

Employment and Skills in Newark and Sherwood

A report for the Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC)

by

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Executive Summary

In this report we present the findings of a survey of businesses located in the Newark and Sherwood district of Nottinghamshire. The survey focuses on growth, employment, skills, training and business advice and includes businesses across a wider range of sectors, from sole traders to large employers and from recent start-ups to long established businesses.

The majority of firms have fewer than five employees. When recruiting, smaller firms tend to prefer local advertising and word of mouth rather than more formal channels.

Almost 60% of businesses are seeking growth, with just 5.6% expecting to downsize. Low confidence in the economy is the main restraint on growth, with the cost of staff and a lack of finance for investment also cited by over a third of respondents.

Over half of the business owners who responded had moved into the district during their adult lives and they are more likely to be looking for growth in the next 2 years compared to indigenous business owners. These in-migrants conduct the majority of their trade within the local area but also have higher levels of export and nationwide trade compared to locally owned businesses. Therefore local development policy must take into account wider business dynamics and networks.

A lack of motivation in the workforce is seen as a problem when recruiting staff across most business sectors, although not in manufacturing. The most difficult skills to find when recruiting are identified as customer service skills, technical skills and written communication.

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SECTION A: Introduction and Methodology

1. Background Information

- 1.1 In 2007-08, there were 4,045 businesses registered in the district of Newark and Sherwood, and a total of 43,000 jobs, of which 27,200 were full time¹. The district is ranked 235 out of 379 districts in the UK Competitiveness Index 2010, and 23 out of the 40 East Midlands districts. It has a GVA per capita of 16,032 (210th out of UK districts).
- 1.2 The population in 2008 was 113,300, of which 67,600 were of working age. In terms of skills, there are fewer people with NVQ3 or NVQ4 compared to the national average and also fewer NVQ4 skills compared to the East Midlands average. In terms of jobs, there are an above average proportion of “elementary occupations” and below average rates of managers and senior officials, professional occupations and associate professional and technical occupations (major group 1-3 occupations).

2. Aims of the Research

The client, Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC), requested a survey of businesses in the district to inform skills development and broader economic development needs within the region. The specific research aims are set out below:

- i. Provide an overview of the local business demographics.
- ii. Identify the growth plans of local businesses in different sectors and any potential restrictions.
- iii. Identify the location of local business’ suppliers and customers
- iv. Identify the employment profile of local businesses and their recruitment approaches
- v. Identify areas where businesses recognise a skills shortage in the labour market.
- vi. Explore the networking, training and business advice activities and requirements of businesses.

3. Context

- 3.1 The new coalition government is calling for local enterprise partnerships to be formed that can provide the strategic leadership in their areas to set out local economic priorities. They add “a clear vision is vital if local economic renewal is to be achieved”². This report provides evidence on the growth ambitions and skills requirements of local businesses that can inform such a vision.
- 3.2 The level of skills in a local district is a good indicator of its economic potential. Lack of qualifications within the resident population is associated with lower incomes and research carried out for *emda* shows this relationship to be slightly stronger in rural areas. This implies that unqualified workers in rural areas are at more of a disadvantage in terms of household income than their counterparts in urban areas. This is significant for Newark and Sherwood as the district is defined under Defra’s rural definitions as “rural-50” with at least 50 percent but less than 80 percent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.
- 3.3 Skills are identified as one of the five direct drivers of productivity, in that increasing skills within the workforce improves efficiency and increases capacity. Skills are also an indirect driver of productivity as they affect other direct drivers; a skilled workforce is more likely to innovate and adopt new business practices, for example. Skills are identified as an output of improved

¹ Nomis 2010. Labour Market Profile for Newark and Sherwood. Accessed 1st July 2010 at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038432009/report.aspx?town=newark%20and%20sherwood>

² Cable-Pickles letter on Local Enterprise Partnerships, June 29 2010. Available at: http://centreforcities.typepad.com/centre_for_cities/2010/06/cablepickles-letter-on-local-enterprise-partnerships.html

performance, as firm growth can lead to increasing division or specialisation of tasks and therefore increase demand for skills and investment in skills development³.

- 3.4 A recent CBI survey found that 22% of employers who hired adult workers had to give remedial literacy training and 18% had to give remedial numeracy training (Financial Times, 17/5/2010). The survey also found that 45% of employers had difficulty finding staff skilled in science and maths, aptitudes that were found to be highly valued by employers. At a time when local economies need to maximise growth potential, such skills deficits are detrimental to economic recovery.
- 3.5 There is increasing recognition of the importance of both human and social capital in local economies. Human capital refers to the skills and competences attached to individuals while social capital describes the intangible benefits associated with the trust, co-operation and shared values that enhance business potential. As a result of social capital, studies have found that businesses engaging with a range of networks can benefit from time and money savings in information gathering, access to wider markets, support in the start-up period⁴, more rapid innovation and greater access to training⁵. Formal support groups can also facilitate access to other business networks, seemingly implying that cumulative benefits can accrue from network participation.
- 3.6 Research found that smaller firms tend to have less time to commit to business networking and, especially in rural areas, an independent outlook makes formal networking activity unappealing. Smaller businesses need a reason to participate and to perceive a likely benefit before they engage with formal business organisations⁶. If the initial gain is not obvious, the subsequent benefits cannot develop. As well as investing in formal training and business support, this work suggests that the development of an enterprise culture where spaces are created for informal business relations and a “can do” attitude is facilitated are equally important. The report therefore addresses questions relating to network participation as well as issues of skills needs and training.
- 3.7 In a recent study for *emda*⁷, it was found that 40% of the working population of Newark and Sherwood commute outside the district while only 28% of jobs in the district are taken by people who commute into the district. It is therefore a donor region in terms of employment so investment in local skills will not all feed into the local business population.

4. Methodology

- 4.1 A questionnaire survey (enclosed in Appendix 1), together with pre-paid return envelope, was sent out to 3,600 businesses by post. A prize of training worth £1,000 provided by West Nottinghamshire College was offered to encourage responses. Prior to the full mailshot, a small pilot survey was carried out. This helped to fine-tune some of the questions and ensure that the data collected would be valuable for addressing the core questions raised by NSDC.
- 4.2 From the 3,600 addresses used, 318 were returned, no longer being valid business addresses. We received 199 usable responses, giving a response rate, based on the remaining 3,282 business, of 6%. Although a low percentage, this reflects the nature of the addresses which included many branch sites and organisations that might not consider themselves as businesses. While 318 were returned, it is also likely that a high number of others had ceased trading, especially given the recent economic climate.
- 4.3 The data was entered into SPSS with frequency tables provided for each of the main questions. More detailed analysis including cross-tabulations and comparisons of means are used for comparative analysis within the report.

³ Gambin L, Green A, Hogarth T (2009) *Exploring the Links between Skills and Productivity* undertaken by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research on behalf of *emda*

⁴ Davidsson, P. & Honig, B., The role of social and human capital among nascent entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business Venturing* 18, pp. 301-331, 2003.

⁵ Bennett, R. J. & Errington, A., Training and the small rural business. *Planning Practice and Research* 10(1), pp. 45-54, 1995.

⁶ Bosworth (2009) Unpublished PhD Thesis, Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University

⁷ Atherton, Price, Gray and Bosworth, (July 2010) *Rurality, Productivity and Skills in the East Midlands*.

Table 1. The business sector of survey respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Retail	35	17.6	17.6	17.6
	Manufacturing	21	10.6	10.6	28.1
	Professional services	81	40.7	40.7	68.8
	Tourism/recreation	9	4.5	4.5	73.4
	Education and Health	12	6.0	6.0	79.4
	Agriculture	22	11.1	11.1	90.5
	Construction	15	7.5	7.5	98.0
	Transport	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	199	100.0	100.0	

4.4 As table 1 illustrates, the majority of returns were in the professional services sector although responses were received from businesses in a variety of industrial sectors. There were also responses from businesses across a range of turnover bands, shown in Table A3.3 in the appendix, which indicates that a good cross-section of business sizes is included in the survey. The majority of businesses are Limited Companies (63%), with 17% partnerships, 16% sole traders and a handful of charities, social enterprises and other organisations.

Section B: Findings

(Note: A summary of the responses to each question is provided in Appendix 3)

5. Growth aspirations and restrictions

5.1 59% of respondents are planning for growth in the next two years with 35% expecting to stay the same and 6% expecting to get smaller. Of the 117 businesses seeking growth, Table 3 illustrates how they are anticipating that growth to materialise. The majority are looking at increasing output of the same products which suggests innovation is low. A common proxy for innovation is the number of new products brought to market and in the past 2 years, 47% of firms had introduced no new products and only 30% had introduced more than 2 new products (see table A3.4).

Table 3. Anticipated directions of business growth

Growth option	Definitely	If the opportunity arises	No
New full time staff	25.6%	40.2%	34.2%
New part time staff	22.2%	41.0%	36.8%
Expanding premises	8.5%	29.9%	61.5%
New premises	7.7%	25.6%	66.7%
New suppliers	27.4%	31.6%	41.0%
New geographical markets	25.9%	23.3%	50.9%
New product lines	37.6%	22.2%	40.2%
Increasing output of same products	54.7%	23.1%	22.2%

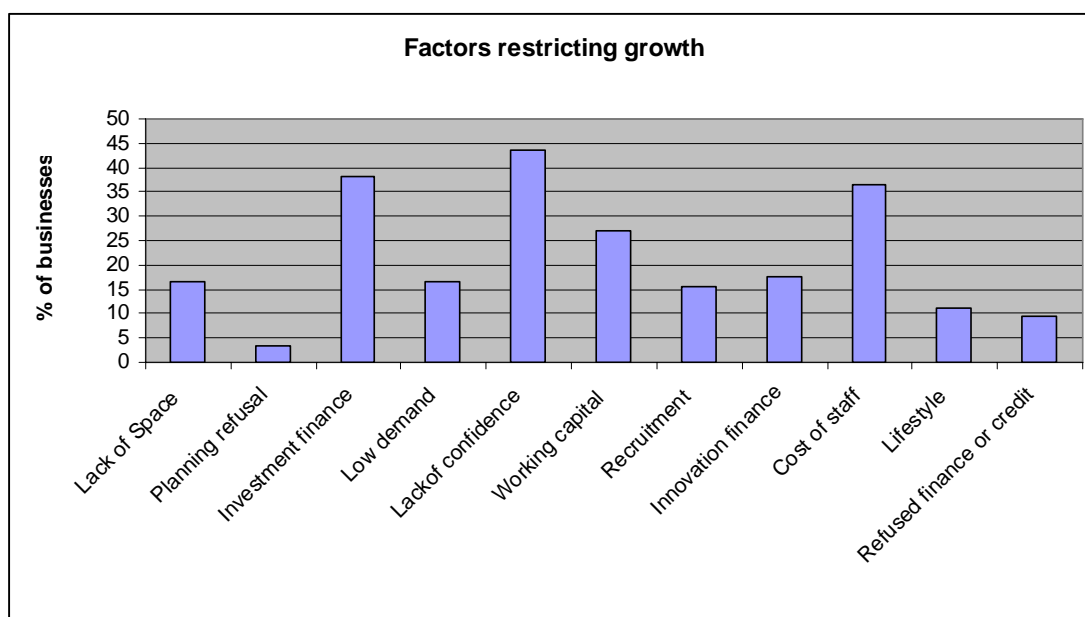
5.2 In the recent recession, the weak pound has made exporting more profitable but half of the businesses have not considered looking at new geographical markets as a means of growth. This may be addressed through greater local support and information about how to sell into new markets, especially overseas.

5.3 A quarter of respondents seeking growth definitely expect to take on new staff and only a third have ruled out this option. Of those firms definitely planning to take on either full time or part time staff, the jobcentre (29%), local newspapers (40%) and word of mouth (67%) are the most likely methods of advertising. This suggests that these firms are most likely to be recruiting locally. In section 5.3 the skills needs of these businesses are analysed to assist labour market and skills policy to support the delivery of these jobs.

5.4 While the majority of firms are looking to grow, there are also many reasons why growth is not achievable for some firms. These are set out in Table 4.

Table 4. What restricts firms from growing? (percentages relate to the 115 firms who want to grow in the next 2 years)

Growth Restrictions	Percent	Growth Restrictions	Percent
Lack of Space	16.5	Recruitment	15.7
Planning refusal	3.5	Innovation finance	17.4
Investment finance	38.3	Cost of staff	36.5
Low demand	16.5	Lifestyle	11.3
Lack of confidence	43.5	Refused finance/credit	9.6
Working capital	27.0		



5.5 Issues such as low demand and low confidence can be identified as cyclical features of the broader economy but the nature of the most recent recession has created additional challenges around accessing finance. Although only 9.6% have been refused credit, double this number feel that growth is restrained by a lack of finance for innovation and nearly 40% are restricted by low levels of investment finance. Given the dominance of financial problems, structural issues such as the local labour and property markets are rated as lower concerns but if finance becomes more readily available in the coming years, this picture could change.

5.6 Access to broadband Internet is a very minor problem for businesses in this region (see results in Table A3.2) with 87% using broadband and only 5% restricted by slow speeds, high cost or reliance on dial-up services.

5.7 A further observation from the survey is that incomers are slightly more likely than local business owners (61% compared to 52%) to be aiming for growth within 2 years. The figure increases to 63.6% for incomers who moved from beyond the East Midlands region. This confirms that the drivers of local economic growth are not necessarily originating from within the local economy and

therefore both businesses and employees need to engage in broader networks for trade, recruitment, information and innovation.

5.8 Incomers who started a business more than a year after moving are even more likely to be seeking growth with 66% of this category responding positively indicating that it is not just about attracting new businesses to the region but attracting people who may subsequently become entrepreneurs.

6. Employment and recruitment

6.1 The majority of firms surveyed are microbusinesses (those employing fewer than 10 FTE staff) with a third having 0-1 full time employees and another third having 2-4 full time employees. The median number of full-time jobs is 2 and the median for the total number of full- and part-time jobs is 4. These smaller firms are less likely to be planning growth in the next 2 years as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 5. The growth plans of larger and smaller firms

Number of Full-time Employees	2 year plan		
	Grow	Stay Same	Get Smaller
0-1 (67)	48%	45%	8%
2-4 (67)	55%	37%	8%
5-9 (25)	76%	24%	0%
10-19 (16)	81%	13%	6%
20-49 (12)	67%	33%	0%
50-250 (9)	67%	33%	0%
250+ (1)	100%	0%	0%

6.2 There are differences in the advertising route chosen by firms of different sizes with very small firms more reliant on word of mouth and local advertising. The comments included by respondents highlighted the importance of cost-effectiveness and the desire to target a local audience. For some it was also important to have a personal recommendation, fitting with the theory that small business owners place a greater weight of responsibility on employees and therefore feel a higher level of trust is necessary.

6.3 By contrast, larger firms commented on the need to look further afield to find specific industry-related skills and to recruit the best staff. They are therefore more likely to use agencies, websites and trade publications, as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Where do firms advertise for staff? (percentages do not add to 100 as respondents were able to select more than one option)

Number of Full-time Employees	When recruiting, where do you advertise?					
	Trade magazines	Local paper	Jobcentre	Websites	Agencies	Word of Mouth
0-1 (37)	11%	19%	14%	5%	14%	61%
2-4 (56)	5%	39%	21%	20%	7%	73%
5-9 (24)	13%	58%	35%	9%	13%	71%
10-19 (17)	12%	59%	47%	24%	24%	53%
20-49 (12)	17%	50%	25%	33%	50%	50%
50+ (10)	44%	44%	50%	44%	78%	78%

6.4 This has implications for local skills development as smaller firms are more reliant on local skills and their growth may be compromised if the right people are not available. As such, the skills needs of smaller employers should be given particular attention when developing local development initiatives.

Table 7. What makes it difficult to recruit staff?

Factor	% of Responses
Affordability	42%
Competition	8%
Experience	31%
Qualifications	19%
Interest	30%

6.5 Looking in more detail at issues of recruitment, affordability is the biggest problem. This will be influenced by the current economic situation but may also relate to the administrative costs of employment. With the opportunity to state additional problems for recruitment, “red tape” was cited along with a lack of enthusiasm and unwillingness to do hard work. More positively, eight respondents added a comment to indicate that they had no problems recruiting staff and in total, 78 respondents ticked none of the five options listed.

6.6 In relation to skills, formal qualifications are not such a big problem as experience. One respondent expressly commented on the mismatch between qualifications and practical experience. This suggests that policy needs to look more at the practical aspects of work rather than academic learning.

6.7 The very low score given to competition reflects the relatively high unemployment and low rates of recruitment in the current economic climate. As the economic recovery continues, it is important that competition for workers increases to bid up wages and incentivise skills development.

6.8 Unfortunately the majority of respondents did not answer this question about recruiting school-leavers, college-leavers and graduates, perhaps suggesting that firms in this region have not recruited many employees from these categories. The fact that only 25 of the 199 firms were able to comment on graduate employees appears to support NOMIS statistics showing the district to have a below average level of skills in the working population.

The responses from businesses responding to this question are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Preparedness for work among school-leavers, college-leavers and graduates. (figures in brackets are the number of businesses responding to each question, the low numbers mean that differences are not statistically significant)

Opinion	School-leaver (50)	College-leaver (24)	Graduate (25)
Very Good	20%	17%	28%
Good	24%	21%	48%
Average	24%	38%	8%
Poor	32%	25%	16%

7. Skills needs

7.1 In total, 136 businesses responded to QB5, “what skills are most difficult to find when recruiting new staff?” with the results shown in Table 7. The rightmost column is for just those firms who are looking for growth in the next 2 years. The results of this group have been highlighted because their investment in skills is more likely to aid economic development. The most common response is that staff lack motivation, something that is more difficult to address through direct skills investment. Breaking this down, it is a minor issue for manufacturing (6.7%) and relatively minor for professional services (37.5%). However, at least half of respondents in the retail, education and health, agriculture, construction and transport sectors identify it as a problem. This suggests that more detailed research could shed light on the aspirations of both recruiters and job-seekers in these different sectors.

7.2 Moving on to more specific skills, both “Customer service” and “Technical skills” are notable concerns. They are slightly more of an issue for growth oriented businesses, suggesting that support should be targeted at developing these skills in the workforce and through training opportunities for businesses themselves.

Table 9. The skills most difficult to find among businesses in Newark and Sherwood

Skills needs	Percent of all responses	Percent of growth oriented firms	Percentage of firms recruiting locally
IT skills	11.8	14.7	9.7
Written communication	26.5	30.5	35.5
Oral communication	26.5	25.3	12.9
Teamworking	22.1	23.2	25.8
Management	11.8	10.5	12.9
Customer Service	39.0	42.1	45.2
Project management	6.6	6.3	3.2
Problem solving	30.9	27.4	22.6
Numeracy	25.0	24.2	29.0
Manual	20.6	15.8	22.6
Technical	33.1	34.7	38.7
Motivation	43.4	41.1	45.2

7.3 Of other core skills that are creating concern, some appear to relate to a lack of confidence in formal education with written skills, problem solving and numeracy scoring fairly highly. These issues also arose when business owners were asked about anticipated future skills needs, although here the highest response, although with just 8 respondents, was “IT skills”. The range of other answers are provided in table A3.5 in appendix 3 but this suggests that there is not one area where investment will provide a solution for a high proportion of businesses.

7.4 Looking at those businesses using more local recruitment methods, higher order skills such as IT, project management and problem solving are less important. By contrast, core skills such as numeracy and written communication are thought to be more difficult to find.

7.5 In broader terms, the perception of the local labour force is a problem. In questions on recruitment, a lack of interest or enthusiasm, unwillingness to do hard work and unsuitability of applicants were all cited. Here we see that many essential skills are thought to be difficult to find and that employees lack motivation.

8. Training

- 8.1 Owners of businesses who expect growth attend more days of external training and send their staff on more training days compared to those not anticipating growth. Approximately half of businesses use private training companies and professional associations, with 10.6% using Business Link for training provision and 15.5% using “colleges” or “other government schemes” (see Table A3.6).
- 8.2 The main reasons given for attending training courses are “industry specific skills” and “legal/regulatory updates”, in other words, the more practical, essential needs of the business. Some 46% of business owners undertake legal and regulatory training, perhaps reflecting the perception that small businesses are concerned about liability and regulations.
- 8.3 Firms seeking these areas of training tend to use professional organisations and private firms more than public sector bodies. Among firms with turnovers above £1m, some 80% use training for industry skills whereas among businesses with smaller levels of turnover, networking is a more common reason. It is also noticeable that while business owners often attend events for networking purposes, they seldom send staff for this reason. See Table A3.7 for the full responses.
- 8.4 The low number of responses makes it difficult to draw comparisons between firms in different sectors but as a generalisation, manufacturing firms value more specific industry skills and management skills whereas firms in the service sectors are more likely to use training to develop personal skills, continual professional development, legal updates and networking.
- 8.5 Networking shows the biggest differences between the sectors and it is important for around half of firms in the professional service, education and health and tourism and recreation sectors. By contrast, only around 20% of retail and manufacturing business owners and fewer in the construction and transport sectors see training courses as opportunities for networking.

9. Business services

- 9.1 Out of 164 respondents, 48 (29%) had not used any of the five business organisations listed. Of those who rated the value of services they had used, the most useful was felt to be Business Link. 55% of businesses currently use or have used their services, with 61% reporting that they were “very helpful” or “helpful”. The full list of responses is in table A3.8.
- 9.2 The additional services requested are listed in Appendix 2 along with an indication of the area of business where this was provided on the questionnaire. As well as requests for funding, a lot of answers appear to want a more straightforward, practical approach to business support delivered by people with credible experience of business.
- 9.3 Looking at the types of businesses that value these service providers, those who are seeking growth are considerably more likely to answer positively. The exception is the FSB but 68% of the respondents had either “not used” or were “not aware” of their services and the results may correspond to their role as a members’ organisation rather than a service provider that can be used at certain times in the life of a business.
- 9.4 Business Link scored highest in terms of satisfaction among business owners seeking growth. Some 40% reported that they found Business Link either “Helpful” or Very Helpful”, with a further 33% not having used the service and therefore unable to rate their service.
- 9.5 Looking at Newark and Sherwood District Council, 18% found them helpful or very helpful, 4% found them to be unhelpful, 37% had not used their services and a further 21% were unaware of the services provided. The final statistic maybe of particular significance in terms of communication with the local business community.

10. Business owner characteristics

The data for education, age and sex of the business owners are tabulated at the end of Appendix 3. There were no statistically significant differences in growth aspirations between men or women (although women were slightly more growth oriented). Also, there was no clear pattern with education as those with undergraduate degrees or diplomas were more likely to planning to stay the same while those with just a school education and those with postgraduate degrees were most likely to be seeking growth.

11. Sectoral comparisons

11.1 Breaking down the results by sector highlights certain areas where we might anticipate future growth to emerge. Table 10 below illustrates the growth plans of business owners in each of the broad sectors identified in the research.

Table 10. Growth ambitions in different business sectors

Sector	Number	% seeking growth
Retail	35	65.7
Manufacturing	21	71.4
Professional services	81	63.0
Tourism/Recreation	9	55.6
Education and Health	11	72.7
Agriculture	22	36.4
Construction	15	33.3
Transport	4	50.0

11.2 Construction, agriculture and tourism tend to have a greater proportion of rural businesses and these results show these businesses to be less growth oriented. It should be noted that the numbers of businesses in some sectors are too small to be statistically significant but the popular view that manufacturing is the driver of growth seems to be borne out by this research.

11.3 In section 5.1 it was noted that in-migrants were slightly more growth oriented. In-migrants were more likely to be in the professional services and education and health businesses – both sectors that could be thought to be more dependent upon higher level skills. By contrast, local business owners were less likely to be in knowledge intensive sectors. (See table A3.13 for a full breakdown of results)

11.4 Recruitment problems also vary between different sectors. For professional services, retail and tourism, affordability is a significant problem with 50-53% of respondents in each sector ticking this box. The figure was less than 33% for each of the other sectors.

11.5 By contrast, in construction, experience was a greater problem, recognised by 50% of respondents. Qualifications were not considered to be such a great problem with manufacturers (29%) and professional services (22%) being the most affected.

11.6 For agriculture (61.5%), tourism (50%) and retail (40%), a lack of interest was seen as a barrier to recruitment, perhaps a reflection of the lower level skills demanded for employees in these sectors.

12. Conclusions and Recommendations

- The majority of firms want to grow
- The preferred method of growth is to produce more of the same products and only 53% of businesses have introduced new product lines in the past 2 years
- A quarter of growth-oriented firms expect to recruit new staff
- The cost of new staff is a concern for over a third of respondents
- A lack of confidence in the economy and a lack of investment finance and working capital are holding back growth
- A lack of core skills is a problem for many firms – e.g. numeracy, written communication.
- The negative perception towards the local labour force, whether accurate or not, is a problem.
- The main reasons for attending training courses are “legal and regulatory updates” and “industry specific skills”
- A high proportion of business owners originate from outside the district but inward commuting is much lower.

- 12.1 The findings of this research can be used to for the development of policy to support both employees and businesses in the Newark and Sherwood district. It is important to recognise that local employees do not necessarily work in local businesses but the issues can be addressed together as increasing local skills levels will raise local aspirations and improve the perception of the local labour force among employers. Greater opportunities for locally-based businesses can also reduce out-commuting and potentially draw in more employees and business owners from beyond the area that can increase the critical mass of enterprise activity.
- 12.2 A combination of improving generic skills through formal education and more directed skills development through business training are required. Soft skills such as communication and customer service are considered to be particularly important whereas higher order skills such as management, project management and IT were less difficult to find. Combined with the high level of firms citing “motivation” as a problem, this raises concerns that businesses are struggling to find people to do low-skilled work and that growth in local firms may create more low skilled, low paid work rather than developing a higher skills base and associated wealth generation.
- 12.3 A further problem in the current climate is that 42% of firms see “affordability” as a problem for recruitment. Along with the low levels of confidence in the economy, this raises concerns that even if the local population were trained to a higher standard, the firms would still not be able to afford to employ them. Given that the public sector is also facing cuts to spending, one recommendation is that businesses should be encouraged to participate in the education process to raise aspirations, raise awareness of the business world and increase the readiness for work among school and college leavers. In return, businesses would be supporting the development of local people with the skills, and hopefully the desire, to fill local vacancies without the need for additional, costly training programmes. With 23 businesses having apprentices and a further 43 expressing an interest (Table A3.9), there is a desire for businesses to be involved in the development of employees and this could enable more sector-specific skills to be improved (33% of firms reported “technical skills” to be difficult to find). It was notable that professional service firms, the dominant sector among respondents, were less interested in taking on apprentices (just 21.5% compared to retail and manufacturing at around 35%).
- 12.4 For higher level skills, the district has no university (although Nottingham Trent has a site near Southwell) so needs to attract the inward migration of graduates. This requires enterprise policy to create a business environment that is conducive to growth. With many firms still seeking growth despite the economic downturn, the potential for enterprise in the region to continue developing is evident. The cost of staff and recruitment were problems for some businesses, so targeting the labour market should enable further growth in the future.

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Appendix 2. Additional services requested by respondents from business support organisations (type of businesses in brackets where given on the questionnaire)

“Bring back the YTS scheme, it is better to have somebody learning whilst claiming” (marketing and web development)

“More Grants Please” (telecoms)

Independent loan scheme for SMEs (IT services)

Legislative requirements (B&B)

There’s too much talk and not enough solid advice (Vet)

How to deal with health and safety and legal matters (Opticians)

Day release courses for staff on a range of general business skills

Realistic bank lending (Retail equestrian outlet)

Meaningful support – past experience found these organisations unhelpful

Common sense approach from experienced people (Haulage business)

Knowledgeable people giving advice, not just reading prepared scripts and ticking boxes

Signposting to funding opportunities (Trent Vale partnership)

Talk with other businesses in the same situation (Landscape gardeners)

Grants for green or renewable energy projects to be clearer and non-political (Caravan park)

Mentoring schemes (Environmental research company)

Help for problem solving, i.e. a “sounding board” (sweet shop)

Help to reduce red tape (Artist club)

Additional financial support (Consultancy)

More concrete financial grants, not just advice (Manufacturer)

Generic qualifications such as first aid, child protection advertised locally and the opportunity for link in. (Riding school)

Appendix 3. Additional data tables

A3.1 The legal form of businesses in the survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Partnership	34	17.1	17.1
Ltd Company	126	63.3	63.3
Sole Trader	31	15.6	15.6
Charity	4	2.0	2.0
Social Enterprise	2	1.0	1.0
Other	2	1.0	1.0
Total	199	100.0	100.0

A3.2 Internet use among respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Broadband	172	86.4	86.9
Dial-up	3	1.5	1.5
too slow	4	2.0	2.0
not need	16	8.0	8.1
can't use	1	.5	.5
too expensive	2	1.0	1.0
Total	198	99.5	100.0
Missing	1	.5	
Total	199	100.0	

A3.3 The turnover of businesses in the survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid <£68,000	44	22.1	24.9	24.9
£68,000 - £199,999	53	26.6	29.9	54.8
£200,000-£499,999	25	12.6	14.1	68.9
£500,000-£999,999	19	9.5	10.7	79.7
£1m-£5m	25	12.6	14.1	93.8
>£6m	11	5.5	6.2	100.0
Total	177	88.9	100.0	
Missing	22	11.1		
Total	199	100.0		

A3.4 The number of new products brought to market in the last 2 years

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 0	66	33.2	47.1
1-2	32	16.1	22.9
3-10	32	16.1	22.9
11+	10	5.0	7.1
Total	140	70.4	100.0
Missing	59	29.6	
Total	199	100.0	

Table A3.5 Future skills needs (the 2nd table shows where more than 1 answer is given)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No answer given	153	76.9	76.9	76.9
	basic skills	1	.5	.5	77.4
	business acumen	1	.5	.5	77.9
	chemical analyst	1	.5	.5	78.4
	communication	1	.5	.5	78.9
	customer service	3	1.5	1.5	80.4
	dairy	1	.5	.5	80.9
	design	1	.5	.5	81.4
	engineering	2	1.0	1.0	82.4
	enthusiasm	1	.5	.5	82.9
	French polishing	1	.5	.5	83.4
	general updates	1	.5	.5	83.9
	hardworking	1	.5	.5	84.4
	health and safety	1	.5	.5	84.9
	horse care	1	.5	.5	85.4
	horticultural skill	1	.5	.5	85.9
	industry knowledge	1	.5	.5	86.4
	IT skills	8	4.0	4.0	90.5
	machinery skills	3	1.5	1.5	92.0
	maintaining competency	1	.5	.5	92.5
	manual skills	1	.5	.5	93.0
	motivation	1	.5	.5	93.5
	practical skills	1	.5	.5	94.0
	problem solving	3	1.5	1.5	95.5
	professional skills	1	.5	.5	96.0
	project management	1	.5	.5	96.5
	sales	2	1.0	1.0	97.5
	statistical analysis	1	.5	.5	98.0
	technical skills	3	1.5	1.5	99.5
	training skills	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	199	100.0	100.0	

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No 2nd answer given	186	93.5	93.5	93.5
	basic intelligence	1	.5	.5	94.0
	communication	2	1.0	1.0	95.0
	customer service	1	.5	.5	95.5
	industry knowledge	1	.5	.5	96.0
	managerial	1	.5	.5	96.5
	manual	1	.5	.5	97.0
	marketing	1	.5	.5	97.5
	new technologies	1	.5	.5	98.0
	project management	1	.5	.5	98.5
	team working	1	.5	.5	99.0
	technical knowledge	1	.5	.5	99.5
	technical skills	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	199	100.0	100.0	

Table A3.6 Where do firms go for training? (firms could tick as many options as appropriate so percentages add to more than 100)

Training Provider	% of firms (142 responses)
Private Company	52.8%
Professional Association	47.9%
College	15.5%
Business Link	10.6%
Other Government Scheme	15.5%

Table A3.7 Why do firms attend training events?

Purpose of Training	You only	Staff only	Both	Neither
Industry Skills	17.1%	21.2%	34.2%	27.4%
Management Skills	33.8%	7.6%	6.2%	52.4%
IT Skills	6.9%	18.6%	10.3%	64.1%
Social/teamworking	6.2%	11.0%	9.0%	73.8%
Legal/regulatory updates	31.0%	9.7%	15.2%	44.1%
General business updates	21.4%	3.4%	13.1%	62.1%
Compulsory CPD	16.6%	9.7%	14.5%	59.3%
Personal qualifications	9.0%	12.4%	13.1%	65.5%
Networking	23.4%	2.1%	8.3%	66.2%

Table A3.8. The value of business services (actual number of responses in each case)

Organisation	Very Helpful	Helpful	Neither	Unhelpful	Not Used	Not aware
Jobcentre Plus	3	27	19	9	71	38
Business Link	10	46	29	7	58	18
Chamber of Commerce	9	28	20	5	71	31
NSDC	1	21	29	8	69	37
FSB	13	16	17	7	89	23

Table A3.9. The number of firms with apprentices and those without but who are interested in taking apprentices

Number of apprentices	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
.00	156	78.4	87.2
1.00	9	4.5	5.0
2.00	7	3.5	3.9
3.00	3	1.5	1.7
4.00	2	1.0	1.1
36.00	1	.5	.6
50.00	1	.5	.6
Total	179	89.9	100.0
Missing	20	10.1	
Total	199	100.0	

Are you interested in taking apprentices?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	41	20.6	26.6
No	112	56.3	72.7
n/a	1	.5	.6
Total	154	77.4	100.0
Missing	45	22.6	
Total	199	100.0	

A3.10 When did you complete formal education?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<16	18	9.0	10.3	10.3
	GCSE	28	14.1	16.1	26.4
	A Level	27	13.6	15.5	42.0
	Diploma	41	20.6	23.6	65.5
	Undergrad	34	17.1	19.5	85.1
	Postgrad	26	13.1	14.9	100.0
	Total	174	87.4	100.0	
Missing		25	12.6		
Total		199	100.0		

A3.11 Age of business owners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	25-34	7	3.5	3.9	3.9
	35-44	46	23.1	25.6	29.4
	45-54	65	32.7	36.1	65.6
	55-65	50	25.1	27.8	93.3
	66+	12	6.0	6.7	100.0
	Total	180	90.5	100.0	
Missing		19	9.5		
Total		199	100.0		

A3.12 Sex of business owners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	135	67.8	75.0
	Female	44	22.1	24.4
	9.00	1	.5	.6
	Total	180	90.5	100.0
Missing		19	9.5	
Total		199	100.0	

A3.13 The origins of business owners in each sector

Sector	Number	Local	Return-migrants	In-migrants
Retail	35	54%	3%	40%
Manufacturing	21	50%	6%	44%
Professional services	81	31%	10%	58%
Tourism/Recreation	9	38%	0%	63%
Education and Health	11	13%	38%	50%
Agriculture	22	77%	5%	18%
Construction	15	77%	0%	23%
Transport	4	100%	0%	0%