

Aberdeenshire Town Centre Health Check 2013



Technical Report: Results and Analysis

Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the results of the 2013 Aberdeenshire town centre health checks.
- 1.2 The results are presented to enable an understanding of how the vitality and viability of a number of Aberdeenshire town centres has developed since 2003. The results are not to be considered definitive of the well-being of a town centre, but rather they are intended to provide an evidence-based perspective on this matter.

Background

- 2.1 *Scottish Planning Policy* advises local authorities to produce town centre health checks to assess the strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience of town centres. (SPP (2014), paragraph 64).
- 2.2 The document: *Assessing the Impact of Retail Developments in Aberdeenshire (December 2004)* provides details of a method for undertaking town centre health checks. Its methodology provides a consistent basis for town centre studies within Aberdeenshire, and has been used to guide the previous town centre health checks.
- 2.3 A town centre health check involves a survey of a town centre. In order to complete the surveys members of Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Policy Team undertook site visits during July 2013.
- 2.4 The approach adopted during the 2011 town centre health check was predominantly adopted for the 2013 health check albeit with a small number of adaptations to improve the quality of the results. These do not affect the overall comparability of the healthchecks.
- 2.5 The 2013 town centre health checks covered nine Aberdeenshire settlements. The towns included were: Banchory, Banff, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Inverurie, Peterhead, Stonehaven and Turriff. The town centre boundary for each town was as identified in the 2012 Local Development Plan.
- 2.6 All of the nine towns have a population over 3,000 people, are settlements in the 2012 Local Development Plan and have a defined town centre. The same town centres were covered in the three previous town centre health checks undertaken.
- 2.7 Each town centre was scored between 1 and 5, against 32 different indicators. Of the 32 indicators, 16 were scored during site visits, whilst the remaining 16 required the collection of data (or other desk-based work) and so were scored after the fieldwork had been completed. A score of 1 constitutes a poor performance, whereas a score of 5 constitutes an excellent performance. A score of 3 is to be thought a satisfactory result.
- 2.8 Generally the following indicators were all unchanged from the 2011 study: existence and quality of a farmers market, presence of pubs, clubs, cultural and community facilities.
- 2.9 A town centre health check is a comparative study of town centre environments. In order for effective comparisons to be made, all town centres had to be relatively scored. Where scores were thought to exaggerate the performance of the town centre they were revised accordingly. Where suitable, population was strongly considered - data was closely compared with other towns' scores of a

similar size. Banff, Turriff and Huntly were considered to be 'of a similar size' (all hold between c.3,500-5,000 people as of the 2011 census), as were Ellon, Fraserburgh, Stonehaven and Inverurie (c. 10,000-12,500). Banchory (c.7,000) and Peterhead (c.18,000) weren't of a similar size to any other town.

Outcomes to the 2013 Town Centre Health Checks

- 3.1 The results of the 2013 town centre health checks are presented below, highlighting the relative performance of each centre in 2013 and the relative change in performance for each centre from 2003 to 2013.
- 3.2 The six tables shown in Appendix 1 give an overview of the study findings from 2003 – 2013. These tables have been used to form the basis of subsequent analyses between each of the town centres.
- 3.3 In the case of each town centre, remarks on the overall performance in 2013 have concentrated on those indicators (or sets of indicators) against which the town centre scored particularly well, or particularly poorly. As similar broad methodological principles were followed with regard to each of the indicators for each of the six studies, any alteration in the average scores for a town centre has been used to suggest overall changes to the well-being of individual town centres.
- 3.4 To assist the reader in obtaining a brief overview of the vitality and viability of a town centre, a set of "key facts" has been assembled for each of the nine centres. These "key facts" appear in boxed sections of text, following a general discussion on the performance of each centre. It should be noted that comparative terms (e.g. 'high' or 'low') appearing in these boxed sections of text are to be understood as relating to a comparison between scores for each of the nine town centres.

Technical note: comments on interpreting the scores

- 3.5 A broad comparison has been made between the results collated from previous studies, rather than an in-depth mathematical comparison between different scores.
- 3.6 It should be noted that a straightforward mathematical comparison between the scores given for all the town centre health check studies may only be of limited value. Despite the consistent fashion in which procedures have been undertaken for each of the health check studies, it must be acknowledged that scores represent qualitative evaluations of a town centre. Given this, one may expect that different individuals would respond differently, in the same circumstance. As different members of staff were involved in the previous five town centre health checks, it may be thought that a difference in the scoring of a particular indicator would present an indeterminate conclusion. However, there are several reasons why this concern does not restrict a broad comparison being made between the scores given for each health check:
 - The same principles were followed by each group of researchers in scoring the indicators for the six studies, and (in the case of the more subjective indicators considered on site visits) similar pro formas have been used to guide the researchers' considerations.

- None of the indicators evaluated on site visits are scored by a single individual, but rather a common score is agreed between the researchers.
- Many of the indicators are scored on the basis of quantitative data and in an easily repeatable manner (see the document: *Assessing the Impact of Retail Developments in Aberdeenshire* (December 2004) for details).
- There are at least 3 different indicators considered for each indicator in each of the studies and as such, the effect of any individually contentious score is greatly reduced.

Banchory

Banchory health check analysis

- 3.7 Banchory was ranked in equal first place in the 2013 Health Check (see appendix 1). The town centre has a variety of specialist independent retailers and there are ample pubs and facilities, with a small number of multiple retailers. Banchory has a low number of vacant premises compared to other towns which is one of the town's strong points. The diversity of uses in the town is fairly average – a low percentage of its properties are service-based compared to other towns. However, a strong retailer demand was reported and there are no lower quality discount shops.
- 3.8 The quality of Banchory's town centre environment was ranked the highest in Aberdeenshire. There is a welcoming feel to the town centre with eye-catching views of Deeside which is especially reflected in its open space and overall cleanliness. Bellfield park is a pleasant, popular place for visitors and locals. The properties are well kept and the quality of buildings is high with the older and the newer blending neatly. The environment of the town compliments its scenic location and its attractiveness to visitors with shop fronts well-kept and inviting. Impressively, a smaller number of crimes were recorded in Banchory town centre than in any other town. However, levels of pedestrians recorded in the town centre were disappointingly low.
- 3.9 Banchory is accessible to many through its regular bus service to Aberdeen however, these services are found to be unreliable at times. Despite Banchory being located on a slope, movement is as comfortable as possible for the less mobile with good traffic control measures. There is a useful car park on Dee Street with further spaces available next to Bellfield Park. Overall, Banchory's scores were fairly similar to the last health check and is one of the most consistent towns studied.

Banchory health check scores

- 3.10 The 2013 average (mean) score for Banchory town centre is 3.5/5. This is less in value than the average score obtained for the 2011 health check. Although Banchory's 2013 average score has decreased slightly from the previous years the town still ranks highly when compared to others in Aberdeenshire.

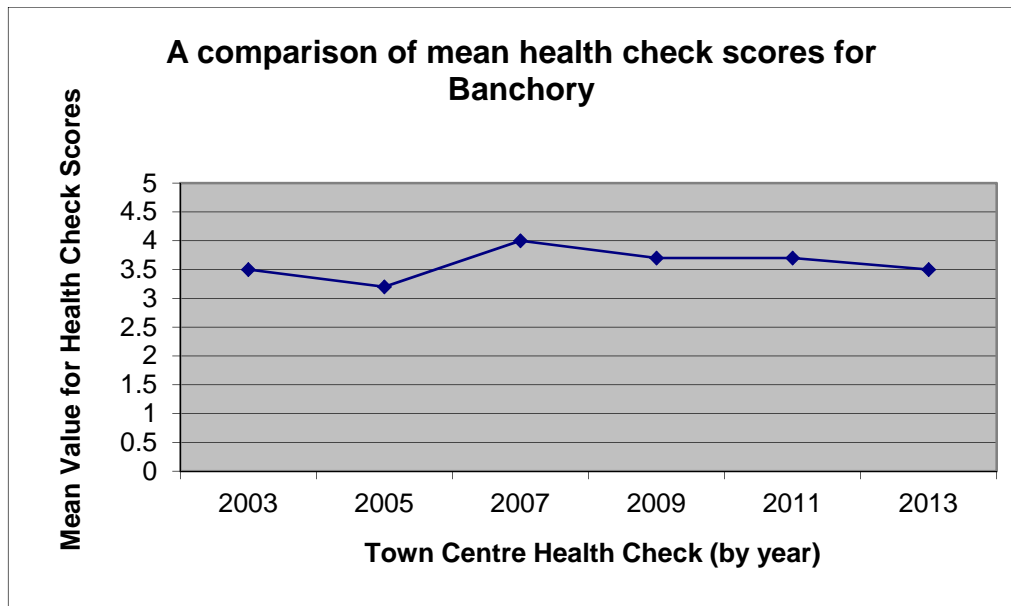


Figure 1: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Banchory town centre

2013 Town Centre Health Check Key Facts – Banchory

- Town centre environment is strikingly attractive and clean.
- The pleasant open space and the overall cleanliness particularly stands out.
- Above average levels of retailer demand with a low vacancy rate.
- Several pleasant pubs – comfortably enough for the town population.
- High Street full of specialist independent retailers offering a range of products.
- Low number of multiple retailers.
- Local public transport can be of low quality.

Future targets

- Increase types of financial and professional services available.
- Try and increase the levels of pedestrians in the town to similar levels in previous health checks.

Banff

Banff health check analysis

- 3.11 Banff town centre is ranked 8th in the 2013 Health Check. Banff again performed well when scoring the town centre environment as the historic design of the buildings was noted to have a striking effect and they are in generally good condition. Visitors to the town will find an accommodating atmosphere with a healthy visitor infrastructure, and some pleasant open space. However, there is a disproportionately high crime rate.
- 3.12 Banff is the weakest town in regards to vacant properties - as with last time, Bridge Street has a large number of vacancies. There is also a large amount of vacant floor space in the town which has an effect on how prosperous it can be. Fairly poor retailer demand in Banff is one of the town's most obvious problems.
- 3.13 In many of the other categories, Banff is seen to be performing at an 'acceptable' level. Scores are stable and there are no major changes from the previous two health checks. The retail areas that Banff needs to improve on are food shopping facilities and, as mentioned, retailer demand. However it had few lower quality discount shops, and most shop fronts were well looked after with several attractive hanging baskets and other clear evidence of beautification. There is an adequate level of public transport and travel by foot and car is comfortable with signage and crossings, and convenient car parks. Banff has a slightly below average range of shops and uses due to its small size and population however there are a very respectable number of professional services, as befits its previous role as the county tow.

Banff health check scores

- 3.14 The 2013 average (mean) score for Banff town centre is 2.8/5. This is similar in value to the average score obtained for the 2011 health check. Although Banff's town centre is stable, it compares poorly with others, attaining the second lowest average mark in the health check.

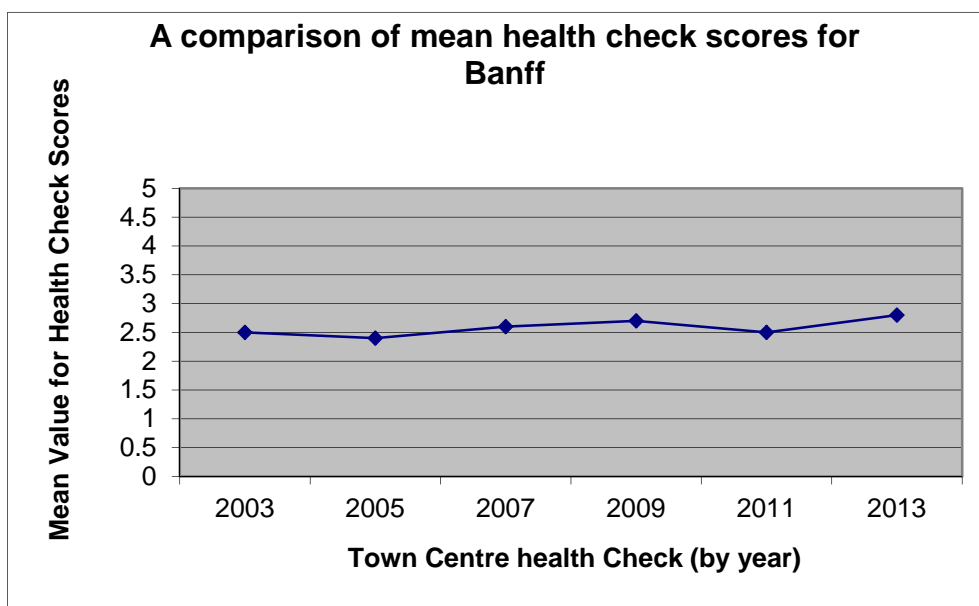


Figure 2: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Banff town centre

2013 Town Centre Health Check Key Facts – Banff

- Scores highly on town centre environment with impressive quality of building.
- Appearance of properties and visitor infrastructure in good health.
- Majority of properties keep up good appearance (with exceptions).
- Strong level of professional services considering the smaller population.
- Problem with the number of vacant properties which are having a negative effect.
- Sloping nature of the town not ideal for movement of the less mobile.

Future Targets

- Increase retailer demand and attempt to fill vacant properties.
- In doing this, increase diversity of retail in the town – provide new facilities for residents.
- These changes may help to reverse negative trend of worsening

Ellon

Ellon health check analysis

- 3.15 Ellon town centre is ranked 5th in the 2013 Health Check. Ellon's scores proved to be similar to its previous health check score. As with last time a low score was recorded for the diversity and range of retail facilities. Despite Ellon being a mid-to-large town based on its population of almost 10,000, the numbers of shops recorded in its centre were less than similarly sized towns. There are very few clothes, furniture, hardware or sports shops in Ellon compared to other towns - this led to a low score for 'diversity of uses'. However, there were no low quality discount stores recorded. There are also a strong number of professional services, and the town has slightly improved its 'Retailer representation' score from the previous health check.
- 3.16 Ellon was also recorded as average for its accessibility as there are bus services to Aberdeen as well as other towns with the A90 nearby to travel by car. Travelling by foot in the town centre is pleasant enough with good signage recorded. However, as with several towns there were a disappointing number of pedestrians.
- 3.17 Ellon did perform well for the quality of its environment and its vacancy rates - the appearance of its properties is welcoming, with shop fronts in good shape. There are also extremely few vacant properties in Ellon town centre generally, a good sign for possible demand for future growth and the atmosphere of the town. Finally, Ellon's crime rate is impressively low improving on its already low rate.

Ellon health check scores

- 3.18 The 2013 average (mean) score for Ellon town centre is 3.1/5. This is similar in value to the average scores obtained for the 2011 and 2009 health check studies – in fact, it is remarkable how the health of Ellon's town centre has been found to be at an extremely similar level over the full history of the health checks. This is despite there being fluctuations in many other towns' results. Ellon has the most 'average' town centre in Aberdeenshire being ranked 5th out of nine.

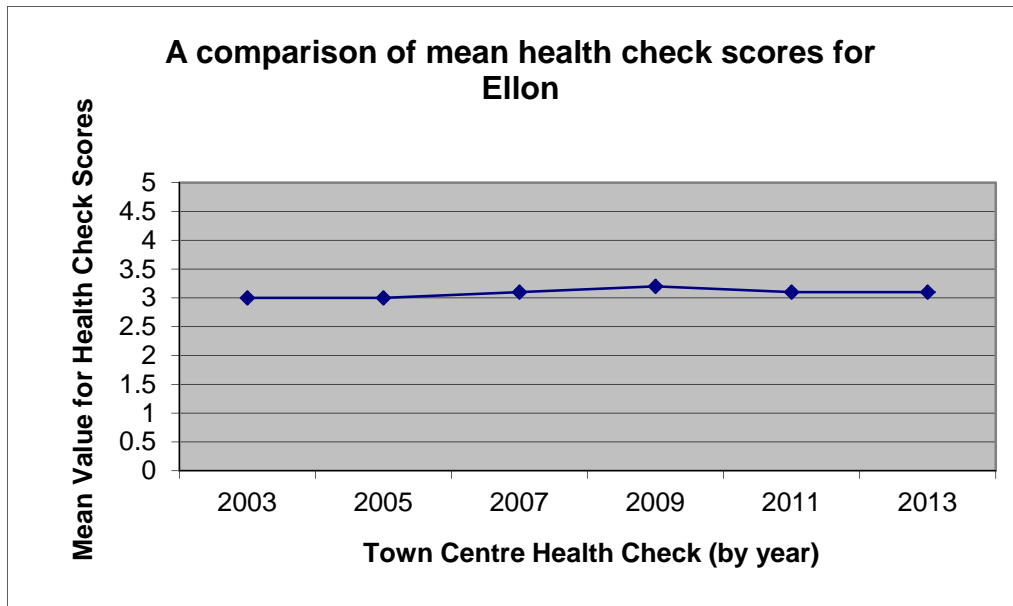


Figure 3: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Ellon town centre

2013 Town Centre Health Check Key Facts – Ellon

- Low level of specialist independent shops compared to other towns.
- A low diversity of retail is a lowlight of the town with several types of shop poorly represented.
- This is despite the healthy low vacancy rate.
- Pleasing quality of environment through the quality of buildings and open space.
- No provision noted for cyclists in the town centre.

Future Targets

- Improve the diversity of retail uses in the town centre.
- More facilities such as pubs and clothes shops could address falling pedestrian rates.

Fraserburgh

Fraserburgh health check analysis

- 3.19 Fraserburgh town centre is ranked last in the 2013 health check. The score is slightly increased on last time but still compares poorly to the other towns. The quality of its town centre environment is low in several aspects. Although there are of course pleasant spots to visit, a number of shops were thought to be 'run-down' looking with a mixed range of buildings of differing quality. There was a lack of a welcoming feel and the open space wasn't considered to be well kept or stimulating to be in. Most disappointingly, the crime rate recorded in Fraserburgh town centre was considerably greater than the rate in similar sized towns in absolute terms than , for example, Peterhead despite being the smaller town.
- 3.20 Fraserburgh also scored poorly on its retailer representation as there appears to be a lack of recent investment by retailers considering the tired shop fronts. However, Fraserburgh does manage to provide reasonable levels of food shopping and has an extremely healthy number of specialist independent retailers. There has also been a marked increase in the number of cafes and restaurants compared to other towns, which contributed to the slightly above average score for diversity of uses. A significantly higher number of retail outlets were found in Fraserburgh than in similar sized towns such as Stonehaven and Inverurie.
- 3.21 Although there are still several vacant properties in Fraserburgh, there are fewer than were found in the previous two health checks. However, these are still thought to have a negative effect on the town's wellbeing with a noticeable number of boarded up shops and on Cross Street there are a cluster of vacant properties. Fraserburgh's accessibility is average, with its wide pavements being suitable for moving on foot however they were not in great condition.

Fraserburgh health check scores

- 3.22 The 2013 average (mean) score for Fraserburgh town centre is 2.7/5. It must be said that this is an improvement on previous scores. However, Fraserburgh still contrived to attain the lowest score in the study.

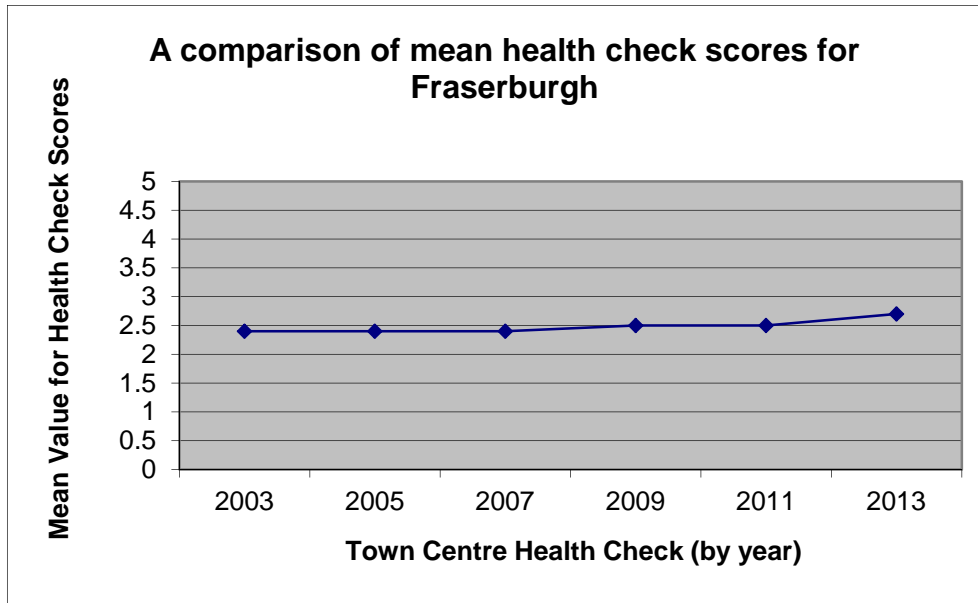


Figure 4: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Fraserburgh town centre

2013 Town Centre Health Check Key Facts – Fraserburgh

- Mixture of quality of buildings brought down by their poor appearance and ‘run-down’ state.
- Town centre environment overall lacking vitality.
- Above average diversity of shops and specialist outlets leading to good retail experience.
- Could be improved further by investment in shops to look modern and attractive.
- Pedestrian movement good with wide pavement and one way streets. However, some are in poor condition.
- Few automatic doors in shops or crossing places.
- Some vacant properties boarded up with some areas holding numerous vacancies.
- Good presence of cafes and restaurants.

Future Targets

- Address poor vacancy rate.
- Address high levels of crime.
- Address poor state of buildings and properties.
- Improve state of pavements.
- Improve overall cleanliness of the town.

Huntly

Huntly health check analysis

- 3.23 Huntly town centre is ranked 6th equal in the 2013 health check. Its most positive feature was the quality of the town centre environment as it gained an above average score. Huntly town centre is aesthetically pleasing, and its historic buildings were appreciated by the review team. The town is very clean and the small amount of open space in the central square was pleasant with ample benches provided (which is not always found when looking at the other towns). Huntly is generally quite accessible with its train station being close to the town centre and providing direct services to Inverness and Aberdeen. Some streets near the square are very narrow for travelling on foot. However, Huntly was the only town to record a significant increase in pedestrians which is a very positive statistic.
- 3.24 Following on from last year, Huntly ranked very poorly for vacant properties, for the size of the town centre there are far too high a number given its small size. The vacant properties had an effect on the town centre with Duke Street in particular affected.
- 3.25 Huntly also struggled with the diversity and range of its shops. Its small size led to a low number of total shops being recorded in the town centre and a high number of shop types not represented. Huntly's lack of restaurants, sport shops, clothing shops and professional services compared to other towns led to a poor mark for diversity of retail in the town centre.

Huntly health check scores

- 3.26 The 2013 average (mean) score for Huntly town centre is 3.0/5. Although the score isn't particularly strong, there has been an overall improvement over the long term. Furthermore, there theoretically is potential for further improvement in the future if the town can improve its vacancy rates especially given its good accessibility and agreeable environment.

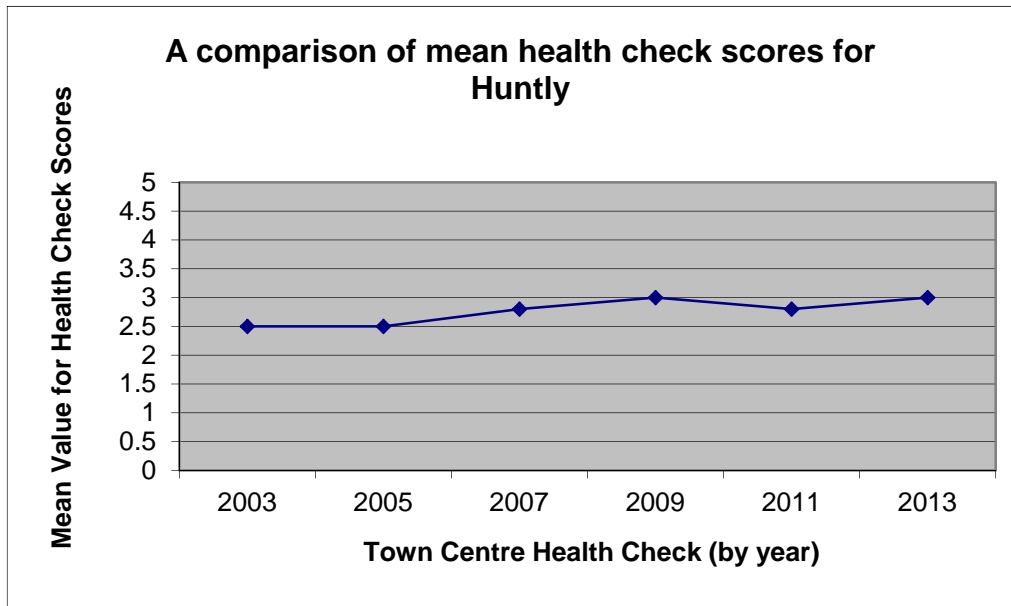


Figure 5: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Huntly town centre

2013 Town Centre Health check Key Facts – Huntly

- Huntly recorded a low number of shops (appropriate to its relatively small size).
- There is a poor range of shops in the town centre.
- High vacancy rates have a negative effect on the town centre.
- Overall environment is well above average.
- High quality of buildings.
- Well-kept and 'aesthetically pleasing'.
- Pedestrian count encouraging.

Future Targets

- Market pleasant condition of town to attract companies in order to decrease vacancy rate.
- Attempt to attract a varied level of business in the town centre.
- Keep up high standards of environment.

Inverurie

Inverurie health check analysis

- 3.27 Inverurie town centre is ranked first equal in the 2013 health check. The town scored at least average in every category, with some above average or well above average. Inverurie maintained its impressive overall scoring from previous years. Inverurie scored higher than any other town on accessibility. This is primarily because of its train station being located just 2 minutes from the town centre which has regular direct services to Inverness, Aberdeen and even Edinburgh. There are also very frequent bus services to Aberdeen. However, accessibility on foot isn't quite of the same standard with traffic being quite busy.
- 3.28 Inverurie also impressed in its scores under retailer representation and diversity of retail. A high percentage of its properties are owned by multiple retailers making visitors and residents highly likely to shop frequently in the centre. Another indicator that was especially impressive was Inverurie's retailer demand which is widely thought to be stronger than the other town centres. The total number of shops was strong for its population, this along with a good level of specialist retailers led to achieving a high score for 'diversity of retail'.
- 3.29 The town also scored well on the quality of its environment with well-located open space, well-kept shop fronts and an extremely positive vacancy rate contributing to Inverurie's overall high score. One of the few low points for the town was that it recorded the 3rd highest levels of crime in the study far behind Fraserburgh and Peterhead, but well ahead of all the other towns. However, there have been signs of improvement regarding this.

Inverurie health check scores

- 3.30 The 2013 average (mean) score for Inverurie town centre is 3.5/5. This is less in value than the average score obtained for the 2011 health check study and although Inverurie's 2013 average score has decreased slightly from the previous years the town still ranks highly when compared to other towns in Aberdeenshire.

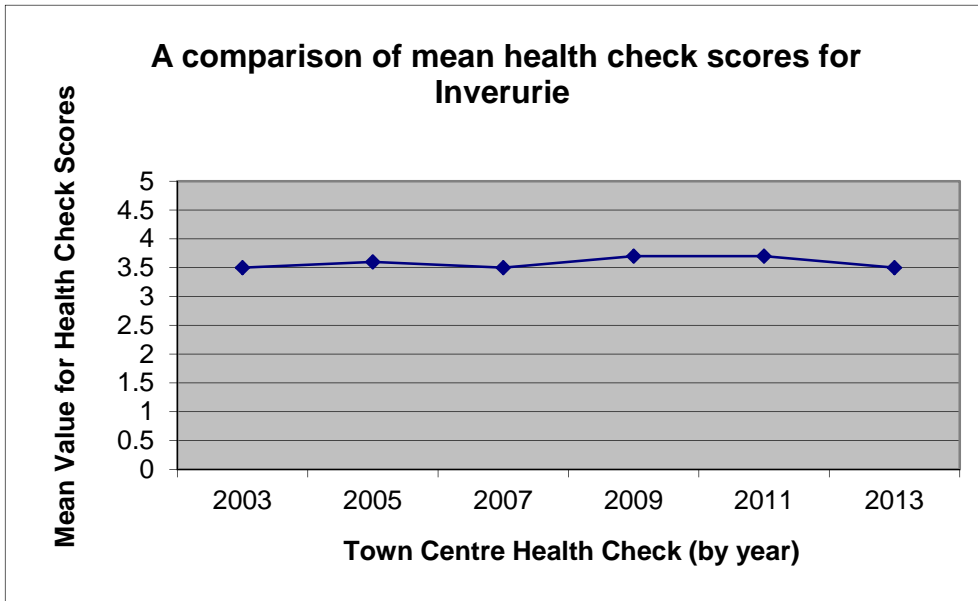


Figure 6: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Inverurie town centre

2013 Town Centre Health Check Key Facts – Inverurie

- Town centre is competent in all areas the health check covers.
- Accessibility strong due good quality bus/rail services.
- Suggestion of too few pedestrian crossings.
- Very attractive to multiple retailers along with a solid range of independent specialists.
- Retailer demand stronger than other town centres.
- Very low vacancy rate.
- Pleasant environment with well-kept shop fronts.

Future Targets

- Reduce traffic impact and perhaps add more pedestrian crossings.
- Continue to address high crime rate.
- Increase provision for cyclists in the town centre.

Peterhead

Peterhead health check analysis

- 3.31 Peterhead town centre is ranked 6th equal in the 2013 Health Check. Peterhead has by a considerable distance the largest population in this study and the locals are well provided for with their town scoring the highest in Aberdeenshire for diversity and range of shops. The town has over double the amount of outlets than the majority of the other towns, and it holds by far the most multiple retailers. Peterhead doesn't have a particularly diverse retail scene considering its size but it still has a higher score than the other towns for its resources of most shops especially restaurants and cafes, health and beauty services, professional services and clothing stores.
- 3.32 Peterhead also scores reasonably for accessibility, as the area has been pedestrianized it encourages people to move around on foot and it has regular bus services to Aberdeen. However, the pedestrian count showed a substantial decrease in numbers of people in Peterhead and with very little visitor infrastructure seen, this is an indicator which raises concern. Traffic was thought to be kept well under control. Despite recently showing a decrease in crime rates it is not enough to avoid a low score for this category. As the town with the largest population in the study, it is expected Peterhead will see a larger number of crimes committed, but not to the current extent.
- 3.33 There is a problem with the number of vacancies in the town centre. Peterhead didn't score well on the quality of its environment; the open space available was average although the quality of the buildings was fairly high. It was also noted that the newer buildings in the area were seen to be appropriate to their local context.

Peterhead health check scores

- 3.34 The 2013 average (mean) score for Peterhead town centre is 3.0/5 – the same score as in the 2011 health check. It seems clear that Peterhead being a base for the oil industry gives it a good platform on which to continue to grow and with improvements to its town centre environment and security it can record higher scores in the future.

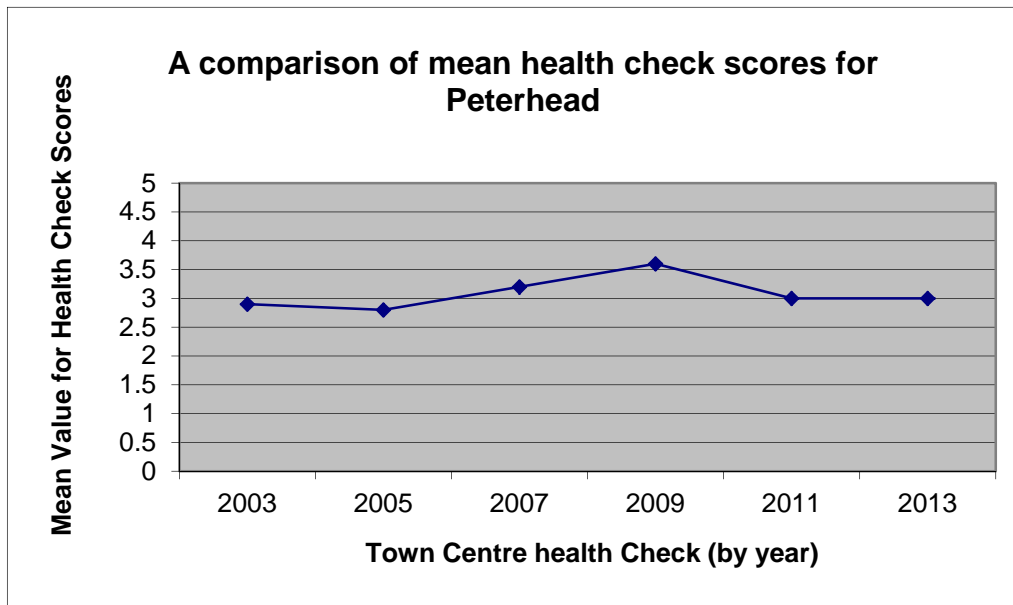


Figure 7: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Peterhead town centre

2013 Town Centre Health Check Key Facts – Peterhead

- Continually increasing population is the largest in the study by c.5000.
- Town centre has many more shops and a higher diversity of retail than other towns.
- A smaller percentage of specialist independent retailers than other towns.
- The area which has been pedestrianized marks Peterhead above average for ease of movement on foot.
- Vacancy rate is poor.
- Despite high quality of buildings town centre environment is fairly low.
- There is a lack of visitor infrastructure.

Future Targets

- Invest in improving appearance and liveliness of town centre to match the range of retail and refreshment outlets.
- Continue to address high crime rates.
- Try to attract independent retailers to the vacant outlets.

Stonehaven

Stonehaven health check analysis

- 3.35 Stonehaven town centre is ranked 3rd equal in the 2013 health check. Stonehaven scores well on many of the indicators relating to the quality of its environment. The shop fronts and signs are very well kept and it was noted how clean the town was overall. The quality of the buildings is admirable although there are signs of weeds or grass on some roofs. There was no open space in Stonehaven town centre so no score was given for this indicator. Stonehaven beachfront is well-used and so the town centre has a strong visitor infrastructure with ample toilets and signage.
- 3.36 Stonehaven is also performing strongly in terms of its retail. An above average score was given for the category 'Retailer representation', strong showings for its diversity of retail and its offering of cafes/restaurants contributing to this. There is also a reasonable level of retailer demand in Stonehaven, more so than in some of the other towns. Stonehaven's vacancy rate is again very positive, with very few unused properties in the town – and those that are vacant are in good repair.
- 3.37 Stonehaven received a mixed score regarding its accessibility as it has excellent public transport links with regular trains to Aberdeen for commuters but also direct to Scotland's central belt, and even London. The train station is a 15 minute walk from the town centre. There is also a good bus service to Aberdeen and also to the south following the east coast. However the ease of movement on foot is lower than average with a lack of crossings in the town.

Stonehaven health check scores

- 3.38 The 2013 average (mean) score for Stonehaven town centre is 3.4/5. Stonehaven's scores decreased slightly from 2011 however it is still a comfortably above average town in Aberdeenshire and has improved overall from 2003.

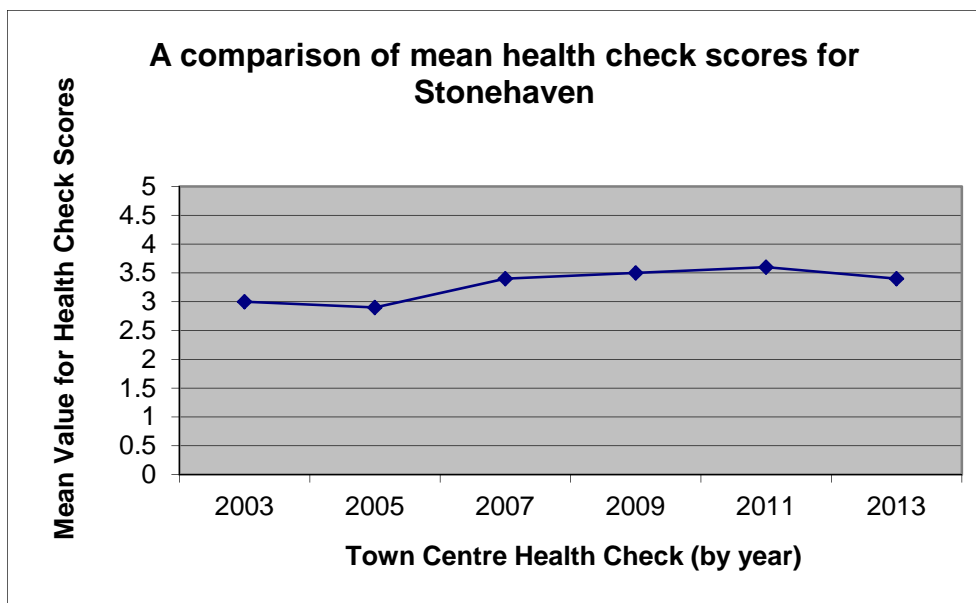


Figure 8: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Stonehaven town centre

2013 Town Centre Health Check Key Facts – Stonehaven

- Quality of town centre environment positive with visitor infrastructure in place and a pleasant feel.
- Types of buildings attractive.
- Frontage of most shops nice although some buildings had weed problems on their roofs.
- Good food shopping, no low quality discount stores seen.
- There are also a great number of café and restaurants.
- Accessibility is mixed with the train station not far from the town centre providing direct services.
- However pedestrian movement was criticised with a need for a crossing opposite Beachgate lane noted alongside the high volume of traffic.
- Healthy vacancy rate in the town with the few vacant outlets in good condition.

Future targets

- Provide a crossing near Beachgate Lane and install further traffic calming measures.
- Increase number of pubs.
- Provide some provision for cyclists.

Turriff

Turriff health check analysis

- 3.39 Turriff town centre is ranked 3rd equal in the 2013 health check. For its small size, Turriff scored well in terms of its retail, improving on the previous health check. Although it struggles to compete when attracting multiple retailers, there is a strong number of independent retailers and of outlets in general. There are a much higher number of shops to buy food at than other towns of a similar size and no low quality discount stores were seen.
- 3.40 This led to Turriff also recording a good score for diversity and range of shops. It was quickly noticed that there are a wide variety of shops and especially professional services in Turriff it is a match for any town in Aberdeenshire when considering the percentage of outlets that offer services. Turriff also has a good presence of community facilities and pubs. These positive attributes are accentuated by Turriff maintaining its high score for vacancy rates, with vacancies having little negative effect on the town.
- 3.41 Despite the healthy retail scene, it was recorded that the level of pedestrians in Turriff is very much on the decline, with the count showing lower numbers than in previous years. Turriff is one of the few towns in the health check not to be in easy commuting distance of Aberdeen or on the coast so it is at a disadvantage in attracting comparable numbers. Several ramps, automatic doors, and dropped kerbs were noted which contributed to top scoring for the indicator 'Ease of movement for the less mobile' and there are bus services to Aberdeen although Turriff scored average overall for accessibility. Turriff also scored an average score for its environment, with the quality of buildings being positively reflected, although its presence of open space less so.

Turriff health check scores

- 3.42 The 2013 average (mean) score for Turriff town centre is 3.4/5. This score is similar to the previous health check and maintains Turriff's overall improvement in its score since 2003. This score for Turriff's town centre meant that the town attained the rank of 3rd equal in Aberdeenshire.

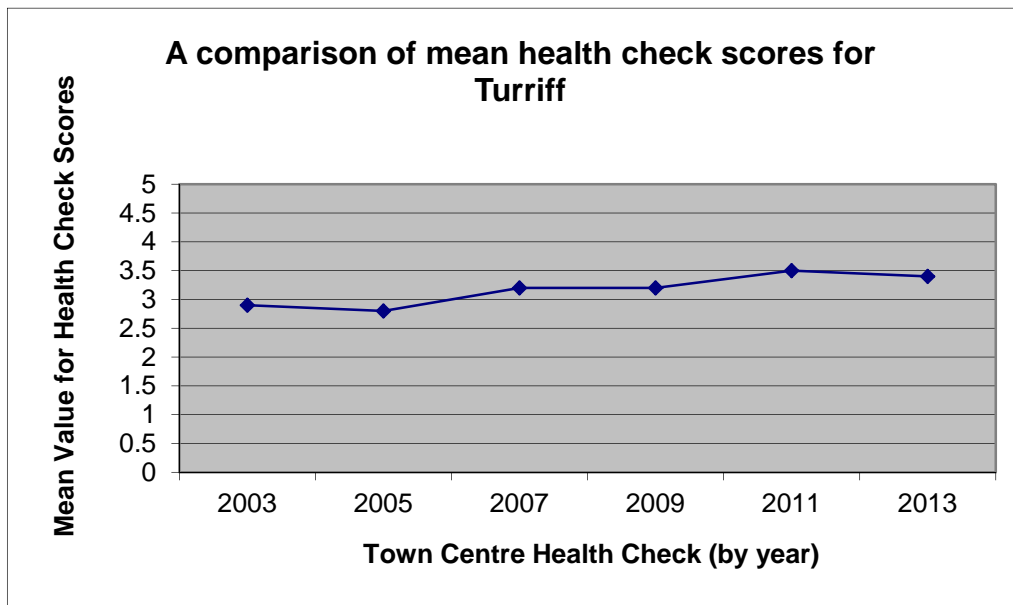


Figure 9: 2003-2013 Mean health check scores for Turriff town centre

2013 Town Centre Health Check Key Facts – Turriff

- Wide range of retail and facilities for the locals with good presence of food shopping outlets.
- Despite being one of the smaller towns in the study Turriff has as many specialist retailers as larger towns.
- Has the second highest number of outlets offering financial and professional services.
- Very few vacant properties.
- Good quality of environment.
- Good quality sandstone buildings with some granite noted as pleasant.
- Well-kept properties and streets although open space could be improved.
- Accessibility was reasonable with provisions for the less mobile and a lack of traffic.

Future targets

- Consider installing further public transport provisions.
- Improve quality of open space.
- Try to identify reasons for low pedestrian count.

Appendix 1

Results of the Town Centre Health Checks 2013

Categories	Indicators	Stonehaven	Peterhead	Inverurie	Ellon	Banff	Fraserburgh	Turriff	Huntly	Banchory
Retailer representation	Number of multiple retailers	3	3.5	4	3	3	3.5	2.5	3	2.5
	Variety of specialist independent shops	3	2.5	3	2.5	3	4	4	3	3.5
	Existence and quality of a farmers market	4	2	4	3	4	1	2	4	4
	Availability of food shopping	4	3	2	3	2	3	4.5	3	3
	Evidence of recent investment by retailers	3.5	2	4	4	3	1.5	3.5	3	4
	Retailer demand	3	2	5	2.5	2	2	2	2	4
	Presence and number of charity shops	2.5	3.5	3	2.5	3	3	3	3.5	3
	Presence and number of low quality discount shops	5	3	3.5	5	4	4	5	4	5
		28	21.5	28.5	25.5	24	22	26.5	25.5	29
Accessibility	Ease of pedestrian movement	2.5	4	3.5	3	3	4	3	3	3
	Provision of facilities for cyclists	1	1.5	1.5	1	2	2	1.5	1.5	2
	Traffic Impact	3	4	2.5	3	3	3	3.5	3	3
	Car Parking	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
	Number of Public Transport Routes	5	3	5	3.5	3	3	3	4	3
	Quality of Public transport	4	3	4.5	3	3	2.5	2.5	3	2
	Ease of movement for the less mobile	2	4	3	3	2.5	1	4	2	3
		19.5	23.5	24	19.5	20.5	19.5	21.5	20.5	20
Diversity of uses, number & range of shops	Diversity of uses	3.5	4	4	2	2.5	3.5	3.5	2.5	3
	Presence of financial and professional services	3	3.5	3	4	4	3	4.5	3.5	2.5
	Presence of cafes & restaurants	4	4	2	3	3	4	3	2	3
	Presence of pubs and clubs	2	4	4	2	3	2	4	2	4
	Presence of cultural & community facilities	3	4	4	2	2	3	4	3	4
		15.5	19.5	17	13	14.5	15.5	19	13	16.5
Quality of town centre environment	Appearance of properties	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	4
	Overall cleanliness	4.5	3	3	4	3	3	3.5	4	4.5
	Quality of building	3	4	3	3.5	4	3	4	4	4
	Presence and quality of open space	N/A	3	4	3	3	2	3	3.5	4.5
	Availability of visitor infrastructure	4	2	3	3	4	3	3	4	3.5
		15.5	15	17	17.5	18	13	17.5	19.5	20.5
Vacant properties	Vacancy Rate	4	2.5	4.5	4	1.5	2	4	1	4
	Vacant Floorspace	4	2	4	3.5	1	3.5	4.5	1.5	4.5
	Effect of vacant premises on the town centre	3.5	3	4	4	2	2	4	3	4
		11.5	7.5	12.5	11.5	4.5	7.5	12.5	5.5	12.5
Safety and security	Feeling of security	4	3.5	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
	Recorded crime	3.5	1.5	2	4.5	2	1	4	3.5	5
		7.5	5	6	8.5	6	4	8	7.5	9
Pedestrian flows	Volume of pedestrian flows	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	4	2
Commercial performance	Rental values	4	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	3
		7	5	7	5	3	5	4	5	5
TOTAL		104.5	97	112	100.5	90.5	86.5	109	96.5	112.5
AVERAGE		3.4	3.0	3.5	3.1	2.8	2.7	3.4	3.0	3.5

* All averages calculated by dividing total scores by number of indicators available.

Results of the Town Centre Health Checks 2011

Indicator	Factor	Stonehaven	Peterhead	Inverurie	Ellon	Banff	Fraserburgh	Turriff	Huntly	Banchory
Retailer representation	Number of multiple retailers	4	4	4	2	2	3	1	2	1
	Variety of specialist independent shops	3	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	4
	Existence and quality of a farmers market	4	2	4	3	4	1	2	4	4
	Availability of food shopping	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
	Evidence of recent investment by retailers	3	3	4	3	3	2	4	2	4
	Retailer demand	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Presence and number of charity shops	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3
	Presence and number of low quality discount shops	3	4	3	5	5	3	4	5	5
		23	20	24	22	21	17	20	23	23
Accessibility	Ease of pedestrian movement	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	2	4
	Provision of facilities for cyclists	2	1	3	1	2	1	3	2	2
	Traffic Impact	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
	Car parking	1	5	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
	Number of public transport routes	5	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	3
	Quality of public transport	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Ease of movement for the less mobile	4	3	4	3	3	2	4	3	4
		22	25	25	21	19	19	23	18	22
Diversity of uses, number & range of shops	Diversity of uses	3.5	3	3.5	2.5	4	3	3.5	3	2.5
	Presence of financial and professional services	4	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	4
	Presence of cafes & restaurants	4	4	4	2	2	2	3	2	4
	Presence of pubs and clubs	2	5	4	2	3	2	4	2	4
	Presence of cultural & community facilities	3	3	4	2	2	3	4	2	3
		16.5	19	19.5	13.5	15	13	19.5	13	18.5
Quality of town centre environment	Appearance of properties	4	3	4	4	3	2	4	3	5
	Overall cleanliness	4	3	4	5	4	3	4	4	5
	Quality of building	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	5
	Presence and quality of open space	4	2	4	3	2	3	3	2	3
	Availability of visitor infrastructure	4	2	3	2	4	3	3	4	5
		17	13	19	18	17	13	18	17	23
Vacant properties	Vacancy Rate	5	3	4	4	1	1	4	3	5
	Vacant Floorspace	5	2	2	2	1	3	5	1	3
	Effect of vacant premises on the town centre	4	2	4	3	2	1	4	3	4
		14	7	10	9	4	5	14	5	11
Safety and security	Feeling of security	5	2	4	4	5	3	5	4	5
	Recorded crime	4	1	3	4	3	2	4	3	4
		5	2	4	4	4	3	5	4	5
Pedestrian flows	Volume of pedestrian flows	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	4	3
	Rental values	3	2	4	3	1	2	3	1	4
Commercial performance		6	4	7	6	3	4	6	5	7
TOTAL		103.5	90	108.5	93.5	24	74	105.5	85	109.5
AVERAGE		3.6	3.0	3.7	3.1	2.9	2.5	3.7	2.8	3.7

* All averages calculated by dividing total scores by number of indicators available.

Results of the Town Centre Health Checks 2009

Indicator	Factor	Stonehaven	Peterhead	Inverurie	Ellon	Banff	Fraserburgh	Turriff	Huntly	Banchory
Retailer representation	Number of multiple retailers	4	4	5	3	2	3	1	3	3
	Variety of specialist independent shops	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	5
	Existence and quality of a farmers market	4	2	4	3	4	1	2	4	4
	Availability of food shopping	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
	Evidence of recent investment by retailers	4	4	4	4	3	2	4	3	N/A
	Retailer demand	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Presence and number of charity shops	3	2	3	3	4	3	2	3	4
	Presence and number of low quality discount shops	4	4	5	5	3	2	5	4	5
		26	21	27	24	20	16	21	24	23
Accessibility	Ease of pedestrian movement	3	5	3	2	3	4	2	3	N/A
	Provision of facilities for cyclists	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	N/A
	Traffic Impact	2	5	2	1	2	4	2	1	N/A
	Car parking	1	5	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
	Number of public transport routes	5	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	3
	Quality of public transport	4	5	5	2	2	3	3	3	N/A
	Ease of movement for the less mobile	3	4	2	2	1	2	3	2	N/A
			20	30	21	16	14	20	17	15
Diversity of uses, number & range of shops	Diversity of uses	4	3.5	3.5	2.5	4	3.5	3.5	3.5	2.5
	Presence of financial and professional services	4	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	4
	Presence of cafes & restaurants	3	4	2	2	2	2	3	2	4
	Presence of pubs and clubs	2	5	4	2	3	2	4	2	5
	Presence of cultural & community facilities	3	4	4	2	2	3	4	2	3
		16	20.5	17.5	13.5	15	13.5	19.5	13.5	18.5
Quality of town centre environment	Appearance of properties	4	3	5	4	3	2	4	5	N/A
	Overall cleanliness	4	3	4	5	4	4	5	4	N/A
	Quality of building	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	5	N/A
	Presence and quality of open space	4	4	3	2	N/A	2	2	3	N/A
	Availability of visitor infrastructure	5	4	4	3	4	2	3	5	N/A
		21	18	20	17	15	13	17	22	0
Vacant properties	Vacancy Rate	4	2	5	5	2	1	4	2	4
	Vacant Floorspace	3	1	4	5	2	2	3	2	4
	Effect of vacant premises on the town centre	4	3	5	5	2	2	4	N/A	N/A
		11	6	14	15	6	5	11	4	8
Safety and security	Feeling of security	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	N/A
	Recorded crime	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		5	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	0
Pedestrian flows	Volume of pedestrian flows	3	4	2	3	4	3	4	N/A	N/A
Commercial performance	Rental values	4	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	3
		7	7	6	6	5	5	6	1	3
TOTAL		106	107	110	95.5	79	75.5	95.5	83.5	58.5
AVERAGE		3.5	3.6	3.7	3.2	2.7	2.5	3.2	3.0	3.7

* All averages calculated by dividing total scores by number of indicators available.

Results of the Town Centre Health Checks 2007

	Indicator	Stonehaven	Peterhead	Inverurie	Ellon	Banff	Fraserburgh	Turriff	Huntly	Banchory
Name of set of Indicators										
Retailer representation	Number of multiple retailers	4	4	4	3	2	3	1	2	3
	Variety of specialist independent shops	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	5
	Existence and quality of a farmers market	4	2	4	3	4	1	2	4	4
	Availability of food shopping	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	3	2
	Evidence of recent investment by retailers	4	3	4	3	3	1	3	2	5
	Retailer demand	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Presence and number of charity shops	3	2	3	4	3	3	2	3	4
	Presence and number of low quality discount shops	4	3	5	4	2	2	5	4	5
		26	19	26	23	18	15	20	22	28
Accessibility	Ease of pedestrian movement	3	5	3	3	2	2	3	3	4
	Provision of facilities for cyclists	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2
	Traffic Impact	2	5	2	1	3	4	4	2	4
	Car parking	1	3	3	4	3	3	5	3	3
	Number of public transport routes	5	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	2
	Quality of public transport	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
	Ease of movement for the less mobile	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	4
		18	25	21	20	17	19	21	18	23
Diversity of uses, number & range of shops	Diversity of uses	4	3.5	3	2	3.5	4	4	3.5	2.5
	Presence of financial and professional services	4	3	4	5	4	3	5	4	4
	Presence of cafes & restaurants	3	4	2	2	3	2	3	2	4
	Presence of pubs and clubs	2	4	4	2	3	2	2	2	5
	Presence of cultural & community facilities	3	2	4	2	2	3	2	2	3
		16	16.5	17	13	15.5	14	16	13.5	18.5
Quality of town centre environment	Appearance of properties	4	3	4	3	4	2	4	4	5
	Overall cleanliness	4	4	5	4	4	2	4	5	5
	Quality of building	3	3	4	3	4	2	5	4	4
	Presence and quality of open space	3	4	3	4	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	4
	Availability of visitor infrastructure	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	2	4
		18	18	19	18	17	9	17	15	22
Vacant properties	Vacancy rate	4	2	5	4	1	3	4	1	5
	Vacant floorspace	4	3	3	3	1	4	4	2	5
	Effect of vacant premises on the town centre	4	3	4	2	2	2	3	3	5
		12	8	12	9	4	9	11	6	15
Safety and security	Feeling of security	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	5	5
	Recorded crime	4	2	3	4	2	1	5	2	5
		8	6	8	8	6	4	10	7	10
Pedestrian flows	Volume of pedestrian flows	4	3	2	1	3	2	3	5	4
Commercial performance	Rental values	4	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	3
		8	6	6	4	4	4	5	6	7
TOTAL		106	98.5	109	95	81.5	74	100	87.5	123.5
AVERAGE		3.4	3.2	3.5	3.1	2.6	2.4	3.2	2.8	4.0

Results of the Town Centre Health Checks 2005

Name of set of indicators	Indicator	Stonehaven	Peterhead	Inverurie	Ellon	Banff	Fraserburgh	Turriff	Huntly	Banchory
Retailer representation	Number of multiple retailers	3	5	5	5	2	5	2	2	3
	Variety of specialist independent shops	3	3	4	1	3	3	2	3	4
	Existence and quality of a farmers market	3	3	4	3	4	2	1	1	3
	Availability of food shopping	3	2	3	1	2	3	3	3	2
	Evidence of recent investment by retailers	3	3	4	3	2	2	3	2	3
	Retailer demand	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	1
	Presence and number of charity shops	4	1	4	3	4	2	3	3	4
	Presence and number of low quality discount shops	3	3	4	4	3	1	4	4	5
		25	23	30	23	23	20	20	21	25
Accessibility	Ease of pedestrian movement	2	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	4
	Provision of facilities for cyclists	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
	Traffic Impact	3	4	2	1	2	3	1	2	2
	Car parking	2	3	5	4	3	2	4	2	1
	Number of public transport routes	4	4	5	4	2	5	2	3	3
	Quality of public transport	3	4	4	2	2	4	3	3	2
	Ease of movement for the less mobile	2	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	2
		17	23	23	16	13	21	16	18	15
Diversity of uses, number & range of shops	Diversity of uses	4	5	5	3	3	5	3	1	1
	Presence of financial and professional services	2	2	3	3	3	1	3	2	2
	Presence of cafes & restaurants	4	3	3	5	3	3	3	2	4
	Presence of pubs and clubs	2	4	4	2	3	2	2	2	3
	Presence of cultural & community facilities	3	2	4	2	2	1	3	2	2
		15	16	19	15	14	12	14	9	12
Quality of town centre environment	Appearance of properties	3	3	5	3	3	1	3	3	5
	Overall cleanliness	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	5
	Quality of building	2	2	4	2	3	3	3	4	4
	Presence and quality of open space	1	2	2	3	2	2	4	3	3
	Availability of visitor infrastructure	1	2	2	3	4	3	3	2	3
		11	13	16	14	16	12	17	16	20
Vacant properties	Vacancy rate	3	1	4	4	1	3	3	2	5
	Vacant floorspace	4	1	2	5	1	2	3	2	1
	Effect of vacant premises on the town centre	3	3	4	4	3	2	4	4	5
		10	5	10	13	5	7	10	8	11
Safety and security	Feeling of security	4	2	4	4	4	1	4	5	5
	Recorded crime	4	2	4	4	1	1	5	2	5
		8	4	8	8	5	2	9	7	10
Pedestrian flows	Volume of pedestrian flows	3	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	5
	Rental values	3	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	5
		6	6	8	6	2	4	4	2	10
TOTAL		92	90	114	95	78	78	90	81	103
AVERAGE		2.9	2.8	3.6	3.0	2.4	2.4	2.8	2.5	3.2

Results of the Town Centre Health Checks 2003

	Factor	Stonehaven	Peterhead	Inverurie	Elton	Banff	Fraserburgh	Turriff	Huntly	Banchory
Indicator										
Retailer representation	Number of multiple retailers	3	4	4	3	2	4	2	1	3
	Variety of specialist independent shops	3	3	4	1	3	3	2	3	4
	Existence and quality of a farmers market	3	3	4	3	4	2	1	1	3
	Availability of food shopping	4	2	4	2	2	5	2	3	2
	Evidence of recent investment by retailers	3	4	4	2	2	1	3	2	4
	Retailer demand	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Presence and number of charity shops	2	1	3	3	4	2	3	4	5
	Presence and number of low quality discount shops	3	3	4	4	3	1	4	4	5
		21	20	27	18	20	18	17	18	26
Accessibility	Ease of pedestrian movement	3	5	3	3	1	2	3	2	3
	Provision of facilities for cyclists	3	2	2	1	3	1	1	1	2
	Traffic Impact	3	4	2	2	3	3	3	3	2
	Car parking	2	3	5	4	3	2	4	2	1
	Number of public transport routes	4	4	5	4	2	5	2	3	3
	Quality of public transport	3	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	4
	Ease of movement for the less mobile	2	3	3	1	1	2	3	2	2
			20	25	24	19	15	18	18	15
Diversity of uses, number & range of shops	Diversity of uses	5	5	4	2	3	5	2	2	2
	Presence of financial and professional services	2	2	3	5	3	1	3	1	2
	Presence of cafes & restaurants	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3
	Presence of pubs and clubs	2	4	4	2	3	2	2	2	3
	Presence of cultural & community facilities	3	2	4	2	2	1	3	2	3
		16	16	18	15	14	12	13	9	13
Quality of town centre environment	Appearance of properties	3	3	4	3	2	2	4	3	4
	Overall cleanliness	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	5
	Quality of building	3	3	3	4	4	2	4	4	3
	Presence and quality of open space	3	3	3	3	3	1	4	2	4
	Availability of visitor infrastructure	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	4	4
		15	15	16	16	15	11	18	17	20
Vacant properties	Vacancy rate	2	1	5	4	1	2	3	2	5
	Vacant floorspace	3	2	2	5	1	4	4	4	5
	Effect of vacant premises on the town centre	3	2	2	5	2	2	4	4	5
		8	5	9	14	4	8	11	10	15
Safety and security	Feeling of security	3	2	3	4	4	2	3	4	4
	Recorded crime	4	2	4	4	1	1	5	2	5
		7	4	7	8	5	3	8	6	9
Pedestrian flows	Volume of pedestrian flows	3	3	2	1	3	1	4	2	5
Commercial performance	Rental values	3	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	5
		6	6	6	4	4	3	6	3	10
TOTAL		93	91	107	94	77	73	91	78	110
AVERAGE		3.0	2.9	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.4	2.9	2.5	3.5