

JSNA Economy Chapter - Executive Summary

Background

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) assesses the current and future health and social care needs of the local community. These are needs that could be met by the local authority, NHS or other stakeholders. All areas are required to have a JSNA, structured in the form of chapters with each looking at a specific area of health and social care and supported by data dashboards. This is an executive summary of the economy chapter – all other chapters are available to [view here](#).

Introduction

The chapter sets out the clear role that the economy plays in determining the health and wellbeing of residents. This includes employment opportunities, developing new skills, individual finances, availability and access to services, and connectiveness. This is explored through 'place' and 'people' perspectives. 'Place' covers aspects such as prosperous towns and access to services. 'People' looks at the role meaningful and secure employment plays in health outcomes as well as those requiring targeted interventions. The chapter explores ways for system leaders to respond to these. The data evidence for the chapter can be viewed in the [JSNA Economy dashboard](#).

The importance of the economy to health and wellbeing is also reflected in the [Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#). It cuts across three priority areas in the strategy including leading healthy lives by preventing ill-health, supporting mental health, and addressing the wider determinants of health such as housing, food security and skills development. Economic factors such as deprivation, employment, and access local services / amenities can lead to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes such as social isolation, lack of food security, reduction in active lifestyles and poor living conditions. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy also identifies 'system capabilities' to break down barriers that may be preventing collaboration and therefore change. The most relevant of these to the economy are empowered and thriving communities, estate management, and workforce development and recovery. The important role of business is also set out in the introduction and their ability to offer stable employment, social value contributions and work with the local community.

Overview of Surrey's economy

- Surrey is one of the largest contributors to the UK economy after London.
- Exceptional global connections due to proximity to London, airports and coastal ports. Rail and road congestion is an issue, however.
- Significantly green (70% green belt) but housing affordability is a challenge.

- 110,000 businesses (91% micro) and Gross Value Added (GVA) of over £50bn. GVA is a measure of the value that producers add to goods and services that they buy and sell. It is measured by calculating the difference between the cost of producing goods and services in a region and the income received from selling them to indicate how well an area can use its resources to generate economic growth.
- Home to innovation strengths in clusters resulting in high value jobs in areas such as health, pharmaceuticals, space, gaming and green automotives. Notable companies include Pfizer, Toyota, and Samsung.
- A highly skilled population and low unemployment rate (economic inactivity rate of 17% for Surrey's working age population) but some employers struggle to recruit, particularly in areas like health and social work, automotive and technology sectors.
- Some disparities across Surrey in areas such as earnings where levels vary (e.g. average full-time weekly wage in Elmbridge in 2023 was £895.60 compared to £718.10 in Tandridge).
- 30,000 people live in the most deprived wards, linked to poor health outcomes, based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), a measure of relative deprivation at a small local area level across England which shows that although there are no parts of Surrey in decile 1 (most deprived) of the IMD, there are pockets of deprivation which are in the 10-30% most deprived areas in the country. More detail on this is in the Surrey Context JSNA Chapter: [The Surrey Context: People and Place | Surrey-i](#)

The Place Perspective (aspects such as prosperous towns, active local communities, and access to services).

Although there is a perception of Surrey as comfortable and prosperous, there are 'pockets' of deprivation in key neighbourhoods. Several of Surrey's town centres also perform below the Surrey average on the index of retail environment, health services, physical environment and air quality. The 'place' perspective illustrates the factors that can contribute to health and well-being including housing, transport and the built environment. It is important to target support and empower local partnership working where need and opportunity are identified to have the greatest impact. This would also help to increase community participation with statistics showing that this is reduced in more deprived areas. In terms of what is known about Surrey as a place, this includes:

- Economic activity takes place predominantly within the identified 27 strategic town centres and their immediate vicinity. It is recognised that the geographic approach to assessing / identifying health and wellbeing needs is an ever-changing environment and, whilst this chapter refers to towns and places geographies, it is acknowledged that this may have developed since publication and will be reflected in future updates.

- The Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that define the strategic towns are home to over 54% of Surrey's resident population.
- Although Surrey has a strong Gross Domestic Product (GDP) performance, this measures the size and health of the economy rather than the well-being of an area and its residents. Socio-economic measures not included in GDP but crucial to well-being include unpaid household service work (cleaning, preparing meals, childcare), volunteer activity, transport services, and loss or gain of social capital and political participation. Attempts to measure these (such as the 'Better Life Indicator') are not at a smaller geography, e.g. LSOA level, illustrating the importance of local insight and partnership.
- Wellbeing measures for consideration across key areas of economic activity include income and jobs, work/life balance, education, social connections, and civic engagement.
- Various studies (including those from Cormac Russell and Brigham) have illustrated the importance of community-based assets and social connection to health. Participation in local growth helps ensure local ownership and builds a greater sense of confidence and belonging.
- Anchor institutions (e.g. councils, the NHS, universities and libraries) have a vital role to play as local assets, given that their long-term sustainability is linked to the wellbeing of the populations that they serve. Their ability to leverage employment, skills, local goods and services means that they can be anchors for opportunity, connecting people, and growing local resilience.
- Current challenges for the 27 strategic towns include housing affordability, accessibility to green space, and civic participation. There are also areas with higher levels of children living in relatively low-income families – Horley (13%), Chertsey (12.3%) and Addlestone (11.5%). Areas such as Chertsey and Egham have lower than average turnout for elections.
- An example of the 'Towns Approach in Horley' is given as an area with high unemployment and related issues. Local authorities and stakeholders undertook extensive local engagement and developed a vision and 13 priorities which helped to secure over £6m investment from several parties involved. This will deliver in areas such as 'greening' the town centre and improving local play provision and community facilities. This also helped to establish a set of town engagement principles, useful for future town-based approaches.

Key neighbourhoods and priority populations

Whilst the chapter focuses on Surrey through a strategic towns lens, it is recognised that there are different approaches to a place-based lens. The Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies the priority populations, recognised as communities of identity most at risk of experiencing poor health outcomes, and key neighbourhoods, which are wards that encompass key LSOA areas likely to have the poorest outcomes based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). It is key to consider the priority populations and key

neighbourhoods when implementing interventions and resource to ensure those most at need are supported.

As well as the strategic towns, there are also Priority Populations identified as being at risk of experiencing poor health outcomes. Geographically, these pockets of deprivation are recognised as Key Neighbourhoods, which encompass key LSOA areas likely to have the poorest outcomes based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Evidence shows that residents should be at the heart of decision making and some examples of best practice include; 'The Wigan Deal', Tower Hamlets 'You Decide', and 'Preston Community Wealth Building'. Key aspects included elements such as strong leadership, community involvement, and practical measures such as a real living wage and progressive procurement.

In conclusion:

- Prioritisation of strategic areas based on need should drive our collective efforts.
- Multi-faceted and coordinated local partnership effort is required to enable sustainable growth.
- It is vital to put residents at the centre of the decision-making process for local initiatives to improve quality of life indicators.

The People Perspective (aspects such as meaningful and secure employment)

The impact of employment on wellbeing goes beyond that of having a job and can include aspects such as the nature, quality, and location of work. The current employability landscape is complex with various funding streams. Therefore, whole system engagement is required to make long-term sustainable differences to the employment opportunities of the most disadvantaged groups. Barriers for those wanting to enter employment will also vary so targeted, joined up interventions will be most effective aimed at specific communities based on evidence where employment and educational outcomes are lower. Any new interventions that are developed need to minimise duplication and help to maximise the existing support and resources already available.

Data shows that higher healthy life expectancy is strongly correlated with higher employment rates. Challenges related to unemployment include poverty, stress, financial strain and unhealthy behaviours. The quality of work is also important, including elements such as pay security, contract type, support at work and work-life balance.

Trends of economic inactivity post pandemic have been researched in a County Councils Network report (2023), revealing that numbers nationally have grown. This has been coupled with an increase in unemployment benefit, seen across all Surrey constituencies between March 2020 and October 2023, ranging from Reigate which saw an increase from 1.4% to

2.1% to Spelthorne which saw an increase from 1.7% to 3.4%. Latest Surrey data indicates that 17.2% of those currently economically inactive do want a job. Reasons for economic inactivity vary and include looking after family, retirement, temporary and long-term sickness. Long-term sickness has been identified as one of the main reasons nationally. Young people out of work is also a Priority Population locally and the number of sick notes issued annually across Surrey Heartlands between 2019 and 2023 has consistently ranged between 104,151 and 130,370 demonstrating the scale of sickness absence and the population level need for support. There are a number of indirect intersections between many of the priority population groups and economic inactivity such as people with serious mental illness, carers, and long-term conditions. To tackle the long-term challenges of economic inactivity there needs to be recognition that a standardised approach has limitations.

The ‘No-one Left Behind’ Revealing Reality Research explored the needs and experiences of Surrey residents furthest from the workforce. This highlighted challenges around finding and sustaining work and concerns and anxiety around keeping jobs. The two main barriers identified were capability (skills or the English language) and mindset (lack of resilience). The research also found a lack of support in this area or a lack of awareness of the support that was available. Evidence also shows the importance of quality of work, including level of pay. Surrey has an average of 8.3% of children (19,967) living in relative low-income families, and that almost 7 in every 10 children who live in absolute low income households in Surrey have at least 1 adult in the household who is in employment. This illustrates the need to support individuals into well-paid jobs or supporting those in work to progress. Further research has been conducted to explore in-work poverty in Surrey to identify interventions that can be implemented with internal Surrey County Council teams and external partners.

There are a number of **programmes offering support for employment and progression** such as ‘in work progression’ with DWP which supports working claimants to progress through a work coach. The Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care Programme (IPSPC) provides on the job employment advice and support.

Surrey’s Skills Plan includes a key aim to ensure inclusive access for residents to improved careers education, information and guidance, linked to clear learning, work, and training pathways. Priorities include promoting access to good quality jobs and enabling access to opportunities for work progression. This is part of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Surrey and Mid/North Hampshire, produced to support local economic growth. This identifies ‘hidden pools of talent’ as a focus area to support employers to increase the diversity of their workforce. Understanding employers’ current and future skills needs is also important to ensure alignment between demand and supply.

In conclusion:

- Employment offers the best and most sustained route out of poverty and better health outcomes.

- There is work to do in areas such as skills and employment to address fragmentation.
- There is a need for a multi-stakeholder effort to join up resources and achieve more to provide local opportunities and increase employment rates and good quality work – working with employers is a key part of this.
- Individual needs will vary, and this requires a flexible approach – not a one-size-fits-all.
- Economic inactivity has increased and those wanting to find quality work may require support.
- Any work carried out should be through a resilient, sustainable model and led locally.

Chapter recommendations for consideration by key organisations

Place	People
System change required to increase participation and engagement, proactively stepping out of established community engagement channels and focus efforts in seeking those who may have not participated in community engagement, designing creative engagement mechanisms to enable participation.	We must take a multi-stakeholder approach to tackling health related barriers to accessing and sustaining employment.
Prioritise based on need and quality of life indicators, allowing residents access to funding and entrepreneurial set-up opportunities, as well as connecting with others to fulfil people’s local needs.	Whilst co-ordination and engagement must come from SCC and the health system, individual actors in this space also need to take responsibility for how their contribution works alongside others.
Indicators and insight required at local level (LSOA) to measure economic performance and social progress such as income and jobs, work-life balance, environmental quality, social connections, and civic engagement to determine wellbeing dimensions and appropriate local social improvements required.	The reasons behind the growing trend of people with long-term health needs and the rise in economic inactivity need to be fully considered with a response that is tailored to supporting these people back into quality work.
Putting residents at the centre of the decision-making process requiring a coordinated multi-stakeholder effort and coordination of local assets in order to deliver a meaningful community-led approach which will benefit the local area.	Partners must work together to connect our communities of need with the existing and future support.