

Full results Business Survey 2017

Introduction

50 completed surveys were received. The survey was distributed amongst local businesses and was also made available on Boston Borough Council website and social media. The survey went live on September 4th 2017 and closed on September 25th 2017.

Headline Results

- The majority of responses – 32%, received were from businesses in the Manufacturing and process sector.
- The majority of responses – 76%, received were from business who have been operating for 10 or more years.
- 30% of respondents employ more than 100 employees.
- 38% of the businesses that responded have a turnover of over £10million
- 62% of respondents reported that they had performed either a little or a lot stronger than they had in the previous year.

Top three issues identified as obstacles to business growth

1. 56% - Broadband or next generation wifi (4g) may impact on business growth.
2. 48% - price pressures on raw materials may impact on business growth.
3. 40% - increase transport costs may impact on business growth.

Top three issues identified as having the greatest impact on business

1. 25% - support to access a suitable workforce
1. 25% - improved road infrastructure
2. 15% - help to access suitable funding
3. 13% - improved digital infrastructure

Full Results

Q1. Which sector does your business operate in?

Agriculture	2%
Construction	4%
Distribution and storage	6%
Manufacturing and process (including food related)	32%
Professional and technical service	8%
Retail	14%
Administrative and support service activities	6%
Human health and social work activities	2%
Other (specified below)	26%

Full list of other comments:

- Butterfly Hospice
- Nature conservation
- Housing management and new supply
- Recycling
- Animal boarding service (cats)
- Media
- Engineering
- Tourism attracting visitors to Boston's water ways. Boston Belle River and Sea Trips
- Leisure and Tourism
- Manufacturing, Processing, Distribution and Storage
- Transportation
- Education
- Graphic Design
- Packaging producer and supplier to all local business sectors

Q2. How long has your business been operating in the borough of Boston?

0-5 years	12%
6-9 years	12%
10-14 years	14%
15+ years	62%

Q3. How many employees do you have within your operations here in the borough of Boston (full time or part time/casual)?

Self employed with no employees	10%
1-5	12%
6-10	10%
11-20	14%
21-50	12%
51-100	12%
101-250	16%
250+	14%

Q4. What is your approximate business annual turnover?

Less than £100,000	14%
£100,001 - £250,000	4%
£250,001 - £500,000	8%
£500,001 - £1million	8%
Up to £5m	12%
Up to £10m	8%
£10m +	38%
Prefer not to say	8%

Q5. How has your business performed over the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months?

A lot weaker	2%
Slightly weaker	26%
About the same	31%
A little stronger	46%
A lot stronger	16%

Q6. Looking forward over the next 12 months, your business performance will be?

A lot weaker	N/A
Slightly weaker	17%
About the same	25%
A little stronger	40%
A lot stronger	19%

Q7. What do you perceive are the main obstacles that will impact on your business growth (1= majority priority, 12 = least priority)

Main obstacles (responded with 1-4)

- 38% of respondents indicated that accessing finance may impact on business growth.
- 56% of respondents indicated that Broadband or next generation wifi (4g) may impact on business growth.
- 40% of respondents indicated that increase transport costs may impact on business growth.
- 32% of respondents indicated that increasing production may impact on business growth.
- 32% of respondents indicated that a lack of training may impact on business growth.
- 26% of respondents indicated that licensing and regulation may impact on business growth.
- 26% of respondents indicated that planning policy may impact on business growth.
- 33% of respondents indicated that power availability or capacity may impact on business growth.
- 48% of respondents indicated that price pressures on raw materials may impact on business growth.
- 38% of respondents indicated that suitable premises/facilities may impact on business growth.

Identified as less of an issue (responded with 9-12)

- 46 % of respondents indicated that accessing finance may have less of an impact on business growth.
- 24% of respondents indicated that Broadband or next generation wifi (4g) may have less of an impact on business growth.
- 22% of respondents indicated that increase transport costs may have less of an impact on business growth.
- 34% of respondents indicated that increasing production may have less of an impact on business growth.
- 32% of respondents indicated that a lack of training may have less of an impact on business growth.
- 48% of respondents indicated that licensing and regulation may have less of an impact on business growth.
- 46% of respondents indicated that planning policy may have less of an impact on business growth.
- 35% of respondents indicated that power availability or capacity may have less of an impact on business growth.

- 24% of respondents indicated that price pressures on raw materials may have less of an impact on business growth.
- 35% of respondents indicated that suitable premises/facilities may have less of an impact on business growth.

Full results in below table: -

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Accessing finance	16%	6%	12%	4%	2%	4%	2%	8%	6%	14%	4%	22%
Broadband or next generation wifi (4g)	21%	10%	10%	15%	2%	4%	6%	6%	8%	8%	2%	6%
Increase transport cost	6%	14%	10%	10%	8%	10%	10%	8%	4%	6%	2%	10%
Business rates	12%		12%	8%	12%	18%	4%	6%	8%	2%	6%	10%
Increasing production	6%	6%	10%	10%	6%	8%	10%	8%	4%	12%	4%	14%
Lack of training	4%	8%	6%	14%	8%	10%	12%	4%	14%	4%		14%
Licensing and regulation	10%		12%	4%	6%	2%		16%	6%	10%	14%	18%
Planning policy	8%	2%	12%	4%	6%	8%	6%	6%	14%	8%	10%	14%
Power availability or capacity	6%	6%	13%	8%	4%	15%	6%	6%	6%	8%	8%	13%
Price pressures on raw materials	16%	8%	14%	10%	6%	14%	2%	4%	6%	4%	6%	8%
Suitable premises/facilities	4%	12%	4%	8%	4%	15%	4%	13%	4%	6%	6%	19%
Other – specified below: -												

Other comments below: -

- Availability and payment rates of agri-environment grant schemes
- Our operations depends a lot on central government regulation
- Poor retail/leisure offer in town centre, competitive ecommerce services and general downturn in consumer spending.
- Local and national economy, especially in respect to wages and Brexit.
- Exchange rates and impact of Brexit.
- Waterways management trees, weeds and mud
- Interest Rates
- Road transport into and through Boston, particularly the A16 and A52
- Recruitment of middle management and supervisory staff due to location of our business
- Exchange rates affecting cost of imported raw material
- Availability of labour. Shortage of skills.
- Labour availability
- Gaining finance to developing the business further
- Work with import/export so other businesses need to be supported so that my job is still viable.

Q8. What type of support would have the greatest impact on your business productivity and growth?

Help to access suitable funding	15%
Support to access a suitable workforce	25%
Support to access workforce skills and management training programmes	6%
Help to improve process efficiency	4%
Improved digital infrastructure	13%
Improved road infrastructure	25%
Networking events or trade shows	8%
Other specified below: -	4%

- Reduction of overhead and better especially when it is totally unsupported by any infrastructure for transport
- There are no specific needs at present although certain roles have been challenging to recruit to
- Promoting the vibrancy of the Boston retail offer
- Boston multifunctional Barrier with a Lock at the side to enable water level management through town to attract visitors and prevent Fluvial Flooding.
- The next generation of engineers and mechanics and technicians are required to replace high retirement rates due to age of workforce
- We deliver nationwide and import via Boston Dock. Moving product across town from the dock to our premises is hampered by the heavy traffic congestion on John Adams Way, Roads between Boston and motorway network are in poor repair and delay traffic flows on a regular basis
- Despite assertions from Open Reach that Boston is now part of the SuperFast network, broadband service in pockets of Boston is extremely slow.

Q9. Do you find it challenging to recruit to certain roles within your business?

Entry level (operate or junior roles)	25%
Supervisory/middle management	27%
Senior management/executive	2%
Technical/professional (entry level)	15%
Technical/professional (senior level)	13%
No, we have no trouble recruiting	19%

Q10. Would you be willing to support initiatives that connect business with education providers at all levels?

Yes	54%
No	19%
Happy to have a conversation about it	27%

Q11. Do you anticipate moving to larger premises over the next: -

12 months	10%
24 months	24%
5 years	16%
No	49%