

County Council

11 December 2024

Question and Response

Member Question from Councillor K Shaw

To ask the relevant Portfolio Holder what the financial impact has been for each of the daytime businesses in Seaham which are located in the adjacent areas where car parking charges have been introduced.

Response from Cllr E Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships

Thank you for your question.

Like other councils, and as a Council with 15,000 businesses we do not and should not track the individual financial performance of every business, however we use other data to provide us with a measure of the performance and vitality of our main centres.

This includes both measures of property vacancy across the town and an assessment of footfall.

The most recent vacancy figure for Seaham measured in summer 2024 shows 92.8% occupancy – which is the highest occupancy in the County. This compares to a national high street average occupancy rate which remains around 86%.

- Earlier this year you will have seen the highly positive press around The Seaham Marina, with both the berths and the associated units being fully occupied and helping contribute to the diverse offer of the town.
- Having provided long term investment to reposition Seaham's economy we continue to provide support to businesses, implementing the Townscape Heritage Programme, providing business advice, and financial support to new or diversifying businesses through our UK Shared Prosperity programme, including three new businesses in Seaham recently receiving support.
- In the year to date we have progressed 10 business enquiries for the town. We have continued to support events in the town including the recent Food Festival, which attracts over 20,000 visitors.
- We routinely assess all available data for Seaham (and our other towns) to ensure we can support policy and programme development and to assist our centres to be effective retail / leisure destinations. We will continue to provide support and assistance to new businesses and those seeking to diversify.

We remain committed to providing support to Businesses and our town centre including thriving centres such as Seaham and will continue to work with businesses and residents as we develop our new Strategic Place Plans to identify future priorities and opportunities within towns across county Durham.