REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2009 – 2018

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Mission Statement

"To encourage a thriving local economy with diverse successful businesses supported by a skilled local workforce and to ensure that Redditch's economic interests are always effectively represented."

Introduction

What is an Economic Development Strategy?

The overarching purpose of the Economic Strategy is to articulate a strategy for enhancing economic growth in the Borough of Redditch, by supporting local business growth and attracting higher value-added inward investors to the Borough. The Borough of Redditch can be considered to be a microcosm of the West Midlands region, demonstrating a number of traits that are reflective of the region as a whole. One of the key issues for the West Midlands region, and importantly Redditch, is to close the output gap of the local economy in line with the UK average. In seeking to achieve local business growth and attracting higher value-added inward investors to the Borough, the Borough will go some way to reducing the output gap and improving efficiency. If successful, the Strategy will also result in an increase in the quality of employment opportunities for residents.

An important aim of the Economic Development Strategy is to ensure that the benefits of economic growth/recovery impact on all sectors of the community across the Borough. Therefore, Officers of the Council will be monitoring the Strategy, in order to ensure that it is achieving these requirements.

The Strategy itself is underpinned by an Action Plan which sets out the means of delivering the components of the Strategy. The mechanisms of delivery identified in the Action Plan will be monitored. Where it is deemed that a particular mechanism is not successful, or needs amending to reflect changes in the economic climate, then the Council will alter the mechanism accordingly to ensure that the Strategy is still being met.

Redditch Context

Redditch Borough is within the County of Worcestershire and borders Warwickshire County to the east and southeast. It is within close proximity to the economic 'powerhouse' of Birmingham, and has strong links to the city. Immediately surrounding the Borough is Bromsgrove District to the west and north, Stratford-on-Avon District to the east and southeast, and Wychavon District to the southwest. The Borough offers easy access to Birmingham and its hinterlands, which subsequently offers excellent connections with major business locations across the country. Birmingham International Airport is a mere 25 minutes drive from the Borough and provides quick access to both European and international destinations. In addition, the Borough offers easy access to the countryside and prominent local areas, including culturally rich areas such as Stratford upon Avon and naturally rich areas such as the Cotswolds.

The Borough itself consists of the main town of Redditch, and the picturesque villages of Astwood Bank and Feckenham, as well as several other hamlets. The Borough covers an area of 5, 435 hectares (13, 430 acres) with a population of 78, 807 (2001 census).

The Borough is split into the urban area of Redditch in the north, accounting for 50% of the area and 93% of the population; and the rural area to the south with 7% of the population.

Strategic Objectives

As part of the Economic Development Strategy the Council has established the following strategic objectives:

Business

- Encourage businesses to seize market opportunities, improve competitiveness and harness knowledge.

People

- Raise economic aspirations and encourage residents to obtain the skills needed to realise those aspirations.

Place

- Optimise the benefits for the Borough of being located adjacent to the economic powerhouse of Birmingham City.
- Ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place to create a thriving business environment.
- Deliver the economic aspirations today without significantly affecting the aspirations of future generations.

Powerful Voice

- Ensure that Redditch's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels.

The relationship between these strategic objectives and the regional and County strategic objectives is set out in 'Regional and Sub-Regional context section' of this report.

What are some of the key economic issues in the Borough?

In developing the Redditch Economic Development Strategy the Council identified some of the main economic issues within the Borough. These are listed below:

- The proportion of jobs in manufacturing in Redditch is high (24.8%).

- There is an over-reliance on low value-added manufacturing, particularly automotive manufacture.

- There is a risk of the potential relocation of manufacturing companies to lower waged economies, e.g. China.

- There is a risk of the relocation of companies, particularly key employers, to other locations.

- Young people in Redditch have low educational attainment and there are low skill levels in the workforce.

- Those young people in Redditch with a high educational attainment often move out of the area taking their skills and expertise to other locations and depriving Redditch of a skilled local workforce.

- There is a lack of suitable sites to attract national and multi-national companies.

- There is a perceived lack of facilities to attract inward investors.

- A significant number of businesses located in the Borough consider security to be an issue.

These key issues have been informed by a variety of sources, including:

- Key economic indicators for the Borough
- Officer input
- Consultation with Members of the public and key Stakeholders
- Redditch Borough Council Employment Land Review and associated consultation (Appendix A sets out the responses to consultation, the Employment Land Review can be viewed in its entirety at www.redditchbc.gov.uk)
- Redditch Borough Council Local Development Framework Scoping Report
- Redditch Economic Assessment – Key Facts and Figures (Appendix B)

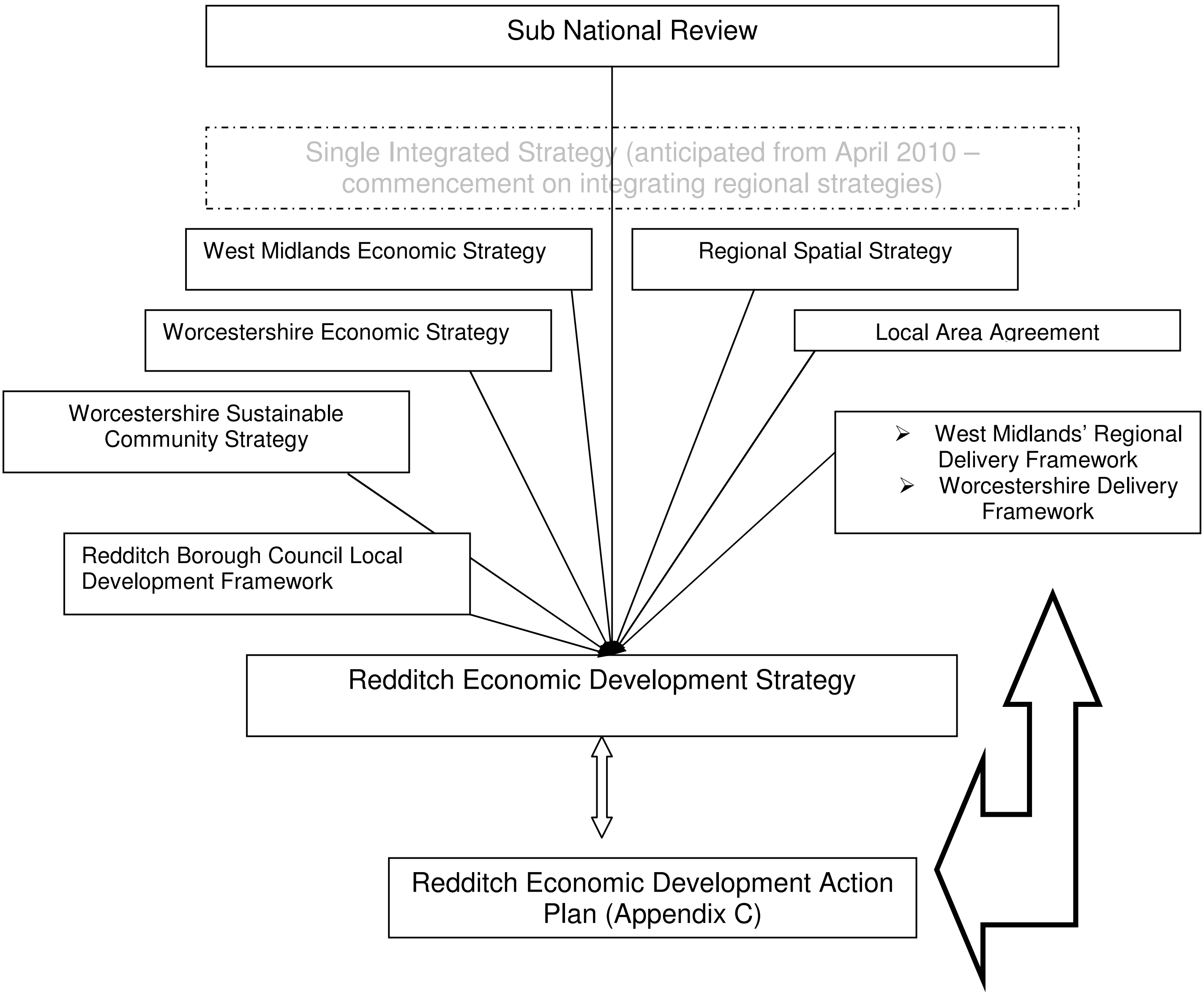
National, Regional and Sub-regional Context

Flow of overarching strategies

The need to delegate economic responsibility and resources to the sub–region to deliver agreed economic priorities has gained significance in recent times. The Government's Sub-National Review of Economic Development has reinforced this requirement.

The relationship between the fundamental Regional, County and Local level strategies is summarised below:

Figure 1



In addition to those sources identified above, there are numerous other plans, programmes, policies, strategies and initiatives that inform and must be accounted for in this Economic Development Strategy. The purpose of this report however is not to provide a long list of documents which have a relationship to Economic Development in the Borough, but rather to recognise and respond to a continually challenging economic environment. Therefore it is not considered necessary to set out how all overarching documents relate to this Strategy, but rather, within the strategy, to identify key issues and extrapolate, where necessary, key data from relevant sources.

Key building blocks

At this point it is considered important to outline the Redditch Economic Development Strategy.

The Redditch Economic Development Strategy is structured around the 3 main components of the economy – Business, People, Place – plus the need for a "Powerful Voice". This structure ensures that the Economic Strategy for the Borough is aligned with the framework established by the West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and the Worcestershire Economic Strategy (WES).

Strategic Objectives

The table below places the Borough's strategic objectives alongside those of the RES and WES.

Regional Economic Strategy	Worcestershire Economic Strategy	Redditch Economic Strategy
Business Seizing market opportunities Improving competitiveness Harnessing knowledge	**Business** Promoting technology-led growth benefiting all sectors and parts of the County	**Business** Encourage businesses to seize market opportunities, improve competitiveness and harness knowledge.
People Sustainable living Raising ambitions and aspirations Achieving full potential & opportunities for all	**People** Removing barriers to employment and improving skills	**People** Raise economic aspirations and encourage residents to obtain the skills needed to realise those aspirations.

Regional Economic Strategy	Worcestershire Economic Strategy	Redditch Economic Strategy
Place Increasing Birmingham's competitiveness Improving infrastructure Sustainable communities	**Place** Supporting the sustainable development of the County through infrastructure development (especially transport) and establishing Worcester as an accessible West Midlands Growth Point.[1]	**Place** Optimise the benefits for the Borough of being located adjacent to the economic powerhouse of Birmingham City. Ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place to create a thriving business environment. Deliver the economic aspirations today without significantly affecting the aspirations of future generations.
Powerful Voice Improving the evidence base for policy Engaging UK and International decision makers Position the West Midlands as a global centre where people and businesses choose to connect	**Powerful Voice** Ensuring that Worcestershire's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels	**Powerful Voice** Ensure that Redditch's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels.

Cross-Border Working

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out cross-border growth implications for the Borough of Redditch. The Phase Two Revision of the Strategy has recently completed a period of public consultation. Comments received during this consultation period will be considered during an Examination in Public. Therefore it is appropriate to acknowledge that elements of this draft may change as a consequence of this consultation. However in order to be accurate, it is necessary to set out the cross-border

[1] This strategic objective will be amended when a decision is made as to whether Redditch will be designated as a Settlement of Significant Development in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

growth implications as they stand currently. The draft version of the RSS identifies cross-border growth implications for housing and employment land requirements as follows:

- Redditch Borough housing requirement 2006 – 2026 amounts to 6600 dwellings. The RSS states that the *Redditch Figure of 6, 600 includes 3, 300 in Redditch and 3, 300 adjacent to Redditch town in Bromsgrove and/or Stratford-on-Avon Districts.*

- Redditch Borough indicative long term employment land requirement 2006 – 2026 amounts to 51ha. The RSS states *Of which 24ha will be provided within Bromsgrove and/or Stratford the distribution to be determined through discussions and agreement on preparation of Core Strategies.*

Given the interdependence implied by the allocations in the RSS, there is the need for the three Councils of Redditch, Bromsgrove and Stratford-on-Avon to work together formally or informally regarding these issues. From an Economic Development point of view, the cross-border growth plans are intended to meet the needs of Redditch and it will be necessary to work with neighbouring authorities in the delivery of this strategy in order to meet the future growth expectations for the Borough. In addition, where there are considered to be advantages of working with other authorities on the implementation of Economic Development, these opportunities will be seized.

Economic Priorities

The Council has established a set of Economic Priorities which are grouped under the strategic objectives. These Economic Priorities have been subject to a period of public consultation (Appendix D sets out the medium by which Officers consulted on the priorities). The Economic Priorities, along with the key economic issues provide the basis of the Redditch Economic Development Strategy. The adopted Economic Priorities are set out below:

Business

BP1 Support for manufacturing companies.

BP2 Encourage diversification away from low value-added manufacturing / automotive industries.

BP3 Business retention.

BP4 Support business start-ups.

BP5 Establish and maintain a reputation for Redditch Borough Council as a “Business Friendly Council”.

BP6 Exploit opportunities created by the Central Technology Belt and Cluster Development.

BP 7 Monitor Government requirements with regard to the single business account.

People

PP1 Encourage entrepreneurialism in young people.

PP2 Foster economic ambition in young people.

PP3 Improve links between education providers and employers.

PP4 Reduce out-migration of skilled young people.

PP5 Minimise the impact of the loss of highly skilled, older workers due to retirement.

PP6 Encourage continual skills development in the workforce.

PP7 Minimise Worklessness in order to assist in creating prosperous communities.

Place

PLP1 Promote Redditch as a business location.

PLP2 Protect employment land.

PLP3 Assist businesses to improve their environmental performance.

PLP4 Work with businesses to address their issues regarding security.

PLP5 Provide a commercial property service to assist businesses in finding suitable premises.

PLP6 Encourage business tourism.

PLP7 Promote allocated employment sites that are not currently on the market in order to encourage their development.

PLP8 Retain and enhance vitality of the town centre

Powerful Voice

Actions

- Keep abreast of Regional and Sub-Regional economic development matters and funding opportunities.

- Work with partner organisations to maximise the benefit to Redditch of any opportunities, e.g. attend WEP meetings.

- To promote the skills needs of residents and businesses in Redditch to strategic bodies such as the Learning & Skills Council.

Redditch Economic Development Strategy – Business

Introduction

Businesses represent the backbone to economic growth and development for any area. In this continually challenging economic climate, businesses represent the fundamental means of driving the economy and prosperity of the area. It is fundamental that this strategy provides a solid grounding for existing businesses in the Borough, and for new businesses entering the Borough.

This section of the strategy contains the detail behind the economic priorities that have been adopted under the business section.

Strategic Objectives - Business

- To encourage businesses to seize market opportunities, improve competitiveness and harness knowledge.

What are the Economic Priorities?

BP1 Support for manufacturing companies.

BP2 Encourage diversification away from low value-added manufacturing / automotive industries.

BP3 Business retention.

BP4 Support business start-ups.

BP5 Establish and maintain a reputation for Redditch Borough Council as a "Business Friendly Council".

BP6 Exploit opportunities created by the Central Technology Belt and Cluster Development.

BP 7 Monitor Government requirements with regard to the single business account.

Deployment and justification of Business priorities

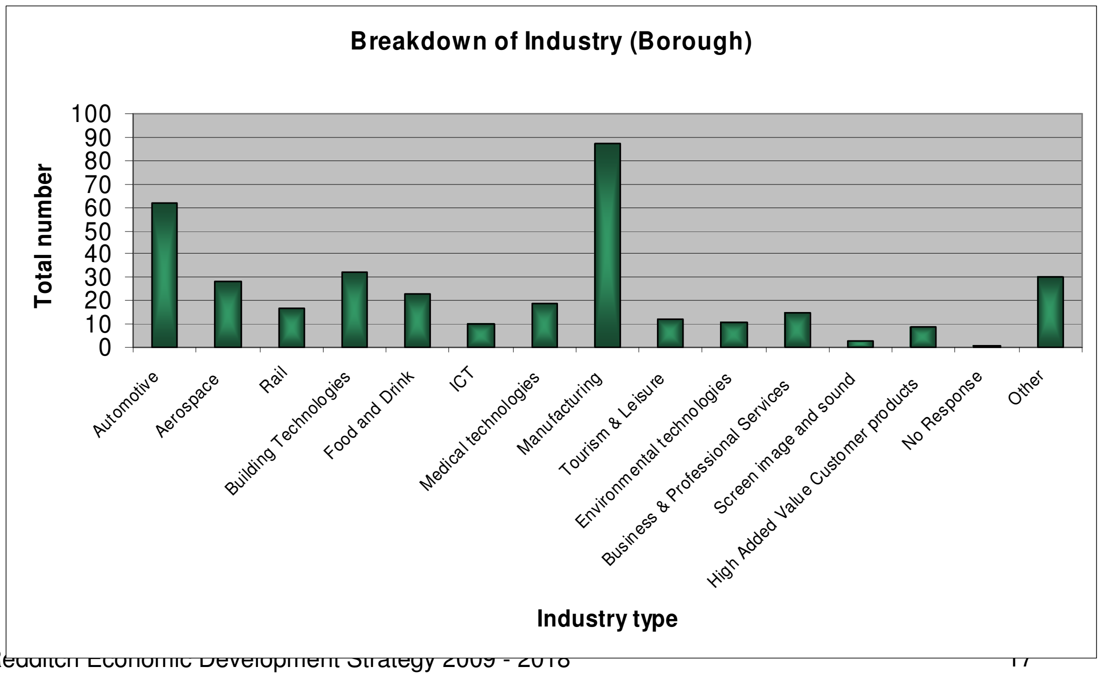
BP1 Support for manufacturing companies

Historically, Redditch Borough has a strong manufacturing base. Therefore, it is paramount that manufacturing firms in the Borough are supported and given the appropriate opportunities to thrive in a competitive environment.

The 2001 Census provides an initial basis for identifying the high proportion of Redditch inhabitants working in the manufacturing industry. The table below illustrates that the manufacturing industry employed more of the Borough residents than any other industry, demonstrating Redditch Borough's association with the manufacturing trade.

Industry of employment (people aged 16-74 in employment)	Number	%
Agriculture, hunting and forestry and fishing	313	0.8%
Mining and Quarrying	22	0.1%
Manufacturing	11129	27.6%
Electricity, gas and water supply	251	0.6%
Construction	2500	6.2%
Wholesale & retail trade, repairs	7545	18.7%
Hotels and catering	1372	3.4%
Transport, storage & communication	2239	5.6%
Financial Intermediation	1245	3.1%
Real estate, renting & business activities	4607	11.4%
Public admin & defence	1596	4.0%
Education	2378	5.9%
Health and social care	3702	9.2%
Other	1359	3.4%

In addition, a survey carried out by the Council (Appendix A) provides further indication that Redditch has a strong manufacturing base. The graph below has been extracted from the Council's survey and again reflects the dominance of the manufacturing industry in the Borough.



This graph indicates the current situation in the Borough. In addition, it is also useful to identify the number of enquiries from manufacturing companies seeking to locate in the Borough in order to ascertain the state of the industry. The table below depicts the number of enquiries from manufacturing companies potentially looking to relocate in the Borough received annually from 2003 to 2007 as a percentage of total enquiries for premises.

Industry Type	**2003**	**2004**	**2006**	**2007**
Manufacturing	34%	29%	20%	18%

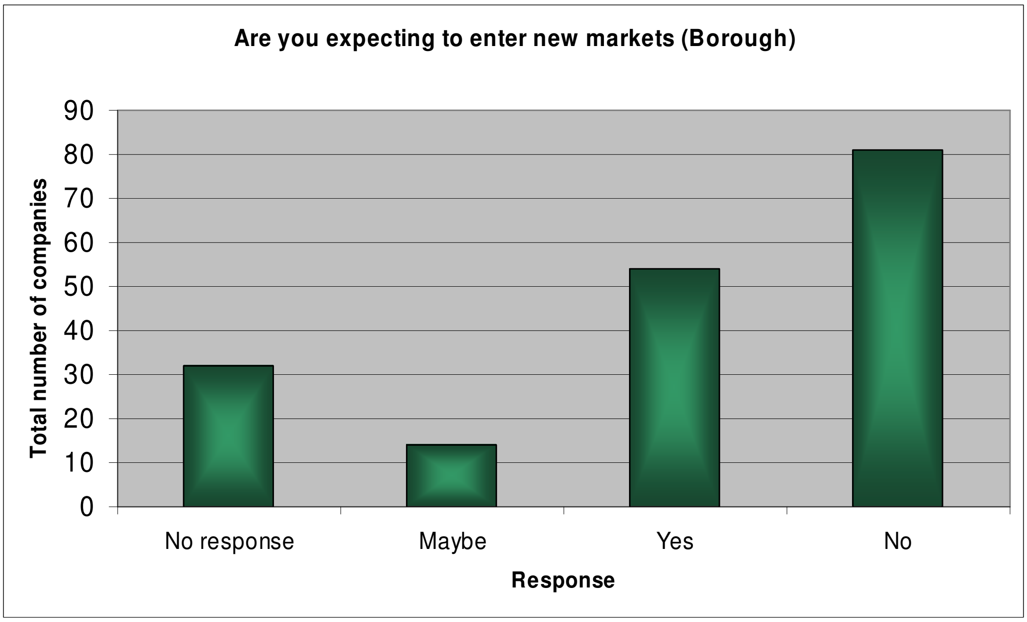
The table illustrates that enquiries in the manufacturing sector have been consistently decreasing. Whilst the causes of this decline are diverse, in general the decline experienced in manufacturing in the UK as a whole is likely to have an impact at the local level with fewer manufacturing companies setting up or moving around the UK. Given, the importance of manufacturing in the Borough and the threats which are posed to it, the need to support those existing manufacturing businesses and any new manufacturing businesses moving into the Borough is crucial.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority BP 1 Support for Manufacturing Companies.*

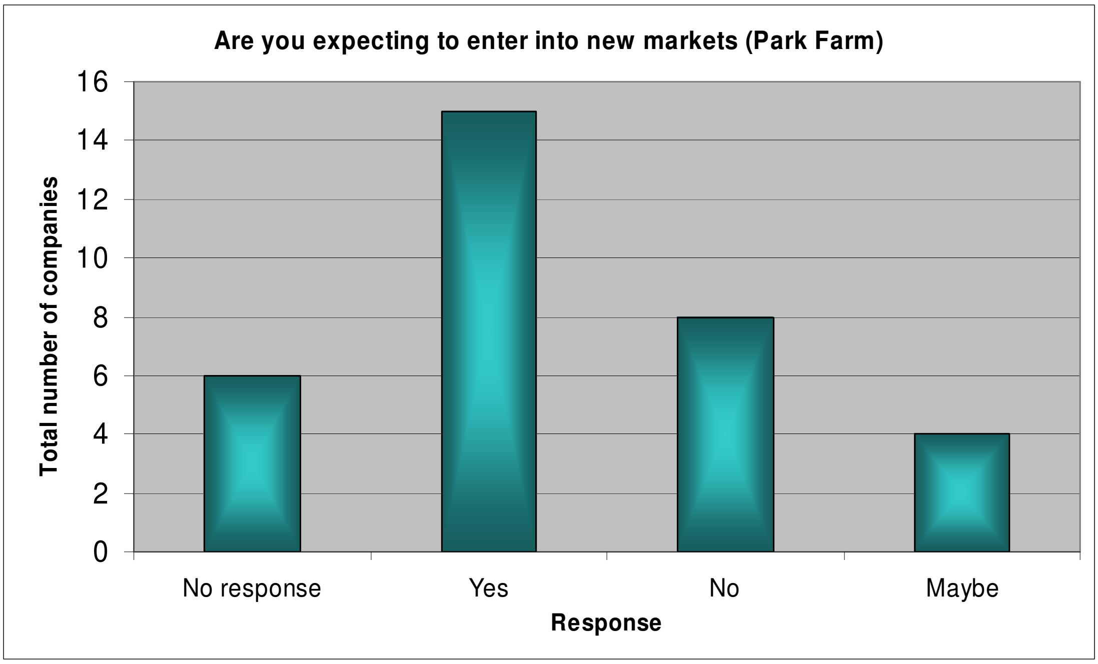
BP2 Encourage diversification away from low value-added manufacturing / automotive industries.

The data outlined above indicates Redditch Borough's historical alliance with the manufacturing industry. In addition, the Council's survey showed high levels of economic activity revolving around the automotive industry. There is a growth aspiration for the Council to be entering new markets which are higher value added than the current primary industries in the Borough (this is set out in Appendix E). This aspiration fits well with the region's strategic objective of reducing the output gap and is considered to be achievable for the Borough. When interrogating the Council's survey (Appendix A), it is clear that there are a significant number of companies within the Borough who are looking to enter into new markets, with Park Farm in particular being a very positive location for growth. Although it is not detailed whether these new markets are high value added, the ambition demonstrates a willingness in the Borough to explore new business activities which could lead to an increase in high value added industry, particularly where such positive diversification is encouraged.

The graphs below are extracted from the Council's survey and reflect current expectations for diversification.



Although Borough-wide, the trend is for companies not to be anticipating diversification, the large number of companies expecting to or considering diversifying is positive. Particular employment zones within the Borough are more focused on growth, such as in the case of Park Farm illustrated below.



The need for Redditch to diversify its economy, and seek to attract high value added businesses is somewhat of a necessity. The reliance on manufacturing in the Borough is high risk given the falling trends in manufacturing across the UK. To some extent the need to address the output gap is accentuated in the West Midlands, as set out in the Regional Economic Strategy. The flow chart overpage illustrates key factors that help justify the Council's priority for diversification.

West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy – Emphasises a need to reduce the output gap between the West Midlands Region and England

Worcestershire Economic Strategy: The vision for the Strategy encompasses the desire to increase the base of high value added companies in the County:
"In ten years time, technology-led growth will have contributed to the sustainable development of Worcestershire and strengthened its role as an economic driver for the region – acting as a catalyst for all sectors of the economy and areas of the County to benefit and providing well paid and highly skilled jobs and high quality of life for residents"

Redditch Community Strategy sets a priority *To look at ways of diversifying working opportunities to reduce reliance on traditional industries.*

Preferred Draft Core Strategy seeks to *create links with local and Higher Education Establishments and businesses to see how the employment opportunities can be enhanced by encouraging high technology technologies … and research clusters.*

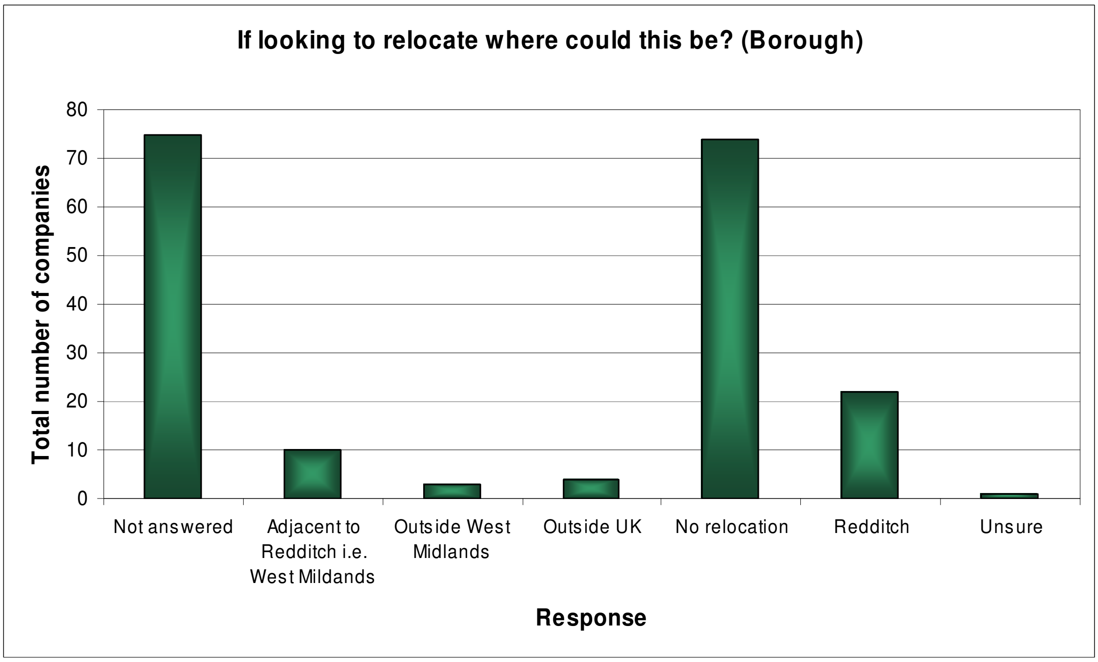
Redditch Economic Priority: BP2 Encourage diversification away from low value-added manufacturing / automotive industries.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority BP 2 Encourage diversification away from low value-added manufacturing/automotive industries.*

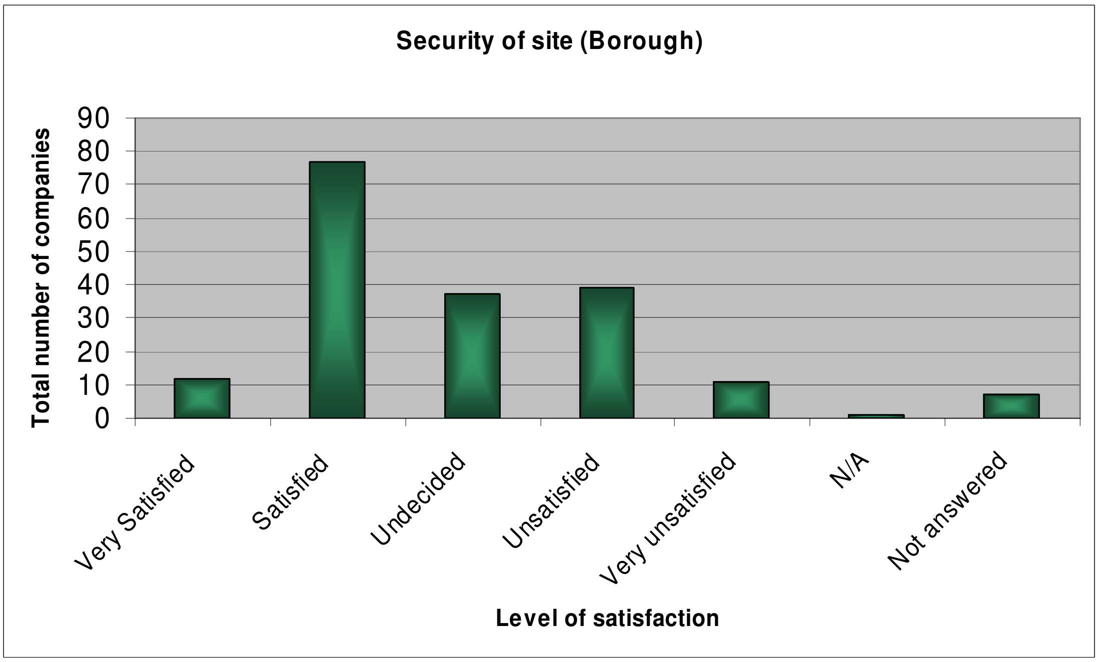
BP3 Business retention.

In order to offer a thriving business environment to any new businesses who may wish to locate in the Borough, it is a necessity to retain the Borough's existing business base. In order to achieve this, the Council needs to offer a service to businesses located in the Borough.

In terms of identifying data which illustrates some dissatisfaction from existing businesses within the Borough that would justify a priority of business retention, the survey undertaken by the Council outlines a few key issues. The graph below demonstrates that some businesses are looking to relocate outside the Borough, and although no specific details can be extracted regarding the reasoning for this it does suggest that the Borough is not delivering on key features for businesses.



The graph below, taken from the Council's survey, shows that there is some dissatisfaction regarding site security, which could be a factor in pushing businesses away from the Borough.



Despite some dissatisfaction, the stock of Redditch businesses has gradually increased, as displayed in the table below. The Council would like to continue to see business stock levels increase, and try to help retain the current business levels in the Borough.

Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Redditch	2,125	2,130	2,195	2,245	2,270	2,330	2,370	2,455

Source: Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2008.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority BP 3 Business Retention.*

BP4 Support business start-ups.

There is a need to support the creation, growth and survival of new businesses, particularly in high value added sectors. The table below indicates the level of new business start ups in the Borough. In 2007, Redditch Borough had the lowest business registration rate in the County, it is also well below the Regional and National averages. During the period 2002 – 2007 Redditch Borough has consistently performed below the National average for business start-ups, with the exception of 2005. This is a concern for the Borough and is an area that requires some attention.

New business registration rate, 2002-7

Area	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bromsgrove	64.9	71.9	63.0	72.5	63.8	70.5
Malvern Hills	64.9	68.8	63.4	68.9	68.7	61.6
Redditch	44.2	57.6	46.2	61.8	48.0	50.9
Worcester	44.4	55.0	51.0	47.4	53.1	51.4
Wychavon	60.7	69.3	67.3	68.9	68.4	80.8
Wyre Forest	47.5	51.6	46.3	54.6	45.7	52.8
Worcestershire	54.5	62.4	56.5	62.3	58.1	62.4
West Midlands	46.7	52.2	54.1	53.9	48.8	55.5
England	54.0	59	61.6	59.2	54.8	64.2

Rate calculated by dividing the number of enterprise births by the population aged 16+/10,000. Enterprise births are defined as new businesses registering for either VAT and / or PAYE for the first time.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority BP 4 Support Business Start-ups.*

BP5 Establish and maintain a reputation for Redditch Borough Council as a "Business Friendly Council".

As a Council, and particularly within the Economic Development Unit, we realise that for the Strategy to be successful there needs to be a close relationship with businesses. The Council wants to be easily accessible and approachable to businesses. With this aspiration, the Council is confident that business liaison will be efficient and productive for all parties concerned.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority BP 5 Establish and maintain a reputation for Redditch Borough Council as a "Business Friendly Council".*

BP6 Exploit opportunities created by the Central Technology Belt and Cluster Development.

What is a High Technology Corridor?

"Advantage West Midlands has identified three geographical areas where the mix of business activity, academic expertise, research capability, infrastructure and development opportunities exist to encourage the growth of high technology businesses.

These are:

- The Central Technology Belt
- The Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Technology Corridor
- The Wolverhampton to Telford Technology Corridor"

The role of the High Technology Corridors

Each corridor is managed by a partnership team consisting of local organisations, such as local authorities, universities, training providers and financial specialists, who can help with development.
The role of the High Technology Corridors is to:

- **develop and improve the infrastructure of the corridors**, so that they offer a complete range of high quality accommodation that satisfies the demands of technology-led businesses;

- **promote and enable collaboration** between businesses, academic providers and research institutions, to ensure that businesses have access to, and benefit from, the local skills and knowledge base;
- **provide integrated business support services and investment funds** to support design, research and development and the commercialisation of research to create new products and services;
- **improve workshop and leadership skills** so that existing and incoming businesses can recruit the high quality, highly skilled workforce they need;
- **market the corridors as prime locations** for technology-related, design, manufacturing and professional service businesses.

To date, these types of activity have led to:
- 100 businesses created;
- 700 businesses assisted;
- 3,100 jobs created and safeguarded;
- 250 people assisted with their skills."

Central Technology Belt

"This Corridor runs from central Birmingham to north Worcestershire and follows the line of the A38, drawing on the strengths of existing businesses, the universities of Birmingham and Aston and the former Defence Evaluation and Research Agency, QinetiQ, in Malvern.

Identified areas of expertise include medical sciences, materials engineering and environmental technologies.

Among the key projects funded through the Central Technology Belt are Longbridge Technology Park, Malvern Hill Science Park and the National Nanotechnology Centre."[2]

Clusters

"The objective of business clusters is to grow regional industries to exploit attractive markets where the region has existing or potential strengths. Clusters encourage businesses to work together to achieve this.

Over the last three years, businesses have collaborated with each other in cluster market exploitation, technology transfer, skills development, supply chain improvement, product development, overseas trade, and strategy planning. In many cases this has led to tangible increases in innovation and sales.

[2] Source: http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/working-with-us/high-technology-corridors.aspx 19/03/09

Clusters have recently published their three year plans for 2008 to 2011. Each plan targets specific markets which will deliver critical mass and greater investment. Detail of individual clusters and their plans can be found on the seperate sections accessible through the left hand menu or the thumbnails below."[3]

Local strategic policy relevance

At a strategic level, a priority of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to "look at ways of diversifying working opportunities to reduce reliance on traditional industries". The Preferred Draft Core Strategy Document takes this one step further by developing a policy on High Technology Development. Draft Policy ES.3 states:

"The Borough Council will seek to create links with local Higher Education Establishments and businesses to see how the employment opportunities can be enhanced by encouraging emerging high technology industries which foster innovation and help develop high technology and research clusters, particularly towards the western side of the Borough. These include:

i. healthcare, biomedical and biotechnology development;
ii. higher education and related research institutes;
iii. computer software and services;
iv. telecommunications;

other high technology clusters as they emerge".

This overarching policy focus on diversifying the Borough's economy provides a sound basis for taking forward the economic priority of exploiting opportunities offered by the Central Technology Belt. Whilst it is inevitable that such opportunities will arise, the requirement of the Council is to create an environment that allows these opportunities to be taken up.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority BP 6 Exploit opportunities created by the Central Technology Belt and Cluster Development.*

BP 7 Monitor Government requirements with regard to the single business account.

The Single Business Account (SBA) is created by the Council and enables businesses to have a single point of contact. The SBA is managed by the

[3] http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/working-with-us/business-clusters/default.aspx

Council using Customer Relations Management systems and processes. The costs associated with SBA are absorbed by the Council.

The importance of SBA for the Council is paramount; hence the need to implement any required changes in an efficient manner.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority BP 7 Monitor Government requirements with regard to the single business account.*

Redditch Economic Development Strategy – People

Introduction

As of 2001 (Census) the population of Redditch was 78807, this figure is increasing. Worcestershire County Council produce population projections for the Borough up to 2026, these are set out below.

Table X – Population projection 2007 – 2026

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2016	2021	2026
Redditch	76,600	80,000	80,300	80,700	81,100	82,900	84,800	86,600

Source: Worcestershire County Council (http://worcestershire.whub.org.uk/home/wcc-pep-ri-index-population-popprojections-district 27/02/09)

Clearly, the projections, which foresee continuous population growth, offer opportunities for the Borough with the potential for a greater workforce. However, in order for the Business and Place aspirations to be successful, there is a particular need for a highly skilled workforce. Redditch needs to attract, retain and develop an enterprising and innovative workforce.

This section of the Strategy contains the detail behind the economic priorities that have been adopted under the people section.

Strategic Objectives – People

- Raise economic aspirations and encourage residents to obtain the skills needed to realise those aspirations.

What are the Economic Priorities – People?

PP1 Encourage entrepreneurialism in young people.

PP2 Foster economic ambition in young people.

PP3 Improve links between education providers and employers.

PP4 Reduce out-migration of skilled young people.

PP5 Minimise the impact of the loss of highly skilled, older workers due to retirement.

PP6 Encourage continual skills development in the workforce.

PP7 Minimise Worklessness in order to assist in creating prosperous communities.

Deployment and justification of People priorities

PP1 Encourage entrepreneurialism in young people.

Entrepreneurialism is fundamental to the economic success of an area. Without entrepreneurs it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Borough to progress economically. However, aspiring to be an entrepreneur is a challenging prospect for any individual. Therefore encouraging this ambition at an early age is considered to be fundamental to the long term economic advancement of the Borough.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PP 1 Encourage entrepreneurialism in young people.*

PP2 Foster economic ambition in young people.

To some extent this priority has a relationship with economic priority PP1 detailed above. Clearly, in order for the Borough to economically thrive in the future there is an absolute need to ensure that employees of the future are driven to succeed in their chosen field. Unlike priority PP1, this priority solely relates to the general ambition of seeking economic success, rather than targeting entrepreneurialism.

There is a perception, informed by liaison with key stakeholders, that in Redditch there is a low level economic ambition for the general student. This is not to say students in the Borough do not want to succeed in a particular field, however there are concerns that students are not always aware of how to achieve their goal, and what obstacles may be in the way to achieving this goal. It is only armed with this knowledge that a young person can map out their potential routes to personal economic success, and in so doing identify ways of overcoming potential problems. It is envisaged that where this is carried out successfully, there will be significant positive outcomes for both the individual and the Borough as a whole.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PP 2 Foster economic ambition in young people.*

PP3 Improve links between education providers and employers.

This priority is borne out of detailed discussions with key stakeholders. The priority itself is simple enough in that employers need appropriate resources to meet the needs of their corporation, and education providers have to be aware of these demands in order to tailor their courses appropriately. In developing the priority, it is also clear that it's ultimate outcome marries up with other local priorities/strategies, for example an improvement in the skills base in the Borough. This is a priority of the Sustainable Community Strategy. In addition, the Preferred Draft Core Strategy states the following in a draft policy:

High Technology Developments	
Policy ES.3	**The Borough Council will seek to create links with local Higher Education Establishments and businesses to see how the employment opportunities can be enhanced by encouraging emerging high technology industries which foster innovation and help develop high technology and research clusters, particularly towards the western side of the Borough. These include:** **v. healthcare, biomedical and biotechnology development;** **vi. higher education and related research institutes;** **vii. computer software and services;** **viii. telecommunications;** **ix. other high technology clusters as they emerge.**

Clearly this policy outlines a common theme with Economic Priority PP 2.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PP 3 Improve links between education providers and employers.*

PP4 Reduce out-migration of skilled young people.

Another recurring theme that arose during discussions on the subject of economic ambition among young people was the view that there is a high proportion of highly qualified individuals who leave the Borough to seek work elsewhere. There could be several reasons for this trend, for example there may not be the type or number of jobs available in Redditch that are suitable for the needs of the graduate, similarly alternative locations may appear more attractive etc. Some of the reasoning behind the out migration of skilled young individuals were identified at a Student Council where it was found that students held the perception that there were not the opportunities in the

Borough for progression into large companies which were likely to require their projected skills (Appendix F provides the Student Council minutes).

Addressing this economic priority is a challenge, but is an absolute necessity. There is no point creating a Borough which can thrive economically if there is a continued out migration of skilled young people from the Borough.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PP 4 Reduce out-migration of skilled young people.*

PP5 Minimise the impact of the loss of highly skilled, older workers due to retirement.

In an article posted on ‘Personnel Toady’[4] Professor Mike Campbell, director of strategic research at Skills for Business stated:

> "Employers have got to deal with the workforce they have now. What we are trying to say is that it is part of improving business performance, productivity and growth prospects as a whole,"

Therefore the loss of highly skilled staff to retirement is not a phenomenon solely experienced in Redditch, as the article notes, there is a national situation, known as the ‘Skills timebomb’

However, as stated, Redditch is considered to be a microcosm of Birmingham City. On November 23rd 2006 Birmingham Post produced an article discussing the skills time bomb in Birmingham, specifically in relation to the manufacturing sector[5]. With manufacturing being the predominant industry in Redditch, the possibility of a loss of highly skilled, experienced workers from the manufacturing sector is considered to be a serious issue. The article from the Birmingham Post relating to manufacturing stated:

> “The average age of people working in this sector is older than the rest of the economy, with people not being replaced’.

Given the prolificacy of manufacturing companies in Redditch Borough, the loss of older worker dues to retirement and the failure to develop these skills locally in a new generation of workers would potentially result in the break down of the economy over the long term.

[4] http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/2005/10/04/32379/skills-timebomb-threatens-uk-workforce-productivity.html
[5] Article is located at http://www.birminghampost.net/birmingham-business/birmingham-business-news/manufacturing-and-skills-business/2006/11/23/skills-timebomb-in-our-factories-65233-18146705/

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PP 5 Minimise the impact of the loss of highly skilled, older workers due to retirement.*

PP6 Encourage continual skills development in the workforce.

A considerable element of this strategy has focused on the up skilling of the future workforce. Clearly those currently in employment have the ability to add greater value to the local economy. The advantages of having a highly skilled workforce often means they are more adaptable to change and potentially more efficient where change occurs. The aim here is not for a business to lose employees because they become over-qualified, but to allow a business to expand into new sectors, or become more advanced in their current sector.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PP 6 Encourage continual skills development in the workforce.*

PP7 Minimise Worklessness in order to assist in creating prosperous communities.

Advantage West Midlands have developed a programme entitled ‘Connection to Opportunities’. Fundamentally this programme seeks to address worklessness within the region. It is intended that the Worcestershire Partnership lead the programme for Worcestershire, with the County Council administering the programme for the County. At this stage the Partnership have submitted a letter of intent to Advantage West Midlands setting out the aspiration of the Partnership to obtain funding to address worklessness within the County. The County faces significant challenges, with some of its communities amongst the most economically and socially disadvantaged in the country. These are the people who are farthest from employment and who are therefore economically inactive and workless. The number of people falling within the definition of worklessness living in Worcestershire is shown in the table below:

Table: Claimants of key out-of-work benefits, August 2008

Authority	Working age[6] population from Annual Population Survey	Jobseekers	Incapacity Benefits	Lone Parent	Others on income related benefit	Total Key out-of-work benefits	Proportion of the working age population claiming key out-of-work benefits (%)
Bromsgrove	54,300	740	2,230	440	150	3,570	6.6
Malvern Hills	41,400	500	2,200	450	160	3,410	8.2
Redditch	51,100	1,230	3,100	980	260	5,550	10.9
Worcester	59,000	1,360	3,450	1,060	310	6,210	10.5
Wychavon	68,800	1,060	3,090	740	250	5,220	7.6
Wyre Forest	59,100	1,250	4,080	980	350	6,630	11.2
Worcestershire	333,600	6,150	18,150	4,660	1,480	30,440	9.1

The table above indicates that for the Borough of Redditch the problem of unemployment is pronounced, therefore an active approach to tackling this issue is required.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PP 7 Minimise Worklessness in order to assist in creating prosperous communities.*

[6] **Working age is 16-64 for males, 16-59 for females.**

Redditch Economic Development Strategy – Place

Introduction

The context behind Redditch's location is set out in the introduction of the Strategy, and it is not necessary to repeat it here. Fundamentally the Borough can play to its current strengths e.g. its excellent transport links, its proximity to the economic powerhouse 'Birmingham' etc, to develop its economy. However, in addition, the Borough needs to emphasise its other strengths, which are less pronounced e.g. the opportunities for business tourism.

Place is a fundamental part of this strategy, because having an excellent place i.e. an excellent Redditch, results in an area where businesses and residents coexist, resulting in economic prosperity.

This section of the strategy contains the detail behind the economic priorities that have been adopted under the place section.

Strategic Objectives – Place

- Optimise the benefits for the Borough of being located adjacent to the economic powerhouse of Birmingham City.
- Ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place to create a thriving business environment.
- Deliver the economic aspirations today without significantly affecting the aspirations of future generations.

What are the Economic Priorities – Place?

PLP1 Promote Redditch as a business location.

PLP2 Protect employment land.

PLP3 Assist businesses to improve their environmental performance

PLP4 Work with businesses to address their issues regarding security.

PLP5 Provide a commercial property service to assist businesses to find suitable premises.

PLP6 Encourage business tourism.

PLP7 Promote allocated employment sites that are not currently on the market in order to encourage their development.

PLP8 Retain and enhance vitality of the town centre

Deployment and justification of Place priorities

PLP1 Promote Redditch as a business location.

In order for the Borough to develop economically there is an obvious need to ensure that the Borough is promoted correctly. The table below indicates the level of enquiries from companies looking to locate business within the Borough.

	2003	2004	2006	2007	Total
Number of Enquiries	242	364	410	405	1421

From 2003 to 2007, enquiries for commercial properties in the Borough increased by 67%. Demand increased with each consecutive year before experiencing a slight fall from 2006 to 2007. However, the figures demonstrate that Redditch is continually attracting a healthy and significant number of business enquiries to the locality.

It is not clear how many of the enquiries are converted, but it is clear that, if promoted suitably during the enquiry stage, there is likely to be an uplift in conversion from enquiry to locating in the Borough.

There are clear challenges for the Council, the proximity to the economic powerhouse of Birmingham City means that the Borough will always struggle to compete with the neighbouring city both in attracting businesses and employees. In addition, the Borough's immediate neighbours in Worcestershire and Warwickshire offer direct competition for winning businesses. However, proper promotion of Redditch as a business location will help to encourage companies to the Borough.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PLP1 1 Promote Redditch as a business location.*

PLP2 Protect employment land.

The importance of Employment Land

Ensuring there is an adequate supply of Employment Land is an essential element of ensuring a continually expanding business base in any locality.

There is a need to have a balanced portfolio of employment sites that meet the needs of prospective occupiers. Where this is achieved there is the potential to attract diverse businesses, facilitate job creation, and in doing so, diversify the Borough business base.

How is Employment Land Designated and why protect it?

In the past, Employment Land in the Borough of Redditch was designated through the medium of Local Plans, most recently Local Plan No.3. The role of the Economic Development Unit in this process was to provide specific guidance on the designation and protection of employment land for economic purposes. Following the implementation of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, fundamental changes were implemented to the Planning system. Crucially, the Act removed the need to prepare a Local Plan and required all Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF). The Core Strategy sets out the spatial vision for the Borough up to 2026. Currently the document is on public consultation, and the intention is to adopt the Core Strategy by 2011. In terms of Employment Land, the Preferred Draft Core Strategy itself does not set out specifically where future employment land should be designated. This is achieved through the Council's Employment Land Review which forms part of the Council's evidence base for its LDF. At present this land has not been formally adopted as future employment land. Therefore land designated as part of Local Plan No.3 needs to be protected for employment purposes (as long as still deemed suitable for this use), and any future employment land designated through the planning process needs to be protected. Where employment land is lost to alternative development, this removes the opportunity to achieve some of the goals in this economic strategy.

Redditch is not immune to losing employment land to alternative purposes, critically this loss is not always recovered, and from an economic development point of view this prohibits economic development in the area. This is an area that the Economic Development Unit must have the ability to influence in the future.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PLP 2 Protect Employment Land.*

PLP3 Assist businesses to improve their environmental performance

It is envisaged that where businesses improve their environmental performance this will have environmental benefits for the Borough as a whole. Every business has to comply with Environmental legislation which covers the following areas:

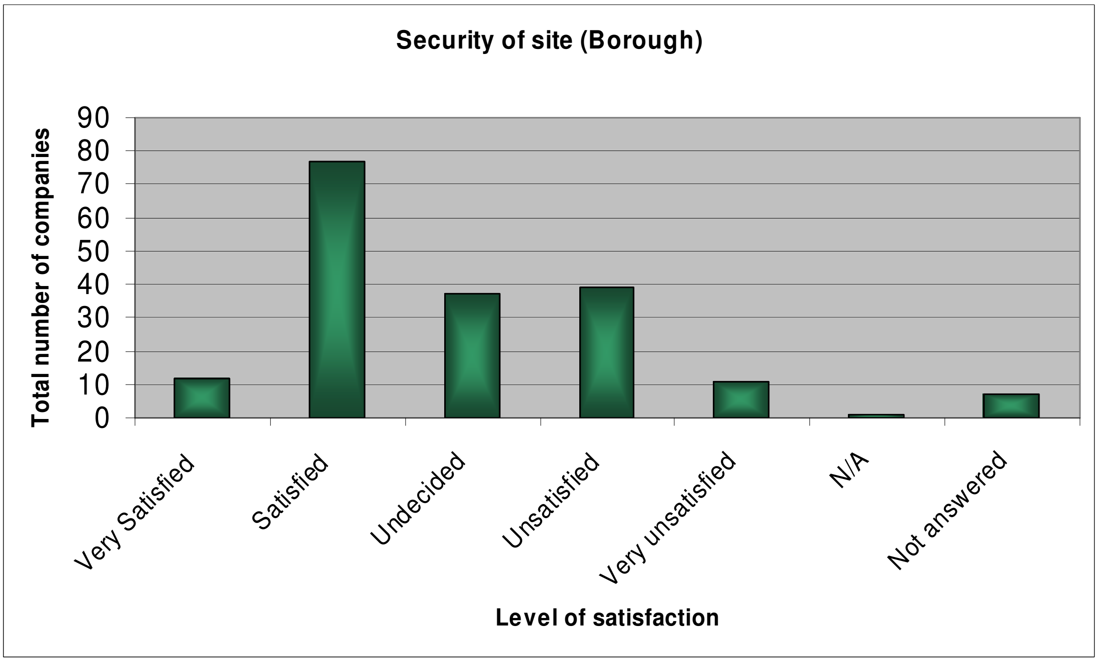
- Emissions into air;

- Proper storage or disposal of business waste;
- Storing and handling hazardous substances;
- Discharges of wastewater;
- Packaging.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PLP 3 Assist businesses to improve their environmental performance.*

PLP4 Work with businesses to address their issues regarding security.

As part of the consultation with local businesses, carried out as part of the Employment Land Review process, there were a number of concerns regarding security of site. The graph below illustrates the response to a question in the survey which asked respondents to outline their level of satisfaction regarding the security of their employment site.



Although the responses indicate that there is a general level of satisfaction, there is a significant proportion of responses that are ‘undecided’, ‘unsatisfied’ and ‘very unsatisfied’. This indicates that security is an issue for the Borough. It should be noted that in some employment areas such as Enfield and Lakeside there was a higher proportion of respondents who were satisfied with security, in other areas this pattern was reversed with a higher proportion of respondents dissatisfied by security. Consequently, in order to ensure current and new businesses coming into the Borough consider their surroundings secure, the Council needs to identify suitable measures which can lead to businesses feeling more secure.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PLP 4 Work with businesses to address their issues regarding security.*

PLP5 Provide a commercial property service to assist businesses to find suitable premises.

The Economic Development Team have consistently provided a commercial property service by which businesses looking to move into the Borough, or relocate from one location in the Borough to another, can use to assist them in finding suitable premises. The service allows the enquirer to identify where in the Borough there are suitable premises/land to meet their particular requirements. Although considered a necessary tool, the service represents a resource issue for the team because there is a need to maintain the commercial property database by liaising with agents and keeping up to date with monitoring of planning applications and land development. Feedback of the service however indicates that this resource helps to promote the Borough as an area to locate and remain in for the long term. When a business enquires about premises/land in the Borough, it is likely that this service is one of the first points of contact for businesses with the Borough Council, and the Economic Development Team. Where this contact is positive, it is likely that future liaisons can be positive for all parties concerned.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PLP 5 Provide a commercial property service to assist businesses to find suitable premises.*

PLP6 Encourage business tourism.

Business tourism can offer a lot of opportunities for the Borough, not only can it bring money into the area directly through business days out etc. it is also a means of promoting the area. There is limited evidence of business tourism significantly occurring in the Borough. However, there are a number of benefits that can arise from business tourism, for example, it is a means of promoting the Borough for potential investors/occupiers and thus can help to bolster the Borough's economic profile. Business tourism brings in capital into the Borough improving an area's spending power. With these benefits in mind, there is a need to develop business tourism in Redditch, and in order for this to be achieved the Borough needs to put the appropriate services/facilities in place.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PLP 6 Encourage business tourism.*

PLP7 Promote allocated employment sites that are not currently on the market in order to encourage their development.

The value of Employment Land has been set out in Economic Priority 'PLP 2 Protect Employment Land', therefore it is not considered necessary to repeat this dialogue here. However there are numerous reasons why it is important for the future prosperity of the Borough to promote allocated employment sites that are not currently on the market for development. First and foremost where an allocated site has not come forward, this obviously rules out any opportunity on this land for job creation or any value added for the Borough as a whole. It is important to consider Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) which was published as a consultation document[7] by Communities and Local Government. PPS4 emphasised that where employment sites had been designated for employment purposes and no take-up had occurred over a 5 year period, the site should be reviewed as to its suitability for employment purposes. Therefore, where employment sites are not taken up over the medium term, there is the real risk of these designated sites being lost to alternative forms of development,. As a consequence, potential capital and investment for an area is lost.

In order to prevent the loss of employment land and its subsequent detriments to the local economy, there is the need to promote employment sites such that they come forward and are taken up for employment purposes. However, Economic Development would stress that a site may be suitable for employment purposes but may not come forward for numerous reasons e.g. a stagnant market. In such circumstances, Economic Development would look to support these sites over the long term and protect them from any other forms of development, which may add less value to the Borough over the long term.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PLP 7 Promote allocated employment sites that are not currently on the market in order to encourage their development.*

PLP8 Retain and enhance vitality of the town centre

The town centre plays an important role in the local economy of Redditch. The Council are currently preparing a Town Centre Strategy which outlines the importance that the Council are placing on this objective. At the time of writing

[7] As the document has been subject to a period of public consultation it has weight. At the time of writing Communities and Local Government could not indicate when the document was likely to be published.

it is not possible to outline any detail contained within the Strategy. However, it is anticipated that the Economic Development Unit will be a key partner in deploying some of the actions set out in the Strategy.

This also follows on from the vision of the Preferred Draft Core Strategy which encompasses the town centre. Within the vision it is stated:

"The Town Centre will be vital and vibrant, supported by regenerated District Centres at Church Hill, Matchborough, Winyates and Woodrow. In particular, the regeneration of the Town Centre will improve connectivity between key sites".

This vision clearly emphasises the need for proactive action to be taken in the Town Centre.

Action Plan response X sets out how the Council seeks to implement *Economic Priority PLP 8 Retain and enhance vitality of the town centre.*

Redditch Economic Development Strategy – Powerful Voice

Introduction

In order to be economically successful the Borough needs to strengthen its reputation, sub-regionally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Providing a Powerful Voice for the Borough will go some way in achieving this. The Council needs to use appropriate information effectively in order to influence decision makers at all levels. Significantly, a Powerful Voice is considered absolutely imperative in order to change perceptions of the Borough, with the aim of attracting investors, businesses, tourists, residents and students alike.

This section of the strategy contains the detail behind the economic priorities that have been adopted under the powerful voice section.

Strategic Objectives – Powerful Voice

- Ensuring that Redditch's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels.

What are the Economic Priorities – Powerful Voice?

Actions

- Keep abreast of Regional and Sub-Regional economic development matters and funding opportunities.

- Work with partner organisations to maximise the benefit to Redditch of any opportunities, e.g. attend WEP meetings.

- To promote the skills needs of residents and businesses in Redditch to strategic bodies such as the Learning & Skills Council.

Deployment and justification of Powerful Voice priorities

Conclusion

To be inserted.

Monitoring

Rigorous monitoring of the Redditch Economic Development Strategy is absolutely paramount in order to ensure that the actions set out are effective. The Action Plan (Appendix C) sets out the specific monitoring methods that are employed in this strategy which will help us deliver economic success in the Borough.

For some elements of the delivery package, there are a number of monitoring measures. It is anticipated that a report will be produced annually which charts and annotates the monitoring process for each of the indicators. This will allow the Council to fully explore why certain elements of the Strategy are performing well and others less so. The monitoring process will also allow the Council to review those actions which are not performing, and also replace actions which are no longer appropriate to the economy. Therefore to some extent the Strategy can be seen as a fluid and iterative process.

Glossary

Core Strategy:

A Core Strategy sets out the long term spatial vision for a Local Planning Authority's area, and in addition to this the spatial objectives and policies that will deliver this vision. The Core Strategy is a component of the Local Development Framework and has status as a Development Plan Document (DPD).

Customer Relationship Management:

A class of software application design to help a company collect and use information about its customers more effectively.
Development Plan Document:

Planning policy documents that a Local Planning Authority must prepare, and which have to be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and examination.

Employment Land Review:

Assesses the suitability of sites for employment development, safeguards the best sites in the face of competition from other higher value uses and helps identify those which are no longer suitable for other uses.

Evidence Base:

A collection of research projects or studies that are undertaken to look at specific factors or areas that may influence the future development of Redditch Borough. It allows a thorough understanding of local needs, opportunities and constraints to direct decisions and policies and can be made up of the views of stakeholders and background facts about the area.

Local Development Framework:

A non-statutory term used to describe a portfolio of documents, this includes all LDDs. The LDF provides the Local Planning Authorities with policies for meeting the community's economic, environmental and social aims for the future of their area, which collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the Local Planning Authority's area.

Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements:

A series of documents produced by the Government covering a wide range of planning issues. PPGs provide advice on the implementation of the law and Government policy regarding the purpose and function of the planning system. Under the new planning legislation, PPGs are being replaced by PPSs.

Preferred Draft Core Strategy:

Sets out what the preferred options for spatial development are as well as giving some detail as to how this approach will be achieved by proposing policy wording which will be further established in the Published DPD.

Regional Spatial Strategy:

This is the Government's Planning for the administrative regions. It sets the regional context for planning and shows how a region should look in 15-20 years time and possibly longer. It identifies the scale and distribution of new housing in the region, indicates areas for regeneration, expansion or sub-regional planning and specifies priorities for the environment, transport, housing, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. The RSS forms part of the Development Plan for the area (as well as the LDF) and replaces previous Regional Planning Guidance. The current RSS is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands (2004).

Single Business Account:

The Single Business Account is an account that can be created by a Local Authority to enable businesses to have a single point of contact. The account is managed by the Local Authority using CRM systems

Sustainable Community Strategy:

Sets out the key themes which Redditch Borough Partnership and its partner organisations will concentrate on to improve the environmental, economic and social well being of Redditch Borough and contribute to sustainable development in the next ten to fifteen years.

Appendix A – Section 3 of Redditch Borough Council Employment Land Review – Stage 1: Summary of Responses to Employment Land Review questionnaire

Introduction

This section provides a summary of the responses to the Employment Land Review questionnaire undertaken with local industries in the Borough. In total 730 questionnaires were sent out and 184 were received back - a response rate of 25%. Therefore this section does not cover the whole industrial constitution of the Borough, however the information can be seen as representative of this community. The purpose of the section is to provide additional baseline information for the Employment Land Review and build upon existing economic data for the Borough. This section solely focuses on the Employment related responses and not those questions relating to the views of the Council[8]. Once responses were received they were grouped into the following locations:

- Arrow Road (Total responses = 4)
- Enfield (Total responses = 27)
- Hunt End (Total responses = 3)
- Lakeside (Total responses = 46)
- Moons Moat (Total responses = 42)
- Oakenshaw (Total responses = 2)
- Park Farm (Total responses = 33)
- Ravensbank (Total responses = 2)
- Washford (Total responses = 25)

As part of the Redditch Borough Structure Plan requirement of 65 hectares of employment land (1996 – 2011), a component of this was to be provided in Bromsgrove District. This component was to be met in Ravensbank, for this reason Ravensbank has been included within this survey. The positive factors of locating in the Borough have been excluded because there were no clear comparisons between the responses and therefore it was not possible to meaningfully group any of the data. The responses made with regard to the satisfaction with the Council have been excluded because this is solely for internal purposes.

[8] Where there were queries which the Council needed to respond to the relevant company was contacted.

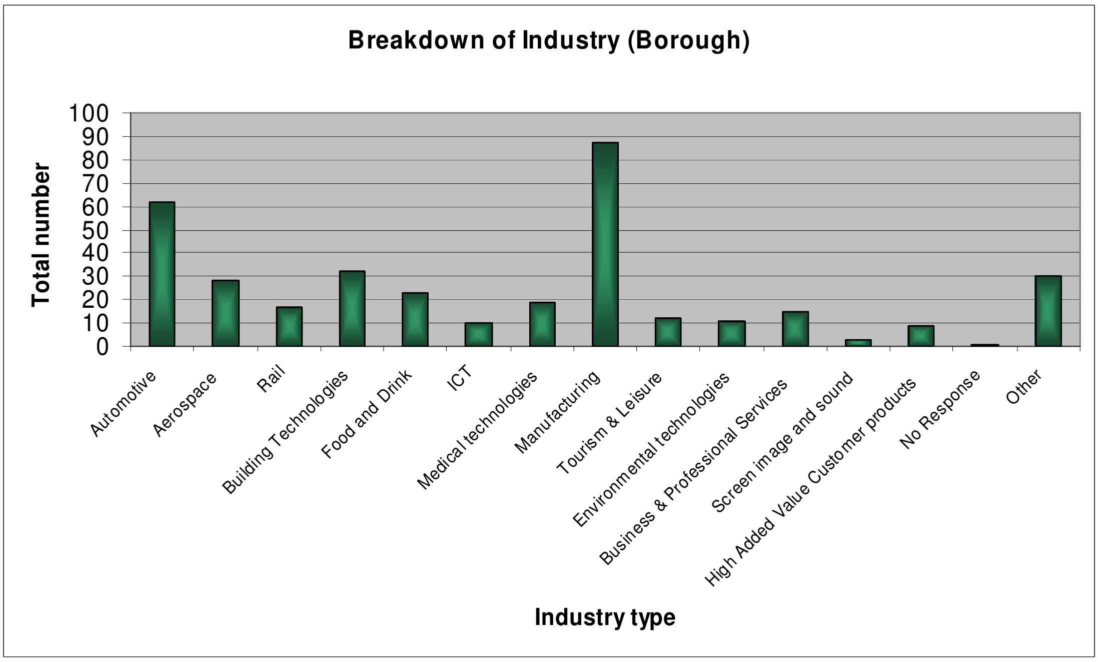
This section sets out the overall responses for the Borough and highlights any significant differences or any major issues within specific employment locations.

Analysis

Employment sectors

The questionnaire sought to establish the existing industrial sectors and their proportionality within Redditch Borough. It should be noted that respondents were not restricted to selecting one business sector.

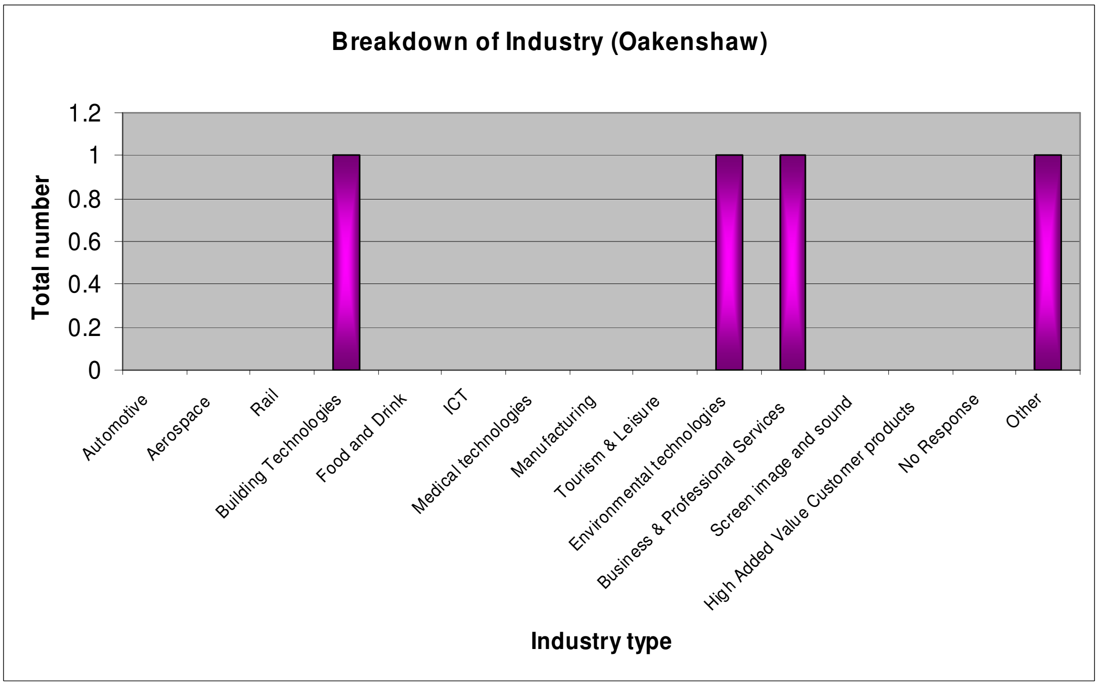
Graph 8



The graph above illustrates that the predominant industry within the Borough is manufacturing. The Borough also demonstrates a high amount of automotive and building technology industries. However, the Borough does not specialise in ICT or high-added value customer products, and the smallest sector, and the only industry with less than ten respondents, is that of screen, image and sound.

These responses are reflected in each of the employment areas across the Borough. The only exception is Oakenshaw, as illustrated below, in which industry is dominated by building technologies, environmental technologies and business and professional services rather than manufacturing. This is not surprising given that the commercial area of Oakenshaw is an office development. However, there were only two responses received for Oakenshaw and therefore it is not considered to be a suitable sample size nor a true representation of the employment area.

Graph 9

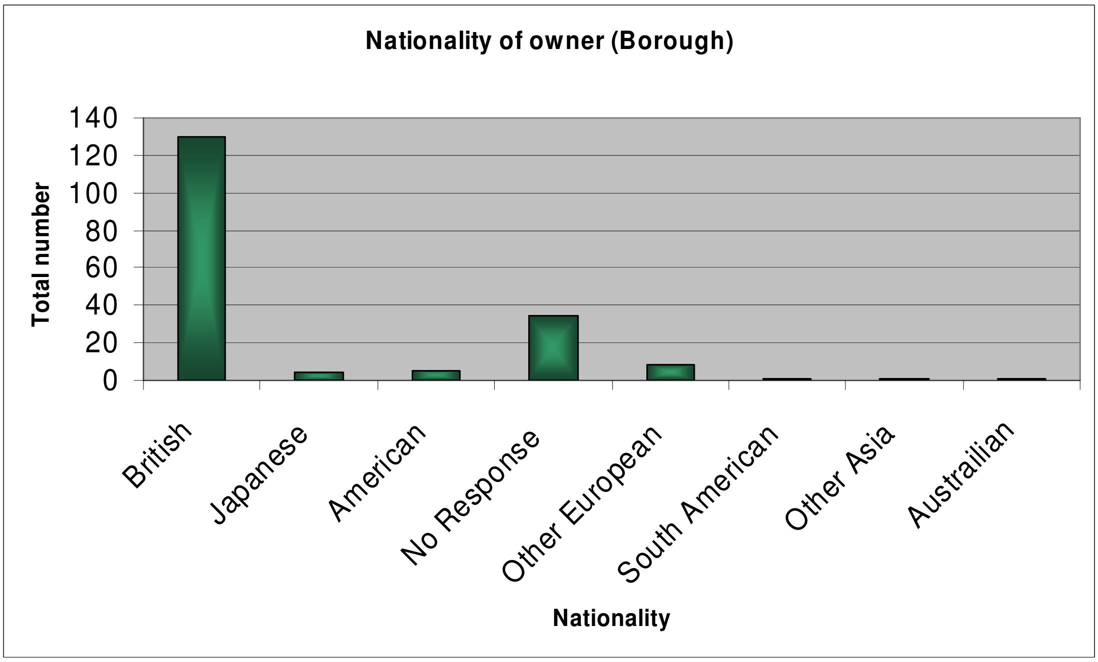


Ownership

The questionnaire asked respondents to specify the nationality of the companies' owner in order to identify the sources of industry within the Borough.

The graph shows that the predominant nationality of owners within the Borough is British, with a limited number of owners from a variety of other nations. Arguably this indicates that there is limited inward investment within the Borough, particularly from international sources, this also correlates with the lack of enquires from international sources detailed in the previous section.

Graph 10



Employment

In terms of considering the size and status of the various industries within Redditch borough, the number of full and part time employees was established.

In relation to full and part time employees within the Borough, the questionnaire established that most companies only employ between 1 and 9 staff members. This indicates that the bulk of industries within the Borough are small enterprises. This is not necessarily an issue as this pattern is reflected nationally; the Federation of Small business states that "over 97% of businesses employ less than 20 people and often rely heavily on temporary and agency workers to cover unexpected gaps in employment."[9]

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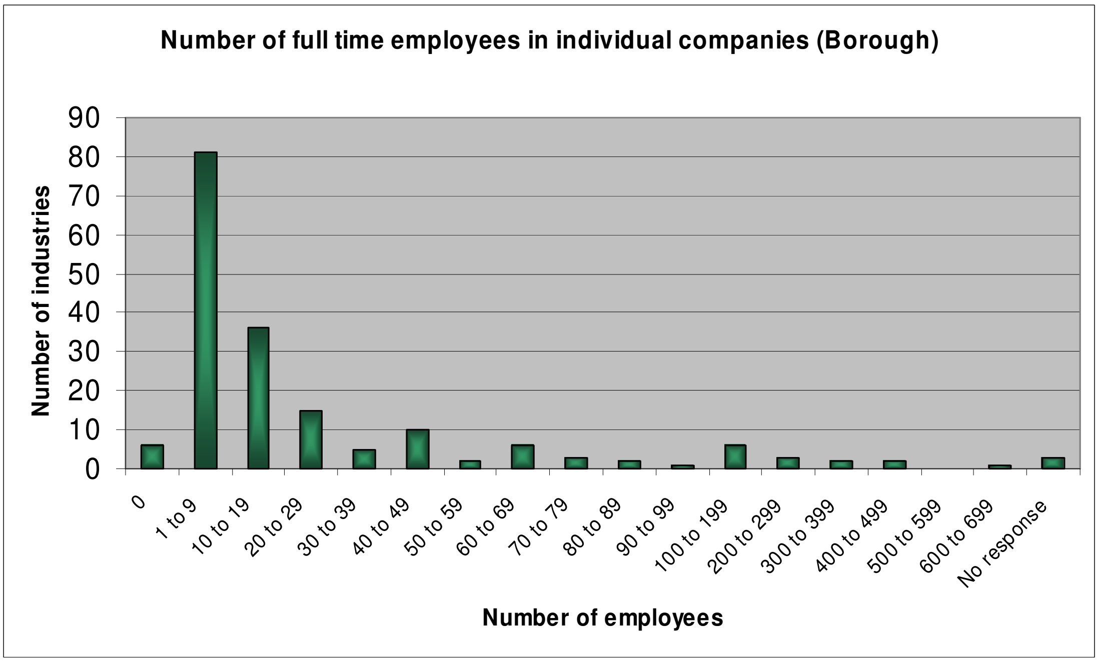
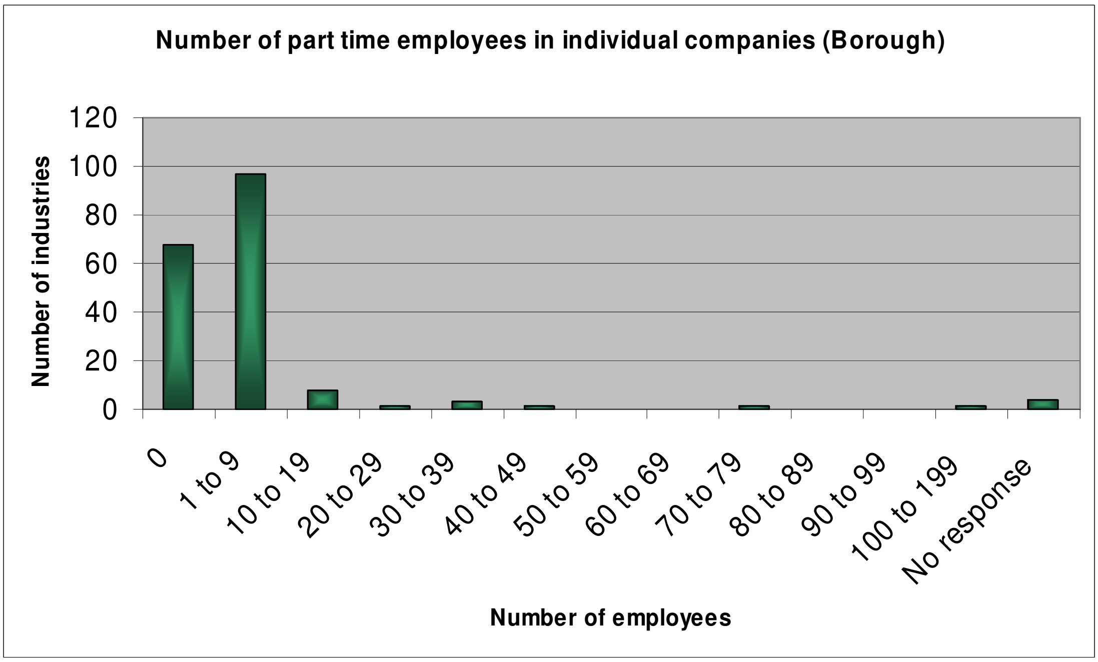
[9] http://www.fsb.org.uk/news.asp?REC=4625 (FSB News Release - PR/2008/30 - Issue date: Tuesday May 20 2008)

Graph 11

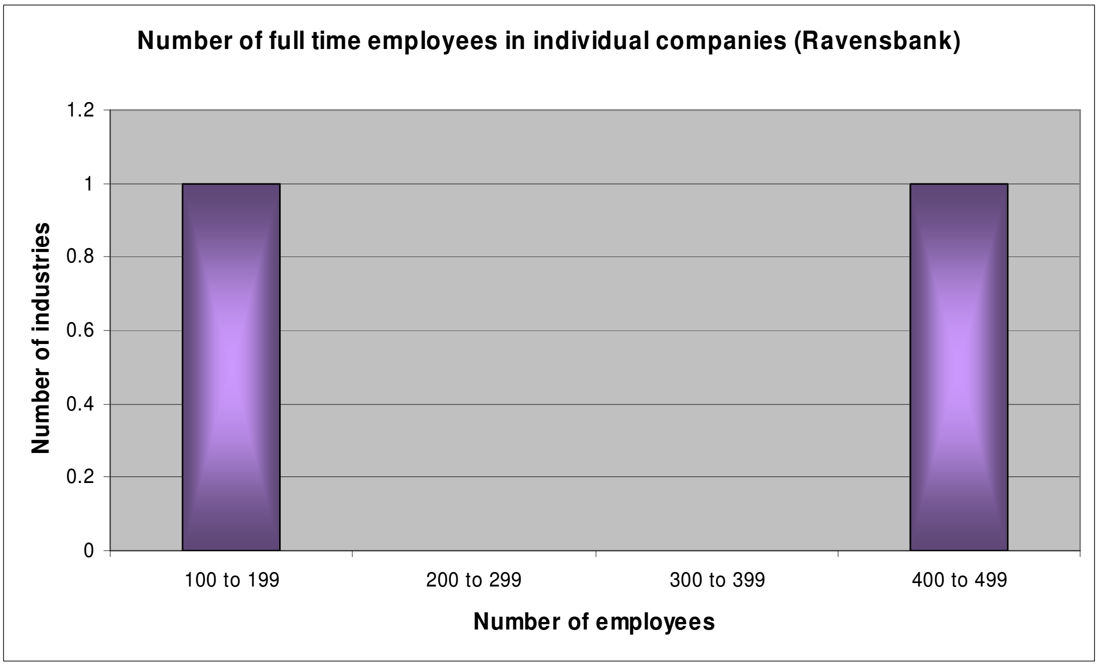


Graph 12



Although Park Farm shows a slight difference in this trend, with companies more likely to employ between 10 and 19 full time staff members, generally, throughout the Borough, company size is small, with a high proportion of industries in Washford, Moons Moat, Lakeside and Park Farm employing no part time staff. The only employment area that is significantly different is Ravensbank which has both a large full time workforce, as illustrated below, and part time workforce. This is to be expected given that the smallest property on Ravensbank is 17,000 sq ft and Ravensbank is the location of the largest commercial property in the Borough.

Graph 13

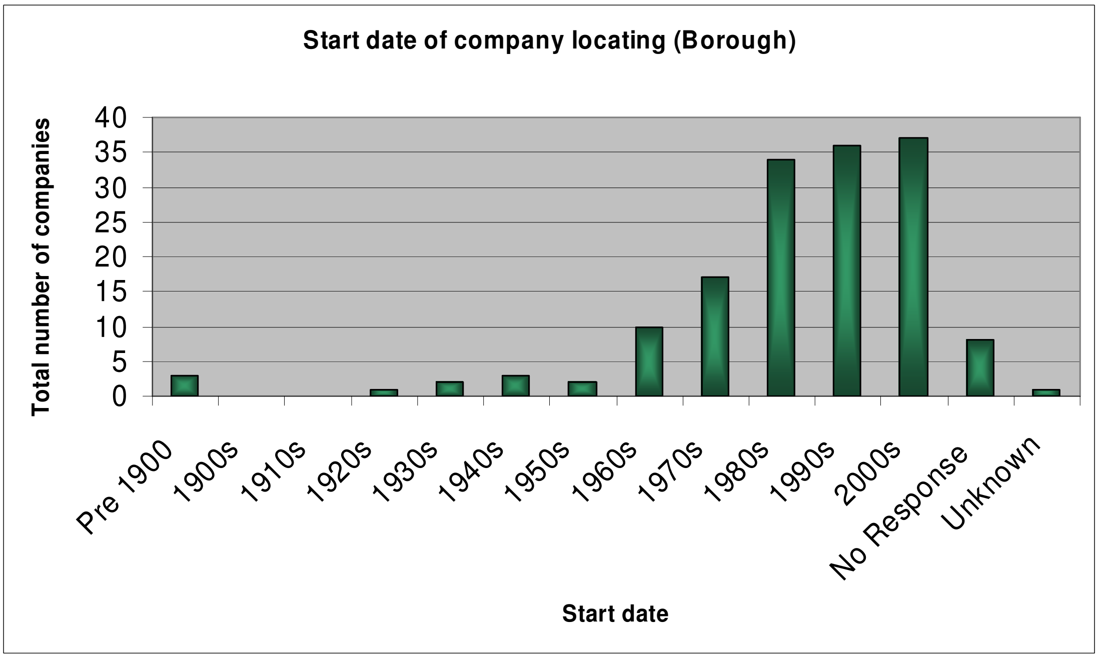


Overall, businesses within the Borough were identified as small in terms of their personnel. This may be advantageous as smaller firms are often more dynamic and the potential for growth in jobs is generally higher than in larger companies.

Company Set-up

The employment questionnaire was used to assess the employment history and development of industries within the Borough by ascertaining the period in which a company located in Redditch.

Graph 14



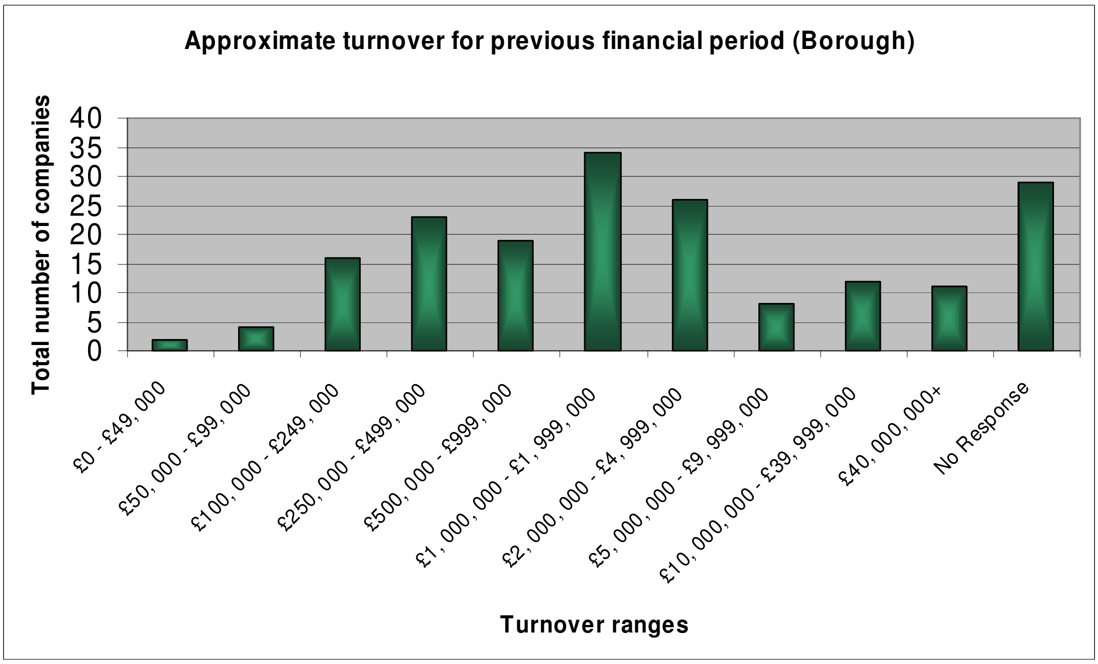
The above graph illustrates the continued expansion of Redditch's industrial portfolio. Whilst the development of industry was sporadic and slight in the early 1900's, from 1950 development has been progressive and significant. Thus it follows that the highest proportion of industries started their operations in Redditch in the 2000s, whilst the 1980s and 1990s also witnessed high proportions of industries locating in the Borough. The fact that Redditch has a high proportion of industries locating in the Borough in the 2000s is not to be deemed an issue. Indeed, it demonstrates both that the Borough is growing economically and that it has the ability to attract companies to the area. It should also be noted that because the question specifically related to locating in Redditch Borough and not the start date of the firm some of the firms locating in the Borough would be well-established companies.

Whilst some of the employment areas in the Borough are more traditional and have companies dating back to the pre-1900s, for example Lakeside, generally the pattern of a developing industrial profile is reflected in all of Redditch's employment areas, with the 1990s and 2000s particularly dominant in terms of companies starting up in Redditch.

Turnover

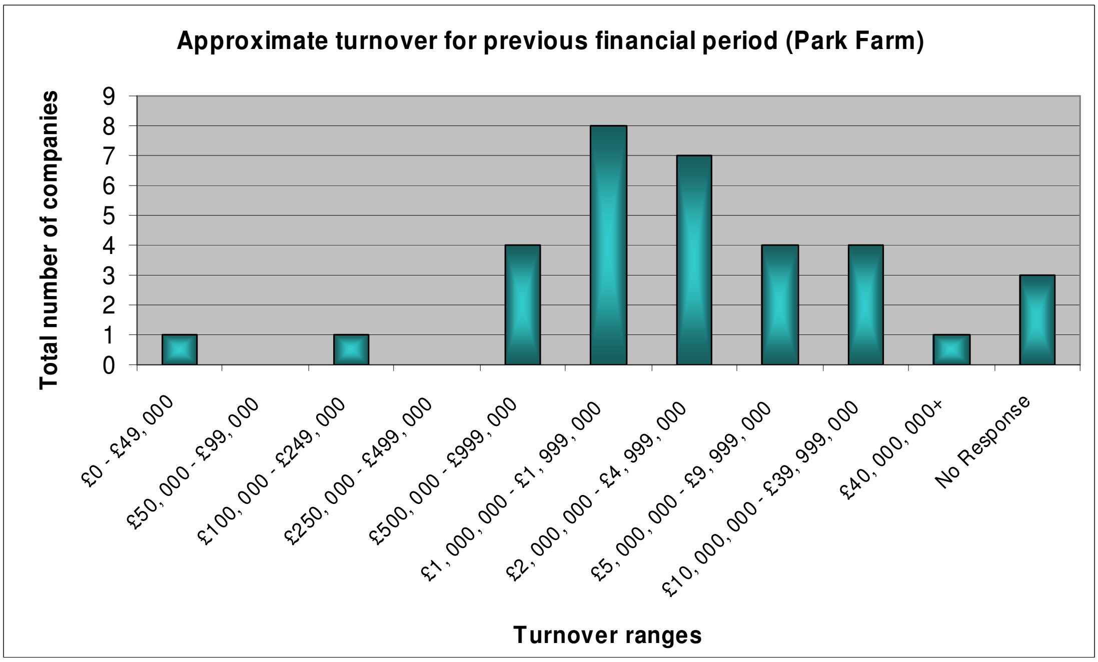
As part of the Employment Land Review, the turnover for local businesses was also assessed in the questionnaire and the feedback is summarised in the graph below.

Graph 15



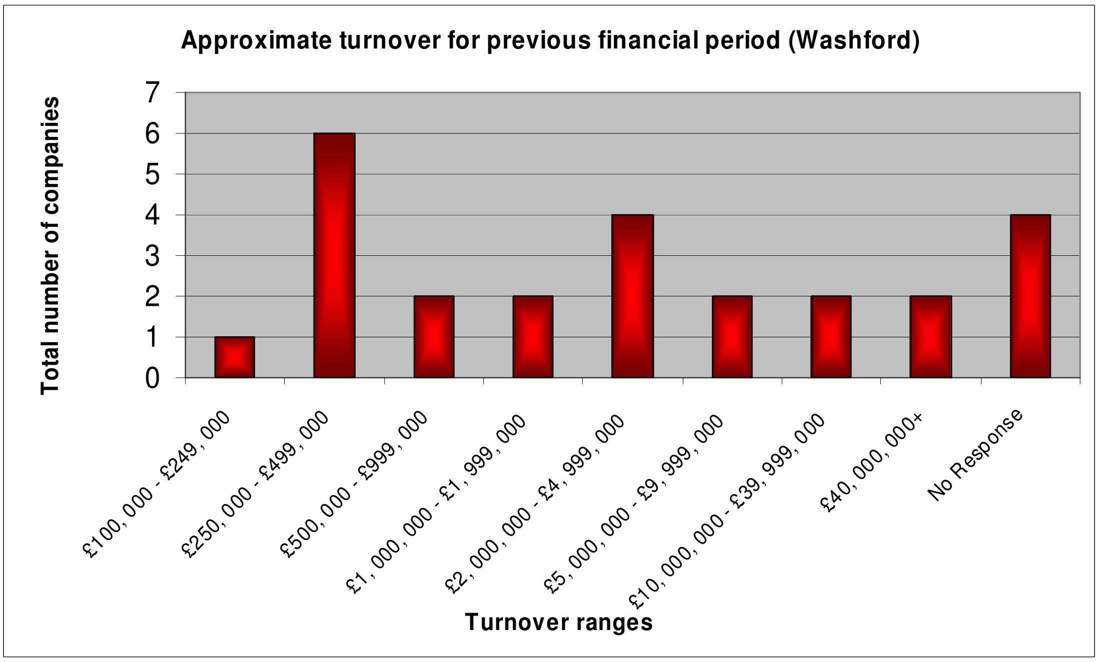
The turnover ranges across the Borough are very varied, and it should be noted that a high proportion of those businesses that did respond preferred not to disclose their turnover for the previous financial period. The graph indicates that the most common turnover range for companies in the Borough is £1, 000, 000 to 1, 999, 000. The majority of local businesses occupy the mid-range for turnover, whilst only a few companies fall in the highest and lowest brackets. This pattern is duplicated in a number of the employment areas in the Borough, most notably Enfield and Moons Moat. However, there are also a number of areas that show distinctly different turnover compositions from the Borough norm. Whilst the patterns in Hunt End, where the turnover consists only of 250,000 to 499,000 and 500,000 to 999,000, Ravensbank where turnover occupies only the maximum range of 40,000,000+ and Oakenshaw where the turnover is equally distributed between the 2,000,000 to 4,999,000 and 40,000,000 ranges, can be explained by the low response rate of the businesses in the area, more telling patterns emerge in Park Farm and Washford.

Graph 16



In Park Farm, whilst the most common turnover for businesses correlates with the Borough norm of 1,000,000 to 1,999,000, the overall pattern differs, with a concentration of businesses in the upper parameters of turnover and a dearth of businesses in the lower parameters.

Graph 17



In terms of the composition of Washford, the entire pattern varies from that dominant in the Borough. Indeed, there were no recorded businesses with a turnover less than 100,000 and, apart from slight peaks in 250,000 to 499,000 and 2,000,000 to 4,999,000; the area shows a more evenly spread of turnovers than is demonstrated Borough-wide. Overall, industries within the Borough tend to produce a healthy turnover that is conducive to economic stability.

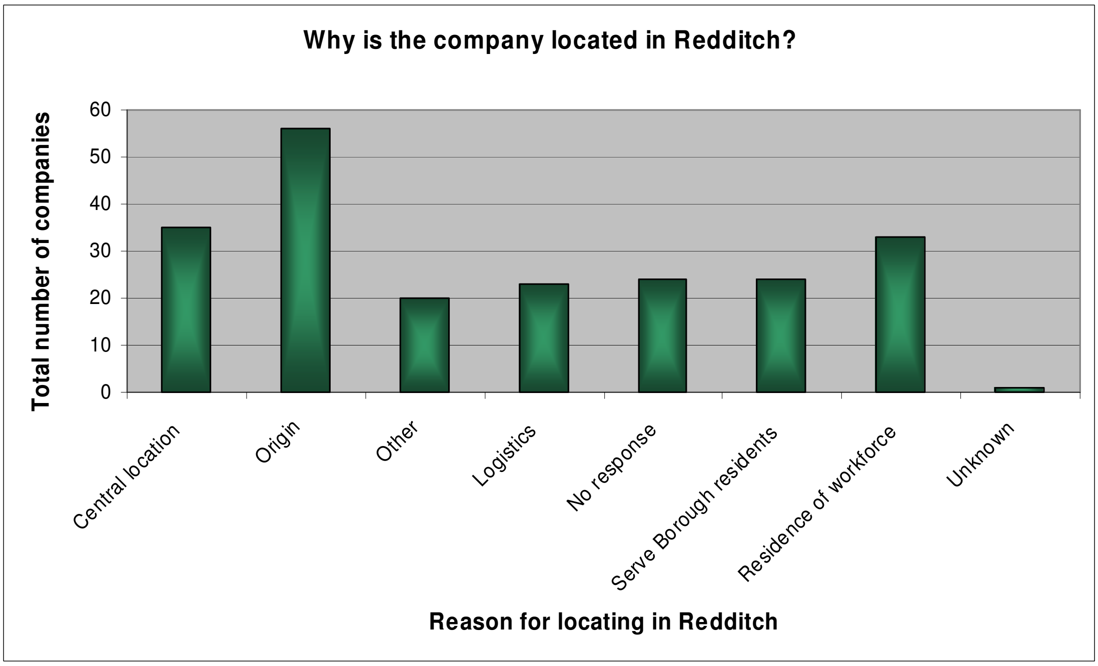
Location

In order to ascertain the appeal for businesses in locating in Redditch, the questionnaire posed why a company chose the area for their operations.

The graph below details the responses relating to why each company decided to locate in Redditch Borough. It should be noted that each respondent could provide as many reasons as they deemed necessary. There were no set responses therefore, based on the most common themes, the responses were grouped into categories. The response relating to 'unknown' signifies that the respondent did not know why they had located in the Borough. As the graph illustrates, the most common response for the Borough related to the origin of the company. Other key responses were the central location of Redditch and the residence of the workforce. This pattern was generally reflected in the individual employment areas with the majority of these areas citing origin as the most important reason for their location. Although there were slight differences in some areas which could be accounted for by response rate to the questionnaire (Oakenshaw and Ravensbank), a notable difference emerged in Moons Moat in which logistics, a relatively insignificant factor across the Borough, was deemed the equal most important factor with origin.

Arguably, these results suggest that many companies do not necessarily choose to locate in Redditch but often their choice is dictated by history or circumstance. This suggests that Redditch has few "push factors" which would prompt businesses that are located here to relocate elsewhere. This is reflected in the high levels of satisfaction with Redditch as a business location expressed by the respondents. However, it appears that the Borough currently relies on companies starting up in Redditch rather than attracting companies from elsewhere. Therefore, Redditch needs to be promoted and made more appealing to outside companies and investors if employment is to continue to grow.

Graph 18



Satisfaction of site

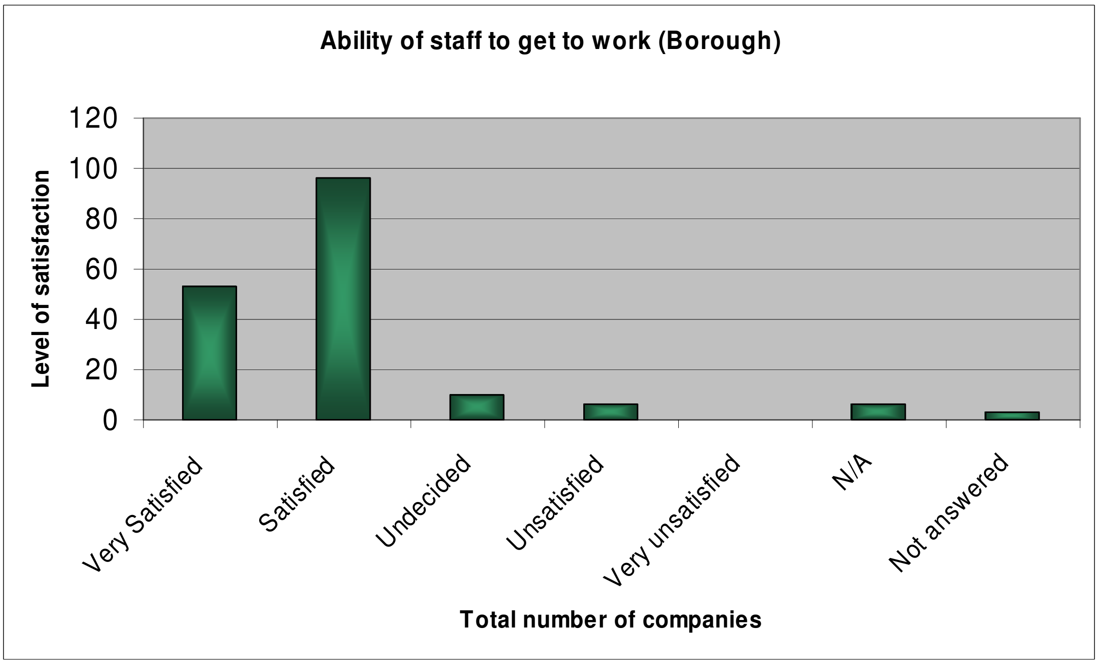
A series of questions were asked about the satisfaction levels of the site where the company is located. These related to:

- Ability of staff to get to work
- Ability to recruit new staff
- Quantity of parking space
- Access to road/transport network
- Security of site
- Proximity to customers/suppliers
- Quality of utilities and telecommunication links
- Nearby amenities

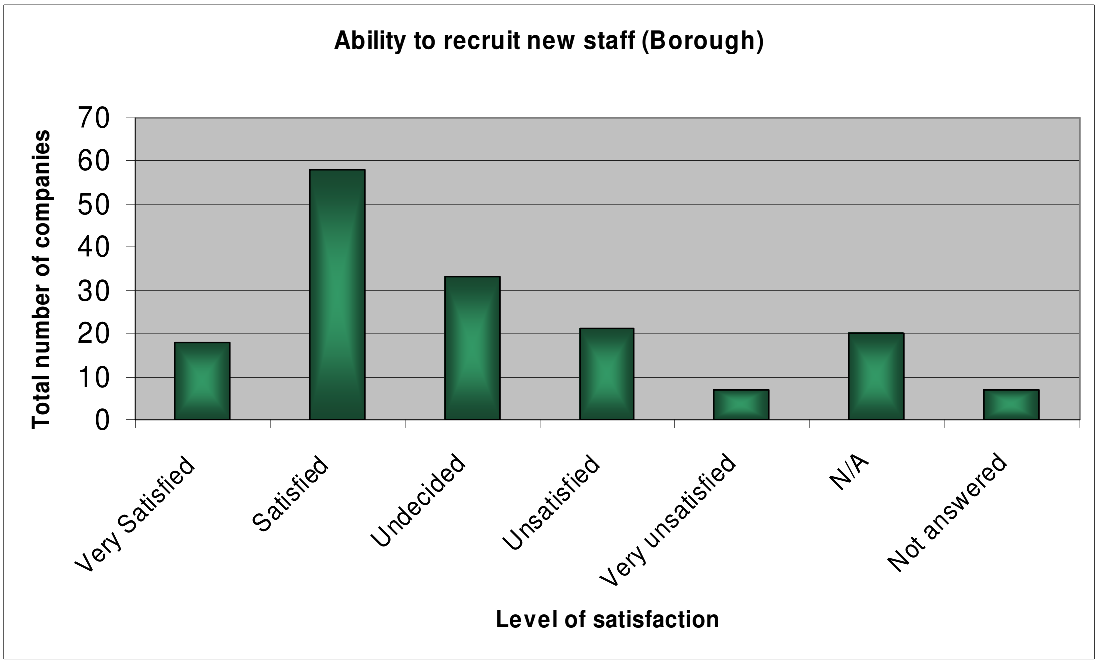
Results for each of these individual measures of satisfaction are collated in the various graphs below.

In terms of the ability of staff to get to work, the responses from across the Borough indicate that the majority of companies (over 85%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the location of their site. This pattern is reflected in the feedback from individual employment areas.

Graph 19



Graph 20



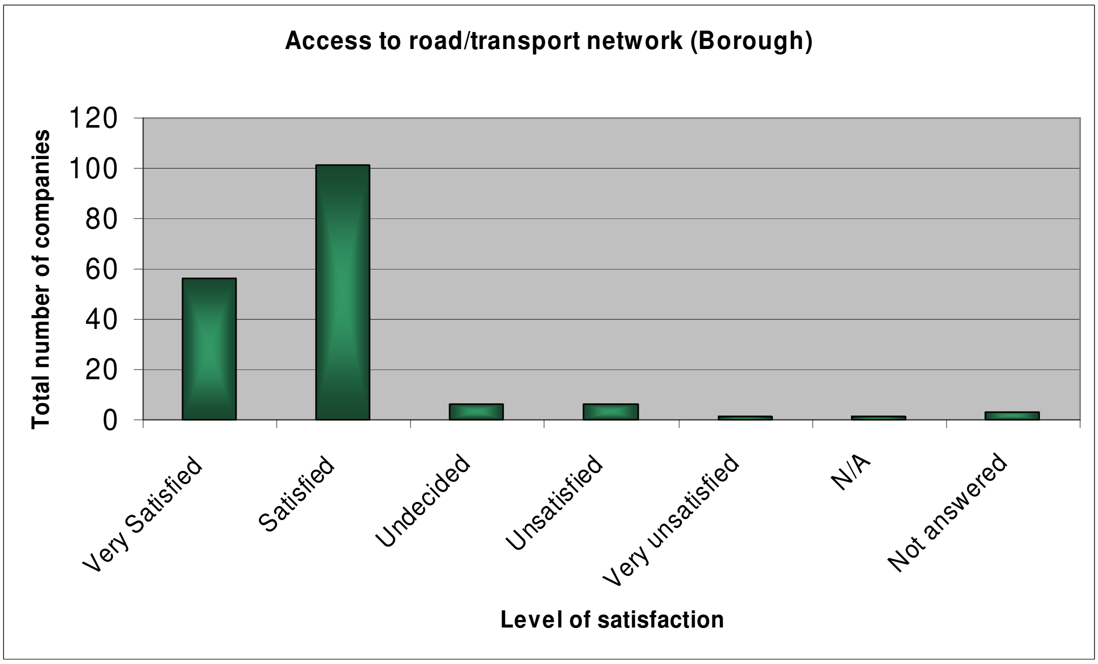
In terms of the ability to recruit new staff, companies within the Borough are generally satisfied that the location of their site facilitates recruitment. However, there are also a number of mixed responses both of a more positive and negative manner. Indeed, whilst 46% of respondents claimed to be satisfied or very satisfied with the site, a comparative 37% of respondents were undecided, unsatisfied or very unsatisfied, suggesting that there is a need to improve recruitment opportunities within the Borough's employment areas. Moons Moat and Park Farm showed particularly mixed responses, with 43% of respondents in Moons Moat satisfied or very satisfied and 40% undecided, unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with recruitment, whilst in Park Farm 48% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied and 39% were undecided, unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Thus it follows that these areas need particular attention with regard to improving recruitment.

Graph 21

With regard to the quantity of parking space, Borough-wide responses tended to show general satisfaction with the site location of companies. This pattern was replicated in the individual employment areas.

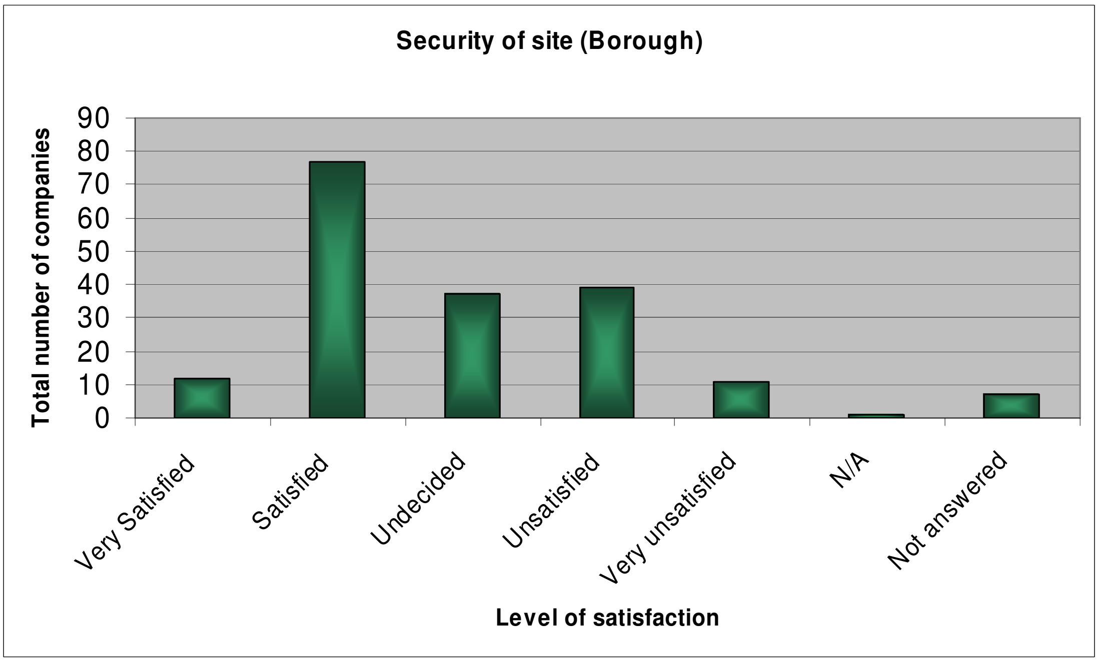
In terms of access to the road or transport network, over 90% of responses from across the Borough show that companies are satisfied or very satisfied with their site location. The most common response for the individual employment areas saw companies considering themselves as satisfied with accessibility, in Washford 72% of respondents were very satisfied with accessibility and the remaining 28% satisfied. All of the negative responses towards accessibility came from three particular areas - Enfield, Lakeside and Park Farm – and although these responses were relatively insignificant in the general overview of the Borough, it does suggest that in terms of these specific sites accessibility is an issue.

Graph 22



In terms of site security, although respondents were predominantly satisfied across the Borough, the graph illustrates that there was a high level of respondents who were undecided, unsatisfied and very unsatisfied. Therefore this is an issue within the Borough.

Graph 23



Within individual employment areas, whilst some areas including Enfield and Lakeside had higher proportions of respondents who were satisfied with security, in other areas this pattern was reversed with a higher proportion of respondents dissatisfied by security. In Hunt End this phenomenon was exemplified, with no respondents being satisfied with security.

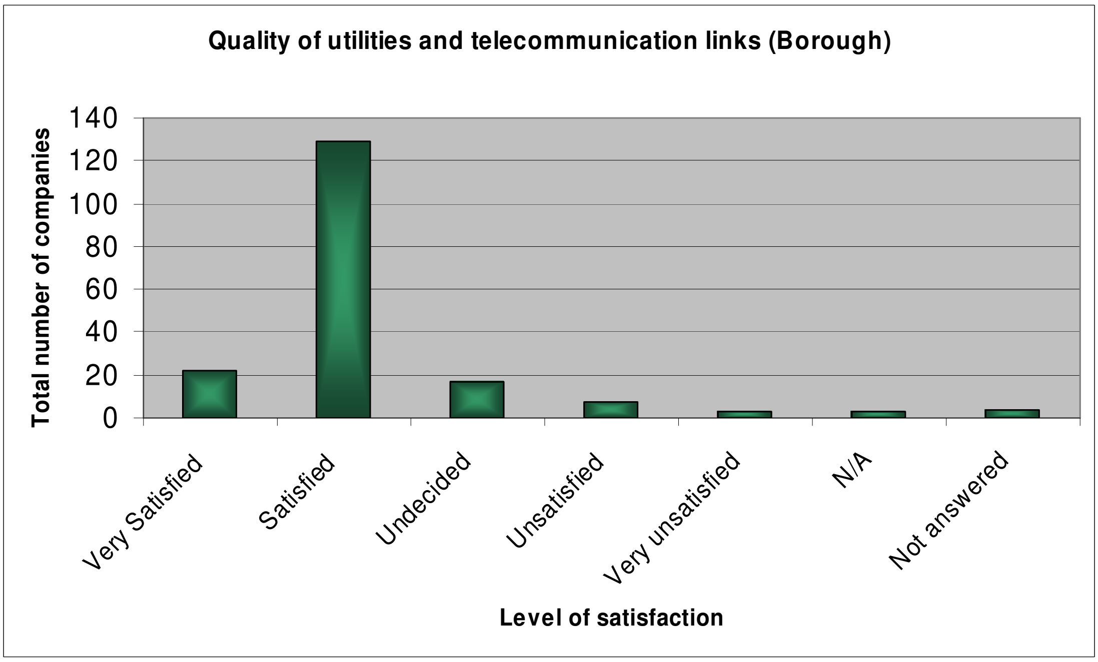
Graph 24

The issue was also prevalent in the responses from Washford, Moons Moat and Park Farm, all of which had a greater proportion of dissatisfied to satisfied respondents: 60% dissatisfied compared to 36% satisfied in Washford, 57% compared to 38% in Moons Moat and 55% compared to 45% in Park Farm. Therefore whilst it is important to consider the issue of security at a Borough-wide level, it is also necessary to focus on improving these individual employment sites.

With regard to the proximity of the employment area to customers and suppliers, the majority of companies in the Borough were satisfied with their site. Indeed, this pattern was reflected in the responses for individual employment sites, with Park Farm, Arrow Road, Oakenshaw and Ravensbank recording no dissatisfied responses.

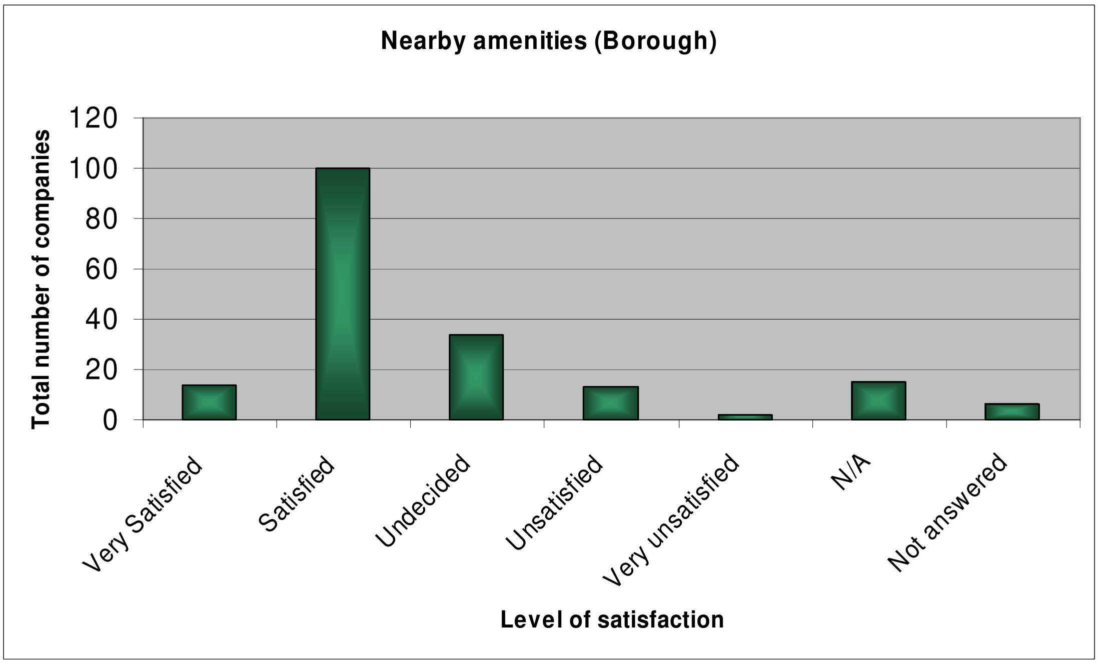
Graph 25

Graph 26



In terms of the quality of utilities and telecommunication links, the predominant response across the Borough shows companies to be satisfied with their employment site. These results are replicated in each of the individual employment areas.

Graph 27



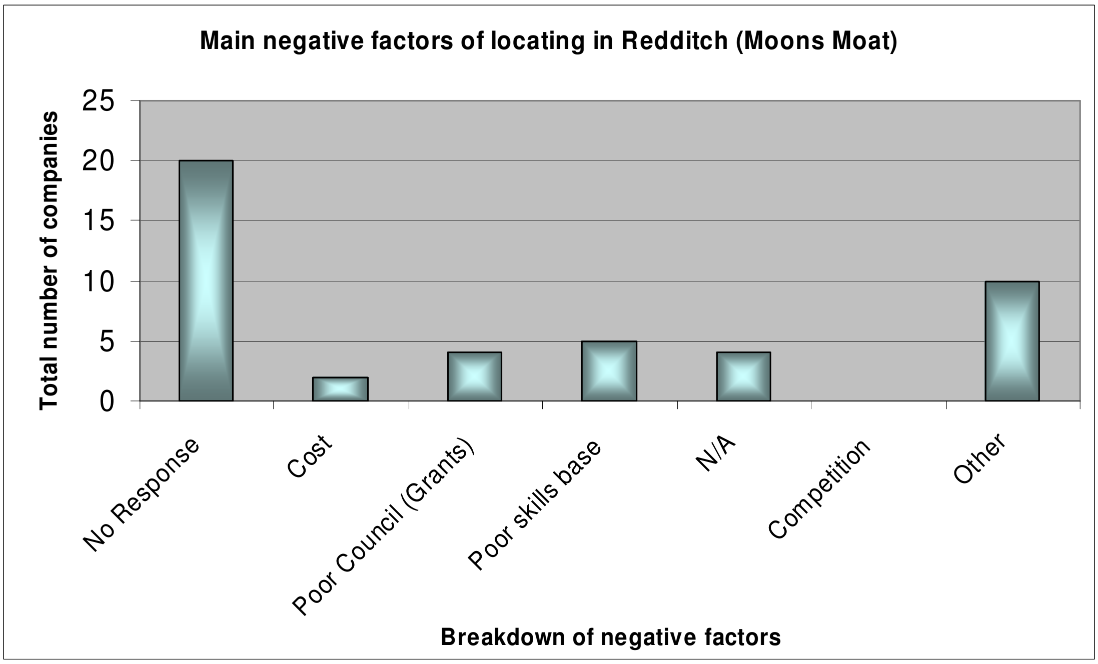
Companies within the Borough tended to express satisfaction towards their location in terms of nearby amenities. Most of the individual employment areas replicated this trend, however in Moons Moat responses were the most diverse, with 45% of respondents satisfied with nearby amenities, whilst a comparative 38% of respondents were dissatisfied.

In relation to all of the indices of satisfaction that were measured by the questionnaire, responses generally suggested that, both in the Borough as a whole and in the individual employment zones that comprise the area's industrial provision, companies are satisfied with the various factors. Whilst it can be assumed that satisfaction levels are high, the responses highlight specific anomalies relating to individual sites. Indeed, responses from Moons Moat suggest the site has various issues that need addressing, whilst respondents from Park Farm also raised a number of concerns and companies in Washford showed a particular dissatisfaction towards security. Borough-wide the main concern with the employment sites appears to be security and this warrants action. However, individual sites also have their own specific issues that should not be overlooked.

Disadvantages of Location

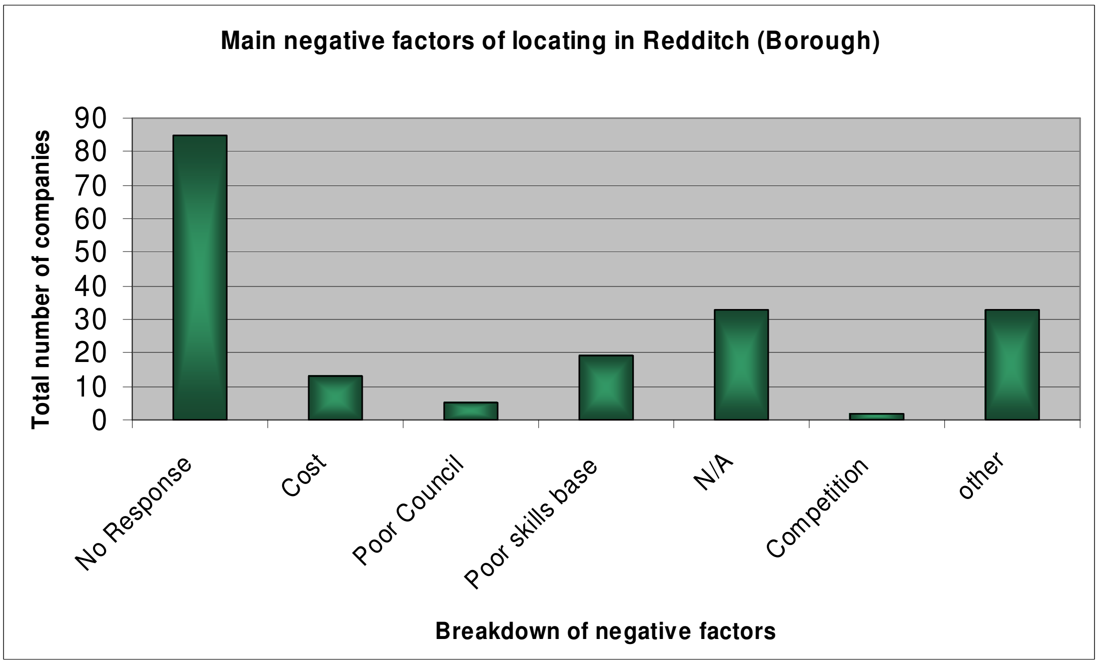
Having identified the satisfaction levels of companies in the Borough on a number of indices, the questionnaire sought to establish the main disadvantages of locating in Redditch.

Graph 28

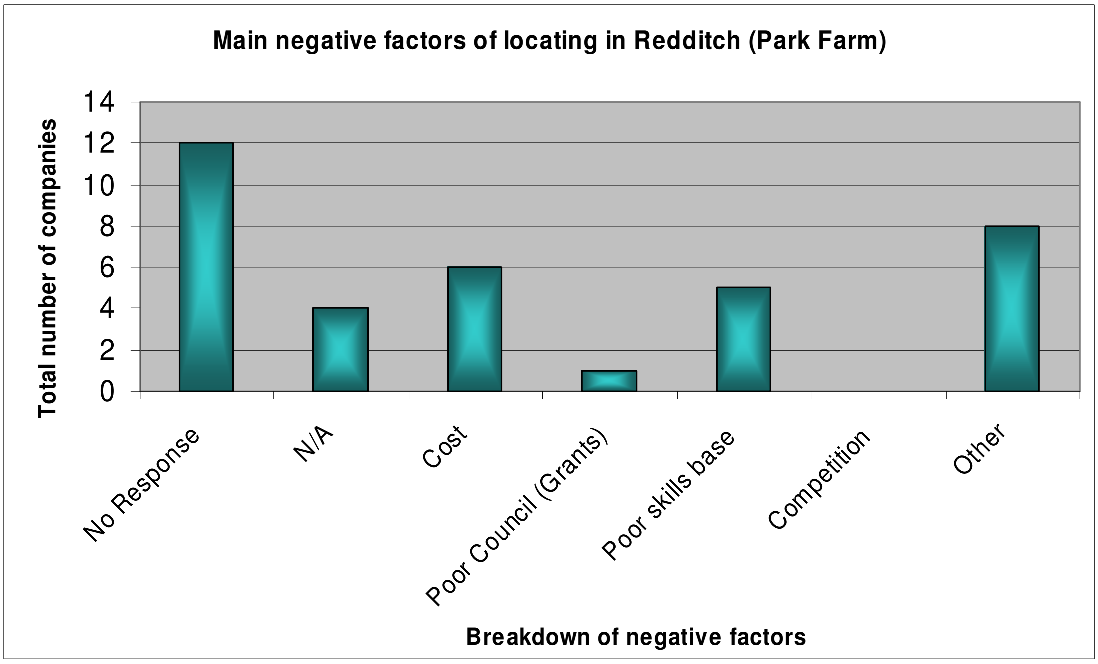


The above graph details the responses relating to the negative factors of locating in Redditch Borough. It should be noted that each respondent could provide as many reasons as they deemed necessary. There were no set responses therefore, based on the most common themes, the responses were grouped into categories. The most recurrent issue related to the Borough's skills base; a pattern that was replicated in the responses from Washford and Lakeside. However, Moons Moat and Park Farm were particularly noticeable for the variety of responses.

Graph 29



Graph 30



The graphs show that both of these sites differ from the Borough pattern. In Moons Moat, although a poor skills base was the most common categorised response, other negative factors were prevalent and included poor links with public transport and proximity to other amenities. There is also less of a differentiation between the various indices than was portrayed across the Borough. Indeed, in Moons Moat there were 5 votes for a poor skills base, 4 votes for poor council input and 2 votes for cost.

In Park Farm, not only were results mixed, but, also, in contrast to the Borough norm, the main negative factor to emerge was that of cost. Like Moons Moat, Park Farm also gained a high number of other responses.

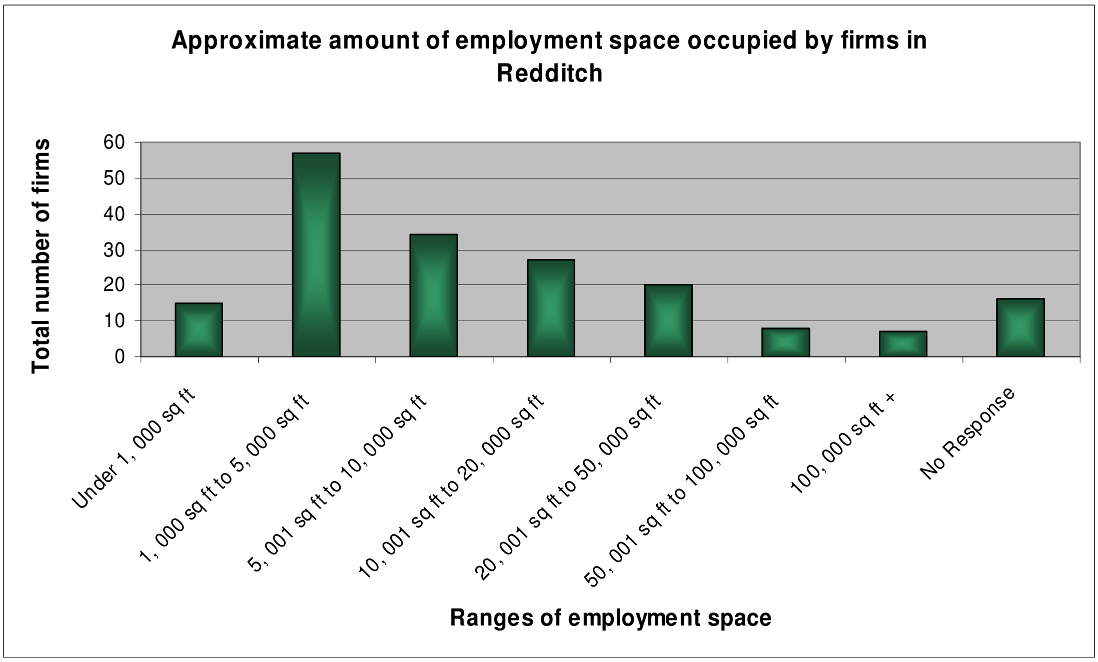
The high rate of no responses is also worth consideration. In the Borough, almost 45% of respondents did not identify a negative factor for locating in Redditch, and this would suggest that such respondents are generally satisfied. Therefore, whilst it is indicated that there are generic problems with skills and cost in the Borough that could be improved, relatively speaking negative factors were not prevalent amongst respondents.

Size

In order to assess the Borough's existing employment requirements and to cater for future delivery, consideration was given to floorspace.

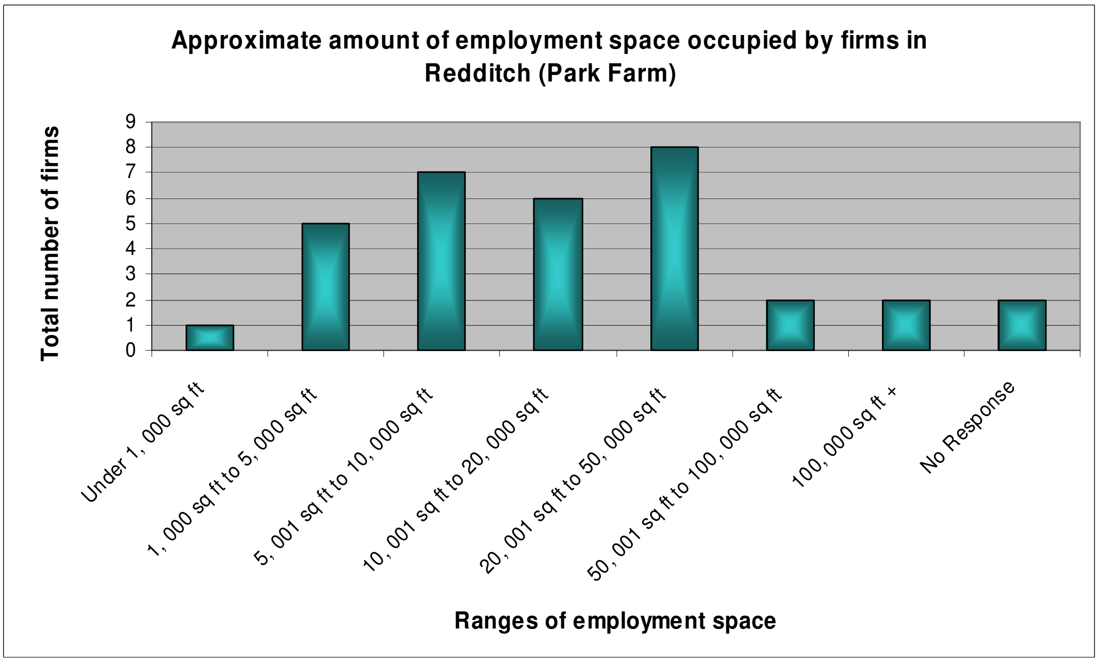
According to the results outlined in the graph above, the most common range of employment space occupied by companies in Redditch is 1,000 to 5,000 sq ft. From a floorspace of 5,001 sq ft to 100,000+ sq ft there is a negative correlation, as such that for each increasing employment space range there are fewer units within the Borough. Indeed, companies tend to occupy the lower middle ranges in terms of size, with only few businesses in the highest and lowest parameters. This would suggest that business operations in Redditch are generally of a small scale.

Graph 31

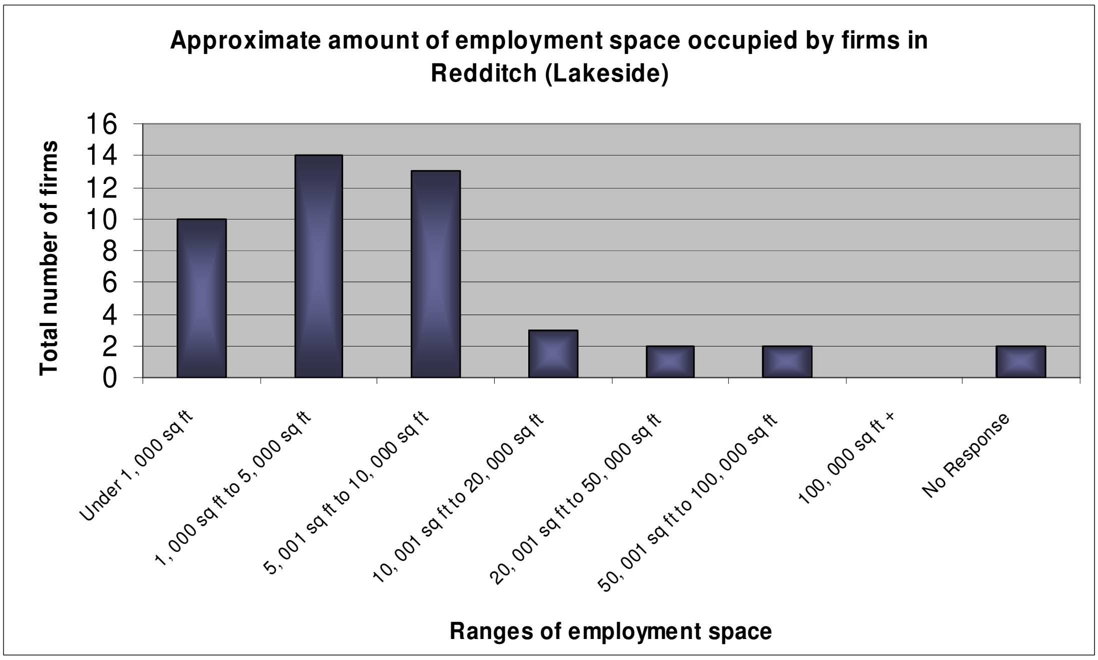


As individual employment areas have different types and statuses of companies, the range of employment spaces is specific to individual sites. In Arrow Road and Washford, the pattern of floorspace is comparative with that of the Borough. In Oakenshaw, the only floorspace ranges are 5,001 to 10,000 sq ft and 100,000+ sq ft, whilst in Ravensbank all responses fell in the range of 50,001 to 100,000 sq ft. Although these results suggest that Oakenshaw and Ravensbank are particularly incongruent with the Borough norms, only two responses were provided from each site, therefore more information would need to be accrued in order to establish whether these rudimentary findings are indeed representative of the areas as a whole. More pertinent findings were gained from Park Farm and Lakeside, as illustrated below.

Graph 32



Graph 33



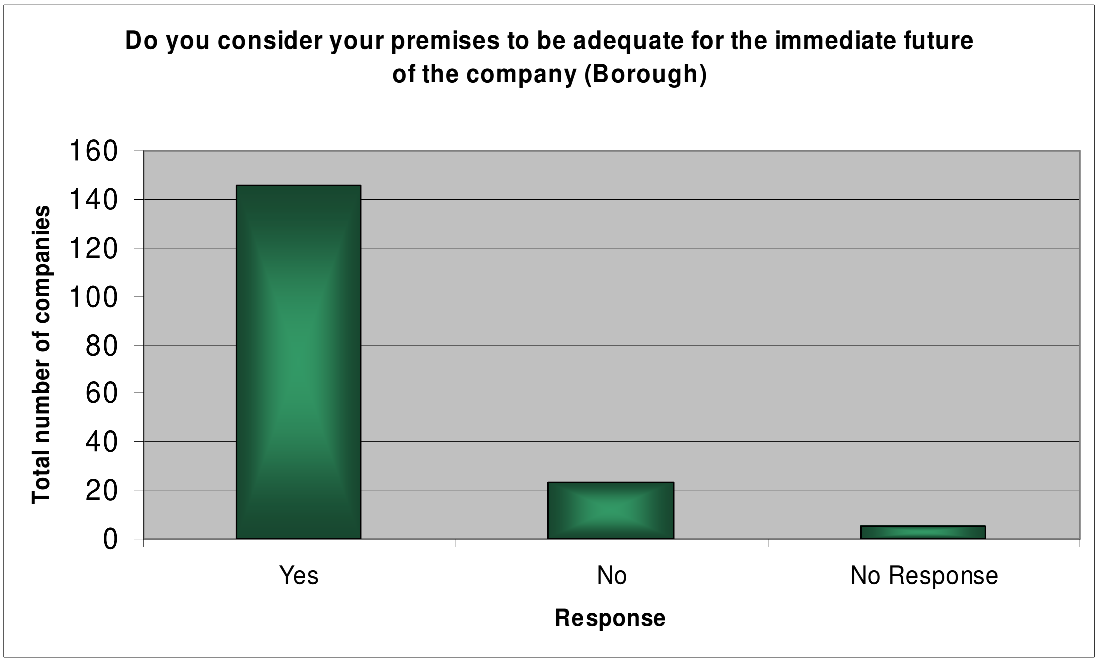
In Park Farm, unlike the tendency within the Borough for the number of units to decrease as floorspace increases, there is a positive correlation as such that generally as employment space increases from 1,000 sq ft to 50,000 sq ft so too does the number of companies. In contrast to the Borough findings, in Lakeside there is a concentration of companies occupying the lower scale of employment space, with 80% of all respondents identifying their premises sizes as less than 10,001 sq ft.

Although it has been identified that floorspace is unique to the individual employment areas in Redditch, arguably in the Borough as a whole findings have indicated that companies run small scale operations.

Premises

The questionnaire asked companies whether they considered their current premises to be adequate for their future, and results are depicted in the graph below.

Graph 34

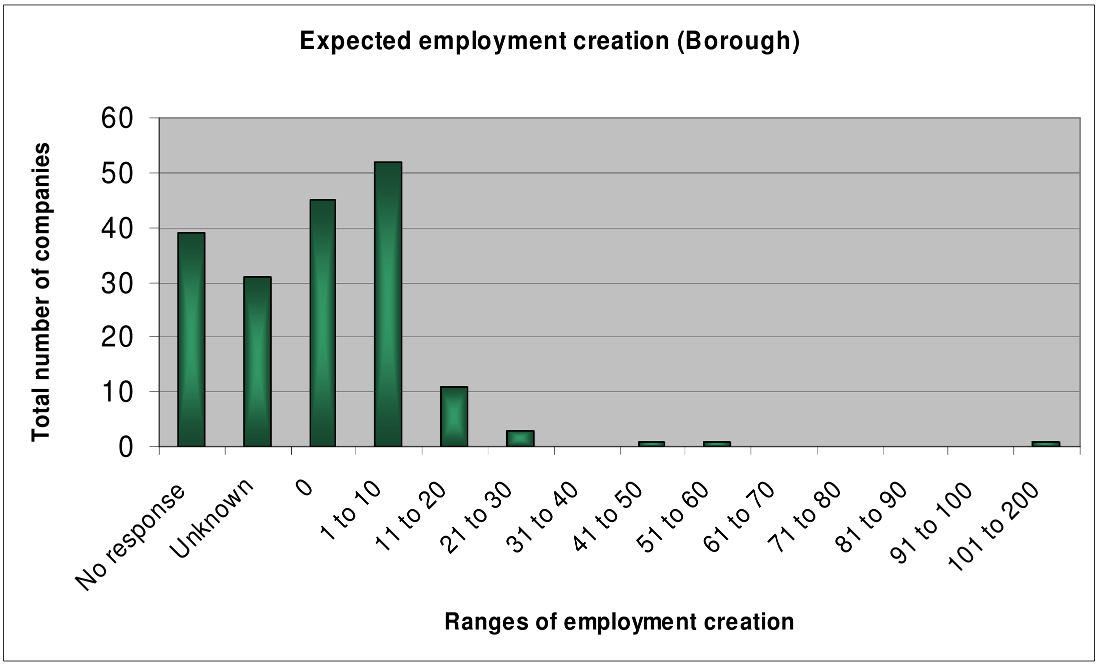


The graph indicates that across Redditch the general consensus amongst the Borough's companies is that their premises are sufficient for the future. Indeed, 84% of respondents replied positively. In all but one of the employment zones percentages equilibrated to that of the Borough, ranging from 81% in Park Farm to 100% in Arrow Road, Oakenshaw and Ravensbank. In Hunt End, the majority of respondents also considered their premises to be adequate for the immediate future of the company, however at 67% the percentage was considerably lower, although this is affected by the limited number of respondents.

Employment Creation

Continuing with the assessment of the Borough's future employment needs, the questionnaire sought to establish expected employment creation.

Graph 35

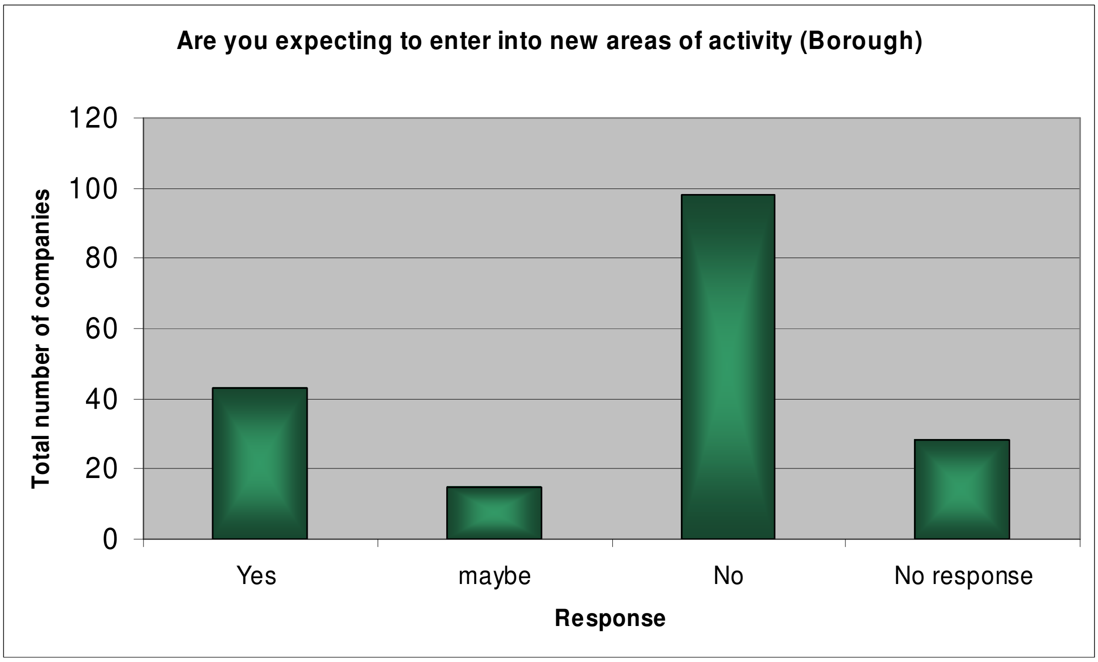


Whilst a number of respondents were unable to anticipate employment creation, the graph highlights that the most expected ranges of employment creation were 1 to 10 opportunities and no opportunities. This suggests that in general across the Borough only minimal employment creation is anticipated and this pattern was echoed within the individual employment areas. However, the actual amount of employment creation is difficult to predict given the uncertainty of future economic and industrial patterns and the results are offered just as a guideline. It is possible to suggest from the findings however, that given that there were few responses at the middle or higher end of the scale, it should be expected that employment creation in the Borough will be progressive and modest rather than drastic.

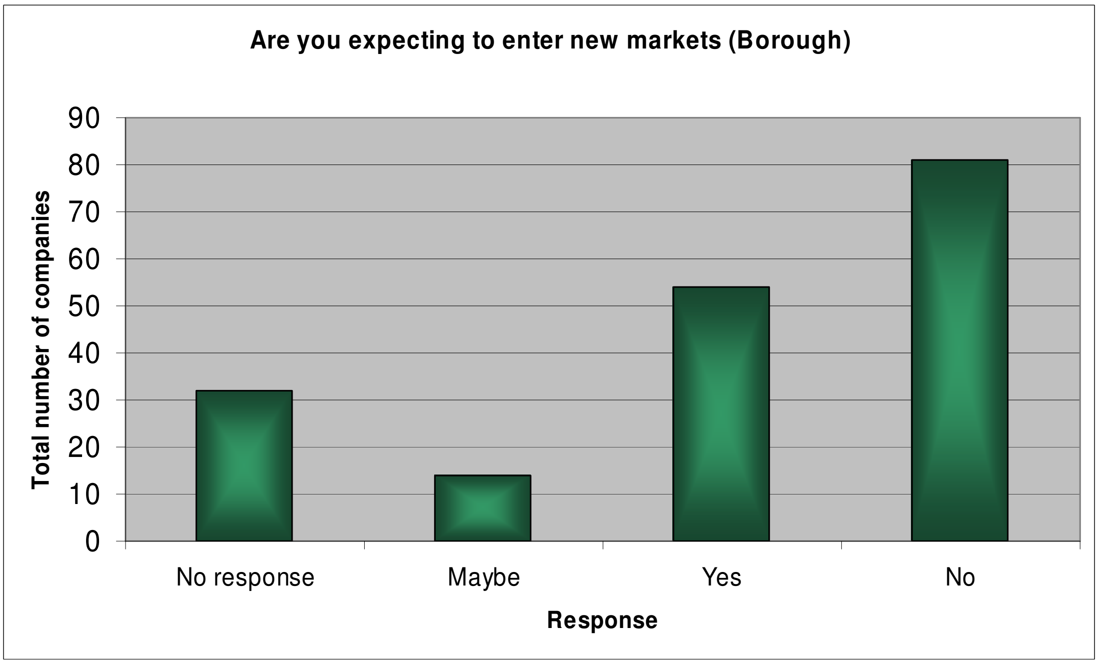
Company Future

Companies were also questioned as to their future plans in terms of their business activities and markets.

Graph 36



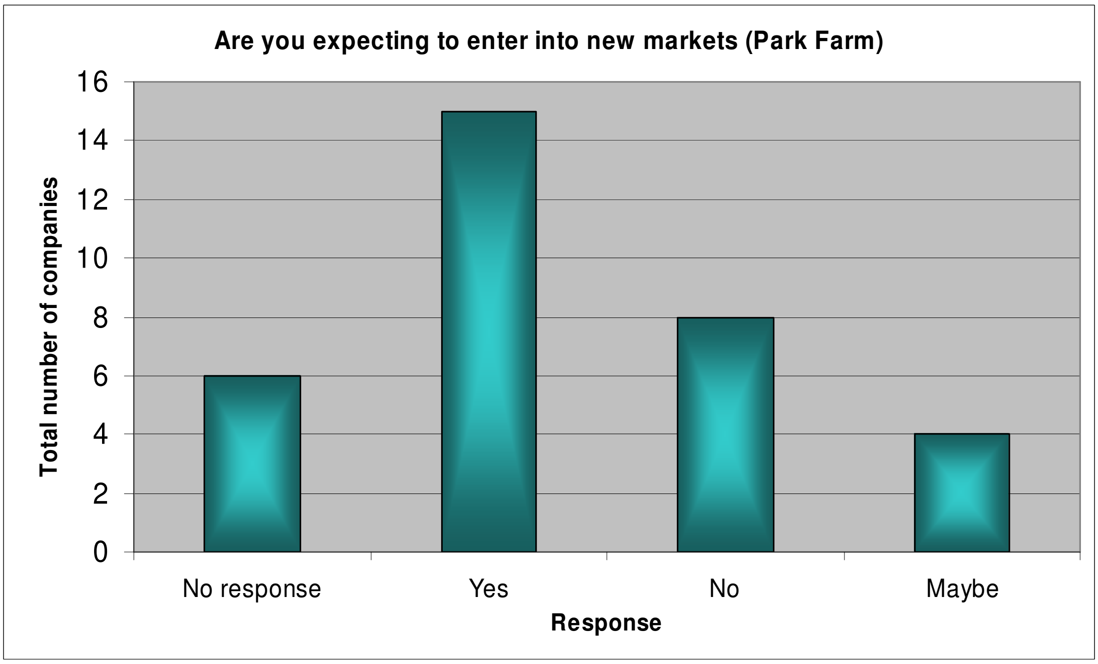
Graph 37



These graphs show that, both in terms of entering into new areas of activity and new markets, the predominant response for companies within the Borough is negative. This response is more accentuated with regard to entering new areas of activity and companies in Redditch find it more viable to enter new markets.

These responses are reflected in the majority of employment areas across the Borough. However, in Oakenshaw all respondents replied positively to the possibility of entering into new areas of activity which contrasts with the Borough norm, however as only two responses were received the sample may be unrepresentative of the area. With regard to the possibility of entering into new markets, results were more telling. In Washford and Lakeside the discrepancy between positive and negative responses was only 5, with 7 yes and 12 no responses and 13 yes and 18 no responses in the two areas respectively. This suggests that in these employment zones the prospect of entering new markets is less clear-cut than that demonstrated generally in the Borough. However, the most distinctive results came from Park Farm (shown below), which was the only employment area within the Borough in which positive responses towards entering new markets outweighed negative responses.

Graph 38

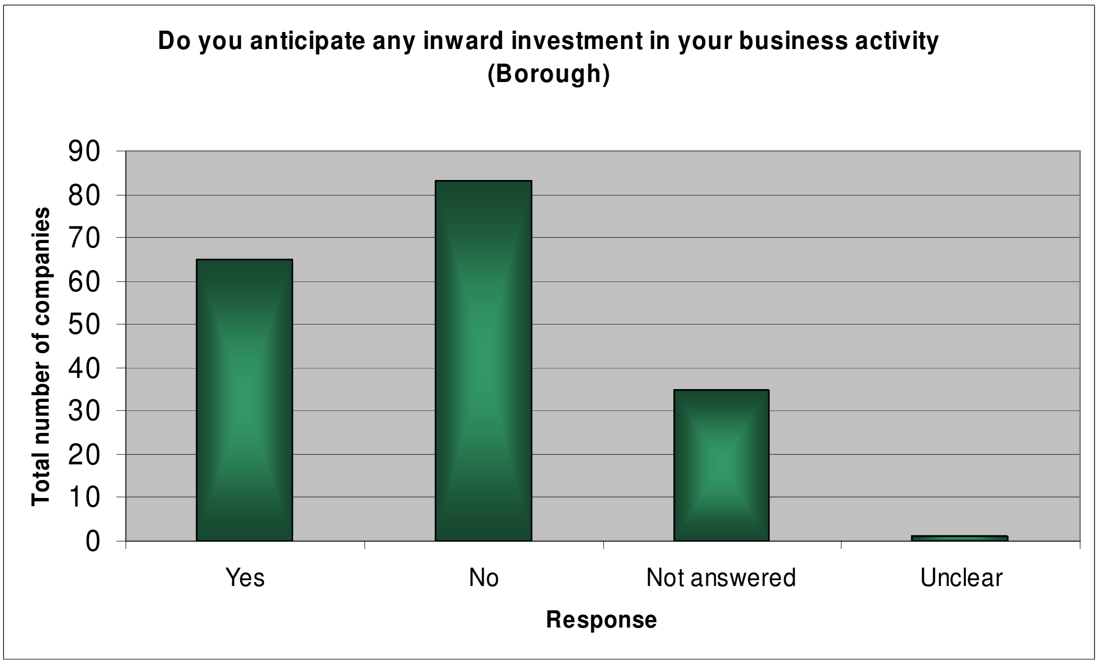


Arguably, the findings in the Borough indicate that companies plan to continue their current operations rather than broaden their portfolios. This may be an issue if the current activities and markets that they specialise in are declining as over-reliance on low value added manufacturing is generally perceived as a problem for the Borough. It does suggest that companies in Redditch may be limiting their prospects by not seeking out relevant opportunities.

Inward Investment

Inward investment plays an important role in the development of businesses, thus the potential impact of inward investment for businesses within Redditch Borough was estimated and is summarised by the graph below.

Graph 39

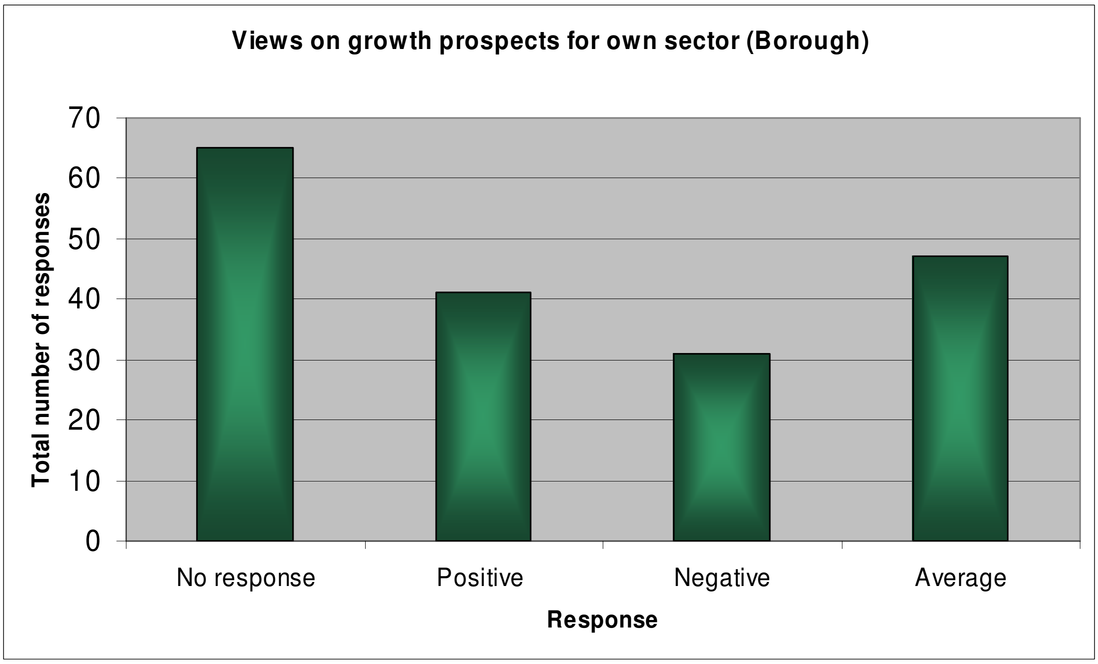


Whilst a number of companies were unable to offer a conclusive response with regard to the potential for inward investment, the number of positive (65) and negative (83) responses obtained for the Borough were relatively similar with the negative responses slightly higher. This relationship was apparent in the responses from a number of the area's employment zones, with the main exceptions being Washford and Lakeside in which the positive responses narrowly outweighed the negative responses. Generally, the findings suggest that investment for a number of companies in the Borough may be an issue.

Growth Prospects

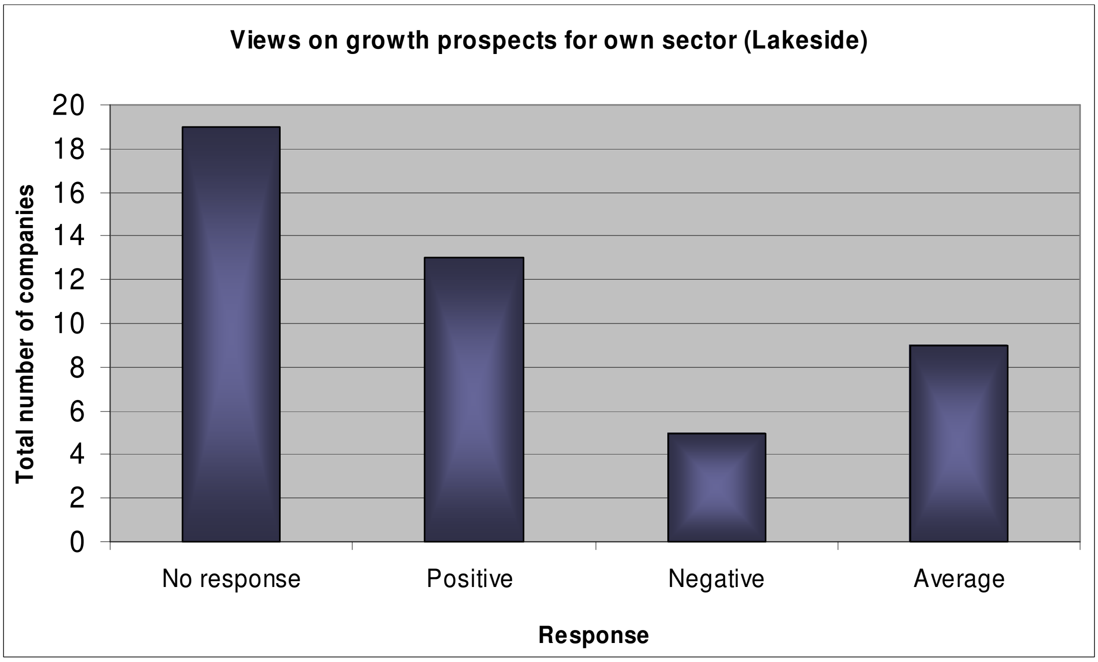
Companies were also questioned on their attitudes towards growth prospects in order to create a vision of the potential development of the Borough's existing employment portfolio.

Graph 40

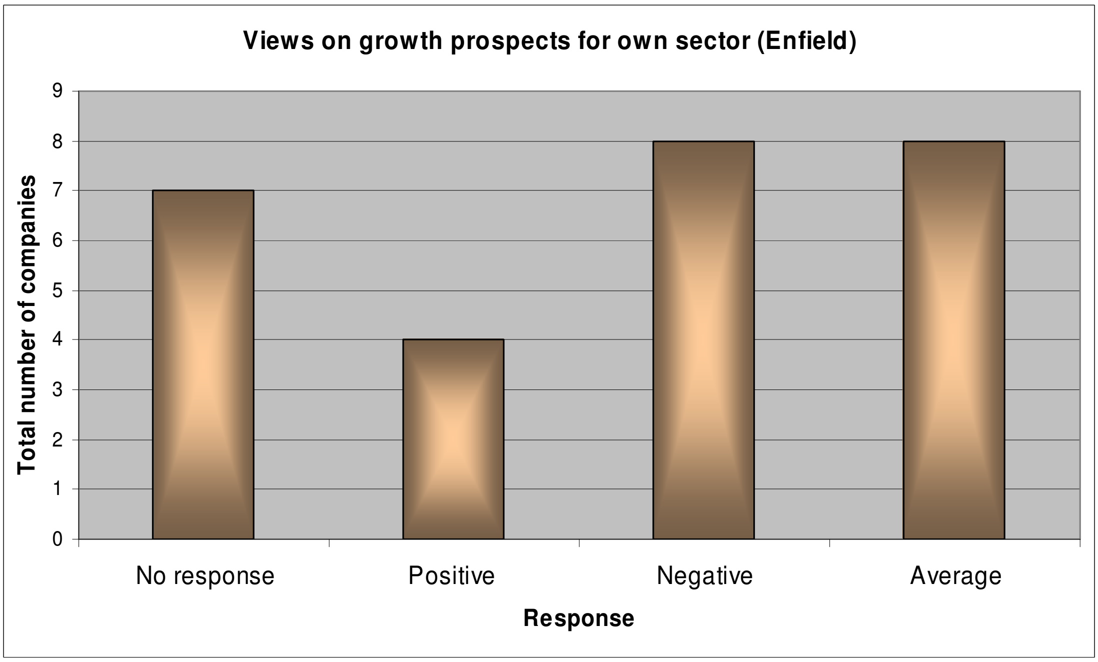


The graph demonstrates that across the Borough there was no clearly dominant response with regard to growth. Although the most common response from businesses towards growth was average, positive responses were not far behind and subsequently neither were negative responses. Indeed, attitudes towards growth were characterised in the Borough by their variation. The general pattern of responses, as shown in the graph, were replicated in a few of the employment areas in Redditch, however for other areas decidedly different results were obtained. For example in both Oakenshaw and Ravensbank only positive responses were received, however as it has been suggested elsewhere due to the limited response rate in these areas a more representative sample is needed before a definitive conclusion can be made on their attitudes towards growth. In both Lakeside and Enfield, which had greater feedback, results were more noticeable.

Graph 41



Graph 42



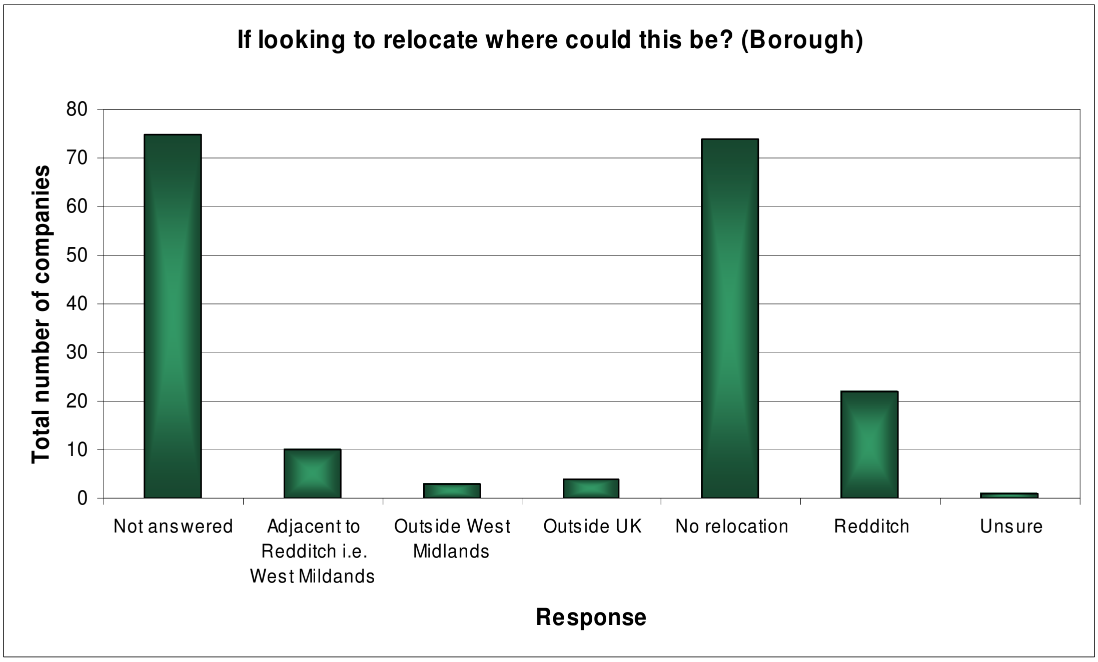
The graphs highlight a greater discrepancy between positive and negative responses in Lakeside than was demonstrated Borough-wide. Meanwhile, in Enfield, the entire pattern of responses is in contrast to that generally experienced in Redditch, with negative responses matching average responses and both doubling the number of positive responses. This may suggest that businesses in Enfield are particularly limited in terms of growth opportunities and therefore sustainability. That positive responses to growth opportunities outweighed negative responses across the Borough is promising. However, that such a significant number of responses were negative does suggest that growth is not a prospect for all of the Borough's businesses and as such is an employment issue for in the area.

Relocation

In order to establish how companies perceive Redditch in comparison with other potential employment locations, the issue of relocation was raised in a series of related questions.

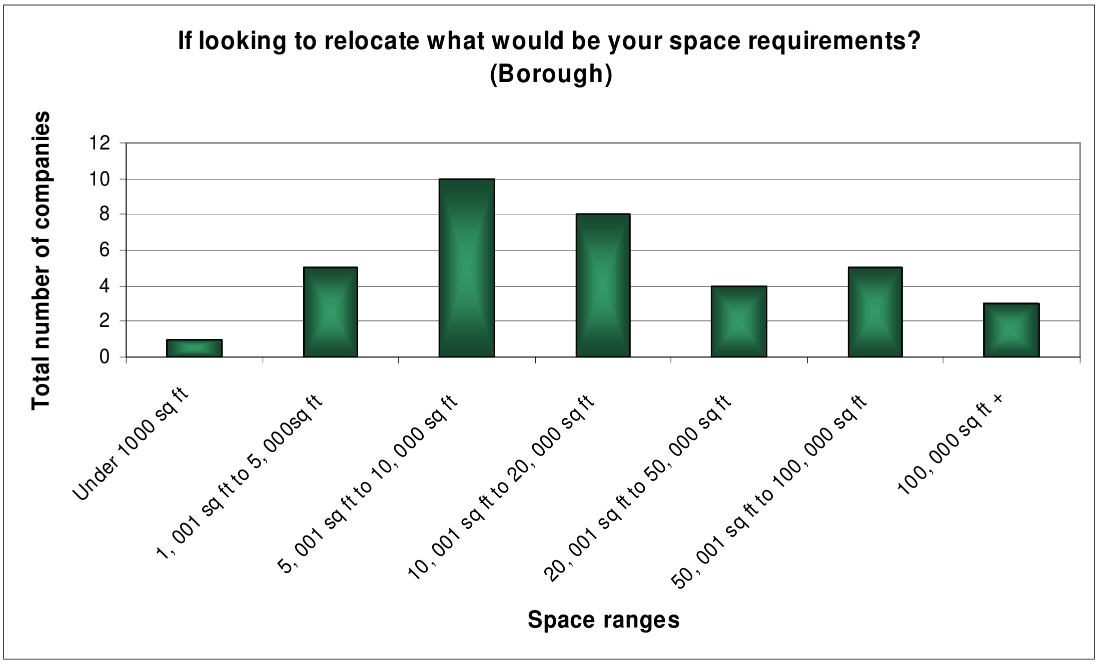
The graph illustrates that the majority of companies in the Borough are not considering relocation, which is promising for Redditch. For those companies considering relocation, Redditch was the most popular destination, which further suggests that companies are satisfied with the Borough as a location for their operations. These results were echoed throughout the individual employment areas.

Graph 43



Continuing with the theme of relocation, the spatial demands of companies considering moving from their current locations was ascertained and is useful in assessing Redditch's potential to attain and deliver such allocations.

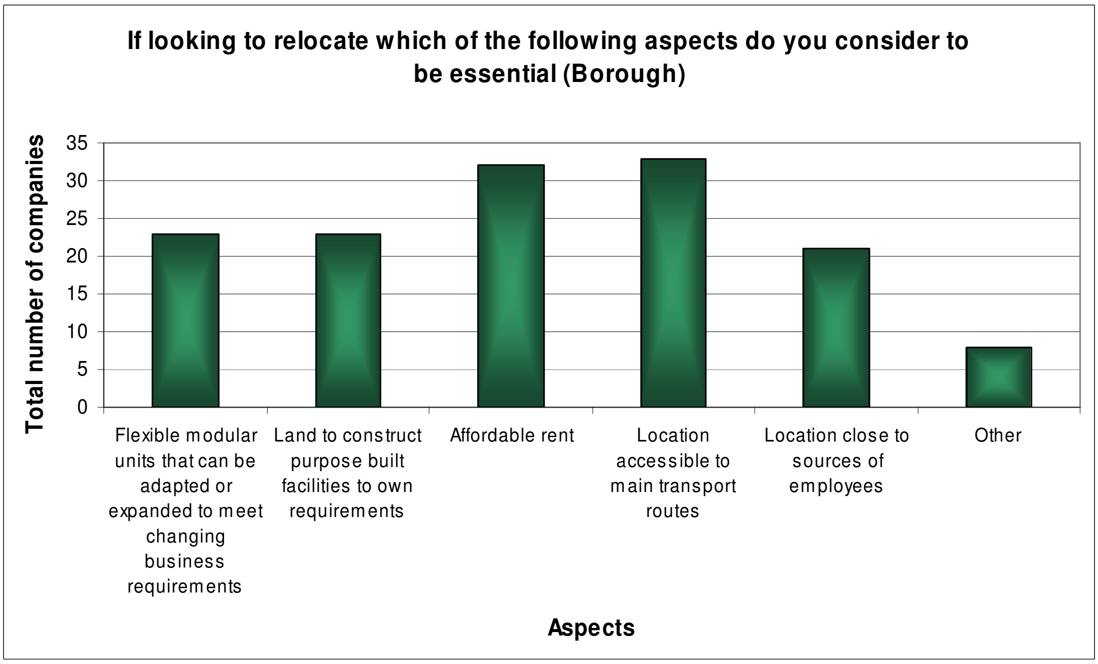
Graph 44



Whilst the graph above outlines the various spatial requirements of local companies, it is important to note that 138 respondents did not answer this question. From the feedback of the 36 companies who replied to this question, it is shown that units in the ranges of 5,001 to 10,000 sq ft and 10,001 to 20,000 sq ft are the most sought after. However, the requirements were very diverse and there was little discrepancy between the various space ranges, with only the requirement for units under 1,000 sq ft particularly low. This would suggest that in its delivery of employment spaces the Borough needs to cater for a wide range of spatial requirements to suit small, medium and large scale enterprises. Furthermore, working to a maximum requirement based on these responses, over 1,000,000 sq ft of employment space is sought after.

Having identified the spatial requirements for companies considering relocation, other factors were determined that would encourage relocation.

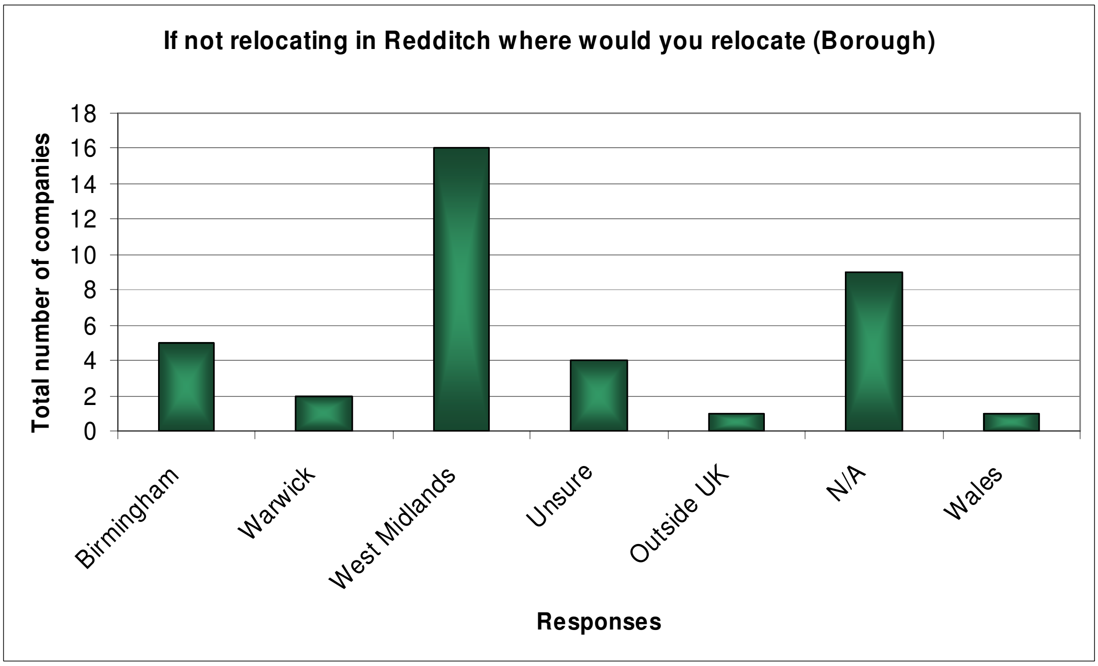
Graph 45



The graph shows the various aspects that would attract companies currently located in Redditch Borough to relocate. It should be noted that each respondent could provide as many reasons as they deemed necessary. The predominant reasons for relocating are affordable rent and an accessible location. However, all of the factors are well-represented. Whilst the responses from the individual employment areas tended to reflect the Borough pattern, in Moons Moat the most important factor was land to construct purpose built facilities to suit the firm’s own requirements and in Lakeside the incorporation of flexible modular units was a particularly attractive feature when considering relocating. However, in general all of the factors are important to most companies in some degree and thus should be considered important to Redditch as a means of keeping existing companies from relocating and encouraging new companies to move to the Borough.

Building on the earlier question of possible areas suitable for relocation, a more specific breakdown of locations was sought.

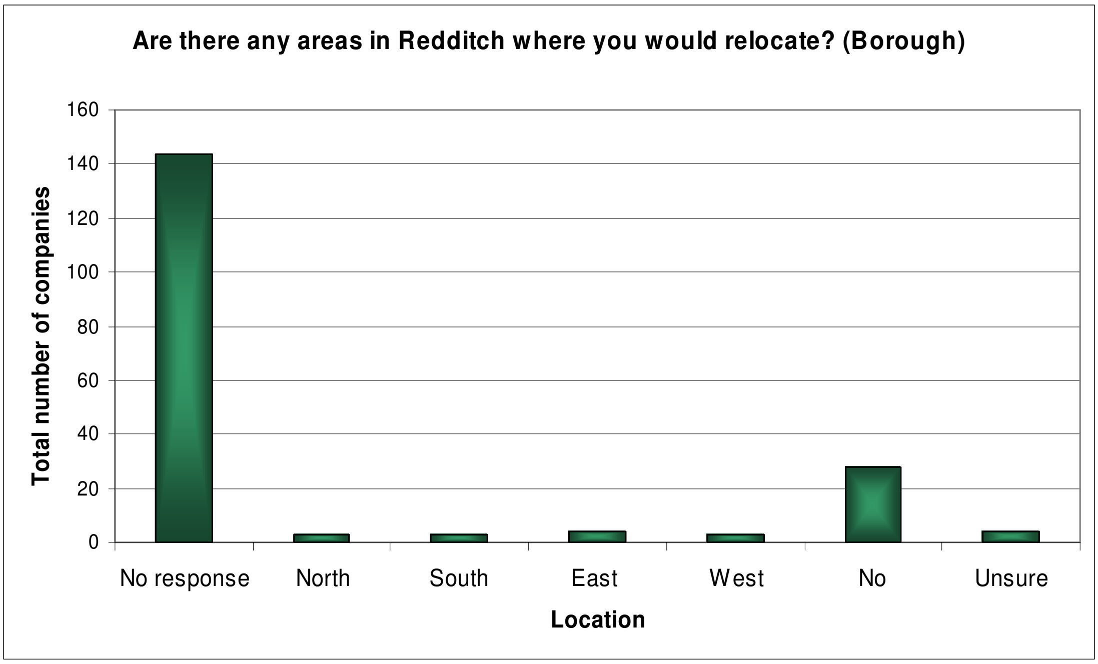
Graph 46



Although 145 respondents did not answer the question, it is clear from the results that the most popular destination outside of the Borough for relocation amongst companies in Redditch would be the West Midlands. Responses were characteristically low and homogenous across the individual employment areas. Indeed, only one respondent, a company located in the Washford employment area, opted for relocating outside of England in Wales and similarly only one respondent, located in the Park Farm area, chose relocation outside of the UK.

In order to establish the attractiveness of different locations within Redditch for businesses, respondents were asked to identify any areas that they would consider relocating to and the results are reproduced in the graph below.

Graph 47



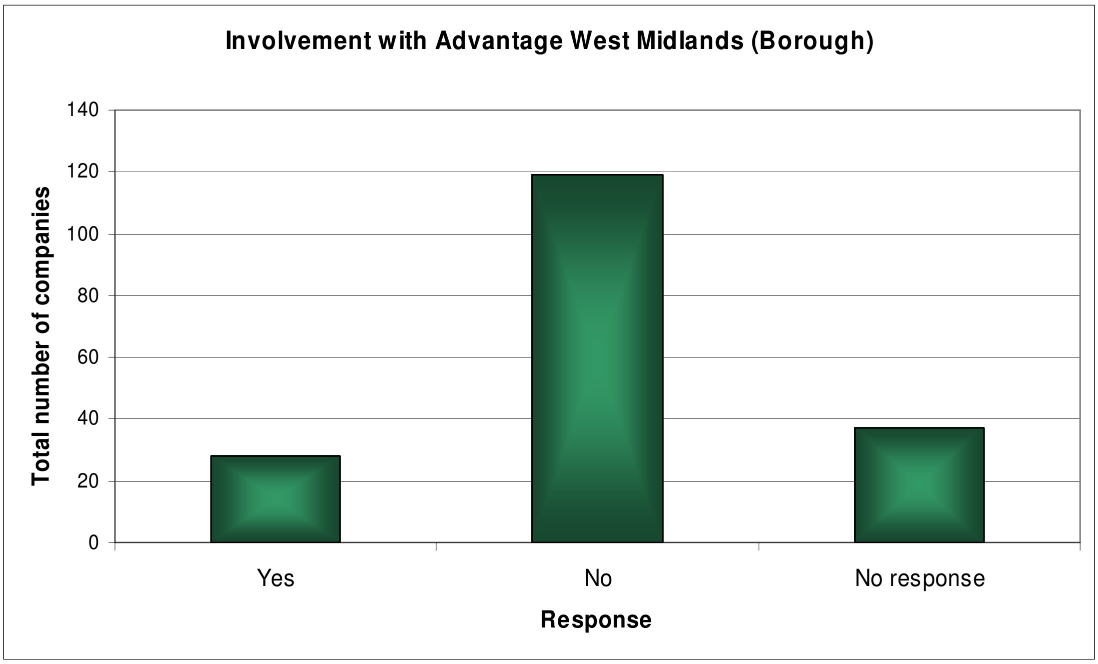
As with the other relocation questions, for the majority of respondents within the Borough relocation was not a consideration, thus the results were limited to 45 responses. From these results the resounding response was that companies within the Borough would not want to relocate to another employment area in Redditch. However, 13 companies expressed a desire to relocate within Redditch, with the different locations receiving similar, if not identical, interest. Moons Moat, Park Farm and Lakeside had the widest spread of results, which is indicative of the higher response rates in these areas. However, all of the industrial areas shared a similar breakdown of responses to that characterised in the Borough as a whole.

In terms of providing an overall assessment of attitudes to relocation amongst companies within the Borough based on the various issues raised in the questionnaire and subsequent feedback, it is apparent that for the majority of industries within Redditch relocation is neither an issue nor a priority. In the few instances where relocation was an option, Redditch itself remained the most popular location suggesting that Redditch has strong appeal for its current occupants. This is not to say that in the future companies will be detracted from the Borough, but at present Redditch appears to be fulfilling the needs of its industrial residents.

Advantage West Midlands

Finally, the questionnaire reviewed the affiliations between businesses in Redditch and the region's development agency, Advantage West Midlands who work to support new and existing businesses by attracting investment, developing key industries, raising skills levels and providing financial and strategic support.

Graph 48



The graph shows that predominantly within the Borough, businesses are not involved with, and therefore not benefiting from the input of, Advantage West Midlands. Indeed, only 19% of respondents are involved with the development agency. The discriminate proportionality in the Borough between those companies affiliated with Advantage West Midlands and those not is replicated across the various employment zones and therefore is an issue. Concerns over a poor skills base in the Borough as well as cost and recruitment issues emerged in this consultation process and greater involvement with Advantage West Midlands could help to reduce the impacts of some of these problems.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this section has sought to engage with feedback from consultation with the Borough's businesses to provide important background information on Redditch’s economic and industrial portfolio. It has generated a portrait of the activities and attitudes of industry within the Borough as a whole, as well as identifying key issues or variances within the constituent employment areas.

Appendix B – Redditch Economic Assessment – Key Facts and Figures

Redditch – Approximate drive time to major conurbations

Town	Birmingham (Minutes)	London (Hours)	Manchester (Hours)	Cardiff (Hours)	Edinburgh (Hours)
Redditch	30	2¼	2	2	5¾

Source: AA, 2003.

Redditch's central location within the West Midlands ensures that drive time to major conurbations is relatively satisfactory.

Within Worcestershire, the Local Transport Plan (2)[10], published in March 2006 for the period 2006-2011, aims "to deliver a transport system within Worcestershire that is safe to use, and which allows people to easily access the facilities that they need for their day-to-day life in a sustainable and healthy way."

The plan highlights the need to work in partnership with core organisations, for example the Highways Agency to maintain key roads through the county, and Network Rail to ensure that the county has reliable rail services.

The Strategy has seven key principles:

1. Ensure that all residents, visitors and workers in Worcestershire can access the facilities they need to carry out day-to-day activities by the safest, most efficient and convenient mode of transport available to them.
2. Minimise the impact of all modes of transport upon the local environment, and seek to reduce vehicle emissions arising from transport activity within Worcestershire.
3. Ensure that traffic congestion within Worcestershire does not constrain economic activity within the County. Reduce the impact of congestion upon local communities, and ensure that the environmental impact of congestion is minimised.

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[10] Worcestershire County Council, 2006. http://worcestershire.whub.org.uk/ltp-2006/wcc-transport-ltp-final-2006-2011.pdf

4. Create a transport network within Worcestershire that is even safer for people to use.
5. Ensure that land use decisions take full account of transport issues and that community facilities are located to minimise the need for travel for their users.
6. Support the future development of the County through initiatives such as the Central Technology Belt, and Market Towns Transportation Initiative.
7. Undertake major transportation studies for the Worcester and Wyre Forest areas to identify the most appropriate future transport strategy to allow future development of these areas.

Proportion (%) of dwellings in each council tax band (as of 15 September 2008)

Area	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total properties
Bromsgrove	8.4	18.2	21.5	19.3	16.8	8.5	6.6	0.8	**38,828**
Malvern Hills	11.1	20.4	21.6	16.0	13.9	10.0	6.6	0.4	**32,881**
Redditch	21.3	33.0	20.4	12.0	8.9	3.2	1.2	0.1	**34,836**
Worcester	18.6	33.1	25.3	11.8	7.4	3.0	0.9	0.0	**42,392**
Wychavon	11.4	20.5	22.1	14.9	12.9	10.4	7.3	0.4	**51,014**
Wyre Forest	24.2	24.3	24.3	13.4	7.2	3.7	2.6	0.3	**44,440**
Worcestershire	15.9	24.8	22.7	14.5	11.1	6.5	4.3	0.3	244,391
West Midlands	31.5	25.1	19.2	11.0	6.9	3.7	2.3	0.2	2,340,770
England	25.0	19.5	21.7	15.3	9.5	5.0	3.5	0.6	22,595,697

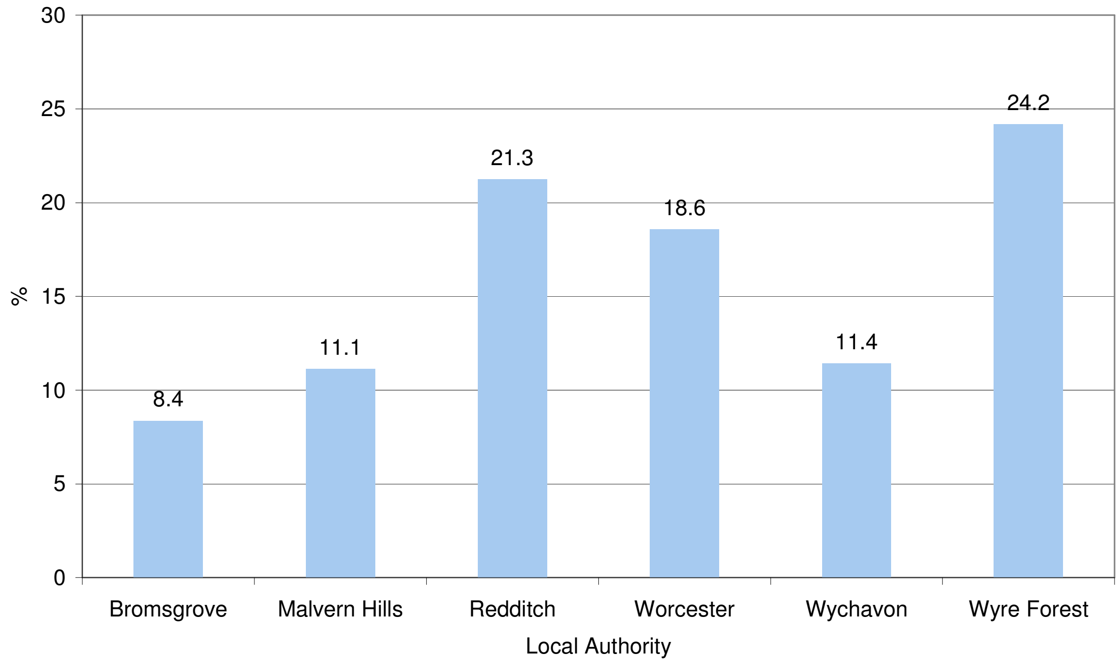
Source: Valuation Office Agency, 2008.

A property's Council Tax band is determined by its price (or estimated price) as of April 1991. Band A properties are the lowest priced and have the smallest Council Tax bills, while Band H has the highest priced properties and thus are subject to the largest

Council tax bills. The table above indicates that, when compared to the rest of Worcestershire, Redditch has a high proportion of Band A and B properties, and a comparatively low proportion of G and H properties.

Proportion (%) of properties in Local Authority in Band A (as of 15 September 2008)

Redditch Borough has the second highest percentage of properties in Council Tax bands A and B, as the graph below illustrates.



Source: Valuation Office Agency, 2008.

Housing numbers proposed in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Preferred Option

	Total dwellings (2006-2026)	Dwellings per year
Redditch	6,600	330

Source: West Midlands Regional Assembly, 2008.

The table above indicates that Redditch is proposed to be hit by a large amount of housing growth up to 2026.

Mean, median and lower quartile house prices, 2007

Area	Mean	Median	Lower quartile
Bromsgrove	£237,599	£203,750	£152,500
Malvern Hills	£266,234	£226,000	£170,000
Redditch	£169,867	£147,750	£120,000
Worcester	£188,401	£167,000	£142,500
Wychavon	£250,211	£210,000	£155,000
Wyre Forest	£182,808	£155,000	£125,000
Worcestershire	**£213,510**	**£178,975**	**£139,950**
West Midlands	**£175,464**	**£147,000**	**£114,950**
England	**£222,619**	**£178,000**	**£127,000**

Source: Land Registry, 2008.

Since July 2007, the housing market in the United Kingdom has suffered a major downturn. Following a prolonged period of growth, property prices fell in 2008. This is intrinsically associated with the so-called ‘credit crunch’. Until the summer of 2007, house prices had risen markedly in recent years. The table above shows that mean, median and lower quartiles prices in Worcestershire in 2007, at what is likely to be the house price peak, were generally above regional and national averages. In relation to Redditch, the mean, median and lower quartile are consistently below these County averages, and there is no clear relationship between house prices across the County and Redditch. However, the 2008 annual house price figures are not yet available, so an assessment of the initial impact of the decline requires other data.

Average property prices by dwelling type, Q3 2007 and Q3 2008

Authority	Detached		Semi-Det		Terraced		Flat/Mais		Total Averages	
	Q3 2007	Q3 2008	Q3 2007	Q3 2008	Q3 2007	Q3 2008	Q3 2007	Q3 2008	Q3 2007	Q3 2008
Bromsgrove	£357,964	£364,901	£208,177	£194,191	£159,453	£164,518	£150,110	£108,215	**£253,541**	**£252,347**
Malvern Hills	£378,387	£342,609	£213,780	£208,539	£193,678	£170,477	£168,501	£143,566	**£277,020**	**£253,828**
Redditch	£251,777	£229,367	£161,164	£151,521	£136,294	£126,648	£111,292	£108,805	**£169,730**	**£163,140**
Worcester	£276,450	£259,081	£179,301	£175,041	£160,887	£151,140	£128,823	£135,945	**£190,346**	**£177,049**
Wychavon	£370,693	£362,825	£212,033	£210,054	£164,530	£157,731	£131,959	£136,625	**£258,101**	**£263,882**
Wyre Forest	£298,543	£299,275	£166,749	£158,143	£138,892	£124,269	£114,257	£116,111	**£191,271**	**£182,011**
Worcestershire	**£332,629**	**£322,102**	**£190,273**	**£182,702**	**£154,716**	**£145,881**	**£132,241**	**£128,463**	**£222,633**	**£214,515**

Source: Land Registry, 2008.

The trend demonstrated in the table above illustrates that Redditch Borough's property prices are all lower than the other Local Authorities across Worcestershire, for all property types, with the exception of flats and maisonettes during Q3 2008. The table also provides solid evidence of the decline in property prices for the corresponding quarters for 2007 and 2008; this is also expressed in the table below.

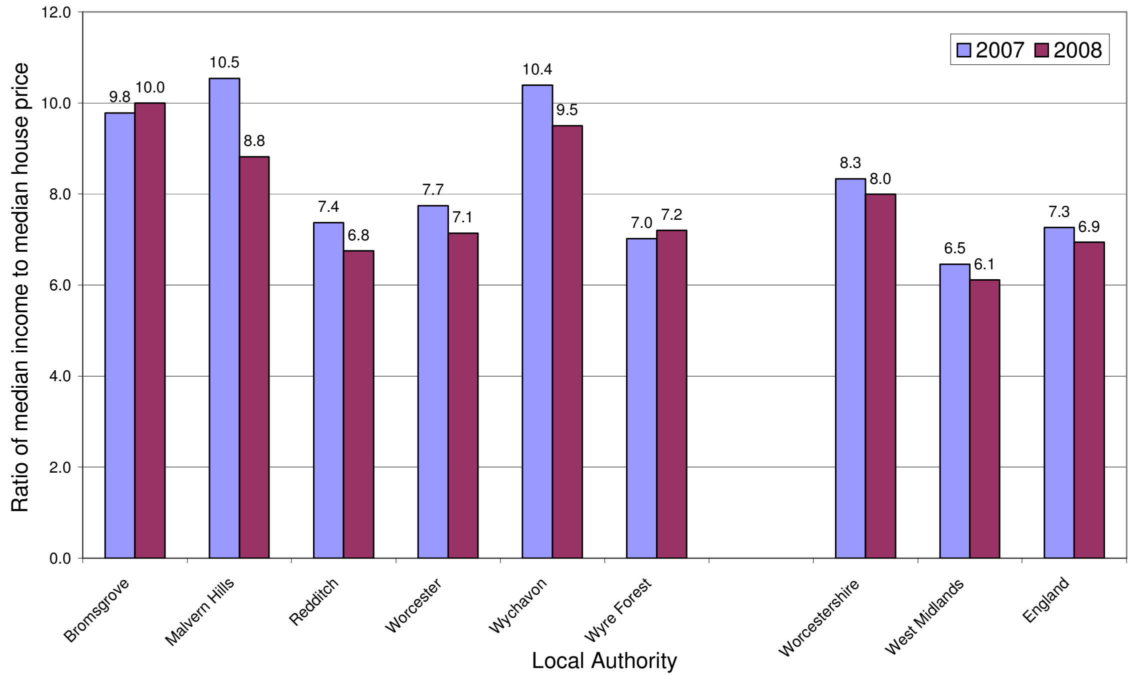
Change in average property prices by dwelling type, Q3 2007 and Q3 2008

	% change Q3 2007- Q3 2008				
District Name	**Detached**	**Semi-Detached**	**Terraced**	**Flat/ Maisonette**	**All properties**
Bromsgrove	1.9	-6.7	3.2	-27.9	-0.5
Malvern Hills	-9.5	-2.5	-12.0	-14.8	-8.4
Redditch	-8.9	-6.0	-7.1	-2.2	-3.9
Worcester	-6.3	-2.4	-6.1	5.5	-7.0
Wychavon	-2.1	-0.9	-4.1	3.5	2.2
Wyre Forest	0.2	-5.2	-10.5	1.6	-4.8
Worcestershire	-3.2	-4.0	-5.7	-2.9	-3.6

Source: Land Registry, 2008.

The table confirms the fall in housing prices in Redditch across 2007 to 2008. Notably, the percentage falls in prices are, excluding flats and maisonettes, consistently more drastic than price falls in Worcestershire.

Ratio of median income to median house prices, 2007 and 2008



Source: Communities and Local Government, 2008.

The ratios presented above are based on house sales and income data from the first half of the year. Although this shows that affordability ratios improved from 2007 to 2008, it is expected that the improvement will be much more marked in 2009 as house prices currently are considerably lower than they were at the start of 2008. As of 2008, Redditch has the best ratio of median income to median house price in the County, and is more in touch with the national ratios depicted in the graph.

Mid-2007 Population Estimates: Selected age groups; estimated resident population (thousands)

Area	All Ages	Children 0-15	%	Working age (16-64M/59F)	%	Older people (65+M/60+F)	%
Redditch	79.6	15.7	19.7	50.9	63.9	12.9	16.2

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2007. Mid-year population estimates.

The County average for Working age population (16-16M/59F) is 60.4%, therefore Redditch (63.9%) is considered to have a healthy proportion of working age population (16-16M/59F) when compared to the County.

Population change over time, 1985-2007

Area	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007		Change (%) 1985-2007	Change (%) 2006-2007

Area	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007		Change (%) 1985-2007	Change (%) 2006-2007
Redditch	73.4	78.9	78.3	78.6	79.2	79.5	79.6		8.4	0.1
Worcestershire	490.1	509.6	526.7	539.6	550.8	552.9	555.4		13.3	0.5
West Midlands	5181.5	5218.4	5256.9	5269.6	5350.7	5366.7	5381.8		3.9	0.3
England	47057.4	47699.1	48383.5	49233.3	50465.6	50762.9	51092		8.6	0.6

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Mid-year population estimates.

The population of Redditch from 1985 to 2007 has increased by 8.4%, this is considerably higher than in the West Midlands, but lower than the County average, and in line with the English average.

Population of Redditch Local Authority by age, 2007

Age	Redditch	%
Aged under 1 year	1,100	1.4
Aged 1 - 4 years	4,000	5.0
Aged 5 - 9 years	4,700	5.9
Aged 10 - 14 years	4,900	6.2
Aged 15 - 19 years	5,300	6.7
Aged 20 - 24 years	4,900	6.2
Aged 25 - 29 years	5,200	6.5
Aged 30 - 34 years	5,300	6.7

Age	Redditch	%
Aged 35 - 39 years	6,000	7.5
Aged 40 - 44 years	6,000	7.5
Aged 45 - 49 years	5,500	6.9
Aged 50 - 54 years	5,600	7.0
Aged 55 - 59 years	5,800	7.3
Aged 60 - 64 years	4,800	6.0
Aged 65 - 69 years	3,000	3.8
Aged 70 - 74 years	2,500	3.1
Aged 75 - 79 years	2,200	2.8
Aged 80 - 84 years	1,400	1.8
Aged 85 and over	1,400	1.8
Total	**79,600**	**100.0**

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Mid-year population estimates 2007.

The table indicates that just under 75% of Redditch's population is aged 20 or over. An ageing population has a number of implications. An increasing number and proportion of older people is likely to increase demand for services used by that group, for example, health services, support at home and public transport. As people live longer, the demands on these services will last for a longer period of time, while the burden of paying taxes to provide such services will fall on a smaller number of people of working age.

NINo registrations in respect of non-UK Nationals, 2002/3 to 2007/8

Local Authority	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08

Local Authority	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Bromsgrove	80	100	140	180	200	160
Malvern Hills	100	80	220	320	280	260
Redditch	200	220	400	880	860	900
Worcester	440	460	670	920	990	970
Wychavon	220	240	600	970	1,000	950
Wyre Forest	110	120	210	360	390	330
Worcestershire	1,150	1,220	2,240	3,630	3,720	3,570
West Midlands	23,420	23,500	28,010	42,040	47,230	46,630
England	309,970	331,980	388,030	579,520	607,950	636,880
UK	346,230	373,500	435,350	663,060	705,840	733,090

Source: DWP, 2008. National Insurance Recording System.

The demographic structure of Redditch is also influenced by migration from overseas. The arrival and employment of migrant workers is a contentious issue, and one that receives much media attention as the extra demand on local services in particular is scrutinised, however migrant workers form an increasingly important and substantial body of the population and it is therefore necessary to consider their contribution. The table demonstrates that from 2002/03 to 2007/08 Redditch has seen the steadiest proportion increase in national insurance number registrations when compared to the rest of the Local Authority areas in Worcestershire and similar patterns are reflected in the change in NINo registrations documented below.

However, as the recession becomes deeper, and unemployment rises, so moving to the UK in search of work may become less attractive and the make-up of the local population may significantly alter.

Change in the number of NINo registrations in respect of non-UK Nationals in Worcestershire districts, 2002/3 to 2007/8

Local Authority	Change on the previous year (%)					
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Bromsgrove	-	25.0	40.0	28.6	11.1	-20.0
Malvern Hills	-	-20.0	175.0	45.5	-12.5	-7.1
Redditch	-	10.0	81.8	120.0	-2.3	4.7
Worcester	-	4.5	45.7	37.3	7.6	-2.0
Wychavon	-	9.1	150.0	61.7	3.1	-5.0
Wyre Forest	-	9.1	75.0	71.4	8.3	-15.4
Worcestershire	-	6.1	83.6	62.1	2.5	-4.0
West Midlands	-	0.3	19.2	50.1	12.3	-1.3
England	-	7.1	16.9	49.3	4.9	4.8
UK	-	7.9	16.6	52.3	6.5	3.9

Source: DWP, 2008. National Insurance Recording System.

According to the table, Redditch experienced significant increases on the number of NINo registrations from Non-UK nationals between 2003 and 2006. Changes have generally been greater in Redditch than in other areas of Worcestershire. However, the extent of these changes has decreased significantly in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, perhaps suggesting a plateau in migration figures.

Change in the number of NINo registrations in respect of non-UK Nationals by Region, 2002/3 to 2007/8

Region	Change on the previous year (%)

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
London	-	5.2	7.8	38.7	2.3	13.2
South East	-	16.3	17.3	57.3	-1.1	4.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	-	7.0	5.6	82.7	13.2	2.0
Scotland	-	8.4	46.9	76.6	25.3	1.0
North West	-	8.9	31.9	56.3	4.7	0.1
West Midlands	-	0.3	19.2	50.1	12.3	-1.3
East of England	-	2.0	30.7	52.5	-0.1	-1.8
Wales	-	34.3	41.6	65.7	0.5	-2.2
East Midlands	-	24.9	42.4	64.3	5.2	-5.6
South West	-	4.2	40.4	50.9	21.1	-5.7
North East	-	7.3	25.2	48.5	22.0	-8.3
Northern Ireland	-	0.7	-41.6	98.0	22.5	-10.4
All	-	7.9	16.6	52.3	6.5	3.9

Source: DWP, 2008. National Insurance Recording System.

The table above shows that the annual rate of increase in NINo registrations has reduced in most regions, with the exception of London and the South East, with many areas, the West Midlands among them, seeing the number of new arrivals starting to fall. It is too early to tell whether this trend will continue, extend to other regions, or be reversed in coming years.

Population projections, 2006-2015

Area	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% change 2006-2015
Redditch	79.5	79.7	80.1	80.4	80.8	81.1	81.5	82.0	82.4	82.8	4.2

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2006. Sub-national population projections (2006-2015)

The Office for National Statistics produces sub-national population projections, which estimate the likely population growth in an area over time. According to the 2006-based population estimates, the population of Redditch is set to increase from 79500 in 2006 to 82800 in 2015, a 4.2% increase. Increases in population, combined with demands of an ageing population will lead to an increased demand on services in the Borough.

Median Household Income, 2004-8

Area	2004 Value	2005 Value	2006 Value	2007 Value	2008 Value	Change 2007-8 Value	Change 2007-8 %
Bromsgrove	£33,280	£36,906	£35,689	£37,085	£38,690	£1,605	4.3
Malvern Hills	£30,889	£32,431	£32,413	£33,870	£34,733	£863	2.5
Redditch	£29,275	£31,529	£33,155	£34,799	£35,448	£649	1.9
Worcester City	£28,279	£30,662	£32,465	£34,034	£34,584	£550	1.6
Wychavon	£33,096	£34,824	£34,341	£35,853	£37,128	£1,275	3.6
Wyre Forest	£28,974	£29,666	£31,144	£32,629	£33,120	£491	1.5
Worcestershire	£30,687	£32,699	£33,227	£34,738	£35,656	£918	2.6

Source: CACI Ltd., 2008. Paycheck.

This data source indicates that the Borough's median household income is generally comparable with the standard for Worcestershire, however increases in income have not risen dramatically in the Borough, unlike areas such as Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest. The following four graphs complement this data.

Workplace-based earnings for full-time employees, 2008

Area	Weekly pay - gross		Hourly pay - gross		Annual pay - gross	
	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %
Bromsgrove	£406.20	9.3	£9.94	9.7	£22,342.00	12.0
Malvern Hills	£477.20	16.0	£11.26	16.0	£27,094.00	18.0
Redditch	£411.60	9.8	£10.14	9.2	£21,067.00	18.0
Worcester	£442.60	6.7	£10.92	4.7	£22,419.00	6.9
Wychavon	£403.40	5.8	£9.71	5.0	£20,317.00	12.0
Wyre Forest	£399.40	8.6	£9.75	8.8	£22,422.00	9.7
Worcestershire	£419.90	3.8	£10.32	3.3	£21,853.00	4.4
West Midlands	£448.90	0.9	£11.09	1.1	£23,820.00	1.9
England	£483.10	0.2	£12.11	0.3	£25,514.00	0.4

The earnings estimates show the earnings in pounds for employees who are on adult rates of pay and whose pay was not affected by absence.

The quality of an estimate can be assessed by referring to its coefficient of variation (CV) which is shown next to the earnings estimate. The CV is the ratio of the standard error of an estimate to the estimate. Estimates with larger CVs will be less reliable than those with smaller CVs.

In their published spreadsheets, ONS use the following CV values to give an indication of the quality of an estimate:

CV Value

5% or lower = Precise

over 5%, up to 10% = Reasonably precise

over 10%, up to 20% = Acceptable, but use with caution

over 20% = unreliable, figures suppressed

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

The table shows that average workplace-based earnings in Redditch on an hourly, weekly and annual scale are all below the County figures. Furthermore, the differential between the earnings in Redditch and those in the West Midlands and England are even greater. However, the accuracy of these figures makes comprehensive conclusions unviable.

Workplace-based median gross weekly pay for full-time employees, 2004-8

Area	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		Percentage change	
	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	2004-8	2007-8

Area	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		Percentage change	
	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	2004-8	2007-8
Bromsgrove	£389.20	11.0	£379.20	10.0	£383.20	6.6	£376.00	7.5	£406.20	9.3	4.4	8.0
Malvern Hills	£372.90	11.0	£397.20	11.0	£416.70	13.0	£402.70	14.0	£477.20	16.0	28.0	18.5
Redditch	£351.80	7.6	£376.00	7.3	£366.00	5.9	£368.30	7.3	£411.60	9.8	17.0	11.8
Worcester	£392.80	8.0	£405.90	6.6	£409.10	5.4	£408.60	5.1	£442.60	6.7	12.7	8.3
Wychavon	£368.40	7.5	£372.80	7.4	£380.70	7.5	£375.80	5.2	£403.40	5.8	9.5	7.3
Wyre Forest	£349.30	9.1	£351.60	11.0	£377.50	7.4	£418.50	7.4	£399.40	8.6	14.3	-4.6
Worcestershire	£371.70	3.3	£383.30	3.1	£388.10	2.6	£395.80	2.6	£419.90	3.8	13.0	6.1
West Midlands	£392.00	1.0	£402.40	0.9	£412.50	1.0	£430.10	1.0	£448.90	0.9	14.5	4.4
England	£425.00	0.3	£436.00	0.3	£449.80	0.3	£463.60	0.3	£483.10	0.2	13.7	4.2

The earnings estimates show the earnings in pounds for employees who are on adult rates of pay and whose pay was not affected by absence.

The quality of an estimate can be assessed by referring to its coefficient of variation (CV) which is shown next to the earnings estimate. The CV is the ratio of the standard error of an estimate to the estimate. Estimates with larger CVs will be less reliable than those with smaller CVs.

In their published spreadsheets, ONS use the following CV values to give an indication of the quality of an estimate:

CV Value

5% or lower = Precise

over 5%, up to 10% = Reasonably precise

over 10%, up to 20% = Acceptable, but use with caution

over 20% = unreliable, figures suppressed

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

The table shows that workplace-based median gross weekly pay has increased from 2004 to 2008, generally with annual increases on the previous year. These increases in workplace weekly pay have been greater than the changes experienced at county, regional or national level. However, despite the rise in gross weekly pay, Redditch figures are consistently below those of the county, region or England. The CV values suggest that these figures are relatively precise.

Residence based earnings for full-time employees, 2008

Area	Median Weekly pay - gross		Median Hourly pay - gross		Median Annual pay - gross	
	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %
Bromsgrove	£570.00	9.9	£13.62	9.7	£29,016.00	14.0
Malvern Hills	£521.70	15.0	£13.41	17.0	£30,342.00	16.0
Redditch	£411.20	9.4	£9.99	8.2	£20,255.00	9.2
Worcester	£471.40	7.1	£11.30	8.1	£24,453.00	9.7
Wychavon	£422.70	7.6	£10.73	7.9	£23,295.00	9.7

Area	Median Weekly pay - gross		Median Hourly pay - gross		Median Annual pay - gross	
	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %
Wyre Forest	£405.00	7.6	£10.47	7.6	£21,739.00	8.6
Worcestershire	£454.00	3.5	£11.11	3.6	£23,682.00	5.1
West Midlands	£450.00	1.0	£11.11	1.2	£23,807.00	1.8
England	£484.00	0.2	£12.13	0.3	£25,520.00	0.4

The earnings estimates show the earnings in pounds for employees who are on adult rates of pay and whose pay was not affected by absence.

The quality of an estimate can be assessed by referring to its coefficient of variation (CV) which is shown next to the earnings estimate. The CV is the ratio of the standard error of an estimate to the estimate. Estimates with larger CVs will be less reliable than those with smaller CVs.

In their published spreadsheets, ONS use the following CV values to give an indication of the quality of an estimate:

CV Value

5% or lower = Precise

over 5%, up to 10% = Reasonably precise

over 10%, up to 20% = Acceptable, but use with caution

over 20% = unreliable, figures suppressed

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

The table highlights that hourly, weekly and annual figures for residence-based earnings in Redditch are generally low, and even the poorest, in comparison to the rest of the local authority areas in Worcestershire. Furthermore, the figures for Redditch are significantly less than the country, regional or national levels. The CV values suggest that these figures are reasonably precise.

Residence-based median gross weekly pay for full-time employees, 2004-8

Area	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		Percentage change	
	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	Number	CV %	2004-8	2007-8
Bromsgrove	£535.40	6.5	£503.80	9.5	£523.20	8.6	£523.80	8.6	£570.00	9.9	6.5	8.8
Malvern Hills	£439.70	12.0	£436.30	14.0	£476.40	11.0	£471.70	13.0	£521.70	15.0	18.6	10.6
Redditch	£379.00	8.4	£403.40	7.0	£382.80	7.0	£377.80	8.5	£411.20	9.4	8.5	8.8
Worcester	£402.60	6.4	£413.90	6.5	£463.70	5.3	£440.90	5.9	£471.40	7.1	17.1	6.9
Wychavon	£396.10	7.5	£408.20	8.2	£408.60	7.2	£411.10	8.7	£422.70	7.6	6.7	2.8
Wyre Forest	£346.40	7.7	£377.30	7.1	£385.10	6.7	£408.90	6.1	£405.00	7.6	16.9	-1.0
Worcestershire	£411.70	3.4	£421.60	3.5	£433.80	3.3	£433.20	3.4	£454.00	3.5	10.3	4.8
West Midlands	£392.90	1.0	£404.70	1.0	£416.20	1.1	£431.10	1.0	£450.00	1.0	14.5	4.4
England	£425.90	0.3	£437.30	0.3	£450.40	0.3	£464.00	0.3	£484.00	0.2	13.6	4.3

The earnings estimates show the earnings in pounds for employees who are on adult rates of pay and whose pay was not affected by absence.

The quality of an estimate can be assessed by referring to its coefficient of variation (CV) which is shown next to the earnings estimate. The CV is the ratio of the standard error of an estimate to the estimate. Estimates with larger CVs will be less reliable than those with smaller CVs.

In their published spreadsheets, ONS use the following CV values to give an indication of the quality of an estimate:

CV Value

5% or lower = Precise

over 5%, up to 10% = Reasonably precise

over 10%, up to 20% = Acceptable, but use with caution

over 20% = unreliable, figures suppressed

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

The table shows that residence-based median gross weekly pay in Redditch has increased from 2004 to 2008, despite annual fluctuations. The figures are generally below those of other local authority areas in Worcestershire and are consistently lower than the county, regional and national averages. The CV values suggest that these figures are reasonably precise.

Highest qualification held by people 19-59/64: qualified to at least level 2, 2001-7

Area	2007 Total Population aged 19-59/64 (000s)	2007 Number (000s)	2007 %	2007 CI	2006 %	2005 %	2004 %	2003 %	2002 %	2001 %
Redditch	49	35	70.7	6.6	69.6	71.9	63.2	51.8	58.9	59.7
Worcestershire	312	223	71.3	2.9	70.0	68.4	66.1	63.2	67.2	68.6
West Midlands	3,043	1,989	65.4	0.8	64.9	63.8	63.4	61.8	61.6	60.3
England	29,519	20,341	68.9	0.2	68.2	67.3	66.6	66.0	65.1	63.9

Source: Office for National Statistics. Annual Population Survey 2004-2007, Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey 2001 to 2003.

Level 2 qualifications are defined as those providing a good knowledge and understanding and include GCSE's obtained at grades A* to C, as well as diplomas. The table shows that the percentage of the total population of Redditch who are qualified to at least level 2 has increased from 2001 to 2007, meaning that Redditch has moved from operating below regional and national levels to surpassing them. However, figures for Redditch have consistently been below county figures.

Highest qualification held by people 19-59/64: qualified to at least level 3, 2001-7

Area	2007 Total Population aged 19-59/64 (000s)	2007 Number (000s)	2007 %	2007 CI	2006 %	2005 %	2004 %	2003 %	2002 %	2001 %
Redditch	49	22	44.1	7.2	44.5	47.5	44.4	32.8	40.7	34.9
Worcestershire	312	157	50.2	3.2	51.2	46.3	45.4	45.1	47.4	46.6

Area	2007 Total Population aged 19-59/64 (000s)	2007 Number (000s)	2007 %	2007 CI	2006 %	2005 %	2004 %	2003 %	2002 %	2001 %
West Midlands	3,043	1,365	44.8	0.8	44.0	42.7	43.0	41.5	40.8	39.5
England	29,519	14,472	49.0	0.3	47.9	47.0	46.4	45.7	44.5	43.6

Source: Office for National Statistics. Annual Population Survey 2004-2007, Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey 2001 to 2003.

Level 3 qualifications are defined as those which provide a range of knowledge, skills and understanding, at a detailed level and include A levels and AEAs. The table demonstrates that the percentage of the total population of Redditch who are qualified to at least level 3 has generally increased from 2001 to 2007, however the percentage shows that over half of the population are not qualified to this level. The figures show that Redditch has become more consistent with regional and national figures, but has generally failed to match county figures.

Highest qualification held by people 19-59/64: qualified to at least level 4, 2001-7

Area	2007 Total Population aged 19-59/64 (000s)	2007 Number (000s)	2007 %	2007 CI	2006 %	2005 %	2004 %	2003 %	2002 %	2001 %
Redditch	49	13	25.7	6.3	22.6	26.2	26.0	13.3	21.3	17.6
Worcestershire	312	93	29.6	2.9	31.7	28.4	29.3	25.9	27.1	27.0
West Midlands	3,043	800	26.3	0.7	25.6	24.6	24.3	22.6	22.1	21.5
England	29,519	8,902	30.2	0.2	29.0	28.0	27.6	26.7	25.5	25.0

Source: Office for National Statistics. Annual Population Survey 2004-2007, Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey 2001 to 2003.

Level 4 qualifications are defined as those which provide specialist learning of a high level of information and knowledge and include BTEC professional diplomas. The table shows that the percentage of the total population of Redditch who are qualified to at least level 4 has increased significantly from 2001 to 2007. However, the figure still only represents just over a quarter of the population having achieved this level of qualification. Whilst the figures for Redditch have moved closer to the regional and national levels, they are still some way off the county level.

A highly educated and skilled workforce is key to providing Redditch with a competitive advantage. It allows individuals and businesses to adapt to rapidly changing economic conditions, and to identify and maximise new opportunities. As such, it is essential that formal education services provide excellent teaching and opportunities for development, and that residents and businesses have access to high-quality training to support life-long learning. For Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications Redditch lags behind the County and English average. This is concerning if the Borough aims towards an economy based on higher level skills and militates against diversifying into more proficient economies. Therefore the move to higher skills based economy needs to work hand in hand with the improvement qualifications attained and maintained in the Borough.

Economic Indicators for the United Kingdom

PRICES AND INFLATION	**Period**	**Release date**		**Monthly change**	**Annual change**
Consumer Prices Index (CPI) (base 2005 = 100) (In UK published as HICP prior to 10/12/03)	Dec-08	20-Jan-09	109.5	-0.4	3.1
Retail Prices Index (all items) (index Jan 1987 = 100)	Dec-08	20-Jan-09	212.9	-1.4	0.9

RPI excluding mortgage interest - RPIX (base January 1987 = 100)	Dec-08	20-Jan-09	209.2	-0.5	2.8
Producer Prices Index - PPI Output (2005=100)	Dec-08	09-Jan-09	112.2	0	4.7
Producer Prices Index - PPI Input prices (materials and fuel) (2005=100)	Dec-08	09-Jan-09	129.1	-2	4.3
LABOUR MARKET	**Period**	**Release date**		**Change on 3 months[1]**	**Change on 1 yr ago[2]**
Employment rate (%)	Sep-Nov 08	21-Jan-09	74.2	-0.2	-0.5
Unemployment rate (%)	Sep-Nov 08	21-Jan-09	6.1	0.4	0.9
AEI Headline rate 3 month average (SA) - including bonuses	Sep-Nov 08	21-Jan-09	3.1	-0.3	-0.9
AEI Headline rate 3 month average (SA) - excluding bonuses	Sep-Nov 08	21-Jan-09	3.6	0	0
Claimant count (Jobseeker's Allowance) (Thousands)	Dec-08	21-Jan-09	1,157.20	212.8	349.5
Vacancies (Thousands)	Oct-Dec 08	21-Jan-09	530	-69	-153
NATIONAL ACCOUNTS/ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	**Period**	**Release date**		**Quarterly change**	**Change on 1 yr ago[3]**
UK Gross Domestic Product (chained volume measure £ billion)	Q4 08	23-Jan-09	314.3	-1.5	-1.8
Private Non-Financial Corporations Net Lending (£ billion)	Q3 08	23-Dec-08	7.2		
Household Saving Ratio (%)	Q3 08	23-Dec-08	1.8		
Public Sector current budget (£ billion)	Dec-08	Jan-09	-11.4		

Public Sector net debt as a % of GDP	Dec-08	Jan-09	47.5		
Public Sector net borrowing (£ billion)	Dec-08	Jan-09	14.9		
Public Sector net cash req't (£ billion)	Dec-08	Jan-09	44.2		
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND TRADE	**Period**	**Release date**			
UK's trade balance (£ billion)	Nov-08	13-Jan-09	-4.5		
Balance of Payments current account - BoP (£ billion)	Q3 08	23-Dec-08	-£7.70		
of which: EU			-£0.50		
non-EU			-£7.20		
Goods export volumes - excluding oil and erratics (Index 2003 = 100)	Nov-08	13-Jan-09	102.8		
Goods import volumes - excluding oil and erratics (Index 2003 = 100)	Nov-08	13-Jan-09	115.5		
SHORT TERM INDICATORS	**Period**	**Release date**		**Change on 3 months[1]**	**Change on 1 yr ago[2]**
Retail Sales Volume Seasonally Adjusted (2000=100)	Dec-08	23-Jan-09	142.4	0.6	2.4
Index of Manufacturing (2003=100)	Nov-08	09-Jan-09	96.9	-3.3	-5.2
Index of Production (2003=100)	Nov-08	09-Jan-09	94.2	-2.7	-5
Whole economy productivity	Q3 08	23-Dec-08	107.4	-0.4	-0.2
Manufacturing productivity	Q3 08	23-Dec-08	121.2	-0.4	0.5
Index of Services (2003=100)	Nov-08	23-Jan-09	114.3	-0.4	-0.1

1. Three months on previous three months
2. Three months on corresponding period one year ago
3. Quarter on corresponding period one year ago

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2009. Latest Indicators.

The independent forecasts for the UK Economy demonstrate just how rapidly economic conditions have deteriorated. While in February 2008, forecasts expected GDP growth of 2.0% in 2009, by January 2009 forecasts were far less optimistic. It is now expected that the economy will shrink by -2.1% this year.

Working Age Economic Activity Rate, 2005/6-2007/8

Area	Jul 2005-Jun 2006			Jul 2006-Jun 2007			Jul 2007-Jun 2008			Percentage point change 2005/6 to 2006/7	Percentage point change 2006/7 to 2007/8
	Number	%	CI	Number	%	CI	Number	%	CI		
Redditch	40,300	79.1	5.6	44,400	86.9	4.8	41,400	81.0	5.7	7.8	-5.9
Worcestershire	273,000	82.1	2.2	276,000	82.8	2.3	269,200	80.7	2.5	0.7	-2.1
West Midlands	2,502,300	76.9	0.7	2,518,800	77.2	0.7	2,525,400	77.4	0.7	0.3	0.2
England	24,504,700	78.5	0.2	24,718,800	78.7	0.2	24,898,100	78.8	0.2	0.2	0.1

CI = 95% confidence interval of percent figure (+/-).

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Population Survey.

Economic Activity rates provide a measure of the proportion of the population who are either active, or potentially active, members of the labour market, including those who are in employment, on Government-supported employment/training programmes, or unemployed but actively seeking work.

Low economic activity rates indicate a large number of people unavailable for training, either by choice or through circumstance. Figures for Redditch indicate that the Borough has a similar economic activity rate, as a percentage of its population, to the rest of the County, West Midlands region and England. Although the economic rate in the Borough has improved from 2005 to 2008, it experienced a significant decrease from 2007 to 2008. It is important to note the confidence intervals (CIs) that have been provided alongside the data by the Annual Population Survey (APS). These figures give a measure of the reliability of the statistics. In comparison to the county, regional and national figures, data for Redditch has larger CIs indicating a lower reliability. CIs are particularly affected by sample size, thus more care must be taken with Redditch data because the sample size for Redditch is considerably lower than Worcestershire and the other sample areas. These larger CIs make it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the data.

Working Age Employment Rate, 2005/6 to 2007/8

Area	Jul 2005-Jun 2006			Jul 2006-Jun 2007			Jul 2007-Jun 2008			Percentage point change 2005/6 to 2006/7	Percentage point change 2006/7 to 2007/8
	Number	%	CI	Number	%	CI	Number	%	CI		
Redditch	39,200	76.9	5.8	42,300	82.8	5.4	39,300	77.0	6.1	5.9	-5.8
Worcestershire	**262,800**	**79.0**	**2.3**	**265,800**	**79.8**	**2.4**	**259,000**	**77.6**	**2.6**	**0.8**	**-2.2**
West Midlands	**2,363,600**	**72.7**	**0.7**	**2,369,200**	**72.7**	**0.7**	**2,362,300**	**72.4**	**0.7**	**0.0**	**-0.3**
England	**23,183,200**	**74.3**	**0.2**	**23,372,500**	**74.4**	**0.2**	**23,551,700**	**74.5**	**0.2**	**0.1**	**0.1**

CI = 95% confidence interval of percent figure (+/-).

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Population Survey.

In terms of working age employment rates, the table suggests that as a percentage of its population, Redditch is operating in line with county, regional and national levels. However, the CIs indicate that caution must be taken when analysing the figures for Redditch.

Number and distribution of employees in Worcestershire, 2003-7

Authority	2003	%	2004	%	2005	%	2006	%	2007	%	% change in number of employees 2003-7	Percentage point change in proportion of employees 2003-7
Bromsgrove	30,400	13.4	32,400	13.9	31,400	13.7	33,900	14.4	33,500	14.3	10.2	1.0
Malvern Hills	26,800	11.8	27,000	11.6	26,700	11.7	28,000	11.8	27,000	11.6	0.7	-0.2
Redditch	41,300	18.2	43,200	18.5	43,200	18.9	43,500	18.4	41,500	17.8	0.5	-0.4
Worcester	52,300	23.0	52,700	22.6	49,000	21.4	50,100	21.2	50,900	21.8	-2.6	-1.2
Wychavon	45,300	19.9	45,900	19.6	45,800	20.0	48,200	20.4	49,400	21.2	8.9	1.2
Wyre Forest	34,100	15.0	35,600	15.2	35,400	15.5	35,600	15.1	34,000	14.6	0.0	-0.4
Worcestershire	**227,300**	**100.0**	**233,500**	**100.0**	**228,700**	**100.0**	**236,200**	**100.0**	**233,200**	**100.0**	**2.6**	

Figures rounded to the nearest 100.
Employees are assigned to an authority based on the location of their place of work.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Business Inquiry.

The Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) shows that in 2007 there were 41, 500 people employed in Redditch. From 2003 to 2005 Redditch witnessed increased employment growth, however following this period up to 2007 the Borough has seen a negative slide in employment growth.

What is ABI?

"The ABI is a two-part survey of a representative sample of employers in the UK. ABI/1 collects information on employment and ABI/2 collects financial information. Completion of the survey is compulsory under the Statistics of Trade Act 1947.

The ABI replaced the Annual Employment Survey (AES) in 1998, which itself replaced the Census of Employment in 1995.

The ABI samples approximately 78,000 businesses each year, with the sample being drawn from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). The sample is stratified by industry, using Standard Industrial Classification SIC 92/ SIC 2003, and by six size bands. The largest size band (250 or more employees) is completely surveyed. Enterprises in lower bands are sampled, with the proviso that those employing fewer than 10 people are replaced annually and half of the sample in the intermediate four bands is replaced each year. For Wales and Scotland, the company size threshold at which all businesses are sampled is lower.

The survey requests information for a specific date in December of each year, and the results of the inquiry are published in December of the following year. Results from the data are consistent year-on-year, since the first ABI in 1998, and data from the 1997 AES are also available and are consistent with later ABI results. The survey achieves a response rate of about 85 per cent, although the response of the largest employers, who make up the bulk of the statistical data, is closer to 100 per cent.

Results from the ABI are used by the ONS in the compilation of the National Accounts, and are also used in the calculation of estimates of the number of employees in the UK. Other government departments use ABI results to develop and monitor policies. Local authorities use the data to monitor local employment levels."[11]

[11] http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/user-guidance/lm-guide/sources/business-surveys/abi/index.html

Workplace-based employment by industry, 1998 and 2007

Industry	Redditch				Change 1998-2007		
	1998	%	2007	%	No.	%	Proportion of employees in industry: Percentage point
Agriculture and fishing	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Energy and water	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manufacturing	13,100	34.4	9,500	22.8	-3,700	-28.0	-11.7
Construction	1,100	3.0	1,200	3.0	100	9.8	0.0
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	8,500	22.2	9,200	22.2	800	9.1	0.1
Transport and communications	1,400	3.6	1,700	4.2	400	26.2	0.6
Banking, finance and insurance, etc	6,500	16.9	10,200	24.6	3,800	58.4	7.7
Public admin., education and health	6,800	17.7	8,100	19.6	1,400	20.2	1.8
Other services	800	2.1	1,400	3.5	600	81.1	1.4
Total	**38,100**	**100.0**	**41,500**	**100.0**	**3,400**	**8.8**	

Figures rounded to the nearest 100.
* suppressed to prevent disclosure of confidential information.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Business Inquiry.

In terms of the most significant developments in industry from 1998 to 2007, the table above shows that Redditch saw a 28.0% decrease in the number of people employed in ‘manufacturing’ and a 58.4% increase in those employed in the ‘banking, finance and insurance’ sector. Transport and communications industries as well as public administration, education and health services also experienced noticeable rises.

Workplace-based employment by status and gender (1), 2007

Area	Total	Full Time Workers	% of total	Part Time Workers	% of total	Male	% of total	Female	% of total
Redditch	41,500	27,300	65.8	14,200	34.2	21,800	52.5	19,700	47.5
Worcestershire	233,200	154,500	66.2	78,700	33.8	116,800	50.1	116,500	49.9
West Midlands	2,359,000	1,627,100	69.0	731,900	31.0	1,214,500	51.5	1,144,500	48.5
England	23,004,900	15,910,000	69.2	7,094,900	30.8	11,699,400	50.9	11,305,400	49.1

Figures rounded to the nearest 100.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Business Inquiry.

The table above indicates that as of 2007 there was a slightly higher proportion of male workers in Redditch to female workers, although there is not a significant split. The table also shows that the higher proportion of male workers in Redditch was higher than the County, Region and English average.

Workplace-based employment by status and gender (2), 2007

Area	Male Full Time Workers	% of total	% of full time	Male Part Time Workers	% of total	% of part time	Female Full Time Workers	% of total	% of full time	Female Part Time Workers	% of total	% of part time
Redditch	18,100	43.5	66.2	3,700	9.0	26.2	9,200	22.3	33.8	10,500	25.3	73.8
Worcestershire	98,400	42.2	63.7	18,400	7.9	23.4	56,100	24.1	36.3	60,400	25.9	76.6

Area	Male Full Time Workers	% of total	% of full time	Male Part Time Workers	% of total	% of part time	Female Full Time Workers	% of total	% of full time	Female Part Time Workers	% of total	% of part time
West Midlands	1,034,600	43.9	63.6	179,900	7.6	24.6	592,400	25.1	36.4	552,000	23.4	75.4
England	9,853,400	42.8	61.9	1,846,100	8.0	26.0	6,056,600	26.3	38.1	5,248,800	22.8	74.0

Figures rounded to the nearest 100.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008. Annual Business Inquiry.

In Redditch males account for 66.2% of the Full time workforce; this is not distinctly different from County, Regional and English averages. However 33.8% of Full Time workers are female, this is considered to be reasonably lower than all the County, Regional and English averages. In terms of Part time workers by gender, Redditch is more in line with the English average for both males and females. The average for both male and female part time workers is not so closely aligned with the County or Regional averages.

Claimant count by Local Authority, December 2006-December 2008

Area	December 2006		December 2007		December 2008		Change in rate Dec 2006-Dec 7	Change in rate Dec 2007-Dec 2008
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Percentage points	Percentage points
Bromsgrove	1,088	2.0	926	1.7	1,426	2.6	-0.3	0.9
Malvern Hills	510	1.2	432	1.0	729	1.8	-0.2	0.8
Redditch	1,130	2.2	955	1.9	1,802	3.5	-0.3	1.6
Worcester	1,376	2.3	1,217	2.0	1,846	3.1	-0.3	1.1

Area	December 2006		December 2007		December 2008		Change in rate Dec 2006-Dec 7	Change in rate Dec 2007-Dec 2008
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Percentage points	Percentage points
Wychavon	1,047	1.5	834	1.2	1,575	2.3	-0.3	1.1
Wyre Forest	1,206	2.0	1,061	1.8	1,792	3.0	-0.2	1.2
Worcestershire	6,357	1.9	5,425	1.6	9,170	2.7	-0.3	1.1
West Midlands	107,508	3.3	94,053	2.9	132,700	4.0	-0.4	1.1
England	772,738	2.4	659,908	2.1	959,419	3.0	-0.3	0.9

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2009. Claimant Count.

As the UK economy has entered recession, so the number of people who are unemployed has started to increase. From 2007 to 2008 claimant counts in Redditch have risen considerably, higher than any other authority in the County, and higher than the County, Region and English average. With the continuing pressures on businesses this trend could continue.

Claimant count by gender, December 2008

Area	Male	Female

	Number	Rate	Change in number	Change on rate in December 2007: percentage points	Number	Rate	Change in number	Change on rate in December 2007: percentage points
Redditch	1,381	5.2	693	2.6	421	1.7	154	0.6
Worcestershire	6,865	3.9	2,944	1.7	2,305	1.5	801	0.5
West Midlands	100,418	5.8	30,793	1.8	32,282	2.1	7,854	0.5
England	715,138	4.3	233,856	1.4	244,281	1.6	65,655	0.4

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2009. Claimant Count.

In Redditch the rate of claimant count is highest amongst males, the figures for 'change on rate in December 2007: percentage points' are high, and it is important to note that this is higher than the County. Regional and English average. This change is mirrored in the female population, although not to such an extreme extent.

Claimants aged 24 and under, December 2007 and December 2008

Area	December 2007		December 2008		Change 2007-2008		
	Number	% of all claimants	Number	% of all claimants	Number	%	% of all claimants: percentage points
Redditch	290	30.4	485	26.9	195	67.2	-3.5
Worcestershire	1,555	28.7	2,640	28.8	1,085	69.8	0.1
West Midlands	29,150	31.0	40,955	30.9	11,805	40.5	-0.1

Area	December 2007		December 2008		Change 2007-2008		
	Number	% of all claimants	Number	% of all claimants	Number	%	% of all claimants: percentage points
England	201,235	30.5	291,605	30.4	90,370	44.9	-0.1

Figures rounded to the nearest 5.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2009. Claimant Count.

Although, the number of claimants aged 24 and under in Redditch has increased from December 2007 to December 2008, the number, as a percentage of total claimants, has decreased. This indicates a rise in the overall level of claimants, which is a concern for the Borough. As of December 2008, the percentage of claimants aged 24 and under was lower than the County, Regional and National averages.

Claimants of key out-of-work benefits, May 2007 and May 2008

Area	May 2007		May 2008		Change 2007-8		
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	%	Percentage points
Bromsgrove	3,520	6.4	3,450	6.3	-70	-2.0	-0.1
Malvern Hills	3,350	8.1	3,220	7.7	-130	-3.9	-0.4
Redditch	5,470	10.7	5,370	10.5	-100	-1.8	-0.2
Worcester	6,100	10.3	5,950	10.0	-150	-2.5	-0.3
Wychavon	5,050	7.3	4,930	7.1	-120	-2.4	-0.2
Wyre Forest	6,570	11.1	6,360	10.7	-210	-3.2	-0.4

Area	May 2007		May 2008		Change 2007-8		
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	%	Percentage points
Worcestershire	30,060	9.0	29,290	8.7	-770	-2.6	-0.3
West Midlands	429,140	13.1	421,830	12.8	-7,310	-1.7	-0.3
England	3,632,210	11.4	3,568,230	11.2	-63,980	-1.8	-0.2

Figures rounded to the nearest 10.
Rates calculated using the resident working age population from the mid-2007 population estimates.
This dataset is based on 100% of claims so is not subject to any sampling error.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2008.

A number of different benefit schemes exist in the UK to provide support to those who are out of work, or who need assistance with illness or disability.

Data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) enables an assessment of the number of people claiming key out of work benefits, namely: Jobseekers Allowance; Lone Parents on Income Support; Incapacity Benefits customers; and other income-related benefits.

Each Local Authority in the county saw a fall in the number of claimants between May 2007 and May 2008, contributing to a total reduction of –770 claimants. However, as the latest data available at the time of writing is for May 2008, prior to the more recent increases in Jobseekers Allowance claimants, it is expected that the overall number of claimants will increase in future releases.

Proportion of resident working age people claiming key benefits, May 2007 and May 2008

Area	May 2007		May 2008		Change 2007-8		
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	%	Percentage points
Bromsgrove	4,580	8.3	4,510	8.2	-70	-1.5	-0.1
Malvern Hills	4,280	10.3	4,150	10.0	-130	-3.0	-0.3
Redditch	6,810	13.4	6,740	13.2	-70	-1.0	-0.2
Worcester	7,400	12.4	7,310	12.3	-90	-1.2	-0.1
Wychavon	6,440	9.3	6,360	9.2	-80	-1.2	-0.1
Wyre Forest	7,960	13.4	7,770	13.1	-190	-2.4	-0.3
Worcestershire	37,470	11.2	36,840	11.0	-630	-1.7	-0.2
West Midlands	513,340	15.6	508,540	15.5	-4,800	-0.9	-0.1
England	4,317,150	13.6	4,274,640	13.4	-42,510	-1.0	-0.2

Figures rounded to the nearest 10.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2009. Claimant Count.

The table above shows the number of people claiming a wider range of benefits, specifically the numbers claiming at least one of: Jobseekers Allowance; Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance Income Support; Carers Allowance; Other income support; Pension Credit; Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Widow Benefit, and Bereavement Benefit.

Again the data shows a fall in the number of claimants, but figures should be treated with caution due to the timing of the release and the subsequent changes in economic conditions.

Attendance Allowance Claimants, May 2007 and May 2008

Area	May 2007	May 2008	Change 2007-8

	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	%	Percentage points
Bromsgrove	2,650	15.6	2,780	16.4	130	4.9	0.8
Malvern Hills	2,590	15.9	2,720	16.7	130	5.0	0.8
Redditch	1,920	18.3	1,960	18.7	40	2.1	0.4
Worcester	2,260	16.4	2,350	17.0	90	4.0	0.7
Wychavon	3,380	15.0	3,480	15.4	100	3.0	0.4
Wyre Forest	2,970	16.2	3,050	16.7	80	2.7	0.4
Worcestershire	15,770	16.0	16,340	16.6	570	3.6	0.6
West Midlands	158,190	17.9	162,000	18.3	3,810	2.4	0.4
England	1,255,590	15.4	1,290,480	15.8	34,890	2.8	0.4

Figures rounded to the nearest 10.
Rates calculated using the resident population aged 65+ from the mid-2007 population estimates.
This dataset is based on 100% of claims so is not subject to any sampling error.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2008.

Attendance Allowance (AA) is "…a tax-free benefit for people aged 65 or over who need help with personal care because they are physically or mentally disabled"[12]. Between May 2007 and May 2008 the number of claimants of AA increased in Redditch by 2.1%.

State Pension Claimants, May 2007 and May 2008

[12] Source: DirectGov, 2009. Attendance Allowance. [online], last accessed 13 February 2009 at URL: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DG_10012425

Area	May 2007		May 2008		Change 2007-8		
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	%	Percentage points
Bromsgrove	19,590	84.4	20,060	86.5	470	2.4	2.0
Malvern Hills	18,580	84.5	19,010	86.4	430	2.3	2.0
Redditch	12,500	81.7	12,960	84.7	460	3.7	3.0
Worcester	16,140	85.9	16,440	87.4	300	1.9	1.6
Wychavon	25,840	82.8	26,530	85.0	690	2.7	2.2
Wyre Forest	21,270	81.8	21,930	84.3	660	3.1	2.5
Worcestershire	**113,930**	**83.5**	**116,940**	**85.7**	**3,010**	**2.6**	**2.2**
West Midlands	**1,010,110**	**84.1**	**1,028,800**	**85.6**	**18,690**	**1.9**	**1.6**
England	**9,219,650**	**83.3**	**9,388,230**	**84.9**	**168,580**	**1.8**	**1.5**

Figures rounded to the nearest 10.
Rates calculated using the resident population aged 60+ from the mid-2007 population estimates.
This dataset is based on 100% of claims so is not subject to any sampling error.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2008.

The basic State pension is "…a government-administered pension…based on the number of qualifying years gained through National Insurance contributions (NICs)"[13]. Between May 2007 and May 2008 the number of claimants of State Pension increased by 3.7% in Redditch, this was higher than any other Local Authority in the County, and higher than the Regional and National increases.

Disability Living Allowance Claimants, May 2007 and May 2008

Area	May 2007		May 2008		Change 2007-8		
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	%	Percentage points
Bromsgrove	3,070	3.3	3,180	3.4	110	3.6	0.1
Malvern Hills	2,840	3.8	2,910	3.9	70	2.5	0.1
Redditch	3,910	4.9	4,080	5.1	170	4.3	0.2
Worcester	4,160	4.4	4,260	4.5	100	2.4	0.1
Wychavon	4,280	3.7	4,450	3.8	170	4.0	0.1
Wyre Forest	4,790	4.9	4,920	5.0	130	2.7	0.1
Worcestershire	23,050	4.2	23,800	4.3	750	3.3	0.1
West Midlands	277,770	5.2	287,310	5.3	9,540	3.4	0.2
England	2,329,680	4.6	2,411,760	4.7	82,080	3.5	0.2

Figures rounded to the nearest 10.
Rates calculated using the total resident population from the mid-2007 population estimates.
This dataset is based on 100% of claims so is not subject to any sampling error.

[13] Source: DirectGov, 2009. State Pension. [online], last accessed 13 February 2009 at URL: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/PensionsAndRetirement/StatePension/DG_10014671

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2008.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is "…a tax-free benefit for children and adults who need help with personal care or have walking difficulties because they are physically or mentally disabled"[14]. The number of claimants in Redditch increased by 170 between May 2007 and May 2008, this is the joint largest increase in the County.

Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance Claimants, May 2007 and May 2008

Area	May 2007		May 2008		Change 2007-8		
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	%	Percentage points
Bromsgrove	2,320	3.9	2,280	3.8	-40	-1.7	-0.1
Malvern Hills	2,300	5.0	2,240	4.9	-60	-2.6	-0.1
Redditch	3,190	5.9	3,130	5.8	-60	-1.9	-0.1
Worcester	3,490	5.5	3,450	5.5	-40	-1.1	-0.1
Wychavon	3,190	4.2	3,150	4.2	-40	-1.3	-0.1
Wyre Forest	4,220	6.6	4,150	6.4	-70	-1.7	-0.1
Worcestershire	18,710	5.2	18,390	5.1	-320	-1.7	-0.1
West Midlands	242,580	6.9	239,070	6.8	-3,510	-1.4	-0.1
England	2,166,470	6.4	2,135,890	6.3	-30,580	-1.4	-0.1

Figures rounded to the nearest 10.
Rates calculated using the 16-64 resident population from the mid-2007 population estimates.

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[14] Source: DirectGov, 2009. Disability Living Allowance. [online], last accessed 13 February 2009 at URL: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DG_10011731

Claimants whose disability or illness began on or after 27 October 2008, will receive the Employment and Support Allowance, which replaces Incapacity Benefit and Income Support. Employment and Support Allowance figures should be available for the next Economic Assessment.
This dataset is based on 100% of claims so is not subject to any sampling error.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2008.

Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance (IB/SDA) is an allowance for people who "…can't work because of illness or disability which started before 27 October 2008…(it) is a weekly payment for people who become incapable of work while under State Pension age". From May 2007 to May 2008 there was a decrease in the percentage of people claiming incapacity benefit in Redditch. This pattern is common with that experienced in the County, West Midlands and England.

Income Support Claimants, May 2007 and May 2008

Area	May 2007		May 2008		Change 2007-8		
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	%	Percentage points
Bromsgrove	1,320	2.4	1,330	2.4	10	0.8	0.0
Malvern Hills	1,460	3.5	1,420	3.4	-40	-2.7	-0.1
Redditch	2,490	4.9	2,520	5.0	30	1.2	0.1
Worcester	2,770	4.7	2,790	4.7	20	0.7	0.0
Wychavon	2,020	2.9	2,040	2.9	20	1.0	0.0
Wyre Forest	2,910	4.9	2,930	4.9	20	0.7	0.0
Worcestershire	12,970	3.9	13,010	3.9	40	0.3	0.0
West Midlands	195,670	6.0	195,150	5.9	-520	-0.3	0.0
England	1,784,740	5.6	1,766,780	5.6	-17,960	-1.0	-0.1

Figures rounded to the nearest 10.
Rates calculated using the resident working age population from the mid-2007 population estimates.
This dataset is based on 100% of claims so is not subject to any sampling error.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions, 2008.

Income Support is for people who "…can't be available for full-time work and don't have enough money to live on". Qualification for the benefit, and the amount to which someone is entitled, depends upon personal circumstances[15].

In Redditch the number of claimants for Income Support increased by 1.2% between May 2007 and May 2008, this is somewhat higher than the rest of the County, and does not compare favourably with the Regional or National percentage changes.

Notified vacancies, December 2006, 2007 and 2008

Area	December 2006	December 2007	December 2008	Change 2006-7		Change 2007-8	
	Number	Number	Number	Number	%	Number	%
Redditch	354	660	275	306	86.4	-385	-58.3

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2009.

At a time of rising unemployment it is useful to consider the number of jobs available in the local economy. Jobcentre Plus reported that in December 2008 there were 275 vacancies in Redditch. This is a considerable decrease from previous years with the percentage change from December 2007 to December 2008 being -58.3%.

Notified vacancies, January 2008-December 2008

[15] Source: DirectGov, 2009. Disability Living Allowance. [online], last accessed 13 February 2009 at URL: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits/BenefitsTaxCreditsAndOtherSupport/On_a_low_income/DG_10018708

Area	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08	Apr-08	May-08	Jun-08	Jul-08	Aug-08	Sep-08	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08
Redditch	304	561	717	403	380	486	487	351	371	661	548	275

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2009.

The table above depicts the changes in job vacancies in Redditch advertised by Job Centre Plus over the course of 2008. There is no cumulative trend, rather the figures characterised by monthly fluctuations. For example, periods of decreased vacancies in April-May and August-September are followed by periods of increased vacancies particularly in October and November. These changes may reflect seasonal requirements with, for example, the need for casual staff over the Christmas period. It will be interesting to compare the advertised vacancies at Job Centre Plus from 2008 with those of 2009. It is anticipated that month on month, i.e. when comparing May 2008 with May 2009, there are likely to be decreases in the number of jobs advertised as a reflection of the recession.

Total jobs and jobs density, 2003-6

Area	2003		2004		2005		2006		Change 2005-6		
	Total jobs	Jobs density	Total jobs	Jobs density	Total jobs	Jobs density	Total jobs	Jobs density	Total jobs: number	Total jobs: %	Jobs density: percentage points
Redditch	45,000	0.89	48,000	0.94	48,000	0.94	49,000	0.95	1,000	2.1	0.01
Worcestershire	270,000	0.81	275,000	0.82	271,000	0.81	275,000	0.82	4,000	1.5	0.01
West Midlands	2,636,000	0.81	2,661,000	0.82	2,691,000	0.82	2,847,000	0.87	156,000	5.8	0.05
England	25,838,000	0.84	26,050,000	0.84	26,478,000	0.84	27,888,000	0.88	1,410,000	5.3	0.04

Total jobs is a workplace-based measure of jobs, and comprises:

- employees (from the Annual Business Inquiry),
- self-employment jobs (from the Annual Population Survey),
- government-supported trainees (from DfES and DWP) and
- HM Forces (from MoD).

The number of jobs in an area is composed of jobs done by residents (of any age) and jobs done by workers (of any age) who commute into the area.

Jobs density is the numbers of jobs per resident of working age (f:16-59; m:16-64). For example, a job density of 1.0 would mean that there is one job for every resident of working age.

Total job estimates are rounded to the nearest thousand in outputs. This rounding reflects that the figures are estimates subject to sampling and non-sampling error.

However, maximum precision has been used at each stage of the compilation of the data, and the jobs density figures are calculated from unrounded numbers of total jobs.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008.

Job Density provides an estimate of the balance between the number of jobs in an area, and the number of working aged people resident in the area. It is calculated by dividing the number of jobs by the number of people of working age. A density value of 1 would indicate that there was 1 job for every working age resident. A value of less than one indicates that there are more residents of working age than there are jobs. In 2006 Redditch had a favourable job density ratio of 0.95, which compares positively with the rest of the County, Region and England. However, given the recession and increase in claimants, it is anticipated that this ratio is currently less favourable.

VAT Registrations, 2000-7

Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007		Change 2006-2007 (%)
Redditch	210	180	225	225	215	245	215	250		16.3
Worcestershire	1,850	1,695	1,815	1,885	1,810	1,875	1,860	2,050		10.2
West Midlands	14,280	13,835	14,350	15,675	15,090	14,815	14,785	15,720		6.3
England	156,815	148,710	155,170	168,500	160,695	159,555	159,335	179,905		12.9

Source: Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2008.

The business stock, number of new business registrations and survival of businesses provides an indication of the level of entrepreneurship, and health of the business community in an area.

Data on the number of firms registered for Value-Added Tax (VAT) are published by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). Companies must register for VAT if their annual taxable turnover is expected to exceed £67,000. Consequently, VAT statistics exclude some smaller enterprises.

In Redditch in 2007, there were 250 new businesses registered for VAT, this was an increase of 16.3%, which was higher than that demonstrated by the County, Region and England percentage increases. This demonstrates that Redditch is attracting new businesses to the locale and can compete in a competitive environment. It suggests that Redditch is a favourable location for businesses and poses a number of advantages for businesses.

New business registration rate, 2002-7

Area	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bromsgrove	64.9	71.9	63.0	72.5	63.8	70.5
Malvern Hills	64.9	68.8	63.4	68.9	68.7	61.6
Redditch	44.2	57.6	46.2	61.8	48.0	50.9
Worcester	44.4	55.0	51.0	47.4	53.1	51.4
Wychavon	60.7	69.3	67.3	68.9	68.4	80.8
Wyre Forest	47.5	51.6	46.3	54.6	45.7	52.8
Worcestershire	54.5	62.4	56.5	62.3	58.1	62.4
West Midlands	46.7	52.2	54.1	53.9	48.8	55.5
England	54.0	59	61.6	59.2	54.8	64.2

Rate calculated by dividing the number of enterprise births by the population aged 16+/10,000.
Enterprise births are defined as new businesses registering for either VAT and / or PAYE for the first time.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008.

The table above provides an indication of the levels of entrepreneurship across Worcestershire, showing the number of new businesses per 10,000 people aged 16+.

In 2007 the new business registration rate was higher for Worcestershire (62.4) than for the West Midlands (55.5), but marginally below the rate for England (64.2) as a whole. Rates were highest in Wychavon (80.8) and lowest in Redditch (50.9). With Redditch demonstrating the lowest rates for new business registration, this is an obvious concern and an area that needs attention.

VAT De-registrations, 2000-7

Area	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**Change 2006-2007 (%)**
Bromsgrove	305	270	265	290	260	220	255	250	-2.0
Malvern Hills	210	190	210	245	235	250	215	210	-2.3
Redditch	140	180	160	175	185	185	180	165	-8.3
Worcester	260	215	240	270	220	210	255	210	-17.6
Wychavon	325	315	335	410	355	370	380	365	-3.9
Wyre Forest	215	220	235	235	220	200	210	215	2.4
Worcestershire	1,445	1,390	1,440	1,620	1,475	1,430	1,490	1,415	-5.0
West Midlands	11,595	11,775	12,030	12,815	12,345	11,620	12,160	12,050	-0.9
England	129,325	129,330	135,170	134,410	131,335	124,945	126,185	128,800	2.1

Source: Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2008.

On a positive note, the number of VAT De-registrations in Redditch decreased by -8.3% between 2006 and 2007, which was more favourable than the percentage decreases experienced in Worcestershire, West Midlands and England.

Net change in VAT registered businesses 2000-7

Area	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Redditch	70	0	65	50	30	60	35	85
Worcestershire	405	305	375	265	335	445	370	635

Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
West Midlands	2,685	2,060	2,320	2,860	2,745	3,195	2,625	3,670
England	27,490	19,380	20,000	34,090	29,360	34,610	33,150	51,105

Source: Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2008.

As a result of the changes in VAT registrations and de-registrations, the net change in businesses in Redditch is positive, with 85 more businesses registering than de-registering in 2007.

Stock of businesses at end of year, 2000-7

Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Redditch	2,125	2,130	2,195	2,245	2,270	2,330	2,370	2,455

Source: Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, 2008.

The above table shows that at the end of 2007 there were 2, 455 VAT registered businesses in Redditch. However, although the number of businesses has grown each year since 2000, as the effects of the current economic downturn become more pronounced, it would seem unlikely that this trend will continue when data for 2008 is published

Percentage of small businesses in an area showing employment growth, 2002/3 to 2006/7

Area	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7
Redditch	8.9	8.6	10.3	12.1	13.6
Worcestershire	**10.0**	**8.2**	**10.0**	**12.9**	**13.1**

Area	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7
West Midlands	**9.7**	**9.0**	**9.9**	**12.7**	**13.0**
England	**9.5**	**8.9**	**10.0**	**12.8**	**12.8**

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008.

The Office for National Statistics has recently published a set of statistics that show the proportion of small businesses that have increased the number of people they employ. Between 2006 and 2007, in Redditch, 13.6% of small businesses showed employment growth. The proportion of growing businesses is higher than the County, Region or England.

Appendix C – Action Plan

WHAT	WHY	WHO	TARGET	COST
Economic Priority: Support for manufacturing companies				
Organise an international trade event	Assist businesses to access new markets	RBC and HW Chamber	X no. of Redditch businesses attending No. of Redditch businesses that begin to export	TBC
Economic Priority: Encourage diversification away from low value-added manufacturing / automotive industries				
Activity to be developed				
Economic Priority: Business retention				
Provide an aftercare service	To encourage businesses to be embedded in the area and minimise the risk of relocation	RBC Senior Management / Partner (HW Chamber?)		TBC
Economic Priority: Support business start-ups				
Offer a "Business Booster" grant for young businesses (18 months – 3 years)	To enhance survival rates of new businesses	The scheme could be administered by Bromsgrove District Council	NI 171 Monitor of survival rates at 3 and 5 years	Up to £1,000 per grant (match funded by business)
Economic Priority: Establish and maintain a reputation for Redditch Borough Council as a "Business Friendly Council"				
Continue to provide a sign-posting service, for businesses, to public sector business support services	To improve uptake of public sector business support services	RBC	Growth in Business Link activities in the Borough Increased uptake of	Officer time

			skills training	
Formalise arrangements to continue to provide accommodation for public sector business support service delivery, eg Business Link business start up services	To improve access to public sector business support services	RBC	Growth in Business Link activities in the Borough	Cost is related to use of physical resources rather than budget. No additional budget implications
Offer a business start-up grant to new business that are located in Redditch and have accessed Business Link enterprise support	Encourage more people to start businesses and improve new business survival rates	The scheme could be administered by Bromsgrove District Council	2008/09 New start ups + x% Monitor of survival rates at 18 months Linked to NI 171	£500 per grant
Produce a "Redditch Prospectus" providing a single resource detailing services to business, useful contact numbers, opportunities for community involvement. The document to be available electronically and in hard-copy.	To improve access to and up take of public sector business support services. To provide a welcome to new businesses. To provide an easy reference resource for businesses. This publication will support many of the economic priorities such as INSERT	RBC / Publisher		TBC
Economic Priority: Encourage entrepreneurialism in young people				
Provide annual sponsorship of a prize for Young Enterprise	To promote entrepreneurialism in young people	RBC / Young Enterprise	Increase in Young Enterprise activity	c£100 To be funded out of existing budgets
Create a Redditch Young Entrepreneur of the Year award	To promote entrepreneurialism in young people	RBC	Year on year increase in	c£100 To be funded out

			nominations	of existing budgets
Economic Priority: Foster economic ambition in young people				
Facilitate the provision of Prince's Trust XL clubs in High Schools	To identify young people at risk of under-achieving and provide specialist support to prevent them becoming NEET	Prince's Trust	Year 1 – Establish XL clubs in each of the 4 High Schools Year 2 – Prince's Trust to secure alternative on-going funding for XL clubs Year 3 - 80% positive outcomes for first participants	£20,000 Funding already secured
Arrange a careers fair for Year 8 students	Due to the tertiary system of education in Redditch, students do not receive careers advice until year 9 (first year of high school). Students that achieve well in middle school often under-achieve at high school. A careers fair will help to create links between educational achievement and future employment opportunities whilst young people are still engaged.	RBC		TBC
Provide a representative of RBC to attend Trinity High School's enterprise review meetings	To assist Trinity High School to ensure that enterprise is promoted in all areas of the	RBC	Increase in involvement of other organisations with	Officer time

	curriculum.		the High School	
Create "Best Work Experience Student of the Year" Award	To promote work experience as a positive experience and encourage young people to use the opportunity to explore career options	RBC / Education Business Partnership		c£100 To be funded out of existing budgets
Economic Priority: Improve links between education providers and employers				
Provide an officer to sit on the Education Business Partnership	To optimise any opportunities for businesses and education providers to work together	RBC		Officer time
Create a "Best Work Experience Provider of the Year " Award	To recognise businesses contribution to improving young people's aspirations and to encourage more work experience opportunities	RBC / Education Business Partnership	Increase in the number of work experience placements offered	c£50 To be funded out of existing budgets
Establish RARE partnership (Raising Aspirations in Redditch)	To assist education providers to work more closely with business. The partnership will set up a programme whereby young people will visit businesses and learn about those businesses. The students will then be given a project by the company related to their business activity and the company will provide feedback and evaluation of the finished project.	RBC / Trinity High School / Businesses		TBC
Economic Priority: Reduce out-migration of skilled young people				

Provide higher education opportunities in Redditch	It is universally true that when young people move away to go to university they usually don't return to their home town. Provision of higher education in Redditch will encourage young people to remain in the Borough and provide a skilled workforce for future employers	RBC / NEW College / Worcester University / Warwick University	Provision of degree level courses at NEW College, Redditch campus	Officer time
Economic Priority: Minimise impact of the loss of highly skilled, older workers due to retirement				
Activities to be developed				
Economic Priority: Encourage continual skills development in the workforce				
Economic Priority: Minimise worklessness in order to assist in creating prosperous communities				
Develop a project to meet the "Connecting to Opportunites" programme in partnership with Worcestershire County Council and the other district councils in Worcestershire	To assist those that are furthest from employment to move towards employment	Worcestershire Economic Partnership	Secure funding for programme Delivery of programme	Officer time AWM have indicated that £800,000 is available to Worcestershire to deliver the Connecting to Opportunities programme.
Economic Priority: Promote Redditch as a business location				
Economic Priority: Protect employment land				
Economic Priority: Assist businesses to improve their environmental performance				

Economic Priority: Work with businesses to address their issues regarding security				
Economic Priority: Provide a commercial property service to assist businesses to find suitable premises				
Economic Priority: Encourage business tourism				
Economic Priority: Promote allocated employment sites that are not currently on the market to encourage their development				
Economic Priority: Retain and enhance the vitality of the town centre				

Appendix D – Consultation process

The Economic priorities have been produced by the Council to provide Worcestershire County Council suitable economic priorities for inclusion in the Worcestershire Economic Strategy and Joint Investment Plan.

In establishing the economic priorities Officers, in the first instance developed a list of priorities, along with reasoned justification for their inclusion. In order to verify and potentially add and/or remove some of the priorities there was a need to consult on the economic priorities. The draft economic priorities were presented to Executive Committee on the 3rd September and were subsequently endorsed for public consultation at Full Council. This report sets out the consultation process undertaken in relation to the economic priorities.

The draft document was placed on deposit for public consultation between 31 October 2008 and 12th December 2008. During this period parties were asked to submit comments. Specifically officers:

- Invited comments from the following key economic stakeholders:
  - Advantage West Midlands
  - Worcestershire County Council
  - Bromsgrove District Council
  - Malvern District Council
  - Worcester City Council
  - Wychavon District Council
  - Wyre Forest District Council
  - Business Link West Midlands
  - Education Business Partnership
  - Manufacturing Advisory Service
  - Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire & Worcestershire
  - NEW College
  - Balancing Business
  - Arrow Vale High School
  - Kingsley College
  - Trinity High School
  - St Augustine's High School
  - Learning & Skills Council
  - Connexions
  - Job Centre Plus
  - Federation of Small Businesses
  - The Student Council
  - Redditch Manufacturers' Association
  - John Truslove
  - The Prince's Trust
- Letter to Consultees on Development Plans database – letter advertised Economic Priorities and Preferred Draft Core Strategy (see Annex 1);

- Advertised the consultation on the Council's website (see Annex 2);
- Meetings and/or telephone conversations were held with key stakeholders.

Annex 1 – Joint Planning and Economic Development consultation letter

Our Ref: P301
Louise Brockett Extn: 3221
Louise.brockett@redditchbc.gov.uk

Date as postmark

Dear Sir/Madam,

<u>Preferred Draft Core Strategy (New Regulation 25) Participation 31st October 2008– 8th May 2009</u>

Redditch Borough Council is preparing its Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD). The Core Strategy forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and will be the main planning document for the Borough up to 2026 in order to deliver the goals and aspirations of Redditch Borough's community. Once the Core Strategy is adopted it will replace the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

In June 2008 amended Town and County Planning Regulations[16] were published. The amended regulations required the Core Strategy to be produced under Transitional Arrangements. Under these arrangements New Regulation 25 requires public participation in the preparation of a Development Plan Document. Therefore the Preferred Draft Core Strategy will be subject to a period of continuous public participation from the 31st October 2008 to the 8th May 2009. Representations are invited on the content of the DPD and can include, for example, suggested alterations to draft policy wording or comments on the preferred options selected by the Borough Council.

[16] The Town and County Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

A Sustainability Appraisal has been completed incorporating the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment. This has given a general assessment of the sustainability of the options on which the policies contained within the Preferred Draft Core Strategy have been based. This Sustainability Appraisal is available for consultation and can be viewed on the Redditch Borough Council website (www.redditch.whub.org.uk) or at the locations detailed below.

A number of other background documents have been produced to support the Preferred Draft Core Strategy and can be viewed online at the address below. The participation period for the Preferred Draft Core Strategy runs from Friday 31st October 2008 and ends on Friday 8th May 2009. During this time you can attend the following exhibitions and drop-in sessions.

When		Where
Tuesday 4th November	10am – 3pm	Sainsbury's
Saturday 8th November	9am – 1pm	The Kingfisher Shopping Centre
Thursday 13th November		Morrison's
Friday 21st November	10am – 1pm	Arrow Valley Countryside Centre
Saturday 29th November	TBC	Redditch Library
Thursday 4th December	4pm – 8pm	Committee Room 3 Town Hall
Tuesday 6th January	10am – 8pm	Committee Room 3 Town Hall
TBC	TBC	Joint Event with Bromsgrove and Stratford Districts

From the 13th January until the 5th May 2009 between 10am – 4pm every Tuesday, the Borough Council are providing the opportunity to 'Call a Planner'. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the Preferred Draft Core Strategy you can come to the Town Hall and call a planner from Planning Reception to discuss your comments.

All of the documents can be viewed on the Council's Website www.redditch.whub.org.uk or at the following locations:

- Redditch Town Hall (Planning Reception), Monday-Friday 9am-5pm
- One Stop Shops (Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow) Monday-Friday, opening times vary
- Redditch Library, Woodrow Library and Mobile Library

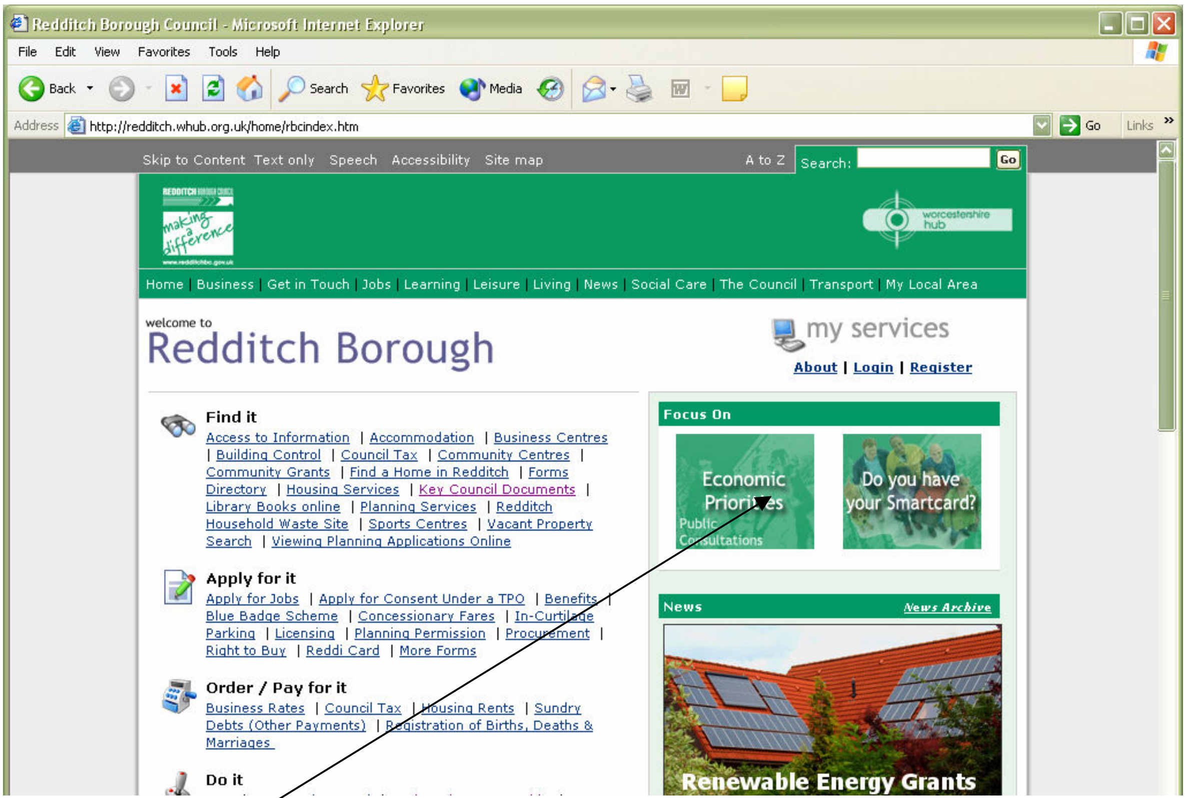
If you would like to comment on the Preferred Draft Core Strategy please send comments to the postal address detailed above or by email to devplans@redditchbc.gov.uk.

In addition to the Preferred Draft Core Strategy, Redditch Borough Council is taking this opportunity to consult on its economic priorities. In September 2008, the Council agreed its draft economic priorities for the purpose of consultation. The priorities aim to tackle the key economic issues affecting Redditch and are grouped around 4 themes – Business, People, Place and a Powerful Voice. We are seeking your views on these priorities. The consultation runs for period of 6 weeks starting on Friday 31st October and ending on Friday 12th December 2008. Comments on the economic priorities can be made at http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/consultation

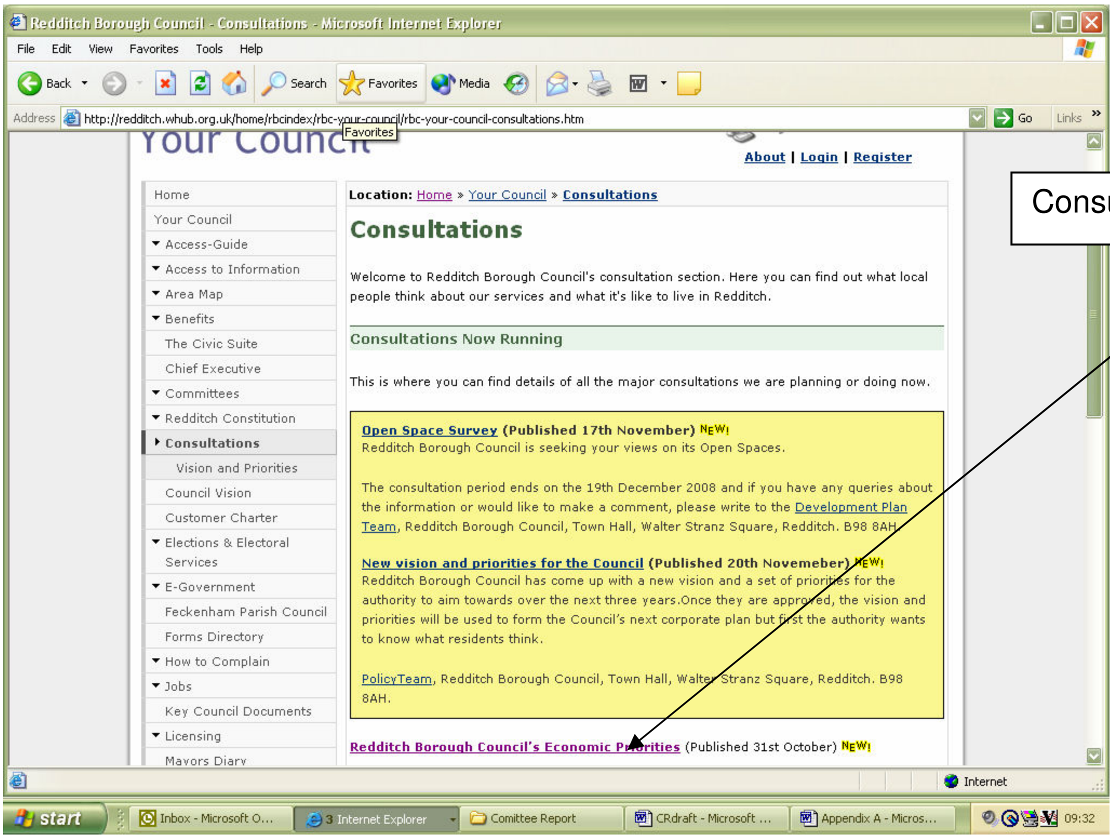
Yours faithfully,

Louise Brockett
Planning Assistant

Annex 2 – Website Extract



Home page



Consultation page

Appendix E – Growth Aspirations

MANUFACTURING

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	CURRENT GREAT BRITAIN %	PREDICTED GREAT BRITAIN CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REGIONAL %	PREDICTED REGIONAL CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REDDITCH %
Manufacturing	10.9		14.7		24.8

We expect the proportion of people who are employed in manufacturing in Redditch to decline but the number of jobs to remain stable.

CURRENT SITUATION

Historically, manufacturing has always been significant in Redditch. Prior to its designation as a New Town, the town's population expanded and its status developed as local needle and spring industries thrived. Following its designation as a new town, Redditch's reputation as a manufacturing area and its supply of engineering labour resulted in more manufacturing companies being attracted to the town. The close proximity to automotive OEMs (Original Equipment Manufacturers) resulted in an automotive cluster with a strong supply chain. Today, Redditch is home to a number of major general and more specialised manufacturing companies including automotive company UK NSI and medical specialists Surgicraft.

Redditch's reputation as a manufacturing area and its supply of engineering labour resulted in more manufacturing companies being attracted to the town following its designation as a new town and its resultant growth. As well as skilled engineering labour, Redditch has a supply of low and semi-skilled labour which is able to compete with other locations which have low labour costs.

VISION FOR REDDITCH

Nationally, manufacturing is generally in decline. However, it remains very important to the local economy. Thus support for manufacturing is one of the Council's economic priorities. Manufacturing is encouraged locally through the Worcestershire Economic Strategy which aims to support technology-led growth and cluster development, particularly in Medical Technologies. The Regional Economic Strategy also aims to support cluster development in the automotive, medical technologies and aerospace sectors. Regional support for manufacturing aims to make it more knowledge-intensive and recognises the importance of sustaining local manufacturing to support local economies.

All of the support for manufacturing aims to promote up-skilling and growth by increasing the value, rather than the volume, of manufacturing businesses. Therefore it is expected that the number of jobs in manufacturing will remain stable. As the total number of jobs in Redditch increases, this will have the effect of reducing the proportion of local jobs in manufacturing in line with national trends. Manufacturing will still be intrinsic to Redditch, however it will be complemented by a broader and more competitive range of economic activities.

CONSTRUCTION

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	CURRENT GREAT BRITAIN %	PREDICTED GREAT BRITAIN CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REGIONAL %	PREDICTED REGIONAL CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REDDITCH %
Construction	4.8		5		2.6

We expect the proportion of people who are employed in construction in Redditch to increase.

CURRENT SITUATION

In recent years there has been little change in the proportion of people employed in construction in Redditch. However, the influx of economic migrants with construction skills into the region indicates that there are opportunities for growth in this sector.

VISION FOR REDDITCH

In the RSS it is proposed that Redditch be designated a Settlement of Significant Development. This places on the Borough a commitment to cater for, and deliver, increased housing and infrastructure and could potentially result in a significant increase in built development. This demand will necessitate an increase in the demand for skilled construction workers and therefore it is suggested that Redditch nurture the local construction industry through training. The introduction of diplomas for 14 – 19 year olds in Construction and the Built Environment and the construction industry training available through Skills 4 Work allow residents to gain the skills required to benefit from the opportunity created by the RSS requirements. With the training and demand in place, semi-skilled workers in other sectors can also have realistic ambitions to acquire construction industry skills. Given Redditch's proximity to other urban areas and excellent road networks, it would be easy for construction employees based in Redditch to access surrounding areas where they could apply their work.

DISTRIBUTION

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	CURRENT GREAT BRITAIN %	PREDICTED GREAT BRITAIN CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REGIONAL %	PREDICTED REGIONAL CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REDDITCH %
Distribution	16.8		17.2		18.1

We expect the proportion of people who are employed in Distribution in Redditch to increase but would look to restrict the growth in relation to wholesale distribution.

CURRENT SITUATION

The distribution sector includes both wholesale and retail distribution. The number of people employed in distribution has been fairly stable in recent years. Redditch's central location and excellent road network make it particularly attractive to businesses in this sector.

VISION FOR REDDITCH

The development of the town centre, particularly in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, and the proposed redevelopment of the neighbourhood shopping centres aims to increase the retail offer in the Borough and should result in a corresponding increase in jobs in this sector. This focus recognises the continued importance and necessity of retail to the local economy.

Whilst there is no ambition locally or regionally to increase job numbers in Wholesale Distribution in Redditch, the Borough's central location and excellent road network are attractive to businesses in this sector. However, the limited availability of employment land and low density of jobs means that we would look to restrict growth of employment in this sector.

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	CURRENT GREAT BRITAIN %	PREDICTED GREAT BRITAIN CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REGIONAL %	PREDICTED REGIONAL CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REDDITCH %
Hotels & Restaurants	6.8		6.7		2.8

We expect the proportion of people who are employed in Hotels & Restaurants in Redditch to increase.

CURRENT SITUATION

The number of people employed in the Hotels & Restaurants sector in Redditch has been relatively stable in recent years.

VISION FOR REDDITCH

The aim of all interventions in the economy, both locally and regionally, is to increase economic wellbeing. Redditch Borough Council's economic priorities aim ultimately to increase wages for local residents. An increase in wages results in higher disposable income from which it is anticipated that the local hotel and restaurant businesses will benefit. Also, business tourism has been identified as an economic priority for Redditch Borough Council and in the Worcestershire Economic Strategy and thus any interventions will be intended to facilitate growth in this sector.

TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATIONS

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	CURRENT GREAT BRITAIN %	PREDICTED GREAT BRITAIN CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REGIONAL %	PREDICTED REGIONAL CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REDDITCH %
Transport & Communications	5.9		5.6		4.2

We expect the proportion of people who are employed in Transport & Communications in Redditch to increase but would aim to restrict growth.

CURRENT SITUATION

The number of people employed in Transport & Communications in Redditch has doubled in the past 10 years. Nationally, the proportion of employees in Transport & Communications has remained fairly constant. Despite the growth in job numbers, Redditch still has a lower proportion of jobs in this sector than the West Midlands and Great Britain.

VISION FOR REDDITCH

Whilst there is no ambition locally or regionally to increase job numbers in Transport & Communications in Redditch, the Borough's central location and excellent road network are attractive to businesses in this sector. However, the limited availability of employment land and low density of jobs means that we would look to restrict growth of employment in this sector.

FINANCE, I.T, OTHER BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	CURRENT GREAT BRITAIN %	PREDICTED GREAT BRITAIN CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REGIONAL %	PREDICTED REGIONAL CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REDDITCH %
Finance, IT, Other Business Activities	21.2		17.8		25.8

We expect the proportion of people who are employed in Finance, I.T and Other Business Activities in Redditch to increase.

CURRENT SITUATION

More people in Redditch are employed in Finance, I.T. and, Other Business Activities than in any other sector. There has been significant growth in jobs in this sector and growth in Redditch has been greater than growth both regionally and nationally.

VISION FOR REDDITCH

Professional & Business Support services have been identified in both the Regional Economic Strategy and the Worcestershire Economic Strategy as a priority cluster due to the high growth potential. Support for manufacturing, increasing competitiveness and diversification have been identified as priorities both locally and regionally and actions around these priorities focus on businesses accessing and investing in support services. The services required to achieve these priorities include Research & Development and I.T. Additionally, cluster development, diversification and the Central Technology Belt all present opportunities in R&D and I.T.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, EDUCATION & HEALTH

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	CURRENT GREAT BRITAIN %	PREDICTED GREAT BRITAIN CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REGIONAL %	PREDICTED REGIONAL CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REDDITCH %
Public Admin, Education & Health	26.9		26.6		18.5

We expect the proportion of people who are employed in Public Administration, Education & Health in Redditch to increase.

CURRENT SITUATION

The proportion of people employed in Public Administration, Education & Health in Redditch has fluctuated over the last decade. Organisations in this sector provide services primarily to the local population. There are no organisations, such as a University or Government Department, in Redditch that would result in higher pockets of employment in this sector being located in the Borough.

VISION FOR REDDITCH

Any growth in the population of the Borough will result in a corresponding increase in public services and therefore in the number of people employed in this sector. However, there are ambitions for significant up-skilling of the workforce which will require additional education and training services. Therefore there is likely to be an increase in the proportion of people employed in this sector.

OTHER SERVICES

TYPE OF INDUSTRY	CURRENT GREAT BRITAIN %	PREDICTED GREAT BRITAIN CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REGIONAL %	PREDICTED REGIONAL CHANGE UP TO 2026	CURRENT REDDITCH %
Other Services	5.3		5.1		3.1

We expect the proportion of people employed in Other Services in Redditch to increase.

CURRENT SITUATION

The proportion of people employed in Other Services in Redditch has remained relatively stable over the past 10 years. However, the proportion in Redditch is below the proportion employed regionally and nationally.

VISION FOR REDDITCH

No interventions in this sector are planned in the Worcestershire Economic Strategy or the Regional Economic Strategy. However, this sector includes recreational and sporting activities and the planned redevelopment of the Abbey Stadium should result in growth in the number of people employed in this sector.

Appendix F – Minutes from Student Council meeting

MINUTES **Present:**

Connor Morris (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Dan Allen, Peter Bailey, Luke Barnard, Arlene Brunner, Kimberley Chadwick, Karen Christoffersen, Sally Foxall, Yasmin Steer, Grace Taylor, Natalie Williams and Patrick Yates.

Officers:

Ashley Baldwin (Planning Assistant), Peter Brown (Waste Awareness Officer), Bev Docherty (Treasurer to the Student Council), Georgina Harris (Development Support Officer) and Veronica Allen (Youth Worker for Worcestershire County Council).

Also Present:

Councillor K Banks (Redditch Borough Council).

Clerk to the Student Council:

Janice Smyth.

63. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Student Councillors Toby Kingsman, James Timney, Karim Mansoor, Ceinwen Stone, Mitchell Davies, April Powell, James Timney and Natalie Williams.

Apologies were also received on behalf of Deputy Student Councillor Emma Bayliss and Borough Councillor Juliet Brunner.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

65. MINUTES

AGREED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Student Council held on the 17 September 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

66. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STUDENT SURVEY

The Chair welcomed Peter Brown, the Borough's Waste Awareness Officer. Peter thanked Student Councillors for the opportunity to highlight waste awareness and ascertain young peoples knowledge and views on the subject. Following a short video, a debate ensued during which the following points were highlighted and discussed:

- changes undergone by the earth during the last 50 years;
- climate change results (drought / famine in some areas such as Africa)
- use of fossil fuels (transport/shipping etc) to move goods around the world;
- mitigation – trying not to waste food and improve recycling to use less energy;
- doing something yourself as young people (Red Nose Day / using Fair Trade products);
- more organic farming (less pesticides into the soil / water courses)
- more use of solar panels / wind farms / coal burning /nuclear plants etc.
- investigate / invest in use of biofuels (as fossil fuels run out alternatives will be needed).
- the impact for young people in the future.

Student Councillors completed a short survey on Sustainable Development and Climate Change Awareness that had been provided with their agendas. Peter thanked the Student Council for their time and views on the subject of climate change

67. REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

The Chair introduced Georgina Harris (Development Support Officer) and Ashley Baldwin (Planning Assistant).

Georgina and Ashley thanked the Student Council for their time and briefly outlined the Council's agreed economic priorities, which were to tackle key economic issues affecting Redditch, for consultation purposes. The Student Council's attention was drawn to the information provided with the Agenda on the Council's key issues and draft priorities, including:

- supporting all types of business in the town and promoting Redditch as a business location,
- encouraging and fostering economic ambition amongst all age groups in the town;
- work to retain skilled workers in the Town; and
- improve links between education providers and employers.

A debate followed the introduction and the following key questions and points were highlighted:

Q. What professions do you see yourself in 10 years.

Career Goals included:

- PE Teacher
- Psychology
- Accountancy
- Anthropology
- Chemist

Q. In Redditch ?

- Probably not, no major companies / insufficient opportunities.
- One Student Councillor advised they would like to stay in Redditch if opportunities existed.

Q. Careers Advice provision ?

It was noted from responses that Careers advise and support varied from school to school. The following quotes were provided:

- Some in year 9
- Opportunities for Connexions in Year 10
- Help with UCAS points.
- Career Advice was primarily to stay on in Education but given quite a few options.
- Arrow Vale – Career lessons available but optional if fits into timetable
- Kingsley – some options in general studies to look at careers in 6th form.
- St. Augustines – very good – advice sessions available 3 times a week.

Q. If / when discussing careers, do you get any feedback on <u>what's available in Redditch</u> –

- generally more across the board advise but does include Redditch usually.

Q. Advise on industry in Redditch?

<u>Apprentiships in Redditch</u> – have looked at local businesses in Redditch through Connexions**.**

Is your knowledge based on your abilities / what you want to do rather than local knowledge – yes generally.

Q. Work experience - responses were as follows:

- very good 10/10 – Connexions got it for him.
- very enjoyable – placement obtained through Mom.
- small business – not related to what wanted to do – School got the placement.

- Bank – very good experience – placed through Connexions.
- Local 1st School – did not really enjoy / bored / not enough to do. - placed through school.
- 1st School – very good – no mention of who placed through.
- British Home Stores – hated the experience and reinforced view that they would never wish to work in retail. Not career linked, placed by school.
- Blue Cross Animal Adoption Centre – not career linked but enjoyed very much – placed through school.
- 1st School – very good / friendly / enjoyed the experience – placed through Mom's friend but supported by school.
- Travel Agency - OK – no mention of who placed through.

The Local economy was briefly discussed and particularly the lack of "brand" shops available. It was generally accepted though, that with retail facilities in Birmingham relatively close by, this was not considered to be a real issue.

Georgina and Ashley thanked the Student Council for their participation in the consultation and advised that the consultation outcomes would become available via a link on the Council's Website Homepage if anyone was interested.

68. MEMBERSHIP REVIEW – KINGFISHER AND PITCHEROAK SCHOOLS

Student Councillors were informed that, as agreed at the Annual Meeting, a review would be undertaken to ascertain the success or otherwise of Kingfisher and Pitcheroak Schools having representation on the Student Council.

Officers reported that both Kingfisher and Pitcheroak were happy to continue with the current arrangements they have – two nominated representatives each - as this was more manageable from the schools' point of view particularly relating to transport and teacher supervision. It was further advised that, Pitcheroak were considering extending the terms of their current representatives, Gemma and Sophie, for a second year as they had both expressed an interest in continuing to represent the School, although this had still to be confirmed.

The views of Student Councillors were sought on the arrangements. There was general agreement that the two schools had integrated very well and that the additional number of Students had not created any difficulties. It was felt that if membership of the Student Council on the current terms worked best for the schools themselves, the Student Council had no problem with the arrangement continuing.

AGREED that

Kingfisher and Pitcheroak Schools be welcomed on a permanent basis on the Student Council Membership under the terms agreed,

namely the inclusion of two nominated representatives from each school to be notified on an annual basis.

69. STUDENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2009/10 – UPDATE

Student Councillors were reminded that the Student Council Elections were to be run in conjunction with the County Council's UK Youth Parliament and Youth Cabinet in late January / early February 2009. Their support and assistance in promoting the Student Council Elections in their schools was sought.

It was noted that Officers had recently received notification of the resignation of Tom Baker-Price from the Student Council for personal reasons which, as Tom had been due to continue with a second year of office, had created a further vacancy for Kingsley College.

70. RESIDENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2009/10 – UPDATE

Student Councillors noted that the Pioneer Centre in Kidderminster was currently being looked at again for the 2009 Residential Weekend for the weekend Friday 6 to Sunday 8 March. Bev Docherty advised, however, that as the 2008 Residential had actually taken place in May 2008, having a further Residential in March 09 would result in having to finance two weekends in the same financial year which would probably not be possible with the budget available. It was therefore suggested, in the circumstances, that Veronica make enquiries as to the availability of the Centre in April (the start of the new financial year) instead.

71. LOCAL DEMOCRACY EVENT

In the absence of Councillor Brunner, Dan Allen provided feedback on the Local Democracy event held on the 21 October 2008.

It was noted that the day had gone well with good participation in all of the organised events with the speed dating session between Students and Borough Councillors being the most popular once again.

Student Councillors assisting with organising and setting up the event were thanked for their help and contributions during the day.

72. FINANCE REPORT

It was noted that the Student Council's balances stood at £3,954.19 as of the 30 September 2008. It was further noted that the figure included two donations to Christ Church Matchborough Youth Group (Summer Camp) and the Worcestershire Youth Support Black History Month (£500 and £375 respectively) and that the Student Council had been included in publicity material for both events.

AGREED that

the Financial report be noted.

73. SUB-GROUP UPDATE

It was noted that attendances at sub-group meetings were very low which was of some concern. Sub-group members expressed their regret at Tom's resignation from the Student Council and wished him the very best in his future endeavours.

Patrick reported that the Crime Survey document Tom had been working on was being drafted again and the sub-group were looking to get a designer on board in order to complete the task.

There was a brief discussion on ways to improve participation at sub-group meetings and there was also a suggestion that a Student Councillor of the Month award be offered as an incentive to get more members to sub-group meetings. Student Councillors were reminded that they had already agreed that Student Council Meetings should be time limited, with exceptions when necessary, to facilitate a short Sub-Group meeting after each meeting in order that the Student Council body "as a whole", had an opportunity to participate in sub-group work.

A further issue highlighted by a number of Student Councillors was that, on occasion, their attendances at Student Council meetings were being marked as absences on their school attendance records. Officers advised that, whilst Students had a responsibility to make sure that relevant teaching Staff (and school administration staff if necessary) were aware that they would be absence and why and had been given permission to be out of school, both Principal Teachers and Student Council Teacher Representatives for all of the schools received Agendas and notifications of every Student Council meeting taking place. The schools had agreed to participate in the Student Council Initiative and release Students to attend the term time meetings, subject to other school commitments (such as exams / work experience etc) having d to take precedence from time to time. In such circumstances, Student Councillors' apologies would be tendered at meetings if notified in good time.

AGREED that

Officers agreed to raise the matter direct with the schools to clarify the situation.

74. FUNDING REQUEST FORM

The Student Council discussed further revisions to the Funding Request Form following debate on the design at the previous meeting when initial changes were agreed. Further minor amendments were suggested (deleting block colours and replacing with dotted lines) and agreed and funding limits, for the year as a whole and on each application specifically, were set. The issue of

Guidance Criteria with a scoring system was briefly discussed and it was agreed to discuss the matter further at the next meeting.

AGREED that

1) the amended version of the Funding Request form be brought to the next meeting for final approval;

2) a £1,000 maximum annual budget be allocated for donations to organisations serving young people of Redditch;

3) donations to groups or organisations be limited to up to £250 with only one request per organisation per Student Council Year (March to January); and

4) further work be undertaken on the Guidance Criteria and considered at the next meeting of the Student Council.

75. WORK PROGRAMME

Other than standard items, no additional matters were suggested for the next meeting of the Student Council.

76. BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MONITORING

The relevant spokespersons for the monitoring of Borough Council's Committee's advised that there were no issues to report regarding the Agendas from the various meetings.

77. STUDENT COUNCIL MEETING – JANUARY 2009

The Student Council agreed that the next meeting of the Student Council be held on Wednesday 7 January 09.

78. OTHER BUSINESS

a) What to do in Redditch

Student Councillors were asked what facilities they thought young people would like to see in Redditch with a suggestion that a "Teenages" only club would be good.

b) Bus Fares

It was highlighted that travelling around the Borough was expensive as Students aged 16 and over had to pay adult fares even when still at school and that it had been suggested by a County Councill that the Student Council might like to look at the situation for young people and compile a report for taking to the County Council on its findings with a view to the County approaching bus providers. No specific action was proposed on this however.

c) Romany Roots

The Student Council noted that Romany Roots were holding an event on the 21 November at Redditch Youth House and that they were invited to attend and also help out with front of house if interested.

5) Voluntary Group – Youth Line

Student Councillors noted that a Voluntary Group "Youth Line", were looking for volunteers to because operators / advisors and anyone interested in finding out more about the service were asked to discuss with Patrick Yates after the meeting.

The Chair reminded everyone that being able to list Voluntary Work on University Applications forms was always of benefit.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m.
and closed at 12.25 pm