

SEMLEP Business Survey 2021

Section A: Business details

Read out: I would like to begin by asking you some general questions about this business or site. By site I mean this single location, even if it encompasses more than one building.

Q1 Ask all: **Are you . . . ?** Note to interviewer: Read out. Single Code.

- A private business - CONTINUE
- A social enterprise organisation – CONTINUE
- A voluntary or public sector organisation – THANK AND CLOSE (Thank you but we need to gather the views of businesses in the private sector or social enterprises)

Q2 Ask all: **Including you and any working proprietors/owners, how many people are on the payroll at this location?**

Note to interviewer: Single code. IF NECESSARY: Include all staff on payroll for this location, even if they are currently working from home some or all of the time.

- 1-4
- 5-9
- 10-24
- 25-49
- 50-99
- 100-249
- 250+
- Don't know/refused – Note to interviewer: take from database

Q3 Ask all: **I have [SIC 2007 description from database] as a general classification for your business. Does this sound about right?** Note to interviewer: Single code.

- Yes
- No

If 'No' to Q3, please continue, otherwise please go to Q5 - this is automated on-line

Q4 **What is the main business activity at this site?**

PROBE FOR DETAIL

IF NECESSARY: What is the main product or service of this business? What exactly is made or done at this site? What material or machinery does that involved using?

WRITE IN:

Q5 Ask all: **How would you describe your company status?** Note to interviewer: Prompt from list below and Single code.

- Sole Trader
- Partnership
- Private Limited Company (LTD) (by guarantee)
- Public Limited Company (PLC) (by shares)
- Franchise
- Social Enterprise
- Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee (CIC)
- Community Interest Company Limited by Shares (CIC)
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Co-operative Models: IPS – Industrial Provident Society; Bencom – Employee owned
- Other
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q6 **Compared to pre-pandemic levels, do you expect the proportion of your workforce working from home to decrease, stay the same or increase by the end of 2021?** Note to interviewer: Select one answer only.

- Decrease
- Stay the same
- Increase

If business has five or more employees, please continue. Otherwise go to Q8 - this is automated on-line.

Q7 **Which of the following descriptions apply to your business?** Note to interviewer: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

- You have at least 10 employees and have an average annual growth in employees or turnover greater than 20% per annum over a 3 year period (i.e. scale-up business – do not read this out)
- You have at least 3 employees; you achieved a turnover of £200,000 or more in the last year; you have the potential and aspiration to grow turnover and/or profit by 20% or more per year over the next 3 years. (i.e. pre-scale-up business – do not read this out)
- Neither of the above

Section B: Quality of Local Area

Q8 Ask all: **Overall, how do you rate your location as a place to do business?** Please indicate by using a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good. Note to interviewer: SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- 1 -Very poor
 2
 3
 4
 5 - Very good

Q9 Ask all: **How do you rate the availability of, or quality of, the following aspects of your location from a business perspective? Could you please indicate by using a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good.**

Note to interviewer: READ OUT EACH ASPECT. SINGLE CODE PER ASPECT.

	1 - Very poor	2	3	4	5 - Very good
Supply Chain located locally	<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of appropriately skilled Staff	<input type="radio"/>				
Local support available to businesses	<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of utilities (such as broadband, energy and water)	<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of suitable premises	<input type="radio"/>				
Affordability of business premises	<input type="radio"/>				
Affordable housing	<input type="radio"/>				
Good quality Schools/Colleges	<input type="radio"/>				
Proximity to complementary businesses	<input type="radio"/>				
Proximity to Universities	<input type="radio"/>				
Attractive surroundings	<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of local services (such as retail and leisure)	<input type="radio"/>				
Your local town centre	<input type="radio"/>				
Road network	<input type="radio"/>				
Rail network	<input type="radio"/>				
Airport access	<input type="radio"/>				
Public transport	<input type="radio"/>				
Walking/cycling routes	<input type="radio"/>				
Ease of transportation of freight	<input type="radio"/>				

Section C: Business engagement

Q10 Ask all: **Have you used any of the following for business advice or support in the past 12 months?** Note to interviewer: READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Private sector professional (E.G.: Solicitor, Accountant, Bank etc.)
- Central Government department or Government body (e.g. HMRC, Job Centre Plus, Department for International Trade, Innovate UK)
- SEMLEP's Growth Hub
- Growth Curve
- Peer Networks
- Your local Council
- Your local business improvement district
- Chamber of Commerce
- Trade Association
- Family/ Friends
- Other Business Owners
- University / College
- Web based business advice
- Recruitment Agency
- Marketing Agency
- National Apprenticeship Service
- BeCentralBedfordshire web portal (CBC only)
- Central Bedfordshire's business support team (CBC only)
- InvestMK (Milton Keynes Council only)
- Other
- None of the above

If "Web based business advice" or "Other", please specify:

Section D: Business Performance

Q11 Ask all: **Would you say that overall, your business performance in the past 12 months has improved, remained stable or deteriorated?** Note to interviewer: SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- Improved
- Remained stable
- Deteriorated

Q12 Ask all: **Over the next 12 months do you expect your business performance to generally improve, remain stable, or deteriorate?** Note to interviewer: SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- Improve
- Remain stable
- Deteriorate

Q13 Ask all: **What do you consider to be constraints on your business growth?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted, but PROBE if needed, and SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Lack of skilled labour
- High cost of labour
- Lack of training available locally
- Increasing competition
- Transport infrastructure (road, rail and sea)
- Transport costs e.g. fuel etc
- Access to public transport
- Constraints with current premises or location
- Lack of suitable premises to relocate to
- Difficulties with obtaining planning permission
- IT infrastructure/lack of high speed Broadband
- Attracting or retaining customers
- Interest rates/cost of finance
- Access to finance
- Cash flow
- High cost of energy
- Over regulation/red tape
- Business rates
- Lack of appropriate business support
- The general economic climate
- The end of the EU transition period
- Reduction in public sector expenditure
- The Covid-19 pandemic
- Lack of availability of materials / difficulties sourcing supplies
- Difficulties importing/exporting
- Other
- None of the above
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q14 Ask all: **Overall, what impact have you seen on your business, if any, of the UK leaving the European Union?** Note to interviewer: SINGLE CODE

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- No notable impact
- Unsure/don't know

Q15 Ask all: **What have been the main negative impacts, if any, you have seen on your business of the UK leaving the EU and its impact on your business?** Note to interviewer: Do not read out but probe if necessary. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Labour availability
- Skills availability
- EU funding availability
- Problems importing from the EU (e.g. sourcing materials and goods/increased costs of doing business)
- Problems exporting to the EU (e.g. loss of business/increased costs of doing business)
- Trade tariffs
- Loss of business
- Increased cost of business
- No negative impacts
- Don't know
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q16 Ask all: **What are the 3 most important things your local Council and other support organisations should do to help you grow your business?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE if needed, and SELECT UP TO 3 RESPONSES.

- Lower business rates
- Use local businesses for jobs/ employ local people
- More financial support
- More business support/ advice
- Reduce red tape/ paperwork
- Easier planning permission
- Better communication with businesses/ listen more to businesses
- Better/ more / cheaper parking facilities
- Help small businesses
- Help with advertising
- Offer more/ free training
- Regenerate the area/ more investment in the area
- Improve transport infrastructure/ links
- Improve other infrastructure such as broadband
- Encourage new business to start up
- More shops/ local amenities (inc fill empty shops)
- Help with marketing and promotion
- Assist / provide suitable premises
- Help you to engage with training and education providers to identify new talent
- Networking and events
- Local supply chains
- Support with planning advice
- Business growth support
- Support with bidding for public sector tenders
- Support to increase your business' energy efficiency/transition to low carbon
- Support to deal with the challenges of the pandemic
- Support to deal with the challenges of the UK leaving the European Union
- Other
- Nothing
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q17 Ask all: **Are you thinking of relocating your business?** Note to interviewer: Probe and SINGLE CODE

- Yes, within the Local Authority Area
- Yes, within the SEMLEP area
- Yes, outside the SEMLEP area
- No
- Don't know

If 'Yes' at Q17, please continue, otherwise please go to Q21 - this is automated on-line

Q18 **Why are you thinking of re-locating?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Lower cost
- Larger premises
- Smaller premises
- Higher specification
- Access to ICT
- Access to energy (electricity, heating etc.)
- Improved parking
- Closer to transport links
- Closer to town centres
- Move to more energy efficient/lower carbon emitting premises
- Other
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q18b **North Northants only (this is automated on-line): What type of premises are you considering?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers.

- Industrial
- Commercial/retail
- Office space
- Managed workspace such as an Enterprise Centre
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q19 **Approximately, what size of new premises are you or would you be looking for, in Square feet?** (Only asked to those seeking smaller or larger premises - this is automated on-line) Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted, but clarify if required. Select one answer only. Note: the square metre and person calculations are approximate and there as a guide if the respondent needs to clarify their response.

- Under 100 square feet (approx under 10 square metres) (approx 1 to 2 person space)
- 100-499 sq ft (10 to 49 square metres) (2 to 10 people)
- 500-999 sq ft (50 to 99 square metres) (10 to 20 people)
- 1000-2499 sq ft (100 to 249 square metres) (20 to 50 people)
- 2500-4999 sq ft (250 to 499 square metres) (50 to 100 people)
- Between 5,000-10,000 sq ft (500 to 1000 square metres) (100 to 200 people)
- Between 10,000-15,000 sq ft (1000 to 1500 square metres) (200 to 300 people)
- Between 15,000-20,000 sq ft (1500 to 2000 square metres) (300 to 400 people)
- Between 20,000-30,000 sq ft (2000 to 3000 square metres) (400 to 600 people)
- Between 30,000-50,000 sq ft (3000 to 5000 square metres) (600 to 1000 people)
- Between 50,000-100,000 sq ft (5000 to 10,000 square metres) (1000 to 2000 people)
- Between 100,000-150,000 sq ft (10,000 to 15,000 square metres)
- Between 150,000-500,000 sq ft (15,000 to 50,000 square metres)
- Over 500,000 sq ft (over 50,000 square metres)
- Don't know

Q20 **When searching for new premises, what, if any, problems have you experienced with premises on the market?** Ask unprompted, PROBE if necessary, AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY:

- Unaffordable price / rent
- Premises are too large
- Premises are too small
- Low quality or specification of premises
- Premises unsuitable for the business' machinery / technology
- Lack of energy available
- Premises have poor access to town centres / urban areas
- Lack of good public transport near premises
- Lack of good quality labour available near premises
- Lack of premises that are energy efficient/low carbon
- Other
- No problems with premises on the market
- Don't know
- Not began our search yet

If 'Other', please specify:

Section E: Employment, Skills and Training

Q21 Ask all: **Have you had any vacancies in the last 12 months?** Note to interviewer: Single code.

Yes

No

If 'Yes' at Q21, please continue, otherwise please go to Q28 - this is automated on-line

Q22 How do you advertise or promote your vacancies?
Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE if necessary. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

Through an agency

Through free websites

Through paid for websites

Through business network groups

Through word of mouth

Through SEMLEP's website

Through LinkedIn

Through other social media

Through the Job Centre

Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q23 Have you had any vacancies in the last 12 months that you have found hard to fill?
Note to interviewer: Single code.

Yes

No

If 'Yes', please continue, otherwise go to Q26 - this is automated on-line.

Q24 Which specific occupations have you found hard to fill? Note to interviewer: ask unprompted and select all relevant occupations. If uncertain, check with respondent that you are allocating the response to the correct code.

- Managerial
- Plant and Machine Operatives
- Metal Forming, Welding and Related Trades
- Construction and Building Trades
- Housekeeping and Related Services
- Road Transport Drivers
- Business, Research and Administrative Occupations
- Sales Assistants and Retail Cashiers
- Draughtspersons and Related Architectural Occupations
- Design Occupations
- Sales, Marketing and Related Associated Occupations
- Science, Engineering and Production Technicians
- Metal Machining, Fitting and Instrument Making
- Information Technology and Telecommunication
- Business, Finance and Related Associated Occupations
- Other Administrative Occupations
- Vehicle Trades
- Childcare and Related Personal Services
- Health and/or Care
- Elementary Agricultural Occupations
- Elementary Cleaning Occupations
- Other Elementary Service Occupations
- Production Managers and Directors
- Electrical and Electronic Trades
- Food Preparation and Hospitality Trades
- Green Economy/Environmental Occupations

Q25 **What have been the main causes of having hard to fill vacancies?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE if necessary, AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Low number of applicants with the required skills
- Lack of qualifications the company demands
- Lack of work experience the company demands
- Low number of applicants with the required attitude, motivation or personality
- Reduction in availability of EU applicants
- Low number of applicants generally
- Poor terms and conditions (e.g. pay) offered for post
- The growth of the business / increase in workload
- Too much competition from other employers
- Remote location/poor public transport
- Poor career progression / lack of prospects
- Job entails shift work/unsociable hours
- Seasonal work
- Other
- No particular reason
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q26 Ask if 'Yes' at Q21 - automated on-line: **Have you found any skills difficult to obtain when recruiting staff in the last 12 months, if so which ones?** Note to interviewer: PROBE if necessary and CHECK THAT ALLOCATING TO CORRECT ANSWERS. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Digital skills
- Managerial Skills
- Technical or practical skills
- Communication skills
- Customer Service skills
- Sales and Marketing
- Foreign Languages
- Knowledge of English among non-native speakers
- Team working skills
- Problem solving skills
- Planning and organisational skills
- Job specific skills
- General employability
- Green Economy/Environmental related skills
- Other
- None

If 'Other', please specify:

If selected a skill above, please continue, otherwise go to Q28 - this is automated on-line.

Q27 **Why have you found these skills difficult to obtain?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE, if necessary AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Lack of work ready school leavers
- Lack of work ready college/further education leavers
- Lack of work ready university higher education leavers
- Poor quality applicants generally
- Low quantity of applicants available
- People applying for jobs they are not suited to
- General lack of skills in available workforce
- Reduction in availability of EU applicants
- High and unaffordable salary expectations
- Other
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q28 Ask all: **Do you have skills gaps in your *existing* workforce, if so, in which areas?**
Note to interviewer: PROBE, if necessary and CHECK THAT ALLOCATING TO CORRECT ANSWERS. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Digital skills
- Managerial Skills
- Technical or practical skills
- Communication skills
- Customer Service skills
- Sales and Marketing
- Foreign Languages
- Knowledge of English among non-native speakers
- Team working skills
- Problem solving skills
- Planning and organisational skills
- Job specific skills
- General employability
- Green Economy/Environmental related skill
- Other
- None

If 'Other', please specify:

If Skills gaps in existing workforce, please continue, otherwise please go to Q31 - this is automated on-line.

Q29 **Why do you think there are skills gaps amongst your existing workforce?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE if necessary AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Lack of appropriate training or courses
- Inflexible times/durations for training or courses
- Not prepared/able to release staff during work hours
- Staff judged not capable of progression
- Lack of investment in staff training and development
- Insufficient budget to provide training courses
- Existing staff not seeking upskilling
- No workforce development plan
- Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on levels of training we have been able to provide
- Difficulty adapting to workplace changes during Covid-19, including operating in Covid-safe environments and/or increased home-working/remote working
- Reduction in number of EU workers
- Other
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q30 Ask if responded 'Digital skills' to Q26 and/or Q28 - automated on-line: **Which digital skills have you found difficult to obtain?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE if necessary, AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Microsoft Office (Excel, Word, Powerpoint)
- Systems design and management (e.g. in Sharepoint)
- Programming / coding
- Computer/network support
- Data analysis
- Digital design
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Digital marketing (including social media)
- Computer-Aided Design (CAD)
- Computer Numerical Control (CNC)
- Cyber security
- Proficiency in a specific software program
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q31 Ask all: **What actions have you taken to increase skills?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and Select all that apply.

- Engaging with schools (e.g. Careers Enterprise Company) through in person or face-to-face activities
- Engaging with colleges
- Engaging with universities
- Investing in apprenticeships
- Offering in-house training & development
- Outsourcing training & development / working with independent training providers
- Relying on agencies to recruit skilled people
- Working with job centre plus
- Providing on-line/remote training and support to staff
- Other
- Not doing anything
- Not applicable - no skills gaps

If 'Other', please specify:

Q32 Ask all: **What level of qualifications do your staff hold?** Note to interviewer: READ OUT. Select all relevant answers.

- No qualifications
- Level 1 qualifications
- Level 2 qualifications (GCSE A*-C)
- Level 3 qualifications (A Level A-E)
- Level 4 qualifications (HNC)
- Level 5 qualifications (HND, Foundation Degree)
- Level 6 qualifications (Degree)
- Level 7 qualifications (Masters)
- Other
- Don't know

Q33 Ask all: I would now like to ask you a few questions about apprenticeships. By "apprenticeships" I mean an apprenticeship scheme that follows a formal framework and leads to a nationally recognised qualification.

Do you employ anyone on an apprenticeship programme currently? Note to interviewer: SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- Yes
- No

If 'No', please continue, otherwise please go to Q36 - this is automated on-line.

Q34 Do you or would you consider taking on an apprentice? Note to interviewer: SINGLE CODE ONLY.

Yes

No

If 'No', please continue, otherwise please go to Q36 - this is automated on-line.

Q35 Ask if responded 'No' to previous: **Why would you not consider employing apprentices?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

No current business need / not recruiting

Cost

Poor experience of apprenticeships

Cannot find suitable candidates

Apprentices don't have the necessary skills / experience / qualifications / we want to employ people that are ready to do the job

Over complex process

Size of business is too small

Business / type of work is unsuitable for apprentices

Other

Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q36 Ask all: In 2017 the Government introduced a requirement for all businesses with a wage bill of £3 million per annum or higher to pay an "Apprenticeship Levy".

Is your business currently an Apprenticeship Levy payer? Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY.

No, we are not a levy payer [i.e. wage bill less than £3 million per annum]

Yes

Don't know / not applicable

Q37 Ask if answered 'Yes' to previous question - this is automated on-line: **How do you use, or plan to use, the Levy?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. Select all relevant answers.

To take on new apprentices

To develop existing employees

By transferring the levy to other businesses

We do not use the levy yet, but have plans to in the future

We do not use the levy and have no plans to

Don't know

Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q38 Ask all: **Which groups, or in what ways, do you actively offer work experience and/or employer engagement?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. Select all relevant answers.

- Primary school students
- School student age 11-13 (Year 7 to 9)
- School students age 14-16 (Year 10 to 12)
- School/College students age 17-19
- Further or Higher Education Students age 19-24
- People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
- Traineeships
- Internships
- Adult schemes
- Kick-start scheme
- Other
- No engagement conducted
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

If 'No engagement conducted', please continue, otherwise go to Q40 - this is automated on-line.

Q39 **Why do you not engage with schools, colleges, universities, adult education schemes or conduct employer engagement?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. Select all relevant answers.

- Lack of time
- Lack of opportunities
- Do not see value
- Do not know how to arrange
- Red tape/bureaucracy
- Concerns about the safety of students
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Section F: Innovation

Q40 Ask all: **Does your business have any links with universities or colleges for research and development purposes?** (If unsure, define R&D as: creative work undertaken within your business that increases knowledge for developing new and improved goods, services and/or processes)
Note to interviewer: SINGLE CODE ONLY.

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Q41 Ask all: **Has your business introduced any new products, services, patents or processes in the past 12 months?**

Note to interviewer: PROBE FOR DETAIL if necessary AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- New Products
 New Services
 New Processes
 New Patents
 No
 Don't know

Q42 Ask all: **Has your business been involved in a collaborative research and development project in the past 12 months and with what type of partner?**

Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FOR DETAIL if necessary AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Yes, with a university/college
 Yes, with another business/enterprise group in the same sector
 Yes, with another business/enterprise group in a different sector
 Yes, with some other partner
 No
 Don't know

Q43 Ask all: **To what extent have each of the following restricted your business from introducing new products, services or internal processes?** Could you please indicate by using a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is not a constraint and 5 is a major constraint.

Note to interviewer: READ OUT EACH ASPECT. SINGLE CODE PER ASPECT.

	1 – no constraint	2	3	4	5 - major constraint
The general economic climate / risk of investment	<input type="radio"/>				
Cost of introducing new products, services or processes	<input type="radio"/>				
Cost of finance	<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of finance	<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of suitable partners	<input type="radio"/>				
Understanding of technologies	<input type="radio"/>				

Understanding of markets	<input type="radio"/>				
Market demand for new products/services in your industry	<input type="radio"/>				
Regulatory environment	<input type="radio"/>				
Challenges related to the Covid-19 pandemic	<input type="radio"/>				
Challenges related to the UK's exit from the European Union	<input type="radio"/>				

Section G: SEMLEP

Q44 Ask all: **Before today, had you heard of any of the following?** Note to interviewer: Read out and select all that apply.

- SEMLEP
- Local Growth Fund
- Getting Building Fund
- Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN)
- SEMLEP's Inward Investment service
- Peer Networks
- Community grants
- Growth Curve
- SEMLEP's Growth Hub
- Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF)
- None of the above

If selected one of the above, please continue, otherwise go to Q46 - this is automated on-line

Q45 **How had you heard of any of the above?** Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Press/Media
- Social media (Twitter, LinkedIn etc.)
- Networking with other businesses
- Communications from my Local Authority
- Communications from SEMLEP direct
- Other
- Can't recall

If 'Other', please specify:

Q46 Ask all - READ OUT: "SEMLEP is a Local Enterprise Partnership which aims to create the right environment for businesses to grow locally."

What do you think SEMLEP should focus on to help businesses and the local economy grow? Note to interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE if necessary AND SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Delivering **infrastructure** improvements to encourage business and economic growth e.g. improved travel and transport network, improvements to broadband
- Attracting new businesses** in to the area i.e. inward investment
- Helping to ensure an appropriate **supply of skilled labour** is available to meet business demand
- Securing **funding** to support new investment/projects
- Communicate local business needs to Central Government** to the benefit of local businesses and the local economy
- Providing **support to businesses** (e.g. through business advice services)
- Providing **support to recover from the pandemic**
- Support to transition to **net zero / cut carbon emissions / be "greener"**
- Supporting businesses around the **UK leaving the EU**
- Other
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Section H: Green agenda

Q47 **Has your organisation made a commitment to become net-zero, and if so by when?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted, but clarify if required. Select one answer only.

- Yes, to reach it by 2030 or before
- Yes, to reach it by 2040
- Yes, to reach it by 2050
- Yes, we have specific targets or aims to become net-zero, but we have not set a deadline yet
- No, we have not set a target, but we are committed to being more environmentally friendly
- No, it is not something we've committed to or thought about much
- Don't know

Q48 What is your organisation doing to become net zero? (only ask to those that are actively committed - this is automated on line) Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted. Select all relevant answers.

- Incentivising staff to use their cars less
- Encouraging sustainable forms of transport
- Supporting staff to work at home/remotely more
- Reviewing energy efficiency in our buildings
- Providing training and education to our staff
- Sourcing sustainable materials
- Encouraging those in our supply chain to be more environmentally friendly
- Measuring our carbon footprint
- Signing up to sustainable business initiatives
- Supporting environmental charities
- Prioritising the use of renewable energy (e.g. like changing to a renewable energy supplier, moving to a green energy business park etc)
- Installing EV charging points / use the Workplace Charging Scheme
- Review energy efficiency of production processes
- Participate in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme
- Increase recycling of waste products
- Investing in renewable generation (solar PV/panels, wind power etc.)
- My business produces products / services that support the net zero transition (e.g. recycling, energy efficiency consultant, building insulation, renewable energy equipment, sustainable transport equipment etc)
- Other
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q49 What do you consider, if anything, is a barrier to reducing your business's carbon footprint? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted. Select all relevant answers.

- Availability or cost of low carbon alternatives
- Lack of grants
- Lack of capital or finance
- Lack of favourable tax rates or allowances
- Unable to change existing processes
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of demand or understanding from customers
- Lack of understanding from employees
- My business does not face barriers
- I or the business don't think it's important
- Don't know
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Section I: Inclusivity

It is important we can understand the profile of business owners in the region. As such we would like to ask you some questions about your own personal situation. IF NECESSARY: Please remember all of your answers are given in confidence and will never be reported in any way that could allow you to be identified.

Q50 ASK SOLE TRADERS only (automated on-line): **Which of the following apply to you?** Note to interviewer: READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- You would describe yourself as belonging to an ethnic minority group
- You would describe yourself as having a long-term illness or disability which has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities
- None of the above

Q51 ASK SOLE TRADERS only (automated on-line): Interviewer: Please record gender of respondent (do not ask)

- Male
- Female

Q52 Ask to non-sole traders (automated on-line): For each of the following, please estimate the percentage of partners or board directors in your business that are . . .? Note to interviewer: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

	0-10%	11-24%	25-49%	50%+	Don't know
Women	<input type="radio"/>				
Belong to minority ethnic groups	<input type="radio"/>				
Have a long-standing illness or disability	<input type="radio"/>				

Q53 **How, if at all, do you ensure your recruitment practice is inclusive?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers.

- We train our recruitment / HR staff so they are best able to adopt inclusive recruitment practices
- We ensure a diverse recruitment / interview panel
- We review job descriptions and adverts to ensure they use inclusive language
- We actively target / advertise to attract diverse applicants
- We have targets to recruit a diverse workforce
- Do not adopt an inclusive recruitment practice currently, but working on it
- Do not adopt an inclusive recruitment practice currently, but interested in finding out how
- Do not do anything specific around inclusive recruitment
- Not applicable / do not recruit staff
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Section J: Local Authority questions

Q54 **Central Bedfordshire (CBC):** In what ways, if at all, have your business operations been impacted since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers.

- Reduced working days
- Reduced working times
- Reduced number of employees
- Increased working times
- Increased working days
- Increased number of employees
- Increased remote Working
- Increased profit margins (or should this read as simply 'increased profit')
- Reduced profit margins (ditto)
- No changes or impact
- Don't know
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q55 **CBC:** What, if any, business support have you received from Central Bedfordshire Council? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers.

- A grant or financial assistance
- Generic Business support
- Planning support
- I am not aware that the council provides business support
- I am aware that the council provides business support, but I haven't used it
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

Q56 **CBC:** Have your employees required any upskilling to adapt to the changes made during the pandemic? Note to interviewer: Select one answer only.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If 'Yes', please specify:

Q57 **CBC:** Do you plan to make any changes to the scale of your business operations in the next 12 months? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select one answer only.

- Expand scale
- Reduced scale
- No changes

Q58 **CBC:** Has your business lost any employees because of the immigration restrictions imposed since the UK exited the EU? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select one answer only.

- Yes, and it has had a negative impact on our business
- Yes, but it has not had a negative impact on our business
- No
- Don't know

Q59 **Luton:** Luton has declared a climate change emergency and set 2040 as a target for Luton to reach net zero carbon.

To this end, would your business like to receive support from a programme being developed by Luton Council to give advice on reducing carbon and helping build sustainability at the core of your business? Note to interviewer: Select one answer only.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q60 **Luton:** Luton has ambitions to help local people access local jobs.

Is it a priority for your business to actively recruit talent from the local area and within Luton? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select one answer only.

- Yes, this is a priority
- Seek to where possible, but not a top priority
- Do recruit locally, but it's not a business imperative/priority
- Not a priority

Q61 **Luton:** Luton Council offer a bespoke Passport to Employment program that supports businesses with their recruitment needs to ensure that they get the right candidate for the job. Would you like to know more about this tailored service? (If 'Yes', we will forward your contact details to the council). Note to interviewer: Select one answer only.

- Yes
- No

Q62 **Luton:** Luton Council want to make sure that the Luton's wealth benefits its local people and businesses to the greatest possible extent.

Would your business be interested in working with local suppliers and engaging in a supply chain programme supporting local organisations to access Luton based contract opportunities? Note to interviewer: Select one answer only.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q63 **Luton:** Looking ahead, which of the following are likely to be a priority in terms of the business's future skills requirements? Note to interviewer: Read out options and select all relevant answers.

- Digital skills
- Technical skills
- Leadership skills
- Managerial skills
- Soft / transferrable skills
- Green skills

Please elaborate or provide examples to explain what you mean about the skills requirements needed?

If selected 'Green Skills', please state that Luton Council is providing training on green/sustainability skills including getting an understanding of the benefits to the business, it's employees, customers and the local area in becoming a net carbon zero business, embedding social value into your organisation, embracing sustainable procurement including the local sourcing of products and services and making sure that the organisation is recruiting inclusively.

Would you like to receive information about this?

Q64 **Luton:** Luton Council is currently working to become part of the Good Business Charter, which is an accreditation that organisations in the UK can sign up to in recognition of responsible business practices. It includes ten components: The Real Living Wage; Fairer Hours and Contracts; Employee Well-Being; Employee Representation; Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Responsibility; Pay Fair Tax; Commitment to Customers; Ethical Sourcing; Prompt Payment.

Would your business be able to meet the requirements of the Good Business Charter? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted, probe where required and select one answer only.

- Yes, and interested in signing up to the Charter
- Yes, but not interested in signing up to the Charter
- Maybe, and interested in being supported to be able to meet the requirements
- No, but interested in being supported to be able to meet the requirements
- Not able to meet the requirements and not interested in being supported to meet the requirements

What support would you require to help you meet the requirements of the Good Business Charter?

Q65 **Milton Keynes (MK):** As a business based in Milton Keynes, would you say that you are proud to be from Milton Keynes? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select one answer only.

- Yes
- No
- Indifferent

Q66 **MK:** How do you see your need for Commercial space changing over the next 18 months? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select one answer only.

- Need for commercial space increasing
- Need for commercial space decreasing
- Expansion outside Milton Keynes
- Greater flexibility / co-locating
- Need for commercial space unchanged

Q67 **MK:** Milton Keynes Council has a business and investment communication channel called InvestMK.

What sort of content would you want to see shared through InvestMK? Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers.

- Good news stories (e.g. major investment in MK)
- Help & support available to local businesses
- Local commercial/office space property information
- Local labour Market Statistics
- Other
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q68 **MK: What barriers, if any, to working with Milton Keynes Council have you found?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers.

- Not knowing who to speak to
- Difficult policies
- Red tape/bureaucracy
- Lack of awareness or knowledge of the council's procurement processes
- Other
- Don't know

If 'Other', please specify:

Q69 **MK: Milton Keynes Council spends up to £250million on goods, works and services every year, and are keen to continue developing engagement channels with local suppliers and businesses. Would you want to hear more about the Council's procurement processes?** Note to interviewer: Select one answer only.

- Yes
- No

Q70 **NorthNorthants: In which of the following ways would you like to engage with the Council to receive support and information for your business?** Note to interviewer: Read out response options and select all relevant answers.

- Support with recruitment and training
- Receive E-newsletter
- Access the Website - www.recoverythroughenterprise.co.uk
- Invitation to business events hosted by the Council and its partners
- By an individual visit to your company
- Land and premises information and support
- Hear about potential funding opportunities

Would you be happy for North Northamptonshire to contact you about any of the options you selected?

Q71 **NorthNorthants: What do you think makes North Northamptonshire a great location for business (please select up to two responses)?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and up to two responses.

- Central location
- Access to markets
- Access to labour and skills
- High quality environment
- Affordable housing
- Availability of premises
- Competitive cost base
- Digital connectivity
- Other
- Don't know
- I don't think it is a great location for business

If 'Other', please specify:

Q72 **NorthNorthants and if rural business: What are the challenges of working in a rural area?** Note to interviewer: Ask unprompted and select all relevant answers.

- Access by public transport
- Difficulty recruiting
- Lack of reliable/fast Broadband
- Other
- Don't know
- N/A - not a rural business

If 'Other', please specify:

Q73 **How can the North Northants Council best work with local businesses to attract more investment and visitors to the area, offer more high-skilled jobs, embed low carbon technologies and support an economic recovery?** Note to interviewer: Please just write down brief comments succinctly.

Section K: Support for you more business

Q74a Ask all: Would you be interested in finding out more about the following? [Inform respondent that we will pass their details on to the appropriate organisation] Note to interviewer: READ OUT. SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

- Funding opportunities
- SEMLEP's Growth Hub - which is a FREE business support programme that has been set up to make it easier for businesses to maximise their growth potential.
- Support for business scale-up and pre-scale-up
- Employer-led skills programmes / initiatives
- Opportunities for employer engagement with schools, colleges, universities and adults
- Commercial premises
- SEMLEP's Newsletters – which features a range of updates on local programmes and growth opportunities.
- Apprenticeships
- Apprenticeship levy information
- Local staff training opportunities
- Support to increase your business' energy efficiency/transition to low carbon
- Support around inclusive recruitment and business practices
- Health and wellbeing of staff
- Local Community Foundations

Q74b Could you confirm your name, contact number and e-mail address? Note to interviewer: This only comes up if the respondent has selected a positive answer to Q74a - automated on-line. Interviewer record:

Name:

Business:

Contact number:

E-mail:

Q75 Do you have any other comments or points you would like to make about the issues discussed in this survey? Note to interviewer: If the respondent has any additional comments or points to raise, please record here. Only ask this if the respondent has time.

That is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for all your help. The findings of the survey will be published on SEMLEP's website later in the year.

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