

biz4Biz

Insight

SEPTEMBER 2023 | ISSUE THIRTY SIX

Introducing
WebeXions

THE TRUTH
ABOUT ULEZ

U-Turn on
Fossil Fuel Ban



WebeXions

BUSINESS NETWORKING WITH

biz4Biz

biz4Biz WebeXions is an online webinar series for businesses. Enjoy receiving advice and support in the comfort of your own environment especially as the weather deteriorates.

Employee Ownership Trusts (EOTs)

12th October at 10am for a walk through



We are delighted to welcome **Andrew Watkin** of Assynt Corporate Finance on the 12th October at 10am to walk us through "Employee Ownership Trusts (EOTs)" for business owners to look at tax effective alternative means of succession, encouraging employee ownership and engagement.



WebeXions event registration - Click on the link and complete the form to be added to our WebeXions mailing list

[Book your place](#)

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MAGAZINE ARCHIVE**

Fossil Fuel Ban moves to 2035

Rishi Sunak's decision to extend the deadline for banning fossil fuel vehicles from 2030 to 2035 is rooted in a complex web of economic, technological, infrastructural, and societal considerations. The economic burden, industry support, and consumer affordability concerns necessitated a more gradual transition to protect jobs and economic stability. Moreover, technological advancements in battery technology and charging infrastructure, along with the need for vehicle diversity, prompted the extension to ensure that electric vehicles are a practical and attractive choice for consumers.

Infrastructural challenges, such as grid capacity, local authority preparedness, and recycling and disposal methods, required additional time for planning and development. Public acceptance and behaviour also play a crucial role in the transition to electric vehicles, with education, awareness campaigns, and overcoming range anxiety benefiting from a more gradual shift.



Ultimately, the decision to extend the deadline has both economic and environmental implications. It balances the need to protect jobs and economic stability with the imperative to combat climate change and improve air quality. By providing more time for stakeholders to adapt and innovate, the UK aims to create a more sustainable, accessible, and affordable future for electric vehicles while working towards a cleaner and greener transportation system.

In this issue of the biz4Biz INSIGHT Magazine we have an interesting article

from Loyd Davies of ElectrAssure that deals with the relevance of ULEZ in reference to public health and our upcoming Sustainable Biz Magazine to be published in October will also focus on this aspect, in relation to the relevance of Net Zero. As an expert in this field supporting the transition to Electric Vehicles, Loyd's view in relation to supporting ULEZ is of great importance to us all.

ADRIAN HAWKINS OBE

biz4Biz Chairman, Chairman of the Stevenage Development Board, Herts LEP Chairman.



A Letter from our Editor

There is much going on in the regional and national economy, and that is clearly evidenced in this latest edition of Insight magazine. We may be biased thinking that this area leads the way but in terms of redevelopment, regeneration and booming business in all types of hi-tech areas there can be no better place to see our economy develop. We were also interested to report on a survey in this edition which showed that no less than three quarters of employed British people actually want to start their own business. This is such a fertile area for the UK economy and one which must be encouraged and supported.

"Meet the Experts showed just what advice and support is out there for businesses and entrepreneurs of all phases, but of course more can and should be done."



You can follow us @biz4biz for news, articles and updates on our current stories. Our articles get tweeted regularly to 2400 followers!

Our recent ConneXions meeting entitled Meet the Experts showed just what advice and support is out there for businesses and entrepreneurs of all phases, but of course more can and should be done. That said we are delighted to report on the £1bn which has been granted to small business by government - it is just a start but a sign that this is where the future of our economy lies.

It is also pleasing to see all our new members as part of their free editorial promotion in this edition. biz4Biz is seeing a rapid growth in its membership and little wonder when we see the success of business such as Assynt gaining top contracts, and some great advice in this edition from companies such as Longmores and Tollers and updates from such growth areas as the Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst.

As always, business success is there to be achieved, despite the economic climate - and a glance at this Insight magazine would show this area to be well and truly thriving.

DARREN ISTED
Insight Editor



biz4Biz

PUBLISHER

Adrian Hawkins OBE

EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION

Hashtag Digital Media
hdmdigitalsales@gmail.com

ADVERTISING

<https://biz4biz.org/magazine-advertising>

CONTACT biz4BIZ SECRETARIAT

0330 9002 777

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Meet the New Member



Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst – a hothouse for innovation



Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst is a leading location for companies to develop and commercialise cutting edge therapeutics. It is uniquely well placed to drive innovation situated at the heart of the golden research triangle of London-Cambridge-Oxford. The campus is home to GSK's two main global research and development facilities, the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult Manufacturing Centre, LifeArc and Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst. This co-location of R&D and manufacturing facilities enables companies to move from start-up to scale up to the development of potentially life-saving therapeutics.

"The total private equity investment in biotechnology raised in Stevenage has grown to become comparable with that of Cambridge, London and Oxford"

With over 160,000 sq ft of lab and office space offered at highly competitive prices, Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst is home to a growing cluster of start-up companies that together have raised £3bn to date. The total private equity investment

in biotechnology raised in Stevenage has grown to become comparable with that of Cambridge, London and Oxford, securing Life Science Opportunity Zone and High Potential Opportunity status and contributing to the Government's ambition for the UK to become a 'science superpower'.

As demand for lab space outgrows supply, the campus is expanding with planning approval secured by UBS Management and Reef Group (Reef) to create one of Europe's largest life science sites in Stevenage. The £900m life science campus will provide 1.6 million sq. ft of lab, office and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) facilities



working alongside global pharma R&D, cell and gene clustering excellence and the vibrant ecosystem at Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst.

This ecosystem of business and scientific support enables organisations at Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst to connect and grow. The [Lab Hotel](#), provides early stage start-ups rent-free space for six months. Young companies are also given access to mentors advisers, grant specialists and investors, while programmes, such as the [SBC Catalyser Programme](#), help therapeutics and tech-bio companies refine their commercialisation strategy.

Wrapped around this is a collaborative environment offering roundtable discussions, networking events, occupier lunches and an established SBC community – all designed to help start-ups to scale-up and achieve their growth potential.

Find out more about how we are driving success in life sciences:
www.stevenagecatalyst.com

"Young companies are also given access to mentors advisers, grant specialists and investors, while programmes, such as the SBC Catalyser Programme, help therapeutics and tech-bio companies refine their commercialisation strategy."



STEVENAGE BIOSCIENCE
CATALYST



Lab Hotel: provides six months rent free space for early stage start-ups

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ConneXions

MEET THE UK'S SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER

**Thursday 26th October 2023 at
Knebworth House Barns**

Meet the UK's Small Business Commissioner

This event starts at **11:30am** with tea, coffee, and networking.
The main presentation will be at **12:00** noon, followed by
lunch at **1.30pm**.

DIRECTIONS TO THE VENUE

Knebworth House Barns are accessed directly from the Junction 7 roundabout of the A1(M) motorway at Stevenage South. Drive along the access road past the Novotel until you reach the entrance to the Knebworth Estate. If you use a sat nav please use the following postcode **SG1 2AX**. The Gate Code for this event is **4499**



Small Business Commissioner

LIZ BARCLAY

Liz Barclay is the Small Business Commissioner for the UK. She has a background in broadcasting and journalism specialising in small business, personal finance and consumer affairs and is author of several business books. She is also Chair of the Fair by Design Campaign (to tackle the poverty premium) and a non-executive Director of the Lending Standards Board. Until she took up the role of SBC Liz was a Financial Inclusion Commissioner, an Ambassador for Business Debtline, a member of the Fundraising Regulator Standards Board, the Equity Release Council Standards Board, and ran BackinBusiness.org.uk to give small businesses a voice with policy makers. She worked with Boards and small businesses on improving governance, trust and culture, inclusivity, employee engagement, and understanding customer behaviour. She is also a communication and presentation skills coach and chairs national and international conferences.



**We expect demand for this event to be very high –
so please register now by pressing the link to the right.
Tea, coffee, and lunch will be provided.**

Book your place

MEET THE NEW biz4BIZ MEMBER

Chemical Solutions

Chemical Solutions are a family run, family owned janitorial supplier based in Stevenage, Hertfordshire.

Founded over 30 years ago, Brendan and his two sons and daughter provide hygiene products and cleaning supplies to many of the UK's top Hospitals, Football Stadiums, Schools, and Universities around the London and 3 counties area.

Being a family business, Brendan and his team know the importance of customer service as well as quality products. That's why they make sure that all of their paper products are recycled and sustainably sourced, minimising the impact their business has on the environment. Not only that but their liquid products are becoming more and more sustainable as they continue to provide the latest in

"Chemical Solutions pride themselves on being a customer focused business by regularly visiting their customers to take orders and check on their product satisfaction"

sustainably sourced cleaning supplies (Ask us about our water soluble cleaning sachets!)

Chemical Solutions pride themselves on being a customer focused business by regularly visiting their customers to take orders and check on their product

satisfaction, as well as offering free 2-3 day delivery. They also offer free equipment hire, free dispenser loan and free COSHH training.

If you or a business you know are looking to use the latest in sustainable cleaning products then please give us a shout, we can guarantee we have the solution for that.

Where to find us:

Unit 39 Wedgwood Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 4QT
chemicalsolutionsuk.com
info@chemicalsolutionsuk.com



Flushable Hand Towels NOW £22 2400 Sheets 2 PLY 	Interfold Hand Towels NOW £17 3000 Sheets 2 PLY 	Z Fold Hand Towels NOW £17 3000 Sheets 2 PLY 	Blue Centrefeed NOW £8 Packs of 6 2 PLY 
Eco Toilet Roll NOW £10 Packs of 45 2 PLY 	Mini Jumbo Roll NOW £13 Packs of 12 2 PLY 	Smart One Jumbo NOW £28 Packs of 12 2 PLY 	Smart One Mini NOW £28 Packs of 12 2 PLY 
Equipment Hire FREE EQUIPMENT HIRE TO ALL REGULAR CUSTOMERS DELIVERY INCLUDED Our equipment ranges from floor buffers, carpet cleaners, hand towel dispensers, toilet roll dispensers and soap dispensers.		Sustainability Here at Chemical Solutions We Take Care of Everything For You Our paper products are made from recycled, sustainable sources, giving you piece of mind that your business is doing its part for the future.	

MEET THE NEW bIZ4BIZ MEMBER

CHEXS

CHEXS is an award-winning youth and family support charity in Waltham Cross. We work with disadvantaged school-age children who are not achieving their potential, and their families. We raise young people's self-esteem, skills, well-being, and aspirations, and address the behavioural/family relationship issues underlying their challenges. Local primary & secondary schools refer families to us if a child is facing problems and need support the school cannot provide. Schools contribute around 20% of the charity's income on services and much of our work with children and families would not be able to happen if we did not receive additional funding from trustees, foundations, local businesses, fundraising and donations.

CHEXS' CORE VALUES ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF EVERYTHING WE DO.

Community - We aim to create a united community working together to improve our local area.

Homes - Working with families to have a happier home life with improved communication and relationships.

Enrichments - We engage children and young people in positive activities, giving them the opportunity to raise their self-esteem, improve relationships and develop life skills.

Xtra-mile - We always endeavour to go above and beyond to support families.

Support - CHEXS provides a dedicated, enthusiastic, professional and inclusive support service for all families in the local community.

CHEXS is strongly embedded in our local community. We've been working alongside local schools and other organisations to support communities for 12 years and have built strong, trusting relationships with children, young people, and parents needing support. The evaluation shows 81% raise their aspirations and 76% do

better at school. Also, 89% of parents know who we are and 98% of referred parents accept our support.

CHEXS HAS TWO KEY SERVICES THAT ARE PROVIDED THROUGH STRUCTURED FRAMEWORKS:

1. Children and Young People Framework

The CHEXS GROWTH Programme builds self-esteem, confidence, aspirations, relationships and resilience by helping young people achieve success outside the traditional classroom environment. It is a structured programme of in-school, after-school and holiday activities for disadvantaged young people. Delivered over multiple weeks and including group and 1-2-1 work, this helps children raise their aspirations and gives them the skills/confidence to achieve more in life. Last year, we supported 353 children struggling with poor emotional well-being/mental health, behavioural challenges and attendance. Evaluations with young people following their participation in our GROWTH programme, show that 81% have raised aspirations and 76% are doing better at school.

The Growth programme encompasses four key pillars:

CHEXS GROWTH Four Pillars:

1. Project gives meaning and purpose
2. Self belief and discipline as well as shared experiences build resilience.
3. A culture of expectations
4. Environment inspires aspirations

The CHEXS Children and Young people Team promote the above pillars by offering support with a wide range of difficulties using lived experiences, specialised training and coaching by working side-by-side with young people as equals to deliver GROWTH:

- ✓ Goal Setting
- ✓ Resilience development
- ✓ One to one focus

- ✓ Working together
- ✓ Trust building
- ✓ Help each other

2. Family Support Service Framework

Our Family Support Team works with parents to tackle the underlying sources of family tension, e.g., money, employment, or housing. We help parents develop better communication and behaviour management strategies. We provide support 1-2-1, in groups and through courses. Last year, we supported 138 families intensively, and 55 'light-touch' (e.g., with food bank vouchers/accessing emergency grants.) Of families helped intensively, 97% felt better supported, 87% could better communicate with their child, 82% improved child-parent relationships.

The family support team strategy encompasses four key pillars:

1. Supporting home life stresses
2. Managing difficult behaviour
3. Strengthening family relationships
4. Communication

The family support team at CHEXS enable parents (including those from deprived and vulnerable families) to develop their skills and confidence and to build a happy home. To give parents the opportunity to improve their parenting skills, to manage their child's behaviour and support learning. Thereby resulting in better relationships with their children. If you'd be interested in hearing more about our services and how our partnership could support families and enable them to strive, access help and ultimately strengthen and benefit our community, then please get in touch.

www.chexs.co.uk



Government delivers over one billion pounds of support to over 100,000 small firms

A government backed loan scheme created to help entrepreneurs start and scale up their business has now provided over £1 billion of funding to over 100,000 businesses. From an activewear firm in Northern Ireland, to a drum manufacturer in Wales, a whisky firm in Scotland to a climbing centre in the southwest of England – every nation and region across the UK has benefitted from these loans, supporting entrepreneurs from all walks of life. Delivered through the state-owned British Business Bank, the Start Up Loan scheme was developed and launched by the government in 2012 to help new and early-stage UK businesses without sufficient personal funds or support from friends and family to access affordable finance and mentoring support. Through this combined access to finance and expert advice, more small businesses can develop and reach their potential, delivering economic growth and a boost to local communities. Small Business Minister Kevin Hollinrake said:

"The scheme has been particularly successful in supporting entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, creating a level playing field for all who wish to run their own small business in the UK"

"We're delivering on the Prime Minister's priority to grow the economy and make the UK the best place in the world to start and scale up a business. "Across all four nations and every region of the UK, we've supported exciting entrepreneurs through one billion pounds of government backed loans, and I want to see even more innovators reach their potential." The scheme has been particularly successful in supporting entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, creating a level

playing field for all who wish to run their own small business in the UK. Last year, the scheme was expanded to provide finance to eligible businesses operating for up to 5 years to support their growth. Of the £1 billion, £371 million (40%) has been lent to female business owners and £201 million (20%) has been lent to people from Black, Asian and Other Ethnic Minority backgrounds. The scheme has also been successful at championing young entrepreneurship, with young people between 18-24 years old having received £106 million (11%) of loans since the programme began. Start Up Loans have been issued to businesses in every UK parliamentary constituency. The majority of loans have also been issued to businesses outside of London and the South East, ensuring that businesses across the UK are able to scale up and grow. Outside of these regions, the North West and Yorkshire and Humber have received the largest shares of the loans, receiving £121,619,51 and £89,997,598 respectively.





FOCUS ON ULEZ

The introduction of ULEZ is a significant policy response to address air pollution in cities and mitigate its harmful effects. Here we explore the interconnectedness of these events and their implications for public health, environmental policy, and societal actions in combating air pollution.

INTRODUCTION:

Air pollution is a global environmental and public health concern. Among various air pollutants, PM2.5 (particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less) is particularly hazardous due to its ability to penetrate deep into the respiratory system and enter the bloodstream. Over the years, research has shown a strong link between exposure to PM2.5 and a wide range of health issues, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. In this context, the Public Health England (PHE) report on PM2.5 adverse effects plays a crucial role in raising awareness and informing policy decisions to protect public health.

THE TRAGIC DEATH OF ELLA KISSI-DEBRAH:

In 2013, a young girl named Ella Kissi-Debrah died at the age of nine after

experiencing multiple asthma attacks. Her death initially did not receive widespread attention or connection to air pollution. However, Ella's mother, Rosamund Kissi-Debrah, started to investigate the potential role of air pollution in her daughter's death. Ella lived near one of London's busiest roads, which was consistently exposed to high levels of air pollution, particularly PM2.5 and nitrogen dioxide (NO2).

Through her efforts, Rosamund gathered evidence suggesting a correlation between Ella's asthma attacks and spikes in air pollution levels. Her determination and persistence led to a reopening of Ella's case, and in 2020, a landmark inquest concluded that Ella's death was directly attributed to air pollution exposure. The significance of this case lies in its recognition of air pollution as a direct cause of death and the subsequent implications it has for addressing air quality issues in urban environments.

[Public Health England \(PHE\) Report on PM2.5 Adverse Effects:](#)

In response to growing concerns about air pollution, Public Health England conducted a comprehensive study on

the adverse effects of PM2.5 on public health. The report, published in 2014, highlighted the detrimental impact of PM2.5 on respiratory and cardiovascular health, linking it to an increased risk of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart attacks, and premature deaths. The report's findings shed light on the urgent need to address air pollution and its associated health risks, especially in densely populated urban areas where exposure to high levels of PM2.5 is common. It served as a catalyst for governments, environmental organizations, and communities to take action in tackling air pollution through evidence-based policies and initiatives.

INTRODUCTION OF ULTRA LOW EMISSION ZONE (ULEZ):

One of the significant policy responses to combat air pollution in London was the introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in April 2019. ULEZ is a designated area in the city where vehicles need to meet strict emission standards or pay a daily charge to enter. The zone's primary goal is to reduce emissions from older, more polluting vehicles and encourage the adoption of cleaner

transportation options. By discouraging the use of high-emission vehicles and promoting the use of public transport, cycling, and electric vehicles, ULEZ aims to improve air quality and, consequently, public health. It represents a concrete step towards achieving cleaner air and reducing the impact of air pollution on vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND IMPLICATIONS:

The interconnectedness of the PHE report, Ella's tragic death, and the introduction of ULEZ underscores the crucial role of evidence-based research and public awareness in driving effective policy change. The PHE report's findings provided crucial evidence that helped establish air pollution as a significant public health concern, leading to increased scrutiny and action from policymakers, health authorities, and the general public. Ella's case, while tragic, brought a human face to the devastating consequences of air pollution and added an emotional dimension to the issue. It highlighted the disproportionate impact of air pollution on vulnerable communities, urging policymakers to take immediate and decisive actions to protect public health. The introduction of ULEZ demonstrates the power of policy interventions in curbing air pollution and improving urban air quality. As a concrete and measurable step, ULEZ has already shown positive effects in reducing emissions and encouraging the transition to cleaner transportation alternatives. Other cities around the world have also taken inspiration from London's example and introduced similar initiatives to address their air pollution challenges.

CONCLUSION:

The relevance of the Public Health England report on PM2.5 adverse effects, Ella Kissi-Debrah's tragic death, and the introduction of ULEZ cannot be overstated. Together, they form a compelling narrative that underscores the urgent need for action to combat air pollution and its detrimental impact on public health. Evidence-based research, such as the PHE report, serves as a crucial tool to inform policy decisions and raise public awareness about the severity of air

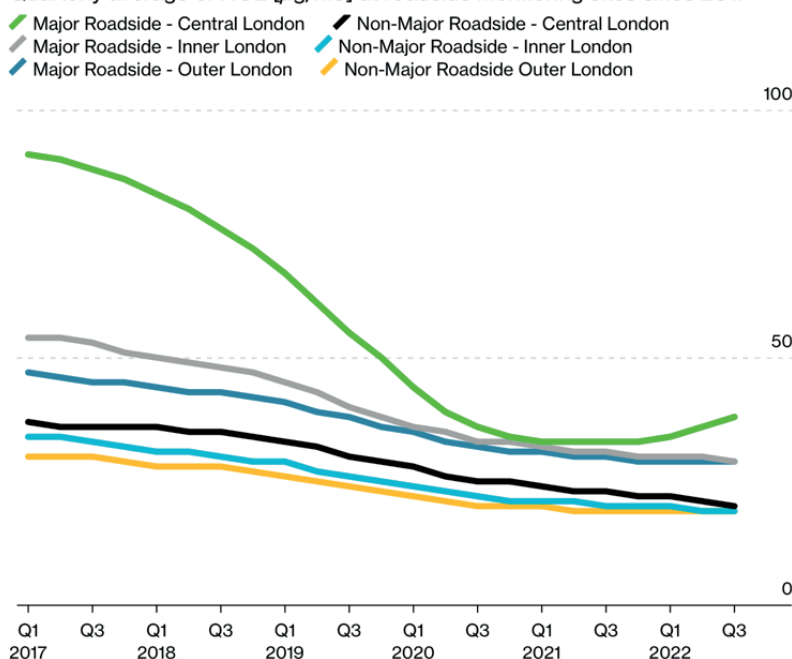
'MAGIC' GUIDELINES

A decade ago London had NO₂ levels that were among the worst of major world cities, and that has improved dramatically alongside the expansion of the ULEZ. At its most severe, NO₂ can lead to reduced lung development and respiratory infections in children and breathing difficulties in early adulthood, as well as premature death.

The decline in NO₂ pollution seen since 2017 can't just be attributed to ULEZ. Internal combustion engine cars, both diesel and petrol, have become much cleaner over time as standards have tightened. There are more affordable electric vehicles on the market and buses and taxis have also become less emitting.

NO₂ Concentrations Fell Most Dramatically in Central London

Quarterly average of NO₂ [$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$] at roadside monitoring sites since 2017



Source: Mayor of London, Inner London Ultra Low Emission Zone - One Year Report

pollution's health risks. Ella's case added a human perspective to the statistics, making it clear that air pollution affects real lives and demands immediate attention. The introduction of ULEZ exemplifies a policy response that shows promising results in improving air quality and protecting public health. However, it also emphasizes the importance of continuous efforts and cooperation from all stakeholders to address this complex and far-reaching issue effectively. To achieve meaningful progress in combating air pollution, sustained commitment to evidence-based policies, technological advancements, public engagement, and international cooperation is essential. By learning from past experiences and working

together, societies can take significant strides towards cleaner and healthier environments for current and future generations.



LOYD DAVIES
Service Development Director
at ElectrAssure

NOTE: Original source data TfL reviewed by Imperial

Make it British:

SUPPORTING SOVEREIGN UK SUPPLY CHAIN FOR CONNECTED AND AUTOMATED MOBILITY

£18.5 million is being made available to UK companies in government funding to strengthen the capabilities of the UK's connected and automated mobility supply chain. The grants, as part of the [Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles](#) (CCAV) Commercialising Connected and Automated Mobility: Supply Chain competition, will help 43 British companies across 13 projects seize early opportunities to develop self-driving technologies, products and service ready for the connected and automated mobility market.

In August 2022, the Government [announced](#) its approach to supporting the safe deployment of self-driving vehicles to deliver societal and economic benefits. It is the Government's vision that the UK will start seeing the deployments of commercially operating self-driving vehicles, improving the ways in which people and goods are moved across the nation. To turn this vision into reality, CCAV launched the Commercialising Connected and Automated Mobility (CCAM) programme to target early commercial self-driving vehicle opportunities and support the UK supply chain to grow and fill technology gaps necessary for their deployment. On 1 February 2023, the Government announced the winners of its deployments competition, where 7 successful projects from around the UK form the most advanced set of commercial, self-driving passenger and freight operations anywhere in the world. Projects are now underway in Belfast, Edinburgh, Sunderland, Strategic Road Network, Coventry and Cambridge.

With a total funding of £28.5 million in joint Government and industry support, 13 new supply chain projects will



“It is the Government’s vision that the UK will start seeing the deployments of commercially operating self-driving vehicles, improving the ways in which people and goods are moved across the nation.”

complement the deployment projects and will play a pivotal role in advancing the self-driving revolution by reinforcing the UK's position at the forefront of connected and automated mobility technologies.

These projects will be delivered in partnership with CCAV's delivery partners, [Zenzic](#) and [Innovate UK](#) to bring together government and industry to support the development of sovereign capabilities within the UK CAM supply chain. The selected projects will address critical technology gaps, enhance safety and security, improve performance and reliability, and create scalable opportunities both domestically and globally.

Combined, the deployments and the supply chain projects will help increase safety and efficiency of operations – a great result for our communities and our economy as we gradually roll these services and solutions out nationally and export them globally.

THE JOINT GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY FUNDING WINNERS ARE:

AIM-DBW

The project aims to deliver a universal and affordable drive-by-wire system that replaces traditional mechanical linkages with electronic ones. This system enables automation of the throttle, steering, braking, gears, and ancillary systems of a vehicle.

- **Partners:** AIM TECHNOLOGIES (Lead) and TRL
- **Grant funding:** £400,000

AUTONOMOUS CARGO

This project focuses on creating an autonomous dolly for airside cargo movements. Building on previous experience with smaller baggage dollies, the project will develop a unique autonomous airside 7.5t cargo dolly. Additionally, a simulation tool will be developed to quantify the benefits of CAM for air cargo operations, providing operators with insights into optimal CAM vehicle types or required infrastructure modifications.

- **Partners:** AURRIGO (Lead) and UPS
- **Grant funding:** £480,000

CERTUS

The verification and validation of ADS presents unique challenges. CERTUS provides a toolset that helps to efficiently identify, define and execute the test requirements for an ADS. It addresses three key questions: what to test, how to test, and when to stop testing. The project partners will collaborate to develop and demonstrate effective testing methodologies.

- **Partners:** HORIBA MIRA (Lead), COVENTRY UNIVERSITY, CONNECTED PLACES CATAPULT, POLESTAR AUTOMOTIVE UK, IPG AUTOMOTIVE UK
- **Grant funding:** £1.5 million

DEEPSAFE

DeepSafe aims to support the verification and validation (V&V) of automated driving systems (ADS) through the development and deployment of industry-critical data and a next-generation simulation toolchain. By combining high acuity data recorded with a new high-speed test methodology operating in real world environments, and high-volume simulation mediated by world-leading raytraced simulation, the project will address the “reality gap” on the most critical scenarios to train ADS against high-impact collisions, emergencies, and the whole landscape of edge cases. Adding a novel AI-based software for backtracking failure modes to their source, the project hopes to finally unblock the way to safe and economical AV deployments.

- **Partners:** DRISK.AI (Lead), IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON, CLAYTEX SERVICES, DG CITIES, RFPRO
- **Grant funding:** £2 million

DRIVESAFEAI

DriveSafeAI will develop a safety assurance framework for the safe deployment of AI in self-driving technology across all driving domains. Bringing together Wayve's next-generation end-to-end AI approach to self-driving, with WMG's

expertise on the safety of automated systems, DriveSafeAI will deliver a set of safety methods, tools and datasets that will support the whole self-driving industry.

- **Partners:** WAYVE TECHNOLOGIES (Lead) and UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
- **Grant funding:** £1.9 million

DRIVEN BY SOUND

DRIVEN BY SOUND is a collaborative initiative to create an affordable, robust navigation system for automated vehicles, with a particular emphasis on adverse weather handling. This system features a high-performance computer supporting all levels of automated and autonomous driving. It incorporates cutting-edge 3-D ultrasound sensors for safety and redundancy, ruggedisation for durability, and robust cybersecurity measures.

- **Partners:** CALYO (Lead) and BARO VEHICLES
- **Grant funding:** £910,000

EVOLVAD

Building upon previous Nissan project experience, evolVAD aims to develop an AV capable of safely driving in residential, urban, and rural environments. Project partners will focus on HD map generation and validation, alignment with multiple complex operational design domains (ODDs) and improving interactions in complex urban environments with vulnerable road users.

- **Partners:** NISSAN MOTOR MANUFACTURING UK (Lead), TRL, HUMANISING AUTONOMY, CONNECTED PLACES CATAPULT, SBD AUTOMOTIVE
- **Grant funding:** £2.3 million

HIGH-PERFORMANCE IMAGING RADAR (HPIR)

This project aims to develop a high-performance imaging radar product specifically designed for AVs. By addressing a gap in the CAM Supply Chain UK, it will enable more robust, cost-effective systems that can operate in a wider range of weather conditions while reducing reliance on lidar.

- **Partners:** APTCORE (Lead), GARFIELD MICROELECTRONICS, PLEKTEK SERVICES, CAMBRIDGE SENSORS
- **Grant funding:** £1.8 million

PHOTONIC INERTIAL SENSORS FOR AUTOMOTIVE (PISA)

This project aims to develop advanced position and navigation sensors that work reliably in various environments. By leveraging Micro Electromechanical Systems (MEMS), Photonic Integrated Circuits (PICs), and low-cost laser/detectors, the project will improve the performance, resilience, and safety of autonomous vehicles (AVs) by reducing reliance on vulnerable external signals.

- **Partners:** ZERO POINT MOTION (Lead), WAE TECHNOLOGIES, UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND, ROYAL INSTITUTE OF NAVIGATION
- **Grant funding:** £1.4 million

SIM4CAMSENS

Sim4CAMSens aims to enable accurate representation of ADS sensors in simulation. It will develop a sensor evaluation framework that spans modeling, simulation, and physical testing. This project will involve the creation of new sensor models, improved noise models, new material models, and new test methods to allow ADS and sensor developers to accelerate their development.

- **Partners:** CLAYTEX SERVICES (Lead), UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, NATIONAL PHYSICAL LABORATORY, SYSELEK (UK), COMPOUND SEMICONDUCTOR APPLICATIONS CATAPULT, RFPRO, OXFORD RF SOLUTIONS, TECHWORKSHUB
- **Grant funding:** £2 million

STREETCAV

StreetCAV will create a ‘plug-and-play’ roadside connectivity solution enabling self-driving shuttles, robotic and drone-based services to operate safely and securely, maintaining connections wherever they go. With world-class experts and UK-based partners, we will deploy StreetCAV and a new self-driving shuttle service into Milton Keynes, as a blueprint for UK-wide deployment.

- **Partners:** SMART CITY CONSULTANCY (Lead), DELL CORPORATION, MILTON KEYNES BOROUGH COUNCIL, OHMIO UK
- **Grant funding:** £1.8 million

SYSTEMS FOR AUTONOMY IN FAIL OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS (SAFE)

The SAFE project will develop a fully redundant, fail-operational Drive-by-Wire technology platform to enable safe driver-out, on-road autonomous vehicle capability. By integrating purpose-built sub-systems, the project will create an automated vehicle capable of achieving SAE Level 4 autonomy. These safety-critical vehicle systems ensure lateral and longitudinal control, even in the event of a single-point fault or failure.

- **Partners:** STREETDRONE (Lead), ALCON COMPONENTS, UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, CHASSIS AUTONOMY
- **Grant funding:** £1.2 million

TORQUE OVERLAY AUTOMATED STEERING TECHNOLOGY (TOAST)

The TOAST project focuses on the development of a modular dual redundant steer-by-wire system for heavily automated and electric vehicles. This project fills a gap in the UK supply chain, supporting ADS development in the UK and globally, as there is currently no UK-based Tier 1 supplier showing interest in supporting low to medium volume vehicle manufacturers.

- **Partners:** TITAN MOTORSPORT & AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERING (Lead), ALEXANDER DENNIS, TRL
- **Grant funding:** £760,000



Co-Space delighted to launch new Milton Keynes venue



Co-Space MK is conveniently situated adjacent to Milton Keynes Central train station, surrounded by local amenities such as restaurants, gyms, retail and hotels.

The space offers private offices for 2-30+ people set over 3 naturally lit floors, and features design led co-working areas with all the required amenities for any office occupier including; showers, secure lockers and bike storage and productivity increasing breakout spaces.

The newly invested space will also benefit from a coffee bar on the ground floor.

The perfect spot to meet, fuel up or just gather your thoughts. Onsite parking is also available to reserve for Co—Space members.

Milton Keynes is one of the UK's fastest growing cities and an economic hub

making Co—Space MK a perfectly placed home for enterprise.

Memberships

Memberships are all-inclusive, with internet, tea & coffee, business rates and more included in the monthly price.

Hot Desk

If your workspace needs are less permanent, we have Hot Desks available on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Private Office

Our office memberships offer an all inclusive private space for companies of varying sizes with 24/7 access.

15% off meeting room bookings for all Biz4Biz readers

"The space offers private offices for 2-30+ people set over 3 naturally lit floors, and features design led co-working areas with all the required amenities for any office occupier including; showers, secure lockers and bike storage and productivity increasing breakout spaces."

ELDER HOUSE
MILTON KEYNES

CO — space



MEET THE NEW biz4BIZ MEMBER

Red Door Recruitment

Hello I'm Louise Wynne, founder of Red Door Recruitment! We are based in the heart of St Albans, celebrating our 16th year in recruitment. We are a supportive flourishing team of 7 people with a strong presence, supplying permanent and temporary office staff to local companies.

I started the business after working for many years in the industry, ready for the challenge and the excitement. I'm naturally positive with a glass half full approach to life and I was sure I could make it happen supported by a great team.

We offer a great service to clients and candidates and in recognition we receive fantastic reviews from people who've worked with us. They love our dedication

"Creating and nurturing a strong capable cohesive team has been the key to our success. We celebrate the successes and manage the challenges together!"

to supply the right people for local jobs coupled with our passion for finding the right roles for candidates. Our passion is in understanding what makes each company unique, enabling us to match candidates successfully. We are dedicated to ensuring each candidate is giving our full support to secure their dream job; from writing a winning CV to offering in depth preparation for the interview.



As an independent company we work on consistently delivering exceptional levels of customer service.

Creating and nurturing a strong capable cohesive team has been the key to our continued growth.

Our Operations Director is Jo Baker who started here 9 years ago, and between us we have over 70 years of recruitment experience to offer the local community!

We are dedicated to supporting local people and we are very excited to be recent sponsors of the St Albans Women's Football Team.

Come and talk to us, we can work quickly and efficiently to fill your next role or find your next perfect job!

**16 Chequer Street, St Albans
Herts, AL1 3YD**

01727 899490

www.reddoorrecruitment.co.uk



**RED DOOR
RECRUITMENT**



Left to right: Jo Baker, Louise Wynne, Aileen Brennan, Jo O'Donovan, Holly Armitage, Esther Canham and Laura Holt Thomas

biz4Biz

Christmas dinner **ConneXions**

Finding the truth about Artificial Intelligence

**Thursday 30th November 2023 at
Knebworth House Barns**

This event starts at **11:30am** with tea, coffee, and networking. The main presentation will be at **12:00** noon, followed by lunch at **1.30pm**.

Over recent months, we've all witnessed the buzz and hype surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI). It's been a topic of intense debate, with opinions swinging between utopia and the end of paid work. But is there more to this technological marvel than meets the eye?

Join Dr. Katherine Bean, PhD, for a Thought-Provoking Talk!

In this exclusive talk by the renowned expert, Dr. Katherine, you will gain invaluable insights into the true position of AI in our world today. She'll unravel the mysteries, dispel the myths, and show you how AI can empower your business tomorrow.

A Journey into the World of AI: What's in Store?

Dr. Katherine's talk promises a clear overview of the AI landscape. You'll not only learn what's possible but also how to practically implement AI tools in your business. With a dedicated section on "The Practical Use Of AI Today", you'll gain hands-on skills to use these new tools in your own business, today.

DIRECTIONS TO THE VENUE

Knebworth House Barns are accessed directly from the Junction 7 roundabout of the A1(M) motorway at Stevenage South. Drive along the access road past the Novotel until you reach the entrance to the Knebworth Estate. If you use a sat nav please use the following postcode **SG1 2AX**. The Gate Code for this event is **2634**

The Practical Use Of AI Today: Learn by Doing

During this talk, Dr. Katherine will take you beyond theory. You'll dive into real-world examples, see how AI can enhance your business and discover how to integrate AI seamlessly into your daily operations. This isn't just about understanding AI; it's about becoming proficient in its application.

Your Questions, Answered

We understand that AI can be a complex and ever-evolving field. That's why Dr. Katherine has set aside ample time to address your burning questions. Prepare them ahead of time, tick off the answers during the talk, and save the rest for the end. Get ready to embark on a journey that will transform the way you perceive and utilize AI, making it not just a concept but a practical tool for your business.

The AI revolution is here, and it's not just about the future—it's about today. Don't miss this opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of AI's role in your business and acquire the practical skills needed to thrive in the AI-driven world. Join us for Dr. Katherine Bean's enlightening talk on Artificial Intelligence. Reserve your seat today and be part of the AI transformation!

DR. KATHERINE BEAN, PHD

Dr. Katherine Bean is a seasoned luminary in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with a career spanning back to the late 1980s. Her remarkable journey in AI has led her to a unique vantage point where technology, business, and innovation converge.

With a passion for AI that ignited in the late 1980s, Dr. Katherine embarked on a lifelong quest for knowledge and innovation. Her dedication culminated in the attainment of a PhD from King's College, London, with a focus on AI, making her a true pioneer in the field.

Dr. Katherine's mission is clear: to empower Small, Medium and Micro-Businesses with the tools and strategies they need to thrive in the digital age.

She specialises in bolstering cybersecurity, streamlining processes, and harnessing cutting-edge tools to boost productivity and profitability.



**We expect demand for this event to be very high –
so please register now by pressing the link to the right.
Tea, coffee, and lunch will be provided.**

Book your place

Extending the Deadline:

THE KEY REASONS BEHIND RISHI SUNAK'S DECISION TO POSTPONE THE BAN ON FOSSIL FUEL VEHICLES TO 2035

INTRODUCTION

In the global effort to combat climate change and transition to a more sustainable future, the United Kingdom has set ambitious targets to phase out fossil fuel vehicles. Initially, the UK government aimed to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030. However, in response to various challenges and considerations, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced a decision to extend the deadline to 2035. This article explores the primary reasons behind Rishi Sunak's choice to postpone the ban on fossil fuel vehicles, delving into the economic, technological, and infrastructural factors that played a pivotal role in this decision.

I. ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Transition Costs

One of the main reasons for extending the deadline to ban fossil fuel vehicles is the substantial economic burden associated with the transition. Phasing out petrol and diesel cars requires significant investment in electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, manufacturing facilities, and research

and development. By delaying the ban to 2035, the government provides the automotive industry more time to adapt and implement these changes without compromising economic stability.

Industry Support

The automotive industry is a vital component of the UK's economy, providing jobs and contributing significantly to GDP. An abrupt shift to a 2030 deadline might have strained the industry, potentially leading to job losses and economic disruptions. Extending the deadline allows for a smoother transition, ensuring that the industry remains competitive and resilient. The new deadline of 2035 matches that set previously by the European Union.

Consumer Affordability

While EV technology has made significant advancements, electric vehicles can still be more expensive than their fossil fuel counterparts. Extending the deadline gives consumers more time to adjust to the market and for EV prices to potentially decrease, making sustainable transportation more affordable for a broader range of individuals.

II. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

Battery Technology

The development of advanced battery technology is crucial for the widespread adoption of electric vehicles. Extending the deadline to 2035 allows for more time to refine and enhance battery performance, capacity, and affordability. This will address concerns related to EV range, charging times, and overall usability.

Charging Infrastructure

A robust and accessible charging infrastructure is essential for the success of electric vehicles. Extending the deadline gives the government and private sector additional years to expand and improve the charging network, making EVs a more practical choice for consumers across the country.

Vehicle Diversity

To encourage the transition to electric vehicles, a diverse range of options is needed to cater to different consumer preferences and needs. Delaying the ban provides automakers with more time to develop a wider variety of EV models, including SUVs, trucks, and affordable options for the mass market.

III. INFRASTRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

Grid Capacity

Transitioning to electric vehicles at a rapid pace could strain the electricity grid. Extending the deadline allows for better planning and investment in grid upgrades to accommodate the increased demand for electricity from EV charging.



Local Authority Preparedness

Local authorities play a critical role in facilitating the transition to electric vehicles by implementing policies and infrastructure at the regional level. Extending the deadline gives local governments more time to develop and execute their own plans for EV readiness.

Recycling and Disposal

Electric vehicle batteries have a finite lifespan, and recycling and disposing of them in an environmentally responsible manner is crucial. Extending the deadline allows for the development of effective recycling processes and regulations to handle the growing number of EV batteries reaching the end of their useful life.

IV. PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE AND BEHAVIOUR

Consumer Awareness

Shifting consumer behaviour and attitudes towards electric vehicles takes time. Extending the deadline provides an extended window for public awareness campaigns, education, and incentives to encourage more people to consider and adopt EVs.

Second-hand Market

A significant portion of the vehicle market involves used cars. Extending the deadline allows for a more gradual transition, ensuring that a broader range of affordable used electric vehicles becomes available in the second-hand market.

Overcoming Range Anxiety

Range anxiety, the fear of running out of battery charge without access to a charging station, is a common concern among potential EV buyers. Extending the deadline gives automakers more time to develop EVs with longer ranges and addresses this psychological barrier.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Climate Goals

While the primary motivation behind the fossil fuel vehicle ban is to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change, the government recognizes that achieving this goal requires a comprehensive approach. Extending the deadline provides an opportunity to implement complementary policies and initiatives that can further support emissions reductions, such as renewable energy expansion and sustainable urban planning.

Air Quality

Fossil fuel vehicles are a major source of urban air pollution, contributing to respiratory illnesses and premature deaths. Extending the deadline to ban these vehicles allows for more immediate improvements in air quality, particularly in urban areas where pollution levels are often high.

CONCLUSION

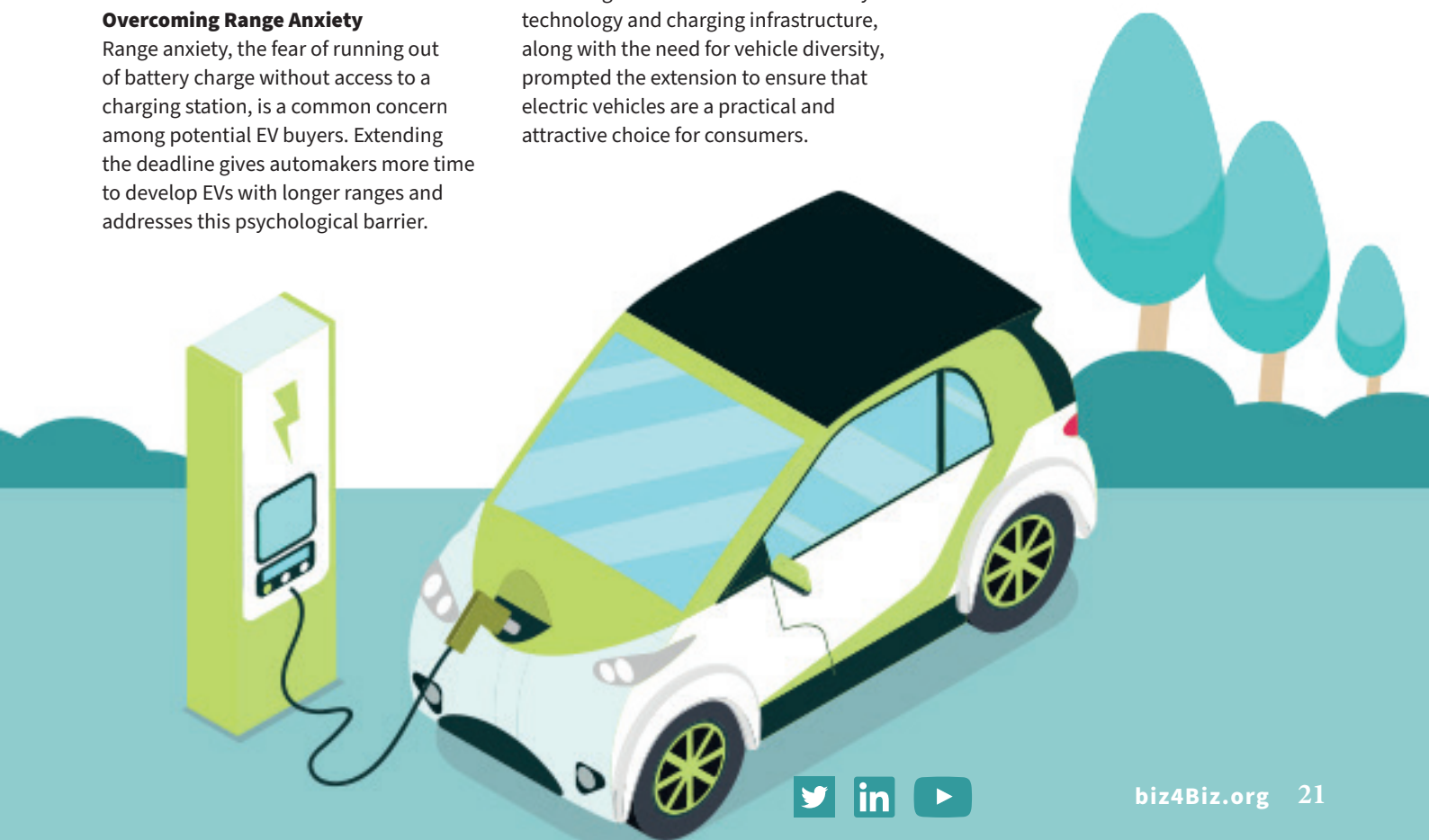
Rishi Sunak's decision to extend the deadline for banning fossil fuel vehicles from 2030 to 2035 is rooted in a complex web of economic, technological, infrastructural, and societal considerations. The economic burden, industry support, and consumer affordability concerns necessitated a more gradual transition to protect jobs and economic stability. Moreover, technological advancements in battery technology and charging infrastructure, along with the need for vehicle diversity, prompted the extension to ensure that electric vehicles are a practical and attractive choice for consumers.

Infrastructural challenges, such as grid capacity, local authority preparedness, and recycling and disposal methods, required additional time for planning and development. Public acceptance and behaviour also play a crucial role in the transition to electric vehicles, with education, awareness campaigns, and overcoming range anxiety benefiting from a more gradual shift.

Ultimately, the decision to extend the deadline has both economic and environmental implications. It balances the need to protect jobs and economic stability with the imperative to combat climate change and improve air quality. By providing more time for stakeholders to adapt and innovate, the UK aims to create a more sustainable, accessible, and affordable future for electric vehicles while working towards a cleaner and greener transportation system.

ADRIAN HAWKINS OBE

biz4Biz Chairman, Chairman of the Stevenage Development Board, Herts LEP Chairman.





HALF OF ALL PAYMENTS NOW MADE USING DEBIT CARDS

Cash has made a resurgence for business but half of all payments are now made using cards.

This was the outcome of a Payment Markets Report from UK Finance for 2022/23 which found the following headlines.

KEY FINDINGS FOR 2022:

- Total number of payments increased to 45.7 billion, up from 40.4 billion in 2021.
- For the first time, half of all payments (50 per cent) in the UK were made using debit cards.
- The number of cash payments increased to 6.4 billion payments (6 billion in 2021) although the proportion of payments made using cash fell slightly from 15 per cent to 14 per cent.
- The number of contactless payments increased by 30 per cent to 17 billion.
- Nearly a third of adults are registered for at least one mobile payment service, while 86 per cent of adults used a form of remote banking.
- Continued growth in the use of Faster Payments by both consumers and businesses.

The total number of payments (consumer and business) in the UK last year increased to 45.7 billion, up from 40.4 billion in 2021. Payments made by businesses accounted for 13 per cent of the number of all payments made in the UK during 2022. However, due to the high average value

of business payments, these accounted for 82 per cent of the total value of payments made. Consumers made 87 per cent of all payments, accounting for 18 per cent of the total value of payments.

The split of this total across various payment types is shown in the graph below:

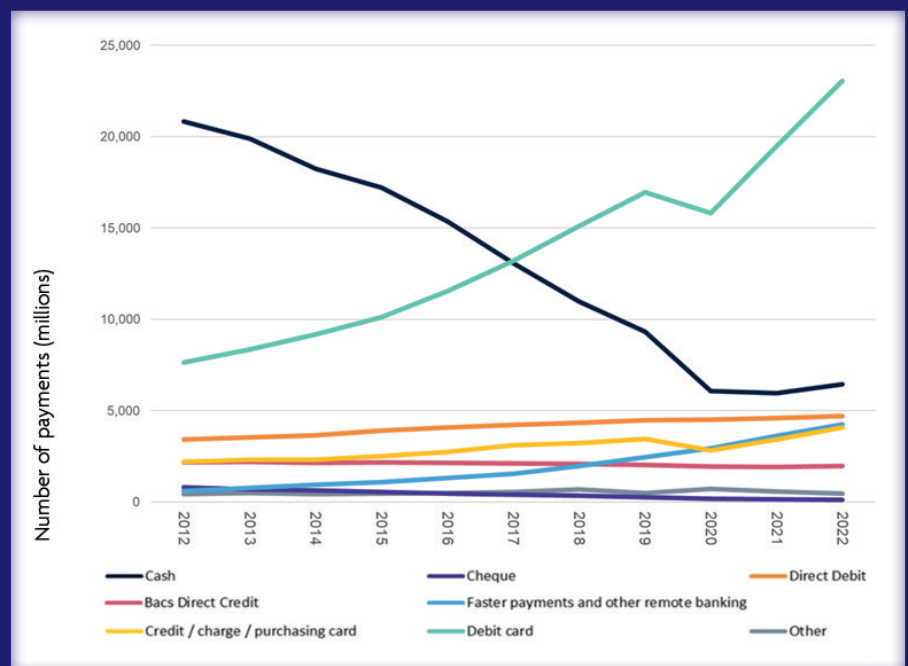


Chart 1.1 – Payment volumes (millions) 2012 to 2022

UK Finance's data suggests that there has been a shift towards an increasing number of transactions that are each worth a lower amount, without necessarily increasing the overall amount spent.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that people are, for example, making more smaller visits to supermarkets rather than doing one large shop. In addition, as more people work from home, purchases of travel cards have fallen significantly as people instead pay for individual journeys – therefore increasing the number of travel payments.

CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS

Debit cards remain the most popular payment method and volumes increased by 18 per cent during the year to just over 23 billion payments (2021: 19.5 billion).

As a result, for the first time, half of all payments in the UK were made using debit cards.

Payments made using credit cards increased by 19 per cent from 3.4 billion in 2021 to 4.1 billion in 2022.

CONTACTLESS

Across both debit and credit cards, there were 17 billion contactless payments, a 30 per cent increase on the 13.1 billion made in 2021.

Contactless payments were used extensively throughout the UK in 2022, with 87 per cent of people making contactless payments at least once a month or more frequently.

The average value of contactless payments continued to grow in 2022 at £15.10, up from £12.66 in 2021.

CASH

The long-running trend in cash has been one of continued decline, although it remains the second most frequently used payment method.

The total number of cash payments made in the UK during 2022 increased to 6.4 billion, (2021: 6 billion).

Due to the higher total volume of payments, the share of payments made using cash still fell slightly, from 15 per cent to 14 per cent. A decade ago, 54 per cent of all payments were made with cash.

Growing fears about inflation and the rising cost of living have meant some

people are making greater use of cash as a way of managing budgets.

There were 21.6 million people who used cash only once a month or not at all in 2022, down from 23.1 million the year before.

There were 0.9 million consumers who mainly used cash in 2022, down from 1.1 million in 2021 and 2.2 million five years previously in 2017. These consumers use cash when doing their day-to-day shopping, although the majority still use other payment methods to pay their regular bills.

REMOTE BANKING

Remote banking (online, mobile, or telephone) remained popular in 2022 with 86 per cent of adults using at least one form last year.

The majority of people across all age groups used remote banking in 2022, ranging from 80 per cent of those aged 65 and over to 95 per cent of people aged 25 to 34.

The number of remote banking payments processed via the Faster Payments Service continued to grow strongly, increasing 17 per cent to 4.3 billion payments. Use of remote banking by businesses contributed to this strong growth.

MOBILE WALLET

As well as using contactless cards,

other devices such as mobile phones are increasingly being used to make contactless payments.

Thirty per cent of the adult population reported being registered for at least one mobile payment service in 2022, with younger people more likely to be making use of mobile wallets.

Overall, use of these services is still lower than use of contactless cards, but they appear to be growing in popularity and it is likely that mobile payment methods will see strong growth in the future.

Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL)

Around one in eight people in the UK (12 per cent) reported using BNPL services to purchase something during 2022, the same proportion as in 2021.

Those aged 25 to 34 reported using BNPL most, with almost one in five adults in this age group (18 per cent) using it in 2022.

Eight per cent of people aged 65 and over reported using BNPL, which was up from four per cent in 2021.

FORECASTS TO 2032

Over the next decade, we expect to see a continuation of current trends, with debit cards becoming ever more popular and cash usage falling as shown in the graph below.

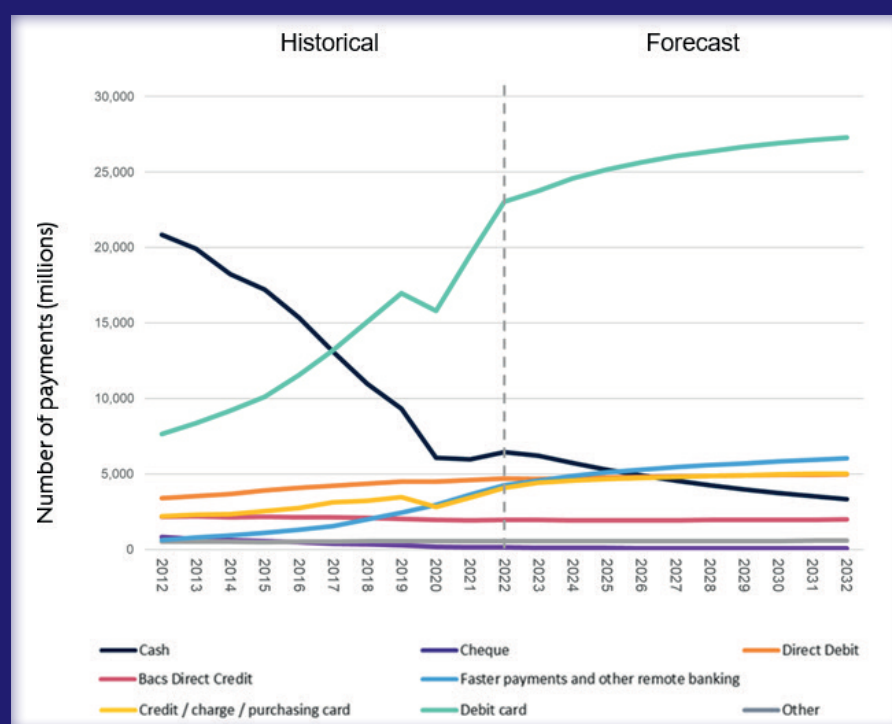


Chart 1.2 – Payment volumes (millions) 2012 to 2032



Energy Efficiency in Buildings – What do I need to know?



The United Kingdom has some of the oldest buildings in the world and many of these were not built to modern energy efficiency standards. There has been a requirement to provide an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) on most sales and rental agreements of residential properties since 2007, and commercial properties since 2008. The average EPC rating in England and Wales is D and the government estimates that 18% of commercial properties hold the lowest EPC ratings of F or G. The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) regulations, introduced following legislation passed in 2015, are intended to improve the UK's carbon footprint by setting out required energy standards in buildings, with a view to improving the country's environmental performance. In the current climate of increasing energy costs, these changes are perhaps more important than ever.

What has changed?

Prior to April 2023 it was already unlawful to grant a new lease of 'sub-standard' property – currently defined as a property with an EPC rating of F or G. From 1 April 2023 it is now unlawful to continue to let a commercial property with an F or G EPC rating, even if the lease was granted prior to the MEES Regulations coming into force in 2018.

“Owners of sub-standard properties which are covered by the MEES regulations may need to carry out energy efficiency improvements if they wish to continue to let the property.”

What does it mean for you?

THE MEES regulations cover all buildings which have a valid EPC. This obviously means that open sites / outdoor storage areas etc. are not covered; and if the property has not had an EPC commissioned in the last 10 years then it may not be subject to the MEES regulations.

Owners of sub-standard properties which are covered by the MEES regulations may need to carry out energy efficiency improvements if they wish to continue to let the property; although if all relevant energy efficient improvements have been met and the property is still 'sub-standard' the property can continue to be let. As an example, the works to the property must satisfy the seven-year payback test – this means that the cost of the energy

efficiency improvements should be capable of recovery (by savings in energy costs, etc.) within seven years. In the context of a commercial lease, it may be the landlord who is responsible for paying the cost of the energy improvements, whilst the tenant would receive the immediate benefit of this cost saving; provided that the cost saving over a seven-year period is equivalent to the expenses, the payback test would still be met. There are other exemptions which may apply to a sub-standard property:

- (a) Devaluation exemption – a landlord is not required to undertake energy efficiency improvements if these would (in the opinion of an independent surveyor) reduce the market value of a property by more than 5%;
- (b) New landlord exemption – if a landlord has recently purchased a property which is subject to tenancies, there is a six-month exemption period during which energy efficiency improvements do not need to be carried out;
- (c) Consent exemption – this can apply if the landlord cannot improve the energy efficiency of a sub-standard property because:
 - a. tenant consent is required and has been refused; or
 - b. third party consent is required and has been refused.

All exemptions must be registered on the

Private Rented Sector Exemptions Register and do not automatically apply. They are also time-limited – an exemption typically lasts 5 years, so landlords will need to regularly review their compliance; and the exemption cannot be transferred, so any new purchaser would need to reassess the situation.

What do I need to do?

Landlords of commercial properties therefore need to review their property portfolios to identify properties that may be sub-standard, and consider whether any energy efficiency improvements can be carried out – and whether any exemptions may apply. Landlords and tenants will also need to consider the potential implications for future business interruption when negotiating the terms of new leases – collaboration will be important to ensure minimal interruption for both parties when considering any future works that may be required to a building to avoid a breach of the regulations.

What are the penalties?

The MEES regulations do not place a legal obligation on a landlord to carry out works to improve the energy efficiency; but the landlord can be liable if it is in breach. If a landlord chooses to let a sub-standard property, or continues an existing letting of a sub-standard property, without making the necessary energy efficiency improvements (and valid registered

exemption) the landlord runs the risk of enforcement action.

There are potential financial penalties (ranging from £5,000 to £150,000 depending on the value of the property and the duration of the breach) as well as potential reputational risks, as breaches are published on a public register. To date enforcement has been minimal for various reasons including a lack of available resources at local authorities – but as climate change continues to be a priority at a national and global level, we can expect increased focus on this area in the future. In 2021-22 a programme of grant funding was announced to help local authorities develop their MEES compliance and enforcement operations, so this is likely to see an increased scrutiny on sub-standard properties in the near future.

What's coming next?

Climate policy is predicted to be of increasing importance across the globe, as all countries and governments continue to look towards improving their environmental performance.

The UK government is committed to improving the country's environmental credentials – so there are proposals to increase the minimum energy efficiency standard to C by 2027 and B by 2030. If these changes are brought in they are likely to have a significant impact for many commercial landlords, who may need to carry out further improvements to the energy efficiency of their buildings.

The Government may also look to impose duties for MEES compliance on tenants, including in relation to tenant fit-out works – so there may be future obligations on tenants to introduce and pay for energy efficiency improvements.

There has also been discussion of “green leases” which contain a series of additional provisions agreed by landlord and tenant, imposing obligations on each party to manage and reduce the environmental impact of a property by way of improvements. This obviously comes with potential costs which can be off-putting for businesses and individuals, but there may be increasing incentives in future to encourage parties to sign up to these obligations.

It is clear that there can be a conflict between the financial objectives of a business and its environmental targets (whether voluntary or imposed) but there are likely to be increasing incentives for achieving energy efficiency improvements – so landlords and tenants will need to be aware of these and act soon.

For more information on how your business could embrace more sustainable practices contact us **here** or...Talk to Tollers on 01438 901095, our teams are on hand to guide you through.





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iSales Academy

● Sales Academy were founded in 2017
1 to address skills gaps in Hertfordshire.
We are a specialist Apprenticeship and bespoke training provider.

Our apprenticeship programmes include:

- Business Administrator
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iSales are different; we forge strong working relationships with local employers and other industry experts to

"iSales are different; we forge strong working relationships with local employers and other industry experts to ensure that the curriculums we provide remain in alignment with current thinking"

ensure that the curriculums we provide remain in alignment with current thinking. We aim to be the best apprenticeship provider possible and are very proud of our Apprentices and the results they

achieve. Central to success is the 3-way partnership that is fostered between Apprentice, employer and iSales staff.

We are passionate about supporting our local community in every way that we can. We work on community projects, fundraise for local charities, and enjoy supporting schools and colleges however possible. This has been done in a variety of different formats over the years.

Some of our current projects include working the Hertfordshire LEP to provide free and flexible Skills Bootcamps in Digital across Hertfordshire. These courses help people from the age of 19 upwards to gain the necessary digital skills to secure a job or progress in their careers. Also, through the UK Governments National Multiply Scheme we are offering expert training workshops to upskill staff that are catered specific sectors and business requirements.

We believe the key to our success is to focus our energy on turning knowledge into demonstrable skill using blended learning techniques within all of our training programmes.

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"Research shows that negotiators who engaged in 'small talk' before a negotiation increased successful outcomes fourfold over those who went directly into negotiation"

Many business people seem to think that skill in negotiation is down to innate skill – natural personality, charm and the 'gift of the gab'. It is not completely true. Those things can help but the fact is that negotiation skills can be learned. And the real secret to a successful negotiation is preparation. A well-prepared but inexperienced negotiator can achieve a better outcome than a more experienced counterpart who is ill-prepared.

John Wiblin, Partner and Head of Dispute Resolution, received training in advanced negotiation at the Harvard Negotiation Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is experienced in negotiating business disputes. He is also an accredited civil and commercial mediator. He tells us what to consider in advance of your next negotiation.

Be selective about whom you negotiate with

There is no point in wasting your energy negotiating with someone who lacks authority to make the crucial decision. Never go into an important negotiation without having confirmed in advance with

whom you will be negotiating and, more importantly, that they have the authority to make a final decision (or, at the very least, that they can contact the ultimate decision-maker by telephone at the key point and that person is available and expecting to take their call).

Establish trust

Break the ice early in negotiation so that you can go on to establish mutual trust. Try to find mutual interests or common ground at the earliest stage. Meet face-to-face whenever possible and talk about sport, the weather, anything but the negotiation for the first few minutes. (Advance research on your negotiating counterpart will pay off here: if their website profile says they support a team, be ready briefly to discuss the results of the team's last match.) Research shows that negotiators who engaged in 'small talk' before a negotiation increased successful outcomes fourfold over those who went directly into negotiation.

Know your alternatives to settlement

Never negotiate without knowing your realistic and Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA). If you

don't know what you will do if you don't reach agreement, you can't know whether or not to accept an offer that is made in the negotiation.

Discredit your counterpart's settlement alternatives

Try also to work out in advance what you think the other side's BATNA is and then set about making that look less certain or attractive. BATNA-bashing can be highly effective. Recognise when it is being done to you in a negotiation.

Change the players if the negotiation stalls

If the negotiation stalls and all else fails, withdraw from the negotiation and substitute a colleague in your place. Try to get the other side to do the same. New people will come to the matter fresh and can revitalise discussions where others have failed to build rapport or the discussion has stagnated.





THREE-QUARTERS OF EMPLOYED BRITS DREAM OF BECOMING SELF-EMPLOYED

A survey of 2,000 British people's has shown that three quarters of them, or 74.2% who don't already own a business, would like to pursue their dream of becoming an entrepreneur. The survey from Solopress showed that starting their venture in the retail sector is

the most appealing industry to enter for aspiring business owners. Two similar sectors, health and wellness, and food and beverages, closely follow retail as the most popular industries for dreaming entrepreneurs to start their venture in.

Top 10 sectors people would like to open a business in	Percentage of respondents that want to open a business in this sector (%)
Retail	6.4%
Health and wellness	5.8%
Food and beverages	5.0%
IT	4.6%
Pet care	4.5%
Hospitality and tourism	3.7%
Education and training	3.1%
Craft business	3.1%
Finance	2.7%
Manufacturing and production	2.7%

The survey reveals that finance alongside manufacturing and production are the least popular industries for budding business owners.

Interestingly, there's a noticeable gender split in people hoping to manage their own company in the future. 82.5% of men hope to open their own business one day, regardless of what sector it's in. This figure slides slightly as at 68%, almost a third of females have no intention of ever owning their own enterprise.

Over 93% of 18-24-year-olds want to open their own business one day.

In comparison, almost 50% of those aged over 55 have no wish to enter into the entrepreneur lifestyle.

Age range	Percentage (%) that said they would not want to open a business in any sector
18-24	6.4%
25-34	6.6%
35-44	11.5%
45-54	20.9%
55	48.6%

Remarkably a staggering 83.5% of all Cardiff residents would like to open a business in the future. They're closely followed by Londoners where 82% of people also have ambitions of

running their own business. Interestingly, each of the top four cities full of aspiring entrepreneurs belongs to a different corner of Britain. In Cardiff, London, Glasgow and Belfast, it's clear

that Britain is full of ambitious potential entrepreneurs.

Top 10 cities with the highest percentage of aspiring entrepreneurs:

City	Would open a business (Net)	N/A – I would never open a business in any sector	Sector	%
Cardiff	83.58%	16.42%	Retail	10.45%
London	81.98%	18.02%	Health and wellness	6.68%
Belfast	80.00%	20.00%	Retail	10.91%
Glasgow	78.85%	21.15%	Health and wellness	9.62%
Leeds	77.23%	22.77%	Pet care	8.91%
Newcastle	77.11%	22.89%	Food and beverages	8.43%
Southampton	77.08%	22.92%	Retail	8.33%
Manchester	75.97%	24.03%	Retail	7.14%
Sheffield	71.43%	28.57%	Food and beverages / Health and wellness	7.94%
Edinburgh	70.49%	29.51%	Retail	11.48%



Languishing at the bottom are maritime cities, Bristol and Liverpool. Over 40% of respondents in both of these areas have no intention of starting their own businesses. Almost a third of the Solopress survey respondents (30.7%) cited the associated cost as being the main reason preventing or putting their entrepreneurial dreams on hold.

Depending on the industry, some businesses will incur higher costs than others. However, all will be met with the same type of costs initially. Start-up costs, legal fees and marketing are required and necessary to get the business running. Almost a quarter of people believe their fear of failure is the biggest barrier to entrepreneurship (23.1%). High expectations, low confidence or maybe a mixture of the two can build up a growing picture of doubt in someone's head. Once this canvas gets too crowded, it's no surprise many fear their future business may fail.

This was closely followed by the economic climate being the third largest factor preventing aspiring entrepreneurs from starting (22.2%). The instability post-Brexit compounded by the Coronavirus pandemic, has left an economic climate in which many are clearly wary about starting a new chapter.

A lack of experience (20.2%) and a lack of knowledge (16.4%) made up the last two barriers to entrepreneurship. This is interesting, as on the flip side, many entrepreneurs claim to suffer from imposter syndrome due to a perceived lack of knowledge or experience in their new position.

Biggest barrier to entrepreneurship	Percentage who agreed with this statement (%)
The associated cost	30.7%
Fear of failure	23.1%
The economic climate	22.2%
Lack of experience	20.2%
Lack of knowledge	16.4%

Following the trend shown in the survey that most people (30%) believe the associated costs are the biggest barrier to entrepreneurship, it's not surprising that receiving monetary incentives would

encourage more to take the leap of faith. 41.8% of respondents cited financial backing as the biggest factor that would significantly lower their barrier to entrepreneurship.

Moreover, 60% believe funding and greater government aid are the biggest barriers that could make their entrepreneurial dreams a reality.

A third of people believe a lack of knowledge and experience is preventing them from becoming an entrepreneur according to our survey. One in five (20%) believe that advice on how to start a business plan would increase their chances of starting a business.

36% of people believe that both advice on how to cope with the risk of starting a business and having a greater knowledge

of the business sector are the important factors that would make them more likely to start their entrepreneurial career. These were the top five answers when our respondents were asked 'What would help you overcome your previously mentioned barriers the most?':

STATEMENT	%
Financial backing	41.8%
Advice on how to start a business plan	20.8%
Government support and policies	20.1%
Advice on how to cope with the risk of starting a new business	19.3%
More knowledge about the business sector	17.8%

Living in a green world may be a dream for some but it's a key business target for others. With increasing pressure on existing companies to introduce and uphold green values, does this sway the approach of potential new business owners?

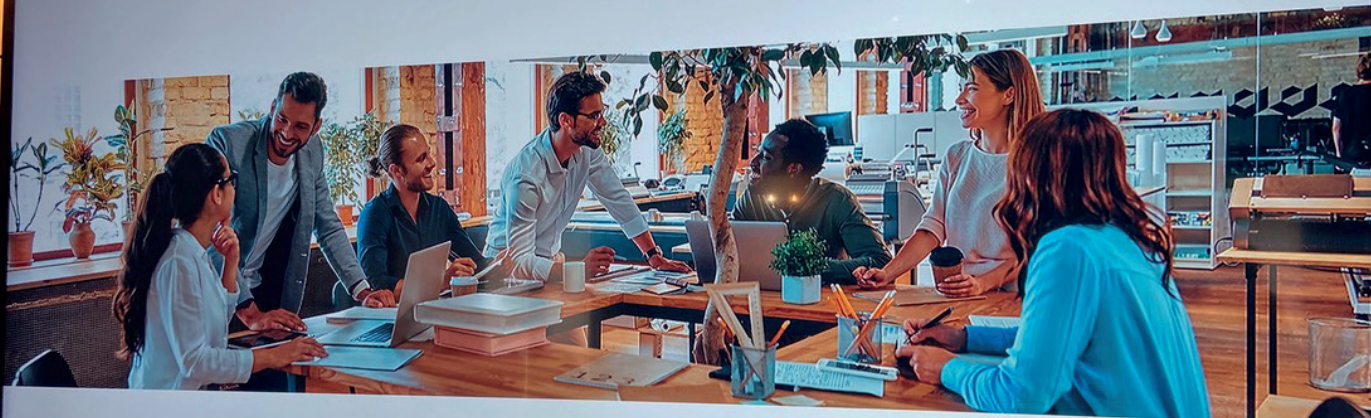
Overwhelmingly, the answer is yes. 81.3% of people believe it's important to make sure their business is a green business. However, it's fascinating to see that, according to our data, it's not Generation Z who care the most about environmental sustainability when setting up a business. Those aged 35-44 can clearly be seen to have the strongest green values if they were to start their dream business. This is shown by 88.8% claiming that having a green business is important to them versus 81% of 18-24-year-olds.

The likelihood is that many of those aged 35-44 may recently have become parent, opening their eyes to the world they want their children to be raised in. Unsurprisingly, people aged over 55 put the least emphasis on environmental sustainability with 25% of those surveyed disregarding the green values of their future business.

Age range:	Percentage (%) that said having a green business is important to them:
18-24	81.0%
25-34	84.2%
35-44	87.8%
45-54	80.2%
55	75.7%



Credit: Jake Ross blog from Solopress



biz4Biz ConneXions Lunch
Thursday 28 September 2023 at Knebworth House Barns

biz4Biz ConneXions

SPONSORED BY

Hertfordshire
Local Enterprise
Partnership

The latest biz4Biz ConneXions held at the end of September was entitled Meet the Experts - Where to find finance and support for your business - and it certainly delivered!

In front of a packed audience of business leaders and influencers at Knebworth House Barns there was the chance to listen to experts discussing a range of Finance and Business support options.

The free event lasted for approximately an hour and was followed by lunch in which networkers and visitors were given the chance to gain more valuable insights.



SPEAKERS:



ARUN MUTHIRULAN, INNOVATION & GROWTH TEAM MANAGER. NATIONAL INVESTMENT READINESS GROUP MEMBER, INNOVATE UK EDGE

Arun is a Senior Innovation, Growth and Investment specialist delivering Innovate UK EDGE's tailored support for SMEs to help them raise funding, innovate, grow and scale. He is a member of Innovate UK EDGE's National Investment Readiness Group and specialises in funding sources for innovation, business models and financial modelling.



STEPHANIE ALDRIDGE, SENIOR INNOVATION & GROWTH SPECIALIST. INVESTMENT READINESS CHAMPION - EAST OF ENGLAND, INNOVATE UK EDGE

Stephanie is an experienced business adviser and has a proven track record of supporting ambitious businesses to develop winning commercial strategies, become investment ready, and secure funding and finance. Stephanie has held several Directorships and has a background in strategy consulting.



SARAH WHITE, DTEP (DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY EXPLOITATION PROGRAMME) BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP MANAGER, DASA

Sarah supports suppliers with the Defence Technology Exploitation Programme (DTEP) whereby SME's can apply for funding to work with companies already in the defence supply chain to get their innovations to market. Sarah has spent most of her career working in SME's, large international organisations and universities in business analytical and development.



DR CLARE GREEN, INNOVATION PARTNER (YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER), DASA

Clare joined the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) in August 2021 and was the Innovation Partner for the East of England before moving to cover Yorkshire and the Humber in 2023. She is working to build networks across the region to identify technologies and innovations that could offer benefit to UK Defence and Security. Clare's career has had a medtech focus and spanned both large industry and SMEs.



KIERAN THORPE, GROWTH ACCOUNT MANAGER, HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH HUB

Hertfordshire Growth Hub is Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's flagship business support provider. Powered by Hertfordshire LEP, it is delivered by a consortium of partners, led by business support specialists Exemplas, with the University of Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Visit Herts.

FEATURED COMPANIES INCLUDED:

- Innovate UK
- DASA
- Biz4Biz Angels
- Catapult
- Herts Growth Hub
- Crowdfunding – Little Birdie Holdings
- Department for Business and Trade



SPEAKERS:



MARTIN BOULD, CEO/ FOUNDER, LITTLE BIRDIE

Martin is a co-founder and CEO of Little Birdie, the UK's first personal subscription and recurring payment management app - helping consumers save time and money on unwanted and unused subscriptions. Innovate UK EDGE client, Little Birdie recently closed an oversubscribed round on CrowdCube for £210k, bringing total funding to date to over £700k.



JOHN BROOK, INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADVISER, DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS AND TRADE

John's main employment history has been with major multinationals (IBM and Xerox) in the office products, IT and telecommunications businesses. This was followed by a period as International Sales Director for a pharmaceutical manufacturer in Ireland and more recently as an Interim Managing Director for a local engineering company.



CRAIG GREEN, EXPORT FINANCE MANAGER, UK EXPORT FINANCE

Craig Green engages with start up to blue chip companies across Herts and Bucks to support them in achieving their international export requirements. Working under the mandate, to advance prosperity by ensuring no viable UK export fails for lack of finance and insurance, doing that sustainably and at no net cost to the taxpayer. Craig joined UK Export Finance in September 2017. Prior to this, he was employed in the banking sector for 21 years.



DR PETER GOODEN, HEAD OF INNOVATION, UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

Pete spent almost 10 years in the chemical industry working for a university spinout company. Subsequently, Pete moved into the Higher Education sector and now holds the position of Head of Innovation at Herts. Pete's team manage Herts' KTP portfolio and is enabling industry to gain funding to access the expertise and facilities within the University. Pete also manages the intellectual property pipeline at Herts.



DR HELEN PODMORE, SENIOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER (INNOVATION), UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

Helen spent almost 12 years working for a major supplier to the life sciences industry. Helen joined the University of Hertfordshire in 2018 and now holds the position of Senior Business Development Manager (Innovation). Helen's team manage the University's contract research, consultancy and KTP portfolio, enabling industry to gain funding to access expertise and facilities.

What do I need to do to borrow Money for my Business

Ian Taylor is a highly experienced business advisor and financial professional, with more than 30 years of experience in senior executive roles with Barclays and BNP Paribas.



In previous articles, I talked about the types of finance that a business can structure to meet the needs of the Business whether it be to buy a long-term asset or to fund the working capital. Whether you are borrowing from a mainstream Bank or a Secondary lender the approach to the request is much the same and it is key to remember that what you provide to a Lender in terms of information must be key information that you use to manage your business on a day to day, week to week, month to month basis. We often talk about the provision of “Management Information” that a lender will want to see on a regular basis.

The key here though is that it is “Information” that you use to “Manage” your business. So first and foremost, the information must be fit for purpose including KPI’s (Key Performance Indicators) that you need to know to make sound decisions on the trajectory of your business.

Having also been on both sides of the fence, it is important to remember a mutual respect for each other’s position. The Lender is assuming the lending risk and will ask lots of questions while the business carries the risk/challenge of making money and repaying the Lender.

THE PHILOSOPHY FOR LENDING

When a Bank lends it does so because they judge that they will get their money back on an agreed future date. To reach their decision, they must make a prediction of the future and as they do not have the benefit of a crystal ball, they cannot do this with absolute certainty.

The aim of their lending appraisal process is to assess and eliminate uncertainties. This involves assembling all the information they need and then evaluating it correctly. There is no definitive analytical process through which they can make their assessment, and this is why many experienced lenders describe lending as an “art” rather than a “science”. That said as technology has evolved there are several “platform” lenders that will just process information and the computer says yes or no. This is normally for low amounts, very quick and very expensive.

Let us stick with the theme that you are approaching a Lender for a sensible amount of funds at a sensible price. On that basis let me set out the methodical approach that each lender should take or a close variation on a theme.

Of equal importance to the approach is the state of mind in which the lender approaches the assessment. There is an overriding need to form an objective view. This means not being influenced by outside pressures or preconceptions. To be seen as professional lenders, they will not take a decision too quickly or based on inadequate information. Equally, if the ultimate decision is going to be No then they have a duty to tell you quickly and with explanation.

With that in mind let us just run through some Do’s and Don’ts from the Lender’s perspective:

DO ask for time to consider the proposition and give a sensible timeframe. They will always try to seek financial information before a meeting so that it can be

assessed, and questions identified.

DON’T make assumptions or fill the gaps themselves – it is their responsibility to get full information from the Business. DON’T accept the Business statements at face value. Do not be offended by this as they will seek evidence that will provide independent corroboration.

DO distinguish between facts, estimates and opinions when forming their judgement – these elements will carry different weights in the final evaluation. DO be sure that they understand the risk involved in the proposition before reaching a decision. If they cannot understand the request, they will not do it.

METHODICAL APPROACH TO APPRAISAL

Once a lender has met you, asked the questions and assimilated the financial information they will then begin their review of the application and write their internal “credit” paper for decision. It is at this stage that the “Canons of Good Lending” are applied. There are many a mnemonic used in different Banks/ Lenders but one of the oldest and still used today is CAMPARI:

Character: This is perhaps the most difficult area for a lender to assess but one of crucial importance. It is impossible to judge somebody’s character based on a few meetings and this area will be assessed on facts and evidence. The sort of questions they will ask themselves:

1. Can his/her word be trusted as regards the details of the proposition and the promise of repayment?
2. Is his/her approach conservative or does he/she tend towards the over-optimistic?
3. What is his/her track record?
4. If a new client to the lender, why have they come to them?

Ability: This covers the extent to which a client is successful in managing his/her Business and financial affairs:

1. Does the management have the necessary production, marketing, and finance skills?
2. What qualifications do they have – ISO?
3. What is their motivation and capacity to succeed?
4. What is their experience in the field for which the finance is required? How well do they know their sector and competitors? Spread of clients?

Margin: The Lender is in business to make profits and give shareholders a fair return on their investment.

The interest margin, commission and fees should be agreed with you at the outset. The interest margin will reflect the risk they perceive in the advance and in today's market they have sophisticated pricing models based on sector, amount, term, and security.

Purpose: Is the lender willing to lend for the purpose given and can it be verified. In this highly regulated world, there are sectors that a lender will not get involved in and they will qualify themselves out right from the beginning. Trade with UN sanctioned countries will be prohibited.

Amount: There are dangers for a lender to lend either too much or too little. They will establish that the amount required is correct and ensure all incidental expenses have been considered.

You as the borrower should ask for sufficient to cover contingencies. Is the amount requested in proportion to the Borrower's own resources and contribution? Normally, a reasonable contribution from the borrower to show evidence of commitment and the borrower's stake provides a buffer should problems occur.

Repayment: Source of repayment must be clear from the outset, and they will establish with a degree of certainty that the promised funds will be received. It is here that the real risk of lending is assessed.

If the lending is for working capital, then the lender will satisfy themselves as to the revolving nature of the cash and current assets/liabilities.

If the lending is a term commitment and clearance is to come from income/cashflow, then they will undertake a full appraisal of the forward projections with one eye on the historical performance to demonstrate the achievability of forecasts, the assumptions made and the ability to cover all funding costs, not



just the new lending. In some instances where the lending is "forecast led" and by that, I mean an over reliance on future performance is required then the lender may require Independent Financial Due Diligence. This is not a bad thing and whilst it will cost, it is undertaken by a well-known firm of accountants (ideally with good knowledge of your sector) who will provide the lender with independent assurance of the forecasts and sensitivities to those forecasts.

It is at this stage that financial covenants will be considered in terms of annual debt service by profits and cash generation. When entering a term commitment of, say, 10 years a lender will have triggers to monitor performance both against the Management Information provided and annual audited accounts. If any of the triggers are "breached" then the facility becomes repayable on demand. There is then a period of remediation where the borrower can satisfy the breach or if not, then the facility is renegotiated or repaid if that is an option.

Insurance (Security): All the above "Canons of Lending" need to be satisfied irrespective of any security available, but a lender will always consider whether security is necessary in case the repayment plans do not work out. The lender will make sure that the security is freely available to be given taking all parties involved into account. There have been many legal precedents over the years

that impact this decision.

Additionally, tangible security for a lending will have a marginal impact on the interest margin for the better.

The lender will always ensure that their security is perfected and in place before any money is released.

MONITORING AND CONTROL

Once the lender has made their decision and agreed to lend the money, it is unrealistic of them to expect a customer's plans to work out perfectly and will therefore need to carry out regular reviews of progress in addition to checking for covenant compliance as detailed above.

The regular reviews will normally be monthly, and it should be a two-way street. The lender will want to monitor trading performance to budget but it is also the opportunity for the customer to keep the lender up to date with current trading conditions and future expectations. A monthly suite of Management Information should consist of:

1. Monthly Profit & Loss, Balance Sheet and Cashflow.
2. Commentary to the Profit & Loss. Do not repeat the numbers but, rather give good insight into why the numbers are what they are.
3. Revised Annual Forecast. By that I mean taking the original budget and inserting actual performance as the months pass. So, for instance, at the halfway stage, the forecast will consist of 6 months actual trading and 6 month's forecasts. NOTE: keep the original budget intact as the revised annual forecast will dictate future action whether that be cost cutting or funding further growth.

With this information supported by a discussion, the lender will be able to continually assess the risk and support the business better.

I hope that this gives some insight to a lender's approach to a borrowing request and importantly, support your thinking around the type of process and the information you will need to produce and keep up to date in a timely manner. Problems occur when there is a lack of communication.

Ian Taylor ACIB
biz4Biz Associate

CU Phosco

100

L I G H T I N G

Celebrating a Century of British Manufacturing

Celebrating 100 years in 2023, CU Phosco based in Great Amwell, Ware, will be no strangers to Insight readers after the business scooped no less than three awards at the recent biz4Biz Business Awards. A manufacturer of exterior lighting products and structures, the inception was the invention of spun concrete columns by the founder Charles Marques. Over the years the company has evolved from concrete columns, via bridges, pontoons through to present day LED and floodlighting products. CU Phosco Lighting, (formerly known as Concrete Utilities), is the longest established lighting group in the UK.



Here are some of the highlights from their rich and varied heritage:

OUR FOUNDER



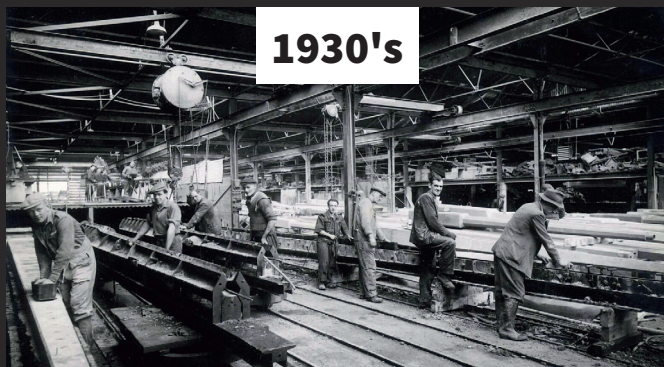
Charles Albert Marques M.B.E. was originally from Adelaide, Australia. He enlisted in the Australian Expeditionary Force in 1914 in WW1 and with his father, he was sent to Gallipoli and France. After the war, both father and son decided to settle in England.

1920's



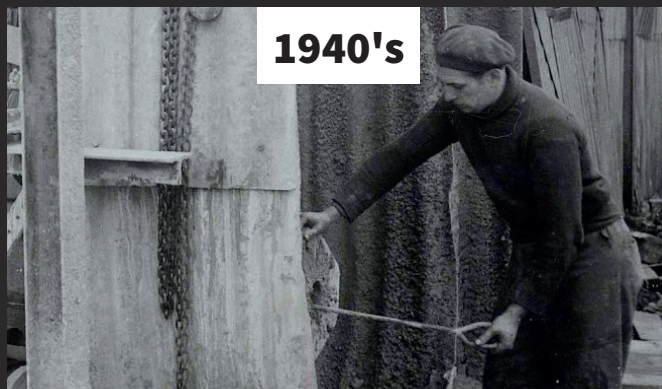
Charles was in partnership with C R Belling of Belling Electric Fires and Cookers and the company was started to make miscellaneous concrete products. Later the company moved to Great Amwell in Ware, (where our Head Office still resides) and Concrete Utilities Ltd. was formed in 1925.

1930's




Concrete Utilities Ltd. formed producing pre-stressed concrete products. Charles Marques invented a spun concrete process that was ideally suited to concrete column production

1940's



We aided the war effort by producing concrete bombs for the RAF to practice with during WW2.



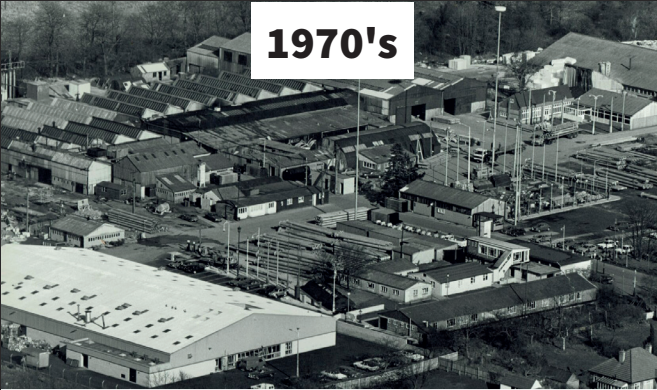
1950's

Phosco was established producing a wide range of outdoor lighting lanterns and floodlights.



1960's

We produced the first high mast lighting towers and established our High Mast Contract Services Division servicing roads, airports, docks, and stadiums throughout the world.




1970's

We produced the first passively safe lighting columns and won the prestigious Queen's Award for Export.



1980's

We produced the UK's first tapered tubular columns. Concrete Utilities changed its name to CU Lighting.



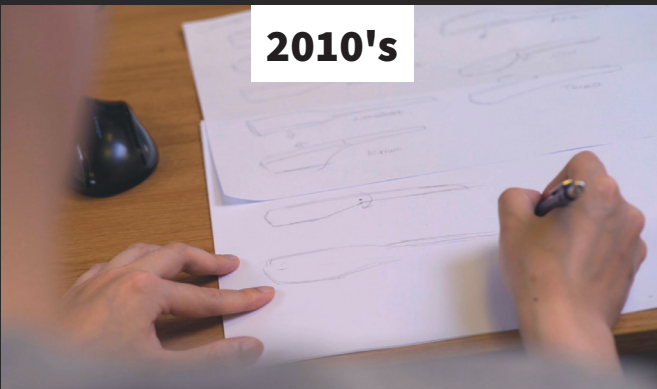
1990's

We established a joint venture in China, CU Beijing, producing High Mast and other lanterns for the Chinese market.



2000's

We started the production of masts for wind turbines.



2010's

We started the development of our award winning, energy-efficient LED Lighting Systems reducing energy consumption in the lighting industry.



2020's

We celebrate our 100th birthday in 2023, marking 100yrs of manufacturing in Britain.

A Message from our Founder and Chairman, Adrian Hawkins OBE

Established in 2010 to provide “a voice for business”, biz4Biz ensures that the benefit of businesses to our society is both seen and heard.

Insight Magazine published bi-monthly holds a current circulation in excess of 600,000 + named business professionals across the northern home counties with a 60% open rate on the first day of delivery. The Sustainable Biz magazine currently published quarterly holds a similar national circulation with a focus on technology to save money, carbon footprint assessment and the journey to Net Zero. We also have the Manufacturing Biz title in our magazine stable with more planned.

biz4Biz is also responsible for the very successful Hertfordshire Business Awards now in its 5th year, annual business conferences, our very popular ConneXions lunches, and breakfasts and the new biz4Biz Angel Investment group providing an ideal space to host these important assets.

We also offer a complete range of marketing awareness services and encourage our members to consider our “Let’s Work Together” (LWT) package providing the most complete marketing awareness service with reach available. Further details of the LWT package can be found overleaf. LWT is a unique package to promote a company, its skills, people, products, and services.

All our services carry a 30% discount for Members who also enjoy free editorial on joining biz4Biz. Don’t hesitate and join biz4Biz today online here <https://biz4biz.org/membership/>

We look forward to you joining biz4Biz and to assisting you in the future,

Best Wishes

Adrian Hawkins

Adrian Hawkins OBE
Founder & Chairman biz4Biz
biz4Biz



A Voice for Business

We launched our first Insight magazine back in August 2014 followed by our ConneXions business networking group and our phenomenally successful biz4Biz Awards programme.

biz4Biz has become a well-established and highly respected brand that provides a voice for the business community. As part of our continued growth, we have expanded our activities nationally.

We are now able to offer SMEs the ability to market their businesses via our "Let's Work Together" integrated digital marketing package which includes:

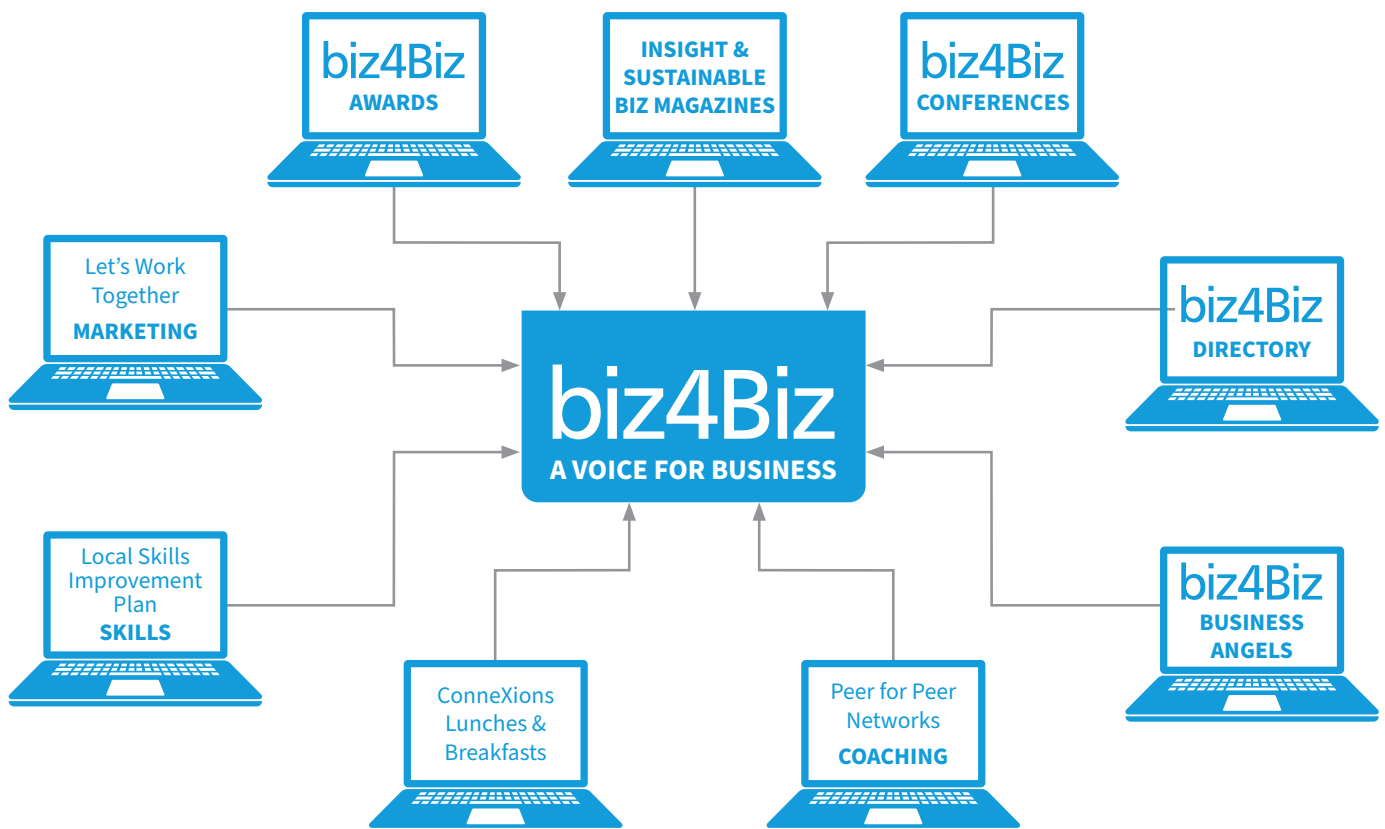
- **Advertising and editorial in our Insight, Sustainable Biz and Manufacturing Biz magazine**
- **Newsletters**
- **Blog posts**
- **ConneXions webinars**
- **Email**
- **Twitter**
- **LinkedIn promotion**
- **Video content in the magazine and on the website**
- **YouTube**
- **Website advertising**
- **Awards Sponsorship**



In addition, we can offer specialised website promotion via our focused expert pages.

These services would be suitable for a wide range of professional services companies in accountancy, legal, HR, financial services, property services, corporate finance, IT, marketing, and insurance amongst others.

For more information contact our marketing team on **0330 9002 777**





“ ———

Being taken into foster care with bin bags was so dehumanising.

My brother was 1. I was a young teen. Mum had just been sectioned.



Henrietta
Care Leaver

A Comfort Case would have made us feel cared about.

COMFORT CASES UK

QR

The impact has been profound.

I work specifically with unaccompanied children, typically aged 16 to reaching 18. Some young people have arrived with just a carrier bag of belongings. For these young people they have travelled across the world escaping awful situations and so to be welcomed with a Comfort Case bag has been lovely.

Practice Supervisor, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Transitions Lead
Lincolnshire

COMFORT CASES UK

”

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

“ ———

The 4 year old girl slept with her teddy the night she was given it.

They didn't have much and what they did have weren't in nice bags so these bags were really nice for them to put their belongings in.



CHILDREN'S SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING SOCIAL WORKER
STOKE-ON-TRENT

COMFORT CASES UK

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE:

“

The 6 year old boy loved his bag and took it to school the next day with all his belongings in.

The second day in his placement he agreed to leave it at placement when he felt sure he was coming back.

He has also taken it on holiday this week.

”

CHILDREN'S SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING SOCIAL WORKER
STOKE-ON-TRENT

COMFORT CASES UK

I don't mind admitting to a few tears when Hertsmere Borough Cllr Alex Clarkson and I visited an inspiring Borehamwood-based charity this month. CEO Sarah Laster warmly welcomed us to the new home of Comfort Cases UK and invited us both to pack a new rucksack filled with essential items of comfort and personal care for a child being taken into emergency care. We imagined them otherwise leaving their home with just the clothes on their back and a bin bag of belongings.

The concept of ownership and control for a child through carrying such a brand-new case into a foster home hit hard and we lovingly packed pyjamas, blankets, toiletries, books and 'trauma' teddy bears with a handwritten card showing someone cares.

Every child should know their value and worth, so if your business would like to get involved with the #nomorebinbags campaign through volunteering, fundraising or sponsoring please contact sarah@comfortcasesuk.org or visit comfortcasesuk.org. And, with Christmas approaching, [click here](#) to look at their Amazon Wishlist.



Thanks to the generous support of businesses like yours, thousands of children will no longer have to carry their life in a bin bag.



Sarah Free
Herts Charity Champion

Recruitment

Social Media Assistant – Part Time 10am to 2pm – Working from Home

We currently seek a self-employed assistant to support our Social Media team as our business expands.

The hours are flexible and to suit the arrangements at home. We seek individuals with a good knowledge of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google, TikTok and Twitter.

For further details contact secretariat@biz4biz.co.uk

biz4Biz

Advertising Sales Representative – Part Time 10am to 2pm – Working from Home

We currently seek a self-employed assistant to support our Advertising Sales team as our business expands.

The hours are flexible and to suit the arrangements at home. We seek confident individuals with a good knowledge of Advertising Sales.

For further details contact secretariat@biz4biz.co.uk

biz4Biz

Employer Engagement Executive x2

This is a great opportunity to contribute to a dedicated project of strategic workforce development within Hertfordshire. You will be an Employer Engagement Executive working as part of a highly motivated, focussed Business Development team.

www.nhc.ac.uk/discover/about-us/work-for-us



Finance Committee Chair

Our governors play a vital role in the success of the Hart Learning Group (HLG), proving a wealth of experience from across different social and professional backgrounds to ensure the group is well-run and high-achieving. We're currently looking to build our Governance team – could you be part of the future of HLG?

www.nhc.ac.uk/discover/about-us/work-for-us



Join the George Hay team

We have a range of opportunities, from apprenticeships to qualified senior roles.

We would love to hear from you if a career with us is something you are interested in.

www.georgehay.co.uk/about-us/join-us



Launch your Career

Airbus pioneers sustainable aerospace for a safe and united world. The Company constantly innovates to provide efficient and technologically-advanced solutions in aerospace, defence, and connected services.

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AIRBUS

Advertise here at competitive rates



www.biz4biz.org/insight-magazine





Assynt Corporate Finance Limited take part in Innovate UK's Funding Strategy Advice Pilot

Assynt Corporate Finance Limited has been engaged by Innovate UK to provide advice to potential applicants for Innovate UK Innovation Loans, exclusively offered by member firms of The Corporate Finance Network in a pilot programme running during Autumn 2023.

The programme is intended to supplement the wider strategy of Innovate UK to support businesses with late stage research & development (R&D) and focus on the most important areas of the future economy, as set out in Innovate UK's [5 year plan for action](#) which runs until 2025. Innovate UK have the ability to offer [innovation loans](#) to small and medium sized-enterprises (SMEs).

Innovation loans aim to provide flexible and patient capital to support business growth through all stages of innovation. Loans of between £100,000 and £2 million are available, with a maximum term of 7 years, and a fixed rate of interest of 7.4% per annum, partially deferred in the R&D and pre-commercial phases before the repayment period commences.

The application process for an innovation loan requires businesses to demonstrate that they have a high quality late-stage R&D project and are able to provide business and financial information to satisfy the Credit Committee of Innovate UK Loans Ltd that they are suitable to take on the significant commitment of a substantial long term loan.

Since the start of the initial innovation loans pilot programme in 2017 over 1,600 applications have been received and 235 loans have been made. In the first 9 rounds of the future economy innovation loans programme that closed between April 2022 and July 2023, while 650 applications were received, almost a third were not eligible, mainly because the financial submissions were not considered to be adequate. Over three quarters of the eligible applications did not progress to the detailed credit evaluation stage, even though a majority of these were considered to have a high quality innovation project proposal. As a result, the overall success rate is currently significantly lower than intended.

Nigel Walker, Deputy Director, Lending & Investor Partnerships at Innovate UK approached Kirsty McGregor, Founder and Chairman of The Corporate Finance Network, with the aim of improving that success rate. Over the past six months, they have jointly developed a Financial Strategy Advice programme which member firms of The CFN will deliver to potential loan applicants, before they make their application.

Innovate UK have committed to support a day's worth of advice, on behalf of selected companies who have demonstrated strong potential to become viable innovative businesses with the quality of their R&D and technology.

Nigel Walker commented "We have identified that there is often a material gap between applicants' understanding of "suitability for an innovation loan" and the expectations of our Credit Committee – even though Innovate UK has significant appetite for innovation risk in our loan offer.

"The consistently high innovation project scores indicate that applicants have well

developed technology development strategies. These scores should also indicate strong commercial development strategies, but there is unfortunately a very frequent mismatch with the credibility of forecast revenues and costs in financial submissions.

“Our initial credit evaluations also indicated that applicants often have a poor appreciation of their underlying funding strategies, particularly around their management of working capital / liquidity and their adequacy of capitalisation.

“Applications, as well as discussion with both successful and unsuccessful applicants, highlighted a frequent gap of a senior finance professional within management teams and a strong reluctance to access and pay for expert financial advice.

“Therefore, I hope this small-scale pilot will identify whether private sector corporate finance professionals can play a part in improving the quality of the applications and I look forward to reviewing the results later in the year, when we can assess whether there is value for money in rolling out this programme to further applicants.”

Kirsty McGregor added “I am incredibly impressed with the tenacity and commitment of the Innovate UK Lending team and their desire to support innovative companies in our economy. The Corporate Finance Network member firms are ideally placed to exclusively take part in this pilot with Innovate UK.

“As outlined in the Government’s Innovation Strategy, Innovate UK is tasked with helping businesses to grow and thrive, and contribute to the UK becoming a global hub for innovation by 2035.

“Despite the difficult times in our economy at present, Innovate UK recognises that this is also a time of opportunity and innovation. And the process that turns science and technology into added-value business reality, is the vital ingredient to unlocking the UK’s economic potential.



"I look forward to hearing about the eventual successes as these businesses bring their products to market in due course and we will be proud to be able to contribute to that success, wherever possible"

“I support this sentiment wholeheartedly and I am delighted to offer my skills and the professional advice of my member firms, to try to find a way to offer more financial support to the most innovative

businesses in our country.

“We hope that if we can assist founders at this critical stage, more will become successful and will pay back that initial contribution many times over as they become thriving companies and employers.”

Andrew Watkin, Founder And Director Of Assynt Corporate Finance Limited commented “I am delighted to be part of this pilot and to be able to offer advice to founders of innovative companies with late-stage R&D.

I look forward to hearing about the eventual successes as these businesses bring their products to market in due course and we will be proud to be able to contribute to that success, wherever possible.”



Andrew Watkin is the founder and owner of Assynt Corporate Finance Limited (www.assyntcf.co.uk) - a new generation of advisory chartered accountancy practice. Assynt is a member of The Corporate Finance Network, whose member firms are recognised as being the experts in smaller company finance transactions.



MEET THE NEW biz4biz MEMBER

Debenhams Ottaway - Andrew Yates

I lead the highly experienced corporate and commercial team of lawyers at Debenhams Ottaway. Having grown up in Hertfordshire, I returned here to work after studying in London and York.

Approach to work

I believe clients want straightforward, practical advice without the 'posturing' of some corporate lawyers. Along with James Brawn, my fellow corporate partner, we have established a reputation for providing excellent business led advice with outstanding client service.

Expertise and background

We work with clients across multiple

sectors including pharmacy, charity, banking and private wealth. Our focus is on acquisitions and disposals, mainly share and business purchases, together with constitutional work such as shareholders' agreements.

We work with high-net-worth individuals, investors, companies, LLPs and partnerships, from family run businesses and start-ups to private limited companies and unquoted public companies.

I'm named as a "next generation partner" and have been recognised as a key lawyer since 2021 in Legal 500, the leading independent guide to the best UK lawyers.

"We work with high-net-worth individuals, investors, companies, LLPs and partnerships, from family run businesses and start-ups to private limited companies and unquoted public companies."

In touch

- Member of the Law Society, Charity Law Association and previously the treasurer of Letchworth Round Table.
- Non-executive director of a family owned, Hertfordshire equity investor business.
- Member of Eurojuris, an international network of lawyers
- Judge on the Funding Network Hertfordshire panel, a charity crowd funding event
- Volunteer non-executive director of a residential management company.



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[Debenhams Ottaway](#) is a law firm based in Hertfordshire with offices in St Albans, Radlett and London. Our focus on client service has won us awards, top rankings in legal directories and outstanding client feedback.

Being a part of the Biz4biz business community is an opportunity to expand our network and – we have always been heavily involved in the Herts community. I look forward to sharing legal insights and working with other Biz4biz members.

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