

Moston Lane District Centre Healthcheck

Description

1. Moston Lane District Centre is located in the Moston area of north Manchester, running east to west along Moston Lane. The centre serves as a busy urban district centre for the surrounding residential communities of Moston and New Moston. Certain areas within these communities are characterised by higher levels of deprivation.
2. The centre is linear in form, extending approximately 800 metres along Moston Lane. The survey boundary encompasses a total of 97 active retail, leisure and service units. The centre has a number of convenience anchors such as the Moston Superstore, the New Moston Superstore and One Stop.
3. The composition of the centre is notably diverse and reflects Moston Lane's multicultural character. The convenience and food offer is particularly strong, with a range of specialist Afro- Caribbean, African and Polish and pan-Asian food retailers. The retail service sector is heavily dominated by health and beauty operators, including hair salons and nail bars, which together are significantly over-represented compared to the national average.
4. The centre contains a small number of vacant units, mostly clustered in the north-eastern fringe of the defined boundary, and the overall environmental quality is variable. Nonetheless, Moston Lane retains a vibrant street life and active daytime economy, underpinned by its diverse and community-focused retail and service offer.



Figure 1: Simpson Memorial Hall and the Peace Gardens sit within the centre boundary and represent a key community asset and regeneration opportunity.



Figure 2: Image showing the retail and service offer along Moston Lane is dominated by independent health and beauty operators, including hair salons and nail bars.



Figure 3: New Moston Superstore occupies a prominent Victorian corner building at the eastern end of the centre and serves as one of the primary convenience anchors for the local community.



Figure 4: Bee Network bus services provide frequent connections along Moston Lane to Manchester city centre and surrounding districts.

Uses

Table 1 Moston Lane District Centre Floorspace Composition

GOAD Category	Floorspace at 2026 (sq.m)	Floorspace at 2026 (%)	Floorspace UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	843	11.4	28.6
Convenience	2,224	30.0	15.4
Financial & Business	419	5.7	6.0
Leisure	1,118	15.1	27.9
Retail Service	1,969	26.5	7.3
Vacant	844	11.4	14.3
TOTAL	7,418	100.0	100.0

Source: Composition of District centre based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of February 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report February 2026.

Table 2 Moston Lane District Centre Unit Composition

GOAD Category	Units at 2026 (no.)	Units at 2026 (%)	Units UK Average at 2025 (%)
Comparison	12	12.4	25.9
Convenience	22	22.7	9.4
Financial & Business	7	7.2	7.8
Leisure	15	15.5	26.7
Retail Service	29	29.9	15.9
Vacant	12	12.4	14.0
TOTAL	97	100.0	100.0

Source: District centre composition based on boundary as defined by Experian Goad and derived from Nexus Planning Survey of February 2026; UK Average from Experian Goad Report February 2026.

5. The convenience offer in Moston Lane is strong in terms of unit numbers, with 22 units, significantly above the UK average of 9.4%. The district centre is considered to begin at Hough Hall Road in the west, running through to Ilkley and Scarborough Streets in the east.
6. Larger-format operators such as Moston Superstore, New Moston Superstore and One Stop are complemented by a wide range of smaller independent food retailers that reflect the area's diverse multicultural community. These include Afro-Caribbean grocery shops. Specialist provision also includes a fishmonger, off-licences (California Wines, Slonko Polish Shop and Premier One), health food retailers (Natural Way Eastern), bakers (Martins), and butchers (Eagle Butchers Ltd.). This concentration of specialist ethnic food retail is a distinctive feature of the centre and is a reflection and response to the diversity of the local catchment.
7. Comparison retailing is below the UK average, accounting for just 12 units. The comparison offer is predominantly independent in character and includes a pharmacy (Wilkinson Pharmacy and Wilmson Pharmacy), clothing and fashion (God is Great Boutique Ltd and Des Fashion), hardware and household goods retailers (Ardon Divine Ventures, Moston Lane Pound Store, Euronics Moston Lane Appliances), a florist (Flower Place), a carpets and flooring retailer (P&D Loftus), mobile phone shops (Lyca Mobile, A6 Mobiles & Vapes), and a cosmetics/beauty retailer (Fibi Cosmetics). There is no national multiple comparison retailers present in the centre, this may be in part down to the absence of large modern retail units given the majority of commercial premises along Moston Lane date from the early and mid 20th century.
8. The leisure offer accounts for 15 units which is below the UK average of 26.7%. The leisure provision is dominated by fast food and takeaway operators, including Canadian Charcoal Grill, Pizza Lane, Peking Garden, My Guyz, The Ben Chippy, Pizza Planet, Chesters and Kastana Shawarma. Sit-down dining is represented by a small number of restaurants including Ksuya Grills, Spices African Cuisine, La'Buka Restaurant and K Korporate Kitchen Bites. Café provision is limited to Potters Café and Village Café. William Hill is the sole betting office in the centre. There are no pubs or bars recorded within the defined boundary.
9. The retail service offer is the most notable feature of Moston Lane's composition. With 29 units, this significantly exceeds the UK average of 15.9%. The overwhelming majority (over 85%) of these units are health and beauty operators, including a large number of hair salons, barbers and nail bars such as Blossom Hair & Cosmetics, Classic Elegant Unisex Cuts, Hana's Nails, Authentik Unisex Salon, Ajoke Hair Palace, Moston Beauty Hub, Blissful Wigs, Lavish Style, Smart Touch and many others. This heavy concentration of health and beauty provision is a defining characteristic of the centre and is typical of district centres serving diverse and growing ethnic minority populations. Other retail service uses include two post offices (Moston Resources and Post Office) and two other retail service operators (Stitch Hub and Sedon Services).

10. The financial and business service offer comprises 7 units, broadly in line with the UK average of 7.8%. The financial and business service operators include two solicitors (KHF Solicitors Ltd and JL Legal Ltd), two property services operators (Tom Clarke & Co. and Brentwood Lettings), Holly B Services (printing and copying), and two other business services operators (PVG Accounting Services and Scorpay Consultancy Ltd.). The overall financial and business service offer is what would be expected for a centre of this size, though the lack of banking provision following the recent closure of Lloyds is notable.

Daytime/Evening Economy

11. During the daytime, Moston Lane functions as a busy and well-used district centre, serving the day-to-day retail and service needs of the residential communities surrounding Moston Lane. Footfall is generated throughout the day, with various convenience stores acting as anchors driving visits to the centre. The large number of hair salons, barbers and beauty operators in the centre also generate a steady flow visitors throughout the day.
12. The fast food, takeaway and restaurant offer in the centre provides for a modest early evening economy, with many of these operators remaining open beyond 6pm. However, the absence of pubs, bars or licensed premises with a dedicated evening leisure function means that the evening economy is limited. After the closure of daytime retail and service traders, the centre's activity diminishes considerably, and the centre is not currently functioning as a meaningful evening destination.
13. There is scope to develop the evening economy through the encouragement of more sit-down restaurant provision and, where appropriate, licensed premises, to build upon the existing food and beverage offer and extend the centre's vitality into the evening hours. However, any such development would need to be sensitive to the predominantly residential character of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Vacancies

14. Moston Lane has a vacancy rate of 12 units, which is slightly below the UK average of 14.0%. The vacancies are spread across the centre but with a visible cluster in the northern part of the centre, particularly near New Moston Superstore which is at the eastern end of the defined boundary. Several of these units are former specialists' retailers or service operators (including former hair salons, food outlets and a former podiatry practice).
15. The majority of vacant units appear to be small-scale premises, and the impact of vacancies on the overall appearance of the centre is partially mitigated by the active frontages on either side. However, the cluster of vacancies in the eastern part of the centre, in proximity to the Moston Lane/ Ben Brierley junction area, does present a visible gap in the active frontage that could undermine perceptions of the centre's vitality if not addressed.
16. Priority should be given to the reoccupation of the vacant units in the eastern cluster, and the Council may wish to consider landowner/landlord engagement alongside other support measures to bring these units back into use with appropriate active commercial uses.

Opportunity Sites

17. The linear and built-up nature of Moston Lane, combined with the dense residential development that flanks the centre on both sides, limits the opportunities for large-scale redevelopment within the defined centre boundary. The centre is largely composed of terraced and semi-detached commercial properties fronting directly onto Moston Lane.
18. However, Manchester City Council has identified Moston Lane as a key priority for significant council-led regeneration investment, underpinned by an ambitious Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) which was published in October 2023 for the area and a long-term investment pipeline of approximately £90 million.
19. The primary focus of the programme is the creation of a new public square fronting onto Moston Lane between Pym Street and Hartley Street. The Council has already acquired a number of properties in this area for

redevelopment. The space is intended to be flexible, capable of hosting markets and community events, and will include new seating, lighting, trees and planting, addressing the most significant current weakness of the centre, namely the absence of a focal point or gathering space.

20. Associated with the public square, a planning application (ref: 144823/FO/2025) has been approved to relocate the Moston Superstore from its current Pym Street location to a new, larger store on the Kenyon Lane (Ebsworth Street) car park site, which will provide dedicated parking and a cycle store for the first time. The former superstore site will be cleared as part of the public square development.
21. Around the square, approximately 80-100 new homes, a mix of apartments and townhouses including social and genuinely affordable tenures are proposed, with ground floor retail, commercial and potential health facilities. A further 30-40 family houses are planned for a site between Watermans Close and Ebsworth Street. Manchester City Council confirmed Aviva and Place Capital Group as the Key partners to lead the project in March 2026.
22. The principal opportunity sites include the car parking areas to the north and south of the centre (at the western and eastern ends respectively) also present potential for investment in improved pedestrian infrastructure and the public realm.
23. The Simpson Memorial Hall and Community Hub, which has already benefitted from recent investment as part of the regeneration programme, sits at the heart of the centre and presents a longer-term opportunity to become a more prominent community and cultural anchor. Beyond the principal regeneration opportunity, the cluster of vacant units in the eastern part of the centre represents a more immediate priority for targeted reoccupation. Any future development across the centre should seek to enhance the public realm, improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity, and support the diversification of the retail, leisure and community offer.

Pedestrian Flows

24. No automated footfall count data was available for Moston Lane District Centre at the time of the survey. However, observations during the fieldwork visit in February 2026 indicated that the centre experiences moderate to good levels of pedestrian activity throughout the day, consistent with its role as a busy district centre.
25. Footfall was concentrated in the western part of the centre, particularly around the dense cluster of hair and beauty salons. The eastern part of the centre, particularly around the Ben Brierley junction and the cluster of vacancies, was noticeably quieter. The two public car parks on Pym Street and Ebsworth Street attract vehicle-borne visitors to both ends of the centre.
26. The busy through-traffic on Moston Lane itself, combined with the relatively narrow pavements in some sections, present some challenges for pedestrian movement and comfort, particularly for those with mobility impairments or with children. Nonetheless, the centre was generally active and well-used throughout the survey period.

Accessibility

27. Moston Lane is easily accessible by car, running along the B6393 and connecting to the wider arterial road network of north Manchester. Two public car parks are located within the centre boundary at the western end near Hugh Hall Road and at the eastern end near Kenyon Lane providing off-street parking for visitors.
28. The centre is well-served by public transport, with several bus stops located along Moston Lane providing services to Manchester city centre and surrounding districts. 14 bus services connect the centre to destinations including Manchester city centre, Failsworth, Middleton and other parts of north Manchester.
29. Cycling provision along Moston Lane is limited, with no dedicated cycle lanes observed within the centre boundary. The busy nature of the road and the volume of through-traffic may deter cyclists. Pedestrian accessibility is reasonable, with pavements on both sides of the road, though their width and condition vary.

Dropped kerbs and controlled crossings are present at key junctions, though the overall pedestrian environment could be improved through public realm enhancement works.

30. The nearest rail station is Moston, located approximately 1.5 miles (38 minutes' walk) to the north east of the centre boundary, providing Northern Rail connections to Manchester Victoria and Rochdale. As noted above, Newton Heath & Moston Metrolink stop is approximately 1.2 miles (24 minutes' walk) to the south-east, providing tram connections via the Rochdale/Oldham line.

Perception of Safety

31. During the daytime fieldwork visit, Moston Lane District Centre felt reasonably safe and active. The high level of trading activity and footfall in the denser western part of the centre provided good natural surveillance and a lively street environment. The presence of numerous independent traders and the associated footfall from customers contributed to a sense of activity and community.
32. At night, the limited number of operators with extended opening hours means that much of the centre will be inactive after approximately 6pm, which may increase perceptions of insecurity. Greater footfall could help to address this, which could be achieved through both a stronger evening economy offer as well as residential intensification in the immediate environs around Moston Lane.

Environmental Quality

33. The environmental quality of Moston Lane District Centre is mixed. The centre lacks the historic character or architectural distinction of some comparable district centres, being composed primarily of terraced commercial properties of varying age and condition. Shopfront quality varies considerably along the length of the centre, with some well-maintained and active premises contrasting with others that are in poor repair or poorly presented.
34. Some sections of the public realm, particularly the pavements and street furniture, need maintenance. There is limited street planting or greenery within the centre boundary, which further reduces the visual appeal of the environment.
35. On the day of the fieldwork visit, there was some evidence of litter in parts of the centre, though this was not pervasive. Investment in the public realm including improved paving, street planting, signage and shopfront improvements, would make a significant contribution to improving the environmental quality of the centre and enhancing its attractiveness to shoppers and prospective new businesses.

Conclusions

36. Moston Lane District Centre performs a vital local function as the principal retail and service destination for the communities of Moston and the surrounding area of north Manchester. The centre's composition reflects its multicultural character, with a strong and distinctive convenience and specialist food offer catering to the Afro-Caribbean, African, Polish and broader international communities in the local catchment.
37. The retail service offer, especially health and beauty, is significantly above the national average and is a defining characteristic of the centre. This reflects the spending patterns and priorities of the local community and generates a consistent flow of footfall throughout the day. The leisure offer is focused on fast food and takeaways, and there is an absence of pubs or bars, with the lack of evening leisure uses limiting the centre's vitality after 6pm.
38. The main concerns for the centre include the variable environmental quality, and the limited comparison retail offer. The centre currently lacks any national multiple comparison retailers, though this is not unusual for a district centre of this size and character.



39. Overall, Moston Lane District Centre is a functioning and locally important centre with a distinctive and community-focused character. It would benefit from targeted investment in the public realm, support for the reoccupation of vacant units, and measures to encourage greater footfall in the evening hours.

