

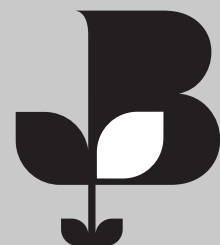
BUSINESS MANIFESTO 2022-2023



Herefordshire
& Worcestershire
Chamber of Commerce



OUR PATRONS



CONTENTS

Foreword	4
About Us	6
Business Priorities	8
Business Growth	10
Business Costs	12
People	14
International Trade	16
Technology	18
Sustainability	20
Herefordshire Business Statistics	22
Herefordshire Business Environment	23
Worcestershire Business Statistics	24
Worcestershire Business Environment	25
Chamber Policy Contacts	26





Sharon Smith
Chief Executive

Herefordshire & Worcestershire
Chamber of Commerce

Representing our Members, associated businesses, and key partner organisations I am pleased to present the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce 2022/2023 Business Manifesto detailing the priorities for local and national government, as identified during regular research and consultations throughout the year.

I'd like to start with a thank you. Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce engages the most businesses via the Quarterly Economic Surveys than any other Chamber across the national Chamber network. Without this commitment by so many businesses to share opinion and concerns we could not maintain this high level and we truly appreciate

the support. This extensive consultation allows us to identify current challenges, potential barriers to growth and to identify opportunities for businesses looking to invest and organisations looking to offer their support.

This document sets out the key priorities which have been identified by businesses across Herefordshire and Worcestershire. In partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce and our 53-strong Chamber network, our 2022/2023 Chamber Business Manifesto outlines how we aim to represent businesses at a local and national level.

When presenting the Manifesto and writing this foreword last year, we were looking to emerge from Covid protocols and return to something resembling normal in terms of day to day life, in a personal and professional capacity. There were moments of optimism, followed by times of real concern in regards to another lockdown. Now, as a result of various factors, none more so than an extensive vaccination programme, we can look forward as a business community.

As a result of some changes in the business environment, the Manifesto areas for 2022/2023 are Business Growth, Business Costs, People, Sustainability, Technology, and International Trade.

While some of these areas have remained similar, their constituent parts have changed. For example, last years "Skills" section has developed to "People". This is not diminishing the vital importance of activity between

business and education but recognising that in 2022/2023 our focus must also be on our existing workforce, its wellbeing, working environment, and personal development.

Equally in Technology, much emphasis remains on investment, and adaptation of technology to make processes more efficient, but now a huge focus is being placed on Cyber Security, keeping our people and businesses safe as we continue to conduct our business activities on-line.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire are often underestimated in terms of their contribution to the national economy. Whether pulling food out of the ground, picking off trees, creating parts for machinery, or providing services to allow businesses to run in an efficient and compliant manner, our two counties have a global purpose. As such we will continue to represent our businesses in International Trade, making introductions, providing advice and servicing documentation.

All this activity, the Manifesto itself, and the efforts of the Chamber team will be carried out locally from our offices in Hereford and Worcester, and from The British Chambers of Commerce in London. The British Chamber is a huge resource and support for all our activities and through our contacts, we have direct access to Central Government.

Thank you for your support, we look forward to working with you, and making connections that will allow you to grow your business and activities in 2022/2023.



Ben Mannion
Director

Hewett Recruitment

President

Herefordshire & Worcestershire
Chamber of Commerce

This year's Business Manifesto sees the "usual suspects" topping the agenda of business priorities across Herefordshire & Worcestershire. Business Growth, Business Costs, People, International Trade, Technology and Sustainability are all familiar areas, with only Business Growth being a new entry since last year, replacing Covid Recovery, perhaps unsurprisingly. The truth is that for many businesses, Covid Recovery is still very much a focus, although it is fair to say that the economy bounced back in a way that few expected.

This bounce back, though, brought with it a wholly different set of challenges to those that were faced during the darkest times of the pandemic. When the most stringent of Covid regulations were enacted, many businesses had little or no demand for their particular product or service. As the economy opened the opposite was true, unprecedented levels of demand and supply chains and a labour market that struggled to react. The bureaucracy brought about by Brexit continues to frustrate those organisations who rely on International Trade and the fear is that any expected improvements are very slow to come about.

When we look at Skills, or People as it has been named this year, the post-Covid landscape has laid bare several deep-seated challenges within the UK labour market. The long-standing skills shortage has been built on by the short-term impact of Brexit and Covid leading to a huge imbalance in supply and demand. Not only is the lack of available candidates causing businesses real production problems, it is also feeding through into the aforementioned Costs issue, as all sectors begin to feel wage pressures in the battle to attract and retain talent.

The "Green economy" represents a significant economic opportunity to the two counties but is not without its challenges. The supply chain and costs issues that businesses are experiencing will undoubtedly have an impact on investment decisions and it remains to be seen if this could have a knock-on effect on how readily firms can adapt to the Sustainability agenda. The same could be said about Technology

in general, with many firms still focusing on getting back to full capacity following the economic shock of the pandemic, rather than committing to significant investment. There remains a huge amount of uncertainty in the wake of Covid and Brexit, exacerbated by recent events in Eastern Europe, and this will certainly affect confidence.

Notwithstanding the above, there is still a remarkable amount of positivity in the local business community. The bounce back from Covid was indeed far quicker and greater than many expected, and this has helped many organisations get through a very difficult period. What businesses now need to see is a cohesive and coherent strategy from Government to address the issues raised in this Manifesto. Then these firms can start to prioritise Business Growth and make the long-term investment decisions in people and technology that will ultimately lead to sustainable economic success for the local area.



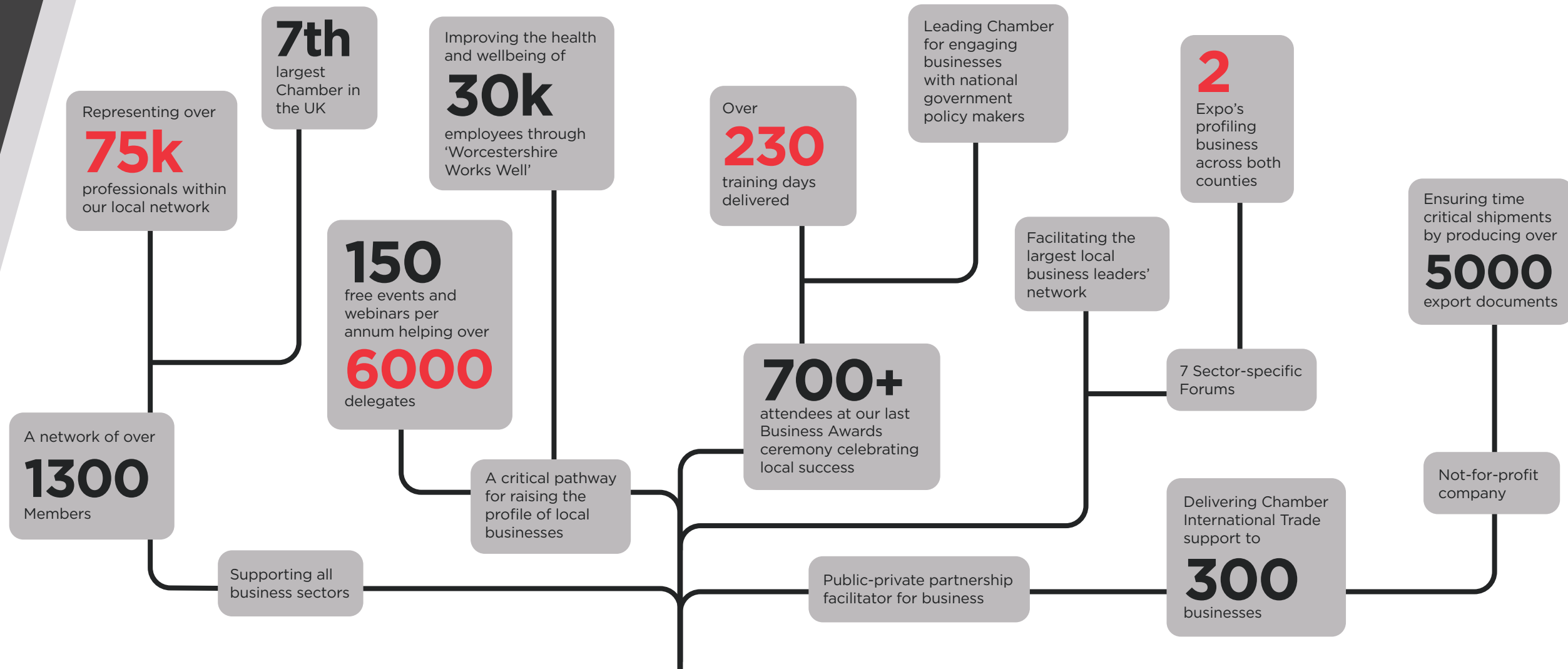
ABOUT US

OUR VISION:

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

OUR MISSION:

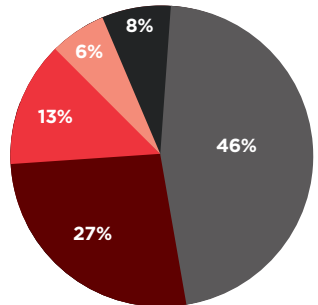
"To provide access to solutions that local businesses need in order to achieve their goals, through engaging, influencing and connecting. To be responsive to the external environment, offering responsive and relevant approaches".



2022-2023 BUSINESS PRIORITIES

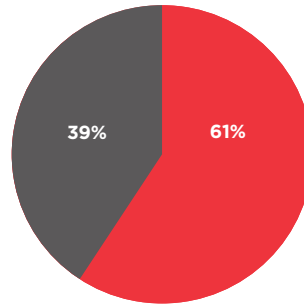
Throughout the year our Policy team, through the Quarterly Economic Survey, collects data from local businesses. Over 500 businesses have identified the top 10 priorities for their organisations. The list adjacent demonstrates the most commonly selected issues.

Responses by Business Size



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

Responses by Sector



SERVICES
 MANUFACTURING

63%
Increasing energy costs

50%

49%

Increasing profits

49%

Recruitment of new employees

47%

Increasing revenues

42%

Supply chain delays

40%

Access to new customers

34%

Red tape and regulation

36%

Business taxes

38%

Cash flow challenges

38%

Health and wellbeing in the workplace

39%

Retention of existing employees

32%

Access to finance/grants

31%

Business rates

31%

31%

Cyber security

28%

Sustainable energy

24%

Pressure from clients and customers to become more sustainable

Preparing future workforce/ apprenticeship

23%

13%

Engaging with local schools and colleges

Access to funding for innovation and new product development

13%

21%

Changes in import/export Regs

Flexible working policies

22%

BUSINESS GROWTH

This section of the Manifesto in 2021/2022 was entitled Covid Recovery. There is no doubt that businesses across Herefordshire and Worcestershire have experienced unprecedented challenges. Now, however, there is cautious optimism and an opportunity to grow, or at least return to previous levels of activity in the year ahead.

Your challenges:

The Quarterly Economic Survey measures business confidence in terms of turnover and profitability. Four consecutive surveys have shown that confidence in turnover projections has fallen. In February 2021 with the prospect of restrictions being lifted, 72% of businesses predicted increases in turnover. The latest survey, in February 2022 showed this falling to 65%.

Profitability is also hard to predict. In summer 2021, 65% of businesses could see profitability improving. This has fallen to just 50% in Quarter 1 2022. In addition to this projection, 19% of businesses expected profitability to worsen. The largest number in 12 months.

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.

“ Business Growth in 2022/2023 Challenges and Opportunities

First it was Brexit, then Covid. Now Covid appears to be receding it is being replaced with inflation and rising interest rates as new problems to manage. And if that wasn't enough, we have the geopolitical and associated economic impacts of the unfolding issues in Eastern Europe. It seems the one constant in business for the 2020s is that challenge will never be far away. As such, it has never been more important for businesses to focus on what they can control. Whether it be people and culture, business funding, or investment in know-how, there is so much a business can focus on. And with that comes opportunity to try new approaches, or to test out new markets. Crucial to all of these will be businesses recognising the need for a well-structured plan. One that can be used to highlight what those controllable actions are, and which should be prioritised in the context of the agreed business objectives. They say never waste a crisis. When challenge comes, the entrepreneurial will always find opportunity.

Chris Walklett
Tax Partner
Bishop Fleming

What the Chamber will deliver in 2022/2023:

- Deliver a series of industry specific, county specific regular networking events and informative webinars for Members and help raise the profile of organisations across the region and nationally.
- Continue the re-launch of the Growth Forum designed for businesses of all sizes to learn of best practice, overcoming of challenges and developing relationships that will provide a platform to grow their business in short, medium term, and sustain growth over a long period.
- Deliver the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Expo in October 2022 and March 2023 enabling 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 research into, and signposting of, local and national government funding schemes.
- Working with local partners to ensure all opportunities in terms of events, promotion, and support can have mutual benefit to all.
- Use of Chamber communications, e-shots, Business Direction magazine to highlight projects that may benefit all.
- Chamber to facilitate regular Bank of England briefings with national economy updates.

“ CASE STUDY:

Founded by Henry Weston in Much Marcle Herefordshire in 1880, Westons continues to thrive some 140 years later. The company still produces cider in the traditional way using bittersweet apples all grown within 50 miles of the Mill.

Lockdown and the closure of pubs and restaurants in the UK clearly had an impact, however at Westons we adapted very quickly with added focus on our off-trade business (sales to supermarkets and convenience stores), as well as a huge expansion of our online presence, direct to consumer, business.

During lockdown we commissioned and installed a new canning line to help this growing part of our business. Indeed, in the year ending March 2022 we hope to hit all our key performance targets and enter the new financial year in a strong position.

As we move into the post pandemic era and pubs and restaurants etc start to resume "normal" trading, we are focussing our resources on our two major brands: Henry Westons and Stowford Press. One of the biggest issues we face is the rising cost of all raw materials, but we continue to invest to mitigate this, and we look to the future with optimism."

Helen Thomas
Managing Director
Westons

BUSINESS COSTS

Surveying through the Quarterly Economic Survey allows the Chamber to not only gauge opinion, but also receive direct feedback from businesses and then plan support.

Costs are increasing, but being able to identify where, can help businesses to plan strategies. The root cause of cost increases has not changed over the past year. What has changed is the impact.

Throughout the last year, wage cost and pay settlements were cited by 13% of businesses as a cost pressure. This figure was most recently reported at 25%. Raw material prices are consistently rising and have been throughout 2021. This has been demand driven, supply challenges, or effected by international politics. Most recently (QES 1 2022) 62% of businesses stated raw materials prices as a reason for cost increase.

Your challenges:

63% of businesses are concerned about increasing energy costs.

36% of businesses highlighted business rates as a cost pressure.

42% of businesses were experiencing supply chain delays and 21% cited changes to import and export regulations as a cost pressure.

Changes to research and development tax legislation could delay and increase cost of proposed investment in plant machinery and create inefficiencies that increase costs.

Our Policy Commitment:

Through the Chamber network and the British Chambers of Commerce, we will continue to lobby central government to ensure cost increases are kept to a minimum and where they are unavoidable, that measures are taken to support businesses.

What the Chamber will deliver in 2022/2023:

- Actively seek feedback from Members as they experience new cost pressures.
- Continue to share best practice displayed by Member businesses to establish if application of such practice can help businesses reduce costs.
- Continue to advise Members on policy changes and trends that arise in various sectors.
- Continue to hold events and webinars such as the Manufacturing Forum that will be on-site live events throughout 2022 and 2023.
- Continue to signpost Members to funding tools such as the "Finance Finder", as well as highlighting new opportunities as they arise.
- Highlight the 2021/2022 Salary and Benefits Survey as a tool to ensure wage pressures are accurate and retention of staff can be maximised.
- Chamber to facilitate regular Bank of England briefings with national economy updates.

CASE STUDY:

The insurance market isn't immune from inflationary and supply chain pressures in the economy.

Inflation is having a disproportionate effect on rebuild costs in the UK. Which is one of the main factors driving the cost of property insurance either as an owner or tenant paying the premium to the landlord. Rebuild indexing is currently 8-10%. Labour shortages and supply chain delays in the building sector are not only driving up the costs of insurance claims, but also causing time delays during which business is interrupted in the event of a loss such as fire or flood. To ensure that buildings are adequately insured for the full rebuild costs and that business interruption insurance will cover for the inevitable delays following an insured loss, businesses will need to budget increased insurance costs.

Motor fleet insurance premiums have been competitive as the reduced road use during Covid led to a lower frequency of accidents. However, the supply chain delays, and the increased complexity of motor vehicles technology has meant that the unit costs per claim have been rising considerably. As we return to a more normal pattern of road use increased claims frequency is likely, which will have a knock-on effect of premiums.

Labour shortages and increased home working have also led to a reduction in service levels from insurance companies.

All these factors highlight benefit of chartered insurance brokers who are able to give independent professional advice, the best deal, and assistance navigating complex insurance claims."

Gordon Hazelton MBA, ACII
Managing Director

Hazelton Mountford, Chartered Insurance Brokers

PEOPLE

In previous years, Manifesto documents have detailed “Skills” as a key area of importance.

This is still very relevant, and it has never been more important to ensure that businesses are engaging with education. Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce are working closely with local schools and colleges, ensuring that course content is relevant, and students are gaining the right skills. The British Chambers of Commerce are working with Department of Education to create Local Skills Improvement Plans.

People have always been a major strength of every business. Covid has changed our working world. We have seen a shift in work practices and company culture. Flexible working policies have been widely introduced and a hybrid model of home/office has become the norm in many industries.

In many cases this has enhanced another new emphasis – workplace wellbeing. Increasingly, employees are seeking employers who recognise the wider working environment is as important as it's outputs.

Your challenges:

49% of businesses reported recruitment as a key challenge in 2022/2023.

39% of businesses viewed retention of existing employees as a challenge.

Health and wellbeing in the workplace was identified as a challenge by 38% of businesses.

Preparing future workforce and encouraging apprenticeships was identified by 23% of businesses.

Our Policy Commitment:

Through the Chamber network and the British Chambers of Commerce, we will continue to lobby government to proceed with work on the Local Skills Improvement Plan, development of apprenticeships, and working with local schools and colleges.

What the Chamber will deliver in 2022/2023:

- Continue to develop a Skills Hub on the Chamber website.
- Continue discussions and work on well-being programmes with Herefordshire Public Health.
- Develop our training portfolios to help Members develop people in their organisations and provide targeted training for business needs.
- Support external funded programs, and deliver our in-house Leadership Development Programme, to facilitate best practice learning for junior and senior executives.
- Continue to promote equality and diversity in the workplace through case studies, forums and training.
- Continue to be represented on the 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.
- Continue to promote “Time to Change” initiative within the Chamber team.



“ CASE STUDY:

Sanctuary is one of the UK's leading social housing and care providers, managing around 105,000 homes across the country.

As a major employer headquartered in Worcester, we recognise the value of recruiting and retaining talented people from across Worcestershire and beyond.

We have a wide range of roles available at Sanctuary and our apprenticeship scheme is an integral part of our talent pipeline.

Apprenticeships add significant value to our business and provide people of any age with the steppingstones to build a successful career. They provide the opportunity to learn, gain valuable work experience and life skills, alongside studying and support to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

They are also a great way to upskill the existing workforce; using the apprenticeship levy where appropriate apprenticeship opportunities arise.”

Liz Hartley
Group Director - Corporate Services
Sanctuary Group

“ CASE STUDY:

We can confidently expect the world of work to look very different by 2032. Automation, robotics, AI and the digitalisation of assets, business processes and operations will disrupt the kind of work we do, how we organise work, and the kinds of skills we need our employees to have. It has never been more important to understand the skills our future workforce will need and – critically – how we can make that transition. This is not a ‘simple’ process of replacing employees with robots; in fact, only around 5% of jobs can be displaced entirely. Instead, our business leaders face the challenge of needing to work out which parts of their organisation can benefit from automation, redesigning job roles to reflect that change, then specifying and developing a workforce that has the skills they’ll need to add value alongside increased automation.”

Beverley Gibbs
Chief Academic Officer
NMITE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

International trade is critical not only for business performance and growth, but also for overall economic growth. International trade enables businesses to expand their market beyond their own country, resulting in enhanced economies of scale, increased living standards and employment. As a result, it is critical that international trade is regarded as a strong characteristic for both the economy and businesses, with growing numbers of UK businesses now exporting.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire businesses import from and export to markets all over the world. There are a number of elements to international trade. Making the sale, delivering, and receiving the goods and then looking for new markets.

Your challenges:

42% of businesses reported supply chain issues as a barrier to international trade.

34% of importers and exporters reported regulation and documentation as a problem.

While welcoming new trade deals, many businesses have cited process and documentation as a barrier.

Our Policy Commitment:

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

What the Chamber will deliver in 2022/2023

- The Chamber's International Trade and Membership teams, in conjunction with the Department for International Trade, will continue to deliver international business support and advice, and maintain a global network through the International Chamber of Commerce, 120 Embassies and High Commissions around the world.
- The Chamber will continue to supply Export Documentation services for companies and deliver an Import and Export Customs Declarations service via the ChamberCustoms Service.
- The Chamber 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, as well as small and larger corporates across multiple sectors.
- Chamber will continue to support International Trade with a full translation service, ATA Carnet service, and Letters of Credit service.
- The Chamber will continue to promote the latest international trade news, events, webinars and updates.
- The Chamber will share news of new contracts, examples of best practice and new trade initiatives through regular communications.

“ CASE STUDY:

The last 12 months have presented many challenges and opportunities - Brexit and the resulting import and export regulations, Covid regulations, lockdowns and furlough schemes, supply chain shortages and the associated increase in costs which all businesses have had to navigate.

Last year at Schaeffler we kicked off our Roadmap 2025 with the strategy 'We pioneer motion'. Our aim is to advance how the world moves through innovation, efficiency, and agility. To maintain our position, we need to focus on our core business, to remain flexible and to seize opportunities - whilst always putting our customers at the centre of what we do.

Within the Automotive sector, the global semi-conductor shortage has resulted in fewer new vehicles entering the market and those that are delivered have vastly increased lead times. This has provided opportunities within the Automotive Aftermarket vehicle maintenance and repair sector. A lack of new and used vehicle availability has resulted in the UK vehicle aging to an average of 8.4 years in 2021 - the oldest on record. This coupled with an increase in 'staycations' and the MOT postponement due to Covid, has resulted in strong demand for our Aftermarket sector that will continue throughout 2022/23."

Mark Dolloway, Managing Director
Kathy Campbell, HR Manager
Schaeffler Automotive Aftermarket (UK) Ltd

TECHNOLOGY

Technology will always bring change to the workplace and our personal lives. During Covid, technology allowed many businesses to continue trading almost as normal. Equally, as we emerge it's likely that the same technologies will further develop our processes.

One major consideration as we rely more on technology is that we need to be clear on some major challenges. Are we training our younger workforce to use this technology? Do we have the skills to take advantage of the benefits? Are we protected from threats such as data theft and cyber security breaches?

Economic prosperity is driven by innovation and technological advancement. 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:

Only 21% of companies in the UK were recently identified by the British Chambers of Commerce as having cyber security accreditations.

31% of businesses in Herefordshire and Worcestershire stated that cyber security is a challenge to their business in 2022/2023.

13% of businesses requested more information on access to funding for technology and product innovation.

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 company. To ensure that nationally we are seeking every opportunity to protect us from cyber crime.

What the Chamber will deliver in 2022/2023:

- Work with members of the tech sector to highlight benefits of technology to wider Chamber Members.
- Highlight the risks of cyber security and provide solutions.
- Continue training courses to allow employees to maintain competency and develop new skills.
- Work with local schools, colleges and universities to ensure learning matches industry needs and developments.
- Continue to promote Midlands Centre for Cyber Security.
- Promote and highlight funding opportunities.

CASE STUDY: The importance of technology in 2022/2023

Technology is playing more and more of a pivotal role across businesses as our way of working continues to develop and evolve at a rapid pace. Over the last 10 years, we have seen a digital transformation take place, accelerated by the pandemic. Businesses are realising that they need to invest in their technology in order to keep up with their competitors and thrive in today's digital world.

Cloud computing services are changing the way organisations approach their IT. Transferring the running of IT functions to a specialist managed services provider removes the responsibility of managing on-site hardware and software, and can be very cost-effective as businesses only pay for what they use. This frees up capital which can be invested in other areas. Many companies in Herefordshire and Worcestershire are choosing to invest in digital workplaces which are becoming very popular with the growth of hybrid working. Digital workplaces allow teams to connect and collaborate from anywhere, improving productivity, lowering costs and enhancing employee experience."

Richard Lane
CEO and Founder
EBC Group

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.

Following the UK hosting of the COP26 annual conference in November 2021, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, along with the British Chambers of Commerce, have a key responsibility in delivering the goals and positive outcomes heralded at the conference.

The BCC has adopted a ten-point Net Zero plan covering emissions, carbon reduction, energy tariffs, recycling, vehicles and fleets, carbon offsetting and future proofing your business. These drivers are all supported by a Net Zero Hub, and this is further supported by the Sustainability Hub on the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce website.

Your challenges:

24% of companies reported 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.

28% of companies see use of more sustainable energy as a key action for the years ahead.

The results from the November 2021 QES highlighted that 68% of businesses requested more information on funding to help achieve sustainability goals.

In the same survey, 28% of businesses outlined more advice was needed to help become greener.

Our Policy Commitment:

Lobby government to ensure that every opportunity to be more sustainable is made available to our Members.
Ensure that rising energy costs are monitored, supply chains monitored, and where possible funding is received within the counties.

What the Chamber will deliver in 2022/2023:

- Deliver 'sustainability-focused' 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 to happen.
- Support delivery of Low Carbon Opportunities Plan (LoCOP) with grants of up to £50,000 for renewable energy projects, and up to £30,000 for low carbon innovation projects.
- Work with partner organisations to promote other grants schemes available.
- Actively promote the business opportunities of mitigating climate change, ensuring businesses in Herefordshire and Worcestershire benefit fully.
- Challenge our internal 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.
- Develop the Sustainability Hub on the Chamber website.

CASE STUDY:

At DRPG, sustainability is at the forefront of everything we do and has been so for many years. Sustainability is much more than just the environment. We look at it in terms of the Triple Bottom Line and how we combine People, Profit and Planet in equal measures to play our part in creating a sustainable future for clients, team, suppliers, and community.

We are close to 75% of the workforce being millennials who put purpose ahead of financial considerations. This means organisations who lack a clear purpose or social responsibility will increasingly find it more challenging to attract the right people and great customers. We recognised this many years ago and were the first agency in our sector to gain ISO14001 and ISO20121. We are now in the closing stages of gaining B-Corp accreditation and advising many of our clients and suppliers on how to be more sustainable."

Dale Parmenter
CEO
DRPG

CASE STUDY:

Mettis has embraced the net zero challenge and commenced our strategy to achieve net zero, engaging with all key elements of our business as our contribution to climate change to reduce emissions by 2030.

Our focus is on scope 1, 2 and 3 and how we implement this throughout our business to realise our vision. We have implemented our own Combined Heat and Power (CHP) generation plant, installed alternative forms of heat management, optimised process controls and during the pandemic we built on our site a modular sustainable factory facility. This facility will take us into the next decade and secure Mettis' UK manufacturing.

We are focussing on our people and their future, by investing in R&D technologies with academia, digitalisation and researching into alternative renewable energy sources, chemicals and vertical value stream processes.

Mettis is striving for sustainability in everything we do and for our products and manufacturing to stand out against our competitors and for us to be a shining light for Worcestershire."

Joanne Fellows
ESG Sustainability Manager
Mettis Group Limited

HEREFORDSHIRE BUSINESS STATISTICS



The **largest business sectors** in Herefordshire are currently manufacturing, defence and security, food and drink production, agriculture and tourism. **15% of the population are self-employed.**

The **Marches Renewable Energy Project** (MarRE) has supported installation of over **2.3 megawatts** of new **renewable** energy generation capacity and a decrease of **563 tonnes of CO2**, enough energy to **power 1,500 homes.**



In Herefordshire, more new businesses were founded in 2021 than in any previous year. In total, **2,858 businesses** were registered in 2021, compared to 2,327 in 2020, a **22.8%** growth.



Herefordshire Stronger Towns Partnership has been awarded **£22.4 million** from the government's Towns Fund for projects supporting **post-covid recovery, economic growth, job creation, and training.**



NMITE, New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering, opened in 2021 and has accepted **two** student cohorts, the **Pioneers**, and the **Explorers.**

Economic development schemes are underway in the county, including enterprise zones in Hereford and Ross and opening of the business incubation centre at the Shell Store in Rotherwas. Herefordshire Council's local plan aims to deliver **16,500 new homes by 2031.**



The **Midlands Cyber Security Centre** at Skylon Park opened in December 2021 with the goal of **promoting innovation** across the UK's technology sector.



Herefordshire Citizens **Climate Change Assembly** launched in 2022. 48 representatives covering all aspects of **climate change** from **land-use** and **buildings**, to **transport** and **food.**



Largely as a result of the **"FasterShire"** **superfast programme**, over **93%** of properties in Herefordshire can access a **superfast broadband** connection with over **36%** able to access a **gigabit** capable connection.

HEREFORDSHIRE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT



As we exit the pandemic it is heartening to see that Herefordshire entrepreneurship is thriving, with 2,858 new businesses being registered in 2021, an increase from 2,327 the previous year.

There are many aspects to Hereford and the county that are bringing excitement to the business community and the public. NMITE is preparing to welcome it's second year of students in September 2022 and it's new Manufacturing Centre on Skylon Park is due to open later this year.

At Skylon Park over £25m has been invested in the area to make it ready for business. Of the 100 acres made available, approximately 20 acres remain yet to be developed, eventually forecast to being over 4,000 jobs total to the area.

To help stimulate, recover, and grow the county's visitor economy (defined as hospitality, visitor attractions, accommodation and retail) within the county, the Herefordshire County Business Improvement District (BID) has been formed with a budget of £430,000 p/a for 5 years. Over the past 6 months a wide range of national media have identified Herefordshire to be a top 10 'staycation' destination. The BID brings an opportunity for businesses in the county to benefit from increased trade through improving areas such as co-ordinated marketing, PR and visitor information at home and internationally. There are many more localised initiatives in place and planned to further stimulate the Herefordshire economy.

All making the county a great place to do business and visit to enjoy the local beauty we are lucky to enjoy on our doorstep."

Mike Forrester
Chair

Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce

WORCESTERSHIRE

BUSINESS STATISTICS



Worcestershire Jobs portal assisting employment search with **10,000** vacancies listed on the website.

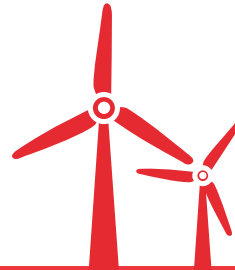
Worcestershire receive Government Towns Funds of £35.2m to deliver long-term economic growth, jobs, and training as part of Covid-recovery.



Gatsby Benchmarks - **Worcestershire Schools and Colleges exceed national levels**, particularly where business engagement is measured.



Since Worcestershire Parkway opened, more than 320,000 tickets have been purchased for journeys to and from the station.



Worcestershire Energy Strategy aims to reduce carbon emissions by 50% on 2005 levels by 2030, double the size of the low carbon sector, and triple energy production from renewable generation by 2030.

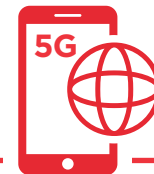


BetaDen, Worcestershire's commercial technology accelerator, confirmed its **fifth cohort** of businesses in 2021.



The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership launch Local Skills Report outlining skills and people strategy for future and existing workforce.

In the Worcestershire LEP area there have been 22 successful Foreign Direct Investment projects, bringing 258 new jobs and safeguarding 216 jobs.



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

WORCESTERSHIRE

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT



The Chamber of Commerce offers a wide range of Membership benefits, some we use, some we don't, but that is not why we are Members. Membership has also allowed us to network with potential customers and promote our business, but that is not why we are Members. We are Members of the Chamber of Commerce because we think it is the right thing to do. The Chamber deserves our support because the Chamber is there to support us - lobbying hard to make our region a better place to live and work for all people and businesses of every size. In these changing times a collective and strong voice is well worth the Membership fee."

Duncan Sutcliffe
Director
Sutcliffe & Co



Tourism is vitally important to the region and in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic we are seeing confidence in visitors from further afield coming to Worcestershire. Tourism creates local jobs, boosts revenue for our economy and develops a sense of pride for where we live. Here at the Park not only have we been serving day guests for almost 50 years, but we also attract exhibitions, conferences and events with our three unique Safari Venues on site. Last year we also introduced accommodation to our Park 'Safari Lodges', which is encouraging more visitors within the experience and overnight stay market. Collaborating and cross-promoting other attractions within our region ensures we keep visitors here for longer to sample the great features Worcestershire has to offer."

Chris Kelly
Managing Director
West Midland Safari Park

CHAMBER POLICY CONTACTS



ROBERT ELLIOT
Director of Business
Engagement and Development

OUR ACCREDITATIONS AND COMMITMENTS



WORCESTER OFFICE

Severn House
Prescott Drive
Warndon Business Park
Worcester
WR4 9NE
01905 673 600

HEREFORDSHIRE OFFICE

The Shell Store
Canary Drive
Skylon Park
Hereford
HR2 6SR

policy@hwchamber.co.uk

www.hwchamber.co.uk



@hw_chamber



Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce

