



# Waterloo District Centre Health Check Assessment

## Centre Overview

Waterloo is the largest district centre within Sefton in terms of both the number of retail units and the amount of commercial floorspace. The centre as defined within the Local Plan Publication Draft (January 2015)<sup>1</sup> is split into two distinct areas comprising units along South Road, which forms the southern half of the centre, and units along St John's Road which forms the northern half of the centre. The district centre as a result has two Primary Shopping Areas separated by a distance of approximately 400 metres. Crosby Road North (A565) and Brighton Road link the two halves of the centre, with Crosby Road North additionally connecting Waterloo to Crosby District Centre which is located 1.3km to the north. The surrounding locality is predominately residential in character with the neighbouring streets typically consisting of Victorian terrace housing.

The Liverpool to Southport railway cuts through the district centre, with Waterloo Railway Station being located centrally within the shopping environment on South Road. Many of the national retailers within the centre are located in the surrounding vicinity of the railway station. At the south western end of South Road is the Crosby Coastal Park which includes the Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre and the Anthony Gormley Statues 'Another Place'. The shopping environment on St John's Road has more of a community atmosphere than that of South Road, predominantly occupied by independent retailers within smaller units, interspersed by residential properties. Further main town centre uses are found along Crosby Road North and Brighton Road outside of the defined district centre boundary. On Crosby Road North these include the Plaza Community Cinema, Crosby Library and five purpose built office buildings.

The centre offers a varied range of shops and services, although there is a particularly high number of leisure service uses. Unlike the other district centres of Crosby and Formby, Waterloo does not contain a large format supermarket<sup>2</sup>. The wider district centre boundary as outlined in the Local Plan Publication Draft<sup>1</sup> is unchanged from that adopted in the Unitary Development Plan.

<sup>1</sup> No material changes of relevance have been made to the Local Plan between the Publication Draft (January 2015) document and the Local Plan Submission (July 2015) document.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report a 'large format supermarket' is considered to have a gross floorspace of over 2,000 sq.m



## Diversity of Uses

**Table 1:** Units in Waterloo District Centre at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015

	Number of Units			Floorspace Figures		
	No.	Waterloo	UK	Sq.m	Waterloo	UK
Convenience	19	9.0%	8.5%	4,038	14.5%	15.1%
Comparison	61	29.0%	32.5%	7,492	26.9%	36.1%
Retail Service	34	16.2%	14.2%	3,093	11.1%	7.4%
Leisure Service	67	31.9%	22.5%	9,930	35.7%	23.3%
Financial and Business Service	9	4.3%	10.8%	906	3.3%	8.2%
Vacant	20	9.5%	11.3%	2,380	8.5%	9.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>27,839</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: WYG site visit based on town centre boundary, (Local Plan Publication Draft January 2015)<sup>1</sup>  
 UK average from the Experian Goad Category Report (June 2015)

**Table 2:** District Centre Facilities

National Operators	Total
<b>Key Anchor Store:</b> None <b>Other National Retailers:</b> Co-operative Food, Iceland, Londis, Greggs, Bargain Booze, One Stop Shop, Boots Pharmacy, Lloyds Pharmacy, Home Bargains, Stan James, Bet Fred, William Hill, Ladbrokes, Subway, RBS, TSB	16
Community Facilities	
Doctors surgery, dental surgery, veterinary surgery, Crosby Library (edge of centre), Crosby Civic Hall (edge of centre)	5

The convenience shopping offer within Waterloo is broadly comparable to the national average with respect to both the number of outlets and the quantum of convenience floorspace. In terms of floorspace specifically, 4,038 sq.m (gross) is identified as being in use by convenience retailers. This correlates to 14.5% of the total floorspace within the centre which is slightly below the national average figure of 15.1%. With no large format supermarket within Waterloo, the largest convenience retail unit is the Co-operative Food store (1,624 sq.m) on Brighton Road. Iceland and One Stop Shop stores on South Road as well as a Tesco Express store on Crosby Road North (outside the defined centre boundary) offer further convenience shopping options. Since WYG's last health check survey of the centre in August 2011 there has been a net loss of two convenience retailers which has included the closure of the Heron frozen foods supermarket on South Road.

Waterloo has relatively few national retailers with only 16 recorded within the centre as a whole. These retailers account for just 7.6% of the units providing an indication that the centre is not a particularly popular location for major retailers. This is particularly apparent in the comparison goods sector where just three national comparison goods retailers have a store within the centre. Overall, 29.0% of the centre's outlets are operated by comparison goods retailers which is below the national average of 32.5%. Across the centre there are a greater number of comparison retailers within the northern half of the centre around St John's Road than in the southern half, with a considerable number of small specialist independent retailers.

Retail services are well represented, accounting for 16.2% of the centre's units and 11.1% of the centres total floorspace, both being higher than the national average figures of 14.2% and 7.4% respectively. Again, a significantly higher number of retail service businesses are located within the northern half of the centre than within the southern half, with many of these businesses offering health and beauty services such as hairdressing.

Waterloo has a particularly high representation of leisure service businesses, which include food and beverage businesses such as restaurants, cafes, public houses



and fast food take-aways as well as other service provisions such as betting shops, with 67 in total accounting for 31.9% of the total number of units. This sector consequently provides the highest number of businesses within the centre. Proportionally the number of leisure service businesses is significantly higher than the national average which stands at 22.5%, with a recorded net increase of 14 units since WYG's survey in 2011. A concentration of leisure service businesses is found at the south western end of South Road, many of which being public houses and restaurants.

Waterloo is currently under represented for financial and business services with nine units within the defined district centre boundary providing such services which together account for just 4.3% of the centres outlets. This is below the national average of 10.8%, with the number of units in this sector reducing by eight since 2011 when 17 units were recorded. The centre retains a small number of high street banks although the provision in this area is less than would typically be expected for a centre of Waterloo's size. A limited number of additional financial and business service businesses are found outside the district centre's boundary on the eastern side of Crosby Road North which are not represented in Table 1.

**Vacancies:**

There were 20 vacancies identified within the centre accounting for 9.5% of the total number of units, below the national average of 11.3%. In terms of floorspace, the centre again proportionally has slightly less vacant floorspace than the national average accounting for 8.5% of the centre's total floorspace compared to a national average of 9.2%. The number of vacant units has reduced greatly since WYG's survey in 2011 when 38 vacancies were recorded, accounting for 18.4% of all units. This improvement has occurred at both halves of the centre, with the number of vacant outlets along South Road reducing from 16 in 2011 to ten in 2015 and similarly along St John's Road reducing from 18 in 2011 to nine in 2015. Of the 20 identified vacancies, 11 were thought to be vacant at the time of WYG's survey in 2011 suggesting that some problems with long term vacancies and difficult to-let properties exists. Despite this, the fall in the number of vacant properties provides an indication that the health of the centre has improved over recent years. This is thought to have been helped, at least in part, by the recorded growth in the number of leisure service businesses.

Two church buildings on the edges of the centre were found to be either disused or up-for-sale. The church at the northern end of Brighton Road was found to be derelict and appeared to be in need of repair works. At the opposite end of the centre, the Waterloo United Free Church on Crosby Road North had signage in place indicating the building being for sale, although services and meetings are thought to be continuing.



Waterloo Railway Station and shops on South Road.



Retail units on South Road.



Primary Shopping Area on St John's Road.

### Accessibility:

Waterloo is located 1.3km south of Crosby district centre and 3.4km north of Bootle town centre. As a result of their relative close proximity, the centre has good connections to both of these neighbouring centres. Crosby Road North (A565) which forms the eastern boundary of the centre's boundary provides direct access to the wider road network.

There are two Council operated car parks available for use by visitors. The most centrally located facility is the Hougoumont Avenue car park (115 spaces) at the rear of Waterloo Railway Station. The car park at the Crosby Civic Hall and Library (100 spaces) is less favourably located being some distance from the main shopping areas. Both of these car parks were found to be relatively quiet at the time of WYG's visit to the centre with many shoppers seeming to prefer to use more convenient and free on-street parking opportunities on either South Road, St John's Road or the neighbouring residential streets. Charges at the Council car parks are £0.20 for 30 minutes, £0.90 for two hours, £1.70 for four hours and £3.40 for over four hours. These prices are broadly comparable to parking charges in place at the other district centres within Sefton. Without any public car parks being conveniently located for easy access to the shops along St John's Road pressure for on-street parking spaces is thought to be greatest in this location. During peak times this could potentially have a resultant impact on the amenity of local residents in the area. Further free car parking is available in more peripheral areas including at the Co-operative Food store on Brighton Road which is limited to customers only and at the Crosby Coastal Park.

Waterloo Railway Station is ideally located at the heart of the Primary Shopping Area on South Road. From this station regular direct services to important



destinations including Liverpool, Southport and Bootle are available. A small bus terminal is located opposite Waterloo Railway Station, well located for changes between rail and bus services. Further bus services are available a short walk away on Crosby Road North. Accessibility to bus services is considered to be good with routes available to many of the surrounding areas and communities.

The divided nature of the shopping offer, split across two distinct locations somewhat prohibits visitors from accessing all of the shops and services within the centre with ease. South Road additionally has regular passing vehicular traffic which requires pedestrians to take caution when crossing this road. Cycle parking is available at a number of locations within the southern half of the centre, although there are fewer formal cycle parking stands within the northern half of the centre.

### **Environmental Quality:**

The two distinct shopping areas which together form Waterloo district centre have evidently different characters. On South Road a generally busy atmosphere presides characterised by three storey Victorian buildings of varying designs which accommodate retail units at ground floor level. Pavements are relatively wide, although frequent passing traffic impacts on the shopping environment.

Along St John's Road retail units are generally smaller in size, with host properties of a more residential scale. The shopping environment around St John's Road as a result has a higher proportion of independent traders and subsequently more of a community focused atmosphere. Less vehicle traffic passes along St John's Road compared to South Road helping to provide a more pleasant pedestrian environment. Common to both parts of the centre is a general lack of modern premises which may well be a factor in the limited number of national retailers.

Shop fronts vary in quality, particularly along South Road, with a limited number of less complimentary designs and vacant units serving to detract from the visual amenity of the area to some extent. Across the centre as a whole there is a lack of seating opportunities and open public space which would complement the shopping environment.

Perceptions of safety are considered to generally be good within the centre, helped by healthy levels of activity. Mounted CCTV cameras are in place on South Road which monitor the wider area around the railway station as well as at the Council managed car parks. The car parks were found to be suitably maintained and signposted.

### **Pedestrian Flows:**

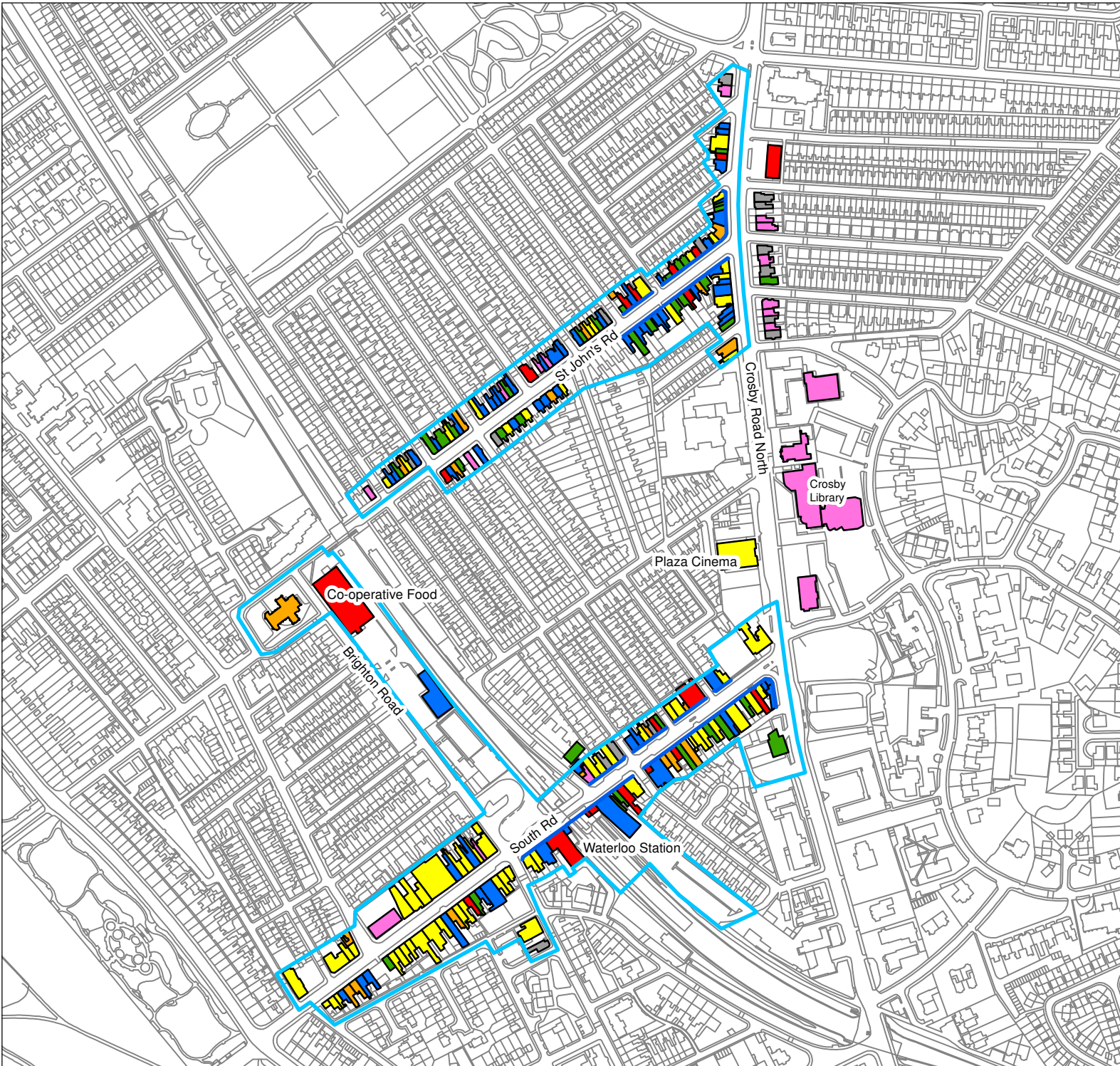
Pedestrian activity was found to be greatest along South Road particularly around Waterloo Railway Station where many of the national retailers present within the centre are located. Pedestrian numbers reduced at both the western and eastern ends of South Road, although the Coastal Park was found to act as a draw to bring people to the area at the southern extremity of the centre. St John's Road had lower levels of pedestrian activity, with the greatest levels of footfall found around the Primary Shopping Area at the eastern end of the road and diminishing westwards.



**Summary:**

Waterloo is the largest of the four district centres. Split across two separated areas the centre provides a varied shopping and service offering. The centre has a relatively limited convenience shopping offer with more of a focus towards leisure and retail services which are well catered for. The vacancy rate has reduced since 2011 indicating an improvement in the centre's vitality and viability over recent years. Public transport links are very good with the centre well connected to key surrounding towns and communities through bus and rail services.

The overall quality of the pedestrian environment can be considered to be a weakness of the centre with scope for improvement. The key shopping areas are heavily focused alongside two highways with no real opportunities for shoppers to break away from the associated passing vehicular traffic and noise.



creative minds safe hands



**Client: Sefton Council**  
**A092546**  
**Waterloo District Centre**

Diversity of Uses Plan

**Key**

- Primary Retail Frontage (Local Plan Publication Draft 2015)
- District Centre Boundary (Local Plan Publication Draft 2015)
- Convenience
- Comparison
- Leisure Service
- Retail Service
- Financial & Business Services
- Other Main Town Centre Use
- Vacant

North



Scale 1:5000 @ A4

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