

# Town Centre Health Indicators 2007 Dartford

**Analysis & Information Team**  
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# DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE

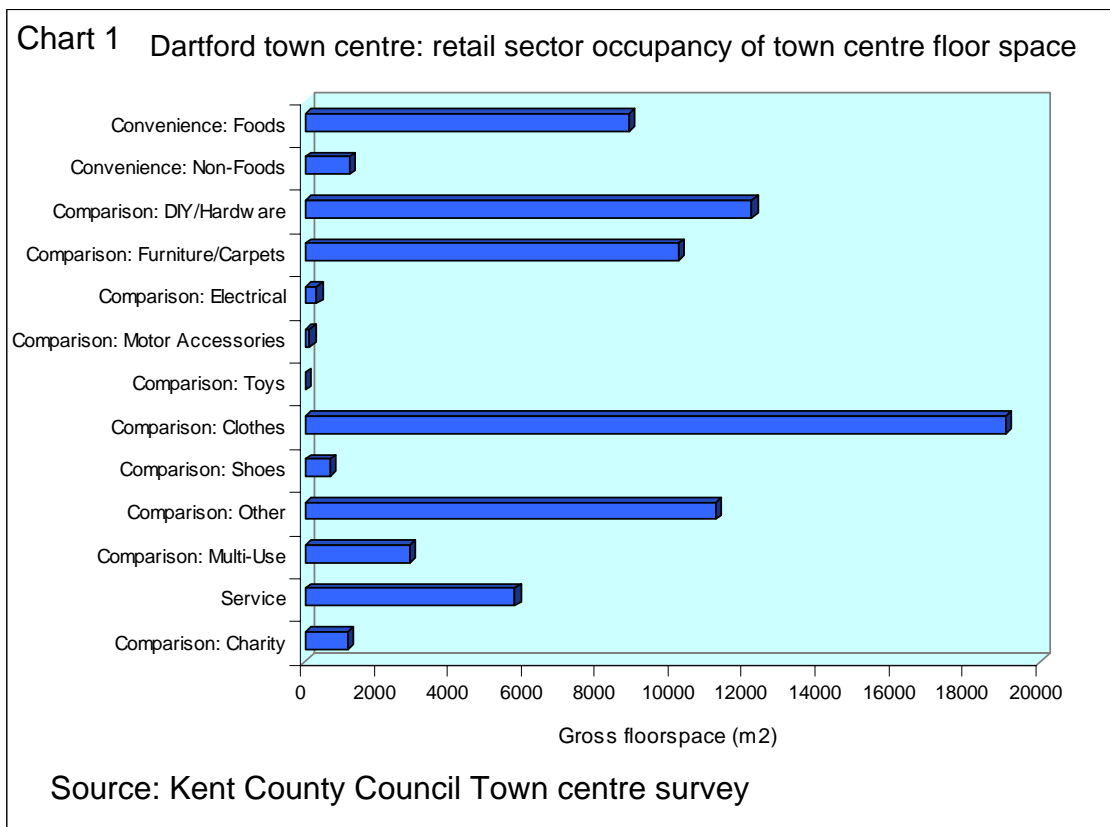
## A Profile of Town Centre Health Indicators

This report has been prepared by Kent County Council on behalf of Kent Town Centre Managers. It is one of a series that includes all major Kent towns and draws on published data as well as data collected by Kent County Council.

The health of a town can be assessed in many ways. This report considers the key indicators most commonly used to monitor town centres and includes, retail sector floor space, evening economy sector, vacant retail property, retail yields, retail rents, retail sector employment, crime, transport mode, air quality, residential, cultural sector and cleaner streets. Dartford town centre was surveyed 2007 and is part of a rolling programme to survey towns every five years. The data collected from the survey is shown in a number of maps which can be found at the end of the report. A summary of data for all towns in Kent is included in Appendix 1.

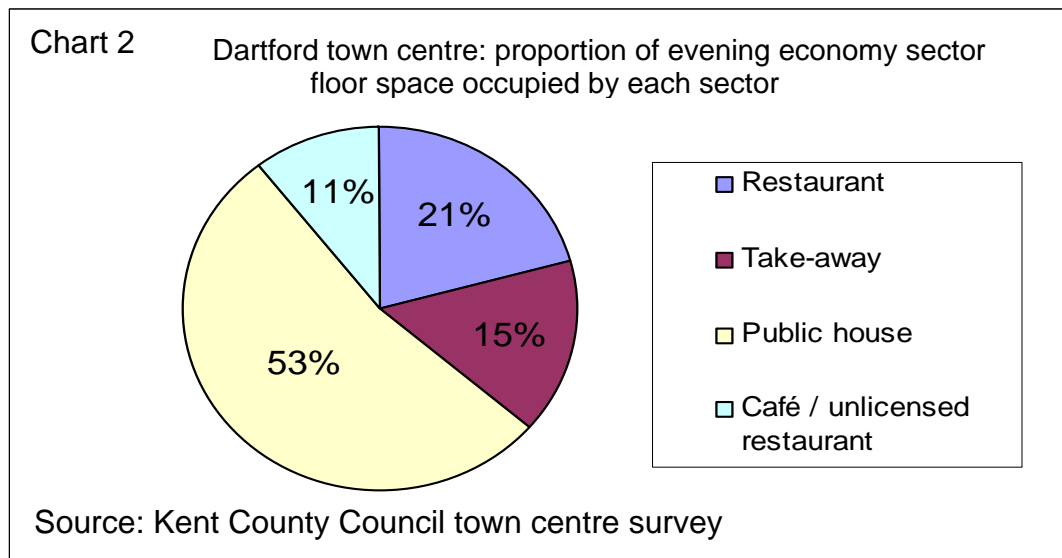
### **Retail Sector Floor space**

Dartford town centre has a total of 72180m<sup>2</sup> of retail and service sector floor space as surveyed in 2007. The floor space occupied by each retail sector at the time of the town centre survey is illustrated in Map 2. The breakdown of total floor space by use is given in Chart 1.



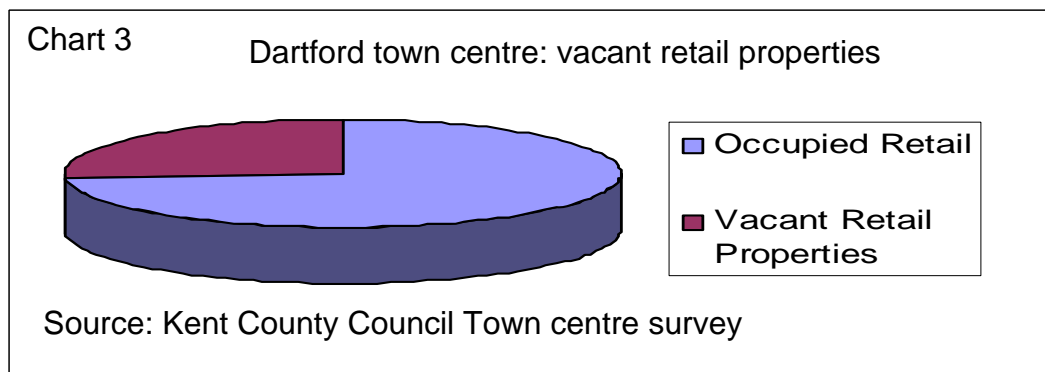
### Evening economy

In the evening a town centre can take on a different character. Businesses such as restaurants, take-away outlets and public houses can have a considerable impact on the evening economy. At the time of the survey, these facilities were generally evenly distributed around Dartford town centre, and occupied 15,210m<sup>2</sup> of town centre floor space which represents approximately 17% of total retail floor space. See Map 3 and Chart 2.



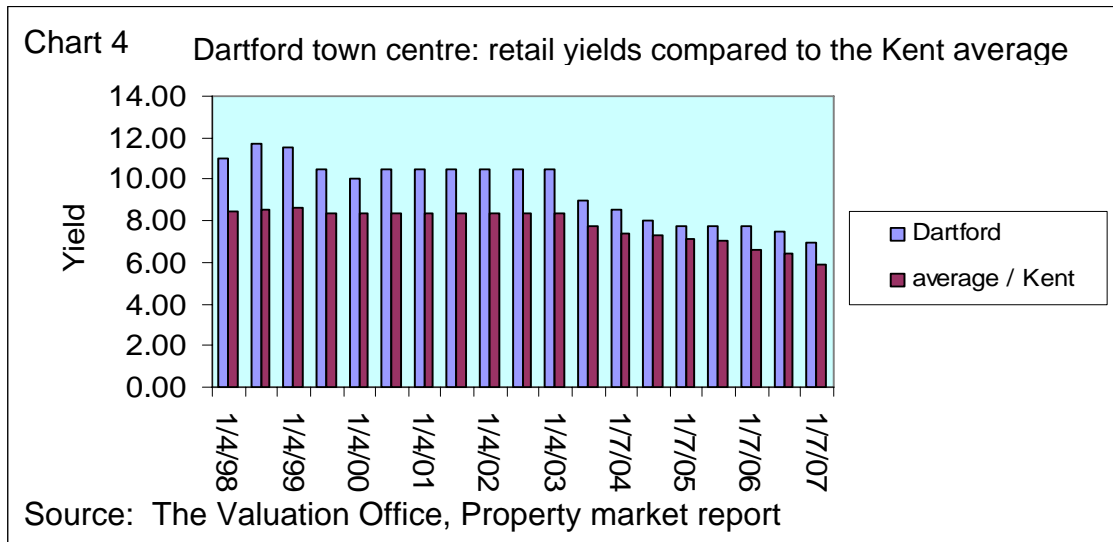
### Retail vacancies

There are a total of 264 retail properties in Dartford town centre. Of these 69 were vacant at the time of the survey giving a vacancy rate of 26%. This is higher than previous years and can be explained by the fact that the area around Lowfield Street is being redeveloped, creating a number of empty shops. See Map 2 and Chart 3.



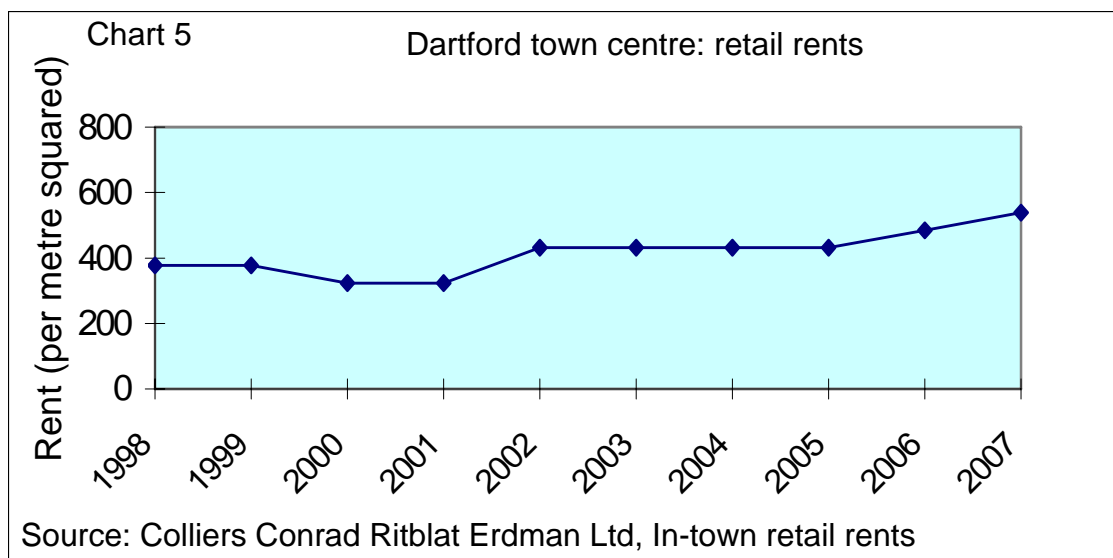
### Retail yield

Retail yield can also be used to indicate the health of the town centre over time. The most **favourable** conditions for retailers are indicated by the **lowest** yields (see Chart 4.) Retail yields in Dartford are higher than the mean yield in Kent. Further explanation of retail yield can be found in the glossary.



### Retail rents

Retail rents also reflect the health of a town centre, with high rents indicating a healthy local economy. Chart 5 indicated that there is an increase in rent apparent in the 2002 data and still continuing, that may indicate a reversal in the fall of retail rents.



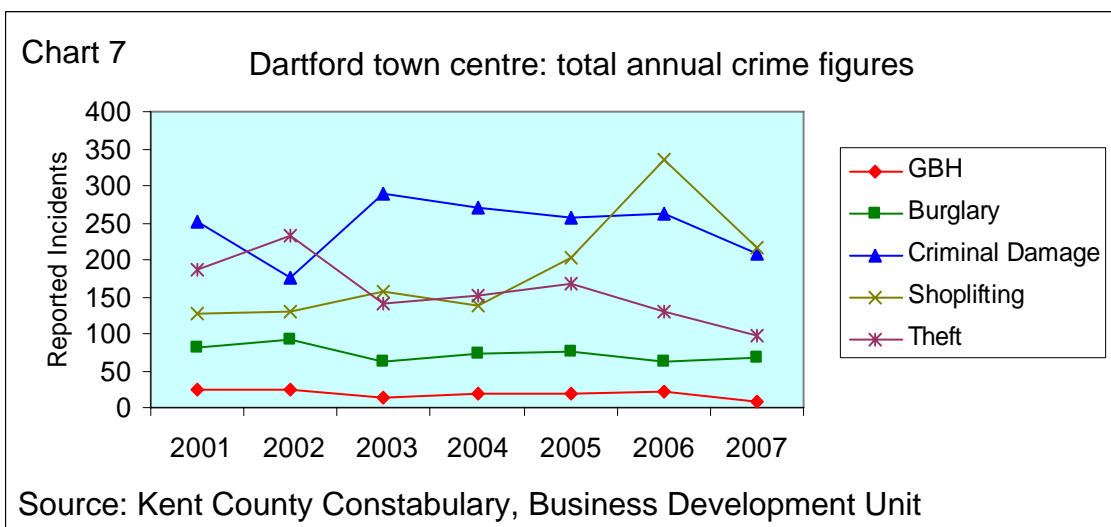
## Employment

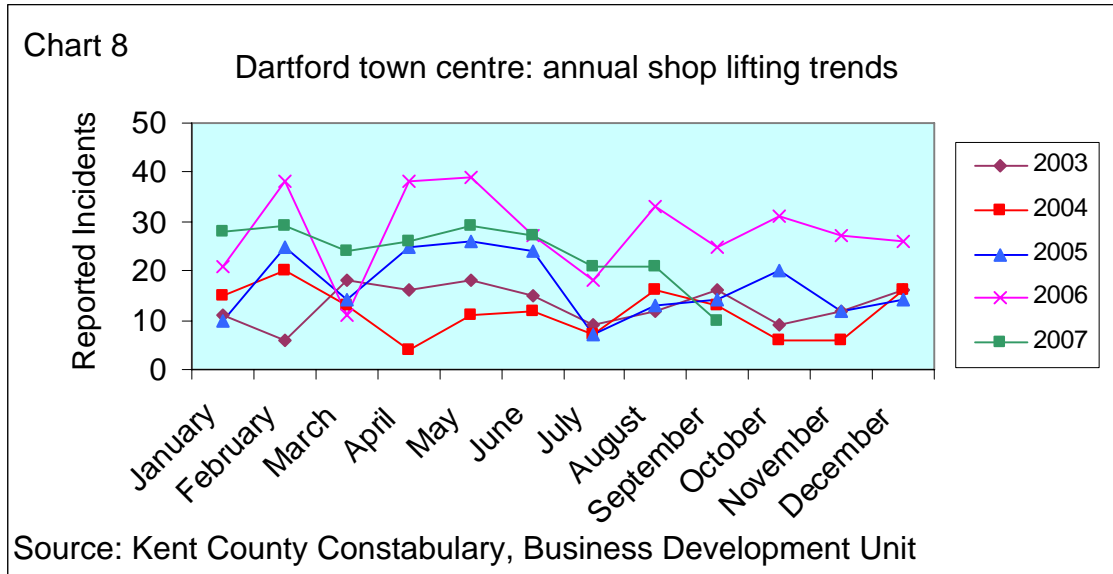
The retail sector in Dartford is a significant employer. On average 1500 people have been employed within the retail sector throughout the 1990s. In 2002 there was a large increase in retail employment, since then the figures indicate a return to the 1990s level. To compare employment figures in other towns refer to Appendix 1. The employment figures given in Chart 6 are for wards approximating the town centre area. The total employment figures within the town centre for 2006 was 8,100. Of these, approximately 18% were in retail employment.



## Crime

The recorded crime statistics for a town centre give an indication of the general health of the town centre and the community it serves. Some general crime statistics are shown in Chart 7, together with the yearly trend in reported shoplifting incidents in Chart 8. The data for 2007 only covers the period from January to September, not the whole year. In the last two years there has been a reduction in theft and criminal damage but an increase in shoplifting.

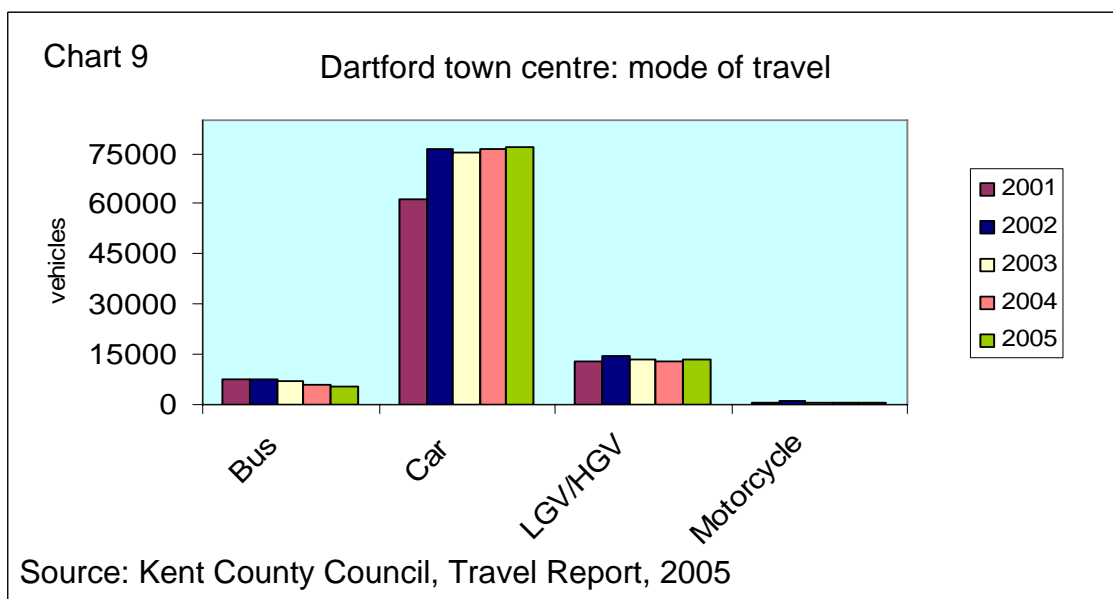


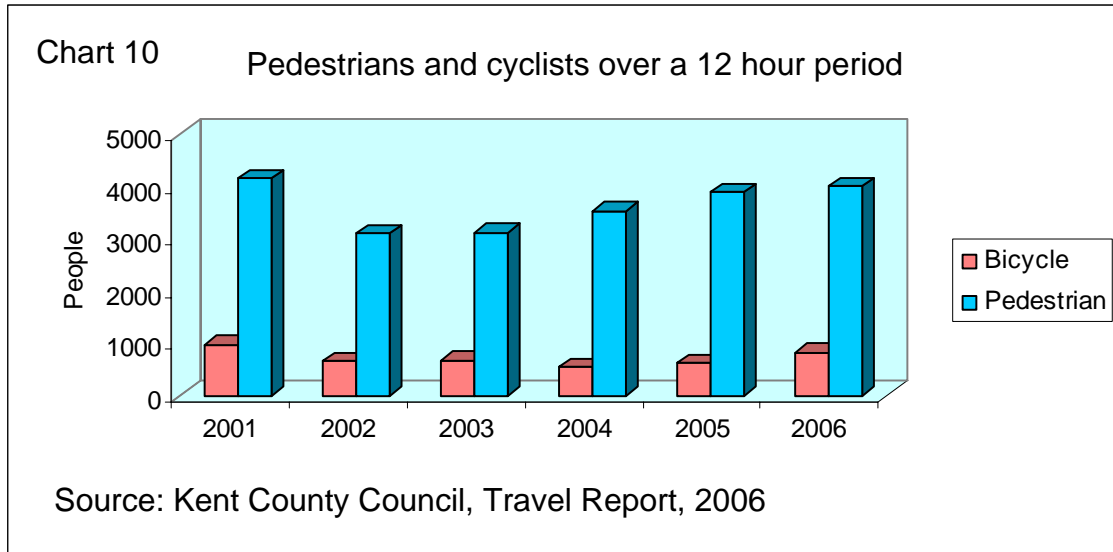


**Transport**

People access the town centre using a range of transport modes. Monitoring the use of these modes can give an indication of the accessibility of the town centre. Chart 9 shows the mode of transport into Dartford town centre over a 24 hour period and Chart 10 shows cyclist and pedestrians over a 12 hour period.

In 2006 and in the future Metrocount machines will be used to collect mode of transport data over a 24 hour period. Vehicles classes will be based on axle spacing with no distinction made between busses and HGV which will be grouped together. Cyclists and pedestrians will continue to be counted over a 12 hour period.

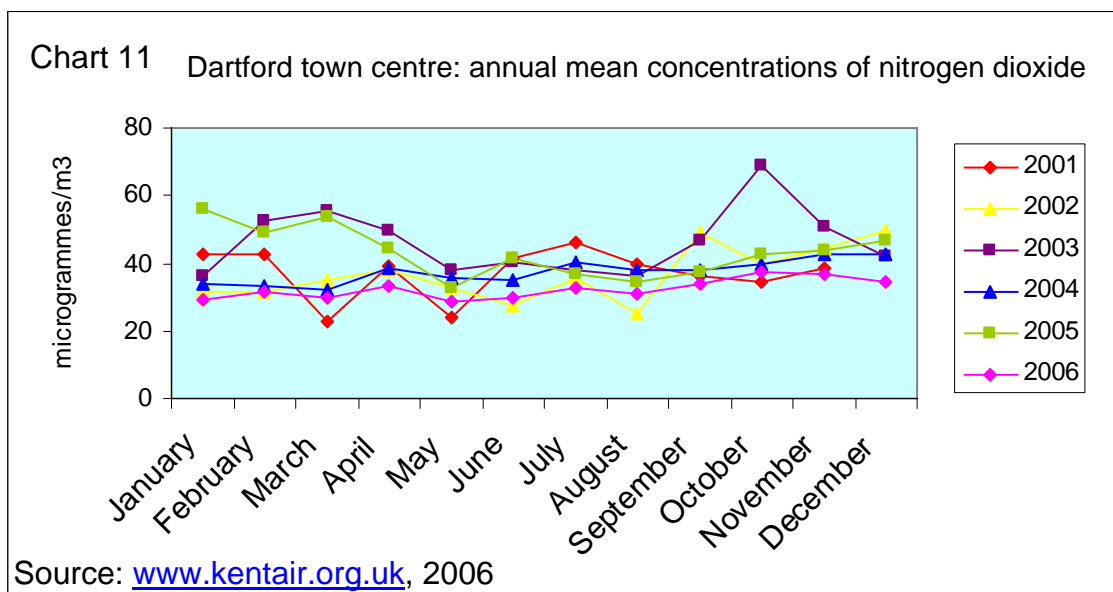




### Air Quality

There is increasing pressure to quantify and resolve threats to the quality of air we all breathe. The emissions from traffic are one of the most important sources of pollution and around 48% of the nitrogen dioxide produced in Britain is a result of road traffic. Nitrogen dioxide levels are monitored at a number of points around the county. In 2006 levels of nitrogen dioxide were recorded in microgrammes to comply with national air quality standards. In order to preserve consistency the data for previous years has also been converted to microgrammes. Chart 11 gives an indication how these concentrations vary at different times of the year.

More air quality information is available for a range of air pollutants from the Kent Air Quality Partnership web site, [www.kentair.org.uk](http://www.kentair.org.uk).



## **Residential**

There is a governmental directive to encourage more residential within the town centre boundary as stated in Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing. Dartford has approximately three hundred residential units. Flats over restaurants, public houses and retail are not included in these figures. Distribution of the residential units within the city centre boundary is shown on Map 7

## **Cultural Sector**

A further indication of the health and vitality of a centre is the number of cultural and tourists facilities within the mix of uses.

Dartford has a few cultural sites, the Orchard Theatre, Dartford Museum and the tourist information centre all within the city boundary. The floor space for the museum is 159 m<sup>2</sup>, while the theatre occupies a total of 1840 m<sup>2</sup> floor space.

# GLOSSARY

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Burglary</b>                    | This category includes all categories of burglary e.g. burglary and aggravated burglary.   |
| <b>Comparison - bulky</b>          | This includes DIY/Hardware, furniture and carpets and electrical goods.  |
| <b>Comparison -non bulky goods</b> | This includes toys, clothes, shoes, other (specialist retailers) and multi-use (variety and department stores & catalogue shops)   |
| <b>Convenience goods</b>           | This category includes products that form part of every-day life and includes food, newspapers, confectionery, tobacco, alcohol and other beverages excluding alcoholic drinks at public houses, hotels and restaurants for consumption on the premises.   |
| <b>Service Sector</b>              | This category includes cleaning, rental, hairdressing, funeral directors, betting shops, travel agents, post offices, printing shops and shoe repairers.   |
| <b>Theft</b>                       | This category includes theft from a person or motor vehicle and the theft of a pedal cycle.  |
| <b>Traffic Count</b>               | More information about the Kent County Council traffic count programme is available from 'Kent Travel Report' 2006.  |
| <b>Yield</b>                       | Yield is a measure of property value that enables properties of different size, location and other characteristics to be compared. It is the ratio of rental income to capital value, and is expressed in terms of the open market rent of a property as a percentage of the capital value. Thus, the higher the yield the lower the rent is valued, and vice versa. A high yield is an indication of concern by investors that rental income might grow less rapidly and be less secure than for a property with a low yield. |

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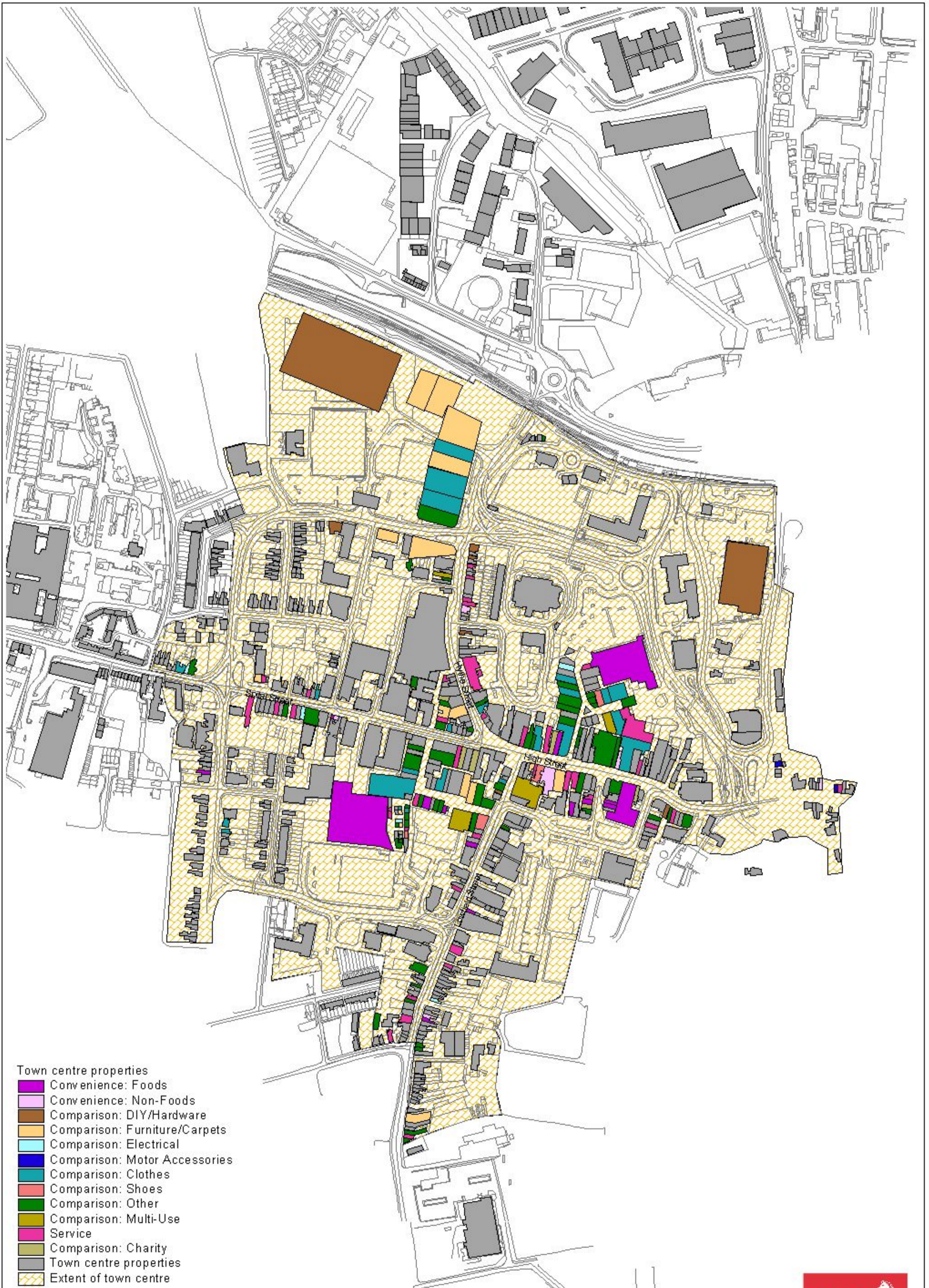


- Town centre properties
- ▨ Extent of town centre

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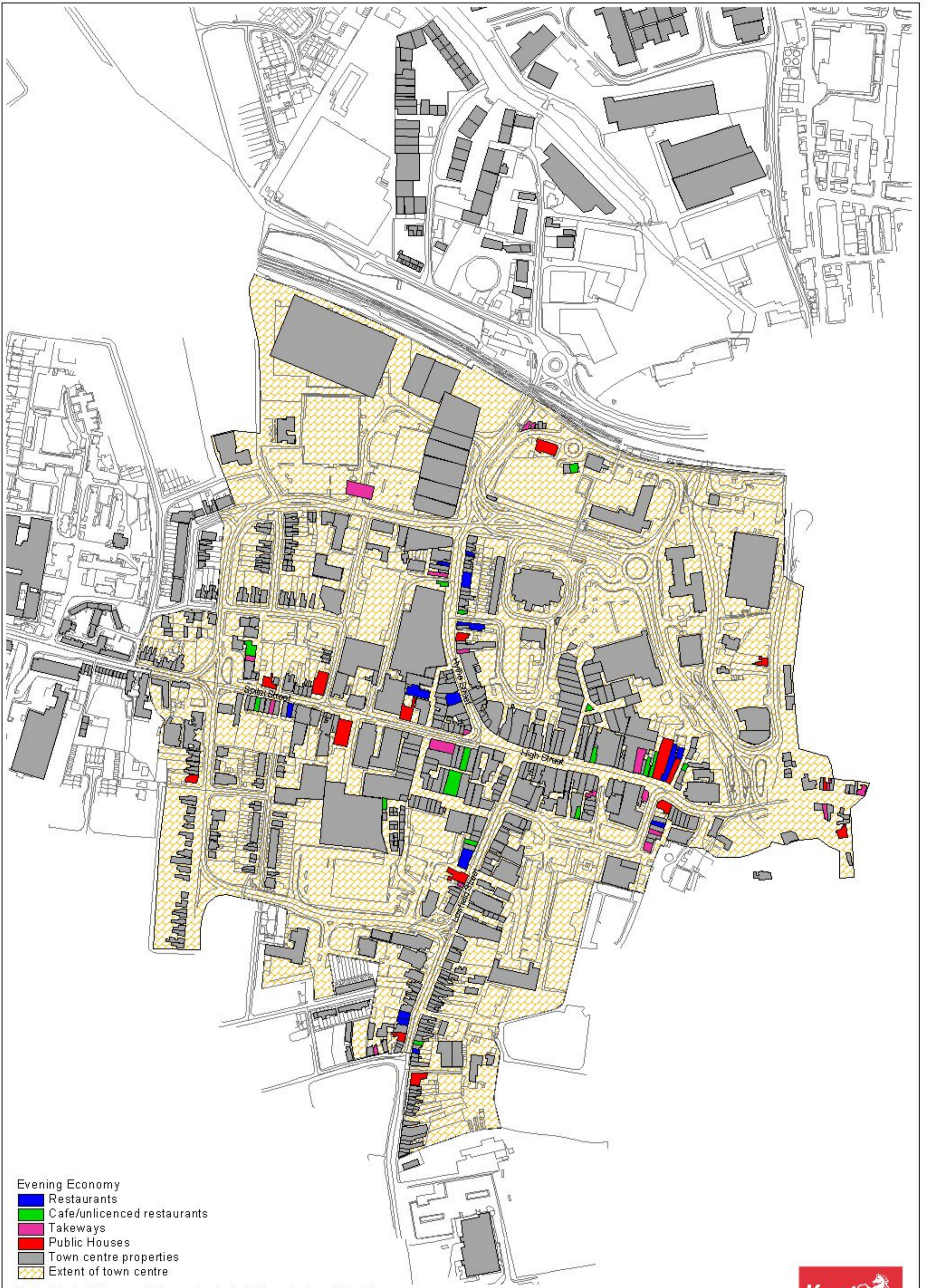


- Town centre properties
- Convenience: Foods
  - Convenience: Non-Foods
  - Comparison: DIY/Hardware
  - Comparison: Furniture/Carpets
  - Comparison: Electrical
  - Comparison: Motor Accessories
  - Comparison: Clothes
  - Comparison: Shoes
  - Comparison: Other
  - Comparison: Multi-Use
  - Service
  - Comparison: Charity
  - Town centre properties
  - Extent of town centre

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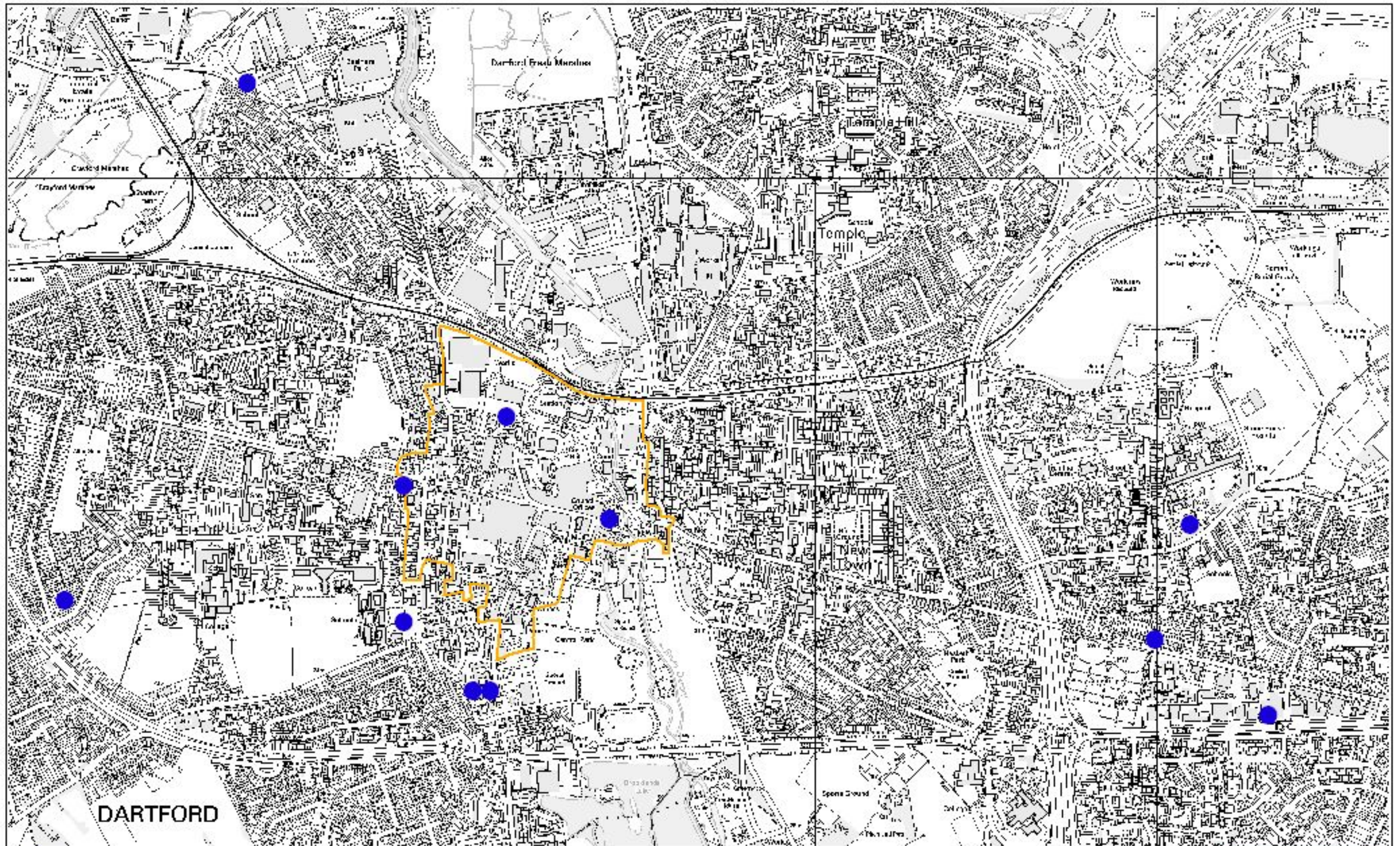


- Evening Economy
- Restaurants
  - Cafe/unlicensed restaurants
  - Takeaways
  - Public Houses
  - Town centre properties
  - Extent of town centre

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- Traffic count sites
- ▭ Extent of town centre

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