

Urban Centres Programme
Goldenacre and Blackhall
Economic Comparison

Background

The Urban Centre Programme (UCP) aims to improve the environmental quality, economic prosperity and sustainability of local centres for the benefit of those that live, work, visit and invest in them.

The UCP's aims are in line with the Single Outcome Agreement 2008-11, Policy guidelines provided within the Edinburgh local plan and the Planning Policy statement 6 (PPS6). The Local Plan aims to retain a network of local centres in order to provide access within a 15 minute walk for the majority of residents in the City. These centres will be protected to ensure that shops and services continue to be provided in convenient locations to meet the everyday needs of the local communities. Investment within these centres is necessary to provide a range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

The North Neighbourhood Manager has been allocated £200,000 of UCP funding in order to carry out environmental improvements within his management area between 2009/11. Goldenacre and Blackhall have been identified as two priority sites within the North area. Both centres achieve the criteria for investment of UCP funding and therefore it has become necessary to carry out an economic comparison to prioritise one over the other.¹

Economic Comparison

An economic comparison is a tool by which to compare different urban centres in order to determine which provides best value for investment within the public realm. The comparison undertaken between Goldenacre and Blackhall shall include the following:

1. The number of units providing goods/ services within the local centres.
2. The business type
3. Context and Function of the Centres

A comparison of the above will also be provided showing a trend over the past 12 years (1996, 2004 and 2008) in order to establish the general health of these centres over this period and aid prediction of future sustainability.

1. Number of Units

Goldenacre

Unit Type	1996	2004	2008
Convenience	8	7	6
Non-retail	20	27	29
Comparison	15	13	12
Vacant	4	2	1
Demolition	0	0	0
Conversion 2 to 1	0	0	1
Residential Conversion	0	0	0
Total number of units	47	49	48*

* Conversion of 2 shops into 1, no reduction in floor space

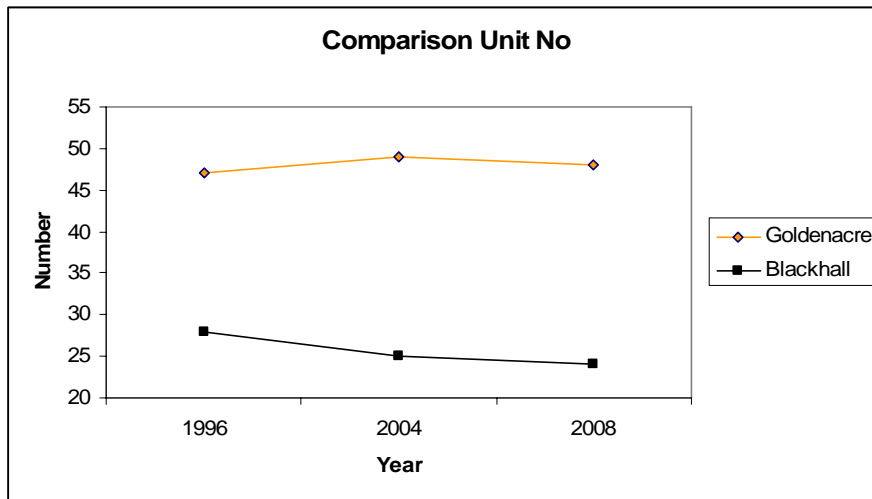
Blackhall

Unit Type	1996	2004	2008
Convenience	4	3	*1
Non-retail	16	17	16
Comparison	7	5	5
Vacant	1	0	2
Demolition	0	0	0
Convert 2 to 1	0	1	0
Residential Conversion	0	2	1
Total number of units	28	25	24

* Change of use from 2004, 1 to shoe shop and the other to residential.

1

No of retail units

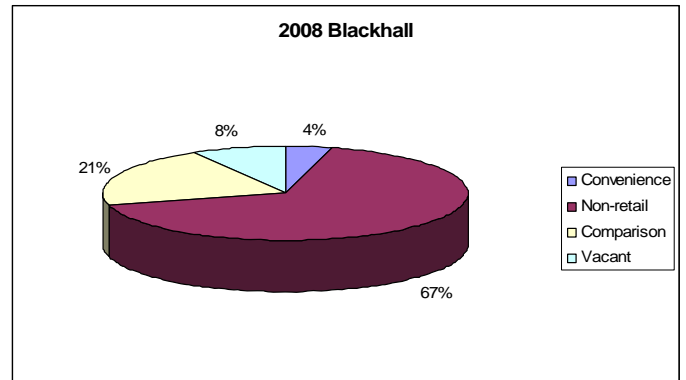
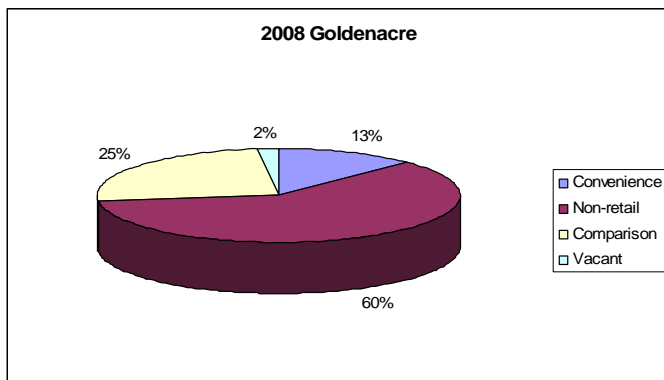


Goldenacre has increased in size over the past 12 years from 47 units to 49. The conversion of two shops to form one has reduced the total number of shops/ services slightly to 48 in 2008, but the overall retail floor space has maintained the same.

Blackhall has decreased in size over the past 12 years from 28 to 24 units. 3 units have been converted to provide residential properties and 2 units have been converted into 1 retail unit.

The data above shows that Goldenacre is the larger and more vibrant centre.

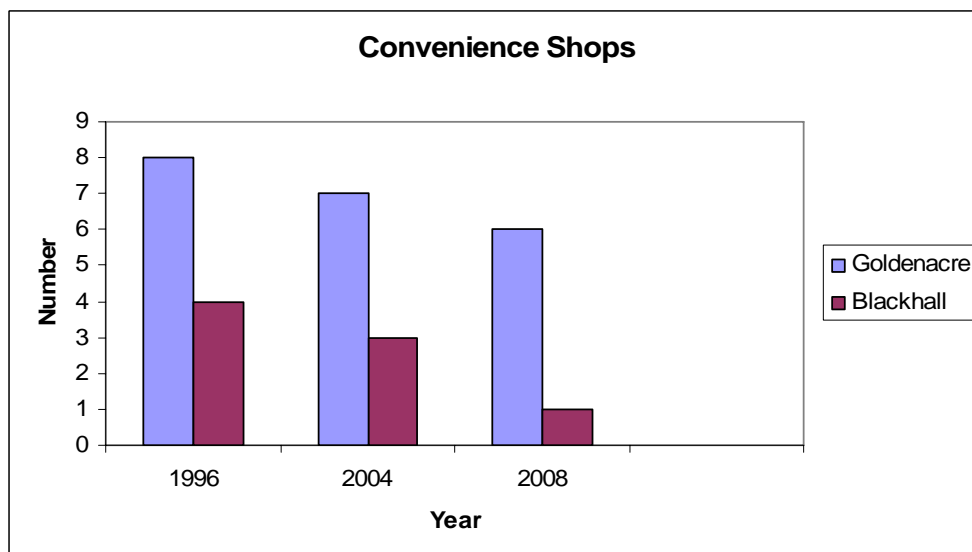
2 Business Type



From the above charts Goldenacre is shown to have the largest percentage of convenience shops. There are also many other services provided within this local centre that although not classified as convenience serve the local community (shoe repairs, fast food, flowers, hair dressers , dry cleaners, banks, pharmacy, Public houses and bookies). In comparison to this Blackhall has only one convenience store and although it has a flower shop, Post Office, fast foods , hairdressers and dry cleaners that also serve the local community, the large percentage of shops cater more on a city wide basis, (Architects, school clothing, plumber, bicycle, tyres, signs and fundraisers).

The bar chart below shows a drop in the number of convenience stores in Blackhall from 4 in 1996 to 1 in 2008. Three convenience shops have been lost in this area; they now serve as a shoe shop, residential unit and vacancy.

Goldenacre has lost 2 convenience shops which now operate as a café and nail bar, both still providing a service for the local community.



Context and Function

3 Goldenacre



Goldenacre is a vibrant local centre which would benefit from further investment in the public realm. The area is at the centre of the local communities of Trinity and Inverleith. It is a major link from the North to the city centre and also a primary route to the Royal Botanical gardens. The area is dominated by vehicular traffic but also has a high volume of pedestrian footfall due to its central location within the neighbourhoods. The closest alternative shopping area is 1.1 Km away at Canonmills.

In recent years Goldenacre has seen an investment to the crossing facilities at its junction with Ferry Road and also Inverleith Row. Due to the heavy footfall it would benefit from investment in the footways in order to create a safer route between South Trinity Road and down Inverleith Row. There is opportunity to eliminate rat running and also upgrade furniture, all of these measures would help improve the environment and sustainability of the centre in the long term.

Blackhall



Blackhall is a local centre that has over the past few years declined slightly with the loss of three retail units to residential use. Its primary focus tends to be on providing services at a City Wide level. It is dominated by vehicular traffic as it provides an arterial route from the West of the City into the City Centre. The centre does cater for the local community but this element appears to be weakening with the reduction of convenience stores from 4 to 1 over the past 12 years. This may reflect its close proximity of 0.5 km from the retail park at Craigleith where a high element of local goods/ services is provided.

Blackhall has seen investment in its footways over the last few years but this has been done in an ad-hoc manner. It may be that improvements in the public realm could be achieved by minor investment in additional paving and upgrading of street furniture.

Conclusion

Both Goldenacre and Blackhall meet the requirements of the UCP. In order to maximise funding and achieve improvements in line with UCP aims and objectives it is necessary to promote one centre over the other. A comparison of both centres has been undertaken and a conclusion has been reached to recommend the inclusion of Goldenacre in the 2009-11 for the following reasons:

1. Goldenacre is the largest and most vibrant centre. It has grown over the last decade and the reduction of vacant units is an indication of its vitality. The UCP aims to help sustain this viability and vitality through investment in the public realm.
2. Goldenacre has a larger number of convenience shops catering for the local community within the centre. It also has a larger no of shops/ services that although not classified as convenience, provides a valuable service to the local area. This makes it invaluable to the community that it serves.
3. Goldenacre is approximately 1.1km away from the next closest local centre at Canonmills. It is vital that this centre is retained in order to serve the large catchment area that surrounds it. Blackhall has Craigleith Retail Park approximately 0.5 km away and another local centre at the junction of Telford Road approximately 0.5 km in the other direction.

Recommendations

- To endorse Goldenacre as a priority for UCP investment over 2009-11.
- To identify other SfC funding to undertake smaller scale improvements within Blackhall in future years.