

The big count

High Street Index:

Year to end March 07	-7.0%	↓
Year to end February 07	-8.4%	↓
Year to end January 07	-13.7%	↓

Month on month change:

Feb to Mar 07	4.4%	↑
Feb to Mar 06	2.8%	↑
Jan to Feb 07	6.9%	↑
Jan to Feb 06	0.7%	↑
Dec to Jan 07	-38.1%	↓
Dec to Jan 06	-31.1%	↓

Regional cities:

Year to end March 07	-4.2%	↓
Year to end February 07	-4.1%	↓
Year to end January 07	-6.7%	↓

Month on month change:

Feb to Mar 07	0.2%	↑
Feb to Mar 06	0.2%	↑
Jan to Feb 07	8.0%	↑
Jan to Feb 06	5.0%	↑
Dec to Jan 07	-37.5%	↓
Dec to Jan 06	-23.4%	↓



The ATCM is collaborating with Springboard, a leading provider of automated customer counting services, to launch a national performance index that records footfall in our town and city high streets. Traditionally, footfall has only ever been monitored in specific places such as shopping centres or retailers' outlets but now, for the first time, Town Centre Management will be able to access accurate high street footfall data.

To date, the information collected for the index is from around 50 UK towns and cities. Data has been gathered from 100 million 'flows' a month around town centres, collated using Springboard's i-site software which monitors footfall continuously, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. i-site is the latest generation of footfall counting technology, achieving accuracy levels of over 99%.

The launch of the High Street Index means that for the first time it will be possible to monitor the performance of town and city centres in attracting customers. Just as importantly, it will enable individual towns and cities to benchmark their performance, and so gain a clear understanding of their performance relative to high streets nationally and to individual towns and cities elsewhere.

Simon Quin, Chief Executive of the ATCM, says: "The ATCM is delighted to be able to work with Springboard to deliver a bespoke performance measure

for high streets. A key objective of Town Centre Management is to drive footfall in town centres and we'll now have at our disposal an indicator of performance that is wholly relevant."

Diane Wehrle of Springboard adds: "The High Street Index will complement other published indices to facilitate a greater understanding of the performance of town and city centres. The Index has already identified a decline in footfall in high streets nationally between 2005 and 2006 of 5%, and 4% in regional cities. Collaboration with the ATCM means that its members – those who are tasked with increasing footfall in our high streets – can derive maximum benefit from the index and so increase further the effectiveness of their efforts."

The index will be published quarterly in Forum, and monthly updates will be made available to ATCM members. Users of Springboard's service will also have access to the index through its website: www.spring-board.info.

ATCM continues push to reform pedlars' legislation

ATCM is continuing to work with a wide range of partners, notably the National Association of British Market Authorities and other members of the Market Industries Forum, to modernise the legislation regarding unlicensed street trading.

In February we supported the introduction of a 10 Minute Rule Bill to Parliament by Dr Brian Iddon MP. This proposed updating the 1871 legislation on pedlars, giving local authorities better control over street trading. Currently, authorities can't regulate pedlars as police are responsible for their licences. Meanwhile, legitimate local businesses subject to greater restrictions

and overheads are feeling the negative impact of ineffective enforcement.

With abuses of licences nationwide and some rogue traders viewing fines as a necessary business expense, ATCM believes consumers and business people deserve better protection.

A number of local authorities have resorted to taking out expensive local legislation of their own and it's been very effective. Cities like Newcastle upon Tyne have removed unlawful traders, improving the environment for legitimate sellers.

The risk of a localised approach, however, is a patchwork effect that leaves traders free to move to other

towns. The new law would give authorities across the country the powers so far given to just a few. Crucially, they would be able to seize goods, quickly stopping trading.

Though the bill received widespread support, including from the Local Government Association and the Association for Chief Police Officers, it was objected to and subsequently discouraged by Ministers. Discussions are now underway with various Government departments to see if the desired result can be brought about through other means but there is still no resolution in sight for what is a key problem in many town and city centres.