Using evidence to shape better services

Measurement Evaluation Learning

Tameside Metropolitan Council

Tameside Metropolitan Borough

Business Survey 2015

Full Report

18th January 2016

Measurement ◆ Evaluation ◆ Learning

Contents

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Executive summary

This report provides the findings from a telephone survey of 503 owners, directors and senior managers of businesses in Tameside undertaken between 21st October and 15th November 2015.

Business Confidence and Growth Plans

Business confidence, over the last 12 to 18 months, is relatively high with over two-fifths (44%) of businesses indicating that their sales turnover had increased. This is comparable with the 2014 Greater Manchester Chamber business survey where 43% of businesses indicated an increase in sales turnover in the past 12 months. One in three (35%) Tameside businesses also indicated increases in profitability, while over one-quarter (27%) claimed they had increased staffing levels in the same 12 to 18 month period.

Although business confidence was relatively high, less than one-fifth (17%) of businesses have any formal plans or a strategy in place to grow their business moving forward. A further one-quarter (24%) indicate that they have informal growth plans. Nevertheless, some seven in ten of those with growth plans (formal or informal) expect growth to come from local markets, some two-fifths from new products or investing in new production facilities, one-fifth from trading overseas and one in ten through mergers and acquisitions.

To support their growth plans, one-third (33%) of businesses are intending to invest in capital equipment in the coming 12 months, while one-quarter (25%) will be investing in premises and around one-fifth (22%) in research and development. Around one in ten (14%) anticipate relocation as part of their growth plans, with most indicating their current premises are too small.

When given a pre-coded list of common barriers to growth, covering economic, regulatory and environmental factors, just over two-fifths (44%) of businesses identified at least one barrier. The most common barriers are from competition in domestic markets and an inability to access finance.

Recruitment and Skills

When asked about any workforce Skill deficit, overall around one-quarter (23%) indicate that they have current skills missing from their business. For 9% this is a lack of IT skills, 8% lack management skills and 6% technical or customer handling skills. When considering future recruitment activity, around three in ten (29%) businesses anticipate experiencing skills gaps; one in ten believe that candidates will lack job specific skills, 9% technical skills and 8% customer handling skills. One in ten businesses indicate that they have current vacancies that are proving hard to fill.

Awareness of Tameside's two grant support schemes for young people and apprenticeships is relatively high at 56%. While awareness may be high, currently just 15% of businesses indicate they offer formal apprenticeship posts from local colleges or training providers, while 7% offer managerial or technical apprenticeship posts. For those businesses likely to offer apprenticeship posts in the future, a greater proportion of small and medium sized businesses indicate an intention to do so.

Business Support

When given a list of potential problems relating to seeking support and advice, one-quarter of businesses indicate they had experienced at least one issue in the last 12 to 18 months; finding the time to seek or access advice is the most prevalent issue at 10%. More encouragingly, just under one-half (46%) of businesses indicated an interest in at least one topic relating to the provision of advice and support. Help with recruiting staff came top with 23% of businesses interested in this area, while 22% would like help with growth ideas.

When asked about awareness of business support organisations, the Chamber of Commerce is the most recognised organisation with 80% of businesses having heard of it. The Federation of Small Businesses is recognised by 67% and Trade Associations or Trade Bodies by 34%. Less than one-quarter of businesses could identify other organisations.

Infrastructure

Looking at satisfaction with key infrastructure aspects in and around Tameside, the motorway network achieves the highest satisfaction rating; 71% of business indicate they are very or fairly satisfied with this aspect. This is followed by internet and broadband speeds at 66%, the bus network at 63% and the train network at 59%. Satisfaction is lowest with roads; just 45% suggest they are very or fairly satisfied.

Supporting the local economy and community

When asked a series of questions relating to Corporate Social Responsibility; two-thirds (65%) of businesses claim to be currently reducing their material usage and minimising waste, around half (48%) claim they support local community groups and charities, while similar proportions indicate they are a Living Wage employer and promote local trading (both at 47%).

Supporting local school activities, such as hosting industry/careers talks, providing work experience, providing support for governors/management or supporting curriculum activities such as reading, literacy or enterprise is undertaken by two out of ten businesses. Just under one-fifth (17%) indicate they currently help local residents get back into work.

Conclusions and recommendations

The above findings provide a useful snapshot of business views on the current trading environment and challenges faced by businesses in achieving growth. While the majority of businesses report either an increased or static sales and profitability compared to the last 12 to 18 months, around one-fifth have seen business decline. Those with declining sales tend to be micro sized enterprises (those with up to 9 employees) and those operating within the accommodation and food services sector. Reasons for declining sales and profitability were not explored in this survey and the Council may therefore wish to consider further investigation into the challenges faced by these businesses. For example, very few micro businesses have formal written growth plans (just 8%), while this group are proportionally more likely to be experiencing declining sales.

Looking at staff skills, a proportionally higher per cent of small and medium sized enterprises indicate that they currently have skills gaps in their business. These businesses expect that finding candidates with the right job specific skills will be a challenge when recruiting, particularly given that some still have hard to fill job vacancies. Locally, Tameside's skills levels reflect a lack of higher level skills, and is likely to impact on the availability of a local skills pool that matches business needs. The establishment of Tameside's Employment and Skills team is now making inroads to working with the business community and education and training provision partners. This is to ensure that advice, training and education of Tameside's young people is focused on the key growth sectors, provides the right skills for the future, as well as working with partnerships such as JCP and Ingeus on supporting those currently unemployed back into work.

While over three-quarters of businesses surveyed overall said they did not have any skills gaps, a number of businesses still indicated they would like assistance with recruiting staff with the right skills (around one-third for small and Medium enterprises).

Awareness of the Tameside support scheme grants for young people and apprenticeships is relatively high at 56%; however the survey did not ask or measure interest in these schemes. While awareness is high, relatively few enterprises currently 'claim' to offer formal apprenticeship posts from local colleges or training providers within their business (15%). Around a further three in ten (28%) indicate a likelihood to do so in the future. For managerial or technical based apprenticeships, just 7% indicate this is something they currently provide, although one-fifth (20%) suggest they intend to in the future. These findings may provide an opportunity for the Council to further communicate and promote their young person and apprenticeship schemes, particularly if linked to a 'recruit for attitude, train for skills' message. The findings also suggest that small and medium sized enterprises, particularly in the traditional manufacturing and construction sectors, would provide a reasonable target of opportunity for any further promotional activity.

Awareness of Tameside specific support organisations, such as Live Work Invest (and blue orchid), is low at around one-fifth or less, and therefore more work is required to grow awareness if these are to become effective business communication and support channels. This is particularly the case when considering that almost one-half of businesses (46%) indicate interest in one or more of the listed business support themes. Again, small and medium enterprises show proportionally greater interest than micro or large businesses, as do those in the construction sector and younger businesses with up to three years trading.

Effective signposting of support services is therefore imperative. The vast majority of businesses have heard of the Chamber of Commerce (80%) and the Federation of Small Businesses (67%). These organisations might provide a useful communication channel to promote Council services so long as these complement and do not conflict with the existing business support offer.

Introduction

Background

The recently published[1] results of the 2014 Greater Manchester Business Survey confirmed the trend shown in the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce's Quarterly Economic Survey over the past year; the seeming upturn in business optimism was solid and ongoing. Businesses reported increases in employment, turnover and profitability, with many forecasting this to continue into 2015 and beyond.

This upturn in the economy is taking place against a backdrop of huge change for the public sector in general, specifically for local authorities and the city region of Greater Manchester in particular. As local authority budgets continue to be significantly reduced, and with the ongoing delivery of services coming increasingly under pressure, the savings required go beyond what can be achieved by back office efficiencies alone. These budget reductions are set against the opportunity presented by the 2014 announcement of "Devo Manc" and the ongoing discussion around greater levels of control over a broad range of areas being passed down to the GM City Region, not least in the Chancellor's Autumn statement on the spending review.

Whilst the economic upturn is undoubtedly starting to show in Tameside, with companies such as Culimeta Saveguard, Challenger Site Services, Grafea and Truck Craft Bodies thriving, a more quantitative evidence base is needed. This approach will guide the Council's cross cutting economic development efforts, to inform policy on planning, strategic infrastructure and investment, to help align skills provision with economic demand and to provide a firm footing for Tameside to best position itself in conversations and decision making, to set Greater Manchester wide priorities.

To provide the necessary evidence for the action, needed to ensure that Tameside remains a great place to base a business, it was determined that a survey focused purely on the Borough, representative of the area's business base and providing a snapshot of the economic picture in the borough at this pivotal moment in time, was required. To this end, the survey was targeted at deepening understanding of the borough's business base, their recent business performance, their skills needs, growth ambitions and challenges, as well as their opinion of Tameside as a place to do business in terms of infrastructure and availability of the staff they need.

This report outlines the results of that survey.

[1] October 2015

Method of approach

M·E·L Research Ltd, were commissioned by Tameside Council to design and undertake a telephone survey of businesses. The council provided a database of businesses to be surveyed which, following de-duplication and cleansing, included 3,168 contact telephone numbers.

A questionnaire was developed and scripted to support a Computer Aided Telephone Interview (CATI) survey. Telephone interviews were undertaken with the business owner, director or other senior manager, with no more than one interview undertaken per business. A total of 503 interviews were conducted between 21st October and 15th November 2015.

Reporting conventions

The output from the survey is in the form of conventional cross-tabulations. These provide results for the total sample and various sub-groups of the profile (e.g. length of trading, business location, business sector).

This report provides the findings from the 503 businesses that participated in a telephone interview. Data has been weighted to reflect the known Tameside business population by business sector using the 2007 Standard Industrial classification (SIC) of economic activities from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) 2014 data.

2007 SIC CATEGORY	Achieved sample	Weighted sample
A. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	0	0
B. Mining and Quarrying	0	0
C. Manufacturing	85	54
D. Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	0	0
E. Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	1	2
F. Construction	37	70
G. Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	142	102
H. Transportation and Storage	16	22
I. Accommodation and Food Service Activities	37	36
J. Information and Communication	10	22
K. Financial and Insurance Activities	5	8
L. Real Estate Activities	7	12
M. Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	24	66
N. Administrative and Support Service Activities	23	34
O. Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	0	0
P. Education	24	6
Q. Human Health and Social Work Activities	22	22
R. Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	9	6
S. Other Service Activities	47	29
T. Activities of Households as Employers; Undifferentiated Goods, etc	2	1
Not specified	12	0
Base:	**503**	**491**

Due to the relatively small sample sizes in some business sectors, and to assist in analysis, sectors have been clustered into the following 7 primary categories:

BUSINESS SECTOR	Sample	Weighted
Manufacturing	85	54
Construction	37	70
Wholesale, Retail, Repair of Vehicles, Transportation and Storage	158	123
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	37	36
IT, Finance, Real Estate, Professional, Technical, Admin & Support	69	141
Education, Health and Social Work Activities	46	28
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other service activities	58	36
Not specified/other	13	3
Base:	**503**	**491**

The 'base' or 'n' figure referred to in each chart and table is the unweighted number of businesses responding to the question. Base sizes shown related to the weighted sample.

Definition of business size by number of employees

Throughout the report we have used the following convention to describe a business by the number of employees:

Business description	Number of employees
Micro	0 to 9
Small	10 to 49
Medium	50 to 249
Large	250+

These definitions are based upon an organisation's total workforce, including any non-Tameside based sites.

Statistical significance

When comparing the results within a sub-group (e.g. business size), the differences in results are tested for statistical significance using z tests (95% confidence level). This way we know whether the differences are 'real' or whether they could have occurred by chance. The test reflects the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. Where statistically significant differences exist, the most pertinent comparisons have been included within this report.

Given the small sample sizes of some sub-groups, particularly around business sector, 'broad differences' may have been identified. These results should be considered as 'indicative only' and not statistically significant.

Rounding

Due to computer rounding, numbers and percentages displayed visually on graphs in the report may not always add up to 100% and may differ slightly when compared to the text. The figures reported in the text will be correct. Where percentages are not shown in charts, these are 3% or less.

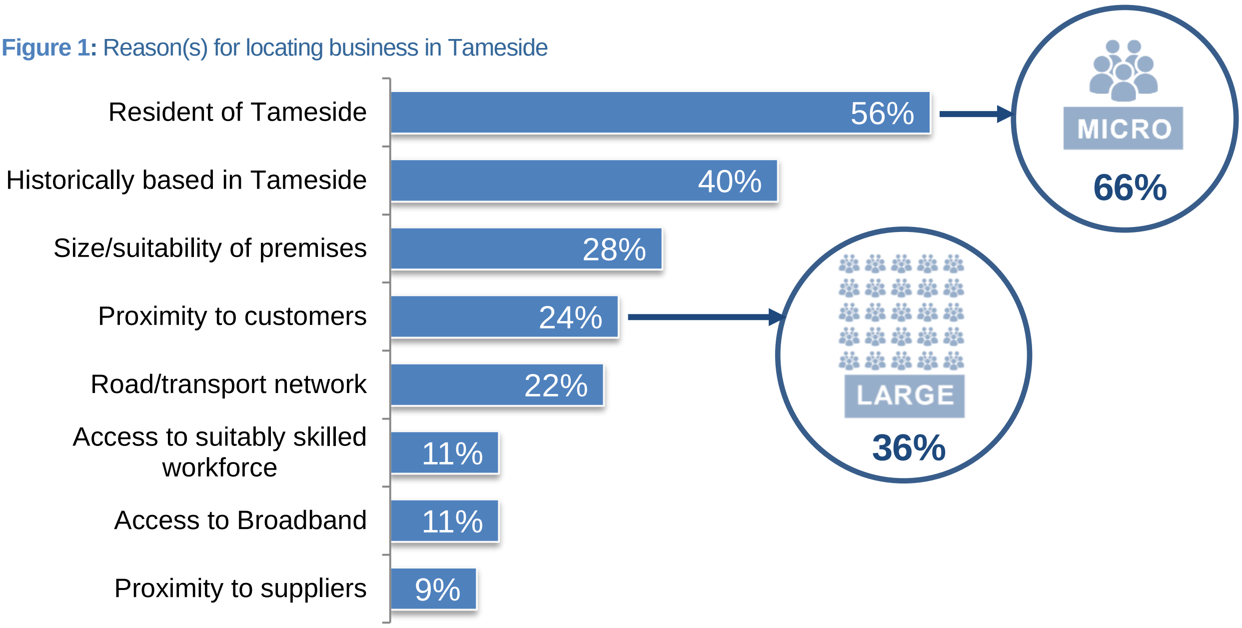
2015 Business Survey Results

Business Location

Reason for locating business in Tameside

The primary reason given for being located in Tameside, by owners, directors and senior managers of participating businesses, is that they are a resident in the Borough; some three-fifths of respondents indicate this as a reason. A further two-fifths indicate they have historically been based in the area.

Figure 1: Reason(s) for locating business in Tameside



Base: 503

Being a resident is particularly the case for micro (66%) businesses with a significantly higher proportion selecting this reason compared to small (45%), medium (16%) and large (18%) businesses.

Whilst being a Tameside resident is the most common reason for micro, small and medium business, for large sized business, being within close proximity of their customers plays a more important role; a higher proportion (36%) select this option compared to micro (21%) and small businesses (27%). However, these are indicative findings and care should be exercised when interpreting this finding due to the small sample size for large businesses (just 32).

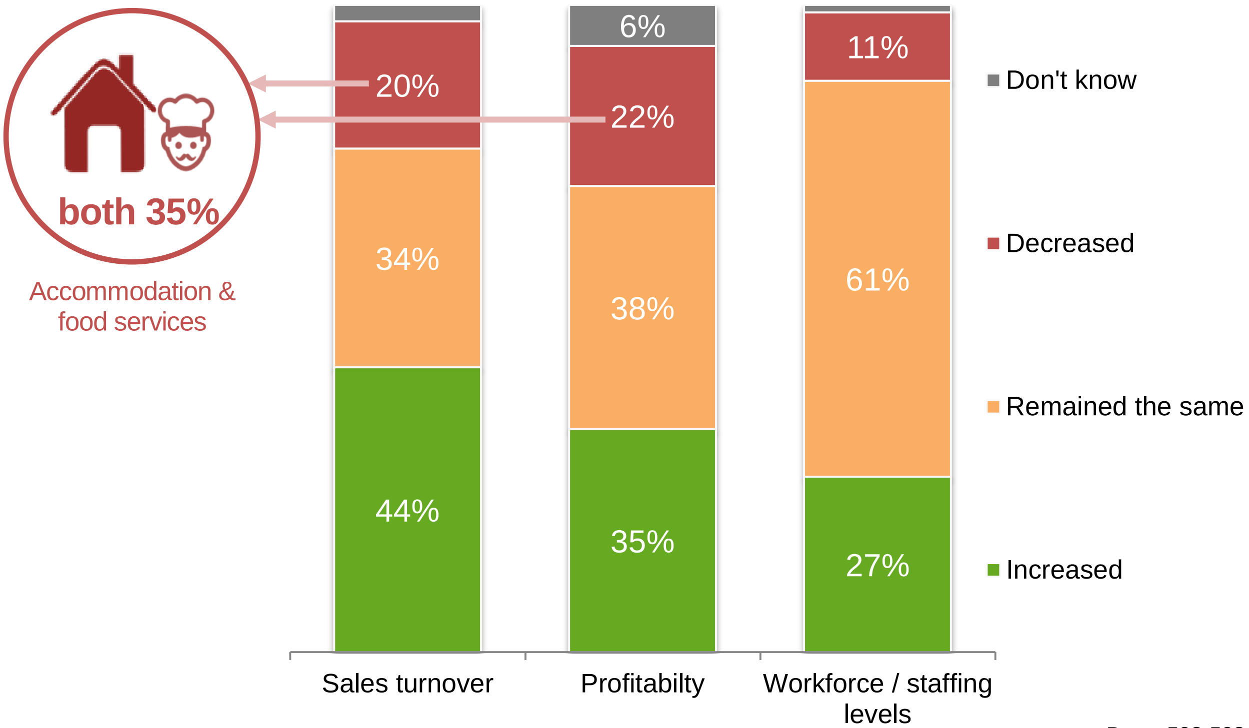
The younger the business, the higher the proportion that indicate that being a Tameside resident is a reason for the business location, with 69% of those with three years or less trading and 65% of those trading for 4-10 years, reporting this as a reason compared with 48% of businesses who have been trading for 11 years or more.

Business confidence

Turnover, profitability and staffing levels over last 12 to 18 months

Over the last 12 to 18 months, the business trading environment appears to have been mostly positive for the majority of businesses. Over two-fifths of businesses have seen their sales turnover increase in this period, with over one-third realising increases in profitability. Over one-quarter have taken on additional staff.

Figure 2: Experience of company turnover, profitability and staffing levels over the last 12 to 18 months



Base: 502-503

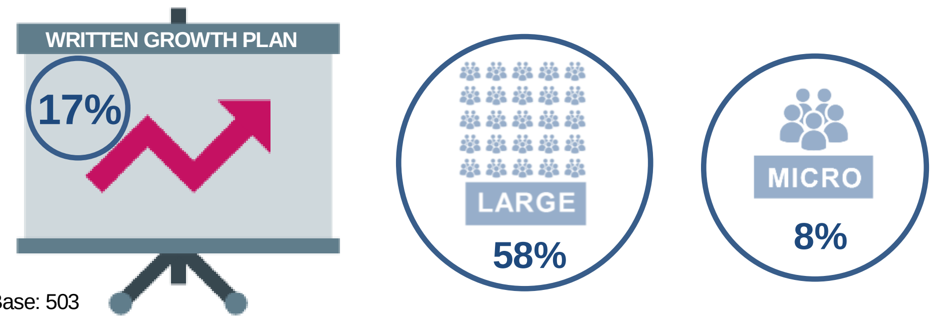
Nevertheless, around one-fifth of business report decreasing sales and profitability. The data suggests that these tend to be micro sized businesses; those with less than 10 employees. Businesses that have been trading for 10 years or more and those operating in the accommodation and food services sector are also proportionately more likely to have indicated a decrease in sales and profit.

Tameside's results here are almost exactly identical to the Greater Manchester (GM) 2014 survey results with, 43% of businesses indicating an upturn in turnover the previous year. The figures for GM also show that 53% of businesses were predicting further growth in the year ahead. Given this prediction it will be interesting to see if Tameside has slipped behind Greater Manchester in the findings of the 2015 GM survey, or if some of the optimism in last year's GM results has failed to be realised across the City region.

Growth plans

Around two-fifths (41%) of businesses claim to have plans to grow their business; 17% have a formal written plan or strategy while 24% have informal plans. The remaining 59% have no formal or informal plans (44%), are actively not planning to grow their business (8%) or simply could not answer (7%).

Figure 3: Have a formal written growth plan or strategy



Base: 503

Not surprisingly, proportionally more large businesses have a formal plan or strategy in place; 58% indicate this, with a further 21% indicating less formal plans. By comparison, just 31% of micro businesses indicate having any type of business growth plans; 8% being a formal written plan.

For those business with a growth plan, whether formal or informal, the majority anticipate their growth coming from local markets; 69% indicate this, rising to 85% for those in the construction sector. Some two-fifths (44%) intend to invest in new products or new production facilities, while around one-fifth (22%) are looking to expand in overseas markets. One in ten (11%) anticipate growth through mergers and acquisitions.

Figure 4: Areas that form part of growth plan or strategy

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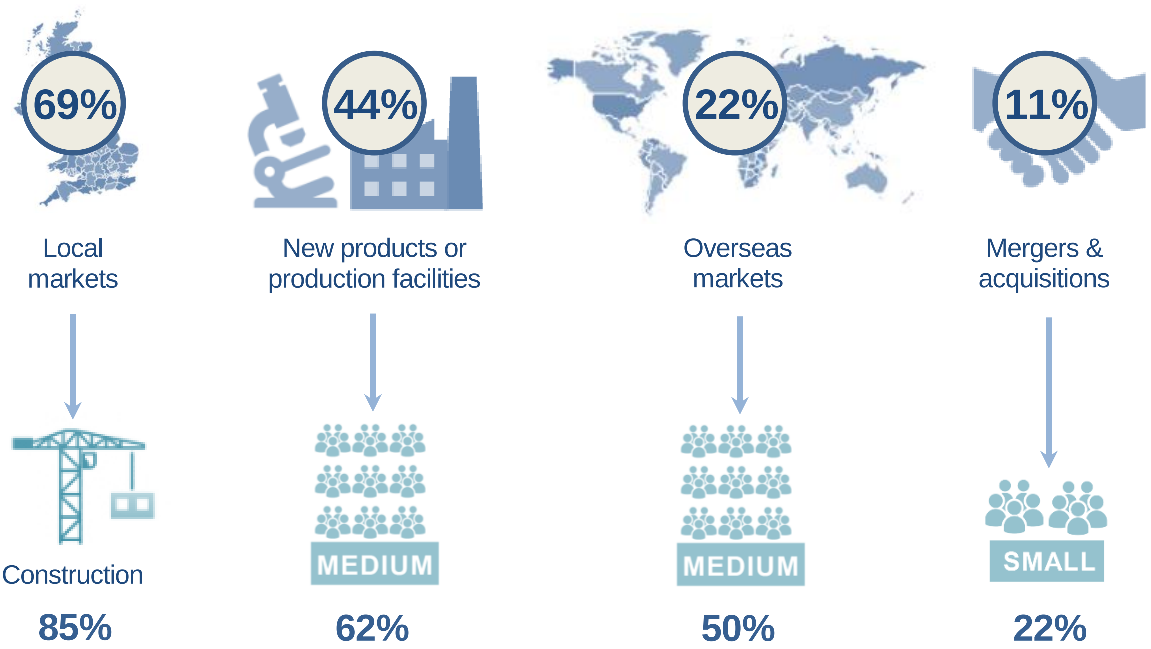


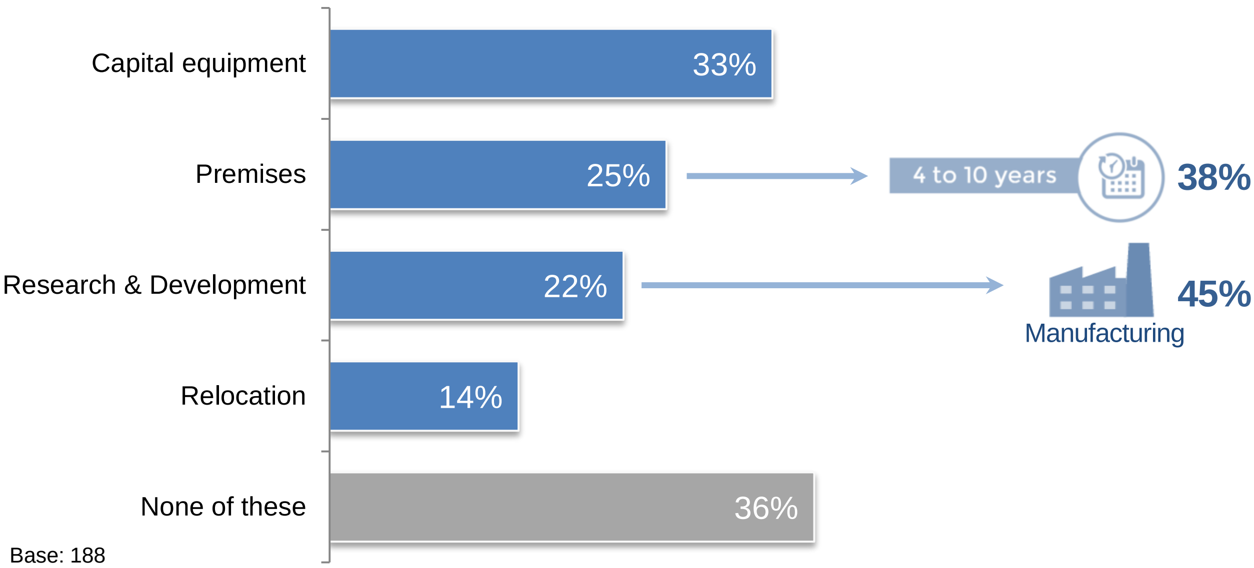
With much of the funded Business Support available focused on helping to realise growth plans, it is important that those businesses with growth plans be encouraged to access as much support as possible. Similarly, those businesses who perhaps do not have a growth plan in place at the moment, yet who have the greatest potential to grow, need to be pointed to the services available to help them.

Investment plans

For those business that have identified growth plans, overall around three-quarters (64%) have indicated an intention to invest in capital equipment, and/or their premises, and/or research and development and/or to relocate to support growth.

One-third (33%) of businesses with growth plans intend to invest in capital equipment, one-quarter (25%) intend to invest in their premises and around one-fifth (22%) plan to undertake research and development. Over one in ten (14%) are considering relocating to support business growth.

Figure 5: Areas of investment to support business growth plans



A greater proportion of those that have been trading in Tameside for between 4 and 10 years are intending to invest in their premises, while proportionally more of those in the manufacturing sector intend to undertake research and development activities to support growth. However, care should be exercised when considering these findings due to the very small sub-groups sizes.

Skill deficit(s) currently in business

Businesses were asked, from a pre-coded list, which skill deficit(s) currently exist in their business. Three-quarters (77%) do not believe that any skill deficits exist in their business. A lack of IT skills represents the largest skills gap for businesses with just under one in ten (9%) reporting this deficit.

Figure 6: Skill deficit which currently exist in business

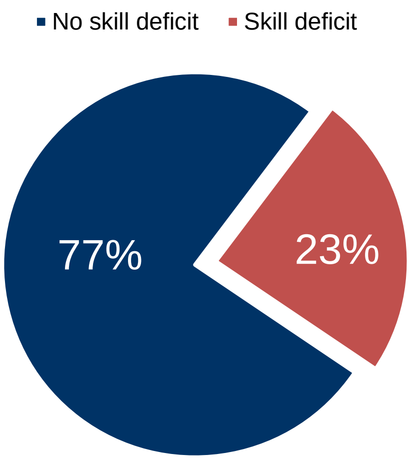
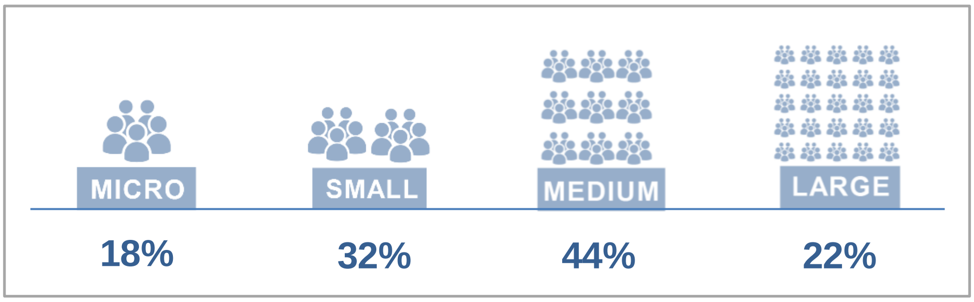


Table 1: Skill deficit(s) currently	%
Lack of IT skills	9%
Lack of management skills	8%
Lack of technical skills	6%
Lack of customer handling skills	6%
Lack of job specific skills	5%
Lack of communication skills	5%
Lack of literacy skills	5%
Lack of administration skills	5%
Lack of planning/organisation skills	5%
Lack of team working skills	4%
Lack of problem solving skills	4%
Lack of numeracy skills	4%
Lack of other skills	2%

Base: 502

It is small and medium size businesses that are disproportionately experiencing skills gaps; around one third of small businesses report having skills gaps currently, rising to over two-fifths of medium sized businesses.

Figure 7: Skill deficits currently exist in business by number of employees



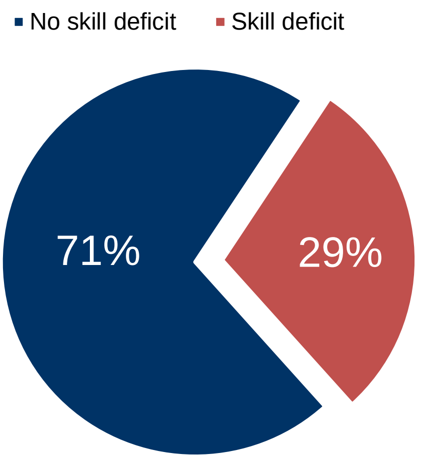
It should also be noted that proportionally fewer businesses that are solely based in Tameside are experiencing skills shortages currently (21%) compared to those businesses that also have a workforce outside of the Borough (34%).

It is not possible to reliably look at Skill deficit by business sector due to the relatively small sample sizes from some sectors.

Skill deficit(s) anticipated when recruiting

Around three in ten (29%) businesses anticipate that they will experience skill deficits when recruiting applicants in the future. Job specific skills and technical skills are the most likely to be missing, according to around one in ten businesses.

Figure 8: Skill deficits anticipated when recruiting

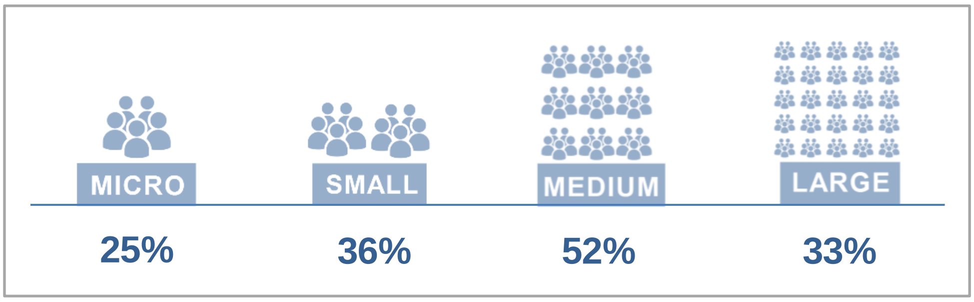


Base: 498

Table 2: Skill deficit(s) anticipated	%
Lack of job specific skills	10%
Lack of technical skills	9%
Lack of customer handling skills	8%
Lack of IT skills	7%
Lack of communication skills	7%
Lack of literacy skills	7%
Lack of numeracy skills	7%
Lack of team working skills	6%
Lack of problem solving skills	6%
Lack of management skills	5%
Lack of administration skills	5%
Lack of planning/organisation skills	5%
Lack of other skills	2%

Similar to current deficits, it is proportionately more small and medium sized businesses that anticipate Skill deficit when recruiting.

Figure 9: Skill deficits anticipated when recruiting by number of employees



Hard to fill vacancies

One in ten businesses (10%) indicate that they have vacancies at their site that are proving hard to fill; this rises to 26% of businesses that have indicated they currently have Skill deficit in their business. The primary barrier in filling these vacancies is a low number of applicants with the required skills or qualifications – two-thirds indicate this as the reason. Again, hard to fill vacancies are linked to business size, with a higher proportion of small (16%) and medium (24%) sized businesses indicating concerns.

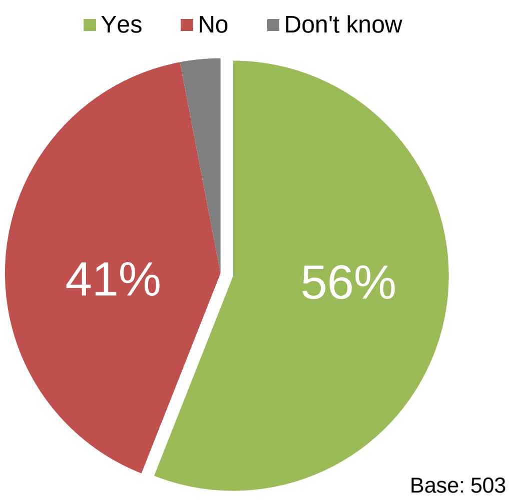
Awareness of young person and apprentice grants

Businesses were told that Tameside Council currently provides two types of support schemes aimed at supporting local businesses to employ a young person or apprentice:

> *"The Tameside Enterprise Grant is £1500 available for an employer taking on an apprenticeship, and if a business employs a 16 – 24 year old, who lives in the borough and is not in education, employment or training, the Tameside Youth Employment Scheme will fund six months of their salary."*

Awareness of the two schemes is relatively high with 56% of businesses indicating they had heard of these schemes prior to being surveyed. Interestingly, fewer large businesses were aware with just 33% indicating they knew of these schemes. Awareness is broadly similar for all remaining business sub-groups.

Figure 10: Whether aware of Tameside's two young people and apprentice support schemes



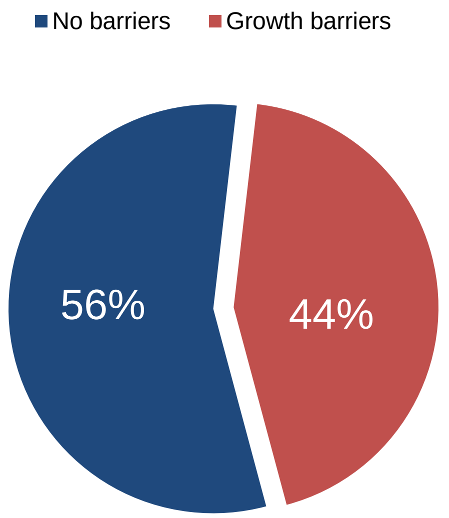
Barriers to growth

Businesses were asked to spontaneously identify any barriers that are preventing or restricting business growth; just over two-fifths (44%) did so.

Overall, 11% of all businesses surveyed identified competition in local domestic markets as being the greatest barrier to their growth. This figure rises to 22% for those in the accommodation and food services, indicating a greater challenge for this sector.

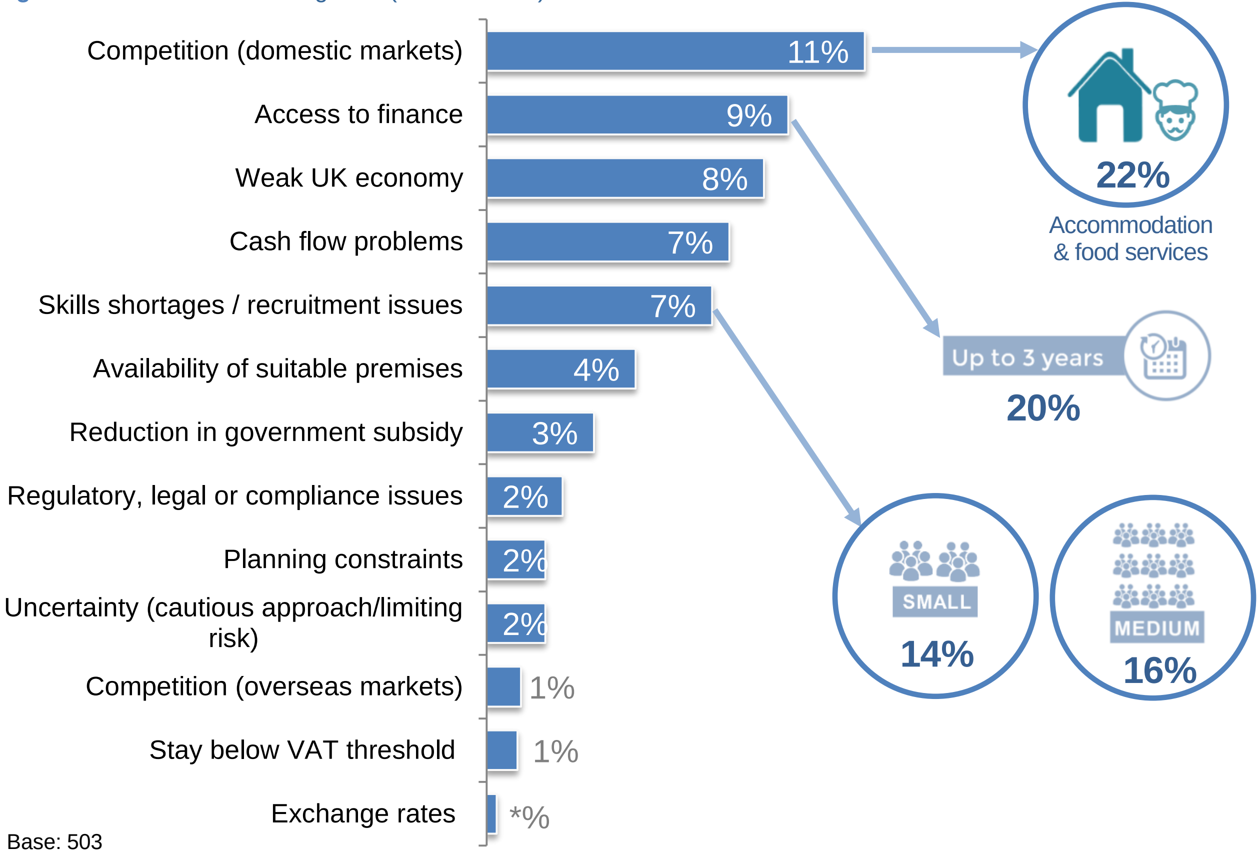
Access to finance affects 9% of businesses, indicatively rising to 20% for those that have been trading for 3 years or less. Staffing issues are a greater issue for small and medium sized businesses.

Figure 11: Barriers to business growth



Base: 503

Figure 12: Barriers to business growth (all businesses)



Base: 503

* Less than 0.5%

NB: Care should be exercised when interpreting the differences by business sub-groups due to the relatively small base sizes. They should be treated as indicative only.

Business support

Businesses were asked which support organisations and services that they had heard of from a pre-coded list. The Chamber of Commerce is the most widely mentioned service, recognised by 80% of businesses, followed by the Federation of Small Businesses at 67% and a Trade Association or Trade Body at 34%.

Fewer than one-quarter of business could recognise any of the other business support organisations.

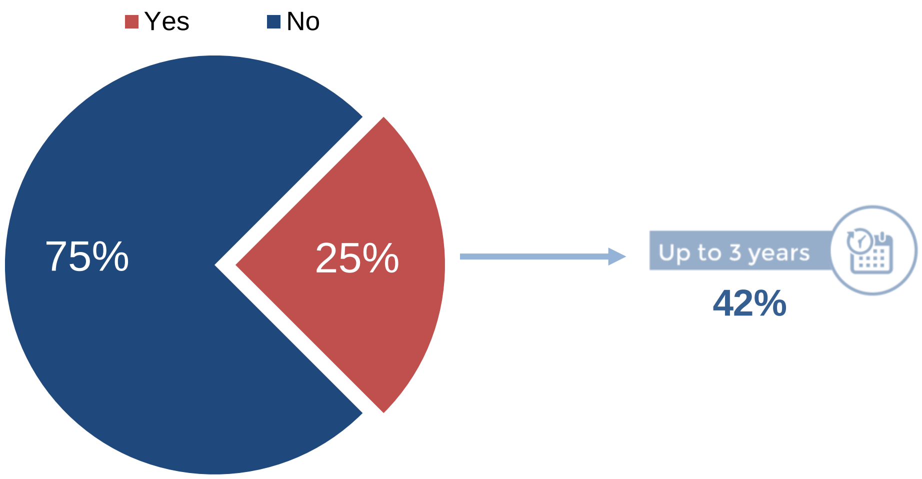
Table 3: Support organisations or services businesses have heard of

Organisation		Heard of
Chamber of Commerce	Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce Connect. Communicate. Create.	80%
Federation of Small Businesses	FSB	67%
Trade Association/Trade Body		34%
MIDAS - Invest in Manchester	MIDAS	23%
UK Trade and Investment (UKTI)	UK Trade & Investment	21%
Business Growth Hub (BGH)	business growth hub	21%
Tameside Live Work Invest	TAMESIDE LiveWORKInvest getting the most out of Tameside	17%
Blue Orchid	blueorchid	17%
Growth Accelerator	GrowthAccelerator	14%
Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)	mas manufacturing advisory service	11%
Other		1%
None of these		12%

Difficulties in accessing advice and support

From a pre-coded list of potential problems relating to seeking support and advice, one-quarter (25%) of businesses indicated they had experienced at least one of the listed issues in the last 12 to 18 months. This figure rises to 42% for business that have been trading for 3 years or less.

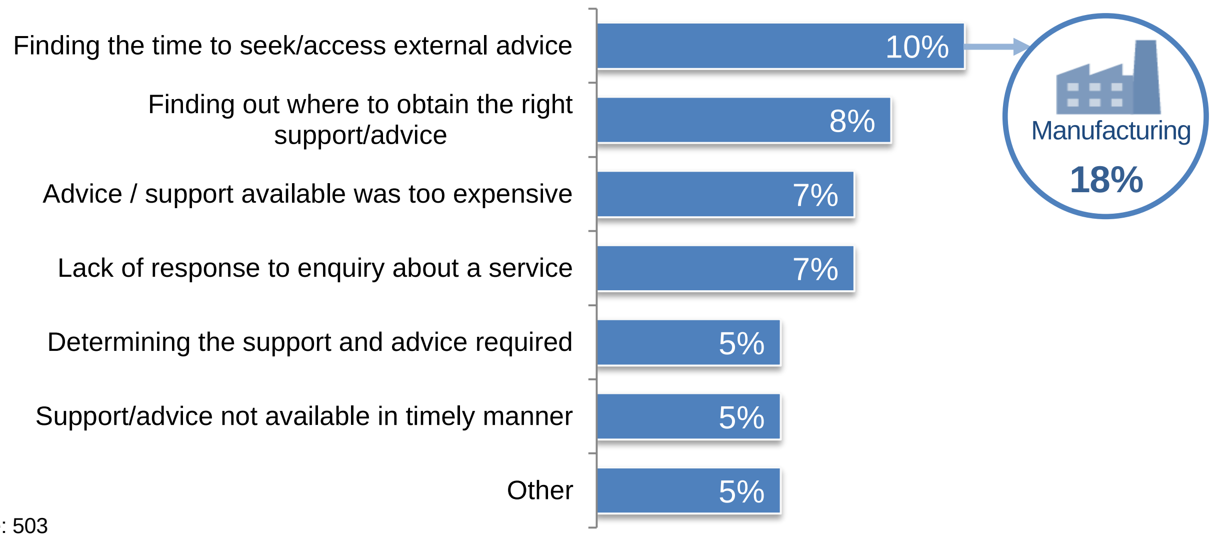
Figure 13: Whether experienced difficulties in seeking support and advice in last 12 to 18 months



Base: 503

Overall, finding the time to seek or access advice is the most prevalent issue identified by respondents; one in ten businesses indicate this, rising to 18% for those operating in the manufacturing sector. Finding out where to obtain advice is a greater challenge for younger businesses with 13% of those with up to 3 years trading indicating this.

Figure 14: Difficulties experienced in seeking support and advice in last 12 to 18 months (all businesses)

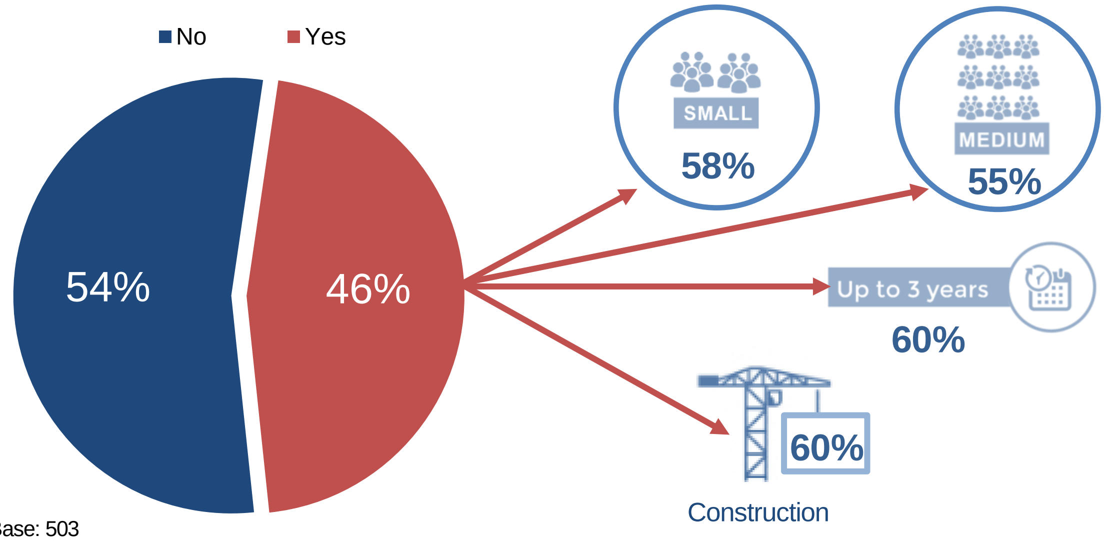


Base: 503

Interest in advice and support services

When provided with a list of potential business advice and support services, 46% of businesses indicate interest in at least one service. This figure rises to 58% for small and 55% for medium sized enterprises, to 60% for younger businesses that have been trading for 3 years or less and 60% for those operating in the construction industry.

Figure 15: Whether interested in a range of business advice and support services



Base: 503

Key areas of support surround recruiting staff with the right skills for the business with around one-fifth (23%) of businesses interested in this area. Similarly, around one-fifth would like help with ideas for growing their business (22%) and/or advice on accessing finance (19%).

Figure 16: Range of business advice and support services interested in

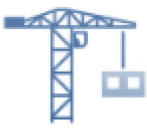
Base: 503

There are a number of statistically significant differences in views depending on business size, years trading and business sector. These provide an indication of the key opportunities that the council could consider for targeting business support activity and signposting.

- Help with recruiting staff with the right skills (32%)
- Advice on how to make sure your business is more environmentally friendly (28%)
- Mentoring by experienced business owners / managers (24%)

- Information on availability of business premises or development sites (34%)
- Help with recruiting staff with the right skills (33%)
- Advice on how to make sure your business is more environmentally friendly (28%)

- Access to finance (31%)
- Growth ideas (30%)
- Help with legal enquiries, e.g. Intellectual Property issues, employment law (24%)


Construction

- Information on or access to local supply chains (38%)
- Council supplied technical and professional advice services, such as planning, regulation, HR (32%)
- Advice on how to make sure your business is more environmentally friendly (32%)
- Access to finance (27%)
- Information on availability of business premises or development sites (27%)


Manufacturing

- Information on availability of business premises or development sites (27%)

With Manchester Growth Company entering into a new contracting period, the range of business support options available to businesses is in flux in the City region. With reductions in the budgets for business support coming from central government some business support services have either been completely abolished (Manufacturing Advisory Service) or are currently unsure of delivery (those bids where central government funds were being used for match funding against European funds).

It is positive to note that the Construction industry specifically values support around planning advice, as well as greater clarity on the location and availability of potential development sites. The Council has taken a lead with its Land Disposal Strategy and events such as the recently held Housing Summit. The upcoming Greater Manchester Spatial Strategy should further enable the sharing of this sort of information.

The Vision Tameside Meet the Buyer event, in conjunction with Carillion, is a start in helping local construction supply chains to access opportunities to supply the council. This may need to be extended to other sectors and areas of spend as well, with support in upskilling in bidding for Local Authority work, and the policies and processes needed to be in place to be successful.

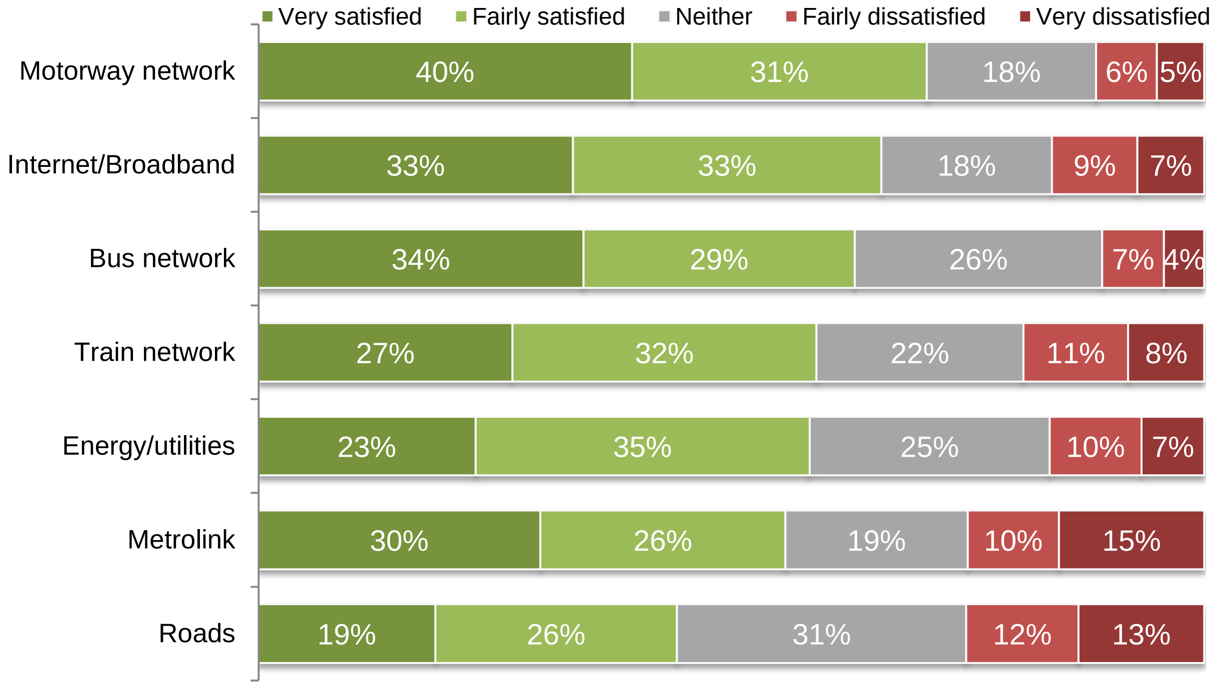
As the Borough's medium size businesses state that help with locating business premises or development sites is an important area of support for them, this needs to be addressed as a priority for the borough. Should the council not be able to offer this support in helping to identify locations in Tameside, these businesses could be seen as being at risk of relocating outside the borough.

Local infrastructure[2]

The motorway network achieves the highest satisfaction level from businesses when given a list of infrastructure attributes to rate; some seven in ten (71%) indicate they are either very or fairly satisfied. This is followed by internet and broadband speeds, with 66% of businesses satisfied, the bus network with 63% satisfied and the train network with 59% satisfied. Energy and utilities achieve a 58% satisfaction rating while Metrolink achieves 56%.

The lowest rating for all infrastructure aspects is roads with less than one-half of all businesses indicating satisfaction at just 45%.

Figure 17: Satisfaction with infrastructure aspects



Views are broadly similar for all business sub-groups.

At a Greater Manchester Level, there is a higher level of satisfaction with Public Transport as a whole, at 71% (with no split by mode) than for each individual mode in Tameside. Potential follow up on this area may be beneficial in future when works to improve the Tameside Interchange Ashton-under-Lyne, electrification of the railways, and junction improvement works south of Ashton Town Centre are complete.

[2] Excludes 'don't know' responses.

The GM survey also considers roads as a whole, with 69% of businesses being satisfied with the network in the city region. This is slightly lower than the level of satisfaction expressed for the motorway network, but considerably higher than the 45% for the local Tameside road network.

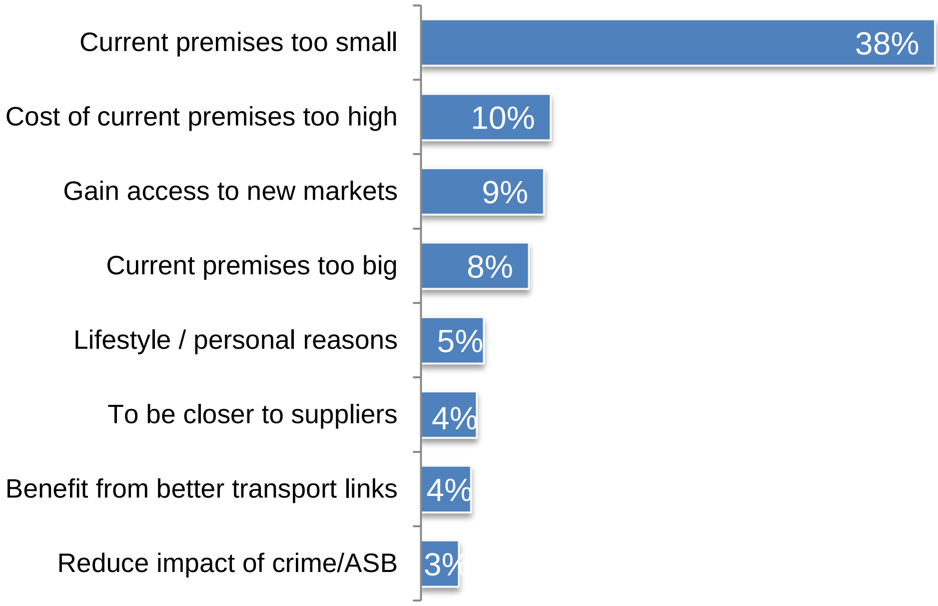
The relatively low level of satisfaction with the road network is of concern, given the potential extra strain that will arise should Growth Options 2 or 3, in the Greater Manchester Spatial Strategy, come to pass.

Relocation

Overall, 14% of businesses indicate they are considering relocating in the next 12 to 18 months. This compares to 13% of all businesses in the 2014 Greater Manchester Chamber business survey.

The primary reason given for considering relocation is that the current premises is no longer large enough to support business operations; almost two-fifths indicate this (38%) – this compares to 34% of businesses that gave this reason in the 2014 Greater Manchester business survey.

Figure 18: Reasons for considering relocation



Base: 60

One-third of those considering relocation are also considering moving outside of Tameside – this represents 20 of the 503 businesses surveyed. Reasons include:

"At Manchester City Council there are free business rates for small businesses."

"Broader opportunities, better infrastructure, low costs elsewhere."

"For new customers."

"Lack of affordable industrial units."

"Lack of support from services from Tameside council."

"Looking for better standard of premises."

"More opportunities moving to Manchester."

"[looking to] Retire."

"Selling."

"To find bigger premises and the council has not offered any support to businesses."

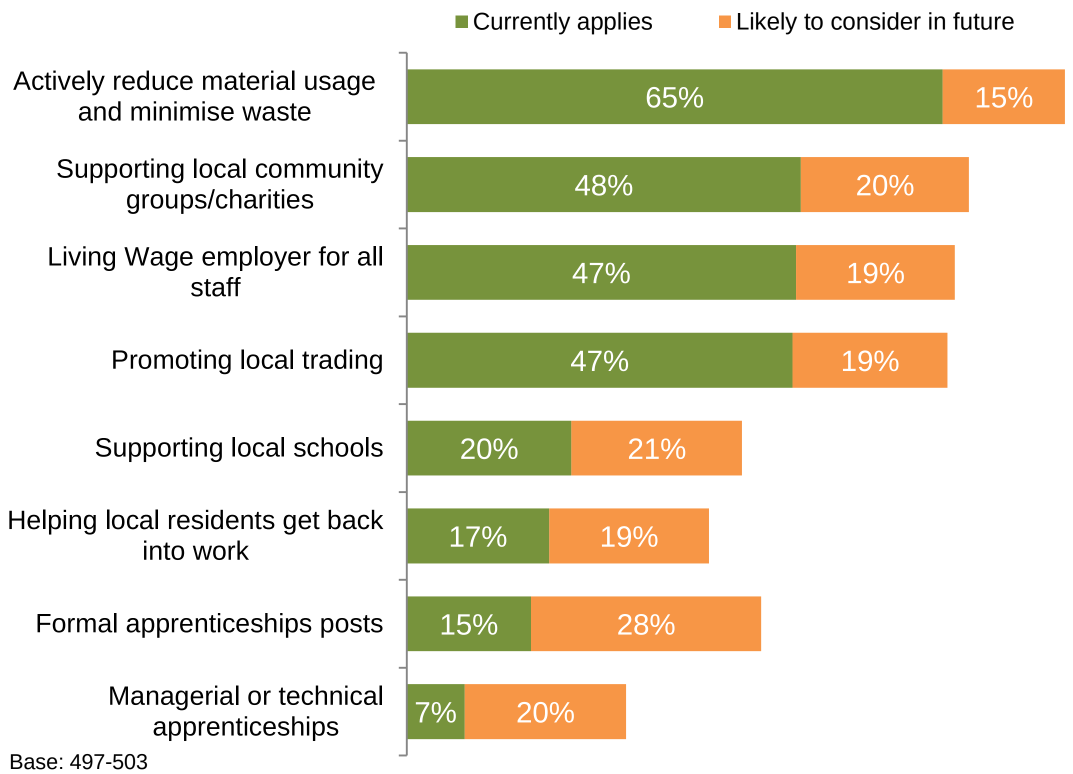
Supporting the local economy and community

Businesses were asked the extent to which they support the following local economy and community activities:

- Supporting local school activities (e.g. hosting industry/careers talks, providing work experience, providing support for governors/management, supporting curriculum activities such as reading / literacy / enterprise)
- Formal apprenticeships posts from local colleges or training providers
- Offering apprenticeships within managerial or technical positions within the business
- Supporting local community groups/charities (e.g. sponsoring activities; providing staff expertise)
- Helping local residents get back into work (e.g. providing work placements, volunteering opportunities, supporting local employment schemes, or helping with CV preparation or mock interviews)
- Promoting local trading (e.g. where possible use suppliers within Tameside)
- Actively reduce material usage and minimise waste
- Living Wage employer for all staff (e.g. we pay our employees a salary that is equal to, or greater than, the Living Wage of £7.85 per hour)

The majority of businesses (65%) claim to be currently reducing their material usage and minimising waste – a further 15% indicate this is something they are likely to do in the future. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is also reported to be relatively high with almost one-half (48%) of businesses indicating they currently support local community and charity groups, that they pay the Living Wage to all staff (47%) and promote local trading (47%).

Figure 19: Support for the local economy and community



At the other end of the scale, relatively few enterprises currently offer formal apprenticeships posts to local colleges or training providers (15%), although around a further three in ten (28%) indicate a likelihood to do so in the future. For managerial or technical based apprenticeships, just 7% indicate this is something they currently offer, although one-fifth (20%) suggest they intend to in the future.

A greater proportion of small businesses 'claim' to currently offer formal apprenticeships places to local colleges or training providers (32%) or are considering doing so in the future (38%), while 15% indicate they also offer managerial and technical apprenticeships, with 29% suggesting they are likely to in the future.

SMALL

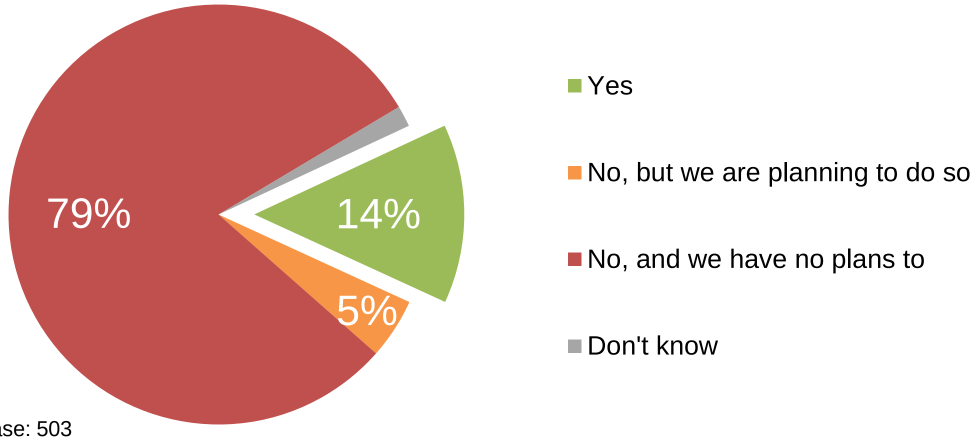
Small businesses are also proportionately more likely to:

- Currently actively reduce material usage and minimise waste (77%)
- Currently promote local trading (59%)
- Currently be a living wage employer (58%)
- Currently help local residents get back into work (31%)
- Consider supporting school activities in the future (28%)

Exporting

Just over one in ten (14%) businesses indicate they are currently trading overseas. The figure rises to 35% for medium sized businesses and to 25% for those operating in the manufacturing sector.

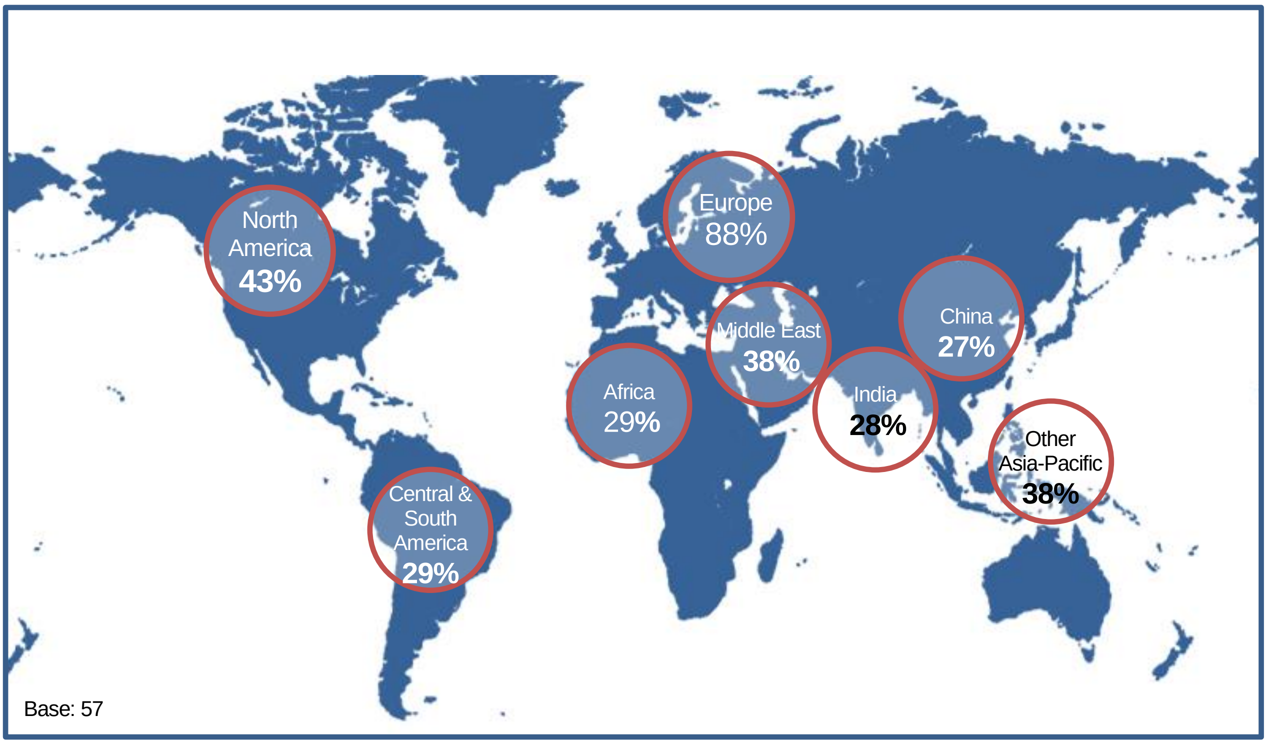
Figure 20: Whether currently export



Base: 503

Of the 14% that do export, the largest market is Europe, accounting for 88% of all exports. North America follows as an international trade destination, accounting for roughly one-fifth of all exporters.

Figure 21: International trade markets



NB: Please note the extremely small base size.

Sample profile

Trading period

Time trading	Total	%
<1 year	20	4%
1-3 years	53	10%
4-5 years	41	8%
6-10 years	88	18%
11-20 years	114	23%
21+ years	178	35%
Not specified	9	2%
Base:	503	100%

Time trading	Micro	%	Small	%	Medium	%	Large	%	Refused	%
<1 year	17	5%	1	1%	1	3%	0	0%	1	14%
1-3 years	45	13%	5	5%	2	7%	1	3%	0	0%
4-5 years	36	11%	4	4%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
6-10 years	66	19%	19	20%	2	7%	1	3%	0	0%
11-20 years	78	23%	22	23%	8	27%	6	19%	0	0%
21+ years	96	28%	42	45%	15	50%	23	72%	2	29%
Not specified	2	1%	1	1%	1	3%	1	3%	4	57%
Base:	340	100%	94	100%	30	100%	31	100%	7	100%

Sales turnover

Annual sales turnover		
<£50,000	98	19%
£50k - £99,999	57	11%
£100k - £499,999	101	20%
£500k - £999,999	35	7%
£1m - £2m	19	4%
£2m-£9m	34	7%
£10m+	9	2%
Not answered	150	30%
Base:	503	100%

Annual sales turnover	Micro	%	Small	%	Medium	%	Large	%	Refused	%
<£50,000	95	28%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%
£50k-£99,999	51	15%	5	5%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%
£100k-£499,999	79	23%	17	18%	1	3%	4	13%	0	0%
£500k-£999,999	18	5%	15	16%	0	0%	2	6%	0	0%
£1m - £2m	4	1%	11	12%	2	7%	2	6%	0	0%
£2m-£9m	4	1%	17	18%	10	33%	3	9%	0	0%
£10m+	0	0%	1	1%	3	10%	5	16%	0	0%
Not answered	89	26%	26	28%	14	47%	15	47%	6	86%
Base:	340	100%	94	100%	30	100%	32	100%	7	100%

Parent company

Part of parent company	Total	%
Yes	77	15%
No	426	85%
Base:	503	100%

Appendix

Survey questionnaire

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is ____________ and I am calling from M·E·L Research on behalf of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.

INTERVIEWER: ASK TO SPEAK TO THE OWNER / DIRECTOR / SENIOR MANAGER

We are conducting a short study about what local businesses feel should be Tameside's business priorities in the future and whether businesses are facing any barriers to growth. We would be really grateful for around 10 - 15 minutes of your time to take part in a short survey that will guide the Council's activity in the next few years to ensure there are suitable services and information available to support business growth.

As part of this exercise, Tameside Council may wish to contact you in the future to provide you with advice or support. You will be given the option to opt out of this activity at the end of the survey should you prefer to remain anonymous.

All information you provide will remain confidential. Are you happy to complete the survey now?

Chec k ☐ If Yes Read - Before we start I need to inform you that this call is being recorded for quality control purposes. However the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence, and used for research purposes only. It will not be possible to identify any particular individual. Are you happy to take part? (Continue with survey if Yes)

If No - Okay, no problem. Thanks for your time (interviewer to make a note on the database whether a refusal, call back etc...)

IF THEY WANT TO CHECK THE VALIDITY OF THE SURVEY, CALL IF THEY WANT TO CHECK THE VALIDITY OF THE SURVEY, CALL MATTHEW KERSHAW, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER AT TAMESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL ON (0161 342 2415) OR DAVID CHONG PING, HEAD OF TECHNICAL PRODUCTION AT M·E·L RESEARCH ON FREEPHONE NO (0800 0730 348).

Business Location

Q1 Firstly, which of the following is a reason or reasons why your business is located in Tameside, if any? **READ OUT - TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Historically based in Tameside
- ☐ Resident of Tameside
- ☐ Proximity to customers
- ☐ Proximity to suppliers
- ☐ Road/transport network
- ☐ Access to suitably skilled workforce
- ☐ Access to Broadband
- ☐ Size/suitability of premises
- ☐ Or any other reasons (please specify below)

Business Confidence

Q2 Over the last 12 to 18 months, has your... **READ OUT FIRST ELEMENT**... increased, decreased or remained the same? **REPEAT FOR REMAINING ELEMENTS**... And what about your... has this increased, decreased or remained the same?

	Increased	Decreased	Remained the same	Don't know (DO NOT READ OUT)
Sales turnover	○	○	○	○
Profitabilty	○	○	○	○
Workforce / staffing levels	○	○	○	○

Q3 Which of the following skills deficits, if any, currently exist in your business? **READ OUT - TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Lack of IT skills
- ☐ Lack of communication skills
- ☐ Lack of customer handling skills
- ☐ Lack of team working skills
- ☐ Lack of numeracy skills
- ☐ Lack of literacy skills
- ☐ Lack of problem solving skills
- ☐ Lack of planning and organisation skills
- ☐ Lack of management skills
- ☐ Lack of administration skills
- ☐ Lack of technical skills
- ☐ Lack of job specific skills
- ☐ Lack of any other skills (please specify below)
- ☐ None of these

Other, please specify

Q4 Which of the following skills deficits, if any, do you anticipate you will experience when recruiting applicants for your business? **READ OUT - TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Lack of IT skills
- ☐ Lack of communication skills
- ☐ Lack of customer handling skills
- ☐ Lack of team working skills
- ☐ Lack of numeracy skills
- ☐ Lack of literacy skills
- ☐ Lack of problem solving skills
- ☐ Lack of planning and organisation skills
- ☐ Lack of management skills
- ☐ Lack of administration skills
- ☐ Lack of technical skills
- ☐ Lack of job specific skills
- ☐ Lack of any other skills (please specify below)
- ☐ None of these / Not looking to recruit **(DO NOT READ OUT)**

Q4 Other, please specify

Q5 Do you currently have any vacancies at the site that are proving hard to fill?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know **(DO NOT READ OUT)**

Q6 WHERE YES: What are the main causes of having this/these hard to fill vacancies? **DO NOT READ OUT. TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Too much competition from other employers
- ☐ Not enough people interested in doing this type of job
- ☐ Poor perceptions of the sector / lack of prospects
- ☐ Low number of applicants with the required skills / qualifications
- ☐ Lack of work experience
- ☐ Low number of applicants with the required work ethic
- ☐ Difficulty finding the right recruitment agency
- ☐ Poor transport links
- ☐ Poor perception of local area
- ☐ Other (please specify below)
- ☐ None
- ☐ Don't know

Q7 Tameside Council currently provides two types of support schemes aimed at supporting local businesses to employ a young person or apprentice:

(1)The Tameside Enterprise Grant is £1500 available for an employer taking on an apprenticeship..

(2)If a business employs a 16 – 24 year old, who lives in the borough and is not in education, employment or training, the Tameside Youth Employment Scheme will fund six months of their salary.

Were you previously aware of these schemes?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know / not sure

Investment and Finance

Q8 Does your company have a growth plan/strategy in place?

- ○ Yes, formal written plan or strategy
- ○ Yes, informal plans
- ○ No formal or informal plans
- ○ Not looking to grow business
- ○ Don't know/not sure

Q9 IF YES: Which of the following form part of your growth plans? **TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Growth in local markets
- ☐ Expanding in overseas markets
- ☐ Growth through mergers and acquisitions (e.g. buying a competitor)
- ☐ Investment in new products or production facilities
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q10 IF YES: Excluding any recruitment, in the next 12 months, will your business be investing to support business growth for any of the following reasons? **TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Capital equipment
- ☐ Premises
- ☐ Relocation
- ☐ Research & Development
- ☐ Investment for any other reasons (please specify below)

Q11 Where will you be looking to source the funding in order to support this growth? **PROBE**

Capital equipment	
Premises	
Relocation	
Research & Development	
{Q10a}	

Q12 Are there any barriers to your company growing at present? **DO NOT READ OUT, PROBE FULLY - TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Access to finance
- ☐ Availability of suitable premises
- ☐ Cash flow problems
- ☐ Competition (domestic markets including imported goods / services
- ☐ Competition (overseas markets)
- ☐ Exchange rates (e.g. value of sterling / euro / dollar)
- ☐ Regulatory, legal or compliance issues
- ☐ Planning constraints
- ☐ Reduction in government subsidy
- ☐ Skills shortages / recruitment issues
- ☐ Uncertainty (cautious approach / limiting risk)
- ☐ VAT threshold (stay below threshold)
- ☐ Weak UK economy
- ☐ Other (please specify below)

Infrastructure

Q13 Could you rate the following elements of the local infrastructure in supporting business on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very satisfied and 5 is very dissatisfied. **READ OUT AND TICK ONE ONLY FOR EACH**

	1 Very satisfied	2	3	4	5 Very dissatisfied	Don't Know (DO NOT READ OUT)
Roads	○	○	○	○	○	○
Motorway network	○	○	○	○	○	○

Bus network	○	○	○	○	○	○
Train network	○	○	○	○	○	○
Metrolink	○	○	○	○	○	○
Internet connection / broadband	○	○	○	○	○	○
Energy / utilities	○	○	○	○	○	○

Business Support

Q14 Which of the following business support organisations or services have you heard of, if any? **READ OUT - TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Business Growth Hub (BGH)
- ☐ Blue Orchid
- ☐ Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Federation of Small Businesses
- ☐ Growth Accelerator
- ☐ Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)
- ☐ MIDAS - Invest in Manchester
- ☐ Tameside Live Work Invest
- ☐ Trade Association/Trade Body
- ☐ UK Trade and Investment (UKTI)
- ☐ Or any other business support organisation (please specify below)
- ☐ None of these

Q15 Have you experienced any of the following difficulties in seeking support and advice for your business in the last 12 to 18 months? **READ OUT AND TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Finding out where to obtain the right support/advice
- ☐ Determining the support and advice required
- ☐ Advice / support available was too expensive
- ☐ Finding the time to seek/access external advice
- ☐ Lack of response to enquiry about a service
- ☐ Support/advice not available in timely manner
- ☐ Other (please specify below)

Business support needs

Q16 Which of the following business support services are of interest to you, if any? **READ OUT AND TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Information on availability of business premises or development sites
- ☐ Help with recruiting staff with the right skills
- ☐ Help with legal enquiries (e.g. Intellectual Property issues, employment law)
- ☐ Mentoring by experienced business owners / managers
- ☐ Growth ideas
- ☐ Access to finance
- ☐ Advice about selling goods or services to the Council
- ☐ Council supplied technical and professional advice services, such as planning, regulation, HR
- ☐ Advice on how to make sure your business is more environmentally friendly
- ☐ Information on or access to local supply chains
- ☐ Innovation support such as R&D tax credits, trademarks and copyright market research
- ☐ A business skills review
- ☐ None of these

Local Area and Relocation

Q17 Are you considering relocating your business in the next 12 to 18 months?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know **(DON'T READ OUT)**

Q18 IF YES: What are your main reasons for considering relocating? **PROBE FULLY AND TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Current premises too small
- ☐ Current premises too big
- ☐ Cost of current premises too high
- ☐ Be closer to existing customers
- ☐ Gain access to new markets
- ☐ Gain access to skilled and affordable labour
- ☐ To be closer to suppliers
- ☐ To be closer to companies in my industry / sector
- ☐ Benefit from better transport links
- ☐ Reduce impact of crime and anti-social behaviour
- ☐ Lifestyle / personal reasons
- ☐ Other (please specify below)
- ☐ Don't know

Other, please specify

Q19 IF YES: Are you considering leaving Tameside?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Don't know / unsure

Q20 IF YES: What are your reasons for considering leaving Tameside?

Q21 We are looking to understand how businesses support their local economy and community. For each of the following statements can you tell me if it currently applies to your business, it is something you are likely to consider doing in future, or it is not something you are likely to consider in the future? **READ OUT (INCLUDING EXPLANATIONS IF REQUIRED) AND TICK ONE ONLY FOR EACH**

	Currently applies	Likely to consider in the future	Unlikely to consider in the future	Don't know	Not applicable
Supporting local school activities (e.g. hosting industry/careers talks, providing work experience, providing support for governors/management, supporting curriculum activities such as reading / literacy / enterprise)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Formal apprenticeships posts from local colleges or training providers	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Offering apprenticeships within managerial or technical positions within the business	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Supporting local community groups/charities (e.g. sponsoring activities; providing staff expertise)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Helping local residents get back into work (e.g. providing work placements, volunteering opportunities, supporting local employment schemes, or helping with CV preparation or mock interviews)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Promoting local trading (e.g. where possible use suppliers within Tameside)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Actively reduce material usage and minimise waste	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Living Wage employer for all staff (e.g. we pay our employees a salary that is equal to, or greater than, the Living Wage of £7.85 per hr)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Export, Trade and Connectivity

Q22 Do you currently export any of your goods and services (e.g. trade overseas/internationally)? **TICK ONE ONLY**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No, but we are planning to do so
- ◯ No, and we have no plans to
- ◯ Don't know

Q23 WHERE EXPORT: Which of the following areas do you have trade links with? **READ OUT AND TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Europe
- ☐ North America, including Canada
- ☐ Central and South America
- ☐ Middle East
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ China
- ☐ India
- ☐ Australasia / other Asia-Pacific
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q24 Approximately what percentage of your products does your business export? **LEAVE BLANK IF NONE**

Q25 WHERE IMPORT/EXPORT: Have any of the following acted as a barrier to you exporting / wanting to export? **READ OUT AND TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- ☐ Tariffs
- ☐ Language / cultural barriers
- ☐ Regulations / legal requirements
- ☐ Political risks
- ☐ Other (please specify below)
- ☐ None of these

Business Profile

Q26 Can I please confirm your job title or function?

- ○ Chairman/woman
- ○ Chief Executive / Managing Director
- ○ Director
- ○ Senior Manager
- ○ Sole Trader
- ○ Other

Other, please specify

Q27 Confirm business name from the database **(CODE 99 IF CORRECT, OR UPDATE BELOW)**

Q28 Confirm business postcode from the database **(CODE 99 IF CORRECT, OR UPDATE BELOW)**

Q29 **CONFIRM INDUSTRY SECTOR SHOWN ON DATABASE:** Can I just confirm that your organisation's principal business activity is.... **READ OUT FROM DATABASE CODE 99 IF CORRECT, OR UPDATE BELOW**

IF NO INDUSTRY SECTOR SHOWN, ASK: Can you tell me which business sector you mainly operate in, or your main business activities?

Q30 How many employees, in total, does your business have....? **READ OUT**

At this site

Across the UK

Worldwide

Q31 And how long has your business been trading?

- <1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21+ years

Q32 And within which of the following annual turnover bands does your business operate? **READ OUT**

- <£50,000
- £50,000-£99,000
- £100,000-£499,000
- £500,000-£999,000
- £1m - £2m
- £2m-£9m
- £10m+
- Prefer not to answer **(DO NOT READ OUT)**

Q33 Is your business part of a parent company?

- Yes
- No

Q34 Where is the parent company based?

Further Consultation

Q35 Would you be willing to be involved in further consultation regarding Tameside business priorities, such as online surveys, telephone surveys or focus groups?

- ☐ Yes, online surveys
- ☐ Yes, telephone surveys
- ☐ Yes, focus groups
- ☐ No - I do not wish to be involved in further consultation

Q36 Name of the respondent

Q37 So that Tameside Council can contact you about future consultations can I please take your email address?

Q38 And what is the best telephone number they should use to contact you?

Q39 Would you be willing to have your answers linked to you and your business so that Tameside Council can contact you in the future reqarding your business needs? All information you have provided will remain confidential.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No - Thank you, your answers will remain anonymous and will not be linked to you or your business

That's all the questions I have. Thank you for your time

Q40 Interviewers to complete the following:

ID Number	
Respondent Name	
Telephone Number	
Interviewer Name	

Using evidence to shape better services

Measurement Evaluation Learning

Research

Public
Consultation

Evaluation

Surveys

Consultancy
Evaluation

Skillbuilding

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Measurement ◆ Evaluation ◆ Learning