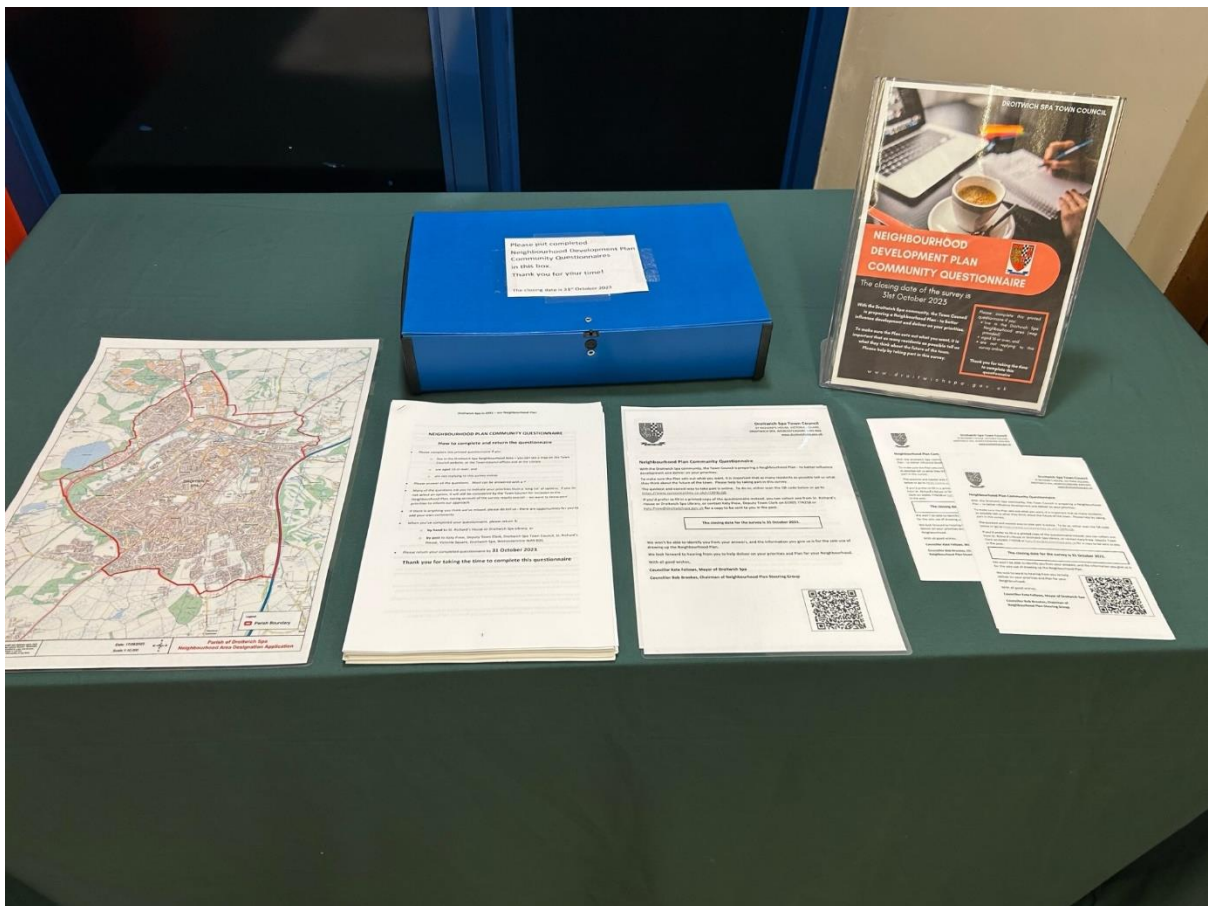


Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan

Community questionnaire survey 2023

Results report



Drop-in display at St. Richards House

DJN Planning Limited

December 2023

For Droitwich Spa Town Council

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1. Introduction

Droitwich Spa Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. To help inform the Plan, a community questionnaire survey was undertaken in October 2023 which sought views on a draft vision and objectives for the Plan, living in Droitwich Spa, community facilities, the town centre (including on a key site for development, the Netherwich Canal Basin), economic development, environment, local green space, building design, and infrastructure.

This report sets out the results of the survey. The report:

- provides a summary of the main findings (section 2);
- outlines the survey methodology, describes the overall response, and explains how the results have been presented in this report (section 3); and
- sets out on a question-by-question basis the response to the questionnaire, dealing with the following topics:
 - draft Vision and objectives – questions 1 and 2
 - living in Droitwich Spa – questions 3 and 4
 - housing – questions 5 to 7
 - community facilities – questions 8 and 9
 - Droitwich Spa town centre – question 10
 - Netherwich Canal basin – questions 11 and 12
 - economic development – question 13
 - environment – questions 14 and 15
 - Local Green Space – question 16
 - building design – question 17
 - infrastructure – questions 18 and 19
 - many thanks for getting this far (a final opportunity to add comment) – question 20
 - information about You – questions 21 to 25.

A copy of the questionnaire is available separately.

This report has been independently prepared for Droitwich Spa Town Council by DJN Planning Ltd.

December 2023

2. Summary of results

The survey was undertaken in October 2023. There were 792 replies, just under 4% of the surveyed population. Most responses were made online with 9% of respondents completing a printed questionnaire.

Vision and objectives

- There was significant support for the draft Vision and objectives.
- Comments emphasised the need to retain a distinctive spa town sense of place, based around heritage and including re-instatement of the Brine baths, and that there should be no more new housing until existing shortfalls in services and facilities particularly health and education had been rectified, with further development linked to the prior provision of the associated infrastructure.
- Comments were also made on aspects of travel and transport including the traffic management at the Copcut junction/roundabout; the regeneration of the town centre; business requirements; and the environment, including prioritising the use of brownfield land over greenfields and addressing climate change.

Living in Droitwich Spa

- The most valued features for respondents were parks and open spaces, a feeling of safety/low crime, the range of shops and services available in the town centre, and a well-maintained, attractive town centre.
- Relatively little weight was given to the ability to access nearby countryside, and to the presence of individual features and facilities in the town such as the canals, Lido swimming pool and the Norbury Theatre.
- Top priorities for improvement and provision were fewer empty shops in the town centre and for the restoration and redevelopment of The Raven Hotel. These were followed by the re-instatement of the Brine Baths, additional NHS GP and dentist provision, and the policing of anti-social behaviour.
- Relatively low priority was attached to more or improved facilities for tourists, mix of size and type of housing, opportunities to see first release or projected films, and flexible workspace for homeworkers.

Housing

- Most respondents preferred to see small and medium-sized homes (2 or 3 bedroom), followed by homes with 1- and 4 bedrooms. There was relatively little support for larger dwellings with 5 or more bedrooms.

- There was significant support for affordable homes in various forms. Affordable housing for rent was most preferred, closely followed by discounted market sales such as First Homes. Respondents preferred all types of affordable housing above market housing.
- There was strong agreement for housing suitable for older households such as adapted/easy access homes e.g. bungalows and supported/sheltered accommodation.
- The priorities for new housing were to:
 - retain trees and other landscape features on development sites.
 - have an acceptable impact on local roads, other infrastructure, and services.
- The lowest priorities for new housing were to provide a variety of house sizes, for new development to be able to access local services and public transport on foot or cycle without using main roads, and for sufficient garden space.
- For householder development such as extensions, top priorities were an acceptable impact on neighbours' amenity, the retention of trees and other landscape features, and for there to be no additional on-road parking due to the loss of on-site parking to the scheme. The retention of enough garden space after the development was of least concern.

Community facilities

- Top priorities for improvements to community facilities were for better NHS GP/dentist and pharmacy provision, re-instatement of the Brine baths, and parks and open spaces. These were followed by improvements in facilities for younger and older people, and in existing provision including at the Lido, Leisure Centre and the Norbury Theatre.
- Adult gym equipment/fitness trails on open spaces, open spaces for formal sports, the Community Hall, and a skate park/BMX facility were of relatively lower priority.
- Comments covered many areas of community life in the town, dealing with services and facilities, travel and transport, town centre regeneration, public realm, and communications and consultation.

Droitwich Spa town centre

- Top priorities for improvements to the town centre were the restoration and redevelopment of The Raven Hotel, the re-instatement of the Brine baths, the public realm and continued festivals and street markets.
- Reduced or no charges for public car parking attracted more support than improvements and initiatives aimed at boosting walking and cycling.
- There was some support for a wider range of town centre uses, encouraging the evening economy, finding new uses for empty shops, and promoting the town as a tourist destination.

Netherwich Canal basin

- Priorities for development of the Netherwich Canal Basin were for a safe and direct pedestrian access to the town centre, the design to reflect the industrial heritage of the site, based on

salt production and the role of the Canal, and open space and landscaping with benefits to wildlife and biodiversity.

- Retail, leisure and Canal-oriented uses were preferred to housing.
- Comments added more detail to this finding, with general support for community uses and meeting spaces and for leisure and tourism based on the area's heritage. Support for retail was qualified by concerns that this could be to the detriment of the town centre. Support for housing was linked to the development of smaller homes and affordable housing though there was also a view that new dwellings should not be included in the overall mix of uses.
- Comments were also made on the public realm, access including an improved pedestrian route linking to the town centre, and open space.

Economic Development

- Top priorities for new economic development were to re-use existing buildings and previously-developed land, maximise local employment opportunities, and for businesses to be linked to the heritage of Droitwich Spa and supporting tourism (hotel, Brine baths, Canal).
- Relatively little priority was given to establishing a business centre, supporting the extension of existing business premises, or the development of live/work premises.

Environment

- In minimising the impact of development on the environment, respondents prioritised the use of brownfield sites before greenfield land; retaining existing landscape features on development sites; and protecting historic buildings and other heritage features.
- Relatively low priority was given to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, minimising light pollution, designation of Local Green Space or protection of key views.
- Asked about locally important views, respondents replied in both general and specific terms. The latter included features of the town linked to its history and character, as well as views of the surrounding countryside.

Local Green Space

- General suggestions were made that all parks, playing fields, woodlands, countryside, canals/towpaths and other open spaces in and around the town should be designated as Local Green Space.
- Specific suggestions included Vines and Lido Parks, the River Salwarpe/canal corridor, open spaces in residential areas such as Yew Tree Hill, and woodland areas (Droitwich Community Woods).

Building design

- Top priorities for the design of buildings were for sufficient off-road parking and the retention of trees and other landscape features, followed by wildlife and biodiversity, scheme layout including relationship to its surroundings and the street scene, the provision of landscaped open space, and the overall height, size and density of new buildings.
- More detailed aspects of design such as materials, architectural detailing and boundary treatments were of lesser concern.

Infrastructure

- Priorities for improvements to infrastructure were the Copcut junction of the A38/Pulley Lane, road maintenance, and surface water flooding. Footpath maintenance and the provision of safe walking/cycling routes were also concerns.
- Comments on infrastructure dealt mainly with travel and transport, covering walking and cycling, public transport, and highways and traffic. Other topics raised were medical, education, broadband and TV reception, flooding and drainage, and The Raven Hotel.

Many thanks for getting this far

- Responses to this final chance to comment dealt with the character of the town, housing growth and infrastructure, travel and transport, and the town centre.

Information about You

- In responses to the survey the following groups were over-represented when compared to Census 2021 information:
 - males
 - age groups over 55.
- Compared to Census 2011 information, full-time and part-time employees and the self-employed were slightly under-represented in survey responses. The retired were over-represented.
- Over 70% of respondents had lived in Droitwich Spa for 11 years or more, and 45% had lived in the town for 25 or more years.

3. Survey method

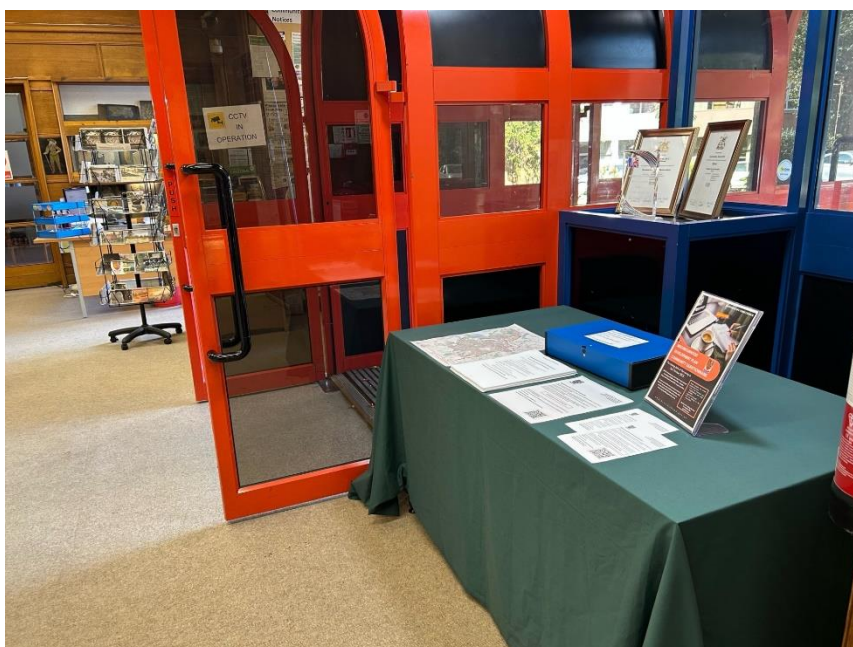
Method and response

The survey questionnaire was developed by the Steering Group with professional support. Account was taken of issues raised in the Launch consultation held earlier in 2023. Key topics for the survey were identified as: Vision and objectives, living in Droitwich Spa, housing, community facilities, town centre, Netherwich canal basin, economic development, environment, Local Green Space, building design and infrastructure.

The survey asked 19 questions on these topics. Responses could be provided either as multiple choices to closed questions or as free-write comments to open questions. There was a further opportunity to add comment on any other matter thought to be relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan. The questionnaire concluded with five questions on respondents' gender, age, economic activity, length of residence and use of services.

The survey was publicised by means of a flyer (see Appendix) circulated by Royal Mail to all households in the Neighbourhood Area during September 2023. All residents of the Neighbourhood Area aged 16 or over were asked to take part. The survey closing date was 31 October 2023.

Responses could be made online (SurveyMonkey) or by completing a printed questionnaire. These could be collected from the Town Council offices at St. Richard's House or Droitwich Spa Library, both central locations in the Neighbourhood Area, or supplied by post on request. Completed questionnaires were returnable to the Town Council offices by hand or post, or by hand to the Library.



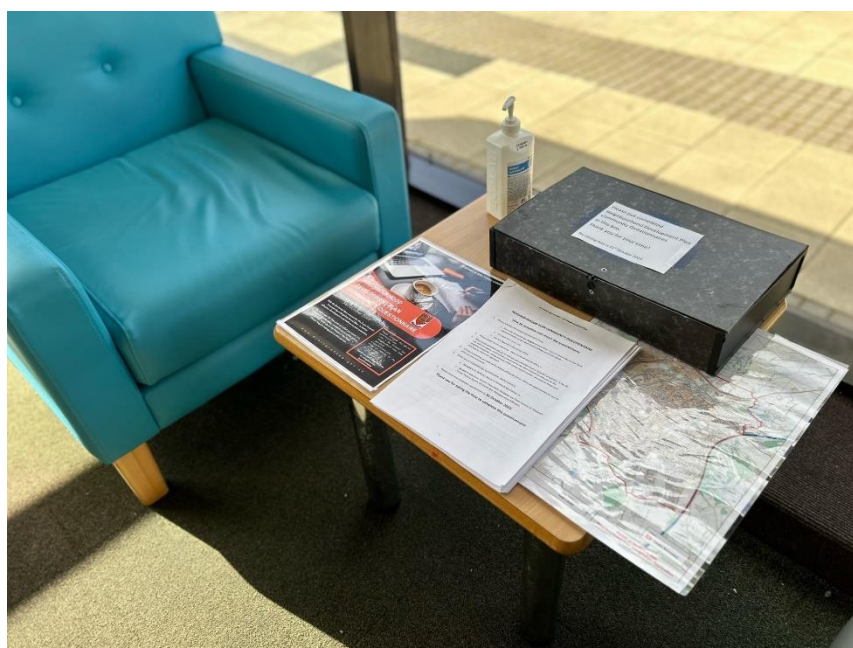
Drop-in display at St. Richards House

There were 792 replies to the survey. This represents 3.8% of the survey population, (20,601 residents aged 16 or over, Census 2021). Some 91% of responses were made online and 9% using the printed questionnaire.

Presentation of the results

For the multiple-choice questions, tables and bar charts show the number of responses against the given options. Table percentages are generally based on the total number of completed questionnaires (792). This aids comparison of results overall and between questions by utilising a consistent base. For Q21 -23, the percentage base is those answering the relevant question minus those selecting the 'prefer not to say' option. This enables comparison with the accompanying Census data. Each table confirms the percentage base. Percentages are rounded to whole numbers except for values less than 1% when a single decimal point figure is reported.

Free-write comments have been summarised in terms of the main themes raised. Anonymous quotes have been included for illustrative purposes but are not intended to be representative of all respondents. The numbers of comments reported for each of the open questions refers to substantive replies i.e. excludes those responding 'no', 'none', 'no comment' or similar. A full set of all the comments made is available (see separate Comment Listings report).



Drop-in display at Droitwich Spa Library

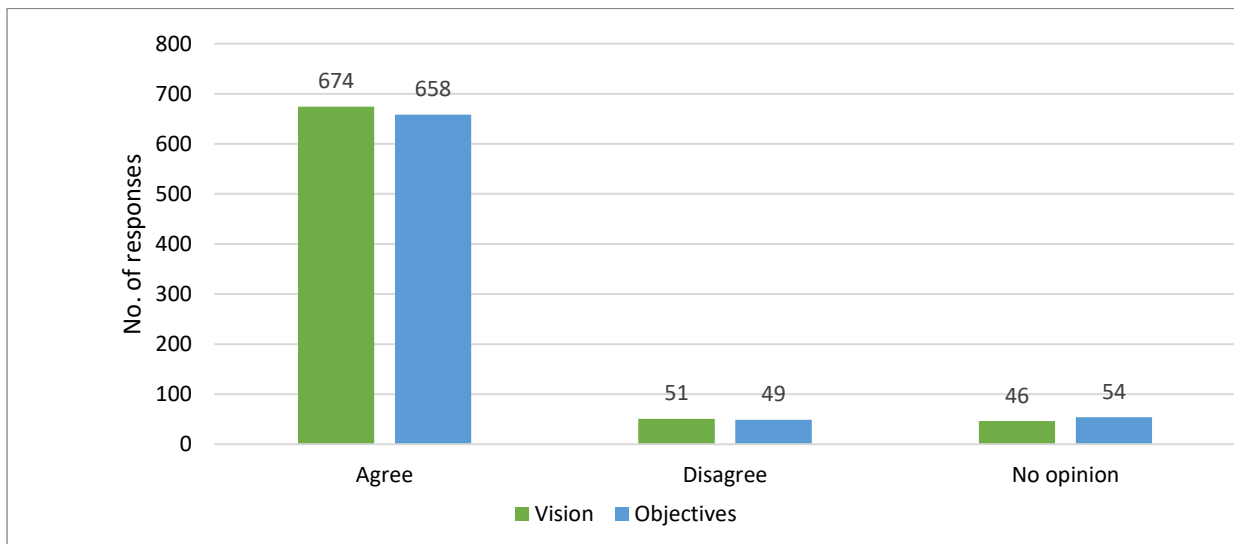
Vision and objectives

The questionnaire asked for views on a draft Vision for Droitwich Spa in 2041 and a set of supporting objectives. These had been prepared based on feedback at the Launch consultation held earlier in 2023.

Question 1: Do you agree or disagree with the Vision and objectives?

	Agree		Disagree		No opinion	
Vision	674	85%	51	6%	46	6%
Objectives	658	83%	49	6%	54	7%

Percentage base = 792



- There was significant overall support for both the draft Vision and the objectives, with many respondents taking the opportunity to make supplementary comments in answering Q2 (see overleaf).

Question 2: If you have any comments on our Vision and objectives please tell us in the box below.

Comments were made by 371 respondents (47%). Responses focussed around seven main themes: community identity; housing growth and infrastructure; travel and transport; the town centre; business; the environment; and that the Vision and objectives be more specific and measurable.

Under the first theme of **community identity**, respondents agreed with the need for a distinctive spa town sense of place: *'it's incredibly important we preserve the unique identity of our town, and our nature, for future generations'*. There was general support for re-instating the Brine baths, *'a key priority along with a greater focus on promoting the town's unique history'* although some thought these were less important.

The focus on heritage including the Roman era, salt, John Corbett and Chateau Impney was applauded: *'you are correct to be aiming to concentrate on the historical and cultural aspects of the town alongside important environmental considerations'*. To this end, regeneration *'needs to be done sympathetically, so it doesn't compromise the town's character'*, amid concerns that Droitwich Spa was already becoming *'just a commuter town for Birmingham/Worcester'*.

Under the second theme of **housing growth and infrastructure**, a widespread view was that there should be no more housing development until existing shortfalls in community facilities and services, particularly health and education, had been rectified, and that any further growth should be dependent on commensurate infrastructure being provided beforehand.

Some respondents thought that no more houses were required and that the character of the town had suffered from the pace and scale of recent development: *'Droitwich was a small Spa town which was attractive to residents and visitors alike, with continued development and growth the infrastructure is at breaking point'*; *'do not need more housing ... what attracted me to Droitwich was that it was a small town with a good community spirit'*.

Respondents identified a *'lack of provision for young people'* in the Vision and objectives, with identified priorities to improve family focussed facilities *'that are aspirational and drive ambition for young kids to thrive in the community and then the wider world'*, encompassing sports, arts and environmental health and pride.

Many aspects of **travel and transport** were raised in the third theme. There were concerns with road capacity, traffic volumes and speeds, with the Copcut junction/roundabout seen as an ongoing and frustrating problem on the network, *'an accident waiting to happen'*. Bus services, routes and times were seen as needing improvement, both within the town and further afield including evening connections to Worcester. Some sought more priority for active travel, that is for *'foot and cycle traffic across Droitwich ... actively encouraging people to walk/cycle more will not only have environmental but health benefits as well'*.

The fourth theme concerned the **town centre**. Respondents agreed this needed improvement and regeneration: *'the centre is just dying with charity shops and cheap low quality outlets and multiple premises not being taken up though empty for some time'*. The aspiration was for *'one-off retail*

outlets which make the town centre attractive to all that live in or visit Droitwich', 'keeping the town as vibrant and interesting ... with a good range of shops, cafes and restaurants'. In short, 'the town centre needs more business, more shops to open'. The Raven Hotel, St. Andrews shopping centre, High Street and the public realm were all seen as specific needs and opportunities. Some thought that a 'review [of] parking charges would help – more free parking would entice people to come in'.

In relation to **business**, respondents advocated a *'focus on new manufacturing capabilities to attract more world class companies to the town ... we need a vision for youth and wealthy jobs'*. As well as retail, leisure, and tourism *'employment needs to come from hi-tech industry, biosciences, healthcare, specialised manufacturing and advanced services plus IT/computing'*. Regard should also be had to transport and distribution, given the location in relation to the motorway network, and to an expected growth in home working, *'requiring excellent mobile phone connectivity ... and high speed broadband connectivity'*. There was a need for offices *'to rent or buy'*.

The sixth theme focussed on **the environment**. Respondents pointed out that greater attention was needed to the challenges posed by climate change, addressing adaptation (*'the elephant in the room'*) and net zero: *'more emphasis is required on sustainability and renewable energy, particularly regarding new builds. All future housing should include heat pumps and solar panels'*.

Others stressed that any development should focus on previously-developed land such as by the railway station, not green fields: *'would like to see statements prioritising development of brownfield sites and protecting green belt and surrounding countryside'*. Overall, *'tackling climate change, increasing biodiversity and ensuring sustainability need to be first priorities'*.

The last theme expressed concerns that the Vision and objectives needed to be more **specific and measurable**, and that they should be achieved over a shorter time period. Whilst *'they seem good ... a deliverable plan to achieve them is much more important'*.

Living in Droitwich Spa

The earlier Launch consultation asked for views about living in Droitwich Spa and how this could be improved. This section of the questionnaire sought further detail on the key issues which had been identified from the responses. It was explained that not everything referred to could be directly or exclusively tackled in the Neighbourhood Plan and that the results would be used to inform the Town Council's work with partner organisations such as Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council.

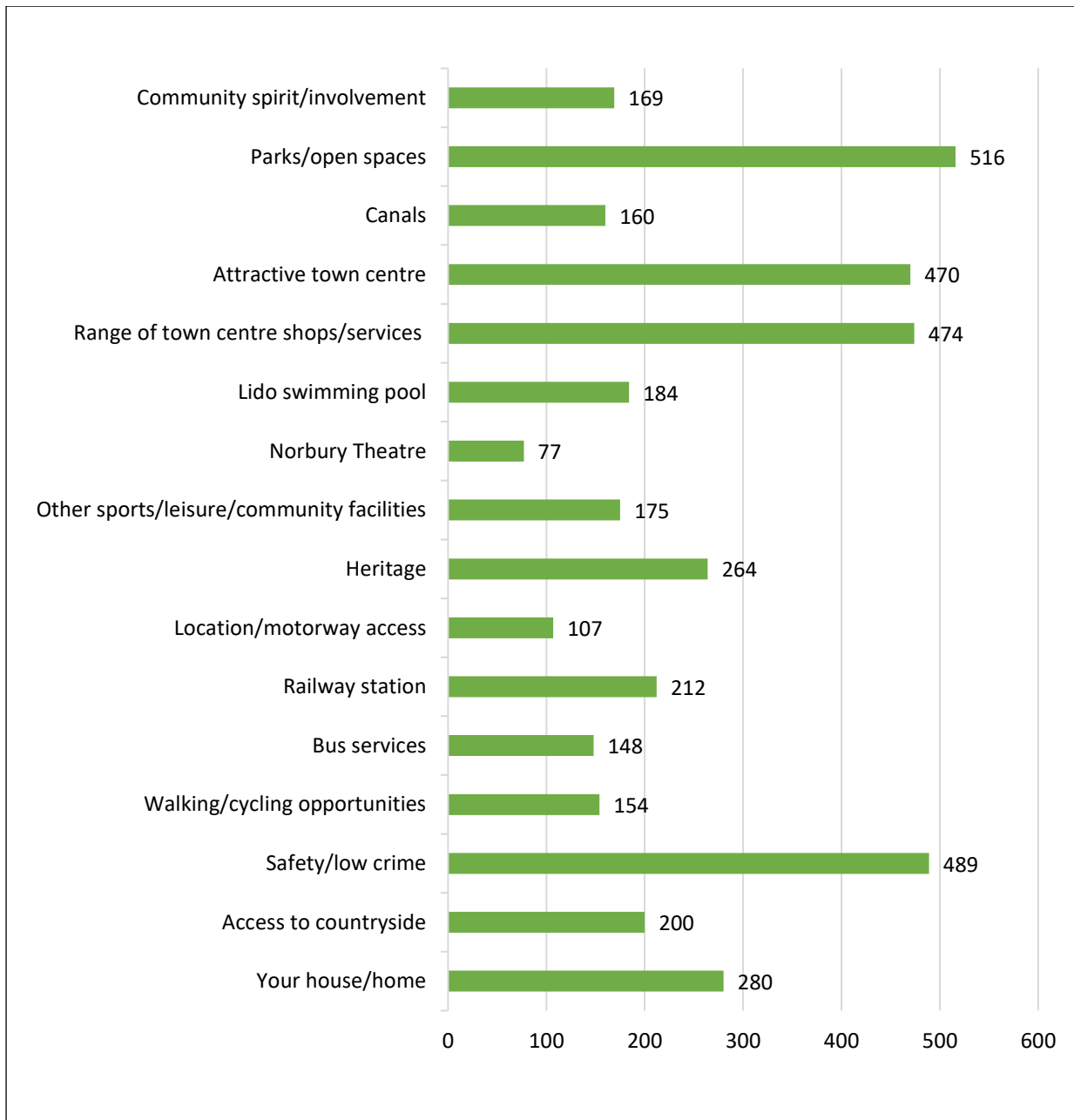
Question 3: From the list below, what are the TOP 5 things that matter to you about living in Droitwich Spa?

	No.	%		No.	%
Community spirit/involvement	169	21%	Historic buildings and local heritage	264	33%
Parks and open spaces	516	65%	Central location – motorway access	107	14%
Canals	160	20%	Railway station	212	27%
Well-maintained, attractive town centre	470	59%	Bus services	148	19%
Range of shops and services in town centre	474	60%	Opportunities for walking and cycling	154	19%
Lido swimming pool	184	23%	Feels safe – low crime	489	62%
Norbury Theatre	77	10%	Access to countryside	200	25%
Other sports, leisure and community facilities	175	22%	Your house/home	280	35%

Percentage base = 792

- The most valued features were parks and open spaces, a feeling of safety/low crime, the range of shops and services available in the town centre, and a well-maintained, attractive town centre. All these aspects of life in Droitwich Spa were valued by well over half of respondents, particularly the parks and open spaces (65%) which are clearly seen as a distinguishing feature of the town.
- These were followed at some distance by respondents' home and by historic buildings and the local heritage generally, each of which were valued by around one-third of respondents.

Question 3, continued/



- In terms of transport and travel, public transport facilities and opportunities for active travel (walking and cycling) were important to more respondents than the town’s central location and proximity to the M5. For example, the latter was referenced by 14% of respondents whilst 27% saw the railway station as important.
- The ability to readily access the nearby countryside was valued by one quarter of respondents.
- Individual features and facilities in the town such as the canals, Lido swimming pool and the Norbury Theatre were of importance to around one-fifth of respondents (Norbury Theatre 10%).

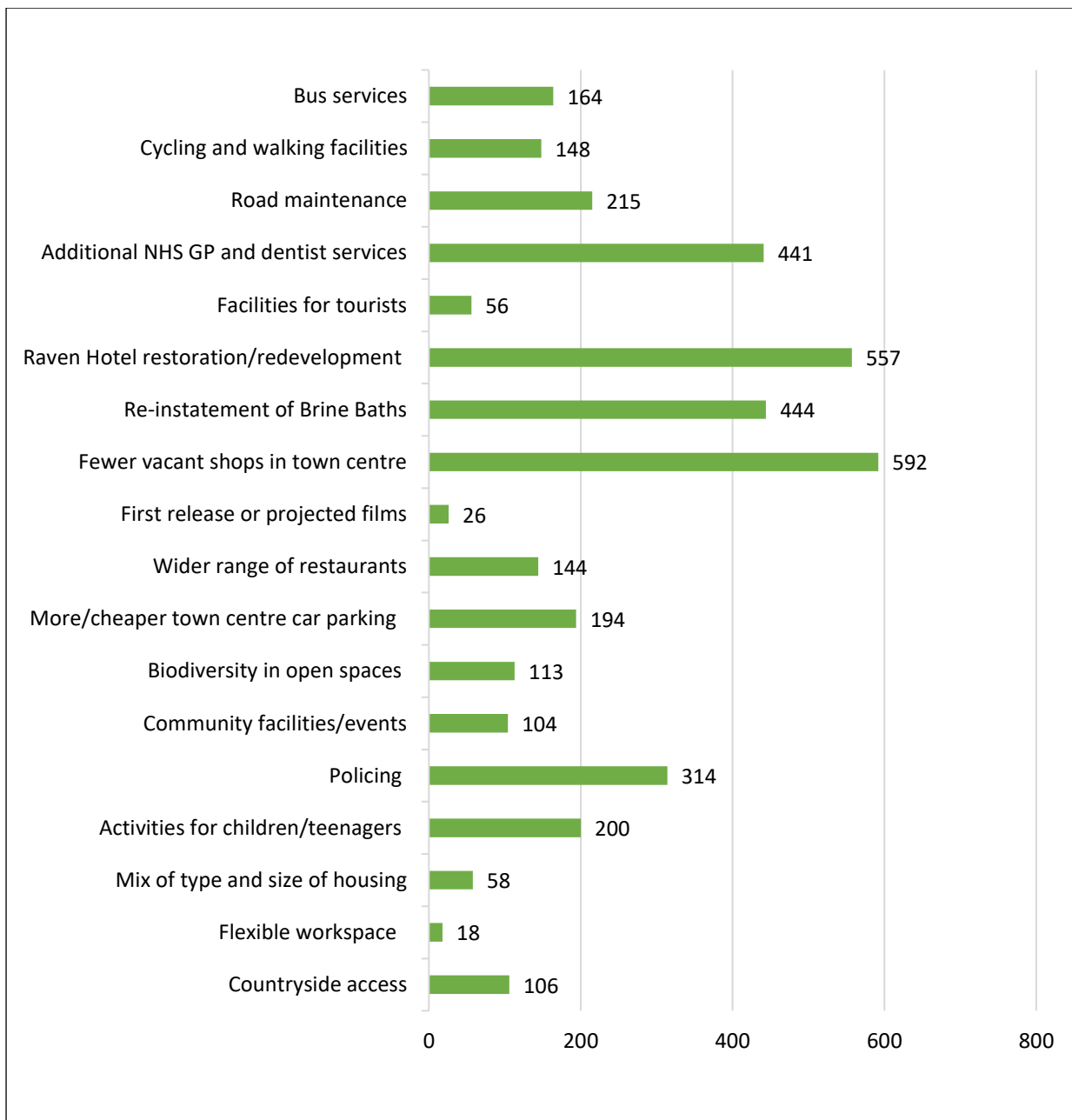
Question 4: From the list below, what are the TOP 5 things that you'd like to see improved or provided?

	No.	%		No.	%
Bus services	164	21%	Wider range of restaurants	144	18%
Facilities for cycling and walking	148	19%	Town centre car parking – more/cheaper	194	25%
Road maintenance	215	27%	Managing open spaces for biodiversity	113	14%
Additional NHS GP and dentist services	441	56%	More community facilities and events	104	13%
Facilities for tourists	56	7%	Policing of anti-social behaviours	314	40%
Restoration/redevelopment of The Raven Hotel	557	71%	Activities for children and teenagers	200	25%
Re-instatement of Brine Baths	444	56%	Mix of type and size of housing	58	7%
Fewer vacant shops in town centre	592	75%	Flexible workspace for homeworkers	18	2%
Opportunities to see first release or projected films	26	3%	Countryside access	106	13%

Percentage base = 792

- Top priorities for improvement and provision were fewer vacant shops in the town centre and for the restoration and redevelopment of The Raven Hotel. These two options were selected by 75% and 71% of respondents respectively.
- These were followed by the re-instatement of the Brine Baths, additional NHS GP and dentist provision (both 56%), and the policing of anti-social behaviour (40%).
- Other options chosen by around one-quarter of respondents were road maintenance, town centre car parking, and activities for children and teenagers.
- Improving sustainable travel by bus, cycling and walking was a priority for around one-fifth of respondents.

Question 4, continued/



- Options for a wider range of restaurants, managing open spaces for biodiversity, more community facilities, and access to the countryside were selected by between 13% and 18% of respondents.
- Relatively low priority (single figure %s) was attached to more or improved facilities for tourists, mix of size and type of housing, opportunities to see first release or projected films, and flexible workspace for homeworkers.

Housing

The questionnaire asked about priorities for the size, type, and design of new housing in the Neighbourhood Area. It explained that whilst land within the town boundary was largely built-up, new housing was proposed by the South Worcestershire Development Plan and could also be allocated by the Neighbourhood Plan. Planning applications on other sites and for ‘householder development’ such as extensions and garages would continue over the plan period.

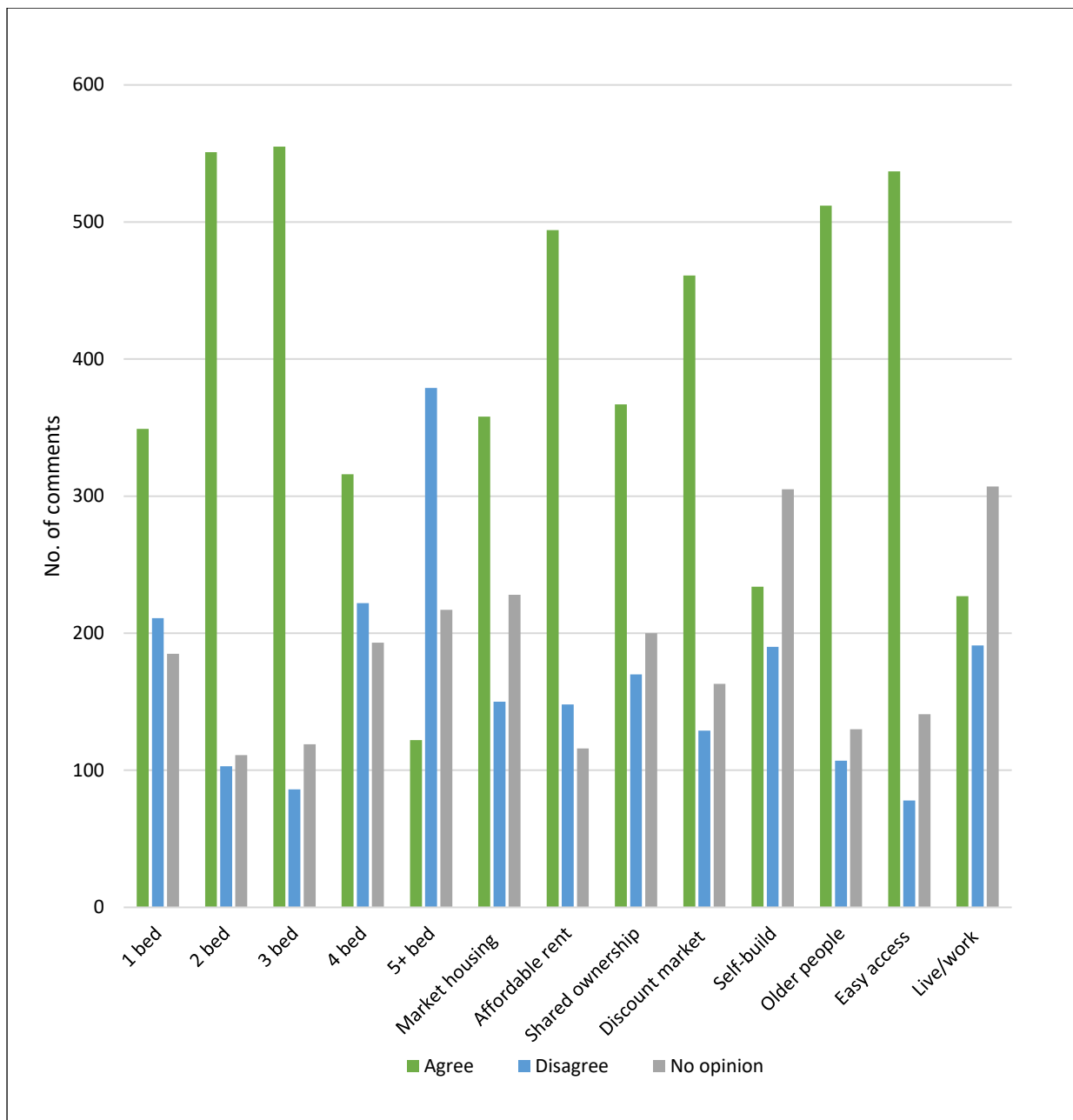
Question 5: What size and type of new housing do you think the town should have during the lifetime of the plan – up to 2041?

	Agree		Disagree		No opinion	
Small homes – 1 bedroom	349	44%	211	27%	185	23%
Small homes – 2 bedrooms	551	70%	103	13%	111	14%
Medium homes – 3 bedrooms	555	70%	86	11%	119	15%
Large homes – 4 bedrooms	316	40%	222	28%	193	24%
Large homes – 5 or more bedrooms	122	15%	379	48%	217	27%
Market housing for purchase and rent	358	45%	150	19%	228	29%
Affordable housing for rent	494	62%	148	19%	116	15%
Affordable housing – shared ownership	367	46%	170	21%	200	25%
Affordable housing – discounted market sale e.g. First Homes	461	58%	129	16%	163	21%
Self-build	234	30%	190	24%	305	39%
Supported/ sheltered accommodation for older people	512	65%	107	14%	130	16%
Adapted/ easy access homes (e.g. bungalows)	537	68%	78	10%	141	18%
Live/ work homes with workshops/ offices	227	29%	191	24%	307	39%

Percentage base = 792

- Small and medium sized homes with 2 or 3 bedrooms were strongly favoured by 70% of respondents, this being the highest level of agreement in the question responses. These were followed by homes with 1- and 4 bedrooms, with 44% and 40% in agreement respectively (along with notable levels of disagreement at 27% and 28%).
- There was relatively little support for larger homes (5 bedroom and above), which were opposed by 48% of respondents with only 15% in agreement.

Question 5, continued/



- In terms of tenure, there was significant support for affordable homes in various forms. Affordable housing for rent was most preferred, by 62%, closely followed by discounted market sales such as First Homes (58%). Respondents preferred all types of affordable housing above market housing, which was supported by 45%.
- There was strong agreement for housing suitable for older households such as adapted/easy access homes e.g. bungalows (68%) and supported/sheltered accommodation (65%).
- The options for self-build and for live/work homes attracted some support (30% and 29% agreed respectively) as well as the highest levels of 'no opinion' (both 39%).

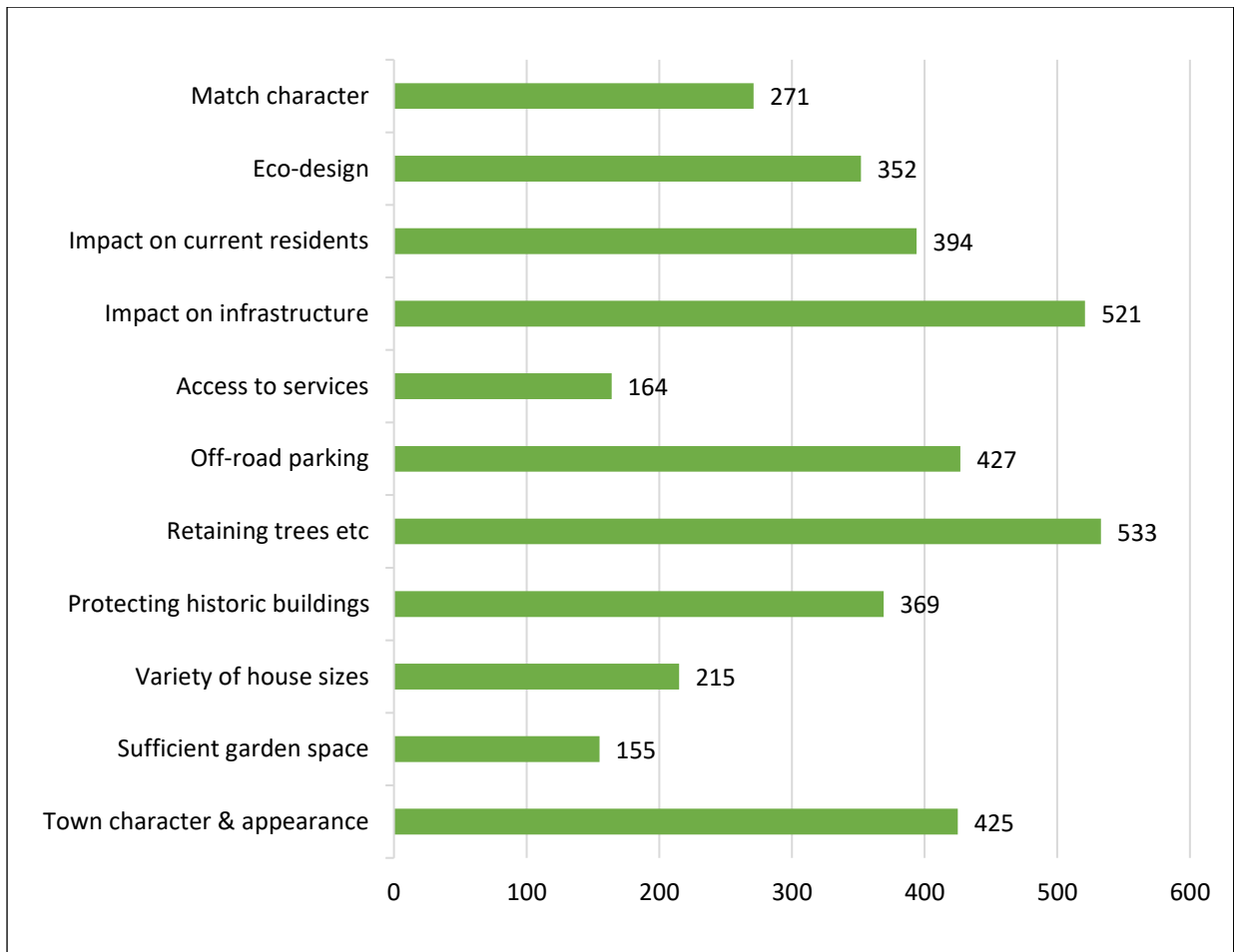
Question 6: What are your TOP 5 planning priorities for new dwellings?

	No.	%
Designed to match the character of neighbouring development	271	34%
Sustainable, eco-design including electric vehicle charging points and provision for solar panels	352	44%
Acceptable impact on amenity of current residents	394	50%
Acceptable impact on surrounding roads, other infrastructure and local services	521	66%
Within walking or cycling distance of play areas, local services and public transport	164	21%
Sufficient off-road parking	427	54%
Retaining trees and other important landscape features	533	67%
Ensuring historic buildings and features are protected	369	47%
A variety of house sizes	215	27%
Sufficient garden space	155	20%
Maintaining the overall character and appearance of the town	425	54%

Percentage base = 792

- Top priorities to be addressed in providing new housing, selected by two-thirds of respondents, were retaining trees and other landscape features on development sites and for schemes to have an acceptable impact on infrastructure and services.
- More than half of respondents also chose maintaining the overall character and appearance of the town, the provision of sufficient off-road parking, and an acceptable impact on the amenities enjoyed by existing residents.
- There was also support for the protection of historic buildings and features, sustainable eco-designs, and for new development to match the character of its neighbours.
- Providing a variety of house sizes, being within walking/cycling distance of local services/public transport and having sufficient garden space were ranked as of relatively lower priority.

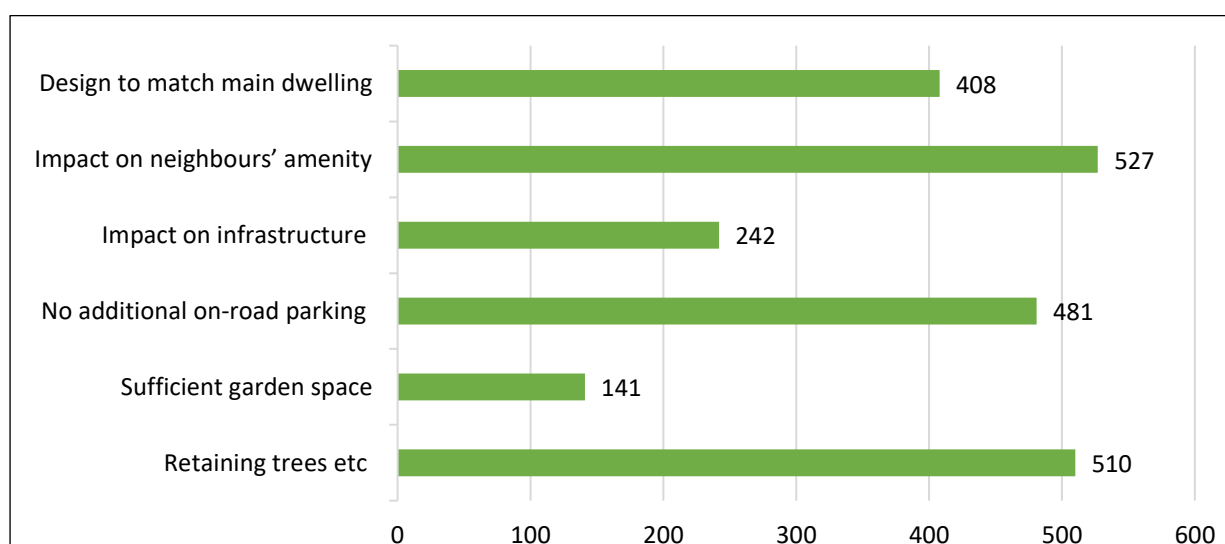
Question 6, continued/



Question 7: What are your TOP 3 planning priorities for ‘householder development’ such as extensions and garages?

	No.	%
Design to match the original main dwelling	408	52%
Acceptable impact on neighbours’ amenity	527	67%
Impact on infrastructure and local services	242	31%
No additional on-road parking due to loss of on-site parking	481	61%
Enough remaining garden space	141	18%
Avoiding loss of trees or other natural features	510	64%

Percentage base = 792



- Top priorities in considering householder development were an acceptable impact on neighbours’ amenity, the retention of trees and other landscape features, and for there to be no additional on-road parking because of the loss of on-site parking to the scheme. These options were selected by around two-thirds of respondents.
- Over half of respondents wanted the design of any new development to match the original main dwelling.
- The potential impact on infrastructure and local services from householder development was of concern to just under one-third of respondents, contrasting with replies to Q6 where it ranked second in priority at 66%. This may be because householder schemes are unlikely to lead to significant impacts on infrastructure or services, due to their small-scale nature.
- Whether there was enough remaining garden space post-development was of least concern to respondents (18%, similar to the responses to Q6).

Community facilities

The questionnaire explained that the Neighbourhood Plan would protect existing facilities and guide new provision, including by working with partners, informed by community priorities. Funds from new development in the town could be used to deliver improvements.

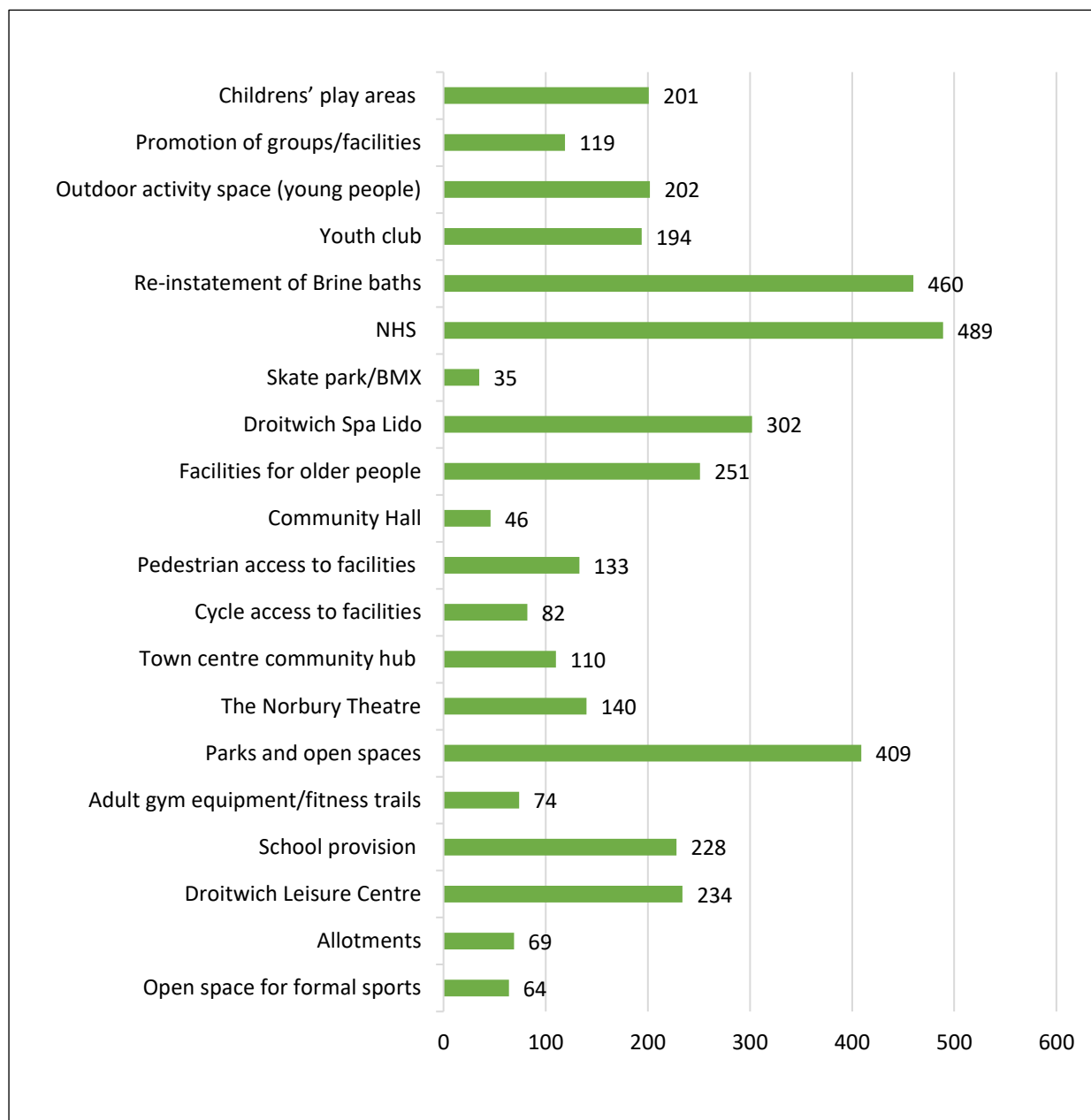
Question 8: What are your **TOP 5** priorities for improving community facilities in Droitwich Spa?

	No.	%		No.	%
Childrens' play areas & equipment including for older children	201	25%	Access to facilities by foot	133	17%
Co-ordinated promotion of existing groups and facilities	119	15%	Access to facilities by cycle including secure cycle parking	82	10%
Outdoor activity space for young people	202	26%	Community hub in town centre	110	14%
Youth club	194	24%	The Norbury Theatre	140	18%
Re-instatement of Brine baths	460	58%	Parks and open spaces	409	52%
Medical provision - NHS GP/dentist, pharmacy	489	62%	Adult gym equipment/fitness trails on open spaces	74	9%
Skate park/BMX	35	4%	School provision	228	29%
Droitwich Spa Lido	302	38%	Droitwich Leisure Centre	234	30%
Facilities for older people: day centre, drop-in health care	251	32%	Allotments	69	9%
Community Hall	46	6%	Open space for formal sports	64	8%

Percentage base = 792

- Top priorities for improvements to community facilities were for better NHS GP/dentist and pharmacy provision, re-instatement of the Brine baths, and parks and open spaces. These options were selected by over half of respondents.
- A second group of priorities focussed on specific age groups and on existing facilities in the town. The needs of younger people were acknowledged in calls for improved school provision (29%), whilst around one-quarter of respondents called for better childrens' play

Question 8, continued/



areas/equipment (including for older children), outdoor activity spaces for young people, and a youth club. Better facilities for older people such as a day centre and drop-in health care were supported by 32%. Improvements to Droitwich Spa Lido were a priority for 38%, with 30% identifying the Leisure Centre and 18% the Norbury Theatre.

- The co-ordinated promotion of existing groups and facilities was selected by 15%, a similar level to those supporting a community hub in the town centre (14%).
- The provision of adult gym equipment/fitness trails on open spaces, open spaces for formal sports, the Community Hall, and a skate park/BMX facility were of relatively lower priority.

Question 9: If you have any other suggestions for how the Town Council could improve community life in Droitwich Spa, please tell us below.

Comments were made by 297 respondents (37%). Suggestions were made across many areas of community life in the town. There was overlap with replies to Q2 notably in relation to housing growth and infrastructure. Responses focussed around five main themes: services and facilities; travel and transport; town centre regeneration; public realm; and communications and consultation.

Many suggestions were made under the first theme of **services and facilities**. Respondents pointed to a need for *'more facilities for young people'*, such as a youth club. Provision by and for the community was also suggested, such as a community hub in the town centre. Modern indoor recreational and leisure facilities for young people and families should be provided, including cinema, climbing wall, and bowling alley, as well as more support for the arts: *'a better arts space – update the Norbury to be more like No 8 Pershore'*. Proposed outdoor facilities included allotments, improved and additional children's play areas, basketball court, outdoor table tennis, and gym equipment. Other requirements were for improved visibility of policing to tackle anti-social behaviour, a hotel, and allotments.

Respondents re-iterated concerns that there should be no more new housing *'until infrastructure, GP's and hospitals can cope'* alongside continued calls for health and education provision to be expanded to address existing demands.

Under **travel and transport** a wide range of suggestions were made. The situation at the Copcut junction/roundabout again featured: *'if you saw the chaos created by Copcut traffic lights yesterday the last thing you should be considering is more housing!'*. There were calls for better provision for people with disabilities and reduced mobility including dropped kerbs and parking bays; improvements for pedestrians and cyclists including repairing pavement surfaces and installing road crossings to aid access to the town centre, Lido Park and the railway station; and for more bus services including in the evening. Respondents also wanted to see *'better control of speeding in residential roads'*, *'adequate off road parking'* and for traffic speeds and parking around schools to be better managed. Charges for public car parks should be reviewed or dispensed with to promote usage in the town centre and elsewhere: *'provide free parking near facilities ... crazy charging for parking in Lido Park on Sundays'*.

For the third theme of **town centre regeneration**, there were calls for *'new shops not just cafes and charity shops – independent stores to interest people in town'*, with suggestions that business rates be reduced to attract small businesses and use be made of empty shops. Others sought a wider choice of restaurants and pubs, including venues such as a jazz club or cocktail lounge, *'sophisticated, diverse additions for adults of all ages without disturbing the peaceful atmosphere of our community'*. There were suggestions for pedestrianisation to *'improve the users experience in walking, shopping, socialising in the town centre'*, such as the High Street, where *'there is little opportunity to stand and appreciate the beautiful architecture if there are cars in the way and the pavements are far too narrow'*. Respondents stressed the need to progress the re-instatement of the Brine baths and the restoration/redevelopment of The Raven Hotel, emphasising this was *'a*

huge issue [which] must be addressed ... the whole character of the town is at risk if this is not addressed properly'.

On the **public realm** respondents called for action to tackle and remove litter and graffiti, which *'is really getting out of hand and giving a very poor impression to visitors'*, for better street and path lighting, and more tree planting. There were also calls to *'crack down on criminal activity and drunk and disorderliness'*, so that it was safe to walk at night.

There were mixed suggestions on public art, with some seeking *'contemporary art installations'* in open spaces and others of the view that *'murals and Arts Network projects are an acquired taste and sometimes diminish the natural environment ... street art is not an attractive feature, lowers the tone of the community and encourages graffiti'*. Other suggestions referred to above also contribute to this theme, including repairing pavements in the town centre and elsewhere in the town.

The final theme addressed **communications and consultation**. Greater involvement in decision-making was sought: *'be open and encourage public involvement'*, *'the Town Council should ask and listen to the views of Droitwich people'*. There was a need to *'improve communication and advertising of community facilities and events'*, with suggestions for public council meetings to be streamed and archived, for a free newspaper such as a *'Droitwich Spa magazine – articles, adverts, newsletter'*, continued use of notice boards and information centre, and for a community website and more involvement in local social media. Amongst comments on the Town Council itself, one respondent reported that *'In general I feel the Town Council balance a lot of different aspects for Droitwich for the benefit of various backgrounds and age groups, keep up the good work'*.

Droitwich Spa town centre

This question asked for priorities on ways to help regenerate the town centre by guiding new development and by supporting work to encourage inward investment.

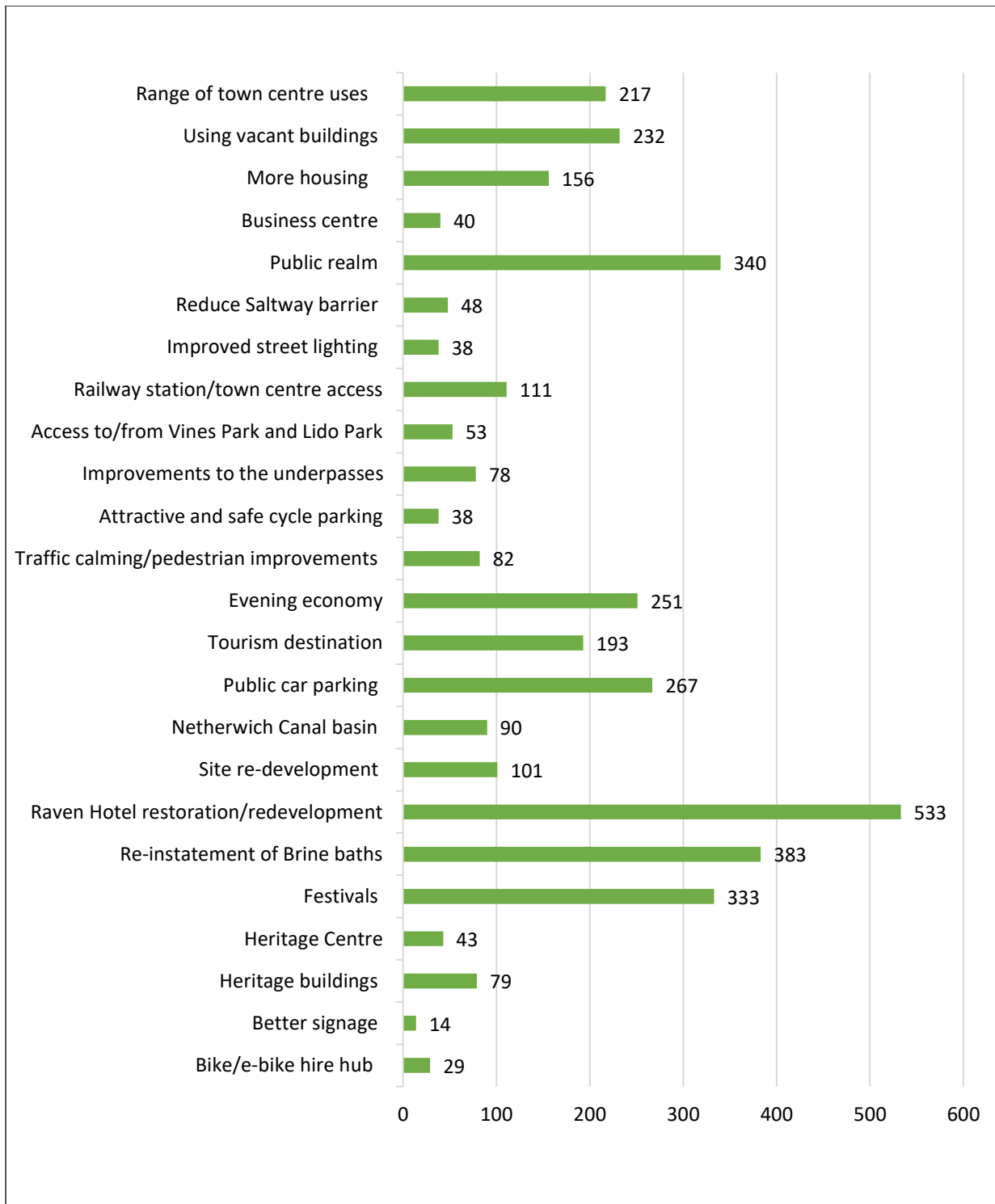
Question 10: Thinking about Droitwich Spa town centre, what are the TOP 5 things that you'd like to see?

	No.	%		No.	%
A wider range of town centre uses	217	27%	Encouraging the evening economy	251	32%
Use of vacant buildings for 'pop-up' events or community	232	29%	Promoting the town centre as a tourist destination	193	24%
More housing – using vacant upper floors and new development	156	20%	Reduced charges or free public car parking	267	34%
Business centre – flexible, managed workspace	40	5%	Re-developing the Netherwich Canal basin (see also Q 11)	90	11%
Improving the public realm generally*	340	43%	Re-developing other sites to provide town centre uses and housing	101	13%
Reducing the barrier posed by Saltway for pedestrian and cyclists	48	6%	Restoration/redevelopment of The Raven Hotel	533	67%
Improved street lighting	38	5%	Re-instatement of Brine baths	383	48%
Better walking/cycling access between railway station and centre	111	14%	Continuing festivals (e.g. Saltfest) and street markets	333	42%
Better walking/cycling access to/from Vines Park and Lido Park	53	7%	Expanded/improved Heritage Centre	43	5%
Improvements to the underpasses	78	10%	Foster contribution of heritage buildings to the character of centre	79	10%
Attractive and safe cycle parking	38	5%	Better signage for pedestrians and cyclists including heritage features	14	2%
Traffic calming and pedestrian improvements - High Street, Friar Street, St. Andrews St.	82	10%	Introduction of hire hub for bikes and e-bikes	29	4%

Percentage base = 792

* publicly owned streets, pathways, underpasses, right of ways, publicly accessible open spaces and public buildings. Improvements could include more landscaping, such as planters; improved pavements and road surfaces; better street lighting; more seating.

Question 10, continued/



- The restoration and redevelopment of the Raven Hotel and the re-instatement of the Brine baths were the top priorities, being chosen by over two-thirds and almost one-half of respondents respectively. These priorities are in line with responses to earlier questions.

Question 10, continued/

- Improving the public realm generally in the town centre and a continuation of festivals and street markets were priorities for just over two-fifth of respondents. More specific improvements which would contribute to the public realm were less well-supported: underpasses (10%), street lighting (5%), and better signage for pedestrians and cyclists (2%). Fostering the contribution of heritage buildings to town centre character was a priority for 10%.
- In terms of transport and travel in and around the town centre, just over one-third of respondents favoured reduced charges for, or free, public car parking.
- In contrast, improvements to encourage walking and cycling received less support. Priorities were for better access on foot or by cycle between the railway station and the town centre (14%) and for traffic calming and pedestrian improvements in High Street, Friar Street, and St. Andrews Street (10%). Better walking/cycling access to/from Vines Park and Lido Park was favoured by 7% and reducing the barrier posed by Saltway for pedestrians and cyclists by 6%.
- Initiatives specifically aimed at boosting cycling were supported by around 5% (cycle parking and a bike hire hub).
- In terms of land uses, almost one-third of respondents thought that the evening economy should be encouraged, with similar proportions supporting a wider range of town centre uses and the use of vacant buildings for 'pop-up' events and/or community uses. Around one-quarter agreed that the town centre should be promoted as a tourist destination.
- Re-development to provide town centre uses and housing was supported by 13%, with 11% agreeing with re-development of the Netherwich Canal Basin. The provision of new housing on vacant upper floors and through new development was favoured by 20%.
- More specific options attracting less support were for the establishment of a business centre providing flexible/managed workspace, and an expanded/improved Heritage Centre.

Netherwich Canal basin

The Netherwich Canal basin is a prominent site on the edge of the town centre, important to the heritage of Droitwich Spa. The questionnaire explained that in the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) it was proposed for development for housing, retail and leisure purposes. This section of the questionnaire asked for views on how the site should be developed, to inform a Neighbourhood Plan policy adding more detail to and supporting the SWDP allocation.

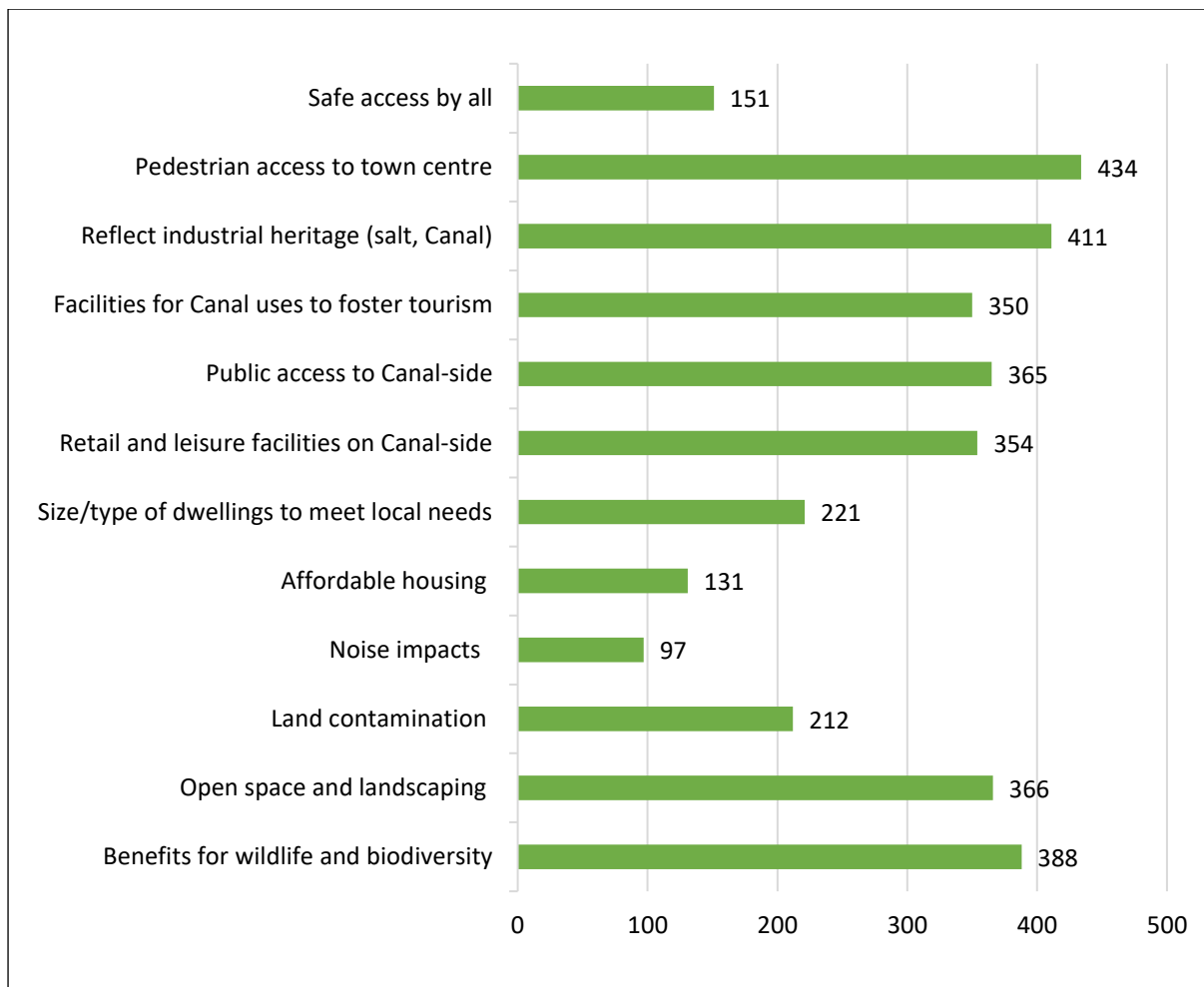
Question 11: What are your TOP 5 planning priorities for the development of the Netherwich Canal basin?

	No.	%
Show in a Transport Statement how the site can be safely accessed by all	151	19%
Enable safe and direct pedestrian access to town centre	434	55%
Reflect the industrial heritage based on salt production and the Canal in scheme design	411	52%
Provide supporting facilities for Canal uses, to foster tourism	350	44%
Enable public access to the Canal-side	365	46%
Provide retail and leisure facilities on the Canal-side	354	45%
Provide dwellings of a size and type which meet local housing needs	221	28%
Provide affordable housing in line with South Worcestershire Development Plan	131	17%
Address possible noise impacts on new residents from Saltway and railway line	97	12%
Investigate any land contamination issues from previous uses	212	27%
Include open space and landscaping using native species	366	46%
Deliver benefits to wildlife and biodiversity	388	49%

Percentage base = 792

- Respondents prioritised the following options for how the Netherwich Canal Basin should be developed:
 - a safe and direct pedestrian access to the town centre (55%)
 - the development to reflect the industrial heritage of the site, based on salt production and the role of the Canal (52%)
 - open space and landscaping (46%), including delivering benefits to wildlife and biodiversity (49%)

Question 11, continued/



- a publicly accessible Canal-side (46%) with retail, leisure (45%) and Canal facilities, to foster tourism (44%).
- In contrast to the emphasis placed on retail, leisure, and Canal-oriented uses, the provision of new housing of an appropriate size and type was a priority for just over one-quarter of respondents, and affordable housing was supported by 17%.
- Just over one-quarter of respondents also agreed that a potential legacy of land contamination would need to be investigated. Demonstrating that the site could be safely accessed by all and assessing possible noise impacts on future residents from Saltway and the railway line were seen as of relatively lower priority.

Question 12: If you have any other suggestions for how the Netherwich Canal basin should be developed, please tell us below.

Suggestions were made by 126 respondents (19%). Four main themes emerged: site uses; public realm; access; and open space.

There were varying suggestions as to the **appropriate mix of uses** to be provided, with comments querying whether retail and housing were suitable uses (notwithstanding the SWDP allocation). Comments addressed:

- Community uses and meeting spaces, including organised events, youth facilities, and bonfire/fireworks.
- Retail and leisure. Whilst there was some agreement that shops and leisure attractions such as Canal-side restaurants and bars were appropriate, others feared that providing retail here would be to the detriment of the town centre: *'if there is to be any retail development, it must not compete with the town centre or prejudice the chances of retailers moving into vacant town centre units. Any retail should be small-scale and limited to uses associated with the canal basin e.g. chandlery'*.
- Tourism and heritage. Linked to retail/leisure uses as above and including museum, visitors centre, hotel, and guesthouses: *'create a heritage trail and enhanced visitor facility to encompass the rich history of Droitwich and the canal network'*. There should also be better facilities for users of the Canal including visitors.
- Housing. As with retail, whilst there was some agreement with new housing being provided to include affordable dwellings and smaller (2-to-3-bedroom properties), there was also a view that new dwellings should not be included in the overall mix of uses: *'do we need even more homes in Droitwich. Make this a heritage centre relating to the history of Droitwich – make it a tourist attraction'*.

In relation to the **public realm** theme, suggestions included outdoor seating/street furniture for pedestrians, dogwalkers and cyclists; areas for open-air entertainment; a safe launching and retrieval zone for local model enthusiasts; safety features at the Canal-side; and public toilets. The overall aim should be to *'provide interest and access for all ages, remembering over 60's are keenly interested in merging past + future'*.

Suggestions on the third theme of **access** to the site focussed on better links between the town centre, the railway station, and the site, with a need for *'an easy way to walk between the town centre and the area'*, aided by suitable signage. Parking should be provided, and road access be safe and not add to congestion.

The final theme dealt with retention and improvement of the area as a green **open space**, avoiding over-development as *'it is a green space near the town centre which acts as the lungs of the town'*. There were also suggestions that the site remain undeveloped: *'it should not be built on at all but developed into a leisure/nature area in keeping with the surrounding canal and parkland area'*, including benefitting wildlife/biodiversity and enabling access by towpath into open countryside.

Economic Development

This question asked about priorities for new economic development in the town.

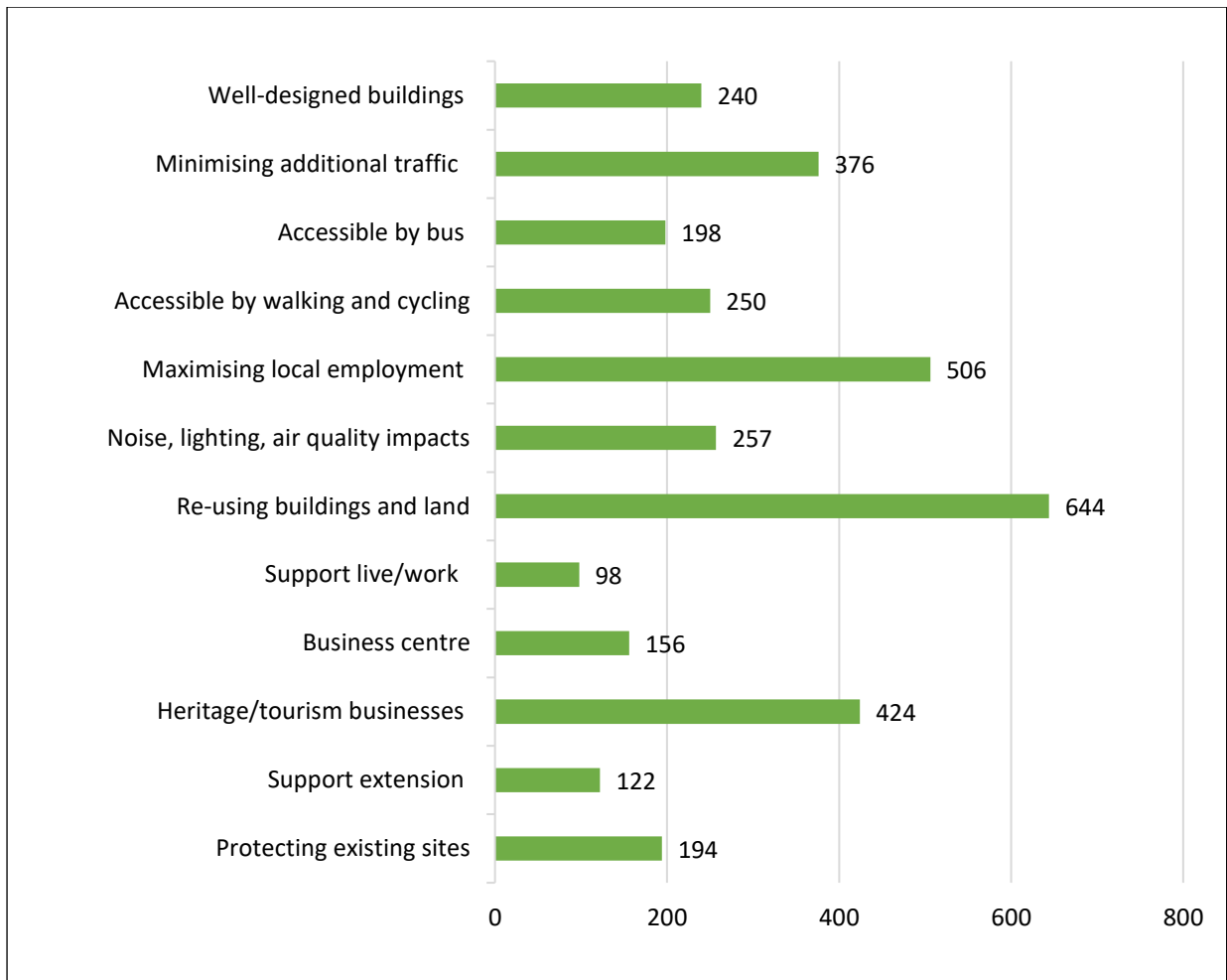
Question 13: What are your **TOP 5** priorities for economic/ business development in the town?

	No.	%		No.	%
Well-designed new buildings for employment uses	240	30%	Re-using existing buildings and previously-developed land	644	81%
Minimising increases in traffic	376	47%	Supporting the development of live/work premises	98	12%
Accessible by bus	198	25%	Establishing a business centre with managed, flexible workspace	156	20%
Accessible by walking and cycling, including provision for cycle parking	250	32%	Businesses linked to town heritage, supporting tourism e.g. hotel, Brine baths, canal	424	54%
Maximising local employment opportunities	506	64%	Supporting the extension of existing premises	122	15%
Minimising impacts from noise or lighting, or on air quality	257	32%	Protecting existing employment land from changes of use	194	24%

Percentage base = 792

- Top priorities for new economic development supported by a majority of respondents were to re-use existing buildings and previously-developed land (81%), maximise local employment opportunities (64%), and for businesses to be linked to the heritage of Droitwich Spa and supporting tourism (hotel, Brine baths, Canal).
- Options for transport and travel favoured minimising increases in traffic from new development over its accessibility by bus, walking and cycling.
- Around one-third of respondents supported well-designed new buildings and minimising impacts from noise, lighting, or on air quality.
- Protecting existing employment sites and land from changes of use was a priority for one-quarter of respondents.
- Relatively little weight was given to the establishment of a business centre, though it attracted more support here (20%) than when canvassed in a town centre context (Q 10, when it was favoured by only 5%).
- Conversely, less weight was given to live/ work premises in replies to Q 13 than to Q5 (where 29% were in agreement).

Question 13, continued/



Environment

The questionnaire explained that community support for environmental protection was important in ensuring development fully respects the local environment.

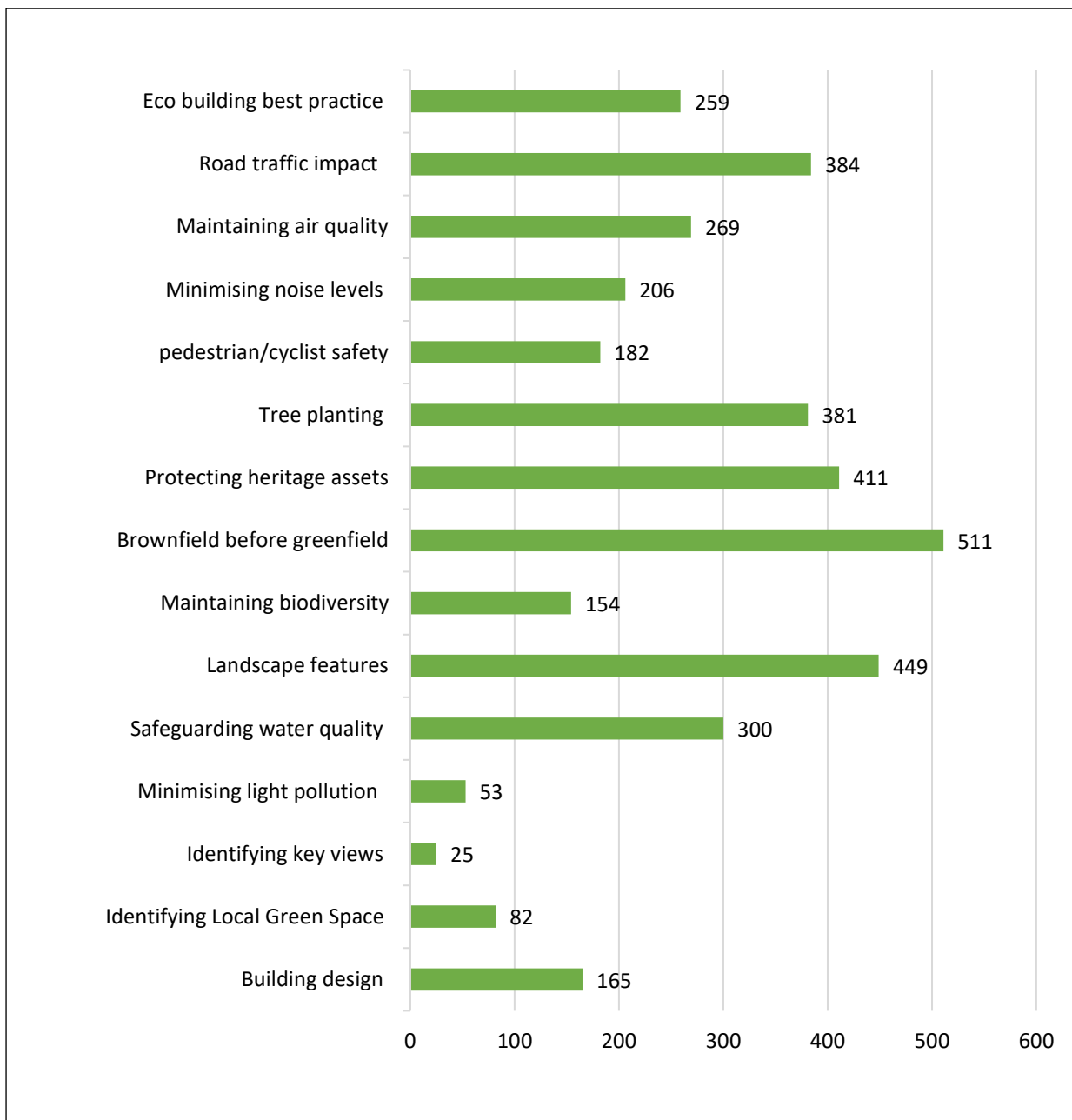
Question 14: In minimising the adverse impact of new development on the environment, what **TOP 5** things are most important to you?

	No.	%		No.	%
Eco building best practice (e.g renewables, passive house)	259	33%	Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity	154	19%
Impact on amount and type of traffic	384	48%	Keeping existing landscape features (trees, hedgerows, ponds and streams)	449	57%
Maintaining air quality	269	34%	Safeguarding water quality in local watercourses	300	38%
Minimising increases in noise	206	26%	Minimising light pollution	53	7%
Impact on safety for pedestrians and cyclists	182	23%	Identifying key views (see Q 15)	25	3%
Tree planting to offset carbon emissions from new development	381	48%	Identifying Local Green Space (see Q 16)	82	10%
Protecting historic buildings and other heritage features	411	52%	Ensuring new buildings are well-designed (see Q 17)	165	21%
Developing brownfield sites before greenfield	511	65%			

Percentage base = 792

- In minimising the impact of new development on the environment, respondents prioritised the use of brownfield sites before greenfield land; retaining existing landscape features on development sites such as trees, hedgerows, ponds and streams; and protecting historic buildings and other heritage features. These three options were all supported by over half of respondents.
- Other priorities were for the planting of trees to offset carbon emissions from new development, and the impact of new building on the amount and type of road traffic (both 48%). The impact on the safety of pedestrian and cyclists in contrast was a priority for only 23%.
- The use of best environmental practice was favoured by one-third of respondents, with 21% wanting to see well-designed new buildings.

Question 14, continued/



- Reducing the environmental impacts of new development by safeguarding water and air quality were supported by 38% and 34% of respondents respectively, with support also for minimising noise pollution (26%). In contrast minimising light pollution was seen as of less importance (7%).
- Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity was a priority for 19%, with others supporting the designation of Local Green Space (10%) and to a lesser extent key views (3%).

Question 15: The Neighbourhood Plan will be able to identify locally important views, for example of the surrounding countryside, for protection. If there are any such views that you think should be protected, please describe them below.

Suggestions were made by 158 respondents (20%). Two main themes emerged: **general suggestions** for the type of feature that should be protected, and **specific recommendations** as to locally important views.

In terms of **general suggestions**, respondents identified many aspects of the environment in and around the Neighbourhood Area including green spaces/parks, wildlife, green belt, countryside around the town in all directions, canals, towpaths and waterways, villages and hamlets, views of distant hills from higher ground (e.g. Rebekah, Spring Meadows and Yew Tree Hill open spaces).

There were many **specific recommendations**, comprising features within the town which were seen as part of the history of Droitwich Spa and its development, and other aspects linked to the surrounding countryside (and which are mostly outside the Neighbourhood Area).

Recommendations included:

- Vines Park and Lido Park (including view to bandstand from St Peter's Church)/King Georges playing field.
- Droitwich Spa signal box and adjacent rail infrastructure bridging the canal as seen from town centre.
- Canal basin.
- High Street.
- The Raven Hotel and other listed buildings.
- St Richards House and gardens.
- Views from town of St Augustine's (Dodderhill) church.
- St Peter's church.
- Westlands/Westwood community woods.
- Yew Tree Hill Farm/Yew Tree Hill water tower.
- Views from top of Primslan/Newland.
- Gateways/approaches to the town e.g. Chateau Impney, Westlands, Copcut, Droitwich Woods.
- Chateau Impney (including from scout hut).
- Views of the Malvern Hills, Abberley and the Severn valley.
- TV masts at Wychbold.
- Hanbury Church.
- Views from Pulley Lane area from top of hill and Copcut Lane, and looking south towards Fernhill Heath and Worcester.
- Hadzor including towards Saltway/Hadzor Hall.
- Hanbury Road.
- Gaudet Luce golf course.
- Salwarpe river valley.

- Oakley Woods.
- Views of countryside between Copcut and Martin Hussingtree.
- Westwood House.
- Gap between Droitwich and Hadzor.
- View from bridge at the Eagle and Sun.
- Hadley towards Wychbold/Client and Lickey Hills.
- Newland Common.
- Oakley Hill.
- Salwarpe.

Local Green Space

This question asked about possible areas of land to be designated as Local Green Space, explaining that such sites must be special to the community and have a particular local significance – for example, because of their beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity, or wildlife value. Local Green Space must also be close to the community served and local in character.

Question 16: Are there any areas of land in the town that you think we should seek to protect by designation as Local Green Space? If so, please describe them below and explain why you think they are significant.

Suggestions were made by 249 respondents (31%). As with Q15, two main themes emerged: **general suggestions** for land that should be protected as Local Green Space, and **specific recommendations**.

General suggestions were made that all existing parks, open spaces including in housing areas, school playing fields, woodlands, surrounding countryside including to the south (Salwarpe, Martin Hussingtree, Fernhill Heath), and canals/towpaths should be protected as Local Green Space.

There were many **specific suggestions**, including some outside the Neighbourhood Area. Suggestions included:

- Vines Park and Lido Park/St Peter's Fields.
- Canal basin.
- Canal/Vines Lane/St. Augustine's church.
- The Raven gardens.
- Land alongside railway line inc. woodland between line and Ombersley Way.
- Chawson Valley playing field.
- Steynors Park.
- Land by Emmanuel Church, Chawson.
- Yew Tree Hill open spaces inc. Rebekah Gardens.
- Open land adjacent to M5.
- Celvestune Way woodland.
- Salwarpe Lane.
- Westwood House grounds.
- River Salwarpe valley/Leisure Centre/canal.
- Doorstep Green Spring Meadow, Primsland Way.
- Addyes Way/Bowden Green open space.
- Droitwich Community Woods.
- Land to the west of Westlands.
- Westwood open space.
- Wildlife Way/Squirrel Bank/Weasel Avenue.
- Woodland/open space at Copcut, Pulley Lane and Newland Common Road (Oakley Woods).

- Hadzor Hall, church and surrounding countryside to canal.
- Chateau Impney grounds.
- Golf courses.
- Land by reservoirs.
- Hanbury Hall, surrounding countryside.

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Building design

This question asked for priorities in terms of good design and attractive visual appearance, to help ensure that new housing and other development was well-designed and in keeping with the character of Droitwich Spa.

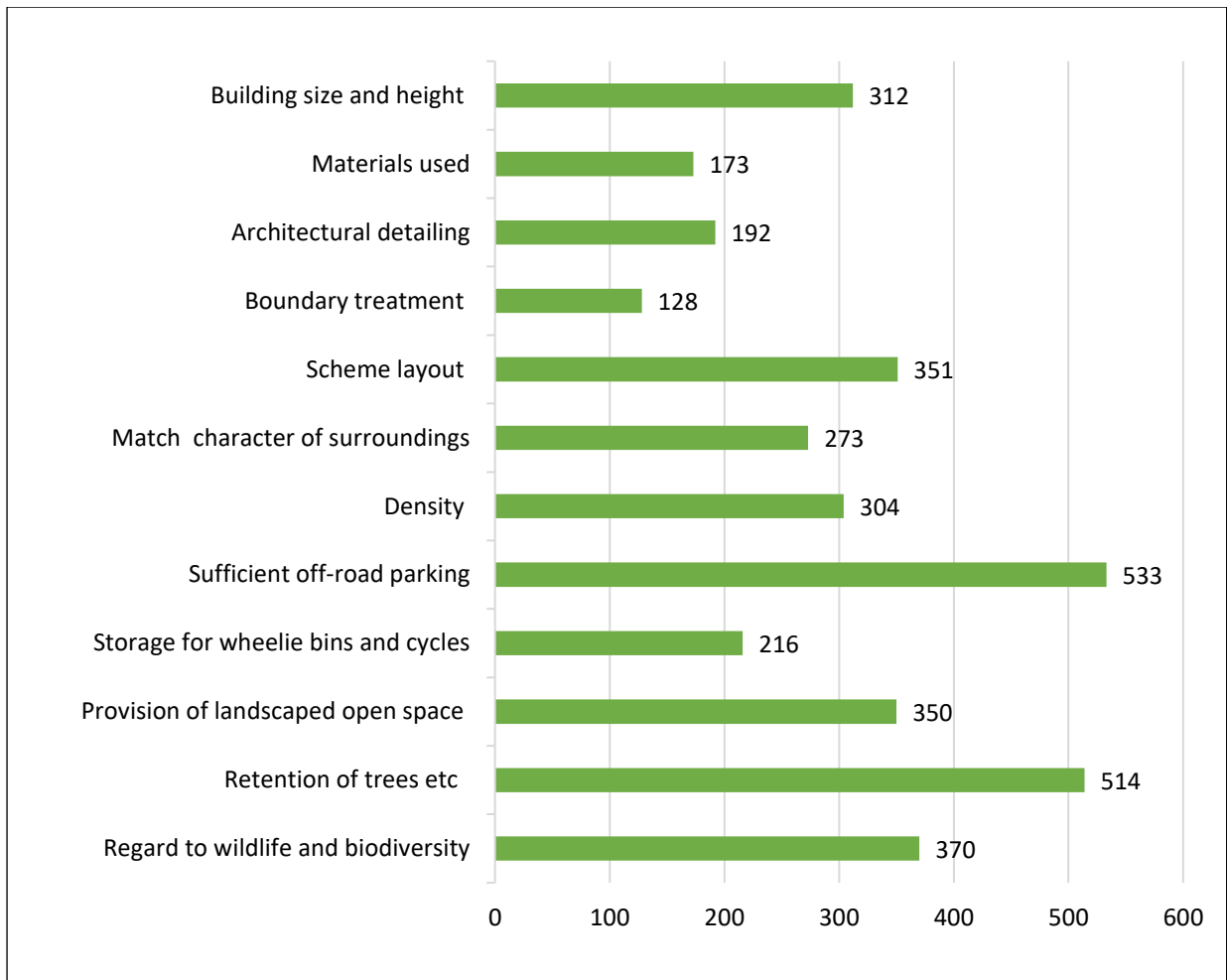
Question 17: What are your **TOP 5** priorities for the design of new development?

	No.	%
The overall size and height of new buildings	312	39%
Materials used	173	22%
Architectural detailing	192	24%
Boundary treatment (e.g. walls, fences and hedges)	128	16%
The layout of the scheme and how it relates to its surroundings and the street scene	351	44%
Whether new buildings match the overall character of adjoining development	273	34%
The density of new development compared to existing	304	38%
Sufficient off-road parking	533	67%
Suitable storage for wheelie bins and cycles	216	27%
Provision of landscaped open space around new buildings	350	44%
Retention of existing trees and other landscape features	514	65%
Regard to wildlife and biodiversity	370	47%

Percentage base = 792

- Top priorities for design were for sufficient off-road parking and the retention of trees and other landscape features. Both options were favoured by around two-thirds of respondents.
- Between half and two-fifths of respondents thought that wildlife and biodiversity, scheme layout including relationship to its surroundings and the street scene, the provision of landscaped open space, and the overall height, size and density of new buildings were important factors in considering design.
- One-third of respondents wanted new buildings to match the character of adjoining development.
- More specific aspects of building design were given lower priority (materials, detailing and boundary treatment).

Question 17, continued/



Infrastructure

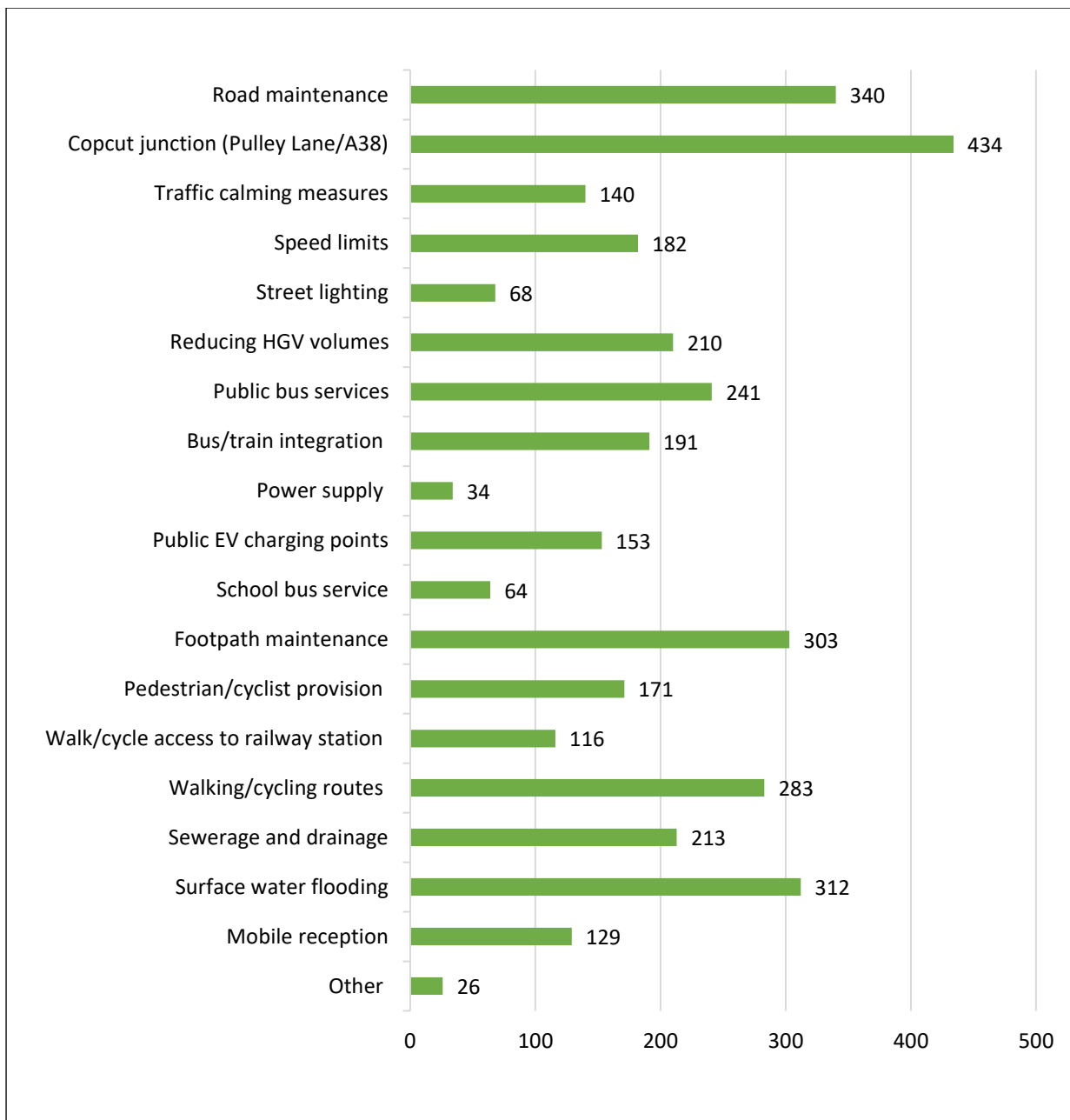
This section of the questionnaire asked for views on how the infrastructure in Droitwich Spa could be improved, to address existing issues and support new development. Infrastructure was defined as the basic services needed to support the town, e.g. road network, travel by bus, walking and cycling, power and water supply, drainage, broadband. It was explained that where issues fell outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, the results would be used to inform the Town Council's work with partner organisations such as the District and County Councils.

Question 18: Thinking about the town's infrastructure, what are the TOP 5 things to be improved?

	No.	%		No.	%
Road maintenance	340	43%	School bus service	64	8%
Copcut junction (Pulley Lane/A38)	434	55%	Footpath maintenance	303	38%
Traffic calming measures	140	18%	Provision for pedestrians and cyclists at key road junctions	171	22%
Extent and enforcement of traffic speed limits	182	23%	Walking and cycling access at railway station	116	15%
Street lighting	68	9%	Safe walking and/or cycling routes	283	36%
Reducing HGV volumes	210	27%	Sewerage and drainage	213	27%
Public bus services	241	30%	Surface water flooding	312	39%
Integration between bus and train services	191	24%	Mobile reception	129	16%
Power supply	34	4%	Other (please specify in Q 19 below)	26	3%
Number of publicly-available electric vehicle charging points	153	19%			

Percentage base = 792

Question 18, continued/



- The top priority for improvements to infrastructure, selected by over half of respondents, was the Copcut junction of the A38/Pulley Lane, followed by road maintenance generally (43%) and surface water flooding (39%).
- Provisions for pedestrians and cyclists were a concern, in terms of both footpath maintenance (38%) and the provision of safe walking/cycling routes (36%). The more specific issues of crossing key road junctions and accessing the railway station on foot or by bike were of less concern (22% and 15% respectively).

Question 18, continued/

- Adverse impacts arising from road traffic were mainly associated with HGV volumes, with just over one-quarter of respondents wanting these reduced. A similar proportion referred to the extent and enforcement of traffic speed limits, whilst 18% wanted to see more traffic calming.
- Improvements to bus services were sought by 30%, with 24% wanting to see better integration between bus and train services.
- The order of priority for the remaining options was:
 - sewerage/drainage
 - publicly-available electric vehicle (EV) charging points
 - mobile reception
 - street lighting
 - school bus service
 - power supply
 - other – reported in Q 19 below.

Question 19: If you have specific recommendations for improvements, please give details of what and where below.

Recommendations in response were made by 233 respondents (29%). There was overlap with replies to Q2 and Q9 notably in relation to travel and transport. Responses focussed around four main themes: walking and cycling (active travel); public transport; highways and traffic; and other infrastructure recommendations.

Many suggestions were made under the first theme of **walking and cycling**. Barriers to walking around the town meant that *'the lack of foot traffic ... to the leisure centre, railway station and other local amenities is astounding'*. Recommendations included: the maintenance and clearance of footways e.g. by cutting back encroaching hedges; footway widening; better lighting; stopping parking on pavements; more, improved surface road crossings, not underpasses; and improving underpasses.

There were many suggestions for specific locations where improvements were needed including adjacent to the BP petrol filling station/M&S Simply Food store on Worcester Road to enable safe crossing. Similarly, there should be better pedestrian access to health, transport, leisure and retail facilities (e.g. to Spa/Salters Medical Practice, railway station, Lido Park, Aldi/Lidl from Westlands): *'it is currently dangerous for pedestrians negotiating the roundabout at the A38 junction with the Kidderminster Road to get to Aldi'*.

Respondents saw traffic speeds throughout the town as a key risk to pedestrian safety and for vulnerable road users: *'try to cross Primsland Way during the morning or evening rush ... it is quite challenging when you are an able-bodied adult ... imagine if you are our neighbour on their mobility scooter with his dog'*. There should be *'better provision for disabled accessibility ... specifically for wheelchairs and mobility scooters who use the pavements'*.

Safety concerns limiting active travel extended to cycling, with respondents wanting to see *'provisions for safe cycling'*; *'make cycling and walking safer'*. Suggestions included to *'develop a footpath and cycleway network connecting where people live to amenities and work places'*, with *'cycle lanes [kept] as cycle lanes ... it is dangerous cycling when cars are parked there for dropping off school children'*.

Under the second theme of **public transport**, respondents made recommendations for additional and more frequent bus services, including improved and/or direct services to Birmingham, Worcester, and other local destinations such as Ombersley: *'ability to get buses to major locations including reinstatement of buses to Birmingham'*. There were also calls for evening bus services, both locally and to other destinations: *'the cut back to the 144 bus service [to Worcester] has had a detrimental effect on my freedom to travel'*. Ancillary facilities for bus users such as shelters also needed improving or providing.

The railway station needed *'improved facilities for car, pedestrian and cyclist access'*, *'more undercover standing space (canopies)'*, and *'integrated transport'*. There was also a requirement for

'improved parking provision (as well as active travel) at the railway station, perhaps using some of the old Union Lane site'.

One respondent summed up concerns around active travel and public transport as follows: *'it is very striking how car-centric such a small town is on a day to day basis ...[this] hugely impacts on the likability of the place as well [having] clear tangible effects on the overall disparity between the priorities given to pedestrians, cyclists, vulnerable road users and car drivers in particular. Fundamentally, Droitwich Spa is a place built for people and has much potential to encourage the very many people who (in many other towns and cities) would be ordinarily expecting to use reliable public transport, walk/cycle to local amenities and experience their neighbourhood up close'.*

For **highways and traffic**, respondents again referenced the Copcut junction and proposed a range of measures to aid traffic flow and alleviate congestion with its attendant pollution problems: *'Copcut/Pulley Lane junction has been a disaster for local residents (Chawson/Ridings) ... traffic routinely becomes stationary blocking back to Copcut roundabout ...'.*

Otherwise, respondents returned to safety concerns, focussing on traffic speeds and a need for reduced speed limits, enforcement, and traffic calming, which was *'desperately needed – car speed around our town is really dangerous'*; *'traffic calming measures are required on Pulley Lane, try riding a bike down there between 0630 and 0945 without fearing for your life'*. On speed limits there were calls for 20 mph limits, either on residential roads or throughout the town *'twenty is plenty – everywhere. Saves on traffic calming, road maintenance, traffic volumes, encourages cycling and pedestrians. Might save a life one day too!'*.

Under the final theme, **other infrastructure** recommendations addressed:

- medical – GP's, dentists.
- Education.
- Broadband.
- flooding and surface water drainage.
- The Raven Hotel.
- TV reception.

Many thanks for getting this far

Question 20: If you believe there are others matters relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan that you think we have missed, please tell us below.

Responses to this question were made by 178 respondents (22%). There was overlap with replies to the earlier open questions. Responses focussed around four main themes: the character of the town; housing growth and infrastructure; travel and transport; and the town centre.

The **character of the town** theme included concerns over loss or condition of key buildings, with calls to *'don't let go of our remaining heritage'*. New development should be carefully judged: *'It is important not to overdevelop Droitwich ... it is a spa town with a wonderful history and historic buildings ... too many of these buildings have been lost in the past e.g. Worcestershire Hotel, Brine Baths and Winter Garden'*. For other respondents, aspects of the public realm needed tackling, such as litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour.

There were suggestions for better maintenance of roadside verges and roundabouts, to include the planting of spring bulbs - *'this is a SPA town – make it look like one!'*, and initiatives aimed at promoting local history and encouraging tourism including heritage signage and a statue of John Corbett. One respondent summed up this theme as follows: *'keep in mind at all times the beauty of our town, its quaintness and history'*.

In the second theme of **housing growth and infrastructure** respondents re-iterated concerns that *'additional infrastructure with doctors and schools for the existing community before extending the population is urgently required'*. Respondents saw that the *'biggest problem is poor NHS healthcare provision as the GP and dentist facilities are not increasing with [the population] ... and the population is ageing too'*. It was highlighted that *'Droitwich High School needs help with building repairs, heating, cooling and massive influx on new pupils'*.

Greater care was needed in the design of new housing, so that it *'blends in'* with existing dwellings, and there were calls also for more apartments, social housing, and smaller properties rather than larger homes. New houses should be well-insulated and provided with solar panels: *'make Droitwich the eco hub for Worcester,'* with more needing to be done to address net zero.

On the third theme of **travel and transport**, the situation at the Copcut junction was again highlighted. Respondents wanted more bus services, e.g. *'new bus routes that have pick up/drop off points, near to roads where people live and are not very mobile ... bus services to Worcs Royal Hospital that are easily accessible'*. The access needs of disabled people should be better addressed in new developments.

For pedestrians, additional footpaths were suggested together with better upkeep of existing routes. Parking in residential areas including on pavements was a problem e.g. along Primsland Way. Pedestrian safety issues were re-iterated, including for those attempting to cross the Worcester Road at the BP/M&S Simply Food store. To aid safety, lower (20 mph) speed limits were suggested

on roads such as Worcester Road, Primsland Way, Celvestune Way, Addyes Way and around schools. There were also calls to limit parking around schools.

On the fourth and final theme of the **town centre**, respondents focussed on the number of empty shops and the poor retail offer available: *'the town is short of shops like Dunelm, Next, Bon Marche etc'*; *'the shopping centre is struggling to attract good quality shops ... it looks and feels tired and old'*. The Raven Hotel should be redeveloped to *'give a major boost to the town centre and rid us of the biggest eyesore'* and the Brine baths reinstated to support tourism; these two projects were *'vital to the future of the town'*. Reduced or free public car parking *'would steal a real march on other towns'*, although others pointed out this would be contrary to net zero. There was also a need to improve the appearance of the town centre, addressing litter, trees, and communal areas. Overall, the aim should be to *'make the town centre buzz with quality retail, tourist and heritage interest as they do in other Spa towns'*.

Information about you

This section asked for information about respondents. It was explained that this was to help understand how the results related to the community as a whole, and that all information would remain anonymous.

Question 21: Would you describe yourself as:

	Questionnaire responses ¹		Census 2021 ²	
Male	398	52%	9,811	48%
Female	371	48%	10,797	52%
Non-binary	2	0.3%	-	-
Other	2	0.3%	-	-
Prefer not to say	19	-	-	-

1. Percentage base = 767 (respondents to Q21 excluding those who preferred not to say)

2. Percentage base = 20,608 (usual residents in Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area aged 16 and over, Census 2021. Census gender identity data is not available at this geography; the figures given here are by sex (RM121)).

- Males were over-represented in the survey responses compared to the proportions given in the Census 2021 for the Neighbourhood Area.

Question 22: How old are you?

	Questionnaire responses ¹		Census 2021 ²	
16-17	3	0.4%	601	3%
18-24	5	0.7%	1,638	8%
25-34	42	6%	2,913	14%
35-44	64	9%	2,886	14%
45-54	115	15%	3,366	16%
55-64	190	25%	3,263	16%
65-74	176	24%	3,088	15%
75-84	126	17%	2,073	10%
85 and over	27	4%	780	4%
Prefer not to say	40	-	-	-

1. Percentage base = 748 (respondents to Q22 excluding those who preferred not to say)

2. Percentage base = 20,608 (usual residents in Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area aged 16 and over, Census 2021).

- Age groups up to and including 45-54 were under-represented in terms of level of response, compared against the Census 2021. This was particularly the case with younger age groups.

- The older age groups were over-represented to varying degrees. Most notably, whilst 25% of questionnaire responses were made by residents aged 55-64, this group accounted for only 16% of the 16 and over population in 2021.
- A total of 45% of responses where age information was provided were made by those aged 65 and over; these groups represented 29% of the 16 and over population in 2021.

Question 23: How would you best describe your main “economic activity”?

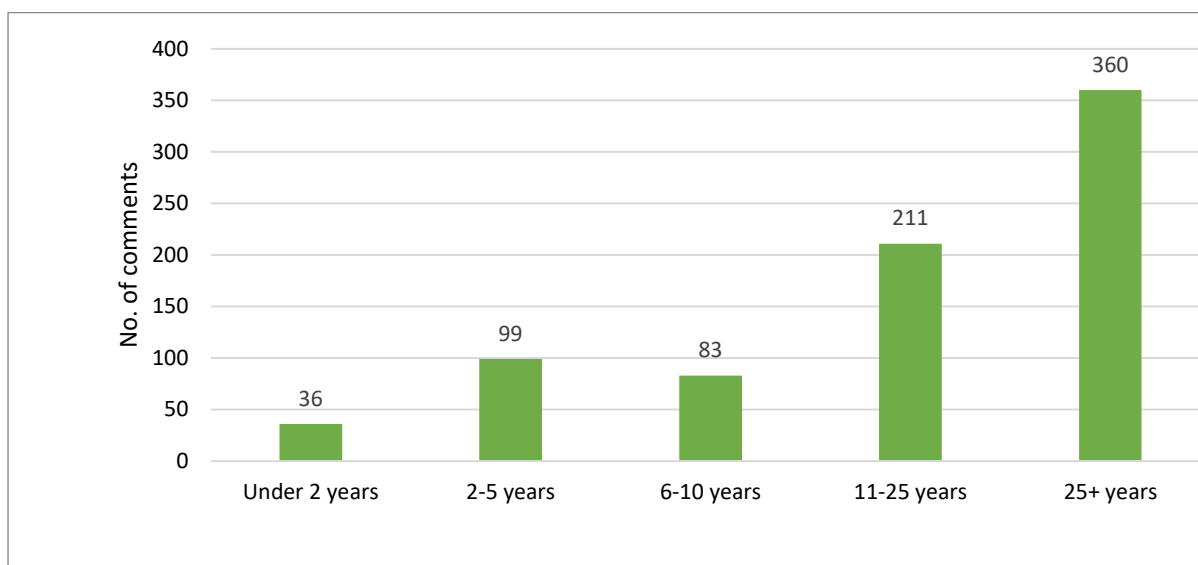
	Questionnaire responses ¹		Census 2021 ²	
Employed full-time	233	31%	7,040	34%
Employed part-time	80	11%	2,576	12%
Self-employed	43	6%	1,719	8%
Unemployed	3	0.4%	465	2%
Full-time student	5	0.7%	1,018	5%
Retired	371	49%	5,695	28%
Looking after home/family	12	16%	819	4%
Long-term sick/disabled	7	1%	855	4%
Other	2	0.3%	421	2%
Prefer not to say	31	-	-	-

1. Percentage base = 756 (respondents to Q23 excluding those who preferred not to say)

2. Percentage base = 20,608 (usual residents in Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area aged 16 and over, Census 2021).

- Reflecting responses to Q22, those describing themselves as retired accounted for just under half of survey responses (49%), although they represented only 28% of those aged 16 and over in the Neighbourhood Area in 2021.
- Full-time and part-time employees and the self-employed were generally well-represented in survey responses compared to the Census 2021, response rates for these groups falling slightly below their population share but not significantly so.

Question 24: How long have you lived in Droitwich Spa?



Question 25: Please tell us if you:

	In Droitwich Spa	Elsewhere	No	Prefer not to say
Are registered with GP	715	69	2	2
Are registered with NHS dentist	358	165	255	3
Have at least one High School age child attending school	52	37	674	13

Appendix: Household flyer



Droitwich Spa Town Council
ST RICHARD'S HOUSE, VICTORIA SQUARE,
DROITWICH SPA, WORCESTERSHIRE WR9 8DS
www.droitwichspa.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Plan Community Questionnaire

With the Droitwich Spa community, the Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan – to better influence development and deliver on your priorities.

To make sure the Plan sets out what you want, it is important that as many residents as possible tell us what they think about the future of the town. Please help by taking part in this survey.

The quickest and easiest way to take part is online. To do so, either scan the QR code below or go to <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/C8PBLQB>.

If you'd prefer to fill in a printed copy of the questionnaire instead, you can collect one from St. Richard's House or Droitwich Spa Library, or contact Katy Prew, Deputy Town Clerk on 01905 774258 or Katy.Prew@droitwichspa.gov.uk for a copy to be sent to you in the post.

The closing date for the survey is 31 October 2023.

We won't be able to identify you from your answers, and the information you give us is for the sole use of drawing up the Neighbourhood Plan.

We look forward to hearing from you to help deliver on your priorities and Plan for your Neighbourhood.

With all good wishes,

Councillor Kate Fellows, Mayor of Droitwich Spa

**Councillor Bob Brookes, Chairman of
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**



Frequently asked questions

What is the Neighbourhood Plan?

- A statutory planning document to guide decisions on land use and development in the Droitwich Spa Town Council administrative area, the 'Neighbourhood Area' (see map on the Town Council website).
- The Neighbourhood Plan's policies will apply only to development in the Neighbourhood Area.
- Wychavon District Council will decide applications for planning permission in the town using the Neighbourhood Plan, alongside the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

Who is involved in its preparation?

- The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by a Steering Group made up of Town Councillors and residents, with professional support.

Why are we preparing the Neighbourhood Plan?

- To set out a positive vision for how we would like the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Area to develop and grow in the period up to 2041.
- The Plan will include practical planning policies to help deliver that vision, by guiding development and protecting the environment.
- We will look to deliver those aspects which fall outside the land use scope of the Neighbourhood Plan by working with our partners, including Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council.

What is the process for developing the Neighbourhood Plan?

- Consultation – including through this questionnaire survey.
- Drafting the Plan - developing policies to deliver what you want to see, followed by a six-week consultation period.
- Submission to Wychavon District Council, with further consultation, followed by an independent examination.
- The final stage is the local referendum. Everyone on the electoral register at the date of the vote and living within the referendum area is entitled to vote. If a majority of voters agree, the Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted as part of the statutory planning framework.