



UNDERSTANDING THE SME JOURNEY TO NET ZERO.





Delivered by

♥®±�► UNIVERSITY OF HULL









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## Innovation Centre

We are delighted to present this timely and comprehensive regional survey to provide real insight and understanding of where the Humber's SMEs are on their journey to Net Zero.

Without this important group - which accounts for 99.9% of businesses in the UK - taking green action and being a key deliverer for lowering our carbon footprint it will be difficult, if not impossible, to meet Net Zero targets.

We are very grateful to the many SMEs who responded to the survey, particularly as this has been such a difficult year with the twin challenges of Covid and Brexit. We would also like to thank our partners in the region's local government organisations - for being involved and supporting this major achievement for our region. Of course, without support and funding from European Regional Development Fund as well as the University of Hull, the Regional Growth Fund's Green Port Growth Programme, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, and the Northern Powerhouse, none of this would have been possible.

We believe the insights and data which this Future
Net Zero Survey has provided us with will enable the
Humber to focus on and tailor the support provided to
the engine of the economy – our SMEs. Organisations
and facilities such as our Aura Innovation Centre will be
key to providing the support and advice the businesses
need. It is clear from the findings of this Future Net Zero
research that if we are to succeed, then we all need to
work together through collaborations and partnerships to
solve the challenges of meeting Net Zero targets.



Lampada Digital Solutions is a Humber-based SME with a growing team of highly experienced professionals in the digital space with expertise in software development, eLearning platforms, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality.

Our Data Science & Insight Division specialises in market segmentation utilising complex datasets to generate valuable segments for our clients. Lampada is led by Andy Parkinson (CEO), an expert in the creation of innovative survey measurement tools and segmentation models, integrating insight into business strategy.

We are delighted to have partnered with Aura to deliver this exceptional opportunity to be part of the Humber's leadership in understanding the particular challenges faced by SMEs on the Net Zero journey.

We would like to thank the Lampada Team for delivering this market research project for us. For their commitment and patience in ensuring the success of this important research endeavour through particularly challenging times.

## INTRODUCTION

The UK Government's ambitious commitment to be Net Zero by 2050 and the launch of the Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution<sup>1</sup> in November 2020 is a call to action for us all to collaborate to 'build back better, support green jobs, and accelerate the path to Net Zero'.

SMEs of all sizes and across all sectors are key to the success of the Government's plans for driving green growth. SMEs are a very important contributor to the UK economy – accounting for around half the turnover in the UK private sector and 61% of total employment<sup>2</sup> – and therefore have a crucial role to play in meeting the country's Net Zero ambitions. There is a clear need for businesses of all sizes to act in reducing their carbon emissions, and aspire to work towards these Net Zero targets.

To date, there has been limited opportunity for the UK's SMEs to have their say on the Net Zero concept, and less so at a regional level. What are their current levels of awareness of what they need to do to meet Net Zero targets and how will this impact their businesses over the coming years? What are their behaviours and attitudes towards low-carbon and investing in greening their business? What are their future plans or, indeed, how will the SME community contribute to, and benefit from, the UK's Build Back Better<sup>3</sup> plan for growth (March 2021)?

One of the overarching aims of Aura is to provide businesses in the region with pathways to innovation to help build a forward-thinking, unrivalled and vibrant supply chain whilst delivering economic value, through both job creation and local investment.

Aura, led by the University of Hull, through its Aura Innovation Centre located at the heart of the Humber, has a leading role, along with its partners, to help the region's SMEs improve their competitiveness, particularly in developing low-carbon capacity through research and innovation.

As part of delivering on this vision for the Humber, following a robust procurement process, Aura commissioned **Lampada Digital Solutions** to carry out a wide-ranging, unprecedented market research project on its behalf. The Humber Future Net Zero Survey was launched at the beginning of January 2021 to understand how the Humber's 31,000 small and medium size businesses are gearing up for the UK's Green Recovery.

Despite the economic climate during England's third lockdown (January to April 2021), an exceptionally high level of responses from businesses across the Humber region was achieved, with over 650 companies completing the online survey (this compared to national surveys, which generally reach 1500 to 2000 completions of business surveys). This achievement was despite the additional challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions which required the Aura and Lampada teams to use innovative approaches to encourage respondents to complete the questionnaire, whilst adhering to Market Research Society guidelines.

The majority of the respondents to the survey were business leaders and senior managers, which confirms how important the Net Zero challenge is to Humber SMEs.

The findings from this major SME survey are providing a unique insight into how SMEs are rising to the Net Zero challenges of meeting the UK's 2050 targets.

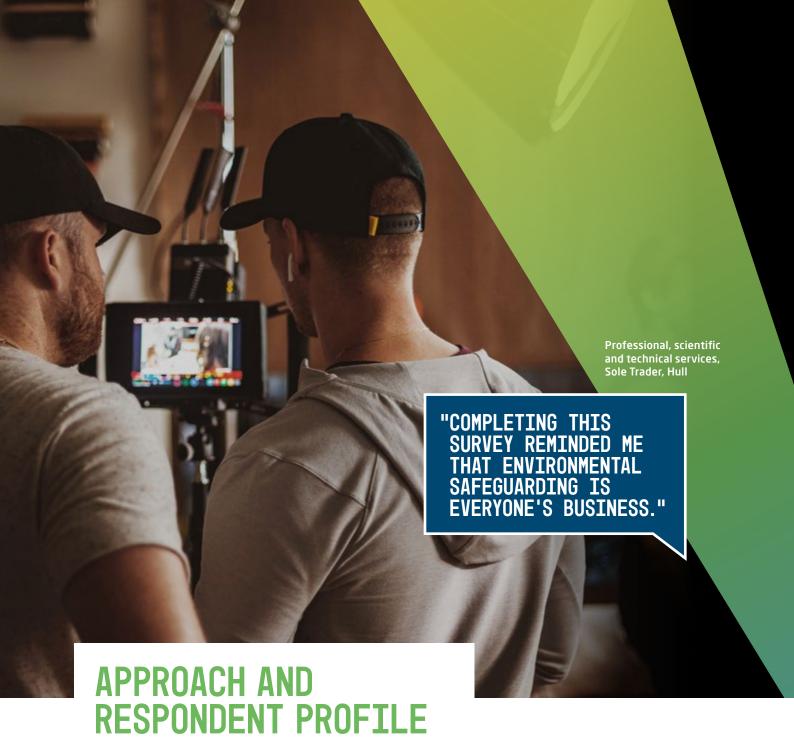
### **KEY SURVEY OBJECTIVES** Understand current **ATTITUDES** Capture **CHALLENGES** faced and towards climate, carbon and whether they predict growth or not environmental issues Understand **ACTIVITY** of Capture **CURRENT OR PLANNED** low-carbon actions and current **INVESTMENTS** in the future for interventions in their businesses carbon innovation-related activity Understand access to FINANCE Identify main **BARRIERS** to adoption or participation in the and how it would **FUND** low-carbon low-carbon economy developments

## **HEADLINE FINDINGS**

- Mind over matter: attitude is the key to driving change
- Cutting costs versus the cost of becoming green
- Net Zero awareness and understanding green action drivers
- Humber business leaders eager to 'build back greener'
- Early adopter SMEs want to help their peers to build up momentum for meeting Net Zero targets
- 6. Complexity of existing funding sources for SMEs acts as barrier to green innovation

This research provides Aura, and partners within the region, with the evidence on which to base decisions for determining and designing the required support for SMEs to meet Net Zero targets at a regional and national level. The research also captures valuable insights into the economic planning and support that will be required, both as part of Covid-19 recovery and the race towards a low-carbon economy. This will be achieved through the development of the low-carbon supply chain and harnessing opportunities of growth around the three core pillars of Infrastructure, Skills and Innovation as set out in the Government's Build Back Better plan.

The data collected will be used to generate a range of insights to develop a roadmap for helping different sectors capitalise on existing opportunities and guidance on how supply chains need to adapt to meet Net Zero targets. The data will allow for benchmarking, in order to measure progress, as well as helping to form recommendations for services and support to SMEs. There will be real opportunities to work closely with our partners in the region in defining the support mechanisms needed for businesses to help them along their path to Net Zero.



The Humber Future Net Zero Survey captured the views of 650 businesses within the Humber region between January 2021 and May 2021, providing robust business attitudinal data at a regional level.

This extensive local response allowed in-depth analysis and segmentation, giving a comprehensive overview of the Humber business community's views, understanding and commitment to Net Zero.

A considered approach to questionnaire design, sampling and methodology was taken, adhering to Market Research Society (MRS) guidelines, as follows:

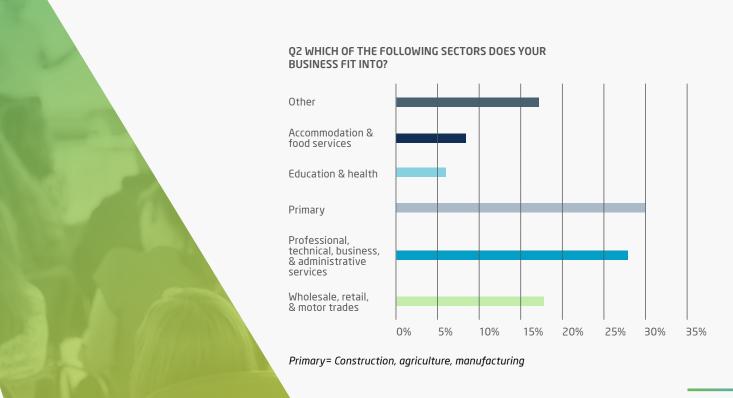
### **CONSIDERATIONS**

Due to the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020/21, some businesses were not trading or were trading in a different way, such as offering services online that would normally be face to face. By using mixed methodology and extending the fieldwork period, businesses recovering from the lockdowns were given the opportunity to participate.

### SAMPLING FRAMEWORK AND TECHNIQUES

The survey captured a sample similar to that of the region's business population profile. Weighting was applied to ensure that the research sample fully matches the Humber SME profile in terms of location, size and sector. This provides confidence that the attitudes and opinions of the research sample reflect those of the local business population as a whole. The weighting used in this survey meets all of the required rules for a weighting system to be fit for purpose.







For the purpose of this research, the Humber region's SME population was defined by geographic area following the four local authority areas including East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Hull City Council, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council. Businesses are distributed across the Humber as set out on the map.

A mixed sampling approach was selected due to the hard-to-reach characteristic of the business population, heightened by the Covid-19 lockdowns of 2020/21. The SME population was grouped by size and sector and a stratified approach, followed by convenience sampling, was taken to reach the desired population.



### QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire was developed in consultation with stakeholders from the Humber region to ensure that as many of the relevant considerations were captured through the survey. Representatives from the Local Authorities (North and South Banks of the Humber), local businesses and industry were invited to contribute to the development of the survey. Collaboration was a key contributor to the quality and quantity of data collected, through design and via stakeholders raising awareness of the importance of the survey to the region (see acknowledgements). A Working Group was set up during the development phase to ensure that the survey implementation, questionnaire and sample selection met requirements and were supported by all involved. The questionnaire design also considered national surveys around low-carbon business research, such as the BSI Net Zero Barometer<sup>7</sup> and Low Carbon Trust<sup>4</sup>, to allow comparability at a national level. Key firmographic data was collected and respondents were given the option to remain anonymous.



#### **METHODOLOGY**

A mixed methodology approach was undertaken to achieve the best possible response from the region's SMEs. An online survey was available and businesses were invited in various ways, as per the sampling technique. Paper-based, self-completion questionnaires were distributed by a fieldwork team (following Covid-19 MRS guidance). Businesses were also contacted via telephone to be invited to take part in the research, via online or paper-based questionnaires as appropriate. All surveys were self-completed to avoid interviewer bias.



#### **KEY FINDINGS**

The 650 small and medium size businesses in the region which took part in the survey have given a significant degree of qualitative data, in addition to the expected quantitative statistics obtained from the responses. This triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data provides invaluable insights into, and understanding of, why and how the region's businesses are preparing to 'build back better - and greener' following the twin challenges of Covid-19

and Brexit. It is also providing an overview of what SMEs think their individual roles are in meeting the Net Zero challenge by 2050. In addition, the survey gives an understanding of Humber SME leaders' attitudes towards investing in low-carbon processes and activities in order to secure the future for their workforces and the region's economy for the next generation.



The research shows that it is individual business leaders' attitudes to Net Zero which are spearheading the move towards greening the Humber businesses.

It is reassuring for the region that the survey found that the Humber business community has a positive attitude towards the environment.

The majority of businesses agree that they have an environmental responsibility and want to do more to encourage others to reduce carbon emissions, as well as cutting their own.

Almost half of respondents (44%) state that 'improving the environment' is a motivator for working towards Net Zero.

The implications for the region are that advice, support and finance to encourage adoption of low-carbon practices by SMEs need to be relevant to businesses across the board. Getting the support right will have the greatest influence on increasing environmental responsibility, building up green business activity and, ultimately, lowering emissions for the individual businesses but also for the region as a whole.

THERE IS HIGH AGREEMENT 80%

that businesses have an environmental responsibility.

ALMOST HALF OF RESPONDENTS



state that 'improving the environment' is a motivator for working towards Net Zero.

## 2: CUTTING COSTS VERSUS THE COST OF BECOMING GREEN

Reducing costs within the business is a key driver for change; however, there is a financial cost associated with becoming green.

The survey finds that a primary motivation for taking green action is to save money. However, there may be an initial cost to going green in the short term. But the long-term implications of not committing to Net Zero action now could be even costlier.

Despite respondents stating that reducing costs is the biggest motivator for making changes to business practices in order to meet Net Zero targets, it is not tenable to continue to emphasise that costs savings are a key business benefit for increasing low-carbon activity. Generally, in the shorter term, businesses find that environmentally focused investment and action does not provide an immediate return on investment. That said, the longer-term implications of not investing in a Net Zero journey early are more important and will have a greater negative impact on business than not investing in green action now.

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT TAKING GREEN ACTION EARLY

As the race to Net Zero gathers pace, measures and regulations around environmental impact and carbon footprint reductions are rapidly increasing. It is important that SMEs are aware of these moves as the large private and public sector procurement policies tighten up under pressure from the Government to meet 2050 targets. Increasingly, SMEs will need to prove their green credentials and they will need to be supported with timely advice and guidance so that they can play an active and positive role in the region's supply chain as it turns increasingly green<sup>5</sup>. The data indicates that businesses of all sizes are calling for a clearer understanding of what measures, actions and changes they need to take now in order to lower carbon footprints and meet Net Zero targets.

## CUSTOMERS ARE INFLUENCING BUSINESSES TO GO GREEN

Customer influence is a key motivator for change, as highlighted by SME leaders in the survey. Respondents say they would be encouraged to make changes if customers requested evidence of green credentials. Almost a quarter of the survey participants believe that attracting new customers is a driver for change. This is evident in the growing trend of businesses choosing to seek more environmentally conscious suppliers<sup>6</sup>.



17%

Attracting new customers

23%

Which of the following would most motivate your business to reduce carbon within the next 1-2 years? Select up to three. Weighted.



### ATTRACTING AND RETAINING PEOPLE

Retaining a future workforce through Net Zero action is not mentioned as a key consideration for businesses by those surveyed, despite employees becoming increasingly conscious of, and concerned by, environmental issues.

Findings from a recent survey carried out by Censuswide<sup>7</sup> show that workers are opting to work for companies whose ethics align with their own, on climate change and other sustainability issues. The research published in October 2020, which surveyed some 2000 office workers, found that employees were more likely to opt to work for companies that have strong environmental values.

National reports around future business planning have found that many stakeholders are now considering a company's green credentials when making decisions about whether to work with, work for, or invest in a company<sup>8</sup>. With this in mind, it is important that the SME business community begins to consider that this view will be an incentive to drive change.



is the biggest driver for businesses.

REDUCING COSTS WITHIN THE BUSINESS

**(62**%)

Which of the following would most motivate your business to reduce carbon within the next 1-2 years? Select up to three. Weighted.

Almost two thirds stated that they would turn down a job offer from a company that had a bad environmental reputation.



## 3: NET ZERO AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING GREEN ACTION DRIVERS

The survey finds a correlation between SME awareness and understanding of Net Zero targets and their levels of activity in adopting carbon-reduction measures within their businesses.

Businesses that say they are both aware of, and understand, the Net Zero targets set by the Government are three times more likely to be fully active in taking green action within their business. This demonstrates a direct correlation between higher levels of awareness and green action. If awareness levels are increased and understanding of Net Zero targets and what they mean in practice are achieved, then green action by individual SMEs will happen. Ultimately, this will lead to lower emissions for the whole of the Humber region.

Only a tenth of businesses said that they were not aware of the Government's intentions for the UK to be Net Zero on carbon emissions by 2050. Over half of business leaders said they were aware of, and understood, what it meant. There is still a sizeable percentage (31%) who said that they are aware of Net Zero targets but don't understand what this means for their business.

Despite 58% of businesses saying that they have an awareness and understanding of Net Zero, the analysis of the data would suggest that, in fact, businesses do not fully recognise the direct implications that national Net Zero targets will have on their individual business. There is more work to be done on ensuring better, clearer communication goes out to the SME community as well as building a better and more connected support network for them.

In terms of green action, the survey findings indicate that two thirds of businesses in the Humber are making some commitment towards Net Zero targets. This is in line with the national commitment levels of seven out of ten businesses stating that they have made, or are making, a commitment to Net Zero<sup>9</sup>. Those businesses reporting that they are fully active acknowledge that there is still more to be done. With this in mind, there is a significant opportunity to

enhance and improve existing support and advice for businesses at all stages of their Net Zero journey.

However, one in ten businesses are still reporting that they are not doing anything towards lowering emissions and do not intend to. This minority of SMEs in the Humber tends to include businesses that feel that they are too small to take action and make a difference to the region's carbon footprint - this figure also includes some organisations which have no interest in Net Zero at all.

Interestingly, some of the businesses surveyed say that they are not taking any action to lower their carbon footprint but then do go on to state that they are making some small changes to their business. This contradiction would seem to indicate a lack of understanding of what is considered decarbonisation activity. Businesses claiming not to be actively making changes to meet Net Zero targets are, in fact, taking initiatives to lower emissions such as recycling, moving to energy-saving light bulbs and insulating business premises. The findings imply that some SMEs are making changes that are helping them move along the low-carbon journey and that these should be accounted for.

It is important that SMEs are encouraged to take note of their green activities through better information and advice on what constitutes green action for Net Zero. There seems to be a perception that only radical, game-changing and costly transformations count as Net Zero action. As the Government tightens policies and regulations around procurement and greening the supply chain, requiring that businesses demonstrate their commitment to Net Zero, more pressure will be put on SMEs to evidence their Net Zero activity. Increasingly, in order to bid for contracts, supply customers and retain and grow market share, SMEs will need to show real green action. This is true across all market sectors and business sizes.

There is still a lot of work to do in raising awareness and understanding of what Net Zero means for SMEs in practical terms. This is the key to increasing low-carbon activity and to ultimately reduce emissions for the region and nationally.

Businesses who are aware & understand the Net Zero target are



**3X** MORE LIKELY TO BE FULLY ACTIVE.

58%



are both aware of and have an understanding of the Government's intentions for the UK to be Net Zero on carbon emissions by 2050.

22%

of businesses report that they are fully active in lowering emissions. 46%

are actively reducing emissions but could do more

More than half of businesses have energy efficiency measures in place, such as



**Insulation** 





Energy-saving light bulbs

Improved process (recycling waste etc.)

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, 2-9 employees, North East Lincolnshire

"I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT LOW-CARBON MEANS TO MY BUSINESS"



## 4: HUMBER BUSINESS LEADERS EAGER TO 'BUILD BACK GREENER'

The timing of the research for the Future Net Zero Survey meant that it was conducted during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

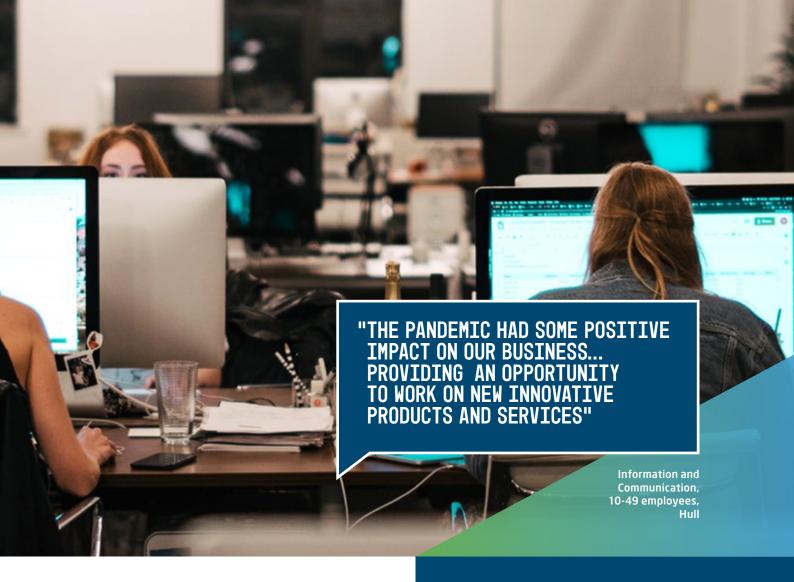
With this worldwide, game-changing event taking place and affecting everyone, it was important to give businesses the opportunity to share how the pandemic has impacted on them and to understand more about what additional challenges Covid-19 had forced on their businesses. Any support and advice on low-carbon initiatives will need to consider the double challenges of the pandemic and the urgent need to adapt businesses to meet the Government's Net Zero targets.

The impact of Covid-19 on businesses has been well reported nationally, along with local efforts to understand how businesses have been affected and what can be done to support them during the recovery years ahead. The majority of respondents to this survey (93%) stated that Covid-19 has, indeed, had an impact on their business. The impacts most mentioned are: reduced revenue, reduced range of service provision and reduced demand/workload. As with national research findings into the effects of Covid-19<sup>10</sup>, most of the consequences on businesses have been negative. However, businesses have

highlighted some positive aspects of the enforced national lockdowns, such as opportunities to innovate and reassess business processes, structures and services.

As a result of this survey, a group of respondents (14%) have been identified as leading the way for 'build back greener' businesses. They come from a range of sectors and are keen to come back stronger from the setbacks caused by the pandemic. Despite the negative impacts from the pandemic, they want to do more. Future Aura FNZ Focus Groups will be carried out with this group of businesses, to learn more about how they can be supported on their journey to Net Zero and to assist them in exploring their low-carbon innovation ideas.

Business leaders say that growing their business and making a profit are on-going challenges for them. Interestingly, 10% of businesses surveyed reported environmental challenges as a major issue, which highlights the need for more proactive and tailored support for the Humber's SMEs.



SMEs also felt that the Government is responsible for putting in place real, tangible support, guidance, and practical advice around how they can work towards Net Zero. SMEs account for 99.9% of the UK's business population and information and advice from Government to explain what they can do to contribute to the national Net Zero targets is vital.

of businesses were identified as 'build back greener' businesses. They come from a

range of different sectors.

1/10

businesses reported environmental challenges

as a major issue.

think that the

Government should be facilitating the process of working towards Net Zero.

# 5: EARLY ADOPTER SMES WANT TO HELP THEIR PEERS TO BUILD UP MOMENTUM FOR MEETING NET ZERO TARGETS

There is clear evidence that businesses want – and need – much more practical advice and guidance to help them understand what to do in order to move along on their Net Zero journey.

Businesses were asked to explain what support they would like to have in order to help formulate, test and embed their business' carbon-reduction plans.

Although many suggest that it should be Government-led, 36% of respondents requested a more impartial, tailored approach to advising businesses on how they can progress with their journey towards Net Zero.

Larger SMEs were most likely to want to encourage other companies to be more environmentally minded and to help them prepare for meeting targets, as these become a regulatory requirement over the coming years. The SMEs working with the Aura Innovation Centre are already seeking opportunities to help their peers in sharing best practice and adopting easy green wins through innovation. There is potential for this spontaneous mentoring to continue in a more structured way by bringing larger businesses, who are further along the Net Zero journey and have greater investment potential, together with the less active businesses in order to share best practice, learn and collaborate.

A common request from respondents is for practical examples of green action within peer groups of SMEs. This would be an opportunity to develop a wide range of case studies to inspire and encourage more companies in the Humber to join the journey for Net Zero and, together, meet Net Zero targets – regionally and nationally. Alongside the tailored guidance and action plans for individual organisations, businesses feel that understanding how others are approaching the Net Zero challenge would help them understand how they, in turn, can make effective changes.

Survey participants also asked for more support, advice and guidance around low-carbon innovation, more specifically around patents and intellectual property as well as around commercial agreements for working in a partnership with other organisations. This would indicate a growing understanding that businesses cannot meet Net Zero targets on their own but will need to collaborate with others to survive and thrive.







There is a clear need for a more joined-up approach to support SMEs in accessing grants and funding for low-carbon initiatives in the region.

Accessing finance and meeting the complex, and often onerous, requirements which are generally associated with funding applications is seen as a key barrier for investing to meet Net Zero targets. One third of SMEs also say that they don't know where to go for investment grants or how to apply. The funding landscape at a regional level tends to be disconnected. Despite many Humber SMEs successfully gaining support, for those that have less experience and understanding of how to access finance, the investment in time and effort required often acts as a barrier.

When asked how energy and sustainability projects are currently funded by SMEs who are active in decarbonising their business, or how they might intend to fund them, respondents stated that they would seek grants (local and national) as the preferred method for financing. Grants are seen as important to companies who want to do more towards the Net Zero agenda.

Interestingly, businesses who are already actively reducing emissions are more likely to be reliant on their own funds to undertake decarbonising activities.



There is a clear need for a more joined-up approach to finance for Net Zero action in order to bring together all funding streams and to simplify the routes to finance, particularly at a regional level and for all sizes of SMEs.

This could, for example, mean enabling a more accessible route to ensure more just access to finance for all SMEs, with the Government underwriting grants and loans in order to manage risk. Working to reduce the confusion and providing a clearer 'one stop shop' or programme approach to allow SMEs to access funding is an urgent action and key priority for the Humber.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

It is the SME owners and senior leaders who are the key to Humber businesses making the changes required to meet Net Zero targets. It is also clear that going green will have cost implications for businesses of all sizes, despite survey respondents stating that cutting costs is a key driver for their business.

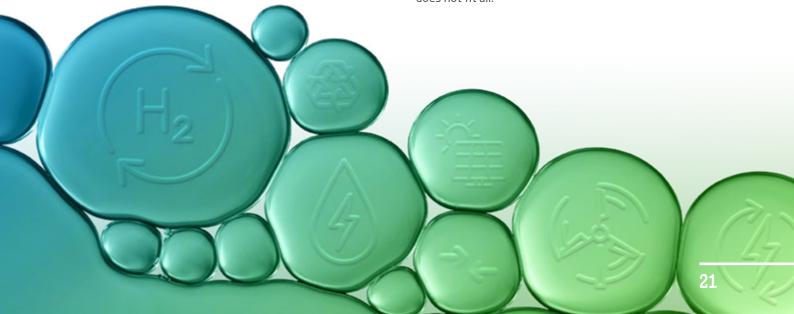
However, not investing in Net Zero activities could mean that businesses are excluded from the supply chain, as regulations evolve and green credentials and carbon-reduction plans become all-important in order to meet the supply chain procurement requirements.

Ultimately, this could mean that some companies in the region are squeezed out, which would lead to job losses and the disappearance of some of the Humber's business community. The Humber has a predominance of small and micro businesses (83%) - 60% have 2-9 employees and 23% are sole traders. The knock-on effect of this could add to existing deprivation and exclusion in the region.

On a positive note, the call for concerted Net Zero action is being heard, with the majority of the Humber's SME leaders saying that they want to go green, and that they see it as their responsibility. Some of the early adopters also see a role for themselves in helping their peers to act. However, many of the SME community are asking for more advice, support and help to understand what the Net Zero journey looks like for them individually and in practice.

One the most important assets for all businesses is their people. Recent studies have shown that increasing numbers of employees are choosing to work for companies that value the environment and are actively engaged in meeting Net Zero targets. In order to recruit and retain employees, all businesses, and particularly SMEs (who employ 48% of the workforce)<sup>11</sup> will need to take this into account. The Government's strategy for upskilling through the Green Jobs Taskforce<sup>12</sup> and National Skills Fund<sup>13</sup> will be key to delivering on this aspect.

The finance landscape is perhaps the most challenging area, given that the process of decarbonisation through innovation is likely to require investment by individual organisations to ensure that they retain their customers and market share. Accessing finance is recognised as a barrier - this is not a new challenge. The key issue for many SMEs is the lack of resources (human and time) to work through the levels of bureaucracy. However, it is clear that the existing funding mechanisms need to be refined and made simpler to access. These need to be more connected and tailored to the different groups which make up the SME community - one size does not fit all.





The findings from the Humber Future Net Zero Survey have highlighted a number of recommendations which could be developed into real action in order to equip the region's SMEs to decarbonise and meet Net Zero targets.

GROUPS	RECOMMENDATIONS
SMEs	<ul> <li>Continue to seek greater understanding of what green actions can be taken easily in the short term.</li> <li>Build-in time to seek to understand what Net Zero Targets could mean for your business.</li> <li>Seek advice from the Aura Innovation Centre, Humber Local Authorities and other business- support organisations.</li> </ul>
AURA / UNIVERSITY	<ul> <li>Continue to build links with Humber SMEs to foster low-carbon innovation and collaborations among SMEs.</li> <li>Work with all stakeholders to build partnerships for the benefit of SMEs.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for small and large innovations through access to the University of Hull's researchers.</li> </ul>
BIG BUSINESS	<ul> <li>Use convening power to help build Net Zero action throughout the whole supply chain.</li> <li>Seek to understand and work with SMEs in the lower tiers of the supply chain to help them build their green credentials.</li> </ul>
LOCAL / REGIONAL GOVERNMENT	<ul> <li>Develop cohesive, region-wide, one-stop-shop financing interface for SMEs of all sizes.</li> <li>Simplify funding requirements for more equitable access to funding.</li> </ul>
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT	<ul> <li>Influence funding mechanisms at a regional level to create a more accessible approach and remove bureaucratic barriers.</li> <li>Provide a clear framework for SMEs of all sizes for meeting green credentials which is realistic and progressive.</li> </ul>

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Aura and Lampada would like to thank all our partners, stakeholders and businesses in the Humber region who have participated and given their time and expertise in supporting this study.

#### We would like to thank:

All SMEs in the Humber who responded - we couldn't have done this without you! As well as:

- BNI Aspire
- BNI Bevan
- Business Hive
- Divine Clark PR
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Emma Hardy
- ERGO
- For Entrepreneurs Only (FEO Hull)
- Flood Innovation Centre (FIC)

- Greater Lincolnshire LEP
- Hull and East Yorkshire LEP
- Hull City Council
- Hull University Business School
- Hull University Enterprise Centre
- KCOM
- Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), UoH
- Make UK

- · Marketing Humber
- Mel Deakin Consultancy
- North East Lincolnshire Council
- North Lincolnshire Council
- Smart Energy Greater Lincs
- Sowden and Sowden
- Sparkfund
- The Business Culture
- We Are Your Business

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- <sup>3</sup> https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/ uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/968403/ PfG\_Final\_Web\_Accessible\_Version.pdf
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