



Results of the early consultation February 2020

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Headline results

We had just over 160 responses to our household survey – which was lower than we had hoped, but still provided a reasonably sized sample from which to base our analysis. The number of people in the younger age ranges (particularly under 35) was not well represented in the sample.

The survey confirmed that we appear to have got the objectives for the plan about right, in terms of reflecting people’s concerns and issues, and what is important to them.

By far and away the main factor for coming to live in the area, was the ease of access to green spaces and/or the beach. Other important factors were the High Street and its shops and services, and the relative quietness of the neighbourhoods. The biggest issue for local residents was traffic, which is not something that a Neighbourhood Plan can readily resolve. The themes that did crop up relating to issues that could be directly addressed through development, including

- housing mix to have a better balance of bungalows, affordable housing, family homes and less emphasis on flats
- encouraging more bars / restaurants in the High Street, and more sporting / recreational / socialising facilities for all ages
- achieving better quality design / character and eco-credentials for new buildings, but limiting building heights / over-development
- providing adequate off-road parking provision for new developments
- providing of safe walking and cycling routes

The data provided some useful insights in terms of the type of property people currently occupy and what their futures needs might be, but recognising that the sample did not really address the needs of younger households.

There are obvious concerns about on street parking, speeding traffic and dangerous junctions. However the data indicated that most properties had at least 2 off-road parking spaces, and only 7% of those responding had more cars than spaces.

We also achieved some insight into some of the green spaces, walking and cycling routes that are used. The community facilities that we identified were well valued by local residents, who also pointed out some additional facilities that they used which hadn’t been on our first list.

There were mixed views as to whether the priority in new design should be in maximising a building’s sustainability (such as through achieving the highest standards in energy efficiency) versus retaining the character of the various local neighbourhoods. A lot of people were concerned about the number of flats being built, and that modern development was too cramped on the plot, too high and overbearing, and with not enough parking or green space. There were general concerns that there was little attempt to fit in with local character and the bland, boring or repetitive nature of recent building designs.

How the consultation was run

Sending out the surveys

The survey was publicised via

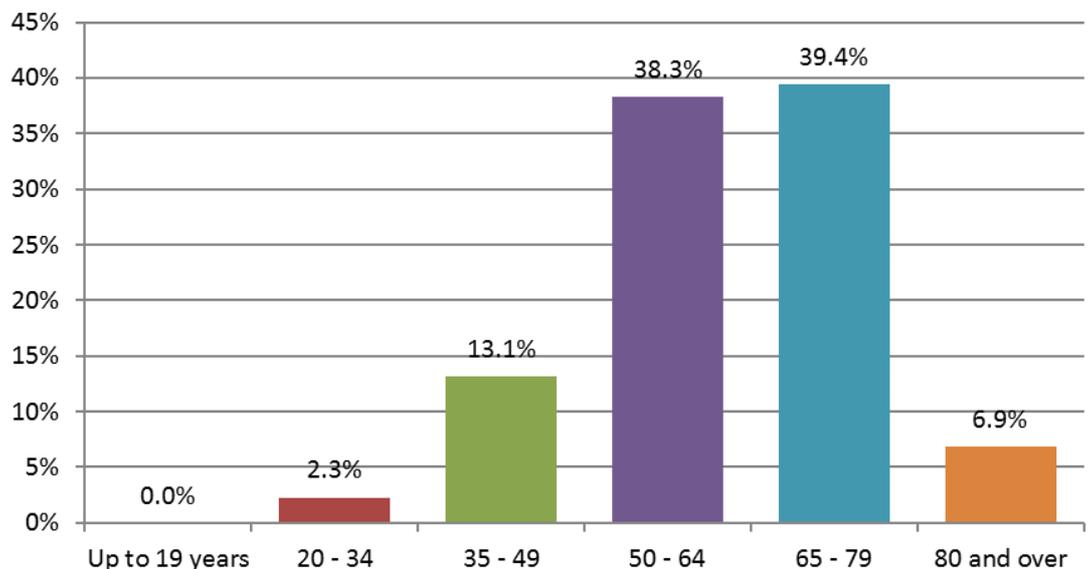
- Parish Neighbourhood Plan web site <https://www.highcliffewalkfordplan.org.uk>
- ‘Nextdoor’ – community social media
- Highcliffe News – community social media <https://www.highcliffedorset.co.uk>
- Facebook – Christchurch, Highcliffe & Mudeford Community site
- Bournemouth Echo/ Christchurch Times - advertorials

Highcliffe Residents Association Members and the 15 Interest Group representatives who attended the scoping workshop in December 2019 were contacted by email. In addition, ‘hard copies’ of the survey were made available to residents for collection and return via the Parish Council offices.

Who responded

162 surveys were returned. By far the majority of respondents were from residents aged 50 or over. We had no responses whatsoever from people under the age of 20, and only 4 responses from those aged 20 – 34.

What age range do you fall within?



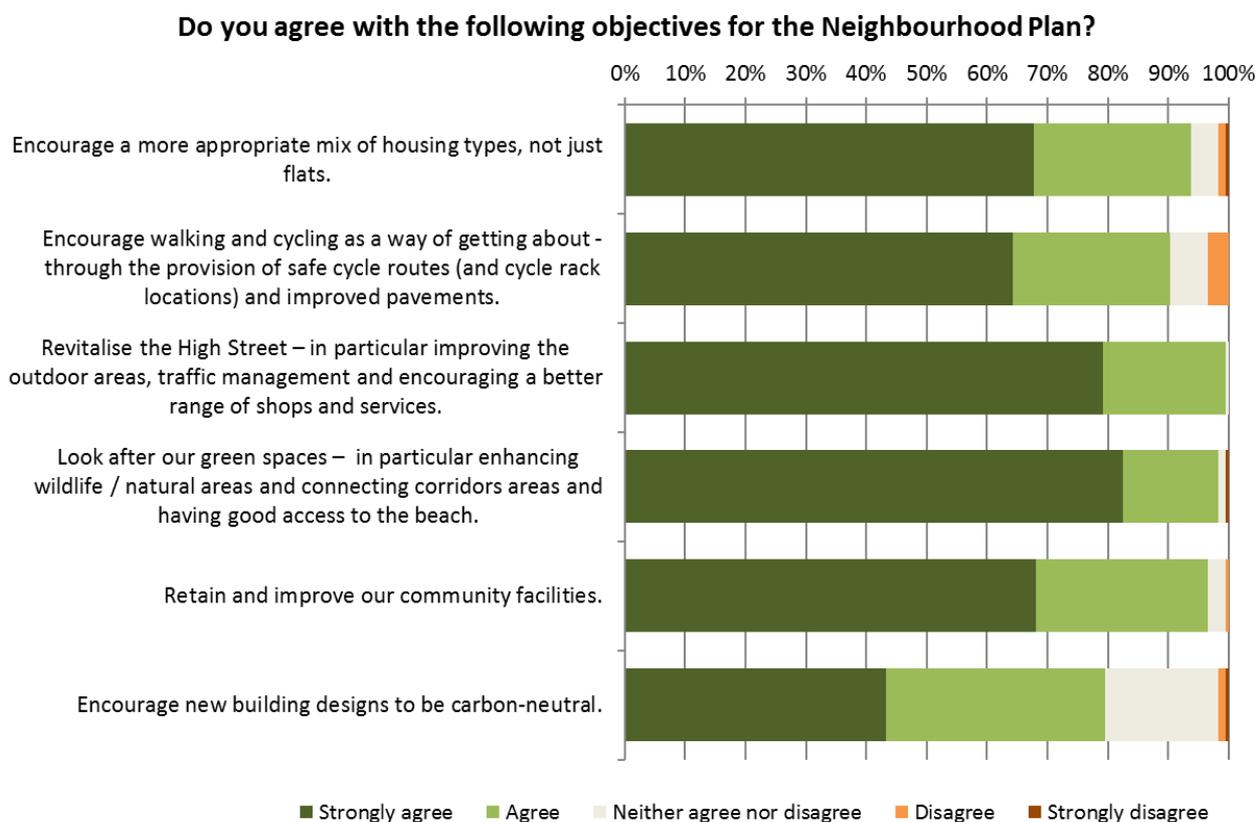
Whilst to some extent this is not surprising given that older people are typically more likely to complete these types of questionnaire, and the fact that the population profile of the area is skewed towards older residents (61% of the population was 50 years or more in the 2011 Census), however it does mean that the results do not reflect the views on younger people within the population (where possible the data for those under 50 years of age has been examined separately to check whether this highlights a different point of view).

Information provided on postcode / street indicates a broad geographic spread of respondents across the Neighbourhood Plan area (the locations shown on the map below are indicative and not exact addresses)



Main Findings

Neighbourhood Plan objectives and priorities



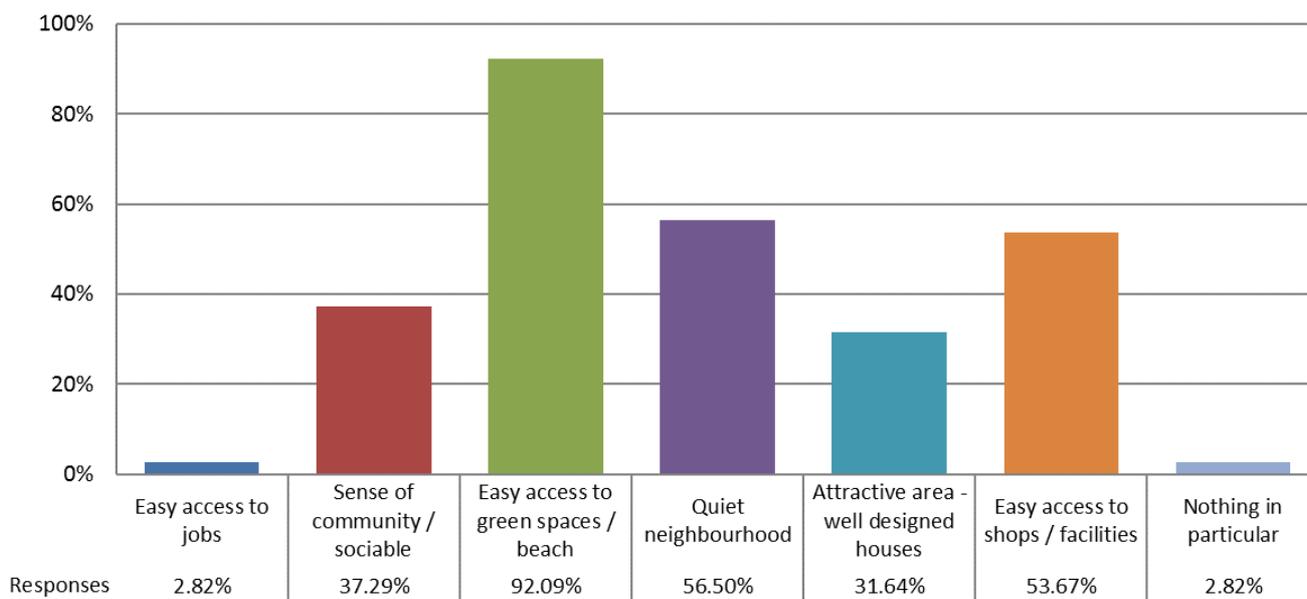
There was strong support for all the proposed objectives. The objective regarding new build designs was less strongly supported, with the highest number of neutral responses (but nonetheless supported by more than three-quarters of respondents). The main reasons for this appear to be linked to retaining the character of the area. A sample of typical comments on the objectives is included below:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Housing mix | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Highcliffe is in danger of being over developed – Development must include affordable properties for young people – Encourage more families and greater mix of ages – Flats are OK – I would like to see far less new flats (or houses) being built – If flats permitted that there is a limitation of 3 floors maximum – Instead of retirement flats how about small bungalow developments – Need a range of housing tenures - more social housing needed. – Many new properties are being purchased as 2nd holiday homes. – The market is saturated with retirement flats and the services cannot cope. |
| Walking and Cycling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clean up the footpaths – Connect cycle routes into New Forest – Allow access to Barton on Sea from the beach – Improve condition of pavements and roads. – Increase waste bins |

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved access for disabled smoother pathways and safe accessible alternatives to steps to clifftop and beach. – Safe, well-thought out cycling infrastructure would be very welcome! – Stop cycling on foot paths – Better surfaces to the slopes down to the beach
The High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Would love to see a greengrocer – Car parking is difficult for shoppers and local workers. – Shop fronts need renovating or even a paint and a clean. – More outdoor café style sitting down areas in the High Street. – Reduce parking spaces on Lymington Road to improve traffic flow – Restore pavements in High Street – Costa coffee or Nero's in high street to encourage life into the high street. M&S simply food would also be a great addition.
Green Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Keep all the current green space! – Retain and maintain wooded areas to preserve wildlife habitat – Make section of the beach dog free – Use the wooded area by the Highcliffe Medical Centre for a Nature Reserve / community area with a walk seats etc. – We have an amazing clifftop open space. It would be great to see outside activities on this grassy area – Consider providing an adult exercise equipment area in the recreation ground on Lymington Road opposite Highcliffe Surgery
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improving toilet facilities at the park – A bank in the high street – Evening activities when people are back from work
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New property should not be higher than the property it replaced – Don't knock down beautiful character properties – Encourage new builds to include reasonably sufficient parking spaces
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ban on heavy lorries – Increase employment opportunities – Evening bus service in the evening to and from Christchurch – Street parking permits for residents during summer months.

We asked what it was that they liked about living in the area. This was done as a multiple choice question (with people encouraged to tick up to three factors under each question), with an open ended response to capture possible answers that we hadn't included. By far and away the main factor for coming to live in the area, chosen by over 90% of those responding, was the ease of access to green spaces and/or the beach. Other important factors were the High Street (easy access to shops and facilities) and the relative quietness of the neighbourhoods – both of which were selected by at least half of all respondents. Access to jobs was the least important – most likely reflecting in part the age profile of the majority of respondents, but perhaps also the fact that the major employment areas (such as Bournemouth town centre and the airport) lie outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area

What do you like about the housing area you live in? Please tick up to 3 points

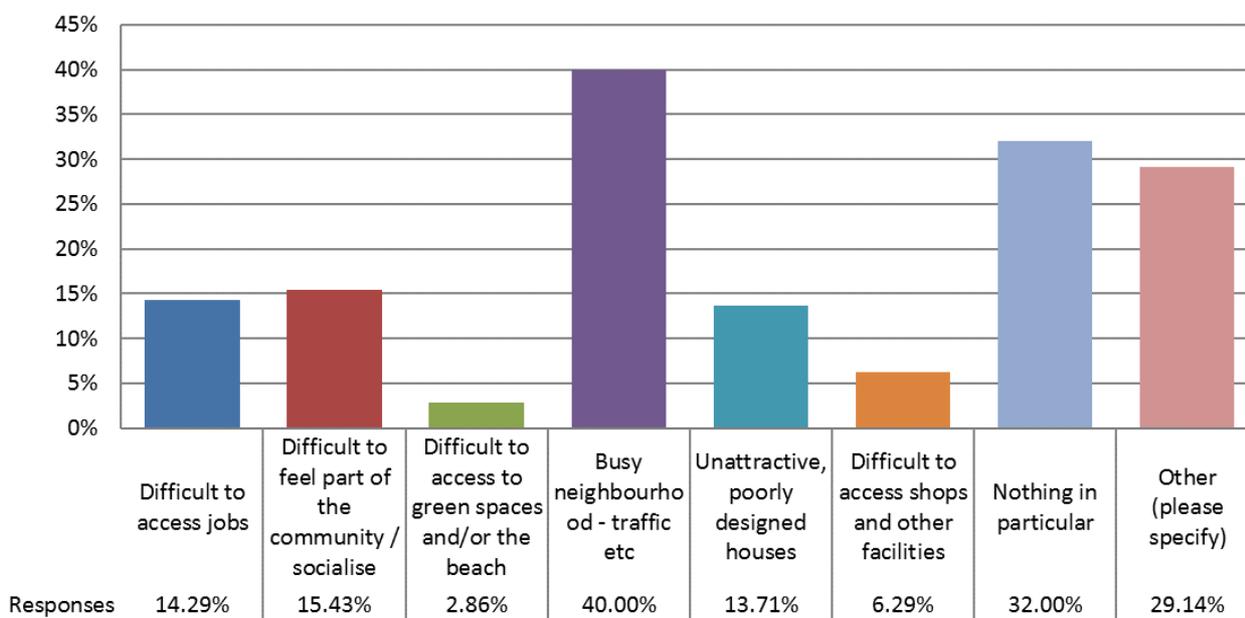


There were 3 ‘other’ responses relating to factors not included in the above options, which were as follows:

- Good schools
- Reasonable transport links (train and bus)
- It is so British!

Following this question, we also asked what, if anything, people didn’t like about the area.

What don't you like about the housing area you live in? Tick up to 3 points.



About one third of respondents said that there was nothing they didn’t like. Traffic was the most common dislike, cited by about two fifths of respondents. Whilst a range of other suggestions were put forward (most commonly complaints about recent developments / over-development and parking) these were not of a significant number in their own right.

Some 125 suggestions were put forward under what most needs to change. Most of these were issues that are covered by the proposed objectives, or were matters that cannot easily be addressed through a Neighbourhood Plan (which sets out guidelines for developments which require planning permissions), including:

- Bus services
- Traffic flows / management
- Footpath / pavement maintenance
- Green spaces management and maintenance
- Littering
- Car park charging policies

The themes that did crop up relating to issues that could be directly addressed through development, including

- housing mix to include some small bungalows perhaps some warden controlled with a day centre complex
- more affordable housing
- more family homes
- fewer flats
- encourage more bars / restaurants in the High Street
- better quality design / character of new buildings
- limit building heights / over-development
- ensure new building of a high quality & more energy efficient
- adequate off-road parking provision for new developments
- encourage more sporting / recreational / socialising facilities for all ages
- provision of safe walking and cycling routes

Housing

Household types and housing stock

The majority of those responding to the survey lived in a bungalow or detached house, with 3 bedroom homes being the ‘average’ house size. The survey sample is not sufficiently large to be confident that this reflects the housing mix across the area, but does highlight the correlation between house types and size (in terms of bedroom).

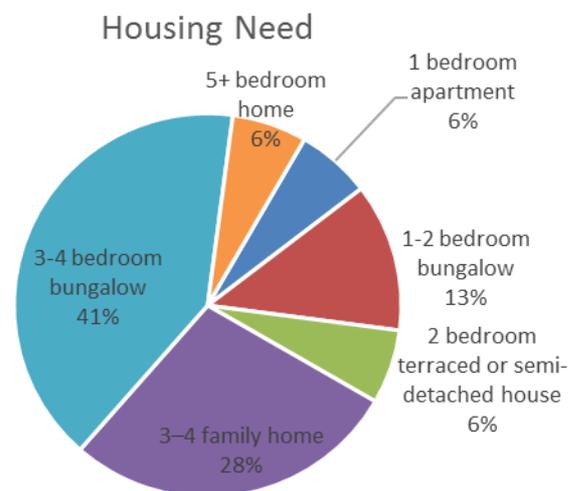
House type	Bedrooms	1	2	3	4	5	Total
apartment / flat		4.0%	10.8%	1.7%			16.5%
terraced or semi-detached house		0.6%	2.8%	6.3%	1.7%	0.6%	11.9%
bungalow			11.4%	15.9%	9.1%	1.1%	37.5%
detached house			1.1%	9.1%	14.2%	6.8%	31.3%
other				1.1%	0.6%	1.1%	2.8%
Total		4.5%	26.1%	34.1%	25.6%	9.7%	100.0%

The house price sales data for the area for the 4 years from April 2015 – March 2020¹ shows that approximately half (49%) of the sales were for detached properties, and just over two-fifths (23%) were terraced or semi-detached homes, with flats and apartments making up about 28% of sales. This does not give an indication of the overall proportion of bungalows, but based on the responses to the survey the data suggests that these make up a reasonable proportion of the overall mix.

Analysing the results by household type shows that bungalows appear to be the preferred choice of older residents (from 50 years and up) and flats / apartments tend to be most popular with those 65 and older (although both these statistics are skewed by the higher numbers of older residents responding). Most households responding to the survey were couples, who typically occupy 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties. Households with a single occupant were most likely to occupy a 2 bedroom home, and those with 3 or more residents having 3 or more bedrooms. This is not untypical of housing trends within the open market where households often occupy properties with more bedrooms than needs out of choice (for a whole range of reasons).

Housing need

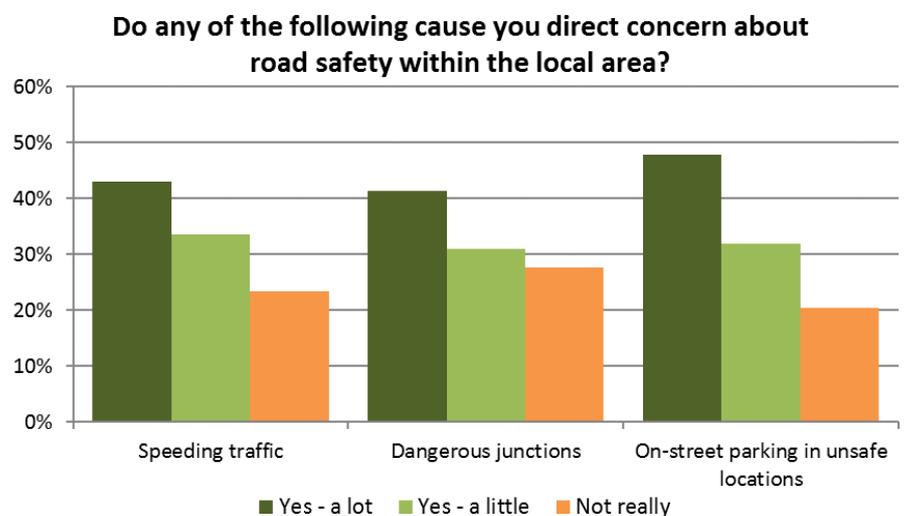
The vast majority of respondents (76%) felt it unlikely that they would move home within the next 5 – 10 years. Of those that would need to move (or might need an additional home as they could become more than one household), most (78%) were hoping to stay in the local area. Almost all respondents would be able to buy on the open market (although this does not suggest a lack of need for affordable housing, given the low response rate from younger families). The main need request was for 3-4 bedroom bungalows or homes. Eight households indicated an interest in self-build or discounted housing for sale, and one household was looking for an affordable property to rent. Two other households were looking to modify / adapt their homes.



Traffic and Transport

Road safety

Residents were asked whether traffic speeds, problem junctions or problem on-street parking caused them concerns. There are obviously issues for local residents, as in all cases the most popular response was 'yes – a lot' accounting for between 40 – 50% of the returns. Of the three issues, on-



¹ As sourced from <https://www.gov.uk/search-house-prices>

street parking was the most worrisome, with only 20% of respondents saying that this was not an issue to them.

In the open-ended answers there was considerable reference to concerns about the High Street. Issues were raised in general (10 responses), specifically about the parking (11 responses) and the difficulties created by the parking. The need for better traffic management (8 responses), including the need for more or better located pelican crossings (3 responses) was also mentioned. Problem of lorries/heavy traffic were also raised by a comparably high number of respondents (14 responses), with some suggesting that heavy vehicles should be banned or curtailed (5 responses). Two responders wanted Highcliffe to be bypassed – which is way beyond the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Lymington Road overall came in for criticism (8 responses), particularly the junction for the Castle with Rothesay Drive. Ringwood Road was mentioned in a number of comments as a concern (9 responses). To the north of the patch, Walkford is also seen as an area for concern, either generally (16 responses) or specifically in connection with parking (5 responses), with access to the A35 around the Cat & Fiddle seen as particularly unsatisfactory to the point of being dangerous (8 responses).

Across the area, there are junctions which are seen as positively dangerous (8 responses) – the prime examples being the Ringwood and Station Road junctions with the A35.

Parking provision

Given that parking issues had been previously raised, the survey looked to gain information about the typical number of cars or vans kept at a property and the level of parking provided. The majority of households (53%) responding to our survey has 2 vehicles normally parked at home overnight. Very few (less than 3%) had no vehicles, and similarly only a small proportion (less than 9%) had more than 3 vehicles. Most properties (87%) had at least 2 off-road parking spaces, and only 7% of those responding had more cars than off-road parking. However it was notable that people living in apartment / flat or terraced or semi-detached homes were more likely to have insufficient off-road parking provided (these house types accounted for 75% of the occurrences, despite making up only 27% of the sample).

Walking and Cycling

It is clear from the open-ended responses to the question “Which walking / cycling routes in the area do you currently use most often?” that much of the area is well used by walkers and cyclists. We had some 442 responses in total to this question (which allowed up to three routes to be suggested).

The overwhelming number of responses show that the beach and cliff paths are well used (77 responses), as well as the associated areas, for example Chewton Bunny (14 responses). These are clearly walking activities, and the immediate area is extended to Highcliffe Castle itself (24 responses), Steamer point (7 responses) and the Coastal Path (5 responses). The Coastal Path is the responsibility of Dorset council but it does incorporate some of our beach/cliff area.

Within Highcliffe and Walkford, Chewton Common is particularly favoured (16 responses), as is Nea Meadow (6 responses). These are evidently walking routes and indeed walking specifically in the general area is mentioned in many responses. Other areas commonly mentioned included

Lymington Road (13 responses), Highcliffe High Street (19 responses), and Hinton Wood Avenue (8 responses).

There were just over 140 suggestions to the question “What improvements or what new routes or crossings (if any) do you think are needed?”.

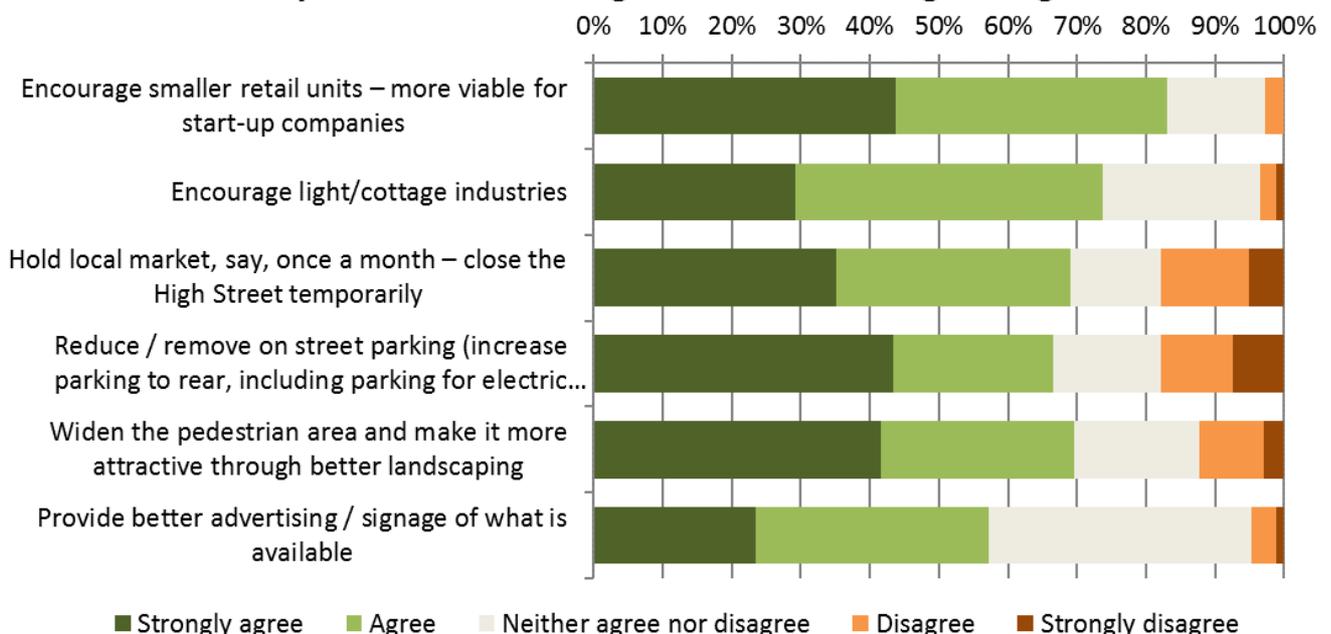
Most of the comments with regard to improved or new routes related to the need for better provision for road crossings. Pelican crossings (particularly in the High Street) and crossings in general need to be improved, relocated, or provided (30 responses). Other locations mentioned included Smugglers Lane, Stuart Road, Mill Lane and the Lymington Road / Rothesay Drive entrance. There are also some areas for improvement identified in the cliff top and beach paths (9 responses).

Of particular note for respondents was the poor provision for cyclists in terms of lanes and alternative routes (23 responses). Many responses were non-specific (simply wanting ‘better cycle routes’ (15 responses)), although some comments were adverse concerning inconsiderate cycling. Access to the village is seen as important. Also in the coastal area cycle routes going west from Highcliffe to Muford (2 responses), and going east in the Nature Reserve via the Castle and cliff/beach as far as access into the New Forest are all seen as desirable (4 responses). Some lockable cycle parking in the main car parks would also be welcome (2 responses).

The High Street

The ideas put forward for revitalising the High Street were generally well-supported by those responding to the household survey.

How do you rate the following ideas for revitalising the High Street:



There were about 100 comments made about how the High Street could be improved. There were many comments about improving or widening pavements (17), more of different shops and services (20), and reducing the amount of traffic (15). Other ideas included banning lorries (and delivery lorries during shopping hours); more planting; more seating; bringing back the banks and free parking (e.g. for residents of for one hour).

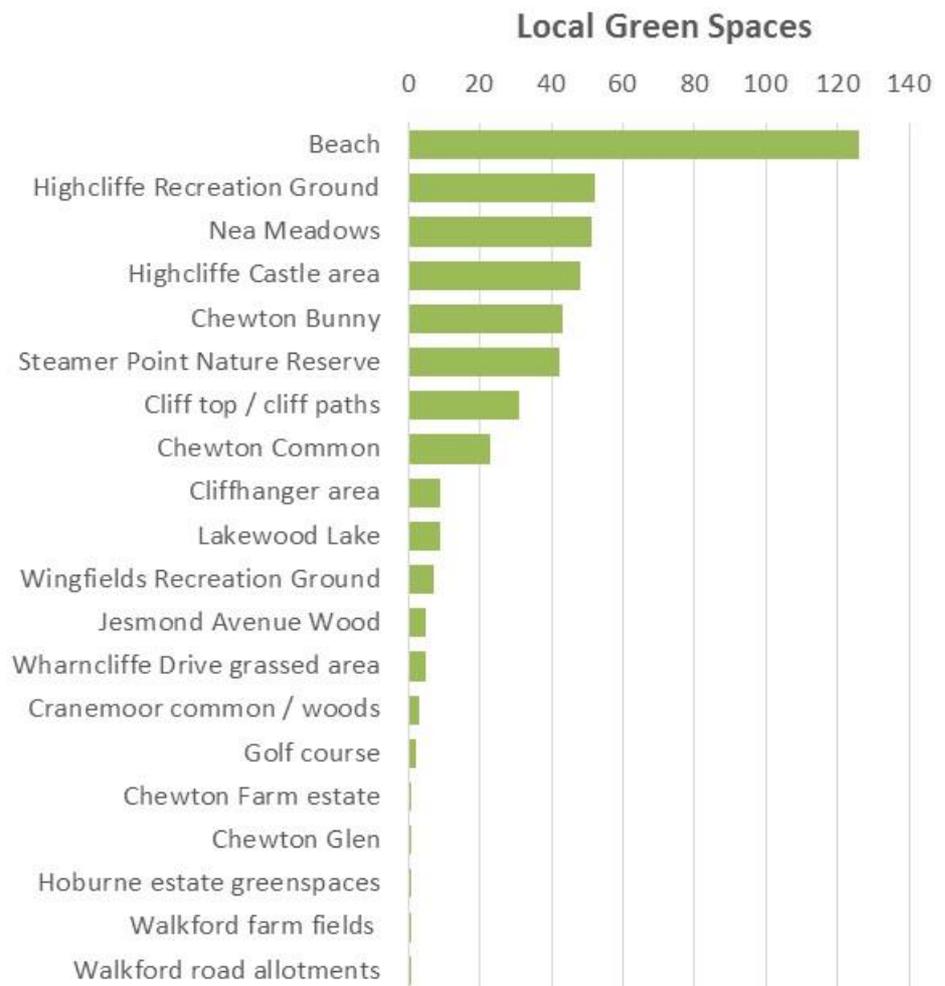
Green Spaces

There were nearly 500 responses to local green spaces that people value. Some of these were outside of our Neighbourhood Plan area – such as Mundeford Quay and Avon Beach, Stanpit Marsh, Hengistbury Head, Burton Common and the New Forest.

The main areas which featured in people comments were:

- Beach areas
- Highcliffe Recreation Ground
- Nea Meadows
- Highcliffe Castle area
- Chewton Bunny
- Steamer Point Nature Reserve
- Cliff top / cliff paths
- Chewton Common
- Cliffhanger area
- Lakewood Lake
- Wingfields Recreation Ground
- Jesmond Avenue Wood
- Wharncliffe Drive grassed area

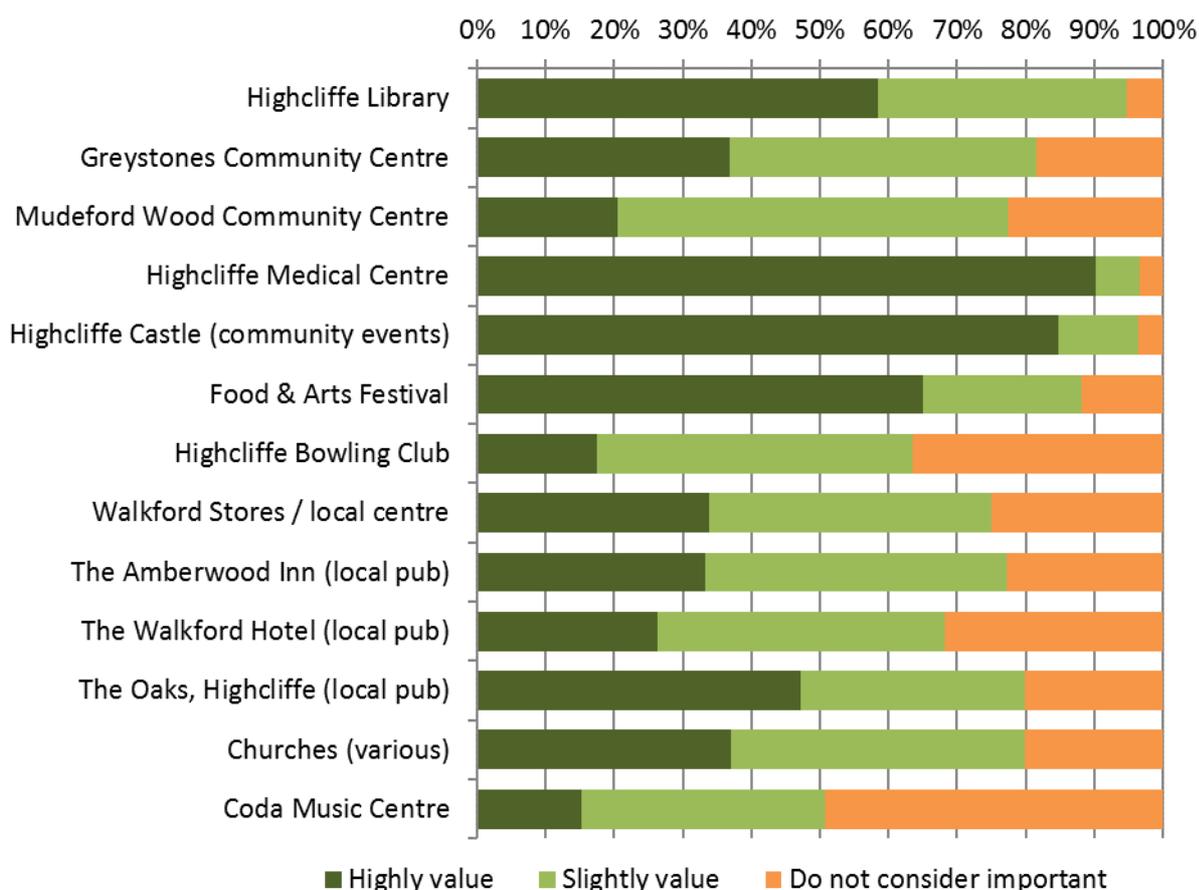
In terms of areas for improvement, suggestions mainly related to the maintenance and signposting of existing areas, including better footpaths, disabled access and lighting (for safety reasons).



Community Facilities

We asked residents to tell us how much they valued the various local facilities in the area. Whilst all were valued by at least 50% of those responding, it is clear from the responses that the Medical Centre, Highcliffe Castle and the Food and Arts Festival, and the local library are particularly well valued.

Community / local facilities of particular value



Other facilities that were also suggested and which cropped up in mentions by several respondents included

- Church Halls
- Highcliffe Day Centre
- Highcliffe Sports and Social Club
- Post Office
- The Globe
- The Old School House
- The Scout Hut

In terms of new or improved facilities, there were a wide range of responses with no one answer particularly dominating the discussions. There were however a number of common themes:

- **Facilities, particularly for younger people** (25 responses): providing facilities and activities specifically for the young such as youth clubs and facilities, and working adults (focusing on evening activities).
- **Improve the High Street ‘hub’** (14 responses): this linked mainly to how the High Street could be made more attractive in terms of its environment and shopping / leisure offer. 3 responses specifically raised the need for the banks / building societies to return
- **Better community venues** (12 responses): particularly noting that more could be provided in Walkford, and to cater for a wider range of cultural and recreational activities

- **Sports facilities** (5 responses): such as a sports / leisure centre, possibly including a swimming pool / water sports focus

Design and Character

There were mixed views as to whether the priority in new design should be in maximising a building's sustainability (such as through achieving the highest standards in energy efficiency) versus retaining the character of the various local neighbourhoods.

The general consensus is that in reality the best approach is somewhere in the middle – that in general developers should try to achieve the highest energy efficiency standards etc, but not in all cases where it would have a real adverse impact on local character. Areas of particular character referred to by residents were primarily:

- The undeveloped nature of the beach / cliffs
- Chewton Road / Farm Estate
- High Street and Lymington Road, including around the church, The Oakes and Lord Bute
- Highcliffe Castle
- Hinton Wood Avenue
- Rothesay Drive
- St Marks Church
- Wharncliffe Road
- Wolhayes Estate

People struggled to come up with examples of recent developments that they considered to be particularly good examples, the main suggestions being Chewton Oaks; Hoburne Farm development - particularly the restoration of the barns; the new flats in Wharnford Road, and the Zig-Zag path.

There were about 100 comments made on what people were most concerned about in new buildings and designs. A third (33) of these felt that there were too many flats being built, and about a quarter (26) of people commented that they were concerned about developments being too cramped on the plots. Lined to this, there were concerns about building too high (18) and not enough parking on site (13). There were general concerns that there was little attempt to fit in with local character (12) Other comments reference the bland, boring or repetitive nature of recent building designs (18), with particular issues raised about 'too much glass', too many flat roofs, and certain materials such as render and uPVC weathering poorly.

Is achieving the highest possible energy efficiency and sustainability standards in new development more important than buildings being in character with the local area?

