

Whitburn Village Centre Assessment

Whitburn Neighbourhood Plan

April 2021



Whitburn Neighbourhood Forum

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1. Introduction

Whitburn Neighbourhood Forum is developing a Whitburn Neighbourhood Plan ('Plan'). As part of the proposed Plan, a policy on the Whitburn village centre is included. This also means a boundary for the village centre is identified, shown on the Plan's policies map.

This assessment looks at the characteristics of the local shopping centre and its boundary, in order to be included in the Plan.

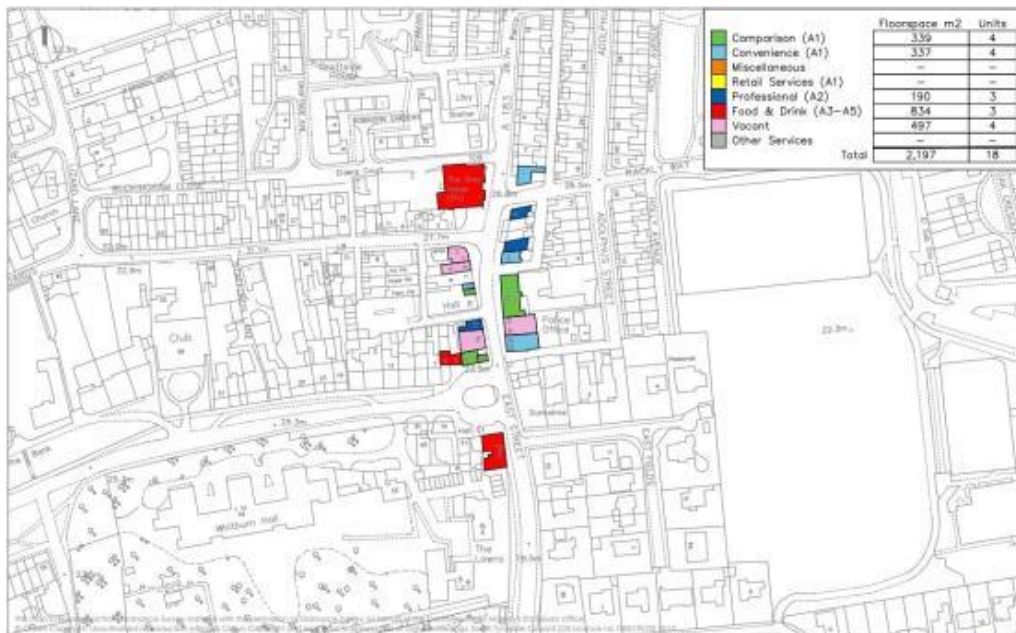
2. Whitburn Village Centre

Whitburn has various shops, which are mostly within the centre of the village, such as East Street and North Guards. In order to understand more of the retail sector in Whitburn, as well as to identify the village centre boundary, evidence on retail has been collected. This includes assessments conducted by the local authority, by google maps, and by undertaking a walkthrough.

Consultation revealed that people would really like to see local shops thrive. The local shopping centre is an important place for people to acquire goods and services, without the need to travel far. It greatly supports the economic and social wellbeing of the neighbourhood area. Residents, however, have experienced the loss and high turnover of retail units. This results in the need to include a policy on the local shopping centre into the Whitburn Neighbourhood Plan.

2.1 Local authority evidence

In 2012, South Tyneside Council produced a 'South Tyneside Retail, Health and Capacity Study' through GVA consultants¹. Although somewhat outdated, it shows retail along East Street, with 18 units totalling 2197m² floor space. There is a mix of uses, whilst 4 units are vacant.



South Tyneside Retail Health & Capacity Study
Whitburn Neighbourhood Centre



Figure 1 Whitburn Neighbourhood Centre

¹ https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/29528/GVA-South-Tyneside-Retail-Health-and-Capacity-Study-October-2012/pdf/14.1.11_GVA_South_Tyneside_Retail_Health_and_Capacity_Study_October_2012.PDF

In 2017, South Tyneside Council produced the 'Supplementary Planning Document 22: Hot Food Takeaways & Health' and a 'Planning for Health and Wellbeing: Hot Food Takeaways and Obesity in South Tyneside: Update on Evidence – Progress Report'.

The SPD includes the following policy: "HFT2: Outside of our designated town and district shopping centres, proposals for new A5 hot food takeaway uses will only be permitted where the premises are not within 400m of a secondary school boundary."

This applies to Whitburn (see map below). This policy will have a positive effect, not just from a health perspective, but also in order to keep the local shopping centre thriving at all hours.

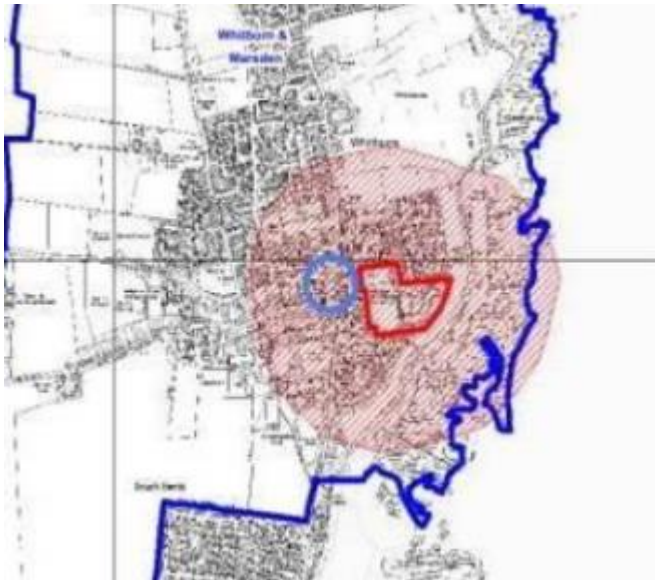


Figure 2 Area in which new A5 uses are prohibited

The progress report states that in 2017, Whitburn and Marsden warden had two take aways. One of these likely refers to the one in Whitburn, which is a Fish and Chips shop in North Guards. The opening hours are currently every day 11:30am–1:30pm and 4–7:30pm, closed on Sundays.

2.1 Retail availability as shown on maps

Using google maps, the availability of retail becomes apparent. Two important caveats are that retail units are added by people, and street views are from May 2018, meaning that maps can become out of date or have inaccuracies.

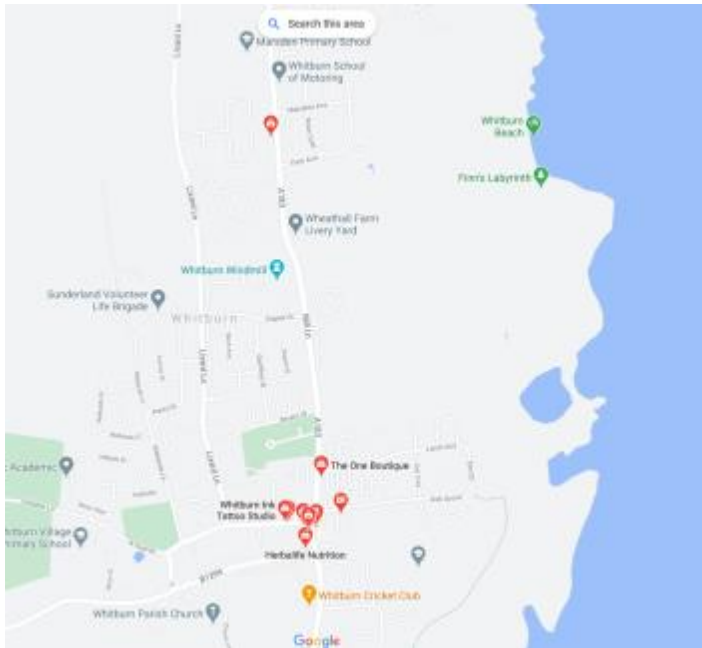


Figure 3 Whitburn on google maps

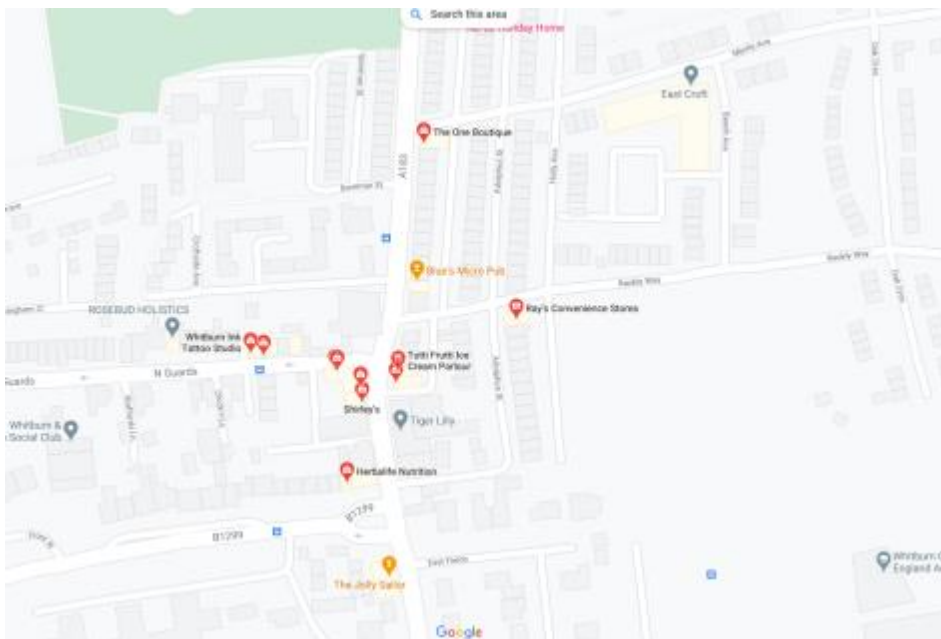


Figure 4 Whitburn centre on google maps



Figure 5 A close up north of North Guards



Figure 6 Street view of North Guards



7 Street view of corner of East Street and North Guards

Figure



Figure 8 A close up south of North Guards



Figure 9 Street view of corner of Front Street and East Street

2.2 Walkthrough

A recent walkthrough of the village² showed that there is a dense cluster of retail availability in the centre of Whitburn. This cluster is larger than shown on the map produced for the South Tyneside retail study, because it also includes retail within North Guards. These units are all in the vicinity of East Street and not further west. At the moment of walkthrough there were no vacant premises. It is proposed to draw the boundary around this cluster of retail units.

The walkthrough revealed that some changes have occurred since 2012. For instance, the Grey Horse pub has closed and is due to become a co-op convenience store³. In addition, a micro pub has opened on East Street.



Figure 10 Grey Horse converted to Co-op

Outside of the cluster of retail within the centre of Whitburn, there are some additional retail units, such as newsagents (for instance on Mill Lane and Rackly Way). There also is a retail unit just north of the centre (at 13 Percy Terrace). This was a clothes store in the past ('The One Boutique' on Figure 3 Whitburn on google maps), but has recently changed to an independent funeral director. There are nine residential units between this unit and the denser cluster of units to the south, whilst there is no retail on the other side of the road. As there is a clear separation, it is therefore proposed not to include this unit into the shopping centre boundary.

² January 2021

³ Change of use of public house (Use Class A4) to convenience retail (Use Class A1); application ST/0149/20/FUL, June 2020



Figure 11 East Street, looking south



Figure 12 Retail units on East Street



Figure 13 Retail units on East Street (newsagent is for sale, but still operating)



Figure 14 North Guards, looking west



Figure 15 North Guards, looking east

3. Conclusion

This assessment shows that the majority of retail units in Whitburn are located in a cluster on East Street, on the corner of East Street and Front Street, and on North Guards, close to East Street. It is therefore proposed to identify Whitburn Village Centre as follows:

The extent of Whitburn Village Centre is identified on the Policies Map as East Street (A183 from Eastfields in the South up to Myrtle Avenue in the North), Front Street (B1299 around the village green oval that forms the junction with the A183) and North Guards (up to Chick's Lane). See picture below:

