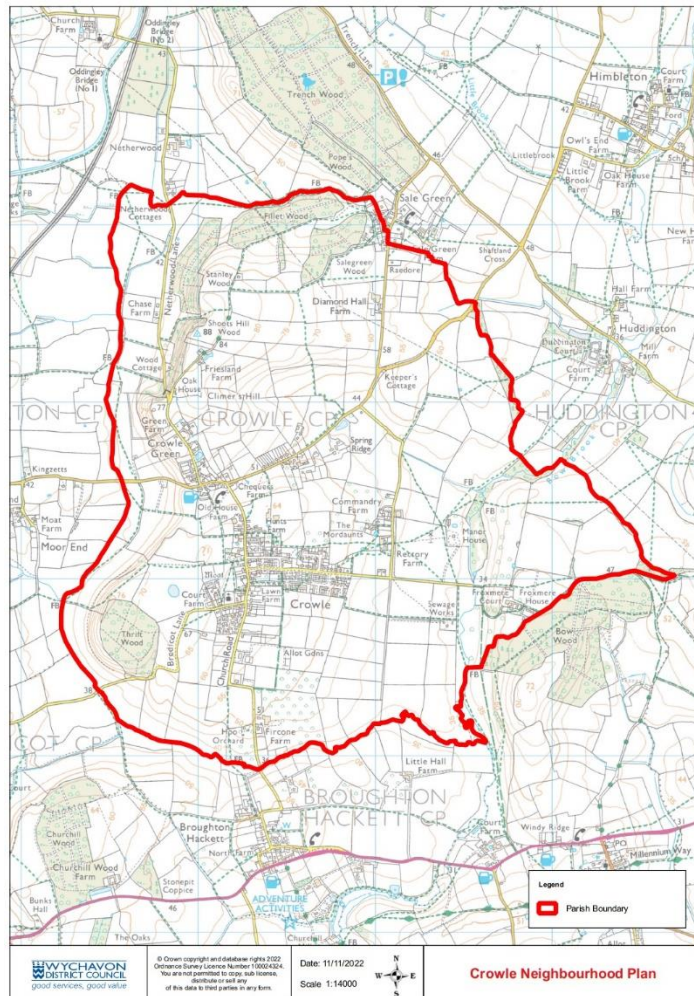


# Crowle Neighbourhood Plan

## Questionnaire Survey 2023

# Results report



DJN Planning Limited

January 2024

For Crowle Parish Council

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# 1. Introduction

Crowle Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. To help inform the Plan, a questionnaire survey of residents was undertaken in September 2023 which sought views on a draft vision and objectives, housing, community facilities, economic development, the built and natural environment, and renewable energy.

This report sets out the results of the survey. The report:

- provides a summary of the main findings (section 2);
- outlines the survey methodology, describes the overall response, and explains how the results have been presented in this report (section 3); and
- sets out on a question-by-question basis the response to the questionnaire, dealing with the following topics:
  - draft Vision and objectives – questions 1 to 3
  - housing – questions 4 to 9
  - community facilities – questions 10 to 12
  - economic development – questions 13 and 14
  - built environment – questions 15 and 16
  - natural environment – questions 17 to 21
  - renewable energy – question 22
  - information about the respondent – questions 23 to 27.
- provides conclusions and recommendations (section 4).

A copy of the questionnaire is available separately.

This report has been independently prepared for Crowle Parish Council by DJN Planning Ltd. Acknowledgements and thanks are due to Parish Councillor Steve Bott who collated the initial survey data and kindly provided the weighted ranking scores.

January 2024

## 2. Summary of results

The survey was undertaken in September 2023 and achieved a response rate of 20%.

### *Vision and Objectives*

- There was significant support for the draft Vision and objectives.
- Comments were made on housing, community, economic development, the environment, transport, and infrastructure.
- On the principal issue of housing, concerns focussed on the significant amount of recent and permitted development in Crowle, with concerns that this was threatening the distinctive identity of the Parish as set out in the draft Vision, and a sense that effective control over development at Parish level was limited.
- The things which residents valued most about living in the Parish were that it was a quiet and peaceful place to live, the nearby countryside, safe village 'feel', own house/home, and the friendly, involved community. Relatively little importance was placed on transport links, outdoor activities, and convenience to work.

### *Housing*

- A wide range of planning requirements for new housing were supported for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan, relating to transport, sewerage and surface water drainage, dwelling size and type, design and landscaping. However, there was less than majority support for affordable housing to be included.
- Most respondents preferred to see starter/retirement homes (2 bedroom) followed by smaller family homes (3 bed) and then large homes (4+ bed). There was little support for studio homes (1 bed).
- Levels of support for new build housing declined with an increasing size of development. Just over a half of respondents agreed with new housing being built as individual homes on "infill" plots between existing dwellings. In contrast, larger developments of five or more houses, which would include some affordable housing, were opposed by almost two-thirds of respondents.
- There was also support for adapted/easy access homes such as bungalows, and for housing for older people.
- The top priorities for new housing were:
  - acceptable sewerage and surface water drainage
  - schemes to be proportionate in size to the existing villages
  - acceptable impact on amenity of residents
  - acceptable impact on local roads.
- The lowest priority was for new dwellings to be within walking or cycling distance of local amenities and public transport.

- For 'householder' development such as extensions and garages, the top priority was an acceptable impact on neighbours' amenity, following by no additional on-road parking.

### *Community Facilities*

- The most important community facilities in the Parish to respondents were The Shop and Café, the Post Office, and the School.
- Comments suggested many ways in which village facilities could be improved or added to. Key areas were recreational provision, particularly for older children and teenagers; transport and parking; medical services (provided on an outreach basis); and footpaths. Some respondents cautioned against over-providing, as this could risk village character and encourage more housing development.

### *Economic Development*

- Favoured types of economic development were those suitable to the rural/village context – small-scale farming/horticulture, farm diversification, small-scale retail such as a shop or café.
- Other forms of types of economic development were opposed, particularly storage and distribution, large areas of glass-housing or polytunnels, and intensive livestock units.
- The top priorities for new economic or business developments were to:
  - minimise increases in traffic
  - avoid unacceptable noise and light impacts
  - enable working from home by improving broadband speed and mobile reception.
- Comments on this topic emphasised concerns around more traffic on unsuitable roads and the risks posed to peace and tranquillity by inappropriate development.

### *Built Environment*

- To ensure development was well-designed, the priorities were:
  - scheme layout and relationship to surroundings/street scene
  - the density of new development compared to existing
  - sufficient off-road parking
  - size and height of new buildings
  - boundary treatment
  - matching the overall character of adjoining development.
- In minimising the impact of new buildings on the built environment, the priorities were:
  - impact on amount and type of traffic
  - safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders
  - minimise increases in noise
  - protect historic buildings and other heritage features.

- Comments focussed on the traffic implications of development, visual impacts, and the need to take into account existing services including sewerage.

### *Natural Environment*

- In minimising the impact of new buildings on the natural environment, the priorities were:
  - keeping existing landscape features
  - safeguarding water quality in local watercourses
  - protecting views
  - minimising light pollution.
- A wide range of countryside views were identified for protection, with viewpoints including Froxmere Road, Crowle Bank, land/footpaths between the Church and The Chequers, the village edges including the eastern edge of Crowle, Netherwood Lane and Bredicot Lane.
- Priorities for development to maintain or enhance the natural environment were:
  - retaining existing trees and other landscape features
  - having regard to landscape setting, including views
  - providing new landscaping
  - having regard to wildlife and biodiversity.
- Suggestions for Local Green Space designation included land at Froxmere Road, between Crowle and Crowle Green, village open spaces, land at the Church/Crowle Court, ponds, and Crowle Bank/Thrift Wood.
- A significant majority of respondents agreed that the open countryside 'gap' between Crowle and Crowle Green should be protected from development.

### *Renewable Energy*

- The domestic and community-led generation of solar power and ground source heating were favoured. Commercial schemes producing renewable energy from any source were not supported, and all options for wind generation were opposed.

### *Information about You*

- Age groups up to and including 45-54 were under-represented in survey responses compared to 2021 Census information for the Parish as a whole (particularly those aged 35-44). Older age groups were over-represented to varying degrees (particularly those aged 65-74).
- Compared to Census 2021 information, full-time and part-time employees and the self-employed were under-represented in survey responses. The retired were over-represented.
- Most respondents lived in Crowle, the largest village, with lower representation from Crowle Green and Sale Green.
- Three-quarters of respondents had lived in the Parish for 11 years or longer.

### 3. Survey method

#### *Method and response*

The survey questionnaire was developed by the Steering Group with professional support. Account was taken of issues raised in the Launch consultation held earlier in 2023, and of a local Housing Needs Survey carried out in 2022. Key topics for the survey were identified as: Vision and Objectives, housing, community facilities, economic development, the built and natural environment, and renewable energy.

The survey asked 27 questions as follows:

- 16 'closed' (multiple-choice) questions, with respondents asked to select from a set of given options. Where appropriate, an 'other' option was included allowing respondents to add further information. Eight of the multiple-choice questions asked respondents to rank options in their perceived order of importance.
- Six 'open' questions, with responses invited as free-write comments.
- Five questions on respondents' gender, age, economic activity, and place and length of residence.

The survey booklet was hand-delivered to all households in the Neighbourhood Area in September 2023. The booklet comprised a covering letter, a set of frequently asked questions, instructions on how to take part, a map of the Neighbourhood Area (Crowle Parish, see front cover of this Report), and the questionnaire itself.

All residents of the Neighbourhood Area aged 16 or over were asked to take part. Responses to the survey could be made online via SurveyMonkey or by completing the printed questionnaire. These were to be returned to the post box at The Shop in Crowle or to a collection box in Crowle Post Office. Additional copies of the printed questionnaire were available from these locations. Contact details for two Parish Councillors were provided to enable any queries to be answered. The closing date was 30 September 2023.

Overall, there were 186 replies to the survey, a response rate of 20%. Half of responses were made online and half on the printed questionnaire. The information on the completed printed questionnaires was entered onto SurveyMonkey by members of the Steering Group.

#### *Presentation of the results*

For the multiple-choice questions, the results are presented in tables and bar charts as follows:

- For the eight ranking questions, the weighted scores calculated and provided by Parish Councillor Steve Bott are reported. Percentages are based on the sum of the scores for all options to each question.



- For the other multiple-choice questions, tables show the count for each option. The percentage base is the number of completed questionnaires (186). This aids comparison of results overall and between questions by utilising a consistent base.
- For questions 23 to 25 (gender, age, and economic activity) the percentage base is those answering the question minus those selecting the 'prefer not to say' option. This facilitates comparison with the accompanying 2021 Census data.
- Percentages are rounded to whole numbers except for values less than 1% when a single decimal point figure is reported.

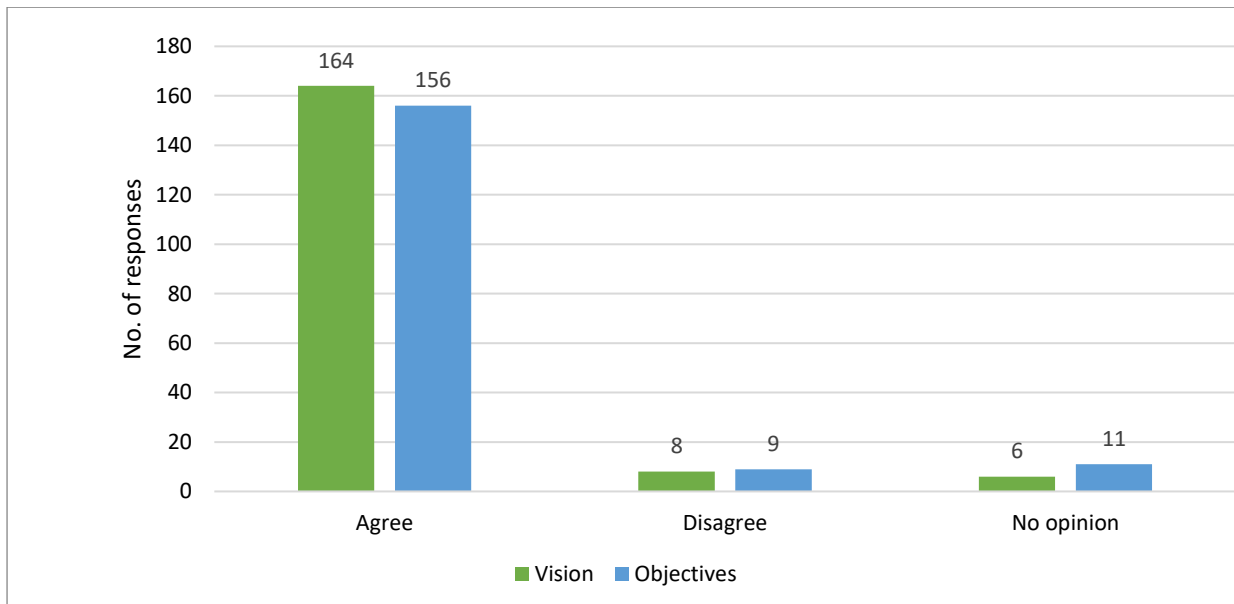
Free-write comments have been summarised in terms of the key topics raised. Pie charts are used to illustrate the number of comments per topic. Individual comments may refer to several topics. Anonymous quotes have been included for illustrative purposes but are not to be assumed to be representative of all respondents. The number of comments given refers to substantive replies i.e. excludes those responding 'no', 'none', 'no comment' or similar. A full set of the substantive comments made is also available (see separate Comment Listings report).

## Vision and Objectives

The questionnaire asked for views on a draft Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan and on objectives relating to individual planning topics.

**Question 1: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the draft Vision and Objectives?** (tick one box per row)

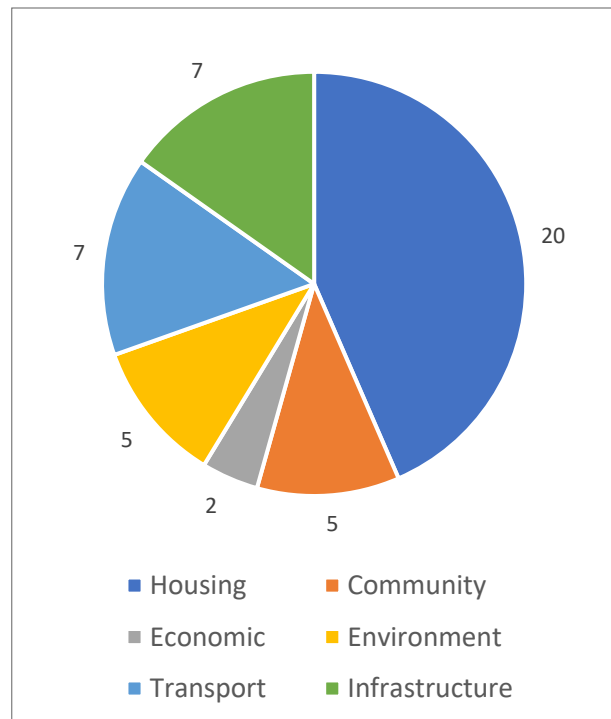
	Agree		Disagree		No opinion	
Vision	164	88%	8	4%	6	3%
Objectives	156	84%	9	5%	11	6%



- There was significant overall support for both the draft Vision and the objectives, with respondents taking the opportunity to make supplementary comments in answering Q2 (see overleaf).

**Question 2: If you have any comments on the draft Vision and Objectives please tell us in the box below.**

- This question was answered by 42 respondents (23%).
- Comments on **housing** (20) focussed on the significant amount of recent and permitted development, with concerns that this was threatening the distinctive identity of the Parish as set out in the draft Vision: *“any further development will impact negatively on what makes the village of Crowle and Sale Green a thriving and sustainable rural community”*. There was a sense that control over development at Parish-level was limited, *“any objections amount to nothing”* so that *“developers seem to do what they want”*. Others sought *“more affordable housing”*; *“gradual and thought through development”*; and *“more individually designed homes”*, to avoid Crowle being *“ruined by mass produced over development”*.



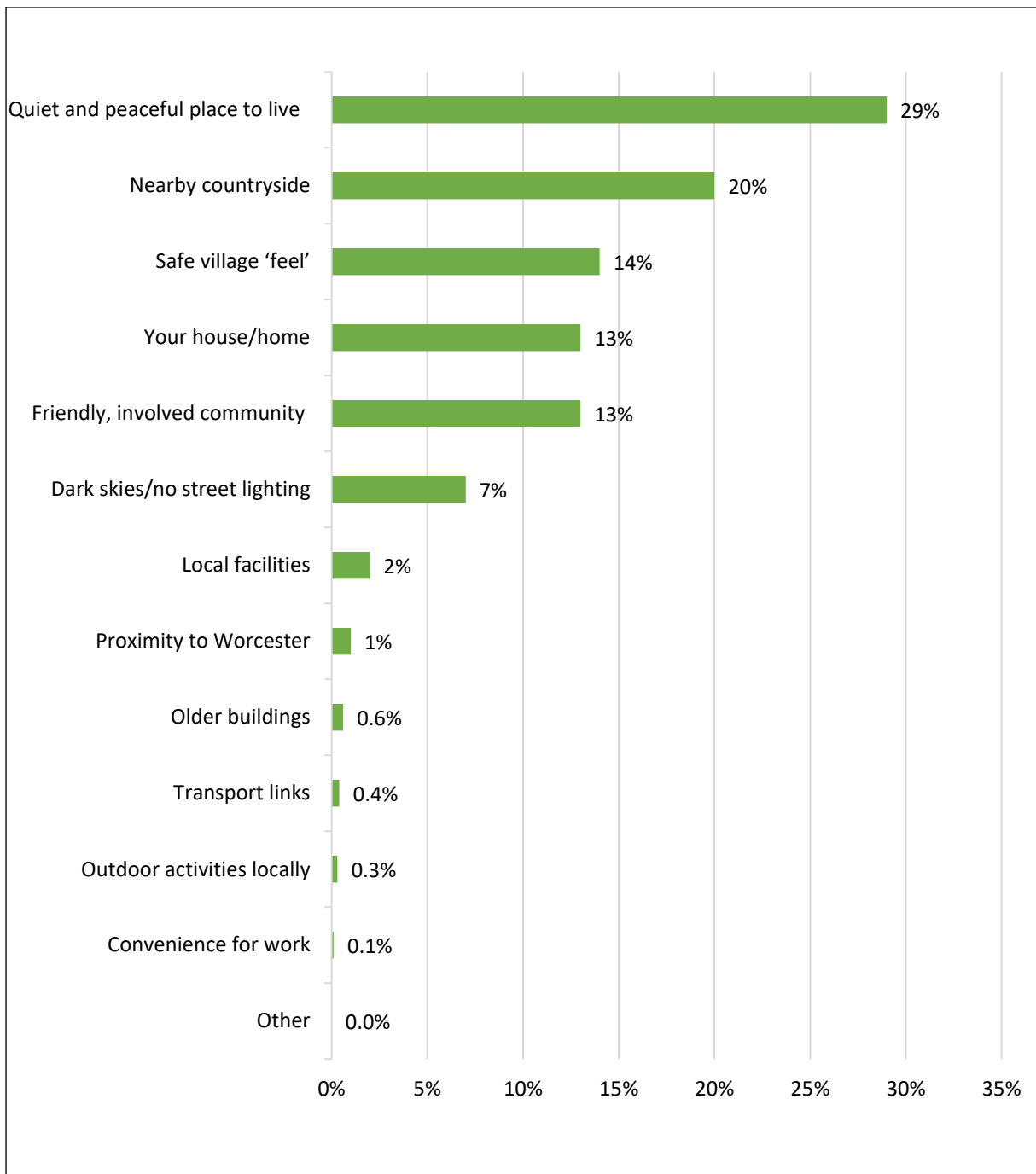
- There were five comments on **community**, including a suggestion that *“it would be nice if we were recognised as a diverse, welcoming community”*, a call for facilities to *“entertain, excite and enthuse”* the Parish youngsters, and for provision at Sale Green where a local green space for activities would be welcomed.
- Two comments on **economic development** queried the realistic scope for such.
- On the **environment** five comments sought reference to the protection and restoration of natural habitats to *“prevent the continuing decline of indigenous flora and fauna”*, including protecting watercourse and ponds from pollution, and advised that new homes should include environmental measures such as renewable energy generation and rainwater harvesting.
- On **transport** (seven comments) there were concerns over the volume and speed of traffic including that generated through the village by housing development. Other issues raised were on-road parking, highway flooding and improvements, lack of public transport/school bus, and rights of way.
- Seven comments on **infrastructure** pointed to the need for provision to keep pace with development although *“infrastructure doesn’t support the current numbers never mind an increase”*, with waste treatment a focus of concern. A comment supported mention of community sustainable energy whilst another did not want any form of solar energy.

**Question 3: What are the top 5 things you value most about living in Crowle Parish?** (rank up to 5 boxes only, where 1 is most important to you)

Rank		Score	%
1	Quiet and peaceful place to live	95472	29%
2	Nearby countryside	64116	20%
3	Safe village 'feel'	45120	14%
4	Your house/home	43927	13%
5	Friendly, involved community	41412	13%
6	Dark skies/no street lighting	21297	7%
7	Local facilities	5080	2%
8	Proximity to Worcester	4633	1%
9	Older buildings	2002	0.6%
10	Transport links	1392	0.4%
11	Outdoor activities locally	901	0.3%
12	Convenience for work	420	0.1%
13	Other	168	0.0%

- Crowle's most important feature for respondents was that it provided a quiet and peaceful live to live.
- In second place was the proximity of nearby countryside.
- Similar levels of importance were given to the safe village 'feel', respondents own home, and the friendly community, these features ranking as third, fourth and fifth respectively.
- The dark skies/absence of street lighting were ranked sixth.
- Relatively little importance was given to the other factors canvassed.
- In comments to the 'other' option, respondents referred to traffic management, protected countryside views, ecology/wildlife, air quality, green issues, climate change, and the variety of house designs which "*make it very attractive to walk or drive through the village*". Others emphasised the importance to them of dark skies and the village feel/rural community. Issues of footpath maintenance and the use of steel gates on rights of way were also raised.

**Question 3, continued/**



## Housing

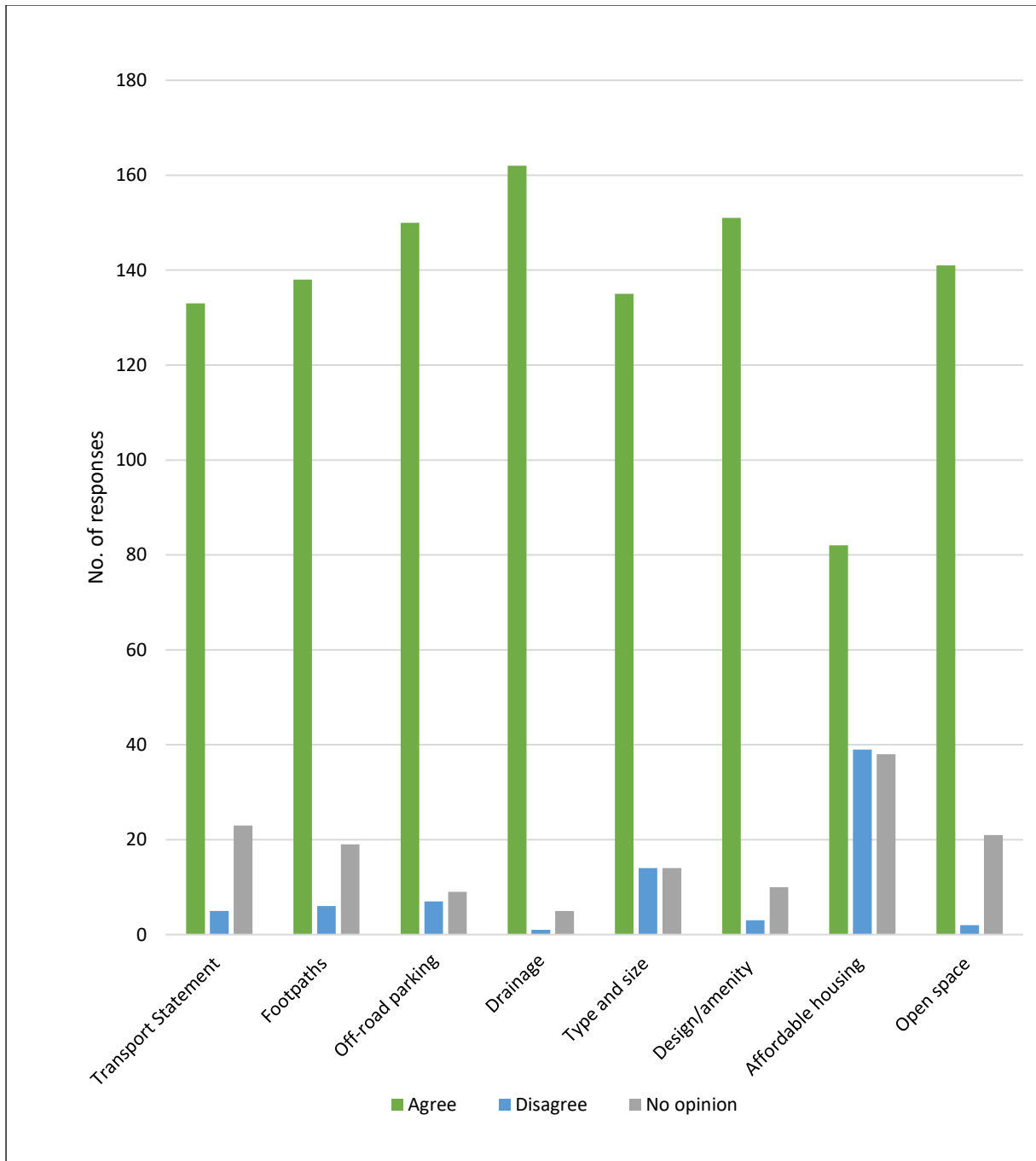
The questionnaire summarised recent planning permissions for new dwellings in Crowle village. It confirmed that as a result the Parish had already met its housing requirement up to 2041 and no additional site allocations were needed. However, planning applications for various forms of residential development could be expected to continue in this period. The questionnaire asked for views about the planning priorities that should be considered when the Parish Council was consulted on planning applications, and about the size and type of new housing that was needed.

**Question 4: What planning requirements should we include in the Neighbourhood Plan to guide any future development in Crowle? (tick one box per row)**

Planning requirement	Agree		Disagree		No opinion	
Provide a Transport Statement to show how the site can be safely accessed by all	133	72%	5	3%	23	12%
Provide footpaths to link with village facilities	138	74%	6	3%	19	10%
Provide sufficient off-road parking	150	81%	7	4%	9	5%
Include acceptable sewerage and surface water drainage	162	87%	1	0.5%	5	3%
New dwellings of a size and type which meet local housing needs	135	73%	14	8%	14	8%
Siting, orientation, and design of new dwellings to respect amenity of existing residents	151	81%	3	2%	10	5%
Provide affordable housing in line with South Worcestershire Development Plan	82	44%	39	21%	38	20%
Provision of open space and landscaping using native species	141	76%	2	1%	21	11%

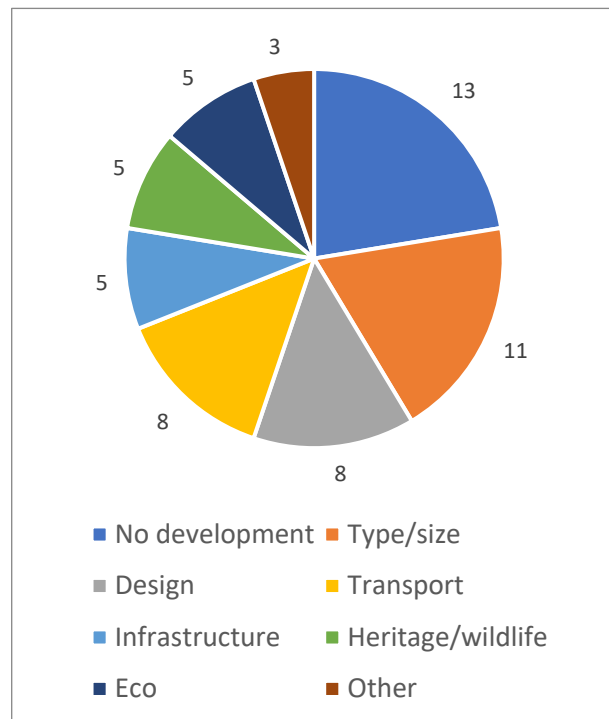
- All the planning requirements mooted in Q4 except for one were agreed for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan by well over a majority of respondents – between 87% (sewerage and surface water drainage) and 72% (transport).
- The exception was the provision of affordable housing. Although this is already a requirement under the Local Plan, only 44% of respondents agreed that this factor should also be included in the Neighbourhood Plan, with 21% opposed and notable ambivalence (20% had no opinion).

Question 4, continued/



**Question 5: If you have any other suggestions to guide future development in the Parish, please tell us below.**

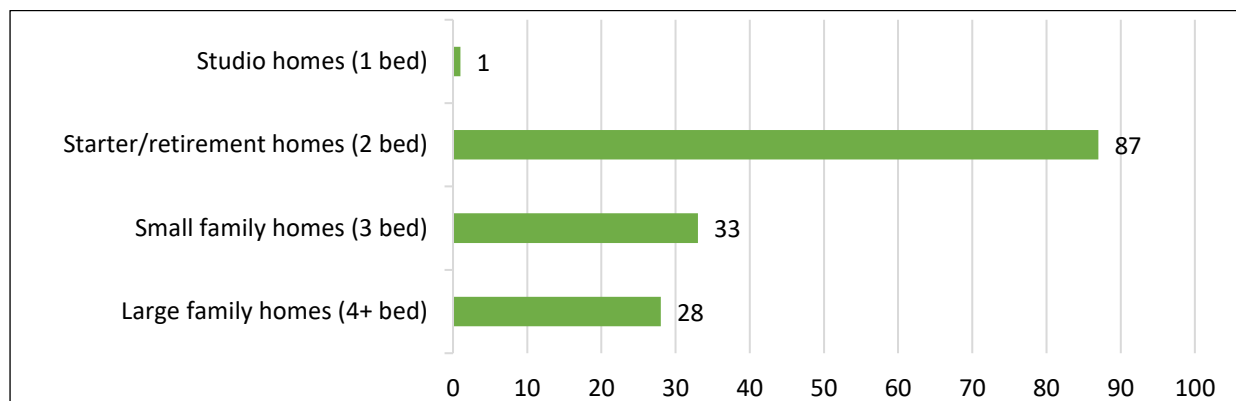
- This question was answered by 50 respondents (27%).
- There were 13 comments opposing **more housing development**: “we don’t need more houses”; “if we were able to limit the number and types of properties that would be a significant improvement”.
- The **type and size** of new housing was raised in 11 comments. Affordable housing should be small houses for purchase, not housing association properties, and for “people with proven historical links to Crowle”; another view was that affordable housing was “actually not needed by most village people”. Other suggestions were for more self/custom builds and bungalows, “for the growing number of senior citizens and single pensioners”.
- On **design** (eight comments) there were calls for schemes to respect local tradition, providing for “variety in size, position, materials, design to enhance varied appearance of village”, and with layouts which “integrate with existing community (i.e. not inward looking)” and reduce impact on neighbours.
- There were eight comments on **transport** matters, including reference to on-street parking along Church Road, footpaths, parking on pavements, more public transport to Worcester, and for development to make the necessary highway improvements and to take account of its impacts on the local road network.
- Other aspects of **infrastructure** raised (five comments) included sewerage, GP services, and power supply for vehicle charging.
- Five comments on **heritage and wildlife** sought protection of the Conservation Area and heritage assets, retention of trees/hedgerows on development sites, and more tree planting.
- **Eco-friendly**, carbon neutral dwellings (five comments) should be provided by including the highest standards of energy efficiency, renewable energy lighting and heating, and electric car charging: “Crowle could become an exemplar village for eco-friendly homes”. Another comment advised that energy security meant solar farm/wind turbines in nearby proximity.
- Three **other comments** addressed the siting of the School, giving preference to infill over larger schemes, and protecting the land between Crowle and Crowle Green as green space.





**Question 6: What size of new homes is the most important to you?** Please tell us about your housing needs, over the lifetime of the Plan up to 2041 (tick one)

House type	No.	%
Studio homes (1 bedroom)	1	0.5%
Starter/retirement homes (2 bedrooms)	87	47%
Small family homes (3 bedrooms)	33	18%
Large family homes (4 or more bedrooms)	28	15%



- Starter/retirement homes with 2 bedrooms were seen as the most important, being favoured by 47% and well ahead of the next most popular option, small family homes of 3 bedrooms (18%).
- There was less support for larger dwellings of 4 bedrooms or more, and less still for studio homes (1 bedroom).

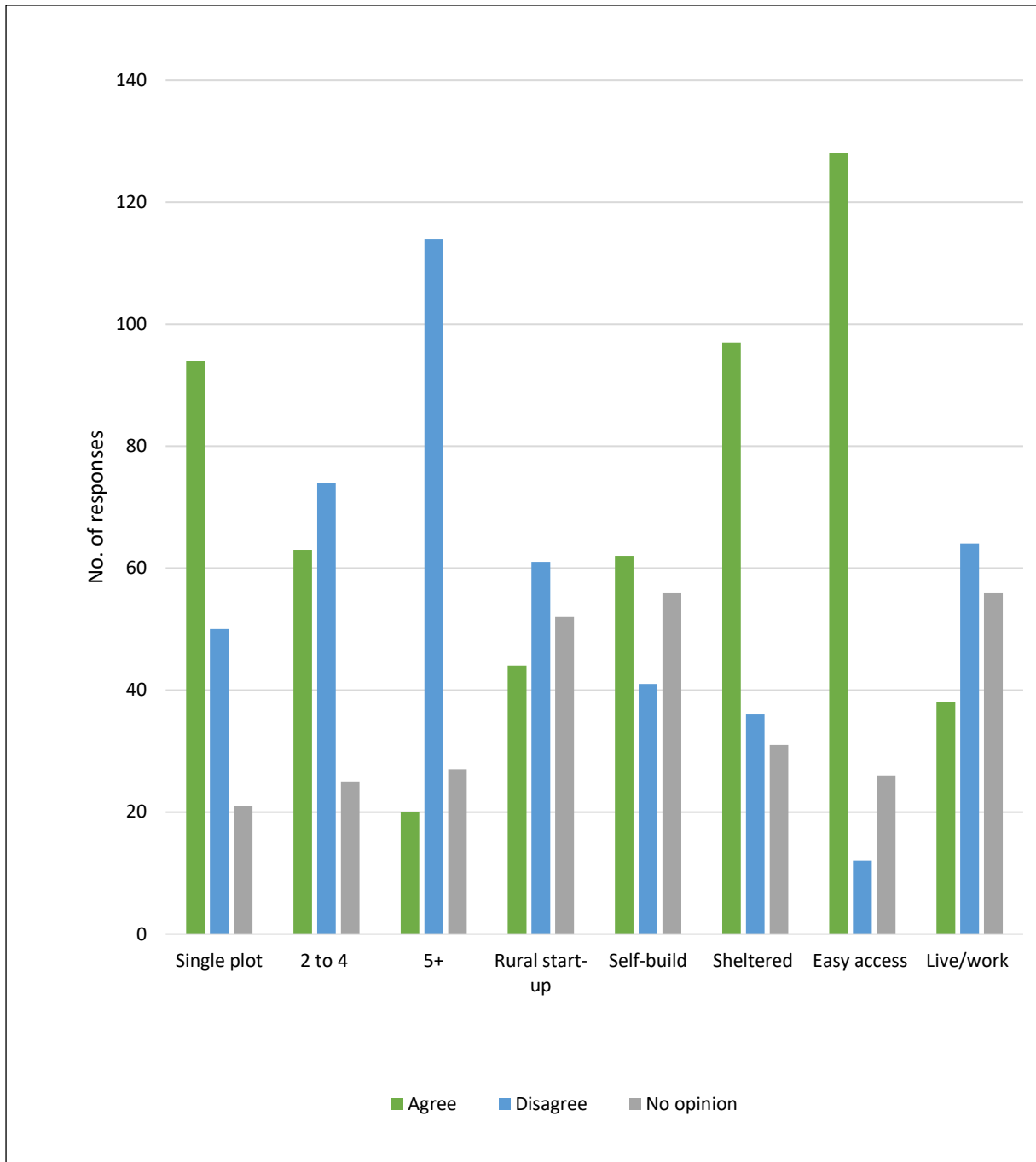
**Question 7: What type of new housing should the Parish have during the lifetime of the plan – up to 2041? (tick one box per row)**

Type of new housing	Agree		Disagree		No opinion	
Individual houses on “infill” plots between existing dwellings	94	51%	50	27%	21	11%
Sites for 2-4 houses within or adjacent to existing homes	63	34%	74	40%	25	13%
Sites for 5 or more new houses – to include some ‘affordable housing’*	20	11%	114	61%	27	15%
Housing associated with start-up small rural business initiatives	44	24%	61	33%	52	28%
Self-build	62	33%	41	22%	56	30%
Supported/ sheltered housing for older people	97	52%	36	19%	31	17%
Adapted/ easy access homes (e.g. bungalows)	128	69%	12	6%	26	14%
Live/ work homes with workshops/ offices	38	20%	64	34%	56	30%

\* ‘Affordable housing’ is an industry-accepted term defined as ‘housing provided for eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market’.

- Levels of support for new build housing declined with an increasing size of development. Over half of respondents agreed with the provision of individual new homes on infill sites (although over a quarter disagreed). Sites of between two to four new dwellings were opposed by 40%, more than were in agreement. The development of sites for five or more dwellings was opposed by almost two-thirds, with only 11% in support. This is the lowest level of agreement for all the canvassed options in this question.
- There was majority support for adapted/easy access homes such as bungalows (69%, with only 6% disagreeing) and supported/sheltered housing for older people (52%).
- Opinion was more divided for the remaining options of live/work, self-build and housing linked to rural start-ups. Levels of ‘no opinion’ were close to one-third for all these options. Both the live/work and rural start-up options were opposed by more than agreed.
- Overall, these replies suggest support for new housing only in limited circumstances, i.e. when provided as individual infill, to enable easy access, and to meet the needs of older people – these latter two being complementary.
- The question included an option for respondents to add comments on the type of new housing. In reply, respondents mentioned starter and retirement homes, and dwellings with the option of ‘granny flat’ type accommodation. Other comments suggested no new housing was needed; that affordable housing should only be provided where needed and for those with local family or job connections; the scale of any sheltered housing scheme; and that much was dependent on the location and type of property.

Question 7, continued/

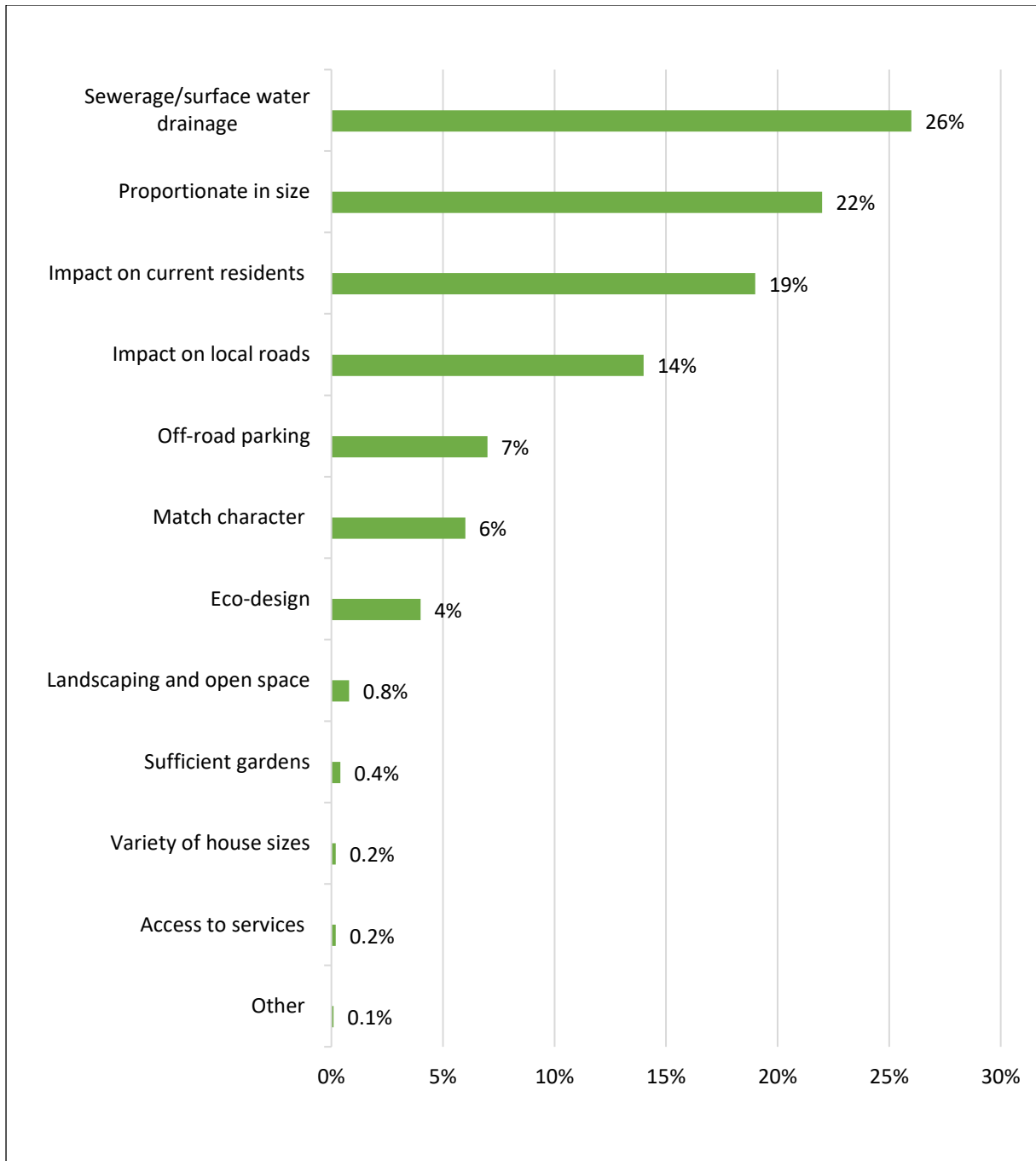


**Question 8: What are your top 5 planning priorities for new dwellings?** (rank up to 5 boxes only, where 1 is most important to you)

Rank		Score	%
1	Acceptable sewerage and surface water drainage	62909	26%
2	Schemes which are proportionate in size to the existing villages	53352	22%
3	Acceptable impact on amenity of current residents (e.g. overlooking, or vehicles passing close to houses)	44722	19%
4	Acceptable impact on local roads	33550	14%
5	Sufficient off-road parking	16405	7%
6	Designed to match the character of neighbouring development	13930	6%
7	Sustainable, eco-designs including electric vehicle charging points and provision for solar panels	9918	4%
8	Landscaping and shared open spaces	1890	0.8%
9	Sufficient garden space	968	0.4%
10	A variety of house sizes	595	0.2%
11	Within walking or cycling distance of play areas, local facilities and public transport	476	0.2%
12	Other (please specify)	105	0.1%

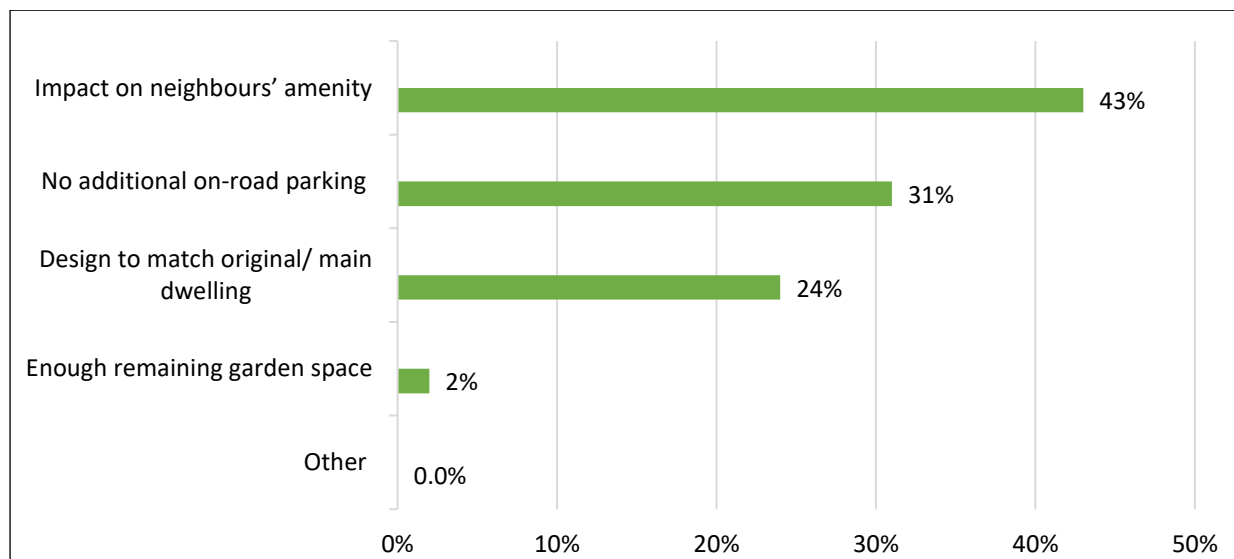
- The most important planning priority for new dwellings was the provision of acceptable sewerage and surface water drainage.
- In second place was for schemes to be proportionate in size to the existing villages, followed by an acceptable impact on the amenity of residents and then on local roads.
- The provision of sufficient off-road parking and aspects of design including building environmental performance were of lower importance.
- New dwellings being within walking or cycling distance of local amenities and public transport was of least importance.
- Comments to the 'other' option elaborated on the selections made. Planning matters referred to were sewerage, off-road parking, development to be within the development boundary, quota already filled, massing, and design. Here, high quality designs and materials were required, not a rural pastiche, and new dwellings should match the character of village, *"not neighbouring development - we have too many uninspiring buildings that shouldn't be the template for future development"*.

**Question 8, continued/**



**Question 9: What are your top 3 planning priorities for ‘householder development’ such as extensions and garages? (rank up to 3 boxes only, where 1 is most important to you)**

Rank		Score	%
1	Acceptable impact on neighbours’ amenity	55286	43%
2	No additional on-road parking due to loss of on-site parking	39762	31%
3	Design to match the original/ main dwelling	31616	24%
4	Enough remaining garden space	2961	2%
5	Other (please specify)	27	0.0%



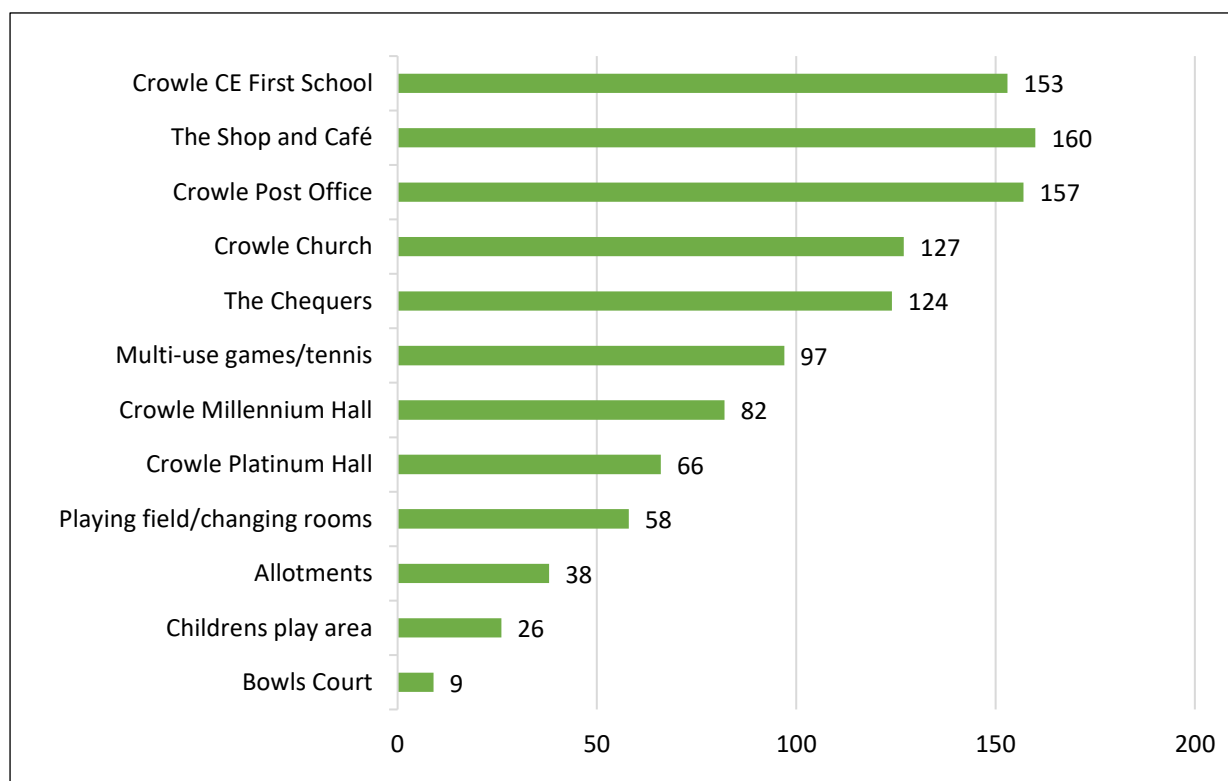
- The most important planning priority for householder development was for there to be an acceptable impact on neighbours’ amenity.
- This was followed by no additional on-road parking, and then for designs to match the original or main dwelling.
- Little importance was attached to the extent of remaining garden space.
- Comments to the ‘other’ option suggested other considerations including power supply to avoid a future need for oil or LPG, impact upon rights of way, design to be appropriate in scale, soft landscaping, and attention to materials and to varying design elements such as windows and porches.

## Community Facilities

The questionnaire asked about residents' views on both existing community facilities and ideas for improvements.

**Question 10: Which of the following facilities in the Parish are important to you (tick all that apply)**

	No.	%		No.	%
Crowle CE First School	153	82%	Crowle Millennium Hall	82	44%
The Shop and Café	160	86%	Crowle Platinum Hall	66	35%
Crowle Post Office	157	84%	Playing field/ changing rooms	58	31%
Crowle Church	127	68%	Allotments	38	20%
The Chequers	124	67%	Childrens play area	26	14%
Multi-use games area/tennis courts	97	52%	Bowls Court	9	5%



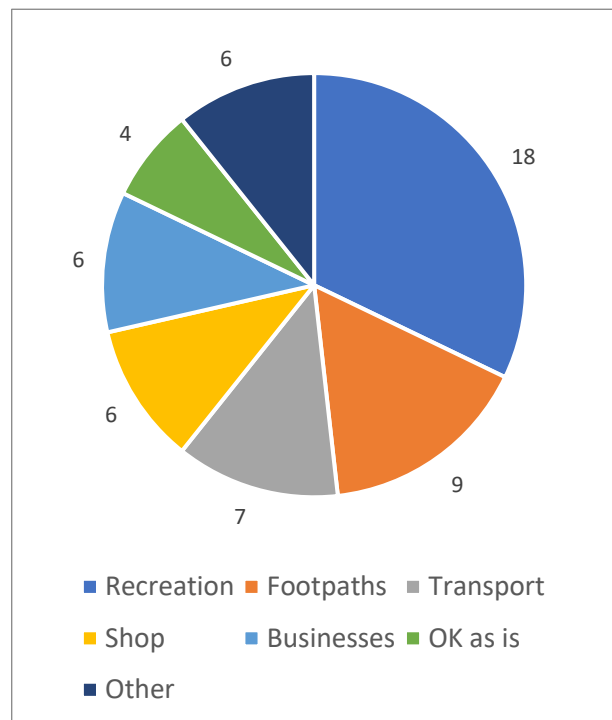
### **Question 10, continued/**

- Most respondents saw the The Shop and Café (86%) and the Post Office (84%), both facilities meeting day-to-day shopping and other needs, as important to them.
- These were closely followed by the School (82%).
- Crowle Church and The Chequers were important to around two-thirds of respondents.
- Meeting room facilities at the Village Hall were valued by around two-fifths, with the multi-use games area/tennis courts seen as most important of the available recreational facilities at 52%.



### Question 11: How could our existing community facilities be improved?

- This question was answered by 55 respondents (30%).
- There were 18 comments on **recreational facilities**, including calls to make provision for older children/teenagers, improve the play area, and provide fitness equipment, trim track, more football pitches, and better facilities for the football club. One comment called for *“a more diverse choice of activities/clubs taking into account age, gender, capability and/or disability”*.
- **Footpaths** were referred to in nine comments, with suggestions for more routes, better signage, improved surfaces/maintenance, and to take account of mobility issues e.g.

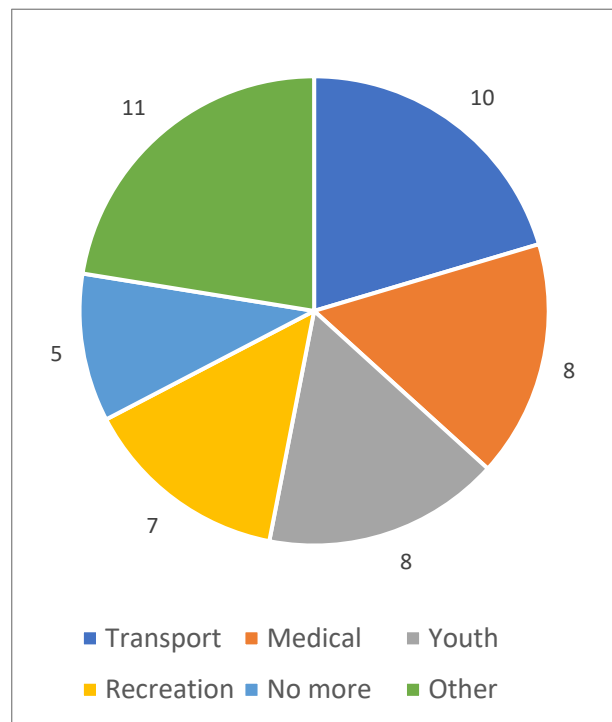


wheelchair/pushchair access around the playing field. There was a call to replace the chip path around the playing field with *“something less wearing on the soles of shoes”*, and a reminder that *“many residents ... regard being able to walk safely on hard surfaces ... as their main ‘leisure’ facility [providing] often crucial opportunistic social contact for those struggling with isolation and loneliness”*, this opportunity being adversely impacted by increased development and associated traffic.

- On **transport**, seven comments addressed car parking and traffic calming at/by the Parish Halls, car parking at the school, bus services, and a suggested volunteer-driven community minibus to Worcester, Parkway and other towns.
- Six comments on the **shop** sought longer opening hours, deliveries, and reduced prices.
- **Other businesses** referred to in six comments were The Chequers, Crowle Garage, and a plant nursery: *“you make no mention of local businesses that provide a community facility such as the garage, and groups such as scouts?”*.
- There were four comments that existing community facilities were **fine as they were**, and that *“no more”* were needed as *“any additional facilities might encourage more housing development”*.
- There were six **other comments**, covering fibre broadband and mobile phone reception, separate drainage for rainfall and wastewater to guard against surcharging during storm events, an office/technology hub, new school, sound absorption measures in the Platinum Hall and a call to *“sort out Severn Trent”*.

## Question 12: What new community facilities would you like to see?

- This question was answered by 46 respondents (25%), with some comments echoing or reiterating the calls for improvements made in response to Q11.
- There were 10 comments on aspects of **transport**, with calls for enforced speed limits, “*considerate parking*” and “*safe parking for school*”, cycle routes to key locations, a community minibus, “*no loss of buses*”, and footpath improvements.
- **Medical** provisions were suggested in eight comments, with reference to making GP, dental, and optician services available on an outreach or monthly basis at the village hall, and for a community health hub and day care for the elderly.
- There were also eight comments suggesting new provision for **older children and teenagers**, including a youth club, “*a modern play area with exciting elements to it*”, skate park, and pump track.
- Additional **recreational facilities** were suggested in seven comments, such as a football pitch, outdoor fitness area/trim trail, 5-a-side football court, better tennis court and club facility, cricket net and a swimming pool.
- Five comments advised that **no more** facilities were required as “*we already have a wide range of community facilities*” and “*Crowle would lose its character if it had every possible facility for every possible taste*”.
- There were 11 **other comments**, covering pop-up services for the less mobile e.g. a weekly mobile bank, retention of the library van, pub with play area, wildlife area/community orchard/nature trail, provision in Sale Green, village composting plan, dog walking facilities, live sports at village hall, and sound absorption measures in the Platinum Hall.



## Economic Development

The questionnaire asked for thoughts about what different types of economic development were appropriate for the Parish, and about relevant planning considerations.

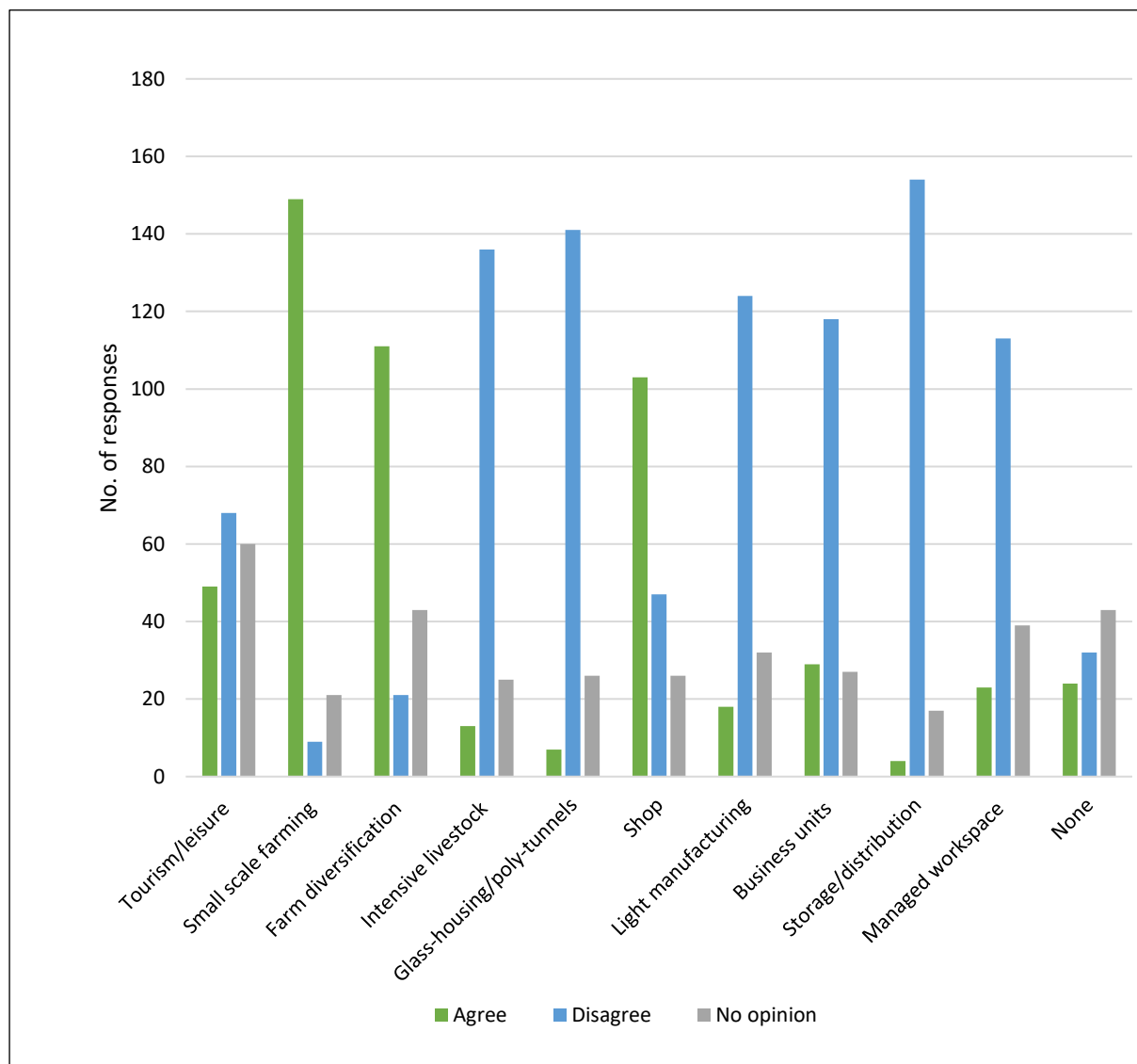
**Question 13: What types of new small-scale economic development should be encouraged in the Parish?** (tick 1 box per row)

Type of new small-scale economic development	Agree		Disagree		No opinion	
Tourism/leisure-related businesses	49	26%	68	37%	60	32%
Small scale farming or horticulture	149	80%	9	5%	21	11%
Agriculture and farming diversification	111	60%	21	11%	43	23%
Intensive livestock units	13	7%	136	73%	25	13%
Large areas of glass-housing or plastic poly-tunnels	7	4%	141	76%	26	14%
Small scale retailing (e.g. café, shop, craft outlets)	103	55%	47	25%	26	14%
Light manufacturing	18	10%	124	67%	32	17%
Business units (e.g. for creative industries, offices)	29	16%	118	63%	27	14%
Storage and distribution	4	2%	154	83%	17	9%
Flexible, managed workspace (e.g. business centre)	23	12%	113	61%	39	21%
None	24	13%	32	17%	43	23%

- The types of economic development which were favoured by over half of respondents were those suitable to the rural surroundings and village context: small-scale farming/horticulture (80% in favour with only 5% opposed), farm diversification, and small-scale retail such as a shop or café.
- The remaining types of economic development were overwhelmingly not favoured, with levels of opposition significantly exceeding those of support.
- The most closely balanced option was tourism and leisure with 37% opposed, 26% in agreement and 32% having no opinion (this was the highest recorded such figure in the replies to this question).

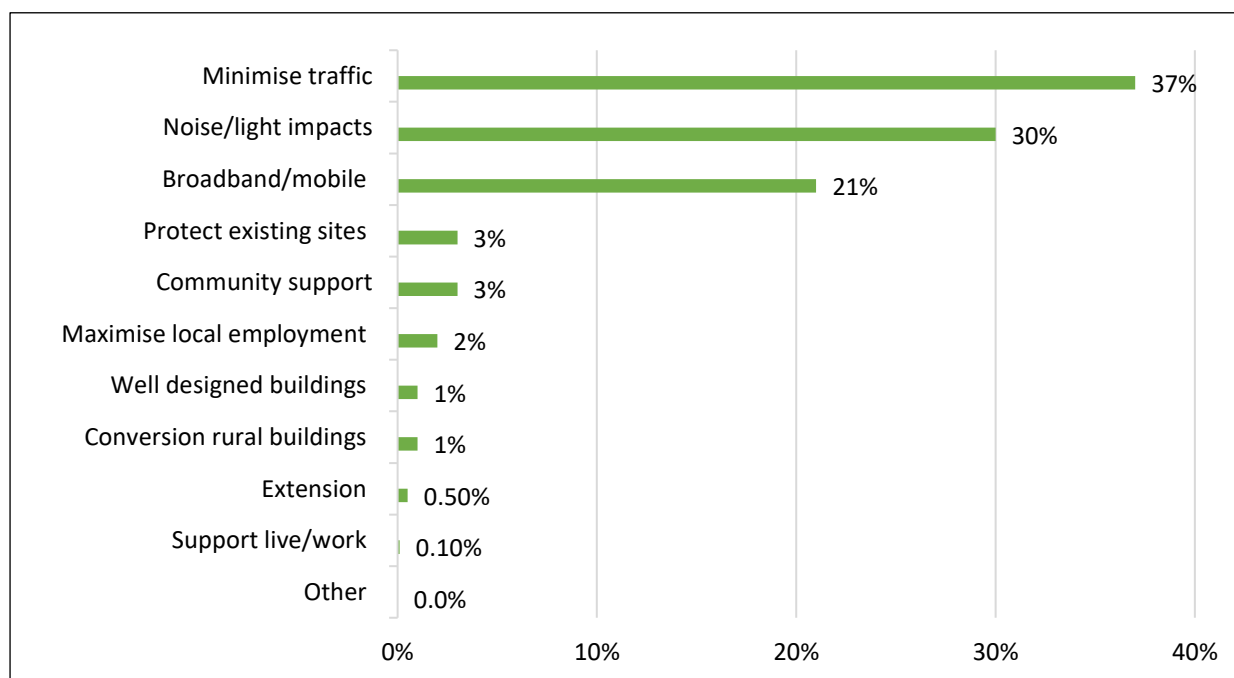
**Question 13, continued/**

- For the other options, levels of opposition ranged from 61% (to a business centre) to 83% (storage and distribution), whilst levels of support varied from 2% (again, storage and distribution) to 16% for business units.
- Despite these consistently high levels of opposition to most forms of new economic development, the option of no such development at all recorded more equivocal results with low and relatively similar levels of agreement and disagreement, both of which were exceeded by those with no opinion.
- Comments to the 'other' option cautioned that new economic development would bring more traffic to unsuitable roads, adversely impacting peace/tranquillity and road safety for vulnerable road users, and require improved mobile coverage. There was a suggestion for a hairdresser and for a GP outreach clinic, possibly in the Platinum Hall, and that any development should be appropriate to the rural area, i.e. sustainable and support wildlife.



**Question 14: What are your top 5 planning priorities for economic/business development in the Parish?** (rank up to 5 boxes only, where 1 is most important to you)

Rank		Score	%
1	Minimising increases in traffic	93900	37%
2	Avoiding unacceptable noise/light impacts	76942	30%
3	Enabling working from home by improving broadband speed and mobile reception	53875	21%
4	Protecting existing employment sites from changes of use	8319	3%
5	Enjoying community support	8100	3%
6	Maximising local employment opportunities	5586	2%
7	Allowing well designed new buildings for small-scale employment uses	3332	1%
8	Supporting the conversion of rural buildings for business	3293	1%
9	Supporting the extension of existing businesses	1431	0.5%
10	Supporting the development of live/work premises	375	0.1%
11	Other	68	0.0%



#### **Question 14, continued/**

- The most important planning priority for economic/business development was for any associated increases in traffic to be minimised. This echoed comments to the preceding question.
- Second priority was to avoid unacceptable impacts from increased noise or light levels.
- There was support as a third priority for working from home by improving broadband speed and mobile reception.
- Relatively little importance was attached to the remaining options.
- Comments to the 'other' option mainly opposed any new economic development, referring again to limited road capacity. Any such development should be appropriate and in scale, infill in nature, and capable of being serviced.

## Built Environment

The questionnaire explained that the Neighbourhood Plan could include a local design policy, adding detail to existing County-level guidance to help ensure that new housing and other development was well-designed and in keeping with the character of the villages and countryside. Feedback was sought on what was required to ensure good design and attractive visual appearance.

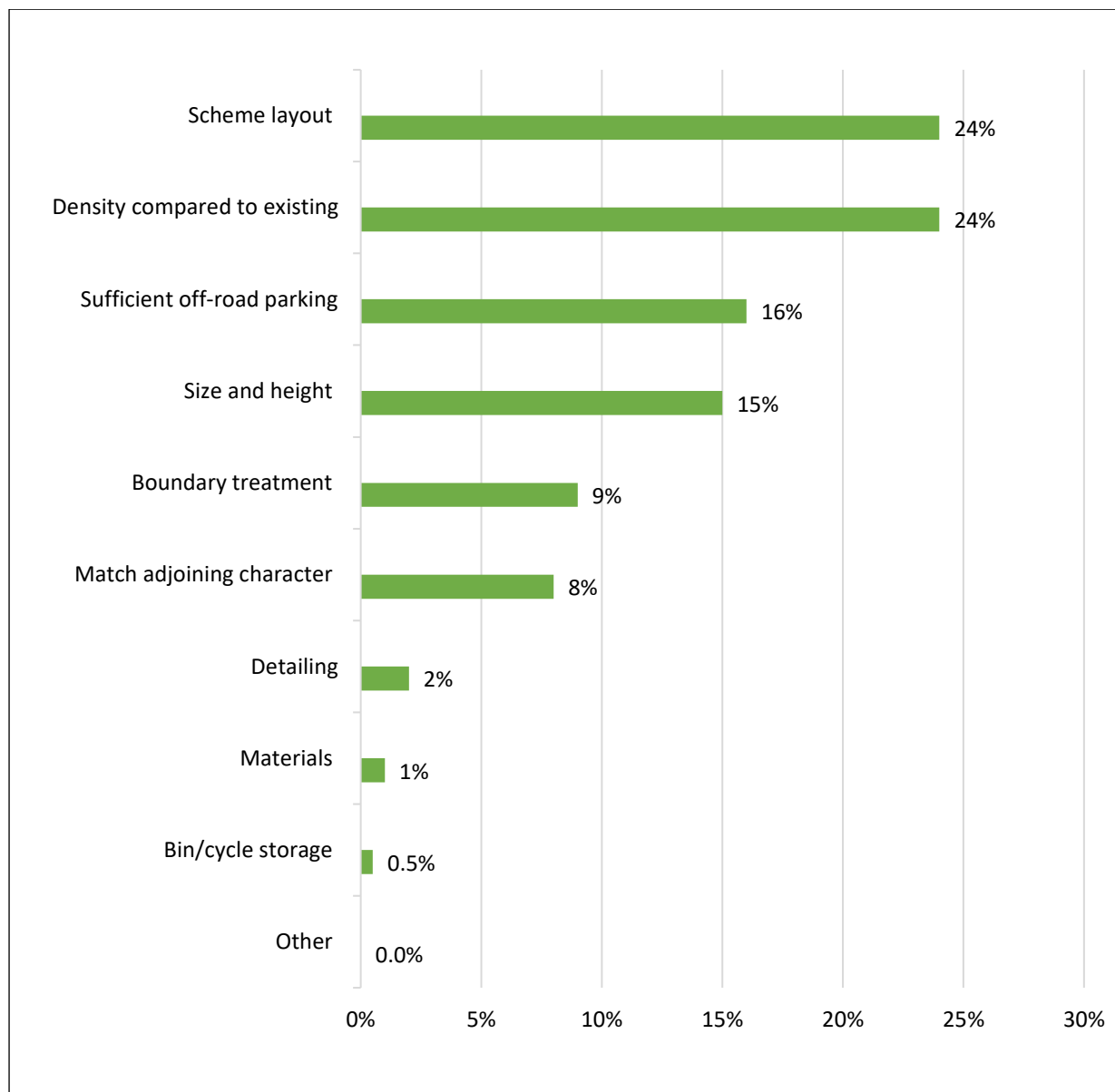
**Question 15: What 5 things are most important to you in ensuring that development is well-designed?** (rank up to 5 boxes only, where 1 is most important to you)

Rank		Score	%
1	The layout of the scheme and how it relates to its surroundings and the street scene	64357	24%
2	The density of new development compared to existing	63624	24%
3	Sufficient off-road parking	43802	16%
4	The overall size and height of new buildings	40454	15%
5	Boundary treatment (e.g. walls and fences, including not being overlooked)	23205	9%
6	Whether new buildings match the overall character of adjoining development	22477	8%
7	Architectural detailing	5940	2%
8	Materials used	3162	1%
9	Suitable provision for storage of wheelie bins and cycles	1404	0.5%
10	Other (please specify)	189	0.0%

- The most important option for respondents in ensuring good design was the layout of the scheme and how it relates to its surroundings and the street scene.
- This was closely followed by considerations of the density of new development, compared to existing densities locally.
- Sufficient off-road parking and the overall size and height of new buildings were of comparable importance in third and fourth places respectively.
- These were followed by boundary treatments and whether new buildings matched the character of adjoining development.
- Relatively little importance was attached to the remaining options.

**Question 15, continued/**

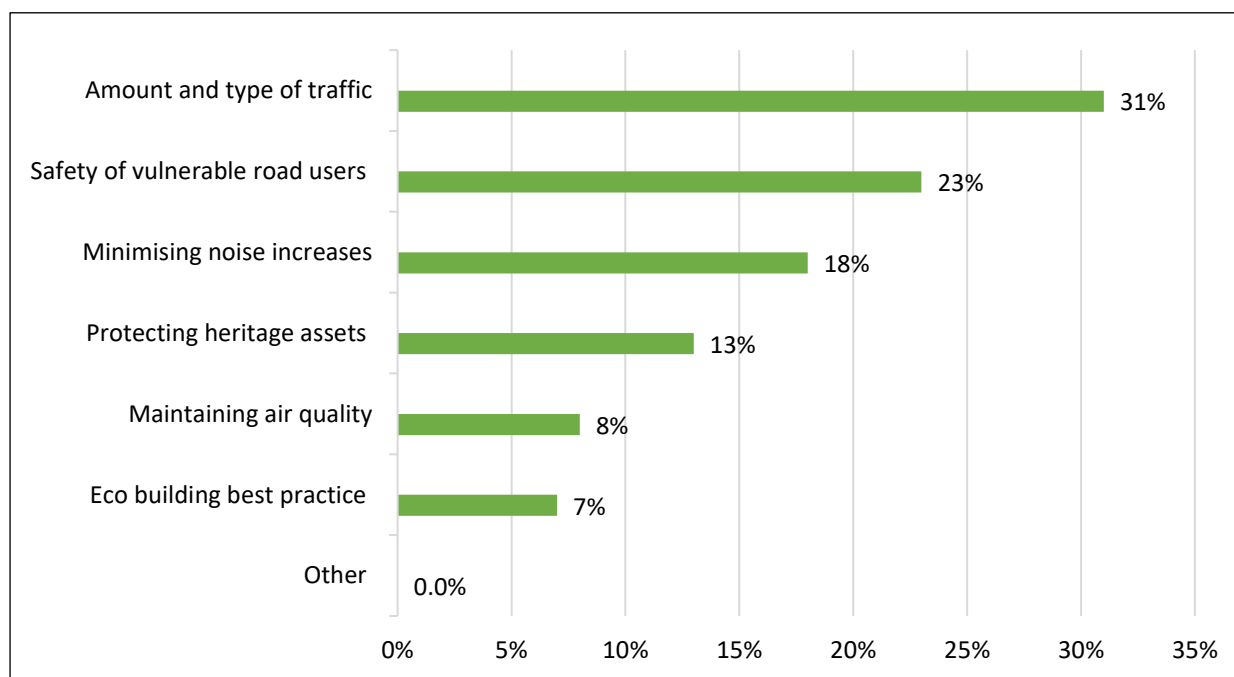
- In comments to the ‘other’ option, respondents referred to avoiding developing on backland or on orchards. All new builds should include solar panels so that they would be “*future proofed and cheaper to run*”. There were also calls for mature hedgerows and trees to be retained and for new developments to include tarmac footpaths to enable pushchairs/wheelchairs to move safely.





**Question 16: In minimising the adverse impact of new development on the Parish built environment, which 5 things are most important to you? (rank up to 5 boxes only, where 1 is most important to you)**

Rank		Score	%
1	Impact on amount and type of traffic	104652	31%
2	Impact on safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders	78526	23%
3	Minimising increases in noise	62181	18%
4	Protecting historic buildings and other features	45387	13%
5	Maintaining air quality	28272	8%
6	Eco building best practice (eg Net Zero Ready Homes)	23114	7%
7	Other (please specify)	203	0.0%



- In minimising the adverse impact of new development on the Parish built environment, respondents gave greatest importance to the impact on the amount and type of traffic, echoing concerns expressed in replies to earlier questions such as Q14.
- In second place was impacts on the safety of vulnerable road users – pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders.

### Question 16, continued/

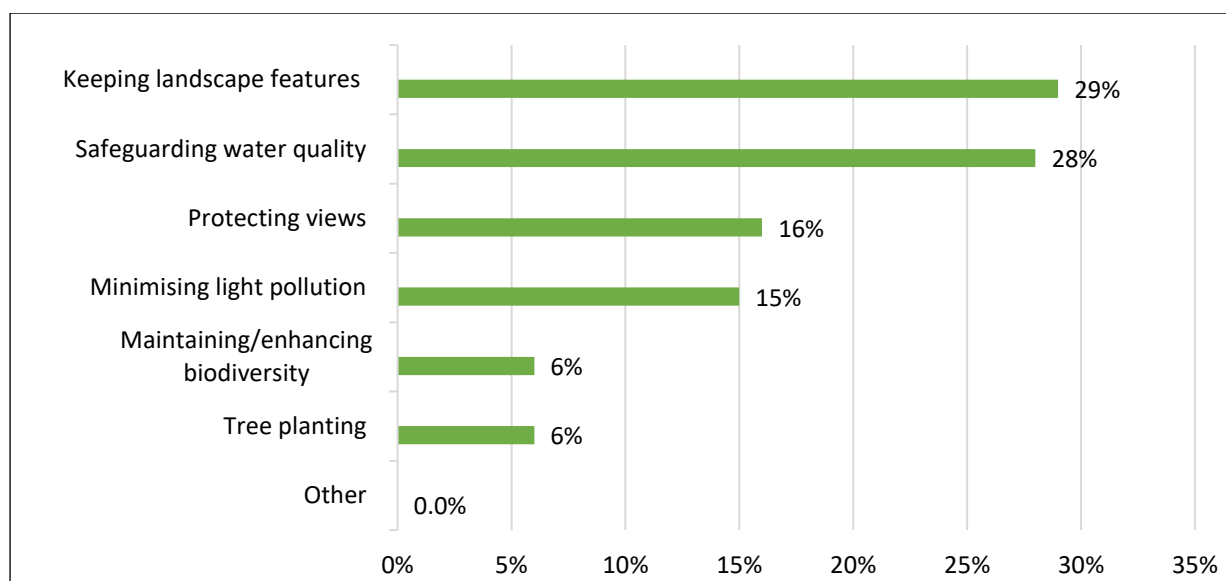
- This was followed by minimising any increases in noise and then by protecting historic buildings and other features.
- Maintaining air quality and achieving eco-building best practice were given relatively low importance.
- In comments to the 'other' option, respondents variously wanted any new development to take into account existing services and amenities, speed limits to be enforced, and larger development to be built where it cannot be seen from Church Road to maintain the village look. In short, "*building the right thing in the right place and only if it is wanted/needed by our community*". Candidates for improvement in terms of services were mentioned as sewerage, capacity at the School, bus service, and footpaths. Other comments expressed opposition to a solar farm, street lighting, and on-street parking. On heritage, there was a suggestion for archaeological investigations around the dispersed settlements in the Parish (Crowle, Mordaunts/Lower Crowle, Froxmere Court, Crowle Green and Sale Green).

## Natural Environment

The questionnaire explained that protecting the Parish environment would be at the forefront of the Neighbourhood Plan. Respondents were asked about the natural features that were important to them, including significant landscape views; how development could help maintain and enhance the natural environment; potential areas of land for consideration for designation as Local Green Space, and open gaps between settlements.

**Question 17: In minimising the adverse impact of new development on the Parish natural environment, which 5 things are most important to you? (rank up to 5 boxes only, where 1 is most important to you)**

Rank		Score	%
1	Keeping existing landscape features	105336	29%
2	Safeguarding water quality in local watercourses	99954	28%
3	Protecting views within and from the villages	56392	16%
4	Minimising light pollution to keep dark skies	55238	15%
5	Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity	22826	6%
6	Tree planting to offset carbon emissions	22770	6%
7	Other (please specify)	108	0.0%

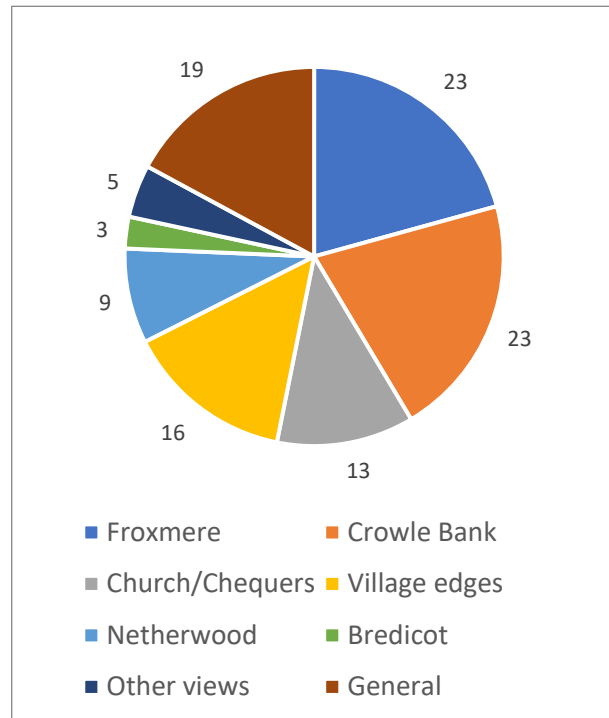


### **Question 17, continued/**

- In minimising the adverse impact of new development on the Parish natural environment, respondents gave greatest importance to keeping existing landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, ponds, and streams.
- This was closely followed in second place by safeguarding water quality in local watercourses, reflecting the importance placed on new development having acceptable drainage in replies to other questions (see Q4 and Q8).
- Protecting views and minimising light pollution were ranked third and fourth respectively.
- Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and tree planting to offset carbon emissions were seen as of relatively low importance.
- In comments to the 'other' option, respondents also wanted to see better management of household waste to avoid air pollution from bonfires and compost, the rural nature of the Parish maintained, protection of historic sites and landscapes, and no street lighting. Other comments emphasised the importance of hedgerows and trees and pointed out that pollution in the Bow Brook had a detrimental effect on wildlife.

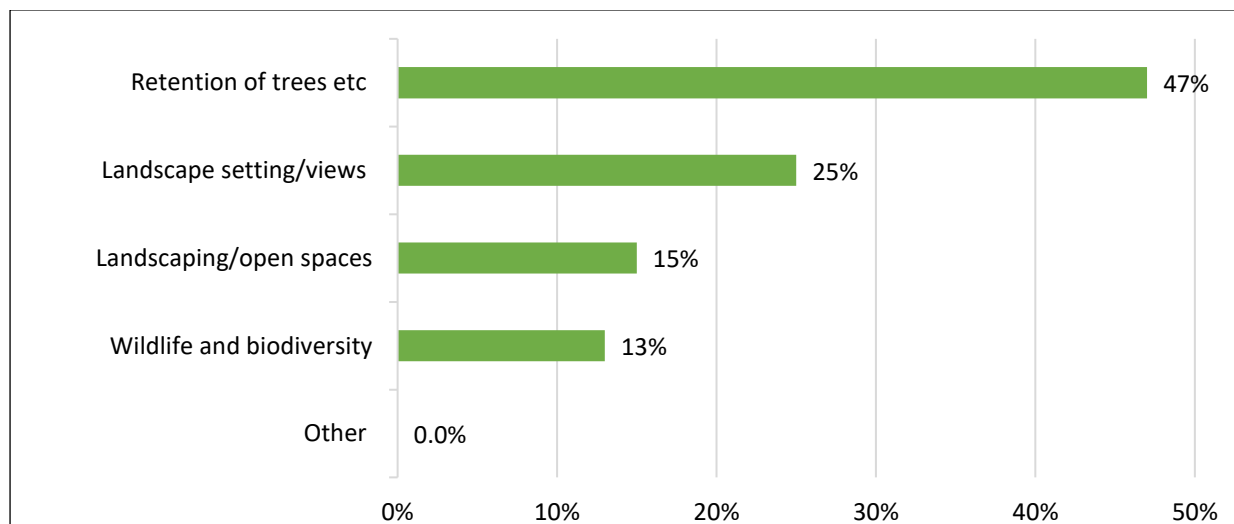
**Question 18: The Plan will be able to identify locally important views of the surrounding countryside for protection. If there are any such views that you think should be protected, please describe them below (including viewpoint and direction).**

- This question was answered by 72 respondents (39%). This is the greatest number of comments made to the free write questions.
- There were 23 references to the views from **Froxmere Road** towards Huddington, Bow Brook, Froxmere Court, Upton Snodsbury church, and Bredon Hill.
- **Crowle Bank** and Thrift Wood were also mentioned in 23 comments, affording “open and far reaching” views west towards Worcester and the Malvern and Abberley Hills.
- Westward views from land and footpaths between the **Church and The Chequers** towards Crowle Bank, Thrift Wood, and the Malverns were identified in 13 comments.
- Other views referred to from the **village edges** (16 comments) included from those from the eastern edge of Crowle (Peartree/Geneva Crescent developments/playing fields) of Bow Wood, Upton Snodsbury church, Bredon Hill, and the Cotswold ridge; from south of Crowle towards Broughton Hackett/the Malverns; and from Sale Green towards Diamond Hill Farm and Bredon Hill. Such views were important “for residents who chose their homes often many years ago because of the visual amenity offered”.
- Views from the **Netherwood Lane** ridgeline and from **Bredicot Lane** were referenced in nine and three comments respectively: “looking west across open fields of Bredicot offers great sunset views”.
- Other views (five comments) included towards Himbleton and Hanbury, and from Climers Hill.
- A range of **general comments** (19) included references to views lost or at risk from development, and that all views were important “and should not be destroyed”, priority should be given to renewable energy (solar/wind) over views, no need for more development, protection of the Crowle/Crowle Green ‘gap’ and of open countryside generally, and pond and watercourse protection.



**Question 19: What 3 things are most important to you in ensuring that development maintains or enhances the natural environment?** (rank up to 3 boxes only, where 1 is most important to you)

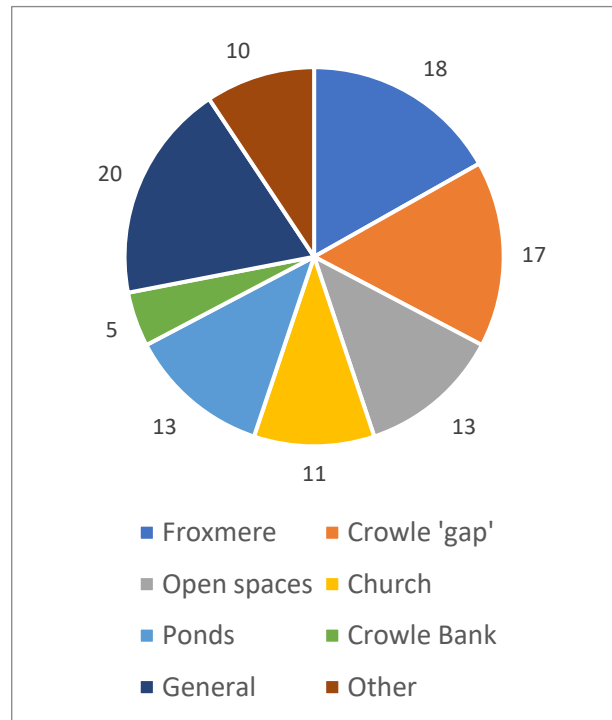
Rank		Score	%
1	Retention of existing trees and other landscape features	61374	47%
2	Regard to the landscape setting of the villages including views of the surrounding countryside	32766	25%
3	Provision of trees, other landscaping, and green open spaces	19392	15%
4	Regard to wildlife and biodiversity	17655	13%
5	Other (please specify)	36	0.0%



- In ensuring that development maintains or enhances the natural environment, respondents gave greatest importance to the retention of existing trees and other natural features such as hedgerows, orchards and ponds – in line with the ranking of this aspect in Q17.
- Having regard to the landscape setting of the villages including countryside views took second place, again aligning with the priorities expressed in Q17.
- This was followed by new tree planting, landscaping and open space provision, and then by regard to wildlife and biodiversity.
- In comments to the ‘other’ option, respondents pointed to hedgerows and ponds, to Crowle Green Pool and its setting, and to the need for long term protection and maintenance of trees, landscaping and open spaces provided through development. Wildlife, pollution, traffic, and noise were also identified as of importance in the context of the question.

**Question 20: Are there any areas of land in the Parish that you think we should seek to protect by designation as Local Green Space? If so, please describe them below (including location) and explain why you think they are significant.**

- This question was answered by 69 respondents (37%).
- There were 18 comments referring to land at **Froxmere Road**, extending to the Bow Brook and to the village hall. Listed attributes included the ‘ridge and furrow’ land off Froxmere Road; Bow Brook, for its wildlife and historic landscape; and public rights of way giving access to village facilities and of recreational value. The land *“is a significant area for leisure activities such as dog walking, horse riding, walking in general”*, providing *“fresh air, views and closeness to nature”*.
- The open countryside ‘gap’ between **Crowle and Crowle Green** was identified in 17 comments as being important in maintaining *“the separateness of the communities”*, and *“in retaining Crowle Green’s distinctive character and identity”*.
- **Village open spaces** such as the playing fields, allotments, Parish Garden, and at School Lane/Froxmere Road were listed in 13 comments, with reference variously to their recreational and community use.
- Land around **the Church** and Crowle Court was referenced in 11 comments, for its historic significance, tranquillity, and wildlife interest.
- **Ponds** in the village at Green Pool, Netherwood Lane (*“value to community as area of tranquillity”*) and at Pear Tree were listed in 13 comments.
- **Crowle Bank** and Thrift Wood (five comments) *“for its tranquillity and beautiful views over Worcestershire at sunset”*.
- **General** features (20 comments) included land between Old Turnpike Road and Sale Green, farmland, orchards, and public rights of way.
- In 10 **other** comments, reference was made to areas of open land around the villages, including at Mordaunts/Lower Crowle, Sale Green, between Crowle and Broughton Hackett, Hunts Farm, and Bredicot Lane.



**Question 21: Do you think that the open countryside ‘gap’ along Church Road separating Crowle and Crowle Green should be protected from development? (tick one box)**

	No.	%
Agree	140	75%
Disagree	21	11%
No opinion	24	13%

- A significant majority of respondents agreed that the open countryside ‘gap’ between Crowle and Crowle Green should be protected from development. Although a notable minority (11%) disagreed with this approach, the findings provide a clear steer to inform a Neighbourhood Plan policy.



## Renewable Energy

This section of the questionnaire explained that recent developments in renewable energy technology and associated Government legislation made it increasingly likely that the local generation of electricity would become widely adopted in the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan. In this context, feedback was sought on levels of support for domestic, commercial and community-based options for generating renewable energy from three sources – solar, wind, and ground.

### Question 22: Which of the following ways of producing renewable energy would you support?

(tick one box per row)

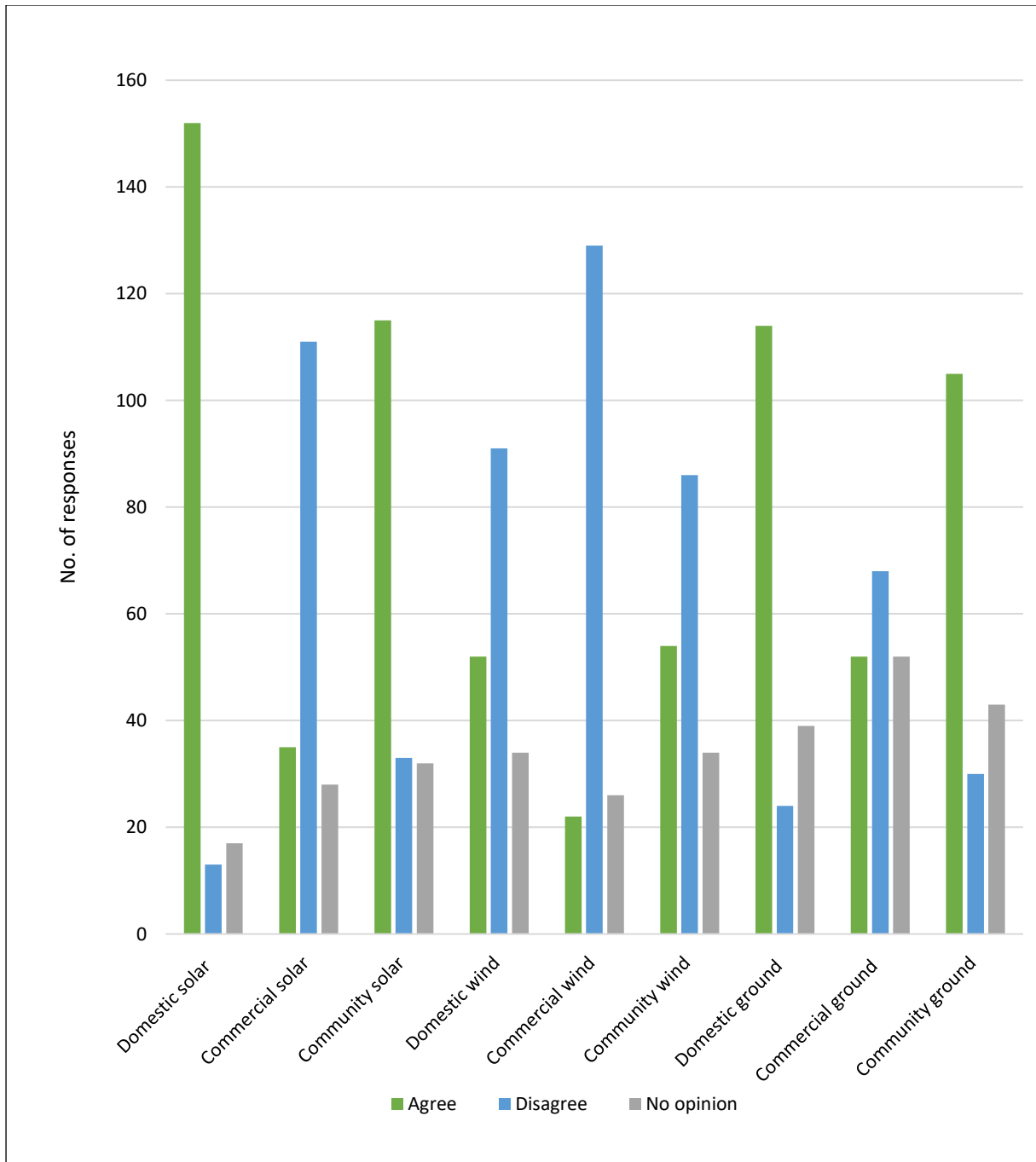
	Agree		Disagree		No opinion	
Domestic solar power	152	82%	13	7%	17	9%
Commercial solar power (solar farm)	35	19%	111	60%	28	15%
Community solar power (providing direct benefits to householders e.g. reduced tariffs)	115	62%	33	18%	32	17%
Domestic wind turbine	52	28%	91	49%	34	18%
Commercial wind turbine	22	12%	129	69%	26	14%
Community wind turbine (providing direct benefits to householders e.g. reduced tariffs)	54	29%	86	46%	34	18%
Domestic ground source heating	114	61%	24	13%	39	21%
Commercial ground source heating	52	28%	68	37%	52	28%
Community ground source heating (providing direct benefits to householders e.g. reduced tariffs)	105	56%	30	16%	43	23%

- There was strong support for the domestic generation of solar power (82%, with only 7% opposed), and to a lesser extent for a community-led scheme (62% agreed, 18% disagreed). However, this position was reversed for commercial solar power – with 60% opposed and 19% in agreement.
- Respondents were on balance opposed to all options for the generation of wind power. This was clear-cut for commercial schemes, where 69% were opposed. Whilst there were more (and similar) levels of support for the domestic and community-led options, in both cases they were outweighed by the numbers disagreeing.
- For ground source heating, there was majority support for domestic (61%) and community-led (56%) schemes, but not for its commercial generation (37% opposed, with equal numbers supporting and having no opinion).

### Question 22, continued/

- Overall, domestic and community-led generation of solar power and ground source heating were favoured (i.e. where the level of support exceeded that of opposition). Commercial schemes producing renewable energy from any source were not supported, and all options for wind generation were opposed.
- In comments to the 'other' option, respondents suggested air source heating, hydropower, anaerobic digestion, and geothermal as sources of renewable energy. There were mixed views on the scope for solar power, from "100% solar farms" to "absolutely no solar power in Crowle". There was support for community-led options: "*community schemes that are serving the local community in which they are situated should be encouraged (they still have to be in the right place and of the right scale and nature)*". There was also an awareness of some of the impacts associated with some sources, such as traffic generation in the case of biomass and digester.

Question 22, continued/



## Information about you

### Question 23: Would you describe yourself as:

	Questionnaire responses <sup>1</sup>		2021 Census <sup>2</sup>	
Male	88	50%	450	49%
Female	89	50%	468	51%
Non-binary	0	-	-	-
Other	0	-	-	-
Prefer not to say	6	-	-	-

1. Percentage base = 177 (respondents to Q23 excluding those who preferred not to say)

2. Percentage base = 918 (usual residents in Crowle Neighbourhood Area aged 16 and over, Census 2021. Census gender identity data is not available at this geography; the figures given here are by sex (RM121)).

- Survey responses for males and females closely matched the proportions given in the 2021 Census for the Neighbourhood Area.

### Question 24: How old are you?

	Questionnaire responses <sup>1</sup>		2021 Census <sup>2</sup>	
16-17	1	0.5%	23	3%
18-24	1	0.5%	60	7%
25-34	3	2%	66	7%
35-44	6	3%	114	12%
45-54	29	16%	186	20%
55-64	44	25%	176	19%
65-74	47	27%	167	18%
75-84	30	17%	89	10%
85 and +	16	9%	37	4%
Prefer not to say	9	-	-	-

1. Percentage base = 177 (respondents to Q24 excluding those who preferred not to say)

2. Percentage base = 918 (usual residents in Crowle Neighbourhood Area aged 16 and over, Census 2021 (RM121)).

- Age groups up to and including 45-54 were under-represented in terms of level of response, compared against the 2021 Census. This was particularly the case for the 35-44 age group.
- The older age groups were over-represented to varying degrees. Most notably, whilst 27% of questionnaire responses were provided by residents aged 65-74, this group accounted for just 18% of the 16 and over population in 2021.
- A total of 77% of responses where age information was provided were made by those aged 55 and over; this cohort accounted for 51% of the 16 and over population in 2021.

**Question 25: How would you best describe your main “economic activity”?** (tick 1 box)

	Questionnaire responses <sup>1</sup>		2021 Census <sup>2</sup>	
Employed full-time	39	22%	292	31%
Employed part-time	11	6%	104	11%
Self-employed	18	10%	146	16%
Unemployed	0	-	6	0.6%
Full-time student	1	0.6%	51	5%
Retired	98	56%	282	30%
Looking after home/family	7	4%	30	3%
Long-term sick/disabled	1	0.6%	13	1%
Other	1	0.6%	9	1%
Prefer not to say	7	-	-	-

1. Percentage base = 176 (respondents to Q25 excluding those who preferred not to say)

2. Percentage base = 931 (usual residents in Crowle Neighbourhood Area aged 16 and over, 2021 Census (TS066)).

NB The difference in this base with that used for Q23 and Q24 is because ONS swaps records between different geographic areas and perturbs counts by small amounts to protect against disclosure of personal information.

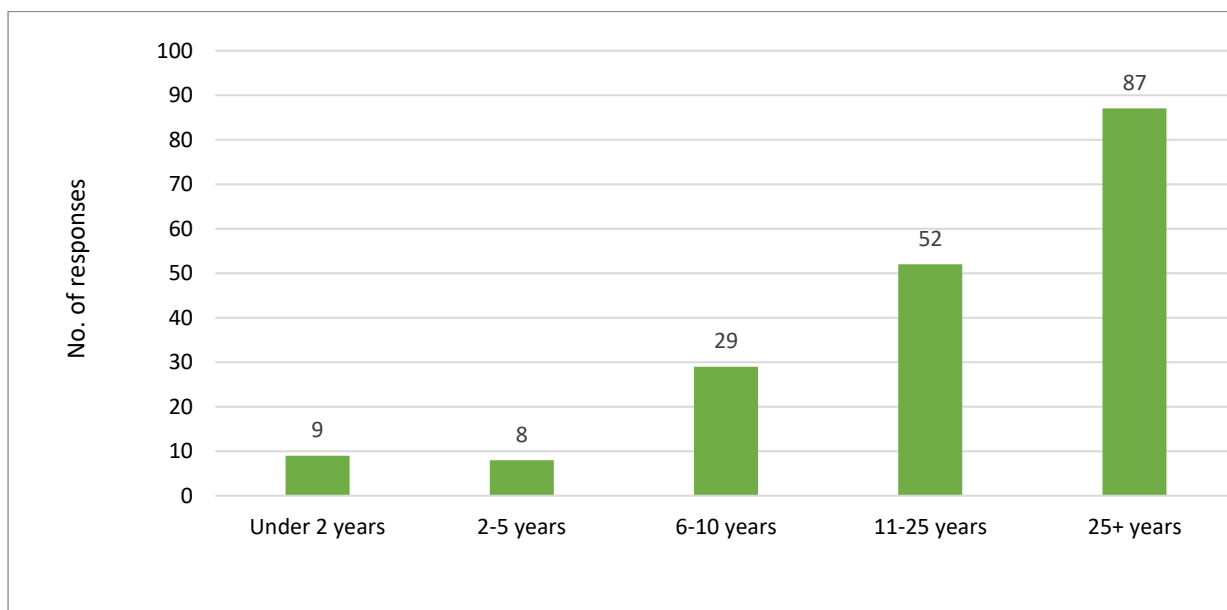
Small counts at the lowest geographies such as that reported here are most affected.

- Full-time and part-time employees and the self-employed were under-represented in survey responses compared to the 2021 Census position
- Amongst the other economic activity groups, the most striking feature is that the retired accounted for over half of survey responses (56%) but represented less than one-third (30%) of the surveyed population.

**Question 26: Where in the Parish do you live?**

	No.	%
Crowle village	152	82%
Crowle Green	21	11%
Sale Green	11	6%
Elsewhere	2	1%

**Question 27: How long have you lived in Crowle Parish?**



- Almost half of respondents (47%) had lived in the Parish for 25 years or more, this proportion rising to 75% for residents of 11 years or more.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

The survey provides significant evidence for a range of neighbourhood planning policies, and for actions the Parish Council may wish to take on matters raised which are outside the land use and development scope of the Plan.

### *Vision and Objectives*

The survey responses give clear support for the draft Vision and Objectives to be taken forward in the Neighbourhood Plan. Suggestions were made in comments as to how the drafts could be amended. It is recommended that when the Plan is prepared that the draft Vision and Objectives be reviewed against the overall findings of the survey, to ensure as optimum a fit as possible, and that the specific suggestions made by respondents are considered for inclusion at that time.

### *Planning policies*

The survey provides evidence for both criteria-based and site/location-specific planning policies. Key policy areas informed by the results are listed below using the survey headings. For criteria-based policies the results indicate community priorities and preferences. For site/location-specific planning policies (shown with an \*), the results provide information to select and define land and locations to be the subject of policy provisions.

In preparing all policies, other appropriate and available evidence including that provided by the Design Technical Support Package should also be considered.

#### Housing

- Preferred size and type of housing.
- Neighbourhood planning requirements for housing.
- Householder development requirements.

#### Community facilities

- Community facilities for protection.

#### Economic development

- Preferred types of small-scale economic development.
- Neighbourhood planning requirements for economic/business development.

#### Built environment

- Design.

#### Natural environment

- Neighbourhood planning requirements for environmental impacts.
- Key views\*.

- Local Green Space\*. The areas suggested in the survey for such designation concerned will need to be evaluated to ensure the requirements in national planning policy are met.
- protection of the open countryside ‘gap’ between Crowle and Crowle Green\*.

#### Renewable energy

- Renewable and low carbon energy including community-led initiatives.

#### *Community actions*

Many of the survey responses raise matters which are outside the Plan’s land use and development scope. This is particularly the case for the free-write comments. They generally concern calls for improvement to ‘existing conditions’, such as issues raised around traffic and transport. Whilst these cannot in the main be the subject of planning policies, they may be included in the Neighbourhood Plan as ‘Community Actions’. Such wider community aspirations need to be clearly identifiable as separate from policy matters i.e. the statutory ‘development plan’ elements.

Potential topics arising from the survey which may form the subject of Community Actions are set out below, in no order of priority. Community Actions can also indicate any proposed interventions by the Parish Council, such as working in partnership with others to address issues.

- Highways
  - Traffic speed, limits and enforcement
  - Road capacity/safety
  - Road improvement and maintenance
- Other transport issues
  - On-road parking/traffic calming (Church Road)
  - Public transport (including school bus and community/voluntary provision)
  - Provision for cyclists and walkers/public rights of way
- Other infrastructure
  - Foul drainage – public network (Severn Trent)
  - Surface water drainage
  - Broadband speed and reliability
  - Mobile phone reception
  - Renewable energy
  - EV charging
- Open spaces
  - Recreational facilities and activities
  - Facilities for dog walkers
- Other services and facilities
  - Medical services – GP, dentist, pharmacy on an outreach basis
  - The Shop (extending opening hours, enabling deliveries).