South Lakeland Business Premises Survey 2020
Analysis Report

October 2020 – February 2021

This report analyses the results of the South Lakeland Business Survey conducted via a self-completion and online survey carried out between 13 October 2020 and 15 February 2021.

Contents

Introduction

The South Lakeland Business Premises Survey was carried out by South Lakeland District Council.

The Business Premises Survey is carried out each year to help provide an up-to-date assessment of the supply and demand of business premises in South Lakeland. The survey helps to inform the South Lakeland local planning authorities evidence base about employment needs in so far as the supply and demand for land and premises and strategic policy about land requirements going forward in the Local Plan. The survey is also used to better understand the opportunities and challenges faced by businesses operating in South Lakeland.

Method

The Business Premises Survey was sent to 4,273 business premises on the South Lakeland Business Rates Register.

There was a press release to advertise the consultation on social media, South Lakeland News and the local press.

Businesses were able to complete a paper copy and return free of charge by post, or online using the link provided. 63% of completed surveys were returned by post.

For the first time, the consultation was primarily advertised digitally (via email) in the early stages of the consultation period. This resulted in a greatly increased online completion of 37%. This compares to just 13% in the previous year's survey.

Responses

There were **1,259** complete useable responses to the consultation. This represents a response rate of 30% of businesses that received the survey, **which is considered a statistically significant sample and can be considered representative**. This is the highest response rate seen so far since the survey began in 2014.

Executive Summary

- A response rate of 30% (1,259 responses) can be considered statistically representative of the district as a whole, and is the highest response rate seen so far since the survey began in 2014.
- More than a quarter of businesses responding to the consultation are from Kendal or the surrounding area. There was, as usual, a good response rate from all parts of the district, including Ulverston and Windermere/ Bowness as well as the more rural towns and villages.
- There was also a good representation from businesses of all ages, from those trading for a reasonably short time (under 5 years) to those who have been operating for over 31 years.
- The vast majority of responses were from businesses in the hospitality/catering and wholesale/retail sectors, which is expected due to the nature of the South Lakeland economy.
- Limited companies, soles traders and partnerships were the main types of businesses responding to the survey.
- The majority of responding businesses are currently operating from retail outlets, while those in residential (hotels, B&Bs etc.), light industrial, food/drink and office premises also contributed a significant response rate.
- The majority of responding businesses are operating from premises in a town centre location, however businesses on the edge of town and in more rural locations are also well represented. There was a good response rate from businesses that have occupied their current premises for a relatively short time to those that have been at the same premises for over 31 years.
- The majority of respondents classed their premises as their main workplace/headquarters. One in two indicated that their floor space was under 2,500 ft^2, and two thirds employed between 1 to 5 employees. This shows that the majority of responses were from small businesses.
- The majority of responding businesses have a current broadband speed between 24-80Mbps.
- Just over half of respondents feel confident about the next twelve months, with the majority expecting their staffing levels to stay the same. However confidence levels have fallen quite considerably compared to last year's survey.
- Of the 1,259 responding businesses, 19% (244 businesses) indicated that they would expect their premises needs to change in the next 3 years. The majority expect to increase in size by means of expanding their existing premises or moving to a larger site. However compared to past years survey there has been a slight shift towards businesses wanting to reduce rather than increase their premises size.
- The majority of those looking for new premises would do so either in a town centre or edge of town (e.g. industrial estate) location, with Kendal being the most likely location.

- The most likely types of premises these businesses would be looking for are retail, office and light industrial units. Two fifths of respondents would prefer a premises under 2,500ft², while just over a third would prefer something slightly larger (2,501 – 9,999ft²).
- All responding businesses feel that the cost of premises, location/accessibility of premises, and sufficient mobile connectivity were important factors to consider when choosing a new premises.
- Just under one in five businesses identify business rates and staffing as obstacles which prevent their business growing.
- Just under half of responding businesses are seeking to address climate change issues by implementing energy efficiency measures, while just under a quarter are utilising green technologies. Over a third of respondents indicated that they weren't sure how they were addressing the issues.
- Respondents were given the opportunity to leave any other comments. The main comments/issues relate to parking, COVID 19, business rates/premises costs and availability, broadband/mobile signal and town centre/high streets.

Company information

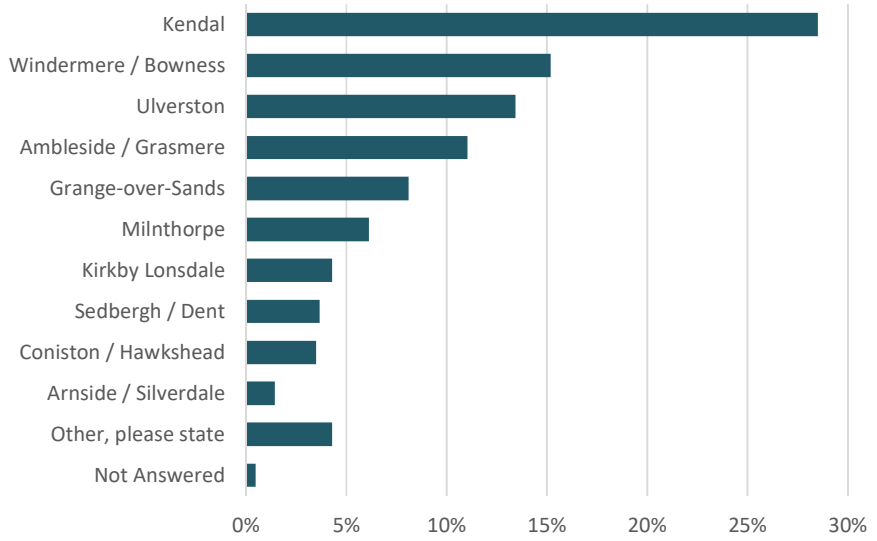
Question 1: What is the name of the business operating from these premises?

Answers to this question have been collected, however under the terms of the Data Protection Legislation this data is not included in the analysis report or appendix.

Question 2: Which is the nearest town/village to these premises?

More than a quarter of responses are from businesses located in or around Kendal. Windermere/Bowness (15%) and Ulverston (13%) were the other two most well represented towns/areas, as would be expected. When looking at the number of responses from the other towns/areas in relation to their size, it can be said that there has been a good response rate from all parts of the district. Broughton-in-Furness, Holme and Staveley were the most common 'Other' responses. These answers can be viewed in full in Appendix 1.

When compared to previous years' surveys, there has not been any significant variations in relation to where responses have been received from.

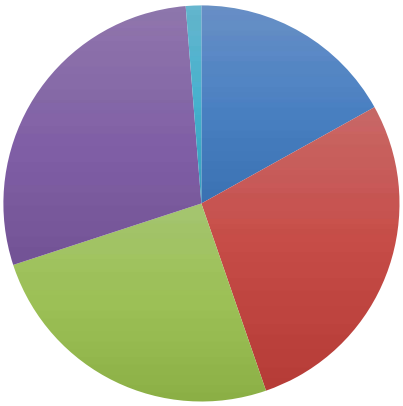


Nearest Area	Total	%	Nearest Area	Total	%
Kendal	359	28.5	**Kirkby Lonsdale**	54	4.3
Windermere/Bowness	191	15.2	**Sedbergh/Dent**	46	3.7
Ulverston	169	13.4	**Coniston/Hawkshead**	44	3.5
Ambleside/Grasmere	139	11.0	**Arnside/Silverdale**	18	1.4
Grange-over-Sands	102	8.1	**Other, please state**	54	4.3
Milnthorpe	77	6.1	**Not Answered**	6	0.5

Question 3: How long has this business been trading?

There was a fairly even response rate from businesses of all ages, with those trading for over 31 years providing the slight majority (29%). Businesses trading for 6-15 and 16-30 years provided around a quarter of responses each, while just under one in six were from those trading for less than five years.

There has been a fairly even response rate from businesses of all ages in previous years too.



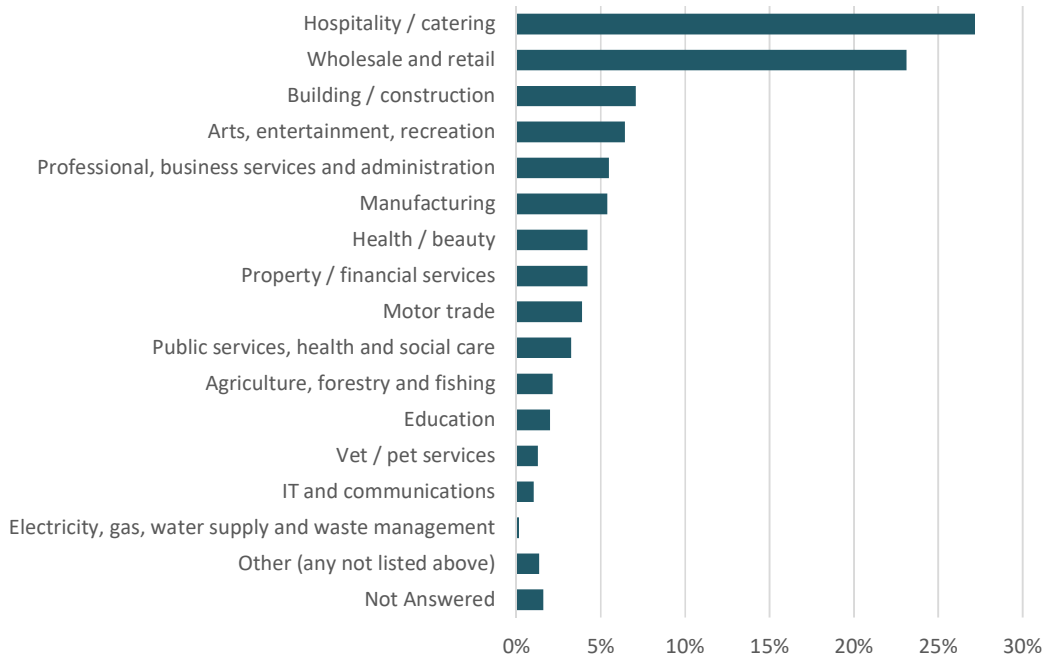
Years Trading	Total	%
0-5 years	213	16.9
6-15 years	350	27.8
16-30 years	318	25.3
Over 31 years	362	28.8
Not Answered	16	1.3

Question 4: Which of the following is the main operation of your business?

Responding businesses were given a list of 15 broad industry groups (and examples) to indicate which sector their business operated in. The majority (91%) chose one of the listed groups, with the remaining choosing to use the 'Other' option. For analytical purposes, these have been added to the main business groups (e.g. Caravan Park has been added to the hospitality/catering sector).

Unsurprisingly, due to the nature of the economy in South Lakeland the vast majority of responses were from businesses operating in the hospitality/catering sectors (27%) and wholesale/retail (23%). Businesses operating in these two sectors have contributed the most responses to the survey each year, with this year seeing a slight increase in response rate from the hospitality/catering sector (+3%).

When looking at the response rates from the other sectors in comparison with last year, there has been slight decreases from the Agriculture, forestry and fishing (-4%) and professional, business services and administration (-2%) sectors.

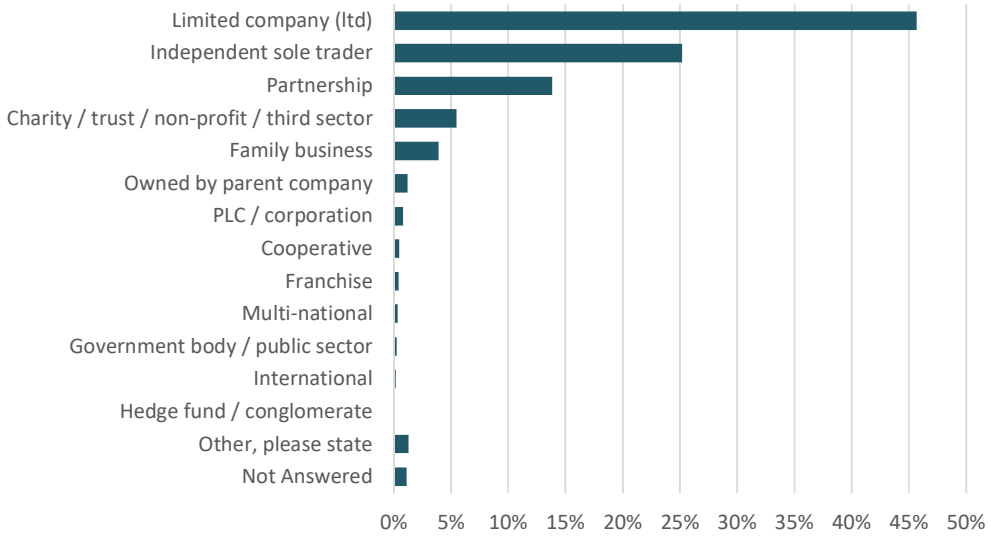


Business Sector	Total	%
Hospitality/catering *(Inc. holiday let, hotel, B&B, pub, laundrette)*	342	27.2
Wholesale and retail *(Inc. shops, wholesale distribution, indoor market, petrol station, garden centre, storage)*	291	23.1
Building/construction *(Inc. builder, roofer, joiner, electrician)*	89	7.1
Arts, entertainment, recreation *(Inc. gallery, gym, sports club, leisure centre)*	81	6.4
Professional, business services and administration *(Inc. solicitor, architect, designer)*	69	5.5
Manufacturing *(Inc. quarrying)*	68	5.4
Health/beauty *(Inc. hairdresser, spa, nail salon)*	53	4.2
Property/financial services *(Inc. private letting, estate agent, bank, accountant)*	53	4.2
Motor trade *(Inc. garage, auto dealer)*	49	3.9
Public services, health and social care *(Inc. doctors surgery, optician, dentist, health centre, charity, rescue service, nursing home)*	41	3.3
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	27	2.1
Education *(Inc. training)*	25	2.0
Vet/Pet Services *(Inc. animal care, animal grooming, animal rescue, boarding kennels)*	16	1.3
IT and Communications	13	1.0
Electricity, gas, water supply, waste management *(Inc. recycling, biomass)*	2	0.2
Other	17	1.4
Not Answered	20	1.6

Question 5: What type of business/organisation are you?

The majority of responding businesses (46%) are limited companies (ltd), while a quarter are independent sole traders. There was also a reasonable response from partnerships (14%) and third sector (5%).

Compared to last year's survey, there was a slight increase in responses from sole traders (+2%) and a slight decrease from family businesses (-2%).



Business Type	Total	%
Limited company (ltd)	575	45.7
Independent sole trader	317	25.2
Partnership	174	13.8
Charity/ trust/ non-profit/ third sector	69	5.5
Family business	49	3.9
Owned by parent company	15	1.2
PLC/ corporation	10	0.8
Cooperative	6	0.5
Franchise	5	0.4
Multi-national	4	0.3
Government body/ publicly owned	3	0.2
International	2	0.2
Hedge Fund/ conglomerate	0	0
Other, please state	16	1.3
Not Answered	14	1.1

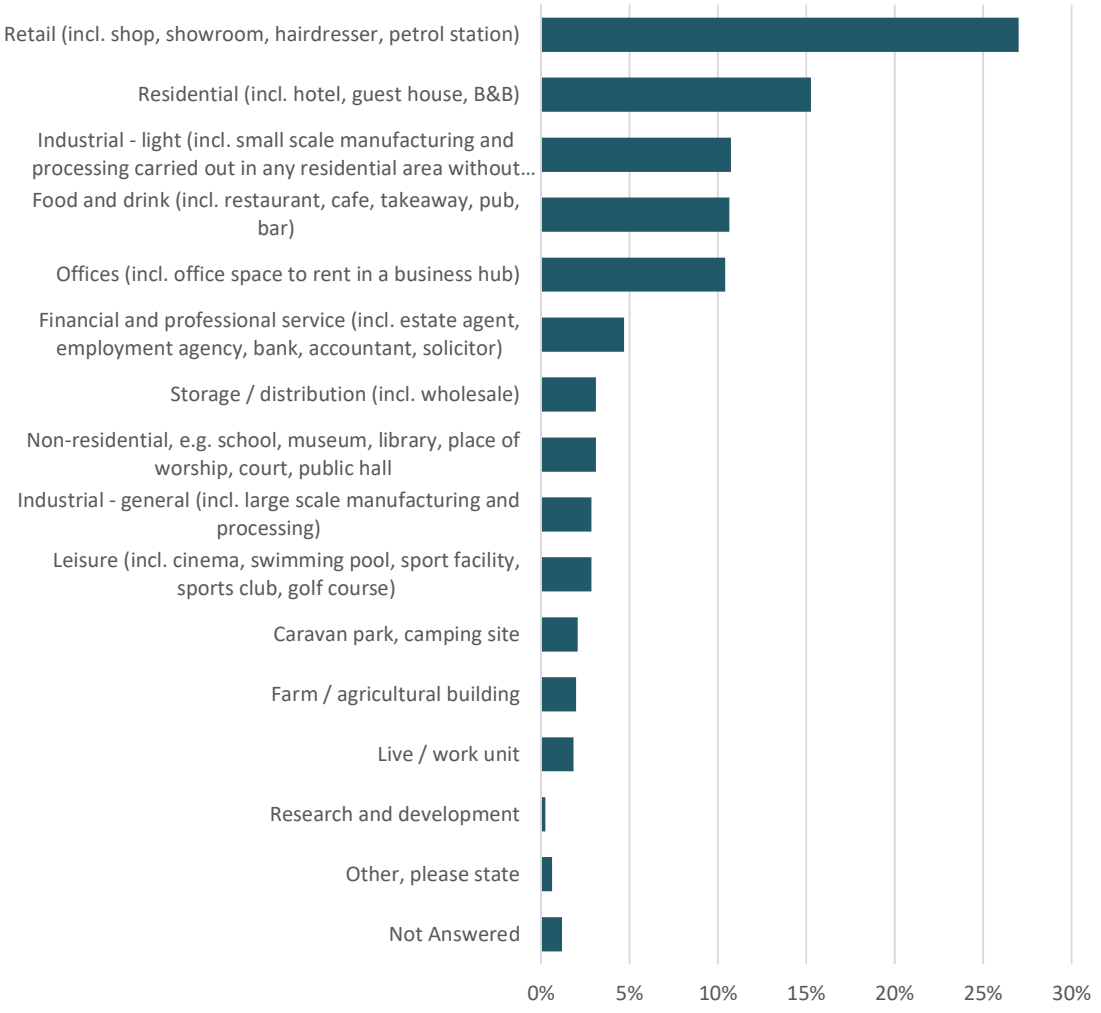
Existing business premises

Question 6: Which of the following best describes the type of premises you occupy?

As with question 4, the majority of respondents (95%) chose one of the listed business premises types, while 5% chose 'other, please state'. For analytical purposes, these responses have been added to the listed premises types where applicable (e.g. builders workshop has been add to industrial – light).

Businesses operating from a retail type premises contributed the most responses to the survey, over a quarter of the total. There was also a good response rate from businesses operating in; Residential (15%), food and drink (11%), offices (11%) and light industrial (11%) type premises.

In comparison to last year's survey, there has been a slight increase in the response rate from light industrial (+6%), residential (+5%), financial and professional (+2%) and retail (+2%) type premises. There has been a slight decrease from those in general industrial (-6%) type premises. This, as well as the increase in light industrial may be due to a clearer explanation in these types of premises in this year's survey.



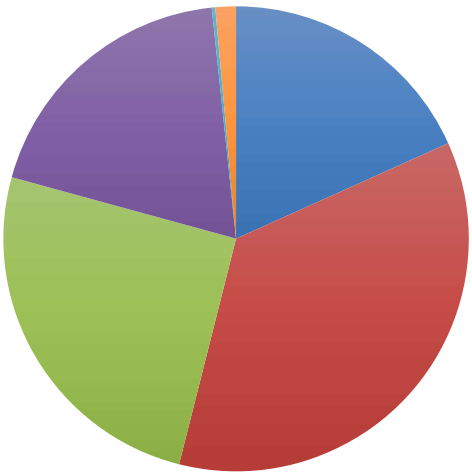
Business Sector	Total	%
Retail (incl. shop, showroom, hairdresser, petrol station)	340	27.0
Residential (incl. hotel, guest house, B&B)	192	15.3
Industrial - light (incl. small scale manufacturing and processing carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to amenity by noise, fumes and dust e.g. small workshop)	135	10.7
Food and drink (incl. restaurant, cafe, takeaway, pub, bar)	134	10.6
Offices (incl. office space to rent in a business hub)	131	10.4
Financial and professional service (incl. estate agent, employment agency, bank, accountant, solicitor)	59	4.7
Storage / distribution (incl. wholesale)	39	3.1
Non-residential, e.g. school, museum, library, place of worship, court, public hall	39	3.1
Industrial - general (incl. large scale manufacturing and processing)	36	2.9
Leisure (incl. cinema, swimming pool, sport facility, sports club, golf course)	36	2.9
Caravan park, camping site	26	2.1
Farm / agricultural building	25	2.0
Live / work unit	23	1.8
Research and development	3	0.2
Other	8	0.6
Not Answered	15	1.2

Question 7: Which best describes the location of these premises?

Over a third of responding businesses are based in a town centre location, which links to the majority response rate from businesses in the retail sector. A quarter are located in a village, one in five based in a rural location and just over one in six on the edge of town. This highlights that there has been a fairly even response rate from the different types of locations within South Lakeland.

As with previous questions, for those that answered 'other', their responses were added to the main options where possible.

Compared to last year's survey, there has been a slight increase in the rate of responses from businesses in edge of town and village locations (both +2%). The response rate from businesses in the other locations are all very similar to those seen in last year's survey.

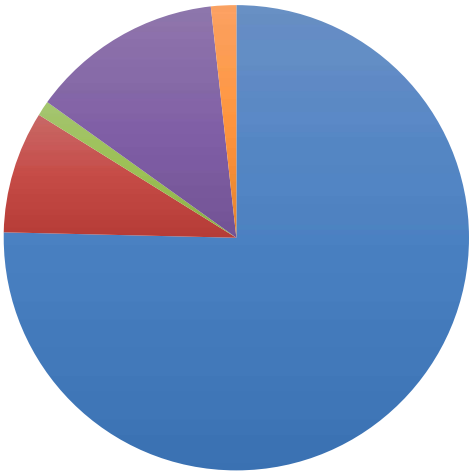


Premises Location	Total	%
Edge of town e.g. industrial estate	230	18.3
Town centre	449	35.7
Village	319	25.3
Rural	240	19.1
Other, please state	3	0.2
Not Answered	18	1.4

Question 8: Which of the following best describes these premises?

The overall majority of responding businesses describe their premises as their main workspace or headquarters, with three out of four doing so. One in seven best describes their premises as a live/work unit, while less than one in ten are operating from a branch premises. Respondents were able to answer 'other', but for analytical purposes all of these answers were able to be added to one of the listed options.

Compared to last year's survey, there was a slight reduction (-3%) in the response rate from branch premises, while there was a slight increase (+2%) from main workplaces/ headquarters.



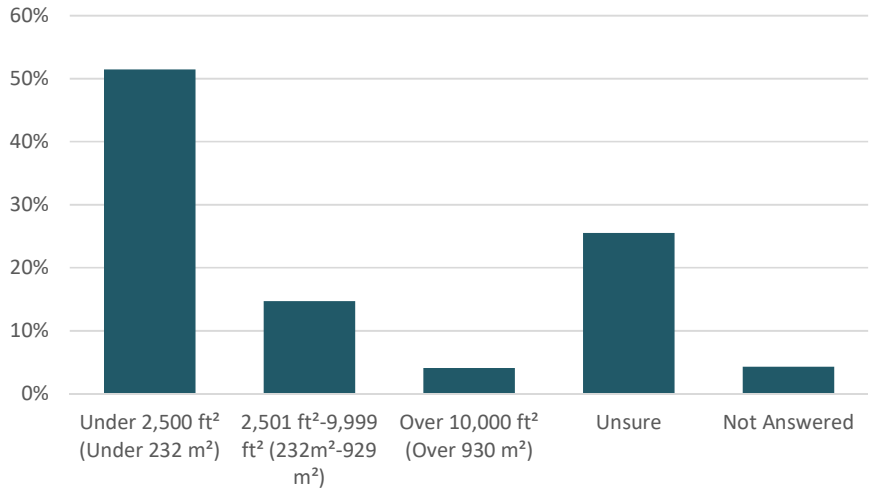
Premises description	Total	%
Main workplace / headquarters	948	75.3
Branch	107	8.5
Office at home	13	1.0
Live / work unit	168	13.3
Not Answered	22	1.8

Question 9: What is the approximate floor space of these premises?

Just over half of responding businesses are operating in 'small' premises with an approximate floor space of under 2,500 ft², while there was a reasonable response rate (15%) from businesses operating in 'medium' sized premises between 2,501 and 9,999 ft². Just 4% are located in a 'large'

premises with an approx. floor space over 10,000 ft². A quarter of respondents are unsure of the size of their floor space.

The results show that there has been an increase (+6%) in responses from small businesses when compared to last year's results. This may however be due to the 6% reduction in the rate of responses from businesses who were unsure when compared to last year's results.



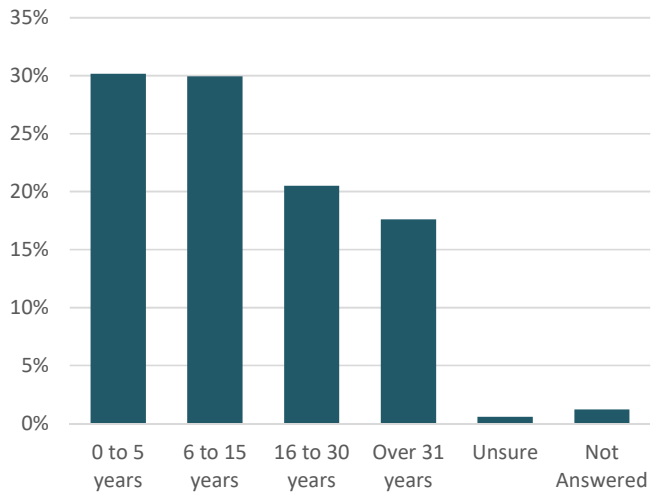
Approx. floor space	Total	%
Under 2,500 ft² (Under 232m²)	648	51.5
2,501 ft²-9,999 ft² (233m²-929m²)	185	14.7
Over 10,000 ft² (Over 930m²)	51	4.1
Unsure	321	25.5
Not Answered	54	4.3

Question 10: How long have you been at these premises?

There was a good response rate from businesses that have occupied their current premises for a relatively short time (30%) to those that have frequented their premises for over 31 years (18%). 30% have been at their premises for 6-15 years, with one in five indicating they have been at theirs for between 16 and 30 years.

As has been the case in previous years' surveys, it is interesting to note that in rural areas and villages there is a slightly higher response rate (23%) from business that have occupied the same property for more than 31 years, whereas in more urban areas it is lower (13%).

The response rates to this question are very similar to the response rates of last year's survey.

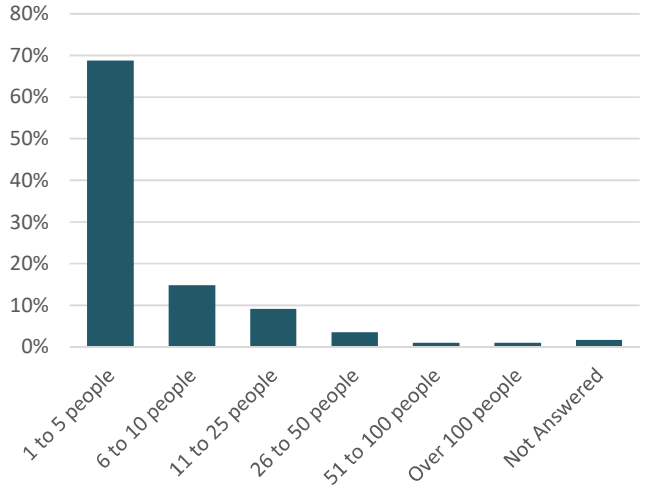


Years	Total	%
0 to 5 years	380	30.2
6 to 15 years	377	29.9
16 to 30 years	258	20.5
Over 31 years	222	17.6
Unsure	7	0.6
Not Answered	15	1.2

Question 11: How many people are based at these premises?

Just over two thirds of responses were from businesses that employ between 1 and 5 staff at their premises, while 15% currently have between 6 and 15 employees. This, along with results from previous questions, indicates that the majority of responders to the survey are likely to be small businesses and sole traders. However there was still a reasonable response rate from larger businesses, and overall the share of responses is fairly representative of the South Lakeland economy overall.

A similar picture has been seen in previous years' surveys.

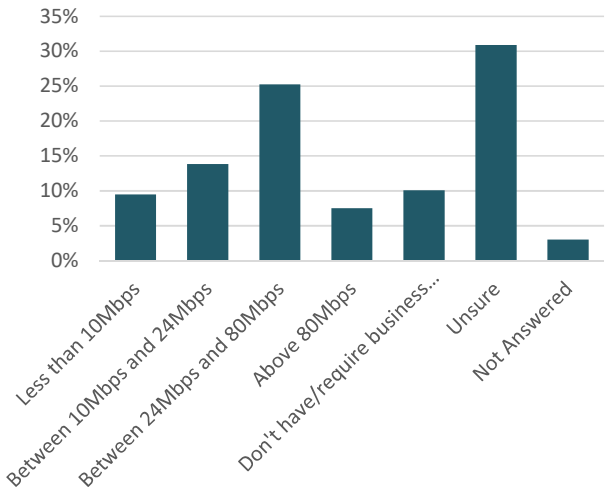


Employees	Total	%
1 to 5 people	866	68.8
6 to 10 people	187	14.9
11 to 25 people	115	9.1
26 to 50 people	45	3.6
51 to 100 people	13	1.0
Over 100 people	12	1.0
Not Answered	21	1.7

Question 12: What is your current broadband speed?

30% of respondents were unsure of their broadband speed. Of those that do know their broadband speed, the majority of responding businesses have a current broadband speed of between 24-80Mbps. One in seven have speeds between 10-24Mbs, while one in ten are currently running below 10Mbps.

When compared to last year's survey, the rates of responding businesses with broadband speeds lower than 24Mbs has decreased (-7% below 10Mbs, -10% 10-24Mbs). There has been a +5% increase with speeds 24-80Mbs. This may indicate an improvement in broadband spread for those responding to the survey.



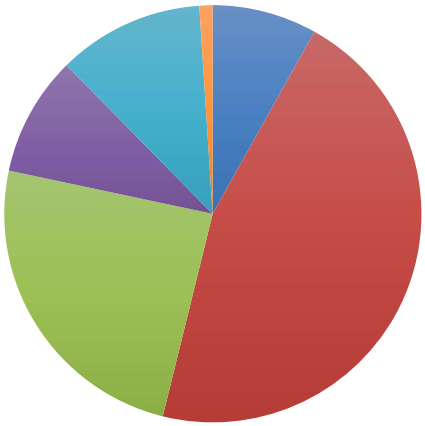
Current broadband speed	Total	%
Less than 10Mbps	119	9.5
Between 10Mbps and 24Mbps	174	13.8
Between 24Mbps and 80Mbps	318	25.3
Above 80Mbps	94	7.5
Don't have/ require business broadband	127	10.1
Unsure	389	30.9
Not Answered	38	3.0

Going forward

Question 13: How confident do you feel about the next twelve months?

Just under half of all responding businesses feel fairly confident about the next 12 months, while one in twelve are very confident. On the other hand over a third are not very or not at all confident. This shows that even though the majority of responding businesses are feeling confident, there is a large proportion of businesses that are not.

Compared to last year's survey, the rate of confidence has reduced by 19%, while the rate of no confidence has increased by 17%. This considerable change in confidence is highly likely to be down to the ongoing pandemic and restrictions that are affecting many businesses in the district.

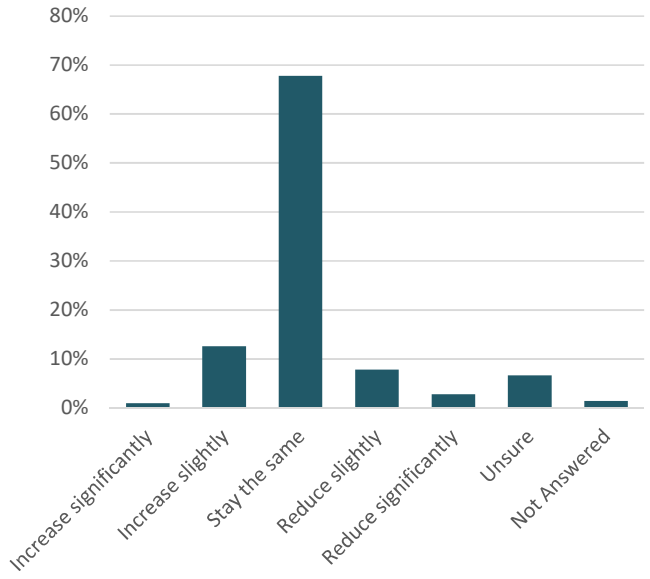


Confidence	Total	%
Very confident	102	8.1
Fairly confident	576	45.8
Not very confident	308	24.5
Not at all confident	117	9.3
Unsure	143	11.4
Not Answered	13	1.0

Question 14: Over the next year, do you expect the number of people employed at these premises to…?

The overall majority, just over two thirds, expect the number of people employed at their premises to stay the same over the next year. One in eight businesses expect their employee numbers to slightly increase, while there are 12 businesses that expect their numbers to increase significantly. One the other hand, 8% expect employee numbers to reduce slightly, and 3% expect theirs to reduce significantly.

Comparted to last year's survey, there has been a slight increase (+4%) in the rate of businesses expecting employee numbers to reduce slightly and reduce significantly (+2%). The rate expecting numbers to stay the same has reduced slightly (-4%).



No. Employed	Total	%
Increase significantly (more than 25%)	12	1.0
Increase slightly	158	12.6
Stay the same	853	67.8
Reduce slightly	99	7.9
Reduce significantly (more than 25%)	35	2.8
Unsure	84	6.7
Not Answered	18	1.4

Question 15: How do you expect your premises/business needs to change over the next three years?

A total of 244 responding businesses (19% of the total) are expecting their premises/business needs to change over the next three years. These respondents were then able to identify all the ways in which they expect their needs to change. 33% of those anticipating change would consider expanding their existing site, 20% would look at moving to a larger site, while 12% may acquire additional premises to satisfy their need to change.

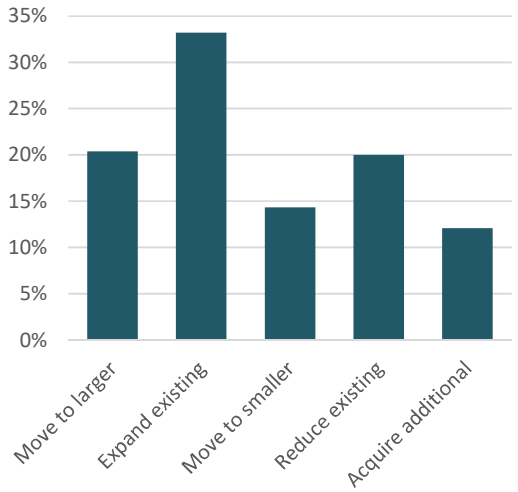
On the other hand, 20% would consider reducing the size/capacity of their current premises while 14% may move to a smaller premises. This shows that overall there is a greater desire to increase premises size or capacity rather than reducing it in the district overall.

The rate of total respondents expecting their premises/business needs to change over the next three years is the same as the rate seen in last year's survey results.

When comparing the types of expected change with last year's results, the rate that would consider moving to a larger premises (-10%), expanding on their existing site (-4%) and acquire additional premises (-3%) has reduced. Those expecting to reduce the size of their existing premises has increased (+7%), as has the rate of those expecting to move to smaller premises (+5%).

The remaining 1,015 responding businesses (81% of the total) indicated that they do not anticipate any change in their premises/business need over the next three years.

Those who expect no change were asked to skip to question 22. The analysis in the next six questions is focussed on those who expect a need to change over the next three years.



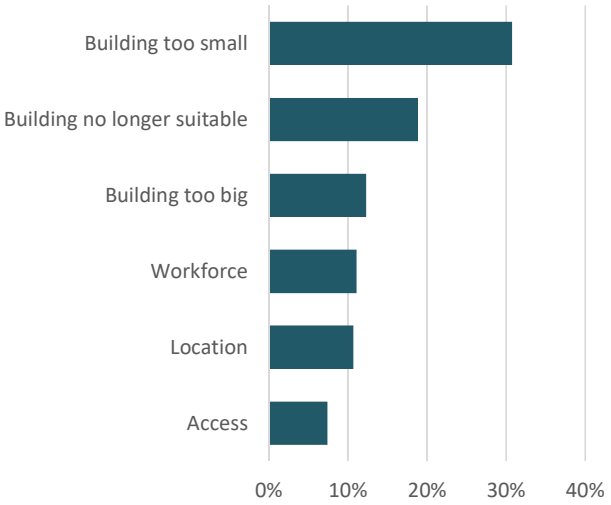
Change of premises needs	Total	%
Move to larger site	54	20.4
Expand existing site	88	33.2
Move to smaller site	38	14.3
Reduce existing site size	53	20.0
Acquire additional premises	32	12.1
Total Responses	244	19.3

Question 16: Why are you planning to change or adapt your premises?

Those who are expecting their premises/business needs to change were asked why this is the case, and could answer all options that applied to them. Just under a third stated that it was because their current premises/building is too small, while just under one in five said that their building is no longer suitable.

There were 60 'Other' reasons given. The main themes coming from the comments are; the need to expand/develop, a need to cut costs, COVID-19 and adaptation to work from home/agile working. These comments can be viewed in full in Appendix 1.

Compared to last year's survey, there has been increases in the rates of respondents planning to change premises due to their current premises being too big (+7%), and issues with workforce (+4%), and a reduction in the reason being that their current premises is too small (-3%).



Reason for change	Total	%
Building too small	75	30.7
Building no longer suitable, e.g. outdated	46	18.9
Building too big	30	12.3
Workforce	27	11.1
Location	26	10.7
Access	18	7.4

Question 17: Where are you likely to look for new premises?

When focusing on the businesses who would expect to move rather than alter/adapt their current premises (112 in total, 52% of the total that expect their needs to change over the next three years), almost half would be likely to look in Kendal. Milnthorpe, Ulverston and Windermere/ Bowness were the other most popular locations. Of those that answered 'other', there were various locations mentioned. These can be viewed in Appendix 1(available upon request).

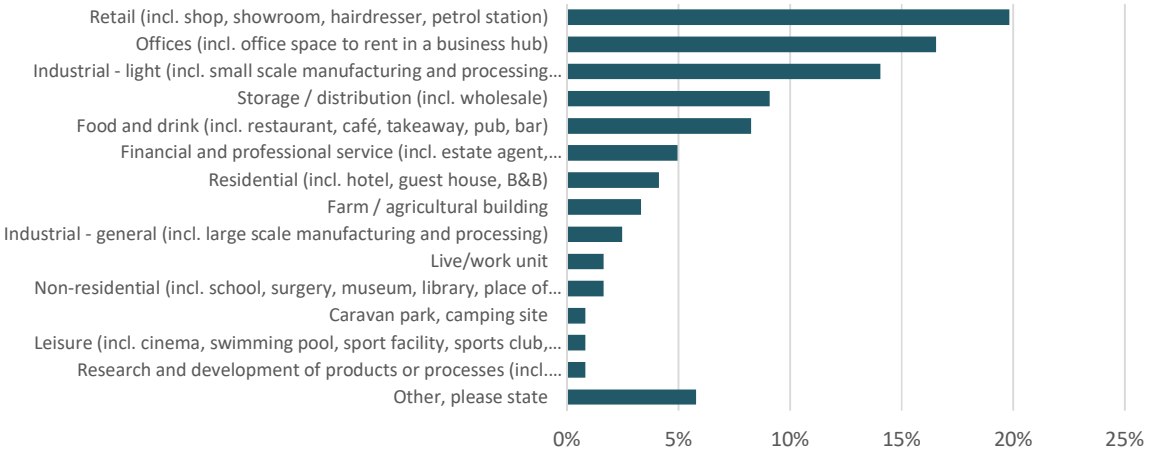
There has been an 8% decrease in the rate of businesses that would expect to move premises in the next 3 years compared to last year's survey. In terms of areas of interest when looking for new premises, compared to last year there has been increases in the rate of respondents likely to look in Kendal (+8%), Milnthorpe (+7%), Windermere/Bowness (+3%) and Sedbergh/Dent (+2%). The rate expecting to look in Ambleside/Grasmere has reduced by -8%.

Location	Total	%	Location	Total	%
Kendal	51	45.5	**Sedbergh / Dent**	6	5.3
Milnthorpe	16	14.3	**Coniston / Hawkshead**	5	4.5
Ulverston	14	12.5	**Ambleside / Grasmere**	3	2.7
Windermere / Bowness	14	12.5	**Arnside / Silverdale**	2	1.8
Kirkby Lonsdale	11	9.8	**Other, please state**	19	17.0
Grange over Sands	9	8.0			

Question 18: Which of the following best describes the type of premises you would be looking for?

When focusing on the same 91 businesses who'd expect to look for new premises in the next three years, shops/retail space (20%), offices (17%) and light industrial (14%) are the types of premises that the majority of these businesses would be looking for. Those that answered 'Other' can be view in Appendix 1.

When comparing to last year's survey, there has been a decrease in the rate of businesses who'd be looking for general industrial (-10%) and retail (-6%) premises. While there has been increases in those looking for food/drink (+5%) and light industrial (+4%) premises.



Premises type	Total	%
Retail (incl. shop, showroom, hairdresser, petrol station)	24	19.8
Offices (incl. office space to rent in a business hub)	20	16.5
Industrial - light (incl. small scale manufacturing and processing carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to amenity by noise, fumes and dust e.g. a small workshop)	17	14.0
Storage / distribution (incl. wholesale)	11	9.0
Food and drink (incl. restaurant, café, takeaway, pub, bar)	10	8.3
Financial and professional service (incl. estate agent, employment agency, bank, accountant, solicitor)	6	5.0
Residential (incl. hotel, guest house, B&B)	5	4.1
Farm / agricultural building	4	3.3
Industrial - general (incl. large scale manufacturing and processing)	3	2.5
Live/work unit	2	1.7
Non-residential (incl. school, surgery, museum, library, place of worship, public hall).	2	1.7
Caravan park, camping site	1	0.8
Leisure (incl. cinema, swimming pool, sport facility, sports club, golf course)	1	0.8
Research and development of products or processes (incl. studios, laboratories)	1	0.8
Other, please state	7	5.8

Question 19: What type of premises ownership would you be looking for?

Two fifths of businesses who expect to acquire new premises in the next three years would be looking for either freehold or leasehold. 30% would prefer freehold, while one in five would prefer Leasehold.

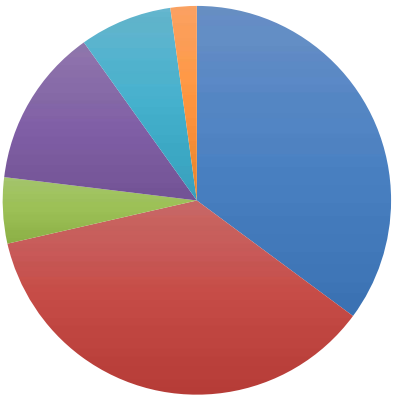
Compared to last year's survey there has been an increase (+5%) in the rate of businesses looking for freehold premises and a 7% reduction looking for leasehold.

Ownership	Total	%
Freehold	36	29.8
Leasehold	25	20.7
Either freehold or leasehold	49	40.5
Not Answered	11	9.1

Question 20: Which best describes the location you would look for?

The most likely location these businesses would look for a new premises would be either town centre or the edge of town, with around a third choosing one of these options. 14% would look in a rural area and 6% in a village. Those that answered 'Other' can be view in Appendix 1.

When comparing to last year's survey results, the proportion of respondents likely to choose an edge of town location has reduced slightly (-5%).

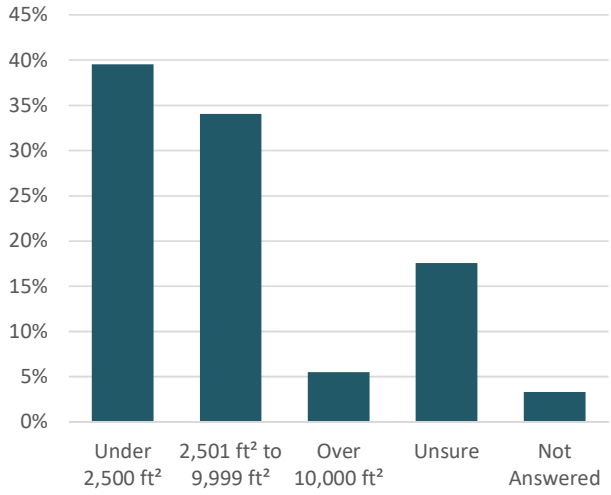


Location	Total	%
Town centre	42	34.7
Edge of town, e.g. industrial estate	38	31.4
Village	7	5.8
Rural	17	14.1
Other, please state	10	8.3
Not Answered	7	5.8

Question 21: What is the approx. floor space of the premises you would be looking for?

Small size premises (under 2,500ft²) are the most desired sized for those who may be looking for a new premises, with 46% preferring this size. However there is also demand for medium sized premises (2,501ft²-9,999ft²) with 30% preferring this size. Just 7 businesses would be looking for a large premises over 10,000ft², while 13% were unsure.

Compared to last year's survey there has been an increase in the rate of businesses looking for small premises (+6%) and a decrease in those looking for a medium size premises (-4%).



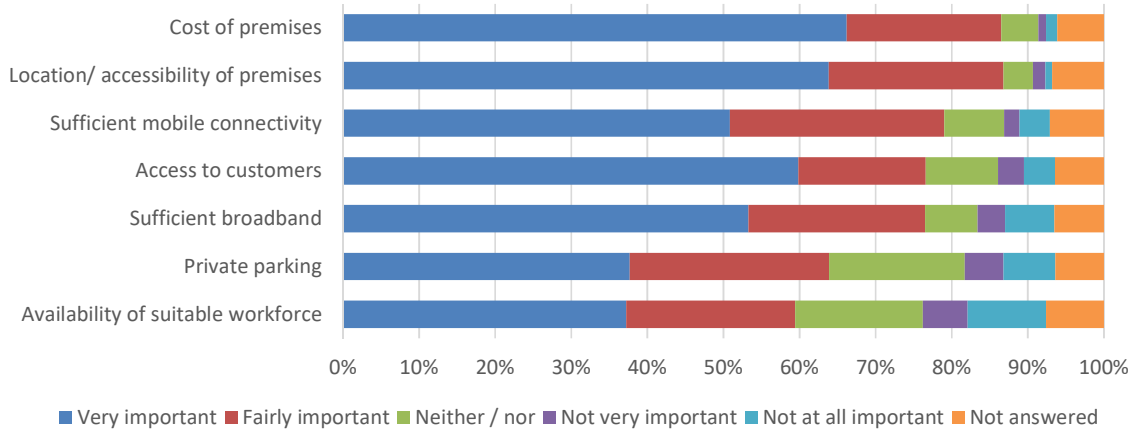
Reason for change	Total	%
Under 2,500ft² (under 232m²)	36	39.6
2,501ft²-9,999ft² (233m²-929m²)	31	34.1
Over 10,000ft² (over 930m²)	5	5.5
Unsure	16	17.6
Not Answered	3	3.3

Question 22: When choosing premises, how important are the following for your business/ organisation?

The most important factors to all businesses that responded to the survey when choosing premises are; cost of premises (87% very/fairly important), location/accessibility of premises (87%), sufficient mobile connectivity (79%), access to customers (77%) and sufficient broadband (77%).

Although private parking (64%) and availability of suitable workforce (60%) are still seen as important to the majority of respondents, they are slightly less so.

The results to this question are very similar to those seen in last year's survey.



Factor	Very important		Fairly important		Neither / nor		Not very important		Not at all important		Not Answered	
Cost of premises	835	66.3	255	20.3	61	4.9	12	1.0	19	1.5	77	6.1
Location/ accessibility of premises	804	63.9	290	23.0	49	3.9	20	1.6	11	0.9	85	6.8
Access to customers	753	59.8	210	16.7	120	9.5	45	3.6	51	4.1	80	6.4
Sufficient broadband	671	53.3	292	23.2	87	6.9	45	3.6	82	6.5	82	6.5
Sufficient mobile connectivity	641	50.9	355	28.2	99	7.9	25	2.0	50	4.0	89	7.1
Availability of suitable workforce	470	37.3	279	22.2	212	16.8	74	5.9	129	10.3	95	7.6
Private parking	474	37.7	330	26.2	224	17.8	64	5.1	86	6.8	81	6.4

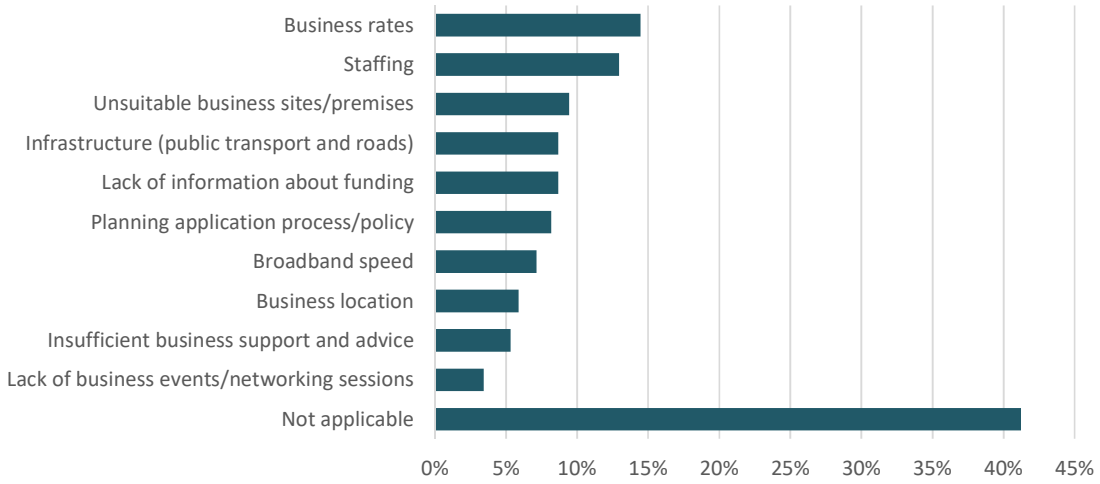
Question 23: Are there any obstacles which prevent your business growing?

The majority of responding businesses (41%) indicated that this question was not applicable to them. However for those that felt that it was, they were able to identify all options that applied to them. The two biggest obstacles to businesses are business rates (15%) and staffing (13%).

Similar results were seen for this question in last year's survey.

Respondents were also able to give 'Other' obstacles which prevent their business from growing, with 270 doing so. The majority of the comments simply stated Cumbria as being an obstacle, while

COVID-19/coronavirus was also mentioned a number of times. All comments to this question can be viewed in Appendix 1.



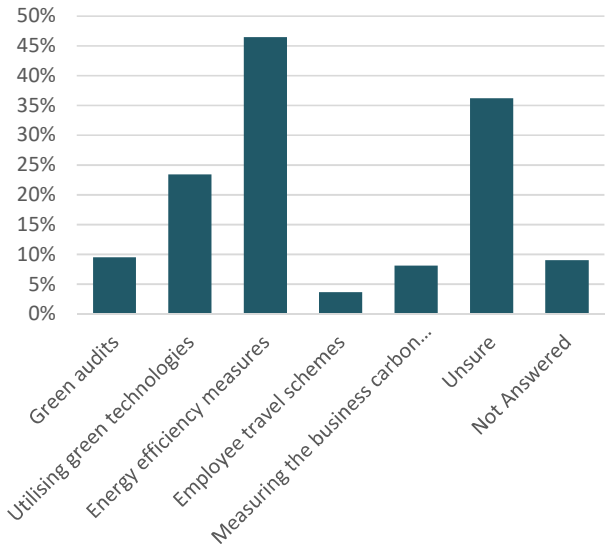
Obstacle	Total	%
Business rates	182	14.5
Staffing	163	13.0
Unsuitable business sites/premises	119	9.5
Infrastructure (public transport and roads)	109	8.7
Lack of information about funding	109	8.7
Planning application process/policy	103	8.2
Broadband speed	90	7.2
Business location	74	5.9
Insufficient business support and advice	67	5.3
Lack of business events/networking sessions	43	3.4
Not applicable	519	41.2

Question 24: How are you seeking to address climate change issues in your business?

Respondents were able to identify all options that applied to them. Just under half of responding businesses are seeking to address climate change issues by implementing energy efficiency measures, while just under a quarter are utilising green technologies. Over a third of respondents indicated that they weren't sure how they were addressing the issues.

When compared to last year's survey there has been an increase in businesses utilising green technologies (+5%) and implementing energy efficiency measures (+4%).

Respondents were also able to give 'Other' examples, with 87 doing so. Comments include; green energy (including solar panels), encouraging recycling, reducing plastic use, travel reductions and difficulties due to unsuitable premises. All comments to this question can be viewed in Appendix 1.



Apprenticeship interest	Total	%
Green audits	119	9.5
Utilising green technologies	295	23.4
Energy efficiency measures	585	46.5
Employee travel schemes	46	3.7
Measuring the business carbon footprint	102	8.1
Unsure	456	36.2

Question 25: Do you have any other comments?

Finally, responding businesses were given the opportunity to submit any other comments they have, with a total of 153 doing so. For analytical purposes they have been grouped into similar 'themes', with a brief overview of the main points highlighted below. All comments can be viewed in full in Appendix 1.

Parking

The issues around parking again generated the most feedback from businesses. Numerous respondents feel that parking fees are too high, which is having a detrimental effect on their business. Some feel that the cost/availability of parking has a detrimental impact on town centre economies.

COVID 19

A number of respondents have indicated that their business has been adversely affected by the ongoing pandemic and the restrictions placed upon their business. Some have mentioned both positive and negative points regarding the business support grants schemes and loans.

Business Rates and premises cost/availability

Business rates is usually the most common theme along with parking in previous year's surveys, however the number of comments regarding this has reduced this year. There were some comments however, as well as comments regarding the cost and availability of business premises.

Broadband and mobile phone signal

Some respondents have highlighted the issues with broadband and mobile signal, particularly in rural areas and the need for improved broadband due to the changing economy brought on by the pandemic.

Town Centres / high streets

The town centre economy, and the state of the high street was another theme to come out of the comments. The majority seemed to be focused on Kendal in particular.

Other themes identified in the comments include; availability of advice and assistance, problems with the town centre traffic, the lack of appropriate workforce and a need for more affordable housing.