



Your Town Audit: Busby

February 2020

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Report produced by:



Audit Date: 12/02/2020

For: East Renfrewshire Council

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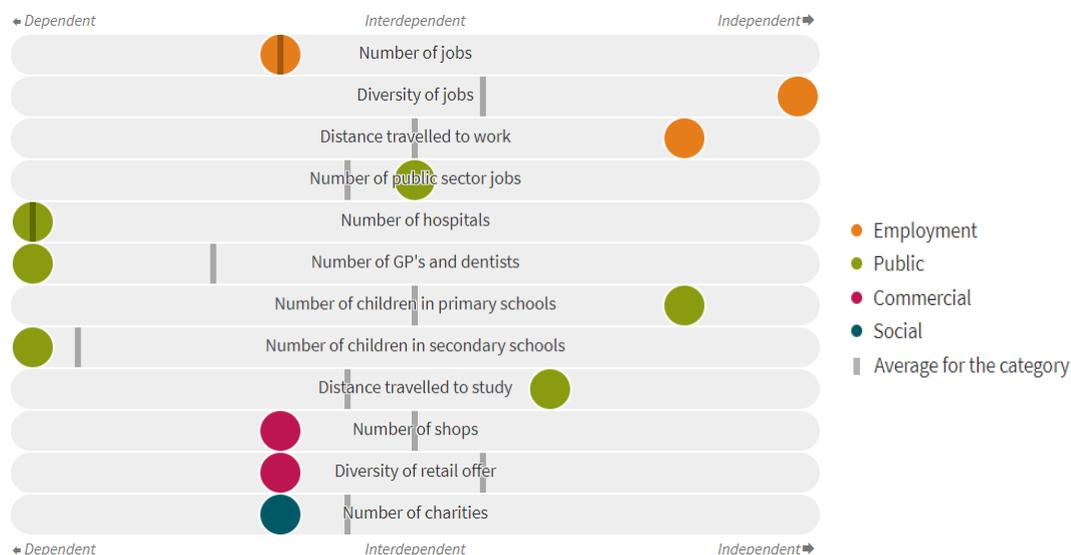
1. Understanding Scottish Places Summary

This report presents a summary of the Your Town Audit (YTA) for Busby, conducted by Scotland’s Towns Partnership and EKOS, and comprises an update on the previous Busby YTA conducted in 2016. 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 and town centres using a series of Key Performance Indicators. It provides a comprehensive audit of Busby with data on up to 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 Busby and identifies four comparator towns that have similar characteristics: Gretna, Kemnay, Locharbriggs and East Calder. The USP platform – www.usp.scot – describes Busby as an interdependent to dependent town.

Inter-relationships



The coloured circles represent Busby’s relative position for key indicators across key themes compared to 9 other similar towns (average marked by the grey line).

Comparing Busby to towns with similar USP typology and interrelationships shows similarities in the number of jobs, number of children in secondary schools and number of charities.

Busby has a greater number of children in primary schools and a much greater diversity of jobs, but there is a comparative lack of GPs and dentists, though these services are located in neighbouring towns, such as Clarkston.

In summary, the USP platform describes Busby in following general terms:

Busby's Interrelationships: Busby is an '*interdependent to dependent town*', which means it has a low number of assets in relation to its population. There is some diversity of jobs; and residents largely travel longer distances to work and study, although some travel shorter distances. They are reliant on neighbouring towns for some assets and jobs.

Busby's Typology: This type of medium-sized town is extremely mixed in terms of demographics. There are a particularly wide range of people, housing and activities. The number of older couples with no children is higher than average. There is a mix of professional and non-professional jobs, and part-time and self-employment are both important for a significant proportion of residents. Socioeconomic status is higher here than in other kinds of towns and there is a mix of professionals and non-professionals, as well as those with higher and lower educational attainment.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) measures relative levels of deprivation across Scotland's communities (statistically referred to as Data Zones) based on seven indicators: income, employment, education, health, housing, crime and geographic access.

None of the Data Zones that comprise the town of Busby fall within the top 15% most deprived areas of Scotland when considering all indicators in aggregate. The lowest ranking amongst all Busby Data Zones is the crime indicator in in the Data Zone corresponding to Busby town centre¹. SIMD 2020 places this area amongst the top 24% most deprived (i.e. experiences relatively high levels of crime). The table over presents the overall SIMD rank and percentile for each of the Busby Data Zones.

¹ 2011 Data Zone S01008367. See Map at the end of the report for detail.

Busby SIMD Ranking by Data Zone

2011 Intermediate Zone	2011 Data Zone	Overall SIMD16 Rank ²	Percentile
Busby	S01008366	4,131	60th
	S01008367	2,355	34th
	S01008368	5,751	83rd
	S01008369	4,647	67th
	S01008370	5,623	81st

Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

Of all Data Zone ranks across Scotland (percentiles): 1(1st) is most deprived, 6,976 (100th) is least deprived. The most deprived area in Busby, ranked within the 34th percentile, forms the core town centre area. It is worth noting that this Data Zone suffers from a particularly high level of deprivation especially for this area of East Renfrewshire where most of the area is amongst the least deprived in all of Scotland³.

YTA Reporting

Building on the USP and SIMD data, this report presents the results of our detailed analysis of Busby based around 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 towns.

In total 40 YTA audits have been prepared for towns across Scotland providing consistent data across a range of KPIs. Where appropriate, this report provides comparisons for Busby against the YTA town average⁴.

² Rank out of 6976 Scottish Data Zones.

³ See Map 2 in Appendix.

⁴ It has not been possible to collect full KPI data for all towns – the number of YTA comparator towns therefore differs across this report.

2. Accessible Town Centre

Busby is a small town in East Renfrewshire approximately 9 miles south of Glasgow city centre, with a population of around 3,700 people. The core retail area of Busby is situated on Main Street, a busy A-class road (A727) leading into East Kilbride to the south and into Clarkston and Giffnock to the north and connecting to the M77.

For a small town, the town centre offers a good range of services and retail, in what is otherwise a heavily residential area.

Busby railway station is located within short walking distance southeast of the town centre along East Kilbride Road (A727), with regular services to Glasgow Central (20 minutes away) and East Kilbride (10 minutes away) throughout the day. This also connects the town with the other East Renfrewshire settlements such as

Thornliebank, Clarkston and Giffnock.

Time	Monday to Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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There is one bus stop in the town centre at the junction of Main Street and Bull Road. There are a further four stops located to the south of the town centre along the A727. All stops are along the Route 6 bus operated the First Group, which provides direct connections to Glasgow and East Kilbride with journey times of around 40 minutes and 30 minutes respectively. While the number 6 bus connects to Clarkston, there are no other

direct bus journeys from Busby to other settlements in East Renfrewshire, as residents travelling to settlements such as Barrhead and Neilston must change services, resulting in a travel time of approximately 50 minutes.

The M77 Motorway is around 4 miles west of the town⁵ and is easily accessible by road. This provides fast access to Ayrshire and beyond, as well as an alternative route into the centre of Glasgow.

15 mile radius around Busby



⁵ From Busby Library to the M77 at its junction with Nitshill Road (A727). Source: Map Data © Google 2020.

There are a limited number of on-street parking spaces in the town centre (along Main Street), and others can be found in the adjacent residential streets. There is one off-street car park located on Mary Young Place which has approximately 20 spaces and is free of charge. There are also 2 electric vehicle charging points in the car park which have been installed since the last YTA in 2016.

The town centre provides access to a limited number of local services which, alongside a mix of retailers, includes a library and a community hall. There is also 3G and 4G throughout the town and, although there is no town-wide WiFi, superfast broadband is available.

There is no registered bank in Busby town centre, however there is an ATM located inside the U-Save convenience store which is free of charge.

There are two well-equipped pedestrian crossings located at the northern and southern edges of the town centre. However, one possible issue which could be reviewed is the partially blind corner around which traffic travels relatively quickly where Main Street becomes East Kilbride Road at the junction with Riverside Terrace. The car park, the Cartvale bar, library and Duff Memorial Hall are all located along the blind corner, meaning there is likely foot traffic in an area that is particularly dangerous to cross for older, younger and people with disabilities or impairments.

The nearest petrol filling station is about 1 mile north on Eastwoodmains Road in Clarkston. The nearest retail park is located in Peel Park in East Kilbride where there is a B&M Home Store, Aldi Supermarket and a fast food outlet. This is accessible by bus route 6, with service as frequent as every 10 minutes during peak times.

There are two churches serving the community: the Cartsbridge Evangelical Church and the Busby Parish Church of Scotland. Each hold weekly Sunday Services and run many groups open to the community for all ages – toddler to elderly.



3. Active Town Centre

3.1 Population and Housing

Just under 800 people live within the town centre area in Busby⁶, around 21% of the total settlement population. The population of the town centre increased

by 2% in the decade between 2009 and 2019. Most of the YTA audited towns have seen an increase in town centre living, averaging around- 12%. Busby is, however, a relatively small town centre within a relatively small settlement.



In 2019, the population of the whole settlement was over 3,700, representing an increase of 6% since 2009. This matched the trends at East Renfrewshire (6% increase) and Scotland levels (4% increase) over this ten year period.

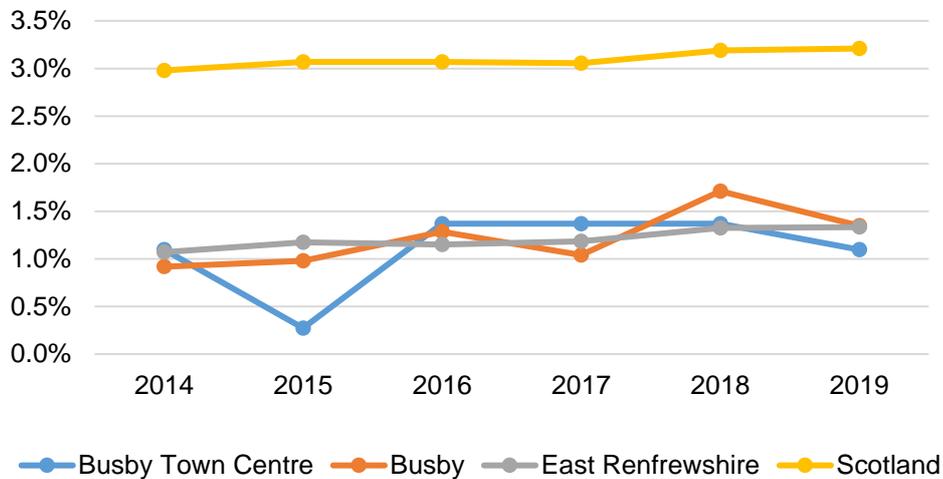
Table 3.1. Population change in Busby and Town Centre

	2009	2019	Change	% Change
Busby	756	769	13	2%
Town centre	3,516	3,725	209	6%

Source: National Records of Scotland (2019)

The housing vacancy rate in the whole settlement has increased from 0.9% to 1.3% (or 7 additional vacant housing units) from the period of 2014 to 2019. In the town centre, there have been a slight fluctuations but overall parity at 1.1%, substantially below the Scottish average of 3.2%.

Residential Vacancy Rate (2014-2019)

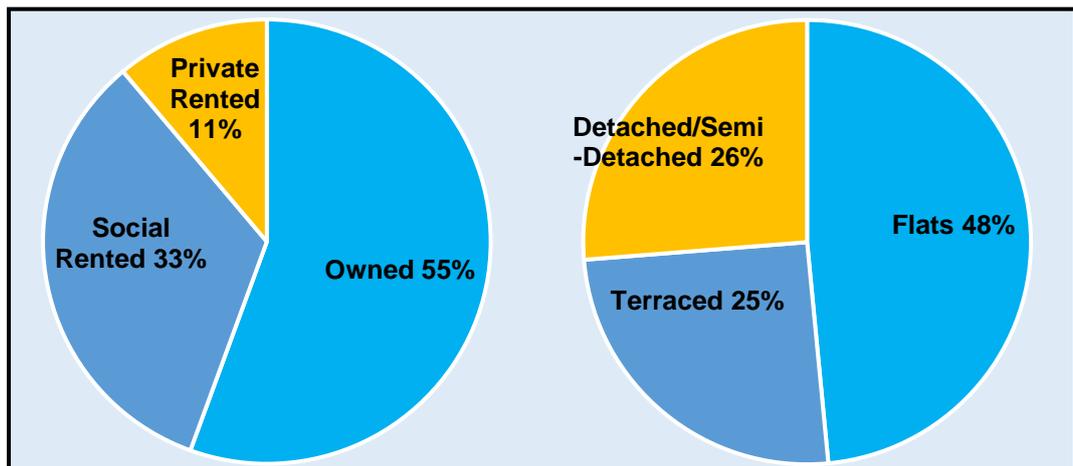


Source: Scottish Government Statistics

Housing in the town centre⁷ is a mix of flats (48%), semi-detached/ detached properties (26%) and terraced houses (25%), typically with three or four bedrooms. Most properties (77%) are in council tax bands A, B or C.

The streets surrounding Busby town centre are almost wholly residential – a mix of older and newer detached/ semi-detached properties and flats – this provides the town’s retail and service businesses with a relatively large catchment population.

Busby Town Centre Housing Mix



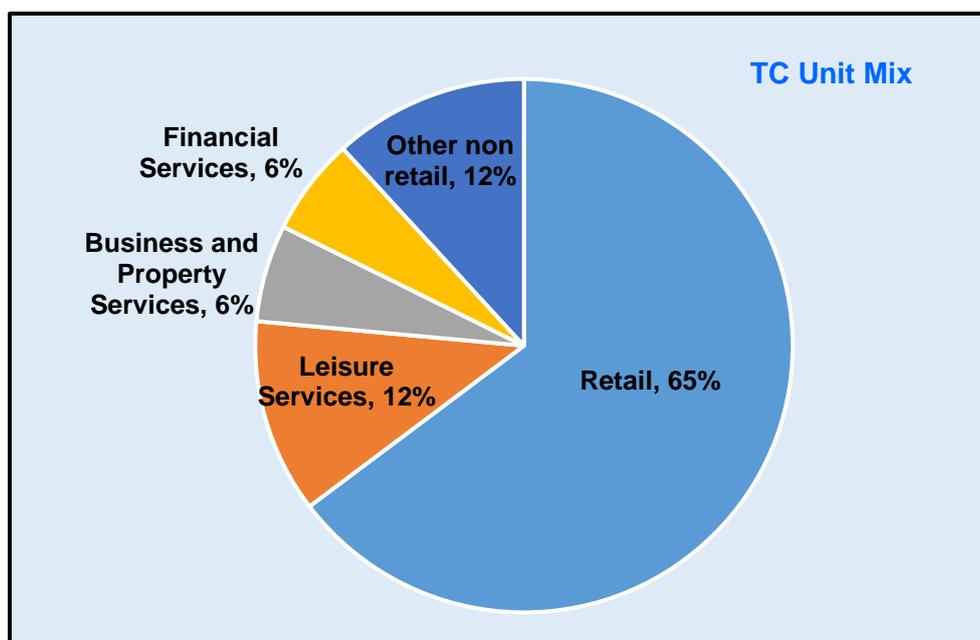
Housing prices in Busby reflect its standing as an attractive settlement within commuting distance of Glasgow. The average purchase price of a town centre dwelling in Busby (£169,508) is lower than that of the town as a whole (£191,570).

⁷ For ease of accessing the most up to date data, this is Data Zone (2011) S01008367.

Prices in the town centre increased by 25% in the decade to 2018, and by 33% in wider Busby. The housing stock in the town is largely privately owned (55% in the town centre; 74% in the wider town), or socially rented (33% in the town centre; 19% in the wider town).

3.2 Employment

Around one-fifth (21%, 150) of the 700 jobs in Busby are located in the town centre Data Zone. National statistics record 90 businesses in the town, down from 95 in 2016. The YTA street audit located 17 units in use within Busby town centre – this was in line with the data collected in the previous YTA. The recent YTA recorded an increase of retail businesses from 10 in 2016 to 11 in 2020 with the Rock, Paper, Scissors Beauty Salon now in the unit formerly occupied by Safe Hand Cleaning Ltd.



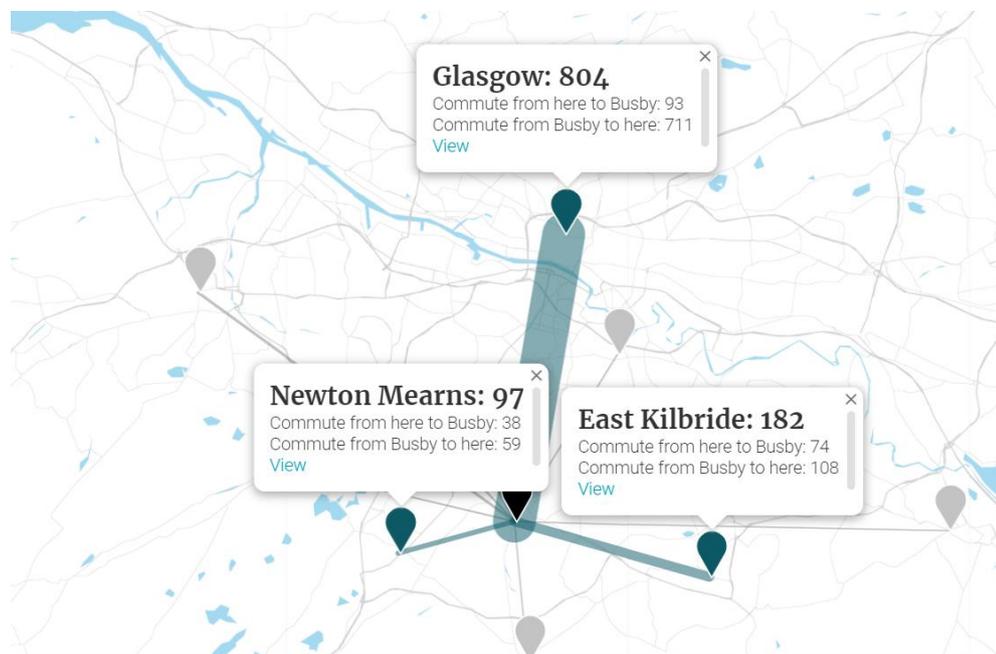
No vacant units were recorded during the audit. In this respect, Busby stands alongside Neilston, but as a very small centre it would only take one vacant unit to create a vacancy rate of 6%. In comparison, the vacancy rate in Barrhead was 6%, in Clarkston 6.4%, and in Thornliebank 5%. The average retail vacancy rate across 39 YTA audited towns since 2015 is 10%.

The main commuter destination for workers from Busby is Glasgow City Centre followed by East Kilbride and Newton Mearns⁸. **Map 3.1** shows the inbound and outbound flow of commuters from and to Busby:

- coloured lines/pins show the main flows that exceed 2% of the town's population or 2,000 people;
- grey lines/pins show smaller flows that still exceed 0.5% of the town's population or 500 people;
- the thickness of each line is proportional to the size of the flow (both inbound and outbound); and
- flows representing less than 10 people in total are not shown.

As Busby is a commuter town, there is a net outflow of commuters with residents travelling to larger settlements, such as Glasgow and East Kilbride, for work. The largest flow of commuters is between Busby and Glasgow, with just over 700 people commuting into the city. There no significant inflows into Busby for work.

Map 3.1: Busby Commuter Flows



Source: [Understanding Scotland's Places](#), download January 2021

⁸ DataShine Scotland Commute data shows that Glasgow City Centre South is the second most common destination for commuters from West Neilston and Uplawmoor. [Accessed online](#)

3.3 Retail

For a small town centre, Busby has a good range of shops and retail services. Most of the shops are located to the north of the town in a parade on Main Street, with others on Riverside Terrace. As Busby is a small town, these retail units are within walking distance for most of the surrounding residents.

Most shops in Busby town centre operate standard opening hours of around 9am to 5.30pm. However, the Cartvale Bar – which underwent a £385,000 renovation in 2019⁹ – on Main Street opens and closes later – 11am to midnight during the week, and at 1am at the weekend.

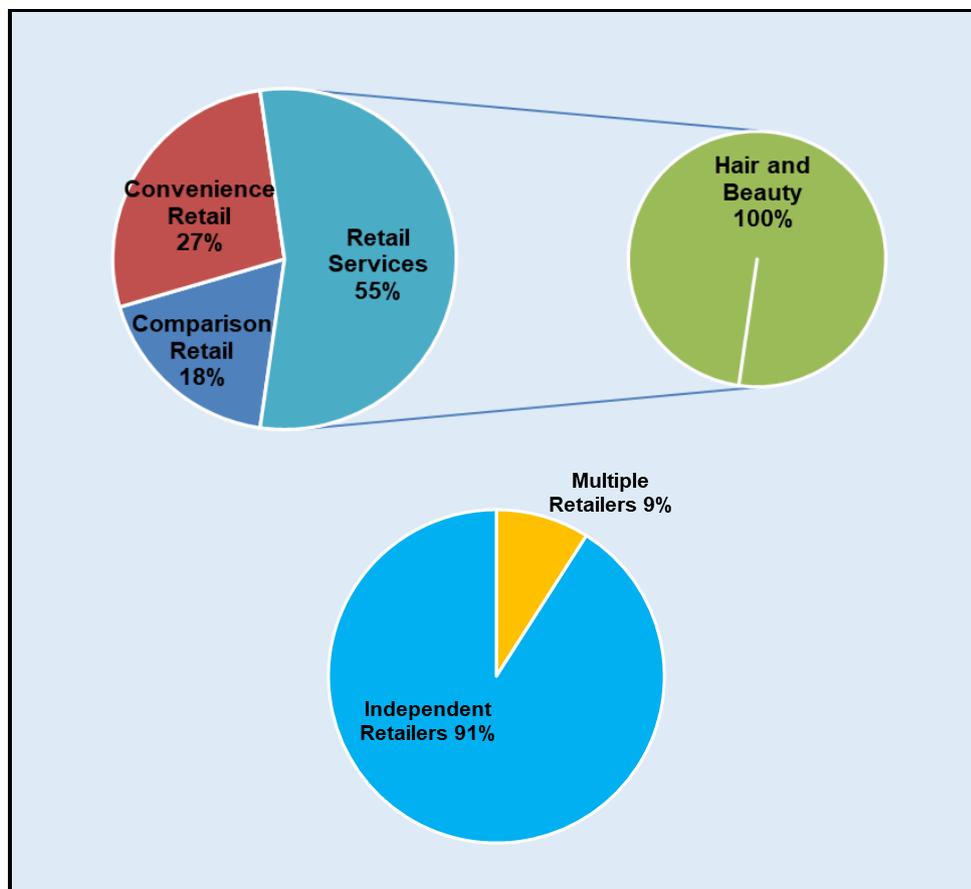
Retail forms the largest single town centre unit use and, at 65%, is significantly higher than Clarkston (39%) and Thornliebank (45%) and higher than the average of 46% across 39 YTAs. The YTA analysis is based on the following retail definitions:



- **Comparison Retail:** all other retail purchases comprising goods bought at infrequent intervals where consumers will compare and contrast products and prices – *two comparison retailers were identified in Busby town centre – a chemist and home decoration store. This represents no change from the 2016 YTA;*
- **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. – *three convenience retailers were identified in Busby town centre – a newsagent, baker and convenience store. This represents no change from the 2016 YTA; and*

⁹ https://www.heraldsotland.com/business_hq/17732368.385-000-revamp-cartvale-pub-busby/

- 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. – *six retail service operators were identified in Busby town centre – five hairdressers and one beauty salon. This represents a one unit increase from the 2016 YTA.*



The majority of traders within Busby town centre are independent (91%) – this is above the 71% average from 39 other YTA audited towns and is amongst the highest rates we have identified – only Eyemouth (94%) and Millport (96%) have higher rates; locally in East Renfrewshire Neilston has 91% independent traders.

There is only one multiple retailer in Busby: the U-Save convenience store on Main Street. In comparison some of the other towns in East Renfrewshire have independent retail figures of 57% Clarkston, 67% for Barrhead and 47% for Thornliebank.

Table 3.1: Split in Uses of Busby Town Centre Units (2016-2020)

	2020	2016	Change
Retail	11	10	+1
Other non-retail	2	2	0
Leisure services	2	2	0
Business & property services	1	2	-1
Financial services	1	1	0
Vacant	0	0	0
Total number of units	17	17	0

Source: YTA Audit Visits

With a settlement population of almost 3,700 people, Busby as a settlement has 334 residents for every town centre retail outlet. This is higher than the YTA average of 235 (39 YTAs) but is the lowest figure within the East Renfrewshire YTA-audited towns with Barrhead at 260.

334 residents per town centre retail outlet

11 town centre retail units in use

0 vacant town centre units

4. Attractive Town Centre

4.1 Leisure Mix

There are only two leisure businesses operating in Busby town centre, both of which are part of the evening economy, the Cartvale bar and the Wings hot food takeaway.



There are, however, a number of other leisure businesses that are easily accessible to the town's residents. On the edge of the town centre area is the Busby Hotel, part of the Manorview group, which acquired the hotel in 2013 and undertook refurbishment. The hotel has a number of facilities including event and conference facilities, and the Carters bar and restaurant. There are also a number of other restaurants which can be found along Busby Road leading from the town towards Clarkston.



Source: thebusbyhotel.co.uk

4.2 Leisure Facilities and Attractions

Inside the town centre area is the Duff Memorial Hall, which is a community hall used for a variety of community functions and events and can be hired for social functions. Also found within the town centre catchment area, Busby Library connects to Duff Memorial Hall, and is open every day from 10am to 5pm apart from Thursdays and Sundays. On Saturdays it is only open from 9:30am to 1pm.

There are also a range of other leisure facilities located outside of the town centre, including three nearby golf clubs: Williamwood Golf Club (1.3 miles away), Whitecraigs Golf Club (2.7 miles away), and Cathcart Castle Golf Course (1.5 miles away). All clubs have 18-hole courses as well as a number of other facilities including a clubhouse, putting green, and a bar and restaurant.

The Eastwood Park Leisure Centre, which has a 25 metre swimming pool, gym, sauna and steam room, is located two miles away in Eastwood Park. The Eastwood Park Theatre is in the same building as the Leisure Centre and has a 330 seat theatre, café and conference/event space.

Busby offers a number of nearby tourist attractions. A popular nearby attraction is Greenbank House and the Greenbank Gardens, which are less than two miles from the town centre of Busby. The house and garden were gifted to the National Trust of Scotland by William Blyth in 1976. Visitors can walk through the gardens, and Greenbank House provides an educational garden for learning how to grow a variety of different plants. Other facilities include a tearoom and shop. The gardens are open from 11:00am to sunset daily, and entry for adults is £7.50, and free for members.

Another popular attraction which can be found near Busby is the National Museum of Rural Life. The museum is located on Wester Kittochside Farm near East Kilbride, 2.3 miles from the town centre of Busby. The museum gives visitors the opportunity to learn what life was like on a rural and partially mechanized Scottish farm in the 1950s. Visitors can watch as daily farming tasks are carried out such as ploughing and haymaking, and visit the farm's herd of cattle and sheep. On site there is also a shop and café. The museum is open daily from 10am to 5pm and admission costs range from £5.50 for children to £8 for adults.

The emerging East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan¹⁰ identifies several potential projects including enhanced community, greenspace and recreational facilities as well as improved recreational path networks and biodiversity enhancements at Busby Glen.

4.3 Community Events

We did not identify any regular community events or festivals being run in Busby. This is unlike most other towns, including those within city conurbations.

However, the two churches and the library/ Duff Hall run activities and host one-off events targeted at residents across the age spectrum. Some activities and groups run out of the churches include: a drama group, a choir, toddler groups, and OMEGA (Older Men's Exceedingly Good Adventures). The library runs the Bookbug programme, code club and Duff Memorial Hall hosts one off events, such as the Scottish Wildlife Trust Talk: An Adventure with Wild Orangutans (17th February).



¹⁰ <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=25325&p=0>

A monthly Community Magazine¹¹ for Newton Mearns, Clarkston and Busby is published highlighting upcoming events, local news, essential information, support groups and a trade directory.

East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) is preparing a Neighbourhood Centre Strategy and Action Programme Policy as part of its refreshed Local Development Plan¹². This offers the chance for the community to come together and work in partnership with ERC to build capacity and deliver new activities.

4.4 Busby Community Council

Following the recent community council elections in August 2019, Busby Community Council has been re-established. There are currently 8 members of the council and 5 vacancies. The council meets in Duff Memorial Hall on the third Monday of every month at 7:30pm.¹³

4.5 Attractiveness Review

The YTA includes an independent (and subjective) review of place and quality impressions, with Busby scoring in line with the averages concluded from other towns audited to date.

Individual unit fronts and shop window displays were graded out of ten during the on-street audit, with a town centre average score of 7.3 for quality of window display and 7.5 for the condition of unit fronts in Busby. These scores represent a marginal decrease in the quality of building fronts and window displays of -0.2 and -0.1 respectively. Both scores are above the 35 town YTA average of 6.9 for both indicators.

Business confidence in the town centre was gauged from a small sample of interviews undertaken with two independent traders with both businesses very confident about the future and both reporting stable turnover and employment over the past three years.



¹¹ <http://www.thecommunitymagazine.co.uk/>

¹² <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ldp2>

¹³ <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/busbycommunitycouncil>

During the audit, the streets were relatively clear with little litter to be found, and not many weeds present. The streets and pavements appeared to be in very good condition, with no pot holes or cracks evident.

The pedestrian crosses appeared to be recently refurbished. The 2016 YTA noted that throughout the town centre area there are hanging baskets, however these were absent at the time of the 2020 YTA, though this could be due to its timing in the winter season.

The 2020 audit also identified a new rectangular flower box encompassed by wooden benches located along Main Street in front of the Mary Young carpark. This is a welcome addition as it is the only resting place in the town centre.

There are also plenty of bins along Main Street for litter and a number of sodium street lighting with traditional columns.

One issue which generally lowers the overall attractiveness of the town centre is large, privately-owned, vacant site adjacent to the Cartvale Bar. According to the emerging Local Development Plan 2¹⁴, the site is viewed as a potential location for future development.

¹⁴ Accessed: [here](#)

5. YTA Summary and Key Points

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

5.1 Accessible Town Centre

- Busby is well connected with transport links and a range of services – although car ownership in the area is high, public transport links are good with regular bus services taking about 40 minutes into the centre of Glasgow;
- the local train station in Busby connects the town to neighbouring settlements of Clarkston, Thornliebank and East Kilbride;
- there are some gaps in public bus transport links to other part of East Renfrewshire – in particular, it can be challenging to get to Barrhead where many public and health services are located;
- key public services including the primary school and library are easily accessible from the town centre, however the nearest health services are accessed in neighbouring towns, e.g. Clarkston or East Kilbride;
- although there is no registered bank in the town centre area of Busby, there is an ATM inside the U-Save convenience store which is free of charge;
- the nearest retail bank branches are TSB and Bank of Scotland in Clarkston;
- parking in Busby town centre on the street is limited, however, the off-street car park on Mary Young Place provides capacity and includes two electric vehicle charging units;
- there seems to be a lack of cycling infrastructure as there are no cycle facilities within the town centre – the previous Active Travel Action Plan included a proposed route from Busby to Barrhead;
- there is no free town WiFi, and notably, there is free WiFi available at Busby Library, although opening hours are limited to morning and afternoons on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and Saturday mornings; and
- Busby has good 4G mobile coverage and access to superfast broadband.

5.2 Active Town Centre

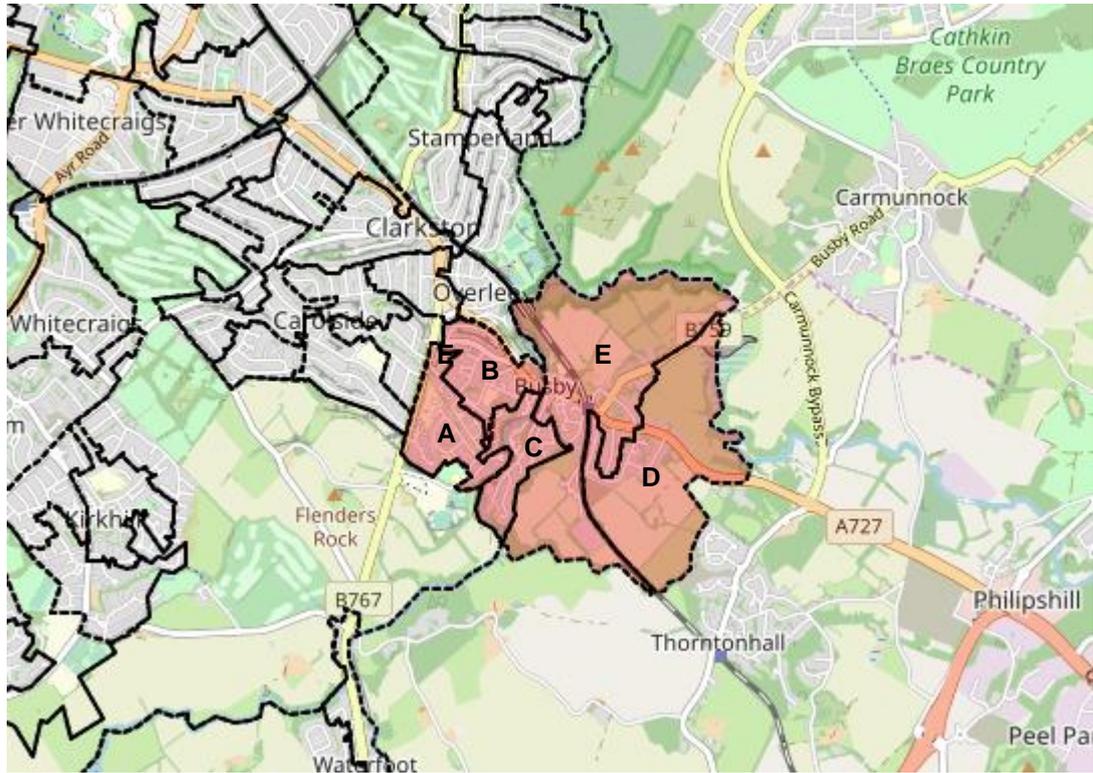
- Busby has a high level of independent retail businesses – this helps to maintain the town’s uniqueness;
- no vacant units were recorded during the audit of Busby town centre, which is encouraging for its long-term survival; and
- one issue to monitor going forward, is the moderate increase in the housing vacancy rate in the whole settlement of Busby – from 2014-2019, the vacancy rate increased from 0.9% to 1.3% (15 to 22 vacant units). While the housing vacancy rate in Busby remains well below the national average (3.2%), the growth rate is of some concern.

5.3 Attractive Town Centre

- Busby is a small neighbourhood settlement and, as part of the Greater Glasgow conurbation with access to a wide range of facilities, it is an attractive place to live;
- we identified a limited number of community events – there may be an opportunity to develop an annual event to bring the community together;
- we did not identify any public art – e.g. statues, memorial fountain, sculptures – in Busby town centre that celebrate the history and heritage of the town and add to the town’s unique setting;
- there is opportunity for the community to come together and work in partnership with ERC to build capacity and deliver new activities;
- while the town centre lacks any major attractions, there are many located within a short distance including: the Busby Hotel, Greenbank Gardens, the National Museum of Rural Life and numerous golf courses; and
- the vacant lot along Main Street adjacent to the Cartvale bar continues to diminish the overall appearance of the town centre.

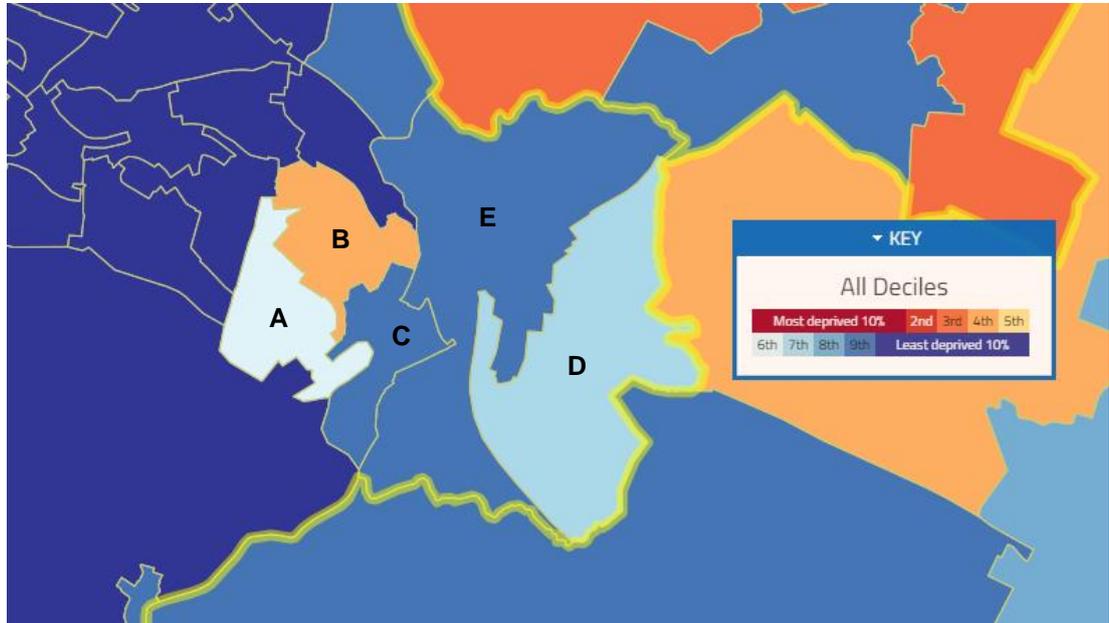
Appendix

Map 1: 2011 Busby Data Zones



Map Label	Data Zone Name	Data Zone Code
A	Busby – 01	S01008366
B	Busby – 02	S01008367
C	Busby – 03	S01008368
D	Busby – 04	S01008369
E	Busby – 05	S01008370

Map 2: Busby Data Zones by SIMD 2020 Decile



Map Label	Data Zone Name	Data Zone Code
A	Busby – 01	S01008366
B	Busby – 02	S01008367
C	Busby – 03	S01008368
D	Busby – 04	S01008369
E	Busby – 05	S01008370