

# Ambition Broxbourne

A friendly face for local businesses

[www.ambitionbroxbourne.co.uk](http://www.ambitionbroxbourne.co.uk)

## Skills Strategy 2017-2020



**BOROUGH OF  
BROXBOURNE**  
2017: Year of the Environment

SP170647

# Introduction

A thriving economy is a corporate priority for the Borough of Broxbourne. Broxbourne Borough Council's vision is for the Borough to be a centre for the knowledge-based economy, providing skilled, high-paying jobs and prosperity for local people. Land is being set aside through the new draft Local Plan to enable businesses to move into the Borough. The Ambition Broxbourne Business Centre has been created to help local businesses grow.

A skills strategy is needed to complement the improved local infrastructure for business. Improving the skills of the workforce is key to attracting business to Broxbourne and enabling local businesses to prosper. It is essential to ensure residents benefit from the improved local employment opportunities these businesses will bring.

The Ambition Broxbourne Skills Strategy 2017-2020 will focus on raising the level of skills in the local workforce and addressing identified skill gaps. It will lay the foundation for higher aspirations, improved educational attainment and skills for local people, and reduce unemployment. The Strategy will help bring higher skilled and better paid jobs to the Borough.

The Ambition Broxbourne Skills and Employment Group, a public-private partnership, has been formed to address skills needs. The Partnership decided the objectives and approved the Strategy and will oversee implementation through an action plan. Progress will be monitored through the action plan and by consulting businesses and other partners.

Themes from The Hertfordshire Skills Strategy, Releasing Our Potential, have been taken into account in producing this strategy together with the Government's Industrial Strategy launched in January 2017, which highlighted the need to 'build on Britain's strengths and tackle its underlying weaknesses to secure a future as a competitive global nation'.

# Skills Strategy objectives

- 1 Ensure local people have the necessary skills and qualifications to meet business needs and a growing economy.
- 2 Support inward investment to increase the employment opportunities for the area.
- 3 Encourage local business to employ local people.

## **Members of the Ambition Broxbourne Skills and Employment Group**

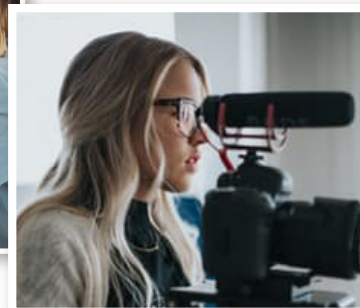
- Borough of Broxbourne
- A business representative
- CVS Broxbourne and East Hertfordshire
- Hertford Regional College
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Job Centre Plus
- A secondary education representative
- Wenta

## Broxbourne: the local economy

Local employment is mixed, with professional and scientific services, retail and wholesale and construction predominating. The Borough has a relatively high proportion of very small businesses employing up to nine people. Many residents commute out of the Borough to work, particularly to London.

The statistics below show that workers based in Broxbourne are paid less than the average for Hertfordshire, and job density (the ratio of jobs to people of working age living in Broxbourne) is 0.75, lower than the overall Hertfordshire rate of 0.90. This suggests that the economy of Broxbourne is of lower value than average for Hertfordshire overall. Finally, although unemployment for residents is low, the proportion of Broxbourne residents of working age who have poor skills is higher than the national average. Low skill levels are a barrier to progress in employment for many residents, and a brake on the local economy.

	Broxbourne (%)	Hertfordshire (%)	Great Britain (%)	Source
Unemployed 16+ Proportion of economically active	4.1	3.8	4.8	ONS annual population survey Jan-Dec 2017
Claimant Count 16+	1.2	1.1	2	ONS Claimant Count. Includes those claiming benefit for unemployment. April 2017
Qualifications NVQ2 +	68.6	78	74.3	ONS annual population survey Jan-Dec 2016
Qualifications NVQ4 +	23.6	42.5	38.2	ONS annual population survey Jan-Dec 2016
Hourly pay excluding overtime	£14.50	£16.34	£13.66	ONS annual survey of hours and earnings 2016
	Broxbourne % of economically active (Actual)	Hertfordshire % of economically active (Actual)		
Apprenticeship Programme Starts	1.46% (740)	1.09% (6829)		ONS annual Population Jan-Dec 2017 Skills Funding Agency 15/16



# Objectives for 2017-2020

## 1 Ensure local people have the necessary skills and qualifications to meet business needs and a growing economy.

The Hertfordshire Businesses' Skills Gap Survey 2014 (University of Hertfordshire) showed nearly half of employers surveyed in Hertfordshire identified skills gaps in their workforce that they believe had a detrimental effect on competitiveness. Problem-solving, oral and written communications, and advanced IT skills were the most common gaps identified.

In the tightening labour market, particularly in technical and scientific industries, there is a struggle to fill vacancies locally. The Borough is actively targeting more knowledge-based, scientific, creative and retail industries which will further increase demand for a skilled workforce. The area has a lower NVQ2+ and NVQ4+ level skill set than Hertfordshire and the nation, so upskilling local people is required to provide a credible workforce for current and future businesses. The Skills Strategy will nurture a culture of retraining, multi-skilling employees and giving job flexibility.

Enthusiasing students of all ages to raise their aspirations and make positive choices about education, employment, apprenticeships and training is essential. Support can be offered to local schools and Hertford Regional College and the wider county education providers to increase attainment and raise aspirations. Options for helping young people and adults prepare for work, presenting and conducting themselves effectively in job interviews and making good choices based on the success of role models should also be explored.

Young people should also have opportunities to learn what careers can involve through initiatives to engage with local business, for example the Dragons Apprentice Challenge project that enables year 12 students to set up and run a business with the support of a mentor with proceeds going to charity. Young people can be given exposure to a range of work through job fairs and by role models from business to support schools and colleges, offering advice and a real insight to working life.



Support for the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Enterprise Adviser Network scheme will be identified in the action plan along with podcast interviews to enthuse young people about high skilled jobs available locally.

Apprenticeships are an opportunity for all ages. The Apprenticeship Levy has highlighted the chance for employees to learn new skills in their current work role and has increased the prospects for new apprentice employees. Businesses will be supported and encouraged to offer more apprenticeships, trainee and work placements or voluntary positions.

Initiatives that support people who face barriers to employment to get into work should be encouraged. Residents with disability, long-term unemployment and social disadvantage should be signposted to services already available in Hertfordshire.

Workshops and training sessions conducted in local venues that provide better access can help support lifelong learning. The Ambition Broxbourne Business Centre provides a supportive, affordable and flexible environment to deliver events and training sessions that will improve skills for local small businesses and encourage innovation for start-up companies. Space in the centre for hot desking to enable lone workers to interact with other businesses and attendance at training opportunities will be encouraged.

Private enterprises are currently offering initiatives for lifelong learning, for example Santander Discovery Grants that support projects with up to £5,000 ,that progress people's knowledge and skills or which provide innovative solutions to overcome social challenges.

## *Opportunities for the action plan*

- *Offer support to schools and Hertford Regional College to help young people raise their aspirations and identify a positive path into education, training and the workforce.*
- *Support the development of entrepreneurship skills in young people and the wider workforce.*
- *Help businesses to develop more apprenticeship opportunities, and work placements.*
- *Improve provision of local training in skills required by local workforces and businesses*
- *Work with local people facing barriers to employment to find fulfilling employment and to progress.*
- *Make use of the Ambition Broxbourne Business Centre to support skills improvement.*

## 2 Support inward investment to increase employment opportunities in the area



The draft Local Plan for Broxbourne anticipates between 6,000 and 7,000 new jobs to be created locally by 2031, through nurturing new and existing local businesses, securing investment in infrastructure and attracting inward investment. This includes but is not limited to opportunities through Crossrail 2, business campuses at Park Plaza West, Park Plaza North, Brookfield Riverside, A10 improvements and the provision of a range of new job opportunities in existing business parks and town centres.

Whilst the Borough's proximity to London and ease of access to Cambridge is a positive draw for new business, it also results in over half the resident workforce commuting out of the Borough to work, adding to local traffic congestion. Attracting more knowledge intensive industries to the area is a Council objective, but this needs to be met with an improved skills level within the immediate area to provide a viable workforce.

Work with the Federation of Small Business (FSB), Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Basepoint Business Centres to upskill the existing workforce will be a focus in the action plan along with workshops and training sessions in local venues to encourage people who face barriers to employment.

### *Opportunities for the action plan*

- *Gain funding from grants and s106 agreements to address local skills needs.*
- *Work with new employers moving to the Borough to help them fill vacancies locally, and address skills needs through Hertford Regional College and other training suppliers.*

## 3 Encourage local businesses to employ local people

Local employers and new companies to the Borough require support to identify what skills are available locally. They are encouraged to recruit from the area to benefit both the business and the local economy.

New companies considering a move into the area need the confidence to fill their vacancies at all levels locally, with encouragement to access local educational

provision, where possible. A drive to communicate that local people are being encouraged to upskill, consider apprenticeships, training and access internships, can help this initiative. Schools, adult education providers and colleges should be supported and encouraged to forge better links with local businesses.

There is a need to identify how to enable and encourage highly skilled and qualified residents who currently commute out of the Borough, mostly to London, to take up new opportunities in the Borough. While helping the local economy to develop, they would also benefit from saving time and money in commuting.

### *Opportunities for the action plan*

- *Help local businesses to market skilled job opportunities to local residents and to fill vacancies*
- *Promote new employers and employment opportunities to the local workforce and to young people in education*
- *Promote the Borough to prospective employers as providing support for skills development.*

## For further information, contact:

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