

## **Rotherham Plan consultation – face to face consultation analysis**

Over 270 people engaged with our public consultation across a range of venues throughout September. People were asked to respond to three prompts/questions:

- The thing I like most about Rotherham is...
- The top priority to improve my area is...
- What's the best way to let you know about events, projects and activities?

### **The thing I like most about Rotherham is**

The most popular response related to green spaces and parks, which were referenced in 16% of responses. The next most common responses focused on residents enjoying living in their local communities and liking the people of Rotherham. Common responses include feeling a sense of community spirit and the friendly and inviting nature of local people. Other popular responses included: local shops and food offerings (9%), events (8%), school or college (7%) and activities around Rotherham (5%).

### **The top priority to improve my area is**

Although local shops were included as a “most liked” feature, they were also the most popular improvement area, with 13% of responses referencing the need for more choice and quality of shops and restaurants either locally or in the town centre. 12% highlighted cleanliness of local areas as an area for improvement, with people asking for more bins and cleaner streets. Respondents also wanted more activities in the borough (10%), including more entertainment and recreation spaces. 9% of residents wanted transport links to be improved, with better and more frequent buses particularly in rural and isolated areas. Other popular priorities included: better policing or increased presence (6%), more activities for children (6%), reducing crime (5%) and improving the quality of roads (5%).

### **What's the best way to let you know about events, projects and activities?**

Digital methods of communication were highlighted as the best way for people to be contacted. The vast majority (42%) suggested social media platforms including: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok. Print material was also a popular method of communication, with 18% of respondents saying they like to be kept informed via flyers, posters and leaflets. 13% of responses mentioned email or an online newsletter. Other popular channels included text messages (6%), letters (5%), local newspapers (5%) and schools/colleges (5%).

## **Rotherham Plan consultation – online survey results and analysis**

The online survey received a total of 43 responses. Questions were asked around the five main themes of the plan, with an opportunity to provide in-depth answers via an open text box format. Respondents were also asked to complete sections covering future communication methods, equalities and date of birth.

### **Thematic questions**

#### **A place to be proud of**

*What aspects of Rotherham and your local area are you proud of?*

The main issue emerging from this survey question was how much people appreciated parks, green spaces, open countryside and the natural environment (19 mentions). Clifton Park was specifically mentioned 5 times and Wentworth was mentioned 6 times. Others mentioned industrial heritage, historical buildings and tourist attractions.

There were several positive comments regarding community spirit/resilience and accessibility, however there were also negative comments around the town centre and feelings of safety.

*“The countryside and green spaces. The nice heritage sites and community buildings such as community hubs, libraries and churches”*

*“NOT the town centre - too much anti-social behaviour”*

*What would be your priorities in future to make Rotherham a place to be proud of?*

There was a significant focus on the town centre improvements, with 17 respondents mentioning the town centre – particularly the speed of the regeneration, the need for improved facilities/new developments and a feeling of safety when visiting. Clean, well-maintained public spaces also ranked highly (8 mentions) and ASB/safety issues were mentioned 9 times. Other priorities included environmental improvements such as cycle and walking routes (4), looking after people/welfare (3) inclusivity (3) and housing improvements (2). The damaged buildings on Corporation Street were specifically mentioned three times as a significant issue for the town centre.

*“Do feel the town centre regen plan and the new library/market development will make it better”*

*“Safe, separated, well connected cycle infrastructure that allows cycling between the villages, to the centre of Rotherham, and connected with Sheffield”*

*“Culture venues - music and arts. Inclusive opportunities for young people to contribute to the place”*

*“The town centre is the main issue in Rotherham. It is not a nice place to be. The closed shops and people hanging around at times do not present a good image. I know there is a lot of development work ongoing around the town centre, but this will also need to be developed”*

## **Climate and environment**

*What do you think of the natural environment in your local area and across Rotherham?*

Many respondents were positive regarding the natural environment and wanted to ensure that improvements are made and that green spaces are protected. Others were concerned that rivers and canals needed cleaning up (5), that the environment was spoilt by litter/graffiti (5), that better transport (3) and walking paths (2) are needed and that more cycling should be encouraged (2). There was some negativity around RMBC, with respondents feeling that they do not do enough to maintain areas or protect green belt land from development.

*“Environmental discussions need to start in school, school will educate the children on ongoing issues, who in turn will educate their parents”*

*“The natural environment is nice and pleasant - it needs preserving and protecting”*

*“I think Rotherham has good open spaces and Parks. There are concerns that building programs are taking priority over maintaining green areas. Brown sites need to be fully investigated to maintain the green spaces around villages and communities”*

*What would your priorities be for reducing emissions, building resilience, and protecting the local environment in Rotherham in the future?*

There were many ideas proposed by respondents – these included greater use of renewable energy (5), more EV charging points and cheaper electric vehicles (4), improvements to the public transport network (4) and speed limits or traffic calming measures (3). Responses also included no more building on green spaces (3) and encouraging/facilitating easy recycling.

*“Reducing private car use, easily accessible and cheap public transport, safe cycling on separated lanes”*

*“More access to locally produced food, especially fruit and veg”*

*“Use of more natural energy and making it more cost effective to add to properties and buildings”*

## **Building stronger communities**

*How well do you think agencies, groups and residents currently work together in local areas?*

This question had an even response across positive/neutral/negative comments, with many respondents stating that the different groups worked well together in their local area, and an almost equal amount stating that they do not, or who were unsure. Several comments revolved around respondents not knowing which groups were active in their area, others were critical of RMBC not responding to local groups' wishes.

*"I'm not really sure. I think it depends on the community - it varies. Good councillors help, and committed, engaged local people, leaders in the community. People need to step forward. Make it easy for them to do this"*

*"I know they exist but don't know where they are or what each one does, again local advertising, not everyone uses internet on a daily basis"*

*"Good community spirit. Would welcome back street wardens and see more policing to deter burglary"*

*What could be done differently to ensure everyone can influence and get involved in local activities and improvements?*

Many respondents suggested that better communication and promotion/awareness raising of what is going on locally was needed (11). Several suggested connecting with the public using different methods (some were critical of promotion via social media – others positive) including through libraries, more face-to-face meetings, a local TV channel and radio. Listening to local people and letting them shape the agenda, having two-way conversations and giving feed-back from surveys were all mentioned by respondents.

*"Local neighbourhood teams working full time in communities. Properly funded and to include council, police and community reps"*

*"Just needs the local representatives to be active and listen to what the concerns are and act on them. Publicising what is being done at a local level is essential. I mean real action not just some activities for kids in a local park for example"*

## **Inclusive economy**

*What would be your priorities in the future to achieve an inclusive economy?*

The two strongest themes emerging from this question were around access to good quality education/training/skills/learning and apprenticeships and the creation of good employment opportunities that were fairly paid at all levels. Improved and affordable housing, and a need for people to have stability through the cost of living crisis were also mentioned.

A few respondents were confused by the question and did not know how to answer it. Other themes included addressing crime/safety, accessibility to work and more services within local communities.

*“Ensuring that inclusive economy means inclusive across the borough and that those of us on the outskirts (Dinnington area) who currently have the least, in terms of everything you describe here, get significant investment”*

*“Searching out opportunities, the skills gaps and jobs that need filling. Provide the training to people and help businesses fill these gaps”*

*“Employability support for young people. Raising wages. Addressing inflation and the cost of living crisis”*

## **Health and wellbeing**

*What would be your priorities for health and wellbeing in the future?*

The main theme emerging from this question (and mentioned by almost 50% of respondents) was the need for improved access to health services – particularly GP services, but also hospital appointments, dentists, mental health services and drug and alcohol services. Next, respondents highlighted the need for access to clean air and green/open spaces (8) and tackling crime/ASB which (5) was cited as a cause of stress. Other themes included good housing, tackling obesity (through education) and access to good quality local food.

*“To provide health and wellbeing activities that are equitable, low cost, a good bus service to get individuals A to B. More mental health support that is advertised and accessible”*

*“Education on eating healthy foods remains essential. Classes to teach people how to cook simple healthy meals which don't cost much”*

*“Prevent long term illness, try and get people to change. More interventions”*

*“Try to get people to be more proactive and encourage healthy lifestyles - such as spending time outdoors, walking, exercising”*

## **Communications**

*What would be the easiest way for you to hear about any events or activities that may be relevant to you in the future?*

Over 90 per cent of respondents (40) stated that email would be their preferred method of communication. All other communication methods received five or fewer responses, with Facebook (5) being the main response followed by newsletter (4) and post (2).