

## **Key Question One – Are groups of functions of the same type located in the same area of the Town?**

My initial answer to this question is simply, yes. After over viewing the map of Altrincham I have noticed that the majority of female clothing stores are situated on George Street. The upper end of George Street near Boots the Chemist. Miss.Attitude, River Island, Principle Ladies, Dolcis, Kaliko, Next and New Look are all situated together. It is indicated on the map with the first ring. These shops are all High order services. Being used infrequently as they tend to sell goods that are bought less often due to the high price. Most of the goods from the shops are comparison goods, high value goods purchased infrequently and people choose between prices and styles. The shops are situated together so people can shop for price and quality in a small area without having to go far, from shop to shop. The consumer will look in one shop and compare it with the prices next door or another near by shop. This would increase sales for most businesses involved. With the increased density of the high order shops in a particular area, the sphere of influence grows larger, as the area gets known for the abundance of shops of a certain type.

This grouping together can also be seen in Hale with HSBC, Westminster and Barclays' bank all situated in close vicinity. With the banks, this is more about competition and beating each others interest rates etc...

To a further extent this can be seen in Manchester town centre with HMV and Virgin Music store close together on Market Street, with Music trade zone in the near by Arndale centre. Furthermore in the Trafford Centre's "The Orient" in which all restaurant and entertainment facilities are grouped. This is also advantageous for the shop and the consumer. People can find all these services in one place, and also the restaurants can gain trade by the larger sphere of influence.

This grouping or "Clustering" together of shops of a similar type is called functional adjacency. The benefits, as explained, are that the close proximity, shares trade and attracts a larger group of customers.

Although we can obviously see that functional adjacency is present in Altrincham there are a few exceptions to the rule. The lower order service of newsagents is not situated closely at all. The newsagent sells convenience and lower priced goods. There is one newsagent situated at the bottom end of Kingsway and another at the joining between Railway and Lloyd Street. Functional Adjacency wouldn't need to be present, as small changes in price between products are often not disputed. For Example if a mars bar was sold in Shop A for 33p and in Shop B for 35p, people wouldn't travel to the other for such a small difference. The placing of Newsagents is also different and very important. Nobody would travel into Altrincham just to go to a newsagents. It is a more spur of the moment purchase, so newsagents are better situated on main roads where they are easily visible.

Furthermore the hairdressers and Barbers do not function under the functional adjacency rule. Most of the customers are loyal to one hairdresser and rarely/if ever change.

So we can see that the higher order shops cluster together for increased sales and competition. With higher order and higher priced shops, every sale counts. Although with

the lower order services functional adjacency is not present as every sale isn't as important and competition isn't as great.

Overall we can see that functional adjacency operates in Altrincham and Hale.