

Edinburgh's Retail Survey 2015

March 2016

Context

The Edinburgh Retail Survey is a comprehensive survey of all shop units in the city including details of occupiers, usage categories and floor space. It has been carried out in 1986, 1996, 2004, 2010 and 2015. The survey provides a snapshot of shop occupancy within defined centres. It provides detail of the amount, type and location of retail provision throughout the city, and how this has changed over time.

Key findings

- Total floorspace increased over the period 1986 to 2015 by 41% to 1.55 million sq. m.
- Total floorspace increased by 10% in the period 2010 to 2015.
- Total number of shop units has fallen by 4% from 1986 to 7,103.
- Substantial reduction in retail units lost to other uses, from 444 in 2010 to 88 in 2015.
- Fall in proportion of shops in active retail use from 49% in 1986 to 37% in 2015.
- Vacancy rate relatively stable at between 9% and 11% in the period 1986 to 2015.
- Average shop size increased from 148 sq. m to 218 sq. m. in the period 1986 to 2015.

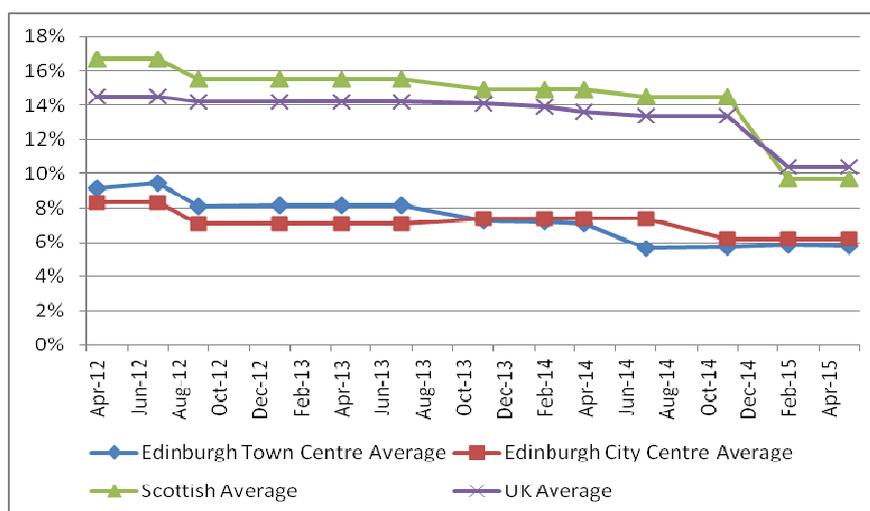
Key trends

- Continuing trend towards fewer, larger stores by larger operators.
- Proportion of shop units in active retail use continues to decline – now less than 40%.
- Corresponding rise in shop units providing non-retail services.
- Vacancy rates remain below the Scottish and UK averages.
- Substantial reduction in shop units lost to other uses.

Planning policy, shop use and vacancies

While total floorspace of shop units has increased by 41% since 1986 the total number of shop units has fallen by 4%. The number of units in active retail use has also fallen by 24% as shop units are increasingly in use for non-retail services.

However, the Council's retail planning policies are designed to protect the overall vitality and viability of town and local centres. The introduction of non-retail uses has maintained activity levels in such centres and has sought to minimise the negative impact of units lying vacant. This is reflected in vacancy rates in the city and town centres which remain substantially below both the Scottish and UK averages.



Funding, improvements and support

The Council has provided, or facilitated access to, various funding for town centre improvements since the previous retail survey in 2010. A total of £45,000 was provided to all town centres for shop front animations in the same period. The Council's Planning Service also worked in partnership with shops in Leith to bid for funding for shop front improvements. This resulted in 14 grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, totalling £176,744, between 2010 and 2012. A project is currently underway in West Maitland Street, in partnership with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust and property owners, to renovate 16 shop fronts. Initiatives to improve town centres are considered alongside the preparation of supplementary planning guidance for each town centre.

More detailed information

Edinburgh's Retail Survey 2015 can be viewed on the council's website:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/818/edinburghs_retail_survey_2015

Contact

For further information, please contact Simon Antrobus, Strategic Planning Policy
email: simon.antrobus@edinburgh.gov.uk tel: 0131 469 3597