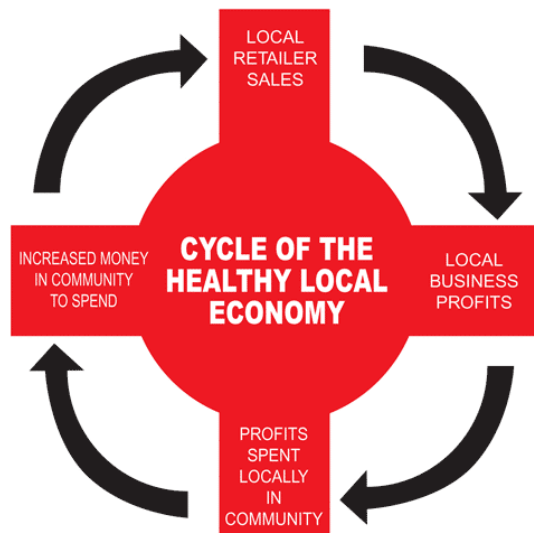


Local Economy & Employment Analysis

The local economy in its many aspects is key to the Deepings maintaining a distinct identity through a thriving High Street and active leisure and sports community and by having local sustainable employment opportunities. Without these, the Deepings could effectively become a suburb of Peterborough.

What are the local issues to be explored?

To ensure local employment growth at least matches the expansion in local population growth by promoting a thriving local economy and having sufficient land / premises allocated to meet future new business requirements and growth of existing. To protect and develop the key retail and employment areas of the Deepings in a sustainable way. To make the Deepings an attractive place to visit and to have sufficient local facilities (retail, leisure and service sector) to encourage residents to use such facilities locally.



This simple diagram, although primarily showing retail economic activity applies equally to hospitality and service sector spend.

Local spend retains significantly more money in the local economy through a circle of more local spend and re-investment than spend outside of the area or online.

Employment & Economic Activity:

In addition to the employment opportunities detailed in the various "industry specific sector documents", the local schools, health centre, leisure centre, library, local councils and some not for profit organisations provide employment so although these are not generating profit for business owners or shareholders, they are generating money into the local economy by providing employment for those residing there as well as suppliers and local trades. The Deepings School (Secondary) alone, employs around 200 staff.

The Deepings also acts as a dormitory community for nearby Peterborough, and through the fast rail link to London and thus a significant number of residents are employed outside of the area.

This is confirmed by the data collected in our surveys. Additionally, the nearby towns of Spalding, Stamford and Bourne provide some smaller levels of employment for residents of the Deepings.

Data collected from our local business survey indicates that 52.6% of local businesses are sole traders and 29.8% are micro businesses. 41.9% turnover less than £50,000 per annum: 32.6% between £50,000 and £100,000: 16.3% between £100,000 and £250,000 and just 9% turnover more than quarter of a million pounds. 46.4% of the respondents operate their business from home, 26.8% from a rented office, 9% from an industrial unit with a split of 60/40 owned/rented. 12.5% from a shop with a 40/60 split between ownership and rental. 28.6% run their business from an office with 94% of those being rented. However, it is believed that the survey response rate from homes based micro and sole trader businesses was much lower than their counterparts with dedicated employment premises.

Business owners reported the following for their customer base:

44% served other businesses (B2B) and 64% served individuals (B2C)

54% served local customers, 26% National and 8% International.

The business sector data from the census seems to be conflicted with our survey, however the census data related to employment sector for individuals, many of whom commute out of the Deepings, the Business survey relates to businesses operating within the Deepings and that survey shows that the Service sector is the largest.

What new information has been gathered?

That there is potentially more demand for small commercial premises (retail, office and industrial) locally than the ELS and thus the Local Plan estimate. There seems to be a preference for rented commercial premises over purchasing.

To attract and enhance trade, all of the following would benefit from increasing or improving:

- Car Parking
- Places to stay (Hotels, B&B)
- A large function facility (e.g. for weddings, large corporate events, performing arts, etc)
- More diversity of business (especially retail)
- Better Signposting to the area and within the area (in hand - InvestSK project).
- Additional choice for grocery shopping

Other issues

If the leisure centre was improved it would be better used. Other leisure, activities are well subscribed and enthusiastically run by clubs and community groups although better premises / facilities would be appreciated. Some groups have had to go outside Deeping to be able to use pitches / facilities.

The number and diversity of retail offerings within the Deepings is not sufficient to retain local spend and attract visitors.

Particular challenges identified are:

1. Lack of availability of ready to use business premises both to purchase and to lease.

Land allocations may be available but businesses in many cases don't have the timescales or resources to build their own premises and speculative build by developers is simply not occurring. The section of the ELS that considers demand is we believe flawed and policies are required to assist or encourage the speculative build of micro, small and medium sized units for industry, service and retail. See section H for reasons why we consider ELS flawed.

2. Shortage of available Retail floorspace / units specifically within the Town Centre which would help facilitate achieving a critical mass for visitors and retention of local shopping. Risk of Market Deeping Town Centre degenerating in number and diversity of retail, service and hospitality offerings.

3. Fragmentation of other retail and service outlets geographically contributing to a lower than critical mass feel in the Deepings that may retain / attract spend. This fragmentation also makes those outlets less likely to be utilised by visitors who will be mainly draw to the town centre.

4. Migration of business out of the Deepings – chiefly to Peterborough due to more availability of suitable premises, better transport links, availability of suitable trained / experienced staff and proximity to other related businesses including suppliers and a larger customer base.

5. Perception that the Deepings is a subservient community to larger towns / cities. Already considered a dormitory town by some and in danger of that increasing if growth in local employment opportunities is not matched to the growth in housing. This will have a negative effect on the local economy, productivity and wellbeing (due to commuting time, exposure to traffic pollution, stress), increased road traffic and thus poorer air quality.

6. There have been many sites previously used for employment that have been allowed change of use to residential in spite of policies that should make those the absolute exception – see list in separate document (Lost Sites). There must be a more robust and consistent application of policy, especially for the town centre and its periphery.

Roadblocks to growth

- Only 37% of local businesses thought they had access locally to suitably skilled staff.
- Only 24% of local businesses thought they had access locally to support and training.

Future expectations

It was encouraging to learn that most local businesses expect to either grow steadily or remain the same and remain within the Deepings. A few may decline or close due to retirements and the consumer movement towards online activity. A few hope to be bought out which could result in relocation.