Shrewsbury: Town Centre Audit Analysis, 2025

Shropshire Council

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Introduction

An audit of businesses operating in Shrewsbury's main shopping streets was undertaken in September 2025 as part of a longitudinal research study reviewing the vibrancy of Shropshire's main market towns and key settlements. Shrewsbury centre was first audited in November 2019 and then again in September every year between 2020 and 2025. The objective of these audits is to provide a snapshot of the vitality of the town by investigating:

- The range and diversity of the retail offer
- The number and types of non-retail businesses operating
- The number and location of vacant properties
- The level of business churn—how many businesses are closing and opening each year
- Distinctive characteristics within the town, for example a strong tourism offer or a high penetration of "low end" traders
- The amount, location and type of domestic residences in the centre of the town

The research also aims to monitor change over time. The functionality of the High Street has been changing for some time, with internet shopping a key factor that has impacted. In September 2025, 27.2% of all retail sales were attributable to on-line purchases. Through 2020 and 2021 the coronavirus pandemic posed additional challenges to High Street businesses. The 2020 audits for all towns took place in September, following the first national lockdown. Non-essential retail and hospitality businesses were able to trade at this time (albeit with strict social distancing measures in place). The 2021 audits also took place when High Street businesses were able to trade. By 2022 High Streets were trading normally with no Covid-19 restrictions, but the cost of living crisis was gathering pace. Inflation was elevated in 2023, which also impacted people's spending power. Inflation has since fallen significantly, albeit still above the Bank of England target, but interest rates are comparatively high and economic confidence remains low.

Key Findings

- 737 commercial units, occupying 137,100m^2 gross floor space.
- Largest centre in Shropshire accommodating 29.3% of all Shropshire High Street traders—more than twice the size of any other town.
- There is a relatively low number of stores per head of population at 9.2 units per 1,000 population (excluding local shop parades or out-of-town retail centres). This is lower than anywhere else except Highley, Albrighton, Broseley and Cleobury Mortimer.
- Average store size 186m^2 which is notably larger than the average across Shropshire (147m^2) - floor space per 1,000 population is therefore more closely aligned with the Shropshire average (1,714m^2 per 1,000 population in Shrewsbury compared with an average of 1,846m^2 for Shropshire).
- A significant amount of commercial space has been lost over recent years with the closure of first the Pride Hill Centre and more recently the Riverside Centre.
- 1,074 residential premises in the main shopping area, giving a ratio of 0.8:1 commercial versus residential properties.
- Shrewsbury has had an 11-12% business churn rate for each of the last three years, standing at 12% in 2025. This compares with an average of 13% across Shropshire. Overall churn between 2019 and 2025 is closely aligned to the level of change recorded across Shropshire.
- 11% of all commercial premises were vacant in 2025, which is a significant reduction compared with 2020. Shrewsbury now has fewer vacant units than pre-pandemic. The vacancy rate is now identical to the county average (11%).
- The highest proportion of commercial units is attributable to comparison retail (31%), with only Church Stretton and Ludlow supporting a higher proportion of units in this category.
- Retail services are slightly under-represented, accounting for 16% of units compared with an average of 19% across Shropshire.
- Convenience retail also accounts for a lower than average share of commercial activity (4% of units).
- Shrewsbury supports a high representation of restaurants and takeaways, with this sector accounting for 18% of stores. Only Cleobury Mortimer has a similar penetration.

Methodology Statement

Only the main retail centre of the town was surveyed, as shown on Map 4. Out-of-town retail parks and local shopping parades are not included.

Both retail and non-retail businesses will be operating in other parts of the town. In the case of Shrewsbury, there are three main retail parks outside the town centre as depicted on map 7. There are also concentrations of employment outside the town centre, especially to the north, where Battlefield Enterprise Park is located.

All commercial premises within the defined area were audited, and classified as:

- Comparison Retail—defined as stores selling non-food/drink/tobacco products
- Convenience Retail—defined as stores selling food/drink/tobacco products
- Retail Service— defined as stores selling a service rather than a product, such as hair dressers or travel agents
- Financial & Business Services — for example, banks, solicitors, accountants, estate agents
- Health - including dentists, health centres, GP practices, alternative therapies
- Restaurants & Takeaways—including cafés and tea rooms
- Tourism & Leisure—hotels and public houses/bars as well as visitor attractions and cultural assets
- Education & Community Facilities—including schools, colleges, libraries, community centres
- Other Non-Retail
- Vacant

Gross floor space was matched to each premise using OS Master Map. It should be noted, that where two outlets shared the same premise (as shown on Master Map) an assumption was made that both occupied the same amount of floor space. For multi-storey buildings occupied by multiple businesses, it is assumed that all floors have the same gross space. Unless it is clear that a single business occupies more than one floor of a building, it has been assumed that it occupies only one floor. This means that in some cases, gross floor space may be under-estimated as some traders use upper floors for storage. No estimate relating to net floor space has been made.

Businesses occupying above ground floor level premises have only been included in this audit if their presence is clear from street level (by door signs or external hoardings for example). It is likely, therefore, that some non-consumer businesses operating in the area may have been missed.

Premises are assumed to have changed hands if their name or function has changed since the 2024 audit. In some cases though, ownership may be unchanged but the business has been rebranded or renamed.

An estimate of the number of domestic residences in the main retail centre has been made using OS LPI using all residential classification codes.

Retail Centre Hierarchy

Town centres represent important employment, entertainment and shopping hubs for their local population and hinterland. They also represent an important component of the visitor economy.

However, not all centres have comparable functions. Larger centres tend to attract workers and shoppers from much further afield than smaller centres, and consequently offer a much greater volume and variety of retail trade and consumer and business services.

In order to benchmark Shropshire towns against each other in an appropriate manner, the following hierarchy has been adopted:

Tier 1:	**Shrewsbury**
Tier 2:	Bridgnorth Ludlow Oswestry Market Drayton Whitchurch
Tier 3:	Albrighton Bishops Castle Broseley Church Stretton Cleobury Mortimer Craven Arms Ellesmere Highley Much Wenlock Shifnal Wem

Shrewsbury is by far the largest shopping centre in Shropshire, accounting for about 30% of town centre based commercial outlets in the County.

Map 1: Shropshire's Main Retail Centres

About Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury is located amidst beautiful countryside with the nearby Welsh border to the west , and the larger town of Telford and the West Midlands conurbation to the east. Shrewsbury is the county town of Shropshire and has a fine medieval heritage. The town centre is packed with timber framed black and white buildings, steep narrow streets and alleyways. It has over 600 listed buildings including the Castle, which is now a regimental museum, and also the famous Shrewsbury Abbey. Charles Darwin was born and educated in Shrewsbury and there are many references to him around the town. Shrewsbury is a vibrant market town with many bars, shops, restaurants and cultural assets and is a popular tourist destination. The River Severn forms a loop around the town, giving Shrewsbury a unique geography and many riverside walks. The Quarry park is situated alongside the river. This is an important natural asset and plays host to a number of events throughout the year, including the famous Shrewsbury Flower Show.

Shrewsbury is designated a Business Improvement District which commenced on 1st April 2014 as a business-led and business-funded body. Businesses in the BID area contribute via business rates to fund works to improve and promote Shrewsbury town centre as a place to live, work, visit and invest. The BID period was initially for a period of 5 years, but has since been renewed twice—once in 2019 and again in 2023. https://shrewsburybid.co.uk/

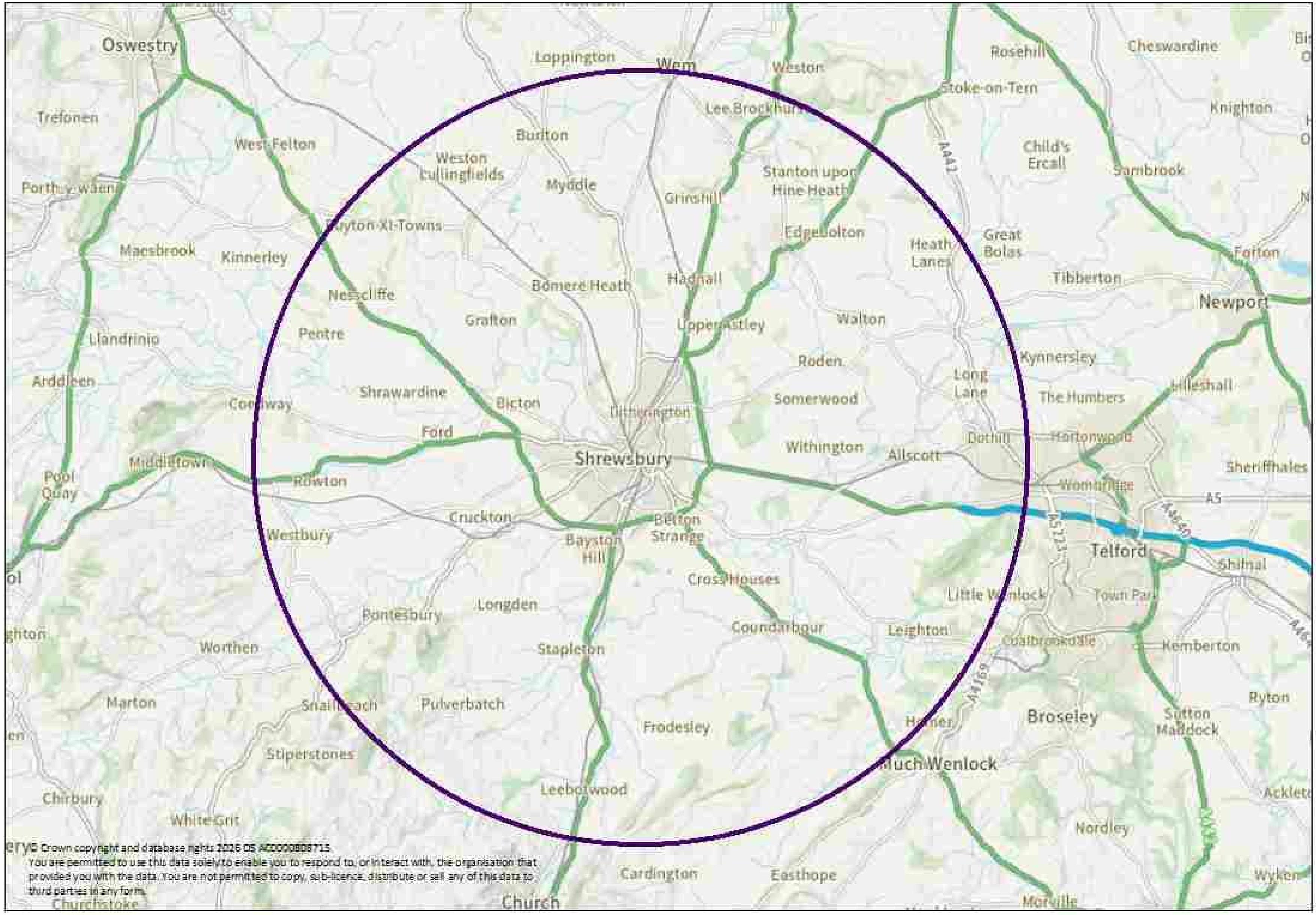
Today, the town has a population of 80,000 (2024 ONS Mid-year population estimates) and 33,900 households (2021 Census). It is more than four times larger than the second ranked Shropshire town (Oswestry). The town's population has grown by 3.9% since 2021, which makes it one of the fastest growing settlements in the county.

As the key county town, Shrewsbury is at the heart of Shropshire's transport network which makes it easily accessible from most other parts of the county. Many of the A roads radiate from Shrewsbury. The A5 London to Holyhead road provides northerly access to Oswestry and North Wales whilst heading east takes in Telford and Staffordshire before continuing on to London. The A49 heads north through Whitchurch on to Cheshire and Warrington, whilst heading south through Church Stretton, Craven Arms, Ludlow and on to Hereford. The A458 heads west to Welshpool and Mid Wales, whilst heading south east to Much Wenlock, Bridgnorth and on to Stourbridge. The A53 starts at Battlefield and heads north east taking in Shawbury and Market Drayton, continuing on to Stoke-on-Trent and Buxton.

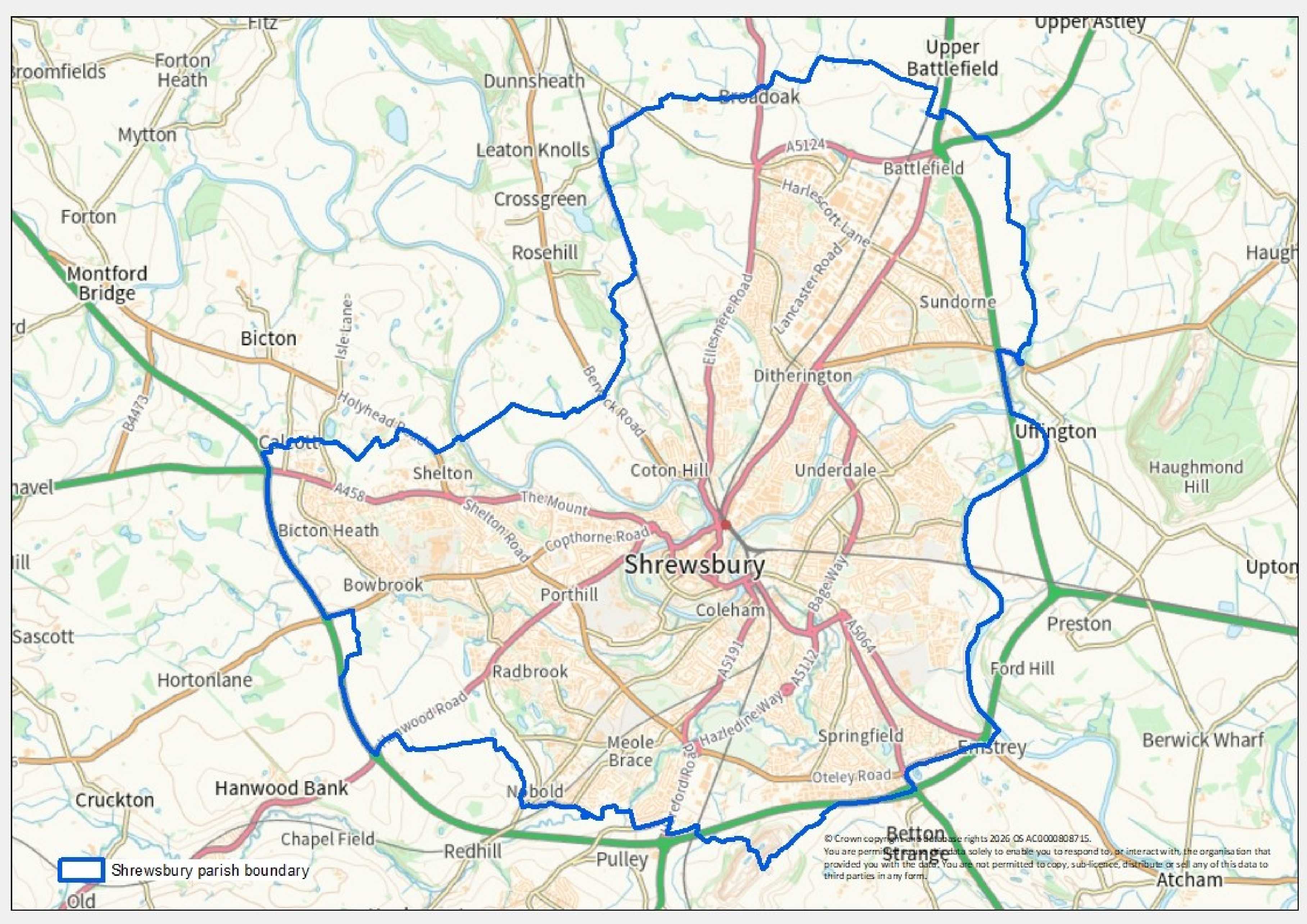
Shrewsbury is a key interchange for train travel in Shropshire. Train services provide direct links southwards to Hereford, Newport and Cardiff, westwards to Welshpool and Aberystwyth, northwards to Crewe and Manchester and to the east to Telford, Wolverhampton and Birmingham. There is also a direct line between Shrewsbury and London.

The total population within a 10 mile radius of Shrewsbury is 155,600. This geography is shown on Map 2. Overall, Shrewsbury town council area (depicted on Map 3) covers an area of 3,799 hectares. The main shopping area (depicted on Maps 3 and 4) is much smaller than this, at around 28 hectares.

Map 2: Location of Shrewsbury showing 10 mile radius



Map 3: Shrewsbury Town Council



Map 4: Main Retail Shopping Area and Survey Boundary

Shrewsbury Businesses and Employment

Shrewsbury is the main employment hub in the county. It is one of the few Shropshire towns that has more jobs than it has resident workers, providing approximately 45,300 jobs across the town council area *(ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, 2024)*. This is the equivalent to more than a third of all jobs in Shropshire. Key sectors include:

- Health (28.6% of jobs)
- Retail (9.9% of jobs)
- Accommodation & Food Services (8.0% of jobs)
- Education (7.5% of jobs)
- Public Administration & Defence (7.3% of jobs)

More than 5,000 businesses have their registered office in the town council area. Outside the town centre, businesses and jobs are concentrated in the business parks and industrial estates on the outskirts of town. These include Battlefield Enterprise Park to the north of the town, Shrewsbury Business Park in the south east, Oxon Business Park in the west and Old Potts Way, which is close to the town centre.

The Retail Offer

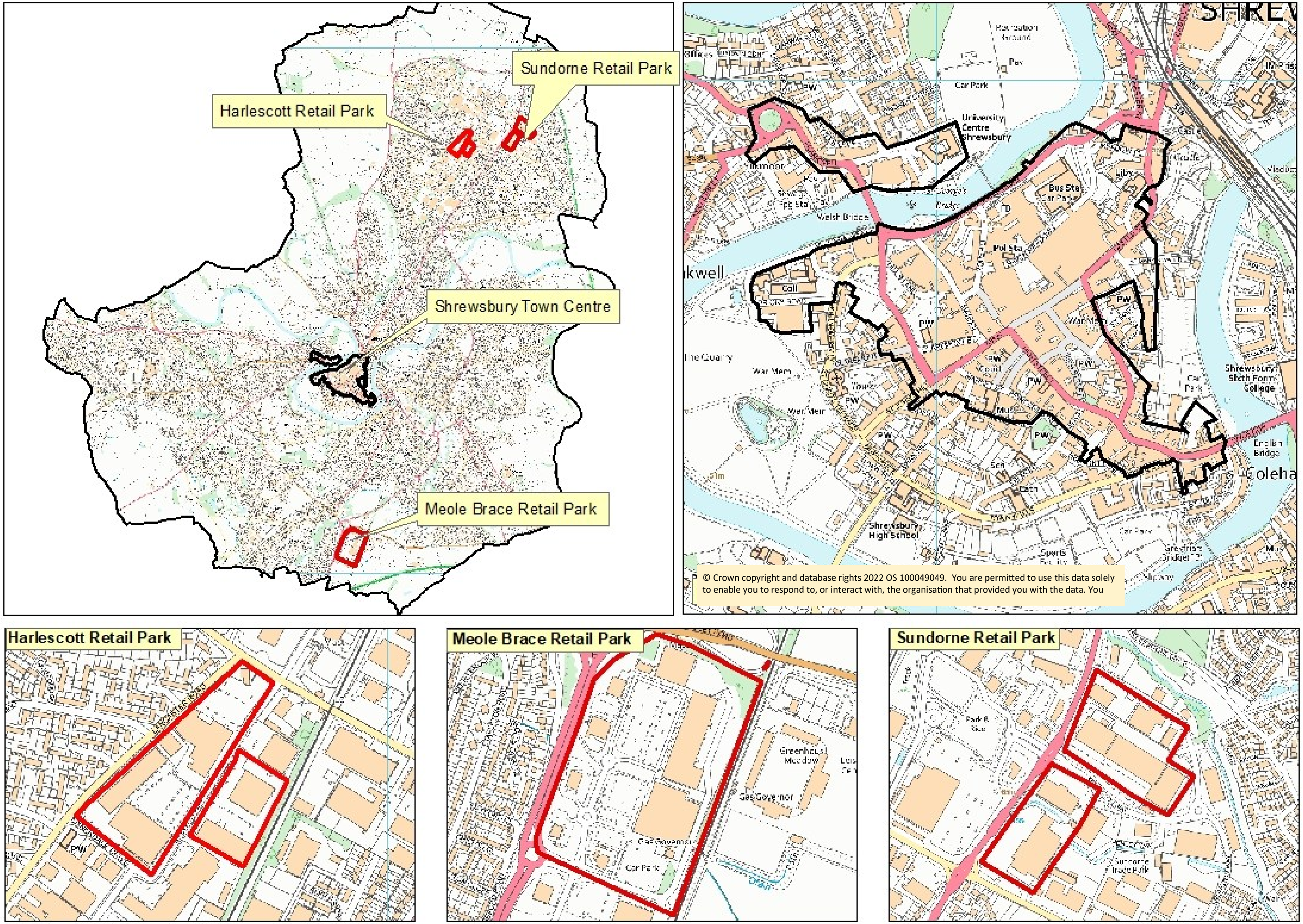
Shrewsbury's town centre retail offer focuses on a mix of independents and national brands, and includes a wide selection of cafés, restaurants and public houses as well as numerous retail, financial and business service providers. The town benefits from an indoor market, for which the main trading days are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. There is late night opening on the first Saturday of the month for special food and drink events in the market hall. A farmers' market is held on the first Friday of the month in the Square.

Outside the town centre, there are three main retail parks as shown on Map 5, plus numerous local shopping parades that serve nearby residents. The three main retail parks are Harlescott and Sundorne, both to the north of the town centre, and Meole Brace, which is to the south.

There are currently three Park & Ride sites that provide easy and regular access to the town centre—these are Oxon to the west, Meole Brace to the south and Harlescott in the north.

Like many cities including Bristol and Manchester, Shrewsbury has been classified by 'The Institute of Place Management' as a **multi-functional, comparison centre** based on its footfall signature.

Map 5: Out-of-Town Retail Parks



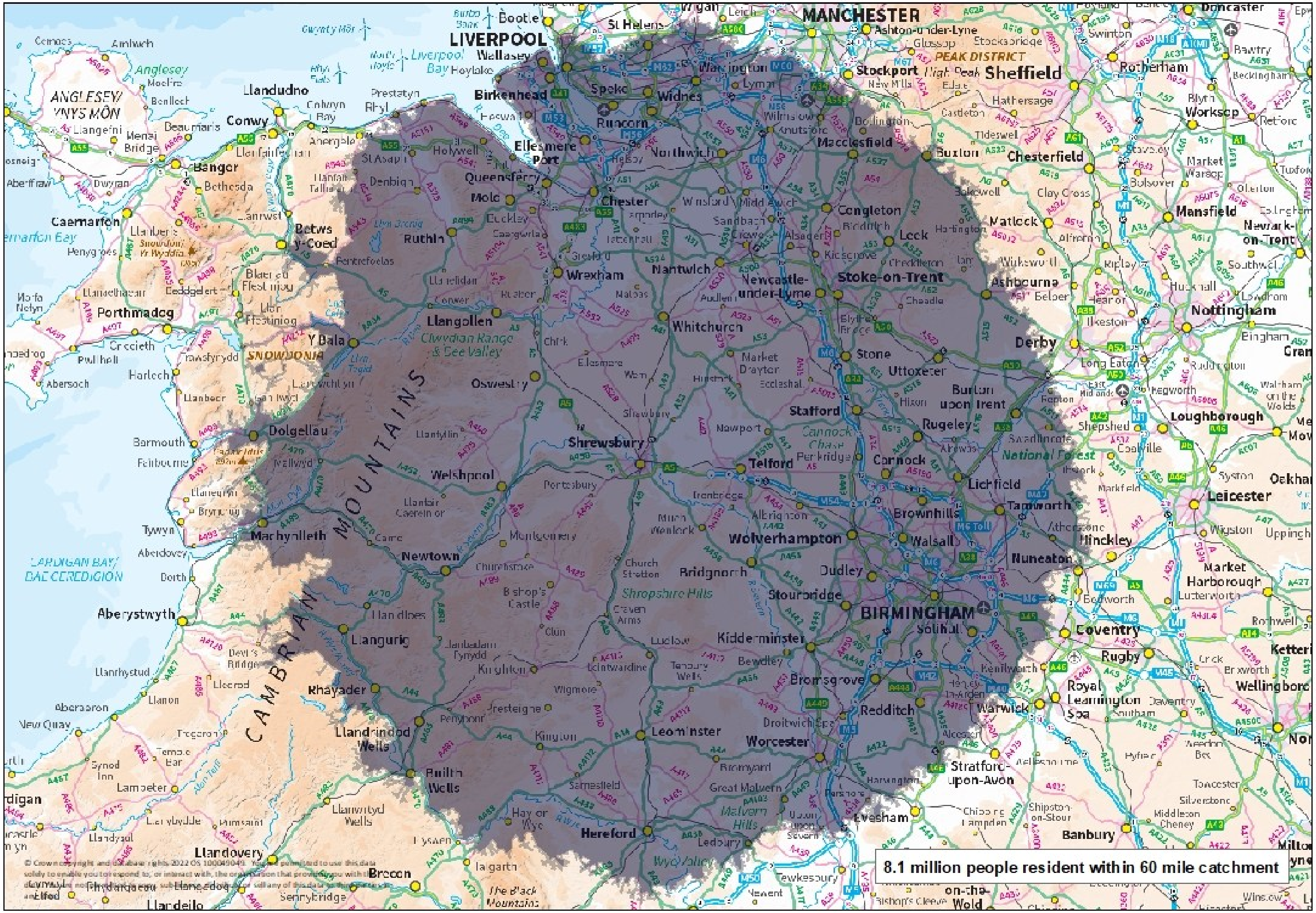
Catchment

Shrewsbury has a large day time population, comprising not only residents that do not work (or work part-time) but also the substantial workplace population (notwithstanding the large number of people who have been home-working since the start of the pandemic).

As a retail centre, Shrewsbury draws footfall not just from residents of the town and immediate surrounding areas and its workday population, but also from further afield, including the rest of Shropshire and mid-Wales. For a Welsh catchment population which stretches to the coast, Shrewsbury is the most easily accessible retail centre (see Map 7) of a reasonable size. Furthermore, Shrewsbury offers a much more extensive range of goods and services than other towns and settlements in Shropshire, particularly in the comparison retail category. This means that Shrewsbury draws shoppers from nearby towns who want more choice and a greater range of goods and services than their own local town centre can provide.

The town's mix of recognisable national brands and unique independent stores attract not just regular shoppers but day trippers as well. Overall, a population of more than 8 million people live within a 60 mile drive of Shrewsbury town centre, as shown on Map 6.

Map 6: 60 Minutes Drive-Time from Shrewsbury



Key Audit Results

A total of 737 commercial business premises are located within the Shrewsbury survey area. These commercial units account for approximately 137,100m^2 of gross floor space. **This includes 22 units (12,200m^2) in the Castle Foregate area that were not included within the audit prior to 2023.**

Chart 1: Location of Businesses Operating in Shrewsbury Town Centre, 2025

	% of Units	% of floor space
Castle Street/Castle Foregate	21.3%	27.0%
Frankwell	7.9%	8.8%
High Street & the Square	18.5%	15.7%
Mardol & Barker Street	22.8%	20.7%
Pride Hill & Centres	13.3%	16.6%
Smithfield Road	3.0%	2.9%
Wyle Cop & Dogpole	13.3%	8.4%

More than a fifth of businesses operating in the main shopping area in Shrewsbury are located in Mardol/Barker Street (23% of units and 21% of gross floor space), with a slightly lower proportion along the High Street and around the Square (19% of units and 16% of floor space). A substantial number of units are located on Castle Street and adjacent streets (21% of units and 27% of floor space). These shares have increased since 2022 with the inclusion of the additional area around the railway bridge. 13% of units are on Pride Hill or in the Darwin Centre. Commercial space has been lost in this area with the closure and subsequent demolishment of the former Riverside Centre.

13% of units (8% of floor space) are in the Wyle Cop/Dogpole area. Smaller numbers of commercial units are located in Frankwell and Smithfield Road, which are on the periphery of the town centre.

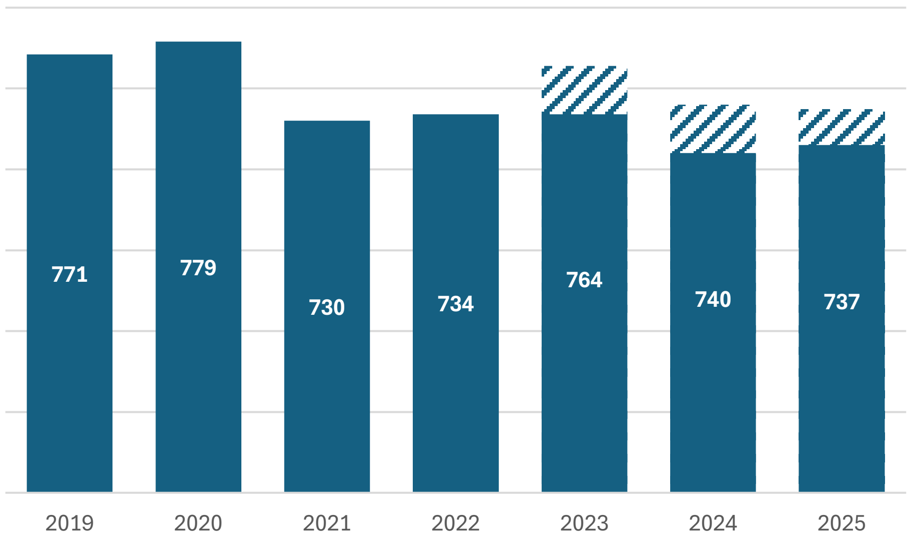
The largest units are located on Pride Hill or in the Darwin centre and in Castle Street/Castle Foregate with an average size of 232m^2 and 236m^2 respectively. Commercial units in Frankwell are also slightly larger than average (207m^2 each on average) while those along Wyle Cop/Dogpole are smaller than average (118m^2). The latter are primarily independent outlets. Outlets along Pride Hill are primarily national chains. Across the town, the average store size is 186m^{2,} which is notably larger than in any other Shropshire town (average 147m^2).

Map 7 shows the above zones, including the new area which has been surveyed in Castle Foregate since 2023.

As well as the town centre and out-of-town retail parks shown on Map 5, there are also clusters of businesses on the outskirts of the town centre which are easily accessible on foot to those visiting the centre of town. These offer a wider range of goods and services than the local shopping parades that primarily serve residents in the immediate locality. These clusters include those located in Longden Coleham and Abbey Foregate.

Map 7: Shrewsbury Town Centre Shopping Zones

Chart 2: Number of Commercial Units in Shrewsbury, 2019-2025



Shaded area represents Castle Foregate, which was not audited prior to 2023

The number of commercial premises in Shrewsbury reduced significantly in 2021, primarily due to the closure of the Pride Hill Centre. 779 commercial premises were recorded in 2020, 49 more than in 2021. As well as the closure of the Pride Hill Centre, there has been some consolidation of space in the Darwin Centre, which has resulted in fewer units (although not necessarily less gross floor space). There was further consolidation in 2022, with a number of outlets merging to form larger units. However, there was an increase in consumer facing businesses operating in non-ground floor premises, and this means that the overall number of commercial premises in the town rose by four to 734. The number of commercial premises within the 2022 survey area remained stable at 734. However, the survey area was extended to include Castle Foregate (see Map 9). The closure of the Riverside Centre between the 2023 and 2024 audits resulted in the loss of 24 commercial units and almost 6,000m^2 of commercial space. The number of units declined slightly in 2025.

Shopping Centres

Repurposing within the town centre means that there is now considerably less commercial space within Shrewsbury's shopping centres than there was in 2020. The Pride Hill Centre, which had 39 units and gross floor space of 10,120m^2 has been shut completely, with many operators relocating to the nearby Darwin Centre. The Riverside Centre has also now closed leaving the Darwin Centre as the main shopping centre serving the town.

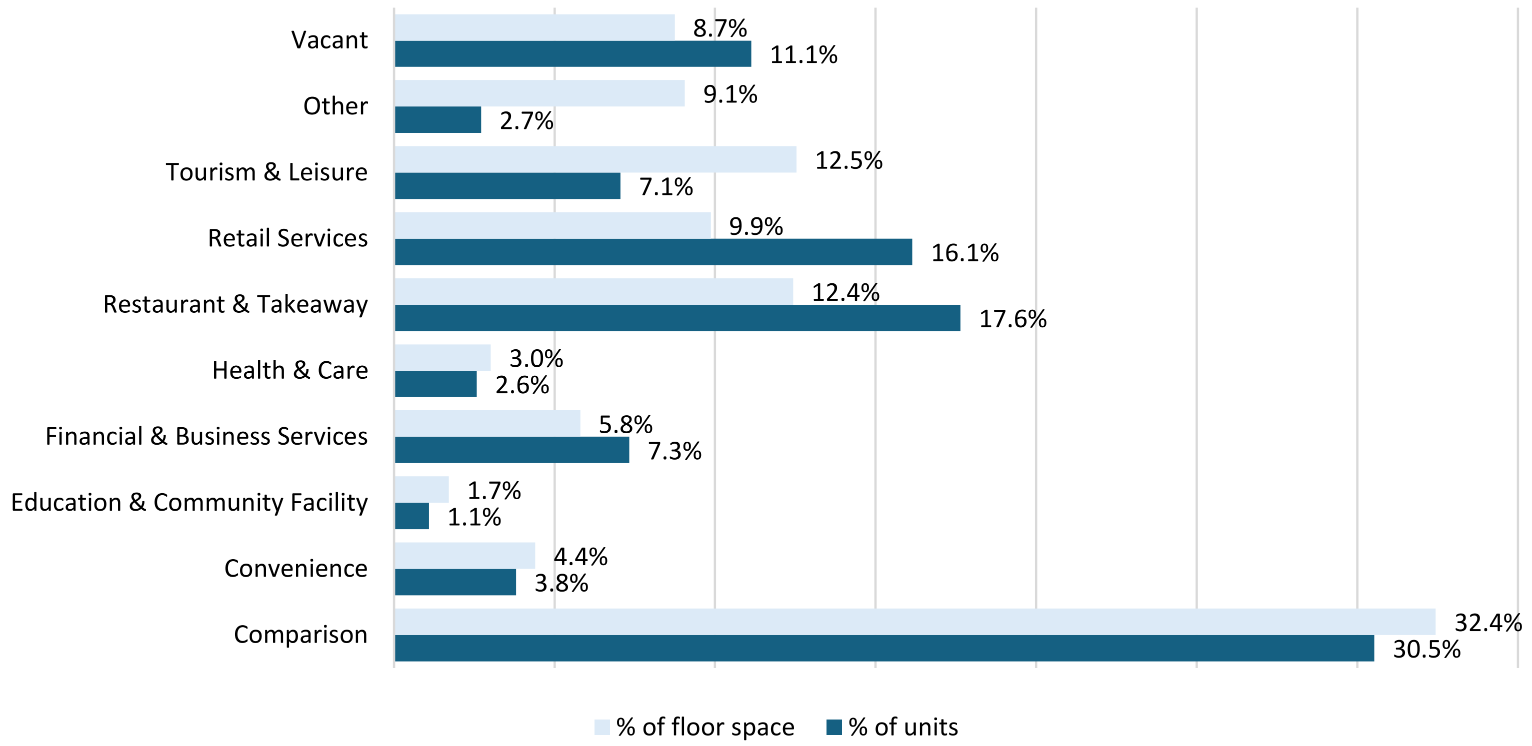
There are currently 44 units in the Darwin Centre, with a capacity of just under 10,700m^2.

Business Classifications

The highest proportion of the town centre is allocated to comparison retail. There are 225 comparison retailers in the main shopping streets, which cover a combined gross floor space of almost 44,500m^2. This is the equivalent of 30.5% of units and 32.4% of space. The second highest share of units is attributable to restaurants and takeaways (17.6% of units), but as these tend to be small in size, they account for a smaller share of space (12.4%). Retail services account for 16.1% of units (9.9% of floor space). 7.1% of units and 12.5% of floor space are allocated to tourism and leisure establishments. 7.3% of units (and 5.8% of floor space) is attributable to financial institutions and professional /business service providers. 3.8% of units are convenience retail, with this classification commanding a similar share of floor space (4.4%). A small amount of the town centre is allocated to education & community facilities and to health and care as well as to other activities (mainly general offices).

Just over one in ten units is vacant (11.1% of units and 8.7% of gross floor space).

Chart 3: Breakdown of Shrewsbury Commercial Premises by Classification, 2025



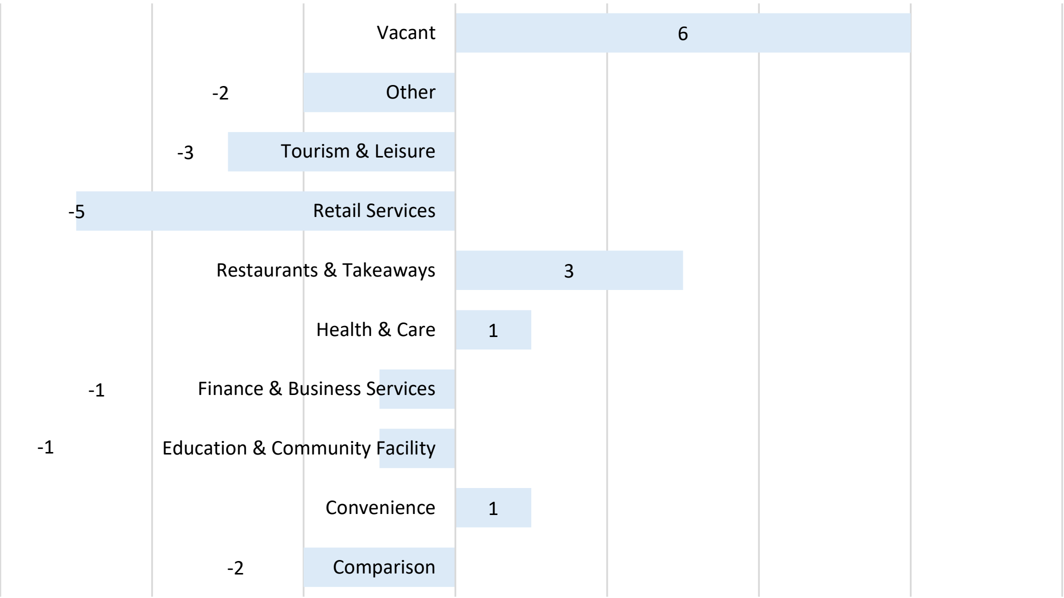
Change since 2024

There has been more change in Shrewsbury town centre since 2019 than in many places, in part because it is a significantly larger centre than any of the others and has the associated level of churn that is attributable to a main shopping destination.

There has also been considerable restructure within the town with the closure of the Pride Hill Centre in 2021 and the Riverside Centre between the 2023 and 2024 audits.

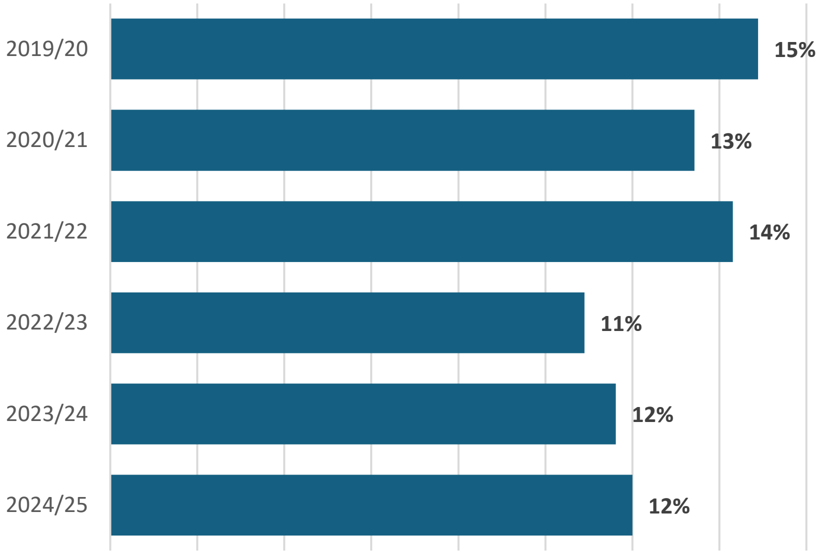
The chart opposite shows change by classification between 2024 and 2025. With the exception of vacant premises, of which there were an additional six in 2025 compared with 2024, increases were recorded against just three classifications—restaurants and takeaways (+3), health & care (+1) and convenience (+1).

Chart 4: Change in Number of Units by Category, 2024/25



In contrast, the number of retail services operators has fallen by five and there were three fewer tourism & leisure businesses than there were in 2024. The comparison retail offer reduced by two units, while there was one fewer finance & business services business and one fewer education/ community facility.

*Chart 5: Level of Business Churn 2019-2025**

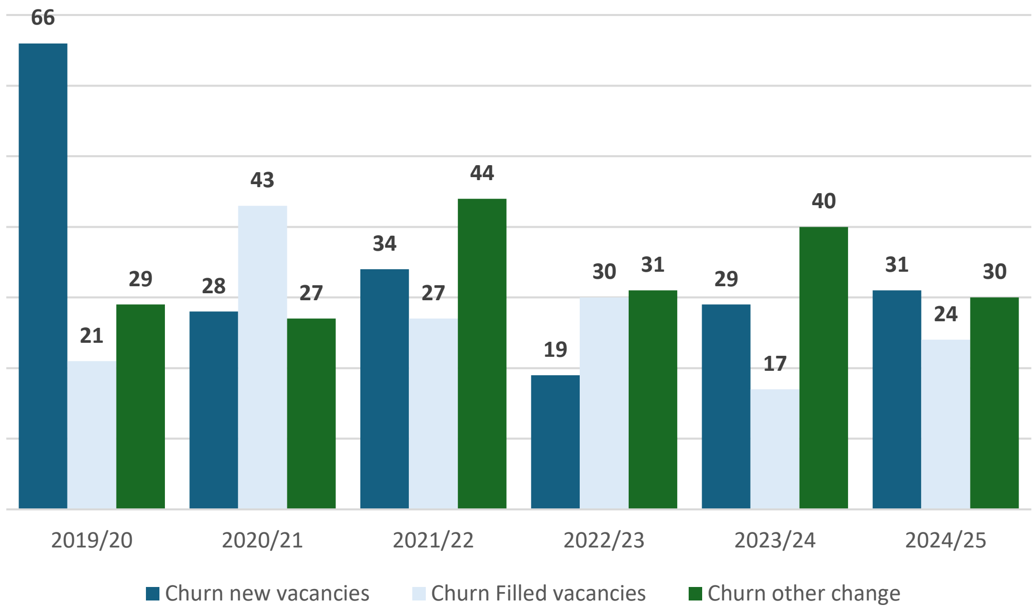


* 2022/23 excludes extended survey area

36% of all churn in 2025 arose as a result of new vacancies, with 28% being attributable to businesses taking occupancy of previously vacant premises. The proportion attributable to new vacancies is higher than it has been in the preceding five years.

Overall, 85 businesses in Shrewsbury town centre changed between 2024 and 2025, which is the equivalent of a churn rate of 12%. This level of churn remains unchanged over the previous year and compares with churn of 11% between 2022 and 2023, 14% between 2021 and 2022, 13% between 2020 and 2021 and 15% between 2019 and 2020. The churn rate has been lower than the average for Shropshire since 2022, but notwithstanding this, change in Shrewsbury accounted for a quarter of all change that took place across the county over the last year.

*Chart 6: Breakdown of Business Churn 2019-2025**



* 2022/23 excludes extended survey area

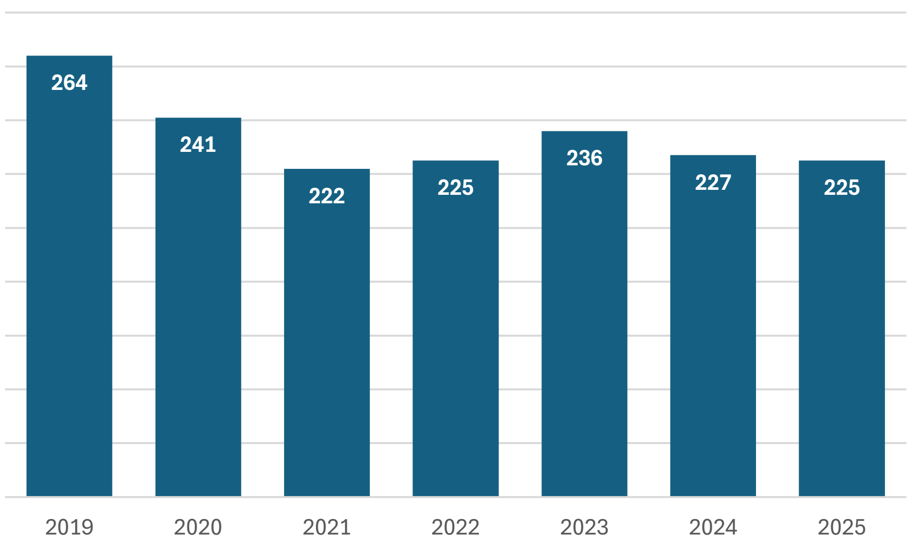
Comparison Retail

The largest proportion of commercial units and space is dedicated to the comparison retail category, accounting for 30% of units and 32% of gross floor space. The number of stores operating is 225, which is 39 fewer than in 2019 (a 15% decrease). The range of different comparison good stores is wide—there is a choice of store in most sub-classifications. There is also a balance between independents and national chains. Shrewsbury is a location which attracts mid market and higher end chains due to its relatively affluent local population and its strong visitor economy but it also accommodates a range of lower end mass market and discount stores. It is a destination which attracts shoppers looking for comparison goods and this continues to be the case despite some reduction in offer in recent years.

With the exception of Ludlow, Church Stretton and Whitchurch, comparison retail accounts for a higher proportion of commercial units in Shrewsbury than anywhere else in the county.

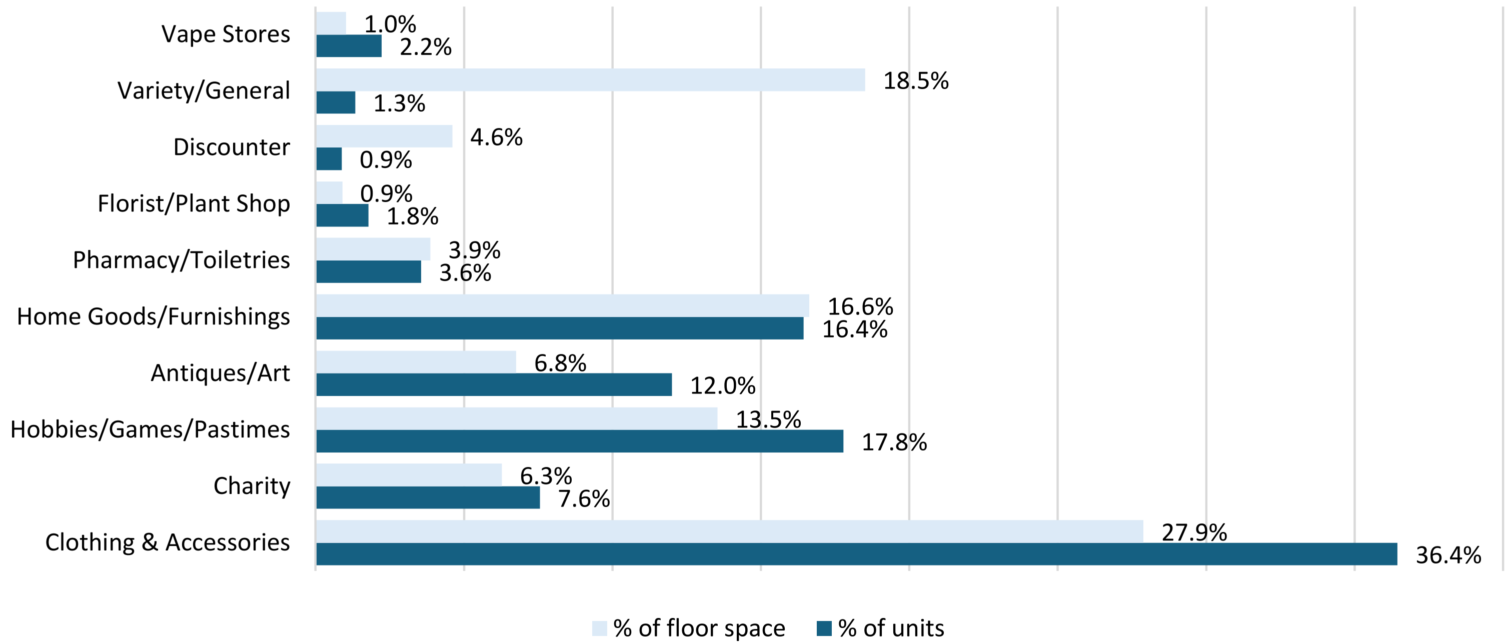
The following chart shows the breakdown of the comparison sector by broad classification. The highest proportion of the comparison offer is designated to clothing and ancillary products.

Chart 7: Number of Comparison Retail Units, 2019-2025



Shaded area represents Castle Foregate, which was not audited prior to 2023

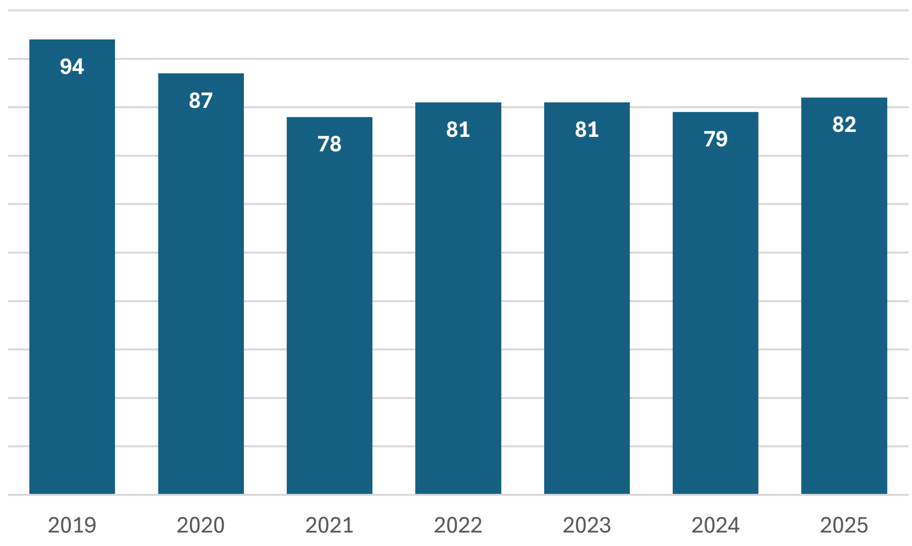
Chart 8: Breakdown of Comparison Retail by Type, 2025



Clothing and Accessories

Clothing and ancillary merchandise accounts for more than a third of all comparison stores in Shrewsbury, as well as 28% of gross floor space. This is the equivalent of 11% of all Shrewsbury commercial units. Within the clothing and accessories sector, there are bespoke men's, women's and children's clothes stores, unisex clothes stores, shoe shops, jewellery stores and stores selling a broader range of accessories (not just jewellery). Despite the range of stores operating, the sector has contracted since 2019 with 12 fewer stores trading. Since 2021, however, the sector has been largely stable and the offer increased slightly in 2025 with the net addition of three units.

Chart 9: Number of Clothing & Ancillary Product Stores, 2019—2025



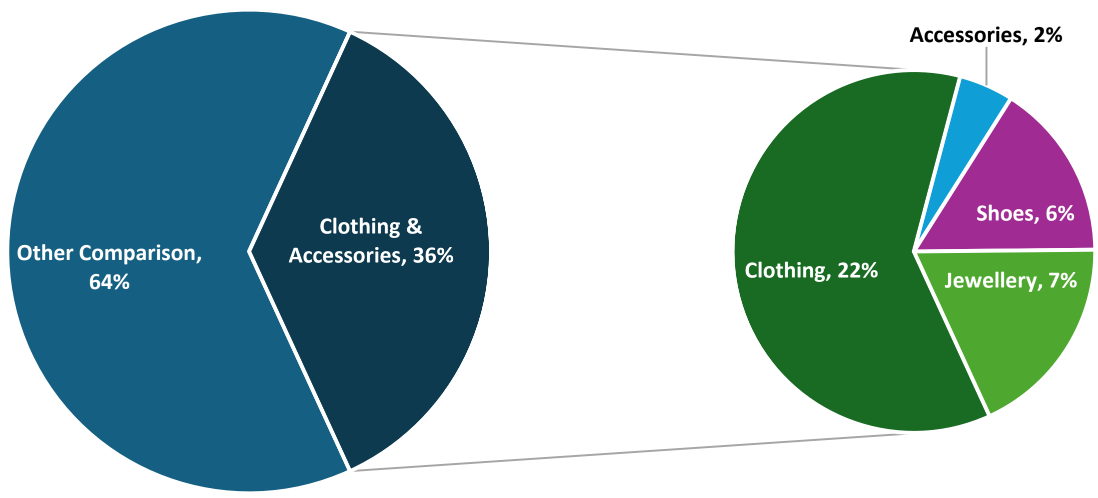
One in five comparison stores in Shrewsbury town centre is a clothes shop. 6% are shoes shops, 7% sell jewellery and 2% specialise in accessories.

Shrewsbury is clearly a location where people come clothes shopping, and there is a range of outlets from mass market (Primark, H&M, New Look) to mid-market chains (including Sea Salt, White Stuff, Jigsaw, Fat Face, French Connection). Common High Street brands such as Moss Bros and Majors are also represented. In total, there are 50 specialist clothes stores covering combined gross floor space of around 9,000m^2. Marks and Spencer (classified as a variety store) also sells clothes. There was one more clothes store operating in 2025 than there was in 2024.

There are a number of independent shoe stores as well as chains Clarks and Sketchers. Altogether, there are 13 shoe shops, covering a total of 1,900m^2 gross floor space. There was one more shoe shop in the town in 2025 compared with 2024.

There are 15 specialist jewellery stores in the town centre. These include national chains (H Samuel, TH Baker, Pandora for example) as well as several independents. The number of jewellery stores increased by one in 2025 compared with 2024.

Chart 10: Breakdown of Clothing & Ancillary Product Stores, 2025



Hobbies and Games

There are 40 commercial units in Shrewsbury town centre specialising in the sale of goods related to hobbies and games, down from the 48 units which were trading in 2019. There was an upturn in the number of stores of this type trading in 2023, with four additional units operating compared with 2022 but the number fell back down to 41 in 2024 with an additional outlet lost in 2025. This sub-classification covers approximately 6,000m^2 of gross floor space. Within the comparison goods classification, hobbies and game stores account for 18% of units and 14% of floor space. Overall, this type of store accounts for 5% of commercial outlets in the town.

Chart 11: Number of Hobby/Games Stores, 2019—2025

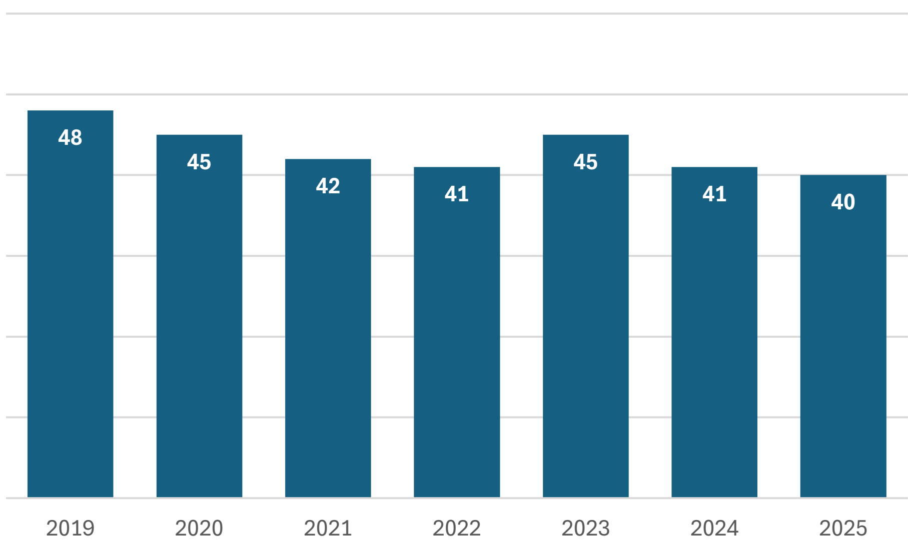
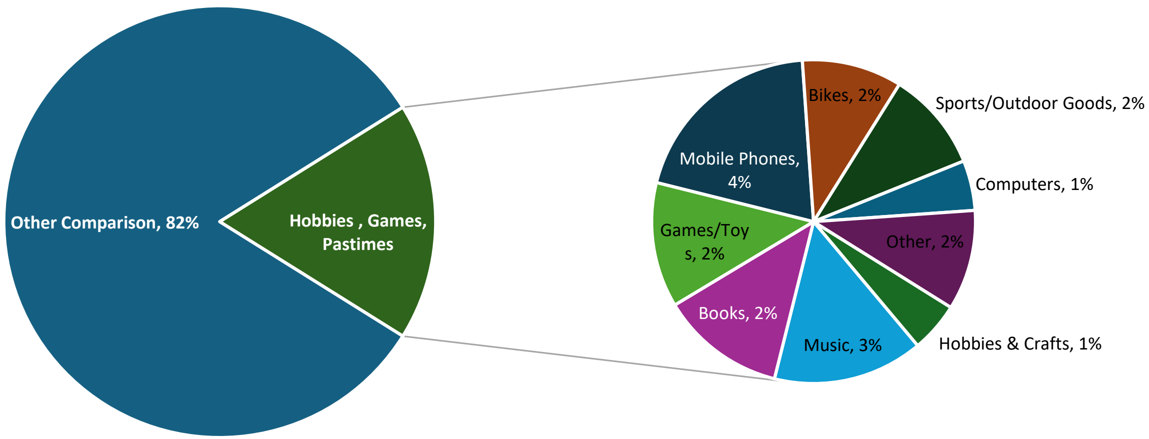


Chart 12: Breakdown of Hobby & Game Stores, 2025



There is a wide variety of stores classified under the hobbies and games banner. There are five book shops (including a branch of chain store Waterstones) and eight mobile phone stores (including O^2, EE, Three and Vodaphone). Mobile phone stores are clustered around Pride Hill. There are five shops selling games and toys (traditional and electronic) and six purveyors of music products, CDs and DVDs. There are four shops selling bicycles and cycle accessories. Two of these are in the Frankwell area.

Other stores in this classification include sports goods, outdoor goods, DIY products, arts & crafts and computer shops.

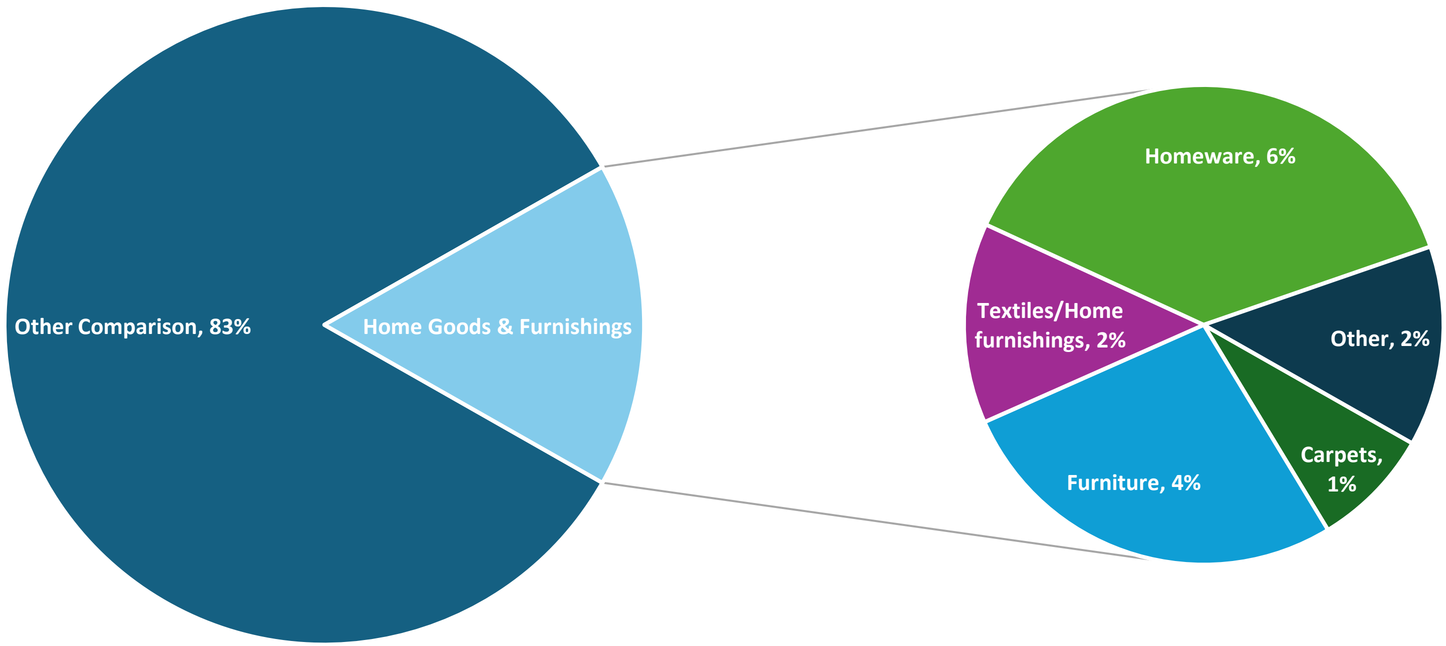
Household Goods

There are 37 stores in Shrewsbury town centre selling household furniture, goods and equipment. These cover approximately 7,400m^2 of gross floor space. This is the equivalent of 16% of all comparison units in the town and a similar share of floor space (17%). 5% of all units in the town are dedicated to home products. The number of stores in this classification fell by one in 2025 compared with 2024.

There are 10 furniture retailers in the town centre, with a cluster of furniture stores in Wyle Cop.

There are also 14 stores selling products for the home (excluding large appliances, furniture and textile related products). These sell a range of products from cookware to glass and chinaware. There are five textile/soft furnishings stores (six less than in 2024) and three shops selling carpets and/or rugs. Other stores included within this category are a domestic appliance provider, an ironmongers, a light fitter, picture frame sellers and a door and window specialist. Many of Shrewsbury's household goods stores—especially those selling furniture or large appliances—are located out of town.

Chart 13: Breakdown of Home Goods and Furniture Stores, 2025

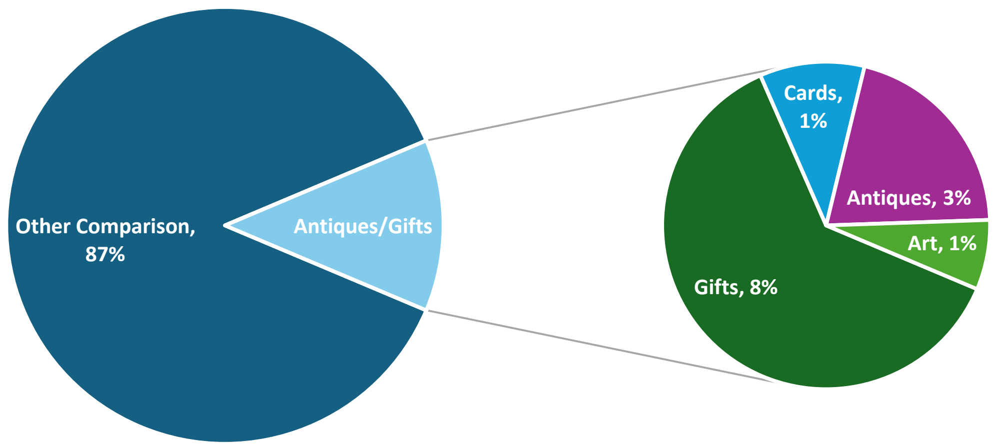


Antiques/Gifts

There are 27 commercial units selling antiques, art, gifts, greetings cards or stationery, and together these account for just over 3,000m^2 of floor space. This is the equivalent of 12% of all comparison stores and 7% of all floor space within the comparison category.

There are 16 gift shops, five antique shops, three art shops/galleries and three card shops/stationers. Antique stores tend to be located at the periphery of the town centre. Most stores in this classification are independent, although there are branches of the card retailers Card Factory and Clintons. Two gift shops closed in 2025 and there was one fewer antiques dealership. However, an additional arts store opened.

Chart 14: Breakdown of Antique/Gift Stores, 2025



Charity Shops

There are 17 charity shops in Shrewsbury town centre, with these accounting for around 2,800m^2 of floor space. These account for 8% of all comparison goods stores and for 6% of floor space. Overall, 2.3% of all commercial units in Shrewsbury town centre accommodate charity stores. The number of charity stores fell by one in 2025 compared with 2024. The majority of stores represent national charities (Scope, British Heart Foundation, Save the Children, Oxfam, etc) but there are also some local charities in the mix (Shrewsbury Ark, Shropshire Cat Rescue, Severn Hospice). There is a cluster of charity shops on Mardol.

Discounters

There are two discount stores in Shrewsbury town centre. These stores are significantly larger than average, accounting for almost 1,000m^2 each. Overall, discounters account for 5% of comparison floor space. The discounters are national brands—Home Bargains and Poundland. The latter took over the premises of the former branch of Wilko. The Catalogue Surplus Store closed between the 2023 and 2024 audits.

Personal Care

There are eight stores offering personal care products, covering 1,700m^2 of floor space. These include four pharmacies (including Boots and Superdrug) and a number of cosmetics and toiletries outlets (including The Body Shop and L'Occitane).

Other

Other stores in the comparison goods category include two variety stores offering a range of goods (Marks and Spencer and WH Smiths, the latter also incorporating a post office service) four florists and five vape stores.

Convenience Retail

There are 28 convenience stores within the main shopping area of Shrewsbury. The number of units and level of floor space allocated to this category is low, with the focus much more on comparison rather than convenience. The majority of Shrewsbury's convenience offer is outside the town centre. The offer has reduced since 2019, albeit with a slight increase of one unit in 2025. Overall, the offer has contracted by around a quarter since 2019. In 2025, convenience retail represented 4% of the overall Shrewsbury town centre offer in terms of the number of units and floor space. This is lower than in any other Shropshire town surveyed.

Map 8: Location of Shrewsbury's Main Out-of-Town Convenience Stores

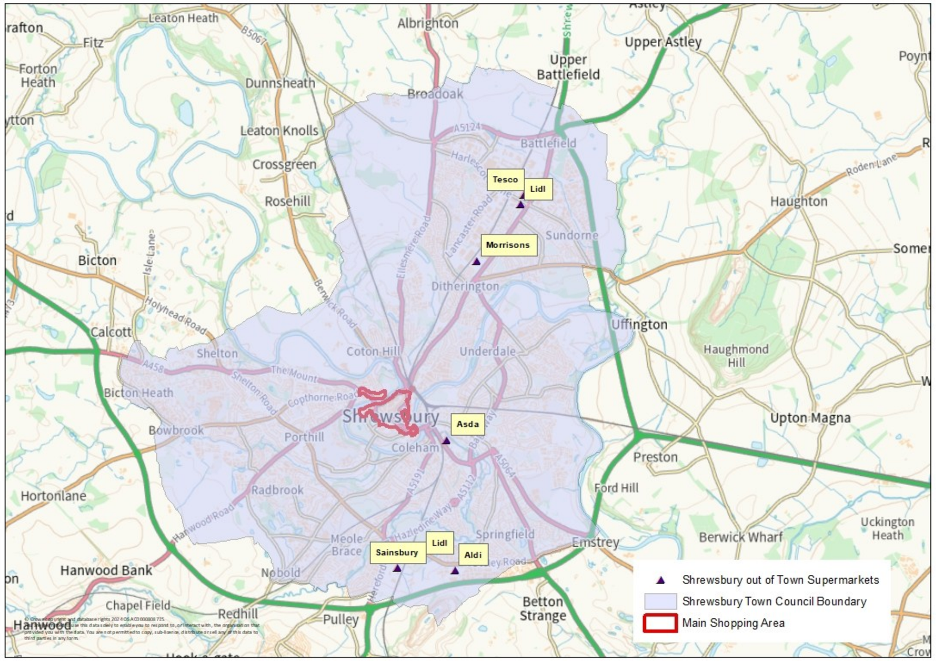
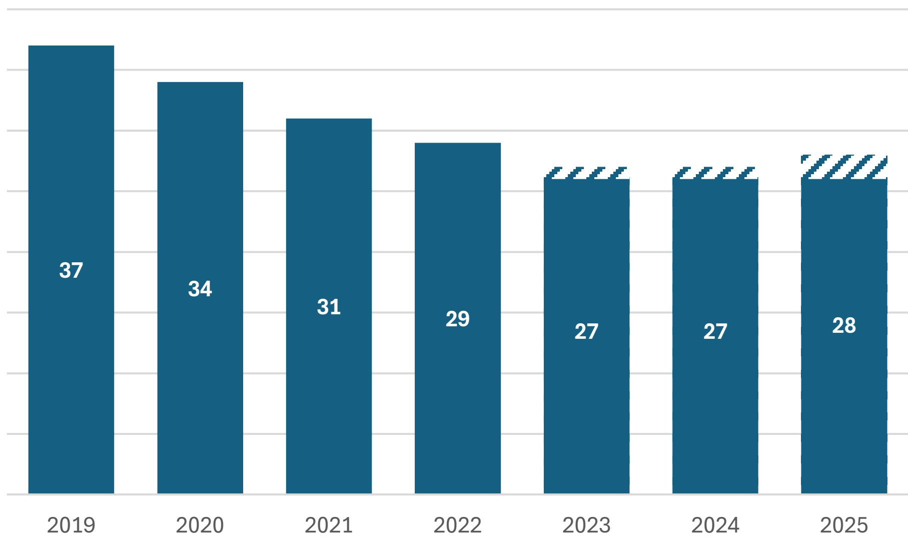


Chart 15: Number of Convenience Stores, 2019—2025



Shaded area represents Castle Foregate, which was not audited prior to 2023

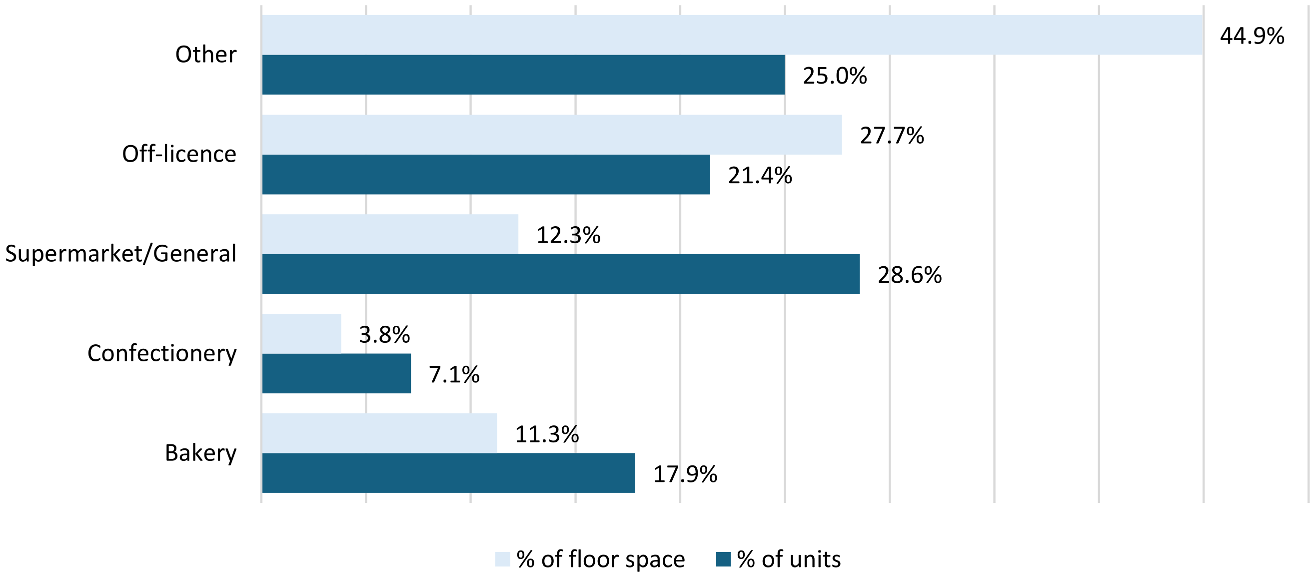
The town does benefit from a large indoor market which offers a range of convenience and other products; individual stall holders are not included within these totals.

At the time of the audit, the main supermarket convenience offer within the town centre was Tesco Express.

Outside the central shopping area, as shown on the adjacent map, the town benefits from a Tesco Extra, Morrisons and Lidl to the north of the town centre. Asda is located just east of the town centre, while the south of the town is served by a Sainsbury's, an Aldi and a Lidl.

As well as the supermarket, the town centre is also home to seven other general food stores (four of which have opened since 2023), five bakeries, two confectioners and six off-licences. There is also a health food store, a delicatessen, a greengrocer, a coffee bean shop, a tobacconist and a newsagent. There is also an indoor market, which accommodates numerous stalls, including a wide variety of convenience products. This enhances the overall convenience offer within the town centre. The variety store Marks & Spencer also has a food department.

Chart 16: Breakdown of Convenience Stores by Type, 2025



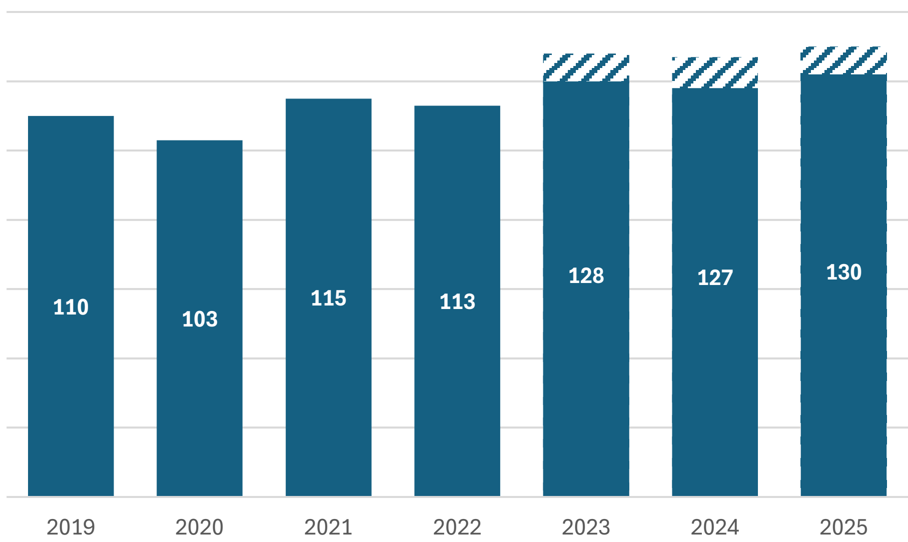
Most operators in the convenience retail category are independent, although the chains Greggs, Hotel Chocolat and Holland & Barrett are all present. Greggs incorporates a small café as well as selling bakery products.

Restaurants & Takeaways

18% of units in Shrewsbury are attributable to restaurants and takeaways, with this category accounting for a lower proportion of gross floor space (12%). The 130 units equates with floor space of around 17,000m^2. The representation of restaurants and takeaways in Shrewsbury is higher than any where else in the county except Cleobury Mortimer.

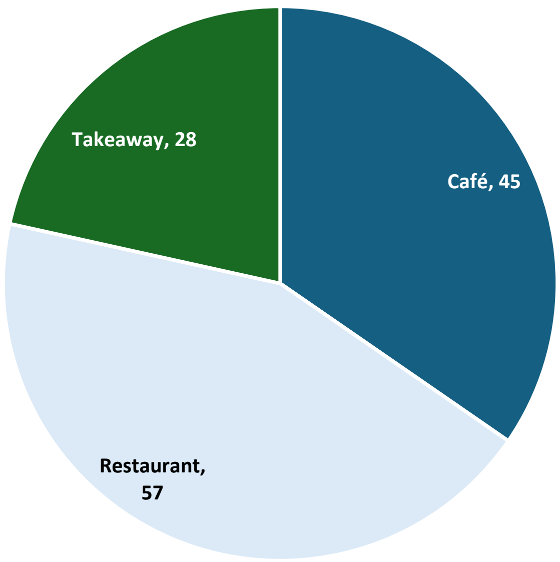
While the number of units in this classification fell by seven in 2020 compared with 2019 (-6%), the sector has subsequently recovered strongly, with a net addition of three traders in 2025. There are eight units in the Castle Foregate area that was not surveyed prior to 2023.

Chart 17: Number of Restaurant/Takeaway Units, 2019-2025



Shaded area represents Castle Foregate, which was not audited prior to 2023

Chart 18: Breakdown of Restaurant/Takeaway Units by Type, 2025



Units are split between cafés (35%), restaurants (44%) and takeaways (22%). Takeaways account for a lower share of floor space (14%) while restaurants have a disproportionately high share of floor space (56%). There is a cluster of takeaways in the additional survey area in Castle Foregate.

A very wide variety of cuisines are represented within the Shrewsbury restaurant sector, including British, European, Chinese, Indian, Italian, Japanese and Thai. There are also several restaurants specialising in vegan food. Although the majority are independent, there are a number of chains, including Ask, Pizza Express and Cote Brasserie. A number of chain restaurants, including Carluccio's and Loch Fyne closed between 2019 and 2020 but independents have emerged to take their place

Within the takeaway sector, there is a large number of sandwich bars which serve the workday population. There are also, amongst others, fish & chip shops and pizza shops. Within the café sub-sector, most are independent, although there are branches of Costa, Caffe Nero and Starbucks.

Tourism & Leisure

The number of businesses operating within the tourism & leisure arena in Shrewsbury town centre rose from 48 in 2022 to 55 in 2023 (although five of these are located in the newly audited Castle Foregate area). This number remained unchanged in 2024 but declined by three in 2025. The classification now accounts for 7% of all commercial units in the town centre. Units in this classification tend to be large, and as such accounted for 13% of gross floor space in 2025.

Within the hospitality sector, there are 27 public houses and bars. These take up approximately 6,100m^2 gross floor space, the equivalent of 4% of all floor space in the town. In addition, Shrewsbury accommodates a number of other tourism and leisure facilities, including eight hotels/guesthouses. Some of the public houses may also offer overnight accommodation. Most of the smaller hotels/guesthouses are independent; however, there is a Premier Inn in the town centre, as well as the Shrewsbury Hotel, which is part of the Wetherspoons' chain.

The town has gained a B&B in the centre of town since 2022.

There are three health clubs/gyms (two less than in 2024) as well as a number of entertainment venues, including a museum, a theatre, a cinema, a night club and a bingo hall.

Just outside the town centre boundary are other important tourism assets for the town, including Shrewsbury Castle and Regimental Museum, the Quarry Park, the Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Shrewsbury Abbey.

Chart 19: Number of Tourism & Leisure Operators, 2019-2025

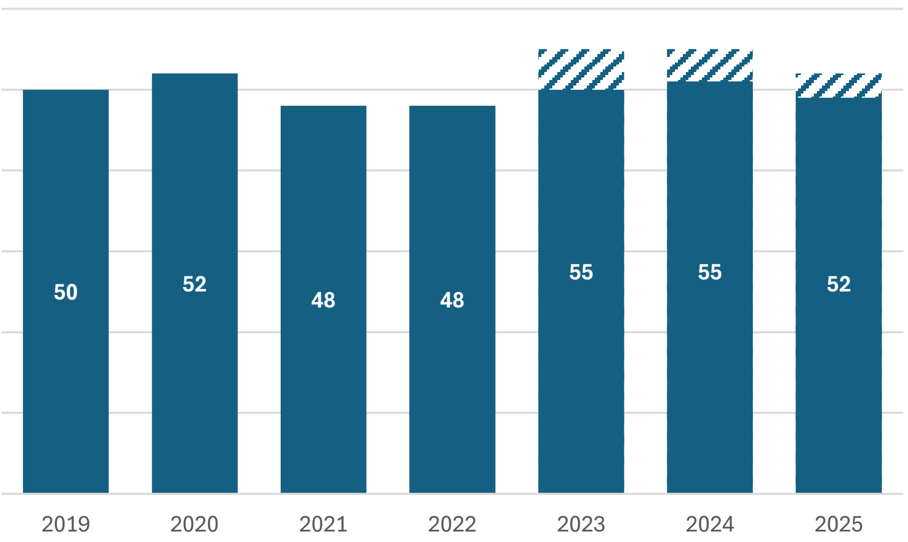
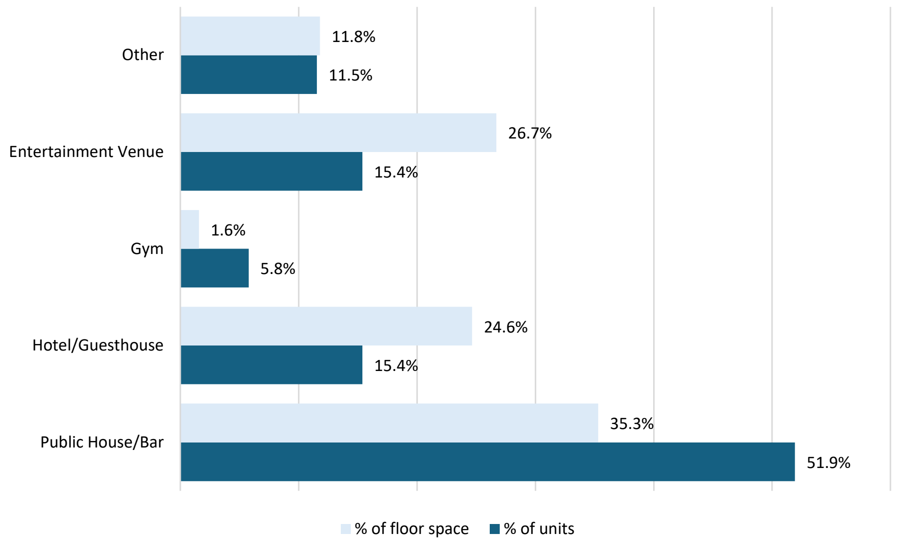


Chart 20: Breakdown of Tourism & Leisure Operators by Type, 2025



Finance & Business Services

There are 54 commercial operators in the finance, professional and business services sector in Shrewsbury town centre, accounting for approximately 7,900m^2 of gross floor space. This represents an decrease of one since 2024. Included within this classification are nine banks/building societies (Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds, Nationwide, Halifax, West Brom, Nat West, Principality, Santander). The Shrewsbury branch of the TSB closed between the 2021 and 2022 audits. There are also 18 estate agents/property services providers, four financial service providers, four solicitors and two accountants. Also represented within the town are architects, a cash broker, insurance brokers, printing services, surveyors and consultancies. With the exception of banks/ building societies, this classification is under-represented in Shrewsbury: in part this is because many businesses have relocated from the town centre to out-of-town premises on business parks.

Chart 21: Breakdown of Finance & Business Services by Type, 2025

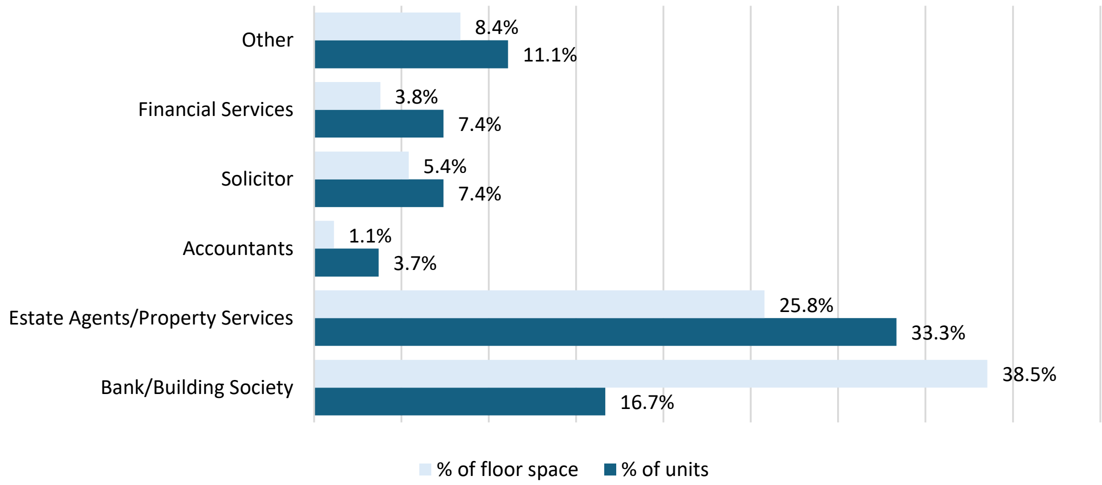
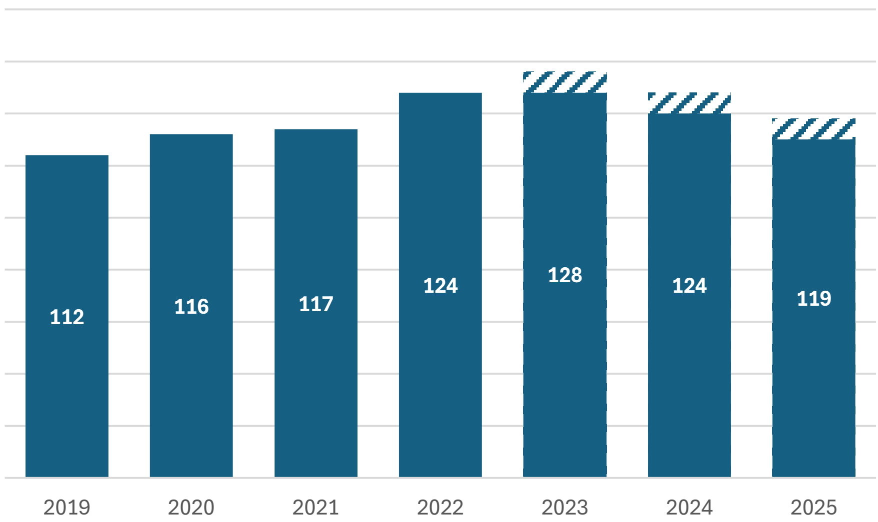


Chart 22: Number of Retail Service Units, 2019-2025



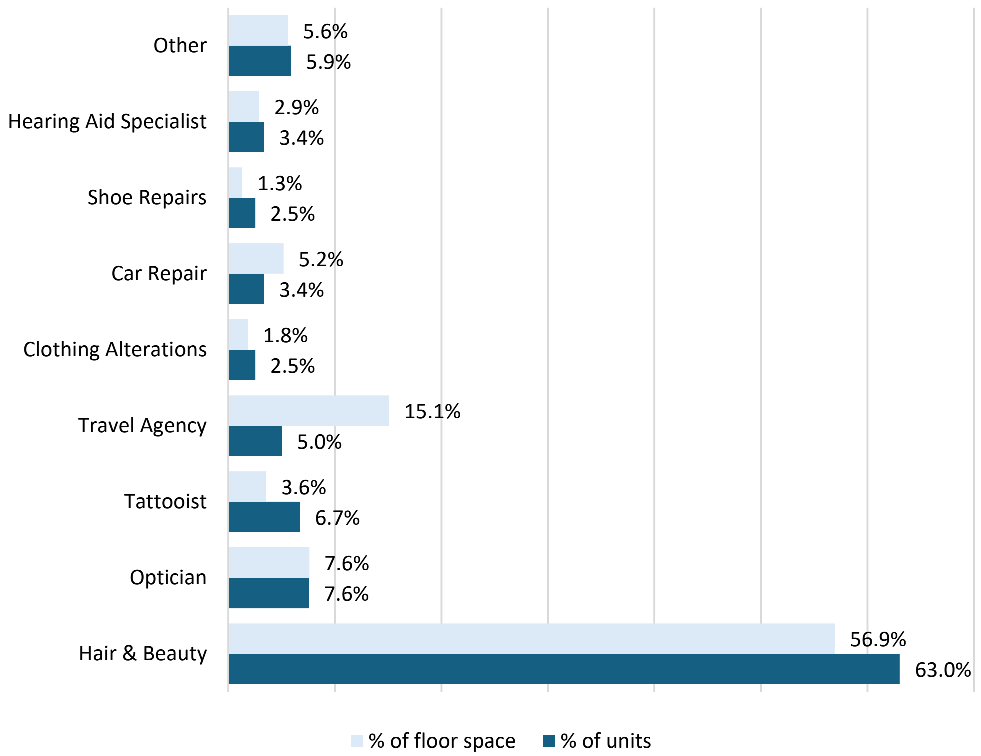
Shaded area represents Castle Foregate, which was not audited prior to 2023

Retail Services

There are 119 retail service businesses operating in Shrewsbury town centre, with these accounting for over 14,000m^2 of gross floor space. Of the 119 units, 115 are located within the original study area (and four are in Castle Foregate).

Despite an overall reduction in the number of commercial units in the town centre since 2020, the number offering a retail service increased steadily between 2019 and 2023, before declining by four units in 2024 and by a further five in 2025. In 2025, retail services accounted for the third highest proportion of commercial units behind comparison retail and restaurants & takeaways, taking a share of 17%.

Chart 23: Breakdown of Retail Services by Type, 2025



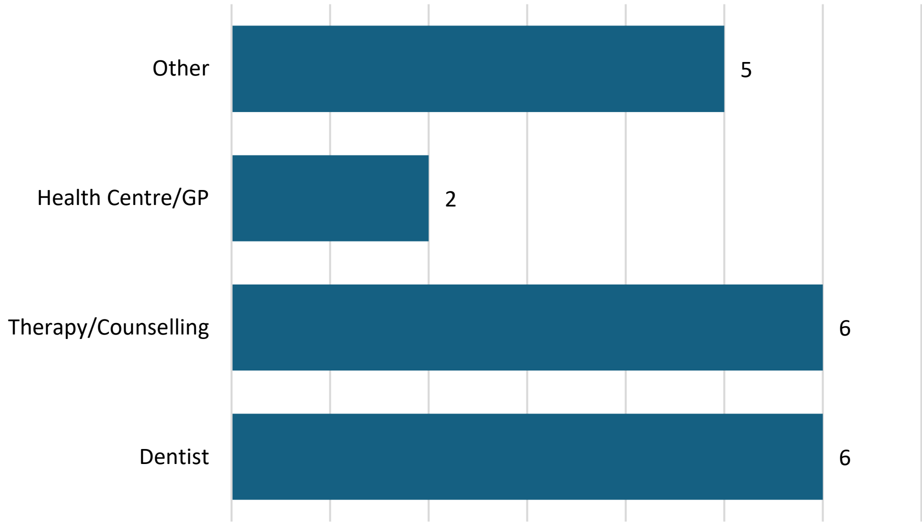
Although the range of services provided is wide, a very high number of operators are in the barber and hair/beauty salon classification, with these together representing 63% of units and 57% of floor space. There are 61 hair dressers/beauty salons and 14 barbers. The majority are independent, although there are branches of Toni & Guy, and Franscesco's (a small local chain). In addition, there are nine opticians (including the chains Vision Express, Boots and Specsavers), six travel agents (one new in 2024), eight tattoo parlours, three shoe repairers and three stores offering clothing alterations.

Other operators include a bookmaker, funeral director, computer repairs, a nursery and photography.

Health

There are 19 premises accommodating health care practitioners, taking up around 4,100m^2 of floor space. There are six dentists, six offering counselling services and two medical centres/GP surgeries. There is also a massage parlour, a footcare specialist, an advice centre, an acupuncturist and an osteopath.

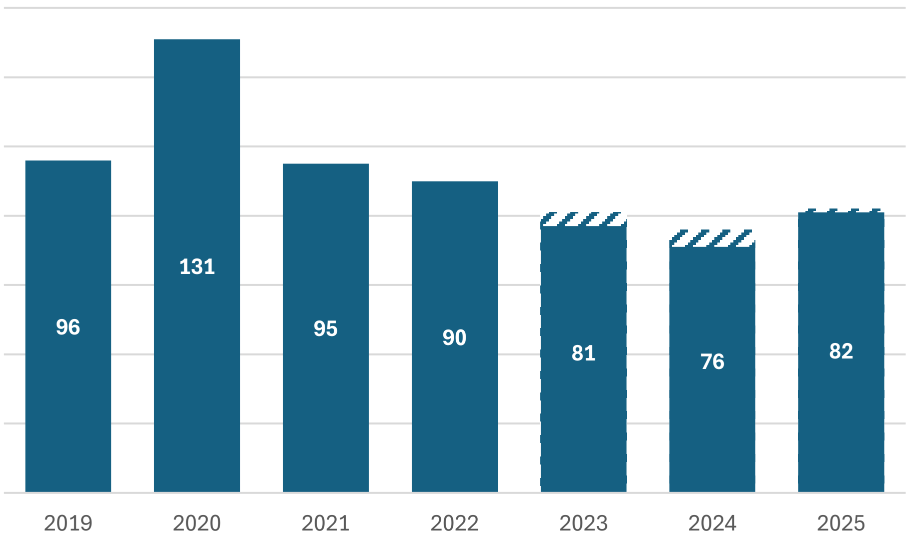
Chart 24: Number of Health Care Providers by Type, 2025



Vacant Units

At the time of the September 2025 audit, there were 82 vacant units in Shrewsbury, accounting for around 12,000m^2 of gross floor space. This is the equivalent of 11% of units and 9% of floor space. This rate compares with the Shropshire average and is much lower than the national average, which stood at 13.5% in the third quarter of 2025 according to BRC (based on high street figures only). In addition, the number of vacancies has fallen significantly over the last four years from 131 vacant premises at the peak of the pandemic in 2020. There were 36 fewer vacant premises in 2021 and the tally dropped by a further five in 2022. In 2023, the number fell by a further nine (by 13 in the original survey zone, but offset partially by four vacant units in Castle Foregate). A further reduction in vacant units was recorded in 2024 (five fewer than in 2023) but there has been a slight uptick of six units in 2025. The closure of the Pride Hill Centre and the Riverside Centre and ensuing decrease in the amount of commercial space in the town will have accelerated the overall reduction in empty premises as some previously vacant units are no longer classified as commercial. Prior to its closure almost all units in the Riverside were unoccupied. Businesses locating from the Pride Hill Centre to other parts of the town will also have pushed the overall vacancy level down.

Chart 25: Number of Vacant Units, 2019-2025



During the pandemic, the county town was particularly impacted by the higher presence of chains than other towns in Shropshire, with a number permanently closing. During 2021 and 2022, a number of independents opened to take their place. Historically, units have not tended to stay vacant for long, particularly along Wyle Cop. Business churn tends to be higher in the shopping centre, particularly as they often attract seasonal stores.

38% of all vacant units in Shrewsbury in 2025 had become unoccupied since the audit took place in 2024. 13% of units have been vacant since 2020 when the town was significantly impacted by the pandemic.

Six stores in the town have been vacant since at least 2019 (7% of all current vacancies).

The largest long-standing vacant premise is the old House of Fraser store along the High Street, which has been unoccupied since January 2019. This is also the largest vacant premise in the town.

Chart 26: Vacancy Rates by Zone, 2025

Shopping Zone	Vacancy Rate	% of all Shrewsbury Vacancies
Castle Street	12.7%	24.4%
Frankwell	6.9%	4.9%
High Street & The Square	9.6%	15.9%
Mardol & Barker Street	12.5%	25.6%
Pride Hill & Darwin Centre	9.2%	11.0%
Smithfield Road	22.7%	6.1%
Wyle Cop & Dog Pole	10.2%	12.2%

The table opposite shows the location of Shrewsbury vacant premises by zone (see Map 7). The highest proportion of vacant commercial premises in Shrewsbury are located in Mardol & Barker Street (25.6%) ahead of Castle Street/Castle Foregate (24.4%) and High Street and the Square (15.9%).

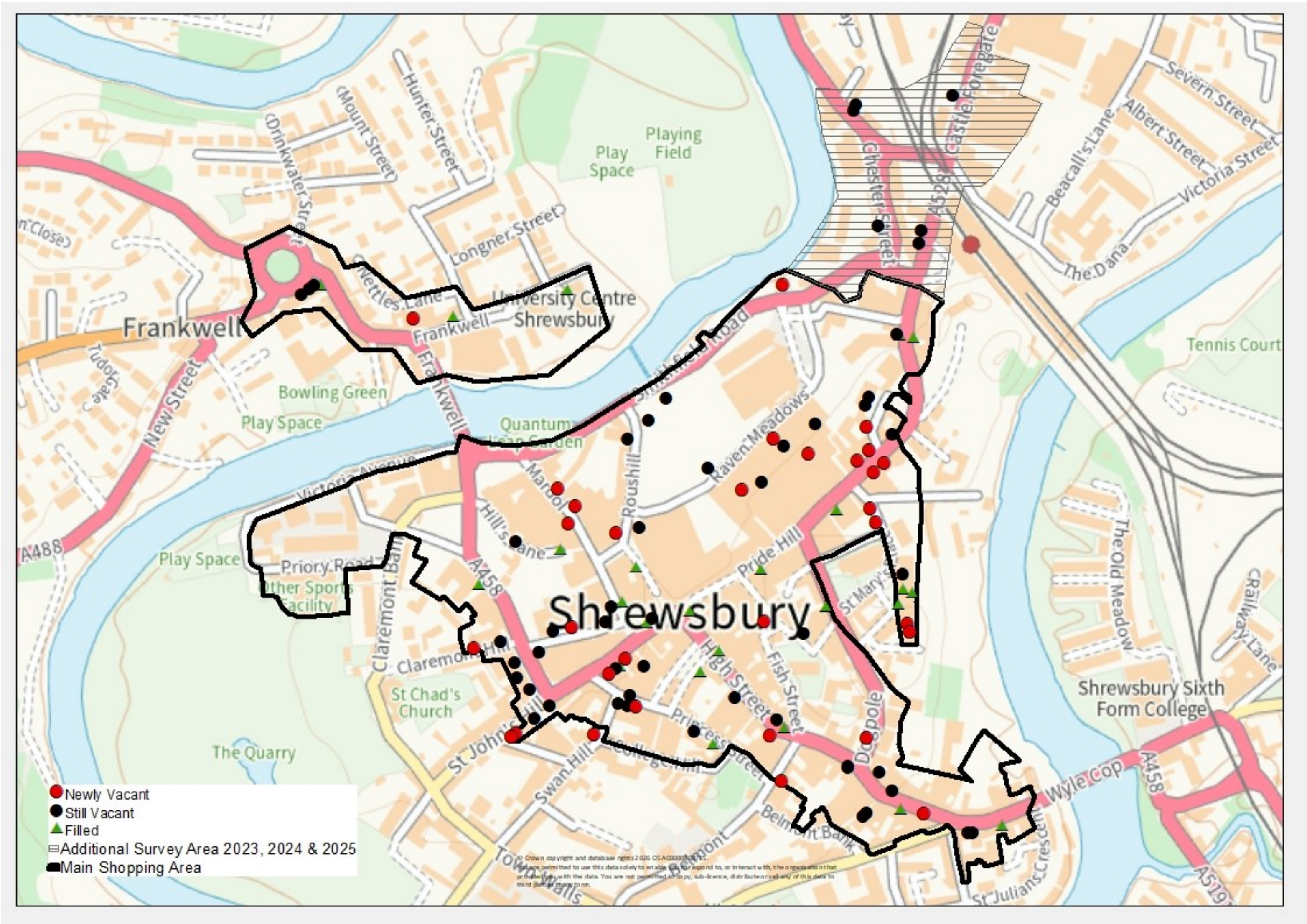
In terms of vacancy rates, the proportion of units that are unoccupied is highest in Smithfield Road at 22.7%. The vacancy rate is also higher than the Shrewsbury average in Castle Street and around average in Wyle Cop & Dog Pole. Frankwell, High Street and Pride Hill & the Darwin Centre all have a vacancy rate of less than 10%.

Map 9: Location of Vacant Commercial Premises, 2025

Please note: Shopping centre vacancies not plotted with accuracy

Of the 82 premises that were unoccupied in 2025, 31 had become vacant since 2024 while 51 were already unoccupied in 2024. 24 units that were vacant in 2024 had become filled by 2025.

Map 10: Change in the Number & Location of Commercial Units, 2024-2025



Please note: Shopping centre vacancies not plotted with accuracy

Residential Premises

Although the town centre is predominantly a commercial zone, there is also a significant amount of residential property within the main shopping centre. In total, 1,074 residential premises are located within the scope of the audit (including the extended survey area in Castle Foregate). The majority are flats (972 or 91%). These are largely located above retail or other commercial outlets. There are 89 terraced houses in the area, which is the equivalent of around 9% of all housing stock in the town centre. There are clusters of terraced housing in Frankwell and also around Castle Street. Semi-detached and detached premises account for less than 1% of town centre housing stock. Not surprisingly, there is an absence of residential property in the very centre of the town along Pride Hill and in the vicinity of the shopping centre. Overall, the number of residential premises within the main Shrewsbury shopping area has been increasing slightly year-on-year and rose by one in 2025.

Map 11: Location of Residential Premises in Shrewsbury Town Centre

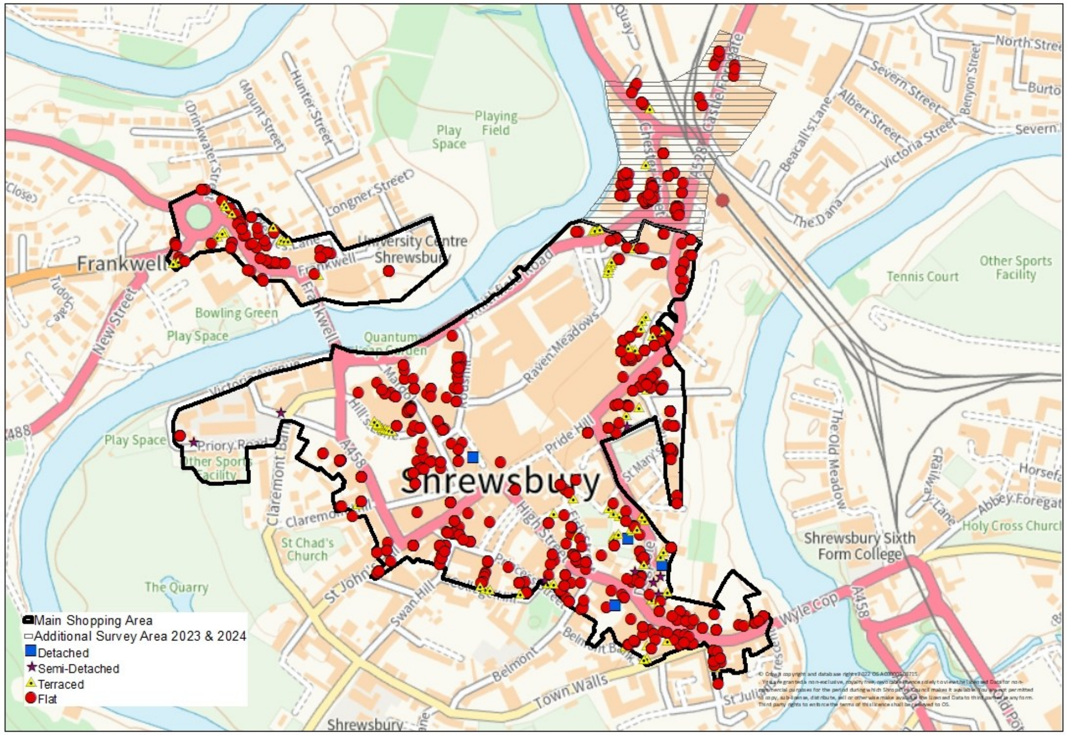


Chart 27: Breakdown of Residential Properties by Type