

Version 1.0  
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MUCH BIRCH  
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
BUSINESS SURVEY REPORT

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## **Introduction**

Much Birch Parish Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan. To inform that plan the steering group has asked each resident who manages a business in the parish to contribute their views on specific business related issues

This was achieved by developing a questionnaire which was distributed by volunteers, together with a community and a housing needs questionnaire, to all households in the parish.

This report presents the results of that survey and has been independently produced by Data Orchard CIC, commissioned by Much Birch Parish Council, and based directly on the residents' responses to the distributed questionnaires.

## **Version history**

Version 1.0 – Initial release.

## **Presentation of results**

This report presents the results of the survey and shows the views of the respondents on the subjects asked in the questionnaire.

In this report, percentages are calculated as a proportion of the total number of respondents to the survey (55) and are rounded to the nearest integer.

There are a small number of instances where a comment made by the respondent could potentially identify that respondent. To preserve anonymity, key words in these comments have been removed or changed to make them less specific. All such changes are shown in <chevrons>.

## **Survey methodology**

A questionnaire was delivered to each of the 412 households in the parish by volunteers between 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2017, along with a more general Community Questionnaire, Housing Needs Questionnaire and a Land for Development ("call for sites") form. It was requested that one business survey questionnaire be completed for each business that a member of the household managed in the parish. Completed questionnaires were collected by the same volunteers between 9<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October.

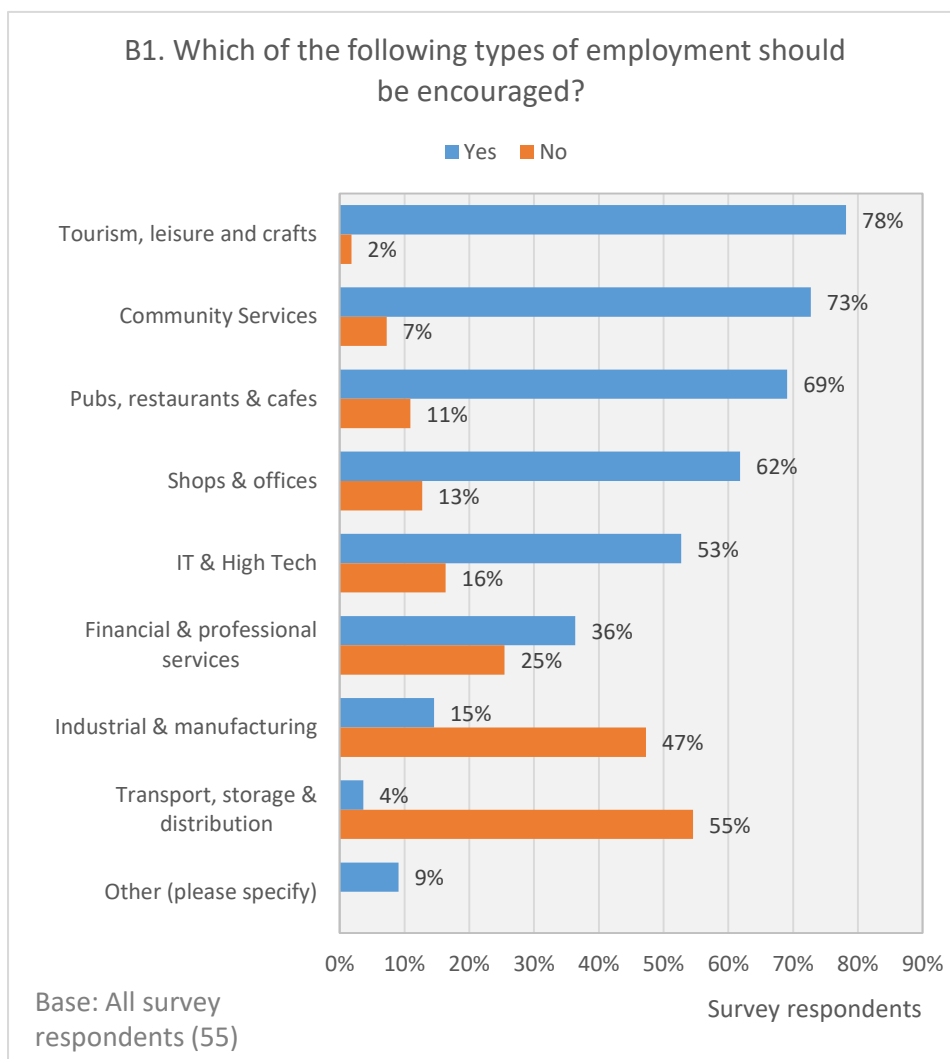
## **Response to the survey**

A total of 55 questionnaires were returned by 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and these responses are analysed and summarised in this report.

## Results

### B1. Which of the following types of employment should be encouraged?

	Yes		No		Responses
	Number	%	Number	%	
Tourism, leisure and crafts	43	78%	1	2%	44
Community Services	40	73%	4	7%	44
Pubs, restaurants & cafes	38	69%	6	11%	44
Shops & offices	34	62%	7	13%	41
IT & High Tech	29	53%	9	16%	38
Financial & professional services	20	36%	14	25%	34
Industrial & manufacturing	8	15%	26	47%	34
Transport, storage & distribution	2	4%	30	55%	32
Other (please specify)	5	9%	0	0%	5



Of the types of employment listed, there was greatest support for *Tourism, leisure and crafts* (78%) and *Community services* (73%), and the highest opposition for *Transport, storage and distribution* (55%) followed by *Industrial and manufacturing* (47%).

The five other suggestions made for other types of employment to encourage were:

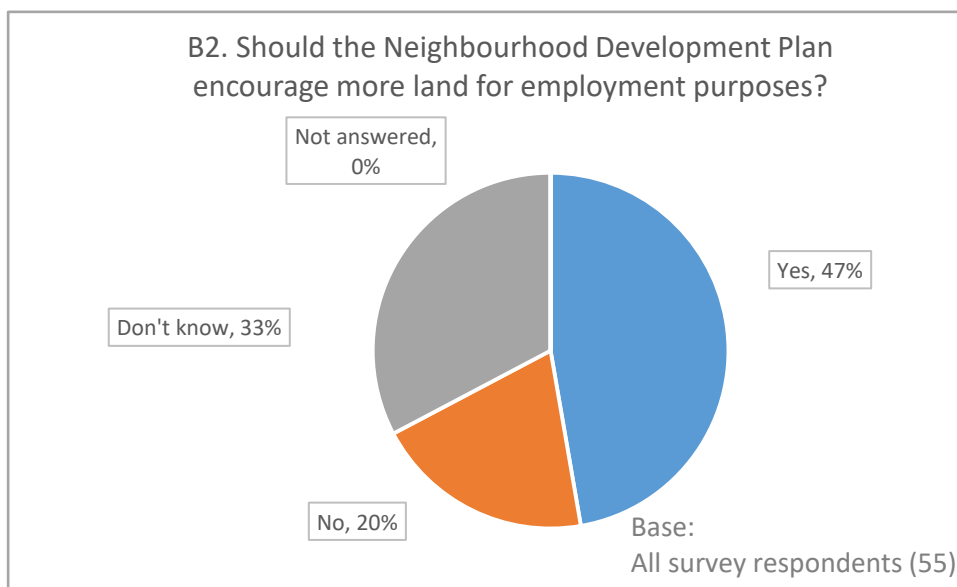
*Agricultural ( x 2)*  
*Agriculture, horticulture & floriculture*  
*Allotments*  
*Elderly residential homes*

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**B2. Should the Neighbourhood Development Plan encourage more land for employment purposes?**

	Number	%
Yes	26	47%
No	11	20%
Don't know	18	33%
Not answered	0	0%
Survey respondents	55	

Nearly half (47%) of respondents agreed that the plan should encourage more land to be available for employment purposes. This compares with a fifth (20%) who thought it should not, while a third of respondents were undecided.

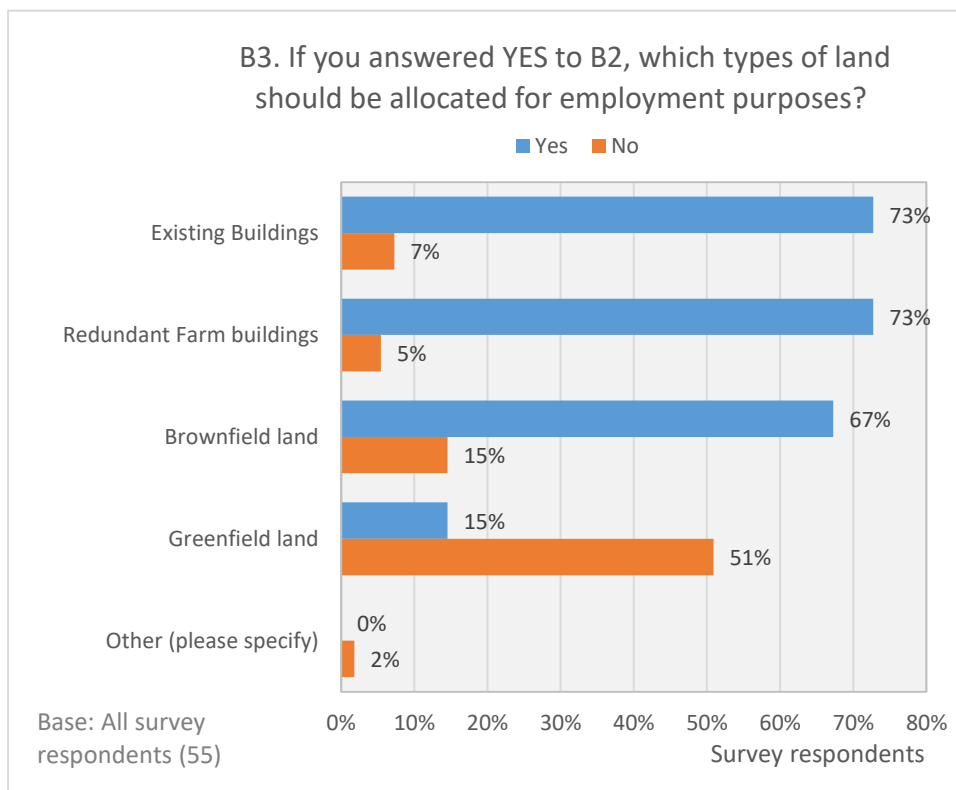


**B3. If you answered YES to B2, which types of land should be allocated for employment purposes?**

	Yes		No		Responses
	Number	%	Number	%	
Existing Buildings	40	73%	4	7%	44
Redundant Farm buildings	40	73%	3	5%	43
Brownfield land	37	67%	8	15%	45
Greenfield land	8	15%	28	51%	36
Other (please specify)	0	0%	1	2%	1

As the table and chart on the next page show, the majority of respondents agreed with the allocation of *Existing Buildings* (73%), *Redundant farm buildings* (73%) and *Brownfield land* (67%) for employment purposes. However, around half (51%) of respondents disagreed with using *Greenfield land* for this purpose compared to 15% who supported the idea.

One of the respondents who ticked 'Yes' for the *Greenfield land* option, noted that it depended on the location and purpose. The other suggestion made by a respondent was to specify that *Infill* should not be allocated for employment purposes.



**B4. If you are aware of any potential sites suitable for employment purpose, please give details below.**

The following four comments were provided.

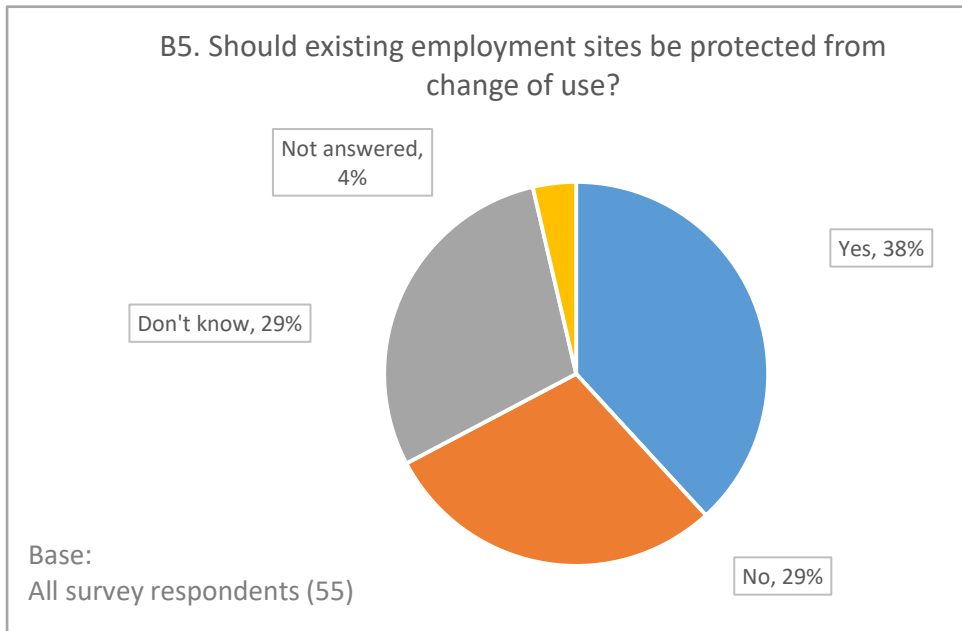
B4. Potential sites suitable for employment purposes
<i>Old Garde Hut - farm/community shop within - local produce etc</i>
<i>There's plenty of land - most of which require change of land use - the most important thing is to gain support of the parish and County planners.</i>
No.
No.

**B5. Should existing employment sites be protected from change of use?**

	Number	%
Yes	21	38%
No	16	29%
Don't know	16	29%

Respondents	53	
Not answered	2	4%
Survey respondents	55	

There were slightly more respondents who were in favour of protecting existing employment sites from change of use (38%) than there were who were against doing so (29%) while a further 29% were undecided.



**B6. What would encourage new businesses to locate to Much Birch Parish? (e.g.: more purpose built premises, faster broadband, etc.)**

The following twenty-six comments were provided:

<b>B6. What would encourage new businesses to locate to Much Birch Parish?</b>
<i>A pro-business ethos/attitude on the part of the parish council and putting the message out. I don't think you can attract business but you can open the doors and make a welcome noise. Thinking positively re: business is the first move.</i>
<i>A 'cluster' of offices/shops perhaps - A 'hub' - so that smaller businesses can benefit from support from each other PLUS people are more likely to drive out to area if there is more than 1 business!</i>
<i>Better mobile and broadband.</i>
<i>Better road network to North of County. By Pass around Hereford. Availability of sites for development or adaptation of existing to move into. Better more open road network to parish. Faster broadband. New energy efficiency technologies and infrastructure e.g. to support electric vehicle charging or community/private energy schemes to put energy (heat/electricity) back into grid/locality.</i>
<i>By-pass for Hereford, better condition roads.</i>
<i>Cheap rates, good broadband/telecommunications, beautiful surroundings, easy access, cheap utilities.</i>
<i>Cheaper business rates. Suitable premises with access.</i>



<i>Faster broadband and improved mobile phone reception, improved drainage.</i>
<i>Faster broadband.</i>
<i>Faster broadband.</i>
<i>Faster broadband.</i>
<i>Faster broadband. Better mobile phone reception.</i>
<i>Faster broadband. Better mobile telephone facilities.</i>
<i>Faster broadband. Better roads. More frequent public transportation.</i>
<i>Faster Broadband. Street lighting. Pavements.</i>
<i>Faster broadband. Better phone network coverage 4G UTL. Fit for purpose buildings.</i>
<i>Free advertising.</i>
<i>Free or subsidised transport links for workforce, a skilled local population with programmes to develop the skills or business need (especially IT skills), world class communications capability including satellite technology, local expertise to help businesses access subsidies including government monies, creative ways to pay for services at Much Birch beyond low rents and costs e.g. % of profit, a Much Birch small business mentoring and or entrepreneur championing scheme. Market Much Birch to Businesses. I am retired but feel my thoughts should be offered.</i>
<i>Improve broadband and mobile phone service. Retail?</i>
<i>Industrial, office units.</i>
<i>IT - Broadband. Community services - shop, pub, post office etc.</i>
<i>More reliable broadband. Better speed control and traffic management on A49. Better M50 motorway linkage.</i>
<i>Opportunities to work from home not needing office necessity. Great place to live - have a work/life balance that is geared to life.</i>
<i>Post office.</i>
<i>Why have it - there is Hereford 5 miles away or Ross 8 miles away.</i>

**B7. Do you have any other comments on jobs and the**

### local economy?

The following four comments were provided:

<b>B7. Any other comments on jobs and the local economy?</b>
<i>People on the whole are fearful of change, on the other hand change is a fact of life. By being pro-business, pro change, we can develop the kind of community which we want, I would encourage any initiatives wherever they appear - it's a matter of embracing the 21st century rather than hoping it will go away. It's got a lot going for it - Much Birch!</i>
<i>We are reliant on services (e.g. pubs) and farming. Encouragement needs to be given to a wider range of types of industries.</i>
No.
No.

### Results – About your business

### B8. What would help your business to develop and thrive during the next 10 years?

The following nineteen comments were provided:

B8. What would help your business to develop and thrive during the next 10 years?
<i>A flexible workforce of young, willing people. Support of the local community for my &lt;type of&gt; farm is essential.</i>
<i>Better broadband.</i>
<i>Better broadband.</i>
<i>Better roads/lanes infrastructure, less restrictions on planning, availability and housing for workers.</i>
<i>Broadband speed of course and better mobile phone service.</i>
<i>Broadband, reliable power supply, a post office.</i>
<i>Broadband.</i>
<i>By-pass for Hereford. Faster broadband.</i>
<i>Consistent communications.</i>
<i>Expansion, better broadband.</i>
<i>Faster broadband and more selection.</i>
<i>Grants to renewable energy source creation.</i>
<i>Improved signage.</i>
<i>N/A (x5)</i>
<i>N/A Self-employed &lt;profession specified&gt;.</i>

**s likely to require additional space over the next 10 years?**

There were seven respondents to this question.

	Up to 50 sqm	51 / 100 sqm	101 / 200 sqm	over 201 sqm	Total
Industrial workshop	0	3	0	0	3
Office	2	1	0	0	3
Retail	0	0	0	0	0
Storage - covered	2	1	0	1	4
Storage - open	1	1	0	0	2

None of the respondents expressed a need for additional space for retail purposes, but there was a spread of requirements for other purposes as shown in the table above.

Some of the respondents made a comment about that requirement as follows:

- The respondent who ticked a need for up to 50 sqm of covered storage and 50 sqm of open storage, stated this was for agriculture storage.
- The respondent who indicated a need for over 201 sqm of covered storage noted that he/she had some need for additional storage plus adaptation of existing.
- A further respondent who didn't tick any of the options in the questions stated "agriculture – not sure".

**B9a. Is your business likely to require alternative or smaller premises over the next 10 years?**

	Yes	Not sure	Total
Larger premises in the M B area	2	7	9
Smaller premises in the M B area	0	8	8
Moving premises outside the M B area	1	6	7

Two respondents thought their business would need larger premises in the Much Birch area and one expected to move premises outside the area. A larger number (6-8 respondents) were not sure of their need for alternative premises either larger, smaller or outside the area. No respondents provided information on the current or future sizes of premises.

**B10. If you have indicated in the previous question that you are moving premises outside the Much Birch area or are considering doing so, what are your reasons?**

One respondent answered this question as follows:

*Appropriate office and dry storage facility and access to <specific type of> facilities.*

**B11. Are there any planning constraints or barriers either locally or nationally that will or may prevent your business from developing during the next 10 years?**

There were nine answers provided to this question as shown below:

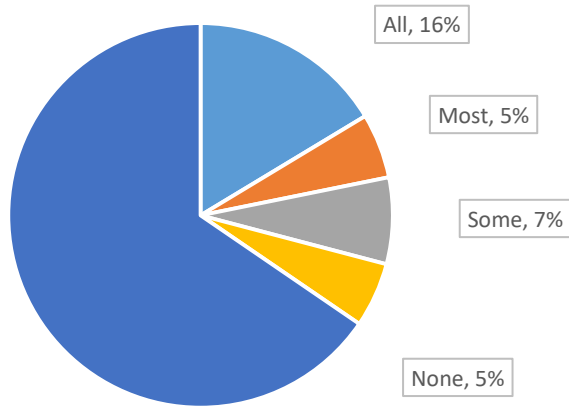
B11. Are there any planning constraints or barriers ...
<i>Low cost housing is difficult to implement due to unreasonable planning conditions. Look up 'The Old Workshop' planning permission. A bike shed as a condition...really!??!</i>
<i>Road network. Western power/central networks have not got sufficient up to date infrastructure to cope with accepting or importing electricity produced in this area therefore surplus energy produced is being wasted.</i>
<i>Yes - planning permission restrictions.</i>
<i>No. (x 4)</i>
<i>Not known.</i>
<i>N/A</i>

**B12. Does your workforce live local to the Much Birch area?**

	Number	%
All	9	16%
Most	3	5%
Some	4	7%
None	3	5%
Respondents	19	
Not answered	36	65%
Survey respondents	55	

Of the 19 respondents who answered this question, 9 indicated that all their workforce live in the Much Birch area.

**B12. Does your workforce live local to the Much Birch area?**



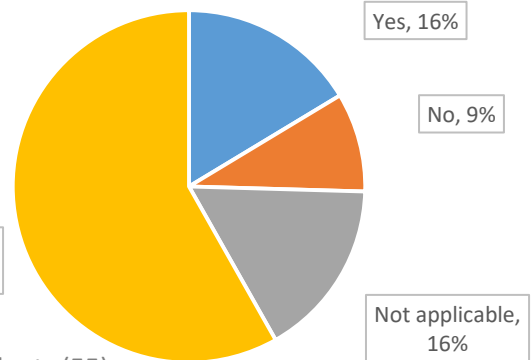
Base:  
All survey respondents (55)

**B13. Are transport links suitable for those who have to travel?**

	Number	%
Yes	9	16%
No	5	9%
Not applicable	9	16%
Respondents	23	
Not answered	32	58%
Survey respondents	55	

9 of the 23 respondents to this question said that the transport links were suitable while 5 indicated that they were not.

**B13. Are transport links suitable for those who have to travel?**

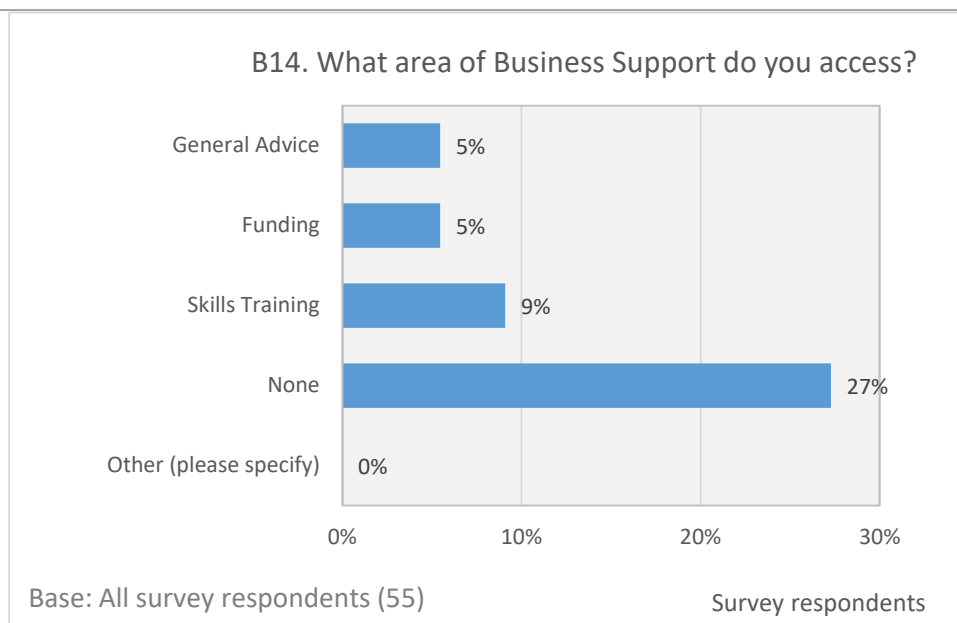


Base:  
All survey respondents (55)

**B14. What area of Business Support do you access?**

	Number	%
General Advice	3	5%
Funding	3	5%
Skills Training	5	9%
None	15	27%
Other (please specify)	0	0%
Respondents	21	

21 respondents answered this question, most of whom (15) indicated that they did not access any business support services, while 5 accessed *skills training* and 3 each *general advice* and *funding*.



**B15. What areas of Business Support would you like to access to help your business grow?** e.g. online business directory, access to business forum, etc.

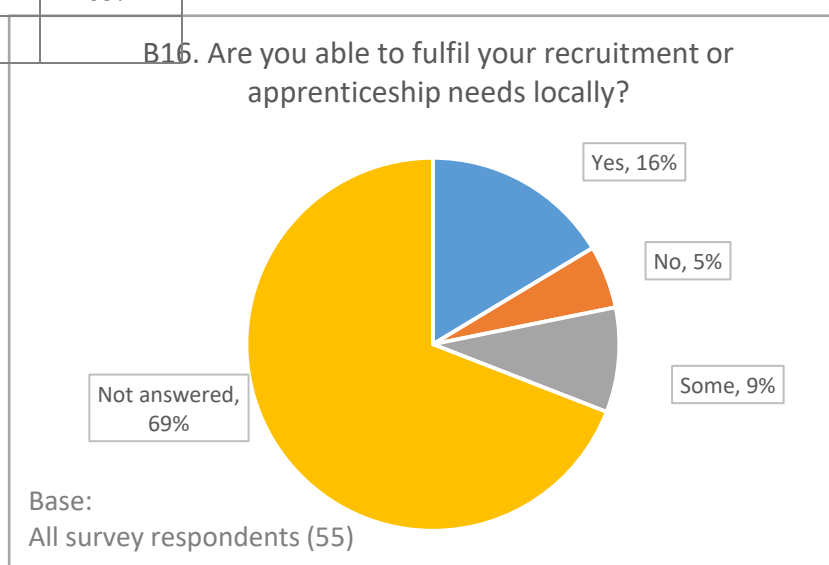
Three answers were provided:

B15. What areas of Business Support would you like to access ...
<i>Local business forum.</i>
<i>Local community business forum.</i>
<i>None.</i>

**B16. Are you able to fulfil your recruitment or apprenticeship needs locally?**

	Number	%
Yes	9	16%
No	3	5%
Some	5	9%
Respondents	15	
Not answered	38	69%
Respondents to survey	55	

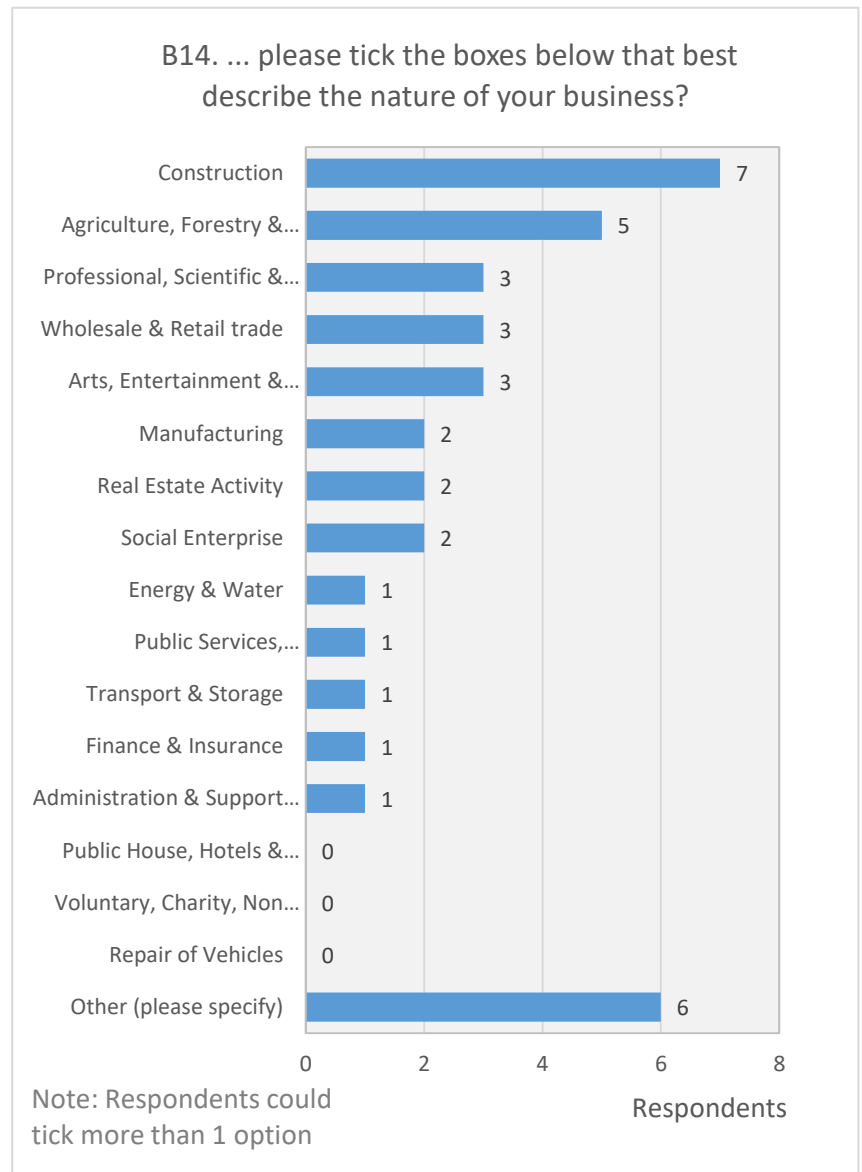
Of the 15 respondents to this question, most (9) said they could fill their recruitment and apprenticeship needs locally and a further 5 said they were able to fill some of them locally.



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**B17. In order to demonstrate that public consultation is representative of our community, would you please tick the boxes below that best describe the nature of your business?**

	Number
Construction	7
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	5
Professional, Scientific & Technical	3
Wholesale & Retail trade	3
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	3
Manufacturing	2
Real Estate Activity	2
Social Enterprise	2
Energy & Water	1
Public Services, Education & Health	1
Transport & Storage	1
Finance & Insurance	1
Administration & Support services	1
Public House, Hotels & Restaurants	0
Voluntary, Charity, Non Profit making	0
Repair of Vehicles	0
Other (please specify)	6
Respondents	28
Not answered	27



The following 6 other natures of business were specified.

Other natures of business
<...> Architect and <another business>
Consultancy.
Domestic cleaning services.
Farming.
I.T.
Sport leisure.

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**B18. Please use the space below to add any further comments you may have that have not been covered in the survey?**

Two comments were provided:

B18. ... Any further comments you may have that have not been covered in the survey?
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<i>We advertise for staff locally, but very rarely get a response. Need to attract younger workers/families to the area.</i>
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<i>Whilst it is good to preserve the locality in all aspects we also need to have an openness and acceptance to change to support the economy and local businesses of the future.</i>
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\*\*\*\*\* End of Report \*\*\*\*\*