

Executive Summary

A survey of the industrial estate was undertaken by the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan's economy task group as a part of a review of businesses within the town. This included both desk based research and a survey of businesses on the industrial estate. The survey was carried out in June and July 2016. In total 81 businesses were identified and offered the opportunity to participate, with a total of 42 businesses responding (52% response rate). The responses were distributed across the estate and were from a range of sectors and business sizes.

Key Findings

The Estate industries cover a surprisingly wide range of businesses, from those we expect to find on traditional industrial estates to high tech and emerging markets more linked with Science Parks. This is a factor that Totnes can use in marketing both its reputation for innovation and cutting edge ideas and the local opportunities for these types of businesses. Over 15% of estate businesses are linked to the Green Economy.

Family, sole traders and local businesses make up almost 70% of businesses. This local connection and commitment is an important feature in the Estates overall contribution to the economic health of Totnes. Whilst some businesses are very new, the average longevity of all businesses is 28 years demonstrating a huge commitment to the town. This is also demonstrated by the opportunities offered to young people. Initial estimates suggest the estate contributes approx. 25% of jobs in the town, although this could be more as it excludes subcontractors. The survey shows some improvements can be made particularly traffic access at peak commuter hours and signage on the estate however the majority of businesses were satisfied with location and premises.

- **Industry Type:** There are a mix of industries on the estate, with six types being identified; Construction, Garages, Manufacturing, Retail, Service and Wholesale. The most common was services (32%) followed by manufacturing (18%).
- **Business Type:** Local businesses account for 41.5% of those on the estate, followed by family businesses (20.3%). There is also International (1.1%) National (9.1%), Regional (1.1%) and Sole Traders (6.7%) on the estate.
- **Markets:** 54.3% of businesses have a local market base, which ranges from very local (e.g. small garages) to a wider South Devon coverage. 17.3% have a national market, 13.6% regional and 12.3 international.
- **Business Longevity:** Notwithstanding the high level of family businesses, 42% have been in business for over ten years compared with 60% in the DBIS report. This may reflect the growth in the green economy?
- **Public Access:** 54% of businesses on the estate have some form of public access, such as a shop front or reception area. Wholesale was the only industry type in which no business had public access.
- **Employees:** 227 people were employed by the 42 businesses surveyed (excluding subcontractors and volunteers). This suggests as many as 4-500 people could work on the estate overall. Department for Business Innovation & Skills 2014 survey of SME employers show average subcontractors of 2.83 per SME business, This could mean a further 200 jobs generated by the Industrial Estate with an estimate of third of employment in the town.

- **Time on the Estate:** The average length of time on the estate was 11.1 years. 57% of businesses have been in their premises for 10 years or under, while for 11+ years it was 33%. 10% did not know.
- **Premises Suitability:** 84% of businesses surveyed thought their premises were fit for purpose. 7% said they were not and the rest being unsure.
- **Industrial Estate Suitability:** 79% of businesses surveyed thought the industrial estate was their ideal business location, but only 48% of businesses were certain they were not willing to move from their current premises.
- **Shop Fronts:** 43% of businesses have a shop front and 66% of these are on the estate. Other locations for shop fronts include elsewhere and online.
- **Improvements:** Parking and presentation/signage were the two main areas identified for improvement, receiving 16 and 12 comments respectively. Other improvements suggested included facilities, traffic and flood prevention (due to issues with insurance cover).
- **Engaging Young People:** 43% of businesses surveyed offer work experience to young people, while 29% offer apprenticeships. The most common reason cited for not doing so was health and safety, insurance and associated paperwork.

