

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR LEICESTERSHIRE BUSINESS

The challenges and opportunities for local companies in the adoption of green and clean energy

A report by Glenfield Electrical

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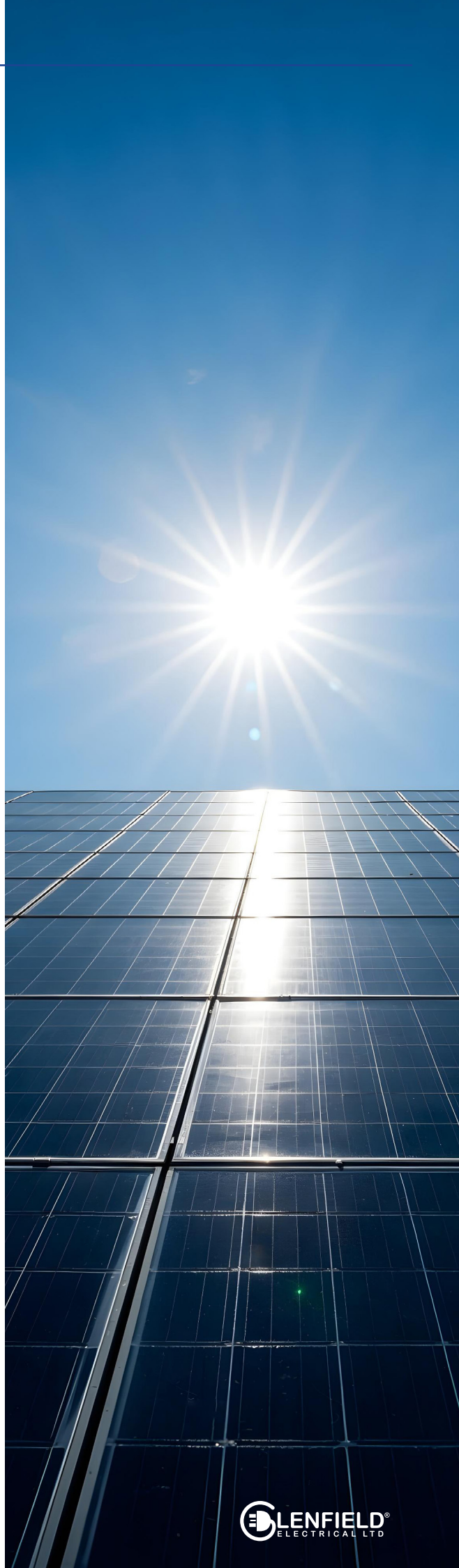



FOREWORD

By Phil Houlder, Managing Director, Glenfield Electrical

As a local, Leicester-based electrical & solar PV contractor, we've worked with thousands of homeowners and businesses alike, looking to improve their properties' energy efficiency, cut their bills and go green. More than ever, businesses are struggling with out-of-control electricity prices, which is why we started researching where businesses 'are at' on their Net Zero journey.

It's especially relevant right now as the promised cheaper bills haven't materialised - they only seem to rise. These rising bills are an existential threat to energy-intensive businesses, so sounding the alarm and finding ways to help them is critically important. We want to find ways to help local businesses achieve the win-wins of both environmentally and, crucially, financially sustainable ways.

At Glenfield Electrical, we wanted to investigate which measures companies have taken already, what they would like to do and what barriers are in the way. Businesses are already facing plenty of obstacles in a difficult financial climate with tax and rate hikes, falling demand and evermore legislation to wade through. On top of that, plenty of other barriers to accessing green, clean energy exist, particularly when it comes to their premises' landlords and tenancies.

In our survey and the interviews we carried out, we've identified a roadmap that businesses of varying sizes can undertake to save cash, lower expenditures and boost their bottom line in cost-effective methods.

Phil Houlder

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR LEICESTERSHIRE BUSINESS

This report by Glenfield Electrical examines the challenges and opportunities for Leicestershire businesses in adopting green and clean energy solutions amidst unprecedented financial pressures.

Companies in our county are struggling with rising costs at a time when all organisations are being urged to play their part in tackling climate change. Through a survey and in-depth interviews with local business leaders, we see evidence of a 'win-win', with companies making big savings through the adoption of green and clean energy tech.

At the same time, however, we reveal barriers to more businesses embracing cash-saving, planet-friendly solutions, such as solar panels and electric vehicle chargers. This report aims, first, to give an understanding of the issues for businesses wanting to reduce their carbon footprint. Second, it provides actionable insights, with tips on how to secure the 'win-win' of clean, green energy use.

This report is part of Glenfield Electrical's contribution to helping Leicestershire businesses become more resilient and sustainable.



INTRODUCTION

Businesses across Leicestershire face existential crises due to energy price spikes on top of other increasing costs and tax rises.

Unprecedented financial pressures are putting the squeeze on companies, ending business for many, and rising gas and electricity bills are a big part of the equation. This report by Glenfield Electrical looks at the challenges companies across our county are facing with their energy usage, and how a growing number are finding efficiencies in more financially and environmentally sustainable solutions.

Increasingly, companies are replacing fossil fuels to power their operations with renewable, 'green energy' solutions, such as solar panels and 'green tariffs' offered by electricity suppliers. They are cutting emissions by opting for 'clean energy technologies' in the form of renewables or higher efficiency tech such as LED lighting, electric vehicles heat pumps, solar PV and battery storage. As we will see, using energy from natural sources and technology that cuts harmful emissions can make sound business sense, too. In fact, for more energy-intensive sectors, such as manufacturing, it may be the difference between profitability, breaking even or actually surviving.

For other firms, however, the adoption of more sustainable energy solutions is a struggle for all sorts of reasons.

This paper looks at the bigger picture, but also the challenges and opportunities for businesses closer to home, here in Leicestershire. The global challenge is to 'go net zero' by 2050. Net zero is a goal in climate change science that means achieving a balance between the harmful greenhouse gases being pumped into the atmosphere and those being taken out. When net zero is achieved, global warming will stop, experts say. It is a goal that has its detractors. Renowned climate change expert Sir Dieter Helm, for example, believes we should focus more on our net consumption of carbon. Nevertheless, the universal message is that we all need to reduce our carbon footprints. So, this is the carbon we produce, and also the carbon produced by the companies we buy from.

Businesses across every sector of industry must be central to this drive for it to be successful. But various barriers are getting in their way. Glenfield Electrical ran a survey of local SMEs about sustainable energy use and then spoke in depth to business leaders to find out more about those roadblocks. In the survey and in the interviews, leaders were asked what Government and others must do to help them become more sustainable.

The findings tell us that much more can be done to help hard-working business owners take advantage of the financial and environmental benefits provided by green and clean energy. A popular request was for more information about how to do it. The survey and interviews will, therefore, inform new advice by Glenfield Electrical and its associates on how Leicestershire companies can save money, protect themselves from energy price hikes and cut emissions in the process.

This paper sets the scene, focusing on those key benefits of sustainable energy use: saving money, insulating the business from a volatile energy market and reducing damage to the environment. Before taking a closer look, then, at what Leicestershire companies are doing, let's examine in more detail those reasons for businesses to 'go green and clean'.

GREEN, CLEAN OR RENEWABLE? A SIMPLE GUIDE TO ENERGY SOURCES

Green energy, clean energy and renewable energy are often terms used interchangeably, but they do mean different things. With a little help from the National Grid, here is a short guide from Glenfield Electrical on what they mean.

Green energy is energy that can be produced using a method, and from a source, that causes no harm to the natural environment. Examples include solar power and tidal energy.

Renewable energy comes from sources that are constantly and naturally renewed, such as wind power and solar power, but are not necessarily 'green'. Renewable, or sustainable, isn't 'green' if the processes used to generate the energy produce carbon emissions. Examples include biomass, the production of which can emit greenhouse gases, and hydro power, generated by dams that disrupt local habitats.

Clean energy is energy that creates little or no greenhouse gas emissions when it's used. Examples include solar power and wind power. As with renewables, not all clean energy is 'green'. Nuclear energy, for example, is clean because it doesn't produce greenhouse gases during generation, but it isn't green because it relies on uranium, a finite, non-renewable resource.

Courtesy of the National Grid, here is a simple way to tell the difference between clean energy, green energy and renewable energy:

Clean energy = clean air

Green energy = no harm to the environment

Renewable energy = sources that replenish naturally, such as the sun and the wind

A VOLATILE ENERGY MARKET AND RISING COSTS

Energy costs are one of the biggest threats facing UK businesses today. Between 2021 and 2023, the average electricity price for UK non-domestic users jumped from around 15 pence per kilowatt hour (kWh) to more than 28 pence. By the end of 2024, prices were still around 70% higher than pre-pandemic levels.

The market remains unpredictable, with prices consistently rising and electricity bills compounding faster than inflation. Energy bill inflationary factors include wholesale gas prices, by which the UK is particularly affected, non-commodity costs (Governmental policy costs outside of the cost of the actual electricity, making up between 50-60% of commercial electricity bills), and the Ukraine War. Experts warn about the long-term security of the national grid, and high energy costs 'baked in' thanks to expensive Government contracts with suppliers.

Unlike households, however, businesses have no protection from energy price caps, which are set by regulator Ofgem and underpinned by Government legislation. This leaves them fully exposed to these market fluctuations. Bills that were once manageable now swing unpredictably from month to month, forcing some firms to make impossible choices. For many, this has gone beyond holding back growth; it is threatening their survival.

These market factors are driving companies towards greener, cleaner energy for two key reasons: It is more efficient so it can save them money; and some measures, such as solar panels, give them greater energy independence. By producing their own energy and storing it, businesses are not as exposed to the volatile energy market. Self-generation of energy gives them more certainty.

THE IMPACT OF GREENHOUSE GASES ON OUR PLANET

The science on the environment is clear: **human activity is changing our climate.** And we are seeing the effects all around us, from extreme weather events to the extinction of some species, such as the Bramble Cay melomys, a rodent from the Great Barrier Reef . Greenhouse gas emissions are causing the planet to warm, and these are growing (by 51% from 1990 to 2021).

Where do these emissions come from? Data published by the World Resources Institute tells us that greenhouse gas emissions come mainly from five sectors of industry:

- Energy
- Agriculture
- Industrial processes
- Waste
- Land use, land-use change and forestry

The energy sector, so fundamentally important to our economy and everyday lives, produces by far the most greenhouse emissions - more than 75% worldwide. These include emissions from electricity and heat, transportation, manufacturing and construction and buildings.

Industrial processes, such as cement production, release greenhouse gases. So does livestock farming and the use of manure. Waste emissions, such as methane and nitrous oxide from landfill sites, are having an impact. All these other causes, however, are dwarfed by the impact of energy. How we use energy for our homes, businesses and travel is the single biggest cause of global warming.

Environmentally conscious businesses, therefore, want to reduce the impact their operations are having on the planet by how they power them. They want to cut their emissions and source their energy from renewable sources whilst saving money and improving their profitability.

SO, WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT IN THE UK?

The UK is legally committed to reaching net zero by 2050 and the message to businesses is clear: we will increasingly need to switch from fossil fuels to electric alternatives. That is, electricity generated by renewable sources, such as wind, solar and waves, rather than fossil fuels, such as gas.

The UK has seen significant progress in reducing emissions, with 2024 levels 50.4% lower than in 1990 and marking a decade of sustained reduction, says the UK's independent Climate Change Committee.

Future targets depend on electrification across surface transport (road and rail), buildings and industry, with these sectors accounting for more than 80% of the required emissions savings up to 2030. How businesses choose to power their operations will have a huge bearing on whether these targets can be met.

Measures that businesses are already taking in Leicestershire and the rest of the UK to reduce emissions include the use of electric vehicles, installing solar panels and heat pumps, switching to electric technologies and choosing renewable energy tariffs. More progress is needed, say experts. Business leaders, however, say they need more help to make the transition to sustainable energy.

A new survey by Glenfield Electrical of businesses in Leicestershire sheds fresh light on the barriers they face - and what can be done to help companies overcome them and makes the switch.

CHOOSING GREEN ENERGY TARIFFS IS A WIN-WIN

By Amit Ganatra, Director, The Business Energy Savings Team

The main challenge that businesses are facing is that everything is going up in cost, expenditure is going higher. So, if they are investing in something, they want to see a quicker return. They will ask, 'How quickly will I see my solar panels pay off?'

Panels will pay off in the long-term, but they can also make you money now. A lot of energy suppliers are now offering businesses the same price for a green tariff as they are for a normal tariff. So, this is the first step your business is making to 'go green' - your energy supplier is matching the energy you use with energy from renewable sources, like wind and solar.

But if you have solar panels fitted on your property and you generate a surplus, you can effectively sell this excess energy back to your supplier. It's a win-win. Out of the suppliers we have, we have a number who offer renewable energy tariffs and will take back energy if you have the means to generate it.

My advice is to get an expert contractor like Glenfield Electrical around to do a site survey to see if you're able to get panels installed.

www.businessenergysavingsteam.com

THE BUSINESS ENERGY SAVINGS TEAM



A SURVEY OF LEICESTERSHIRE BUSINESSES ON THE DRIVE TOWARDS MORE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY USE

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This report summarises the results of the sustainable energy survey, which gathered insights from businesses in different sectors across Leicestershire. This was an online survey distributed through digital media channels and promoted through local media, such as the magazine and newsletter of the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce. The poll was a blend of multiple choice, scale and open questions, and 40 companies took part in total.

In sum, the findings highlight the level of interest in sustainability, concerns over rising energy costs and where there are gaps in both knowledge and financial support. These quantitative findings prompted interviews with several business leaders who completed the questionnaire - see later in the report.

THE SURVEY FINDINGS

Business profile and energy costs

The survey primarily represents **small businesses** (SMEs). Most respondents (52.5%) employ between 2-9 people, followed by 17.5% with 10-24 employees and 15% who are sole traders. Only 12.5% employ 25 or more people, confirming that the responses largely reflect smaller businesses.

Energy bills vary widely, but 40% of businesses report approximate monthly energy costs of between **£100 p/m and £499 p/m**, while 22.5% pay less than £100. A further 20% spend £500-£999, and 5% report costs between £1,000 and £3,999.

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Energy cost trends and awareness

Energy costs are a pressing issue, yet business awareness and monitoring of energy practices remain low. Half (50%) of businesses report their energy costs are rising, while 45% state they are staying the same. Only 5% reported falling costs.

A total of 60% of businesses said they were somewhat, quite or very concerned about the impact of rising energy costs on their business. However, nearly half (47.5%) of respondents said they did not monitor or measure their energy usage. About a third (30%) said they do, and an additional 22.5% indicated they don't know who is responsible for this role.

Awareness of renewable energy sources is low. Some 87.5% of businesses do not know their energy supplier's renewable energy mix, highlighting a significant knowledge gap in energy procurement.

Implemented measures

Current adoption of sustainable energy measures is mixed, with most businesses focusing on low-cost improvements ***- see Table 1.***

MEASURE	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES TO ADOPT IT	PERCENTAGE (OF 40)
LED lighting	21	52.2%
Smart meters	13	32.5%
EV charging points	7	17.5%
Energy audits	5	12.5%
Solar panels	4	10%
Battery storage	1	2.5%

Table 1

LED Lighting is the most widely adopted measure, implemented by 52.5% of respondents. High-capital measures, such as **solar panels** (10%) and **battery storage** (2.5%), have low adoption rates, which correlates with the reported financial barriers and size of companies who took part.

Attitudes and future intent

Businesses express a strong interest in sustainability but are hesitant about immediate investment. The vast majority (82.5%) said they were **quite Interested** or **very interested** in reducing their carbon footprint. However, despite concerns about rising costs, 55% of businesses reported they **haven't considered** becoming more energy independent and less reliant on the National Grid. This suggests, perhaps, a lack of proactive planning or awareness of the potential benefits. Two in five (40%) said yes to becoming more energy independent, and 5% said no.

When asked about installing renewable technology in the next 12 months, only seven people (17.5%) answered **yes**. A large portion (42.5%) answered **maybe,** indicating a conditional interest that could be converted with the right support.

Barriers and support needed

Lack of grant awareness and the need for better information are the most critical takeaways regarding barriers to going green. The most common answer was “other” **(52.5%)**, with respondents citing reasons including rented premises or no suitable space, suggesting property ownership and lease restrictions are primary obstacles.

Upfront cost **(32.5%)** remains a significant deterrent, followed closely by a lack of information **(22.5%)** and unclear ROI **(17.5%)**. A smaller number **(12.5%)** said they simply didn’t have the time to explore it.

Awareness and support

A staggering 85% of respondents were not aware of any government or local grants for energy efficiency or sustainability, underscoring a major failure in communication and promotion of existing support schemes. The most requested form of support was better information (40%), followed by financing options (25%) and free consultation (15%).

This confirms that targeted support focused on information clarity, financial assistance and consultation/audits is most likely to move most businesses from ‘maybe’ to ‘yes’ on future investment.

IN SUMMARY

This survey of mainly SMEs across Leicestershire tells us that many businesses in the county are concerned about rising energy costs, but nearly half do not monitor their energy usage. Is this a gap between concerns and taking action to address them?

Adoption of sustainable measures among our respondents was limited to low-cost improvements like LED lighting, despite more than four in five expressing interest in reducing their carbon footprint. The primary obstacles to further investment were upfront costs and, critically, a lack of awareness about existing grants.

Businesses who took part in this survey wanted better information, financing and consultation to help them move forward with green and clean energy and energy independence.







STORIES OF LEICESTERSHIRE COMPANIES AND THE DRIVE TO ADOPT GREEN AND CLEAN ENERGY

The findings from the Glenfield Electrical survey raised serious questions about how businesses in Leicestershire, at least SMEs, can adopt cleaner, greener energies. They prompted a series of interviews to get a deeper understanding of how companies in the counties are embracing the challenge.

SV RICHARDS
BUILDING CONTRACTORS LIMITED

GETTING A GOOD ROI ON SOLAR PANELS - AND DOING THE RIGHT THING

Liam Richards, Director, SV Richards, Coalville

As a business, we are familiar with renewables, understand how they operate and how they integrate into homes and commercial businesses. We use solar PV panels and we're lucky in the sense that we've had very little overheads because it's a third-generation business; our yard and the business itself are established.

We've also implemented small changes, such as turning off lights and switching to LEDs. These incremental changes can add up over time. For us, it's important not just monetarily but ethically and in principle. Implementing sustainable technology was primarily about keeping down our running costs and trying to be as energy efficient as possible, but it was also trying to do the right thing. If you truly believe something is right, you should be investing in it as a business. It's part of your corporate social responsibility.

Financially, you get a good return on your investment with solar PV. There's an initial upfront cost, which can be a barrier to entry for some, but I would certainly recommend it based on the return on investment. Of course, it depends on company size. If you're a small- to medium-sized outfit, your returns might be different compared to a larger business with massive premises, where you can implement mass solar and see bigger benefits.

Yes, both cost and planning laws are barriers. Another issue is a lack of information about the efficiency of these products and their return on investment. To invest, there needs to be more confidence from the end user that what you're implementing is going to work, because those upfront costs do scare some people off. With a better breakdown, I think businesses would be more confident in investing in green energy.

Forcing the changes on SMEs is difficult and that's why the Government needs to be giving more support, including incentives, for net zero to become a reasonable goal by 2050.

I think what Glenfield Electrical is doing is brilliant; raising awareness of the opportunities in sustainable technology, not just the challenges. People often don't realise the opportunities that come with sustainable technology. It's not only about environmental impact but also about commercial opportunities, reducing dependency on fossil fuels and boosting the bottom line. More awareness is needed, both among business owners and the public. Glenfield Electrical opening doors to these opportunities for local businesses is great.

Micro Weighing Solutions

THE ROADBLOCKS TO BUSINESS ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

By Andrew Clarke, Managing Director, MWS, Birstall

Before the massive energy cost hikes, I secured a five-year fixed deal for our business. While everyone else was scrambling, we were still paying 2021 prices, which gave us a cushion. As a business, we don't have heavy, intensive machinery, but every bit of energy we use should be scrutinised. That led us to the logical next step: **solar panels.**

Our factory is a huge 12,000 square foot building with around 10,000 square feet of roof space, so the potential for **energy independence** is enormous. We could generate a significant amount of our daytime power and even feed back into the grid. We've approached our landlord about this multiple times over the years, even mentioning that we could get a grant to finance the installation. But the answer is always the same: No.

They cite the risks, such as messing with the roof's integrity, the warranty on the steel frame, or simply the maintenance headache. It is a symptom I see across the UK marketplace, where a small number of landlords would rather keep the status quo.

Despite this major roadblock, we're doing what we can. We've **decarbonised** our fleet aggressively: five EVs and two hybrids now make up our company cars, leading to daily fights over the chargers! The exception is our 12-14 calibration vans. Because they carry large lots of weights, the current EV battery technology simply won't last. Our engineers would spend 25% of their day plugged in, which is unfeasible. We've also shifted our internal tech, moving from energy-hungry 400–500-watt desktop PCs to **low-power units** that draw only 150 watts.

My frustration with renewable energy goes beyond my business; it highlights a colossal failure of political leadership. When I look at the UK's supposed push for **Net Zero**, I see a 'grift'. We've decimated our own manufacturing and offshored our carbon footprint to places that don't care as much, allowing us to look good on paper while global consumption continues unchecked. There is no long-term vision, no mandate to put solar panels on new factories or houses. We are wasting vast amounts of viable roof space just so solar farms can take up green fields.

The solutions are simple, yet they're ignored by short-term politics. If the government was serious, it would be investing in and owning **battery technology** to create a national energy storage grid. They should be mandating solar and battery packs on all new homes, offering a stamp duty rebate to incentivize buyers. Instead, they find new ways to tax everything, like the looming congestion charge in Leicester, further crippling the local economy. Our attempts at change are met with barriers at every turn, proving that in this country, it's easier to say no to progress than to say yes.



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Inside-Out laser clinics

BUSINESS OWNERS NEED MORE HELP TO INVEST IN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

By Zoe Darkins, Owner and Clinic Director, Inside-Out Laser Clinics Ltd, Mountsorrel

I would like to see a varied use of sustainable energy types more readily used in business. I think we definitely need to invest in renewal energy long term for our planet's future, but I also feel people are being rail-roaded a little bit more at present. I feel we need to invest in more renewable energy sources, such as wind power.

At present in clinic, we have had LED lights installed throughout, which is one of a number of things we are doing to be as energy efficient as possible.

As a business, I rent my premises so I would have loved to have been able to have solar panels installed, which in turn would have helped my electricity costs. Maybe this is something the government could look at; helping landlords to invest in more environmentally friendly energy.

The cost for most or many business owners is the biggest barrier facing anyone trying to establish themselves with green or sustainable, renewal energy. If costs were lower, then more would invest. Increased running costs in everything day to day have also increased dramatically, which also puts a much harder barrier to overcome there, too.

I feel small businesses should get a lot more help to use green energy products to help our environment, such as solar panels on buildings. As I said previously, this is something I would like to see the government helping small business owners or commercial landlords to achieve.

Rising energy bills are a massive concern for me as a very small business, especially as I use electricity for almost 70% off my treatments in clinic. If I can cut the costs, I would be ecstatic, and if I could be more energy-independent without needing a large outlay first, then that would be even more beneficial.

On a daily basis, we try as a team to be as efficient with energy as possible, but the challenges are difficult. We are at present looking management company that can separate our recyclables without needing to have multiple contracts, as this can be crippling financially.

FINANCING GREEN, CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS: WHAT SMES NEED TO KNOW

By Stuart McKee, Director, Equipment Leasing Solutions Ltd

Cost does not need to be a barrier to investment in green and clean energy measures to power your business. Here are a few things you need to know.

- Asset finance for green energy upgrades (solar panels, LED lighting, battery storage, etc.) is accessible to SMEs, with funding available from as little as £2,000.

- Well-structured financing aims to make projects cash-neutral or cash-positive - monthly savings on energy bills often match or exceed repayment costs.

- Free expert advice and project scoping are available. Reputable brokers and vendors typically do not charge for initial consultations or proposals.

- It's crucial to compare actual repayment costs, not just quoted interest rates; a robust, independent audit of projected savings helps overcome scepticism.

- Even if projects aren't immediately cash-positive, longer repayment terms can protect cash flow while enabling long-term savings and meeting supply chain or regulatory requirements for sustainability.

- Bottom line: Exploring finance options costs nothing but time, can help SMEs unlock improvements, cut costs and boost their green credentials.

els.lease

European POWER SYSTEMS

MAKING BIG SAVINGS AND BECOMING ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENT

By Iain Jubb, Director, European Power Systems, Loughborough

European Power Systems was established 23 years ago, and we specialise in gas turbine maintenance and modifications for the oil and gas sector. Our operations are global, with a significant portion of our work focused offshore, especially in the North Sea.

We currently have solar panels and battery storage at our Lincoln site, installed by Glenfield Electrical, with a 10 kW solar system and 20 kW of battery capacity, the most we could install on our roof. Our properties in Lincoln are owned by us, which made these installations possible. However, our Loughborough office is council-owned, limiting what we can implement there. We are soon moving to new offices nearby, where we intend to install solar panels on all buildings.

All of our locations use LED lighting, and this was one of the first upgrades we made. In terms of electric vehicles, we currently have a couple of company cars equipped for EV charging; one is used by me and another by an engineer, with a third considering it.

The primary motivation for adopting to these green technologies was financial. Owning our buildings meant we could invest with a good return; we're looking at a five-year payback period, possibly six, based on our annual energy savings of over £3,000. With the extended lifespan of the batteries and solar panels, we expect to further benefit over the coming years. While energy independence isn't our main driver, the predictable cost savings are valuable as energy prices rise.

So far in 2025, we've generated 10.43 megawatt-hours of electricity and reached 83% self-sufficiency.

Environmental benefits are also a consideration. While the financial aspect is most important to us, demonstrating a commitment to sustainability helps with customer relationships and is good for our reputation.

For other businesses considering similar initiatives, I'd say the projections provided by reputable suppliers, such as Glenfield Electrical in our case, have proven to be accurate in our experience. Comprehensive quotes that consider all relevant variables give a clear picture of potential savings.



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SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1



Leicestershire businesses are struggling with rising energy costs and a volatile market

2



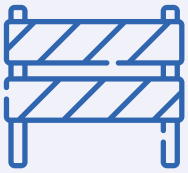
Awareness of money-saving energy options is low among many SMEs

3



Upfront costs of investing in clean and green energy measures, such as solar panels, is deterring businesses

4



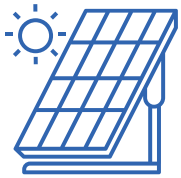
Barriers to investing in solar panels include the reluctance of landlords to grant permission for installation when the premises is a leasehold

5



Companies want more help from government, with better information and financial incentives, such as grants or tax breaks

6



Some businesses are saving thousands of pounds each year after installing solar panels

7



Quick wins being adopted by local firms include LED lighting and EV chargers

8



Most companies want to reduce their carbon footprint and do their bit to protect the environment

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEICESTERSHIRE BUSINESSES

This white paper will be followed by a series of guides to help companies grasp the 'win-win' opportunities of sustainable energy. This section draws from the findings of our survey, interviews and additional research to highlight the key steps businesses must take to realise the many business benefits of clean, green energy.

STEP 1 - AUDIT:

Understand your current energy use by reviewing your electricity consumption, building setup and lease agreement (if applicable). Identify what drives your usage so you can pinpoint opportunities to cut consumption or generate your own power.

STEP 2 - CONSULT:

Engage key stakeholders early including operations, facilities and management to shape practical energy-saving ideas. Speak with your finance team or accountant upfront to understand funding options and potential savings. Consulting commercial finance providers can also reveal cost-effective ways to fund projects that may otherwise seem out of reach.

STEP 3 - TALK TO THE EXPERTS:

Talk to local installers to get a good understanding of what would work for your business, in your location. Choosing a local installer for your implementation of green, clean energy measures ensures they are on your doorstep to help maintain and upkeep the system.

STEP 4 - IMPLEMENT:

Deliver improvements in a logical order, starting with lower-cost, low hanging fruit wins before moving to larger, long-term investments. A phased approach helps businesses build savings early and reinvest those gains into bigger projects.

Phase 1: Low-cost efficiencies

LED upgrades, smart controls and sensors, timer optimisation, insulation and sealing, change to green tariff, behavioural changes.

Phase 2: Medium-cost upgrades

Smart monitoring, EV chargers, efficient appliances and heating/cooling systems, HVAC optimisation.

Phase 3: Long-term investments

Solar PV, battery storage, heat pumps, major building fabric upgrades, and fleet electrification planning.

STEP 5 - REVIEW, MONITOR AND MAINTAIN:

Maximise long-term savings by tracking performance and keeping systems in good condition. Regular monitoring helps you spot issues early, protect your investment and increase savings over time.

Include:

- Routine energy consumption reviews
- Solar and battery performance checks
- Planned maintenance for lighting, solar, heating and controls
- Reviewing tariff competitiveness
- Tracking ROI and payback
- Setting new annual efficiency targets
- Planning for future electrification needs

Consistent monitoring ensures savings grow, especially as energy prices rise, while maintenance extends the life of your equipment.

STEP 6 – STAY UP TO DATE:



Keep eye on tech



Regulation changes



Tax rates



New solutions

... to do all of this, follow us and our new series of guides on all things to do with green, clean energy for business.

IN CONCLUSION

The priority for Leicestershire businesses right now is staying in business. Yes, they want to grow and do it the right way, but companies across our county are struggling with costs. Inflation and tax increases are putting them under incredible pressure. At the same time, they are being encouraged to do their bit towards 'going net zero', or reducing their carbon footprint, at the very least.

The good news is that there is advice out there, and financial help is at hand. Green, clean energy can be a 'win-win', helping businesses to cut costs and do their bit for the environment.

On the flip side, however, there are barriers. These include the up-front costs of investing in the more expensive measures, such as heat pumps and solar panels, and landlord reluctance to grant permission for installations on leaseholds.

Glenfield Electrical will play its part by providing objective, unbiased, free advice to help Leicestershire companies overcome these barriers and make the right decisions for them. At the same time, Glenfield Electrical plans to write to its government representatives at local and national level to improve the information and financial incentives for local businesses to take advantage of the many benefits of green and clean energy.

The businesses in this report showed that meaningful savings start with one step: understanding your own energy profile.

Glenfield Electrical offers free, no-obligation site assessments to help you identify where you can reduce waste, generate your own electricity and access funding options such as asset finance or AIA.

Book your assessment today and start building a more resilient, lower-cost future for your business.

www.glenfieldelectrical.com/contact

THANK YOU NOTE

Many thanks to those companies who took the time to complete the survey or talk to us about their use of clean and green energy. Your comments will help new advice and guidance for companies across Leicestershire.

References

i https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9888/

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iii https://dieterhelm.co.uk/energy-climate/british-energy-policy-not-cheap-not-home-grown-and-not-secure/

iv https://www.ifaw.org/au/journal/animals-most-impacted-climate-change#:~:text=The%20Bramble%20Cay%20melomys%20(Melomys,a%20result%20of%20climate%20change.

v https://www.wri.org/insights/4-charts-explain-greenhouse-gas-emissions-countries-and-sectors

vi https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-2025-report-to-parliament/

NOTES

FURTHER READING

Businesses looking to explore the topics covered in this report in more depth may find the following resources useful. These sources provide impartial guidance on energy costs, funding, decarbonisation and the transition to cleaner energy.

Energy prices and markets

Ofgem - Guidance on the UK energy market, business energy contracts and supplier obligations

https://www.ofgem.gov.uk

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) - UK energy policy, Net Zero strategy and business guidance

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-energy-security-and-net-zero

Climate Change Committee (CCC) - Independent advice to Government on emissions targets and progress

https://www.theccc.org.uk

Renewable energy and energy efficiency

Energy Saving Trust - Practical advice on energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies

https://energysavingtrust.org.uk

Solar Energy UK - Industry insight on commercial solar PV and policy developments

https://solarenergyuk.org

Midlands Net Zero Hub - Regional support for businesses and public sector organisations

https://www.midlandsnetzerohub.org.uk

Funding, grants and support

Greener Futures Leicestershire - Local business grants, funding opportunities and sustainability resources

https://greenerfutureleicestershire.co.uk/business-grants-and-funding

British Business Bank - Information on business finance, loans and investment options

https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) - Guidance on capital allowances and the Annual Investment Allowance (AIA)

https://www.gov.uk/capital-allowances

Electric vehicles and electrification

Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) - EV infrastructure guidance and grant information

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-zero-emission-vehicles

Carbon reporting and sustainability

World Resources Institute (WRI) - Data and frameworks on greenhouse gas emissions

https://www.wri.org

Carbon Trust - Tools and guidance on measuring and reducing carbon footprints

https://www.carbontrust.com

Local business support

East Midlands Chamber - Business support, policy updates and sustainability initiatives

https://www.emc-dnl.co.uk

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