

## Harrogate Best for Shopping

Friday 28 July, 2017

Harrogate is the number one performing market town in the North of England, according to the 2017 Vitality Rankings of the Top 50 British Centres.

Harrogate came in at number 23 in the Vitality Ranking Top 50, which ranked 1000 retail centres, beating Islington, Upper Street, Kensington and Fulham Road in London, St Ives, and Henley-on-Thames in the south.

It was also number one in the 'Top 5 Centres in Yorkshire and Humber', beating Meadowhall in Sheffield (ranked 28), Leeds City Centre (ranked 35) and York City Centre (ranked 46).

Compared with other market towns on the Top 1000 list, Harrogate was the highest ranking market town in the North.

The Vitality Index, conducted by retail specialist Harper Dennis Hobbs, maps 1,000 retail centres across Britain, and ranks them all by quantifying the 'retail health' of each centre.

Vitality is measured through a combination of the proportions of up-market shops, value-led shops, vacancy rate, and the proportion of 'undesirable' shops – such as pawnbrokers, money lenders, and bookmakers.

It is the first year the Vitality Index includes small towns and high streets after demand from both retailer and investors.

Jonathan De Mello, Head of Retail Consultancy at Harper Dennis Hobbs, said, "This ranking highlights the 'healthiest' retail centres in Britain, which successful brands should target when considering network expansion. Smaller centres are of increasing interest to retailers, given rents are often highest in the largest centres. So a small centre with a high vitality score – and the right shopper profile – could potentially yield strong profits."

Richard Spencer, CEO of Visit Harrogate, said: "Harrogate is leading the way in Yorkshire. The Index shows the town's retail sector is performing better and is more desirable than Leeds and York – that's good news for investors, shop brands and visitors. We should be enormously proud of these results. As the number one centre in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, and ranking in the top 10 market towns across Britain, we can say Harrogate truly is the Knightsbridge of the North. It also shows how important it is to work hard to maintain this momentum and keep Harrogate as a leading destination for residents and tourists alike."

Richard added: "Our boutique destination reputation is built on the quality of everything we offer here - from our independent and premium brand shops to our broad hospitality choice to our highly attractive public realm. Together, with the private and public sectors pulling together, we can be one of the most competitive and desirable destinations in England. This report shows we are heading in the right direction, but we must not rest on our laurels as competition is fierce!"

The 2017 Vitality Rankings identified the Yorkshire and Humberside region, along with London, as the fastest growing by proportion of up-market shops.

To find out more about Harrogate as a leisure and conference destination, go to [www.visitharrogate.co.uk](http://www.visitharrogate.co.uk)

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