South Lakeland Business Premises Survey 2022
Analysis Report

October 2022 – January 2023

This report analyses the results of the South Lakeland Business Survey conducted via a self-completion and online survey carried out between 4 October 2022 and 6 January 2023.

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 by post to 4,014 business premises on the South Lakeland Business Rates Register.

There was a news release to advertise the survey in South Lakeland News and the local press. The survey was also promoted through the Invest in South Lakeland newsletter and on social media.

Businesses were able to complete a paper copy and return free of charge by post, or complete the survey online using the link provided. 60% of completed surveys were returned by post.

As in 2020 and 2021 the consultation was primarily advertised digitally (via email) in the early stages of the consultation period. This resulted in an online completion rate of 40%, a 4% increase on the previous two years' online response rates.

Responses

There were **1,243** complete useable responses to the consultation. This represents a response rate of 31% of businesses that received the survey, **which is considered a statistically significant sample and can be considered representative**.

Executive Summary

- A response rate of 31% (1,243 responses) can be considered statistically representative of the district as a whole. This is compared to 28% in 2020, and is the highest response rate seen since the survey began in 2014.
- 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 Windermere/ Bowness, Ambleside/Grasmere and Ulverston, 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 residential (hotels, B&Bs etc.) premises and retail outlets. Those in light industrial and food/drink 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. Just over one in two indicated that their floor space was under 2,500 ft^2, and more than 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 under two thirds of respondents feel confident about the next twelve months, while just under a quarter are expecting their staffing levels to stay the same. However compared to the results from the 2021 survey, there has been a 15% decrease in confidence rates.
- Of the 1,243 responding businesses, 15% (183 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. This year’s survey showed a slight shift towards more businesses wanting to downsize, compared to last year’s results which showing a shift towards a need for larger premises.

- The majority of those looking for new premises would do so either in an edge of town (e.g. industrial estate) or town centre location, with Kendal being the most likely location.
- The most likely types of premises these businesses would be looking for are office, retail and light industrial units. More than a third of respondents would prefer a ‘small sized’ premises (under 2,500ft^2), while just over a quarter would prefer a ‘medium sized’ (2,501 – 9,999ft^2).
- All responding businesses feel that the location/accessibility of premises, cost of premises, sufficient broadband/mobile connectivity and energy efficiency were important factors to consider when choosing a new premises.
- A third of businesses identify energy/fuel costs and staff retention/recruitment as obstacles which prevent their business growing.
- Around half of the responding businesses are seeking to address rising energy and fuel prices by implementing energy efficiency measures and/or reducing business costs.
- Overall, two thirds of responding businesses indicated that addressing climate change is important to them.
- Respondents were given the opportunity to leave any other comments. The main comments/issues relate to; Staffing/recruitment, lack of affordable housing, energy prices/rising costs, parking and high streets/town centres.

Company information

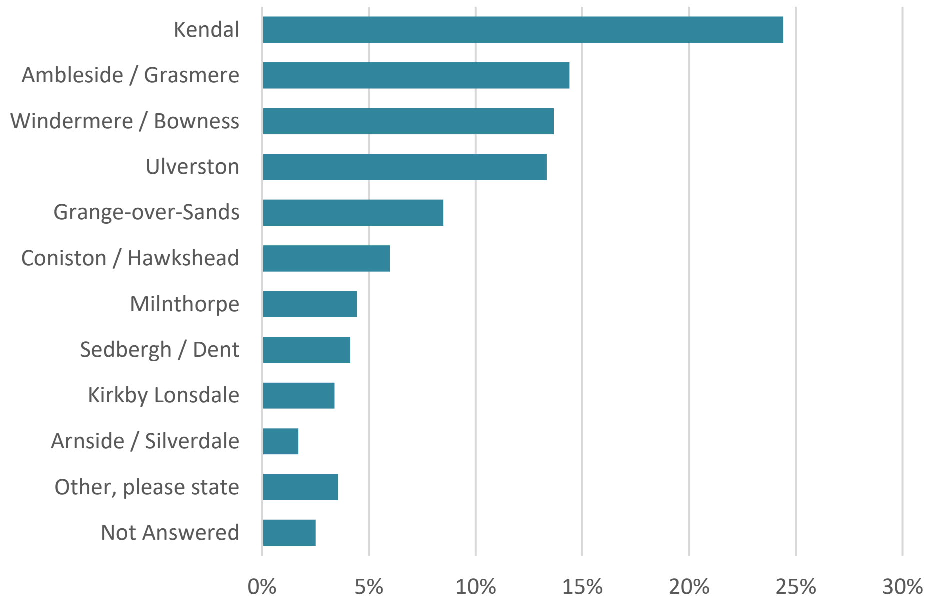
Question 1: What is the name of the business operating from these premises?

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?

A quarter of responses were from businesses located in or around Kendal. Ambleside/Grasmere (14%) and Windermere/Bowness (14%) were the other two most well represented towns/areas. 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, Staveley and Levens were the most common 'Other' responses. These answers can be viewed in full in Appendix 1.

When compared to previous years' surveys, the proportion of responses from the different areas is fairly similar all round.

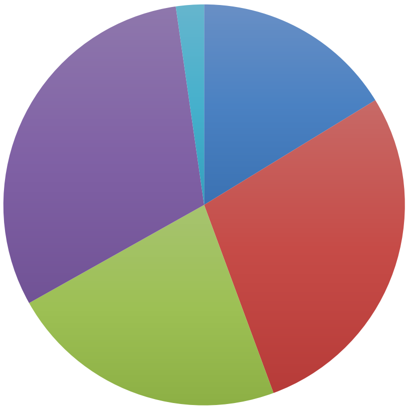


Nearest Area	Total	%	Nearest Area	Total	%
Kendal	302	24.4	**Milnthorpe**	55	4.5
Ambleside/Grasmere	178	14.4	**Sedbergh/Dent**	51	4.1
Windermere/Bowness	169	13.7	**Kirkby Lonsdale**	42	3.4
Ulverston	165	13.3	**Arnside/Silverdale**	21	1.7
Grange-over-Sands	105	8.5	**Other, please state**	44	3.6
Coniston/Hawkshead	74	6.0	**Not Answered**	31	2.5

Question 3: How long has this business been trading?

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

Compared to last year's results, there has been a slight increase in responses from older businesses (over 31 years).



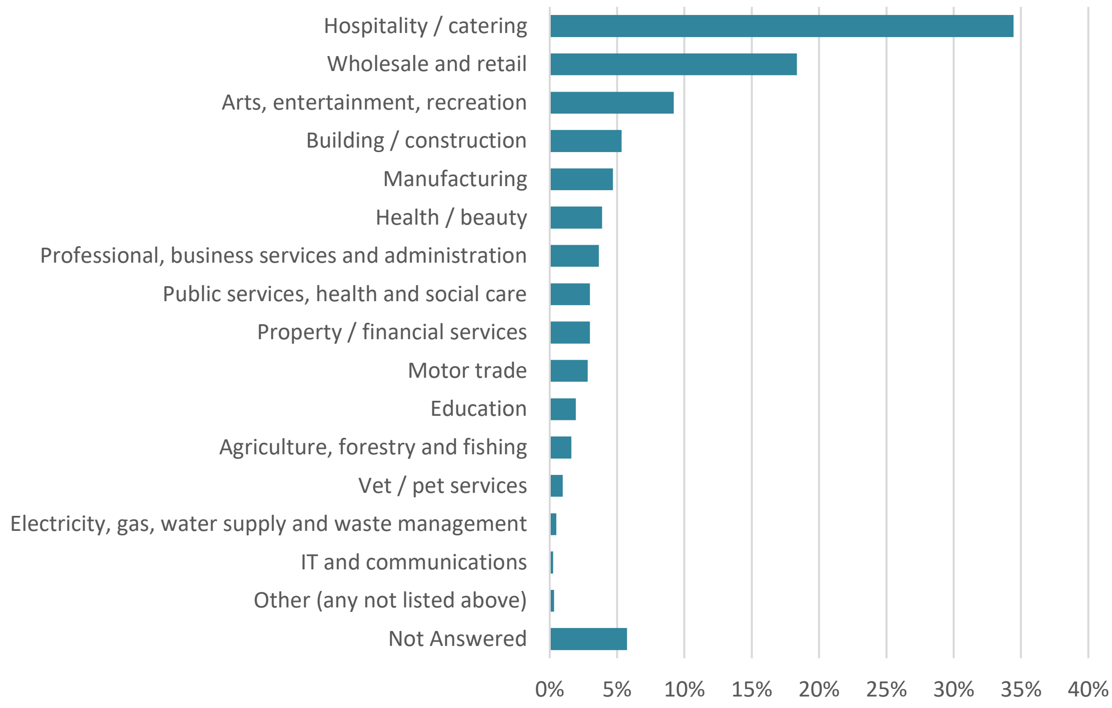
Years Trading	Total	%
0-5 years	201	16.3
6-15 years	348	28.1
16-30 years	278	22.5
Over 31 years	382	30.9
Not Answered	28	2.3

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 (95%) chose one of the listed groups, with the remaining choosing to use the 'Other' option. For analytical purposes, the majority of 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 (37%) and wholesale/retail (19%) sectors. Businesses operating in these two sectors have contributed the most responses to the survey each year.

When looking at the response rates from the other sectors in comparison with last year, there has been a slight increase from the arts/entertainment/recreation sector (+3%), and a slight decrease from the hospitality/catering sector (-3%).

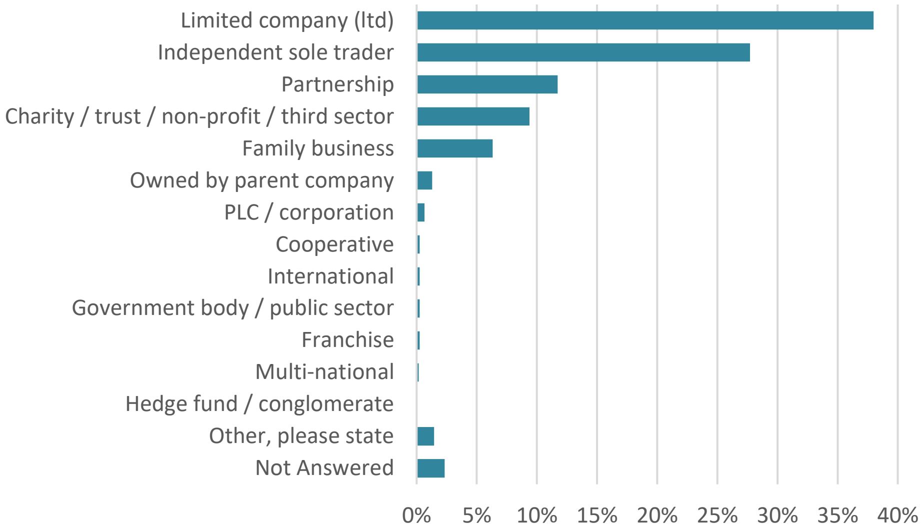


Business Sector	Total	%
Hospitality/catering *(Inc. holiday let, hotel, B&B, pub, laundrette)*	426	34.4
Wholesale and retail *(Inc. shops, wholesale distribution, indoor market, petrol station, garden centre, storage)*	227	18.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation *(Inc. gallery, gym, sports club, leisure centre)*	114	9.2
Building/construction *(Inc. builder, roofer, joiner, electrician)*	66	5.3
Manufacturing *(Inc. quarrying)*	58	4.7
Health/beauty *(Inc. hairdresser, spa, nail salon)*	48	3.9
Professional, business services and administration *(Inc. solicitor, architect, designer)*	45	3.6
Public services, health and social care *(Inc. doctors surgery, optician, dentist, health centre, charity, rescue service, nursing home)*	37	3.0
Property/financial services *(Inc. private letting, estate agent, bank, accountant)*	37	3.0
Motor trade *(Inc. garage, auto dealer)*	35	2.8
Education *(Inc. training)*	24	1.9
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	20	1.6
Vet/Pet Services *(Inc. animal care, animal grooming, animal rescue, boarding kennels)*	12	1.0
Electricity, gas, water supply, waste management *(Inc. recycling, biomass)*	6	0.5
IT and Communications	3	0.2
Other	4	0.3
Not Answered	74	5.7

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

The majority of responding businesses (38%) are limited companies (ltd), while more than a quarter are independent sole traders (28%). There was also a reasonable response from partnerships (12%) and charities (9%).

Compared to last year's survey, there was an increase in responses from charities (+4%) and a decrease from limited companies (-4%).



Business Type	Total	%
Limited company (ltd)	469	42.3
Independent sole trader	323	29.2
Partnership	149	13.5
Family business	63	5.7
Charity/ trust/ non-profit/ third sector	57	5.1
Owned by parent company	14	1.3
PLC/ corporation	5	0.5
Cooperative	5	0.5
Franchise	4	0.4
Multi-national	1	0.1
Government body/ publicly owned	0	0.0
International	0	0.0
Hedge Fund/ conglomerate	0	0.0
Other, please state	9	0.8
Not Answered	9	0.8

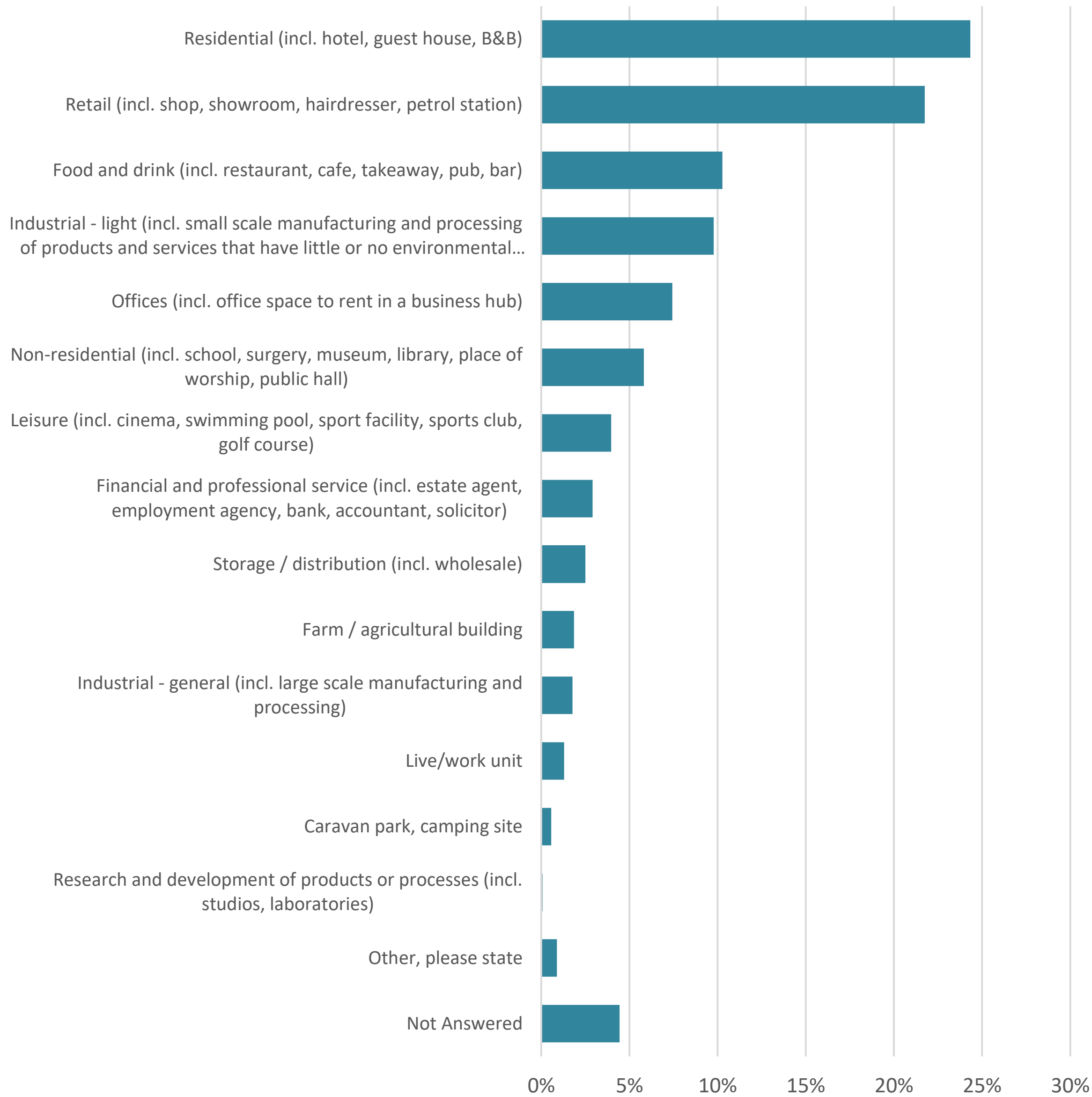
Existing business premises

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).

Just under a quarter of responses were from businesses operating from residential type premises (24%), while just over a fifth were from those in a retail premises (22%). There was also a good response rate from businesses operating in light industrial (10%) and food and drink (10%) premises.

In comparison to last year’s survey, there has been a slight increase in the rate of response from non-residential type premises (+3%) and a slight decrease from retail premises (-4%).



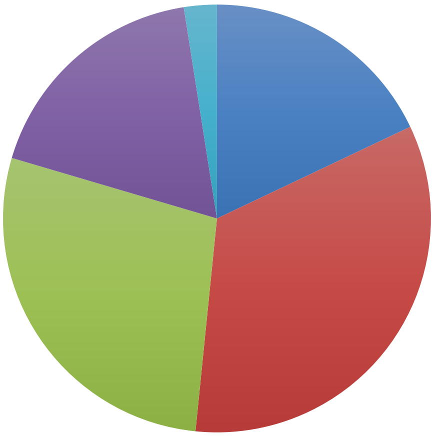
Business Sector	Total	%
Residential (incl. hotel, guest house, B&B)	301	24.3
Retail (incl. shop, showroom, hairdresser, petrol station)	269	21.8
Food and drink (incl. restaurant, cafe, takeaway, pub, bar)	127	10.3
Industrial - light (incl. small scale manufacturing and processing carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to amenity by noise, fumes and dust e.g. small workshop)	121	9.8
Offices (incl. office space to rent in a business hub)	92	7.4
Non-residential, e.g. school, museum, library, place of worship, court, public hall	72	5.8
Leisure (incl. cinema, swimming pool, sport facility, sports club, golf course)	49	4.0
Financial and professional service (incl. estate agent, employment agency, bank, accountant, solicitor)	36	2.9
Storage / distribution (incl. wholesale)	31	2.5
Farm / agricultural building	23	1.9
Industrial - general (incl. large scale manufacturing and processing)	22	1.8
Live / work unit	16	1.3
Caravan park, camping site	7	0.6
Research and development	1	0.1
Other	11	0.9
Not Answered	55	4.5

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

A third of responding businesses are based in a town centre location, which links to the majority response rate from businesses operating from retail premises. Just over a quarter are located in a village and just under one in five are based in a rural location and 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 (+3%) in response rate from businesses based in rural settings.

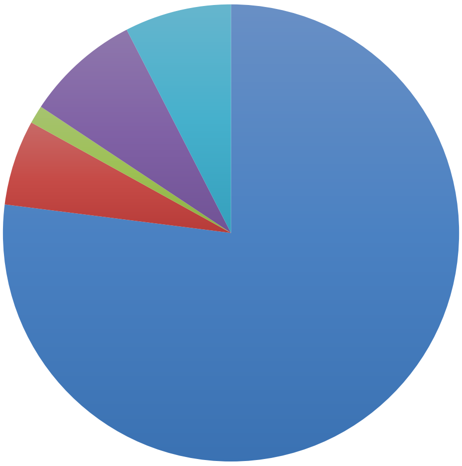


Premises Location	Total	%
Edge of town e.g. industrial estate	224	18.1
Town centre	420	34.0
Village	349	28.2
Rural	224	18.1
Not Answered	31	2.5

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 twelve best describes their premises as a live/work unit, while just over one in twenty 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. The majority of these were holiday lets, so were added to main workplace/headquarters.

Compared to last year's survey, there was a slight reduction (-4%) from those in a live/work unit.

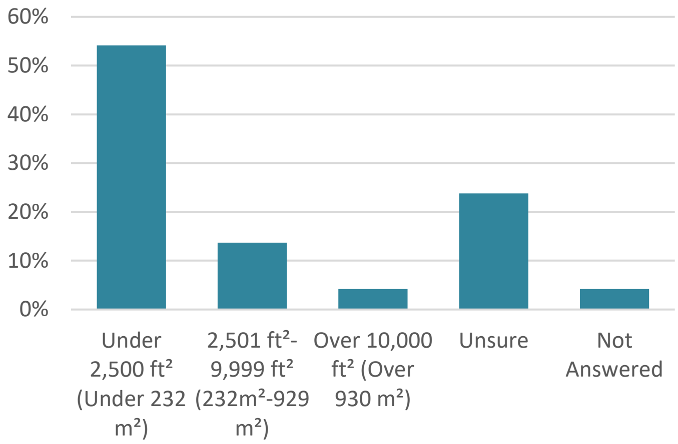


Premises description	Total	%
Main workplace / headquarters	957	77.0
Branch	75	6.0
Office at home	16	1.3
Live / work unit	101	8.1
Not Answered	94	7.6

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

Just over one in two responding businesses are operating in 'small' premises with an approximate floor space of under 2,500 ft^2, while there was a reasonable response rate (14%) from businesses operating in 'medium' sized premises between 2,501 and 9,999 ft^2. Just 4% are located in a 'large' premises with an approx. floor space over 10,000 ft^2. Almost a quarter of respondents are unsure of the size of their floor space.

Compared to last year's survey, there has been a slight increase (+4%) from businesses in a small premises.

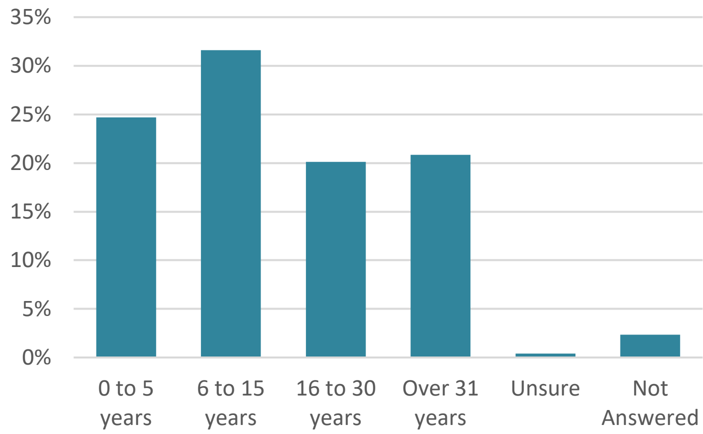


Approx. floor space	Total	%
Under 2,500 ft² (Under 232m²)	673	54.1
2,501 ft²-9,999 ft² (233m²-929m²)	170	13.7
Over 10,000 ft² (Over 930m²)	52	4.2
Unsure	296	23.8
Not Answered	52	4.2

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 (25%) to those that have frequented their premises for over 31 years (21%). 32% 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.

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

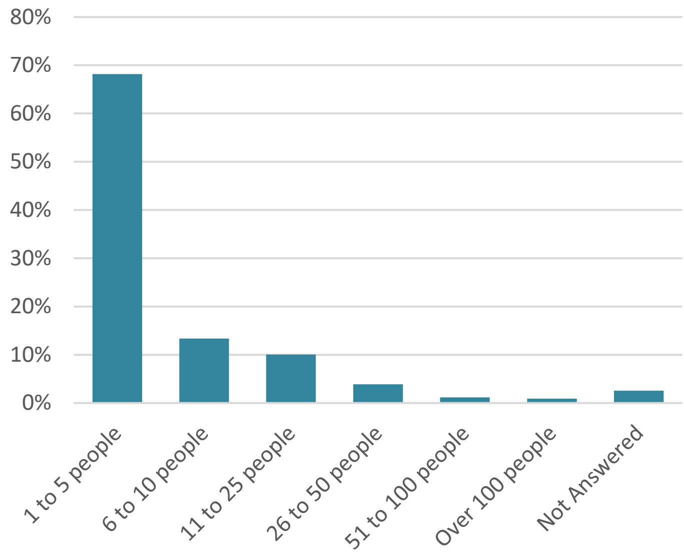


Years	Total	%
0 to 5 years	307	24.7
6 to 15 years	393	31.6
16 to 30 years	250	20.1
Over 31 years	259	20.8
Unsure	5	0.4
Not Answered	29	2.3

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 13% 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.

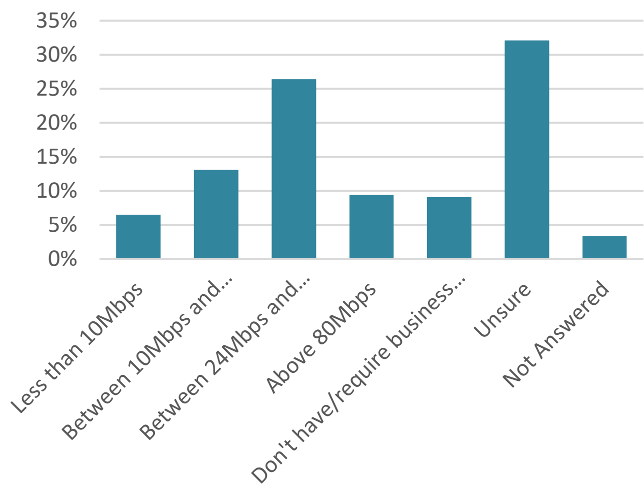


Employees	Total	%
1 to 5 people	755	68.1
6 to 10 people	148	13.4
11 to 25 people	111	10.0
26 to 50 people	43	3.9
51 to 100 people	13	1.2
Over 100 people	10	0.9
Not Answered	28	2.5

Question 12: What is your current broadband speed?

32% of respondents were unsure of their broadband speed. Of those that do know their broadband speed, the majority of responding businesses (26%) have a current broadband speed of between 24-80Mbps. One in eight have speeds between 10-24Mbs, one in ten are running above 80Mbps and one in fourteen have less than 10Mbps.

Compared t last year's survey, there has been a very slight increase (+2%) in those with superfast (80Mbps) broadband, and a slight decrease (-3%) with slow broadband.



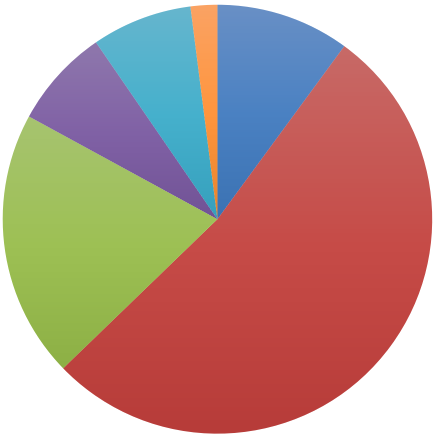
Current broadband speed	Total	%
Less than 10Mbps	81	6.5
Between 10Mbps and 24Mbps	163	13.1
Between 24Mbps and 80Mbps	328	26.4
Above 80Mbps	117	9.4
Don't have/ require business broadband	113	9.1
Unsure	399	32.1
Not Answered	42	3.4

Going forward

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

Over half of all responding businesses feel fairly confident about the next 12 months, while one in ten are very confident. On the other hand, more than one in four are not feeling confident going forward.

Even though there is a higher rate of confidence (63%) than no confidence (27%), when compared to last year's results the rate of confidence has decreased by 15%, while the rate of no confidence has increased by 12%.

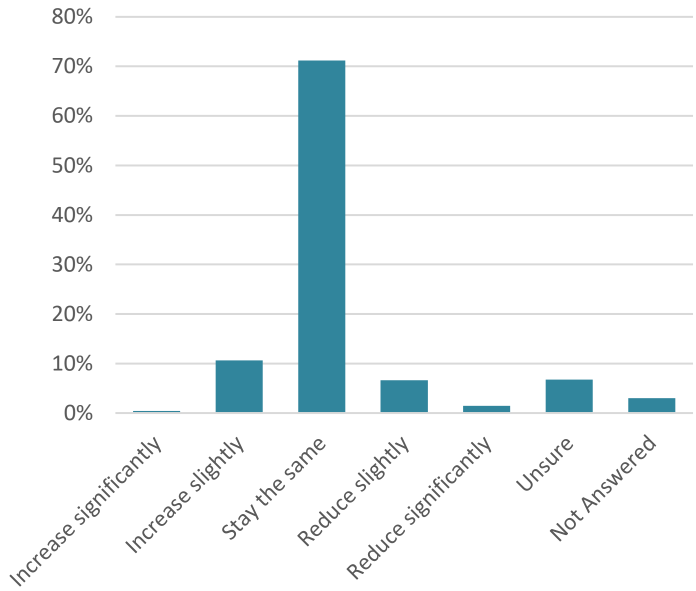


Confidence	Total	%
Very confident	125	10.0
Fairly confident	655	53.0
Not very confident	251	20.2
Not at all confident	93	7.5
Unsure	94	7.6
Not Answered	25	2.0

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

The overall majority, almost three quarters, expect the number of people employed at their premises to stay the same over the next year. One in ten businesses expect their employee numbers to slightly increase, while there are just 5 businesses that expect their numbers to increase significantly. One the other hand, 6% expect employee numbers to reduce slightly, and just 1% expect theirs to reduce significantly.

Comparted to last year's survey, there has been a decrease in the rate of businesses expecting employee numbers to increase slightly (-5%). The rate expecting numbers to reduce slight has increased by 4%.



No. Employed	Total	%
Increase significantly (more than 25%)	5	0.4
Increase slightly	132	10.6
Stay the same	885	71.2
Reduce slightly	82	6.6
Reduce significantly (more than 25%)	18	1.6
Unsure	84	6.8
Not Answered	37	3.0

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

A total of 183 responding businesses (15% 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. 36% of those anticipating change would consider expanding their existing site, 25% would look at moving to a larger site, while 10% may acquire additional premises to satisfy their need to change.

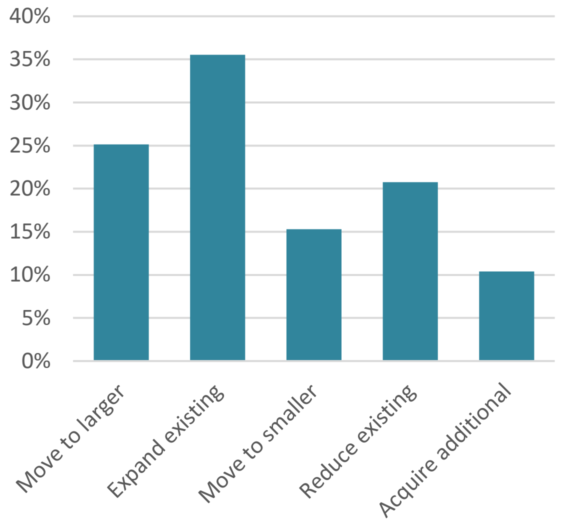
On the other hand, 21% would consider reducing the size/capacity of their current premises while 15% may move to a smaller premises. This shows that overall there is a slightly greater desire to increase premises size or capacity rather than reducing it in the district overall.

The rate of total respondents expecting their premises/business needs to change over the next three years is lower than the rate seen in last year's survey results (19%).

When comparing the types of expected change with last year's results, the rate that would consider moving to a larger premises (-4%) and acquiring additional premises (-7%) has decreased. Those expecting to reduce the size of their existing premises has increased (+8%), as has the rate of those expecting to move to smaller premises (+7%).

The remaining 1,060 responding businesses (85% 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.



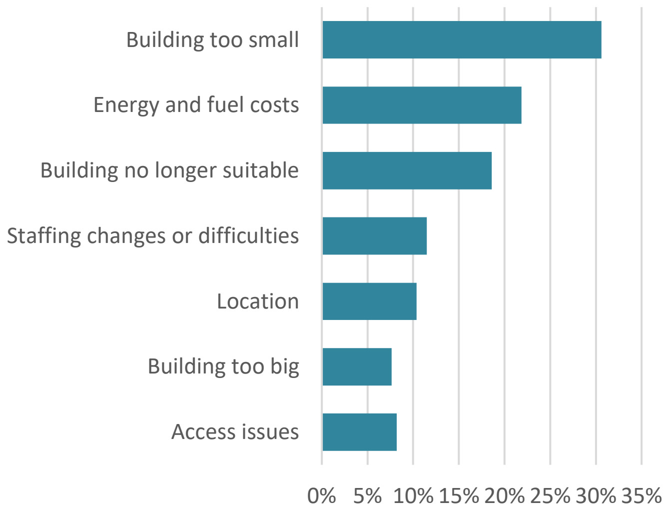
Change of premises needs	Total	%
Move to larger site	46	25.1
Expand existing site	65	35.5
Move to smaller site	28	15.3
Reduce existing site size	38	20.8
Acquire additional premises	19	10.4
Total Responses	183	

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, 22% because of energy and fuel costs, and just under one in ten said that their building is no longer suitable.

There were 50 'Other' reasons given. These comments can be viewed in full in Appendix 1.

Compared to last year's survey, there has been a decrease in the rates of respondents planning to change premises due to their current premises being too small (-7%). All other reasons for possible change has seen a slight increase in response rate (energy and fuel costs is a new option in this year's survey).



Reason for change	Total	%
Building too small	59	30.6
Energy and fuel costs	40	21.9
Building no longer suitable	34	18.6
Staffing changes or difficulties	21	11.5
Location	19	10.4
Building too big	14	7.7
Access	15	8.2

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 (80 in total, 44% of the total that expect their needs to change over the next three years), two fifths would be likely to look in Kendal. Ulverston, Windermere/ Bowness and Milnthorpe were the other most popular locations. There were 17 'Other' locations given. These can be viewed in full in Appendix 1.

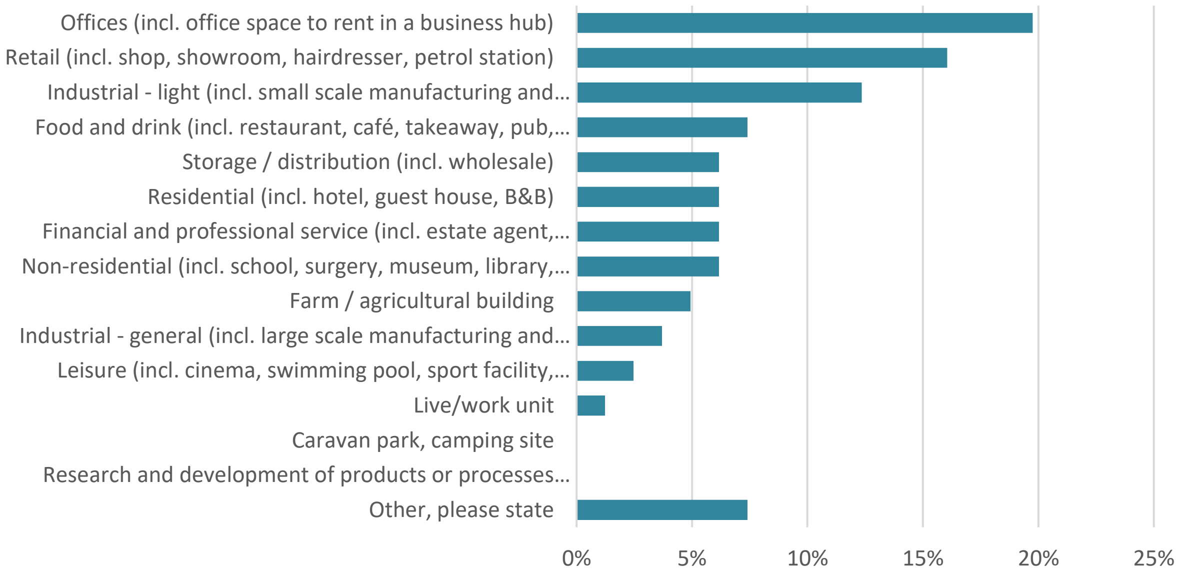
There has been a 10% reduction in the rate of businesses that would expect to move premises in the next 3 years compared to last year's survey. In terms of areas of interest when looking for new premises, compared to last year there has been slight a slight increase in the rate of respondents likely to look in Ulverston (+3%), and a slight reduction in those likely to look in Kendal (-4%).

Location	Total	%	Location	Total	%
Kendal	33	41.3	**Ambleside / Grasmere**	9	11.3
Ulverston	15	18.8	**Coniston / Hawkshead**	8	10.0
Windermere / Bowness	12	15.0	**Kirkby Lonsdale**	7	8.8
Milnthorpe	10	12.5	**Sedbergh / Dent**	4	5.0
Grange over Sands	9	11.3	**Arnside / Silverdale**	3	3.8

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

When focusing on the same 80 businesses who'd expect to look for new premises in the next three years, offices (20%), shops/retail space (16%) and light industrial (12%) 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 slight increase in those looking for light office premises (+3%), and a decrease looking for light industrial (-5%) and retail premises (-2%). The response rates for all other property types are similar to last year's results.



Premises type	Total	%
Offices (incl. office space to rent in a business hub)	16	19.8
Retail (incl. shop, showroom, hairdresser, petrol station)	13	16.1
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)	10	12.4
Food and drink (incl. restaurant, café, takeaway, pub, bar)	6	7.4
Storage / distribution (incl. wholesale)	5	6.2
Residential (incl. hotel, guest house, B&B)	5	6.2
Financial and professional service (incl. estate agent, employment agency, bank, accountant, solicitor)	5	6.2
Non-residential (incl. school, surgery, museum, library, place of worship, public hall).	5	6.2
Farm / agricultural building	4	5.0
Industrial - general (incl. large scale manufacturing and processing)	3	3.7
Leisure (incl. cinema, swimming pool, sport facility, sports club, golf course)	2	2.5
Live/work unit	1	1.2
Caravan park, camping site	0	0.0
Research and development of products or processes (incl. studios, laboratories)	0	0.0
Other, please state	6	7.4

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

Two thirds of businesses who expect to acquire new premises in the next three years would be looking for either freehold or leasehold (35%), or freehold only (33%). One in six (17%) would prefer Leasehold only.

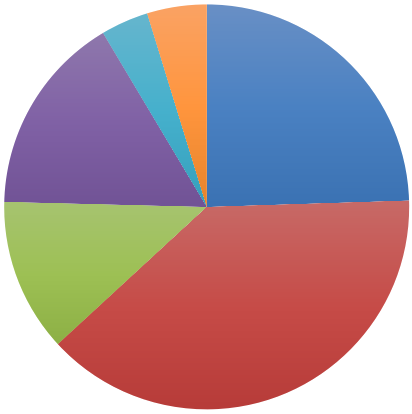
Compared to last year's survey there has been an increase (+9%) in the rate of businesses looking for freehold only, and a reduction (-15%) looking for either freehold or leasehold premises.

Ownership	Total	%
Freehold	29	32.6
Leasehold	15	16.9
Either freehold or leasehold	31	34.8
Not Answered	14	15.7

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 town centre, with over a third choosing this option. A quarter would look in an edge of town location, while 16% would look in a village and 11% in a rural location. Those that answered 'Other' can be view in Appendix 1.

When comparing to last year's survey results, there has been an increase in the rate of businesses who'd prefer town centre (+12%), and village (+4%) locations. There has been a 12% decrease in the rate who would look for an edge of town location.

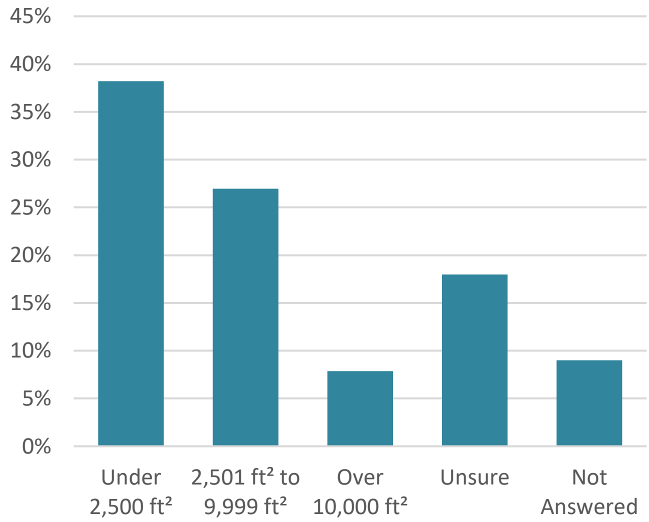


Location	Total	%
Town centre	26	23.2
Edge of town, e.g. industrial estate	41	36.6
Village	13	11.6
Rural	17	15.2
Other, please state	4	3.6
Not Answered	5	4.5

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

Small sized premises (under 2,500ft²) are the most desired size for those who may be looking for a new premises, with 38% preferring this size. There is also demand for medium size premises (2,501ft²-9,999ft²) with 27% preferring this size. Just 7 businesses would be looking for a large premises over 10,000ft², while 18% were unsure.

Compared to last year's survey there has been an increase in the rate of businesses looking for small size premises (+7%) and a decrease in those looking for a medium size premises (-10%).



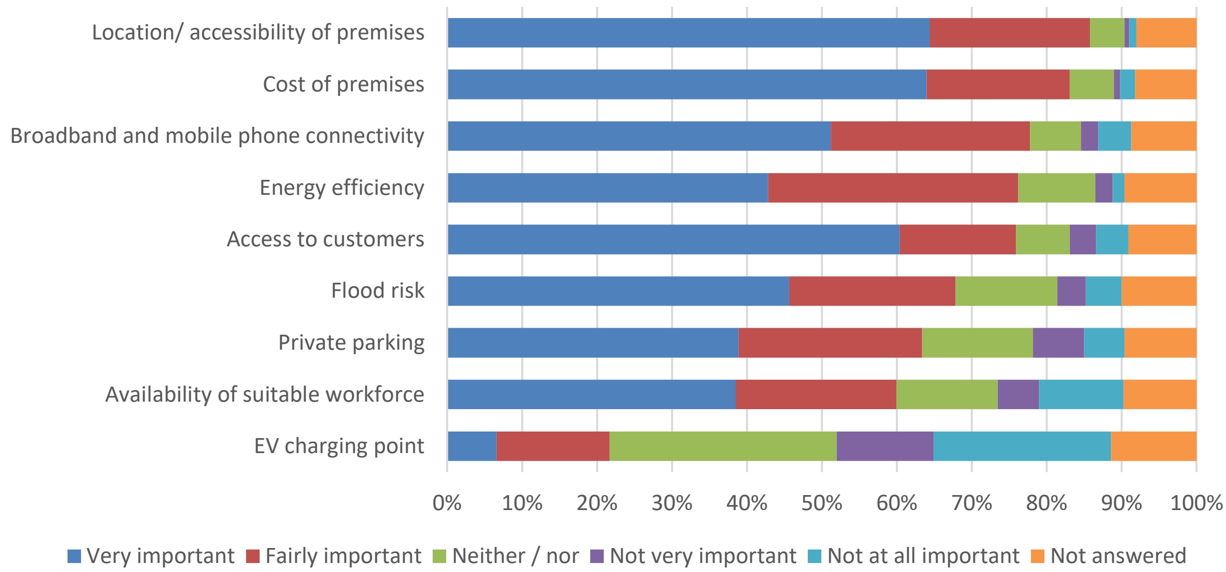
Floor space	Total	%
Under 2,500ft² (under 232m²)	34	38.2
2,501ft²-9,999ft² (233m²-929m²)	24	27.0
Over 10,000ft² (over 930m²)	7	7.9
Unsure	16	18.0
Not Answered	8	9.0

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; location/accessibility of premises (86% very/fairly important), cost of premises (83%), broadband and mobile phone connectivity (78%), energy efficiency and access to customers (both 76%).

Although private parking (68%) and availability of suitable workforce (63%) are still seen as important to the majority of respondents, they are slightly less so. Only one in five see an EV charging point as being an important factor.

The results to this question are very similar to those seen in last year's survey. It's worth noting that flood risk, energy efficiency and EV charging point are new options to this year's survey.



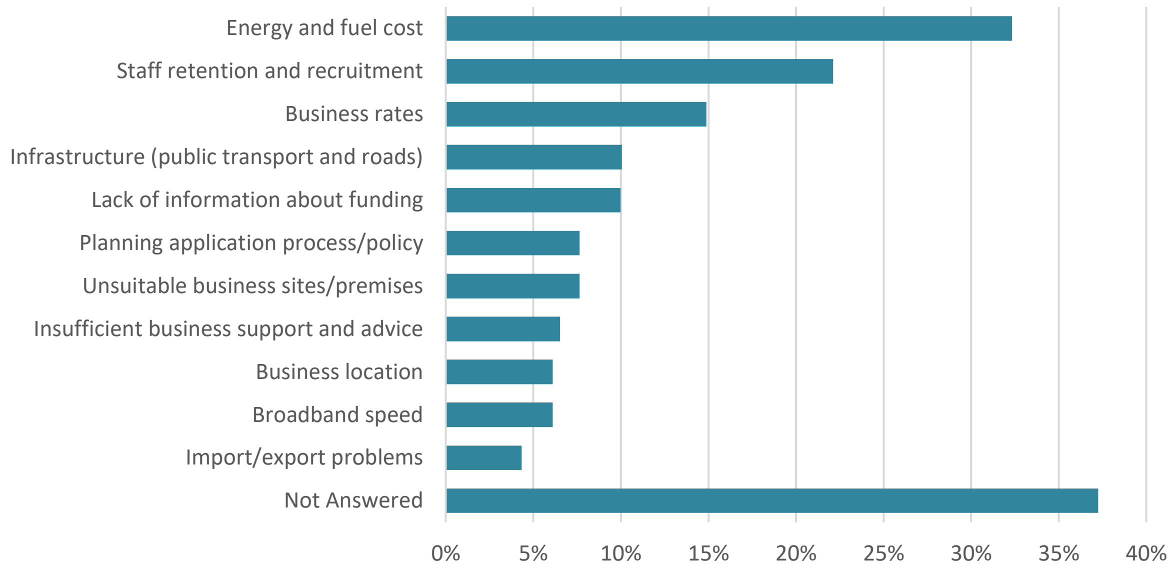
Factor	Very important		Fairly important		Neither / nor		Not very important		Not at all important		Not Answered	
Location/ accessibility of premises	801	64.4	266	21.4	57	4.6	7	0.7	13	1.1	99	8.0
Cost of premises	796	64.0	237	19.1	73	5.9	10	0.8	25	2.0	102	8.2
Broadband and mobile phone connectivity	636	51.2	331	26.6	85	6.8	28	2.3	55	4.4	108	8.7
Energy efficiency	533	42.9	415	33.4	128	10.3	28	2.3	20	1.6	119	9.6
Access to customers	751	60.4	193	15.5	89	7.2	43	3.5	54	4.3	113	9.1
Flood risk	568	45.7	276	22.2	169	13.6	47	3.8	59	4.8	124	10.0
Private parking	483	38.9	305	24.5	184	14.8	85	6.8	67	5.4	119	9.6
Availability of suitable workforce	479	38.5	266	21.4	168	13.5	68	5.5	141	11.3	121	9.7
EV charging point	82	6.6	188	15.1	377	30.3	160	12.9	294	23.7	142	11.4

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

The majority of responding businesses (32%) did not answer this question. However for those that did, they were able to identify all options that applied to them. The two biggest obstacles to businesses are energy and fuel costs (32%) and staff retention and recruitment (22%)

Compared to last year's survey the response rates to the different options were similar. Energy and fuel costs was a new option in this year's survey, and went straight in as the main obstacle preventing business growth.

Respondents were also able to give 'Other' obstacles which prevent their business from growing, with 290 doing so. The majority of the comments simply stated Cumbria a as being an obstacle, while Lancashire and other counties was also mentioned a number of times. All comments to this question can be viewed in Appendix 1.



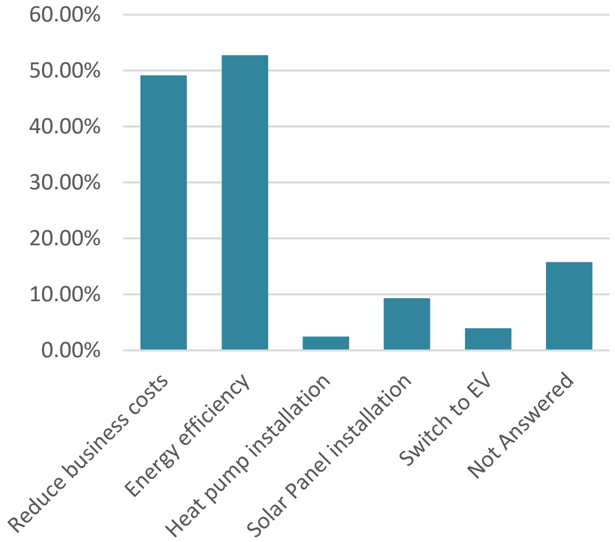
Obstacle	Total	%
Energy and fuel costs	402	32.3
Staff retention and recruitment	275	22.1
Business rates	185	14.9
Infrastructure (public transport and roads)	125	10.1
Lack of information about funding	124	10.0
Planning application process/policy	95	7.6
Unsuitable business sites/premises	95	7.6
Insufficient business support and advice	81	6.5
Business location	76	6.1
Broadband speed	76	6.1
Import/export problems	54	4.3
Not answered	463	37.3

Question 24: How are you seeking to address rising energy and fuel prices?

Respondents were able to identify all options that applied to them. Around half are seeking to address rising energy costs and fuel prices by reducing business costs and/or being more energy efficient. One in ten have/will be installing solar panels.

This question was new to this year's survey so comparisons cannot be made.

Respondents were able to give 'Other' examples, with 207 doing so. Comments include; raising prices, closing the business for certain periods of time during winter, installing solar/biomas/improved insulation/double glazing and being unable to make energy saving changes due limitations on the premises (rented, listed building, cost etc.). All comments to this question can be viewed in Appendix 1.



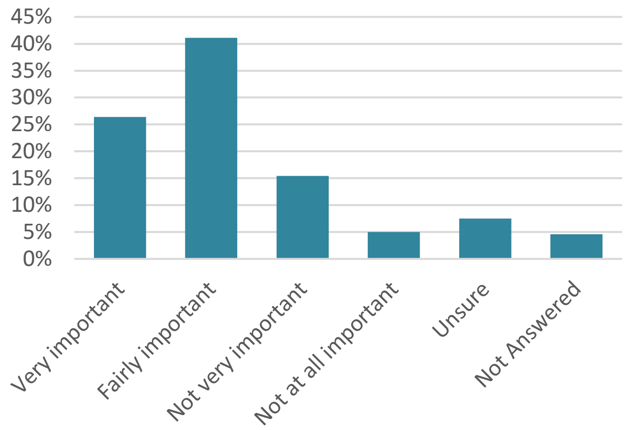
Measures	Total	%
Reduce business costs	611	49.2
Energy efficiency	656	52.8
Heat pump installation	31	2.5
Solar Panel installation	116	9.3
Switch to EV	49	3.9
Not Answered	196	15.8

Question 25: How important is addressing Climate Change to your business?

Two in five responding businesses indicated that addressing Climate Change is fairly important to them, while just over a quarter stated that it is very important. Therefore overall, around two thirds of respondents feel that it is important that it is addressed. On the other hand one in five indicated that overall it is not important to their business.

This question was new to this year's survey so comparisons cannot be made.

Respondents were also able to comment on this question, with 82 doing so. These comments can be viewed in Appendix 1.



Importance	Total	%
Very important	328	26.4
Fairly important	511	41.1
Not very important	192	15.5
Not at all important	62	5.0
Unsure	93	7.5
Not Answered	57	4.6

Question 26: Do you have any other general comments?

Finally, responding businesses were given the opportunity to submit any other comments they have, with a total of 329 doing so. For analytical purposes they have been grouped into similar 'themes', with the most commonly mentioned listed below (in order of frequency mentioned). All comments can be viewed in full in Appendix 1.

- **Staffing / Recruitment** – issues around the availability of staff, often linked to the lack of affordable housing.
- **Lack of affordable housing** – linked heavily with the recruitment issues, and keeping young people living in the area.
- **Energy prices / Rising costs** – concern over price increases and energy costs, and the effects these are having/will have on many businesses
- **Parking** – lack of parking and price of parking. Again linked with issues of recruitment and staffing.
- **High streets / Town centres** – concerns about empty shops and footfall, often linked to parking issues**.**