Eden Vision:
Analysis & Insight

An independent review of the evidence gathered during the Autumn 2018 Eden District Council public engagement exercise

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Foreword

The creation of a 2050 Penrith Strategic Masterplan ('PSM'), in conjunction with a 2050 Vision for Eden, was a significant attempt by Eden District Council ('EDC') to take a stronger role in shaping every aspect of the environment, economy and society of the region in future years.

The PSM, produced over the spring and summer of 2018 aims to address a pressing need for Eden and Cumbria to tackle the demographic challenge of a rapidly ageing population, by shaping thinking and action in ways that extend far beyond the statutory duties of a District Council. This approach to long range policy making places the council as a central place-shaping organisation, bringing together diverse voices in order to think through and plan out the development path of the region. This is an ambitious goal for EDC to pursue.

Such an approach is fraught with risk, and certainly there will be experiments, some mistakes, opportunities won and ideas lost, as the organisation learns new ways of thinking and working. We believe that any attempt to build a sustainable, healthy and prosperous future for the region needs to engage with long term, far reaching issues and that external engagement is critical, and needs to be supported by business, academia and the wider community of Eden. That is why Lancaster University and the University of Cumbria are supporting EDC with the analysis in this report.

It is important to set out what this report aims to achieve, but also what it will not focus on. The key aim here is to share insights from the large and wide ranging body of evidence collected during the Autumn 2018 public engagement exercise. We fully acknowledge that the process generated a great deal of interest, controversy, debate, and many column inches of reporting in the local paper. We are also aware of potential shortcomings in the engagement process, some minor in terms of simple steps that might have made it easier to manage, some more serious as private citizens sought to question the legitimacy of the whole activity. But we are *not* undertaking a review of the process itself, nor are we seeking to either challenge or legitimize the option that was presented in the Masterplan document as a preferred option for Penrith.

***Our primary aim** is to provide independent analysis that **respects every comment made by every citizen**, and draws those comments together into a single, coherent report that can shape the thinking of EDC as it develops its long term plans.*

That is why this detailed, collaborative and independent review is important. We welcome any comments, feedback or debate that follows on from this document, and both universities intend to continue to work with EDC as policies are developed and implemented.

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1. Introduction

This report offers an in-depth review of the evidence generated during the Eden District Council ('EDC') public engagement process, which commenced on 10 September 2018 and concluded on 2 November 2018. The focal document produced by Eden District Council for this engagement activity, entitled "The Penrith Strategic masterplan, A Vision to 2050" (the 'PSM'), brought together a range of issues and proposals that sought to address multiple aspects of the economy, society and environment of the region.

The PSM document had a powerful effect in terms of steering some of the debate, and certainly many of the newspaper headlines and letters submissions, since a central aspect of the proposed plan was the creation of three new 'Beacon Villages' over a period of 30 years, providing an addition 5,560 homes. The other contentious issue presented in the document was the change in use of a portion of the Beacon forest, to allow the development of low density, high value housing on the elevated area of woodland just to the north of the Beacon Monument itself.

The depth of engagement, with 25 pop-up events or shop opening days and the ability to engage through multiple online platforms, was further fuelled by very high levels of press interest and the formation of two influential community action groups (for full details see Appendix I). As a result, a significant body of data was collected. The data we used for our analysis was as follows:

Data source	Number of responses
EDC online questionnaire	667
Keep Penrith Special postcards & petition	4,780 (including 532 hand written comments)
Friends of the Beacon petition	2,693
Graffiti wall comments from Penrith shop	281
Postcards from pop up shops	466 (including 382 hand written comments)
Letters	82 (48 public, 7 political, 27 other organisations)

Additional evidence and insights

EDC were aware that certain geographical areas and demographic groups tend to be less likely to engage in this form of opt-in consultation. To supplement the data collected above, they also commission a specialist research organisation to undertake doorstep, face-to-face surveys with 261 residents, focussing on the following areas: Castletown, Pategill and New Squares, Scaws, Townhead, and Weatheriggs, with a smaller number in Beacon Edge and Carleton.

We have identified a very strong correlation between the main issues, concerns and wishes of residents expressed in that survey as we see in the data being analysed here. We will not be re-analysing that evidence, as this report will focus specifically on the data collected through the formal engagement process, or delivered in the form of letters and petitions that relate directly to that process.

We are also aware that EDC set out to discuss the issues in their document with business owners and groups. Again, this evidence is not shown or analysed in this report, but it is important to note that this also formed part of the body of evidence collected both formally and informally to inform the next steps being considered.

In relation to this particular report, our goal is to draw out useful insights from the rich body of publicly created evidence listed above.

However, we must be extremely careful to note that this cannot be treated as a representative sample of the wishes of the people of Penrith or wider communities. There are several reasons for this, with three of the most significant being: 1) the public are responding to a specific proposal and this directs their attention and concerns; 2) the analysis of the demographic data shows an under representation of both the younger and older age groups, in favour of those working aged individuals aged 25-65; 3) despite the significant press coverage and public engagement with key issues, the 667 questionnaire responses that allow the most detailed picture of what residents think about a range of issues still represent a little over 1% of the population of Eden, or 4% of the population of Penrith.

So what can usefully be done with this data, given these concerns about its representativeness? As the consultation progressed, the depth of debate encouraged people to think more deeply about what they value in Penrith, how they want to see the town develop, and what their real concerns are. This resulted in the creation of possibly the largest body of public engagement data that Eden District Council has ever generated. It allows us to draw out ideas and insights from the people who know the town, its communities, economies and histories, better than anyone else. The purpose of this report is to synthesise this evidence into a meaningful, single document.

The main structure of this report follows the subject framework provided by the original consultation document, with its nine topic areas covering the key themes in this engagement. We have combined Transport with Infrastructure and Utilities, due to the number of comments received on each of these, to give us eight main subject areas for analysis. The process followed to ensure a comprehensive analysis of all public comments is explained in the next section.

In addition to this structured look at the comments made by individuals, this report contains a significant body of quantitative analysis of the 667 survey results. This is presented in section 3 of the report.

In section 12 we draw together the insights gained from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis, and seek to deliver some better understanding of what is valued in Eden, and why.

2. Methodology

This engagement exercise generated a great deal of public interest, and in turn, a very significant volume of data that arrived with EDC in many forms. One of the main reasons for Lancaster University and the University of Cumbria becoming involved in the analysis exercise was our experience at managing the analysis of such broad and varied data sets in ways that can bring meaning to the voices of those concerned, without any accidental bias being introduced through the methods chosen.

In this section we set out some of the key risks when tackling a large body of data such as this, and explain the process by which we have overcome these risks. The key considerations for the analysis of the data in this project included:

- Developing innovative approaches to work with large collections of text data

- Ensuring equality, impartiality and objectivity when selecting and categorising data for further analysis

- Ensuring real-world relevance and clear criteria for categorising data for further analysis

- Making use of expert local knowledge to ensure that the in-depth analysis included an understanding of context, history and the local area.

Dealing impartially with high volumes of data

The significant volume of data demanded a novel approach to analysis. When confronted with large amounts of text data there are two significant risks:

- One is to dismiss the data as "too much / too overwhelming" and to therefore ignore or side-line it in favour of statistical analysis that focuses only on questions that use scales (eg. rank from 1-5 or 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'). This sort of statistical analysis is both quicker and easily tp use with large bodies of data, whilst reading, analysing and interpreting text is time and labour intensive. This not only throws away a lot of valuable and rich data but is also disingenuous to those who have taken the time to write and express opinions or give information in the belief their voices will be listened to.

- The other is to find examples in an unsystematic way - "cherry picking" the quotes that *appear* to be frequent or significant or to fit an argument that has been developed for another purpose with the data selected to fit its conclusions. This is a frequent accusation levelled at research that works with text – that the selection and analysis was biased and that the examples were chosen to fit an argument rather than the conclusions being representative of the range of opinions that were expressed.

The work of analysing the data was divided across two teams: one led by Darrell Smith from University of Cumbria, looking at the quantitative data, the other led by Steve Wright and Chris Ford, looking at the freely written text, or qualitative, data. The remainder of this section focusses on the

qualitative analysis, which was enabled by sophisticated data mining techniques embedded in the latest qualitative analysis software, Nvivo 12 Plus. This work, and the various stages we went through, are explained below.

How text mining works

Written language in comments does have structure and computer processing can help to identify phrases, topics and sentiment. It does this through exploring how frequently words and phrases are used, finding commonality between the words and phrases, and identifying expressions that indicate if the text is positive or negative about a topic.

The most frequent words in a document have the least meaning – words like "a" or "the" or "an". The phrases with lower frequencies typically have greater meaning – for example in this section of the report the words "frequency/frequencies/frequent" all share a stem of "frequen" followed by a suffix and all relate to one concept of "frequency" but are far less frequent than the words a, an or the and therefore help show that that word is significant for the topic of the text.

By running *all* of the text from the public engagement exercises through a software package called NVivo Plus all the text was considered and processed impartially and objectively by text-mining algorithms. These provide rapid sorting and initial categorisation of the data – overcoming the first problem of dismissing the data as overwhelming. Their impartiality and objectivity based on the content of the text and the words within it rather than an interpretation or selection of them by a person with a viewpoint helps to overcome the second issue of bias.

Analysis of qualitative engagement data

Our analysis began with the use of text mining to ensure that all of the text from the engagement exercises and interaction with interest groups was treated impartially and analysed together. The first stage of this analysis was to ensure that all free text was included - including comments from the online survey, comments from postcards sent to the council by campaign groups and then typed up by administrative staff at EDC, emails, and text from the graffiti walls and postcards in the pop-up shop in Penrith and other locations.

The outcome of this first automated stage of analysis was a complete categorisation of the data into multiple themes. This form of auto-coding is accurate but not perfect, so the next stage was to refine this categorisation, working collaboratively with members of the Eden District Council Planning Group who could bring their expert local knowledge to the categorised data.

The refined topic groupings from the data were then organised and clustered using the structure of the Eden District Council Master Plan document to create meaningful collections of related topics. For example, "The Beacon" and "Town Centre" collected together all of the comments relating to those aspects of the plan, creating groups of data that were ready for further analysis.

As well as grouping responses by topics, the text within each collection could also be grouped or categorised based on demographic information given by respondents' answers to closed questions – enabling (for example) reading all the comments about markets from respondents who were not yet in work, working, or retired; or where they lived.

By collecting together topics and then grouping using demographic information, these collections of text were impartially and comprehensively created. These groups of comments were then analysed using the local expertise and knowledge of members of the EDC Planning Department, by reading through all of the comments relating to a topic and interpreting them based on emerging themes, then writing meaningful summaries of the collected data. These summaries and themes could then be compared across groups to explore the dimensions that influenced particular viewpoints and topics. It also provided an objective approach to categorisation to ensure selection of "example quotations" was not a product of cherry picking but instead a true reflection of the rich text data.

This innovative approach was enabled by the willingness of EDC to invest in staff capability building in the form of qualitative data analysis training, provided free of charge by the Lancaster University academics, which allowed four members of the EDC planning team to become Nvivo coders for this research project. One member of that coding team then continued to work with the four academics as a full co-author of this report, ensuring that we remained close to the data (that she had been involved in coding) and to its social and organisational context, at all times. The latest text mining capabilities of NVivo Plus, the expertise in the research team of an NVivo consultant and trainer, and this collaborative research process have come together to underpin our ability to deliver this comprehensive review of the EDC engagement process.

3. Quantitative survey analysis

The quantitative analysis in this section allows us to identify some relatively straightforward demographic information about those who responded to the engagement exercise, and identify some key concerns highlighted through the EDC online engagement survey.

The data that could be assessed in a quantitative manner includes:

- The questionnaire completed by 667 individuals, accessed through the official Eden District Council online engagement website
- The Keep Penrith Special postcards and petition signed by 4780 individuals;
- The Friends of the Beacon petition signed by 2693 individuals.

3.1 Demographic data

Responses were received that enable a demographic description of participants to be made. These responses allow consideration of characteristics such as: where do participants come from, what their ages are, and how participants describe their relationship with Penrith. This information allows for an assessment of how representative the responses received during the engagement process are of the Penrith and Eden demographic.

3.1.1 Where do participants come from?

Postcode data has been taken from the online questionnaire plus the Keep Penrith Special and Friends of the Beacon submissions and petitions. With respect to the Penrith focus of the masterplan, an initial split of responses for assessment based on proximity to Penrith and postcode information was used to create geographic clusters as follows (and shown in fig 3.1):

cluster 1 - CA11 7, CA11 8;

cluster 2 - CA10 1, CA10 2, CA10 3, CA11 0, CA11 9;

cluster 3 - any response that came from participants outside clusters 1 and 2.

Whilst we recognise that this approach introduces subjective boundaries and presents problems such as with CA11 9, where homes will be located within the Penrith town area. It does, however, provide a means to engage with postcode data in a manner that defines a basis from which to describe representativeness of responses, specifically in regard to those postcodes that sit outside of Penrith and the surrounding area, cluster 3.

The number of participants, in the form of percentage of all of the 7876 responses that provided postcode information, identifies the extent to which respondents were either from cluster 1, cluster 2 or cluster 3 (Table 1). Responses that did not provide a postcode or that the postcode information provided was unusable have been excluded. The Keep Penrith Special campaign attracted more responses from outside of Penrith and the surrounding area, cluster 3, and fewer from postcodes within cluster 1.
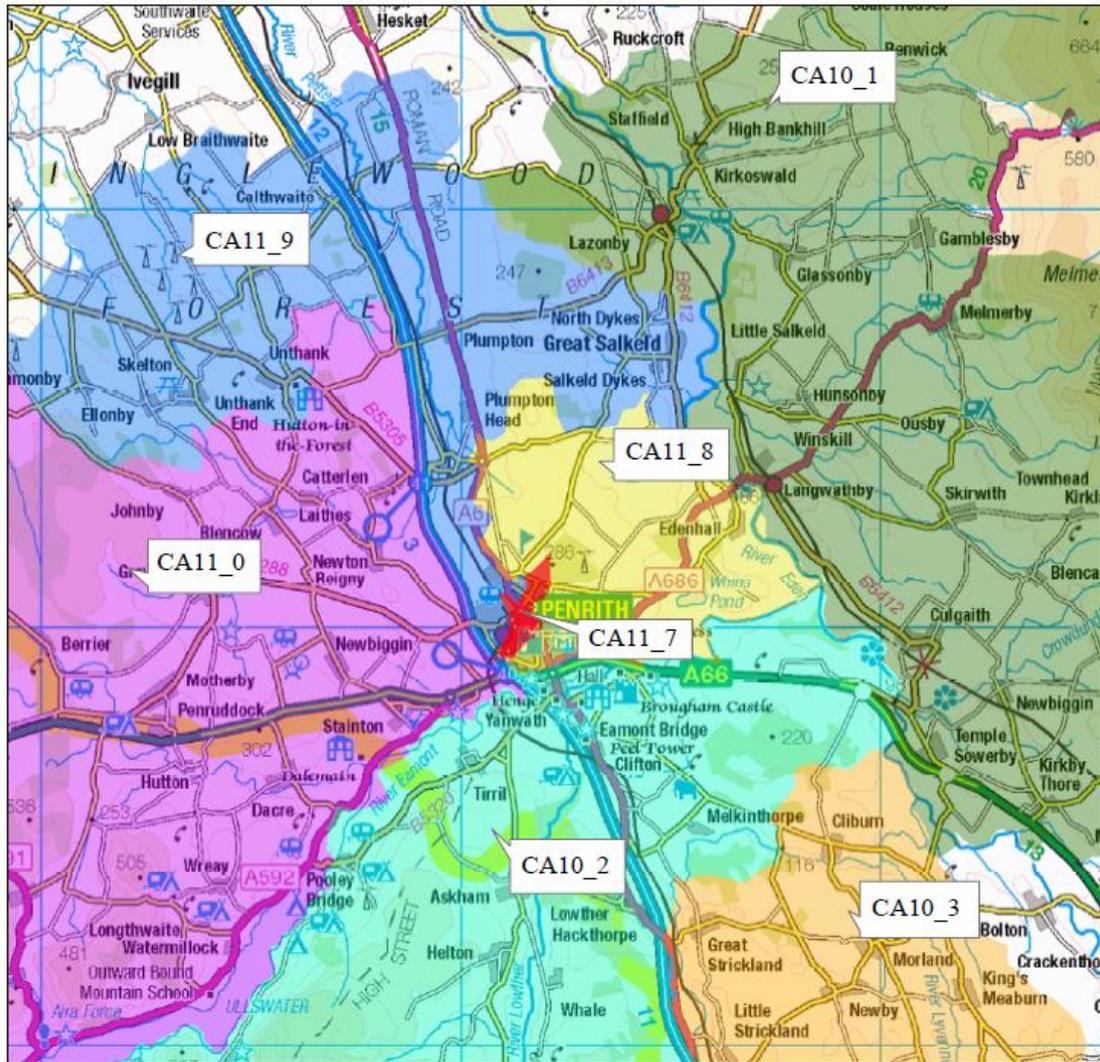
Figure 3.1 *Postcodes used to describe participant responses collected as part of the engagement process; Online questionnaire, 'Keep Penrith Special' and 'Friends of the Beacon'.*

Table 1 *Percentage of responses per postcode grouping (postcodes that were unusable have been excluded): number of responses online questionnaire 523, Keep Penrith Special 4725, Friends of the Beacon 2628.*

	Online Questionnaire	Keep Penrith Special	Friends of the Beacon
Cluster 1	47.0	34.2	46.8
Cluster 2	42.3	46.9	40.9
Cluster 3	10.7	18.9	12.3

3.1.2   Age profile

Survey responses allow us to compare the age profile of respondents with the known age profile of Eden residents. These responses can be used to characterise the age profile of participants by comparison to a known profile of the area[1]. The age categories used in the survey do not align precisely with those used by the Cumbria Observatory, and in the survey instrument there was a one year overlap in two cases, allowing people aged 65 and 80 to select one of two groups: 41-65 and 65-80, 65 -80 and 80+. We have explicitly accepted their self-selection.

Figure 3.2   *Age profile of online questionnaire participants (top) and Eden District population age profile (bottom)(Cumbria Intelligence Observatory, 2017).*

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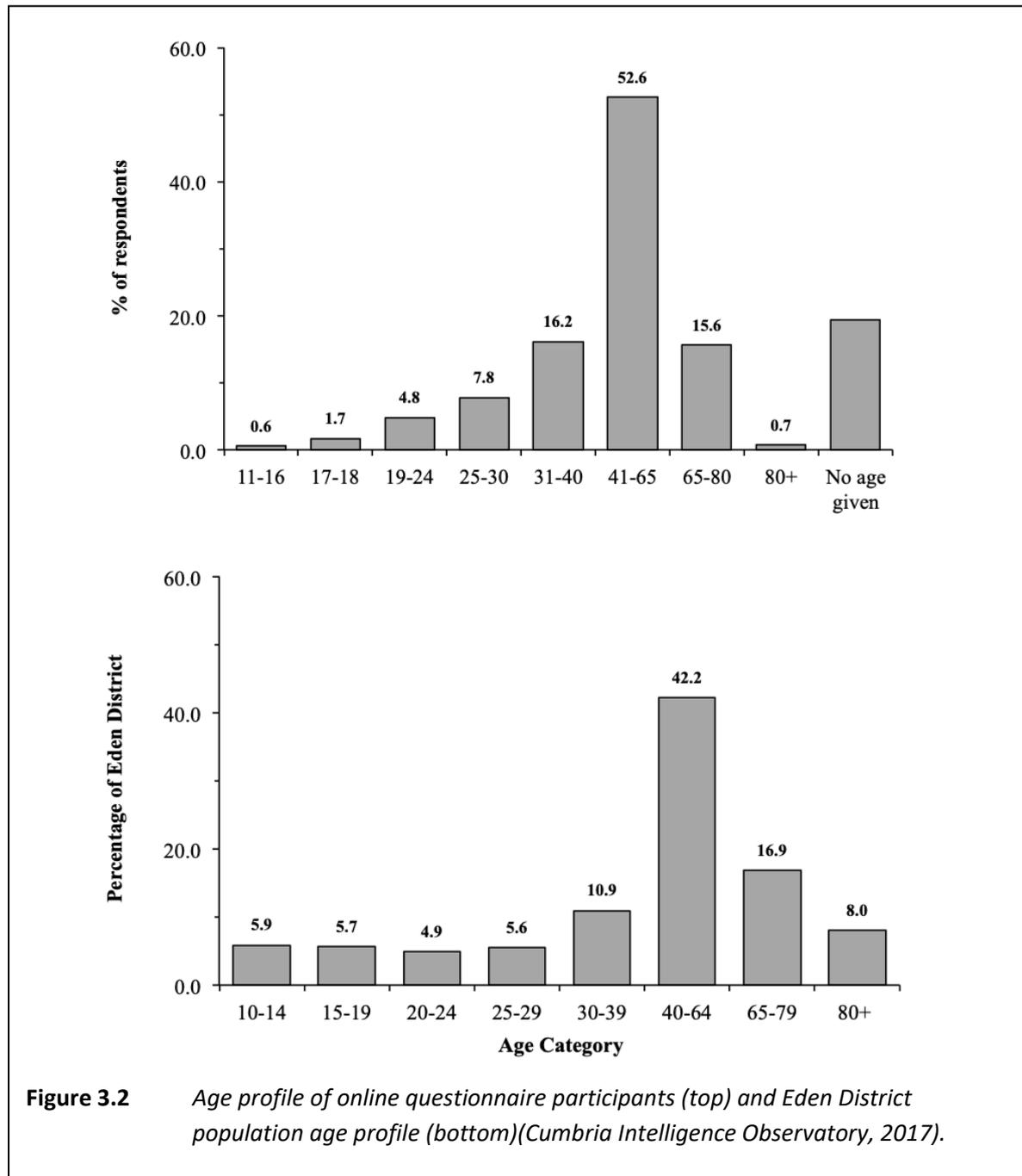
[1] Figures for age profile comparison has been taken from ONS data available at the Cumbria Observatory, see
https://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/population/report/view/32e912dc0fc8438f932399b24b848bea/E07000030

The comparison suggests that the age profile of the online respondents broadly under represents the younger **(-9.3%)** and older **(-8.5%)** age groups.

The age profile of respondents over represents the 25 – 65 year old age group **(+17.9%)** when compared with that of the Eden District population (Fig 3.2). However, the estimated mean age of the online questionnaire participants was broadly in line with the population: the mean age of survey respondents was 49 years old, as compared with 48 years old across Eden District.

3.1.3   How participants describe their relationship with Penrith

With regard to the relationships of participants to Penrith, as described through their responses to the question '*Please tell us if you live in Penrith or how often you visit (including for work)?*', the majority of online questionnaire participants either describe themselves as living in Penrith (64.5%) or are regular visitors throughout the week (31.5%): this visit frequency is characterised as every day, 3 to 5 times a week or once or twice a week (Fig 3.3).

Figure 3.3   *Online questionnaire responses to the question 'Please tell us if you live in Penrith or how often you visit (including for work)?' Percentage figures for each category are identified at the end of the associated bars.*
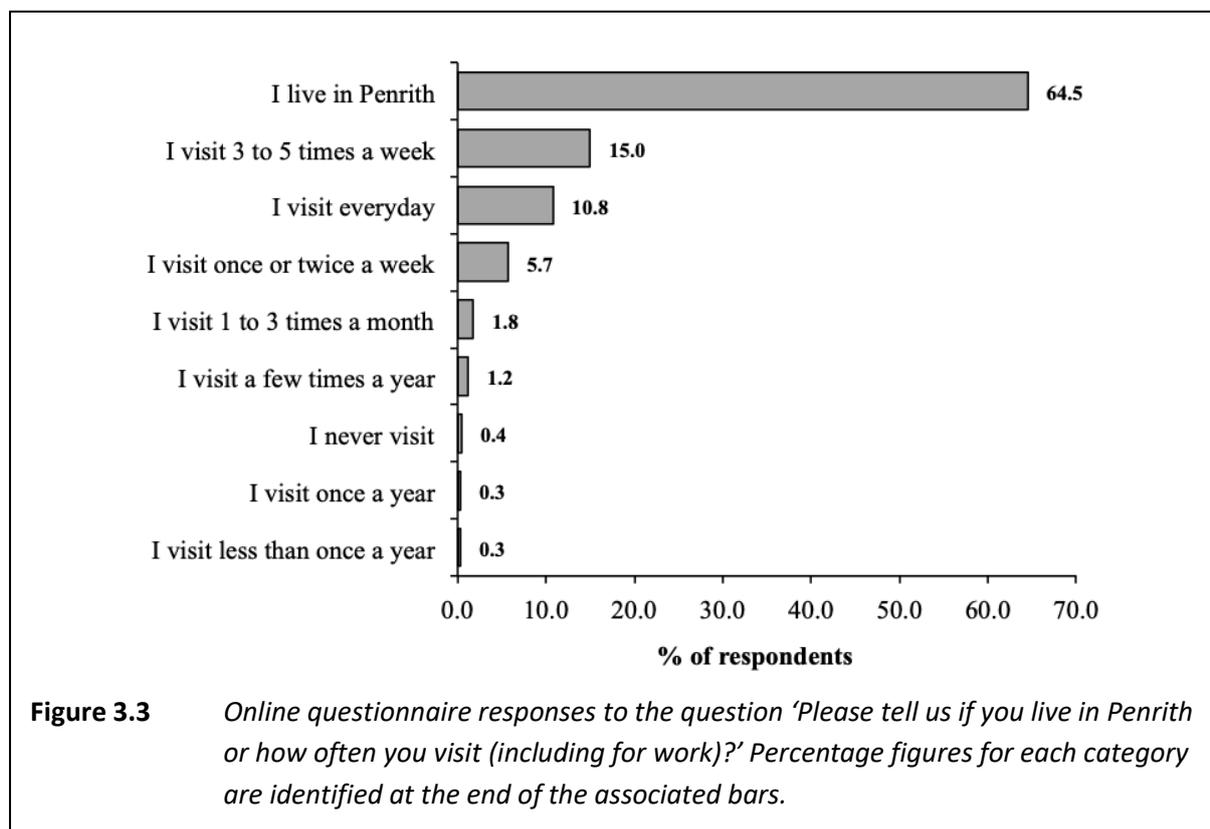
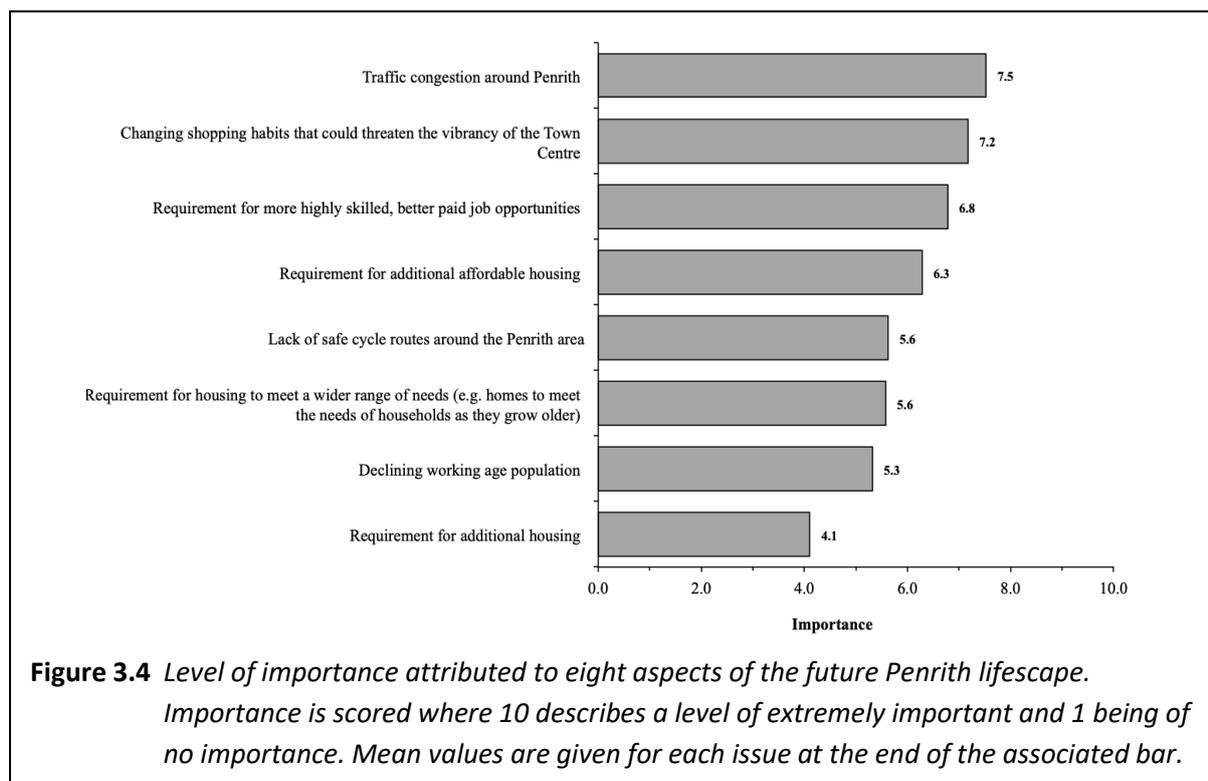**3.2   Official Eden District Council online engagement website**

The official online survey site collected directed responses from 667 individuals through tick box and open comment questions. The tick box response data is presented below in seven themes that correspond to key questions asked related to proposals presented within the Penrith Masterplan:

1. *How important are the following issues to you?*
2. *What do you think should be done to overcome the challenges in Penrith?*
3. *What do you think are important considerations when locating a new settlement in Eden?*
4. *What elements do you think are important for creating a vibrant new community?*
5. *Which of the following uses do you think would be suitable for Beacon Hill (the forested area surrounding the Beacon)?*
6. *Do you agree with the location of the proposed new settlements?*
7. *If you are concerned about the location of the proposed new settlements, do you believe that any of the areas previously assessed should be reconsidered and assessed in more detail?*

The following analyses make use of all responses collected from the online survey. Where difference is commented upon, within a question, this difference has been found to be statistically significant.

3.2.1   Issues relating to Penrith lifescape

Participants were asked to score a range of issues in relation to the current Penrith lifescape[2], based on a level of importance where 10 is extremely important and 1 is of no importance.

Figure 3.4 *Level of importance attributed to eight aspects of the future Penrith lifescape. Importance is scored where 10 describes a level of extremely important and 1 being of no importance. Mean values are given for each issue at the end of the associated bar.*
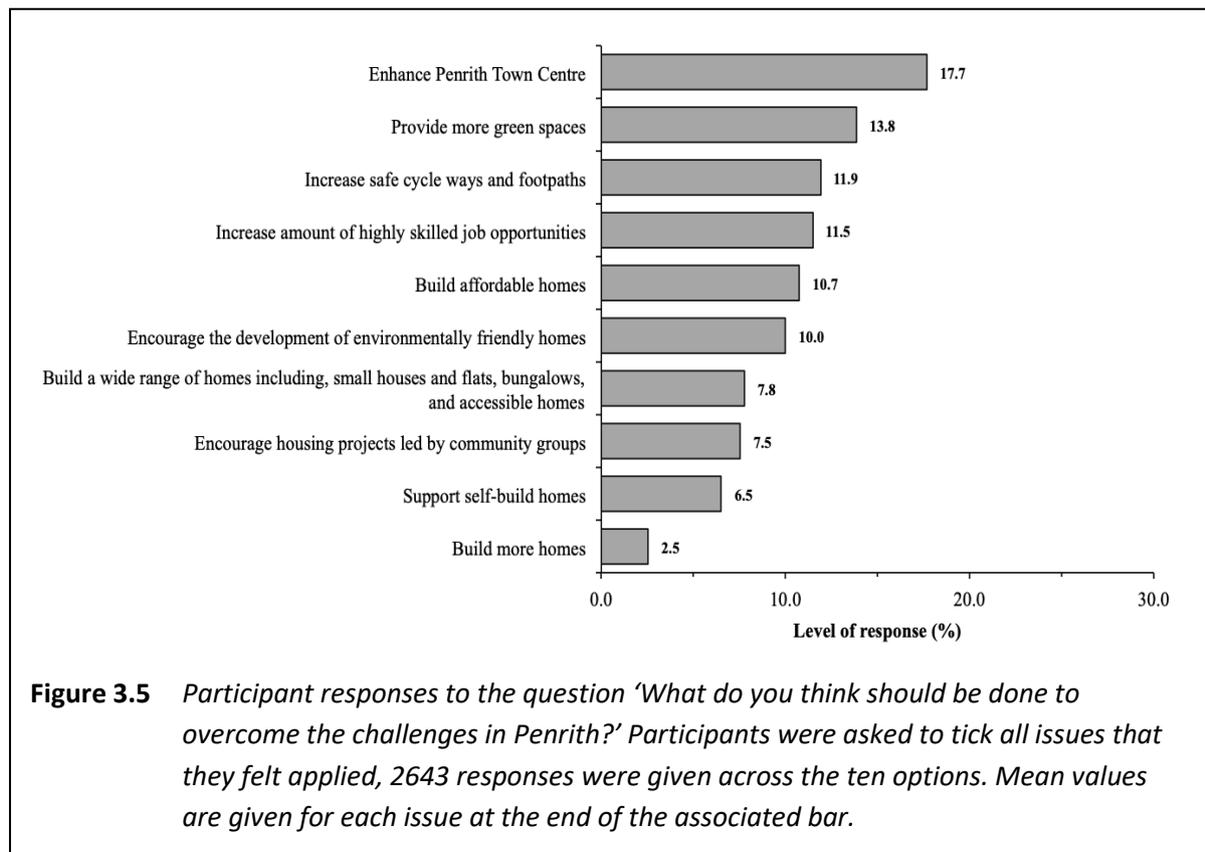
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[2] Lifescape is a term used to characterize the relationship between people and place (see Convery, I. 2006). A lifescape is an active lived-in and connected place that links people, communities, economy and the natural environment.

In terms of importance, as denoted by the scores given to each issue by participants, a statistically significant difference was described across the eight issues (Fig 3.4). Difference was driven by both high and low levels of importance attributed to a range of options. High importance was attributed to traffic congestion (mean score of 7.5), and shopping habits and town centre vibrancy (mean score of 7.2). A low level of importance was given to additional housing needs, with a mean score of 4.1.

3.2.2   Overcoming the challenges in Penrith

With respect to the challenges that Penrith faces, participants were given a list of potential options and asked to identify all that they felt applied. Options given covered future housing needs, employment opportunities, safe routes to move through the area, enhancement of the town centre and the provision of green space. The 667 participants provided 2643 choices across the ten options, an average of 4.0 choices per participant (Fig 3.5).
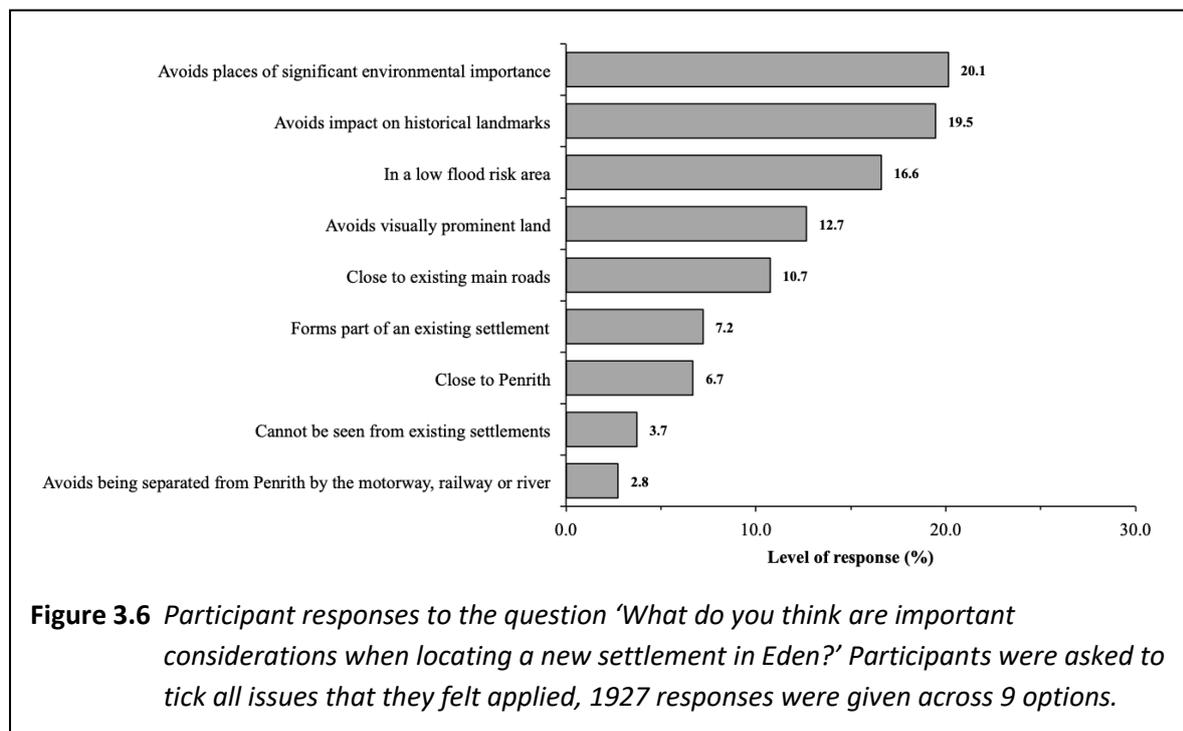
Participant choices were statistically significant in respect to a higher proportion of selection for the enhancement of town centre as the primary challenge to Penrith, with 17.7% of all responses. Of less importance but still a significant contribution is the wish for more green space, with 13.8% of all responses. In respect of issues identified as having low levels of importance the idea of needing to 'build more homes' was described as having the least level of importance, only contributing to 2.5% of the total number of choices made.

Figure 3.5   *Participant responses to the question 'What do you think should be done to overcome the challenges in Penrith?' Participants were asked to tick all issues that they felt applied, 2643 responses were given across the ten options. Mean values are given for each issue at the end of the associated bar.*

3.2.3   New settlement location in Eden

When asked about the location of any new housing settlement in Eden, participants were prompted to consider a suggested range of aspects that may be considered important when locating a new settlement, and were prompted to identify all that they felt applied. Options given covered proximity to Penrith and existing main roads, forming part of an existing settlement or being separated from Penrith, being visible from current settlements, issues of avoiding areas identified as being at risk of flood, visually prominent and of significant historic and environmental importance. The 667 participants provided 1927 responses across the nine options provided, an average of 2.9 choices per participant.
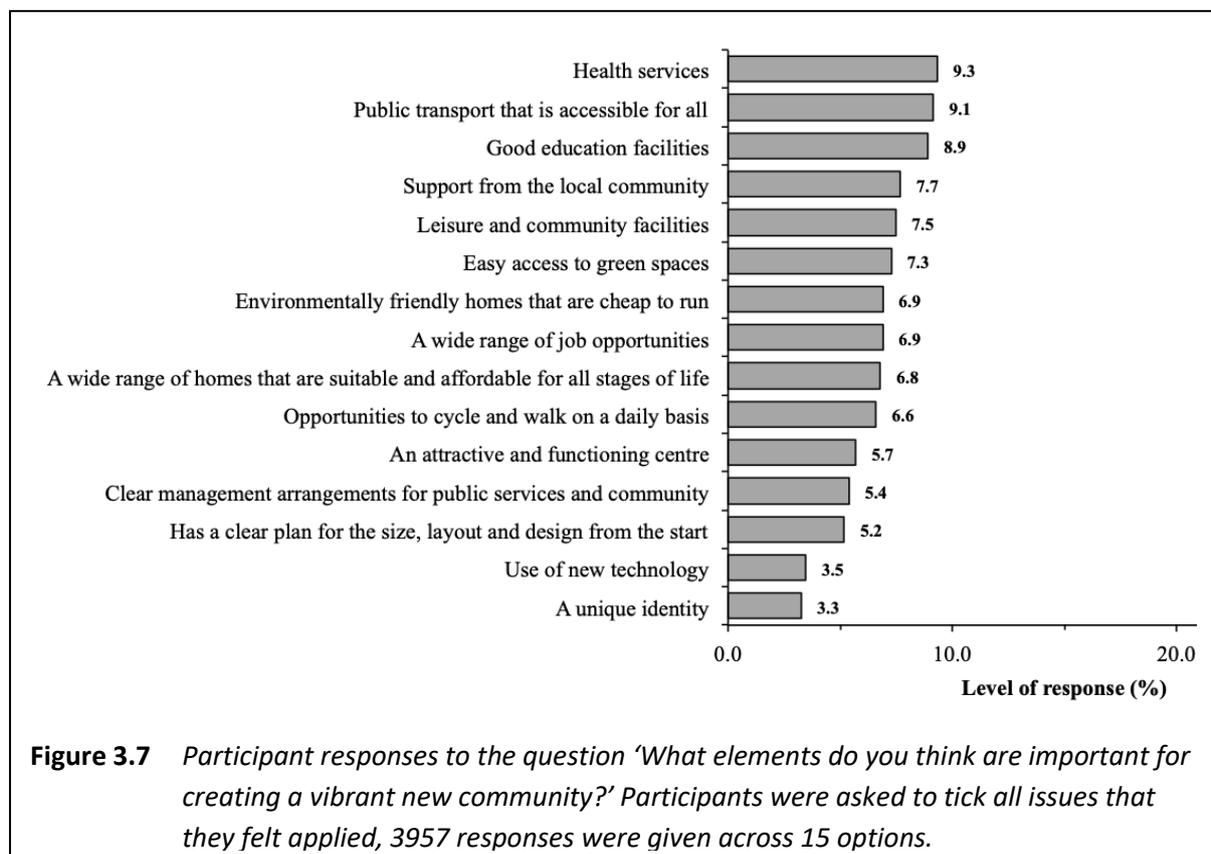
Participants selection of the issues thought to be important when locating any future possible settlement were significantly different across the nine options provided (Fig 3.6). Significant importance was attributed to the need for avoidance of places with high environmental value, 20.1% of all responses, and consideration of the potential impact on historical landmarks, 19.5% of responses. Aspects that were selected at a significantly low level related to the visual aspects and community connectivity within location: '*cannot be seen from existing settlements*' 3.7% of total responses, and '*avoids being separated from Penrith by the motorway, railway or river*' 2.8% of total responses.

Figure 3.6 *Participant responses to the question 'What do you think are important considerations when locating a new settlement in Eden?' Participants were asked to tick all issues that they felt applied, 1927 responses were given across 9 options.*

3.2.4 Creating a vibrant new community

When considering the prospect of creating a vibrant new community, participants were asked to select, from a list of 15 options, those aspects that they thought of as being important. Participants were instructed to identify all aspects that they felt applied. The 667 participants provided 3957 responses across the 15 options, an average of 6 selections per participant, demonstrating the broad nature of opinion with regard to this question.

Significant difference was identified in preference for elements that were thought to characterise a vibrant new community. The primary high level contributors reflected the public service aspects of social networks: '*health services*' a network of '*public transport that is accessible for all*' and '*good education facilities*' which described the most important aspects, with 9.3%, 9.1% and 8.9% of total responses, respectively. The creation of '*a unique identity*' and the '*use of technology*' were the less preferred options (3.3% and 3.5% respectively) (Fig 3.7).

Figure 3.7 *Participant responses to the question 'What elements do you think are important for creating a vibrant new community?' Participants were asked to tick all issues that they felt applied, 3957 responses were given across 15 options.*
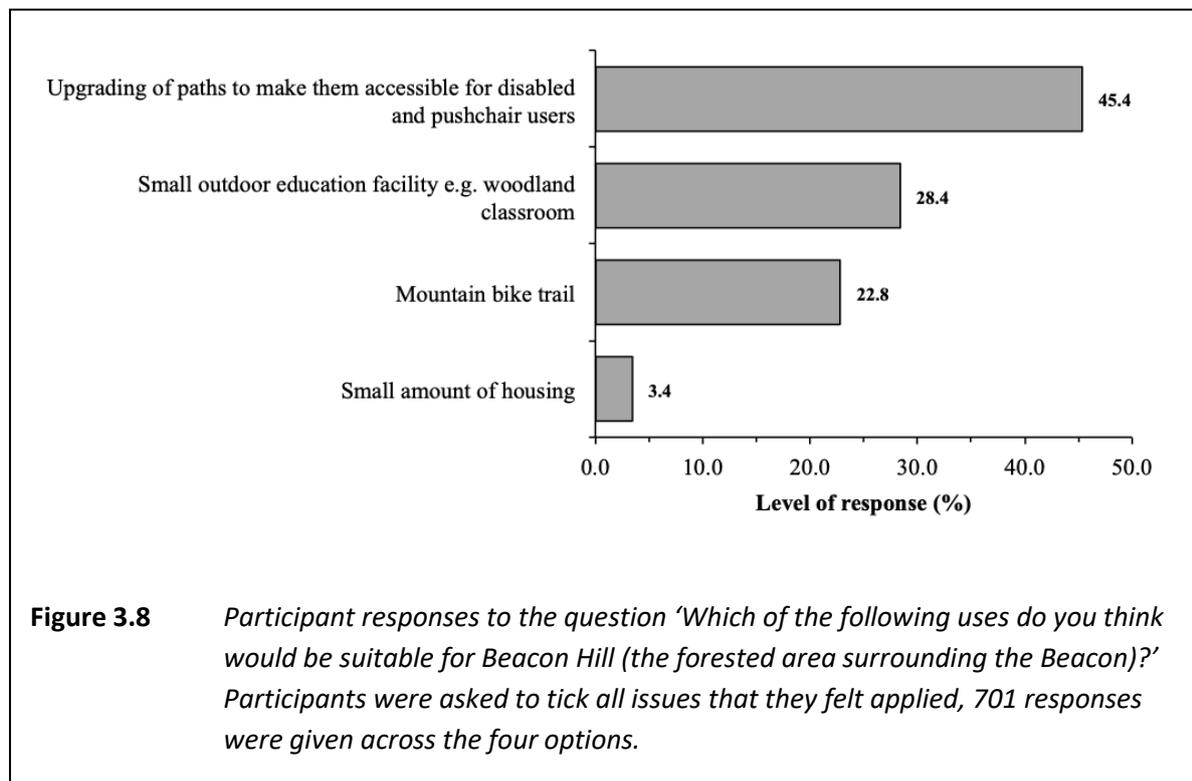
3.2.5   Beacon Hill usage

The area known as Beacon Hill was also a subject for consultation as part of the Penrith Masterplan engagement process. Participants were asked to consider a range of potential options for continuing and future use of the Beacon Hill area, described as the forested area surrounding the Beacon.

Four options were presented that described community use, recreational use, educational use and the potential for housing with participants asked to identify all options that they felt applied. Of 667 participants 378 (56.7%) participants provided 701 responses, an average of 1.9 choices per response, 231 (61.1%) of the participants selected more than one of the four options.

Broadly, when pooling all responses together, in terms of use suitability, a significant difference in selection response was observed. This difference is primarily driven by the high level of support for the *'Upgrading of paths to make them accessible for disabled and pushchair users'* (45.4%). Also observed as a contributor to significant difference was the low level of support for making use of Beacon Hill to provide a *'Small amount of housing'*, this use for Beacon Hill attracted the least number of responses (3.4%) (Fig 3.8).

Figure 3.8   *Participant responses to the question 'Which of the following uses do you think would be suitable for Beacon Hill (the forested area surrounding the Beacon)?' Participants were asked to tick all issues that they felt applied, 701 responses were given across the four options.*

When the multiple optionality is considered more nuance can be added to the responses. Whilst 107 (28.3% of total participant responses) participants selected '*Upgrading of paths to make them accessible for disabled and pushchair users*' as their only option a greater number of participants, 211 (55.8% of total participant responses) selected this option along with a variety of the other three choices. Of those 211 participants that selected the '*Upgrading of paths to make them accessible for disabled and pushchair users*' plus another option(s), the favoured choice was for a combination '*Upgrading of paths to make them accessible for disabled and pushchair users*' and '*Small outdoor education facility e.g. woodland classroom*' (36.5%).

When we consider multiple choices, those participants who selected more than one option, selections that include the '*Upgrading of paths to make them accessible for disabled and pushchair users*' are chosen in 35.5% of cases, multiple choices that include '*Mountain bike trail*' were selected in 26.9% of cases, '*Small outdoor education facility e.g. woodland classroom*' were selected in 33.5% of choices and a '*Small amount of housing*' was selected in 4.1% of multiple choices.

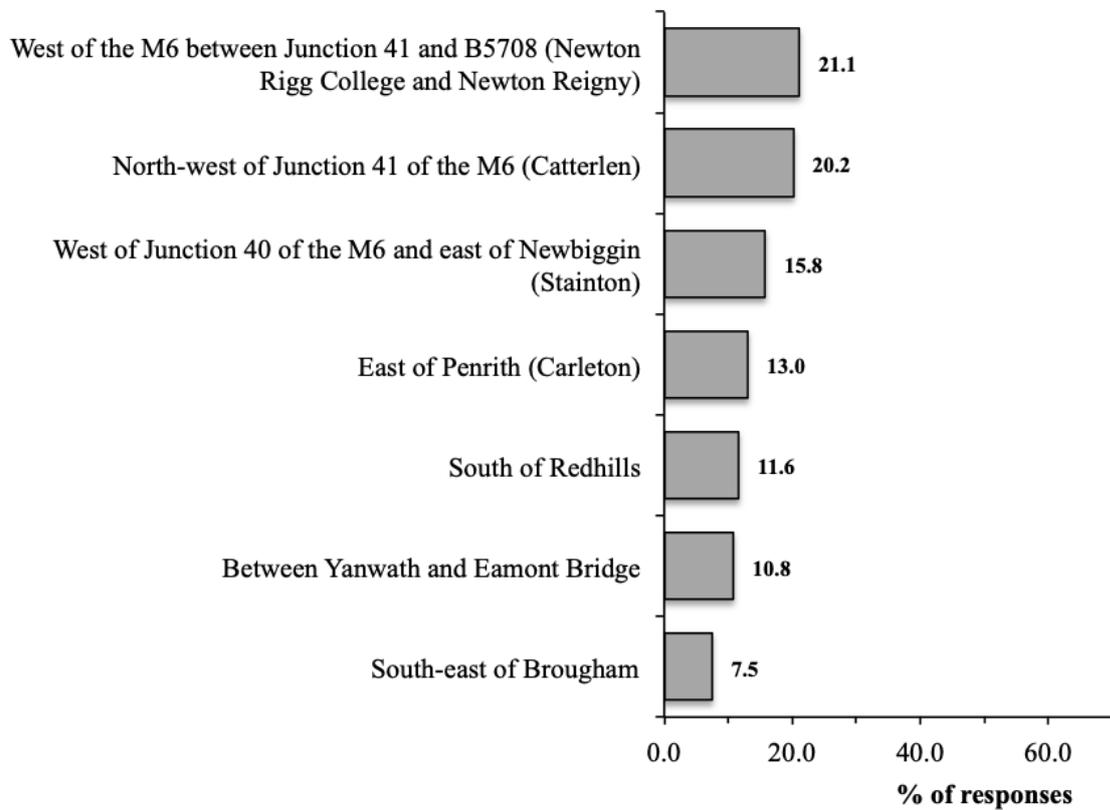### 3.2.6 Proposed location of the new settlements

Participants were asked whether they agreed with the location of the proposed new settlements. Four options were given: agree, partially agree, disagree and unsure. Of the 667 participants a total of 565 responded to this question, the dominant view was for a position of disagree (Fig 3.9).

Figure 3.9   *Participant responses to the question 'Do you agree with the location of the proposed new settlements?'*
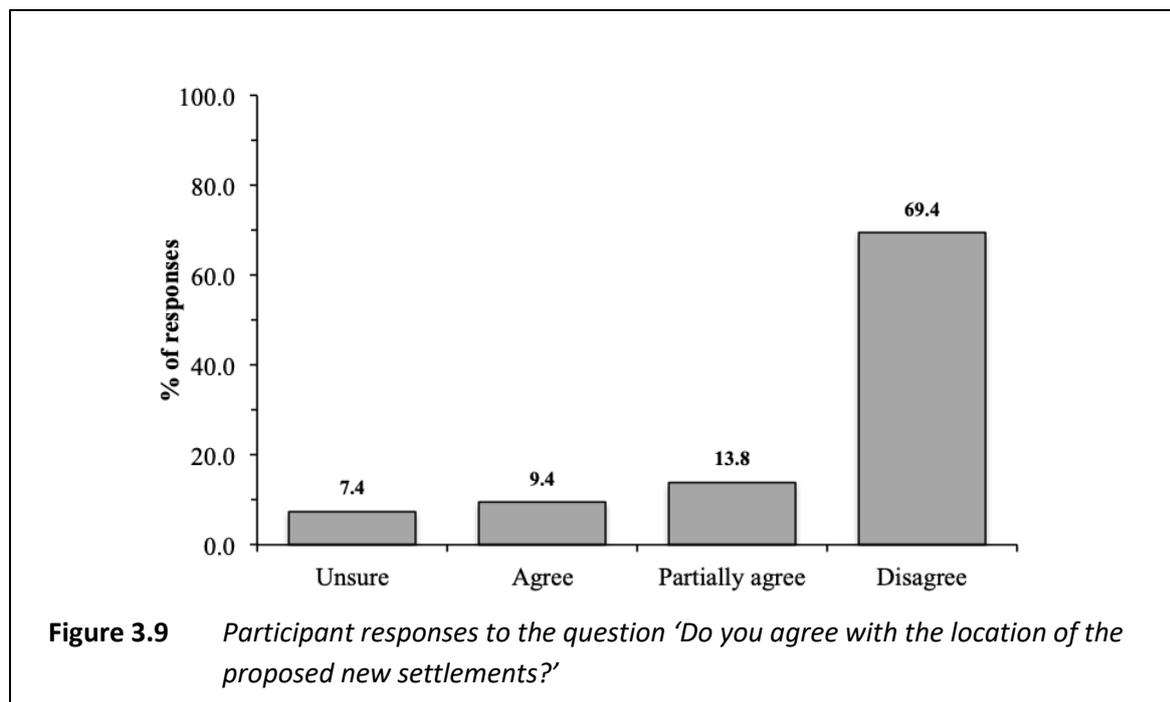
3.2.7 Alternative settlement locations

With regard to the location of any new settlement proposal, participants were asked to consider, from a provided list of options, locations that they believed warranted reconsideration and to be assessed in greater detail. As with other questions in the online survey participants were free to select all options that they felt applied.

Of the 667 participants 358 (53.7%) provided 843 responses, of these 89 participants (24.8%) provided single response answers. Two choices attracted the majority of responses: '*West of the M6 between Junction 41 and B5708 (Newton Rigg College and Newton Reigny)*' with 21.1% of total responses and '*North-west of Junction 41 of the M6 (Catterlen)*' with 20.2% of total responses (Fig 3.10).

Figure 3.10   *Participant responses to the question 'If you are concerned about the location of the proposed new settlements, do you believe that any of the areas previously assessed should be reconsidered and assessed in more detail?'*

4. Housing

Headline findings

The petition responses highlight a high level of concern about new village and Beacon developments. There is a substantial desire to protect the Beacon and to prevent the creation of nearby new villages, with a focus on providing more affordable homes for local people.

The most prominent theme across the age ranges is affordable housing. There are a range of comments within this wider theme concerning its provision, whether or not homes are affordable to local people in the context of the low wage economy, and the fact that there is no guarantee that affordable homes will be built.

The most significant idea for the future is converting empty and vacant buildings in the area into housing. This has been suggested by responses from all of the age ranges.

There are a number of concerns in relation to housing; this relates to developers not providing the required amount of affordable housing, the impact of the proposal upon the character of Penrith and the character of the new housing development, the lack of provision of housing for the elderly as well as the amount of second homes and holiday lets in the area.

The PSM centred on the construction of three new villages outside of Penrith, which aimed to tackle both the local and national requirements for housing, as well as issues of affordability in relation to average household incomes in the region. The plan proposed 5,560 new homes across the three Beacon villages, broken down into 2,470 new homes in the western village, 1,632 in the central village and 1,458 in the eastern village. It states that average house prices in Eden are 7.6 times higher than average household income. In line with the Eden Local Plan 2014-2032, the Council would continue to seek a minimum of 30% affordable housing on all new developments of over 11 units in Penrith.

Although not significant in terms of the overall supply of housing, the proposal to allow a small number of high quality homes or holiday lets to be built on the plateau behind the Beacon summit generated a great deal of interest and concern.

Petition responses focussed heavily on these two elements of housing development: the new villages and the change in use of the central area of the Beacon forest. Keep Penrith Special attracted 4780 signatories and signed postcards, based on a broad anti-masterplan manifesto that led with these two issues. Friends of the Beacon attracted 2693 signatories, based on a clear concern relating to the single issue of protecting the Beacon from development. Whilst there is undoubtedly some overlap between these petitions, they represent a very significant voice in relation to the population of Penrith, which is analysed more closely in section 3, above.

Young people (aged 11 to 24) primarily focused on the need to provide more affordable housing with one response stating there is a difference between 'affordable housing' and 'low cost housing'. There were also suggestions that the existing redundant buildings could be used to provide more housing in the area.

"What exactly is affordable housing?"

Working aged people (aged 25 to 65) raised a number of issues in relation to the proposal. Their responses primarily focused on affordable housing; the need to provide more and concerns that those houses which are termed 'affordable' are not affordable to local people due to the low wages in the area. In line with the responses from young people, there are suggestions that vacant buildings in Penrith could be used for housing, such as New Squares and the old Co-op building. One response suggests the possibility of enabling larger villages across Eden to become more viable by providing housing there, to support the local schools and facilities. Concerns have been raised about housing for elderly people and the growing implications of second home ownership.

"Insufficient low cost housing is a major problem."

"More provision for the growing elderly population in terms of suitable housing and adequate healthcare."

Retirement-aged people (aged 65+) share similar concerns to those in the other age ranges in relation to affordable housing. Responses outline the need for more genuinely affordable homes in the context of Eden's low wage economy and that this strategy document does not contain any guarantee that any affordable homes will be built. Similar to the suggestions above, responses pose the idea of utilising empty homes and vacant buildings in the area to assist in the provision of housing.

Numerous responses contain tones of suspicion around developers and if they actually provide the level of affordable housing initially approved, as some submit a viability assessment which reduces their affordable housing requirement.

In addition, this age range outline concerns with the character of new housing developments and the impacts of the proposals upon the character of Penrith as a market town.

"I have never come across a development where the promised number of affordable houses have come to fruition."

"Too many housing estates without character"

Numerous responses have been received in which **no age range** has been identified for respondents. Predominantly, these responses reflect those discussed above. The responses state that new development should be integrated into existing communities, affordable housing should be at a price affordable to local people, and second homes are still a concern. Responses suggest the possibility of housing development along the A6 and A66, along with the upgrading of the existing housing stock and converting empty buildings.

"Need to restrict second home owners"

"Empty spaces in the town and on bus routes should be utilised for small numbers of bungalows and affordable homes."

5. Economy

Headline findings

The strongest themes across the age ranges is the need to support local businesses and to provide more job opportunities in the area. A range of ideas have been put forward from across the age categories, with the most frequent suggestion being to reduce business rates to support local businesses. Other ideas suggested or supported include converting or renovating empty buildings, developing the industrial area at Junction 41, and supporting different forms of industry-government-academia collaboration to create centres of excellence.

There are also concerns about how the proposed 7,000 higher skilled jobs will be created, in reality. This highlights potential issues of trust in the underpinning rationale for some elements of the economic plan: whilst there may be compelling causal links between the construction of new homes, the designation of new industrial land, and positive long term employment prospects in the region, these links are not accepted by many respondents.

The PSM highlights the combined issues of almost full employment and full industrial estates in Penrith, yet with low average wage levels and their link to concerns about the affordability of housing. It proposes to assign 73 hectares of new employment land and ensure that it is landscaped to integrate with the surround areas. The goal is to create an attractive place for businesses to relocate to, and to remain as they grow. The document aims to support the creation of 7,000 jobs in Penrith through this approach.

Young people (aged 11 to 24) are primarily focused upon the need to support the local businesses in the area and to provide more higher paid job opportunities. Concerns were raised about the housing-led approach to this. Another idea considered is increasing the opportunities for local businesses to utilise the shop space in the New Squares complex.

> *"The Council's job creation policy seems to consist largely of building houses and hoping for the best."*

> *"Don't do any of this until new job opportunities are here."*

Working aged people (aged 25 to 65) focus upon similar ideas and concerns as young people (11 to 24); more support for local businesses and the need to provide more higher paid jobs. As with the housing section, above, there is concern about underutilised space within the town, which could be converted or renovated as business space.

Some responses highlighted the need to consider different, more focussed developmental ideas. At the industry level, ideas are presented about fostering links between farming and the food industry to create a centre of excellence around Penrith in conjunction with Newton Rigg and University of Cumbria. For individuals, there is a suggestion that focussing on managerial or interpersonal 'soft skills', and the training opportunities required locally, might facilitate the advancement of our workforce.

There is an underlying tone of concern across a number of responses about how the 7,000 jobs proposed in the document will be created, with some responses commenting that you cannot just build more houses and expect the job opportunities to follow.

In addition to this, responses express concern about the empty shops in the town centre and many suggest reducing business rates as one way of tackling this issue. There is overlap here with the section on the town centre, below, so key points relating to that aspect of the economy are addressed in more detail in that section. However, the concern for small business support is not limited to independent retailers that create a more distinctive town centre offering – comments suggest a need to support all smaller businesses in the region.

"You cannot just build new housing and expect that to reinvigorate the local economy – it makes no economic or planning sense."

"The number of empty shops in Penrith is a big concern – if the business rates were reduced for ALL businesses then it would attract businesses and hopefully being to regenerate the town centre."

"Where are these 7K jobs going to come from?"

"More support for very small independent businesses."

Retirement-aged people (aged 65+) share the views and concerns of young and working aged people as discussed above. One response suggests exploring the opportunity for links between the farming and food industry to create a centre of excellence around Penrith working with both Newton Rigg College and the University of Cumbria.

Concerns are expressed that Penrith will become a retirement town as only wealthier people, possibly moving in to the region as they downsize from areas further south with higher house prices, will be able to afford the house prices here. This, in turn, will have a knock on effect on the ability of young people and families to remain in Penrith, and so affect the vibrancy and youth of the town itself.

"It needs to retain its small, friendly, local, individual, market town feel, whilst attracting young business professionals to live here."

"It's a grand vision of zoning residential and business zones with no plan for how to make these become a reality."

6. Town centre

Headline findings

There is very significant concern that the experiences offered by Penrith Town Centre need to be greatly enhanced, for the benefit of residents but also to capture the tourism potential of a location at the gateway to the Lake District. Revitalising the farmers markets, stimulating visitor numbers through events, developing a cultural centre that can draw in tourists through holiday activities and performances, are all themes highlighted in multiple responses.

Functional concerns focus on two key issues: the empty shop fronts in town and in New Squares in particular, and the management of long stay parking. This latter point is an issue for those who want to see visitors staying longer, workers who wish to find economical parking near the centre, and individuals whose residential streets become de facto car parks for workers.

Lack of green spaces and easy access to nature are also of concern to many respondents, who highlight the poor green infrastructure within, and connected to, the town centre. This, in turn, leads to increased car traffic and prevents the town centre from becoming a green tourism hub.

6.1 Introduction

The engagement evidence suggests that two aspects of the PSM are of great interest to the people of Eden: the future of the town centre of Penrith, and the future of the Beacon. This report seeks to unpack that evidence in a more detailed way, as it relates to these two important themes. The aim is to generate a more academically informed understanding of the problems, and to connect this to all the concerns, insights and ideas that have come from the people of Eden as they took part in the engagement process.

This Town centre section of the report aims to help us fully understand the elements that make up the performance of the town, and in so doing, give us a clearer picture of its pivotal role in the economy and society. This, in turn, should help us to think more clearly about the policies that might be required to support the town centre of Penrith.

6.2 Analytical approach

The core framework that we will use to analyse the engagement data when looking at Penrith town centre is a model developed by Stocchi, Hart and Haji (2016)[3] . Through their framework we can break down the data covering the town centre into two groups of separate elements, which come together to create the town centre customer experience. This allows us to look carefully at what drives high quality, or low quality, experiences for those visiting the town and offers a range of immediate and potential longer term interventions to improve that experience.

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[3] This model was first presented by its author, Dr Cathy Hart of Loughborough University, to a workshop attended by key individuals from Eden District Council, Penrith Town Council, Penrith Chamber of Trade, and both of the BIDs, in January 2019.

6.3 Town centre customer experience – overview of theory

The Stocchi, Hart and Haji (2016) model was used to create a set of key concepts that could shape our view of the town centre. These are split into two groupings:
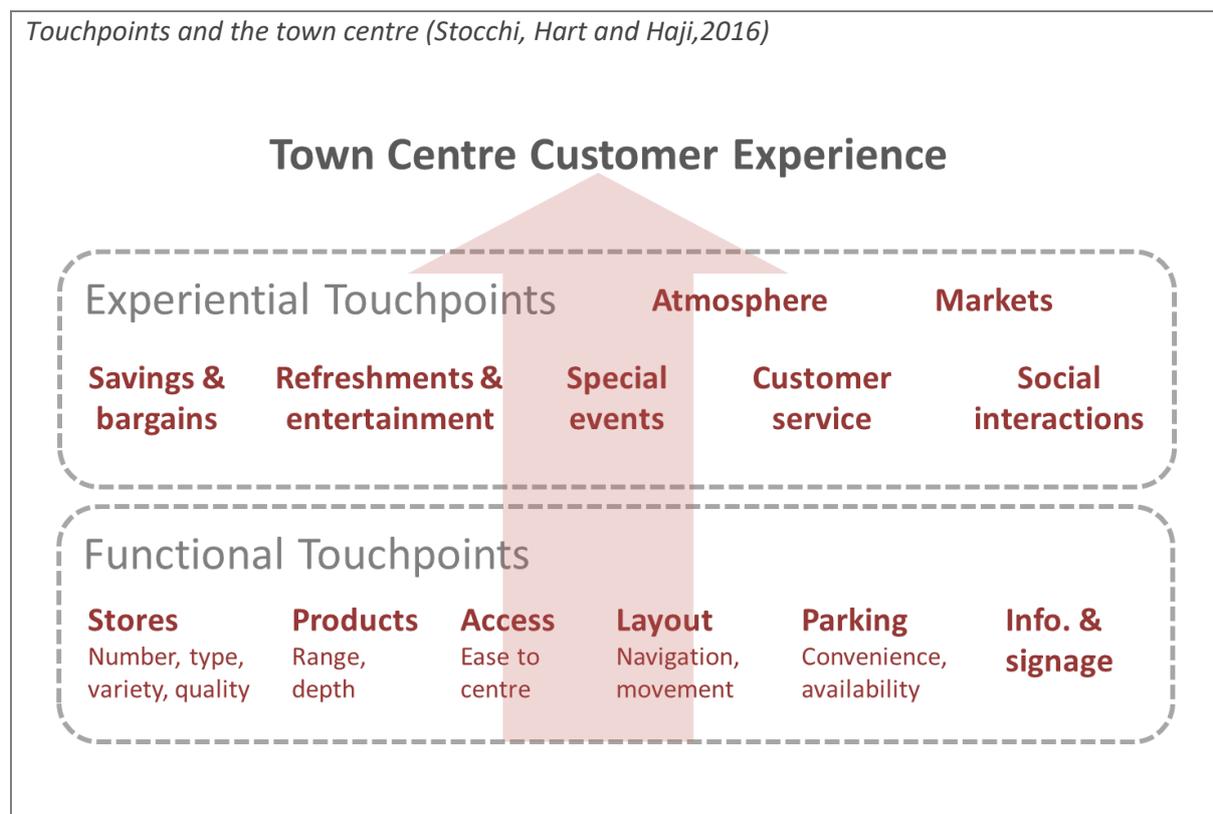
Functional touchpoints –
These are the real, physical aspects of a town that customers connect with on their visits, and which deliver quite straight forward, functional value. These are generally considered to be the hygiene factors of the town centre, in that they need to be good enough to keep people from feeling frustrated or unhappy with their experience of the town, but by themselves they are not guaranteed to make people keep revisiting.

Experiential touchpoints –
These trigger emotional responses in those visiting a town centre, creating memorable experiences that are likely to make them revisit and recommend the location (if, of course, the experience is a positive one). These are essential if we want to offer a town centre with more than a basic utilitarian value to visitors.

When we draw together an analysis of these groups of factors, we can then begin to see what the overall Town Centre Customer Experience ('TCCE') looks like, and what might be done to improve it. The touchpoints model is represented visually below.

Touchpoints and the town centre (Stocchi, Hart and Haji,2016)

Town Centre Customer Experience

Experiential Touchpoints

Atmosphere   **Markets**

| **Savings & bargains** | **Refreshments & entertainment** | **Special events** | **Customer service** | **Social interactions** |

Functional Touchpoints

| **Stores** | **Products** | **Access** | **Layout** | **Parking** | **Info. & signage** |
| Number, type, variety, quality | Range, depth | Ease to centre | Navigation, movement | Convenience, availability | |

6.4 Functional touchpoints analysis

Stores & Products – There was a strong and common theme running through the data in relation to the New Squares development and a desire to see those empty units filled, and EDC taking steps to incentivise businesses to commit to occupying them. There are other broader concerns about the number of empty units, and many suggestions that these should be converted into residential flats our housing.

The nature of these stores is also a very important concern, with many highlighting a desire to see more interesting, smaller or craft-type shops in town. This is in direct contrast to the many comments worrying about an apparent increase in the number of retail units that are perceived as being of either lower value, or serving a utilitarian function rather than generating an interesting retail space, including charity shops, discount shops, takeaway food shops, nail bars, hair dressers and estate agents. Whilst these stores all fulfil an important function on the high street, and provide both revenue generation and employment, the broader concern is with the distinctiveness of the Penrith shopping experience, and whether it is good enough. On this point, opinions varied widely.

"Address the problem of empty high street shops and those in the New Squares area that have never been filled since completion."

"We have a surfeit of supermarkets, charity shops and barbers, but nothing of great interest or distinctiveness to bring people in."

"Penrith is known for its lovely shops."

Parking – The issue of parking generated a great deal of comment, with quite a clear set of concerns that emerges consistently across the entire data set. Long term parking is a key issue, whether it is for workers coming in to Penrith from outlying villages, or for visitors to the town. In both cases there is concern that they are restricted by parking that has limited availability, poor visibility, and with most space restricting their stay to under 3 hours (the limit in the large car park by Sainsburys). This is perceived to be a major disincentive for tourists in particular. A number of suggestions have been made, as shown in the quotations below.

The issue of long-stay parking spills over into concerns about residential parking. The lack of spaces for workers or long stay visitors in the town centre car parks is pushing incoming drivers out into the unrestricted zones surrounding the town, causing traffic congestion and frustration amongst local residents. A broader concern is also noticed about residential parking, but whether this could be resolved by addressing the worker / visitor parking issue is unclear.

"The absence of low cost or free long stay carparking within a car-bourn rural economy would be a disincentive to both locals and visitors alike to visit and work in the town centre."

"Cheap long term parking for workers would stop parking in residential areas SLDC are doing £1 for the day if parking before 8am"

"Residents parking is woefully inadequate where we live, and cars are parked illegally on a daily basis often causing access problems for other residents"

Access, layout and signage – The creation of a town centre that is much friendlier to pedestrians is a common theme that cuts across many of the comments in this section. There are many calls for pedestrianisation of the centre, but just as prominent are concerns about pedestrian access more broadly, on roads around the centre with increasing traffic and too few pedestrian crossings.

There are some calls for better public transport, and a belief that it is not simply the busses themselves but the entire provision – such as bus shelters and the tidying up of the bus station itself – that might encourage more public transport use. Some comments are made about green transport, including better provision for cycle access, as well as more general steps to encourage the development and use of a much wider cycle network.

At the same time as these calls for greener transport solutions, there appears to be a level of acceptance that access to town is dominated by the private car, and that improved traffic management is important. Issues relating to signage, for both drivers and pedestrians, are raised. For those driving in to Penrith we may not be actively and effectively directing them, to ensure that they enjoy easy access to the most appropriate parts of town, and car parks. Once on foot, the town has limited maps and information boards to support first time visitors.

> *"Of course traffic will find the quickest and least congested route to the town centre and whilst the PSM shows improved junctions along Beacon Edge it is difficult to see how anything can be 'improved'."*

> *"Carlisle has a much better selection [of shops] and once you develop to the north of town, with easy access to jn 41, if the parking and retail problems of Penrith are not resolved, all new residents will do is head north rather than 'visit' Penrith (because they will not actually be living IN Penrith)."*

> *"Support provision of better bus services eg more bus only lanes, improve the Bus Station, more bus shelters at bus stops - the aim being to reduce car usage hence reduce congestion."*

> *"Designated pedestrian area in town centre with adequate cheap car parking accessible from ALL approaches into town."*

> *"Pedestrianize town centre to make it a more agreeable place, free from traffic noise and fumes."*

6.5 Experiential touchpoints analysis

Atmosphere & social interactions – The engagement data contained a great many passionate comments about the atmosphere of the town centre, and extended this to beliefs about the very nature of the town and its value as part of our regional identity. There are references to the historic nature of shop fronts, the character of the centre, the fact that it is quiet and small and yet at the same time contains a number of interesting and unique independent retailers. However, blended with these positive attributes is a real sense of fear about what is being lost, or might already be lost: whether it is really a market town, whether it has lost its vibrancy as a social place, and whether it ought to be more aspirational about its role as a regional hub, a gateway to the Lakes and Dales.

The Beacon also features in the discussions about the atmosphere and identity of the town centre. Rather than being seen as something separate, a hill above the town, it is often described as being integral to the town centre atmosphere, framing many views, and creating an iconic backdrop that shapes the visual identity of Penrith.

"Penrith is a quiet small market town and that's what I LOVE about it."

"Penrith lives in the past: once a great market town but with the decline of agriculture as an industry it has never moved forward."

"Maintaining its uniqueness as a market town with independent retailers."

"Protect the Beacon and rest of ridge to preserve views and context of town in landscape."

Markets – There are calls for a regular, significant market to be reinstated in Penrith. The relatively recent loss of the monthly Tuesday market that filled Great Dockray is seen as an indicator that the town may not be a market town any more. The fact that this is, historically, an agricultural town and still has bi-weekly auction markets at the Penrith & District Auction Mart is not seen as significant in this context: there is a strong expectation that the town will have a market for consumers, in the town centre.

The role of markets in attracting tourists has also received attention in the engagement data, and the comparison with Keswick and its very busy market is noted. The role that markets could play in building the overall attractiveness of the town centre, as a place where people visit and linger, is raised. This point chimes with much academic evidence, that suggests the value of markets to the broader retail economy, as events that do not compete with local shops but rather act as powerful magnets to visitors and local residents alike.

"Revive a regular market in town and pedestrianise the town centre, to encourage visitors to stay and browse."

"It thinks it's a market town, but doesn't really have a market, needs a new identity."

"Hold a regular market, not just the Farmers Market."

Entertainment, attractions & events – The desire to have some kind of cultural or arts centre in Penrith comes through very strongly in the evidence. Comparisons are made to the focal arts facilities in nearby towns such as Brewery Arts in Kendal and Theatre by the Lake in Keswick to highlight a belief that Penrith has a relatively weak position in the region. Support for local organisations and local engagement is highlighted, with suggestions that this needs to be a place where people can meet and be active, as well as being entertained.

Within these calls for greater arts-based entertainment and engagement is a strong theme of community. People greatly value places and events that draw together communities and make them part of the spectacle, not merely observers. The Winter Droving gets many positive mentions, as an iconic event that has rapidly become part of the cultural identity of Penrith.

The suggestion is that entertainment and attractions within the town must serve multiple functions: drawing in tourism and revenue, providing entertainment for local residents, connecting communities and enhancing our sense of place and identity, and finally offering performance opportunities and support for grass roots community-based arts groups.

"Improving the range of easy-access cultural provision, both informal/open space and venue-based, daytime and evening."

"More community events to promote social cohesion."

"More events/festivals in the town in summer, as other places do it and people flock in and spend money."

"The place needs more life, the theatre could be built up, and the local arts organisations."

One particular quote highlights the role of culture, events and the public realm in helping to ensure that any *extension of the town* is consciously made a *part of the town*, socially as well as through built infrastructure (roads, cycle lanes etc.):

"We need a public space, events and a public space, that allows us to unite the new developments with the existing town, through a shared sense of place."

6.5 Summary

The people of Penrith and the wider Eden District place a great deal of value on Penrith town centre, and this value extends into every aspect of the space and its multiple roles in society:

- **Retail.** On a very practical level there is a desire to see more stores and more activity, ideally based on more independent retailers that generate interesting rather than purely functional shopping experiences. There seems to be an understanding that a much wider range of issues needs to be addressed first, to create the footfall required to sustain any retail growth.

- **Markets.** There is a very strong desire to see markets back in the centre of Penrith. These could be regular trading events, or the kind of celebration and place shaping events that Eden Arts have created with their Winter Droving.

- **Culture.** The town falls short of its neighbours in the eyes of many, and needs a central space that can deliver arts based activities, become a social space, and a place for performance.

- **Tourism.** Penrith lies just 15 minutes away from the shores of Ullswater and has tried to badge itself as the Gateway to the Lakes, yet the benefits of tourism are not felt within the town centre as much as many would like.

- **Environmental.** The relationship between Penrith and its immediate surroundings has come under great scrutiny in this engagement process. The need for easier access to the Beacon, to green spaces in the town, and to natural spaces surrounding town could all enhance the town centre as both a place to live and a hub from which to explore the region.

Underpinning the themes above are issues of infrastructure, parking and layout. Whilst these may not distinguish a town, there are clearly concerns that need to be addressed both now, and as the town seeks to grow. Critically, though, we must be mindful that as Penrith grows it is the combined needs for cultural, social, environmental and infrastructural connectivity that will protect the sense of place and the strength of local communities.

7. Tourism

Headline findings

The importance of the local landscape for attracting tourists and future residents into the local area is highlighted, and Penrith's position in relation to the Lake District National Park.

The attractiveness of Penrith town centre as a destination, with more pleasant pedestrianised streets, cheaper parking, the provision of some cultural space, and support for public events and art, represents the main view of how to benefit more from tourism.

The strategy document recognises the importance of tourism to the Eden District, with the links to two national parks, the coast to coast cycle route, and a range of tourist destinations such as Center Parcs, The Rheged Discovery Centre and other activities in the wider area. The strategy identifies the potential for Penrith to make more of the tourist opportunities in Eden including ideas to increase hotel stock, new wet weather attractions, improving the signage into and around the town, and providing inexpensive long stay car parking.

In comparison to the number of responses received in other sections of the strategy document, the fewer responses relating to tourism were received.

Young people (11-24) did not raise any comments in relation to tourism in the responses received through the online survey.

Working-age people (aged 25 to 65) present the most responses on this topic. They recognise the need to find a balance in the area for tourists and the local people who live here. Responses recognised the importance of the landscape of the Eden area and Penrith's position in relation to the Lake District National Park. Ideas from responses suggest the pedestrianisation of Penrith town centre, cheaper parking in Penrith, more support for public events and public art.

> *"Create a gateway hub for Lake District tourist using sustainable transport and local tour operators (like Iceland)"*

> *"Penrith has beautiful areas for cycling and walking on its doorstep, there is an opportunity to promote green tourism that will be killed off if traffic levels rise on local roads and the Eden valley."*

Retirement-age people (aged 65+) shared similar responses to the above with the idea of providing greater cultural space in the form of a theatre, gallery or concert venue in Penrith and the importance of the natural landscape which attracts people to the area.

> *"This landscape is what visitors come to see and this type of landscape is one reason people chose to live here."*

8. Education

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Headline findings

Overall, people across the age ranges express concerns about existing village schools and secondary school places. There is a feeling that a lack of support for the existing village schools is a problem that needs to be addressed, and new developments will exacerbate existing concerns about the pressure on secondary schools, and lack of availability of places for local people.

Developing the tertiary educational offer at Newton Rigg College while also building collaborations with industry and academia, or better links to the natural environment and its potential educational value, are all seen as issues that should be explored further.

The concerns over education connect to those relating to infrastructure and environment, with comments about cycle networks that are safe for school aged children to use for commuting.

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The strategy document envisages three new primary schools and an additional secondary school for around 900 pupils. It wishes to broaden the scope of education around Penrith especially focusing upon environmental technology and supporting the expansion of Newton Rigg College.

Young people (aged 11 to 24) made relatively few comments, buts some expressed concern about the future of the existing schools, and how the choices people made as development proceeds might affect them, given that some will not want to test out entirely new schools in new locations.

Working aged people (aged 25 to 65) express concern for the lack of support for the existing village schools, the pressure on the existing secondary schools, with particular concern about the availability of school places to local people. Ideas for the future include increased support for the existing village schools, and an increase in the specialisms offered at Newton Rigg College.

Many draw links between education, transport and the natural environment, for example suggesting the possibility of providing a full bicycle network to access the schools as well as looking to the natural environment in the District for future education opportunities.

> *"Good education opportunities: build more school places, provide subsidised housing for head teachers, increase Newton Rigg specialisms"*

> *"Full bicycle (protected) network to access all town schools and residential areas."*

Retirement-aged people (aged 65+) and responses in which **no age range** has been identified broadly cover those issues discussed above, and in particular the lack of support for existing village schools. In addition, mention is made of seeking out opportunities for growth or differentiation through the creation of centres of excellence, linking industry and academia in specific, relevant fields.

> *"The town schools do not have the capacity to cope."*

> *"Support existing schools and education."*

9. The Beacon

Headline findings

The Beacon is as an important 'community green asset': residents appreciated the presence of a tranquil **green space** for leisure, relaxation and wildlife habitat close to the town. The Beacon is predominantly a resource for local people, a **community asset**, and whilst there was some acceptance that sympathetic development, particularly in relation to paths and access, was required, the overwhelming response was one of **protection** and **preservation,** in part due to its important role as a **place of wellness – for healthy, tranquil and accessible leisure.**

9.1 Beacon Hill: Connections to Place

The PSM notes the historic and cultural significance of Beacon Tower alongside the ecological and recreational value of Beacon Hill (henceforth both referred to as 'the Beacon'). The PSM also notes that due to the ecological, visual and historical sensitivities of the site certain principles will need to be adopted to minimise impact should there be future development.

'Sense of place' and place attachment are important considerations when development and landscape change is proposed. There is evidence that attachment to place strengthens concern about landscape change and development, and helps motivate community action and engagement.

A key issue in landscape planning is understanding how local attitudes, perceptions and associations can be reflected when managing change and development; *how do communities define a sense of place that is meaningful to them?* As the PSM raises a number of options concerning developing the Beacon, EDC specifically focused on the Beacon as part of their consultation process.

Five key themes emerge from our analysis of the engagement data:- *'greenness'*, *'wildness'*, *'community ownership'*, *'health/well-being'*, and *'develop?'*. Word clouds have been generated based on the most frequently occurring words (figures 9.1 – 9.5), to illustrate the opinions expressed through this engagement exercise, and the comments are then analysed under each theme.

9.2. Greenness Theme

Figure 9.1 Visualisation of most frequently used words relating to greenness

The term 'green' is commonly used to describe anything that is 'natural' and 'life-enhancing' in the broadest sense. Respondents using phrases such as green space(s), green lungs, green corridor, *'essential green space' 'green shield'* and *'green asset'* to describe the naturalness of the Beacon. This view was particularly strong amongst the 25-65 group who referred to the Beacon as a *'valuable green space'*, a *'green area' 'green corridor'* and a *'well-loved green space.'*

*"The Beacon should be protected as an unspoilt green space"*

"Our iconic Beacon and green spaces should be protected"

"Maintain Beacon Hill as an accessible green space with no building development…preserve a wildlife area and a site promoting health and well-being"

"It should be kept as a green space and…acquire it all for use of local people"

9.3. Wildness Theme

Figure 9.2 *Visualisation of most frequently used words relating to wildness*
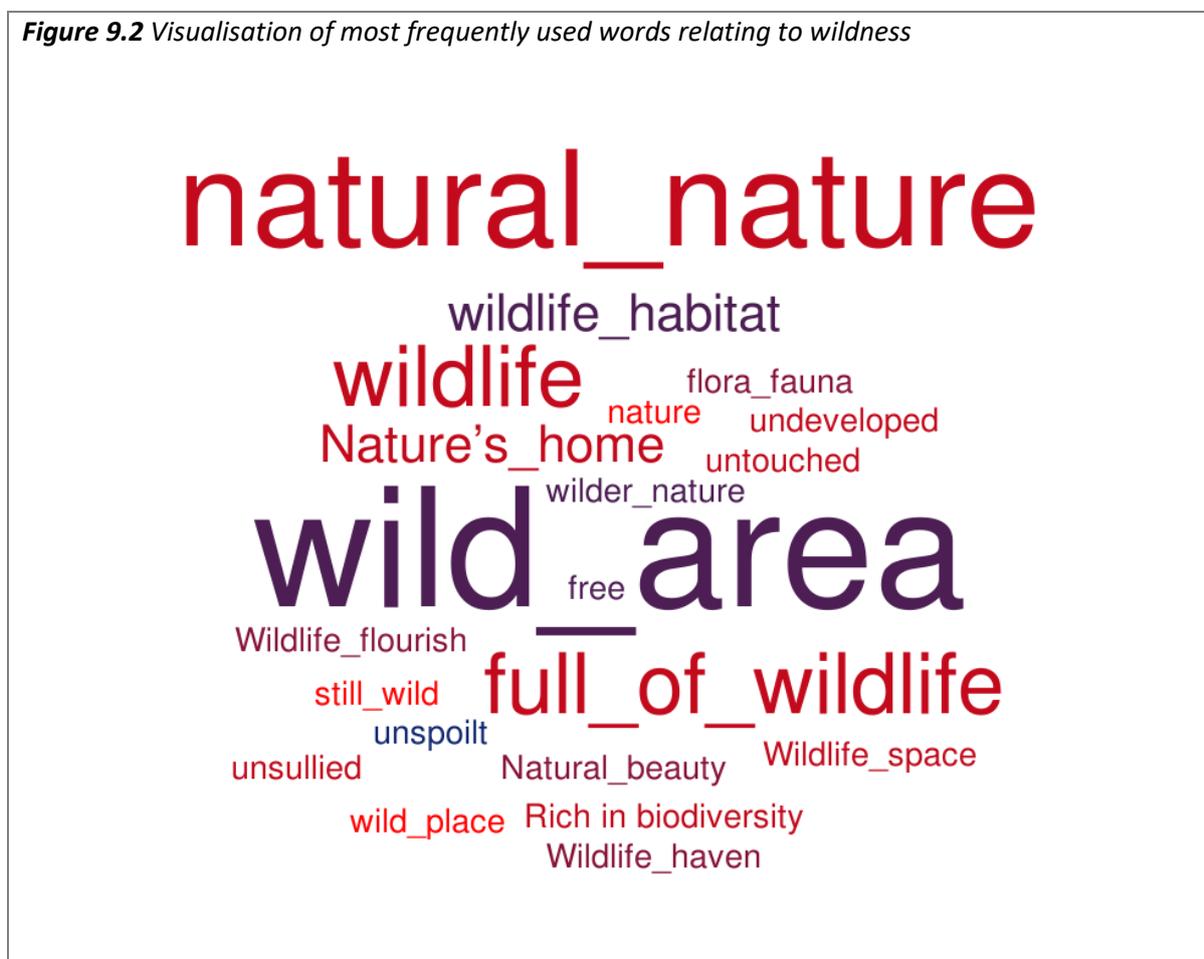
Wildness is not only a quality associated with remote landscapes; it can also apply (to varying degrees) to green spaces in and around urban areas. The term wild was used to describe the naturalness of the Beacon. Respondents clearly value the wildlife and perceived naturalness of the Beacon, using terms like *'wildlife' 'natural landscape', 'wild place', 'wild area' 'undeveloped'* and

'wild nature'. The 25-65 group mentioned how a *'varied amount of wildlife flourished'* on the Beacon, it was an important '*habitat for wildlife', 'a natural space',* and a *'wild area'.* Amongst the 65+ group, the Beacon was referred to as a '*wild place'*, somewhere that was *'natural'* and *'undeveloped', 'unsullied'* and *'unspoilt',* and an *'area for wildlife habitat.'*

> *"Just leave it alone, it's a wild area"*

> *"Many animals have their homes in the forest and will be driven out by building work and increased footfall"*

> *"The Beacon should remain a wild place…for limited quiet use by walkers…but for the wildlife more than these visitors"*

9.4. Heath & Well-being Theme

Figure 9.3 *Visualisation of most frequently used words relating to health and wellbeing in relation to the Beacon*

Research on the health and well-being effects of green space has been rapidly expanding over the past decades, and that there is good evidence that regular contact with green space can enhance well-being and alleviate stress, and may even mitigate income-related health inequalities regarding chronic diseases and life expectancy.

There was an appreciation of the *'peace'* and *'tranquillity'* of the Beacon; it was a *'valuable recreational area'* for *'walking'* and *'relaxing',* crucial to the *'health'* and *'well-being of Penrith'.* Across the 25-65 group, people commented on the *'unique tranquil'* character of the Beacon, an

'idyllic' place *'local people can enjoy'*. The 65+ commented most on health and well-being, focusing on the importance of *'public access for walking'* for those *'prepared to respect it'*.
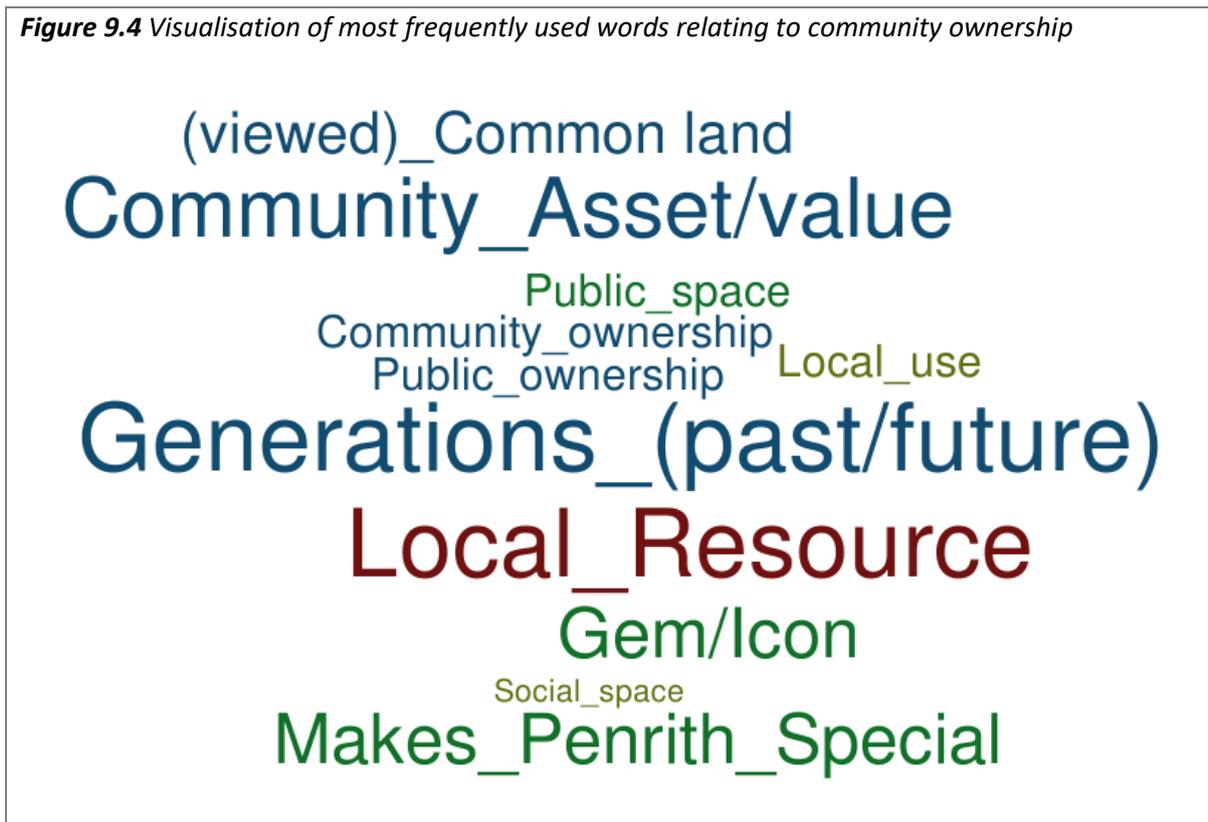
"It's a place of peace people can go which is a rare gem so close to a town"

"[Risk] losing unique tranquil areas that conserve and support local wildlife"

"The Beacon forest gives Penrith such an important landmark and place for leisure and relaxation"

9.5. Community Ownership Theme

Figure 9.4 *Visualisation of most frequently used words relating to community ownership*

Whilst there was recognition that the Beacon was private land, there was a strong sense that this was a community asset and was *de facto* under public/community ownership. This was also a 'forward-looking' perspective; the Beacon should remain *'wild for generations to come'*, *'unspoilt for future generations'*. It is a local *'gem'*, an *'icon'* for the *'citizens of Penrith.'* There was also perceived need to take the Beacon *'back into public ownership'*, *'it should be a resource for local people, unspoilt for future generations.'* Similarly, the 25-65 group spoke of the Beacon as somewhere the *'town people have loved for generations'*, *'a public space'* of important *'community heritage.'*

"[Register it] as a community asset, public open space"

"Maintaining the Beacon as a haven for wildlife and a special place for future generations"

"It should be a resource for locals who are prepared to respect it and make an effort, not a tourist attraction or community leisure facility"

9.6. Develop? Theme

Figure 9.4 *Visualisation of most frequently used words relating to development*

No_interpretation/packaging
'Enhancement'
Improve_paths
Improve_car_park
Keep_Natural
Protect/Preserve
Risk
Destroy/spoil
Improve_local_access
Dreadful/Appalling
Leave_alone

Whilst some respondents recognised the need to *'improve public access'* and *'repair footpaths'*, there were many concerns that inappropriate development could *'spoil or ruin'* the Beacon and that it was an area worthy of *'protection'* and *'preservation'.* It should be *'kept', 'protected', 'maintained'* as a *'green space'.* The *'community doesn't want packaged nature* or *'interpretation'.*

The need to protect the Beacon was strongest amongst the 65+ group, who raised concerns about inappropriate *'interpretations* and *'additional infrastructure,* the area should not become *'a tourist attraction.'* Whilst there were similar sentiments amongst the 25-65 group, there was also a recognition that the area could be *'enhanced'* and *'access improved'* by creating and/or improving *'paths'.*

> *"Retain public spaces and wildlife, e.g. the Beacon"*

> *"I find it very depressing that development on the Beacon would even be considered an option"*

> *"Creating Country Parks…is unnecessary if Beacon Hill is left as an area for wildlife habitat"*

9.7. Summary

Beacon Hill exerts a strong sense of place in Penrith. A well-recognised town landmark that dates back to 1296, it has forewarned of numerous Scottish and Reiver raids over the subsequent centuries. To borrow from Escobar (2001), we were interested in how Penrith residents *encounter* the Beacon, *perceive* the Beacon and *endow* the Beacon with significance.

The relationship between people and place is important for individual and community identity; there are often deep emotional and psychological ties between people and place, and this relationship is part of the complex processes through which individuals and communities define themselves and where they live (Convery et al, 2012).

In effect, place is bound up in people's sources of meaning and experience; people and their environments, places and identities are mutually constructed and constituted (Harvey, 2001). Sense of place may be derived from the natural environment, but it is more often made up of a mix of natural and cultural features in the landscape. As Casey (1996: 18) indicates, 'to live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in'. Thus, sense of place in landscape can be defined by strong human-made and natural features that define a mood in the landscape and can provide a sense of place that affects large areas. For example, the Angel of the North sculpture has become a symbol of entry to the Gateshead/Newcastle area (Roe, 2012).

The Beacon is seen by the people of Penrith as a *'community asset'*, a *'tranquil' 'green space'*, a *'wild area'* that is important to *'protect'*.

There is evidence of a strong connection to place, and whilst this requires further study, such a perspective presents both challenges and opportunities for EDC**.** When planning new developments or landscape change it is important (and often challenging) to consider how to conserve existing sense of place, sometimes built up over many years, in highly valued landscapes (Roe, 2012). Similar to Sanna & Eja (2017) we note how the character of the Beacon seems to give rise to feelings of connectedness and sense of place, people clearly feel passionate about the Beacon, and it is highly valued as an asset for the town and community. There is also an apparent '**intergenerational connectedness'** to the Beacon that is worthy of further study.

Both the 2018 DEFRA 25 Year Plan and the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals highlight the benefits of community engagement with nature, and in particular the need for 'place-based decision making' to empower local communities to engage with, and cherish, natural heritage. This presents an opportunity for EDC to develop a different approach to community engagement and to build a trusting and genuinely collaborative relationship with local communities - spanning individuals, landowners, business, community groups and others - to co-develop the Beacon. Linked to this, there is also a need for further research to understand how specific groups (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) and communities perceive and value the Beacon.

10. Health & wellbeing

Headline findings

The strongest theme to emerge is that there should be more accessible green space in Penrith. People aged 11-24 have expressed a desire for "*more parks and public spaces*" with this continuously re-iterated in the responses from across the age categories. We can also see a call to "*Improve, link and add to public green spaces*" along with a broader goal of creating more open spaces, of whatever kind, for people to socialise in.

There are also concerns over healthcare facilities. This frequently occurring theme relates to both existing and planned services in the area, with numerous calls for "*investment in the local hospital and facilities*".

The strategy document proposes a range of ideas to support healthier lifestyles, such as better cycle lanes and walkways, as well as a more general increase in the provision of health services that would be in line with the increasing population. The key themes emerging from the engagement data in relation to this are summarised below.

Young people (aged 11 to 24) focussed very much on the provision of public open space, retaining and protecting existing spaces, and increasing the amount of public open space in the Eden area.

Working-age people (aged 25 to 65) show a strong concern for preserving the natural environment and the existing public open spaces, again with a desire to increase the amount of accessible green space. This desire for community spaces and more community interaction extends beyond green space, however. Ideas suggested include more events in the town centre, the creation of a dedicated arts and cultural centre, and the creation of a woodland play area.

Support was shown for the idea of greenways connecting in to the town from surrounding villages, and the need for more careful infrastructure planning being linked to health and wellbeing concerns. However, concerns were raised about the impact of growth on communities already in place.

With increasing concerns nationally about food provenance, Eden's agricultural strength was highlighted through a suggestion to support local food self-sufficiency in the District.

Retirement-age people (aged 65+) shared similar concerns to the groups above, with an increased focus on the need for the creation of more open spaces where people can socialise. This chimes with other comments about the lack of a central park or green space in the town of Penrith.

"I would like to see walking groups on the Beacon, for parents and toddlers, older people, people with mental health problems."

"Look at Sheffield with its green wedges to see how green routes into a town or city can make it a great place to live and consequently prosper."

11. Transport, utilities & infrastructure

> **Headline findings**
>
> **There is not one overarching theme which presents itself as the most prominent amongst responses, but rather, a range of ideas and concerns.** There are broad concerns about traffic management and the limitations of existing, or even future infrastructure to cope with the proposed expansion. Some suggest a focus on development along the A6/M6 and A66 corridor in. Responses also seek support for pedestrian and cycle-focused infrastructure around and beyond town centre, with suggestion of a cycle network between the schools and residential areas.

The strategy document discusses congestion in the centre of Penrith and on other main roads, and the need to address this as part of a broader review that includes the upgrading of the A6/M6 junction, and the better utilisation of junction 41 of the motorway.   In relation to utilities and infrastructure, there is a strong focus on sustainable technologies including solar and underground heat sources, linked to more community-centre power generation approaches.

Young people (aged 11 to 24) provide a low number of responses, but do suggest that money should be invested in the existing town and not diverted to that proposed Beacon villages, as they are located further away from Penrith and have an inferior road infrastructure.

Working aged people (aged 25 to 65) are concerned that it will be difficult to resist a supermarket development in the villages, which will then detract from Penrith town centre. There are, again, broad themes relating to the cultural and environmental infrastructure of the existing and expanded town, with suggestion for an arts centre and better environmental considerations. Some see the A6/M6 and A66 corridors as the ideal locations for future developments. Many respondents comment on walking and cycling infrastructure, wanting more pedestrian crossings in busy areas outside of the town centre and more public footpaths and cycle ways direct from the town centre.

"Establish a master plan which retains the Beacon as it is, allocates appropriate residential and commercial building land, and invests in appropriate transport infrastructure"

"Far better to build on the current strong sense of community and belonging, and expand in adjacent areas along the A6/M6 corridor, giving easier access to existing facilities"

Retirement aged people (aged 65+) and those who did not disclose their age continue the themes above. Concerns are raised that there are physical limits to existing infrastructure, which will be unable to cope with an increase in the population, and the impacts of the new industrial area. An idea for the future includes ensuring money is spent on infrastructure to ensure that there is no impact on Penrith from any development plans. Some respondents suggest that a more sustainable approach is required, focussing on green infrastructure and sustainable transport.

"Penrith infrastructure is inadequate for large increase in population"

"Any development on this scale should be taken as an opportunity to do things very differently, underpinned by green infrastructure and active, sustainable transport"

12. Conclusions: What is valuable in Eden

During this engagement process the residents of Eden have given some clear information to their council about what they value. Our analysis reveals some important issues of concern, issues that are reflected in other data and analysis that EDC has either commission or gathered informally. However, it is important to note that this process focussed on individuals rather than businesses. This means that whatever we conclude from this report, we need to be aware that more needs to be done to understand how these ideas connect with the needs and plans of the business community.

There is already increasing collaboration between EDC, the Town Council, the town BIDs and Penrith Chamber of Trade. We have also been involved in co-hosting business events in collaboration with the Chamber and EDC. As the ideas coming from residents are turned into themed projects or priorities, the impact on business always needs to be assessed if we are to protect and build a thriving economy. Yet the tensions between the apparent needs of business, for example the desire for a much larger potential workforce, and the concerns of residents about where those people will live and in what kinds of houses, need to be openly discussed and carefully addressed as we move towards a review of the Local Plan. This document remains one of the key levers that EDC can use to address serious demographic issues in the region, and at the same time respond to central government priorities and processes in relation to housing and growth.

The rest of these conclusions proceed in two sections: First, we look at the priority themes emerging from the evidence and their implications for regional policy making; Second, we consider the wider policy landscape within which these key themes are located.

12.1 Priority Themes

12.1.1 Environment

There is a strong sense that the Beacon is fundamental piece of the town's history and identity, and should be preserved for residents in its current form, perhaps with sensitive development that improves access for those seeking to enjoy it as a forest park. This is part of a wider concern for access to the environment and to green spaces: there is strong demand for open space, green space, and high quality green infrastructure connecting those spaces to the town centre. This desire for better low-carbon connectivity spans a range of issues, including better pavements and pedestrian crossings, pedestrianisation of the centre, and cycle lanes that give easier and safer access to the natural environments and national parks that surround the town.

In summary, we can see a collective desire for Penrith to become more of a green hub that works on multiple spatial scales: from its centre to the nearby forest of the Beacon, to its rural hinterland. Such improvements would be felt by residents but also by visitors, and in turn by those businesses that could benefit from greater tourism in the town and nearby villages.

12.1.2 Town Centre

There is a strong theme through all the data telling us that Penrith Town Centre is of great concern and great importance to residents of Eden. The empty stores, perception that the town is now less vibrant and less appealing to residents and visitors alike, and the specific issues of parking and access are all concerns. Respondents very much want to see a wide range of independent stores in the town, maintaining a sense of uniqueness that to some extent separates Penrith from the carbon-copy high streets that dominate the UK, Europe and the USA now.

The ability of Penrith to achieve renewed levels of vibrancy is raised by many respondents, who make many suggestions. Possibly the strongest themes relate to the need for more places and activities that act as anchor institutions in the town. These would not be the giant anchor stores of the shopping malls, but instead something that is in keeping with the community and surrounding environment: flagship events like the Winter Droving, regular markets that are well supported and promoted, a more prominent visitor hub that links us to the nearby national parks, and a cultural centre that draws in tourists day and night whilst also providing places for local people to practice and perform.

In summary, the success of the town centre is not only relevant for the retail business that operate within it – the success of the centre is the single most important issue that residents want to see EDC focus on, alongside the preservation of key natural assets.

12.1.3 Housing and Growth

There are real and significant concerns about the implications of growth for existing residents. The location of the proposed villages was one contentious issue, but equally significant appears to be the likely impact of population growth on health provision, education and traffic flows. Aside from these concerns about infrastructure are issues relating to the impact of new developments on the centre of Penrith, and on the communities and social structures that currently operate through that centre. There is strong support for the idea of affordable housing, with an affordability measure that is related to income levels rather than average house price levels. Yet, there is little desire to see significant building, and most positive comments about the creation of new homes is in relation to the conversation of underutilised, existing building stock in the town.

These concerns present a challenge to both EDC and to business to think about how growth is achieved through improved productivity, rather than through population growth attached to relatively low wage work. This suggests a need to focus on supporting innovation (in existing industries) and on creating new hubs of enterprise that attract different, higher skilled and higher wage employment. We have seen clear links being drawn between the ability to attract such businesses and the wider cultural and environmental offering of Penrith and Eden. This is a complex picture of economic development, one that looks very different from the housing-led growth philosophy that underpinned the original PSM proposals. It is an approach that requires a deep understanding of the relationships between the economic, cultural and environmental systems that exist in our region. Then with this understanding, EDC will need to draw together a wide range of individuals and organisations, and co-ordinate them in new ways to deliver a holistic growth strategy for Eden District.

12.2 Policy Landscape

The findings and conclusions drawn from this report need to be interpreted in light of a rapidly changing national and international context, shaped by issues such as Brexit, increased concerns over the UK's productivity, and the impact of society on the climate and other environmental concerns. Predicting future policy landscapes is difficult, but we do want to highlight some key policy initiatives that are likely to influence the development and implementation of any sustainable, strategic plan for the future of Penrith and Eden.

Given the predominantly rural character of the Eden Valley, the 2019 DEFRA Agriculture Bill and the forthcoming Environment Bill (building on the DEFRA 25 Year Plan) are likely to have a significant policy impact on the area. The preamble to the Agriculture Bill notes that *'providing public goods will help manage and mitigate the effects of climate change…[and] will leave the environment in a better state than we found it…helping to deliver promises set out in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.'* In practice, the intention is to ensure that developers (of housing and infrastructure) ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development (a concept called 'net gain'). They must assess the type of habitat and its condition before submitting plans, then demonstrate how they are improving biodiversity – such as through the creation of green corridors, planting more trees, or forming local nature spaces. Green improvements on site would be encouraged, but where they are not possible, developers must pay a levy for habitat creation or improvement elsewhere. Central government's intentions are clear, and seem to be very much in line with the conclusions we have drawn in this report about what Eden residents value:

"Biodiversity net gain, in combination with future Green Infrastructure Standards, has the potential to ensure that an increasing proportion of new homes have access to natural spaces and wildlife within walking distance. This brings health and wellbeing benefits…access to public green space is an important factor in connecting people with nature and tackling obesity...living in greener environments is associated with reduced mortality."

There is also a strong focus on place-based decision making in both the 2018 DEFRA 25 Year Plan and the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals. They highlight the benefits of community engagement and stress the need to empower local communities to get involved in natural ecosystem initiatives.

Residents' strong sense of connection to Penrith and Eden has been a key theme of this report, and looking ahead, the Government clearly sees biodiversity net gain as an important driver of local planning and place making. They will seek to ensure improvements in the design quality of residential developments, as well as the provision of environmental amenities (e.g. urban woodlands, green spaces and parks). This presents an opportunity for EDC to take forward the ideas and values explored in this report, along with its other bodies of evidence, and work with communities to shape policies that work both locally and nationally. Policies which should be capable of positioning Eden as a vibrant, healthy and innovative location to live and work.

Report No:

Eden District Council

Executive

4 December 2018

Penrith Strategic Masterplan
Public Engagement Update

Portfolio:	Eden Development
Report from:	Deputy Director Technical Services
Wards:	Penrith North, Penrith East, Penrith Carlton, Penrith West, Penrith Pategill, Penrith South, Langwathby, Eamont, and Kirby Thore
OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	

1   Purpose

1.1   To provide an update on the public engagement for the Penrith Strategic Masterplan which was concluded on 2 November 2018 and the intended next steps required to inform a review of the Eden Local Plan.

2   Recommendation

2.1   That progress on the scale and depth of the community engagement process for the Penrith Strategic Masterplan, and the next steps in moving towards a review (in full or in part) of the Eden Local Plan are noted.

3   Report Details

3.1   in December 2016, the Leader and Political Group Leaders of the council and, the Leader Penrith town Council agreed vision for the council to look beyond the current Local Plan to 2050 and produced a discussion paper: Vision and Opportunities for Eden to 2050.

3.2   In October 2017 the Executive approved a supplementary estimate of £45,000 to commission a Strategic Masterplan for Penrith. The intention was for the Masterplan to provide a spatial framework for new development, showing the opportunities and benefits of this growth, whilst also enabling the area to retain its character and quality of place.

3.3   in January 2018 following a competitive tendering exercise of work to develop the strategic masterplan the Penrith was awarded to Land Use Consultants Ltd (LUC). The scope of work by the consultants comprised four stages:

- Stage 1 – Project inception, familiarisation and engagement strategy
- Stage 2 – Demonstrating needing growth

- Stage 3 – Spatial implications
- Stage 4 – Preferred option

3.4   At the conclusion of each stage, LUC provided a presentation to a stakeholder group comprising the Chief Executive, Council Leader, Leaders of the four Main Political Groups, representatives of Penrith Town Council, a landowner's group representative and a representative from Rory Stewart's office. A final draft masterplan was presented to the stakeholder group on 30 May 2018 and due to the complexity of this report a further round of consultation was undertaken with the stakeholder group. As a consequence further work was required to refine this draft which culminated in the production of the Penrith Strategic Masterplan: Technical Appraisal at the beginning of August.

3.5   The Council also received £250,000 from the Government to support multi-agency working on reviewing infrastructure and associated issues in relation to the future growth of Penrith. This has assisted in undertaking and commissioning the work necessary to take the Masterplan forward, such as the production of a Strategic Food Risk Assessment (SFRA) and an update of the Penrith Transport (Saturn) Model.

3.6   The SFRA although district wide is focused on Penrith and is considering the potential implications for development of the 32 sites around Penrith which were part of the 'optioneering' process within the LUC 'Technical Appraisal'. This is expected to be completed at the beginning of 2019. The Penrith Transport (Saturn) Model will be the model used to analyse transport data and forecast growth scenarios within and around Penrith. An update of the 'Saturn' model was commissioned in February this year and is expected to be completed in January 2019. The model will be available to assess the impact of new development coming forward through the masterplan and appraise their potential transport requirements and this process is expected to be completed by March 2019.

3.7   During the stage of the stakeholder review meetings, it was agreed that the Penrith Strategic Masterplan: Vision 2050 would be the subject of an eight-week community engagement exercise to bring the plan forward into the public domain, and to seek the views of residents of Penrith and Eden.

The Community Engagement Exercise

3.8   The engagement exercise commenced 10 September and concluded on the 2 November, with preceding press releases appearing in the local press commencing from the 7 September, in addition to a half page advert and an advert in the public notices section of the Cumberland and Westmorland Herald on 8 September. All such information within the press confirmed the form and nature of the community engagement process, together with non-statutory status of the Masterplan.

3.9   The engagement exercise was resource intensive and comprised of the use of a 'Pop-up Shop' at 3 Middlegate Penrith, during September and a series of ''Pop-up events' both within Penrith and around Eden during October. This comprised:

- Penrith 'Pop-up Shop' (Series of 7 display boards with a 'Graffiti wall' for observations, information leaflets and brochures, manned by at least two officers to answer questions and promote engagement).

  Monday 10th September 10am – 4am and 6pm – 8pm

  Wednesday 12 September 10am – 4pm and 6pm – 8pm

  Thursday 13 September 10am – 3pm

  Saturday 15th September 10am – 2pm

  Tuesday 18th September 10am – 4pm

  Thursday 20th September 10am – 4pm

  Monday 24th September 10am – 4pm

  Wednesday 26 September 10am 4pm

  Friday 28 September 10am – 4pm

- 'Pop up Events (Series of display boards depending on size of venue with postcards for observations, leaflets and brochures manned by one or more officers to answer questions and promote engagement).

  Monday 1 October - Kirkby Stephen Local Links 10am – 1pm

  Wednesday 3 October - Penrith Leisure Centre 5pm - 7pm

  Thursday 4 October - Alston Local Links10am – 1pm

  Thursday 4 October - Langwathby 2pm – 6pm

  Friday 5 October - Lazonby Co-Op 10am -4pm

  Monday 8 October - Ullswater community college 10.20am – 11.20am

  Monday 8 October - Ullswater community college 12.45pm – 1.30pm

  Tuesday 9 October – Gt Salkeld 10.30am – 12.30pm

  Tuesday 9 October – Newton Rigg 5pm – 6.30pm

  Tuesday 9 October – Scaws Residents Group 6.45pm – 8pm

  Wednesday 10 October - Ullswater community college 11.25am – 12.35pm

  Thursday 11 October – Appleby Hub 10am – 2pm

  Saturday 13 October - Penrith Leisure Centre 9.45am - 3pm

  Wednesday 17 October – Newbiggin Village Hall 1.15pm – 4.00pm

  Wednesday 17 October – Pategill Simm Court 6.30pm – 8pm

  Tuesday 30 October - Penrith Leisure Centre 5pm - 7pm

3.10   Over the engagement period the Penrith 'Pop up Shop' was visited by some 997 people and was the subject of a protest group demonstration on the first day. In addition, some 242 comments were made on the 'Graffiti wall', which ranged from short expressions (NO! and other brief statements), and single observations through to a series of multiple comments by single individuals.

3.11 The response to the 15 'pop-up events' varied enormously from those at Kirkby Stephen, Appleby and Alston which were visited by between1 and 8 people, to small groups around Penrith of between 8-10 and Ullswater community college where the three events attracted a total of some 260 young people. The 'Pop-up event' at Langwathby was the most successful rural event attracting some 42 people. As no 'Graffiti wall' was available at these mobile events interested parties were asked to fill in postcards which had a 'tick box' response for the preferred level of growth and whether there was agreement or not to proposals for Housing, Employment and the Beacon, together with an open comments box. Overall, some 230 postcards were received of which about 50% included individual responses.

3.12 In addition, during the engagement period the Council ran a dedicated website which included maps, documents and information relating to masterplan, updated news releases, frequently asked questions and answers (FAQs) and a survey monkey which included both tick box responses and a series of open comment boxes. The Council also provided a dedicated email address relating to the masterplan to enable residents to contact the policy team directly. The survey monkey has attracted 667 responses.

3.13 In response to the dedicated Local Plan email address has had some 72 responses from the public, in addition to 14 consultation responses from consultees such as Cumbria County Council and United Utilities and the Environment Agency etc. The dedicated Local Plan email address has also confirmed that 79 respondents specifically wish to be kept informed of progress on the strategic masterplan.

3.14 The Council also ran in a dedicated Facebook page and tweets through the corporate Twitter account, enabling contact and discussion through these media sources.

3.15 Two petitions have been received by the council. The first petition submitted by 'Friend of the Beacon' confirmed that *'we the ''friends of Penrith Beacon'' petition Eden District Council to take the necessary action for all of the Beacon Forest to remain as it is now, a wild place with no development and accessibility to all residents'*, has some 2557 signatories. In accordance with the constitution, as this petition contains more than 500 signatories, it was the subject of a debate by Council on 8 of November 2018, but did not have a formal resolution. This petition was received shortly after Lowther Estate's formally withdrew the Beacon Forest Area from the Masterplan proposals.

3.16 A second submission, comprising of prepaid postcards containing statements and comments, an online petition containing a statement of objection and a series of signed petition sheets, reflecting the online petition, has been received as a formal petition from 'Keep Penrith Special' (KPS). The terms of the petition is similar to that of the postcards, making both statements and demands, under a heading 'Keep Penrith Special – Reject the Penrith Masterplan'.

3.17 In all 1,336 postcards were received at both the town hall and the Mansion house, together with the online petition containing 1739 signatories and 331 signed petitions sheets. It is understood from KPS that any online or paper submissions from outside the area of Eden have been discounted and total

some 588, although this has not been verified. From an initial sample inspection of the postcards it would seem that somewhere in the order of 40% have comments attached (possibly some 534 with comments). The petition from KPS was received out of time to be considered for debate by Council on 8 of November 2018. Accordingly, this petition will be debated by Council at their next meeting on the 10 January 2019.

3.18   The scale of response to the recent engagement has been significant with some 7,174 responses in total, the vast majority of which being the petitions received from 'Friends of the Beacon' (2,557) and 'KPS' (3,406). The remainder (1,238) being in the form of comments from the 'Graffiti wall' and postcards received during the 'Pop up events' over the two month engagement process, together with emails to our designated masterplan email address.

3.18   In addition to the above the Council has commissioned independent market research company to undertake survey of 250 residents within Penrith about the general objectives contained within the Strategic Masterplan proposals. The results of this are currently awaited.

The next steps

3.19   The next phase of the process will be to assess the results of the engagement process, taking into account the responses from consultees such as Cumbria County Council, Highways England, Environment Agency, National Grid etc. and the conclusions from the 'Saturn' traffic modelling for Penrith and the strategic flood risk assessment. This is part of a long process that will develop over the forthcoming months to be concluded in the early part 2019.

3.20   The petition received by 'KPS' will be the subject of debate by Council on 10 January 2019. This will also be an opportunity to bring members up-to-date with progress on assessing the results of the engagement process, together with other associated information.

4   Policy Framework

4.1   The Council has four corporate priorities which are:

- Decent Homes for All;
- Strong Economy, Rich Environment;
- Thriving Communities; and
- Quality Council

5   Consultation

5.1   At the different stages of the development of the Strategic Masterplan, presentations have been given to the stakeholder group, who have been involved in it's development as it moved towards it's final draft at the end of May 2018 and a further consultation round in June. Following the development of the Penrith Strategic Masterplan: Technical Analysis by LUC the officer working group has developed the Masterplan Vision to 2050 which

has been subject of an extensive eight week community engagement exercise concluding on second of November 2018.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial and Resources

6.1.1 Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the Council's stated priorities, as set out in its Council Plan 2015-19 as agreed at Council on 17 September 2015.

6.1.2 There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources. The funding approved in 2017 – 2018 has been rolled forward 2018 – 2019 (Ref F24/18; Executive 3 April 2018)

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 in accordance with the planning and compulsory purchase act 2004 (as amended), the Council has a statutory duty to prepare planning policies, which has been reinforced through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF July 2018) and the Localism Act 2011.

6.2.2 The proposed Penrith Strategic Masterplan currently has no formal status and is not intended to be part of the current local plan. The Eden Local Plan has just completed a separate lengthy process leading to its adoption on 11 October 2018. The Penrith Strategic Masterplan has become a vision to be used by Council (in its current or amended form) to inform a review of the Eden Local Plan (in full or in part) which is required to be considered in any case under the regulations on the five yearly basis, as an extension to the local plan beyond 2032 and for future decision-making

6.3 Human Resources

6.3.1 There are no human resources implications arising out of this proposal.

6.4 Statutory Considerations

Consideration:	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and Diversity	It is too early in the process to be assess any equality and diversity implications arising out of the proposals within this report.
Health, Social Environmental and Economic Impact	There are clearly likely to be health, social, environmental and economic impacts, but it is too early in the process to identify what those impacts are likely to be.
Crime and Disorder	Any proposals within the masterplan would need to consider the need to reduce crime and disorder.
Children and Safeguarding	There will be requirements to provide adequate infrastructure in terms of schools, nurseries, healthcare provision and a safe and healthy

	environment as part of the proposals within the Masterplan.

6.5 Risk Management

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
Eden will continue to grow beyond the current Eden Local Plan period to 2032 and there is no clear long term strategic masterplan beyond that date	The district could lose out on opportunities to grow the economy and maintain the sustainability of existing communities	To have a long-term plan for supporting transformational long-term economic growth

7   Other Options Considered

7.1   The sites which have been identified for development within both the Penrith Strategic Masterplan: Technical Analysis and the Vision to 2050 have been the subject of an optioneering exercise involving 32 sites in and around Penrith which supported the current proposal.

8   Reasons for the Decision/Recommendation

8.1   To update the Executive on the scale and depth of the community engagement process for the Penrith Strategic Masterplan and to identify the next steps in moving towards a review (in full or in part) of the Eden Local Plan.

Tracking Information

Governance Check	Date Considered
Chief Finance Officer (or Deputy)	
Monitoring Officer (or Deputy)	
Relevant Assistant Director	

Background Papers:

Appendices:

Contact Officer:

NB: Report author to note that:

- Reports for Council and Executive are always considered by Management Team;

- Where appropriate, reports for Committees should also be considered by Management Team;

- Portfolio Holders should be consulted on reports to the Executive that are within their Portfolio; and

- Ward Members should be consulted on proposals that have a significant effect on their ward.