

HARDISTY•JONES

Runnymede Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment

Economy Workstream:
Appendix 3 Economic Context

Runnymede Borough Council

March 2026

Appendix 3. Economic Context

A3.1 This chapter sets out the socio-economic baseline of Runnymede and compares the area to the benchmark areas of Surrey County Council and the UK.

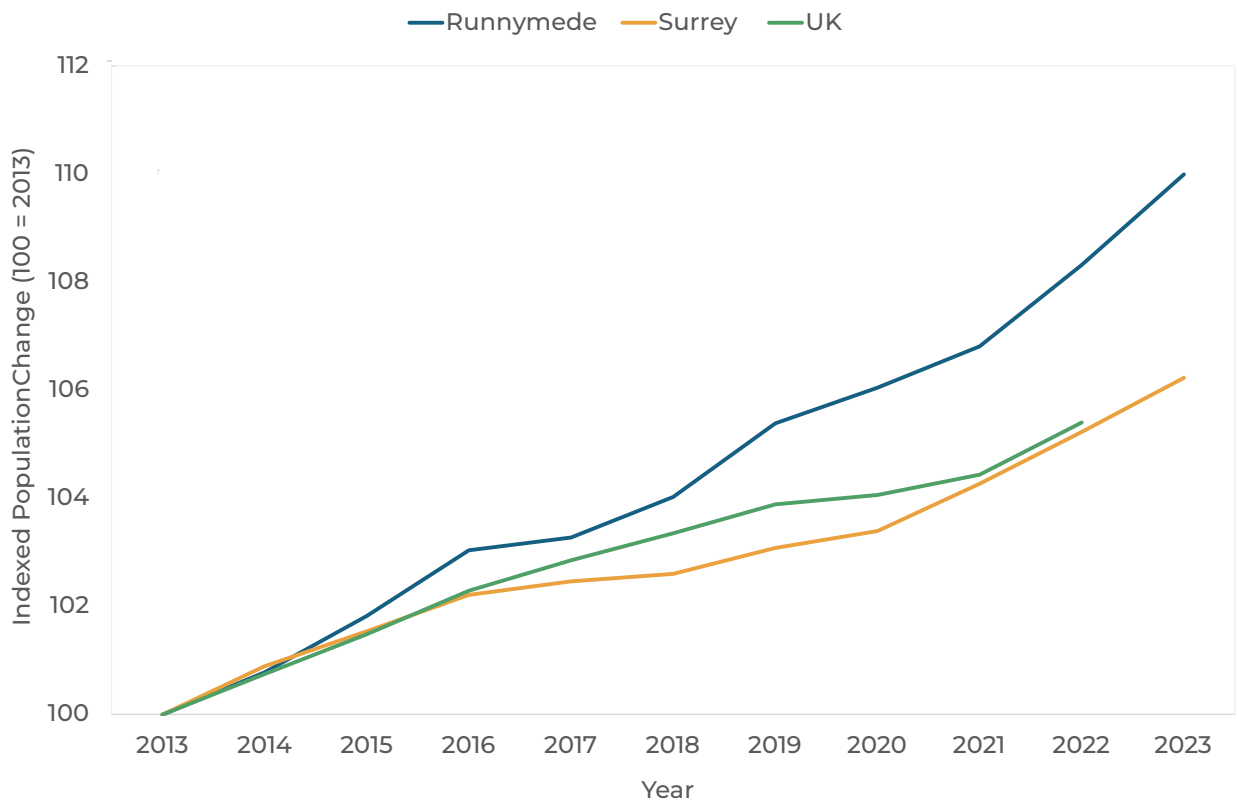
A3.2 Where available, the baseline will be assessed over a 10-year period in order to account for any impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Demographic Baseline

Population change

A3.3 In 2023, the population in Runnymede was 90,400, making up 7.4% of Surrey’s population in that year¹.

Figure A3.1: Indexed total population change in Runnymede and comparators (2013 to 2023²)



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2025). Population estimates.

¹ ONS, 2025. Population estimates.
² Data for the year 2023 for the UK is unavailable.

A3.4 The population in Runnymede has experienced strong growth over the last 10 years between 2013 and 2023, with an average annual growth rate of 1.0%. Population growth has been higher compared to the growth in Surrey (0.6%) and UK³ (0.6%) over the same time period (as shown in Figure A3.1).

A3.5 The latest year where population estimates data is available for all three areas of Runnymede, Surrey and the UK is 2022. In 2022, 65% of Runnymede's population was of working age (16-64 years), which is higher than the share in Surrey (62%) and the UK (63%).

A3.6 Between 2017 and 2022, the average annual growth rate of Runnymede's population aged 16 to 64 years was 1.0%, which is higher than Surrey (0.5%) and UK (0.5%) comparators over the same period.

Labour market baseline

Economic activity/inactivity

A3.7 In 2023, 47,600 people aged 16-64 years in Runnymede were economically active, equivalent to 82% of the population of this age range. This is lower than the share in Surrey (84%), but higher than the share in the UK (79%) in the same year⁴.

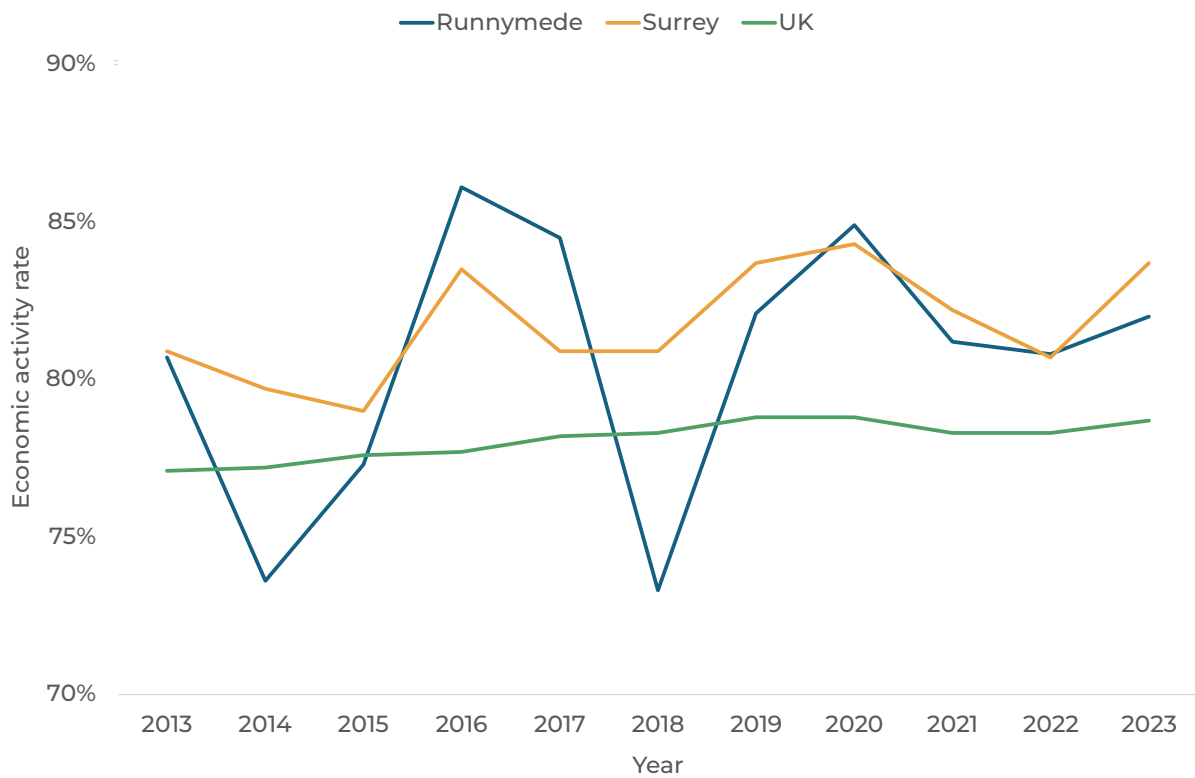
A3.8 Between 2013 and 2023, the average annual growth rate of economically active people aged 16-64 years in Runnymede was 1.0%, although shares fluctuated over the ten-year period. This was higher than the comparator areas over the same ten-year period (Surrey rate of 0.6%; UK rate of 0.5%).

A3.9 Due to small sample sizes, data on economic inactivity in Runnymede is not complete for every year. Looking at 2022 data shows that Runnymede had a similar proportion of economically inactive individuals as Surrey (~19%), with both areas having a lower share than the UK (22%). Of those economically inactive in 2022, a higher proportion were noted to 'want a job' than to 'not want a job' in Runnymede (as shown below in Figure A3.3).

³ Note data for the UK in 2023 is unavailable so is assessed up to the year 2022 and the average annual growth rate is for a 9-year period (2013-2022).

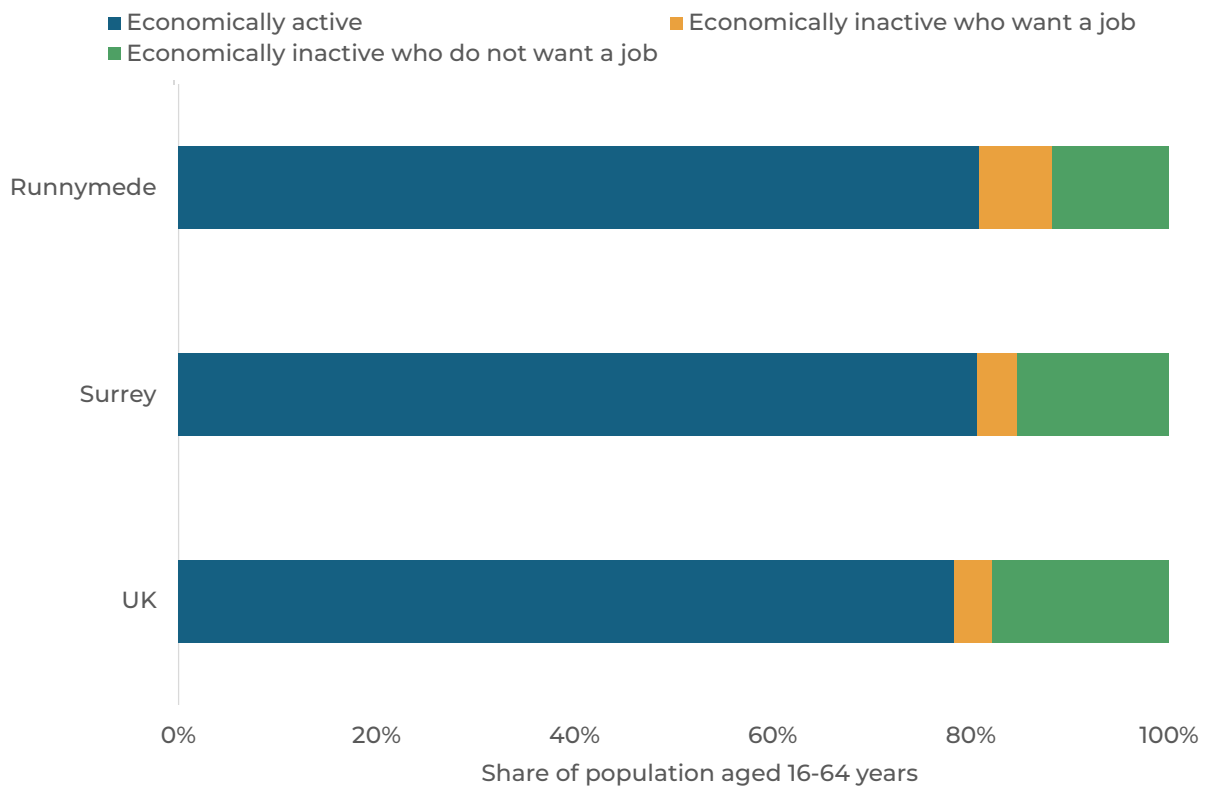
⁴ ONS, 2025. Annual Population Survey.

Figure A3.2: Economic activity rate in Runnymede and comparators (2013–2023)



Source: ONS (2025). Annual Population Survey

Figure A3.3: Economic activity and inactivity in Runnymede and comparators (2022)



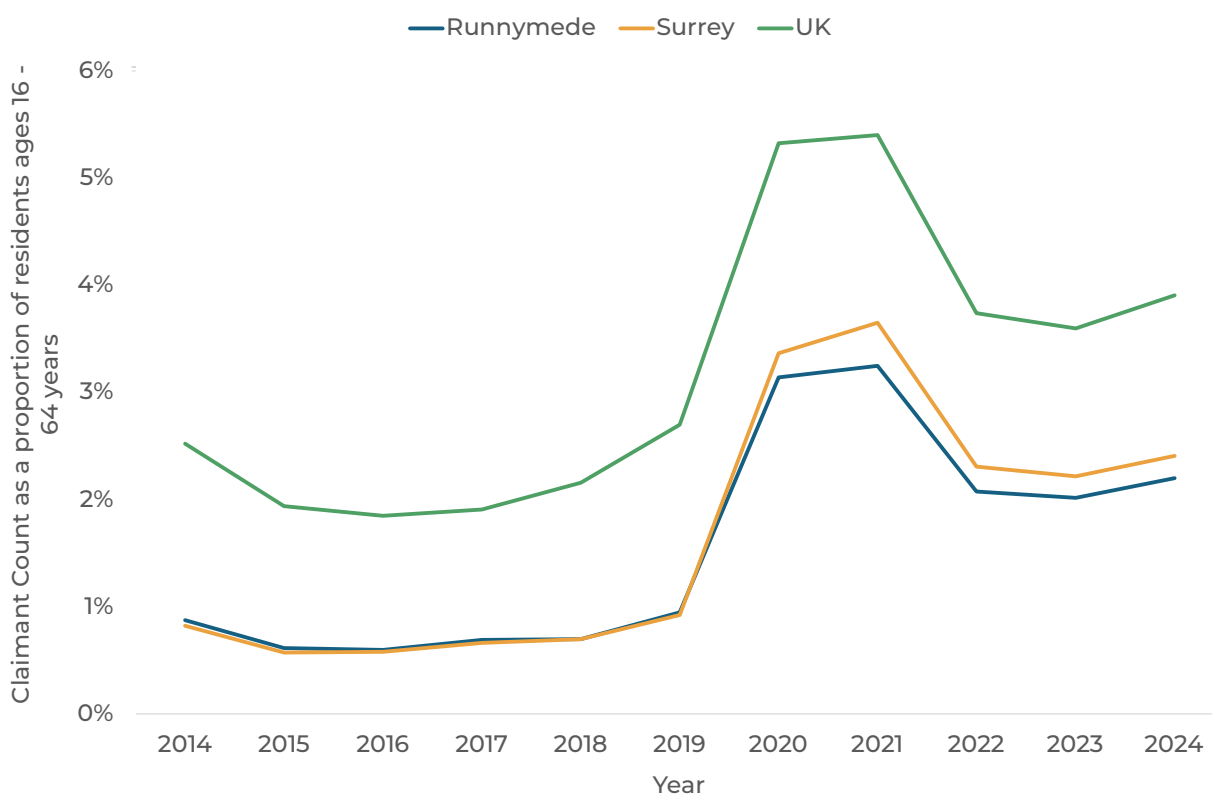
Source: ONS (2025). Annual Population Survey.

Claimant Count

A3.10 The Annual Population Survey provides official statistics on unemployment. However, data is unreliable at county council level. Therefore, we present claimant count figures as a proxy for unemployment. This is an administrative dataset that provides data on all those claiming benefits primarily as a result of unemployment.

A3.11 As shown in Figure A3.4 Runnymede has had lower levels of claimant counts than Surrey and the UK over the period 2014 to 2024. The Covid-19 pandemic placed restrictions on businesses and social activities leading to a rise in unemployment and claimant counts in the years 2020 and 2021.

Figure A3.4: Claimant count as a proportion of residents aged 16–64 years in Runnymede and comparators (2014–2024)



Source: ONS (2025). Claimant Counts.

Skill levels

A3.12 Qualifications data has historically been categorised based on NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) levels. However, this system has been replaced with the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework). Since 2021, data based on NVQ classifications is no longer available. Therefore, we present five-year historic data for the period 2017 to 2021 under the NVQ

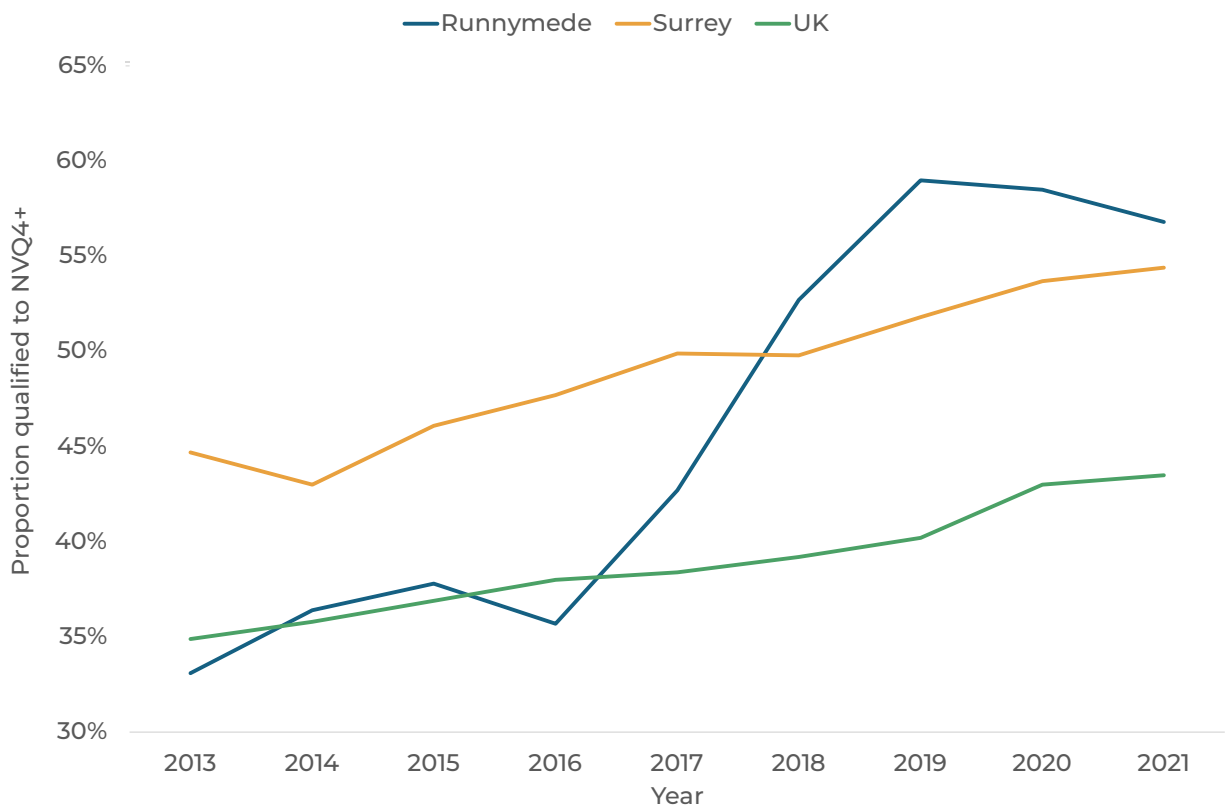
classification system and an average of data for the years 2022 and 2023 under the new RQF classification system.

A3.13 It should be noted that under the NVQ system, qualifications at level 4+ reflect those with a minimum qualification of a bachelor’s degree or equivalent, whilst under the RQF system level 4+ indicates a minimum qualification of a higher national certificate or equivalent. Data on RQF qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 4+ are unavailable.

NVQ

A3.14 In 2021, 94% of 16–64-year-olds in Runnymede had some form of qualification (90% recorded with NVQ1+ or above qualifications). Runnymede’s shares were lower than Surrey (96% had some form of qualification; 90% with NVQ1+ or above), but higher than the UK (93% had some form of qualification; 87% with NVQ1+ or above) in 2021.

Figure A3.5: Proportion of 16–64-year-olds qualified to NVQ4+ in Runnymede and comparators (2017–2023)



Source: ONS (2025). Annual Population Survey

A3.15 In 2021, 57% of 16–64-year-olds in Runnymede had qualifications of NVQ4+, which was higher than the proportion in Surrey (54%) and the UK (44%). Between 2016 and 2021, Runnymede has experienced strong growth in the proportion of residents with qualifications of NVQ4+. Runnymede’s average annual growth rate of NVQ4+ qualified residents was 9.7% between

2016 and 2021, higher than Surrey and the UK with both comparator areas experiencing an average annual growth rate of 2.7% over the same period.

RQF

A3.16 The average proportion of residents aged 16-64 in Runnymede with RQF4+ qualifications over a 2-year period (2022–2023) was 62%, which is a higher average than Surrey (55%) and the UK (46%) (see Table A3.1).

Table A3.1: RQF4+ Qualifications as a proportion of residents Aged 16–64 in Runnymede and comparators (2022–2023).

Year	Runnymede	Surrey	UK
2022	55%	54%	46%
2023	70%	56%	47%
Average	62%	55%	46%

Source: ONS (2025). Annual Population Survey

Commuting Patterns

A3.17 The 2011 Census provides data on commuting patterns by local authority, indicating the number of people commuting in (inflow) and out (outflow) of an area⁵. The 2021 Census provides data on commuting patterns, but this has not been analysed due increased levels of homeworking brought about from the Covid-19 pandemic, meaning the data would be less reflective of commuting patterns today.

A3.18 In 2011, Runnymede had a greater number of people commuting into the district (an inflow of 30,660 persons) for work than out of the district (an outflow of 21,350 persons). The top ten areas that people commuted to and from were districts in Surrey, Berkshire, and London.

A3.19 The top three inflows and outflows into/and out of Runnymede in 2011 were to other districts in the wider Surrey County authoritative area.

A3.20 The proportion of people that both live and work within Runnymede in 2011 was 39%.

Resident vs workplace wages

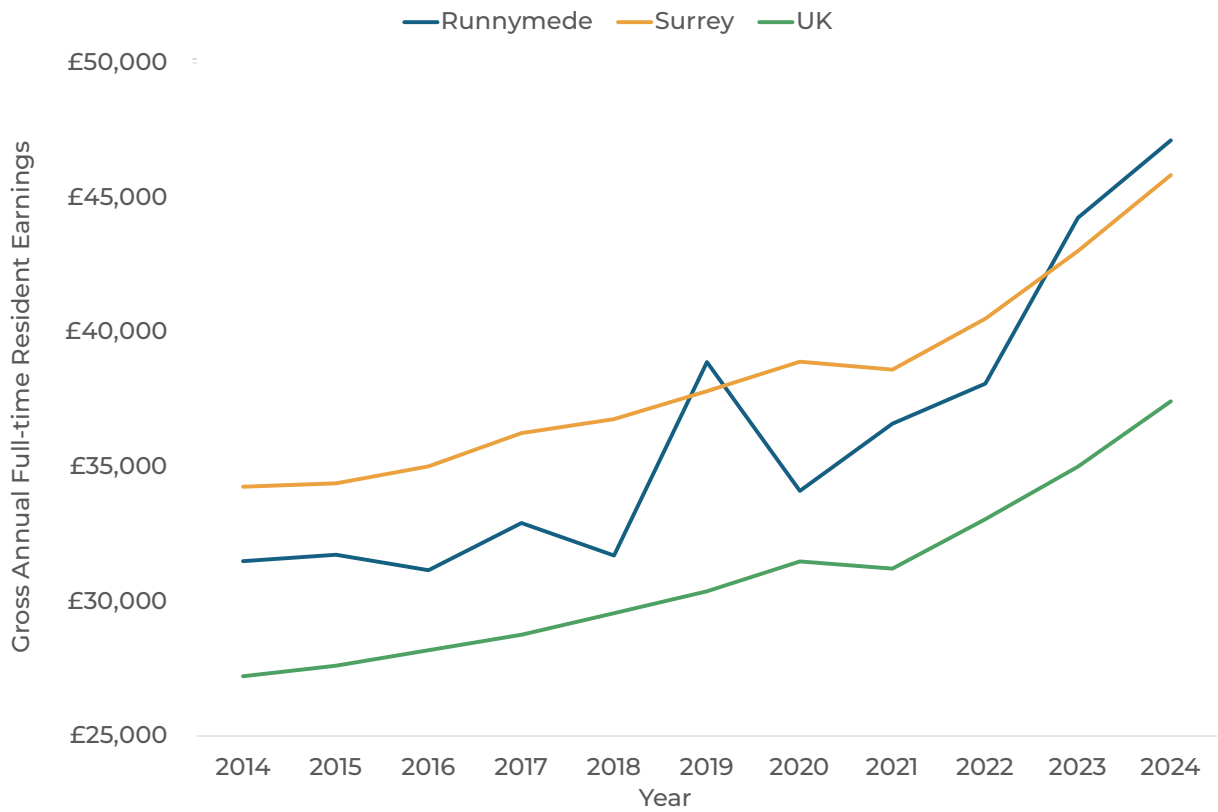
A3.21 In 2024, gross annual median full-time resident-based earnings in Runnymede was £47,100⁶. This was above Surrey (£45,800) and the UK (£37,400) in the same year. Runnymede's and

⁵ ONS, 2011. Census 2011 - WU01UK - Location of usual residence and place of work by sex.

⁶ ONS, 2025. Annual survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis.

Surrey's resident-based earnings have been consistently higher than the UK average over the last ten years.

Figure A3.6: Gross annual median full-time resident-based earning in Runnymede and comparators (2014–2024)



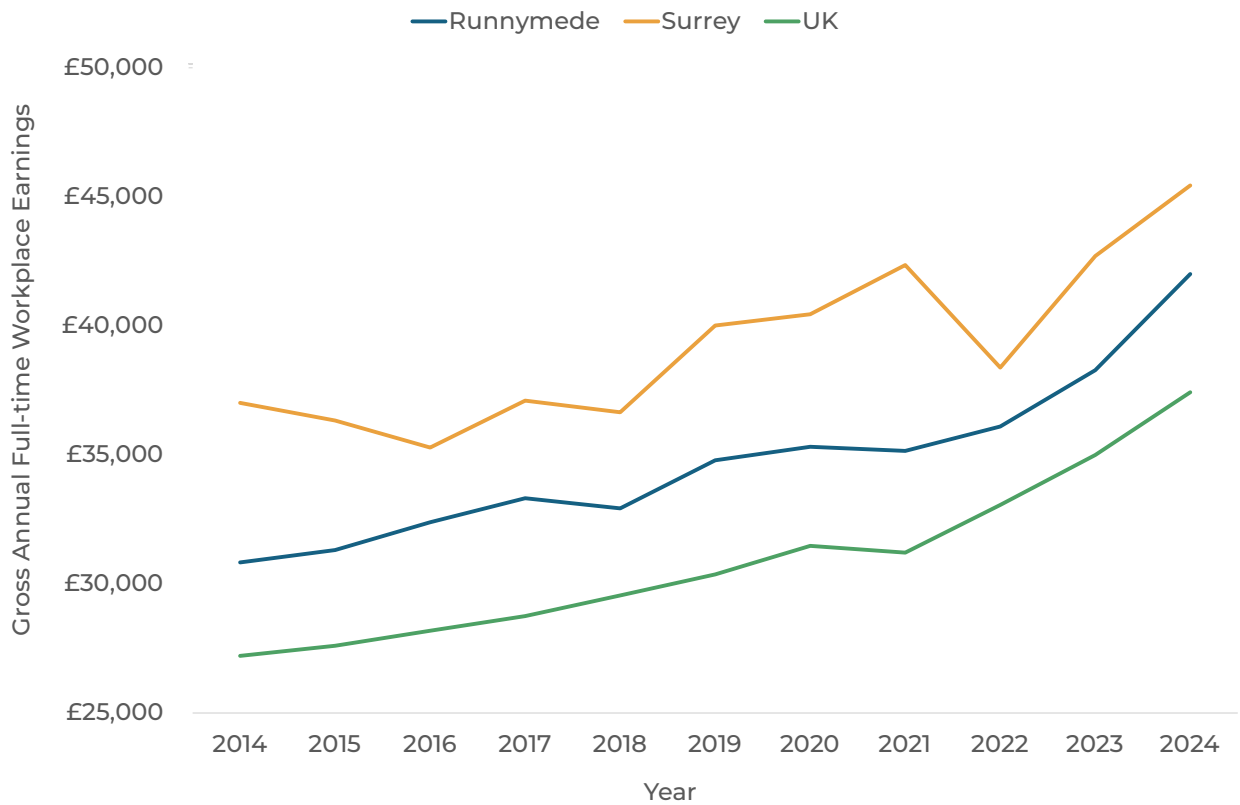
Source: ONS (2025) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

A3.22 In 2024, gross annual median full-time workplace-based earnings in Runnymede was £42,000, which was lower than the average in Surrey (£45,400) but higher than the UK average (£37,400)⁷.

A3.23 Similar to the trend for resident-based earnings, Runnymede's and Surrey's workplace-based earnings have been consistently higher than the UK average over the last ten years.

⁷ ONS, 2025. Annual survey of hours and earnings - workplace analysis.

Figure A3.7: Gross annual median full-time workplace-based earning in Runnymede and comparators (2014–2024)



Source: ONS (2025) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

Economic Base

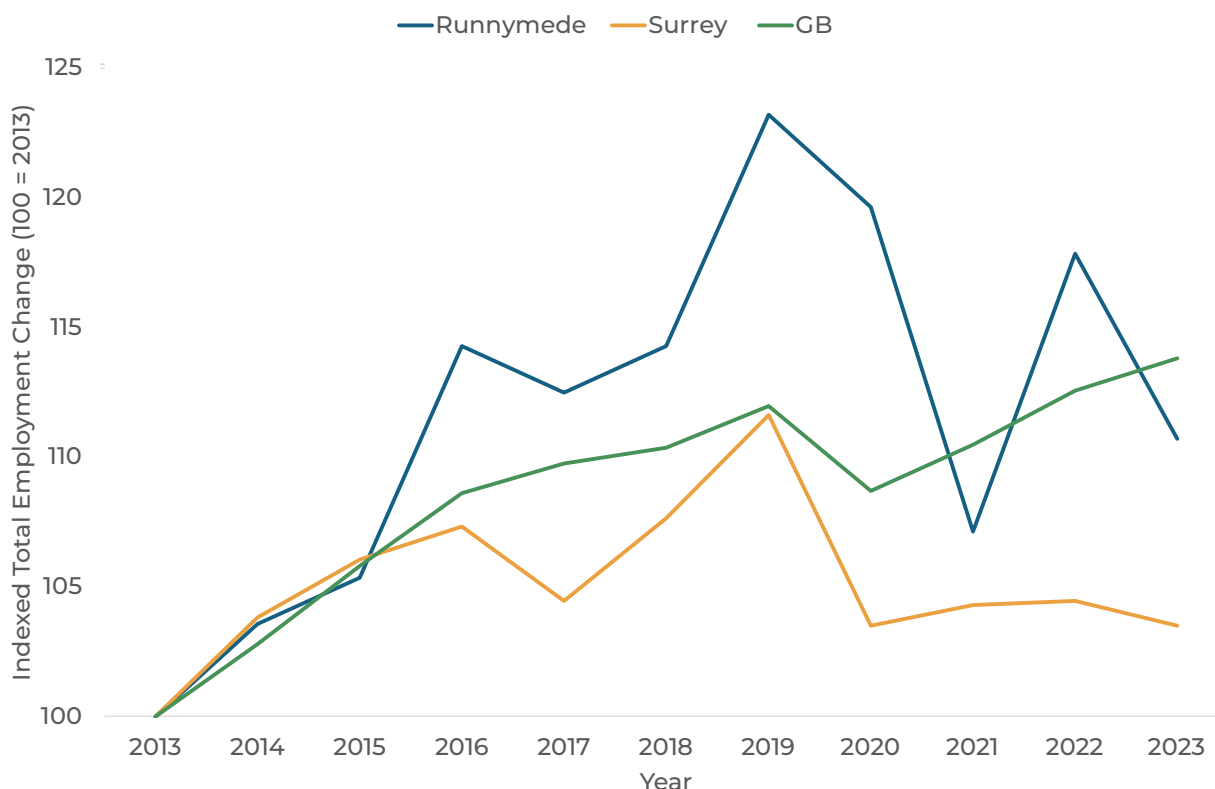
Employment

A3.24 According to Jobs Density data⁸ there were approximately 62,000 people in employment in Runnymede in 2023. Employment count has fluctuated between 2013 and 2023 across Runnymede and Surrey.

⁸ ONS, 2025. Jobs Density

A3.25 Figure A3.8 shows that employment in Runnymede has fluctuated over the last ten years. Total employment within Runnymede between 2013 and 2023 has increased by 6,000.

Figure A3.8: Indexed total employment change in Runnymede and comparator areas (2013-2023)



Source: Jobs Density (2025).

A3.26 The Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)⁹ also provides data on employment¹⁰ which can be broken down by sector. Data is only available dating back to 2015 from BRES, but as jobs density data does not provide a breakdown of sector level data, the following analysis uses BRES.

A3.27 Data has been analysed across 19 sectors that comprise the entire economy. For the purposes of this report the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Mining and Quarrying, Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply, and Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities sectors have been combined and are referred to as the 'Primary Industries and Utilities' sector.

A3.28 When looking at employment by industry, the largest industries in terms of absolute employment in Runnymede are:

- Human health and social work activities (Q)

⁹ ONS, 2025. Business Register and Employment Survey : open access.

¹⁰ BRES employment excludes self employed people not registered for VAT/PAYE, along with HM Forces and Government supported trainees

- Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G)
- Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)
- Education (P)
- Information and communication (J)

A3.29 The industries that experienced the greatest average annual growth rate within Runnymede between 2015 and 2023 are:

- Financial and insurance activities (K)
- Human health and social work activities (Q)
- Education (P)
- Manufacturing (C)
- Arts, entertainment and recreation (R)

A3.30 Table A3.2 presents absolute employment, employment change between 2015 and 2023, and average annual growth rate over the same period for Runnymede and comparators.

Table A3.2: Employment (2023), employment change (2015-2023), and average annual growth rate (CAGR) (2015-2023) for Runnymede and comparators

	Runnymede			Surrey			UK		
	Emp.	Change	CAGR	Emp.	Change	CAGR	Emp.	Change	CAGR
ABDE: Primary Industries and Utilities	180	(4,535)	-33.5%	9,750	(3,050)	-3.3%	852,000	1,000	0.0%
C : Manufacturing	1,500	250	2.3%	21,000	(3,000)	-1.7%	2,374,000	(15,000)	-0.1%
F : Construction	3,000	-	0.0%	35,000	4,000	1.5%	1,573,000	181,000	1.5%
G : Wholesale and retail trade	7,000	(1,000)	-1.7%	79,000	(12,000)	-1.8%	4,392,000	(260,000)	-0.7%
H : Transportation and storage	1,750	250	1.9%	17,000	-	0.0%	1,595,000	235,000	2.0%
I : Accommodation and food services	3,500	-	0.0%	48,000	8,000	2.3%	2,551,000	399,000	2.1%
J : Information and communication	5,000	-	0.0%	35,000	(4,000)	-1.3%	1,431,000	230,000	2.2%
K : Financial and insurance activities	2,250	750	5.2%	19,000	(2,000)	-1.2%	1,075,000	46,000	0.5%
L : Real estate activities	1,000	-	0.0%	11,000	(1,000)	-1.1%	645,000	103,000	2.2%
M : Professional, scientific and technical activities	6,000	(1,000)	-1.9%	65,000	(8,000)	-1.4%	2,993,000	462,000	2.1%
N : Administrative and support service activities	5,000	1,000	2.8%	48,000	-	0.0%	2,756,000	140,000	0.7%
O : Public administration and defence	800	(450)	-5.4%	13,000	(1,000)	-0.9%	1,475,000	213,000	2.0%
P : Education	6,000	1,000	2.3%	59,000	4,000	0.9%	2,687,000	66,000	0.3%
Q : Human health and social work activities	10,000	3,000	4.6%	87,000	14,000	2.2%	4,387,000	533,000	1.6%
R : Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,000	500	2.3%	24,000	5,000	3.0%	837,000	117,000	1.9%
S : Other service activities	1,500	-	0.0%	14,000	(1,000)	-0.9%	636,000	(10,000)	-0.2%

Source: BRES, ONS (2025)

A3.31 Location quotient is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry is in a specific location compared to the national average in a particular year.

A3.32 In Runnymede the industries with the highest location quotient in 2023 included:

- Information and communication (J)
- Arts, entertainment and recreation (R)
- Other service activities (S)
- Human health and social work activities (Q)
- Education (P)

A3.33 Figure A3.9 presents the location quotient for each industry for Runnymede and Surrey in 2023.

Figure A3.9: Employment location quotient by industry for Runnymede and Surrey (2023) (UK = 1.0)



Source: ONS (2025). BRES.

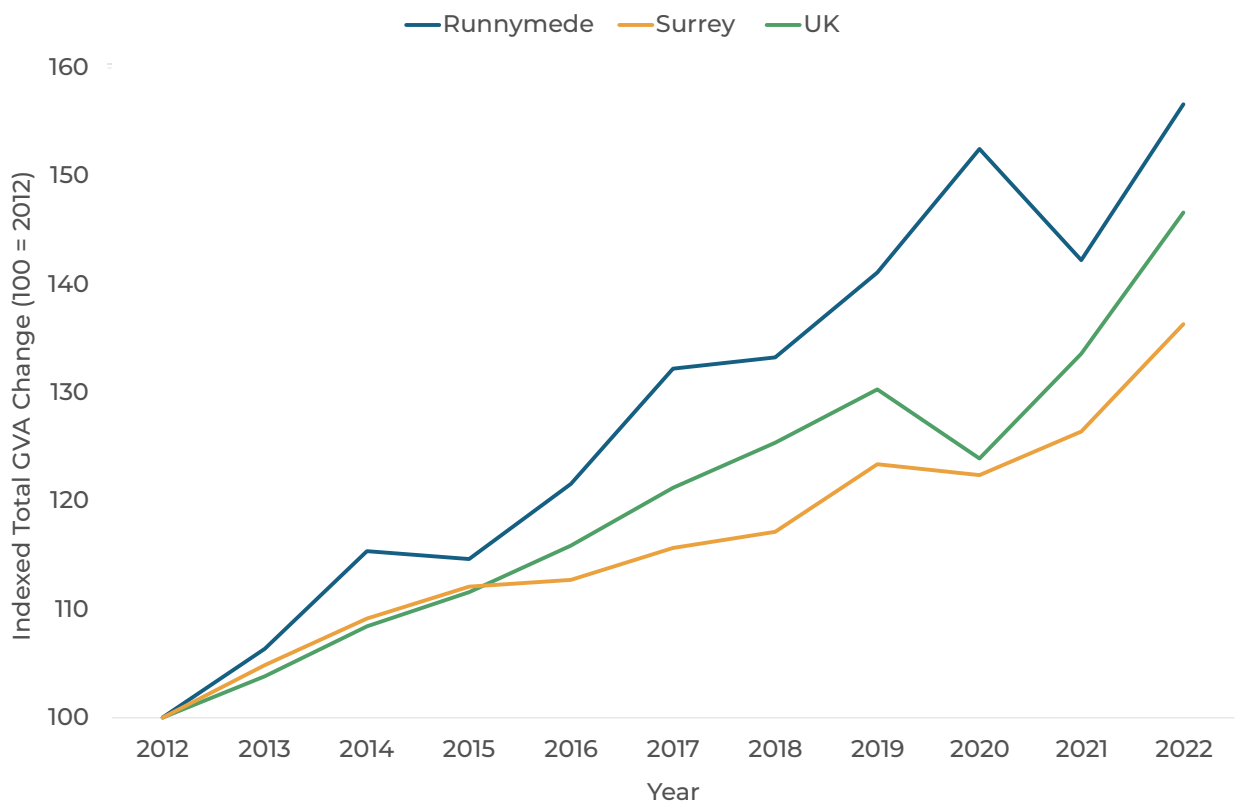
Gross Value Added

A3.34 GVA measures the contribution to an economy of an individual producer, industry, sector, or region. The latest data available shows GVA contributions up to the year 2022¹¹.

A3.35 In 2022, total GVA in Runnymede was £7.2 billion, contributing 14.1% to Surrey's GVA (£51 billion). Between 2012 and 2022, Runnymede's GVA increased by £2.6 billion, at an average annual growth rate of 4.6%. This was higher than the growth rate for Surrey (3.2%) and the UK (3.9%) over the same period.

A3.36 Figure A3.10 shows an indexed change in total GVA in Runnymede and comparator areas between 2012 and 2022.

Figure A3.10: Indexed total GVA change in Runnymede and comparator areas (2012-2022)



Source: ONS (2025). Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions

A3.37 Note that the Real Estate sector has been excluded from the following analysis as this includes the value of 'imputed rent'. This is an estimate of the hypothetical rent an owner-occupier

¹¹ ONS, 2025. Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions

would pay to rent the home they own. This does not therefore reflect real value generated in the economy through employment.

A3.38 The largest industries in terms of absolute GVA in Runnymede in 2022 were:

- Information and communication (J)
- Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)
- Wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G)
- Construction (F)
- Education (P)

A3.39 The industries that experienced the largest average annual growth rate of GVA within Runnymede between 2012 and 2022 were:

- Arts, entertainment, and recreation (I)
- Accommodation and food service activities (I)
- Information and communication (J)
- Other service activities (S)
- Construction (F)

Table A3.3: GVA (2022), GVA change (2012-2022), and CAGR (2012-2022) for Runnymede and comparators

	Runnymede			Surrey			UK		
	GVA (millions)	Change (millions)	CAGR	GVA (millions)	Change (millions)	CAGR	GVA (millions)	Change (millions)	CAGR
ABDE: Primary Industries and Utilities	80	(360)	-15.7%	660	(350)	-4.1%	87,770	6,170	0.7%
C : Manufacturing	160	820	7.3%	2,270	400	2.0%	210,380	50,210	2.8%
F : Construction	460	240	7.7%	3,910	1,350	4.3%	139,080	56,440	5.3%
G : Wholesale and retail trade	740	180	2.9%	6,530	1,830	3.3%	234,260	74,530	3.9%
H : Transportation and storage	90	20	2.8%	1,120	290	3.0%	78,940	17,210	2.5%
I : Accommodation and food services	170	100	9.7%	1,450	720	7.2%	70,630	29,380	5.5%
J : Information and communication	2,060	1,190	9.0%	4,640	1,470	3.9%	146,580	50,160	4.3%
K : Financial and insurance activities	70	(5)	-0.7%	3,780	(280)	-0.7%	201,850	64,870	4.0%
L : Real estate activities	550	180	4.1%	7,980	2,260	3.4%	280,500	86,450	3.8%
M : Professional, scientific and technical activities	1,300	450	4.3%	6,880	2,150	3.8%	184,600	78,120	5.7%
N : Administrative and support service activities	350	(50)	-1.4%	2,720	1,050	5.0%	113,280	47,530	5.6%
O : Public administration and defence	60	10	2.3%	1,230	270	2.5%	116,190	34,130	3.5%
P : Education	380	160	5.5%	2,850	860	3.6%	134,210	37,650	3.3%
Q : Human health and social work activities	370	160	5.7%	3,320	950	3.4%	175,680	58,330	4.1%
R : Arts, entertainment and recreation	260	190	12.9%	980	350	4.5%	31,020	9,200	3.6%
S : Other service activities	130	80	9.1%	900	310	4.3%	38,140	13,380	4.4%

Source: ONS (2025). Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions

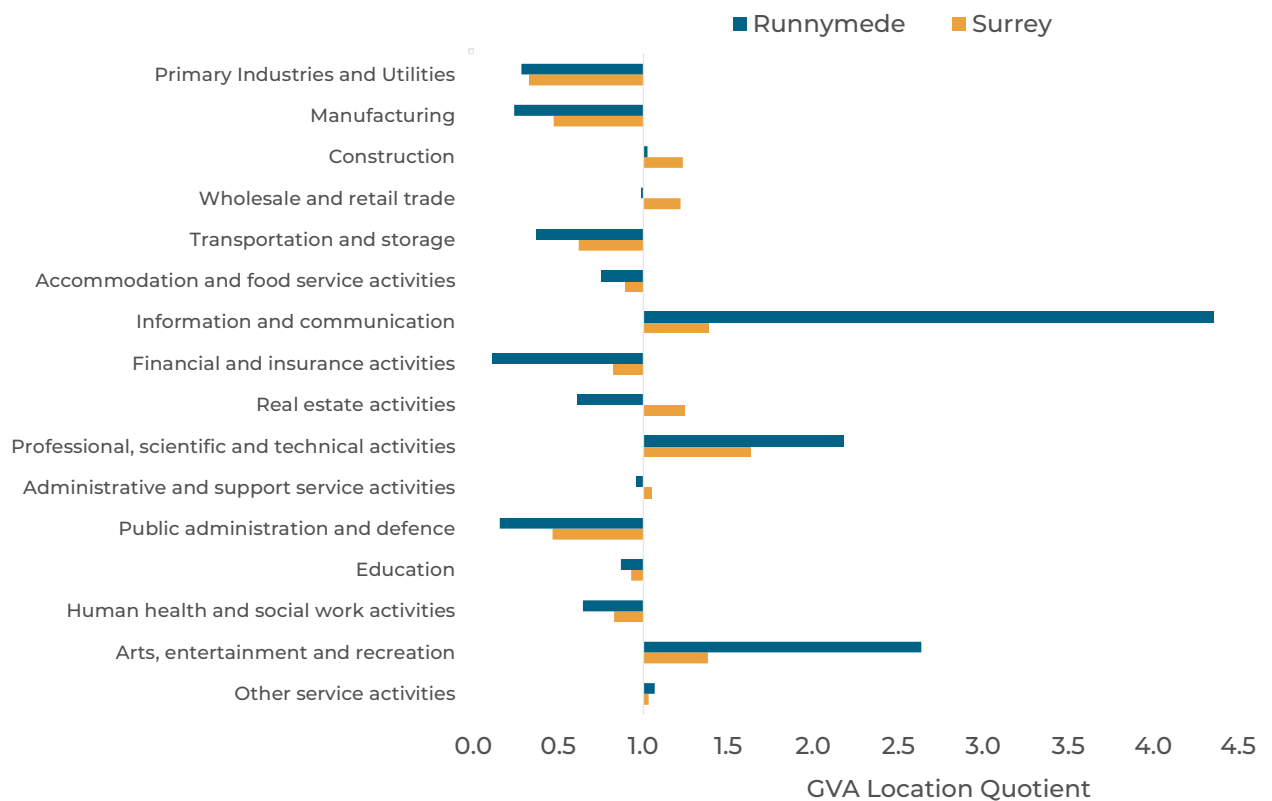
A3.40 In 2022, the industries in Runnymede that had the highest location quotients of GVA compared to the UK average were:

- Information and communication (J)
- Arts, entertainment and recreation (R)
- Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)

A3.41 Runnymede has a strong information and communication industry, Figure A3.11 shows the industry has a significantly higher concentration when compared to the UK average (location quotient was 4.4).

A3.42 However, aside from the three industries listed in paragraph A3.40, all other industries had a concentration of GVA similar to or below the UK average.

Figure A3.11: GVA location quotient by industry for Runnymede and Surrey (2022)



Source: HJA analysis of ONS (2025) Regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: all ITL regions

Competitiveness Index

A3.43 The UK Competitiveness Index (UKCI) (2023)¹² provides a benchmarking of the competitiveness of UK localities, measuring their long-run potential to generate economic growth and well-paid employment. Data is not available for the Surrey County area, but is available for its districts.

A3.44 In 2023, Runnymede was ranked 9th (UKCI score of 130.9) for competitiveness out of all local authority districts and was the only locality in the top ten of the UKCI outside of London. Whilst Runnymede has dropped 2 places between the 2019 UKCI and the 2023 UKCI, it is noted that:

A3.45 “Runnymede in the South East remains the one exception to the dominance of London. Similar to Hackney, its success is now centred around high-tech sectors, with services rather than manufacturing dominating”. (UKCI, 2023. Pg.12)

A3.46 Runnymede scores and ranks the highest in competitiveness of the local authority districts in the Surrey County authoritative area, as shown in Table A3.4. All local authority districts in the Surrey County authoritative area rank in the top half of UKCI.

Table A3.4: 2023 UKCI score and rank of Runnymede and local authority districts in Surrey.

Surrey districts	UKCI Score	Rank
Runnymede	130.9	9
Elmbridge	129.3	11
Mole Valley	116.6	24
Reigate and Banstead	115.1	25
Surrey Heath	114.7	27
Guildford	114.0	28
Woking	111.5	37
Waverley	107.3	62
Spelthorne	106.2	66
Epsom and Ewell	99.9	107
Tandridge	99.6	111

Source: UKCI (2023).

¹² Huggins, R., Prokop, D., and Thompson, P., 2023. UK Competitiveness Index 2023. Available at: <https://cforic.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/UKCI-2023.pdf>

Business base

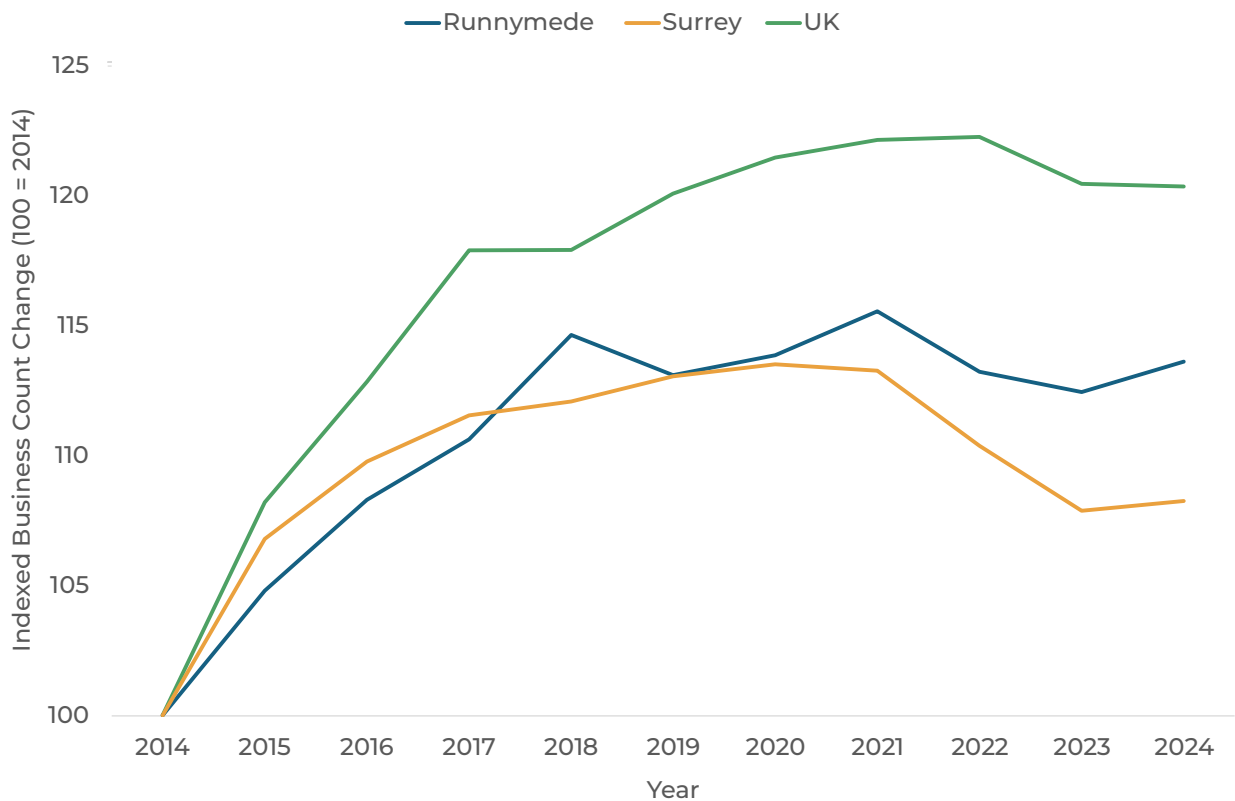
Number of businesses/sizes

A3.47 The ONS provides rounded business counts data which can be broken down by size and by industry. The different business sizes outlined in this report are as follows:

- Micro businesses - 0 to 9 employees,
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) - 10 to 249 employees, and
- Large businesses - over 250 employees

A3.48 In 2024, Runnymede had a total of 4,380 businesses¹³. Looking over a 10-year period (2014 to 2024), the number of businesses has risen by 525 businesses. Over the latter 5-year period, in which the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic took place (2019 to 2024), the number of businesses rose by 20 businesses.

Figure A3.12: Indexed total businesses change in Runnymede and comparators (2014 - 2024)



Source: ONS (2025). Business Counts.

¹³ ONS, 2025. Business Counts.

A3.49 Runnymede and Surrey have experienced a similar trend in business growth and decline, although Surrey experienced a greater decrease in businesses following the year 2021. UK level growth of businesses has been higher over the 10-year period than both Runnymede and Surrey. Figure A3.12 shows the indexed change in businesses in Runnymede and comparators.

A3.50 The majority of businesses in Runnymede are micro businesses, accounting for 89.8% of businesses in 2024. SMEs made up 9.2% of Runnymede's businesses in 2024, and large businesses made up 0.9%. Runnymede has a bigger share of large businesses compared to Surrey (0.5%) and the UK (0.4%).

A3.51 Table A3.5 below shows the distribution of business sizes in Runnymede and comparators.

Table A3.5: Business base in Runnymede and comparators (2024)

	Runnymede	Surrey	UK
Total number of businesses	4,400	62,300	2,724,800
Micro (0-9 employees)	89.8%	90.8%	89.1%
SME (10-249 employees)	9.2%	8.7%	10.5%
Large (250+ employees)	0.9%	0.5%	0.4%

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Source: ONS (2025). Business Counts.

A3.52 The largest industries in terms of absolute business counts in Runnymede in 2024 were:

- Professional, scientific and technical activities (M)
- Construction (F)
- Wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (G)
- Administrative and support service activities (N)
- Information and communication (J)

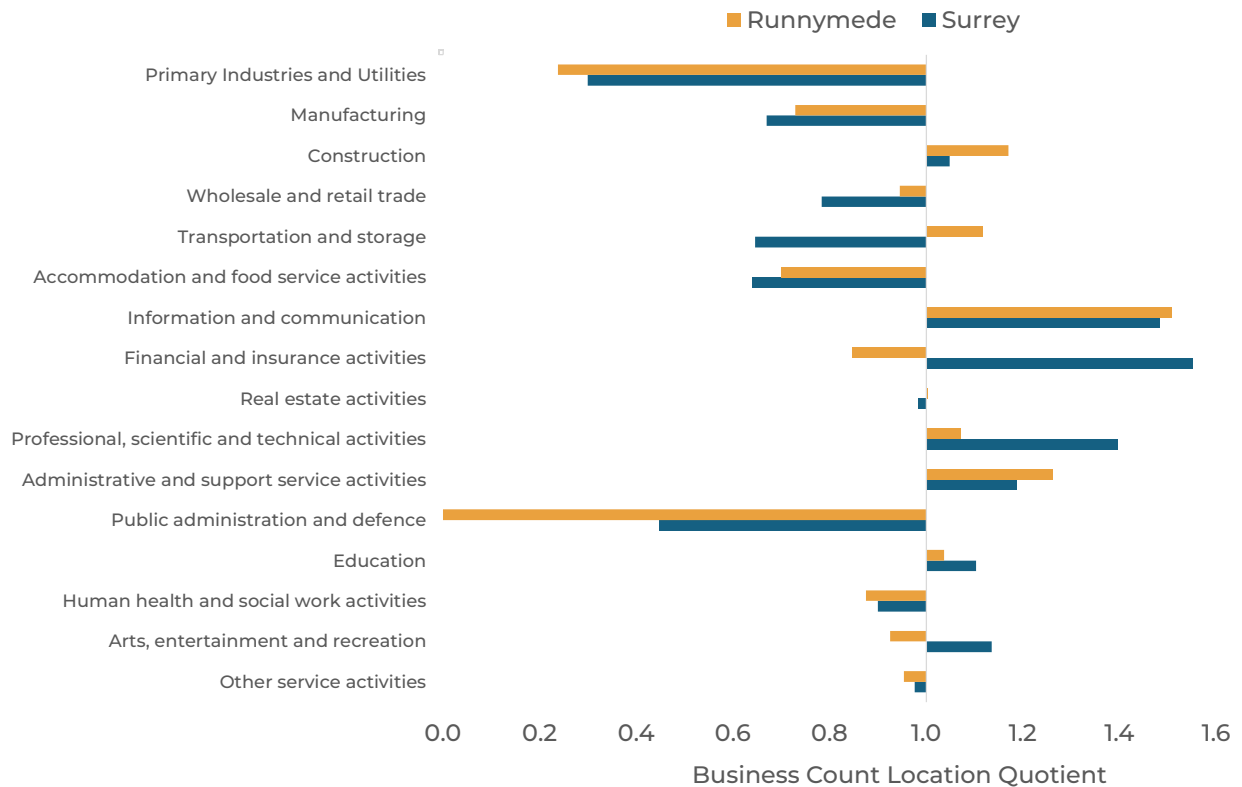
A3.53 The industries that experienced the largest average annual growth rate of business counts within Runnymede between 2014 and 2024 were:

- Transportation and Storage (H)
- Financial and insurance activities (K)
- Construction (F)
- Real estate activities (L)
- Administrative and support service activities (N)

A3.54 In terms of location quotient, in 2024, the industry with the highest concentration of businesses compared to the national average in Runnymede was information and

communication (J). Administrative and support service activities (N), construction (F), transportation and storage (H), professional, scientific and technical activities (M), and education (P) also had higher location quotients, as shown in Figure A3.13 below.

Figure A3.13: Location quotient for business counts by industry for Runnymede and Surrey (2024).



Source: ONS (2025). Business Counts.

Start-ups/failures

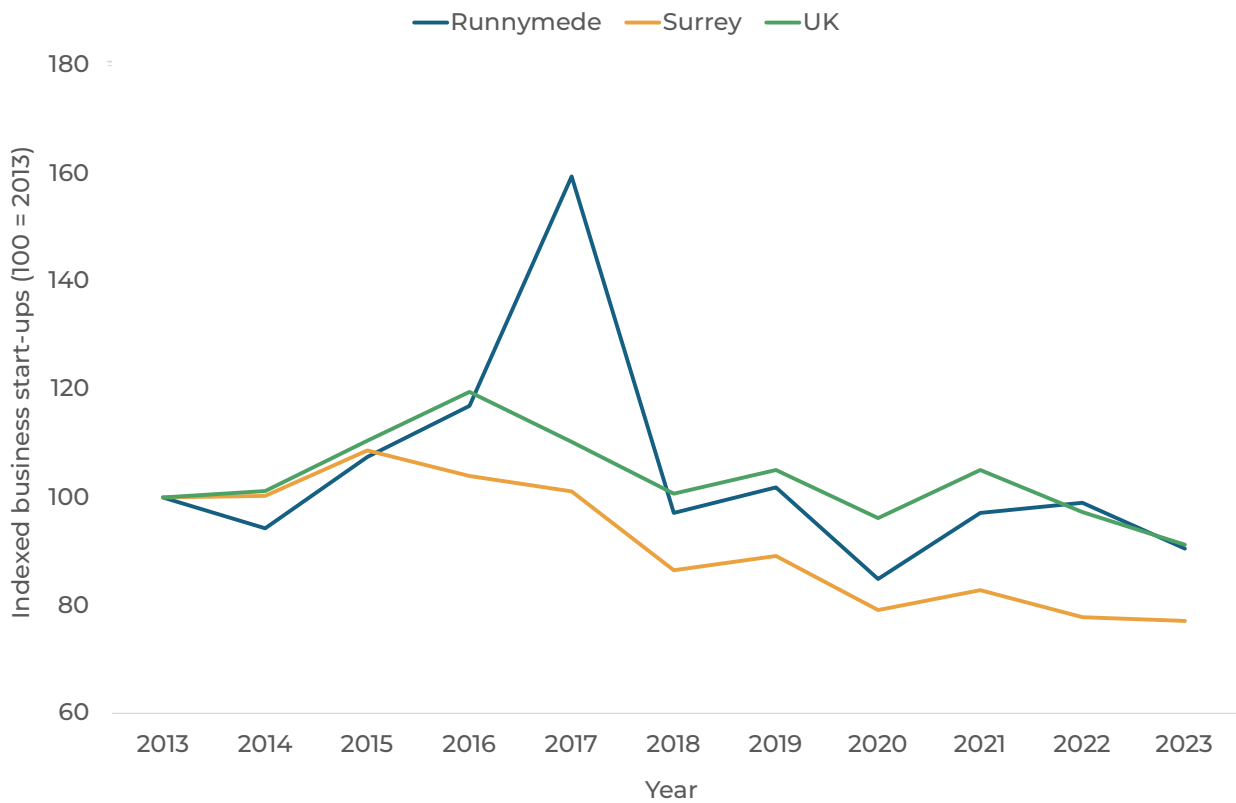
A3.55 The Business Demography dataset provides official statistics on business start-ups and failures¹⁴.

A3.56 In 2023, Runnymede had 480 births of new enterprises. The general trend (as shown in Figure A3.14) is that the number of business start-ups has fallen between 2013 and 2023 in Runnymede and comparators, aside from a peak in Runnymede in 2017. All areas have seen a decrease in business start-ups with the count of start-ups in 2023 being below the counts in 2013.

¹⁴ ONS, 2025. Business demography; ONS, 2018-2024, Multiple business registrations at a single postcode.

A3.57 In 2023, there were 420 business failures in Runnymede. Generally, the number of business failures across all areas has risen between 2013 and 2023. The latest year of data (2022–2023) showed a decrease in business failures across all areas, with Runnymede and Surrey falling to a similar count as seen in 2013. Figure A3.15 shows the change in business failures between 2013 and 2023.

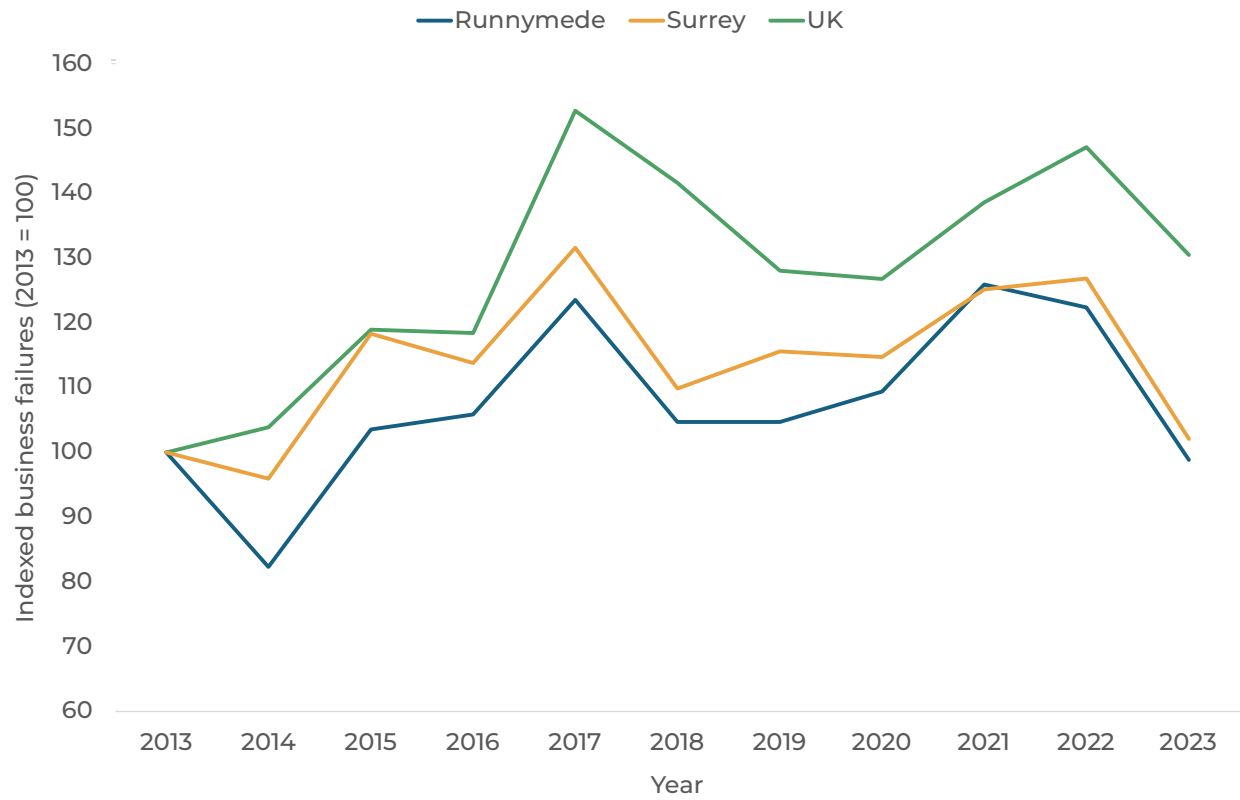
Figure A3.14: Indexed business start-ups in Runnymede and comparators (2013–2023)



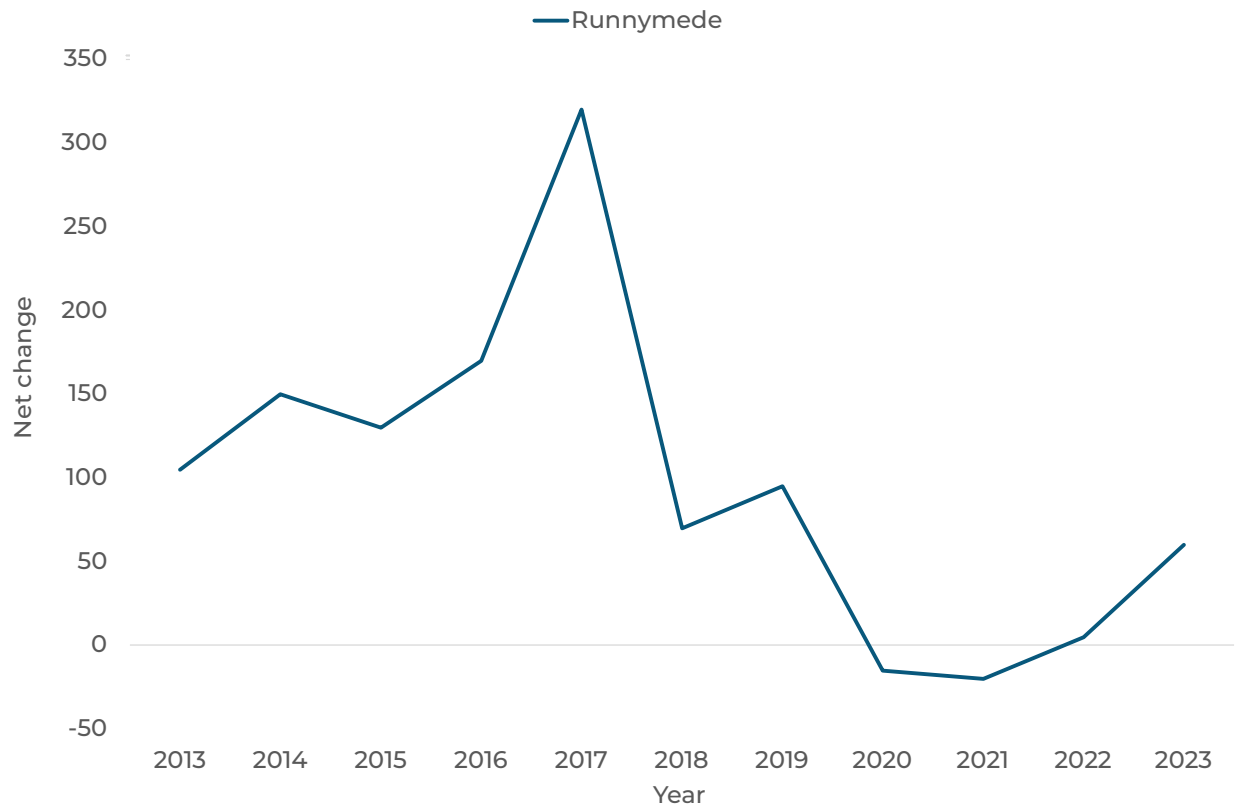
Source: ONS (2025). Business Demography.

A3.58 Over the period 2013 to 2023, Runnymede experienced more business start-ups than business failures, aside from the years 2020 and 2021 where there were more business failures which could have been related to businesses struggling through the Covid-19 pandemic. Figure A3.16 shows the net change by subtracting business failures from start-ups.

Figure A3.15: Indexed business failures in Runnymede and comparators (2013–2023)



Source: ONS (2025). Business Demography.

Figure A3.16: Net change of businesses start-ups and failures in Runnymede

Source: ONS (2025). Business Demography.

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