

Astley Bridge District Centre

Description

Astley Bridge District Centre is located approximately 2.5 miles north of Bolton town centre, centred on the Blackburn Road (A666) corridor and its junction with Crompton Way, Hillview Road and Old Road. The centre is multi-directional in form, with retail and service uses extending north along Blackburn Road from Warwick Street and incorporating the Asda Superstore cluster to the east of Blackburn Road at the Crompton Way junction.

The centre serves the residential communities of Astley Bridge, Sharples, Tonge Moor and Bank Top. It functions as one of Bolton's principal district centres, providing a dominant convenience anchor in the Asda Superstore on Moss Bank Way, complemented by Lidl (Crompton Way), The Range (general merchandise) and a broad range of independent retail, service and food operators along the Blackburn Road frontage. The Astley Bridge area has a largely residential hinterland, and the centre plays a critical day-to-day role for its catchment.



Figure 1: Asda Superstore forms the principal convenience anchor of the centre, prominently visible from Blackburn Road/Crompton Way junction.



Figure 2: Busy signalised crossroads forming the heart of the district centre, with high volumes of through-traffic on both Blackburn Road (A666) and Crompton Way.

Table 1 Astley Bridge District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2026 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2026 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	5,477	28.1%	28.6%
Convenience	7,072	36.2%	15.4%
Financial & Business	822	4.2%	6.0%
Leisure	3,033	15.5%	27.9%
Retail Service	2,488	12.7%	7.3%

Vacant	624	3.2%	14.3%
TOTAL	19,515	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2025.

Table 2 Astley Bridge District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2026 (no.)	Units at 2026 (%)	Units UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	13	15.3%	25.9%
Convenience	10	11.8%	9.4%
Financial & Business	5	5.9%	7.8%
Leisure	22	25.9%	26.7%
Retail Service	25	29.4%	15.9%
Vacant	10	11.8%	14.0%
TOTAL	85	100.0	100.0

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2025.

Uses

The convenience offer is a defining feature of Astley Bridge district centre and provides an important destination for both main and top-up food shopping. The centre is anchored by the Asda Superstore, which incorporates an in-store pharmacy, optician, café and petrol filling station, generating significant levels of customer activity throughout the day. This is complemented by Lidl on Crompton Way, providing a strong discount foodstore offer that broadens consumer choice and reinforces the centre's role in serving the surrounding residential catchment.

Comparison shopping is centred on The Range, which acts as the principal destination retailer for homewares, DIY and lifestyle products, attracting shoppers from beyond the immediate area. Along Blackburn Road, this offer is complemented by a range of independent retailers including clothing shops, mobile phone retailers and value-orientated stores, providing a varied comparison goods offer that supports the centre's wider retail function.

The leisure offer is focused primarily on food and drink uses. Independent cafés, sandwich shops and hot food takeaways are concentrated along Blackburn Road, providing convenient facilities for local residents and visitors, while McDonald's offers a nationally recognised food operator close to the Crompton Way junction. Although the centre provides a good range of everyday food and drink options, the evening economy remains relatively modest, with relatively few larger restaurants or leisure attractions encouraging longer visitor dwell times.

Retail services are one of the centre's principal strengths, with Blackburn Road accommodating a wide range of hairdressers, barbers, beauty salons and nail studios that generate regular repeat visits. These are complemented by services including dry cleaners, veterinary facilities, betting premises and other personal service businesses, reinforcing the centre's role in meeting the day-to-day needs of the local community.

Financial and business uses are represented by a small number of independent professional services, including solicitors, accountants and financial advisers operating from premises along Blackburn Road. Whilst traditional banking

provision has reduced over time, banking facilities remain available through the Asda complex, ensuring that essential financial services continue to be accessible within the district centre.

Daytime/Evening Economy

The daytime economy is anchored by Asda and Lidl generating consistent flows from mid-morning onwards, with the Asda café as a social dwell point. The Blackburn Road arm's hair/beauty and service cluster generates appointment-led footfall, and the McDonald's and independent takeaway operators provide a lunchtime and early-evening economy extending to around 9pm.

The formal evening economy is limited to restaurants with extended hours or licensed venues within the boundary, though there is scope to introduce one or two modest café-bar or casual dining uses on the Blackburn Road arm to extend vitality into the early evening.

Vacancies

Vacant units were scattered throughout the centre and observed particularly along the northern section of Blackburn Road, although they remain relatively dispersed and do not form a continuous frontage of empty premises. The vacancy rate in respect of floorspace in particular is significantly below the national average, indicating that the vacant units present are small in scale.

As a result, vacancy is not currently having a significant adverse effect on the vitality, viability or overall appearance of the district centre.

Opportunity Sites

There are no major developments proposed within the district centre, however there are proposals to improve active travel within the centre and its environs as part of the Astley Bridge-Crompton Active Neighbourhoods project. The scheme will provide walking and cycling access to schools, and two major shopping streets including Blackburn Road and two supermarkets.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian activity is moderate to good across the centre. The Asda Superstore and Lidl generate the highest footfall, with a consistent flow of car-borne and pedestrian shoppers throughout the day.

The northern Blackburn Road arm generates lunchtime and early evening footfall from the dense cluster of hot food, takeaway and service operators. Pedestrian permeability between the Crompton Way retail cluster and the traditional Blackburn Road high street could be improved through wayfinding and public realm investment.

Accessibility

The centre is well-served by Bee Network bus services, with stops at Blackburn Road/Asda (Stop H), Crompton Way and Moss Bank Way providing connections to Bolton town centre, Farnworth and Bury. Hall i'th' Wood Northern Rail station is approximately 0.95 miles to the east; Bromley Cross station is 1.4 miles to the north. The Asda Superstore provides ample free surface car parking. Accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists is less favourable. The busy signalised crossroads at Blackburn Road (A666) and Crompton Way, with high volumes of through-traffic, create a significant physical barrier within the centre. Pedestrian permeability between the Crompton Way retail cluster and the traditional Blackburn Road high

street is constrained by the busy crossroads and could be improved through wayfinding, crossing improvements and public realm investment.

Perception of Safety

The district centre feels safe, active and well overlooked throughout the day, with consistent pedestrian activity generated by the Asda Superstore, Lidl, The Range and the mix of independent businesses along Blackburn Road. These larger-format retailers, together with the surrounding commercial uses, provide good levels of natural surveillance and contribute to a generally welcoming environment.

Activity continues into the early evening, supported primarily by the concentration of hot food takeaways, cafés and convenience shopping, although pedestrian footfall reduces later in the evening due to the limited provision of restaurants, cafés and other leisure uses that would encourage a stronger night-time economy.

The northern section of Blackburn Road, experiences lower levels of activity and passive surveillance than the remainder of the centre. Whilst this does not currently give rise to significant safety concerns, maintaining active frontages, ensuring good-quality street lighting and bringing vacant premises back into active use would help to strengthen perceptions of safety and reinforce the vitality of this part of the district centre.

Environmental Quality

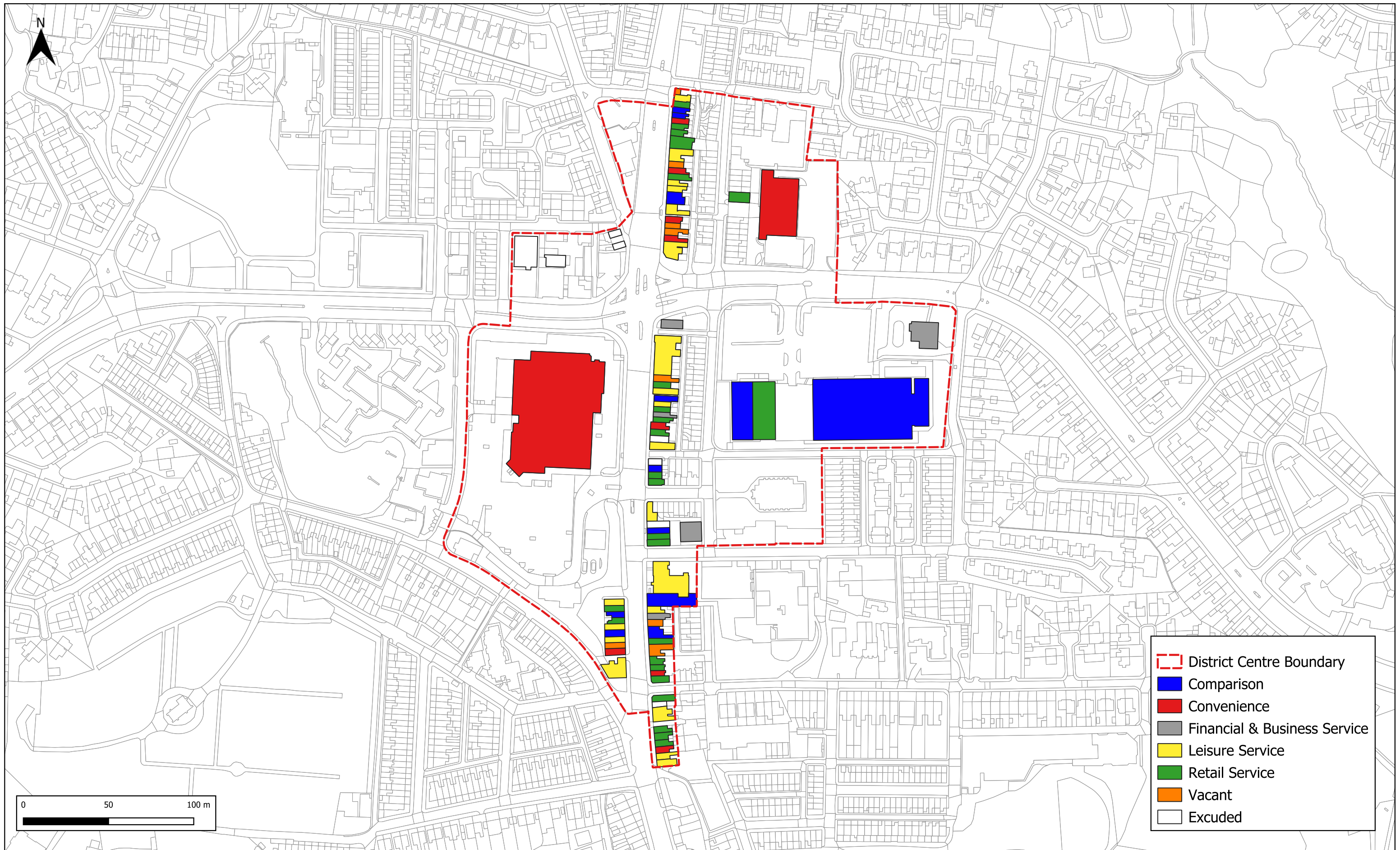
Environmental quality across Astley Bridge district centre is variable. The Crompton Way and Asda Superstore area provides a modern, well-maintained environment, with generous parking, wide footways and a generally attractive public realm that creates a positive first impression. In contrast, the traditional Blackburn Road frontage displays a more mixed character, where the quality of shopfronts varies considerably and some sections of the footway show signs of wear.

The presence of vacant units in the northern part of Blackburn Road also detracts slightly from the overall appearance of this section of the centre. Targeted investment in shopfront enhancements, resurfacing and maintenance of footways, additional street planting and other public realm improvements would help strengthen the visual quality of Blackburn Road and create a more cohesive and attractive district centre.

Conclusions

Astley Bridge District Centre is performing well against most key health indicators. The Asda Superstore provides a dominant and well-patronised convenience anchor, complemented by Lidl and The Range to create a distinctive multi-anchor district centre offer. The northern Blackburn Road arm contributes a broad independent retail, service and food offer that serves the diverse daily needs of the local catchment.

Vacancy levels are low and the centre retains good transport accessibility. The principal challenges are the disconnected character between the Crompton Way car-oriented cluster and the traditional high street arm, and the variable environmental quality of the Blackburn Road frontage. With targeted investment in public realm and shopfront improvement, Astley Bridge is well-placed to remain a healthy and well-functioning district centre within Bolton's retail hierarchy.



Brightmet District Centre

Description

Brightmet District Centre is situated approximately 1.85 miles east of Bolton town centre, centred on the Brightmet Retail Park at the Brightmet Fold Lane/Bury Road/Milnthorpe Road junction (BL2 6NY). The northern part of the boundary encompasses a separate community cluster along Brightmet Fold Lane, including Cohens Chemist and Brightmet Library.

The centre serves the communities of Brightmet, Tonge Fold, Tonge Moor, Darcy Lever and Ainsworth. The quantum and character of the retail offer, including The Food Warehouse by Iceland, B&M, Home Bargains, Aldi and Greggs reflects its retail park function. The Brightmet Retail Park is the primary driver of footfall, whilst the northern cluster fulfils a distinct community and health service role.



Figure 1: Home Bargains forms one of the key discount retail anchors of the Brightmet Retail Park, occupying a modern purpose-built unit with an in-store café, well-maintained car parking, representing of the retail park's strong discount and value retail offer.



Figure 2: The Bury Road frontage opposite the retail park comprises a modest strip of independent convenience, health and beauty, and service operators and takeaways.

Table 1 Brightmet District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2026 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2026 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	2,859	35.7%	28.6%
Convenience	3,186	39.7%	15.4%
Financial & Business	80	1.0%	6.0%
Leisure	1,478	18.4%	27.9%
Retail Service	415	5.2%	7.3%
Vacant	0	0.0%	14.3%
TOTAL	8,018	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2025.

Table 2 Brightmet District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2026 (no.)	Units at 2026 (%)	Units UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	6	22.2%	25.9%
Convenience	6	22.2%	9.4%
Financial & Business	1	3.7%	7.8%
Leisure	7	25.9%	26.7%
Retail Service	7	25.9%	15.9%
Vacant	0	0.0%	14.0%
TOTAL	27	100.0%	100.0%

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2025.

Uses

Brightmet district centre benefits from a strong convenience offer which is anchored by The Food Warehouse by Iceland at Brightmet Retail Park and Aldi on Bury Road. Together these stores provide for both main and top-up food shopping and attract regular customer footfall throughout the day. They are complemented by a small number of additional convenience retailers, ensuring that the centre performs an important role in meeting the everyday shopping needs of the surrounding residential catchment.

The comparison goods offer is centred on value retailers, with B&M and Home Bargains acting as the principal comparison anchors. Together these operators provide a broad range of household goods, homewares, garden products and general merchandise, complementing the convenience offer and reinforcing the centre's role as a practical shopping destination. While the comparison offer is relatively limited in variety, it is well aligned with the day-to-day needs of local residents.

Leisure provision is modest and is focused primarily on food and drink uses. The centre accommodates a number of independent takeaway operators, including Zumuku Sushi Bolton, Lee Hing and U Kitchen Chinese Takeout, which provide a range of cuisines and support the centre's daytime and early evening activity. However, there are few wider leisure uses, such as cafés, restaurants or entertainment venues, and consequently the evening economy is relatively limited.

Retail services provide an important supporting role within the district centre. These include Hair Masters and the Brightmet Post Office which complement the retail offer by providing a range of day-to-day personal and convenience services. Whilst the range of retail service operators is relatively modest, it is appropriate for a district centre of this scale and contributes to the centre's role in serving the everyday needs of the local community.

Financial and business uses are limited, with only a small representation of professional services within the district centre. As a result, this sector makes a relatively minor contribution to the overall function of the centre, with its role remaining firmly focused on convenience shopping and local services.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Brightmet district centre's daytime economy is driven primarily by the larger-format retailers within the retail park, with Aldi, The Food Warehouse by Iceland, B&M and Home Bargains generating consistent customer activity throughout the day and particularly at weekends. These retailers are complemented by Greggs and a small number of independent businesses along Bury Road, whilst the cluster of community facilities around Brightmet Fold Lane, including the library, pharmacy and post office, serves a more localised function and attracts regular day-to-day visits from nearby residents. Collectively, these uses ensure that the centre performs well as a convenient shopping and service destination for its surrounding residential catchment.

The evening economy is relatively limited. Activity declines noticeably once the larger retailers close during the evening, leaving only the independent takeaway operators along Bury Road to generate pedestrian activity outside normal trading hours. Consequently, there is little to encourage visitors to remain in the centre during the evening or to attract trips beyond those associated with takeaway food.

Vacancies

Brightmet benefits from the absence of vacant units within the defined district centre boundary, indicating that the existing commercial floorspace is fully occupied and continues to meet the needs of local businesses and residents. The lack of vacant premises contributes positively to the centre's vitality, ensuring that active frontages are maintained throughout and reinforcing perceptions of a well-functioning centre.

Opportunity Sites

There are very few opportunities for significant redevelopment in Brightmet, with the majority of the centre occupied by established retail, community and service uses. As a result, the principal opportunities lie in enhancing the quality and functionality of the existing environment rather than accommodating major new development. There is however scope to improve accessibility within the district centre by introducing cycle parking to encourage sustainable travel to and from the centre.

Pedestrian Flows

The Brightmet Retail Park dominates pedestrian and vehicle activity, drawing sustained footfall from across the local catchment and beyond. Aldi, Iceland Food Warehouse, B&M and Home Bargains generate a consistent flow of car-borne shoppers throughout the day, peaking at weekends.

The northern Brightmet Fold Lane cluster generates more localised pedestrian activity from residents accessing community and health services. Pedestrian connectivity between the northern cluster and the retail park is limited.

Accessibility

Brightmet district centre is readily accessible by car via Bury Road (A58) and Brightmet Fold Lane, with the retail park benefiting from extensive customer parking that supports its role as a convenient shopping destination. The centre is also served by a number of bus stops along Bury Road and Brightmet Fold Lane, providing regular services to Bolton town centre and surrounding residential areas. Whilst there are no railway stations within easy walking distance, Hall i' th' Wood and Moses Gate stations are located approximately 1.8 and 2 miles from the centre respectively.

Accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists is less favourable. The dual carriageway nature of the A58 creates a significant physical barrier within the centre, making movement on foot between different parts of the district centre less convenient and reducing the attractiveness of cycling. Although pedestrian crossings are provided, the dominance of vehicular traffic limits the quality of the pedestrian environment in places.

Opportunities to introduce additional cycling infrastructure would help improve accessibility for non-car users and create stronger links between the retail park, community facilities and the surrounding residential areas.

Perception of Safety

The centre feels safe and well-managed during the day, with multiple national operators and consistent footfall. The Brightmet Fold Lane community uses maintains reasonable activity during opening hours. There were little signs of antisocial behaviour throughout the centre and the centre is well overlooked with residential units on the upper floors of the cluster of retail units along Bury Road.

Environmental Quality

The environmental quality of Brightmet district centre is generally good and reflects its predominantly modern retail park character. The retail park is well maintained, with modern buildings, clear signage and extensive customer parking contributing to a functional shopping environment. The community facilities centred on Brightmet Fold Lane are also generally well maintained and present a positive appearance, reinforcing their role in serving the surrounding residential community.

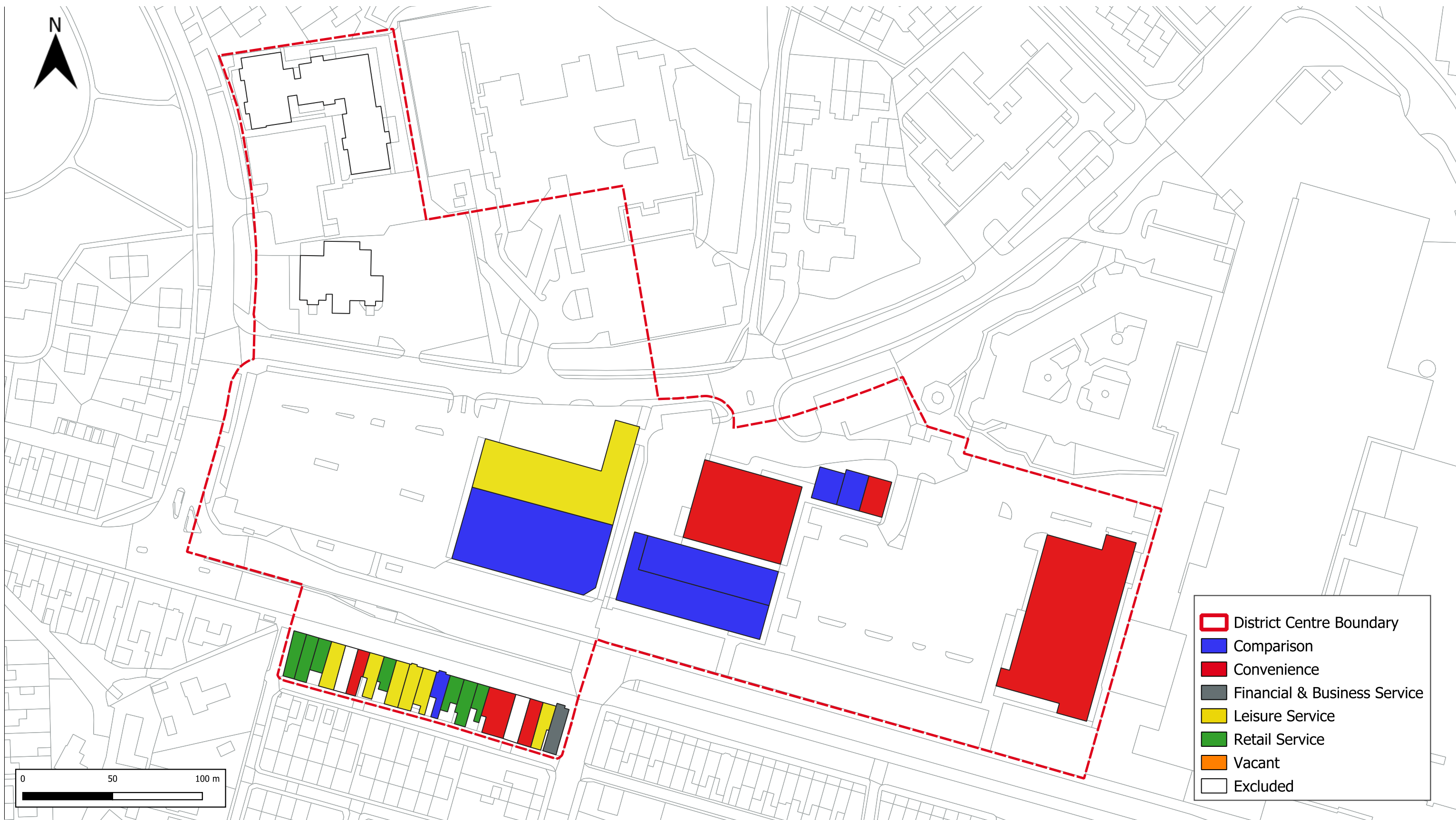
More generally, there is scope for additional cycle parking and cycle lanes, which would further improve the attractiveness and accessibility of the district centre.

Conclusions

Brightmet District Centre performs an important convenience, discount retail and community service function for the east Bolton catchment. The Brightmet Retail Park is anchored by Aldi, The Food Warehouse by Iceland, B&M and Home Bargains, providing a strong discount convenience and general merchandise offer. Cohens Chemist outside the defined centre boundary and Brightmet Library fulfil essential health and civic roles in the northern cluster.

The centre performs well against most health indicators: vacancy rates are low, the anchor operator offer is strong and well-patronised, and car accessibility is good. The principal weaknesses are the limited cycle infrastructure within the centre.

As a designated District Centre, Brightmet effectively operates at a scale and with a retail offer that performs a district centre function for its catchment.



Chorley Old Road District Centre

Description

Chorley Old Road District Centre is located approximately 1.3 miles west of Bolton town centre and is centred on the junction of Chorley Old Road, Mornington Road and Victory Street. The centre extends from the Morrisons Superstore and the former Atlas Mills site in the east, along Chorley Old Road where a continuous frontage of independent shops, cafés, restaurants and service businesses forms the traditional commercial core. The district centre also includes the Bolton Steam Museum, together with a number of commercial premises extending north towards Ivy Road.

The centre serves the surrounding residential communities of Halliwell, Daubhill and the western suburbs of Bolton. Morrisons provides the principal convenience anchor and generates significant levels of footfall throughout the day, while the traditional high street accommodates a diverse mix of independent retailers, food outlets and service businesses that contribute to the centre's distinct character. The presence of Bolton Steam Museum and the proximity of Queen's Park further broaden the centre's role beyond day-to-day shopping by providing heritage and recreational attractions within walking distance of the commercial area.



Figure 1: Morrisons Superstore occupies the former Atlas Mills site, presents a prominent and well-established anchor presence and mobility-impaired pedestrian access from Mornington Road level.



Figure 2: The Chorley Old Road frontage illustrates the centre's diverse, multicultural, independent retail character.

Table 1 Chorley Old Road District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2026 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2026 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	5,133	38.6	28.6

Convenience	1,467	11.0	15.4
Financial & Business	320	2.4	6.0
Leisure	2,265	17.0	27.9
Retail Service	3,190	24.0	7.3
Vacant	910	6.8	14.3
TOTAL	13,286	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2025.

Table 2 Chorley Old Road District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2026 (no.)	Units at 2026 (%)	Units UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	23	20.2%	25.9%
Convenience	17	14.9%	9.4%
Financial & Business	9	7.9%	7.8%
Leisure	25	21.9%	26.7%
Retail Service	29	25.4%	15.9%
Vacant	11	9.6%	14.0%
TOTAL	114	100.0%	100.0%

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2025.

Uses

Chorley Old Road benefits from a varied convenience offer centred on the Morrisons Superstore, which provides a comprehensive range of food shopping facilities alongside a café, bakery, butcher, fishmonger, petrol filling station and other customer services. The supermarket is complemented by a number of independent convenience stores and specialist food retailers located along Chorley Old Road, ensuring that the centre performs well in meeting the everyday shopping needs of its surrounding residential catchment.

The comparison offer is predominantly independent in nature and reflects the centre's traditional high street character. Whilst there are relatively few national multiple retailers, a range of specialist businesses, including bathroom showrooms, collectables, building materials and motor-related businesses, provide a varied comparison offer that serves both local residents and trade customers. Together these retailers contribute to the diversity of the district centre and distinguish it from centres that are more heavily reliant on national operators.

Leisure uses are concentrated along Chorley Old Road and Victory Street, where independent cafés, restaurants, sandwich shops and hot food takeaways provide a good choice of food and drink establishments. These businesses support activity throughout the day and into the early evening, whilst Bolton Steam Museum provides a unique heritage attraction that adds further diversity to the centre's offer and attracts visitors from a wider catchment.

Retail services represent an important component of the district centre and are particularly well represented by hairdressers, barbers, beauty salons and other personal service businesses. These are complemented by

a range of specialist operators, including vehicle repair businesses and trade-related services, reflecting the centre's mixed commercial character and generating regular repeat visits throughout the week.

Financial and business uses are more limited, comprising a small number of independent professional services together with cashpoint facilities provided by Morrisons. Whilst traditional banking provision is limited, the existing businesses contribute to the diversity of the centre's commercial offer.

The centre also benefits from several important community facilities. Bolton Steam Museum occupies part of the former Atlas Mills complex and provides a distinctive heritage attraction within the district centre, whilst Bolton Hospice, located about 1km from Chorlton Road District Centre, which further strengthens the area's wider community role.

Daytime/Evening Economy

The daytime economy of Chorley Old Road District Centre is underpinned by the Morrisons Superstore, which generates consistent levels of footfall throughout the day and acts as the principal destination for shoppers. The supermarket is complemented by a diverse range of independent retailers, cafés, takeaways and service businesses along Chorley Old Road and Victory Street, which collectively sustain activity and provide for the everyday needs of the surrounding residential communities. Bolton Steam Museum also contributes to daytime activity by attracting visitors to the former Atlas Mills site, broadening the centre's appeal beyond its shopping function.

The evening economy is more limited and is primarily focused on food and drink uses. Independent takeaways, cafés and restaurants continue to generate activity beyond normal retail trading hours, whilst the extended opening hours of Morrisons provide an additional source of evening footfall. However, the centre contains relatively few restaurants, public houses or other leisure uses capable of creating a stronger evening destination, and activity declines noticeably later in the evening.

Vacancies

Vacancy levels within Chorley Old Road District Centre are relatively low and compare favourably with national averages. The majority of vacant units are concentrated towards the northern section of Chorley Old Road, although they are interspersed with occupied businesses and do not create extensive inactive frontages.

Elsewhere, occupancy levels remain strong, with the Morrisons Superstore and the surrounding mix of independent retailers and service businesses ensuring that the centre retains an active commercial function. Overall, the current pattern of vacancy is not considered to have a significant adverse effect on the vitality, viability or appearance of the district centre.

Opportunity Sites

Chorley Old Road District Centre contains relatively few large-scale redevelopment opportunities, with the majority of the commercial frontage remaining occupied and in active use. Consequently, the

greatest opportunities lie in enhancing existing assets and improving the relationship between different parts of the centre.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian activity within the district centre is principally generated by the Morrisons Superstore, which attracts a steady flow of shoppers throughout the day and acts as the main source of footfall. Activity extends westwards along Chorley Old Road, where the concentration of independent retailers, cafés, takeaways and service businesses encourages linked trips between the supermarket and the traditional shopping frontage.

Footfall is generally strongest around the Morrisons entrance and the junction with Victory Street before gradually reducing towards the northern end of the centre. Activity continues into the early evening around the cafés, restaurants and takeaway operators, although overall pedestrian movement declines as daytime shopping trips diminish. Whilst the centre functions well overall, opportunities remain to strengthen pedestrian connections between the Morrisons car park and the traditional high street, helping to encourage greater movement throughout the district centre.

Accessibility

Chorley Old Road District Centre is well connected by public transport, with frequent bus services operating along Chorley Old Road and Chorley New Road providing links to Bolton town centre and surrounding residential areas. Bolton railway station lies approximately 1.6 miles to the south-east, providing access to destinations across Greater Manchester and beyond.

The centre is also readily accessible by car, with the Morrisons Superstore providing a substantial area of free surface parking that serves both the supermarket. Pedestrian accessibility is generally good, with footways provided throughout the centre and several crossing opportunities along the main commercial frontage. Cycling provision is limited, with little dedicated infrastructure available for cyclists travelling to or through the district centre.

Perception of Safety

Chorley Old Road District Centre generally feels safe and well used during the day, benefiting from regular pedestrian activity generated by the Morrisons Superstore and the concentration of independent retailers, cafés and service businesses along the traditional shopping frontage. These uses provide good levels of natural surveillance, contributing to a welcoming and active environment throughout normal trading hours.

Perceptions of safety become more variable towards the northern end of the district centre, where the commercial frontage becomes less continuous and a small cluster of vacant units and commercial premises creates a quieter environment. Whilst this area experiences lower levels of pedestrian activity, there was little evidence during our site visit of vandalism, graffiti or anti-social behaviour. Activity continues into the

early evening through the centre's cafés, takeaways and restaurants, although overall footfall declines as daytime shopping trips diminish.

Environmental Quality

Environmental quality within Chorley Old Road District Centre is mixed and reflects the varied character of the surrounding built environment. The Morrisons Superstore and its associated car park provide a modern, well-maintained retail environment, whilst the traditional Chorley Old Road frontage retains an active high street character, supported by a diverse mix of independent businesses. The presence of Bolton Steam Museum also contributes positively to the centre's identity by preserving part of the historic Atlas Mills complex and reinforcing the area's industrial heritage.

Elsewhere, the quality of the public realm is more variable. The transition between the traditional shopping frontage and the commercial and industrial uses towards the northern part of the centre creates a less cohesive townscape.

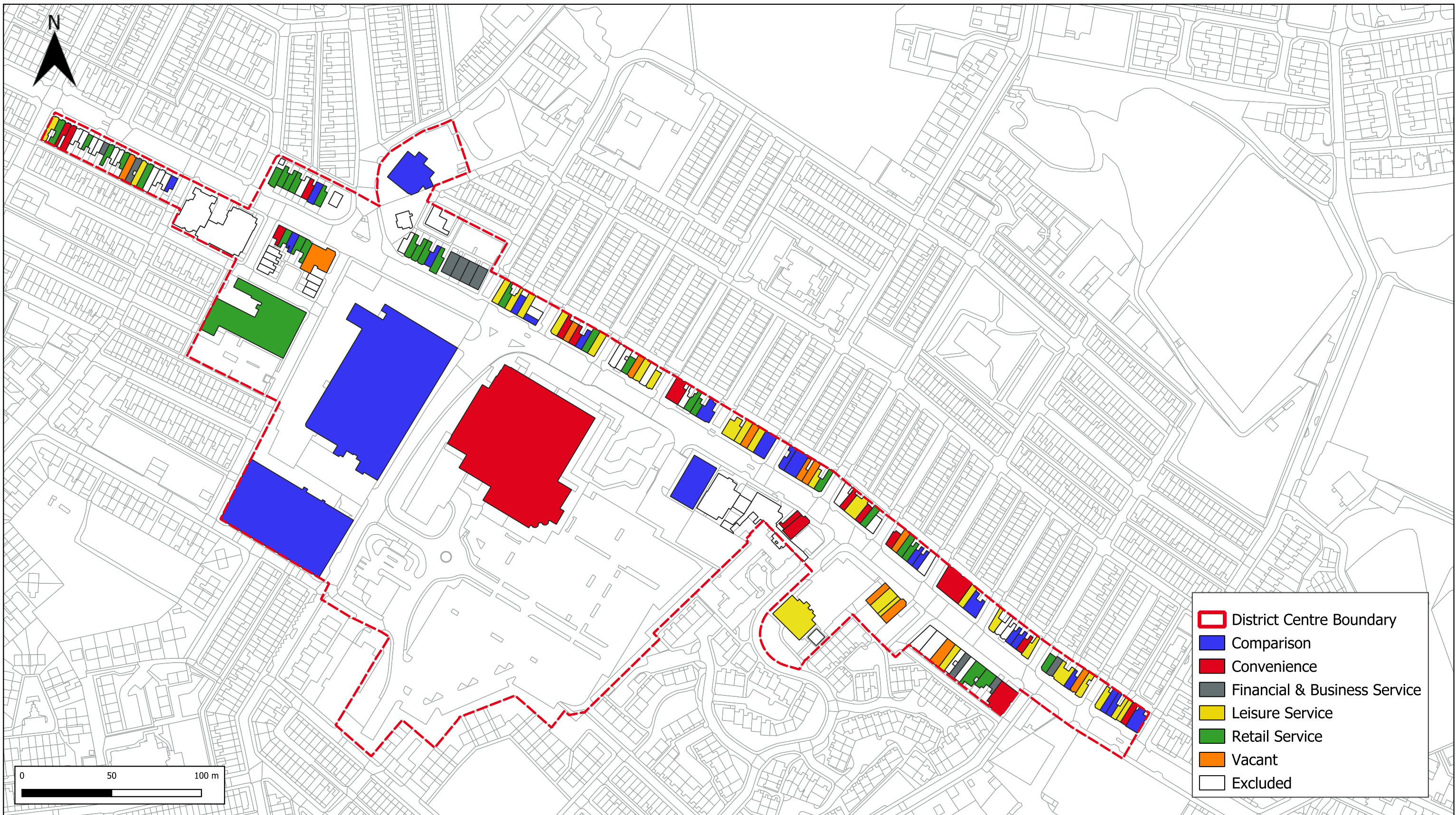
There are also opportunities to improve the public realm through enhancements to paving, street furniture and landscaping, creating a more attractive environment and strengthening the visual coherence of the district centre. Nevertheless, the centre was generally free from significant graffiti and litter at the time of our site visit, and overall environmental quality is considered appropriate for its function.

Conclusions

In summary, Chorley Old Road District Centre performs an important role in meeting the day-to-day shopping and service needs of the surrounding communities of Halliwell, Daubhill and western Bolton. The Morrisons Superstore provides a strong convenience anchor that generates consistent footfall throughout the day, supporting a diverse range of independent retailers, cafés, takeaways and service businesses along the traditional Chorley Old Road frontage. The presence of Bolton Steam Museum also distinguishes the centre from many comparable district centres, adding a heritage and visitor dimension to its overall offer.

The centre benefits from a varied mix of uses, relatively low vacancy levels and good accessibility by both car and public transport. Whilst environmental quality is generally good, opportunities remain to improve the public realm and strengthen the relationship between the Morrisons Superstore and the traditional shopping frontage. Further investment in the Bolton Steam Museum, together with the continued reoccupation of vacant premises and enhancements to the public realm, would reinforce the centre's vitality and help attract additional visitors.

Overall, Chorley Old Road is considered to be a healthy and viable district centre that continues to perform an important role within Bolton's network of centres and is well placed to meet the everyday needs of its local catchment.



Harwood District Centre

Description

Harwood District Centre is located approximately 3.5 miles north-east of Bolton town centre, centred on the Lea Gate Road, with the defined boundary extending south along Hough Fold Way to encompass the Morrisons Superstore and its extensive free surface car park, and north-east along Longsight Road to include a compact strip of independent retail, food and service operators. Harwood Library and Harwood Pharmacy are key community facilities within the boundary.

The centre serves the predominantly residential community of Harwood a largely suburban district bordering Bury, which is characterised as 'mostly residential, with the few businesses concentrated around a Morrisons supermarket at its centre. The Morrisons Superstore is the undisputed anchor of the centre and the primary driver of footfall, supported by a compact cluster of independent operators and community facilities.



Figure 1: The Morrisons Superstore presents a well-maintained, pitched-roof suburban format with active frontage, accessible car parking including dedicated disabled bays.



Figure 2: Harwood Medical Centre is a GP surgery within the defined centre boundary, reinforcing Harwood's role as a multi-use community Destination, further strengthening the case for health, pharmacy and community services.

Table 1 Harwood District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2026 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2026 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	507	7.4	28.6
Convenience	4,539	66.7	15.4
Financial & Business	78	1.1	6.0
Leisure	626	9.2	27.9
Retail Service	896	13.2	7.3
Vacant	164	2.4	14.3
TOTAL	6,810	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2025.

Table 2 Harwood District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2026 (no.)	Units at 2026 (%)	Units UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	7	28.0	25.9
Convenience	2	8.0	9.4
Financial & Business	1	4.0	7.8
Leisure	6	24.0	26.7
Retail Service	8	32.0	15.9
Vacant	1	4.0	14.0
TOTAL	25	100.0	100.0

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of April 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report September 2025.

Uses

Harwood's retail offer is predominantly convenience-led, reflecting the dominant role of the Morrisons Superstore. In addition to providing a comprehensive food shopping offer, the store incorporates a café, petrol filling station, bakery, butcher, fishmonger, ATM, parcel locker and other customer facilities, enabling it to meet a wide range of day-to-day needs. The supermarket is complemented by a small number of independent convenience and specialist retailers, ensuring that the centre performs well in serving its local residential catchment.

Comparison shopping is relatively limited, although the centre accommodates a small selection of independent retailers, including Little Black Dress, which adds variety to the overall offer. The comparison function is secondary to the centre's convenience role but nevertheless contributes to its diversity.

Leisure uses provide an important complementary function and are concentrated along Lea Gate and Longsight Road. Independent cafés and restaurants, including The Nook and Cranny, Bill and Co and Thai Kitchen, are complemented by traditional public houses such as The Plough and House Without A Name. Together these businesses provide opportunities for both daytime and evening social activity that are above what might typically be expected for a district centre of this size.

Retail services are well represented by a range of hairdressers, barbers, and other personal service businesses, alongside a petrol filling station. These

uses generate regular repeat visits and complement the centre's wider retail offer. Financial and business uses on the other hand are limited, with the presence of one estate agent in the centre.

Daytime/Evening Economy

Harwood District Centre functions primarily as a daytime shopping and service destination, with Morrisons acting as the principal driver of activity from early morning through to the evening. The supermarket generates a consistent flow of customers throughout the day, supported by Harwood Library, Harwood Medical Centre, Harwood Pharmacy and the surrounding independent retailers and service businesses, which collectively sustain regular pedestrian activity.

Unlike many district centres of a similar size, Harwood also benefits from a modest but established evening economy. The Plough and 'House Without A Name' public houses, together with Thai Kitchen, The Nook and Cranny and Bill and Co, provide opportunities for eating, drinking and socialising beyond normal retail trading hours. Whilst the scale of the evening economy is relatively small and principally serves the local community, it contributes to continued activity after daytime shopping has ceased and reinforces Harwood's role as a district centre for both shopping and leisure.

Vacancies

Vacancy levels within Harwood District Centre remain very low, with only a single vacant unit identified at the time of the survey. This comprises the former Royal Bank of Scotland branch, which has remained vacant since the bank closed in 2019. Whilst the premises occupy a prominent location within the centre, the absence of further vacancies reflects Harwood's generally strong performance and the important role of the Morrisons Superstore in sustaining customer footfall and supporting the surrounding mix of independent businesses.

Opportunity Sites

Harwood District Centre contains few redevelopment opportunities owing to its compact size, full occupancy and established suburban character. No development projects have been proposed within the centre and around the centre at the time of the survey.

Pedestrian Flows

Pedestrian activity within Harwood is centred on the Morrisons Superstore, which generates a steady flow of shoppers throughout the day and acts as the principal source of footfall within the district centre. Activity extends along Lea Gate, where independent cafés, restaurants, retailers and community facilities attract local residents and encourage linked trips between the supermarket and the traditional shopping frontage.

Although the majority of visitors are likely to arrive by car, the compact nature of the centre allows most destinations to be reached on foot once within the centre. Pedestrian activity continues into the early evening, supported by the cafés, restaurants and public houses, including The Plough and 'House Without A Name'. Whilst evening footfall is naturally lower than during the daytime, these uses help maintain activity beyond normal retail trading hours and contribute to the centre's vitality.

Accessibility

Harwood District Centre is highly accessible by car, with the Morrisons Superstore providing a substantial area of free surface parking that serves the supermarket. The centre is also accessible by public transport, with the 507 bus service providing regular connections to Bolton town centre and surrounding residential areas, whilst the 480 school service operates on weekdays. Bromley Cross railway station lies approximately 1.5 miles to the north-west, providing rail connections to Manchester Victoria and Blackburn.

Pedestrian accessibility within the district centre is generally good. The compact layout allows visitors to move easily between Morrisons, Lea Gate and the surrounding shops, services and community facilities. However, cycling provision is limited, with little dedicated infrastructure to encourage journeys by bicycle.

Perception of Safety

Harwood District Centre benefits from a strong perception of safety, reflecting its predominantly residential setting, active community facilities and consistently occupied commercial units. Morrisons generates regular levels of footfall throughout the day, while Harwood Library, Harwood Medical Centre and the surrounding independent businesses provide additional natural surveillance and ensure the centre remains active during normal trading hours.

Activity continues into the evening through the cafés, restaurants and public houses, although at a more modest level than during the day. Nevertheless, these uses help maintain a degree of natural surveillance beyond standard retail hours, and there was little evidence during our site visit of anti-social behaviour, vandalism or other factors that might detract from perceptions of safety. Overall, Harwood presents as a welcoming and secure district centre.

Environmental Quality

Environmental quality within Harwood District Centre is good overall and reflects its suburban village character. The Morrisons Superstore and its associated car park are well maintained and provide a modern retail environment, whilst the Lea Gate frontage benefits from attractive independent businesses, traditional buildings and a pleasant streetscape that contributes positively to the centre's identity. Harwood Library and the adjoining community facilities further enhance the civic character of the district centre.

Conclusions

In summary, Harwood District Centre performs well as a compact, convenience-led district centre serving its surrounding residential catchment. The Morrisons Superstore provides a strong and well-established anchor that generates consistent footfall throughout the day, supporting a complementary mix of independent retailers, cafés, restaurants, public houses and service businesses. Community facilities, including Harwood Library, Harwood Medical Centre and the Places for People community centre, further strengthen the centre's role as a focal point for local shopping, services and community activity.

The centre benefits from full occupancy, a good perception of safety and a well-maintained environment, all of which contribute positively to its vitality and viability. Whilst accessibility by car is a particular strength, opportunities remain to improve cycle facilities within the centre will encourage other sustainable means of transport within the centre.

Although Harwood's evening economy is relatively modest, it is stronger than might typically be expected for a district centre of this scale, with cafés, restaurants and public houses continuing to generate activity beyond normal retail trading hours. Overall, Harwood is a healthy and well-performing district centre that is well placed to continue meeting the everyday shopping and service needs of its local community.

