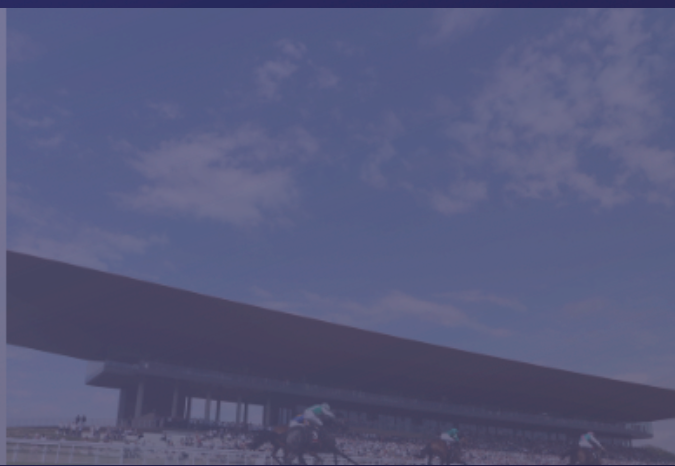




**County Kildare**  
**Chamber**  
Advancing business together

# Chamber Membership Sentiment Report Q1 2025

March 2025



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## Introduction

Welcome to the Chamber Membership Sentiment Report Q1 2025 by County Kildare Chamber. This report is conducted every quarter, with the survey designed to pinpoint specific challenges faced by our businesses in Kildare and help us to identify solutions.

County Kildare Chamber is the business organisation in Kildare, proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of economic and sustainable growth. Representing an employer base of 400 businesses and over 52,000 employees across the county, County Kildare Chamber is the largest business organisation in the mid-east region of Ireland.

Given the significant breadth and depth of our membership, and our representation on various bodies at local and national level, County Kildare Chamber constitutes the representative voice for business in Kildare.

The Chamber conducted this survey over a period of two weeks from the January 27th – February 10th 2025.

Of the total responses received, 43% were from businesses with 21 plus employees, while 57% came from businesses with staff ranging from one to 20 employees. 46% of the responses came from the Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure, Construction & Engineering and the financial services sectors.

The survey concentrated on priorities of Kildare businesses community, specifically measures related to housing supply within the county, increased investment in infrastructure projects and in public services, Sustainable Development and staffing levels. It particularly highlighted continuing challenges Kildare businesses are having with regards to housing availability and rising business costs, all of which businesses see as substantial barriers to competitiveness within Kildare.

The survey found the majority of businesses consider housing availability the #1 issue affecting competitiveness within Kildare, followed by public transport and the availability of skills and talent.

However, despite ongoing pressure and uncertainty for business, the results of our survey also show the majority of businesses are optimistic about their outlook in Kildare, with 78% of businesses confident or very confident in the Irish economy.

# Business Challenges

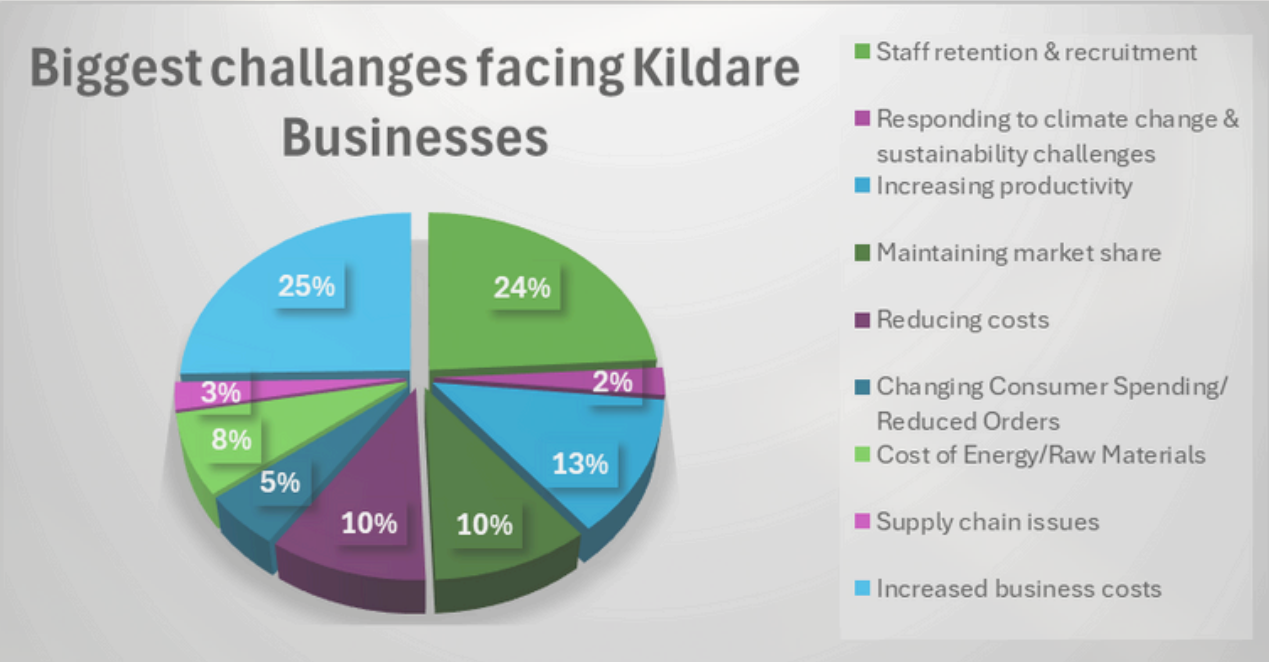
As we leave Q1 2024 and look to the remainder of year, we asked members ‘What is the biggest challenge facing your business over the next 12 months?’.

In a change to data from 2023/2024 and County Kildare Chamber survey trends for the last 48 months, rising business costs has now overtaken staff retention & recruitment as the number one challenge facing businesses at 25%. Increased labour costs, inflation and higher interest rates are among the top issues highlighted as key challenges.

In a sign that businesses are now looking at a number of mitigating factors and concerns, 24% of companies have stated staff recruitment & retention is still the biggest challenge facing their business in the next 12 months. Businesses are suffering difficulties regarding recruitment in a tight labour market.

This is followed by increasing productivity at 12%, which shows business nerves are continuing in the face of a time of severe uncertainty in Europe and the prospect of US imposed tariffs of EU goods & services. Supply chain issues are also adding to potential uncertainty and stress.

As the world becomes more protectionist, Ireland will need to find a way to navigate this new way of doing business, to ensure we continue to remain a competitive region for business growth and investment.





## Competitiveness

County Kildare Chamber asked ‘What is the biggest issue for Kildare’s competitiveness in the next 12 months?’

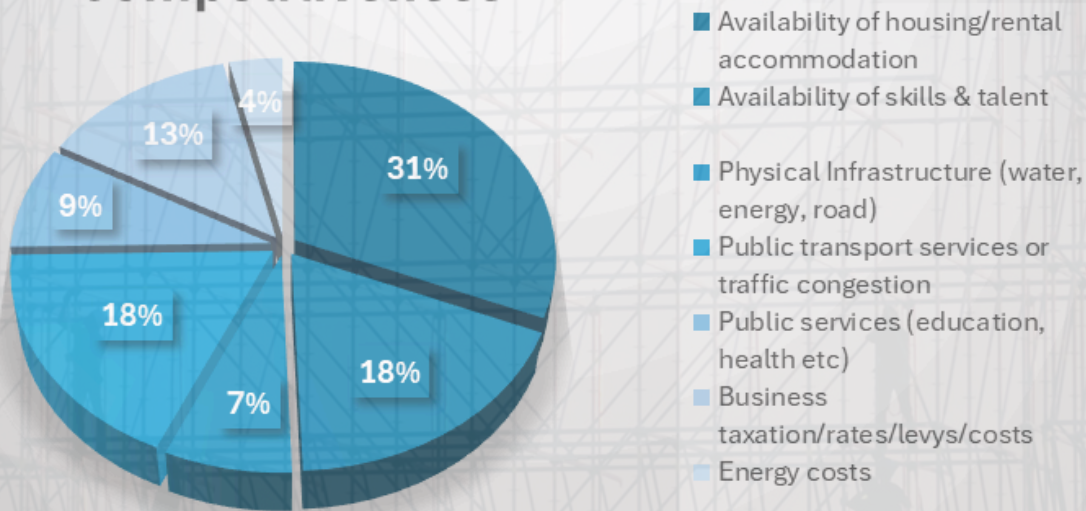
Housing availability now tops the list as the number one concern for businesses when looking at Kildare’s biggest competitiveness challenges for over two years, which accounted for 31% of the responses. This is followed with 18% of businesses reporting the availability of skills and talent, and public transport availability as joint second on the list, as the biggest challenge facing the County.

Addressing housing affordability and infrastructure development are vital to Kildare and Ireland retaining top talent and investors. Factors such as housing are key, as the lack of affordable housing in our main urban centres is a real barrier for many companies seeking to invest or re-invest in Kildare. If we are to continue securing FDI we need to ensure that we have the necessary infrastructure, so that people can live and can see a secure future for themselves in Kildare.

Public transport services and traffic congestion rise to joint second on the list, as businesses and communities look to the state and local authorities to implement sustainable effective and efficient public transport models.

We must address our infrastructure deficits in Ireland to ensure we remain a competitive location of choice for business. The Chamber will continue to use its voice, on behalf of our members and businesses in Kildare to raise these matters with our wider stakeholders and public representatives.

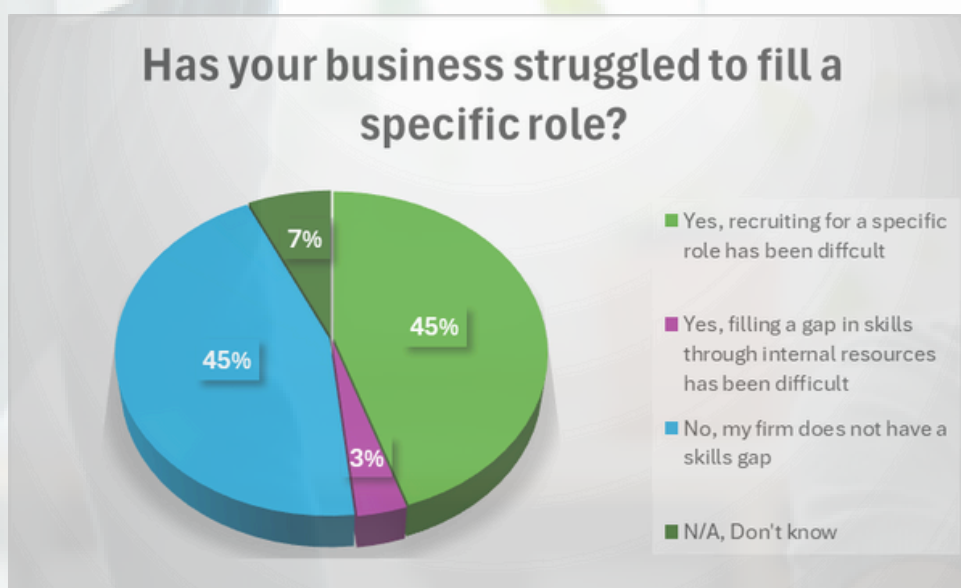
Biggest issue for Kildare's competitiveness



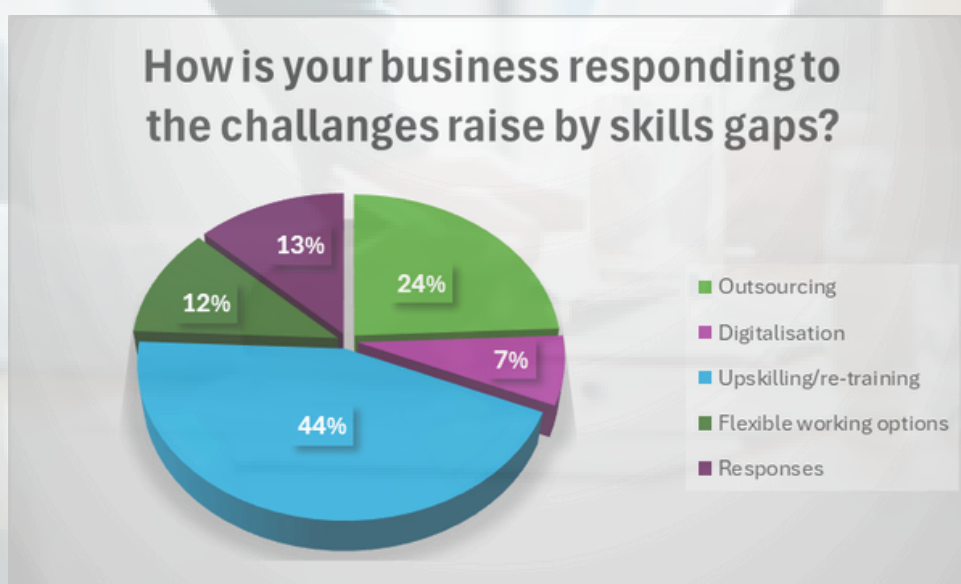
## Staff recruitment & retention

When it came to staff recruitment and retention levels 48% of businesses stated their business had struggled to fill a specific skills gap in Q1 2025, when compared to 49% in Q1 2024 and 55% in Q1 2023.

The responses indicate that there has been a positive downturn in the number of companies reporting significant problems in filling skills gaps. With nearly 45% of businesses in this quarter stating they will not have an skills gap, when compared to Q1 2024 at 40%. When asked as to which level within the company the difficulties were being experienced, 44% stated junior and entry level positions, while 46% stated mid level management. Less than 10% of businesses stated they had an issue recruiting senior management positions within the last 12 months.



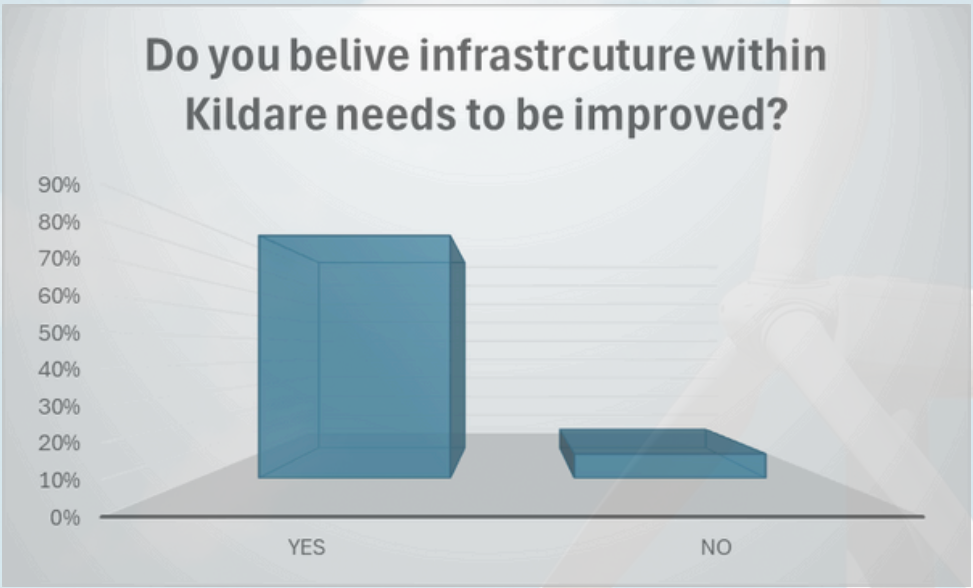
When asked how the business is responding to this challenge, 44% stated upskilling & retraining programmes were helping to bridge the gap. 24% of respondents stated they were outsourcing the particular vacancy area, while 12% stated flexible working arrangements were working as a staff insensitive.



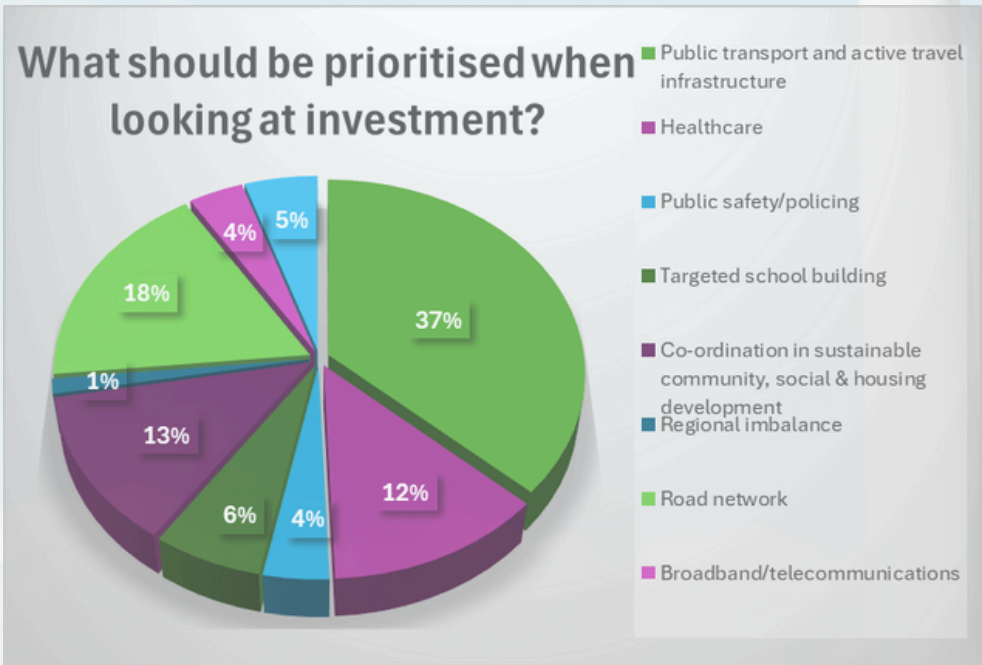


## Infrastructure

County Kildare Chamber members have stated they believe more needs to be done to develop infrastructure within the County. 85% of respondents agreed with the question ‘Do you believe more needs to be done to improve infrastructural development within Kildare?’ Many respondents highlighted issues around rail and road infrastructure, water quality and public transport options within the County, particularly when keeping pace with increases in population and new housing developments.



As per the Q1 2025 membership survey; 37% of our membership selecting investment in public transport and active travel projects as the main area our stakeholders in the County should look at when prioritising infrastructure development. This is followed by improvement to road networks and co-ordinated community, social & housing development standing on 12 and 13%. What we can see from these results, is that our businesses in Kildare saying very clearly affordable and accessible housing, proximity to amenities and good transport infrastructure are all key to continuing economic growth and thriving communities.

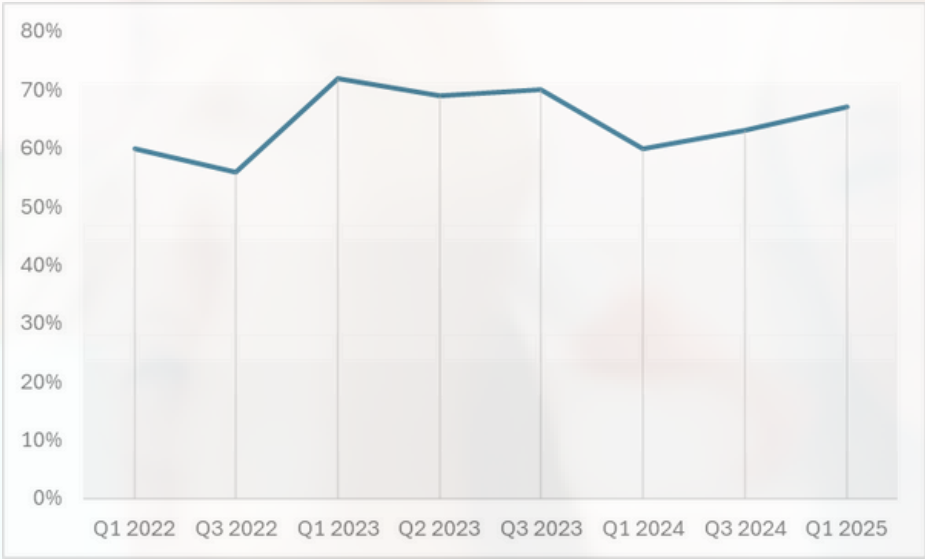


## Business Outlook

Despite facing a number of continuing challenges at the beginning of 2025, businesses are overwhelmingly positive looking forward to the rest of the year.

## Revenue

When asked about revenue expectations for the year ahead, 67% of respondents said they expected their business revenue to increase. This is an increase on outlook when compared to Q1 2024 (60%). 18% of Kildare businesses are expecting to see a reduction in revenue, a significant increase from 5% in Q3 2024.



## Profit

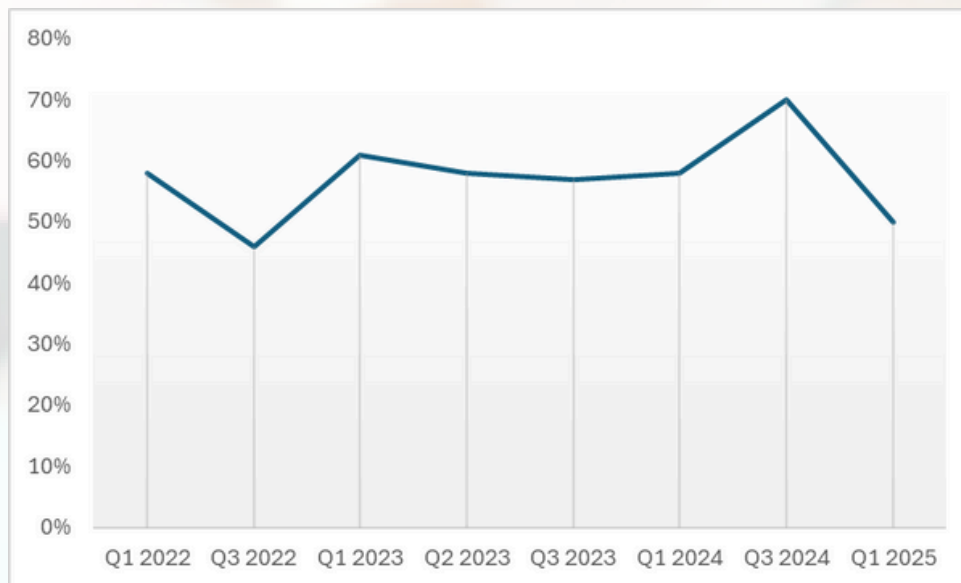
Looking at profitability for the coming year, business sentiment remained relatively consistent throughout 2023 and major parts of 2024, with a significant increase in sentiment in Q3 2024, this reduced slightly moving into Q1 2025. 56% of respondents are forecasting an increase over the next quarter, a major increase on Q1 2024 46% in outlook by businesses. Despite this increasing positivity a noted 20% of businesses are still expected to see a decrease in profit, a decrease to figures reported in Q1 2024 at 30% .





## Staffing Expectations

Staffing expectations for Kildare businesses in Q1 reveals a significant decrease on Q3 2024 figures with 50% of businesses expecting levels to increase in 2025. This continues a trend in the levelling out of labour and skills gaps within industry as a whole in Kildare. 11% of Kildare businesses expect a decline in jobs, an increase in figures recorded for the first time since these sentiment recording began in 2022.



## Summary

The Q1 2025 County Kildare Chamber Membership Survey has found that 31% of businesses consider housing availability the #1 issue affecting competitiveness within Kildare, followed by the availability of public transport and skills and talent. The survey also found 87% of business owners believed more needs to be done to improve infrastructural development within Kildare.

Each month it becomes more and more evident that housing poses a significant challenge to Kildare's ability to maintain its competitiveness as a county. The shortage of available housing and rental accommodations has reached a crisis point, posing a major obstacle to the ongoing growth and development of our economic ecosystem.

The housing crisis is now a pressing concern, impacting both workplace harmony and broader societal cohesion. We must enhance our investment in infrastructure and skills to ensure Kildare's sustained growth.

County Kildare Chamber is the largest business organisation in the mid-east region of Ireland representing an employer base of 400 businesses and over 52,000 employees across the county. Kildare is the location of choice for existing & potential business enterprise. Our highly skilled workforce & the attractiveness of our region coupled with the quality of life we enjoy; our excellent infrastructure provision and connectivity ensures we are well placed to secure foreign direct investment.

County Kildare Chamber will continue to work closely with key government agencies and local and regional stakeholders, drawing on the insights provided by this survey to advocate effectively on the issues that matter most to our members.

However, as we look forward to the rest of 2025, there is notable uncertainty within the business community, particularly around the potential imposition of tariffs by the US on EU goods and services. Such external pressures further emphasise the importance of ensuring Kildare's economic resilience and competitiveness.

We must remain focused on what we can control. This means enhancing our investment in public infrastructure, streamlining planning processes, and ensuring robust broadband connectivity to support existing businesses and attract new investment. Government and local authorities must prioritise these efforts to safeguard Kildare's position as a thriving economic hub within the mid-east region of Ireland.

The feedback gathered from this survey will be crucial in shaping our advocacy efforts throughout the coming year, as we continue to build a prosperous future for the county.

The next survey will be completed in Q2 of 2025.

If you have any queries regarding the survey or want to discuss a matter further, please contact [sinead@countykildarechamber.ie](mailto:sinead@countykildarechamber.ie).



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