

Broseley: Town Centre Audit Analysis, 2023



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Introduction

An audit of businesses operating in Broseley's main shopping streets was undertaken in September 2023 as part of an on-going piece of research reviewing the vibrancy of Shropshire's main market towns and key settlements. Broseley centre was first audited in July 2019 and then again in September 2020, 2021 and 2022. 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
- 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, and through 2020 and 2021 the coronavirus pandemic has 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 has also impacted people's spending power.

Key Findings

- 46 commercial units, occupying 4,700m² gross floor space
- Amongst the smallest centres in Shropshire, accounting for less than 2% of all Shropshire High Street traders (only Cleobury Mortimer & Highley smaller)
- Lower than average number of stores per head of population at a rate of 8 units per 1,000 population (13 across Shropshire)
- Average store size 102m²—much smaller than average for Shropshire (147m²)
- 85 residential premises in the main shopping area, giving a ratio of 0.5:1 commercial versus residential properties
- Broseley had a very low churn rate in 2021 at just 4%. This compares with a rate of 15% in 2020. By 2022, the level of churn was up to 13% and by 2023 to 17%.
- The overall number of commercial premises has decreased since 2019, with five former business properties being converted into residential accommodation between 2019 and 2020.
- 13% of all commercial premises were vacant in 2023—this is the same as the previous year and remains higher than the Shropshire average
- Retail services and comparison retail account for the largest share of business premises

Methodology Statement

Only the main retail centre of the town was surveyed, as shown on Map 4.

Both retail and non-retail businesses will be operating in other parts of the town.

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 2022 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 Address Base (complete version) 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.

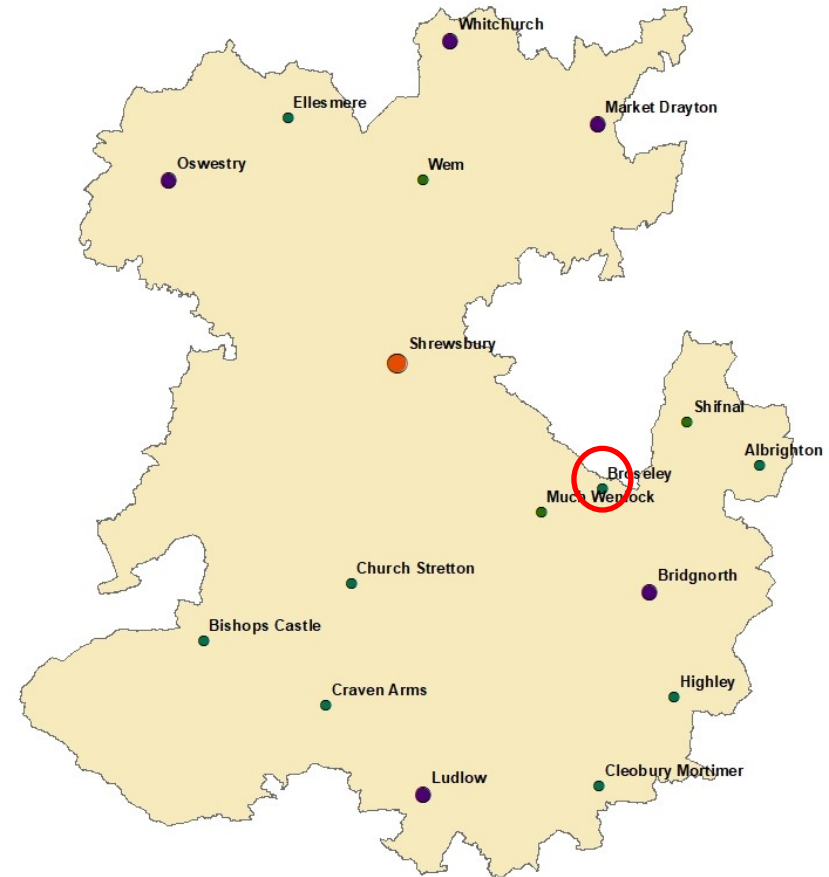
However, not all centres have comparable functions. Larger centres tend to attract workers and shoppers from much further afield than smaller centres, and consequently offer a much greater volume and variety of retail trade and consumer and business services.

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

Broseley is one of the smallest retail centres in Shropshire, with fewer than 50 commercial premises.

Map 1: Shropshire's Main Retail Centres



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About Broseley

Broseley is a small market town located in the east of Shropshire. The town's origins can be traced back before the Domesday register. Originally a small agricultural area, it became a thriving area during the industrial revolution. Located along the southern bank of the River Severn, the famous Iron Bridge was built to link Broseley to Coalbrookdale. Today it has a population of 5,095 and 2,281 households (2021 Census). Its population has increased marginally (by 3.4%) since 2011. It is currently the ninth largest settlement in Shropshire.

Broseley is located three miles to the west of the A442, which provides access north to Telford Town Centre and to the M54 (nine miles) and south to Bridgnorth (six miles). Taking the M54 westbound leads to Shrewsbury, while the West Midlands conurbation is to the east. The nearest mainline railway station to Broseley is Telford Central (eight miles).

The total population within a 10 mile radius is approximately 212,500.

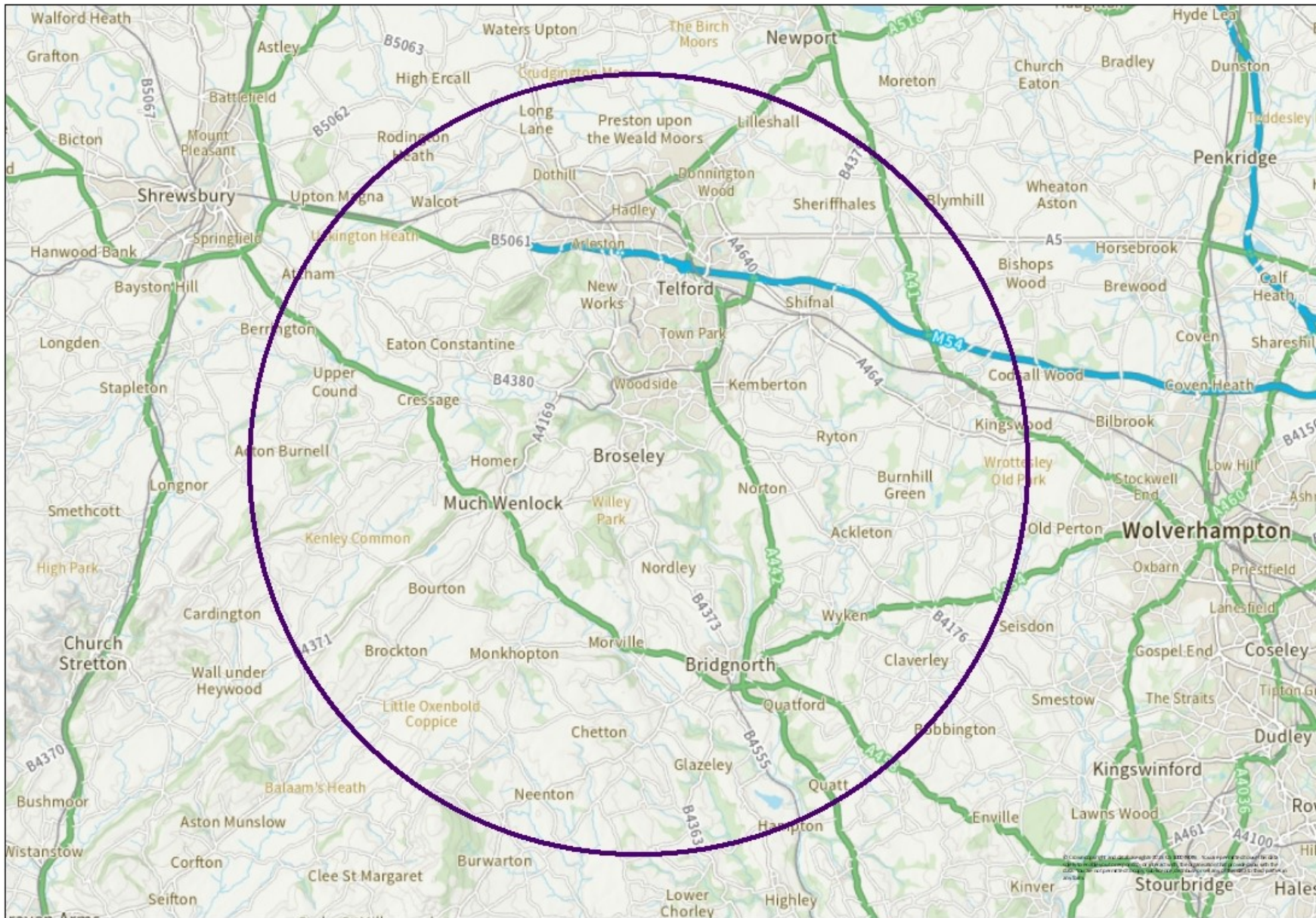
Broseley provides approximately 1,100 jobs across the town council area (ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, 2022). A significant proportion of local residents work outside the immediate local area, and as such the town is not one of Shropshire's key employment hubs. Key sectors include:

- Manufacturing (36.4% of jobs)
- Education (10.0% of jobs)
- Accommodation and Food Services (9.1% of jobs)
- Wholesale (7.3% of jobs)
- Retail (6.4% of jobs)

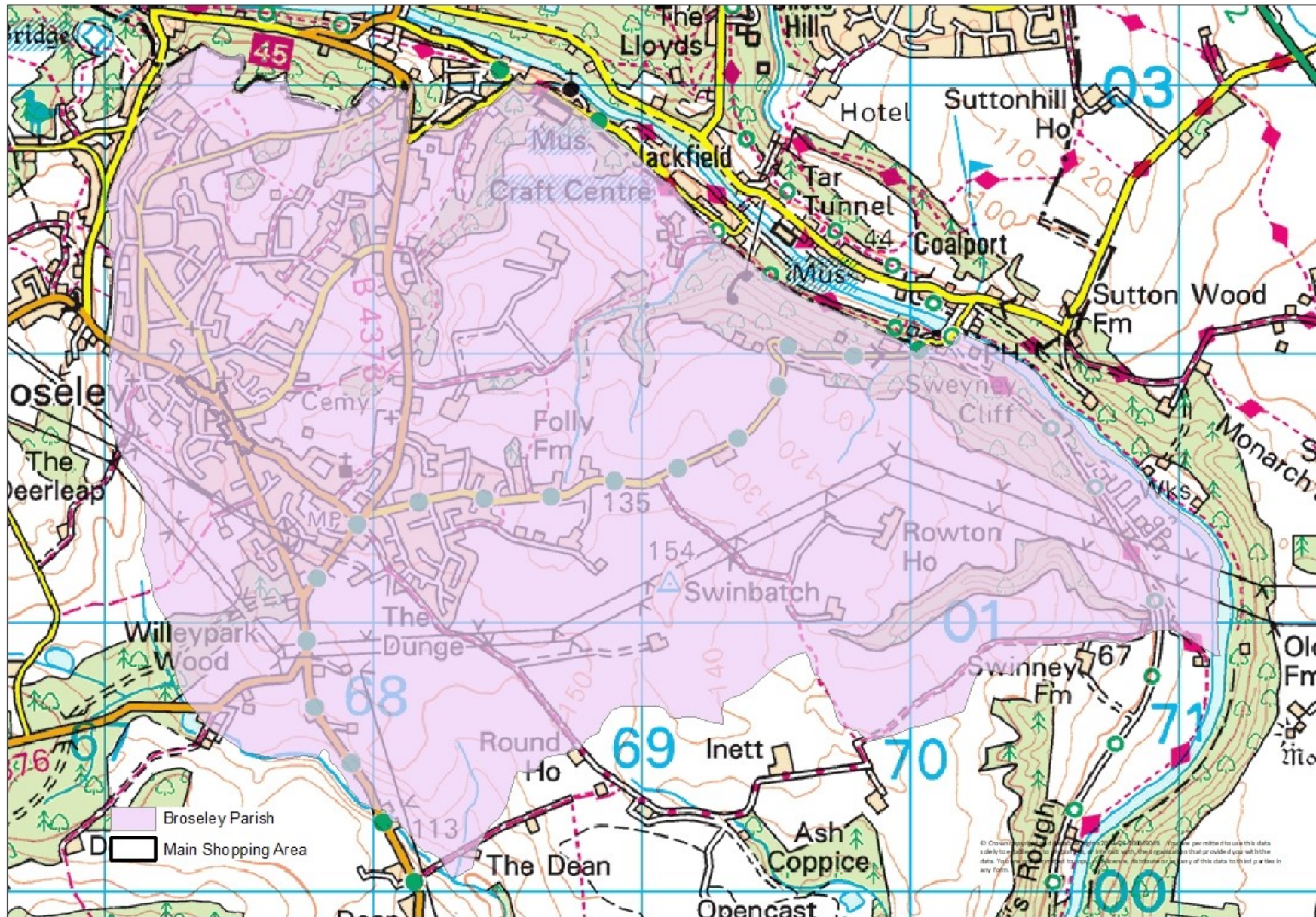
Overall, Broseley town council area (depicted on Map 3) covers an area of 741 hectares. The main shopping area (depicted on Map 4) is much smaller than this, at around 2 hectares.

The town comprises predominantly independent retail and there is a significant amount of residential housing stock in the main shopping area of the town.

Map 2: Location of Broseley showing 10 mile radius



Map 3: Broseley Town Council Area



Map 4: Main Retail Shopping Area



Alternative Shopping Destinations

Broseley primarily services its own local population, the postcode district TF12. However, residents in this postcode are frequent visitors to other nearby shopping centres which offer a greater choice of comparison retail and more leisure and hospitality opportunities. The charts below show the proportion of the TF12 postcode district which visited Telford, Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury in each month between April 2020 and January 2022. It is clear that a very high proportion use nearby Telford and Bridgnorth as regular retail destinations. As shown in Map 1, both of these locations are less than 10 miles from Broseley. In January 2022, 52.5% of the TF12 population had visited Telford, with the same proportion having visited Bridgnorth on at least one occasion. TF12 represents part of the core catchment area for both of these towns.

Chart 1: Telford

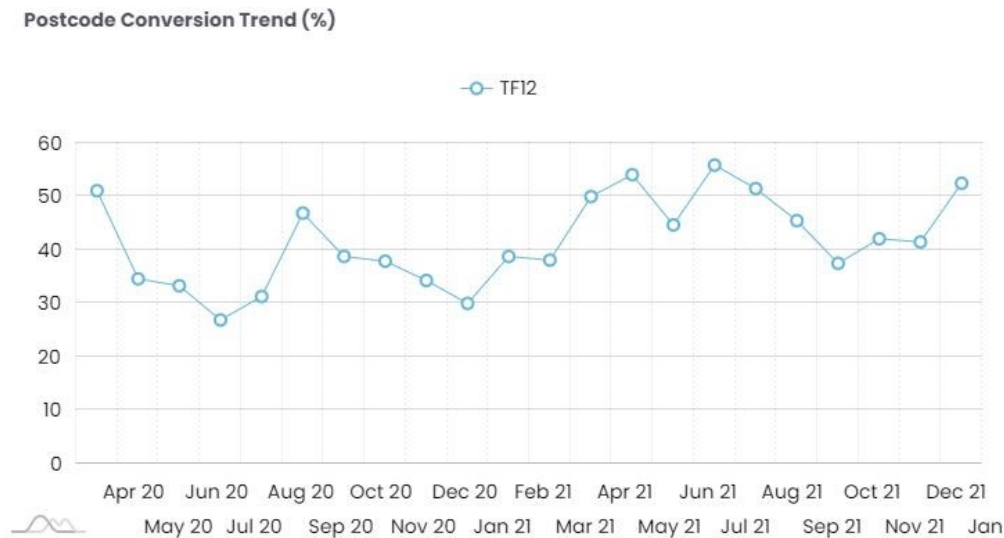
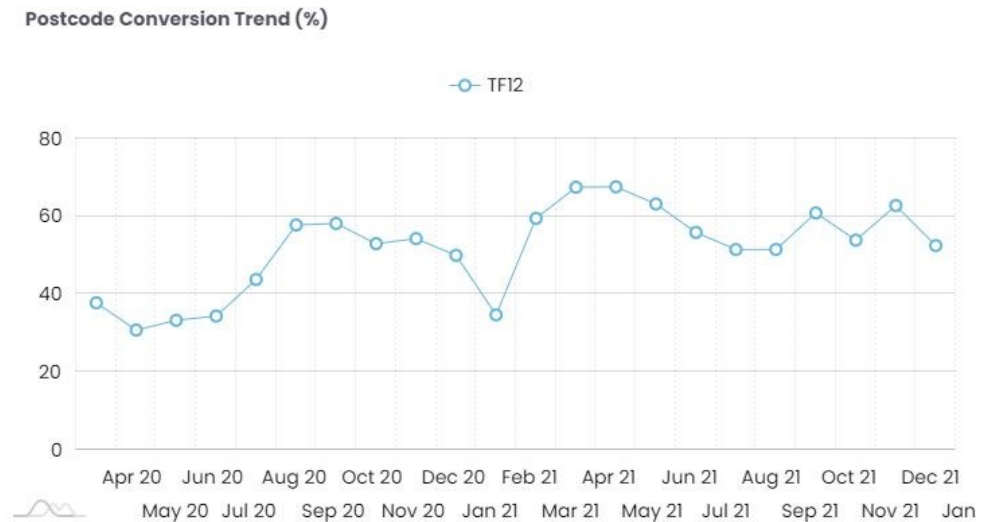


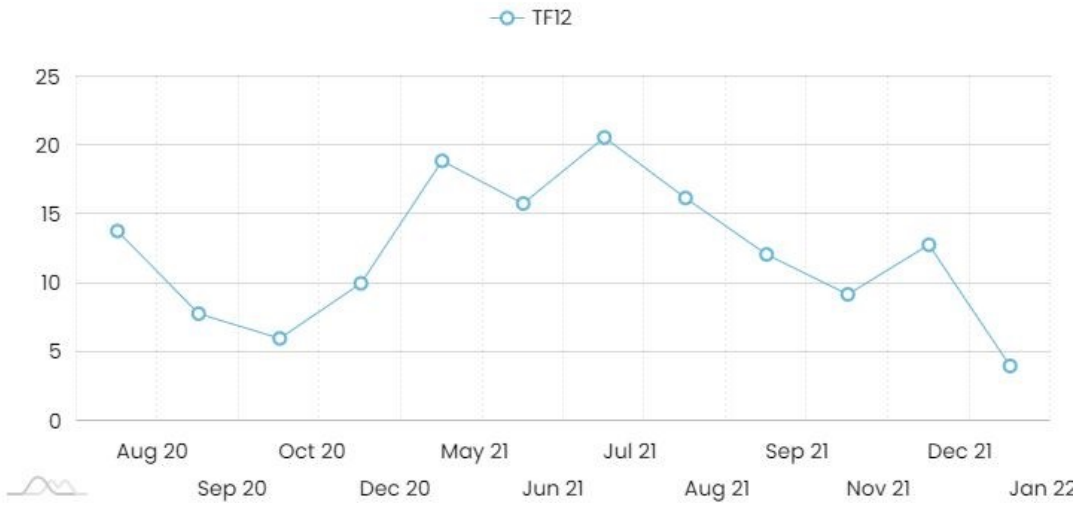
Chart 2: Bridgnorth



Shrewsbury is a little further afield, and as such the postcode conversion rate is lower, at less than 5% in January 2022. As such TF12 is not part of the core catchment for Shrewsbury. The following chart shows that the postcode conversion rate is higher in the summer (and peaking again pre-Christmas), perhaps indicating that Broseley residents are more likely to visit Shrewsbury on a day out or for a special shopping outing than to use the town as the destination for more regular shopping trips.

Chart 3: Shrewsbury

Postcode Conversion Trend (%)



Charts downloaded from the Town and Place AI tool which monitors visitor numbers and footfall across a range of town and city centres across the UK.

Key Audit Results

A total of 46 commercial premises are contained within the Broseley survey area. These are primarily in High Street (32 businesses), with smaller numbers in Barber Row, Church Street, Delphside, Hockley Road and the Square. Gross floor space allocated to these businesses is around 4,700m² (over two-thirds on High Street). The average store size is 102m² with units ranging in size from 21m² to 293m².

There has been no change in the number of commercial units operating since 2020. However, five commercial outlets were lost between the 2019 and 2020 audits. These have since been converted/are being converted into residential premises. In addition, in 2023, one commercial unit was split into two, with one side being converted into residential property and the other remaining commercial. Therefore, while the number of units remains the same, a small amount of retail floor space has been lost over the last year.

The highest proportion of commercial units are allocated to retail services and comparison retail, with both accounting for 17% of units in 2023. Retail services account for a higher share of floor space than comparison retail (16% compared with 12%). Tourism and leisure operators account for the highest share of floor space (23%) as well as 13% of units. Restaurants and takeaways account for 13% of units but for a lower share of floor space (9%). Convenience retail takes a share of 13% of units and for 15% of floor space. There are also a small number of financial and business service providers, which account for 7% of units (7% of floor space). Comparison retail is slightly under-represented in the town and tourism and leisure over-represented.

There are six vacant premises in Broseley (13% of units), which is the equivalent of 10% of floor space.

Chart 4: Number of Broseley Commercial Premises, 2019-2023

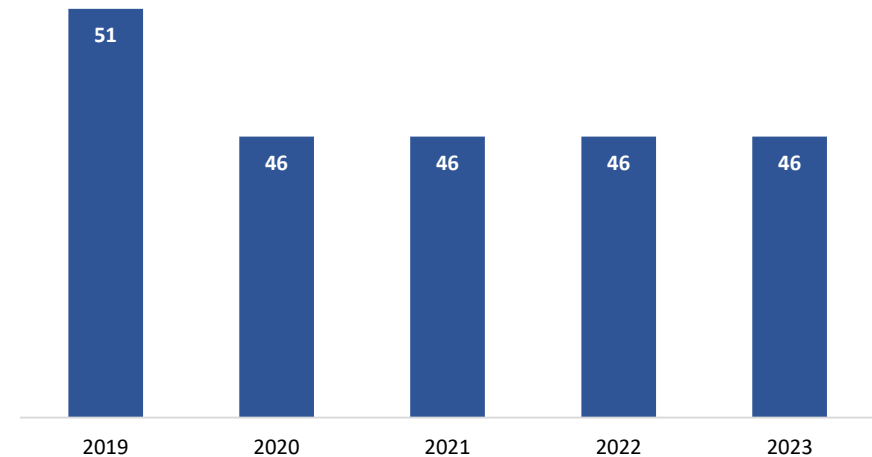
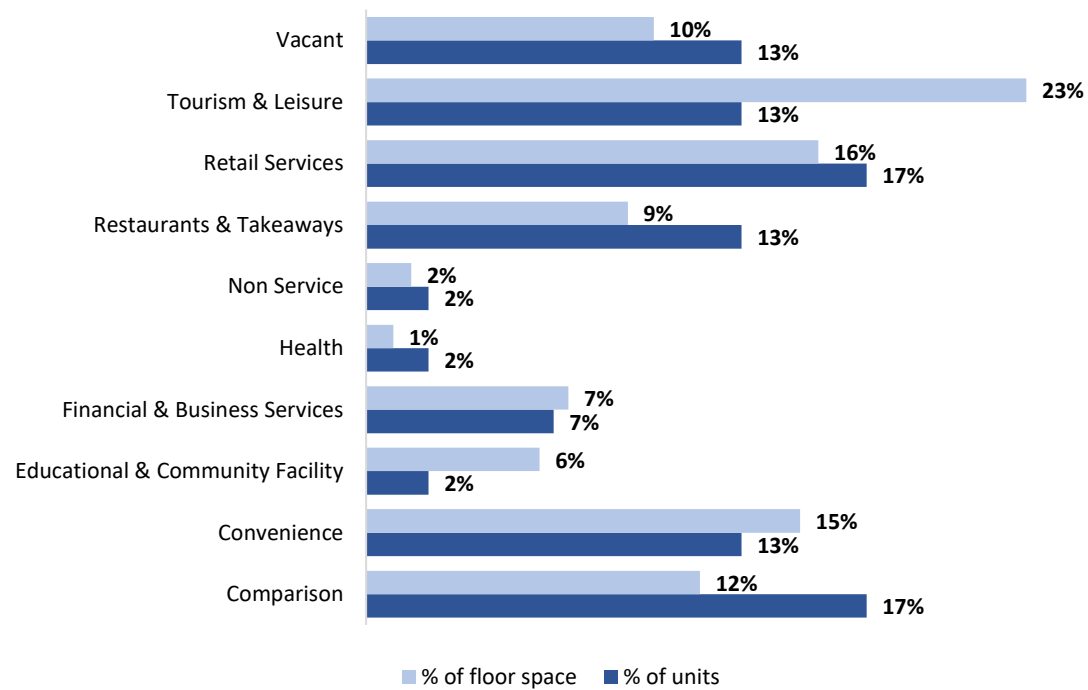


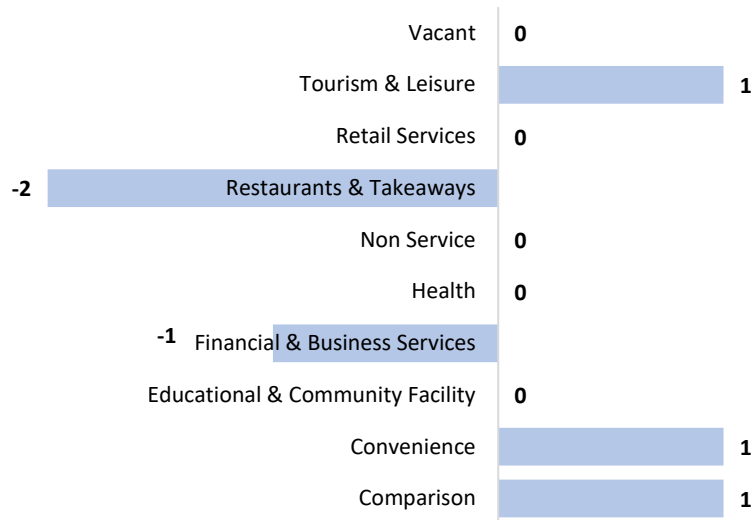
Chart 5: Breakdown of Broseley Commercial Premises by Classification, 2023



Change since 2022

There has been small changes in Broseley town centre over the last year, with an addition operator in tourism and leisure, convenience and comparison retail. In contrast, there are two fewer restaurants/takeaways and one less finance/business service provider. The number of vacant units has remained the same, and there has also been no change in the number of retail services operators.

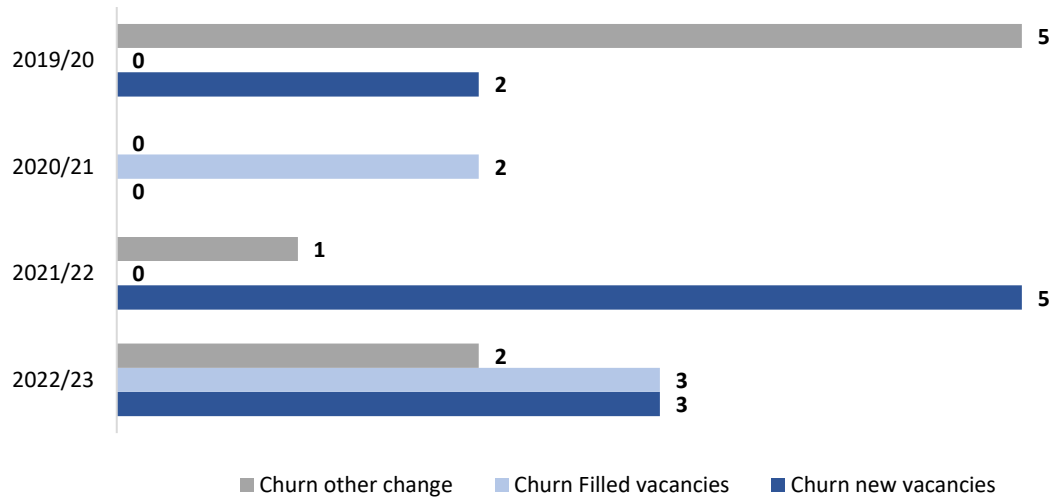
Chart 6: Change in Number of Units by Category, 2022/2023



Churn in 2023 (compared with 2022) was higher in Broseley than in the previous year at 17% compared with 4%. It was also higher than the Shropshire average in 2023 (12%). The lowest level of churn was recorded in 2021 at just 4%.

In 2023, the same number of units became vacant as were filled, and together, this accounted for three-quarters of all churn. This represents some recovery in the town compared to 2022 when five new vacancies were recorded with no previously vacant premises becoming occupied.

Chart 7: Breakdown of Business Churn 2019-2023



Comparison Retail

17% of commercial units are dedicated to the comparison retail category, accounting for 12% of gross floor space. This equates with eight stores with over 500m² of floor space. The amount and variety of comparison retail in Broseley is low, and clearly the town is not a main comparison retail destination. The proximity of the main shopping centres in Telford in some way contributes to this. The number of stores operating in this classification increased by one in 2023, with the hardware store that had been closed for refurbishment the previous year having re-opened in half of its previous premises (the other half now being reclassified as residential).

Within the town there is gift shop, a pet shop, a pharmacy and a wedding dress retailer. Also operating are a second hand furniture store, a purveyor of memorials plus the latest addition (trading since the 2021 audit), a mobile store/vape shop.

The pharmacy was re-branded between the 2022 and 2023 audits, and this, alongside the re-opening of the hardware store, was the only change in the comparison sector in 2023.

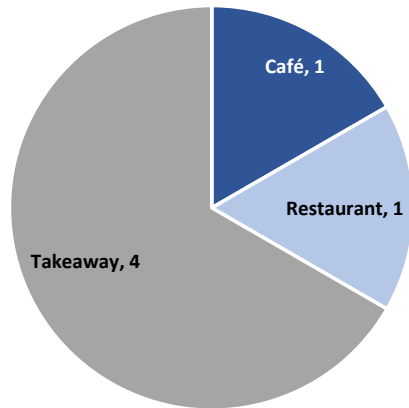
Convenience Retail

There are six convenience stores within the main shopping area of Broseley. These account for 13% of all units and for 15% of gross floor space. As well as two general convenience stores (Spar and Select and Save), there is a butcher, a greengrocer and a newsagent. A new bakery opened in 2023, occupying a previously vacant premise.

There is also Co-op in Broseley, albeit outside the main shopping area zone. The main supermarket facilities for Broseley residents are located in nearby Telford.

Restaurants & Takeaways

Chart 8: Breakdown of Units in the Restaurant/Takeaway Sector, 2023



The number of operators in the restaurant and takeaway sector reduced by two to six in 2023, representing a 25% decrease.

This means that the share of all Broseley commercial units attributable to restaurants and takeaways has fallen to 13%. This category accounts for a lower proportion of gross floor space (9%) primarily due to the high concentration of takeaways as opposed to restaurants or cafes. There is just one café and one restaurant trading now following the closure of two restaurants between the 2022 and 2023 audits. Both these premises are now vacant.

There are no chain stores in the restaurant and takeaway category in Broseley.

Tourism & Leisure

Also within the hospitality sector, there are five public houses. These take up approximately 870m² gross floor space. This represents an increase of one since the 2022 audit, with one re-opening during the year following refurbishment. There is also a B&B. One of the public houses also offers accommodation.

Finance & Business Services

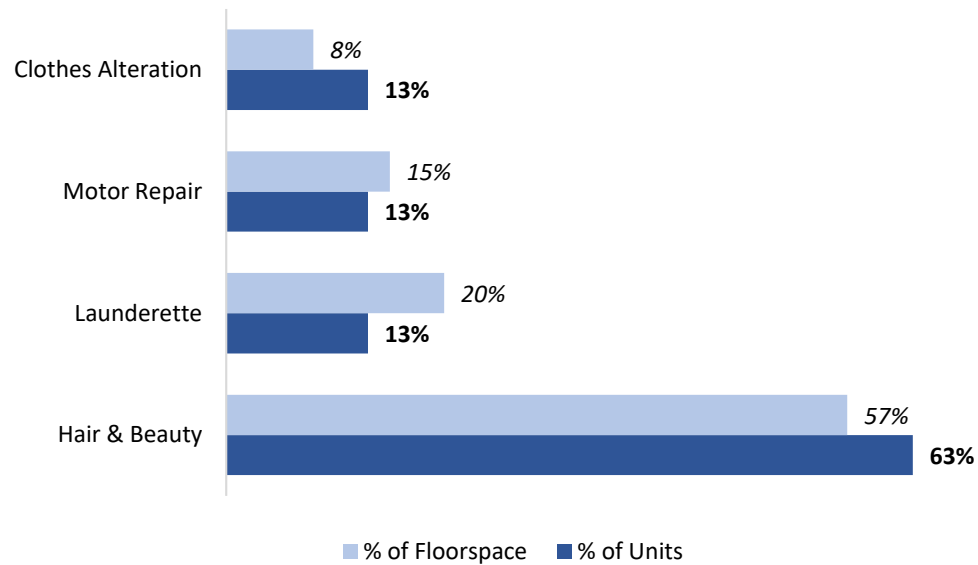
There are three commercial operators in the finance, professional and business services sector in Broseley town centre, accounting for just over 300m² of gross floor space. Included within this classification are two estate agents (including a letting agent) and a solicitor. A financial advisor ceased trading in the town between the 2022 and 2023 audits. There are no banks or building societies.

Retail Services

There are eight retail service businesses operating in Broseley town centre, with these accounting for over 700m² of gross floor space. There is a concentration of operators in the barber and hair salon classification, with these together representing almost two thirds of units and more than half of floor space. There is one barber and four unisex or ladies' hair salons.

In addition, there is a motor repair outlet, a launderette and a store offering clothing alterations. The latter was rebranded in 2023—this was the only change in the retail services offer over the year.

Chart 9: Breakdown of Retail Services by Type, 2023



Health

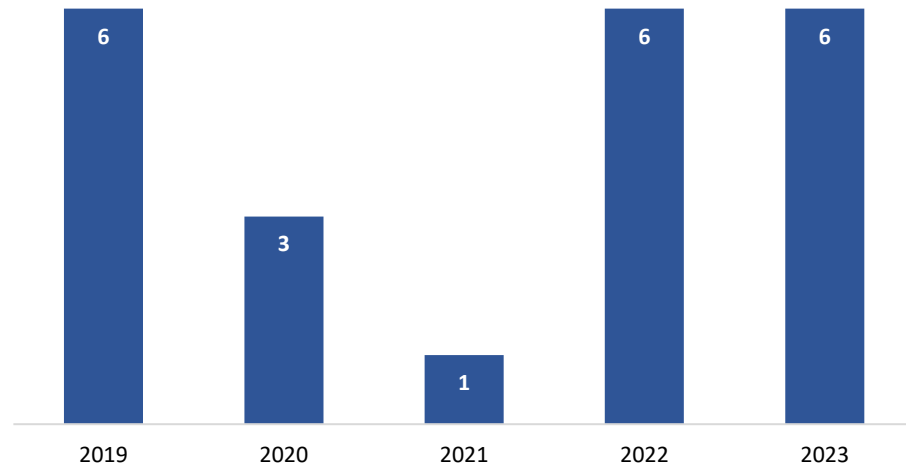
A dentist has a practice within the main retail streets of Broseley.

Vacant Units

In 2021, there was just one vacant unit in Broseley, located on Delphside. This represents a decline from 3 units in 2020 and from 6 in 2019. By 2022, the number had risen back up to six, although two of these stores were just closed on a temporary basis for refurbishment and have since re-opened. Despite this, the number of vacancies remained at six in 2023.

It should be noted that some units that were classified as vacant in 2019 have since been repurposed as residential homes and as such are no longer classified as commercial. The 2023 vacancy rate of 13% is amongst the highest in Shropshire, although it remains slightly lower than the national average, which stood at 13.9% in the second quarter of 2023 according to BRC (data relating to high streets only).

Chart 10: Number of Vacant Units, 2019—2023



Half of vacant premises in Broseley had become empty over the last year. There are no longer any very long term vacant units—those that had been empty for some time have now been repurposed as residential accommodation.

The map below shows the location of the vacant stores in Broseley town centre in 2023.

Map 5: Location of Vacant Commercial Premises, 2023



Three new vacant premises were recorded in 2022, but these were offset by three units that had been vacant that became filled between 2022 and 2023. Of the six units that had been empty in 2022, three were occupied by 2023.

Map 6: Change in Location of Vacant Commercial Premises, 2022 – 2023



Residential Premises

The main shopping streets of Broseley comprise a mix of residential and commercial premises. In total, 85 residential premises are located in the audit area, of which the majority are flats (47 or 54%) which are largely located above retail or other commercial outlets. This stock is primarily along the High Street. There are also 25 terraced houses, also principally along the High Street. There are 8 detached and 7 semi-detached properties in the audit area. The number of residential premises in the areas has remained stable despite the conversion of a number of commercial premises into residential properties since 2019, suggesting that some former homes are no longer in use.

Map 7: Location of Residential Premises in Broseley Town Centre

Chart 11: Breakdown of Residential Properties by Type

