Littlehampton Business Survey 2015

For Arun District Council

27th May 2015

Qa

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1.   Background

In late 2014, Arun District Council (Arun DC) was awarded funding worth over half a million pounds to deliver an enhanced public realm scheme on top of new flood defences installed by the Environment Agency along the east bank of the River Arun. The flood defences have been constructed over a period of 18 months, and have caused disruption to businesses on the 'Riverside' (Pier Road and Arun Parade), although they have been compensated for these difficulties.

The funding was predicated on the improvement of the public realm creating new jobs, which would be brought about by an increasing turnover in local and the town centre businesses. This would be achieved by attracting a greater number of visitors to the town and increasing visitor spend per visit by encouraging people to stay longer. This is supported by data provided by Tourism South East.

In order to measure the impact of the enhanced public realm and assess whether this has led to the creation of jobs, Arun DC commissioned Qa Research (Qa) to conduct a study that would act as a baseline measure of staffing levels of businesses in the town centre as well has their intentions with regard to hiring more staff and their economic performance.

Following the implementation of the public realm enhancement scheme the study will be repeated to produce a 'before and after' comparison to assess the impact of the public realm in in the creation of employment.

2.   Aims and objectives

The principal objectives of the research with businesses were to;

- Measure the current levels of employment at the business and any future change
- Determine the financial situation of the business and their growth prospects
- Discover how potential future growth might impact staff levels.

3.   Methodology

The research was carried using a sample survey. Fieldwork was carried out by face-to-face interviews with businesses using a survey designed collaboratively by Qa and Arun DC. The survey was heavily based on a similar survey used in Bognor Regis for a separate but similar piece of research measuring the impact of improved public realm on local businesses and jobs that Qa carried out for Arun DC in September 2014.

To ensure a broad mix of traders were interviewed, minimum quotas were set on the location of the businesses. In particular, it was crucial to ensure the views of traders on the Riverside were well represented in addition to businesses elsewhere in the town in order to assess the impact the construction works have had.

Businesses that were included were those where visitors might go i.e. retail, catering, and attractions; businesses such as solicitors, banks, healthcare, etc., were not included in the research as it was felt it would not be relevant to them. With these businesses removed, the "*interviewable businesses*" is the number of remaining businesses that were approached to be interviewed.

The table below shows these areas as well as the targets and final sample;

Street	Total commerical units	Interviewable businesses		Target interviews	Final sample	
		n	%		n	%
Riverside Traders	19	19	12%	19	15	13%
Beach Road	32	22	14%	min 13	18	16%
High Street	63	49	30%	min 28	34	29%
Surrey Street	28	24	15%	min 14	21	18%
Other Streets	59	48	30%	max 20	28	24%
	201	162	100%	min 94	116	100%

The aim was to interview all 19 businesses on the Riverside, however dissatisfaction over the flood defence construction meant that some traders were unwilling to take part. In total, 15 interviews with this group were conducted.

The final number of interviews in 'other streets' was higher than the intended maximum, however this was due to a greater than expected final sample size, and in fact as a proportion they makes up slightly less of the final sample than in the population of interviewable businesses.

Interviewing was carried out in March 2015 as the public realm work was being completed, and interviewers were instructed to seek out the most senior person possible at each business to complete the survey. In total, 116 businesses completed the survey. Following the return of the completed questionnaires to Qa, they were quality checked for accuracy and manually inputted into an electronic database. The results were then collated and analysed ahead of production of the report.

Based on the population of relevant businesses within Littlehampton (162) and the final sample of 116, the results in this report at an overall level are accurate to within +/- 4.8% at 95% confidence. This falls inside the statically representative benchmark of +/- 5%.

4.   Key findings

This section details the key findings of the research

The results are shown using a combination of charts and tables with commentary to describe the findings. In some instances responses to questions have been combined ('Netted') to aid interpretation. This has been highlighted where it occurs. Similarly, on some occasions responses have been converted into average (mean) scores.

Where percentages have been expressed as a 'NET' figure this may sometimes differ from the sum of the percentages due to rounding.

4.1   Profile of businesses in sample

For the first question in the survey, respondents were first asked how they would describe their business: as either a local, national, or international enterprise. Answers were chosen from a pre-coded list shown to respondents, on a 'showcard', and results are shown below;

Figure 1. Type of business in sample

Q1. How would you describe your company from the following list below?

Local business with one business site	National company with a number of business premises across the UK	Local business with more than one business premises in the South East	International company with offices/business premises outside of the UK
68%	14%	13%	5%

Source: Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 116 (all respondents)

The majority, or two thirds (68%), of businesses interviewed described themselves as a '*local businesses with one business site*'; along with the one-seventh (13%) who said they were a '*local business with more than one business premises in the South East*', this means that four-fifths (81%) of interviewed traders classified themselves as *local businesses*.

In contrast, one only fifth (19%, NET) of respondents were national (14%) or international (5%) companies.

At relevant points in this report the results are stratified by *local businesses* (NET: '*local businesses with one business site*' and '*local business with more than one business premises in the South East*') and *national/international businesses* (NET: '*national company with a number of business premises across the UK*' and '*international company with offices/business premises outside of the UK*' in order to examine any differences (or lack of differences) in their responses.

Businesses were then asked what percentage of their customer base they estimated were visitors to Littlehampton and what percentage were residents of the town. Respondents were asked to give two percentages that added to 100%, and results are shown below.

The percentages have been grouped into bands, and the charts show the proportion of businesses that gave a percentage in each bands. For example, 59% of business interviewed said that between 0 and 24% of their customer base were tourists or visitors.

Figure 2. Proportion of customers that are tourists or visitors.

Q3a. What percentage of your customer base do you estimate are tourists/visitors to the area?

Proportion of businesses

59% — 0-24%
20% — 25-49%
9% — 50-74%
0% — 75-100%
12% — Don't know

Percentage of customer base that are tourists/visitors

Source: Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 116 (all respondents)
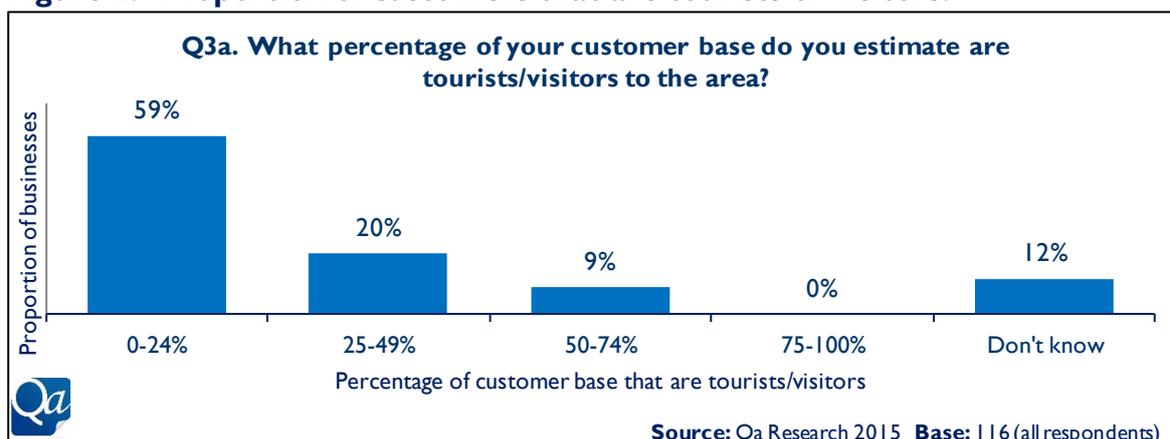
Figure 3. Proportion of customers that are residents of Littlehampton

Q3b. What percentage of your customer base do you estimate are residents of Littlehampton?

Proportion of businesses

1% — 0-24%
2% — 25-49%
23% — 50-74%
70% — 75-100%
4% — Don't know

Percentage of customer base that are residents

Source: Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 116 (all respondents)
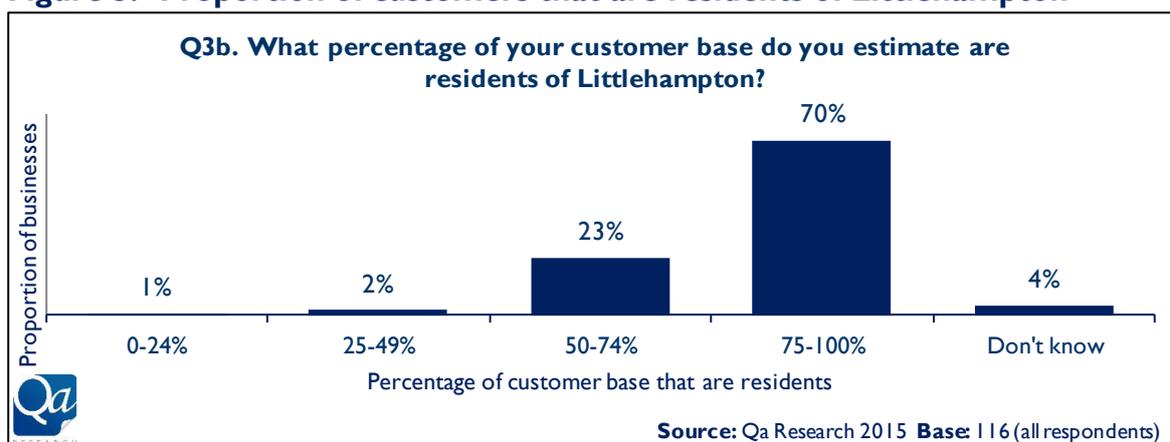
Residents of Littlehampton make up the majority of the customer base for the majority of the interviewed businesses; just under three quarters of businesses (70%) said that their customer base was between 75% and 100% residents, and in total nine-in-ten (93%) businesses said residents made up at least half of their customers (NET: 50-74% and 75-100%).

Tourists and visitors make up a lower proportion of business's customer base, with only one-in-ten (9%) saying that tourists/visitors made up at least half of their customers. Indeed, over half of respondents said that these groups made up only 24% or less of their customer base. Tourists and visitors were more prevalent along the Riverside however, and made up on average (mean) 26% of the customer base of businesses there, compared to only 16% for other town businesses.

Obviously this question relies on business's accurate perception of which customers are tourists and which are residents. The low responses of '*don't know*' for residents (4%) suggest that businesses were confident they could give an accurate estimate here, and although the proportion saying '*don't know*' is slightly higher for tourists/visitors (12%) it is still relatively low.

4.2   Employment at the business

Businesses were then asked a series of questions about the number of employees they had, the breakdown of those by full and part time employees, and the future employment prospects of the business.

Respondents were first asked how many individuals in total (including themselves) were employed at the premises where the interview took place. The total number of individuals has been grouped into categories, and the chart below shows the proportion of businesses that fell into each category. For example, 32% of businesses had between 3 and 5 employees in total.

Figure 4. Total number of individuals employed at the premises

Q4a. Including yourself, how many individuals does the business currently employ at this premises?

Proportion of businesses

0	1	2	3-5	6-10	11-20	More than 20	Don't Know
1%	14%	25%	32%	21%	5%	2%	1%

Total number of employees

Mean average number of employees: 5.09

Source: Qa Research 2015 Base: 116 (all respondents)

Three quarters (78%) of interviewed business employed between two and ten employees (NET: 2, 3-5, and 6-10), and unsurprisingly the mean average number of employees (5.09) falls in the middle of this range.

It should be noted that one business gave an answer of 'zero' employees; this was because the staff at this site was comprised entirely of volunteers whom the business did not classify as employees.

The mean average number of employees was much lower for local businesses, at 3.88, than for national/international businesses, at 10.48.

The mean average number of individuals employed amongst Riverside businesses (businesses in Pier Road and Arun Parade) was slightly higher than the average amongst all other interviewed traders (6.33 vs. 4.90). This is despite *all* the interviewed Riverside traders being local businesses, who had on average a lower number of employees compared to national/international businesses.

With this in mind, it should be highlighted that the average number of employees amongst the local businesses that make up the interviewed Riverside businesses was higher (6.33) than the average of all *local* businesses interviewed in Littlehampton (3.88, including Riverside traders). This suggests that the Riverside businesses have the capacity to support more staff than the other local businesses in the rest of Littlehampton.

Businesses were then asked how many of their employees work full time (defined as 30 or more hours a week) or part time (less than 30 hours a week). The numbers of employees were recorded and as before the results have been grouped into categories shown in the charts below. For example, 41% of businesses interviewed had only one full time employee.

Figure 5. Number of full-time employees at the premise
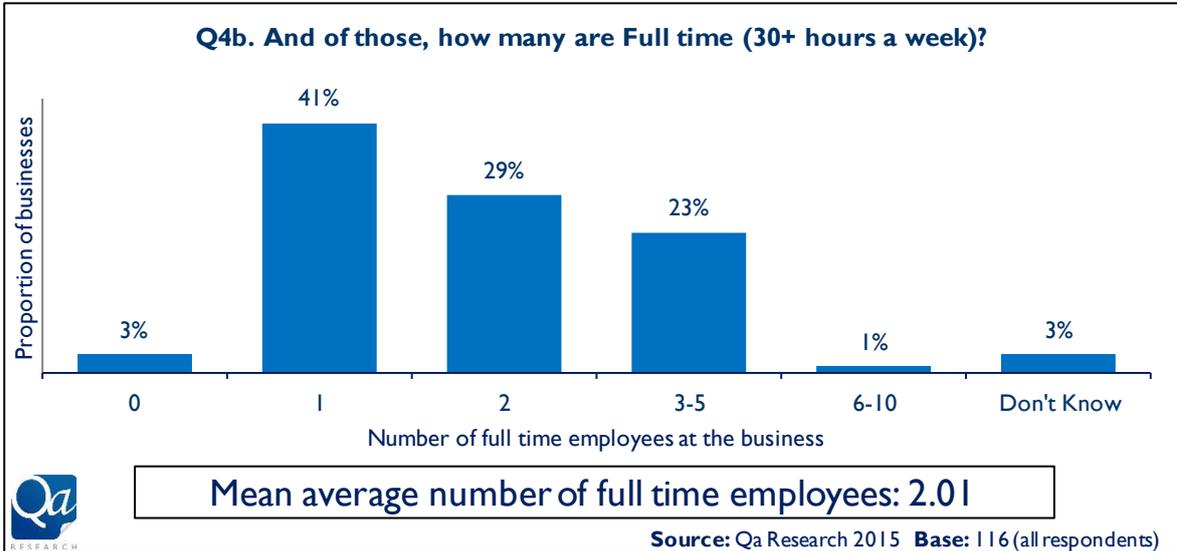
The vast majority (94%) of interviewed businesses employed between one and five full time employees (Net: 1, 2, and 3-5), and the overall mean average was 2.01 per business. A very small proportion of businesses (3%) employed no full time employees.

Figure 6. Number of part-time employees at the premises
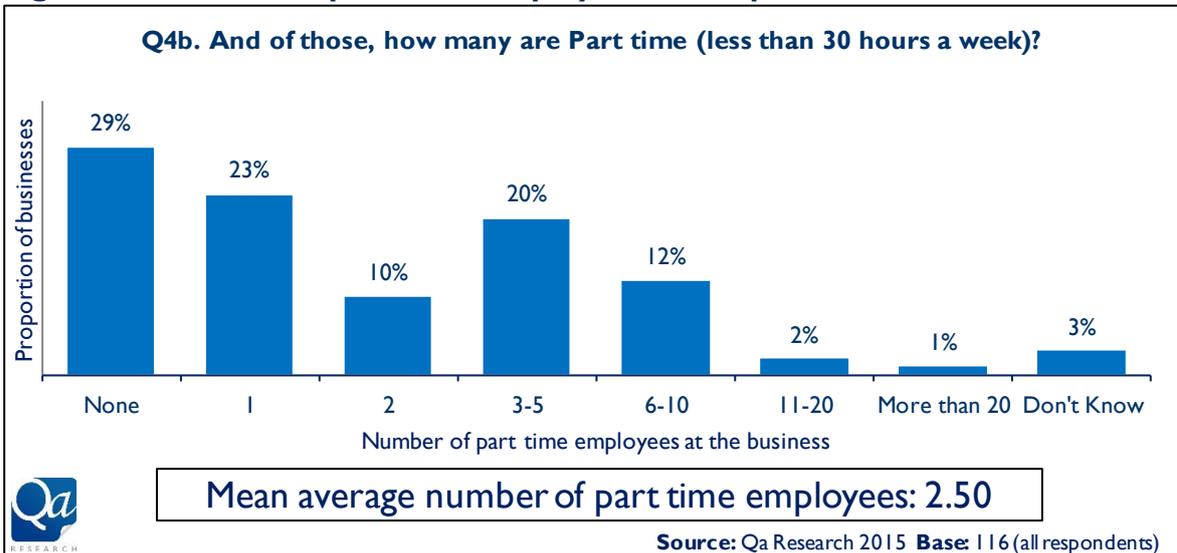
The mean average number of part time employees is slightly higher than that of full time, at 2.50 per business, in spite of the finding that just under one third (29%) of interviewed businesses employed no part time staff. The average is higher because of the greater proportion of business employing 6-10, 11-20, and more than 20 part time staff (12%, 2%, and 1% respectively) compared to full time staff.

Businesses were then asked which of three statements about the prospect of hiring more staff in the next 12 months they agreed with the most, and results are shown in the chart below;

Figure 7. Intention to hire staff in the coming 12 months

Q5. Thinking again about the number of staff that you employ, which of the following statements would you agree with the most?

Source: Qa Research 2014 **Base:** 115 (one respondent with only volunteer staff excluded)
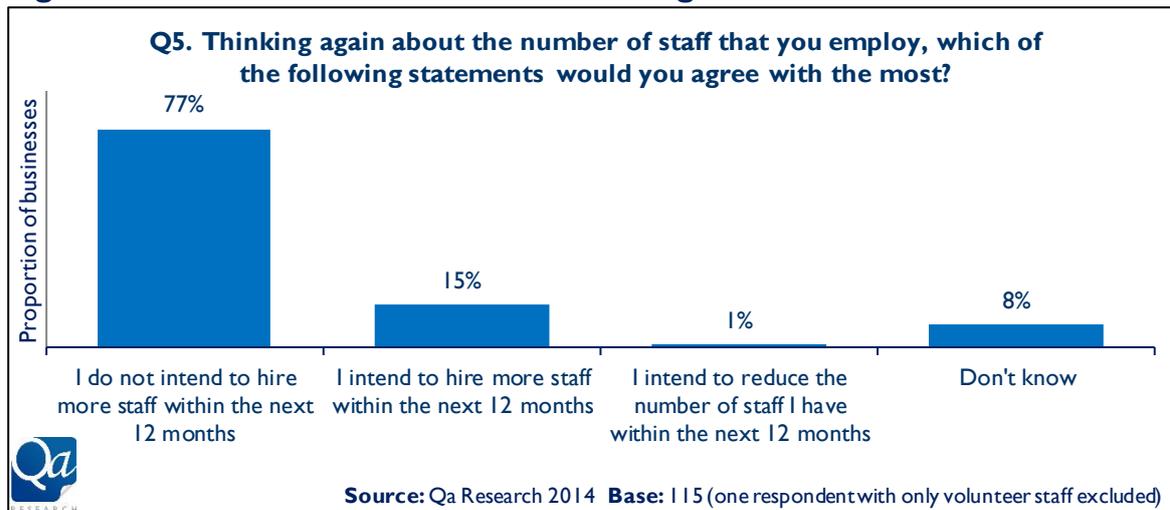
The majority of interviewed businesses (77%) indicated that they '*did not intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months*'. Just one-in-seven (15%) traders said they did '*intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months*', and positively only a negligible proportion (1%) intended to '*reduce*' staff numbers.

There were no statistically significant differences between the proportions of either local businesses or national/international businesses who did or did not intend to hire more staff, nor any difference between the Riverside and other town businesses.

Although there were no significant differences between Riverside and other town businesses, the counts for local and national/international businesses in these groups are shown in the table below to highlight variation in the sample. It is important to note however that due to the lack of statistical significance and the small base size these findings *cannot* be generalised beyond the interviewed sample.

Figure 8. Intention to hire staff by businesses type by location

	Net: Local Businesses				Net: National/ International Businesses			
	NET: Riverside traders		NET: Non-Riverside traders		NET: Riverside traders		NET: Non-Riverside traders	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
I intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months	4	27%	11	14%	-	-	2	10%
I do not intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months	9	60%	62	78%	-	-	17	81%
I intend to reduce the number of staff I have within the next 12 months	-	-	1	1%	-	-	-	-
Don't know	2	13%	5	6%	-	-	2	10%
Total	**15**	**100%**	**79**	**100%**	**-**	**-**	**21**	**100%**

Amongst the interviewed sample, regardless of businesses type and location the majority of the businesses suggested they '*did not intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months*'.

Businesses that indicated that they 'did intend to hire more staff' were then asked how many extra full and part time staff they anticipated hiring over the next 12 months. The number of extra staff has been grouped into bands, and the charts show the proportion of businesses that gave a figure in each band. For example, 22% of businesses interviewed think they will hire one extra staff member over the next 12 months.

Figure 9. Approximate increase in the number of full time staff

Q6a. Roughly how many additional full time staff do you think you will employ over the next 12 months?

Mean average extra full time staff: 0.92

Source: Qa Research 2015 Base: 17 (intending to hire more staff within 12 months)

Figure 10. Approximate increase in the number of part time staff

Q6b. Roughly how additional part time staff do you think you will employ over the next 12 months?

Mean average extra part time staff: 1.17

Source: Qa Research 2015 Base: 17 (intending to hire more staff within 12 months)

Businesses were more likely to hire part time staff than full time; twice the proportion of respondents said they would not employ any additional full time staff (35%) compared to the portion who said they would no hire any extra part-time staff (18%).

The averages show that, across businesses that intend to hire more staff in the next 12 months, an average additional 0.92 full time staff and 1.17 part time staff would be employed per business.

There was a degree of uncertainty over the increase in staff numbers; just under one third (29%) of businesses who intended to hire more staff said that they 'didn't know' how many additional staff they would hire. Given the similar mean average number of full time or part time staff that would be hired it may be that this uncertainty stems not from the number of staff that would be hired but if they would be full or part time.

The differences by sub-groups would have been interesting here, but unfortunately the small base sizes for these questions means it is impossible to draw even indicative findings from the data. Put simply, too few businesses intended to hire more staff to draw comparisons between them.

Regardless, a selection of the raw data has been presented in the tables below so as to illustrate the distribution of answers from the small sample of businesses interviewed. This data cannot be generalised beyond the sample however.

Figure 11. Intention to hire additional full/part time staff by business location

	NET: Riverside businesses		NET: Other town businesses	
	count	*%*	*count*	*%*
Q6a: Intention to hire full time (f/t) staff	**4**	**100%**	**13**	**100%**
Net: Intend to hire extra f/t staff	1	25%	5	38%
Do not intend to hire extra f/t staff	1	25%	5	38%
Don't know	2	50%	3	23%
Prefer not to say	-	-	-	-
Q6b: Intention to hire part time (p/t) staff	**4**	**100%**	**13**	**100%**
Net: Intend to hire extra p/t staff	1	25%	2	15%
Do not intend to hire extra p/t staff	1	25%	8	62%
Don't know	2	50%	3	23%
Prefer not to say	-	-	-	-

Figure 12. Intention to hire additional full/part time staff by location

Location	Q5: Intention to hire staff			Q6a: Intention to hire full time (f/t) staff			Q6b: Intention to hire part time (p/t) staff	
	Base (Q5)	Intend to hire more staff	Do not intend to hire more staff	Base (Q6a Q6b)	Net: Intend to hire extra f/t staff	Do not intend to hire f/t extra staff	Net: Intend to hire extra p/t staff	Do not intend to hire extra p/t staff
NET: The Riverside	15	27%	60%	4	25%	25%	25%	25%
Beach Road	18	11%	83%	2	50%	-	-	50%
High Street	34	12%	74%	4	25%	50%	75%	25%
Surrey Street	21	10%	86%	2	100%	-	50%	-
NET: Other Streets	28	18%	75%	5	20%	60%	80%	-

Answers of '*I intend to reduce the number of staff within the next 12 months*' (Q5), '*don't know*' (Q5, 6a, 6b), and '*prefer not to say*' (Q5, 6a, 6b) and not shown in Figure 12.
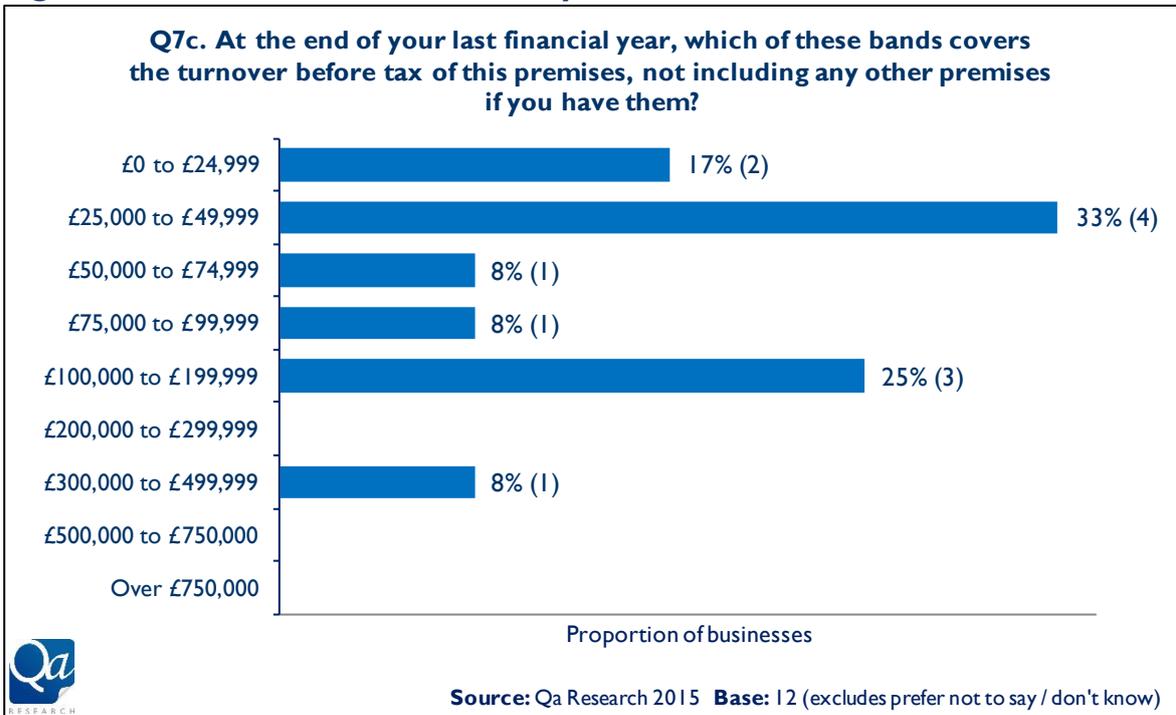
4.3   Financial measures of the businesses

Respondents were then asked a series of questions about the finances of their business and how they expected to grow in the near future.

Businesses were asked what their turnover was at the end of *their* last financial year. Answers were picked as bands shown on a showcard.

Two thirds (68%) of the surveyed businesses declined to state their turnover, and another fifth (22%) said they did not know the figure, and so the chart below shows the breakdown of those who did disclose their turnover. The very small base size at this question must be noted, and in fact a percentage of 8% in the chart below is equal to just one business; the count for each percentage is shown in brackets (e.g. '17% (2)' means that 2 businesses gave a value in this turnover band, and they represent 17% of the base of 12).

Not a single Riverside business reported their turnover, with 11 of the 15 interviewed preferring not to say and 4 saying they didn't know, and so the results in the chart refer only to other town businesses.

Figure 13. Turnover for last financial year

Q7c. At the end of your last financial year, which of these bands covers the turnover before tax of this premises, not including any other premises if you have them?

Band	
£0 to £24,999	17% (2)
£25,000 to £49,999	33% (4)
£50,000 to £74,999	8% (1)
£75,000 to £99,999	8% (1)
£100,000 to £199,999	25% (3)
£200,000 to £299,999	
£300,000 to £499,999	8% (1)
£500,000 to £750,000	
Over £750,000	

Proportion of businesses

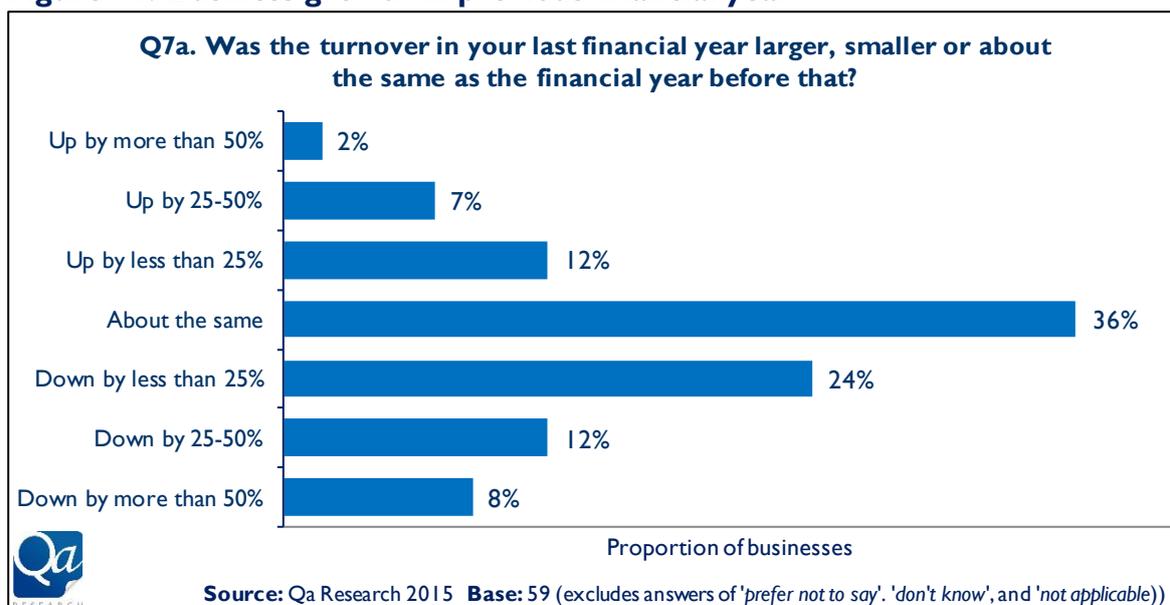**Source:** Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 12 (excludes prefer not to say / don't know)

Of businesses that were willing to disclose their turnover (12 respondents), half (50%) had a turnover of less than £50,000 per annum (NET: '*£0 to £24,999*' and, '*£25,000 to £49,999*'). However, the base size here is so small that this cannot be generalised to the rest of the sample.

Respondents were also asked two questions about the growth of their business, both in the past and their anticipated future growth. The first of these asked whether, in terms of turnover, the business had grown in the previous financial year compared to the financial year before that. Answers were chosen from categories prompted from a showcard and are shown below;

Again some businesses (29% of all respondents) preferred not to disclose this information, and a small proportion (4%) also indicated that they had only been trading for a year and therefore could not answer the question. These businesses, along with those who reported they '*didn't know*' the answer (16%), have been excluded from the table below;

Figure 14. Business growth in previous financial year

Q7a. Was the turnover in your last financial year larger, smaller or about the same as the financial year before that?

Up by more than 50% — 2%
Up by 25-50% — 7%
Up by less than 25% — 12%
About the same — 36%
Down by less than 25% — 24%
Down by 25-50% — 12%
Down by more than 50% — 8%

Proportion of businesses

Source: Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 59 (excludes answers of '*prefer not to say*'. '*don't know*', and '*not applicable*'))

Only one fifth (20%) of businesses has experienced any kind of growth in the previous financial year (NET: '*up by more than 50%*', '*up by 25-50%*', and '*up by less than 25%*'). In contrast, just under two fifths (36%) said their turnover had been '*about the same*' as in the previous year and just over two fifths (44%) reported a decrease in turnover (NET: '*down by more than 50%*', '*down by 25-50%*', and '*down by less than 25%*').

Of the 8 Riverside businesses who gave an answer, all but one (88%) said that their turnover in the last financial year had been smaller than in the year before that (the remaining one said '*about the same*'). This was more than double the proportion of other town businesses who said their turnover had been smaller (37%).

The most likely explanation for this is the disruption caused by the construction of flood defences, which lasted for 18 months and reduced trade for businesses on the Riverside.

A greater proportion of national/international businesses said their turnover had grown (40%) than local businesses (16%), more than double the proportion, however this difference is not statistically significant.

Businesses were then asked about their projected growth in turnover in their next financial year, and responses are shown below. Again, answers of '*prefer not to say*' (29% of all respondents) and '*don't know*' (22%) have been excluded.

Figure 15. Projected growth over next financial year

Q7b. And compared to your turnover in your last financial year, do you expect your turnover at the end of your next financial year will be larger, smaller, or about the same?

Up by more than 50%	-
Up by 25-50%	11%
Up by less than 35%	16%
About the same	46%
Down by less than 25%	16%
Down by 25-50%	4%
Down by more than 50%	7%

Proportion of businesses

Source: Qa Research 2014 **Base:** 56 (excludes '*prefer not to say*' and '*don't know*')

In the same way that only a small proportion of businesses reported previous turnover growth (20%), only a small proportion of businesses projected any degree of future growth (27%). Instead, just under half of businesses predicted that their turnover at the end of the next financial year would be '*about the same*' as their previous financial year and one quarter predicted it would be smaller (27%).

There was variation in the proportion of businesses projecting growth by location and business type, which is shown in the table below. The proportion of businesses predicting greater turnover were highest in Beach Road (36%) and Surrey Street (38%), and was also higher amongst national/international businesses.

Figure 16. Projected turnover growth by location/business type

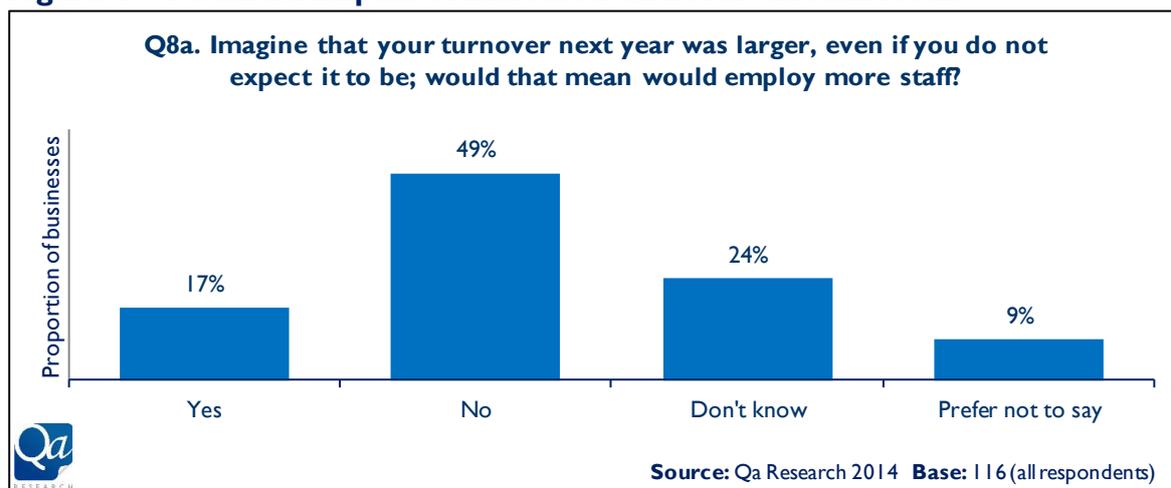| Item	Base	NET: Larger	About the same	NET: Smaller
Location				
NET: Riverside businesses	6	17%	17%	67%
NET: Other town businesses	50	28%	50%	22%
- Beach Road	11	36%	45%	18%
- High Street	16	25%	44%	31%
- Surrey Street	13	38%	54%	8%
- NET: Other Streets	10	10%	60%	30%
Business type				
NET: Local business	45	22%	47%	31%
NET: National/International business	11	45%	45%	9%
Total	**56**	**27%**	**46%**	**27%**

NB: Beach Road, High Street, Surrey Street, and NET: Other Streets are all included in NET: Other town businesses.
Answers of '*prefer not to say*' and '*don't know*' have been excluded.

Projected turnover growth can also be viewed as a potential indicator for intention to hire more staff, however again the small base size makes it impossible to draw conclusions from the data. The table below shows the intention to hire more staff spilt by who expected their turnover to be larger or smaller in the next financial year.

	Expect turnover to be <u>larger</u> in next financial year		Expect turnover to be <u>smaller</u> in next financial year	
	n	%	n	%
Q6a: Intention to hire full time (f/t) staff	**3**	**100%**	**5**	**100%**
Net: Intend to hire extra f/t staff	2	66%	1	20%
Do not intend to hire extra f/t staff	-	-	4	80%
Don't know	1	33%	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-	-	-
Q6b: Intention to hire part time (p/t) staff	**3**	**100%**	**5**	**100%**
Net: Intend to hire extra p/t staff	1	33%	3	60%
Do not intend to hire extra p/t staff	1	33%	1	20%
Don't know	1	33%	1	20%
Prefer not to say	-	-	-	-

Respondents were then asked about the impact of potential growth on staff levels, even if they did not expect to grow in the future.

Figure 17. Potential impact of increased turnover on staff levels

Q8a. Imagine that your turnover next year was larger, even if you do not expect it to be; would that mean would employ more staff?

Yes 17% No 49% Don't know 24% Prefer not to say 9%

Proportion of businesses

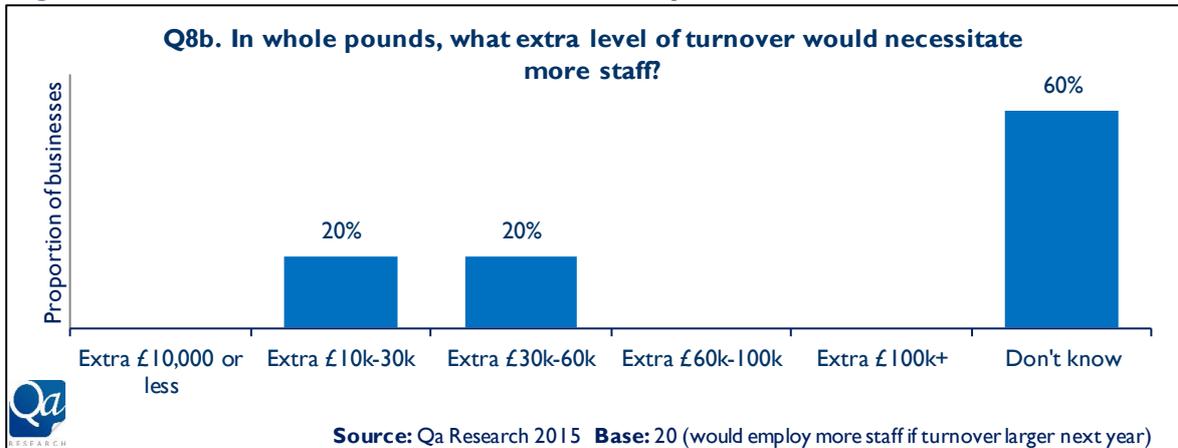**Source:** Qa Research 2014 **Base:** 116 (all respondents)

Only a small proportion of businesses, just under one fifth (17%) said they would employ more staff if their turnover increased. This is broadly the same proportion that said they intended to hire more staff in the next 12 months (15%).

When businesses were asked if their projected turnover in their next financial year was to increase, one quarter (27%) indicated that they expected growth. A smaller proportion said they would hire more staff if turnover increased (17%) which suggests that increasing staff numbers is not linked solely to an increase in turnover. This may be related to the fact that for businesses that projected growth, more than half projected growth in turnover of less than 25%, and given that half of interviewed businesses had a turnover of less than £50,000 per annum, a less than 25% increase may not provide sufficient income to warrant additional staff.

A quarter (24%) of businesses interviewed indicated that they 'didn't know' suggesting a degree of uncertainty over future staff prospects.

Those businesses that said they would hire more staff if their turnover increased were asked to quantify this by saying how much additional turnover would be required to necessitate more staff. Answers were selected from bands shown on a showcard, and are shown below;

Figure 18. Estimated additional turnover required to hire more staff

Q8b. In whole pounds, what extra level of turnover would necessitate more staff?

Proportion of businesses

Extra £10,000 or less	Extra £10k-30k	Extra £30k-60k	Extra £60k-100k	Extra £100k+	Don't know
	20%	20%			60%

Source: Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 20 (would employ more staff if turnover larger next year)

Again there was a lack of certainty of the amount of turnover required to hire more staff; three fifths (60%) of those who would employ more staff said that they '*didn't know*' how much turnover would be required to necessitate more staff. The small base size must be noted here, as only 20 businesses were asked this question.
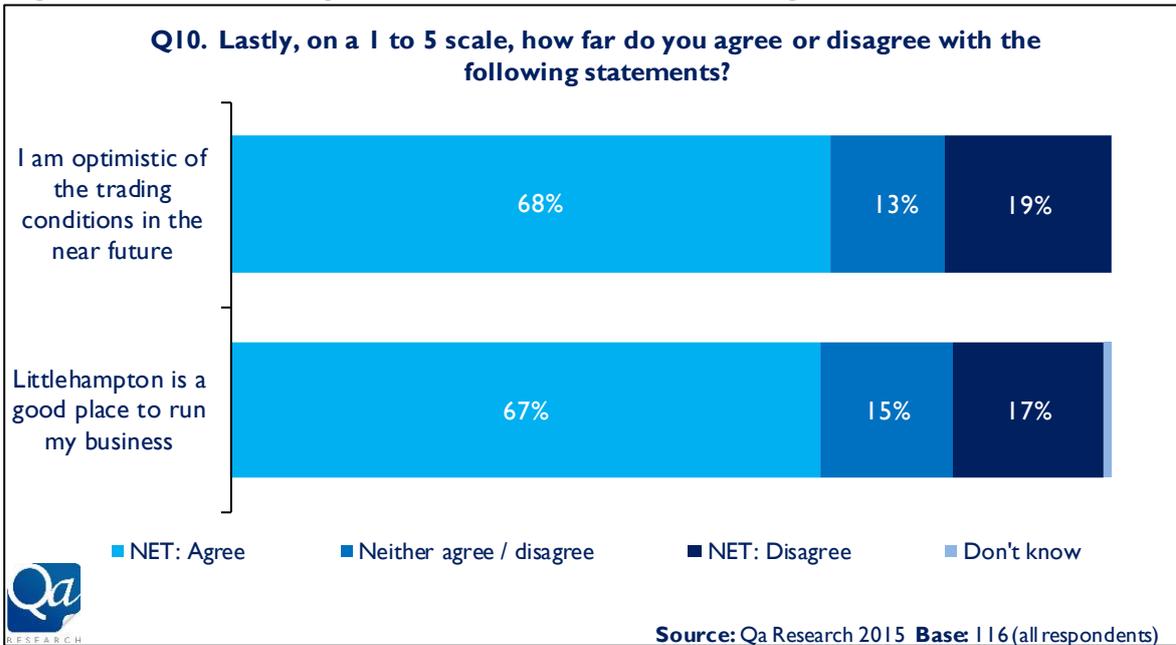
One fifth (20%) of businesses who would employ more staff if their turnover increased would do so if their turnover increased by just '*£10k-£30k*', and another fifth (20%) if it increased by '*£30k-£60k*'.

4.4   Satisfaction with, and optimism about Littlehampton

For the final questions on the survey, respondents were asked questions to gauge their satisfaction with Littlehampton and how the town could be improved from a business perspective.

Respondents were asked how far they agreed or disagreed with two statements about their optimism for trading conditions and Littlehampton as a location for business. Answers were recorded on a one to five scale (five being 'strongly agree'), and are shown in the chart below;

Figure 19. Levels of optimism and satisfaction amongst businesses

Q10. Lastly, on a 1 to 5 scale, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	NET: Agree	Neither agree / disagree	NET: Disagree
I am optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future	68%	13%	19%
Littlehampton is a good place to run my business	67%	15%	17%

■ NET: Agree   ■ Neither agree / disagree   ■ NET: Disagree   ■ Don't know

Source: Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 116 (all respondents)

Two thirds of respondents both agreed that they were '*optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future*' (68%, NET: '*strongly agree*': 34%, '*agree*': 34%) and that '*Littlehampton is a good place to run their business*' (67%, NET: '*strongly agree*': 32%, '*agree*': 35%).

The high level of optimism is perhaps greater than expected given that only one quarter (27%) of businesses projected that their turnover would increase in their next financial year (although this excludes a significant number of respondents who declined to give this information). This suggests that the interviewed businesses do not necessarily relate increase in turnover with optimistic trading conditions, nor with the quality of Littlehampton as a location of business.

The proportion of respondents who agreed that they were 'optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future' and that 'Littlehampton is a good place to run their business' is shown in the table below stratified by various other key measures.

Figure 20. Optimism/satisfaction amongst businesses by type, growth, location

Item	Base	Optimistic of trading conditions in future Net: Agree	Littlehampton a good place to run business Net: Agree
Type of business			
Local	94	65%	63%
National/international	22	82%	86%
Expect turnover to be…			
Net: Larger	15	80%	80%
Net: Smaller	15	60%	67%
Location			
NET: The Riverside	15	67%	67%
NET: Other town businesses	101	68%	67%
- Beach Road	18	50%	61%
- High Street	34	94%	85%
- Surrey Street	21	67%	62%
- NET: Other Streets	28	50%	54%
Total	**116**	**68%**	**67%**

A greater proportion of national/international businesses than local businesses agreed that they were 'optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future' (82% vs. 65%) and that 'Littlehampton is a good place to run their business' (86% vs. 63%), although neither of these differences are statistically significant.
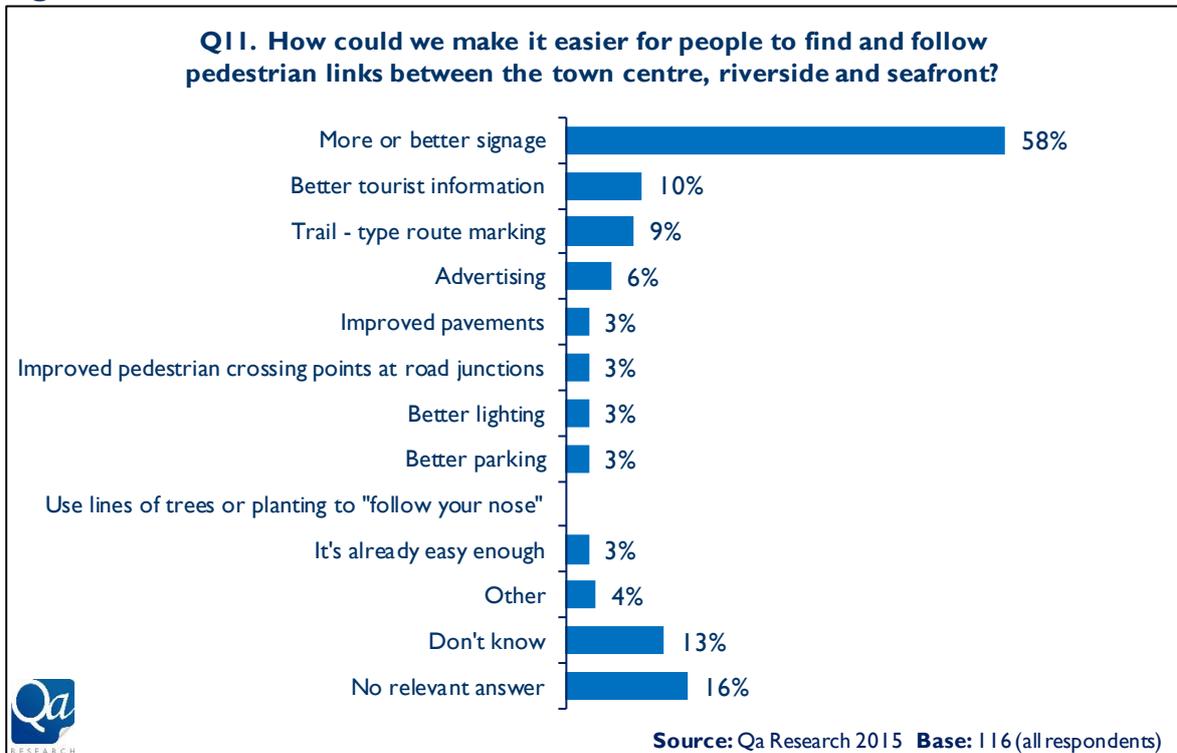
A similar pattern was true of businesses that projected their turnover would be larger in their next financial year compared to those who thought it would be smaller. A greater proportion of businesses that said it would be larger agreed that they were 'optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future' (80% vs. 60%) and that 'Littlehampton is a good place to run their business' (80% vs. 65%). There was no significant difference between the proportion of local or national/ international businesses that said they expected their turnover to be smaller or larger, and the data does not support a link between the levels of agreement between these two measures.

The level of agreement between Riverside businesses and other town businesses is remarkably consistent for both being 'optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future' (67% vs. 68%) and that 'Littlehampton is a good place to run their business' (67% for both). This is surprising given that the disruption that Riverside businesses suffered from the construction of flood defence works; it might be expected that this disruption would at least decrease satisfaction with Littlehampton as a place to do business, but there is no difference between Riverside and other town businesses in that regard.

Amongst other town businesses there was one very notable variation. Business in the High Street were statistically significantly more likely to agree that they were 'optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future' (94%) than businesses on the Riverside (67%), on Beach Road (50%), Surrey Street (67%), and other streets (50%, NET).

Respondents were then asked if they had any suggestions for how Arun DC could make it easier for pedestrians to find and follow routes between the town centre, riverside, and seafront. Answers were chosen from a pre-coded list on a showcard with the option to record other answers verbatim; any verbatim answers have been coded into thematic categories and are shown below alongside the pre-coded options.

Figure 21. Ideas for better links between town centre, riverside, seafront

Q11. How could we make it easier for people to find and follow pedestrian links between the town centre, riverside and seafront?

Category	%
More or better signage	58%
Better tourist information	10%
Trail - type route marking	9%
Advertising	6%
Improved pavements	3%
Improved pedestrian crossing points at road junctions	3%
Better lighting	3%
Better parking	3%
Use lines of trees or planting to "follow your nose"	
It's already easy enough	3%
Other	4%
Don't know	13%
No relevant answer	16%

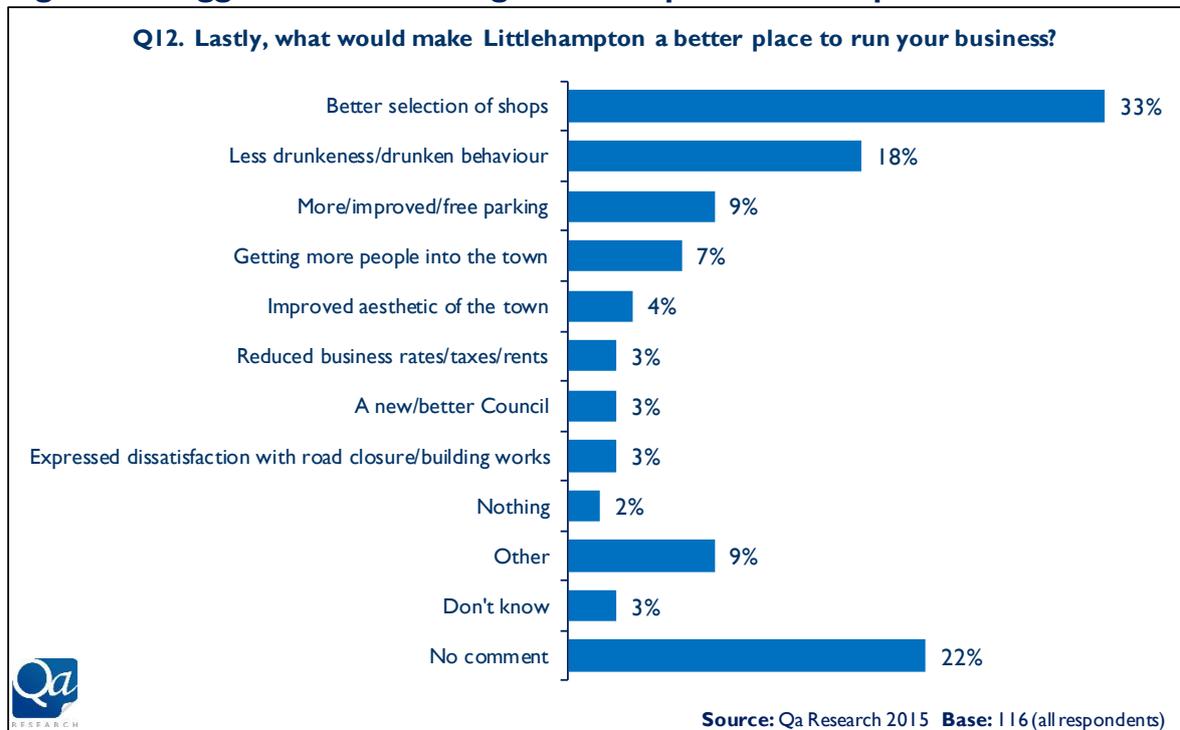**Source:** Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 116 (all respondents)

The most frequent single suggestion was for '*more or better signage*', given by over half (58%) of respondents, much more than any other suggestion. '*Better tourist information*' (10%), '*trail - type route marking*' (9%) and '*advertising*'(6%) were the next most common suggestions, which, along with '*more or better signage*', suggests that awareness of the routes between the town centre, riverside, and seafront is seen as the what would make it easiest for people to navigate in between these locations.

A relatively high proportion gave verbatim answers that were classified as 'no relevant answer' (16%); the majority of these were not suggestions but rather assertions that improved signage had already been installed. The proportion saying this is small in comparison to the proportion of businesses who did suggest '*more or better signage*' and therefore the overall businesses consensus is clear that further improved signage is needed.

There was little variation between Riverside and other town businesses, with a similar proportion from both groups (53% and 58%) saying '*more or better signage*'. The same is also true of local and national/international businesses (59% and 55%).

For the last question on the survey, businesses were asked what they thought would make Littlehampton a better place to run their business. Answers were recorded verbatim and were coded into thematic categories during analysis.

Figure 22. Suggestions for making Littlehampton a better place for businesses

QI2. Lastly, what would make Littlehampton a better place to run your business?

Suggestion	Percentage
Better selection of shops	33%
Less drunkeness/drunken behaviour	18%
More/improved/free parking	9%
Getting more people into the town	7%
Improved aesthetic of the town	4%
Reduced business rates/taxes/rents	3%
A new/better Council	3%
Expressed dissatisfaction with road closure/building works	3%
Nothing	2%
Other	9%
Don't know	3%
No comment	22%

Source: Qa Research 2015 **Base:** 116 (all respondents)

A variety of answers were given here, with the most frequent being that a '*better selection of shops*' would make Littlehampton a better place for businesses; this was given by a third (33%) of respondents. Despite that the fact this would potentially introduce a greater competition for businesses, an improved selection of shops might draw more shoppers to Littlehampton and the increased income would presumably outweigh the increase in competition. This presumed increase in footfall is echoed by the fourth most common suggestion, '*getting more people into the town*' (7%).

The second most common suggestion was that there should be '*less drunkenness/drunken behaviour*' in Littlehampton, given by one fifth (18%) of interviewed businesses. While this is small proportion of the overall sample, that one fifth of respondents brought it up is notable. Non-Riverside businesses were also more likely to say '*less drunkenness/drunken behaviour*' than Riverside traders (20% vs. 7%), and the proportion saying this was highest in the High Street (32%) and Beach Road (28%), with a lesser impact in Surrey Street (14%) compared to the other two locations.

A small proportion of respondents used this question as an opportunity to expresses '*dissatisfaction with the road closure and building works*' (3%); unsurprisingly, all who said this were Riverside businesses. In addition, one fifth indicated that they had no suggestions for how to improve Littlehampton for businesses.

There were some interesting variations between Riverside and other town businesses, most not notably that not one Riverside business said there needed to be a '*better selection of shops*'; all businesses who give this answer were not on the Riverside. A particularly high proportion of businesses from Surrey Street (62%) gave this answer.

5   Conclusions

A local business with one site, employing around five staff and with a customer base was comprised mostly of local residents was typical of an interviewed businesses in the research. A small proportion of businesses were national or international companies, who tended to have more employees and whose customer base had a greater proportion of visitors compared to local businesses (although still a minority).

Overall, local residents make up the majority of the customer base of businesses in Littlehampton. Businesses on the Riverside had a higher proportion of visitors or tourists in their customer base, although these were still in a minority compared to local residents.

Most businesses employed between two and ten people, with a mean average of 5.09 employees per business. This average was slightly higher amongst Riverside businesses that had on average one more employee than other town businesses. Businesses tended to have slightly more part time than full time employees, although on the Riverside this equated to over one more part time employee than full time on average.

Only a small minority of businesses intended to hire more staff within the next 12 months, although almost none intended to reduce staff numbers. Where businesses did intend to hire more staff, these were equally likely to be full or part time.

Very few businesses had increased their turnover over the previous financial year compared to the year before that. Notably, none of the interviewed Riverside businesses who were willing to disclose their growth levels said their turnover had increased; this is likely a consequence of the food defence construction works.

Only a small proportion of businesses projected a growth in turnover over their next financial year. Half of businesses felt it would remain the same, although only a small proportion felt it would decrease. Of Riverside businesses who gave an indication, the majority felt their turnover would continue to decrease, suggesting that they felt the loss of trade due to the construction works would continue to have an impact.

Overall, businesses were optimistic of trading conditions in the near future and agreed that Littlehampton was a good place to run a business. Optimism has especially high in the High Street, significantly more so than any other location. In addition, and despite their decreasing turnover over the last and next financial year and the disruption caused to them by the construction of flood defences, Riverside businesses were equally was likely to as other town businesses to be optimistic and feel that Littlehampton was a good place for business.

Traders felt that a better selection of shops would make Littlehampton a better place to run their business, although a variety of suggestions were made and less than half gave this answer. Less drunkenness and antisocial behaviour was also cited, but again by a small (but perhaps significant) proportion.

6. Appendix

6.1 Face-to-face survey

Littlehampton Business Survey 2015

Interviewer	Date of Interview DD/MM/YY	
	_____DD _____MM _____YY	
Time (Duration)	**QAID**	**Survey Number**
Inputted (internal use)	**Q-C (internal use)**	

Introduction:

Good morning/ afternoon I am working for Qa research on behalf of Arun District Council. The Council have asked us to undertake some research with the owners and managers of businesses in Littlehampton.

Are you a manager/ owner of this business?
Yes – Continue
No – Attempt to arrange an appointment with owner/ manager

The Council has won funding to enhance the new public realm on the East Bank riverside in Littlehampton, i.e. the paving, street furniture, planting, lighting etc. The funding award was based on attracting more visitors to the riverside and town, and encouraging them to stay longer and spend more with local businesses, raising turnover and ultimately creating new jobs in the town. As part of that, we are working with the traders trying to collect information about business in the town.

Would you be able to spare a few minutes to answer some questions with me to help the Council, it should take about six to eight minutes?

Before we begin, I'd like to reassure you that this interview will be carried out according to the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct and all your answers and information you provide will be treated as anonymous and confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Business background

Q1. How would you describe your company from the following list? [SHOWCARD Q1]		(S)
Local business with one business site	1	①
Local business with more than one business premises the South East	2	②
National company with a number of business premises across the UK	3	③
International company with offices/ business premises outside of the UK	4	④
Other – please state	5	⑤
Don't know [Do not prompt]	6	⑥

Q2. Which of the following streets is this premises in?
[SHOWCARD Q2]   (S)

Street	No.		Street	No.	
Anchor Springs	1	①	High Street	13	⑬
Arcade Road	2	②	New Road	14	⑭
Arun Parade	3	③	Pier Road	15	⑮
Arundel Road	4	④	River Road	16	⑯
Avon Road	5	⑤	River Walk	17	⑰
Bayford Street	6	⑥	Sparks Court	18	⑱
Beach Road	7	⑦	St Martins Street	19	⑲
Church Street	8	⑧	Surrey St	20	⑳
Clifton Road	9	⑨	Terminus Road	21	㉑
Coastguard Road	10	⑩	The Arcade	22	㉒
Duke Street	11	⑪	Wharf Road	23	㉓
East Street	12	⑫			

Q3a. What percentage of your customer base do you estimate are tourists / visitors to the area?   (S)
Q3a AND Q3b MUST ADD TO 100%

Percentage tourists/ visitors		
Don't know [Do not prompt]	1	①

Q3b. What percentage of your customer base do you estimate are residents of Littlehampton?   (S)
Q3a AND Q3b MUST ADD TO 100%

Percentage residents		
Don't know [Do not prompt]	1	①

Business Employment

I'm now going to ask you some questions about the number of people you employ at the business. Do remember this information is confidential.

If you have more than one premises, please think only about the people you employ at this premises we are in now.

Q4a. Including yourself, how many individuals does the business currently employ at this premises? [IF REQUIRED: we are looking for a headcount, so the number of people regardless of how many hours they work]	(S)	
Number of individuals employed		
Don't know [Do not prompt]	1	①

Q4b. And of those, how many are full time, so who work more than 30 hours a week, and how many are part time? [INTERVIEWER: total must equal number from Q3]	(M)
Full time (30+ hours a week)	
Part time (less than 30 hours a week)	

Q5. Thinking again about the number of staff that you employ, which of the following statements would you agree with the most? [SHOWCARD Q5]		(S)	Go to
I intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months	1	①	Continue
I do not intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months	2	②	Q7
I intend to reduce the number of staff I have within the next 12 months	3	③	Q7
Don't know [Do not prompt]	4	④	Q7
Prefer not to say [Do not prompt]	5	⑤	Q7

Qa
RESEARCH

Q6a. Roughly how many <u>full time</u> additional staff do you think you will employ over the next 12 months? (S)

Additional full time staff		
Don't know [Do not prompt]	1	①
Prefer not to say [Do not prompt]	2	②

Q6b. And roughly how many <u>part time</u> additional staff do you think you will employ over the next 12 months? (S)

Additional part time staff		
Don't know [Do not prompt]	1	①
Prefer not to say [Do not prompt]	2	②

Business Finances

I'm now going to ask you a few questions about the financial side of the business and you ambitions and projections going forward.

Before I do, I'd just like to remind you again that all the information you disclose in this survey is strictly anonymous and confidential.

Q7a   Was the turnover in your last financial year larger, smaller or about the same as the financial year before that? [SHOWCARD Q7] (S)

Up by more than 50%	1	①
Up by 25-50%	2	②
Up by less than 25%	3	③
About the same	4	④
Down by less than 25%	5	⑤
Down by 25-50%	6	⑥
Down by more than 50%	7	⑦
Don't know [Do not prompt]	8	⑧
Prefer not to say [Do not prompt]	9	⑨

Qa
RESEARCH

Q7b. And compared to your turnover in your last financial year, do you expect your turnover at the end of your next financial year will be larger, smaller, or about the same? [SHOWCARD Q7]   (S)

Up by more than 50%	1	①
Up by 25-50%	2	②
Up by less than 25%	3	③
About the same	4	④
Down by less than 25%	5	⑤
Down by 25-50%	6	⑥
Down by more than 50%	7	⑦
Don't know [Do not prompt]	8	⑧
Prefer not to say [Do not prompt]	9	⑨

Q7c. At the end of your last financial year, which of these bands covers the turnover before tax of this premises, not including any other premises if you have them? [SHOWCARD Q7c]   (S)

£0 to £24,999	1	①
£25,000 to £49,999	2	②
£50,000 to £74,999	3	③
£75,999 to £99,999	4	④
£100,000 to £199,999	5	⑤
£200,000 to £299,999	6	⑥
£300,000 to £499,999	7	⑦
£500,000 to £750,000	8	⑧
Over £750,000	9	⑨
Don't know [Do not prompt]	10	⑩
Prefer not to say [Do not prompt]	11	⑪

Q8a. Imagine that your turnover next year was larger, even if you do not expect it to be; would that mean would employ more staff?

		(S)	Go to
Yes	1	①	Q8b
No	2	②	Q9
Don't know [Do not prompt]	3	③	Q9
Prefer not to say [Do not prompt]	4	④	Q9

Q8b. In whole Pounds, what extra level of turnover would necessitate more staff? [SHOWCARD Q8b]

		(S)
Extra £10,000 or less	1	①
Extra £10k-30k	2	②
Extra £30-60k	3	③
Extra £60-100k	4	④
Extra £100k+	5	⑤
Don't know [Do not prompt]	6	⑥

Q10. Lastly, on a one to five scale where one is Strongly Disagree and five is Strongly Agree, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements...
[SHOWCARD Q10]

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither/ Nor	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know [Do not prompt]
I am optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
Littlehampton is a good place to run my business.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Q11. How could we make it easier for people to find and follow pedestrian links between the town centre, riverside and seafront?
Please prioritise three from the list on the showcard. [SHOWCARD Q11] (M)

Improved pedestrian crossing points at road junctions	1	①
More or better signage	2	②
Use lines of trees or planting to "follow your nose"	3	③
Trail –type route marking	4	④
Improved pavements	5	⑤
Better lighting	6	⑥
Better Tourist Information	7	⑦
Other - specify	8	⑧

Q12   Lastly, what would make Littlehampton a better place to run your business

No comment ①

6.2   Showcards

SHOWCARD Q1

Q1. How would you describe your company from the following list?

1. **Local business with one business site**

2. **Local business with more than one business premises the South East**

3. **National company with a number of business premises across the UK**

4. **International company with offices/ business premises outside of the UK**

5. **Other – please state**

SHOWCARD Q2

Q2. Which of the following streets is this premises in?

1. Anchor Springs

2. Arcade Road

3. Arun Parade

4. Arundel Road

5. Avon Road

6. Bayford Street

7. Beach Road

8. Church Street

9. Clifton Road

10. Coastguard Road

11. Duke Street

12. East Street

13. High Street

14. New Road

15. Pier Road

16. River Road

17. River Walk

18. Sparks Court

19. St Martins Street

20. Surrey St

21. Terminus Road

22. The Arcade

23. Wharf Road

SHOWCARD Q5

Q5. Thinking again about the number of staff that you employ, which of the following statements would you agree with the most?

1. I intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months

2. I do not intend to hire more staff within the next 12 months

3. I intend to reduce the number of staff I have within the next 12 months

SHOWCARD Q7a & Q7b

Q7a   Was the turnover in your last financial year larger, smaller or about the same as the financial year before that?

Q7b. And compared to your turnover in your last financial year, do you expect your turnover at the end of your next financial year will be larger, smaller, or about the same?

1. **Up by more than 50%**

2. **Up by 25-50%**

3. **Up by less than 25%**

4. **About the same**

5. **Down by less than 25%**

6. **Down by 25-50%**

7. **Down by more than 50%**

SHOWCARD Q7c

Q7c. At the end of your last financial year, which of these bands covers the turnover before tax of this premises, not including any other premises if you have them?

1. **£0 to £24,999**

2. **£25,000 to £49,999**

3. **£50,000 to £74,999**

4. **£75,999 to £99,999**

5. **£100,000 to £199,999**

6. **£200,000 to £299,999**

7. **£300,000 to £499,999**

8. **£500,000 to £750,000**

9. **Over £750,000**

SHOWCARD Q8b

Q8b. In whole Pounds, what extra level of turnover would necessitate more staff?

1. **Extra £10,000 or less**

2. **Extra £10k-30k**

3. **Extra £30-60k**

4. **Extra £60-100k**

5. **Extra £100k+**

SHOWCARD Q10

Q10. Lastly, on a one to five scale where one is Strongly Disagree and five is Strongly Agree, how far do you agree or disagree with the following statements…

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Disagree

3 – Neither/Nor

4 – Agree

5 – Strongly Agree

- **I am optimistic of the trading conditions in the near future.**

- **Littlehampton is a good place to run my business.**

SHOWCARD Q11

Q10. How could we make it easier for people to find and follow pedestrian links between the town centre, riverside and seafront?

Please prioritise three from the list below;

1. **Improved pedestrian crossing points at road junctions**

2. **More or better signage**

3. **Use lines of trees or planting to "follow your nose"**

4. **Trail –type route marking**

5. **Improved pavements**

6. **Better lighting**

7. **Better Tourist Information**

8. **Other – please specify**