

Economy worksheets

WORKSHEET EC1: EMPLOYMENT

Task: The task is to assess the strength of the local job market.

1: Introduction to the task

Employment in rural areas is extremely varied, but in very broad terms is characterised by higher rates of economical, activity and self-employment than in urban areas. There are lower levels of formerly unemployed people and a high proportion of the labour force work in very small firms. Most employers work in four industries:

- Distribution, which includes retail, wholesale and public services sector
- Hotels and catering
- Manufacturing
- Business and financial services

An overview of rural employment and its sources of information can be found in the Countryside Agency's *'Annual State of the Countryside'* report and Rural Economies *'Stepping Stones to a Healthier Future'*. There is probably a regional version of these reports. Your regional development agency, Local Authority and Learning and Skills Council all produce profiles of employment, which may help you create your own employment profile for the town and hinterland.

The main sources of information that should help answer the questions are:

- Census of Population 2001 (which records employees and self employed at their places of residence)
- Annual Employment Survey and the unemployment data produced by the Office for National Statistics and Department for Work and Pensions
- Annual and Quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Business Inquiry's (ABI) Workplace Employer Survey
- Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) – this records forms for VAT and/or PAYE

Apart from using published data, you may find a survey of local employers useful.

2: Getting the following information will help you find out the basic facts needed to understand the local employment situation

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes																								
Sub-section 1: Employment																										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census of Population 	<p>Q1 What is</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The ratio of employed people to the total working age population? The ratio of working women to working men? <p><i>Compare these ratios with regional and national averages.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Employment levels are high – 70% against England & Wales average of 60%. 61% of women are employed compared with 77% for men. 																								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census of Population 2001 More recent local surveys Comparing LFS with ABI employer analysis 	<p>Q 2: What proportion of local people commute out of the town/hinterland to work and how far do they go?</p>	<p>The average distance travelled to work is 22 miles compared with the national average of 13miles. The 2001 census gives the following travel to work statistics:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>All People</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3188</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2km to less than 5km (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">161</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5km to less than 10km (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">391</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10km to less than 20km (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">767</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20km to less than 30km (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">230</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30km to less than 40km (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40km to less than 60km (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">295</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60km and over (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">242</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No fixed place of work (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">192</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Working outside the UK (Persons)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2333</td> </tr> <tr> <td>%age out of town</td> <td style="text-align: right;">73%</td> </tr> </table>	All People	3188	2km to less than 5km (Persons)	161	5km to less than 10km (Persons)	391	10km to less than 20km (Persons)	767	20km to less than 30km (Persons)	230	30km to less than 40km (Persons)	47	40km to less than 60km (Persons)	295	60km and over (Persons)	242	No fixed place of work (Persons)	192	Working outside the UK (Persons)	8	Total	2333	%age out of town	73%
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Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Earnings Survey, published by the Office for National Statistics Surveys by the Local Authority. 	<p>Q 3 Household earnings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are average household earnings? How do they compare with the national and regional averages? What percentage are above and below the average income level? 	<p>a) Average household earnings are £820 per week (source: neighbourhood Statistics Model-based estimates Apr04-Mar05).</p> <p>b) This is higher than the south east region average of £730.</p> <p>c) Staplehurst in top 10 per cent wealthiest tier based on political wards.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census of Population Annual Employment Survey 	<p>Q 4 How do employment rates in specific key industry sectors compare over time with regional and national averages?</p>	<p>There is very little evidence of specific employment patterns; an analysis of local businesses shows a very mixed local economy. There is evidence from local advertising of an increasing number of small businesses and home-based enterprises but not in any greater proportion than other localities.</p> <p>There have been past reductions in agricultural working as a result of farm consolidation and diversification but there is no evidence of any continuation of this historic trend.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local survey of businesses Labour Force Survey 	<p>Q 5 Employers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which employers employ over 100 people? What is the proportion of the local workforce employed by them? 	<p>Business Questionnaire or telephone survey needed, then comparison with national statistics.</p>
Sub-section 2: Unemployment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authorities Job Centre Plus 	<p>Q 6 How do local unemployment rates for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> male unemployment female unemployment youth unemployment <p>compare with regional and national averages?</p>	<p>Unemployment is low – 1.6% against 3.4 nationally.</p> <p>Economically inactive is low (1.6%) and lower levels of retired against national average – 10.8% against 13.6% - suggest many of retirement age consider themselves to be in some form of employment</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NOMIS. 	<p>Q 7 What sectors of the unemployed population are proportionally higher by age/gender than the regional and national averages?</p>	<p>All sections of the unemployed population are generally lower than the national average.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Employment Survey NOMIS 	<p>Q 8 Has unemployment fallen or risen in the last 5 years, compared to the national average?</p>	<p>There is anecdotal and observed evidence of changes in the number of businesses which would likely have resulted in a reduction in any unemployment. General growth in the Lodge Road industrial site and self-employment and in home-working and rural farm-based business. Growth in the number of services businesses (solicitors, hair-care/beauticians) at the expense of retail businesses (two shops vacant/not used in October 2008).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Employment Survey NOMIS. 	<p>Q 9 Are there any specific trends in unemployment in the local area, for example in a particular industry?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Employment Survey NOMIS 	<p>Q 10 What proportion of those who are unemployed have been out of work for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> over 6 months one year 	<p>At the time of the 2001 census, 10% of those unemployed had not been in work since 2000 (one year approx.).</p>

Sub-section 3: Employment outlook		
Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs and Excise VAT Registration. • The local Business Link Operator 	<p>Q 11</p> <p>i. What are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the success rates for new business start ups? • the failure rates for new business start ups? <p><i>Compare local statistics to the regional and national average, over a five year time period to identify trends</i></p> <p>ii. How many specific business closures have there been in the last three years?</p>	<p>There is no evidence of any notable patterns in business start-up success or business failure. Staplehurst has a comparatively small and very mixed local business economy. There are very few vacant business premises and there is planning permission for expansion of the local trading estate. The majority of businesses are either sole traders or small companies with less than 10 employees. There are only a few large employers, mostly based on the local trading estate. There has been growth in the number of professional services businesses (solicitors, estate agents, hair-care/beauticians) at the expense of retail businesses (three vacant shops in February 2009).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surveying local firms • enquiries to the Business Link Operator, LAD/UAs or • Learning & Skills Council 	<p>Q 12</p> <p>i. How many local firms are planning to expand?</p>	<p>Business Questionnaire or telephone survey needed</p> <p>See also Faversham Healthcheck</p> <p>Expansion of Lodge Road estate will provide increased opportunities for employment.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local Business Link Operator • District Council economic development department • Regional Development Agency. 	<p>Q 13</p> <p>What economic development/inward investment grants are available?</p> <p><i>Identify types of funding, eligibility criteria, sources and amounts available.</i></p>	<p>None known. Staplehurst is generally not considered a deprived area. It is not included in the LEADER funding initiative which covers other parts of Kent.</p>

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the local jobs market. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered:	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Is unemployment a significant issue locally?	No. The last Census shows unemployment is low – 1.6% against 3.4 nationally. There is no evidence of any great change recently. This is a <u>fact</u> and is a <u>strength</u> .		X				
Are there any recent trends in long term unemployment?	No.		X				
Is the town a dormitory town or has it a significant employment role?	Yes, Staplehurst is considered a dormitory town with a large number of commuters in its population. The majority of people have employment outside the community rather than within it. There is no evidence of the larger local businesses being particularly integrated in to the community and employing local people. This is a <u>weakness</u> . <u>More information is needed</u> but there could be an <u>opportunity</u> for better business and community integration.			X	X		X
Is local employment particularly dependent on specific industry sectors and /or on a small number of large employers?	No. There are a broad range of sectors represented, with none having a significantly higher proportion of representation than others. This is a <u>strength</u> .		X				

Is employment growth within only some industry sectors, or spread more widely?	There is growth <u>opportunity</u> from the expansion of the local industrial estate but this is not geared towards any particular sector.				X		
How much confidence is there within the business sector?	More information needed (business survey).						X
Is the number of jobs available locally increasing or decreasing?	Currently static; there is the <u>opportunity</u> for employment to increase due to planned expansion of the local industrial estate.				X		
What opportunities are there for job creation from the expansion of existing local firms?	The expansion of firms on existing premises will be limited by planning constraints. The planned expansion of the local industrial estate will provide an <u>opportunity</u> for smaller firms to expand into.				X		
How vigorous is the local economy - based on new business start-ups / closures?	Not particularly vigorous with very few start-ups and closures.			X			

WORKSHEET EC2: BUSINESS SUPPORT

Task: to find out what business support services and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are used by local businesses and

1. identify if these are effective
2. point up where things could be improved

1: Introduction to the task

All businesses need advice, information, funds or other support at some stage. Many very small rural businesses prefer to secure some help from their banks, accountants, families and trade associates, rather than through public business support organisations. However, some businesses need help with compliance with regulations and should seek it from local or national regulators and the Environmental Health Office or the Health and Safety Executive.

To help you draw conclusions about how the support available to businesses could develop you may need to

- *Look at findings from monitoring of public sector funding initiatives*
- *Evaluate the number of enquiries to Business Support Agencies in relation to the total number of businesses*
- *Identify how easily information on business support services can be obtained*

Organisations, which may hold useful information, include:

- the economic development department of the Local Authority
- the regional development agency
- the town centre manager or forum
- the business volunteer mentoring association
- the Business Link Operator
- the Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- the local business associations

2 Getting the following information will help you decide how support for business - or access to that support - needs to be improved. If there is not enough information available to answer the questions, you could carry out an audit of facilities to find out about the work of business community support agencies in the area.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub Section 1: Support available to businesses		
Local Business Directory	Q 1 What services are offered to businesses by local bank branches?	None. Business enquiries are deferred to nearest major town (Maidstone).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow Pages • Business Directory • Regional Development Agency 	Q 2 Which of the following organisations have a presence in the town? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Service • Business Link • Chambers of Trade or Commerce • Learning and Skills Council • Enterprise Agency • Local food network/partnership or farm advisory service 	None.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register of Business Enquiries • Business Directory • District Council Business Surveys 	<p>Q 3 How well used are business support agencies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Link Operator • Business Links • Chambers of Trade or Commerce • Learning and Skills Council • Enterprise Agency • FRA/National Association of Farmers' Markets 	<p>None in Staplehurst.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council • the Business Link Operator • the Regional Development Agency 	<p>Q 4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What previous business support or initiatives have been available/been used? b. What is the evidence of these initiatives proving successful? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Small Business Association (no longer running). Joint business directory with neighbouring villages ended some years ago. General accountants and solicitors in the village provide services to local businesses. b. None.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council • Local knowledge 	<p>Q 5 If the town has a town centre manager, town centre forum or similar partnership organisation, who are they?</p> <p><i>If there is more than one town centre manager, town centre forum or similar partnership organisation find out if there is an overlap between their services/ remit.</i></p>	<p>No such person/forum.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Manager (this may be the District Council, one of the local business advice centres, or a consortium of local businesses). 	<p>Q 6 What results have there been from any existing town centre management work?</p>	<p>None specifically other than ad-hoc Parish Council work.</p>

Sub section 2: Business networking		
Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Link Operator • Chamber of Commerce 	<p>Q 7 What regular events are there to bring the business community together; for example, breakfast clubs and trade fairs?</p> <p><i>Find out:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>what they are</i> • <i>how often they are held</i> 	None.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Local business people 	<p>Q 8 What arrangements are there for local suppliers to be able to network? Examples may include a Business Directory or website for the town.</p>	Parish Council website has a Local Directory and the Parish Magazine provides an advertising opportunity. The Village Forum provides a networking opportunity, but where business information is traded, this is the general public advising on local suppliers rather than B2B exchanges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local surveys • Yellow Pages • Chamber of Commerce • Local businesses 	<p>Q 9 What business meeting and business conference venues are available? Are these venues available when needed? Are these venues big enough? Are these venues available at reasonable rates?</p>	Village Centre. Public Houses (informal). Church Halls.
Sub section 3: IT and e-business		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce 	<p>Q 10 Is there a published strategy relating to the use of information and communication technology (ICT)? Is the strategy readily available? Is the strategy easily understood?</p>	No.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Business Link Operator • Local surveys 	<p>Q 11</p> <p>What local training and support is there to help companies address ICT problems and to develop their ICT capability?</p>	<p>Local IT service providers (private companies).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.bt.com/broadband • www.adslguide.org.uk 	<p>Q 12</p> <p>What is/will be the availability of high-speed Internet access (at 512 kbits/second and at 2Mbit/ second) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now • In 6 months' time <p>In 12 months' time</p>	<p>2-8Mbit available now.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Business Link Operator or by • Local surveys 	<p>Q 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What proportion of all businesses use broadband? • What local businesses are considering using broadband in the near future? 	<p>Business questionnaire or telephone survey needed.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Business Link Operator • Local surveys 	<p>Q 14</p> <p>What do local businesses see as the key benefits of using broadband?</p> <p><i>Examples could be: speed, convenience, cost savings, access to wider markets, increased customer contact, faster response, access to wider resources, business innovation.</i></p>	<p>Business questionnaire or telephone survey needed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Business Link Operator • Local surveys 	<p>Q 15</p> <p>Why do some local businesses not use broadband?</p> <p><i>Reasons may include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Difficulty with availability</i> • <i>Financial cost</i> • <i>Too time consuming</i> • <i>No business advantage</i> • <i>No ICT support available</i> 	<p>Business questionnaire or telephone survey needed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Business Link Operator • Local surveys 	<p>Q 16</p> <p>How many local businesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use e-mail? b. Have a website? c. Make purchases or sales over the Internet? d. Gain access to key business resources over the Internet? 	<p>Business questionnaire or telephone survey needed.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Business Link Operator • local survey. 	<p>Q 17 How many local businesses collaborate over the Internet with partner firms?</p> <p><i>Look here at cluster or supply chain relationships</i></p>	<p>Business questionnaire or telephone survey needed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities 	<p>Q 18 Which public sector offices and sites currently have broadband communication facilities for external access?</p> <p><i>What proportion is this of all public sector office locations?</i></p>	<p>Parish Council office, public library and primary school all have broadband access. There are no council offices in the locality.</p>

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the provision and use of business support services. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered:	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Are there shortfalls in the range of services offered by local bank branches, financial institutions and other business support services? If so, what are they?	Yes. There is only one bank which is a satellite branch. There is only a small number of legal practices offering business support. This is a <u>weakness</u> .			X			
Are there any opportunities to expand support for local businesses?	Yes, as there are few support services at present and no evidence of inter-business networks or forums.			X			
Is there is a need to create, develop and or fund business events?	More information needed (business survey).						X
Are there are enough business meeting and conference venues locally?	There are no dedicated business meeting and conference venues locally. This is a <u>weakness</u> .			X			

To what extent are local businesses making use of Broadband and Internet technologies	More information needed (business survey).						X
Are there are technical or security concerns with remote broadband access to public sector ICT systems?	More information needed (business survey).						X

WORKSHEET EC3: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Task: to assess the quality of training and education available, and identify where there are gaps and opportunities for development.

1: Introduction to the task

It will be valuable to identify the educational profile of your area's workforce and residents. This profile is usually taken as an indicator of the skill base of the workforce, and is generally measured in terms of NVQ levels. For example, a low proportion of the economically active population holding triple level NVQs may show low potential, poor participation and little applicable knowledge: this would present a greater challenge to raising productivity, outputs and wages.

Sources that might hold useful information include:

- Labour Market Trends (Statistical information about employment and unemployment, from National Statistics Online)
- Labour Force Survey (3-monthly survey of households providing information on employment and unemployment, from National Statistics Online)
- Household Surveys (Survey of households looking at training and employment issues, from National Statistics Online)
- Employer Surveys (Survey of employers looking at skills issue, from the Learning and Skills Council; latest version is 2003)
- Regional Intelligence Unit
- Regional Economic Assessments (Carried out on behalf of the Regional Development Agency, assessing skills and employment issues in the region)

You might also want to carry out a survey of local employers to help you identify vocational and work based training needs. You should also gather supporting information about the standard occupational classification categories of the workforce and vocational training principles.

2: Getting the following information will help you draw conclusions about the quality and suitability of the learning and training opportunities available.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Pre-school to College Years		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Education Authority 	<p>Q1 How many pre-school places in nurseries and playgroups are there compared with the number of pre-school children in the area? <i>Take into account any planned changes in the levels of service provision.</i></p>	<p>There is spare capacity amongst the local playgroups.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Education Authority 	<p>Q 2 Is there access to good quality schools in the area? <i>Compare rankings in school league tables with other, similar towns.</i></p>	<p>There is a single and local primary school which the majority of children access on foot. This school is running at near capacity. This school is of good quality – it is in the top 1/3 of the best performing schools in the LA and its scores for added-value and subject performance exceed the LA and national averages.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local schools and colleges Local Education Authority 	<p>Q 3 How well qualified are local school leavers? <i>Compare the number of pupils at</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>age 16 with five GCSEs at A-C level</i> <i>age 19 with one or more A Level to the regional and national averages</i> 	<p>Not applicable as the secondary schools are outside the healthcheck area. The 2001 Census shows that Staplehurst young people aged 16 to 19 are better qualified when compared with regional and national averages.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Education Authority Individual schools 	<p>Q 4 Is there a high number of school exclusions? <i>Identify the levels of exclusions and compare with other towns.</i></p>	<p>No recent exclusions. Unauthorised absence is at 0.1% against LA and national averages of 0.5%.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber of Commerce Business Link Operator Local survey 	<p>Q 5 Does the area attract and retain enough graduates? If no, are there any policies in place/being planned to address this problem?</p>	<p>Staplehurst is not a significant enough business base to be attractive to graduate employment destination.</p>
Sub-section 2: Vocational & Adult Learning Opportunities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning and Skills Council Local schools and colleges Chamber of Commerce Surveys of local residents, employees and employers 	<p>Q 6 Do local training organizations provide vocational work based training that reflect the needs of local residents and employers? <i>Compare training areas with local employment opportunities.</i></p>	<p>There are no local training organisations which provide vocational work-based training.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult education centres Surveys of local residents, employees and employers 	<p>Q 7 What non-vocational courses are provided locally and how easy is it for people to access a wide range of courses.</p>	<p>There are 2 watercolour painting adult education classes. Otherwise, the only identified training providers locally are those providing ad-hoc computer training and language classes. It is difficult for people to access a wide range of courses. There are no Adult Educational courses locally. 54% of respondents to the local survey expressed interest in such classes being available in the community centre.</p>

Sub-section 3: IT-supported learning

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">LibraryLocal Education AuthoritySurvey	Q 8 How many public Internet learning and access points are there within the town and its hinterland? <i>Find out the number of Internet points available in the towns and the surrounding villages per head of population. For example, are there Internet points within a telecottage, electronic village hall, telecentre, internet café, library or school?</i>	One only at the public library.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local surveys	Q 9 What proportion of households has Internet access at home, work or school/ other educational establishments?	An estimated 75%+ of households have internet access at home, work, school or elsewhere. This is based on an analysis of a local community group membership directory, including email addresses, which has representation of all population groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The town websiteTourist Information CentreLibrary	Q 10 Is there a local community ICT group?	No.

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the education and training profile and standards achieved locally. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered:	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Are there are sufficient pre-school places in nurseries and playgroups?	Yes..	X					
Is there is a problem in local schools with academic achievements or exclusions?	No. This is a <u>fact</u> and a <u>strength</u> .	X	X				
Are there significant vocational or non-vocational training gaps, which could be filled locally?	Business survey needed.						X
What proportion of people has access to the Internet?	The majority. This is a fact and a <u>strength</u> . There may be an <u>opportunity</u> to help more people get on the internet by providing public training courses.	X			X		

WORKSHEET EC4: LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Task: To explore local skills and learning issues and assess how a learning culture could be developed to foster economic performance and individuals' development.

1: Introduction to the task

The strength of the labour force can be a key driver of economic competitiveness. Well developed entrepreneurial and management skills feed the growth of small businesses and a more highly skilled labour force is essential for increasing productivity and moving to a higher wage and value-added economy. This means that the skills of the local workforce are crucial in attracting employment and supporting entrepreneurs.

There are generic skills that help to:

- ensure good business practice and development
- meet legal requirements
- foster staff development

The presence or absence within the workforce of these skills has an important impact on the employability of local people. It is also important to know what employers' specific skills and training needs are, and what their recruitment and staff development experiences are.

Market towns may have a key role in delivering training and skills development opportunities. As a minimum, towns have an information and support role in assisting local businesses and individuals (including those from the rural hinterland). The larger market towns and those that play a key service-centre role for a large rural hinterland could look to providing more comprehensive facilities and services. This is a role that is particularly applicable in delivering generic business skills.

Adult Education and volunteering are recognised pathways back to work for a significant number of people. However, often the adult education provision in market towns is not as broad as in urban areas and voluntary sector training services are also weaker. There may be potential in larger market towns to broaden the adult education curriculum and integrate it more closely with other learning opportunities. Voluntary sector training could be encouraged and provided locally so that skills that are relevant both to voluntary organisations and to the workplace are developed.

The last part of the analysis involves finding out:

- what training and learning is available
- who decides what is provided and how to influence these providers
- what opportunities there are to meet identified need

2: Getting the following information will help you examine key trends in the local economy and identify opportunities to support local people in acquiring the right skills and participating in lifelong learning.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Overall Economic Performance		
	<p>Q 1 What are the regional norms and trends for those industry sectors that are present in the town?</p>	<p>Employment in all industry sectors is consistent with regional norms based on the 2001 census. There are no notable trends.</p>
	<p>Q 2 To what extent has the town centre become a less significant location for retail and service sector development?</p> <p><i>Assess to what extent it is maintaining and attracting branches of major chains, and maintaining or attracting independent shops.</i></p>	<p>Service sector has expanded at the expense of retail. The number of solicitors' offices, estate agents and hair and beauty parlours has increased for example. There are no major chains in the locality.</p>
	<p>Q 3 How has employment in retail and service sector changed regarding full time/part-time jobs?</p>	<p>Service sector has expanded at the expense of retail.</p>

Sub-section 2: Generic Skills Gaps		
Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
	Q 4 What are the issues around the attainment of basic literacy and numeracy skills?	No known or identified issues. People in the area are generally better educated when compared with regional and national averages.
	Q 5 Skills: a. What particular generic skills needs do the industries in your area have? b. To what extent are they being met?	Need to define generic skills and then business questionnaire or telephone survey needed.
Sub-section 3: Employers' Needs		
	Q 6 Training: a. How do existing training services in the town meet employers' requirements? b. How good are those services?	There are no training service providers in the town.
	Q 7 Which employers provide local training or have their own training facilities for which there might be scope for sharing?	Business questionnaire or telephone survey needed to identify what training businesses provide in house.
	Q 8 What are employers' specific skills training and development needs?	Business questionnaire or telephone survey needed.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
	<p>Q 9 What specific recruitment and staff retention issues are there that could be addressed through local training provision?</p> <p>(Worksheet S1 Q4 also refers to employment)</p>	Business Questionnaire or telephone survey needed.
	<p>Q 10 Skills development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do employers encourage training and skills development? b. How do employers participate in training and skills development? c. What are the barriers to that participation? 	Business Questionnaire or telephone survey needed.
	<p>Q 11 To what extent do employers recognise the business benefits of training and skills development?</p>	Business Questionnaire or telephone survey needed.
Sub-section 4: Peoples' Needs		
	<p>Q 12 Is there adequate local provision for all the types and levels of learning that are needed?</p> <p><i>Look into whether different learning preferences are met or reflected in what is available.</i></p>	Business Questionnaire or telephone survey needed to identify where training providers that are used are located.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
	<p>Q 13 Learning opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are people aware of learning opportunities either as individuals or as employees? b. By what means have they become aware of the opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No. There are very few opportunities locally and little knowledge of what is available in other localities. b. Assumed they have become aware by personal research only and occasional press and private firm advertising/marketing.
	<p>Q 14 To what extent do people have to travel elsewhere to match their skills and aspirations with appropriate employment?</p>	<p>There is significant commuting out of the locality for work purposes. Staplehurst is often referred to as a 'commuter town'.</p>
	<p>Q 16 How important is the voluntary sector in the town as a pathway to skills development?</p>	<p>Not at all important.</p>
	<p>Q 17 What is the voluntary sector's track record as a training provider?</p>	<p>No known training provision by the voluntary sector.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
	<p>Q 18 Is transport an issue specifically in the context of accessing training/education?</p>	<p>Business Questionnaire or telephone survey needed to understand training requirements / centres used.</p>
	<p>Q 19 Is Adult Education recognised locally as a pathway to future learning?</p>	<p>No. There are no local Adult Education classes. 54% of respondents to the local survey expressed interest in Adult Education classes being available in the local community centre.</p>
	<p>Q 20 Is childcare available and adequate to meet the needs of those attending courses?</p>	<p>Individuals would have to make private arrangements. There are no known schemes in the locality.</p>
	<p>Q 21 Are there a significant number of childcare providers requiring local training?</p>	<p>No.</p>
	<p>Q 22 What links are being made locally between children and family learning programmes and the encouragement of further learning opportunities?</p>	<p>None.</p>

Sub-section 5: Provision & Mechanics

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
	Q 23 Training provision: Who provides training within the town? Where does the training take place? When does the training take place?	The only identified training organisation locally provides media (radio) training to companies not based in Staplehurst. There are a few computer support companies which provide computer-based training either at their own or the customer's premises.
	Q 24 What mechanisms are in place to link the main learning information, advice, and guidance advisors/providers?	None.

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use the tickboxes in this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in provision of and access to local training and skills development. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered.	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
Are industries in the town in the growth sectors of the regional economy? Are the skills needs of these sectors being met?	None identified.						X
How does the health of the local economy compare with other towns and the regional economy as a whole?	No evidence Staplehurst businesses are in a different position from other areas.		X				
Is there any significant cluster of businesses in the town (for example, tourism, specialist retailing, and engineering) and why is the town attracting these businesses?	No clusters of businesses in a specific industry.	X					
What significant skills shortages or recruitment problems are existing businesses experiencing?	More information needed (business survey).						X
What is the mix of generic and sector-specific skills that local employers most value and most need to help their business?	More information needed (business survey).						X

Can local people access training locally that will improve general skills levels in the community and work to the benefit of local businesses and the local economy?	No. Need to understand demands / needs of local businesses.	X				X
What delivery agencies, trainers, and infrastructure bodies are active in the town? What facilities are available in the town that could provide a venue for local delivery of information, skills training, etc?	There are no training organisations in the town. Various community buildings could be used, but these are not particularly suitable as training environments, lacking customer-oriented broadband access and other modern facilities.			X		
Where are decisions made about the provision of training opportunities within the town? By whom are these decisions made?	There is no identifiable body making any decisions about training provision within Staplehurst.			X		

WORKSHEET EC5: RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE SERVICES

Task: to discover the key facts about the retail and town centre services available and consider how well they meet people's needs

1: Introduction to the task

The economic and social health of the majority of Market Towns most often shows in the health and vibrancy of its high street and other retail and consumer services. Retail is the largest single employing sector in rural areas.

(There may not be reliable information on size of shops or their turnover. Advice on retail turnover surveys is given in Data Sources and Survey Methods.)

2: Getting the following information will help you assess what range of shops and services are available locally and give some idea of possible future trends.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Retail shops and services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber of Trade or Commerce The district council (if they have undertaken a retail study) GOAD Experian your own local surveys 	<p>Q 1</p> <p>Look at the businesses in the town</p> <p>a. What proportion are retail, and how many people do they employ?</p> <p>b. What proportion provide consumer services, and how many people do they employ?</p>	<p>a. There are 30 retail business premises, representing 46% of premises with products or services for the general public. These are mainly small sole traders employing on average 3 people each, so approximately 90 people are employed.</p> <p>b. There are 35 business premises providing consumer services, representing 54% of premises with products or services for the general public. The majority of these are also small sole traders employing on average 3 people each, so approximately 90 people are employed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber of Trade or Commerce The district council (if they have undertaken a retail study) GOAD Experian your surveys 	<p>Q 2</p> <p>a. How many shops in total are there?</p> <p>b. What is the total floorspace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the town centre in out-of-town centres in the villages? 	<p>a. There are 18 premises which could be classified as shops.</p> <p>b. Around 5000 sq feet in the town centre, 1500 sq ft in outlying areas.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes																																																																																																									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Trade or Commerce • The district council (if they have undertaken a retail study) • GOAD Experian town centre surveys or your own local surveys 	<p>Q 3</p> <p>a. What type of shops and services are there in the town centre and surrounding villages?</p> <p>b. List them by numbers and percentages of each type. An example might be: Banks, 6, 12%</p> <p>c. Identify any particular shops and services that attract visitors and shoppers from outside the town. Include any shops and services which have branches in other areas or towns.</p>	<p>a/b:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Business Type</th> <th style="text-align: center;">No.</th> <th style="text-align: center;">%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Takeaway/ restaurant</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">9</td></tr> <tr><td>Car service</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">9</td></tr> <tr><td>Public houses</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>Estate agents</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>Solicitors</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Newsagents</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Dentists</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Hairdressers</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Farm shops</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Petrol/shop</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Beauty</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Nursery / garden centre</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Equipment hire</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Physiotherapy</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Vet</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Charity</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Greengrocers</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Florist</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Baker</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Butcher</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Supermarket</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Off licence</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>DIY/ builders</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>White goods</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Medical centre</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Car rental</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Pharmacy</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Opticians</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Funerals</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Carpets</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Betting shop</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>House clearance</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Post office</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Bank</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Business Type	No.	%	Takeaway/ restaurant	6	9	Car service	6	9	Public houses	4	6	Estate agents	4	6	Solicitors	3	5	Newsagents	3	5	Dentists	3	5	Hairdressers	3	5	Farm shops	2	3	Petrol/shop	2	3	Beauty	2	3	Nursery / garden centre	2	3	Equipment hire	1	2	Physiotherapy	1	2	Vet	1	2	Charity	1	2	Greengrocers	1	2	Florist	1	2	Baker	1	2	Butcher	1	2	Supermarket	1	2	Off licence	1	2	DIY/ builders	1	2	White goods	1	2	Medical centre	1	2	Car rental	1	2	Pharmacy	1	2	Opticians	1	2	Funerals	1	2	Carpets	1	2	Betting shop	1	2	House clearance	1	2	Post office	1	2	Bank	1	2
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Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council: look at their Retail Capacity Studies and Retail Impact Assessments of specific developments 	<p>Q 5 Has retail floorspace in the town centre been lost in the last five years? If so, by how much?</p> <p><i>Look at historical data on retail and commercial floorspace in the town centre and compare it with any out-of-town developments.</i></p>	<p>Yes. 10-15%</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property Intelligence plc From local property agents 	<p>Q 6 Retailers register their interest for additional floorspace. What are the anticipated retail floorspace requirements in the future based on this?</p>	<p>There is no unmet demand for retail space. One shop is currently vacant and two estate agents have closed for business.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GOAD Experian town centre surveys District Council's Retail Capacity Study your own local surveys 	<p>Q 7. How many shops are vacant in the town centre and how many have been vacant for more than two years?</p> <p><i>If there seem to be a large number compared with the regional and national vacancy rates, find out why the vacant shops are not being reopened.</i></p>	<p>One shop is currently vacant and two estate agents have closed their Staplehurst offices. Neither has been vacant for more than two years.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GOAD Experian town centre surveys District Council's Retail Capacity Study your own local surveys 	<p>Q 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many new shops in the centre have opened in the last three years? How many shops have had major refits in the last three years? 	<p>One new retail outlet; and one new café, although the latter has already reduced opening hours.</p> <p>One shop has had a major refit.</p>
Sub Section 2: Markets		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Federation of Market Traders Association of Town Centre Managers National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association (FARMA) British Association of Market Authorities 	<p>Q 9</p> <p>a. Do the town and surrounding countryside have markets? If so</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind (eg, provision markets, livestock markets, farm shops, farmers' markets, WI markets)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many? How often? What size? <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. How many of these sell local produce?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. Which local producers are not represented in local markets?</p>	<p>a. One general market on Sunday mornings in the railway station car park selling a mix of second hand goods, clothes and food.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Most produce at this market is from out of town.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. All. No local producers are represented.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The market operator (often from the District Council or from the National Association of British Market Authorities) 	<p>Q10</p> <p>a. How often is the general market held?</p> <p>b. How have the number and type of traders and stalls changed over the last three years?</p>	<p>a. Once a week on Sunday mornings.</p> <p>b. No change.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Farmers Union, District Council The Market owners and operators. 	<p>Q 11</p> <p>What are the potential threats to the local provision and/or livestock market?</p> <p><i>Look at historic data on number of stalls, turnover levels, throughput, how many people they employed, etc. This will help you to assess any vulnerability to closure</i></p>	<p>Not applicable as there are no local produce or livestock markets.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defra 	<p>Q 12</p> <p>How far away is the nearest abattoir or meat cutting plant</p>	<p>Commercial, 18 miles (Ashford). Small one in Marden 3 miles (butchers)</p>

Sub-Section 3: Looking to the future		
Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any survey of local shops and services 	<p>Q 13 Are local retailers confident about future trading and the town's role as a shopping destination?</p> <p><i>Find out whether local retailers plan to expand or move to new premises, or if they are concerned about particular constraints on future business. If they have concerns, what are they?</i></p> <p>(Worksheets S7; T2 Q12; T3 Q16 also refer to the retail and service sector)</p>	<p>Not applicable. Staplehurst is not a shopping destination. From a local survey, only 4% of survey respondents do main shopping in the village; 75% do their main shopping elsewhere and convenience/top-up shop locally; 21% do all their shopping elsewhere. 83% of community respondents would like to see more development in Staplehurst with 'more shops' being the most frequent request.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Valuation Office The District Council Through local property agents 	<p>Q 14 Are rents for retail premises stable or increasing?</p> <p><i>Look at rents over the last three years and compare them over time with competing centres.</i></p>	<p>Stable.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tourist Information Offices for your town and nearby/other county towns Local/nearby hotels The Internet 	<p>Q 15 In which brochures or other publicity material is the town centre actively promoted as a shopping destination?</p>	<p>None. The Parish Magazine promotes local businesses generally to local people only.</p>

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the number and type of shops and services. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered.	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
How much of the local shopping provision is in the town centre, out-of-town centre or in the villages?	There is little shopping provision in Staplehurst. The majority of shopping takes place outside the locality. This is a <u>fact</u> , a <u>weakness</u> and a <u>threat</u> . 83% of community respondents would like to see more development in Staplehurst with 'more shops' being the most frequent request.	X		X		X	
Are there any obvious gaps or shortages in provision of different types of shops and services?	The locality mainly provides for top-up food shopping and there is a single pharmacy. There are many gaps in provision. In the local survey, 83% of community respondents would like to see more development in Staplehurst with 'more shops' being the most frequent request, including cafes/restaurants and a supermarket. This is a <u>fact</u> , a <u>weakness</u> and a <u>threat</u> .	X		X		X	
How effective is the use of retail floorspace?	Most available floorspace is currently in use. Some previous retail premises have been converted to residential use of consumer services. <u>Opportunities</u> to create more retail space would require further research.				X		X
Has the town centre has become a more or less attractive location for retail development?	Less attractive. Many residents would like the visual appearance of the Parade improved, including the planting beds which are considered to be detrimental to the area. This is a <u>fact</u> , a <u>weakness</u> and a <u>threat</u> .	X		X		X	

If there is commercial demand for additional retail floorspace?	No, as there are vacant premises.	X					
What is retail confidence like?	Poor at present (January 2009).			X			
Are the local provision and/or livestock markets vulnerable to closure	No local provision or livestock markets. This is a <u>fact</u> and a <u>weakness</u> .	X		X			

WORKSHEET EC6: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY NEEDS

Task: to identify whether there are likely to be enough commercial and industrial properties for existing and new businesses

1: Introduction to the task

It is important to keep in mind that the typical profile of rural self employed is for one third to work from home and one third to be mobile.

2: Getting the following information will provide some key facts about the commercial property market in the local area

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub-section 1: Supply of property		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Local property agents 	<p>Q1 How much land for development has been allocated in the Local Development Plan?</p> <p>(Worksheets EN1; EN2; EN3 Q4; S2; S3 Q11; S5 Q8; S6 Q1,3 also refer to the built environment. Worksheets EN1 Q7,14; EN3 Q4; S2; S5 Q10; T! Q3 also refer to development)</p>	Two fields on the edge of the village envelope; one as an extension to the existing light industry/trading estate (planning permission for development approved) and one for housing (no development currently planned).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Local property agent 	<p>Q 2 Floorspace:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is the total amount of commercial and industrial floorspace available? Where is it? How much of it has been built or let in the last three years? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approx, 100,000 sq m or 1.07million sq. ft.. Main concentration is on the Lodge Road industrial/trading estate. Some commercial operations (offices) in the village centre. A variety of light industry in former farm buildings in outlying areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Local property agent 	<p>Q 3 How many premises suitable for new small businesses are there at affordable rents?</p> <p>Look at the number of smaller premises and find out rent levels.</p>	There are very few vacant units suitable for small businesses. Rents are in line with other similar locations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council 	<p>Q 4 How many premises are there that allow for 'expansions' or 'grow</p>	The extension of existing commercial premises to provide growth

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local property agent 	<p>on' by existing local firms?</p>	<p>will be very constrained by planning policies. They may, for example, be in the conservation area or in outlying very rural areas. The extension of the Lodge Road trading estate will provide new premises into which smaller business could relocate.</p>
<p>Sub-section 2: Demand for properties</p>		
<p>Starting points for information</p>	<p>Information you will need</p>	<p>Answers and notes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local property agents District Council Surveys of local employers 	<p>Q 5 Available floorspace:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How much available office or industrial floorspace is vacant or on the market? Where is it? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 93,500 sq ft. On the Lodge Road industrial estate with two vacancies in outlying farm buildings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Local property agents 	<p>Q 6 What have been the trends in vacancy levels in industrial and commercial property?</p> <p><i>Compare historical vacancy levels in properties of different ages and sizes.</i></p>	<p>Growth in light industry, growth in business services, decline in retail services.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Council Valuation Office Local property agents 	<p>Q 7 What have been the trends in rental returns in recent years?</p> <p>Compare historical data on commercial rents. Note that increased rents and yields denote greater demand for floorspace.</p>	<p>General increases in line with the market. No great variations identified because of supply/demand issues.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local employers • Business Link • Regional Development Agency 	<p>Q 8</p> <p>Future planned expansion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How many existing commercial and industrial businesses are there with commitments to expand? b. Where are they located? 	<p>Business Questionnaire or telephone survey needed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council • Small Business Service • Regional Development Agency 	<p>Q 9</p> <p>What economic development and funding initiatives are in place to assist the expansion of local firms and incoming firms?</p>	<p>None.</p>

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the local commercial property market. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered:	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
How have vacancy levels for commercial properties changed in the last three years?	Not significantly; they have remained static with always a few premises available. This is a <u>fact</u> .	X					
Are existing commercial and industrial firms planning to expand?	More information needed (business survey).						X
Are there sufficient premises at affordable rents for new small businesses, and for businesses that want to expand?	There are a number of vacant premises available in the locality, the rents of which are in line with other areas. This is a <u>fact</u> and an <u>opportunity</u> for new businesses to be set up in the area.	X			X		
What is the overall demand for, and gaps in the provision of, different types of commercial and industrial property. Take into consideration size and age of available property.	No specific demand gaps identified.	X	X				

WORKSHEET EC7: TOURISM AND VISITOR SERVICES

Task: to measure the level of tourism activity in the area and make assessments of visitor services and facilities.

1: Introduction to the task

Although tourism is part of the local economy you may find that it is difficult to get hold of reliable information about tourism issues. If there is not enough published information available to answer the questions, you may want to carry out an audit of tourist and visitor activities. Your audit will probably need to include a wide range of topics including:

- Visitor attitudes: what do they come for, what do they do, and what do they think about what the town/hinterland have to offer?
- Community Attitudes: how does tourism impact on the local economy both economically and socially, and what are the benefits and the problems?)
- Economic impact assessment: how does tourism and tourism related employment affect the area?

The regional development agency or local authority tourism officer may be able to help with collecting and analysing the data. You might want to consider 'benchmarking' the town's businesses and facilities. This involves making a comparison between your town and other similar towns. The Countryside Agency's 'Leaky Luggage' model may help you with this process.

2: Getting the following information will give you the facts you need to assess visitors' needs and the services and facilities available.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
Sub Section 1: Who are our visitors?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Tourist Information office Visitor surveys 	<p>Q 1 How many visitors come to the area each year? Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day visitors Overnight visitors Longer stay visitors <p>(Worksheets S1 Q8 also refers to visitors and tourism)</p>	<p>The village is on route to a number of local tourist destinations – Sissinghurst, Leeds, Bodiam, Northiam Castles; Cranbrook and Tenterden are historic towns; the A229 through Staplehurst is a main arterial road to Hastings. There will be a small number of day visitors. There are no hotels or guest houses. There are approx. 5 B&Bs in the vicinity, so there will be a few overnight/longer stay visitors. Staplehurst itself is not a destination for anything in particular.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Surveys conducted by the District Council or Tourist Board 	<p>Q 2 Visitor activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is visitor activity susceptible to seasonal peaks and troughs? If yes, when do these occur, and why? <p><i>Compare visitor numbers and employment rates at different times of the year.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, to some degree. Assumed there will be more visitors during summer months with people on holiday in or passing through the region. The locality itself is not renowned as a tourist destination. There may be some influx during crop harvest times.
Sub Section 2: What do tourists want?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Tourist Information office Visitor surveys 	<p>Q 3 Where do visitors go during their visit?</p>	<p>General use of retail services. Iden Croft Herbs attracts some visitors from outside the area; otherwise there are no specific tourist destinations. Some genealogy visits to parish church and library.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Tourist Information office Visitor surveys 	<p>Q4 What do visitors do during their visit? <i>Look at, for example, whether they go shopping, visit tourist attractions, do sport, visit friends/relatives, etc.</i></p>	<p>As above.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor Surveys conducted by the District Council or Tourist Board 	<p>Q 5 How much money do visitors spend in the town and the surrounding area?</p>	<p>Small expenditure on food and drink services and B&B accommodation.</p>
<p>Sub-section 3: What does our town offer tourists?</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Tourist Board Yellow Pages 	<p>Q 6 Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are the main tourist or visitor activities in the town or nearby? Are there any specialist tourism enterprises, such as language schools or conference centres that may encourage people to visit the area? If so, what proportion of visitors use these facilities? <p><i>Consider both major activities (for example, festivals, sports events, key landmarks, etc), and smaller scale activities (for example, footpaths, cycle ways/cycle hire, etc).</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There are no tourist activities in the locality or the near vicinity. There are no specific enterprises which promote Staplehurst as a tourism destination. The village is on route to a number of tourist destinations which are more widely promoted – Sissinghurst, Leeds, Bodiam, Northiam Castles; Cranbrook and Tenterden historic towns; the A229 through Staplehurst is a main arterial road to Hastings. There is a small farm museum but this is mainly only open to groups by prior arrangement. The area does not have any substantive facilities that encourage people to visit or stop.

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority • Local transport providers 	<p>Q 7</p> <p>What are the transport links:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To the town in the first instance (for example, road and rail) b. For visitors once they have arrived (for example, buses, hire cars)? <p><i>Consider whether there are viable alternatives to private cars.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. There are road, rail and bus links. b. Transport within the locality would be predominantly by car and on foot.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tourist Information Office • local survey. • www.tourismforall.org.uk • www.holidaycare.org.uk 	<p>Q 8</p> <p>How accessible is the town and its facilities for people with disabilities?</p>	<p>Generally flat with ramped pavements. Poor access for the less-able to the south end of the village with steps on both pavements.</p> <p>Access to shops is generally good. Access to some pubs is poor because of steps on footways or the internal design of the period buildings in which some pubs are based.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council • Local Tourist Board • Local surveys 	<p>Q 9</p> <p>What is the range and capacity of accommodation available with respect to these grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&B • Guest House • Hotel • Self-catering • Caravan and camping • Youth hostels • Bunkhouse barns 	<p>Very limited. There are a few (c.5) B&Bs and one or two self-catering premises in Staplehurst and its hinterland.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council • Local Tourist Board 	<p>Q 10</p> <p>Competitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does the town enter any national competitions, such as 'Britain in Bloom'? b. Do the surrounding villages enter the 'Best Kept Village'? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No. b. Yes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local food groups • Tourist Information Office 	<p>Q 12</p> <p>Food directory:</p> <p>Is there a local food directory for the town and surrounding hinterland?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How is it produced? b. Who is it distributed to? c. How often is it updated? 	<p>There is no local food directory.</p>

Sub-section 4: Do we need to improve what we offer?		
Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist Information • Visitor Centre • Local surveys • Visitor surveys • Tourist Board • Tourism officer 	<p>Q 13</p> <p>Visitor information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If there is a Tourist or Visitor Information Centre in the town, how well used is it? Where are the Visitor Information Points in the town? Around the town and its environs, are there: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ current visitor guides ○ town trails ○ up to date walking and cycling trails <p><i>Consider the number of enquiries in various forms, including phone calls, 'hits' to the Internet and the number of visitors to the Centre.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No such service in the locality. The public library and rail station have visitor information. There are footpath maps published by the local footpath group.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor surveys • Tourist Board • District Council Tourism Officer • Local survey 	<p>Q 14</p> <p>Is there adequate and effective pedestrian and road signing to visitors' attractions and services (for example, parking and public toilets, the Tourist Office and the town centre)?</p> <p><i>Look at signage to/from tourist attractions from key points such as at car parks, the train station, and between attractions.</i></p>	<p>No. Local knowledge is required to locate key buildings and services. There is a map at the railway station although its orientation is confusing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local survey 	<p>Q 15</p> <p>How convenient is public transport for shopping areas/facilities and tourist attractions?</p>	<p>For inward travellers the rail station is to the north of the village some distance from the main retail/historic centre. Buses do pass through the village centre. There is no real integration of public transport services with each other or with local facilities.</p>

Starting points for information	Information you will need	Answers and notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local survey 	<p>Q 16 Parking:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How many car parks, coach parks, meters, free parking zones, etc, are there? Are they situated conveniently for the Town Centre, shopping and tourist attractions? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There are three major car parks (Village centre, Bell Lane, rail station). Only the station is chargeable. There is parking in the shopping centre, but this is proving to be inadequate. <p>68% of community survey respondents consider there is insufficient parking in Staplehurst generally, although many comment that providing more spaces will encourage car use and traffic.</p> <p>81% of community survey respondents would like to see some for of time-limited (non chargeable) parking at the Parade.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor surveys Tourist Board District Council, Tourism Officer 	<p>Q 17 To what extent does the number, range and quality of visitor services and ancillary services match visitor expectation and needs?</p>	<p>The limited range of service does not draw people to the area in the same manner as nearby locations of Headcorn, Tenterden and Cranbrook so they are inadequate. Staplehurst is not a destination for anything.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local survey 	<p>Q 18 What do visitors think about the general appearance and attractiveness of the town/hinterland, and the public facilities?</p> <p><i>Look at:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The number of and standard of public facilities (for example, public toilets; seating (in covered and uncovered areas); accessibility for older people and the less able; litter bins. Add to this list as appropriate.</i> <i>The general appearance: for example, are the streets clean and tidy? Is graffiti a problem? Are there well-tended flower beds and borders, etc? Are the railway station/bus terminals in good repair? Add to this list as appropriate.</i> 	<p>Staplehurst and its hinterland are in an area which is generally considered to be attractive.</p> <p>Generally presentable and well maintained. Poorly kept shrubbery detrimental to central shopping area; no flower beds or borders. There is some seating, but mainly by busy road.</p>

3: This part is called a SWOT analysis, where you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Once you have the information, use this table to show the Strengths and Weaknesses in the visitor and tourism services currently on offer. Also flag up where there are Opportunities to improve things or where there might be Threats in the future. The conclusions give the basis for a summary that can go forward to the Healthcheck Report.

You may need to tick more than one column for each question.

You need to consider what the information you have gathered tells you in the light of these questions:	Write your answers here. Base them on the information you have gathered:	Conclusion					
		It's a Fact	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Need more info
How important is tourism spending and tourism-related employment to the local economy?	Not at all important. Staplehurst is not a destination for anything in particular. This is a <u>weakness</u> .	X					
How vulnerable is the local economy to seasonal variations in tourism?	Not vulnerable because little or no tourism. This is a <u>fact</u> .	X					
How do historical employment rates and business stocks in tourism related services, such as hotels and catering, compare with regional and national averages over the last 3-5 years?	There is no tourism-related employment or business stock, so rates can only be lower than the national average. This is a <u>weakness</u> .			X			
Is visitor activity concentrated mainly within the town itself or within the hinterland?	The little visitor activity there is will be concentrated in the town. This is a <u>fact</u> .	X					
How good are the transport links into the town and to tourist attractions?	There are no tourist attractions and there are no particular transport links, although the area is geographically small and commercial activity is concentrated in the heart of the village. This is a <u>fact</u> .			X	X		
What Tourism information sources there are in the area, and how well used are they?	There is some tourist information in the local library. This is not extensively used. This is a <u>weakness</u> .			X	X		

<p>Do the town and its hinterland have adequate parking facilities for both residents and visitors?</p>	<p>No. This is a <u>weakness</u> with respect to visitor and tourism matters but there is <u>opportunity</u> for improvement.</p> <p>68% of community survey respondents consider there is insufficient parking in Staplehurst generally, although many comment that providing more spaces will encourage car use and traffic.</p> <p>81% of community survey respondents would like to see some time-limited (non chargeable) parking at the Parade.</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>		