

Community, Economic Growth and Property Cabinet Advisory Committee

11 January 2021

Employment on Sheppey

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. This report provides a very brief overview of current employment picture on the Isle of Sheppey, using the available small area data.

2. Background

- 2.1. The availability of data at sub-district authority level is relatively limited, with the vast majority based on the census of 2011, which is now significantly out of date. Employment data is provided by the Business Register and Employment Survey. Published annually, the survey records a job at the location of an employee's workplace. This dataset excludes agricultural workers. The survey was first published in 2015 and the latest available data is for 2020.
- 2.2. Whilst the survey provides data at small area level, including electoral wards, its use and publication is restricted. Therefore, data has been aggregated to provide information for the Isle of Sheppey as a whole. Given the information is based on a survey, data at smaller geographical level should be treated as a gauge, rather than as an absolute measure.

3. Employment on Sheppey

- 3.1. The figures below indicate that total employment on Sheppey has fallen since 2015, by c.8% whilst Swale has seen a small increase of 2%.

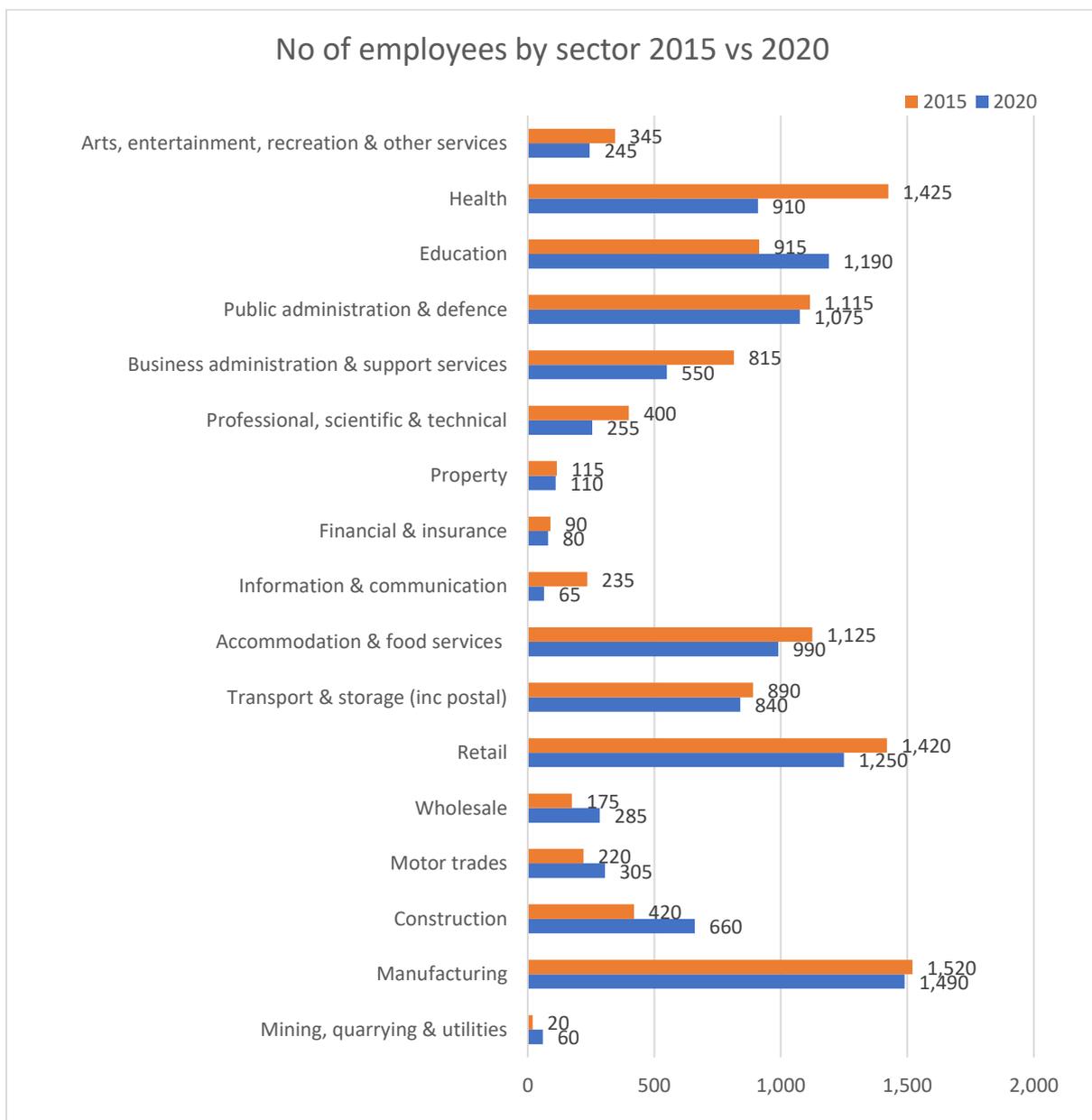
Total number of employee jobs

Year	Sheppey Employees	Swale Employees
2015	11275	49,500
2016	10975	50,500
2017	11250	50,500
2018	11100	51,500
2019	10425	51,500
2020	10375	50,500

- 3.2. The reduction in the number of jobs on Sheppey compares to a growing working-age population (16-64), rising from 26,360 in 2015 to 27,199 in 2020 (ONS Mid-year population estimates). This generates a lower employment density, resulting in a higher proportion of the resident workforce travelling to other destinations to access employment opportunities.
- 3.3. Travel to work data is census based and now significantly out of date. Whilst there remains a need to travel to access work, historically there has been a significantly

lower propensity for residents on the Isle of Sheppey to remain within the Borough to access employment, generating more localised travel patterns.

- 3.4 An analysis of employment by sector between 2015 and 2020 show that the largest gains were seen in education (+275), construction (+240) and wholesale (+110). Losses were spread across a number of sectors, with the largest being in health (-515). The geographical spread of changes in total employment is relatively evenly distributed across the Island, so is more difficult to attribute to specific circumstances
- 3.5 The geographical pattern of concentrations of employment by sector is largely unsurprising: Employment in Sheppey East is dominated by public administration (the Prisons) and to a lesser degree food and accommodation services. Sheerness and Queenborough have the largest areas of employment and a broader spread across sectors, with most retail, manufacturing and transport and storage jobs located within these two wards. I



3.6 Comparing workplace jobs, against resident employment is challenging, as resident data is largely based on the census. Recognising that the datasets are 9 years apart, the chart below does make such a comparison the proportion of resident employment by industry (2011) to the workplace jobs 2020, which unsurprisingly shows some degree of alignment. There are, however, disparities, particularly in construction, education and accommodation food services. However any analysis are should be treated with caution, given the difference in the datasets and 9 year gap.

