

# Your Town Audit: Dalry

November 2016



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## 1. Understanding Scottish Places Summary

This report presents a summary of the Your Town Audit (YTA) for Dalry, 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 Dalry 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 Dalry and identifies 12 comparator towns that have similar characteristics, with the most similar being Blackburn, Kelty, Fauldhouse and Gorebridge<sup>1</sup>. The USP platform – [www.usp.scot](http://www.usp.scot) – describes Dalry in the following general terms:

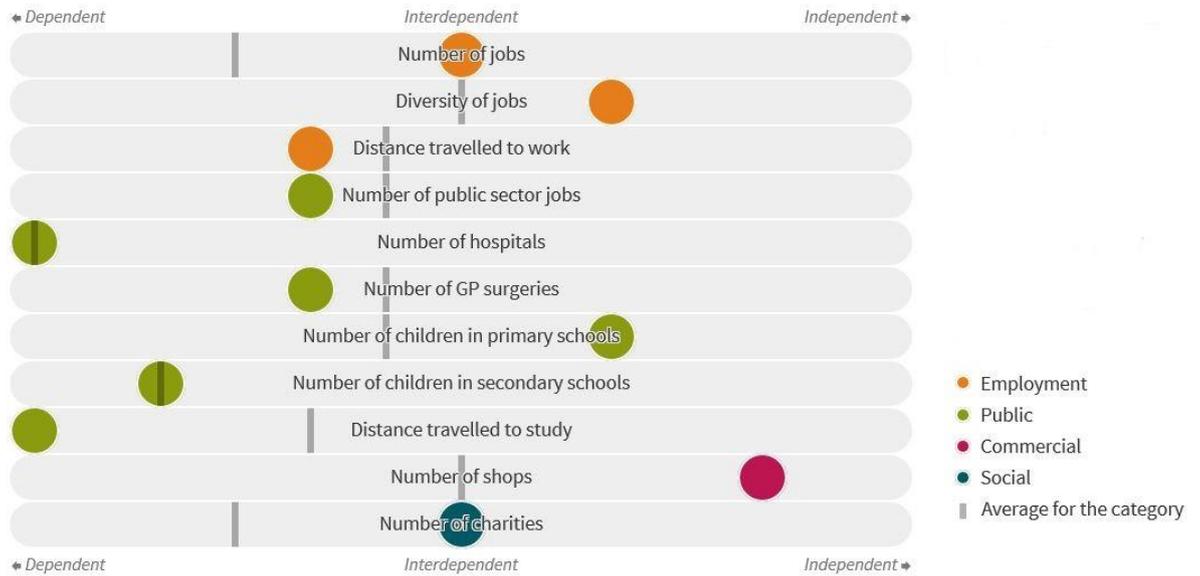
**Dalry's Interrelationships:** Dalry is an *'interdependent to dependent'* town, which means it has a low number of assets in relation to its population. Towns of this kind have some diversity of jobs; and residents largely travel long distances to work and study, although some travel shorter distances. These towns are also reliant on neighbouring towns for some assets and jobs.

**Dalry's Typology:** Social and council housing are the norm in this type of medium-sized town. Manufacturing and construction are the dominant forms of employment. Health and social work services are particularly active. There is a higher level of unemployment. Educational attainment is low. Car ownership is low, meaning that many residents in these towns are reliant on public transport.

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<sup>1</sup> The other comparator towns are identified as Newmains, Kilbirnie, Harthill, Cleland, Drongan, Prestonpans, Ballingry, Lochore and Crosshill, and Hurlford and Crookedholm.

## Inter-relationships i



Comparing Dalry to towns with similar USP typology and interrelationships shows it has a similar number of hospitals, and children in secondary schools. It differs in its number of jobs (more independent) and distance travelled to study (more dependant).

Building on the USP, this report presents the results of our detailed analysis of Dalry 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

Dalry is a small settlement located in North Ayrshire, to the south west of Glasgow, with a population of around 6,000 people. The core retail area of Dalry is focused on Main Street and New Street.

The town centre offers a good range of services and retail outlets, in what is otherwise a residential area.

The railway station in Dalry has park and ride facilities, and is almost one mile from the town centre area. Journeys from Dalry into the centre of Glasgow take roughly 30 minutes. Services from this stations connect Dalry to other settlements in North Ayrshire, with journey times to Irvine, Largs and West Kilbride taking 20, 35 and 30 minutes respectively.

There are very few bus stops located throughout the town centre area of Dalry, with one being located on New Street and another on North Street. There are, however, many more located throughout the wider town. There are direct bus connections from Dalry to the centre of Glasgow which take around 45 minutes. As well as this, there are direct bus journeys from Dalry to other settlements in North Ayrshire, including: Largs (35 minutes), Kilwinning (15 minutes), Irvine (35 minutes), and Ardrossan (30 minutes).

The M8 motorway is around twenty miles north east of the town and is easily accessible by the A737 road, which provides fast access into the centre of Glasgow and beyond.

15 mile radius around Dalry

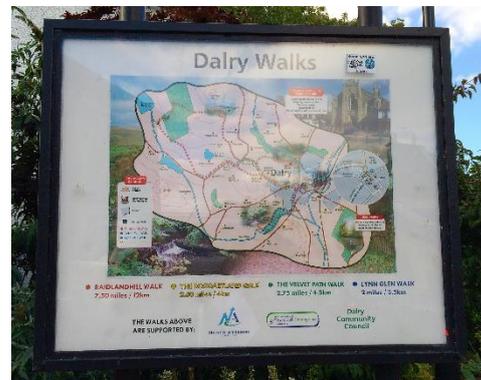


There are a number of on-street parking spaces to be found in the town centre, including those on Main Street and New Street – all parking is free of charge. Cars are also able to park in the surrounding residential streets, and there are a number of off-street car parks, such as those located on Courthill Street and North Street, both with around 20 spaces each.

The town centre provides access to a number of services which, alongside a mix of retailers and business services, includes a library, church and town hall. There is good 3G and 4G throughout the town, and although there is no town-wide free WiFi, superfast broadband is available.

No major issues were identified during the in-street audit regarding qualitative assessment of pavement/ street surfaces, crossing points, cleanliness and seating/ resting places. While there is CCTV recording and good footfall on the street during the day we did, however, identify that lighting (outwith the Cross) could be improved to increase the sense of safety and security, particularly for people on foot.

There are a number of accessible walking trails in and around the town centre, with clear routes promoted on display signs.



### 3. Active Town Centre

#### 3.1 Population and Housing

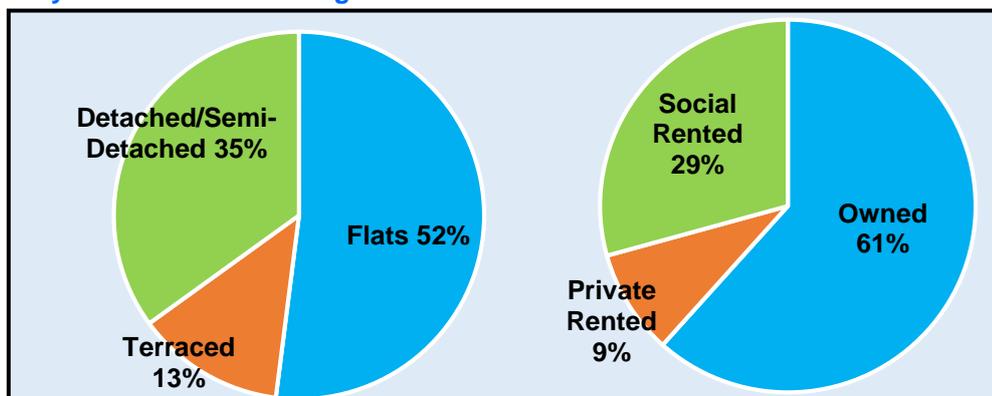
Just over 330 people live within the immediate town centre area in Dalry<sup>2</sup>, around 6% of the total settlement population. Taking a wider datazone level for comparison purposes, the population of the area around the town centre saw no change in the decade to 2013, with the population of the whole settlement decreasing by around 1% over this time.

While the change in settlement population is broadly in line with the 0.7% decline across other audited towns in North Ayrshire and comparable with our 34 YTA average (0.6% increase) the decline in town centre population is in contrast, where most have seen population growth, with an overall average of 6% increase in town centre population over 31 YTA audited towns.

Housing in Dalry town centre<sup>3</sup> is a mix of flats (52%) and detached and semi-detached properties (35%), with 52% of properties having three or four bedrooms, which is somewhat unusual for a town centre area. The majority of properties (70%) are in council tax bands A, B and C.

The streets surrounding the retail area in Dalry are largely residential and, with a town population of just over 5,900 people, this provides a reasonable catchment population for the retail and service businesses that is typical of other YTA audited towns (185 residents per retailer in Dalry, compared to a 34 YTA average of 226).

#### Dalry Town Centre Housing Mix



<sup>2</sup> Scotland Census 2011 output zones S00122549, S00122554, S00122568, and S00122569.

<sup>3</sup> For accessing the most up to date data, this is datazone (2001) S01004496.

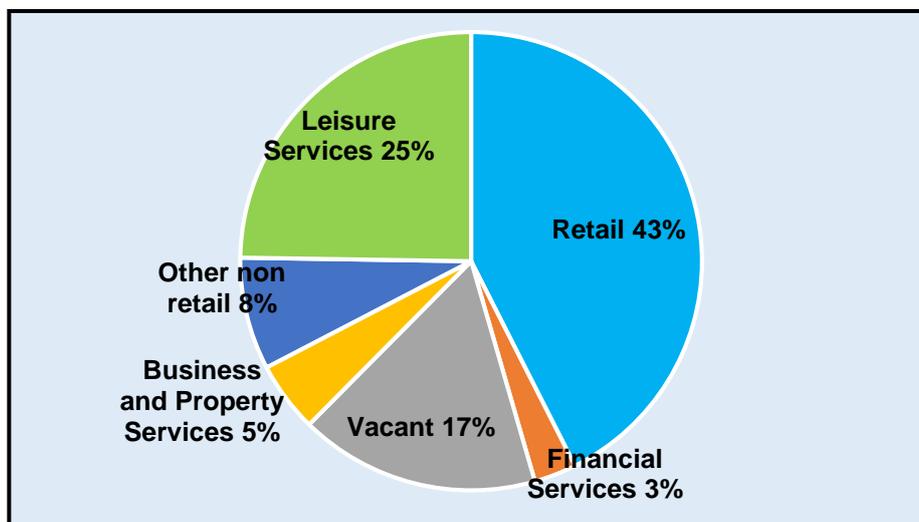
The average purchase price of a town centre dwelling in Dalry (£89,571) is lower than that of the town as a whole (£179,141)<sup>4</sup>. Prices in the town centre increased 4% in the decade to 2013, and by 36% in wider Dalry. The housing stock in the town is largely privately owned (61% in the town centre; 60% in the wider town), or socially rented (29% in the town centre; 32% in the wider town).



### 3.2 Employment and Business

Just under one third (32%) of the 1,800 jobs in Dalry are located in the town centre area. National statistics record 250 businesses within the settlement. The YTA street audit located 65 commercial units in use within Dalry town centre – this was in line with the UPRN data provided by North Ayrshire Council prior to the audit. Of these, 28 are retail businesses.

#### Town Centre Unit Mix



### 3.3 Retail

Retail units in Dalry are clustered along Main Street, New Street, and The Cross. For a small town centre, it has a good range of shops and retail services.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Statistics, 2013

During the audit eleven vacant retail units were recorded, producing a retail vacancy rate of 18%<sup>5</sup>, much higher than the 9.9% average retail vacancy rate across other North Ayrshire towns, and the 33 YTA average of 9.3%.



Most shops in Dalry town centre operate standard opening hours of around 9am to 5.30pm. However, the Co-op Supermarket on New Street has longer hours – 7am to 10pm during the week, as do the pubs in the town for example the Black Bull Inn on Vennel Street is open every day from 11/11:30am to Midnight/1am.

Retail forms the largest single town centre unit use but, at 43%, is slightly lower than the 45% average across the other North Ayrshire towns. Dalry's retail rate is similar to other audited towns such as Kilbirnie (43%) and Stevenston (47%).

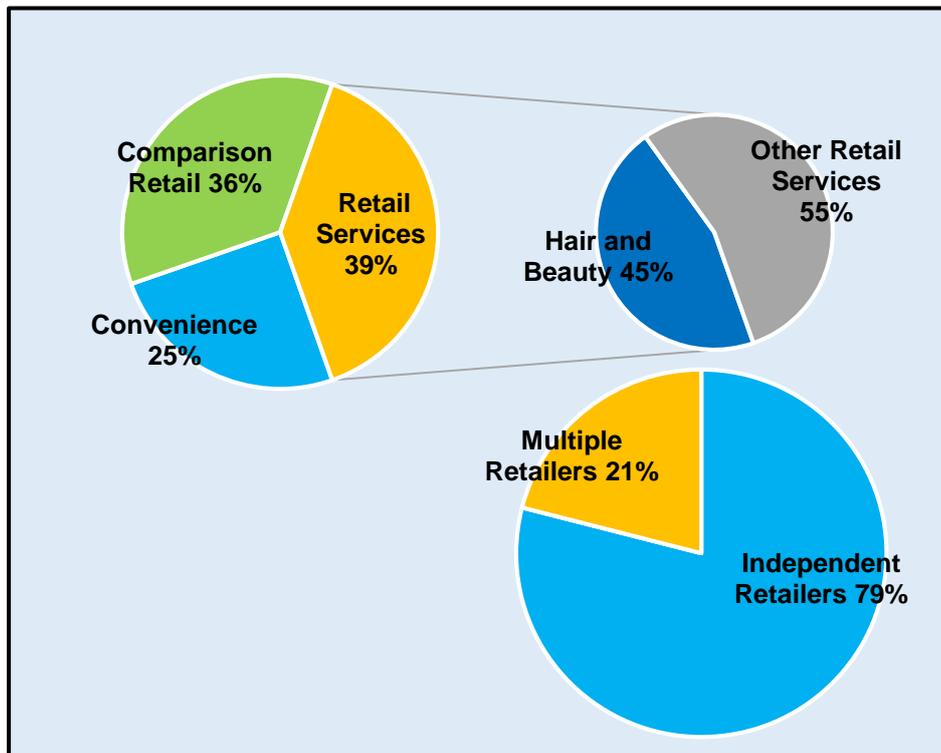


The YTA analysis is based on the following retail definitions:

- **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. – 7 convenience retailers were identified in Dalry town centre;
- **Comparison Retail:** all other retail purchases comprising goods bought at infrequent intervals where consumers will compare and contrast products and prices – 10 comparison retailers were identified in Dalry town centre; and

<sup>5</sup> Note: this is the retail vacancy rate (7 vacant of 68 retail units) and differs from the 17% vacancy rate in the chart above which relates to all commercial town centre properties (9 of 75 properties).

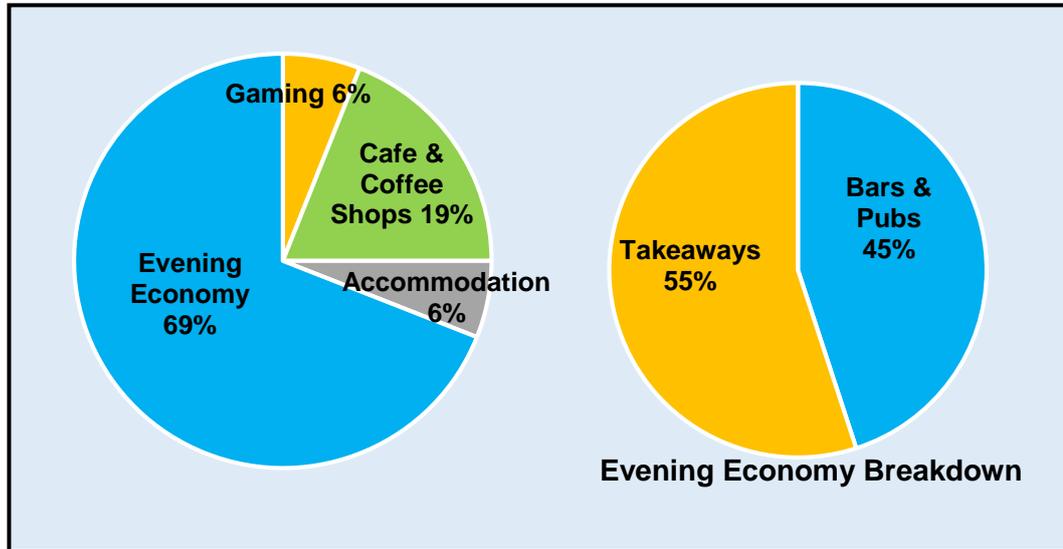
- **Retail Services:** services that consumers would expect to find in a town centre including hairdresser, beauty salon, repair of goods, hire of specialist clothing, health clinics, post office, travel agent, etc. – 11 retail service operators were identified in Dalry town centre.



The majority of traders within Dalry town centre are independent (79%) – this is above the 74.5% average for the other YTA audited towns in North Ayrshire (11 in total), and similar to Kilwinning (78%), Kilbirnie (76%) and Ardrossan (75%).

## 4. Attractive Town Centre

### 4.1 Leisure Mix



The mix of leisure businesses in Dalry town centre sees evening economy account



for 69% of all leisure businesses. The evening economy in the town is comprised of five pubs/bars, and six hot food takeaways. Some of the pubs/bars include the King's Revolution at The Cross and the Black Bull Inn on Vennel Street. Takeaways in the town centre include the Phoenix Grill House on North Street and the Topwok Chinese takeaway on New Street.

### 4.2 Leisure Facilities and Attractions

One leisure facility in Dalry is the KA Leisure Campus located at the primary school. KA Leisure is a non-profit organisation which was established to help deliver sport and leisure services to the communities of North Ayrshire settlements. The campus in Dalry is open Monday to Friday 6pm-10pm (during school term), Saturdays 9am-4:30pm, and Sunday 10:30am-6:30pm. The facilities include: a sports hall, training room, 5 and 7-a-side sports pitch and a café.

The social sport sessions run by KA Leisure from this location are done so in association with Dalry Community Sports Club, which is an organisation that aims to increase the access of sports and leisure opportunities for the people of Dalry. Some of the sports on offer include: karate, table tennis, football and ladies netball.

Another leisure facility located in the town centre is the Dalry Bowling Club, located to the north of the town, less than a mile from the town centre area. Facilities include: a club house, car park and a large bowling green. Although the club doesn't have a website, they do have a Facebook which is updated regularly but doesn't provide their opening times. It is understood that they are still very active, as they recently held their 2016 Awards Presentation Dance on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November.

There is also a community centre located outside of the town centre area. The Dalry Community Centre is open from 7am-10pm Monday to Friday, with opening times varying on the weekend. Some of the facilities in the centre include: a Main Hall with a capacity of 200, a lounge, a committee room and a kitchen. According to the North Ayrshire council website, the centre is managed by Dalry Community Association.

### 4.3 Community Events and Activities

A community event which takes place annually in Dalry is the Dalry Farmers Society Open Show. This event is held in May, and takes place on a farm in the town, which belongs to a society member. Attractions include a variety of cattle and livestock shows, horse shows, and a dog show.



Photo via Flickr user John McIntyre [under terms of licence](#)

The event lasts one day, with admission being free for children and £3 for adults. Parking at the event costs £2 for the show car park with ringside car parking costing £20.

Another community event which takes place each year in the settlement is the Dalry Party in the Park, which involves a number of attractions including: live music, parades and amusements.

#### 4.4 Dalry Community Development Hub

The Dalry Community Development Hub was formed in 2014, with the aim of improving Dalry and the lives of those who live there. This would be done through social and physical regeneration, with the DCDH working hard to secure the resources and funds to tackle and overcome a variety of community issues. The DCDH is made up eleven trustees with a mix of residents, local business owners, and representatives of other community groups.



There are a number of projects that the DCDH is working on currently, with some of the completed projects to date including:

- creating the Dalry Station Gardening Group, a group of volunteers which aim of keeping the area around the local train station well-kept and welcoming all year-round through the up-keep of plants and shrubs. This project benefits the travelling public as well as passers-by, as it helps to brighten up the area and contribute to the physical regeneration of the local area. The project was completed in Autumn 2015, and secured funding from ScotRail; and
- restoring a length of the Dalry public park walk which had become unkempt and muddy, was restored by the DCDH in 2016. The Hub made a successful application for funding to 'Paths for All', and received a £1,500 grant to carry out the works.

#### 4.5 Dalry Community Council

Dalry Community Council meets in the Community Centre on the second Thursday of each month at 7.00pm, and there are currently nine members (six elected community councillors, and three office bearers). Meetings are open to the public and involve discussions about issues and topics regarding the local area.

## 4.6 Attractiveness Review

The YTA includes an independent review of place and quality impressions. Individual unit fronts and shop window displays were graded out of ten during the on-street audit, with a town centre average score of 6.9 for the condition of unit fronts and 7.1 for quality of window display. This is broadly in line with average across other YTA towns in North Ayrshire (6.9 windows / 6.8 buildings) and our broader analysis (30 YTAs = 7.1 windows/ 7.0 buildings).

At the time of the audit it was noted that the streets were relatively clear with little litter to be found, and few weeds present. Throughout the town centre area there are hanging baskets, boxes, and a flower display at The Cross which helps to brighten up the area. There are also plenty of bins throughout the town. There have been street lighting improvements carried out within the town centre area, with these having a positive impact, however there is scope for further lighting improvements.



## 5. YTA Summary and Key Points

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

### 5.1 Accessible Town Centre

- although in a somewhat rural setting, Dalry is well connected with transport links and a range of services. Car ownership is quite high and public transport links are good with regular bus services taking about 45 minutes into Glasgow;
- there is a local train station in Dalry, but it is located almost one mile from the town centre area;
- parking in Dalry town centre appears – at least during the time when the audit was undertaken, a midweek daytime – to be adequate. There are also adequate off-street car parks located throughout the town centre. All town centre parking is free of charge with no time restrictions;
- the town centre would benefit from a review of lighting to ensure that it is, and importantly that it feels, safe for those on foot at night and
- Dalry has good 4G mobile coverage and access to superfast broadband.



### 5.2 Active Town Centre

- Dalry has a good range of retail and services and high level of independent retail businesses – it is important that these are supported and protected to maintain the town's sense of uniqueness;
- eleven vacant units were recorded during the audit of Dalry town centre, all of which were retail units;
- of the eleven vacant units there are two main clusters – six on Main Street (#8, 12, 17, 20, 23 and 29), and three on New Street (# 38, 42, and 51-55) with further units on North Street (#2) and Courthill Street (#2) – there is a need to understand whether there is an issue with the properties themselves and/ or with the areas to identify if any remedial actions could be taken to

improve the area/ properties and thereby generate interest and attract businesses to these vacant units; and

- the town hosts the annual Dalry Farmers Society Open Show which sees a number of cattle and livestock competitions as well as other attractions. It is important that such an event is well supported as it helps to create a sense of community and culture within the settlement.

### 5.3 Attractive Town Centre

- Dalry is an attractive, small town centre that retains a distinctive village feel due to the majority of retail units being small and independent;
- the town centre has an attractive core area at The Cross with planting and street furniture; and
- the scores Dalry received for the quality of the building fronts, was broadly in line with the average across North Ayrshire and our wider YTA audited towns – to increase its attractiveness some of the town centre retail units would benefit from targeted improvements.

