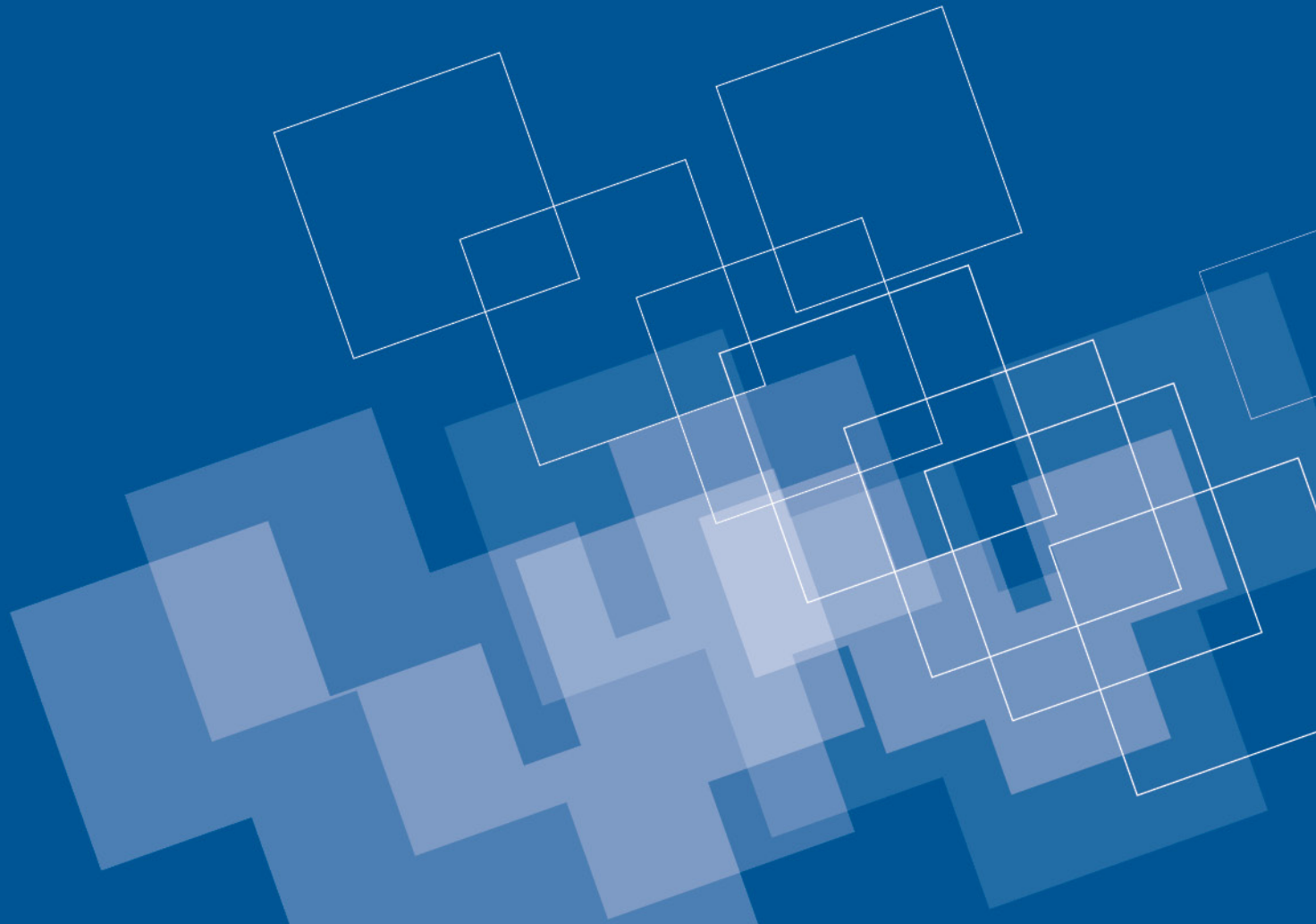




East Lothian
Council

BUSINESS BASE SURVEY

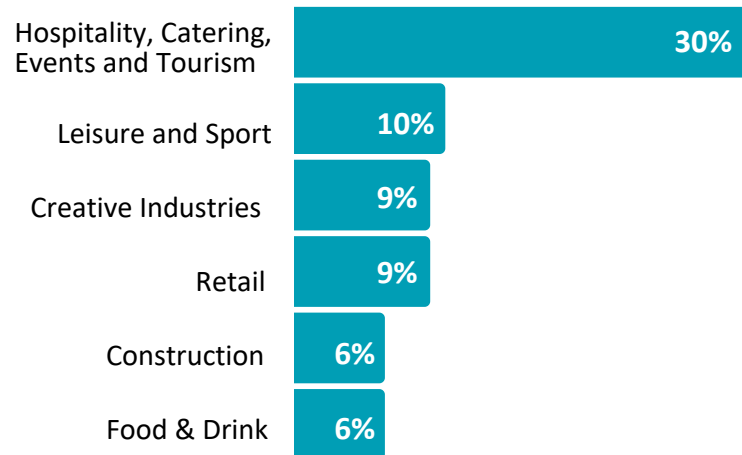
2023 Results



East Lothian Council undertook a business base survey between 14/09/2023 and 24/12/2023 to understand business sentiment and help inform the new **Local Economy Strategy**.

There were **107 responses**.

The largest sector was Hospitality, Catering, Event Management and Tourism at 30% followed by Leisure and Sport at 10% and then creative industries and Retail both at 9%.

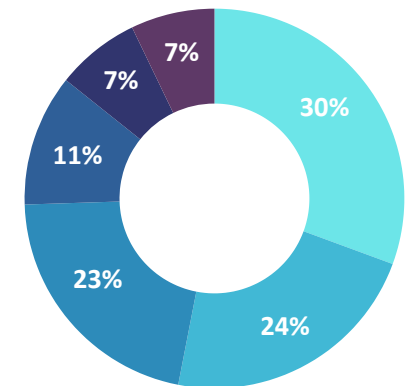


50% were a limited company, 29% were sole traders followed by 10% in a partnership.



The largest response 30% came from the Dunbar and East Linton Ward, followed by 22% Haddington and Lammermuir.

- Dunbar and East Linton
- Haddington and Lammermuir
- North Berwick Coastal
- Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerry
- Musselburgh
- Preston Seton Gosford



Of those who employed **full-time staff**, 65% employed between 1 – 4 and 35% employed more than 5.

Of those who employed **part time staff** 62% employed between 1 – 4 and 38% employed more than 5.

89% operate fair work practices.



Looking ahead to the next 12 months:

- 70% foresee static **staffing levels** with 23% foreseeing an increase and 7% a decrease.



- 48% expect their **net profit** to increase, 20% anticipate that it will stay the same and 38% predict a decrease.

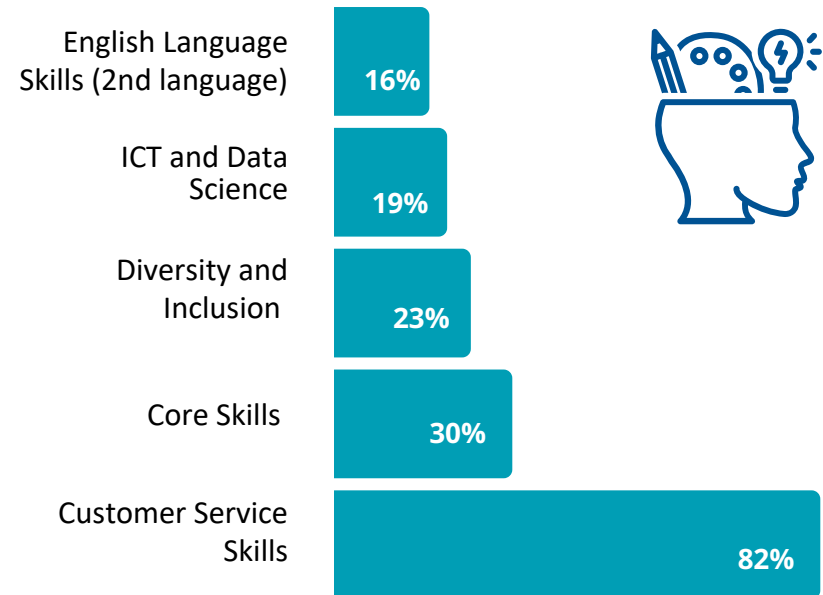


- 51% predict an increase in **turnover**, 34% predict that it will stay the same and 15% forecast a decrease.

- 58% think **market share** will remain static, 34% think that it will increase, with 8% predicting a decrease.



Of those requiring **skills / experience** in employees, the following were most in demand:



Only 30% were aware of **East Lothian Works**, the County's employability hub providing information and advice to employers and those looking for or moving on in work.



When asked about **support for businesses** the following were rated important or very important.

34% One to One Business Advice 

Business Loan **37%**

28% Business Networking Events

Business Training Events **26%**

31% Business Directory



Introductory Guides to Council
Departments **31%**



The most in demand topics for **seminars / workshops** were:

44% Social Media 

Business Planning **34%**

34% Marketing and Selling 



Strategic Planning **29%**

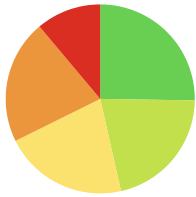
We wanted to know the **key concerns** facing businesses.

Key:  No concern  Slight concern  Moderate concern  Quite concerned  Very concerned

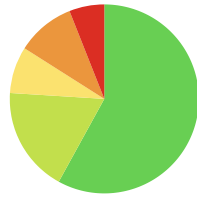
Sustainability



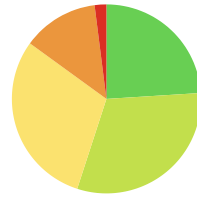
Cashflow



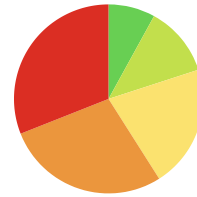
Rising Cost of Rent



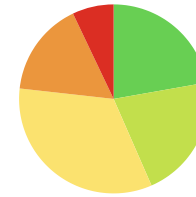
IT Security /
Being Hacked



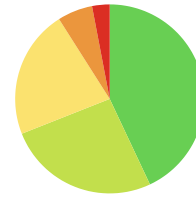
Rising Costs of Goods
and Services



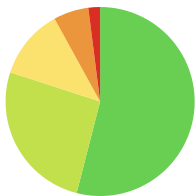
Poor Broadband
Speed / Connectivity



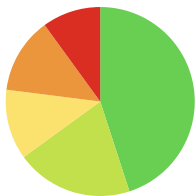
Supply Chain
Issues



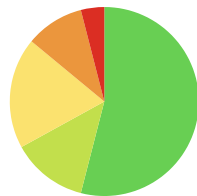
Inability to Pay
Suppliers



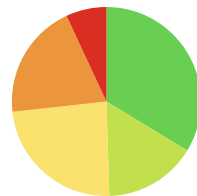
VAT / HMRC
Payments



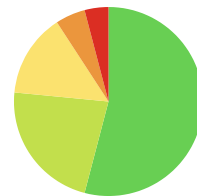
Competition from
Online Providers



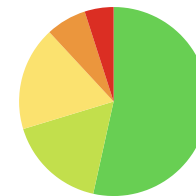
Lack of Trained /
Qualified Staff**



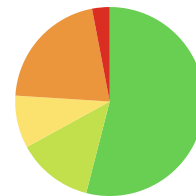
Employment
Legislation**



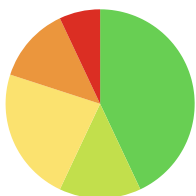
Availability of
Local Training



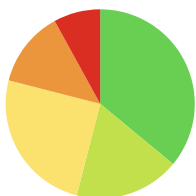
Transport Provisions for
Staff and Consumers**



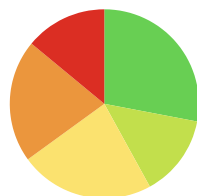
Packaging and The
Environment



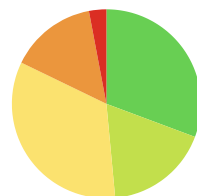
Transitioning to
Net Zero Carbon



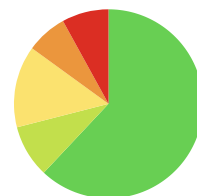
Climate Change



Advances in
Technology e.g. AI



New Legislation



The top three were:

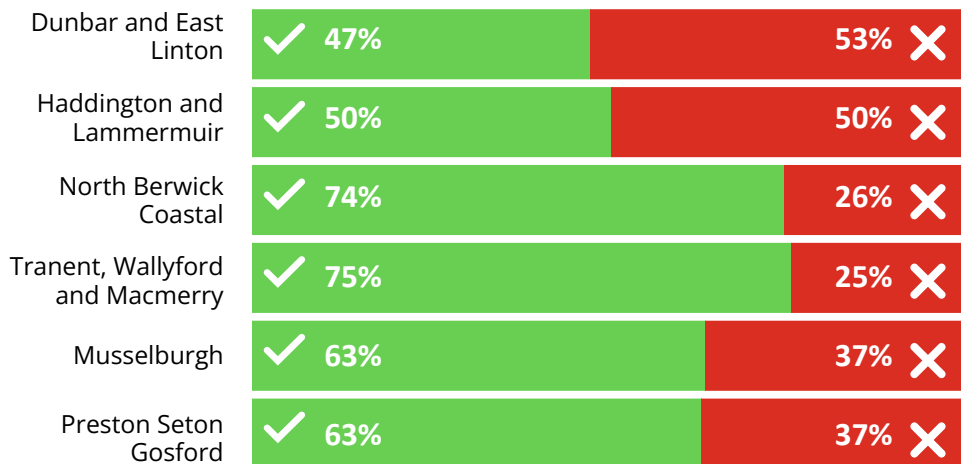
- **Rising Costs** with 59% quite or very concerned.
- **Cash Flow** with 33% quite or very concerned.
- **Climate Change** with 35% quite or very concerned.

**Results excluding sole traders

How aware were respondents of these East Lothian Council **business support** services?

Service	Aware
Business Gateway	86%
Economic Development	72%
East Lothian Works	49%

We wanted to know what **digital connectivity** was like for businesses. 59% have access to superfast broadband which leaves a significant number without.



We wanted to know what businesses think of East Lothian as a **place to do business**.

90% rated the region as good or excellent.

Of those who have used East Lothian Council services, most had experience of Business Gateway, Economic Development and Planning.

95% rated **Business Gateway** good or excellent, 92% rated **Economic Development** good or excellent, and 60% rated **Planning** good or excellent.



Of those who have engaged with other Council services including Licensing, Environmental Health and others **80%** rated their experience **good or excellent**.

In relation to **business growth plans** 80% indicated that their current property would be suitable.

Of those looking to move 29% cited the need for a larger property to accommodate growth.

Planning permission is required for a range of activities and businesses who responded are in general aware of this.

91% were aware of the need in relation to alterations to business premises, 77% for new signage, and 78% for repainting in conservation area.



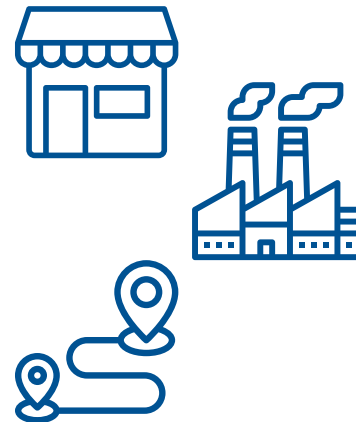
Knowing what businesses may need to enable growth is important for future planning.

25% of respondents said they would need to relocate within the next 5 years with the main reasons being larger property, recent or projected growth and a more modern property.

Of those looking to relocate 29% are looking for office space, 39% for industrial, 19% for retail and 13% for land for new build.

If we remove sole traders from these questions the results are: 28% for office, 32% for industrial, 24% retail and 16% for land.

Of those looking for premises, **small commercial units** for rent were most in demand with 22% answering important or very important followed by **small offices** at 16%.



Of those looking to relocate the most popular ward was Haddington and Lammermuir 29% followed by Dunbar and East Linton and Musselburgh at 23%.



We wanted to know what businesses felt would help them the most.

Business rates relief

Drop in sessions



Networking events at a wider range
of locations and varied times



Improve transport connectivity

Allocate more resources to
deliver business support



Improve response times

Keep up to date



Join our mailing list when you add your
business to our Business Directory at
www.eastlothian.com

Follow our socials:



Biz East Lothian
Business Gateway East Lothian



BizEastlothian
BGEastLothian



Business Gateway East Lothian

Contact us:

economicdevelopment@eastlothian.gov.uk

01620 827 827