

Ashford Borough Council

Employment Monitoring Report 2017/18

March 2019



Chapter 5 - Employment

Employment Growth

The Ashford Borough Council Local Plan 2030 Policy SP3 seeks to support sustainable economic development, job growth and prosperity with the stated intention to deliver 64 hectares of new employment land and a total of 11,100 jobs in the Borough between 2014-2030. This policy aim ensures that job creation would progress in tandem with population growth in the Borough.

Kent County Council (KCC) produce annual reports using the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), a series of data compiled by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) for job figures in particular locations. This data is gathered by surveying a small number of companies in an area and making assumptions about the Borough based on this data (excluding certain types of businesses, such as agriculture).

The latest report covers employment statistics up to 2017, detailing the distribution of jobs across the Borough and the relative growth/decline of jobs in certain sectors. Below are the results of the report specific to Ashford: as can be seen, the 'Human health and social work activities' sector has experienced the largest growth, followed closely by 'Construction', while 'Wholesale and retail trade' and 'Professional, scientific and technical activities' are joint for the largest reductions.

Ashford	2015	2016	2017	Change 2016 - 2017		Structure 2015	Structure 2017
				No.	%	%	%
Primary Industries (Agriculture/Mining/Utilities)	1,700	1,700	1,700	0	0.6%	3.1%	3.1%
Manufacturing	5,000	4,800	4,800	0	0.0%	9.2%	8.4%
Construction	2,300	2,400	3,300	900	36.8%	4.1%	5.8%
Wholesale and retail trade	11,500	12,000	11,500	-500	-4.2%	21.2%	20.4%
Transportation and storage	2,500	3,300	3,000	-300	-7.7%	4.6%	5.3%
Accommodation and food service activities	3,800	3,500	3,500	0	0.0%	6.9%	6.2%
Information and communication	1,500	1,500	1,400	-100	-8.3%	2.8%	2.4%
Financial and insurance activities	700	600	600	0	0.0%	1.3%	1.1%
Real estate activities	600	800	700	-100	-12.5%	1.1%	1.2%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4,000	3,500	3,000	-500	-14.3%	7.4%	5.3%
Administrative and support service activities	3,800	5,000	5,000	0	0.0%	6.9%	8.9%
Public administration and defence	1,800	2,000	1,800	-300	-12.5%	3.2%	3.1%
Education	4,300	4,300	4,300	0	0.0%	7.8%	7.6%
Human health and social work activities	8,500	8,000	9,000	1,000	12.5%	15.6%	16.0%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,100	1,000	1,300	300	25.0%	2.1%	2.2%
Other service activities	1,500	1,800	1,600	-100	-7.1%	2.8%	2.9%
Total	54,400	56,000	56,300	300	0.5%	100.0%	100.0%

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

Residents in Employment

Using the most up-to-date ONS Nomis official labour market statistics, we are able to record growth in the number of people employed in Ashford Borough.

These statistics indicate that, in September 2018, there were 62,600 people employed in the borough, representing an employment percentage of 74.5% among

those aged between 16 and 64. This is lower than both the regional South East percentage (78.1%) and the national percentage in Great Britain of 75.1%.

Over a five-year period of comparison, these statistics indicate a decrease of 400 in the number of employed individuals from 63,000 in September 2013 - a decrease of 4.7% in the overall percentage of employed individuals in Ashford from 79.8%.

Source:

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

Job Density

The most recent job density statistics for Ashford Borough, again using the ONS Nomis data, illustrate a positive improvement. The statistics indicate a job density of 0.95, with an average of 95 jobs per 100 residents aged 16 - 64, which is a marked improvement over 5 years from the 2012 job density of 0.80. The 2017 data is significantly higher than both the regional South East density of 0.87, and the national density in Great Britain of 0.86.

Source:

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

Business Growth

Business demographic statistics released by KCC give a good indication of the business environment health in Ashford Borough, particularly looking at the business birth/death ratio. The data specifies that in 2017 there were 720 new enterprise births, which is 55 fewer than the previous year (885 in 2016), equating to a new enterprise birth rate of 11.5. Likewise, in 2017 there were 740 enterprise deaths, resulting in an enterprise death rate of 11.7. From this data, we can produce an enterprise birth to death ratio of 0.99.

In 2017 there were 6,330 active enterprises operating in Ashford Borough.

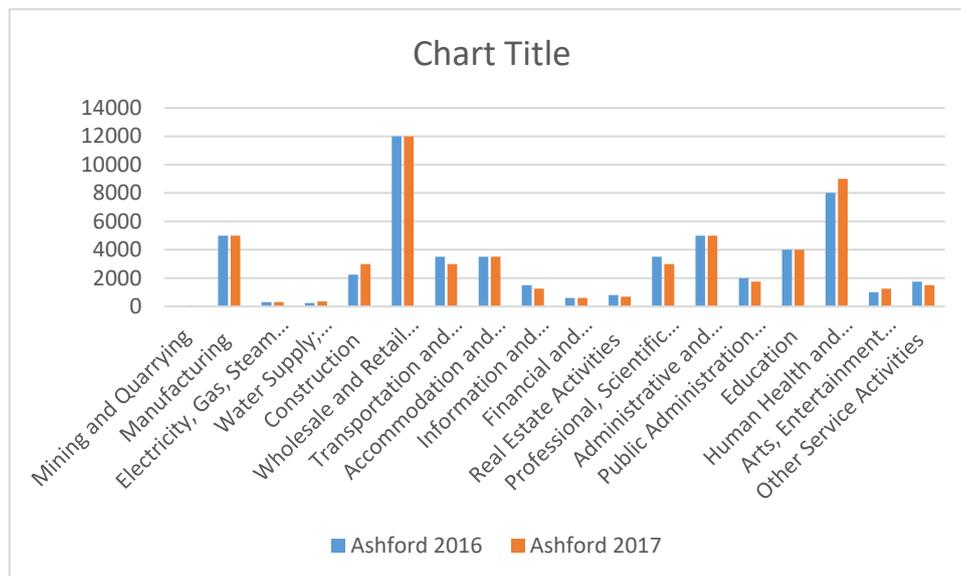
Source: https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/8179/Business-demography.pdf

Employees by Industry Group

The largest proportion of people employed in Ashford up to 2017 work in the *wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles* industry, with 12,000 jobs, representing 21.4% of the total jobs available in Ashford Borough. This is higher than both the regional South East (16.3%) and national percentage for Great Britain (15.2%). The next largest industry in the borough is *human health and social work activities*, with 9,000 jobs representing 16.1% of the total – an increase of 1,000 jobs on the 2016 statistics. Again, this is higher than both regional and national statistics, with a 12.7% total for the South East and 13.3% across Great Britain.

Comparatively less well-represented industries in Ashford include: *professional, scientific and technical activities*, where the employment percentage of 5.4% falls well below the national percentage of 8.4%; *financial and insurance activities*, with a

percentage of 1.1% below the national average of 3.5%; and *information and communication* where the Ashford percentage of 2.2% is half the national percentage of 4.4%.



Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157311/report.aspx?#ls>

Employment Floorspace Monitoring

Ashford Borough Council (ABC) currently conducts an annual survey of employment land. Typically, employment/commercial sites with planning permission valid as of the 31st March of that monitoring year are visited. Following these visits, an assessment is made on the stage of each individual development: complete, under-construction, or not started, which are recorded in the annual Commercial Information Audit (CIA). The site visits for this report were conducted in the last quarter of the monitoring period for 2017/2018.

The CIA monitoring data for 2017/2018 indicates that approximately 25,474sqm of employment floorspace was gained, and approximately 18,739sqm was lost. This results in a net gain of approximately 6,734sqm employment floorspace for the period of 2017 to 2018.

The largest growth in employment floorspace between 2017 and 2018 came from B1-use which provided approximately 5,259sqm of employment floorspace, with a further 4,158sqm coming from B2-use and 4,048sqm from B8-use. The largest single contribution came from the Highfield Industrial Park development, which provided approximately 9,801sqm of employment floorspace in the form of 18 industrial/warehouse units with B1(c), B2, and B8 use classifications.

The largest employment floorspace losses were comprised of B2 class floorspace, with approximately 12,164sqm lost over the period 2017 to 2018. The largest single contributor to this loss of employment floorspace arose from the residential

development located on the Godinton Way Industrial Estate, which created 83 dwellings.

Employment Floorspace currently Under Construction

From information gained during CIA site visits for the period 2017/2018, it was found that approximately 71,023sqm of employment floorspace was under construction. This is a marked increase on the projected employment floorspace under construction during the period 2016/2017, and suggests a strong position in terms of future employment development. The largest single contributor to this employment floorspace under construction is the continuing expansion of the Ashford Designer Outlet Centre, with a total of approximately 10,962sqm under construction as of the period 2017/2018. Once completed, this site will provide around 13,617sqm of new employment floorspace.

The next largest contributor to employment floorspace under construction is the development at Pond Farm, Bethersden Road, with approximately 7,324sqm of floorspace under construction during the period 2017/2018.

Ashford Town Centre

During the monitoring year for 2017/2018, there was an overall net loss of 8,964sqm of employment floorspace in Ashford Town Centre from completed developments, with a gross gain of 4020sqm and a gross loss of 12,984sqm. The largest single gain came from the Charter House conversion on Park Street, providing 1,988sqm of B1a employment floorspace. The largest losses were accrued from B2 land classification, caused by the Godinton Way Industrial Estate conversion with a loss of 7,481sqm employment land, and the Cobbswood Industrial Estate demolition and change of use that resulted in 4,674sqm of lost employment floorspace. However, approximately 3,920sqm of employment land is currently under construction at Cobbswood Industrial Estate to be delivered in the future.

As of the monitoring period 2017/2018 there is approximately 22,195sqm of employment floorspace under construction in Ashford Town Centre. This total is comprised of a series of considerably sized developments in the town centre. For example, the former Ashford market site on Elwick Road will eventually provide 8,069sqm of mixed-use employment space. Another considerable development currently under construction is the 'Commercial Quarter' development, involving a change of use of Dover Place Car Park to office accommodation that will provide 7,477sqm of flexible office space and potential for B1, A1, A2, and A3 land use upon completion. This considerable amount of employment land currently under construction bodes well for the future economic health of Ashford Town Centre and the job opportunities for local residents that will arise from the developments.

For more information, visit: <https://www.ashfordfor.com/investing-in-ashford>

Employment Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator – Additional employment floorspace (Borough wide)

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 2017/2018	Gross M ²	Net M ²
A2	400	264
B1a	3,437	2,527
B1b	0	0
B1c	5,259	3,365
B2	4,158	-8,006
B8	4,048	3,505
B1-8	0	0
Mix (unable to split)	20,119	17,506
Total	37,438	19,178

Performance Indicator – Additional employment floorspace – Urban

Total amount of additional employment floorspace completed in the **Urban** areas by type gross M² (A2, B1, B2, and B8 uses)

Target – No target for urban floorspace

Actual 2017/2018	Gross M ²	Net M ²
A2	0	0
B1a	758	744
B1b	0	0
B1c	3,267	1,533
B2	4,158	3,491
B8	3,295	3,295
B1-8	0	0
Total	11,478	9,063

Performance Indicator – Additional employment floorspace – Rural

Total amount of additional employment floorspace completed in the **Rural** areas by type gross M² (A2, B1, B2 and B8 uses)

Target – No target for rural floorspace

Actual 2017/2018	Gross M ²	Net M ²
A2	0	-136
B1	0	-149
B1a	692	599
B1b	0	0
B1c	1,992	1,832
B2	0	-289
B8	753	414
B1-8	0	0
Mix (unable to split)	13,589	10,976
Total	17,027	13,248

Performance Indicator – Additional ‘town centre’ uses floorspace – Borough Wide*

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 – 2017/2018	Gross M ²	Net M ²
A1	1,446	782
A2	400	264
B1a	3,437	2,527
D2	250	214
Total	5,533	3,787

*Town Centre uses defined as class orders A1, A2, B1a and D2.

Performance Indicator – Loss of B-class uses in the urban area

Amount of employment floorspace (B-class uses) lost in the **Urban** area (net)

Target – No net loss

Actual 2017/2018	Net Loss M²
B1a	1,239
B1b	0
B1c	2,370
B2	3,202
B8	3,014
Total	+9,825

Town Centre Vitality Indicators

Performance Indicator – Additional Town Centre uses floorspace – Ashford Town Centre*

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 57,700m² net; Commercial (A2 and B1a) uses: 93,000m² net

Actual 2017/2018

Retail/Leisure	Gross M ²	Net M ²
A1	400	116
D2	0	0
Total	400	116

Commercial	Gross M ²	Net ²
A2	400	400
B1a	1,988	1,185
Total	2,388	1,585

*Town Centre uses defined as class orders A1, A2, B1a and D2.

Performance Indicator – Jobs in Ashford Town Centre

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 2017/2018

Retail/Leisure	6
Commercial	79

Note: Source Arup Study 2001 – The Arup study gives a formula of 1 job per 20 sq metre. 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 Ashford Town Centre

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

Target – At least 1,200 by 2021

Actual - 0

Performance Indicator – Tenterden primary shopping frontage

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

Target – The non-A1 uses should not cumulatively amount to more than 25% of the length of either of the defined primary frontages

Actual – No survey taken during 2017/2018