

APPENDIX B: RURAL TASKFORCE: SURVEYS OF RESIDENTS AND GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

FINAL SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

1. This report updates the Taskforce on the results of the surveys following the close of the survey on 13 October 2019. It replaces the previous interim report that was presented to the Taskforce and gave the summary picture at 1 October 2019.

2. Please note:

- This summary report covers both the residents survey and the groups and organisations survey. Each is dealt with in turn in the sections below.
- All answers are listed in descending order of importance (except equality monitoring questions which remain in standard categories)
- A large part of the survey was made up of free text responses. These have been analysed using standard manual techniques for free text analysis, which while highly effective are unable to eliminate any degree of judgement or subjectivity.
- The top three responses have been highlighted in yellow in each section below.
- The raw data behind each of the questions can be shared with the Taskforce (please note the report runs to 117 pages)

A: About the respondents

a) Resident Survey:

3. 309 completed surveys were submitted and included as part of this analysis. A further 34 surveys were partially completed but not included as they were not ultimately submitted by the respondent. Duplicate, identical responses from the same IP address were also removed from the analysis.

Gender

4. The survey was completed by more females than males, with women accounting for 58% of the respondents, compared to 38% who were male. The remainder of respondents did not disclose their gender.

Age and health/disability

5. The age breakdown (see chart 1) demonstrated a larger proportion of older people completing the survey; 82% were aged over 45. There is no representation of those aged under 18 in this survey, with very few 18-24-year olds also. 17.5% of respondents also said they had a long-term disability or illness, which could correlate with an aging population seen in rural West Suffolk who have responded to this survey.

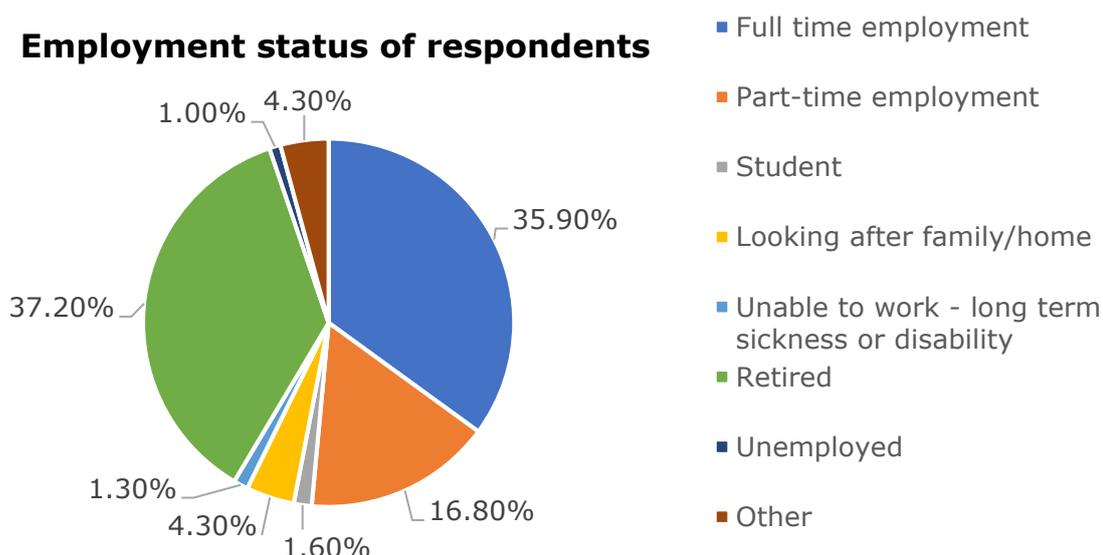
Chart 1 – Age breakdown of respondents

Age categories	% in each age category	West Suffolk % (2018)
0-17	0%	21.1%
18-24	1.3%	7.7%
25-34	4.6%	13.8%
35-44	11.9%	11.5%
45-59	35.6%	19.5%
60-69	26.0%	10.9%
Over 70	20.5%	15.5%

Employment status

6. The employment status of respondents showed that 37% were retired, closely followed by 35% in full time/part time employment. Only 1% of respondents are unemployed, which is below the West Suffolk average of 2.7% (ONS).

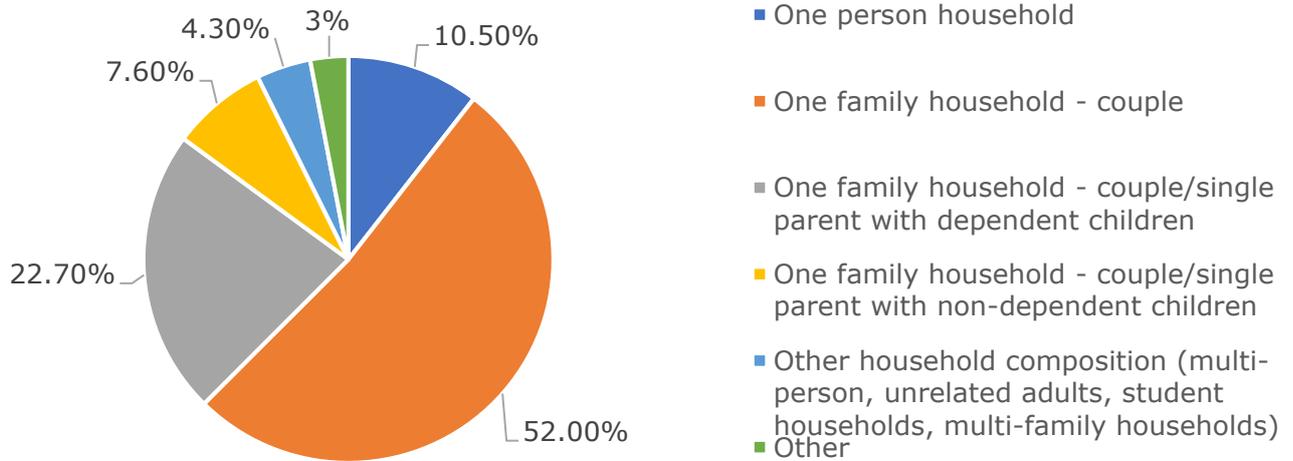
Employment status of respondents



Household composition

7. The survey also collected information about the household composition of each respondent. 52% were part of a couple in a one family household, with the West Suffolk average being 53.5%. One in 10 people lived alone, compared with a West Suffolk average of 27.2% one person households. 22% were living as a single family with dependent children, in comparison to the 28.5% across West Suffolk.

Household composition of respondents



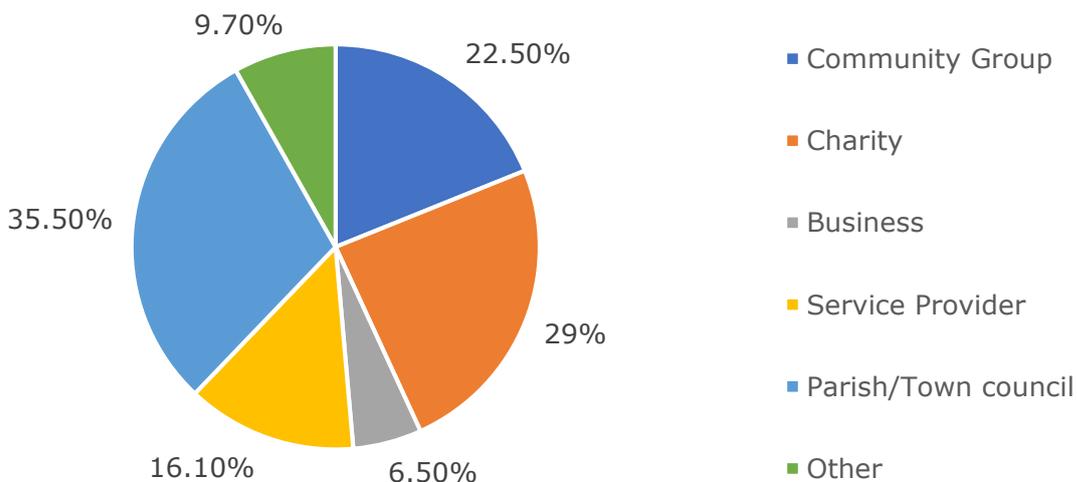
Ethnic background

8. Of the survey respondents, 96% identified as white British/Irish with the remaining identifying themselves as other (white) and British/mixed race. The white British/Irish response rate is therefore higher than in West Suffolk as a whole, where this group make up 87.1% of the population as a whole.

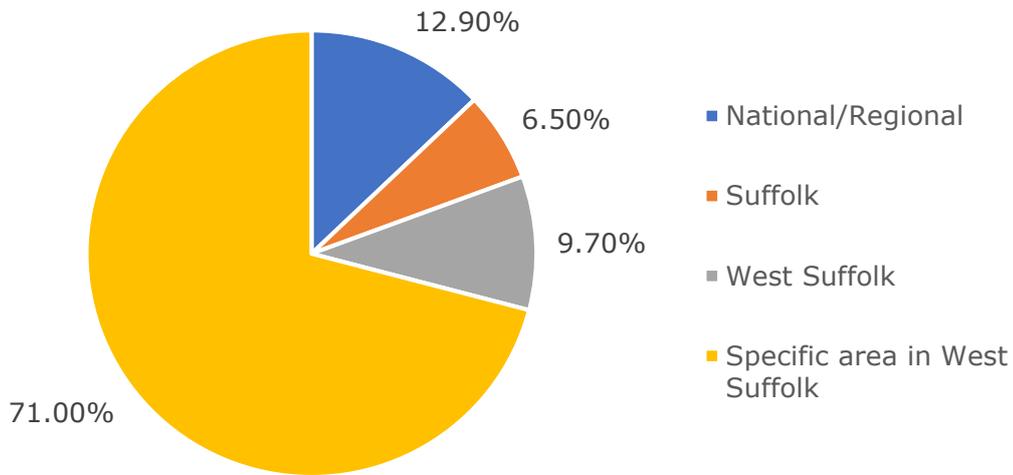
b) Groups/organisations survey:

9. 30 groups and organisations submitted responses. The most popular organisation type was Parish/Town councils which cover a specific area of West Suffolk. 12% of responses were from national and regional organisations, compared to 71% that covered only specific areas of West Suffolk, demonstrating a range in scale of groups/organisations.

Type of Organisation



Area that the Organisation Covers



B. Living and working in West Suffolk:

a) Residents

10. Residents were asked to consider what it is like to live in their local area and to describe their rural living and community context. First, they were asked what they valued most about living in their local area, using a free text response. Please note the number of mentions of key words or phrases exceeds the number of overall survey responses as respondents may have replied with more than one answer.

QR2 - What do you value most about living in your local area?	Frequency of inclusion
Views of the Countryside/Rural life/Country living	115
Peaceful/quiet	85
Sense of belonging in a community	63
Green open spaces	53
Access to shops, services and facilities	49
Friendly local people/neighbours looking out for each other	40
Safety/Security/Lack of crime	30
Access to urban areas and main roads	28
Undeveloped/Unspoilt	20
Lack of cars and main roads	15
Community Events	13
Lack of pollution/fresh air	11
Clean and maintained environment	7
Footpaths	7

11. Next, respondents were asked about how safe they felt in their local area.

QR3 - How safe do you feel in the local area?	Frequency of inclusion
Always feel safe	107
Normally feel safe	183
Sometimes feel safe	13
Seldom feel safe	2
Never feel safe	1

12. 94.7% of respondents to this question stated that they always or normally felt safe in their local area, with only one saying they never felt safe. These figures were reinforced by an open text reason for their answer; 56 responses indicated that respondents felt safe because they lived in a low/no crime area, with a further 37 stating it was because they knew and trusted their neighbours and lived in a friendly community.

13. Conversely, 36 responses said there had been occasional incidents in their village so they could not always feel safe in their local area and 28 cited a lack of policing. 18 said incidences of antisocial behaviour and gangs of young people made them feel less safe in their community. Eleven respondents stated that either they or a close next-door neighbour had been burgled in the past.

QR3 -Reasons for feeling unsafe	Frequency of inclusion	QR3 - Reasons for feeling safe	Frequency of inclusion
Occasional incidents (so cannot always be safe)	36	No reason to feel unsafe as it is a low/no crime area	56
Lack of policing	28	Knowing and trusting neighbours/friendly community	37
Gangs of young people/antisocial behaviour	18	Quiet and remote area	12
Burglary of own property/close neighbour	11	Personal/property security measures	10
Increase in rural crime	11	Visible policing	2
Speeding	11		
Unknown people in the local area	8		
Knife crime/drugs/county lines	7		
Being alone at night outdoors	5		
Cold calling	5		
Need more street lighting	4		

14. To evaluate the level of community connections and cohesiveness within settlements, resident survey respondents were asked what the key meeting spaces were in their local area. 169 responses cited the local pub as a key meeting space in their locality, although some responses said they were sad that

their local pub had closed in recent years or was under a complicated process of moving from landlord to landlord so was often closed. A village hall or 'hub' of the community was also an important meeting space, with 161 responses saying it was a space to meet other members of the village and get involved with community activities.

15. On the other hand, 31 responses said there was no specific physical space in which to meet in their local area, however some respondents said they met up with each other just on dog walks or walking around the local area.

QR4 - What are the key meeting spaces in the local area?	<i>Frequency of inclusion</i>
Pub	169
Village hall/hub	161
Church	88
<i>Community centre</i>	53
<i>Shops</i>	50
<i>Parks/Green spaces/Playgrounds</i>	36
<i>School</i>	33
<i>Nothing in village</i>	31
<i>Local clubs and groups</i>	18
<i>Café/tearoom/coffee shop</i>	16
<i>Post Office</i>	15
<i>Hairdressers</i>	12
<i>Walking around the area</i>	11
<i>Library</i>	9
<i>Locally organised events</i>	9
<i>Leisure centre</i>	4
<i>Garden centre</i>	4
<i>Allotments</i>	4
<i>Doctors</i>	3
<i>Market</i>	3

16. Residents were questioned about how well connected they felt with one another in their local area. The majority said there was some or a strong sense of community and was followed up with reasons for their responses. Firstly, the top table (QR5a) describes a multiple-choice response from a set of predetermined categories. QR5b, QR5c and QR5d describe the thoughts and opinions from within a free text response. These have been categorised to analyse the key ideas of the responses.

QR5a - How well are people connected to one another in your local area?	Number of responses
Strong sense of community	109
Some sense of community	139
Little sense of community	42
No sense of community	5
I don't know	7

QR5b - Well connected, free text responses:	Frequency of inclusion
Regular social events	31
A village website/social media/newsletter	16
Neighbours willing to help each other out	16
Neighbours knowing each other	14
Friendly neighbours	13
2-3 community events a year	6
Many clubs/groups/committees to get involved in	5
Local support fund/charity/community project	4
Village all connects the community	3

QR5c - Some connections, free text responses:	Frequency of inclusion
A divided community (those who are working/retired, not a traditional village atmosphere anymore)	23
Minority of residents have a strong connection if involved	16
Not as strong as it used to be	11
Events/groups for those who want to	5

QR5d - No connections, free text responses:	Frequency of inclusion
Nowhere to be sociable/connect	14
No/very little connection with neighbours or village	11
Events are not well supported, and people do not want to get involved	9
New communities are not connected/RAF bases changing residents regularly	8
Spread out settlements (increasing connectivity needed to access)	6
No activities or events	5

17. The most common means of feeling well connected was through attendance at regular social events, in order to be able to meet up and socialise with other local people (31 responses). 16 responses also referred to feeling connected by local communication methods, such as a village newsletter, to find out what is happening in the local area/village. Others also said they felt well

connected through knowing and having friendly neighbours who were willing to help each other out.

18. On the other hand, 23 of the responses that said there was some sense of community cited an issue with the divide that has occurred within rural areas, between those who are newer residents who work full time and those who have been life-long residents and are retired. Alternatively, respondents said their sense of community has reduced over time, but a strong connection is possible if you are immersed in village life and the Parish Council. This community connection is increased through communication methods within a local area.

19. Residents were also asked about their main methods of communication.

QR6 - What are the main ways of communication you use within your local area?	No. of responses
Village/Town magazine	224
Word of mouth	166
Social media	119
Community website/online message board	95
Email	79
Phone calls – landline	27
Texts/instant messaging	25
Phone calls - mobile	12

20. These results indicate the importance of communication within rural communities. A village magazine was the most common way of communicating, with 224 of 309 overall responses referring to this method. Mobile phone calls were least likely to be used. Other methods were described also, with the NextDoor app being cited by many respondents as a popular way to keep in contact with neighbours.

21. Residents were asked what their community had achieved over the past ten years.

QR7 - What has your community achieved in the past 10 years?	Frequency of inclusion
Refurbished/new village hall/community centre	46
New/Refurbished play parks/spaces/recreation areas	36
Supporting community events	30
Don't know	27
Fundraising activities	24
Nothing	23
Litter picking groups	20
Cricket club/sports clubs	18
Maintaining environment/footpaths	15
Social gatherings and support	14
Speed watch/cameras	12
Village fete/fun day	12
Starting up different clubs	12

WW1 events	11
Campaign against developments	11
Defibrillator	8
Community woodland	8
Community cinema	7
Preparing a neighbourhood plan	7
Christmas celebrations	6
The Shed' Allotments	6
Fireworks event	5
Memorials	5
Monthly market	5
Post Office/local shop campaign	4
Thriving community	3
Summer BBQ	3
Bus shelters	3
Carols on the Green	3
Winning awards/competitions	3
Magazine	3
Phone box - book exchange	2
Increased communication/ NextDoor App	2
Dog bins	2
Monthly village café	2
BMX track	1
Low crime figures	1
New church clock face	1
Broadband	1
Car park renovations	1
Saved school closure	1
Saved bus service	1

22. A wide range of activities, achievements and outcomes were cited by local residents, most commonly the refurbishment of community facilities and green play spaces. Fundraising activities have taken place within the local area to support these improvements and have involved community fun days and events to raise money. 27 respondents said they did not know what the community had achieved. Some of these respondents were new to the area and were not aware of previous accomplishments. 23 said their local area had achieved nothing.

b) Groups/organisation in West Suffolk:

23. Groups and organisations were asked about the strengths they see from the local area(s) they work in within West Suffolk. The results are shown below:

QG&05 - What are the strengths of the local area(s) in West Suffolk you work in?	Frequency of inclusion
Community spirit	14
Countryside/rural location	6
Road links	5
Volunteers	3
Links with other partners/organisations	3
Opportunities for young people	2
Skilled workforce	1
Public transport	1
Local activities and social events	1
Infrastructure	1

24. The rural groups and organisations who responded to the survey described what were some of the specific challenges to their work. The most common challenge with 14 mentions, was the lack of public transport and hence a lack of accessibility to services and facilities. Respondents indicated that it is difficult to operate over a vast rural area where there are limited opportunities to travel to other places. 12 responses also mentioned a need for more support and funding to be able to complete their work, which is ultimately resulting in a loss of services. Other common challenges include a lack of community engagement, little affordable housing and a lack of mobile phone and broadband coverage for rural businesses.

QG&06 - What are the top three challenges you face as a group/organisation?	Frequency of inclusion
Lack of public transport	14
Needing more support and funding from Government	12
Lack of services and infrastructure	10
Poor roads/paths conditions	7
Different needs of the villages, impacts of deprivation	7
Rurality/isolation of area	6
Lack of community engagement	6
Speeding/traffic/parking	4
Overdevelopment	4
Lack of mobile/broadband signal	3
Affordable housing	3
Use of land for energy production (Sunnica)	2
Less focus on rural areas compared to urban centres	2

25. Groups and organisations were also asked about the benefits of working in rural West Suffolk. 11 responses said they liked the supportive community living that is evident as well as being in a nice countryside location. Others liked the collaboration and connections between different services both in the public and private sector and the relationships with local people.

QG&08 - Benefits of working/operating in the local area(s) in West Suffolk	Frequency of inclusion
Nice area, supportive community living	11
Links with schools and other services	4
Close support and cooperation from Local Authority	4
Good relationships and communication with local people	3
Access to locations/transport links	2
Local knowledge	1

26. Additionally, respondents were able to add their own opinion and comments about working and operating in West Suffolk; the majority of these commented on a lack of funding and help available from West Suffolk Council, with an apparent opinion of being ignored in favour of urban centres.

QG&07 - Anything else to add about working/operating in West Suffolk?	Frequency of inclusion
Lack of funding/Being ignored by West Suffolk Council/Needing more funding, to equal urban areas	14
Having a spread-out community can be isolating and difficult to provide services/facilities	4
Difficulties with lack of public transport	3
Friendly communities	2
Overdevelopment and lack of facilities is occurring	1
A need for affordable housing is evident	1

C: Priorities for the Rural Taskforce

27. Both residents and groups/organisations were asked what they thought local people would like to achieve in their local area.

28. The most common improvement **residents** wished to see in their local area was to public transport services, with 40 residents saying this is what they would like to achieve.

29. Residents also expressed a desire for speeding and traffic calming measures to be implemented alongside better roads and traffic management.

QR8 - Resident responses: What would people like to achieve in the future to make their local area better?	Frequency of inclusion
Access to public transport	40
Speeding/traffic calming measures	27
Footpaths/cycle paths	24
Better roads and traffic management	21
Less development of housing	21
More services e.g. shops/cafes	20
Activities for children and young people	15
Keeping village tidy/free of litter	15
Better sense of community	15
Police presence	15

A village hall/ community centre to socialise	14
Upgrading/improvements to current community buildings	13
Better mobile reception / broadband	12
Don't know	12
Stopping Sunnica developments	10
Affordable housing	8
A pub	7
Enhance/maintain what is already there	6
Investment in play spaces, parks and open spaces	6
Tree planting/promoting environment	6
Improved access and better doctors/health centres	6
Better Parish Council	5
Reducing antisocial behaviour	5
Community garden/allotment etc	5
Support for volunteers	5
Sports facilities	4
Better/accessible parking	4
School transport	4
Road edge cutting	4
Village plan	4
Community communication	4
More facilities in housing growth areas	4
Improved housing policies	4
Removal of homelessness/social housing	3
Regular village events	3
Street lighting issues (more and less)	3
Work opportunities	2
Less crime/vandalism	2
Increase safety	2
More for elderly/lonely people	2
Reducing congestion	2
Defibrillator	1

30. Meanwhile, as well as prioritising transport (9 responses), **groups and organisations** thought local people would prioritise suitable affordable housing, totalling 4 responses. However, this sample size is small in comparison to the residents' survey so can be difficult to directly compare.

QG&O9 - Groups/organisations responses: What do you think people would like to achieve in the future to make their local area(s) in West Suffolk better?

Frequency of inclusion

Better public transport	9
Affordable housing/sustainable development	4
Better communication	3
More community groups to reduce isolation	3
Better road links	3
Activities and support for young people	2
Increased collaboration	2

Better mobile signals and broadband	2
Support for community volunteer schemes	2
Improved paths and cycleways	2
Keeping services and facilities open	2
No energy developments	1
Police presence	1
More funding	1
A voice within West Suffolk Council	1
A directory of services	1
Reducing Anti-social behaviour	1

31. Residents and groups/organisations were both asked to identify their top five priorities for the rural taskforce to work towards, from a set of predetermined themes. Free text options of 'other' were also allowed, however the majority of these were repetitions of other themes, so have not been added to the original categories.

32. It is also important to consider the differences between the priorities of a group compared to a resident so they cannot be combined. Something that is important to a resident, such as improving access to healthcare, may not be as important for groups and organisations, who may require support for business start-ups.

a) Residents

QR9 - Which of the following themes would you most like the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce to focus on in terms of how our local areas might be strengthened (select a maximum of 5 choices)

Themes	Number of responses	As a % of responses (308)
1. Improving transport links and roads (including walking and cycle routes)	205	66.5%
2. Protecting and enhancing the environment	177	57.5%
3. Supporting older people to continue to live in the community	156	50.7%
4. Improving broadband and mobile phone coverage	136	44.2%
5. Encouraging more activities for young people	136	44.2%
6. Improving access to high quality healthcare and wellbeing services	120	39.0%
7. Improving affordability and choice of housing for local residents	97	31.5%
8. Helping the community plan its own future	78	25.3%

9. Helping the community take action to bring about change in the local area	66	21.4%
10. Supporting communities to promote healthy living	52	16.9%
11. Improving access and upkeep of community meeting spaces	51	16.6%
12. Improving jobs and access to training in the local area	40	13.0%
13. Other	30	9.7%
14. Supporting new business start ups	29	9.4%
15. Reducing fuel poverty	24	7.8%
16. Improving the quality of housing for local residents	16	5.2%

b) Groups and organisations

QG&O11 - Which of the following themes would you most like the West Suffolk Rural Taskforce to focus on in terms of how our local areas might be strengthened (select a maximum of 5 choices)

Themes	Number of responses	As a % of responses (30)
1. Improving transport links and roads (including walking and cycle routes)	21	70.0%
2. Encouraging more activities for young people	19	63.3%
3. Improving affordability and choice of housing for local residents	14	46.6%
4. Helping the community plan its own future	13	43.3%
5. Improving access to high quality healthcare and wellbeing services	13	43.3%
6. Protecting and enhancing the environment	12	40.0%
7. Improving broadband and mobile phone coverage	11	36.6%
8. Supporting older people to continue to live in the community	11	36.6%
9. Improving access and upkeep of community meeting spaces	10	33.3%
10. Helping the community take action to bring about change in the local area	9	30.0%
11. Supporting communities to promote healthy living	6	20.0%
12. Improving the quality of housing for local residents	5	16.6%
13. Improving jobs and access to training in the local area	4	13.3%
14. Supporting new business start ups	4	13.3%
15. Other	3	10.0%
16. Reducing fuel poverty	1	3.3%