

ATCM-Springboard High Street Index

February 2008 Commentary



The vulnerability of our economic circumstances this year is becoming ever more evident - an annual decrease in high street footfall during February 2008 of 4.7% is more than double the decrease from February 2006 to 2007 of 2.3%.

The decreased level of activity in our high streets reflects results reported by the British Retail Consortium which identified an annual increase in spending in February of just half of that reported in February 2007 (1.5% in February 2008 compared with 3.3% in February 2007).

The divergence between increased spending levels as reported by the BRC, and an annual decrease in footfall in our high streets seems, at least in part, to be a consequence of the polarisation in the performance of particular retail sectors. The BRC reports that while food and drink sales remain strong (albeit that this is partly accounted for by rising commodity prices), there was an annual decrease in clothing sales for the fifth consecutive month. Moreover, the pressure on our high streets is likely to be even further felt by the apparent polarisation between the premium and value ends of the clothing sector – both of which performed well to the detriment of the middle market. And for many of our towns and cities, it is middle market retailers that predominate in terms of both floorspace and brand presence.

As would be expected, half term week in the second week of February boosted footfall - by 12% - from the previous week. However, even this uplift was substantially less than that in the same week in 2007 when footfall increased by 28%.

All Towns and Cities

Annual Change:

Feb 07 to Feb 08	-4.7%
Jan 07 to Jan 08	-3.9%
Dec 06 to Dec 07	-8.6%

Month on month change:

Jan to Feb 08	9.3%
Jan to Feb 07	7.2%
Dec to Jan 08	-34.9%
Dec to Jan 07	-37.6%
Nov to Dec 07	14.1%
Nov to Dec 06	14.0%

Regional Cities

Annual Change:

Feb 07 to Feb 08	-4.3%
Jan 07 to Jan 08	-6.6%
Dec 06 to Dec 07	-9.1%

Month on month change:

Jan to Feb 08	8.2%
Jan to Feb 07	8.6%
Dec to Jan 08	-36.7%
Dec to Jan 07	-38.3%
Nov to Dec 07	13.0%
Nov to Dec 06	11.5%