

SECTION 3

Industry and Employment

3.0. INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1. GENERAL BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1. Historically, Ross-on-Wye's importance was related mainly to its agricultural and local marketing functions although there has always been a variety of small manufacturing industries active in the town. In recent years, more growth in manufacturing industry has occurred.
- 3.1.2. Despite this growth the problems of Ross-on-Wye are still very evident in that the high level of unemployment continues. The informal Local Plan for Ross-on-Wye approved by the former Herefordshire County Council in 1968 provided for the growth of the town to about 9,000 persons or thereabouts during the period until 1981. Residential land allocations in the Informal Local Plan have now largely been taken up but employment opportunities have not kept pace with residential growth.
- 3.1.3. The District Council have successfully attracted assistance from the Development Commission to develop the former Station Yard area for industrial purposes to begin to combat these problems. Although the total area of development is relatively small, a significant growth in employment has been achieved by the firms now occupying units on this embryo industrial scheme.
- 3.1.4. The following sub-sections of this report attempt to examine the employment situation and problems and quantify the future requirements up to the end of the Plan Period in 1991 in accordance with the Structure Plan Policies.

3.2. STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1. The approved Herefordshire Structure Plan drew attention to the economic problems of the County which are characterised by low earnings, low public resources and limited employment opportunity. It also identified the costs of providing services and facilities to a dispersed population as amongst the highest in the country.
- 3.2.2. In a summary of the County's economic problems at the commencement of the approved Structure Plan document, it is further stated that the main objectives of policy in the economic field are to retain the natural increase of population, improve the level of private and public incomes and ensure the maintenance of a healthy balance between the young and the old but that there is no intention of industrialising Herefordshire, merely to provide a modest number of jobs (approximately 9,700) to sustain the target population. Whilst the approved Herefordshire Structure Plan Policies promote the growth of employment and population, particularly in the neighbourhood of Hereford City, Policy WS 5.1 specifically provides for the provision of industrial land in the market towns sufficient to meet the needs of the people living in these areas. A proviso was included in that such land could be readily and economically made available. In paragraph 6.6 of the Secretary of State's letter of approval dated 26th February, 1976, it is stated that:-

"industrial development in the market towns should not be substantially restricted in the interests of channelling all such growth to Hereford City, irrespective of the effect this would have on the remainder of Herefordshire".

3.2.3. At present the approved Herefordshire Structure Plan remains in force. However, under the Review of the County Structure Plans a Written Statement has been recently submitted to the Secretary of State for approval which contains specific policies and proposals for economic growth. Due regard will need to be paid to these policies when approved.

3.2.4. In accordance with the general policy relating to the economic development of the county. The policy for industry and employment in the Ross Sub Area is:-

POLICY SA11.3 "TO ENSURE THAT ABOUT 4 HECTARES OF SERVICED LAND ARE PROVIDED AT ROSS-ON-WYE FOR INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSING USES BETWEEN 1981 AND 1991. THE LOCATION AND AMOUNT OF THIS GROWTH WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IN DISTRICT LOCAL PLANS HAVING REGARD TO THE ABOVE TOTAL."

3.3. EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

3.3.1. Location and structure of existing industry

The role of Ross-on-Wye purely as a market town has changed to some extent with the establishment of new manufacturing industries in the town in recent years.

3.3.2. The Herefordshire County Development Plan Report of Survey, prepared in 1952, identified a need to solve existing unemployment and re-house firms occupying obsolete premises or non-conforming areas. The area off Alton Road on the eastern outskirts of the town was recommended for industrial development and some 24 acres (10 hectares) here was shown primarily for industrial use on the Ross-on-Wye Town Map No. 3 approved in 1960. This area currently represents the largest area of industrial development in the Study Area, having been established in the period 1963 to 1964. Woodville Rubber Co. Ltd., a subsidiary of the Amercian firm, Gaslock, occupy a site area of 8.2 acres (3.3 hectares) and currently employ some 300 people engaged in the production of rubber seals and other rubber components for use in a variety of industries, including motor vehicle manufacturing and the aircraft construction industry. Haigh Engineering Co. Ltd., manufacture industrial and domestic waste disposal units and currently employ some 130 employees on their site of over 3 acres (1.3 hectares).

3.3.3. Most of the land allocated on the Town Map has now been developed with the exception of some 6.4 acres (2.6 hectares) which is owned by Woodville Rubber and Haigh Engineering, for future expansion. In the case of the latter firm, six small industrial units have recently been completed on just over half an acre of land, presumably because they no longer require all of their expansion area.

3.3.4. In addition, there are a further ten firms occupying small units at the western end of this industrial area.

3.3.5. In view of the continuing problems of unemployment in the town, the District Council resolved in 1975 to develop the former Station Yard area (now called Ashburton Industrial Estate) and adjoining land for industrial purposes and the Council were successful in attracting assistance from the Development Commission. To-date, 5.5 acres (2.1 hectares) of the Station Yard area have been developed with a further two acres (0.8 hectares) remaining, but in a fully serviced state. Eight units have been constructed by the Commission on 3.3 acres (1.3 hectares) of the developed land and the occupants activities

range from general engineering to the production of ultra sonic testing equipment. Six factory units have also recently been completed by I.C.F.C. Properties Ltd., and are presently available offering four units of between 3,000 and 5,000 square feet.

3.3.6. Other industrial uses are principally located in obsolete premises around the periphery of the town centre or in the Tanyard Lane area.

3.3.7. As might be expected, offices and shops are mostly confined to the town centre together with a number of distributive firms and other specialised trades located on the fringe of the town centre in the Millpond/Station Street area.

3.3.8. Employment in Ross-on-Wye and area

Between 1951 and 1971, the number of economically active persons in the former Ross-on-Wye Urban District rose steadily from 2,075 to 2,948 persons in step with the steady growth in population as can be seen from Table 7 below. The term "economically active" accounts for those persons who are classified for National Insurance purposes as employees, employers, self-employed and members of H.M. Forces. It excludes adult students, and includes not only those unemployed who are registered at employment or careers offices, but others who are seeking work. The 1971 figures for Ross are similar to the 1971 Census for Great Britain figures which showed a male "activity rate" of 61% and 33% for females.

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE	% OF TOTAL POPULATION	MALES %	FEMALES %
1951	5399	2579	2820	2075	38.4	1475 (57)	600 (21)
1961	5641	2644	2997	2350	41.6	1620 (61)	730 (24)
1971	6405	2980	3425	2967	46.3	1853 (62)	1114 (32)
1977*	6412	3072	3340	2948	45.9	1756 (57)	1192 (36)

TABLE 7 ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE PERSONS RESIDENT IN ROSS-ON-WYE

Source:- CENSUS AND 1977 CENSUS UPDATE*

3.3.9. In the period between 1951 and 1971, there was a 7.9% increase in the proportion of economically active with an apparent reduction of 0.4% between 1971 and 1977 which probably reflects the early affects of the economic recession.

3.3.10. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of females that are economically active, i.e. in 1951 only 21% of total females were economically active whereas in 1971 the proportion had risen to 32%, whilst male activity rates had only increased marginally (see Table 7) in the twenty year period to 1971. Subsequently, by 1977, male activity rates have fallen to the level of 1951. The apparent reduction in male activity rates may be due to the limited employment opportunities in Ross and early retirement, whilst the female increases have undoubtedly been due to more female job opportunities and the continuing trend for married females to seek work to supplement the household income.

3.3.11. Type of employment in the area

Unfortunately, figures for the type of employment of those living in the Local Plan area are not available separately. However, Table 8 below serves to indicate the situation for the Ross Employment Exchange area, which also includes the former Ross and Whitchurch District.

INDUSTRY	1973		1975		1976		1977	
	NO. IN 000's	%	NO. IN 000's	%	NO. IN 000's	%	NO. IN 000's	%
PRIMARY (AGRICULTURE)	1.3	24.5	1.1	23.4	1.0	20.4	1.0	20.8
MANUFACTURING	1.1	20.8	1.0	21.3	1.1	22.4	1.1	22.9
SERVICE	2.9	54.7	2.6	55.3	2.8	57.2	2.7	56.3
TOTAL	5.3		4.7		4.9		4.8	

TABLE 8 EMPLOYMENT IN THE ROSS-ON-WYE
EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE AREA

Source:- ROSS-ON-WYE E.E.A. E.R.II

3.3.12. Although most employees in agriculture undoubtedly reside outside the Local Plan area, it is demonstrated that the number employed in agriculture is slowly diminishing (as predicted in the Herefordshire County Structure Plan Report of Survey) whilst there has been some growth in employment in the manufacturing and service industries.

3.3.13. Between 1973 and 1977, the total number of people in employment in the Exchange area had declined by approximately 500 which correlates with the rise in unemployment (see Section 3.3.22) in the corresponding period up to the end of 1977.

3.3.14. A closer analysis of employment levels and type in the Local Plan area has been possible by an examination of information provided by the Ross-on-Wye Job Centre for firms of five and over in 1976 - 1981 and from a list of small firms in Ross-on-Wye provided by CoSIRA.

INDUSTRY	1976	1981
	%	%
Agriculture	0.3	0.4
TOTAL PRIMARY	0.3	0.4
Engineering	14.8	18.4
Other Manufacturing	37.4	26.5
TOTAL MANUFACTURING	52.4	44.9
Construction	1.7	1.9
Utilities and Distributive	12.8	13.9
Public Administration	1.2	1.3
Transport and Professional	18.0	19.8
Miscellaneous	13.8	17.8
TOTAL SERVICES	47.5	54.7
GRAND TOTAL	100.0	100.0

TABLE 9 ESTIMATE OF EMPLOYMENT IN FIRMS OF FIVE AND OVER
IN THE ROSS-ON-WYE DISTRICT PLAN AREA - 1976 and 1981

Source:- ROSS JOB CENTRE, CoSIRA RECORDS

- 3.3.15. The above table does not provide a complete picture of employment. However, it does serve to provide an insight into the type and level of employment within the Local Plan Area from 1976 until July, 1981. Some caution is needed in interpreting individual figures, particularly in agriculture where the majority of employment would be found on farms employing less than five farmworkers.
- 3.3.16. It would seem evident from the information provided by the Job Centre, that the total number in employment has decreased which is in line with the national trend during the present economic recession and is reflected in the high unemployment levels referred to in paragraph 3.3.13.

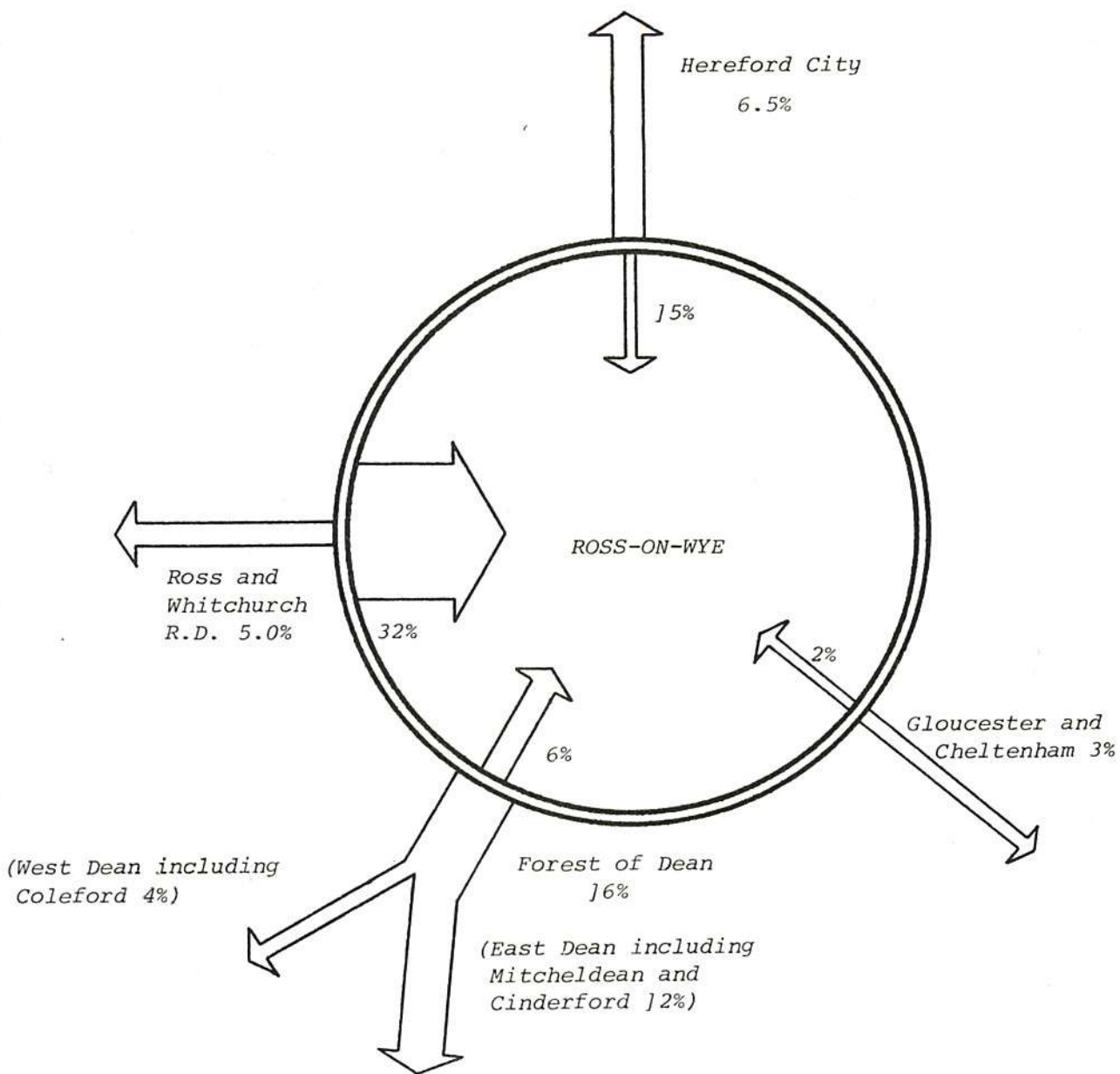
3.3.17. Despite the establishment of new manufacturing industries in the town over the past twenty years there has actually been a net loss of about 225 jobs in this group over the past five years. In particular, it is understood that the largest job losses have been with Woodville Rubber and Haigh Engineering, two of the largest employers in the area. The estimated overall job loss in manufacturing employment in firms of five and over has to some extent been cushioned by a modest growth in engineering trades (about 3.6%) mainly as a result of new or expanding firms who have been accommodated in the new Development Commission factories on the Ashburton Industrial Estate. Some of these firms were previously in unsatisfactory or obsolete premises elsewhere in the town and demonstrate that given the right conditions, small embryo firms are able to generate new employment rapidly (see Table 10 below). It has to be admitted that some of these small firms have actually halted any expansion plans as the present recession begins to "bite harder".

UNIT NO.	NAME OF COMPANY	BUSINESS	UNIT SIZE (SQ. FT.)	DATE OF OCCUPATION	NOS. EMPLOYED ON OCCUPATION			NOS. EMPLOYED AT JULY, 1981		
					F.T.	P.T.	TOTAL	F.T.	P.T.	TOTAL
UNIT 1	Szollosi Engineering Ltd. (B.S.J.)	General Engineering	7,000	August, 1978	12	-	12	18	2	20
UNIT 2	Refrema	Photographic and laboratory pro- cessing equipment	3,500	November, 1978	5	-	5	14	-	14
UNIT 3	Precision Rubber Tooling and Machining Ltd. (formerly CMR Ltd.)	Tool making and machine casting	3,500	Took occupation of Unit 5 in Dec. 78 and then moved into pres- ent Unit in Dec. 1980	5	-	5	9	1	10
UNITS 4 and 5	Norm Sinclair	Rubber mouldings & metal pressings	2,000	August, 1979	6	6	12	9	6	15
UNIT 6	Meccasonics	Production of ultra sonic testing equip.	1,500	September, 1979	4	-	4	6	-	6
UNIT 7	Structaply	Stressed skin insulated panels and wooden fruit bins.	8,000	June, 1980	12	-	12	36	-	36
Totals					44	6	50	92	9	101

TABLE 10

CoSIRA FACTORY UNIT EMPLOYMENT LEVELS
AS AT JULY, 1981

Source:- DISTRICT COUNCIL SURVEY



← % of people living in Ross-on-Wye and working outside the town

→ % of people living outside Ross-on-Wye and working in the town

DIAGRAM 6

JOURNEY TO WORK IN AND OUT OF ROSS-ON-WYE
IN 1971

Source:- 1971 Census (10% Sample)

3.3.18. The net loss of jobs in manufacturing industries has also been partially offset by an increase of nearly 50 jobs in service industries which now employs over half (54.7%) of those persons employed in firms of five and over. The largest concentration of employment in the service sector appears to be in the transport and professional field (19.8%)

3.3.19. Workplace

Diagram 6 shows the pattern of movement in relation to Ross-on-Wye in 1971. As the information is based on a 10% sample from the 1971 Census Workplace Movement Analysis, the information can only be taken as an indicator. Nevertheless, some 32% of workers resident in the town went to work outside the town, of which half were working in the Forest of Dean. This movement of workers can be corroborated by information collected from the case made by the District Council to the Development Commission for further advance factory units. Rank Xerox at Mitcheldean, some six miles from Ross, were employing some 4,500 worker in 1978, and provided subsidised transport for picking up employees at selected stages throughout the area. Some 170 workers were collected from the Ross area and a further 100 travelled in private cars from Ross. The total figure of 270 accounts for the bulk of the 12% (according to the 1971 Census) who travelled to the East Dean area of the Forest of Dean. Other places of work outside Ross-on-Wye were in the Gloucester/Cheltenham area which accounted for almost 3% of the total workforce. Dowty Rotocl of Cheltenham provided a similar service to Rank Xerox which, combined with enhanced rates of pay, attracted workers from Ross-on-Wye. Employment in the former Ross and Whitchurch Rural District and Hereford City accounted for about 5.0% and 6.5% of the town's workforce respectively.

3.3.20. On the other hand, some 42% of the total workforce came into Ross to work from places outside the town. By far the largest movement came from the former Ross and Whitchurch Rural District demonstrating Ross's function as an economic centre for the surrounding rural hinterland.

3.3.21. Although on balance, Ross-on-Wye was a net importer of labour in 1971 in that of the two way movement totalling about 2,290 people, 61.5% travelled into Ross to work and 32% went outside to work, the latter figure demonstrated that there is still a high reliance on jobs outside the towns, particularly in the Forest of Dean area.

3.3.22 Unemployment

In July, 1981, the total number of registered unemployed persons (including youths under 18) was 552, or about 11.2% of the working age population for the Ross-on-Wye Exchange Area. At the time of writing this report, (November, 1981), the neighbouring Employment Exchange Areas of Hereford and Ledbury were significantly lower at 9.7% and 8.0% respectively. Continuing discussions have been held with the Job Centre (Manageress - Mrs. S. Davidson) since the first submission to the Development Commission for assistance and six monthly levels of unemployment have been obtained back to January, 1975, as shown in Diagram 7. It can be seen that unemployment levels increased from 4.2% at the beginning of 1975 to a peak of 8.8% in December, 1977 and following a reduction to 4.8% in mid 1979, there has been a sharp rise to the present level of 11.2%. With the exception of the last few months, Ross-on-Wye has an unemployment rate consistently higher than National and Regional averages and indeed higher than most other Exchange Areas in Herefordshire.

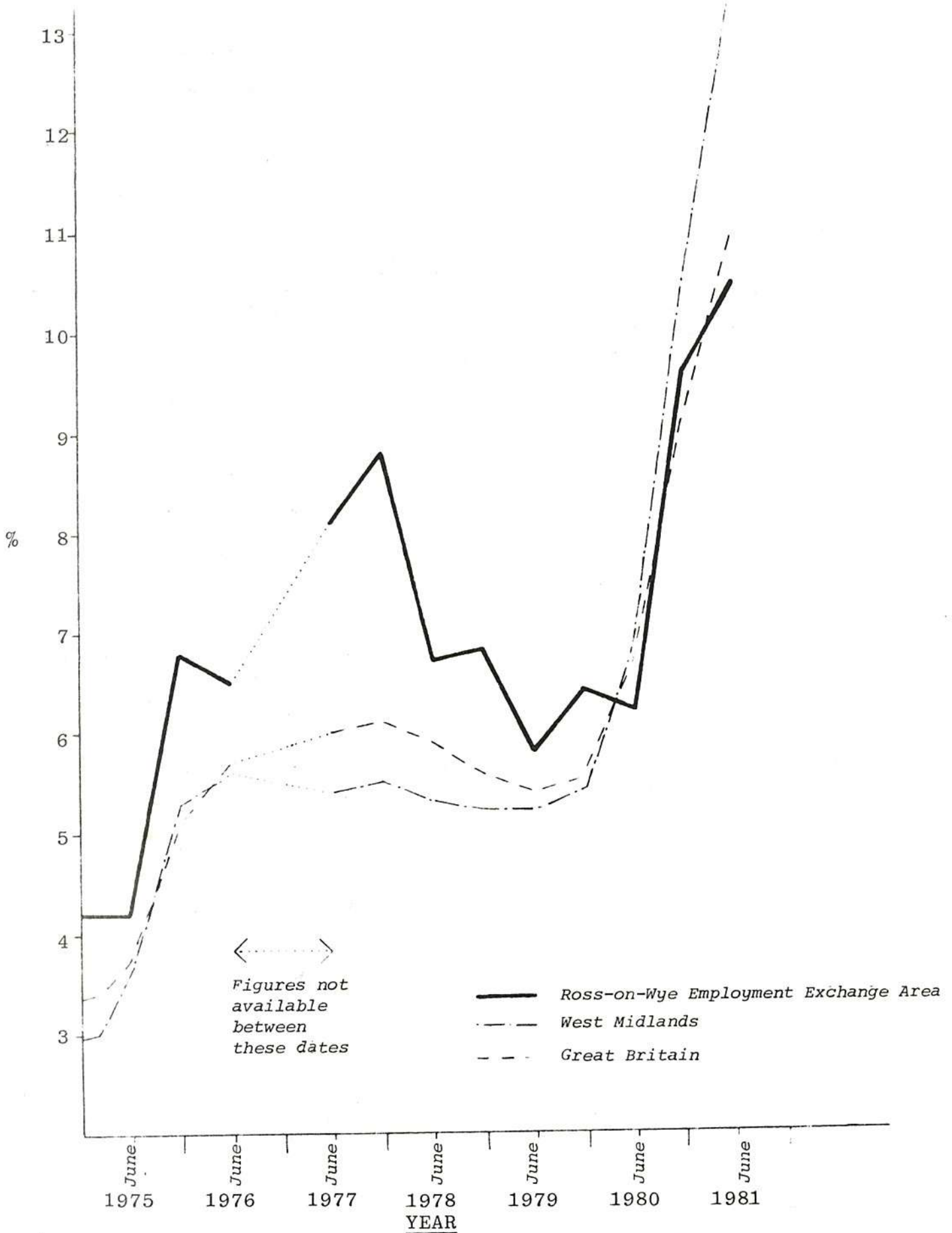


DIAGRAM 7 UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS IN ROSS-ON-WYE EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE AREA - January 1975 to June 1981

Source:- Ross-on-Wye Job Centre

- 3.3.23. Many of those unemployed tend to fall in the unskilled categories consisting of general labourers and factory workers. Skilled and professional people who have been out of work tend to find new employment more quickly.
- 3.3.24. With regard to vacancies, there have been very few opportunities until very recently when there has been a slight improvement with firms such as Woodville Rubber beginning to take on 20 to 30 temporary workers. Very few opportunities are found from shops and allied trades and indeed it would seem that shops would rather take on school leavers on the Youth Opportunities Programme than full time employees.
- 3.3.25. Although Ranks have employed many people from the Ross area in the past, there has been no recruitment in the last 18 months and this situation is unlikely to change in the next 12 months.
- 3.3.26. The situation in Gloucester is somewhat better where there are vacancies for engineering, trades-people, secretarial and middle management however, the high costs of transport tend to deter people from the Ross area applying for such posts.

3.4. AVAILABILITY OF INDUSTRIAL LAND AND BUILDINGS IN THE ROSS-ON-WYE AREA

- 3.4.1. Currently, there is only a limited amount of serviced land suitable for industrial development.
- 3.4.2. Of the 24 acres (9.6 ha.) of land in Alton Road allocated primarily for industrial purposes on the Approved Town Map, about 6.4 acres (2.6 hectares) remain undeveloped which has been retained hitherto for the expansion of Haigh Engineering Co. Ltd., and Woodville Rubber. However, six starter industrial units have recently been constructed on part of the land (about 0.75 acres) owned by Haigh Engineering. Following consultations with Haigh Engineering, this Company have plans to develop, in stages, four more groups of starter and secondary units of various sizes and this might bring forward the development of another 2 acres of industrial land.
- 3.4.3. Reference has been made in paragraph 3.4 to the 20.4 acres (8 hectares) of former railway land now called Ashburton Industrial Estate which the District Council appropriated in April 1974 on Local Government Re-organisation from the former Ross-on-Wye Urban District Council.
- 3.4.4. In 1975 South Herefordshire District Council approved in principle a scheme for the industrial development of this area together with some 25 acres of adjoining land most of which was allocated in the Informal Local Plan for industrial development. In view of high infrastructure costs and limited financial resources, the adjoining land was excluded from the present scheme.
- 3.4.5. As a result of two successful submissions to the Development Commission, approval was given for acquisition of land and the construction of six units. Subsequently, a programme of 10,000 square feet of factory space per annum for five years was agreed. A total of eight units were constructed by the Commission before the Government directed that private initiatives should be encouraged. Subsequently, land was sold to ICFC Properties Limited who have now completed six units varying in size from 3,000 square feet to 5,000 square feet. Two of these units have been occupied to-date although there have been three planning applications for change of use from industry to warehousing or retailing.

In view of the Council's objective of creating maximum job opportunities such applications are being discouraged at the present time. Additionally, two sites have been sold to individual firms for the construction of their own industrial units.

- 3.4.6. The development referred to in Paragraph 3.4.5. accounts for some 6.3 acres (2.5 hectares) of the total area of land (20.5 acres - 8.2 hectares) formerly owned by the District Council in April, 1974. Only 1.2 acres (.4 hectares) of land remains in a fully serviced and uncommitted state and this is still in the Commission's ownership. Of the remaining land, about 3.2 acres (1.3 hectares) is currently leased by the District Council, 3.0 acres (1.2 hectares) have been utilised for landscaping and roads and about 1.4 acres (0.5 hectares) is likely to be required for the proposed Ross Relief Road. This leaves about 2.5 acres (1.0 hectares) for future development in the vicinity of Gloucester Road and a further 2.7 acres (1.1 hectares) of fragmented parcels which could only be developed in conjunction with other adjoining land outside the Council's ownership. In the short term only the land fronting to Gloucester Road could reasonably be brought forward for development subject to the necessary provision of roads and sewers.
- 3.4.7. The Informal Local Plan for Ross-on-Wye included an area of 21.9 acres (8.7 hectares) for industrial use to the north of the Ashburton Industrial Estate which was to be included in the development of the Ashburton Estate (referred to in paragraph 3.4.4.) but was omitted from the overall scheme in view of financial limitations.
- 3.4.8. Adjoining the land referred to in paragraph 3.4.7. two areas of existing industrial and storage use were allocated for industrial purposes on the approved Town Map of 1960. The largest site of some 4.3 acres (1.7 hectares) is situated in the triangular area of land between the Ashburton Industrial Estate and the Informal Local Plan allocation whilst the smaller site of 2.8 acres (1.1 hectares) is situated to the north of the Rudhall Brook and south of Tanyard Lane. Both of these sites are probably under utilised and would benefit from redevelopment.
- 3.4.9. Although not available as a development site, a portion of the former Red and White Bus garage off Gloucester Road (now owned by the District Council) may soon be available for industrial purposes. About 4,000 square feet of factory space could be available on this site of some 0.45 acres (0.18 hectares).
- 3.4.10. The availability of industrial land at the present time can be summarised as follows:-

LOCATION	AREA
Ashburton Industrial Estate - Development Commission land	1.2 acres (0.48 ha.)
Ashburton Industrial Estate - District Council	2.5 acres (1.0 ha.)
Former Bus Depot, Gloucester Road - District Council	0.45 acres (0.18 ha.)
Haigh Engineering - Nursery units	say 3.0 acres (1.21 ha.)
ICFC Industrial Units	<u>1.45 acres (0.58 ha.)</u>
TOTAL	<u>8.6 acres (3.45 ha.)</u>

TABLE 11 LAND WHICH COULD BE AVAILABLE IN THE SHORT TERM

Source:- SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCATION	AREA
Yorkley Timber and Tanyard Lane sites (allowing for rationalisation of existing uses)	say 4.0 acres (1.6 ha.)
Ashburton Industrial Estate (District Council)	2.7 acres (1.12 ha.)
TOTAL	<u>6.7 acres (2.72 ha.)</u>

TABLE 12 OTHER INDUSTRIAL LAND

Source:- SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

- 3.5. ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN ROSS-ON-WYE AREA AND FUTURE INDUSTRIAL LAND REQUIREMENTS 1981 - 1991
- 3.5.1. In view of the current recession and limited employment base in Ross-on-Wye it is not possible to project with any certainty the number of jobs likely to be available in the future.
- 3.5.2. However, some form of forecast of future workforce is necessary to assess approximate requirements for industrial land as the Local Plan is primarily intended to be a land use based planning policy.
- 3.5.3. In the County Council's Review of the Structure Plan, proposals contained in the Written Statement (recently submitted to the Secretary of State for approval), suggest that in the Central County Area, employment should be located in the urban centres and market towns including Ross-on-Wye. To consider the future employment requirements for the Local Plan area, it is necessary to examine the workforces likely to be generated from both the Ross 'urban' area (the former Urban District Council area but including Springfield and Greytrees), Ross 'rural' area (the residual area of the former Ross and Whitchurch District), and population concentrations further afield.
- 3.5.4. Ross-on-Wye 'urban' area
- This forms the 'built-up' or developed portion of the Local Plan area and it is estimated that the total population growth would be approximately 700 people (between the period 1981 to 1991). Such an estimate is based on the proposals for housing for the Ross Sub-Area as contained in the Structure Plan Review. It is therefore expected that the 1981 population of the Ross 'Urban' area will rise to about 9,050 by the end of the Plan period in 1991.
- 3.5.5. Between 1951 and 1971 the proportion of economically active in the former Ross-on-Wye U.D. area steadily rose from 38.4% to 46.3%. However, information just received from the 1981 Census confirms the 1977 Census up-date prediction, that a reversal has now taken place, probably due to the recession. The proportion of economically active for the Ross E.E.A. as at April 1981 being 44.6%.
- 3.5.6. On the basis of the fall in the 1981 Census activity rates it is being predicted by the County Council in their preparation of the County Structure Plan Review for the Ross Sub-Area, that even given an upturn in the economy, the activity rate for Ross Sub-Area is unlikely to increase much above 45% by 1991 - the end of the Plan period. If such

a rate is applied to the population estimate for 1991, it would suggest that a total of some 4,100 people living in the Plan area will be economically active, with 3,800 actually in employment.

- 3.5.7. In 1971, some 32% of workers residing in Ross-on-Wye were employed outside the town. However, one of the objectives of the Local Plan should be to seek to reduce the need for commuting in view of rapidly rising fuel costs and diminishing public transport services. It has therefore been assumed that provided there is a sufficient allocation of industrial land and adequate job creation, the proportion of workers commuting to employment elsewhere could be reduced from 32% to 27.5%. Applying this figure to the estimate of jobs required in 1991, some 2,750 of the future resident population could be employed locally.
- 3.5.8. Figures recently received from the 1981 Census have revealed that some 3,412 people living in Ross-on-Wye were in employment in April, 1981. In the absence of any 1981 Census Journey to Work figures, it is assumed that the same proportion of the town's resident workforce still commute out of the town to work (i.e. 32%), leaving some 2,300 persons employed locally. Subtracting the 1981 resident workforce from the estimated number of jobs, some 450 new jobs are likely to be required for resident workers during the Plan period.
- 3.5.9. Ross 'rural' area
- Based on figures from the Structure Plan Review, it is estimated that the total population growth would be only approximately 220 persons, increasing the 1981 population from 11,299 to about 11,520 in 1991.
- 3.5.10. Utilising the 1981 Census activity rate for the Ross E.E.A. of 44.6% it is probable that there were about 5,050 economically active in the area in 1981. Assuming the activity rate for Ross 'rural' could also only be expected to increase to 45% similar to that for Ross 'urban', the total economically active by 1991 could be some 5,240 in total.
- 3.5.11. The 1981 Census Workplace Tables are not yet available. However, 1971 tables indicated that about 21.4% of the Ross 'rural' workforce commuted into Ross-on-Wye for employment. Although some growth in local employment is expected in the Whitchurch area (perhaps 50 or more jobs ultimately) as a result of the Development Commission scheme, the decline in agricultural employment, which according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has now 'bottomed-out', has forced more people into Ross 'town' to work. The dependence of the surrounding rural hinterland on Ross-on-Wye as an economic centre is therefore likely to be maintained.
- 3.5.12. Assuming therefore, a marginal increase of the 1971 Census pattern of movements into Ross-on-Wye, it is estimated that some 1,100 of those economically active in Ross 'rural' would have been working or seeking work in Ross in 1981.
- 3.5.13. If the same increased movement continues until 1991 some 1,200 persons would be seeking work in Ross requiring some 100 new jobs over and above the estimated 1981 position.

3.5.14. Employment required for workers residing outside Ross and area

In order to complete the estimate of the total number of jobs required in the Ross-on-Wye Local Plan area, it is necessary to consider the number of economically active who would commute into the Plan area from elsewhere.

3.5.15. The 1971 Census Workplace Tables are the most recent indicator available when it was shown that about 11% or about 370 workers originated from outside the Plan area and Ross 'rural'. The majority of these inward movements originated from the Forest of Dean and Gloucester/Cheltenham areas. In view of the general aim of most local authorities to promote industrial development within their administrative areas and to create local employment, it would seem unlikely that the number of workers from further afield will rise significantly, especially with the continuing rise in the cost of personal transportation.

3.5.16. A total of 400 workers has therefore been assigned for other inward movements until the end of the Plan period in 1991.

3.5.17. Estimated number of jobs required during the Plan period

Assuming that there is a greater dependence for employment in Ross-on-Wye, the estimated total increase of jobs is as follows:-

WORKERS PLACE OF RESIDENCE	ESTIMATE
Ross 'urban'	450
Ross 'rural'	100
Outside the Ross Employment Exchange	30
TOTAL	580

TABLE 13 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF JOBS

Source:- SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

3.5.18. Land requirements

A survey of existing industrial developments in Ross-on-Wye reveals that the 'employment density', that is the number of workers per acre, ranges between 18 in the small units at Alton Road, 31 workers per acre on the Ashburton Industrial Estate and some 39 workers per acre achieved in 1976 by the larger manufacturing industries in Alton Road.

3.5.19. Nevertheless, it is likely that the majority of future industrial developments will be comparatively small in scale and will not achieve employment densities comparable with the larger industries of the town. It is therefore proposed that a target of 15-20 workers per acre be adopted for land allocated for manufacturing use.

3.5.20. Whilst an upturn in the economy in the near future is hoped for, it is thought likely that while some expansion from existing employers could be expected this increase is likely to be off-set, particularly in the short term, by continuing job losses.

- 3.5.21. Latest figures from the 1981 Census Small Area Statistics (10% sample) revealed that approximately 28% of all jobs in the Ross-on-Wye Sub-Area were in manufacturing, thus requiring industrial land. Applying this to the Plan area and hence transferring a number of those employed in agriculture it is estimated that the percentage of workers likely to be employed in manufacturing processes could be between 30-40%. Utilising a 35% figure it is therefore estimated that some 200 of the 580 new jobs required by the end of the Plan period will be in manufacturing requiring further industrial land. Taking the low estimate of 15 jobs per acre, it is calculated that some 14 acres (5.7 hectares) of new industrial land is required.
- 3.5.22. It must be understood that such land requirements will only satisfy the planned employment needs of the local population for the period up to 1991. No account has been taken of the areas past and present needs which have become increasingly more apparent since the early 1970's.
- 3.5.23. It has already been seen in Section 2 - Population and Housing - that the population of the town has increased considerably in recent years and unfortunately this has not been matched by new job opportunities. Unemployment in the area has been consistently higher than most other areas of Herefordshire and in June, 1981 some 552 persons or 11.2% of the working age population in the Ross E.E.A. were registered as unemployed. To further aggravate the situation, Rank Xerox, one of the Plan area's main employers has been forced to make considerable redundancies at its Mitcheldean plant and it is feared that further job losses will follow.
- 3.5.24. Acknowledging that there is no acceptable unemployment level, some provision must be made to help redress this situation. It is therefore considered that jobs ought to be found for some 350-400 of those registered as unemployed. Assuming that 35% will want jobs requiring industrial land it is estimated that a further 9 acres (3.6 hectares) of industrial land needs to be identified to help correct this past mismatch.
- 3.5.25. Furthermore, it has been identified that there is a growing need to provide land for warehousing purposes, and in particular to satisfy the requirements of some transport businesses. It is estimated that a further 5 acres (2 hectares) would satisfy this need.
- 3.5.26. It is calculated that some 28 acres (11.3 hectares) of new industrial land needs to be identified and developed by 1991 to help satisfy the local populations employment needs.
- 3.5.27. In November, 1981, it was estimated that there were 8.6 acres (3.5 hectares) of industrial land likely to be available in the near future, of which, some 3.4 acres (1.4 hectares) had already been serviced whilst the remainder could be expected to be brought forward for development within the next two years. Thus taking the 8.6 acres (3.5 hectares) from the 28 acres (11.3 hectares) of land estimated to be required by 1991, an additional allocation of about 20 acres (8 hectares) would be necessary to provide employment opportunities for the estimated maximum workforce.
- 3.5.28. Whilst the District Council are in agreement with the principles of the Structure Plan Review Policy, the investigations contained in the Ross-on-Wye Local Plan Report of Survey indicates that there is a greater need for land allocated for industrial purposes during the Plan period than suggested in Structure Plan Review Policy SA 11.3.

- 3.5.29. The development of land directly north of the former Station Yard for industrial purposes was identified in the Informal Local Plan prepared for Ross-on-Wye in 1968. In the preparation of this present Plan, consideration was given to other sites for industrial use but none were better situated than the land at Ashburton, despite its considerable land drainage problems. The construction of the Relief Road directly east of the proposed industrial land will offer ideal access opportunities to this future industrial land and will relieve the town of much local and heavy traffic.
- 3.5.30. Obviously not all of this previously 'zoned' industrial land is required within this Local Plan period and a programme of phasing will need to be agreed before major planning applications are submitted.

3.6. A SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS

3.6.1. From the foregoing survey and information from other sources, it is evident that there are many problems relating to employment and industry in the Local Plan area and these are summarised in the following sections.

3.6.2. Unemployment

There has been a long history of high unemployment in the Local Plan area partially due to limited employment opportunities and the restricted range of activities. The reduction in the labour forces of some of the larger employers and lack of opportunities for school leavers has aggravated the situation.

3.6.3. Housing growth unmatched by industrial development

Commitments for substantial housing developments unmatched by an adequate level of new industrial development has further exacerbated the employment situation. The District Council have made arduous efforts to develop the Ashburton Industrial Estate in conjunction with the Development Commission but this level of development alone is insufficient to meet the needs of the town.

3.6.4. Significant dependence on commuting

In 1971, some 32% of the town's population were travelling to work outside the town and unless there is a continuing policy of promoting industry and employment in the town, this situation could become worse. However, escalating fuel costs and diminishing public transport services may well deter many residents from even finding work outside the town with consequent further aggravation of unemployment problems.

3.6.5. Limited choice and range of employment locally

Despite the positive action of the District Council in conjunction with the Development Commission, there is limited scope for new development at the present time. Coupled with the effects of the present economic recession which has led to the larger firms reducing their workforce, there are consequent limitations on the number and range of jobs in the town. Limited employment opportunities leads to professional people and skilled workers seeking work elsewhere but only to be faced by the problems referred to in paragraph 3.6.4. above.

3.6.6. Continuing requirement for small factories

There would still appear to be a shortage of small factories and workshops for the relocation of existing small firms occupying inadequate and obsolete premises and, indeed, for the establishment of new small businesses.

3.6.7. Need for appropriate sites for specialised service trades and warehousing

A growing need for appropriately located sites for transport firms and other businesses such as commercial vehicle breakers, has recently been demonstrated. Currently, there is only limited serviced industrial land and the Council's policy has been to encourage maximum job creation. Nevertheless, there remains a need for sites to accommodate the above mentioned uses.

Similarly, there is increasing pressure for warehousing units in the town but the Council have once again considered that such uses should be resited in view of the limited availability of new industrial premises and the higher job creation which normally accompanies industrial uses.

3.7. AIMS OF THE PLAN AND OPPORTUNITIES

3.7.1. Aims

Having summarised the problems currently evident in the town, the following aims should form the basis of proposals to be incorporated in the Local Plan:-

1. Maintain existing employment in the Plan area and provide a sufficient allocation of industrial land to match housing growth until the end of the Plan Period in 1991.
2. Encourage the creation of further job opportunities to combat the high unemployment levels of the town.
3. Encourage greater diversification of the industrial structure of the town.
4. Reduce the need for commuting to work elsewhere.
5. In allocating land for industrial purposes, ensure provision is made for specialised trades, transport firms and some warehousing.

