

8.0 WLEP VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2020

WLEP BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The WLEP Board is asked to:

- Provide feedback for Worcestershire LEP's 2020 Virtual Conference and suggest changes and/or improvements for the 2021 Conference.

8.1 Approach for the Virtual Conference

- 8.1.1 The Virtual Conference took a different approach to previous physical conferences due to the impact of COVID-19 making it impossible to host a large-scale physical conference event.
- 8.1.2 The Virtual Conference utilised our virtual broadcasting platform, Livestorm. Content was broken down across 5 days with a specific topic identified for each day. These topics were: Skills & Employment, Healthy Worcestershire, Digital & Physical Infrastructure, Future Economy and One Worcestershire.
- 8.1.3 The background to every topic and the speakers for the session is available on the Virtual Conference section of the WLEP website. The link to this page is available as an **Appendix** at the end of this report.
- 8.1.4 Each topic was given a dedicated hour episode which allowed us to explore these topics in greater detail than at previous events. Touchpoints were identified that could connect the WLEP and the work we do with more people than before.
- 8.1.5 Each of the episodes were broadcasted to our registered viewers. This was then repeated the following week during the evening to allow anyone who missed the original broadcast to watch it.
- 8.1.6 The episodes have now been released on a weekly basis through our YouTube channel where they are now available on-demand.
- 8.1.7 The Virtual Conference also received the support of the county's 6 MPs as they joined us to produce the summary video. Each of the MPs provided a video and discussed the programme or project which was of most benefit to their constituency. The link to this summary video is available in the **Appendices** at the end of this report.

8.2 Feedback and Statistics from the Virtual Conference

- 8.2.1 Feedback received so far from the business community has been extremely positive. Several members of the executive team have received great reviews and comments about the quality and delivery of key information, the speakers and the format of the Virtual Conference episodes.
- 8.2.2 The viewing figures for the conference programme are different to previous audience rates as the content produced has an initial 'live viewing' figure and since have been made available on-demand through our YouTube channel. This means the viewer numbers will

continue to increase unlike at a physical event.

- 8.2.3 This presents the unique opportunity for the WLEP to continue expanding our reach and engagement with the Worcestershire community. Further promotion of this material is planned with links into stakeholders and partners to support across social media platforms.
- 8.2.4 We also have regional and national profile with the opportunity to share certain clips and pieces with stakeholders at these levels. An example of this would be with the MPs clips which has been shared with partners at the LEP Network and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 8.2.5 As we identify further stakeholders, we can re-use the footage we have and re-edit it to create pieces relevant to them which they can share and promote amongst their networks.
- 8.2.6 As of Friday 20th November the total Virtual Conference views stands at **1,118**. See the table below for the breakdown of live to on-demand views.

Type of content	Live Views	On-demand Views
Additional Material	N/A	408
Main Episodes	345	365
Total	345	773

Total views across the conference = **1,118**

- 8.2.7 Whilst this is much more reach than previously achieved physically, it has also helped to connect the Worcestershire LEP with more partners across the county to expand the awareness of the LEP and our programmes.
- 8.2.8 **Appendix 2** of this report contains more data on the episode breakdown showcasing the views that each episode has received in total.
- 8.2.9 A challenge that was recognised from the previous conferences was the need to interact more with the audience. This virtual format allowed us to achieve this, with users answering unique polls and submitting their own questions across the 5 episodes.
- 8.2.10 This information has been collected and will help to inform the future thinking of the WLEP and our projects as we take onboard the data from the conference.
- 8.2.11 The detailed poll findings are listed within **Appendix 3** at the end of this paper.
- 8.2.12 Now that we have this data collected, it will be used within our future comms strategy to outline the programmes and deliverables the community would like to hear more about.

8.3 Proposals for 2021 Conference

- 8.3.1 With the continued uncertainty around physical events taking place next year, we may have to embrace a similar virtual format again for the 2021 Conference.
- 8.3.2 We can see that having footage and sessions available on-demand is hugely important to increasing the exposure of the WLEP and is something that must be carried on going forward.
- 8.3.3 Ideas have been shared around 'hybrid events', combining a small physical audience with virtual viewers joining online. This perhaps could be an idea to explore, however the value to risk factor of bringing together a physical audience would have to be assessed and approved.

- 8.3.4 Future conferences would also need to continue to utilise business speakers to help bring in different audiences to engage with the work of the WLEP.
- 8.3.5 Delivery for the 2021 Conference has been identified for potentially following a similar timeframe to this year with the conference held between October to the end of November 2021. To be approved by the WLEP board.
- 8.3.6 We would like to invite the board to share ideas and concepts around the structure and format of the 2021 WLEP conference and how this can be delivered, building on the success of the 2020 Virtual Conference.

Alex Price
PR, Marketing & Communications Co-ordinator

Appendix 1 – Website Links

Virtual Conference Website – <https://www.wlep.co.uk/about-wlep/people/>

Summary Video with MPs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Es21XUg1kE&feature=youtu.be>

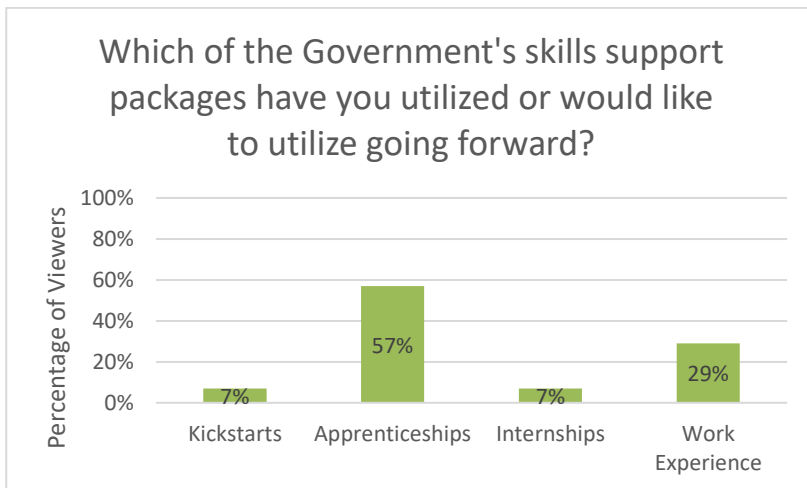
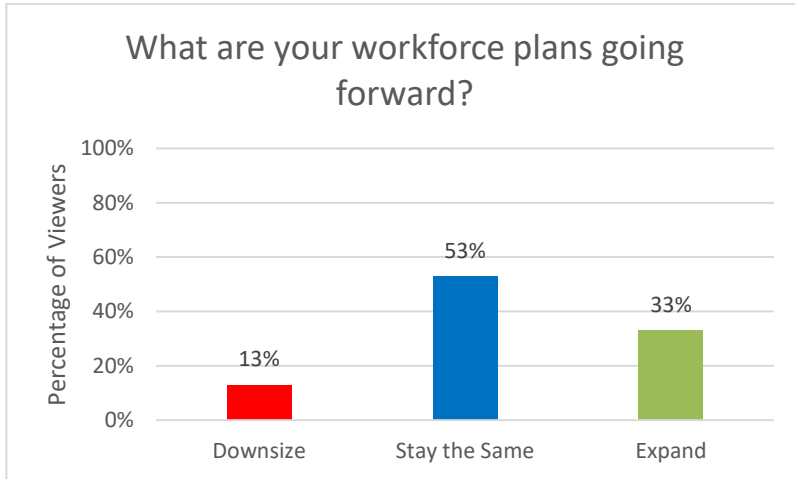
Appendix 2 – Virtual Conference episode views

Episode	Total Views (to date)
Skills & Employment	298
Healthy Worcestershire	171
Digital & Physical Infrastructure*	73
Future Economy	106
One Worcestershire*	52

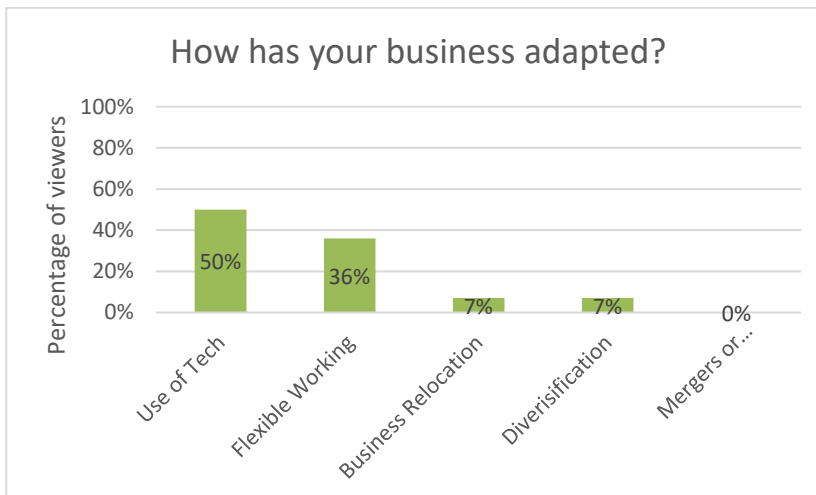
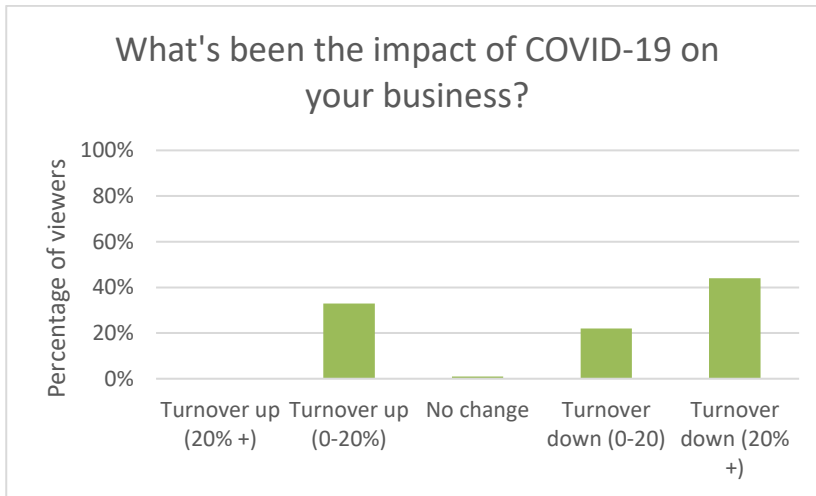
**Both the Infrastructure & One Worcestershire episodes have only just been made available on-demand which reflects in the lower views so far.*

Appendix 3 - Poll findings

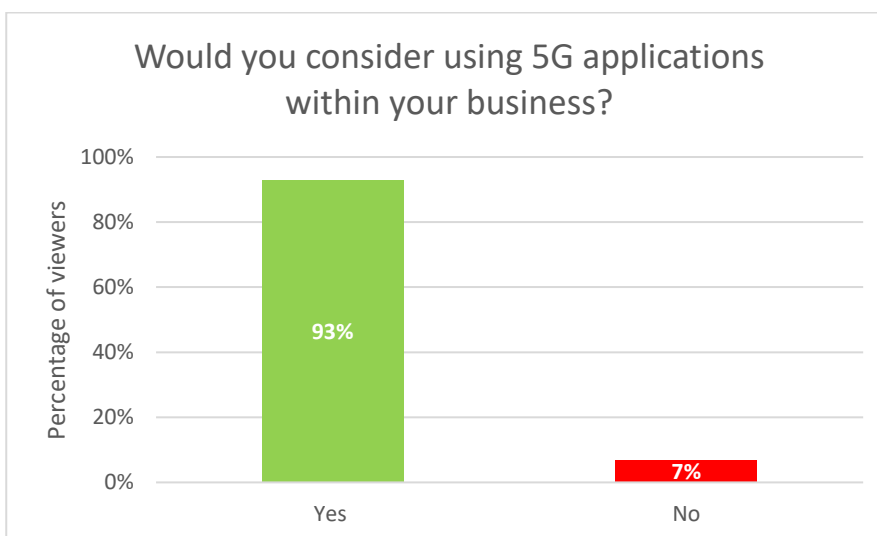
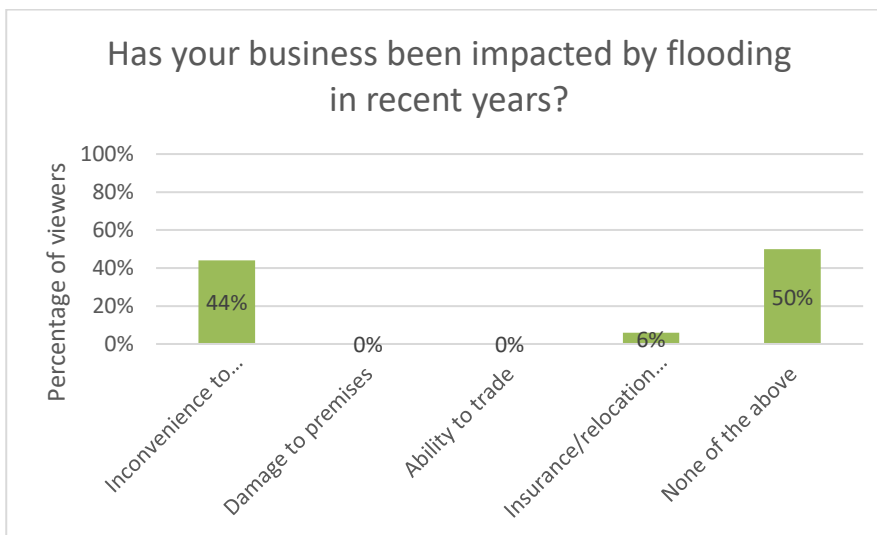
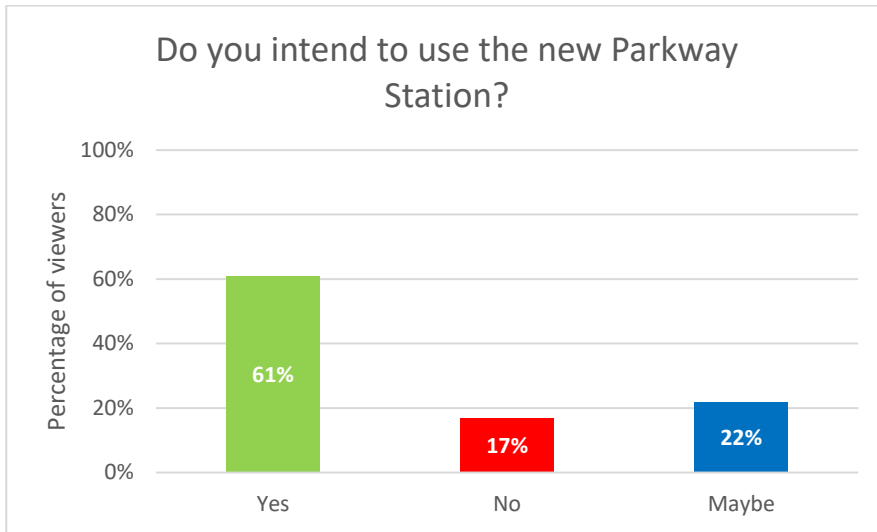
Skills & Employment Session



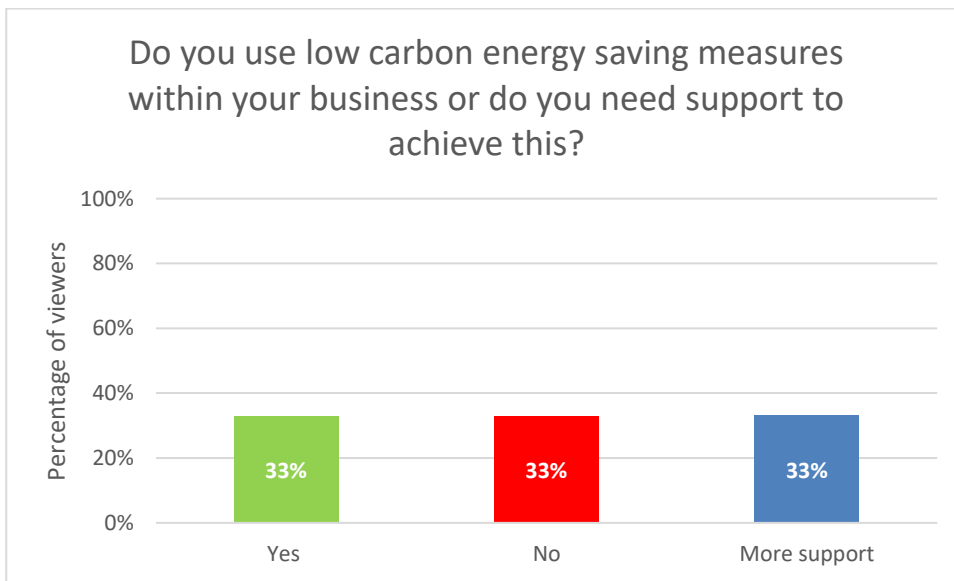
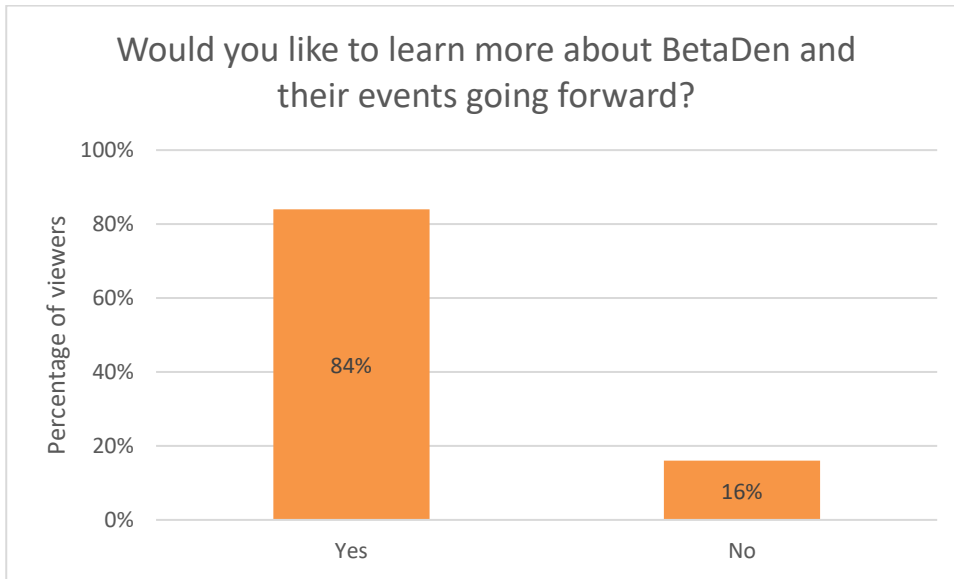
Healthy Worcestershire Session



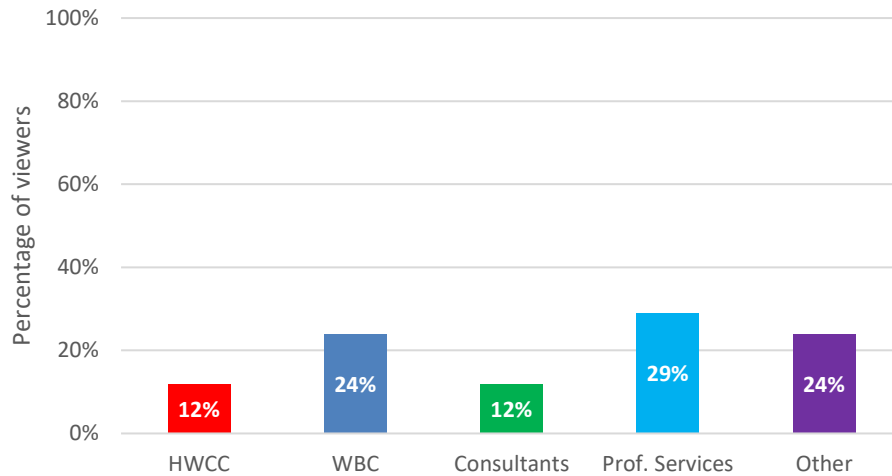
Digital and Physical Infrastructure session



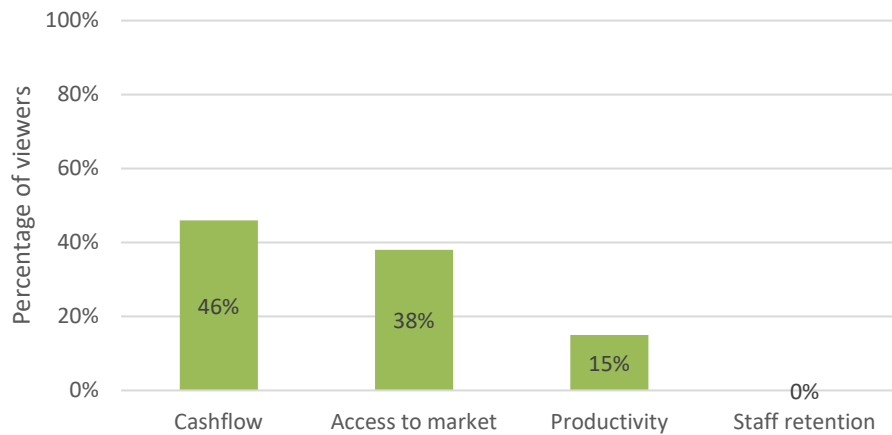
Future Economy session



From where have you received business support?



What have been your biggest challenges this year?



Are you active in promoting Worcestershire as a county through:

