

Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan

BD7 Background document - Business and Employment

Like much of the UK, Boughton and Dunkirk thrives, in the main, on small business.

Companies were invited to submit their views either on-line, via a website or on paper. Seventy one companies responded (44%), well above the average business survey response rates (10-15%).

The Neighbourhood Plan area has fewer companies than the average across the south east of England, largely involving part-time working and self employment.

Suggestions for improvements/criticisms covered ten different areas of which five most frequently mentioned were the need for:

- Faster, improved broadband service (12)
- Reduced parking in The Street and increased off-street parking allocation (11)
- Improved road upkeep and/or maintenance (6)
- Additional housing and commercial land allocations (6)
- The need for Business Networking forums (5)
- Promotion of Local Businesses (5)

Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan area has Broadband access one-third slower, compared with the national average and incomplete coverage. The proportion of exporting companies locally are in line with the national average (11%) eleven companies (15.5%) have expansion plans some with additional property requirements, and eighteen with additional staff requirements in 2016.

The absence of a Business Forum or group to support local business with combined activities such as networking, the discussion of promotion or recruitment opportunities may hamper attempts at progress in calling government bodies to account or when coordinated action is required.

Local business attitudes are mainly positive. The potential for further growth exists, at least in the medium term.

Eleven local companies said they were considering changing premises to expand and allow for growth. These opinions were expressed pre-Brexit and a further survey may be needed in order to gauge/check business confidence. The Neighbourhood Plan should remain flexible to accommodate any expansionist ambitions help by small businesses, while at the same time, protecting the local environment.

There are three major farming/agricultural businesses in the curtilage of the Neighbourhood Plan. Each is thriving, and the development of agricultural buildings has been sympathetic and necessary for the growth of these businesses.

Appendices:

Local Business Monitor

Survey Findings Report