North Northamptonshire Council

Draft Corporate Plan 2021-25

Consultation Analysis Report

September to October 2021

Author: Consultation and Engagement Team, North Northamptonshire Council

Owner: Assistant Chief Executive, North Northamptonshire Council

Contents

Introduction 3

How was the consultation promoted? 3

How did consultees have their say? 4

Number and type of responses received 4

Summary of feedback 4

Draft Corporate Plan Consultation Questionnaire 5

About the respondent 5

Proposed Vision 5

Proposed Values 10

Proposed Commitments & Priorities 15

Ranking of Commitments and their associated priorities 37

Readability and language used 38

Staying connected 39

Demographic information 39

Other responses 41

Feedback receive via letters/ emails 41

North Northamptonshire Council's Economic Development Business Member Organisations 42

Feedback received via social media 42

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the Draft Corporate Plan consultation process, and key consultation findings (including an understanding of who participated in the consultation), the results of which will be used to help shape the final Corporate Plan, which is due to be considered for adopting in December 2021.

2. The Draft Corporate Plan sets out what the Council is about, where it wants to go, both as a Council and in terms of the outcomes for the area and people who the Council represents. It sets out the policy choices that have been made or need to be considered in order to get there. The Plan forms a central part of the Council's budget and decision making and is at the top of the Council's corporate policy framework, overarching all other Council policies.

3. The draft Corporate Plan contains the Council's draft vision which is: North Northamptonshire: A place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life. To achieve this draft vision, the Council has identified six draft strategic commitments that express what the Council believes its organisational values should be. The Council identified its draft vision, values and commitments, from engaging stakeholders when the new Council was being formed in 2019/2020.

How was the consultation promoted?

4. The consultation was hosted on North Northamptonshire Council's Consultation Hub website. The consultation was widely promoted. Councillors, local MPs, parish and town councils, partner organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, representatives of protected characteristic groups, local business groups including Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses, North Northamptonshire Council staff, and members of the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel (circa 600 members) and North Northamptonshire's Consultation Register were invited to give their views and asked to promote the consultation to their members, or within their local area where appropriate.

5. Opportunities to take part in the consultation were also promoted in the local media via press releases. The press release went to over 60 newsrooms (local and national, print and broadcast including the Northants Telegraph and BBC Radio Northampton), plus individual reporters and other local news sites. It was promoted through North Northamptonshire Council's websites, e-newsletters and social media channels, enabling both internal (e.g. staff) as well as external consultees to get involved in the process. The Facebook Reach (i.e. the number of people who saw any content from or about the consultation web page) was 18,645 and the Twitter Impressions (i.e. the number of times any content from or about the consultation web page entered a person's screen) was 14,411.

How did consultees have their say?

6. Local residents, organisations and other interested parties were able to have their say about the Draft Corporate Plan proposals in a range of ways, by:
    - Visiting the Draft Corporate Plan Consultation Hub webpage and completing the online questionnaire or requesting a paper questionnaire
    - Writing to the Council via Draft Corporate Plan Consultation Response, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Meadow Road, Kettering, NN16 8TL
    - Using the Council's social media (i.e. Facebook and Twitter)
    - Contacting the Council by telephone to give verbal feedback
    - Having a group/ forum conversation and then completing a Group Facilitator's Feedback Form to provide their feedback as a collective

Number and type of responses received

7. The Draft Corporate Plan consultation ran from 6 September to 3 October 2021. During the consultation period, using the various means available to consultees, local people and organisations contributed to the consultation 609 times. Nearly all of the feedback received was via the questionnaire, with 581 respondents participating via this mechanism. There were also 4 completed Group Facilitator's Feedback forms and 4 submitted written responses, 19 responses via social media, and one response from a local business forum.

8. Within the questionnaire, respondents could choose which questions they responded to, and so there are lower response numbers to each question when compared with the overall number of participants, depending on whether participants had a particular interest in the subject matter.

Summary of feedback

9. This report is a summary of the feedback received. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with the full consultation results, including the detail and suggestions contained within some of the received comments. The appendix includes all responses received (with personal/identifiable details redacted) to enable decision makers to see each response in full. The full consultation results are available on the consultation's dedicated page on the Consultation Hub.

10. An Equality Screening Assessment was published and made available alongside the questionnaire. As were Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and the draft Corporate Plan Vision, Values, Commitments and Priorities.

Draft Corporate Plan Consultation Questionnaire

About the respondent

11. In total, 585 respondents filled out a questionnaire on the draft Corporate Plan proposals, either partially or fully. This figure includes the four respondents who completed the Group Facilitator's Feedback Form questionnaire. Respondents did not have to answer every question, so the total number of responses for each question differs and is shown in relation to each question. It is noted that some respondents exited the questionnaire before reaching the end. On the whole the quantitative feedback from organisational and group responses matches those provided by individuals.

12. Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the consultation. There were 567 responses to this question, with respondents being able to select more than one option if applicable. The majority of respondents said they were local residents (73.4%), and 38.3% said they were a North Northamptonshire employee. The following table details the various respondent types to the consultation questionnaire. Respondents who said 'Other' mostly identified themselves as local volunteers and representative of a Town or Parish Council.

	Response number	Percentage (%)
A local resident	416	73.4%
A North Northamptonshire Council Employee	217	38.3%
A North Northamptonshire Council Elected Councillor	8	1.4%
A representative of the voluntary sector or community organisation	58	10.2%
A representative of the local business community	18	3.2%
A representative of a partner organisation	22	3.9%
As a service user of North Northamptonshire Council	60	10.6%
As an elected Town or Parish Councillor	49	8.6%
Other	16	2.8%

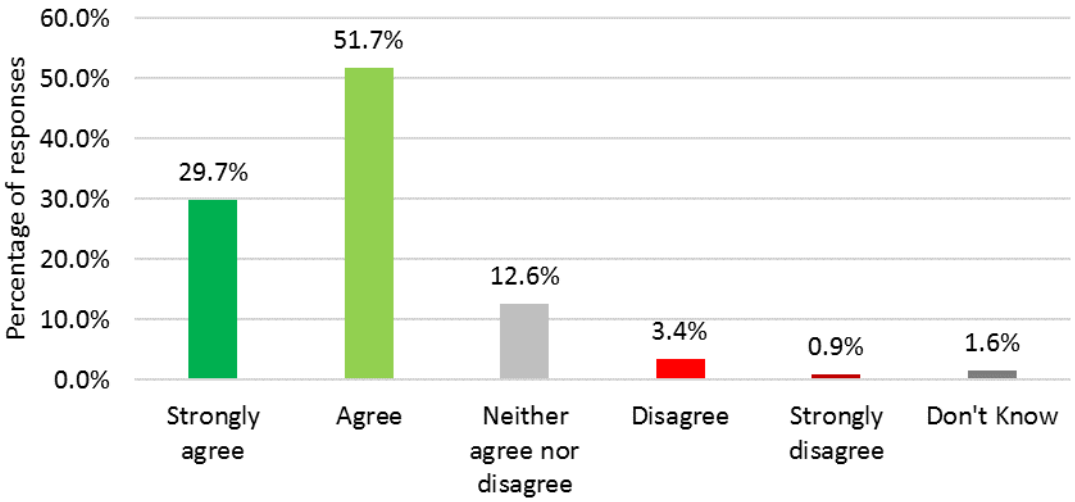
13. Respondents completing the Group Facilitator's Feedback Form were asked different initial questions, which included the name of the group and the number of participants. Groups represented included local Town and Parish Councils and a day centre service. Not all of the Group Facilitator's recorded the total number of attendees, those that did recorded 22 attendees. Full details are available within the Appendix.

Proposed Vision

14. As part of the Draft Corporate Plan Proposals, the Council was proposing the following vision: "*North Northamptonshire: A place where everyone has the best opportunities and quality of life".*

15. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the Council's vision. There were 437 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (81.5%) said they strongly agree or agree with the Vision, while 4.3% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our Vision?



16. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 215 comments made in relation to this question.

17. There were 141 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comment. Of those nearly half of the respondents described the Vision as an overall benefit to North Northamptonshire. Respondents outlined how it would be a benefit to the whole area, and felt it covered everything that it should and liked how it focused on both current and future issues. The ambition of the vision was also highlighted as a positive.

18. Although many respondents felt the vision was lacking in detail. Whilst acknowledged by some as a good starting point, respondents felt a lot of the Vision was either common sense or obvious goals to aim for. Respondents are keen to see how the Council delivers on these aims and how it defines terms as 'best'.

19. Several respondents want the Council to focus on how we can improve their quality of life. Topics ranged from helping residents in adult social care dealing with dementia to achieving a better balance of professional to personal life. The importance of mental health on quality of life was also mentioned by multiple respondents.

20. A similar amount of respondents who mentioned quality of life discussed equality within North Northamptonshire area. When it comes to money spent on areas some respondents believed that the villages would be last to receive anything and would not get the same treatment as the bigger towns. There was also a focus on deprived areas and how they should be 'levelled up' so communities were fair and equal.

21. A few respondents focused on service development and spatial development within the area. There were a variety of different aspects listed e.g. better condition roads, more investment in libraries and ensuring green spaces are still valued against mass housing

estates. The point was also raised to encourage different industries/businesses to develop and grow in the area.

22. The environment was also mentioned by a smaller group of our respondents. People were happy that the vision addresses issues of sustainability. However, some respondents believe this did not go far enough and believed it needed to be highlighted more. Developments such as Weekley Wood and Shepton Road were mentioned as poor decisions that would not benefit the environment.

23. Lastly a few respondents were concerned about crime within North Northamptonshire. Respondents were upset with the lack of visual policing in particular and wanted to see how this will be addressed.

24. Of the 15 organisations/groups who commented as to why they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', over a third simply agreed with the Vision. Respondents mentioned the Vision covered a lot of key values and how it complements the current focus of North Northamptonshire. A few organisations/groups respondents mentioned equality, and want the Council to enable everyone to have the same opportunities. There was also a response relaying the importance of identifying and recognising all residents of North Northamptonshire. The environment and the importance of the vision were equally mentioned. For the environment respondents believed the whole vision should be underpinned by how it will benefit the environment and it needs to be more prioritised. The importance of the Vision was questioned, stating that as it's a draft its meaning isn't that great and how it reads as an add on, not an integral part of the Council. There were also comments about carers, youth and a feeling of overall lack of action within the Vision.

25. There were three comments received via the Group Facilitator Feedback form who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'. It was commented that the statement was short and precise; mirrors the aspiration of the respondent organisation; and that the Council should be transparent, with a fair and structured salary scheme, and should be a lead example in its delivery of services.

26. Of the 36 individual responses that said they 'Neither agreed nor disagreed', the majority mentioned the lack of detail within the Vision. Respondents believed the Vision was a collection of soundbites with very little meaning. They also mentioned the lack of detail as to how the Vision will be achieved. A lack of clarity/consistency was also mentioned, leading to confusion about what the Council's values are for.

27. Similarly, to a lack of detail, some respondents were concerned about a lack of action taken with regards to the vision. People raised their upset at their perceived lack of action taken so far by the Council since April 2021 and see this as a public relations exercise.

28. A few respondents said they want to see the Council improve from past performance from the former sovereign councils. They are pleased there is new leadership but some respondents believe the Council will not follow through on the Vision based on their past experience.

29. Equality was mentioned here as well. Again the difference between rural areas and the towns was mentioned as well as the difference of quality of life in certain areas of the area.

30. Finally, infrastructure and the environment were spoken about by respondents equally. They want the Council to aim to be the best county in the country for being green and support the 'greening' of the local towns. Local infrastructure and housing were highlighted as issues that respondents felt needed to be addressed.

31. There were two organisations/groups who commented as to why they 'Neither agree nor disagree'. Both of these responses highlighted the lack of accountability within the Vision. With a perceived lack of substance, they felt the Vision would be hard to measure. The respondents wanted to see this included so there is a clear starting point and progress/improvement can be measured by residents.

32. No Group Facilitator Feedback form said they 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

33. There were 23 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree', that made comment. These respondents mentioned a lot of different topics, such as: houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs), the environment, refugees, support for staff and improving on past performance were all mentioned once each.

34. A lack of accountability from the Council was mentioned the most. Respondents believe the Council are not interested in what they had to say and did not believe the Vision would actually happen.

35. Quality of life was also mentioned a few times here. The lack of opportunities across the district, especially in the rural areas was also highlighted.

36. Some individuals believed this was simply unrealistic. Whilst they agreed they were good aims they believed the timescale was far too limited to achieve this and wanted to see what they considered to be a more realistic Vision.

37. Respondents also wanted to see a stronger support system for residents. It was mentioned support groups for young families was key, as well as making it easier/cheaper to move around the region using public transport.

38. There was only one organisation/group that made comment as to why they disagreed with the Vision. The disagreement focussed on conservation areas and the perceived lack of priority placed on them. The respondent wanted to address this issue within the Vision.

39. No Group Facilitator Feedback form said they 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree'.

40. There were five individual respondents who said 'Don't know' and made comment. The main reason was the lack of detail. Respondents believed there was a lack of substance and that some statements within the Vision didn't set out how success would be measured so residents could tell if the Council was doing a good job or not.

41. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback form said they 'Don't know'.

42. Respondents were then asked if they thought we missed anything important in our organisational Vision. There was a total of 146 comments made in relation to this question.

The below WordCloud demonstrates the most frequent words respondents mentioned whilst answering this question

43. Of the 129 individual responses to this question, the largest theme was a lack of detail and/or action within the Vision. Respondents wanted to see more substance and numbers. One respondent wanted to see how residents were expected to contribute and how this would differ from the past sovereign councils in terms of delivery. An overall theme is whilst they agree with what the Vision says they want to see how the Council will bring this to life.

44. Inclusion/equality was mentioned by many respondents. Ensuring the same opportunities for everyone was a common theme. Also mentioned several times was the need to work in partnership with other organisations and the wider community, and to highlight the area's diversity as a strength.

45. The spatial and business/ economic development within the area was mentioned many respondents. Housing was a particular issue, especially the new to build affordable housing and holding private companies accountable. The issue of private companies bringing higher skilled jobs into the area was also mentioned. Some respondents said they feel the area is being over developed and that the Council need to better protect the local environment.

46. Several respondents mentioned the quality of services the Council provides. Adult social care and specifically care homes were mentioned as needing more control and better funding. The past history of the county council was commented upon, with call for North Northamptonshire Council to have a tighter control of finances to avoid past mistakes. Addressing the financial realty of what the Vision will take was mentioned multiple times, usually with detail.

47. The environment was mentioned by a few respondents. They wanted more detail when it came to 'protect the environment' and noted the air quality within the region and increasing electric car charging points to encourage/make it easier to own an electric car.

48. Quality of life was commented upon by a few respondents who said they wanted the Council to avoid past mistakes of cutting services and instead focus on more than just older people as those with physical and learning difficulties need just as much support. The perceived lack of medical facilities and access to them was highlighted as a particular problem that was felt needed to be addressed.

49. Highways were mentioned and it was cited that the quality of roads in places such as Corby are very poor and need to be improved due to the amount of potholes. Ideas such as free parking in all town centres in the area were given but the major theme was better enforcement of issues such as speeding and parking on double yellow lines.

50. Crime and its reduction was mentioned by a few respondents, asking what the plans were to reduce drug abuse leading to anti-social behaviour and how the police will build better relationships in the community so that residents will feel safer.

51. A larger focus on children was mentioned, stating there is a lack of support and emphasis on education for children. Increasing the standard of education is seen as a priority and encouraging sending children to special needs education where it can be avoided.

52. The smallest area mentioned was business growth and the lack of mention how the Council will provide a positive environment for this. Specifically mentioned was how the A14 has made the area a distribution hub and as such we need to capitalise on this to provide more job across the district, especially those that bring high skilled and well-paying opportunities.

53. There were 15 organisations/groups who commented. These respondents made a variety of comments and there wasn't one stand out theme. Lack of detail/action was the biggest group, citing how broad the vision is and asking for more detail/how these will be measured.

54. Communication was highlighted as missing. It ranged from a simple phonebook for contacts within the Council to better engagement/partnership with Town and Parish Councils to better work together.

55. A mention of the importance of farming and how all actions were going to be evaluated to ensure they better the environment was asked for as well.

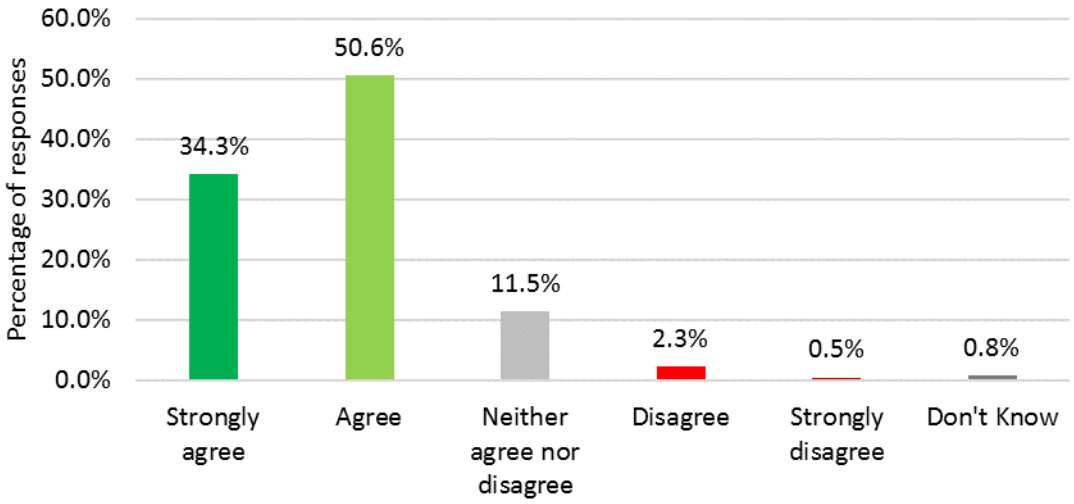
56. Two comments were made via the Group Facilitator Feedback form. One thought the statement should go further and clarify that the opportunities should explicitly extend to those living in disadvantaged circumstances such as (but not exclusively) disability and poverty. They also felt it should include a positive acknowledgement of the equalities agenda. The other group felt care and respect for residents should be included.

Proposed Values

57. As part of the Draft Corporate Plan Proposals, the Council was proposing the following draft values: "*We will be customer focussed, respectful, innovative, efficient, transparent, supportive, and trustworthy".*

58. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the Council's draft values. There were 391 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (84.9%) said they strongly agree or agree with the draft Values, while 2.8% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft Values?



59. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 172 comments made in relation to this question.

60. There were 121 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made a comment.

61. Many individual respondents offered general support for the draft Values. Respondents highlighted the importance of the Values and felt that they outlined how service users and staff should be treated as well as how good services should be delivered.

62. Although agreeing with the draft Values, the most common responses were based around concerns over the ability to deliver them, with approximately a third of respondents making comments about delivery. These respondents felt that the Values will be evaluated against how the Council operates going forward. Several respondents' concerns were focused on how the former councils operated and the effect on North Northamptonshire Council. A few felt the Values were not currently being met and it was questioned how the Council would monitor if these are achieved.

63. Several individual respondents made comments about 'transparent' or 'trust' highlighting the importance of these Values and that increased transparency would result in increased trust. Respondents raised issues that there has been a lack of transparency / trust at some sovereign Councils, with some decisions being made in private. Respondents suggested that Council meetings are promoted more and provide opportunities to speak, better online and offline communication channels, public forums and website signposting improvements. A few respondents felt there is currently a lack of transparency at the Council.

64. A similar number of respondents made comments related to the Council being ‘customer focused’. Respondents agreed with the importance of having a customer focus and putting the customer at the centre of the way the Council operates. Respondents suggested reviewing outdated processes, attending local meetings in the community, customers having their say as ways to ensure a customer focus. A few respondents disagreed with the wording of ‘customer focused’ as they felt it was corporate / commercial. Respondents suggested the following alternatives: 'Focussed on the needs of the population', ‘Focused’ and ‘Citizen / People / Resident focused’.

65. Several respondents wanted more information about the Values, including clarity about how they would be achieved, success measured, and what they mean in ‘real terms’. Some respondents felt that the lack of information made it difficult to provide a genuine answer.

66. A few respondents highlighted the need for accessibility and explain current issues they’d faced. Difficulties being able to speak to relevant officers, being passed around and having to rely on technology when information is only available online.

67. A few respondents made comments about ‘Respectful’ or ‘Supportive’ agreeing with their importance. A couple of respondents felt these may be hard to achieve whilst another highlighted that these values need to be applied to staff as well as members of the public. ‘Caring’ was suggested as a key value.

68. A similar number of respondents felt the Council should be innovative highlighting the importance of evaluation and new approaches for customers and staff to improve services. Respondents also mentioned environmental issues / sustainability in their comments. Another respondent suggested ‘Visionary’ as a value.

69. A few respondents included ‘efficiency’ in their comments i.e. efficient service for customers, direct points of contact and better use technology.

70. A small number of respondents highlighted the importance of partnership working, having values that stakeholders can buy into and creating opportunities for collaboration, and that the draft values could only be achieved by working with stakeholders.

71. Other comments included a request that the Values are based around inclusivity; and that having seven Values is too many and the number should be reduced to four to six.

72. There were 12 organisational/group respondents who said they either ‘Strongly agree’ or ‘Agree’, that made a comment. The majority of respondents offered general support for the draft values. However, several felt that the values were more aspirational and wanted clear details about how they will be achieved / delivered and affect Council operations. One organisational/group respondent thought that ‘Resident focused’ was more accurate than ‘Customer focused’.

73. There was only one Group Facilitator Feedback form respondent who said they either ‘Strongly agree’ or ‘Agree’ and commented that the values mirrored their organisations.

74. There were 23 individual respondents who said they ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, that made a comment. The majority of responses were based around whether the Values could be achieved for a variety of suggested reasons. The most common responses were focused on respondents wanting more information about the proposed values, especially how they will be achieved and what they actually mean to residents / local issues.

75. A few respondents suggested that the draft Values are not part of the Council’s current way of working. It was also commented that the values are not being met due to a lack of accessibility and there is too much reliance on customers having access to technology / social media. It was also commented that Council meetings should be available online.

76. A couple of respondents raised concerns over how the former councils operated which has led to a lack of trust.

77. A respondent felt using 'customer' indicated that the Council was a business rather than a service provider.

78. Only one organisation/group respondent who said they ‘Neither agree nor disagree’ commented and felt the Values were meaningless until measures to achieve them were introduced.

79. Only one Group Facilitator Feedback form respondent who said they ‘Neither agree nor disagree’ commented and said that it was difficult to provide conclusions about the implications of the corporate plan with only the summary available.

80. There were individual 9 respondents who said they either ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’, that made a comment. These respondents made a variety of comments.

81. A few respondents said they disagreed with the draft Values and made the following alternatives suggestions:

    - replacing ‘efficiency, innovation, transparency’ with ‘Honesty, accountability and clarity’,
    - removing 'Innovative’,
    - questioned including ‘Efficient’,
    - highlighted that the green / climate agenda was missing, and
    - changing the values to ‘Listen, Respect, Engage, Trust, Transparent and Support’.

82. Other respondents said they felt that the draft Values were not currently being met, and felt there is a lack of efficiency, trust and respect; that having seven values was too many; that staff should be treated fairly; that the Values would not be achieved; and that they were repetitive.

83. No organisations/groups said they ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’.

84. One Group Facilitator Feedback form respondent who said they either ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’ felt that the COVID-19 pandemic had shown than Learning Disability (LD) Services are not being supported.

85. There were two individual respondents who said 'Don't know' and made comment. One respondent wanted more information about the draft Values whilst another said they had not read them.

86. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback form respondents said 'Don't know'.

87. One respondent did not answer the previous question to say if they agreed or disagreed but made comment and said they thought that there were too many values and that they would interrelate.

88. Respondents were then asked if they thought we missed anything important in our organisational Values. There were 94 comments made in relation to this question.

89. A total of 84 individual respondents provided comments to suggest anything important they thought had been missed from the draft values.

The below WordCloud demonstrates the most frequent words respondents mentioned whilst answering this question

90. Many respondent's comments related to listening to and involving local communities as well as working in partnership with stakeholders. Respondents made comments about the need for the Council to be supportive, listen, open and involving others. 'Approachable and engaging', 'Citizen-led' and 'Listening and learning' were suggested as values. A couple of respondents made comments about promoting and creating a sense of pride / place in communities, with 'Creating Pride in the Community' suggested as a value. One respondent suggested 'Collaborative' as a value.

91. Several individual respondents wanted more information about the proposed Values especially how they will be achieved and what they mean to residents / local issues. These

respondents felt that the Values were unclear, lacked substance and were not specific to North Northamptonshire. Some respondents felt the proposals would not be delivered. 'Accountability' was suggested by a few respondents, including the implementation of the Values and their monitoring.

92. Several respondents included comments about staff and volunteers. Respondents highlighted the importance of and need for staff training and another felt that staff structures should be reviewed at the Council. Respondents suggested having a value related to staff and volunteers, along with a suggestion of 'Strong work ethics and moral'.

93. A similar number of respondents made comments about including equality, diversity and inclusivity. Respondents felt the Council should be more inclusive, embrace diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all in the region. A respondent used COVID-19 to highlight the importance of inclusivity and tackling inequalities.

94. A few respondents felt there were too many values. It was suggested that 'Respectful' and 'Supportive' would be part of 'Customer focused'; that 'Customer focused' should be either 'Citizen / People focused' or 'Customer centric'; and there should be a value focusing on the environment / green issues / sustainability.

95. In addition to the suggestions outlined above, respondents' comments included the following ideas for values: 'Ambitious', 'Competent', 'Effective', 'Empowering', 'Fair', 'Honesty, accountability and clarity', 'Responsibility', 'Responsive', 'Transformational', 'Inclusive'.

96. A total of nine organisational/group respondents provided comments when asked to suggest anything important they thought had been missed from the draft values. A respondent mentioned about providing more information of what is being considered; another questioned how the values would lead to action and change. Other comments include that there is a perceived current lack of accountability or inclusivity; and that there should be connections between communities not just with the Council.

97. A couple of organisational/group respondents' comments mentioned finances and how money is spent. One suggested 'Empowering' to replace 'Supportive' as they thought the Council should be empowering communities to find their own solutions. Another respondent suggested including 'Caring' and 'Environmentally Conscious' as ideas for values.

98. One Group Facilitator Feedback form respondent made comment and suggested that looking after staff, having appropriate pay, and putting customers first were missing from the draft Values.

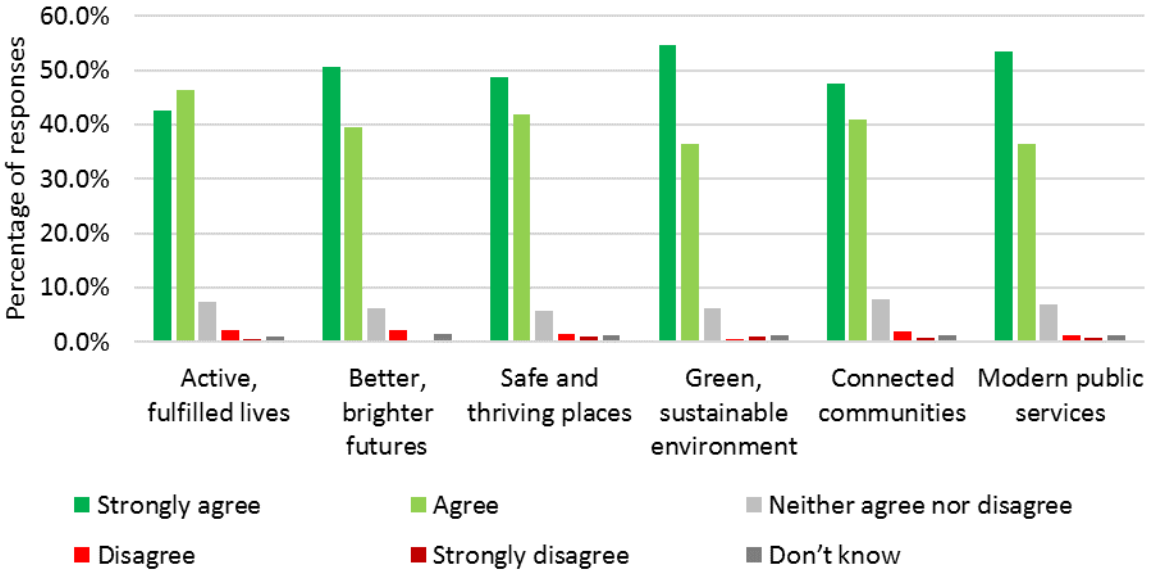
Proposed Commitments & Priorities

99. As part of the Draft Corporate Plan Proposals, the Council was proposing six key commitments. For each of the six commitments, the Council has developed a series of actions and activities grouped which have been called priorities.

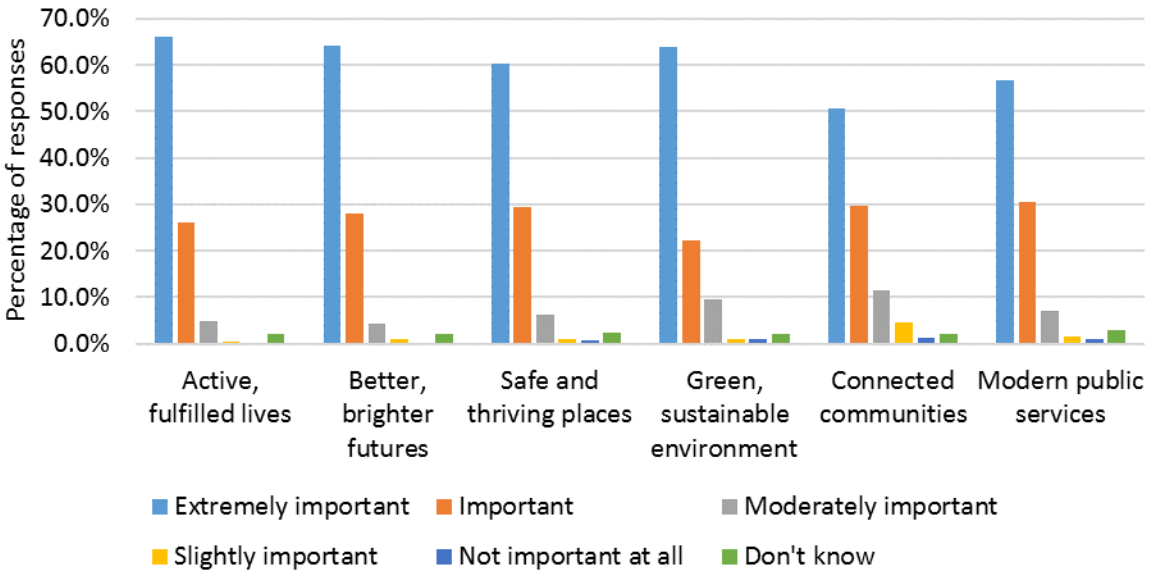
Summary of Commitments and their associated priorities

100. The following two graphs show a summary of the support for all of the six commitments and their associated priorities and the importance given to them. More detail regarding each commitment is provided below.

Summary graph showing level of support for all six commitments and their associated priorities



Summary graph showing level of importance of the all six commitments and their associated priorities

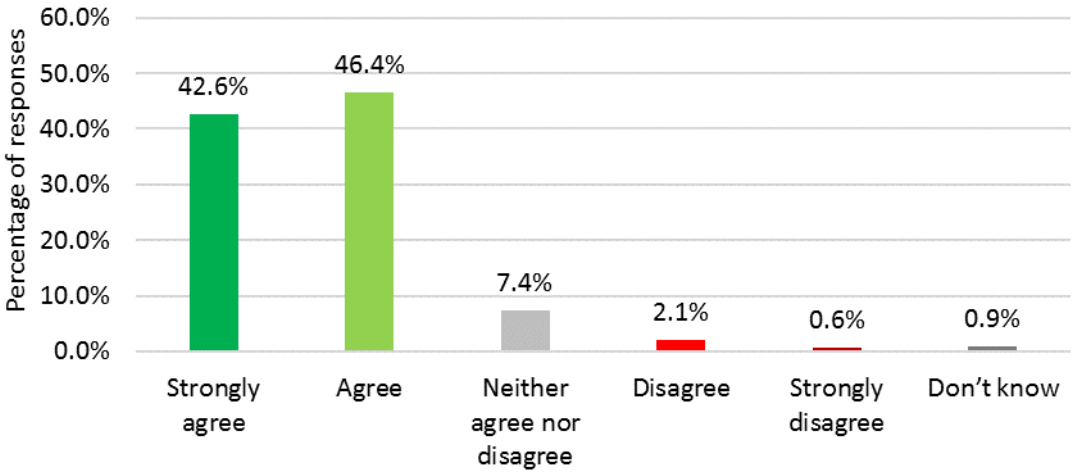


101. **Key Commitment 1: Active, fulfilled lives** - *"Helping people live healthier, more active, independent and fulfilled lives*". Our Priorities to achieve Commitment 1 are:

- Greater access to better quality adult social care
- Value and support our carers and volunteers
- Improve the accessibility and use of leisure, culture, and sport
- Provide enhanced support to improve mental health and wellbeing
- Tackle the causes of complex problems such as homelessness

102. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities. There were 338 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (89.1%) said they strongly agree or agree with this commitment and its associated priorities, while 2.7% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

Do you agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities?



103. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 143 comments made in relation to this question.

104. There were 103 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comment. Many responses were comments of general support, with respondents feeling the commitment and its priorities are important and are a society requirement. However, several respondents raised their concerns as to whether the priorities were overly ambitious, or whether the Council would be able to deliver them, especially with reduced funding from central government and other budget pressures. It was also commented that the Council would not be able to deliver these priorities without the support of partner organisations.

105. Many respondents also commented on health and wellbeing, especially mental health. It was commented that preventative services would put less pressure on the need for acute services, and would in turn provide future savings. There was mention of health inequalities and how services should be easily accessible for all. Several respondents specifically mentioned mental health services and linkages with the pandemic and homelessness.

106. Some of the comments regarding homelessness mentioned the need to identify the cause of homelessness, appropriate housing, and how this cohort may require support from several services, including rehabilitation.

107. Several respondents commented about adult social care. It was felt these services are vital and should be funded as such. Comments included requests for better access and improvement to services. It was commented that the cost of care for families should not be unaffordable, and that carers should be valued, supported and paid accordingly.

108. A few respondents commented on how they felt accessibility and use of leisure, culture, and sport could be improved, and want more opportunities for services to be available for all age groups, and for access to leisure services to be more affordable. It was also commented that arts and green space should be included within this priority.

109. A small number of respondents mentioned volunteering and felt that charities should receive support from the Council to help achieve these priorities.

110. A similar number of respondents said they would like to see more information and how these priorities will be achieved.

111. Of the 13 organisations/groups who commented as to why they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', there was again some comments of general support, as well as requests to see detail as to how the priorities would be measured and achieved. Respondents also felt health and wellbeing and mental health services for all ages are important, and it was commented that all residents should have access to quality health and leisure opportunities. Support for adult social care and carers was mentioned by a couple of respondents, as was the need to support the voluntary sector supporting these services. One respondent said the priorities do not identify any key priority groups other than homeless.

112. There were four comments made within the Group Facilitator Feedback form as to why they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'. With two respondents expressing their general support for the commitment. One respondent said they want to see a strategy for how the Council with support the homeless. It was suggested that the term 'disability' be included, as well as the opportunity to target the retention of carers and volunteers.

113. There were 13 individual respondents who said they 'Neither agree nor disagree', that made comment. The majority of these respondents said they wanted to see more detail regarding how these priorities will be measured and achieved. A couple commented on the need for accessible health services.

114. The one organisation/group respondent that commented said they felt older people should be mentioned specifically in this section to balance out younger people and children having a dedicated section within the Better, Brighter Futures commitment.

115. No Group Facilitator Feedback form said they 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

116. There were eight individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree', that made comment. These respondents made various comments including concern that the priorities are too aspirational and would not be achieved and adequately funded; and that they appear to exclude children and the environment.

117. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree'.

118. The one individual respondent who said 'Don't know' and made comment said the actions should be measurable.

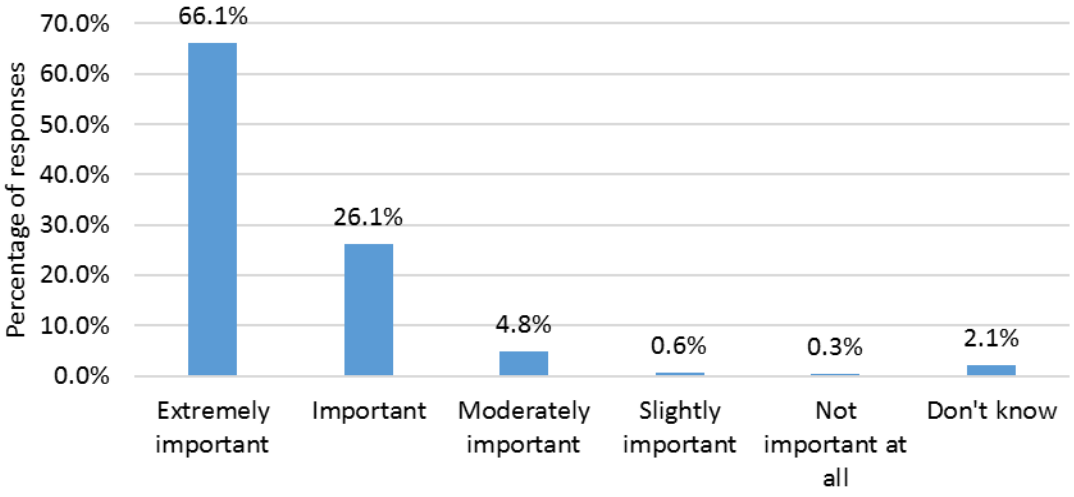
119. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Don't know'.

120. Specific suggested changes/additions to the commitment/priorities also include:

- Greater access to great quality care
- Access across county boundaries
- Explicit reference to green open spaces
- Accessibility to public spaces
- Accessibility to arts
- Provide ready access to a range of services of the highest quality
- Working with people to enable people
- Promote and support residents in maintaining independence and quality of life
- Explicit reference to older people
- Reference to education, employment, exercise, community activities
- Reference to early intervention

121. Respondents were then asked how important they thought this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council. There were 333 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (92.2%) said they thought the commitment was either extremely important or important, while 0.9% said they thought the commitment was only slightly important or not important at all.

How important do you think this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council?

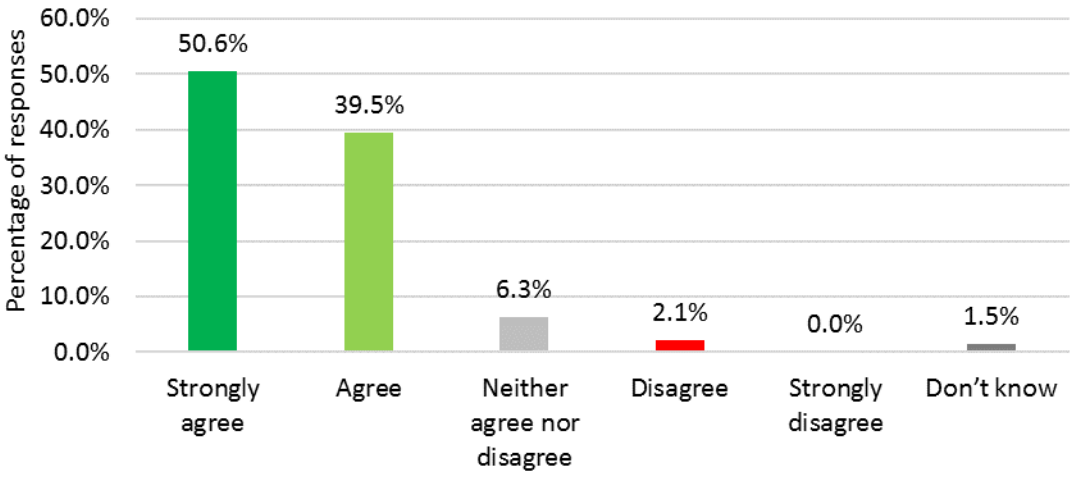


122. **Key Commitment 2: Better, brighter futures** - *"Caring for our young people, providing them with a high-quality education and opportunities to help them flourish".* Our Priorities to achieve Commitment 2 are:

- Ensure every child has equal access to a high standard of education
- Assist the Children's Trust to provide higher standards of support
- Promote better training, further education and employment opportunities for young people

123. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities. There were 334 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (90.1%) said they strongly agree or agree with this commitment and its associated priorities, while 2.1% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

Do you agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities?



124. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 138 comments made in relation to this question.

125. There were 97 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comment. Over a third of responses were comments of general support, with respondents feeling that children and young people are the future and need to be supported and invested in to help improve their future and future generations. It was felt that children should have a good start in life, including providing sufficient early years support. However, a few respondents felt the Council would not be able to deliver and would be lacking the funding and staff in order to obtain this commitment. Several respondents said they would like to see more information, including how these priorities will be achieved.

126. Many respondents commented about education and its importance, they commented how young people deserve an inclusive and high quality education. It was mentioned that education and training should be provided in locations where needed to provide sufficient places for the ever increasing population and that access to schools is equitable. It was also mentioned that quality of education should be across the board and that the pandemic highlighted inequalities.

127. Related to education, a few respondents commented on the need for appropriate places in schools for children with additional needs. It was said there needs to be sufficient support for schools and specialist staff to provide appropriate assistance to children with specific educational needs, and closer monitoring of the support.

128. Several respondents commented on the need to support the health and wellbeing of the children and young people, including their mental wellbeing.

129. Several respondents comment on the training and further education for young people and wanted to see easier access to these opportunities, and that this should cover a broad range of job roles to give young people a wide choice of future career paths. Those respondents that mentioned employment opportunities said there needs to be suitable jobs available within the region, and that adequate career advice is provided within secondary schools. It was commented that training and employment opportunity should not be limited to just young people but open to older adults too.

130. A few respondents mentioned children's social care and felt it could be improved. It was also commented that the Children's Trust should be working in closer partnership with schools.

131. Of the 12 organisations/groups who commented as to why they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', there was some comments of general support, as well as a request to see the detail as to how the priorities will be measured. It was also commented that youth services have seen a decline in funding over previous years. Respondents said they want more joint working with the Children's Trust and education and health; training and further education to be readily available to adults and not just young people; investment in parenting skills; and their value of quality education.

132. There were four comments made via the Group Facilitator Feedback form as to why they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'. Respondent were supportive of the commitment and felt it would need the support of partners to be able to deliver. It was suggested special educational needs and disability (SEND) be included. It was also suggested the priorities should include that 'every child regardless of ability or disability, has equal access to a high standard of education'. And that the second priority should be replaced with 'Work with our partners including the Children's Trust to provide high standards of support needed for children and families'.

133. There were 16 individual respondents who said they 'Neither agree nor disagree', that made comment. These respondents made various comments including the importance of the Council as a corporate parent; that similar support should be available for older people too; children should be able to access education within their own locality; that not all children are academic; that extra-curricular activities should be available; and that this is simply not a priority to them.

134. The one organisations/groups who ticked 'Neither agree nor disagree' did not make comment. No Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

135. There were six individual respondents who said they either ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’, that made comment and they made a variety if comments including requests for greater commitment to help improve education and special needs services; that the commitment should include adults too; and that community safety should feature.

136. The one organisation/group respondent that made comment said the Council should be striving for ‘exemplar’ and not just ‘higher’ or ‘better’, and that tacking childhood poverty should be a priority.

137. No Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’.

138. The three individual respondent who said ‘Don’t know’ and made comment said the actions should be measurable; questioned how these services would be funded; and asked how the Council could influence academy trusts.

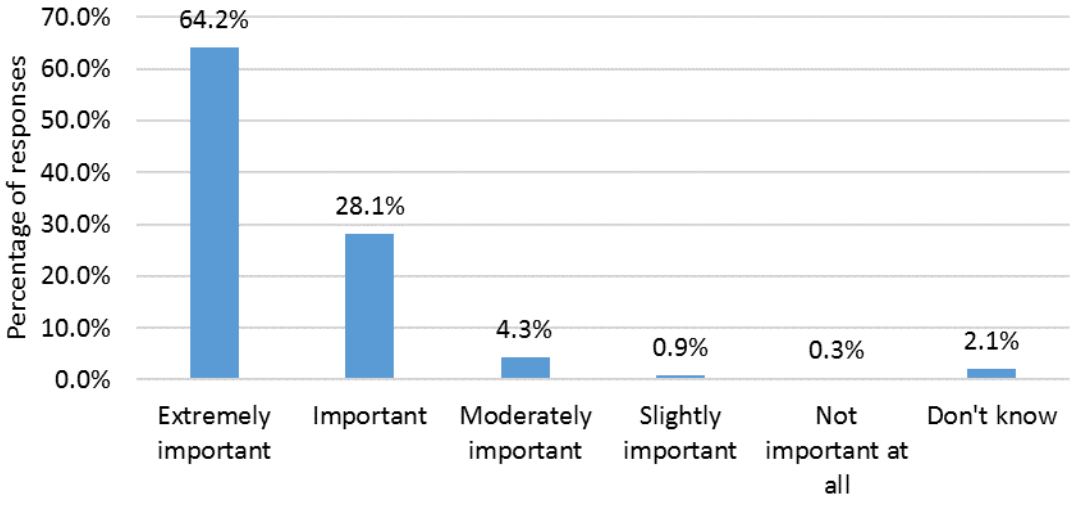
139. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback form respondents said they ‘Don’t know’.

140. Specific suggested changes/additions to the commitment/priorities also include:

- Explicit mention of early years
- Explicit mention of SEND
- Explicit mention of childhood poverty
- To aim for excellence as this is greater than ‘better’
- Promote children in health, sport, leisure, music, performing arts and creative arts.
- Reference to ensuring every child has equal access to a high standard of education, within their local community where possible.

141. Respondents were then asked how important they thought this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council. There were 327 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (92.4%) said they thought the commitment was either extremely important or important, while 1.2% said they thought the commitment was only slightly important or not important at all.

How important do you think this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council?

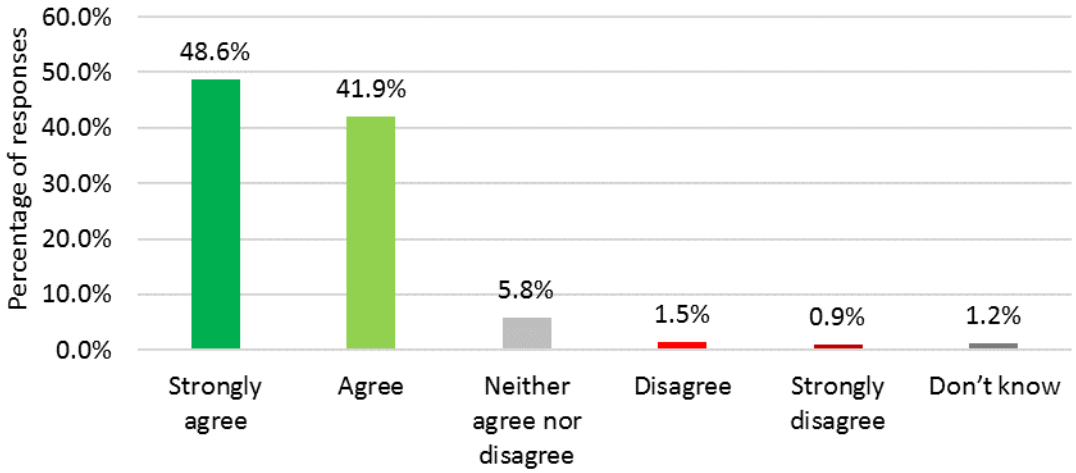


142. **Key Commitment 3: Safe and thriving places** - *"Enable a thriving and successful economy that shapes great places to live, learn, work, and visit"*. Our Priorities to achieve Commitment 3 are:

- Strengthen the cultural identity of our towns, villages, and rural communities
- Help town centres and villages respond to changing trends
- Attract tourism, visitors, and inward investment
- Support the creation of high-quality, better skilled jobs
- Improve the standard of new and existing homes and ensure housing supply meets demand
- Tackle the causes of difficult issues leading to nuisance, crime, and anti-social behaviour
- Promote sustainable, active travel
- Maintain our highways infrastructure to keep people moving safely around North Northamptonshire
- Enable people to travel across North Northamptonshire and beyond
- Ensure everyone has access to high-speed internet connectivity

143. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities. There were 329 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (90.6%) said they strongly agree or agree with this commitment and its associated priorities, while 2.4% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

Do you agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities?



144. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 152 comments made in relation to this question.

145. There were 132 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comment. Many responses were comments of general support, with respondents feeling the commitment and its priorities are all positive and vital and liked the priority of strengthening the regions cultural identity. Although a small number of respondents felt there was a lot of priorities and questioned if the Council would be able

to deliver. A few said they want to see more information, including how the priorities will be achieved.

146. Many respondents commented on travel and highways infrastructure. Respondents felt public transport should be more affordable and frequent; with improved bus routes – especially in rural locations; and that the local area would benefit from improved railway connectivity. Highway maintenance was frequently mentioned with respondents want to see more investment in road repair. There was also a request for greater transparency in the highway maintenance scheduling. Respondents requested the necessary infrastructure to support active travel, including improved cycle ways and footpaths. During their feedback respondent's comments included rural and environmental issues associated with the above.

147. A similar number of respondents mentioned housing and the importance of sustainable, affordable homes. It was commented that local infrastructure should increase in line with the amount of new housing and population growth, and that environmental impacts need to be considered when planning new housing developments. It was also commented that existing housing stock should be well maintained.

148. Several respondents made comment about community safety and crime reduction and the need for communities to feel and be safe. Respondents said how they wanted crime, including knife crime and anti-social behaviour to be reduced. It was suggested the Council work in partnership to help tackle crime. Respondents also wanted more visible policing.

149. A similar number of respondents mentioned the various town centres in the area and felt these needed much support and investment to make them a place people want to visit and shop out of choice and not necessity. It was commented that town centres are competing with out of town shopping centres and, with the loss of several large branded shops, more needs to be done to make them attractive and vibrant places to visit.

150. Several respondents mentioned tourism and felt there is scope for investment in leisure, tourism and rural green space that would make the locality more attractive for people to visit from outside of the region, creating an opportunity to bring money and investment into the area. It was also commented that more local events should be held, including in villages.

151. A few respondents commented on the creation of new jobs and felt the Council would need to work in partnership to meet this goal. Respondents also commented that there is a variety of industries and employers within the region and the Council should support the creation of a variety of job roles.

152. A couple of respondents mentioned the priority of high speed internet connectivity, with differing views of its importance. It was considered there are inequalities in internet access and knowledge.

153. A couple of respondents also mentioned inward investment and felt it important.

154. Of the 16 organisations/groups who commented as to why they either ‘Strongly agree’ or ‘Agree’, there was some comments of general agreement. These respondents also highlighted their support of the priority to strengthen cultural identity, and want this to include the local environment too. The reduction of shops within town centres was also commented on, as was the need for more affordable housing and facilities to aid rural communities. Respondents mentioned the need for improved infrastructure to support new housing developments, as well as a strategy for routing road traffic away from villages. Concerns over community safety was also mentioned as was the need for a good local economy and prosperity.

155. There were three comments made within the Group Facilitator Feedback form as to why they said either ‘Strongly agree’ or ‘Agree’. One respondent said there needs to be sufficient funding, especially within social care. Another respondent said there needs to be a commitment to both affordable housing and an increase in the amount of social housing that is available through more house building; that more bus services should be available; and that highway maintenance should be proactive and not reactive. The third respondent commented that strengthen towns and villages cultural identify brings with it the opportunity of social development too; and that support for blue light services should be included as should ensuring accommodation for homes for people with disabilities is suitable.

156. There were ten individual respondents who said they ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, that made comment. These respondents made various comments including a sense that there are too many priorities listed under one commitment, and that some of these are considered more important than others i.e. placing the need to reduce crime should be of a higher priority than attracting tourism. It was also felt responsibility to deliver some of these priorities sits with other agencies instead of the Council. A couple of respondents felt more should be done to encourage the use of public transport. It was also commented that more information, including targets should be published.

157. There were two organisational/group respondents who made comment as to why they ‘Neither agree nor disagree’. One said there were too many priorities listed; the other said strengthening the cultural identity of our towns, villages, and rural communities may distract focus on the collective area when making policy decisions; and that housing and transport connection between towns is key.

158. The one comment within the Group Facilitator Feedback form as to why they said ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, explained that whilst supportive of the priorities public transport should be explicitly mentioned and that the comment on housing needs include the need for affordable housing.

159. There were six individual respondents who said they either ‘Strongly disagree’ or ‘Disagree’, that made comment. Again it was commented that there are too many priorities under one commitment. Other suggestions included suggested changes to the priorities as included below and doubts that the commitment will be delivered.

160. The one organisational/group respondent who disagreed and made comment said the commitment is too wide covering and some priorities could be included under other commitments.

161. No Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

162. The two individual respondent who said 'Don't know' and made comment said the actions should be measurable; and more information is required to be able to comment.

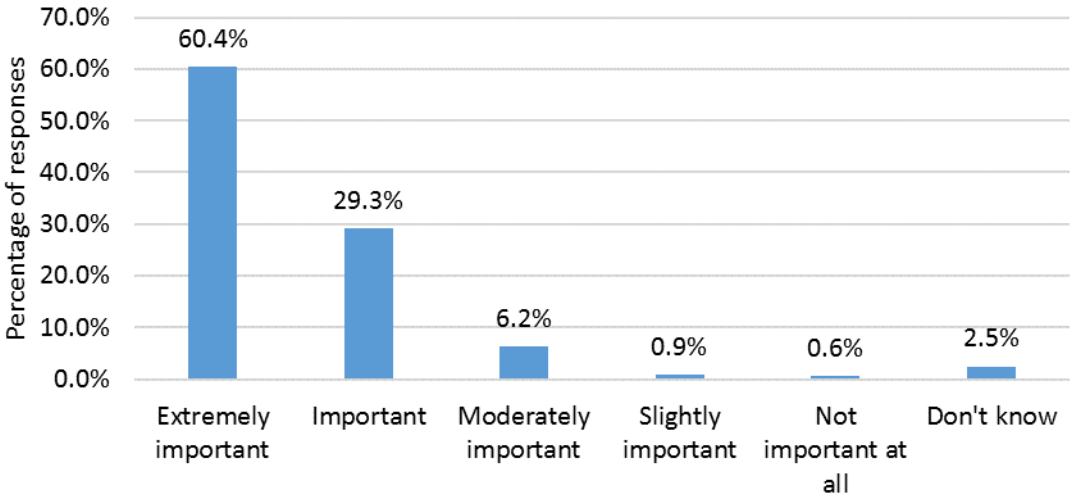
163. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Don't know'.

164. Specific suggested changes/additions to the commitment/priorities also include:

- Reference maintain highways infrastructure in a timely manner and be transparent about planned maintenance work
- To write the commitment so the word economy is not first as that implies the economy shapes the place i.e. 'Shape great places to live, learn, work, and visit, with a thriving economy'
- That the use of the word 'safe' is too frequent and out of context. Suggested alternative is 'Create and enhance thriving places'

165. Respondents were then asked how important they thought this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council. There were 321 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (89.7%) said they thought the commitment was either extremely important or important, while 1.6% said they thought the commitment was only slightly important or not important at all.

How important do you think this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council?



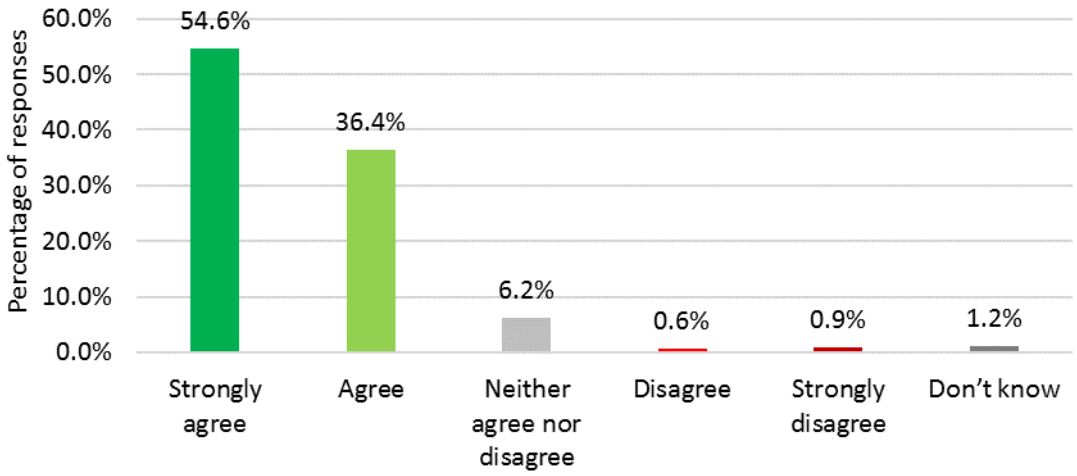
166. **Key Commitment 4: Green, sustainable environment** - *"Taking a lead on improving the green environment, making the area more sustainable for generations to come"*. Our Priorities to achieve Commitment 4 are:

- Work with communities and businesses to tackle climate change and improve air quality
- As an exemplar to other organisations, demonstrate clear leadership on tackling sustainability

- Embed low carbon technology, sustained and improved green infrastructure, and sustainable forms of transport fit for the future
- Protect and further enhance the natural environment and ecology
- Ensure we all throw away less, reuse more, and recycle as much as we can
- Protect the countryside and ensure it is accessible for everyone to enjoy

167. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities. There were 324 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (91.0%) said they strongly agree or agree with this commitment and its associated priorities, while 1.5% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

Do you agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities?



168. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 144 comments made in relation to this question.

169. A total of 115 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', made comment. The most common responses were requests that the Council should lead by example, with sustained action on what was considered an important local, national and global agenda. Some of these respondents said the Council was in a position where it could make its own informed decisions about the climate change agenda which in turn meant that it had to educate others and lead change. Respondents expressed the Council needed to be creative in its approach, that it had to work flexibly with its employees, the public and other stakeholders to achieve this commitment.

170. The second largest area of comments centred around the green infrastructure and land use. Many commented on wanting to protect North Northamptonshire from over development. They also commented that green spaces made North Northamptonshire attractive to many. It was felt these 'green' features of the area should not be lost. New developments – residential and commercial – should be sustainable and balanced with green technology built in, with green spaces incorporated into their design and transport infrastructure. Some felt that the natural environment needed protecting and cherishing but that it needed better management too. A few respondents mentioned specific spatial site areas which were of concern to them.

171. Several respondents said they agreed with the commitments intention but felt that the achievement of priorities would be challenging. Some questioned the ability of the Council being able to deliver the commitment and considered it too aspirational. Some said that lack of financial funds would impact delivery, whereas others said that delivery was interlinked to wider national and global issues that the Council could not influence. A few respondents also said that they needed more information and detail about the priorities, and that the goals and any targets set needed to be shared widely so the Council's success could be measured.

172. Several respondents said that they were not sure that the Council ought to be using the word 'exemplar' within the second priority, although they accepted that the Council could positively advocate the green agenda. They suggested the Council could achieve this by the standardisation of services and policies across the North Northamptonshire area. It was felt communication messages about this commitment had to be simple so everyone knew what the Council was doing and stood for.

173. The respondents that expressed their views on educating the public about the climate agenda mostly cited services such as recycling, waste management, planning and land use as areas where they thought the Council could make the greatest impact. Again, they felt the Council should lead by example. They said that local business/ business partnerships support was key in succeeding to deliver this commitment. A few respondents gave their suggestions to areas of service improvement or chose to share their general views on climate change/ environment.

174. Those individual respondents who mentioned air quality and air pollution were concerned about traffic congestion; the number of cars that households have; and the state of parking and upkeep of roads and highways. They mentioned issues of bio diversity, and their views of the negative impact in reduction of woodlands and the countryside. Some felt that rural identity was being lost. Increases in population along with volume and growth of traffic leading to increases in pollution and damage to the wider environment.

175. There were 13 organisations/groups who indicated either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', and provided comments. The most common responses were around general support for the commitment. Some felt it was a good start but needed further detailed targets and goal setting. Others said this commitment should underpin everything the Council does and planned to do. A few of the respondents were reserved in their thinking of whether the Council would be able to deliver on its intention, with some suggesting that the Council would be eventually judged on its performance. Others made reference that acting locally would impact globally, with other comments adding that people and businesses culture, practice and behaviour also have to make and drive positive changes.

176. There were four comments made within the Group Facilitator Feedback form as to why they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comment. They said the Council should be the leader in a greener future. Another stated that the second priority implies that the Council is already an exemplar to other organisations tackling sustainability, but they felt this was yet to be evidenced, and thought the Council should instead set priority two as an aspiration. Two respondents conveyed views on the time framework by which the Council could say it was carbon neutral. A comment was also made about the difficulty in getting the public to respond to playing their part, consistently, to improving recycling.

177. There were eight individual respondents who said they 'Neither agree nor disagree', and provided comment. Their comments varied from wanting to see specific service improvement to overall Council policy on climate change. The cost of parking charges within Council owned green spaces were mentioned. These respondents felt the charge to be too high and unaffordable to some, resulting in the Council also compromising its health and wellbeing agenda. Another said that the Council had provide more detail about which specific data it would use to measure environmental impact. Another commented on wanting the Council to seek expert advice on sustainability and ecology on climate change in relation to policy and any specific project developments. Other respondents mentioned littering and the lack of enforcement and compliance with the law; questioned the use of the word 'exemplar'; and said they felt the climate change agenda should be the responsibility of everyone.

178. The one organisation/group respondent who said they 'Neither agree nor disagree' did not comment as to why. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

179. There were two individual responses who said they either 'Strongly disagree' or Disagree' that provided comments. One asked for more local infrastructure to improve local travel choices. The other commented on the language being used, and thought the Council should use the term climate emergency instead of climate change.

180. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree'.

181. There were two individual responses who said 'Don't know' that made comment. They both said the Council should provide details on its plan, targets and measures which underpinned the commitment, before they could comment any further.

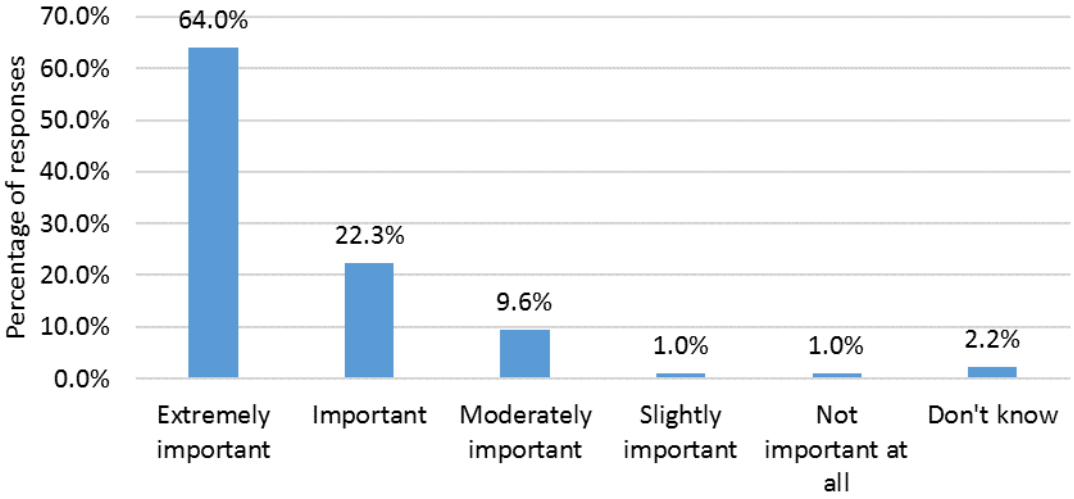
182. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Don't know'.

183. Specific suggested changes/additions to the commitment/priorities also include:
- To include health and wellbeing as a priority such as ensuring green spaces offer opportunities to be active and improve mental health
- That light and noise pollution be a priority with the priority four i.e. 'protect and further enhance the natural environment and ecology'
- To add that the Council signs up to climate emergency protocol
- To add the Council 'demonstrate clear leadership in sustainability strategies and carbon reduction tactics'
- To explicitly mention green space as a priority
- To list the priorities in order of importance and that the last two priorities listed should be moved to second and third on the listing
- Specifically mention 'attempt to reverse ecological decline and using resources for nature recovery'
- Reference how the Council would help mitigate the decline of the natural world
- It was suggested that priorities four and five were similar and could be combined

184. Respondents were then asked how important they thought this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council. There were 314 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (86.3%) said they thought the commitment was either extremely important or

important, while 1.9% said they thought the commitment was only slightly important or not important at all.

How important do you think this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council?

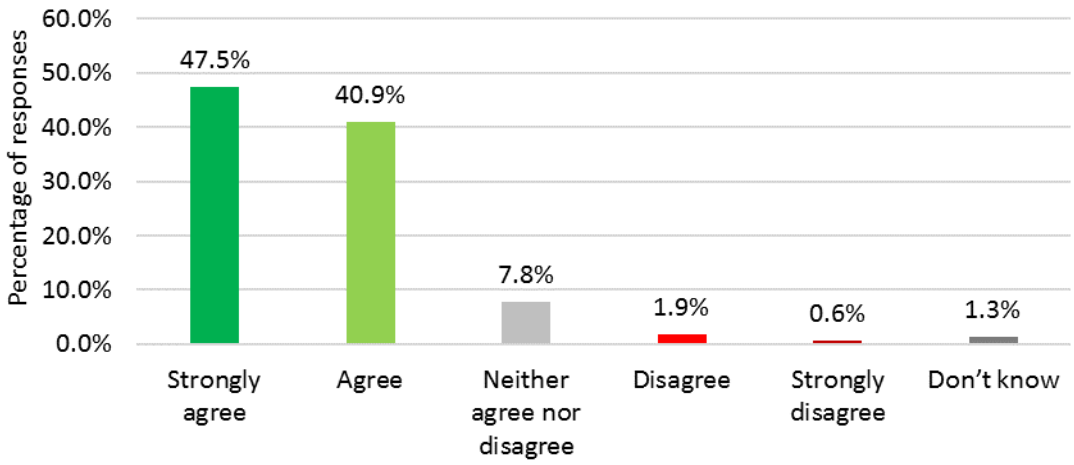


185. **Key Commitment 5: Connected communities** - *"Ensuring our communities are connected with one another so they are able to shape their lives and the areas where they live"*. Our Priorities to achieve Commitment 5 are:

- Inform and listen to our communities, giving them a greater say in their future
- Respect and engage our local communities
- Empower a thriving voluntary and community sector

186. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities. There were 320 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (88.4%) said they strongly agree or agree with this commitment and its associated priorities, while 2.5% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

Do you agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities?



187. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 125 comments made in relation to this question.

188. There were 93 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comment. Many comments centred around the value of the community and voluntary sector. Many respondents also said the Council should engage respectfully with people and stakeholders, as this would result in communities and individuals taking pride in their Council.

189. Many respondents had a general view about 'community empowerment' recognising it as a good thing for the Council to embed in its operations. This type of policy model meant taking joint ownership of issues which results in a joint responsibility of them. Some pointed out that this modelling had been tried before in differing ways and its sustainability was dependent on the Council's true alliance to the model. Respondents said that to achieve success the Council had to work in partnership to enable communities and its various community organisations to build their capacity too. This would enable community infrastructure to be further developed and that both the Council and its community and stakeholders could become equitable partners. Some respondents felt that at the moment the relationship was not fair and was balanced in favour of the Council being the predominant partner.

190. Several individual respondents were concerned that the voluntary sector did not end up doing the work that the Council was supposed to do, and said the voluntary sector was not a replacement service for the new Council. They added that without the investment in the community and voluntary sector the commitment would not be achieved. Others said that the Council would save money in the long term if the community and voluntary sector were involved and invested in fairly and properly.

191. Several individual respondents agreed with the principles of the commitment and its associated priorities but found them too aspirational. They found it difficult to see how the Council would achieve the commitment and its priorities. Other respondents pointed out that all type of people, communities and stakeholders needed to have a fair chance to be involved in Council matters. They said that this would require the Council to look at its communication methods and channels and make them accessible and available to all. They said the Council had to connect and share information with its residents and other stakeholders and that the Council ought to work 'bottom up' rather than 'top down'.

192. A few individual respondents felt that more collaboration and more consultation/ involvement with various stakeholders was important and would be welcomed if the Council was genuine in its interaction. They said that communities and people have to feel that the Council is listening to them and that at the same time the Council is involving them in things that matter to them. These respondents further stated that canvassing local opinion was essential if the Council did not want to exist in its own vacuum. Some respondents expressed that without engagement and communication none of the commitments would be achieved.

193. A couple of respondents felt that they required more information and detail on the commitment to fully understand what the Council was wanting to achieve. They questioned past relationships the various sovereign councils had with its stakeholders, with some saying that they Council should operate with better intentions and outcomes if the Council was committed to what it was stating it wanted to achieve.

194. There were 13 organisations/groups who said they 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' and made comment. Respondents said that Parish and Town Councils had to be mentioned and that the Council had to improve its communication, engagement, partnership and involvement channels with them. Some respondents said local communities are thriving in the North Northamptonshire area and had a lot to offer the new Council. A few mentioned that without this wider community infrastructure, public authorities would not be able to deliver its various public services. A respondent mentioned having a healthy relationship in which neighbourhood based groups were valued. They added that empowering communities and voluntary sector could make a real difference to things that matter to communities and their areas however, this required sustained financial resourcing. Another respondent said that the sense of community was now more important than ever if the new Council was fairly representing the whole of North Northamptonshire.

195. There were three comments made within the Group Facilitator Feedback form as to why they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree'. They mentioned building local pride, especially in the locality in which they lived. This commitment enabled the various geographical areas of North Northamptonshire to be bought together as one. Respondents stated that information should flow freely between the various tiers of local government and that opportunity should be taken to acknowledge Town and Parish Councils role in community leadership and assisting in local engagement and consultation opportunities.

196. There were eight individual respondents who said they 'Neither agree nor disagree'. On the whole they said that the commitment was hard to deliver, not clear and some found it confusing in how it defined the word community. They said the commitment did not match the priorities stared, and that there should be more focus on connecting communities with each other and not just with the Council. Another commented that local authorities were not very good at listening to people.

197. The one organisation/group respondent who stated they 'Neither agree nor disagree' and made comment said they felt that some communities would stay separate. They also said that the Council itself had to improve first.

198. No Group Facilitator Feedback form said they 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

199. There were five individual respondents who stated they either 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree' and made comment. These respondents felt the priorities were not tangible, that they could not be achieved as the connection to communities has been lost or that communities should be resolving problems themselves. Another respondent questioned the level of engagement and involvement of communities and felt more could be done.

200. The one organisation/group respondent who said they either 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree' commented that although they agreed with the commitment they wanted the

priorities to be stronger. They wanted to see an explanation as to how the connection would happen between the Council and communities.

201. No Group Facilitator Feedback form said they 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree'.

202. The one individual respondent who said 'Don't know' and made comment said the actions should be measurable.

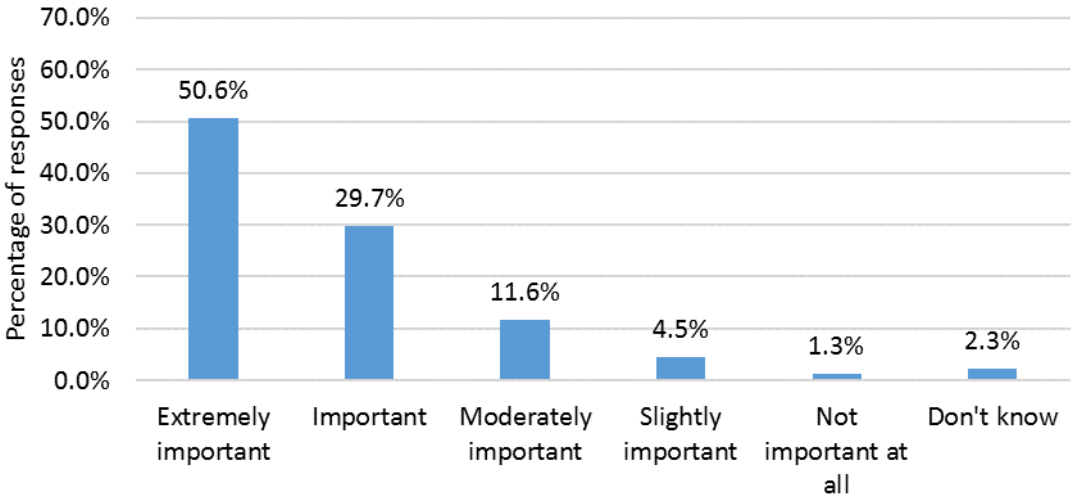
203. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Don't know'.

204. Specific suggested changes/additions to the commitment/priorities also include:

- To insert a priority about improving communications lines/ channels
- That the first and second priorities seem to similar to each other

205. Respondents were then asked how important they thought this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council. There were 310 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (80.3%) said they thought the commitment was either extremely important or important, while 5.8% said they thought the commitment was only slightly important or not important at all.

How important do you think this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council?

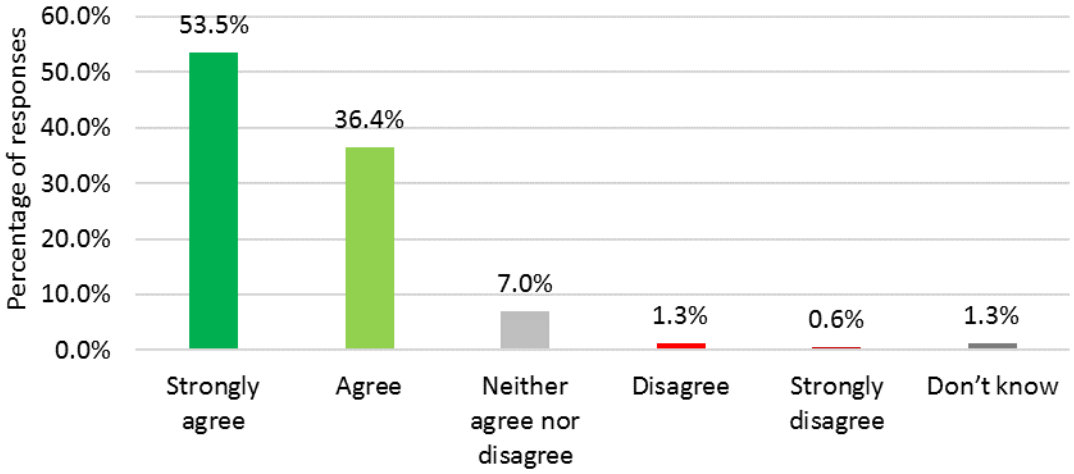


206. **Key Commitment 6: Modern public services** - *"Providing efficient, effective, and affordable services that make a real difference to all our local communities"*. Our Priorities to achieve Commitment 6 are:

- Provide good quality and efficient services valued by our customers
- Enhance the services provided at our community hubs
- Value our staff and become an employer of choice
- Use our assets, skills, knowledge, and technology to make a real difference
- Robust financial and performance management

207. Respondents were then asked to what extent they agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities. There were 316 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (89.9%) said they strongly agree or agree with this commitment and its associated priorities, while 1.9% said they strongly disagree or disagree.

Do you agree or disagree with this commitment and its associated priorities?



Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 122 comments made in relation to this question.

208. There were 95 individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comment. From these just under a quarter said it was an important commitment which effected the delivery of rest of the Corporate Plan. They felt it would ensure quality and was important to deliver and embedded as Council practice, that would make residents feel valued. It was also commented that the Council should be transparent with its financial resource management; and that this commitment provided a good benchmark both for officers and elected members from which they could measure their performance. However, a few of these respondents quested the ability for the Council to deliver. They said trust had to be built up about the new Council's ability to be efficient.

209. Many individual respondents who agreed provided comments which implied they were commenting as Council employees/ staff. Consistently these respondents expressed their want to be valued and sufficiently paid and trained to be able to provide a good public service. A few said their teams had been reduced and/or resources depleted; with some feeling a lack of connection to their new authority, which some stated had not been helped with the pandemic and working from home. Respondents also commented that employees had an important role to play in being connected to the public. Job satisfaction and being able to work to the employee's best ability was seen as important if the Council was to become an employer of choice which has a sustainable, efficient and effective workforce.

210. Several individual respondents directly mentioned that financial management and financial trust were important for the Council, citing the inherited financial management from the previous county council. Respondents were concerned that poor financial

behaviour should not be allowed to continue. They said the Council should set robust, realistic and transparent targets, which were subject to constant public scrutiny and accountability.

211. A similar number mention the Council's service provision. Some said that if services were to be trusted then this would result in a call for less intervention or emergency services as people would feel that they could approach services earlier. In this way, they added efficient service delivery should be a cornerstone of the commitments as it was about use of public finance. Respondents also requested more buses for towns, a commitment to waste reduction and the Council making a difference within the locality and local community.

212. A few Individual respondents who commented about community hubs did not know what the term meant. From those that did know, they commented that opportunities with community hubs included collaborating and working with other partners and stakeholders.

213. A few individual respondents said they want the Council to make the most out of technology and that lessons can be learnt from working styles put in place during the pandemic and how services could be provided in different ways, such as self-serve.

214. A similar number of respondents stated that they needed more information about this commitment and its priorities in order to make further comments. Some commented on the use of communications – both internally and externally – to help understand services and what the Council is doing. Comments were also received on national issues about the way in which public money is used to finance the general running of local councils. A couple of individual respondents wanted the Council to invest in local community assets and use a social value model to help effectively deliver public services. Others stated that the Council did have assets that it could invest in and be creative in service provision which in turn could have a positive impact for staff as well as recipients of services.

215. Of the 10 organisations/groups who said they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comments, the most common responses were around building a new council and not repeating previous poor financial management. They wanted accountability throughout the organisation. Organisations also commented that they wanted services to be delivered equally and with fair opportunity across the region, including service access in rural areas. At the same time, some added that it was important to be clear on what services are being delivered and to whom and that when services were being delivered, they were being delivered efficiently by highly skilled staff. A couple of respondents said they agreed but commented on cultural change being required for this commitment which they felt was going to be hard to achieve.

216. There were four comments made within the Group Facilitators Feedback form as to why they either 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', that made comment. One response questioned the use of the word customers and said the term implied choice which they felt was not applicable to residents and members of the community. It was commented that staff should be valued, supported and retained, enabling the Council to build a workforce that employees are proud to be a part of. One response felt that modern public services meant bringing back services to in-house provision and not outsourcing services. One response

said the Council should include a statement on creating and maintaining a robust planning and financial management system with supervision and oversight.

217. There were 8 individual respondents who said they 'Neither agree nor disagree', that made comment. They provided various comments, including low Council staff morale; and that they felt the commitment and priorities presented were meaningless or that this should be expected behaviour and practice of the Council. A couple of respondents questioned the affordability and efficiency of services; the cost of local taxation; and balancing traditional and modern communication methods.

218. No organisation/group respondent gave comment as to why they 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

219. No Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Neither agree nor disagree'.

220. There were three individual respondents who said they either 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree', that made comment. One respondent said the information presented was not specific; and they did not know what a community hub was. Another was concerned with the collection of personal data; and a suggestion of streamlining the workforce and privatisation. Another questioned if the Council knew what its asset and skills set really were; and felt the technology used at the Council was limited and that any spend the Council make should be considered carefully.

221. The one organisation/group respondent that commented stated they disagreed raised various issues within their comment. They said they agreed with the commitment to some extent but felt the priorities did not fully reflect the commitment as it was missing the point about the Council as an organisation needing to be modernised; that it needs to reflect a new 'one council culture'; and that the Corporate Plan needs to be expressive about improving diversity at both executive and leadership level so it was reflective of the community it serves.

222. No Group Facilitator Feedback form said they 'Strongly disagree' or 'Disagree'.

223. The one individual respondent who said 'Don't know' comment that any actions should be subject to measurement.

224. No organisations/groups or Group Facilitator Feedback forms said they 'Don't know'.

225. One individual respondent who did not answer whether they agreed or disagreed with the previous question still provided a comment, which stated that the Council should not promise what it cannot be delivered.

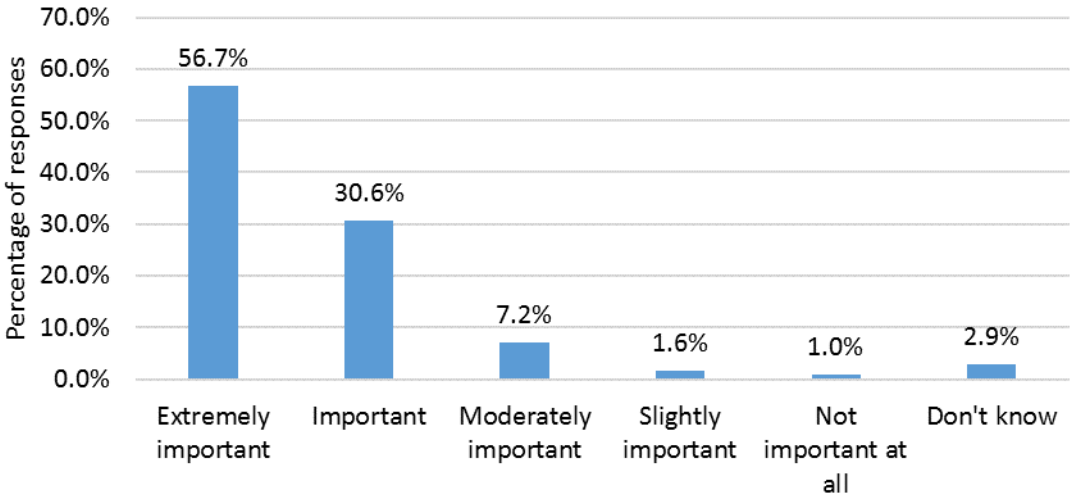
226. Specific suggested changes/additions to the commitment/priorities also include:

- Adding 'invest' to the third priority
- Adding 'a very' to the fifth priority
- Commitment 2, the community hubs reference would better sit in Commitment 5
- Commitment 4, that 'making a real difference' is not clear and suggested it should be linked to delivering commitments of North Northamptonshire Council
- Commitment 5, to be changed to 'manage finance and performance robustly'

- Wording to also include: create and maintain robust planning, financial management, supervision, and oversight
- Wording to also include: valuing, supporting, and retaining staff across organisations and service areas

227. Respondents were then asked how important they thought this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council. There were 307 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (87.3%) said they thought the commitment was either extremely important or important, while 2.6% said they thought the commitment was only slightly important or not important at all.

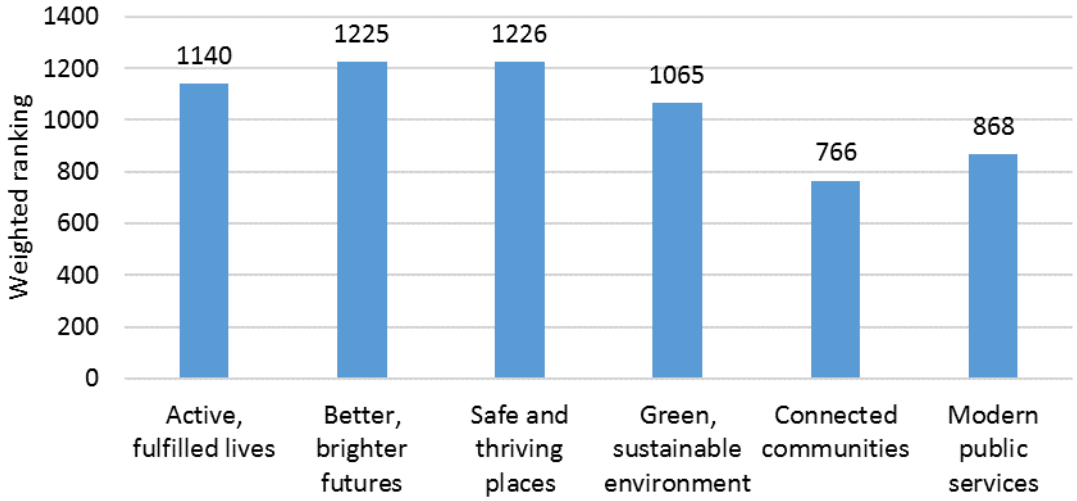
How important do you think this commitment is for North Northamptonshire Council?



Ranking of Commitments and their associated priorities

228. Respondents were then presented with the six commitments and were asked to rank each of them in order of importance, with 1 being the 'most important' and 6 being the 'least important'. Respondents were not able to duplicate the same rank for more than one commitment. There were 298 responses to this questions. The feedback received to this question has been analysed and weighted in accordance of how respondents ranked each commitment, with the most important receiving the largest weighted value and so on. Commitments 1 to 4 were regarded as the most important with 'Safe and thriving place' being regarded as the most important, very closely followed by 'Better, brighter futures'. Connected communities was regarded as the least important.

To help us understand which of our key commitments are most important to you, please rank each of the commitments in order of importance, with 1 being the 'most important' and 6 being the 'least important'.

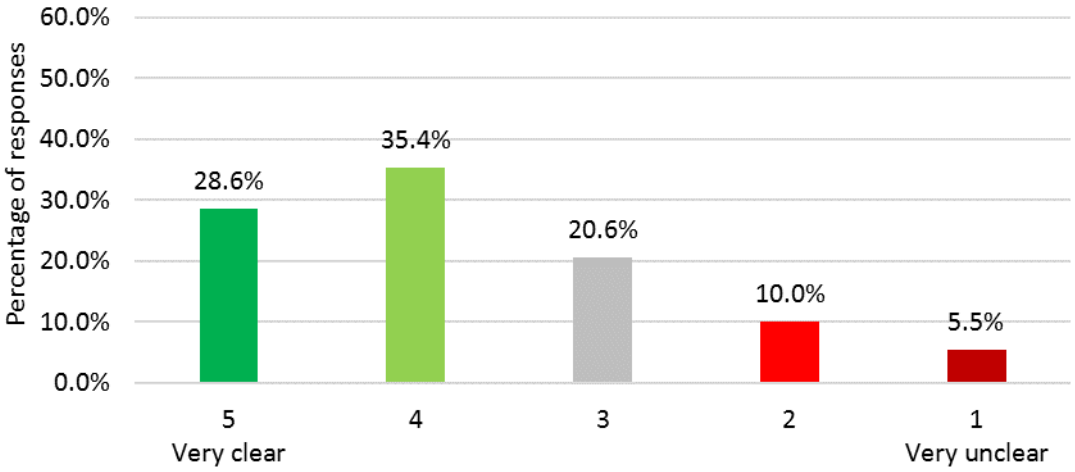


229. When applying this weighted ranked and limiting respondents to only choosing one rank of importance for each commitment shows a slightly different result when compared with the previous questions which allowed respondents to select the importance of each commitment separately. When considered separately 'Safe and thriving places' was regarded as the fourth most important commitment, however when respondents are limited within their choice and weighting is applied this then becomes the most important commitment.

Readability and language used

230. Respondents were then reminded that the draft Corporate Plan is a key document for the Council, and we want to make sure that everyone can understand it, and that the language and wording used is clear and easy to follow. Respondents were asked to rank the draft Corporate plan on a scale of 1-5, as to how clear they felt the Corporate Plan was to read and understand, with 1 being 'very unclear' and 5 being 'very clear'. There were 311 responses to this question. The majority of respondents (64.0%) thought it was clear (ranking it 4 or 5), while 15.4% thought it was not clear (ranking it 1 or 2).

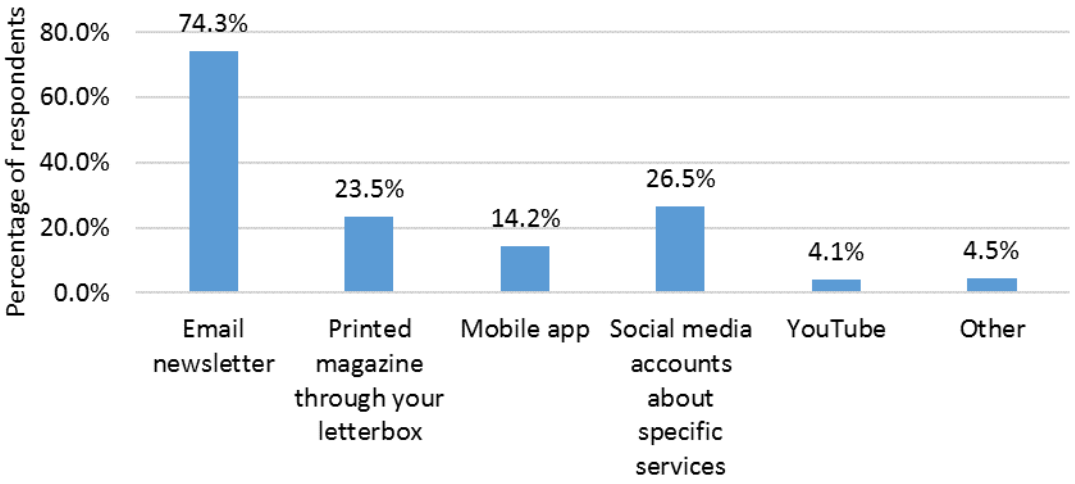
On a scale of 1-5, how clear was the Corporate Plan to read and understand? (1 = Very Unclear and 5 = Very Clear)



Staying connected

231. Respondents were then asked how they would like the Council to stay in contact with them. There were 268 responses to this question. Respondents gave a variety of answers demonstrating that they would like to be contacted via various methods, with the preferred method is via an email newsletter (74.3%). The least preferred method is via YouTube (4.1%).

How would you like for us to stay in touch with you?



Demographic information

232. Within the demographic section of the questionnaire organisational respondents were asked to provide more detail about their organisation by providing their organisations name and their job title/role. These respondents identified themselves as mostly Town and

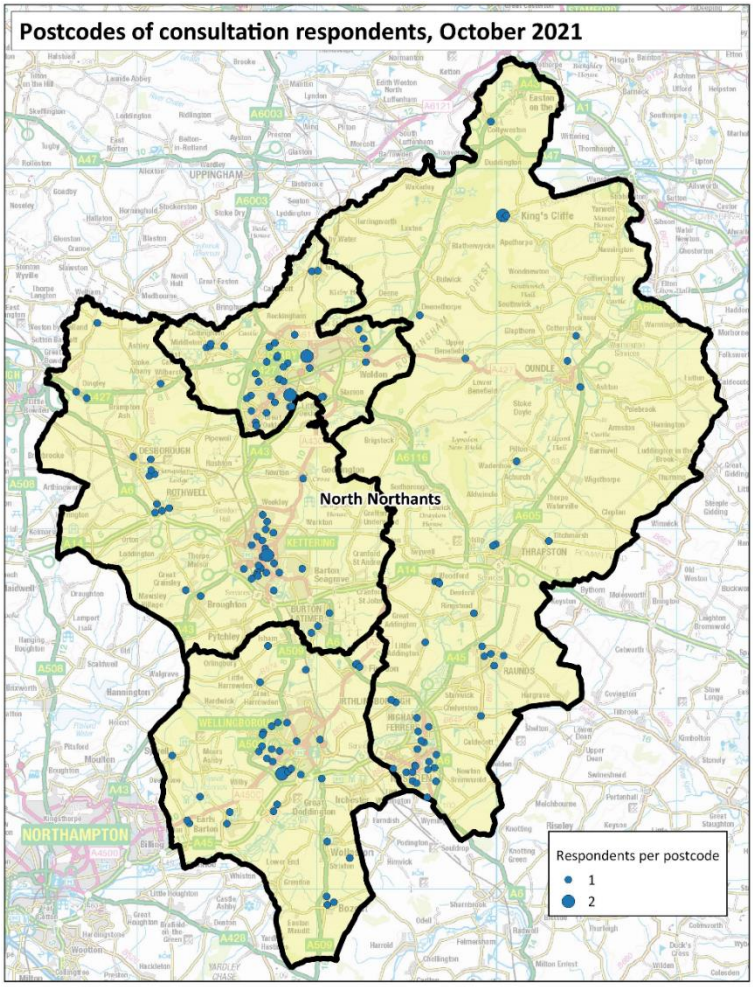
Parish Councils, voluntary sector organisations, local business and community groups. We have not listed the job titles/ roles of respondents within this report in order to ensure respondents' anonymity is retained.

233. Respondents who were not responding on behalf of an organisation were asked a range of demographic questions about themselves to help us understand the characteristics of people who have taken part in the consultation.

234. Many respondents chose not to provided their demographic information. From the data received by those respondents who did complete this section, the information demonstrates that the respondents are broadly representative of the population of North Northamptonshire, although some demographical areas received higher levels of representation than others. Full statistical data of the responses is available within the Appendix. The following is a brief summary of the data received.

235. Individual respondents were asked their postcode. There were 215 responses to this question and of the postcodes provided 168 were within North Northamptonshire, 22 were from West Northamptonshire and 25 were out of county or incomplete/ unrecognised postcodes.

What is your postcode?



© Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey licence no. 0100063687
Created by Business Intelligence, North Northamptonshire Council

North Northamptonshire Council

236. The majority of respondents were female (54.2%), with 40.5% being male and 0.8% saying Other and 4.6% saying 'Prefer not to say'. The most frequent age given by respondents were those aged between 50 to 64 years (34.2%).

237. A total of 62.9% of respondents were married, with 14.7% being single, 9.3% co-habiting / living together, 3.1% being widowed, 0.4% in a Civil Partnership; 1.9 saying 'Other', and 7.7% saying 'Prefer not to say'.

238. Other identified demographic information provided by respondents demonstrated that 16.8% were disabled, with physical disability being highlighted as the most frequent disability and mentioned by 29 of the 46 respondents who stated their disability. Predominantly respondents identified themselves as White British (88.0%), with 7.2% saying they were from another ethnic background and 4.8% saying 'Prefer not to say'. The most frequent religion identified was Christian (49.6%) with 41.0% of respondents choosing 'None'. A total of 85.6% described themselves as heterosexual, with 10.1% saying 'Prefer not to say', and 4.3% describing themselves as either bisexual, gay man or gay woman/ lesbian.

Other responses

Feedback receive via letters/ emails

239. There were four written response received in relation to the draft Corporate Plan consultation. Two of these were from individual and two were from organisations.

240. One individual respondent felt that, in relation to socially orientated areas, the draft plan was more reactionary and missed focus on prevention and early intervention.

241. The other individual respondent felt that 'Democracy' was missing from the draft plan. Focusing on their local area, the respondent felt that communities should be understood and listened to in regard to planning proposals. They also highlighted their perceived lack of enforcement and restrictions of heavy goods vehicles in their area; and said felt the health service was not meeting residents' expectations.

242. One organisational response was on behalf of a housing and care/ support service provider operating in the area. They welcomed the 'Improve the standard of new and existing homes and ensure housing supply meets demand' priority under commitment 3 and added the following suggestions for priorities; supporting delivery of affordable homes, improving the quality and design of new homes, and enhancing the natural environment (in relation to climate change).

243. The other organisational response was on behalf of a food production company based in the area. They agreed with and felt positive about the corporate plan and could see the importance of it for their business.

North Northamptonshire Council's Economic Development Business Member Organisations

244. North Northamptonshire Council's Economic Development Team ran a meeting of Business Member Organisations representatives for their views on the Corporate Plan.

245. The majority of attendees made comments about engagement with businesses. They felt that the plan should contain specific reference to engagement. Attendees highlighted the importance of sharing and dialogue and suggested engagement on diversity and inclusion as well as making services small business friendly. An attendee thought there should be a clear reference to supporting enterprise and entrepreneurship.

246. Several attendees raised that the draft corporate plan did not include the word 'Business' and felt it should. Several attendees also felt that a commitment to local procurement should be part of the plan, – including the digital sector. An attendee questioned whether the Council could quickly respond and adapt to worldwide changes. Another hoped the plan would lead to deliverables including for town centres.

Feedback received via social media

247. There were 19 comments made directly to our social media channels regarding the consultation. Several of these comments were general criticism of the Council and its elected Councillors. A couple of posts were people saying they were concerned for the environment and the impact future development may cause to the local countryside. A couple of respondents asked for harmonisation of the green waste scheme. A couple of respondents also asked for improved road repairs, with one wanting more average speed cameras to help keep the community safe. Other specific comments included a request for more bus routes in Wellingborough and improved broadband in Rothwell.