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Debates set to tackle issues of being an environmentally friendly business

THE tricky question of how small businesses can thrive whilst becoming more environmentally friendly will be tackled in a series of live debates in Doncaster.

The debates, at the **Business Yorkshire** exhibition at Doncaster Racecourse next month, will bring together experts in the fields of sustainability and business who will respond to questions from the local business community.

The 'Great Green Debate' aims to explore the key issue of sustainability and business in the light of growing evidence that consumers, as well as businesses, are increasingly looking for greater levels of sustainability from their suppliers and partners. However, small businesses are the least likely group to have a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or environmental policy in

place. This is putting them at a competitive disadvantage when compared to larger businesses that have the resources to develop advanced CSR and environmental policies, and the budgets to aggressively market themselves as 'green'.

Scott Hider, managing director of Nationwide Media Group said: "There is a perception amongst many SMEs that developing a sustainable strategy costs time and money, with little real return on investment. This belief is wrong because businesses need to be more sustainable to both improve efficiency and to make themselves more attractive to customers and clients. By ignoring the issue of sustainability they risk reducing their chances of growth and exposing themselves to a wide range of significant risks.

"There are cost efficient ways to

improve environmental and bottom line performance, while ensuring that they can offer their customers a sustainable solution. The Great Green Debate is a chance to publicly examine these issues and to help educate businesses in the region about how they can become environmentally more competitive."

The Great Green Debate will take place at in the Innovation Lounge at Business Yorkshire on Wednesday 25 and Thursday November 26.

Businesses are invited to submit questions prior to the debate. To submit a question register online to attend Business Yorkshire and email greendebate@nwe.co.uk. If your question is selected you will be contacted prior to the event and you will be invited to pose your question during the debate.