

SDS FUTURE OF THE REGION SURVEY Engagement report

March 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Spatial Development Strategy

We need a large-scale plan to make sure future development in the region provides the right kind of jobs, homes and transport links in the right places. The Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) will set out the vision for how people will live, work and play in the West of England over the next 20 years and will help us deliver our commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. It will influence where the homes and jobs in each local area will go and will be important in shaping future decisions on development.

The strategy will cover the area of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) area, which includes Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council.

The SDS offers an opportunity to plan for a cleaner, greener recovery, ensuring new development is resilient, contributes towards reducing carbon emissions, and brings improvements for nature and sustainability.

The SDS is a planning document and there is a legal requirement for WECA to produce this plan for the area. The SDS will contain a spatial strategy and strategic policies to address priorities for the development and use of land and will set the context for the three WECA local authorities' Local Plans. The Local Plans are being prepared alongside the SDS.

The Future of the Region engagement

In November 2020 we asked people living and working in the West of England for their views about the future of the region. The engagement was focused around a survey, which asked nine questions about the priorities for the Spatial Development Strategy.

Along with technical studies and evidence, the feedback from the Future of the Region survey will help shape the draft Spatial Development Strategy. The survey was not a formal statutory consultation on a draft plan, but an informal

engagement exercise to provide an opportunity for people to engage with the SDS at an early stage of development. The nature of the questions reflected this early stage of plan-making. The survey was structured around emerging objectives and high-level principles that will frame the SDS. The survey was available for six weeks between 3 November to 14 December 2020.

Throughout the six-week period the survey was promoted by WECA and the three constituent local authorities through the following activity:

- Notification letters were sent to key stakeholders, partners and MPs
- A social media campaign was promoted across the four authorities including targeted advertising to increase the reach of the survey
- Press release was shared with local media outlets
- An advertisement in local magazines was delivered door to door in 13 neighbourhoods
- A series of six online public webinars
- Email updates were sent to WECA and Council mailing lists (including planning, community groups, equalities groups and Town & Parish Councils)
- A communications toolkit was cascaded to partner organisations, Councillors and the WECA constituent authorities to support promotion of the survey
- Information about the survey was shared through regional networks

Six webinars were hosted while the survey was live to share information about the Spatial Development Strategy and provide an opportunity for people to ask questions and find out more about how to get involved with the informal engagement. Over 200 people attended the sessions and a broad range of topics were covered in the Q&A sessions. A summary of the questions raised and responses to them is included at Appendix A.

The survey was hosted online and primarily promoted using online channels. Due to Covid-19 social distancing measures, some traditional methods of engaging with local communities (such as pop-up stalls, attending community meetings, town hall exhibitions) were not possible. Anticipated gaps in reach (for example offline audiences, equalities groups and young people) were identified and online promotion of the survey was supplemented with offline alternatives. During the six weeks, people were able to request paper copies of the questionnaire via phone or email. Paper copies were provided with a return envelope to a free postal address to simplify and encourage completion of the survey. Offline promotion of the survey included traditional media as well as print adverts in local news publications.

A tightening of national coronavirus restrictions was announced on 31 October, just prior to the survey launch. This meant that some communications channels in the region needed to prioritise Covid-19 and public health messages and were less able to support the promotion of the survey. This may have had an impact on the reach of the survey to some communities in the West of England. However, the need to plan sustainably for the strategic recovery and growth of the region is more pressing than ever and our thorough communication plan ensured we achieved a significant response to the survey. National guidance is clear that planning authorities should adapt to Covid-19 restrictions and continue to promote effective community engagement to allow planmaking to progress and continue to enable the delivery of housing and economic growth that will support the UK's economic recovery¹.

Who took part in the Future of the Region survey?

A total of 1,329 respondents took part in the Future of the Region engagement. 1,310 people and organisations responded by taking part

in the survey. Ten of these were received by hard copy (post), eight were emailed and 1,292 completed online. A further 19 written responses were sent by email (not in the survey format).

The survey invited people to submit further information to support their responses, either through the survey platform or by email. 60 supporting documents were received from 56 respondents. All of these responses have been taken in to account and have fed in to this report.

Respondents by area

The largest number of respondents were from the Bristol area, followed by South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset. This is broadly in line with the population distribution of the region being more concentrated in the Bristol urban area. There was a fairly high (7.2%) number of respondents from the North Somerset authority area, reflecting the close relationship between North Somerset and the WECA authorities. 88 respondents gave postcodes outside the West of England region. These were largely from residents in neighbouring authorities or from organisations with registered addresses outside the WECA area. Responses were checked for duplicates and 12 responses were removed as a result.

Authority Area	Total	Percent
B&NES	295	22.5%
Bristol	592	45.2%
South Glos	241	18.4%
North Som	94	7.2%
Other	88	6.7%

Table 1: Survey respondents by local authority area

¹ Ministerial Statement made on 13 May 2020 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-05-13/HLWS231>

1. INTRODUCTION continued

The map at Figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents across the WECA area. There are clusters of responses in areas where there has been active engagement with previous plan making processes (such as the withdrawn Joint Spatial Plan) including Whitchurch, Charfield and Thornbury. The map highlights some areas of low participation which will inform future engagement activity (e.g. Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston, Hartcliffe and Withywood, Southmead, and some areas of the east fringe including Hanham and Kingswood).

Organisation responses

Whilst the majority (92%) of respondents were residents, 107 organisations also took part in the survey. Responses from organisations form an important part of the wider approach to partnership working to support the development of the Spatial Development Strategy.

Type of organisation	Number of respondents
Development sector (including agents, developers and land promoters)	33
Partner agencies (including non- government organisations, partnerships and infrastructure bodies)	18
Local businesses	14
Transport groups (NGOs)	13
Conservation, heritage and environment groups (NGOs)	11
Town & Parish Councils	7
Equalities groups	5
Residents groups	4
Political party groups (local)	3

Table 2: Type of organisation

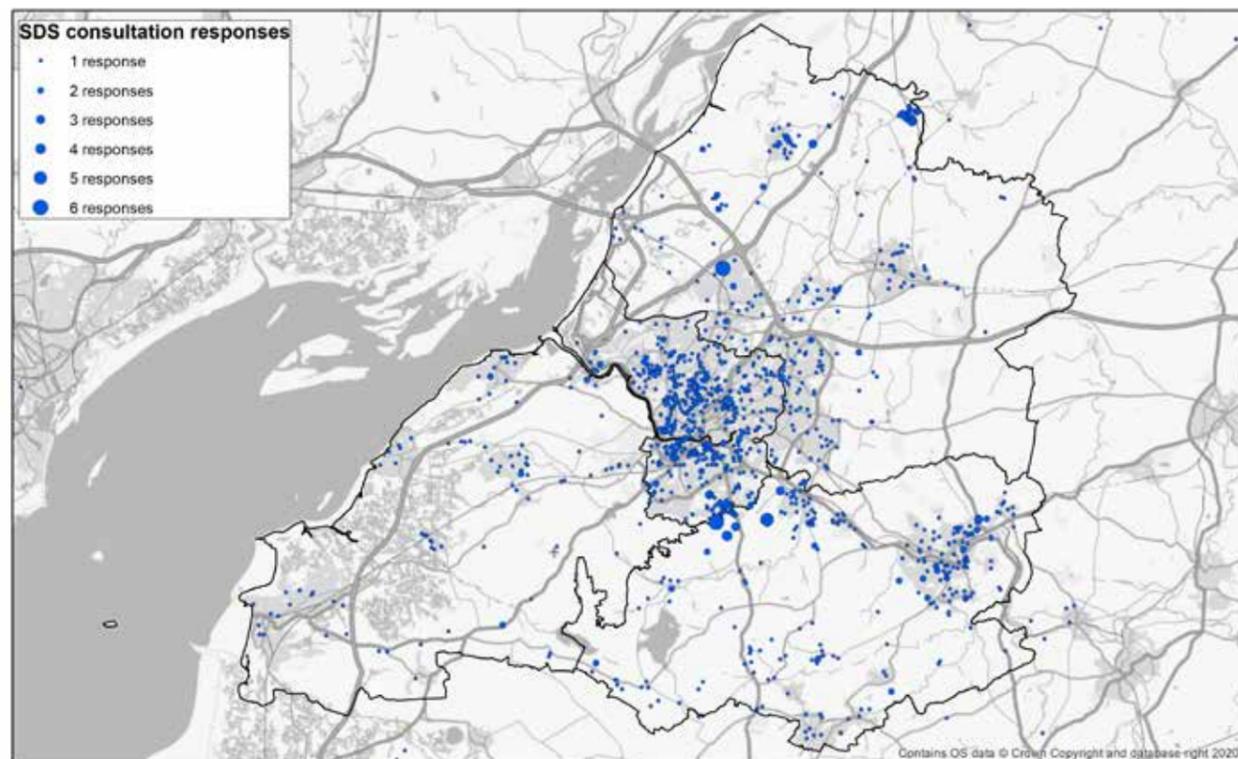


Figure 1: Future of the Region survey respondent postcodes

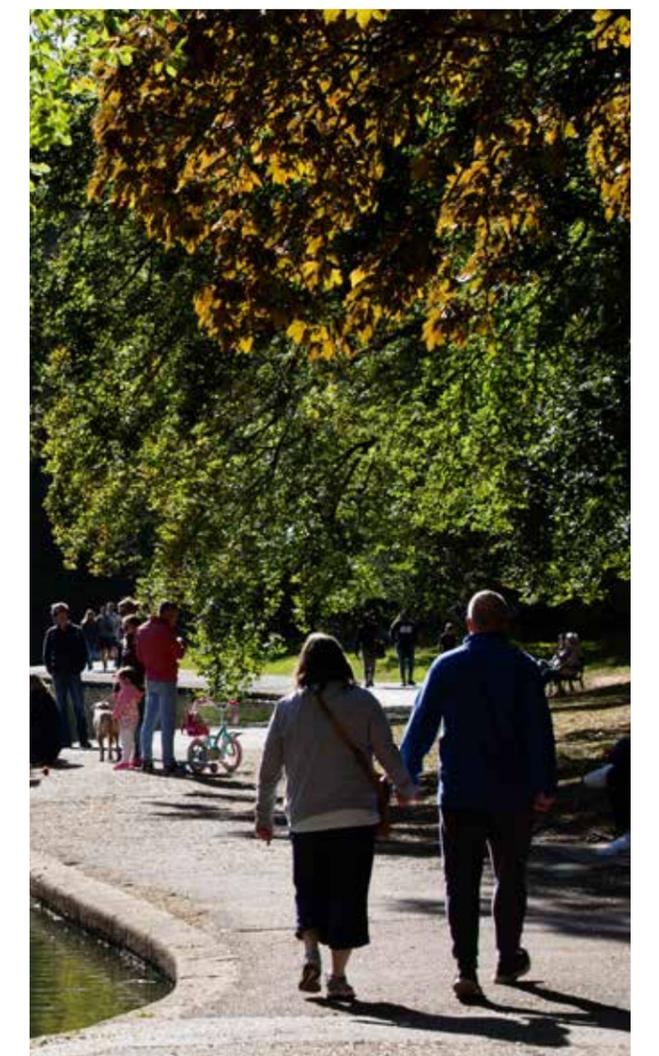
Equalities monitoring

Respondents were invited to complete equalities monitoring questions to support our understanding of views and needs across the region and monitor the reach of the survey. Equalities monitoring is provided at Appendix B. Our communications and promotion of the survey set out to encourage participation from a broad and representative section of the WECA population and extend the reach of our stakeholder engagement. Despite this, the equalities data demonstrates that there is significant under-representation of some groups, particularly from younger people, black and ethnic minority residents and women. Consideration of how these gaps can be addressed as the SDS progresses will inform future engagement and may include:

- Closer engagement with equalities groups and forums
- Engaging with young people to shape the approach to future engagement
- Early engagement with education providers to reach younger audiences
- Focused activity in some geographical areas of the region
- Improve accessibility of information (in 'Plain English' where possible)
- Better use of accessible and engaging formats such as videos and animations, and ensure images and language are inclusive of a wide range of audiences

The under-representation of some communities is a common issue with planning consultations, where 'engagement (in the planning system) traditionally comes from an older, educated and middle-class demographic²'. It is therefore noted that there are views and perspectives that will not be represented in this dataset.

This will be taken in to consideration in its use, recognising that some voices and perspectives may be sought in other ways such as through other consultation and engagement processes and local representation through elected councillors. It is also noted that some communities have been more severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, which may have impacted on the ability of some communities and groups to engage in the survey at this time, potentially reinforcing existing patterns of engagement.



² Royal Town Planning Institute: 'The Future of Engagement' (2020) <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/7258/the-future-of-engagement.pdf>

2. SURVEY FINDINGS

What were the overarching findings?

The scope of the *Future of the Region* survey included a range of important social, environmental and economic issues and highlighted opportunities for the SDS to contribute to the overarching objective of clean and inclusive recovery and growth.

Responses to each question are set out in section 3, but there are some clear themes that repeat throughout the survey responses:

- The provision of quality homes that are affordable is seen as a key priority for the region.
- The importance of providing space for wildlife and nature is rated very highly by respondents. Access to nature and green space is also a key concern.
- There are high levels of support for activity to address and prioritise responding to the climate emergency.
- A high-quality sustainable transport network is viewed as key to delivering a successful spatial strategy.

In general, the survey results demonstrated high levels of support across the emerging priorities and principles of the SDS.

How the survey responses will shape the Spatial Development Strategy

The SDS will be framed by *strategic objectives*, which will form the basis for future development of the region. The survey was framed under the emerging priorities below which sit under the overarching SDS objective of *clean and inclusive recovery and growth*:

- A cleaner, greener, more inclusive region
- Planning for recovery
- Providing homes and generating employment to meet the region's needs
- Responding to the climate emergency
- Responding to the ecological emergency
- Supporting sustainable travel

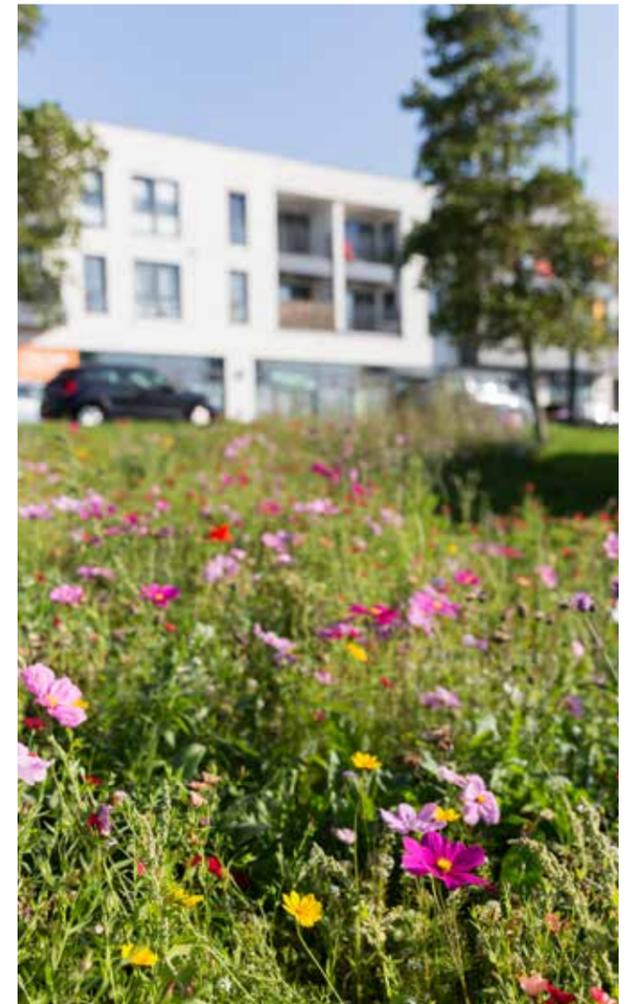
The results of the survey demonstrated high levels of support across these priorities, particularly in relation to the provision of quality homes that everyone can afford, wildlife and access to nature, responding to the challenges of climate change and ensuring a sustainable transport network. These priorities will help to inform how we approach the *clean and inclusive recovery and growth* strategic objective, aiding identification of key issues and the spatial planning approaches to resolve them, through directing the pattern, scale or quality of development and investment (e.g. infrastructure and environmental enhancement). The pattern and scale of development and investment will be mostly set out in the spatial strategy, and the quality of development will be specified in accompanying strategic policies.

Results from the *Future of the Region* survey are also feeding more directly into our thinking around how we develop the spatial strategy to help identify the most suitable broad locations for growth. For example, answers to Question three on the 15-minute neighbourhood will support our understanding of what people find most important to have access to locally, and will feed in to mapping opportunity that arises from the distribution of those facilities/amenities and new investment.

The scope of *strategic policy* in the SDS will be informed by identifying key issues and the spatial planning topics that can address them, influencing them in ways that the spatial strategy cannot. The *Future of the Region* survey is supporting the refinement and understanding of these topics, which cover a variety of environmental, social and economic themes that planning can influence, to ensure that growth meets the objective of being clean and inclusive.

Results from the engagement are also feeding into the *technical evidence* that will underpin and inform the SDS. The survey results support the understanding of some issues and potential routes to address them (including opportunities and challenges, such as feasibility or unintended consequences). Some additional information that was submitted is of direct relevance to our technical studies, and where this is the case, has been shared with technical teams and specialist consultants.

The results of the survey demonstrated high levels of support across these priorities, particularly in relation to the provision of quality homes that everyone can afford, wildlife and access to nature, responding to the challenges of climate change and ensuring a sustainable transport network.



3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION

Question 1

Which of the following statements do you consider to be the most important for the vision of the future of the region?

Participants were asked to rank a list of statements relating to the vision of the future of the region in order of importance. 1304 respondents completed this question. 'Everyone can access a quality home that they can afford' was ranked the most important more than any other statement, and 'wildlife is thriving, and everyone has access to nature' had the highest number of rankings of 1-3.

Figure 2: Future of the Region survey responses to question one

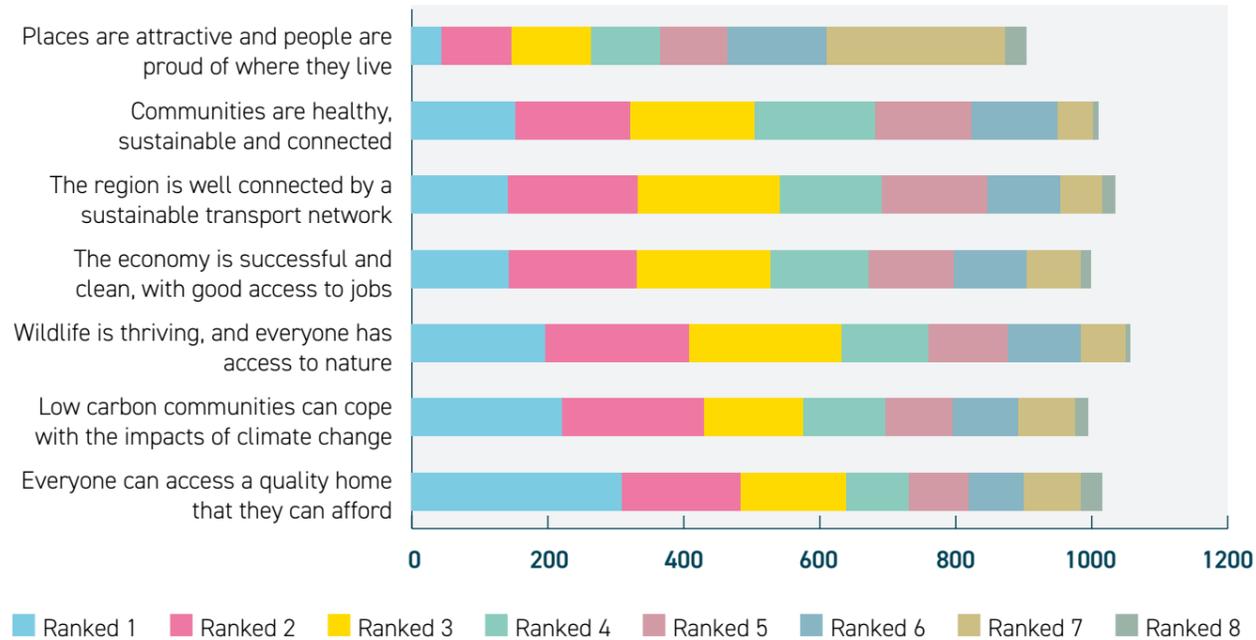
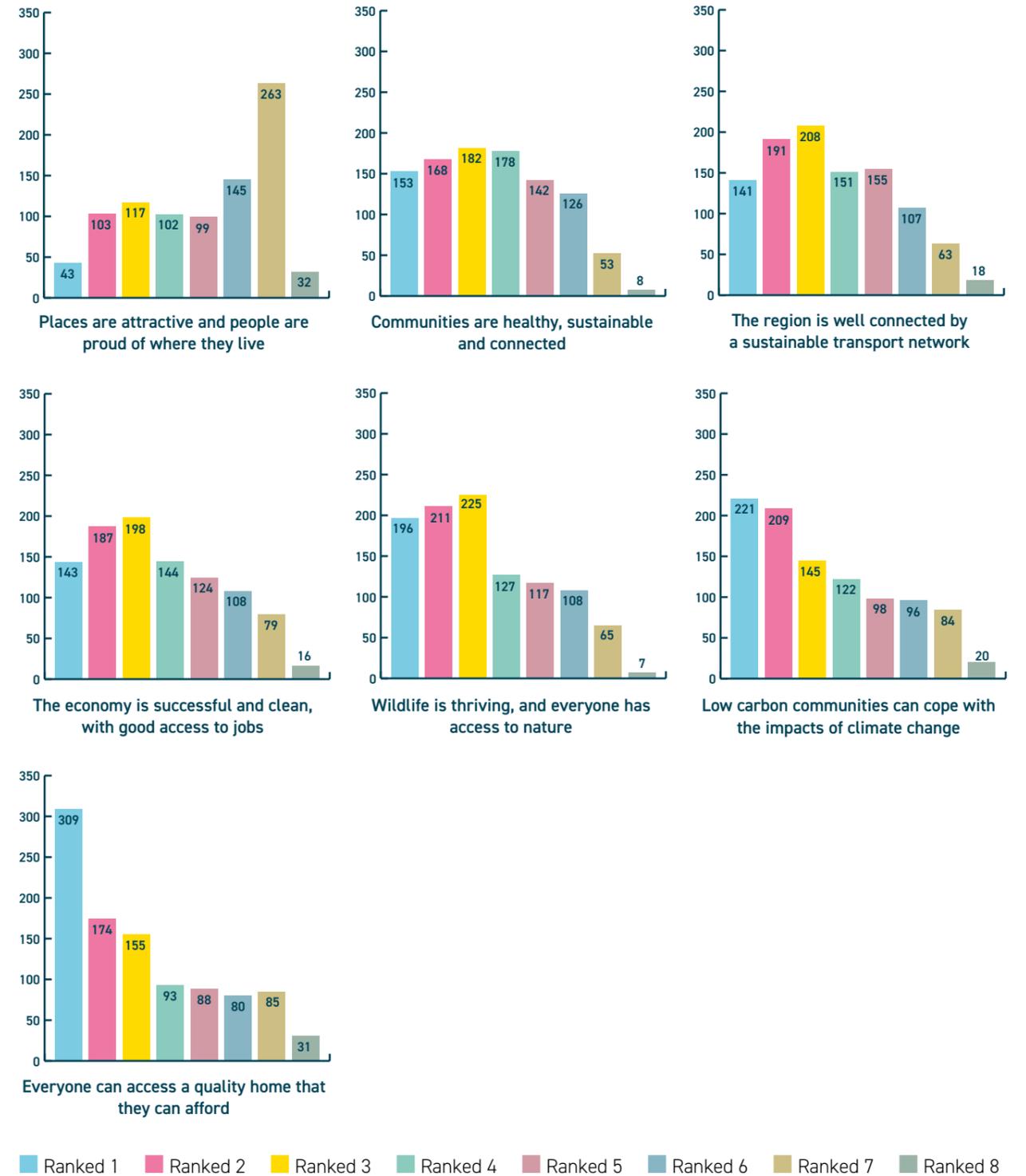


Figure 3: Question 1 results per statement



3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Additional responses

There were 242 responses to the 'other, please specify' question component, where respondents shared priorities for the SDS vision not captured in the statements provided. Some respondents used the box to add more detail to the priorities listed and others picked up issues that were covered later in the survey. 32 respondents noted that the priorities are interdependent and are all important, which made ranking them difficult. Responses to this part of the question have been categorised under broad headings and the most commonly mentioned themes are listed below.

Table 3: "Other" responses to question 1

What do you consider to be the most important for the vision of the future of the region? (other, please specify) Broad theme of responses	No of responses
Prioritisation of active/sustainable travel and reduction of car use	31
Mixed communities (housing and employment located close together) to reduce need to travel	19
Preservation of green space/countryside /nature	17
Protection of the Green Belt	17
Reducing carbon emissions to address climate change	16
High quality new development (heritage assets, local character, safe and healthy places)	11
Focus growth in urban areas / brownfield	11

The table demonstrates that sustainable transport is a key priority for many respondents, and highlights some of the important issues for local residents when considering appropriate locations for growth – these themes are picked up further under questions four and five. A number of responses picked up on the interdependencies between these issues, for example the provision of affordable homes near sustainable transport will contribute to economic security and health and wellbeing. Some respondents raised that a key objective of the SDS will be to bring forward a sufficient amount and variety of land to support the delivery of homes, which will underpin the SDS.

How will responses to question one shape the Spatial Development Strategy?

As identified by a number of responses, the priorities listed are all important objectives for the region, and many of them are interconnected. The responses provide a more nuanced understanding of what is of most importance to people who live and work in the area, for example highlighting that alongside the provision of homes, wildlife and access to nature are important priorities for many survey respondents.

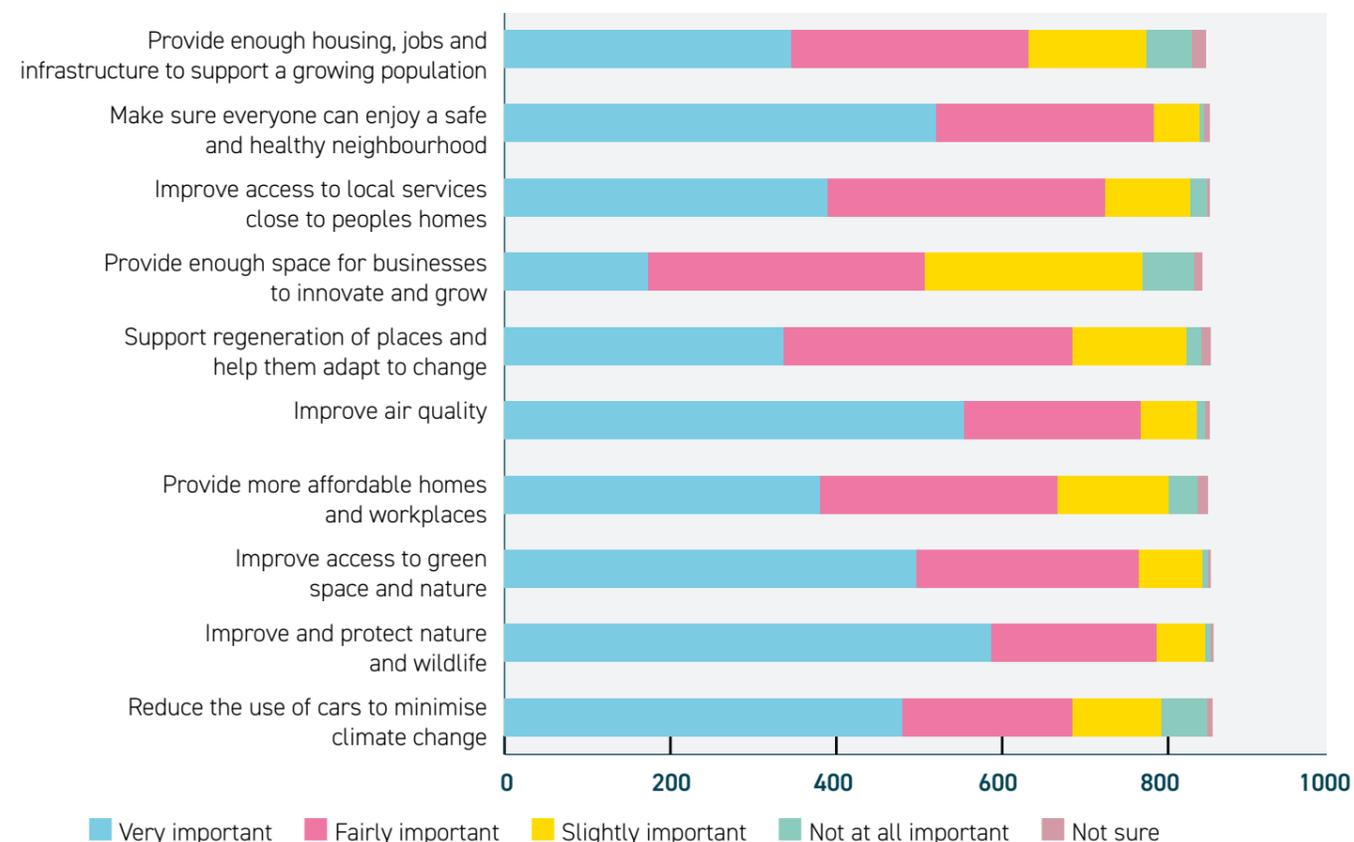
Question 2

How important are the following in planning for clean, inclusive recovery and growth in our region?

This question asked people to rate statements on a scale of importance. Each statement plays a role in achieving the overarching objective of 'clean, inclusive recovery and growth'. There were 1308 responses to the question, although not all participants completed each question component.

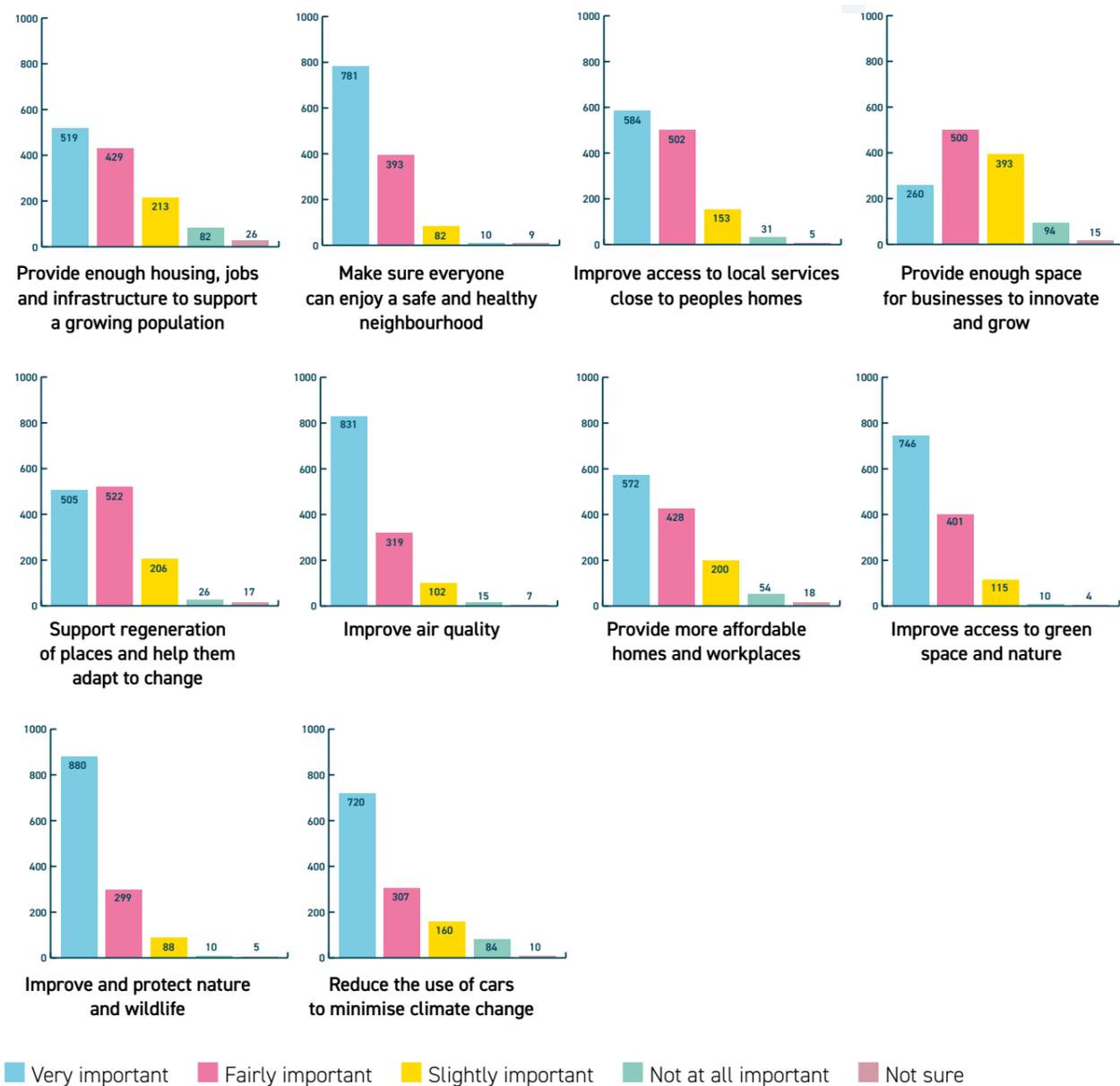
The statements with the highest number of respondents selecting them as 'very important' were 'Improve and protect nature and wildlife', which is in line with responses to question one, and 'Improve air quality', reflecting perhaps a growing concern for the impacts of air pollution on human health. Combining the 'very important' and 'fairly important' ratings shows that 'Improve and protect nature and wildlife' remains the highest rated statement, followed closely by 'Make sure everyone can enjoy a safe and healthy neighbourhood', 'Improve air quality' and 'Improve access to green space and nature.'

Figure 4: Future of the Region survey responses to question two



3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Figure 5: Question 2 results per statement



Additional responses

There were 265 responses to the 'other, please specify' question component, and the vast majority (89%) of people that answered this part of the question considered their answer to be 'very important'. These responses have been categorised under broad headings which are listed on page 15 to identify the most common themes.

18 respondents used the 'other' box to state that all statements were important and needed to be balanced to deliver a successful strategy. 22 used the opportunity to challenge whether large scale growth and development was required in the region - some were concerned about the anticipated scale of the region's housing growth and others felt that the rate of growth should be reduced in response to climate change and economic uncertainty.

Table 4: "Other" responses to question two

How important are the following in planning for clean, inclusive recovery and growth in our region? (other, please specify)	No of responses
<i>Broad theme of responses</i>	
Prioritisation of active / sustainable travel and reduction of car use	58
Address climate change	29
Focus growth in urban areas / brownfield	23
High quality, attractive places with local character, including preservation of existing heritage and local identity	20
Healthy natural environment / integrate nature in new developments	16
Mixed communities (housing and employment close together)	15
Protection of the Green Belt	14
Improved community involvement	14
Preservation of countryside / open space	10

A significant number of people added reference to active or sustainable travel, expressing that in order to 'reduce the use of cars to minimise climate change' a strategic, sustainable transport network is required. Respondents pointed to the existing deficit in current transport provision and quality, and the need to integrate sustainable and active travel in new developments.

Responses to climate change in the 'other' category reflected that responding to climate change was about more than transport and includes renewable energy, reducing emissions, adapting to a zero-carbon economy and constructing carbon neutral homes and buildings. The need to understand different needs of businesses in different locations was also raised.

How will responses to question two shape the Spatial Development Strategy?

Overall the responses demonstrate high levels of support for all statements, highlighting that the SDS must balance the need to address all these priorities and be opportunistic in finding ways to deliver against multiple objectives. The least prioritised statements were 'provide enough space for businesses to innovate and grow' and 'provide enough housing, jobs and infrastructure to support a growing population'. Despite being a lower priority for respondents these are key drivers for the SDS and will form a fundamental objective of the strategy. In the supporting answers to question three respondents did highlight the affordability of homes was highlighted as an important consideration, particularly in the context of the economic impact of Covid-19, which has amplified the need for secure, high quality homes.

3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Question 3

What features and facilities do you consider to be most important to access within easy reach (15-minute walk) of your home?

Survey respondents were asked to reflect on the things they felt were important to access within easy reach of their homes. The question was framed around the concept of the '15-minute neighbourhood' and reducing the need to travel by providing more local accessibility in communities. Although the concept is not new, the idea gained particular attention during the Covid-19 pandemic as restrictions on movement highlighted the importance of local access to key amenities. It also highlighted that easy access to goods, services and green spaces is not equal across communities. The question structure was a free text box so respondents could share as much detail as they chose. This question was answered by 1,102 respondents.

In the supporting text explaining the question, respondents were prompted to consider the following examples to aid with answering the question:

- local shops, schools and services
- green spaces, planting and trees
- places for social interaction and play
- places to work
- space for walking and cycling
- well-designed buildings

A considerable number of respondents (229) either expressed general support for the principle of the 15-minute neighbourhood or generally supported the list of examples provided. A number of respondents linked the 15-minute neighbourhood to wider social and environmental benefits such as supporting local economies, promoting health and wellbeing, addressing climate change by encouraging more walking and cycling, and supporting community cohesion by providing space for people to mix and socialise. Another theme that came through in many responses was addressing inequalities and providing local access to work, transport, services and green space.

Only 21 people expressed that they did not support the concept of the 15-minute neighbourhood. Reasons for this included concern it would be used to justify development in rural locations, that it may reduce mixing across communities and lead to containment of local areas, and that a focus on neighbourhoods should not be to the detriment to city and town centres and key destinations.

A number of respondents supported the principle but aired caution about its universal application. 45 respondents noted it may be less appropriate for rural communities where there may not be the population density to support a high number of shops and services and it was accepted longer journeys may be required to access some facilities. Some rural residents also noted that in recent years the loss of some services from villages (such as banks, shops and health centres) increased car dependency in those communities.

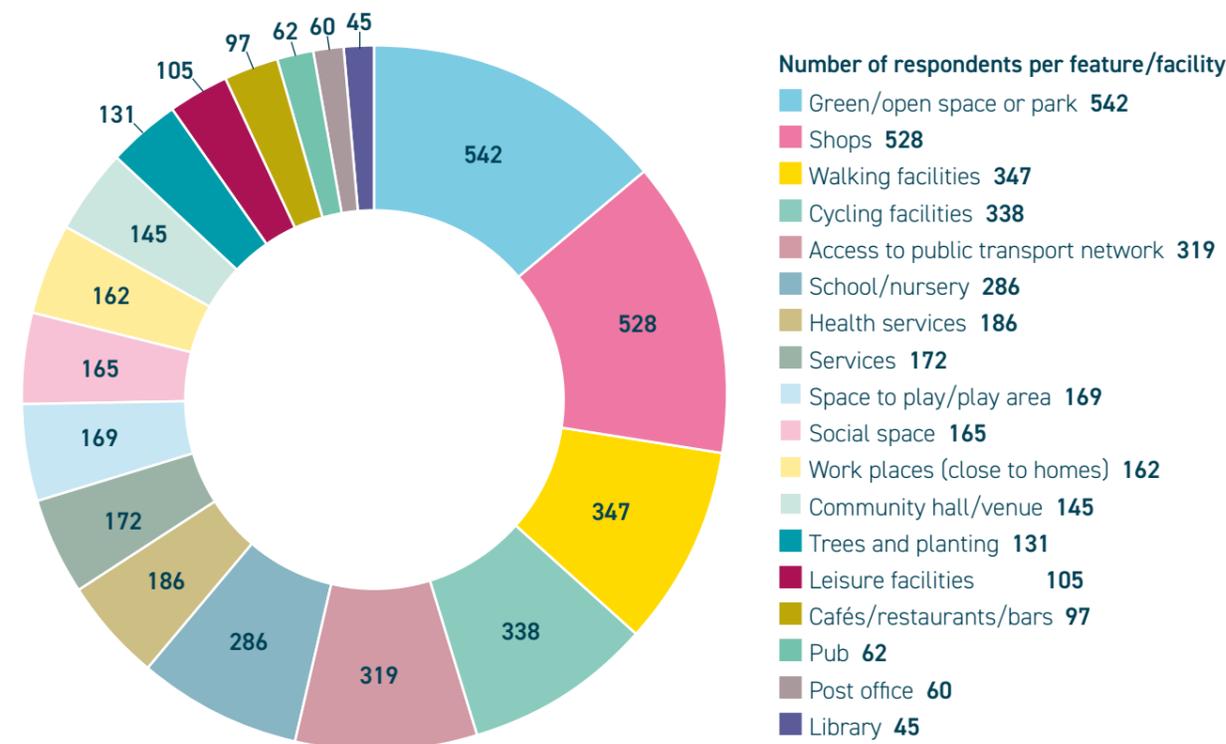


Figure 6: Future of the Region survey responses to Question 3

Some responses picked up on qualitative features of local neighbourhoods that the 15-minute neighbourhood might help deliver, as well as the physical amenities considered important.

- 142 respondents felt that neighbourhood accessibility should reduce the need to travel by car.
- 128 considered that nature and biodiversity should be embedded in local communities.
- 78 people wished to see more traffic reduction measures such as car free spaces or low traffic streets.

- 66 highlighted that neighbourhoods should promote health and wellbeing.
- 61 raised the issue of accessibility and meeting the needs of disabled and older people in local communities. Some people highlighted that for some people a 15-minute walk was not manageable, and therefore alternative transport provision must be available.
- 59 mentioned the need to address climate change at a local level.

3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Further narrative on some of the key themes is provided below.

Green Space and nature

The most frequently mentioned feature respondents would like to access close to home was a green/open space or park. Many respondents reflected on the importance of green space during the Covid-19 pandemic to provide a place for exercise, socialising safely, connecting with nature and supporting mental wellbeing. A few respondents raised concerns about loss of access to green spaces or potential for them to be used for development.

Nature and biodiversity were also mentioned a number of times, not just in relation to green space for recreation, but embedded in the design of neighbourhoods and the need to provide wilder spaces for nature to thrive. Trees and planting were mentioned many times as positive features of neighbourhoods.

Allotments and space for growing food were also mentioned a considerable number of times, separate to the function of parks and other green spaces. A further 13 respondents highlighted how space for local food production (at a larger scale than allotments) was important to address climate change and reduce food mileage.

Shops and services

Shops were the second most commonly mentioned features of a 15-minute neighbourhood, and these largely came with qualifying descriptors. Most respondents referred to 'local' shops, many to 'independent' shops and some described the types of shops they would like to have easy access to (most commonly cited were food, groceries, butchers, bakery). A small number of people (16) mentioned supermarkets. Another theme was around shops that were environmentally responsible (such as second-hand goods, local food, ethical products). This was reflected more broadly as a number of respondents made reference to supporting local economies and high streets, providing space for local

businesses to develop and improving the viability of local/independent shops.

Similarly, services were mentioned a large number of times. The health services most commonly referred to were GP practices but also included dentists, pharmacies and opticians. Other commonly cited services included a post office or post box, bank, cash machine, hairdressers, vets and car mechanic. Places of worship were also raised as an important feature to access within 15 minutes from home.

Transport

Walking and cycling were two of the most commonly cited requirements. The vast majority of responses qualified these with mention of the quality and safety of walking and cycling provision, through segregated and connected infrastructure, to facilitate more walking and cycling journeys. A small number of respondents felt horse riding should also be considered in active travel strategies, particularly in rural communities.

Likewise, public transport is a key priority and again was often qualified with descriptions such as affordable, reliable and frequent. A key theme in relation to the 15-minute neighbourhood was the acknowledgement that not everything can be provided at the neighbourhood scale in all areas, but access to the public transport network to connect to urban and town centres, as well as sites for employment, was viewed as important.

Reduction of car use and support for liveable neighbourhoods, traffic calming and reducing the dominance of cars on local streets was also a common theme. Clean air / reduction of air pollution was also mentioned a number of times. A small number of respondents felt that provision for cars, including improved road infrastructure and adequate car parking, were priorities. A number of references to anticipated changes to transport were made, for example the need for electric vehicle charging points and access to car share services.

Work, school and play

A large number of respondents felt it was not necessary for workplaces to be provided within all neighbourhoods, particularly in sectors such as industry, manufacturing and services which are best suited to non-residential areas. This observation was often followed by an emphasis on the need for public transport and safe walking and cycling provision to connect to employment centres and reduce the need to travel by car to access employment. A number of respondents referred to changes to working patterns during the Covid-19 pandemic. Respondents highlighted that increased rates of home working may have longer term consequences with less staff returning to full time office work. The need for quality digital connectivity, potential demand for localised work hubs / shared work spaces and a potential reduction in demand for city centre office spaces were raised.

Many people suggested nurseries and primary education should be within a walkable distance but accepted that secondary and further education could be further away, particularly if accessible by public transport.

Access to play was commonly mentioned. Often this included reference to provision of play



areas, but also included informal space to play and socialise for children and young people. Leisure and recreation included a broad range of activities but a common theme was about enabling exercise through sport facilities and safe spaces. This also links back to safe walking and cycling infrastructure which can be used for running and exercise. Other leisure facilities also included entertainment venues with many answers mentioning hospitality and community spaces that can be used for a broad range of activities, and arts and cultural venues.

Quality of homes and places

Respondents expressed that all buildings should be well designed, but it was not necessary for "well designed buildings" to be a feature of neighbourhoods. Some people expanded on this in relation to designing buildings that are low carbon and energy efficient, whilst others felt this was important in relation to reflecting local character. A few people raised concerns about the poor quality of new housing and the building of 'identikit' homes. The quality of public spaces, streets and public realm was mentioned a number of times, particularly in relation to ongoing maintenance and cleanliness.

Another theme in the responses around the quality of buildings was adaptability and flexibility. This was mentioned a number of times in relation to homes that are practical for an ageing population, reducing carbon emissions and anticipating changes in behaviour towards lower carbon lifestyles. Community buildings that could support a range of activities and services and therefore become more viable community resources were also suggested. Providing a mixture of types and tenures of homes to support inclusive communities and meet a range of housing needs was also a theme of responses, particularly in relation to affordability and supporting younger people. The affordability of homes was highlighted as an important consideration, particularly in the context of the economic impact of Covid-19, which has amplified the need for secure, high quality homes.

3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Locational principles

Some responses to question three, in particular from the development sector, reflected on how the principles of local accessibility and 15-minute neighbourhoods could be applied to the spatial strategy for the SDS. Some concerns were raised including:

- The principle of access to facilities should form part of the approach to assessing sites, but the strict application of a 15-minute walk as a requirement for deciding locations for new development should be avoided.
- Achieving '15-minute neighbourhoods' comes from effective mobility and transport strategies that link local centres both through radial and orbital connections.
- The concept is more applicable to Local Plans, or to inform the design of places rather than to determine where growth might be directed.
- It is difficult to justify which 'features' should be considered as part of the approach.
- The recognition that by allowing new development, sustainability can be enhanced and the opportunity to deliver facilities to support existing communities should be taken into consideration.

How will responses to question two shape the Spatial Development Strategy?

The Future of the Region survey offered an opportunity for survey participants to highlight what they felt were the most important amenities and services to access close to home. This allows us to develop a more specific understanding of priorities for local communities in the WECA region. This feedback will inform our thinking about how the accessibility and sustainability of locations will be assessed, and this will be tested alongside other important considerations that link back to the strategic objectives.

It should also be noted that the direct delivery of many of the features and amenities discussed falls outside of the scope of the SDS. The aim is for the approach to the SDS to include assessment of opportunities to support or enhance the accessibility of local communities.



Question 4

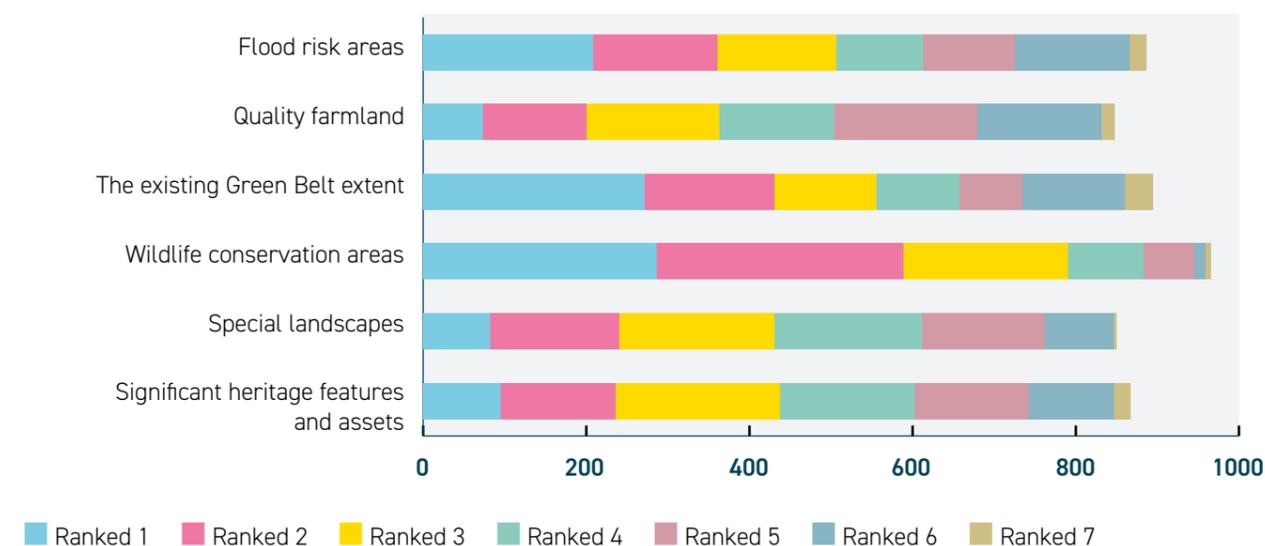
Which of these are the most important when deciding where new development should be limited?

Questions four and five both sought responses to some of the locational considerations that will influence where new housing and employment development will come forward in the WECA area. Maps were provided of some of the key constraints and to illustrate potential opportunities to help respondents answer the questions.

For question four, participants were asked to rank statements in order of importance. 1106 respondents completed this question.

'Wildlife conservation areas' emerged as the most important factor to respondents

Figure 7: Future of the Region survey responses to question four



'Wildlife conservation areas' emerged as the most important factor to respondents, having the highest number of first and second rankings, which is in line with the priorities from earlier questions. 'The existing Green Belt extent' received the second highest number of first and second rankings, although it also had a number of rankings of lower importance.

3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Additional responses

There were 171 responses to the 'other, please specify' question component for question four. These responses have been categorised under broad headings and the most common responses are listed in table 5. In addition, 39 respondents used the 'other' box to state that all considerations were important and ranking them was at risk of playing important objectives against each other, expressing that the factors need to be balanced to deliver a successful strategy. A number of responses either emphasised their support for the protection of the Green Belt, or suggested the Green Belt requires review – this is picked up under Question five.

Table 5: "Other" responses to question four

Which of these are the most important when deciding where new development should be limited? (other, please specify)	No of responses
<i>Broad theme of responses</i>	
Lack of transport infrastructure/connections	26
Focus growth in urban areas/brownfield	14
Capacity of existing communities to support growth	13
Preservation of existing green spaces, sports fields and allotments	12



Question 5

How important are the following when considering opportunities for new development?

1110

people answered at least one part of this question

Question five also sought views on some of the locational considerations for the SDS, focusing on potential opportunities for guiding sustainable development. Respondents were asked to rate a series of statements on a scale of importance. 1110 people answered at least one part of this question.

Figure 8: Future of the Region survey responses to question five



As with previous questions, the theme of wildlife and nature is the most highly rated consideration by survey respondents. This is closely followed by the importance of locating new growth close to public transport corridors. Fewer respondents rated 'Safeguard existing employment areas' as very or fairly important compared to other options, perhaps reflecting some of the narrative responses to earlier questions where mixed communities providing housing and employment close together emerges as a theme.

3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Views on the Green Belt

The responses to the 'review the Green Belt' option are more evenly dispersed than the other options. This is in line with the answers to question four where mixed views on the importance of Green Belt protection were expressed. It is also noted that the Green Belt is a technical planning term, and it is likely that not all respondents to questions four and five were fully aware of the designation and its role and purpose, and the role of Green Belt review (although supporting text was provided on the survey which aimed to help clarify this). This was echoed in some responses to the 'other, please specify' part of this question, where a number of respondents expressed uncertainty about the wording of the question or shared their view that the Green Belt should be protected but selected 'review the green belt' as very important. Therefore, the responses to the Green Belt options will be treated carefully alongside other considerations.

Narrative responses across the survey both to questions four and five and in supporting statements demonstrated mixed views on the topic of the Green Belt. A number of respondents expressed the value of the Green Belt to local communities to access green space close to urban locations, provide agricultural land and prevent urban sprawl and the merging of settlements. Other respondents felt that the Green Belt led to unsustainable patterns of development, whereby 'jumping' the Green Belt created longer journey times and transport challenges and could potentially cause harm to more valuable landscapes than some of those within the existing Green Belt. Some responses articulated that they felt a Green Belt assessment and review should be undertaken early in the SDS process.

Additional responses

Further common themes expressed through the 'other, please specify' part of the question are highlighted below:

- 54 respondents used this part of the question to share views on the interaction between transport and potential development locations. 11 of these respondents felt active travel (walking and cycling) links should also be an important consideration, 22 emphasised that access to sustainable travel should be a key factor. 12 respondents highlighted that the provision of new public transport should be a consideration and brought forward through the SDS.
- 29 responses reflected on the location of housing development in relation to employment. 14 of these expressed that housing and employment should be closer together and a further seven responses suggested employment centres should be more dispersed or focused on regenerating existing towns and peripheral centres. Reasons included a reduction in the need to travel by car, easing pressure on key commuter routes and providing employment opportunities in areas of deprivation.
- 26 respondents raised the prioritisation of brownfield sites and that development should be focused in urban areas with existing services, transport links and employment.
- 14 comments reiterated the importance of nature, special landscapes and countryside. It was highlighted that enhancing nature and wildlife may require safeguarding land outside of existing protected areas to enable the development of the nature recovery network.
- 11 respondents mentioned climate change, and in particular opportunities to focus on employment growth in green / low carbon industries and ensure carbon neutral development.

How will responses to Question four and five shape the Spatial Development Strategy?

As with question one, some respondents felt that ranking the options in question four was challenging. However, this allowed for more nuance to emerge from the responses and also reflects some of the challenges of accommodating what is likely to be a significant scale of growth in the WECA area. It will help shape thinking on how prioritising and balancing different needs can be achieved through the SDS.

Comments in response to this question, and throughout the survey, have raised the need to prioritise brownfield sites and urban locations for development. This will be the starting point for the SDS and is a core principle of national policy. However, the scale of growth anticipated and availability of brownfield sites is likely to mean land outside the existing urban areas will need to be identified. The responses also reflect high levels of support for a strategy that prioritises active and sustainable travel, and this will be central to the approach of the spatial strategy.

The differing views expressed on the Green Belt are acknowledged, and underline that the approach to Green Belt must be undertaken objectively and methodically. A strong national test of 'exceptional circumstances' will need to be passed before any development in Green Belt can be considered. If exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, an assessment of the current Green Belt will be undertaken in line with national planning policy and guidance.

Comments in response to this question, and throughout the survey, have raised the need to prioritise brownfield sites and urban locations for development.



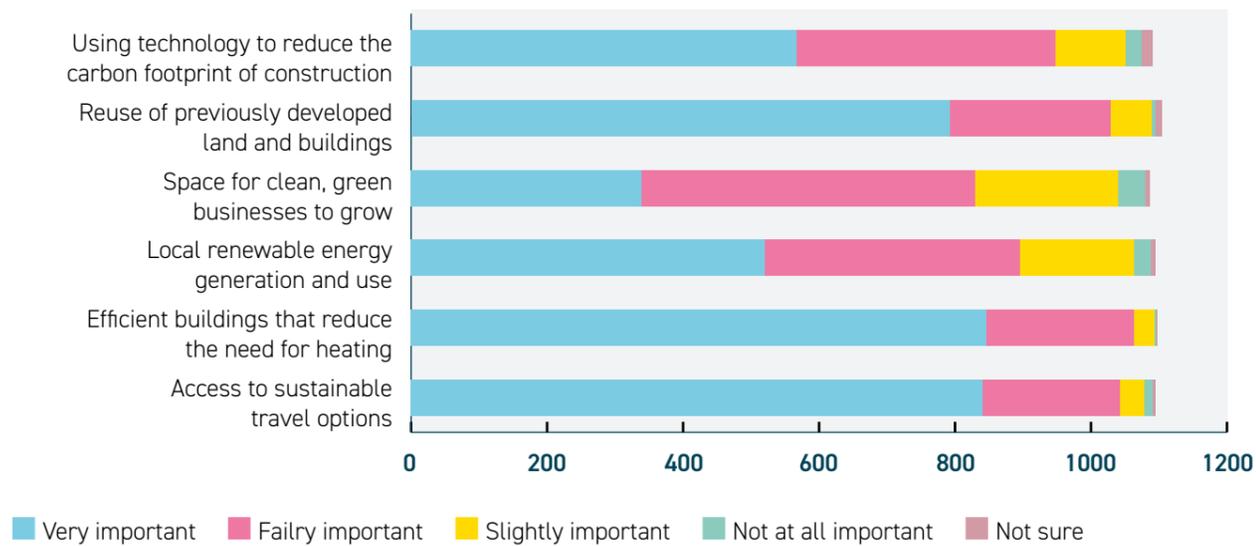
3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Question 6

How important are the following considerations for reducing the carbon footprint of new development?

Questions six and seven were themed around climate change, with question six focusing on opportunities for reducing carbon emissions (mitigation) and question seven looking at how new development might support communities adapt to a changing climate (adaptation). 1,121 respondents answered one or more parts of question six.

Figure 9: Future of the Region survey responses to question six



It's clear from the above chart that there are strong levels of support for approaches to reduce carbon emissions, in particular for sustainable travel, efficient buildings and the reuse of land and buildings.

Additional responses

159 responses were given to the 'other, please specify' component of this question. These have been reviewed and the key themes raised are listed in table 6. Many of the responses in this category expanded on aspects of the statements provided in the main question.

Table 6: "Other" responses to question six

How important are the following considerations for reducing the carbon footprint of new development? (other, please specify)	No of responses
<i>Broad theme of responses</i>	
Prioritisation of active / sustainable travel and reduction of car use	45
Sustainable, energy efficient housing	32
Protect and enhance nature and wildlife & provide green spaces	29
Focus growth in urban areas / brownfield	19
Mixed communities (housing and employment close together)	15
Create 15-minute neighbourhoods	11

It's clear that there are strong levels of support for approaches to reduce carbon emissions

1,121
respondents answered one or more parts of question six

3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

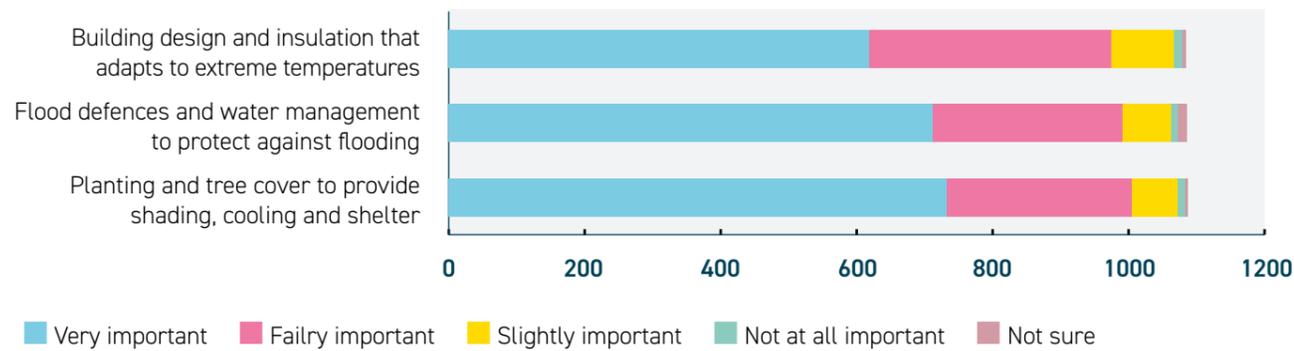
Question 7

How important are the following considerations for adapting to the impacts of climate change?

The statements in question seven related to responding to the impact of extreme weather events that are increasing in regularity and severity as a result of global warming. 1,115 respondents answered one or more parts of this question.

The chart shows that of the three statements provided there was little disparity in the responses and the majority of respondents felt that they were very or fairly important.

Figure 10: Future of the Region survey responses to question seven



Additional responses

186 respondents completed the 'other, please specify' component to this question. These responses have been reviewed and the common themes emerging from these responses are summarised in the table on page 29.

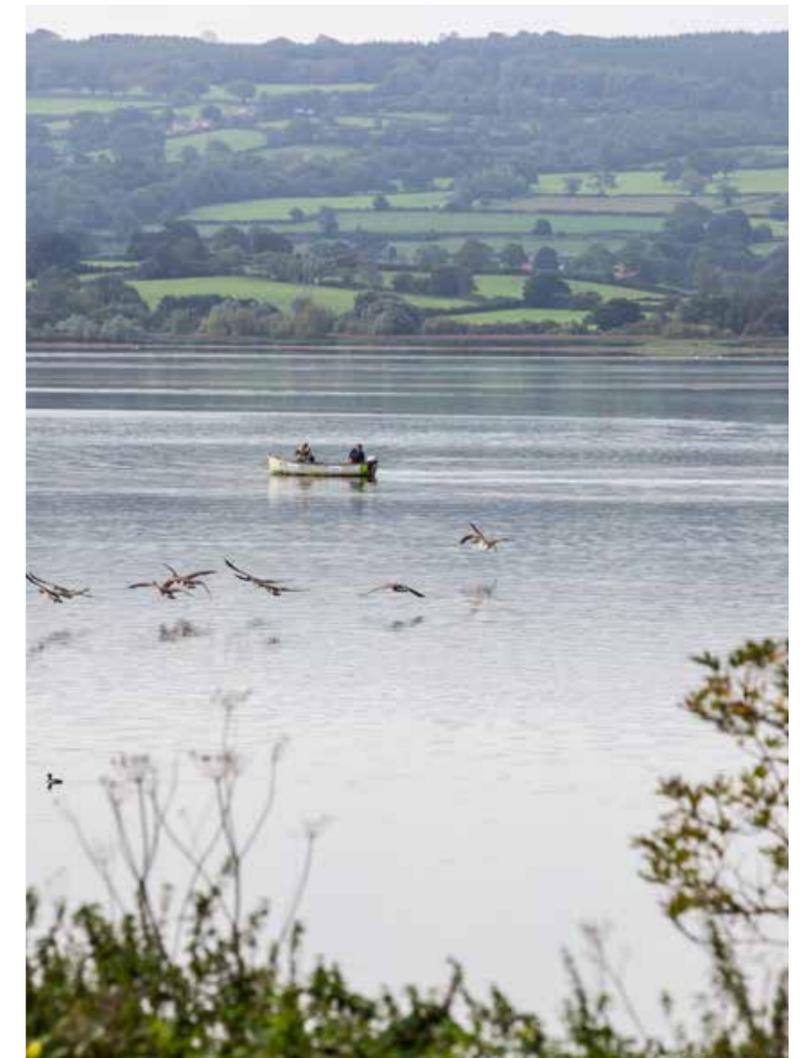
Table 7: "Other" responses to question seven

How important are the following considerations for reducing the carbon footprint of new development? (other, please specify)	No of responses
<i>Broad theme of responses</i>	
Protect and enhance nature and wildlife to mitigate the effects of climate change	27
Use planting (including trees) and enhance nature to protect against flooding	16
Using sustainable/energy efficient materials and design to build new homes	16
Avoid building on flood zones/plains	15
Providing green/blue spaces in developed areas	13
Renewable energy generation	10

How will responses to Questions 6 and 7 shape the Spatial Development Strategy?

Comments raised have identified the role of the SDS to consider and embed principles of climate change adaptation and mitigation into a regional spatial strategy and policy framework.

Responses to these questions support the development of the SDS, as some aspects will feed in to the development of the spatial strategy (e.g. transport). Other opportunities for carbon reduction will be identified through the carbon impact assessment and other technical evidence base documents. This evidence and the survey feedback will inform aspects of the SDS policy scope.



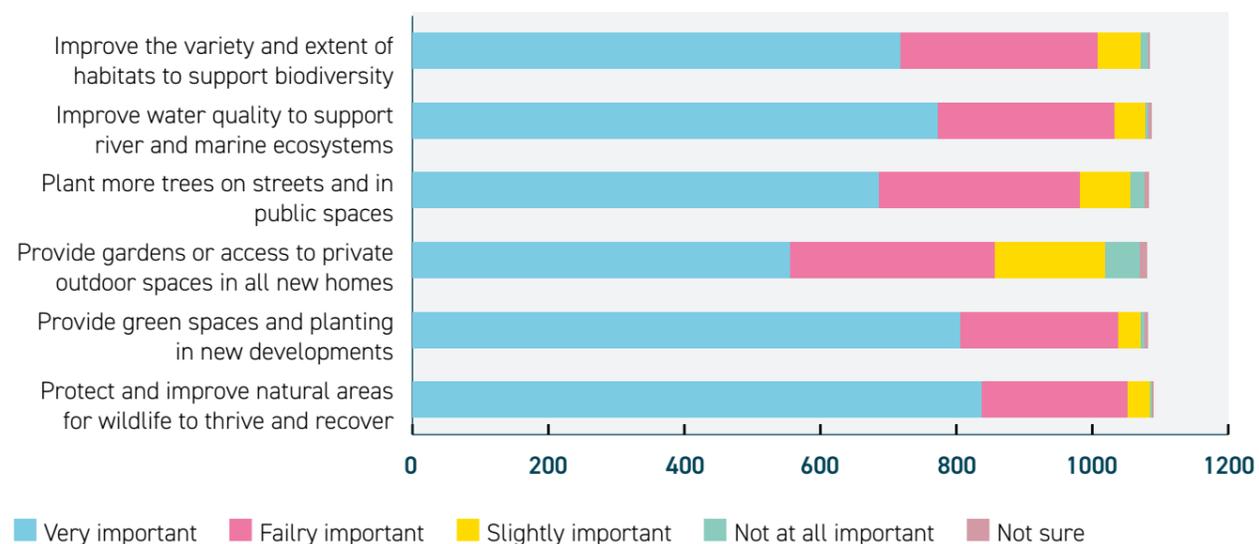
3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Question 8

How important are the following considerations for planning in response to the ecological emergency?

The theme of question eight was the response to the ecological emergency, which covers the protection and enhancement of natural spaces, habitats, provision of green infrastructure and integrating nature in to new development. A series of statements under this theme were provided and survey respondents were asked to rank them in order of importance. 1,113 people answered one or more parts of this question.

Figure 11: Future of the Region survey responses to question eight



Again, the survey results show strong levels of support for the suggested opportunities. 'Provide gardens or access to private outdoor space in all new homes' was not rated as highly as the other statements, with 'Protect and improve natural areas for wildlife to thrive and recover' and 'Provide green spaces and planting in new developments' viewed as more important. 'Improve water quality' was also rated as very important by a high number of survey respondents.

Additional information

The 'other, please specify' part of question eight was completed by 143 respondents. The most common themes from these responses were:

- 32 responses were themed around the location of new development and the protection of existing wildlife rich land.
- 29 respondents commented on the ways that new development could support the response to the ecological emergency, for example in reducing impacts on protected species, integrating wildlife friendly features in to the design of new places, delivering biodiversity net gain and ensuring that green spaces supported biodiversity.
- 17 respondents mentioned the connection between nature and green spaces to support wildlife and biodiversity. The enhancement of wildlife corridors and the nature recovery network were seen as key opportunities for the SDS.
- 14 respondents felt that nature and green spaces should be accessible to all, citing benefits for both physical and mental health.
- 13 responses felt that 'rewilding' was an important aspiration, pointing out that some green space is too manicured and not conducive to support biodiversity.
- 12 respondents felt more community green spaces, allotments and growing spaces should be provided.

How will responses to question eight shape the Spatial Development Strategy?

The responses to question eight support the development of the SDS and the approach to responding to the ecological emergency, for example through the consideration of nature-based solutions and approaches to protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Responses to these questions will also feed in to the development of the spatial strategy, in particular shaping the role of key environmental assets and the enhancement of green infrastructure.

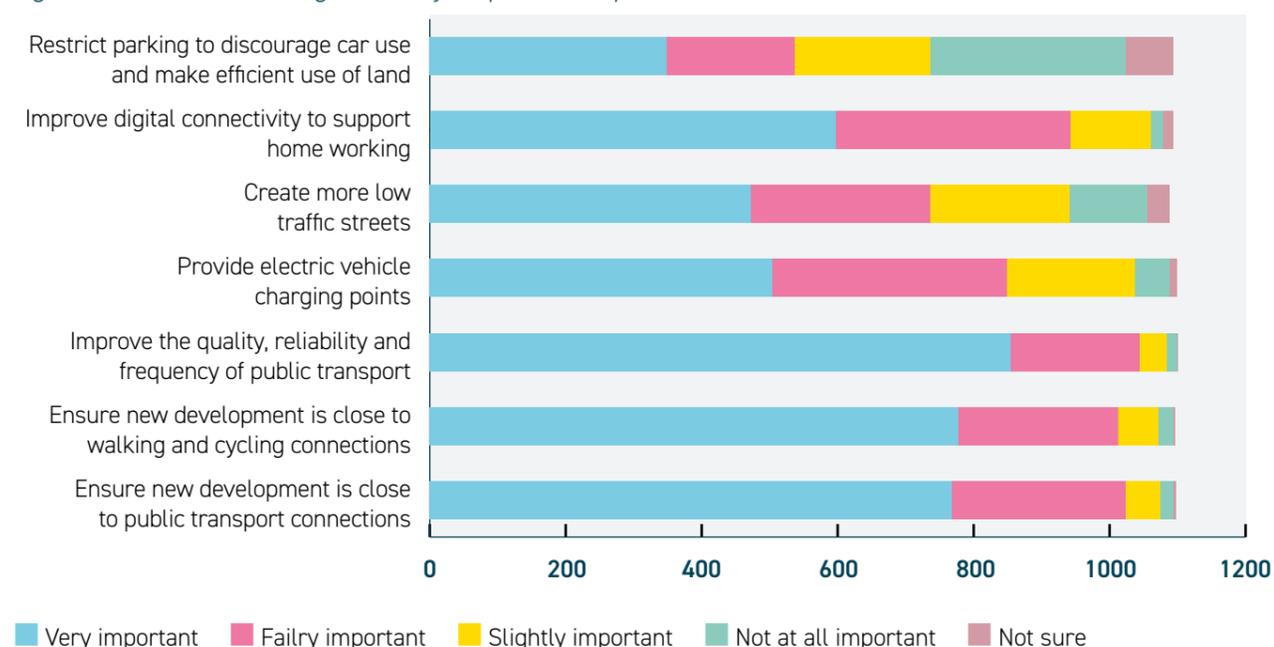
3. SURVEY RESPONSES BY QUESTION continued

Question 9

How important are the following to ensure new development can support green travel choices?

Question nine repeated the structure of the previous three questions, whereby respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of statements. 1,127 respondents answered one or more parts of this question.

Figure 12: Future of the Region survey responses to question nine



The results show particularly strong support for the bottom three statements that covered the proximity of new development to public and active travel connections and the quality of public transport services.

Additional responses

213 respondents answered the 'other, please specify' part of the question. A summary of the main themes of responses is provided below.

- 63 responses made points relating to the quality of walking and cycling infrastructure to support sustainable transport. These ranged in focus and included the need to improve connectivity of the walking and cycling network and improve safety for non-motorised road users.
- 57 responses expanded views on the quality and affordability of public transport services in the WECA area and it was broadly felt by these respondents that a transformative change to encourage public transport take up is required. Responses included support for a light rail or tram network to transform transport provision, concern about rural connectivity, and the need to improved local and regional rail services. Better integration between different transport modes was also raised as important, including the location of bus, rail and light rail interchanges.
- 40 respondents expressed the view that car use should not be discouraged. Some people felt that the move to electric vehicles would reduce the carbon footprint of driving, whilst others felt that better public transport is required to encourage people to leave the car at home.
- A smaller number of respondents (22) felt that car use should be more strongly discouraged. A range of measures including congestion charging, ban on pavement parking and restrictions to parking were supported.

- 29 responses expanded on the relationship between transport and development locations. Respondents felt that new development should facilitate sustainable travel choices and connect to active and public transport networks.
- 20 responses felt that the location of development could reduce the need to travel by car, for example locating housing in close proximity to employment opportunities and creating mixed communities that are less car dependent.
- 19 respondents mentioned accessibility, in particular in relation to public transport and to highlight the fact that walking and cycling is not an accessible means of travel for all residents.
- 16 respondents felt that technological changes should be planned for, such as e-bike and e-scooter loan schemes, demand-based passenger vehicles, electric vehicle charging points, increased use of car share schemes and autonomous vehicles. However, some respondents felt that over reliance on technological changes could lead to an approach which did not sufficiently address the challenges of decarbonising transport or would miss out on wider benefits of reducing car use (such as cleaner air and less vehicles).

How will responses to question nine shape the Spatial Development Strategy?

As raised previously, sustainable transport will form a core part of the spatial strategy and is a key element of achieving clean and inclusive recovery and growth. The SDS is an opportunity to ensure that transport and land use planning are integrated and coherent. Embedding the principles of sustainable transport will support a shift away from the private car, reduce carbon emissions and support inclusion through connections to opportunities and cleaner transport. This is being reflected both in how we approach the work to identify the best locations for growth and ways in which we will test the impacts of different choices around these.

4. COMMENTS ON THE FUTURE OF THE REGION SURVEY

Some concerns and challenges about the delivery and scope of the Future of the Region survey were raised by respondents. These are summarised below with a brief response, or reference to points made earlier in the report.

- 1. Concern that the reach of the survey would be limited during the Covid-19 pandemic, as communities are unable to meet in person and those without online access would not easily find out about the survey. Some felt the process should be postponed until after the pandemic.**

WECA and the authorities have a responsibility to progress with plan making to ensure the sustainable development of the region. The mitigations taken in light of the Covid-19 pandemic are outlined on page 5 of this report.

- 2. The scope of the consultation does not add value to the planning process and does not reflect an evidence-based approach to resolving spatial planning challenges.**

The survey was promoted as part of wider plan making activity, and adds value to, rather than substitutes, the development of the evidence base to underpin the SDS. How the survey will support the plan-making process is set out on page 8 and in response to each question.

- 3. As highlighted earlier, some respondents felt the ranking questions one and four would not yield the most useful responses as the different aspects need to be balanced and addressed through a spatial scenario testing.**

It was felt this question structure would provide an opportunity to understand in more detail the priorities of the region through the survey respondents. These concerns are addressed in response to Questions 1 and 4 of the report.

- 4. Concern that the survey responses will amplify the voices of special interest groups and not be representative of the WECA population.**

The under-representation of some groups in the survey respondents has been noted, and our approach to addressing this as the SDS is developed is set out on page 7 of the report.

- 5. The survey feels unbalanced and the answers seem pre-determined. High level questions do not allow for more locally and granular responses.**

The survey content reflects the early stages of plan making and the anticipated scope of the SDS including opportunities for the SDS to influence agreed priorities for the region. No answers have been pre-determined; this engagement provided an early opportunity for residents and stakeholders to give us their views and shape the draft SDS.

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A number of participants chose to share supplementary information or written statements in response to the engagement opportunity. This includes information from infrastructure providers, key partners and interest groups. These have been reviewed and views have fed in to and been captured in this report. Responses will also feed in to the technical evidence base where appropriate. A number of developers used the engagement to share information to promote sites, and this has been passed on to the local authority teams who are working on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments.



6. ONGOING PARTNERSHIP WORKING

A number of survey respondents highlighted the need for ongoing partnership work, particularly drawing attention to the need for close working with North Somerset Council which forms part of the region's functional geography. The approach of sharing joint evidence on key strategic issues was welcomed by a number of respondents.

This close working with North Somerset Council (and other key strategic partners and neighbouring authorities) to address strategic and cross-boundary issues continues to form a key part of the preparation of the SDS. This partnership working will be documented through the Statement of Common Ground which is available online and will be updated as the SDS develops.

Please visit www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/west-of-england-strategic-planning/ for more information.

Engagement activity is also taking place with a range of stakeholders to ensure that the SDS evidence base is informed by the most up to date intelligence and best practice and draws input from key stakeholders across the region.

7. NEXT STEPS

The Future of the Region survey was an informal engagement exercise and the responses were the first step in developing a draft of the Spatial Development Strategy (alongside evidence and studies). The SDS and supporting evidence is being developed based on national policy, technical assessments and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, alongside consideration of the outputs of this engagement.

Alongside this engagement report, responses to the survey will be made available online (where permission to publish has been granted by the respondent). Updates on the progress of the SDS will be communicated at regular intervals over the coming months as the technical evidence work develops and there will be a need for further engagement aligned to the emerging UA Local Plans.

Once the draft SDS is completed later in 2021 it will be subject to a full statutory consultation for 12 weeks, providing an opportunity to formally comment on the proposed plan. Consultation feedback will be shared with the planning inspectors who will lead the examination of the SDS. The table below sets out the current SDS timetable, although this is being kept under review and could be subject to change.

More information on the SDS and a link to sign up to the mailing list for future updates can be found on the WECA website:

www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/west-of-england-strategic-planning/

Engagement	Consultation	Examination	Publication
Autumn 2020 – Summer 2021	Second half of 2021	2022	2023
Development of an evidence base and plan formation Keep people informed as work progresses	Statutory consultation on the proposed plan	Plan examination	Local plan examination
Online survey Ongoing stakeholder engagement on evidence base	Opportunity to comment on the proposed plan and supporting evidence through formal consultation	Opportunities for the public to participate in the plan examination process, led by Inspectors	Opportunities to participate in Local Plan examinations

APPENDIX A

SDS webinar – questions raised and responses

Scope of the SDS

Will the SDS set specific targets for housing and employment in each of the three authorities?

Yes, the SDS will set out a housing and employment requirement for the WECA area, and this will be distributed to the three local authorities to take forward in their Local Plans through the spatial strategy.

The figure for the amount of housing required will be reached through technical assessments set out in national guidance, and in the case of housing, use targets set by government as a starting point.

Will the SDS identify specific areas of growth/ allocate sites, and how will this be undertaken?

The SDS will gather evidence and test different scenarios to come to the best spatial strategy to direct growth across the region, looking at locational principles that will help realise its strategic objectives. It will identify 'broad locations for growth' within each authority linked to this spatial strategy but not make formal site allocations or reference specific sites or boundaries. Details will follow in Local Plans.

How does this strategy fit with the development of Local Plans by each of the constituent authorities?

The SDS will be a high-level strategic plan and will help set the context for the local authorities' Local Plans which are being prepared alongside the SDS. Local Plans and the SDS will be informed by the same strategic

evidence, and information gathered for Local Plans will form part of the evidence base for the Spatial Development Strategy. Local Plans will contain more detailed policies to shape development in each local authority area and will allocate land for development. The two processes are therefore aligned and coming forward to similar timescales.

Will the SDS undertake a review of the Green Belt?

The Bristol & Bath Green Belt has been identified as a strategic, cross boundary issue that will be addressed through the SDS in a coordinated and consistent manner.

Green Belt boundaries can only be changed if 'exceptional circumstances' are demonstrated, based on the scale of the housing requirement, maximisation of available brownfield land, and the sustainability of patterns of development (National Planning Policy Framework, para 137).

If exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, an assessment of the current Green Belt will be undertaken in line with national planning policy and guidance. Any assessment of Green Belt in the WECA area will be embedded in a wider approach to developing and testing spatial options for growth and change. This will be determined in due course and will take into account the requirements set out in national policy including co-operation across boundaries as necessary.

What percentage of housing do you envision as affordable / social rent?

This will be informed by technical evidence including a Local Housing Needs Assessment, which is currently being undertaken for the

West of England (including North Somerset). This will help to establish the Housing need for the WECA area and the North Somerset Local Plan, including the approach to Affordable Housing, but further planning work will then establish deliverable housing requirements. It is too early to comment in detail on this matter.

How is the SDS responding to the changes in jobs, economy and travel patterns caused by the Covid pandemic?

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the ways many people work, travel and access services and goods. In many of these areas, it is difficult to predict to what extent these changes will endure and what the long-term impacts will be on demand for space, infrastructure and so on. In some cases, the impacts of Covid-19 have accelerated trends already underway (e.g. growth of internet shopping, home working) which suggests they may be more likely to prevail and need to be worked with in the approach to planning for the economy. In other cases, there are newer patterns of behaviour (e.g. increase in walking and cycling, local shopping) that we wish to encourage as they support our wider strategic objectives. Our evidence bases are all engaging with these uncertainties in the context of an immediate need for planning to support recovery as well as longer term growth. Ultimately one of the tests that the SDS will have to pass will be that it should be sufficiently flexible to respond to unforeseen circumstances. However, plans also have to be reviewed every 5 years, so if things happen that stretch the limits of this flexibility, we can revise our approach accordingly.

How is the SDS addressing the needs of rural communities, which are very different to the urban areas of Bristol and Bath?

It is acknowledged that the needs, challenges and issues affecting the rural communities

of the WECA area are somewhat different to those of the urban centres of Bristol and Bath, but we are working to shared objectives concerning clean and inclusive recovery and growth. Some of the strategic policies in the SDS will cover issues that affect both urban and rural communities (such as the affordability of housing, sustainable transport). Up to date and robust evidence will need to include an understanding of different contexts so these can be planned for. The SDS will set strategic context, with more detail to be brought forward by Local Plans (which may include more localised policies for rural communities).

Will the SDS be following the Protect, Renewal, Growth zones promoted by the White Paper?

The government published a consultation on Planning for the Future in August 2020, which included proposals for a different scope and format for Local Plans in future. Whilst the consultation proposals are noted, the SDS is coming forward under the current planning legislative framework as these proposals have no status at present.

The SDS programme and format will be reviewed on the announcement of any changes to national legislation that affect it directly or indirectly.

Will the issue of obesity be addressed in the SDS?

The SDS is unlikely to contain a policy directly about obesity. However, the relationship between health, physical activity and both the location and quality of development is well established (such as active travel opportunity, air quality and access to green space). Addressing health inequalities is recognised as a cross-cutting priority of the SDS and will be factored in to the technical assessments of potential growth scenarios, including through an Integrated Impact Assessment which will include an assessment of health impacts.

APPENDIX A continued

Will food security and local food production be explored in the SDS?

The SDS is unlikely to contain a policy directly addressing food security. However, the SDS will draw upon existing strategies to support the development of regional policy, notably the Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy which identifies sustainable and local food production as one of eight outcomes when delivering multifunctional Green Infrastructure. Through the delivery of multifunctional Green Infrastructure, the SDS provides the principles for Local Plans to address more detailed consideration in relation to opportunities for local food production in urban and rural areas.

How will cross boundary issues and strategic assets be addressed in the SDS, such as access to Bristol Port and Bristol airport?

The port and airport are both located in North Somerset, so are not within the SDS plan area. Cross-boundary implications arising from any future plans of the port and airport will be taken in to consideration. The approach to addressing strategic and cross boundary issues in partnership with neighbouring authorities and strategic partners, is set out in the Statement of Common Ground.

Key international connectivity serving the sub-regional economy is provided for within the West of England, including via the Port and Airport. Managing this infrastructure and its impacts, including access to it, requires cross-boundary collaboration. This will be focussed within the West of England area, but will also extend beyond it along motorway and rail corridors notably to Gloucestershire, Somerset and across to South Wales.

What are the plans for regeneration of deprived communities?

Clean and inclusive recovery and growth is the overarching objective of the SDS. The linkages between social, environmental and economic issues are a key aspect of the planning system and its overarching aim to deliver sustainable development.

How will the SDS differ from the Joint Spatial Plan? Will any of the previous evidence from the JSP be used to inform the SDS?

The world has changed since we began working on the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP). National planning policy has been updated, we need to tackle the new challenges of Covid-19 recovery and respond to the climate emergency, so much of the JSP evidence is no longer fit for purpose in its original form. In addition, the SDS is a different type of plan to the JSP, governed by regulations that relate to the strategic planning function of the Combined Authority; it will be more high level and the evidence base will be proportionate to that level of detail. The SDS will be built on an up to date, robust evidence base that will give us the best information to find the right strategy for our region.

Transport

How will the transport impact of potential locations be assessed?

The transport evidence base will provide an accessibility assessment that focuses on promoting developments where public transport and active travel are viable modes of transport for the most common journey purposes. A new regional multi-modal model is also currently in development that will provide a robust evidence base across a range of schemes over the next 5-10 years.

How does the SDS align with the Joint Local Transport Plan 4, and will the JLTP be reviewed once the SDS is approved?

The SDS will be informed by JLTP4, which is the current agreed plan for transport in the West of England. Given that the SDS will also be reviewing and building on this transport evidence base, it may be that once the evidence base is in place, consulted on and the SDS has been tested at examination, that this leads to an update to the Joint Local Transport Plan, or new plans to be created, such as JTLTP5.

The JLTP4 is based on principles of carbon reduction and modal shift, and these remain important drivers for the transport plan and the SDS.

Road building schemes continue to be proposed in the West of England, despite the need to support modal shift away from private cars. Will the SDS be different?

The focus of the Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4) is modal shift away from private car use. Where there are specific potential road schemes in the JLTP4, the intention is that these will support public transport corridors, not just car use.

The SDS is looking at opportunities for locating sustainable growth. Part of our evidence base will assess the carbon impacts of development and look at how new development can reduce our carbon footprint, both in terms of supporting low carbon lifestyles and ensuring new communities are low carbon and fit for the future. Whilst the SDS has a role to play in addressing the climate emergency, other actions to decarbonise the region are also important. The Climate Emergency Action Plan sets out our approach to tackling climate change through addressing five challenges including a low carbon transport system.

How much will the SDS be taking into account developments in technology i.e. electric and hydrogen cars which will of course reduce the use of polluting cars?

The SDS will be looking to promote developments that can be accessed by public transport and active modes to reduce car dependency in the first instance. The impact of future technologies will be considered through wider West of England strategies and initiatives, such as the Future Transport Zones.

Climate change

Will the SDS move quickly enough and be ambitious enough to address the climate emergency?

The Climate Emergency is a challenge being jointly addressed across all the organisation's (and constituent authorities') programmes and plans and is not an issue that can be singularly addressed through the SDS. The WECA Climate Emergency Action Plans (CEAP) sets out the holistic approach to addressing climate change through addressing five challenges including:

- Low carbon transport system: Work to decarbonise the transport system, increase cycling, walking and the use of public transport
- Low carbon business: Help business and local people benefit from growth in the green economy; maximising government investment in the region and supporting our businesses to build back better
- Renewable energy: Work to decarbonise our energy system and increase local renewable energy
- Low carbon buildings and places: Increase the energy performance of buildings and develop low carbon standards in new developments

APPENDIX A continued

e. The green environment: Protect and enhance the environment through a proactive approach to green infrastructure.

Further details can be found here:

www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/ourstrategy/. In addition to the WECA CEAP, the WECA UAs are also developing more locally led Climate Change action plans.

The SDS has a role to play across a number of the five challenges, notably to explore options to ensure low carbon new buildings, transport and places and support the ambition for zero carbon by 2030. Work under the SDS will include assessing opportunities for policy to influence energy demand in new developments, exploring options for additional renewable energy supply, and addressing wider implications of climate adaptation by delivering multifunctional Green Infrastructure.

Are any plans going to be assessed against WECA's targets to reduce carbon emissions, specifically to ensure there is a quantifiable reduction per annum to meet the 2030 target?

The SDS will be required to meet the legal requirements set within the Climate Change Act 2008 but is also strongly influenced by the climate emergency objectives of WECA and the constituent authorities as reflected in the strategic objective of 'clean and inclusive recovery and growth'. We are working to ensure that our scoping and testing of policies and spatial strategy scenarios includes appropriate data about carbon impacts, notably through the development of a carbon impact assessment tool. It will also be important to monitor the plan's implementation and impacts once it is in place to ensure that intended outcomes are realised.

Partnership working

Will North Somerset be included in the SDS?

The SDS will cover Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire and will be developed by those councils and the West of England Combined Authority. North Somerset will not be included in the SDS and are developing their own Local Plan. The North Somerset Local Plan Choices Consultation ran at the same time as the survey on the SDS and results can be viewed at <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/planning-building-control/planning-policy/our-local-plan/local-plan-2038>

What will happen if North Somerset join WECA?

North Somerset is not currently in the Combined Authority and therefore not in the area covered by the SDS. Should this change the position will be reviewed.

How will the SDS work with key partners, including transport providers, health providers and wider strategic initiatives such as the Western gateway?

Residents, local businesses, partners and stakeholders all have an important and active role to play in the development of the Spatial Development Strategy, by contributing local knowledge and expertise to improve the strategy and ensure that it reflects the diversity of the sub-region.

The statutory consultees and key partners that will be engaged throughout the process includes (but is not limited to):

Neighbouring and nearby Authorities	Key strategic partners
Cardiff Council	BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG
Cotswold District Council	Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership
Forest of Dean District Council	Bristol Water
Gloucestershire County Council	Department for Transport
Mendip District Council	Environment Agency
Monmouthshire Council	Highways England
Newport City Council	Historic England
North Somerset Council	Homes England
Sedgemoor District Council	Natural England
Somerset County Council	Network Rail
Stroud District Council	NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG
Swansea Council	Marine Management Organisation
Wiltshire Council	Wales & West Utilities
	Wessex Water
	West of England Nature Partnership
	Western Power Distribution

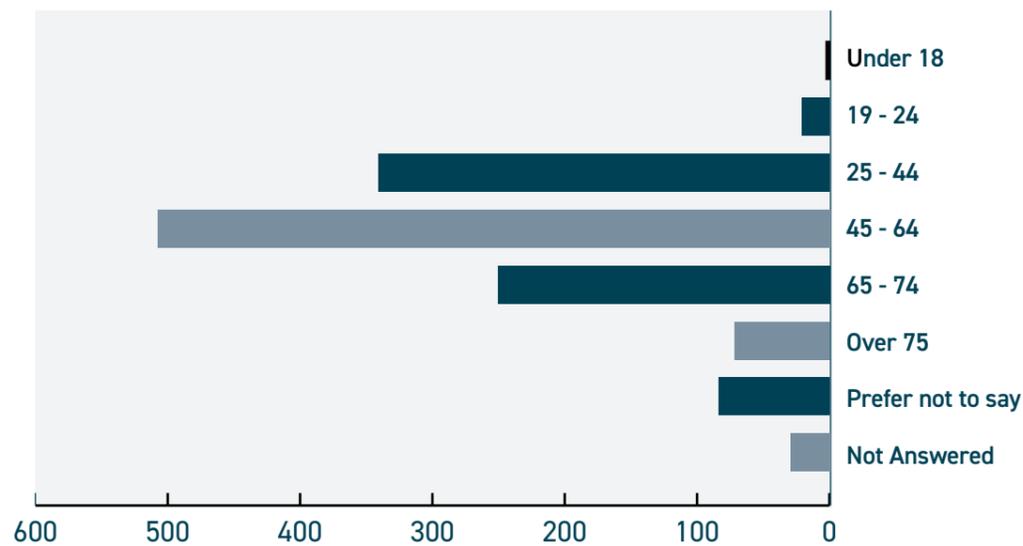
A Strategic Planning Forum with representatives from these bodies will meet at least quarterly to discuss strategic and cross boundary matters, and decisions and solutions will be documented in the Statement of Common Ground. This will be supported by bilateral discussion as and when required.

APPENDIX B

Equalities monitoring data

Question 14: What is your age?

	Total	Percent
Under 18	3	0.23%
19 - 24	21	1.60%
25 - 44	341	26.03%
45 - 64	508	38.78%
65 - 74	251	19.16%
Over 75	72	5.50%
Prefer not to say	84	6.41%
Not Answered	30	2.29%



Question 15: Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

	Total	Percent
Yes	112	8.55%
No	1049	80.08%
Prefer not to say	115	8.78%
Not Answered	34	2.60%

Question 16: What is your ethnic group?

	Total	Percent
Arab	1	0.08%
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0.15%
Asian/Asian British – Indian	3	0.23%
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	0	0.00%
Asian/Asian British – Chinese	4	0.31%
Asian/Asian British – Other (please describe)	2	0.15%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African	2	0.15%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean	0	0.00%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Other (please describe)	0	0.00%
Gypsy or Traveller of Irish Heritage	0	0.00%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Asian	6	0.46%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Black African	2	0.15%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Black Caribbean	2	0.15%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – Other (please describe)	0	0.00%
White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	1005	76.72%
White – Irish	11	0.84%
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0	0.00%
White – Other (please describe)	57	4.35%
Other ethnic group (please describe)	8	0.61%
Prefer not to say	168	12.82%
Not Answered	37	2.82%

Question 17: What is your gender?

	Total	Percent
Female	487	37.18%
Male	660	50.38%
Other (please state)	1	0.08%
Prefer not to say	124	9.47%
Not Answered	38	2.90%

APPENDIX B continued

APPENDIX C

Question 18: Do you identify as a transgender person?

	Total	Percent
Yes	1	0.08%
No	1110	84.73%
Prefer not to say	145	11.07%
Not Answered	54	4.12%

Question 19: What is your sexual orientation?

	Total	Percent
Bisexual	43	3.28%
Gay man	27	2.06%
Gay woman / lesbian	12	0.92%
Heterosexual	879	67.10%
Other	18	1.37%
Prefer not to say	275	20.99%
Not Answered	56	4.27%

Question 20: What is your religion?

	Total	Percent
Buddhist	10	0.76%
Christian	385	29.39%
Hindu	1	0.08%
Jewish	2	0.15%
Muslim	3	0.23%
Sikh	0	0.00%
Any other religion	24	1.83%
No religion	600	45.80%
Prefer not to say	234	17.86%
Not Answered	51	3.89%

The Future of the Region: the Spatial Development Strategy

Overview

We are developing a **Spatial Development Strategy** (SDS) to make sure our region remains a thriving, successful and innovative place for the future. The plan will make sure the development of homes, spaces for employment and transport links happens in the right places giving all residents access to opportunities and a better quality of life. It will help us meet our aim to be carbon neutral by 2030 and ensure that nature and wildlife can also benefit.

The SDS will cover Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire and will be developed by those councils and the West of England Combined Authority. **North Somerset** will develop their Local Plan in cooperation with the WECA authorities but will not be included in the SDS.

The scale of the challenge

The West of England's population is growing. People are attracted to move to the region and our resident population is increasing. House prices and rents are rising and, as people live longer, the amount and types of housing that are needed is changing.

Over the next 20 years the area covered by the Spatial Development Strategy could need around 88,500 or as many as 125,000 homes (depending on the Government's method of calculating housing need, linked to the national housing target).

However, we will need to consider constraints and opportunities to arrive at the right amount of homes to plan for (which may or may not reach these numbers).

Generating employment and a clean, resilient economy

The coronavirus pandemic has changed lives, businesses, work and travel patterns. The SDS can help us build back a more clean, inclusive economy through providing the space and infrastructure needed for residents to access good jobs, and for businesses to thrive. This will support growth, drive innovation and support clean and low carbon sectors.

Why we are consulting

Your views will help us shape the Spatial Development Strategy so we can create a better place to live, work and play.

The survey runs from 2 November to 14 December 2020. An engagement report and responses will be published online in early 2021.

By taking part in this survey, you are agreeing that your comments can be made public in an engagement report that will be published by the West of England Combined Authority. You will be asked at the end of the survey if you would like your responses to remain anonymous.

Survey structure

We would encourage everyone to answer questions 1-3. This will take around 5-10 minutes.

You can then choose to answer more detailed topic based questions or skip to the end of the survey.

You can answer as many of the topic based questions as you like, or skip forward to the next page at any time. Completing the whole survey will take around 20 minutes.



A cleaner, greener, more inclusive region

The Spatial Development Strategy will include a vision for the West of England in 2040.

Our overarching objective is clean and inclusive recovery and growth that addresses the climate and ecological emergencies, tackles the housing affordability crisis, and ensures quality of life for current and future generations.

1 Which of the following statements do you consider to be the most important for the vision of the future of the region?

Please rank in order of importance by writing numbers 1-8 in the boxes, with one being the most important. You can rank as many options as you like. For example, if you want to select your three most important, rank using numbers 1-3.

- Everyone can access a quality home that they can afford
- Low carbon communities can cope with the impacts of climate change
- Wildlife is thriving, and everyone has access to nature
- The economy is successful and clean, with good access to jobs
- The region is well connected by a sustainable transport network
- Communities are healthy, sustainable and connected
- Places are attractive and people are proud of where they live
- Other (please specify)

If you selected other, please write your answer in the space below:



Planning for recovery

The coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on all our lives, and has significantly changed the way people work, travel and use their leisure time. It has also made a lot of people think about what we value about where we live and what we think needs to change in future.

2 How important are the following in planning for clean, inclusive recovery and growth in our region? Please rate each statement on the scale of importance.

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Reduce the use of cars to minimise climate change	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve and protect nature and wildlife	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve access to green space and nature	<input type="radio"/>				
Provide more affordable homes and workplaces	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve air quality	<input type="radio"/>				
Support regeneration of places and help them adapt to change	<input type="radio"/>				
Provide enough space for businesses to innovate and grow	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve access to local services close to peoples homes	<input type="radio"/>				
Make sure everyone can enjoy a safe and healthy neighbourhood	<input type="radio"/>				
Provide enough housing, jobs and infrastructure to support a growing population	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>				

If you selected other, please write your answer in the space below:

One idea that has emerged from lockdown is the '15 minute neighbourhood', where the things that you need are within a walkable distance from home. This principle could apply to a town, city neighbourhood, suburb or village.

Important features that could be considered part of the 15 minute neighbourhood might include:

- local shops, schools and services
- green spaces, planting and trees
- places for social interaction and play
- places to work
- space for walking and cycling
- well designed buildings

3 What features and facilities do you consider to be most important to access within easy reach (15 minute walk) of your home?

Please share your views in the space below (300 word max).

Submit further information

You are welcome to share further information to support your response. You can share images, examples of places that you like, or other documents that illustrate what you think good development looks like with your response.

Providing homes and generating employment to meet the region's needs

The SDS will identify opportunities for new housing and employment development and ensure it is supported by the right infrastructure. It will also acknowledge other factors such as Green Belt, protected areas, and what can be delivered.

Some areas have very strong protections in law. Other areas may have sensitivities that need to be balanced against the need to accommodate growth.

You may find it useful to look at the accompanying maps provided which provide an overview of some of the key protections and sensitivities in the West of England. You do need to look at the maps to answer the question, but they may provide useful context.

Maps are provided of:

- **Heritage and landscape areas (including Green Belt)** (page 1)
- **Biodiversity, nature and wildlife areas** (page 2)
- **Quality farmland areas** (page 3)
- **Flood risk areas** (page 4)

4 Which of these are the most important when deciding where new development should be limited?

Please rank in order of importance by writing numbers 1-7 in the boxes, with one being the most important. You can rank as many options as you like. For example, if you want to select your three most important, rank using numbers 1-3.

Significant heritage features and assets	<input type="text"/>
Special landscapes	<input type="text"/>
Wildlife conservation areas	<input type="text"/>
The existing Green Belt extent	<input type="text"/>
Quality farmland	<input type="text"/>
Flood risk areas	<input type="text"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

If you selected other, please write your answer in the space below:

What is the Green Belt?

The Green Belt is land designated around urban areas to maintain the open nature of land and prevent urban sprawl. It is designated based on five criteria set out in national policy:

1. to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
3. to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
5. to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

A case may be made for reviewing the existing extent of the Green Belt in exceptional circumstances. Green Belt review happens through the plan making process.

Providing homes and generating employment to meet the region's needs

The maps provided give an overview of some of the opportunities that will be considered to inform the Spatial Development Strategy. Maps are provided of:

- **Sustainable transport and Green Belt** (page 1)
- **Town and employment centres** (page 3)
- **Bristol heat network potential** (page 4)
- **Nature recovery network**(page 5)

5 How important are the following when considering opportunities for new development?

Please rate each statement on the scale of importance.

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Focus new growth close to public transport corridors	<input type="radio"/>				
Focus new growth close to town centres and employment areas	<input type="radio"/>				
Review the Green Belt whilst maintaining its role and function	<input type="radio"/>				
Prioritise areas where local renewable energy is possible	<input type="radio"/>				
Create mixed neighbourhoods bringing employment and housing closer together	<input type="radio"/>				
Safeguard existing employment areas in anticipation of recovery	<input type="radio"/>				
Prioritise areas that support improvements to wildlife and nature	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>				

If you selected other, please write your answer in the space below:



Responding to the climate emergency

Decisions on future development can help us meet our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. We need homes, infrastructure and jobs that can support low carbon lifestyles and reduce the need to travel by car.

Building and heating buildings more efficiently, reducing emissions from transport and creating mixed neighbourhoods with local access to shops, services, recreation and jobs will further reduce the carbon footprint of communities.

Development needs to be 'future proofed' as much as possible. We need to take account of extreme weather events and areas prone to flooding to help us address existing and future challenges of the changing climate.

6 How important are the following considerations for reducing the carbon footprint of new development? Please rate each statement on the scale of importance.

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Access to sustainable travel options	<input type="radio"/>				
Efficient buildings that reduce the need for heating	<input type="radio"/>				
Local renewable energy generation and use	<input type="radio"/>				
Space for clean, green businesses to grow	<input type="radio"/>				
Reuse of previously developed land and buildings	<input type="radio"/>				
Using technology to reduce the carbon footprint of construction	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>				

If you selected other, please write your answer in the space below:

7 How important are the following considerations for adapting to the impacts of climate change?

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Planting and tree cover to provide shading, cooling and shelter	<input type="radio"/>				
Flood defences and water management to protect against flooding	<input type="radio"/>				
Building design and insulation that adapts to extreme temperatures	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>				

If you selected other, please write your answer in the space below:

Responding to the ecological emergency

The West of England has a significant number of protected wildlife sites (such as the Severn Estuary and Avon Gorge) and varied and diverse green spaces in villages, towns and cities (green infrastructure).

Plans for future growth need to protect special areas, connect green spaces and wildlife corridors and provide spaces for nature and wildlife to thrive. They also need to reduce the pressures put on the natural environment by human activity and climate change.

8 How important are the following considerations for planning in response to the ecological emergency? Please rate each statement on the scale of importance.

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Protect and improve natural areas for wildlife to thrive and recover	<input type="radio"/>				
Provide green spaces and planting in new developments	<input type="radio"/>				
Provide gardens or access to private outdoor spaces in all new homes	<input type="radio"/>				
Plant more trees on streets and in public spaces	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve water quality to support river and marine ecosystems	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve the variety and extent of habitats to support biodiversity	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>				

If you selected other, please write your answer in the space below:

What is green infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure is a network of green spaces including rivers, parks, trees, woodland and allotments. Improving the network of these spaces can help improve air quality, reduce surface water flooding and benefit our communities by improving access to green spaces to improve health and wellbeing.



Supporting sustainable travel

We want our region to be a great place to live: a region that is less reliant on cars with better air quality and sustainable transport links giving all residents good access to opportunities for work, leisure, education and training.

The Spatial Development Strategy will make sure that housing and employment growth is supported by quick, convenient and reliable transport options that connect people to town and city centres, services and employment opportunities.

9 How important are the following to ensure new development can support green travel choices? Please rate each statement on the scale of importance.

	Very important	Fairly important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Not sure
Ensure new development is close to public transport connections	<input type="radio"/>				
Ensure new development is close to walking and cycling connections	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve the quality, reliability and frequency of public transport	<input type="radio"/>				
Provide electric vehicle charging points	<input type="radio"/>				
Create more low traffic streets	<input type="radio"/>				
Improve digital connectivity to support home working	<input type="radio"/>				
Restrict parking to discourage car use and make efficient use of land	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>				

If you selected other, please write your answer in the space below:

About You

WECA believes it is important to understand the needs and views of all communities who use our services. By asking you these questions we can develop our understanding of views and needs across the region. Responses to questions 14-20 will remain confidential - individuals will not be identified to responses to these questions and the individual details will not be published.

10 What is your name?

Full name (Required)

11 What is your postcode?

Please enter your full postcode in the space below (Required)

12 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Please select only one item

Yes No

If yes, please state the name of the organisation

13 What is your email address?

Please enter your email address in the space below

14 What is your age?

Please select only one item

Under 18 19 - 24 25 - 44 45 - 64 65 - 74 Over 75 Prefer not to say

15 Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Please select only one item

Yes No Prefer not to say

16 What is your ethnic group?

Please select only one item

- Arab Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi Asian/Asian British – Indian Asian/Asian British – Pakistani
 Asian/Asian British – Chinese Asian/Asian British – Other (please describe) Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African
 Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Other (please describe)
 Gypsy or Traveller of Irish Heritage Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Asian
 Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Black African Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Black Caribbean
 Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – Other (please describe) White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British White – Irish
 White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller White – Other (please describe) Other ethnic group (please describe) Prefer not to say

If you selected other, please specify here

17 What is your gender?

Please select only one item

- Female Male Other (please state) Prefer not to say

If you selected other, please specify in the space below

18 Do you identify as a transgender person?

Please select only one item

- Yes No Prefer not to say

19 What is your sexual orientation?

Please select only one item

- Bisexual Gay man Gay woman / lesbian Heterosexual Other Prefer not to say

20 What is your religion?

Please select only one item

- Buddhist Christian Hindu Jewish Muslim Sikh Any other religion No religion
 Prefer not to say

If you selected other, please specify in the space below



Additional information

21 If you would like to submit any further information to support your response, please include with your response.

22 Would you like to hear from the West of England Combined Authority in future?

Please select all that apply

Yes, I would like to receive information about strategic planning by email Yes, I would like to receive the WECA Newsletter by email

If you tick yes, please provide your email address at question 11

How will my information be used?

Your information will be held by WECA, who will use this to update you on strategic planning in the West of England region, and inform you of relevant future consultations. Your information will be held for no more than five years, at which point you will be asked whether you wish to remain on the mailing list. WECA may share your information with the Combined Authority unitary authorities (B&NES, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire). WECA may at times engage with external consultants as part of the plan making process, and therefore there may be times when details will be shared with those working on behalf of WECA and the West of England unitary authorities. They will not be shared with any other third party, or for any purpose unrelated to strategic planning. Your details will be stored securely in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and only accessed by authorised personnel who have received appropriate training in data management. You have the option to opt out of this mailing list at any time by clicking unsubscribe at the footer of any email communications.

We use Mailchimp as our marketing platform. By clicking below to subscribe, you acknowledge that your information will be transferred to Mailchimp for processing. You can find out more about Mailchimp's privacy practices at <https://mailchimp.com/legal/>

23 Do you consent to your response being published?

We would like to publish responses to this survey to support the development of the Spatial Development Strategy. Please indicate whether you would like your response to be published.

We will not publish any contact details, but you can choose to publish your response anonymously.

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes - please publish my response in full Yes - please publish my full response but remove my name and / or organisation
 No - please do not publish my response

Submitting your response

- You can return the survey online by visiting <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/future-of-the-region/>
- You can email your response to planning@westofengland-ca.gov.uk
- If you do not have online access you can send your response to Freepost, WECA CONSULTATION