

Tonbridge & Malling – Workforce Skills Overview

November 2016

1. Introduction:

This paper aims to provide information that is useful in aiding discussion on the issue of work readiness and skills attainment. In the first section, some contextual statistics are provided to provide an overall feel for how the local economy is performing, what sectors are well-represented and growing in the borough, as well as some of the challenges these sectors face. The second part of this paper looks at what activities and support the Borough Council has been involved in to date.

2. Statistical Information:

2.1 The information below simply provides some background information on the local economy that highlights key issues relating to workforce and skills.

Measure	Source & Date	T&M	KCC Area
% of residents leaving Kent and Medway to work	Census 2011	24%	16%
Average weekly earnings (K&M residents)	ONS 2015	£640.80	£552
Average weekly earnings (K&M workers)	ONS 2015	£518.8	£504.10
Unemployment	ONS Annual Population Survey April 2015- Mar 2016	4% unemployed 15.9% economically inactive	6% unemployed 22% economically inactive
Unemployment rates 18-24 years	ONS Claimant Count Aug 2016	1.6%	3.5% (relates to K&M)
NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training)	KCC 2014	3.5%	4.7%
Deprivation Extent - % living in 20% most deprived areas	IMD2015	1%	-
Graduate level skills (residents aged 16 and over)	Census 2011	27%	25%
Residents aged 16 and over with no qualifications	Census 2011	20%	22%
Rank – Education, Skills and Qualifications	IMD2015	20,839* out of 32,844	-

Table 1: T&M Background Statistical Information

*A score of 1 indicating the most deprived.

2.2 **Local Sector Employment Strengths:** The following information provides an indication of the key sector strengths that Tonbridge & Malling enjoys. The location quotient (LQ) used below in Table 2 is an indication of how well represented each sector is in the area based on size of workforce – i.e. if the percentage of the workforce employed in the borough in motor trades was the same as the percentage in the sector

across the country the LQ would be 1.0, but if it was only half of what would be expected the LQ figure would be 0.5.

- 2.3 As is evident below, the borough has strong representation from the following sectors – Energy and Utilities; Primary Industries (Agriculture); Motor Trades; Wholesale; Transport; Construction; Retail; and Finance & Insurance. This provides an initial indication of where best to focus effort if we are to consolidate existing strengths in the local economy.

Sector	Source and Date	T&M	KCC Area	Great Britain	Traffic Lights
Energy and Utilities	ONS BRES 2013	2.9	1.0	1.0	
Primary Industries	ONS BRES 2013	1.7	0.7	1.0	
Motor Trades	ONS BRES 2013	1.7	1.2	1.0	
Wholesale	ONS BRES 2013	1.5	1.0	1.0	
Transport and Storage	ONS BRES 2013	1.5	1.1	1.0	
Construction	ONS BRES 2013	1.5	1.5	1.0	
Retail	ONS BRES 2013	1.3	1.3	1.0	
Financial and Insurance	ONS BRES 2013	1.2	0.8	1.0	
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	ONS BRES 2013	1.1	1.0	1.0	
Business Administration	ONS BRES 2013	1.1	1.1	1.0	
Education	ONS BRES 2013	1.1	1.2	1.0	
Information and Communication	ONS BRES 2013	1.0	0.7	1.0	
Property	ONS BRES 2013	1.0	0.8	1.0	
Digital and Media	ONS BRES 2013	0.9	0.7	1.0	
Public Administration & Defence	ONS BRES 2013	0.8	0.9	1.0	
Accommodation & Food Services	ONS BRES 2013	0.8	1.0	1.0	
Professional, Scientific & Technical	ONS BRES 2013	0.7	0.7	1.0	
Manufacturing	ONS BRES 2013	0.7	0.8	1.0	
Life Sciences	ONS BRES 2013	0.6	1.1	1.0	
Health	ONS BRES 2013	0.5	1.0	1.0	

Table 2: Location Quotient

- 2.4 However, it is also important to assess the actual size of the workforce in individual sectors and also their forecast growth potential in order to ascertain future demand – for example, whilst T&M has a strong agriculture sector, numerically it still only employs a very small percentage of the workforce. Table 3 below takes information from recent studies to address both these issues as well as providing notes on other specific issues such as skills requirements (NB unfortunately there are a few gaps in the data).

Sector	T&M (LQ)	Forecast 2013-22 (K&M)	Notes (sector related issues)
Energy & Utilities	2.9	11%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector currently employs 1,700 people in T&M - relatively small sector within K&M - diverse workforce - need to improve image of the sector and ensure appropriate apprenticeship frameworks are in place
Primary Industries	1.7	-3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quite small in employment terms - over half the workforce are in skilled trades - decline mostly as a result of automation - need for skills in following areas: succession planning, environmental management skills, risk management, scientific knowledge and technology transfer and better ICT skills.

Transport	1.5	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector employs 3,500 people in the borough - around a third of the workforce are drivers - focus on lower level qualifications - need to attract new recruits; promote clearer development pathways and professionalise the workforce.
Construction	1.5	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector currently employs 3,500 people in the borough - sector is dominated by micro-business - construction workforce is more susceptible to changes in the economy - Increasing demand for higher level skills - new skills required to keep up with changes in the sector (low energy requirements/higher spec)
Retail	1.3	3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector currently employs 7,400 people in the borough - nearly half of all employment is focused on sales and customer services. - need to improve image of sector as a career opportunity
Financial & Insurance	1.2	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector employs 3,900 people in the borough - highly qualified workforce - need for more professional staff, as well as IT, leadership and management and customer service skills - training and skills development in risk management and regulatory compliance is a high priority.
Arts & Recreation	1.1	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector currently only employs 100 people in the borough. - current climate of public funding increases importance in growth of self-employed workers - High level technical skills and knowledge will continue to be essential.
Digital & Media	0.9	16%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector currently employs 2,600 people - demand for corporate managers - skills shortages in a range of associate professional and technical skills.
Accomm. & Food Services	0.8	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector employs 3,300 people in the borough - 55% of workforce are qualified to Level 2 or below - need to increase the workforce, improve customer service, improve the apprenticeship offer (matching training supply to employer needs)
M'facturing	0.7	-10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector currently employs 3,200 people in the borough - sector is focussed on medium to large companies - diverse workforce but skilled trades account for 22% of workforce - issue of making sector attractive to new recruits
Life Sciences	0.6	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector employs 200 people in the borough - workforce is professional and highly qualified - future skills needs relate to R&D, the production process and management
Health	0.5	3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sector currently employs 3,600 people in the borough - although low growth, due to its size, it is expected that 2-3,000 additional workers will be needed across the county by 2022. - 3 priorities for action are – efficiency and innovation; having a skilled workforce and sustainability.

Table 3: Sector Growth Potential

2.5 As such, from the statistical evidence available it is possible to divide the following sectors into a matrix based on sector strength and growth potential:

	Low or Negative Growth	Average Growth	High Growth
Weak Representation	Health** Manufacturing	Life Sciences	Accommodation & Food Services
Average Representation		Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	Digital and Media
Strong Representation	Retail Primary Industries		Finance & Insurance Construction Transport Energy & Utilities

Table 4: Strength and Growth Potential by Sector.

**Although comparatively weak representation and low growth, because so many people are employed in the health sector, this growth still translates as 2-3,000 additional workers across the county by 2022.

2.6 As such, in simple terms it can be highlighted that the main issues highlighted for those sectors that are high growth or have strong representation in the borough are:

- Require an improvement to the apprenticeship offer and development pathways (Accommodation & Food Services; Energy & Utilities and Transport)
- Address shortages in technical/higher level skills (Digital & Media; Finance & Insurance)
- Improvements required to the image of certain sectors (Retail and Energy & Utilities)

2.7 On top of this, discussions with local businesses (via the T&M Local Strategic Partnership and the West Kent Partnership) have also highlighted the following general issues:

- The need for training in helping the development of softer skills
- In the face of cuts to careers advice in many schools, support is needed to fully demonstrate the real careers options that are available through greater interaction with businesses.
- Schools are required to be too focussed on meeting their targets as opposed to thinking about pathways to employment.

3. Delivery to Date

3.1 The following initiatives have so far been delivered by the Borough Council as part of its Skills Action Plan:

a) KCC Guilds:

Participation in the sector guilds is a key strand to supporting the work of the KCC Skills and Employability Team. The aim of these sector guilds is to:

- Promote the positive image of the sector and the opportunities

- Develop the employability skills to enable young people to sustain employment in the sector
- Develop a curriculum offer in Kent that provides young people with appropriate qualifications and skills.

Whilst most of these guilds are still embryonic, through the West Kent Partnership, the West Kent authorities have supported the development of action plans.

One example is the Science and Technology Guild which has the following actions:

- Employer led initiatives – school visits by businesses; schools coming out to see businesses; specialist careers events.
- Creating work experience opportunities.
- Improving communication between businesses and schools – through events and informative material.
- Create focus on degree level apprenticeships.

b) Jobs and Training Fairs:

These have taken place in Tonbridge (March) and Tunbridge Wells (September) this year. These events have been co-ordinated through a partnership approach involving JobCentre Plus and the three West Kent Authorities via the West Kent Partnership.

Most recently at Tunbridge Wells, over 500 people (job seekers) attended the event, which included 30 business and training providers as well as seminars on CV writing and interview techniques which were both well attended.

All the information is still to come back to the JobCentre Plus but from the 5 companies that have responded, 11 people have been recruited from the Jobs Fair so far.

Feedback forms from the businesses taking part were overwhelmingly positive. However, the issues that were flagged up were a) venue needed air-conditioning; and b) request to have some food to keep the business reps going throughout the event.

Plans are in place for future Jobs and Training Fairs, there are a number of improvements that can be implemented for the next one (planned for March in Tonbridge):

1. Production of 'helpful hints' sheet for businesses looking to recruit at the event - highlighting benefit of having a pre-interview at the jobs fair, positive body language, and colourful displays.
2. Improved signage - especially between workshops and main fair
3. Badges/T-Shirts for people helping at the event so that it is clear who is there to help and support the job seekers
4. Packed lunch for stall holders to ensure they stay at their stands (this would probably be where the extra funding would go towards)

5. Reduce the event from 10-4pm to 10-3pm to make sure that stallholders are less inclined to leave early
6. Where possible, promote the individual businesses on the promotional material (although this will require the businesses to confirm attendance earlier).
7. Build upon the workshops to give consideration to motivational speakers aimed at boosting confidence.

c) West Kent SkillsFest:

The West Kent SkillsFest took place in October 2016 at Salomons in Tunbridge Wells, and was delivered by the Kent Education Business Partnership and supported by TMBC via the West Kent Partnership. The aim of the event was to link businesses with students to help make young people aware of the job and training opportunities and the pathways to employment. In total, over 80 businesses attended and nearly 900 students took part. Anne McNulty of the Kent Education Business Partnership will be able to provide further details at the meeting.

A debrief session for the event takes place on 10 November at which plans for future events will be discussed.

d) Lobbying – Measures of Success:

On 23 September 2016, the Leader of the Council wrote a letter to the Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills to highlight some issues concerning work readiness which had been picked up in our discussions with local businesses.

This letter flagged up:

- Whilst the responsibility does not solely rest with schools, there is inconsistency between them in preparing their students for the world of work, with some doing a very good job whilst others do not.
- Success measures for schools should be broadened out beyond how many students get in to university, and should also include the number that go into apprenticeships and employment.
- The need to strengthen links between schools and business through the Government's forthcoming Careers Guidance Strategy.

A response is expected shortly.

e) Work Ready Interviews:

In February and March 2016, TMBC supported a series of work ready interviews with students from Mid-Kent College that were soon to be seeking employment. These mock interviews helped the students to build gain confidence, experience an interview situation and pick up useful advice on how to improve their interview technique.

4. Next Steps:

- 4.1 Given the information above, covering an overview of the economy and the interventions currently being undertaken, the key question to discuss is:

Are there other activities that the Borough Council should deliver or support that will help to contribute towards the work readiness agenda?

- 4.2 To help aid discussion, we are fortunate enough to be joined by Anne McNulty of the Kent Education Business Partnership, who will provide an overview of work that they undertake and some of the key issues that they continue to face in maintaining effective links between schools and local businesses.