



# Your Town Audit: Eaglesham

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## 1. Understanding Scottish Places Summary

This report presents a summary of the Your Town Audit (YTA) for Eaglesham, 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 and town centres using a series of Key Performance Indicators. It provides a comprehensive audit of Eaglesham 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 Eaglesham and identifies 14 comparator towns that have similar characteristics, with the most similar being Peterculter, West Kilbride, Stepps and Dalgety Bay<sup>1</sup>. The USP platform – [www.usp.scot](http://www.usp.scot) – describes Eaglesham in the following general terms:

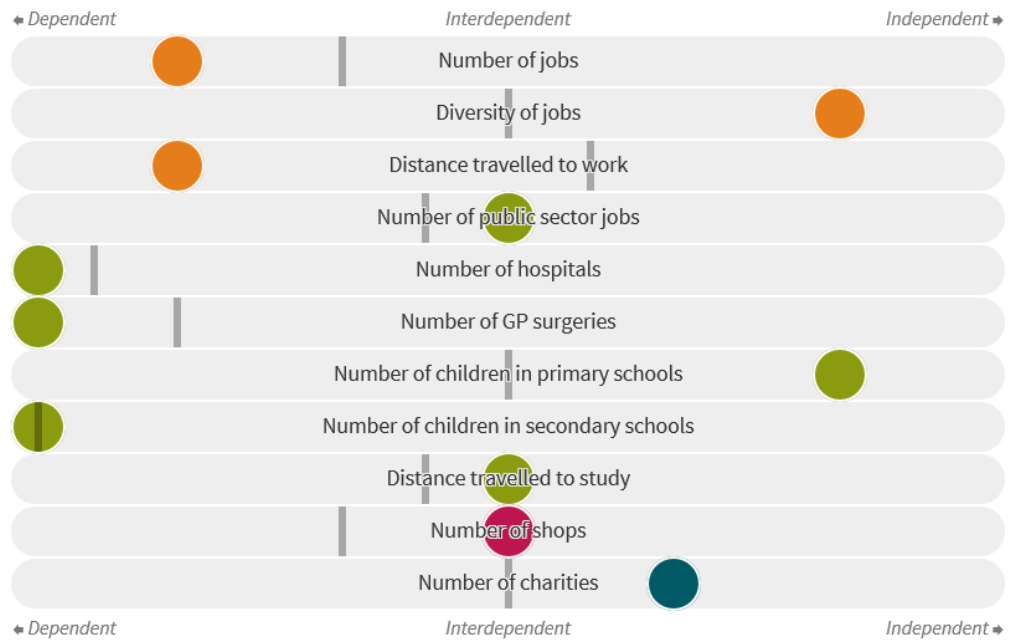
**Eaglesham's Interrelationships:** Eaglesham is an *'interdependent to dependent town'*, which means it has a low number of assets in relation to its population. Towns of this kind have some diversity of jobs; and residents largely travel longer distances to work and study, although some may travel shorter distances. These towns rely on neighbouring towns for some assets and jobs.

**Eaglesham's Typology:** This type of medium-sized town is a suburban or commuter locality with a prevalence of higher income residents and private housing. A large proportion of the population are aged 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 are educated to HNC level or above. Many households own two or more cars.

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<sup>1</sup> The other comparator towns are identified as Bishopton, Westhill (Highland), Newport-on-Tay and Wormit, Brightons, Kingswells, Cove Bay, New Scone, Kilbarchan, Inverkip and Kintore.

## Inter-relationships i



Comparing Eaglesham to towns with similar USP typology and interrelationships shows it has a similar number of children in secondary schools, and number of hospitals (for both of which it is dependent on adjacent towns). It differs as it has a greater number of children in primary schools.

Building on the USP, this report presents the results of our detailed analysis of Eaglesham 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.

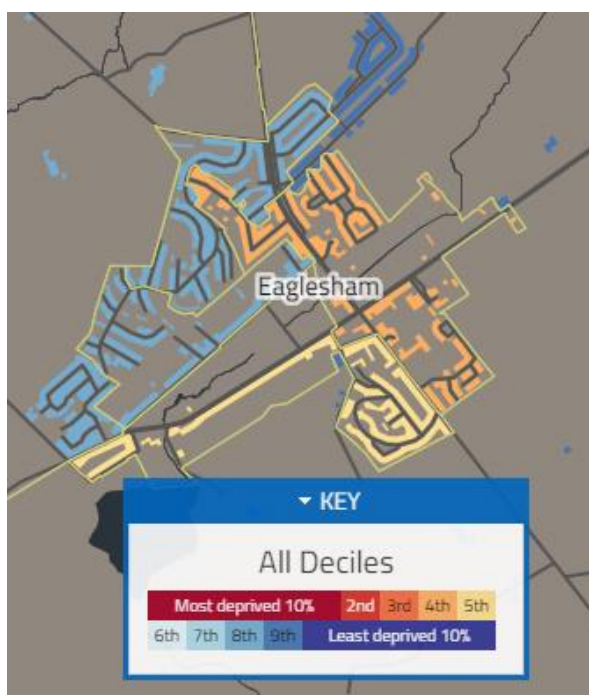
**It is important to note that the audit for Eaglesham was carried out during a world health pandemic as a result of the Covid-19 virus. It is acknowledged that this may have had an impact on the results of the audit and this subsequent report.**

## Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

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

Eaglesham experiences relatively limited levels of deprivation and none of its datazones are in the 15% most deprived in Scotland. It has both middling datazones and datazones in the least deprived 20% (**Figure 1**).

**Figure 1.1: SIMD 2020 Map**



Source: [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation \(SIMD\) 2020](#)

**Table 1.1: Eaglesham SIMD Ranking by Data Zone**

2011 Intermediate Zone	2011 Data Zone	Overall SIMD16	
		Rank <sup>2</sup>	Percentile
Eaglesham and Waterfoot	S01008355	3,295	47 <sup>th</sup>
	S01008356	5,210	75 <sup>th</sup>
	S01008357	5,426	78 <sup>th</sup>
	S01008358	2,583	37 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020

<sup>2</sup> Rank out of 6976 Scottish Data Zones.

## 2. Accessible Town Centre

Eaglesham is a small town in a rural setting, located in East Renfrewshire, 15 miles south of Glasgow, with a population of over 5,000 people. The core retail area of Eaglesham is situated on Glasgow Road, a B-class road leading into Eaglesham from Waterfoot and Clarkston, with other retailers and service providers being distributed around the main town centre area.

There is no railway station located within the settlement of Eaglesham, with the nearest being Hairmyres in East Kilbride (3 miles away) and Busby (4 miles away), both of which have park and ride facilities. Journeys from these stations into the centre of Glasgow will take roughly 30 minutes. Services from these stations connect Eaglesham to other settlements in East Renfrewshire, with journey times to Thornliebank and Giffnock taking roughly 10-15 minutes. However, rail travel to Barrhead involves a changeover in Pollokshaws for both services, meaning a travel time of 50 minutes from Hairmyres and 1.5 hours from Busby. Most residents of the town will therefore be reliant on private cars, taxis and bus services.

**15-mile radius around Eaglesham**



There are approximately ten bus stops located throughout the town centre of Eaglesham and direct bus connections to Glasgow. Bus services also connect the town with other settlements across East Renfrewshire including Clarkston, Busby and Newton Mearns, with journey times of roughly 20-30 minutes running from 7am to midnight. However, journeys by bus to other settlements in East Renfrewshire such as Thornliebank and Giffnock involve a change at Clarkston. Bus journeys to Hairmyres Rail Station from Eaglesham take around 7 minutes, and those to Busby rail station will take longer, approximately 20 minutes and involves changing in Clarkston.

The M77 Motorway is around four miles west of the town and is easily accessible by road, providing fast access to Ayrshire and beyond, and an alternative route into the centre of Glasgow.

There is a large number of on-street parking spaces in the town centre, however, these are primarily found in residential streets. There are no public off-street car parks, although there are around fifteen spaces located next to the main retail hub on Glasgow Road, and a private car park situated behind the Eglinton Arms Hotel.

The town centre provides access to some local services which, alongside a small mix of retailers, includes two medical centres, and three churches. The library offers many children's activities and the church halls, including the newly renovated Carswell centre provide space for lots of community groups and events.

There is also 3G and 4G throughout the town and, although there is no town-wide WiFi, superfast broadband is available. The town no longer has a police station following closure of the one behind Polnoon Drive.

### 3. Active Town Centre

#### 3.1 Population and Housing

Just over 2,700 people live within the town centre of Eaglesham<sup>3</sup>, comprising 54% of the total settlement population. The population of the town centre increased by 3% in the decade to 2019, while the population of the whole settlement increased by around 8% over this time. This compares with increases of 6% for East Renfrewshire and a 4% increase in Scotland over this ten-year period. Most of the YTA audited towns have seen an increase in town centre living, averaging around 12%.



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

	2009	2019	Change	% Change
Eaglesham	4,669	5,059	390	8%
Town centre	2,630	2,710	80	3%

Source: National Records of Scotland (2019)

The housing mix in Eaglesham is largely dominated by semi-detached and detached properties (57%) followed by terraced houses (26%) and flats (16%). Over half of all homes contain 3-4 bedrooms and 40% 5+ bedrooms. The housing stock in the town is largely privately owned (74% in the town centre; 81% in the wider town).

Properties are fairly evenly divided in council tax bands (A/C, D/E, F/H) each containing one third. The streets surrounding Eaglesham town centre are almost wholly residential – a mix of older and newer terraced properties – providing the catchment population for the town’s retail and service businesses.

House prices in Eaglesham reflect its standing as a desirable town within commuting distance of Glasgow. The average purchase price of a town centre<sup>4</sup> dwelling (£191,024) is lower than that of the town as a whole (£243,314). Prices in the town

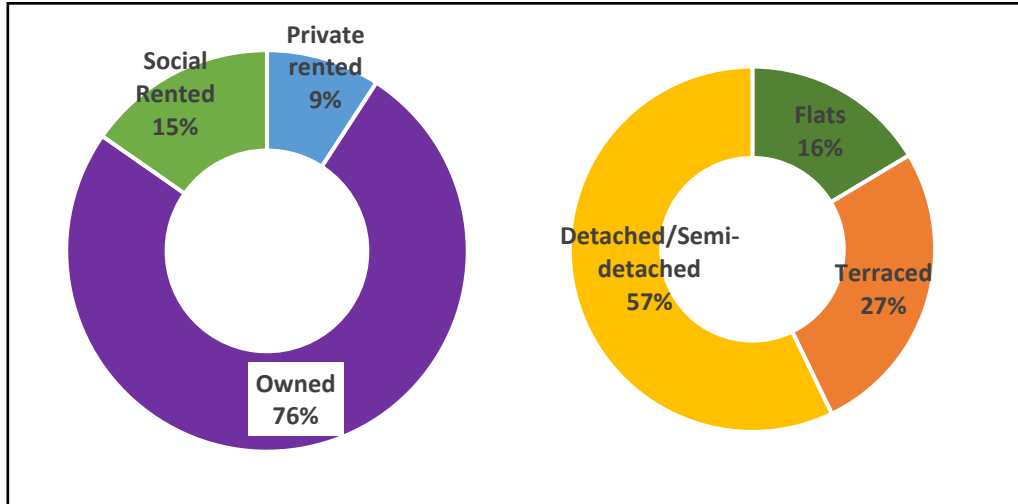
<sup>3</sup> Datazones S01008356, S01008357, S01008358. National Records of Scotland, 2019

<sup>4</sup> Datazones S01008356, S01008357, S01008358. Scottish Statistics, 2018



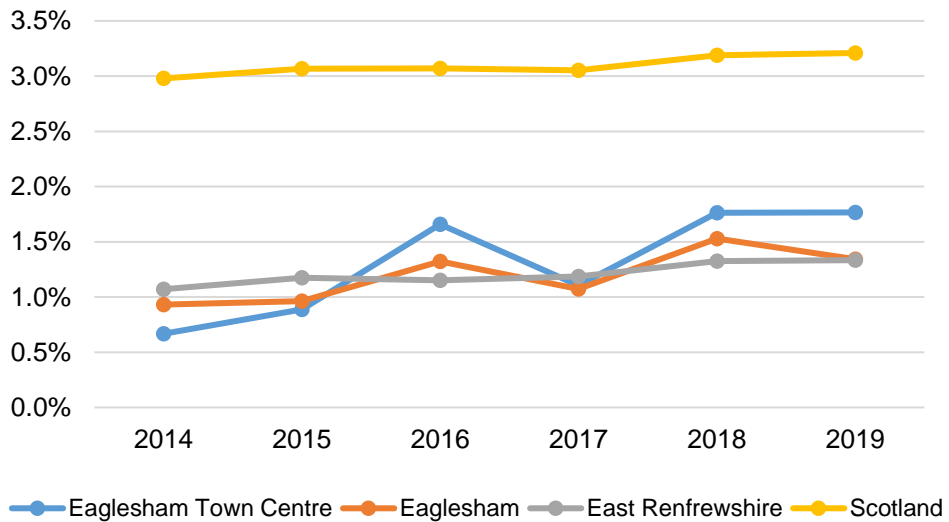
centre increased by 13% since 2014, while prices in the wider settlement saw a small increase of 6%.

**Eglesham Housing Mix**



In 2019, the residential vacancy rate was at 1.8% in the town centre, moderately higher than the 1.3% vacancy in the town as a whole and 1.3% for East Renfrewshire overall. but below the Scottish average of 3.2%, **Figure 3.1**.

**Residential Vacancy Rate (2014-2019)**



Source: Scottish Government Statistics

While the vacancy rate and actual numbers are low, the data does represent an increase of more than double since 2014 – from 6 to 16 vacant homes. It will be important to analyse and understand the reason for the increasing vacancy rate in

Eaglesham town centre and, where possible, undertake remedial action to attract new residents.

### 3.2 Employment and businesses

Half (51%) of the 800 jobs in Eaglesham are located in the town centre datazones. National statistics recorded 130 businesses in the settlement in April 2020, compared to 155 during the previous audit (2016). The YTA street audit located 27 units within Eaglesham town centre of which 17 are in retail use. This excludes one retail unit and the police station that have become vacant since the last audit.

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

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

**Map 3.1: Eaglesham Commuter Flows**



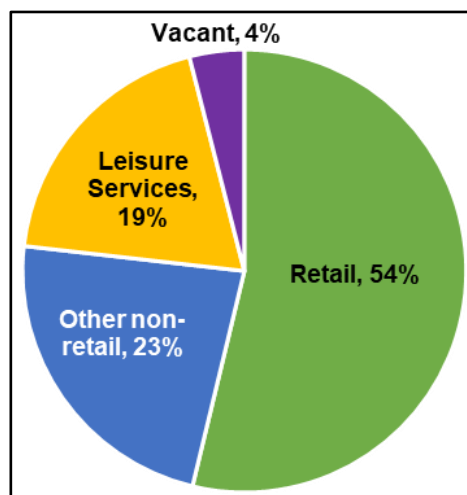
Source: [Understanding Scotland's Places](#), download January 2021

### 3.3 Retail

Eaglesham has a good range of shops and retail services for a small town centre.

Most of the shops are located in a parade on Glasgow Road, located to the north of the town. While Eaglesham is a small town and these retail units are within walking distance for most residents, it would take around 30 minutes for older and less physically able people to walk from the southern part of the town.

There are also a small number of other retail units spread throughout the wider town centre area – on Montgomery Street, Cheapside Street, Gilmour Street and Polnoon Drive – including a pub/restaurant, hotel, a convenience store and a tearoom.



Most shops in Eaglesham town centre operate standard opening hours of around 9am to 5.30pm/6pm. However, the ScotMid convenience store on Cheapside Street is open earlier and later (8am-10pm), as is the RS McColl's on Glasgow Road (6am-8pm).

In line with other audited towns, retail forms the largest single town centre unit use and, at 54%, is higher than Clarkston (39%) and Barrhead (50%).

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 – *5 comparison retailers identified in Eaglesham town centre, one less than 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. – *4 convenience retailers identified in Eaglesham town centre, compared to 6 in the previous 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. – *5 retail service operators identified in Eaglesham town centre, with no change in the number.*



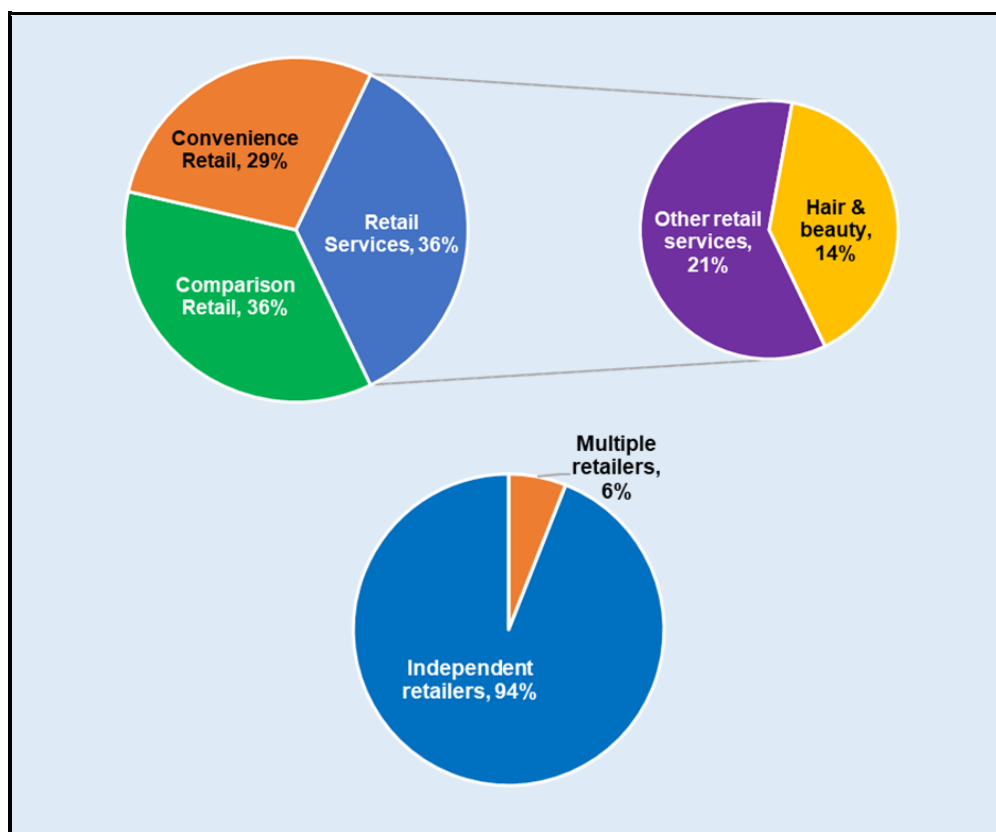
**Table 3.1: Split in Uses of Eaglesham Town Centre Units (2016-2020)**

	2020	2016	Change
Retail	14	17	-3
Other non-retail	6	7	-1
Leisure services	5	5	5
Business & property services	0	0	0
Financial services	0	0	0
Vacant	1	0	+1
Total number of units	26	29	-3

Source: YTA Audit Visits

Almost all of the traders within Eaglesham town centre are independent (94%) – this is above the 71% average for other YTA audited towns and is the joint highest rate we have identified, Eyemouth (94%). Other towns with high levels of independent businesses are Moffat and Stornoway, with 82% and 83% respectively. There are only two multiple retailers in Eaglesham: the ScotMid convenience store on Cheapside Street and the RS McColl convenience store on Glasgow Road. Both of these units provide ATMs for the village.

**Retail Composition**





This year's audit identified two vacancies one of which is a previous retail unit, bringing the retail vacancy rate to 5%. It was unclear whether the shop closure occurred before this year or was affected by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. However, there has not been a reduction in the number of retail services

(e.g. hairdressers) since the last audit. The vacancy rate is still relatively low for a small town and demonstrates the resilience of businesses.

A newly installed electrical vehicle charging station is located on Glasgow Road in the centre of town.

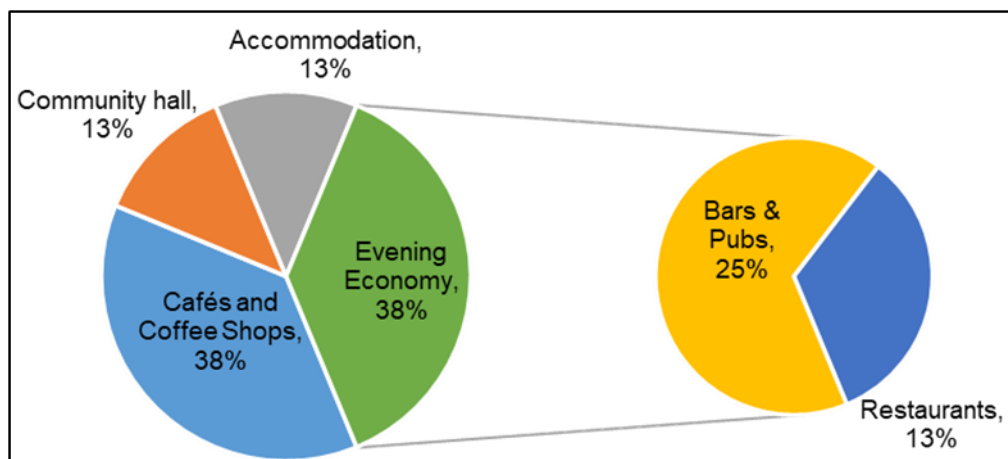
**361 residents per town centre retail outlet**

**14 town centre retail units in use**

**1 vacant town centre unit**

## 4. Attractive Town Centre

### 4.1 Leisure Mix



The mix of leisure businesses in Eaglesham town centre is split with evening economy accounting for just over one third (38%). The evening economy in the town comprises a restaurant (Villaggio) and two bars/ pubs, including the Eglinton Arms hotel and Swan Inn which also serve food. There is a café/ deli, a convenience store that serves ice cream and snacks, and a tearoom. There are two hot food take-away businesses in the town centre, Villaggio and Peking Village on Glasgow Road.

### 4.2 Leisure Facilities and Attractions

Leisure facilities located in Eaglesham include the bowling club and the amateur football club. In addition, Bonnyton Golf Club is situated 1.2 miles away, an 18-hole golf course with other facilities including: a putting green, a club house and a licensed bar and a restaurant.

Within the town centre, there is the Eaglesham Pavilion and playing fields, which include a football field and children's play park. The fields in the centre of the town provide the residents with a large area for leisure activities and dog walking, and adding committed areas for exercise or sports could perhaps be considered.



Benches and bins are dotted around the green areas.

Well-maintained flower installations are found at the main bus stop and on street corners and a central island next to the shops on Glasgow Road. Volunteers from the village are responsible for the majority of installations.

The audit also observed sensors attached to lampposts for a new initiative called Beat the Street, an interactive game to encourage children's exercise and outdoor play, set up by East Renfrewshire Council. The game involves an online map of sensors which record the length a player has walked/cycled by tapping their card.



A popular nearby attraction is the Whitelee Windfarm Visitor Centre, which is 4.7 miles from the town centre. Whitelee Windfarm is the largest onshore windfarm in the UK and the second largest in Europe, with 215 turbines. The visitor centre is located on Eaglesham Moor, with free entry. Inside there are interactive exhibits about renewable energy, demonstrating how the turbines work, as well as a café, gift shop and education hub where workshops are hosted.



Eaglesham was declared Scotland's first Conservation Village in the 1960s, and the first project undertaken by the Eaglesham & Waterfoot Community Development Trust was the Eaglesham Heritage Trail. This is another visitor attraction in the settlement, which is comprised of 12 panels and information boards which start at Polnoon House and end at the St Bridget's Church. The panels contain photos, diagrams and interpretive text telling the story of the village from the creation of the planned village,

through its textile industry days, the landing of Rudolph Hess in 1941 to the restoration of the village in the 1960's and 1970's. The Trail was funded by Lottery Awards for All and East Renfrewshire Council LEADER Fund.



The newly refurbished Carswell Centre houses a collection of six life-sized statues which were carved by Eaglesham villager, William Gemmell, between 1840 and 1845.

### 4.3 Community Events

The Eaglesham Fair was first held in the town in 1672 and was revived in 1961 as part of a successful campaign to regenerate the village. This carried on until 2000 when it stopped again, due to a lack of committee members. However, in 2005, after a village lead campaign it re-started, and has taken place annually since.

The fair is an all-day event, which includes a procession starting from the school, (accompanied by a pipe band), and involves the crowning of the Fair Queen. There are a number of attractions at the fair including: arts and crafts stalls, dog shows, musical performances, and rides and attractions. Entry for all is free, although donations can be made, and those with stalls must pay a fee. The event tends to be held in June and focuses on a theme which changes every year.



Eaglesham also hosts the Eaglesham Beer Festival – an annual event which offers attendees the chance to taste craft beers, wines, and ciders, as well as offering food and live entertainment. The event has had a number of sponsors including: Whole Foods Giffnock, Aldi, Top of the Hops in Kilmarnock, Yelp Glasgow and the Drygate Brewing Company.



It is held on the Eaglesham Playing Fields in the centre of the town in the summer, although this year's event was cancelled due to the exceptional circumstances of COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 4.4 Eaglesham & Waterfoot Community Development Trust

Eaglesham and Waterfoot Community Development Trust was established in late 2009 to support the community, tackle local issues, and improve the quality of life in the village. The Trust addressed several issues within the Village during its time but has since been dissolved. It supported the creation of the Eaglesham History Society which was formed in September 2012, following the successful reception of the Eaglesham Heritage Trail, and secured funding to renovate the park areas and undertake other improvements such as installing zebra crossings in Eaglesham.

#### 4.5 Attractiveness Review

The YTA includes an independent (and subjective) review of place and quality impressions, with Eaglesham 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 7.3 for quality of window display and 7.8 for the condition of unit fronts. These averages remained the same since the previous audit, and are above the average across other audited town centres, of 6.9 in each instance.



Business confidence in the town centre was gauged from a small sample of interviews undertaken with independent traders. The retailers were asked to assess their confidence in future business performance, and some answers may have been affected by the current pandemic. Business confidence was estimated at an average of 6.9, which is still higher than the average of 16 other YTA audited towns, at 5.9 / 10. This level of confidence is surprising given the timing of the audit (i.e. during the Covid-19 pandemic) but does align with wider national trends of increased use of local retail and other services during this time.

## 5. YTA Summary and Key Points

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

### 5.1 Accessible Town Centre

- although in a rural setting, Eaglesham is reasonably well connected with transport links and a range of services. Car ownership in the area is high and public transport links are good with regular bus services taking about 45 minutes into Glasgow;
- while there is no local train station in Eaglesham, the town is connected by bus service to the nearest stations in neighbouring settlements of Busby and East Kilbride;
- most residents will, however, be reliant at least to some extent to the use of private cars and taxi services;
- parking in Eaglesham town centre appears – at least during the time when the audit was undertaken, a midweek daytime – to be adequate; and
- Eaglesham has good 4G mobile coverage and access to superfast broadband.

### 5.2 Active Town Centre

- Eaglesham has a high level of independent retail businesses – it is important that these are supported (and where possible protected) to maintain the town's sense of uniqueness;
- two vacant units were recorded during the audit of Eaglesham town centre, which may be, in part, a reflection of the current circumstances of COVID-19 pandemic – this situation should be monitored and effort made to attract new occupiers based on the increased use of local retail and other services;
- the town hosts both the Eaglesham Fair and Eaglesham Beer Festival annually which shows that the community is active in creating and maintaining a sense of local culture; and
- Eaglesham library has hosted activities for children and families, and it could be considered as a host for wider activities in the future.

### 5.3 Attractive Town Centre

- Eaglesham is an attractive, small town that manages to retain a distinctive village feel due to the majority of retail units being small and independent;
- although there is no registered bank in Eaglesham there are two ATMs located in the village; one of which can be found outside of the ScotMid Convenience store on Cheapside street, and one outside of RS McColls on Glasgow Road – it is important for access to financial services that every effort is made to retain these ATMs; and
- with its large park areas in the town centre, Eaglesham provides attractive space for outdoor exercise and children's play. ERC's Beat the Street is a welcome initiative to encourage children's exercise. However, it could be suggested that further opportunities for encouraging exercise could be explored, which could include for example adults' exercise machines (outdoor gym) or other dedicated areas for sports.