



Alston

Town Benchmarking Report

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Executive Summary

General

Retail Offer

- ❖ 31% of the commercial units in Alston town centre are A1 Shops which is 20% lower than the National Small Towns average. 19% of the units are Non-Residential Institutions which is 12% higher than the National Small Towns average.
- ❖ 73% of the A1 Shops mainly sell Comparison Goods, lower than the National Small Towns average. (81%)
- ❖ As per the National Small Towns average the main purpose for Town Centre Users to visit Alston was Convenience Shopping (44%).
- ❖ 80% of the A1 Shops in the town centre are unique to Alston which is 15% higher than the National Small Towns average.

Footfall

- ❖ On the Busy Day, the average footfall count was 20 persons per ten minutes, lower than the 2017 figure of 35 and similar to the 2013 (14) and 2012 (17) evaluations.

Car Parking

- ❖ Overall vacancy rates in Alston are higher than the National Small Towns average, 47% on a Busy Day in the town compared to 31% Nationally and 62% on a Quiet Day in the town compared to 37% Nationally. It must be noted, further analysis highlights that by taking out the Fair Hill and the Railway Car Parks, 17% of spaces were free on the Busy Day and 31% on the Quiet Day.

Customer Spend

- ❖ Once again similar to the National Small Towns average (61%), 62% of Town Centre Users spend over £10.00 on a normal visit to Alston. The 2018 figure is 13% lower than the 2017 Alston Benchmarking average.

Length of Stay

- ❖ 71% of Town Centre Users stayed in Alston for less than 2 hours.

Positive

Visit Recommendation

- ❖ 89% of Town Centre Users would recommend a visit to Alston, higher than the National Small Towns average of 64%.

Physical Appearance

- ❖ 53% of Town Centre Users stated Physical appearance as a positive aspect of Alston, 10% higher than the National Small Towns average. Augmenting the Physical appearance figure, Cleanliness (47%) was also classed a positive

Food and Drink Offering

- ❖ Cafes/ Restaurants (46%) and Pubs/ Bars/ Nightclubs (43%) were also classed as positive aspects of Alston Town Centre and were all rated highly in the 2017 evaluation.

Customer Service

- ❖ 49% of Town Centre Users rated Customer Service as a positive aspect of Alston.

Regular Visitors

- ❖ Mirroring the National Small Towns average (78%), 77% of Town Centre Users visited Alston at least once a week.

Room for Improvement

Vacancy Rates

- ❖ 17% of the commercial units recorded in Alston town centre were vacant in November 2018, which is higher than the National Small Towns average of 10% and a return to the 2013 figure.

Quiet Day Footfall

- ❖ Footfall in Alston on the Quiet Day (8 persons per ten minutes) was considerably lower than the National Small Towns average (83).

Transport and Parking

- ❖ As in 2017, Transport Links (71%) and Car Parking (58%) were classed as negative aspects of Alston by Town Centre Users and noticeably higher than the National Small Towns average. 'More/Better Parking' was a key suggestion to emerge from Town Centre Users comments.

Access to Services and Leisure Facilities

- ❖ Town Centre Users rated Leisure Facilities (48%) and Access to Services (41%) as negative aspects of Alston.

Reinstate Cobbles

- ❖ A key theme to emerge from the Town Centre Users comments was the need to 'Reinstate the Cobbles'.

The Approach

The People and Places Insight Limited Town Benchmarking System has been developed to address the real issues of how to understand measure, evaluate and ultimately improve town centres. The approach offers a simple way of capturing data on Key Performance Indicators selected by those involved in town centre management. By having the tools to measure performance, strategic decision making is both encouraged and improved. By considering performance, forward strategies and action planning can be more focused and effective.

The System

The Benchmarking system is divided into two sections:

- ❖ National Large Towns; consisting of those localities with more than 250 units
- ❖ National Small Towns; consisting of those localities with less than 250 units

Towns, depending on their size, contribute to either the Large or Small-Town analysis. The defined town centre area of **Alston** consists of **58** units and is thus classed as a **Small** Town.

The analysis provides data on each KPI for the Benchmarked town individually and in a National and Longitudinal. The National figure is the average for all the towns which participated in Benchmarking from July 2016-January 2018. Where appropriate as a continued user of the Benchmarking System longitudinal analysis again the 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2017 Alston figures are supplied.

The Reports

The People and Places Insight Limited Town Benchmarking report provides statistical analysis of each of the KPI's. The reports are used by a variety of key stakeholders such as Local Authorities, Town and Parish Councils, Business Improvement Districts, Local Partnerships, Retailers and Universities to;

- ❖ Measuring High Street regeneration projects
- ❖ Developing Town Centre regeneration projects
- ❖ Measuring the impact of events and festivals against normal trading conditions
- ❖ Providing an evidence base for funding applications
- ❖ Providing an evidence base for car parking initiatives
- ❖ Providing an evidence base for Neighbourhood Planning
- ❖ Supporting Business Improvement Districts
- ❖ Supporting community group

Case Studies of good practice in the use of Benchmarking data include;

Ourburystedmunds; Bury St Edmunds BID initially used Benchmarking to create a deliverable project plan for which the organisation could use for the first 12 months of inception. Subsequently the Key Performance Indicators have been measured each year to ascertain the impact of a wide range of projects and initiatives. Most noticeably the Town Centre User Surveys identified that a large number of visitors were unhappy over an increase in car parking fees throughout the locality. As a result the BID were able to present the information to their Local Authority and oversaw the introduction of a 'Free Parking After 3pm' policy. Data from the Business Confidence, Footfall and Town Centre Users Surveys was also used to improve signage for first time visitors throughout the town centre.

Love Newmarket; The Business Improvement District used the data to measure the Town Centre in normal trading conditions and then replicate footfall, customer spend, length of stay and origin at the Christmas Events to understand impact.

Bradford on Avon Town Council; The Town Council used the data from a general Benchmarking Study to commission People and Places to conduct an Advanced Car Parking Study. Anecdotal information and the Benchmarking highlighted an issue with a severe shortage of parking provision in the Town Centre at pinch points during the day. The initial data was supported by the evidence gathered in the in-depth study providing the Town Council with a detached report to address the issue.

Southam First; Stratford on Avon District Council (SDC) used Section 106 money to commission a Benchmarking review of Southam town centre. Key points from the analysis included improving the business economy, marketing the locality, the creation of a calendar of events and festivals and the development of a Farmers Market. SDC used the data as a detached, evidence-based tool to create a Town Centre Partnership consisting of a private and public mix to address the issues raised from the Benchmarking Report. A public event both highlighted the findings of the report and asked for nominations for Board and Working Group members. Within 2 months 'Southam First' was a fully functioning organisation delivering actions on a project plan which was based on the Benchmarking Review. The evidence led approach allowed for Southam First to apply successfully for funding from a wide range of bodies to ensure sustainability.

Methodology

Each KPI is collected in a standardized manner as highlighted in the Table below.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	METHODOLOGY
KPI: Commercial Units; Use Class	Visual Survey of ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: Commercial Units; Comparison/Convenience	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: Commercial Units; Trader Type	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: Commercial Units; Vacancy Rates	Visual Survey of A1 ground floor units in defined town centre area.
KPI: Footfall	Footfall Survey on Friday 30 th November 2018 and Wednesday 5 th December 2018.
KPI: Car Parking	Audit of total number of spaces and vacancy rate on Friday 30 th November 2018 and Wednesday 5 th December 2018.
KPI: Business Confidence Surveys	Conducted in 2017
KPI: Town Centre Users Surveys	Online/paper-based survey
KPI: Shoppers Origin Surveys	Conducted in 2017

Key Findings

KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; USE CLASS

It is important to understand the scale and variety of the “commercial offer” throughout the town. A variety of shops and a wide range of services in a town are important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. Sustaining a balance between the different aspects of buying and selling goods and services ensures that the local population (and visitors from outside) can spend time and money there, keeping the generated wealth of the town within the local economy. Importantly, it forms the employment base for a substantial proportion of the community too, helping to retain the population rather than lose it to nearby towns and cities.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of each of the Use Classes

Class	Type of Use	Class Includes
A1	Shops	Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes
A2	Financial and Professional Services	Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices
A3	Restaurants and Cafes	Food and drink for consumption on the premises- restaurants, snack bars and cafes
A4	Drinking Establishments	Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not nightclubs)
A5	Hot Food Takeaways	Sale of hot food for consumption off the premises
B1	Businesses	Offices (other than those that fall within A2) research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area
B2	General Industrial	General Industrial
B8	Storage and Distribution	Warehouses, includes open air storage

C1	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels)
C2	Residential Institutions	Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.
C2A	Secure Residential Institution	Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.
D1	Non Residential Institutions	Clinics, health centres, crèches, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres.
D2	Assembly and Leisure	Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not nightclubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).
SG	Sui Generis ("unique" establishments)	Theatres, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/ or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, laundrettes, taxi business, amusement centres, casinos, haulage yards, transport depots, veterinary clinics, dog parlours, tanning and beauty salons and tattoo studios.

The following table provides a detailed analysis of the commercial offering in the town centre by Use Class. The figures are presented as a percentage of the 47 occupied units recorded.

	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
A1	51	31	34	44	42	42
A2	13	8	9	8	8	8
A3	8	8	9	6	6	6
A4	4	4	4	4	6	8
A5	4	2	2	2	2	2
B1	3	6	4	4	4	0
B2	1	2	2	2	2	2
B8	0	0	0	0	0	0
C1	1	10	9	8	8	8
C2	0	2	2	2	2	2
C2A	0	0	0	0	0	0
D1	7	19	19	18	18	21
D2	1	2	2	0	0	0
SG	6	4	4	2	2	2
N/R	0	0	0	0	0	0

31% of the commercial units in Alston town centre are A1 Shops which is 20% lower than the National Small Towns average. 19% of the units are Non-Residential Institutions which is 12% higher than the National Small Towns average.

Due to the distinct nature of Alston, working with the Alston Moor Business Association, a number of town-based businesses which fall outside of the traditional town centre definition, applied by Benchmarking, have been added as an extra level of analysis. The following table refers to the 62 occupied units.

	Alston 2018 (town- based) %	Alston 2017 (town- based) %
A1	24	26
A2	6	7
A3	6	7
A4	2	3
A5	2	2
B1	13	11
B2	8	8
B8	3	2
C1	10	8
C2	2	2
C2A	0	0
D1	15	15
D2	2	2
SG	6	8
N/R	0	0

The table highlights the proportion of A1 commercial units drops 7% to 24% whilst the B1 figure increases 7%.

KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; COMPARISON VERSUS CONVENIENCE

A1 Retail units selling goods can be split into two different types Comparison and Convenience.

Convenience goods – low-cost, everyday items that consumers are unlikely to travel far to purchase. Defined as;

- ❖ food and non-alcoholic drinks
- ❖ tobacco
- ❖ alcohol
- ❖ newspapers and magazines
- ❖ non-durable household goods.

2. **Comparison goods** – all other retail goods.

- ❖ Books
- ❖ Clothing and Footwear
- ❖ Furniture, floor coverings and household textiles
- ❖ Audio-visual equipment and other durable goods
- ❖ Hardware and DIY supplies
- ❖ Chemists goods
- ❖ Jewellery, watches and clocks
- ❖ Bicycles
- ❖ Recreational and Miscellaneous goods
- ❖ Hairdressing

The presence of a variety of shops in a town centre is important to its ability to remain competitive and continue to attract customers. A balance of both comparison and convenience retail units is therefore ideal in terms of encouraging visitors / potential customers.

The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which sell mainly Comparison Goods/ Convenience Goods.

	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Comparison	81	73	63	67	67	64
Convenience	19	27	37	33	33	36

73% of the A1 Shops mainly sell Comparison Goods, lower than the National Small Towns average. (81%)

KPI: COMMERCIAL UNITS; TRADER TYPES

The vitality of a town centre depends highly on the quality and variety of retailers represented. National retail businesses are considered key attractors and are particularly important in terms of attracting visitors and shoppers to a town. However, the character and profile of a town often also depends on the variety and mix of independent shops that can give a town a “unique selling point” and help distinguish it from other competing centres. A sustainable balance of key attractors and multiple names alongside local independent shops is therefore likely to have the greatest positive impact on the vitality and viability of a town.

The following shops are considered Key attractors by Experian Goad.

Department Stores	Clothing
BHS	Burton
Debenhams	Dorothy Perkins
House of Fraser	H & M
John Lewis	New Look
Marks and Spencer	Primark
	River Island
Mixed Goods Retailers	Topman
Argos	Topshop
Boots	
TK Maxx	Other Retailers
WH Smith	Carphone Warehouse
Wilkinson	Clarks
	Clintons
Supermarkets	HMV
Sainsbury's	O2
Tesco	Superdrug
Waitrose	Phones 4 U
	Vodafone
	Waterstones

Multiple traders have a countrywide presence and are well known household names. Regional shops are identified as those with stores / units in several towns throughout one geographical region only and Independent shops are identified as those that are specific to a particular town.

The following table provides a percentage of the A1 Shops which are Key Attractors, Multiples, Regional and Independent to the locality.

	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Key Attractor	7	0	0	0	0	0
Multiple	18	13	13	10	10	9
Regional	10	7	6	14	14	14
Independent	65	80	81	76	76	77

80% of the A1 Shops in the town centre are unique to Alston which is 15% higher than the National Small Towns average.

KPI; COMMERCIAL UNITS VACANCY RATES

Vacant units are an important indicator of the vitality and viability of a town centre. The presence of vacant units over a period of time can identify potential weaknesses in a town centre, whether due to locational criteria, high rent levels or strong competition from other centres.

The following table provides the percentage figure of vacant units from the total number of commercial units.

National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
10	17	13	9	17	13

17% of the commercial units recorded in Alston town centre were vacant in November 2018, which is higher than the National Small Towns average of 10% and a return to the 2013 figure.

Using the town-based business definition 15% of the commercial ground floor units in Alston were vacant at the time of the audit, a 3% increase on the 2017 figure..

KPI; MARKETS

Good quality markets provide competition and choice for consumers. A busy and well-used street market can therefore be a good indicator of the vitality of a town centre. Conversely, if a market is in decline (e.g. empty pitches reducing numbers), it can be an indication of potential weaknesses in the town centre e.g. a lack of footfall customers due to an inappropriate retail mix or increased competitor activity. Street markets can also generate substantial benefits for the local economy. Markets can also provide a local mechanism for a diverse range of local enterprises to start, flourish and grow, adding to the sustainable mix of shops services on offer throughout the town.

The following table provides the average number of market traders at the main regular (at least once a fortnight) weekday market within the locality.

National Small Towns	Alston 2018	Alston 2017	Alston 2014	Alston 2013	Alston 2012
15	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

There is currently no weekly market trading from Alston.

KPI: FOOTFALL

The arrival and movement of people, whether as residents, workers, visitors or a shopper is vital to the success of the majority of businesses within the town centre. The more people that are attracted to the town, the better it trades and the more prosperous the businesses in it become, provided there is ample available disposable income in that population. Measuring passing people in a consistent manner in the same place, at the same time builds up a picture of the town, its traders and their relative success over the weeks and months.

Benchmarking footfall is conducted in specific locations for a set period, between 10.00am to 1.00pm, counting the people passing in both directions through a fixed point (e.g. an imaginary line across the road) for a precise ten minutes in every hour (e.g. 10.00–10.10am, 11.20am-11.30am, 12.40pm-12.50pm). Aside from the above basic rules are applied to the process;

- *An accurate stopwatch and a hand operated mechanical counter are used*
- *If a person walks passed more than once they are included in the count each time they pass through the 'line'*
- *Children under 12 are not included in the count*
- *Footfall counts are not conducted in the rain*

The following table provides the average number of people per 10 minutes between 10am and 1pm from the busiest footfall location in the locality (Outside Co Op, Market Place) on the relevant days recorded.

Busy Day

National Small Towns	Alston 2018	Alston 2017	Alston 2014	Alston 2013	Alston 2012
93	20	35	n/a	14	17

On the Busy Day, the average footfall count was 20 persons per ten minutes, lower than the 2017 figure of 35 and similar to the 2013 (14) and 2012 (17) evaluations.

**Please note a Busy Day Footfall Count was not included in the 2014 evaluation*



Quiet Day

National Small Towns	Alston 2018	Alston 2017	Alston 2014	Alston 2013	Alston 2012
83	8	26	41	13	15

Footfall in Alston on the Quiet Day (8 persons per ten minutes) was considerably lower than the National Small Towns average (83). Longitudinally, the 2018 figure is the lowest recorded on the Benchmarking system but the weather on the day was very cold.

Each of the individual footfall counts over Benchmarking exercise can be seen in the table below.

Outside Co Op, Market Place			
Busy Day:		Quiet Day:	
10.00-10.10	15	10.00-10.10	8
11.00-11.10	17	11.00-11.10	10
12.00-12.10	27	12.00-12.10	7
TOTAL	59	TOTAL	25
AVERAGE	20	AVERAGE	8

KPI: CAR PARKING

A large proportion of spending customers in a town centre come by car. In the rural setting, the car tends to be an essential tool, used by both those who come to spend and those who come to work. The provision of adequate and convenient car parking facilities is therefore a key element of town centre vitality. An acceptable number of available spaces with a regular, quick turn-over for shoppers are the ideal while adequate longer stay, less convenient spaces for local owners/ workers and visitors must be considered too.

Within the town on street and off parking within the core commercial offering were identified as being integral to the study. The following tables provide a summary of the Car Parking offering broken down into the;

- ❖ Percentage number of spaces in the designated car parks.
- ❖ Percentage number of short stay, long stay and disabled spaces in designated car parks
- ❖ Percentage of vacant spaces in designated car parks on a Market Day and on a Non-Market Day
- ❖ Percentage number of on street car parking spaces
- ❖ Percentage number of on street short stay, long stay and disabled spaces
- ❖ Percentage of vacant on street spaces on a Market Day and on a Non-Market Day
- ❖ Overall percentage of short stay, long stay and disabled spaces
- ❖ Overall percentage of vacant spaces on a Market Day and on a Non-Market Day

A full list of all car parks included in the Audit is available in the Appendix.

	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %
Car Park:		
Total Spaces:	84	51
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	34	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	59	100
Disabled Spaces:	7	0
Not Registered	0	0
Vacant Spaces on a Busy Day:	34	75
Vacant Spaces on a Quiet Day:	40	92
On Street:		
Total Spaces:	16	48
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	81	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	13	97
Disabled Spaces:	5	3
Not Registered	1	0
Vacant Spaces on a Busy Day:	15	17
Vacant Spaces on a Quiet Day:	18	31

Overall	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %
Total Spaces:	n/a	n/a
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	41	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	52	98
Disabled Spaces:	7	2
Not Registered	3	0
Vacant Spaces on a Busy Day:	31	47
Vacant Spaces on a Quiet Day:	37	62

Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
47	43	45	44	23
62	52	49	53	34

Overall vacancy rates in Alston are higher than the National Small Towns average, 47% on a Busy Day in the town compared to 31% Nationally and 62% on a Quiet Day in the town compared to 37% Nationally.

However, further analysis highlights that by taking out the Fair Hill and the Railway Car Parks, 17% of spaces were free on the Busy Day and 31% on the Quiet Day.

KPI: BUSINESS CONFIDENCE SURVEY

In regard to the 'business confidence' by establishing the trading conditions of town centre businesses, stakeholders can focus their regeneration efforts on building on existing strengths and addressing any specific issues. The following percentage figures are based on the **17 returned** Business Confidence Surveys in **2017**.

	National Small Towns %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Nature of Business					
Retail	63	35	n/a	50	100
Financial/ Professional Services	12	12	n/a	17	0
Public Sector	2	0	n/a	0	0
Food and Drink	13	24	n/a	17	0
Accommodation	1	12	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other	9	18	n/a	17	0
Type of Business					
Multiple Trader	10	0	n/a	0	0
Regional	8	6	n/a	0	0
Independent	82	94	n/a	100	100
How long has your business been in the town					
Less than a year	6	0	n/a	0	0
One to Five Years	22	29	n/a	50	17
Six to Ten Years	13	18	n/a	0	17
More than Ten Years	58	53	n/a	50	67

35% of the respondents were based in the Retail sector. 94% were Businesses unique to Alston and 50% had been based in the town for more than 10 years and 50% for one to five years.

Compared to last year has your turnover	National Small Towns %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Increased	38	18	n/a	0	33
Stayed the Same	31	41	n/a	33	0
Decreased	31	41	n/a	67	67
Compared to last year has your profitability					
Increased	31	18	n/a	0	17
Stayed the Same	35	41	n/a	33	17
Decreased	34	41	n/a	67	67
Over the next 12 months do you think your turnover will...					
Increase	44	29	n/a	33	33
Stay the Same	38	35	n/a	17	17
Decrease	19	35	n/a	50	50

41% of Businesses reported that compared to last year their turnover had 'Decreased', higher than the National Small (31%) Towns average. 41% reported that their turnover had 'Stayed the Same'.

41% of Businesses stated that their profitability had 'Decreased' during the last 12 months, 7% higher than the National Small Towns figure. 41% reported that their profitability had 'Stayed the Same'.

In terms of business confidence, 35% of Businesses indicated that over the next 12 months they expected their turnover to 'Decrease', 16% higher than the National Small Towns average. 35% expected their turnover to 'Stay the Same'.

What are the positive aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Physical appearance	44	38	n/a	50	n/a
Prosperity of the town	39	19	n/a	17	17
Labour Pool	10	13	n/a	0	17
Geographical location	39	50	n/a	83	83
Mix of Retail Offer	40	13	n/a	33	50
Potential tourist customers	36	75	n/a	67	100
Potential local customers	77	75	n/a	100	83
Affordable Housing	15	6	n/a	17	17
Transport Links	34	0	n/a	0	0
Footfall	26	13	n/a	n/a	n/a
Car Parking	32	19	n/a	17	0
Rental Value/ Property Costs	16	19	n/a	17	50
Market(s)	14	0	n/a	0	0
Events/ Activities	22	18	n/a	17	n/a
Marketing/Promotions	10	0	n/a	0	n/a
Local Partnerships/ Organisations	17	13	n/a	50	n/a
Other	3	6	n/a	0	14

In regard to the positive aspects of trading in Alston town centre, Potential local customers (75%) and Potential tourist customers (75%) were the most popular response from Businesses, the latter more than double the National Small Towns average. Half of the Businesses rated Geographical location as a positive aspect of Alston.

What are the negative aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Physical appearance	22	19	n/a	17	n/a
Prosperity of the town	29	38	n/a	50	67
Labour Pool	14	6	n/a	0	17
Geographical location	7	19	n/a	17	27
Mix of Retail Offer	21	6	n/a	17	17
Number of Vacant Units	41	69	n/a	n/a	n/a
Potential tourist customers	11	0	n/a	0	0
Potential local customers	3	0	n/a	0	33
Affordable Housing	10	6	n/a	33	0
Transport Links	14	56	n/a	67	100
Footfall	20	38	n/a	n/a	n/a
Car Parking	50	81	n/a	83	83
Rental Value Property Costs	29	6	n/a	0	17
Market(s)	10	6	n/a	0	17
Local business competition	17	13	n/a	33	0
Competition from other localities	25	25	n/a	0	50
Competition from out of town shopping	40	31	n/a	0	50
Competition from the internet	37	31	n/a	0	n/a
Events/ Activities	7	0	n/a	17	n/a
Marketing/ Promotions	5	13	n/a	0	n/a
Local Partnerships/ Organisations	2	0	n/a	0	n/a
Other	6	13	n/a	0	17

As in previous evaluations, Car Parking (81%) was classed as the most negative aspect of operating a Business from Alston. The Alston figure being noticeably higher than the National Small Towns average of 50%. 69% of Businesses rated the Number of Vacant Units as a negative aspect of trading in the town centre, 28% higher than the National Small Towns average, whilst 56% rated Transport Links as a negative compared to the National figure of 14%.

Has your business suffered from any crime over the last 12 months?	National Small Towns %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Yes	26	25	n/a	17	0
No	74	75	n/a	83	100
Type of Crime					
Theft	73	0	n/a	100	0
Criminal Damage	25	75	n/a	0	0
Abuse	14	0	n/a	0	0
Other	4	25	n/a	0	0

75% of Businesses reported that over the last 12 months they had not suffered from crime.

What two suggestions would you make to improve the town's economic performance?

A 'Coordinated Marketing and Promotions Approach' and 'Car Parking' were the key themes to emerge from the comments.

- ❖ *never enough parking on Front Street Alston or Town Centre, not using the space we have got to maximise trade and custom. Wasted space at bottom of town instead we have parking on Road Side and is very risky giving way to traffic with no lighting on road. More parking (and not at the Spar Petrol Station as it steals all of the passing trade to this town and is killing the town centre).*
- ❖ *We hardly see any injection of money into this town at all, we don't even get flower boxes as other own do, this would also attract more tourists to our town and spend money.*
- ❖ *Fill empty shops. Find a new butcher.*
- ❖ *Encourage all people 'living on the moor' to support independent businesses locally.*
- ❖ *Marketing to encourage people to visit. However, currently there is insufficient retail interest here to attract people and make them return. Joined up thinking between organisations to promote a 'whole town' rather than 'our venture'.*
- ❖ *Better transport links.*
- ❖ *More marketing and promotion initiatives- particularly linking Alston with tourists visiting the Lakes.*



❖ More visible police presence.
❖ <i>More parking available</i>
❖ <i>Definitely need more parking for visitors to the town.</i>
❖ More shops filled
❖ The tarmac parts of the cobbled street look awful, need to be replaced with cobbles. Cobbles are a vital feature of this historic town, and we know that they attract visitors.
❖ <i>Need better marketing by Cumbria CC in relation to marketing Alston and the North Pennines. Poor relation to the Lake District</i>
❖ Need a cashpoint in the town centre
❖ <i>There is a need for a coordinated plan to modify the centre to make it more attractive to potential visitors and encourage repeat visits.</i>
❖ Existing vacated properties should be incorporated into the overall plan to improve the town's appearance.
❖ There are no leisure facilities to encourage visitors, especially young families, to remain in town. An undercover soft play area would be a good start and this would also benefit locals.
❖ <i>Better collaboration between Eden DC/Cumbria CC and Durham/Northumberland/AONB to promote the wider North Pennines as a visitor destination, with Alston as the central point with the most amenities (an ideal base for a holiday).</i>
❖ Sort out the appearance of the town centre. The Townscape Heritage Scheme is a great start, but we must get the cobbles properly reinstated, as they're spoiling the appearance. They're a key feature of the historic town centre, and a unique asset that we know draws visitors in.
❖ Transport links
❖ <i>proper marketing for the area rather than being dumped in with the Lakes - which we are not. We have lots of interesting things for tourists to do and stay but Alston has almost no national marketing and therefore has a very small tourist population now</i>
❖ Sort out traffic flow and <i>car parking</i>
❖ Encourage businesses to take up empty units - and refuse permission to convert retail to residential in core area
❖ We need better transport links.
❖ <i>Parking can be an issue.</i>
❖ Some funding for key businesses (like Lowbyer Manor) which are not within Townscape Boundary and a significant increase in emphasis to drive some of Cumbrias tourism marketing from the Lakes to the North pennines
❖ <i>Increased business support which is now very much focussed on by Alston Moor Business Association (AMBA) and working more closely with Eden DC Developing new tourist themes, e.g. Dark Sky tourism in conjunction with AONB support</i>

KPI: TOWN CENTRE USERS SURVEY

The aim of the Town Centre Users Survey is to establish how your town is seen by those people who use it. By asking visitors, of all types, a more detailed picture can be obtained as what matters to regular visitors can be very different to someone who has never been to the place before. In total **226** Town Centre User Surveys were completed. The following percentage figures are based upon the total number of respondents to each question.

	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Male	32	38	37	n/a	45	n/a
Female	67	63	63	n/a	55	n/a
Prefer not to answer	1	n/a	3	n/a	n/a	n/a
Age						
16-25	6	5	6	n/a	5	n/a
26-35	14	9	4	n/a	6	n/a
36-45	24	13	14	n/a	13	n/a
46-55	23	27	29	n/a	35	n/a
56-65	17	31	35	n/a	20	n/a
Over 65	15	15	12	n/a	21	n/a
Prefer not to answer	1	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
What do you generally visit the Town Centre for?						
Work	10	19	33	n/a	17	24
Convenience Shopping	39	44	38	n/a	41	41
Comparison Shopping	5	3	0	n/a	1	0
Access Services	19	5	6	n/a	18	13
Leisure	16	15	6	n/a	8	13
Other	11	14	17	n/a	15	9

As per the National Small Towns average the main purpose for Town Centre Users to visit Alston was Convenience Shopping (44%).

How often do you visit the Town Centre	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Daily	21	34	56	n/a	34	30
More than once a week	37	34	33	n/a	33	41
Weekly	20	9	4	n/a	8	7
Fortnightly	7	2	2	n/a	3	6
More than once a Month	5	4	0	n/a	8	4
Once a Month or Less	10	18	4	n/a	14	11
How do you normally travel into the Town Centre?						
On Foot	38	28	38	n/a	24	30
Bicycle	1	0	0	n/a	0	3
Motorbike	0	0	0	n/a	1	2
Car	56	68	58	n/a	63	61
Bus	3	0	4	n/a	4	4
Train	0	0	0	n/a	0	0
Other	2	3	1	n/a	0	0
On average, on your normal visit to the Town Centre how much do you normally spend?						
Nothing	3	4	0	n/a	3	n/a
£0.01-£5.00	12	9	6	n/a	9	n/a
£5.01-£10.00	24	25	19	n/a	23	n/a
£10.01-£20.00	33	35	47	n/a	41	n/a
£20.01-£50.00	23	25	26	n/a	20	n/a
More than £50.00	5	2	2	n/a	4	n/a

Mirroring the National Small Towns average (78%), 77% of Town Centre Users visited Alston at least once a week.

Once again similar to the National Small Towns average (61%), 62% of Town Centre Users spend over £10.00 on a normal visit to Alston. The 2018 figure is 13% lower than the 2017 Alston Benchmarking average.



What are the positive general aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Physical appearance	43	53	65	n/a	54	67
Cleanliness	36	47	37	n/a	n/a	n/a
Retail Offer	18	35	41	n/a	n/a	n/a
Customer Service	22	49	52	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cafes/ Restaurants	39	46	48	n/a	34	25
Access to Services	56	30	35	n/a	82	77
Leisure Facilities	14	4	7	n/a	4	9
Cultural Activities/Events	20	25	26	n/a	8	10
Pubs/ Bars/ Nightclubs	25	40	43	n/a	50	51
Public Toilets	20	30	28	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transport Links	18	3	4	n/a	0	1
Ease of walking around the town centre	54	42	39	n/a	39	41
Convenience e.g. near where you live	66	58	78	n/a	49	65
Safety	17	27	15	n/a	57	58
Car Parking	27	22	13	n/a	26	29
Markets	29	13	9	n/a	0	13
Other	7	9	9	n/a	5	4

58% of Town Centre Users reported that Convenience e.g. near where you live was a positive aspect of Alston whilst 53% stated Physical appearance, 10% higher than the National Small Towns average. Customer Service (49%), Cleanliness (47%) Cafes/ Restaurants (46%) and Pubs/ Bars/ Nightclubs (43%) were also classed as positive aspects of Alston Town Centre and were all rated highly in the 2017 evaluation.

What are the negative general aspects of the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Physical appearance	32	33	33	n/a	29	21
Cleanliness	24	15	24	n/a	n/a	n/a
Retail Offer	52	27	28	n/a	n/a	n/a
Customer Service	8	4	4	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cafes/ Restaurants	17	14	11	n/a	13	37
Access to Services	12	41	61	n/a	3	5
Leisure Facilities	24	48	20	n/a	41	48
Cultural Activities/Events	16	21	13	n/a	22	45
Pubs/ Bars/ Nightclubs	28	16	11	n/a	10	10
Public Toilets	25	11	15	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transport Links	14	71	59	n/a	78	64
Ease of walking around the town centre	9	21	17	n/a	32	32
Convenience e.g. near where you live	4	5	7	n/a	9	19
Safety	13	8	4	n/a	6	9
Car Parking	40	58	63	n/a	65	51
Markets	22	20	13	n/a	21	31
Other	15	14	11	n/a	4	3

As in 2017, Transport Links (71%), Car Parking (58%) and Access to Services (41%) were classed as negative aspects of Alston by Town Centre Users and all noticeably higher than the National Small Towns average. 48% of Town Centre Users rated Leisure Facilities as a negative aspect of Alston.

How long do you stay in the Town Centre?	National Small Towns %	Alston 2018 %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Less than an hour	37	38	30	n/a	53	46
1-2 Hours	43	33	30	n/a	20	20
2-4 Hours	12	14	9	n/a	8	7
4-6 Hours	2	4	4	n/a	7	7
All Day	4	9	24	n/a	8	16
Other	2	3	2	n/a	5	4
Would you recommend a visit to the Town Centre?						
Yes	64	89	87	n/a	n/a	n/a
No	36	11	13	n/a	n/a	n/a

71% of Town Centre Users stayed in Alston for less than 2 hours.

89% of Town Centre Users would recommend a visit to Alston, higher than the National Small Towns average of 64%.

What two suggestions would you make to improve the town centre?

*Please note all comments have been copied directly from respondent submissions so may contain grammatical errors.

The key themes to emerge from 2017 were the need to 'Reinstate the Cobbles' and 'Better/More Car Parking'. Once again these were the key themes in 2018;

Car Parking comments included;

- ❖ *More town centre parking.*
- ❖ *Delineated parking spaces.*
- ❖ *Car parking is essential*
- ❖ *More parking. Lots more parking. The town centre is ridiculous, as is anywhere on the front street. Cars parked all d a y by shopkeepers and home owners, does not allow people passing through who might have stopped for a visit to do so.*
- ❖ *More parking either end of the main road to reduce traffic parked within the street making it safer for people to browse etc*
- ❖ *More parking available*
- ❖ *It needs much mch more parking for ease of stopping and having a quick wander round, doing some quick shopping as you pass through etc - I often can't see somewere to par so don't stop when I otherwise would. Would prefer to shop here often but can't*
- ❖ *Make much more parking for those wanting to browse shops or pop into PO or elsewhere whilst passing through (I would like to shop there more, never space to stop quickly)*
- ❖ *Better parking.*

Comments concerning the 'Cobbles' included:

- ❖ *Repair cobbles..*
- ❖ *Replace the cobbles as soon as possible before tourists leave for good.*
- ❖ *Restore the cobbles that gave the town character*
- ❖ *Re-lay the cobbles on the street*
- ❖ *Makeover of shop fronts and walking areas.
Bring back the cobbles.*
- ❖ *Replace cobbles.*
- ❖ *Put the cobbles back.*
- ❖ *Bring back the cobbles.*

KPI: SHOPPERS ORIGIN SURVEY

The Shoppers Origin Survey tracks the general area that your town centre visitors originate from. The data can be used to target local marketing or promotional literature. It can also be used as evidence of the success of such campaigns by gauging the penetration into the population.

The 599 postcodes gathered from businesses in 2917 were split into 3 categories to be able to compare with other towns. The categories are:

- ❖ Locals; those who live within a Post Code covering the town
- ❖ Visitors; those who live within a Post Code less than a 30-minute drive away
- ❖ Tourists; those who live within a Post Code further than a 30-minute drive away

	National Small Towns %	Alston 2017 %	Alston 2014 %	Alston 2013 %	Alston 2012 %
Locals	66	69	n/a	n/a	63
Visitors	27	0	n/a	n/a	0
Tourists	7	31	n/a	n/a	37

69% Post Codes gathered were from Locals, similar to the National Small Towns average of 66% whilst 31% were from Tourists, 24% higher than the National figure.

Appendix

Business Unit Database

Street Name	Business Name	Use Class	Type	Type	Notes
Church Road	Alston Moor Federation	D1	n/a	n/a	
Church Road	Grisedale	C2	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Mad Hatters Hardware	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Front Street	Cumbrian Pantry	A3	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Mellow Yellow	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Front Street	Local Links	D1	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	TLC Hair Design	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Front Street	The Angel Inn	A4	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Saint Augustine of Canterbury	D1	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Next to Blueberrys	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
Front Street	Chemist	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Front Street	Next to Chemist	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
Front Street	The High Plaice	A5	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Alston Wholefoods	A1	Convenience	Independent	
Front Street	Once upon a time Bookshop	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Front Street	The Victoria Inn	C1	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Barclays	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
Front Street	Carlise and Eden Age UK	A1	Comparison	Regional	
Front Street	Alston Moor Partnership Office	B1	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Cumbrian Fire and Rescue	D1	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	The Top Café	A3	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Alston Post Office	A1	Convenience	Independent	
Front Street	The Crown Hotel	C1	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	Antiques and Vintage Emporium	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
Kings Arm Lane	Catholic Church of St Wulstan	D1	n/a	n/a	
Market Place	Pennine Ways	A2	n/a	n/a	
Market Place	Hi Pennine Outdoor	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Market Place	Pick of the Bunch	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
Market Place	T C Blackstock	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
Market Place	The Co Operative Food	A1	Convenience	Multiple	
Market Place	Turks Head Inn	A4	n/a	n/a	

Market Place	Market Cross	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Market Place	Potter in the Window/ Gallery 1611	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Market Place	Blueberrys Tea Shop	A3	n/a	n/a	
Market Place	H Kearton and Sons	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
Market Place	Lantern House	C1	n/a	n/a	
Station Road	Moredun Garage	SG	n/a	n/a	
Station Road	Alston Moor Fitness Club	D2	n/a	n/a	
Station Road	Crossing Café	A3	n/a	n/a	
Station Road	Alston Heritage Museum	D1	n/a	n/a	
Station Road	Salvage Yard	SG	n/a	n/a	
Townfoot	J H Henderson and Sons Ltd	B2	n/a	n/a	
Townfoot	Spar	A1	Convenience	Multiple	
Townfoot	Alston House	C1	n/a	n/a	
Townfoot	Cumberland Hotel	C1	n/a	n/a	
Townfoot	The Bluebell Inn	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
Townfoot	The Old Parlour	A1	Comparison	Independent	
Townhead	The Quaker Meeting House	D1	n/a	n/a	
Townhead	Countryside Consultants	A2	n/a	n/a	
Townhead	Cumbrian County Council Depot	D1	n/a	n/a	
Front Street	The Moody Baker	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
	Old Church	n/a	n/a	n/a	VACANT
	Ruth Lancaster James Hospital	D1	n/a	n/a	
	Cane Workshop	A1	Comparison	Independent	
	redhotproperty.co.uk	A2	n/a	n/a	
	Pennine Country Cottages	A2	n/a	n/a	
	Acumen Investigation Services	B1	n/a	n/a	
	Glasstap	B1	n/a	n/a	
Station Road	<i>Gullwing Electronics</i>	<i>B1</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Station Road	<i>Eden Autos</i>	<i>B2</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Station Road	<i>Cumberland Mustard</i>	<i>B1</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Station Road	<i>Lowbyer Manor Country House Hotel</i>	<i>C1</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Station Road	<i>Less Paper Solutions</i>	<i>B1</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Station Yard	<i>The Memory Knot Company</i>	<i>B1</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Station Yard	<i>Richardson Joiners</i>	<i>B1</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Station Yard	<i>Camelot Carpets</i>	<i>B8</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	

<i>Garrigill Road</i>	<i>CCC (ex-Primary School)</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>VACANT</i>
<i>Nenthead Road</i>	<i>Bond Precision</i>	<i>B2</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
<i>Nenthead Road</i>	<i>Totalpost Mailing Ltd</i>	<i>B2</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
<i>Nenthead Road</i>	<i>Moorland Candles</i>	<i>B2</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
<i>Nenthead Road</i>	<i>Old Stone Vets</i>	<i>SG</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
<i>Nenthead Road</i>	<i>Must be nice Discount Outlet UK</i>	<i>B8</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
<i>Nenthead Road</i>	<i>Wright Bros</i>	<i>SG</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	

*Please note the businesses in *PURPLE ITALICS* fall outside of the traditional Benchmarking definition of a town centre but due to the distinct nature of Alston have been added as an extra level of analysis.

Car Parking Database

Name:	Spaces by vacant Church en route to Fair Hill Car Park
On Street/ Car Park:	On street
Total Spaces:	4
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	4
Disabled Spaces:	0
Vacant Spaces on Friday 30th November 2018	1
Vacant Spaces on Wednesday 5th December 2018	1

Name:	Front street (Cobbles up from Co Op)
On Street/ Car Park:	On street
Total Spaces:	22
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	21
Disabled Spaces:	1
Vacant Spaces on Friday 30th November 2018	3
Vacant Spaces on Wednesday 5th December 2018	4

Name:	Marketplace by Market Cross
On Street/ Car Park:	On street
Total Spaces:	17
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	17
Disabled Spaces:	0
Vacant Spaces on Friday 30th November 2018	1
Vacant Spaces on Wednesday 5th December 2018	6

Name:	Outside Local Links either side of the road
On Street/ Car Park:	On street
Total Spaces:	15
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	14
Disabled Spaces:	1
Vacant Spaces on Friday 30th November 2018	5
Vacant Spaces on Wednesday 5th December 2018	7

Name:	Fair Hill Car Park
On Street/ Car Park:	Car park
Total Spaces:	26
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	26
Disabled Spaces:	0
Vacant Spaces on Friday 30th November 2018	15
Vacant Spaces on Wednesday 5th December 2018	21

Name:	Railway Station car park*
On Street/ Car Park:	Car Park
Total Spaces:	35
Short Stay Spaces: (4 hours and under)	0
Long Stay Spaces: (Over 4 hours)	35
Disabled Spaces:	0
Vacant Spaces on Friday 30th November 2018	31
Vacant Spaces on Wednesday 5th December 2018	35

Town Centre Users Survey

- ❖ More parking.
More for tourists.
- ❖ Better access to shops.
More parking for tourists.
- ❖ Bigger market.
More parking.
- ❖ Designated parking in town.
Shop fronts to be made over in town.
- ❖ Repair cobbles.
Encourage/incentivise new shop/business in empty units.
- ❖ More leisure facilities.
More parking.
- ❖ Improve car parking.
Improve relations when the railway.
- ❖ Put the cobbles back.
Have a dedicated retail outlet for local crafts.
- ❖ More leisure facilities and events.
More policing.
- ❖ More events.
More policing.
- ❖ More leisure facilities.
Better parking.
- ❖ More parking.
Sort out historic cobbles.
- ❖ More parking.
More lights other than front street area
- ❖ No regular buses or accessible taxis
- ❖ Better parking.
A cash machine.
- ❖ Car parking.
Easier access for public.
- ❖ Reinstate cobbles.
Stop digging it up.
- ❖ Better car parking.
General tidy up.
- ❖ Car parking.
Longer closing times in pubs.
- ❖ Re-lay the cobbles on the street.
Make extra public transport available.
- ❖ Cobbles or tarmac, it looks bad with both.
More authority.
- ❖ More parking.
More events.

- ❖ Makeover of shop fronts and walking areas.
More parking spaces.
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles.
Public transport.
Better parking.
Better disabled access.

- More greenery.

- ❖ Repair the town hall clock.
Put solar panels on the school.
- ❖ Continue shop front improvements.
- ❖ Signs for parking.
Flowers/planting greenery.
- ❖ At night it was very dark. Need more lighting.
More signage.
- ❖ Better signage to the public toilets.
- ❖ Parking
- ❖ Replace cobbles.
Transport links to get people here.
- ❖ More flowers.
Repair shop windows.
- ❖ Put the cobbles back.
Tidy and clean the street.
- ❖ Parking.
Roadworks.
- ❖ Steep hills difficult lack of hand rails.
No public/taxi transport.
- ❖ More shopping.
Regular markets.
- ❖ More parking.
A weekly market.
- ❖ Too many empty shops and tired looking bars.
- ❖ Needs a buzz.
- ❖ Weekly market would be good.
No bank/cash machine.
- ❖ Lack of local and regional transport.
- ❖ Lacks a hub - a meeting venue for visitors and locals alike. Appalling transport.
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles.
Public transport.
- ❖ Public transport.
Banks.
- ❖ Not lively for younger age group, local transport a big problem.
- ❖ No retail attractions for my age group.
No social appeal.

- ❖ A market every week!
Fill shops with anything, even window displays.
- ❖ Improve provision of parking and signage.
Improve outdoor space through seating.
- ❖ Improved parking with signage.
Improved provision of seating area and open spaces.
- ❖ Redo cobbles on road.
More variable shops.
Bank.
- ❖ Better transport links.
Banks.

- ❖ Cobbles back.
Better parking.

- ❖ Would like to see cobbles reinstated.
- ❖ Fix cobbles.
More shops other than cafes or antique shops.
- ❖ More parking.
Public transport.
- ❖ Improve more shop fronts make it safer underfoot.
The cobbles look nice but aren't safe to walk on.
- ❖ Better parking.
Cash machine.
- ❖ Better town centre parking.
Resolve c.c.c and cobbles.
- ❖ Better parking.
- ❖ Better parking.
Consistent road surface - reintroduce cobbles.
- ❖ Cobbles to the road and improved cobbles in walkways.
Cash machine - 24hr access on Front Street.
- ❖ Village is lovely but could do with better signage for opening times.
- ❖ Get rid of buildings behind co-op and put in parking.
Bring back the proper cobbles.
- ❖ Better parking.
Tidy the pavements.
- ❖ More parking - signed.
- ❖ More parking around the town, better signs.
- ❖ The cobbles and footpaths are slippy and needs maintenance.
Greater selection of shops.
- ❖ More parking spaces.
Improved cleanliness.
- ❖ Better parking.
Better transport links.
- ❖ Parking.
Public transport.

- ❖ Parking
- ❖ Remove co-op signage.
Public transport links.
- ❖ Car parking.
Needs rehaul, its tired.
- ❖ Need more lighting at night.
- ❖ Better signage.
Better parking.
- ❖ Reinstate the cobbles
More regular litter pickup & more litter bins
- ❖ 1. A regular programme of maintenance of features: e.g. removal of redundant lamp posts (Church Road and Front Street), mending and care of seats at the top end of the Market Place (the Potato Market.) This area has been neglected for years!
- ❖ 2. Better street lighting
- ❖ Replace the cobbles - they were an asset to the town, giving an 'olde-worlde' appearance with much charm, and they were a visitor attraction. TV and Movie crews have filmed period dramas in Alston because of the appearance of the street and buildings.
Improve the street lighting - it is very sparse and ineffective during dark winter evenings.
- ❖ Cobbles/sets back.
Better use of empty shops and properties
- ❖ More parking for vehicles
Regular sweeping and litter picking (at LEAST once a week - daily would be better)
- ❖ better parking
more varied shops
- ❖ Less parking on double yellow lines
Replacement of cobbles in middle of town and a designated crossing area in middle of town.
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles!
Better public transport
- ❖ Tarmac the whole of front street and be done with it - OR properly put back the cobbles in a way that are not dangerous to motorcycles; but preferably the former. It needs much mch more parking for ease of stopping and having a quick wander round, doing some quick shopping as you pass through etc - I often can't see somewere to par so don't stop when I otherwise would. Would prefer to shop here often but can't. (Also needs more takeaways that are actually open 7 days a week at times when peple want to eat when passing them)
- ❖ Put the cobbles back. You've lost your heritage. Retain the parking.
- ❖ Replace the cobbles
- ❖ General maintainance.
Working street/footway lights.
- ❖ put back the cobbles

- ❖ Further improvements to shop/hotel fronts. Town looks shabby
- ❖ More street lighting in and around town and a facelift of the buildings. We do NOT need this overhaul and a pedestrianised zone with reduced parking as planned. We are NOT the Lake District that attracts day trippers, people come here to walk and admire the rugged beauty that is Alston Moor and to soak up our long and rich heritage. Furthermore, next time you conduct a survey try and tailor it to the actual town you are surveying please, this is an insult to the intelligence of the locals, mind the local council are good at trying to insult our intelligence whilst still taking our money!. They are also extremely good at trying to foist us off with plans that we have not been properly consulted on nor have we been allowed to have any input into, whilst with the other hand bullshitting their way through numerous questions asked of them and giving unlimited further bullshit to the press about how the town is being consulted on forthcoming plans and developments. Stop lying to the people of Alston and man up and get honest.
- ❖ Reinstate the cobbles in the central area, as part of the development plan (creating a market area et al)
Well thought-out, properly-marked, car parking
- ❖ Sort the tarmac - the cobbles gave an historic look. The mixture of cobbles patched with tarmac gives an unkempt look.

- ❖ Slow down the speeding vehicles, especially on the bends... some more parking please, especially in the centre of the town, but off the main street somehow.
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles.
Stop taking away the heritage of the town which attracts tourists.
- ❖ Bank
Car parking
- ❖ Put cobbles back
Improve bus service
- ❖ Give us back the cobblestone, give us back our banks .
Give us back buses.
Please can we have street lights.
Alston has been destroyed my Eden council and planners who probably don't even know where Alston is.
We won't have anything left to attract visitors.
- ❖ 1) Somewhere to sit for a breather.
2)Some leisure facilities.
3)Car parking
- ❖ Stop digging the road up & put the cobbles back down
- ❖ Replace the cobbles we need more shops rc
- ❖ Make Main Street surface match the old stone built character by returning the cobbles/sets.
Better improved street lights on the main roads through Alston to improve safety for pedestrians and car drivers.

- ❖ Banking required
- ❖ Restore Alston's heritage of its cobbled road. This not only is a major part of its heritage and main attraction for visitors, but has the benefit of a natural traffic calming for both four and two wheeled vehicles.
Remove the dreadful double and single yellow road markings. These can be replaced with markings on the curb stones and signage.
Add two or more public seating benches strategically placed up the hill.
Install decent street lighting in keeping with the surroundings. Trust me, walking at night is difficult to see even for those of us with good sight. Modern car lighting is so intense and causes such black shadows, visibility is reduced to zero without street lighting.
Stop treating Alston as a place that 'cannot be afforded'.....
- ❖ Parking
Cobbles
- ❖ Reinstate the cobbles; they're part of the town's heritage, in a conservation area.
Tarmac is pure vandalism.
There's often litter lying around, so more street cleaning.
- ❖ Tourism is important to the town's economy so 1 restore cobbles
2 maybe a very discreetly signposted set of town trails in different colours. I am thinking arrows as seen on footpaths. Linked to a leaflet.
(quite possible this already exists but not with physical signs I think)
- ❖ Car park
Better selection of shops and a bank
- ❖ Sadly a lot of alstons shops are now empty. It would be lovely to see a thriving and diverse set of shops there.
Also. Where have the lovely cobbles gone? They were so quaint and interesting.
Perhaps a bench or two would be good to sit and eat chips on.
- ❖ More parking
More leisure facilities
- ❖ 1. Put the cobbles back. Apart from preserving the unique character of Alston, they also acted as a method to calm traffic.
2. Encourage inward investment to preserve the declining high street. The town does not currently have any banking facilities, save for the Post Office.
- ❖ Reinstall the cobblestone road.
Better parking
- ❖ Encourage property owners to improve the state of their buildings - can grants be offered..
The cobbles need to be reinstated
- ❖ Better links to train stations Haltwhistle / Hexham.
Traffic calming measures - especially for motorbikes.
(and a Micro-brewery).
- ❖ More disabled/parent and child spaces. As the town is on a steep hill if the elderly/disabled and parents with buggies and young children are unable to park near the shops this could be a difficult situation for them.

Bring back the cobbles, they make our town our town and without them it just doesn't have the same picturesque atmosphere. Plus when the road gets icy I imagine it will cause a few accidents/stuck cars, busses and lorries.

- ❖ Keep the cobbles.
Improve transport links to other towns.
- ❖ More parking available
Tarmac the whole street make it look tidy then add more flower pots etc to make it look welcoming and inviting.
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles down front street. It's a disgrace that they have been allowed to be neglected and giving an excuse to remove them. They are integral to the heritage of Alston.
Encourage low rents to attract new shops to open in empty retail properties. The shops we have are great but there are too many vacant.
- ❖ Edc must support and encourage new businesses.
New shops
- ❖ An increase in supply of housing that will bring wealthy incomers who will spend money on shops and services within the town and generally invest in the town.
Alston has an abundance of affordable and lower cost property and doesn't need any more.
Alston would benefit from significant investment in 'landmark' projects. Projects that will leave a lasting impact for generations to come, will attract a new type of visitor, will provide local jobs and involve thinking big and no longer messing about at the margins.
- ❖ Remove the cobbles. Re-open the banks
- ❖ New leisure facilities I.e. swimming pool, hall etc
More shops and consistency of when they are open.
- ❖ Make outsiders welcome
late night shopping
- ❖ Reinstate the cobbles
- ❖ It saddens me that this lovely town has had its cobbles removed and tar mac put in their place. I understand that there are plans to restore them but no date has been fixed to achieve this. It is clearly an important route and therefore a decent road surface is crucial but to take such an important part of the town's character away without firm plans is wrong.
- ❖ More car parks
- ❖ Replace the cobbled street and sort out the remaining ones.
Trying to open and keep open more shops
- ❖ Bring derelict buildings back into use.
- ❖ The street is a disgrace despite the necessary work carried out. The cobbles identify Alston and make it more attractive to a very rural area that has little employment or regeneration. Alston moor is a forgotten area that Eden District should remember and give it equal opportunities with the rest of their catchment area. At least if the town looks attractive then people visit the area and therefore it generates some employment.

- ❖ Obviously, encourage more shops to move to town.
Brighten up the shop fronts, hanging baskets etc and make the COOP frontage to match the others, ie look same age.
- ❖ Divert heavy goods through traffic away from the main street and town centre.
Put money into rehabilitating all the old industrial and other buildings behind the main street and renting them to small businesses, artists, etc.
- ❖ More car parking. Put the cobbles back.
- ❖ Car park more shops
- ❖ Reinstate historic features
Better shops, restaurants, facilities
- ❖ Improved public transport links.
Continued awareness raising of what Alston offers to increase footfall and to help current and existing businesses to thrive.
- ❖ Replace cobbles
Leisure centre with swimming pool
- ❖ Parking more shops
- ❖ A bank
A 2nd Free ATM
More bus, services
A Dentist
- ❖ Nothing - it's fab!
- ❖ Make the town centre more disabled friendly. There are many uneven footpaths with awkward cambers.
Better access to businesses for wheelchair and mobility users.
More disabled parking.
Enforcement of double yellow lines. (Too much car abandonment)
Speeding lorries up the main Street very close to pedestrians.
- ❖ More shops and easier access for cash withdrawals as we are without a bank.
- ❖ Find a road surface inkeeping with the buildings to improve the look of the mix between tarmac and cobbles.
Encourage small businesses to open up and advertise Alston more to attract people to come and visit.
- ❖ Reduced speed limit..
More parking either end of the main road to reduce traffic parked within the street making it safer for people to browse etc
- ❖ When I visit my cousin would love to buy Chinese food from carry out. Also would love to see a market bring held maybe once a fortnight
- ❖ Alston is a heritage site, so to maintain the town in this manner is very important to visitors coming into the town.
I would also like to see flowers and planter such as though in Penrith. (we pay the same tax) we have none.
- ❖ Cobbled streets. Companies who dig up be road should have to put it back as it should be, not just tarmac it over.
- ❖ Plant trees & have more greenery - it's very bare

- Remove ugly concrete bollards by market cross
- ❖ Top class independent restaurants , open Christmas Day Hotel
- ❖ Reinstate ALL the cobbles
- Enable cheap pop up shops for brief, seasonal, blocks of time
- ❖ Cobble entire length of front street
- Community shop for local producers to sell at with sensible rents and rates
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles. Important to Alston's appearance, heritage and tourism offer.

- ❖ more parking facilities for younger people.
- ❖ Fewer road works
- ❖ More parking. Lots more parking. The town centre is ridiculous, as is anywhere on the front street. Cars parked all d a y by shopkeepers and home owners, does not allow people passing through who might have stopped for a visit to do so. I produce some sort of local loyalty scheme to encourage people to use local shops and services.
- Put back the cobbles.
- ❖ Empty shops being used or at least the shop fronts decorated or used for pop up shops/restaurants/ art displays
- More places to sit
- ❖ Retain the individuality and charente of the town: supporting buissnes more to keep them open, and continue the heritage.
- Improving parking for visitors away from the town centre (eg. Increase and signpost effectivaly at the park) whilst increasing ease of use for visitors on foot eg. Having more outdoor seeting so people are able to sit, socialise and appreciate the beautiful setting.
- ❖ Attractive seating areas to encourage lingering.
- More, & better signposted, car parking.
- ❖ Getting the road completed either all tarmac or cobbles or a combination as anything would look better than the patch work at present.
- Better transport links for locals to enable them to attend schools, shop, visit GP surgery, Hospital appointments and participate in local events/clubs as this could help with their mental as well as physical health. Reducing stress/anxiety due to social isolation for our ever increasing population.
- ❖ 1) Replace the cobbles and character of the town
- 2) Encourage shops and businesses for visitors as well as residents - no more changing to residential for Front Street properties please
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles please!
- Fewer shops and properties for sale - makes it look like no one cares
- ❖ Put cobbles back need a bank

- ❖ Put the cobbles back.
- Create more parking.
- ❖ Reinstate the cobbles

- Access to cash machine
- ❖ An ATM
- ❖ Reinstate the historic cobbles and encourage film and TV companies to film here
Investment to improve the town in general, buildings appearance etc, make people proud of Alston once more.
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles.
Bring back a bank, or a cash machine at least.
- ❖ Continue with shop fronts and fill empty shop windows.
Replace the cobbles
- ❖ better parking on front street.
Restoration of cobbled road
- ❖ The town centre has lost its charm with the messy mix of cobbles and tarmac. It looks scruffy. The cobbles need to be returned.
In places the town centre looks tired and needs revitalising.
- ❖ Reinstate the cobels
Ensure all buildings are in use and maintained ie the Chapel
- ❖ Reinstate the cobbles and maintain the historic nature of Alston.
- ❖ Put the cobbles back
Stop digging it up
- ❖ More help for local business
Cobbles reinstated
- ❖ Leave it alone stop with the road works stop closing it.
Advertising the centre and what's there and nearby.
- ❖ Property repairs and lights installed.
- ❖ Put back the cobbles & make the main road safe from hgvs
Support conservation of historic buildings needing repurposing for sustainable community and business uses.
- ❖ put the cobbles back and lower rates for shops
- ❖ Alston is a historic market town, the town centre is in need of a facelift but not at the expense or detriment to it's historic nature or buildings.
Alston relies heavily on visitors who come to see the historic buildings and cobbled streets. But a lot of the history is hidden, interpretation boards around the center would give visitors a deeper insight into the towns history.
- ❖ Get rid of the cobbles - and mixed tarmac and cobbled bits made last year - on the main through hill road (horrible if riding a motorbike).
Make much more parking for those wanting to browse shops or pop into PO or elsewhere whilst passing through (I would like to shop there more, never space to stop quickly).
- ❖ A bank! More cash machines.
Lower rents so we can have a larger offering.
- ❖ Reinstate the cobbles
Encourage more retail business to move into Alston
- ❖ Making sure the cobbles are returned to part of the town to return the herratige.
Increase the parking spaces and implement the double yellow lines properly.

- ❖ Carparks more shops
- ❖ To have better transport links to larger settlements (a bus that runs directly to Carlisle or Newcastle during school holidays!!)
- ❖ To have our picturesque cobbles back! :(
- ❖ Seating areas with good lighting and general tidiness
- ❖ Better car parking usage

- ❖ Provide more seating in the public realm area
- ❖ Better access to and signage to parking

- ❖ Better parking around the centre better lighting and bring back our cobbles
- ❖ More regular bus service
- ❖ Get a bank to re-establish in the town and a cash machine.
- ❖ Improved parking/signage to car parks
- ❖ Put the cobbles back
- ❖ car parking
- ❖ free electric car charge point in town (ie not at Tyne willows)
- ❖ Replace the cobbles, improve the parking areas
- ❖ Take up the tarmac and replace the cobbles with new ones, the heritage and look of the town is paramount to the success of business and property sales and letting.
- ❖ Bring cobbles back for character
- ❖ More parking
- ❖ Restore the cobbles
- ❖ Encourage local shops to open
- ❖ Remove car parking in the centre of Main Street.
- ❖ Reinstate cobbles on whole of front street in line with its conservation / heritage status.
- ❖ Spruce up the Town Center
- ❖ Bring back the cobbles
- ❖ Relay the cobbles . No other improvements needed.
- ❖ Restore the cobbles that gave the town character.
- ❖ Many of the shops and pubs are very tatty and dirty - but i don't know how you address that as they are privately owned
- ❖ 1. Replace the cobbles (not modern alternative) as they are Alston's USP heritage for tourism for which the town commercially relies on.
- ❖ 2. Improve the dismal public transport provision.
- ❖ more choice. better parking availability
- ❖ 1. improve parking.
- ❖ 2. have an area for families with young children to gather for leisure and play in a safe and dry environment.
- ❖ Tidy up dilapidated buildings like the Foundry area, building next to Alston House & campsite. Clean up signage and make the approach from all directions much nicer.
- ❖ Reinstate the cobbles
- ❖ Better parking facilities
- ❖ parking

better footpaths

- ❖ Replace the cobbles as soon as possible before tourists leave for good.
Continue doing up the shop fronts - they look fantastic!
- ❖ More parking please - and not just disabled parking.
A main bank - please. Otherwise every transaction goes through the post office so everyone knows your business.
- ❖ Improve car parking.
Upgrade physical appearance of main street to capitalise on heritage.
- ❖ More parking
Security Cameras and or constant feed cameras so people can view what is happening in Alston town centre from around the world
Double yellow lines to prevent roadside parking
- ❖ Restore cobbles and fill empty premises with some exciting new retail/food or drink offerings
- ❖ Tarmac the street totally
Improve parking
- ❖ Car parking is essential
Bring back the cobbles and protect the heritage
- ❖ Bring back and properly instal the cobbles.
Encourage new diverse businesses into the area. With redevelopment of certain buildings to bring in Businesses with a point of difference, a usp not already here which also compimements existing businesses.
- ❖ Delineated parking spaces.
Cleaning and repair of the Market Cross
- ❖ Improve car parking
Improve public transport
- ❖ Vastly improve car parking eg limited stay, disc etc
Improve footways - very uneven and difficult to walk on.
- ❖ Replace the cobbles
Better disabled parking
- ❖ Car parking
Eateries
- ❖ Attention to the road and footpath surfaces including returning cobbles to the market cross area of the town centre.
Seating and tree planting in the town centre but not to the detriment of available central parking
- ❖ More town centre parking.
Availability of low cost easy in/out small business premises sujitable for incubator business and visitor short term daily rental