

ASHFORD LOCAL PLAN 2030

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Ashford Borough Council

**Employment Monitoring Report
2016/17**

March 2018



Chapter 5 - Employment

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Employment Growth

The Core Strategy seeks to achieve a general balance between a growing population and the creation of new jobs through Policies CS1, CS2 and CS7. Policy CS7 states that the Council is committed to improving the economy of the borough and enabling a range of employment opportunities to be provided that will be sufficient to generate an additional 16,700 jobs between 2001 and 2021. This will ensure that employment remains in balance with housing development.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) produce a Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) for jobs figures in a particular location. This is done by surveying a small number of companies in an area and making assumptions about the whole borough based on the performance of the surveyed businesses. This survey excludes certain types of businesses including Agriculture.

In October 2017, Kent County Council (KCC) produced a report using BRES survey data which showed the distribution of jobs across the borough. As can be seen on the chart below, the administrative sector has seen the largest growth, whilst the scientific and human health industries have seen the largest decline.

Ashford	2015	2016	Change 2015 - 2016		Structure 2015	Structure 2016
			No.	%	%	%
Primary Industries (Agriculture/Mining/Utilities)	2,500	2,500	-100	-2.6%	4.6%	4.3%
Manufacturing	5,000	4,800	-300	-5.0%	9.1%	8.4%
Construction	2,300	2,400	100	5.6%	4.1%	4.2%
Wholesale and retail trade	11,500	12,000	500	4.3%	20.8%	21.2%
Transportation and storage	2,500	3,300	800	30.0%	4.5%	5.7%
Accommodation and food service activities	3,800	3,500	-300	-6.7%	6.8%	6.2%
Information and communication	1,500	1,500	0	0.0%	2.7%	2.6%
Financial and insurance activities	700	600	-100	-14.3%	1.3%	1.1%
Real estate activities	600	800	200	33.3%	1.1%	1.4%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4,000	3,500	-500	-12.5%	7.2%	6.2%
Administrative and support service activities	3,800	5,000	1,300	33.3%	6.8%	8.8%
Public administration and defence	1,800	2,000	300	14.3%	3.2%	3.5%
Education	4,300	4,300	0	0.0%	7.7%	7.5%
Human health and social work activities	8,500	8,000	-500	-5.9%	15.4%	14.1%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,100	1,000	-100	-11.1%	2.0%	1.8%
Other service activities	1,500	1,800	300	16.7%	2.7%	3.1%
Total	55,200	56,700	1,500	2.8%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: KCC BRES 2016

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/8180/Business-Register-and-Employment-Survey-BRES.pdf

Residents in Employment

In addition to this, there are several other ways to record employment growth across the borough. Using the most up to date ONS Nomis official labour market statistics, we can record growth in the number of people actually employed in the borough.

Within a five year period, the number of people employed in Ashford has increased by 19% or 10,600, growing from 55,900 in September 2012 to 66,500 in September 2017. The percentage of people between the ages of 16 and 64 who were in employment in Ashford as of September 2017 was 86.9%, higher than both the regional average of 78.4% and the national average of 74.5%.

Source: *Nomis – Economically Active – Time Series*

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157311/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx

Job Density

The latest job **density figures** for Ashford are from 2016 and are very encouraging. Ashford's latest job density was 0.90, the South East's was 0.88 and Great Britain's was 0.84. So effectively, for every 100 people in Ashford between the ages of 16 and 64 there are 90 jobs, which is higher than both the regional and national averages.

Source: *Nomisweb – Labour Demand – Jobs Density (2015)*

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157311/subreports/jd_time_series/report.aspx

Business Growth

A new European Commission Structural Business Statistics Regulation came into force in February 2008, requiring National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) to produce statistics on business births, deaths and survival rates. This record is beneficial as it can indicate whether the business sector in Ashford is growing or declining, which will have a subsequent impact on the amount of jobs available in the borough. In 2016, the number of active enterprises in the borough stood at 6095, compared to 5360 in 2011 – an overall increase of 13.7% in four years. Overall, there were 885 births of new enterprises in 2016, whilst there were 670 deaths, producing a ratio of 1.32. Anything above 1 is regarded as positive as it shows that more businesses are opening than closing.

Source: *KCC Business Demography 2016*

https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/8179/Business-demography.pdf

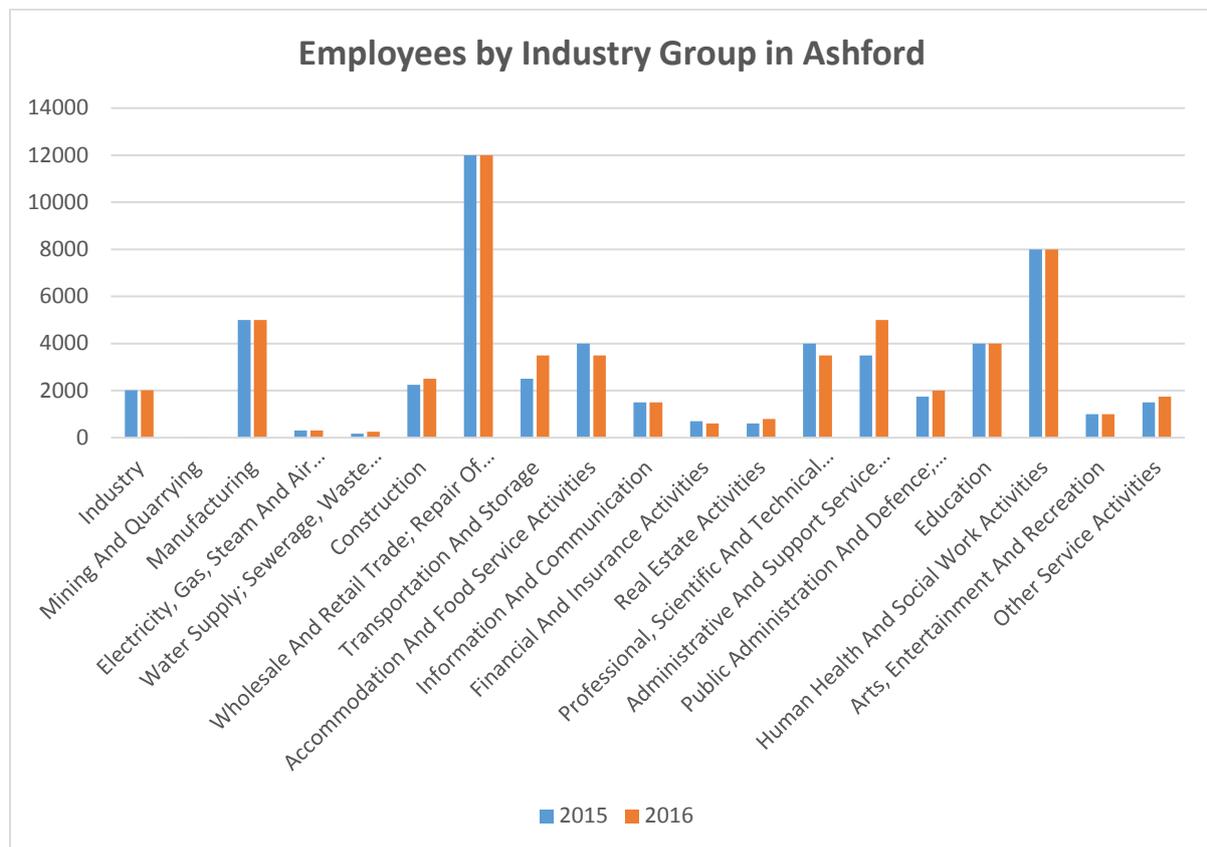
Employees by Industry Group

The biggest proportion of those employed in Ashford work in the **wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles industry**, with 12,000/21.8% of those employed in Ashford working within this sector. This is significantly higher than the percentage employed in this sector regionally (16.3%)

and nationally (15.3%). The second largest employment sector in Ashford is in **human health and social work activities** with 8,000/14.5% of the workforce.

Between 2015 and 2016 there has not been a dramatic shift in the number of employees in each industry group as shown in the graph below. The two industries with the biggest loss in employees have been the **accommodation and food service activities sector**, which has decreased by 500 employees, and the **professional, scientific and technical activities industry**, which has also decreased by 500 employees.

Ashford’s employment structure predominantly tilts towards **health, manufacturing, wholesale, retail trade and the repair of motor vehicles** industries in the Borough’s labour force, with a higher proportion in these sectors compared to the regional or national average. In contrast, **the IT, education, finance & insurance and the professional, scientific industries** are all less well represented in Ashford when compared to the regional and national averages.



Source: Nomisweb – Labour Demand – Employee Jobs by Industry 2016
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157311/report.aspx?#ls>

Employment Floorspace Monitoring

The annual survey of employment land is currently undertaken by Ashford Borough Council (ABC). Ordinarily, all employment/commercial sites with a planning permission valid on the 31st March of that monitoring year are visited. An

assessment is then made on the stage of the development; complete, under-construction or not started, and this is then recorded in the annual Commercial Information Audit (CIA). It is worth noting that the last employment monitoring report was based on visits conducted at the beginning of 2017, so **in order to remain consistent, this years employment monitoring report has been based on visits conducted in February 2018. This report therefore provides an annual overview of business development in the borough.**

Originally this survey only covered employment sites permitted for B1-B8 land uses. These uses were surveyed in order to monitor whether levels of development were meeting regional development targets. In 2007/08 monitoring procedures were expanded to include surveying of other commercial sites. This means that instead of only monitoring land uses B1, B2 and B8 (Offices and light industry, general industry and storage/distribution), gains and losses of commercial units such as shops (A1), financial and professional services (A2), hotels (C1), Residential Institutions (C2), Non Residential Institutions (D1) and Assembly and leisure (D2) are now included in the annual survey.

The 2016/2017 CIA shows that the borough gained approximately 29620sqm of employment floorspace over the course of the monitoring year and lost 25709sqm, resulting in an overall net gain of 3911sqm. This is quite a sharp decline on the 2015/16 figure, which saw a net gain of 20971sqm.

The largest growth in employment floorspace between 2016 and 2017 came from the D1 non-residential sector which contributed 15395sqm, whilst an additional 3371sqm came from new B1c light industry developments. The site with the biggest individual contribution to the net gain of employment floorspace was the construction of the Ashford College on Elwick Road, with the completion of that development providing 13989sqm of D1 floorspace. The second largest floorspace gain in the borough was the development at the Singleton Nursing Homes where the conversion and extension of the building from a surgery to nursing home contributed 1524sqm of C2 space.

The biggest loss in employment floorspace came from the B1-8 business sector, where 19896sqm was lost. The site that contributed to the biggest individual loss in floorspace was at Godinton Way, where the new Croudace Homes site consisting of 83 dwellings is close to being completed. The demolition of the buildings and structures that were previously on the site led to an overall loss of 7481sqm of B2 floorspace. The second largest single loss in employment floorspace was at the Houchin Ltd building on the Cobbswood Industrial Estate, where a change of use at the site from predominantly B2 to A1 has led to a loss of 3727sqm whilst the site is under construction.

Employment Floorspace currently Under Construction

From the information gathered in the CIA site visits between 2016/2017, there is currently around 47898sqm of employment floorspace under construction. This high figure indicates that the borough is in a strong position in terms of future employment development.

With regards to the amount of floorspace under construction in the A and B use classes, the A1-5 sector currently has the largest amount under construction with 24503sqm, whilst in the B1-8 use class there is around 10207sqm under construction. With around 35000sqm under construction in these use classes alone, it provides a good indication that these two sectors should continue to grow steadily in the next few years.

The largest individual development under construction is the extension of the Ashford Designer Outlet. Once complete, this development will contribute 13617sqm of floorspace to the borough. Around 11000sqm of this will be in the A1 sector, with the rest made up within the A3 and Sui Generis land uses. The second largest development in terms of future floorspace is the redevelopment of the former Ashford Market site on Elwick Road with a cinema, hotel and restaurant complex. Here there is currently 8069sqm under construction, split between 2830sqm of A3 space, 1976sqm C1 and 3263sqm of D2.

Please note that in the 2015/16 AMR it was wrongly recorded that a site at Hall Avenue in Sevington was under construction when it was actually complete. Although the under constructions figures were slightly skewed by this in the report last year, the amount of floorspace completed was recorded accurately.

Ashford Town Centre

During the monitoring year 2016/2017 there was an overall net gain of 2561sqm of employment floorspace in Ashford Town Centre, with a gross gain of 15377sqm and a gross loss of 12816sqm. Most of the gain came from the D1 sector which contributed 13989sqm, whilst the bulk of the loss came from the B2 sector where 7481sqm was lost during the course of the year.

The largest single gain in 2016/17 was at the Ashford College on Elwick Road, with the completion contributing 13989sqm of D1 floorspace to the overall figures for the town centre. The largest losses have been seen in the B2 sector, with the buildings that were formerly on the Croudace Homes site demolished to make way for new housing. This site therefore contributes 7481sqm to this monitoring years losses. In the B1a office sector, 2108sqm were lost across three main sites (15 to 17 North Street 646sqm, Tufton House 845sqm and Elwick House 616.8sqm). This trend is likely to continue due to the national permitted development rights in place that allow offices to convert to residential use without obtaining planning permission. Ashford does however, have restrictions on this over the planned Commercial Quarter site which will prevent this permitted development right.

As of 2016/2017, there is 15809sqm of floorspace under construction in the town centre, which makes up around 33% of the total UC in the borough. Over half of this is located on the former Ashford Market site on Elwick Road, where there is currently 8069sqm under construction in the form of a cinema, hotel and restaurants. It is worth noting that the recently submitted Ashford Local Plan contains a policy labelled S1 - Commercial Quarter, which it is anticipated will provide 55,000sqm of office space. Developments such as the Curious Brewery and Aldi Superstore on Victoria Road are also at the early stages of development, and will contribute 4150sqm of floorspace once complete. These few developments listed above emphasise that the town centre is undergoing significant change that will generate more employment opportunities within the borough.

For more information on these Town Centre development projects visit the Ashfordfor website:

<http://www.ashfordfor.com/spacetogrow/development/ashfords-development-opportunities>

Employment Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator - Additional employment floorspace – Borough Wide (CS1, CS7, CS16 Core Indicator)

Total amount of additional employment floorspace – by type m² (gross and net)

Target – Total of 592,000m² of net additional employment floorspace (A2, B1,B2 and B8 uses) should be provided in the **Borough** between 2001 and 2021

Actual - 2016/17	Gross m²:	Net m²:
A2	241	241
B1a	1740	-1216
B1b	0	0
B1c	3371	1047
B2	1375	-9833
B8	222	-1763
B1-B8 (Unable to split)	644	-780
TOTAL:	7593	-12304

Performance Indicator - Additional employment floorspace – Urban (CS1, CS7, CS16 Local Indicator)

Total amount of additional employment floorspace completed in the **Urban** areas by type gross m² (A2,B1,B2 and B8 uses)

Target – No urban target for floorspace

Actual - 2016/17	Gross m²:	Net m²:
A2	6	6
B1a	263	-480
B1b	0	0
B1c	254	254
B2	0	-3727
B8	0	-204
B1-8 (Unable to split)	0	0
TOTAL:	643	-4151

**Performance Indicator - Additional employment floorspace – Rural
(CS1, CS7, CS16, TRS8, TRS9 Local Indicator)**

Total amount of additional employment floorspace completed in the **Rural** areas by type gross m² (B1,B2,B8 and A2 uses)

Target – No rural target for floorspace

Actual - 2016/17	Gross m²:	Net m²:
A2	163	163
B1a	1010	905
B1b	0	0
B1c	3117	2527
B1	31	-1165
B2	1375	1375
B8	222	-1559
B1-8	613	613
TOTAL:	6531	2859

**Performance Indicator – Additional ‘town centre’ uses floorspace – Borough Wide
(CS1, CS3, CS7, CS16, CS17 Core Indicator)**

Total amount of floorspace for ‘town centre uses’ (gross and net) completed in the **Borough**

Target – To minimise loss of retail, office and leisure development

Actual - 2016/17	Gross m²:	Net m²:
A1	592	-836
A2	241	241
B1a	1740	-1216
D2	1268	1268
TOTAL:	3841	-543

NOTE: Town Centre uses is defined as use class orders A1, A2, B1a and D2

**Performance Indicator – Loss of B-class uses in the urban area
(Urban Sites DPD Local Indicator)**

Amount of employment floorspace (B-class uses) lost in the **Urban** area (net) (unless one of the criteria in Policy U20 applies)

Target – No net loss

Actual – 2016/17	Net Loss m²:
B1a	-480
B1b	0
B1c	254
B2	-3727
B8	-204
TOTAL:	-4157

Town Centre Vitality Indicators

Performance Indicator - Additional Town Centre uses floorspace - Ashford Town Centre

(CS1, CS3, CS7, CS16, CS17 Core Indicator)

Total amount of floorspace completed for 'town centre uses' (gross and net) within **Town Centre** area.

Target – Between 2006 and 2021 – Retail/Leisure (A1 and D2) uses: up to 57,700 m² net; Commercial (A2 and B1a) uses: 93,000 m² net

Actual - 2016/17

Retail/Leisure	Gross m ² :	Net m ² :
A1	0	-923
D2	393	393
TOTAL:	393	-530

Commercial

A2	72	72
B1a	467	-1641
TOTAL:	539	-1569

NOTE: Town Centre uses is defined as use class orders A1, A2, B1a and D2.

The Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (ATCAAP) was adopted in February 2010 and has allocated new employment sites for development. This should have a positive impact on future figures.

Performance Indicator – Jobs in Ashford Town Centre

(CS1, CS2, CS3, CS7 Local Indicator)

Number of additional jobs created within the **Ashford Town Centre** per annum

Target – Jobs to be created for the period up to 2021: Retail/Leisure: 3,750; Commercial: 4,150

Actual - 2016/17 **Retail/Leisure - 0**
Commercial - 0

NOTE: Source Arup Study 2001 – The Arup study gives a formula of 1 job per 20sq metres. This formula was applied to the floorspace gained as shown in the indicator above. This is just an indicative figure.

Performance Indicator – Multi-storey parking in in Ashford Town Centre

(Ashford Town Centre AAP TC21 Local Indicator)

New multi-storey public car parking spaces in **Ashford Town Centre**

Target - At least 1200 by 2021

Actual – None

**Performance Indicator – Tenterden primary shopping frontage
(Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD TRS15 Local Indicator)**

Amount of frontage subject to changes of use from Class A1 uses to non-A1 uses permitted within the areas of Tenterden town centres two primary shopping frontages

Target – The non-A1 uses should not cumulatively amount to more than 35% of the length of either of the defined primary frontages

Actual - Survey 2016/17:

	North frontage	South frontage	Total frontage
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A1 uses

Non A1 uses Survey not undertaken during 2016/17

NOTE: Shopping frontage as stated in the adopted Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD is:

	<i>North frontage</i>	<i>South frontage</i>	<i>Total frontage</i>
<i>A1 uses</i>	65%	55%	61%
<i>Non A1 uses</i>	35%	45%	39%