

# 10. POCKLINGTON:ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

February 2009

England  
& Lyle



EAST RIDING  
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

## 10. POCKLINGTON: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## BASELINE SITUATION

The Study has made an assessment of the baseline situation, identifying where Pocklington town centre is in terms of vitality and viability today. This is set out below to explain how Pocklington Town Centre is performing at present and to provide an indication of its direction of travel.

### Overall Provision

Pocklington is an historic market town which retains its traditional character and townscape. This provides the centre with much of its distinctive character. In general terms the health of the town centre has had an overall improvement noted since the previous assessment in 2001, making it the joint second best performing centre in the East Riding.

The shopping centre is concentrated around the Market Place, extending into the neighbouring Market Street, Railway Street and Pavement/George Street. Sainsburys is located just outside the town centre boundary but it is well related physically to the town centre and brings trade into the town. Observation however has not provided evidence of linked trips being made. The amount of out-of-centre retail floorspace is rated as good, but there is considered to be very little capacity for growth or change within the existing town centre boundary. However, some potential for an expansion of the town centre along Station Road has been identified in this assessment.

### Diversity of Main Town Centre Uses

Pocklington serves a rural hinterland, mostly to the west of the town. It has a total of 67 retail units and 57 service units. Shops represent 52% of all retail and service uses, well above the national average of 44% and in particular, there is a good representation of convenience goods shops, at 14% of all retail and service units, well above the national average of 8%. The town centre includes a Somerfield supermarket as well as Sainsburys outside the town centre. Comparison shops represent 38% of all units, just above the national average of 36%. The number and type of shops is rated as being good for a market town of its size.

The representation of services is 43%, below the national average of 46%, with the representation of financial and professional services such as banks, building societies, estate agents and travel agents being good, reflecting Pocklington's role as a service centre. Business and office premises are rated as fair. The presence of pubs, cafes and restaurants is rated as good, again reflecting the town's service role. Hotel provision is said to be lacking and is rated as poor. There is accommodation elsewhere in the town however as Pocklington has only a small tourist role this is not considered a critical factor. Cultural and entertainment facilities and sports and leisure facilities are rated as good, including a leisure centre, rugby club, tennis club and sports ground and the arts centre (pictured, above).



### Retailer Representation

There are 2 multiple retailers in Pocklington and the number of multiples is rated as poor. Pocklington has however a good range of specialist and independent shops, some of high quality, which provide much of the distinctive character of the retail offer. The centre is trading well. A street market is held on Tuesdays (pictured, right) and is rated as good. The availability of food shopping is also considered to be good, including Somerfield, the Co-op and specialist food shops in the town centre and the edge-of-centre Sainsburys.



Our inspection of the town centre shows some evidence of recent investment by retailers and this factor is rated as fair. No information is available on retailer demand. There are 4 charity shops in the town centre, and the level of presence of charity shops is rated as good. However some concerns had been expressed at the consultation workshop about the: *Increased number of charity shops, which are now able to sell a significant percentage of new goods, which has an impact on trade.* This study has not found any evidence to this effect.

### Vacant Properties

Pocklington has just 4 vacant units. The vacancy rate is very low at only 3%, well below the national average of 10% and is rated as being good. In 2001, 7 vacant units were noted. The amount of floorspace in vacant properties is also judged to be good and vacant premises do not have a negative effect on the town centre.

### Pedestrian Flows

The volume of pedestrian flow in the town centre is relatively low at the western end of the town centre but the centre is busier in the Market Place. The consultation workshop noted that the town centre is particularly busy on Tuesdays (market day) and Saturday mornings but is quiet on Wednesdays. Overall we rate pedestrian flow as fair.

### Accessibility

Ease of movement for pedestrians, cyclists and the less mobile are all rated as fair whilst the ease of access to the main attractions in the town centre from car parks and bus stops is considered to be good. The workshop commented that Pocklington is a



‘walkable’ centre which is flat and easy to navigate, and that the town centre is within walking distance of most residential areas.

There is free on-street car parking in Market Place for 2 hours. Off-street parking is available at the West Green car park (free) and George Street (2 hours). Sainsburys has a controlled car park with 90 minutes maximum stay. The workshop thought that there is insufficient parking at busy times, although this perception needs to be tested. Overall car parking is rated as fair.

Buses operate from Pocklington to Beverley, Market Weighton and York hourly Monday to Saturday. There are also local services to neighbouring villages. Public transport is rated as fair. There were no adverse comments about bus services at the consultation workshop.

### Customer Views and Behaviour

Positively, the household survey showed a generally high level of satisfaction with Pocklington town centre. The main likes identified were that it is close to home, its independent stores, attractive environment and it is compact and close together. The main dislikes about the centre are lack of non-food stores and difficulties in parking. These points are considered elsewhere within this report. The survey also shows some need for improvements in the centre – better quality shops/products, cheaper/easier car parking and more/better choice of shops. It was thought at the consultation event that the centre suffered from negative perceptions which were exacerbated by the media: *The Pocklington Post is too negative towards the town centre.* It is also relevant that a number of the negative perceptions are not found to be supported by evidence in this study.

Observations made when preparing the study were that some shoppers make linked trips between Somerfield and other shops and services in the town centre. It does not appear from observation however that shoppers make linked trips between Sainsburys and the town centre. Overall we rate the extent of linked trips as fair.

### Safety and Security

The feeling of security in the town centre has been rated as being good. We are not aware of any CCTV cameras in the town centre. The workshop thought there is a low perception of crime in the centre which has been identified as being one of its strengths.

### Environmental Quality

The workshop agreed that Pocklington has an attractive town centre with a pleasant environment. Pocklington's overall score on the physical appearance of retail and commercial properties is 3.5 of a possible score of 5. 49% of properties were rated as fair and a further 43% as good. This is the same score as in the 2001 survey. Overall cleanliness (litter and graffiti), the general pedestrian environment and quality of open spaces and landscaping are all rated as good. The War Memorial Gardens and the grounds of All Saints Church are particularly attractive. There are toilets in Railway Street; the availability and condition of toilets is judged to be poor. The workshop thought that Pocklington needs clean and safe public conveniences.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

### Strengths

- Highest vitality and viability score of the District Centres
- Continued improvement in terms of vitality and viability since 2001
- Its historic environment
- Presence of independent retailers
- Low level of vacancies
- High level of satisfaction with centre

### Weaknesses

- Poor perceptions of town centre in respect of a number of issues

- Perceived lack of hotel accommodation
- Poor toilet provision centre

### Opportunities

- Allocated site
- Preparation of conservation area management plan

### Threats

- Increased retailing provision in other centres

## RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL STRATEGIES

The recommendations below should be implemented within the context set out by the relevant strategies. These include the car parking strategy and the Pocklington Conservation Area Appraisal which is under preparation.

## ROLE AND FUNCTION

The study has identified Pocklington as one of nine District Centres in the East Riding. This designation reflects the number of shops and services, total turnover and percentage of turnover of the total within the East Riding, and Pocklington's relatively high level of vitality and viability in comparison to the other district centres.

Pocklington, as a local service centre, serves the settlement and immediate area to the west and further a field for leisure and cultural activities. It is considered to have strong links with the city region of York for which it has the role of labour provider. It is also considered to be a prosperous centre with a relatively large number of shops and services and a good vitality and viability score. On both counts, Pocklington Town Centre exceeds the other identified District Centres in this study.

The study has found linkages between Pocklington and Market Weighton and with two supermarkets in York in terms of convenience goods and with Beverley and Hull in regards comparison shopping. Pocklington therefore functions at a more local level.

The following case studies referred to in Section 2 are of particular relevance to Pocklington in terms of best practice in market towns:

- Somerset Market Towns Forum
- Haslemere and Maldon loyalty cards.

### LAND USE ISSUES

Development opportunities in Pocklington are generally limited due to its historic market town layout and surrounding housing. There is a need to extend the northern and southern town centre boundaries on a small scale to incorporate community uses, e.g. the Parish Church and the health centre, although it is reasonable to generally consolidate the existing town centre boundaries. The existing East Yorkshire Borough Local Plan Allocation, Policy POCK8, the bus depot site off Station Road measures approximately 0.2 hectares of land and provides a small scale opportunity for redevelopment, reflecting the modest scale of future development capacity identified in Pocklington town centre (0.2 - 0.4 hectares). This existing allocation should be retained and could potentially be incorporated into the town centre, possibly along with the Fire Station site to form a larger development site in the longer term, meeting the upper scale of development identified. The needs assessment undertaken as part of this study shows that there would be capacity for future retail provision in the period to 2026.

The primary shopping area is defined to comprise the retail and commercial area of Market Place, Market Street, George Street, Pavement, Railway Street and Regent Street. The primary shopping frontages are limited to the Market Place.

### MANAGEMENT

It is significant that the centre’s vitality and viability score has increased since the previous appraisal in 2001 and this can be seen with improvements having taken place in terms of business, services and offices, pubs, cafes and restaurants; cultural and leisure facilities and food shopping. The future objective should be to build upon the improvements and to maintain as a minimum, the 2008 vitality and viability score going forward.

### ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the consultations undertaken revealed a significant number of positive points for the town centre, with for example the attractive environment, low perception of crime and the Theatre and arts centre providing key ‘pull’ factors, being cited. However, a number of more negative issues were also raised and these are set out below:

<b>Community</b>	
<i>Issues</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
Negative perceptions of the town centre were expressed during the consultation, even though vitality and viability of the centre has improved since 2001.	The study did not provide any evidence to support the negative perceptions. The results of this study are publicised so that the community is aware of the improvements that have occurred to the town centre in terms of vitality and viability and of the relative performance of the centre in the context of the East Riding as a whole, so that the negative perceptions can be reversed. This should be pursued through the media in particular.
Perception that there is poor disabled access into some of the traditional shop units	An accessibility assessment could be undertaken to identify any particular problems and solutions to them.

Inadequate toilets identified as a weakness	Address through investment or making existing private facilities available as per Welsh Assembly Community Toilet Grant Scheme <a href="http://www.wales.gov.uk">www.wales.gov.uk</a> )
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<b>Economy</b>	
<i>Issues</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
Concerns have been expressed over the low footfall on non-market days and with shops closing early on Wednesday.	There is a need to gather evidence in respect of these matters. An assessment should be made as to the extent of any problem and to identify the causes and possible solutions such as additional marketing, or the reallocation of market stalls pitches.
The market day arrangements can cause conflicts between stalls and shops selling similar products next to one another	The town centre should be marketed as a destination in order to increase footfall and further events such as those held at Christmas should be considered.
Lack of non-food shopping was said to be an issue in the consultation and it was considered that better quality shops/ products needed in the town centre	Noted. The study found that the level of comparison goods retailing was at the national average. Whilst there is no direct action that can be taken to address this perception in the short term, the continued long term improvement to the town centre may lead to a broadening in the range of shops. Further marketing of the centre as a location for non food retailers could bring forward the required investment.

<b>Transport</b>	
<i>Issues</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
Perception of insufficient parking at busy times	Whilst there is no evidence of a problem, the level of parking provision and its usage should be monitored to see if this perception is correct and if it is the matter can be addressed as appropriate.

<b>Culture and Heritage</b>	
<i>Issues</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
Lack of hotel accommodation	As stated above, Hotel accommodation is provided outside of the town centre, and the lack of accommodation within the identified centre is not a significant issue.

### MONITORING AND REVIEW

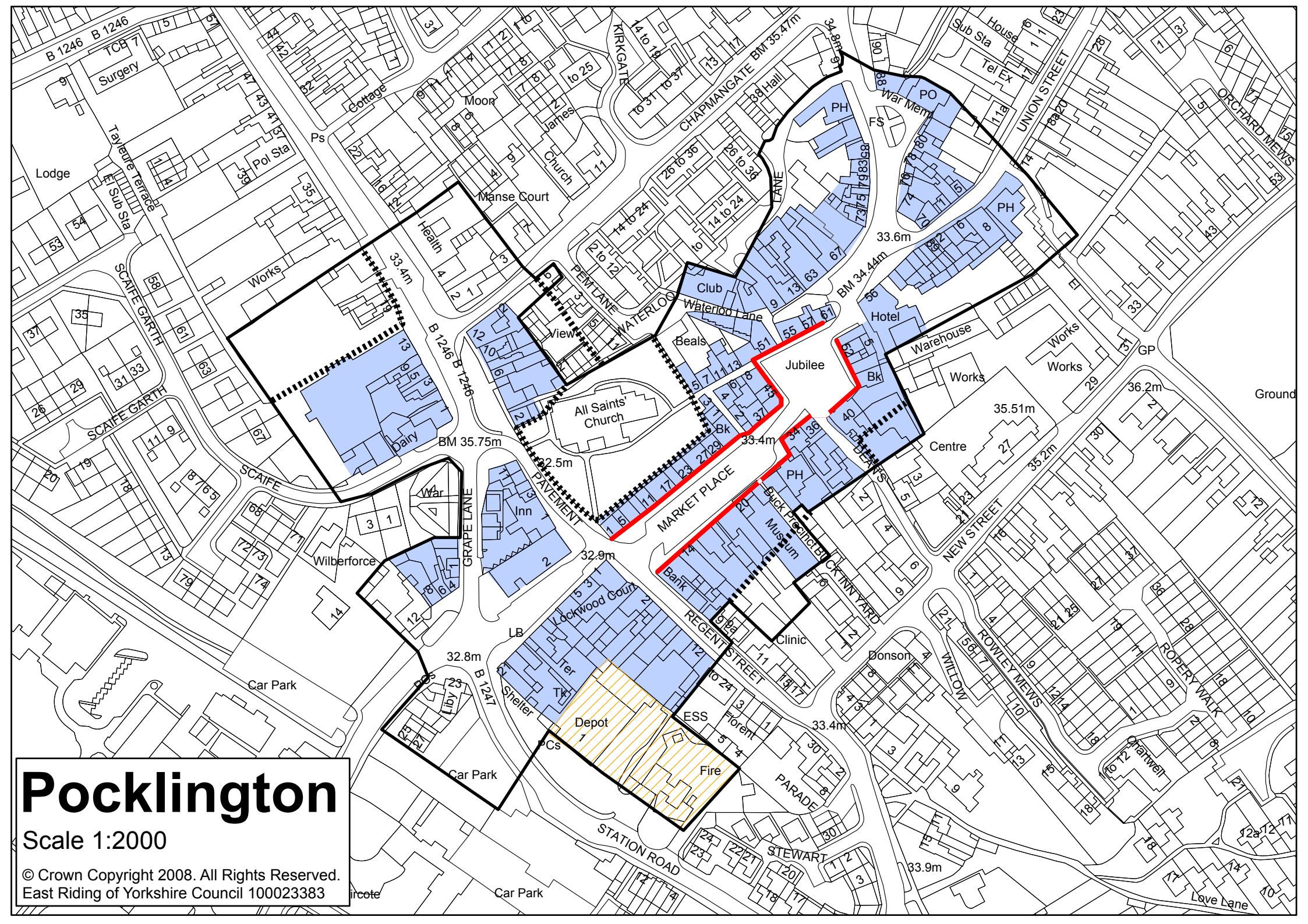
The performance of the town centre should be monitored against the baseline as set out in this study on an annual basis with the following key indicators being monitored so that any trends can be identified and acted upon promptly. The East Riding of Yorkshire Council should set out trigger points in the monitoring scheme for action to be initiated.

- Changes in the number and type of town centre units
- Number of multiple retailers
- Changes in retail floorspace
- Number of charity shops
- Vacancy rate compared against the baseline and national average
- Number and usage of car parking spaces
- Physical appearance of properties (average score)
- Hotel accommodation
- Linked trips
- Footfall on non-market days

**APPENDIX 1: PROPOSED POCKLINGTON TOWN CENTRE MAP**



**Pocklington**  
Scale 1:2000  
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East Riding of Yorkshire Council 100023383



Map Key:



Primary Shopping Area



Primary Shopping Frontage



Proposed Town Centre Boundary



Existing Town Centre Boundary (where applicable)



Potential Development Opportunity