**	**£50.20**	**£61.28**	**£40.23**	**£19.54**		**£251.64**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 6 **Future 2021 Food and Beverage Expenditure Patterns (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2021	**£24.21**	**£25.78**	**£32.03**	**£53.06**	**£64.63**	**£41.93**	**£20.30**		**£261.93**
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	£16.12	£6.52	£3.17	£5.41	£2.00	£8.26	£1.68	£2.27	£45.45
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	£1.48	£0.34	£0.00	£0.00	£1.36	£0.71	£0.00	£0.20	£4.09
Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	£0.90	£4.61	£2.88	£1.59	£1.23	£4.78	£4.65	£1.09	£21.73
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**£18.49**	**£11.47**	**£6.05**	**£7.00**	**£4.59**	**£13.75**	**£6.33**	**£3.56**	**£71.26**
Cardiff	£3.85	£7.50	£10.19	£11.57	£15.38	£5.33	£0.65		£54.46
Zone 2 - Nelson	£0.00	£0.57	£0.00	£0.00	£1.36	£0.00	£0.00		£1.92
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£0.00	£0.39	£10.86	£0.00	£0.00	£0.34	£0.00		£11.58
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£0.46	£1.78	£0.00	£22.02	£0.90	£0.00	£0.00		£25.16
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£0.00	£0.62	£0.00	£0.00	£24.49	£0.08	£0.00		£25.20
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£0.00	£0.21	£0.00	£0.00	£0.19	£11.07	£0.17		£11.64
Zone 7 - Brecon	£0.15	£0.00	£0.45	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£11.19		£11.79
Outside Study Area	£1.26	£3.25	£4.48	£12.47	£17.71	£11.36	£1.96		£52.49
Other Total	**£5.71**	**£14.31**	**£25.98**	**£46.05**	**£60.04**	**£28.18**	**£13.96**		**£194.23**
TOTAL	**£24.21**	**£25.78**	**£32.03**	**£53.06**	**£64.63**	**£41.93**	**£20.30**		**£265.49**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 7 **Futurer 2026 Food and Beverage Expenditure Patterns (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2026	**£26.61**	**£28.34**	**£34.73**	**£57.53**	**£69.72**	**£44.70**	**£21.56**		**£283.19**
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	£17.72	£7.17	£3.44	£5.87	£2.16	£8.81	£1.79	£2.47	£49.43
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	£1.62	£0.37	£0.00	£0.00	£1.46	£0.76	£0.00	£0.22	£4.44
Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	£0.98	£5.07	£3.13	£1.73	£1.32	£5.10	£4.94	£1.17	£23.44
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**£20.33**	**£12.61**	**£6.56**	**£7.59**	**£4.95**	**£14.66**	**£6.73**	**£3.87**	**£77.30**
Cardiff	£4.23	£8.25	£11.04	£12.54	£16.59	£5.68	£0.69		£59.02
Zone 2 - Nelson	£0.00	£0.62	£0.00	£0.00	£1.46	£0.00	£0.00		£2.09
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£0.00	£0.43	£11.77	£0.00	£0.00	£0.36	£0.00		£12.56
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£0.51	£1.96	£0.00	£23.87	£0.98	£0.00	£0.00		£27.31
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£0.00	£0.68	£0.00	£0.00	£26.42	£0.09	£0.00		£27.19
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£0.00	£0.23	£0.00	£0.00	£0.21	£11.80	£0.18		£12.41
Zone 7 - Brecon	£0.16	£0.00	£0.49	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£11.89		£12.53
Outside Study Area	£1.38	£3.57	£4.86	£13.52	£19.10	£12.12	£2.08		£56.63
Other Total	**£6.28**	**£15.73**	**£28.17**	**£49.93**	**£64.77**	**£30.04**	**£14.83**		**£209.75**
TOTAL	**£26.61**	**£28.34**	**£34.73**	**£57.53**	**£69.72**	**£44.70**	**£21.55**		**£287.05**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 8 **Future 2031 Food and Beverage Expenditure Patterns (£m)**

Location	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Inflow	Total
Expenditure 2031	**£29.45**	**£31.36**	**£37.71**	**£62.47**	**£75.19**	**£47.61**	**£22.83**		**£306.62**
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre	£19.61	£7.93	£3.73	£6.37	£2.33	£9.38	£1.89	£2.70	£53.95
Other Merthyr Tydfil Zone 1	£1.80	£0.41	£0.00	£0.00	£1.58	£0.81	£0.00	£0.24	£4.83
Merthyr Tydfil Zone 2	£1.09	£5.61	£3.39	£1.87	£1.43	£5.43	£5.23	£1.27	£25.32
Merthyr Tydfil Total	**£22.50**	**£13.96**	**£7.13**	**£8.25**	**£5.34**	**£15.62**	**£7.12**	**£4.21**	**£84.11**
Cardiff	£4.68	£9.13	£11.99	£13.62	£17.90	£6.05	£0.73		£64.09
Zone 2 - Nelson	£0.00	£0.69	£0.00	£0.00	£1.58	£0.00	£0.00		£2.27
Zone 3 - Aberdare	£0.00	£0.47	£12.78	£0.00	£0.00	£0.38	£0.00		£13.64
Zone 4 - Pontypridd	£0.56	£2.16	£0.00	£25.92	£1.05	£0.00	£0.00		£29.70
Zone 5 - Blackwood	£0.00	£0.75	£0.00	£0.00	£28.50	£0.10	£0.00		£29.35
Zone 6 - Ebbw Vale	£0.00	£0.25	£0.00	£0.00	£0.23	£12.57	£0.19		£13.23
Zone 7 - Brecon	£0.18	£0.00	£0.53	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£12.59		£13.29
Outside Study Area	£1.53	£3.95	£5.28	£14.68	£20.60	£12.90	£2.20		£61.15
Other Total	**£6.95**	**£17.41**	**£30.58**	**£54.22**	**£69.85**	**£31.99**	**£15.71**		**£226.71**
TOTAL	**£29.45**	**£31.36**	**£37.71**	**£62.47**	**£75.19**	**£47.61**	**£22.83**		**£310.83**

Source: Table 3 and 4

Table 9 **Food and Beverage Floorspace Projections (Sq.M)**

	2016	2021	2026	2031
Available Expenditure (£M)	£67.37	£71.26	£77.30	£84.11
Turnover of Existing Facilities (£M)	£67.37	£69.07	£70.81	£72.60
Available Expenditure Surplus/Deficit £M	0.00	2.19	6.49	11.51
Turnover Density New Floorspace (£ per sq.m)	£5,000	£5,126	£5,256	£5,388
Floorspace Projection (sq.m gross)	0	428	1,235	2,136

Source: Tables 5 to 8

Appendix 5: Analysis of Centres

Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre

Merthyr Tydfil is the principal town within MTCB of Merthyr Tydfil. It functions as the main commercial, retail and service centre of MTCB and the Heads of the Valleys Region. The Local Development Plan (2011) states that Merthyr Tydfil town centre is the favoured location for retail development, being situated at the top of the retail hierarchy. It has a good selection of retail and service uses and its key roles include:

- Convenience shopping – including a large Tesco Extra (4488 sq.m net), Iceland (364 sq.m net) and Farmfoods (654 sq.m net). An Aldi supermarket (787 sq.m net) lies on the edge of the town centre boundary. These stores are complemented by a number of smaller convenience stores such as Premier Fountain Shop and Bakery (200 sq.m), Trevithick Stores (220 sq.m) and Buy 4 Save Continental Supermarket (230 sq.m).
- Comparison shopping – There is a moderate number of multiples (chain stores) including Burtons, Clarks, Pandora, New Look, Wilkinson, Boots, Trespass, Bon Marche, Peacocks and The Works. There is a good range of independent shops selling a range of comparison goods.
- Services – There is good range of banks with most of the national banks represented (Barclays, HSBC, Natwest, Halifax, Santander). There is a good range of travel agents and estate agents. There is a high proportion of hairdressers/barbers. There is a good range of cafes but only a limited amount of restaurants. There is a large amount of takeaways in the town centre.
- Entertainment – In terms of town centre entertainment the main attractions are Redhouse Cymru (an arts and crafts multi-purpose venue) and Theatre Soar. There are also a number of pubs and bars.

The household shopper survey results (Appendix 6) indicate that Merthyr Tydfil (including the edge of centre Aldi) is the main destination for 10.47% of shoppers for food shopping and 11.41% for non-food shopping.

The convenience goods expenditure attracted to Zone 1 (including Merthyr Tydfil town centre) is £133.31 million in 2016 (Appendix 2), which is equivalent to 88% of the total convenience goods spending attracted to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough stores and centres. The 2009 Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study referred to the convenience goods turnover of the Zone 1 in 2006 as £43.6 million. The Zones are similar but not identical.

The comparison goods expenditure attracted to Merthyr Tydfil town centre is £76.38 million in 2016 (Appendix 3), equivalent to 26% of the total comparison goods spending in Merthyr Tydfil CBC as a whole. Cyfarthfa Retail Park attracts £200 million.

The 2009 retail study suggested the comparison goods turnover of Merthyr Tydfil and Cyfarthfa was £194.7 million.

Food and beverage expenditure attracted to Merthyr Tydfil town centre is £42.6 million (Appendix 4), 64% of the total food and beverage spending within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. The combined turnover of Merthyr town centre is approximately £168.48 million, split approximately 29.3% convenience goods trade, 45.3% comparison goods and 25% food and beverage. This indicates Merthyr town centre's varied role.

Merthyr Tydfil town centre is ranked 492nd by Venuescore in 2016. By way of comparison the town centre was ranked 365th in 2013 and 328th in 2010. This decline may have been impacted upon by the rise of Cyfarthfa Retail Park in the rankings from 722nd in 2010 to 714 in 2013 and 568th in 2016 which is only 7 Venuescore points below Merthyr Town Centre. Cyfarthfa has strengthened recently by way of a £30 million 150,000 sq.ft extension[8]. M&S and Next opened in Autumn 2015 and River Island opened in May 2016.

Nearby Abergavenny is ranked 473rd whilst Cardiff is ranked 6th.

Mix of Uses and Retailer Occupation

Within Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre there are 209 Class A retail/service uses. The diversity of Class A uses present in the centre is set out in Table A.1, and the results are compared with the national average.

Table A.6.1 Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Use Class Mix by Unit

Type of Unit	Units 2017	Percentage %	Goad UK Average %
A1 - Comparison	85	33.1	33.4
A1 - Convenience	20	7.8	10.4
A1 - Service	33	12.8	13.0
A2 - Service	24	9.3	11.8
A3	47	18.3	20.1
Vacant	48	18.7	11.2
Total	257	100	100

Source: UK average for all town centres surveyed by GOAD Plan including hairdressers, travel agents and other Class A1 uses not selling comparison/convenience goods

The proportion of A1 comparison and A1 service uses within the town centre is very similar to the GOAD national averages. However the proportion of A2 and A3 uses is less than the national average. The proportion of vacancies is significantly higher compared to the national average which suggests that the town centre is struggling to attract operators. The vacancy rate in the 2009 study was 13%. It is likely that the full effect of the 2008 recession had not yet been felt at the time of survey for the 2009 report. Table A.2 shows the breakdown of uses in terms of floorspace.

Table A.6.2 Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Floorspace Breakdown

Type of Unit	Floorspace (sq.m)	Total Floorspace (%)
A1 – Comparison	7,345	18.0
A1 – Convenience	16,152	39.6
A1 – Service	2,622	6.4
A2 – Service	3,735	9.2
A3	5,561	13.6
Vacant	5,360	13.2
Total	40,775	100.0

Source: MTCBC Data and Lichfields Site Visit (January 2017)

The vacancy rate in terms of floorspace is much more closely aligned to the national average which suggests that Merthyr's vacant units are small units that national retailers are unlikely to trade from.

[8] Completely Retail Website

The floorspace figures also show that in terms of floorspace that A1 convenience has a much larger proportion than A1 comparison. This figure is boosted by the existence of the large Tesco Extra (4,488 sq.m net) which is located within the town centre.

Retailer Representation

Table A.3 provides a breakdown of comparison shop units by category.

Table A3 Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre breakdown of comparison units by category

Type of Unit	Number of Units	Percentage	UK Average Percentage
Clothing and footwear	21	24.7	24.5
Furniture, carpets and textiles	8	9.4	7.7
Booksellers, arts, crafts and stationers	2	2.4	5
Electrical, gas, music and photography	6	7.0	9.6
DIY, hardware and homewares	11	12.9	7.1
China, glass, gifts and fancy goods	4	4.7	7.5
Cars, motorcycles and motor accessories	1	1.2	0.5
Chemists, drug stores and opticians	8	9.4	10.9
Variety, department and catalogue	1	1.2	1.7
Florists, nurserymen and seedsmen	1	1.2	2.1
Toys, hobby, cycle and sport	2	2.3	5.5
Jewellers	5	5.9	5.2
Charity/second-hand	12	14.1	9.6
Other comparison retailers	3	3.5	3.1
Total	85	100.0	100.0

Source: MTCBC Data and Lichfields Site Visit (January 2017)

Merthyr Tydfil town centre has a good number of comparison shops (85) and the proportion of comparison goods is only marginally less than the national average. Most of the Goad Plan comparison goods categories are represented within the centre, but the choice in some categories is limited. Of the categories represented, there is a good choice of clothing/footwear shops, furniture/carpet/textiles, DIY/hardware/homeware shops and charity/second hand shops. There proportion of booksellers/arts/crafts/ stationers, electrical/gas/music/ photography, china/glass/gifts/fancy goods and toys/hobby/cycle/sport shops are below the UK average. The number of multiple comparison retailers is on the low side for a town centre of Merthyr Tydfil's size and role within the retail hierarchy. The main multiple comparison retailers are shown in Table A.4.

Table A.4 Multiple Retailers in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre

Burtons	Clarks	Pandora	New Look
Wilkinson	Boots	Trespass	Bon Marche
Peacocks	The Works	Select	Pep & Co
Shoe Zone	Timpson	Shaws	Poundworld
Poundland	Savers	Specsavers	H Samuel
Warren James	F Hinds		

The multiple retailers are concentrated along the pedestrianised High Street and within the St Tydfil Shopping Centre. There are two enclosed shopping centres within Merthyr Tydfil. The largest is the St Tydfil Shopping Centre which is anchored by Wilkinsons, Iceland and Poundland. The second is Beacons Place a small covered walkway linking The Tesco Extra with High Street. A planning application was submitted 6 January 2017 for alterations to St Tydfil Shopping Centre. This included removal of central escalators and access ramps, relocation of existing fire escape stairs from the southern access to the south elevation and the introduction of a new covered escalator from Market Square.

It is important to note that LDP Policy AS20 allocates land for comparison goods at the Bus Station site. The supporting text to the policy states that between 600 sq.m and 4,000 sq.m (net) of new comparison goods floorspace will be required by 2021 depending on the retention rate that the Council decide to pursue.

Service Uses

Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre has a good range of non-retail service uses, with a choice of service providers across all categories, as shown in Table A.5.

Table A.6.3 Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Analysis of Selected Service Uses

Type of Unit	Units	Percentage (%)	UK Average (%)
Restaurants/cafés	18	18.0	24.4
Fast food/takeaways	16	16.0	15.5
Pubs/bars	13	13.0	7.2
Banks/other financial services	14	14.0	11.5
Betting shops/casinos	4	4.0	3.9
Estate agents/valuers	5	5.0	9.7
Travel agents	6	6.0	2.3
Hairdressers/beauty parlours	23	23.0	23.4
Laundries/dry cleaners	1	1.0	2.1
Total	100	100.0	100
Other A1 Retail Services	4		
Total	104		

Source: MTCBC Data and Lichfields Site Visit (January 2017)

The proportion of fast food/takeaway, betting shops/casinos and hairdressers/beauty parlours, laundries is very similar to the national average. The main divergence from the national average appears in the Pubs/bars category which is significantly higher than the national average. There is also a higher amount of banks/financial services. All of the major banks are represented in the town centre and it is interesting to note that a number of these financial services are located in the primary shopping area including Halifax, Santander, Nationwide, HSBC and Barclays.

The number of estate agents and restaurants/cafes is also below the national average and there is only a very limited number of chain restaurants in the town centre, Costa, Papa Johns and Wetherspoons. This contrasts from the situation at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village where most of the units are occupied by chain restaurants:

Table A.6 Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village multiple restaurants

Nandos	Frankie & Bennys	Subway
McDonalds	Harvester	Marstons

Source: Lichfields Analysis

In terms of leisure and entertainment the provision within Merthyr Tydfil town centre is limited. The main attractions are Redhouse Cymru (an arts and crafts multi-purpose venue) and Theatre Soar. There are also a number of pubs and bars. The nearest cinema is the Vue, located at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village which is out of centre in retail terms.

Merthyr Tydfil Indoor Market

There are three markets that operate on a regular basis in the town centre:

- St Tydfil's indoor market is managed by St Tydfil's Shopping Centre and is located in the market hall on the first floor of the shopping centre. There are a wide variety of stalls in the market, including a deli, bakery, jeweller, ironmonger, café and many more. The market is open between 9am and 5.15pm Monday to Saturday.
- M&B Street Market is operated by M&B Markets every Tuesday and Saturday in the main High Street and Market Square. The market provides a selection of goods and services including fruit, vegetables, meat, clothing and rugs;
- A farmers market takes place on the High Street on the first Friday of every month between 10am and 2pm;

Only 1.36% of respondents to the survey regularly visited the market. 0.38% of respondents considered that improvements to the market would make them shop in Merthyr town centre more often.

Characteristics of the Shopping Area

Merthyr Tydfil town centre comprises a long, linear form extending from Penydarren Road in the north (adjacent to the football ground) to the roundabout to the south of Caedraw Primary School in the south. The primary shopping area is located off High Street in the purpose built and pedestrianised St Tydfil Shopping Centre. No primary/secondary frontage is proposed in the LDP.

Customer Views on Shops and Services

Respondents to the household survey were asked what would make them shop in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre more often. Of the respondents 52% stated that *'nothing in particular'* would make them shop in the town centre more often. Of the respondents who suggested improvements to the town centre, the majority mentioned better choice of shops and services and better quality of shops:

- 21.5% (172 respondents) - Better choice of shops and services;
- 11.38% (91 respondents) - Better quality of shops;
- 6.5% (52 respondents) - More large shops/national brands;
- 6% (48 respondents) - More parking;
- 4.9% (39 respondents) - Free/cheaper car parking;
- 3.5% (28 respondents) - More specialist/independent shops.

These responses suggest that improvement to the range and choice of shops as well as the presence of national brands and larger shops would help improve the number of visitors to Merthyr Tydfil town centre.

Supply and Quality of Commercial Premises

Based on Lichfields' site visit (January 2017) there are 48 vacant commercial units within Merthyr Tydfil's town centre. This represents 18.68% of the total number of units. This amounts to 5,360 sq.m of floorspace. In terms of floorspace the vacant units represent 13.15% of the total commercial floorspace within the centre.

Vacant units are dispersed throughout the town centre but there is a pocket of vacant units on Pontmorlais and upper High Street, reflecting the fact that this area is a fair distance from the primary shopping area.

Vacancies are primarily small retail units with 39 of the 48 units being less than 150 sq.m in floorspace. The largest vacant unit is the former Wesley Chapel which measures 410 sq.m. This unit is an unorthodox commercial unit, being a former chapel and it is currently in a state of disrepair.

Zone A retail rents vary significantly throughout the centre, as shown in Table A.7 below. The most expensive units are located in St Tydfil Shopping Centre with the cheapest units located at Pontmorlais which is on the periphery of the town centre.

Table A.6 Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Zone A Rates

Location	£ per sq.m
St Tydfil Shopping Centre	625 - 775
Beacons Place	475 - 600
High Street	310 - 550
Glebeland Street	175
Lower High Street	175
Pontmorlais	90 - 120

Source: Valuation Office Agency Business Rates (2010), accessed February 2017

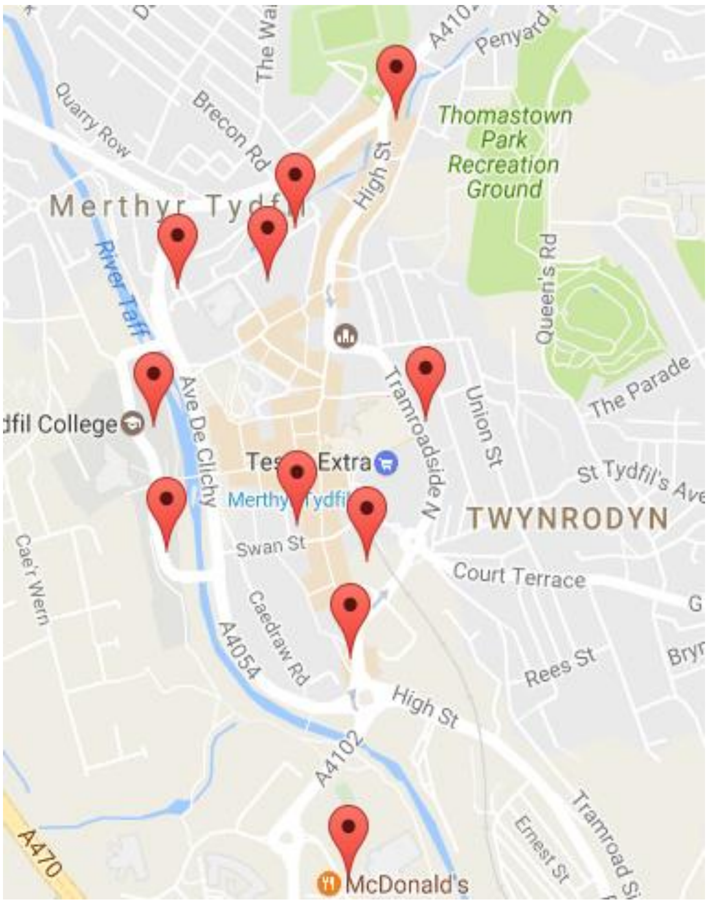
Accessibility and Movement

The household survey results show that 71.98% of food shopping was undertaken via car with a further 16.21% made as a passenger in a car. There is a choice of car parks within the town centre as shown in Table A.8. These parks are distributed around the town centre and are conveniently located near the main shopping area. The locations of the car parks are detailed in the plan below.

Table A.8 Merthyr Tydfil Car Park Provision

Car Park	No. of Spaces	Cost	Concessions
Tesco Car Park	200+	Free for 2 hours	-
Multi Storey	269	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays
Abermorlais Car Park	44	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays
Castle Car Park	141	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays
Pontmorlais Car Park	26	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays
College Car Park	354	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays
College South Car Park	Approx. 150	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays
Swan Street (Disabled Only)	23	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays
Gillar Street Car Park	81	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays
Tramroad Car Park	27	£3.50 per weekday and £1 all day Saturday	Free after 6m and on Sundays and Bank Holidays

Source: MTCBC Website



The centre is well served by buses with the Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station located adjacent to St Tydfil Shopping Centre. Services run from here to local destinations as well as destinations further afield such as Cardiff (Service X4/T4), Bargoed (Service 1) and Brecon (Service T4). 4.67% of respondents stated that they used the bus to do their main food shopping.

Merthyr Tydfil Railway Station is located adjacent to the Tesco Extra car park. The station is the terminus of the Merthyr Line which runs from Cardiff. Only 0.13% of respondents stated that they used the train to do their main food shopping. A contributing factor to this is the fact that there is no railway links to the north where a large population exists.

Pedestrian access throughout the centre is good, with the vast majority of the centre being pedestrianized. Recent public realm improvement such as the new civic square has improved the visual appearance of the centre to pedestrians.

In terms of footfall the highest footfall was seen at St Tydfil Shopping Centre and along High Street (from 135 to 120 High Street). There was also good footfall in and around the Tesco Extra and through Beacons Place. Footfall was lowest at the southern and northern extent of the town centre, especially towards Penydarren Road.

The Catchment Area

The household survey results indicate that 11.41% of respondents shop for their comparison goods in Merthyr. The main attractors were Cyfarthfa (25.8%) and Cardiff (18.8%). Non-food shoppers are attracted from across the household survey area. The survey indicated that the following proportion of respondents shopped in the town centre:

- Zone 1 - 39.5%
- Zone 2 - 23.7%
- Zone 3 - 7.1%
- Zone 4 - 4.9%
- Zone 5 - 3.0%
- Zone 6 - 10.0%
- Zone 7 - 6.7%

Strengths

- There is a good range of convenience shopping facilities in the town centre. This includes the Tesco Extra, Iceland, Farmfoods and the edge of centre Aldi.
- The centre provides a range of service facilities, including banks, building societies, estate agents and travel agents.
- Good link between the town centre and the main anchor supermarket (Tesco Extra) via Beacons Place.
- Redevelopment of the River Taff Central Link and Bridge which has improved traffic flow around the town centre, provided priority lanes for buses and improved access into the town centre.
- The centre has several public car parks which are distributed around the centre, within close proximity to the main shopping areas. This includes the recently constructed development of the Castle Multi Storey Car Park providing easy access to the town centre.
- Recent creation of a new civic square outside the newly renovated Old Town Hall. The square has become a key focal point for the cultural identity of the town centre.

- Improved approaches to the town centre. This includes the Iron Town Link footbridge and path connecting the Welsh Government Offices to the town centre.
- Free two hour parking at the Tesco Extra store.
- Proximity to public transport including the bus and railway station.
- Most of the town centre is pedestrian friendly.
- Indoor market.

Weaknesses

- High number of vacant units.
- Limited size of retail units not attractive to national retailers.
- Linear shape of town centre means that there is low footfall at the peripheral areas, and there are shop vacancies in these areas.
- Low number of national retailers.
- Low number of restaurants/cafés.
- St Tydfil Shopping Centre in need of modernisation.
- Limited leisure/entertainment uses.

Opportunities

- Building Enhancement Scheme – 50% grant funding for building renovations and improvements to external street frontages which are in keeping with the age and style of the property.
- Application (P/17/0005) to alter and improve St Tydfil shopping centre.
- Relocation of the bus station to the vacant Police Station site.
- Development of the bus station for retail purposes.

Threats

- The expansion of out of town shopping centres such as Cyfarthfa Retail Park. The 2012 planning application[9] has facilitated the relocation of the B&Q store to a new site adjacent to the main scheme. A new retail terrace has been developed at the location of the previous B&Q which houses M&S, an upsized Next, River Island and H&M.
- The opening of the out of centre 17,995 sq.m net Trago Mills superstore (expected in 2018). This has the potential to further reduce the visitor numbers to the town centre.
- Competition from Cardiff town centre and Cardiff's out of town offer.

[9] A 2012 planning application (P/12/0219) granted planning permission for the demolition of existing B&Q building (7,737 sqm) and the erection of 6 retail units in its place (11,762 sqm). The erection of 3 additional retail units (6,979 sqm) on land at former Thorn Electrical site.

Treharris Local Centre

Treharris Local Centre is designated in the Merthyr Tydfil LDP as a Local Centre. The settlement is located approximately 16km from Merthyr Tydfil.

Treharris is one of the largest Local Centres in the Borough. Treharris also falls within the Secondary Growth Area (Policy BW2) which allows limited growth within the extended settlement boundaries. Policy BW2 states that the settlements within these areas are reasonably served by public transport with the bus service ensuring access to / from the main centres of Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd and the Merthyr to Cardiff train line serving the communities situated within the Taff Fawr Valley. The Taff and Celtic Trails also provide an integrated cycle network through the area. The commercial units are situated on Perrott Street and Fox Street.

Mix of Uses and Retailer Occupation

Treharris is a small local centre with the commercial units geared towards the needs of local people. There are 36 commercial units within Treharris. Six of these are vacant which represents a vacancy rate of 11.8% which is very similar to the national average.

There is a good variety of convenience stores (8) including the Premier (421 sq.m), Coop Food (122 sq.m) a Post Office (71 sq.m) a butcher (75 sq.m) and a bakery/grocery shop (52 sq.m). The number of comparison shops is limited but this reflects the nature of the local centre. There is a good number of A1 Service units within the centre albeit six out of the eight are hairdressers/barbers. There is also a travel agent and an ironing shop. A2 uses include a Solicitor's practice (Hugh James), a Ladbrokes betting office, Principality Building Society and an estate agent. There are 4 takeaways in the centre, three Chinese and a kebab house. There is one public house (The Navi) and one coffee shop.

In terms of the vacant units, most of these appear to be long term vacant units, some which appear derelict.

Table B.1 Breakdown of units in Treharris

Type of Unit	Units 2017	Percentage %	Goad UK Average %
A1 – Comparison	3	8.3	33.4
A1 – Convenience	8	22.2	10.4
A1 – Service	8	22.2	13.0
A2 – Service	5	13.9	11.8
A3	6	16.7	20.1
Vacant	6	16.7	11.2
Total	36	100.0	100.0

Source: MTCBC land use audit and Lichfields site visit (Jan 2017)

Accessibility

The site has a centrally located car park albeit this only has capacity for 12 vehicles. There is another larger car park off Perrott Street which has approximately 60 spaces. These car parks provide easy access to the town centre. There is also a good provision of on street parking along Perrott Street. There is no charge for parking within these car parks.

There is no train station in Treharris. The nearest train station is Quakers Yard Station in Edwardsville which is approximately 1.5 km from Treharris Local Centre.

Treharris has a centrally located modern bus stop which provides good access to the local centre. This provides frequent (three or four per hour) links to Merthyr Tydfil (service 78 and 79) as well as an hourly service (service 7) to Ystrad Mynach.

The centre is not pedestrianised. Pedestrian movement is along pavements that are constructed of block paving. The fact that the roads are one way makes it easy for pedestrians to cross from one side to the other.

Nature and quality of retail environment

The shops that are occupied are generally well maintained. There is evidence of recent investment in terms of the new bus station and the new car park and associated public realm. Relatively new residential apartments are also situated on the crossroads between Perrott Street and Fox Street. The highest footfall was seen around the crossroads between Perrott Street and Fox Street.

The retail centre is located within the Treharris Conservation Area which is noted by the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as being a planned late 19th century 'model' industrial settlement, including civic, religious, commercial and residential buildings. It is also noted as having a high quality townscape resulting from late 19th century planning and the control of the Harris Navigation Colliery on the town's development. A cluster of historic buildings lie in the local centre including the Listed Treharris Library and the Tabernacle Chapel.

Strengths

- Centrally located car parking.
- Centrally located bus station.
- Evidence of recent investment in the public realm.
- Good range of convenience stores to serve local needs.

Weaknesses

- The long and linear form of the town centre which runs along Fox Street as well as down Perrott Street.
- Steep incline from Perrott Street to Fox Street which may be difficult for the less mobile to manage.
- Limited number of comparison shop units.
- Limited leisure uses within the local centre.

Opportunities

- Redevelopment of long term vacant units such as 36-37 Fox Street and Bethel English Baptist Chapel.

Threats

- Increase in shop vacancy.
- Loss of key convenience units such as Premier, Coop and the Post Office.

Troedyrhiw Local Centre

Troedyrhiw is designated in the Merthyr Tydfil LDP in retail terms as a Local Centre. The retail centre boundary runs along Bridge Street and along part of Merthyr Road. Troedyrhiw is designated by Policy BW3 as an 'other growth area' where growth is limited to development that sustains the integrity and vitality of the settlement. The LDP states:

"The settlements within these areas are reasonably served by public transport with the bus service ensuring access to /from Merthyr Tydfil with limited potential onward connections available. The communities situated within the Taf Fawr Valley are also served by the Taff and Trevithick Trail cycle network and the Merthyr to Cardiff train service which will shortly improve to two trains per hour. These areas tend not however to be favourably located in relation to the strategic highway network and the local roads are often narrow and congested. As a result they have seen limited private sector investment in recent times and have insufficient capacity to accommodate major growth."

Lichfields visited the centre in January 2017.

Mix of Uses and Retailer Occupation

Troedyrhiw is a small local centre with the commercial units geared towards the needs of local people. There are 27 commercial units within Troedyrhiw. Six of these are vacant which represents a vacancy rate of 22.2%.

There is a good variety of convenience stores (5) including Premier (148 sq.m), Lifestyle Express (81 sq.m), Peter Williams Quality Butchers (50 sq.m) and Family Shoppers (345 sq.m). The number of comparison shops is limited but this reflects the nature of the local centre. There is a flower shop, a pharmacy a second hand furniture store, a school uniform store and a shoe shop (Ronas). The number of A1 service units within the centre is limited. This comprises Blondies Hair Salon and Cariad Memorials. The only A2 use is a Ladbrokes betting office but 33% (9 units) of the commercial units in Troedyrhiw are A3. These include four takeaways, an Indian restaurant and four public houses.

There is a high vacancy rate (22.2%). This comprises 6 of the 27 commercial units. The percentage is nearly double the GOAD UK average. Five of the vacant units are A1 and one of them is A3.

Table C.1 Troedyrhiw: Breakdown of uses

Type of Unit	Units 2017	Percentage %	Goad UK Average %
A1 – Comparison	5	18.5	33.4
A1 – Convenience	4	14.8	10.4
A1 – Service	2	7.4	13.0
A2 – Service	1	3.7	11.8
A3	9	33.3	20.1
Vacant	6	22.2	11.2
Total	27	100.0	100.0

Source: MTCBC audit and Lichfields site visit (Jan 2017)

Accessibility

Troed-y-rhiw Railway Station is centrally located and provides easy access to Troedyrhiw. The station is on the Merthyr Line which links Cardiff Central in the south to Merthyr Tydfil in the north. Two services an hour run from Troedyrhiw to Merthyr Tydfil with two services an hour also running between Troedyrhiw and Cardiff.

Bus stops exist within the boundaries of the retail centre. The Bridge Street bus stops provide services to Merthyr Tydfil (service 81, three per hour) and in the opposite direction to Aberfan (service 81, three per hour).

There is very limited parking within Troedyrhiw Local Centre and in the immediate vicinity. This makes access to the centre's amenities difficult by car. A small car park is available at Troedyrhiw Football Club (approximately 15 spaces). There is another larger car park at Bronheulog Terrace which is approximately 650m away from the local centre.

The centre is not pedestrianised. Pedestrian movement is along narrow pavements. Traffic movement through the centre along Bridge Street is constrained by the pinch point underneath the railway bridge.

Nature and quality of retail environment

The local centre is a small local centre that is primarily geared towards the needs of the locality. Due to the large number of takeaways a number of units had steel shutters down during the day. These units do not therefore provide an active frontage throughout the day. A number of shopfronts could do with modernisation.

At the time of the visit there was no indication of vandalism and the areas was tidy with no noticeable litter. CCTV exists on some units and the environment felt safe.

Strengths

- Good provision of convenience shops to serve local day to day needs
- Troedyrhiw Railway Station is centrally located providing easy access to the local centre.
- Easy access to the centre on foot from the surrounding residential area.

Weaknesses

- Limited car parking within close proximity to the local centre.
- Limited signage directing visitors to parking.
- Road and pavement is narrow underneath the railway bridge which causes congestion.
- High vacancy rate.
- High proportion of A3 uses.
- Generally small units which are less attractive to national retailers.
- Congestion around the crossroads of Bridge Street, the A4054 and Tyntaldwyn Road.

Opportunities

- Opportunity to expand the retail boundary to include Station House, Brookside Medical Centre and 2 and 4 Yew Street.
- Opportunity to reduce the number of units that include steel shutters.

Threats

- Increased shop vacancy.
- Without investment the condition of shopfronts may deteriorate further.

Brecon Road Local Centre

Brecon Road is designated by Policy AS18 of the Merthyr Tydfil LDP in retail terms as a Local Centre. The retail centre boundary runs along Brecon Road. The centre is located within the settlement of Merthyr Tydfil and is approximately 350m from the town centre boundary of Merthyr Tydfil. It is partly located within the Morgantown Conservation Area.

Mix of Uses and Retailer Occupation

Brecon Road is a small local centre with the commercial units geared towards the needs of local people. There are 21 commercial units within the Brecon Road centre. Seven of these are vacant which represents a vacancy rate of 33.33%. This is significantly above the national average.

There are three convenience stores within the centre which provide day to day goods to the local community, i.e. Nisa Local (192 sq.m), Spar (178 sq.m) and a Polish convenience shop (143 sq.m). It is interesting to note that the Polish Shop has expanded to incorporate 110 Brecon Road as well as 109 Brecon Road. The number of comparison units is limited to a florist and a baby shop. In terms of A1 service uses there is a hairdresser, funeral director and a dry cleaner. A2 uses comprise an independent bookmaker (D.D. Racing). There are five A3 uses. This includes three public houses and two Chinese takeaways. Vacant units are generally very small, averaging 45 sq.m. The only national retailers represented in the centre are SPAR and NISA. This is most probably influenced by the fact that the centre is so close to Merthyr Tydfil's retail centre.

Table D.1 Brecon Road: Breakdown of land uses

Type of Unit	Units 2017	Percentage %	Goad UK Average %
A1 - Comparison	2	9.5	33.4
A1 - Convenience	3	14.3	10.4
A1 - Service	3	14.3	13.0
A2 - Service	1	4.8	11.8
A3	5	23.8	20.1
Vacant	7	33.3	11.2
Total	21	100.0	100.0

Source: MTCBC audit and Lichfields site visit (Jan 2017)

Accessibility

The local centre is in a residential area therefore the centre is highly accessible on foot for these residents. There are no car parks nearby but there is ample on street parking which is free. Merthyr Tydfil town centre is within easy walking distance (approximately 250 m). There is no train station in the vicinity. The nearest train station is in Merthyr Tydfil's town centre. The station is approximately 2.5km away.

The number 25 and 26 bus stops on Brecon Road. These provide 4 services per hour into Merthyr Tydfil. Number 25 and 26 provides four services an hour in the opposite direction to Trefechan.

The centre is not pedestrianised but the pavements on both sides of the road are generally in good condition.

Nature and quality of retail environment

The commercial units are well spread out within the centre. There are a cluster of commercial units at the southern end of Brecon Road. Otherwise the retail units are interspersed with dwellings. There was very limited footfall during our site visit with most footfall seen around the SPAR and Premier convenience stores.

The centre is generally in good condition although some rubbish and dog fouling existed. The southern part of the centre is located within the Morgantown Conservation Area. The Character Area Appraisal for this Area states that:

"The built heritage of Morgantown largely derives from iron production which occurred during the 19th Century. This is reflected in the terraced layout of many of the homes, a notable feature of workers' housing"

There are two listed buildings within the retail centre. These are the Grade II starred Capel Tabernacl (ID 11394), Church Hall at Capel Tabernacl (ID11395). The Our Lady of the Rosary Roman Catholic Church (ID 11393) is located adjacent to the retail centre's boundary.

Traffic through the centre was light and it was easy to cross to the other side of the road.

Strengths

- Easy access to the centre on foot from the surrounding residential area.
- Satisfactory provision of convenience shops to serve local day to day needs.
- Ample on street parking available.

Weaknesses

- High vacancy rate.
- Low number of service uses.
- The fact that shoppers may decide to visit Merthyr Tydfil retail centre compared to Brecon Road given that it is so close.

Opportunities

- Opportunity to bring vacant units back into beneficial occupation.

Threats

- That the vacant units become long term vacant units.
- Shoppers may decide to visit Merthyr Tydfil retail centre compared to Brecon Road given that it is so close.

Dowlais (Victoria Street)

Dowlais (Victoria Street) is designated by Policy AS18 of the Merthyr Tydfil LDP in retail terms as a Local Centre. The retail centre boundary runs along Victoria Street. The centre is located within the north east of the settlement of Merthyr Tydfil and is approximately 2.5km from the town centre boundary of Merthyr Tydfil.

Policy BW1 of the LDP states that Dowlais, along with other northern sector communities comprise the primary growth area. Paragraph 3.1.4 states that there is greater capacity for regeneration and development in this area than anywhere else in MTCB.

Mix of Uses and Retailer Occupation

Dowlais (Victoria Street) is a small local centre with the commercial units geared towards the needs of local people. There are 18 commercial units within the centre. Four of these are vacant which represents a vacancy rate of 22.2%. This is above the national average.

There are three convenience stores within the centre which provide day to day goods to the local community. These are Henderson's Premier (128 sq.m), A&A Cunningham Family Butchers (107 sq.m) and Susan's Traditional Fresh Fruit and Veg (68 sq.m). The number of comparison units is limited to two pharmacies and a florist. In terms of A1 service uses there is a hairdresser and a barber. There is only one A2 use i.e. a financial advisor. There are five A3 uses. This includes two public houses, a takeaway, a coffee shop and a cake shop. Vacant units are generally very small, averaging 73 sq.m. There are no national retailers represented within the centre.

Table E.1 Dowlais (Victoria Street): Breakdown of uses

Type of Unit	Units 2017	Percentage %	Goad UK Average %
A1 - Comparison	3	16.7	33.4
A1 - Convenience	3	16.7	10.4
A1 - Service	2	11.1	13.0
A2 - Service	1	5.6	11.8
A3	5	27.8	20.1
Vacant	4	22.2	11.2
Total	18	100.0	100.0

Source: MTCBC audit and Lichfields site visit (Jan 2017)

There is a potential expansion area to the local centre along Pant Road to the north. This comprises 6 further commercial units:

Business Name	Address	Use Class	Vacant	Type
Sartori Flowers & Design	28 Odessa Street	A1	No	Comparison
Lifestyle Express	2 Pant Road	A1	No	Convenience
La Bodega Restaurant	1 Pant Road	A3	No	Service
Harry's Plaice	3 Pant Road	A3	No	Service
Tattoo Studio	6 Pant Road	SG	No	Service
Dowlais Motor Components	7 Pant Road	A1	Yes	Comparison

It would be logical to expand the retail area to encompass these units given that they are adjacent to the existing boundary and that one of the car parks serving the centre is located opposite to the units.

Accessibility

The Local Centre is served by a centrally located car park which accommodates approximately 50 vehicles. There is no charge for parking at the car park. From the car park, the centre's amenities are easily reached. Another smaller car park is located off Pant Road.

The centre is not pedestrianised. Traffic flow was relatively busy at the time of surveying.

Victoria Street is narrow in places. This causes congestion when large vehicles try to pass each other. The pavements are also narrow in places which may cause difficulties to those in wheelchairs or pushing prams. Victoria Street is on a gradient which may also cause difficulties for the less mobile.

There is no train station in the vicinity. The nearest train station is in Merthyr Tydfil's town centre. The station is approximately 3.2km away.

Nature and quality of retail environment

Commercial units are interspersed with residential units. The largest cluster of commercial units is located around the junction of Mount Pleasant Street. The centre generally had low footfall but the highest footfall was around this area.

Traffic through the centre was relatively busy with the car park near its capacity.

The centre is not located in a conservation area.

Strengths

- Two centrally located car parks that provide easy access to the local centre.
- Good provision of convenience shops relative to the size of the centre.
- Relatively strong evening uses including two public houses and a tapas restaurant (if taking into account the expansion area).

Weaknesses

- Limited number of comparison shops.
- Limited number of A1 services.
- Limited number of A2 services.

Opportunities

- Potential to expand the retail area to Pant Road.
- Increase in local population should allocation H23 (Former Dowlais Foundry) come forward for development.

Threats

- Further increase in vacant units.
- Loss of commercial units to non-commercial units.

Cefn Coed Local Centre

Cefn Coed local centre is designated by Policy AS18 of the Merthyr Tydfil LDP in retail terms as a Local Centre. The retail centre boundary runs along High Street. The centre is located within the north west of the settlement of Merthyr Tydfil and is approximately 3.4 km from the town centre boundary of Merthyr Tydfil.

Policy BW1 of the LDP states that Cefn Coed, along with other northern sector communities comprise the primary growth area. Paragraph 3.1.4 states that there is greater capacity for regeneration and development in this area more than anywhere else in MTCB.

Cefn Coed local centre is a small local centre comprising 17 commercial units. Two of the units are vacant which represent a vacancy rate of 11.8% which is slightly higher than the UK average. The centre has a good provision of convenience shops comprising:

- Cefn Newsagents & Post Office (69 sq.m);
- BAL Newsagents & General Store (91 sq.m);
- Premier Cefn Convenience Store & Bakery (196 sq.m);
- Popty Bach Delicatessens (21 sq.m).

These shops provide day to day goods for the community of Cefn Coed y Cymmer. The comparison offer is poor and comprises two units. One of these is Sheppards Pharmacy which provides a valuable service to the local community. A1 service units are limited to two hairdressers and a funeral director. There are no A2 units in the centre. There are six A3 units within the centre which represents a rate of 35.3%. Although this is high and significantly above the national average, there is good range of different uses such as public houses, takeaways, restaurants and a coffee shop.

Castle Inn is one of these units and it appears that this has been vacant for a long period. The other vacant unit is 62C High Street which was formerly occupied by Blue Lagoon Turkish Barber, now of 185 High Street.

Table F.1 Cefn Coed: Breakdown of land uses

Type of Unit	Units 2017	Percentage %	Goad UK Average %
A1 - Comparison	2	11.8	33.4
A1 - Convenience	4	23.5	10.4
A1 - Service	3	17.5	13.0
A2 - Service	0	0.0	11.8
A3	6	35.3	20.1
Vacant	2	11.8	11.2
Total	17	100.0	100.0

Source: MTCBC audit and Lichfields site visit (Jan 2017)

Accessibility

Pavements exist on each side of the High Street providing good accessibility to the commercial units. The high street is on a gradient from south to north. There is a small car park serving the local centre situated on New Church Street. There is also ample free on street parking.

Bus stops are located on High Street which provide links (service 25 and 26) with Trefechan to the north and Merthyr Tydfil town centre to the south. Four buses an hour travel between Cefn Coed and Merthyr Tydfil town centre.

There is no train station in Cefn Coed. The nearest train station is located in Merthyr Tydfil town centre. This provides links south into the valleys terminating in Cardiff.

Nature and quality of retail environment

The local centre is in a linear form and extends approximately 800m. The commercial units are interspersed with residential dwellings and other non-commercial units such as religious institutions. Traffic through the centre was light and crossing between one side of the road to the other was easily managed. A pedestrian crossing is located approximately half way up the street. The pavements were relatively wide and in good condition. There was no evidence of litter or vandalism within the centre. Pedestrian footfall was generally quiet. The busiest areas were in and around the newsagents/convenience stores.

There are two listed buildings within the retail centre. These are Vaynor War Memorial & Railings and Carmel Welsh Baptist Chapel & Schoolroom.

Strengths

- Good range of convenience shops.
- Centrally located car park as well as on street parking.
- Low vacancy rate.
- Good range of A3 uses including a public house, fish and chips shop, Indian restaurant and a coffee shop.
- Shopfronts are generally well maintained.

Weaknesses

- No A2 uses.
- Low number of comparison shops.

Opportunities

- To bring Castle Inn Free House back into beneficial use.

Threats

- Increase in vacancy rate.
- Loss of commercial units to non-commercial units.

Aberfan Local Centre

Aberfan is designated by Policy AS18 of the Merthyr Tydfil LDP in retail terms as a Local Centre. The retail centre boundary runs along Aberfan Road. The centre is located within the north west of the settlement of Merthyr Tydfil and is approximately 3.4 km from the town centre boundary of Merthyr Tydfil. Policy BW3 of the LDP states that development will be limited to those which sustain the integrity and vitality of the settlement.

Mix of Uses and Retailer Occupation

Aberfan is a small local centre comprising of 14 commercial units, but 7 of these are vacant, representing a very high vacancy rate of 50%. There are two convenience stores within Aberfan. These comprise Village Stores and Aberfan Convenience Stores and Post Office. Well Pharmacy is the only comparison unit within the centre. There are no A1 service units or A2 units within the centre. There are four A3 units. These comprise two fish and chips shops, a public house and a café.

Five of the seven vacant units are A1 whilst two are A2. The vacant units are small in terms of floorspace with an average floorspace of 56 sq.m. The former Barclays Bank unit appeared to be under renovation during the site visit. However upon investigation it is clear that the renovation will result in the loss of the retail use to a residential use.

Table G.1 Aberfan: Breakdown of uses

Type of Unit	Units 2017	Percentage %	Goad UK Average %
A1 – Comparison	1	7.1	33.4
A1 – Convenience	2	14.39	10.4
A1 – Service	0	0.0	13.0
A2 – Service	0	0.0	11.8
A3	4	28.6	20.1
Vacant	7	50.0	11.2
Total	14	100.0	100.0

Source: MTCBC Audit and Lichfields site visit (Jan 2017)

Accessibility

The centre is level with pavements on both sides of the road. The road is quite narrow and congestion can occur as a result of this. There is a small car park off Aberfan Road which provides easy access to the centre.

Buses stop on Aberfan Road which provide frequent links (approximately 4 per hour) to the principal town of Merthyr Tydfil. The nearest train station is the station at Merthyr Vale which is approximately 1 mile away.

Nature and quality of retail environment

The local centre is in a linear form and extends approximately 300 m. The commercial units are interspersed with residential dwellings and other non-commercial units such as religious institutions. Pedestrian footfall was generally low.

Strengths

- Satisfactory convenience offer for the size of the settlement.
- Good range of A3 uses including a café, fish and chips shop, a public house and a Chinese take away.

Weaknesses

- Low number of commercial units.
- High vacancy rate.
- No A1 service or A2 uses.

Opportunities

- Re-occupation of vacant units.

Threats

- Further loss of retail units to residential.

Dowlais Local Centre

Dowlais Local Centre is a small, purpose built local centre which serves the community of Dowlais. The site is designated by Policy AS18 of the LDP as a local centre. The centre comprises seven units. One of these, Merthyr Music is vacant. The others are a convenience unit (Londis & Post Office) which measures 203 sq.m, three comparison units (Morlais Carpets and Flooring, Bits and Bops second hand shop and Cancer Aid Charity Shop) as well as a Ladbrokes betting shop and a Chinese takeaway.

There is ample free on street parking in close proximity to the centre. The centre is served by the number 28 and 35 buses that provide links with Merthyr Tydfil town centre. It is located approximately 250m away from Dowlais (Victoria Street) Local Centre. Pedestrians can easily walk between Dowlais (Victoria Street) and Dowlais Local Centre.

The site is generally in good condition although the built form appears dated. The centre was free of litter. However, some graffiti was in evidence within the centre.

Gurnos Local Centre

Dowlais Local Centre is a small, purpose built local centre which serves the community of the Gurnos. The site is designated by Policy AS18 of the LDP as a local centre.

The centre comprises 12 units and only one of these is vacant. This represents a vacancy rate of 9%. The centre has a good convenience goods offer with four general convenience stores (McColls, Premier, Onestop and Coolfoods) as well as a Greggs bakery. Coolfoods also includes a Post Office branch.

The comparison provision is limited to a pharmacy although this does provide an important function locally. In terms of service uses there is a hairdresser, a bookmaker and two takeaways.

The site is centrally located within the Gurnos Estate and is therefore accessible to most residents on foot. Approximately 25 car parking spaces are available at the centre should customers choose to drive to the centre. Buses also stop adjacent to the centre on Chestnut Way. Service 27 and 28 provide approximately five buses per hour to Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre. The journey takes approximately 16 minutes.

The centre is in good condition following a recent regeneration. The units are modern and the car park is well landscaped. The centre is pedestrianised.

Cyfarthfa Retail Park

As of January 2017 the units on Cyfarthfa Retail Park are occupied as follows:

Table H1 Breakdown of Cyfarthfa Retail Park Units

Unit	Operator	Sq.M (Gross)	Use Class
1	DW Sports	2,322	A1 (Comparison)
2	JD Sports	465	A1 (Comparison)
3	Matalan	3,716	A1 (Comparison)
4	Argos	929	A1 (Comparison)
5	Wilko	929	A1 (Comparison)
6	Boots	929	A1 (Comparison)
7	Currys	1,858	A1 (Comparison)
8	TK Maxx	1,858	A1 (Comparison)
9	Debenhams	929	A1 (Comparison)
10	New Look	929	A1 (Comparison)
10B	Costa Coffee	139	A1/A3
11	Outfit	1,394	A1 (Comparison)
12 A and B	NEXT	1,858	A1 (Comparison)
12 C	H&M	929	A1 (Comparison)
12 D	Vacant	650	A1 (Comparison)
12 E	River Island	604	A1 (Comparison)
12 F	M&S	2,323	A1 (Comparison/Convenience)
Carphone Warehouse Pod	Carphone Warehouse	114	A1 (Comparison)
Game Pod	GAME	175	A1 (Comparison)
A	McDonalds	294	A3 (Service)
B	KFC	269	A3 (Service)
C	Pizza Hut	296	A3 (Service)
1 (Cyfarthfa North)	B&Q	4,288	A1 (Comparison)
2 (Cyfarthfa North)	Vacant	929	A1 (Comparison)
3 (Cyfarthfa North)	Pets at Home	696.8	A1 (Comparison)
Total		**29,822**	

Source: Lichfields Site Visit, Completely Retail Data, VOA Data, Storepoint Data

Pentrebach Retail Park

As of January 2017 the units on Pentrebach Retail Park are occupied as follows:

Table H2 Breakdown of units on Pentrebach Retail Park

Unit	Operator	Sq.M (Gross)	Use Class
A	Halfords	1,052	A1 (Comparison)
B1	Poundstretcher	683	A1 (Comparison)
B2	Iceland	836	A1 (Convenience)
C1	Dreams	1,175	A1 (Comparison)
C2	Home Bargains	1,422	A1 (Comparison)
C3	PC World	1,116	A1 (Comparison)
D	Sports Direct	1,513	A1 (Comparison)
Co-op	Co-op	2,820	A1 (Convenience)
Total		**10,617**	

Source: Lichfields Site Visit, Completely Retail Data, VOA Data, Storepoint Data,

Dowlais Top Retail Park

As of January 2017 the units on Dowlais Retail Park are occupied as follows:

Table H3 Breakdown of units on Dowlais Top Retail Park

Unit	Operator	Sq.M (Gross)	Use Class
Asda	Asda	10,089	A1 (Convenience)
1	Flooring Republic	649	A1 (Comparison)
2	Trade Price Sofas	425	A1 (Comparison)
3	Carpet and Bed Company	484	A1 (Comparison)
C	B&M Bargains	2,843	A1 (Comparison)
Carpet Right	Carpet Right	930	A1 (Comparison)
No Frills Superstore	Pound Deals/Pet Hut /Poundstretcher	4,234	A1 (Comparison)
Leather Leaders	Leather Leaders	1,137	A1 (Comparison)
Lidl	Lidl	2,206	A1 (Convenience)
Total		**22,997**	

Source: Lichfields Site Visit, Completely Retail Data, VOA Data, Storepoint Data,

Appendix 6: Household Survey

Household Survey Results

NEMS Market Research carried out a telephone survey of 800 households across the Merthyr Tydfil study area in December 2016. The study area was split into seven zones, based on postcode sectors. The number of surveys per zone was weighted towards the more important central zones. The main aims of the survey were to establish patterns for the following:

- Main food and top up grocery shopping;
- Non-food shopping, including:
- clothing and footwear;
- Domestic electrical appliances;
- Other electrical goods (TV, Hi-Fi and computers);
- Furniture, soft furnishing or carpets;
- DIY/hardware items and garden items;
- Other non-food items (e.g. books, CDs, DVDs, toys and gifts); and
- Leisure activities.

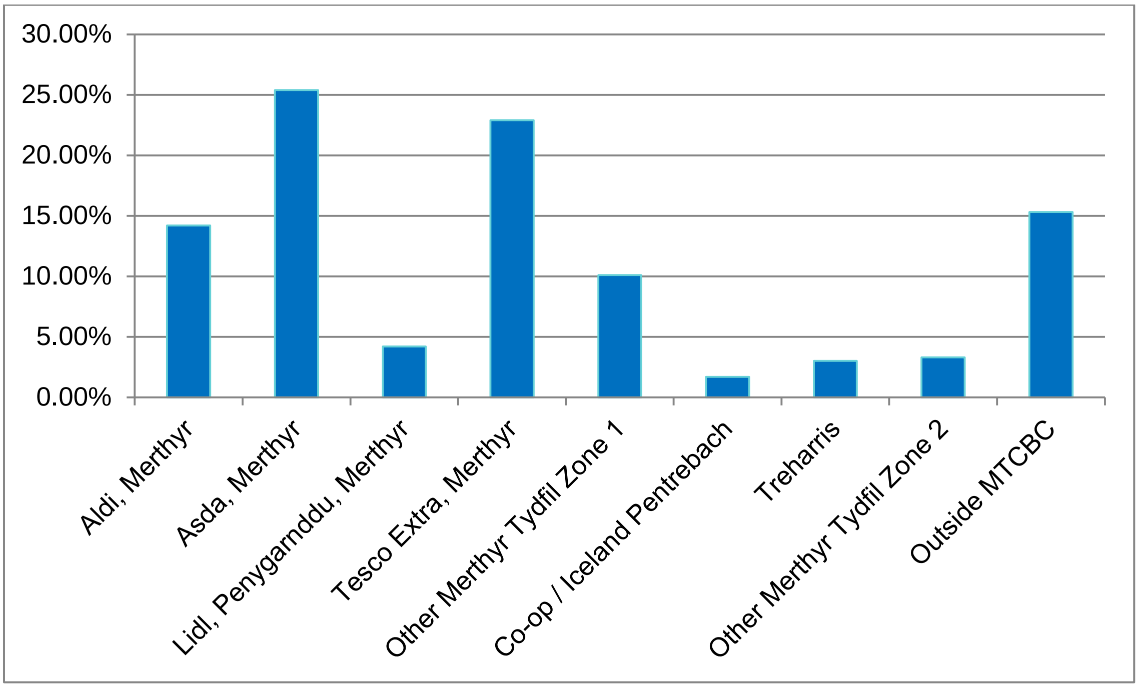
Main Food Shopping

Respondents were asked where they last undertook their main food and grocery shopping.

The survey results suggest nearly 85% of convenience goods expenditure is retained within the core zones (1 and 2). This is a high retention rate and is likely to be as a result of the wide range and choice of food stores in the Borough. Zone 1 includes Merthyr Tydfil town centre and a number of large stores i.e. Asda, Aldi, Lidl and Tesco Extra. The only large food store in Zone 2 is the M&S Simply Food at Cyfarthfa Shopping Centre. The main destination for Zone 1/2 residents is the Asda Superstore at Dowlais Top (25.4%), followed by Tesco Extra (22.9%) in the town centre and Aldi (14.2%) on the edge of the town centre. Around 25% of the study area respondents shopped for their main food and grocery shopping in MTCBC.

Figure A.1 shows demonstrates where zone 1 and 2 respondents shop for their main food shopping.

Figure A.1 Core Zones 1 and 2 Food Shopping Market Shares



Source: NEMS Market Research

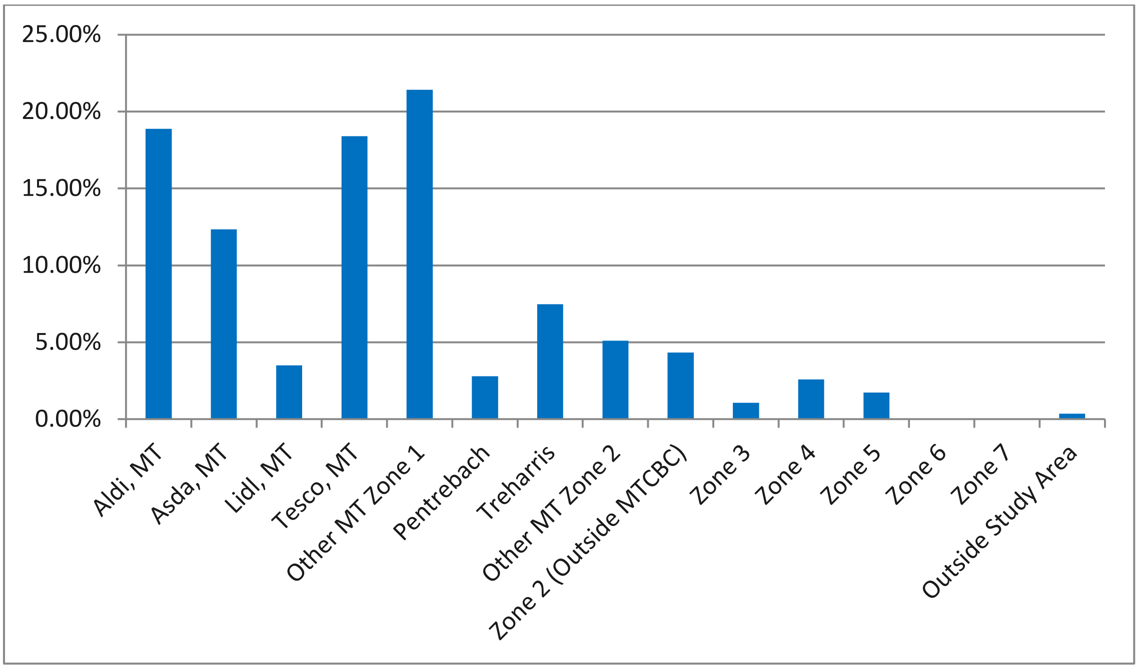
Top-Up Food Shopping

Around 75% of the respondents undertake top up food shopping trips to supplement main food shopping trips. These top-up shopping trips are usually undertaken on a more frequent basis for perishable items such as bread and milk. The market share of top-up food shopping for Zone 1 and 2 respondents is shown in Figure A.2 below.

A large number of stores/destinations were identified for top-up food shopping. Aldi, on the edge of the town centre was the most popular destination for Zone 1 and 2 respondents attracting 13.3% of respondents. Second was Tesco Extra in the town centre with 13% and third was Asda at Dowlais Top with 8.8%. The patters of top up food shopping are more diverse than for main food shopping, with a wide range of stores/local shops each capturing a small overall market share. Merthyr Tydfil is the key top up food destination for Zone 1 and 2 respondents.

The retention rate for top up shopping is very high at 90%. This demonstrates that top up food shopping is undertaken locally by respondents.

Figure A.1 Top up food shopping market shares (Zone 1 and 2)



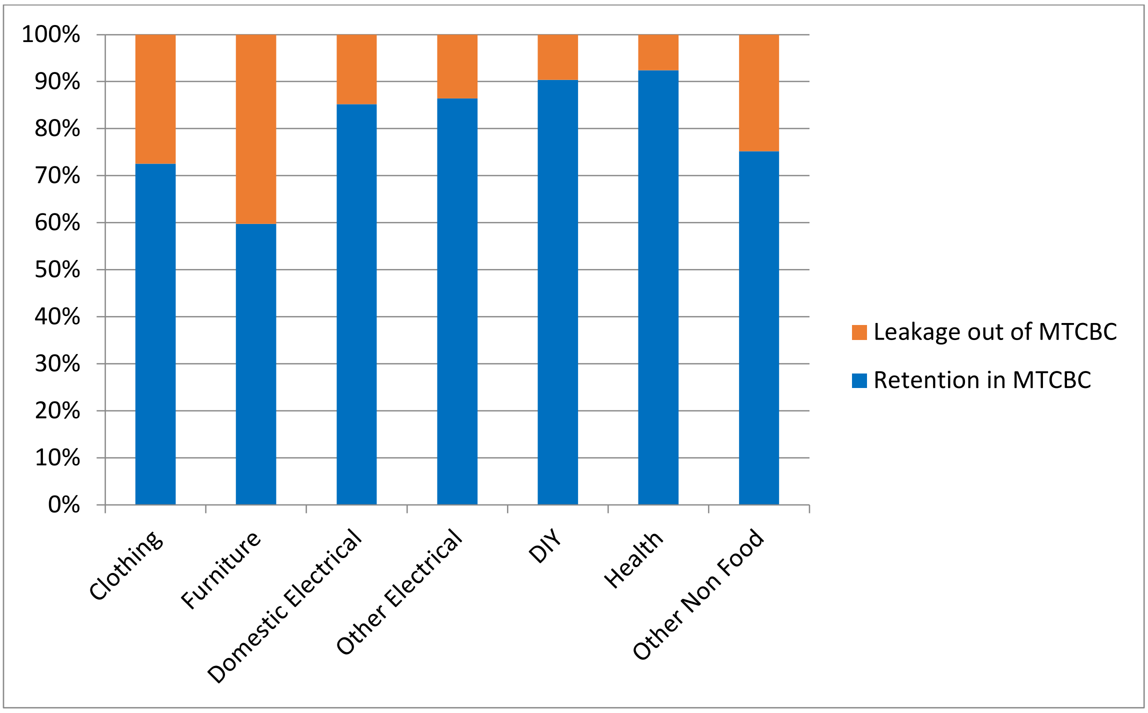
Source: NEMS Market Research

Non-Food Shopping

Respondents were asked in which location they buy most of their household's non-food shopping. The survey results suggest around 73% of comparison goods expenditure is retained within the core zones (1 and 2). This is a reasonably high retention rate, recognising this area falls within Cardiff's regional catchment. The main comparison goods attractions in the core zones (1 and 2) are Merthyr Tydfil town centre (31.6%), Cyfarthfa Retail Park (36.1%) and Cardiff (17.2%). The retention rate for comparison goods (73%) is less than that for convenience goods (85%). This reflects the propensity of customers to do food and grocery shopping locally, whilst for comparison shopping, customers are more likely to shop around and travel longer distances to visit larger centres (primarily Cardiff) that have more range and choice of shops. The main comparison goods attractions for the whole study area were Cyfarthfa Retail Park (25.8%), Cardiff (18.8%) and Merthyr Town Centre (11.41%).

Figure A.3 below shows the retention and leakage out of the core zones (1 and 2).

Figure A.3 Retention/Leakage Rate from Zones 1 and 2



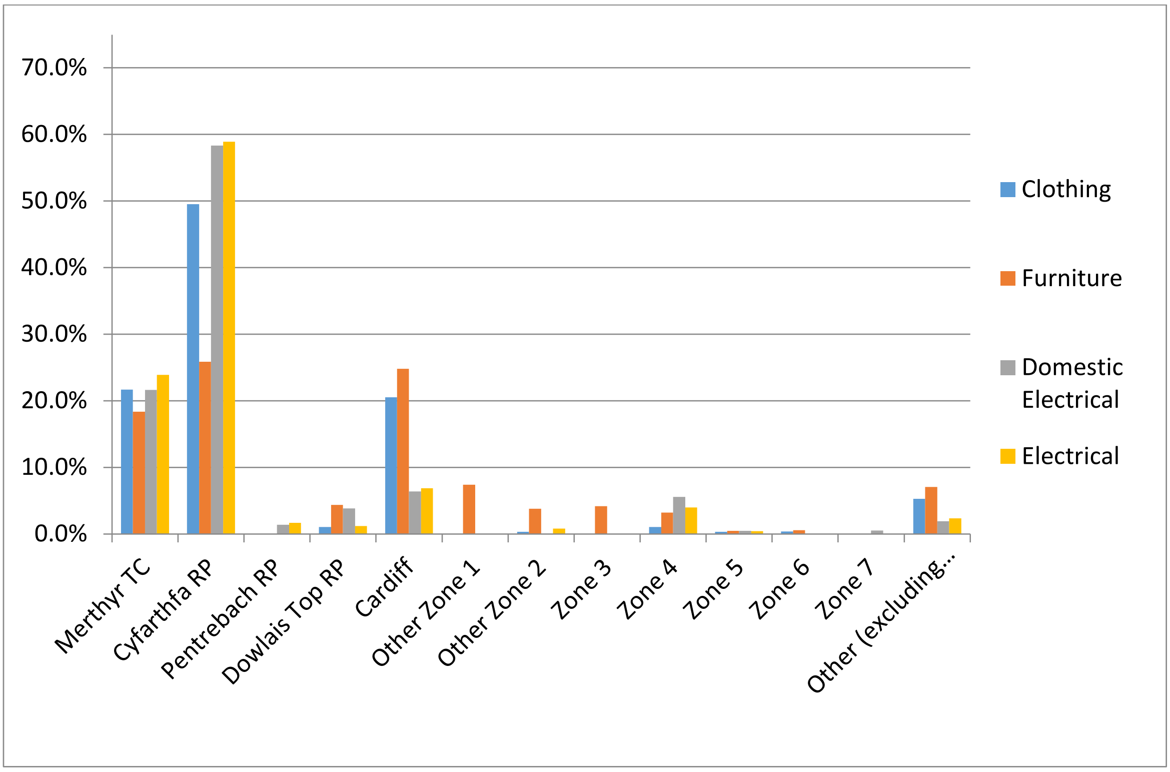
Source: NEMS Market Research

Non-Food Shopping Destination

The household survey asked specific questions to probe which destinations respondents last visited to undertake particular types of non-food shopping. The market share (excluding internet shopping) for each non-food goods category for zone 1 and 2 and for the whole study area are shown in Figures A.4 to A.7 below. It can be seen that DIY, health and other non-food items (e.g. books, CDs, DVDs, toys and gifts), electrical and domestic electrical items for Zone 1 and 2 residents are generally bought locally, either in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre or Cyfarthfa Retail Park. Cardiff attracts more shoppers for the clothing and furniture category compared to the other categories. This is explained by the wide variety of clothing and furniture shops in Cardiff compared to Merthyr Tydfil.

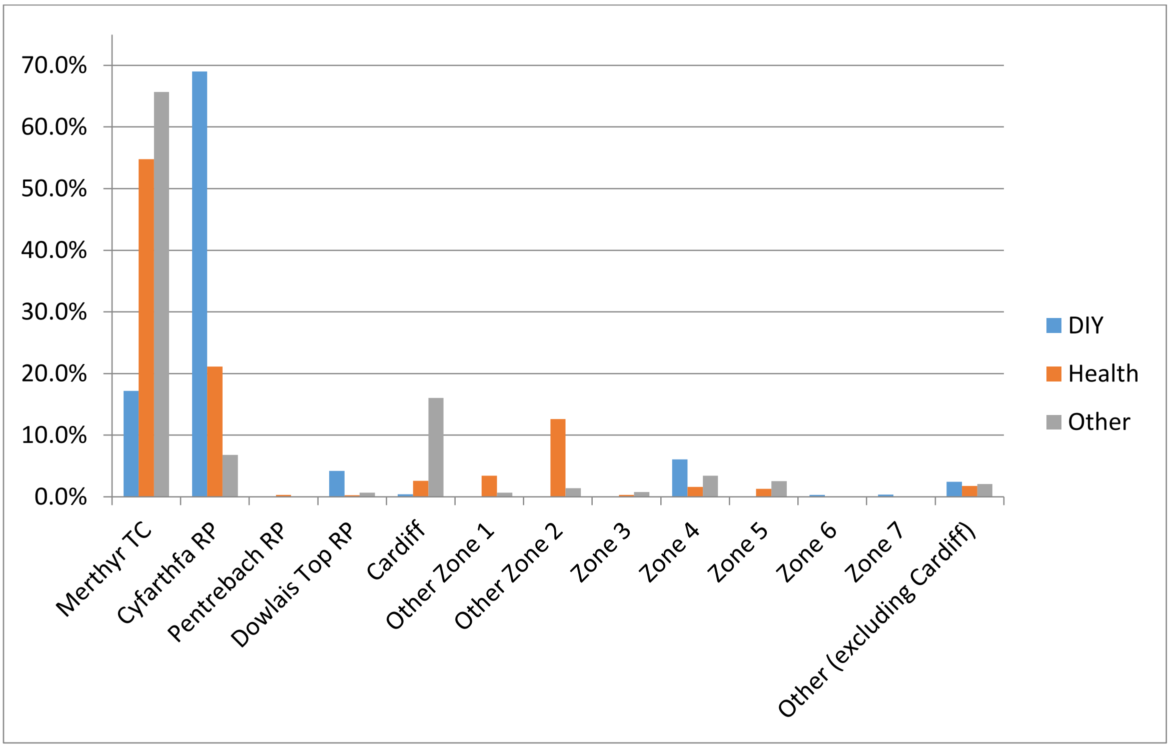
The market shares across the study area as a whole are lower for Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre and Merthyr Tydfil's retail parks, because other centres are in closer proximity to the homes of respondents in peripheral zones when compared with Merthyr Tydfil town centre and the retail parks.

Figure A.4 Market Shares for Core Zone 1 and 2 Respondents (Clothing, Furniture, Domestic Electrical and Electrical)



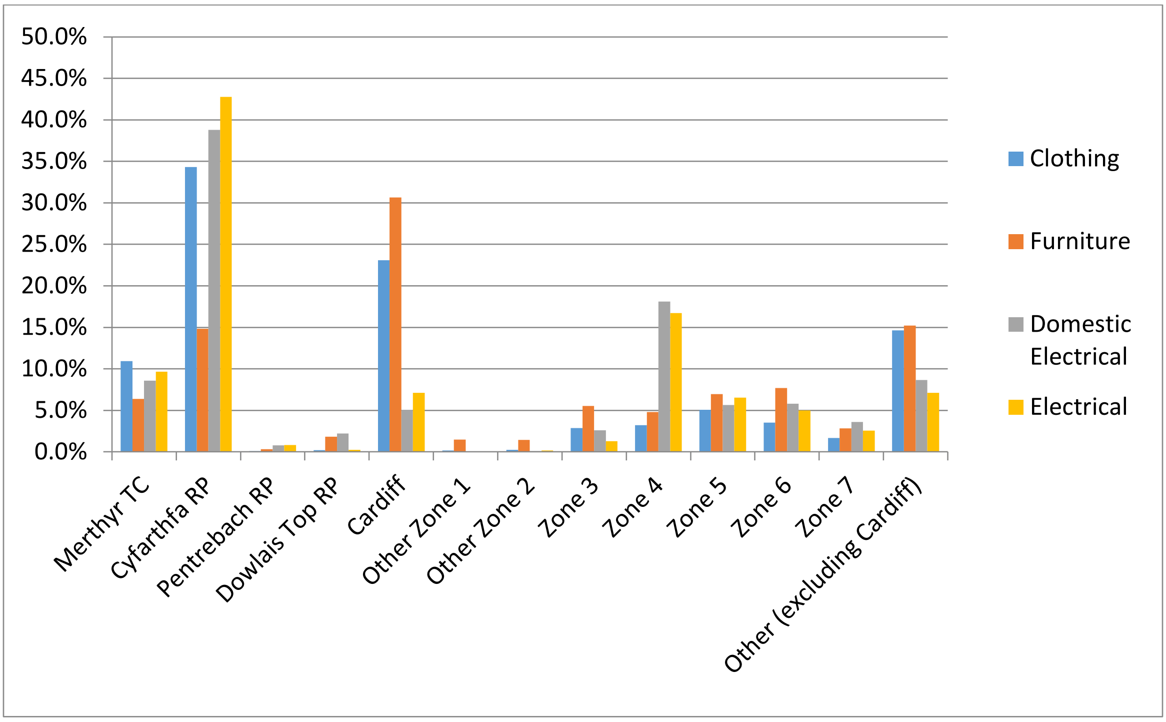
Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.5 Market Share for Zone 1 and 2 Respondents (DIY, Health and Other)



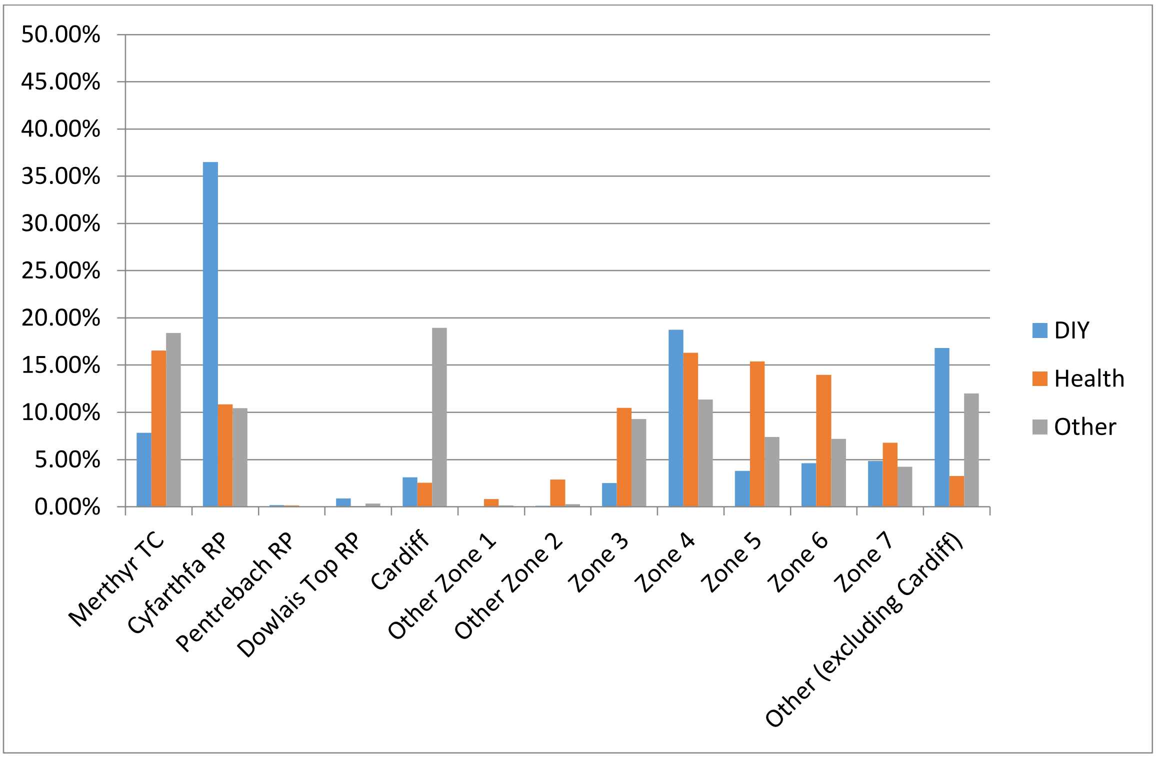
Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.6 Study Area Comparison Goods Market Shares



Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.7 Study Area Comparison Goods Market Shares



Source: NEMS Market Research

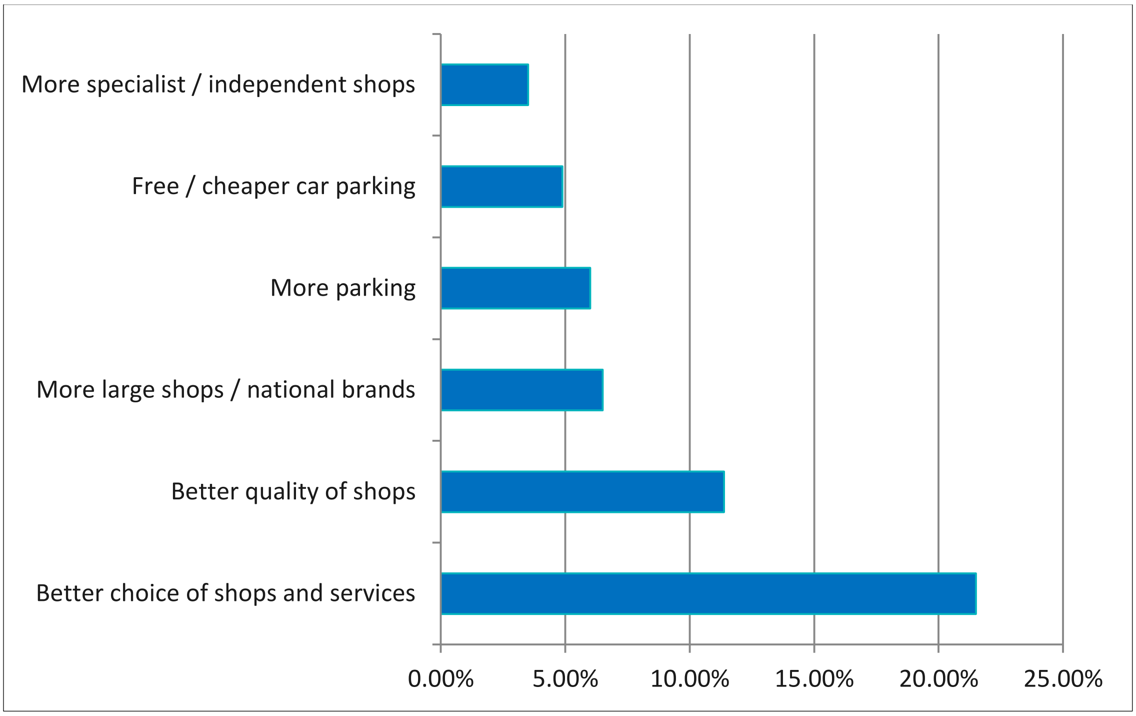
Mode of Travel for Shopping

Across the study area (excluding internet sales) 90.3% of respondents stated that they undertook their last main food shopping trip via car (both driver and passenger). Only a small proportion use public transport or walk. 3.2% travel via bus, 0.1% via train and 3.2% via walking.

Shoppers' Views

The household survey asked respondents what would make them visit Merthyr Tydfil town centre more often. Of the respondents 52% stated that 'nothing in particular' would make them shop in the town centre more often. Of the respondents who suggested improvements to the town centre, the majority mentioned better choice of shops and services and better quality of shops.

Figure A.8 What would make you shop more often in Merthyr Tydfil town centre?

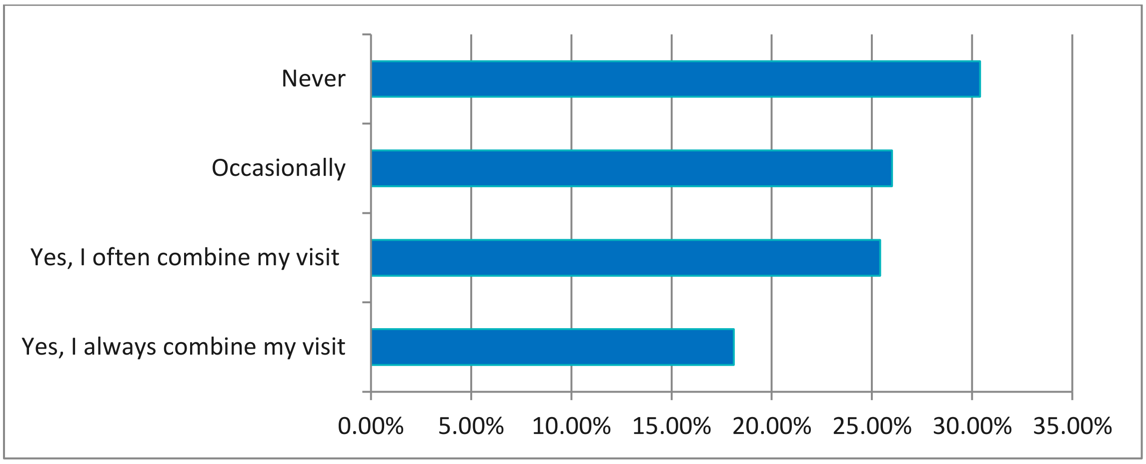


Source: NEMS Market Research

These responses suggest that improvement to the range and choice of shops as well as the presence of national brands and larger shops would help improve the number of visitors to Merthyr Tydfil town centre. More parking and cheaper parking is also considered to be an issue for shoppers.

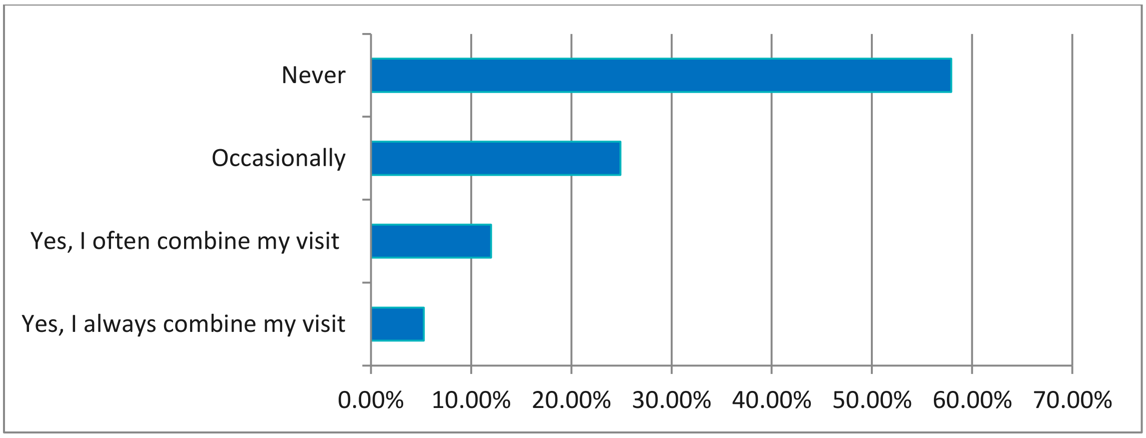
Shoppers were also asked if they ever combine visits to the town centre with a trip to Cyfarthfa Retail Park. The results are shown in Figure A.9. The same question was also asked conversely for visitors to Cyfarthfa Retail Park. Around 5% stated that they always combined visits, 12% stated that they often combined visits and 24.9% stated that they occasionally combined visits. 57.9% stated that they never visit Merthyr Tydfil town centre as part of their trip to Cyfarthfa Retail Park.

Figure A.9 Do you ever combine your visit to the town centre with a trip to Cyfarthfa Retail Park?



Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.10 Do you ever combine your visit to Cyfarthfa Retail Park with a trip to the town centre?

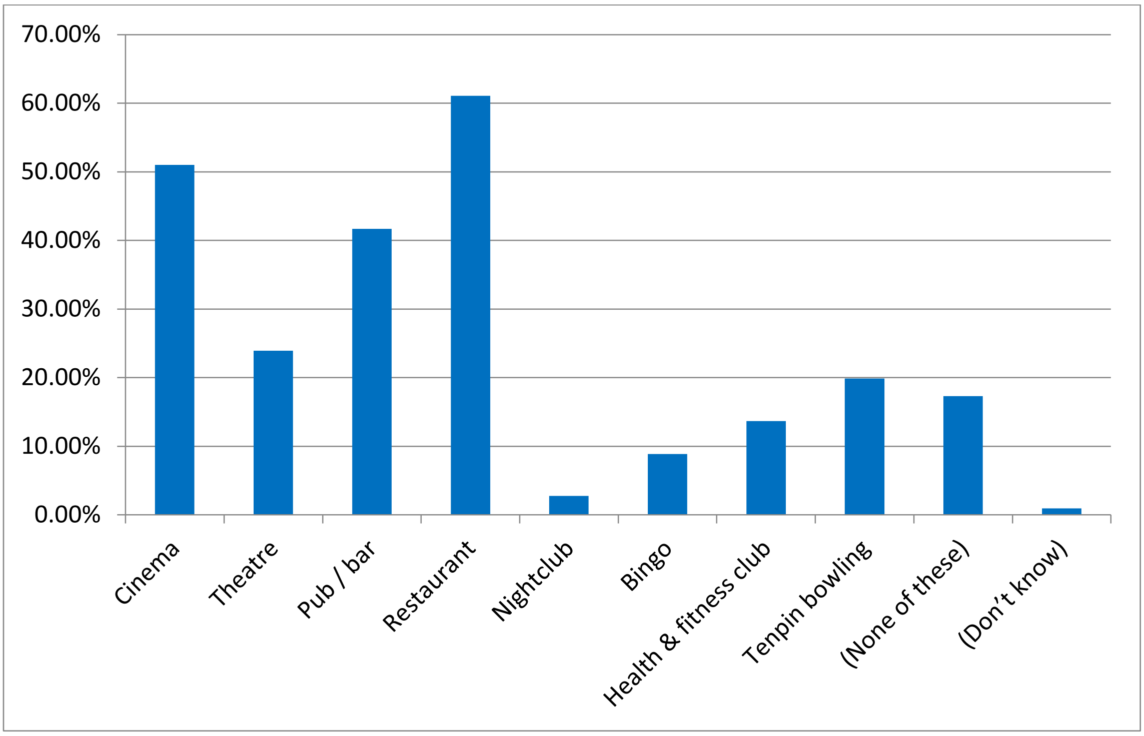


Source: NEMS Market Research

Leisure Activities

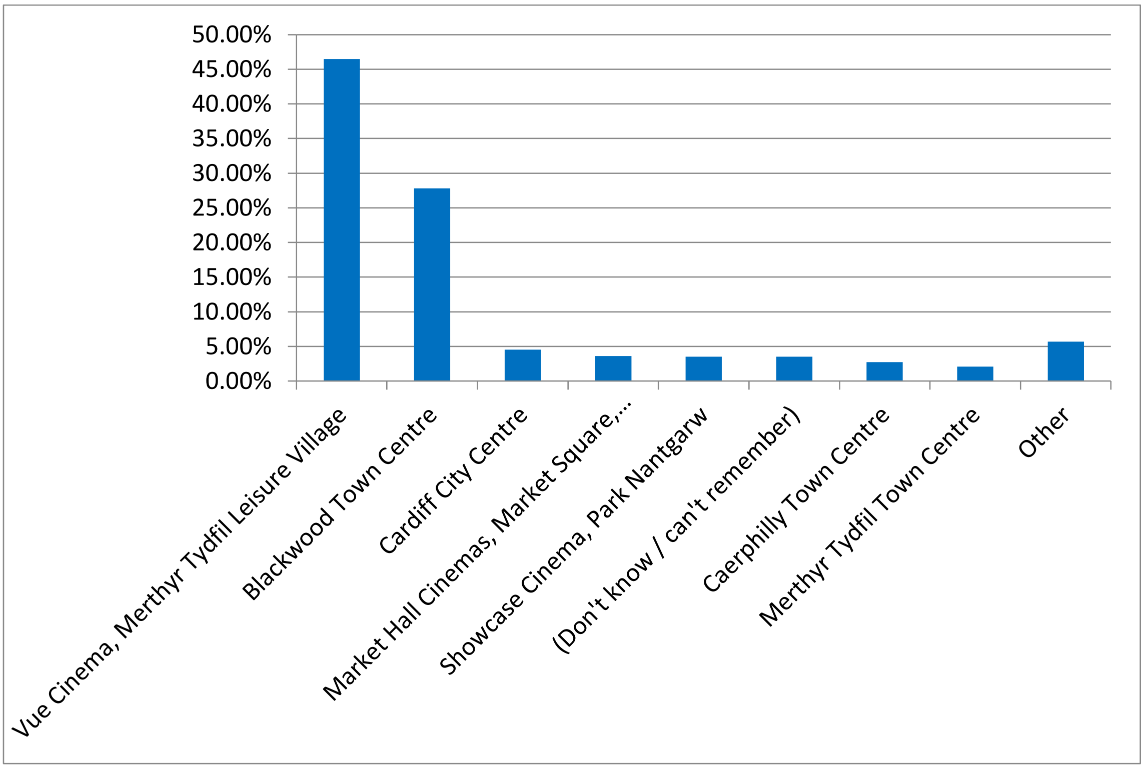
The household survey asked respondents what leisure activities their family participate in as shown in Figure A.11. The destinations for the main activities are shown in Figures A.12 to A.18.

Figure A.11 Leisure Participation Rate



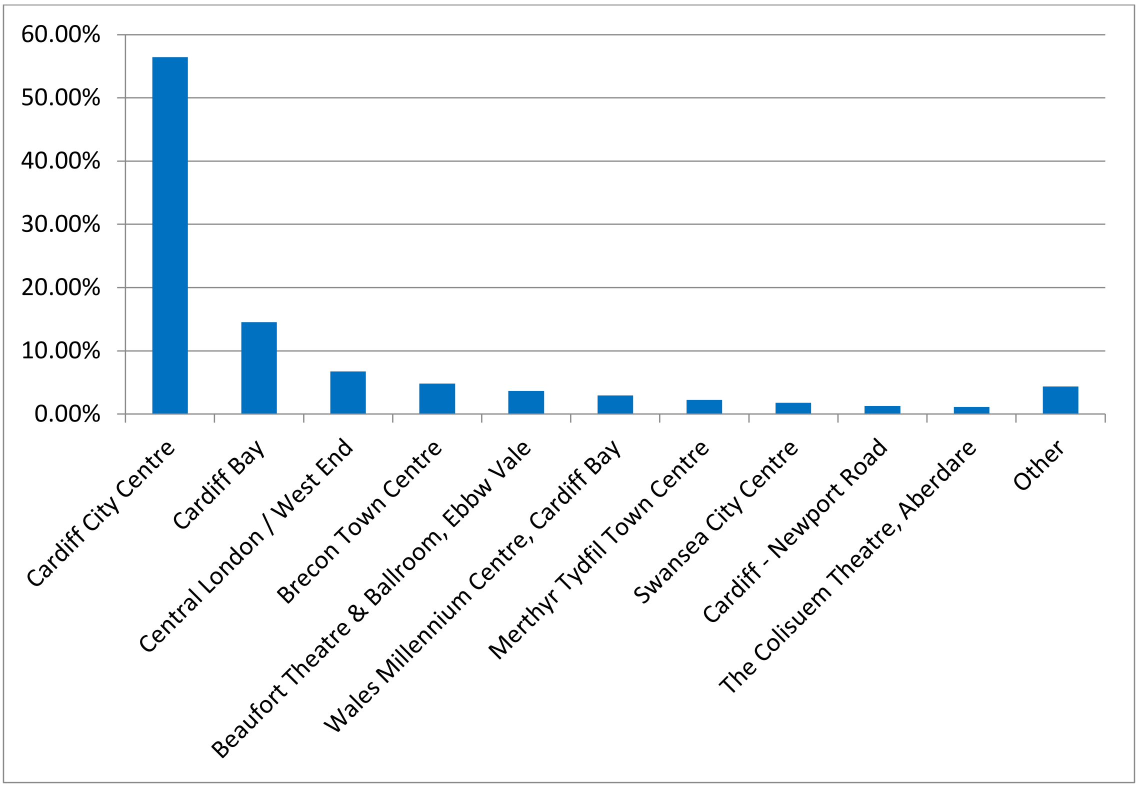
Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.12 Cinema Trip Destination Breakdown



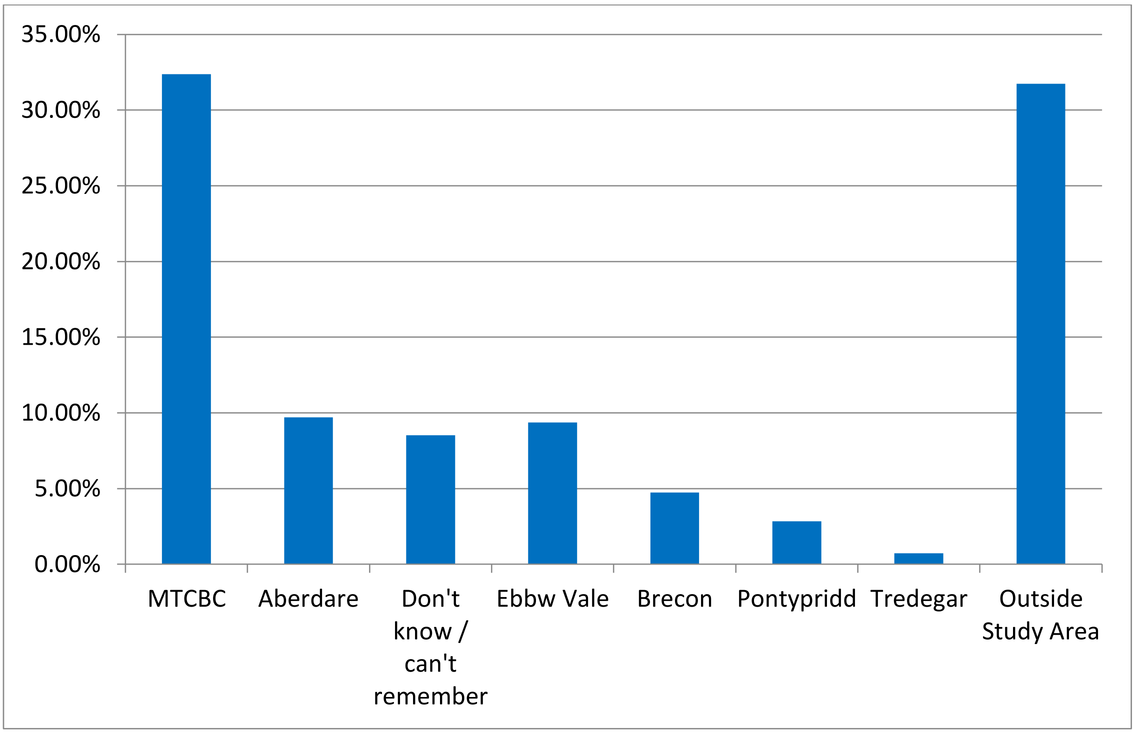
Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.13 Theatre Visits Destination Breakdown



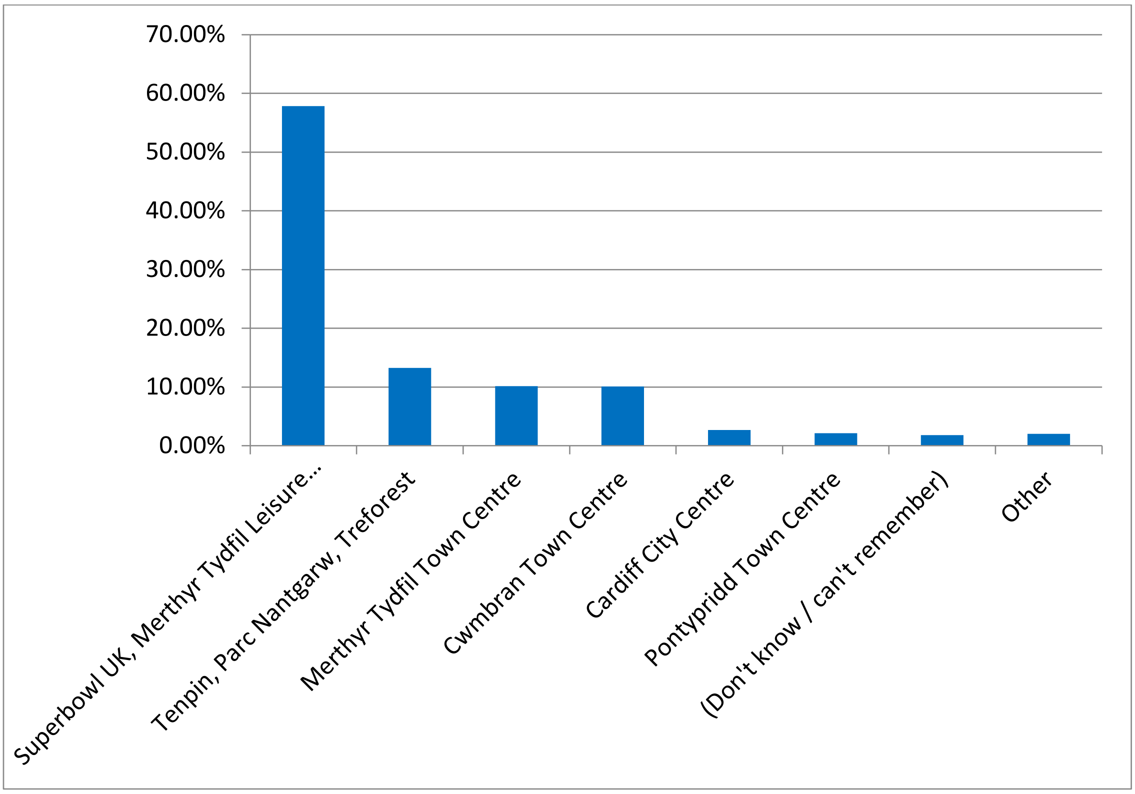
Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.14 Health/Fitness Clubs Destination Breakdown



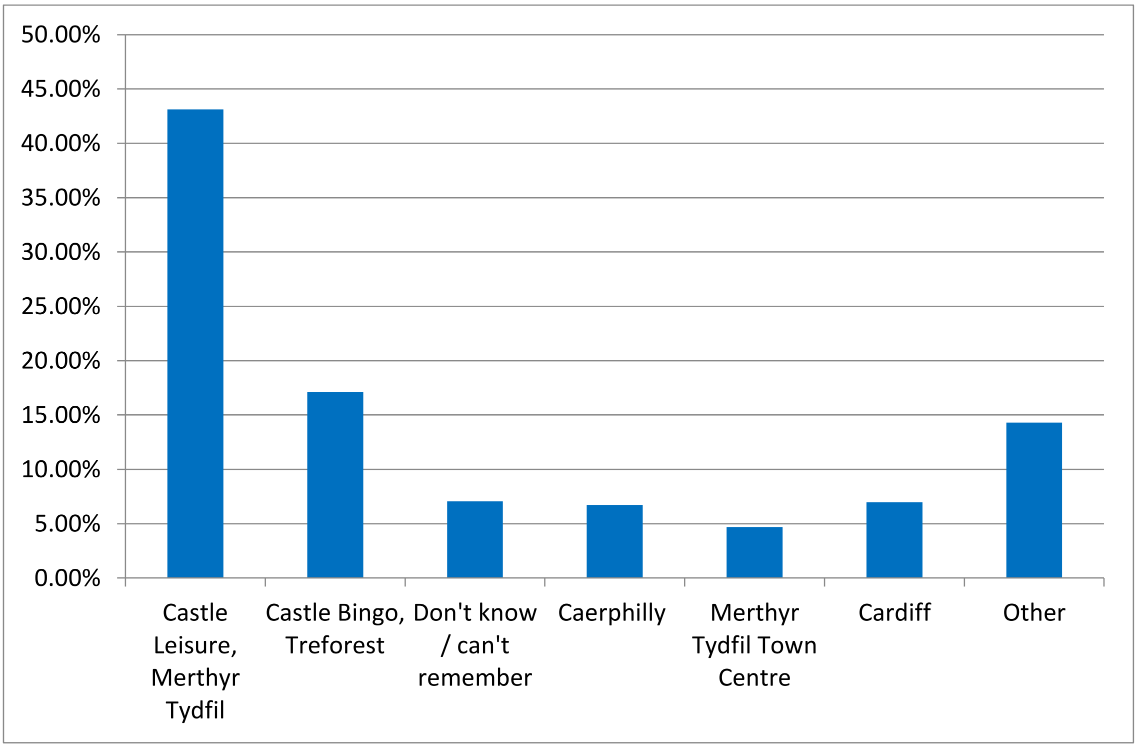
Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.15 Ten Pin Bowling Destination Breakdown



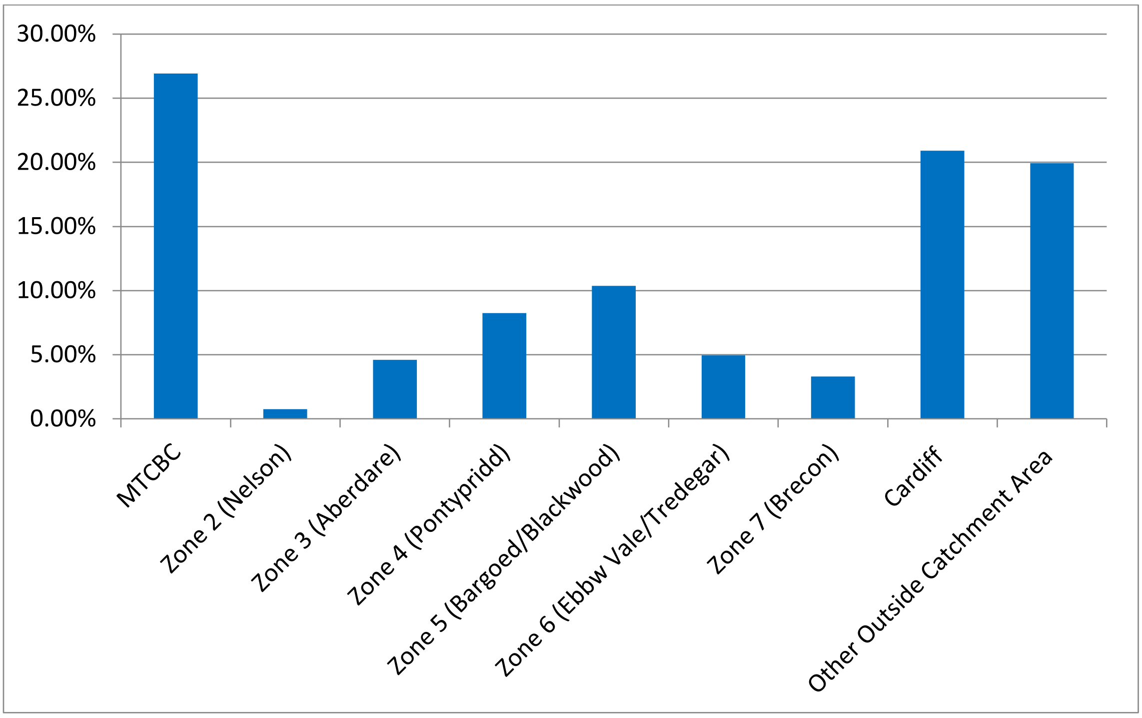
Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A..16 Bingo Destination Breakdown



Source: NEMS Market Research

Figure A.17 Food and Beverage Destinations Breakdown



Source: NEMS Market Research

Appendix 7: Business Survey

Business Survey

As part of this study, a postal questionnaire was sent to 250 businesses in Merthyr Tydfil and the surrounding area. Around 40 responses were received, most from businesses in Merthyr. A copy of the questionnaire is provided at Appendix 7.

Nature of Existing Businesses

The majority of responses came from independent traders (60%) rather than national multiples (29%). Circa 11% of respondents chose to remain anonymous.

60% of the respondents had established businesses in Merthyr which had been open and trading for over 10 years. Only 8.5% of respondents had been trading less than a year.

In terms of premises, circa 74% of respondents were operating from leased premises and 11% were owner-occupied. Other operators either didn't know or chose not to answer.

Business Performance and Future Plans

Respondents were asked to rate their businesses current trading performance with 26% rating it as 'good', 37% 'satisfactory' and 31% 'poor'.

When asked to rate business performance over the previous 12 months, 23% stated that they had seen improvement, 40% said business had stayed the same and 29% stated that business had declined. Over the next 12 months 34% predict that business performance will improve, 26% predict it will stay the same and 23% predict a decline.

In terms of future plans, 63% of respondents stated that they had no plans to change their business premises. However, 14% stated that they intended to extend or improve their existing premises, 8.5% were looking to relocate to new premises within Merthyr Tydfil and 3% were looking to close and move premises outside of Merthyr. One retailer commented that they would move into the town centre if a suitable building became available but considered existing options to be limited.

Issues Facing Businesses

Respondents were asked to identify the three main issues constraining their businesses. The most frequently listed were: availability of car parking (46%), general economy (43%), rents/overheads (40%), competition from out of centre retail/trading parks (34%), lack of visitors/customers (31%) and poor quality of town centre environment (31%).

Concerns were also raised that Trago Mills could divert trade from the town centre when it opens.

Merthyr Town Centre

Respondents were asked their opinion on Merthyr town centre's market position with 66% stating that it is 'fine as it is' and 31% feeling it is 'too down market'. No respondents considered it to be too up market.

With regard to the mix of the town centre offer in terms of shops and services, 37% of respondents felt there to be too many small independent shops and not enough larger chain stores, 46% considered the mix to be about right and 14% felt that there aren't enough independent shops.

Respondents were then asked to rank Merthyr Tydfil town centre in terms of a number of factors. The key highlights were:

- Rents/Rates: 37% rated Merthyr as quite poor or very poor with only 14% rating it very good or quite good. Businesses consider Beacons Place Shopping Centre rent to be too high for smaller retailers.
- Availability of parking: decision was split with 46% rating the centre as very poor or quite poor and 46% rating it as very good or quite good. There were also comments that disabled parking is limited.
- Parking Charges: 57% rated existing charges as very poor or quite poor. Specifically the abundance of free parking out of centre was highlighted, with businesses wanting free parking in the town centre to make it a more attractive prospect.
- Traffic Congestion: 40% considers traffic congestion to be an issue, ranking it quite poor or very poor.
- Bus Service: 37% rate the bus service as very good or quite good and a further 31% were neutral. Only 17% considered it dissatisfactory.
- Safety and Security: 40% rated this as very poor or quite poor and 37% were neutral.
- Range of Shops and Services: 80% considered the range of shops and services to be either very good or quite good.
- Quality of Shops and Services: 60% rated the quality as very good or quite good and 26% were neutral. Negative comments included a view that there are too many charity shops and pound shops.
- Entertainment and Leisure: 40% rated this as very poor or quite poor and 26% rated it as very good or quite good.
- Marketing/Promotion: 40% rated this as neutral and 34% rated in as very or quite poor. Businesses commented that Sunday trading should be encouraged and promoted.
- Liveliness: 63% rated the liveliness of the centre as quite or very poor.
- Street Market: opinion was split with 31% rating it as neutral, 31% rating it as quite or very poor and 26% rating it as quite good or very good.
- Quality/Number of Places to Eat/Drink: 40% rated this as neutral and 31% rated it as quite or very good.
- General Shopping Environment: 46% rated this as quite poor or very poor and 29% were neutral.

The Future

Respondents were asked to name four things they considered to be the most important factors when planning the future of Merthyr Tydfil town centre. The most popular responses were:

- Increase range of local/speciality retailers (43%);
- Improve quality of shops and services (40%);
- Increase national multiples/chain stores (37%);
- Improve the appearance of the centre (37%); and
- Improve public car parking (31%).

Appendix 8: In-Street Survey

In-Street Survey

NEMS Market Research undertook on street surveys of 100 shoppers in Merthyr Tydfil town centre and 100 shoppers at Cyfarthfa Retail Park. The surveys were undertaken on a range of days and time of day in February 2017. A summary of the main results from this survey are provided below.

Interviews at Cyfarthfa Retail Park

Respondents were asked what they intended to visit during their stay at Cyfarthfa. The majority (86%) stated they were planning to visit the shops, 31% stated restaurant/café and 17% stated they were just there to have a walk around and window shop.

Respondents were asked what their main purpose for visiting the retail park was, with 63% stating that they were shopping for non-food goods only, 10% shopping for food and 10% shopping for either food or non-food items. Respondents were also asked if they intended to do anything else during their visit with 51% stating no. Of those who said yes, the majority were intending to visit a restaurant or café.

In terms of what respondents were intending to buy, 55% stated clothing or footwear, 20% stated food and groceries and 15% stated health and beauty products. With regard to spend, respondents were most likely to spend between £30-40 (33%), with 72% of people spending between £10 and £50.

Around 85% of respondents started their journeys from home and 94% travelled by car, either as the driver or passenger. Only 5% came by bus and one respondent walked. Approximately 49% of respondents stayed at the retail park for less than one hour and only 13% stayed for more than two hours.

Respondents rated the retail park on a number of factors. A summary is provided in Table A.1.

Table A.1 How Customers Rate Cyfarthfa Retail Park

	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Availability of Parking	31%	47%	5%	9%	2%	6%
Parking Charges	81%	10%	2%	-	-	7%
Traffic Congestion	17%	29%	23%	11%	6%	14%
Bus Service	6%	9%	-	-	2%	83%
Bus Facilities	5%	2%	2%	1%	5%	85%
Personal safety	27%	32%	5%	1%	2%	33%
Range of Shops & Services	47%	41%	8%	1%	-	3%
Quality of Shops & Services	53%	42%	4%	1%	-	-
Daytime Entertainment/Leisure	8%	14%	33%	21%	8%	16%
Daytime Entertainment/Leisure Facilities	2%	4%	29%	24%	11%	30%
Evening Entertainment/Leisure	1%	7%	21%	21%	14%	36%
Evening Entertainment/Leisure Facilities	4%	33%	36%	11%	3%	13%
Centre Events	6%	44%	24%	19%	2%	5%
Liveliness/Street Life	37%	58%	-	-	1%	4%
Quality/Number of Places to Eat/Drink	9%	43%	27%	16%	2%	3%
General Shopping Environment	22%	62%	11%	3%	2%	-
Planting/Landscaping	32%	38%	8%	3%	4%	15%
Layout of Centre	12%	36%	19%	9%	10%	14%

Source: NEMS On-Street Survey

In terms of improvements, 28% of respondents stated that they could not identify anything in particular, 21% suggested improving the quality and range of restaurants/cafes, 17% suggested improving car parking and 11% suggested toilets.

Respondents were asked whether they ever combine their trip to Cyfarthfa with a trip to the town centre. Overall, 53% stated that they never combine their trip, 25% stated occasionally, 12% often and 10% stated that they always combine their trip.

When combining their trip, this was primarily to do food shopping and/or non-food shopping. 83% of respondents also stated that they never visit Merthyr Town Centre in the evening. Of those who said they do visit, this was primarily for bars and pubs.

Car Respondents were then asked to rate Merthyr Tydfil Town centre with respects to a number of factors. The responses are summarised in Table A.2.

Table A.2 How Cyfarthfa Customers Rate Merthyr Town Centre

	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Availability of Parking	3%	11%	11%	4%	4%	67%
Parking Charges	4%	9%	16%	13%	8%	50%
Traffic Congestion	1%	6%	28%	15%	8%	42%
Bus Service	14%	15%	22%	9%	8%	32%
Bus Facilities	-	38%	7%	3%	5%	47%
Personal safety	1%	13%	13%	1%	1%	71%
Range of Shops & Services	1%	19%	5%	19%	6%	50%
Quality of Shops & Services	1%	7%	25%	25%	6%	36%
Daytime Entertainment/Leisure Facilities	-	6%	48%	9%	5%	32%
Evening Entertainment/Leisure Facilities	-	6%	61%	7%	1%	25%
Centre Events	-	7%	64%	9%	1%	19%
Liveliness/Street Life	-	7%	27%	15%	2%	49%
Quality/Number of Places to Eat/Drink	-	20%	35%	4%	1%	40%
General Shopping Environment	-	7%	44%	14%	4%	31%
Planting/Landscaping	-	6%	13%	15%	3%	63%
Layout of Centre	-	10%	25%	9%	16%	40%
Size/Quality of Supermarkets	-	16%	27%	6%	10%	41%
Public Toilets	-	5%	40%	8%	18%	29%
Street Market	2%	21%	44%	3%	3%	27%
Indoor Market	3%	36%	36%	1%	2%	22%

Source: NEMS Survey at Cyfarthfa Retail Park

In terms of improvements, 33% of respondents stated that they could not identify anything in particular, 30% suggested increasing the number of national multiples/chain stores, 24% stated improving the quality of shops and services and 18% consider the range of local/speciality retailers in the centre.

Respondents were also asked what they like and dislike about Merthyr town centre. Proximity to home and the choice and quality of bars and pubs were the main likes whereas a perception of the centre being unsafe and a poor choice of facilities were the key dislikes.

Shoppers at Cyfarthfa were asked which other centres they regularly use for a number of activities. A summary of the responses is provided below:

- Food Shopping: 29% undertake in Merthyr town centre;
- Non-food shopping: 25% undertake in Merthyr town centre;
- Cinema: 15% undertake in Merthyr town centre;
- Theatre: Only 5% undertake in Merthyr town centre;
- Sports/health clubs: other centres not specified - no respondents visit Merthyr for this activity;
- Ten pin bowling: 10% undertake in Merthyr town centre;
- Bingo: 6% undertake in Merthyr town centre;
- Pubs/bars: 10% undertake in Merthyr town centre; and
- Restaurants: 13% undertake in Merthyr town centre.

Interviews at Merthyr Town Centre

Respondents were asked what their main purpose for visiting the town centre was, with 31% stating that they were shopping for food goods only, 21% shopping for non-food only and 12% shopping for food and non-food items. Respondents were also asked if they intended to do anything else during their visit with 22% stating that they were going to visit a restaurant/café, 19% for non-food shopping, 18% to use services and 15% for window shopping.

In terms of what respondents were intending to buy, 68% stated food and groceries, 18% newspapers and magazines, 17% household goods and 15% clothing and footwear. With regard to spend, respondents were most likely to spend between £10-20 (46%) on food and groceries with 82% of people spending less than £40.

For non-food, 46% of people stated that they didn't intend to spend anything and a further 20% spending between £0.01 and £30. For eating and drinking, 81% intended to spend less than £10.

Respondents were asked which services and facilities they intend to visit with 43% stating restaurant/café, 33% stating services such as bank, hairdressers or post office and 13% a cultural facility.

Around 90% of respondents started their journeys from home and 31% travelled by car, either as the driver or passenger. The majority (59%) came by bus and 8% walked. It's worth noting that 54% of respondents stated that their household did not own a car.

Approximately 69% of respondents stayed in the town centre for between 1-3 hours with 20% staying less than an hour and 7% over 3 hours.

In terms of linked trips, 53% stated that they never combine a trip to Merthyr town centre with a visit to Cyfarthfa, 35% occasionally combine their visit, 10% often combine their visit and 2% always combine their visit.

Respondents rated the town centre on a number of factors. A summary is provided in Table A.3.

Table A.3 How Customers Rate Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre

	Very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
Availability of Parking	5%	40%	23%	3%	6%	23%
Parking Charges	4%	32%	27%	4%	8%	25%
Traffic Congestion	3%	42%	21%	3%	5%	26%
Bus Service	23%	47%	6%	2%	2%	20%
Bus Facilities	13%	42%	9%	9%	7%	21%
Personal safety	10%	51%	24%	7%	2%	6%
Range of Shops & Services	8%	49%	22%	14%	5%	3%
Quality of Shops & Services	8%	53%	24%	12%	1%	2%
Daytime Entertainment/Leisure Facilities	3%	45%	15%	12%	5%	21%
Evening Entertainment/Leisure Facilities	1%	16%	15%	7%	8%	54%
Centre Events	2%	44%	18%	7%	5%	24%
Liveliness/Street Life	7%	41%	31%	10%	4%	8%
Quality/Number of Places to Eat/Drink	13%	65%	10%	5%	3%	8%
General Shopping Environment	7%	65%	17%	9%	2%	1%
Planting/landscaping	7%	51%	32%	4%	2%	4%
Layout of Centre	7%	36%	19%	9%	10%	14%
Size/Quality of Supermarket	8%	70%	16%	4%	1%	-
Public Toilets	2%	32%	28%	4%	24%	10%
Street Market	6%	52%	17%	6%	1%	18%
Indoor Market	8%	61%	17%	3%	1%	10%

Source: NEMS On Street Survey - Merthyr

In terms of improvements, 27% of respondents stated that they would like to see an improved quality of shops and services, 17% would like more chain stores/national multiples and 16% want to see improvement to the appearance of the centre. 22% could not name anything in particular.

Shoppers were asked if they ever visit Merthyr town centre in the evenings, of which 83% stated that they didn't. Of the 17 respondents who do visit, this was primarily to visit pubs/bars (71%) or restaurants (18%).

Those that visit the centre in the evenings stated that they liked the convenience to home and the choice of pubs, bars and restaurants. The majority (41%) didn't dislike anything about the centre in the evening but 29% highlighted poor security and a feeling of it being unsafe.

Those that don't currently visit Merthyr town centre in the evening were asked why that is. The majority (69%) stated that there was no particular reason, 21% said it was due to a lack of public transport, 17% said due to safety and 14% said it was due to the poor choice of facilities.

Shoppers in Merthyr were asked which other centres they regularly use for a number of activities. A summary of the responses is provided below:

- Food Shopping: 34% undertake at Cyfarthfa Retail Park;
- Non-food shopping: 65% undertake at Cyfarthfa Retail Park;
- Cinema: 14% undertake at Cyfarthfa and 7% at Pentrebach Retail Park;
- Theatre: of those that do this activity (14%), they go to an unspecified 'other' centre;

- Sports/health clubs: other centres not specified - no respondents visit Merthyr centres for this activity;
- Ten pin bowling: other centres not specified - 1 respondent visited Cyfarthfa for this activity;
- Bingo: of those that do this activity (7%), they go to an unspecified 'other' centre;
- Pubs/bars: 12% undertake in Cyfarthfa; and
- Restaurants: 17% undertake in Cyfarthfa.

Conclusions

The in-street survey results highlighted the following:

- Cyfarthfa is primarily used for non-food shopping whereas the town centre is primarily used for food shopping.
- Cyfarthfa appears to attract a higher level of spend per person but on average shoppers spend much less time there on an individual visit than the town centre.
- Shoppers with access to a car appear far more likely to shop at Cyfarthfa. The town centre is very attractive to those who rely on public transport.
- Those using Cyfarthfa are broadly happy although would like to see more restaurants/cafes and more facilities.
- Those using Merthyr town centre are also broadly happy but would like to see more national multiples in the centre and a general improvement in the quality of shops and services.
- Combined trips between Merthyr town centre and Cyfarthfa are relatively limited.
- Few respondents visit Merthyr town centre in the evening which appears primarily due to a lack of facilities and a perception that the centre is unsafe. However, the bars/pubs are a clear attractor.
- Those who primarily shop in Cyfarthfa appear to have a low opinion of the town centre. However, those who primarily shop in the town centre are fairly happy with the offer.
- The leisure offer is poor across the borough with the majority of respondents utilising centres elsewhere.

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