

6. Socio-economics

Introduction

- 6.1. This chapter, which was prepared by Stantec, presents an assessment of the likely socio-economic effects of the Development. CVs for the competent experts responsible for preparing this chapter are provided in [Appendix 1.2, ES Volume 2](#).
- 6.2. This chapter provides a description of the methods used in the assessment. This is followed by a description of the relevant baseline conditions of the Application Site and surrounding area, together with an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Development during operation. Mitigation measures are identified where appropriate to avoid, reduce or offset any adverse effects identified and / or enhance likely beneficial effects. Taking account of the mitigation measures, the nature and significance of the likely residual effects are described.
- 6.1. This chapter is supported by the following figures:
- [Figure 6.1: Socio-Economic Study Area](#).
- 6.2. The chapter is accompanied by the following appendices, provided in [ES Volume 2](#):
- [Appendix 6.1: Socio-Economic Planning Policy and Guidance](#).

Planning Policy and Guidance

- 6.3. The following comprises a summary of the key policy and guidance of relevance to this assessment. Further information is provided in [Appendix 6.1](#).

Planning Policy and Guidance

- 6.4. The chapter takes into account the following national and local planning policy and guidance:
- National Planning Policy Framework 2024, Paragraph 8a and Chapter 6 (Building a Strong, Competitive Economy)¹;
 - National Planning Practice Guidance, Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (Paragraphs: 025 to 032, Reference IDs: 2a-025-20190220 to 2a-032-20190722)²;
 - Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policies SP1 (Strategic Objectives), SP3 (Strategic Approach to Economic Development) and EMP2 (Loss or Redevelopment of Employment Sites and Premises)³.
 - Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan, Policy U19 (Sevington)⁴. Although it is acknowledged that this Plan has been superseded by the Ashford Local Plan 2030, it remains relevant with regards to the historical context of the Application Site.

Other Policy and Guidance

- 6.5. The chapter also takes into account the following additional socio-economic, standards and guidelines:
- The Green Book: Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government (2022)⁵;
 - Additionality Guide (2014)⁶.

Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

Assessment Methodology

Establishing Baseline Conditions

- 6.6. The socio-economic baseline has been established via a desktop study of secondary data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Experian and Oxford Economics including:
- 2021 Census: Age profile⁷, economic activity⁸, resident employment by occupation⁹, resident employment by industrial sector¹⁰, qualification levels¹¹ and commuting patterns¹²;
 - Sub-National Population Projections (SNPP)¹³
 - Jobs' density¹⁴;
 - Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)¹⁵;
 - Gross Value Added (GVA) by industrial sector¹⁶;
 - Employment by industrial sector¹⁷;
 - Convenience expenditure¹⁸.
- 6.7. The baseline reflects the position for the year 2021 as the baseline to inform the ES for EIA development must be based upon the position that existed prior to the proposed development being constructed. Where that development already exists, that baseline must be from a date prior to the development being implemented. The baseline endeavours to reflect the position prior to the development of the existing Inland Border Facility (IBF) but the EIA Scoping Opinion requested a 2021 baseline to ensure that most data is sourced from the 2021 Census. The Scoping Opinion considered that this would provide a more accurate representation of the local area during this time, rather than data for 2019/2020 (the baseline used across the wider ES) which would be based on 2011 Census data.

Evolution of the Baseline

- 6.8. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended)¹⁹ (EIA Regulations), the ES includes consideration of the likely evolution of baseline in the absence of the Development (i.e. should the application for the continued use and operation not be successful). This is to determine the likely effect if the Cumulative Schemes and any relevant policy designations were to come forward in the absence of the Development.

Assessment Methodology

Total Job Creation (Direct)

- 6.9. The number of direct jobs generated during the operational phase is based on employment associated with existing IBF operations as provided by the Applicant. The number of workers has been converted into a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) through reference to the average working hours profile across Ashford¹ according to the Annual Survey of Hours of Earnings (ASHE)²⁰. This establishes a ratio of 0.87 workers per FTE.

¹ When referring to Ashford, this is in relation to Ashford Borough as a whole.

Net Employment Effect to Ashford

- 6.10. Guidance from the Additionality Guide (HCA, 2014) and more recently The Green Book (HM Treasury, 2022) establishes that direct jobs created by development would be subject to a degree of 'displacement' (the level of employment likely to be lost, moved or adversely affected by the employment created as a result of the Development); 'leakage' (referring to the number of jobs likely to be taken up by people outside of Ashford), and; 'multiplier effects' (the additional economic benefit that will be derived as a direct result of the income earned by the new employment as an indirect result of the supply chain linkages). These factors are collectively known as 'additionality' factors. They enable quantification of the employment effect to an area, in the case of this assessment, Ashford. That is, the net increase in the number of employed Ashford residents attributable to the Development and the jobs it is expected to generate.
- 6.11. For this assessment no displacement factor is applied. This is deemed appropriate because the Development's operations are unique and are not therefore anticipated to displace employment from elsewhere.
- 6.12. The leakage factor has been informed through reference to commuting data (ONS, 2021 Census) and data provided by the Applicant. As established in the 'baseline conditions' section of this chapter, the 2021 Census reveals that 65% of people working in Ashford (excluding those people who work from home) also live in Ashford. Data provided by the Applicant reveals that 59% of the current IBF workforce live within 10-miles of the Application Site, which approximately relates to Ashford. The two data sources are broadly comparable (65% and 59%), suggesting a leakage factor of between 35% and 41%. To provide a reasonable, worst-case scenario for assessment (that being that which results in the lowest reported level of employment), the higher leakage factor (41%) has been applied in this assessment.
- 6.13. With regards to multipliers, as the Development is public sector, the Green Book's central multiplier for the public sector (0.25) has been applied to estimate the number of net additional jobs in the supply chain created by the Development.

Creation of Economic Output

- 6.14. Economic output is measured through the creation of GVA. GVA is a measure of economic impact, distributed through retained profit and wages. GVA generated by net additional employment created by the Development is calculated using the average GVA output per worker for the transportation and storage sector in the South East region, applied to the net additional direct jobs, and the national average GVA per worker across all industries, applied to the net additional indirect jobs. Regional and national average GVA per worker figures are utilised rather than GVA specific for Ashford because the jobs created will be new specialised jobs that are anticipated to reflect regional output per worker rather than the local equivalent.

Workforce Expenditure

- 6.15. Expenditure from the on-site workforce is estimated using convenience goods expenditure per person for Ashford sourced from Retail Planner data (Experian, 2023). Based on professional judgement, and considering an equivocal evidence base, it is assumed that approximately 10% of this annual spend per person could be spent by employees in the local area (for example, buying lunch, etc).

Definition of the Impact Area

- 6.16. Due to the employment-led nature of the Development, it is considered that the main area of impact for the Development is Ashford. Travel to work data from the 2011 and 2021 Census identifies respectively that 64% and 65% of all jobs in Ashford (excluding people who work from home) are undertaken by people who also live in Ashford, reflecting a high level of labour self-containment and therefore an appropriate functional economic area impact for this assessment.

Significance Criteria

- 6.17. Significant effects are likely to occur when a sensitive receptor is subject to an impact of a considerable magnitude. The significance of the effect on the receptor or receptors in question is a product of considering the magnitude of the impact having regard to the sensitivity of the receptor.
- 6.18. The following sections define the methodology for determining both the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of impacts in relation to socio-economics, followed by a matrix which can then be used to determine the significance of the resultant effects.

Sensitivity of Receptor

- 6.19. The sensitivity of receptors to the effects of socio-economics are determined by the contribution to Ashford's economy based on professional judgement. **Table 6.1** sets out the scale of sensitivity that is to be applied to the receptors identified in relation to socio-economics.

Table 6.1: Sensitivity of Receptor – Socio-Economics

Receptor Sensitivity	Receptor Type
Very High	The receptor is of significant importance to Ashford's economy (contributing to at least a quarter of the economy)
High	The receptor is of importance to Ashford's economy (contributing to between 10% and 24% of the economy)
Medium	The receptor is of some importance to Ashford's economy (contributing to between 0.1% and 9% of the economy)
Low	The receptor is of low or no importance to Ashford's economy (contributing less than 0.1%)

Magnitude of Impact

- 6.20. The magnitude of impact represents the degree of change to which a receptor will be exposed as a result of the operational activity undertaken. **Table 6.2** sets out the scale of impact magnitude relevant to assessment of socio-economics which is based on professional judgement.

Table 6.2: Magnitude of Impact – Socio-Economics

Scale of Magnitude	Description of Impact
Very Large	The Development would cause a very large change to the existing socio-economic condition (providing a +10% increase or greater to the current baseline)
Large	The Development would cause a large change to the existing socio-economic condition (providing between a +2.5% and +9.9% increase to the current baseline)
Medium	The Development would cause a moderate change to the existing socio-economic condition (providing between a +1% and +2.4% increase to the current baseline)
Low	The Development would cause a small change to the existing socio-economic condition (providing between a +0.1% and +0.9% increase to the current baseline)
Very Low	The Development would cause a no discernible change to the existing socio-economic condition (providing less than 0.1% increase to the current baseline)

Significance of the Effect

- 6.21. The significance of effects is determined by considering the magnitude of impact against the sensitivity of receptor. **Table 6.3** sets out the significance that will be ascribed to effects upon socio-economic sensitive receptors.

Table 6.3: Significance of Effect Matrix

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Impact				
	Very Large	Large	Medium	Low	Very Low
Very High	Major	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Negligible
High	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

- 6.22. For the purposes of the socio-economic assessment, effects of moderate significance and above are deemed to be significant in EIA terms.
- 6.23. As set out in **Chapter 2: EIA Methodology** (refer to **Table 2.2**) effects are also assigned descriptors to confirm the nature (direct or indirect), temporal scale (short-term, medium-term or long-term), permanence (temporary or permanence), type (beneficial or adverse) and spatial scale (site, neighbourhood, local, regional or national).

Assumptions, Exclusions and Limitations

- 6.24. The following assumptions and limitations are relevant to the socio-economic assessment:
- The assessment relies on secondary data (information that has been collected and published by a third party). Each data source has methodological limitations related to data collection and surveys only represent the socio-economic context at a specific point in time;

- The assessment defines the IBF operations as falling with the transportation and storage industrial sector. This sector is deemed to capture the IBF operations most appropriately as the IBF operations facilitate freight and cargo handling/movement via the ports, which is an industrial subset of the broader transportation and storage sector. Within this industry, there will be a wide range of occupations from administrative to management roles and elementary/processing roles, capturing IBF activities.
- 6.25. General assumptions and limitations which apply to all technical chapters are set out in **Chapter 2: EIA Methodology**.

Consultation

- 6.26. Consultation regarding the methodology for the socio-economic assessment was undertaken via the EIA scoping consultation process. The key points raised in these consultation responses, together with a commentary regarding how they have been addressed, are summarised in **Table 6.4**.

Table 6.4: Issues raised in the EIA Scoping Opinion – Socio-Economics

Summary of Key Issue	How has this been addressed	Where is this addressed in the ES
Requests that a 2021 baseline is utilised for the socio-economic Chapter to ensure that most data is drawn from the 2021 Census, providing a more accurate representation of the local area during this time.	The baseline reports data sourced from the 2021 Census. Where required socio-economic indicators are not available from the 2021 Census, alternative secondary data sources have been utilised, using data for the year 2021 to provide a consistent baseline.	Paragraphs 6.8 and 6.33 through to 6.54
Requires the ES to provide a direct comparison between the number of FTE jobs generated by the Development and the number of FTE jobs that would have been generated from the full implementation of the extant permission (this is specifically the terminology used by the EIA Scoping Opinion but is considered to refer to the historic outline permission) Requests that this is considered in the socio-economic chapter.	The socio-economic chapter of the ES submitted alongside the previous outline application (ref: 14/00906/AS) for the Application Site reported 2,406 gross direct FTE jobs would be supported. Only Phase 1A works of this application were implemented (comprising access roads, drainage and landscaping), the balance of the outline permission fell away in September 2024 as no further Reserved Matters applications were submitted. As such, there is no extant permission for the element which would have supported the 2,406 FTE direct jobs. For this reason, this issue is not considered any further within this chapter.	Paragraphs 6.56 to 6.59 reports the number of jobs supported by the Development.

Summary of Construction-related Effects

- 6.27. As the IBF is already built and operational, construction impacts were scoped out of the ES. However, in response to the EIA Scoping Request, ABC requested a summary of construction effects within each relevant ES chapter.

- 6.28. While no socio-economic assessment was conducted for the SDO, effects on population and health were considered and may be summarised as follow:

PROWs A337A, AE338, AE363, and AE639 will close temporarily during construction, with a six-month diversion via AE364 and AE344. All other PROWs remain unaffected. While WCHs may experience slightly longer travel times, no community facilities will be impacted.

Construction may cause minor visual disturbances (Chapter 3.4), but there will be no demolition, property loss, or effects on businesses, agricultural land, or community assets, including the Church of St Mary. Access to facilities remains unchanged.

Air quality and noise assessments (Chapters 3.2, 3.8) find no significant health effects. To minimize disruption, the community will be informed, and clear signage will mark PROW diversions (REAC PH1, Appendix C). These measures will be included in the CMP and implemented by the Principal Contractor.

Baseline Conditions

Pre-Development Baseline (Application Site)

- 6.29. ES **Chapter 3: Land Uses and Sensitive Receptors** details that the pre-development baseline conditions comprise the Phase 1A works, which including the main access point to the Application Site, together with internal estate roads, drainage features and landscaped areas. Such uses would have supported limited levels of employment.
- 6.30. However, under Policy U19 of Ashford Borough Council's Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan (2012), the Application Site was allocated for employment development. The supporting Policy text states that the Application Site is better suited to large-scale light industrial uses rather than high-density office development. The employment development allocation was not carried forward pursuant to the new Local Plan (2019), on the basis that outline permission had been granted for employment development over the Application Site.

Existing Baseline (Surrounding Area)

- 6.31. This section reports baseline conditions for Ashford (as the identified impact area for this assessment) alongside the average for Kent County, the South East region and England, for comparison.
- 6.32. The baseline represents the position for the year 2021, as requested by the EIA Scoping Opinion.

Population

- 6.33. As of the 2021 Census, Ashford had a resident population of 132,752 people accounting for 8% of the county of Kent's population (1,576,069 people).
- 6.34. The age profile of Ashford residents is comparable to the Kent average as demonstrated in **Table 6.5**. However, both Ashford and Kent have a slightly older age profile than the regional and national average, with a lower proportion of working age (16 to 64 years) residents and a higher proportion of residents aged 65+ years.
- 6.35. 61% of Ashford's population is of working age (aged 16 to 64 years), which is comparable to the Kent average but marginally lower than both the regional and national averages (62% and 63% respectively).

- 6.36. In contrast, 20% of both Ashford's and Kent's population is aged 65+ years, which is higher than both the regional (19%) and national (18%) averages.
- 6.37. Despite this, Ashford does have a higher proportion of children (aged 0 to 15 years) than the average for Kent, the South East region and England (all 19% respectively).

Table 5.5: Age Profile by Broad Age Group (2021)

Age Band (Years)	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
0 to 15	20%	19%	19%	19%
16 to 64	61%	61%	62%	63%
65+	20%	20%	19%	18%
All Ages	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total Population	132,752	1,576,069	9,278,063	56,490,045

Source: ONS, 2021 Census

- 6.38. Population projections (ONS, SNPP) suggest that over the 10-year period 2021 to 2031, the population of Ashford will increase by +9%. This rate of growth is higher than projected for Kent, the South East region and England as shown in **Table 6.6**. The projections also show that Ashford is expected to see growth across all broad age groups, and again, to a higher level, than each of the comparator areas.

Table 6.6: Projected Population Growth (2021 to 2031)

Age Band (Years)	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
0 to 15	+1%	-2%	-6%	-5%
16 to 64	+6%	+4%	+1%	+2%
65+	+25%	+22%	+22%	+21%
All Ages	+9%	+7%	+4%	+4%

Source: ONS, SNPP

Resident Economic Activity

- 6.39. The 2021 Census recorded that there were 64,829 residents in Ashford, aged 16 years and over, who were classified as economically active (this includes all those people in employment or available to work, for example the unemployed but excludes full-time students). This is equivalent to 61% of the population aged 16 and over, which is higher than the average for Kent (58%), the South East region (60%) and England (59%).
- 6.40. Of those economically active Ashford residents, 62,236 were in employment which is equivalent to 58% of 16+ year olds. Whilst again higher than the average for Kent and England (both 56% respectively), the proportion is equivalent to the regional average (58%).
- 6.41. The remaining 2,593 economically active Ashford residents were unemployed. This represents 2.4% of all residents aged 16+ years. The proportion of unemployed residents in Ashford is lower than all comparator areas as shown in **Table 6.7**.

Table 6.7: Economic Activity Status (2021)

Economic Activity Status	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
Economically active*	61%	58%	60%	59%
In employment	58%	56%	58%	56%
Unemployed	2.4%	2.6%	2.5%	2.9%
Economically inactive**	38%	40%	38%	39%

* Excluding full-time students

** Economically inactive includes students, those looking after the home or family, long-term sick or disabled, retired and other.

Source: ONS, 2021 Census

Resident Employment and Skills Profile

- 6.42. **Table 6.8** presents the occupation group of all residents aged 16+ years in employment. The highest proportion of Ashford residents are employed within professional occupations (18%), which is also the highest form of employment in each of the comparator areas, albeit to a slightly lesser extent than the average for Kent (19%), the South East region (21%) and England (20%). A further 14% of Ashford residents work as managers, directors or senior officials. The data reveals that Ashford has a varied occupation profile which is broadly comparable to the county, regional and national averages.

Table 6.8: Residents in Employment by Occupation (2021)

Occupation	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
1. Managers, directors and senior officials	14%	14%	15%	13%
2. Professional occupations	18%	19%	21%	20%
3. Associate professional and technical occupations	13%	14%	14%	13%
4. Administrative and secretarial occupations	9%	10%	9%	9%
5. Skilled trades occupations	12%	11%	10%	10%
6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations	9%	9%	9%	9%
7. Sales and customer service occupations	8%	7%	7%	7%
8. Process, plant and machine operatives	7%	6%	6%	7%
9. Elementary occupations	10%	10%	9%	10%
All occupations	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: ONS, 2021 Census

- 6.43. **Table 6.9** presents the industrial sector in which all residents aged 16+ in employment are working within. The highest proportion of Ashford residents are employed within human health and social work (16%), followed by the wholesale and retail trade (15%), which is comparable to the county, regional and national averages. However, Ashford has a higher or equal proportion of residents employed in manufacturing (7%) and construction (11%) to the comparator areas. 5% of Ashford residents work in the transport and storage sector – comparable to the county, regional and national averages.

Table 6.9: Residents in Employment by Industry (2021)

Industry	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing	2%	1%	1%	1%
Mining and quarrying	0%	0%	0%	0%
Manufacturing	7%	5%	6%	7%
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1%	1%	1%	1%
Water supply; Sewerage, Waste management and Remediation activities	1%	1%	1%	1%
Construction	11%	11%	9%	9%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	15%	15%	14%	15%
Transport and storage	5%	5%	5%	5%
Accommodation and food service activities	4%	4%	4%	5%
Information and communication	4%	4%	6%	5%
Financial and insurance activities	3%	5%	4%	4%
Real estate activities	1%	2%	2%	2%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	6%	6%	7%	7%
Administrative and support service activities	6%	6%	6%	5%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	6%	6%	6%	6%
Education	9%	10%	10%	10%
Human health and social work activities	16%	14%	14%	15%
Other	4%	5%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: ONS, 2021 Census

- 6.44. In terms of qualification levels, **Table 6.10** shows that the highest level of qualification achieved by the greatest proportion of Ashford residents (30%) is a Level 4 qualification or above which is equivalent to a degree or higher. This mirrors the county, regional and national picture, albeit the proportion of residents with a Level 4 qualification or above is slightly lower in Ashford in comparison to each of the other comparator areas. Overall, however, the data reveals that Ashford has a varied skills profile which is broadly comparable to the county, regional and national averages.

Table 6.10: Highest Qualification Level of Residents (% of residents aged 16+)

Qualification	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
No qualifications	18%	18%	15%	18%
Level 1 and entry level qualifications	11%	11%	10%	10%
Level 2 qualifications	15%	15%	14%	13%
Apprenticeship	6%	6%	5%	5%

Qualification	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
Level 3 qualifications	17%	17%	17%	17%
Level 4 qualifications or above	30%	31%	36%	34%
Other qualifications	3%	3%	3%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: ONS, 2021 Census

Employment (Workplace-based)

- 6.45. Jobs density data (ONS, 2021) identifies that in 2021 there were 72,000 jobs supported in Ashford. Expressed as the proportion of residents aged 16 to 64 years, Ashford has a jobs density of 0.89, which means there are more working age residents than jobs, indicating that Ashford is a net exporter of labour. Ashford's job density is higher than each of the comparator areas as shown in **Table 6.11**.

Table 6.11: Job Density (2021)

	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
Total Jobs	72,000	775,000	4,896,000	30,590,000
Job Density (jobs per residents aged 16 to 64)	0.89	0.81	0.85	0.86

Source: ONS, Jobs Density

- 6.46. Data from the 2021 BRES (ONS), provides a breakdown of the industries people are working within in each of the comparator areas from a workplace perspective as shown in **Table 6.12**.
- 6.47. The health sector accounts for the highest proportion of employment in Ashford (16%), with this sector also accounting for the highest proportion of employment in each of the comparator areas, albeit to a lesser extent than in Ashford. The retail sector and business administration and support services are also both important sectors to the Ashford economy, each accounting for 11% of employment. The transport and storage sector accounts for 5% of employment in Ashford - comparable to the regional and national averages, but lower than the county average (7%). In total the transportation and storage sector support 3,000 jobs in Ashford.

Table 6.12: Workplace-based Employment by Industrial Sector (2021)

Industry	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	3%	2%	1%	1%
Mining, quarrying & utilities	2%	2%	1%	1%
Manufacturing	7%	6%	6%	7%
Construction	7%	8%	6%	5%
Motor trades	2%	2%	2%	2%
Wholesale	6%	4%	4%	4%
Retail	11%	11%	10%	9%
Transport & storage (inc postal)	5%	7%	5%	5%
Accommodation & food services	6%	7%	7%	8%

Industry	Ashford	Kent	South East	England
Information & communication	2%	2%	5%	5%
Financial & insurance	1%	3%	3%	4%
Property	1%	2%	2%	2%
Professional, scientific & technical	7%	7%	9%	9%
Business administration & support services	11%	9%	9%	9%
Public administration & defence	3%	4%	3%	4%
Education	7%	9%	9%	9%
Health	16%	13%	13%	13%
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	3%	4%	5%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: ONS, BRES

Commuting Patterns

- 6.48. According to the 2021 Census, 65% of people who work in Ashford also live in Ashford (excluding those who work from home). The remaining 35% of Ashford's workforce live outside of Ashford but mainly in the neighbouring local authorities to Ashford, including: Folkestone and Hythe (11%), Maidstone (4%), Canterbury (4%) and Dover (4%).

Economic Output (GVA) by Sector

- 6.49. **Table 6.13** presents average annual GVA per worker by industry for the year 2021 (Oxford Economics, 2024).
- 6.50. Average annual GVA per worker across all industries is lower in Ashford (£49,070) compared to Kent (£58,359), the South East region (£68,220) and the UK (£61,341) (data for England is not available). However, GVA per worker varies considerably by industry. The Development is associated with the transportation and storage sector. In Ashford, the transportation and storage sector have the lowest GVA per worker per annum (£22,508) of all of the sectors, whereas the average annual GVA per worker for the transportation and storage sector is higher in Kent (£31,682), the South East region (£33,461) and the UK (£34,140).
- 6.51. The transportation and storage sector accounts for 2.1% of total GVA in Ashford (£3.3bn), accounting for a lower proportion than the average for Kent (3.5%), the South East region (2.4%) and the UK (2.9%).

Table 6.13: Average Annual GVA Per Worker (£) by Industry (2021)

Industry	Ashford	Kent	South East	UK
Accommodation and food service	£29,339	£24,136	£25,770	£22,382
Administrative and support	£29,388	£29,633	£37,580	£34,008
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	£23,119	£29,572	£33,680	£43,736
Arts, entertainment and rec.	£31,186	£21,593	£32,034	£28,423
Construction	£49,105	£63,365	£61,734	£58,058
Electricity, gas, steam and air	£132,267	£168,701	£254,006	£186,426

Industry	Ashford	Kent	South East	UK
Financial and insurance	£41,424	£121,946	£142,909	£175,534
Human health and social work	£39,920	£33,441	£38,567	£38,457
Information and communication	£53,840	£70,733	£101,328	£87,436
Manufacturing - Total	£73,749	£107,906	£108,794	£87,049
Mining and quarrying	£166,667	£181,951	£221,862	£163,864
Other service activities	£55,045	£49,801	£45,666	£37,085
Education	£39,210	£41,452	£44,600	£41,978
Professional, scientific and tech	£38,554	£49,707	£58,705	£54,479
Public administration and defence	£70,550	£70,848	£76,366	£66,571
Real estate activities	£690,831	£728,342	£638,638	£458,626
Transportation and storage	£22,508	£31,682	£33,461	£34,140
Water supply	£65,971	£94,855	£151,708	£118,318
Wholesale and retail trade	£38,849	£41,638	£54,672	£47,004
All industries	£49,070	£58,359	£68,220	£61,341

Source: Oxford Economics

Workforce Expenditure

- 6.52. Retail expenditure data from Experian (2023) reports the average annual expenditure per resident in Ashford on convenience (food) goods of £2,720 per person per annum. This level of expenditure is marginally lower than the average for Kent (£2,784), but higher than the regional (£2,593) and national (£2,709) averages.
- 6.53. Based on professional judgement, it is assumed that approximately 10% of this annual spend per person could be spent by employees in Ashford (for example, buying lunch, etc). This equates to an estimated workforce expenditure of £272 per annum per employee.
- 6.54. On the basis that there are 72,000 people working in Ashford according to the 2021 Jobs' Density data, this would suggest current workforce expenditure of £19.6 million per annum in Ashford.

Sensitive Receptors

- 6.55. A number of sensitive receptors have been identified, following the baseline review, as set out in **Table 6.14**.

Table 6.14: Sensitive Receptors

Receptor Name	Description	Location	Sensitivity (Low / Medium / High / Very High)
Transportation and storage industry (employment)	The sector accounts for 5% of employment in Ashford – comparable to the regional and national averages but lower than the Kent average	Ashford	Medium
Transportation and storage industry (GVA)	The sector accounts for 2.1% of total GVA in Ashford – lower than the county, regional and national averages	Ashford	Medium
Resident labour market	Resident employment rates in Ashford are higher than the Kent and national averages but comparable to the regional average but unemployment levels are lower in Ashford in comparison to the Kent, South East and national averages	Ashford	Medium
Workforce expenditure	Convenience expenditure per person is higher in Ashford is higher than the regional and national averages but lower than the Kent average	Ashford	Medium

Assessment of Likely Significant Operational Effects

Total Job Creation (Direct)

- 6.56. The Applicant has advised that the existing IBF operations currently support 941 staff across a range of occupations as detailed in [Table 6.15](#). This is considered to be a conservative estimate because numbers for some departments, including live animal handlers, is not known.

Table 6.15: Employment currently (2024) supported on the Application Site by existing IBF Operations

Government Department	Type of Job	Number of Jobs
HMRC	Front Office Staff	615
	HMRC Staff	
	Border Force Staff	
	Other Commercial Partners (including Sodexo, Kuehne & Nagel, Tivoli, DVSA)	
DEFRA	Port Health Authority (PHA)	326
	Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)	
	Front Office Staff	
Current Unknown	Live Animal Handlers	n/a
Total Known Jobs on the Site		941

- 6.57. Employment supported by the Development offers flexible, part-time and full-time working opportunities. However, the 941 jobs are estimated to equate to 819 FTE jobs. The total number of direct jobs supported by the Development is therefore estimated to be 819 FTE jobs. Given the nature of the Development, these direct jobs are anticipated to be within a variety of occupations, from administrative to management roles and elementary/processing roles, but all within a specialised subset (facilitating freight and cargo movement) of the transportation and storage industry.
- 6.58. The sensitivity of employment in the transportation and storage industry has been identified as medium (refer to [Table 6.14](#)). The magnitude of change is considered to be very large on the basis that the 819 FTE jobs supported on-site by the Development represents 27% of the 3,000 jobs in the transportation and storage sector in Ashford as identified in the 'Baseline Conditions' sector of this chapter.
- 6.59. On this basis, the Development will provide a **permanent, long-term, moderate beneficial effect** on jobs (transportation and storage sector) in Ashford, which is considered **significant**.

Net Employment Effect to Ashford

- 6.60. As detailed in the 'Assessment Methodology' section of this Chapter, the direct jobs created by the Development would be subject to additionality factors (displacement, leakage and multiplier effects). The additionality factors applied to 819 FTE direct jobs is detailed in [Table 6.16](#) to establish the net additional employment effect to Ashford.

Table 6.16: Net Additional Employment Effect of the Development to Ashford

	FTE Jobs
Gross on-Site job creation	819
Displaced jobs from elsewhere in Ashford (0%)	0
Net direct jobs in Ashford (gross jobs minus displaced jobs)	819
Jobs filled by people who live outside of Ashford (41% leakage)	336
Net direct jobs for Ashford residents	483
Net indirect supply chain jobs (0.25 multiplier) for Ashford residents	121
Net additional employment to Ashford	604

- 6.61. [Table 6.16](#) illustrates that the net additional employment effect of the Development to Ashford is 604 FTE jobs.
- 6.62. The sensitivity of the resident labour market in Ashford has been identified as medium (refer to [Table 6.14](#)). The magnitude of change is considered to be medium on the basis that the 604 net additional FTE jobs created by the Development represent 1% of resident employment in Ashford as identified in the 'Baseline Conditions' sector of this Chapter.
- 6.63. On this basis, the Development will provide a **permanent, long-term, minor beneficial effect** on employment in Ashford, which is considered **not significant**.

Creation of Economic Output

- 6.64. **Table 6.17** applies GVA assumptions as detailed in the 'Assessment Methodology' and 'Baseline Conditions' sections of this Chapter to the direct and indirect net additional jobs created by the Development.

Table 6.17: GVA Per Annum Generated by the Development

	FTE Jobs	GVA Per Worker	GVA Creation
Net direct jobs	483	£33,461	£16.2m
Net indirect jobs	121	£61,341	£7.4m
Total	604	n/a	£23.6m

- 6.65. It is estimated that the net additional employment effect (604 FTE jobs) created by the Development will generate GVA of £23.6 million per annum.
- 6.66. The sensitivity of economic output from the transportation and storage sector in Ashford has been identified as medium (refer to **Table 6.14**). The magnitude of change is considered to be low on the basis that the £23.6 million GVA created per annum by the Development represents 0.7% of total GVA creation in Ashford (£3.3 billion).
- 6.67. On this basis, the Development will provide a **permanent, long-term, minor beneficial effect** on economic output in Ashford, which is considered **not significant**.

Workforce Expenditure

- 6.68. As established in the 'Baseline Conditions' section of this Chapter, it is estimated that the average workforce expenditure in Ashford is £272 per worker per annum.
- 6.69. Applied to the Development's on-site workforce (819 FTE jobs), it is calculated that the Development could generate an additional £222,768 in convenience expenditure per annum through the Development's workforce spending on daily subsistence. However, it is understood that the Application Site is a secure site, restricting the ability for workers to easily leave and re-enter the site, thereby limiting the potential for workers to spend in local shops. A realistic worst-case scenario would therefore be to assume that the Development's workforce either spend nothing, or an amount that is low and not deemed to be significant.
- 6.70. The sensitivity of workforce expenditure in Ashford has been identified as medium (refer to **Table 6.14**). The magnitude of change is considered to be negligible on the basis that the Application Site is secure, limiting the potential for worker spend locally.
- 6.71. On this basis, the Development will provide a **permanent, long-term, negligible effect** on workforce expenditure in Ashford, which is considered **not significant**.

Mitigation and Enhancement Measures and Likely Residual Operational Effects

Other Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

Total Job Creation (Direct)

- 6.72. Beneficial effects on jobs are predicted, and therefore no mitigation would be required. The likely residual effect is considered to be **permanent, long-term, moderate beneficial to Ashford**, which is considered **significant**.

Net Employment Effect to Ashford

- 6.73. Beneficial effects on employment to Ashford are predicted, and therefore no mitigation would be required. The likely residual effect is considered to be **permanent, long-term, minor beneficial to Ashford**, which is considered **not significant**.

Creation of Economic Output

- 6.74. Beneficial effects on economic output are predicted, and therefore no mitigation would be required. The likely residual effect is considered to be **permanent, long-term, minor beneficial to Ashford**, which is considered **not significant**.

Workforce Expenditure

- 6.75. Beneficial effects on workforce expenditure are predicted, and therefore no mitigation would be required. The likely residual effect is considered to be **permanent, long-term, negligible to Ashford**, which is considered **not significant**.

Summary of Likely Significant Operational Effects

- 6.76. **Table 6.18** summarises the likely significant effects, identified mitigation measures and the likely residual operational effects identified within this Chapter.

Table 6.18: Summary of Likely Significant Operational Effects

Issue	Likely Significant Effect	Mitigation Measures	Likely Residual Effect
Job Creation (Direct)	Permanent, long-term, direct, moderate beneficial effect (Significant) at the Borough level.	No mitigation proposed.	Permanent, long-term, direct, moderate beneficial effect (Significant) at the Borough level.
Employment	Permanent, long-term, direct, minor beneficial effect (Not significant) at the Borough level.	No mitigation proposed.	Permanent, long-term, direct, minor beneficial effect (Not significant) at the Borough level.
Economic Output	Permanent, long-term, direct, minor beneficial effect (Not significant) at the Borough level.	No mitigation proposed.	Permanent, long-term, direct, minor beneficial effect (Not significant) at the Borough level.
Workforce Expenditure	Permanent, long-term, direct, negligible effect (Not significant) at the Borough level.	No mitigation proposed.	Permanent, long-term, direct, negligible effect (Not significant) at the Borough level.

Monitoring

- 6.77. No monitoring is proposed to monitor the socio economics effects of the Development.

Assessment of Future Effects

Evolution of the Baseline

- 6.78. Should the Development not be granted full planning consent by 31 December 2025, all infrastructure except drainage and road infrastructure would be removed from within the Application Site, and the Site reinstated (as required under the SDO), leaving only areas of hardstanding in the once operational plots, together with the internal estate roads, drainage infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage (SuDS), landscaping and areas of open space.
- 6.79. If full planning permission for the Development is not granted, it is anticipated that a scheme, similar to the previous outline permission, could be implemented at the Application Site. As such, it is reasonable to assume that employment would be supported, and there would be associated economic benefits.
- 6.80. Oxford Economics (2024) estimate that employment in Ashford would increase by +8% and GVA creation by +9% between 2021 and 2025. It is anticipated that economic activity rates and workforce expenditure would remain at the levels currently presented in the baseline.

Cumulative Effects Assessment

- 6.81. Consideration has been given to the cumulative schemes described within **ES Chapter 2: Methodology** for the potential to have likely significant cumulative socio-economic effects when combined with the Development.
- 6.82. Eleven of the cumulative schemes are considered relevant for inclusion within the socio-economic cumulative assessment. Essentially the cumulative schemes considered relevant are those which will create operational employment opportunities. These schemes are outlined in **Table 6.19** along with the number of operational direct FTE jobs sourced from material submitted alongside the respective planning application.

Table 6.19: Cumulative Schemes Included within the Socio-Economic Cumulative Assessment

ID	Reference	Address	FTE Direct Operational Jobs
2a	18/00098/AS	Waterbrook Park, Waterbrook Avenue, Sevington, Kent	944
2b	PA/2024/0260	Waterbrook Park, Waterbrook Avenue, Sevington	n/a
3	19/00025/AS	Land between railway line and, Willesborough Road, Kennington, Kent	133
4	19/01476/AS	Newtown Railway Works, Newtown Road, Ashford, Kent, TN24 0PN	2,035
6	12/01245/AS	Conningbrook, Willesborough Road, Kennington, Kent	24
11	15/01671/AS	Former Powergen site, Victoria Road, Ashford, Kent	2
12	15/01282/AS	Land opposite, 1-8 Elwick Road, Ashford, Kent	n/a
13	12/00400/AS	Land at Chilmington Green, Ashford Road, Great Chart, Kent	1,200

ID	Reference	Address	FTE Direct Operational Jobs
14	18/01822/AS	Land at Court Lodge, Pound Lane, Kingsnorth, Kent	198
15	19/01597/AS	Home Plus, Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 7RR	n/a
17	PA/2022/2772	Land south of Asda, Kimberley Way, Ashford	2,500
Total			7,036

Operational Development

Total Job Creation (Direct)

- 6.83. **Table 6.19** illustrates that the Cumulative Schemes will collectively support 7,036 direct FTE jobs. This is considered a conservative estimate because data was not available for three of the identified Schemes. The Development will support a further 819 FTE direct jobs. The Development and Cumulative Schemes combined will therefore support 7,855 direct FTE jobs.
- 6.84. The jobs created by the Cumulative Schemes will be within a range of different industries. The sensitivity of Ashford's economy is considered to be medium on the basis that the industrial profile of employment in Ashford mirrors that of both the regional and national averages. The magnitude of change is considered to be very large on the basis that the 7,855 direct FTE jobs supported by the Development and Cumulative Schemes represents 11% of the 72,000 jobs in Ashford as identified in the 'Baseline Conditions' sector of this chapter.
- 6.85. On this basis, the Development and Cumulative Schemes combined will provide a **permanent, long-term, moderate beneficial cumulative effect** on jobs (all sectors) in Ashford, which is considered **significant**.

Net Employment Effect to Ashford

- 6.86. To provide a consistent approach to the calculation of net additional employment to Ashford from the Cumulative Schemes, the additionality assumptions applied to calculate net additional employment from the Development, have been applied. Whilst the 0.25 multiplier applied for the Development reflects the multiplier for the public sector, it has also been applied to the Cumulative Schemes despite jobs created by the Cumulative Schemes not being in the public sector. This is because The Green Book's (2022, HM Treasury) low employment multiplier is 0.40 (higher than the public sector multiplier). For this reason, use of a 0.25 multiplier is considered to represent a worst-case scenario (that being the lowest level of spin-off in the supply chain). **Table 6.20** details the additionality factors applied to 7,036 direct FTE jobs supported by the Cumulative Schemes, alongside the Development's 819 direct FTE jobs.

Table 6.20: Net Additional Employment Effect to Ashford from the Development and Cumulative Schemes

	FTE Jobs	
	Cumulative Schemes	The Development
Gross direct job creation	7,036	819
Displaced jobs from elsewhere in Ashford (0%)	0	0
Net direct jobs in Ashford (gross jobs minus displaced jobs)	7,036	819

	FTE Jobs	
	Cumulative Schemes	The Development
Jobs filled by people who live outside of Ashford (41% leakage)	2,884	336
Net direct jobs for Ashford residents	4,152	483
Net indirect supply chain jobs (0.25 multiplier)	1,038	121
Net additional employment to Ashford	5,190	604

- 6.87. **Table 6.20** illustrates that the net additional employment effect to Ashford of the Development and Cumulative Schemes combined is 5,794 FTE jobs.
- 6.88. The sensitivity of the resident labour market in Ashford has been identified as medium. The magnitude of change is considered to be large on the basis that the 5,794 net additional FTE jobs created by the Development and Cumulative Schemes represent 9% of resident employment in Ashford.
- 6.89. On this basis, the Development and Cumulative Schemes combined will provide a **permanent, long-term, moderate beneficial effect** on employment in Ashford, which is considered **significant**.

Creation of Economic Output

- 6.90. GVA created by the Cumulative Schemes is calculated using the average GVA per worker for the South East region (all industries) applied to the net additional direct jobs, and the average GVA per worker for the UK (all industries) applied to the net additional indirect jobs. **Table 6.21** details the resulting GVA created by the Cumulative Schemes.

Table 6:17: GVA Per Annum Generated by the Cumulative Schemes

	FTE Jobs	GVA Per Worker	GVA Creation
Net direct jobs	4,152	£68,220	£283.2m
Net indirect jobs	1,038	£61,341	£63.7m
Total	5,190	n/a	£346.9m

- 6.91. It is estimated that the net additional employment effect (5,190 FTE jobs) created by the Cumulative Schemes will generate GVA of £346.9m per annum. The Development will create GVA of £23.6 million per annum. Collectively, the Development and Cumulative Schemes will create GVA of £370.5 million per annum.
- 6.92. The sensitivity of economic output in Ashford has been identified as medium. The magnitude of change is considered to be very large on the basis that the £370.5 million GVA created per annum by the Development and Cumulative Schemes combined represents 11% of total GVA creation in Ashford (£3.3bn).
- 6.93. On this basis, the Development and Cumulative Schemes combined will provide a **permanent, long-term, moderate beneficial effect** on economic output in Ashford, which is considered **significant**.

Workforce Expenditure

- 6.94. As established in the 'Baseline Conditions' section of this Chapter, it is estimated that the average workforce expenditure in Ashford is £272 per worker per annum.
- 6.95. Applying the estimated average worker expenditure of £272 per annum to the direct jobs supported by the Cumulative Schemes (7,036 FTE jobs), it is calculated that the Cumulative Schemes could generate £1.91 million in convenience expenditure per annum through the workforce spending on daily subsistence. Given the Development is on a secure site, it assumed (worst-case) that there will be no workforce expenditure created by the Development. Collectively, the Development and Cumulative Schemes could generate £1.91 million in convenience expenditure per annum.
- 6.96. The sensitivity of workforce expenditure in Ashford has been identified as medium. The magnitude of change is considered to be very large on the basis that the £1.91 million in workforce expenditure per annum created by the Development and Cumulative Schemes represents 10% of total workforce expenditure in Ashford (£19.6 million).
- 6.97. On this basis, the Development and Cumulative Schemes combined will provide a **permanent, long-term, moderate beneficial effect** on workforce expenditure in Ashford, which is considered **significant**.

References

- ¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (December 2024) National Planning Policy Framework
- ² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (March 2015) Housing and Economic Needs Assessment – Revised 20/02/2019 and 22/07/2019
- ³ Ashford Borough Council (February 2019) Ashford Local Plan 2030
- ⁴ Ashford Borough Council (October 2012) Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan
- ⁵ HM Treasury (2022), The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation
- ⁶ Homes and Communities Agency (2014) Additionality Guide. 4th Edition.
- ⁷ ONS, 2021 Census, Table TS007 [downloaded from NOMIS on 7 January 2025]
- ⁸ ONS, 2021 Census, Table TS066 [downloaded from NOMIS on 7 January 2025]
- ⁹ ONS, 2021 Census, Table TS063 [downloaded from NOMIS on 7 January 2025]
- ¹⁰ ONS, 2021 Census, Table TS060 [downloaded from NOMIS on 7 January 2025]
- ¹¹ ONS, 2021 Census, Table TS067 [downloaded from NOMIS on 7 January 2025]
- ¹² ONS, 2021 Census, Table ODWP01EW_LTLA
- ¹³ ONS (May 2018), 2018-based Sub National Population Projections for England [downloaded from NOMIS on 7 January 2025]
- ¹⁴ ONS, Jobs Density 2021 [downloaded from NOMIS on 7 January 2025]
- ¹⁵ ONS, Business Register Employment Survey 2021 [downloaded from NOMIS on 7 January 2025]
- ¹⁶ Oxford Economics (October 2024) GVA by Industrial Sector 2021 [accessed via commercial licence]
- ¹⁷ Oxford Economics (October 2024) Employment by Industrial Sector 2021 [accessed via commercial licence]
- ¹⁸ Experian, Retail Planner Data 2023 (2022 prices) [accessed via commercial licence]
- ¹⁹ HMSO (2017). Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.
- ²⁰ ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (Workplace Analysis) [downloaded from NOMIS on 9 October 2024]