



# Your Town Audit: Giffnock

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## Contents

1.	Understanding Scottish Places Summary	1
2.	Accessible Town Centre	2
3.	Active Town Centre	3
4.	Attractive Town Centre	8
5.	YTA Summary and Key Points	11

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## 1. Understanding Scottish Places Summary

This report presents a summary of the Your Town Audit (YTA) for Giffnock, conducted by Scotland's Towns Partnership and EKOS. The detailed YTA Framework and Data Workbook are provided under separate cover.

The YTA was developed to provide a framework to measure and monitor the performance of Scotland's towns and town centres using a series of Key Performance Indicators. It provides a comprehensive audit of Giffnock with data on up to 180 KPIs across seven themes – Locality, Accessibility, Local Services, Activities + Events, Development Capacity, Tourism, and Place + Quality Impressions.

The [Understanding Scottish Places](#) (USP) data platform provides a summary analysis for Giffnock and identifies 5 comparator towns that have similar characteristics, with the most similar being Helensburgh, Linlithgow, Prestwick and Ellon<sup>1</sup>. The USP platform - [www.usp.scot](http://www.usp.scot) - describes Giffnock in the following general terms:

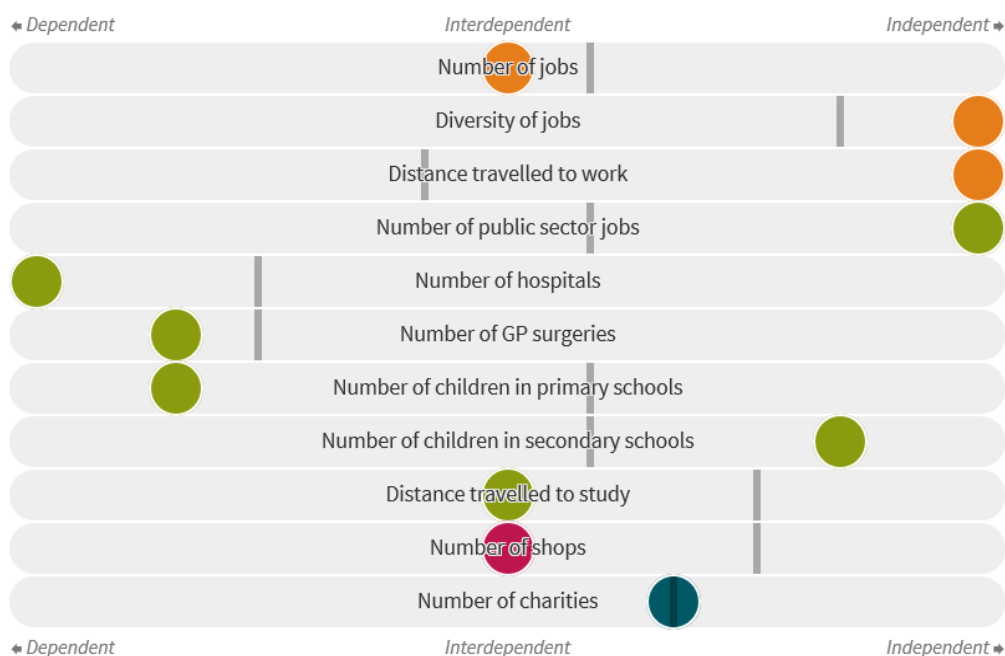
**Giffnock's Interrelationships:** Giffnock is an *'interdependent to independent town'*, which means it has a good number of assets in relation to its population. Towns of this kind have some diversity of jobs; and residents largely travel shorter distances to work and study, although some travel longer distances. These towns attract people from neighbouring towns to access some of their assets and jobs.

**Giffnock's Typology:** This type of large town is a suburban or commuter locality with a prevalence of higher income and private housing. A large proportion of the population are over 45, and many are retired. Many people own their home. There is also a high proportion of people in professional employment and a high proportion of residents are educated to HNC level or above. Many residents own two or more cars.

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<sup>1</sup> The other comparator town is identified as Stonehaven.

## Inter-relationships i



Comparing Giffnock to towns with similar USP typology and interrelationships shows it has a similar number of charities, jobs and GP surgeries. It differs in its diversity of jobs (greater) and distance travelled to work (lower).

Building on the USP, this report presents the results of our detailed analysis of Giffnock based around the Scottish Government's [Town Centre Toolkit](#) – an online resource available via the USP website which provides advice, guidance and case studies across three thematic areas: accessible, active and attractive.

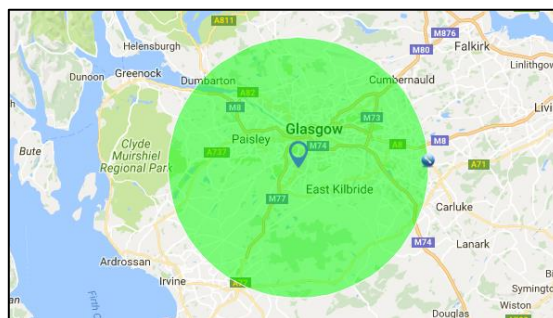
## 2. Accessible Town Centre

Giffnock is a suburban town located in East Renfrewshire, immediately south of Glasgow, with a population of around 12,000. The core retail area of Giffnock is focused on Fenwick Road, a busy A-class road leading to Newton Mearns in the south and Glasgow to the north. The town centre covers the main services and retail offering, including both supermarkets, in what is otherwise a heavily residential area.

Giffnock railway station is located centrally in the town, with regular services to Glasgow (15 minutes away) and East Kilbride (18 minutes away) throughout the day. This also connects the town with the other East Renfrewshire settlements of Clarkston, Busby and Thornliebank. However, rail travel to Barrhead involves a changeover in Glasgow, meaning a travel time of around 40 minutes.

Giffnock has direct bus connections to Glasgow, Thornliebank and Ayr. The M77 motorway is around two miles west of the town and is easily accessible by road, providing fast access to Ayrshire and an alternative route into the centre of Glasgow.

15 mile radius around Giffnock



A limited number of on-street parking spaces are found in the town centre. An off-street car park with around 100 spaces is located next to the railway station and library, while privately run car parks are adjacent to (and on the roof of) the Wholefoods Market, and at the Morrisons supermarket.

Giffnock has excellent mobile connectivity, with the rollout of superfast broadband in the town began in 2009 and was further extended in 2015.

The town centre provides access to local services which, alongside a mix of retailers and business services, includes the library, medical centre, railway station and police station.

### 3. Active Town Centre

#### 3.1 Population and Housing

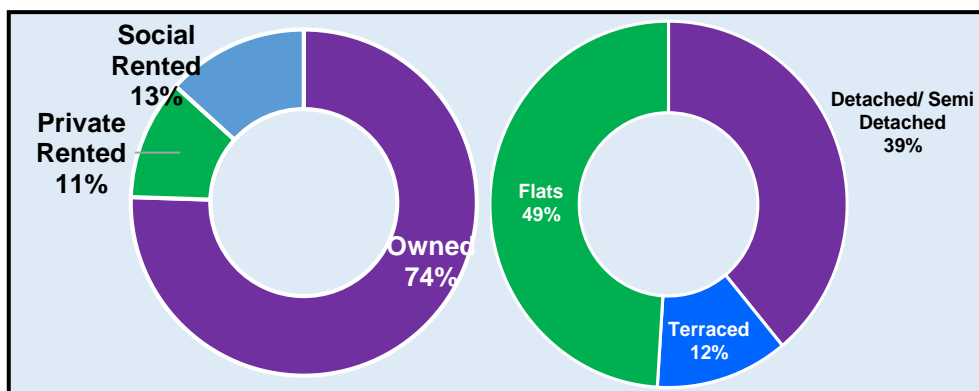
Just over 540 people live within the town centre area in Giffnock<sup>2</sup>, around 3% of the total settlement population. While the population of the town was broadly static in the decade to 2011, the town centre population decreased by around 0.3% over this time (approx. 50 people). This compares with increases of 1% for East Renfrewshire and a 5% increase in Scotland over this ten year period. Most audited towns have seen a marked increase in town centre living, averaging around 7%. This is less pronounced in Giffnock although this is likely to do with the small size of the town centre.

<sup>2</sup> Census 2011 output zones S00102964, S00102965, S00103013, S00103191 & S00103238

Housing in the town centre<sup>3</sup> is a mix of flats (49%) and semi-detached/detached properties (39%), typically with one to four bedrooms. Just under half of properties (49%) are in council tax bands D and E. The streets surrounding Fenwick Road are almost wholly residential – a mix of older and newer detached/semi-detached properties – providing a considerable catchment population for the retail units on the street. There are also some newer flats on Fenwick Road.

House prices in Giffnock reflect its standing as one of the more affluent parts of Greater Glasgow. The average purchase price of a town centre dwelling (£189,000) is lower than that of the town as a whole (£241,000)<sup>4</sup>. Prices in the town centre increased 32% in the decade to 2013, and by 45% in wider Giffnock. However, more up to date data from Zoopla states that from 178 sales in Giffnock over the past 12 months, the average price paid was £316,000. The housing stock in the town is largely privately owned (74% in the town centre; 86% in the wider town).

**Giffnock Town Centre Housing Mix**



**3.2 Employment**

Just over one third (34%) of the 3,200 jobs in Giffnock are located in the town centre datazones. National statistics record 480 businesses in the town. The YTA street audit located 66 units in use within Giffnock town centre – this was in line with the UPRN data provided by East Renfrewshire Council prior to the audit and the membership numbers of the town’s Business Improvement District (BID). Of these, 36 are retail businesses.

<sup>3</sup> For ease of accessing the most up to date data, this is datazones (2001) S01001784, S01001772 & S01001762  
<sup>4</sup> Scottish Statistics, 2013

**502 residents per town centre retail outlet**

**36 town centre retail units in use**

**0 vacant town centre retail units**

### 3.3 Retail

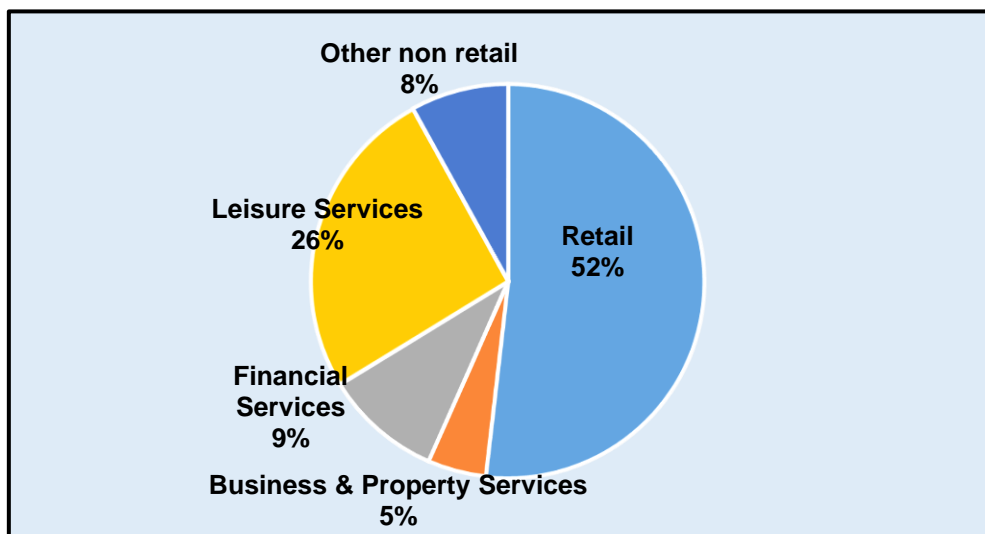
As mentioned, retail units in Giffnock are clustered along Fenwick Road. For a small town centre, it has a good range of shops and retail services. Larger units are located towards the northern edge of the town centre, including Whole Foods, Majestic Wine Warehouse, two car showrooms and a large Morrisons supermarket.

No vacant units were recorded during the audit – in this respect, Giffnock stands alone in towns which have been audited to date. In comparison, the vacancy rate in Barrhead was 6%, in Clarkston 10%, and in Newton Mearns 3%. Audited towns outside of East Renfrewshire have had much higher vacancy rates, including Alloa (10%), Dumbarton (15%), Kilmarnock (15%), Ayr (16%) and Kirkcaldy (17%).

A large part of Giffnock's retail draw is Whole Foods Market, which opened in 2011 and is located centrally on Fenwick Road. It is the only Scottish branch of the US chain, firmly targeted at the luxury/high end food market. This acts as an anchor store in the town and, as a destination in itself, will act to draw shoppers into the area.

Most shops in Giffnock town centre operate standard opening hours of around 9am to 5.30pm. The Morrisons supermarket opens between 7am and 10pm, while Whole Foods opens between 8am and 9pm, and the small Sainsbury's supermarket on Fenwick Road between 7am and 11pm.

### Town Centre Unit Mix

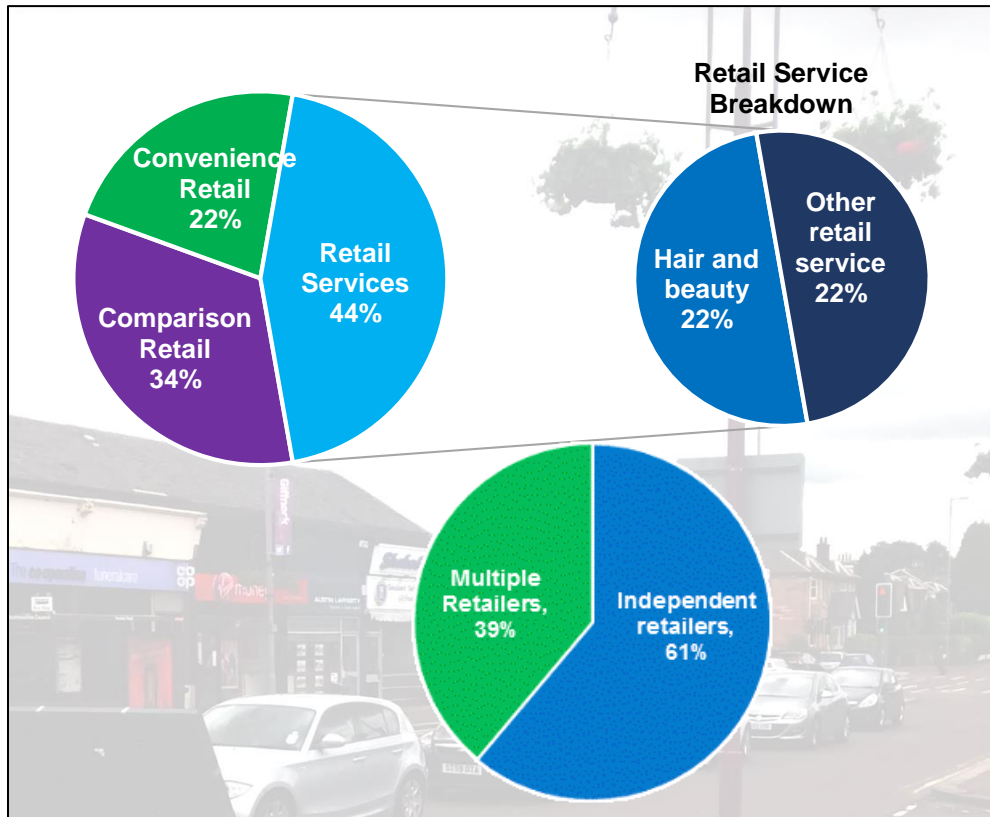


Retail forms the largest single town centre unit use and, at 52%, is higher than Clarkston (40%) and Barrhead (46%). In line with other audited town centres, retail forms the largest single unit use, at 55% of all units, slightly higher than the 40% rate in Clarkston.

The YTA analysis is based on the following retail definitions:

- **Convenience Retail:** primarily low cost goods that are typically bought out of habit or on impulse i.e. food, drink (alcohol and non-alcohol), news, tobacco, etc. – *8 convenience retailers identified in Giffnock town centre;*
- **Comparison Retail:** all other retail purchases comprising goods bought at infrequent intervals where consumers will compare and contrast products and prices – *12 comparison retailers identified in Giffnock town centre;* and
- **Retail Services:** services that consumers would expect to find in a town centre including hairdresser, beauty salon, repair of goods, hire of specialist clothing, health clinics, post office, travel agent, etc. – *16 retail service operators identified in Giffnock town centre.*





Just under two-thirds of traders within Giffnock town centre are independent (61%) – this is in line with the average for other audited town centres, which range between 49% and 71% (excluding an outlier, Eyemouth). Hair and beauty retailers make up 22% of the retail services in the town centre, with the other 22% accounting for retailers such as a post office, travel agent and opticians.



## 4. Attractive Town Centre

### 4.1 Giffnock BID

Giffnock Business Improvement District was established in October 2013 with a five year mandate, which will go up for renewal in 2018. The BID operates under the name of Giffnock Village, with an accompanying website and social media channels with strong reach (2,770 Facebook likes; 670 Twitter followers). Giffnock Village banners are on display throughout the town – particularly important for appealing to vehicles passing along the A77.

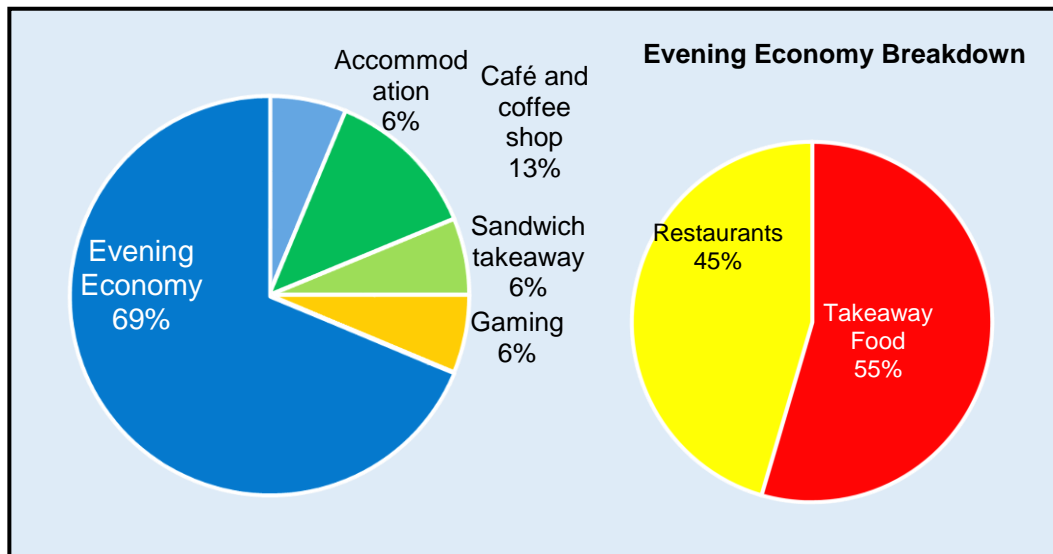


The BID organises and supports a number of events throughout the year, designed to bring visitors into the town centre and increase footfall for local businesses. This includes Christmas-themed events, including a lights switch-on, and a classic car show each summer. Other BID activities have included flower displays and hanging baskets, business networking opportunities, and the production of an attractive illustrated map of the town centre which promotes its retail and service offer.

The quality of public realm in the town centre is generally good, with an adequate number of bins and tidy streets. Although the town does have a busy road cutting through it, there is an appropriate number of pedestrian crossing points and pavements are of a suitable width. Unlike some towns, there is not extensive use of guard rails between the pavement and road.

Additionally, Giffnock has a busy and vibrant feel to it, helped by a high number of cafes and restaurants, and absence of any vacant units. Combined with the late opening of the two Fenwick Road supermarkets, this means there is activity on the street throughout the day and into the evening. Giffnock library is also open until 8pm on weeknights.

## 4.2 Leisure Mix



The mix of leisure businesses in Giffnock town centre is dominated by evening economy (69% of units), itself largely takeaways and restaurants. Although not captured in this breakdown, there is also a coffee shop/eating area within the Whole Foods supermarket, and a bar and grill within the Orchard Park hotel. There is one bookmaker, classified here as 'gaming'.

Other leisure facilities are located outside of the town centre, including Eastwood Park Theatre and the Eastwood Recreation Centre, which includes a swimming pool and gym. Giffnock Tennis, Squash and Hockey Club is also located to the south of the town centre area, with six floodlit courts.



### 4.3 Attractiveness Review

The YTA includes an independent review of place and quality impressions, with Giffnock scoring above average in comparison with other towns.

Business confidence in the town centre was gauged from a small sample of interviews undertaken with independent traders. Scores averaged at 5.9 / 10, just above the national average of other audited towns of 5.8 / 10. Anecdotally, perceptions of the town centre were not negative – most reported static performance in terms of footfall/trade.

Individual unit fronts and shop window displays were graded out of ten during the on-street audit, with a town centre average score of 7.6 for the condition of unit fronts and 7.9 for quality of window display. This is just above the average across other audited town centres, of 7.0 in each instance.



## 5. YTA Summary and Key Points

The following are offered as final comments on the Your Town Audit of Giffnock, within the framework of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Toolkit.

### 5.1 Accessible Town Centre

- Giffnock, at the southern edge of the Greater Glasgow urban conurbation, is well connected to transport links and a wide range of services. Although car ownership in the area is high, public transport links are good with regular bus and rails services. Encouraging active travel is also important – there are bike racks around the town centre and an innovative 'tool station' near the entrance to Whole Foods;
- parking in Giffnock town centre appears – at least during the time when the audit was undertaken, a midweek daytime – to be adequate; and
- Giffnock has good 4G mobile coverage and access to superfast broadband.

### 5.2 Active Town Centre

- no vacant units were recorded during the audit of Giffnock town centre, which is highly encouraging for its long-term vitality and health; and
- there is a limited amount of civic space within the town centre for events, markets etc. However, car parks are utilised for this purpose (e.g. the classic car show, held in the railway station car park).

### 5.3 Attractive Town Centre

- despite its proximity to a large urban area, Giffnock manages to retain a distinctive, "village" feel, and with its mix of appealing smaller shops and the UK's only Whole Foods supermarket outside of the south of England, a unique retail offer;
- while the Whole Foods Store will be a draw that attracts people to Giffnock it is not clear how many shoppers also visit other local stores – opportunities to explore how linked shopping trips could be maximised should be identified to encourage spend in other business outlets; and
- Giffnock Village BID continue to provide a focal point for encouraging and promoting business and community activity focused on the town centre – the BID needs to ensure it improves business performance to ensure renewal.