



**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**

---

# CONTENTS

		<b>Page</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
<b>2.0</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	1
<b>3.0</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF RESULTS</b>	2
<b>4.0</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	5
<b>4.1</b>	<b>About You and Your Business</b>	5
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Your Workforce</b>	8
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Business Premises</b>	11
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Employment (including change of use)</b>	13
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>	16
<b>4.6</b>	<b>General</b>	18

---

## 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>

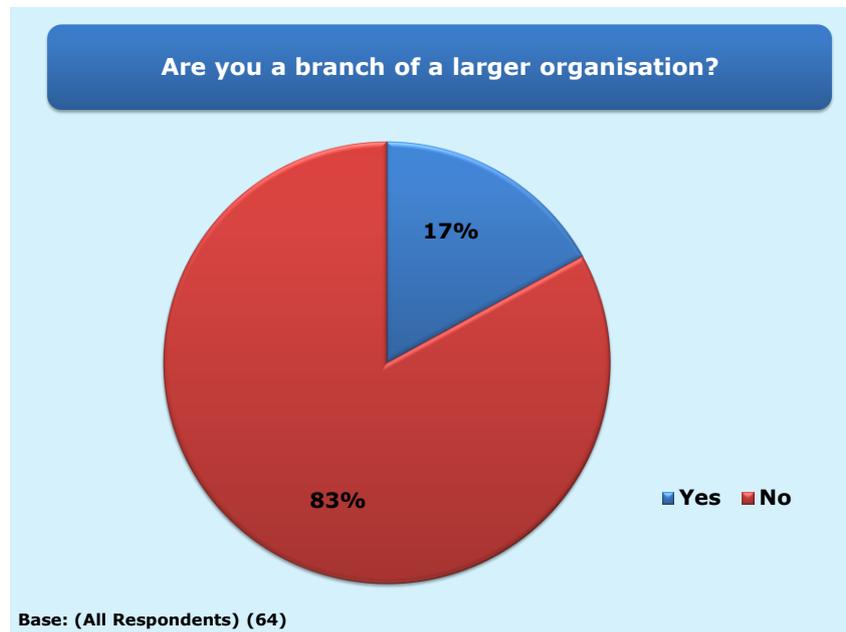
Half of the businesses in the survey operated out of a shop or retail unit.

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

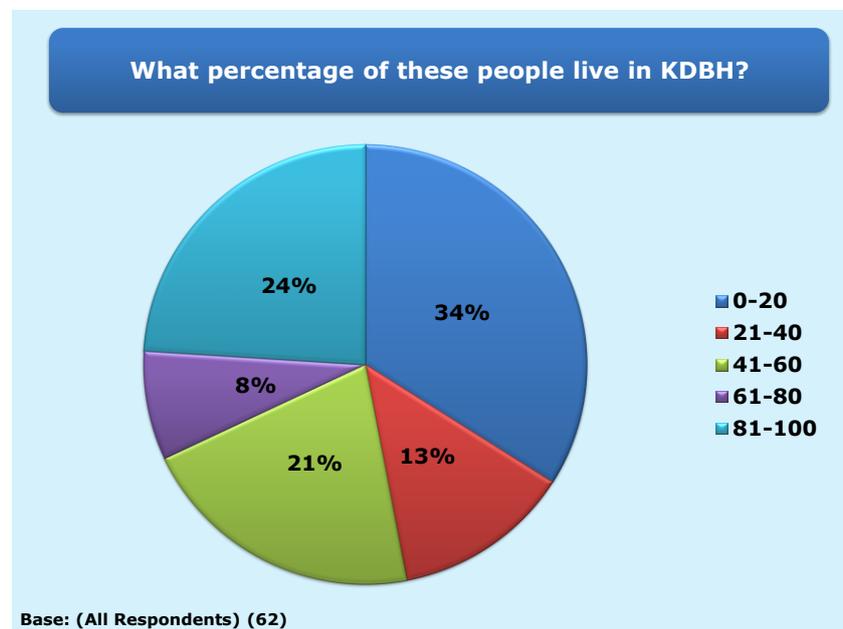
Four out of ten businesses responding to the survey had 1 to 3 people working at the premises and the same split had 4 to 9 employees.

Chart 2:



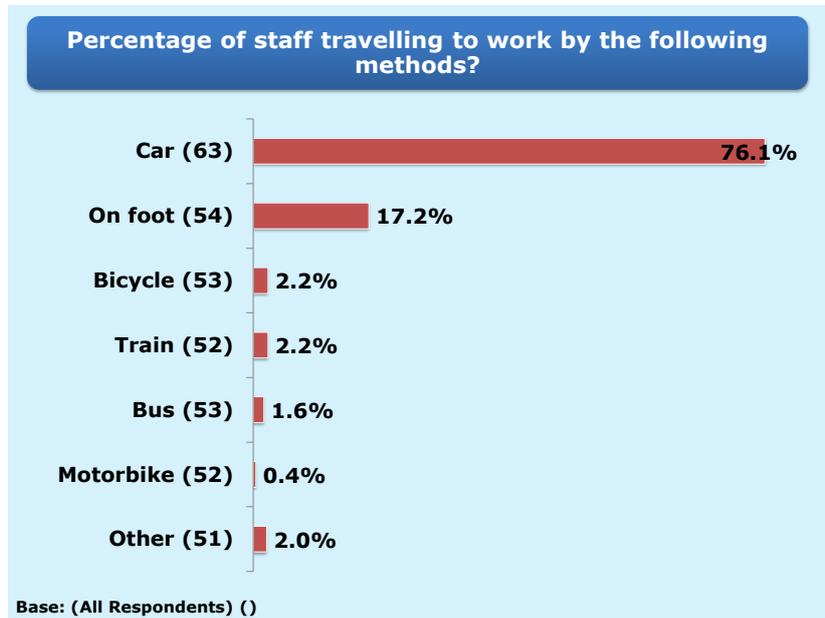
A third of those employed in these businesses (34%) had 0-20% of people living in KDBH. At the other end, a quarter had 80 to 100% of staff living in KDBH.

Chart 3:



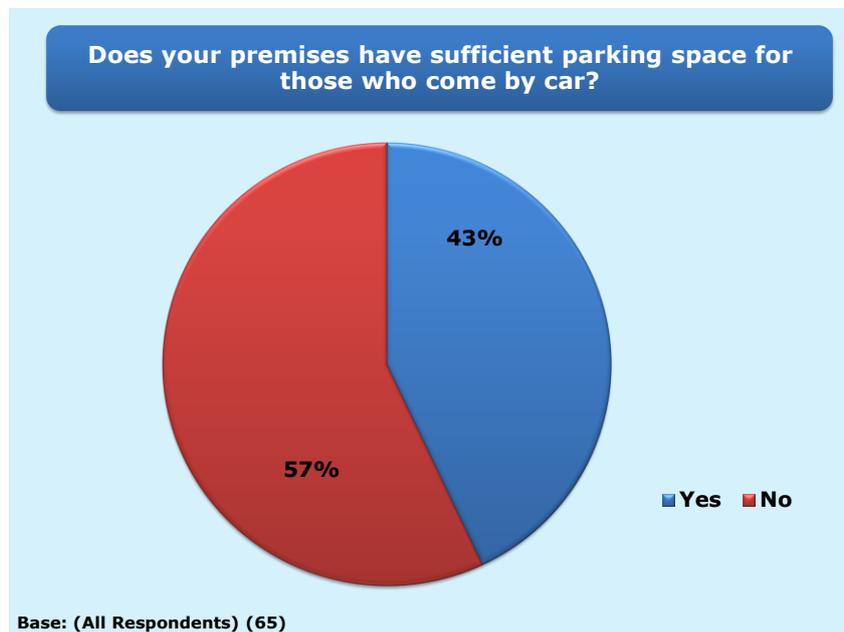
Three-quarters of staff travel to work in their car and 17% go by foot.

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

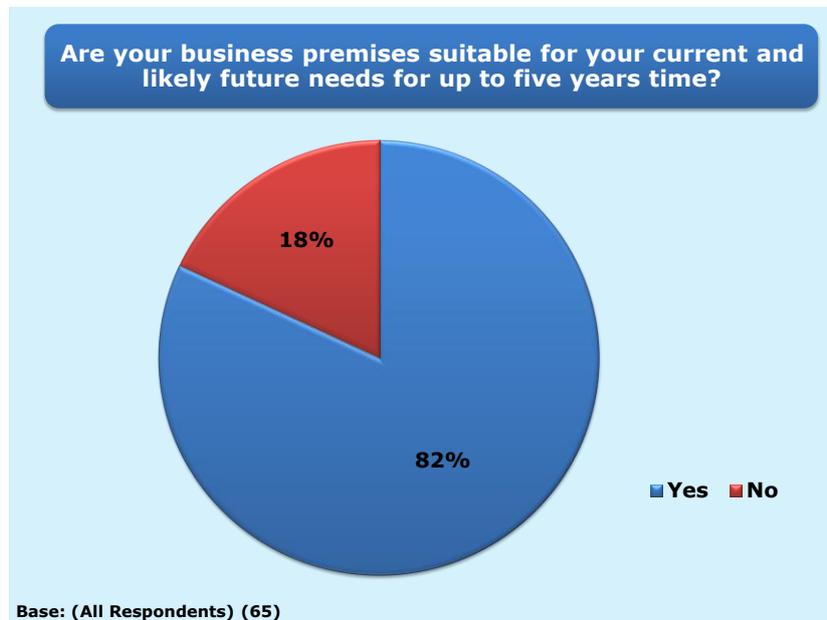
73% of businesses felt that priorities in the Neighbourhood Plan to protect the quality of the existing built environment should include commercial building design to be in keeping with the scale, location and appearance of existing buildings. 68% indicated a preference to ensure that business development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



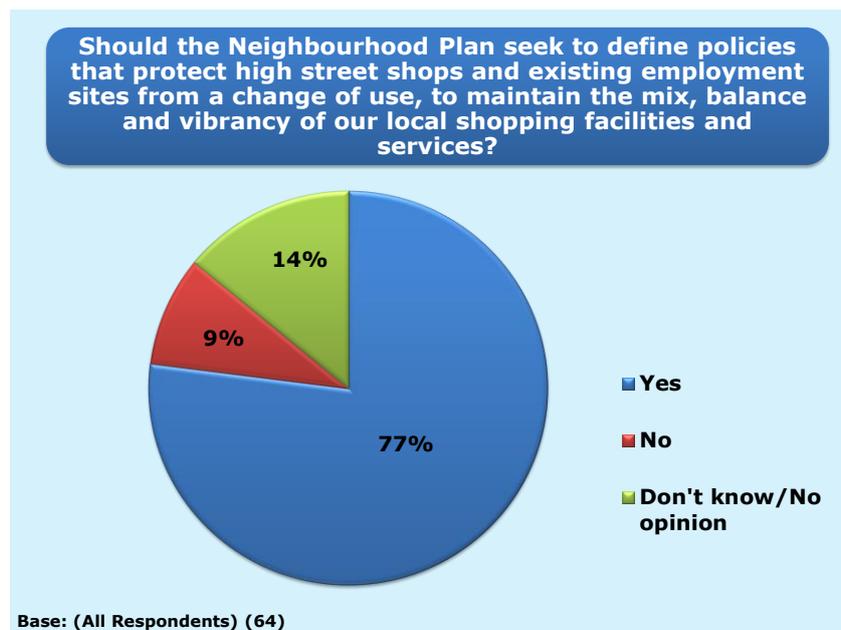
Seven businesses felt their premises were not suitable as they were too small.

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.

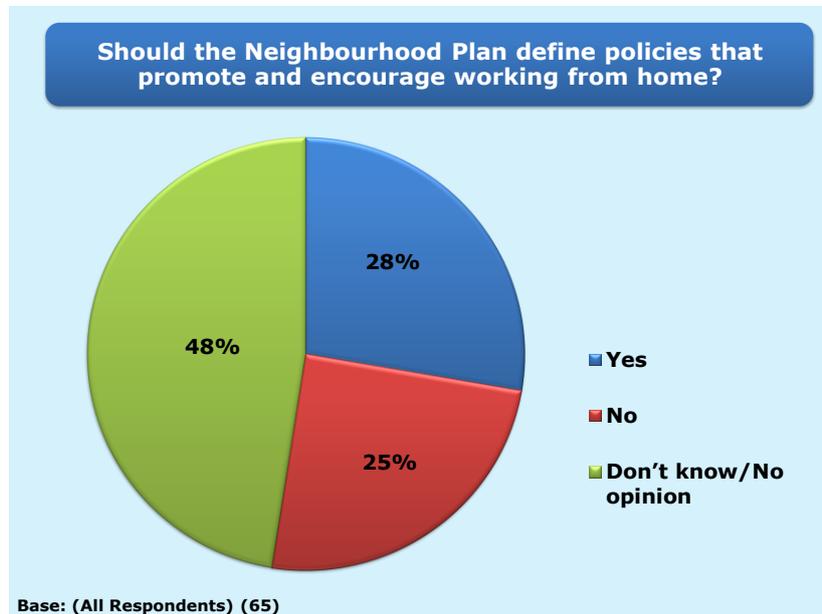
Chart 7:



#### 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:



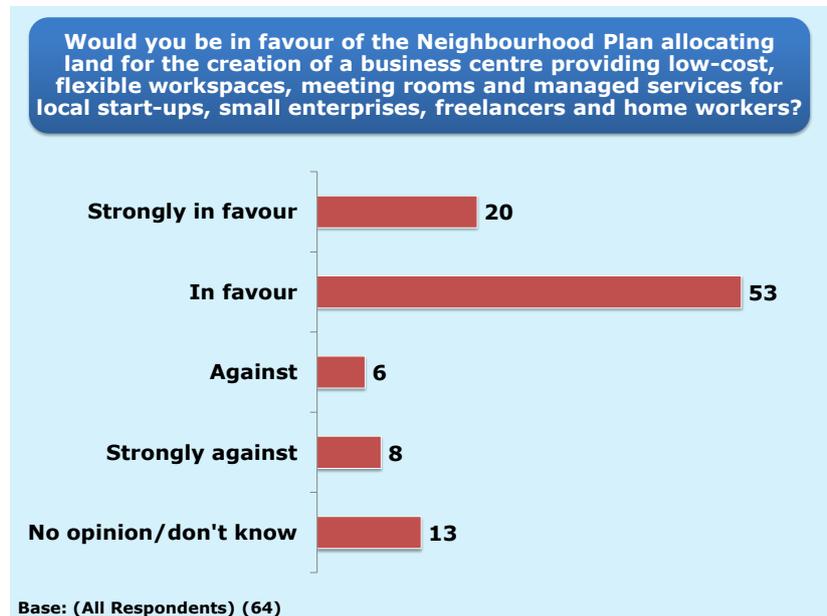
Asked what the Neighbourhood Plan should consider for the allocation of land for business use, 59% stated parking, 38% mentioned shops and retail with 27% equally saying starter units and offices.

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:



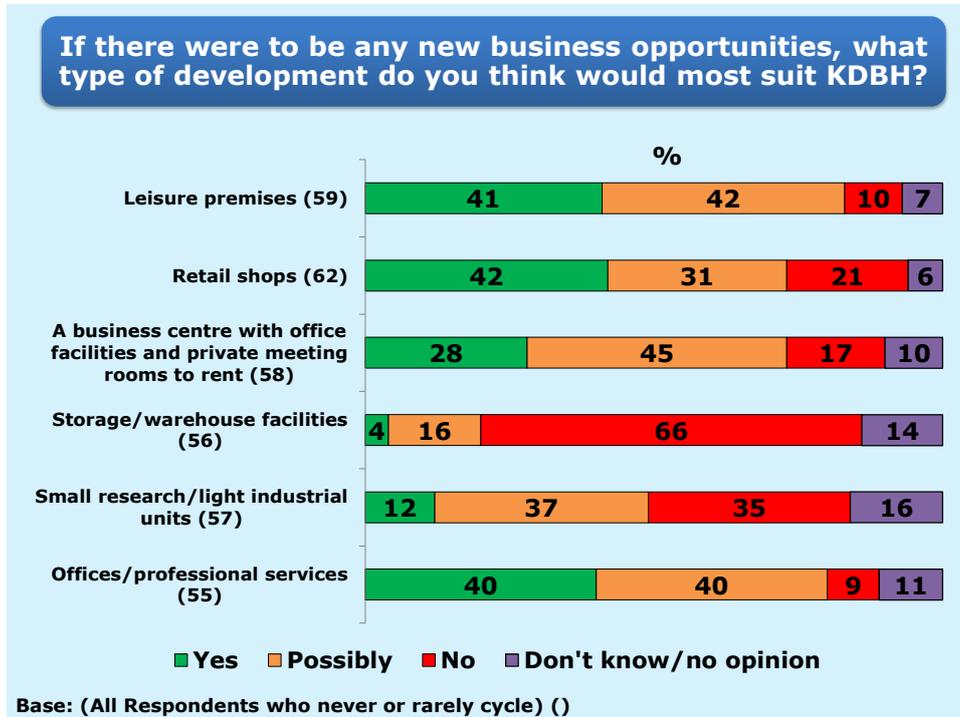
Although a small sample, three homeworkers wished to have access to a shared office space and the same number would appreciate an informal homeworkers' network or network meeting place.

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.

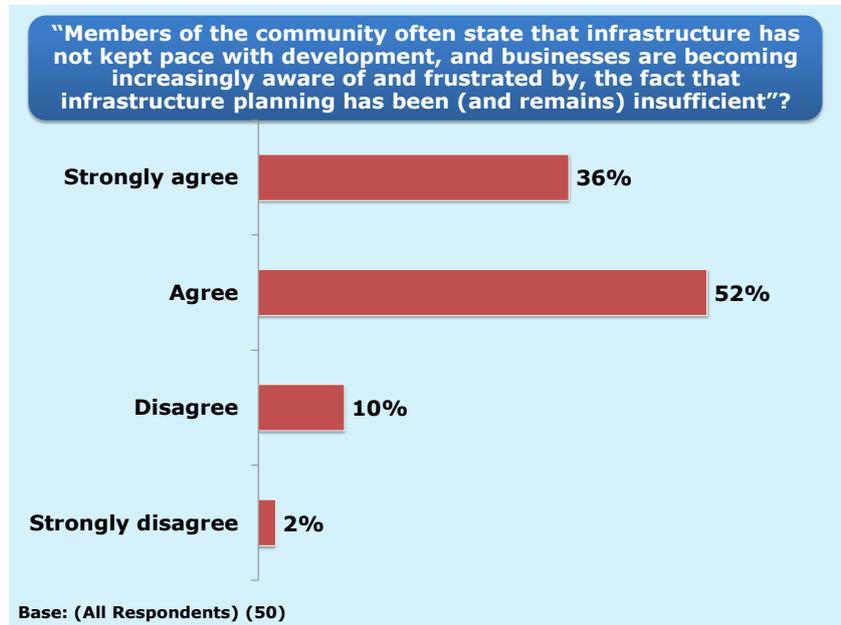
Chart 11:



## 4.5 Infrastructure

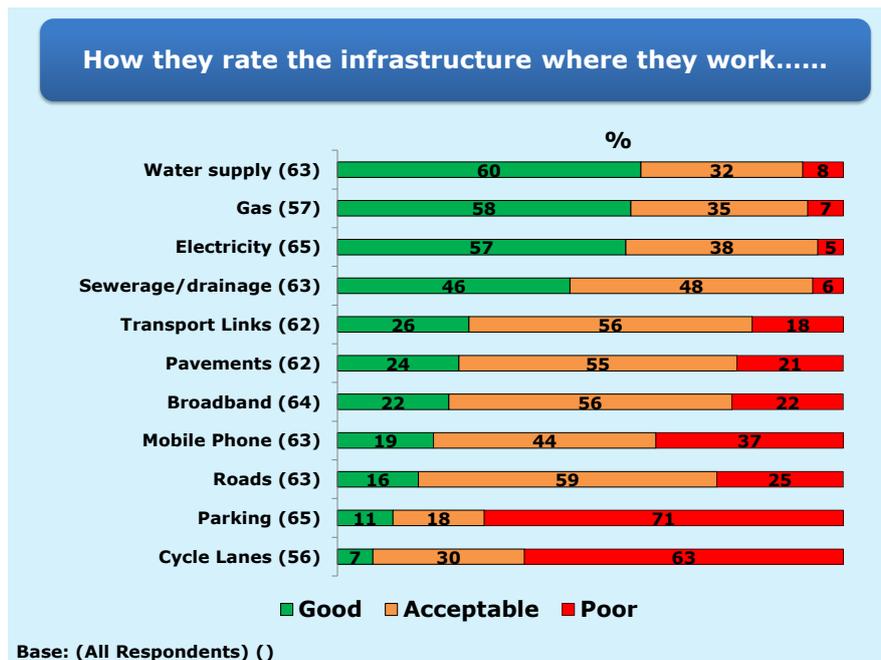
88% of businesses agreed with the statement "Members of the community often state that infrastructure has not kept pace with development, and businesses are becoming increasingly aware of and frustrated by, the fact that infrastructure planning has been and remains insufficient."

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%.

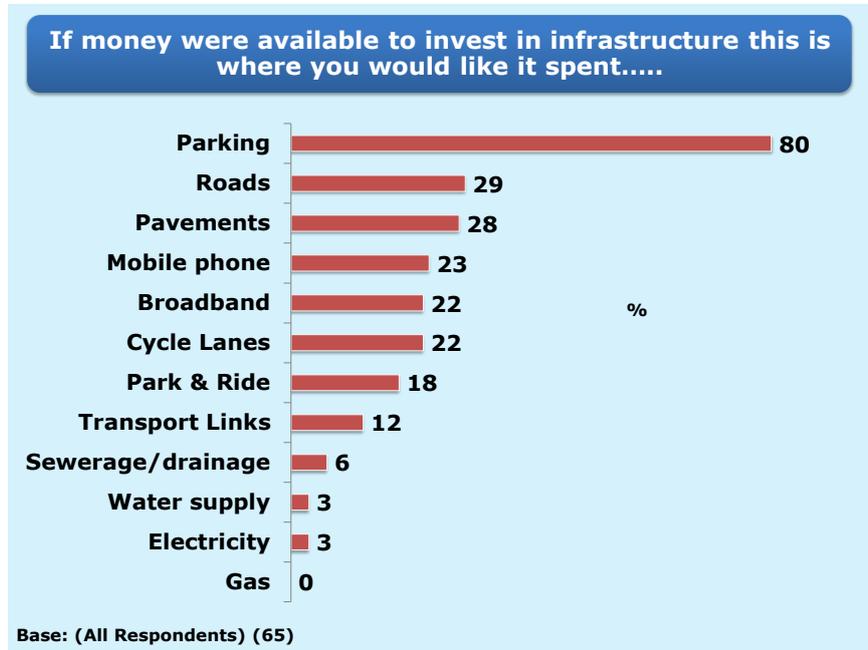
Chart 13:



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%).

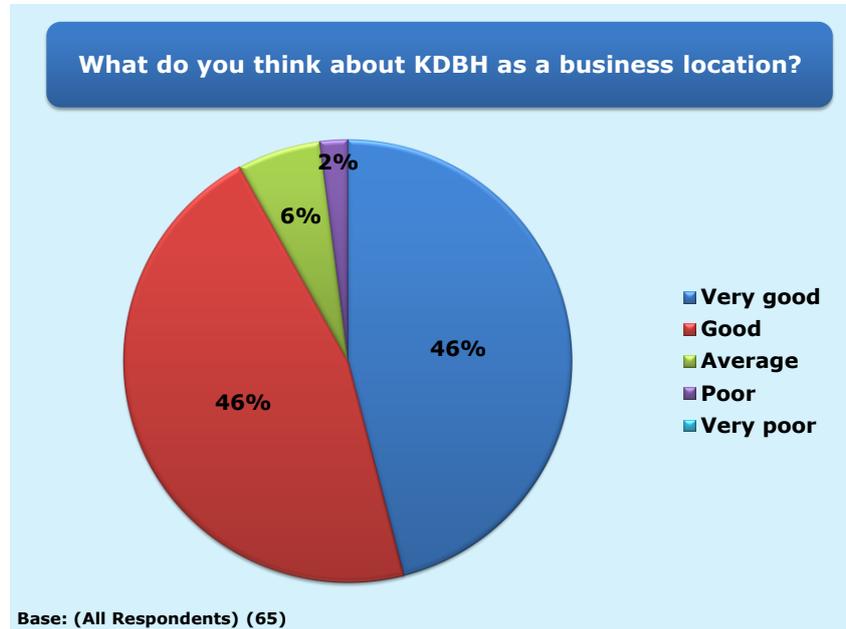
Chart 14:



## 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:

