

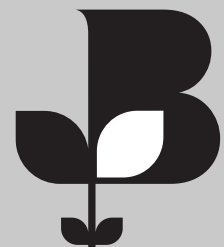
# BUSINESS MANIFESTO 2021-2022



Herefordshire  
& Worcestershire  
Chamber of Commerce



## OUR PATRONS



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**Sharon Smith**  
**Chief Executive**

Herefordshire & Worcestershire  
Chamber of Commerce

**After quantitative and qualitative consultation with over 5000 businesses this year, I am delighted to launch the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce 2021/2022 Business Manifesto, detailing the priorities for local and national government, as identified by our local businesses.**

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce engages the most businesses via the Quarterly Economic Surveys than any other Chamber across the national Chamber network. This is not purely a vanity statement for our Chamber, but one of pride that the results from our surveys and consultations truly reflect the views of local businesses in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. This extensive consultation allows us to identify current challenges, potential barriers to growth and to identify opportunities for businesses looking to grow and expand.

The document sets out the key priorities which have been identified by businesses in our area. In partnership with the British Chamber of Commerce and our 53-strong Chamber network, our 2021/2022 Chamber Business Manifesto sets out how we aim to represent businesses at local and national levels to support businesses across our network.

Areas covered within the 2021/2022 Business Manifesto are post Covid-19 recovery, costs, skills, international trade, technology and a greener economy. The last year of business has been extremely challenging with extreme disruption - national lockdowns, sector closures and reduced trade for many, which has resulted in the worst economic downturn in over 50 years.

Sales and profits have been hit hard, with consequences to cash, borrowing and investment. However, some sectors have fared better than others and our Quarterly Economic Survey reports have shown the upward growth quarter by quarter. Moreover, with the vaccine programme, lower thresholds for business testing and increased use of test and tracing nationally, there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel, as ever our businesses remain agile and resilient, responding to the change and pressure forced upon them.

The EU trade agreement signed with the UK, has provided some clarity for business who import and export to/from the EU. However, there is much still to be done. Rules of origin and increased red tape are just two of the areas where we are still lobbying government to provide further detail and transparency.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also no doubt caused redundancies within most industries and sectors across the UK. The Job Retention Scheme has helped save millions of jobs to date, yet we are still cautious about the ending of the JRS, in particular if it is not released

slowly, with a phased approach. The business community strongly welcomed the government intervention of this scheme and others, although thoughts have now turned to how this unprecedented debt will be repaid and with what impact again to businesses.

Technology continues to remain an important commodity for many businesses, with Covid-19 exponentially accelerating remote working with many employees now working from home for nearly 12 months. This has led to much consideration and development of future flexible working policies. In our Employment Report, 78% of businesses reported at least one benefit of remote working. In addition, with increased digitalisation and technological advances, businesses are now finding new ways to innovate and pioneer new products and services.

Many businesses are also focusing on corporate social responsibility with particular review of climate change and implementing more eco-friendly processes. To ensure we help businesses succeed in becoming more sustainable, we will lobby government to ensure they engage the business community in decision making, to ensure businesses help the government reach its carbon targets, whilst making solutions practical and achievable.

There is no doubt that this has been one of the most challenging years for businesses in our lifetime. Businesses have fought hard to survive, and many have, directly, or indirectly, helped the country in its battle against Covid-19. Businesses are aware of the long road ahead, but remain flexible, responsive and optimistic. Although post Covid-19 and EU Exit businesses will be well versed in dealing with uncertainty and change, it has never been more vital that we now come together to draw on shared information and best practice to find solutions and new opportunities.



**Ben Mannion**  
**Director**

Hewett Recruitment

**The last 12 months have been some of the most challenging in British business history. The impact of Covid-19 and associated restrictions have reached far and wide, in particular within hospitality, retail and leisure, and the supply chains within these sectors. Furthermore, from January 1st, 2021 some of the anticipated worries of leaving the EU began to take effect, with many companies struggling with additional import / export costs and issues regarding the documentation required to operate under the new trade agreement.**

It is perhaps unsurprising then, that of the 6 key business priorities identified by the Chamber for 2021, we see Covid-19 Recovery, Costs and International Trade all directly linked to the headline issues of the pandemic and Brexit. The reduction in sales and stress on

cash-flow put incredible pressure on many companies, and programmes such as the Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme have been vital to their survival. How these schemes are unwound over the coming months - hopefully in a sympathetic way, rather than a cliff-edge ending - will be very important to the long-term futures of many companies and their employees. When we turn our attention to Costs and International Trade, it is fair to say that there have already been improvements in this area since the turn of the year but still plenty of work to do before we get back to the “frictionless” relationship we previously enjoyed.

Looking past what we can hopefully describe as these short-term priorities, we see 3 familiar faces making up the rest of the business priorities - namely, Skills, Technology and Sustainability. Some challenges indeed...but inherent within them also great opportunities. It is encouraging to see local businesses considering such long-term matters on their agenda and getting to grips with them now could provide enduring benefits to the business community across the 2 counties. The UK's low carbon and renewable energy economy is already estimated to be worth over £45bn with significant growth to come, whilst early adopters of Artificial Intelligence and Automation will reap the rewards of improved business efficiency.

Skills has been a key priority for several years, with many businesses finding it difficult to recruit and retain people with the right abilities. This has been particularly acute within areas such as IT and Engineering but there have also been more general concerns around young people lacking the “employability” skills to start work. There has been much work

done locally in recent times to develop the careers programme in schools and colleges, as well as new initiatives such as the Kickstart Scheme recently introduced. It is vital that whilst businesses deal with some of the aforementioned challenges around Covid-19 and Brexit, they stay engaged with the Skills agenda, continuing to work with education to help them produce the talent their organisations need to thrive in the future.

The Chamber of Commerce, both locally and nationally, plays a key role in lobbying Government and providing support and advice to businesses of all shapes and sizes. The importance of these services and of the business community working to support each other has taken on renewed significance in the last 12 months. The Bank of England's Chief Economist recently described the UK economy as a “coiled spring” with a huge amount of “pent-up financial energy”. It is against this backdrop that the Chamber and its Members can work together to address the business priorities in this manifesto and generate economic prosperity and employment across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.





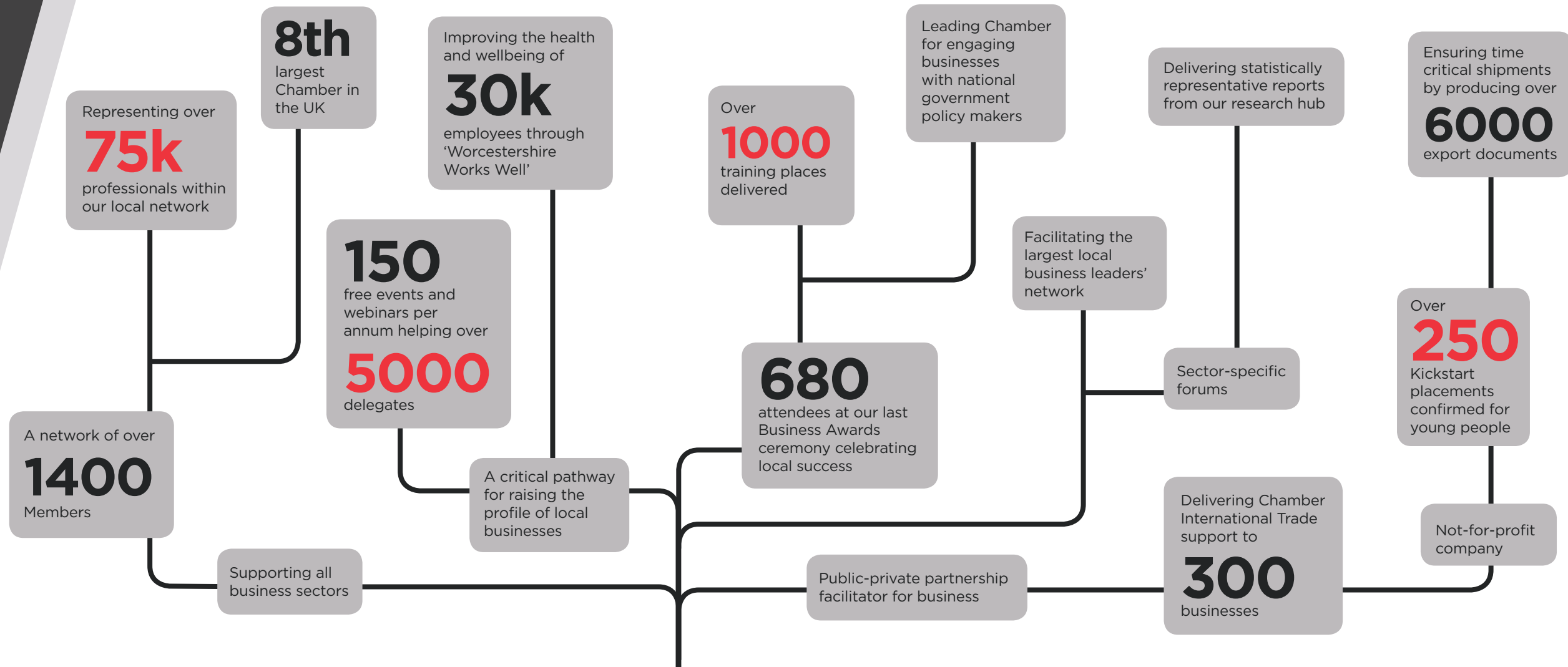
# ABOUT US

## OUR VISION:

"Working with the whole business community, to build sustainable economic growth in Herefordshire and Worcestershire"

## OUR MISSION:

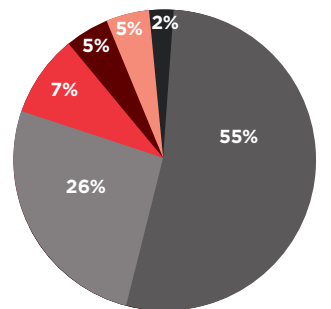
"To provide access to solutions that local businesses need in order to achieve their goals, through engaging, influencing and connecting. To be responsive to the external environment, offering responsive and relevant approaches"



# 2021 BUSINESS PRIORITIES

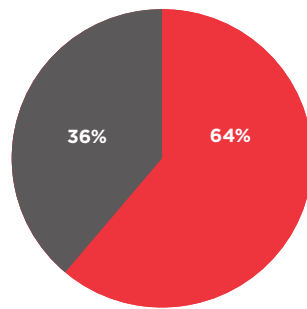
Throughout the year our Policy team, through the Quarterly Economic Survey, collects data from local businesses. Over 500 businesses have identified the top 10 priorities for their organisations. The list adjacent demonstrates the most commonly selected issues.

Responses by Business Size



SOLE TRADER  
 1-10  
 11-49  
 50-100  
 101-249  
 250+

Responses by Sector



SERVICES  
 MANUFACTURING



# COVID-19 RECOVERY

**The Covid-19 pandemic has presented many challenges for businesses across Herefordshire and Worcestershire during 2020. However, with vaccines being rolled out there is optimism for the year ahead. Businesses will be looking forward to the economy safely reopening as they recover and grow after the pandemic.**

## Your challenges:

Many businesses reported, via our Quarterly Economic Survey, that the effects of the pandemic on sales and cash flow were a key barrier to business growth for 2021/2022.

For example, 46% of local businesses reported that reduced revenues remained their biggest concern for the year ahead. This uncertainty comes after rising Covid-19 cases and national lockdowns which has seen some businesses across the UK remaining closed.

Secondly, 43% of businesses identified reduced profits as a significant challenge. The Chamber recognises that reduced profits mean businesses are unable to invest capital and help growth. Subsequently investment in new markets, sectors or indeed jobs will be jeopardised.

## Our Policy Commitment:

Through the Chamber network and British Chambers of Commerce, we will commit to help businesses plan for economic recovery, by lobbying and working with government to implement greater financial investment, help kickstart the economy and support companies plans for growth.

## Last year the national Chamber network successfully:

- Lobbied the UK government to shape, influence and implement business support schemes to help protect livelihoods and support firms during the pandemic and national lockdowns.
- Played a crucial role in persuading government to expand the Job Retention Scheme to all firms and helped extend the scheme through to April 2021.
- Lobbied the UK government to announce an increase in the overall level of Self-Employed Income Support Scheme to 80% of trading profits.
- Launched the Business Heroes campaign to help celebrate businesses across the UK and how they have responded effectively to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## What the Chamber will deliver in 2021:

- Further increase capacity to deliver networking events and informative webinars for Members and help raise the profile of organisations across the region and nationally.
- Regularly hold growth and sector specific forums targeted at business owners and senior managers to provide a platform for businesses to share knowledge and best practice on how to grow their business and sustain growth over a long period.
- Deliver a West Midlands Regional Expo across five days commencing Monday 22nd March 2021. The event will enable businesses to help raise the profile of their brand, grow sales through sponsoring stands and be able to engage with industry experts on key topical issues.
- Continued promotion of Government backed financial support programs and support schemes.
- Continue to promote the latest news and information from National and Local Government agencies and partners on our Covid-19 Hub and via our specialist E-news.

## “ BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

As a manufacturer of commercial adhesives and sealants, 2020 threw a huge curveball in terms of the plans we had for the business. Thankfully, we managed to continue to work through the pandemic by launching new products to support our customers' needs and we've been fortunate to end on a very unprecedented yet successful year.

We were adamant that our focus continued on our quality systems and processes and we've successfully installed a new MRP system which has streamlined our production process when dealing with complicated Bill of Materials. New automated filling equipment with bowl feeders and more accurate filling machines allows us to consistently fill, batch and label inline for increased productivity. We've also invested in colour matching software for a more scientific and consistent batch production result.

With our recent ISO 9001:2015 recertification, we feel we've made great progress this year regardless of the climate and most importantly laid stronger foundations as we move into 2021."

**Warren Wilkinson**  
Managing Director  
Bondloc UK Ltd



# COSTS

Costs have remained one of the most significant issues for businesses this year. One of the major barriers identified by our results was an increase of red tape and regulation as a result of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement signed with the EU. Furthermore, other concerns include business taxes, wage and or redundancy costs, access to finance, energy costs, access to alternative funding post EU exit, access to finance for innovation and new product development and cybercrime.

## Your challenges:

28% of businesses identified additional documentation needed to import and export goods out of the EU as a significant concern.

24% of businesses reported concerns around business taxes. In particular, concern that the government plans to increase tax rates to help fund the ever-increasing public debt which has grown due to government borrowing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

10% of businesses reported concerns around access to finance for innovation and new product development. Without the appropriate finance, research and product development will remain low preventing businesses from innovating and growing.

## Our Policy Commitment:

Through the Chamber network and the British Chambers of Commerce, we will lobby central government to assist further with import and export processes, for business rate reliefs to be staggered as recovery continues, and funding assistance for research and development.

**Last year** the national Chamber network successfully lobbied to include more economic support for businesses throughout the pandemic.

## What the Chamber will deliver in 2021:

- Our Finance Finder tool helps businesses identify the most appropriate financial support to help small, medium and large businesses
- Our Employment Report for 2020/2021 helps businesses understand how organisations across Herefordshire and Worcestershire aim to overcome challenges such as recruitment, employee health and wellbeing and remote working.
- Continue to hold informative webinars to ensure businesses remain updated on the latest information from across sectors and industry.
- Continue to advise Members on policy issues which may arise within their sectors and industry.

## “ BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

Businesses are grappling with the fallout of the EU exit, in the middle of a global pandemic, and on the back of GDP figures that show the UK economy contracted by nearly 10% in 2020.

Government needs to facilitate business success by realising that regulation is an impediment to trade and export. Inward investment requires a tax system that remains attractive. Meanwhile, rebalancing business rates to reflect the way the world now buys and sells online will go a long way to saving our deteriorating high street, and local retailers on whom the economy is so dependant.

SME business and international trade are two powerhouses of the UK economy. Fiscal, monetary and government policy need to recognise and support that.

**Chris Walklett**  
International Tax Partner  
Bishop Fleming



# SKILLS

**Skills remain a key issue for local businesses. The Covid-19 pandemic has seen many businesses reduce their workforce which has seen national unemployment increase. However, 50% of businesses across Herefordshire and Worcestershire attempted to recruit in the 6 months between May and October 2020. Challenges remain on whether people who have been made unemployed during the last year are able to gain new employment opportunities or retrain in growing industries or sectors. EU Exit is also likely to affect the skills market. For example, 2021 will see a focus on the agricultural industry which is concerned it will not be able to access the EU labour market, in-turn affecting the ability to pick produce.**

## Your challenges:

28% of businesses reported managing health and wellbeing as a significant challenge due to increased remote working. Businesses have increased welfare programs within their workplace in order to provide targeted support for employees experiencing challenges working from home.

25% of businesses identified attracting and retaining skilled staff as a barrier to their business growth.

13% of businesses advised that a lack of work-ready young people for the future workforce was a prominent issue for their business. Government schemes such as the Kickstart Scheme give young people the opportunity to find paid work with an organisation and help develop their work-life skills.

## Our Policy Commitment:

Through the Chamber network and the British Chamber of Commerce, we will continue to lobby government to continue work on the EU Settlement Scheme and work with government nationally to bridge the gap between education and business.

## Last year the national Chamber network successfully:

- Played a critical role in shaping the Kickstart Scheme.
- Shaped policy through the work of the Workplace Training and Development Commission to ensure the skills system works better for business.
- Successfully lobbied the government to introduce new schemes to target young people into paid work.

## What the Chamber will deliver in 2021:

- Continue to promote and deliver the Kickstart scheme on behalf of the DWP to help businesses attract young people to work within their organisation.
- Ongoing support for the Worcestershire Works Well programme which is a free accreditation scheme designed to support businesses to improve the health and wellbeing of their employees.
- Develop our training portfolios to help Members develop people in their organisations and provide targeted training for business needs.
- Support external funded programs such as Peer to Peer Networks and deliver our in-house Leadership Development Programme, to facilitate best practice learning for Senior Executives.
- Continue to be represented on Skills Boards and work with Universities, Higher Education establishments and training providers in order to work with partners on local support schemes.
- Continue delivering TYRO events aimed at helping to develop young professionals develop their networking skills
- Continue to provide forums and opportunities for HR professionals to share best practice and grow their knowledge.



## BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

During the Covid 19 pandemic, Kidderminster College has successfully continued to develop the knowledge, skills and experience of apprentices by supporting them with virtual learning and keeping their employers much involved in the process.

Phosters FM have continued to recruit apprentices through Kidderminster College despite the pandemic. Chloe Gooding, Learning & Development Coordinator, says, "Our company has been extremely lucky during the pandemic as we have continued to operate as normal. Due to increased activity from one of our major clients, we have remained incredibly busy throughout and have even continued to expand our workforce. Our Soft Services division has quadrupled in size since the beginning of the pandemic."

**Beth Newton and  
Chloe Gooding**  
Kidderminster College



# INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**On New Year's Eve at 23:00 GMT, the UK completed its separation from the EU, left the Single European Market and Customs Union and became a "third country". The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) was concluded on 24 December and contains new rules for living, working and trading with the EU. From cars to chemicals and fish, the new treaty will govern £650bn worth of trade between UK and EU. The deal covers technical aspects of trade for key sectors, including autos, chemicals, pharmaceutical and professional services as well as a governance mechanism to resolve disputes that may arise between the two sides.**

Some organisations have a good understanding of new import, export and customs regulations that need to be followed, but our businesses report that there is a lot of detail that is still not clear, which is causing significant ongoing challenge for firms.

As the UK is now outside of the EU, the UK Government can sign independent international trade deals with other countries around the world which will in turn could present opportunities for businesses to trade more preferentially with those countries.

## Your challenges:

20% of business have reported higher import costs.

8% of businesses identified exporting into a new market would be a significant challenge due to increased documentation.

## Our Policy Commitment:

Through the Chamber network and the British Chamber of Commerce, we will continue to provide expert advice to businesses on how to adapt to the TCA with the EU. We will also work with businesses to identify new trade opportunities.

## Last year the national Chamber network successfully:

- Reviewed information available to businesses in their EU-Exit preparation and continually updated a Brexit Guidance Dashboard thereby helping to evaluate any preparations required by businesses on a host of EU-Exit related and other International Trade questions and issues. A continuous review of International Trade information by the BCC enables further pressure to be put on the UK Government to give offer more clarity and accurate guidance on international trade support.
- The British Chambers of Commerce lobbied the UK Government extensively for a business-friendly trade deal with the EU to help ensure and maintain existing trade levels after EU-Exit.
- Successfully established a new Import and Export Declaration Service across the UK Chamber network for delivery to UK businesses.

## What the Chamber will deliver in 2021:

- The Department for International Trade (DIT) team at the Chamber will continue to deliver international business planning, international market-facing support and advice and access to a global commercial network through over 120 Embassies and High Commissions worldwide.
- The Chamber's international trade commercial services team will continue supply Export Documentation services for companies and deliver a new Import and Export Customs Declarations service.
- The Chamber's international trade team will continue to develop and expand its international trade training courses for businesses looking to upskill on a wide range of relevant international trade topics for new and experienced exporters, small and larger corporates across multiple sectors.
- We will continue to promote the latest international trade news, international trade events, webinars and updates from the UK Government's department for international trade, national and local government agencies and Chamber partners through the Chamber's EU Exit Hub and through the International Trade section of website as well as through newsletters and social media platforms.

## BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

At Shires Equestrian, we export to most EU countries, but one of our major customers is based in Holland. Last year they spent €800,000 with us. We were shipping to them almost every day, 6-10 parcels per day using Parcelforce. The deliveries arrived within 4 working days and was quite cost effective.

We have committed to £7000 annually for 3 years with a company called Scurri to installing software that deals with Customs declarations and produces export compliant labels.

Now we are looking at shipping from our Irish warehouse. As this is in the EU there shouldn't be any problems, but we still have to get our products from the UK to Ireland."

**Malcolm Ainge**  
Managing Director  
Shires Equestrian

## BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

The new trading arrangements between the UK and EU are still challenging, despite the preparation for the new rules and their implementation. For businesses, which import and export essential goods from the EU, it is not only paramount to have a seamless process at the border without any delays, it need to be a cost-effective process too. In a highly competitive environment non added administrative tasks and disproportional cost increases in the supply chain process will not be sustainable long term. In the end, it is the market which will decide how effective the new trading arrangement is."

**Matthias Meyer**  
Managing Director  
Heller Machine Tools

# TECHNOLOGY

Technology has played a significant role for businesses throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with great reliance on technology to work remotely. Economic prosperity is driven by innovation and technological advancement and our region is characterised by the dominance of advanced manufacturing, defence and security businesses in the two counties, who are driving the use of artificial intelligence innovation and automation in these sectors.

## Your challenges:

16% of companies identified their interest in developing and implementing new technology to help develop their products and services.

6% of companies reported implementing automation in various forms such as using artificial intelligence to help automate processes in order to improve product efficiency.

## Our Policy Commitment:

To lobby government to continue to provide funding and tax incentives that encourage innovation for businesses who want to introduce new technologies into their business.

**Last year** the national Chamber network successfully continued to help companies looking to implement new technology and innovation were able to meet industry experts through our manufacturing forums

## BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

Lifestyle Appliances Ltd, one of the UK's largest independent suppliers of outdoor leisure products, saw a surge in online sales during the recent lockdown period, which the company managed with the latest ERP software and remote working tools provided by OGL Computer.

Frank Spencer, Lifestyle Appliances Director commented: "A small number of staff utilised mobile VPN set ups to work from home and this enabled them to access OGL Software real-time to process sales and purchase orders. This kept the flow of orders to be dispatched going into the warehouse so that delivery time promises were maintained.

"Our view on remote working has totally changed. We feel that as we transition out of the pandemic and return to the "new normal", practices implemented during the lockdown will be maintained as standard working practice as a result of them being recognised as a far more efficient way of conducting our business."

**Cindy Phillips, Head of Marketing**  
OGL Computer  
**Frank Spencer, Director**  
Lifestyle Appliances

## What the Chamber will deliver in 2021:

- Hold growth and manufacturing forums to bring together companies to learn from successful peers.
- Provide training courses on how to develop technology skills using Office 365, Canva and other digital marketing applications.
- Work with partners and support significant change projects and organisations in the two Counties, including Malvern Hills Science Park, Betaden, 5G Innovation and the Midlands Centre for Cyber Security.
- Continue to work with local universities, including the University of Worcester, NMiTE and the University of Wolverhampton.
- Continue to promote relevant grant funding that enables businesses to innovate, adapt, introduce automation and develop new products.
- Work with partners to continue to promote the growing risk from cybercrime and solutions to safeguard businesses.

## BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

Last year we were awarded eAdviser of the Year by Intelliflo for adoption of technology. We have fully adopted tech across all areas of the business including onboarding our clients to a secure finance portal and refining our systems to meet our customers' need. We continually review how we utilise tech by consulting with our staff to ensure systems work across all departments and processes are as efficient as possible. By involving the staff and being inclusive the adoption of new technology has been successful, and it has revolutionised the way we're able to work both in the office and remotely."

**Justin Neale**  
**Director of Business Operations & Compliance**  
SN Financial Services Ltd



# SUSTAINABILITY

**Sustainability and climate change remain amongst the most important concerns both for businesses and governments around the world. Many companies are increasingly paying close attention to their corporate social responsibility in their efforts to become greener and create positive change within society. Businesses in the energy, extractive, construction and transportation industries are the most likely to find themselves exposed to potential regulatory and natural resource constraints. The UK is hosting the COP26 annual conference in November 2021. It will present a ten-point plan for a greener economy to increase awareness of climate change and help reach targets to reduce carbon emissions by 68% by 2030. It is predicted that these actions will create 250,000 jobs. Additionally, the government are now taking steps towards net-zero with the ending of the sales of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.**

## Your challenges:

8% of companies reported to having pressure from clients to become demonstrably greener. This indicates more and more that companies are paying attention to becoming greener, and many are finding ways to achieve this through research and collaboration.

7% of companies reported concerns identifying more sustainable materials to use for packaging in efforts to reduce plastic use. Government initiatives such as the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance and the Global Plastics Action Partnership will help companies understand ways to reduce plastic and to help make the environment more sustainable.

**Last year the national Chamber network successfully worked with other business groups to release a report; ‘A Just Transition to Net Zero’, on how to reach their goal of a net-zero UK by 2050.**

## What the Chamber will deliver in 2021:

- Deliver ‘sustainability’ policy roundtables with companies and industry experts on the challenges of climate change and how organisations can become greener and more sustainable.
- Deliver the Business Energy and Efficiency Programme (BEEP) which can provide free support to identify cost saving opportunities and grant funding of up to £20,000 and 40% of project costs to allow these savings happen.
- Work with partner organisations to promote other grants schemes available.
- Challenge our own costs and activities towards a more sustainable business.
- Promote more case studies of best practice, so businesses can see the practical steps they can take to contribute to this agenda.



## “ BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

The Covid-19 pandemic helped the management team at FZUK accelerate plans to implement the change to “net zero”. In under twelve months we installed 9 EV chargers and the Board of Directors, Commercial team and three other employees converted to electric cars and are now all fully operational. Once the leases have expired, the rest of the fleet will be replaced by EV, including technicians vans. FZUK also paid for the home chargers and have a fully EV Mini for all other employees to use at the weekend or in the week to “experience” EV and encourage them to make the move from diesel or petrol.

ISO 14001 accreditation was secured with zero non-conformances in the year and the Redditch facility has now implemented low energy LED lighting, a fully integrated recycling management programme and a paperless office. The biggest move however is in the company’s product offering. During the year we accelerated our plan to move away from diesel propulsion vehicles to fully electric and Hydrogen Fuel Cells for both the Collection Vehicles and mechanical Road Sweepers, including a zero-emission sweeper body. The Refuse Body and lifting devices are also fully electric, moving away from the very inefficient hydraulic systems.

**Simon Hyde**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
FAUN Zoeller (UK) Limited

## Our Policy Commitment:

Lobby government to involve businesses in the decision-making processes and targets associated with climate change to ensure solutions to push this agenda forward are innovative and impactful as well as realistic and practical.

## “ BUSINESS CASE STUDY:

At Worcester Bosch we believe that a social and ecological balance is needed to achieve business success whilst preserving resources for current and future generations.

We are leading the UK in developing products that meet the energy challenge by being part of the first trial of Hydrogen ready boilers.

Great efforts are also made in our factory to reduce our environmental impact. We introduced water recycling which saved twelve metric tons of CO2 and 71 million litres of water annually. We replaced the air handling unit in our factory, giving us a carbon saving equivalent to driving a diesel car over 1.8 million kilometres.

Our team members also care about the community regularly giving days volunteering at local charities and over the last 6 years we have raised over £100,000 to local and national charities.”

**Carl Arntzen**  
**Managing Director**  
Worcester Bosch



# HEREFORDSHIRE BUSINESS STATISTICS

More new businesses were established in Herefordshire during **2020** than in any previous year. **2,327** new companies were registered compared to 1,499 during 2019, an **increase of 55.2%**



**90%** of businesses employ less than **10** people



The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership were awarded a **£5.43 million Growth Deal investment** for the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Skylon Park. The funding will support infrastructure works and create **500 new jobs**

The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership were awarded **£3 million** of funding from the **Getting Building Fund** in August 2020 to make improvements to Hereford City Centre



The **Stronger Towns Bid** for Herefordshire aims to improve three areas for the county which include **connectivity, urban regeneration, skills and enterprise**.



**Midlands Cyber** is a government backed initiative, supported by the Midlands Engine and Department of International Trade, showcasing the region for its **pedigree in Cyber Security**.



**NMITE**, New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering officially will open in **September 2021** and will accept applications for its cohort very soon.



The **Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ)** was designated as the Enterprise Zone for the Marches LEP in 2011. Developments on Skylon Park made great strides in 2019/2020 as two of Hereford Enterprise Zone's biggest investments to date came to fruition. Both the **£7.3m transformation of the historic Shell Store** and the building of the **£9 Cyber Quarter** - Midlands Centre for Cyber Security are nearing completion.

Supported by **£440k Marches LEP funding**, a project led by Herefordshire Council will **revitalise tourism marketing** for the county, including new branding and new website, increased PR and national advertising.



**Hereford Enterprise Zone** continues to grow, now standing at over **56,000 sqm of new workspace** accommodating **46 businesses** and just under **1,000 jobs**. The **Marches LEP** were awarded **£5.432m Growth Deal** investment for the Zone which will make another 20 acres ready for business investment.

## HEREFORDSHIRE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT



It goes without saying that the business environment we are operating in has been very different. Businesses are usually great at adapting and surviving however this set of circumstances have hit some harder than others.

If you are in the hospitality or entertainment sector it is perhaps obvious that businesses are in survival mode. It's possible will not recover. Other sectors also facing extreme trading conditions are perhaps less obvious. The automotive and aviation supply chains for example have seen severe disruption to order books.

Other sectors like construction and food manufacturing have seen increased activity and have continued trading. There will be winners and losers for some time to come.

Deborah Gittos  
Director  
Arctic Circle

# WORCESTERSHIRE BUSINESS STATISTICS

**90%**  
of businesses  
employ less  
than 10 people



Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership were awarded **£12 million** from the **Getting Building Fund**, to fund projects in the wake of the **Covid-19** pandemic



Worcestershire's first **new railway** station for over **100 years**, Worcester Parkway, opened in February 2020



**BetaDen**, Worcester's commercial technology accelerator, confirmed its **fourth cohort** of businesses in 2021

**£20.5**

Worcester City Council and Wyre Forest District Council secured **£17.9** and **£20.5 million** of investment respectively from the **Future High Streets Fund** in January 2021

**£17.9**



**Work on Heart** of Worcester's College's Duckworth Centre of Engineering was **completed** in November 2020



Phase 5 of **Malvern Hills Science Park** is now complete with further expansion planned to cater for future demand.



A new **5G company** has been set up Malvern, continuing to lead the way on the delivery of **"Industry 4.0"**.



Continued to deliver the **'Inspiring our Future Workforce'** programme with employers, schools and pupils to maintain the level of employer encounters and careers advice to all pupils in the County.

## WORCESTERSHIRE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

“Coronavirus has had a mixed impact on local businesses – some are booming, others are on their knees, with very few left unchanged. Short term predictions are equally mixed, with much resting on how quickly lockdown restrictions can be eased. However, the businesses I speak to are positive in their outlook. Some of the adaptations and lessons from lockdown are already bringing beneficial changes to the way people work, trade, travel, collaborate and communicate. These present opportunities for agile and innovative businesses that can thrive in our beautiful region.”

Duncan Sutcliffe  
Director  
Sutcliffe & Co

“The utilities sector has been an economic 'safe haven', meaning we haven't been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Construction rates for new connections have remained constant, although we have seen a shift in the types of developments requiring connections.

“We operate in a very agile way, so adapting quickly to Covid-safe working practices on construction sites came naturally to us, and this has enabled us to maintain a high level of service to our clients. Throughout the pandemic our team of utility keyworkers have continued to build and upgrade assets on the distribution network.

“Whilst Covid-19 has slightly increased costs of delivery due to social distancing requirements and Brexit may cause some short-term pain on switchgear delivery timescales, Rock Power Connections is in a strong position for 2021, with growth in the low carbon economy boosting our pipeline of work to support the rollout of the UK's Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network.”

Emma Chetwynd Jarvis  
Electrical Connections Manager  
Rock Power Connections Ltd



## CHAMBER POLICY CONTACTS



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## UPCOMING RESEARCH AND REPORTS

### Q1 2020

Fieldwork: 15 February to 8 March

### Q2 2020

Fieldwork: 17 May to 7 June

### Q3 2020

Fieldwork: 23 August to 13 September

### Q4 2020

Fieldwork: 1 November to 22 November

## OUR ACCREDITATIONS AND COMMITMENTS





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