

# Your Town Audit: Clydebank

March 2016



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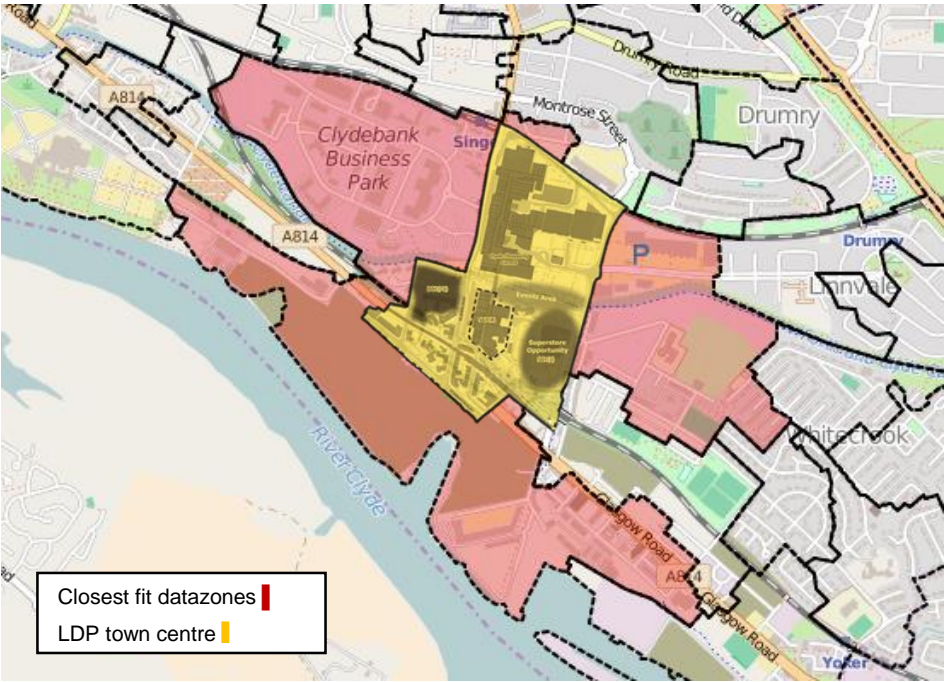
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For: West Dunbartonshire Council

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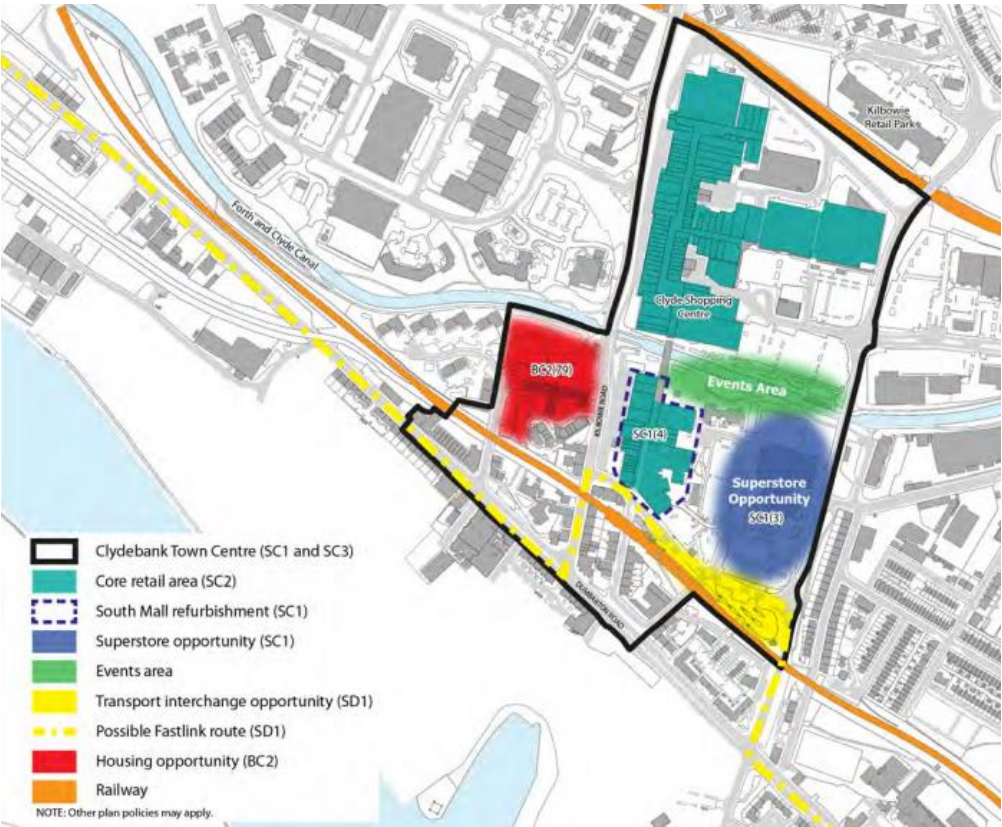


Figure: Clydebank Town Centre and Town Centre Datazones



Datazones S01006182 & S01006186. © Open Street Map Contributors

Figure: Clydebank Town Centre



Source: West Dunbartonshire Council Local Development Plan 2013

## 1. Understanding Scottish Places Summary

This report presents a summary of the Your Town Audit (YTA) for Clydebank, conducted by Scotland's Towns Partnership and EKOS. The detailed YTA Framework and Data Workbook are provided under separate cover.

The YTA was developed to provide a framework to measure and monitor the performance of Scotland's towns using a series of Key Performance Indicators. It provides a comprehensive audit of Clydebank with data on 180 KPIs across seven themes – Locality, Accessibility, Local Services, Activities + Events, Development Capacity, Tourism, and Place + Quality Impressions.

The [Understanding Scottish Places](#) (USP) data platform provides a summary analysis for Clydebank and identifies four comparator towns that have similar characteristics – Greenock, Motherwell, Alloa and Saltcoats. The USP platform – [www.usp.scot](http://www.usp.scot) – describes Clydebank in the following **general terms**:

**Clydebank's Interrelationships:** Clydebank is an '*interdependent to independent town*' which means it has a good number of assets in relation to their population. Towns of this type have some diversity of jobs; and residents largely travel shorter distances to work and study, although some travel longer distances. These towns attract people from neighbouring towns to access some of their assets and jobs.

**Clydebank's Typology:** Social and council housing are the norm in these large towns. Manufacturing and construction are the dominant forms of employment. Health and social work services are particularly active. There is a relatively high level of unemployment. Educational attainment is low. Car ownership is low, meaning that many residents in these towns are reliant on public transport.

When Clydebank is compared to the towns identified by USP as being similar, key variations include its diversity of jobs, the distance that people travel to work and study, and its number of residents per retail outlet, suggesting that it draws shoppers in from other places.

This report presents the results of our analysis using the Scottish Government's [Town Centre Toolkit](#) – an online resource available via the USP website which provides advice, guidance and case studies across three thematic areas: accessible, active and attractive.

## 2. Accessible Town Centre

Clydebank is a former industrial centre, around eight miles west of Glasgow on the north bank of the Clyde. Clydebank stands out from other towns in which audits have been carried out in that virtually all of its core retail offering is within a shopping centre. The town centre area – as specified in the 2013 Local Development Plan – takes in the shopping centre and the area immediately surrounding it. As the town centre definition is so concentrated, many of the Clydebank's other facilities and services are found outwith its town centre boundary. This audit report does, however, comment on facilities outside the strict meaning of the town centre, and the wider regeneration of the town, where appropriate.

Clydebank boasts excellent connectivity with west central Scotland, with Glasgow less than half an hour away by both rail and road. The wider settlement has four railway stations, including one within the town centre area (Clydebank) and one on its edge (Singer). There is a frequent service from each of these stations, with up to three or four trains an hour at peak times. This allows fast access to surrounding towns in West Dunbartonshire, as well as Helensburgh, Motherwell and Glasgow.

**15 Mile radius around Clydebank**



A bus turning/waiting area is located centrally in Clydebank, offering services to Dumbarton, Glasgow, Greenock, Glasgow Airport and Paisley. The most recent Local Development Plan identifies improving the quality of public transport facilities in the town centre as an opportunity, with potential for an integrated rail and bus hub. Some work has taken place to improve the quality of the bus shelters on Chalmers Street over recent years. Improved public transport infrastructure may help ease traffic congestion in the town centre, which can be an issue on roads around the retail park and shopping centre at peak times.

National Cycle Route NCN 7, which runs between Glasgow and Loch Lomond, goes alongside the Forth and Clyde Canal for much of its distance. This a popular route and, by intersecting the shopping centre, brings cyclists into the heart of the town

centre. The audit found there to be an adequate number of bicycle stands around the town centre.

The River Clyde is located to the south of the town centre and, like the canal, helps give the town a sense of place. The addition of a pontoon as part of the ongoing regeneration of the riverside provides access to the town for passing vessels and tourist cruises, such as the Waverley paddle steamer. Sailing is an increasingly important part of Scotland's tourism offer, and with ongoing proposals to develop the riverside, there may be further potential to attract more boats to the town.

The town has good 3G and 4G mobile reception, and the Clyde Shopping Centre also offers free Wi-Fi. Superfast broadband has been rolled out to Clydebank, and is also now available wirelessly at Clydebank's public libraries.

West Dunbartonshire Council announced in 2015 that their One Stop Shop for council services is set to relocate from offices on Rosebery Place to premises within the Co-op department store on Sylvania Way South. This will bring services into the heart of the town centre, improving both their visibility and accessibility. Other council offices have transitioned to new accommodation at the riverside Queen's Quay development.



### 3. Active Town Centre

#### 3.1 Population and Housing

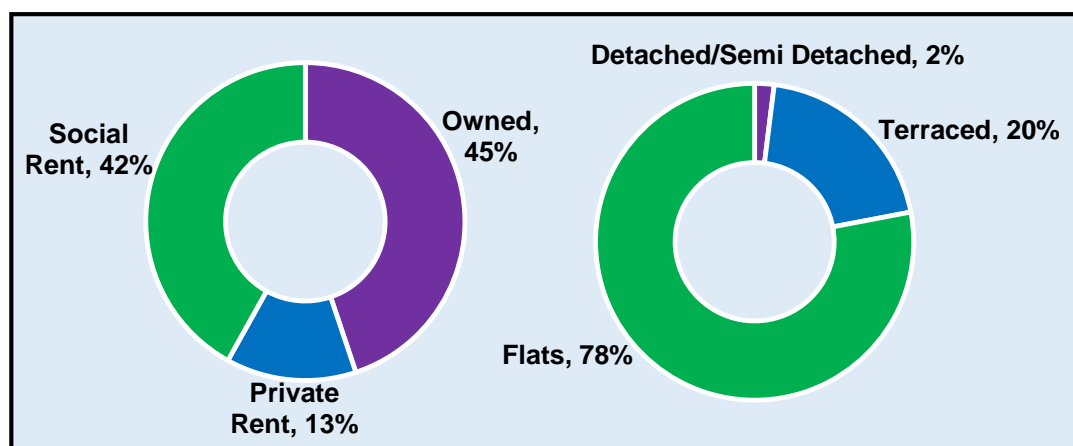
The wider settlement of Clydebank<sup>1</sup> has a population of 43,000, with only around 200 people living within the town centre<sup>2</sup>. Clydebank therefore has a very low number of town centre residents compared to other towns, although this is not surprising given the small size of the defined town centre, the dominance of the shopping centre, and the limited stock of housing above retail units. Clydebank's population declined -4% in the decade to 2013, which compares with a decrease of -3% for West Dunbartonshire and a 5% increase in Scotland over the same period.

Please note that the housing and employment data presented below relates to a much larger area around the town centre, comprised of the closest fit datazones<sup>3</sup> - see map on page 2. Datazones are the most readily accessible geographic area for future comparison purposes.

More than three quarters of housing in this area is in flatted accommodation (78%), typically one or two bedroom and Council Tax band A/B/C. Tenure is split between private ownership (45%), social rented (42%) and private rented (13%), with a small number of vacant dwellings (2%) and virtually no second/holiday homes.

The average purchase price of a dwelling is around 80% of the wider town (£74k compared with £93k), which increased by 52% between 2003 and 2013.

#### Clydebank Housing Mix



<sup>1</sup> Based on Multi-Member Wards of Clydebank Central, Clydebank Waterfront & Kilpatrick.

<sup>2</sup> Output Areas S00096697 & S00097099, a good fit with the LDP town centre (Census 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Datazones S01006182 & S01006186

### 3.2 Employment

Around 44% of Clydebank's jobs are located in the town centre datazones. National statistics record 510 businesses within Clydebank town centre and its periphery<sup>4</sup>, with the YTA street audit finding just over 200 within the town centre (i.e. businesses immediately visible from the street). The remaining businesses will largely be found in Clydebank Business Park and other addresses around the town centre. There are on average 22.3 employees in Clydebank per town centre business – typical of the other towns in which audits have been undertaken, including Kirkcaldy (17), Alloa (18.5) and Hamilton (27).

### 3.3 Retail



We identified 136 retailers in the town centre, most of which are located on or just off the main shopping precinct, Sylvania Way. Additionally, 21 temporary retailers/stalls were found within the shopping centre. As the audit was undertaken during a period of heavy footfall and high consumer spending ahead of Christmas, it is likely the case that not all of these temporary retailers/stalls are year-round.

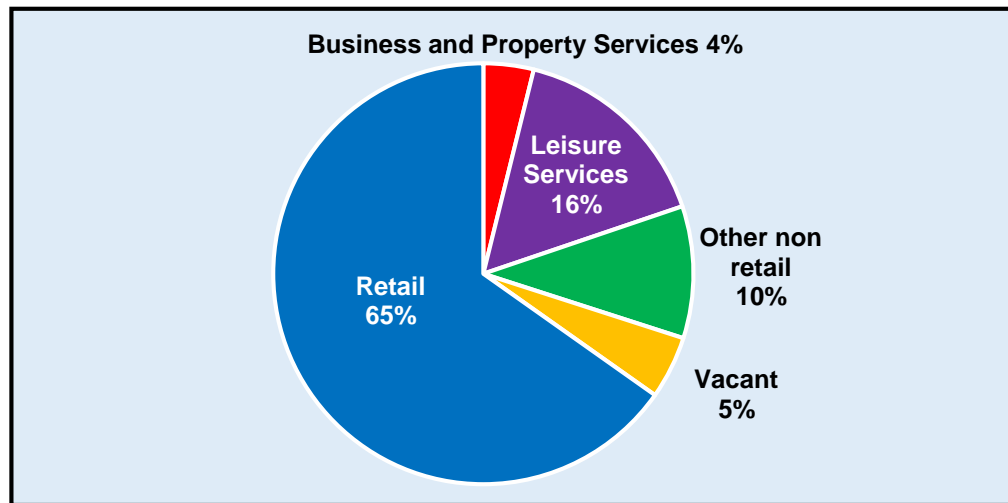
Overall vacancy in the town centre was just over 5%, which is considerably lower than other towns in which audits have been undertaken. Only two vacant units were identified in the north side of the shopping centre, which is more modern than the southern side of the mall. By comparison, the vacancy rate in other towns – albeit with less condensed town centre areas – were in the range of 10% to 20%, including Alloa (10%), Kilmarnock (15%), Ayr (16%) and Kirkcaldy (17%).

Clyde Shopping Centre opens 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday, until 7pm on Thursdays, and from 11am to 5pm on Sundays.

<sup>4</sup> Intermediate Zone S02001185  
Your Town Audit: Clydebank



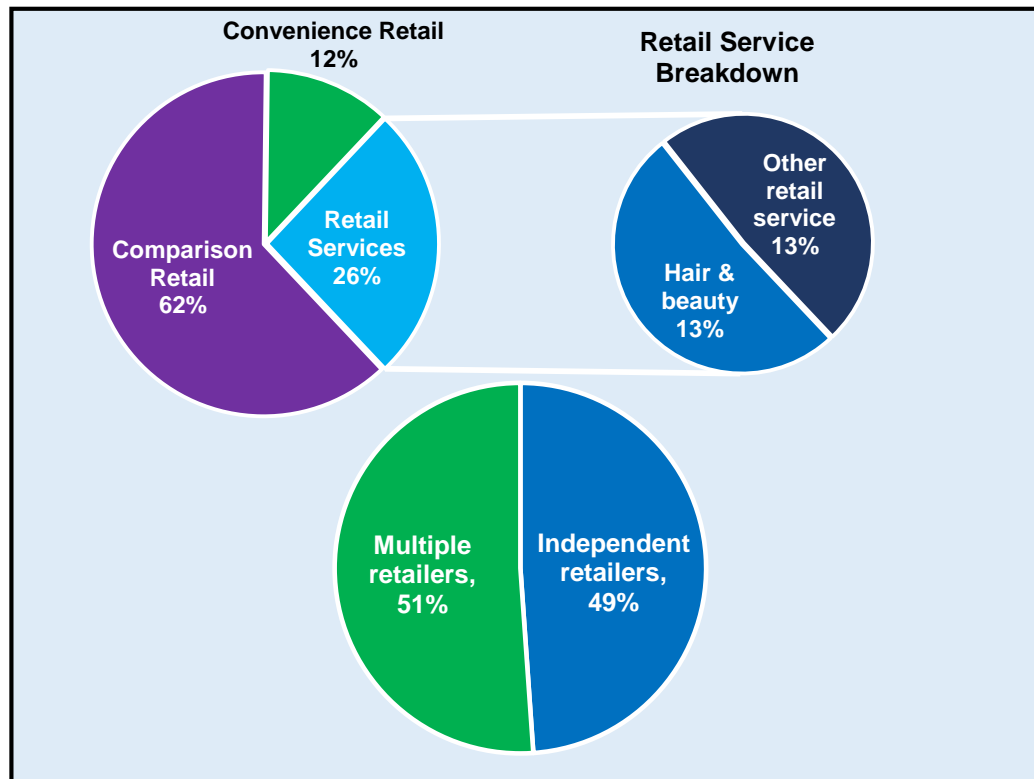
### Town Centre Unit Mix



The town centre is dominated by retail, amounting to 65% of all business units. The YTA analysis is based on the following retail definitions:

- **Convenience Retail:** primarily low cost goods that are typically bought out of habit or on impulse i.e. food, drink (alcohol and non-alcohol), news, tobacco, etc. – *16 convenience retailers identified in Clydebank town centre;*
- **Comparison Retail:** all other retail purchases comprising goods bought at infrequent intervals where consumers will compare and contrast products and prices – *84 comparison retailers identified in Clydebank town centre;* and
- **Retail Services:** services that consumers would expect to find in a town centre including hairdresser, beauty salon, repair of goods, hire of specialist clothing, health clinics, post office, travel agent, etc – *35 retail service operators identified in Clydebank town centre.*

## Retail Mix



The core retail area in Clydebanks focuses on the shopping centre, which is split into two sections and intersected by the Forth and Clyde Canal. The northern half is a fully enclosed, modern shopping centre with an adjacent cinema and large supermarket. The lower half is a partially enclosed, pedestrianised precinct, with a cluster of pay day loan and betting shops. This leads out on to the remainder of the town centre, comprising traditional tenements with some non-residential uses at ground level, and a listed, now only partially occupied Co-operative department store.

Interestingly, just over half of retailers in Clydebanks are multiples (51%) i.e. belong to a national chain. This is higher than other towns in which audits have been conducted, which have generally had between 30-40% multiples. Clydebanks has a particularly strong offering of national comparison retailers, including clothes shops. This profile reflects the preference for this type of retailer to be located within a shopping centre and clustered alongside similar businesses.

There are also a number of independent stores that will play a role in securing repeat footfall in the town centre, such as a greengrocer stall within the shopping centre and the butcher and fishmonger on Sylvania Way South.



## 4. Attractive Town Centre

### 4.1 Overview

A Charrette – a planning and design workshop aimed at engaging the local community – was held in Clydebank in early 2015. Key issues arising from the consultations included a “perceived lack of ownership” of the town centre among residents and some dissatisfaction with the mix of town centre uses and the need to improve connections, particularly for pedestrians, between different parts of the town.



The Charrette also highlighted the importance of regeneration activity at Queens Quay (pictured), an expansive waterfront site that was previously the John Brown's Shipyard. The eastern side of Queens Quay is home to an increasing range of services, including the West College Scotland campus, council offices and Titan Crane.

In 2015, funds were set aside for infrastructure and groundworks to ready the remainder of the site – which contains a majority of the town's housing land supply – for future investment. It is hoped that this will eventually see 1,000 homes and a public boulevard constructed between the shopping centre and riverside amenities. This will also provide a walkable linkage between the town centre and its public transport network with the college and Titan Crane. The development of Queens Quay has the potential to transform central Clydebank, opening it up beyond the shopping centre and providing high quality public space. It will also vastly increase the number of people living in the town centre area, increasing footfall for local businesses and making the town centre a more vibrant place.

The existing layout presents some challenges, as despite excellent public transport links and a pedestrianised shopping precinct, the surrounding parts of the town still



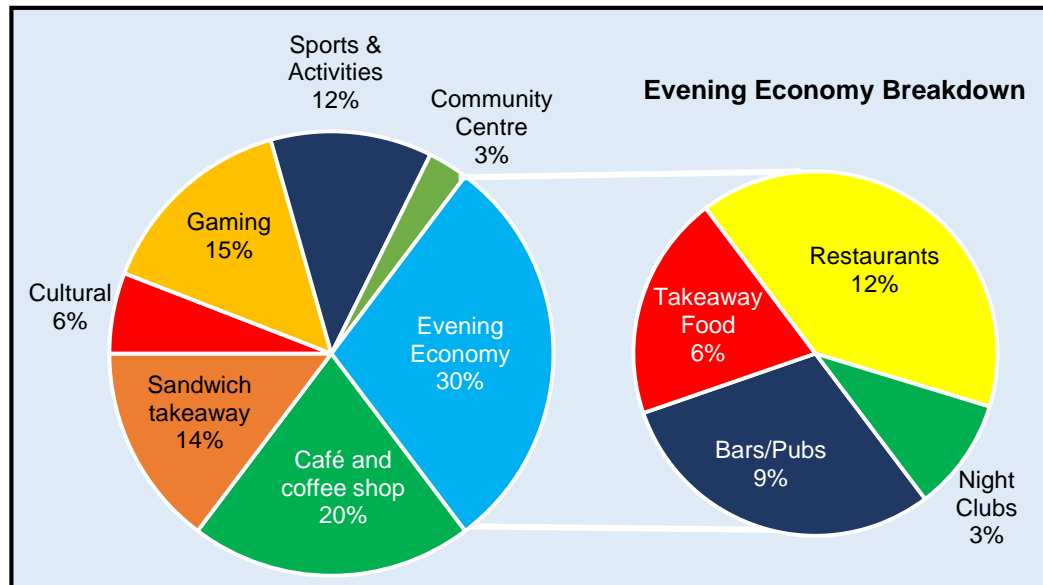
feel like they prioritise travel by car. This can also create problems with traffic congestion in and around the town centre, while the roundabouts, roads and car parks can make it feel like an out of town retail park – to be driven in and out of – rather than a town centre designed for local people to access a mix of uses. This will be particularly important in ensuring that travelling by foot to the increasing number of facilities and housing at the waterfront is an attractive option.

Clydebank has one major supermarket, a 24 hour ASDA located just to the east of the shopping centre. The 2013 LDP identifies the soon to be vacated Play Drome site as suitable for a new 8,000m<sup>2</sup> superstore, although the planning application for this development has now expired. Forward Planning at WDC have advised that while zoning for the site will still allow the food store option to be pursued, a more open view of what the site can be used for will be adopted. A supermarket development may be challenging in the current retail environment, with the larger supermarket chains scaling back expansion plans and with an existing superstore already sited next door.

The town also has Lidl and Aldi supermarkets, in retail parks close to the centre, and Farmfoods and Iceland stores within the town centre. The Charrette did, however, identify the town's "limited major food store presence" as an issue to be addressed.

## 4.2 Leisure

### Leisure Mix



The leisure offering in the town centre is split between the evening economy, cafes and coffee shops and other uses. There is a low number of hot food takeaway outlets and relatively few bars/pubs compared to other town centres. However, this is indicative of the core retail area mostly being within a shopping centre, which is not typically associated with evening leisure use – the shopping centre closes at 5.30pm most days with late opening till 7pm on Thursday. The cinema is located next to the shopping centre and there are some evening economy uses dotted around the southern part of the town centre, such as a nightclub, live music venue and pubs.

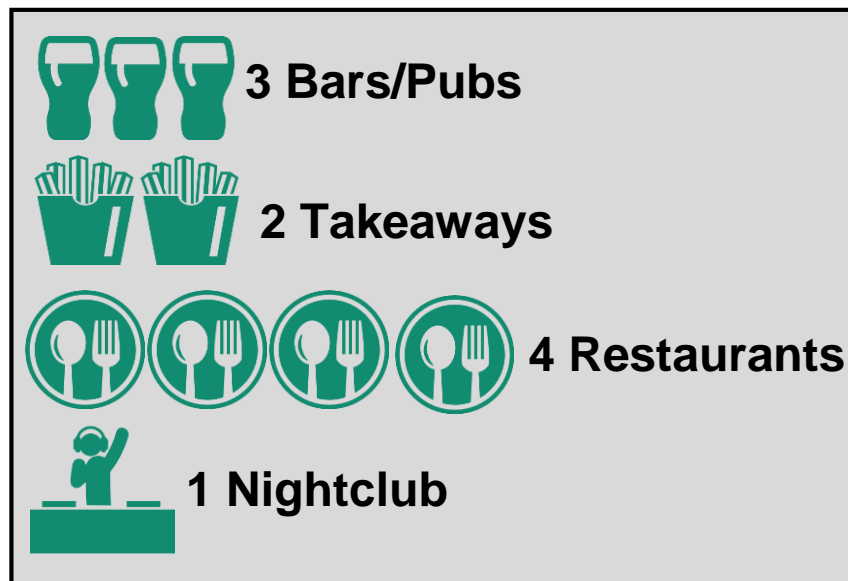
The Play Drome leisure centre is currently located near to the shopping centre, but is set to be demolished. A new, £22m complex is under construction at Queens Quay, and will open in 2017, with swimming pools and a sports hall. This is a part of a major, mixed-use development planned for the riverside area.

The improvements made to the canal side area that the shopping centre backs on to provide a solid benchmark for regeneration in Clydebanks. This has provided a people friendly space that



complements the retail use on each side, complete with a band stand that can be used for events. There is also a good amount of seating. On a grey and wet day in December, there was little reason for people to stop, but the site has excellent potential for use in better weather.

There are currently no hotels within the town centre, although three in the surrounding area, including the large, NHS-operated Beardmore Hotel and conference centre in Dalmuir. Another hotel is planned as part of the riverside regeneration.



### 4.3 Attractions and Heritage

Clydebank manages to maintain a strong sense of its heritage, with pedestrian guard rails along Dumbarton Road making reference to the area's shipbuilding past. This street also has a number of public art works and memorials in the granite column at Solidarity Plaza, the war memorial on Clydebank Town Hall/Museum, and the stainless steel memorial to victims of asbestos, unveiled in 2015.

A key attraction in Clydebank is the Titan Crane, which was restored and opened as a heritage attraction in 2007. The Titan Crane's opening times were limited in 2015 due to the nearby construction of the new leisure centre. The crane is the only A listed building in the town and acts as a focal point for the town's identity, representing both its past and the present riverside regeneration.

Clydebank Museum is located in the Clydebank Town Hall building, currently on the fringe of the town centre but at a key entrance point to the Queens Quay

regeneration site. It opens Monday to Saturday and has a range of exhibits on the town's heritage. Other attractions, outside of the town centre, include the Scotkart go-karting and laser tag centre and the Auchentoshan Distillery, on the outskirts of Clydebank, which is rated five stars by Visit Scotland.

#### 4.4 Attractiveness Review

The YTA includes an independent review on place and quality impressions, with Clydebank scoring close to the average when compared to other towns. The town's post-industrial transition is still ongoing, as evidenced by the vacant land which still dominates the riverside area. But the town has many strong points, and on the day the audit was undertaken, felt very busy. The town centre, and indoor shopping mall, were also clean and – on the whole – well presented.

With 2,500 spaces, a considerable amount of space in the town centre is taken up by car parking, which is free for up to a four hour stay and is well used. The car parks are an important contributor to footfall and bring economic benefits to the town, particularly with a supermarket located on a highly visible central site.

However, this does have the effect of making the town centre less attractive to pedestrians, with expansive car parks and wide roads between buildings. This is doubly the case at times when the shopping centre thoroughfare is closed. The lack of visible store fronts – which are contained within the shopping centre – also detracts from the vibrancy of the town centre.

Designing for the weather is an important feature of urban centres in Scotland. However, most of Clydebank's retail core is protected from the elements by virtue of being indoors. The main transport hubs also offer some protection, with bus shelters on Chalmers Street and indoor areas at the railway stations. However, the wider open areas in the town centre – such as car parks – are more exposed, and consideration of this will need to be taken with future developments by the riverside.

Business confidence in the town centre was gauged from a small sample of interviews undertaken. However, these were all with independent traders, so are not necessarily





representative of wider feeling among retailers, given the importance of multiples in Clydebank. Nonetheless, business confidence scores averaged at 5.9 / 10, which is slightly higher than the average across other YTA audited towns.

Individual shop fronts and window displays were graded out of ten during the on-street audit, with a town centre average score of 6.9 for the condition of shop fronts and 7.4 for quality of window display. Clydebank achieved a reasonably high score compared to audits of other towns, slightly higher than the average. This is likely due to the high standards maintained by retailers within the shopping centre. Both shop front and shop window scores ranged from 4 to 9.

## 5. YTA Summary and Key Points

The following are offered as final comments on the Your Town Audit of Clydebank, within the framework of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Toolkit.

### 5.1 Accessible Town Centre

- there is excellent access into the centre of Clydebank by virtually all methods of transport – road, rail, foot / cycle path, canal and river. However, the linkage between parts of the town centre could be improved to boost its attractiveness to pedestrians and cyclists, particularly the shopping centre and the key heritage assets (museum/ library/ Titan Crane);
- there is an issue with traffic congestion in the town centre, particularly at peak times on streets around the retail park; and
- bus and rail access to the town centre is frequent with good connections from towns and cities in west central Scotland, although an integrated transport hub has been identified as a priority for the town centre to achieve better connectivity between these different methods of transport.

### 5.2 Active Town Centre

- a use will need to be found for the Play Drome site, with the existing leisure centre set to be demolished in 2017 after the new centre opens at Queens Quay;
- there is a strong mix of retailers within the Clyde Shopping Centre, which it will be important to maintain to ensure its continued vibrancy;
- Clydebank has a relatively limited stock of evening economy activities within the town centre – there may be value in exploring how other similar (i.e. shopping centre dominated towns) have addressed this issue. While on a different scale and context, The Centre in Livingston has expanded its leisure offer with a 'Restaurant Avenue' on its western edge;
- compared with other town centres, Clydebank has a small number of residential units – there may be an opportunity to increase town centre living which, in turn, may help to increase support an expanded evening economy offer; and

- it may be worth examining ways of bringing people into the town e.g. additional events, gala days etc during the summer months, particularly with the enhanced public realm around the canal.

### 5.3 Attractive Town Centre

- the medium term redevelopment of Queens Quay will significantly improve the attractiveness of the town centre, but there is a need to ensure that this is well-connected to the main retail and leisure facilities and public transport infrastructure in the town; and
- parts of the town have already undergone extensive regeneration, with the southern canalside a good example of what can be achieved. Other key sites around the town centre include Rosebery Place, where a vacated office block is set to make way for residential development; the relocation of the WDC One Stop Shop to the Co-op building, bringing council services into the heart of the town centre; the identified need to upgrade public transport facilities, with a proposed new interchange; and the need to find a use for the Play Drome site, with active frontages.