

**THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2030**  
**'WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES'**

**ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT REPORT**

**FEBRUARY 2024**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

- This report details the main findings from the Phase Two engagement with a wide range of stakeholders conducted between December 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 – January 29<sup>th</sup> 2024, to inform the development of the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2030 – 'Working with our Communities'.
- A number of different engagement methodologies were used to engage with stakeholders:
  - on line and paper based survey forms,
  - face to face engagement in town centre 'drop in' events.
  - Focus Group approach with established networks.
  - Direct contact through email to stakeholders and partners.
- To support engagement and responses, a standard pack of engagement materials were made available for anyone to consider and use. This included, standard presentation, discussion guide and a standard response form to aid discussion and collection of feedback. All engagement materials, including, the standard engagement pack was available through the 'Let's Talk' platform and supported by regular social media 'comms' which linked directly to 'Let's Talk' platform.
- Both the survey and the network feedback form were the main data collection methods used to gather stakeholder opinions, views and information. Both engagement tools focused on whether participants agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments and if not, what could be added, taken away or improved to better embed what matters to our key stakeholders.
- In total, there were 546 participants in the consultation. The survey received 303 responses and a further 19 networks engaged in meetings, completing the network feedback forms via facilitated discussions which included 243 participants.
- The majority of online survey respondents were happy and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments:
  - Our Vision: 238 (78.5%) agreed
  - People and Communities: 226 (74.6%) agreed
  - Work and Business: 227 (74.9%) agreed
  - Nature and the Environment: 229 (75.6%) agreed
  - Culture and Heritage: 223 (73.6%) agreed
  - Our Commitments: 227 (74.9%) agreed
- There were 22 feedback themes identified in response to the 6 questions asked. The questions received 326 comments in total with 644 references to the feedback themes identified. The most common feedback themes identified from the survey were:
  - Environment (56)
  - Financial concerns (50)
  - Too ambitious (49)
  - More detail needed (47)
  - Infrastructure (44)
  - Community (42)
  - Education (40)

- Through the online survey, respondents suggested improvements that could be made to the Plan. A common theme throughout the responses was that respondents want the Council to take a balanced approach towards social, economic and environmental issues with a focus on areas in RCT that need the most support such as community, infrastructure and education. Within these themes, issues such as protecting our most vulnerable and those in, or at risk of, falling into poverty were common, as well as repurposing empty buildings and protecting old buildings of heritage and prioritising education, ensuring young people are protected and given the best start in life.
- The majority of respondents within Networks were happy and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments:
  - Our Vision: 176 (72.4%) agreed
  - People and Communities: 231 (95.1%) agreed
  - Work and Business: 208 (85.6%) agreed
  - Nature and the Environment: 237 (97.5%) agreed
  - Culture and Heritage: 158 (65%) agreed
  - Our Commitments: 114 (76.5%) agreed
- There were 17 feedback themes identified in response to the 6 questions asked. The questions received a range of comments with 695 references to the themes identified. A breakdown of the networks that took part and their attendance can be found, in Appendix 3. The main themes identified from network improvement feedback were:
  - Culture (135)
  - Travel and Transport (68)
  - Community (64)
  - Environment (52)
  - Safety (49)
  - Infrastructure (46)
- Feedback from Networks that responded indicated that they were generally happy with the Plan but also made suggestions about how it could be improved. A common theme throughout was the importance of supporting communities and enriching the culture within those communities. Empowering communities, promoting the Welsh Language and improving community links were common topics of conversation which also encompassed points around safe, clean and litter free places.
- Network discussions also highlighted how many different areas are interconnected and by enhancing one area will lead to improvements in another. For example, investing in and improving connectivity and public transport around the County Borough will lead to increased employment, thriving town centres and fewer empty properties.
- There were also many responses, in the online survey and network feedback, that wanted to see more detailed plans to show how the Council will achieve its proposals given the current budget constraints and financial difficulties the Council faces. Fears of over ambition were common.
- All the findings, opinions and information obtained from key stakeholders during this consultation will be used to inform and develop the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030

ensuring that all stakeholders including residents, staff, service users, businesses, young people, third sector, partners, visitors and the wider community have a voice telling the Council what matters to them.

- *N.b. The findings from Phase 1 have not formally been reported. However, the findings were used to gather a better understanding of whether participants agreed with the Council's direction of travel with regard to what priorities could be included in the Corporate Plan 2024-30. In total, over 87% of respondents either thought that the priorities listed were right/correct or almost right/correct but could be improved. For more information please go to the ['Let's Talk About What Matters To You'](#) engagement page.*

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 – ‘Working with our Communities’ consultation.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines the background around previous engagement for the Council’s next Corporate Plan, why the Council are developing a new Corporate Plan and what the Council propose to be included in the next Corporate Plan.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology including engagement tools used, promotion methods, network engagement and who was involved in the consultation.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results and key findings from the online survey engagement tool.
- 1.5 Section 5 provides the results and key findings from all guided facilitated discussions via network groups.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The new draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030, attached at [Appendix A](#), seeks to build on the progress of the previous Corporate Plan(s) and has revisited its Vision, Purpose and ambition as local authority for the County Borough. The Council's approach to engagement for extended over two phases. Information on the performance and delivery of the current Corporate Plan 2020-2024 can be found in the [Annual Self-Assessment 2022/23](#).
- 2.2 We regularly seek the views and opinions of our residents of all ages, community groups, businesses and staff as we conduct the business of the Council. This means we have information and feedback from the many conversations and surveys, as well as from the findings of [Phase 1 engagement](#), held over the last year or so that have helped to inform and shape the proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. For example, feedback and views about the [Council's budget setting for 2023/24](#); the Council's [Local Development Plan 2022-37](#), [Flood Risk Strategy](#), the place based [Aberdare Town Centre Strategy](#), co production proposals for day service following '[My Day, My Way](#)', 'Your Voice' survey of young people, our '[Climate Conversation](#)', the wide ranging engagement as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg [Well-being Assessment](#), as well as many [service specific engagement events and surveys](#).
- 2.3 A report of the early engagement findings conducted via Phase 1 of engagement can be found on the '[Let's Talk About What Matters To You](#)' engagement page. The findings of early engagement were used to better understand whether participants agreed with what the Council direction of travel with regard to what priorities could be included in the Corporate Plan 2024-30. In total, over 87% of respondents either thought that the priorities listed were right/correct or almost right/correct but could be improved. What we learned from this conversation gave us some assurance that we had made a solid start from that point in time.
- 2.4 Using this feedback and other information, we drafted an outline of a new Corporate Plan including a new Vision, Well-being Objectives and commitments to residents. Our outline Corporate Plan formed the basis of Phase 2 consultation and focused on engaging a wide range of key stakeholders
- 2.5 Phase 2 of the consultation '[Continuing to Talk About What Matters to You](#)' ran from the 8th December 2023 to 29th January 2024 following Phase 1, see para 2.3 above.
- 2.6 The draft outline of the Plan on which we engaged can be seen in Appendix 2.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The consultation for the Corporate Plan 2024-30 – ‘Working with our Communities’ set out quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods primarily through a survey tool for individuals to complete via the [Let's Talk website](#) and through network feedback forms to facilitate group discussions between network groups.
- 3.2 Both the survey and the network feedback form focused on whether participants agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments and if not, what could be added, taken away or improved to better embed what matters to our key stakeholders.
- 3.3 The same quantitative and qualitative methods were used in both the survey and the network feedback form to ensure that all findings can be compared and accumulated whether it be sourced from an individual or group.
- Quantitative: multiple choice close-ended questions to understand whether respondents agreed with the proposals.
  - Qualitative: text box open ended feedback questions to understand what stakeholders thought could be improved.
- 3.4 The survey was made available through the ‘Continuing to Talk About What Matters to You’ engagement page which received 303 responses.
- 845 people were aware of the project and made at least one visit to the page.
  - 505 people were informed on the page meaning that they clicked and engaged in the content of the page (viewed documents and multiple pages).
  - 299 participants who were engaged and completed the engagement tools on the page.
  - Some surveys were completed using the same device by officers engaging residents in public.
- 3.5 The network feedback form yielded 19 group/network responses from a possible 30 networks invited to participate in the engagement. A total of 243 participants engaged in guided facilitated discussions as a part of the network meetings. Many networks such as ‘Housing Leaders’ and ‘Valley Veterans Networks (3)’ encouraged their members to complete the online survey as individuals, so did not submit a network response. A list of the networks that responded can be found in Appendix 3. We also emailed members of the Council's Citizens' Panel, Community and Town Councils, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (PSB), MPs/MSs, Trade Unions and all other Welsh Local Authorities to encourage them to share with their Networks and to complete the survey.
- 3.6 The consultation was promoted digitally and in person. Officers engaged with residents through library drop-in days at Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd, Aberdare Library and Treorchy Library. Digitally, the Council's corporate pages on Facebook and Twitter were used to increase online reach. Social posts were scheduled twice a week on both apps for the full consultation period. In total, 28 posts were shared making 40,600 impressions and 423 clicks to the consultation. The posts also received 38 likes, 45 comments and 33 shares.
- 3.7 Staff engagement was promoted during Phase 1 for early engagement which included a prior Cabinet/Management Planning session in July 2023. Then in Phase 2, two ‘RCT Staff



Updates' emails were sent out during the consultation period. The Council also reached out to staff through the climate change forum 'Green Space' on MS Teams, through managers to contact non-email staff and through Officer/Cabinet engagement. All Councillors were also made aware via the Members Weekly Bulletin.

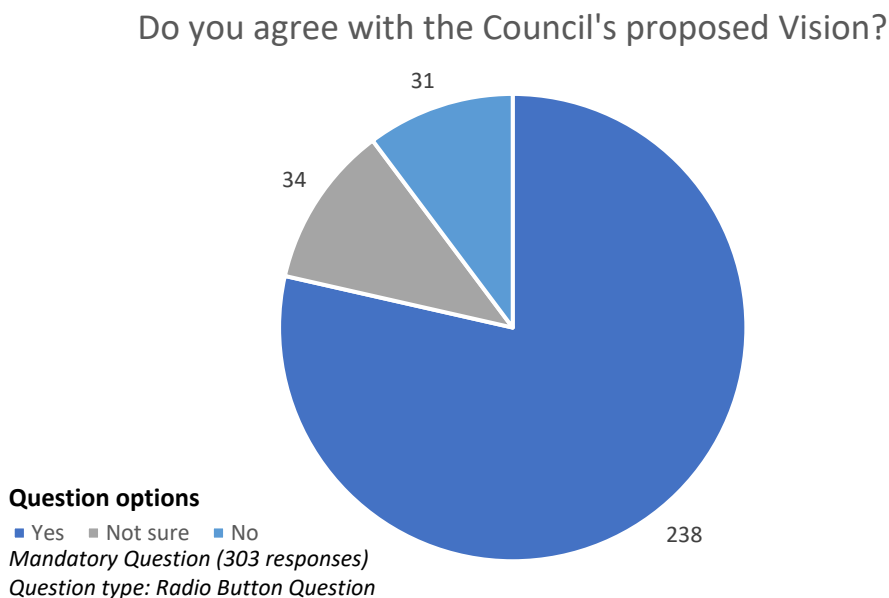
## 4. KEY FINDINGS - SURVEY

- 4.1 There were 303 responses to the survey. The majority of respondents were happy and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments:
- Our Vision: 238 (78.5%) agreed
  - People and Communities: 226 (74.6%) agreed
  - Work and Business: 227 (74.9%) agreed
  - Nature and the Environment: 229 (75.6%) agreed
  - Culture and Heritage: 223 (73.6%) agreed
  - Our Commitments: 227 (74.9%) agreed
- 4.2 There were 22 feedback themes identified in response to the 6 questions asked. The questions received 326 comments in total with 644 references to the feedback themes identified. The most common feedback themes identified from the survey were:
- Environment (56)
  - Financial concerns (50)
  - Too ambitious (49)
  - More detail needed (47)
  - Infrastructure (44)
  - Community (42)
  - Education (40)
- 4.3 Examples of feedback received, and themes identified within each response have been analysed for each question.
- 4.4 Although the majority of respondents have agreed with the Council's proposals, all highlighted areas for improvement must be considered when developing the final Corporate Plan 2024-30. The Corporate Plan 2024-30 will include a summary of feedback for each Well-being Objective identifying what our stakeholders have told us that they would like to see included in the plan.
- 4.5 It must be recognised that many responses were concerned around a balanced approach towards social, economic and environmental issues with many respondents wanting the Council to focus on areas in RCT that need the most support such as community, infrastructure and education. Within these themes, issues such as protecting our most vulnerable and those in or at risk of falling into poverty were common; as well as repurposing empty buildings and protecting old buildings of heritage; and ensuring education and young people are protected and given the best start in life.
- 4.6 There were also many responses that wanted to see more detailed plans to show how the Council will achieve its proposals given the current budget constraints and financial difficulties the Council faces. Fears of over ambition were common.

## Our Vision

### 4.7 Survey responses for Vision:

- 238 (78.5%) agree with the Council's proposed Vision.
- 34 (11.2%) unsure on whether they agree with the Council's proposed Vision.
- 31 (10.2%) disagree with the Council's proposed Vision.



**Figure 1.** Our Vision: Online Survey Responses

### 4.8 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Vision received 62 responses and 101 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 2. The most popular themes for improvement included:

- Environment (13)
- Financial concerns (10)
- More detail needed (8)
- Social Care (8)
- Travel and Transport (8)
- Education (8)

### 4.9 Many of the feedback responses incorporated more than one of the themes identified above. Respondents want the Council's vision to take a balanced approach towards society, economy and the environment, but also prioritise areas in RCT that need the most support given the current financial concerns around the Council's budget and wider political and socioeconomic issues. Particularly, respondents want the Council's vision to support the most vulnerable and those who are in or at risk of being in poverty. They also want the Council to focus on improving connectivity and transport around the County Borough and to improve education and support for young people. Examples:

*"Needs to be less of a focus on 'net zero' and more of a focus on providing basic services such as efficient refuse services, road maintenance etc".*

*“How are you going to pay for this ideal world? I am uncertain of how you are going to even get close to this aim”.*

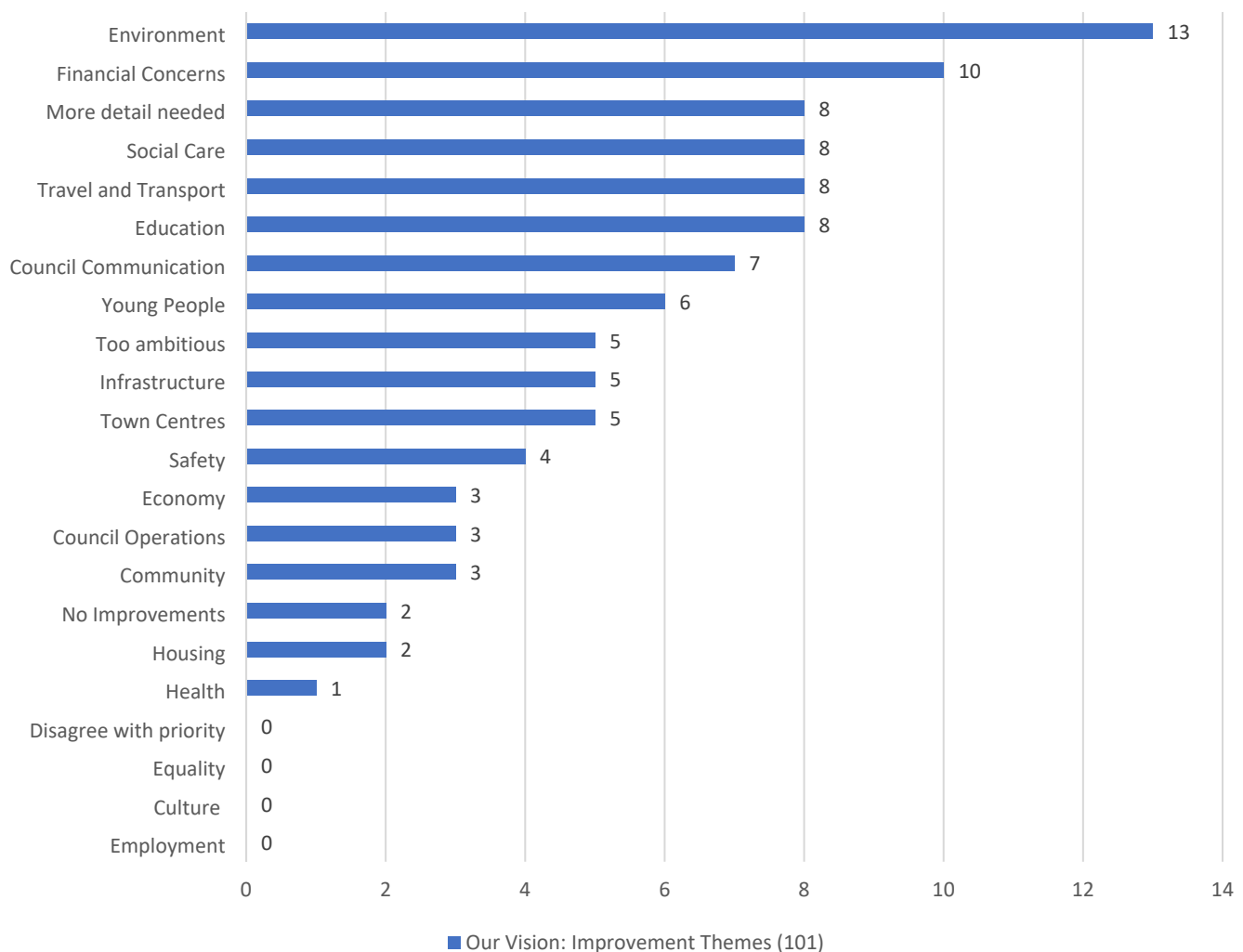
*“Transport needs to be improved massively”.*

*“Not charging extra for service already in place.”*

*“Sounds good on paper but is there anything really being done for a sustainable future that individuals do not have to fund”.*

*“Children and young people need to be in your vision”.*

### Our Vision: Feedback Themes (101)

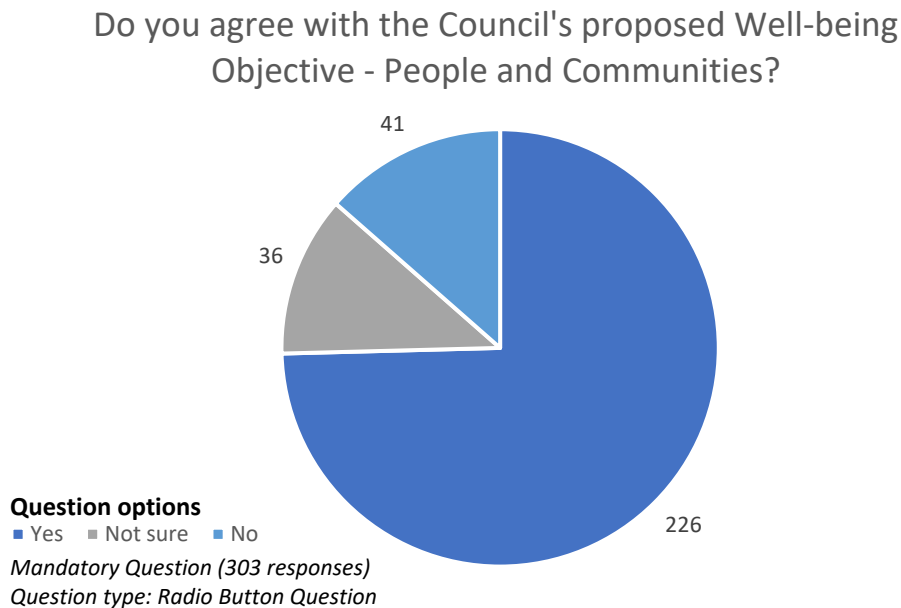


**Figure 2. Our Vision: Thematic Content Analysis**

## **Well-being Objective: People and Communities**

### 4.10 Survey responses for People and Communities:

- 226 (74.6%) agree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - People and Communities.
- 36 (11.9%) unsure on whether they agree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - People and Communities.
- 41 (13.5%) disagree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - People and Communities.



**Figure 3. People and Communities: Online Survey Responses**

### 4.11 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Well-being Objective – People and Communities received 68 responses and 127 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 4. The most popular themes for improvement included:

- Social Care (16)
- Housing (14)
- Education (14)
- Young People (12)
- Community (12)

### 4.12 Many of the feedback responses incorporated more than one of the themes identified above. Respondents wanted education prioritised including better support for children and adults with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). This also included better care for the elderly, young people and improved management and protection of schools. Community development and improving people's well-being were also popular themes as well as improving housing, particularly the energy efficiency and affordability of existing housing. Examples:

*“Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow their*

*confidence and aspirations”.*

*“There needs to be more opportunities for people with learning disabilities and their families. There needs to be holiday provision for parents to work and children to have a routine. Also, for adults with learning difficulties there needs to be more daytime ops in groups”.*

*“More provision for children with ALN is required. Children with ALN are losing out on education due to schools not being able to provide the required support”.*

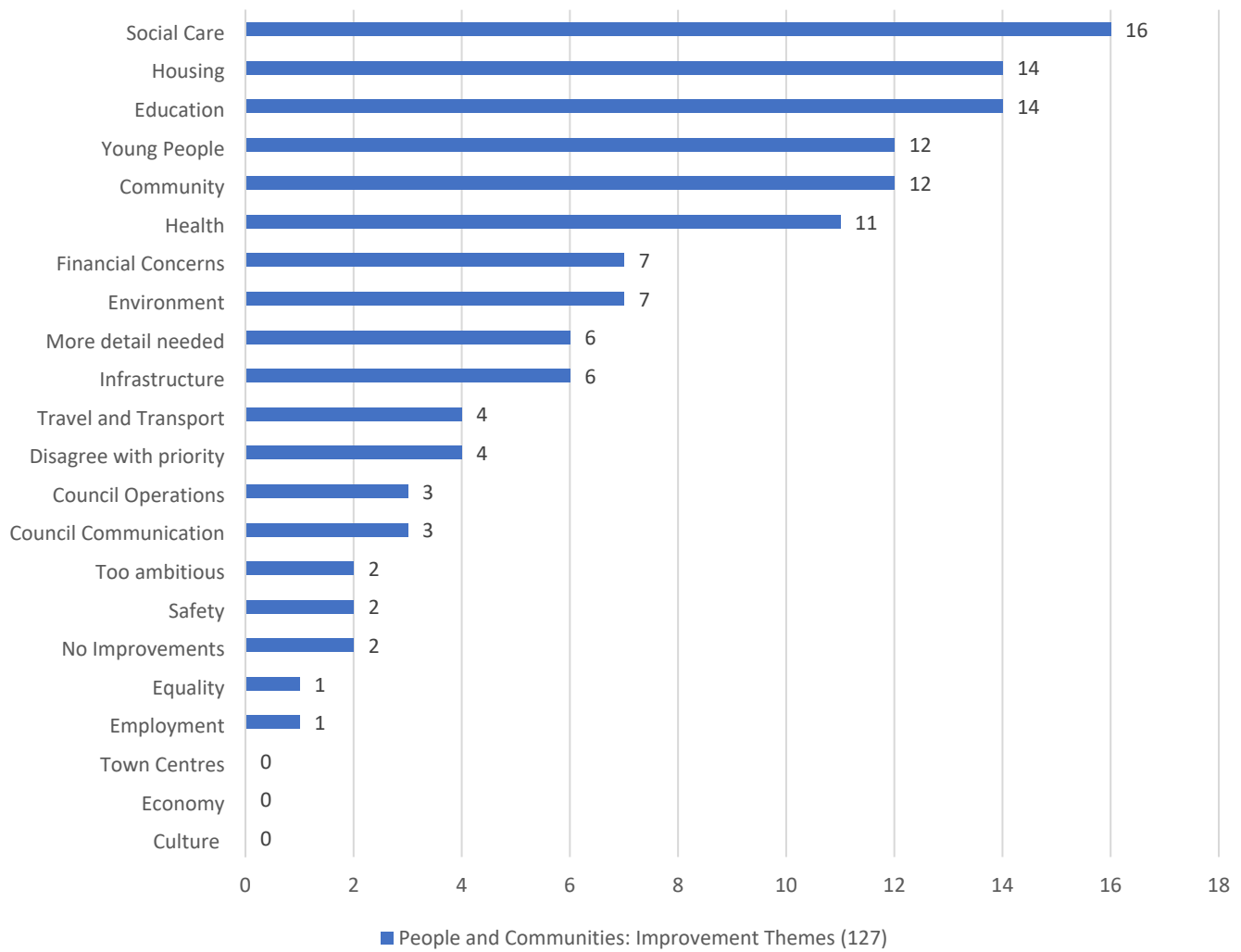
*“More support needed with rising costs too many us in poverty”.*

*“As well as affordable homes, what about affordable childcare and a safe place for children to play? Play and youth services to support young people as early as possible live and learn how to be healthy, independent and fulfil their potential”.*

*“This area needs far more than just individual supposed living it needs community service community centres and a whole lot of advertising to bring people together please stop catering for individual people where no one is treated equally and address communities”.*

*“Energy efficient homes should prioritise improving the terraced housing that's already here rather than new builds popping everywhere that look out of character with the area”.*

## People and Communities: Feedback Themes (127)

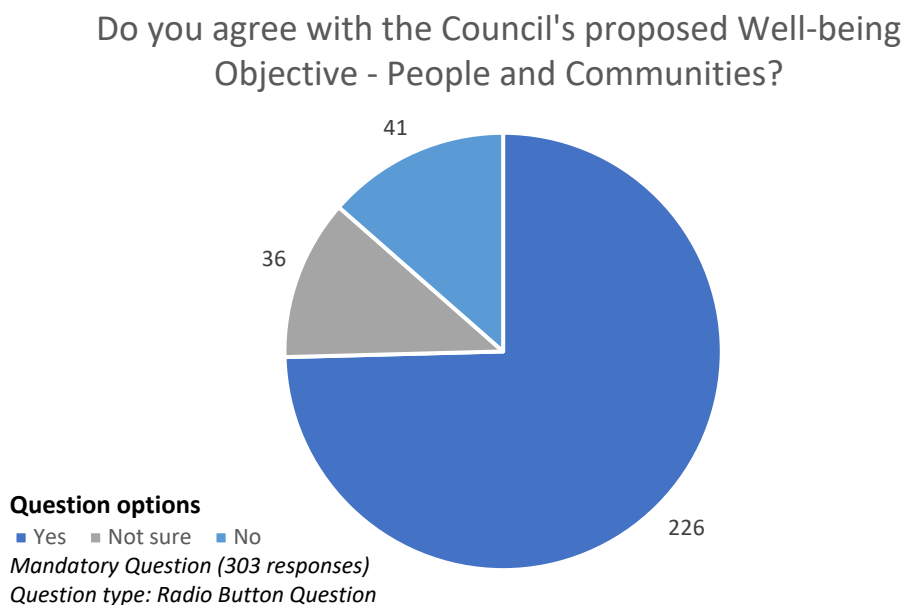


**Figure 4.** People and Communities: Thematic Content Analysis

## **Well-being Objective: Work and Business**

### 4.13 Survey responses for Work and Business:

- 227 (74.9%) agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Work and Business.
- 33 (10.9%) unsure on whether they agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Work and Business.
- 41 (14.2%) disagree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Work and Business.



**Figure 5. People and Communities: Thematic Content Analysis**

### 4.14 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Well-being Objective – Work and Business received 71 responses and 125 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 6. The most popular themes for improvement included:

- Town Centres (24)
- Economy (17)
- Infrastructure (14)
- Travel and Transport (11)
- Community (11)

### 4.15 Many of the feedback responses incorporated more than one of the themes identified above. Respondents wanted to see improvements across all town centres including repurposing empty properties, supporting local businesses and developing infrastructure that will entice residents and visitors into visiting our town centres. Many responses were concerned about how the Council will support business, commerce and economy across the County Borough including the need for better transport and public transport links. Examples:

*“The infrastructure needs to be improved to allow for “thriving town centres”. To increase the volume of people coming into town there needs to be adequate and affordable public transport, parking and or traffic measures.”*



*“The bus services and train links need improvement. I'm currently working from home because it would take two hours of commuting to get to the office.”*

*“I've been trying to start a new business for years but cannot find premises. Why don't you convert unused buildings etc to units for new startups?”*

*“It seems a little unrealistic. How will this be financially viable? Certain town centres don't even have basic facilities?”*

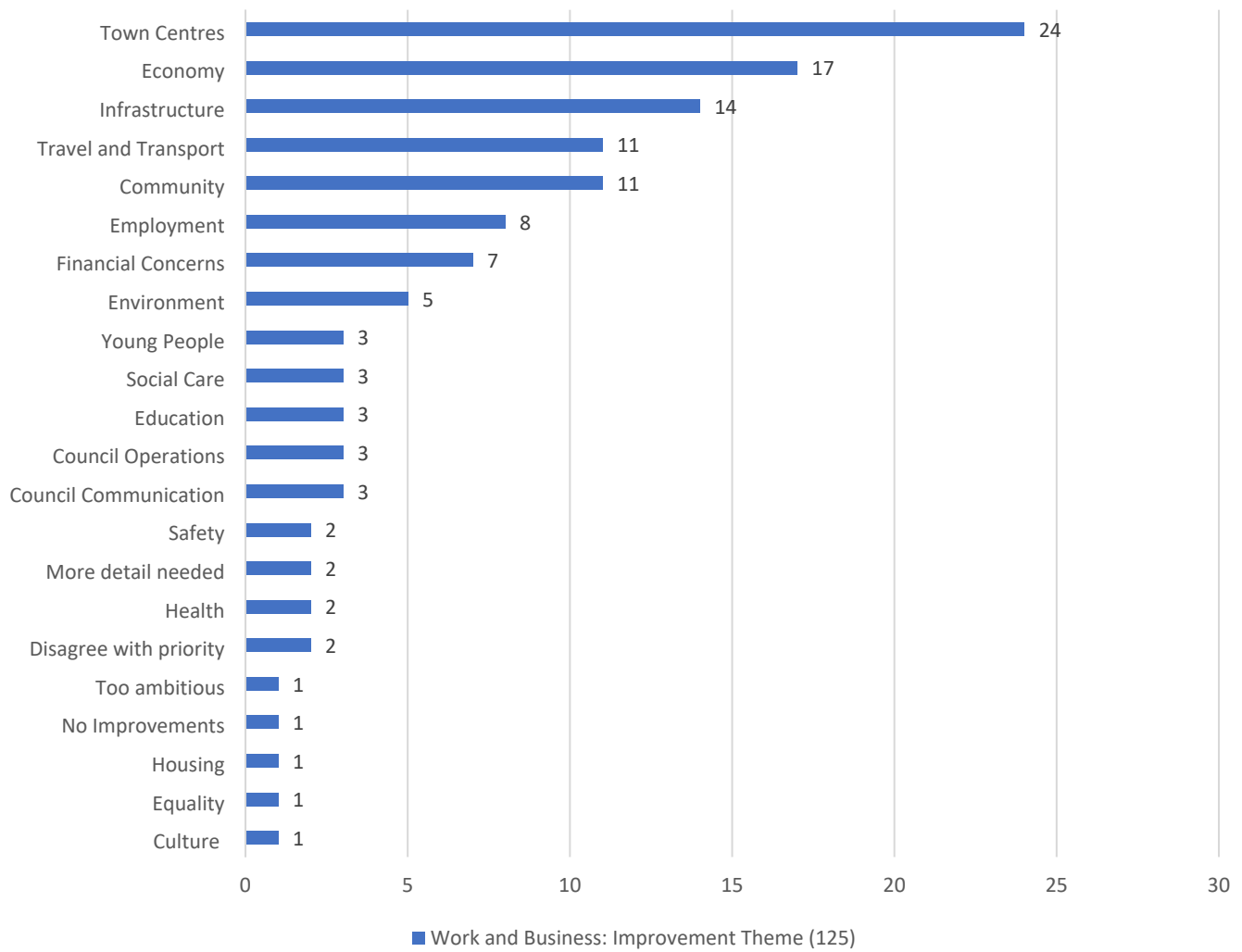
*“More needs to be done to keep our small businesses open and not just huge chains.”*

*“I would like to see opportunities for people to gain self-employment skills, combined with opportunities to rent empty town centre shops at very low cost to encourage independent businesses and brave ideas.”*

*“Raising shop rates and increasing charges for commercial waste disposal isn't helping small businesses stay financially viable.”*

*“The public transport system does not support residence into better working opportunities. This then leads to greater traffic congestion due to the amount of cars on the road during peak times. Those on low income remain stuck in local poor employment.”*

## Work and Business: Feedback Themes (125)

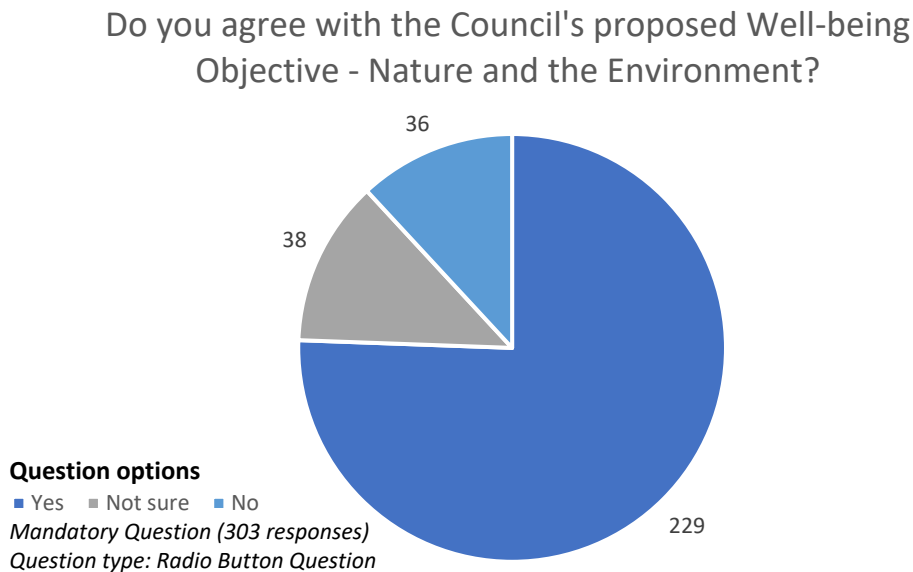


**Figure 6.** *Work and Business: Thematic Content Analysis*

## **Well-being Objective: Nature and the Environment**

### 4.16 Survey responses for Nature and the Environment:

- 229 (75.6%) agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Nature and the Environment.
- 38 (12.5%) unsure on whether they agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Nature and the Environment.
- 36 (11.9%) disagree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Nature and the Environment.



**Figure 7. Nature and the Environment: Online Survey Responses**

### 4.17 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Well-being Objective – Nature and the Environment received 59 responses and 70 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 8. The most popular themes for improvement included:

- Environment (20)
- Disagree with priority (9)
- Council Communication (7)
- Travel and Transport (6)
- Too ambitious (6)
- More detail needed (6)

### 4.18 Respondents wanted to see more sustainable actions that improve the cleanliness and biodiversity of the County Borough including restoring and protecting green spaces and rivers, cleaning the streets of dog fouling and litter whilst ensuring bins are regularly emptied, stopping or reducing the amount of trees that are being cut down and more opportunities for sustainable living and community growing. Respondents also wanted more sustainable transport options and active travel routes.

4.19 There were also some responses that indicated that they did not agree with the priority or that it was too ambitious and believe that the Council should prioritise other services before nature and the environment. Some of the respondents wanted more information about the priority and better communication from the Council making them unsure on whether they agreed. Examples:

*“Encouraging people to use transport other than cars - walking, cycling, public transport, but they will only do so if it's safe and economical”.*

*“Restoring green spaces and rivers. The river taff and river bank is in a bad state. Restored would mean removing rubbish and cleaning river and stopping water companies dumping sewage”.*

*“Too many trees (not those that are diseased) being cut down and previously ‘green’ spaces being left devastated. Currently, not much evidence of planting going on. Roundabouts unkempt but could be better planted to help contribute to a greener RCT”.*

*“Protect all aspects of biodiversity especially in our parks”.*

*“Clean environment ... full of fly tipped rubbish because of further cost cutting of services from last proposal”.*

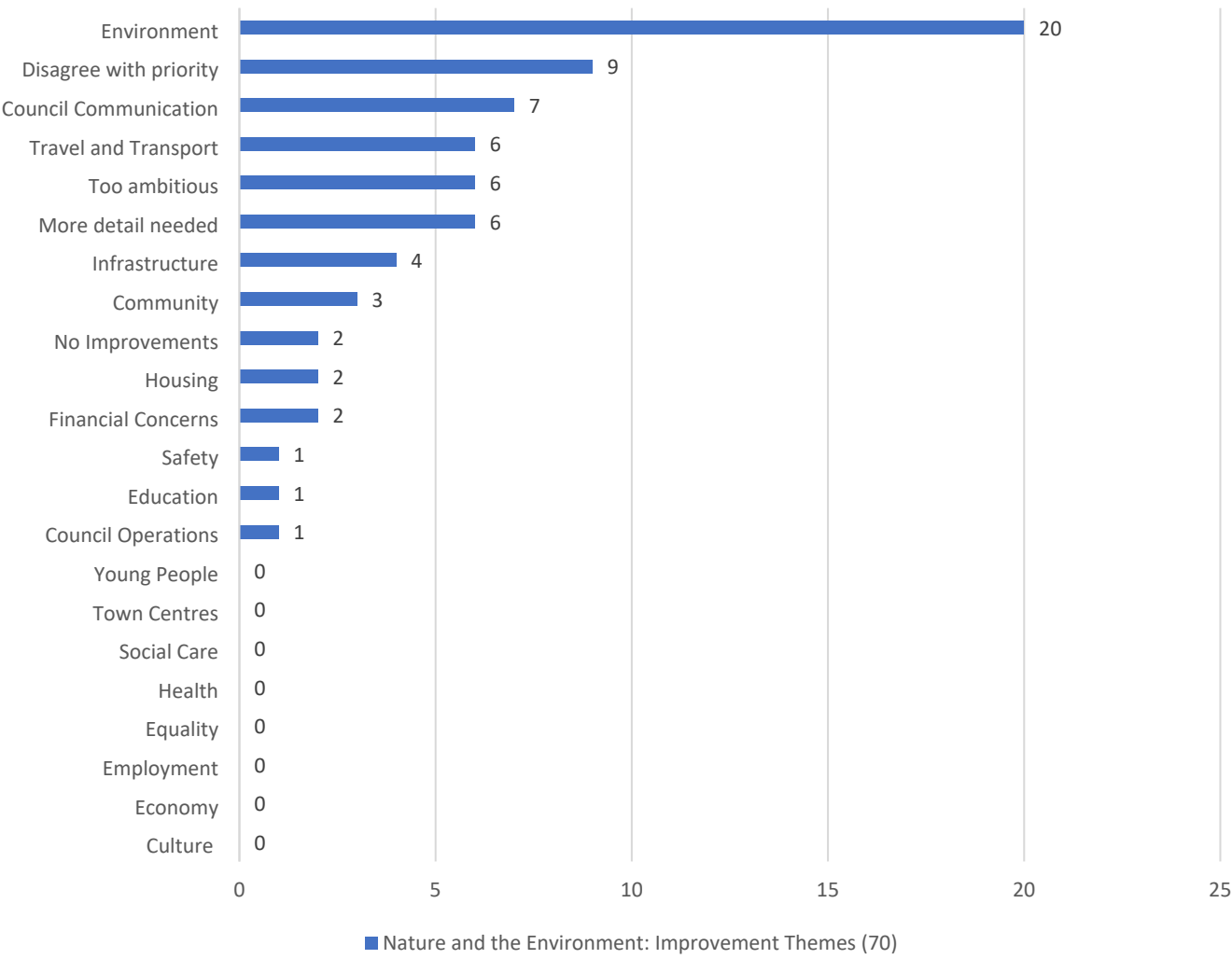
*“I’m all for your targets in theory but in reality I think there are much more pressing issues”.*

*“This isn’t a priority for me”.*

*“You haven’t said what you are going to do to achieve this”.*

*“Need details on how this can be done, and how to get people on board. Many say they are concerned about Nature etc., but do very little to support it e.g., installation of wood stoves, outdoor burning, littering etc”.*

### Nature and the Environment: Feedback Themes (70)

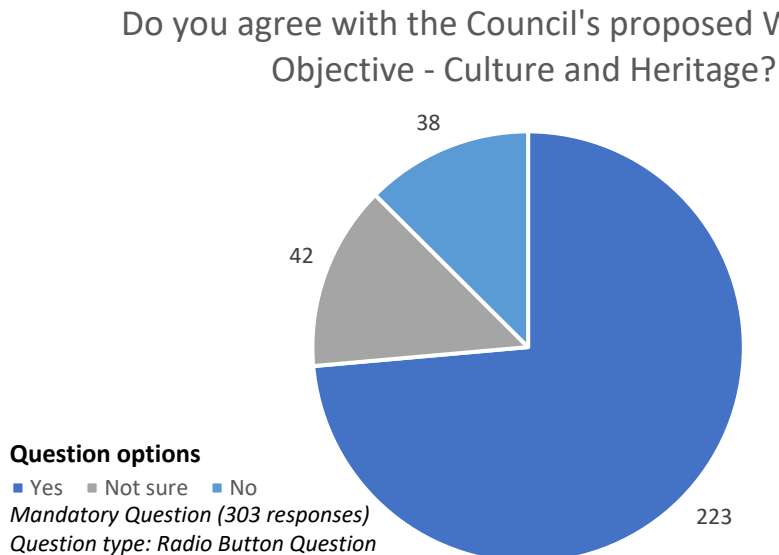


**Figure 8. Nature and the Environment: Thematic Content Analysis**

## Well-being Objective: Culture and Heritage

4.20 Survey responses for Culture and Heritage:

- 223 (73.6%) agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage.
- 42 (13.9%) unsure on whether they agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage.
- 38 (12.5%) disagree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage.



**Figure 9. Culture and Heritage: Online Survey Responses**

4.21 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage received 59 responses and 70 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 10. The most popular themes for improvement included:

- Culture (24)
- Too ambitious (16)
- Infrastructure (11)
- Financial concerns (11)
- Education (11)

4.22 Many of the feedback responses incorporated more than one of the themes identified above. Respondents identified that culture and heritage is cross-cutting across many areas and wanted to see the Council support it through its actions and operations. They wanted this done through preserving and enhancing existing buildings and infrastructure and by protecting local communities. Education and support of local, traditional and Welsh culture and heritage were common variables that respondents want the Council to focus on.

4.23 There were also some responses that indicated that this Well-being Objective may be too ambitious, had financial concerns and wanted the Council to prioritise other areas before highlighting culture and heritage as a key area of sustainable improvement. Examples:

*“Preserve our history by not selling off our historical buildings, i.e., school buildings. Superschools are definitely not the way forward in my opinion”.*

*“There are more important things to be proactive on. Culture and heritage is important, but it doesn't help solve today's issues”.*

*“I do agree but have a suggestion. One of the world's biggest stars, Tom Jones was born in RCT. Could something be developed i.e., a museum in the locality? I think this could potentially be a great investment, attracting many visitors to Pontypridd”.*

*“Local heritage should be taught more in our local schools as there was a lot of Heritage in our valleys”.*

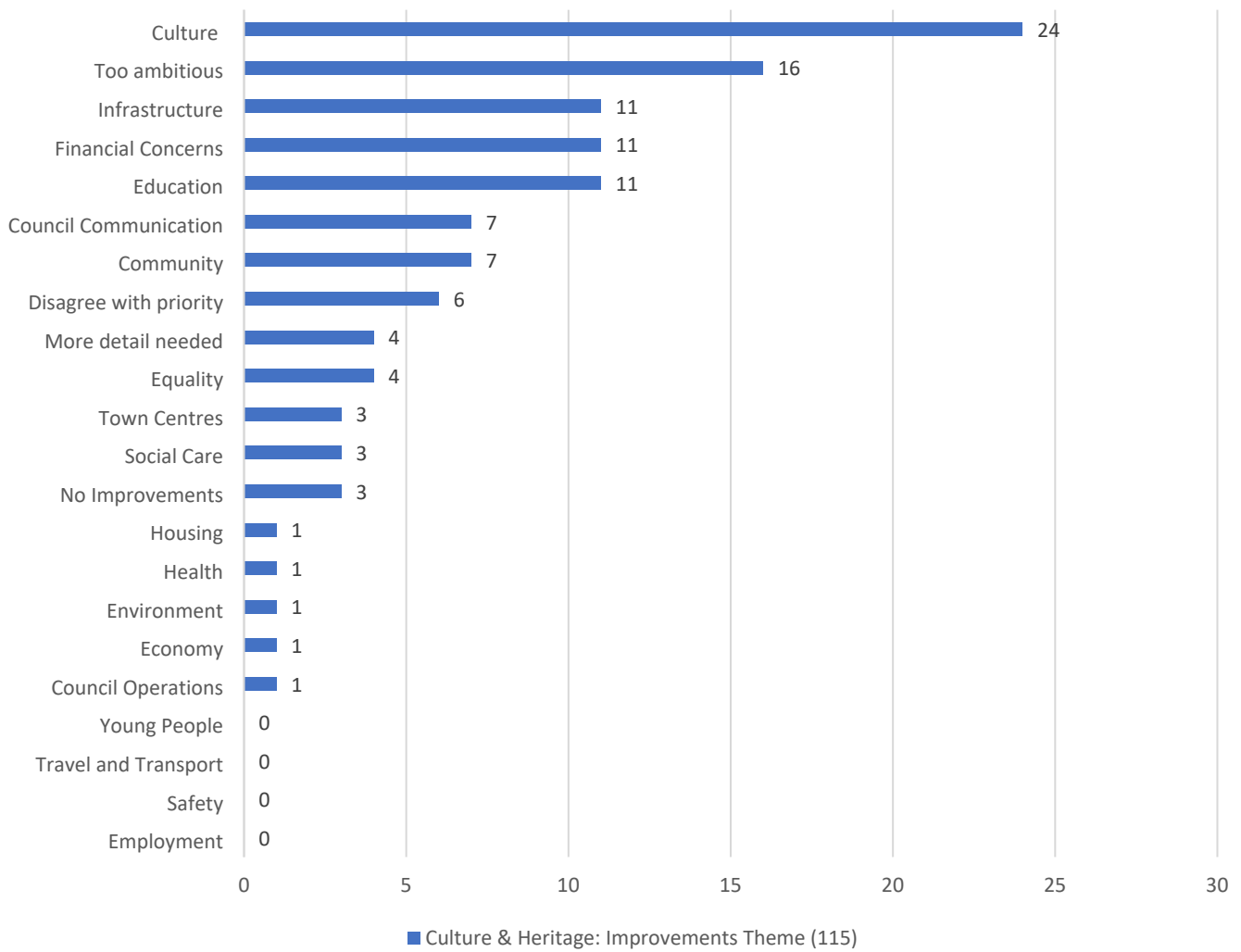
*“Stop demolishing our old buildings, reinvest in them. Too many new developments are going up and out culture is disappearing”.*

*“Priorities should be health, education and cost of living”.*

*“I think with all the challenges that face the authority this has to be way down the list of what is important”.*

*“This depends on costings and whether funding is taken from places that need it more”.*

### Culture & Heritage: Feedback Themes (115)



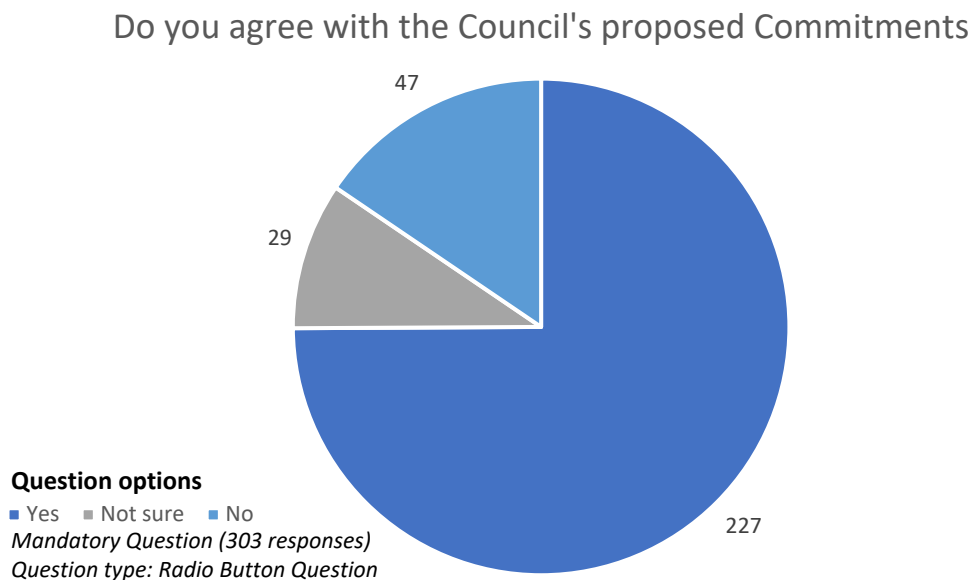
**Figure 10. Culture and Heritage: Thematic Content Analysis**



## Our Commitments

4.24 Survey responses for Our Commitments:

- 227 (74.9%) agree with the proposed Commitments.
- 29 (9.6%) unsure on whether they agree with the proposed Commitments.
- 47 (15.5%) disagree with the proposed Commitments.



**Figure 11.** Our Commitments: Online Survey Responses

4.25 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Commitments received 73 responses and 106 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 12. The most popular themes for improvement included:

- More detail needed (21)
- Too ambitious (19)
- Financial Concerns (13)
- Environment (10)
- Council Communication (9)

4.26 Respondents were concerned about whether the Council's proposed commitments were financially viable or achievable given the Council's current budget restraints. They want to see more detailed plans about how the Council will achieve the priorities and commitments highlighted including actions which are costed. Similarly to the Council's vision, respondents also want to see a balanced approach towards society, economy and the environment in our commitments and they also want to see the Council improve how it engages and communicates with residents. Examples:

*"I can't see how all these objectives are to be obtained. It's all very well having the right ideals, but how will they be financed?"*

*“More detail is needed, specifically on carbon future and carbon neutral council and what it entails”.*

*“I feel that although the proposal is acceptable, what is not clear is how this will be achieved. How residents’ money is going to be spent to achieve these objectives is far more of concern”.*

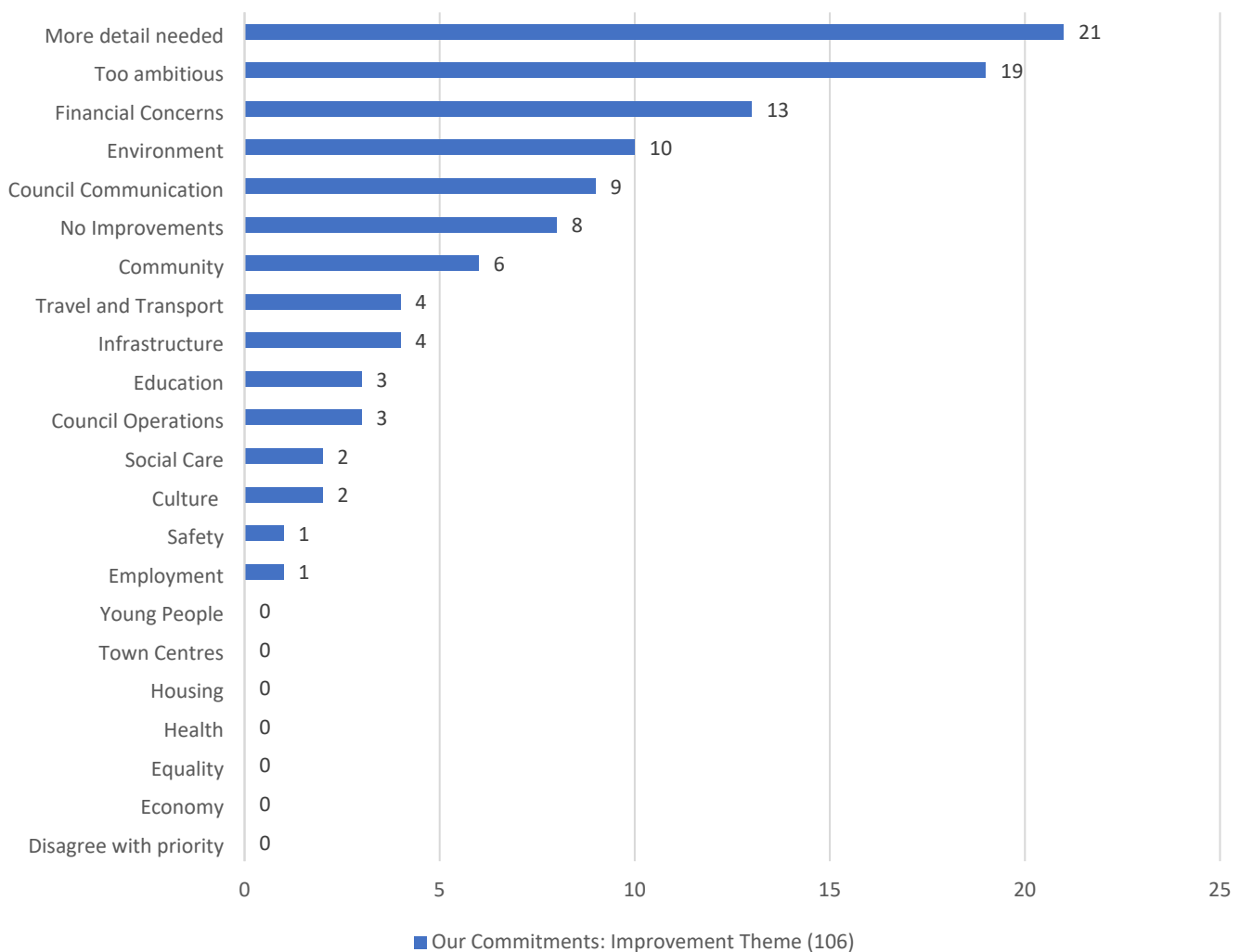
*“How can you deliver these proposed Commitments with all the cut back the Senedd are demanding RCT councils make?”*

*“The Council need to get out and speak to the community more. Obtain community points of view and discuss key issues”.*

*“Seems like a lot to achieve, in the current climate and budgets the way they are”.*

*“I cannot disagree with any of the proposals; however I have major concerns that they will not be achieved due to budget constraints”.*

**Our Commitments: Feedback Themes (106)**

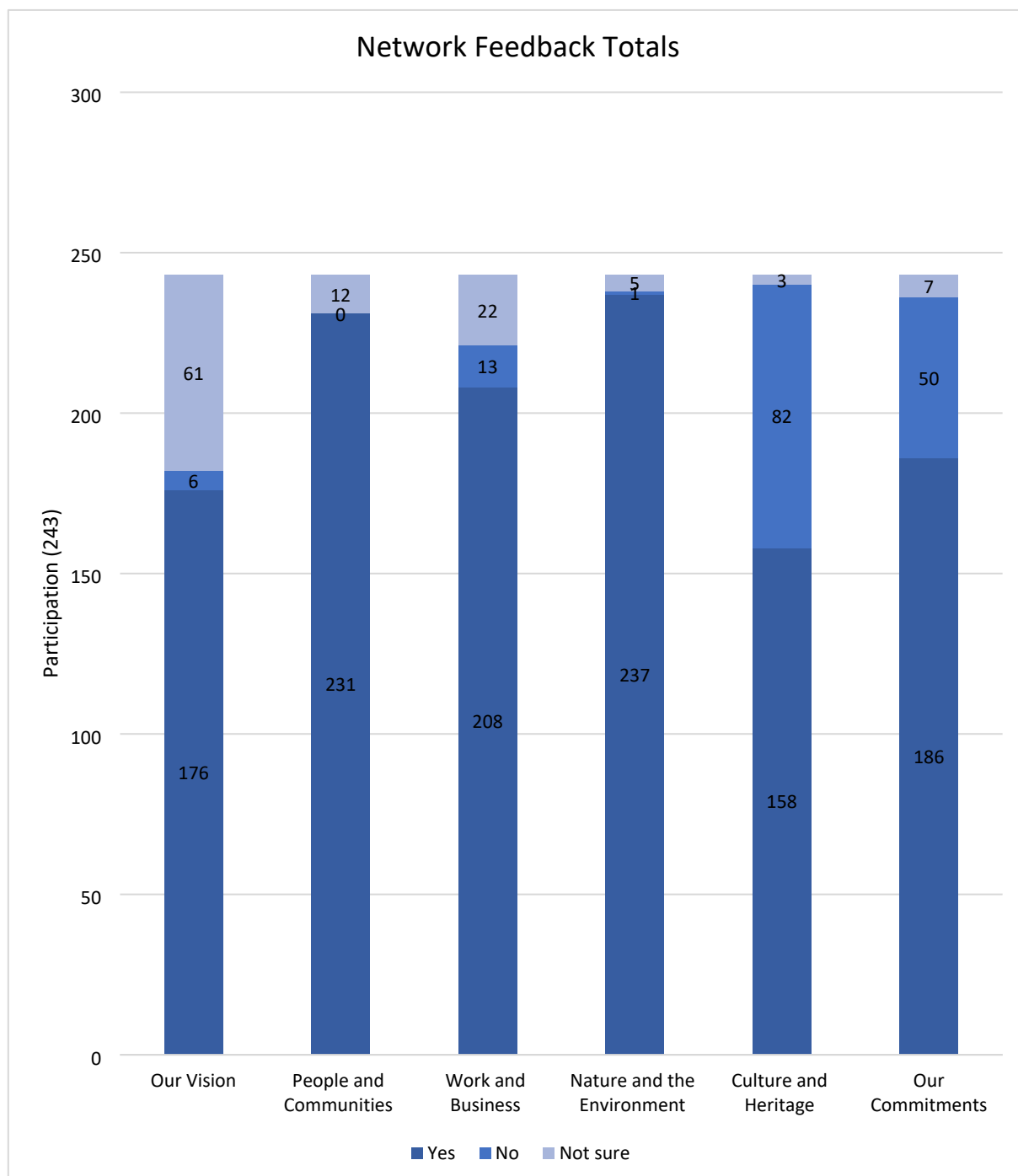


**Figure 12. Our Commitments: Thematic Content Analysis**

## 5. KEY FINDINGS – NETWORK/GROUP FEEDBACK

5.1 The majority of respondents within Networks were happy and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments:

- Our Vision: 176 (72.4%) agreed
- People and Communities: 231 (95.1%) agreed
- Work and Business: 208 (85.6%) agreed
- Nature and the Environment: 237 (97.5%) agreed
- Culture and Heritage: 158 (65%) agreed
- Our Commitments: 114 (76.5%) agreed



**Figure 13. Network Feedback Totals**

- 5.2 There were 17 feedback themes identified in response to the 6 questions asked. The questions received a range of comments with 695 references to the themes identified. The main themes identified from network improvement feedback were:
- Culture (135)
  - Travel and Transport (68)
  - Community (64)
  - Environment (52)
  - Safety (49)
  - Infrastructure (46)
- 5.3 Examples of feedback received, and themes identified within each response have been analysed for each question.
- 5.4 Although the majority of respondents have agreed with the Council's proposals, all highlighted areas for improvement must be considered when developing the final Corporate Plan 2024-30. The Corporate Plan 2024-30 will include a summary of feedback for each Well-being Objective identifying what our stakeholders have told us that they would like to see included in the plan.
- 5.5 Through the network feedback responses, different groups suggested detailed improvements that could be made to the Plan but also told us how they were happy with the Plan. A common theme throughout was the importance of supporting communities and enriching the culture within those communities. Empowering communities, promoting the Welsh Language and improving community links were common topics of conversation which also encompassed points around safe, clean and litter free places.
- 5.6 Network discussions also highlighted how many different areas are interconnected and by enhancing one area will lead to improvements in another. For example, investing in and improving connectivity and public transport around the County Borough will lead to increased employment, thriving town centres and fewer empty properties.
- 5.7 There were also many responses wanted to see more detailed plans to show how the Council will achieve its proposals given the current budget constraints and financial difficulties the Council faces. Respondents also expressed concern that the Plan was overambitious.

### **Cwmparc Neighbourhood Network**

- 5.8 Agreed overall with the Council's proposed Vision and Well-being Objectives but disagreed with the Council's proposed Commitments due to fears of financial constraints. All in attendance (9) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'Social Care', 'Travel and Transport' and 'Young People'.

*"Help strengthen the link between RCTCBC and community groups (3rd Sector). Empower pride in our communities".*

*“Raise communities out of deprivation. Loneliness and isolation is a big issue for many in RCT and there needs to be better community/public transport so residents can get about the County Borough more easily”.*

*“Youth Provision including activities, events and engagement need to improve”.*

### **Maerdy Ferndale Neighbourhood Network**

5.9 Agreed overall with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments but thought there could be improvements, particularly to ‘People and Communities’ and ‘Work and Business’. All in attendance (9) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Employment’, ‘Health’, ‘Young People’ and ‘Infrastructure’.

*“There should be a whole objective on health. People and Communities does not go far enough. We would like to see more ‘Flying Start’ schemes, better housing provision for the homeless and support for people’s well-being”.*

*“We need to create more employment. If we want to encourage employers to the Rhondda, especially the Fach, the infrastructure must be upgraded to attract investment in and encourage residents to stay”.*

*“There also appears to be a lack of opportunity and provision for Young People”.*

### **Mid Rhondda Neighbourhood Network**

5.10 Responded that they were not sure whether they agreed or disagreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Commitments and Well-being Objectives for People and Communities and Work and Business. Concerns were raised around whether the priorities were realistic or achievable in the next six years. The network wanted to see more detailed plans about how the Council would accomplish the detail set out in the proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives for ‘People and Communities’, ‘Work and Business’ and Commitments All in attendance (4) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Social Care’, ‘Council Communication’, ‘Culture’ and ‘Travel and Transport’.

*“Welsh language needs to be used and encouraged more to really promote culture and heritage across RCT”.*

*“Helping to tackle loneliness and isolation, especially for older residents should be a key priority for the Council”.*

*“We would like to see better communication about how successful the previous Corporate Plan was. How do we know that we are headed in the right direction with the new well-being objectives?”.*

*“Leisure services e.g., Libraries and keeping them accessible to children need to be prioritised as well as social/intergenerational connections and digital inclusion”.*

### **North Cynon Neighbourhood Network**

5.11 Agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments but thought there could be improvements, particularly relating to whether the plans are achievable, a lack of Welsh Language and concerns around the Eisteddfod 2024. All in attendance (10) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Community’, ‘Culture’, ‘Travel and Transport’, ‘Financial Concerns’ and ‘Infrastructure’.

*“It’s impossible to disagree with the wellbeing objectives, however how doable are they? How will RCTCBC do this with the current cut backs?”*

*“Travel services are poor, no mention of it improving. The Eisteddfod will drive footfall and encourage people to travel to RCT, but public transport needs to be improved. People won’t be able to attend from some areas of RCT currently as things are. Ease of travel/accessibility/better links needs to be a priority”.*

*“No mention of the Welsh Language”.*

*“Make use of the buildings we have and don’t let them get into a state of disrepair, and then being demolished. Feel like RCTCBC have been left behind with regards to development”.*

### **Pentre Neighbourhood Network**

5.12 Agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (2) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Community’, ‘Young People’, ‘Culture’ and ‘Environment’.

*“Having a safe place for the community to meet is important. We need to redevelop community spirit, which many feel has been on decline for some years. This includes providing support for vulnerable community members, community activities for residents of all ages, transport and access to services and long term funding for community groups / organisations”.*

*“The Council need to ensure young people are gaining good, safe employment and good wages. Many young people are moving away, and communities are getting older”.*

*“Need to ensure there is a legacy after the Eisteddfod. Support for local groups to come together to share their memories and better promotion of a Valleys brand for tourism”.*

*“Parks need to be kept in good order, cutting down too many trees is a concern”.*

## **Porth Plaza Neighbourhood Network**

5.13 Responded that they were not sure whether they agreed or disagreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Commitments or Well-being Objective for Culture and Heritage. The network wanted further ambition in the Vision with reference to residents of RCT 'prospering' or 'thriving'. They also wanted to see the Corporate Plan be more community focused and the County Borough's future prioritised. All in attendance (6) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'Employment' and 'Culture'.

*"The word 'corporate' is a poor choice as it doesn't feel like the plan relates to us. Naming the Council's Corporate Plan: 'Councils plan for the people' makes it sound more interesting and about our lives".*

*"It is important to protect what we have e.g., park and dare, museum etc but it is just as important not to dwell on the past and to focus on the future".*

*"The community is always changing. Be more specific on what you mean by 'community'".*

*"Need to focus on opportunities and employment. Lack of opportunities leads to a community in decline due to young people leaving. They will search for their own opportunities".*

## **South Cynon Neighbourhood Network**

5.14 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision and Well-being Objectives for People and Communities and Nature and the Environment. However, they disagreed with Well-being Objectives Work and Business, Culture and Heritage and the Council's proposed Commitments. All in attendance (12) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'More detail needed', 'Council Communication', 'Culture' and 'Social Care'.

*"Will there be regular feedback? This was promised previously and would it be possible to given feedback for the current Corporate Plan. Was previous feedback used for this current vision, where is the evidence of that?".*

*"The arts need to be prioritised in Culture and Heritage. This includes mental health and well-being through the arts, inclusion, accessibility for all and funding to help develop creativity".*

*"How will the Council achieve the proposed Well-being Objectives?"*

*"Caring for our most vulnerable should be a priority such as combatting loneliness, inspiring people to learn, preventing anxiety and distress in people and essentially enabling all people / residents and supporting those who are in crisis".*

## **Tylorstown Neighbourhood Network**

5.15 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (11) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Environment', 'Safety', 'Transport and Travel', 'Community'.

*"Environment – more needs to be done with wind energy and hydro energy. Wind turbines are producing too much energy and are being switched off, but this could be used to provide cheaper electricity for communities. Should be using our water to power the grid as we certainly have enough rainfall, and this would be ideal to power RCT".*

*"Antisocial behaviour on the increase due to lack of community facilities".*

*"Buses are stopping and not being replaced... local transport is not suitable or often enough. Transport to the forgotten valley is vital – which needs to be accessible and affordable ...cost is extortionate for short journeys £2.70 one way to go 4 stops".*

*"Help strengthen the link between RCTCBC and community groups through introducing more activities, events, workshops, support networks which will rejuvenate pride in our Communities. Raise communities out of deprivation".*

## **RCT Climate Action Network**

5.16 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (15) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Environment', 'Housing', 'Infrastructure', 'Culture' and 'Economy'.

*"Energy efficient homes are important as many private landlords are not providing good quality and affordable homes within most areas of RCT. Mortgaged homes for low income families have no to little support".*

*"Need to fund and support creative spaces, food places, the arts, innovative and vibrant spaces etc in town centres to get a more diverse and engaging business community".*

*"There is also the cost of buildings for commercial use being high even when the buildings have been disused for more than 12 months".*

## **Cwm Taf People First**

5.17 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (14) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Health', 'Safety', 'Travel and Transport', 'Economy' and 'Town Centres'.



*“It is important that good health is maintained as this will keep people out of hospital. It should also be easier to get a GP appointment”.*

*“There needs to be more Safe Places for people. Our communities need to be cleaner from dog mess and litter”.*

*“Improvements are needed for more accessible transport. More opportunities for people to get out and about in their local community will lead to better health and well-being and equally business for our town centres”.*

### **Community Focused Schools**

5.18 Agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments, apart from the WBO - Work and Business, where they thought it could be improved. All in attendance (15) provided feedback on an area of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below the feedback received. The response can be categorised by the feedback theme, ‘Education’ especially in the Work and Business section.

*“It would better if it included a school element - about strengthening careers, work related experiences and raising aspirations for all”.*

### **Fforwm Iaith**

5.19 Agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments, apart from the Well-being Objective - Culture and Heritage, where they thought it could be improved. All in attendance (40) provided feedback on an area of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below the feedback received. The response can be categorised by the feedback theme ‘Culture’ with a focus on the ‘Welsh Language’.

*“This needs to explicitly mention the Welsh Language as a priority area, to read Culture, Heritage and the Welsh Language / Diwylliant, Treftadaeth a’r Iaith Gymraeg. It should be mentioned as part of the Council’s commitment and aspiration for the Welsh Language - to tie in with both statutory duties and wider commitment to Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Standards, WESP 2022-2032 etc”.*

*“If one specific policy area is mentioned (Carbon Neutral by 2030) there should be parity with other essential policy areas / aspirations”.*

### **Our Aberdare BID and Love Treorchy BID**

5.20 Sent a joint response and agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (9) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Culture’, ‘Safety’, ‘Community’ and ‘Town Centres’.

*“We have so much history here in RCT however we are very poor at celebrating it! We could be doing so much more to use it to our benefit and that in turn would attract visitors,*

*give people a reason to visit but most of all instil pride in our communities based on our incredible history”.*

*“All components of the plan are interlinked; you provide people with a town/community they are proud of then standards across the board rise. People have more pride and so they take care of things, they are proud of their towns and communities and so they visit and shop, spending more time enjoying their surroundings. Lack of education around heritage and culture compound the anti-social behaviour and we are forever battling against vandalism and bad behaviour and this for me will be the biggest challenge”.*

## **Our Pontypridd BID**

5.21 Agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments, apart from the Well-being Objective - Work and Business where they thought it could be improved. All in attendance (7) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Culture’, ‘Education’, ‘Employment’, ‘Environment’, ‘Safety’, ‘Town Centres’ and ‘Travel and Transport’.

*“There will need to a clear vision for sustainable transport and an increase in electric charging points. In Pontypridd in particular, there are many areas where pollution is high due to increased levels of traffic due to its position...”*

*“Supporting people into work is very key, especially for the town centres”.*

*“Would like to see more encouragement of litter picking in the town centre and park area, it will encourage people to have more pride in their community and care more about the look and feel of the town”.*

*“We can work on encouraging schools to visit the town and learn about the rich history of the town, birthplace of the national anthem etc. This will help create proud communities and encourage people to create more history in the town”.*

## **Sustainable Food Network**

5.22 Agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (5) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Community’, ‘Economy’, ‘Environment’ and ‘Travel and Transport’.

*“We want fair food for all. This includes access to land for community use and the Council leading by example by serving environmentally friendly food in all Council premises and services”.*

*“Access (including public transport) to acquire food. All residents should be able to access affordable, healthy and sustainable food”.*

*“We would also like to see more opportunities for very small scale producers to be able to supply in the future. Business opportunities/reduced rates for businesses that demonstrate clear sustainable ideas”.*

### **Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG) Committee**

5.23 Agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision and Well-being Objectives but were unsure whether they agreed with Commitments. All in attendance (8) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Housing’, ‘Transport and Travel’, ‘Safety’ and ‘Social Care’.

*“To live in warm, energy efficient homes and to be able to use public transport for social gatherings and shopping without being in fear of antisocial behaviour”.*

### **County Youth Forum**

5.24 Agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (12) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes ‘Employment’, ‘Infrastructure’, ‘Housing’, ‘Environment’ and ‘Council Communication’.

*“Supporting people into rewarding and secure work whilst also enhancing infrastructure, including green infrastructure and prioritising affordable housing”.*

*“The Vision could be shorter, catchier and more engaging for young people and other groups. More pictures and visuals would also improve the Plan as well as better social media on it”.*

### **Cor Cwm Rhondda**

5.25 Responded that they were unsure whether they agreed with the Council’s proposed Vision, but they agreed with Well-being Objectives and Commitments. However, they did disagree with the Council’s Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage. All in attendance (50) provided feedback on an area of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below the feedback received. The response can be categorised by the feedback theme ‘Culture’ with a focus on the Welsh Language.

*“We feel the statement could acknowledge that we are in Wales/a Welsh area, and that Welsh language is used here. We also feel it could include reference to being a welcoming area to people of all backgrounds”.*

*“We feel the Welsh language must be acknowledged more explicitly here, especially if we want to maximise the legacy of the Eisteddfod. We’d like to see the objective renamed as ‘Culture, Heritage and the Welsh Language’ to ensure the Welsh language is at the forefront of council strategy and normalised within the borough at all levels. We’d like to see ‘linguistic’*

*heritage added to the second bullet point too. We feel these changes would be more in line with the Well-being goals of the Future Generations Act itself too”.*

### **Upper Rhondda 50+ Network**

5.26 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (25) agreed they have no concerns with what the Council have proposed in the Plan, nor were any particular issues raised by individuals. The Network recognise that Council is generally doing a good job with limited resources and trust that the particular needs of older people are recognised and given the attention that is needed.

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## Appendix 1: Feedback Theme Definitions

Feedback Theme (22)	Definition (Summary of comments by theme)
Community	References to people and relationships within a social context.
Council Communication	Responses related to the passing of information between the Council and its stakeholders.
Council Operations	References to Council systems and processes which may influence the wider community.
Culture	Any responses related to the protection or promotion of meaningful social traditions, heritage, Welsh Language or the arts.
Disagree with priority	Any responses that offered no improvement suggestion and completely disagreed with the Well-being Objective and priorities.
Economy	Factors affecting the conduct of business and commerce throughout the County Borough.
Education	References to both schools and opportunities for additional learning.
Employment	Responses related to rates of employment and factors that may improve it.
Environment	References relating to the natural physical environment and factors that may affect its current or future state.
Equality	Factors affecting the ability of all peoples within the County Borough to develop and succeed equally.
Financial Concerns	References to where there are concerns around funding or costing of the Well-being Objective and priorities.
Health	Responses related to any aspect of a person's health, physical, mental or otherwise.
Housing	Factors relating to the residences and accommodation of people within Rhondda Cynon Taf.
Infrastructure	Factors relating to physical structures within Rhondda Cynon Taf, new and old and their impacts.
More detail needed	Any responses that require more detail to fully understand the benefits of the Well-being Objective and priorities.
No Improvements	Responses that didn't offer any improvement comments.
Safety	Factors relating to the sense of safety and security experienced by residents.
Social Care	References to additional care and support services, particularly the recipient has a recognised vulnerability.
Too ambitious	Any responses that relate to the Well-being Objective and priorities being unachievable.
Town Centres	References to the condition of Rhondda Cynon Taf's town centres including local business commercial centres, any public facilities and other amenities.
Travel and Transport	References to factors affecting the movement of people throughout the County Borough.
Young People	Factors relating to the futures, safety and livelihoods of young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

## **Appendix 2: Draft outline of Corporate Plan 2024-2030 – ‘Working with our Communities’** *n.b. version as of 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 subsequently reviewed by O&S Committee 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024.*

### **The Council’s Vision is for a Rhondda Cynon Taf where:**

*People, communities, and business can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future.*

### **The Council’s purpose and the reason it exists is to:**

*To provide community leadership and deliver high quality public services, working alongside residents, communities and our partners for people, businesses, and the environment to prosper.*

### **Our Approach:**

*Our new Plan builds on the strong platform put in place by our previous two Plans. To deliver what our new Plan sets out, we need our staff, Councillors, residents, communities, and partners working in the same direction to deliver our shared vision. The future challenges faced across the Council’s services mean that now more than ever, we need well trained, informed, and supported staff and councillors who can respond to the challenges ahead within an ambitious programme of work. As public sector budgets remain under pressure and the demands on our services increase, the need to work with communities and across organisational boundaries to deliver the best outcomes for our residents, both now and in the future, has never been greater.*

**As a result of what we have learned so far, we are proposing four Well-being objectives that you have told us matter most to you now and that will better prepare us all for the future:**

Our four Well-being Objectives:

- 1. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES - Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. This includes:**
  - Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow safely,
  - Residents can take care of their health & well-being so they can live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives,
  - Residents having access to affordable, good quality and energy efficient homes,
  - Safeguarding our most vulnerable residents of all ages, providing protection, care and support when they need it most so that they can maximise their potential.
- 2. WORK AND BUSINESS - Helping to strengthen and grow RCT’s economy. This includes:**
  - Supporting people into rewarding and secure work,
  - Supporting businesses to prosper and be sustainable,
  - Thriving town centres, and
  - A well-connected County Borough.
- 3. NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT’s environment and nature. This includes:**
  - Protecting and enhancing the natural environment,
  - Clean, Safe and Sustainable RCT,
  - Using Natures Assets to benefit people and communities.
- 4. CULTURE AND HERITAGE - Recognising and celebrating RCT’s past, present and future where:**

- Culture and heritage is vibrant, and difference is celebrated in strong communities that enhance well-being.
- We celebrate and preserve the cultural, industrial and sporting heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

### **A well-run Council...**

Our four Well-being objectives and our priorities can only be delivered by a well-run Council. By this we mean a Council that has a positive organisational culture, that values its staff, manages its resources sustainably and wisely and looks to continually improve what we do to have the biggest impact for residents.

### **Our commitments to you**

- We will deliver our improvement priorities and strive to meet all our targets and you will be able to hold us to account through good governance and local democracy.
- We will lead by example, show strong community leadership and be open about the challenges we face and the tough decisions we have to make.
- We will put residents and customers at the centre of all that we do and the decisions we make through more meaningful, involvement and engagement.
- We will work with partners in all sectors so that we join up our services, make life easier for our residents and communities and deliver better outcomes for them.
- We will work together with residents and communities on solutions that better meet their needs and share responsibility deliver better outcomes together.
- We will manage our workforce, budgets, land, buildings, fleet and information to maximise our efficiency and make the biggest difference to our communities, nature and the environment.
- We will reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint and be a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.
- We will be honest with our residents and regulators about where we are doing well and where we need to do better.
- We will put in place plans to care and support communities in emergency situations when they happen.

### **Our commitment to staff**

We will provide equality of opportunity for all, so that staff feel valued and can reach their full potential. The Council's commitment to its staff and our communities is set out in full in our Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Plan.

### **Our commitment to partners**

We will be committed and active partners in our work with others, seeking and challenging where we can add more and better outcomes for our residents, communities and businesses by working together. You can see more about our [work with others](#).

### Appendix 3: Network Feedback Table

<b>Network Response (19)</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
RCT Climate Action Network (15)	15
Community Focused Schools (15)	15
Cwm Taf People First (10)	10
Our Pontypridd BID (7)	7
Our Aberdare BID/ Love Treorchy BID (9)	9
Sustainable Food Network (5)	5
Fforwm Iaith (40)	40
OPAG Committee (7)	7
Neighbourhood Network – Cwmparc (9)	9
Neighbourhood Network – Maerdy Ferndale (9)	9
Neighbourhood Network – Mid Rhondda (4)	4
Neighbourhood Network – North Cynon (10)	10
Neighbourhood Network – Pentre (2)	2
Neighbourhood Network – Porth Plaza (6)	6
Neighbourhood Network – South Cynon (12)	12
Neighbourhood Network – Tylorstown (11)	11
County Youth Forum (12)	12
Upper Rhondda 50+ Network (25)	25
Cor Cwm Rhondda (50)	50