

# Council Plan 2024-27

# Public Consultation on the Draft Plan

## Survey Analysis



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

# Overview of the consultation

- The public consultation ran from 6 March to 25 April 2024
- The consultation was promoted in the One Darlington magazine; by the Council social media channels (reaching over 20k people); Cabinet members through their social media; emails to key stakeholders and meetings with residents; discussions in meetings with key stakeholders; and all Councillors were briefed and asked to raise with their residents
- A survey was published alongside the draft plan, there were 315 responses
  - 11 responses were from stakeholders
- There was also discussion at Council scrutiny committees, feedback from organisations in stakeholder meetings and directly to Cabinet members in their meetings and correspondence.



# Survey Analysis

- The analysis provides valuable insights into the issues, priorities and actions people feel are important
- 315 people completed the survey
- All respondents answered the first question on core values
  - Thereafter, fewer than 315 answered each
- There are a large number of open text comments and we used PowerBI and Microsoft Excel to analyse the comments
- Comments were grouped into themes and the most common themes are shared in this report.



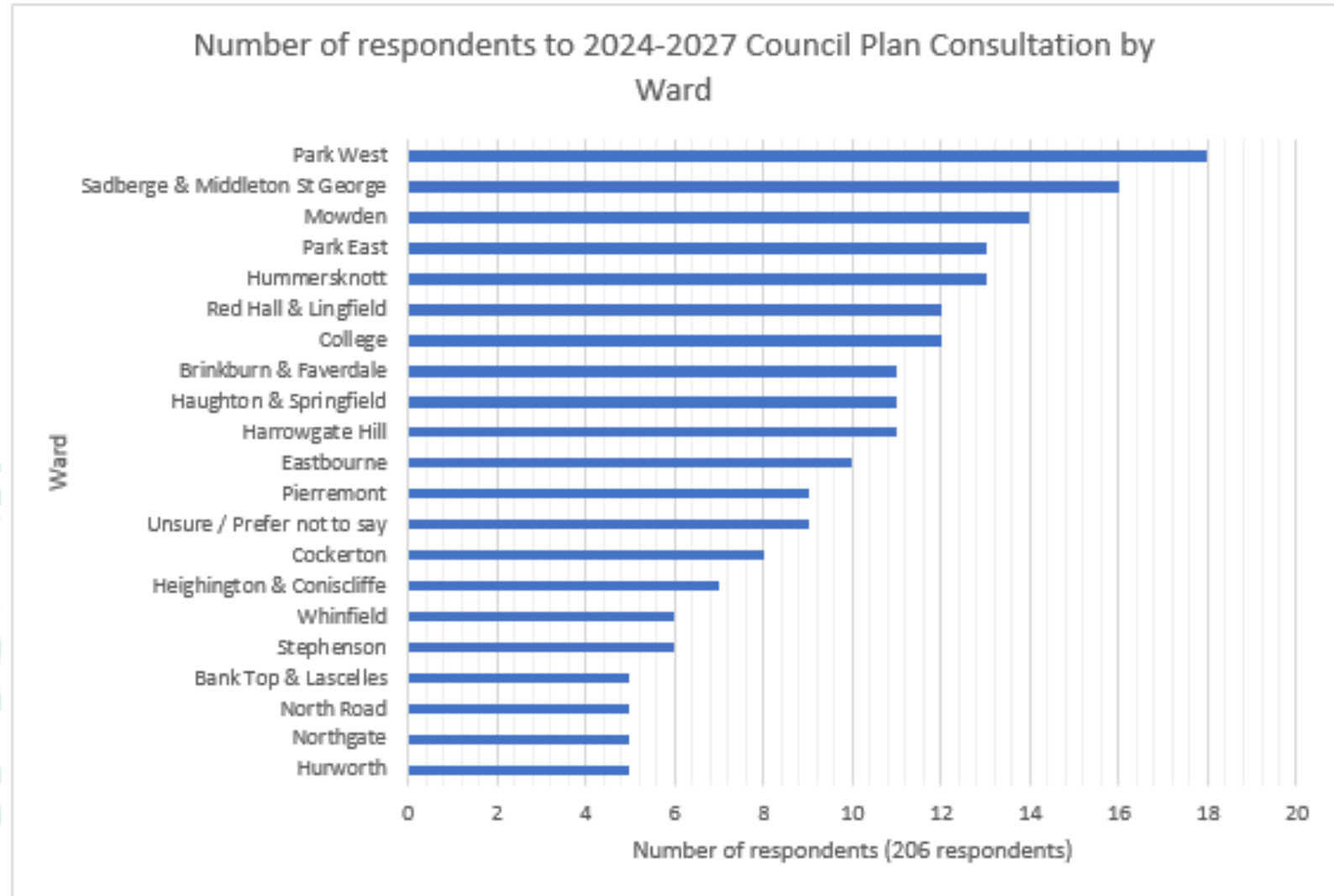
# Response Rate

- Five times the number of responses to previous council plan consultation
- 315 responses, all online
- 5% responded on behalf of an organisation (11), 1% on behalf of an individual
- 200/315 answered the question about their sex
  - 51% identified themselves as Female
  - 42% identified themselves as Male
  - 7% preferred not to say their gender
- 11% of 214 people identified as having a disability
- 3 people (1.5%) of 216 people identified in 3 different non-white ethnic groups, white UK 92%, 6.5% prefer not to say



# All wards are represented

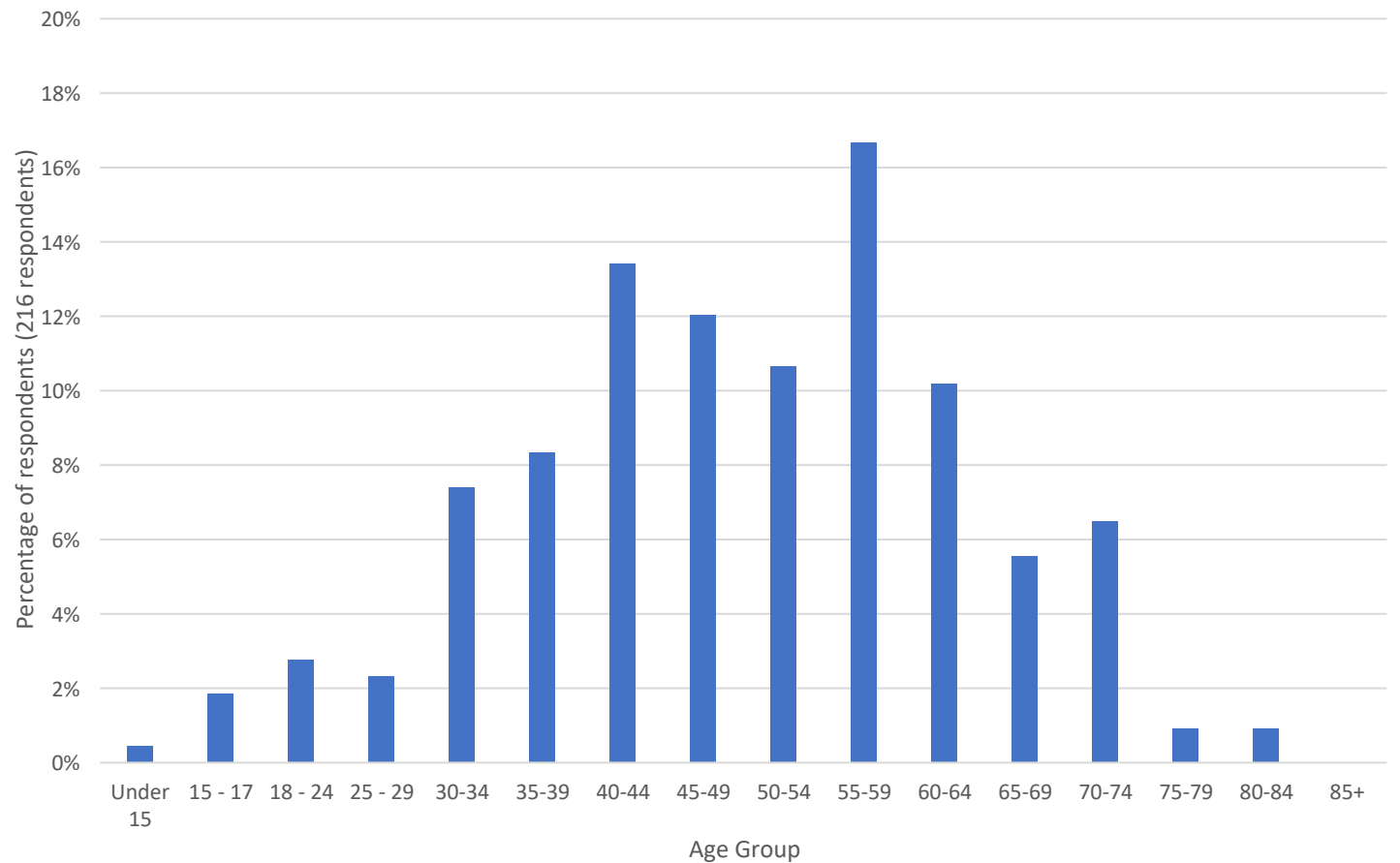
- 206/315 people told us where they live
- Most responses from Park West, Sadberge & Middleton St George, and Mowden
- Fewest responses from Banktop and Lascelles, North Road, Northgate and Hurworth



# All age groups under 84 years old represented

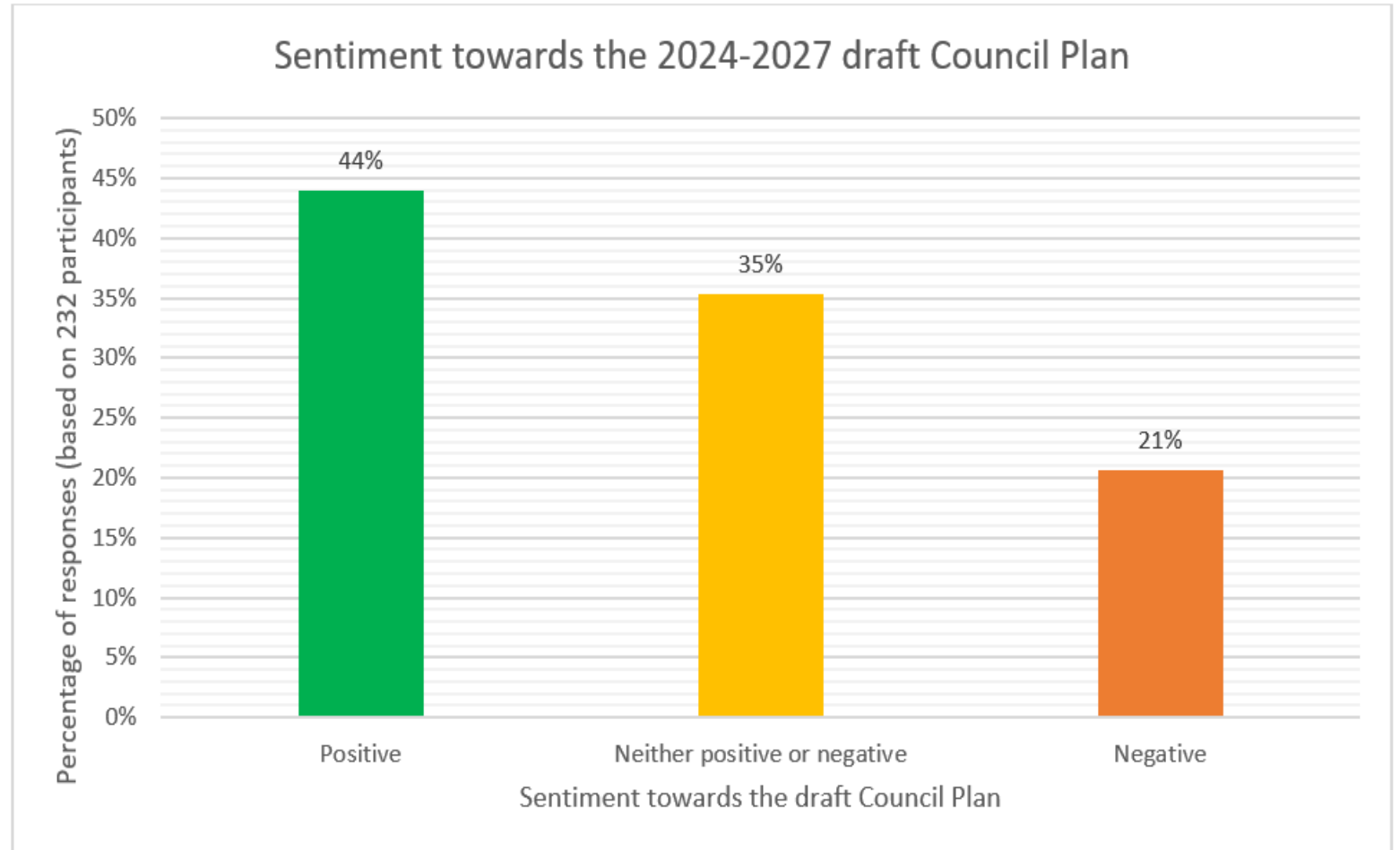
- 216/315 responded told us their age group
- More people responded from the 55-59 age group than any other
- No respondents in the 85+ age group

What age group do you, or the person on whose behalf you are responding, fall into?



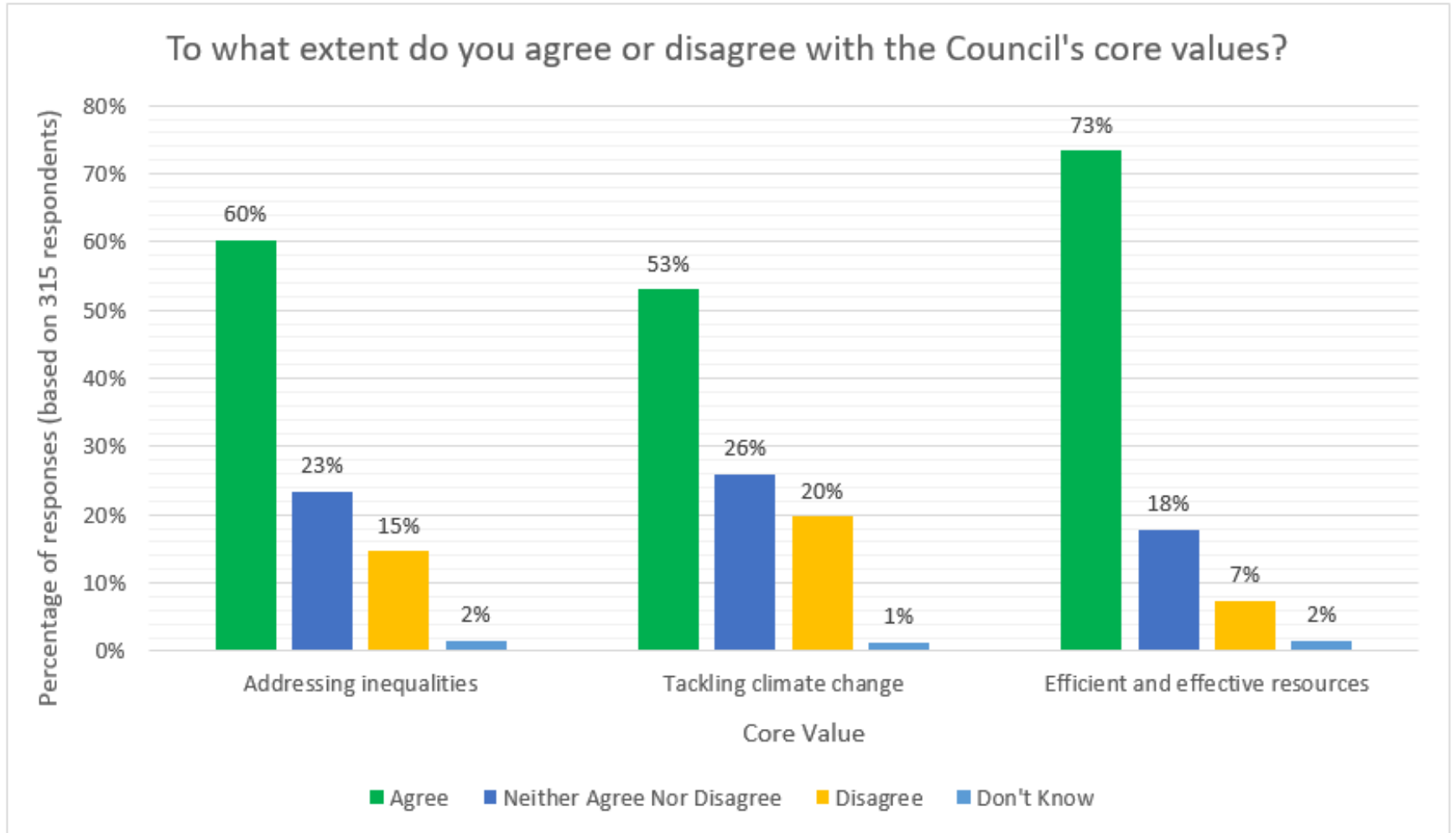
# More people are satisfied than dissatisfied with the plan

- 232 people responded to this question
- More people were satisfied (44%) than dissatisfied with the plan (combined answers very satisfied and satisfied combined)
- Age groups under 49 were more supportive than the age groups 50 and above
- 30-40% of all age groups were neither satisfied or dissatisfied



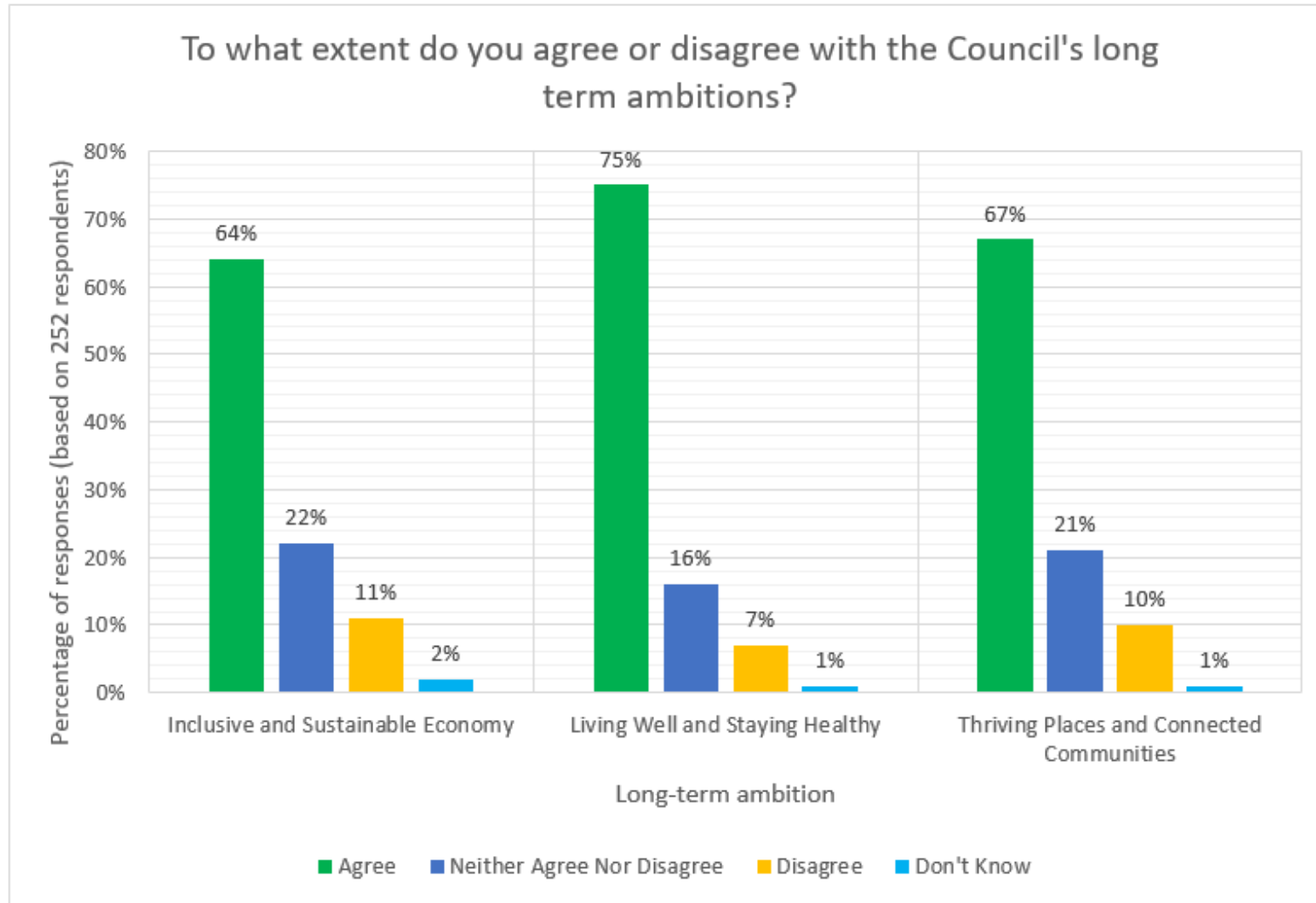
# Most support for core value: efficient and effective use of resources

- 315/315 respondents answered this question
- High levels of support for all three core values
- More people disagreed with climate change
- More females than males supported addressing inequalities and tackling climate change; more males disagreed





# More people agreed with Living Well and Staying Healthy

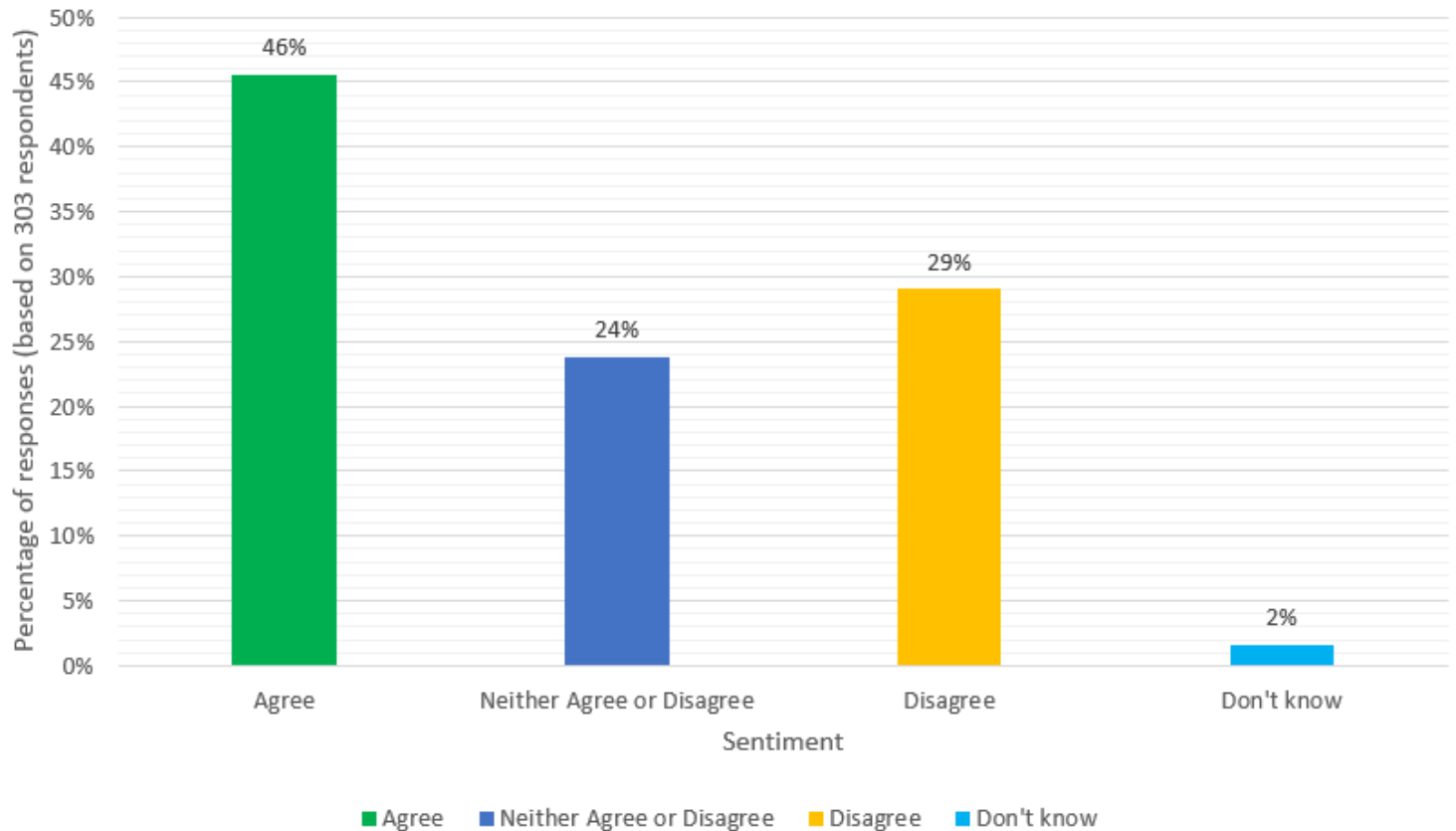


- 252/315 responses
- The majority of people agreed with every ambition
- Living Well and Staying Healthy had the highest level of agreement at 75%



# Vision

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's vision for the borough, "Darlington is one of the best places to live, learn, work and invest in the UK, with a strong economy, healthy thriving communities and opportunities for all."

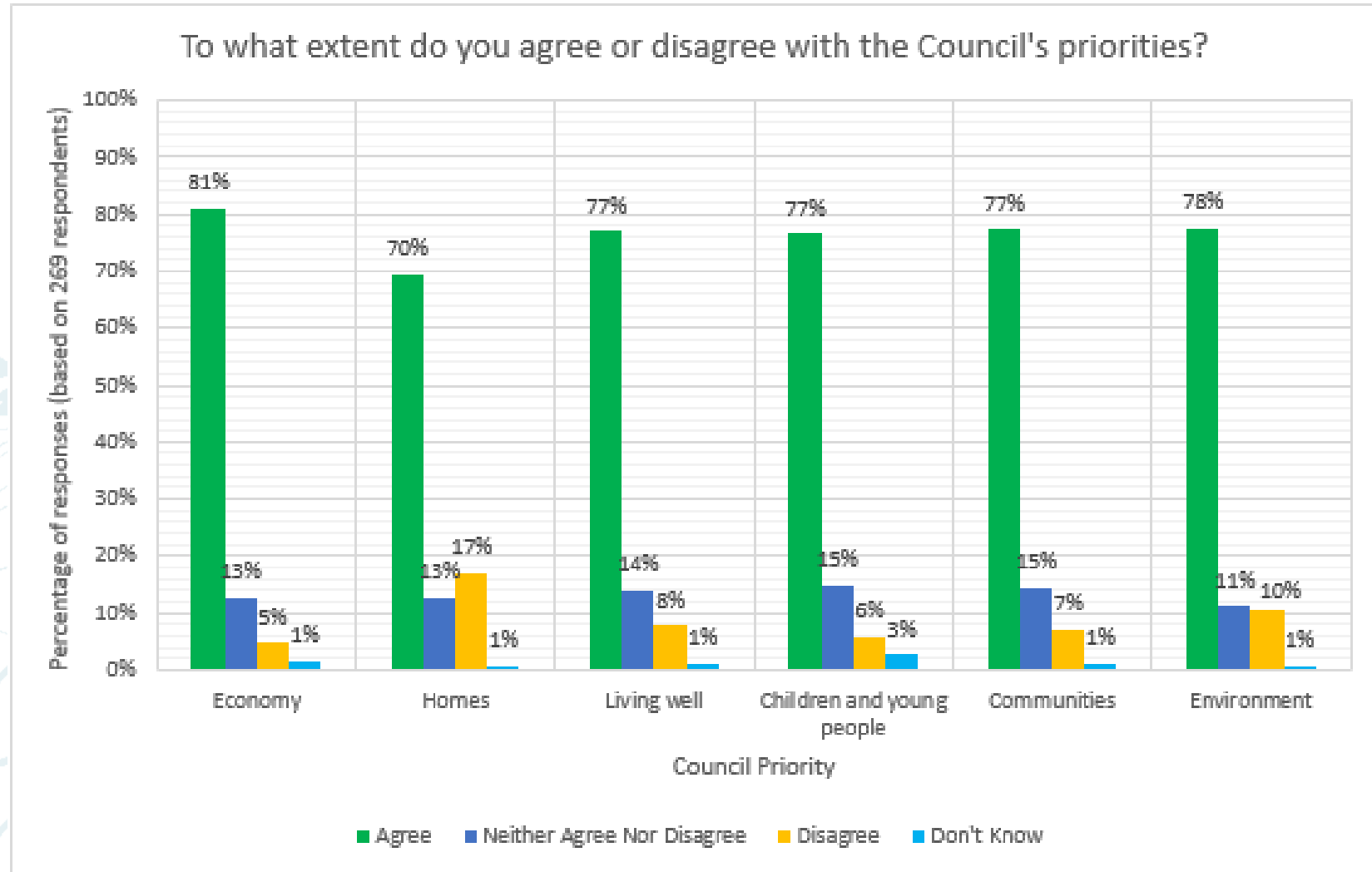


- More people agreed than disagreed with the vision
- 60% males agreed compared with 46% females
- 40-49 age group agreed the most at 62%



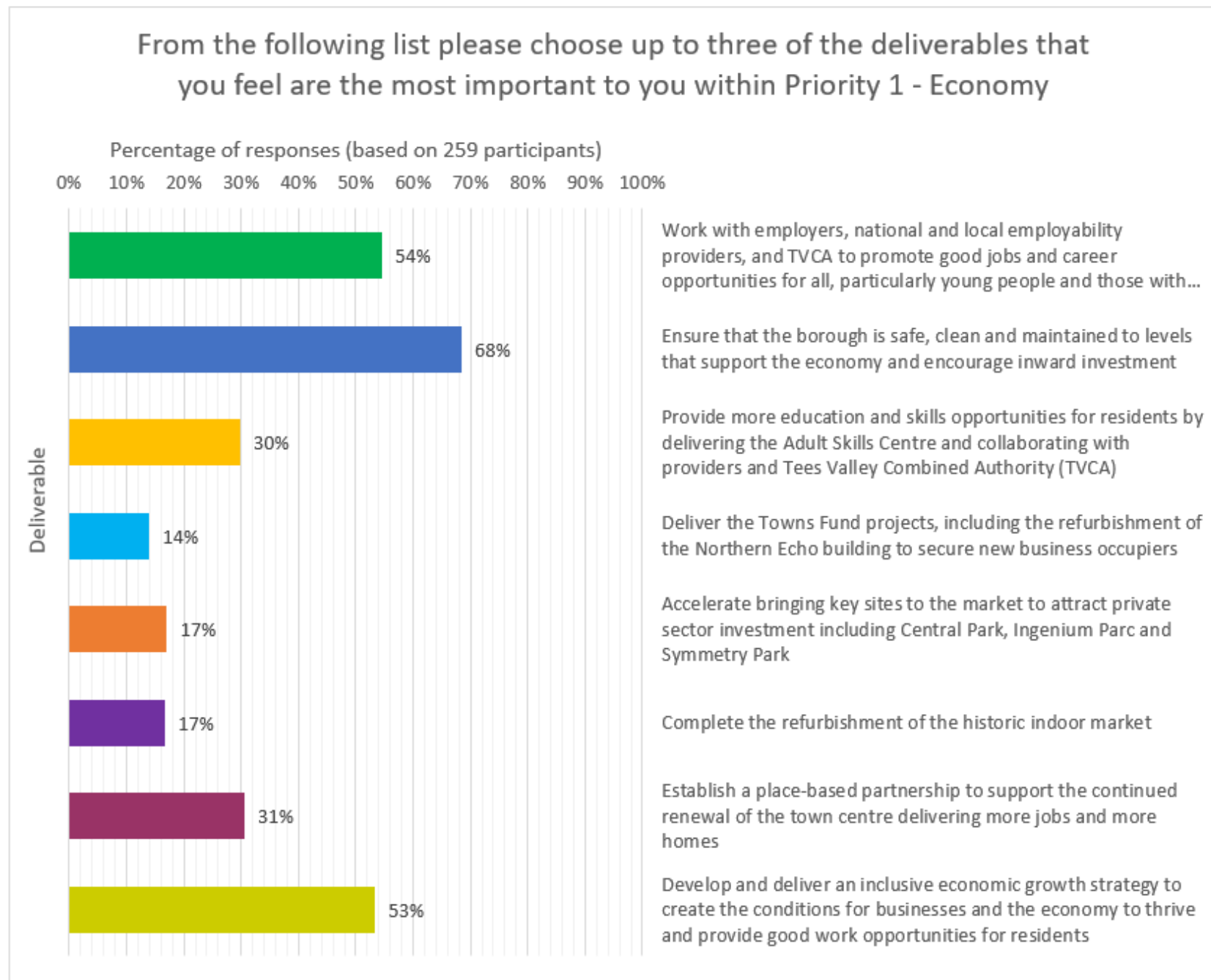
# 70% or more of respondents agree with each priority

- 269 respondents answered this question
- High level of support for all six priorities
- More people agreed with economy than any other priority, 218 (81% who answered this question)
- More people disagreed with homes than any other priority



# Economy

- 259 responses
- Most popular response was to maintain the safety and cleanliness of the borough with 177 (68% of those who answered this question)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - working with employers and Tees Valley Combined Authority to promote good jobs and careers
- Close 3<sup>rd</sup> – develop inclusive growth strategy

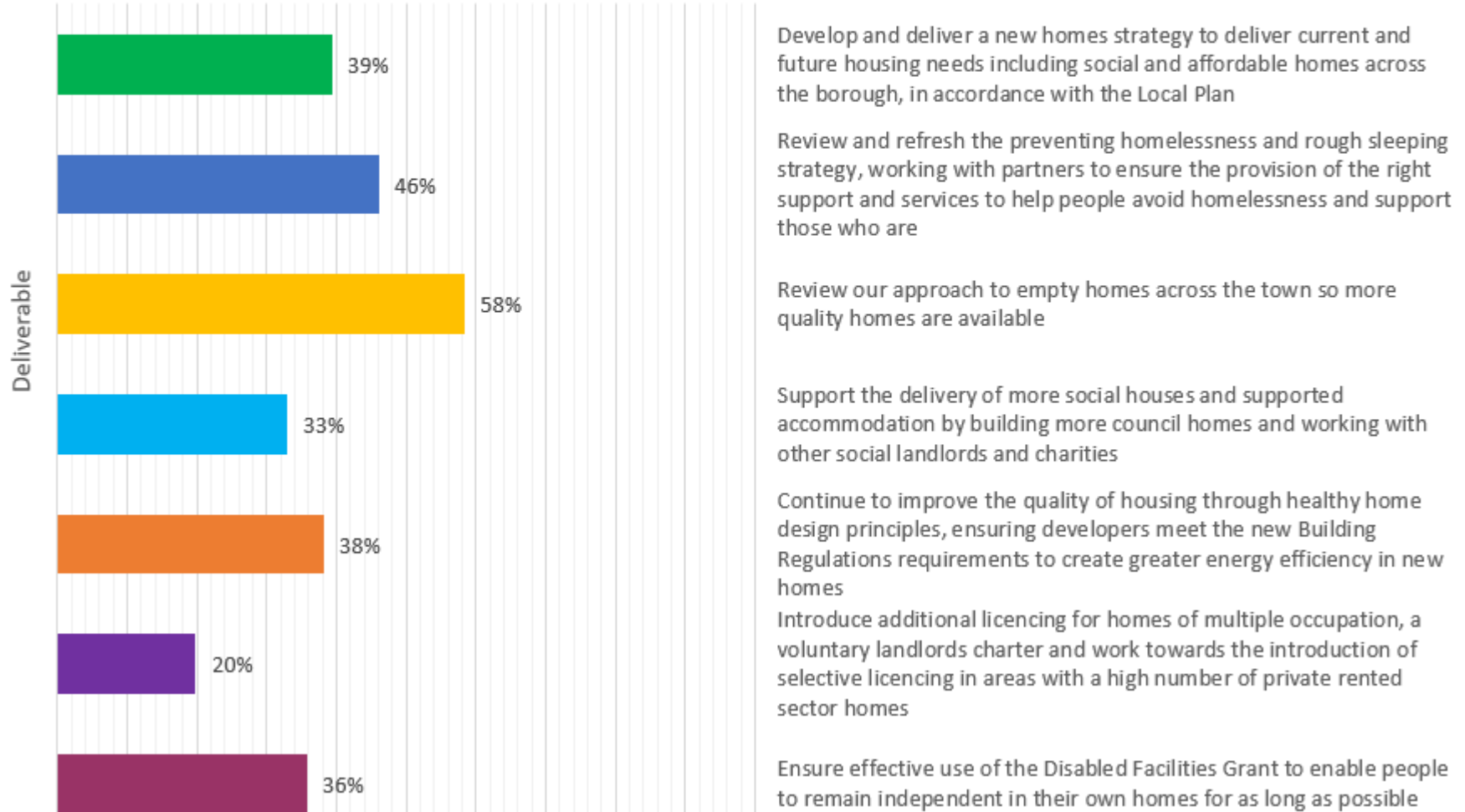


# Homes

- 252 responses
- Most popular response was reviewing our approach to empty homes
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - review and refresh the preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – develop and deliver a new homes strategy

From the following list please choose up to three of the deliverables that you feel are the most important to you within Priority 2 - Homes

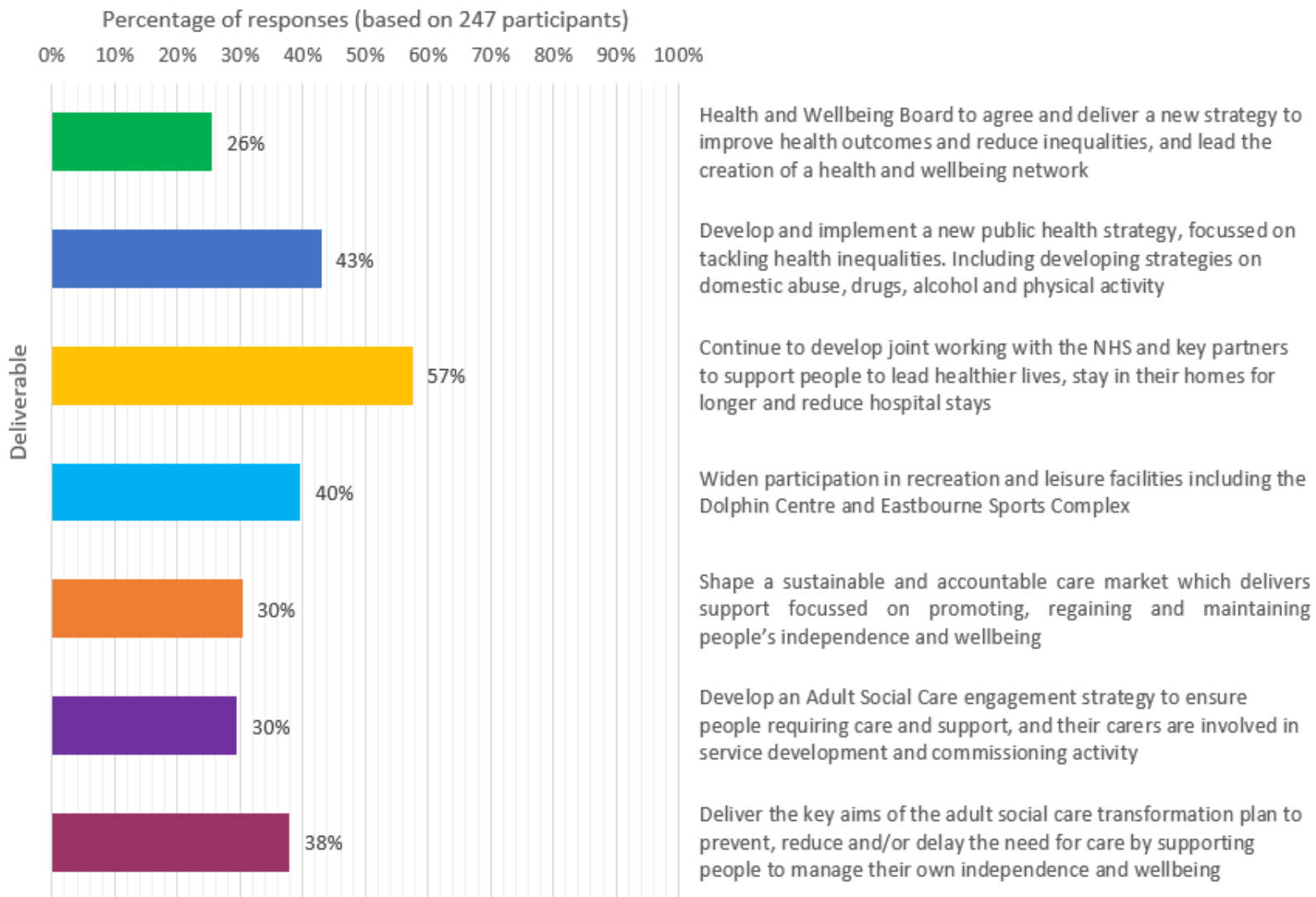
Percentage of responses (based on 252 participants)  
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



# Living Well

- 247 responses
- Most popular response is for continuing to develop joint working with the NHS
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – develop and implement a new public health strategy
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – widen participation in recreation and leisure facilities

From the following list please choose up to three of the deliverables that you feel are the most important to you within Priority 3 - Living Well



# Children and Young People

- 252 responses
- Most popular response was to work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector
- Very close 2<sup>nd</sup> – work with Department for Education and academy trust sponsor on the free school for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – involve children and young people in service development and commissioning

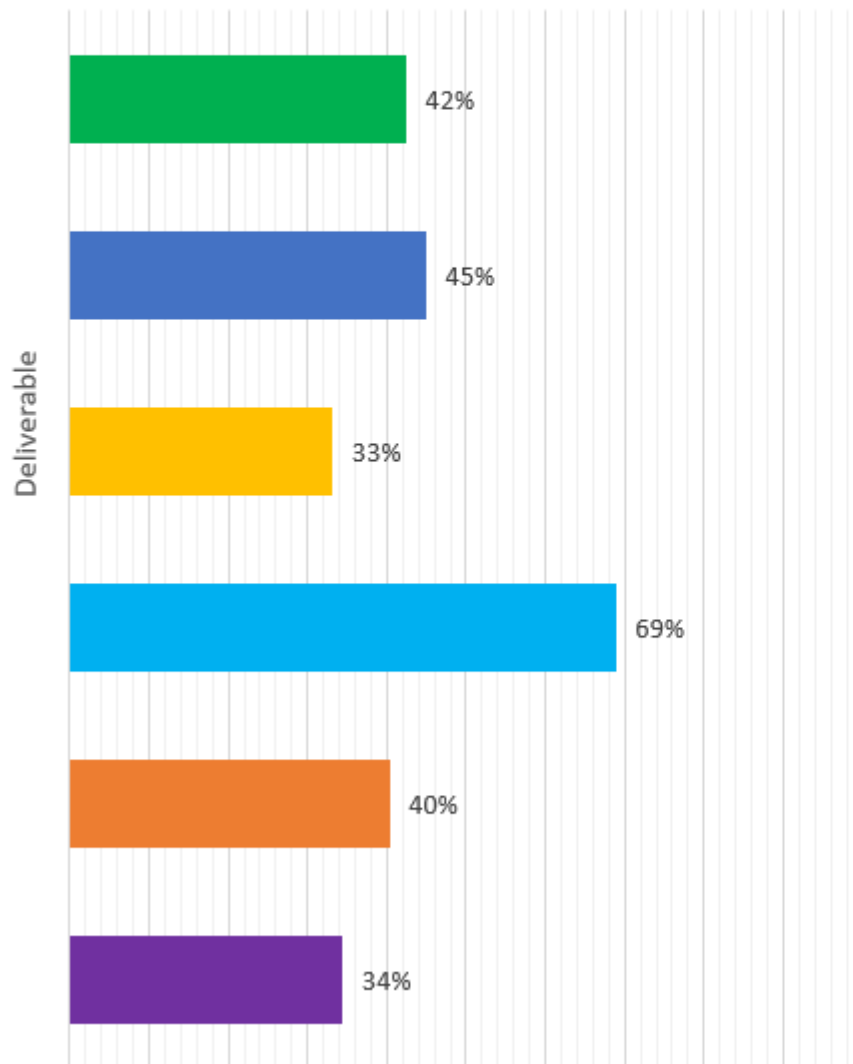


# Communities

- 238 responses
- Most popular response, by a difference of 24%, was supporting communities to remain safe and resilient
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - work with partners to reduce the burden of the cost of living with a focus on food and fuel insecurity
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – partnerships with the Voluntary and Community Sector focussed on causes of inequality, financial inclusion, social exclusion and vulnerable people

From the following list please choose up to three of the deliverables that you feel are the most important to you within Priority 5 - Communities

Percentage of responses (based on 238 participants)  
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



Support and strengthen partnership working with voluntary and community groups with a focus on addressing the causes of inequality, financial inclusion, social exclusion, and vulnerable families with children and young people

Work with partners to reduce the burden of the cost of living with a focus on food and fuel insecurity

Work with the voluntary and community sector to develop a strategy for informal volunteering which empowers people to volunteer and directs volunteering to areas of greatest need, including working with Darlington Cares to deliver an enhanced volunteering

Support communities to remain safe and resilient by working with key agencies and communities to address anti social behaviour and crime issues in the community

Support a strong Community Safety Partnership to ensure the issues affecting the safety and security of our communities are addressed collectively, including addressing hate crime

Ensuring business activity is regulated, licensed and enforced effectively to protect the health and wellbeing of residents, visitors and businesses

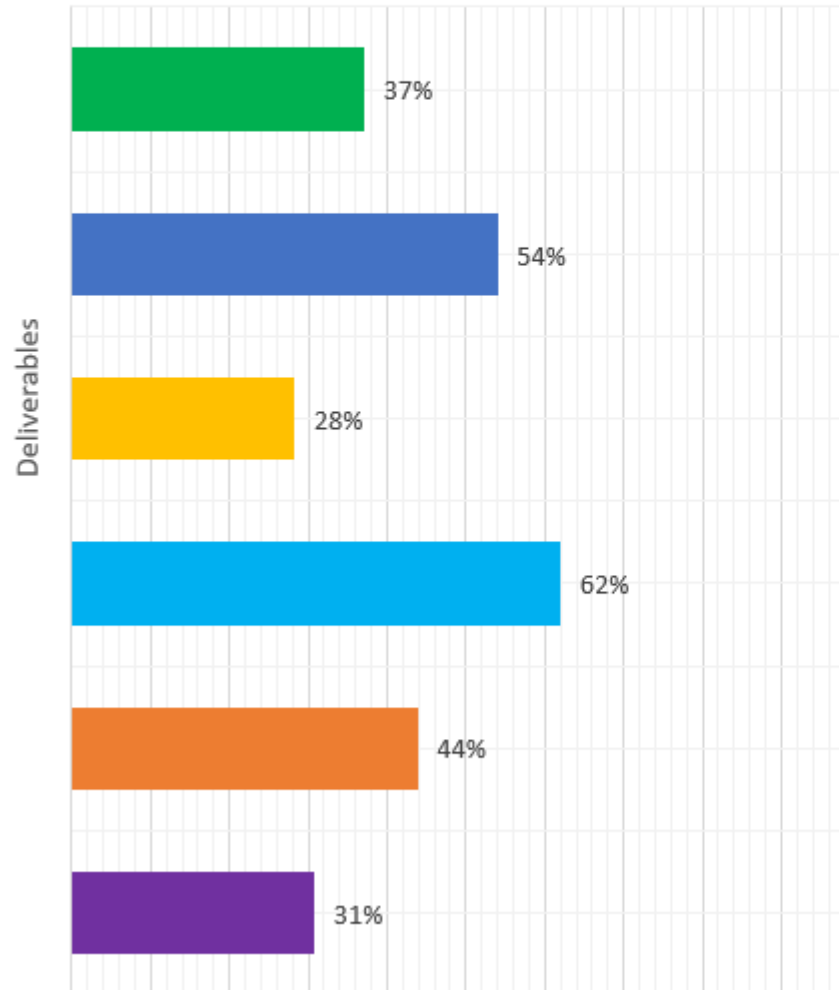


# Environment

- 237 responses
- Most popular - enable improvements in transport systems working with TVCA and transport operators
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – diverse and accessible events, bringing footfall and a positive impact on the local economy
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - introduce food waste collections and encourage residents to increase overall recycling rates

From the following list please choose up to three of the deliverables that you feel are the most important to you within Priority 6 - Environment

Percentage of responses (based on 237 participants)  
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



Celebrate the opening of Hopetown and deliver a successful 2025 festival programme that helps to promote Darlington as a destination for visitors and investment

Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

Deliver revised supplementary planning documents that guide better design in new developments and contribute to a sense of pride in place

Enable improvements in transport systems by working in partnership with TVCA and public transport operators to deliver the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, including the improvement of bus facilities and the reliability of...

Introduce food waste collections and encourage residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average

Work with statutory bodies to progress studies of flood risk in Darlington and enable funding to be sought to mitigate the impact of climate change

# 177 comments on the hope for the future of Darlington survey question

Within the survey participants were asked what their hope was for the future of Darlington. Below is a summary of the responses:

- **Economy:** Range of good quality jobs; Encouraging business growth through investment
- **Environment:** Protect green space, wildlife and biodiversity; sustainable energy; clean
- **Town centre:** more independents, fewer empty shops; thriving market town, festivals
- **Transport:** reliable public transport; improved road infrastructure, fewer potholes and better road surfaces
- **Homes:** affordable; meet resident's needs; reduce impact on green space; services to support growth
- **Children and young people:** improving lives of young people, education and apprenticeship provision; reduce Anti-Social Behaviour
- **Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour :** less in town centre; prioritise tackling crime



# Overall Themes and Comments

There were 315 responses to the survey and although same size is too small to be representative of the overall population, they do provide insights on what is important. There were a diverse range of views cross a large number of issues.

The following themes came from the comments sections of the questions and meetings with stakeholders

- Green spaces/impact of new housing
- Road infrastructure, maintenance and potholes
- Valuing nature and biodiversity
- Good jobs and skills
- Town centre – good jobs, empty/lack of variety of shops
- Unaffordability of new homes
- Safe places
- Opportunities for children and young people

