

# Rothbury – Borderlands Place Programme Consultation Review

June 2022

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## Overview



## Rothbury Borderlands Place Programme Consultation

### Overview

Through the [Borderlands Place Programme](#), Northumberland County Council intend to target investment in places that will help boost economic activity across the region. Recognising the importance of our smaller rural market and coastal towns to the local economy, the Place Programme will support a range of capital interventions targeted at enhancing the economic infrastructure needed to ensure the sustainability and growth of our towns. Each town, including Rothbury, will be developing an investment plan to secure up to £3m of Borderlands Place Programme funding.

A series of Place Plans will be developed for both Rothbury and Northumberland's other priority towns. Towns will only enter the Place Programme should their Place Plan contain projects eligible for Borderlands investment.

**Closes 6 Jun 2022**

Opened 16 May 2022

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**Contact**

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### Why your views matter

To develop a Town Investment Plan for Rothbury, it is vital for us to learn more about the town from your perspective. We have launched a new survey and if you live, work, study, visit, or run a business in the town we encourage you to use this to have your say on developing plans for Rothbury - how to be stronger together, develop a shared view and demonstrate your passion for the area.

<https://haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk/economy-regeneration/rothbury-bpp-consultation>

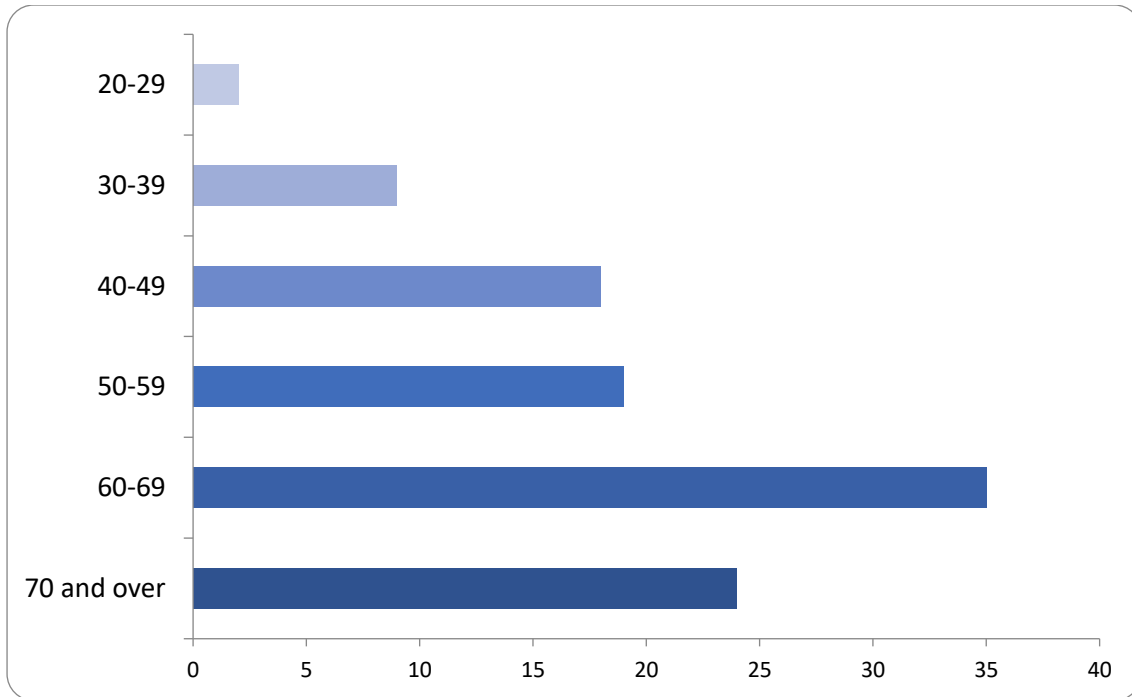
The activity ran from 16/05/2022 to 06/06/2022

Responses to this survey: 107

## Demographic Questions

### Age

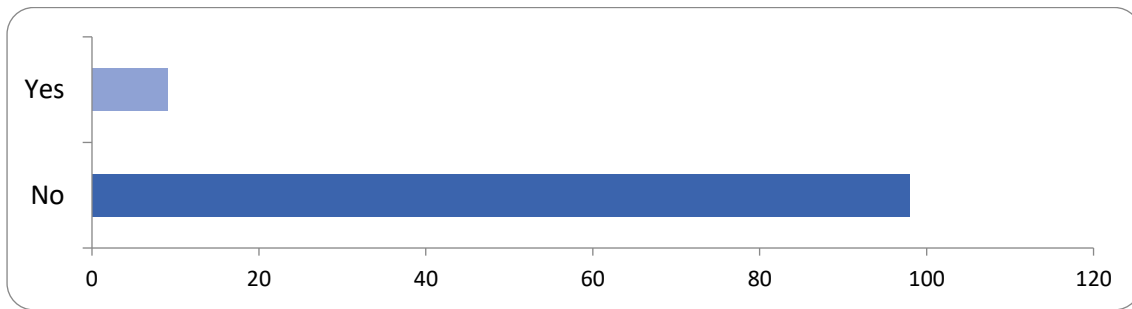
There were 107 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
up to 15	0	0.00%
16-19	0	0.00%
20-29	2	1.87%
30-39	9	8.41%
40-49	18	16.82%
50-59	19	17.76%
60-69	35	32.71%
70 and over	24	22.43%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

### Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

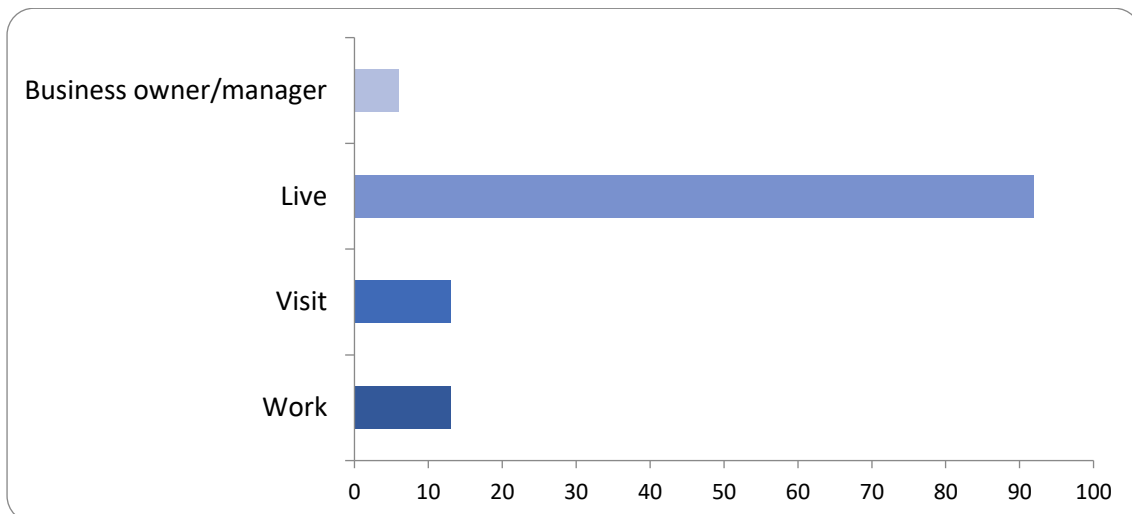
There were 107 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	9	8.41%
No	98	91.59%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

### Why do you come to Rothbury?

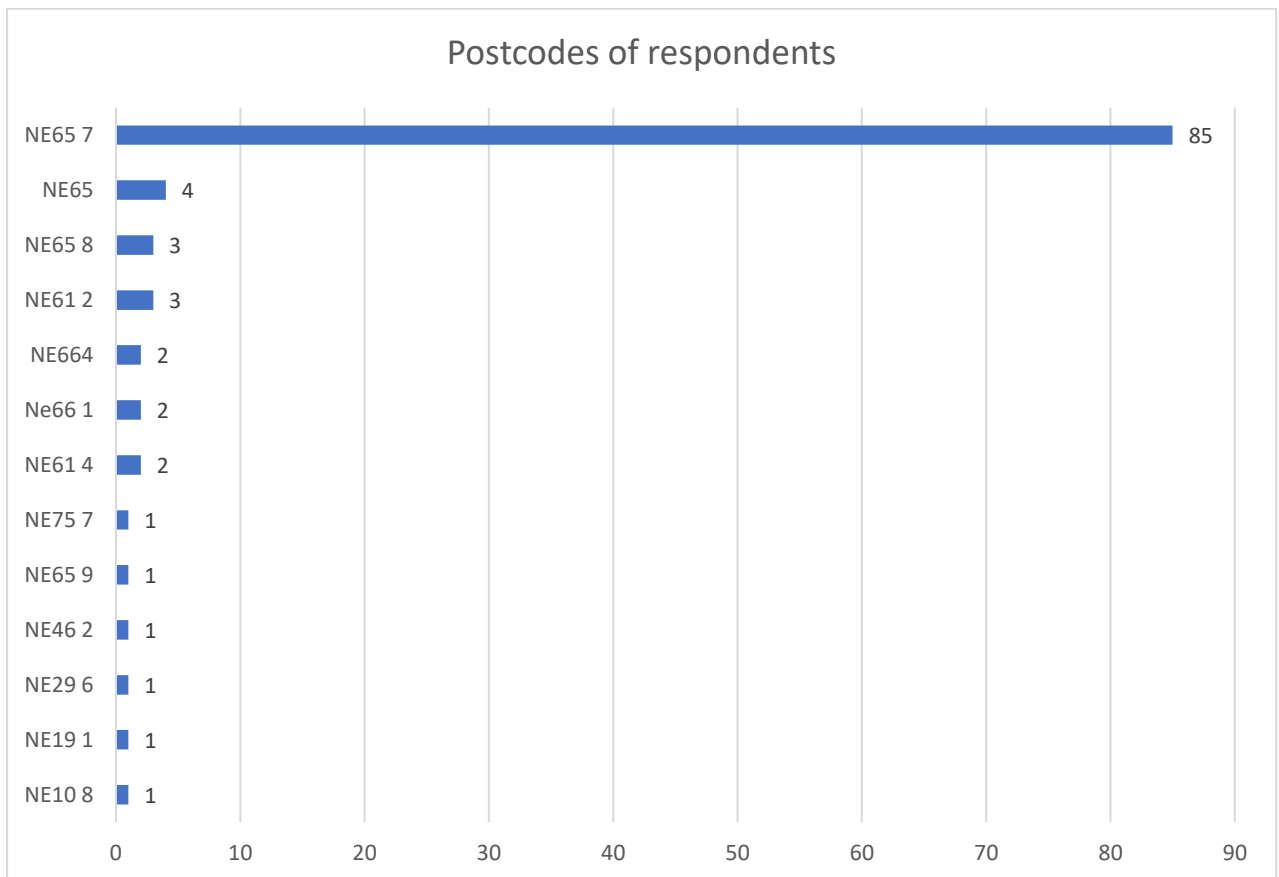
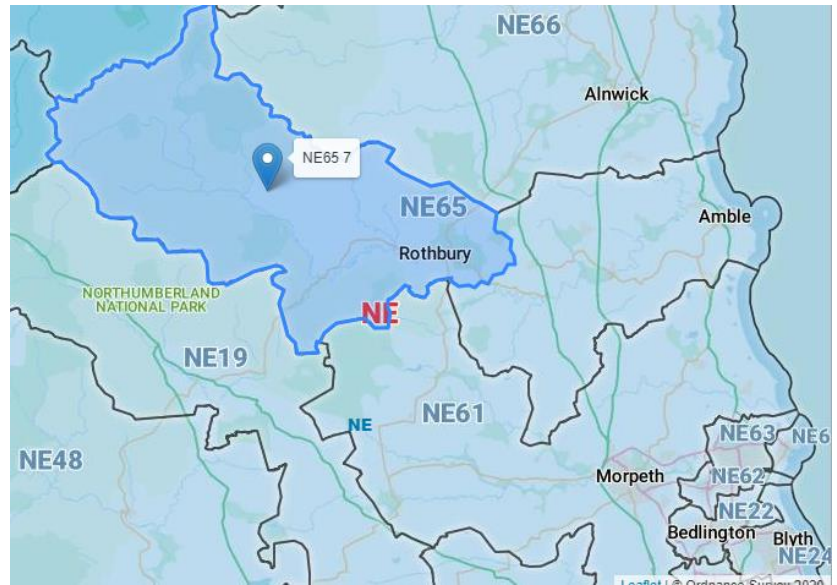
There were 273 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Business owner/manager	6	5.61%
Live	92	85.98%
Study	0	0.00%
Visit	13	12.15%
Work	13	12.15%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

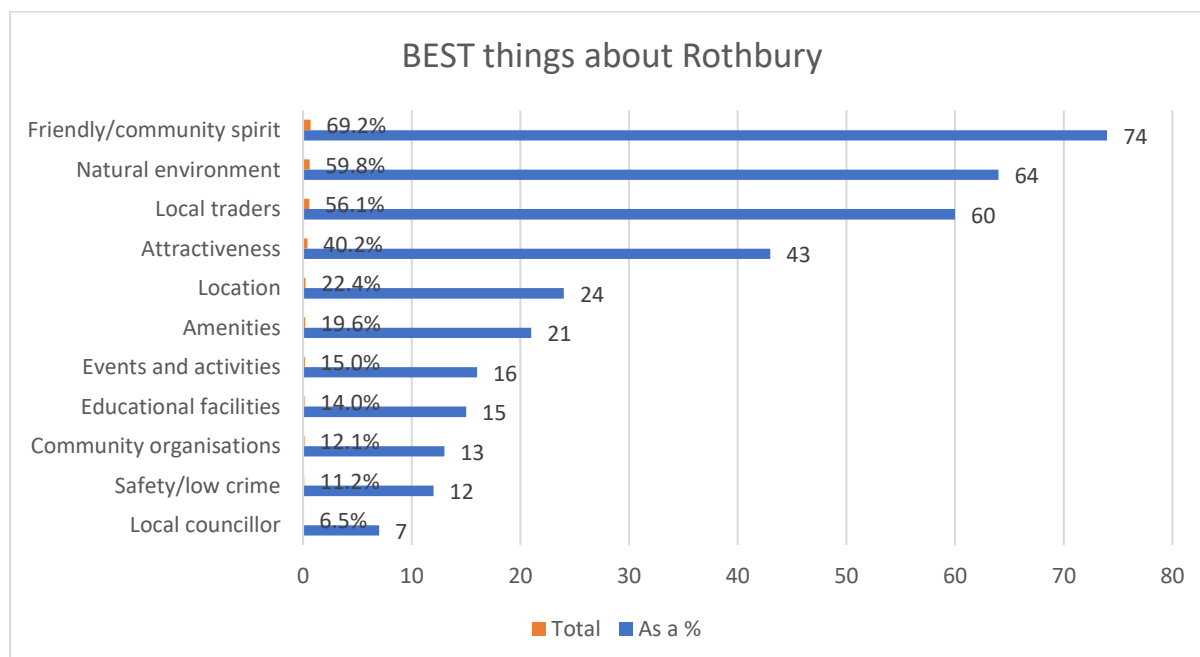
## Postcodes of respondents

Postcode	Frequency
NE65 7	85
NE65	4
NE61 2	3
NE65 8	3
NE61 4	2
Ne66 1	2
NE664	2
NE10 8	1
NE19 1	1
NE29 6	1
NE46 2	1
NE65 9	1
NE75 7	1



Currently what are the BEST things about Rothbury as a place to live, work, study, visit, or run a business?

Topic	Frequency	%
Friendly/community spirit	74	69.2%
Natural environment	64	59.8%
Local traders	60	56.1%
Attractiveness	43	40.2%
Location	24	22.4%
Amenities	21	19.6%
Events and activities	16	15.0%
Educational facilities	15	14.0%
Community organisations	13	12.1%
Safety/low crime	12	11.2%
Local councillor	7	6.5%
Wildlife	6	5.6%
Tourism	4	3.7%
Transport connectivity (within town and with wider region)	4	3.7%
Accessibility	3	2.8%
Parking	3	2.8%
Cragside	2	1.9%
Caravan sites	1	0.9%



## Friendly/Community Spirit – 74 respondents

“The friendly, welcoming and very active community”

“Close sense of community, friendliness”

“clean, community spirit, landscaping excellent”

“Best thing about Rothbury is the friendly atmosphere and generosity of its people. In the summer, the village is buzzing with excitement with tourists, cyclists and locals”

“Community cohesion with most people sharing the same values. People taking pride in their town and caring for their properties”

“Wonderful community spirit for residents with excellent caring Councillor”

“A strong community. (I was born in Rothbury in 1949, spent my early school-years in Rothbury. I have never lived anywhere else.)”

“It is very friendly and there is lots going on - loads of things to join and it has been great to start making friends and settling in”

“We run a business & live in Rothbury & absolutely love it. Rothbury is a great community”

## Natural environment – 64 respondents

“The best thing about living here is the scenery and it’s natural beauty”

“A beautiful place to live, open countryside and a lot of nice walks. Friendly people. Low crime rate, peace”

“The feeling of well-being from the beauty of the location, and enjoyment of wildlife”

“To live Rothbury is a lovely place to live, the area is great for walking and close to the coast if you prefer the seaside”

“Attractive town with a range of services, with easy access to countryside and hills”

“It's beautiful, clean and friendly with easy access to amazing walks in the surrounding hills and it has an excellent range of amenities”

“Beautiful area within easy drive to coast and country”

## Local businesses and traders – 60 respondents

“Vibrant High Street with a good selection of local shops meeting basic needs and those of visitors”

“Convenient shops, post office - don't have to go to nearby towns for most things”

“A good range of shops so that it's not necessary to shop out of town very often”

“Excellent facilities regarding shops including Post Office, Chemist, Library, Doctors etc as well as excellent pubs and restaurants. It's a working town- not just a tourist place”

“Hardworking local businesses, particularly those in the hospitality sector”

“It has all the shops I need. I don't buy online groceries or from adjoining towns. I believe in supporting local businesses and people I know”

“All the shops are there - I can buy everything I need in Rothbury and found this particularly during lock down. Clothes I still buy elsewhere”

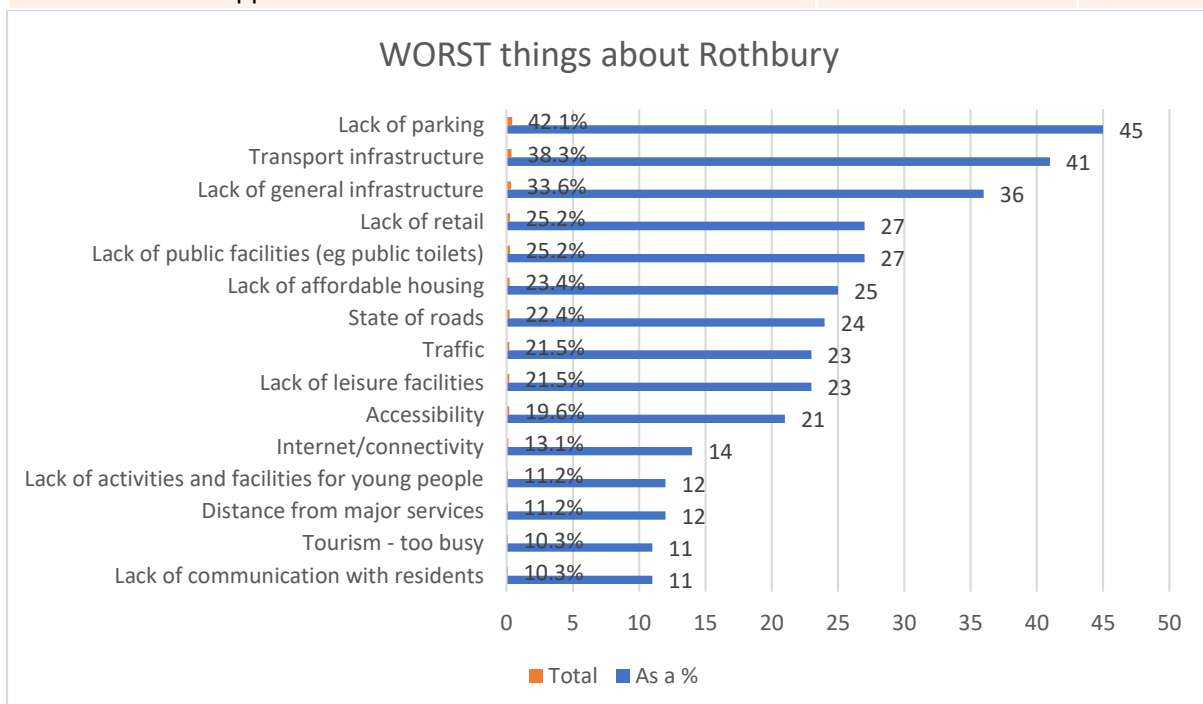
“The variety of high quality independent local shops - such as Alderson's the ironmonger, Tully's delicatessen, Rogerson's shoe shop”

“The amount of facilities the town has for its size is fantastic. The main street is vibrant. Crime is low”



Currently what are the WORST things about Rothbury as a place to live, work, study, visit, or run a business?

Topic	Frequency	%
Lack of parking	45	42.1%
Transport infrastructure	41	38.3%
Lack of general infrastructure	36	33.6%
Lack of public facilities (eg public toilets)	27	25.2%
Lack of retail	27	25.2%
Lack of affordable housing	25	23.4%
State of roads	24	22.4%
Lack of leisure facilities	23	21.5%
Traffic	23	21.5%
Accessibility	21	19.6%
Internet/connectivity	14	13.1%
Distance from major services	12	11.2%
Lack of activities and facilities for young people	12	11.2%
Lack of communication with residents	11	10.3%
Tourism - too busy	11	10.3%
Waste/refuse	8	7.5%
Lack of employment opportunities	6	5.6%
Attitude to visitors	5	4.7%
Empty/Run down buildings	5	4.7%
Lack of amenities (eg GP)	4	3.7%
General lack of investment	3	2.8%
Lack of business support	3	2.8%



## Lack of parking – 45 respondents

“Parking issues made worse by developments like the coop building. Accessing Rothbury is a nightmare with the two main roads regularly closed off for road works for months (and even years!!) at a time and much more planned. Diversions can be well over 10 miles and cost a fortune”

“Parking in the summer months. Awful. There should be residents parking...Inadequate charging points for electric cars”

“Car parking: there should be dedicated car parking for residents in the centre and more done to divert visitors to the large car park on the other side of the river”

“Not enough parking especially for residents (in summer)- needs direction to riverside car park for non residents”

“Parking in summer, no traffic calming, no pedestrian crossing, the road along the river is awful (poor surface in many places). Roads into Rothbury seem to be constantly closed for one reason or another”

“Parking in the village is busy, parking across the river less so but pedestrian route to village poorly signposted. Lack of town map, anywhere, poor sign posting to toilets from car parks. Parking area at the Library/ Gallery crumbling and overgrown with weeds”

“The closed public toilets by the Haugh car park - many children relieve themselves behind the building at the moment, the other toilets are too far away”

## Transport infrastructure – 41 responses

“Constant road closures involving long detours and local rural high roads not being treated in the Winter months leading to dangerous journeys and discouraging visitors”

“There is no regular bus service to Alnwick. I need to get to Alnwick 4 days a week in the early morning but have to do it by car as there is no bus service”

“No late evening bus services to anywhere so socializing must be done by car”

“The bus service is poor and expensive. A later bus at the weekend would be a boon”

“More buses from Alnwick. If I go to the station in Alnmouth I have to get someone to pick me up or get a taxi as it is impossible to get up the valley unless I arrive at certain times”

“Poor (and very expensive) public transport which effectively only goes to Morpeth”

“Bus service (useless). More consultation on things like the road closure outside the Newcastle (have no objection but I think local residents should have been consulted). The pedestrian bridge across the river and the pathway to get to the doctor's surgery is lethal in winter for elderly/disabled people”

## Lack of general infrastructure – 36 responses

“Still no useful offer from the cottage hospital leading to difficulty and isolation for those needing hospital care and their families”

“Likely hood of power cuts and the impact on communications (we lost mobile signal and copper phone line connections for long periods several times this winter)”

“Not enough capacity at the local dentist. Not enough capacity at the local GP. Power cuts (you need to bury the lines!) No capacity for home broadband. Exchanges are full, so no more copper connections can be made. And Factco who are supposedly delivering FFTP to the village keep delaying and not communicating. Makes it very difficult in our household where one of us runs an online business and one of us works in web-based data analytics from home”

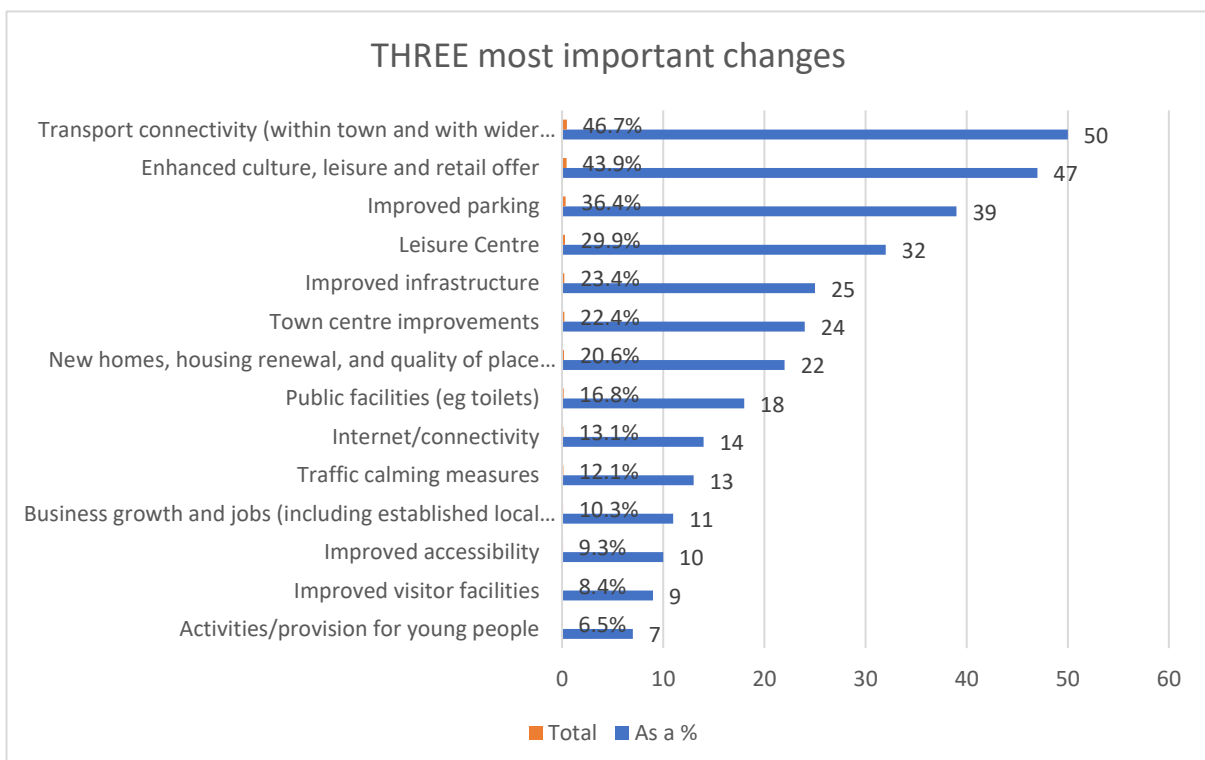
“Feeling of isolation when roads closed, electricity supplies interrupted and community hospital plans shelved and only slowly resurrected due to the devotion of the team led by Katie Scott”

“It is disappointing there is only the one bank and I wonder if this would be a good place to have a bank hub”

“Loss of power and telecommunications during adverse conditions. Loss of swimming pool facility. Lack of transport to and from surrounding areas with limited availability. Little provision of social facilities for older children. No local care home provision and temporary respite care”

What are the THREE most important changes that would make Rothbury a better place to live, work, study, visit, or run a business?

Topic	Frequency	%
Transport connectivity (within town and with wider region)	50	46.7%
Enhanced culture, leisure and retail offer	47	43.9%
Improved parking	39	36.4%
Leisure Centre	32	29.9%
Improved infrastructure	25	23.4%
Town centre improvements	24	22.4%
New homes, housing renewal, and quality of place improvements	22	20.6%
Public facilities (eg toilets)	18	16.8%
Internet/connectivity	14	13.1%
Traffic calming measures	13	12.1%
Business growth and jobs (including established local firms)	11	10.3%
Improved accessibility	10	9.3%
Improved visitor facilities	9	8.4%
Activities/provision for young people	7	6.5%
Environmental policies	4	3.7%
Improved communication with residents	4	3.7%



## Transport connectivity (within town and with wider region) – 50 responses

“Properly sorting out the main roads into the village so they are not closed off so often”

“Keep road closures to a minimum /do works overnight to keep both main roads into the village open at all times .Treat the local roads in the Winter months”

“Better public transport. Northumberland ought to have a decent East-West bus service that doesn't go via Newcastle, eg Alnwick-Rothbury-Hexham. Improved road access, partly to accommodate suggestion 1, with a decent road through to Hexham, as well as the obvious improvements to the Rothbury to Morpeth route”

“Low cost, subsidised frequent public transport links to wider range of other towns/villages, with service enabled to grow organically and not be dependent on paying its own way immediately or being cut - people need to be able to grow their trust in such provision and create a habit of using it”

“Traffic calming measures etc to stop lorries and 'boy racers' racing through. Possibly camera. All the other villages have them”

“Wider ranging, more frequent bus services (without first travelling south for destinations north, and west!)”

## Enhanced culture, leisure and retail offer – 47 respondents

“I'd like to see the swimming pool repaired, it's a great asset for the schools and for the public, especially with more holiday makers in the area”

“Control over businesses incoming and outgoing (eg not too many of one business and too few of essential services eg banks, PO”

“Public leisure and fitness facilities maintained and upgraded”

“Maintain existing local facilities within walking range, such as the swimming pool, rather than assuming that everyone can drive to another pool”

“A new sports centre with a variety of regular fitness classes and a swimming pool”

“Improved community amenities, eg the pool should be fixed and all primary and middle school children have lessons”

“another supermarket or food hall by national operator with dedicated parking in centre of Rothbury for residents and growing holiday visitors ... nearest competitive one is 12 miles away”

## Improved parking – 39 respondents

“Random parking it's as tho' the Road Traffic Act does not apply in Rothbury”

“Sorting out car parking for residents and visitors, especially in the light of the new Co op being built”

“Resident's parking (visitors to park in riverside car park)”

“Time-restricted parking in the village centre. Every parking space is valuable to the local economy and, DURING WORKING/SHOPPING hours, should be restricted to 2 hours with the use of Parking Discs, as occurs in our other towns. This could not be regularly enforced, but signs to that effect would encourage much more considerate behaviour. Reducing the number of parking spaces would be a disaster for the local economy”

“Car park made more use of especially for all day walkers to encourage less parking in the village”

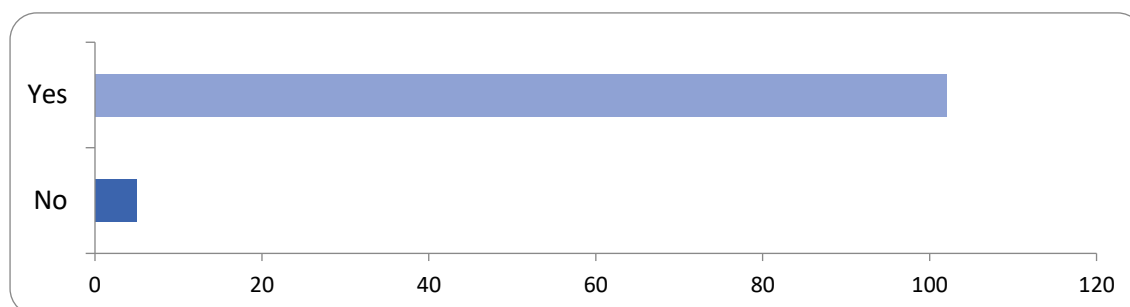
“Sort out road layouts and parking for residents and visitors (including reopening road in front of Newcastle House Hotel, which is a BIG loss for some)”

“Introduction of short stay parking restrictions on the main street”

“Better parking facilities on the outskirts of the village with Resident Only and Disability parking in the village”

## Do you agree with the vision?

There were 107 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	102	95.33%
No	5	4.67%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

### Yes

“That vision was not followed in any way when the coop relocation was approved. It will put even more pressure on the already overburdened infrastructure on the main road. I would suggest the various council departments communicate better to make sure the vision is followed”

“We and some of our friends are thinking of moving out of the area because of the lack of things locally (like a decent coffee shop!!) you end up spending a small fortune a week in fuel just for entertainment when you don't just want a walk for example. I think I would fully support some new energy and change especially some diversity as if you don't like walking up hills there's not much else in Rothbury for you. I don't think new house etc would appeal to anyone from outside of the area without some massive improvements to local amenities”

“I believe local businesses and residents should be prioritised over visitors”

“Sustainability is key. The old court buildings underwent refurbishment in 1997 using rural communities EU funding and little attention has been paid to the buildings since apart from statutory maintenance. Now, with 1997 night storage heaters the building is expensive to heat and no one at NCC can answer questions about insulation or even the prospect of solar panels on its south facing roof. Sustainability would mean that council owned buildings in conservation areas have a plan and contingency fund rather than being allowed to deteriorate”

“Tread softly lest you destroy the balance of our well balanced rural community”

“Let's simply see this happen, so much seems to be provided to other slightly larger out lying towns with little recognition as the population are geographical area Rothbury services”

## No

“What do you mean by sustainable? It's an overused expression. Do I want every house to have a heat source pump making a day and night racket? No”

““Sustainable” is the most fraudulently-used words in the English language. For Rothbury to be environmentally sustainable its economy should not be reliant on tourists driving vast distances to get here. It should be producing much more of its own food, for example and using much more renewable energy. Fewer people should be commuting to Newcastle and our homes should be occupied by local families who can stay here and contribute to the local economy, not providing holiday accommodation or bigger houses bought up by wealthy retirees when they could have families living there”

“It is a meaningless platitude with the usual vapid promises. You say collaborating but so far the only evidence of that is a Facebook post on the local Rothbury group asking us to respond to this survey”

“A collection of buzz words coined by suits in offices”

“It is just so many words that don't actually mean anything and could be said about anywhere and everywhere”

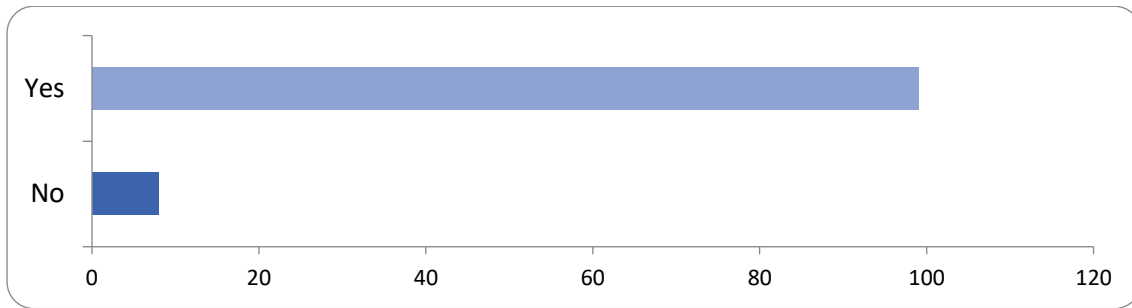
“I chose 'no', because the vision is way too vague for me. I think CLIMATE CHANGE should be the very first consideration with any development plans”

“Please don't spoil what we already have! Rothbury is an attractive, welcoming town for residents and visitors. Please don't take away any green spaces in the town; so many rural towns and villages have now become just car parks”



### Taken as a whole do you agree with these objectives?

There were 107 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	99	92.52%
No	8	7.48%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

### Yes

“All ok apart from objective 1 - I don't see the growth of housing as necessary or desirable”

“4 is very important. There are very limited facilities for young people”

“Good ideas but how you going to do it? You should separate out these objectives and ask for individual comments. Objectives need to be achievable. You are asking people to sign up to airy fairy stuff. Give examples. You will get better feedback”

“Just yes desperately need some things like decent coffee shops, a decent pub and a softplay or something as there's nothing like that”

“Decreasing the residents age will be difficult without substantial increases in social housing - housing that is allocated to local residents still living with their parents. Therefore, input should be provided from the local cllr regarding social housing allocation”

“What about welcoming visitors rather than just seeing them as an income stream?”

“I have little interest in catering for visitors while our residents struggle to live in the valley”

“Like the emphasis on younger people. I do feel like I'm living in a retirement village. Of concern that the first school has run classes together. To maintain a vibrant community, we need people to want to stay or come to the area to work and raise families. Difficult when available housing is 'executive style' - e.g. on most recent estate, one house is currently for sale for over £0.5m. This is out of reach of most residents”

“Less emphasis on younger people more on the population as a whole”

## No

"I don't agree that we need to increase the number of visitors, as that would potentially destroy what they come for. We would be better finding ways to get those who come to spend more"

"Not addressing some of the major issues - which include cost of travel to work and lack of a decent well stocked reasonably priced supermarket in the village (not a spar or a co-op) and the lack of a decent sport centre for all ages"

"It would be good to have some more shopping options"

"We do not need to increase the number of residents or visitors. There are enough already."

"Local swimming pool is a big loss for both young and old"

"1 and 2 are contradictory. You can't increase the number of working age residents when all the housing goes to tourism"

"The village can't sustain further growth"

"The strategic objectives read like a plan to remodel the town centre to make it more attractive to tourism to bring in additional visitor spend. As a strategic objectives, this would be another example of short-term thinking and a failure to adequately plan for the future. Local tourism is not a viable solution to create "strong local employment opportunities" in a place where many older people work locally for social reasons (rather than financial)."