



**Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath  
Neighbourhood Plan**

**Business Survey Results**

**2016**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Prepared by:  
Performance, Consultation & Insight Unit  
Stratford-on-Avon District Council  
January 2017**

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## APPENDICES

**What is your post code?**

**What was it about the KDBH area that made you choose to have a business here?** If other, please specify

**If no, which car parks does your staff use?** If other, please specify where

**Business premises suitable, if no, in what way are they not suitable?** If other, please specify

**Please tell us what you think about the infrastructure where you work. How do you rate the following?** If you have answered poor to any of the above, why is this?

**Is your business experiencing problems in any of the areas shown below?** If other, please specify

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## 1.0 Introduction

The preamble to the questionnaire informed residents that the survey results will dictate the direction and priorities in creating a Neighbourhood Plan that meet the needs of the community. It was important for everyone who runs a business in Knowle, Dorridge & Bentley Heath (KDBH) to have the opportunity to make their views count right from the outset.

The survey would influence what residents wanted for their villages and how they would like to see them develop over the next 15-20 years.

Once approved, the Plan will have legal force in determining what development is acceptable in the Area, and for what reasons. Developers and local authority planners would have to take notice of it. With a Neighbourhood Plan, it will increase the level of control the community has over any developments that takes place and over the expenditure of any community funds that become available.

## 2.0 Methodology

The survey ran from Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November for a month until Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016. The questionnaire was piloted before it was distributed. All known businesses (including known self-employed people) in the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Forum area (KDBH) were hand-delivered a questionnaire. 332 copies of the survey were delivered (24 Bentley Heath, 80 Dorridge and 228 Knowle)

Businesses had the option of completing a paper version or one available on-line with the link provided on the covering note of the paper questionnaire.

It was stressed that all the information provided would be processed and analysed by an independent third party, who aggregated the responses to create the results reports. This way all responses were guaranteed to be anonymous and not identified to an individual.

65 questionnaires were returned either via online means (12) or via a paper version (53). This represents a response rate of 19.6% in line with the response rate achieved by Stratford District Council when they send out their Business Survey.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council undertook the survey on behalf of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Forum because they were acting independently of the process.

The report follows the order of the questionnaire (6 pages and 29 questions). Charts and tables are used throughout the report to assist the interpretation of the results. In some cases, anomalies appear due to "rounding". The term "base" in the tables and charts refer to the number of responses to a particular question.

## 3.0 Summary of Results

### 3.1 About You and Your Business

- 49 respondents had their business based in Knowle.
- Four in ten businesses had operated in KDBH area for more than 20 years.
- 31% completing the questionnaire were sole owners and 27% a partner in the company.
- Half of the businesses in the survey operated out of a shop or retail unit.
- 17% were a branch of a larger organisation.
- A third of those completing the questionnaire had a retail or wholesale sales business and a quarter described themselves as a professional business organisation.
- Half of those surveyed chose to have a business in the area as it was in close proximity to the director or owners residence. Four out of ten said it was the potential customer base, 38% felt it was an affluent area and 37% the availability of a suitable property.

### 3.2 Your Workforce

- Four out of ten businesses responding to the survey had 1 to 3 people working at the premises and the same split had 4 to 9 employees.
- A third of those employed in these businesses (34%) had 0-20% of people living in KDBH. At the other end, a quarter had 80 to 100% of staff living in KDBH.
- Three-quarters of staff travel to work in their car and 17% go by foot.
- 43% of those responding felt their premises had sufficient parking space for those who travelled by car.
- 43% of staff without parking on site parked in a local street or road.

### 3.3 Business Premises

- 73% of businesses felt that priorities in the Neighbourhood Plan to protect the quality of the existing built environment should include commercial building design to be in keeping with the scale, location and appearance of existing buildings. 68% indicated a preference to ensure that business development is in harmony with the rural character of the neighbourhood and sits well in the landscape.
- Over eight out of ten businesses said their business premises were suitable for their current and likely future needs for up to five years' time.
- Seven businesses felt their premises were not suitable as they were too small.

- 77% of businesses agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to define policies that protect High Street shops and existing employment sites from a change of use, to maintain the mix, balance and vibrancy of the local shopping facilities and services.

### **3.4 Employment (including change of use)**

- Almost half of those surveyed did not know or had no opinion on whether the Neighbourhood Plan should define policies that promote and encourage working from home.
- Asked what the Neighbourhood Plan should consider for the allocation of land for business use, 59% stated parking, 38% mentioned shops and retail with 27% equally saying starter units and offices.
- 73% of businesses would be in favour of the Plan allocating land for the creation of a business centre, with 14% against. 13% offered no opinion or did not know.
- Although a small sample, three homeworkers wished to have access to a shared office space and the same number would appreciate an informal homeworkers' network or network meeting place.
- Looking at new business opportunities in KDBH, the types of development respondents felt would suit the area were more leisure premises and offices/professional services. There was a strong opinion against the development of storage/warehouse facilities.

### **3.5 Infrastructure**

- 88% of businesses agreed with the statement "Members of the community often state that infrastructure has not kept pace with development, and businesses are becoming increasingly aware of and frustrated by, the fact that infrastructure planning has been and remains insufficient."
- Businesses were asked to rate the infrastructure where they work. 60% rated the water supply as good, with gas (58%); electricity (57%) and sewerage/drainage (46%) also highly rated. Only 7% rated the cycle lanes as good/ 63% poor and 11% was the outcome for parking which also received the highest poor rating of 71%.
- If money was available to invest in infrastructure, businesses were asked where it should be spent.
- An overwhelming 80% said parking dwarfing any other result. The next two highest were roads (29%) and pavements (28%).

### **3.6 General**

- Overall, businesses were positive about KDBH as a location with 92% rating it very good or good, 6% average and just 2% poor.

- Exactly six out of ten respondents indicated road/traffic and parking issues for customers and the same problem with a similar figure of 56% given for employees and their road/traffic and parking issues. High and rising costs were a problem for 36% of businesses.
- Including all businesses, 20% found Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council helpful to their business and 26% said no. More than half (54%) had never approached them for help.

## 4.0 Results

### 4.1 About You and Your Business

49 respondents had their business based in Knowle.

Table 1:

Is your business based in?	Number
Bentley Heath	3
Dorridge	11
Knowle	49
No reply	2
<b>Base: (All Respondents)</b>	<b>(65)</b>

Four in ten businesses had operated in KDBH area for more than 20 years.

Table 2:

How long has your business operated in KDBH?	%
Less than 1 year	2
1 to 2 years	12
3 to 5 years	15
6 to 10 years	15
11 to 20 years	15
More than 20 years	40
<b>Base: (All Respondents)</b>	<b>(65)</b>

31% completing the questionnaire were sole owners and 27% a partner in the company.

Table 3:

Are you the?	%
Manager	13
Sole Owner	31
A Partner	27
Managing Director	22
Chief Executive	0
Other	8
<b>Base: (All Respondents)</b>	<b>(64)</b>

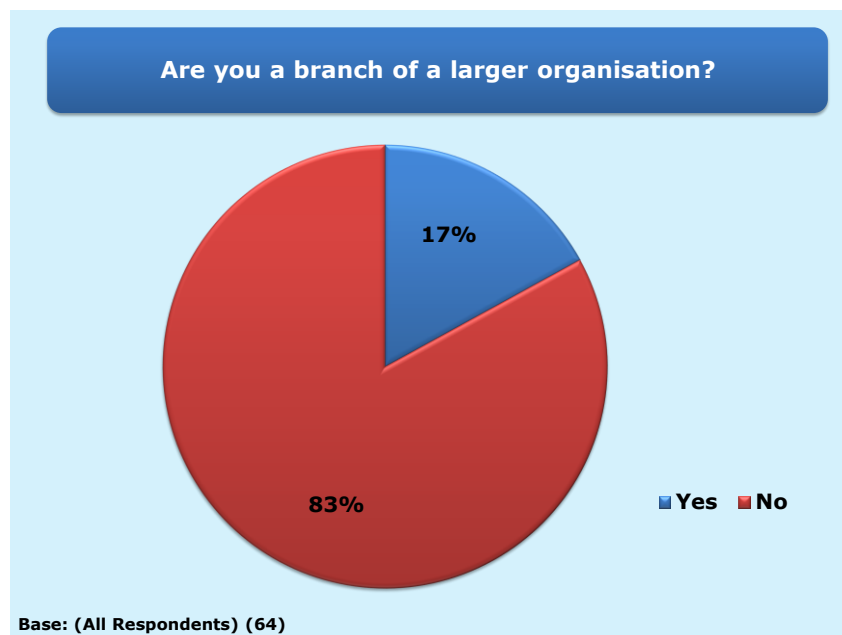
Half of the businesses in the survey operated out of a shop or retail unit.

Table 4:

Is your business carried out from?	%
A shop/retail unit	51
Your home	5
An office	42
An industrial/commercial unit	3
Other	5
<b>Base: (All Respondents)</b>	<b>(65)</b>

17% were a branch of a larger organisation.

Chart 1:





A third of those completing the questionnaire had a retail or wholesale sales business and a quarter described themselves as a professional business organisation.

Table 5:

What is the focus of your business organisation?	%
Retail/wholesale sales	31
Professional	25
Hair & beauty related	12
Building & allied trades	6
Estate Agents	6
Finance & Insurance	6
Manufacturing	6
Medical & health related	6
Hotel, public house, café, restaurant or other catering	5
IT & business services	3
Arts, entertainment & recreation	2
Charitable/Social enterprise	2
Horticulture/garden centre	2
Service industry	2
Vehicle sales/service	2
Education	0
Leisure & tourism	0
Scientific & technical services	0
Transport, storage & distribution	0
Other	6
<b>Base: (All Respondents)</b>	<b>(65)</b>

Half of those surveyed chose to have a business in the area as it was in close proximity to the director or owners residence. Four out of ten said it was the potential customer base, 38% felt it was an affluent area and 37% the availability of a suitable property.

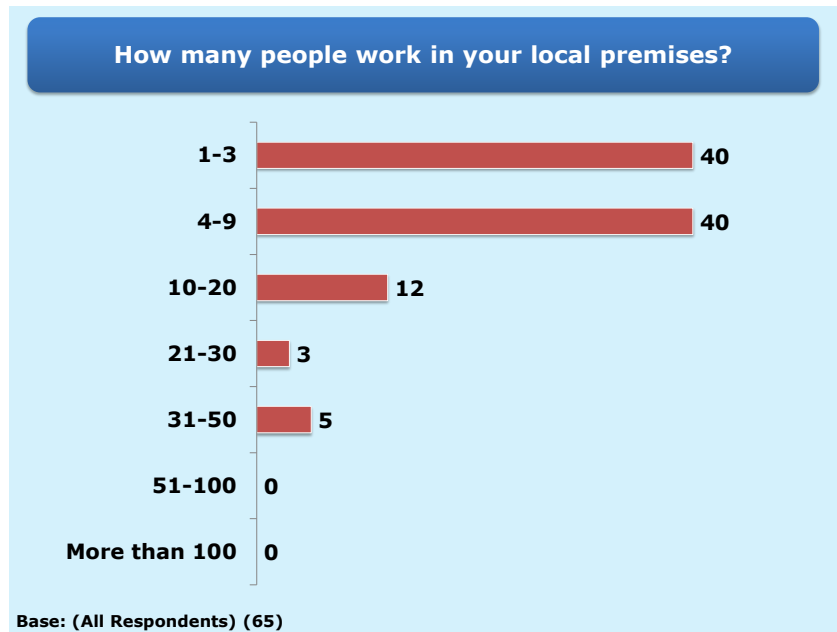
Table 6:

What was it about the KDBH area that made you choose to have a business here?	%
Proximity to Director/owners residence	51
Potential customer base	40
Located in an affluent area	38
Availability of suitable property	37
Local client base	25
Local parking	25
Local amenities	23
Low crime area	23
Transport links	23
Good quality workers	11
Lack of local competition	11
Inherited business	8
Natural environment	6
Competitive environment	0
Other	6
<b>Base: (All Respondents)</b>	<b>(65)</b>

## 4.2 Your Workforce

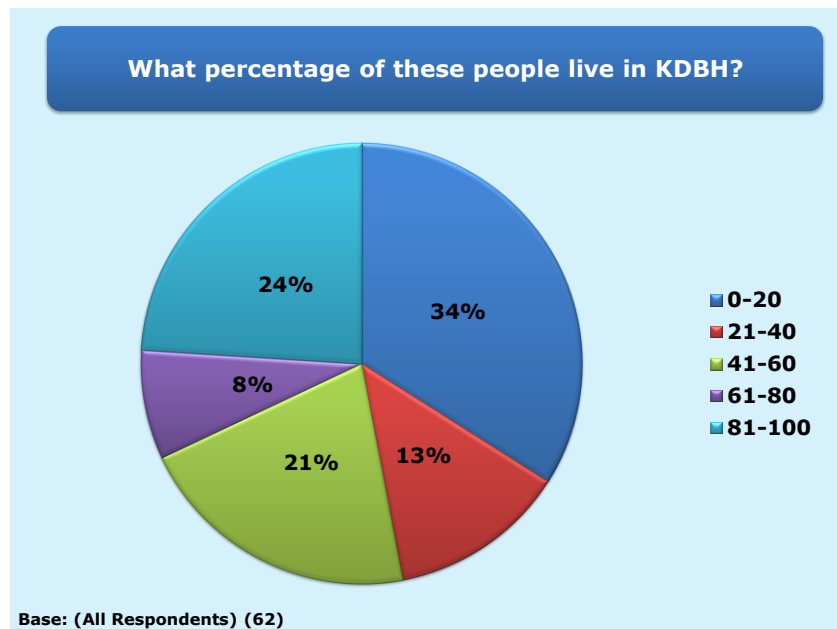
Four out of ten businesses responding to the survey had 1 to 3 people working at the premises and the same split had 4 to 9 employees.

Chart 2:



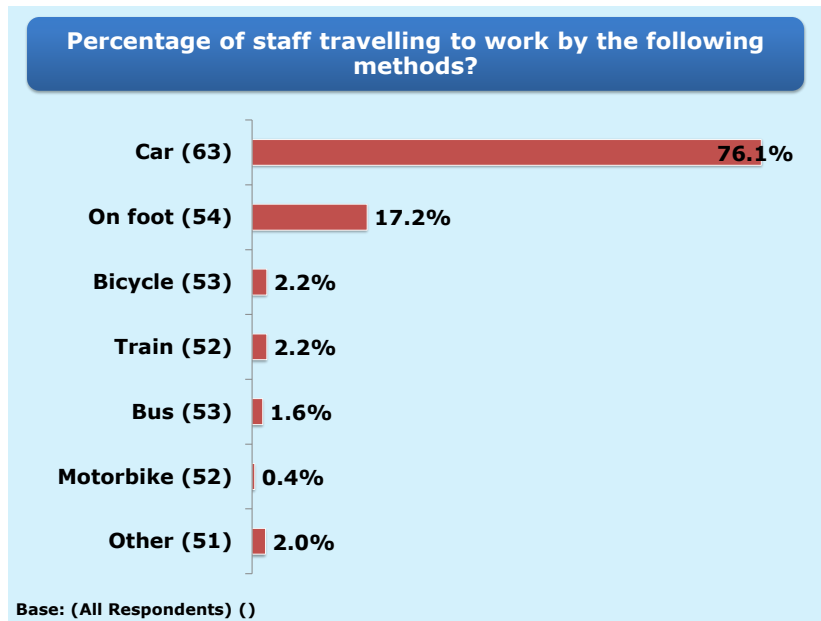
A third of those employed in these businesses (34%) had 0-20% of people living in KDBH. At the other end, a quarter had 80 to 100% of staff living in KDBH.

Chart 3:



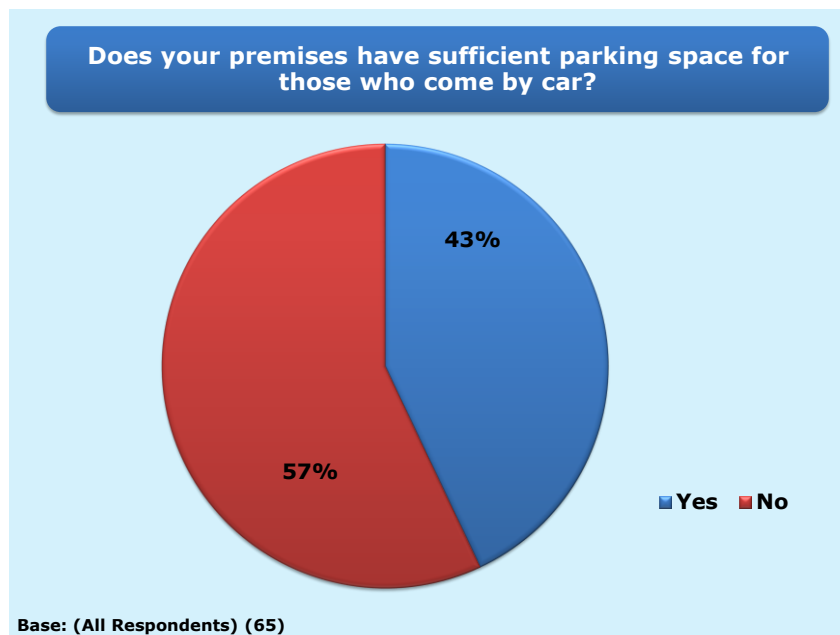
Three-quarters of staff travel to work in their car and 17% go by foot.

Chart 4:



43% of those responding felt their premises had sufficient parking space for those who travelled by car.

Chart 5:



43% of staff without parking on site parked in a local street or road.

Table 7:

<b>If no, which car parks does your staff use?</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	3
<b>Dorridge Station</b>	5
<b>Dorridge Station overflow (behind Sainsbury's fuel station)</b>	11
<b>Dorridge Sainsbury's</b>	3
<b>Dorridge – Centre adjacent to Tesco</b>	3
<b>Dorridge Village Hall</b>	0
<b>Dorridge – The Park</b>	0
<b>Knowle – Primary School/Church</b>	22
<b>Knowle – behind Greswolde</b>	8
<b>Knowle - Tesco</b>	22
<b>Knowle – Rear of NatWest Bank</b>	5
<b>Knowle Village Hall</b>	14
<b>Bentley Heath Village Hall</b>	0
<b>Bentley Heath Co-op</b>	0
<b>Local street or road</b>	43
<b>Other</b>	16
<b>Base: (Those not parking at premises)</b>	<b>(37)</b>

### 4.3 Business Premises

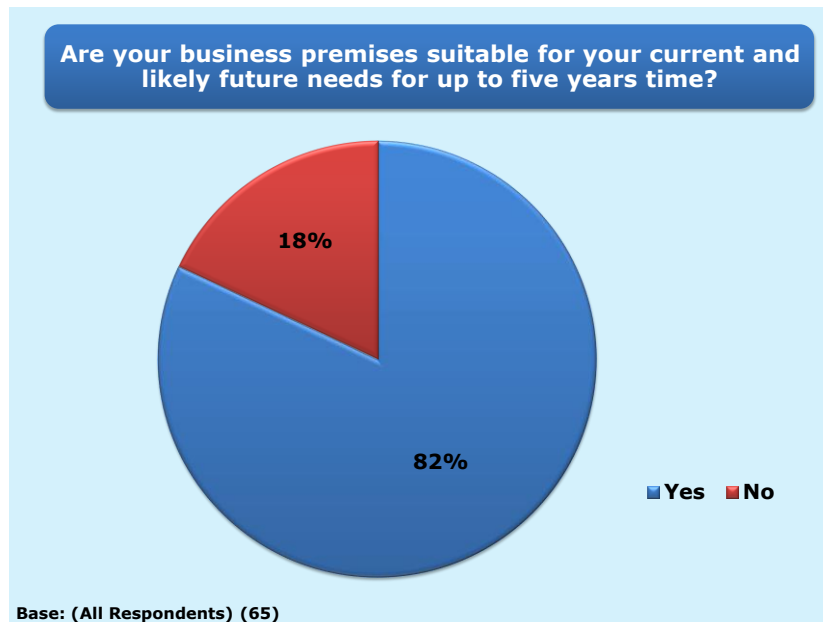
73% of businesses felt that priorities in the Neighbourhood Plan to protect the quality of the existing built environment should include commercial building design to be in keeping with the scale, location and appearance of existing buildings. 68% indicated a preference to ensure that business development is in harmony with the rural character of the neighbourhood and sits well in the landscape.

Table 8:

What priorities should the Neighbourhood Plan have in protecting the quality of the existing built environment?	%
Commercial building design to be in keeping with the scale, location and appearance of existing buildings	73
Ensure that business development is in harmony with the rural character of the neighbourhood and sits well in the landscape	68
Use signage, advertising and street furniture that are in keeping with the character of our neighbourhood	55
Define and preserve the boundaries of our villages	37
Promote a high level of energy conservation/environmental sustainability in new buildings	23
Identify any currently unlisted buildings that we should seek to protect by a local listing	11
Use traditional local building materials	5
<b>Base: (All Respondents)</b>	<b>(62)</b>

Over eight out of ten businesses said their business premises were suitable for their current and likely future needs for up to five years' time.

Chart 6:



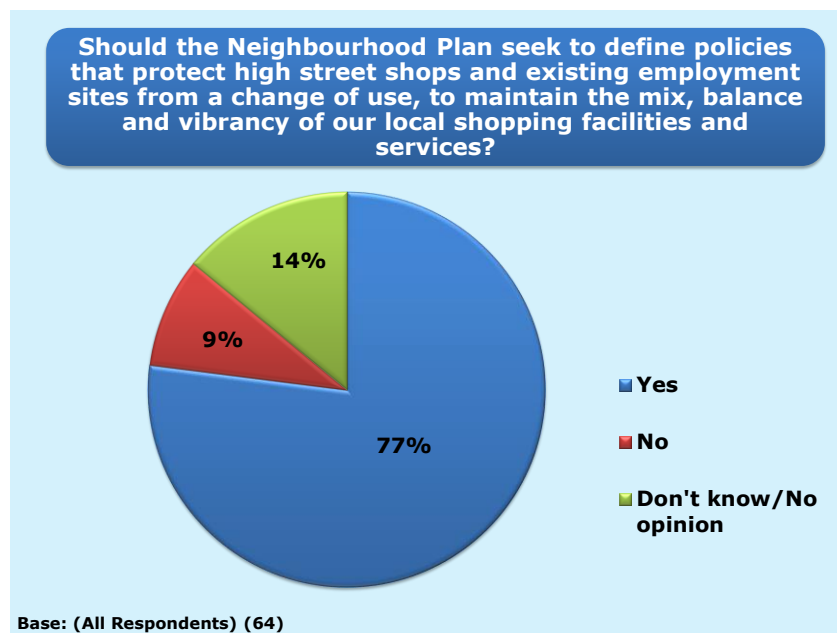
Seven businesses felt their premises were not suitable as they were too small.

Table 9:

If not, in what way are they not suitable?	Number
Too small	7
Insufficient on-site parking	4
Lack of suitable public transport	3
In the wrong place	1
Intrusive local restrictions	1
Lacking in key facilities	1
Too expensive	1
Too large	1
Other	4
<b>Base: (If premises not suitable)</b>	<b>(14)</b>

77% of businesses agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to define policies that protect High Street shops and existing employment sites from a change of use, to maintain the mix, balance and vibrancy of the local shopping facilities and services.

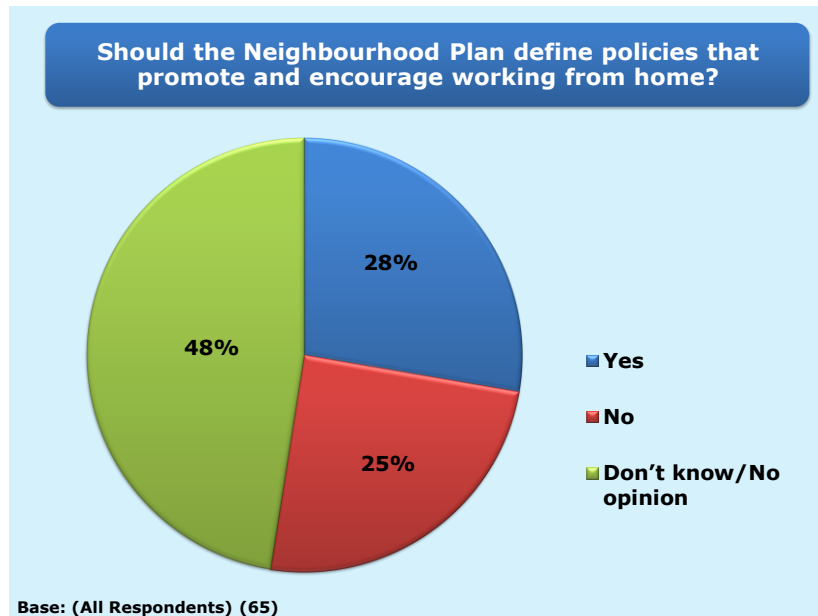
Chart 7:



#### 4.4 Employment (including change of use)

Almost half of those surveyed did not know or had no opinion on whether the Neighbourhood Plan should define policies that promote and encourage working from home. For those having an opinion there was almost an equal split.

Chart 8:



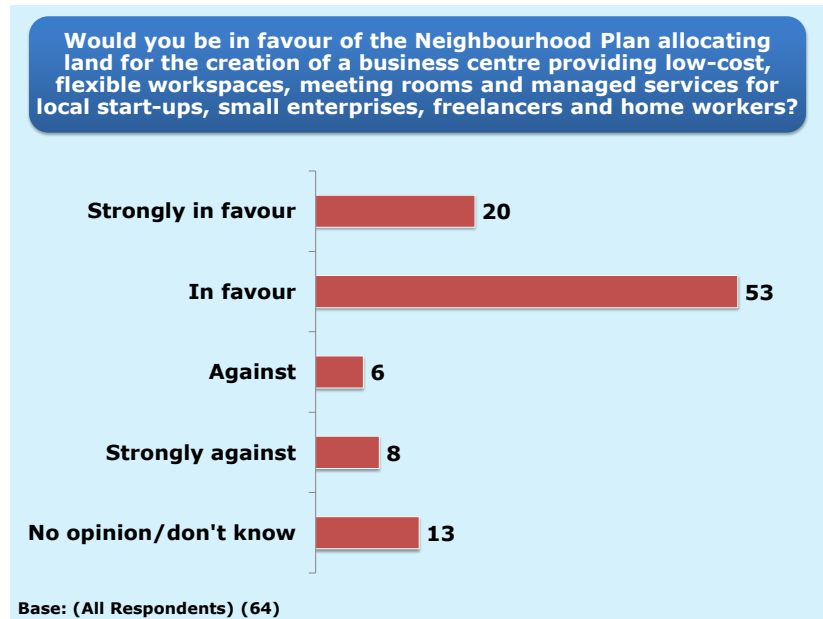
Asked what the Neighbourhood Plan should consider for the allocation of land for business use, 59% stated parking, 38% mentioned shops and retail with 27% equally saying starter units and offices.

Chart 9:



73% of businesses would be in favour of the Plan allocating land for the creation of a business centre, with 14% against. 13% offered no opinion or did not know.

Chart 10:



Although a small sample, three homeworkers wished to have access to a shared office space and the same number would appreciate an informal homeworkers' network or network meeting place.

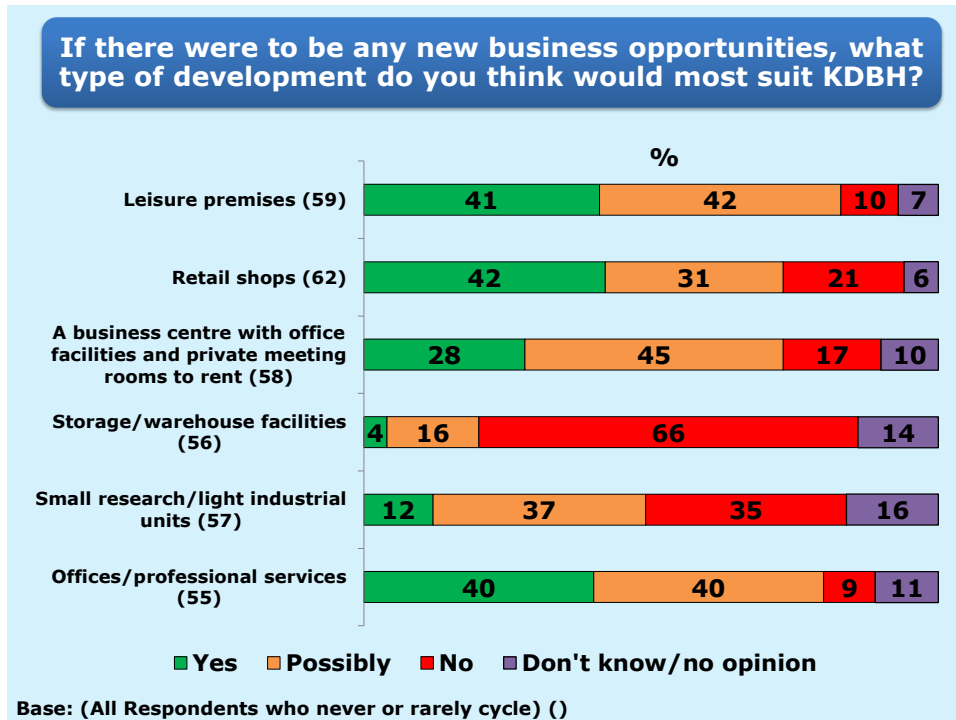
Table 10:

If you are a homeworker, are there improvements that would make KDBH more supportive of homeworking?	Number
Access to a shared office space/hot desk (occasional or regular)	3
An informal homeworkers' network or network meeting place	3
Coffee shop or other venue with WIFI for meetings with clients	2
Base: (All home workers)	(7)



Looking at new business opportunities in KDBH, the types of development respondents felt would suit the area were more leisure premises and offices/professional services. There was a strong opinion against the development of storage/warehouse facilities.

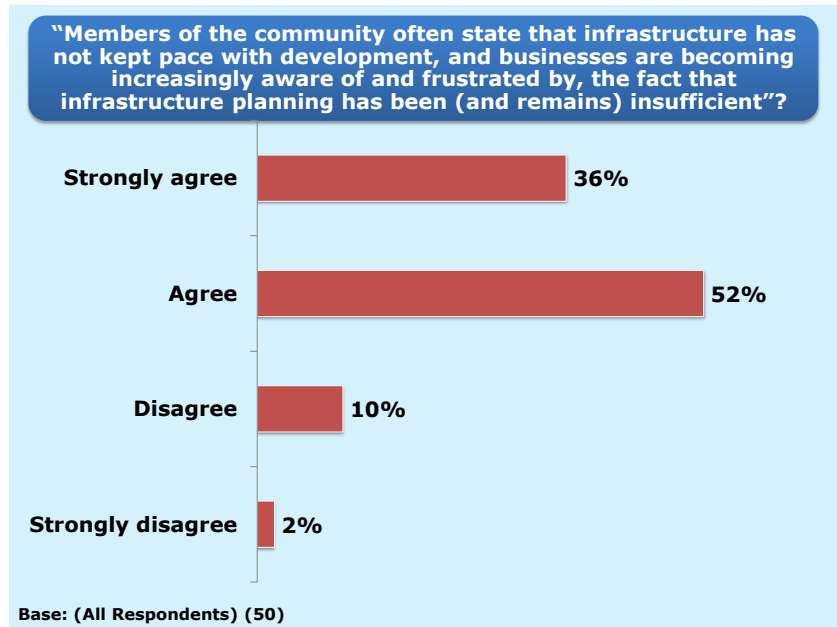
Chart 11:



## 4.5 Infrastructure

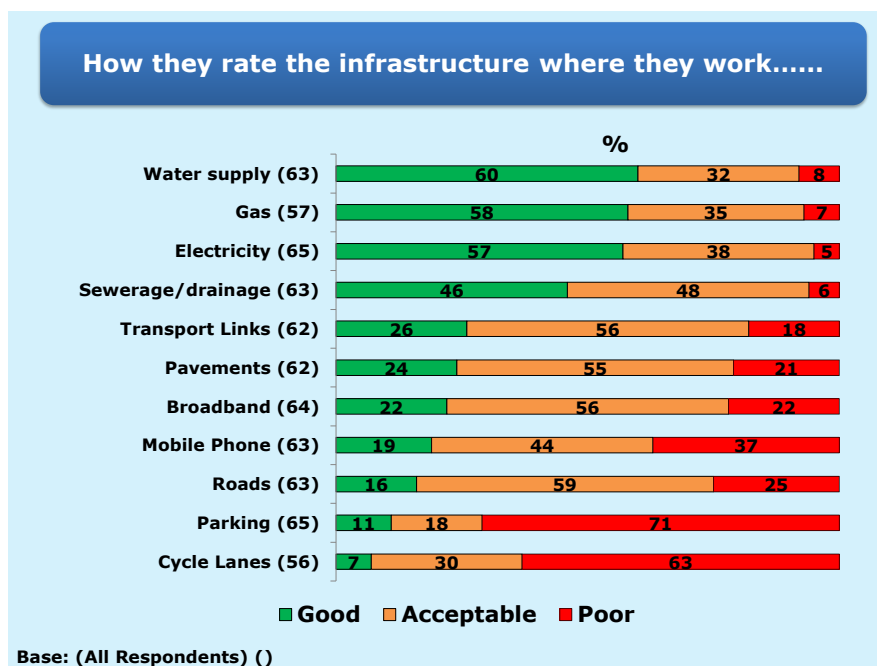
88% of businesses agreed with the statement “Members of the community often state that infrastructure has not kept pace with development, and businesses are becoming increasingly aware of and frustrated by, the fact that infrastructure planning has been and remains insufficient.”

Chart 12:



Businesses were asked to rate the infrastructure where they work. 60% rated the water supply as good, with gas (58%); electricity (57%) and sewerage/drainage (46%) also highly rated. Only 7% rated the cycle lanes as good/ 63% poor and 11% was the outcome for parking which also received the highest poor rating of 71%.

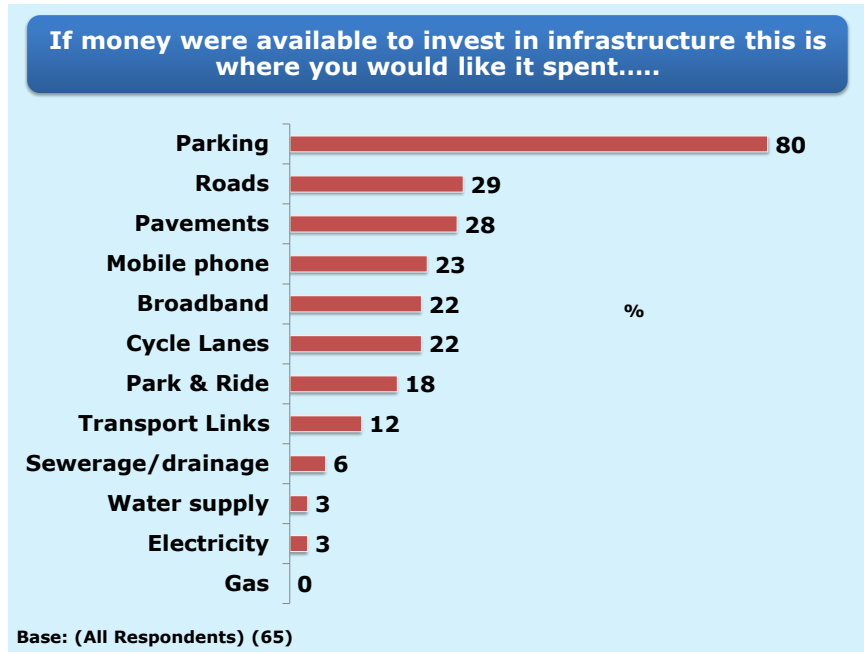
Chart 13:



If money was available to invest in infrastructure, businesses were asked where it should be spent.

An overwhelming 80% said parking dwarfing any other result. The next two highest were roads (29%) and pavements (28%).

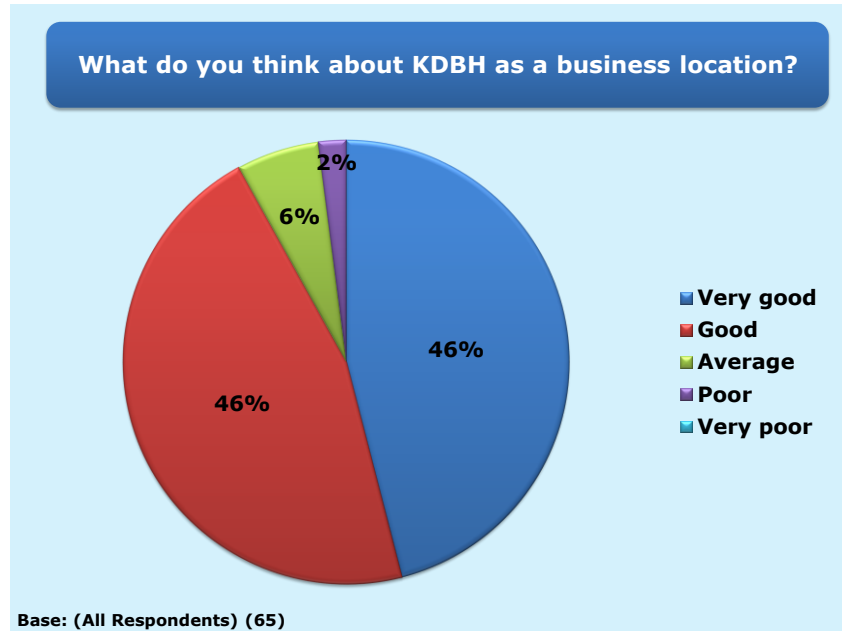
Chart 14:



## 4.6 General

Overall, businesses were positive about KDBH as a location with 92% rating it very good or good, 6% average and just 2% poor.

Chart 15:



Businesses were given a list of problems they may be experiencing in the area.

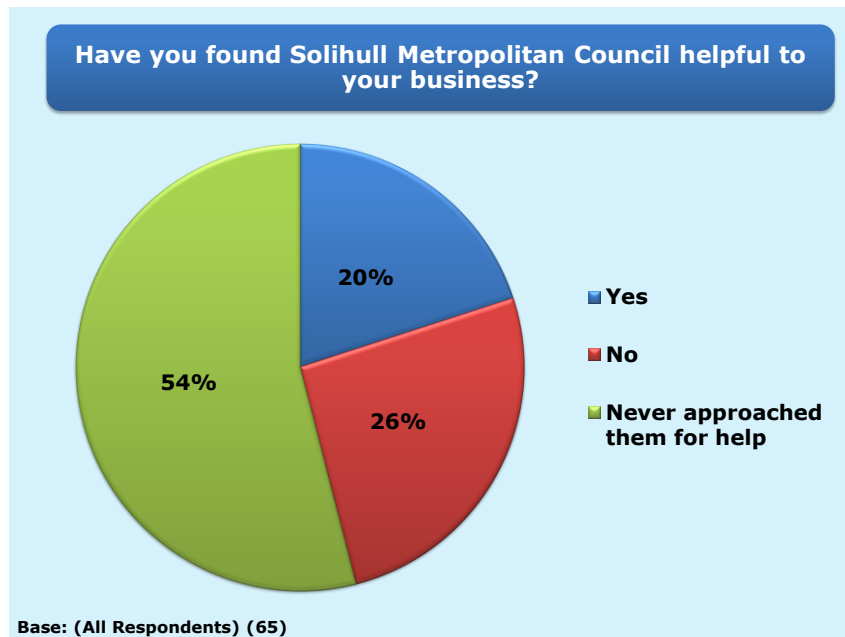
Exactly six out of ten respondents indicated road/traffic and parking issues for customers and the same problem with a similar figure of 56% given for employees and their road/traffic and parking issues. High and rising costs were a problem for 36% of businesses.

Table 11:

Is your business experiencing problems in any of the areas shown below?	%
Road/traffic/parking issues – for customers	60
Road/traffic/parking issues – for employees	56
High/rising costs	36
Shortage of skilled staff	20
Unable to relocate in the area owing to lack of suitable premises	20
Staff recruitment/retention	18
Planning constraints	16
Local competition	14
Public transport	10
Access to appropriate advice	2
Other	6
Base: (All Respondents)	(50)

Including all businesses, 20% found Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council helpful to their business and 26% said no. More than half (54%) had never approached them for help.

Chart 16:



# APPENDICES

## What is your post code?

61 responses

B93 0DU
B93 0DX
B93 0EF
B93 0HJ
B93 0HL
B93 0HL
B93 0HL
B93 0HL
B93 0HL
B93 0HN
B93 0HN
B93 0HT
B93 0HT
B93 0JA
B93 0JU
B93 0JU
B93 0JU
B93 0JU
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B93 0LY
B93 0LY
B93 0LY
B93 0PU

B93 1PU
B93 8FG
B93 8HE
B93 8HN
B93 8HP
B93 8HP
B93 8JA
B93 8JA
B93 8JA
B93 8QP
B93 9AW
B93 9BW
B93 9BW
B93 9LF
B93 9LF
B93 9NX
B93 9PS
B93 0LL
B93 0LY
B94 6EA
B94 6EA

**What was it about the KDBH area that made you choose to have a business here?**

If other, please specify - 4 comments

Lower rents
It is where I live
Near M40 42 for travelling clients. Hair and wig styling helps lots of cancer/alopecia clients
Local resident

**If no, which car parks does your staff use?**

If other, please specify where

5 comments

Parking bays on road on Station Road
Sometimes our own space
Box Trees Craft Centre
One of our customers allows us to use her drive
None - if I drive I park at back of my shop

**Business premises suitable, if no, in what way are they not suitable?**

If other, please specify

4 comments

High street footfall too low
Customer parking massive problem. Customers cannot park
Dual location not ideal
Internal modernisation required

**Please tell us what you think about the infrastructure where you work. How do you rate the following?**

If you have answered poor to any of the above, why is this?

47 comments

Bad mobile reception. Very little free parking
Not the fastest broadband area. Lack of parking at peak times
Signal really bad
Although quite a few car parks - very hard to get a space after 9am. Not aware of any cycle lanes
Pot holes in roads. Parking too few spaces for short stay need to provide spaces for long stay! None of our staff can use public transport no service at needed times. Can't cycle through park only soft cycling area!
Electricity cuts without explanation frequently. Mobile phone some networks dreadful. Pavements not cleaned/maintained/uneven. Transport - what to where?! Cycle lane none existent
Road surface quality - pot holes & traffic calming is poor. Insufficient parking for employees - they take up shoppers parking spaces - so shoppers stay away

Adjacent roads are not blocked with parked cars following the car park charges
There are none. Need better facilities for cyclists
Not enough parking for vehicles on Station Road, always too busy at lunch time and during parts of the day. Also not near us but popular road is getting dangerous during week days due to people parking there for station in day time. The bus stop in Station Road Knowle also needs looking at. I have seen so many near misses because of people using it as a road
Hardly any signal in my retail premises, so can't really use mobile phone. Broadband is very hit and miss
Insufficient parking! I frequently have to cruise the car parks to find a space so I can get to work. Arrival time 10am approx. Also applies to my staff. Cycle lanes we have none, some use pavements
Shoppers parking in Knowle is a massive problem. Knowle will have no shops just empty shops if no action on this problem is solved
You need plenty of free parking to encourage a vibrant office and retail environment. The Council make it increasingly difficult for car parking. They wrongly envisage us all travelling on buses, trains and bicycles
Mobile phone - poor signal. Roads - often blocked as increased motorway problems. Parking - serious lack of parking spaces in the village + too many cars left on side roads in Knowle. Cycle lanes - not enough, pavements could be shared!
More parking is needed in Knowle
Mobile phone reception in office, cycle lanes are limited, always issues with people using our parking spaces and not enough spaces when we have our quarterly meetings when members attend
Lack of cycle lanes available around the area. Any problems with the main water main serving Knowle and the whole of Knowle is without water. There should be an alternative water main provided
Insufficient parking available. Roads + cycle lanes in poor state of repair. Pavements have been dug up and 'patched' too often - unsightly
Poor parking not enough shoppers car park spaces (taken up by office workers all day)
Limited free parking
Nowhere near enough parking now. God help us when another 1100 are built with 2 cars each. Roads will not cope with extra housing demands
Mobile phone links are poor because we had a card machine that would not work and had to be returned. The roads have been dug up too much
Station Rd needs cycle lane for kids
There is not enough parking in Knowle. Buses stop working too early
Local transport links from surrounding villages is poor. Only bus routes from Solihull If you lived in Catherine de Barnes/ Hampton in Arden you would have to catch a bus into Solihull and back out again
There needs to be more parking for staff employed in the businesses in the village location. This could be by a park and ride possibly? Poor broadband services restricts office development. Poor public transport puts a reliance on staff working in local businesses using cars. Enhanced bus services linking to Solihull at 'rush hour times' could lessen a reliance on car use.
We have no gas supply no main sewer. Parking in Knowle is poor. Poor mobile connections and broadband. Poor condition of road and pavements were applicable I am always contacting the council over this matter.
General lack of parking in Knowle, it is having an effect on trade
Parking is very limited, people park in Knowle then travel into Solihull by bus, leaving very little space for people who use local businesses
They are not of an acceptable standard for the environment



Pavements in Knowle are uneven. Roads are potholed. Parking does not work in Knowle - they offer 3 hours free parking but this is taken up by office workers meaning it is difficult for shoppers to park which detrimentally affects the shops. It also leads to people parking where they shouldn't e.g. outside local homes on Milverton Road/Blackdown Road, adjacent to Stowe House etc. Not aware of any cycle lanes!
Parking is insufficient in Knowle; access to our business is poor. Buses to local villages is poor. Not enough cycle lanes
Lack of short term parking, means that spaces are blocked all day. Limited safe cycle facilities.
Old drains to property across 2-3 properties. Blocked with tree roots. Not enough parking for workers - charged after 3 hours. No cycle lanes
Need more off road parking
Not aware of any cycle lanes. Roads are very busy and generally not suitable for cycling. Parking is much improved in Dorridge with Sainsbury's. In Knowle and Bentley Heath it remains chaotic
There are not enough parking spaces for our customers - needs to be looked at urgently
Low water pressure affects our heating. Electricity supply regularly spikes or is non-existent. Gas supply is jointly 'owned' not meeting current regs. Mobile phone very poor signal. Broadband slow. Cycle lanes in village non-existent
Lack of parking. Are there cycle lanes?
Problem with blocked drains, pavements uneven and dangerous, parking a problem with spaces designated for shoppers being used by workers. no cycle lanes through village
Lack of parking - poor phone signal and only one broadband supplier possible to units
The roads aren't as good as they could be. The pavements are very poor. Parking is in short supply for long term. Cycle routes, there aren't any
There are no cycle lanes in Dorridge. Parking - not enough in Knowle & Dorridge. Mobile phone coverage is poor since Sainsbury's built in Dorridge
In my shop - I have customers complain of little or no signal on their mobile phones - including myself
Weak mobile signal; not enough business parking; bus service limited, very few cycle lanes.
Pot holes for roads. Low water pressure for water supply

**Is your business experiencing problems in any of the areas shown below?**

If other, please specify

3 comments

Lack of shoppers on the High Street
People attending shops park in our spaces
Customer parking