

BUSINESS PRIORITIES FOR REGENERATING CAMBUSLANG TOWN CENTRE



Cambuslang Business Survey 2017

Cambuslang Community Council



CAMBUSLANG
Community Council

Acknowledgements

The Cambuslang Business Survey 2017 was carried out by Cambuslang Community Council with a survey team comprising Hilda Allison, Bobby Allison, John Bachtler, Michelle Farmer and David Porter, with support from Dominic Sinclair and Jayde Morton.

The Community Council are very grateful to the following businesses for taking part in the survey:

AM Ducie Florist	Glasgow Law Practice	Pandora's Box
Andy's Convenience	Greggs	Phone to U
Asian Fusion	Health & Wellbeing	Pizza Hut
Asian Tandoori	Hospice Shop	Proper Print & PC
Benny's	Hugh Black	Ritz Bar
Black Bull	Iain's Carpets	Scissor Sisters
Boots	Ironing & Alterations	Scottish Wheel Tyre Centre
Burger Bang	John Fairweather	Sefton Bar
Cambus News	Karen's Ice Cream	Special Moments
Cambuslang Dental	Kolor King	Speciality Cakes
Century 21	Ladbrokes	Specs Direct 2 U
Cheers	Leslie Chemist (2 shops)	Subway
Chillies	Lucky Oriental	Super Save
Cibelli Barbers	M&Co	Superdrug
Cinnamon	Maestro	Tandoori Knights
Classy Chicks	Main's Memorial	The Bakers Shop
Clock Inn	Marie Curie	The Black Bull
Clydesdale Bank	Marion's Hairstylist	The Tea Bay
Cooperative Funeral	Mary Brogan	Vanity Hair & Beauty
Coral	McCallum's Cafe	Vapetek
Corkys	Money Shop	William Hill (2 shops)
Credit Union	Naz	Zippy
Eastern Delight	Night Star	
Farm Foods	No Hat Required	
Finlays	Optical Express	

Cambuslang Community Council welcome comments on this report, further ideas for its Community Strategy and offers to get involved. Please contact CambuslangComCo@aol.com or phone 07973 744807.

Cambuslang Community Council, February 2017

BUSINESS PRIORITIES FOR REGENERATING CAMBUSLANG TOWN CENTRE: THE CAMBUSLANG BUSINESS SURVEY 2017

SUMMARY

The purpose of the Cambuslang Business Survey is to assess what Main Street shops and other businesses think of the town centre and what needs to be improved. The survey was run from November 2016 to January 2017 and achieved 73 responses, equivalent to a 95% response rate from the 77 businesses approached for the survey.

The results show that **the Main Street is in trouble** and may be reaching a tipping point. A sizeable proportion of retailers (40%) have experienced declining business performance over the past three years. Almost a quarter assess their current performance as poor, and 20% have considered closing down or moving out of Cambuslang.

The **potential damaging economic impact** is clear from the data analysis undertaken for this survey. The Main Street retail sector supports some 350 jobs and an estimated turnover of between £8 million and £11 million. Losing more shops would accelerate a vicious cycle of decline. Less measurable, though also important, is the effect of decline on civic pride.

The shifting fortunes of the Main Street are partly due to changing shopping patterns. However, there are factors specific to Cambuslang which retailers believe need urgent action. **Top of the list is a new parking strategy** to address the lack of sufficient spaces and time for parking. Other important priorities are related to security (crime, vandalism, anti-social behaviour), the layout and appearance of the street and the level of traffic and congestion. More diversity of shops is needed, particularly at least one new anchor store (supermarket) in the centre of the Main Street.

Further decline of the Main Street is not inevitable. There are many examples of how town centres across the UK are taking effective action to turn around their main streets and high streets. Regeneration will require concerted action by businesses with support from the wider community, and – crucially – leadership from South Lanarkshire Council and Scottish Government.

The results of this survey indicate **a clear case for a new policy approach by South Lanarkshire Council** to regenerate Cambuslang Main Street. We make the following recommendations:

- (i) a **Town Centre Regeneration Strategy** involving:
 - a. establishment of a Town Centre Regeneration Task Force of all relevant bodies;
 - b. a Main Street Action plan to address the most urgent issues (e.g. parking);
 - c. a Business Improvement Plan for commercial revival of the Main Street;
 - d. extension of Clyde Gateway to include Cambuslang;
- (ii) a **'town centre first' policy** in the new SLC Local Development Plan and future investment decisions (including rescinding planning approval for a supermarket on Bridge Street); and
- (iii) development of a **new long-term masterplan** for the layout of Cambuslang Town Centre to provide a road-map for future decision-making on planning and investment.

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BUSINESS PRIORITIES FOR REGENERATING CAMBUSLANG MAIN STREET THE CAMBUSLANG BUSINESS SURVEY 2017

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMBUSLANG BUSINESS SURVEY: WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

Four years ago, the Scottish Government launched its ‘Town Centre Action Plan’ to reinvigorate town centres across Scotland. The Action Plan called for a *“long term vision for each town centre which will make our town centres fit and viable places to interact, do business, and access facilities and services”*.¹ The principle of ‘town centre first’ applies to all policies and strategies of the Scottish Government, local government and other organisations.

In response, the South Lanarkshire Council’s Local Development Plan² has an objective to *“sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the network of town centres”*, encompassing strategic centres (e.g. East Kilbride, Hamilton), town centres (such as Cambuslang) and neighbourhood centres (such as Burnside, Fernhill, Halfway). It makes commitments to promoting town centre living, vibrant local economies, community-led regeneration, accessible public services, investing in digital infrastructure, and pro-active planning (including health checks).

While there has been some progress in areas such as public service accessibility in Cambuslang, the objectives of ‘vibrant local economies’ and ‘community-led regeneration’ are not being met. There is certainly no publicly recognised vision or strategy specifically for Cambuslang town centre. It is unclear whether SLC has recently carried out a health check of Cambuslang Main Street. None of the Glasgow City Region Deal projects chose by South Lanarkshire Council comply with the ‘town centre first’ principle, at least as far as Cambuslang is concerned.

The view of the local community is that the town centre has declined significantly over the past decade. The main conclusion of the 2015 Cambuslang Community Survey³ was huge public dissatisfaction with Cambuslang Main Street. Two-thirds of respondents were unhappy with the appearance and layout of the Main Street, and almost 70% criticised the limited range of shops. The layout of the Main Street was considered a mistake; parking availability was poor; the large trolley waste bins were considered unsightly; and better provision for cycling was needed.

The Cambuslang Business Survey was undertaken by Cambuslang Community Council to find out whether shopkeepers and other business owners/managers share the views of local people about

¹ Scottish Government Town Centre Action Plan <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/town-centres/review/action-plan>

² South Lanarkshire Council Local Development Plan Supplementary Guidance –Town Centres and Retailing, 2015.

³ The Cambuslang Community Survey was carried by Cambuslang Community Council in Summer 2015. It achieved almost 1100 responses, making it one of the largest community surveys conducted in Scotland. The results are available here: <http://www.cambuslangcommunitycouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Cambuslang-Community-Survey-Report-final3.pdf>

the Main Street and their priorities for change. Those running businesses on the Main Street have the most direct stake in the health of the town centre. They can see most clearly what is wrong and which improvements would have the most immediate impact.

The Business Survey was launched by Cambuslang Community Council in November 2016 and ran until the end of January 2017. Survey forms were given to every retailer and other business fronting on to either side of the Main Street and adjacent streets (Greenlees Road, Tabernacle Lane, West Coats Road), encompassing a total of 77 businesses. 73 businesses responded, yielding an impressive response rate of 95%. With this high level of response, which is rare in surveys of this kind, the Cambuslang Business Survey can claim to be a comprehensive assessment of business opinion. It includes the views of all types of business situated in all parts of the Main Street and therefore provides a well-informed basis for assessing the problems experienced and identifying the priorities for improvement.

The survey asked ten questions on the following issues:

1. **Characteristics of the business:** how long has your shop/business been operating on the Main Street? Do you live in Cambuslang? Are your premises leased or occupied? How many staff do you employ?
2. **Business performance:** how do you assess your current trading performance (good, satisfactory, poor)? How has it changed over the past three years (improved, much the same, declined)?
3. **Assessment of the Main Street:** how has the Main Street changed over the past three years (stayed the same, improved, declined)? What are the main problems experienced – commercial factors (trade, competition, customer parking), cost factors (rent, rates, improvement finance, premises), staffing (recruitment, retention) and environment factors (traffic, security, anti-social behaviour, appearance of the street)?
4. **Priorities for improvement:** What are your priorities for improving the Main Street for your business – commercial environment (more national multiples, more specialist shops, foodstore), cost factors (reduced rents, rates), parking issues (more spaces, more time to park), environment (more policing, better streetscape), and promotional activity (marketing, events)?

A copy of the questionnaire is provided in an annex to this report.

The following sections discuss each of these issues, complemented by data analysis. It summarises the results of the survey and provides an indicative range of the supplementary comments made by respondents. It should be noted that respondents were assured that the survey results would be anonymised and no comments are attributed to specific businesses.

2. CAMBUSLANG MAIN STREET – WHAT SORT OF RETAIL CENTRE?

Cambuslang has units for 83 shops or business services fronting on to the Main Street or adjacent streets. 75 of them are occupied, with eight lying vacant. There are a further 57 business units, 52 of them offices and most of them in the Cambuslang Gate complex.

2.1 Retail profile – dominated by hair, beauty and takeaway shops

The profile of the Main Street is typical of many secondary town centre shopping streets, with a significant number of hair and beauty salons, takeaway food shops, pubs and betting shops (see Figure 1).

The Main Street also has a range of health-related services (dentist, opticians, pharmacies), restaurant/cafes, professional services (finance, property) and a mix of other shops and businesses. Over two-thirds of the businesses are independents and c. 30 percent are branches of regional or national chains.

Many of the shops on the Main are relatively small (see Figure 2). Two-thirds are less than 100 m² in size, and almost half of these are under 50 m². This is similar to other UK shopping streets dominated by convenience goods, personal services and fast-food outlets.

Fewer than ten percent of shops have a floorspace greater than 200 m², the largest units being Farmfoods, M&Co and The John Fairweather.

Figure 1: Retail profile of Cambuslang Main Street

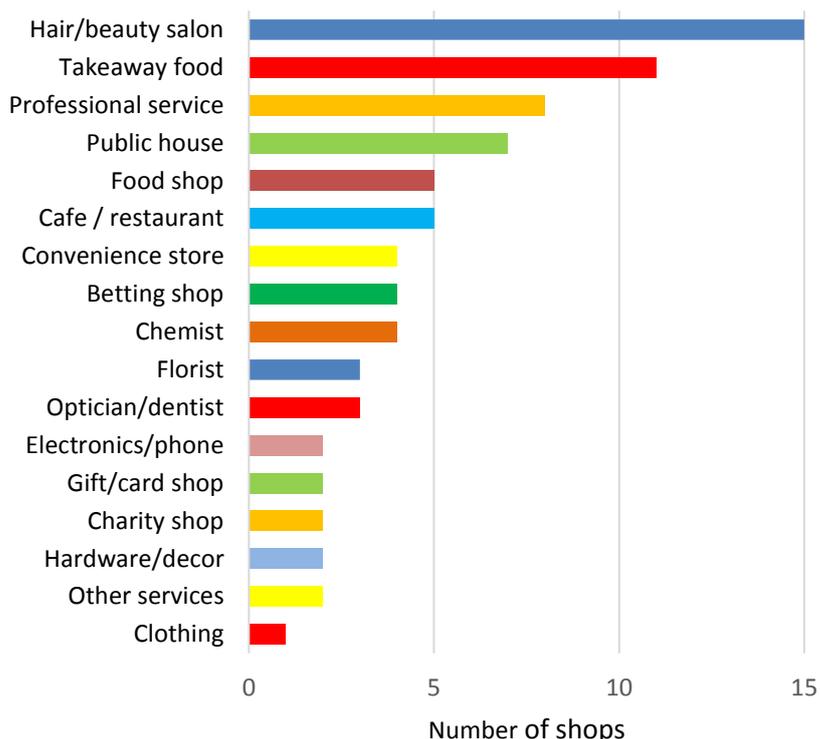
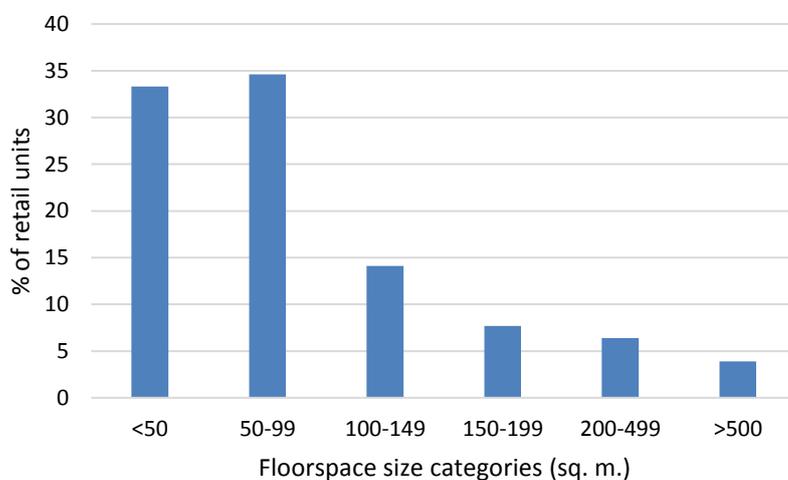


Figure 2: Size of shops on the Main Street



2.3 Retail floorspace - less than 10,000 square metres

Overall, the Main Street has a total retail floorspace of 9,746 square metres, of which 8,246 m² are currently occupied by retailers.⁴ For comparison purposes, the central business district of Hamilton has a retail floorspace of 82,800 m², and the East Kilbride shopping centre has over 100,000 m². The total floorspace of all retail and service units on the Main Street combined is less than the total of local supermarkets, and less than the size of some individual superstores such as Sainsbury's and Tesco (see Table 1).

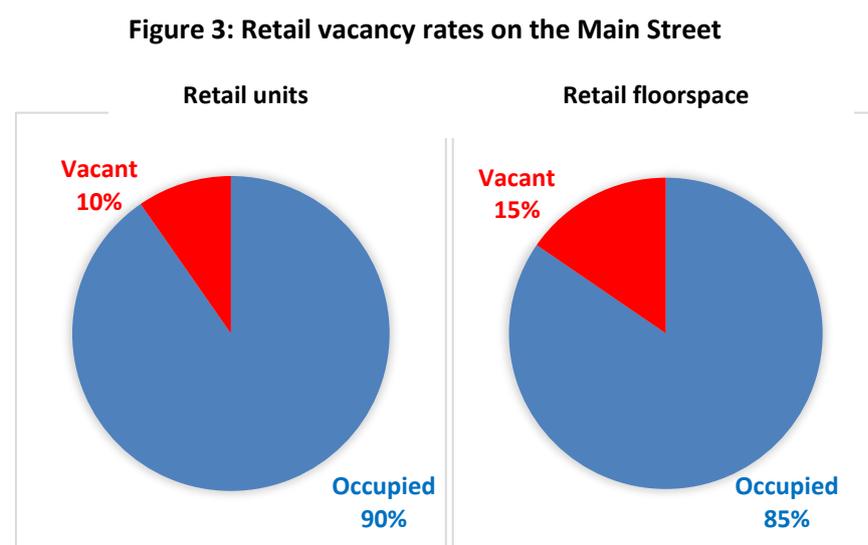
These figures also indicate the threat posed by the South Lanarkshire Council Masterplan for the Hoover site, which includes approval of a supermarket with 9,104 m² of floorspace on Bridge Street.⁵ Its focus on convenience goods would represent significant competition for the Main Street and cause major damage to its continued viability.

Table 1: Comparison of Cambuslang Main Street floorspace

Shops/centres	Floorspace (sq. metres)
Cambuslang Main Street	9,746
Morrisons	4,730
Aldi	1,515
Lidl	1,962
Tesco Burnside	2,520
Sainsburys Kingsgate	10,783
Tesco Dalmarnock	10,859

2.4 Vacant units - lack of anchor stores

The Main Street has eight vacant retail units, c.10% of the total stock of shops. This is above the 2016 average for Scotland⁶ with respect to the number of units vacant (see Figure 3).



The scale of vacancy is still greater in terms of retail floorspace, where 15% of floorspace is vacant.

Three vacant units have floorspace in the 200-500 m² range, indicating the difficulty of attracting larger retailers – among them a tenant for the former Scotmid supermarket site in the centre of the town. The

⁴ Data collated from the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) portal (www.saa.gov.uk)

⁵ South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan – Town Centres and Retailing Supplementary Guidance, 2015.

⁶ Scottish Retail Consortium 2016 survey data.

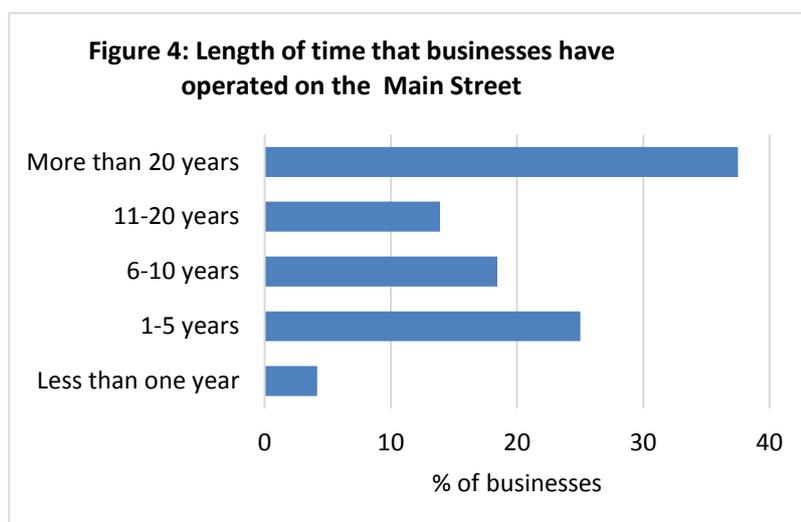
lack of anchor stores to draw retail traffic to key parts of the Main Street is a major concern for the town centre's sustainability.

This is not a recent problem. Some of the units on the north side of the Main Street have been empty since the development of the Cambuslang Gate complex in the mid-2000s i.e. pre-dating the economic crisis. One factor is cost: according to the SAA valuation rolls, the rateable value of units in Cambuslang Gate are among the highest on the Main Street, suggesting that the units may need to be subdivided or reconfigured to make them affordable to tenants.



2.5 Many retailers are well-established, and most premises are leased.

The majority of businesses on the Main Street are well-established. Around half have been operating on Cambuslang Main Street for at least ten years and well over a third for more than 20 years. There is also a significant number of new businesses that have opened within the past five years (see Figure 2).



However, the profile of the Main Street has changed substantially over the past two decades.

The number of shops selling foodstuffs and groceries has declined in recent years, only one clothes shop remains, there is no longer a supermarket in the centre of the Main Street, and all three or the remaining three bank branches have closed in 2016-17.

There have been some new additions – particularly the redevelopment of the derelict cinema/bingo hall to create a bar and restaurant by JD Wetherspoon. However, a comparison with the Main Street of 20 years ago is stark. At that time, Cambuslang still had a shoe shop, furniture shop, fresh fish shop, second hand furniture shop, DIY store, fruit shop, and more than one butcher and clothes shops. In the words of one local resident *“you didn't need to go out of Cambuslang for anything”*.

Importantly, a high proportion of businesses (60% of respondents) lease the property that they occupy. Only a quarter are owner-occupied. For the multiples and other externally owned businesses, decisions on investment are often made outside Cambuslang. As the recent closures of RBS, Clydesdale Bank and TSB demonstrate, the decision to stop trading can be made at very short notice, apparently without any local consultation.

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE MAIN STREET FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The Main Street is an important generator of employment and income for the economy of Cambuslang. Using the data from the survey responses, and applying basic Retail Impact Assessment techniques,⁷ it is possible to quantify the economic impact of the retail sector on the Main Street.

3.1 Employment – provision of 350 jobs and £4 million of wages & salaries

The Main Street retail businesses are estimated to create some 350 jobs. Based on the findings of the survey, which asked respondents to provide figures for full and part-time staff, the total retail employment of Main Street retailers is estimated as 354 jobs – 171 full-time and 183 part-time.⁸ This is 2-3 times the level of employment in the Liberty (Tata) steel plant in Cambuslang, and double the (remaining) jobs in the local Greggs factory.

Table 2: Employment created by Main Street retailers

	Retail jobs recorded	Retail jobs (full-time equivalent)	Direct, indirect and induced jobs
Full-time staff	171	171	225.7
Part-time staff	183	91.5	120.8
Total	354	262.5	346.5

Around 90 percent of the retailers have five or fewer staff, with almost 10 percent being run by one person. The remaining retailers have more than five staff, with the largest recording 28 full and part-time staff.

Assuming that part-time employment averages 0.5 FTE, the retail employment on the Main Street jobs equates to 263 full-time jobs. This employment will be associated with indirect and induced jobs elsewhere. Applying a standard Scottish Government employment multiplier of 1.32,⁹ it can be estimated that total direct, indirect and induced employment is of the order of 347 jobs. With the addition of commercial employment in the offices in Cambuslang Gate and elsewhere, the total figure for jobs associated with Main Street businesses is likely to be well in excess of 400.

⁷ It is important to underline that this is not an RIA, and the figures for income and turnover are indicative.

⁸ Eight respondents were not able to provide employment figures, and estimates have been included for these businesses.

⁹ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Economy/Input-Output/Multipliers>

Retail and food service jobs are among the lowest paid sectors in Scotland, with median hourly pay (excluding overtime) of £8.66 and £7.42 respectively.¹⁰ This equates to an annual salary of £16,707 and £14,315 respectively. Applying these salary figures to the above data for direct employment in the different businesses suggests that the generation of wages and salaries of the Main Street retail sector could be of the order of £4.09 million per year.

3.2 Business turnover for the Main Street - between £5 and 11 million?

The turnover of Main Street retail businesses can be estimated from floorspace data from the SAA valuation rolls. As noted above, the total floorspace of operating retailers is 8,246 square metres. Retail Impact Assessment studies conducted for similar town centres, including in Scotland, assume that between 60% and 70% of floorspace will be sales area (net floorspace) to which they then apply a turnover value ranging between £1,000 and £2,500 per square metre. Lastly, they apply an economic multiplier, usually between 1.2 and 1.5.

Applying this methodology to the floorspace figures for the Main Street is shown in Table 3. This assumes a gross/net floorspace ratio of 65% and turnover values of £1,000-£2000 per square metre.

Table 3: Estimated annual turnover of Main Street retailing

Turnover per sq.m.	Total turnover	Multiplier of 1.2	Multiplier of 1.5
£1,000	£5,359,684	£6,431,621	£8,039,526
£1,500	£8,039,526	£9,647,431	£12,059,289
£2,000	£10,719,368	£12,863,242	£16,079,052

The outcome suggests that the turnover of retail businesses on the Main Street is at least £5.4 million per year and is more likely to be in the £8-11 million range. Even with a conservative multiplier of 1.2, the wider direct and indirect economic impact of retailing in Cambuslang could be approaching £13 million per year.

¹⁰ *Earnings in Scotland 2016*, Scottish Parliament Information Centre.

4. HOW IS THE RETAIL PERFORMANCE OF THE MAIN STREET CHANGING?

The survey results indicate that the contribution of the Main Street to local employment and income is under threat. In the survey, respondents were asked to assess their current business performance and how it has changed over the past three years.

Only a minority (18%) of Main Street retailers say that their current performance is good (see Figure 5).

While more than half consider that their business performance is currently satisfactory/ok, almost a quarter assess their performance as poor.

Looking at trends, only 14% of retailers say that their business performance has improved over the past three years (see Figure 6). Almost 40% consider that performance has stayed much the same.

Of most concern is that almost 40% of Main Street retailers say that their business performance has declined over the past three years.

Many of those recording declining business performance are also those who rate the current situation as poor. Some of these have got to the stage of considering closure or moving out of Cambuslang (see Figure 7); they comprise almost one-fifth of retailers of the Main Street, many of them higher added value shops.

Figure 5: How is your current performance?

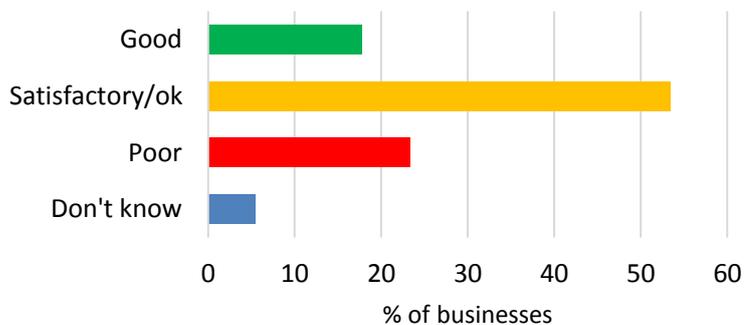


Figure 6: How has your performance changed in the past three years?

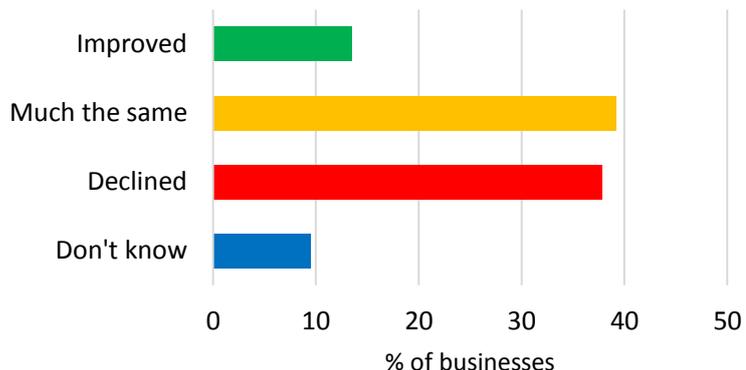
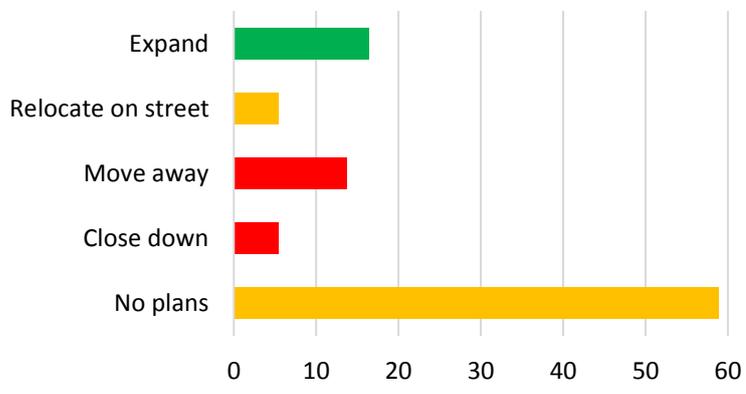
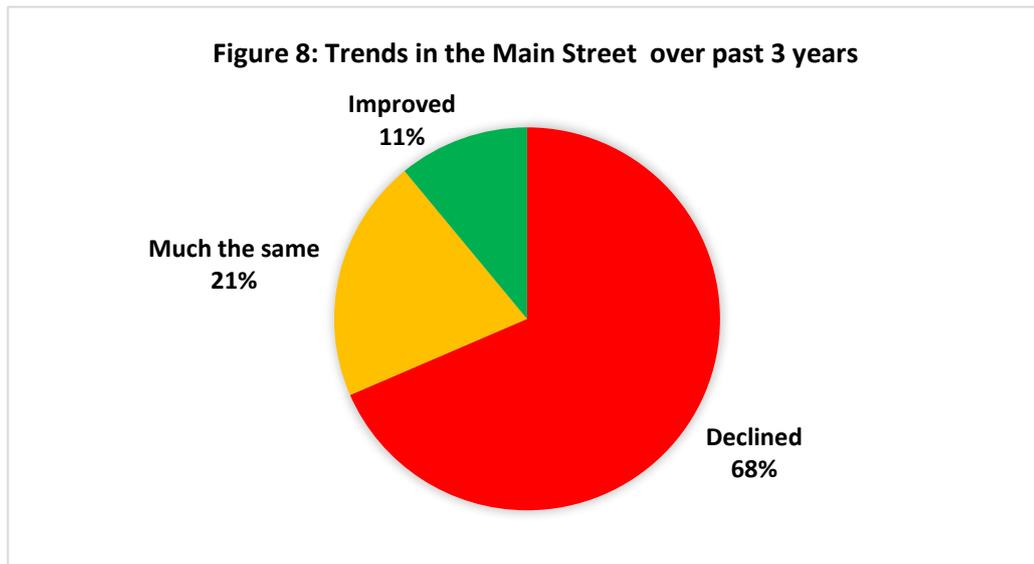


Figure 7: Do you have plans to change?



Survey respondents were also asked to comment on how they felt Cambuslang Main Street had changed over the past three years (see Figure 8). Only around one-tenth considered that it had improved, many of these positive responses being attributed to the street planters and hanging baskets organised by Cambuslang Community Council through Cambuslang in Bloom. Other positive factors identified were the new food service shops that have opened over the past 2-3 years, particularly The John Fairweather (although this was also seen negatively by some because of increased competition).

A further 21% of respondents could identify little change, considering that the Main Street has stayed much the same.



However, the vast majority of retailers – over two-thirds – consider that the Main Street has declined. Numerous problems were listed in the survey: lack of parking; poor street design; lack of diversity of shops; loss of the RBS branch; declining footfall; unappealing streetscape; loose slabs; waste bins on the street; vacant units; and relocation of the post office. Unfavourable comparisons were made with the better designed and better maintained streetscapes of Lanark, Burnside and Rutherglen (see Figures 9a-9c).

The following quotes are representative of the respondents who see the Main Street in decline:

“The Main Street has been destroyed – it’s like a ghost town now”

“Business is declining – day-by-day I am thinking more of quitting”

“There is less and less to keep me here. The Council keep putting obstacles in the way. I’m giving it until the end of the year and then will look at moving”

“The loss of RBS and other key businesses has really affected footfall”

“The Main Street has declined due to the lack of overall vision of a plan to improve the shopping area for the benefit of the local residents and shopkeepers. The current decline will only continue unless a drastic change is implemented”

Figure 9a: Lanark Main Street – attractive streetscape, flowerbeds and well-designed railings, no waste bins



Figure 9b: Rutherglen Main Street – attractive streetscape, well-designed railings, no waste bins



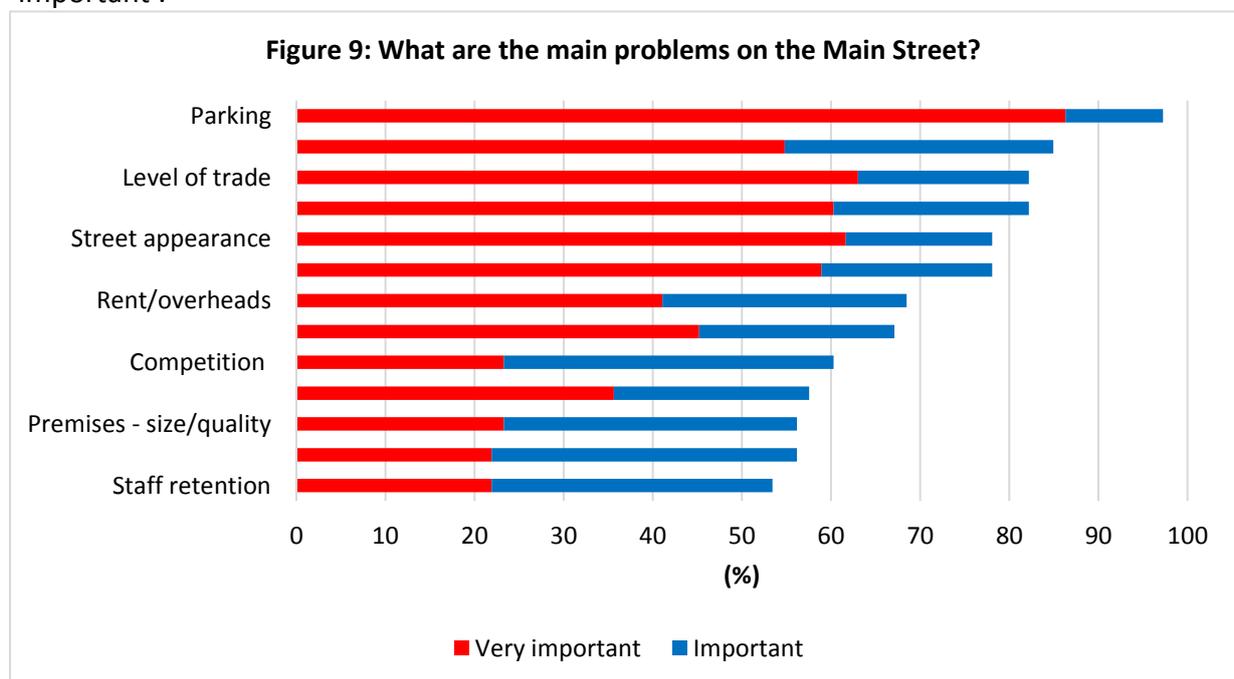
Figure 9c: Cambuslang Main Street – unattractive streetscape, dominated by waste bins, rusty railings



5. WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF CAMBUSLANG MAIN STREET?

Insufficient space and time for parking top the list of problems experienced by retailers in Cambuslang Main Street. Other important issues are related to security – crime, vandalism, anti-social behaviour – and the (declining) footfall and level of trade on the Main Street. The streetscape also ranks high on the list notably the layout and appearance of the street and the level of traffic and congestion. Business factors are important but to a lesser degree: the difficulty in obtaining business finance for improvements; the size and quality of premises; and the recruitment and retention of staff.

Figure 9 ranks the list of problems identified in the survey as being ‘very important’ and ‘important’.



5.1 Parking – everyone’s No. 1 concern

The universal strength of feeling on the lack of parking for shoppers in Cambuslang Main Street is evident in the fact that 97% of businesses identified this issue as important, and 85% cited it as ‘very important’. Simply put, the current parking policy of South Lanarkshire Council is regarded as detrimental to business.

From the commentary provided by survey respondents, the problem of parking has three parts.

- First, the 30 Main Street **parking bays are limited to 30 minutes’ parking time**, rigorously enforced by traffic wardens. Justified by SLC on the grounds that it encourages rapid turnover of custom, this policy prioritises the ‘pop-in-



pop-out' customers shopping for convenience goods, but it (a) disadvantages customers visiting establishments which require longer periods of parking (e.g. hair/beauty salons, professional services, cafes etc), and (b) it discourages customers from spending more time shopping in several places on the Main Street. Several shopkeepers commented that they have lost custom through customers being ticketed for even minor over-runs of parking time.

- Second, the Allison Drive car park has **insufficient parking bays for shoppers**. The current configuration of the car park has 97 unrestricted parking bays and 54 bays which allow for one-hour parking time. The unrestricted bays are generally filled up from early morning by commuters and those working in nearby offices, and the time-limited bays are too few in number for the number of shops in the Main Street. Use of the car park has the additional disincentive of requiring shoppers to use a pedestrian crossing regarded as confusing (see below).
- 
- Third, the **availability of parking for shoppers in local streets has disappeared**. Two decades ago, it was possible for local people to park in residential streets or small car parks (e.g. Cherry Tree Court) close to the Main Street. These opportunities for parking are now almost non-existent. The growth of housing in Cambuslang has been associated with a massive increase in use of Cambuslang Station; an average of 1,000 extra passengers are using the station every day compared to the 1990s.¹¹ Many commuters drive to the station and park in nearby streets from 7 a.m. onwards. With SLC and ScotRail failing to provide additional parking facilities, local streets are becoming congested with commuter parking. North of the Main Street, there are conflicts over parking provision for the flats along Allison Drive. South of the station, as one shopkeeper noted, *“Hamilton Drive has become a commuter car park”*; the same is true for West Coats Road, Douglas Drive, Cadzow Drive, Wellshot Drive and Beech Avenue.

5.2 Security

The problems of crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour were highlighted by 80-85% of businesses. There are three major concerns. One is the perceived high levels of drug use and alcoholism, associated with shoplifting and erratic behaviour that disconcerts shoppers on the Main Street.

Another is vandalism and graffiti. This was associated by some shopkeepers with the lack of facilities for young people; one commented *“there is not enough for kids to do other than cause trouble and walk up and down the Main Street all night.”* A third



¹¹ Office of Road and Rail – data on station usage based on ticket sales.

issue is the lack of a visible police presence, especially at times of the day (and evening) when anti-social behaviour is most prevalent.

Similar points were made by the wider community in the 2015 Cambuslang Community Survey, where responses indicated that some people felt intimidated about going to the Main Street in the evening.¹²

5.3 Street layout and appearance

The current street layout is deeply unpopular among many shopkeepers. Most are critical of the fact that the single-lane service road is frequently blocked by a stationary bus or delivery van stopping to unload. Others regret that through traffic is diverted away from the shops making it impossible for drivers to stop for an impulse purchase.

The pedestrian crossing is also widely criticised because of its counter-intuitive design, creating uncertainty among users about which way to look when crossing. Shopkeepers in the western part of the Main Street feel that there should be a second pedestrian crossing. One said: *“the underpass should be filled in – few people use it and it’s often vandalised; it should be replaced by a crossing.”*

Apart from its layout, the appearance of the Main Street is regarded as an important factor in explaining the decline in footfall. One blunt comment summed up the view of many: *“the Main Street is a dump, with too many trip hazards.”* The streetscape is considered to be poorly designed, with too many different kinds of paving slabs that have either not been laid on solid foundations or are unable to cope with mechanical cleaning. A large number of shopkeepers mentioned examples of customers tripping on loose slabs, in some cases having bad falls. Repeated repair of paving slabs appears to bring no improvement.

Another issue is the prevalence of waste bins, and the lack of a SLC provision for these to be out of sight. One shopkeeper commented: *“you don’t see waste bins on other streets in Burnside or Rutherglen.”*

Many felt that ignoring the problem of bins (and overflowing waste by shopkeepers) was symptomatic of SLC neglect of Cambuslang. Numerous respondents argued that the back courts should be improved to allow bin storage; where this is not possible, SLC should provide bin shelters on the street.

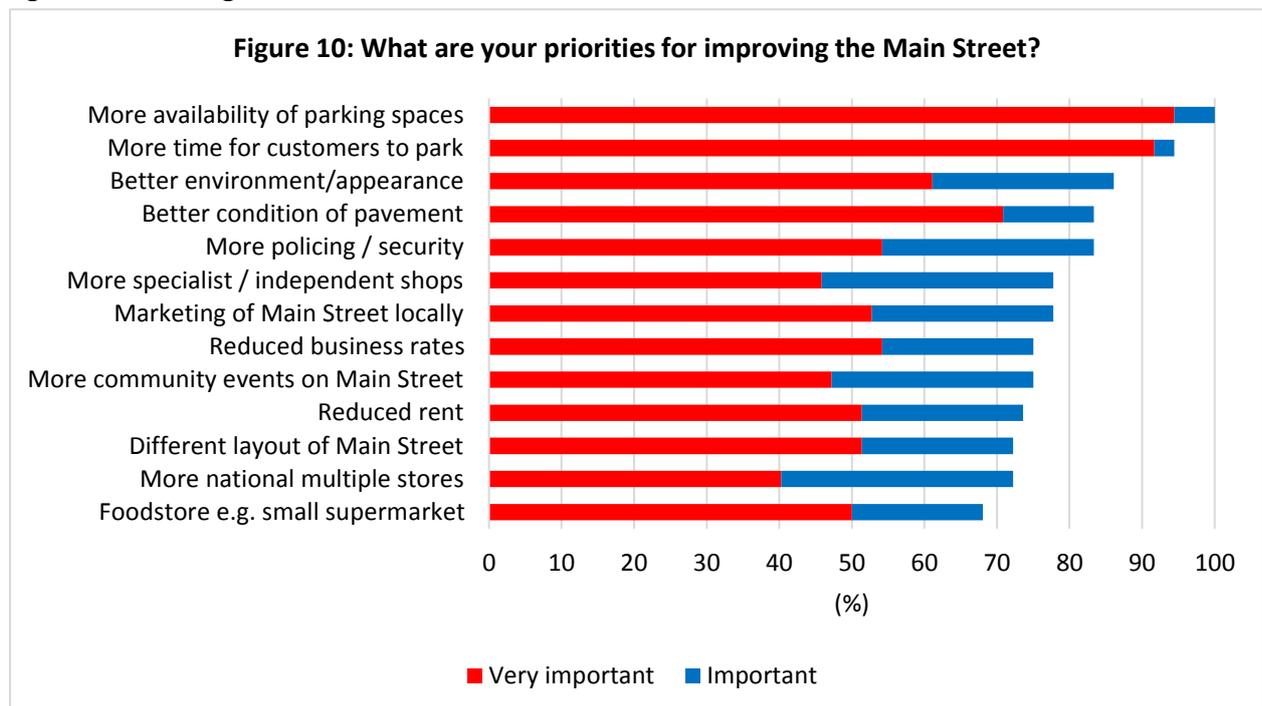


¹² Cambuslang Community Survey p.8

6. WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS? BUSINESS PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

The retail businesses on the Main Street have clear ideas on what has to change to address the problems described in the previous section, to reverse the decline of the Main Street and to reinvigorate the town centre.

Thirteen priorities were identified in the survey response, listed in Figure 10 below. While they are listed in rank order of importance, all 13 were supported by at least two-thirds of businesses and most by at least three-quarters. All of them should therefore be taken seriously as part of an agenda for change.



Priority 1 – Parking: Every single business in the survey wants more availability of parking spaces, and some 95% consider this to be ‘very important’. Over 90% also want more time for customers to park and shop. This universal level of support is significant because SLC have resisted changing their current policy on parking on the basis that opinion among Main Street business is divided about parking times. These survey results indicate that this is not so; there is a consensus on the need for change – not just more spaces but also more time to park.

Priority 2 – Improvements to the streetscape. Over 80% of businesses want to see improvements to create a more attractive retail environment that encourages shoppers to spend time on the Main Street. An immediate priority is to upgrade the paving once-and-for-all so that there is a level, stable and – above all – safe pavement for customers that does not require constant repair. Equally important from the survey comments is the removal of the unsightly number of waste bins on the Main Street by creating facilities in the back courts and/or bin shelters. A longer-term

priority for over 70% of businesses is to re-model the Main Street to create a layout that is more friendly for pedestrians and provides better accessibility.

Priority 3 – Security. Shopkeepers are keen to see more policing of the Main Street, especially in the evenings. They would like to see more patrols on foot and a small team of named officers regularly patrolling Cambuslang, with a view to building up a more personal relationship with the shopkeepers and allowing continuous feedback on problems and issues.

Priority 4 – Diversity of shops. One of the important priorities for improving the commercial environment is to have a greater diversity of shops, especially with more specialist and independent stores. Currently there is a broad mix of shops but with a high proportion of two types of shops – hair/beauty salons and takeaway food places (some of which are only open in the evenings). Encouraging more people to spend time on the Main Street would require greater variety of shops. It was noted that at least one new anchor store is needed. An additional foodstore or supermarket is seen as important by almost 70% of retailers; this is particularly important for shops in the western part of the Main Street, most of whom see the urgent need for a supermarket in the former ScotMid premises. As one respondent noted, *“along a long stretch of the Main Street there is nowhere to buy a pint of milk or an apple”*. The need for more national multiple stores was also included in the list of priorities though with the lowest proportion of ‘very important’ ratings.

Priority 5 – Marketing and events. Around three-quarters of respondents consider it important to have greater marketing of the Main Street and to exploit the potential of more community events in the town centre. It was noted that other centres across the UK have been successful in promoting the ‘brand’ of their main/high streets, with collaboration among businesses to have street markets and other events. Many retailers emphasised that this would need to be part of a wider regeneration strategy for the town centre, including action on the above priorities, to be effective. As one commented *“we can’t just expect more customers to shop, unless we can provide adequate parking and more variety”*. It was also noted that any events would need to be policed; many shopkeepers are unhappy that the legacy of Summerfest is graffiti and other debris which may not be removed for weeks or months.



Priority 6 – Reduced rates and rents. The final set of issues identified by survey respondents is the reduction of business operating costs. The comments of retailers focused on the need for some kind of rate relief, even if only on a temporary basis, to attract tenants to the larger vacant units, notably the empty ScotMid shop and the units in Cambuslang Gate. The current rate revaluation will be a critical point. It was also noted that landlords should be involved in the discussions about reviving the Main Street with a view to considering whether temporary rent reductions would be feasible to help arrest the decline and possible closure of shops.

7. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? A NEW STRATEGY

This survey by Cambuslang Community Council of Main Street retailers was prompted by the perception in Cambuslang that the Main Street is declining. It was undertaken to assess current and recent business performance, to identify perceived problems and explore possible solutions. The willingness of businesses to engage with the survey – evident in the very high response rate of 95% - indicates the level of concern about the health of the town centre.

7.1 Conclusions of the survey: the Main Street under threat

The results show that the Main Street is in trouble and may be reaching a tipping point. A sizeable proportion of retailers (40%) have experienced declining business performance over the past three years. Almost a quarter assess their current performance as poor, and 20% have considered closing down or moving out of Cambuslang.

The potential damaging economic impact is clear from the data analysis undertaken for this survey. The Main Street retail sector supports some 350 jobs and an estimated turnover of between £8 million and £11 million. Losing more shops would accelerate a vicious cycle of decline, with diminishing footfall as shoppers have less reason to visit the Main Street, which in turn undermines the viability of other businesses. Less measurable, though also important, is the effect of decline on civic pride. Vacant units, a limited range of shops and a shabby streetscape are damaging to the image of the town for local people and visitors.

The changing fortunes of the Main Street are partly due to changing shopping patterns. Three edge-of-town supermarkets, which collectively have as much floorspace as the Main Street, have drawn trade away from the town centre. The rapid rise of online shopping, estimated to be approaching 22% of retail UK-wide, and different shopping tastes are also important factors.

However, the survey has shown that there are factors specific to Cambuslang which retailers believe need urgent action. Top of the list is a new parking strategy to address the lack of sufficient spaces and time for parking. Other important priorities are related to security (crime vandalism anti-social behaviour), the layout and appearance of the street and the level of traffic and congestion. A greater diversity of shops is needed, particularly at least one new anchor store (supermarket) in the centre of the Main Street.

7.2 Regeneration needs collective leadership and community involvement

Regeneration of Cambuslang Main Street will be a major challenge. Retail experts foresee continued pressures on town centres, with the loss of trade and shops.¹³ Secondary and tertiary centres are seen as being under particular threat.

¹³ See for example: *Retail Futures 2018*, Centre for Retail Research, University of Nottingham. *Retail Think Tank*, KPMG. *Retail 2020: Fewer but better jobs*, British Retail Consortium, February 2006.

However, **further decline of the Main Street is not inevitable**. There are many examples of how town centres across the UK are taking effective action to turn around their main streets and high streets.¹⁴ Initiatives include pop-up shops, street markets, collectives and collaboration among retailers, shopfront refurbishment schemes, start-up loans for new retailers, town centre websites and digital engagement with local customers, loyalty cards, branding and marketing, mentoring programmes, and real-time smartphone information on special offers or parking availability. Strategies also include using vacant units for community initiatives, and remodelling to make town centres more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists.

The 2015 Cambuslang Community Survey showed that **Cambuslang has a strong community spirit** and a desire for a dynamic and attractive town centre. A successful regeneration strategy will need the commitment of businesses and support from the local community through the wide range of community groups in the town and, fundamentally, more local people shopping on the Main Street and using its services.

Leadership by South Lanarkshire Council is essential. Part of this involves recognising what has worked and not worked in the past. In response to recent press criticism about the decline of the Main Street, South Lanarkshire Council have referred to the significant investment made in Cambuslang town centre in the mid-2000s.¹⁵ This had some benefits, notably bringing community services such as the library onto the Main Street and creating new office space. Equally, several aspects of this investment are considered a failure within the business community: the out-of-scale architecture of Cambuslang Gate; a development with shop units that have never had a tenant; a street layout with a single-lane service road; a confusing pedestrian crossing; excessive use of railings and barriers; and paving where slabs constantly become loose and regularly cause trips and falls. It is time to be honest about these problems, move on and engage positively (and pro-actively) on retailers' concerns.

In this context, **a major concern is the lack of a specific SLC plan for reviving Cambuslang town centre**. Despite the Scottish Government having a 'town centre first' policy, this is not obviously being applied to Cambuslang in terms of strategic planning or investment. The most recent example is that projects chosen by South Lanarkshire Council under the City Deal Glasgow are new "community growth areas" rather than investments to address economic inequality and regeneration in existing centres such as Cambuslang.

There is also an important role for Scottish Government. The problems of the Main Street are part of entrenched economic and social inequality in Cambuslang. Despite a range of interventions, significant parts of the town are ranked among the lowest 15% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

¹⁴ Scotland Towns Partnership (<http://www.scotlandstowns.org/news-and-resources>) The Great British High Street (<http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/GBHS-Good-Practice-Guide.pdf?2>)

¹⁵ Cambuslang locals reveal how they would improve their Main Street, *Reformer*, 1.2.17

The Scottish Government's programme for government, and the recent Enterprise & Skills Review are distinctive within the UK and internationally by recognising that policies for economic growth need to include commitments to social justice, inclusion and the reduction of inequality.¹⁶ Cambuslang demonstrates the need for a strong local focus in government policies for regeneration and inclusion, as is already underway in neighbouring Bridgeton and Dalmarnock through Clyde Gateway. In the light of the evidence in this report, Scottish Government could demonstrate an immediate commitment and effective policy response, by consulting with local authority partners on extending Clyde Gateway a few miles eastwards to include Cambuslang (and Halfway).

Lastly, while 'community empowerment' is a stated objective of Scottish Government and SLC policies, the evidence from the Cambuslang Business Survey and the 2015 Cambuslang Community Survey is that the business sector and wider community of Cambuslang do not feel part of the process of decision-making on planning and investment affecting the town. Looking forward, this needs to change. Future plans and strategies need to involve local people to ensure that they fully reflect the needs of – and are supported by - different parts of the community.

7.3 Recommendations: a new strategy for regenerating Cambuslang town centre

The results of this survey indicate a clear case for a new policy approach by South Lanarkshire Council, supported by Scottish Government, working closely with businesses and the community to regenerate Cambuslang town centre, with the following short, medium and long-term elements.

1. Town Centre Regeneration Strategy

- 1.1. **Establishment of a Town Centre Regeneration Task Force.** When 98 jobs at Tata Steel were under threat, there was rightly a collective ambition by policy-makers at local and national levels to stop this happening. With some 20% of the 350 jobs on Cambuslang Main Street under threat, a similar collective response is needed with a Task Force bringing together elected members, senior SLC officials from relevant departments, representatives of Main Street businesses and the wider community to drive forward the regeneration of the Main Street.
- 1.2. **Main Street Action Plan.** Immediate actions are needed to address each of the priorities identified in this report. They need to be implemented within 12 months to stem the current decline of the Main Street and to give confidence to retailers considering moving away or closing that there is a commitment to change. Key actions are:
 - a) **Action on parking** with a new parking policy that provides space for commuters and office workers (using the redundant Mitchells site for a new commuter car park),

¹⁶ *A Plan for Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2016 -17*, Scottish Government, 2016. *Enterprise & Skills Review – Phase 1*, Scottish Government, October 2016.

more parking time in Main Street parking bays (potentially using parking meters instead of traffic wardens), significantly more spaces for shoppers in the Allison Drive car park, and restrictions on commuter parking in Cherry Tree Court and residential streets surrounding Cambuslang Station to allow short-term parking only.

- b) **Action to improve the appearance of the Main Street** with the upgrading of back courts to allow waste bins to be stored there, and/or bin shelters on the Main Street (potentially co-funded by the waste management companies). Paving slabs needs to be re-laid to provide a stable and secure pedestrian area. The current poorly designed and maintained railings should be removed wherever possible, or redesigned to provide a more attractive streetscape similar to Lanark or Rutherglen.
- c) **Action on security**, with more frequent police patrols of the Main Street, especially in the evening, and the introduction of CCTV at key points, to give confidence to businesses and Main Street users at all times of the day and evening.

1.3. **Business Improvement Plan.** Learning from good practice in reviving other town centres, a Business Improvement Plan should be developed focusing on *commercial* revival of the Main Street, including actions to attract a new anchor store for the central part of the street and tenants for other vacant units, the use of branding and street festivals as well as wider marketing to bring more customers to the town centre. This will need strong commitment from all the businesses on the Main Street working together, and support from the wider community.

1.4. **Extension of Clyde Gateway to include Cambuslang.** Actions to improve the business environment and commercial prospects of the Main Street need to be embedded in a wider regeneration strategy for the town. Discussions should be initiated by SLC with the Scottish Government and local authority partners about the extension (with appropriate additional resources) of Clyde Gateway several miles eastwards to include Cambuslang (and Halfway) covering datazones ranked in the bottom of Scottish and SLC indices of multiple deprivation.

2. SLC Prioritisation of Town Centre planning and investment

Over the medium term, it is important that immediate improvements are sustained and underpinned by a coherent and focused policy commitment to town centre regeneration by South Lanarkshire Council – not just in strategic centres like Hamilton, but town centres like Cambuslang. Specifically, this requires the following.

2.1. **Focus on Main Street regeneration in the new SLC Local Development Plan.** The new iteration of the SLC Local Development Plan should prioritise the regeneration of Cambuslang town centre. The outline planning approval for a new supermarket on the

former Hoover site – that would have the same floorspace as the whole of the Main Street retail sector – should be rescinded given the potential damage that it would do to the economic future of the Main Street.

2.2. A 'Town Centre First' policy by SLC. All relevant SLC departments (Community & Enterprise Resources, Planning, Roads & Transportation, Environmental Services, Housing & Technical Resources) should assess ongoing policy strategies and planning/investment decisions relating to Cambuslang in ways that support the regeneration of Cambuslang Main Street and the town centre.

3. Development of a new masterplan for Cambuslang Town Centre

The evidence from this Business Survey and the 2015 Cambuslang Community Survey is that the Main Street is not 'fit for purpose'. While current budgetary constraints may limit the potential for major infrastructure investment in the short-term, work should begin on developing a new long-term masterplan (involving participatory design processes) that meets the needs of business, different road users and the wider community. New thinking will require hard decisions on whether the current layout is appropriate for the future. A new masterplan would provide a road-map for future decision-making on planning and investment, beginning with affordable improvements to street furniture and working towards a new town centre that is universally seen as fit for purpose and a focus for civic pride.



CAMBUSLANG
Community Council

CAMBUSLANG BUSINESS SURVEY 2016

1. How long has your shop/business been operating in Cambuslang Main Street?

(please tick)

Less than 1 year

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-20 years

More than 20 years

2. Do you live in Cambuslang?

Yes

No

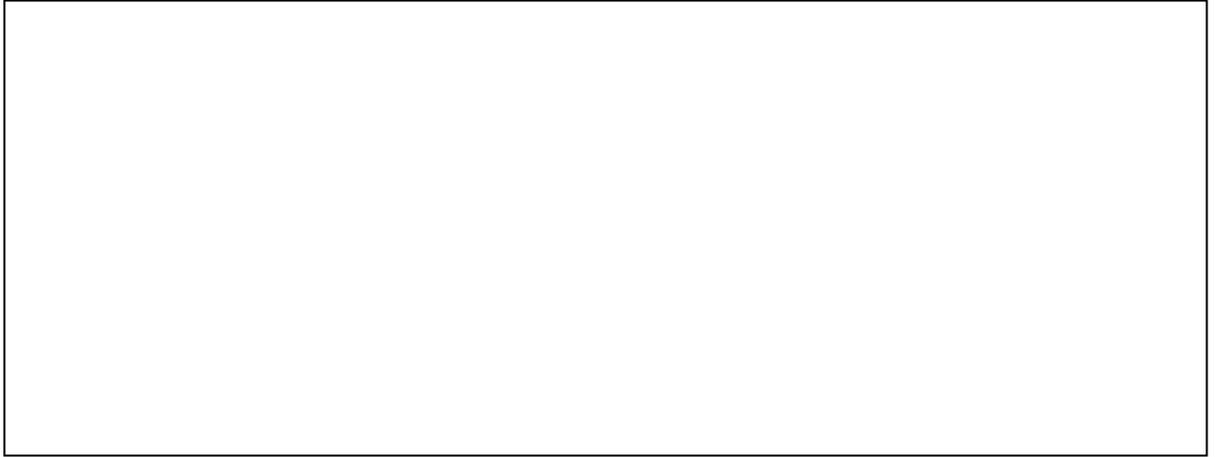
3. Over the past three years, how do you think the Main Street has changed?

Much the same

Improved

Declined

Why do you think the Main Street has improved/declined?



4. Have you recently considered changing your business in the following ways:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Expand the business – selling more, different goods/services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Relocate to other premises on the Main Street | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Relocate somewhere outside Cambuslang | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Close down business | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No plans to change | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. How do you assess your current business trading performance?

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Good | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Satisfactory / ok | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know / no opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> |

6. How do you assess your business trading performance over the past 3 years?

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Improved | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stayed much the same | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Declined | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know / no opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> |

What are the reasons for your business performance improving or declining?

7. What are the main problems that your business faces on the Main Street? (please tick)

Importance of problem	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Don't know No opinion
Commercial factors				
Level of trade / customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competition from other businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of parking for customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost factors				
Rents/overheads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annual business rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of finance for improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality or size of premises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staffing				
Staff recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infrastructure/environment/crime				
Traffic / road congestion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Security – crime, vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anti-social behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appearance of the Main Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other factors				
(please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. What are your priorities for improving the Main Street for your business?

Priority	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Don't know No opinion
Commercial factors				
More national multiple stores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More specialist/independent shops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foodstore e.g. small supermarket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost factors				
Reduced rent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced business rates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parking issues				
More availability of parking spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More time for customers to park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Security / environment				
More policing / security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better environment / appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better condition of pavement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Different layout of Main Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promotional activity				
Marketing of Main Street locally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More community events on Main Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other priorities				
(please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(please specify).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Are your premises leased or owned?

Leased	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owner occupied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know / prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. How many staff do you employ?

Full-time staff	<input type="text"/>
Part-time staff	<input type="text"/>
No staff, only me	<input type="text"/>
Don't know / prefer not to say	<input type="text"/>

Shop/business name:

Respondent name:

Interviewer name:

Date:

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

If you have any questions about this Survey, please contact Cambuslang Community Council
(John Bachtler) at cambuslangcomco@aol.com or 07973 744807