

## **Retail Centre Health Checks**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In 2014, Aberdeen City Council undertook a series of Retail Centre Health Check assessments.
- 1.2 This report provides an assessment of the existing retail centre uses within Aberdeen such as the City Centre, Rosemount and Torry Town Centres, Cults, Culter, Danestone, Dyce, Mastrick, Middleton Park and Upper Berryden District Centres. These assessments were done in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy (SPP, 2010) criteria and the recommendations of the '*Town Centres Retailing and Methodologies*' paper published by the Scottish Government in December 2007.
- 1.3 The Retail Centre Health Checks provides information which can be compared with future Health Check assessments of retail centres in Aberdeen and the baseline data that was collected in 2012. The 2014 Aberdeen Retail Centre Health Checks will form part of an on-going programme of health check assessments, which are intended to be updated every two years. The Retail Centre Health Check data will:
  - Provide an evidence base for use in other studies and strategies;
  - Support the preparation and implementation of the local development plan (particularly city centre and retailing policies); and
  - Provide data for assessing the impacts of proposed retail development proposals on existing retail centres.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the report does *not* seek to provide an interpretation of the information obtained; its role is to provide information for other studies/analysis to interpret.
- 1.5 The principal information sources that have been used for this report are field surveys and pedestrian flow surveys undertaken by Aberdeen City Council staff in May 2014.

## 2. Methodology

2.1 This analysis focuses on an assessment of the performance of the existing retail centres (the City Centre, Town Centres and District Centres) in Aberdeen. This paper provides an assessment of existing 'town centre' uses in accordance with Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) criteria and the recommendations of the '*Town Centres Retailing and Methodologies*' paper published by the Scottish Government in December 2007.

### 2.2 Vitality & Viability Indicators

2.2.1 SPP defines 'vitality' as a measure of how lively and busy a retail centre is. 'Viability' is defined as a measure of capacity to attract ongoing investment for maintenance, improvement and adaptation to changing needs. Together these measures give an indication of the health of a retail centre and, when used consistently over a period of time as part of a retail centre health check, can demonstrate changes in performance that can inform future decision making. A health check measures the strengths and weaknesses of a town centre and analyses the factors which contribute to its vitality and viability. A brief description of key Vitality and Viability Indicators assessed in this report are provided below.

2.2.2 **Pedestrian flow** can be defined as the movement of people past a particular location over a specified period of time (e.g. average hourly counts). Data was collected at different times of day (peak / off peak).

2.2.3 **Space in use** surveys have been undertaken, which comprises an analysis of the mix of uses within the centres. The following GOAD classifications (please see Appendix I for a definition) were used to group retail units:

- Finance/ Administration,
- Clothing/ Footwear,
- Supermarkets,
- Electrical/ Computers/ Phones,
- DIY/ Hardware/ Furniture,
- Commercial Services,
- Entertainment/ Catering,
- Department and Specialist Stores,
- Grocers/ Convenience,
- Charity, and
- Vacant

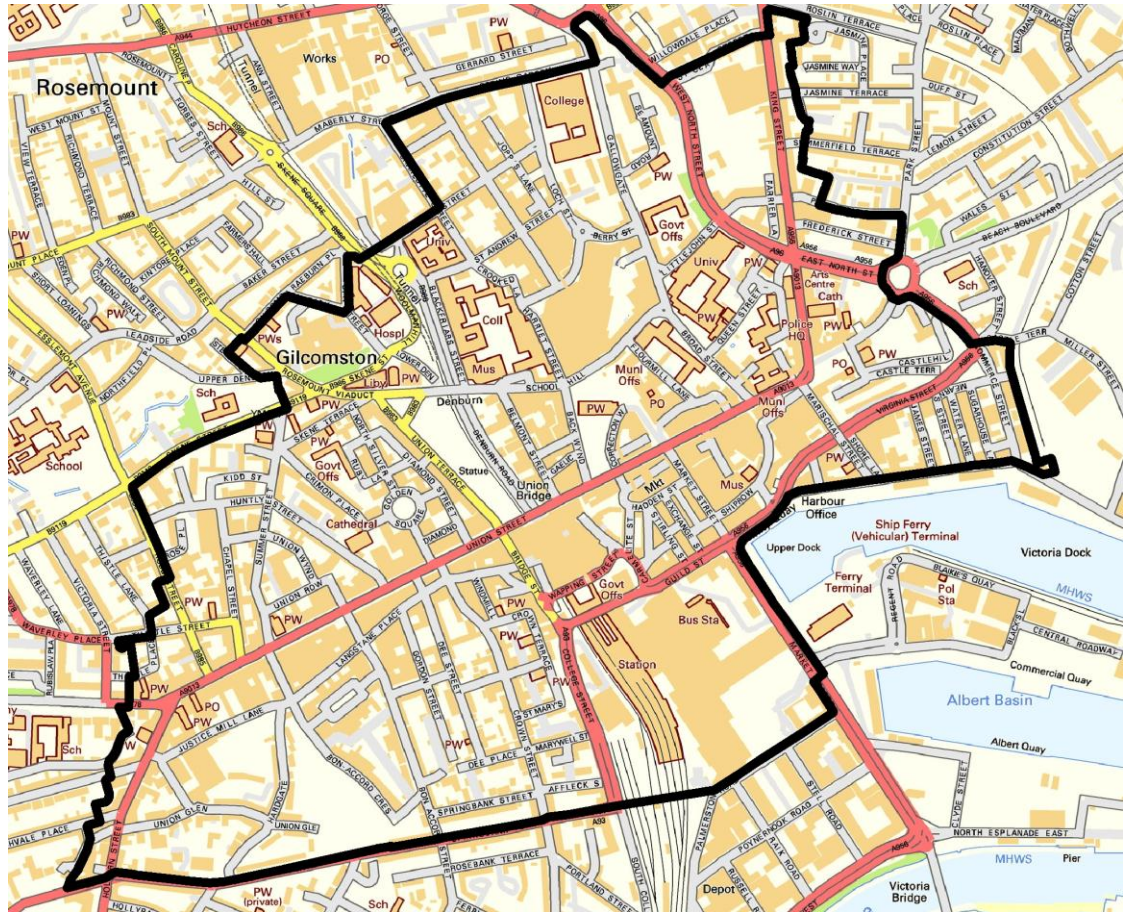
2.2.4 **Retailer representation** is a recording and assessment of those retailers located within the town centre in terms of identity and type (e.g. multiple or independent retailers). A multiple is defined as a network of 9 or more outlets.

- 2.2.5 Retail and retail service **vacancy rates** are defined as the number of units not in occupation, expressed as a percentage of the total number of retail units. This is an indicator of the impact that vacancies will have on the appearance and feel of a centre, since this is what most shoppers in the centre will be aware of.
- 2.2.6 **Accessibility** to and from a centre is a key factor in the attractiveness of a centre and is an important indicator underpinning town centre viability. Indicators should encompass most of the following: public and private transport modes, congestion issues, and provision for the disabled and cyclists.
- 2.2.7 **Environmental quality** is a key factor which contributes directly to the vitality of a centre and, indirectly, to town centre viability. SPP identifies town centre environmental quality as a specific issue covering both positive and negative aspects of the environment.
- 2.2.8 **Physical structure of centre** is an indicator that looks at issues such as the physical layout of town centre and pedestrian routes, connectivity and retail circuit, the location of car parks and public transport facilities and pedestrian links between these facilities and the core town centre/retail area, quality of buildings and streetscape, provision of public open space and opportunities for events and markets, ease of access, including the disabled, pedestrian areas and covered shopping areas
- 2.2.9 **Town Centre Management and initiatives** this indicator gives information on the projects that are ongoing to help promote and improve the centre.

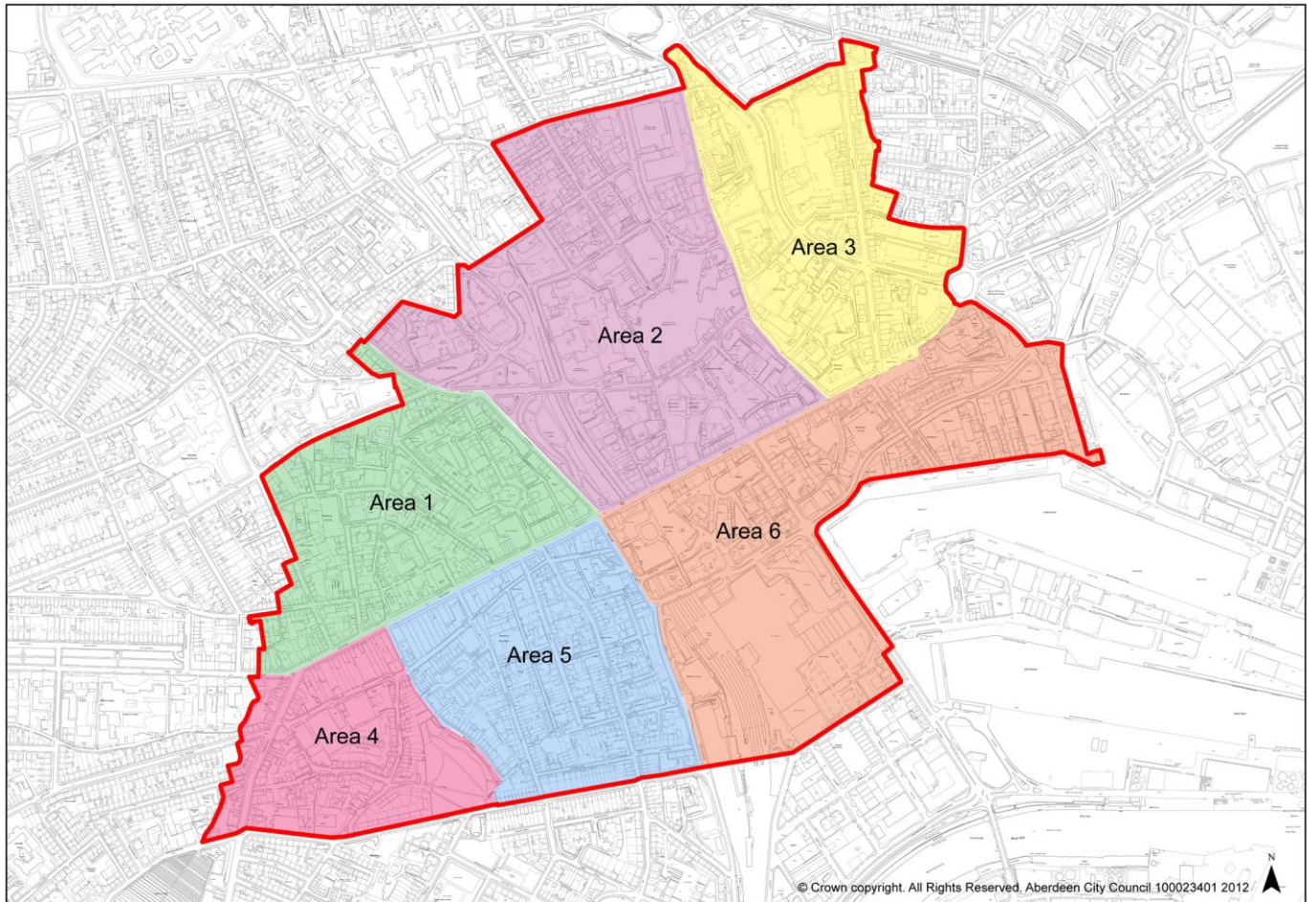
### 3. Regional Centre

#### 3.1 Aberdeen City Centre

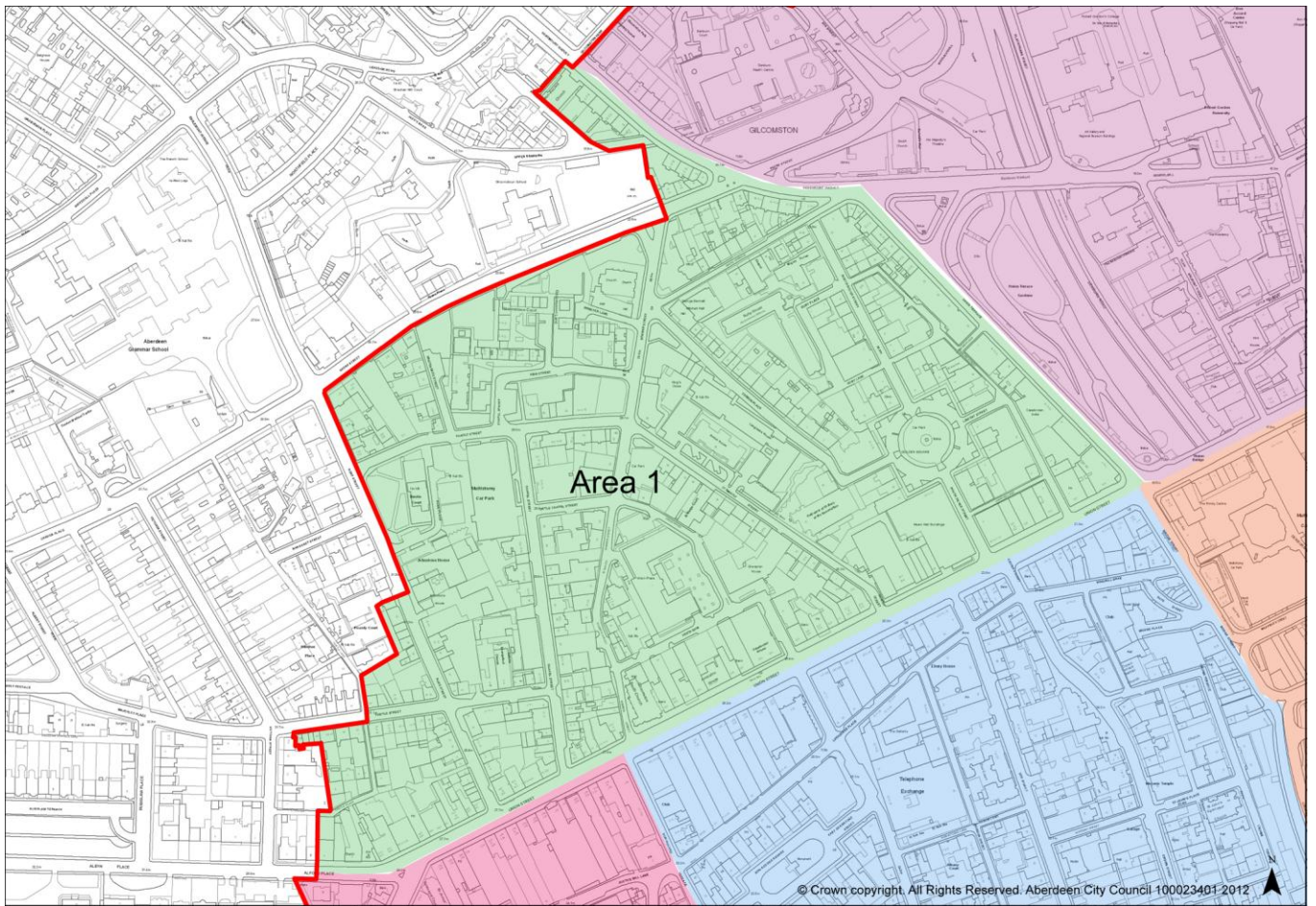
The regional centre is Aberdeen City Centre as defined in the map below.



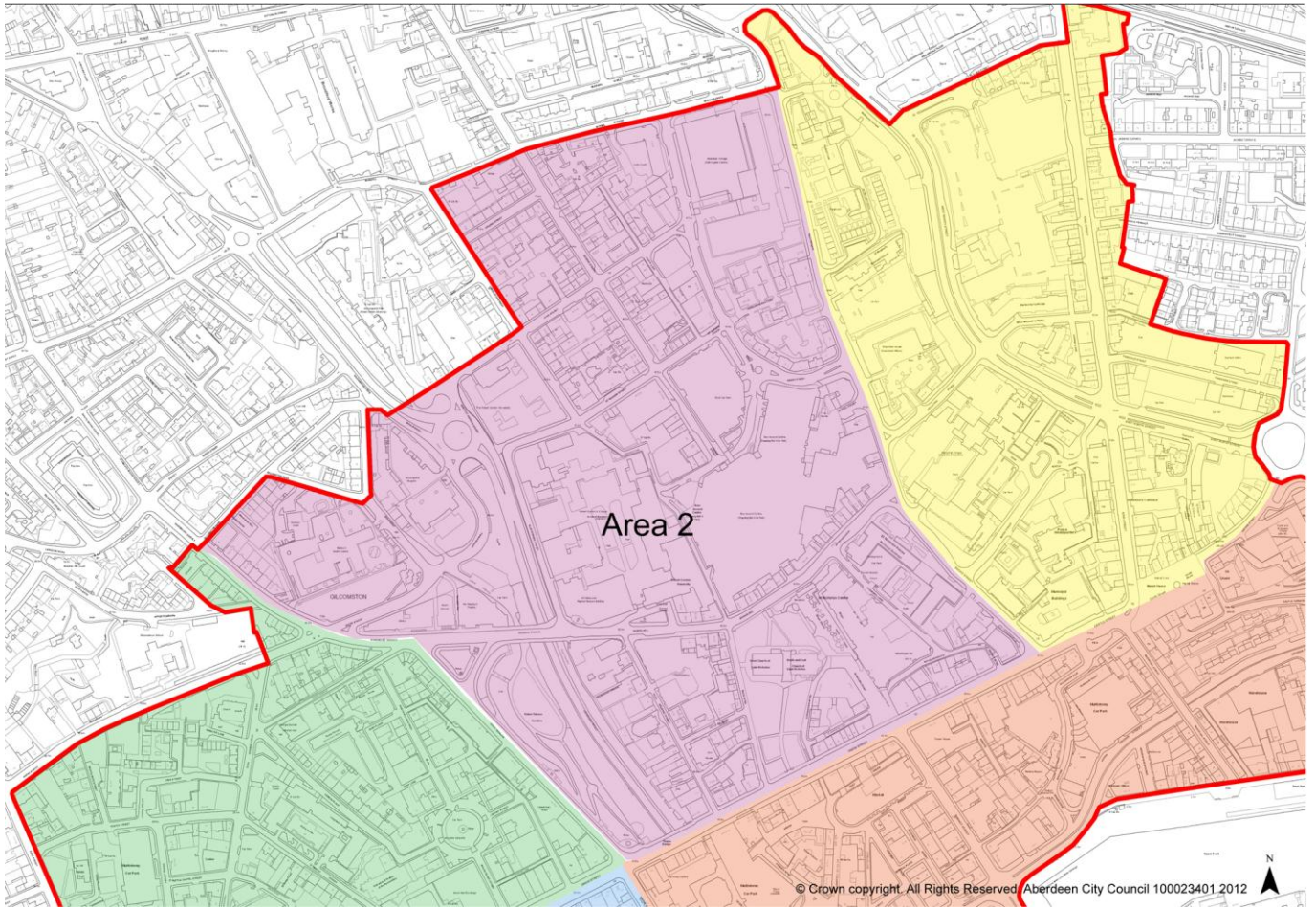
The City Centre was split into six areas to assess the indicators in more depth. These were:



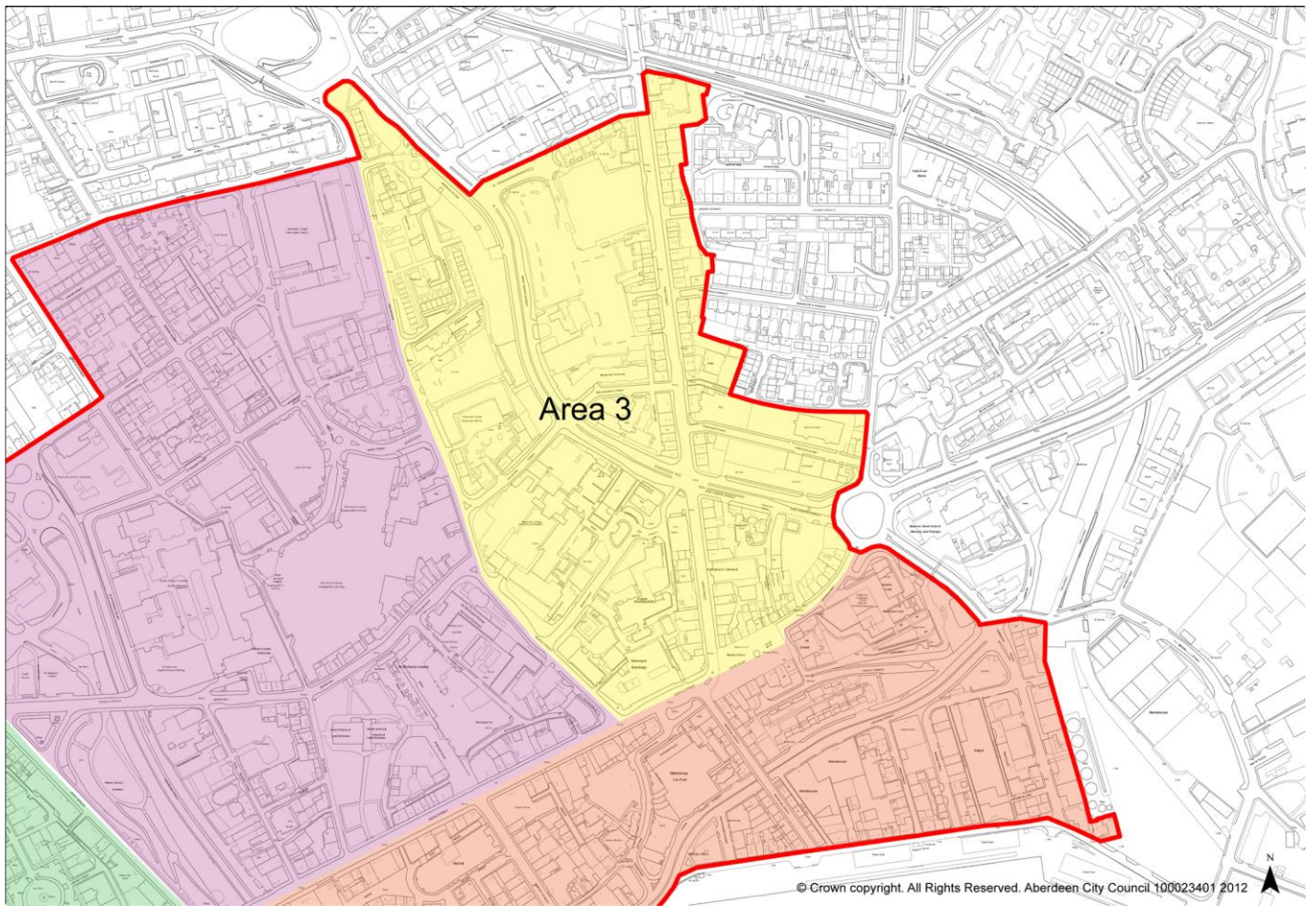
Area 1 – North of Union Street from the west of the CC boundary to Union Terrace



Area 2 – North of Union Street from Union Terrace to Broad Street (including the Bon Accord Centre, St Nicholas Centre and Academy Centre)

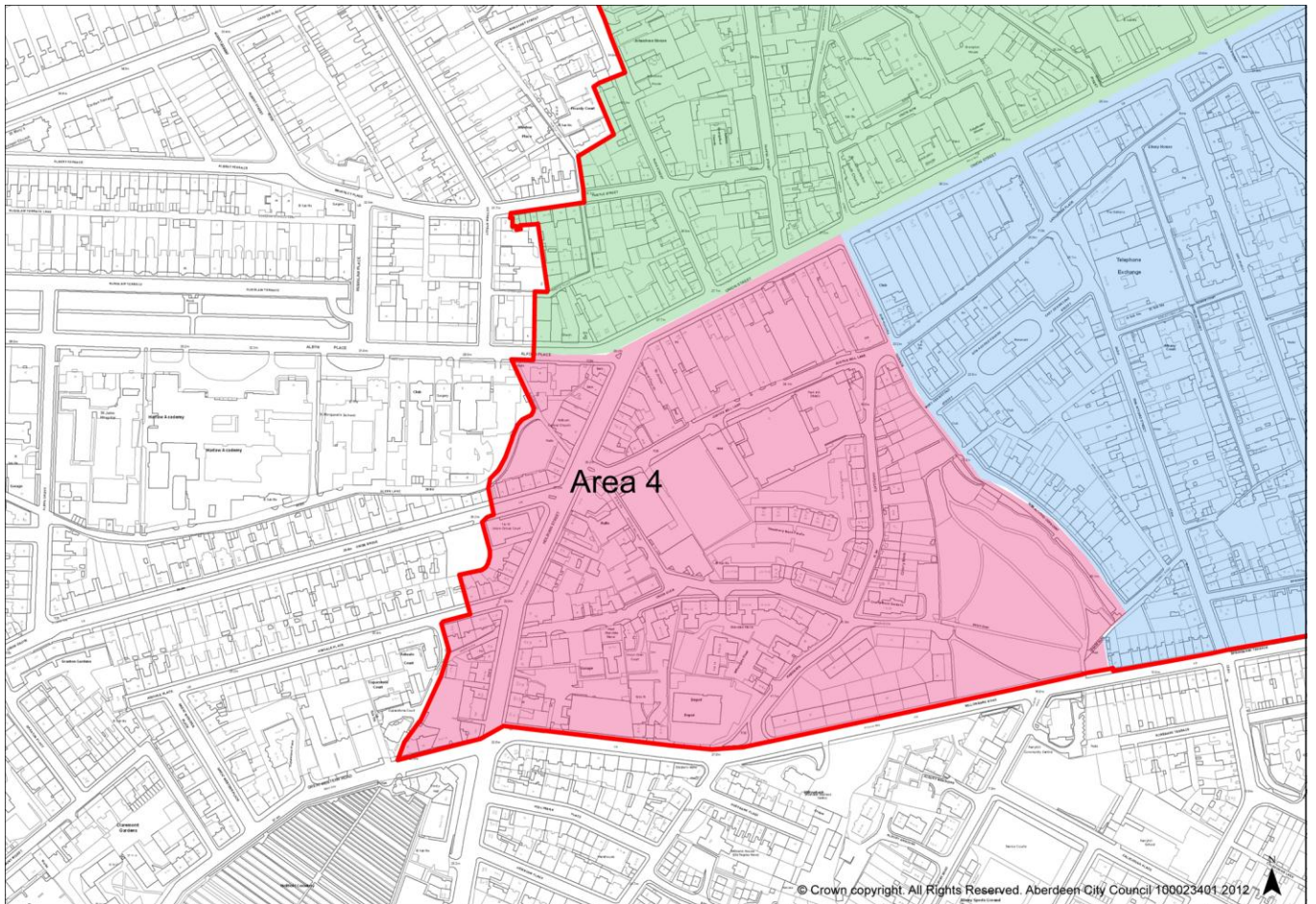


Area 3 – North of Union Street from Broad Street to the east of the CC boundary

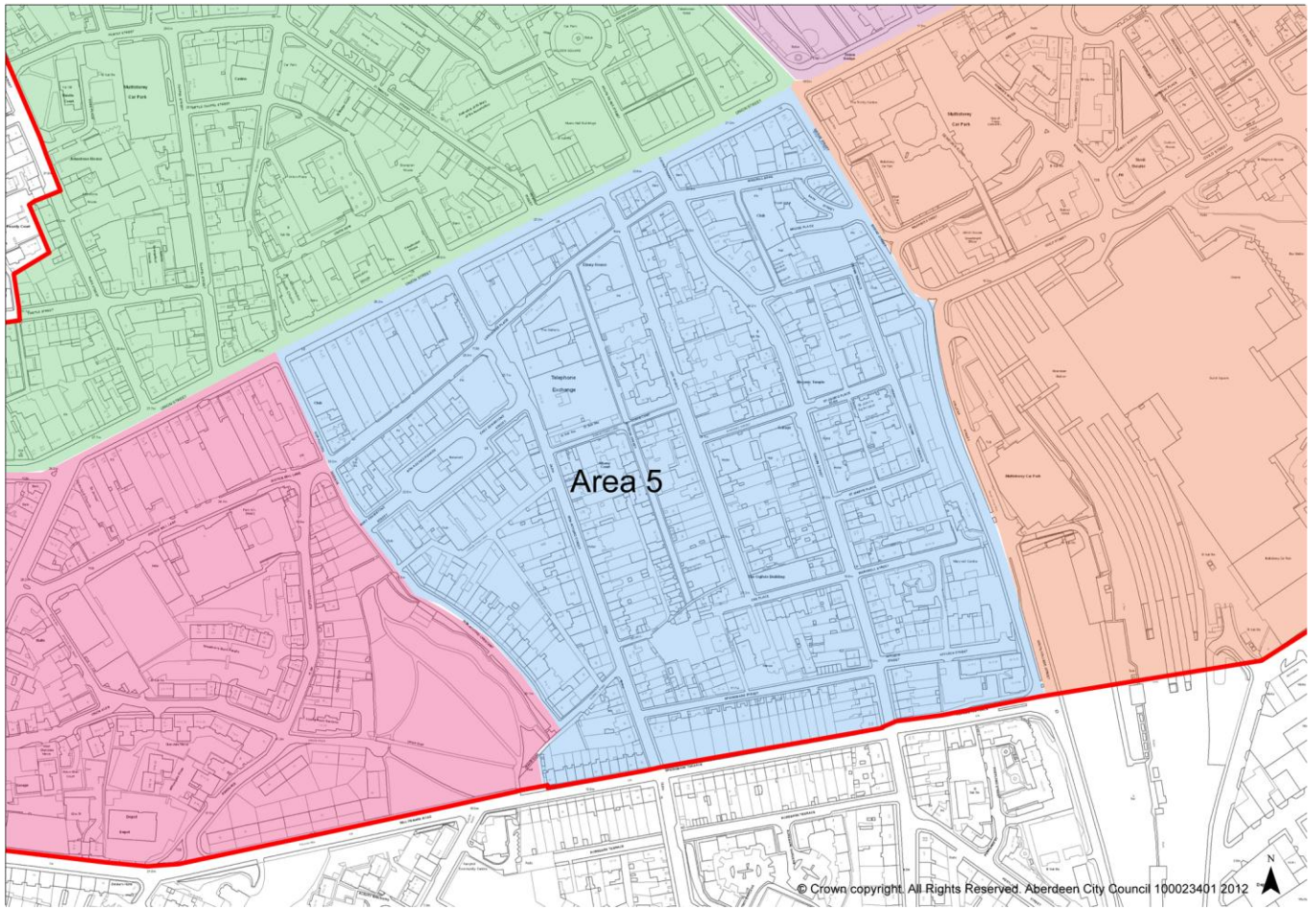




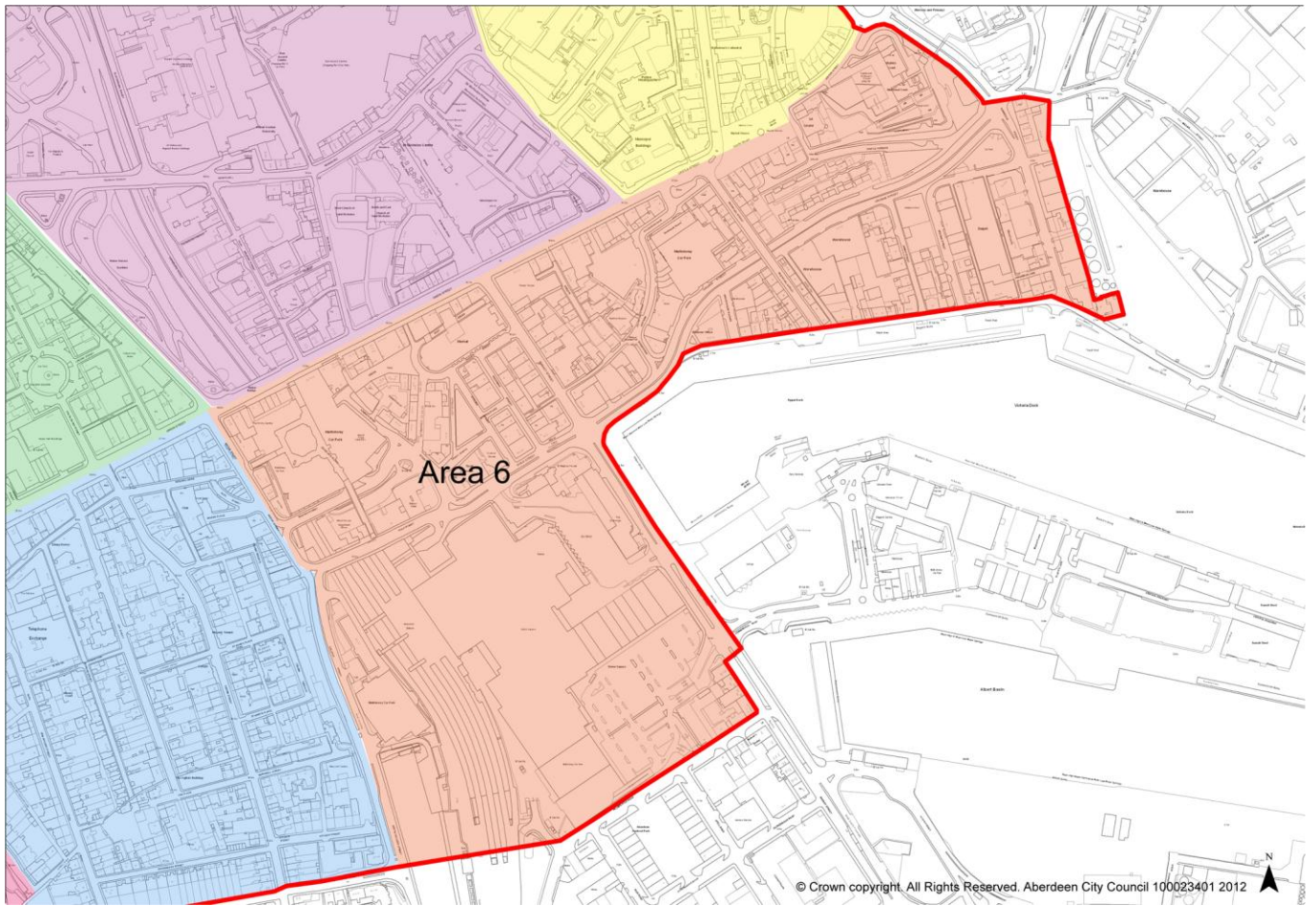
Area 4 – South of Union Street from the west of the CC boundary to Bon Accord Street



Area 5 – South of Union Street from Bon Accord Street to Bridge Street (including the Galleria Centre)

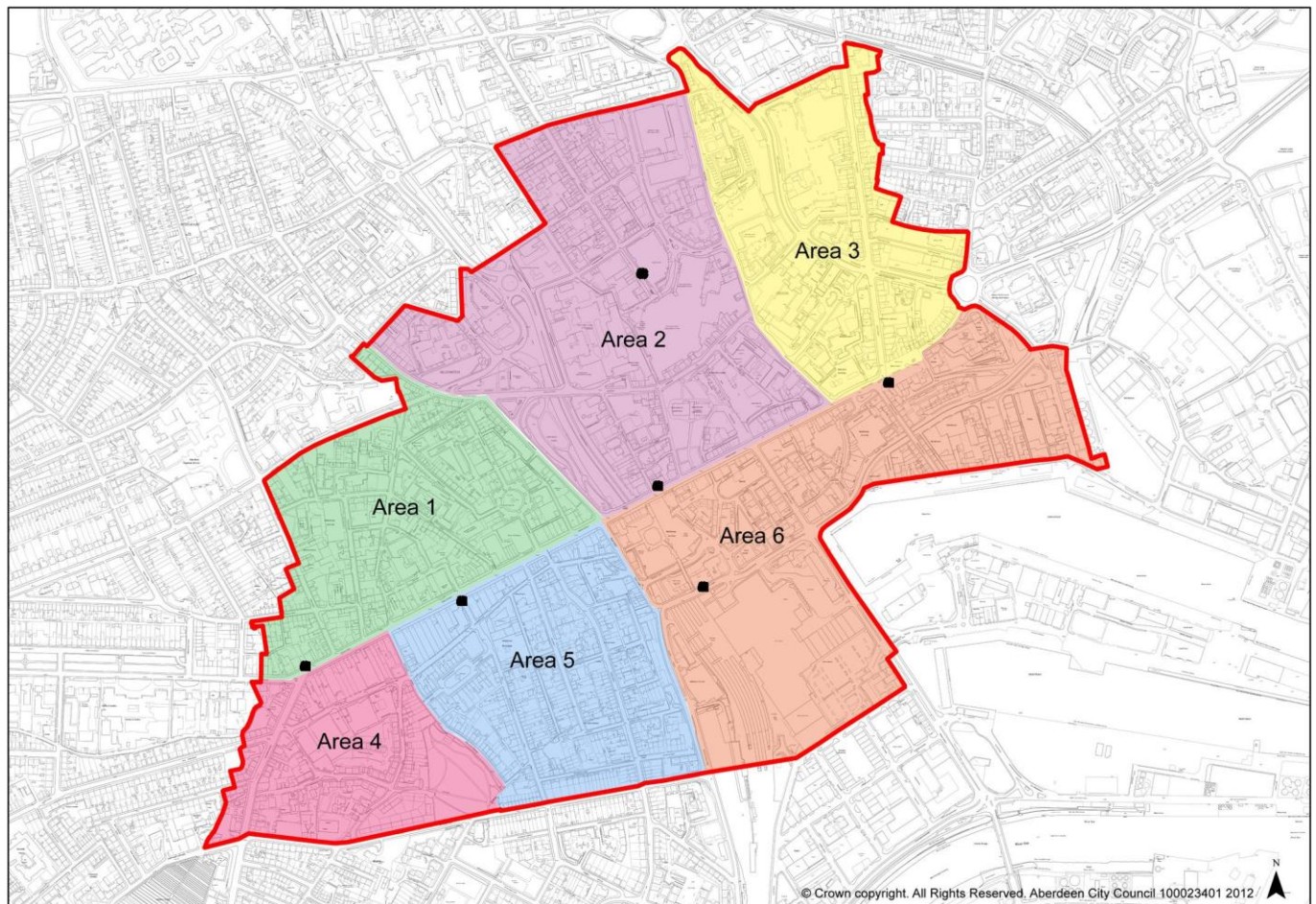


Area 6 – South of Union Street from Bridge Street to the east of the CC boundary  
(including Trinity Centre and Union Square)



There was also a location chosen for each area to conduct the pedestrian counts. These were:

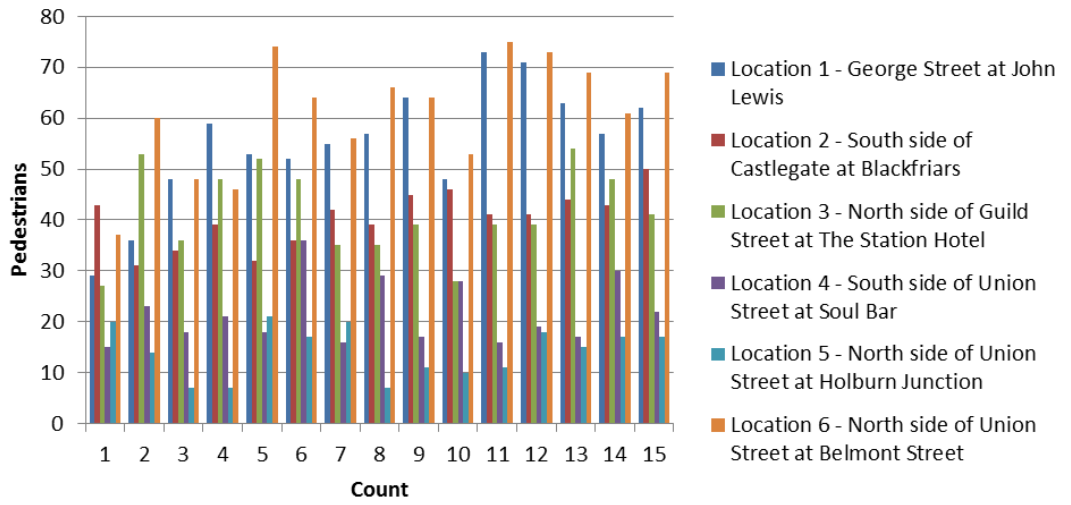
- Location 1 – East side of George Street at John Lewis
- Location 2 – South side of Castlegate at Blackfriars
- Location 3 – North side of Guild Street at The Station Hotel
- Location 4 – South side of Union Street at Soul Bar
- Location 5 – North side of Union Street at Holburn Junction
- Location 6 – North side of Union Street at Belmont Street



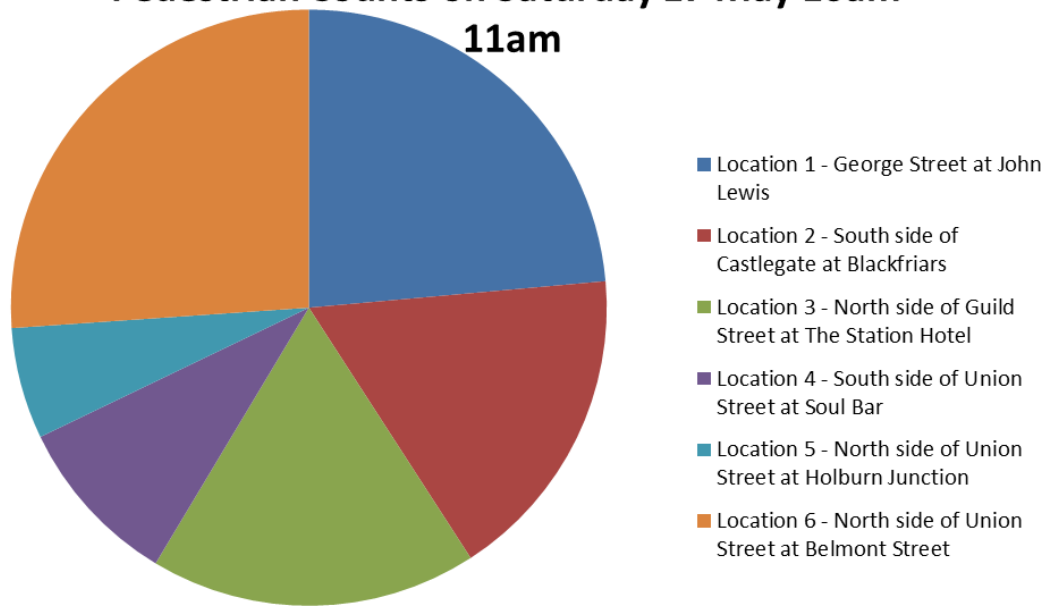
### 3.1.1 Pedestrian Footfall

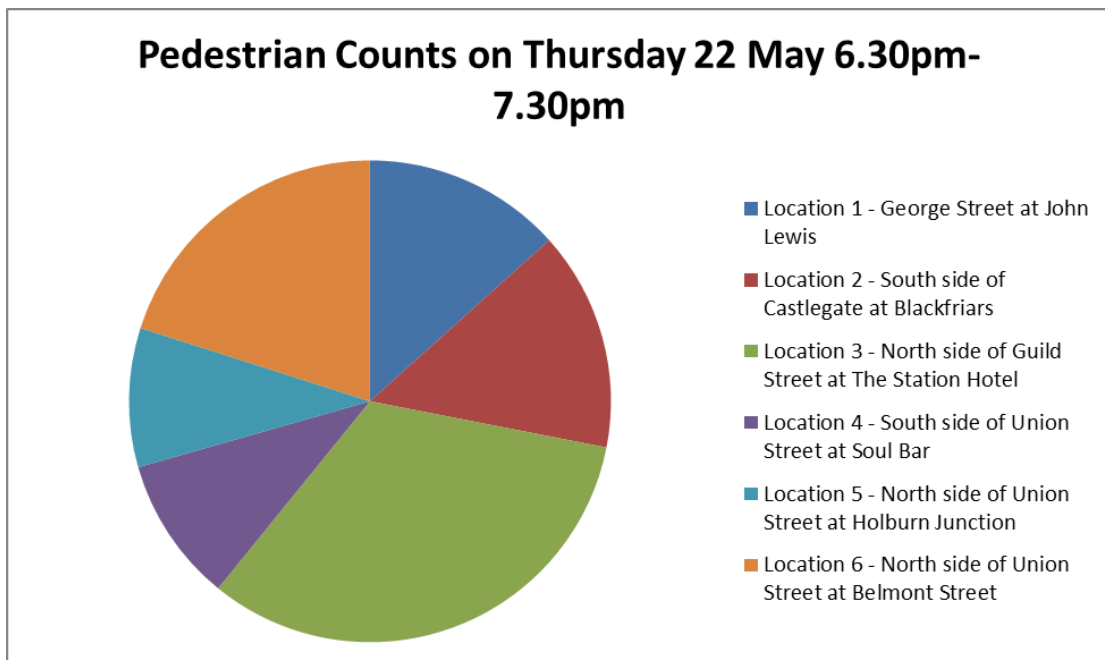
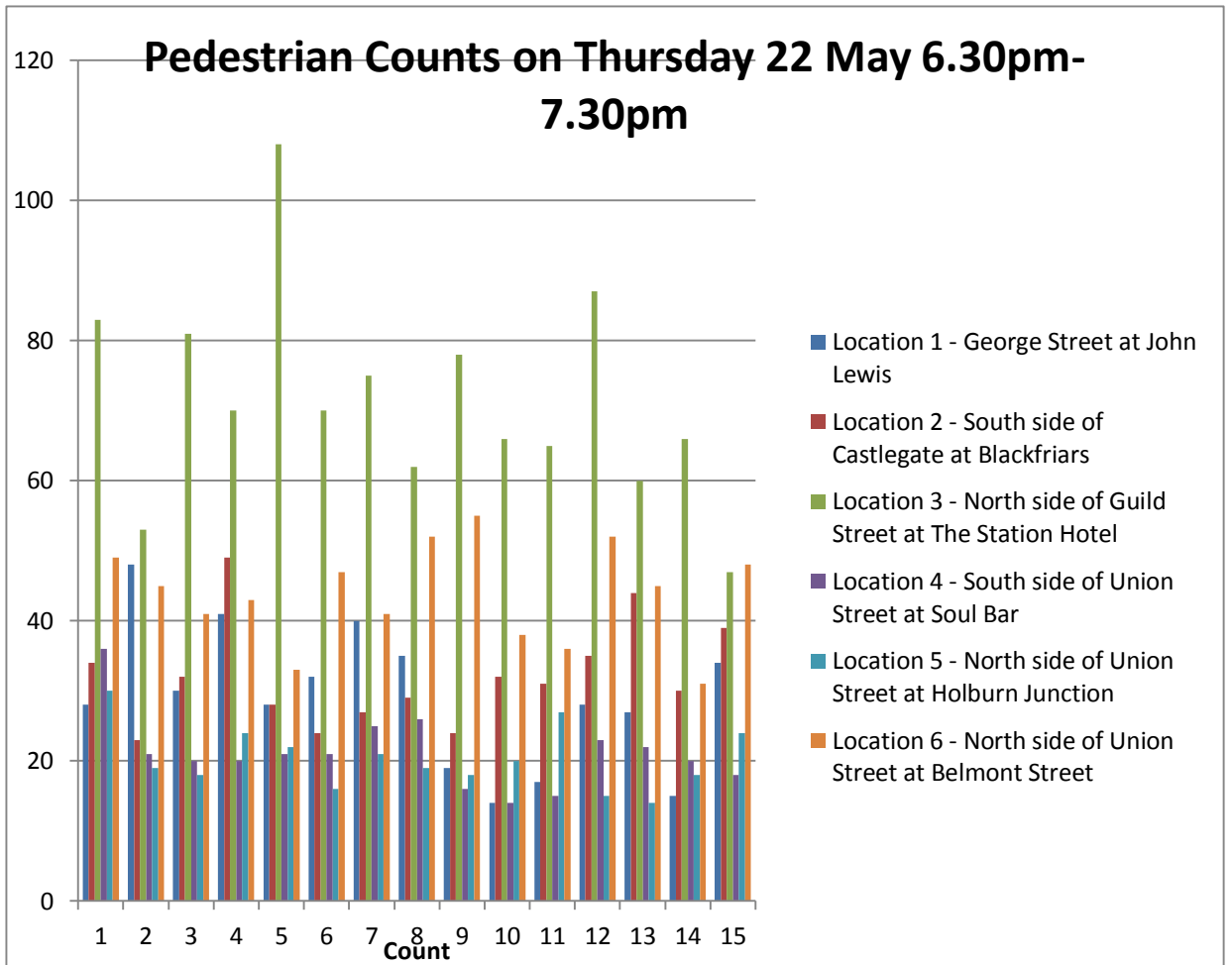
Pedestrian counts were carried out twice for this report, once on Saturday 17 May between 10-11 am and once on Thursday 22 May between 6.30-7.30 pm. The following charts and graphs detail the pedestrian counts recorded. All raw data for the city centre pedestrian counts can be found in Appendix II.

### Pedestrian Counts on Saturday 17 May 10am-11am



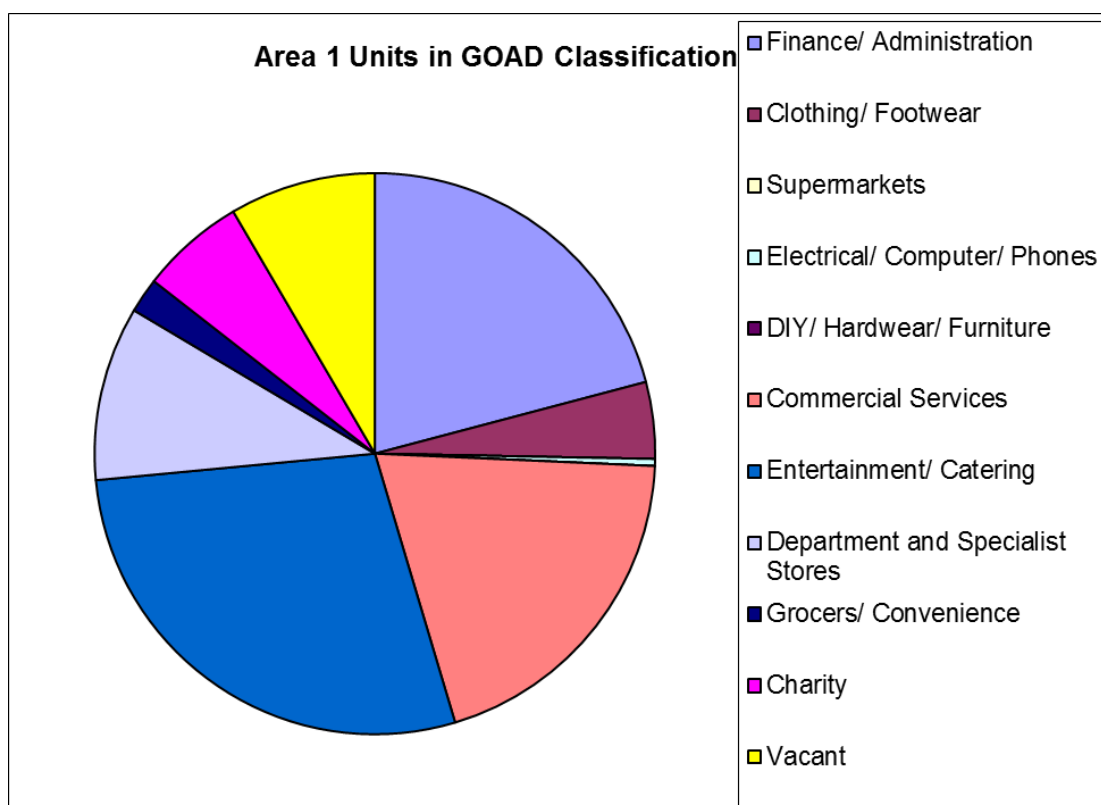
### Pedestrian Counts on Saturday 17 May 10am-11am



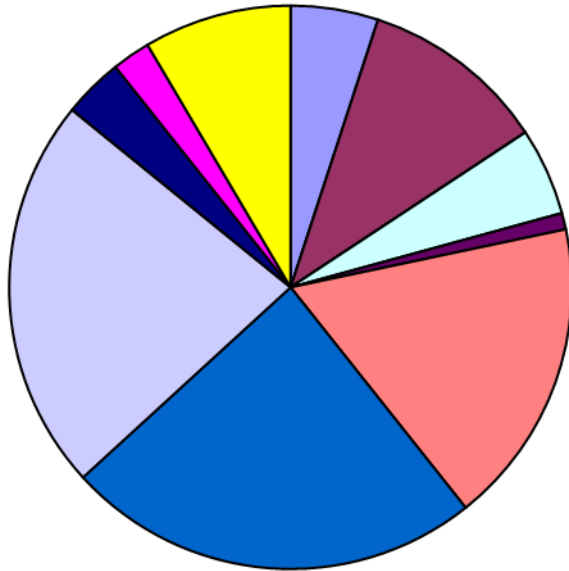


### 3.1.2 Space in Use

GOAD Classifications	Number of Units					
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6
Finance/ Administration	52	16	7	12	15	6
Clothing/ Footwear	11	34	1	3	10	36
Supermarkets	0	0	1	0	0	0
Electrical/ Computer/ Phones	1	16	0	0	0	7
DIY/ Hardware/ Furniture	0	3	4	3	0	3
Commercial Services	49	56	25	27	26	24
Entertainment/ Catering	70	76	21	18	51	63
Department and Specialist Stores	25	72	10	7	18	55
Grocers/ Convenience	5	11	8	2	2	8
Charity	15	7	6	2	1	2
Vacant	21	27	15	14	16	22
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>226</b>

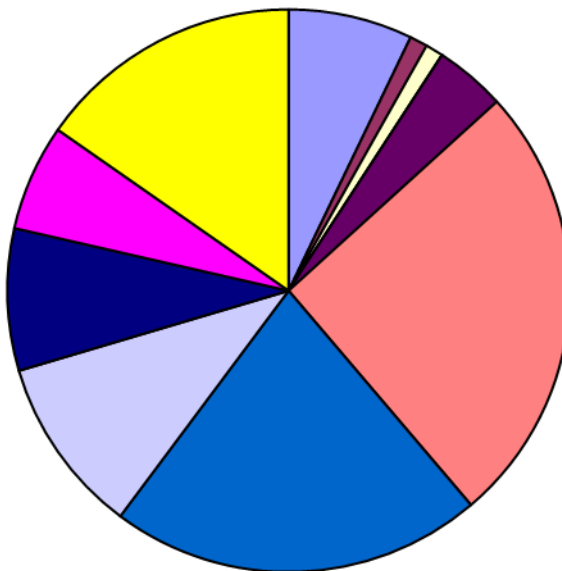


### Area 2 Units in GOAD Classifications



- Finance/ Administration
- Clothing/ Footwear
- Supermarkets
- Electrical/ Computer/ Phones
- DIY/ Hardware/ Furniture
- Commercial Services
- Entertainment/ Catering
- Department and Specialist Stores
- Grocers/ Convenience
- Charity
- Vacant

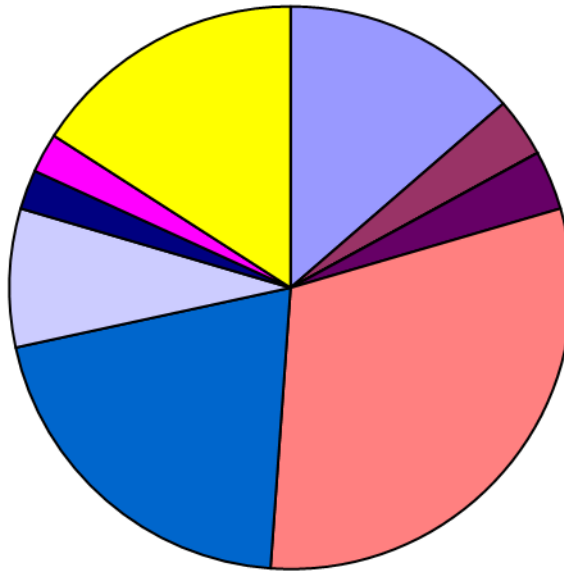
### Area 3 Units in GOAD Classifications



- Finance/ Administration
- Clothing/ Footwear
- Supermarkets
- Electrical/ Computer/ Phones
- DIY/ Hardware/ Furniture
- Commercial Services
- Entertainment/ Catering
- Department and Specialist Stores
- Grocers/ Convenience
- Charity
- Vacant

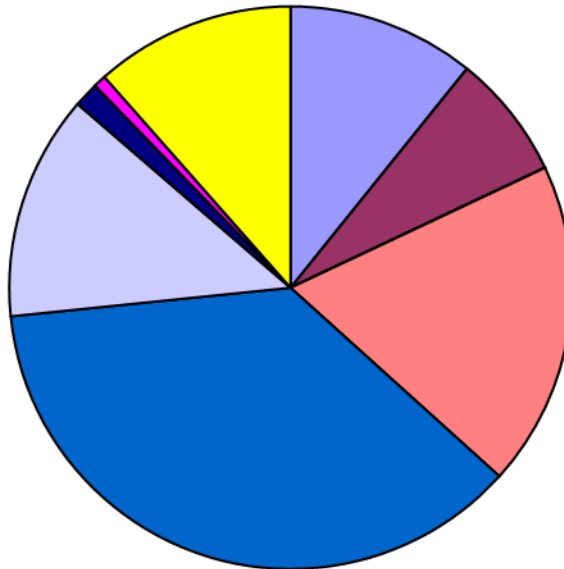


### Area 4 Units in GOAD Classifications

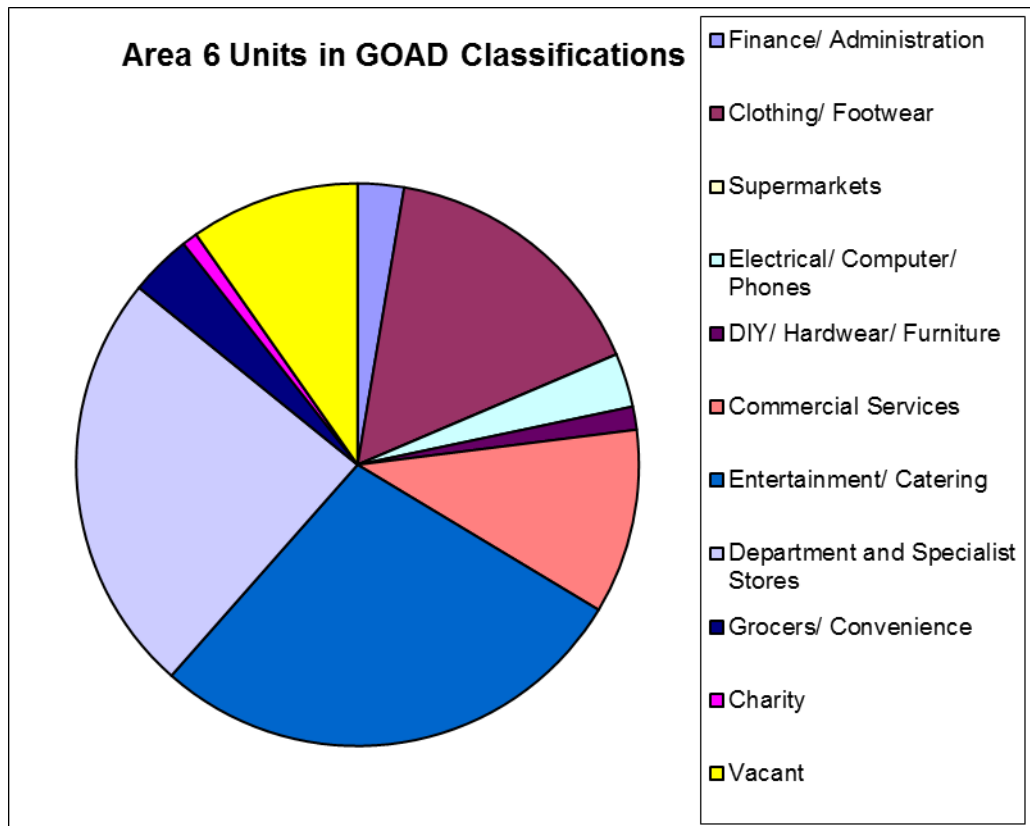


- Finance/ Administration
- Clothing/ Footwear
- Supermarkets
- Electrical/ Computer/ Phones
- DIY/ Hardware/ Furniture
- Commercial Services
- Entertainment/ Catering
- Department and Specialist Stores
- Grocers/ Convenience
- Charity
- Vacant

### Area 5 Units in GOAD Classifications



- Finance/ Administration
- Clothing/ Footwear
- Supermarkets
- Electrical/ Computer/ Phones
- DIY/ Hardware/ Furniture
- Commercial Services
- Entertainment/ Catering
- Department and Specialist Stores
- Grocers/ Convenience
- Charity
- Vacant



### 3.1.3 Vacancy Rates

Location	1	2	3	4	5	6
No. of vacant units	21	27	15	14	16	22
% Vacant	8.4	8.5	15.3	15.9	11.5	9.7

### 3.1.4 Physical Structure of Centre

#### 3.1.4.1 Location 1

This is the most north western part of the city centre. It consists of a number of linear streets coming off of Union Street and other linear streets intersecting these. A number of the streets operate a one – way system to ease congestion in the city centre, such as Rose Street and Chapel Street.

There is one square located within the area, Golden Square, which is currently used as a car park and is predominately occupied by businesses, whereas the western part of this area is predominately retail.

The buildings are mostly constructed of granite, with a slate roof and are 4 storeys. A number of the buildings have fine detail on the front elevation. There are three notable granite buildings within this area; Music Hall, Gilcomston South Church and St Mary's Cathedral. Union Plaza at Union Wynd is the most striking new building within this area of the city centre and offers office accommodation. The smooth white render and glazed construction boasts an attractive open courtyard setting. Other purpose built office accommodation and residential development are of concrete construction. The streetscape is generally attractive.

There is little open space within this part of the city centre apart from the courtyard at Union Plaza on Union Wynd.

Other than the pavement in this area, there is no pedestrianised area or covered shopping areas. However, as streets are small in size, and traffic is limited in most cases, the pedestrian areas available are appropriate.

#### 3.1.4.2 Location 2

This part of the city centre is dominated by three shopping centres (Bon Accord Centre, St Nicholas Centre and The Academy) and the dual carriage way that runs through the middle of the city centre. There are also two major areas of open space in this part of the city centre, Union Terrace Gardens and The Kirk of St Nicholas's graveyard. Belmont Street, a pedestrian first street, is also located in this area and is a good example of a successful pedestrian area.

The buildings are mostly constructed of granite, with a slate roof and are four storeys. A number of the buildings have fine detail on the front elevation. These buildings include St Nicholas Kirk, The Academy, the Central Library, His Majesty's Theatre and Robert Gordons. There is redevelopment ongoing at the location of Triple Kirks.

The newer buildings in this area include the Bon Accord and St Nicholas shopping centres. St Nicholas House is currently being demolished and will soon be undergoing redevelopment. The streetscape is of very high quality. Sections are dominated by a dual carriageway and general traffic which have an impact on the streetscape. Good design principles have been used in Belmont Street, which is pedestrian first.

The Denburn area at St Andrews Street has several vacant units, including the old Robert Gordons University building, which have proposals for redeveloped.

The McCombies Court lane between Union Street and Netherkirkgate has been improved and hopes to attract interest from retailers.

Open space is present at Union Terrace Gardens and St Nicholas Kirk. Union Terrace Gardens comprises an area of active green space which has potential for outdoor events. Both have adequate benches and lighting, however Union Terrace Gardens has issues with disabled access. There is open space within the St Nicholas House site adjacent to Provost Skene's House, however at this time there is no access to this area due to redevelopment work underway at St Nicholas House.

The one shared surface street, Belmont Street, along with the inside of the three shopping centers comprise the pedestrian areas.

#### 3.1.4.3 Location 3

This part of the city centre is dominated by four busy roads; Broad Street/Gallowgate, East North Street/West North Street, King Street and Union Street. The area comprises of long vehicle dominated roads typically running north to south with interconnecting streets running east to west. East North Street/West North Street is dual carriageway. Public realm on Broad Street outside Marischal College is of good quality as the pavement is wide and there is the provision of street furniture, public art and lighting.

The buildings are mostly constructed of granite, with a slate roof. A number of the buildings have fine detail on the front elevation in particular Marischal College, Town House, Sheriff Court, Archibald Simpson House and Archibald Simpson Public House and Aberdeen Art Centre. The Aberdeen community Health and Care Village is the only new building in this area. The streetscape ranges from having a very high appeal to rather low appeal. Examples of high quality streetscape is along Union Street and the stretch of Broad Street that incorporates Marischal College and examples of poor street scape are along West North Street as this particular section is dominated by a dual carriageway, traffic and pedestrian barriers which make the area unattractive for pedestrian movement.

There is no open space present apart from the civic space located in front of Marischal College and the Aberdeen Arts Centre.

Pedestrian areas are constrained to pavements along all the main streets. King Street features a wide pavement area allowing for more movement of people, however, it is in poor condition and could be done with improvement.

#### 3.1.4.4 Location 4

This part of the city centre is dominated by Holburn Street, Bon Accord Terrace Gardens and Bon Accord Square. The area comprises of long streets with interconnecting streets.

The buildings are mostly constructed of granite, with a slate roof and are four storeys. Notable buildings within this area include Langstane Kirk and Bon Accord Baths. The former Capitol Cinema located on Union Street is currently undergoing development. The newer buildings in this area are predominately located on Justice Mill Lane and include The Radisson Park Inn and Travel Lodge. The streetscape ranges from having a very high appeal (Bon Accord Terrace) to rather low appeal (Justice Mill Lane).

Open space is present at Bon Accord Terrace Garden – an attractive and relatively large but underused area.

Pedestrian areas are constrained to pavements along all the main streets, with the exception of Alford Lane, a small pedestrianised area. Holburn Street features a wide pavement area allowing for more movement of people.

#### 3.1.4.5 Location 5

This part of the city centre is dominated by busy roads such as Crown Street and South College Street (dual carriageway). The area comprises of long streets typically running north to south with small interconnecting lanes running east to west. There is one shopping centre located within the area called The Galleria. There has been recent residential redevelopment within the area.

The buildings are mostly constructed of granite, with a slate roof and are four storeys. A number of the buildings have fine detail on the front elevation including The Masonic Temple and the former Crown Street Post Office. The streetscape is generally of a high appeal. The east of the area is dominated by South College Street dual carriageway.

There are no large useable areas of open space. Although very wide pavement areas on Bon Accord Terrace outside The Galleria Shopping Centre could allow for some usage.

Pedestrian areas are constrained to pavements along all the main streets. The only pedestrian area is within The Galleria shopping centre.

#### 3.1.4.6 Location 6

This part of the city centre is dominated by two shopping centres (Union Square and the Trinity Centre) to the western edge, and by a dual carriage way running east to west. The area comprises of short streets typically running north to south with small interconnecting lanes running east to west. Three market spaces, one covered, with The Green, Castlegate and the Indoor Market. There have been noticeable improvements to the public realm, with roads being upgraded so they are more pedestrian friendly, and a number of buildings in private ownership have been improved.

The major transport hub is located within this area of the city centre, with both the railway and bus station. There is a car park located on the east of the centre, and to the south side of the area.

The buildings are mostly constructed of granite, with a slate roof and are four storeys. A number of the buildings have fine detail on the front elevation. The newer buildings in this area - two shopping centres, purpose built office accommodation, development on Ship Row, a residential tower block and residential flatted accommodation, are concrete construction. The streetscape ranges from having a very high appeal to rather low appeal. Examples of high quality streetscape are along Guild Street and Union Street and examples of poor streetscape are along Virginia Street and Commerce Street. Sections are dominated by a dual carriageway, traffic and pedestrian barriers which make the area unattractive. Good design principles have been used in Carmelite Street, which is pedestrian first and uses granite planters and street trees to traffic calm.

Open space is present to the front of Union Square shopping centre and on The Green. Outside Union Square comprises an area of hard surface with benches and lighting. On The Green, open space exists on a cobbled surface with benches and light landscaping throughout.

Pedestrian areas exist along the pavements of the main roads throughout the area, including Union Street and Market Street. Pedestrian only and pedestrian first areas exist outside Union Square, on The Green and within the two shopping centres.

#### 3.1.5 Accessibility

##### 3.1.5.1 Location 1

Car parking is provided at the east by Golden Square and north west by Chapel Street multi-storey car park. Restricted and pay and display

car parking is available on street. A taxi rank is situated on Chapel Street. Alternative taxi ranks are available on Union Street at night time.

Bus routes are limited to Union Street only, however both First Bus and Stagecoach operate numerous services here, which are close in walking distance from this area.

Union Street is the busiest road within this area and acts as a main thoroughfare for the city. To ease any potential congestion the areas directly connected to Union Street have a one way traffic system in place, e.g. Huntly Street, Rose Street, Chapel Street.

Generally newer buildings within the area feature enabled access. Topography of this area is generally flat, however, some streets (Huntly Street) feature cobbles which may make crossing roads challenging.

Dedicated cycle lanes operate on Union Street and there is adequate provision for cycle parking.

Pedestrian movement is restricted to the pavements as there are no designated pedestrian spaces in this area of the city centre and the most direct route pedestrian route is not easily found.

#### 3.1.5.2 Location 2

There is car parking offered at the Bon Accord Centre as well as limited pay and display and restricted on street car parking.

A taxi rank is situated on Back Wynd. Alternative taxi ranks are available on Union Street at night time.

Bus routes for both First Bus and Stagecoach operate throughout this area.

Union Street is the busiest road within this area and acts as a main thoroughfare for the city. Union Street experiences some congestion at peak times.

Generally newer buildings within the area feature enabled access. Some streets within this area are more difficult to negotiate due to varying topography levels. All three shopping centres have disabled access to all levels.

Dedicated cycle lanes operate on Union Street and there is adequate provision for cycle parking.

The area is well signposted to direct pedestrian movement and of particular note is the Merchant Quarter signage located to the east of The Kirk of St Nicholas's graveyard. Although pedestrian movement is interrupted by the dual carriageway from Union Terrace to Belmont Street, Union Bridge and Rosemount Viaduct offer access north and south of Union Terrace Gardens. Pedestrian movement is restricted to the pavements apart from the designated pedestrian spaces at Union Terrace Gardens, St Nicholas Kirk, Belmont Street and the three shopping centres.

#### 3.1.5.3 Location 3

There is a multi-storey car park on Frederick Street and the multi-storey car park to the rear of Marischal College can also be used by members of the public on Thursdays evenings and at weekends. Restricted and pay and display car parking is available on street.

Multiple bus routes for both First Bus and Stagecoach operate throughout this area.

This area acts as the main thoroughfare to and from the north of the city. With King Street experiencing some congestion at peak times, especially at the junction with East North Street/West North Street.

Generally newer buildings within the area feature enabled access. Topography of this area is generally flat with the exception of the topography change between Gallowgate and West North Street.

Dedicated cycle lanes operate on Union Street and King Street and there is adequate provision for cycle parking.

Pedestrian movement is significantly interrupted by the vehicle dominated roads, particularly with freight movement, within this area of the city centre. Pedestrian movement is also restricted to the pavements as there are no designated pedestrian spaces.

#### 3.1.5.4 Location 4

There is limited restricted and pay and display on street parking and Bon Accord Square is used as a car park.

Bus routes are limited to Union Street and Holburn Street only, however both First Bus and Stagecoach operate numerous services here.



This area acts as the main thoroughfare to and from the south of the city. Therefore during busy times the area can become congested, especially at the junction of Holburn Street/Union Street.

Generally newer buildings within the area feature enabled access. Some streets within this area are more difficult to negotiate due to varying topography levels.

Dedicated cycle lanes operate on Union Street and Holburn Street and there is adequate provision for cycle parking.

The pedestrian movement is interrupted by heavy vehicular traffic on Holburn Street and is restricted to the pavements as there are no designated pedestrian spaces in this area of the city centre except Alford Lane. Sometimes the most direct route pedestrian route is not easily found.

#### 3.1.5.5 Location 5

There is limited restricted and pay and display on street car parking within the area.

Bus routes for both First Bus and Stagecoach operate throughout this area.

Union Street and College Street are the busiest roads within this area and act as the main thoroughfares for the city in this area.

Generally newer buildings within the area feature enabled access. Some streets within this area are more difficult to negotiate due to varying topography levels.

Dedicated cycle lanes operate on Union Street and College Street and there is adequate provision for cycle parking.

Pedestrian movement is restricted to the pavements as there are no designated pedestrian spaces in this area of the city centre with the exception of the Galleria Shopping Centre. Pedestrian movement is interrupted by the South College Street dual carriageway.

#### 3.1.5.6 Location 6

Car parking is provided at the south by the Union Square car park and by an NPC car park to the east. Restricted and pay and display car parking is available on street.

Taxi ranks are situated at the railway station and Hadden Street. Alternative taxi ranks are available on Union Street at night time.

The main transport hubs of the rail and bus station are located in the area. The services are frequent. Bus stops are located on Guild Street and Market Street.

The area acts as a main thoroughfare for the city and at peak times can be congested on Market Street, Guild Street, and Virginia Street.

Generally newer buildings within the area feature enabled access. An issue arises due to the lack of lifts to the rear of the Trinity Centre. Accessing the Green may also be challenging for those with mobility difficulties.

Cycle stands are present in the car park for Union Square and at various spots throughout the area. There is a designated cycle lane along Shiprow.

The main pedestrian flow is within and between the two shopping centres of Union Square and Trinity Centre and the area is well signposted to direct pedestrian movement. Market Street and Guild Street are also populated with foot traffic, with improved pavements to reflect the demand for pedestrian space. The pedestrian movement during the day and night alters due to the closure of the Trinity shopping centre and thereby the closure of a pedestrian route. Sometimes the most direct pedestrian route is not easily found.

The pedestrian movement is interrupted by the dual carriageway and it is difficult for pedestrians to cross the dual carriageway from the western edge of Commerce Street as there is no pedestrian crossing.

Although the Green is a direct pedestrian route from Union Street to Union Square, access to the Green still requires improvement.

### 3.1.6 Environmental Quality and Amenity

#### 3.1.6.1 Location 1

The area is generally clean with litter bin provision comprising a mixture of standard black litter bins, on street Big Belly bins and household food waste bins (prevalent within parts of the centre which are more residential in nature).

The road traffic network within this area comprises a mixture of one way and two way streets which can become congested at peak times throughout the day. The high number of offices within the area also

impacts on the level of traffic at peak commuter times. The streets within the area are generally quite narrow which acts as a natural speed calming measure although it is likely that traffic will impact upon pedestrians within pockets of this area e.g. Union Terrace.

There are no pedestrian only streets or shared surface streets therefore pedestrian areas and areas of open space are reserved to pavements and hard surfaces areas such as Golden Square and the courtyard at Union Plaza at Union Wynd. There are no parks within the area or large areas of open space.

The worst sections of pavement due to poor surfacing and narrowness can be found on Union Street, particularly on the northern side around South Silver Street and between Union Row and the western terminus of the street.

The streetscape is of very high quality. The area has high amenity and in particular are the areas around Golden Square and Union Terrace. A number of the streets are cobbled and soft landscaping is common within the streets in the area which increases amenity. Golden Square could be improved with regards to its use as a car park; however the square itself is attractive. The street lighting in Golden Square and on Huntly Street is of a heritage style. Street furniture of particular note comprises a monument within Golden Square and a religious statue in front of St Marys Cathedral. In line with the 2012 Olympic Games, Golden Square now features a Golden Postbox.

Buildings and shopfronts are in good condition throughout the area although the take-away units on Rose Street could be improved.

Listed buildings –

Grade A – 2 buildings (Music Hall and Monkey House Public House)

Grade B – 43 buildings plus the Rosemount Viaduct and Union Bridge and Viaduct

Grade C – 20 buildings

Some of this area of the city centre is designated under the Union Street conservation area.

#### 3.1.6.2 Location 2

The area is generally clean with litter bin provision comprising a mixture of standard black litter bins and on street bins (prevalent within parts of the centre which are more residential in nature). Litter bins are provided in front of the shopping centres. On the whole the area is clean but parts of the area are dominated by vehicular traffic on the Denburn which gives rise to dust and fumes.

The area has mixed amenity with high amenity areas including Union Terrace Gardens, Union Terrace, St Nicholas Kirkyard, Belmont Street, Back Wynd and Schoolhill. The northern part of the area is of lesser amenity and could be improved.

A number of the streets within the area are pedestrianised, cobbled, have widened pavements or are shared surface which increases pedestrian amenity. Belmont Street, a pedestrian first street, is located in this area and is a good example of a successful pedestrian area.

The road traffic network within this area comprises a mixture of one way and two way streets which can become congested at peak times throughout the day. This area has a diverse range of use types including education, commercial, retail and leisure which all have differing impacts on the road network. The streets are also used by buses within this area. As a number of the streets have some form of pedestrian priority, as mentioned above, it is unlikely that traffic will impact negatively upon pedestrians within these areas. However, there are particular pockets which will impact upon pedestrians e.g. Schoolhill between St Nicholas and Bon Accord shopping centres.

Union Terrace Gardens is the largest area of open space within this area, followed by St Nicholas Kirkyard. Both are pleasant areas of greenspace. There are pockets of soft landscaping located throughout this area which break up the dominance of roads and pavements. Examples of these are at the northern end of Union Terrace and in front of Robert Gordons College.

Street furniture of particular note includes four monuments on or within close proximity to Union Terrace, the Cowdray Hall war memorial and a further statue outside Robert Gordons College.

Buildings and shopfronts are in good condition throughout the area, especially the exterior of the Bon Accord and St Nicholas facing onto Schoolhill. However the units north of Bon Accord Centre on George Street were noted to be of lesser quality with regards to the shopfronts.

Listed buildings –

Grade A – 9 buildings plus the St Nicholas Kirk Churchyard

Grade B – 23 buildings plus the Denburn Viaduct, Union Terrace Gardens balustrades, arcades and public toilets, Edward VII statue, Burns statue, Prince Albert statue, Wallace statue

Grade C – 21 buildings plus the General Charles George Gordon Statue

Most of this area of the city centre is designated under the Union Street conservation area and some is designated under the Rosemount conservation area.

The old Esslemont and Mackintosh building on the western corner of Union Street and Broad Street has now been redeveloped into a restaurant facility.

Union Street from Broad Street to the eastern side of Union Bridge are now finished in Caithness flagstone. This provides a solid and hardwearing quality surface that contributes to the positive amenity of the street.

### 3.1.6.3 Location 3

On the whole the area is clean but due to the high level of vehicle traffic around East North Street/West North Street and King Street this gives rise to dirt due to dust and fumes.

Litter bin provision comprises of a mixture of standard black litter bins, on street bins and household food waste bins (prevalent within parts of the centre which are more residential in nature).

The area has mixed pedestrian amenity. The streetscape ranges from having a very high appeal to rather low appeal. Outside Marischal College is pleasant and there are many buildings of note within the area however the dominance of traffic has a negative impact on amenity.

The traffic has a significant impact on pedestrians and the quality of space on King Street, East North Street/West North Street. The road network here is very intrusive and the streets are highly trafficked with frequent buses using Broad Street, Gallowgate, East North Street/West North Street and King Street.

Benches/seats are located in the paved area outside Marischal College and the area around Aberdeen Arts Centre and Queen Street. Buildings and shopfronts are in good condition throughout the area however a number of the units on King Street/Justice Street were noted to be of lesser quality with regards to the shopfronts. Public realm improvements and pavement widening has taken place around Marischal College since its renovation which has improved the environment and amenity of the area in addition to freeing up space for pedestrian movement. The King Robert the Bruce statue in front of Marischal College is of particular note.

There is sparse provision of soft landscaping throughout the area and is limited to a landscape buffer area around Marischal College and on Queen Street. There is a small area of civic space adjacent to the Town House on Queen Street which improves the amenity of the area. Planters are located in and around the civic buildings (Town House, Sheriff Courts) etc.

Listed buildings –  
Grade A – 7 buildings  
Grade B – 19 buildings  
Grade C – 15 buildings

Most of this area of the city centre is designated under the Union Street conservation area.

Union Street from Broad Street to the eastern side of Union Bridge is now finished in Caithness flagstone. This provides a solid and hardwearing quality surface that contributes to the positive amenity of the street.

#### 3.1.6.4 Location 4

The area is clean with litter bin provision comprising a mixture of standard black litter bins, on street bins and household food waste bins (prevalent within parts of the centre which are more residential in nature).

There are no pedestrian only streets or shared surface streets therefore pedestrian areas and areas of open space are reserved to pavements and hard surfaces areas such as the area in front of Bon Accord Square. Significant open space is, however, located within Bon Accord Gardens which is a pleasant area of green space for this area and the city centre as a whole although is underused.

A number of the streets operate a reduced 20mph speed limit which reduces impact on pedestrians although generally this area has little impact on pedestrians due to the mix of uses and high number of residential properties. The streets within this area are quite narrow which also acts as a natural speed calming measure. Traffic light systems exist throughout Holburn Street, to allow for safe crossing of the roads.

Street furniture of particular note includes a memorial to architect Archibald Simpson located in the centre of Bon Accord Square and a sculpture on the corner of Langstane Place and Dee Street.

Buildings and shopfronts are in good condition throughout the area. Recent redevelopment on Justice Mill Lane has increased amenity of the area although there is room for further improvement along this stretch of Justice Mill Lane/Lanestane Place.

The streetscape ranges from having a very high appeal (Bon Accord Terrace) to rather low appeal (Justice Mill Lane). The area is of mixed amenity with some particularly high areas around Bon Accord Square, Terrace and Crescent. As mentioned above the streets running behind Union Street e.g. Justice Mill Lane/Langstane Place is not of particularly high amenity.

One of the buildings in the worst visual physical condition include the Balmoral bar and hotel building on the south side of Union Street between Bon Accord Terrace and Holburn Junction. The Oil and Glass unit is a good example of a pleasant shopfront.

Listed buildings –

Grade A – there are no Grade A listed buildings in this area of the city centre

Grade B – 15 buildings plus the Hardgate Well and a ventilator on Justice Mill Lane

Grade C – 20 buildings plus a March Stone on Alford Lane

Parts of this area of the city centre are covered by either the Union Street conservation area or the Bon-Accord Crescent/ Crown Street conservation area.

#### 3.1.6.5 Location 5

The area is clean with litter bin provision comprising a mixture of standard black litter bins, on street bins and household food waste bins (prevalent within parts of the centre which are more residential in nature).

The traffic has a significant impact on pedestrians and the quality of space on South College Street which dominates the east of the area. The road network here is very intrusive and the streets are highly trafficked. The road traffic network within this area comprises a mixture of one way and two way streets. The streets are also used by buses within this area. A number of the streets operate a reduced 20mph speed limit which reduces impact on pedestrians although generally this area has little impact on pedestrians due to the high number of residential properties which dominate the southern part of the area.

There are no pedestrian only streets or shared surface streets therefore pedestrian areas and areas of open space are reserved to pavements and hard surfaces areas such as the area in front of the the Galleria shopping centre. The only pedestrian area is within the Galleria shopping centre. There are no large useable areas of open space.

The paved area outside the Galleria Shopping Centre features attractive plant pots and some granite block street furniture.

Buildings and shopfronts are in good condition throughout the area and the streetscape is generally of a high appeal. Recent residential development to the south of the area has increased the amenity of the area.

The buildings of the worst visual physical condition can be found on Bridge Street and include numerous late night bars and clubs, as well as a number of take-aways.

A good example of a shopfront can be seen at Aperitivo Restaurant on Bon Accord Street, which also features an outdoor seating area.

Listed buildings –

Grade A – there are no Grade A listed buildings in this area of the city centre

Grade B – 37 plus the Bridge Street Viaduct

Grade C – 19 buildings

Parts of this area of the city centre are covered by either the Union Street conservation area or the Bon-Accord Crescent/ Crown Street conservation area.

#### 3.1.6.6 Location 6

The area outside of Union Square has litter bins, as does Market Street, Guild Street, and the Green. On the whole the area is clean but due to the high level of vehicle traffic the area appears dirty due to dust and fumes. There are also household food waste bins in areas which are more residential in nature.

The traffic has a large impact on pedestrians and the quality of space on Guild Street, Virginia Street and Market Street. The road network here is very intrusive and the streets are highly trafficked. On Carmelite Street, Shiprow and The Green the public realm enhancements have increased the pedestrian first elements.



Rationalisation and removal of bins, bus shelters and superfluous signage on the southern pavement between Market Street and Bridge Street have freed up space for increased pedestrian movement between the Trinity and Union Square. This section of the street has also benefited from widened pavements. The stairs from Guild Street up into the Trinity Centre have been improved.

There is extensive soft landscaping throughout the Green and Carmelite area, however, there is very little elsewhere and there are no parks in the area.

Benches/seats are located in the pedestrian areas on the Green and outside Union Square. There are a number of large black bins on the pavement and located in on street parking bays. The street lighting in Marischal Street is of a heritage style. The condition of these is generally good.

Contour Café and Café 52 on the Green both feature outdoor seating areas.

The lane at the Adelphi now features some art work and has seen some minor improvements to the area. In order to attract more interest, some more improvements are required.

A new monument has been erected in the Castlegate recently to pay tribute to the Gordon Highlanders. There is also a Golden Post Box to mark one of the Great Britain gold medal wins at the 2012 London Olympics.

The area has mixed amenity. In Carmelite Street, The Green and the area outside Union Square are pleasant. Castlegate could be improved. Guild Street and Market Street are steadily being improved due to shopfront upgrading and improvements.

A number of buildings in this area are being improved at present and this includes improving shop frontages on Market Street and the immediate area. This has improved the environment and amenity of the area over the recent past. The Tivoli Theatre is a good example of how these improvements can make a difference to the streetscape of the area.

This side of Union Street from the Castlegate to the eastern side of Union Bridge is now finished in Caithness flagstone. This provides a solid and hardwearing quality surface that contributes to the positive amenity of the street.

Listed buildings –

Grade A – 5 plus the Mercat Cross

Grade B – 47

Grade C – 39 plus the 'The Mannie' or the green fountain

Most of these are in good condition or being improved. There has been investment in the area through the Townscape Heritage Initiative. Noticeable improvements have been made to the Carmelite Hotel, Tivoli Theatre and a number of buildings on Market Street. Less regular maintenance has taken place on some of the buildings closer to the harbour, yet there are still many fine examples of well maintained and pleasant buildings here. The majority of the area sits within the Union Street Conservation Area. The Market Cross on the Castlegate is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The open space comprises of areas of hard surface in the two open area markets and the public areas outside Union Square. Castlegate is finished in setts, The Green in modern setts and the area outside Union Square with slab paving. The general condition of the areas is good, although improvements could be made to the Castlegate to improve the vitality this is also true for The Green.

### 3.1.7 Town Centre Management and Initiatives

Within Aberdeen City Centre's BID, local businesses are working together and investing collectively in improvements to the local business environment with the aim of strengthening the local economy. Aberdeen Inspired is now the established brand for the BID. The BID commenced in summer 2011 and will run for five years, concluding in 2016.

Since 2011, Aberdeen Inspired have implemented the following projects (this list is not exhaustive):

- 'Big Belly' solar-powered compacting waste bins
- Union Street Bunting
- McCombie's Court Refurbishment
- Window Vinyl Scheme
- Shop Front Improvement Scheme
- Jazz on the Green 2013