A Study of Local Centres in The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

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An Interactive Qualifying Project submitted to the faculty of Worcester Polytechnic Institute in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Degree of Bachelor of Science

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Executive Summary

In the borough of Kingston communities often rely on local shopping Centres for convenience goods, making it essential to have vibrant Centres. To ensure that the health of the Centres continues to flourish national, regional, and local planning policies have been devised and implemented in order to encourage the growth of the Centres and community alike. For these policies to be put into effect, the policy and planning division of the Kingston Council conducts health checks of all of their Centres every five years. The last check conducted was in 2007 and the report, published in 2009, was titled "Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Local Centres Study." Since the last study was conducted in 2007, a new one must be done to update the Council's database. The purpose of this project was to assess the status and health of local Centres in the RBK and offer recommendations for future policy based off these assessments. To efficiently update this report, we developed an improved audit methodology that included methods to not only assess the quality of the public realm but also update the RBK's database for the local Centres. As a result we came up with 5 main objectives:

1. Identify and inspect policies and practices that directly influence local Centres and their viability and vitality;
2. Clarify the scope, purpose, and methods of the project;
3. Assess the vitality and viability of the local Centres within the RBK;
4. Identify Centre deficient areas within the RBK that have potential to support a Centre; and,
5. Recommend policies and practices to enhance the viability and vitality of local Centres and sites for new Centres within deficient areas.

Methodology

Based on an extensive review of the literature and discussion with council staff, we designed our audit methodology to collect data on the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): occupancy rates, diversity of current usage (use classes), pedestrian flow and environmental quality.

Anchor tenants, such as convenience stores or grocers, are thought to have a substantial impact on the health of local Centres, but they are vulnerable to development elsewhere in the borough and can be smothered by larger stores that offer similar goods at district Centres. Consequently, we were careful to record the presence or absence and types of convenience stores in each Centre.

Building on the protocols used in 2007, the team developed several tools to gather the data, including: a Centre Audit Checklist, a Shop Keeper Survey, a Shopper Survey, a Centre Summary form, and a Survey Manual. The Centre Audit Checklist was designed to collect data on transportation, quality of the public realm, and other observations of the Centre. Following a review of the pertinent literature, we developed a new set of protocols to assess the quality of the public realm, which was not assessed in the 2007 audit or 2009 report. Quality of the realm is a relatively imprecise term used to refer primarily to the aesthetics of the urban environment, such as the presence of trees, the quality of the street furniture, and the absence of street clutter, rubbish, and graffiti. The team pre-tested the audit protocols in several local Centres to address implementation issues and calibrate the methods to assure consistency in data collection regardless of which team member was collecting the data. In 2009, outside consultants were hired to conduct statistically representative residential surveys. Conducting similar residential surveys was beyond the scope of this project, but the team conducted convenience surveys with 44 shoppers and 19 shopkeeper surveys. These surveys provided additional qualitative information that supplemented the audit data. Getting a reasonable sample of shoppers to agree to answer survey questions was difficult because many Centres had little foot traffic during the day and many shoppers were reluctant to take the time. To supplement the surveys completed in the various Centres, we distributed an online version of the survey to the Kingston Council staff and team members went to seven libraries asking the patrons to fill out the survey based on the Centre they visited most. We created a Centre Summary form to expedite the data entry from the surveys and Centre audits. As an aid to future data collection efforts in the borough, the team developed a Survey Manual that outlined, in a step-by-step fashion, the methodology and criteria used in the study. Ideally, future studies will follow the manual, thus providing data readily comparable to this 2012 report.

Findings

In the assessment of the Borough's local Centres, the team found that since the last study many of the Centres have stabilized in health and composition, breaking the downward trend that had been evident since 1989. Most of the Centres in Kingston are performing well and will remain viable and vital for years to come. Some Centres would benefit from small additions such as road signs or designated pedestrian crossings. We identified only three Centres that appear to be performing poorly. Ace of Spades and Chiltern Drive have high vacancy rates and Chiltern Drive is simply not meeting the role of a local Centre because it failed to have an adequate diversity of outlets available. The team determined that the factors that contribute to healthy Centres had been thoroughly identified in the 2009 report and have not changed. They include:

- Inclusion of an adequately sized convenience store – 150m^2+ gross;
- Prominent location;
- Adequate parking provision;
- Minimal catchment area overlap;
- Good pedestrian environment such as sufficient pedestrian crossings, and;
- Broad range of retail, service, and evening economy attractions (e.g. A3 and A5 uses)

The data revealed that occupancy rates among A1 units have stabilized from the downward trend of the past few decades. Additionally, there has recently been a slight increase in the percentage of A1 comparison shopping units becoming A1 convenience stores. With the exception of the two re-bounded and reclassified Centres, Kingston Road (South)/Park Road and Cambridge Road, the numbers of units has not changed substantially overall or among individual Centres. In fact, in 15 out of the 25 Centres the numbers of units have not changed since 2009. Of the remaining 8 Centres that were not reclassified there were only slight changes in the numbers of units caused by shops expanding and taking over other addresses or splitting into several new units.

New policy has been implemented at the national (NPPF 2012), London (London Plan 2011), and Borough (Core Strategy 2012) level. Much of the new policy maintains similar goals as the previous policy; however, it is important to have a thorough understanding of the newest policy to ensure the team's recommendations comply with the new legislation.

All levels of new policy mandate some type of local Centre review and encourage councils to ensure the viability and vitality of the Centres.

Through the use of GIS analysis, the team found the number of households served by the local Centres had decreased overall with one exception and that the deficiency areas identified in the 2009 report still exist. Due to difficulty determining previous methods used in determining deficiency areas for the previous studies comparison of actual numbers do not provide useful figures. As such future studies should focus on rigorously defining a method for GIS analysis and document the process for future studies. Some suggested points to take into account are as follows:

- Major roads and rail lines are essentially pedestrian barriers and should be used to break deficiency regions.
- Distances should be either 'as the crow flies' or walking distance, ideally walking distance as this is more representative of the actual conditions the report is trying to measure.
- If data can be obtained from neighboring boroughs on A1 convenience outlets near the boundary of the Borough some of the deficient regions adjacent to the boundary could show significant reductions in un-served populations during analysis.

Plotting the location of healthy and less healthy Centres on GIS-generated base maps failed to reveal any association with unemployment rates, levels of deprivation, or ethnicity in the borough. Likewise, there was no apparent relation between quality of the public realm and Centre success. For example, Chiltern Drive has a high quality public realm but is ailing as a local Centre. The team did, however, find a link between lower quality of the public realm and the presence of busy streets in Centres. A busier street decreased the overall quality of the public realm due to high traffic and limited crosswalks in the Centre, making navigation both difficult and dangerous. While not directly practical for the borough's planning team, the transport and highway team might use these findings to choose their next target for improvement works.

Based on this limited assessment, there are no clear factors that explain why some Centres are successful and others fail although it is clear that the absence of a key anchor tenant, adequate access and parking, and Centre visibility are key variables.

Average outlet vacancy rates on a neighborhood basis only provide trends in the vacancy over time and masks the wild fluctuations in individual Centre vacancy rates over time. From the shopkeepers and shoppers, the team found that the most common complaint was expensive parking and a lack of parking. We found vacancy rates to be most useful in substantiating a diagnosis of poor health but not necessarily an indicator of poor health.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the team has recommendations in two areas; methodological suggestions for future studies and policy options to maintain and encourage Centre viability and vitality. Future studies will benefit from the tools we devised through the audit process and if used again in accordance with the survey manual will produce comparable data. Surveys of residents need to be more thorough to attain a wider breadth of data as well gain different opinions from varying demographics.

In terms of policy recommendation, the Council should continue to encourage diverse uses of Centres. Efforts in improving the visibility of lower traffic Centres through posted signs would help Centres maintain the revenue needed to stay vital. Council support and advocacy of appropriately sized A1 convenience outlets will help Centres gain or maintain an anchor tenant. Appropriately sized A1 convenience outlets provide Centres with enough draw for prospective tenants and visitors to further enhance Centre viability and vitality.

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Introduction

Major urban areas typically comprise a number of discrete town Centres or nodes of economic activity that vary in size and function. For example, in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (Figure 1) the retail hierarchy comprises of one metropolitan Centre (Kingston Town Centre), three district Centres (Tolworth, Surbiton, and New Malden), and 25 local Centres. Kingston Town Centre “is one of London’s most successful metropolitan town Centres and is a popular regional shopping destination attracting approximately 18 million shoppers a year from a wide catchment area” (Core Strategy, 2012) including Surrey and other parts of south London. Lower in the hierarchy, three district Centres supplement the role of Kingston Town Centre and provide a valuable range of walk-to shops and services for their local communities. Local Centres are substantially smaller than district Centres. Typically, they include a small number of shops in ‘parades’ or as clusters at key intersections. Local Centres provide a more limited range of “day to day” goods and services for local residents, particularly to those who have limited access to larger Centres. The vitality and viability of town Centres throughout the retail hierarchy varies over time in response to a variety of factors such as suburbanization, economic conditions and changes in consumer shopping habits.

The planning profession has long recognized that healthy town Centres are essential for the creation and maintenance of successful, sustainable communities and meeting the needs of residents. Consequently, since the 1940s planning policies at the national, regional and local levels have reflected this through guidance which seeks to manage and enhance them. Most recently, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), adopted in 2012, directs local planning authorities (LPAs) to:

- “recognize town Centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;” and,
- “where town Centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.” (“National Planning Policy”, 2012, pp7)

Further regional guidance is provided by the London Plan (2011), produced by the Greater London Authority (GLA), which states that London boroughs should undertake regular town centre health checks to inform strategic and local policy and implementation[1].

Accordingly, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames' Local Development Framework (LDF) has developed policy documents that focus on maintaining and enhancing its town Centres. The Core Strategy (2012) which serves as the borough's principal development plan dedicates one strategic and two development management policies to achieving these objectives and a Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP), K+20 (2008) which sets out specific policy guidance for Kingston Town Centre. Core Strategy (2012) policy CS12 states that the Council will:

- "update the Local Centres Study (2009) and explore how to improve local shopping provision in residential areas with the greatest deficiency (Areas 6 and 7 outlined in the Local Centres Study (2009))
- conduct regular town centre healthchecks"

As stated in the Core Strategy these Centre health checks are to be a regularly occurring, and historically have occurred every five years. This study is meant to continue this cycle and update the 2009 report as well as expand the number of criteria considered. These additional criteria include the quality of the public realm and interviews with outlet owners within the Centres.

Through the review of the existing network of the borough's local Centres the team found that with the exception of a few Centres the borough's local Centres were performing well. Of those Centres performing well some needed small changes to further enhance their viability and vitality. The ailing Centres on the other hand needed significant aid from the council or needed to be revaluated in their status as a Centre. Geospatial analysis was preformed to investigate demographic influences, catchment area populations, and deficient populations. GIS analysis found that most of the deficient households were located in New Malden. Additionally, since the 2009 report the majority of the deficient areas have decreased in size. The team did not find any demographics which correlated to the poor health of Centres or vice-versa.

[1] See London Plan Policy 2.15 for further information.

Furthermore the quality of the public realm factors measured had no bearing on the overall performance of the Centre.

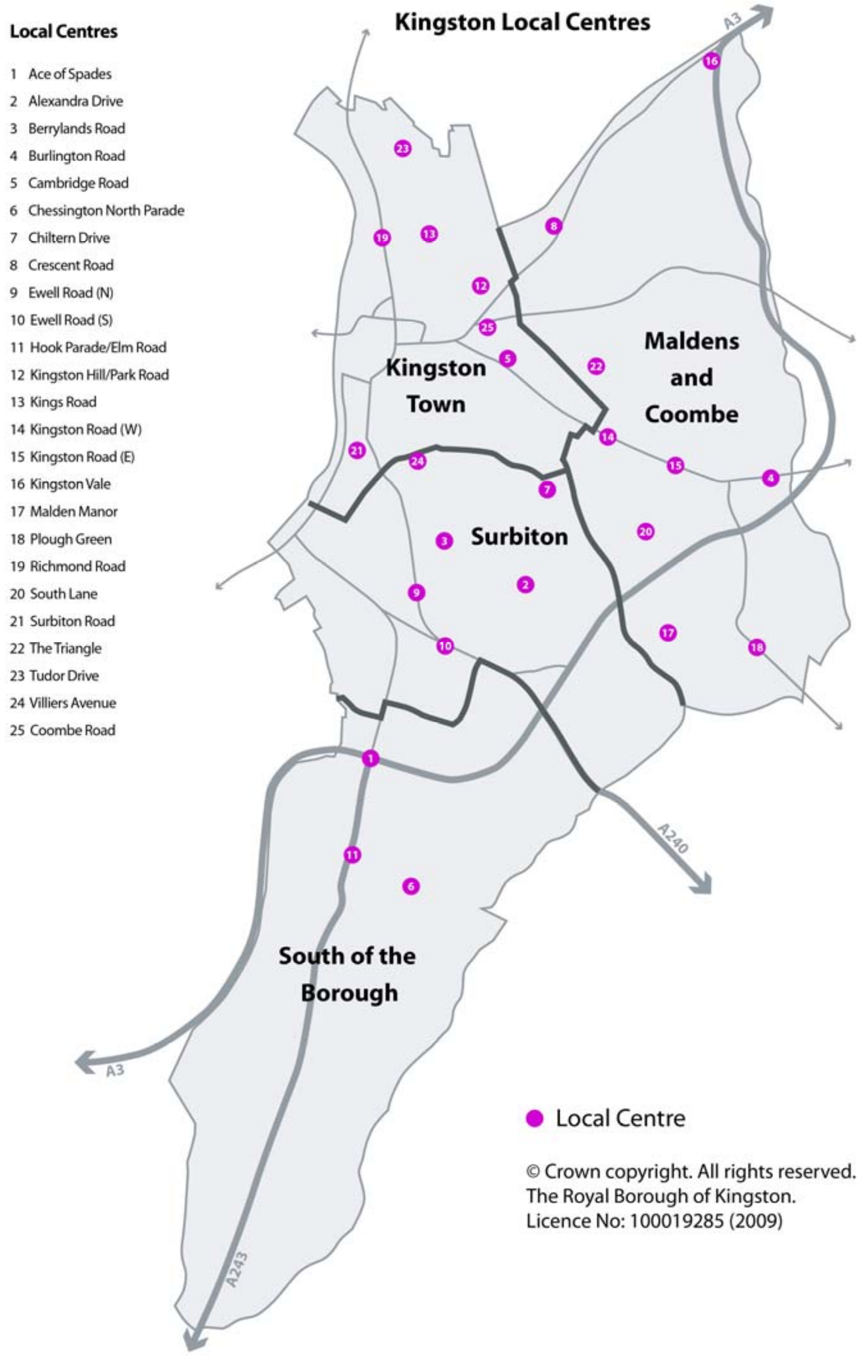

Figure 1: The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and its Local Centres

2 Methodology

The goal of this project was to assist The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames in updating its 2009 Local Centres Study and fulfill the policy requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS12. The project comprised the five following objectives:

6. Identify and inspect policies and practices that directly influence local Centres and their viability and vitality;
7. Clarify the scope, purpose, and methods of the project;
8. Assess the vitality and viability of the local Centres within the RBK;
9. Identify Centre deficient areas within the RBK that have potential to support a Centre; and,
10. Recommend policies and practices to enhance the viability and vitality of local Centres and sites for new Centres within deficient areas.

2.1 Objective 1: Identify and inspect policies and practices that directly influence local Centres and their viability and vitality

The project team conducted an extensive review of planning policy and guidance pertaining to the role of local Centres and their vitality and viability in communities. The discussion in the literature does not fully expose the nuances of the Centre-community relationship, thus we interviewed experts in the field to parse out said nuances. Building on the suggestions of our sponsor, we developed a list of individuals in different boroughs that we could interview to gain an understanding of the methods used in similar studies throughout London. Interviewees included staff from other boroughs, staff within the borough, and experts from within the planning community, such as planners from local boroughs including Sutton, Merton, and Mole Valley who have conducted similar studies. The interviews helped us identify new sources of data, methods, and types of analysis and fortify the research presented in the literature review. The team conducted semi-structured interviews via email, telephone, and in person. The interviews consisted of open ended questions based on research of past models and the project goals. The topics of discussion for the interviews incorporated the professional experience of the individual along with research questions pertaining to the studies that they conducted or managed.

2.2 Objective 2: Clarify the Scope, Purpose, and Methods of the project

Upon arrival, the team clarified the scope and purpose of the project such that the proposed methods aligned with the goals and preferred protocols of the sponsor. After a series of project development meetings with pertinent staff in the council, the team resolved various methodological questions, including:

- How should the Centre boundaries be defined?
- What Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and other databases contain information relevant to the study (such as building footprints, floor space by business, etc.)?
- Which Key Performance Indicators should be used in the updated study?
- What features and criteria should be used in evaluating the quality of the public realm?
- How can we design this study to yield comparables in future studies?

How should the Centre boundaries be defined?

Defining Centre boundaries was an essential component in preparing to survey local Centres. From our review of the literature and past Centre assessments, it was unclear how Centre boundaries were defined. However, following a discussion with our sponsor, we found that the Centre boundaries are rigidly defined in the existing planning policy guidance. It is important to note that if outlets or other structures are outside of the boundaries they should be noted in the audit to be incorporated later on in the council database.

What GIS and other databases contain information relevant to the study (such as building footprints, floor space by business, etc.)?

Using Kingston's GIS system, Integrated Spatial Information System (ISIS), we have been able to identify additional land use and individual property data that would not typically be found in other Council archives (e.g. floor space information, easting and northing co-ordinates and planning permissions history). The database allowed the generation of base maps of the Centres, giving the team a handheld, explicit guide defining what was and was not part of the Centre. Using this database, the team pictorially and graphically represented trends from the data and surveys on maps to help establish areas of deficiency as well as catchment areas. From this information, maps of deficient regions were synthesized.

Which Key Performance Indicators should be used in the study?

From the literature review, we identified more than eight potential performance indicators; however, after discussions with our sponsor, the team discovered that many were not pertinent to this study or were impractical to measure in a seven week period. The final choice of KPI's, listed in Table 2, includes: unit occupancy/use class, unit vacancy levels, quality of the public realm, parking availability, floor space, number of outlets and available modes of transportation. With the exception of floor space data which were available from existing council databases, all of the data were gathered in the field by the team.

What features and criteria should be used in evaluating the quality of the public realm?

Quality of the public realm was not evaluated in the 2009 Local Centres Study, but the borough staff were eager to include such an evaluation in the updated Centre evaluation. Through meetings with members of the planning team and a review of Council documents and additional relevant literature on the public realm, the team determined which criteria would be most pertinent in evaluating the quality of the public realm. After some deliberation the research team determined that the following criteria were most appropriate in an assessment of the quality of the realm:

1. accessibility;
2. litter and cleanliness;
3. planting and landscaping;
4. street clutter;
5. quality of street furniture;
6. security; and,
7. quality of pavement (Appendix B).

It was agreed that the public realm data (as well as a text overview, use class and vacancy data, photographs, and policy recommendations) would be recorded in the Centre summaries. These Centre summaries would document the conditions in each local Centre individually and be included as an appendix to the overall study (Appendix C).

How can we design this study to yield comparable data in future studies?

Developing clear definitions and collection protocols will ensure that future efforts will collect consistent and comparable data. To aid the Council in this regard, the team developed a survey manual (Appendix D) which outlined our methodology in a step-by-step fashion and detailed how to fill out Centre summary forms.

2.3 Objective 3: Review of Existing Centres

Before officially beginning Centre audits, the team went through several 'dry runs' of the auditing process to ensure that each member knew the correct procedure and would produce consistent results. After this calibration process was completed, the team performed audits of Kingston's 25[2] local Centres in teams of two.

These pairs audited three to five Centres daily depending on the distance between Centres and their combined size. The auditing process consisted of noting changes in unit ownership, performing shop owner and shopper surveys and filling out the Centre audit checklist. Typically, one team member would record changes in outlet occupancy, use class and unit vacancy on a printed Excel spreadsheet while the other performed shop owner and shopper surveys (Appendix E, F). A1 outlets required further classification as either convenience (Food and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, newspapers and periodicals and non-durable household goods) or comparison (goods one would shop around for, or everything that is not convenience). In addition, both team members filled out Centre audit checklists (Appendix B) which dealt with the amount of parking, cycles, bus stops and the quality of the public realm. The aforementioned characteristics were characterized on a 1-5 scale with 1 being very poor, 3 being average and 5 being excellent. Comments describing the team member's reasoning accompanied each rating that differed from a score of 3, thus ensuring that adequate thought went into the scoring system. The team took several photographs in each Centre to illustrate varying qualitative and quantitative aspects of the public realm as well as the type and number of particular use classes. These photographs were later used in the Centre summaries to substantiate claims about quality of the public realm and help devise recommendations for policy.

[2] In the 2009 Local Centres Study there were 28 Centres. However, the policy recommendations in that study were used as part of the LDF evidence base to formulate Core Strategy policies. This resulted in the following: (insert table or text from Core Strategy Proposals Map Changes Document)

The criteria used for judging the quality of public realm in local Centres were compiled into a short document for team members to refer to while surveying. It aided in maintaining the uniformity of the data collected. As more Centres were surveyed by the team, further information regarding methods used was folded into the document to create the Survey Manual (Appendix D). The purpose of the Survey Manuals is to provide future surveyors with data collection guidelines to ensure comparability between surveys. In addition to data collection guidelines, the manual contains information on approaches to data analysis.

The largest obstacle to overcome in the auditing process occurred when team members attempted to survey shoppers. An overwhelming majority of accosted shoppers declined to participate in the survey. The first trial consisted of twenty five people asked to be interviewed with only five volunteering their time. The team attributed this unexpected issue to a combination of factors including poor weather conditions, timing (e.g. workers being on lunch breaks) and that the local Centres, with their abundance of convenience shopping, primarily attracted shoppers with little time to spare.

To remedy the lack of shopper surveys conducted, the team explored three alternative options. Firstly, to contact local resident associations throughout the borough and use those as a means of obtaining a representative source of information from their members or the organizations as a whole. Secondly, to circulate a targeted internal email to Council staff in the Planning and Highways and Transportation Teams that lives within the borough. Thirdly, to perform shopper surveys at targeted locations in the borough. Discussions on the proper location concluded that visiting Kingston's seven local libraries during the school holidays (half term holidays) would provide the team with a captive audience and produce the best results in a limited timeframe. The team decided to employ both methods two and three as Council employees could complete the survey at their convenience and day time library visitors were less likely to be in a hurry as they had already set aside time in their schedule to visit the library. Method one was rejected on the grounds of having limited time to contact resident associations and organize meetings that coincided with their existing schedules.

Surveys targeting shopkeepers were comparatively more successful. Some difficulties were encountered; sometimes shop keepers were too new to the area and thus could provide limited background knowledge about the success and function of the local Centre or they were long term tenants that tended to raise issues that were unrelated to the survey or the planning function of the Council. Overall, the insights gained through these surveys greatly improved the team's ability to judge each Centre's health.

Table 1: Key Performance Indicators and Evaluation Methods

Key Performance Indicator	**Evaluation Method**
Unit occupancy/use class	Unit occupancy can be determined during the audit using the use classes from Appendix A – Use Classes. Generally the use class will be apparent by observing the outlet. If observation fails the council archive should also have information on the use class of each unit.
Unit vacancy levels	Vacancy levels will be polled as part of the Centre audits by simply noting the number of vacant units in each Centre. If units are determined to be going out of business the unit will not be counted as vacant. Not yet open units will also be counted as vacant.
The quality of the public realm	The quality of the public realm is determined through evaluation of a Centre's accessibility, litter/cleanliness, plants/soft landscaping, street clutter, quality of street furniture, security, and quality of pavement.
Parking availability	The quantity and type of parking will be included in the Centre audit checklist. Type can be broken down into: Private parking associated with stores Residential Metered Residential only Unrestricted Pay-and-display Other (with comments)
Floor space	Floor space numbers will be provided by the council archives. In the event that the archives are not sufficient GIS surveying data can be used to produce a reasonable estimate of floor space.
Number of outlets	Number of outlets is the total number of units within the Centre and can be derived from the unit occupancy/vacancy measurements.
Transportation Methods	Indication of public transit, such as bus stops and train stations in the area as well as indication of facilitation of other modes of transport (e.g. cycles)

2.4 Objective 4: Identifying Catchment Areas and Areas of Deficiency

Whilst assessing the health of the 25 local Centres was the ultimate purpose of this project, another key aspect was investigating whether residents' needs for local shops and services were being met. In planning terms, this could be assessed by identifying retail deficiency areas[3]. According to this study, the definition of a retail deficiency area is a location which is over 400m away from a convenience shop. However, in order to identify retail deficiency areas in the borough, the team needed to measure the catchment areas[4] of each Centre and identify any catchment area overlap[5]. As such, those areas not covered by a catchment area were identified as areas of retail deficiency.

To address Objective 4 of the study and identify which deficiency areas had populations large enough to support an additional local Centre, further analysis was required. For instance, the team had to discount large areas of uninhabited open space (such as the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land) and other non-residential areas that were in deficiency areas as well as retail located outside of Centre bounds. To do this, the team employed ISIS/arcGIS software and basic graphical overlay methods to analyze the land use designations within those deficient areas. Then the team ranked the deficient areas by population (Deficiency Area 1 having the largest population) and compared the data to the catchment areas of existing local Centres. This exercise made it possible to explore potential correlations between the overall performance of a Centre, its catchment area population and the general socio-demographic characteristics. For example, variables such as age, ethnicity, and affluence would have a bearing on the type of local shops and services that would meet residents' needs and the types of policy recommendations the study could make. This type of analysis was an update of the analysis preformed in the 2009 Local Centre Study.

2.5 Objective 5: Assessing Centre Health and Recommendations

By using the data obtained from the team's Centre audits, making comparisons with data from the 2009 study and ISIS/GIS analysis, the team formulated local policy recommendations. The purpose of these recommendations was to both promote the vitality and viability of the existing Centres and guide the creation of new local Centres in retail deficient areas.

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[3] Deficient areas are defined as areas beyond the catchment area of a Centre
[4] Catchment area is defined as the region within a 400m radius of the midpoint of a Centre.
[5] Catchment overlap is defined as a region within a catchment area of two or more Centres

Between the collected data and previous data from the 2009 study, the team was able to conduct quantitative analysis by comparing vacancy rates, property use class, and the overall number of outlets. The data could be objectively compared and contrasted, whereas quality of the public realm, requiring subjective, qualitative analysis, was not recorded previously. As stated, previous studies did not consider the quality of the public realm nor accessibility in the form of parking, bus stops and cycle racks.

While the 2009 study used a small selection of the Key Performance Indicators suggested by the planning literature, the 2012 study explored many more KPIs and allowed more qualitative analysis of the local Centres in particular. This qualitative data provided a more holistic view of why some Centres performed well and why others were less successful. As stated in the literature review, however, a prescriptive, standard method of discerning Centre health does not exist. For that reason, the methods employed in this study may not be directly comparable with other local planning authorities. Nevertheless, through a mixture of the commonalities in the planning policy and guidance, recommendations from experts, methods used in the 2009 study, and the teams own understanding at the end of the process, the team was able to develop a clear and robust methodology.

3 Findings

The findings are a result of both health checks of each individual Centre and GIS analysis of catchment areas and deficient regions. First, the team provides a treatment of the spatial relationships of Centres and their catchment areas as well as an investigation of various demographics and their correlations to the acquired data. This treatment includes an evaluation of deficiency regions as well. Next the team analyzed trends in the Centre data over the previous Centre studies and data since 1989. The quantitative analysis delves into number of outlets, vacancy, main anchor stores, floor space, use-class distribution, and the rate of change between use classes. The qualitative measurements include quality of the public realm and visitor and business owner opinions in relation to local Centre shopping. The findings are concluded with a table summarizing the Centres with targeted recommendations for each individual Centre.

3.1 Spatial Relationships

Spatial analysis of the data provides many insights into how Centres perform in relation to their surroundings. The team investigated the number of households within a 400m radius of each Centre and the number of households outside of any 400m radius from convenience stores. Additionally analysis was performed to investigate the relationship between unemployment, deprivation, and non-white ethnic groups.

3.1.1 Catchment Area Characteristics

Figure 2 shows the Centre catchment areas highlighted in green around each of the 25 local Centres. Only six Centres do not have catchment region overlap. To account for this overlap the team assigned households in the overlap regions to the physically closest Centre 'as the crow flies'. From the GIS analysis, the team found data comparison between the 2009 and current study to be impossible as the addition and removal of Centres drastically changed the total number of households in a Centres catchment area. This phenomenon is easily observed in the data (Table 2 and Table 3) for Coombe Road where supposedly there was a -110% change in households when in reality Cambridge Road (E) was removed and Cambridge Road was established as a Centre which substantially cut into the catchment area of Coombe Road due to their proximity to each other. One meaningful conclusion that can be drawn from the given data is the overall minor change in population within the catchment areas of the local Centres.

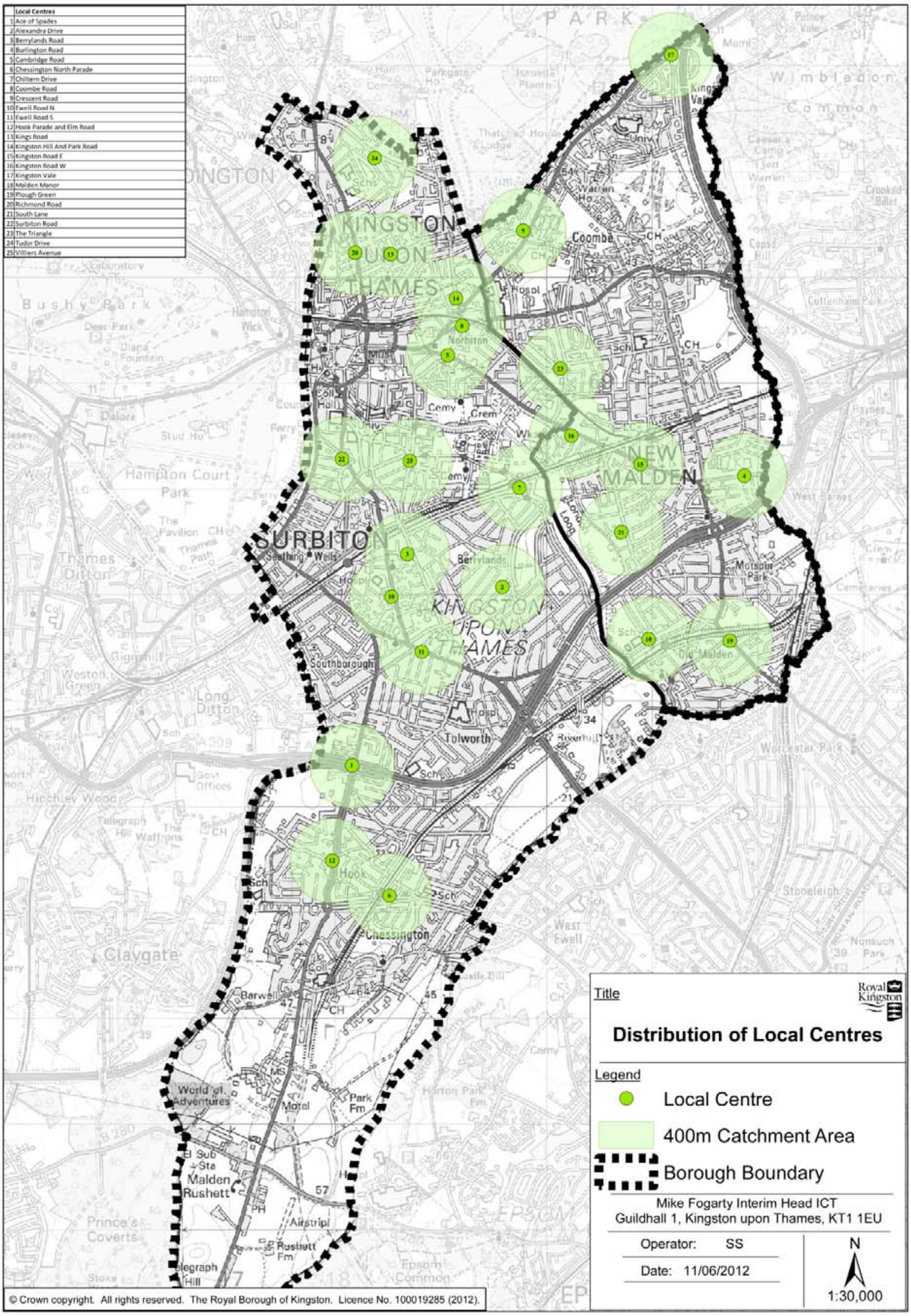

Figure 2: Catchment Regions of each of the 25 Local Centres

Table 2: Count of Properties by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Count of Properties
Kingston Town	10919
Maldens and Coombe	8921
Out of Borough	6
South of the Borough	3435
Surbiton	7468
Grand Total	**30749**

Table 3: Count of Properties within Centre Catchment Area 2007-2012

Centre Name	Catchment Area Households 2007	Catchment Area Households 2012	Difference	Percent Change
Ace of Spades	1082	1025	-57	-6%
Alexandra Drive	596	916	320	35%
Berrylands Road	1805	1951	146	7%
Burlington Road	787	1157	370	32%
Cambridge Road	N/A	2085	N/A	N/A
Chessington North Parade	910	1121	211	19%
Chiltern Drive	471	561	90	16%
Coombe Road	1504	717	-787	-110%
Crescent Road	978	1159	181	16%
Ewell Road (N)	2081	1605	-476	-30%
Ewell Road (S)	1304	1244	-60	-5%
Hook Parade/Elm Road	1100	1291	191	15%
Kings Road	1763	1622	-141	-9%
Kingston Hill/Park Road	1900	1602	-298	-19%
Kingston Road (E)	1448	1649	201	12%

Kingston Road (W)	894	1046	152	15%
Kingston Vale	337	455	118	26%
Malden Manor	803	1005	202	20%
Plough Green	780	865	85	10%
Richmond Road	1259	1247	-12	-1%
South Lane	525	681	156	23%
Surbiton Road	1400	1991	591	30%
The Triangle	838	1210	372	31%
Tudor Drive	655	1020	365	36%
Villiers Avenue	1178	1524	346	23%
Cambridge Road (E)	1710	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kingston Hill (N)	1058	N/A	N/A	N/A
Red Lion Road	1160	N/A	N/A	N/A
Robin Hood Way	426	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	**30752**	**30749**	-3	0%

3.1.2 Areas of Deficiency in Convenience Goods Provision

Figure 3 shows the deficiency areas ranked in ascending order. The deficient areas neighbouring the border may be deceiving as retail located outside of Kingston is not accounted for when drawing deficient regions. The largest of the deficiency regions is region 8 with 3,145 'un-served' households. This number is misleading as a majority of the houses could be located in a small subsection of the region. Therefore, it is much more informative to have smaller deficiency regions. Ideally, each deficiency region should be roughly the size of a Centre catchment area. In addition, the regions like 8 are split by railroad tracks or highways. These act as barriers that are difficult to cross thus reducing the usefulness of local Centres placed near these regions.

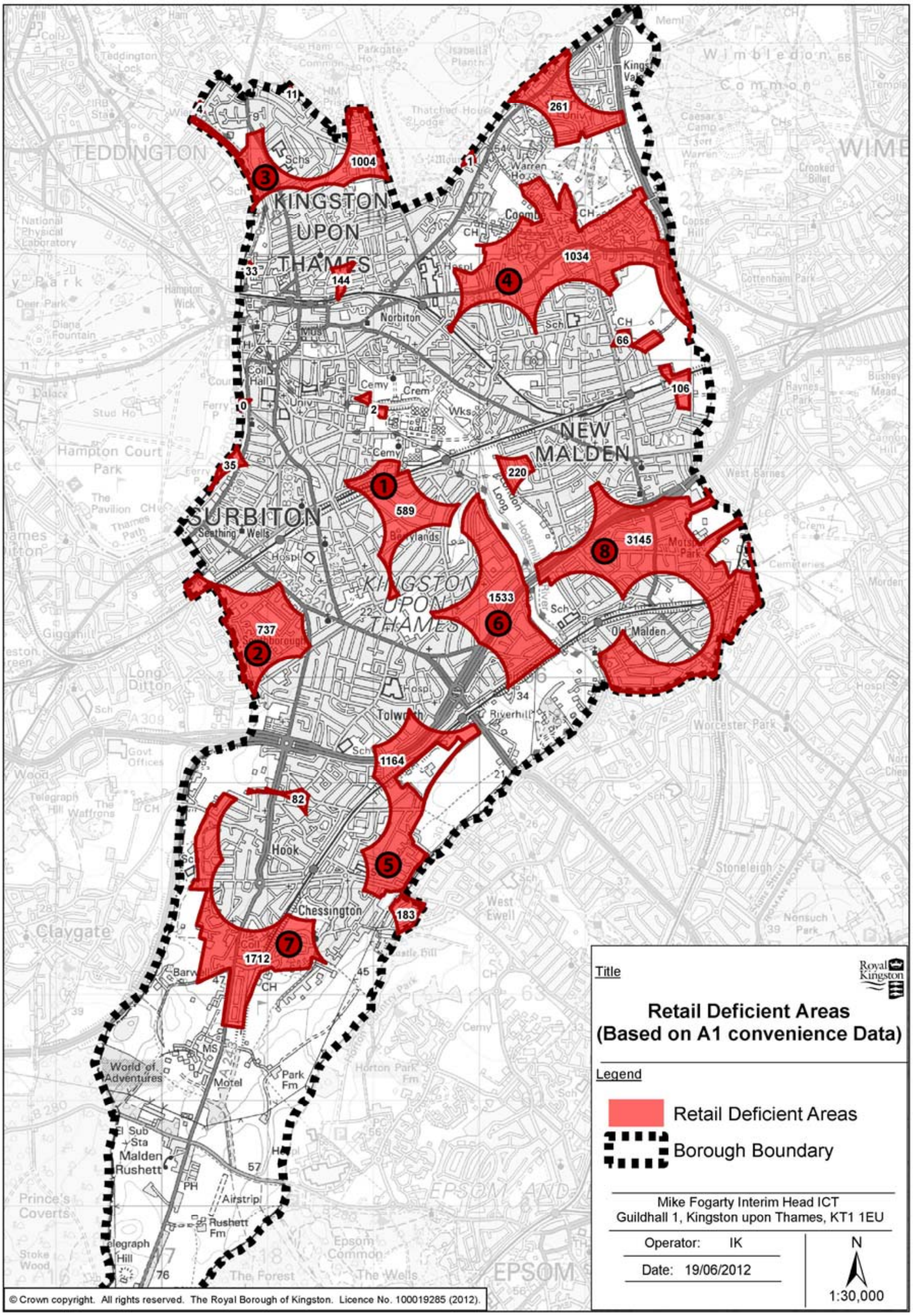

Figure 3: Retail Deficient Areas

3.1.3 Centre Health and Demographics

The team's analysis of the Centre health as it related to demographics, mainly unemployment, non-white ethnic populations, and deprivation found no link between the sets of data. Maps of Centres and demographics data can be found in Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6.

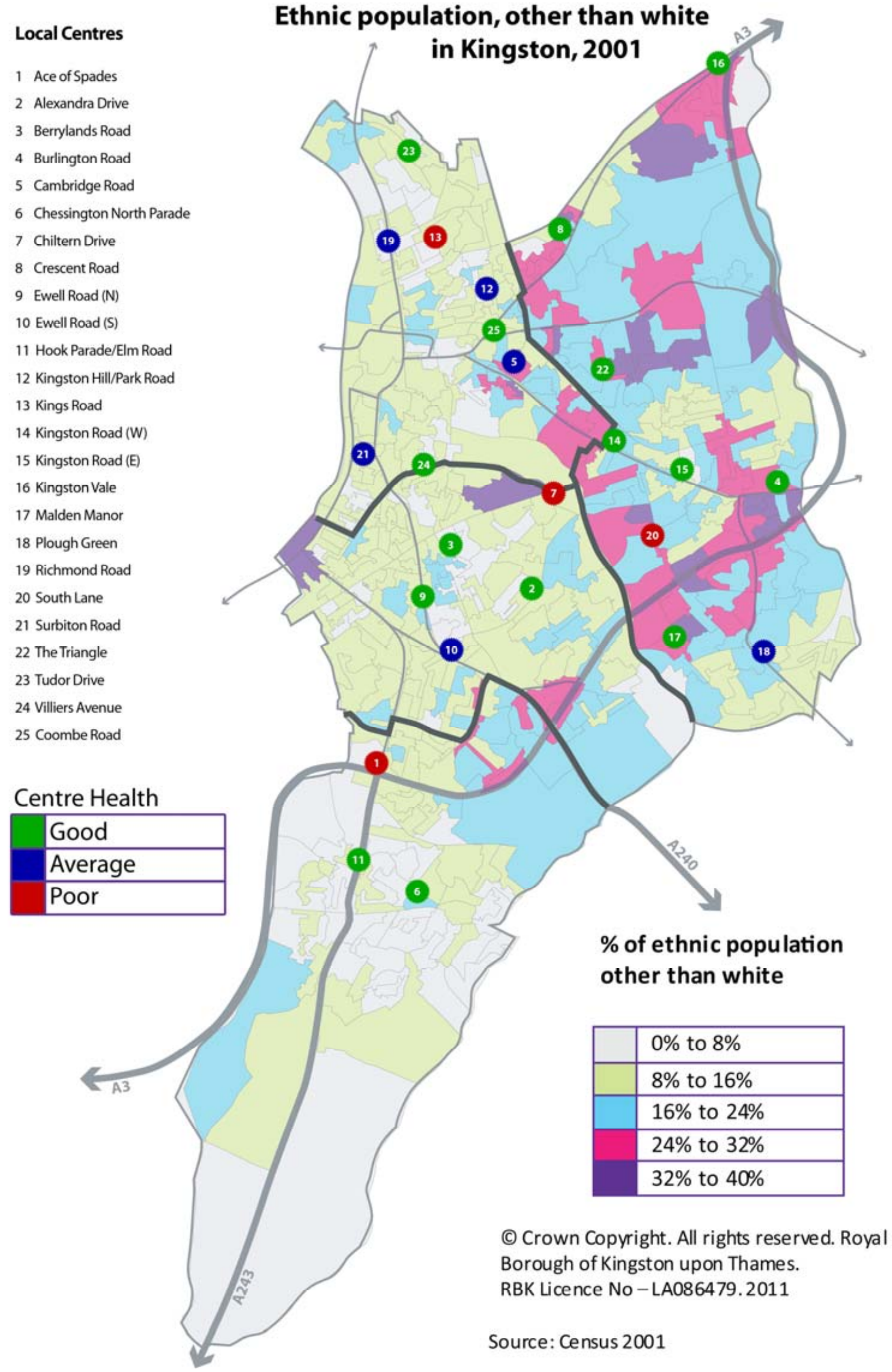

Figure 4: Non-white Ethnicities and Centre Health

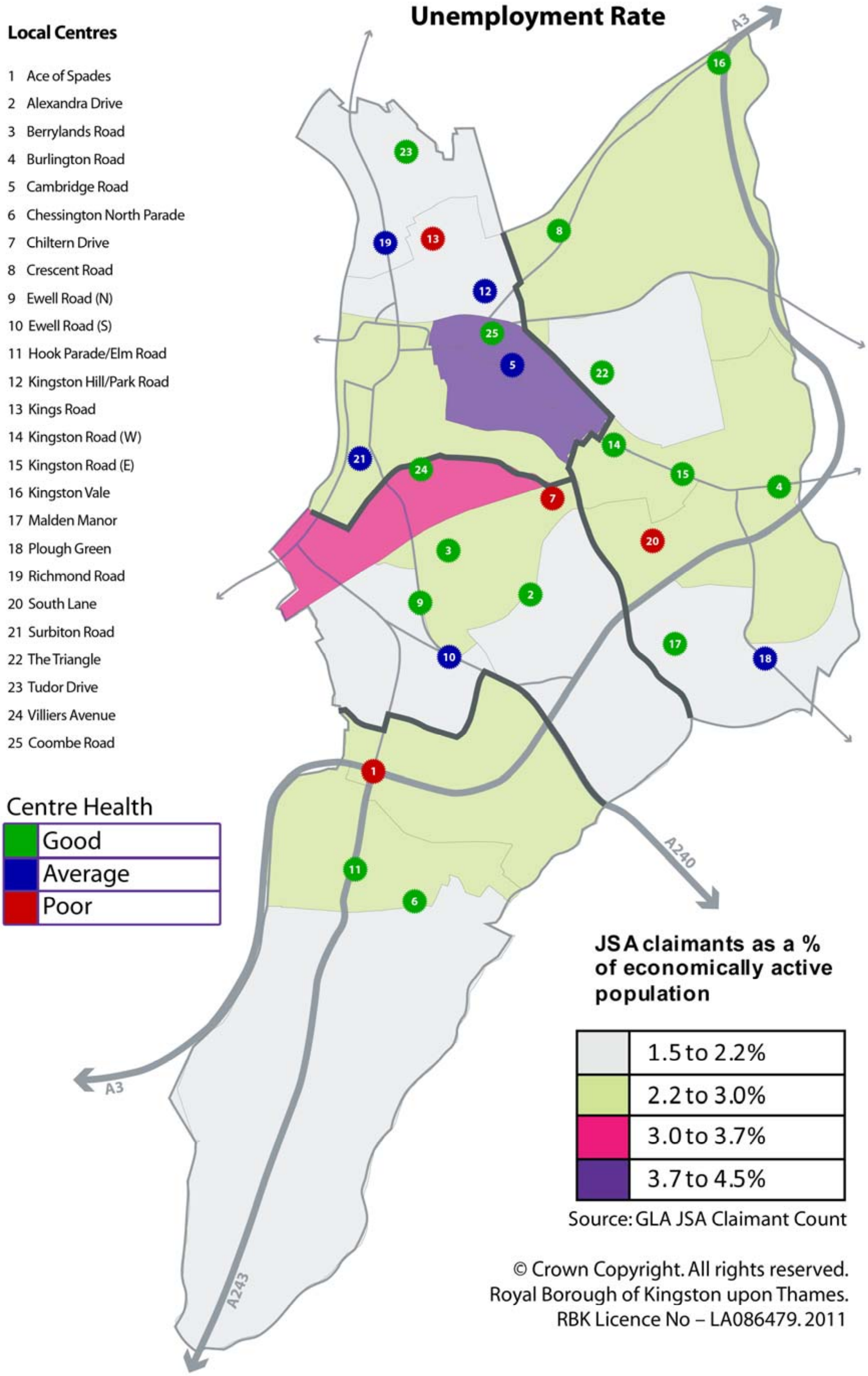

Figure 5: Unemployment Rate and Centre Health

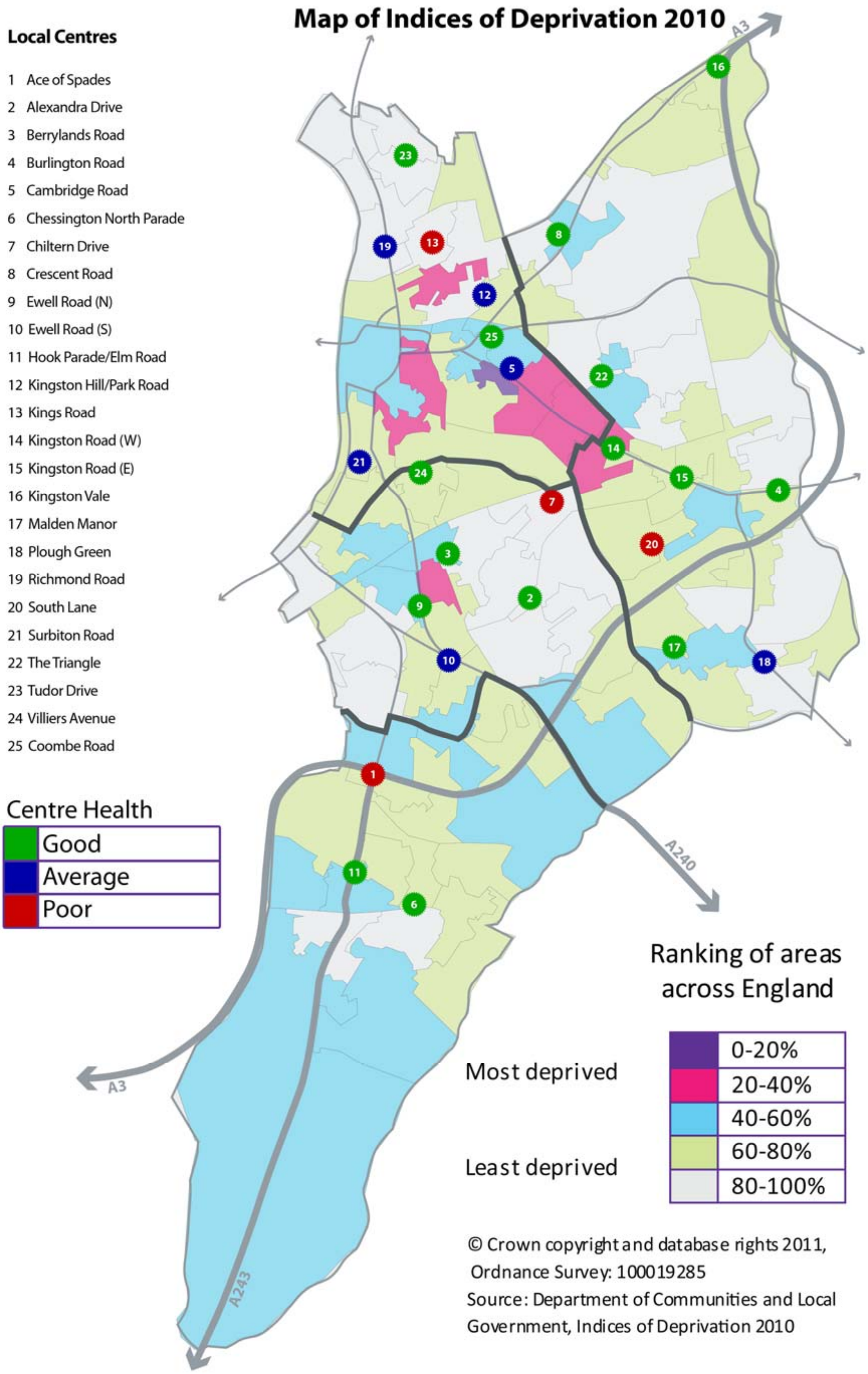

Figure 6: Ranking of Deprivation Overlaid with Centre Health

3.2 Health Check Assessment

Through the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data the team assessed the health of the 25 local Centres. This data included outlet use class, floor space, vacancy rates, shopper and shop owner surveys, and data resulting from prior local Centre studies. The quantitative data was examined from a Centre, neighborhood, and borough level to provide targeted recommendations as well as an overview of the health for the neighborhoods and entire borough. Qualitative data was used to supplement and reinforce our findings and recommendations.

3.2.1 Outlet Numbers

Figure 7 shows that the numbers of outlets in most of the Centres have changed little since 2002. The number of outlets in 15 of the Centres during 2012 is the same as they were in 2002. Cambridge Road stands out as a newly created Centre with 16 outlets, while the Kingston Hill South/Park Road Centre increased from 20 to 35 outlets due to boundary changes in the designation of the Centre. The remaining Centres fluctuations can be explained as a result of multiple physical property addresses being absorbed or removed from under one shop front. An example of this would be a once successful restaurant shrinking down from occupying two addresses to one as business slows. None of the Centres have seen an overall decline in the number of outlets since 2002.

As shown by Figure 8 the overall number of Centres does not dramatically change with the variation below 15 outlets due to the addition and removal (not shown in Figure 7) of local Centres in between 2007 and 2012. The changes, rather, are in the composition of the outlets within the Centre and not the number itself.

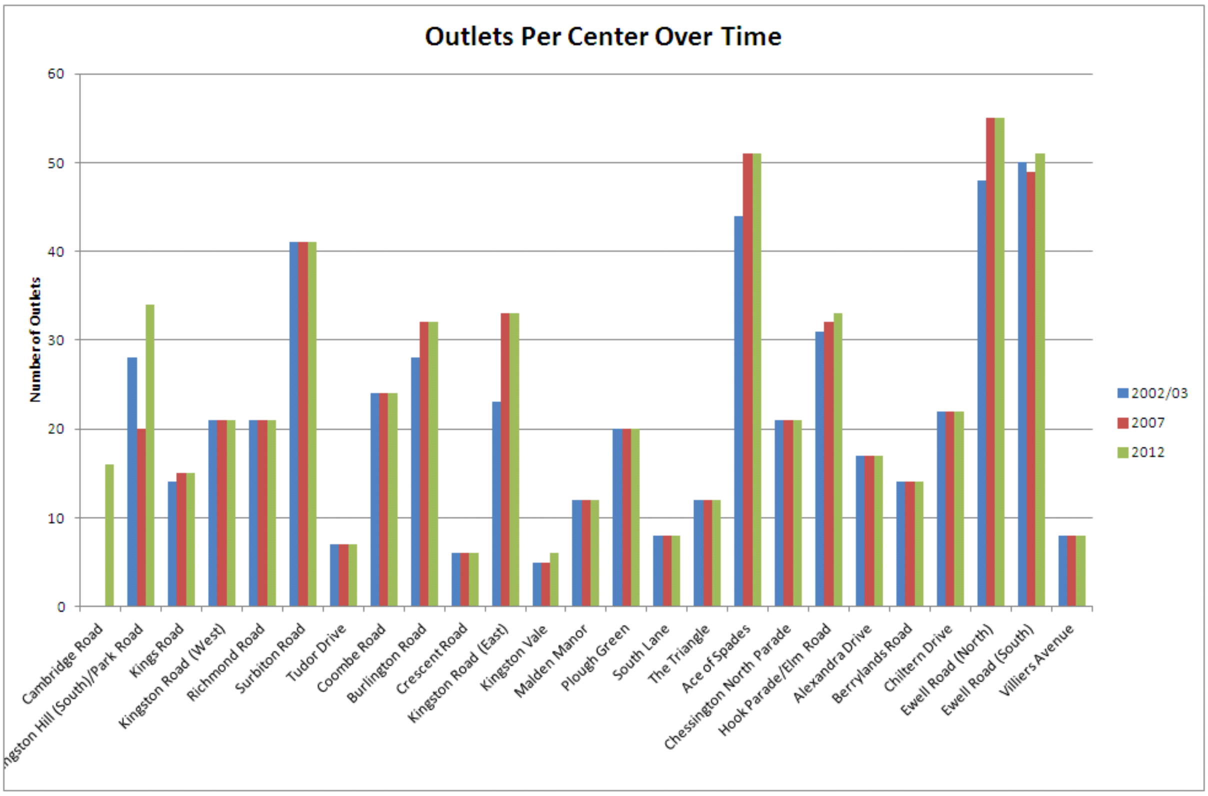

Figure 7: Outlets per Centre over time

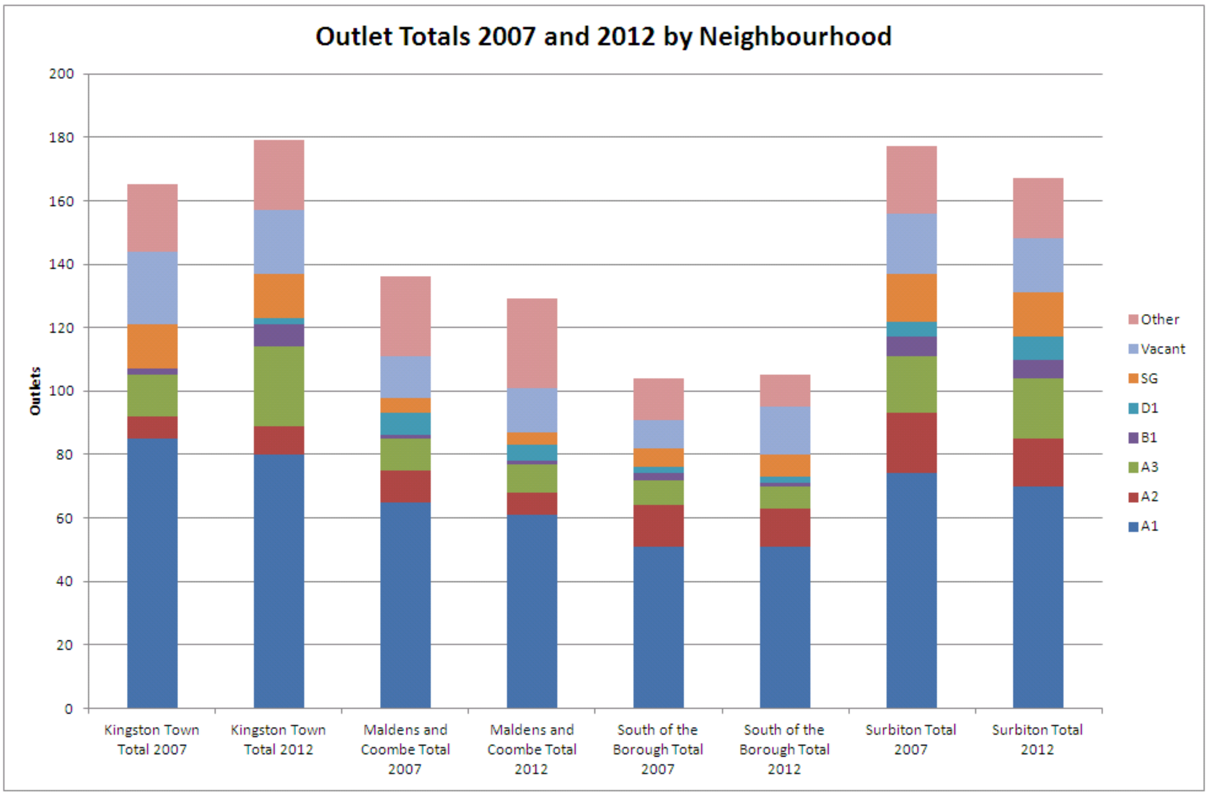

Figure 8: Outlet usage broken down by use class and neighborhood in 2007 and 2012†

After slowly increasing on a year to year basis the total number of outlets has not changed since the last set of data gathered. This is true even with the adjusted Centre boundaries and Centre reclassifications between 2007 and 2012. In accordance with the larger number of Centres contained within Kingston Town and Surbiton there are also more outlets. The inverse of this is also true; the South of the Borough has the least Centres and also the least number of shops.

Table 4: Outlet Numbers by year†

Neighborhood	1989	1996	2003	2007	2012
Kingston Town	147	161	172	165	180
Maldens & Coombe	124	124	122	136	129
Surbiton	161	163	165	177	167
South of the Borough	100	100	96	104	105
BOROUGH TOTAL	**532**	**548**	**555**	**582**	**581**

3.2.2 Vacancy

Vacancy rates at the entire Kingston level (Figure 9) only show the vacancy rates have increased about 7 percentage points. The South of the Borough had increased vacancies while the other three neighborhood's vacancy rates decreased. The most useful way to analyze the vacancy data is at the Centre level (see example Figure 10). Large fluctuations in Centres often indicate that the Centre in question is very small where one vacancy could account for up to 20 percentage points of change. Often high vacancy rates can suggest a Centre is doing extremely poorly as illustrated by Chiltern Drive (Figure 10) and Ace of Spades (Figure 11). Each Centre needs to be evaluated on a case by case basis in terms of acceptable vacancy levels as the percentages are so tied to the Centre size.

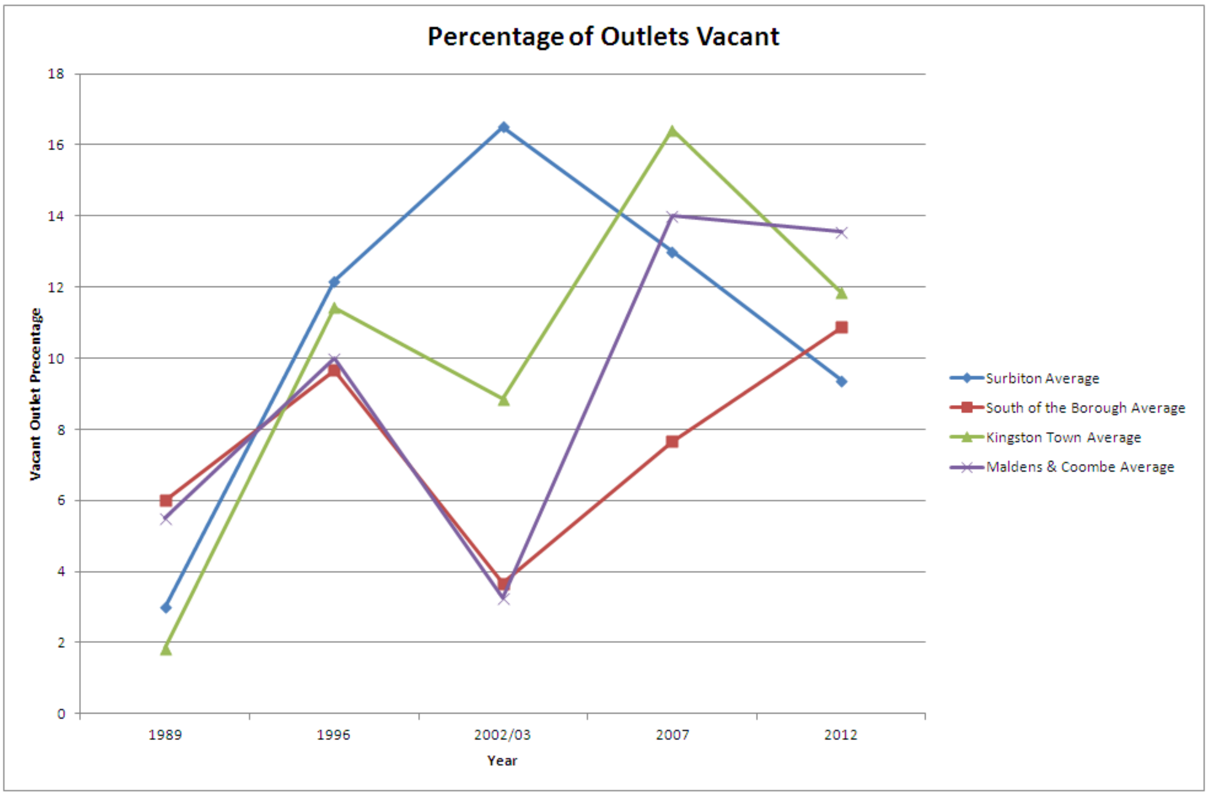

Figure 9: Percentage of Outlets Vacant by Neighborhood

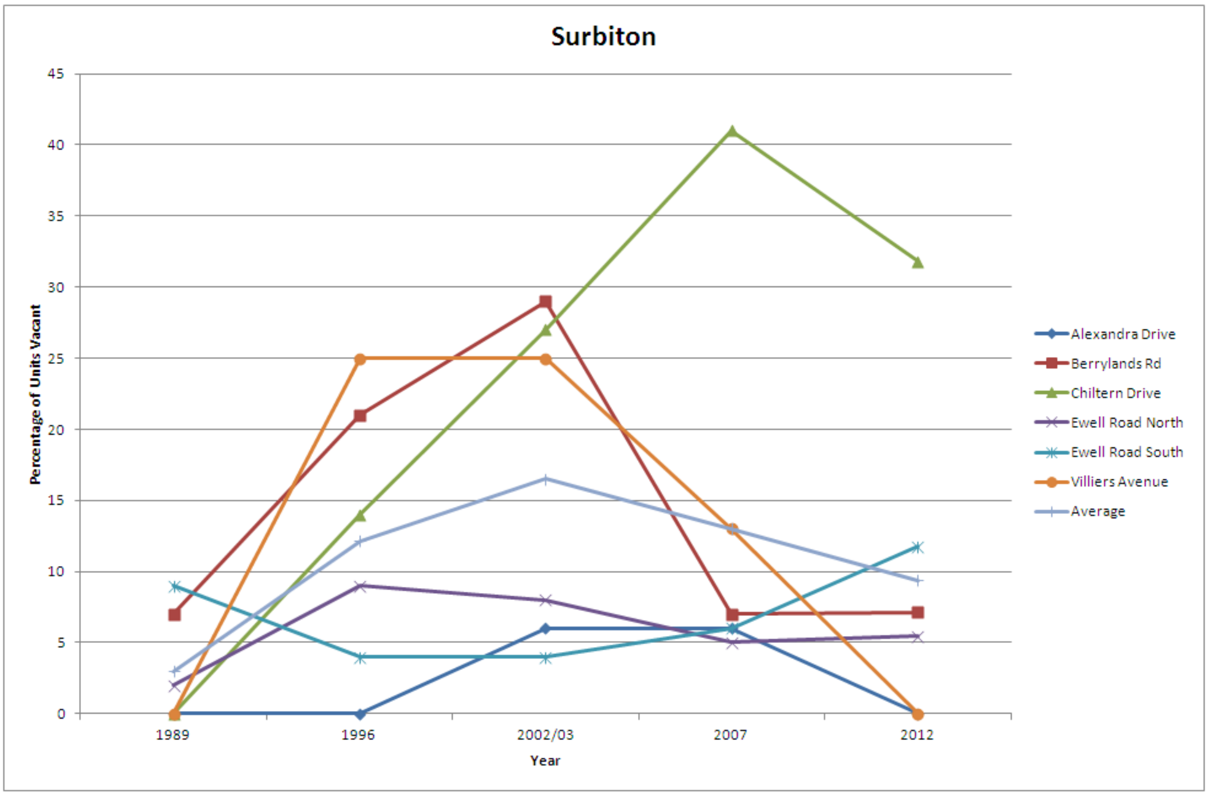

Figure 10: Percentage of Outlets Vacant in Surbiton Neighborhood

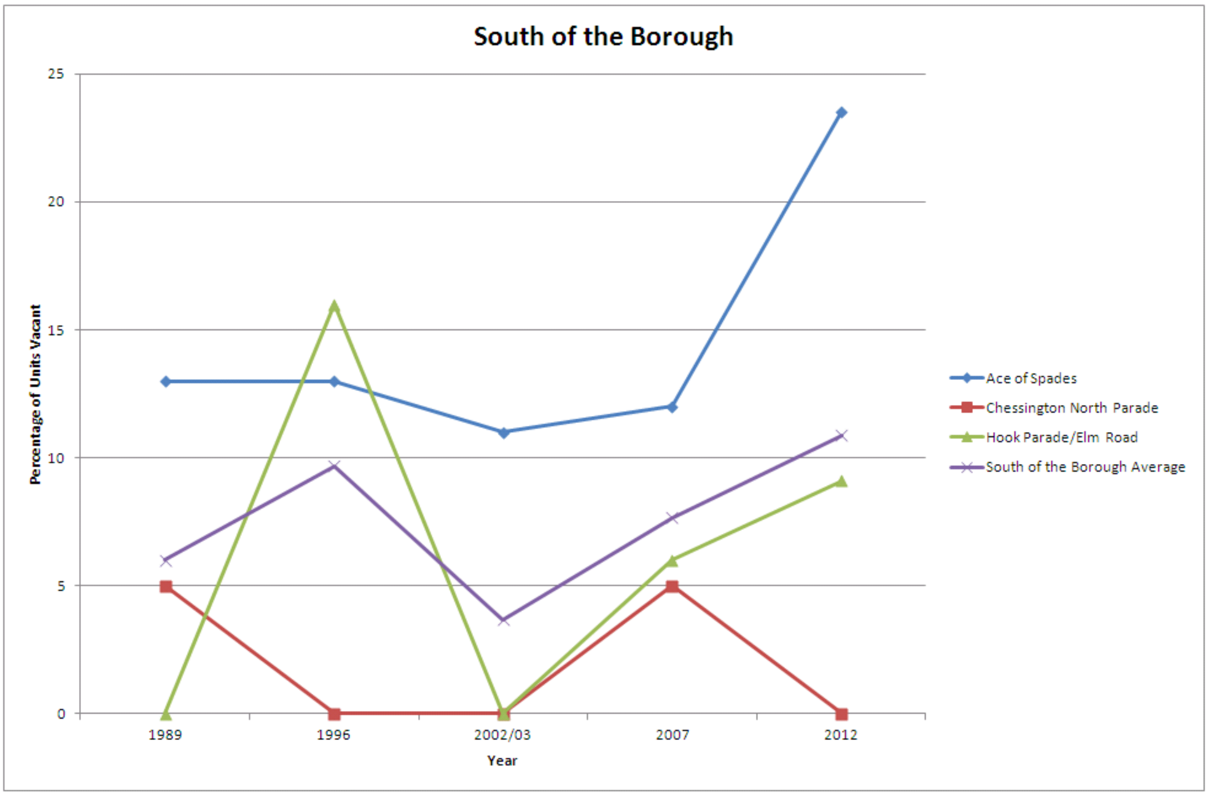

Figure 11: Percentage of Outlets Vacant in the South of the Borough Neighborhood

3.2.3 Use Classes

Since 1989 there have been a decreasing number of A1 outlets in all of the Kingston neighborhoods. Since the 2009 Local Centre Study both Maldens and Coombe and the South of the Borough have not changed in A1 outlet numbers whereas Surbiton lost one A1 outlet and Kingston Town gained one. This suggests that overall the change in A1 outlets has stagnated as compared to the past decline. The overall percentage of A1 follows this trend of stagnation even with the rebounding, removal, and addition of Centres since the 2009 study. The largest shifts in usage were A2/A3 (-5%) and 'other'(+7%) between 2007 and 2012 (Table 5) leaving just less than one in five units being A2/A3 and just over one in four units being 'other'.

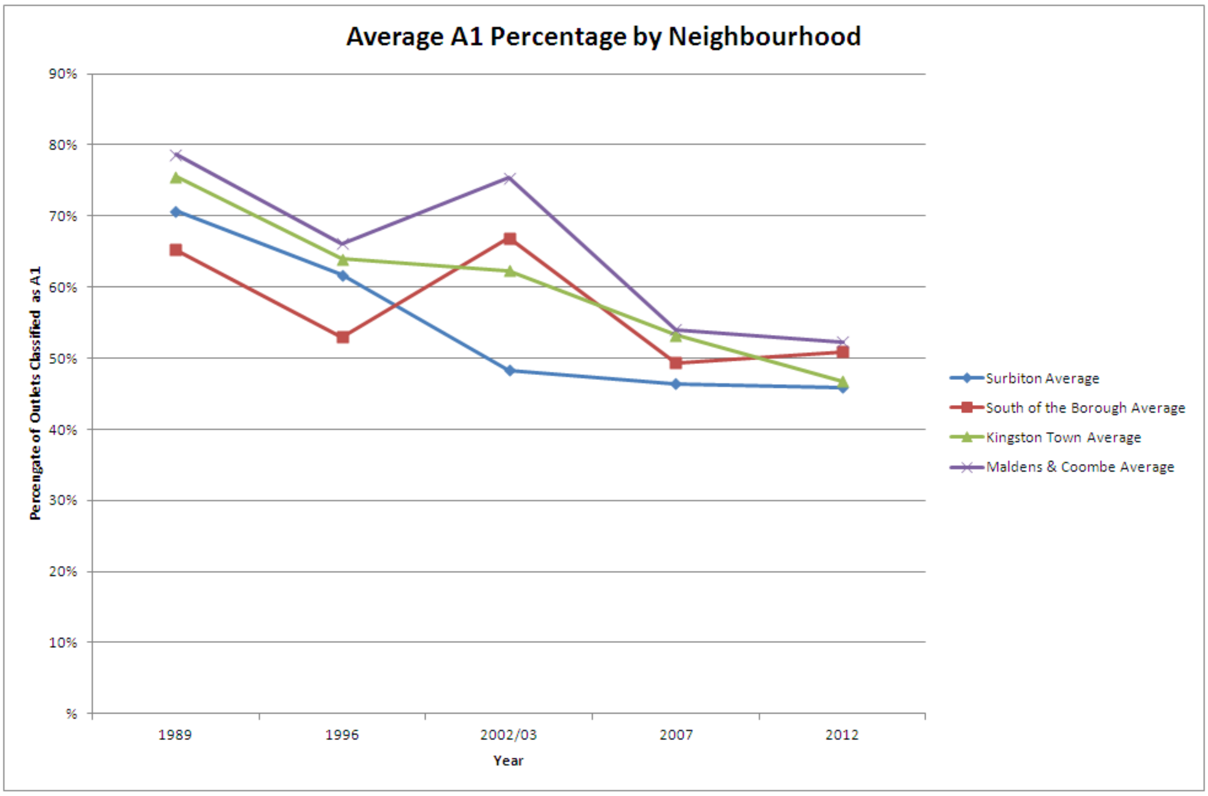

Figure 12: Average Percentage of A1 Outlets by Neighborhood

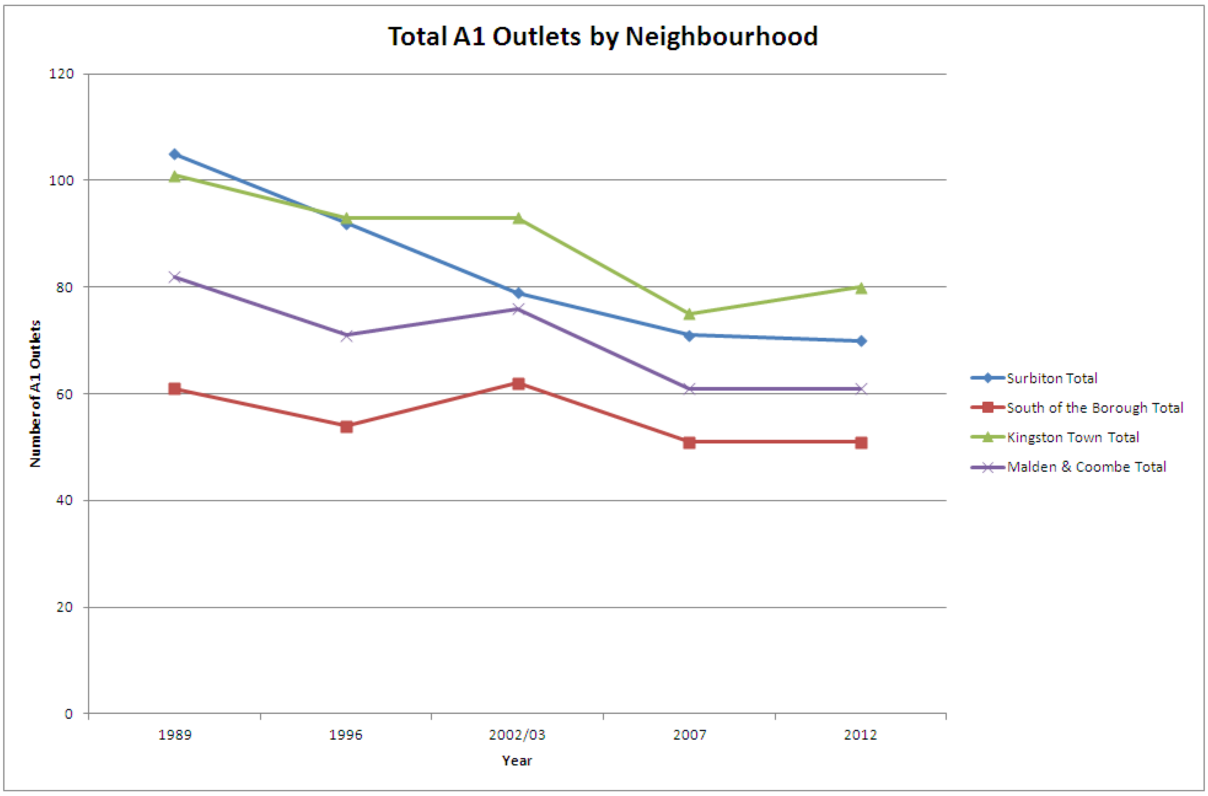

Figure 13: Total A1 Outlets by Neighborhood

Figure 14 shows a more concise makeup of the usages of the outlets on a per neighborhood basis. A decent portion of shops in many of the neighborhoods are made up of ‘other’ usage which include C usages which are buildings used as housing and a handful of other A, B, and D usages (See Appendix A – Use Classes). As evident in other figures A1 makes up the bulk of the outlets. Following A1 the largest use depends on the Centre with Kingston Town having a large number of A3 units, Maldens and Coombe’s having ‘other’, South of the Borough having vacancies, and Surbiton with both ‘other’ and A3 having the next largest percentage of outlets. Exact figures for the usages can be found in Appendix G – Use Class Count by Centre.

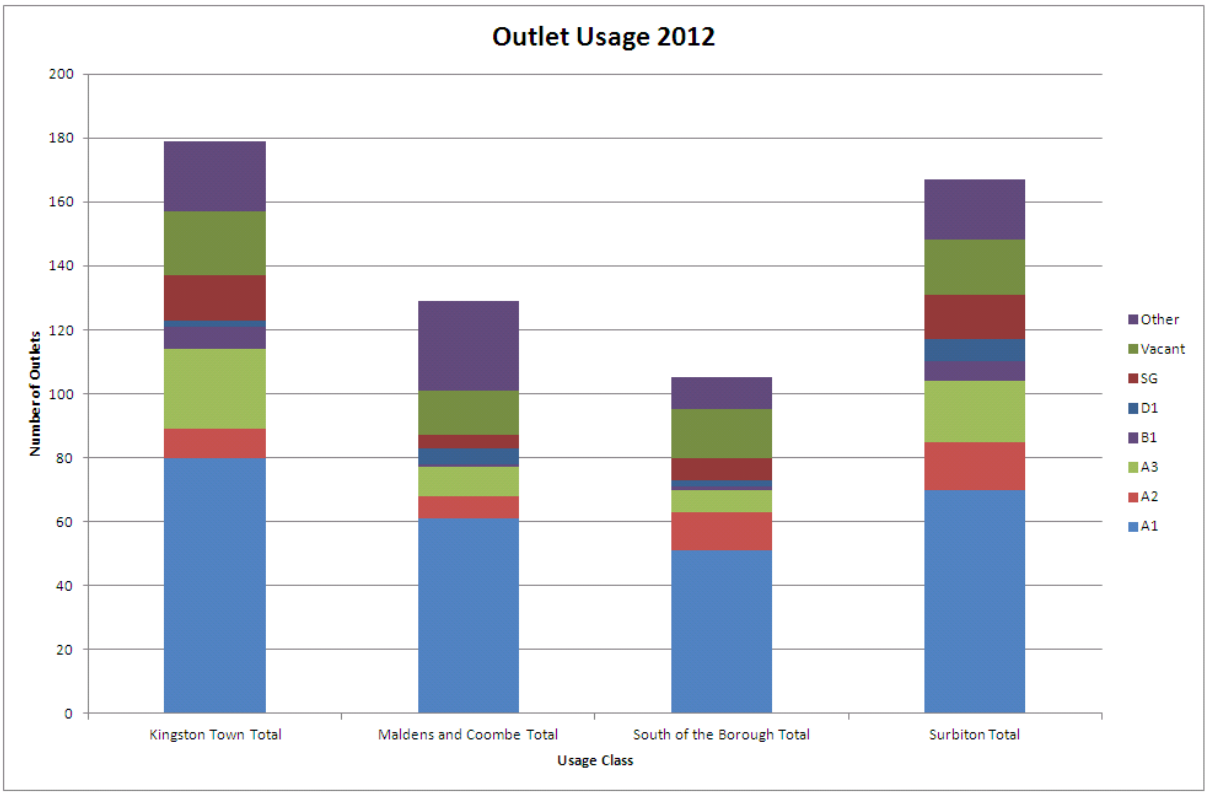

Figure 14: Outlet Usage in 2012

Table 5: Use Changes†

	1996									
	A1		A2/ A3		V		Other		Total Number	
Neighborhood	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Kingston Town	103	59	34	19	20	11	18	10	175	22
Maldens and Coombe	77	62	31	25	15	12	1	1	124	22
South of the Borough	54	54	19	19	11	11	16	16	100	18
Surbiton	98	60	33	20	16	10	16	10	163	29
Borough Totals	**332**	**59**	**117**	**21**	**62**	**11**	**51**	**9**	**562**	

	2002/03									
	A1		A2/ A3		V		Other		Total Number	
Neighborhood	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Kingston Town	102	59	39	23	15	9	16	9	172	2
Maldens and Coombe	80	66	26	21	6	5	10	8	122	22
South of the Borough	62	65	19	20	5	5	10	10	96	17
Surbiton	83	50	37	22	19	12	26	16	165	30
Borough Totals	**327**	**59**	**121**	**22**	**45**	**8**	**62**	**11**	**555**	

	2007									
	A1		A2/A3		V		Other		Total Number	
Neighborhood	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Kingston Town	85	52	35	21	23	14	22	13	165	28
Maldens and Coombe	65	48	29	21	13	10	29	21	136	23
South of the Borough	51	49	24	23	9	9	20	19	104	18
Surbiton	74	42	45	25	19	11	39	22	177	30
Borough Totals	**275**	**47**	**133**	**23**	**64**	**11**	**110**	**19**	**582**	

	2012									
	A1		A2/A3		V		Other		Total Number	
Neighborhood	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**
Kingston Town	80	45	34	19	20	11	45	25	179	30
Maldens and Coombe	61	47	16	12	14	11	38	29	129	22
South of the Borough	51	49	19	18	15	14	20	19	105	18
Surbiton	70	49	34	20	17	10	46	28	167	29
Borough Totals	**262**	**45**	**103**	**18**	**66**	**11**	**149**	**26**	**580**	

3.2.4 Rate of Change

When the totals for the neighborhood and boroughs are viewed, it is apparent that there has been little overall change since 2007. It is important to note not only the stability in the borough total, but also the individual neighborhoods. This excludes the possibility that on average the borough is doing well but on a per neighborhood basis some are performing exemplary whereas some are in rapid decline. On a per Centre basis none of the Centres have lost or gained a significant number of A1 outlets further excluding either exceptional or rapidly declining Centres which could be masked by neighborhood averages (See Appendix G – Use Class Count by Centre). The largest changes were in Kingston Hill South/Park Road which can be attributed to the re-bounding of the Centre adding 6 A1 outlets and Surbiton Road which had five A1 outlets reclassified as A3. Nine Centres saw small increases in total A1 outlet numbers while 10 saw small negative changes and nine saw no change causing overall changes to be minor. In terms of A1 convenience neighborhoods saw a slight increase as depicted in Figure 15. This change could be attributed to a more inclusive interpretation by the team or could be due to the possibility of many comparison good retailers moving into district and metropolitan Centres as many comparison goods such as electronics are mainly sold through large retailers. Data from individual Centres regarding comparison goods can be seen in Appendix G – Use Class Count by Centre.

Table 6: Rate of Change in Retail (A1) Provision[6]

Neighborhood	No of A1 in '89	No of A1 in '96	No of A1 in '02/'03	No of A1 in '07	No of A1 in '12	Change '89-'96	Change '02/3-'96	Change '07-'02/3	Change '12-'07
Surbiton	105	92	79	71	70	-13	-13	-8	-1
South of the Borough	61	54	62	51	51	-7	8	-11	0
Kingston Town	101	93	93	75	80	-8	0	-18	5
Maldens & Coombe	82	71	76	61	61	-11	5	-15	0
Borough Total	349	310	310	258	262	-39	0	-52	4

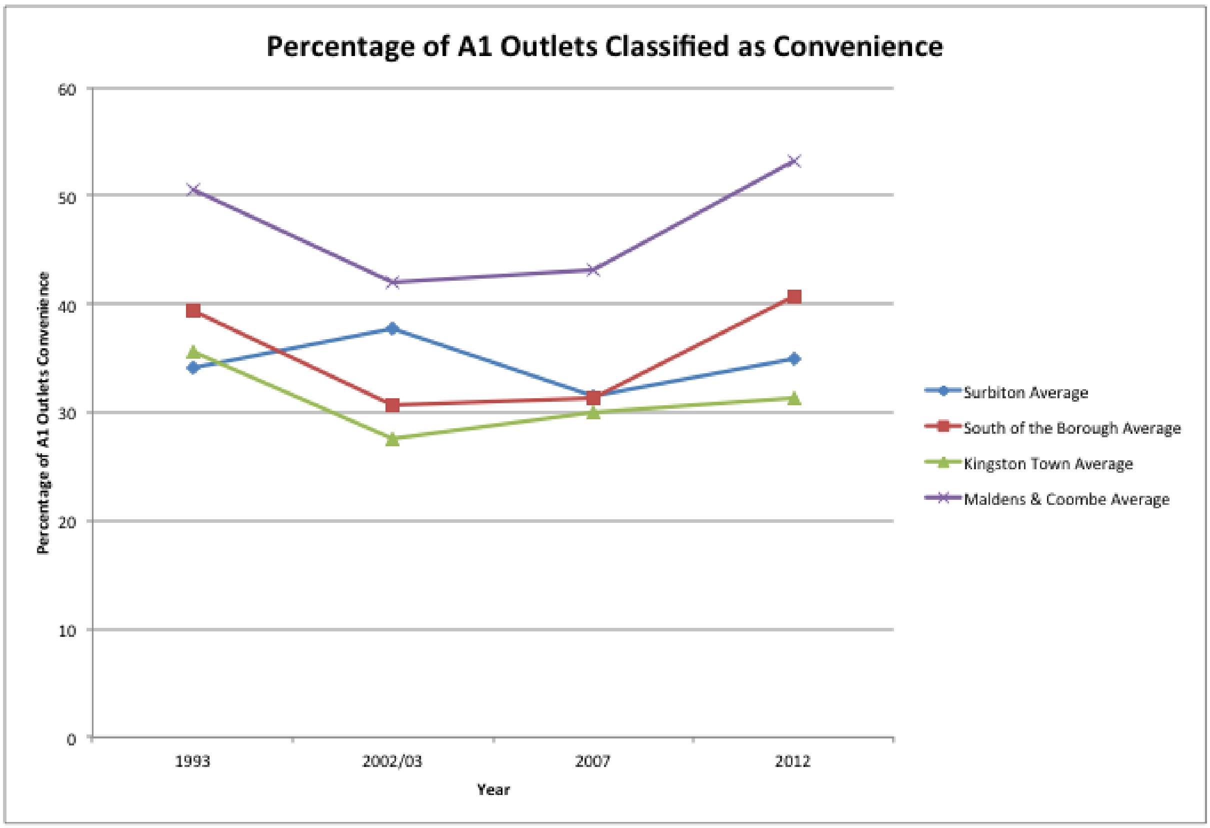

Figure 15: Percentage of A1 Outlets Classified as Convenience

[6] This table contains different values for 1989-2007 as compared to the 2009 Local Centre Study because the outlets in Centres removed are not counted.

3.2.5 Main Anchor Stores

Grocers with floor spaces above 150m^2 usually act as anchor tenants. As the South of the Borough lacks district and metropolitan Centres, these anchor tenants role are emphasized. They can be the only grocery options for a much larger distance than in other neighborhoods in the borough. In fact, all of the Centres in South of the Borough have grocers with at least 150m^2. It appears that in other neighborhoods with metropolitan and district Centres, anchor food stores are not as important.

Table 7: Main Anchor Food stores

Centre	Neighborhood	Floor space (m^2 gross)	Store Name
Ace of Spades	South of the Borough	178.06	SK Superstore
Ace of Spades	South of the Borough	280.68	Londis
Chessington North	South of the Borough	534.38	Sainsbury's
Ewell Road (North)	Surbiton	337.01	Londis
Hook Parade	South of the Borough	686.9	Budgens
Hook Parade	South of the Borough	406.74	Tesco Express
Kings Road	Kingston Town	163.17	Co-op Local
Malden Manor	Maldens & Coombe	255.6	Londis
Plough Green	Maldens & Coombe	496.7	The Co-operative Food
The Triangle	Maldens & Coombe	151.7	Tesco Express

3.2.6 Floor Space

Total floor space per Centre ranges from 7,690m^2 to 12,560m^2. Compared to values obtained in 2007 (Appendix H – 2007 Floorspace) Kingston Town was the only Centre with additional floor space while the other three Centres lost total floor space. Possible causes of this may be outlets transitioning to uses not counted in gross floor space, or more likely, as a result of the removal of Centre status from four Centres as a result of recommendations given in 2009. It is important to note the number of Centres is not indicative of the total floor space of a neighborhood. In the case of Maldens and Coombe compared to the South of the Borough the former has eight Centres compared with three in the latter, yet the South of the Borough has more floor space, 10,546m^2 compared to 7,690m^2. On an individual Centre level both Ewell Road Centres remain the largest Centres as compared with South Lane and Kingston Vale having the least overall floor space.

Table 8: Floor space Gross (m^2) - 2012[7]

Neighborhood		Total	A1	A1 Conv	A1 Comp	A2	A3	B1	D1	SG	Vacant
Kingston Town		11,778	7,389	2,406	4,983	404	1,378	255	107	1,287	959
			63%	20%	42%	3%	12%	2%	1%	11%	8%
Maldens and Coombe		7,690	4,868	2,791	2,077	376	726	66	297	265	1,092
			63%	36%	27%	5%	9%	1%	4%	3%	14%
South of the Borough		10,546	6,322	3,111	3,211	971	840	65	181	456	1,712
			60%	29%	30%	9%	8%	1%	2%	4%	16%
Surbiton		12,560	5,437	1,414	4,023	1,053	1,546	563	508	1,557	1,897
			43%	11%	32%	8%	12%	4%	4%	12%	15%
Borough Total		42,574	24,016	9,723	14,293	2,804	4,490	948	1,092	3,565	5,659
			56%	23%	34%	7%	11%	2%	3%	8%	13%

Table 9: Centres with most Floor space in a Specific Use Class - 2012

Use Class	Centre Name	Floor space (m2)
A1	Hook Parade/Elm Road	2,860.22m
A1 Convenience	Hook Parade/Elm Road	1,621.21m
A1 Comparison	Kingston Hill (South)/Park Road	1,747.46m
A2	Chessington North Parade	457.44m
A3	Ewell Road (North)	1,044.18m
B1	Ewell Road (North)	232.00m
D1	Ewell Road (South)	287.32m
SG	Surbiton Road	1,029.67m
Vacant	Ace of Spades	1,374.94m

When compared to the Centres having the most floor space within a specific use class in the 2009 report it is apparent major shifts have occurred. Ace of Spades has more than two times the vacant floor space in 2012 than Chiltern Drive had in 2009.

[7] Additional use classes such as C1, A4, and A5 are not accounted for in total floorspace as the 2009 Local Centre Study did not account for these as a result of PPS6 Paragraph 1.8 main town centre uses.

3.2.7 Quality of the Public Realm

After comparing quality of the public realm scores (Table 10) to various Centres it became clear that there is little to no correlation between the two. One of the highest scoring Centres, Chiltern Drive, was simultaneously one of the worst performing Centres. There are Centres with high quality of the public realm scores that are doing well some that are doing poorly. Likewise, the same was true of Centres with low public realm scores. Interestingly, a correlation arose between the presence of busy roads and low quality of the public realm scores.

Table 10: Quality of the Public Realm

	Ace of Spades	Alexandra Drive	Berrylands Road	Burlington Road	Cambridge Road	Chessington North Parade	Chiltern Drive	Coombe Road	Crecent Road	Ewell Road (N)	Ewell Road (S)	Hook Parade/Elm Road	Kings Road	Kingston Hill	Park Road	Kingston Road (E)	Kingston Road (W)	Kingston Vale	Malden Manor	Plough Green	Richmond Road	South Lane	Surbiton Road	The Triangle	Tudor Drive	Villiers Avenue
Accessibility	1.8	3.5	2	3	3.5	4.5	4	3	4.5	3	3.8	2.5	3	2	3	3	2.5	3.5	3	4	2	3	1.8	4	3	3.5
Litter/Cleanliness	3	4	3	3	3.5	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	4	3	2.5	3.5	3	5	3	4	3	3	4	3.5
Planting/Soft Landscaping	3	5	3	3	3	2.5	3.5	3.5	4	3	3	3.8	3.1	4.5	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	5	2.5	4.5	4	3.3
Street Clutter	1.3	3	2	2	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	2.8	3	3	2	2	4	2	4	2.5	3	2	3	2	4
Quality of Street Furniture	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.5	3.3	3	3	3	2.8	3	2.5	3.5	3	3	3.8	3	3	3	3.5	3	3	3	3
Security	3	3	3	3	3	4	3.5	3	3	3	3	4.5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.5	3	3	3.5	3	3	3	3
Quality of Pavement	2.5	2.5	4	2	3	4.5	5	2	3	2.5	2	3	2	3	4	3	2.5	4	3	5	2.5	3	2.5	4	4	4

3.2.8 Qualitative Surveys

In the field, the team conducted forty four surveys of shoppers within the borough of Kingston. It is important to note that there was a sampling bias due to the methods. Originally shoppers would be surveyed at each Centre, but due to a poor sample size an alternate approach of surveying customers of the seven local libraries of Kingston was used. The libraries included: Hook and Chessington, Tolworth, New Malden, Old Malden, Kingston, Surbiton, and Tudor Drive.

Ten out of the forty-four people listed Kingston Town as their neighbourhood, and stated Richmond Road, Surbiton Road, and Kings Road were their primary areas of local shopping. Four of the people shopped at Richmond Road, four at Surbiton Road, and two and Kings Road. For the shoppers at Richmond Road it is clear to see that it is visited primarily by people in the surrounding mile and on a regular basis. The majority of the shoppers have used this Centre for the last one to five years and will most likely to continue. The shopping was primarily top-up and weekly.

Two shoppers were from Maldens and Coombe and listed Kingston Road. East and Malden Manor as their primary Centres respectively. Both have been shopping at the Centres for more than five years and visit the Centre for convenience purposes due to the proximity and visit roughly once a week. Three shoppers were from South of the Borough and all listed Hook Parade/Elm Road as their primary local Centre. Two of the individuals have been to this Centre for more than five years and one as of this year. All visit the Centre on a weekly basis and are top up shoppers within walking distance of the Centre. One person out of all the surveys was from Surbiton and went to Villiers Avenue. The individual only purchases specific items thus not going to the Centre very frequently.

The remaining twenty five surveys did provide any substantial data because the individuals did not know in which neighborhood they resided nor were willing with divulging that information. This proves to be a deterrent, however the majority noted that they shop at the Kingston Town Centre for all their shopping needs.

Table 11: Health check Conclusions

Kingston Town	
Coombe Road	The Coombe Road centre lies along an averagely busy road. Since 2007, the number of vacant storefronts has not changed from 5. The road is navigable by a few pedestrian crossings. Although it lacks a larger A1 convenience shop (e.g. Londis, Tesco Express, etc.), the centre was healthy and had visitors passing through during the visit. Portions of the centre have parking along the front; however a bus stop takes most of the prime parking real estate choking the centre of parking. That said, alternative transportation methods are available with the aforementioned bus stop providing public transit access and cycle racks available to cyclists. The sidewalks at places were laid out such that the pedestrian would need to weave back and forth to navigate passing through the centre. Shop keepers suggested that the area was quite stable and doing well with a new restaurants having opened in the centre. **2009 Outlook:** The catchment overlap may reduce the viability of a centre of this size in the medium to long term, and could justify consolidation and redevelopment opportunities. However, the provision of a suitably sized convenience store in the centre would help enhance the centre's viability. **2012 Outlook:** The centre remains healthy and has approximately 50% convenience outlets and has since added another core shop (butcher). Analyzed trends do not suggest the centre is losing viability. However the 2009 recommendation of the provision of a suitably sized convince store still holds.

Kings Road	The Kings Road centre is located on a quiet road and is divided into three small frontages having between four and five shops per section of frontage. Parking is only available on the side of the streets where the frontages are located. The parking is further reduced as the centre shares roughly half of the units facing Kings Road with residential buildings. A grocer is present; however, all but two of the other outlets present at this centre sell non-essential goods which are not usable on a daily basis for nearby residents leaving the grocer as the only anchoring outlet. The low flux of traffic though the area and reduced parking as well as the lack of other means of transportation severely limit the number of visitors to the centre. **2009 Outlook:** Will continue to trade satisfactorily provided the Coop store remains. **2012 Outlook:** No significant change from the 2009 outlook.
Kingston Hill South/ Park Rd	This centre is effectively two nearby Centres, the one on Park Road and the other near the roundabout. They should remain classified as one centre but it is important to note the differences in quality of the public realm. Near the roundabout there was more trash, worse sidewalk but substantially more trees and other foliage. Farther down on Park Road there was a bit of foliage but the pavement was in much better condition. Despite the high usage of the roundabout going from one section of the centre to another is not problematic. Businesses complain that the parking costs too much money and that since the recession they have seen a reduction in customers. Business owners also complained at the cost of rent in the area. This centre's performance is average when considering the recession. Reducing the cost of parking might encourage additional trading. **2009 Outlook:** Expand this centre to include the areas immediately east and west of the Kingston Hill roundabout. **2012 Outlook:** Since the 2009 study the recommendation advising the re-bounding the Centre has been acted upon. Due to the high traffic through the area there is a large volume of passing trade, however most of this is untapped due to the lack of parking. Business owners also worried about high rent being a result of wealthy tenants. While rent control is outside of council control it is interesting that smaller business owners feel as though big name businesses are effectively the cause of higher rents in parts of the Centre.

Kingston Road West	Since the last study, not much has changed in this very linear centre. The centre still has many specialty stores that have a larger than average catchment area and there is still no anchor tenant. The best and worst part of this centre is the busy road that both gives the area lots of exposure and makes it noisy and somewhat unpleasant. The distinct lack of parking is a problem as shop owners attempt to attract people that are outside of walking distance. It is not in drastic need of more parking however, it may help the centre continue to thrive. **2009 Outlook:** This centre is likely to continue to trade reasonably well as long as parking arrangements remain, as many of the stores are specialist attracting trade from beyond the local catchment area. **2012 Outlook:** Little has changed since the last recommendation. This Centre is in need of additional parking and an anchor tenant. Furthermore, the street clutter present would benefit from being reorganized to avoid pedestrian congestion.
Richmond Road	This is a linear centre on a busy road. Whilst it has some day-to-day convenience provision, its focus is much more on A3 and A5 outlets. It also has more specialist stores such as a picture framing store than is the case in most other local Centres. The specialist stores and the food and drink outlets no doubt trade there because of opportunity to attract passing trade, as well as the local walk-in custom. The centre does not have dedicated parking. **2009 Outlook:** Continue to trade successfully. **2012 Outlook:** This centre shows signs of failure with many vacancies and shop closures. Lack of main street parking may also be contributing to the lack of customers. Additionally the Council should work to promote a diversity of uses within the Centre.

Surbiton Road	Surbiton Road centre is located on a busy portion of Surbiton Road. Due to the busyness of the road there is a high volume of passing trade, however, this causes the centre to be difficult to navigate due to the limited marked road crossings. The sidewalk is blocked and narrowed in places by parked cars, signs the businesses have placed, and extended patios built by restaurants. Interviews with outlet owners and shoppers at Surbiton Road suggested dissatisfaction with the available shops. Both outlet owners and shoppers felt that there was a lack of core convenience shops such as a grocer, butcher, and baker. They also commented on the overwhelming presence of restaurants/cafes in the area expressing they felt there was an over abundance. Additionally parking was an issue shop owners rose expressing a desire for reduced maximum parking times (20 minutes was suggested) for shoppers who were visiting to quickly grab goods. **2009 Outlook:** This centre has improved in recent times and is likely to sustain this trend. Although, the high proportion of take away outlets and the need for more on-street parking will reduce the opportunity for the centre to improve its range and quality in the same way other Centres have e.g. Ewell Road North and Ewell Road South. **2012 Outlook:** While the centre seems to be trading well A3 class outlets make up a large portion of the outlets reducing the usefulness of this centre in providing necessary shopping to the surrounding community. Furthermore due to the long term parking (2 hours) visitors looking to quickly pick up items are unable to do so for lack of parking. Pedestrian movement through the centre is also difficult due to structures, signs, and other blockages on the pathway as well as the lack of pedestrian crossings between the sides of the centre. This centre will continue to trade well but appears to be serving the surrounding communities less and less as convenience units are replaced with A3 and other non-core shops.

Tudor Drive	A purpose built centre supporting 7 outlets which provides a range of convenience shopping and service facilities. Although there are no A3 or other leisure facilities. The centre is located on a relatively quiet road, and is served by a dedicated access road with ample off-street parking. It is also on a bus route with a bus stop at the centre of the parade. There has been a loss of 1 outlet to office use, but the centre trades successfully. The Centre lacks an anchor store, which could possibly bring in more business. In time, the Centre will most likely succeed due to public accessibility. **2009 Outlook:** Continue to trade successfully. **2012 Outlook:** No significant change from the 2009 outlook.
Maldens & Coombe	
Burlington Road	The Burlington Centre serves as a specialty convenience centre providing a variety of goods from different ethnic backgrounds. It is easily accessible to the public to get to and hosts a variety of products depending on one's preferences. The overall quality of the pavement is not up to par in comparison with other Centres, due to the numerous cracks and sloped pavement outside of outlets. There is an abundance of street clutter outside of the outlets causing the sidewalk to be narrow in some areas. The poor pavement and street clutter limits the pedestrian traffic of the centre and proves to be a deterrent. In addition to the sidewalks, there is limited parking to the centre as well and temporary parking such as deliveries, park directly on the walkways creating numerous obstructions. **2009 Outlook:** This centre will continue to trade reasonably well as it has a discrete catchment area. It benefits from passing trade and caters in large part for the established Korean community. **2012 Outlook:** This centre continues to trade well and provide specialty goods.

Crescent Road	Located just off of the A308 motorway on Crescent Road the Crescent Road centre has a good location for high visitor traffic. Not much has changed over the past three years; only one new outlet has opened. This small centre is inset from the main roadway with a sufficient amount of parking. Due to this layout the centre is perfect for stopping briefly and picking up essentials or dropping off dry cleaning. The team revisited this centre for additional photographs and found a new cycle rack installed suggesting there is continued improvement being pursued by the council in these small Centres. **2009 Outlook:** This centre will continue to trade satisfactorily, but could improve if signage was introduced on Kingston Hill to attract in more passing trade. **2012 Outlook:** The 2009 recommendation has not been addressed and is still valid. Still, centre appears to trade well.
Kingston Road East	Kingston Road East is located on one side of a busy road and caters to a more ethnic population with many specialty grocers and Asian style restaurants. The nearby bus stop and busy road make this centre easily available to a large number of people. The sidewalks were at times quite narrow due to storefront seating which was in very good condition providing customers a place to eat or visit without hesitation. There is limited parking availability on side streets because of residents parking, although it is not resident only parking. Parking on the curbside makes it difficult for pedestrians to walk, which can prove to be a deterrent for the young and elderly. **2009 Outlook:** The centre will continue to struggle, mainly because the lack of parking. Despite its location on a busy road it is unable to take advantage of its position. **2012 Outlook:** Additional parking would increase the safety of the patrons, and increase the number of shoppers to the centre. It is currently walking or bus transportation that brings customers.

Kingston Vale	Since the last centre study only one of the outlets has changed from a hairdresser to a restaurant. It is offset from the road insulating visitors from traffic. During the teams visit there was a continuous flux of new visitors indicating the good health of this centre. The adjacent site of the petrol filling station has remained undeveloped. As stated in the 2009 study the site provides opportunity for the centre to expand. The closest bus station was a few hundred meters from the centre and the centre lacked cycle racks leaving automobile transport the ideal method of getting to the centre. The only residential areas are to the southwest of the centre with undeveloped space surrounding it on its other sides. Despite the reduced number of households in its catchment area the centre is vital. **2009 Outlook:** Very successful centre that will continue to trade well. The centre's boundary should be expanded to include the site of the former petrol filling station site to the west of the centre. The site provides the opportunity to expand retail/service offer. **2012 Outlook:** Kingston Vale has only five shops making it the smallest centre. Since the 2009 study the centre continues to trade well with a strong core set of outlets. The service station still has yet to be developed for centre expansion.
Malden Manor	This centre is ideally suited for its location. Since the centre is right next to a school it brings school children, their parents' and their teachers into the centre's catchment area. There is a newsagent for the children to buy snacks on their way home and there are similarly other shops such as the grocer and dry cleaner, which can be made useful by adult patrons. The roundabout nearby is nicely landscaped, adding to the atmosphere of the centre despite not being within its bounds. **2009 Outlook:** The centre will continue to trade reasonably well. **2012 Outlook:** Reduce the amount of clutter on the sidewalk from the shop owners and street furniture. There are numerous students on bicycles and signs that identify the area as a school zone can protect the safety on the individuals due to the driving speed of locals within the area.

Plough Green	The Co-Operative Food is the anchor of this centre despite not providing parking for its patrons. There is a wide variety in the other shops, ranging from a betting office to a bakery. The centre is in a nice area, partially across the street from the green space where it gets its name. The wide pavement makes travelling through the centre easy despite the street clutter at the curb. The centre is located on a fairly well travelled road but is able to maintain a neighborhood feel. **2009 Outlook:** The continued trading of the Coop store is the critical factor in the centre's continued trading success. **2012 Outlook:** Add or move the pedestrian crossing closer to the bus stop and the pub's car park entrance. This centre does not receive much advertisement; therefore signs pointing out some of the services can be implemented to improve customer attendance and revenue.
South Lane	This centre seems like it would only service people in the surrounding neighborhoods as it is small and not on a busy road. Though lacking a larger A1 convenience shop (e.g. Londis, Tesco Express, etc.), South Lane has other services useful to locals such as a hairdresser and an off-license. The atmosphere and aesthetics of this centre fit well with the adjacent neighborhoods. If a large larger A1 convenience shop took up some of the vacant units, the overall health of the Centre would increase due to the larger draw of customers. **2009 Outlook:** The centre has a good range of provision, ample off-road dedicated parking, no catchment area overlap and although small in scale, and is likely to continue to trade very well. **2012 Outlook:** Outlook is similar to that in 2009, as this Centre is great for people that live a few minutes walk or drive away. Additionally this Centre would benefit from a larger A1 convenience shop (e.g. Londis, Tesco Express, etc.).

The Triangle	Of the centre's 13 shops 4 are vacant, with the remaining shops getting by. It is aesthetically pleasing with several large trees, very little street clutter and an above average public realm; however, this is not enough to maintain the centre. An A3 outlet would help draw people to the centre which could also improve business for the other shops. It is one of the few Centres with enough parking to sustain people driving to a restaurant. **2009 Outlook:** Trading in the centre has been affected by the loss of the convenience provision, and will only improve when the vacant outlets are redeveloped. **2012 Outlook:** Since the previous audit a Tesco Express has opened. Tesco will act as an anchor tenant and strongly enhances the viability and vitality of the Centre.
South of the Borough	
Ace of Spades	Ace of Spades is a large centre with 51 outlets situated around the intersection of Hook Road and the A3. This leads to a feeling of disconnect in the centre as the sections divided by the A3 seem almost independent of each other. Many shops are new from 2009, with many repeated services (i.e. 5 hairdressers and barbers). The repetition of stores can signify multiple things, such as the competition among business owners or the fact that it's essential to the community. A shop owner of 36 years mentioned the negative changes mentioned above in the centre between taking over her shop and how it is today. A Tesco Express is being fitted out, in place of a local convenience store, which should help bring more business to the centre. The grocery mart can give the centre more of a community feel, and may raise the overall morale of the centre. A major downside of the centre is the location. There is a very busy roundabout and a highway that intersects the centre. This adds danger to the mix in terms of accessibility for youth, elderly, and disabled. **2009 Outlook:** It will continue to provide for both the needs of the local catchment population and the specialist needs of a much wider area (predominantly car visitors). Possible opportunities to enhance the trading prospect of the centre would be by increasing the number of households through any redevelopment opportunities. **2012 Outlook:** This Centre does not fully provide for its local catchment area, although the introduction of a Tesco Express should change that for the better. It is showing signs of failure due to numerous vacancies and shop closures. Additional parking is badly needed, although only if the Centre can begin to draw more patrons. Shop variety is needed to achieve this. Signs on the A3 should be expanded upon for advertisement.

Chessington North Parade	Unlike most of its centre counterparts, the Chessington North Parade is specifically designed around the local population, neighborhood, and nearby train station. While this is helpful for the usability of the centre, it does lead to a slight loss of a community feel despite the infusion of residential dwellings. Adjacent to the train station, the centre lies with one way traffic to decrease congestion, and very wide sidewalks to enable pedestrian flow. Although the sidewalks are wide, there are trees planted in the middle of the walkway causing a deterrent and an obstacle. The centre in itself provides for top-up shopping, comparison shopping, and food from cafes and grocers. The centre location is ideal and was well designed to draw in commuters and local residents. **2009 Outlook:** This centre is set to continue its very successful performance. Opportunities to increase the catchment area population, perhaps in the locality of the railway station would enhance the trading potential of the centre's stores, and aid possible expansion. **2012 Outlook:** No significant change from the 2009 outlook with the addition of signs showing the way to/from the centre from the bus and train stations.

Hook Parade/ Elm Road	After multiple visits to Hook Parade it is evident that it is one of the busiest Centres. It has a major thruway in between the centre that is a deterrent because there is only one pedestrian crossing connecting each side of the centre. There are a decent amount of parking spaces for the size of the centre but it is still crowded due to the number of people within the vicinity. The amount of disabled parking spaces is small compared to the total number of spaces and not evenly distributed along the line of shops. Additionally, some businesses such as a pub, dentist, community centre with a cafe and library are immediately adjacent to the centre but not included in it. Therefore the boundary of the centre needs to be adjusted to include these features. The centre has a wide range of shops to attract patrons for both top-up and one time purchases. **2009 Outlook:** The 'hybrid' role of the centre would be significantly enhanced by a larger anchor convenience store. The recent loss of Woolworths may provide an opportunity, however. The only other location that may offer up redevelopment opportunity is the site occupied by the post office and the Working Men's Club. Any potential to increase the catchment population through appropriate redevelopment will help sustain the centre's vitality and viability. **2012 Outlook:** The additions of a new grocer and a Community Centre have improved the attractiveness of the centre. Adding more disabled parking spots and lengthen the time given to pedestrians at the pedestrian crossing to enable more flow of people would improve navigability of the Centre.

Surbiton	
Alexandra Drive	Alexandra Drive is located on a fork in the road causing the outlets to be laid out in an arched fission. The bordering roads are very quiet in comparison to most other Centres surveyed helping the centre feel welcoming and relaxed. Along the entire centre frontage there is dedicated parking totaling about 30 parking spaces. Additionally there is parking on the nearby streets. Overall parking is adequate for this centre. Bus stops are relatively close (~100-200m) allowing easy access to public transport. Cycle racks were also present for use. This centre has a higher than average quality of the public realm with its extremely wide sidewalks, slow street, and soft landscaping. The centre has all of the core outlets to serve the surrounding area as well as a variety of specialty shops to draw visitors. **2009 Outlook:** The centre will continue to trade successfully due to the broad range of facilities and the lack of overlapping catchment areas. There is little prospect for growth or expansion. **2012 Outlook:** There is no significant change since 2009. Alexandra Drive continues to trade well with a strong set of core shops for nearby residents. The dissimilar and uneven sidewalks are a slight hazard.
Berrylands Road	The Berrylands Road is a fairly small centre that serves its local community well, but has little draw for anyone outside of walking distance. It has the feel of a small local centre because it is off the main roads and caters to cyclists and walkers. For its size, however, there is an abundance of dining options, both restaurants and take-away, suggesting that the centre's busiest time may be after typical working hours. The car showroom at the edge of the centre has been vacant for at least five years; this detracts from the aesthetic draw of the centre as the corner it sits on shows neglect. **2009 Outlook:** This centre will continue to serve both the convenience and the night-time economy needs of the catchment population. The car showroom on the edge of the centre that has been vacated could provide opportunity for expansion of retail or evening economy uses. **2012 Outlook:** Adding parking and a larger A1 convenience shop (e.g. Londis, Tesco Express, etc.) may increase the draw of the centre. The vacant car showroom could be a unique feature if an A1 or A3 outlet opened there.

Chiltern Drive	This centre, along with Red Lion Road, is the most poorly performing of all the Borough's local Centres. It is a mid-sized local centre with 22 outlets in a purpose built parade which sweeps down the incline terminating at Berrylands Railway Station. It is on a quiet residential road that brings no opportunity for passing trade. Vacancy is running at 40%, which is due to the poor access and linkages, low catchment population (470 households), poor environment and the lack of a good anchor store. The centre has lost its critical mass of retail attractions. B1 office uses have replaced A1 retail uses which reduces the overall attraction of the centre. It also discourages other retailers to either stay or locate in the centre. The railway station is not delivering benefits, and the centre is in need of renewal. **2009 Outlook:** Continued decline unless a strategy is developed to expand the catchment population and/or consolidate the retail activity in a particular area, and allow change of use in other parts of the centre. Higher density residential redevelopment could be appropriate given the location adjacent to the station. The delivery of more frequent rail services, from two to four services per hour, would make higher density residential outlets more viable. As would a reduction in the odors that emanate from the sewage treatment works. Addressing this problem is something Thames Water has on their agenda to carry out in the near future. **2012 Outlook:** During the 2012 visit no odors were noticed while auditing the centre. Rail services are still only 2 per hour in either direction as of the time of the audit. Due to the location on a cul-de-sac the only passing traffic stems from visitors to the station. Further the centre is not visible from the roundabout that acts as an inlet essentially removing the chance for additional passing trade. The addition of a sign to the roundabout informing drivers of the centre may help draw trade. The centre itself has very little shopping available and only one convenience outlet. As such either Chiltern Drive needs significant Council intervention such as improving the diversity of units and preventing the loss of A1 to offices or to de-designate the Centre to a local parade as it is not currently functioning as a local Centre or serving its local catchment area.

Ewell Road North	This large centre is thriving despite the lack of parking. There is variety in the shops, bringing many different kinds of patrons to the centre. The mix of convenience goods with many different kinds of more specialized shops, such as a music shop and a reptile pet shop attracts both local and non-local business. The size and mix of shops with other types of businesses give the centre a cosmopolitan feel. In comparison to other Centres, there aren't any outstanding features that set it apart from its other counterparts. **2009 Outlook:** Continued success due to the diversity of the offer, the large resident catchment and the opportunity for passing trade. Redevelopment opportunities that increase the catchment population would be likely to enhance the centre and could encourage better convenience store provision. This centre is in greatest need of a modestly sized larger A1 convenience shop (e.g. Londis, Tesco Express, etc.). Possible sites for an A1 convenience shop could be the Surbiton Hospital Ewell Road frontage. **2012 Outlook:** The Surbiton Hospital under renovation to become a Primary School and Health Centre will provide additional opportunities for the Centre. Additional parking or lifting the street parking restriction would be beneficial. In order to maintain a cleaner environment in the centre there can be policies banning illegal rubbish disposal or organized programs to remediate the trash created such as sanitation sweeps.
Ewell Road South	Splitting the centre is a moderately busy roadway. Three pedestrian crossings along the main stretch of the centre are evenly distributed to help the pedestrian access both sides. There is parking in front of some of the outlets; however bus stops/lanes restrict parking in some parts of the centre. Two bus stops are located roughly in the middle of the centre for easy public transit access. One missing transportation element are cycle racks leaving cyclists to lock their cycles to lamp posts or the few trees along the sidewalk. The quality of the public realm is average for this centre with a higher accessibility due to the frequent pedestrian crossings and wide sidewalks and a lower pavement quality due to broken stones, uneven paving, and inconsistent pavement types. Despite the lack of a larger A1 convenience shop (e.g. Londis, Tesco Express, etc.), and therefore the core set of outlets, the centre has many specialty outlets which provide a good customer draw. The centre has a good range of outlets for serving both the passing visitors and the visitors from the surrounding neighborhoods. **2009 Outlook:** The success of the centre is likely to continue given its diversity and niche in providing for the evening economy. This would be enhanced by the addition of a suitably sized convenience store. **2012 Outlook:** The addition of a convenience store has added to the draw of the centre but only highlights the need for more parking.

Villiers Avenue	Villiers Avenue is located on a moderately busy road with inset pay and display parking located along the front. On either side of the centre there are bus stops providing easy public transit to the centre. There exists a bakery, cafe/restaurant, and multiple convenience/grocer outlets providing an extremely strong core set of outlets for this centre. The quality of the public realm is higher than average. Pedestrian navigation of this centre is easy with no sidewalk obstructions and even pavement. **2009 Outlook:** The small size of the centre, but marginally above average catchment (with no overlap) suggests it will continue to trade successfully. No obvious prospect for expansion. **2012 Outlook:** Other than the possible addition of cycle racks this Centre is very good. It is trading well and will continue to do so with its strong set of core outlets.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Through the course of this study the team updated the prior 2009 Local Centre Study and used additional references to get a holistic view of the planning and policies involved in London and specifically Kingston borough. Planning policies, such as the NPPF, London Plan, and Kingston Core Strategy, all play an important role in maintaining the growth and prosperity of local Centres. In order to maintain the growth and health of Centres, the Kingston Council conducts these case studies every five years to help monitor the status of Centres as well as the variety of outlets per Centre. In reviewing the policy surrounding local Centres the team found changes on the national, London, and borough level. Policy at each level stresses the importance of viable and vital local Centres and mandates that checks are preformed to ensure Centre health and inform strategies to rejuvenate those found to be ailing. As a result the audit checklists were devised to find deficiencies in the Centres.

Overall the Geospatial results were inconclusive on both the deficiency region analysis and correlation of Centre health to various demographics. Deficiency analysis resulted in the team finding an overall reduction in the number of households inside of major deficiency areas with one exception, that being deficiency area 7 (Figure 3). This could be a result of the merging of two deficiency regions since the last study. A large problem encountered while performing deficiency mapping was using the same technique as had been used to produce the findings in the 2009 report and only towards the very end of the study did we find that our analysis had been based on ‘as the crow flies’ 400m catchment areas and the previous study had 400m catchment areas based on walking distance. This made much of the results difficult to compare to past data. Future studies should focus on rigorously defining a method for GIS analysis and document the process for future studies. Some suggested points to take into account are as follows:

- Major roads and rail lines are essentially pedestrian barriers and should be used to break deficiency regions.
- Distances should be either ‘as the crow flies’ or walking distance, ideally walking distance as this is more representative of the actual conditions the report is trying to measure.

- If data can be obtained from neighboring boroughs on A1 convenience outlets near the boundary of the Borough some of the deficient regions adjacent to the boundary could show significant reductions in un-served populations during analysis.

To assess the health of the Centres a variety of quantitative and qualitative data instruments were used. To attain quantitative data the team used a variety of performance indicators while qualitative data was gathered through surveying residents. The data collected for the quality of public realm helped determine which Centres looked the healthiest aesthetically. Although a Centre may look healthy and aesthetically pleasing there was not any correlation to the overall success of the Centre. The surveys of shop owners and passing shoppers revealed that more people are migrating towards the larger district Centres and Kingston Town Centre instead of local Centres due to variety and shopping overall. This leaves local Centres to provide convenience or specialty goods.

Determining the viability and vitality of a Centre in a strictly defined way is difficult in that each Centre is different and serves a slightly different role in the community. The 2009 report identified the following key determinants of success:

- Inclusion of an adequately sized convenience store – 150m^2+ gross;
- Prominent location;
- Adequate parking provision;
- Minimal catchment area overlap;
- Good pedestrian environment such as sufficient pedestrian crossings, and;
- Broad range of retail, service, and evening economy attractions (e.g. A3 and A5 uses)

We found these to be in line with determining the overall health of a Centre with a slight caveat on the good pedestrian environment. Good pedestrian environment mostly is comprised of accessibility and less so other measures of the quality of the public realm.

In accordance with these key determinants the team found 21 out of the 25 Centres to be performing their role as a local Centre well without major questions about their longevity. However, four of the Centres were not performing or the team had major reservations about their long term health. Chiltern Drive was failing to meet the role of a local Centre.

The Centre was comprised mostly of non convenience goods or any sort of outlet visitors might visit day to day. Of the outlets occupied many were used as offices and of those A1 units only one out of the total five was a convenience outlet. While the Centre was bordered by a train station and had cycle racks it lacked visibility and easy bus access. Only five out of the total 22 outlets could a visitor buy a physical item. As such the team recommends either re-designating the Centre as a parade or change policy to provide a more diverse set of outlets particularly A3-A5 as well as more A1 convenience. The Ace of Spades Centre has high vacancy rates jumping over 10% since the 2009 study. A new Tesco Express is opening in the area suggesting that the Centre may be on the road to recovery, but the Centre as a whole has the lowest percentage of convenience type A1 outlets in the South of the Borough. The Council needs to scrutinize applications for use change to ensure diversity. Additional Centres that showed signs of deficiency were Kings Road and South Lane. The Kings Road Centre has a poor outlook due to the location of the Centre considering it is not on a major roadway. In addition to the location, there is little variety within the Centre although there is a large grocer. The South Lane Centre is ailing as well for a few reasons. The Centre is in a residential location but there are not any bus stops within the vicinity. There is a high vacancy rate among the outlets which provides evidence of a poor outlook. There is little variety as a result of the high vacancy which can affect the number of shoppers that actually visit the Centre. The Centre is lacking an anchor tenant such as a grocer to attract customers. In order for the Centre to thrive it is essential to have outlets that are not vacant as well as an anchor tenant to stimulate growth.

To make Kingston local Centres healthier, initiatives can be taken within the borough to achieve this goal in addition to recommendations for each Centre. A new initiative, Totally Locally, was created to increase local shopping. This is a "social enterprise that provides a free marketing and branding campaign to towns nationwide" ("Parades to be," pgs. 12, 2012). The purpose of this program is to promote growth on the micro community level instead of promoting large shopping or grocery stores. An initiative similar to Totally Locally can be introduced in Kingston to help increase the local Centre shopping. It may take time to develop but will prove to be beneficial to the Centres success and health. In following with the 2009 Local Centre Study the team produced a table of all of our relevant findings on a per-Centre basis. Table 11 is this table; it essentially provides both a qualitative feel of a Centre and individualized recommendation and comparison to the 2009 studies outlook.

Table 11 replicates the Health check Conclusions table in the 2009 Local Centres Study and includes the recommendations presented in 2009 to provide a better view of the changes and actions the Council has made based on the recommendations. The Centre descriptions have been updated by the team reflecting our experience and views of each Centre. The 2012 outlook is derived from a combination of visitor/shop owner opinions, trends in quantitative data, and through the team's comparison of all of the Centres.

Recommendations that can be incorporated for each Centre include better parking arrangements, more bust stops or different traffic patterns to make a Centre more accessible and less dangerous to traverse, along with more signage to help advertise local Centres to increase public awareness.

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Appendix A – Use Classes

Table 12: Use Classes ("Change of use," 2011)

A1 Shops	Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes.
A2 Financial and professional services	Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices.
A3 Restaurants and cafes	For the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises - restaurants, snack bars and cafes.
A4 Drinking establishments	Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not night clubs).
A5 Hot food takeaways	For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.
B1 Business	Offices (other than those that fall within A2), research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area.
B2 General industrial	Use for industrial process other than one falling within class B1 (excluding incineration purposes, chemical treatment or landfill or hazardous waste).
B8 Storage or distribution	This class includes open air storage.
C1 Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels).

C2 Residential institutions	Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training Centres.
C2A Secure Residential institutions	Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention Centre, secure training Centre, custody Centre, short term holding Centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.
C3 Dwelling houses	C3 (a) covers use by a single person or a family (a couple whether married or not, a person related to one another with members of the family of one of the couple to be treated as members of the family of the other), an employer and certain domestic employees (such as an au pair, nanny, nurse, governess, servant, chauffeur, gardener, secretary and personal assistant), a carer and the person receiving the care and a foster parent and foster child. C3(b): up to six people living together as a single household and receiving care e.g. supported housing schemes such as those for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems. C3(c) allows for groups of people (up to six) living together as a single household. This allows for those groupings that do not fall within the C4 HMO definition, but which fell within the previous C3 use class, to be provided for i.e. a small religious community may fall into this section as could a homeowner who is living with a lodger.
C4 Houses in multiple occupation	Small shared dwelling houses occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom.
D1 Non-residential institutions	Clinics, health Centres, crèches, day nurseries, day Centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Nonresidential education and training Centres.
D2 Assembly and leisure	Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used)

Sui Generis	Certain uses do not fall within any use class and are considered 'sui generis'. Such uses include: theatres, houses in multiple occupation, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, launderettes, taxi businesses, amusement Centres and casinos.

Appendix B - Centre Audit Checklist

Property use classification

Classify each shop on the accompanying map and spreadsheet in accordance to the designations below. Shops require additional information, whether they are comparison or convenience.

- A1 – Shop
  - Comparison
    - Every day items
    - Specialty items
  - Convenience
- A2 – Financial or Professional Service
- A3 – Restaurant or Café
- A4 – Drinking Establishment (Night club excluded)
- A5 – Hot food Takeaway
- B1 – Business
- D1 – Non-Residential (Clinics, Art Galleries, Churches)
- D2 – Assembly or Leisure (Cinema, Gyms)
- V – Vacant
- O – Other

Parking Availability

Add the number of parking spaces next to amount

- ☐ Metered – Amount:
- ☐ Residential Only
- ☐ Unrestricted – Amount:
- ☐ Pay-and-Display – Amount:
- ☐ Provided by Business – Amount:
- ☐ Other:

Other Transportation

- ☐ Cycle Racks
- ☐ Bus Stops
  - Number of stops:

Average Distance to bus stops				
1	2	3	4	5

*1 being distant from the Centre 5 being close

Opinion: Is the parking sufficient for the given area?

Quality of the Public Realm

Scale from 1 – 5 one being very poor, five being very good

Accessibility				
1	2	3	4	5

Litter/Cleanliness				
1	2	3	4	5

Planting/Soft Landscaping				
1	2	3	4	5

Street Clutter				
1	2	3	4	5

Quality of street furniture*				
1	2	3	4	5

Security				
1	2	3	4	5

Quality of Pavement				
1	2	3	4	5

*The term street furniture encompasses features such as signage lamp posts, lighting, seating, utility boxes, guard rails, street art, etc.

Environmental Quality Notes

Appendix C - Centre Summary

(Name of Centre)

Parking and transportation information:

Cycles racks, bus stops and parking information as the surveyor's opinion on the sufficiency of the available parking.

Quality of the Public Realm Scores

Average the scores from each team member and add reasons why a certain score was given if above or below 3. Add photos when useful/relevant.

1. Accessibility:
2. Litter/Cleanliness:
3. Planting/Soft Landscaping:
4. Street Clutter:
5. Quality of Street Furniture:
6. Security:
7. Quality of Pavement:

Written summary of Centre:

Write a paragraph or two about the centre, using the information collected in the checklist, photos, and from interviews with the shop owners and shoppers. Include photos when relevant. Add predictions and recommendations for the Centre here as well.

Appendix D - Survey Manual

Introduction:

The purpose of this manual is to streamline the data collection process for Centre studies and vitality and viability assessments in order to provide comparable data in subsequent surveys. Materials that a surveyor should take include both a camera and a survey pack containing: a Centre audit checklist, an Excel spreadsheet to fill in occupancy changes, a base map of the Centre, a visitor interview sheet, and a shop owner interview sheet. The Centre Audit Checklist has a set of questions that need to be uniformly assessed by each group member as well as during any possible future audit. Upon return from centre visits, the surveyor should then fill out a centre summary. To do this the following criteria should be used to judge the qualities in question.

Filling out the Survey

From experience, one can survey 3-5 Centres a day depending on size and then have time to fill out the surveys that same day. This is highly recommended as it will ensure that the Centres are fresh in your mind. If the survey is done over multiple days for additional interviews or the collection of other data, the summary should be updated after each visit.

Occupancy and Unit Class

Using a spreadsheet filled with addresses, old occupancies and unit classes of units in the centre, go through the Centre and note any changes that may have occurred since the most recent study.

Parking

Parking availability will serve as a quantitative measure as parking spaces can be counted. Mark down whether the available parking is convenient for use and if there is enough parking to adequately serve the Centre. Parking adjacent to shops within the Centre would be considered convenient whereas street parking on the other side of the street would not. The adequacy of parking is the most difficult to assess; therefore, the judging criteria need to be as thorough as possible. Adequate parking for the purpose of this study will be based primarily on the number of parking spaces per shop and the sizes of the stores. In addition to parking spaces the number of cycle racks and the location of bus stops will also be recorded with the primary focus remaining on parking spaces. The easiest way to determine adequate parking is through the supplemental shop owner interviews, as they will have the best knowledge of their respective centre or shop.

Quality of the Public Realm

Quality of the public realm is analyzed through a set of criteria that can be ranked from 1 to 5 with rankings as follows: 1- very poor, 2-below average, 3-average, 4-above average 5-exceptional. When certain criteria were not applicable, such as landscaping and plants, the rating was defaulted to 3. The criteria used to assess the quality of the public realm are:

1. Accessibility
   a. Navigation of the Centre
      i. Enables very young, old, and disabled to access shops
   b. Questions to Ask
      i. Are the pavement even?
      ii. Are there wheelchair ramps and textured tiles for the blind?
      iii. Are there railings on stairs?
      iv. Are the sidewalks very narrow?
      v. Is there a cross walk for a dividing street
   c. Scoring for Category
      i. Uneven pavement, unmarked curbs/steps, no railings, and other tripping hazards: Score of 1
      ii. Some but not all of the following: Wide sidewalks, railings on stairs, disabled utilities and even pavement: Score of 3
      iii. No obstructions on the wide sidewalks. Disabled ramps convenient and available for all locations and pedestrian paths. Railings on all steps. Score of 5
2. Litter/Cleanliness
   a. Cleanliness
      i. Bad Graffiti – Graffiti should play a minor role in determining the cleanliness of most Centres; however, its impact, be it positive or negative, can be difficult to determine. See below for a section on positive and negative graffiti.
      ii. Chewing Gum on sidewalks
   b. Rubbish
      i. Abundance of cigarette butts
      ii. Litter on the ground
   c. Scoring Category
      i. Graffiti on sides of buildings, rubbish in the streets and in walking areas and chewing gum under benches and tables. Score of 1
      ii. No non-artistic graffiti, little to no rubbish outside bins. Score of 5
3. Planting/Soft Landscaping
   a. Measure of the quality of plants
   b. Scoring for Category
      i. Solely weeds: Score of 1
      ii. Not Applicable/Average: Score of 3
      iii. Healthy plants that add to the aesthetics: Score of 5
4. Street Clutter
   a. Consider the density not just the actual amount. In other words, a wider sidewalk means more items without excessive clutter.
   b. Uniformity of Signage and Road Marking
   c. Advertising/Signs
   d. Obstructions
      i. Too many barriers

   e. Excess structures
      i. e.g. – “Are there three sign posts when one would do?”
   f. Scoring for Category
      i. Redundant signage/road markings, excess advertising, pedestrian paths obstructed: Score of 1
      ii. Cleanly laid out signage and advertising as well as logical structure placement: Score of 5
5. Street Furniture
   a. Lampposts
   b. Utility Boxes
   c. Guardrails
   d. Street Art
   e. Other Observations
   f. Scoring for category
      i. Street furniture serves little/no purpose and visually detracts from the area: Score of 1
      ii. Street furniture as art and highly adds to the area either functionally or visually: Score of 5
6. Security
   a. Public Safety
   b. Neglected Regions
   c. Lighting at Night
   d. Scoring for category
      i. Poorly lit at night, very “unsafe” feeling, substantial areas not in plain view: Score of 1
      ii. Score of 3: Average
         1. Most, if not all Centres scored a 3 when done during the daytime. This criterion is only descriptive when a centre has a score of 1 or 2.
      iii. Well lit at night, very “safe” feeling, whole area easy surveillance: Score of 5
7. Pedestrian Walkways
   a. Sidewalk upheaval
   b. Cracks
   c. Missing Pavers
   d. Broken Stones
   e. Scoring for category
      i. All things listed above are true: Score of 1
      ii. Sidewalks in very good condition, all stones are clean and in good condition, no cracks in any of the footpaths: Score of 5

The Environmental Quality section is left for personal notes. This can be observations such as: “All of the store fronts in this area have fallen into disrepair” or “There needs to be a major reworking of the signage/road way to increase the navigability and safety of the pedestrians.” Further this area can be used to recommend improvements such as “A sign pointing to the Centre would help” or “There needs to be a substantial decrease in street clutter for this Centre to be navigable.”

These are the criteria on which the Centres should be judged and the methods by which the judging should rely. The purpose for such rigorously defined criteria and methods are so that within a team or future survey the results from the Centre Audit Checklist are consistent and reproducible.

Good vs. Bad Graffiti

There will inevitably be a subjective component based on the surveyor, but tagging, the writing, painting or scratching into glass of one's name quickly, should always be considered "bad graffiti". For other forms of graffiti, the surveyor must use their sense of aesthetics to judge if it helps or hinders the look of the area. Murals or other forms of street art might attract or repel different demographics depending on the nature of imagery. Graffiti from the street artist Banksy can transform a business into a destination and raise property value. Conducting interviews with frequent shoppers to assess the public opinion on the graffiti and if it effects the shopping experience. If there is any question or significant concern about the graffiti it should be photographed. Err on the side of caution.

Centre Summary

To summarize a centre, one should make note of a basic set of characteristics. These characteristics are:

- What is the immediate area like?
  - Is there a busy road?
  - Is it in a residential area or a business area?
  - Atmosphere (e.g. relaxed, busy, quite)
- Transportation details
  - Public transit
  - Cycle racks
  - Parking
- Public realm
  - How does this centre compare to others? Add appropriate details of how this distinction was made.

Example study Coombe Road (2012):

The following is a centre audit checklist and centre summary filled out by a team member.

(coop's near)

Center Audit Checklist

Property use classification

Classify each shop on the accompanying map and spreadsheet in accordance to the designations below. Shops require additional information, whether they are comparison or convenience.

- A1 – Shop
  - Comparison
    - Every day items
    - Specialty items
  - Convenience
- A2 – Financial or Professional Service
- A3 – Restaurant or Café
- A4 – Drinking Establishment (Night club excluded)
- A5 – Hot food Takeaway
- B1 – Business
- D1 – Non-Residential (Clinics, Art Galleries, Churches)
- D2 – Assembly or Leisure (Cinema, Gyms)
- V – Vacant
- O – Other

Parking Availability

Add the number of parking spaces next to amount

☐ Metered – Amount:
☐ Residential Only
☒ Unrestricted – Amount: 8 + 3 +
☐ Pay-and-Display – Amount:
☐ Provided by Business – Amount:
☐ Other:

Other Transportation

☒ Cycle Racks
☒ Bus Stops

- Number of stops:

Average Distance to bus stops				
1	2	3	4	5

*1 being distant from the center 5 being close

Opinion: Is the parking sufficient for the given area?

Quality of the Public Realm

Scale from 1 – 5 one being very poor, five being very good

Accessibility				
1	2	3	4	5

there is stuff in the way of pedestrians

Litter/Cleanliness				
1	2	3	4	5

Planting/Soft Landscaping				
1	2	3	4	5

have trees but they are poorly kept

Street Clutter				
1	2	3	4	5

stuff impeadly pedestrian trav

Quality of street furniture*				
1	2	3	4	5

they have a bench for the bus stop

Security				
1	2	3	4	5

Quality of Pavement				
1	2	3	4	5

mis matched uneven patchy

*The term street furniture encompasses features such as signage lamp posts, lighting, seating, utility boxes, guard rails, street art, etc.

Environmental Quality Notes

1 Parking inadequate and side walks hard to navigate

area somewhat unsightly

Centre Summary – Coombe Road

Parking and transportation information:

Cycles racks, bus stops and parking information as the surveyor's opinion on the sufficiency of the available parking.

Parking is available along the road in front of most shops. There were approximately 15 pay parking spots and a handful of unrestricted spots available. Two bus stops were located in the middle of the centre next to the bulk of the outlets. Overall parking is sparse and has been reduced in recent years by the addition of the bus stop.

Quality of the Public Realm Scores

Average the scores from each team member and add reasons why a certain score was given if above or below 3. Add photos when useful/relevant.

1. Accessibility: 3 – There was a good deal of obstacles in the sidewalk which was balanced out by wheelchair ramps and crosswalks.
2. Litter/Cleanliness: 3

3. Planting/Soft Landscaping: 3.5 – There was a tree every 5-10m however the trees were poorly maintained.
4. Street Clutter: 3 – Generally good, however at some parts pedestrian traffic was impeded.

Figure 16: Very narrow sidewalk near bus stop

5. Quality of Street Furniture: 3.25 – Overall average, however the bus station provided a bench to sit on.
6. Security: 3
7. Quality of Pavement: 2 - The sidewalk was broken, non-uniform, and slanted.

Written summary of Centre:

The Coombe Road centre lies along an averagely busy road. Since 2007, the number of vacant storefronts has not changed from 5. The road is navigable by a few crosswalks. Although it lacks a grocer, the centre was healthy and had visitors passing through during the visit. Portions of the centre have parking along the front; however a bus stop takes most of the prime parking real estate choking the centre of parking. That said, alternative transportation methods are available with the aforementioned bus stop providing public transit access and cycle racks available to cyclists. The sidewalks at places were laid out such that the pedestrian would need to weave back and forth to navigate passing through the centre. Shop keepers suggested that the area was quite stable and doing well with a new restaurants having opened in the centre.

Outlook: This centre appears to be doing well, no changes required but as said in the 2007 report, a convenience store would enhance the centre’s survivability.

Appendix E – Shopper Survey

Name (optional)__________________ Name of Centre____________________

Date and Time___________________ Team Member______________________

Personal Details (optional): ☐M ☐F ☐Under 18 ☐18-35 ☐35-50 ☐50+

1. **When did you start coming to this shopping centre?**
   - ☐ This Year
   - ☐ Past Three Years
   - ☐ Past Five Years
   - ☐ More than Five years
2. **How frequently do you visit?**
   - ☐ Multiple times a week
   - ☐ Once a week
   - ☐ Once every few weeks
   - ☐ Not often
3. **What kind of shopping do you typically do?**
   - ☐ Top Up
   - ☐ Weekly
   - ☐ Monthly
   - ☐ Only for specific items
4. **How has this shopping centre changed over the past three years?**
   - ☐ Type of Stores
   - ☐ Traffic Patterns
   - ☐ Aesthetics
   - ☐ Amount of Stores
5. **How does this shopping centre compare to other ones that are nearby?**

6. **Why do you choose to shop at this centre?**
   - ☐ Location
   - ☐ Convenience
   - ☐ Cost
   - ☐ Products
7. **How do you usually get to the centre?**
   - ☐ Walking
   - ☐ Driving
   - ☐ Train
   - ☐ Bus
8. **Roughly, how far do you live from this centre?**
   - ☐ Less than 400 meters
   - ☐ 400 meters to 1 mile
   - ☐ 1 mile to 5 miles
   - ☐ More than 5 miles
9. **What products do you typically buy?**
   - ☐ Electronics
   - ☐ Groceries
   - ☐ Other (please list)
   - ☐ Restaurant and Cafes
   - ☐ Clothes

10. If those products were unavailable at this centre, where would you go?

11. Best/worst things about this centre?

12. What do you think would make this centre better?

Appendix F – Shop Keeper Survey

Name______________________________ Name of Centre__________________________

Name of Shop_______________________ Type of Shop____________________________

Date and Time______________________ Team Member___________________________

"Hello my name is __________, and I am a student of Worcester Polytechnic Institute working with Kingston Council. My group and I are currently conducting a Local Centre Study. In this study, our project team will be assessing the vitality and viability of local Centres in Kingston based on a set of performance indicators."

1. How long have you been in business at this location?
   a. If a long time, how has the centre changed (shops, area, customers)?
      i. How has that influenced the shop?
   b. Why did you choose to have a shop in this centre?
2. What type of customers does your shop typically draw?
   a. Are they different from the type of customer you hope to draw?
3. In a typical day, how many customers do you usually serve?
   a. Is there a particular time of day that is generally the busiest?
4. How stable is the market in the centre?
5. What effect has the economic recession had, overall and specifically for your shop?
6. Best/worst things about the centre?

a. What could improve the centre?

Appendix G – Use Class Count by Centre

Centre Name	Total Units in 2012	A1	A1 Conv	A1 Comp	A2	A3	B1	D1	SG	Vacant Units
Cambridge Road	16	5	2	3	2	1	1	0	1	2
Kingston Hill (South)/Park Road	34	15	3	12	1	6	4	0	3	2
Kings Road	15	5	1	4	0	1	1	0	3	3
Kingston Road (West)	21	12	3	9	2	2	1	0	0	2
Richmond Road	21	8	2	6	1	3	0	0	2	2
Surbiton Road	41	15	4	11	2	7	0	1	5	6
Tudor Drive	7	5	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1
Coombe Road	24	15	8	7	1	5	0	0	0	2
Kingston Town Total	**179**	**80**	**25**	**55**	**9**	**25**	**7**	**2**	**14**	**20**
Burlington Road	32	17	7	10	2	2	0	1	0	2
Crescent Road	6	5	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
Kingston Road (East)	33	11	6	5	0	3	0	1	3	1
Kingston Vale	6	3	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Malden Manor	12	5	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	2
Plough Green	20	8	3	5	3	2	1	1	1	4
South Lane	8	4	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
The Triangle	12	8	4	4	0	0	0	1	0	2
Maldens and Coombe Total	**129**	**61**	**30**	**31**	**7**	**9**	**1**	**5**	**4**	**14**
Ace of Spades	51	21	4	17	2	4	1	0	3	12
Chessington North Parade	21	12	7	5	5	2	0	1	1	0
Hook Parade/Elm Road	33	18	8	10	5	1	0	1	3	3
South of the Borough Total	**105**	**51**	**19**	**32**	**12**	**7**	**1**	**2**	**7**	**15**
Alexandra Drive	17	10	3	7	2	1	1	1	2	0
Berrylands Road	14	7	3	4	0	2	1	0	1	1
Chiltern Drive	22	5	1	4	6	0	1	1	1	7
Ewell Road (North)	55	22	5	17	3	9	1	1	4	3
Ewell Road (South)	51	21	3	18	4	6	2	4	5	6
Villiers Avenue	8	5	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Surbiton Total	**167**	**70**	**19**	**51**	**15**	**19**	**6**	**7**	**14**	**17**
Borough Total	**580**	**262**	**93**	**169**	**43**	**60**	**15**	**16**	**39**	**66**

Appendix H – 2007 Floorspace

Neighborhood	Total	A1 Conv	A1 Comp	A1	A2	A3	B1	D1	SG	Vacant
Kingston Town	10,286	2,034	3,947	5,981	409	952	255	0	1,418	1,271
		20%	38%	58%	4%	9%	2%	0%	14%	12%
Maldens & Coombe	8,701	2,926	2,409	5,335	514	816	66	410	512	1048
		34%	28%	61%	6%	9%	1%	5%	6%	12%
South of the Borough	10,271	2,814	3,954	6,768	1,071	833	110	181	457	851
		27%	38%	66%	10%	8%	1%	2%	4%	8%
Surbiton	13,301	1,278	4,442	5,720	1,176	1,563	691	267	2,244	1,640
		10%	33%	43%	9%	12%	5%	2%	17%	12%
BOROUGH TOTAL	**42,559**	**9,052**	**14,752**	**23,804**	**3,170**	**4,164**	**1,122**	**858**	**4,631**	**4,810**
		21%	35%	56%	7%	10%	3%	2%	11%	11%

[†] The data for 2007 includes Centres removed in the 2012 study. Additionally the 2012 data contains Centres added and additional outlets from re-bounded Centres.