

Bracknell Forest BID Research Report

For Bracknell Forest Council

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R E S E A R C H

Mill House,
North Street,
York, YO1 6JD
01904 632039

Dephna House, 24-26 Arcadia Ave,
London, N3 2JU
0208 8191397

www.qaresearch.co.uk
Company registration: 3186539



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Authors:	Miles Crosby
Comments:	To: miles.crosby@qaresearch.co.uk
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1. Introduction

This report outlines the key findings from research into the opinions and attitudes of businesses towards their local area, with a view to supporting the Bracknell Forest Business Improvement District. This study was conducted by Qa Research (Qa) on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council (BFC)

Business Improvement Districts (BID) are a central government initiative that allows businesses to form a recognised identity and geographic area, and for them to agree projects that they wish to see implemented in that area. Business led, the BIDs would also agree the level of investment into these projects from members and vote on their approval.

BFC has conducted some initial consultation with businesses that were exploring what the BID could do for the Bracknell Industrial area, however further research was required to evidence that all businesses have had the chance to be consulted on their views of the BID and how it could benefit them and the area.

2. Methodology

This research was conducted as a telephone administered survey with businesses located in the Western and Southern Industrial Area in Bracknell, using a questionnaire designed by Qa and BFC. Businesses were contacted by telephone and asked if they wished to take part in the research; if they were unavailable at that time, interviewers sought to make an appointment to ring back at a more convenient time and date in order to give the business the opportunity to take part.

Ensuring as much opportunity to take part in the research as possible was a key objective of the project, in order to ensure that as many businesses as possible were consulted.

A total of 233 unique businesses exist across the Western and Southern Industrial area. Whilst every effort was made to contact every one of these, in some cases phones went unanswered or numbers would not connect; despite this, overall 89% of businesses in the two Industrial Areas were contacted and given the chance to take part. Businesses had no obligation to take part in the survey and could decline to do so, and these made up 37% businesses. At the end of fieldwork, a number of businesses had been called a number of times but, despite contact being made, the calls had not resulted in a refusal or completion; this was 9% of the sample. Lastly, a total of 98 businesses completed the survey (42%)

	(n)	(%)
• Survey completed:	98	42%
• Declined to take part:	87	37%
• Call failed (wrong number, no tone, NNR, etc.):	26	11%
• In use (still in the appointment making stage):	22	9%

In this report, quoted figures at a topline level (i.e. based on all 98 respondents) have a potential variance (standard error) of no more than +/-7.5% at the 95% confidence level. The benchmark for statistically robust data in market research is +/-5.0%, however, whilst the standard error falls slightly outside this, the data here is still indicative of the views of businesses in the Southern and Western Industrial Areas, although the findings cannot be generalised to them.

A breakdown of businesses in terms of their size and geographic location can be found in appendix 5.1.

3. Key findings

This section of the report outlines the key findings from the research.

3.1 Satisfaction with location as a place to do business

The first set of questions on the survey explored how satisfied businesses were with their location as a place to do business, and the reasons for this. Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were using a scale of 'very satisfied', 'satisfied', 'dissatisfied', and 'very dissatisfied' (along with the option to say 'don't know'). Responses are shown in the chart below.

Q1. How satisfied are you with your location as a place to do business?



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

Essentially all business (97%) who took part in the survey were satisfied with their location as a place to do business, with just under one third (31%) being 'very satisfied' and two thirds (66%) 'satisfied'. Only a very small proportion (2%) were dissatisfied, and none of these were 'very dissatisfied'.

Satisfaction was almost universally high across various key subgroups, and there were no significant differences between these. Whilst this may be partially due to the low base size of many subgroups, it is still true that (net) satisfaction was 95% or greater regardless of the size of the businesses (in terms of full time employees) or whether they were located in the Southern or Western Industrial Area. Even amongst businesses who indicated they had been affected by vandalism, trespassing or theft in the last two years (Q6), the proportion who were satisfied with their location was 100%.

The only instance in which satisfaction with the location was significantly lower appeared to be related to the perceived appearance of that area. Businesses who rated the overall appearance of their business area as poor (Q4) were significantly less likely to be satisfied with their location (73%) than businesses who said it was average or good (both 100%).

Respondents were then asked why they had rated their location in the way they did. Answers were recorded verbatim (i.e. word for word) and have been coded into thematic categories during analysis. These categories are shown in the table below.

Note that amongst those who were satisfied (essentially the entire sample) some did still list issues with or complaints about their location when asked why they had said they were satisfied. In these instances, it is likely that they interpreted the question to mean 'why were you not very satisfied'.

Good access/transport links	43	45%
Access to or being near the other businesses in the area	13	14%
We've had issues with access/traffic	11	12%
Just generally a good location	11	12%
Longshot Lane HWRC causes access issues	7	7%
Good access to facilities/amenities	7	7%
Good access to parking	6	6%
Availability of suitable workforce	2	2%
Communication infrastructure needs to be improved	2	2%
Other	8	8%
Don't know	1	1%
No relevant answer	3	3%
Base: Those satisfied with their location as a place to do business	95	

Of those who were satisfied with their location, almost half (45%) indicated that this was due to 'good access and transport links'. This was by far the most commonly given reason for being satisfied. Other positive reasons included 'being near other businesses in the area', 'access to facilities and amenities' (7%), and 'access to parking' (7%). A selection of the verbatim comments have been reproduced below;

"We have transport links to London and good motorway networks. It's a densely populated area so there are lots of customers near us. There're good amenities and entertainment for staff and guests. It's near to the airport"

"Because the area is vibrant, the new centre is being built, there's lots of industry around the area that is similar to ours, the facilities are good and the education, local authority is good"

"For us, good location- we're on a main road and there are similar businesses in and around us which is a draw to customers"

"It's easy to get access in and out, it's a well maintained site and clean and tidy"

"I come for work, straight in off the motorway. There are plenty of routes in and out of Bracknell. We are in an ideal location"

As previously mentioned, some businesses did highlight issues that they had with their location. This was most commonly complaints about the level of traffic in their area. Some businesses gave the specific example of traffic disruption caused by cars queuing to get into Longshot Lane HWRC and preventing access to their premises. Verbatim comments included;

"Because of all the works that are going on. It takes longer to get to work but it is good that they are improving them"

"Accessibility is poor due to long queues to the tip which blocks Longshot Lane- takes half an hour. It costs a lot for employees"

"The road which we're on has the refuge centre, so the traffic is badly managed"

"It'd be perfect without the recycling centre- the traffic volume when they're loads of people at the centre- we can't get to our unit and nor can our drivers. Road system needs to be changed"

Of the very small number of respondents (2) who were dissatisfied, one said this was due to disruption caused by Longshot Lane HWRC and the other because their premises was too small.

3.2 Key factors making a place ‘good for business’

Respondents were asked what they felt were the key factors that made a place good for business. Answers were recorded verbatim and have been coded into thematic categories (codes) during analysis.

Accessibility and good transport links	57	58%
Access to customer base	18	18%
Good nearby facilities	13	13%
The other businesses in the area	13	13%
Access to parking	11	11%
Access to suitable workforce	10	10%
Aesthetically pleasing area - attractive and clean	8	8%
Suitable premises	8	8%
Communication infrastructure	7	7%
Low rental costs or business rates	6	6%
Other	3	3%
Don't know	6	6%
No relevant answer	2	2%
Base: All respondents	98	

Unsurprisingly, the key factors that make an area good for business were very similar to reasons why businesses were satisfied with their location. ‘Accessibility and good transport links’ was given as a key factor by over half (58%) the sample, and having ‘good nearby facilities’ (13%), being near ‘the other businesses in the area’ (13%), and ‘access to parking’ (11%) were all also mentioned. An additional key factor that emerged here was ‘access to customer base’ (18%); this was not mentioned as one of the reasons were satisfied with their location, although a small number did reference it there (not enough to warrant its own code).

Verbatim comments included.

“A large population in terms of target market, access and transport infrastructure”

“Being able to be easily accessible, to provide a good environment, ease of parking for our employees, reasonable amenities close by”

“Other organisations in close proximity, strong transport links, close to a residential area for local employees, good area, facilities and green spaces”

“To not have to pay massive overheads, to have reasonable business rates, good infrastructure, good access to communication and access to a good work force”

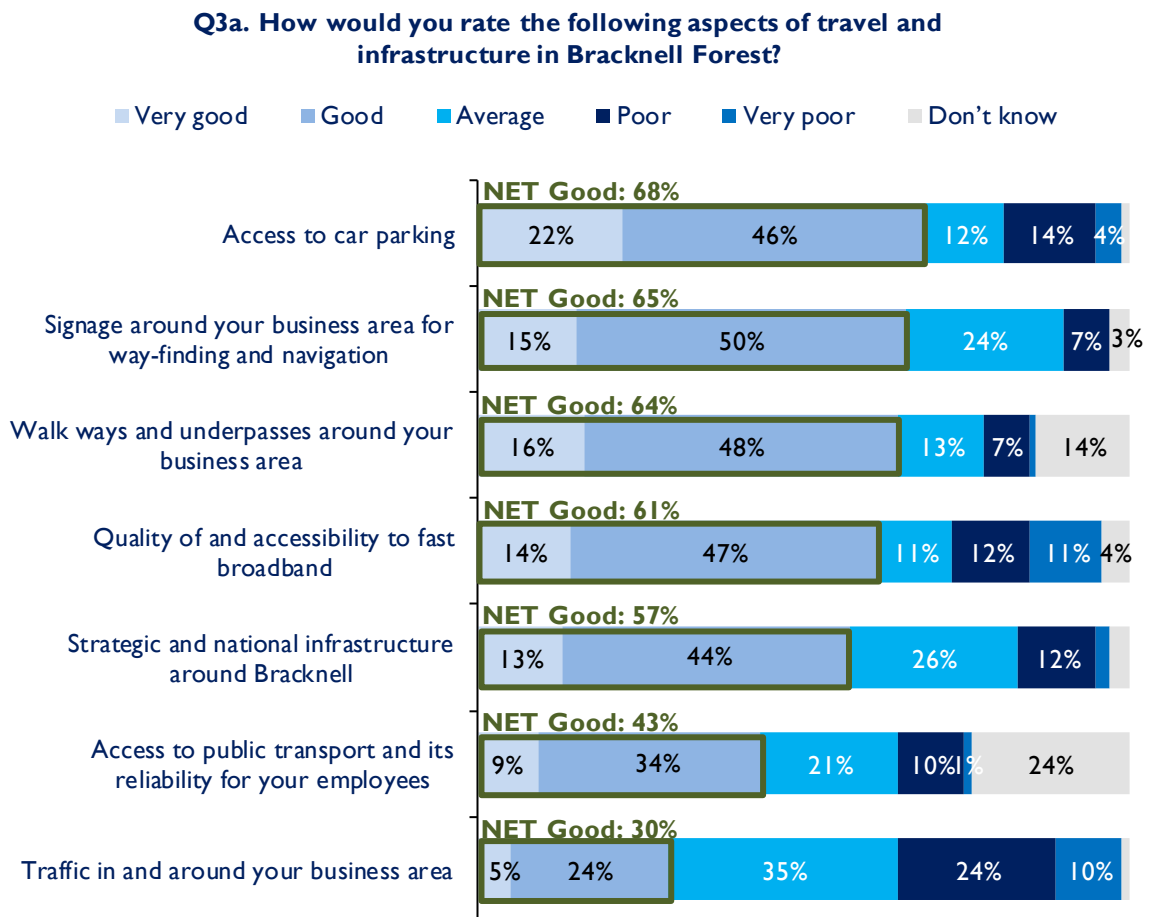
“Location, close to the motorway and Heathrow airport. Key talent in employees”

“Good access, skilled workforce, good place to live and must be able to park”

These key factors appeared to very consistent across businesses, and there was only one notable statistically significant difference between subgroups. This was that businesses with 51 or more full time employees were significantly more likely to list ‘accessibility and good transport link’ as a key factor (80%), than businesses with between 1-10 full time employees (49%).

3.3 Travel and infrastructure

Businesses were then asked to rate a number of aspects relating to travel and infrastructure in Bracknell Forest. A five point scale of 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor', and 'very poor' was used, along with the option to say 'don't know' if applicable. Results are shown in the chart below, sorted from the highest ranking to the lowest.



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

For most aspects of travel and infrastructure in Bracknell Forest that were tested in the survey, the majority of businesses indicated that these were either 'good' or 'very good'. Only in two areas was this less than 50%.

Around two thirds (or just under) of businesses rated 'access to car parking' (68%), 'signage around your business area for way-finding and navigation' (65%), 'walk ways and underpasses around your business area' (64%), and the 'quality of and accessibility to fast broadband' (61%) as good overall. It should be noted that businesses were more likely to say these were 'good' rather than 'very good' however, and there is arguably room for some improvement here.

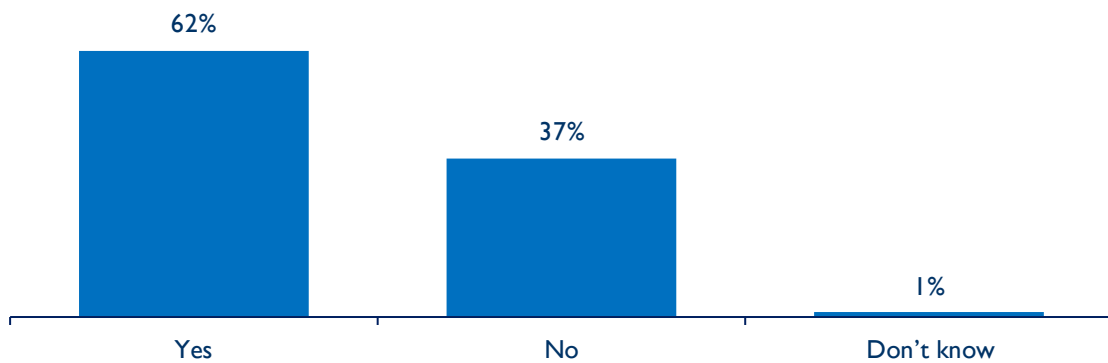
'Access to public transport and its reliability for employees' was rated as (net) good by under half of respondents (43%), although it should be stressed that the proportion of business that rated this as (net) poor was low (11%). One quarter (24%) of businesses answered 'don't know' for this aspect, and this level of uncertainty has contributed to the lower rating here. With those uncertain respondents excluded, over half (56%) rated public transport as good overall.

Geographically there were no significant differences between the results of the western and southern businesses areas. There were few differences by the size of business either, with the exception of the rating of 'quality of and access to fast broadband'; whilst a comfortable majority of businesses with 11-50 and 51+ full time employees rated this as (net) good (81% and 80% respectively), significantly fewer businesses with 1-10 full time employees did so (45%).

Whilst the results here were generally positive, they do highlight that there was an issue with 'traffic in and around the business area'. Only one third (30%) rated this as (net) good, and indeed a greater proportion felt that it was poor overall (35%) with one-in-four businesses indicating that it was 'poor' (24%) and a further one-in-ten saying it was 'very poor' (10%).

Related to traffic and its impact on travel, businesses were asked if their company offered a flexible working system and, if they did, if they perceived this to have a positive effect on traffic or travel time in their business area. Just under two thirds (62%) of businesses interviewed did offer a flexible working system, and this is shown in the chart below.

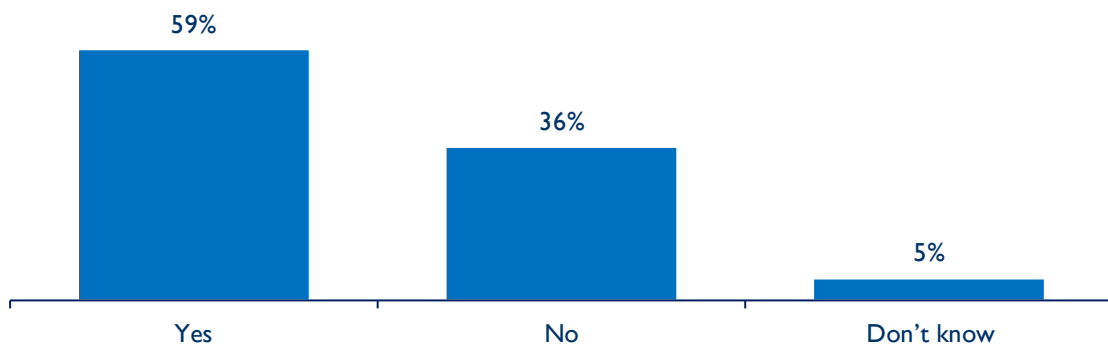
Q3b. Does your company offer a flexible working system?



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

Those businesses that did offer flexible working were then asked if this had had a positive effect on traffic in their area or the commute time for their staff. Just over half (59%) of those that offered flexible working felt that there had been a positive impact on traffic and travel time as a result, suggesting that this policy may have a wider positive impact on traffic in the business areas of Bracknell.

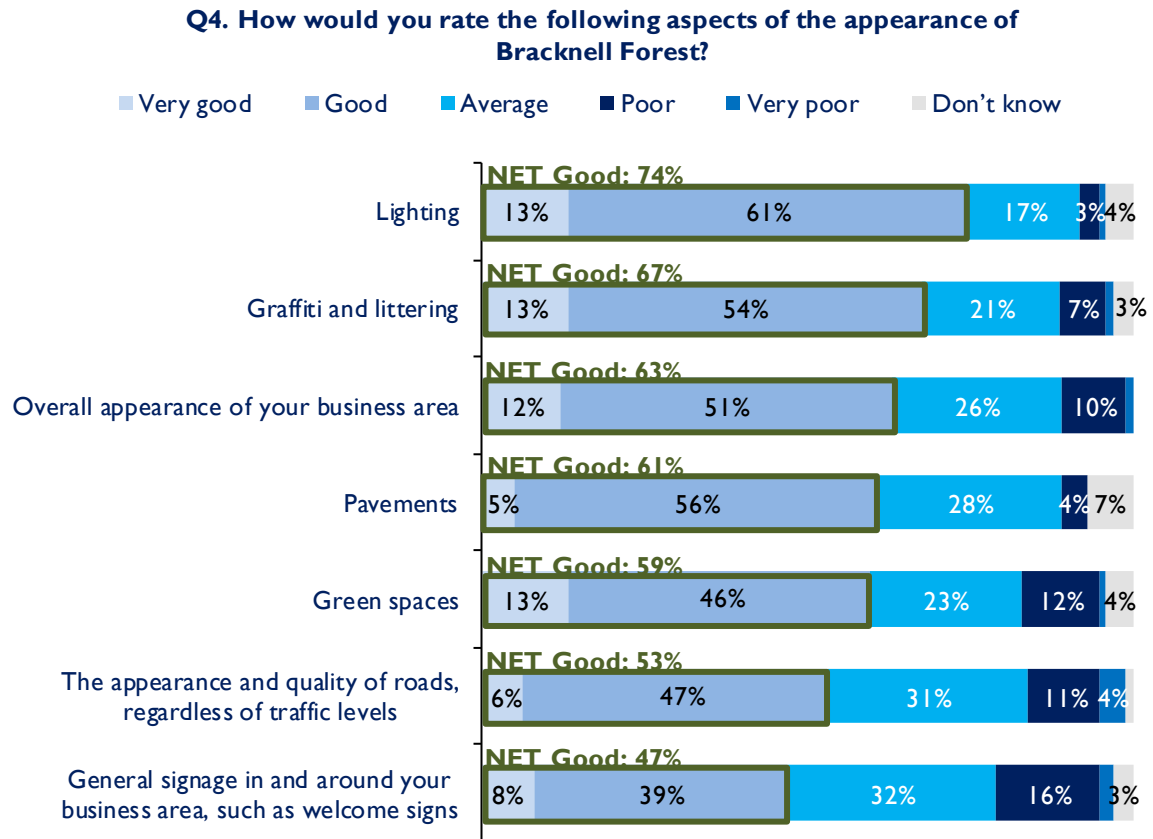
Q3c. Has this had a positive effect on traffic in your business area or travel to work for your staff?



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 61 (businesses that offered flexible working)

3.4 The appearance of Bracknell Forest

Businesses were then asked to rate various aspects relating to the appearance of Bracknell Forest. The same five point 'very good' to 'very poor' scale seen previously was once again used here. Results are shown below, sorted by the proportion of respondents who rated the aspect as good.



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

Overall, aspects of the appearance of Bracknell Forest were perceived to be average or good overall, and indeed for all but one tested aspect over half of respondents indicated these were (net) good. In addition, the proportion who felt they were (net) poor was also generally low. Typically only around one-in-ten said that these aspects were 'very good', however, and respondents were far more likely to say they were 'good' or 'average'.

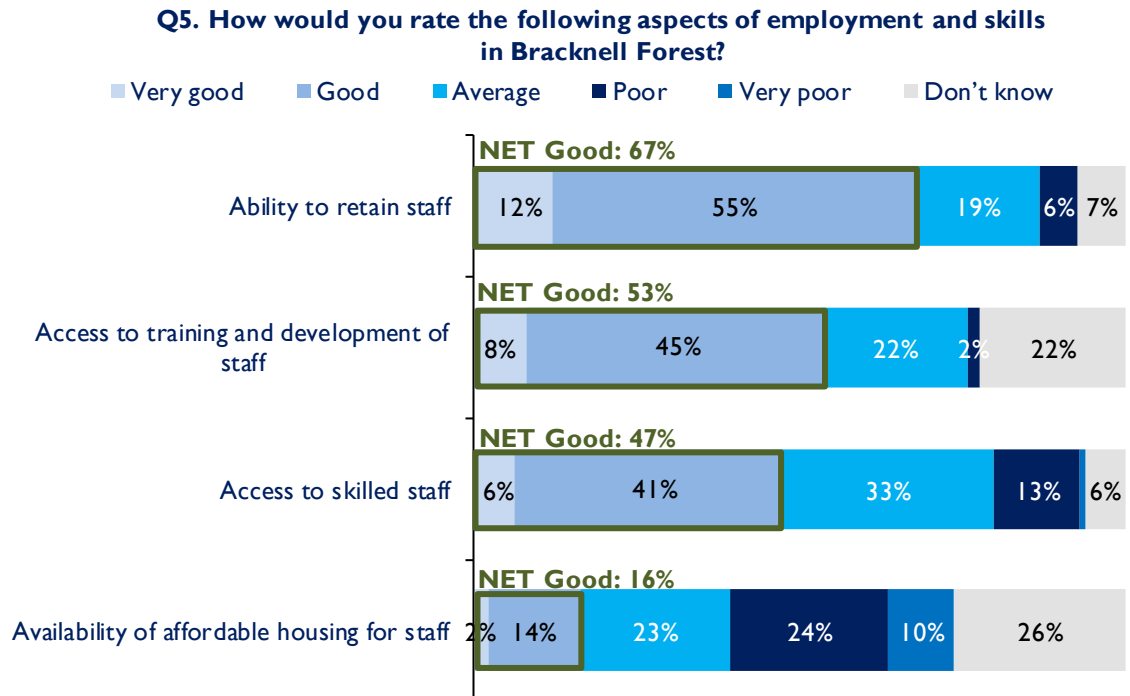
'Lighting' was highest rated with three quarters of businesses saying it was (net) good (74%) and this followed by around or just under two thirds saying this of 'graffiti and littering' (67%), the 'overall appearance of their businesses area' (63%), 'pavements' (61%), and 'green spaces' (59%).

'The appearance and quality of roads, regardless of traffic' was slightly less well rated with only half (50%) of businesses rating it as good. This is not to say that is poorly rated, indeed only 15% rated it as (net) poor, but rather there was a stronger feeling that this aspect was 'average' (31%). This was also true of 'general signage in and around your business area, such as welcome signs'. Note the difference here between this general signage and the specific road signage asked about at Q3a.

Once again there were no significant differences between the western and southern industrial areas. Businesses with between 11-50 full time employees were significantly more likely to rate 'lighting' (90%) and 'the overall appearance of their business area' (81%) as (net) good than businesses with between 1-10 full time employees (67%, 55%, respectively).

3.5 Employment and skills

Businesses were then asked to rate, using the now familiar ‘very good’ to ‘very poor’ scale, various aspects of employment and skills in Bracknell Forest. The results are shown in the chart below.



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

Responses to this question fell into three rough groups. Firstly, two thirds (67%) of interviewed businesses rated the ‘ability to retain staff’ in Bracknell Forest as (net) good; this was the highest rated aspect, and therefore appears to be an area in which Bracknell Forest performs well.

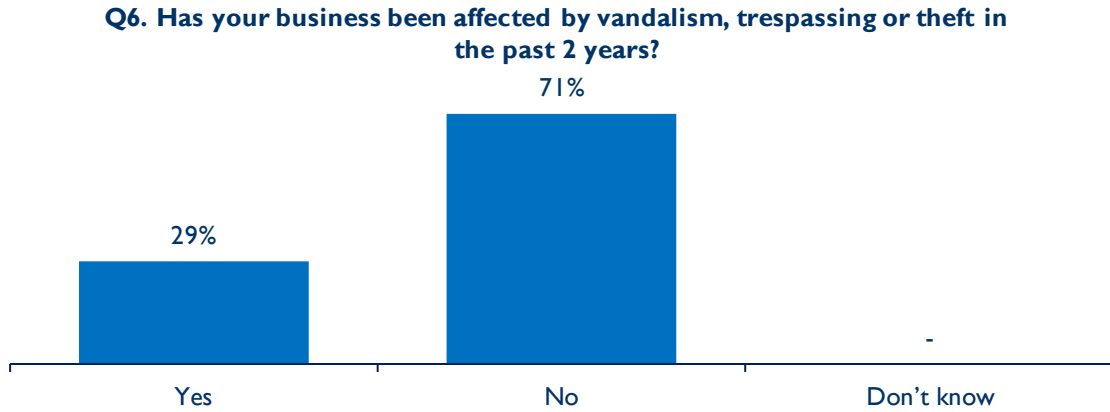
Secondly, around half of respondents rated access to ‘training and development of staff’ (53%) and ‘skilled staff’ (47%) as good, and these are areas in which some improvement could arguably be made, especially for ‘skilled staff’ where one-in-eight (13%) said this was ‘poor’. Note, however, that for the former, 22% of respondents answered ‘don’t know’ and with these excluded we see 68% rating this as (net) good, which would put it in the first group.

Thirdly, ‘availability of affordable housing for staff’ was the area in which the most improvement was needed. Only one-in-six (16%) businesses felt that this was good overall, and indeed more felt that this aspect was ‘poor’ than felt it was (net) good. In total, one third of businesses felt that the availability of such housing was (net) poor. Indeed, with those who answered ‘don’t know’ excluded almost half indicated that this aspect was poor overall (47%).

Larger businesses, those with 51 or more full time employees, were significantly more likely than the smallest businesses, those with 1-10 full time employees, to rate the ‘ability to retain staff’ as good (85% vs. 62%). Conversely, these smaller businesses were significantly more likely to rate the ‘availability of affordable housing for staff’ as poor than the larger (50+) businesses (47% vs. 10%).

3.6 Safety and Security

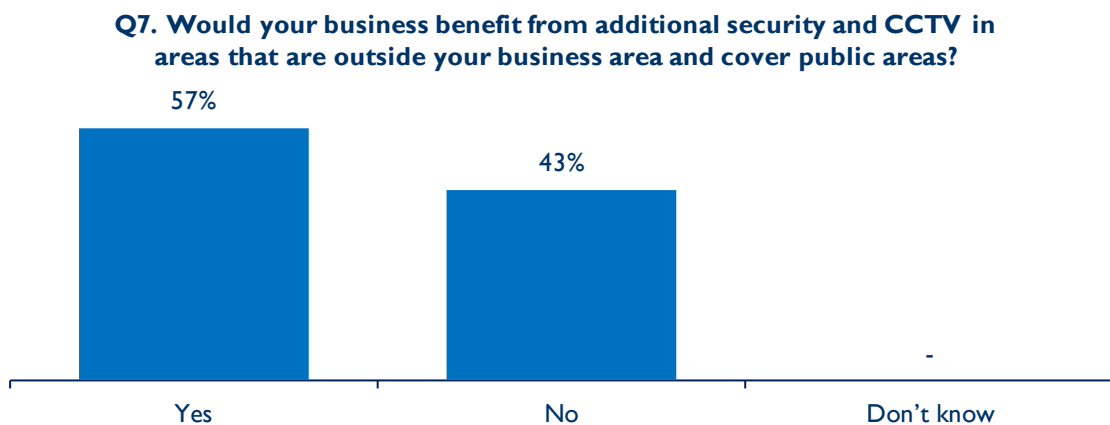
Businesses were also asked two questions to gauge their perceptions of safety and security in their industrial area. The first of these measured if the business had been affected by vandalism, trespassing or theft in the past two years. Results are shown in the chart below.



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

Three-in-ten (29%) of the businesses interviewed indicated that they had been affected by vandalism, trespassing or theft in the past 2 years, and although this is a minority it still represents a notable proportion of the business population. There were no significant differences by businesses size or location, and experiences of crime seem to be reasonably consistent regardless of these.

All businesses (regardless of whether or not they had been affected by vandalism, trespassing, or theft) were then asked if they felt they would benefit from additional security and CCTV. Results are shown in the chart below.



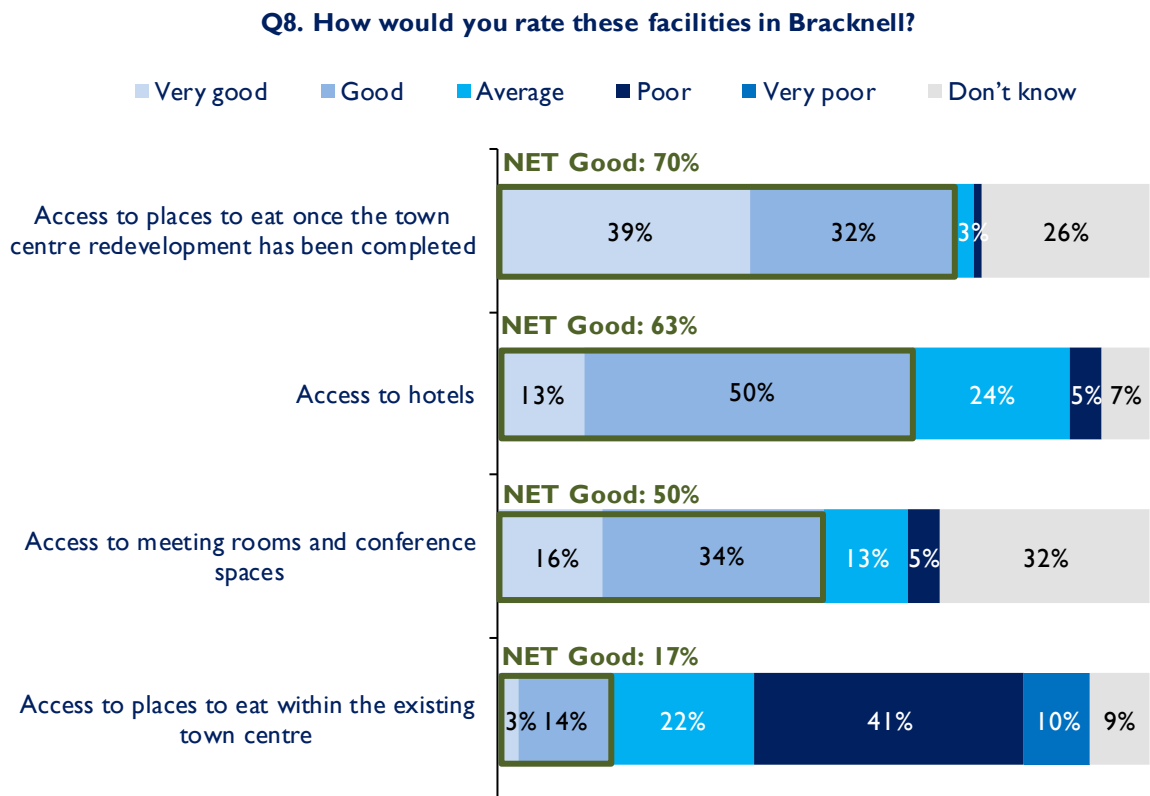
Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

Just over half (57%) of businesses felt that they would benefit from additional security and CCTV, although the proportion that did not was only slightly smaller (43%).

Unsurprisingly, business who indicated they had been affected by vandalism, trespassing, or theft were significantly more likely to want more security and CCTV (82%) than those who had not been affected (47%). Nonetheless, half of unaffected businesses did still advocate further security.

3.7 Facilities and Amenities

The next set of questions asked respondents to rate their access to facilities and amenities in Bracknell, once again using the 'very good' to 'very poor' scale. This included places to eat, hotels, and meeting spaces. Results are shown in the chart below.



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

Currently, access to 'places to eat' in the town centre is poorly perceived with one quarter of respondents saying it was 'poor' (41%) and a further one-in-ten (10%) saying it was 'very poor'. This was considerably more than felt it was (net) good (17%). Businesses expressed optimism that this would improve however, with seven-in-ten (70%) saying that 'once the town centre redevelopment had been completed' access to places to eat would be (net) good. Indeed, more than half of these seven-in-ten felt that it would 'very good' (39% overall).

'Access to hotels' was also generally perceived as (net) good, although generally merely 'good' (50%) as opposed to 'very good' (13%). Despite access to hotels, which typically (although not always) include such spaces, access to 'meeting rooms and conference spaces' was rated as slightly less good with only half (50%) indicating that this was the case. It should be noted that around one third (32%) answered 'don't know' for this aspect, likely because they do not have a need to access such spaces, and with these respondents excluded the proportion rating this as good increases to 73%.

Once again there were no significant differences in the results of this question between businesses in the Western or Southern Industrial Area, or by different sizes of businesses. Attitudes to access to facilities and amenities therefore appear consistent across different businesses.

Respondents were then asked what, if any, other facilities were important to have in close proximity to their premises. Answers were recorded verbatim (word-for-word) and have been coded (grouped) into the thematic categories shown in the table below.

Restaurants, cafes, places to eat and drink	19	19%
Sports or leisure facilities	13	13%
Public transport	11	11%
Retail and shopping	9	9%
Parking	7	7%
Hotels and accommodation	6	6%
Outdoor spaces	3	3%
Childcare	3	3%
Other	8	8%
Don't know	7	7%
None	28	29%
No relevant answer	9	9%
Base: All respondents	98	

A wide array of suggestions was given, suggesting a desire for a diverse range of facilities rather than an overwhelming need for a specific one. Of these, 'restaurants, cafes, and places to eat and drink' was the most commonly mentioned facility with one-in-five (19%) businesses referencing it. There was also interest in 'spots and leisure facilities' (13%) and 'public transport' facilities (11%).

It should be noted, however, that around three-in-ten (29%) businesses answered 'none' suggesting that they did not perceive a need for any further facilities in their immediate area.

Businesses were then asked if they would benefit from a coordinated staff benefit scheme, such as discounts on gym access, food, or training. Answers were recorded as simple 'yes' or 'no', although where businesses insisted they didn't know this was recorded.



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

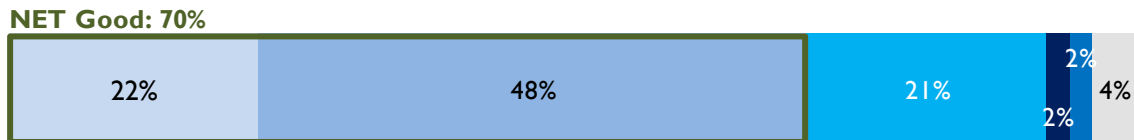
Answers were fairly polarised with just over half suggesting that such benefits would be of use to the business (55%) and just under half suggesting the opposite (43%). There were no significant differences by business size or location.

3.8 Overall attitudes to Bracknell as a place to do business

Having considered various aspects of doing business in Bracknell, including travel and infrastructure, the appearance of the area, access to workforce and skills, security, and facilities, businesses were asked to give an overall rating for Bracknell as a place to do business. Answers were recorded on a five point scale of 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor', and 'very poor', along with the option to say 'don't know' if applicable.

Q11. From your experience, how would you rate Bracknell as a place to do business?

Very good Good Average Poor Very poor Don't know



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

The results suggest that Bracknell is seen as a good place to do business by those based there; not only did the majority indicate that Bracknell was either 'good' (28%) or 'very good' (22%), but only a very small proportion indicated that it was (net) poor (4%). There were no significant differences in the results by Industrial Area or size of business.

Respondents were then asked to rate, on the same scale, the *reputation* of Bracknell as a place to do business. It is important to draw distinction between how businesses rate Bracknell (Q11, above) and Bracknell's reputation, the latter of which would be how the interviewed businesses think that Bracknell is perceived by those outside the town.

Q12. And overall, how would you rate Bracknell's reputation as a place to do business?

Very good Good Average Poor Very poor Don't know



Source: Qa Research 2017 Base: 98 (all respondents)

Whilst just over half of respondents felt that Bracknell had a (net) good reputation overall, they were more likely to think it was 'good' (44%) as opposed to 'very good'. In addition, around one-in-four (26%) felt its reputation was merely 'average' and one-in-ten went so as to say it was 'poor'.

The reputation of Bracknell as a place to do business must be looked at in conjunction with the actual rating given by those who businesses that are based there. The reputation is lower than the actual rating, suggesting that there is work to be done increasing the reputation of Bracknell as a place to do business in order to bring that reputation in line with the actual experience of the area.

3.9 Key business improvements for Bracknell

Lastly respondents were asked what, of all the topics that were discussed in the survey, were the five most important aspects of doing business in Bracknell that they would like to see improved. Answers were recorded verbatim and have been coded into thematic categories during analysis, and the order of importance (i.e. most important, second most important, etc.) noted. The table below shows the total number of mentions across the top five.

Improve access and road infrastructure	43	44%
Reduce traffic	33	34%
Improve access to facilities, retail, amenities	33	34%
Improve public transport	21	21%
Improve access to parking	15	15%
Improve access to suitable workforce	10	10%
Improve security	10	10%
Improve signage	10	10%
Make the area more aesthetically pleasing	8	8%
Improve communication infrastructure	8	8%
Bring more businesses to Bracknell	3	3%
Other	28	29%
Base: All respondents	98	

answers of 'nothing', 'don't know', and non-relevant answers are not shown

Improvements to 'road infrastructure' and a 'reduction in traffic' were the most commonly mentioned, attracting 44% and 34% of desired improvements respectively. Accessibility and good transport links were cited as the top key factor in making a place good for business, and therefore it is perhaps unsurprising to see a desire for improvement in this area. 'Facilities, retail, and amenities', 'public transport', and 'access to parking' were also potential areas of improvement, and all together these make up the top five most mentioned.

The top three for answers for the top three levels of importance are shown below. Highlighting the importance of improvement to 'access and road infrastructure' and 'traffic', these were among the top three answers for each of these questions.

Most important	(n)	(%)
• Improve access and road infrastructure	29	30%
• Reduce traffic	17	17%
• Improve public transport	11	11%
2nd most important		
• Improve access and road infrastructure	12	12%
• Improve access to facilities, retail, amenities	12	12%
• Reduce traffic	11	11%
3rd most important		
• Improve access to facilities, retail, amenities	11	11%
• Improve access and road infrastructure	5	5%
• Reduce traffic	5	5%

A selection of the verbatim responses are included below.

'Roadworks need to be improved, including diversions. There is so much going on in Bracknell at the moment, be it electrical repairs, plumbing, housing development'

'Traffic - improve the roads and infrastructure'

'The transport is the main one, it's pretty good already. The trains are good but the roads seem bad'

'Access facilities to get here to work because of the tip users causing huge queues'

'Improving the local shops and restaurants'

'Further improvement of public transport, more frequent buses. Better public transport infrastructure'

'Roads and traffic, getting onto the estate is difficult'

'More meeting rooms and coffee shop places to meet outside the work place'

'More and cheaper parking, especially if going to the station, where the parking is very limited'

Finally, respondents were asked if there were any specific improvements that they would like to see in their businesses area. Answers were again recorded verbatim and have been coded to thematic categories during analysis.

Improve access and road infrastructure	23	23%
Improve access to parking	10	10%
Improve security	7	7%
Reduce traffic	6	6%
Improve public transport	6	6%
Improve access to facilities, retail, amenities	5	5%
Make the area more aesthetically pleasing	3	3%
Improve communication infrastructure	3	3%
Other	5	5%
Nothing	43	44%
Don't know	1	1%
No relevant answer	3	3%
Base: All respondents	98	

answers of 'nothing', 'don't know', and non-relevant answers are not shown

Almost half (44%) of businesses interviewed said there were no specific improvements they would like to see in their business area. Amongst those who did, 'improvement to access and road infrastructure' was again the key area for improvement. Verbatim comments included;

'Appearance and access to the units'

'Best parking'

'Better bus links for staff'

'Road improvement is the main thing-there is a lot of traffic and congestion'

'Close to recycling areas, queues and traffic for refuse build up; reorganising a separate lane for people to use, if they are recycling their rubbish'

4. Conclusions

Businesses are satisfied with their location as a place to do business, with good access and transport links being the key drivers of this satisfaction. Essentially all interviewed business (97%) said they were either '*satisfied*' or '*very satisfied*', and this was true regardless of the size of the businesses or their location within the two Industrial Areas. Respondents listed good access and transport links as reasons for their satisfaction, along with being around or near other businesses. There may be some room for improvement here, however, as even those who were satisfied made reference to a need for improvement to road infrastructure and a reduction in traffic.

In general, key aspects of travel and infrastructure in Bracknell Forest were perceived to be good, although traffic and public transport could be improved. Access to car parking, road signage, and walkways & underpasses were all rated as '*very good*' or '*good*' by around two thirds of interviewed business, and high speeds broadband and the strategic & national infrastructure around Bracknell were also well received if perhaps with the capacity to improve. The rating of access to public transport and especially traffic were lower however, and later in the survey these would be identified as key areas where improvement was desired. One potential avenue to do this would be for more businesses to offer flexible working systems; two thirds of interviewed business offered this and two thirds of them felt it had had a positive impact on traffic and commute times (although naturally such systems may not be suitable for all businesses).

Despite being one of the key positives of Bracknell, however, the key improvement for businesses was to further improve access, road infrastructure, and reduce traffic. Together, comments relating to these made up more than half of requested improvements and were consistently listed in the top three most important areas for improvement.

Whilst businesses generally found it easy to retain staff in Bracknell Forest, there were perceived to be issues with affordable housing. Only one-in-seven (16%) business felt that the availability of affordable housing for staff was good, half the proportion who felt it was '*poor*' or '*very poor*'. Some business also suggested that they had difficulties in accessing skilled staff (47%), and whilst half rated this as good a minority cited it as an area for improvement.

The current town centre offers limited amenities (especially places to eat) but the majority of businesses feel this will be much improved once the new town centre redevelopment has been completed. Half of businesses rated the current town centre as poor but almost three quarters felt the redevelopment would be good. Businesses wanted a diverse range of facilities and amenities nearby, but restaurants, cafes, and places to eat and drink were the most popular.

There is a disparity between the perceived reputation of Bracknell as a place to do business and the more positive experience of those who actually do business there. Whilst 70% of the interviewed businesses rated Bracknell as a good place to do business, only 56% felt that its reputation was good. A potential way to boost this reputation would be to highlight that businesses like Bracknell more than the current reputation would suggest.

5. Appendix

5.1 Profile of respondents

Q15. Businesses by location		
Western Industrial Area (north of the A329, Berkshire Way)	65	66%
Southern Industrial Area (south of the A329, Berkshire Way)	20	20%
Don't know	9	9%
Declined to say	4	4%
Base: All respondents	98	

Q16. Approximate number of <u>full time</u> employees employed at the site		
1-10	55	56%
11-50	21	21%
NET: 51+	20	20%
- 51-100	9	9%
- 101-250	7	7%
- 251-500	1	1%
- 501+	3	3%
None	2	2%
Base: All respondents	98	

Q17. Approximate number of <u>part time</u> employees employed at the site		
1-10	43	44%
11-50	5	5%
NET: 51+	3	3%
- 51-100	2	2%
- 101-250	-	
- 251-500	-	
- 501+	1	1%
None	44	45%
Don't know	3	3%
Base: All respondents	98	

5.2 Questionnaire

This survey has been designed to transfer smoothly to QA's CATI system, and looks slightly different to a conventional survey. The questions themselves are the same, but are simply presented differently. All questions, (including prompts for interviewers/respondents e.g. 'Tick all that apply') are formatted with the 'Question' style in blue. All responses are listed and formatted using the 'Response' style in red. Questions followed by a blank line are an open-ended or numeric question. Instructions (i.e. routing instructions) are formatted using the 'Instruction' style in italic. Rating questions are simply listed with the scale listed first followed by the responses and formatted using the 'Response' style.

Good morning/afternoon. My name is ____ and I'm calling from Qa Research on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council and the BID Team which includes business representatives from companies including Fujitsu, Waitrose and Honda. We've been asked to talk to businesses about the 'Bracknell Business Improvement District' which is also known as the Bracknell BID. They are keen to understand the views of businesses that may be affected by this initiative.

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION (IF REQUIRED):

Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs, are a central government initiative to enable businesses in a particular area to form a legal identity and agree a set of projects they want implemented for that area. A levy is taken from each business in the BID area and this money is ring-fenced for use in improving the BID area.

May I speak to a senior person based at this site, such as an owner, director, or manager?

WHEN PUT THROUGH TO A POTENTIAL RESPONDENT

INTERVIEWER: Repeat first two paragraphs of the intro.

Can I just check that you are an appropriate senior person at this site to discuss overall issues about your organisation?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION (IF REQUIRED): You should be able to answer questions from the perspective of your organisation in Bracknell Forest, and the challenges and opportunities you face in terms of infrastructure, skills, and access to facilities in the borough.

Your business is in an area that would be covered by the Bracknell BID if one was set-up in Bracknell. This survey asks about your views on a range of aspects of doing business in Bracknell and the council would like to hear your views. The interview should take no more than 10 minutes, depending on your answers. Would it be convenient to conduct the interview now?

IF BUSY, CREATE AN APPOINTMENT

This interview will be carried out in accordance with the Market Research Society's code of conduct. That means your responses will be confidential and the call will be recorded for quality purposes. Is that ok?



SECTION 1: ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS AREA

Firstly, I'd like to ask you a few generally questions.

Q1a. How satisfied are you with your location as a place to do business?

READ OUT

Singlecode

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don't know

ASK Q1b IF 'Very satisfied' OR 'Satisfied' AT Q1a, OTHERS GOTO Q1c.

Q1b. Why did you give this answer?

INTERVIEWER: Probe for detail; good points/bad points

Codes open

ASK Q1c IF 'Very dissatisfied' OR 'Dissatisfied' OR 'Don't know'; AT Q1a, OTHERS GOTO Q2.

Q1c. Why did you give this answer?

INTERVIEWER: Probe for detail; good points/bad points

Codes open

ASK ALL

Q2. What are the key factors that make a place good for business?

Codes open

SECTION 2: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The next few questions ask about some specific aspects of doing business in Bracknell. Please note that when I mention your 'business area' I mean the area in close proximity to your premises in Bracknell, including road junctions, roundabouts etc.

Q3a. How would you rate the following aspects of travel and infrastructure in Bracknell Forest? Please give your answer on a scale of very good, good, average, poor, or very poor. READ OUT

Singlecode

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

Very poor

Don't know

LOOP – RANDOMISE ORDER OF ASKING

Local infrastructure in Bracknell

Strategic and national infrastructure around Bracknell

Traffic in and around your business area

Access to public transport and its reliability for your employees
Walk ways and underpasses around your business area
Signage around your business area for way-finding and navigation
Quality of and accessibility to fast broadband
Access to car parking

Q3b. Does your company currently offer a flexible working system?

Singlecode

Yes

No

Don't know

ASK Q3c IF 'Yes' AT Q3b, OTHERS GOTO Q4

Q3c. Has this had a positive effect on traffic in your business area or travel to work for your staff?

Singlecode

Yes

No

Don't know

ASK ALL

Q4. And on the same scale, how would you rate the following aspects of the appearance of Bracknell Forest? READ OUT

Singlecode

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

Very poor

Don't know

LOOP – RANDOMISE ORDER OF ASKING

Overall appearance of your business area

Green spaces

General signage in and around your business area, such as welcome signs

Lighting

The appearance and quality of roads, regardless of traffic levels

Pavements

Graffiti and littering

Q5. And again on the same scale of very good to very poor, how would you rate the following aspects of employment and skills in Bracknell Forest? READ OUT

Singlecode

Very good
Good
Average
Poor
Very poor
Don't know

LOOP – RANDOMISE ORDER OF ASKING

Access to skilled staff
Ability to retain staff
Availability of affordable housing for staff
Access to training and development of staff

Q6. Has your business been affected by vandalism, trespassing or theft in the past 2 years?

Singlecode

Yes
No
Don't know (do not prompt)

Q7. Would your business benefit from additional security and CCTV in areas that are outside your business area and cover public areas?

Singlecode

Yes
No
Don't know (do not prompt)

Q8. On the same very good to very poor scale used before, how would rate these facilities in Bracknell?

Singlecode

Very good
Good
Average
Poor
Very poor
Don't know

LOOP – DO NOT RANDOMISE ORDER OF ASKING

Access to places to eat within the existing town centre
Access to places to eat once the town centre redevelopment has been completed
Access to meeting rooms and conference spaces
Access to hotels

Q9. What, if any, other facilities are important to have in close proximity to your business premises?

Codes open

Q10. Would your business benefit from a coordinated staff benefit scheme such as discounts on access to a gym or on food or training?

Singlecode

Yes

No

Don't know (do not prompt)

Q11. From your experience, how would you rate Bracknell as a place to do business? READ OUT

Singlecode

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

Very poor

Don't know

Q12. And overall, how would you rate Bracknell's reputation as a place to do business? READ OUT

Singlecode

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

Very poor

Don't know

Q13. Of all the topics we've discussed, what would you say are the 5 most important aspects of doing business in Bracknell that you would like to see improved? Please give your answer in order of importance starting with the most important.

MOST IMPORTANT: Codes open

2nd MOST IMPORTANT: Codes open

3rd MOST IMPORTANT: Codes open

4th MOST IMPORTANT: Codes open

5th MOST IMPORTANT: Codes open

Q14. Are there any specific improvements that you would like to see in your business area?

Codes open

I'd now like to confirm a few details about your organisation.

Q15. Are your premises in Bracknell based in the Western or Southern Industrial area?

SINGLECODE

Western Industrial Area (north of the A329, Berkshire Way)

Southern Industrial Area (south of the A329, Berkshire Way)

Have premises in both

Don't know

Declined to give

Q16. Approximately how many full-time workers are employed at this site?

SINGLECODE

1-10

11-50

51-100

101-250

251-500

501+

Don't know

Declined to give

Q17. Approximately how many part-time workers are employed at this site?

SINGLECODE

1-10

11-50

51-100

101-250

251-500

501+

Don't know

Declined to give

Thank and close.