



# Your Town Audit: Giffnock

September 2020



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Report produced by:



Audit Date: 25/09/2020

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 Giffnock, conducted by Scotland's Towns Partnership and EKOS, and comprises an update on the previous Giffnock 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 Giffnock 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 Giffnock and identifies six comparator towns that have similar characteristics, with the most similar being Helensburgh, Prestwick, Linlithgow and Bishopbriggs<sup>1</sup>. The USP platform - [www.usp.scot](http://www.usp.scot) - describes Giffnock in the following general terms:

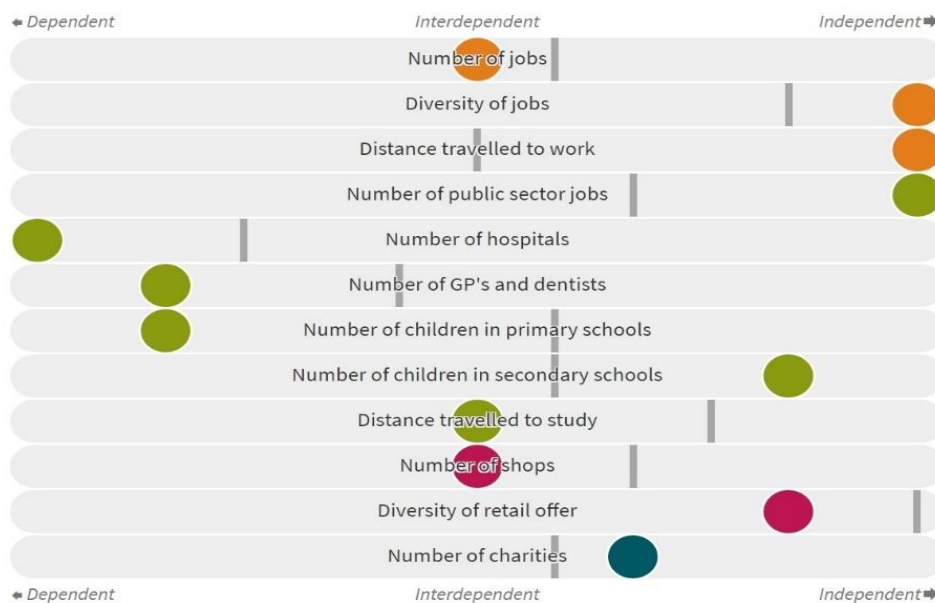
**Giffnock's Interrelationships:** Giffnock is an *'interdependent to independent town'*, which means it has a good number of assets in relation to its population. Towns of this kind have some diversity of jobs; and residents largely travel shorter distances to work and study, although some travel longer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

**Giffnock's Typology:** This type of large town is a suburban or commuter locality with a prevalence of higher income and private housing. A large proportion of the population are over 45, and many are retired. Many people own their home. There is also a high proportion of people in professional employment and a high proportion of residents educated to HNC level or above. Many residents own two or more cars.

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<sup>1</sup> The other comparator towns with similar characteristics were Stonehaven and Ellon.

## Inter-relationships i



The coloured circles represent Giffnock's relative position across key themes compared to six other similar towns (average marked by the grey line).

Comparing Giffnock to towns with similar USP typology and interrelationships shows it has a relatively similar number of charities, shops and diversity of retail offer. It is similar both in the number and diversity of jobs in the town. It differs most in terms of the number of children in primary schools and distance travelled to work.

**The audit for this report was carried out during a world health pandemic as a result of the Covid-19 virus. It is acknowledged that this may have had an impact on the results of the audit and the subsequent report.**

### Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

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

**Table 1.1: Giffnock Town Centre – 2011 Data Zones by SIMD Rank and Percentile**

Data Zone Name	Data Zone Code	Overall SIMD20 Rank <sup>2</sup>	Percentile
North Giffnock and North Thornliebank - 01	S01008406	5,128	74 <sup>th</sup>
North Giffnock and North Thornliebank - 02	S01008407	3,469	50 <sup>th</sup>
North Giffnock and North Thornliebank - 05	S01008410	4,709	68 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) [Accessed online](#)

Giffnock experiences relatively limited levels of deprivation with none of its Data Zones ranked within the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland. Looking at deprivation broken down by the individual indicators, only one Data Zone located in the whole of the Giffnock is ranked within the 15% most deprived communities for crime<sup>3</sup>.

### YTA Reporting

Building on the USP and SIMD data, this report presents the results of our detailed analysis of Giffnock 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.

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 Giffnock against the YTA town average<sup>4</sup>. In particular, a YTA has been prepared for one of the USP comparator towns defined earlier – Helensburgh – and specific reference is made to this comparison where relevant.

<sup>2</sup> Rank out of 6,976 Scottish Data Zones.

<sup>3</sup> Data Zone ranked within the top 15% most deprived for crime is North Giffnock and North Thornliebank 04 (S01008409).

<sup>4</sup> 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

Giffnock is a suburban town located in East Renfrewshire, immediately south of Glasgow, with a population of around 16,000. The core retail area of Giffnock is focused on Fenwick Road, a busy A-class road leading to Newton Mearns in the south and

Glasgow to the north. The town centre covers the main services and retail offering, including both supermarkets, in what is otherwise a heavily residential area.

Giffnock railway station is located centrally in the town, with regular services to Glasgow (15 minutes away) and East Kilbride (18 minutes away) throughout the day. This also connects the town with the other East Renfrewshire settlements of Clarkston, Busby and Thornliebank. However, rail travel to Barrhead involves a changeover in Glasgow, meaning a travel time of around 40 minutes.

Giffnock has direct bus connections to Glasgow, Thornliebank and Ayr. The M77 motorway is around two miles west of the town and is easily accessible by road, providing fast access to Ayrshire and an alternative route into the centre of Glasgow.

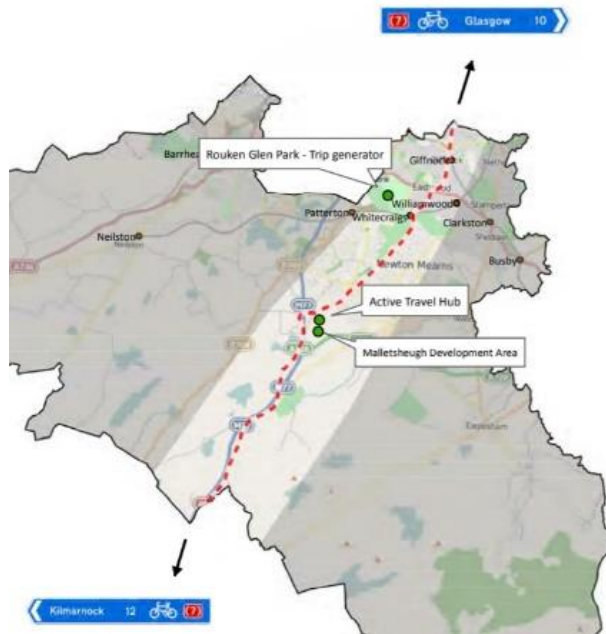
A limited number of on-street parking spaces are found in the town centre, some with a 60-minute limit on weekdays. An off-street car park with around 100 spaces is located next to the railway station and library, while privately run car parks are adjacent to (and on the roof of) Lidl, and at the Morrisons supermarket.

Recognising the lack of national cycle networks within the local authority area, the Council is looking at improving cycle corridors to encourage cycling. This includes a route from Giffnock to Newton Mearns, **Figure 2.1**.

15-mile radius around Giffnock



**Figure 2.1: Strategic Cycle Corridor 2 – Giffnock to Newton Mearns**



Source: East Renfrewshire Council.

Giffnock has excellent mobile connectivity, with the rollout of superfast broadband in the town began in 2009 and was further extended in 2015. Ultrafast broadband is available to some but not all premises in the area.

The town centre provides access to local services which, alongside a mix of retailers and business services, includes the library, medical centre, railway station and police station.

### 3. Active Town Centre

#### 3.1 Population and Housing

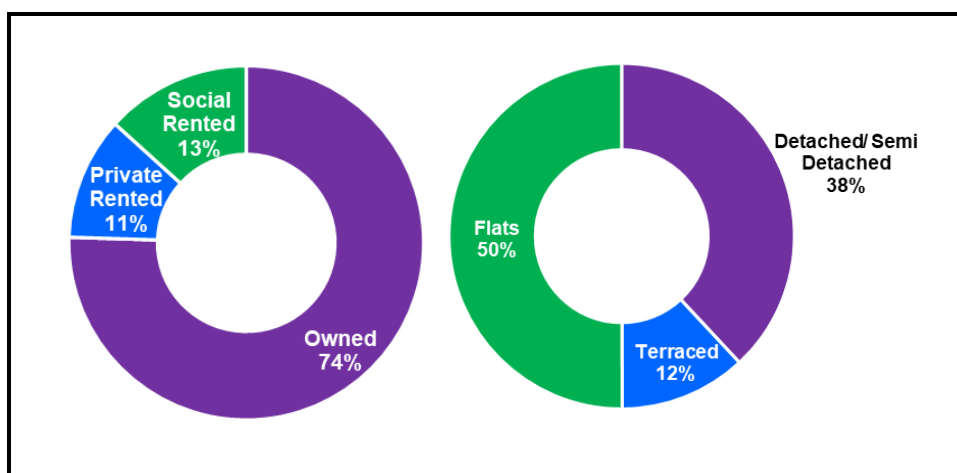
In 2019, just over 2,200 people lived within the town centre area in Giffnock<sup>5</sup>, around 14% of the total settlement population. The population of the settlement has remained stable over the decade to 2019 (0.3% increase), while the town centre population increased by 6% (approx. 130 people). This compares with increases of 6% for East Renfrewshire and a 4% increase in Scotland over this ten-year period. Most audited towns have seen a marked increase in town centre living, averaging around 12%, substantially higher than Giffnock at 6% increase.

**Table 3.1. Population change in Giffnock and Town Centre**

	2009	2019	Change	% Change
Giffnock	16,109	16,151	42	0.3%
Town centre	2,084	2,215	131	6%

Source: National Records of Scotland (2019)

Housing in the town centre<sup>6</sup> is a mix of flats (50%) and semi-detached/detached properties (38%), and relatively evenly split between smaller (1/2 bedrooms) and larger properties (3/4 to 5+ bedrooms). Half of properties (51%) are in council tax bands D and E. The streets surrounding Fenwick Road are almost wholly residential – a mix of older and newer detached/semi-detached properties – providing a considerable catchment population for the retail units on the street. There are also some newer flats on Fenwick Road.



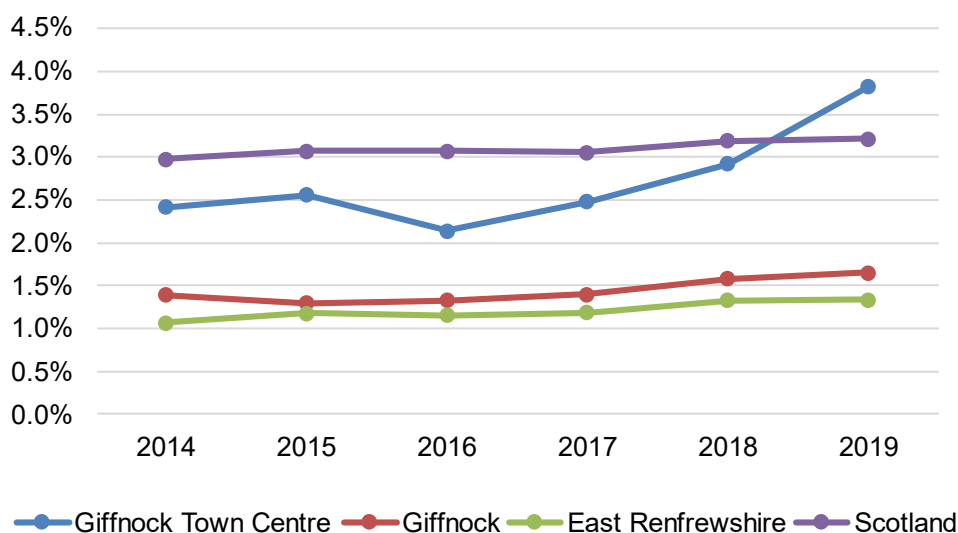
<sup>5</sup> Census 2011 output zones S00102964, S00102965, S00103013, S00103191 & S0010338

<sup>6</sup> For ease of accessing the most up to date data, this is datazones (2001) S01001784, S01001772 & S01001762



In 2019, the residential vacancy rate was 3.8% in the town centre and 1.7% in Giffnock as a whole. The town centre vacancy rate is the highest found across all eight audited East Renfrewshire town centres and is higher than the national vacancy rate of 3.2%.

### Residential Vacancy Rate (2014-2019)



While the town's overall vacancy rate has remained static, there has been an overall increase for the town centre (from 27 in 2014 to 43 in 2019). This would suggest an issue(s) relating to the town centre housing stock that should be explored.

House prices in Giffnock reflect its standing as one of the more affluent parts of Greater Glasgow. The average purchase price of a town centre dwelling (£171,000) is lower than that of the town as a whole (£269,000)<sup>7</sup>. Prices in the town centre decreased slightly (-10%) between 2014-18 but increased by 18% in wider Giffnock. However, more recent data from Zoopla states that, from 136 sales in Giffnock over the past 12 months, the average price paid was £329,000. The housing stock in the town is largely privately owned (74% in the town centre; 86% in the wider town).

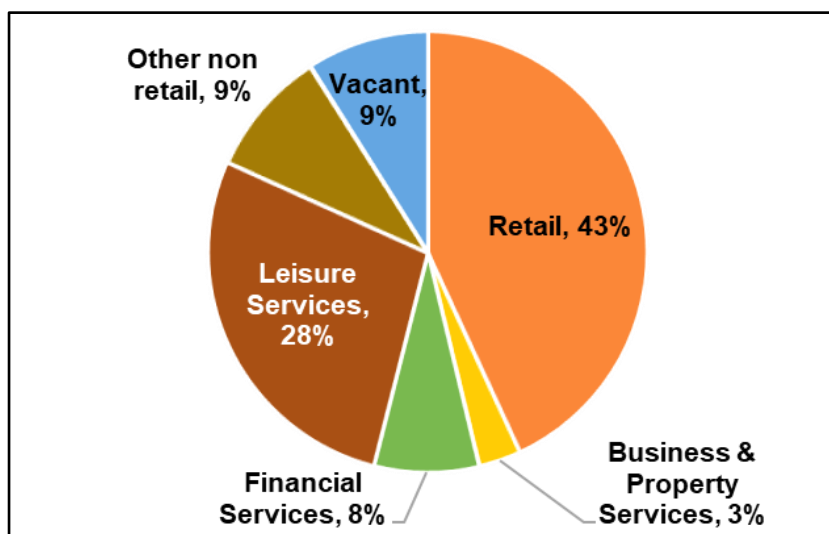
<sup>7</sup> Scottish Statistics, 2018

### 3.2 Employment and Business

Almost one-fifth (19%) of the 5,700 jobs in Giffnock are located in the town centre datazones. This is lower compared to the 2016 audit (34%) but is partly due to employment increasing in the overall settlement. National statistics record 580 businesses in the whole settlement. The YTA street audit located 62 units in use within Giffnock town centre – of these, 33 are retail businesses.

Seven vacant units were recorded during the audit, which possibly reflects implications of COVID-19 and the ongoing health crisis. This brings the overall vacancy rate to 9%, which is highest among audited towns in East Renfrewshire but still compares to the average of other audited towns (10%, 39 YTAs). The vacancy rate in Clarkston was at 6.5% and Barrhead at 6%. Audited towns outside of East Renfrewshire have had much higher vacancy rates, including Dumbarton (15%), Kilmarnock (15%), Ayr (16%) and Kirkcaldy (17%).

#### Town Centre Unit Mix



Retail forms the largest single town centre unit use and, at 43%, is higher than Clarkston, 39%, but lower than some other East Renfrewshire towns such as Barrhead (50%) and Newton Mearns (61%).

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

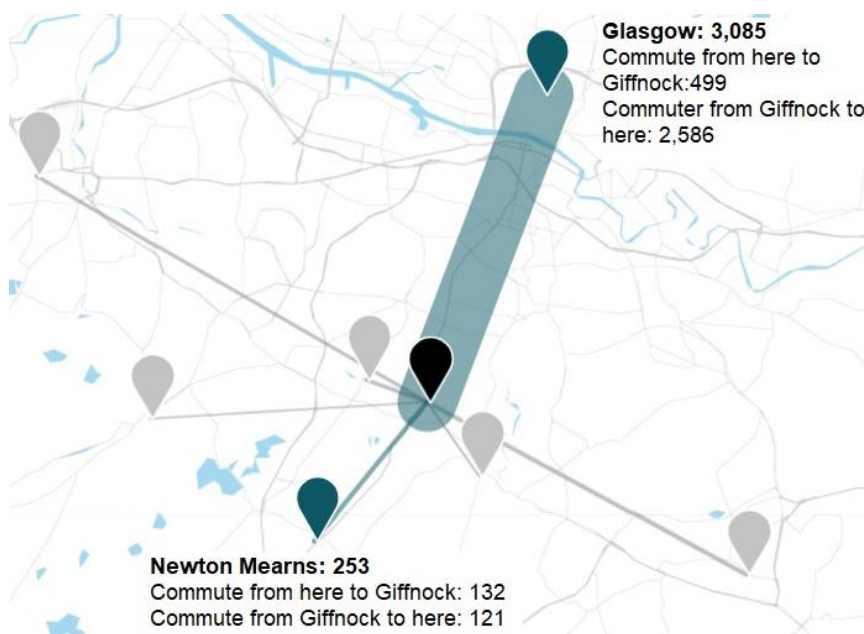
	2020	2016	Change
Retail	28	32	-4
Other non-retail	6	5	+1
Leisure services	18	16	+2
Business & property services	2	3	-1
Financial services	5	6	-1
Vacant	6	0	+6
Total number of units	65	62	+3

Source: YTA Audit Visits

**Map 3.1** shows the inbound and outbound flow of commuters from and to Giffnock:

- 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.

**Map 3.1: Giffnock Commuter Flows**



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

As Giffnock is a suburban commuter town, there is a net outflow of commuters with residents travelling to larger settlements, such as Glasgow, East Kilbride and Paisley, for work. The largest flow of commuters is between Giffnock and Glasgow, with over 2,500 people commuting into the city from Giffnock.

### 3.3 Retail

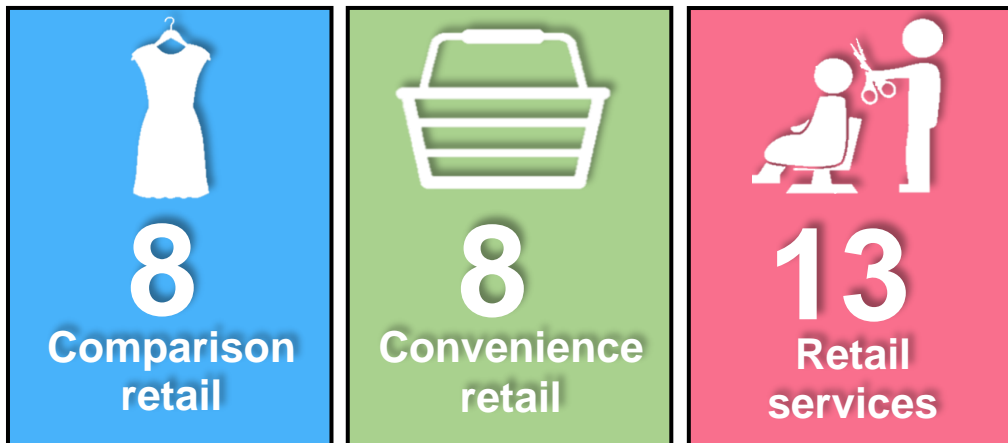
As outlined, retail units in Giffnock are clustered along Fenwick Road. For a small town centre, it has a good range of shops and retail services. Larger units are located towards the northern edge of the town centre, including Majestic Wine Warehouse, two car showrooms, Lidl, which took over the old Wholefoods site, and Morrisons on the outskirts of the town centre.

Most shops in Giffnock town centre operate standard opening hours of around 9am to 5.30pm. The Morrisons supermarket opens between 7am and 10pm, while Lidl opens between 8am and 10pm, and the small Sainsbury's supermarket on Fenwick Road between 7am and 11pm.

The YTA analysis is based on the following retail definitions:

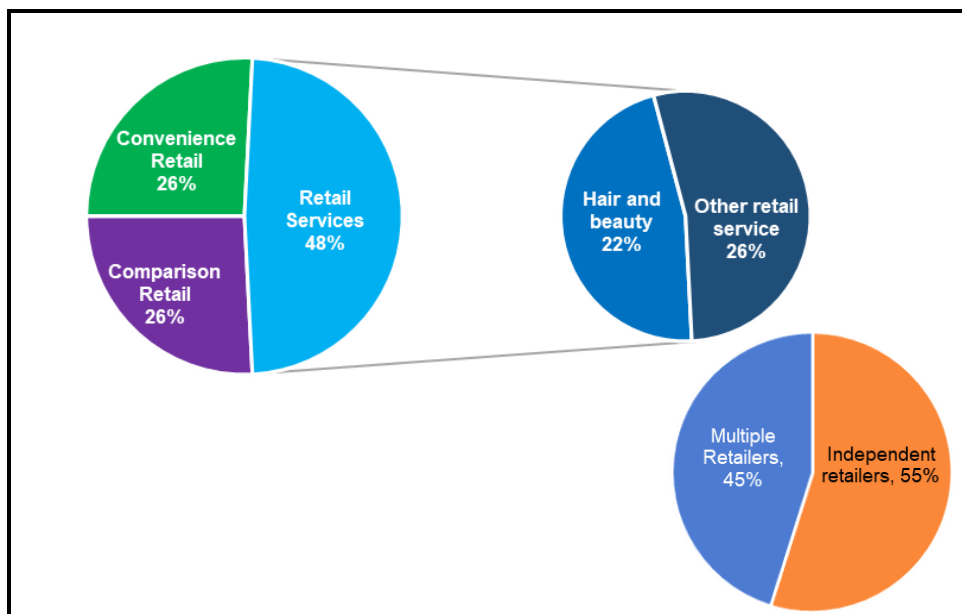
- **Comparison Retail:** all other retail purchases comprising goods bought at infrequent intervals where consumers will compare and contrast products and prices – *8 comparison retailers identified in Giffnock town centre, down from 12 in the previous audit;*
- **Convenience Retail:** primarily low cost goods that are typically bought out of habit or on impulse i.e. food, drink (alcohol and non-alcohol), news, tobacco, etc. – *8 convenience retailers identified in Giffnock town centre, which compares to 7 identified in the 2016 audit; 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. – 13 retail service operators identified in Giffnock town centre similarly to the previous audit.



Just over half of traders within Giffnock town centre are independent (55%) – this is in line with the average for other audited town centres, which range between 49% and 72%, which was found in Helensburgh. Hair and beauty retailers make up 22% of the retail services in the town centre, with the rest accounting for retailers such as a post office, shoe repair and opticians. The number of food & drink establishments has increased to 94% of leisure service provision (compared to 88% previously).

**Retail Mix**



With a settlement population of over 16,000 people, Giffnock as a settlement has 490 residents for every town centre retail outlet which is considerably higher than the YTA average of 235 (39 YTAs).

**490 residents per town centre retail outlet**

**33 town centre retail units in use**

**7 vacant town centre retail units**

## 4. Attractive Town Centre

### 4.1 Giffnock BID

Giffnock Business Improvement District was established in October 2013 with a five year mandate, and was renewed in 2018. The BID operates under the name of Giffnock Village, with an accompanying website and social media channels with strong reach (4,800 Facebook likes; 950 Twitter followers). Giffnock Village banners are on display throughout the town – particularly important for appealing to vehicles passing along the A77.



The BID organises and supports a number of events throughout the year, designed to bring visitors into the town centre and increase footfall for local businesses. This includes a classic car show each summer and Christmas-themed events, including a lights switch-on. Other BID activities have included flower displays and hanging baskets, business networking opportunities, and the production of an attractive illustrated map of the town centre which promotes its retail and service offer.

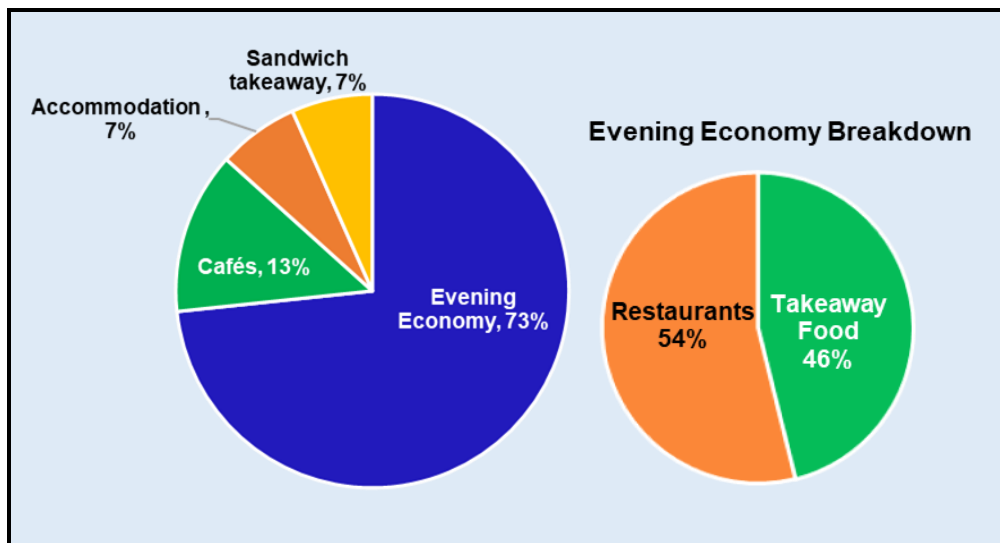


The quality of public realm in the town centre is generally good. Streets are relatively tidy, and a good number of bins, many including recycling contribute to this. The metal benches found on many street corners as well as bus stops are new and clean looking. Although the town does have a busy road cutting through it, there is an appropriate number of pedestrian crossing points. Pavements are of a suitable width and have extensions at some bus stops. Unlike some towns, there is not extensive use of guard rails between the pavement and road.

Additionally, Giffnock has a busy and vibrant feel to it, helped by a high number of cafés and restaurants, and other services. Combined with the late opening of the two Fenwick Road supermarkets, this means there is activity on the street throughout the day and into the evening.

## 4.2 Leisure Mix

The mix of leisure businesses in Giffnock town centre is dominated by evening economy (73% of units), comprising takeaways and restaurants. For its size, Giffnock has a good selection of independent restaurants and cafés which appear well-frequented. Although not captured in this breakdown, there is also a coffee shop/eating area within Morrisons supermarket, and a bar and grill within the Orchard Park hotel.



Other leisure facilities are located outside of the town centre, including Eastwood Park Theatre and the Eastwood Recreation Centre, which includes a swimming pool, gym, and space for arts activities. Giffnock Tennis, Squash and Hockey Club is also located to the south of the town centre area, with six floodlit courts.





### 4.3 Attractiveness Review

The YTA includes an independent (and subjective) review of place and quality impressions, with Giffnock scoring above average in comparison with other towns.

Individual unit fronts and shop window displays were graded out of ten during the on-street audit, with a town centre average score of 7.9 for quality of window display and 7.5 for the condition of unit fronts. This is above the average across other audited town centres, of 6.9 in each instance (and 6.9 in Helensburgh).



Business confidence in the town centre was gauged from a small sample of interviews undertaken with independent traders. It is possible that the current public health crisis affected responses. Still, scores averaged at 6.3 / 10, just above the national average of other audited towns of 5.9 / 10.



## 5. YTA Summary and Key Points

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

### 5.1 Accessible Town Centre

- Giffnock, at the southern edge of the Greater Glasgow urban conurbation, is well connected to transport links and a wide range of services. Although car ownership in the area is high, public transport links are good with regular bus and rails services;
- the planned strategic cycle corridor and multiple bike racks are found around the town centre help to encourage active travel;
- parking in Giffnock town centre appears – at least during the time when the audit was undertaken, a midweek daytime – to be adequate; and
- Giffnock has good 4G mobile coverage and widespread access to superfast broadband and access to ultrafast broadband for some premises.

### 5.2 Active Town Centre

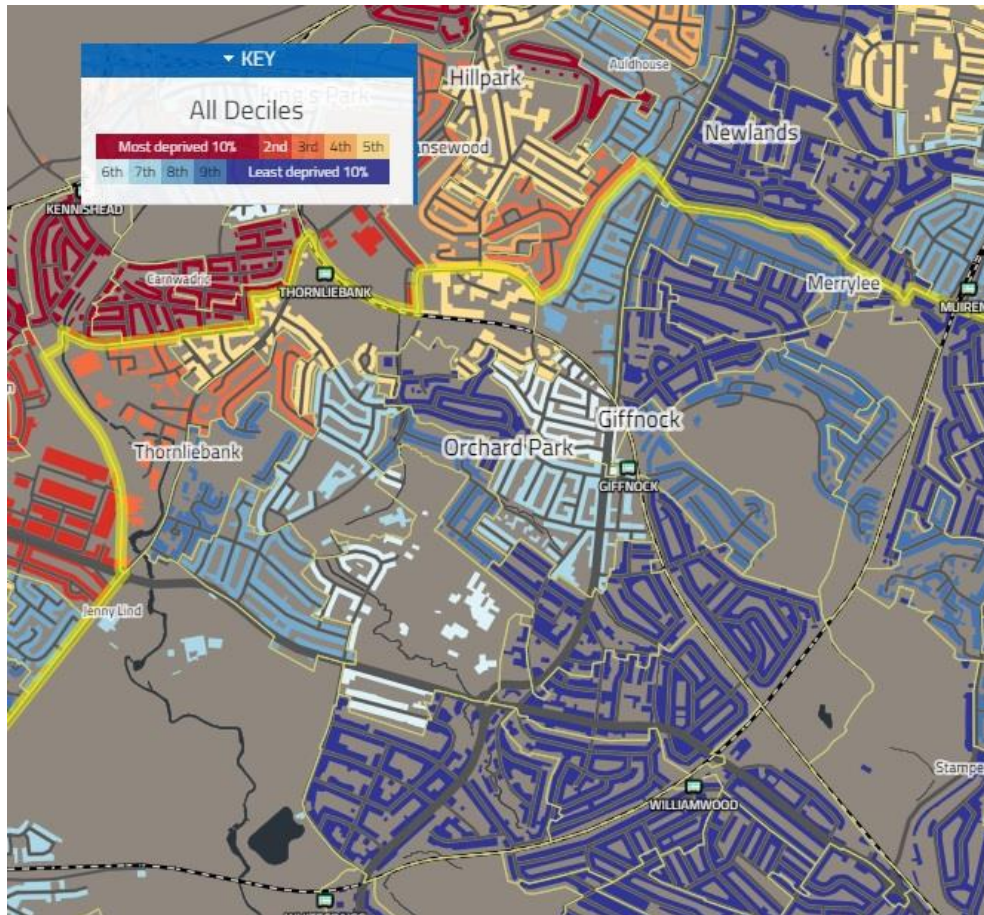
- seven vacant units were recorded during the audit of Giffnock town centre, which suggests that efforts should be continued to maintain its long-term vitality and health;
- the BID will play an important role in delivering activity in the town centre, it is important that it is supported where possible for the future;
- the housing vacancy in the town centre should be explored to identify any specific issues and, where relevant, remedial action should be taken; and
- there is a limited amount of civic space within the town centre for events, markets etc. However, car parks are utilised for this purpose (e.g. the classic car show, held in the railway station car park).

### 5.3 Attractive Town Centre

- despite its proximity to a large urban area, Giffnock manages to retain a distinctive, “village” feel supported by branding of Giffnock Village, and with its mix of appealing smaller shops and a unique retail offer;
- the public realm is well maintained and appears to be appropriate to the town’s setting;
- while the big supermarkets are likely to attract people to Giffnock, it is not clear how many shoppers also visit other local stores – opportunities to explore how linked shopping trips could be maximised should be identified to encourage spend in other business outlets; and
- Giffnock Village BID continue to provide a focal point for encouraging and promoting business and community activity focused on the town centre.

## Appendix: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2020)

### 2011 Data Zones by SIMD Decile



Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2020) [Accessed online](#)