



Surrey Economic Prospects – May 2017

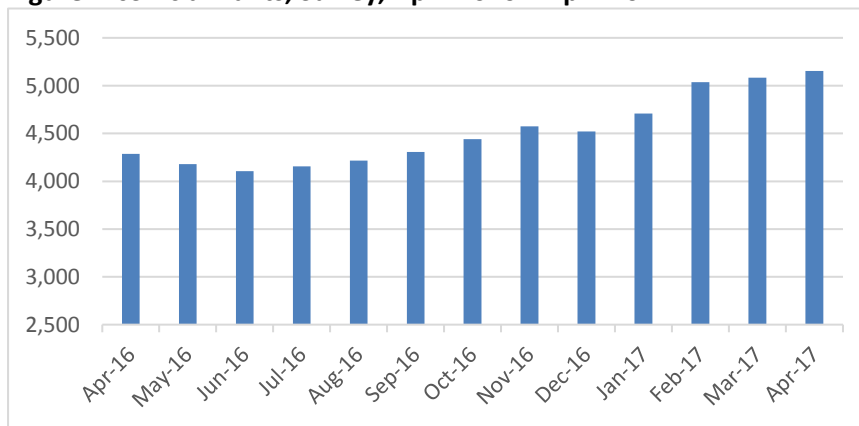
Headlines

- Plans to build more than 130 new flats in Redhill have been given the go-ahead
- A Guildford horticultural business is hoping to significantly expand with plans for 130,000 sq ft of glasshouse space on land near Worplesdon
- Unemployment, measured by the number of JSA claimants, increased slightly in April 2017 to 5,155 (0.7% of the working age population).

Data and analysis – labour market

Unemployment, measured by the number of **Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) claimants**, increased slightly in April 2017 to 5,155 (0.7% of the working age population). See Figure 1 (below) for the trend over the last 12 months.

Figure 1: JSA claimants, Surrey, April 2016 – April 2017

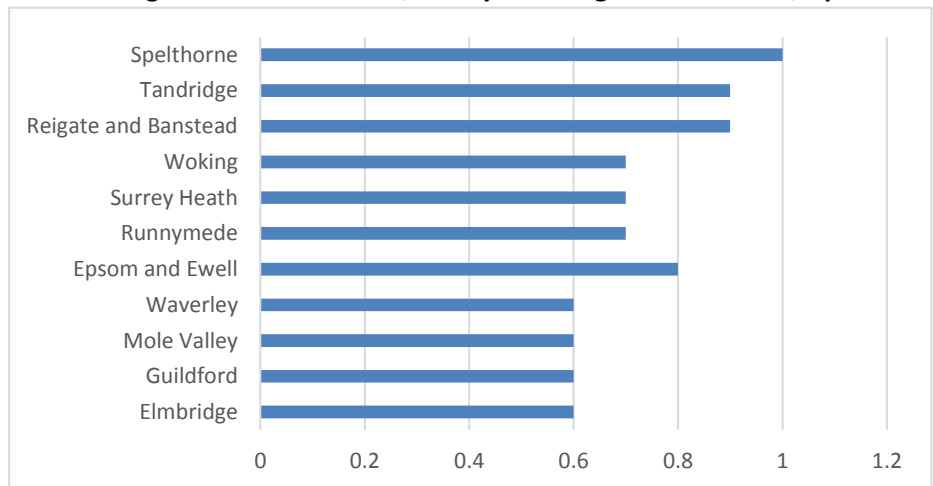


Surrey's unemployment rate is similar to its economic comparators – Cambridgeshire (0.7%), Buckinghamshire (0.9%), Hampshire (0.8%), West Sussex (1.1%) and Oxfordshire (0.7%).

Source: Nomis

Figure 2: JSA claimants, Surrey's boroughs and districts, April 2017

The unemployment rate (JSA claimant count) varies amongst Surrey's boroughs and districts. This is shown in figure 2. The rate varies from 1.0% in Spelthorne to 0.6% in Elmbridge, Guildford, Mole Valley and Waverley.





Business intelligence¹

A **Guildford** horticultural business which supplies local garden centres is hoping to significantly expand its operations with plans for a new development. **RC Kemp and Son** is seeking planning permission to erect almost 130,000 sq ft of glasshouse space on land near Worplesdon. The detailed planning application also includes a 7,000 sq ft store.

Plans to build more than 130 new flats in **Redhill** have been given the go-ahead. The scheme will include a total of 133 apartments for rent for the local commuter market including 15 affordable flats.

Synoptica, an artificial intelligence company based in **Guildford** has secured an investment from business services provider BE Group. Synoptica uses its platform to automate traditional company research done on the internet.

The fastest-growing businesses across Surrey and Sussex – with a turnover between £5 million and £10 million – have been revealed. **BDO's** Best in Business report has identified the top 20 companies in each county, with **Mast Interiors** leading the Surrey table. For more information see [here](#).

Longshot Country Inns, which operates seven pubs across Berkshire, Surrey and Hampshire has secured a £5.3 million loan from OakNorth Bank. The group operates sites in Cookham, **Churt**, **Godalming**, Kingsclere, Odiham, Reading and Windsor, all trading under the Bel & The Dragon brand name.

Multidisciplinary consultancy **Waterman Group**, with offices in **Redhill**, has agreed terms on a £43 million takeover by Japan-based **CTI Engineering**. Shareholders will receive 140p in cash for each Waterman share, with the purchase price valuing the group at £43 million.

Chertsey-based **Compass Group** has proposed a £1 billion special dividend following a good six months for the food services company. According to the company's results for the six months to 31 March 2017, revenue has risen to £11.5 billion, up from £9.5 billion in 2016. Pre-tax profit increased to £831 million.

Bartlett Mitchell, an independent catering group based in **Egham** has welcomed its sixth successive year of growth. The company reported revenue of £35 million for the financial year to 31 October 2016, an increase of 10 per cent on a year earlier. Pre-tax profit increased to £619,000.

A new partnership between **East Surrey College** and London South Bank University (LSBU) will provide highly trained engineers to local employers. For the first time, in September 2017 engineering apprentices will begin a three-year programme at East Surrey College studying towards a Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Engineering, later joining LSBU for two years to achieve a Bachelor of Engineering (Hons) in Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

Woking-based manufacturer and distributor of self-adhesive sign vinyl and print media has completed a £62 million management buyout backed by a private equity firm. London-based Primary has purchased **Metamark**, which has a sales and distribution base in Woking.

¹ Sources include Insider Media, CoStar Group and Surrey News.



INVEST IN SURREY

Petards, the **Guildford**-based software developer of advanced security and surveillance systems, has been awarded a major contract with **Bombardier Transportation**. The £3 million contract is for the supply of Peterds' eyeTrain systems.

Farnham Castle Intercultural Training will run a **Global Mindset & Cultural Intelligence** workshop on 6 July 2017 designed to enhance cultural awareness and efficacy when working with international colleagues, clients and partners. The training will give participants the relevant frameworks and real life business scenarios to develop practical tools and strategies that can produce immediate results in the workplace. To book a place click [here](#).

Surrey Chambers of Commerce is supporting the British South India Council of Commerce (BSICC) '**India Manufacturing Summit**' to be held at the House of Commons on 18 July. Manufacturing companies from UK, Europe and India, policymakers from UK and India, Members of the House of Lords and House of Commons and other invited guests will gather to understand business opportunities for UK/ European companies to invest in India's manufacturing sector and let companies know about the regulatory policies which have been relaxed to facilitate investments and ease of doing business.

Projectfive, based in **Camberley**, has won "Outsourcing Company of the Year" at the National Technology Awards. The winners were determined by an independent judging panel and announced at the National Technology Awards Gala and Dinner on 17 May 2017.

The first **Surrey Tech Bytes** event was launched in **Guildford** on the 9th May at Surrey Technology Centre. Surrey Tech Bytes is run as a partnership between the Enterprise M3 Growth Hub, Surrey Research Park, Cressive Digital, Venner Shipley, and Tax Insight UK. Running at lunchtime on the 2nd Tuesday of every month, the event aims to educate businesses in the local area on the latest news and schemes available, whilst providing a networking opportunity over a 'byte' of lunch. The next event runs on the 13th June from 1-2pm, on European Funding for SME Training. If you would like to attend the next event please send your name and company to admin@enterprisem3growthhub.co.uk. The full 2017 schedule can be found by viewing the [Surrey Tech Bytes Schedule PDF here](#).

Turnover has passed £1.5 billion at **Clarks**, which has stores across Surrey, but the shoe retailer has reported a fall in pre-tax profit. Turnover increased to £1.65 billion in the year to 31 January 2017, up from £1.53 billion in 2015/16. However, pre-tax profit fell to £19.9 million from £35 million in 2016.

National news²

EY has published its latest [UK Attractiveness Survey](#). It highlights a mixed performance in terms of the UK's attractiveness as an inward investment location.

The chief executive of convenience store chain **McColl's** has revealed the business is exploring a potential takeover of **One Stop**, owned by supermarket **Tesco**. The news comes five months after McColl's purchase of 298 Co-op stores was approved by the Competition and Markets Authority.

² Sources include Insider Media, CoStar Group and Surrey News.



INVEST IN SURREY

Lloyds Bank Group is now a fully private company once again after the government sold off its remaining 0.25% stake. This is eight years after the government funnelled £20 billion into the failing bank at the height of the financial crisis.

The £200 million merger between UK takeaway giant **Just Eat** and **Hungryhouse** is to undergo investigation by the Competition and Markets Authority, citing similarities between the two services and the areas they cover. Announced in December 2016, the acquisition has the potential to create by far the biggest player in the UK online takeaway market and entrench Just Eat's dominant position in the market.

Marks and Spencer Group plc saw its profits fall 63.9% last year but revenue growth remained steady. For the 12 months to April 1 2017, the firm reported a pre-tax profit of £176.4 million in comparison to £488.8 million in 2016. Groupwide revenues for the period grew 0.6%, rising to £10.62 billion.

To participate in the British Chambers of Commerce **Quarterly Economic Survey** click [here](#). This is the largest UK survey of its type and the findings equip the British Chambers of Commerce to lobby the Government effectively on business's behalf.

The Overview of the **May 2017 Inflation Report** has been published by the Bank of England. It can be downloaded at <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/inflationreport/2017/may.pdf>

The **Agents' Summary of Business Conditions** can be found at <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/agentssummary/2017/may.pdf>

Mark Pearson
Director of Business Growth
Surrey County Council

mark.pearson@surreycc.gov.uk

01483 685230

www.investinsurrey.co.uk

www.surreycc.gov.uk