

Tonbridge Gateway

Area Profile 2009

The aim of this document is to set out a snapshot of information about the Tonbridge area to help provide a steer on what sort of services might be most appropriate within the Gateway. The Tonbridge Gateway will serve 9 electoral wards, Medway, Trench, Judd, Higham, Vauxhall, Cage Green and Castle in Tonbridge itself, plus Hildenborough and Hadlow, Mereworth and West Peckham.

Tonbridge is a very diverse area. The geography ranges from urban town centre to rural settlements. The town is a public transport hub with generally good links within the town, but a more variable service in the surrounding villages. In terms of headline deprivation, the area has the least deprived area in the borough (part of Hildenborough) and the second most deprived area (Trench South). All of the secondary schools for the south of the borough are located within the town, attracting pupils from a wide catchment area. The town is also the main focus for retail in the south of the borough.

The core strategy of the Local Development Framework sets out a vision for the town centre as a place with:

- *a healthy, varied and vibrant shopping environment;*
- *a range of cultural pursuits and leisure and tourism facilities;*
- *adequate, accessible and safe parking for shoppers and visitors;*
- *convenient public transport links and facilities;*
- *an attractive physical environment;*
- *public spaces making the most of the waterfront;*
- *safe areas and corridors for pedestrians and cyclists;*
- *opportunities for a wide range of employment and jobs;*
- *a variety of housing, close to amenities and public transport;*
- *a range of shops and other High Street services;*
- *continuing appropriate activity and interest throughout the day;*
- *good access for the disabled and others with restricted mobility;*
- *good opportunities for training and education.*

A brief summary of other statistical and research information for the area is set out below. The data demonstrates the need to consider the local population not as one homogenous whole, but as several distinct communities with different needs. This clearly creates challenges when creating a single public service hub.

Tonbridge Population

Mosaic Data

MOSAIC is a classification of Great Britain residential postcodes – a "geo-demographic" tool. It uses a combination of census, electoral roll, housing and financial data (86 variables in all) to classify households into 12 lifestyle groups. These groups in turn break down into 52 sub-groups.

Understanding the cultural make-up of an area is a key factor in identifying the products and services required by different groups, and the best way to communicate with those groups.

Mosaic Origins has applications in the public and private sectors. In the public sector, for example, can help organisations to:

- Find 'difficult to reach' groups and target them appropriately
- Identify and address diverse needs within an area
- Audit the take-up of services
- Understand how ethnic groups are distributed within a specific area
- Work with adjoining authorities on cross-border issues

The Mosaic data shows that in 2007, the population estimate of Tonbridge (7 wards), Hadlow, Mereworth and West Peckham and Hildenborough totalled 42,618. In 2001 the total population of the 9 wards mentioned above amounted to 41,173, this shows an increase of 1,445 in the population overall.

The Mosaic data also shows symbols of success. Almost 52% of residents in the Hildenborough area are regarded as having a rewarding career, live in a sought after location, affording luxuries and premium quality products. No Trench residents have achieved this level of living standard. These two wards sit side by side in the North Tonbridge area.

Hadlow, Mereworth and West Peckham have the highest number of population living in rural isolation running at just over 20%. Elsewhere in the Tonbridge area rural isolation is not an issue with the next most 'isolated' area being Hildenborough with only 1.5% of the population living in rural isolation.

The percentage of elderly people subsisting on meagre income in council property, only differ slightly in percentage across the board between 2.5%-6.5% with the exception of Hadlow where none were recorded.

The percentage of independent pensioners living in their own homes who are relatively active in their lifestyles range from just over 14% in Cage green to none in Vauxhall and just over 1.5% in Trench.

Income Model Based Estimate at Ward Level 2001/02

The estimated weekly income of people living in the 26 wards within Tonbridge and Malling borough have been ranked, with 1 being the highest estimated weekly household income at £1,450 and 26 being the lowest weekly household income at £470. (Appendix 1 attached). We can see from the listing that Trench has been ranked at 25 (£520 per week) the second lowest income in the Tonbridge and Malling area with Cage Green ranking 23 and Hadlow and Judd at 20. Hildenborough was ranked as 7 with an estimated weekly household income of £740. These estimates reveal a difference in average annual income of £11,000 between Trench residents and those living just a stones throw away in the neighbouring Hildenborough area.

Aging Population

The figures available are at borough level so we cannot accurately estimate the changes within wards or towns. However, we have managed to obtain some experimental population estimates to the year 2030.

2006 estimate: 22.5% of Tonbridge, Hildenborough and Hadlow residents were aged 60 or over.

2010 projection: this will rise to 22.9%

2020: 24.1%

2030: 25.4%

These figures suggest that the population of the 9 wards will not be aging as rapidly as elsewhere in the borough. However, new developments of flats, some specifically aimed at the retirement market, may influence these figures.

Economy and Skills

Currently, there are high levels of employment in the area, ranging from 81% of people of working age in employment in Judd ward to 74% in Trench Ward.

Skills levels in Trench ward are low with 40% of people having no formal qualifications (compared to a borough average of 25%). There is also an above average percentage of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance and Department of Work and Pensions benefits. Trench is amongst the 10% most deprived areas in the *country* for education, skills and training.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The Indices of Deprivation 2007 provide a relative ranking of areas across England according to their level of deprivation. It is based on small areas, known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). LSOAs have between 1,000 and 3,000 people living in them with an average population of 1,500 people.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation brings together 37 different indicators which cover specific aspects or dimensions of deprivation: income, employment, health and

disability, education, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime.

Of the 70 LSOAs in the borough, three fall into the 10 most deprived; Trench South (2), Hadlow Village (9) and Trench West (10).

Hildenborough South is the least deprived area in the borough and among the 500 least deprived areas in the country (out of a total of 32,482).

Health

The average life expectancy in Tonbridge generally good when compared to the borough and county, however, there are some differences between wards. Higham ward has the highest life expectancy at 82.6 years and Medway has the lowest at 78.2 years. Only Castle (78.4 years) and Medway wards have lower life expectancy than the borough or county averages.

Smoking prevalence is higher than the borough average in Trench, Judd, Medway and Vauxhall with rates above the national average in Trench. Other healthy lifestyle estimates reveal that binge drinking is generally at levels below the national average. Levels of obesity tend to be around the national average with lower rates in Hildenborough, but higher rates of obesity in Trench ward. Trench ward also has lower levels of consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables compared to England and other Tonbridge wards, all of which exceed the national and county averages for healthy eating. The highest rates of teenage conceptions in the borough occur in Medway and Trench wards.

Within the Index of Multiple Deprivation, the Health and Disability domain identifies areas with relatively high rates of people who die prematurely or whose quality of life is impaired by poor health or who are disabled across the *whole* population. Trench South and East both appear in the most deprived 10% in West Kent for this domain. Health deprivation elsewhere in Tonbridge is generally low.

Crime

The total recorded crime rates were highest in Trench ward where the figures showed 68 incidences in the first quarter of 2008/09. 25 of those cases were recorded as violent crime. In the same period but one year earlier 2007/08 the highest crime rates were recorded in Trench at 75 cases and 25 of those cases recorded as violent crime.

The lowest recorded crime rates were in the Judd ward for the period of April – June 2008/09 where some 20 cases were recorded with 1 case recorded as violent crime. In the previous year 2007/08 during the same period 55 cases were recorded with 18 recorded as violent crime.

The highest level of crime in 2007/08 was recorded in Medway ward at 173 reported crimes 37 of which were recorded as violent. These figures decreased to 64 and 10 respectively in 2008/09.

To put this matter into perspective the total recorded crime for the first quarter April-June 2007/08 amounted to 665. In the same period for 2008/09 the figure had gone down to 374 cases recorded.

Resident's Panel survey 2008

We have recently carried out a survey of our Resident's Panel to help inform the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy for the borough. The survey asks local people what factors they think make a place a good place to live and what most needs improving.

Tonbridge wards follow a similar pattern to the borough as a whole, with the factors considered to having the most importance in making an area a good place to live being listed as clean streets and public areas, level of crime and anti social behaviour, GP and Hospital services. In terms of factors most in need of improving to make the local area a better place in which to live, again, generally the same pattern as the borough emerged, with clean streets, recycling, traffic congestion, road maintenance and hospitals being the critical factors.

Some factors, such shopping facilities, flooding, cultural facilities and particularly traffic congestion, were more likely to be listed as in need of improvement by Tonbridge residents than the borough as a whole.

Implications for Gateway Services

The area to be served by the Tonbridge Gateway is very diverse, and as such, requires a wide range of services to be provided at the Gateway. From the brief research detailed above, it would seem that the following services/organisations would be a good fit with local needs and priorities.

1. Borough Council functions, particularly related to street scene
2. Local primary care services
3. Information on local hospital services
4. Health promotion – with outreach work focused on some wards
5. Sexual health information – particularly for young people
6. Public transport information
7. Information about Tonbridge town centre development (inc shopping facilities)
8. Learning and skills links (focused on adult population)
9. Crime and ASB reporting opportunity (surgeries with Police/PCSOs)
10. Home safety including Fire and Rescue links plus Police
11. Adult Services for adults with disabilities and older people

Some of these services can be dealt with by our trained customer service staff an example of which are 1,3, 6 where scripts can be created for the CRM system linked to web sites such as 'where's my nearest?' Other areas may need to be serviced by professional organisations through partnership.