



Appendix 5 - Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Centres: Business Survey 2011

A survey of approximately 400 commercial operators was undertaken across Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre (approximately 300 businesses) and Kidsgrove town centre (approximately 100 businesses) to obtain information on the status of local businesses, their plans for growth and their views on the centre in which they operate.

This Appendix provides a summary of the results of the business survey, set out in the format of the questionnaire that was provided to commercial operators.

Dear Sir/Madam

Newcastle-under-Lyme Council wants to know your views about Newcastle-under-Lyme/Kidsgrove town centre

Your views are sought as part of a wider 'health check' of the centre, which will help to inform a future strategy for improving retail and leisure facilities. We would be grateful if you would contribute to this exercise by completing this questionnaire and returning it as soon as possible **in the pre-paid envelope provided**. You can either post it to us, or drop it in at our office in either Newcastle-under-Lyme or Kidsgrove town centre (the addresses are below). The questionnaire should take no longer than five minutes to complete. **Please return by Friday 1 July 2011.**

All responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and no information on individual businesses will be released. By providing us with the information we seek, you will help the Council shape its redevelopment and planning policies to foster growth and prosperity within the centre.

If you have any queries on the questionnaire or its purpose, please do not hesitate to call Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, the company which is co-ordinating the research for the Council.

QA. In which of these centres do you have business premises?

Centre	Returned Questionnaires	% of Total
Newcastle-under-Lyme	77	80%
Kidsgrove	19	20%
Total	96	100%

Q1. What is the status of your business?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
A sole proprietorship	25%	53%
A partnership	9%	11%
A private limited company	45%	26%
A public limited company	13%	5%
A cooperative/social enterprise	0%	5%
Don't know	3%	0%
Not responded	1%	0%

Q2. What type of business is the main business operating from your premises?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Food retail	6%	21%
Non-food retail	49%	26%
Coffee shop/café	5%	5%
Restaurant	4%	0%
Pub/bar	1%	0%
Bank	5%	0%
Financial service e.g. building society	1%	5%
Recreation e.g. Amusement centre	1%	0%
Leisure e.g. Cinema	0%	0%
Legal services e.g. Solicitors	0%	0%
Other service e.g. Hairdresser, beauty salon	3%	26%
Industry	0%	0%
Council office/Advice centre	0%	0%
Other office use	6%	11%
Other	12%	5%
Not responded	5%	0%

Q3. How long has your business been operating from the premises?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Less than 1 year	9%	11%
1 to 5 years	26%	21%
6 to 10 years	22%	5%
Over 10 years	22%	16%
Over 25 years	10%	42%
Over 50 years	9%	5%
Not responded	1%	0%

Q4. Are your premises leased or owner occupied?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Leased	84%	63%
Owner occupied	13%	37%
Other	1%	0%
Not responded	1%	0%

Q5. How many staff do you employ?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Full time		
Only business owner	7%	0%
Less than 5	67%	93%
6-10 employees	13%	0%
11-25 employees	8%	0%
26-50 employees	0%	0%
50 + employees	2%	0%
Part time		
Only business owner	0%	0%
Less than 5	65%	81%
6-10 employees	18%	13%
11-25 employees	13%	0%
26-50 employees	0%	0%
50 + employees	0%	0%
Not responded	3%	6%
Total		
Only business owner	5%	0%
Less than 5	49%	67%
6-10 employees	24%	28%
11-25 employees	14%	0%
26-50 employees	4%	0%
50 + employees	1%	0%
Not responded	3%	6%

Q6. Which type of customers does your business primarily rely on?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Local residents (Newcastle- under- Lyme area)	62%	79%
Other residents of North Staffordshire	7%	11%
Office employees	1%	0%
Tourist/leisure visitors	0%	0%
Other	7%	0%
Not responded	24%	11%

Q7. Why is your business located in Newcastle-under-Lyme?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Affordable rent	12%	26%
Availability of short term leases	1%	5%
Good accessibility	10%	11%
Availability of free car parking in centre	3%	11%
Close to other businesses	14%	11%
Serves local market	19%	26%
To be within the central area	25%	11%
High level of pedestrians (footfall) past premises	22%	5%
Business already set up when I took over	36%	47%
Other	13%	11%
Not responded	44%	37%

Q8. What current plans do you have to change your business?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Re-fit, extend or improve premises	18%	11%
Relocate to new premises in local area	3%	5%
Close or relocate to new premises outside the local area	9%	5%
No plans/nothing	47%	58%
Don't know	16%	5%
Other	5%	16%
Not responded	3%	0%

Q9. What are the issues constraining the operation and performance of your business*?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Rents/overheads	39%	26%
Level of trade/lack of visitors/customers	72%	63%
Quality or size of premises	9%	11%
Staff recruitment/retention	1%	5%
Availability of business/customer parking	35%	32%
Competition from other businesses in the centre	18%	37%
Competition from other businesses in other town centres	16%	16%
Lack of business finance	3%	5%
Security issues (crime/vandalism)	1%	11%
Problems associated with anti-social behaviour	4%	5%
Advice on how to improve the operation of the business	1%	5%
Poor location of premises	11%	0%
Poor quality of the local environment	18%	21%
Inability to find time to develop business	1%	5%
Lack of good transport links	0%	0%
Poor accessibility	5%	5%
Shortage of skilled labour	0%	5%
Childcare issues	0%	0%
Don't know/nothing Other	0%	0%
Other	21%	5%
Not responded	43%	37%

*percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents were asked for multiple answers

Q10. How do you feel the issue selected as 'most important' at Q9 could be addressed?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
More car parking	8%	16%
Cheaper car parking	14%	0%
Increased policing	18%	16%
Reduced overheads (rent/rates)	18%	16%
More national multiple retailers in centre	14%	5%
Reduction in number of takeaways	0%	5%
Promotion of centre to visitors	9%	0%
Promotion of centre to businesses	1%	0%
Environmental improvements	9%	5%
More community/business events	2%	0%
Other	12%	26%
Not responded	14%	26%

Q11. Do you consider that Newcastle-under-Lyme has any of the following, to the benefit your business?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Room to expand	6%	5%
Affordable premises to buy/rent	1%	5%
Affordable Rents	5%	5%
Good road network	16%	10%
Plentiful availability of car parking	6%	6%
Existing/potential employees living in area	8%	6%
Good bus services	11%	14%
Easy access for employees	6%	10%
Easy access for customers	9%	9%
A local demand for the product/service	10%	13%
Presence of other businesses	5%	8%
A variety of shops, services and entertainment	7%	3%
Other	3%	3%
Not responded	6%	4%

Q12. How do you rate Newcastle-under-Lyme in respect of the following?

1 = Very Poor 5 = Very Good

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Rents/rates	2.1	2.9
Availability of business/customer parking	2.1	2.7
Traffic circulation	2.9	2.7
Safety during daytime	2.5	3.1
Safety during the evenings and at night	2.8	2.3
Crime and security	3.0	2.3
Range of shops and services available	2.5	2.3
Quality of shops and services available	2.3	2.7
Range of sports/leisure, entertainment or arts and cultural facilities	2.5	2.2
Quality of sports/leisure, entertainment or arts and cultural facilities	2.5	2.2
Quality of public open spaces, street furniture and landscaping	3.1	2.4
Liveliness/street life/character	2.5	1.8
Level of street cleansing and litter	3.1	3.1
Centre management and maintenance	2.5	2.3
Condition/appearance of older buildings	2.6	2.0
General shopping environment	2.4	2.7
Interest shown by Council/local authorities	2.1	1.8
Marketing/promotion of the centre	2.0	1.3
Interest shown by landlord owners	1.9	2.1
The way businesses work together	2.5	2.6
Events in the centre	2.0	1.6
Average	2.5	2.3

Q13. In general, do you consider that over the last year Newcastle-under-Lyme has...?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Improved	6%	5%
Stayed the same	31%	58%
Declined	56%	26%
Don't know	3%	0%
Not responded	4%	11%

Q14. What measures do you think would improve Newcastle-under-Lyme?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Increased choice/range of shops	19%	20%
More national multiples	6%	2%
Foodstore in centre	5%	4%
More independent/specialist retailers	12%	7%
Improved public spaces	1%	4%
Cheaper/more flexible parking	23%	4%
Improved street cleaning	1%	4%
Improved public transport	0%	0%
More sports/leisure or entertainment facilities	1%	4%
More arts or cultural facilities	0%	2%
More quality restaurants/cafes	2%	2%
More organised events	5%	7%
Greater promotion/marketing of the centre	9%	20%
Expansion of the shopping centre	3%	0%
Improved security	1%	9%
Improved traffic management	0%	0%
Other	3%	0%
Not responded	7%	9%

Q15. Which of the following statements best describes your business's current trading performance?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Good	17%	16%
Satisfactory	44%	42%
Poor	30%	32%
Don't know/No opinion	3%	0%
Not responded	6%	11%

Q16. Over the last 12 months has your trading performance...?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Improved	14%	21%
Stayed the same	23%	47%
Declined	54%	26%
Don't know/No opinion	5%	0%
Other	0%	0%
Not responded	4%	5%

Q17. Over the next 12 months do you expect your business performance to...?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Improve	31%	37%
Stay the same	31%	42%
Decline	23%	5%
Don't know/No opinion	10%	11%
Not responded	4%	5%

Q18. Which centre or retail park do you consider to be your biggest competition?

	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Kidsgrove
Newcastle-under-Lyme (Other Businesses)	16%	0%
Kidsgrove	0%	33%
Stoke-on-Trent City Centre (Hanley)	36%	11%
Longton	0%	0%
Burslem	0%	0%
Tunstall	0%	17%
Biddulph	0%	0%
Century Park, Stoke-on-Trent City Centre	0%	0%
Festival Park and Festival Heights, Stoke-on-Trent City Centre	4%	0%
Octagon Retail Park, Stoke-on-Trent City Centre	0%	0%
Wolstanton Retail Park, Newcastle-under-Lyme	0%	0%
Other Retail Parks (Please Specify)	3%	0%
Internet/Mail order	9%	11%
Other	10%	6%
Not responded	22%	22%