NOVEMBER 2025 TOWN & CITY CENTRE BEAUCLAIR INSIGHTS

THE IMPACT ON TOWNS AND CITIES OF THE MUCH-DISCUSSED CAUTIOUSNESS OF CONSUMERS - PARTICULARLY IN THE RUN UP TO THE BUDGET - WAS SIGNIFICANT DURING NOVEMBER.

According to Diane Wehrle, of Rendle Intelligence and Insights & Beauclair's Brand Ambassador.

During November, sales in towns and cities dropped annually by -7% compared with November 2024. By contrast, last November saw an annual increase of +1% compared to November 2023. This concurs with other reports of high street spending and footfall during November, all of which were less favourable than during November 2024. It is likely that consumers were highly price sensitive and held off from making purchases until Black Friday discounts became available in the last week of the month.

The metrics that drive sales - customers, transactions and average transaction value - provide clear evidence of the pull back in spending. The number of customers during November declined (-4.8%). However a key reason for sales being so poor was an even greater drop in the number of transactions (-8.5%). This demonstrated that not only were less people making purchases in the high street, but it is also likely that they bought fewer items and visited fewer stores. The impact of this on total sales during November was further compounded by only a small rise in the average transaction value of +1.7% which is less than the prevailing inflation rate of 3%, suggesting that retailers continue to struggle to pass on full cost-of-living increases to customers.

Sales in all five key sectors that account for 85% of total town centre sales declined during November, with the greatest drops relative to November 2024 in General Retail (-8.3%) and Health & Beauty (-6.9%). In all five sectors both transactions and customers declined, with by far the largest drops in Health & Beauty, where transactions declined by -11.1% and customers by -9.1%. However, the ATV in Health & Beauty rose by +4.7%, which shows that whilst this sector has seen fewer customers, they are spending more overall. This could be driven by demand for premium products, or stronger demand meaning retailers have been better able to pass on inflationary costs to customers. In contrast, the ATV in both the Fashion and General Retail sectors declined (by -1.4% and -1.8%), suggesting discounting.

Of the five key sectors, Food & Drink was the strongest during November, with an annual drop in sales of just -1.8%. The number of customers and transactions in this sector declined by a similar magnitude to Fashion, General Retail and Grocery, however, sales were supported by an increase in the ATV of +4.4%, possibly suggesting those who did dine out spent more, in combination with prices being maintained.

We now look to prospects for trading during December. During December 2024 town centre sales were the worst of the quarter, declining annually by -7.5%. With such a low comparable, I had previously forecast a 1.5% sales increase this year. However, the prevailing trend this year suggests that this may have been optimistic and that the outcome is likely to be weaker than originally hoped.

GB Benchmark – November 2025

Sector	Sales vs Nov 2024	Transactions vs Nov 2024	Customers vs Nov 2024	ATV vs Nov 2024	ATV
All Sectors	-7.0%	-8.5%	-4.8%	1.7%	£19.56
Fashion	-4.3%	-3.0%	-5.1%	-1.4%	£39.80
Food & Drink	-1.8%	-5.9%	-3.4%	4.4%	£13.86
General Retail	-8.3%	-6.6%	-6.1%	-1.8%	£17.98
Grocery	-3.7%	-6.6%	-2.0%	3.1%	£16.27
Health & Beauty	-6.9%	-11.1%	-9.1%	4.7%	£29.07

GB Benchmark – YTD November 2025

Sector	YTD Sales vs Nov 2024	YTD Transactions vs Nov 2024	YTD Customers vs Nov 2024	YTD ATV vs Nov 2024	YTD ATV
All Sectors	-3.3%	-4.4%	-3.2%	+1.2%	£18.57
Fashion	-4.8%	-4.0%	-3.8%	-0.8%	£37.69
Food & Drink	-2.2%	-4.9%	-3.1%	+2.9%	£13.47
General Retail	-4.4%	-3.4%	-3.8%	-1.1%	£16.07
Grocery	-2.1%	-2.6%	-1.4%	+0.5%	£15.13
Health & Beauty	-1.1%	-5.8%	-4.4%	+5.0%	£27.18

Our GB Benchmark is based on the median retail performance of 62 nationwide Town & City Centres.