



West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041

‘Your Voice Counts’ Consultation Summary Report



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



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1. Introduction

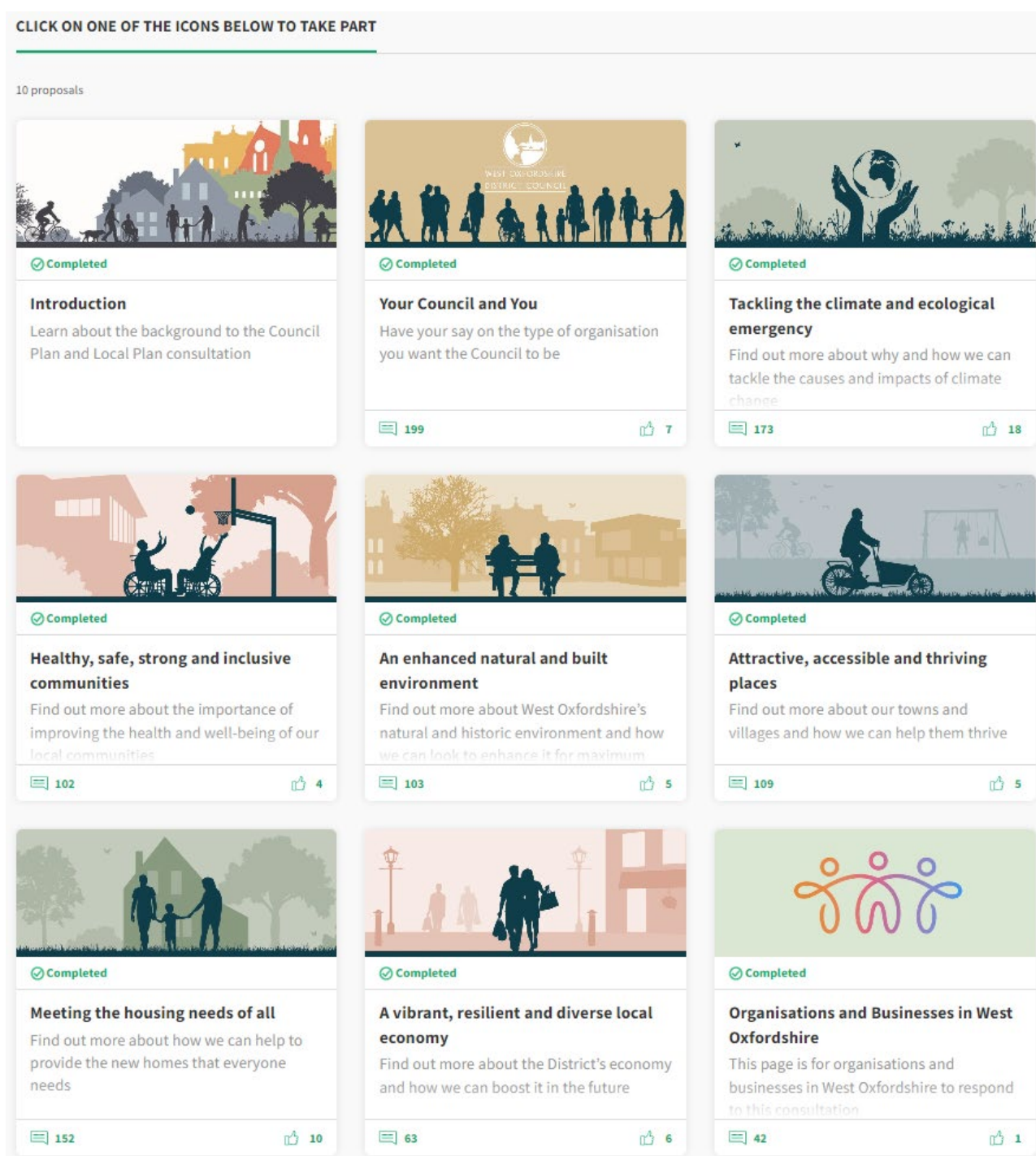
- 1.1 The District Council is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan and last year ran an initial ‘scoping’ consultation seeking early views on what topics the new plan should be looking to focus on.
- 1.2 The purpose of doing this was to ensure that the plan is concise and locally relevant rather than being excessively long and simply repeating national policy.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary overview of the consultation in terms of how and when it took place and the main issues that were raised.
- 1.4 The report has been made publicly available and the findings will be used to inform the subsequent stages of Local Plan preparation.

2. The ‘Your Voice Counts’ Consultation

- 2.1 The Council’s ‘Your Voice Counts’ consultation ran for a period of 6-weeks from 24 August – 5 October 2022. The consultation was a joint exercise, designed to inform the development of both the Council Plan¹ and the new Local Plan.
- 2.2 The consultation was predominantly digitally-led, using the Council’s dedicated engagement platform ‘commonplace’ <https://yourvoicecounts.commonplace.is/>
- 2.3 Figure 1 overleaf shows the structure of the consultation which comprised a series of questions based around the following ‘areas of focus’:
 - 1. Tackling the climate and ecological emergency
 - 2. Healthy, safe, strong and inclusive communities
 - 3. An enhanced natural and built environment
 - 4. Attractive, accessible and thriving places
 - 5. Meeting the housing needs of all
 - 6. A vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy
- 2.4 To help inform the Council Plan, a number of questions were also posed under the topic of ‘Your Council and You’ allowing respondents to put forward views on what sort of organisation they would like the District Council to be.

¹ The Council Plan was adopted in early 2023

Figure 1 - Consultation structure on Commonplace



2.5 Respondents were asked whether they agreed with each potential area of focus and then more specifically for views on potential measures which the new Local Plan might look to introduce under each such as zero carbon buildings and affordable homes.

2.6 Some examples of the consultation questions are shown in Figures 2 and 3 below.

Figure 2 - Example Question on Reducing Carbon Emissions and Requiring Net Zero Carbon Development

How important is it to you that the Council seeks to reduce carbon emissions from existing buildings through retrofitting and require net zero carbon with high standards of energy and sustainability in all new developments?(5 being most important, 1 being least)

5 4 3 2 1

Very important Not Important

Figure 3 - Example Question on Affordable Housing

How important is it to you that the Council seeks to deliver an increase in the number and range of affordable homes and ensure that all new homes are affordable to run in the long-term? (5 being most important, 1 being least)

5 4 3 2 1

- 2.7 Comments were able to be put forward in writing or alternatively by recording a 'voice note'.
- 2.8 Section 3 of this report provides an overview of the main issues raised under each of the 6 main areas of focus.
- 2.9 Respondents were also able to make any general comments they wished to and the main issues raised are summarised in Section 4.
- 2.10 In overall terms, the digital consultation attracted a good level of response, with Figure 4 below showing the overall data.

Figure 4 - Numbers of visitors, respondents, contributions and news subscribers



2.11 To complement the digital consultation, two face-to-face workshop events were held, the first of which was with Town and Parish Councils on 5 September 2023 and the second held with a number of key stakeholder organisations on 20 September 2023.

2.12 Section 5 of this report provides further detail of these two events.

3. Feedback on Local Plan Potential 'Areas of Focus'

- 3.1 This section of the report provides an overview of the main issues raised under the 6 main 'areas of focus' that formed the basis of the consultation.
- 3.2 For ease of reference, these are set out in the same order as they appeared in the consultation itself.

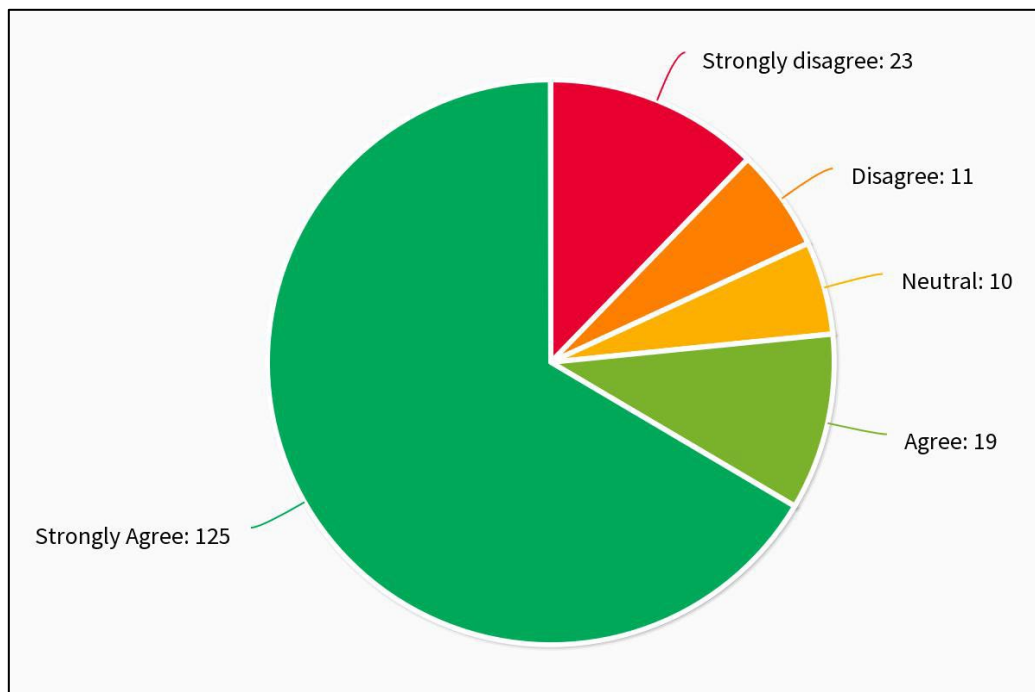
Tackling the climate and ecological emergency



To what extent do you agree that 'tackling the climate and ecological emergency' should be an area of focus for the Local Plan?

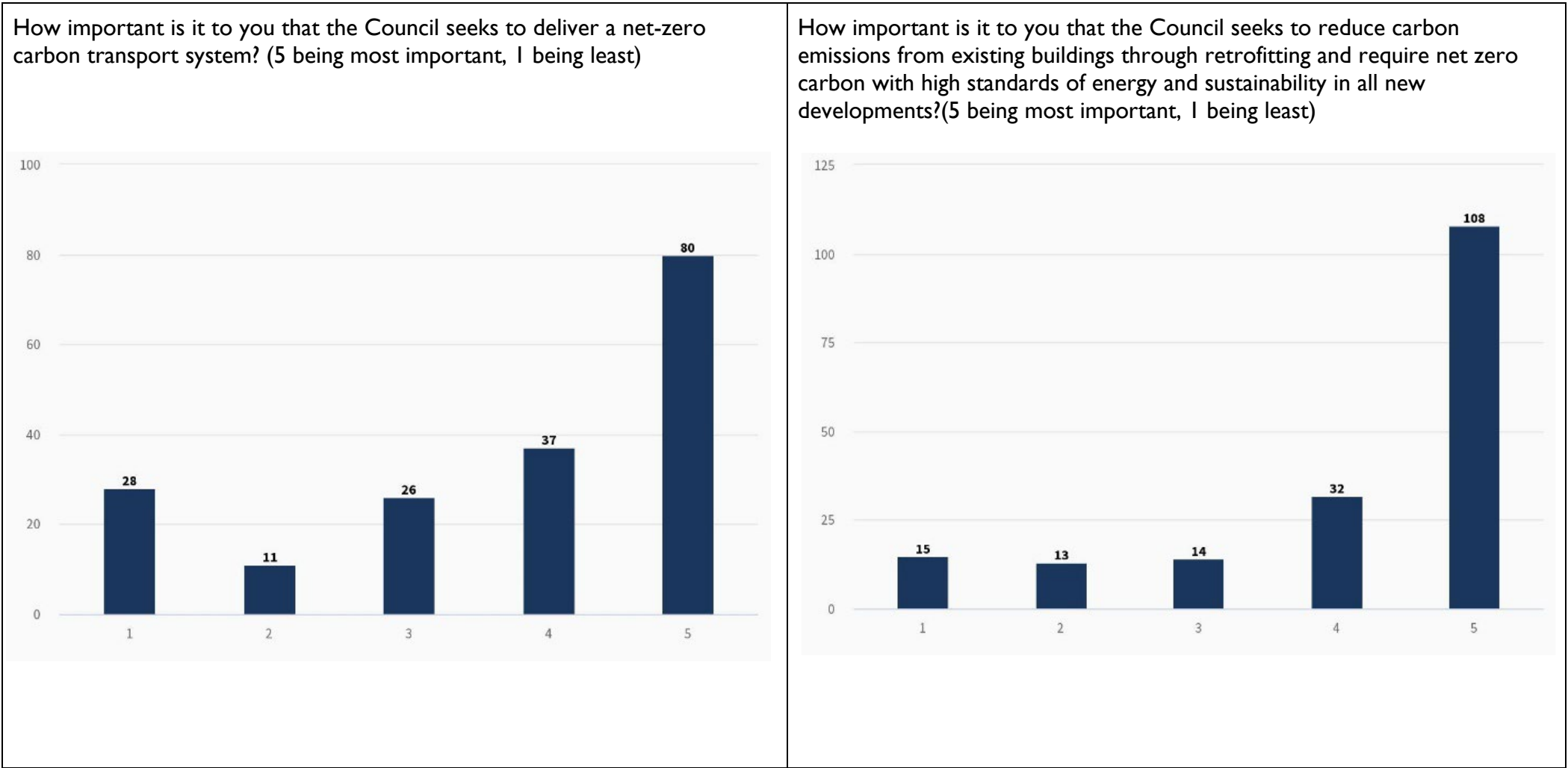
- 3.3 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

Figure 5 - Degree of support for whether ‘tackling the climate and ecological emergency’ should be an area of focus for the Local Plan

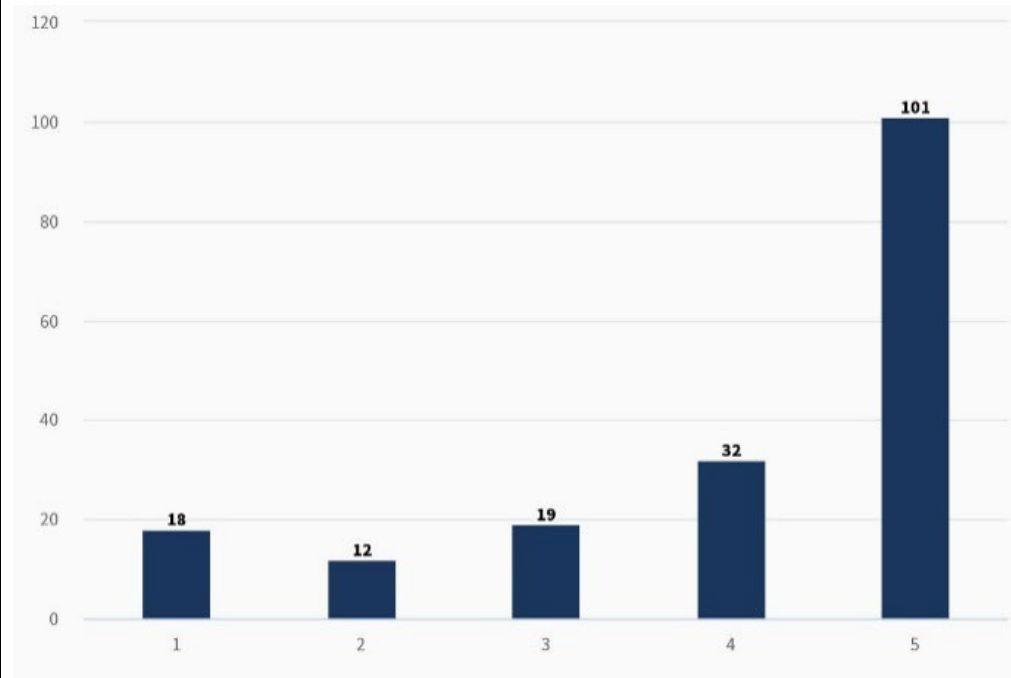


- 3.4 Within this overall ‘theme’ the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.5 Figure 6 shows the survey responses received to each.

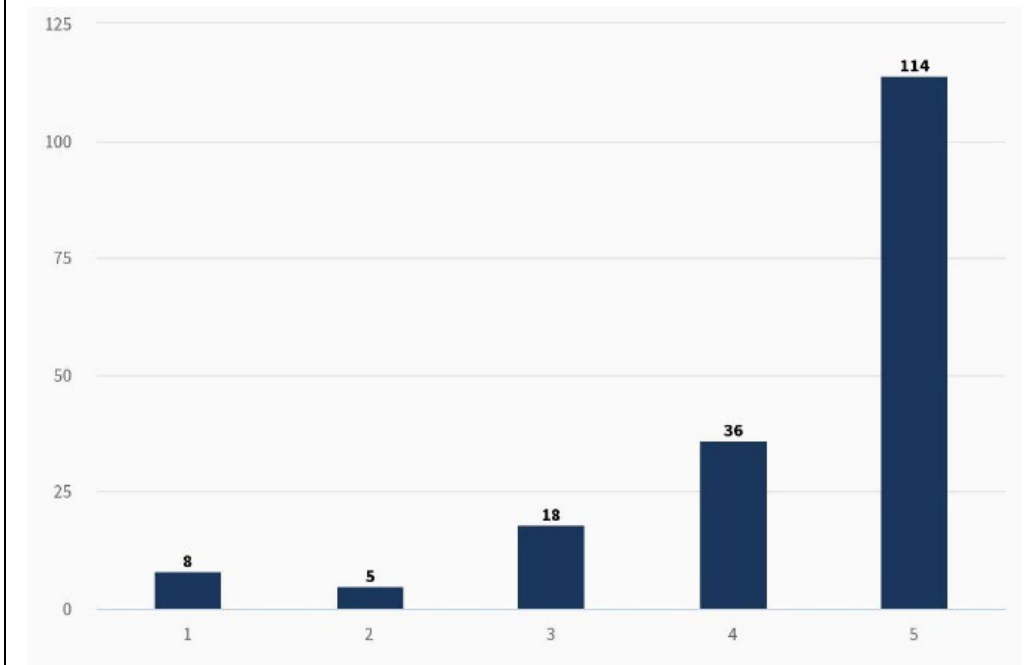
Figure 6 - Responses to individual questions relating to tackling the climate and ecological emergency



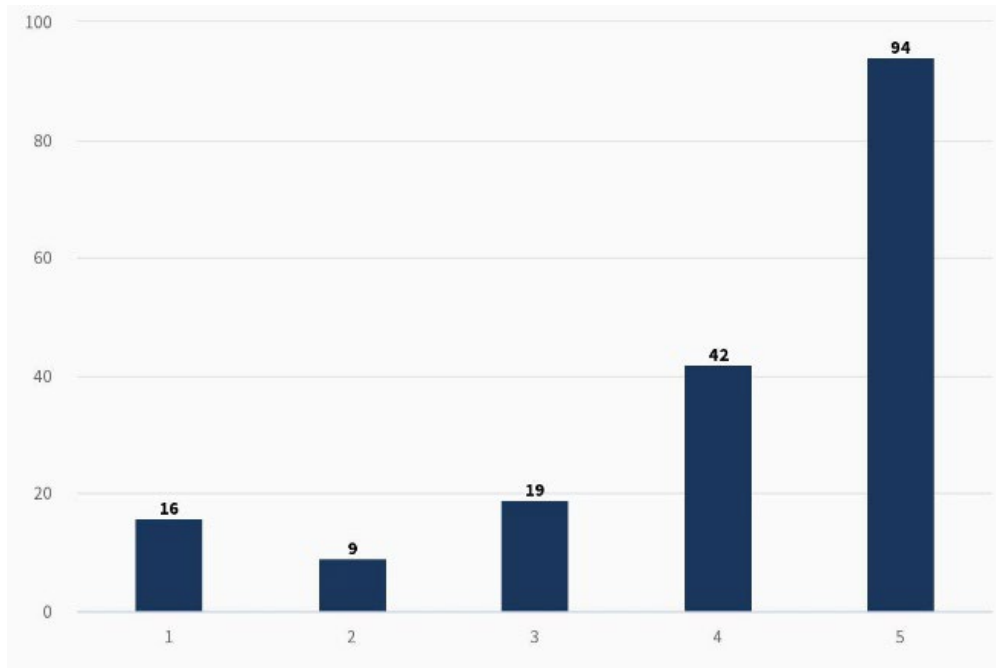
How important is it to you that the Council seeks to actively promote and enable the roll-out of renewable and low carbon energy sources in suitable locations across the District? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



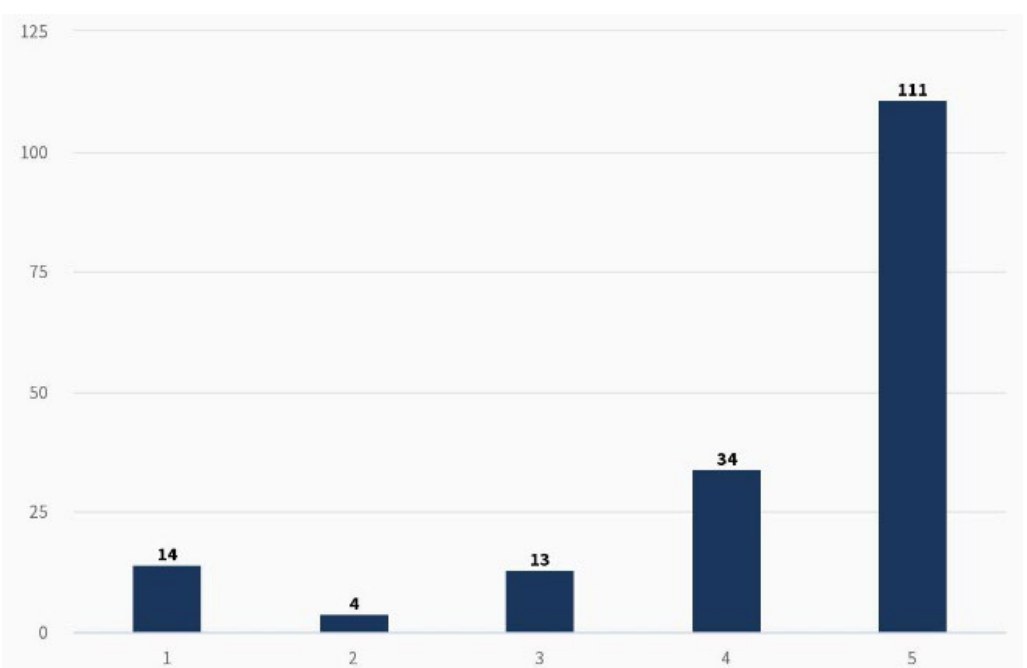
How important is it to you that the Council seeks to make the most efficient use of existing buildings and resources and create a 'zero waste' society? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council seeks to adapt to the effects of climate change that are already in motion or predicted to occur? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council seeks to help nature to recover and flourish in order to reverse the impacts of climate change and secure nature's benefits? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



3.6 The word cloud in Figure 7 illustrates the main ‘phrases’ which recurred in people’s written responses to the questions above.

Figure 7 - Word cloud of key phrases relating to tackling the climate and ecological emergency



3.7 Key points arising from the written comments included the following:

- Climate change and ecological emergencies are not new phenomena for the planning system and represent an accentuation in emphasis rather than a sea-change in direction;
- The importance of taking local action in the absence of clear national policy;
- WODC should seek to be ground-breaking in its new Local Plan;
- The new Local Plan should seek to enable the transition to a zero-carbon energy system;
- Nature recovery is vital but is not well understood by many people – the plan needs to link to the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- Large cost associated with a net zero carbon transport system – need to be realistic;
- Need to mitigate against additional human activity – a major threat to biodiversity;
- Need more active travel in particular routes to schools as well as strong protection of existing public rights of way;
- Plan to make provision for increased EV take-up;
- The plan should seek to enable the provision of sustainable, locally grown food;
- Need efficient use of land for housebuilding e.g. more flats;
- Importance of measuring progress towards net zero and nature recovery targets;
- Climate change is a global issue, the local plan should focus more on local issues;
- Retrofitting renewable energy solutions is vital e.g. solar panels alongside improved insulation in existing properties;
- Woodland and hedgerow protection and creation is vital for carbon storage, micro climate, landscape and ecological reasons;

- All new homes should be built to zero carbon standards;
- Need to effectively address the issue of waste water capacity and water quality;
- Waste must be considered at all stages of development and the principle of the circular economy adopted;
- The plan must recognise the issue of 'water stress' and require appropriate water efficiency measures;
- All forms of flood-risk need to be taken into account;
- Renewable energy projects should benefit the local community;
- A need for more reliable and frequent electric bus services to reduce car use;
- The plan should emphasise the use of previously developed land in preference to greenfield sites, particularly agricultural land;
- Location of development is key to reducing car use – new development should be co-located with transport and mobility hubs;
- Concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods well supported;
- Co-locating new homes and jobs can make a significant contribution to producing a net zero carbon transport network;
- Design and layout of new developments should focus on energy conservation, reducing energy consumption and mitigate against the effects of climate change;
- EV charging points to be readily available including in public places;
- Important that the provision of renewable energy solutions does not bespoil the countryside;
- New development must make space for nature;
- The Council should seek to allocate sites for renewable energy - considered alongside network capacity and demand;
- Any such allocations should not be at unacceptable cost to the countryside and should be steered towards areas that have relatively low sensitivity to the type and scale of development being proposed;
- Need to carefully consider the issue of retrofitting renewable energy solutions on older and listed buildings;
- The policy response to the declared climate and ecological emergencies should not result in a further polarisation of growth at the main towns, and away from smaller settlements in rural areas.

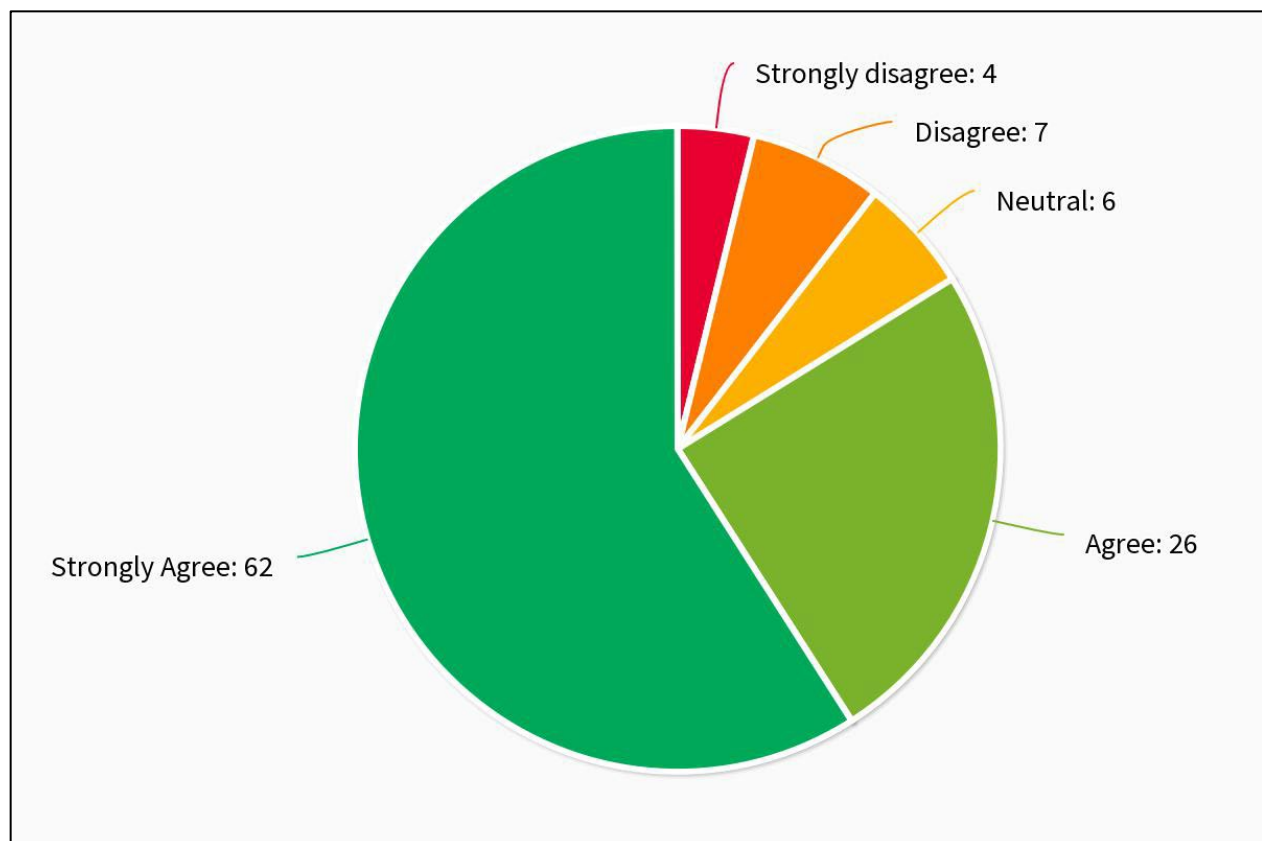
Healthy, safe, strong and inclusive communities



To what extent do you agree that achieving ‘healthy, safe and strong and inclusive communities’ should be an area of focus for the Local Plan?

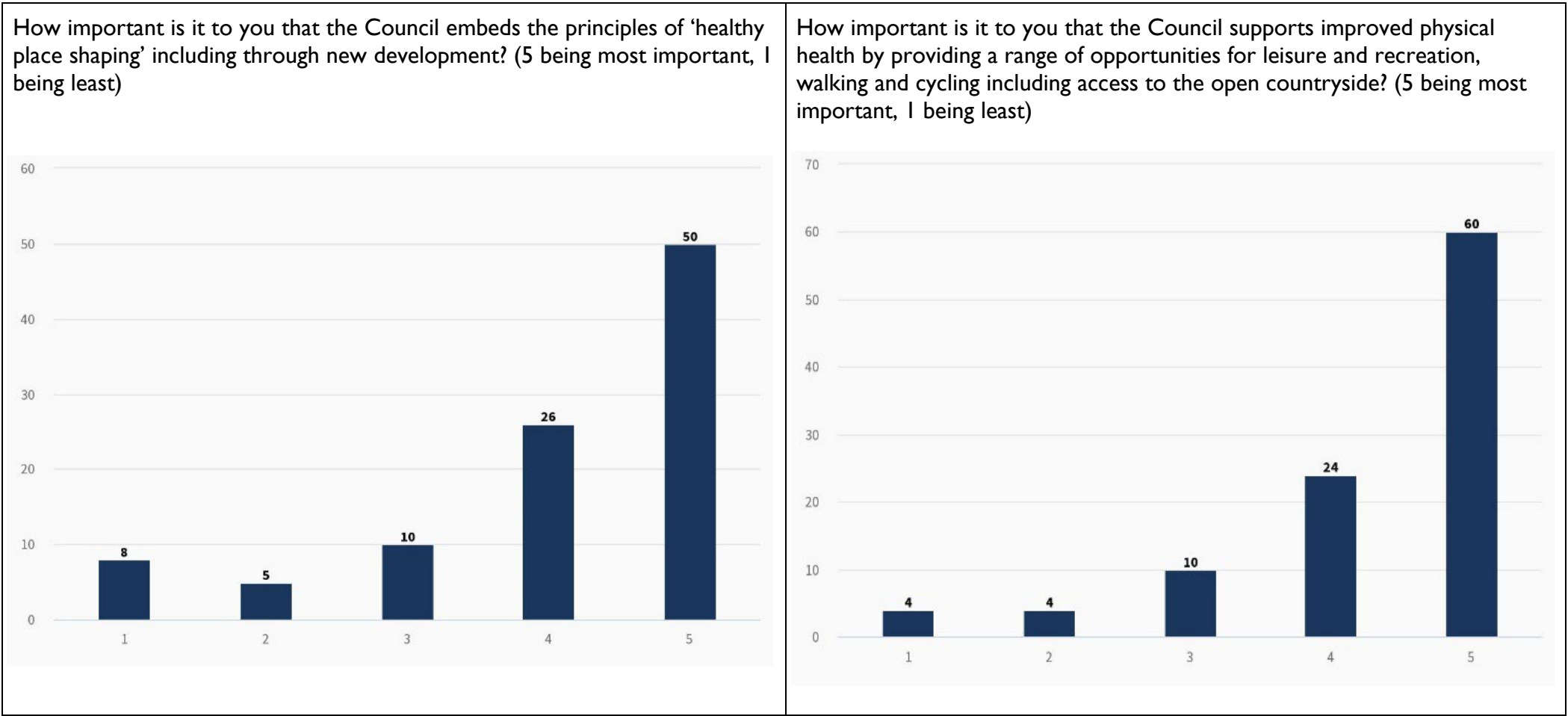
- 3.8 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

Figure 8 - Degree of support for whether achieving health, safe and strong and inclusive communities should be an area of focus for the Local Plan

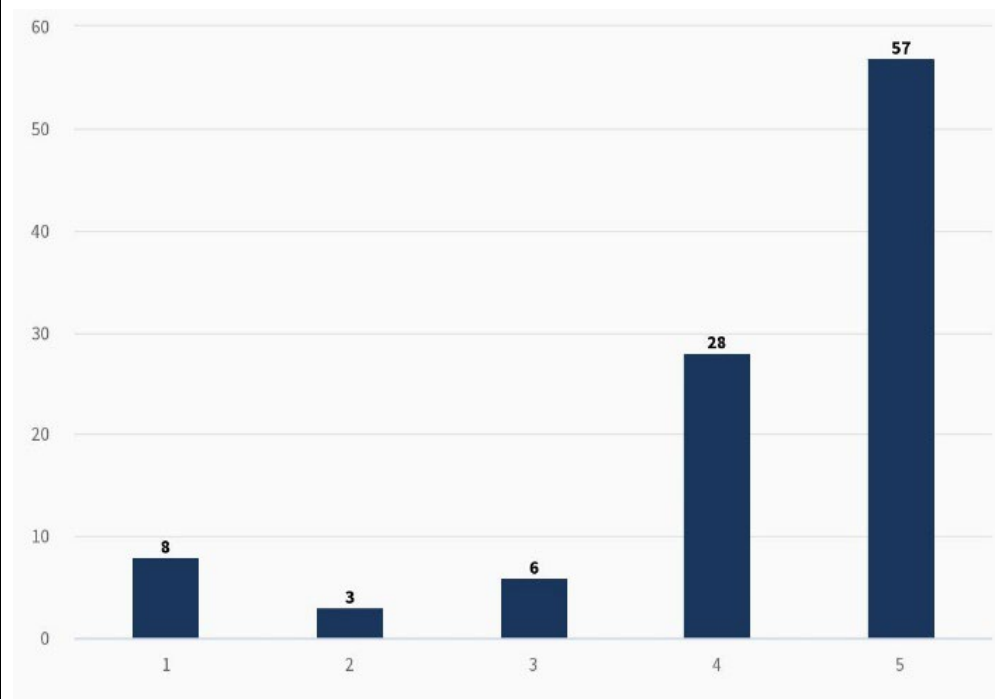


- 3.9 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.10 Figure 9 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

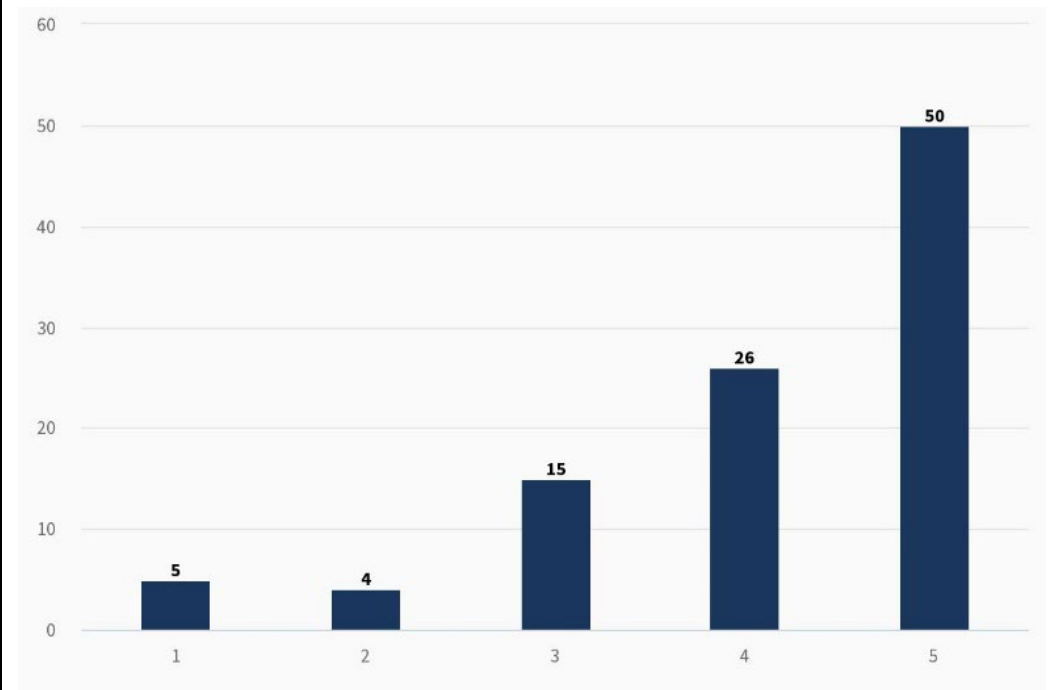
Figure 9 - Responses to individual questions relating to healthy, safe and strong and inclusive communities



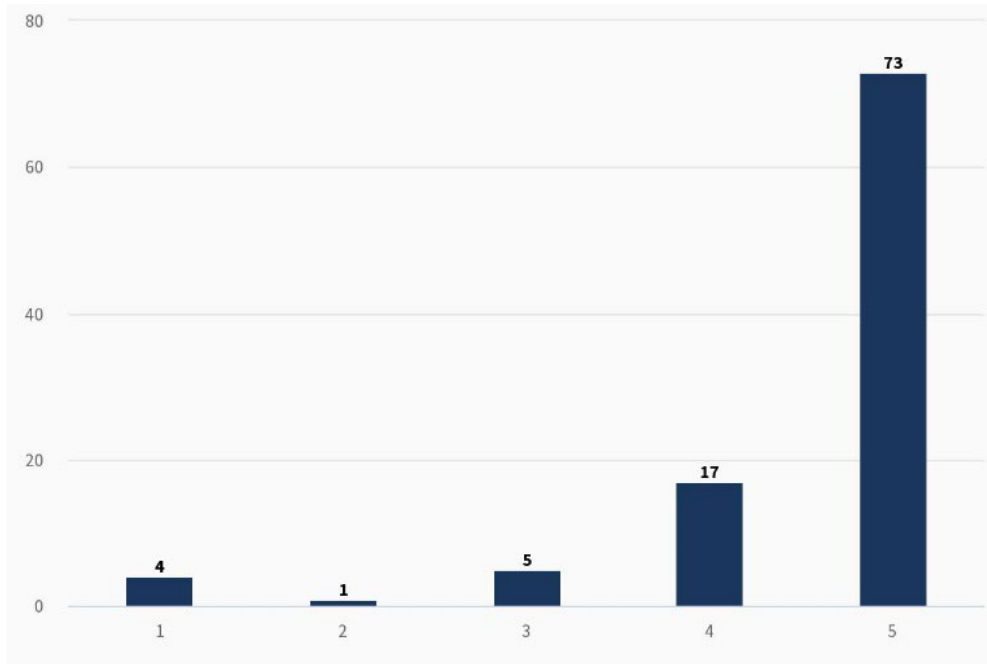
How important is it to you that the Council seeks to address mental health issues including rural isolation, loneliness and inequality? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



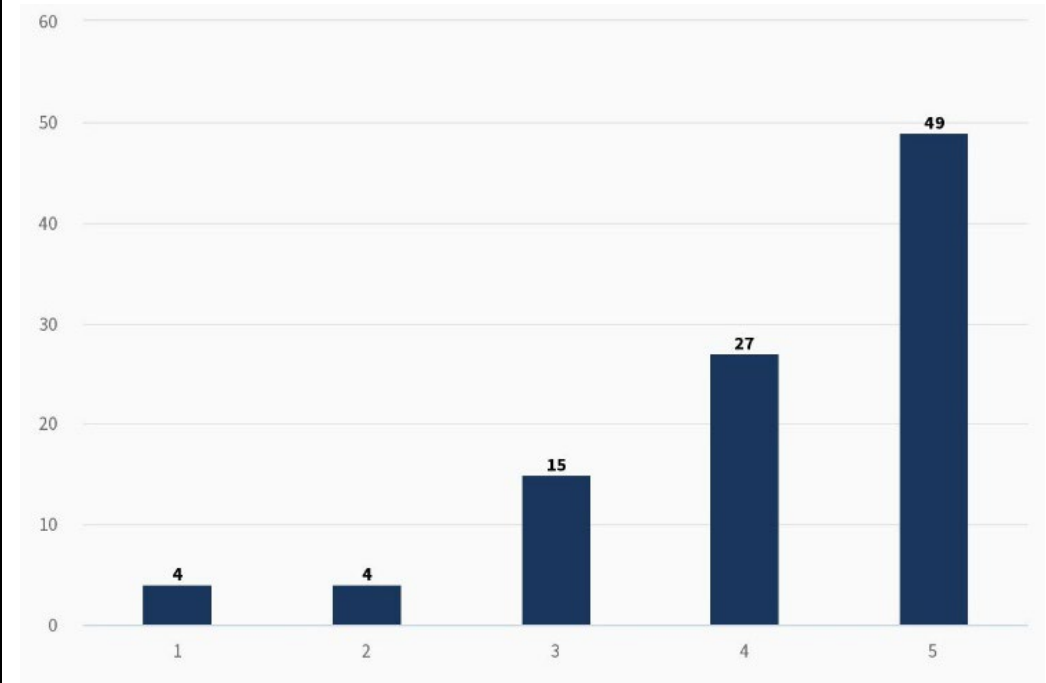
How important is it to you that the Council enables the provision of opportunities to grow food locally and make healthier food choices? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council seeks to ensure that new development and local communities are supported by effective and timely investment in supporting infrastructure? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council requires well designed buildings and spaces with an appropriate mix of different uses to create safe, inclusive and welcoming environments? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



3.11 The word cloud in Figure 10 illustrates the main ‘phrases’ which recurred in people’s written responses to the questions above.

Figure 10 - Word cloud of key phrases relating to healthy, safe and strong and inclusive communities



3.12 Key points arising included the following:

- Need to tackle isolation and inequality e.g. cost of public transport, location of affordable homes, access to food opportunities;
- Support for the use of health impact assessments (HIA) in new developments;
- Local Plan should be making provision for local food growing opportunities e.g. allotments and community orchards;
- Important that developer contributions are effectively secured;
- Essential that supporting infrastructure is provided in step with new housing;
- The Council needs to work with local communities to identify community priorities;
- Improved public transport for rural communities essential to avoid social isolation;
- Need green spaces that are accessible to all;
- The plan should encourage more self-build housing opportunities;
- The Local Plan should be considering the opportunity for a new rail line linking Oxford and Carterton;
- Buildings need to be accessible to all;
- Interaction with heritage or the historic environment can be a positive factor in supporting individual and community wellbeing;
- Need to provide new leisure facilities and improve existing;
- Active travel is key to promoting healthy communities – WODC should work closely with Oxfordshire County Council and other key stakeholder groups;
- An integrated network of accessible green infrastructure is needed;

- The plan should focus on achieving safe routes to schools;
- The new Local Plan should focus on a positive and effective strategy for alleviating rural isolation and inequalities;
- Provision needs to be made for younger age groups e.g. involve schools in local food growing opportunities;
- Community activation measures are key to supporting healthy place shaping and should be incorporated;
- Important to consider the impact of new development on existing communities;
- The Council must follow through and ensure that developers provide what they need to, to support new development and mitigate the impact;
- WODC should work with business and commercial organisations to ensure they play a much stronger role in contributing to the health and prosperity of their local communities;
- The time to deliver water/wastewater infrastructure should not be underestimated;
- The plan must clearly define what is meant by 'healthy place shaping'.

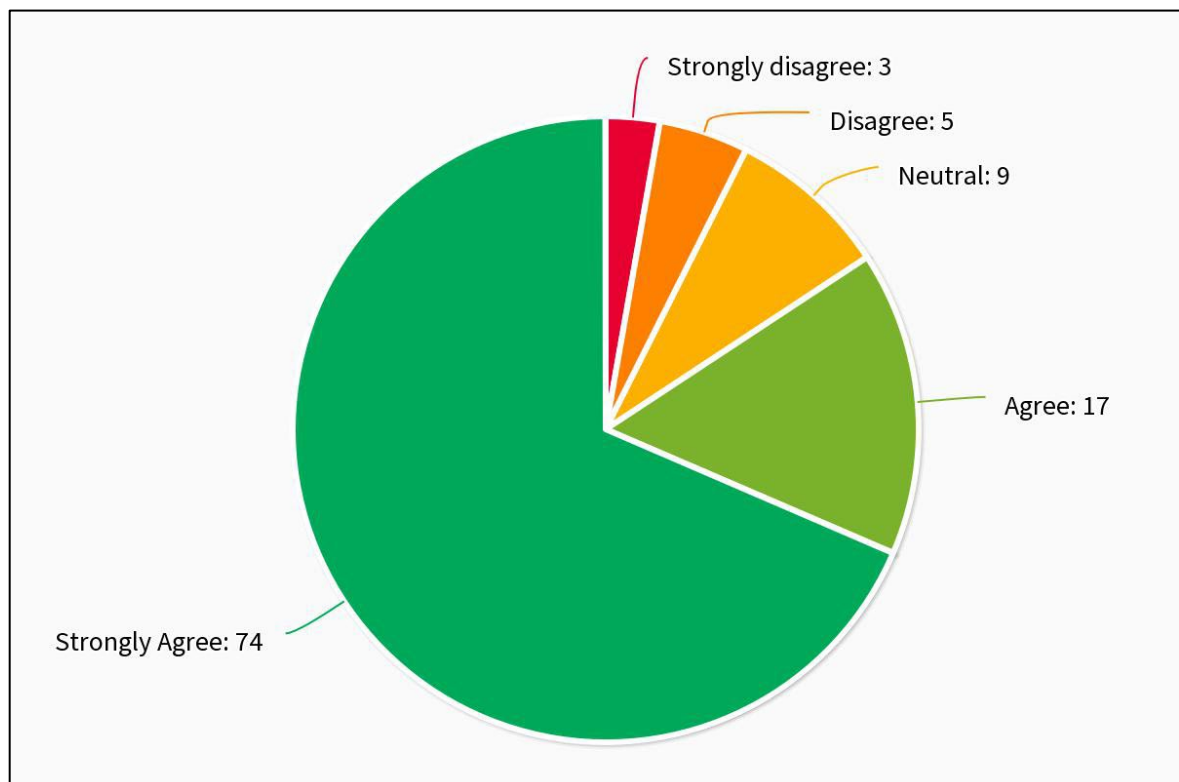
An enhanced natural and built environment



To what extent do you agree that achieving an enhanced natural and built environment should be an area of focus for the Local Plan? (5 strongly agree- 1 strongly disagree)

- 3.13 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

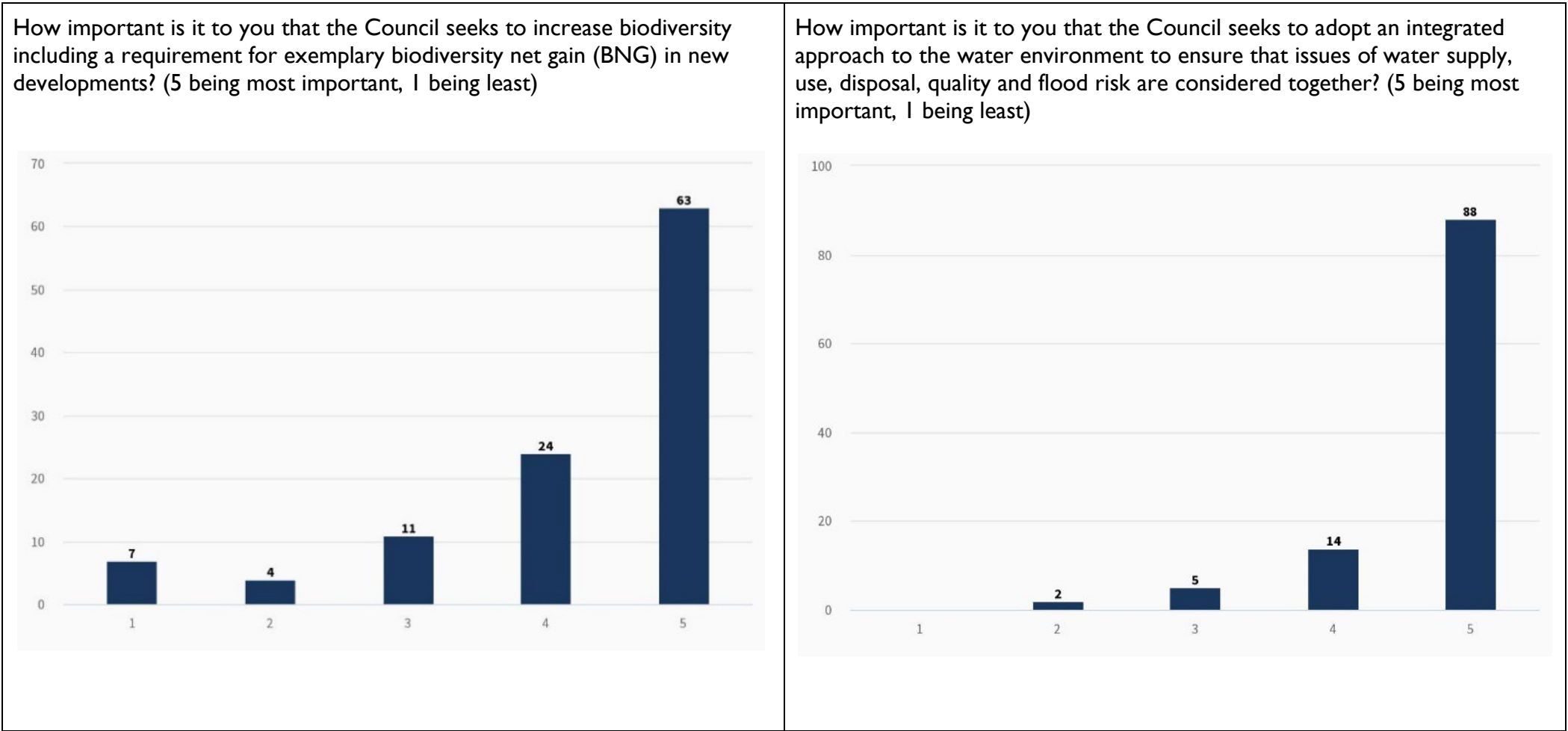
Figure 11 - Feedback on whether achieving an enhanced natural and built environment should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



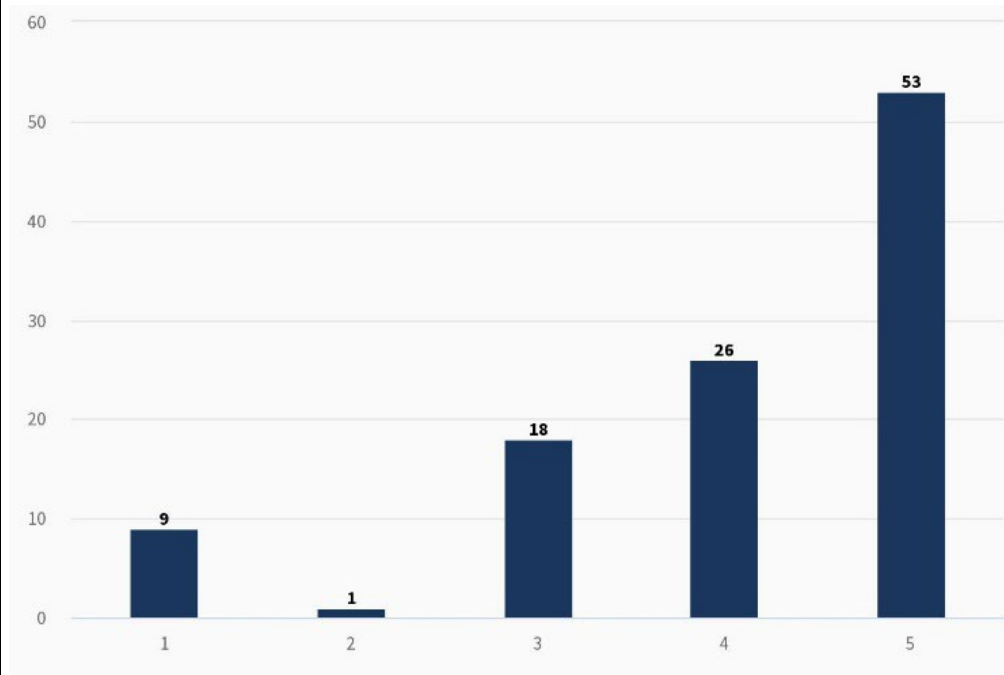
- 3.14 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.

3.15 Figure 12 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

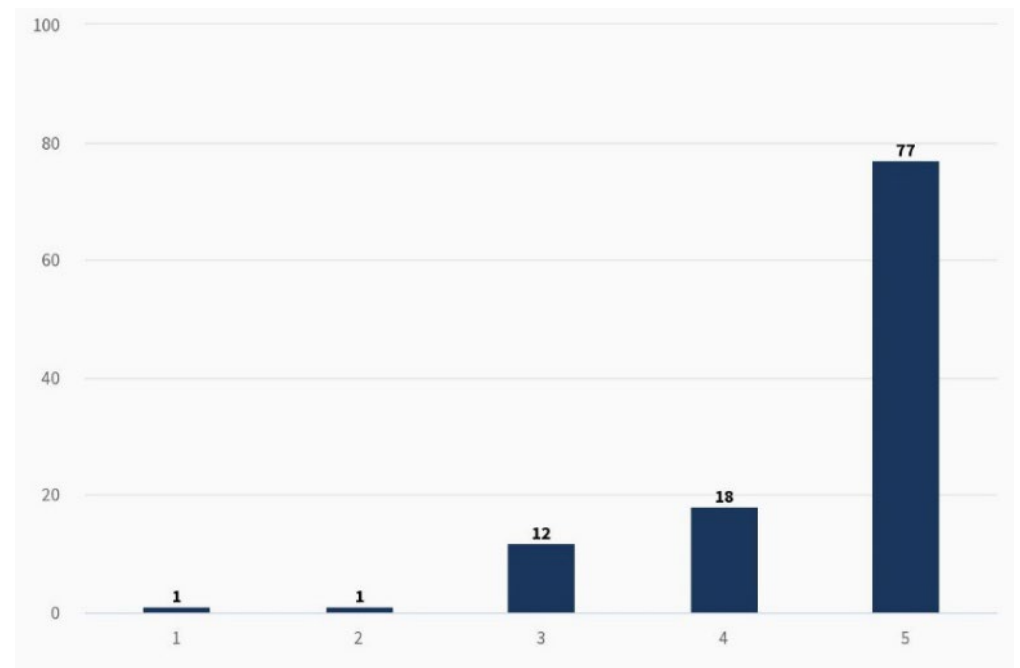
Figure 12 - Responses to individual questions relating to enhancing the natural and built environment



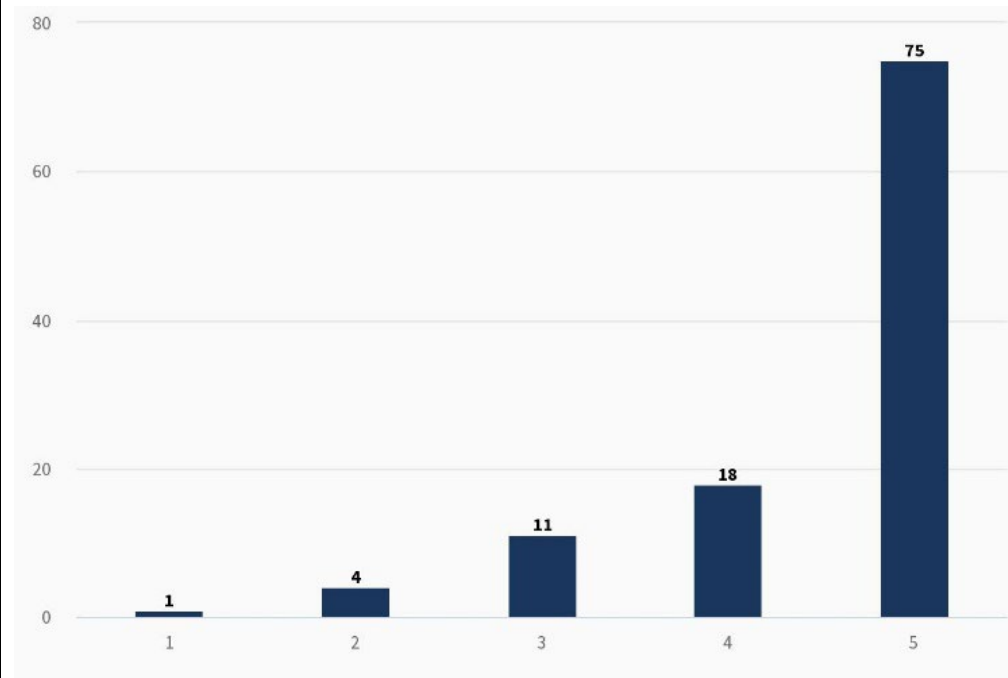
How important is it to you that the Council adopts a positive approach to the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and seeks to minimise carbon emissions from older buildings? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



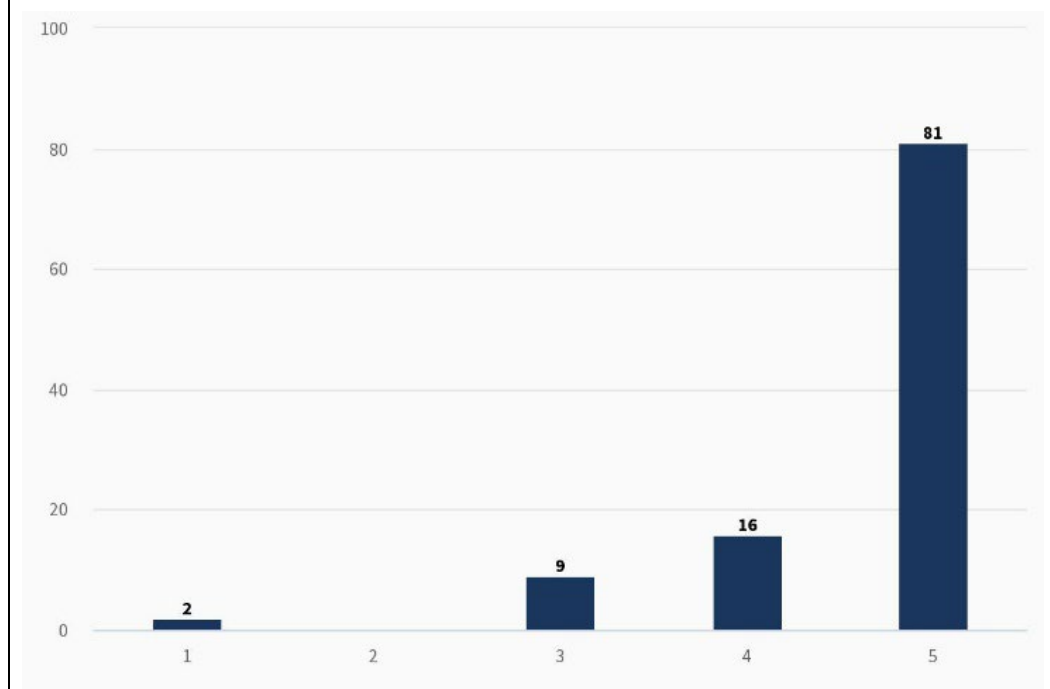
How important is it to you that the Council seeks to protect the District's highest quality agricultural land? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council seeks to reduce all forms of pollution and improve environmental quality? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and pro-actively considers opportunities to enhance the Cotswolds National Landscape and Oxford Green Belt? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



3.16 The word cloud in Figure 13 illustrates the main ‘phrases’ which recurred in people’s written responses to the questions above.

Figure 13 - Word cloud of key phrases relating to enhancing the natural and built environment



3.17 Key points arising included the following:

- A landscape-led approach to development should be adopted in the Cotswolds National Landscape and its setting;
- The Council should prepare more Conservation Area Appraisals;
- It is important that the new Local Plan is based on a positive approach to the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment with a focus on enhancement;
- Need to consider how the outstanding universal value (OVA) of the Blenheim Palace World Heritage site is most appropriately conserved;
- Action needed to minimise carbon emissions from historic and traditional buildings;
- Increased focus on the water environment is crucial including the issue of water pollution;
- Vital that infrastructure planning takes account of waste water capacity;
- The relative tranquillity of the area and its dark skies are particularly important considerations for the Cotswolds National Landscape;
- The plan should include a specific policy on hedgerow protection;
- The establishment, protection and enhancement of wildlife (blue-green) corridors is essential;
- Important that development within the AONB is not automatically seen as inappropriate which creates a risk that development may be steered to less sustainable locations;
- Need to improve public access to the countryside e.g. extension of commons etc;

- High value agricultural land should not be used for solar farms;
- Also need to limit house building on farmland;
- Local Plan should be seeking to tackle biodiversity loss, habitat loss, water, soil and air pollution, natural greenspace, accessible green space, climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- New housing developments need to have more imagination and a rethink in how they are designed;
- The natural landscape of the District is a key asset and must be protected;
- A targeted and focused approach to biodiversity gain is needed e.g. could focus on management regimes, not just new planting;
- The plan could consider making specific allocations for new areas of biodiversity creation;
- Importance of protecting and managing areas of ancient woodland which are irreplaceable;
- All countryside needs to be protected – not just the AONB and Green Belt;
- Consideration should be given to development within the Green Belt due to its proximity to Oxford;
- The focus of biodiversity net gain should be financial contributions towards off-site provision;
- Any strategy must distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national, and designated sites;
- An enhanced natural and built environment is not incompatible with meeting requirements for growth;
- Need to avoid unnecessary use of lighting especially at times when it is not needed;
- Natural spaces should be designed to allow accessibility without damaging the natural conservation basis;
- This theme needs to consider not only built heritage but also assets with archaeological interest;
- Effective decision-making benefits from considering the natural and historic environment in an integrated way;
- An integrated approach is needed whereby climate change and heritage considerations inform a range of policies throughout the plan.

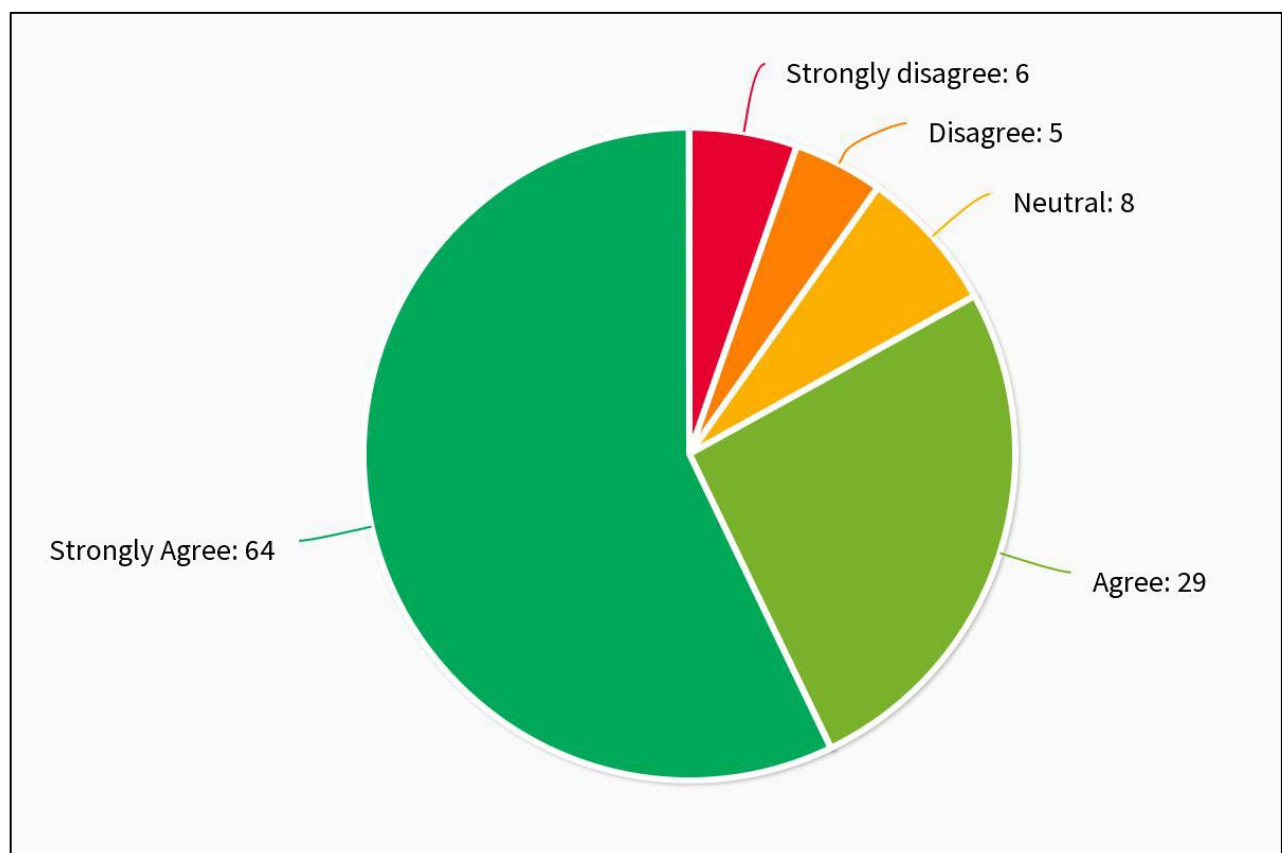
Attractive, accessible and thriving places



To what extent do you agree that the creation of attractive, accessible and thriving places should be an area of focus for the Local Plan? (5 strongly agree- 1 strongly disagree)

- 3.18 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

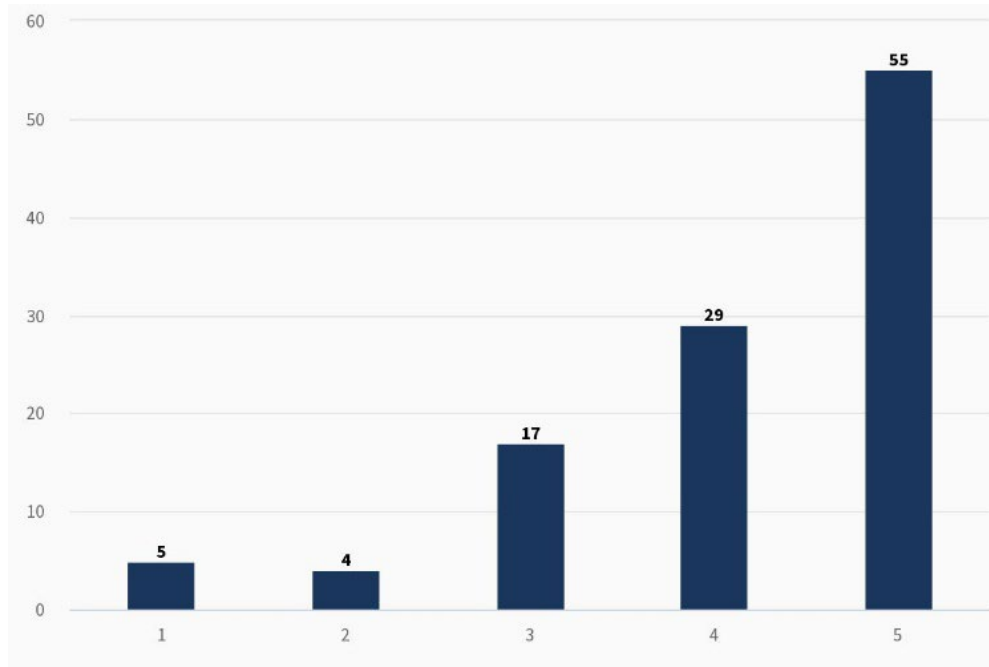
Figure 14 - Feedback on whether the creation of attractive, accessible and thriving places should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



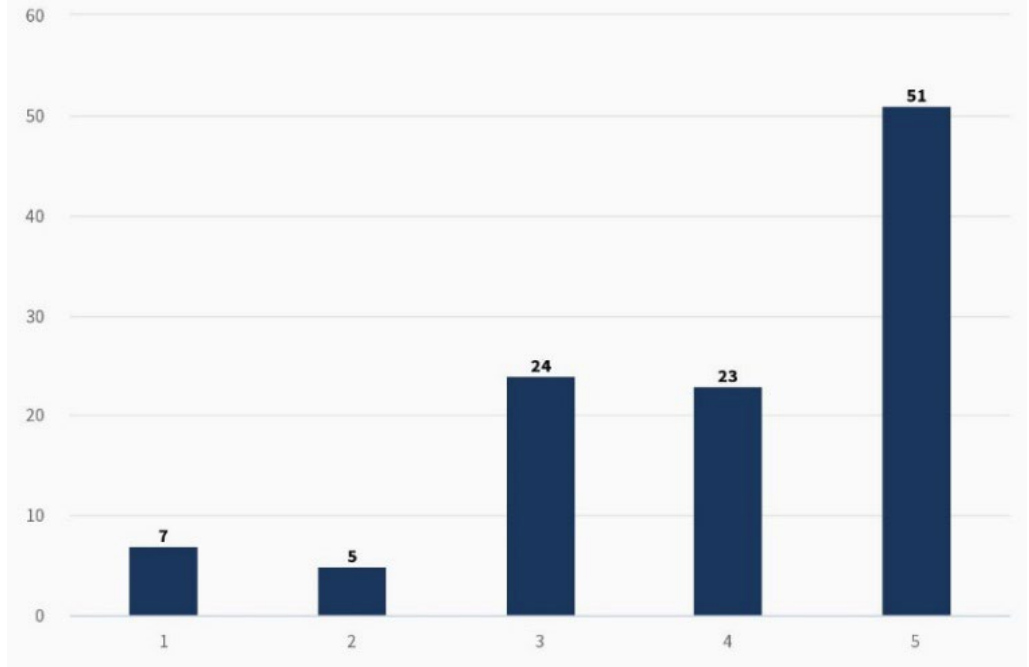
- 3.19 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.
- 3.20 Figure 15 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

Figure 15 - Responses to individual questions relating to the creation of attractive, accessible and thriving places

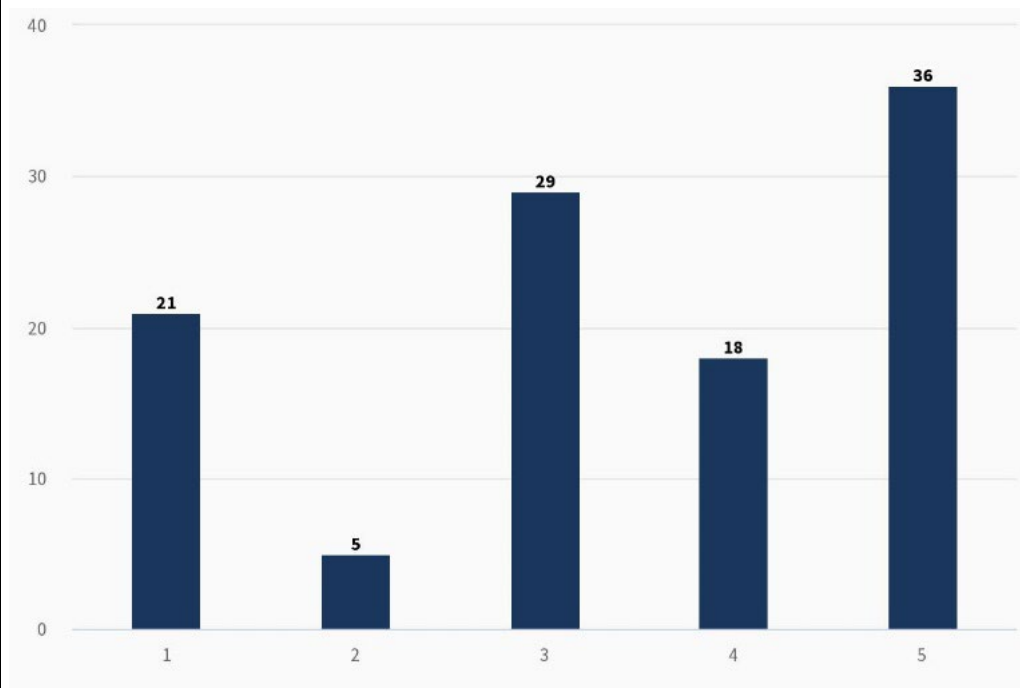
How important is it to you that the Council explores different options to help identify the most appropriate and sustainable pattern of future growth? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



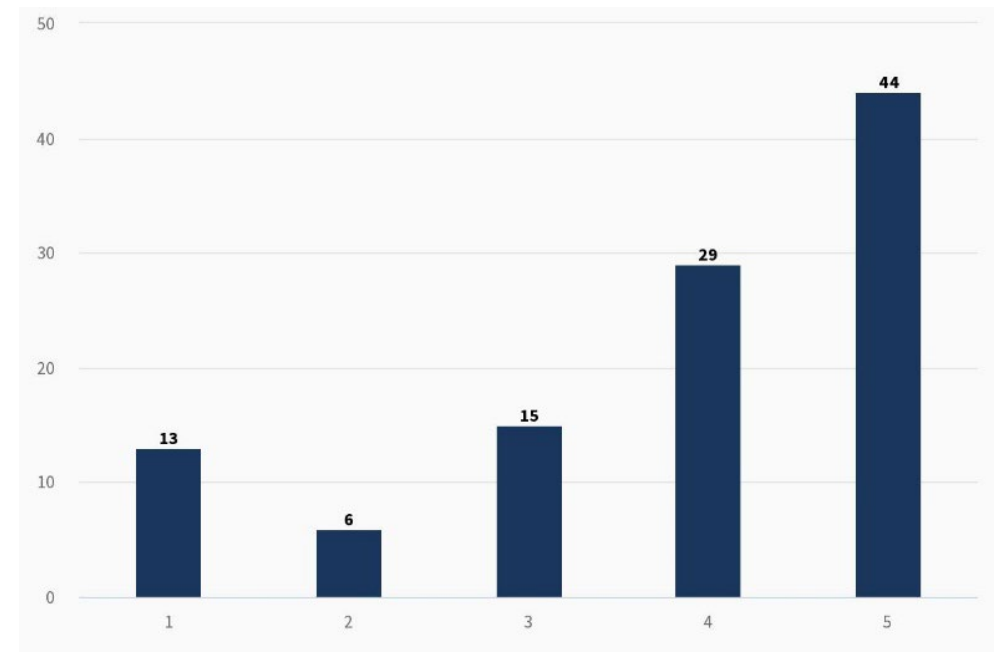
How important is it to you that the Council seeks to strengthen its approach towards sustainable design including the provision of specific design guidance? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



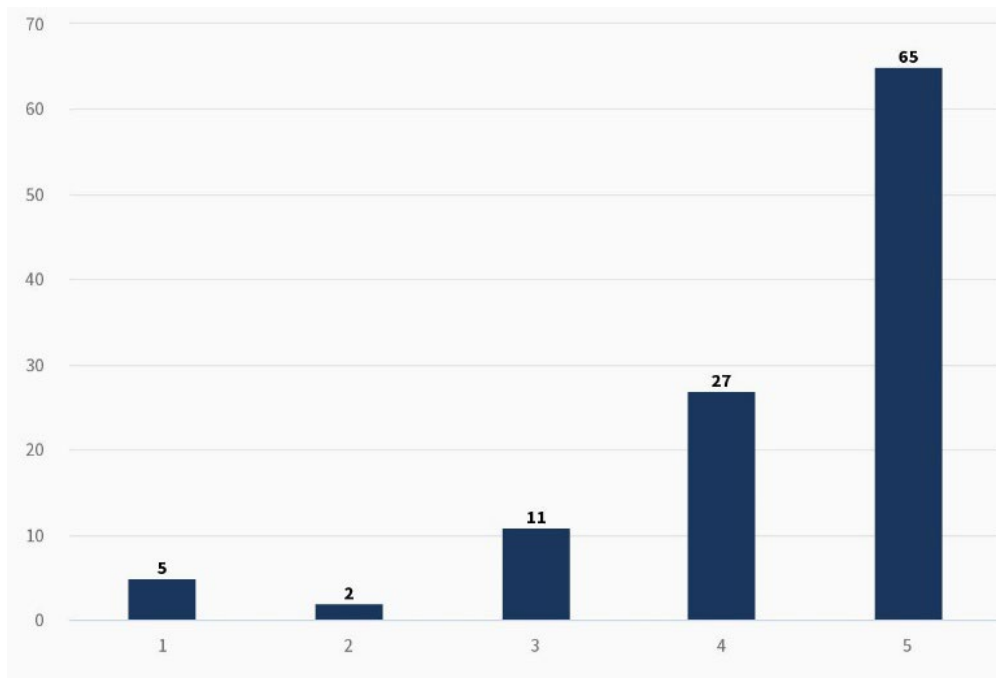
How important is it to you that the Council explores the potential to roll out garden village principles more widely to larger development proposals within the District? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



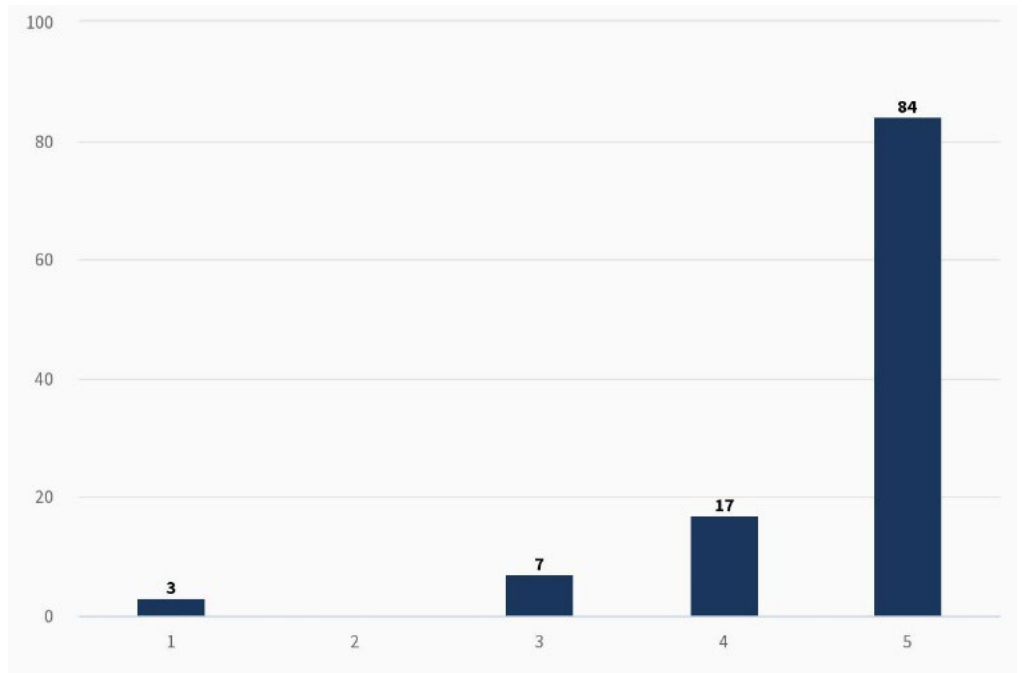
How important is it to you that the Council actively supports the preparation of neighbourhood plans and other community-led plans across the District? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council adopts a positive strategy to support the revitalisation and viability of our town centres? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council aims to retain and increase core services and facilities in the District's villages and hamlets? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



3.21 The word cloud in Figure 16 illustrates the main ‘phrases’ which recurred in people’s written responses to the questions above.

Figure 16 - Word cloud of key phrases relating to the creation of attractive, accessible and thriving places



3.22 Key points arising included the following:

- Accessibility is vital – especially in rural areas;
- Enhancement of public transport is needed alongside improved opportunities for walking and cycling;
- Rural bus services should be restored;
- The pandemic demonstrated the strength of our local communities – we need this vibrancy to continue;
- Importance of local shops and services, particularly in rural areas – community shops should be supported;
- The pattern of future growth should steer development to the most sustainable locations, especially where there are good public transport links;
- Mixed-use developments help to promote social interaction and connections;
- The plan should require well-designed, high-quality public spaces which encourages their active usage and reduces fear of crime;
- Without some growth in rural areas, villages are at risk of stagnation;
- Greater sustainability of building design needed;
- Essential that new development is in step with the provision of supporting infrastructure;
- Important that smaller developments do not avoid obligations to provide or contribute towards supporting infrastructure;
- Need to address the increasing number of holiday lets – can this be restricted?
- Any new development must be proportionate in scale to the location in which it is proposed;

- Importance of maintaining housing delivery to avoid speculative development;
- Improved opportunities for self-build housing;
- A range of different development sizes should be provided – need to avoid excessive reliance on a limited number of large strategic sites;
- Consideration should be given to development opportunities within the Green Belt;
- The new Local Plan must define and protect a route for a new rail link from Carterton to Oxford;
- Multi-purpose buildings should be provided in villages and important services e.g. pubs, should not be lost;
- Maintenance arrangements in new developments should avoid excessive management charges for residents;
- The plan should encourage higher density developments in appropriate locations;
- Need to protect the historic character of the District which is what makes it such a desirable place;
- New homes to make appropriate provision for garden space;
- Emphasis should be on re-using land in urban areas and avoiding development on greenfield sites;
- Need care with town centre measures such as speed and vehicular restrictions – we need them to be inviting;
- A positive growth strategy is needed for our towns and villages;
- Heritage has the potential to make a significant, powerful contribution to delivering vibrant and sustainable places;
- Housing needs to be affordable, sustainable and attractive;
- Large developments destroy the cohesion of so many villages because of the strain they place on infrastructure;
- Design of new developments must take account of the need for easily accessible community spaces indoors and out;
- Too many recent new housing developments have ignored the Design Codes and Guides that WODC have previously published;
- Need to localise decision making through neighbourhood plans but they must add value over and above the Local Plan;
- The new Local Plan should take a much smarter approach to opportunities for villages to grow and thrive – reliance on windfall development is insufficient;
- A need for flexibility in our town centres, as they evolve to meet consumer demand, the marketplace and the structural changes influenced by Covid-19;
- Importance of tourism economy e.g. parking for motorhomes;
- Public spaces are vital to town centres.

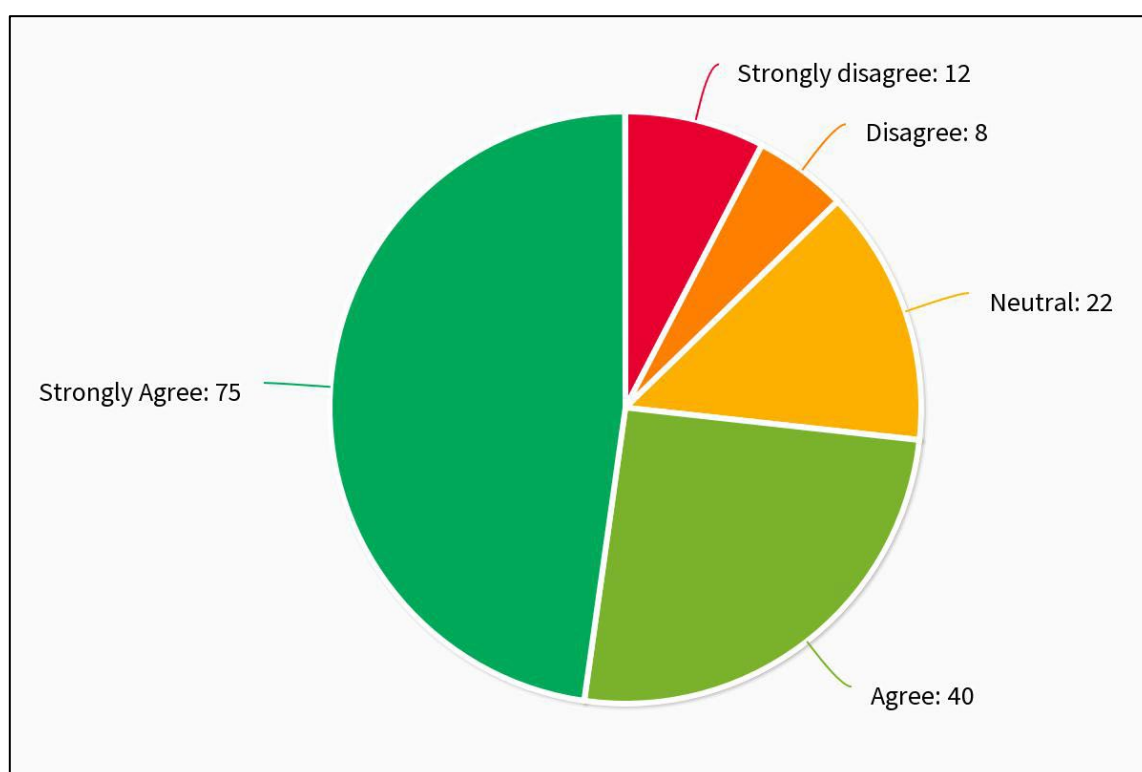
Meeting the housing needs of all



To what extent do you agree that ‘meeting the housing needs of all’ should be an area of focus for the Local Plan?

- 3.23 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

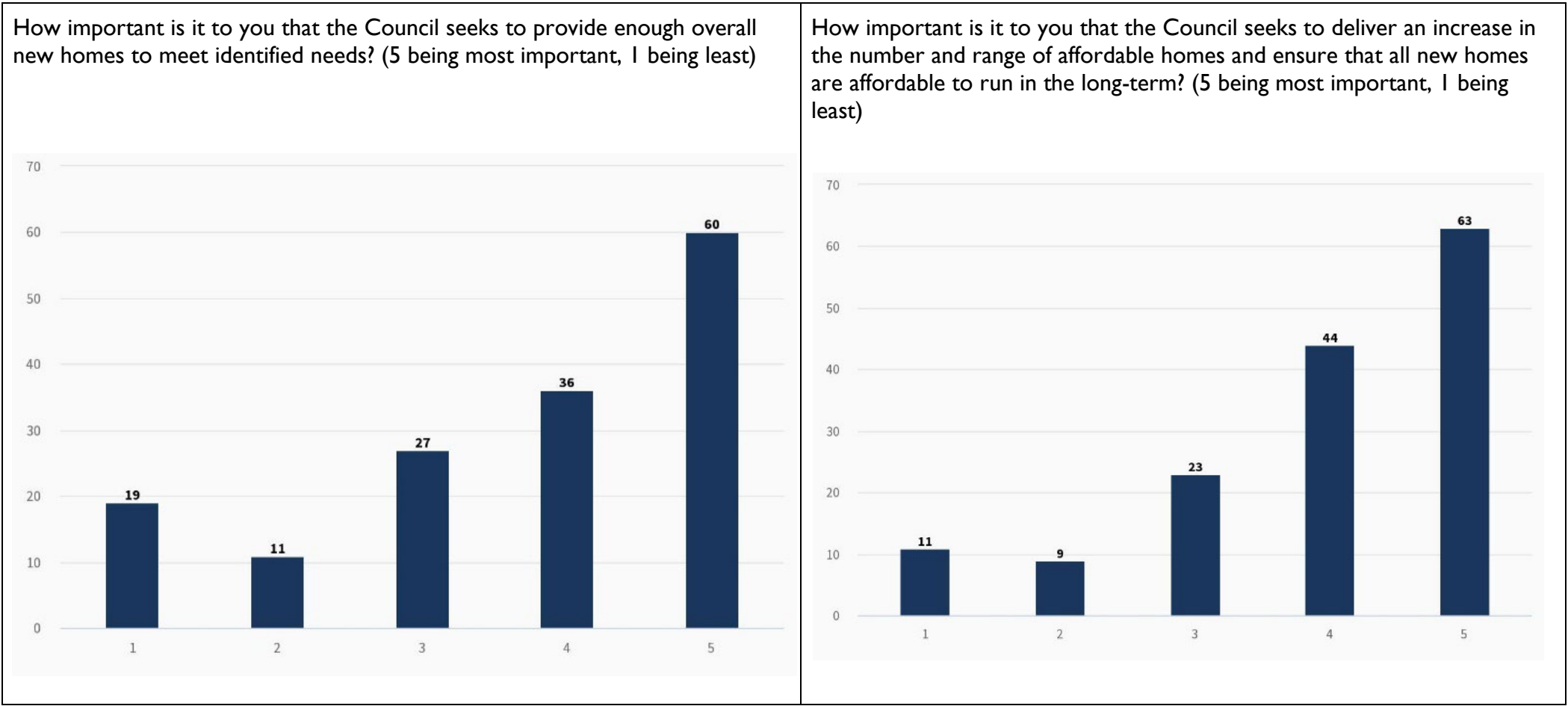
Figure 17 - Feedback on whether meeting the housing needs of all should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



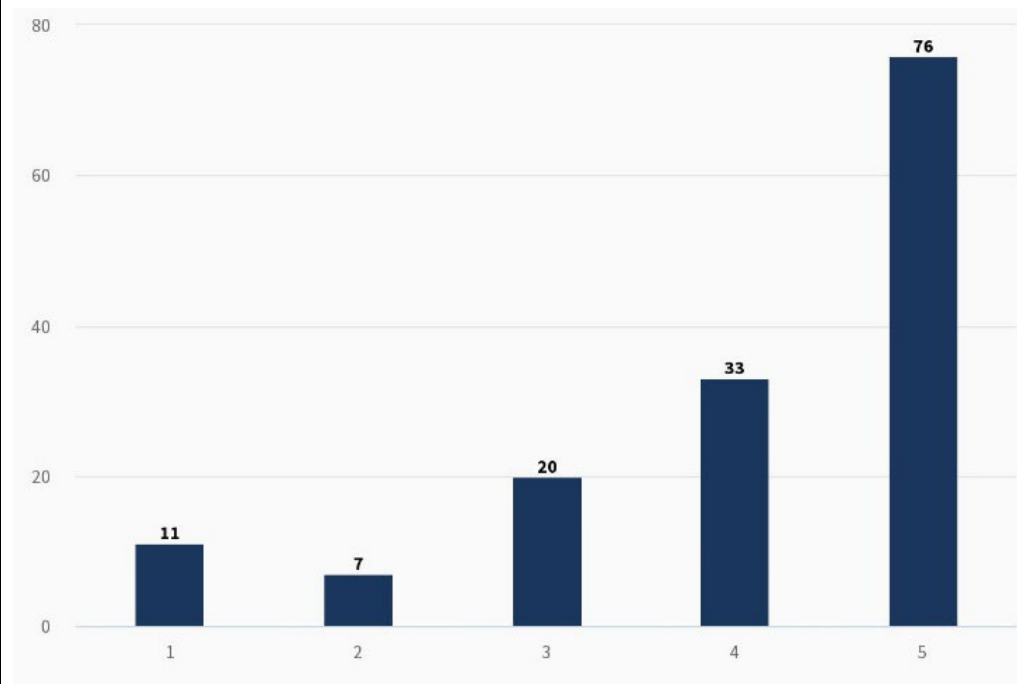
- 3.24 Within this overall ‘theme’ the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.

3.25 Figure 18 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

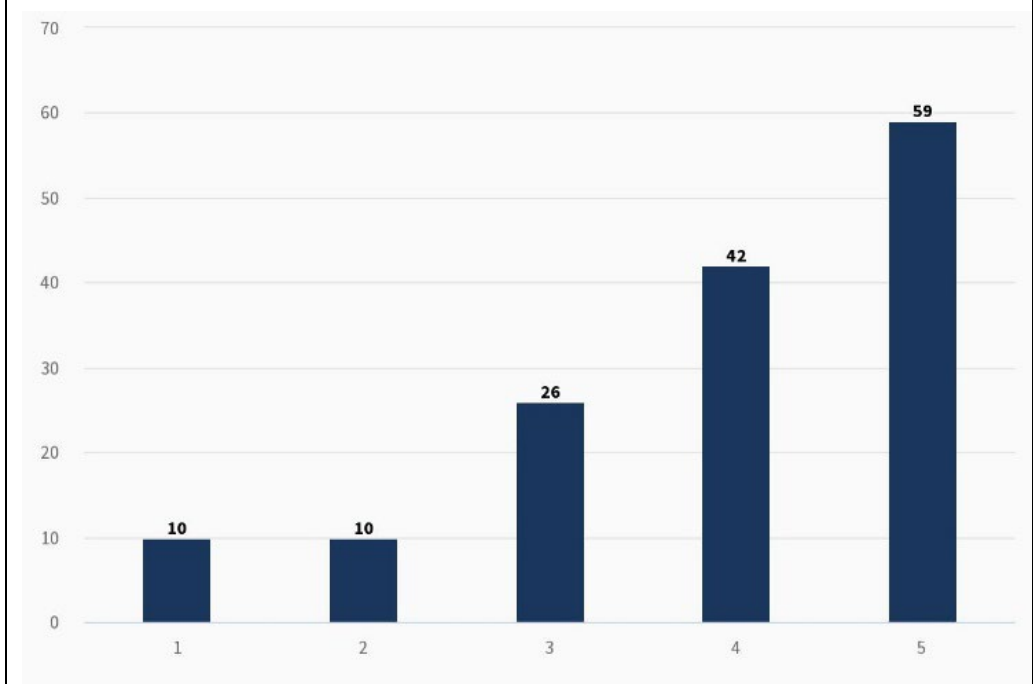
Figure 18 - Responses to individual questions relating to meeting the housing needs of all



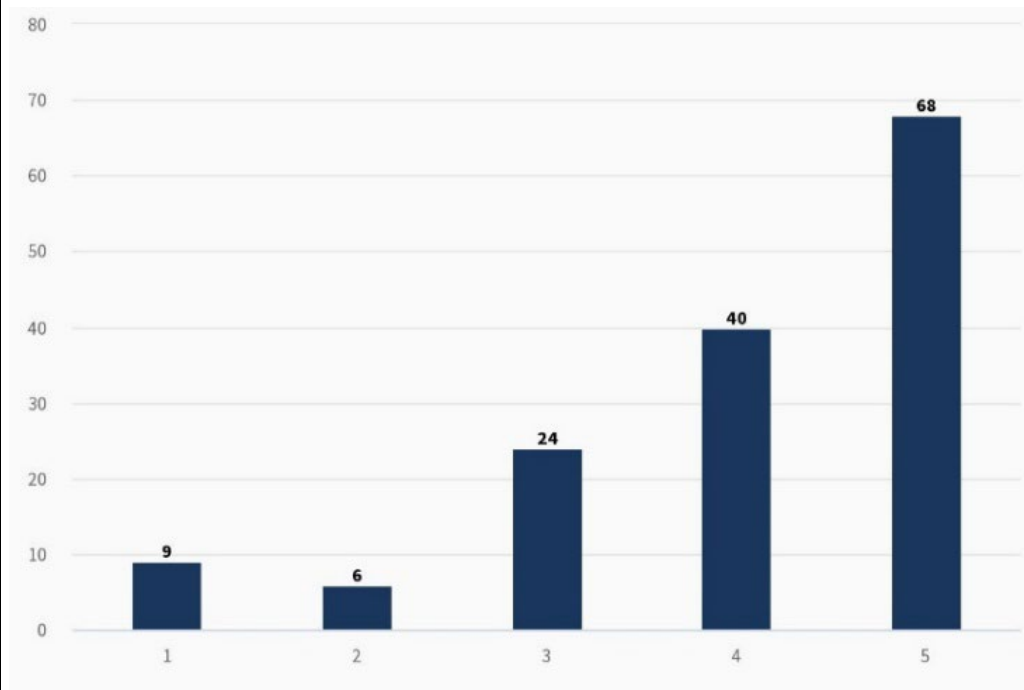
How important is it to you that the Council seeks to achieve a broad mix of different property types and sizes to meet different needs? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



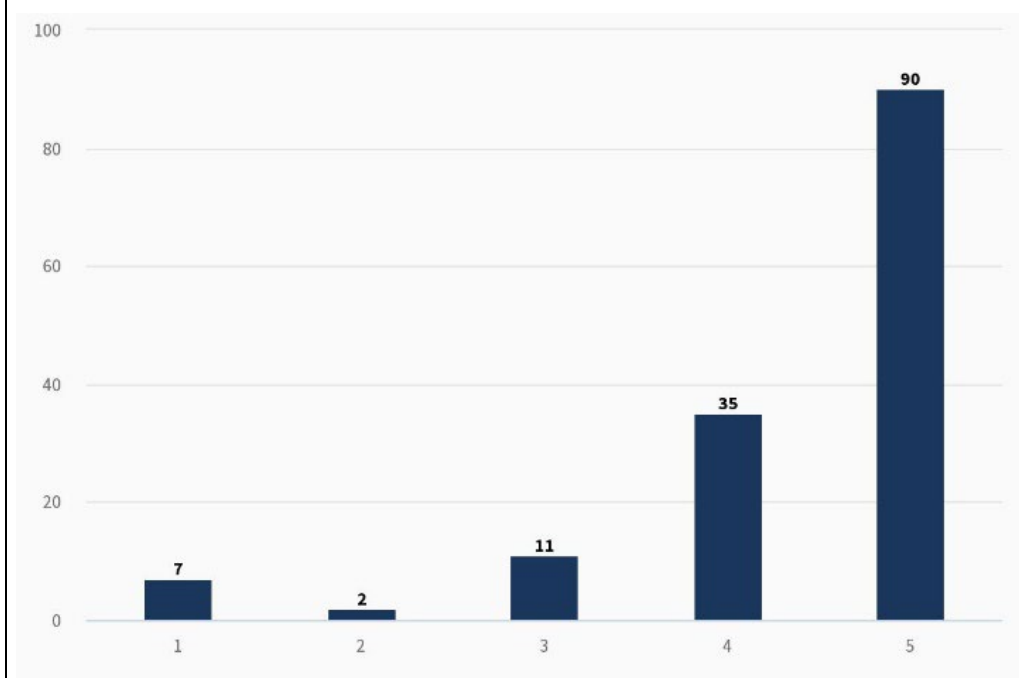
How important is it to you that the Council seeks to make more specific provision to help meet the needs of particular groups? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council seeks to consider the relationship between new homes and jobs to support economic growth and reduce out-commuting? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council seeks to keep the delivery of new homes under regular review to ensure we are not delivering too few or too many at any one time? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



3.26 The word cloud in Figure 19 illustrates the main ‘phrases’ which recurred in people’s written responses to the questions above.

Figure 19 - Word cloud of key phrases relating to meeting the housing needs of all



3.27 Key points arising included the following:

- Various site submissions put forward (see separate schedule at Appendix I);
- Need to recognise the role of smaller windfall development sites;
- Plan must emphasise the re-use of previously developed land and buildings;
- Need to achieve genuine affordability of new housing and this affordability needs to be in perpetuity;
- Provide housing for key workers;
- The new Local Plan must set realistic targets that meet genuine local need but are not over-inflated by aggressive growth ambitions;
- WODC should be considering building its own housing stock;
- The plan should seek to make more efficient use of the current housing stock and opportunities from existing buildings;
- The plan should be promoting rural exception sites built to zero carbon standards;
- The plan must be based on robust evidence and seek to meet identified needs over the plan period;
- Policies need to take account of the needs of different groups with sufficient provision made (e.g. for the elderly) including through specific site allocations;
- Vital that we do not sacrifice green countryside, agricultural land and biodiversity unnecessarily on the basis of a drive for economic growth;
- Any strategic sites should be accompanied by realistic delivery rates and supported by smaller developments as appropriate;

- A mix of different sizes of site allocations are needed – smaller schemes can help avoid settlements becoming stagnant and avoid slow-rates of delivery associated with larger strategic sites;
- More affordable, smaller homes needed for younger people;
- Increased need for more flats/apartments to make the most efficient use of available land;
- Local Plan needs to be underpinned by robust evidence of housing need;
- Need to avoid homes being turned into holiday lets;
- Policies must address modern needs such as agile working including home working space/separation of work and living etc;
- We need balanced communities – not ghettoization;
- New homes need to be supported by better investment in supporting infrastructure – roads, schools, health, sewage etc;
- The plan should encourage more community housing, co-housing and community land trusts;
- New homes need to be where jobs are located so as to minimise out-commuting;
- Affordable housing needs to be located where public transport, walking and cycling are realistic options;
- Priority should be given to re-purposing existing buildings;
- The current local plan commitment to meeting a proportion of Oxford's unmet housing need should be carried forward into the new Local Plan;
- The new Local Plan will need to deal with any past under-supply from the current Local Plan;
- Further discussions will be needed with the other Oxfordshire local authorities in respect of any further unmet need arising from Oxford City;
- Essential that the cumulative requirements placed on new development does not render it unviable;
- Oxford City should be doing more to meet its own housing needs;
- Vital that new homes are able to come forward in a timely manner;
- Housing delivery needs to be effectively monitored;
- Sustainable options within the Green Belt should be considered;
- Must consider the impact of new homes on the environment and existing communities;
- New housing needs to be green and affordable to run;
- We need high quality design, not soulless boxes;
- Don't cram in new homes – allow space for people and nature;
- Additional employment provision should be made to help reduce out-commuting;
- All new homes to be built to high environmental standards;
- Housing provision should not just be about profit for developers;
- Need more bungalows provided for older generations;
- A strategic approach to housing provision across Oxfordshire is needed;
- Large-scale strategic sites enable self-sustaining neighbourhoods.

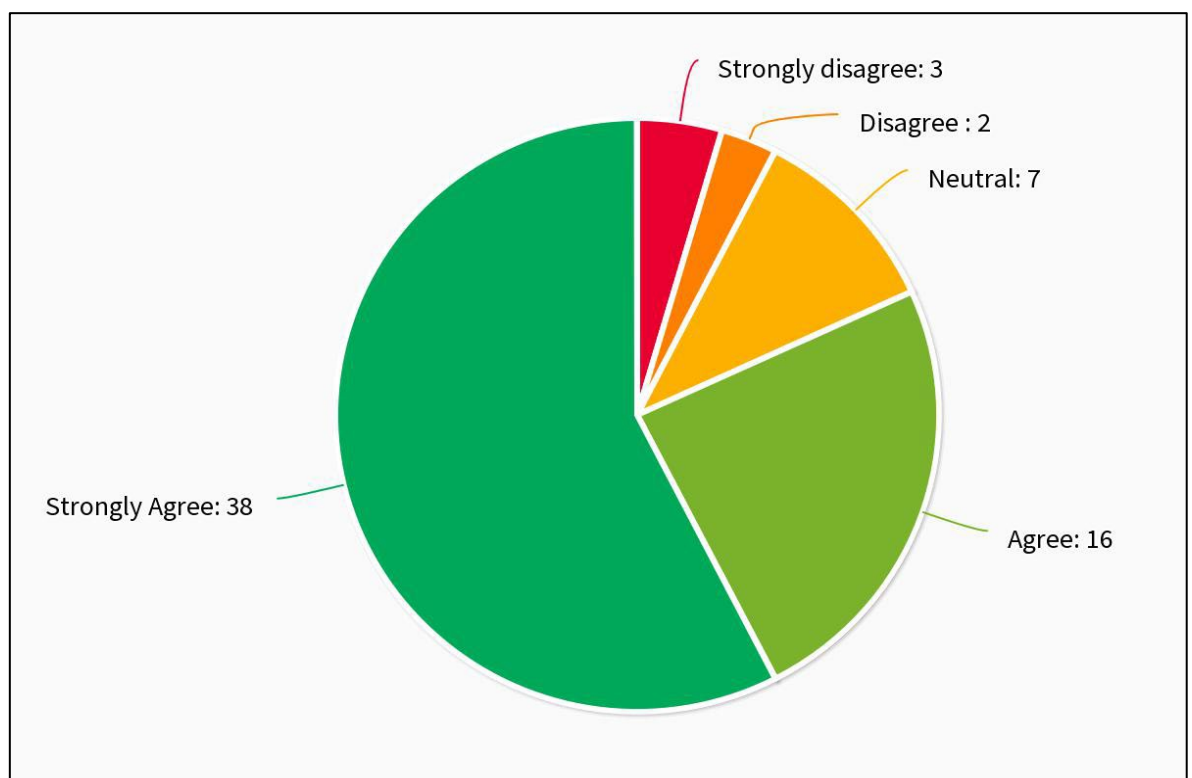
A vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy



To what extent do you agree that achieving a vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy should be an area of focus for the Local Plan? (5 strongly agree- 1 strongly disagree)

- 3.28 In general terms, the vast majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that this should be an area of focus for the new Local Plan.

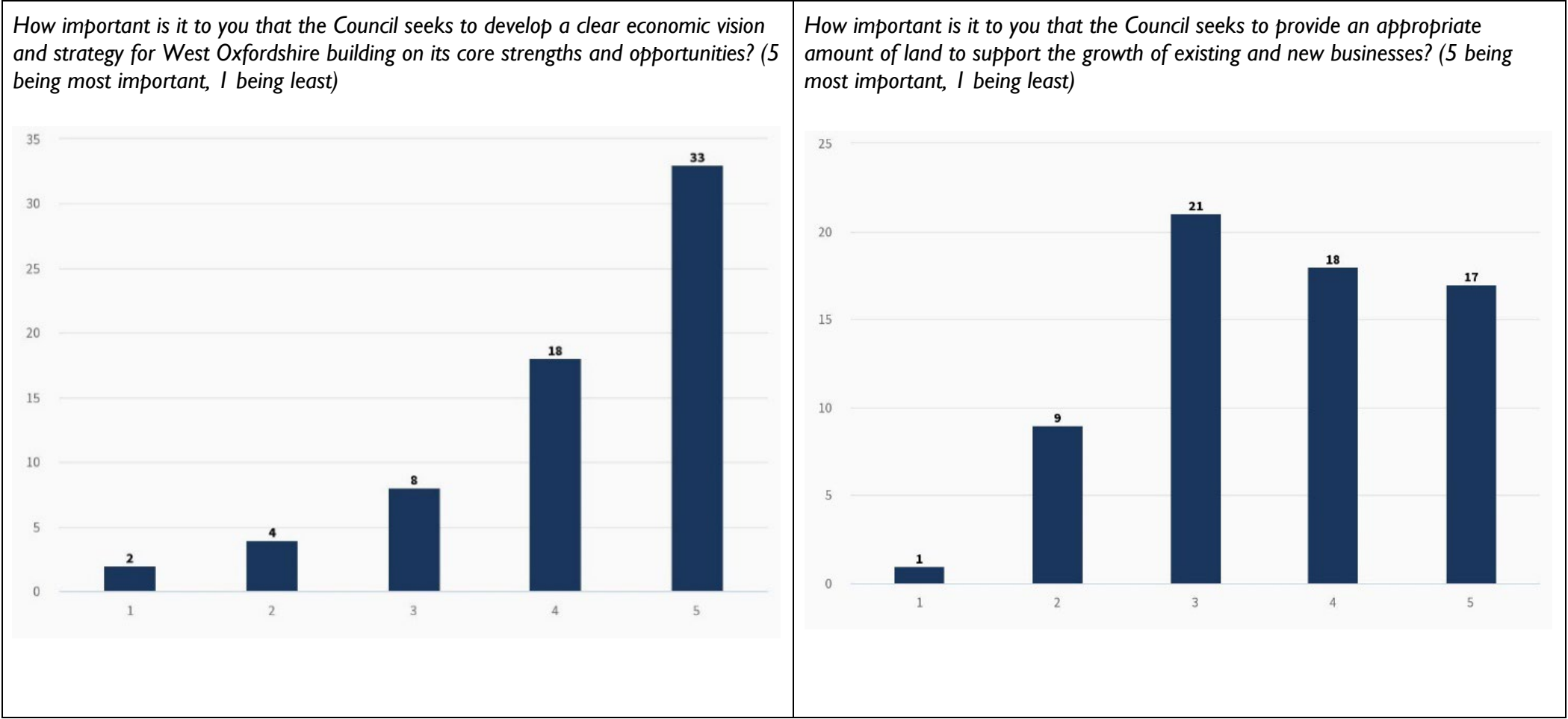
Figure 20 - Feedback on whether achieving a vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy should be an area of focus for the Local Plan



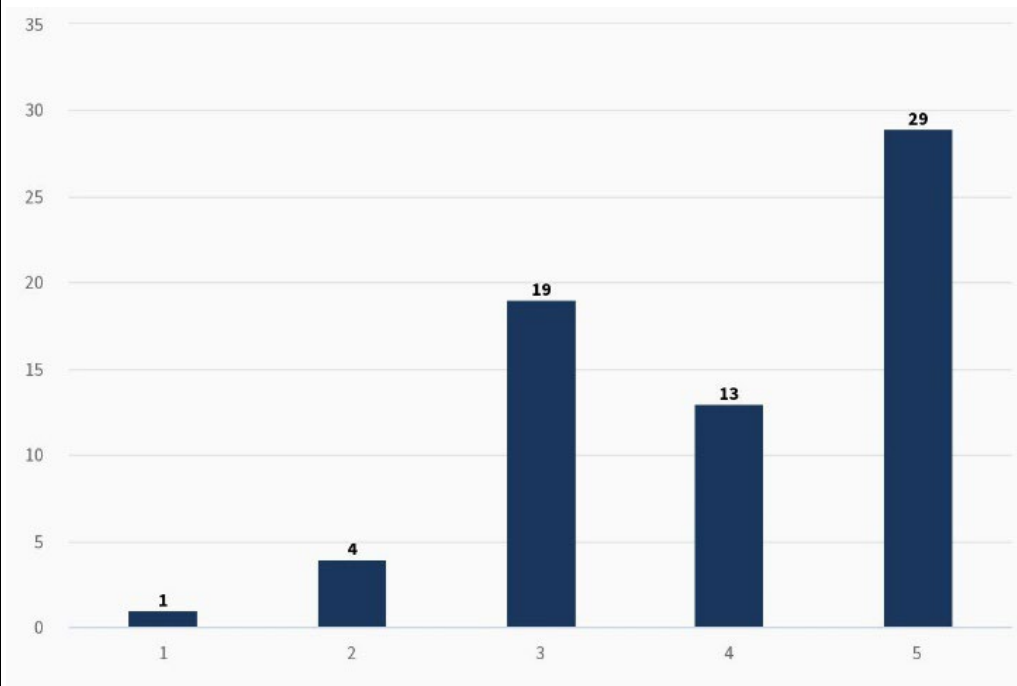
- 3.29 Within this overall 'theme' the consultation paper then asked six questions in relation to different measures which the new Local Plan might look to include.

3.30 Figure 21 shows the survey responses received in response to each.

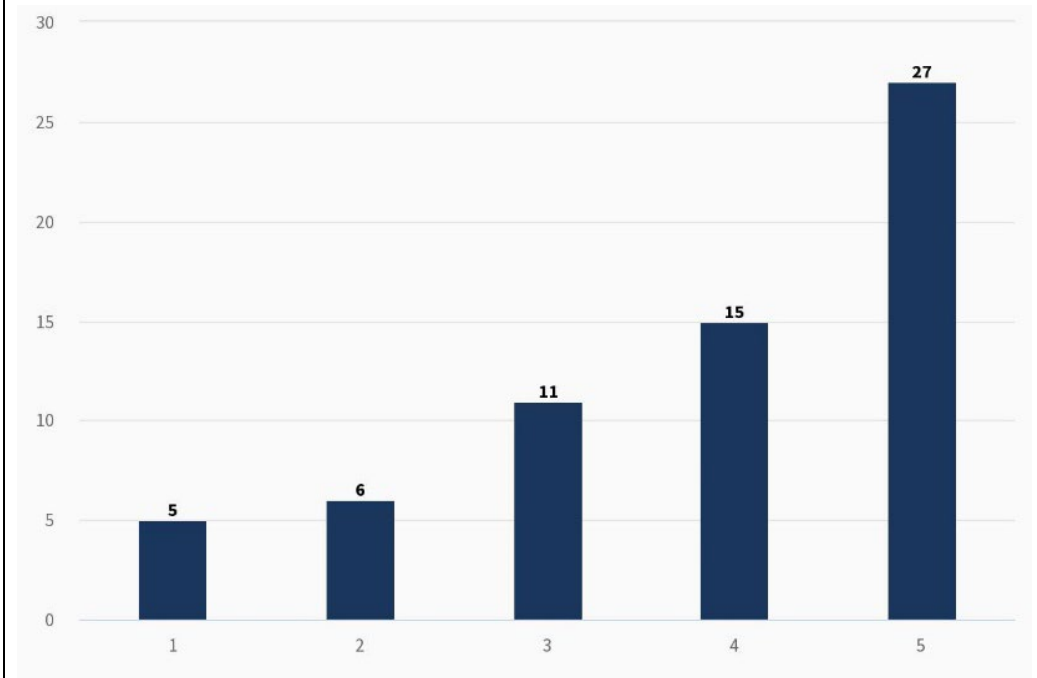
Figure 21 - Responses to Individual Questions relating to a vibrant, resilient and diverse local economy



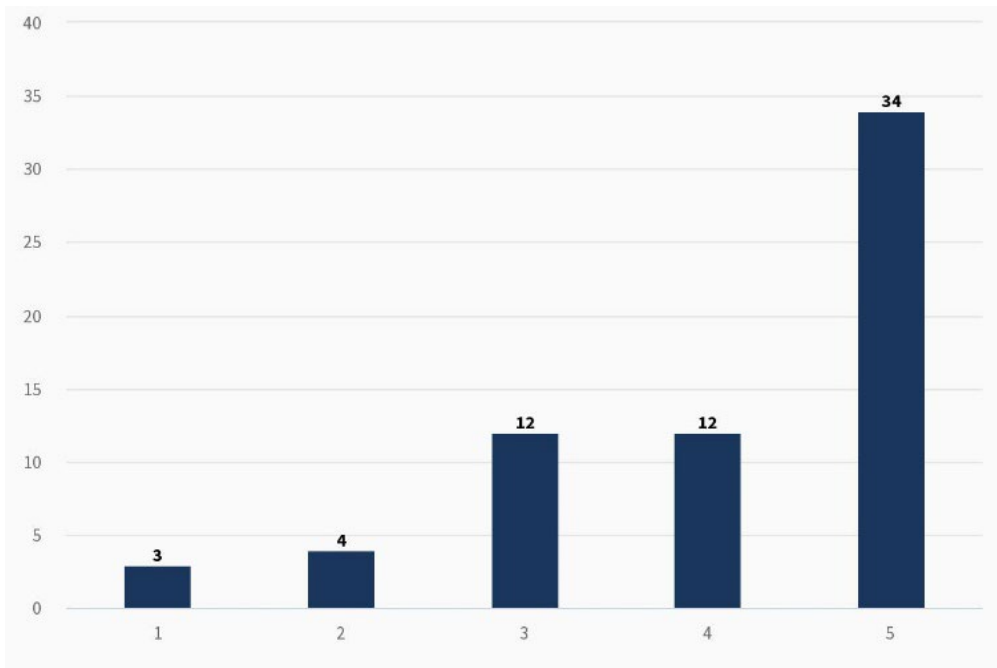
How important is it to you that the Council seeks to protect existing employment sites from being lost to other uses? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



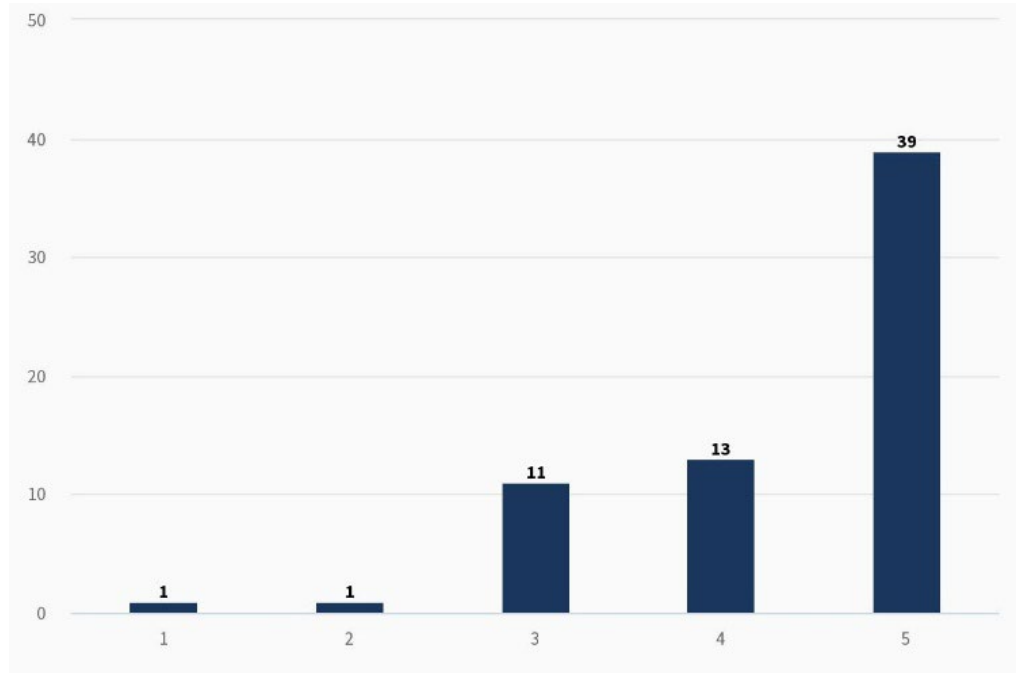
How important is it to you that the Council recognises and provides support for increased home and remote working? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council focuses on improving workforce skills to increase well-being and prosperity? (5 being most important, 1 being least)



How important is it to you that the Council supports the District’s rural economy and tourism sector? 5 being most important, 1 being least)



- Flexible working spaces in vacant town centre units should be created;
- Need to consider low carbon transport options to major tourist destinations;
- The role of sport in providing employment opportunities should not be overlooked;
- Social and environmental wellbeing should have equal weighting in decisions – we should be progressing a doughnut society whereby wellbeing is prioritised whether or not the economy is growing;
- The emphasis should be on the re-use of empty employment sites in preference to identifying new ones;
- The Local Plan must assess current employment sites and determine the quality of such sites to meet future economic needs;
- Policies could encourage a greater dispersal of smaller employment sites across the rural areas to encourage investment into such areas;
- A blanket policy protection on all employment sites may be stifling inward investment;
- Support the provision of infrastructure which will enable business growth, for example connectivity, EV charging facilities and sensors which provide live information;
- Importance of re-using previously developed land and buildings;
- The local plan should define and protect a route for a new rail link from Carterton to Oxford;
- Need to provide support for small businesses;
- The Local Plan should seek to allocate mix used developments which can provide new employment facilities alongside new residential development;
- The economy needs to be diversified and more outward facing;
- Concerns about the closure of the High Street in Witney and the economic impact this is having;
- Important to protect public houses as community and tourism assets;
- Supporting home-working and encouraging start-ups and niche industries maybe related to the centres of excellence locally should definitely be areas of focus;
- Any emphasis on home-working needs to be balanced with the provision of appropriate workspaces for those people who are unable to work from home;
- The historic environment has a close connection to economic activity - heritage-led regeneration should be encouraged as appropriate;
- It should be recognised that the nature of work has changed, with more people working more of the time at home;
- The Plan should seek to recognise and support rural land-based businesses, the local food economy and rural tourism;
- The focus should be on creating an economy for well-being, rather than a crude pursuit of growth;
- Important that new employment sites meet the same criteria as other developments e.g. housing in terms of location and building sustainability.

4. Other general comments arising

- 4.1 In addition to the quantitative and qualitative responses outlined in Section 3, the consultation generated a number of more general responses.
- 4.2 This included a number of developer/landowner submissions relating to parcels of land which they wish to be considered through the Local Plan review process with many of the submissions received explaining how particular sites could help to meet the various objectives identified in the consultation paper.
- 4.3 Attached at Appendix I is a schedule of the site submissions received.
- 4.4 Apart from discussion on the merits of these individual sites, other more general issues raised included the following:
- It is important that the new Local Plan addresses strategic issues that would otherwise have been addressed by the Oxfordshire Plan 2050;
 - Continued joint working will be needed in respect of any further unmet housing need from Oxford City;
 - Allocated sites which were expected to deliver before 2031 but will now deliver beyond then will need to be carried forward into the new Local Plan;
 - The Local Plan housing requirement will need to be based on robust evidence;
 - Important to understand and recognise the important linkages between economic, social and environmental objectives;
 - The new Local Plan should recognise the strategic role of Hanborough Station;
 - The plan must be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area;
 - The Council's settlement sustainability report will need to be updated as part of the supporting evidence base;
 - Any new development sites must take account of adjoining existing occupants and land uses;
 - WODC needs to work creatively with landowners, farmers and developers;
 - Important that the new Local Plan does not prevent sustainable development from coming forward due to feasibility or viability constraints;
 - A 'decide and provide' approach to site assessment will help determine which options are sustainable from a transport perspective;
 - Stronger emphasis needed on engagement with Town and Parish Councils;
 - All new development sites should be required to produce an Innovation Plan, referring to the Innovation Framework guidance;
 - Any strategic vision in the Local Plan 2041 should have a strong spatial focus, being specific about growth locations and priorities for regeneration.

5. Stakeholder Events

- 5.1 To supplement the predominantly digitally-led consultation, two workshop events were held, the first with Town and Parish Councils on 5 September 2022, the second with a number of key stakeholders on 20 September 2022.
- 5.2 Both events were well attended with wide-ranging discussions held. Attached at Appendix 2 are the summary notes taken by Officers for the Town and Parish Council event and attached at Appendix 3 are the summary notes for the stakeholder event.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The 'Your Voice Counts' consultation generated an excellent response which has provided the District Council with invaluable feedback on which key issues the local community and key stakeholders would like the Local Plan to focus on.
- 6.2 The feedback received has already helped to inform the new West Oxfordshire Council Plan and will now be used to shape a series of draft Local Plan objectives. These will be the subject of further consultation in summer 2023 alongside a series of potential spatial strategy options on what the future pattern of growth in West Oxfordshire might look like in the period up to 2041.
- 6.3 The feedback from both consultations will inform a series of preferred policy options/approaches which will then be the subject of further consultation in autumn 2023 before the final pre-submission draft Local Plan is published in late spring 2024.

Appendix I – Schedule of Developer/Landowner Site Submissions

Name of Site	Agent/Developer/Landowner
Land south of Banbury Road, Chipping Norton	Turley on behalf of Rainier Developments
Land to the west of London Lane, Ascott Under Wychwood	Walsingham Planning on behalf of Obsidian Strategic
Land East of Wroslyn Road, Freeland	Pye Homes
Land east of Station Road / Mount Owen Road, Bampton	Hourigan Planning on behalf of Anwyl Land Ltd
Land east of Burford Road, Chipping Norton	Savills
Land north of Mill Lane, Clanfield	Savills
Land east of Manor Road, Brize Norton	Savills
Land north of Monahan Way, Brize Norton	Savills on behalf of Bloor Homes
Land adjacent to Hanborough Station	Nexus on behalf of CEG and Blenheim Strategic Partners
Land west of Carterton	Nexus on behalf of Crest Nicholson
Land north east of Carterton, Brize Norton	Nexus on behalf of Lone Star Land and Graftongate
Land at Curbridge Downs Farm, Witney	CDF Partnership
Land west of Curbridge	Arc Planning on behalf of Socially Conscious Capital
Land off The Downs, Standlake	Arron Twamley Planning on behalf of Mactaggart and Mickel
Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell	Catesby Estates
Land east of Jubilee Way, Witney	Carter Jonas on behalf of the Mawle Trustees and the Trustees of the Northfield Life Interest Settlement

Name of Site	Agent/Developer/Landowner
Land at 80 Brize Norton Road, Minster Lovell	Adkin
Land east of Mount Owen Road, Bampton	Hollins Strategic Land (HSL)
Land east of Mount Owen Road, Bampton	Catesby Estates
Land north of Holliers Crescent, Middle Barton	Rocke Associates on behalf of Hallam Land Management Ltd
Land north of Cote Road, Aston	Terra Strategic
Land at Rousham Road, Tackley	Adkin
Land north of Bampton and east and west of Station Road, Bampton	Savills on behalf of the Church Commissioners for England
Land at Common Farm, North Leigh	Savills on behalf of Lioncourt Strategic Land Ltd
Land at Kilkenny Farm, Brize Norton	Carter Jonas on behalf of Bloombridge LLP
North Witney SDA	Turley on behalf of the North Witney Land Consortium
Land west of Downs Road, Witney	David Locke Associates on behalf of Hallam Land Management

Appendix 2 – Summary Notes of Town and Parish Council Event 05/09/2022

Record of post-it notes from Table Discussions Summit ‘Helping to Shape the Future of West Oxfordshire’ 5th September 2022 (Carterton Community Centre)

Attended by: Alevscot, Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney, Asthall, Bladon, Brize Norton, Burford, Carterton, Chadlington, Chastleton, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Curbridge & Lew, Eynsham, Filkins & Broughton Poggs, Freeland, Hailey, Hanborough, Langford, Shilton, Spelsbury, Standlake, Steeple Barton, Swinbrook & Widford, Woodstock and Wootton

Tackling the climate & ecological emergency

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire tackling the climate & ecological emergency?

- Planning guidelines to include looking at outcomes – energy use, carbon emissions, water usage, drainage, ecology, pedestrians and cycling
- Heritage officer rulings to be rethought to allow building owners to reduce energy and emissions without being a slave to heritage
- Compliance – which type?
- Solar farms in otherwise usual industrial sites - solar PV should be fitted on the roofs of industrial buildings, in addition to solar farms.
- Concerns over the impact of existing buildings on storm overflows and water quality.
- Outlay for new energy generation, such as solar PV, puts residents off installing them.
- Smaller villages have accommodated housing growth; however environmental mitigation is limited and there is insufficient infrastructure e.g. sewage.
- Under occupied housing is an issue.
- Some parishes own limited buildings so are unsure what they can achieve.
- Issues with contractors working farming land.

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Older buildings, grey water soakaways to prevent flood overflows of sewerage into water courses
- Discounted council tax for privately installed soakaways to stimulate interest
- Neighbourhoods communicating
- Misconnections (sewerage)
- High energy performance and sustainability standards required in new and retrofit development.
- Ban on gas boilers, with new and existing buildings fitted with heat pumps.
- Householders need more information on what they can do e.g. how can they preserve water, enhance biodiversity in their gardens etc.
- Many residents are environmentally minded but do not have resources. Grant funding to support residents in retrofitting homes.
- Raise awareness of dual benefits, e.g. insulation traps heat and prevents noise.
- Cost benefit analysis to ensure measures, e.g. insulation, are an efficient use of resources.

- Viability argument should not be used by developers.
- District led solar programmes.
- Solar PV should be installed on all new builds (although one parish expressed concerns over visual impact).
- Cost savings of installing solar PV across terraces.
- Solar farms located in areas with low visibility to minimise landscape impact and low grade agricultural land to protect food production.
- Limit the use of agrochemicals.
- Higher density development in smaller villages to minimise environmental impact and maximise the use of loft spaces.
- New build housing accessible and supported living provision so that residents can downsize and release property to the market.
- Airbnb and second homes taxed.
- Audit taken of what climate and ecological action is happening across the district.
- Sharing of best practice among communities / exemplar projects, and evidence that these approaches work in practice.
- Coordinate parishes and develop a strong climate network, e.g. through advisory groups.
- Environmental assessments, e.g. FRAs, thoroughly checked by officers as consultants take a slanted view.
- Maintenance and monitoring to form part of planning conditions and conditions not charged unless they have been compiled with.
- More planning officers.

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress on this?

- Keep it simple advice
- Declare a climate emergency following a petition.
- Set-up climate change committee, identify work streams and establish working groups on community, climate and ecology.
- Explore energy solutions for retrofitting parish owned buildings.
- Raise environmental concerns about planning applications at committee, like WTC have in relation to surface run-off.
- Community solar farms.
- Become involved in district-wide projects e.g. the Oxfordshire Treescaping Project.
- Apply for an eco-schools green flag to enthuse young people.
- Minimise the use of plastics.
- Link up with companies and organisations to use EVs out of office hours.
- Open up community facilities to support residents with the cost of living and reduce loneliness and isolation. Some parishes charge for breakfast/lunch clubs.
- Set up foundations, welfare trusts, charities and establish links with the WI, church etc. Raise awareness of these across communities.
- Implement community emergency plans.
- Provide information to residents and engage them on issues.

- Learn lessons from other schemes in the district e.g. Hooky car club, the pesticide action network, community orchards, sustainable Woodstock etc.

Healthy, Safe, Strong and Active Communities

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire achieving healthy, safe, strong and active

- High rate of significant road accidents
- Ambulances a problem everywhere
- Roads do not encourage cycling
- Doctors: Difficult to get appointments, structures of surgeries often poor
- Dentists
- Playgrounds – Burford. Improving funding?
- Communications about initiatives
- Volunteer link-up
- Air BnB destroying communities. Rules on 2nd Houses. Eg Cornwall.
- Some support required to make a new “estate” be integrated into village life. “Community Officer”
- Walking Route Passport of stamps. Safe routes to schools/signposting.

Question 2: What improvements, changes or progress would you like to see towards this?

- General assumption, CIL has not been implemented because previous regime did not want parish councils to participate in community infrastructure funding decisions. PC's have been squeezed out of above decision.
- Existing (old) policies. E.g. x pitches per 1,000 population increase, y allotments per 1,000... these policies exist but were not embedded in the Local plan
- No community centre strategy in larger developments local P council has to ask WODC to negotiate S106 money but if it's not in the local plan it's difficult.
- Youth provision – warm space not necessary to have fixed activities.
- Greater flexibility of S106 spend – be able to redefine what it can be spent on.
- Help T+P's with promo + communication of activities
- Burford – adult & child trim trail, support active lifestyle
- Burford – Warwick hall has broken heating as geo-thermal needs replacing – we need funding to enable replacement to keep warm then could be “warm place” open days + evenings.
- Safety – Air pollution
- High Speed Broadband – Gaming clubs
- Monitor the Airbnb + similar properties in WODC + create rules that limit the number
- Protect our green infrastructure
- WODC can help facilitate discussions from amongst parish councils
- Support T+Ps to initiate their own consultations/map out hyper local facilities
- Why was Martin Holland, playing field and recreation officer not replaced.
- Walking football + netball. Cycle paths.
- Poo bins for dev site paid for by developer

- No-one within WODC taking responsibility for recreation facilities. Parish councils are not the experts, where do we go for information/assistance?
- Please could someone from WODC come and talk to Brize Norton Parish Council about the 2 new “football pitches” on the Brize Meadow development attached to 2 existing football pitches at Monahan Way owned by WODC.

Question 3: What could your town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress on this?

- Burford need some activities/equipment for youth
- Youth club. Supervision space
- Warm space
- Networking groups with people working
- Homeworking
- Gaming. Need high speed broadband
- Coffee

Miscellaneous

- Focus on outcome rather than budget
- What funding are we entitled to?
- Louder voice for NHP
- 20 MPH speed limits
- A40 Crossings, Burford side
- Cost of Living support community spaces
- Lack of volunteers, how to reach youth?
- Shared working spaces
- Who to contact for recreation?
- More support RE section 106!
- Joining up neighbouring parishes
- Not fans of “aspirational” policies
- Communication is key
- Youth provision is about safe spaces
- Support parishes to consult parishioners.

An enhanced natural & built environment

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire achieving an enhanced natural & built environment?

- WODC has been very good at controlling housing numbers e.g. delivered quality over quantity

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Future policies should encourage built environments to be 'green' – providing opportunities for all ages of communities to integrate and promote lots of social interaction opportunities
- More development designs should include water elements – not just green infrastructure but blue infrastructure e.g. boating pond, wild swimming, nature
- At a Parish level – achieving measures to reduce flooding by working with WODC and OCC
- Accessible greenspace and biodiversity rich areas – integrate people management into natural spaces
- Make use of metrics to measure what we want to achieve and then measure that success
- Community hubs should be build first to help integrate new residents with the old
- Value of coordinating with other WODC support for Nature Recovery Planning
- Water quality and measures – holding Thames Water to account to greater extent
- Infrastructure – insuring sufficient infrastructure for new homes
- Strong protection for Public Rights of Way that developments should not detract from or negatively impact
- Access to a resource for developing proposals for improving the natural environment
- WODC under-resourced staff particularly in relation to flooding issues – only one Officer working on this for three local authorities.
- Burford – protecting AONB areas of natural beauty e.g. Coles field east of Barns Lane can be protected by not building on it. This has been dismissed twice in the last 4 years (waste of public resources to fight the same proposals time and again) e.g. topography, ancient trail etc.
- Enforce conditions and costs to deter number of AirBnB ratios to residential housing
- Maintaining the community – need to act against AirBnB's which damage the community.

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress on this?

- Produce at Parish level and Nature Recovery Network and local Nature Recovery Plans ... but need some guidance and support with how to do this. Lots of enthusiasm but less technical expertise.
- Work with the Evenlode Catchment Partnership on water quality, biodiversity etc
- Be included in development proposals to help shape and influence designs. T&PC's have valuable local knowledge and their input should be valued.
- Put pressure on Thames Water – but how?

- Roads and potholes – cycle paths, footpaths and bus routes
- Flooding and maintenance – what can our role be in this?
- A more achievable carbon plan
- Keep the District's rural identification
- New developments need allotments – only available after the last house is build when they should be provided much earlier

Attractive, accessible & thriving places

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire achieving attractive, accessible & thriving places?

- Support for all age groups with a range of facilities – young adults and older. Locate a range of services together so that they support each other
- Free parking not helping – we need a better reason to visit
- More leisure experiences
- Provide for specialist shopping
- Funding for maintaining public areas has been reduced
- Protect and maintain greenspaces
- High Street Witney – one way system is not attractive nor is the overall environment
- Need better walking/cycling connections to/from surrounding villages
- Need joined up thinking between areas
- Infrastructure requirements: sewerage, better standards needed, better design standards

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Need reliable bus services in villages
- Mix of housing – need smaller homes – these play an important role
- Positive about community planning
- Infrastructure is lacking
- Development in the future should be spread across all villages and towns rather than select few areas
- Potentially more interest to put more development in smaller settlements to sustain services

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress?

- CIL when progressed
- Infrastructure to match housing
- Longer term links to towns and villages
- Cross boundary transport
- Develop Town Centres to be more attractive
- Enforcement needs to be strengthened – this needs to be monitored

- Seek out best practice and share it
- Strategic sites are not attractive – too uniform, not in keeping, different approaches between rural/urban settings, need to plan around greenspaces

Meeting the housing needs of all

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire meeting the housing needs of all?

- Current local plan target too high
- Phasing of infrastructure provision
- Concern 5 year supply too onerous
- Difficulty of social integration if too much development too soon
- Pressure from speculative development

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Oxford City should be doing more e.g. Colleges
- Focal point e.g. community facility + phased early in development
- Villages need modest levels of growth, proportionate in scale
- Affordable units need to be genuinely affordable
- Affordable housing provided but not at the expense of infrastructure provision
- More brownfield, mixed-use development e.g. shop/office conversion
- Air B n B - local buyers being outbid
- Energy from waste
- Adaptability of dwellings / future proofing of buildings and spaces
- More bungalows needed
- Increased energy efficiency in new build
- Implications of post-covid e.g. properties with shared gardens, digital community. Dedicated working space, community space
- Need to enforce housing mix policies
- Foul water drainage capacity. Need to make sure we have more imaginative solutions eg. grey water recycling
- Modular construction needed on larger scale to increase sustainability and speed of delivery
- Affordable housing should be for local people - application of local connection criteria

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress?

- Rural exception site - small scale provision in most villages
- Social integration between different age groups e.g. intergenerational living
- More active support for neighbourhood and community planning
- Social isolation and loneliness - need to combat this
- WODC acquisition of land to enable direct delivery

A vibrant, resilient & diverse local economy

Question 1: How well are we in West Oxfordshire achieving a vibrant, resilient & diverse local economy?

- Out-commuting reflects lack of local opportunities
- Co-working hubs vs smaller bespoke offices
- Advice centres for small businesses who are struggling
- Signposting to grants and support – don't rely on Google!
- Brexit, supply of goods and labour uncertainty = less investment
- Learn from Scandinavia
- AirBnB needs controlling
- Christmas lights and events to support local businesses
- Lack of small office spaces for start-ups in non-Witney locations
- Energy costs of home working and less social interaction & teamworking
- Businesses are cautious at the present due to state of the economy
- Care industry is on its knees – supported living to release housing. Care is a business too.
- Business rates is a key issue but not for small businesses
- Taxation will deliver more than planning ever can
- Better access to Oxford

Question 2: What improvements/changes/progress would you like to see towards this?

- Care needs will increase – Interest in apprenticeship less
- Young people moving away is a real issue
- Only minimum wage jobs for the young
- Resistance to business development in villages from 'new comers'
- Local hubs for businesses in villages needed
- Tailor education to the needs of the area
- Internships as well as apprenticeships to align to a local business
- Clearer careers advice for all and especially for the less able – kids are 'drifting' and need mentoring
- Are university's pulling their weight?
- Spin-off businesses need space to locate and grow and employ local people
- Barns to residential is a real problem for local employment
- High Streets – Will Covid 'boom' carry on? How do we help? Can we help the market? More social than just shopping, help local not chain stores
- Businesses feed off and support each other in villages
- Anchors other businesses and shops
- Rural landowner monopoly of land for businesses (Oxford University and Blenheim)
- Rent/Business Rate free first year to trade
- Demographic profile of the district means less workers – need training for local workers?
- Identify USP of each settlement
- Pop-up shops, market stalls, start the market before a shop
- Free parking is a significant benefit locally but appropriate time limits are important to encourage churn.

- Get rid of buses – visitors pay and locals free!
- What else other than Coffee Shops can the High Street do?
- Frequency of the market – coordinate so not competing against other markets
- Improve public transport
- Doctors surgeries in the town centre help
- Activity as well as shopping – bold vision for public spaces – destination not shopping (Tourism and Leisure Managers)

Question 3: What could your Town or Parish do locally to make a contribution towards making progress?

- Need to coordinate support – Chambers of Trade + DL/TL + Village Hall are separate
- Volunteers are time poor
- Local artists exhibition
- Outdoor activity to High Street is essential
- Community Centre as a stop/surgery/ economic hub etc
- Use empty shops for housing
- Second hand shops promote recycling and trade on brand of upper-class area
- Build in hubs rather than bolting on 'ticky tacky'
- Public transport shrinking in rural areas – transport apps with cost and frequency would be useful
- Housing must relate to good transport
- Don't stop business support during downturn that may be needed when economic cycle picks up.

Appendix 3 – Summary Notes of Key Stakeholder Event 20/09/2022

SESSION 1: Mixed tables of representatives from economy/community and environment sectors

Task: To discuss if we have the priorities for the ‘Your Voice’ consultation correct:

- Tackling the climate & ecological emergency
- Healthy, safe, strong & active communities
- An enhanced natural & built environment
- Attractive, accessible & thriving places
- Meeting the housing needs of all
- A vibrant, resilient & diverse local economy

Group 1

- Concerns over lack of historical investment in infrastructure – public transport, flooding
- Concern over staffing for leisure and tourism

Opportunities

- Green construction skills
- Inequality – access to opportunities
- Improve water quality
- Local tourism
- Integration with the NHS (benefits for leisure industry)
- Changing partnerships – who we need to work with
- Buy in from younger people

Group 2

Session 1 - Priorities.

- Growth is needed to address inequalities but it needs to be done in a sustainable and green way which is aware of climate and ecological issues. A different approach is therefore needed.
- The tourism offer needs to be taken more seriously. How do we attract **tourists if limited VICs are now available to promote the area?**
- Need better communication/ positive messages to promote current projects such as the Witney High Street traffic restrictions which appears to be unpopular locally.
- Redistribution of opportunities is fundamental rather than simply trying to create new ones.
- Need to create more accessible natural spaces for people to visit. Managing ‘risk’ is a hurdle to this (insurances/ risk of injury etc) as well as cost of maintenance.
- Climate adaptation and how we respond to climate change will become increasingly important.
- Access to community groups in rural areas is an important issues. Need resilient communities with good local services and spaces. In addition, development sites need to

include a balanced mix of uses to help create community cohesion with good active travel linkages.

- Accessibility is key – public transport is a key consideration in this.
- Renewable energy policies need to be given higher priority and we need to reconsider how these are balanced with other planning considerations.
- Currently the Local Plan is quite silent on energy and food security.
- Energy efficiency standards on new development needs to be vastly improved and better supported at a national level.
- Chamber of Commerce: 'A vibrant, resilient and diverse economy' drives the others – growth, growth, growth is needed – address income inequalities through more employment that in turn has to be done in a way that deals with climate issues that are paramount – we have to have a plan that enables growth in a sustainable way. That creates active communities.
- CofC – how can we give people opportunities – grow the economy in a way that is more aware of ecological issues – create an environment that people feel welcomes new businesses.
- Tourism – how can we attract people? We need Visitor Info Centres – an organisation to counteract negative narratives on the area. Eg Witney Gazette publishes that Witney is closed and failing but revenue is up in local businesses.
- Wychwood Forest Trust – countered this – growth forever is a road to ruin. West Ox is affluent – there is no shortage of ££ the problem is distribution of this. We need policies to enable the redistribution of opportunity.
- WFT – on the climate/ecological emergency – question is do we want to focus on rural/pretty or intensely farmed landscapes? Challenge is inaccessible land. 80% of West Ox land is agricultural, 10% is housing, 2% is SSI, <5% is good quality ... that remaining 3% needs careful consideration. We need to redistribute opportunities to access quality land – doesn't need to be a big endeavour – also need to increase biodiversity over the entirety of the District.
- Cornbury Estate – we would put Climate as the top priority – trickle down benefits to growth after. We are more aligned than we think even though we all come from different perspectives. Regarding accessibility to our land – biggest concern is managing risk of people entering our land. Ash die back a big concern. Cornbury is an employer – it is essentially a London business who has its HQ in the Cotswolds (employs 15 staff) so contributes on multiple levels. Seeking to link with tourism/cultural offer locally e.g. working proactively with Chipping Norton Theatre – holding outdoor theatre events at the park.
- Nick Mottram – OCC Environment Lead. Climate emergency is very difficult to grasp. How do you balance growth with concerns that are so significant that they will chip away at business as usual. From OCC's perspective the focus is on climate adaptation – water access, flooding, storm event. Preparing our communities for these inevitable events.
- Ruth Madder for VCS Forum – climate is not on our radar, it's all about health and social care. A group of people the same size population as Chipping Norton (7,000) in Oxfordshire suffer from psychotic illness – 2/3 of these don't work, 1/3 hold down a job. This has huge implications for community cohesion.
- VCS Forum – connectivity important – social prescribing – need opportunities for people to connect with each other. Creating blue/green corridors that give people access to public spaces (built as well as natural) ... places to play and socialise. If there are spaces the VCS will support, facilitate and enable. This can be intensive for 6-12 months but then groups can become self sustaining.

- Land-uses are not mutually exclusive – what use is most appropriate where and where are there opportunities for cross-benefits? E.g. both environmental, community and economic benefits?
- Wychwood Forest Trust – If we kick the can further down the road on the climate/ecological emergency it will get progressively worse. We can't expect to contribute to the global debate if we don't take local action.
- Energy and food are both missing from the priorities.
- Growth in businesses is needed to provide job opportunities but should not be at the expense of climate/environmental issues
- Need to create an environment in which businesses are keen to invest/create new jobs
- Importance of tourism – WODC should reinstate tourist visitor centres. Clearer information needed e.g. traffic restrictions in Witney Town Centre. Needn't necessarily be run by WODC
- Support the interlinkage of the climate and ecological emergency – fundamentally intertwined
- Should be seeking redistribution of opportunities
- Key issue is accessibility to open space in rural areas which is limited. Need more accessible and biodiverse areas to attract visitors
- Ash dieback is a major problem for some areas as remedial work restricts any public access
- Need to think about the future scenarios/impacts of climate change especially adaptation. Plans need to be future-proofed
- Local Nature Partnership recently established
- Mental health issues including in relation to accessibility of local services – both within towns and villages and between in terms of connectivity including between people and nature
- Multi-purpose hubs e.g. Spendlove centre at Charlbury well supported
- Continuity of support from WODC across all sectors including environmental
- Should be potentially looking to third sector organisations for further support
- Accessibility by public transport in rural areas is poor
- WODC should be looking at potential for renewable energy provision across the District including wind and solar
- A need to balance competing requirements – e.g. growth/development and climate change
- Visual example – interactivity – what will this look like?

Group 3

- Inequalities
- Climate emergency
- Communication
- Food
- Co-working spaces
- Accommodation /housing costs
- Using planning policy to drive Net Zero
- Rural land management
- Transparency on action re infrastructure particular in relation to water and sewerage
- Understanding biodiversity net-gain
- Access to the countryside
- What is the role of Market Towns?

Group 4

- Climate should run through all things, potentially most important topic.
- Economy is very diverse throughout the district, lots of high tech industry.
- Rise in homeworking suggest opportunity for more co working spaces such as is available at Part & Parcel in Witney.
- Promoting High Street resilience.
- Lack of housing and lack of land drives people away from the district.
- Cotswolds being used as a carbon offsetting landscape threatens to change the character of the landscape.
- WODC can best help by removing barriers to organisations trying to put climate first.
- Lots of pressure being put onto farmers to be leaders in all aspects of climate and environment.
- Poor clarity/information on spending of SI06 moneys.
- Water quality a hugely pressing concern, particularly in context of continued development.
- Huge appetite for more joined up working, WODC positioned as a leader and facilitator for other local organisations.

Need to:

- Give consideration to the trends in working, such as the potential continuation of home working. Implications for design and use of homes, neighbourhoods and settlements, as well as people's mental and physical health. Plan in co-working hubs.
- Recognise that the function of town centres is changing. Re-use of vacant premises and re-designing/re-using public realm.
- Assess the implications for the AONB of health and societal changes. The development of renewable energy an important consideration.
- Emphasise 'recovery', including those that are trying to address climate change and support them.
- Have a vision of what we want to achieve in, say, 4 years' time.
- Give attention to rural land management, as well as getting people back on the land (perhaps through use of tied cottages).
- Do something about inadequate infrastructure, especially sewage treatment works and the water environment. What can the Council achieve?
- Be clear as to what 'good' looks like for Biodiversity Net Gain?
- Decide whether the Council wishes to be a 'leader'.
- Consider having a leadership role around the topic of healthy towns and communities, including economic recovery. By way of example, town centres should be less about retail and more about community hubs, pop-ups and cultural services.
- Look at settlement clusters. Blenheim considering this around Woodstock – linking surrounding villages to town by footpaths and cycleways as a way of providing new homes in those small villages
- Provide access to nature for all.

SESSION 2: Representatives from the economic sector sat at table 1, environmental sector sat at table 2 and community sector at table 3.

TASK – To identify opportunities for practical action towards delivering strategic aims relevant to their sector within the District. What role could/should WODC play in this action?

Group 1 – Economy

- Cost of living crisis - £300k utilities bill for Abingdon and Witney college – general impact also on staff and students well-being
- Accessibility by public transport between different campuses
- Tourism sector – actually doing quite well despite cost of living crisis – could be due to a number of factors including money saved by households during covid
- Business/economy also doing well generally – quite resilient and diverse which helps. Still some issues to address e.g. lower than average incomes
- Rural estates (Cornbury) – largest impact felt during covid but generally returned to normal
- Blenheim – visitors back to pre-covid levels. Most visits depend more on weather. Cost of living not yet biting on visitor numbers – possibly still to come
- Impacts of inflationary pressures e.g. rental prices. Increased number of lettings and people moving further afield to access cheaper properties
- Need to promote more EV skills training/green skills/construction etc. Link with WODC climate manager role.
- Would be useful for stakeholders to know more about Council Officers and what they do – a ‘meet the team’ style section online perhaps
- Need to focus on short-term tangible improvements e.g. Witney High Street
- Need to more re: public transport and connectivity. Potential use of SI06 funding, increased lobbying
- Better communication needed – what’s on in West Oxon? Links with loyal free initiative – big push on this this year
- Visitor economy – overarching organisation would be helpful
- Potential scope for further joint working between different estates and organisations
- Hotel provision – hospitality sector – potential links with college (although courses tend to focus on GVA so probably not a priority)

Group 2 - Environment

- Communication and networking between organisations is reasonably good but there could be a role for WODC to help inform these groups of funding opportunities as well as helping to bring these organisations together (today is a positive example of this).
- Many of the organisations cover different geographical areas and whilst there could be regular 'West Oxon' meetings between the groups, it may be better for any such groups to be project focussed.
- WODC could help influence change with responsible organisations such as Thames Water.
- Funding and resources remain a hurdle. Also need a better understanding of the issues we face and a change in attitude/ new approach.
- Need to try to improve collaborative working at the earliest stage and this should be underpinned by action plans.
- Generally happy with the priorities set out in draft Local Plan consultation but what does this mean in reality and how will these priorities be implemented?
- Good monitoring is vital if these priorities are to be delivered. Could have monitoring by communities but training would be necessary and communities would need to be supported in this.
- Need strong evidence base to support policy approach. Joint working between the organisations can assist with this.
- Need to focus on positive change rather than focussing on impact only otherwise we will continue on the same path.
- Policies and strategies need stronger oversight and enforcement.
- Lack of regional planning means that organisations often have to engage multiple times at the local level.
- Networks should be established at all scales.
- Important for the environment sector to actively engage with other sectors.
- Collaborative approach might work best through pilot projects – spotlighting successes and challenges.
- Farmer clusters are good examples of landowners coming together effectively to discuss key topics in depth to collectively prepare for future change.
- Climate adaptation is important, not only mitigation.
- Sufficient infrastructure should be put in place before development connects to it.
- WODC Ecologist in post is essential.
- OP2050 evidence base should be explored to make use of existing data.
- Project – look at housing delivery for agricultural workers
- Lobby water companies – you can connect new housing but only if sewerage capacity is adequate
- Projects should support ecosystem quality and resilience
- Climate adaptation needs to be a focus – consider the impacts down the line of local land uses and water supply
- What is the role of citizen science – Parish Council's as part of this
- What is WODC's approach to community engagement to build local resilience e.g. extreme weather events. We need to coordinate at the highest of levels
- In terms of the environmental sector's role – we are different types of organisations ... we need to be less competitive and would benefit from a more collaborative grants process. West Oxon needs to detail projects at a landscape level. If you focus grants at a more granular level you get more opportunists.

- Environmental sector needs to interact more with community and economy sector e.g. Farmer Cluster is a good example. Landowners want to know where the £ are coming from and how they access.
- WODC can be a champion for some of these issues – food, housing, ecology so that others input and raise the profile of the issue within the District.

Group 3 – Healthy, safe, strong and inclusive Communities

- In addition to the Council Plan and the Local Plan, there should be a Health and Wellbeing Strategy/Plan which sets out: where we will lead; where we will work in partnership; and where we will take more of a back seat and focus more on ‘influencing’ others.
- The District-level is an important starting point for partnership working.
- Voluntary sector has a significant role to play. Huge health and wellbeing benefits for both those participating and the outcomes of their actions. Citizen champions.
- Need to recognise that for many people, especially those living hand-to-mouth, Plans and Strategies are not seen as having relevance and/or not a priority for them to be involved. Shows the importance of having trusted relationships to tackle inequalities – making use of the knowledge and skills of others.
- Important to make use of spaces and places in a multifunctional way, both existing and new, including the public realm.
- Need to focus on partnership working and how this can continue to achieve maximum opportunities/benefits.
- Funding seen as a significant issue for many groups, especially if this is currently decided on an annual basis.

List of attendees

Organisation	Name
Abingdon & Witney College	Simon Kibble
Witney Chamber of Commerce	David Gambier
Wake up to Woodstock	Dennis Allen
The North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster	Tim Field
Cornbury Park Estate	John Jacques
Cornbury Park Estate	Lord Rotherwick
P.D Hook	Patrick Hook
Blenheim Estate	Liz Foulkes
Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership	Camilla Burrow
Evenlode Catchment Partnership	Eoghan Concannon
Wychwood Forest Trust	Neil Clenell
Lower Windrush Valley Project	Rachel Crookes
FarmED	Ian Wilkinson
OCC Climate Lead	Rachel Wileman
OCC Lead for the Natural Environment	Nick Mottram
Windrush Against Sewerage Pollution	Ashley Smith
Cotswolds National Landscape	Andy Parsons
OCC Healthy Place Shaping Lead	Rosie Rowe
GLL – Partnership Manager West Oxfordshire	Matthew Simmons
West Oxon VCS Development Group	Ruth Madder

Organisation	Name
Oxfordshire MIND	Lisa Harle-Ward
Community First Oxfordshire	Tom McCulloch
WODC	Cllr Andrew Prosser
WODC	Cllr Joy Aitman
WODC	Cllr Dan Levy
WODC	Cllr Carl Rylett
WODC	Cllr Duncan Enright
WODC	Cllr Geoff Saul
WODC	Chris Hargraves – Planning Policy
WODC	Janice Bamsey – Planning Policy
WODC	Kim Hudson – Planning Policy
WODC	Hannah Kenyon – Planning Policy
WODC	Oliver Murray – Planning Policy
WODC	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer
WODC	Astrid Harvey - Policy & Partnerships Officer