Section A: Employees

A1 Including you and any working proprietors, how many people are on the payroll at this location?

A2 How many of these are full time and how many are part time (< 30 hours a week)?

[If A2= "full time >0"]
A2a Do you employ more, the same or fewer *full time* staff than you did 12 months ago?
   [If A2a= "more or fewer"]
     A2aa By approximately how many has the number of *full time* staff increased/ decreased?

[If A2= "part time >0"]
A2b Do you employ more, the same or fewer *part time* staff than you did 12 months ago?
   [If A2b= "more or fewer"]
     A2ba By approximately how many has the number of *part time* staff increased/ decreased?

A3 Do you currently employ any freelance, temporary/casual workers, or workers on zero-hours contracts?

[If A3=yes]
A3a Do you have more, fewer or the same number of freelance workers than 12 months ago?
A3b Do you have more, fewer or the same number of temporary/casual workers than 12 months ago?
A3c Do you have more, fewer or the same number of zero-hours workers than 12 months ago?

A4 Have you advertised any vacancies (or made an effort to recruit in other ways, e.g. by word of mouth) in the last 12 months?

[If A4=yes]
A4a How many of these vacancies were:
  - *Full time*
  - *Part time*
  - *Permanent*
  - *Temporary*
  - *Freelance*
  - *Temporary/Casual*
  - *Zero-hours*

Section B: Markets, Business Development and Business Advice

B1 What is the main business sector your company operates in (e.g. manufacturing, retail, farming, third sector etc.)? [Telemarketing company to assign to SIC code during analysis]

B2 Thinking about the last 12 months, how would you describe your business state? [Choose one]
  - *Excellent*
  - *Good*
  - *Fair*
  - *Fluctuating*
  - *Poor*

B3 Looking forward to the next 2 to 3 years, do you expect the markets for your products and/or services to be: [Choose one]
  - *Fast growing*
  - *Growing steadily*
  - *Stable*
  - *Fluctuating*
  - *Reducing*

B4 Overall, how would you describe your aims for your business over the next 3 to 5 years? [Choose one]

- *To grow fast*
- *Grow steadily*
- *Remain as now*
- *Reduce*
- *Sell up*
- *Don't know – too unpredictable*

B5 Do you expect to take on any new staff over the next 2 to 3 years?

[If B5=yes]
B5a Approximately how many new employees?
B5b At what sort of skills level? [Answer Yes/No to each of these]
- *Low skilled role*
- *Technician*
- *Skilled professional*
- *Highly skilled professional with specific skillset*
- *Other (please specify)*

B6 Do you believe that *the current uncertainty* associated with Brexit is having a negative impact on your business, a positive impact, or not having any impact at all? [Answer 'negative', 'positive' or 'none']

B7 Do you believe that, ultimately, the decision to leave the EU in March 2019 will have a positive effect on your business, a negative effect, or make no difference? [Answer 'positive', 'negative' or 'none']

B8 What would you say are the main impediments to your company's productivity, or the main obstacles or difficulties that you might face in achieving your business objectives? Please answer Yes or No to each of the following:

- *Accessing finance – borrowing*
- *Accessing finance – grants or other 'non-repayable'*
- *Cash flow*
- *Lack of financial understanding*
- *Recruiting staff with the right professional or technical skills*
- *Recruiting staff with the right attitude to work*
- *Managerial/Leadership skills/expertise*
- *Transport issues*
- *Lack of high speed Broadband access*
- *Understanding and using new technologies*
- *Keeping up with the growth of digital capabilities*
- *Knowing how to 'innovate'*
- *Bringing new products or services to market*
- *Adequate marketing*
- *Availability of suitable premises*
- *Business Regulations/red tape*
- *Require business growth plans*
- *Global instability and/or uncertainties around the impact of Brexit*
- *Succession planning*
- *Other (specify)*

B8a Overall which of these is the biggest obstacle in achieving your business objectives?

B8b How, if at all, do you feel that the biggest obstacle could be resolved?

B9 Where, in terms of geography, would you describe your *main* geographic market? [Choose one]
- *Within 10 miles*
- *Within the District/Borough*
- *East Sussex*
- *Brighton*
- *Gatwick Airport*
- *London*
- *The South East*
- *UK*
- *European markets/countries*
- *USA*
- *Global*
- *Other (specify)*

B10 Do you intend to expand your geographic market in the next 12 months?

[If B10=yes]
B10a Into which geographic area do you intend to expand? [Use the same list as question B9]

B11 Do you currently *export* any of your products/services, or are you planning to start exporting in the next 12 months? [Answer 'Yes', 'Planning to' or 'No']

[If B11=yes or planning to]
B11a Into which region and in which sectors are you exporting / planning to export?
[If B11=no]
B11b What would you say are the main reasons for you not exporting?

[If B10=yes or if B11=yes/planning]
B12 In terms of business expansion or exporting, do you think you would benefit from any advice or support? [Answer Yes or No]

B13 In terms of 'innovation', how do you develop ideas for new products and new services? Which of the following statements would you say best describes your company's position on innovation? [Choose one, allow two at the most if needed]
  - *An individual or team in the company has responsibility for developing ideas for new products/services*
  - *Any of our employees can make suggestions*
  - *We take inspiration/innovation from our competitors*
  - *We ask our customers what they want*
  - *We work with specialists e.g. our trade organisation, private sector consultants or universities*
  - *We generally do not develop new ideas for products or services*

B14 Looking at 'design', how would you describe your company's use of design in the development of new products or services? Please answer Yes or No to each of the following four statements:
  - *We don't use design at all, it's not relevant to our business*
  - *We don't use trained designers – ideas about function and aesthetics are driven by people working on the project, and user perspective is not really part of this process*
  - *We use design or 'styling' at the last stage of development, usually done by those working on the project (although sometimes we do use professional designers)*
  - *Design is integrated early in the development process requiring the use of a wide variety of skills and capacities; solutions are driven by users and the nature of the problem*
  - *We fully work with designers to review and rethink our business model; we focus on design process in relation to our vision, developing new business areas and our future role in the value chain*

B15 In your view is your business innovating *digitally*, using a good range of the possible digital tools/ capabilities at your disposal?

[If B15=no]
B15a What do you think is preventing your business from doing these things? What can you change to stay abreast of digital innovation?

B16 Have you heard of 'Business East Sussex' (or 'BES'), our one-stop-shop for business support services in East Sussex?

[If B16=yes]
B16a Have you actually used/contacted Business East Sussex?
  [If B16a=yes]
  B16aa What sort of support did you receive from Business East Sussex [Answer Yes/No to each]
    - *To get help with grants or other funding applications*
    - *Had one-to-one advice lasting 3 hours or less*
    - *Had one-to-one advice lasting more than 3 hours*
    - *Received signposting to other services*
    - *Attended a workshop or event*
    - *Just browsed through the website*
    - *Other (please specify)*

B16ab How did you rate the service, on a scale of 1–5 (where 1 is 'very poor', 2 is 'poor', 3 is 'average', 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good')?

B16ac Why do you rate it that way?

B17 Have you heard of 'Locate East Sussex' our partner for inward investment, relocating or expanding businesses in East Sussex?

[If B17=yes]

B17a Have you actually used/contacted Locate East Sussex?

[If B17a=yes]

B17aa For what reason did you use/contact Locate East Sussex [Answer Yes/No to each]
- *To get help with finance*
- *To get help with business premises*
- *To get help with business growth*
- *Just browsed through the website*
- *Other (please specify)*

B17ab How did you rate the service, on a scale of 1–5 (where 1 is 'very poor', 2 is 'poor', 3 is 'average', 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good')?

B17ac Why do you rate it that way?

B18 In terms of *accessing business support*, which of the following do you think are most important to your business? [Answer Yes/No to each of these]
- *A local 'one stop shop' business advice centre*
- *General advice on accessing finance*
- *Help with actually accessing finance (e.g. preparation of business plan)*
- *Being able to access non-mainstream (e.g. bank) loans and grants to business*
- *Access to advice on business planning/growth*
- *Access to advice about skills/professional development*
- *Access to advice on legal requirements (e.g. Trading Standards)*
- *Access to relevant business-to-business support networks*
- *Advice on staff training*
- *Access to help with R&D/innovation*
- *Advice on reducing energy costs*
- *Advice on reducing transport costs*
- *ICT advice (e.g. use of superfast broadband/software/data security)*
- *Advice on digital capabilities and innovation*
- *Help with bringing a product or service to market*
- *Help to export a product/service*
- *Other (please specify)*

B19 Have you ever used the services or taken advice from your local authority (e.g. the County Council, your local Borough or District Council, Planning Officers etc.)?

[If B19=yes]

B19a How did you rate the service, on a scale of 1–5 (where 1 is 'very poor', 2 is 'poor', 3 is 'average', 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good')?

B19b Why do you rate it that way?

[If B19=no]

B19c Are you aware that these local authority services exist?

B20 Have you ever used the services/advice of a university or further education college in relation to your business products or services (for example apprenticeships, internships, graduate placements, professional training or retraining etc.)?

[If B20=yes]

B20a Which universities/colleges have you used?

B20b What did you use them for?

B20c How easy was it to find the particular university/college service you were looking for, or to find the most appropriate service for your needs? Please indicate using a scale of 1–5, where 1 is 'very difficult', 2 is 'difficult', 3 is 'ok/average', 4 is 'easy' and 5 is 'very easy'.

B20d Please rate how *beneficial* you found the university/college service, on a scale of 1–5 (where 1 is 'very poor', 2 is 'poor', 3 is 'average', 4 is 'good' and 5 is 'very good')?

[If B20=no]

B20e Looking at the possible reasons why you have not approached a university or further education college, can you please say which of the following relates to you? [Answer Yes/No to each]
- *I did not know they offered services to business*
- *I don't know what exactly they offer*
- *I wouldn't know where to start looking*
- *I think it would be too expensive*
- *I don't think it would be of benefit to my type of business*
- *Other (please specify)*

B21 Have you ever sought business advice/support from any of the following? [Answer Yes/No to each]
- *The Manufacturing Growth Programme*
- *Department for International Trade*
- *UK Trade & Investment (UKTI)*
- *Trading Standards*
- *Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)*
- *Your local Chamber of Commerce*
- *Innovate UK (formerly the Technology Strategy Board)*
- *eDEAL (business advice & training)*
- *Sussex Skills Solutions*
- *Any other independent training provider – please name*
- *Any other business advisory service or support organisation – please name*

Section C: Finance

C1 In the last 12 months have you sought any kind of credit (e.g. from a bank or other financial institution)?

[If C1=yes]

C1a What type of credit did you seek?

C1b What level of borrowing did you request?

C1c Were you given the credit requested? [Answer 'Yes', 'In Part', or 'No']

[If C1=no]

C1d What was the main reason for refusal of credit? [Choose one only]
- *Credit score/history*
- *Up to credit limit*
- *Low profitability / poor turnover*
- *Type of business*
- *Lack of assets to back the borrowing*
- *Business Plan not strong enough*
- *Offered unacceptable terms in loan agreement*
- *Still undergoing loan review/awaiting response*
- *Banks trying to reduce lending/not lending at this time*
- *Unspecified reason, was just was refused/declined*
- *Other (please specify)*

C2 Do you have any plans to raise finance in the next 12 months?

[If C2=yes]

C2a What level of borrowing are you likely to request?

C2b From where do you expect to raise the finance?

Section D: Transport Infrastructure & Connectivity

D1 In relation to your business, do you have any concerns about *public* transport (including infrastructure)? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]

- *Frequency/timetable of rail services (and please specify whether Southern or South Eastern)*
- *Reliability of rail services & time to destination (specify Southern or South Eastern)*
- *Quality of rail services (specify Southern or South Eastern)*
- *Frequency/timetable of buses (and please specify any particular operator)*
- *Reliability of buses & time to destination (specify any particular operator)*
- *Quality of bus services (specify any particular operator)*
- *Bus routes*
- *Cost of public transport services*
- *Other (please specify)*

D2 In relation to your business, do you have any concerns about *private* transport? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *Parking (cost/availability)*
- *Congestion*
- *Reliability of journey times*
- *Accessing motorways*
- *Roadworks*
- *Quality of roads (e.g. potholes)*
- *Pollution*
- *Problems with specific roads (please specify)*
- *Other (please specify)*

D3 In relation to your business, what improvements to transport (road and rail) infrastructure would you like to see come forward to help your employees get to work or move your goods and services more easily? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *High Speed Rail to Bexhill, Hastings and Eastbourne*
- *Improvements to the Brighton Mainline to improve rail journey times to Gatwick and London*
- *Lewes-Uckfield railway line reinstatement*
- *A27 Lewes to Polegate road improvements*
- *A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst road improvements*
- *A259 Eastbourne to Hastings road improvements*
- *Public transport improvements on the A259 between Brighton and Newhaven*
- *Local improvements to increase capacity on the A22 between Eastbourne and Uckfield*
- *Local improvements to increase capacity on the A26 between Lewes and Uckfield*
- *Other (please specify)*

D4 Overall how important would you rate transport infrastructure to your business? Indicate by using a scale of 1–5, where 1 is a 'very low priority' and 5 is a 'very high priority'.

[If D4=3, 4 or 5]
D4a As you consider transport infrastructure to be relevant, which of the following aspects of your business do you think it's most important for? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *Getting products to market*
- *Getting supplies*
- *Provision of services to customers*
- *Getting to/from work (me and/or my staff)*
- *Visiting customers/clients (or them visiting us)*
- *Other (please specify)*

Section E: Energy

E1 Have you ever accessed advice on reducing energy costs within your business?

[If E1=yes]
E1a From where did you get the advice?
E1b To what extent did you act on the advice?
- *Acted on all advice*
- *Some suggestions taken up*
- *Not at all*

[If E1b='All' or 'Some']
E1ba By roughly what percentage would you say these actions have reduced your energy costs?
[If E1b='Some' or 'Not at all']
E1bb What stopped you from acting on all of the advice? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *Too technically difficult*
- *Not considered appropriate*
- *Too expensive when set against any savings*
- *Required additional advice to instigate*

- *The paperwork involved*
- *Other (specify)*

[If E1=no]

E1c What, if anything, has stopped you from accessing advice on reducing energy costs within your business? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]

- *I don't know where to get the advice*
- *I'm not that interested*
- *I gather from other businesses that the advice is not that useful*
- *The possible expense involved*
- *What I do is too specialised for generic advice*
- *My business is not that reliant on energy*
- *Time*
- *Other (please specify)*

E2 Do you consider that *Climate Change* poses any of the following risks to your business? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]

- *Physical risks (e.g. flooding)*
- *Price risks (e.g. energy or water costs)*
- *Product or service risks (e.g. changes in demand)*

[If E2=yes]

E2a What measures, if any, have you put in place to reduce the risks of climate change to your business?

Section F: Business Premises

F1 I'm going to read out a list of possible 'features' of the area in which your business is currently located and I'd like you to tell me whether you consider each feature to be a *positive* aspect of your location or one which is *in need of improvement*: [record as Positive or Negative for each]

- *Access to my customers*
- *Access to my suppliers*
- *The 'local' road network*
- *Access to major roads/motorways*
- *Accessible public transport (bus and/or rail)*
- *Parking*
- *Varied choice of business accommodation*
- *Availability of appropriately skilled labour*
- *Access to business support network/services*
- *Business rates*
- *Rent cost*
- *Other running costs*
- *Mobile phone coverage*
- *Broadband connectivity/speeds/coverage*
- *Local schools and colleges*
- *Local amenities, shops, town centres*
- *Restaurants, bars & cafés*
- *Cultural attractions / Tourist destinations / environmental attractions*
- *Hotel stock*

F1a Of those features listed above, which *two* do you consider the most important in helping your business grow?

F1b Why do you consider these so important to your business?

F2 Has your business always been sited at its current location or have you previously relocated from another area? [Choose one]

- *Always been in current location*
- *Relocated within the county*
- *Relocated to East Sussex from outside of the county*

F3 What were the main reasons for choosing your company's current location? [Choose options from question F1 if necessary]

F4 Are you currently or have you recently (say during the last 2 years) been looking for alternative or additional business accommodation, or do you expect to do so in the next year?

[If F4=yes]
F4a Are you mainly looking for: [Choose one]
- *Office accommodation*
- *Retail space*
- *Light/heavy industrial*
- *Warehousing*
- *Studio/Creative Workspace*
- *Other (please specify)*

F4b Roughly what size of premises do you require (best estimate in square meters)?

F4c What would you like to be different about your new premises? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *Larger – need to grow*
- *Smaller – cheaper*
- *New build property*
- *Good second hand building*
- *Managed workspace*
- *Flexible space with room to grow/shrink within the building*
- *Different type of space – Incubation/Start-up units, Innovation Centre, Creative Workspace, easy in/easy out, networking space*
- *Higher spec – more prestigious*
- *Lower spec – less prestigious*
- *Other (please specify)*

F4d Into which geographical area are you ideally looking to locate your alternative/additional business accommodation? [Choose one]
- *Within the same local district/borough*
- *Wider than the local district/borough but still within East Sussex*
- *Outside the county area*

[If F4d='outside']
F4da What would you say is your main reason for looking outside of East Sussex for your alternative/additional business accommodation?

Section G: Skills

G1 Have you had any vacancies you have been unable to fill in the last 12 months?

[If G1=yes]
G1a What type of vacancies were these (use SOC codes if known)?

G1b Why do you think these vacancies proved hard to fill? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *Low number of applicants with the required technical skills*
- *Low number of applicants with the required soft skills (communication, teamwork etc.)*
- *Lack of work experience the company demands*
- *Lack of qualifications the company demands*
- *Local wage rates too low*
- *Not enough people interested in this type of job*
- *Remote location / poor public transport*
- *Poor 'image perception' of the area*
- *Other (specify)*

G2 In which areas do you consider there to be the greatest skills shortages when recruiting? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *General management skills*
- *Sector-specific management skills*
- *Technical knowledge & skill, specific to business sector*
- *Other job-specific skills*
- *Project/programme management*
- *Sales*
- *Marketing*

- *Social media & digital marketing*
- *ICT*
- *Literacy and/or numeracy*
- *Initiative / problem solving / creative thinking*
- *Communication*
- *Self-presentation*
- *Customer service*
- *Team working*
- *English Language skills*
- *Relevant qualifications*
- *Common sense*
- *Motivation & attitude*
- *Other (specify)*

G3 If you could ask schools/colleges to focus on one particular Skills area to help make young people more ready for the workplace, what would it be?

G4 Does your establishment have either of the following? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- A budget for training
- A plan that specifies the level and type of training your staff will need

G5 Roughly what proportion of your workforce has received training in the past 12 months?

[If G5=none]
G5a Why has your business not arranged any training in the past 12 months? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *All our staff are already fully trained*
- *Company doesn't provide training or development, staff learn from experience*
- *Staff receive on the job coaching/mentoring support instead*
- *Can't release staff from the business to train*
- *Lack of resources / too expensive*
- *Lack of relevant training available locally / we can't find the training we want locally*
- *Managers lack the time to organise training*
- *Staff lack motivation to gain skills*
- *Employees might leave if we train them*
- *Other (please specify)*

G5b Is there anything training providers could do that would make you more likely to access training? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *Shorter 'bitesize' courses*
- *Accredited modules leading to qualifications*
- *Non-accredited courses*
- *Flexible times or locations*
- *Help to understand what can be externally funded or subsidised*
- *Work based learning at the business*
- *Relevant courses delivered locally*
- *Other (please specify)*

[If G5 > none]
G5c How much has your business (at this site) spent on training in the last year?

G5d Which of the following types of training have you arranged in the past 12 months?
- *Induction training*
- *Health & Safety*
- *Job specific*
- *A nationally recognised qualification, e.g. NVQ*
- *Leadership & Management*
- *Intermediate (level 2), Advanced (level 3) or Higher (level 4) Apprenticeships*
- *Degree (level 5) Apprenticeship or above*
- *Other (please specify)*

G5e Does your organisation assess whether training and development received by employees has an impact on: [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]
- *The performance of the individual receiving the training?*
- *The career and retention of the individual?*
- *The business as a whole i.e. profitability?*

[If G5e=Yes to any of the options]

G5ea Overall would you say that the training you've provided in the past 12 months has had:
- *A strong positive impact?*
- *Some positive impact?*
- *A negative impact?*
- *No impact?*

And please explain your answer.

G6 What are your top skills priorities for staff development over the *next* 12 months? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]

- *General management skills*
- *Sector-specific management skills*
- *Leadership*
- *Technical knowledge & skill, specific to business sector*
- *Product knowledge*
- *Legal business requirements & legislation (including legal changes post-Brexit*
- *Other job-specific skills*
- *Project/programme management*
- *Sales*
- *Marketing*
- *Financial management*
- *Social media & digital marketing*
- *ICT*
- *Literacy and/or numeracy*
- *Initiative / problem solving / creative thinking*
- *Communication*
- *Self-presentation*
- *Customer service*
- *Team working*
- *Health & Safety*
- *Updating qualifications*
- *Upskilling to higher-level skills (degree level or above)*
- *Motivation & attitude*
- *Other (specify)*

G7 Beyond the next 12 months (in the medium to long term) do you think there will be any changes in the *future skills* requirements of your business's sector, and what do you think those changes will be?

G8 The Government recently introduced an Apprenticeship Levy for companies with a turnover of £3m+; are you an Apprenticeship Levy payer?

[If G8=yes]
G8a What is your Levy contribution?
G8b How many apprentices have you appointed?
G8c What age group are these apprentices? [Answer 16-24 or 25+]
G8d At what level are the Apprenticeships?
- *Level 2 (GCSE equivalent)*
- *Level 3 (A-level equivalent)*
- *Level 4 (Foundation degree equivalent)*
- *Level 5 or above (Degree level apprenticeship)*

G8e Are these apprentices new or are you offering Apprenticeship courses to your existing employees? [Answer 'New', 'Existing' or 'Both']
G8f Has your experience of Apprenticeships been good, reasonable, poor or mixed?
G8g Why do you say that – what has been the impact of Apprenticeships on your business?

[If G8=no]
G8h Do you currently have *any* apprentices at this site?
[If G8h=yes]
G8ha How many apprentices have you appointed?
G8hb What age group are these apprentices? [Answer 16-24 or 25+]
G8hc At what level are the Apprenticeships?
- *Level 2 (GCSE equivalent)*
- *Level 3 (A-level equivalent)*
- *Level 4 (Foundation degree equivalent)*
- *Level 5 or above (Degree level apprenticeship)*

G8hd Are these Apprentices new or are you training your existing workforce via Apprenticeship training? [Answer 'New', 'Existing' or 'Both']
G8he Has your experience of Apprenticeships been good, reasonable, poor or mixed?
G8hf Why do you say that – what has been the impact of Apprenticeships on your business?

[If G8h=no]
G8hg What are the main reasons for your business not offering Apprenticeships? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]

- *Do not understand how Apprenticeships work or what the business would have to do*
- *All staff are fully trained; prefer to recruit fully trained/qualified recruits*
- *No Apprenticeship opportunities available in this business sector*
- *No 'relevant' Apprenticeship frameworks/standards or training available locally*
- *No-one has asked/suggested it to the business*
- *Takes too much management time*
- *Previous bad experiences with apprentices and/or providers; hasn't worked well for the business in the past*
- *Other (please specify)*

G9 Thinking about the next 12 months, how likely is it that your business will take on an apprentice?

- *Already doing so*
- *Very likely*
- *Quite likely*
- *Not very likely*
- *Definitely not*

[If G9=already doing so or likely]
G9a What area/sector and level of Apprenticeship are you considering?

G10 Which of the following, if any, does your business offer? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]

- *Work experience*
- *Volunteering*
- *Site visits*
- *Internships*
- *Activities in local schools, colleges or universities to promote careers in our sector*

G11 And finally, do you believe either of the following statements to be correct? [Answer Yes/No to each of the following]

- *It is the responsibility of training providers to ensure that young people understand the range of careers in my sector and to deliver staff to me who have the right skills to work in my business/sector.*
- *I have a responsibility to help promote careers in my sector, and help training providers deliver and shape the right training to ensure that they can deliver staff to me who have the right skills to work in my business/sector.*