



Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation & Enhancement

Scheme

Public Consultation Report Survey Results & Key Findings December 2023



Dorset
Coast Forum





468 survey responses



Articles in various news outlets



1.9k webpage visits



Town Councillors & Town Council staff present at every event



430 approx. attendees at engagement pop ups and events



Planet Purbeck Festival - approx. 75 people engaged



Community Fete - approx. 50 people engaged



Signs across the Green Seafront



Purbeck Coast Radio Interview



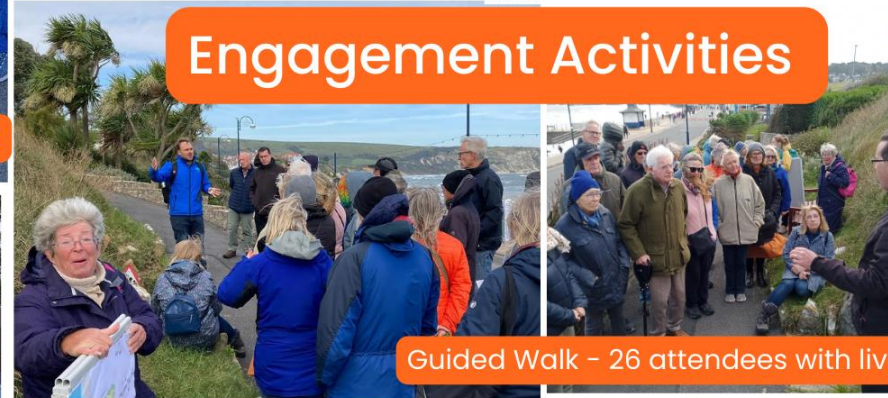
Youtube - Mayor Cllr Tina Foster introduced the schemes on dedicated webpage

The Mayor of Swanage Tina Foster & DCF's James Mitchell introduce Swanage Green Seafront Scheme

Engagement Activities



Swanage Carnival - approx. 40 people engaged



Guided Walk - 26 attendees with lively discussion



Mowlem Drop in event - around 160 people joined us

"Either scheme [should] consider closing off shore road to traffic so that the green space is linked to the beach without traffic danger"

"Could we enhance this more for disability access"
"Build seating onto stone walls at Shore Rd"
"Can we see the evidence for all this stabilisation"

"Obviously its necessary to stabilise the whole area but I'd prefer it to stay as much as possible the way it is. Lots more building cafes etc are going to spoil the grassy areas and the views. Same extra seats are ok but nothing sizeable filling in Walrond Rd will cost too much and it a quick route from de Moulham Rd."

"Sandpit field has worked for events over many years. I would need persuading that a scheme using all STC reserves is desirable. Cant just put in some piles and rebuild some walls?"

"It should be possible to have more trees and plants in this scheme? And green roof beach huts"

"... just get on with it or global heating will beat you to it"



"Hope for classy café (continental smart) not burgers chips etc. Prefer 2nd option but gradient to beach still steep for wheelchairs"

"Concerned on costs. Can you not just essential repairs on affected areas, retaining walls etc. loathe to spend council reserves and borrow money."

"Prefer this option. Option 2 too expensive. Worried how it would be funded."



Essential Scheme - A range of comments written by the public at the Mowlem Engagement Event

"Swanage version of HS2. Unaffordable. Not needed. No proper option appraisal."

"Could an option 3 be considered - cheaper but still effective and safe. It is a considerable amount to spend."

"If the larger scheme can be financed and delivered in it's entirety, then great! But I suspect cuts will be made as the money runs out and the environmental green benefits will not be delivered. Also the events space looks smaller. All down to cost, timescale and delivery!"

"Very joined up and great space arrangement"
"We need to smarten up to compete with other seaside towns."

"To be of any value to the town, it would have to be used 365 days a year. What will the effect be on the residents opposite?"

"Both schemes seem to be an excessive amount. What about an option C? Minimum stabilisation, repair and replace, no enhancements of gardens. Also, it will empty the town's coffers! A scheme this big much be a public (resident) vote, not just chamber!"

"I like the idea of something more ambitious. We should be looking o the future, adding value in terms of rental from huts, tearooms etc. Good to have services for swimmers like toilets, showers etc. Realistically Shore Road being shut would enhance scheme."

"Why spend £11m on something the town does not need. When it rains in the summer, this will do nothing to keep folk in town. Spend it on something that benefits the town i.e. sports centre"

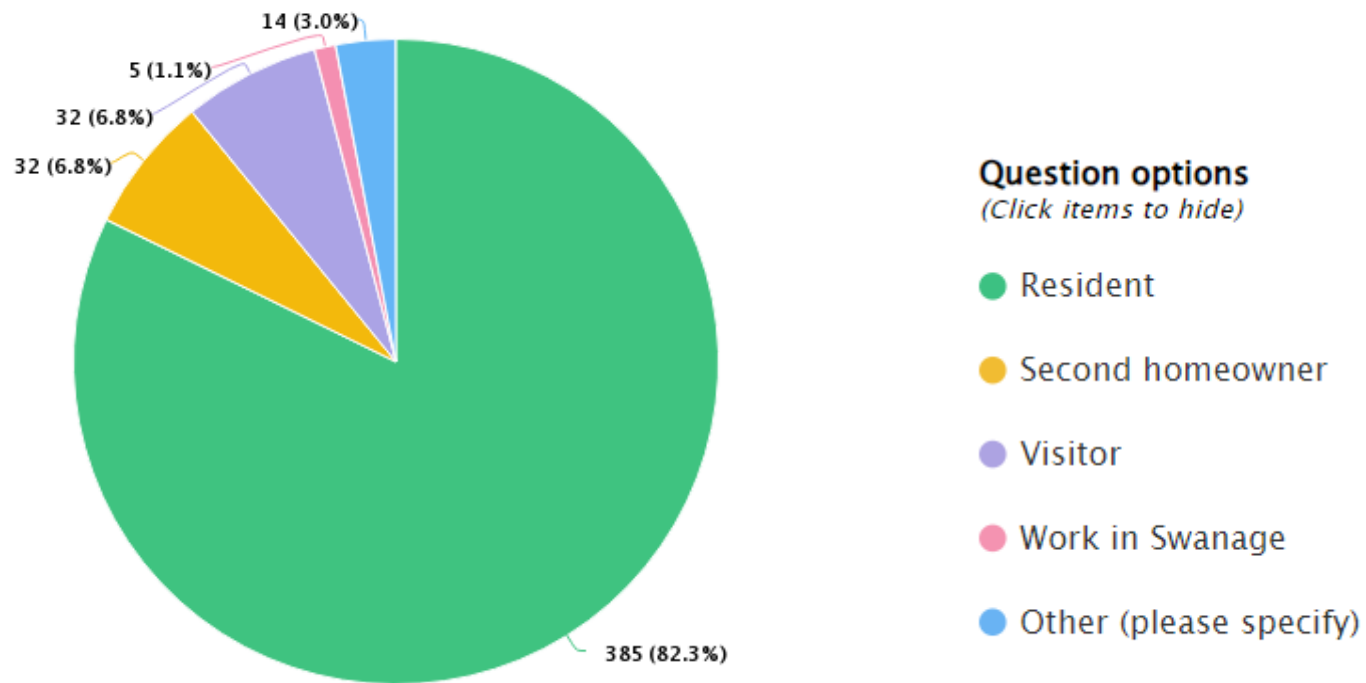


"Scheme 2 - preferable even if costly. The town can't stand still and survive successfully. An interesting new design to the front has to be a good thing - go for it"

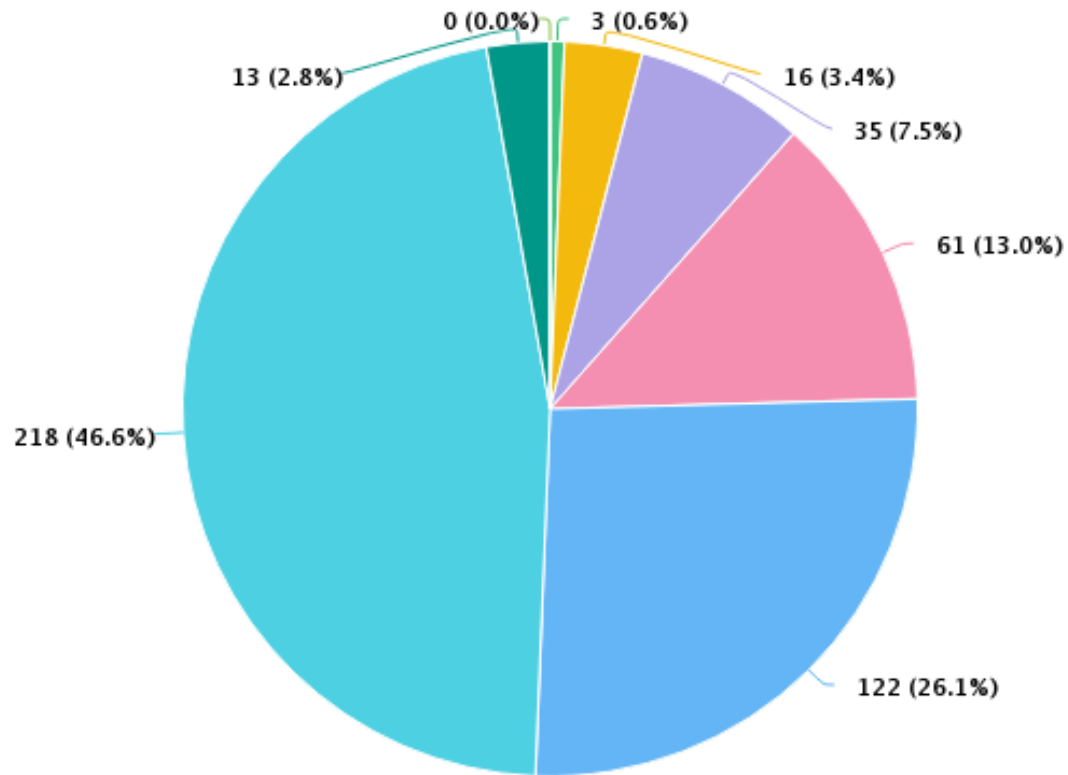
Enhanced Scheme - A range of comments written by the public at the Mowlem Engagement Event

Survey Results

Question One: What is your connection to Swanage?



Question Two: What age bracket are you in?

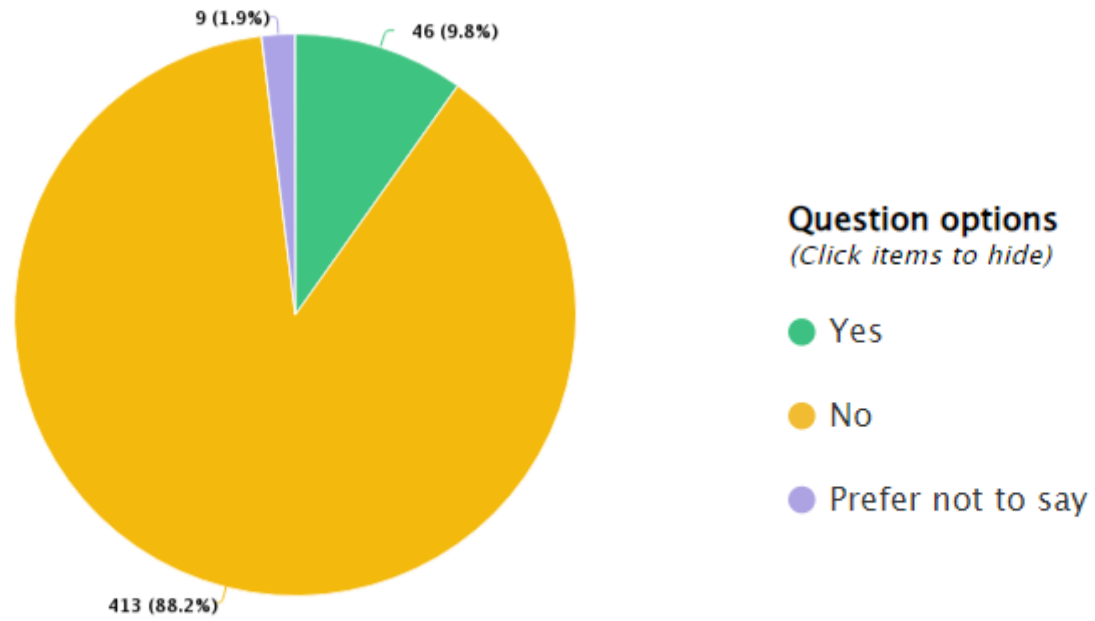


Question options

(Click items to hide)

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and over
- Prefer not to say
- Under 18

Question Three: Would you consider yourself to have a disability?

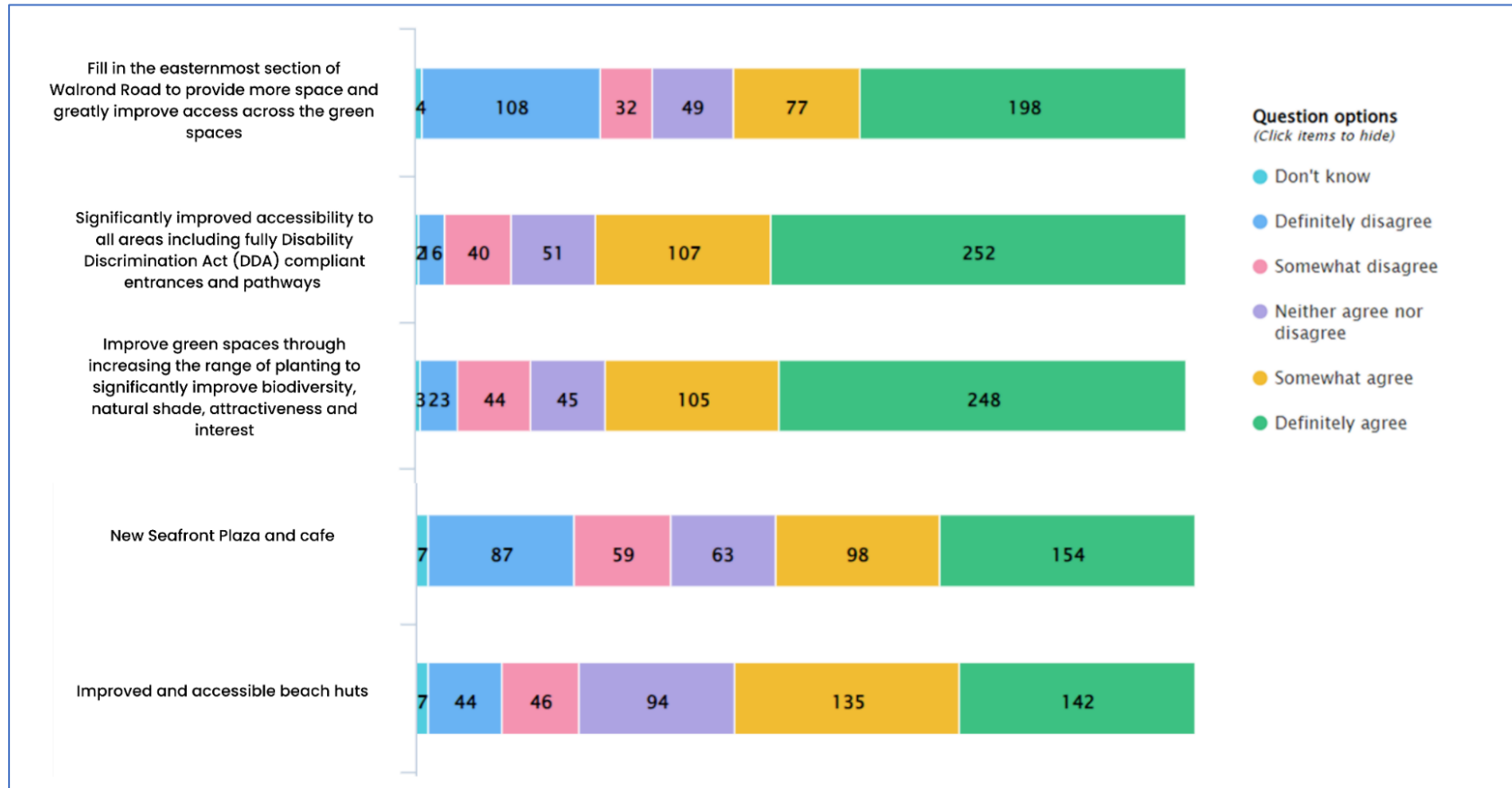


Question Four: Please state to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements



¹ **Hidden numbers:** I am aware of the ground movement issue along the Green Seafront – Don't know (2); Definitely disagree (6); Somewhat disagree (5); Neither agree nor disagree (16). It is important to stabilise the Green Seafront to protect the area for the town and future generations to enjoy – Don't know (2); Definitely disagree (4); Somewhat disagree (3). I am aware of the importance of Sandpit Field as an events field to the local economy – Don't know (1); Definitely disagree (2); Somewhat disagree (3).

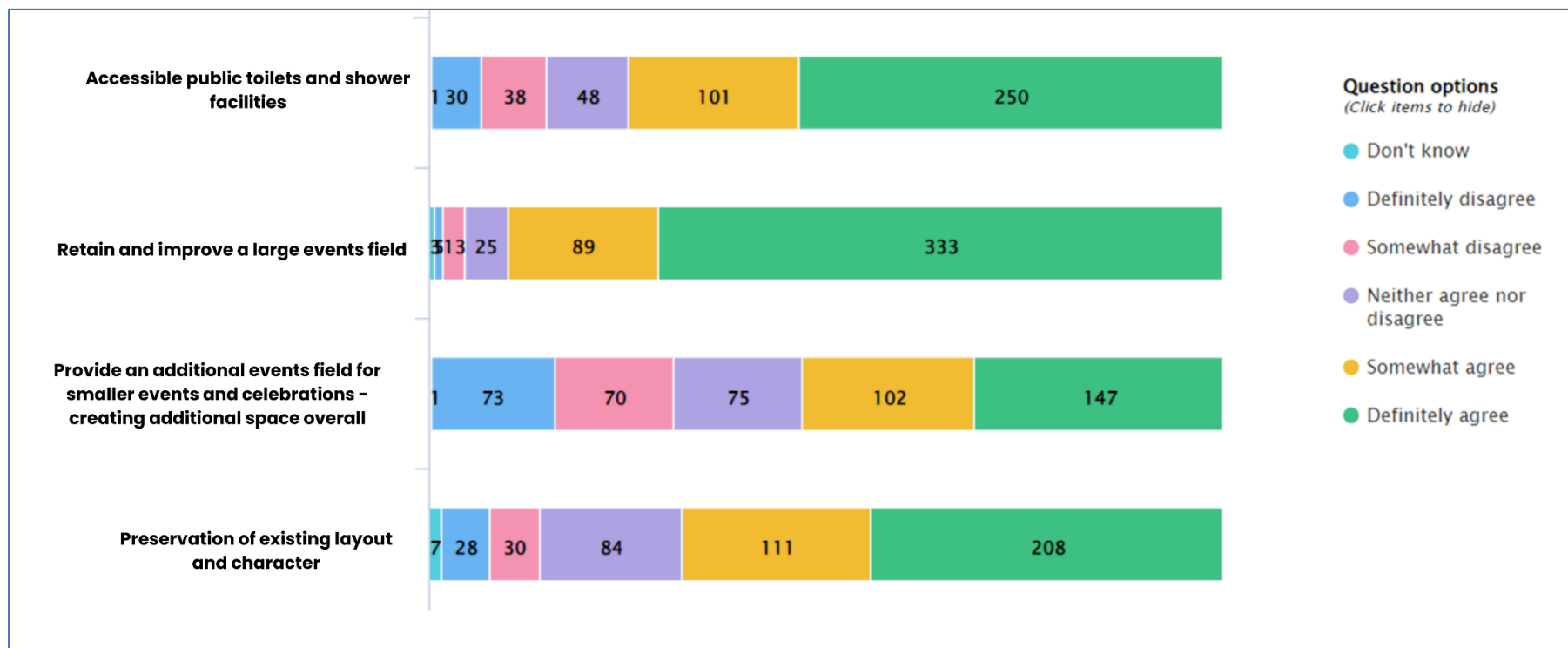
Question Five: How important are the following features of a new Green Seafront scheme?



2

² **Hidden numbers:** Significantly improved accessibility to all areas including fully Disability Discrimination Act (Equalities Act), compliant entrances and pathways: Don't know (2); Definitely disagree (16).

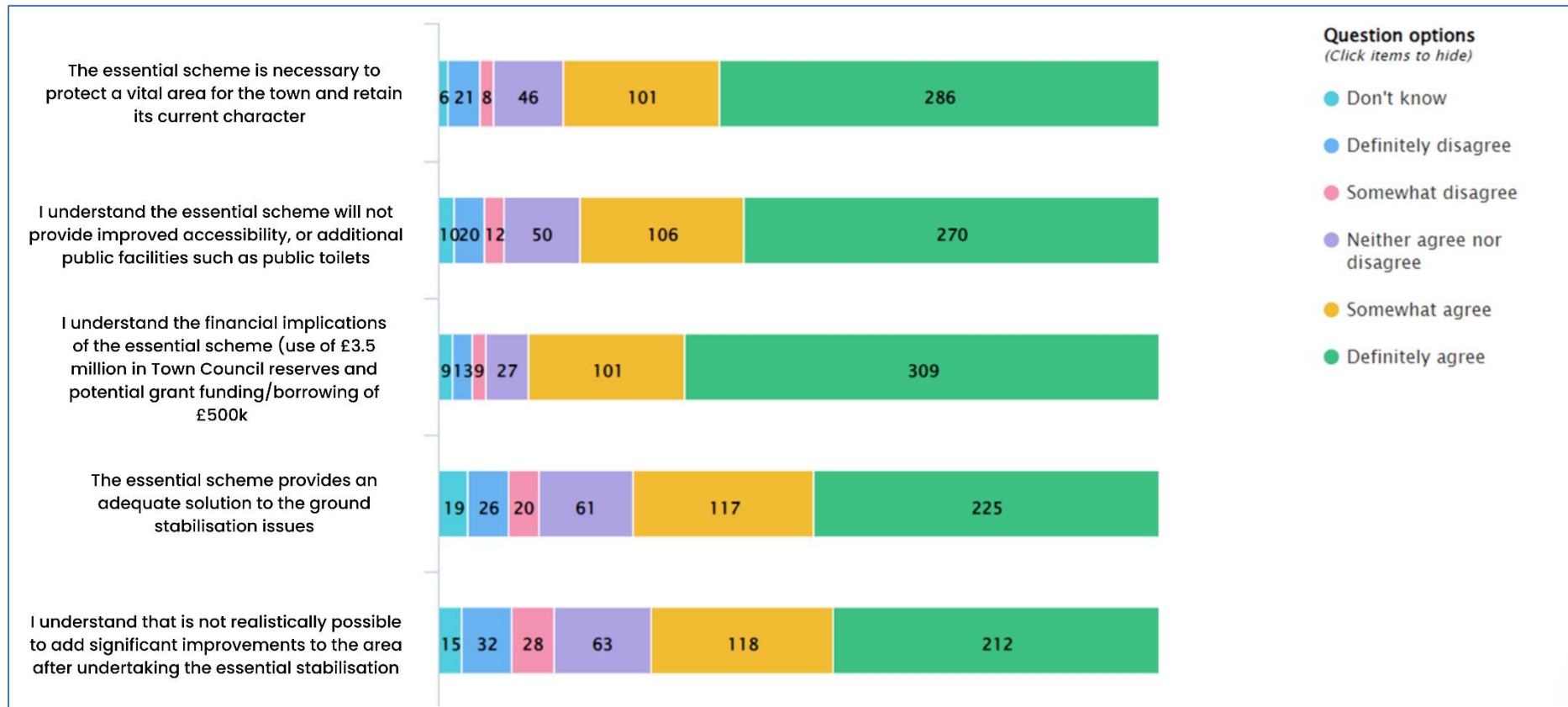
(Question Five Continued): How important are the following features of a new Green Seafront scheme?



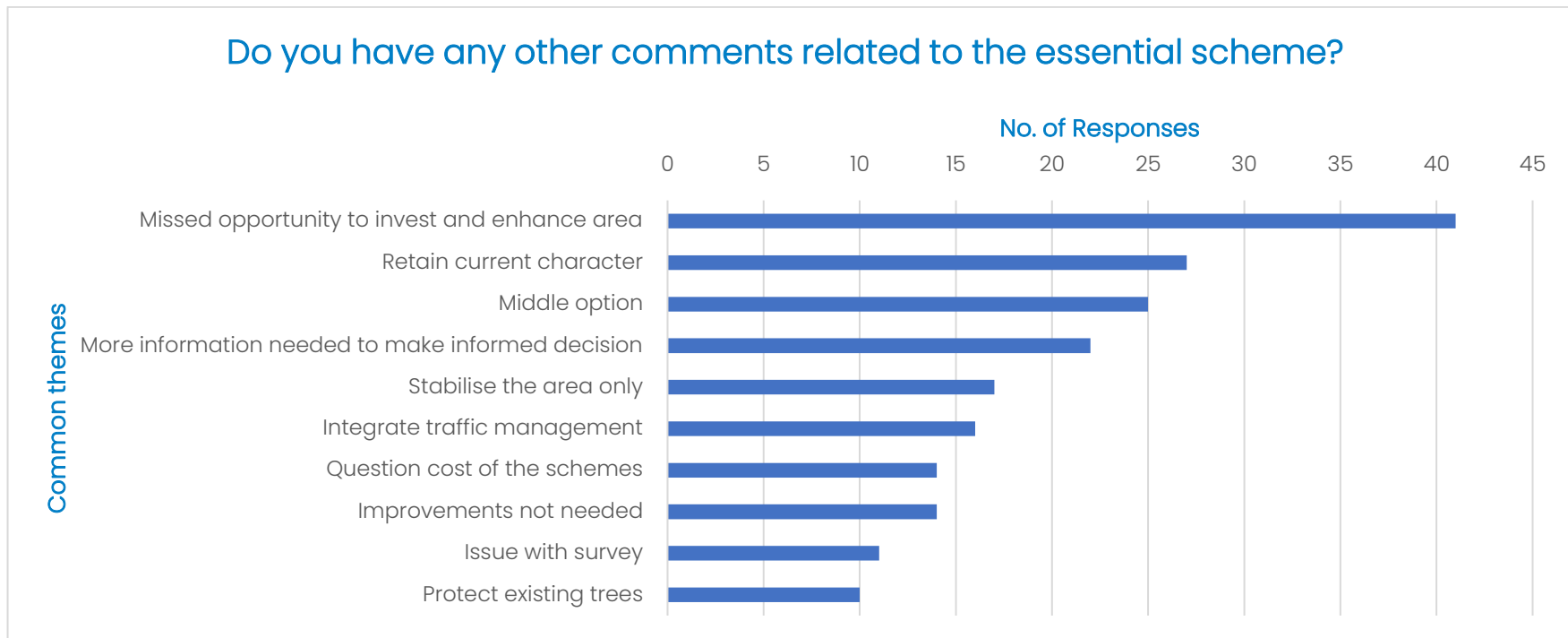
3

³ Hidden numbers: Retain and improve a large events field: Don't know (3); Definitely disagree (5); Somewhat disagree (13).

Question Six: Please state to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the essential scheme



Question Seven: Do you have any other comments related to the essential scheme?



⁴ Text based responses to open questions were read and categorised into themes using 'tags'. The tags help to build a picture of how popular these themes were. Tagging helps to see broad trends and themes throughout the text-based responses.

“Any other comments linked to the essential scheme?”

Missed opportunity to invest and enhance area

“It would seem a wasted opportunity and mean spending reserves simply for status quo, which will need modernising later”

“This scheme seems sensible and practical. There is always the option to add further improvements in the future and it is disingenuous to suggest otherwise”

“Fine if that’s all we can afford, but it seems like an opportunity missed. This is a once in a lifetime to improve the area as amenity and environmental”.

“While the essential scheme provides an immediate relief this is a unique opportunity to renovate, modernise and ultimately improve the Swanage seafront experience. Currently the seafront east of Walrond road provides little to no public value beyond the beach huts”.

“Pointless when the opportunity to upgrade the sea front is available”.

Middle option

“There is a middle ground option. Sandpit field can be retained pretty much as it is. An accessible link can be created across Walrond Road. Then revamp the weather station field to provide a smaller events field (shares Walrond Rd parking) and link this to the beach hut area with new cafe and toilets if required”.

“It seems incredible that this one scheme/development is not able to be tweaked to accommodate other good ideas”

Retain current character

“This looks to be the scheme to maintain the character of the area, continue with the important events field and not make traffic flow and parking worse!”

“Please Retain the unique character of Sandpit field and do not turn it into a generic boring area of landscaped ground that could be found anywhere”.

“Retaining the current character and amenity of Sandpit field is very important both visually and historically”.

"Any other comments linked to the essential scheme?"

"There are no timeframes included in the descriptions for either option. Assuming Option 1 (essential) is shorter timeframe I believe it is the better option".

More information needed

"I am not an engineer so find it difficult to assess the practicality. Equally the funding is fairly vague. I'm greatly in favour of improvements and if there is an integration with the road system on and around shore road which is pretty chaotic".

"More breakdown of what the sums of money are for"

Integrate traffic management

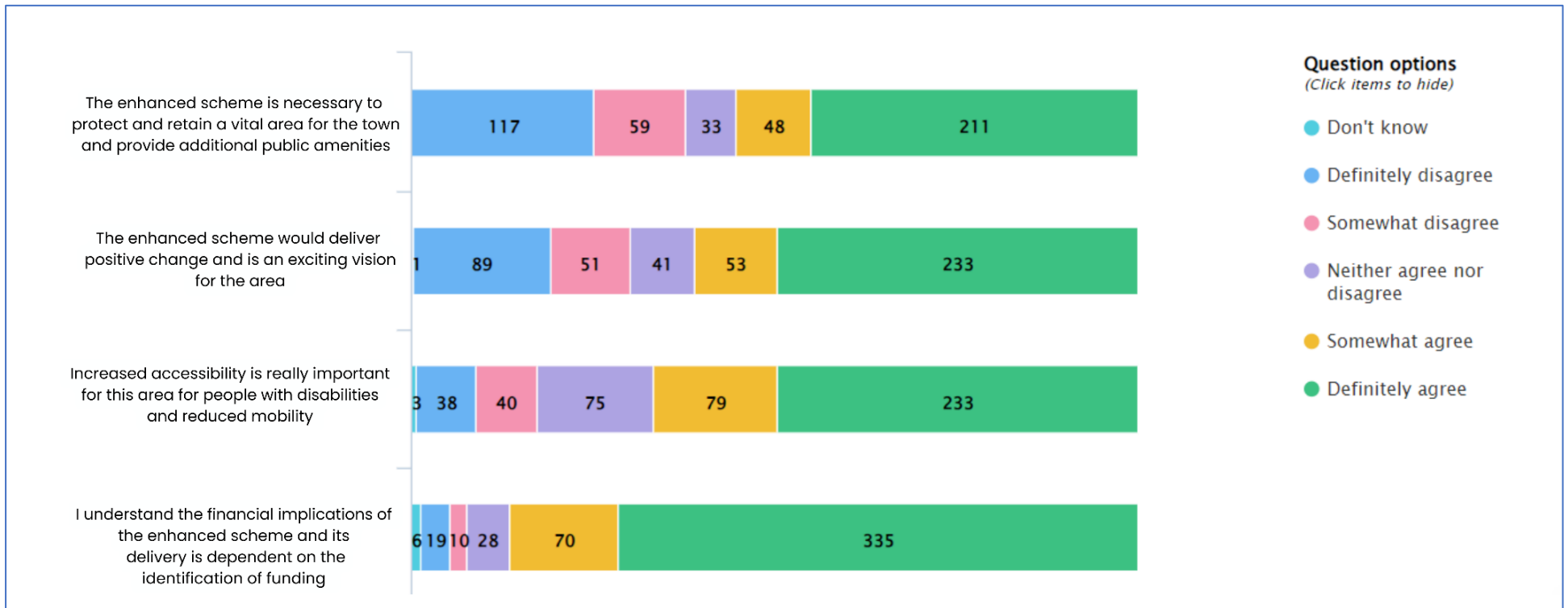
"These decisions should be taken in collaboration with traffic planning e.g. a one way scheme along the sea-front".

"To me it is absolutely imperative that a Scheme is not considered independently of the necessary improvements to Shore Road, which I understand are due to be carried out by Dorset Council next year. The necessary works that are being considered in this survey/scheme could be dealt with much more effectively if they are considered and developed in conjunction with the Shore Road proposals."

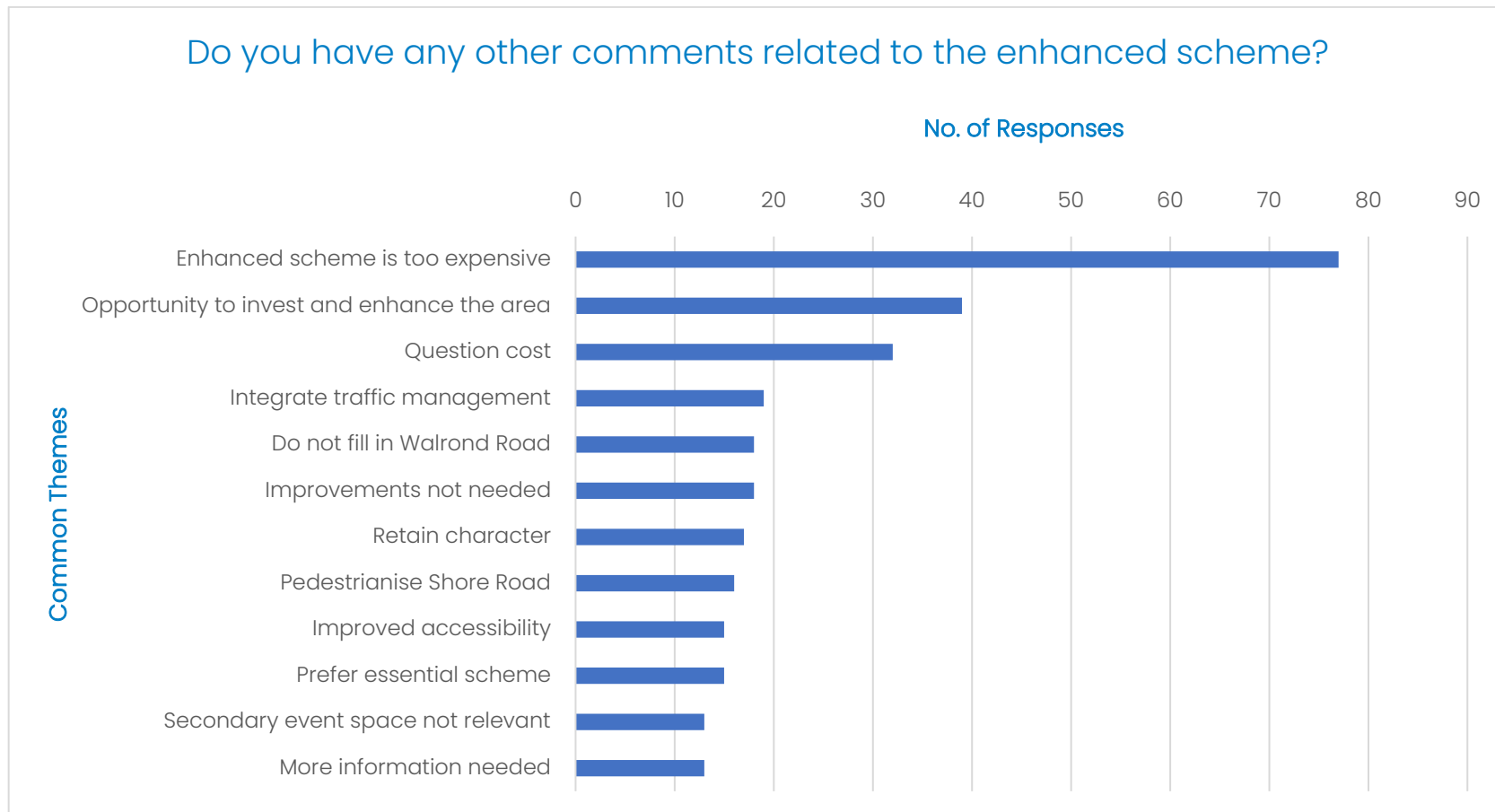
"The whole area works well for visitors and residents alike. There is no need to improve it, just stabilise it"

Stabilise area only

Question Eight: Please state to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements linked to the enhanced scheme



Question Nine: Do you have any other comments related to the enhanced scheme?



“Any other comments linked to the enhanced scheme?”

“Spending more than twice the cost of option 1 does not provide value for money for council tax payers or Gov't funding”.

“I feel it would be a massive financial burden to the town and will not bring enough benefits to justify the cost”.

“Although this scheme offers much improvement to the area, I do not believe the impact to the Town Council's finances justifies the spend”.

Too expensive

“I worry about where the additional funding will come from. What 'assets' will need to be sold?”

“This option is more expensive and likely to be a longer timeframe. How many years? Likely to overrun on budget and timeframe”.

“Improving the area would be positive for the town but borrowing money in a period of higher interest rates could backfire.

Please don't put STC assets on the line to pay for this”.

Question Cost

Integrate traffic management

“Does the enhanced scheme have any negative knock-on effects to the other future proposals of updating the seafront? What I remember included better pedestrian access along the promenade and potentially making Shore Road one-way, or even closed off completely to vehicles”.

“It is unfortunate that we look unlikely to see an integrated scheme for these areas and Shore Road. It would enable a reimagining of the appearance and perception of Swanage as a seaside resort and residential town”.

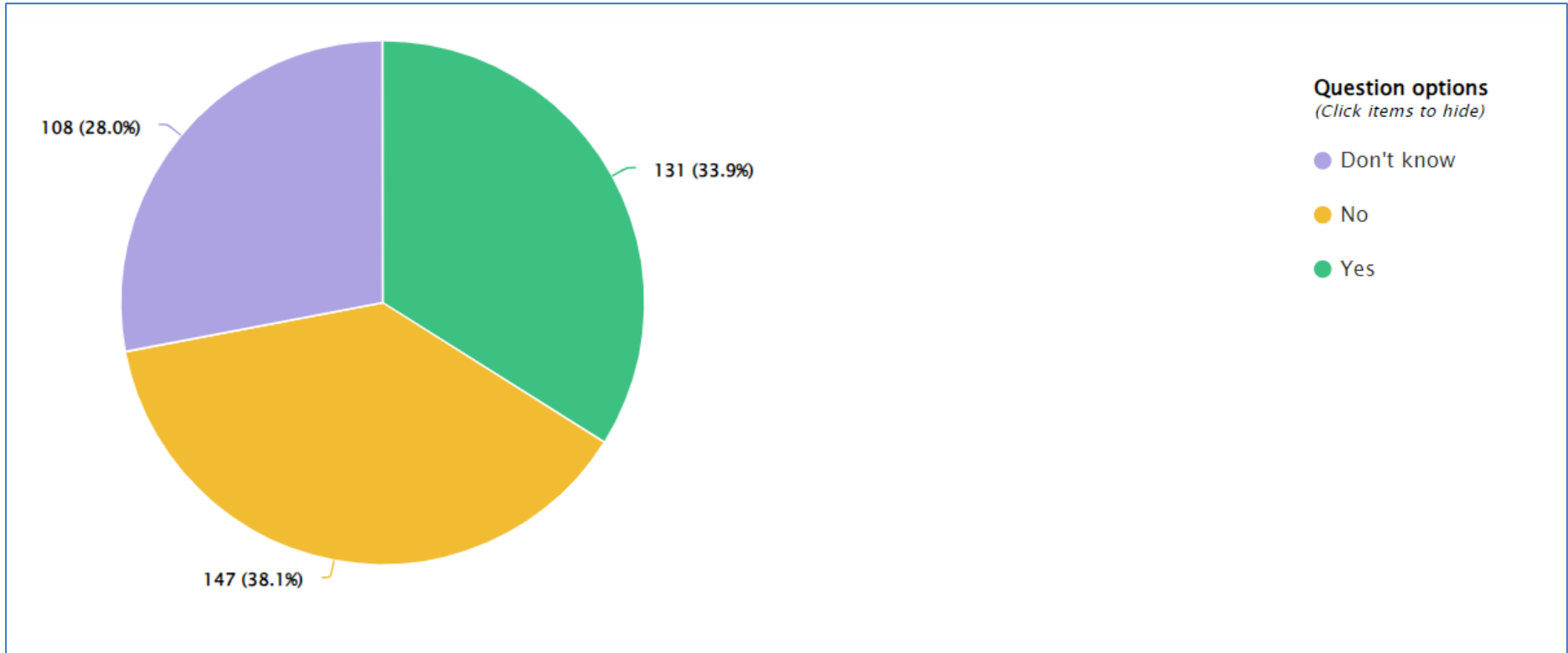
Opportunity to invest and enhance area

“Now is an opportunity to enhance our beautiful sea front and green spaces. We won't get this opportunity again, so lets do it properly and make it a place for residents and visitors to be proud of!”

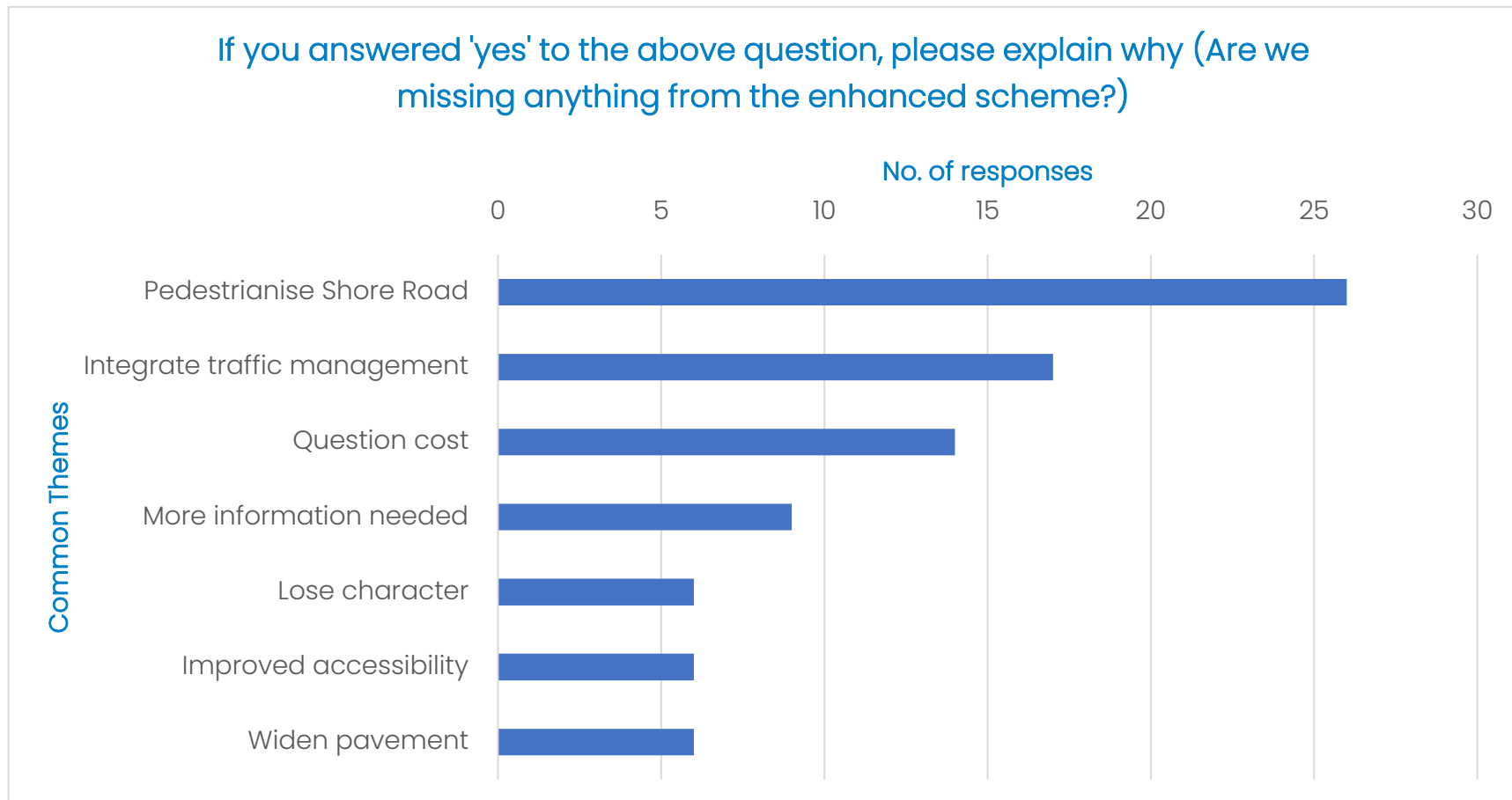
“This scheme would provide a long term benefit to the town and visitors alike and if some work is going to have to be done anyway, why settle for an interim solution that may need further investment later”.

“Swanage needs to invest for the next 50 to 100 years. This is an ideal opportunity to ensure that Swanage maintains it's attraction for both residents and visitors”.

Question Ten: Are we missing anything from the enhanced scheme?



Question Eleven: If you answered yes to the above question, please explain why



"Are we missing anything from the enhanced scheme?"

Question Cost

"You need to provide an option for how the £7m additional funds might be put to better use elsewhere in Swanage"

"Information about how long the schemes will take to complete. If necessary enhanced scheme should be completed in phases as funding allows."

"How can the price increase from 3.5 million+ to 11 million for not that much extra! After all you will not have any waist [sic] earth as it will all be used in the road closure, and the rest will be digger grading, piling and Beach huts. Really not viable and really over inflated prices!"

"Have you got a firm budget. No. There will always be unforeseen extras. What contingency sum have you included?"

More information needed

Integrate traffic management

"Integration with improvements to Shore Road (ideally full pedestrianisation)."

"Implications for traffic movement."

"Make sure the programme includes any plans for Shore Road".

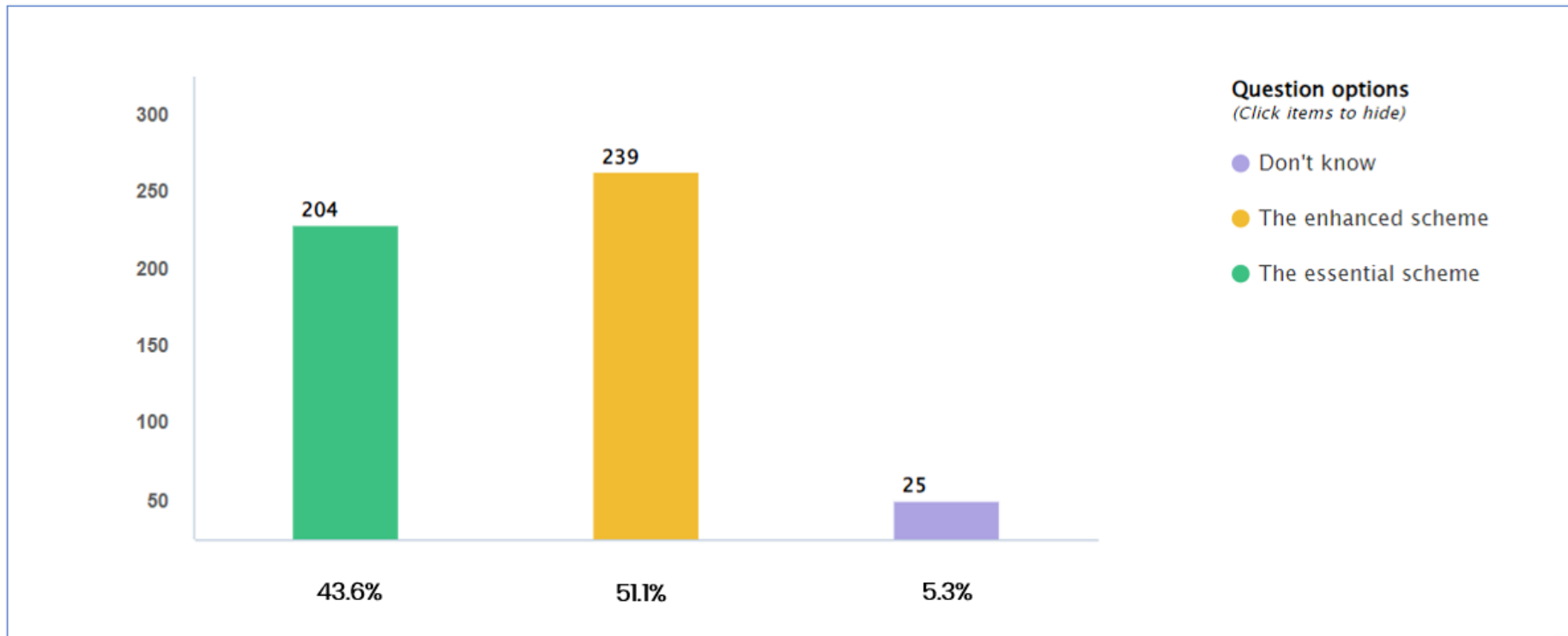
"The opportunity to close Shore Road to general motor traffic"

Pedestrianise Shore Road

"I know it is not part of the Town Council's remit, but for the sake of the environment, public health and safety, as well as possibly enabling further economic development, it would be good to completely pedestrianise Shore Road by closing it off to all non-essential traffic."

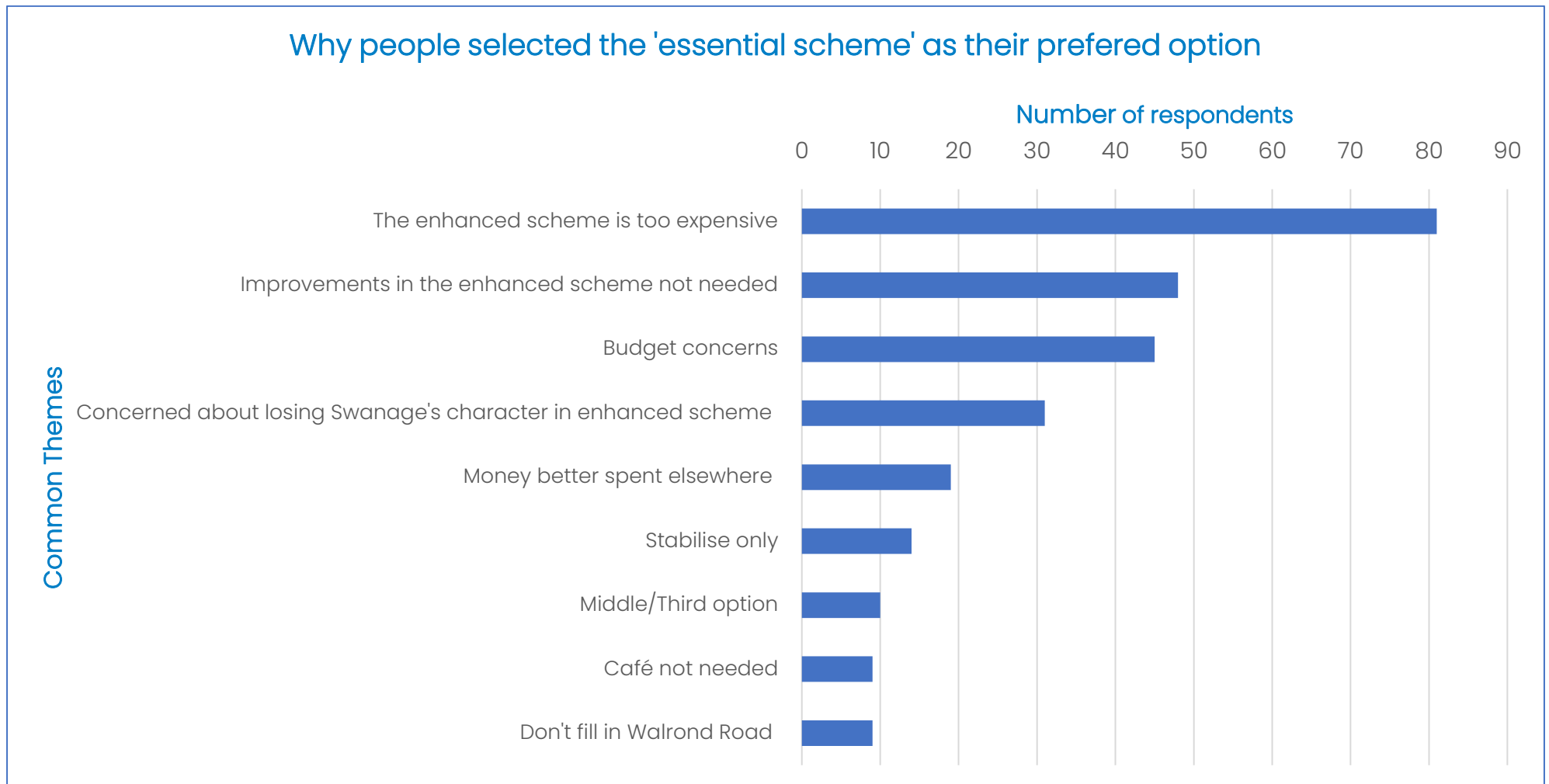
"Shore Road should be completely closed and pedestrianised"

Question Twelve: Given all the considerations presented at this stage – which option would be your preferred scheme?



Question Thirteen: Why did you choose the option in the previous question?

Please explain



Why did you select the essential scheme as your preferred option?

"Most of what is proposed in the enhanced scheme is already available nearby"

Improvements in the enhanced scheme not needed

"The enhanced scheme would duplicate facilities already available elsewhere in the town e.g., Prince Albert gardens for small events, under-utilised meeting rooms in the Mowlem and many other venues, toilets in Shore Road popup shop spaces in Shore road, beach huts everywhere".

"The current arrangement provides an important and essential part of Swanage! Any change would involve vast cost and result in unnecessary additions to the overall area."

Enhanced scheme is too expensive

"The enhanced scheme is so much more expensive than the essential scheme, and there do not seem to be enough gains to justify the costs".

"The enhanced scheme is so much more expensive than the essential scheme, and there do not seem to be enough gains to justify the costs".

"Because it is more easily affordable. Option 2 is a bold plan but less likely to be achievable".

If it ain't broke don't fix it. Spending £11m rather than £4m is not value for money for anyone".

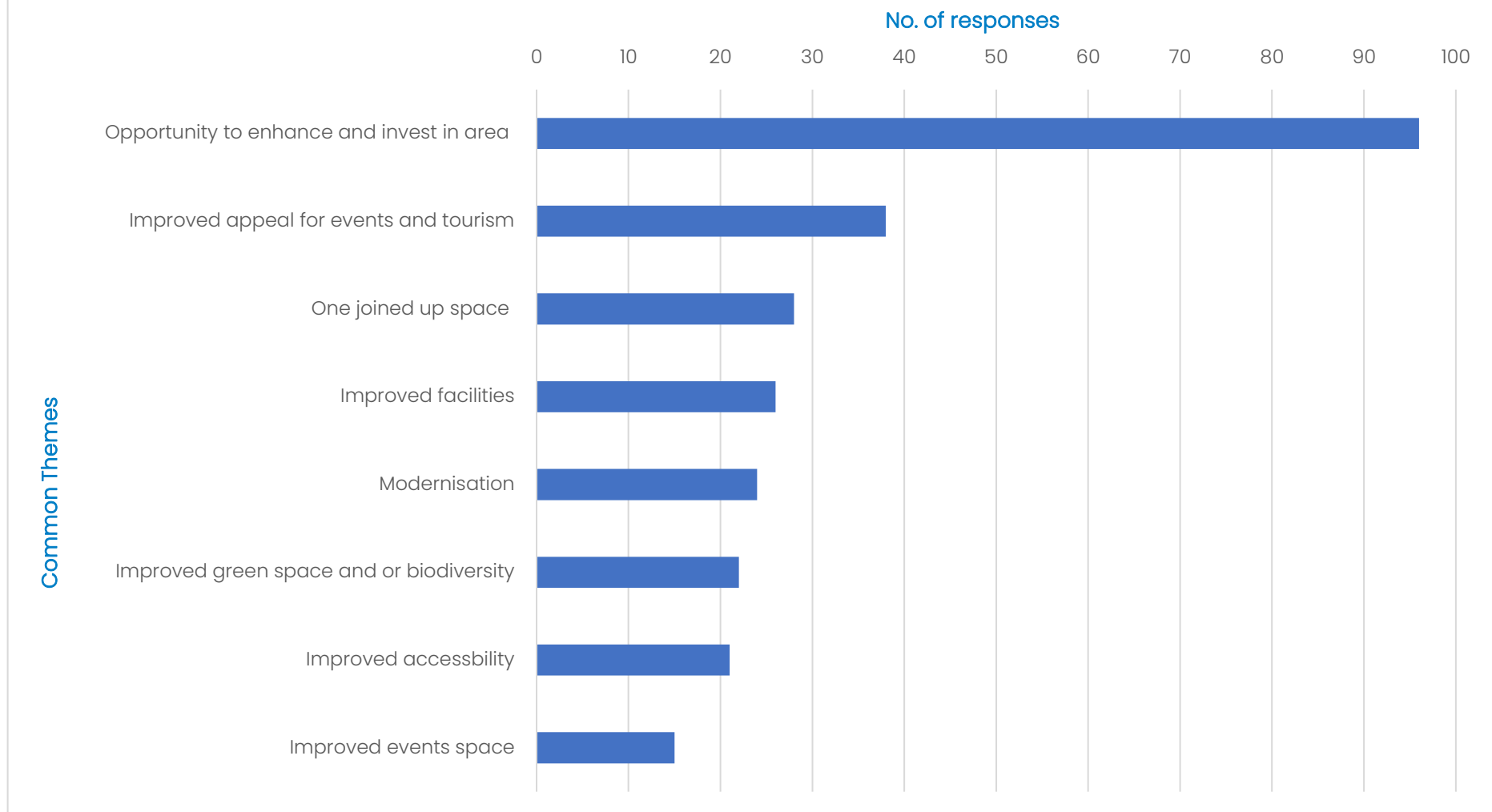
"Do the work that is absolutely necessary, but don't risk speculative investment on putting the council into debt for years to fund work that is not essential".

"I don't know if the enhanced scheme could be a) funded or b) completed on budget"

"The enhanced scheme, while a nice improvement, is completely unfunded".

Budget concerns

Why people chose the 'enhanced scheme' as their preferred option



Why did you select the enhanced scheme as your preferred option?

"I feel we need to be brave to enhance and improve the town rather than just keep it in the past".

Opportunity to enhance and invest in area

"This is an opportunity to improve the green area of the seafront. By joining the two areas, and adding new features including trees and shaded seating. I feel it will attract locals and visitors to use the space".

"With regard to doing enhancement work for the future this is a preferable time to take the opportunity to improve the seafront for the future".

"If Sandpit Field and Shore Road are essentially no better in 10 years time than they are now, a huge opportunity will have been missed".

"We need to not settle for more of the same and take the opportunity to improve our seafront green spaces. The loss of Walrond Road is anything but a loss. At best it's 10 free street parking spaces. Nothing more. Fill it in. Grow the park. Increase the seafront event opportunities. Leave a legacy".

"Investing in the future of Swanage, many people come to the town for the popular events put on and this will further improve their experience as well as the general aesthetic of the seafront".

"It will make the town more attractive to more events"

Improved appeal for events and tourism

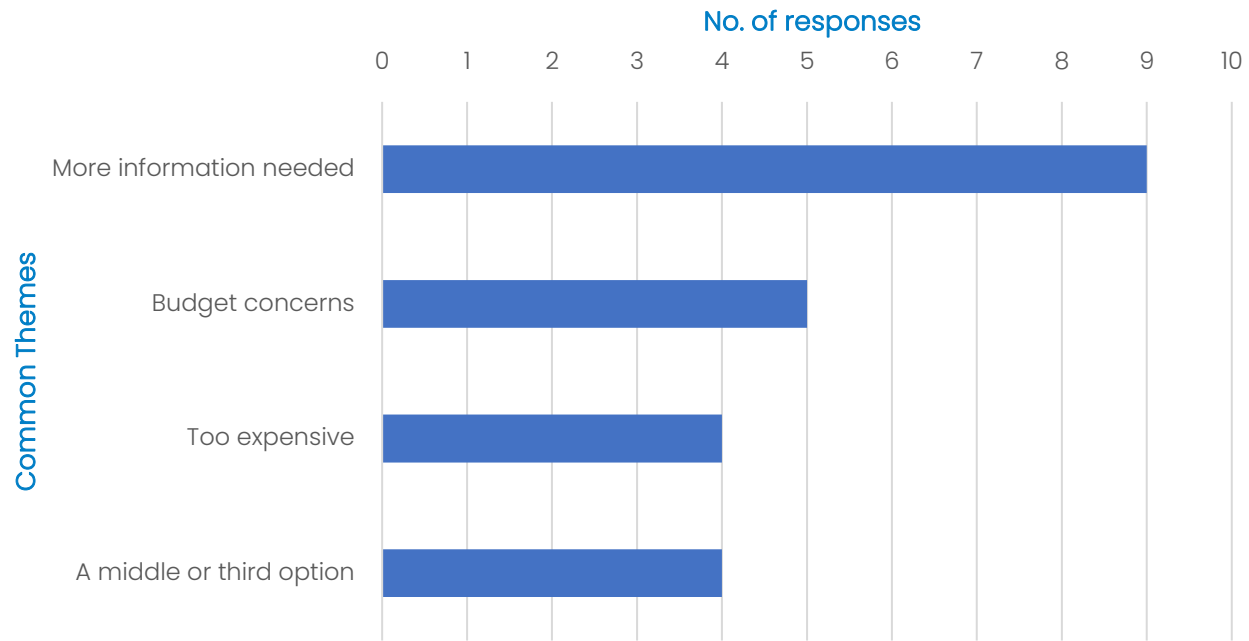
"Provides an opportunity to encourage visitors to swanage promoting tourism and providing an opportunity for economic growth of the town. A very exciting project".

"Better accessibility, facilities and use of both areas joined together".

One joined up space

"Great opportunity to enhance and make greater use of all the green space by incorporating sandpit field, weather station field, spa and stone bench field as one comprehensive usable space in a variety of ways facilitate multiple uses concurrently".

Why people selected 'Don't know' to Question 13



Why did you select 'don't know' when choosing your preferred scheme?

More information needed

"Too many unanswered questions".

"It seems like STC have made this work essential but are not really giving the detailed answers as to how much subsidence and how fast it has occurred in the last 40 years".

"Neither scheme seems right to me. There has to be other options and we need to be consulted. Why have you decided on only these two schemes? Why have you come to this conclusion. We need more transparency and more consultation".

Budget concerns

"You haven't explained things properly of shown value for money".

"The enhanced scheme would be preferable but I am concerned with the cost and how it would be funded. What additional financial burden would be placed on residents?"

Middle or third option

"You've been given two extremes, and there must be a middle way. My suggestion is to go with something closer to Option one, but improve the slopes towards the corner of Victoria Avenue and Shore Road to make it more accessible.

Rather than 'fill in' the gap where Walrond Road cuts through, close the road and make the upper section grass with footpaths across, and build the proposed café into the lower part, providing plenty of outdoor seating space in front to set it back from the road".

Key Findings

Face-to-Face

- Conversations with the public largely matched the survey results in terms of the split reaction to the schemes.
- Generally, people would like to see more detailed information on both schemes including budget breakdown, timeframes, gradients and what impact the scheme would have on traffic management more widely.
- People also wanted more detail about elements in the enhanced scheme including the community hub, landmarks, and trees and planting.

Survey

- The enhanced scheme was the more popular scheme with 51.1% of respondents preferring it – but it was close, with 43.6% of respondents preferring the essential scheme.
- The cost of the enhanced scheme was the most common theme of respondents' answers when they explained why they selected the essential scheme as their preferred option (40% of respondents who selected essential scheme).
- Conversely, the 'opportunity' presented by the stabilisation works to enhance and invest in the area was the most common theme of respondents' answers when explaining why they selected the enhanced scheme as their preferred option (40% of respondents who selected enhanced scheme).
- 76% of all respondents agreed that it was a good opportunity to enhance the area if work was going to take place anyway.
- Question Five shows that, generally, many improvements to the Green Seafront area were considered important by respondents. For example:

- 76% of respondents agreed⁵ that significantly improved accessibility to all areas was an important feature of any seafront scheme,
- 75% agreed that improving the green spaces through increased planting was important, and the additional events field (53%) and seafront plaza and café (59%) had support.
- Crucially, retaining a large events field was viewed as the most important feature (90% of respondents agreed)
- The integration of improved traffic management was consistently cited through the survey. Of those who felt there was something missing from the enhanced scheme – ‘the pedestrianisation of Shore Road’ and ‘traffic management’ were the most popular themes of respondents’ answers. There were also over 100 mentions of ‘Shore Road’ in all the comments.

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who took part in the consultation process, from attending events, providing your input, and completing the survey.

Timeline

- Consultation data presented to Swanage Town Council – 5th December 2023
- Consultation data published online – 6th December 2023
- Swanage Town Council will review the findings of the public consultation will be discussed and reviewed and STC will feedback to residents early next year on our plans going forward.

⁵ ‘Agreed’ includes those who selected ‘definitely agree’ or ‘somewhat agree’

- The report will be passed on to Dorset Council Highways and Swanage Town Council are reviewing the impact of the scheme on the wider area in Swanage including Shore Road.

This report has been compiled by Dorset Coast Forum, a neutral strategic coastal partnership, on behalf of Swanage Town Council.