Introduction from Harry Keogh
MD Private Banking at The Royal Bank of Scotland

Given everything we read and watch these days, you could easily imagine that an affluent lifestyle is exclusively the domain of premiership footballers, with their multi-million pound lifestyle with high-end cars and luxury mansions in the most desirable locations. Meanwhile, the rest of us are left to figure out the most affordable places to live across the UK.

But the truth about Britain’s wealthy people may not be quite what you’d imagined, which is exactly what The Royal Bank of Scotland has found with its latest research, the Affordable Affluence Index. This unprecedented study reveals for the first time ever, the locations across Britain where the elements of an affluent lifestyle – the top-performing schools, the desirable restaurants, hotels, cultural attractions, gyms and sport clubs, are available in abundance – but most importantly, the cost of living has not rocketed accordingly.

Beverley’s place at the top of the list reflects the fact that the town offers everything from award-winning golf courses to excellent restaurants – and all with an average house price of just £182,000. What the example of Beverley, and the other towns that make it into the Index show, is that a moderately wealthy lifestyle is well within the reach of many more people than probably realise it.

Within the past few years, wealth in Britain has been on the rise, with almost half a million people now earning £100,000 or more each year. In the past, you’d have been forgiven for thinking of Private Banking as the exclusive domain of the super-rich, millionaire aristocrats and big name stars; however, it’s equally as likely that your average Private Banking customer these days might be a head teacher, an eBay entrepreneur or perhaps a prosperous plumber.

At The Royal Bank of Scotland, we’ve responded to growth in the numbers and types of wealthy people and the changes in the way they are living their lives, by changing our Private Banking services. Now everyone with over £100,000 in annual earnings can take advantage of RBS Private Banking. There’s plenty to take advantage of too – with your own personal Private Banking Manager available face to face or via Private Banking Direct (0800 051 9955) and a team on call 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. There’s also an expert to deal with every type of query, from a personal tax service to dedicated mortgage advice, flexible lending and planning help for investments and retirement. Not to mention almost £2,400 worth of discounts and benefits, including 5* travel insurance, preferential terms on, borrowing, mortgages, travel and holiday booking and even airport lounge access as part of the exclusive Royalties Private packaged account.

So if you’ve ever thought that Private Banking is not for you, think again.

“Beverley’s place at the top of the list reflects the fact that the town offers everything from award-winning golf courses to excellent restaurants”
The aim of the RBS Private Banking Affordable Affluence Index was to identify those towns and cities across the UK offering a sought-after combination of services and amenities to facilitate an affluent lifestyle, but within a relatively affordable location.

Key components of the research were a series of affluent lifestyle indicators, identified by RBS as important to people earning £100,000 and over to enjoy their desired lifestyle. These included restaurants, boutiques, coffee shops, cultural attractions and high-end supermarkets, among many others.

Negative indicators were also aggregated into the overall score for each location in terms of desirability. These negative indicators included ‘value’ supermarket chains, betting shops, and takeaway fast food eateries.

This information was gathered by geographical region and mapped onto a data model, which identified ‘hotspots’ or ‘clusters’ of the affluent lifestyle indicators together with low levels of negative indicators.

Affordability was then calculated using property price data, average earnings data and regional rental price data. A good level of affordability was defined as an area that offered a property price to earnings ratio of lower, or close to the national average. Some areas do have ratios that are higher than the national average, but this is because they still offer exceptional affluent factors relative to property prices.

The data aggregation process involved applying weightings to all the different factors examined in the research. Desirable factors, such as indicators of affluence and high earnings, have been given a positive weighting, some greater than others. Negative factors, such as high house prices, have been given a negative weighting. This method has provided an overall score for each location. The resulting table of scores has then been sorted into descending order to produce an index of the top twenty locations of Affordable Affluence in the UK.
Eating out is no longer just a treat on rare occasions; it's becoming the norm for those who enjoy living a faster pace of life and making the most of free time. The huge popularity and growth of chains such as Wagamama’s, Carluccio’s and Browns demonstrates that those with the means to do so, love to eat good quality food outside of the home.

Socialising is a pastime which seems to become more and more important with every year that passes. Many have adopted the French passion for coffee houses, the home to ‘yummy mummies’ and busy folk up and down the country. Equally, well-designed bars with excellent wine lists and ranges of imported and local beers are important to our ‘affluent lifestylers’.

A pampering spa break or even just a single night away has fast become the most popular way to unwind after a hectic week. Those who frequent Marriott and Radisson Hotels or a Champneys Spa are definitely the type of clientele who appreciate the finer things in life.

The likes of Marks & Spencer or Waitrose have long been considered the natural choice for special occasions such as dinner parties. However, changes in spending habits and a thirst for exceptional quality every day have made them a more frequent choice for discerning shoppers.

BMW’s, Mercedes and Lexus are models that have long been identified as prestige brands and as earnings continue to rise, they’re becoming ever more popular among affluent customers.

Those who favour brands such as Thomas Pink and Russell & Bromley, clearly enjoy taking care of their appearance and looking their best. A cut above some other high street shops, these outlets host more expensive and exclusive collections for those want excellent quality but affordable style.

Molton Brown, Crabtree & Evelyn and MAC are renowned destinations for that little extra special something. These brands promote quality and inspire loyalty in their often affluent customers.

Local education standards are an acknowledged indicator of an affluent area and with private school fees rising exponentially; state schooling is an ever-more frequent option for more affluent families. Parents who promote education and its importance insist on a certain level of schooling for their children in order to help them achieve throughout their lives.

Keeping fit and healthy is good for the heart – and the contacts book. People who frequent golf courses, tennis and cricket clubs find it’s a great place to meet others in similar circumstances and even make business and social contacts. These establishments attract a clientele in comfortable circumstances who definitely enjoy the good things in life.

Areas with great entertainment facilities provide ideal locations for affluent people to enjoy relaxing time with family and friends – whether it’s a trip to a museum, to see a play or even the latest movie at the cinema, there’s no doubt that entertainment is key for this group.
Beverley comes out at the top of our survey of affordable affluence. It is a picturesque market town in the East Riding of Yorkshire. With a population of under 20,000, it is one of the smaller towns in the top twenty.

As well as the historic core of the town, including the awe-inspiring Minster and the attractive Victorian and Georgian town houses, Beverley offers a good selection of quality shopping as well as high-performing schools such as Beverley High School.

Many people may be familiar with the town because of the horse racing at Beverley race course.

The town has an average house price of £182,000 – just above the national average of £180,000. The town has enjoyed higher than national average earnings since medieval times when it was a wealthy centre for wool-trading.

The sheer volume of shopping in Maidstone, along with the high income to property price ratio enjoyed by the average family in the area push Maidstone to number 2 on our list. Much larger than Beverley and with a wide variety of good schools, restaurants and leisure facilities, the town is well served for the hustle and bustle of modern life.

In addition to this, Maidstone has some very attractive areas, such as nearby Leeds Castle, dubbed “The loveliest castle in the world”. Leeds Castle offers a cultural diversion and beautiful views over parkland and lakes. In addition, the nearby village of Chilham is a chocolate-box haven in the “Garden of England” away from the traffic of the centre of Maidstone.

Household income is comparatively high in Maidstone, with residents earning on average approximately £40,000, whilst the average property costs nearly £241,000.

Chester is a more anticipated entry on our list at number 3. This city is one of the most popular destinations for domestic and international tourists in the UK, and it is easy to see why. “The Rows” – the medieval shopping arcades in the centre of the town offer a unique shopping experience, and one in which the beautiful buildings dominate any attempts at branding but the whole city centre is architecturally one of the most interesting, varied and well-preserved in the country featuring city walls of red sandstone, Roman streets and Victorian and Tudor-inspired structures. However, the city’s fathers have ensured that there is a good supply of modern housing in the city’s suburbs and as such, property here is more affordable for locals than those of Maidstone, with average property priced at just over £194,000.

The city boasts a large number of excellent schools, including Abbey Gate College, Hammond School, The King’s School and The Queen’s School. The city also has a proliferation of golf clubs and spas.

1 Beverley

2 Maidstone

3 Chester

4 Perth
5 Salford
6 Inverness
7 Huddersfield
8 Solihull
9 Wokingham
10 Sutton Coldfield
11 Canterbury
12 Ely
13 Stratford Upon Avon
14 Worcester
15 Salisbury
16 Torquay
17 Bangor
18 Newport
19 Durham
20 Livingston
4  Perth
Perth’s residents earn on average, approximately £34,000, whilst the average property costs approximately £158,000. This means that Perth is a relatively affordable place to live, and is Scotland’s highest placed area in our survey.

The city used to be Scotland’s capital and is close to the present day capital, Edinburgh and the metropolis of Glasgow. It is steeped in history, especially the Stone Palace and nearby Moot Hill, where Scottish monarchs were traditionally crowned.

Perth and its environs are renowned for its beautiful natural scenery, offering skiing, cycling and some stunning walks. However, there are also a number of golf and tennis clubs, museums, galleries and good shops in the area, whilst the excellent Perth Grammar School is in the top 20% of schools in the country.

5  Salford
A phenomenal programme of investment in culture and the proximity the sporting mecca of Old Trafford has seen a rejuvenation of Salford. The Lowry museum pays homage to one of Salford’s most celebrated residents, depicting the industrial workers of his day, and the toll their labours took. Nowadays, Salford’s residents are more likely to be found in the local branch of an upmarket shop – Molton Brown or Whistles for example.

In addition, the beautiful Daniel Libeskind designed Imperial War Museum North is a visually striking addition to the waterfront. Property in the area is varied, with some very affordable areas. However, the recently redeveloped sections tend to command significant sums. The proximity to the economic powerhouse of Manchester ensures that average family income here (at £33,000 but varying from £48,000 to £26,000) can be well above the national average.

6  Inverness
The capital of the Highlands comes in at number 6 in our survey. The city is also adjacent to the world famous Loch Ness, and receives a great many tourists either for the natural attractions in the immediate vicinity or for the wealth of shops which the city offers those from smaller towns and villages in the Highlands.

It is one of the fastest growing cities in Scotland, with several high tech companies providing good jobs (average household income here is £32,000), whilst house prices continue to be relatively affordable for locals at an average of £160,000, and excluding the expensive IV1 postcode district, these fall to £146,000.

The town has several museums, including the Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, and the Highlanders Museum. With walks along the River Ness and trips to see the dolphins of the Moray Firth there are also some stunning natural attractions.

7  Huddersfield
With a wealth of listed buildings, the large town of Huddersfield is noted for its abundance of historic Victorian architecture. There are also many future developments planned and approved for the town. Coupled with attractive buildings are a large and diverse range of shops to satisfy all different tastes. Huddersfield is well connected on the national motorway network via the M62 and M1.

Huddersfield has a low average house price of £131,000, much lower than the national figure; and has many properties that are relatively inexpensive for first time buyers. The mean family income is strong at just under £33,000.

8  Solihull
As the UK’s fifth richest borough, and the most affluent town in the Midlands, Solihull earns its place on our list. Situated 9 miles to the south-east of the centre of Birmingham, it is well within the range of the shopping opportunities that Birmingham has to offer as well as a plethora of up-market clothing retailers in Solihull town centre and the Touchwood Shopping Centre, and country clubs around its outskirts. The town itself has existed since medieval times, and is particularly noted for its Tudor architecture.

Solihull is well connected to Birmingham and the rest of the Midlands, and the M42 and M40 provide quick passage to Oxford and London. The average price of a home in Solihull is £299,000; this high figure is matched by a high level of household earnings: £42,000 per annum.

9  Wokingham
An historic market town in the Thames Valley in Berkshire and lying less than 30 miles from the capital, Wokingham has a population of just over 30,000. Its location is well served by easy access to road, rail and air services. The town has eight public parks, a number of manor houses, and several leisure facilities including riding centres and golf clubs. Wokingham also has four state secondary schools and three private schools. The mean price of a house in Wokingham is a shade above £310,000 whilst the average household earnings are £50,000; all these factors contribute towards Wokingham’s status as a highly desirable rural place to live.

10  Sutton Coldfield
As part of the conurbation of Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield has a large population of over 100,000 which is well served by two large shopping centres and several parades. Affluence indicators include high class clothes retailers, grammar schools, and tennis, golf and cricket clubs. Much of Sutton Coldfield’s growth occurred in the 20th century, with the town being increasingly connected to Birmingham; Sutton Coldfield lies eight miles from central Birmingham.

Sutton Coldfield has an average house price of £240,000 and household earnings stand at £40,000 both of these statistics are lower than Solihull but higher than the national values.

11  Canterbury
Canterbury is more expensive, and salaries lower than in many of the areas in the top 10, with the average property price currently lying at approximately £244,000. However, the sheer variety of local facilities means that it is worthy of a place in the top 20. Canterbury is the home of Anglicanism and a magnificent cathedral, but also has a wide selection of bars and restaurants, sporting facilities and museums.

The city is also well- served by schools and shops.

12  Ely
The pretty cathedral city of Ely lies on the Fens about 15 miles north east of Cambridge. As well as a beautiful cathedral, the town has many attractive Georgian and medieval buildings.

The city is quite small, but is growing relatively quickly and the proximity to Cambridge with its wealth of high tech jobs provides a good standard of living for local people. House prices here are also not yet as high as some of the surrounding areas, and so it is possible for many residents to live well. Currently, the average house is priced at just under £202,000.

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1. This ranking is in terms of the percentage of students who have achieved level 2 threshold in Key Stage 4 or equivalent. According to government 2006 exam results data.
2. The Highland Council explains that Inverness, the fifth largest city in Scotland, is one of the fastest growing urban centres in the UK.
13. Stratford upon Avon
The picturesque town of Stratford-upon-Avon is not only one of the most visited places in the country, it also offers a high quality of life for residents. Its association with Shakespeare means that the town’s Elizabethan heritage has been preserved through the numerous Tudor buildings, whilst the location provides easy access to the Cotswolds and extensive countryside, whilst also enjoying close proximity to larger cities such as Birmingham, Coventry and Oxford.

The tourist industry of Stratford-upon-Avon supports numerous shops, restaurants and museums in addition to many hotels and country clubs located on the outskirts of the town centre. The area also has a number of schools, the most popular of which are the single sex grammar schools, King Edward VI School (reputedly the school at which William Shakespeare himself was educated) and Stratford-upon-Avon Grammar School for Girls. However, although the average household income is almost £40,000, the average house price reflects the popularity of the area at almost £280,000, and is one of the more expensive areas to purchase property in the top twenty.

14. Worcester
Magnificent cathedral crowns this eclectic mixture of Georgian, Tudor and Elizabethan architecture, alongside some more modern structures. The opportunities to spend money in Worcester are excellent, with a great mix of high-end shopping on both the High Street, and Friar Street, as well as a broad selection of country, golf and tennis clubs and cricket facilities on the outskirts.

The city has some excellent schools, including Alice Ottley and Royal Grammar. The city of Worcester has an average household income of £37,000 and house prices lie at £241,000. This means that it is higher than the national average in terms of property and income but it remains relatively affordable in comparison to some of the other locations on our list.

15. Salisbury
Salisbury and the surrounding areas are outstandingly beautiful, and offer an architectural feast from every period of British history – from Stonehenge, a world heritage site and one of the most important areas of its kind in the world, through the spire of the Cathedral, soaring above streets of timbered town houses and Georgian splendour, to the restaurants, bars and lively markets.

Salisbury has a wide range of golf clubs, riding schools, galleries and museums to entertain the body and the mind as well as a variety of superb national and local shops.

Salisbury is not further up our list because it’s one of the more expensive places to live in our top 20, but many people will think that it’s worth it! Average household income lies at about £32,000, while house prices are at just over £270,000.

16. Torquay
At the heart of the English Riviera, Torquay is a truly British seaside town, complete with shabby deckchairs. As well as having the coast and fine beaches close to hand, Torquay benefits from numerous other leisure facilities such as tennis, golf and cricket clubs, as well as a number of theatres and restaurants.

Local schools are also popular, with the grammar schools (a boy’s single sex school and a girl’s single sex school) amongst the highest performing in the country. However, it is one of the less affordable areas in the top twenty with a price earnings ratio marginally higher than the average, with an average household income of just £31,000, and house prices of just over £196,000.

17. Bangor
The relatively small coastal town of Bangor in North Wales is surrounded by areas of outstanding natural beauty that include the Menai Straits, Snowdonia National Park and the nearby beaches of Anglesey. As a university town it has many more cultural events than other towns of similar size. Some of the best climbing, hiking, mountain biking, sailing, surfing and fishing in the country can all be done within an hour drive of the town. Bangor boasts one of the longest High Streets in the country. Although property prices in Bangor have shot up over the last five years, average prices of around £140,000 make Bangor one of the most affordable towns in the top twenty.

18. Newport
Newport’s attraction lies largely in its geographical location. It is positioned on the edge of a national park, with the coast and beaches to its south and the Preseli Hills inland. However, Newport also benefits from its culture and leisure facilities, which range from numerous golf, tennis and riding Clubs to the Dolman Theatre and the Newport Museum and Art Gallery.

Housing in the area is particularly affordable, with the average family income being approximately £34,000, slightly higher than the average for the Top Twenty, yet the average house price reaching only £165,000, much lower than the average house price for the Top Twenty of just over £200,000.

19. Durham
The city of Durham has two main pulls, the cathedral, arguably the greatest Norman building in Europe, and the University, which is regularly ranked amongst the top ten in the country. Its setting also allows Durham’s residents to make use of the countryside and open spaces for golf clubs and riding schools, whilst the cobbled streets, pedestrianised town centre and river make Durham centre surprisingly calm for a city. Durham property is also particularly reasonably priced, with the average property price for the area being £142,383, in contrast to the average property price for the top twenty being over £200,000.

20. Livingston
Located within the central belt, Livingston is located between Scotland’s principal cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The area is well-equipped with shopping facilities, with a number of shopping centres, including a designer outlet village. Property in Livingston represents excellent value for money, with the lowest price earnings ratio in the Top Twenty, of 3.4, compared to a national average of 5.6.
RBS Private Banking customers in areas of Affordable Affluence

PERTH
NOLON OWEN
Nolon Owen is 33 years old and has lived in St Madoes, Perth since his job in financial services relocated there. Nolon became an RBS Private Banking customer just two months ago.

Nolon comments:
“I moved to Perth eight years ago. Perth offers a great quality lifestyle, there’s very little traffic and it’s quite sparsely populated, which means pollution levels are very low. The cost of living is also quite affordable compared to other areas, with some excellent but very reasonable local restaurants.

If you like outdoor activities, Perth has a lot to offer. I really enjoy salmon fishing, so feel very fortunate to have the River Tay on my doorstep. Perth is also very conveniently located for getting to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

“I became an RBS Private Banking customer because I was moving house and needed some bridging finance to be organised in a very short timescale. They provided the help I needed, in a very demanding timescale and the service was excellent.

I prefer Private Banking because I have someone who knows me, knows my finances and always makes themselves available, even at very short notice.”

SALFORD
SARAH HORSFIELD
Sarah Horsfield lives in Swinton, Northern Salford, and owns her own design and print company, Acanthus.

Sarah says:
“I have lived in Salford for eleven years. I own my own company and one of the reasons I chose to live here is because of the availability of affordable housing and commercial premises.

Also, Salford is about ten minutes from Manchester, so we have all the benefits of a big city on our doorstep. Since moving here, there has been lots of regeneration, and the area is attracting a lot of big corporations, such as the BBC. This is great news.”

Sarah became an RBS Private Banking customer because she was unhappy with her previous bank:
“I became an RBS Private Banking customer because I wanted a more personal service from my bank. I also needed a Private Banking Manager who was accessible and a good communicator. I’m really happy with the service I have received so far and feel that my finances are in a safe pair of hands.”

TORQUAY
MIKE FREEMAN
Mike Freeman moved to the outskirts of Torquay, two years ago. Semi-retired, Mike manages a buy-to-let portfolio and runs a property development business.

Mike has been a Royal Bank of Scotland Private Banking customer for two years.

Mike comments:
“I think the area has so much to offer. The local marina is a real bonus, since it has great facilities for boating enthusiasts. We also have excellent local restaurants, including a Rick Stein restaurant nearby and a good good range of shops on our doorstep.

“I became an RBS Private Banking customer because I wanted a more personal service from my bank. My Private Banking Manager Anna is really hands on, and I admire her ‘can do’ attitude to problem solving. There aren’t really any banking issues that she can’t help me with, and at last I feel like an individual, as opposed to a number.”

BEVERLEY
Vivien Tindall
Vivien Tindall lives with her husband just outside Beverley. Vivien is the Director of a vehicle body repair company, called The Paint and Bodyshop and has been an RBS Private Banking customer for three years.

Vivien comments:
“I moved here almost forty years ago, and the fact that I’ve lived here for so long speaks volumes about how much I enjoy living in the Beverley area. There really is everything you could possibly want and need here – a great choice of places to eat and drink, and a fantastic range of shops, from popular chains to smaller boutiques and a market every Saturday. We also have a local racecourse which I visit every year for Ladies Day.

Another advantage of living in Beverley is our proximity to York and Leeds, although we also frequently arrange trips to London, because the train service is so good!”

Vivien became an RBS Private Banking customer when she became dissatisfied with her previous bank:
“The primary reason I chose to become a Private Banking customer is because I really value a one-on-one personal service from my bank, which I wouldn’t receive in the same way from a standard bank account. I particularly like the guarantee that if you ask for something to happen, it will always be followed up.”
An Introduction to The Royal Bank of Scotland Private Banking Service

Truly Personal Service

RBS Private Banking is designed specifically for customers who expect superior service, excellent products and the very best value from their bank. It offers everything from a dedicated personal banking relationship manager to tailored products and services.

Customers receive a high level of personal service from their Private Banking Relationship Manager who they can meet face-to-face or talk to over the ‘phone. They are also able to provide customers with access to RBS’ teams of experts on:

- investment and retirement planning
- personal tax service
- will writing service
- share dealing service

The Personal Banking Relationship Manager can advise on any costs associated with some of these services.

Royalties Private current account

RBS Private Banking customers are eligible for the Royalties Private current account. For £18 a month, they receive an extensive range of benefits including:

- an exceptional overdraft rate – including an interest-free overdraft of £500
- a tailored rate of credit and debit interest and interest rates on loans
- preferential interest rates on loans
- special mortgage deals
- discounts on tax services

The current account also comes with a range of benefits that compliment an affluent lifestyle including:

- concierge service – the luxury of a Lifestyle Manager with the expertise and connections to help organise a whole host of things from reservations at top restaurants and tickets for to worldwide sporting and music events to bespoke travel itineraries and inspirational gift ideas
- access to executive lounges at major UK airports and also worldwide airports when customers order a free priority pass
- complimentary next day delivery on commission-free travel money through Royalties membership services
- complimentary car upgrade as well as 10% discount on rental price

Help Always at Hand

It can be very difficult for customers to get to their branch during the working day so RBS Private Banking offers 24 hour support with its Private Banking 24/7 telephone service.