

SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL

Dr M.K. Ayres
Town Clerk

Town Hall
SWANAGE
Dorset
BH19 2NZ

16th January 2026

Dear Councillor

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

A meeting of the above Sub-Committee will be held at the **TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, SWANAGE** on **WEDNESDAY, 21st JANUARY 2026** at **4.30 p.m.** for the purpose of transacting the business mentioned in the Agenda.

Yours sincerely

Dr M.K. Ayres

Town Clerk.

PLEASE NOTE: **15 MINUTES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME WILL BE HELD AT 4.30 P.M. PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING.**

To the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors Foster, Lejeune, Sutton, and Vile, and all members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Membership – to appoint community member to the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
3. Declarations of Interest and consideration of requests for Grants of Dispensations (Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare their interests in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct)
4. To approve as a correct record Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 26th November 2025 (Copy enclosed)
5. Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 26th November 2025
6. Dorset Coast Forum – consideration of adult and youth feedback reports from community engagement (Copies enclosed)

7. ONeill Homer Planning Consultants
 - a) Update
 - b) Review of Project Plan (Copy enclosed)
 - c) To consider new webpage for the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan
8. Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas
9. Date of next meeting – to be agreed
- * 10. Draft of Pre-submission Swanage Neighbourhood Plan 2026-2043
 - a) To review the updated draft Plan, consider amendments, and recommend its approval for Regulation 14 public consultation at the Council Meeting on 23rd February 2026 (Copy enclosed)
 - b) To consider and agree the communications and engagement strategy for the Regulation 14 consultation

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- * Under Standing Order No. 1 c), it is envisaged that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public will be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of agenda items 10 a) and b) (to preserve the integrity of the forthcoming public consultation process).

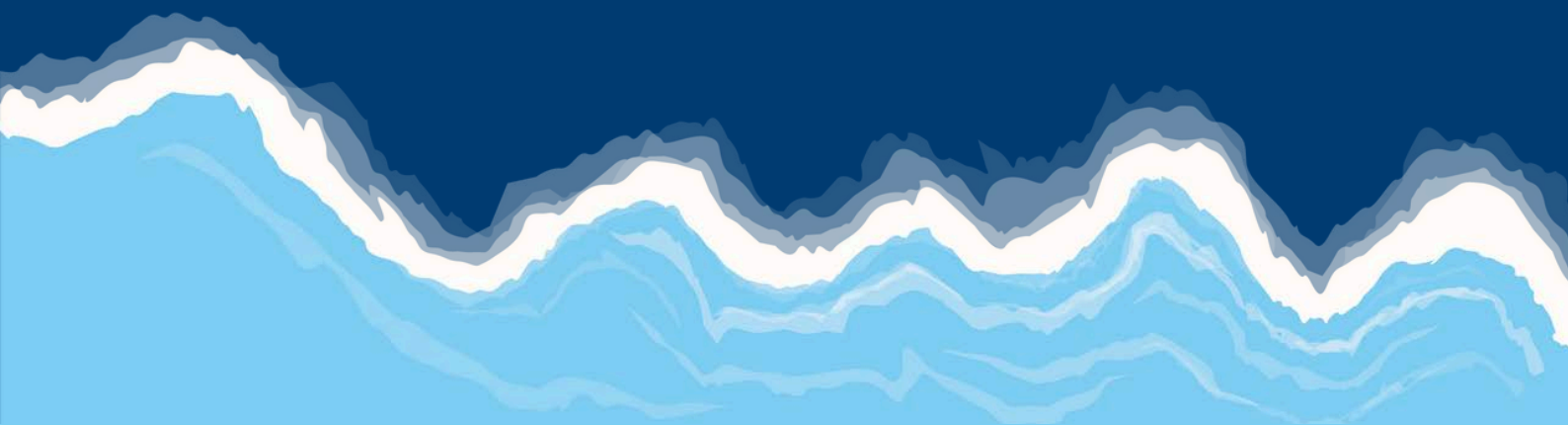
For further information please visit:

[How to create a Neighbourhood Plan: Your step by step roadmap guide - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)



SWANAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Engagement Report November 2025



Engagement - Summary

The Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) was commissioned by Swanage Town Council to lead on public engagement to gain input for the draft Swanage Neighbourhood Plan (SNP). Swanage Town Council is aiming to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that ensures the growth of the town is both sustainable and achieved within a townscape and environment that protects and enhances the special characteristics of the town as recognised by the Swanage community and which, in turn, attract the visitors who power the town's seaside economy.

Engagement on the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan took place from 4th September to 31st October 2025. Details of the project background and proposals are available on the [project webpage](#).

Aims of the engagement were:

- To clarify what a neighbourhood plan can offer and its limitations.
- To outline how the SNP will integrate with other plans, such as the Swanage Local Plan.
- To highlight the significance of the neighbourhood plan and its role in guiding decisions on housing, development, and the town's character.
- To explain the reasons for seeking feedback, the methods used, and how the feedback will be utilised.
- To gather opinions and comments from residents, businesses, and stakeholders through online surveys, in-person events, and direct submissions via email or letter.
- To address concerns and questions from the public.
- To organise various events and activities that collect information through face-to-face, online, and written engagement methods.
- To ensure a wide range of target audiences are reached, that the engagement is fully accessible, and that participants have ample time for consideration.

Engagement Overview

A series of events were held across Swanage in order to give residents a chance to find out more about the project, meet project team members from DCF, Swanage Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and connect with those in the community. Visitors were encouraged to ask questions and share any concerns.

The call to action for the events was to direct people to the webpage and survey and all those who attended left were encouraged to take part online or on paper. Paper surveys were also specifically distributed to businesses and a youth survey and engagement activities were designed alongside the main survey.

Name of event	Location	Date and time	Number attended	Notes
In-person drop in event	The Focus Centre, 107 High Street	25 th September 3.00pm - 7.00pm	16	A public drop in event with displays of key maps and policy themes. Members of the steering group and DCF team were in attendance to answer questions and talk through ideas or concerns.
In-person drop in event	All Saints Church, 5 Redcliffe Road BH19 1LL	1 st October 10.00am - 2.00pm	44	As above
In-person drop in event	Herston Village Hall, 12 Jubilee Road, BH19 2SF	8 th October 3.00pm - 7.00pm	21	As above
In person drop-in event	Emmanuel Church Hall, 160 Victoria Avenue, BH19 1AZ	15 th October 10.00am - 2.00pm	45	As above
In person pop-up	Swanage Market	24 th October 9.00am - 12.00pm	Approx. 20	This in person pop-up event allowed the Steering Group members chance to chat to visitors to the market about the Neighbourhood Plan. Posters of the maps and policy themes were displayed.

Event Images



Top: Drop-in event at All Saints Church Hall

Middle: Drop-in event at Emmanuel Church Hall and All Saints Church Hall

Bottom: Drop-in events at Herston Village Hall and the Focus Centre



Our Reach in Numbers

DCF tracked engagement using the following methods:

- In person attendance at events
- Social media posts and interactions
- Webpage visits
- Survey completions

Overview of total engagement	Number of people engaged
People engaged with at in person or online events	146
Survey Responses	140
Have Your Say website visits	891
Visits from social media link	90
Social post reach (number of unique individuals reached across Facebook and Instagram)	6200
Social post engagements (e.g. likes, comments and shares across Facebook and Instagram)	83

Engagement Advertising

- **Social media:** The events and survey were advertised widely on Social Media, originally being posted on the DCF pages, then shared by Swanage Town Council, Councillors and members of the steering group, members of the community, Help and Kindness, Swanage Matters and other local events pages.
- **Press:** An article was published in the Swanage News, Bournemouth Echo and Purbeck Gazette at the launch of the engagement.
- **Local stakeholder groups:** The events and survey were shared with key local groups and stakeholders.
- **DCF E-News:** Shared with 600 DCF recipients.
- **Posters:** Posters were displayed in the Swanage Information Centre and at other key venues.
- **Posters and banners:** Banners and posters were displayed across Swanage.

Swanage residents asked for opinion on local planning policy

By Helen Ffitch 6 September 2025, 6:00 am



With the carrot dangling of getting more money from Dorset Council, a planning document is being produced by Swanage Town Council and, as part of the process, local residents are being invited to fill out a survey.

The Swanage Neighbourhood Plan is intended to set out the town's vision and priorities for land use and development, and should be taken into account when Dorset Council considers planning applications and whether to grant planning permission or not.



People are being asked to help shape the future of the town. Picture: Dorset Coast Forum

HOW COULD SWANAGE TOWN CENTRE BE IMPROVED?

PEOPLE are being encouraged to help shape the future of Swanage Town Centre. A draft neighbourhood plan is being created for the town which gives people the power to help decide where and how new homes, shops and offices should be built. If the plan is eventually approved following a referendum, it will be considered when Dorset Council decides planning applications. It will also give communities greater access to funding, as towns would receive a larger share of the Community Infrastructure Levy - a fee paid for by developers to support additional infrastructure.

SWANAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Drop in to a community event to explore maps, displays, and talk to us in person.

- Thursday 25 September, The Focus Centre at 3 to 7pm
- Wednesday 1 October, All Saints Church Hall, Ulwell at 10am to 2pm
- Wednesday 8 October, Herston Village Hall at 3 to 7pm
- Wednesday 15 October, Emmanuel Baptist Church at 10am to 2pm

Share your views on:

- Housing
- Potential Development
- Town Centre Character
- Green & Open Spaces
- Community Facilities

For more information & to complete survey

www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/swanage-neighbourhood-plan



Top: Articles in the Swanage News and Purbeck Gazette alongside the main poster for the engagement.

Middle: An image used on social media, the banner for the engagement and a Facebook post.

Bottom: Examples of social posts and shares from throughout the engagement period.

Dorset Coast Forum 23 October

The team from Swanage Town Council will be talking all things Swanage Neighbourhood Plan at the market tomorrow at the Main Beach car park - local knowledge, local impact and if you haven't yet completed the survey you still have time as we've extended the deadline to 31st October!

For more information and to complete the survey go to: <https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/swanage...>

Swanage Information Centre Swanage Library Friends Swanage News Swanage Matters Swanage Rotary Planet Purbeck Purbeck Coast Purbeck Gazette



Have Your Say Webpage Online Survey

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

"Neighbourhood planning lets communities create legally binding plans or permissions that protect character areas, green spaces and community facilities, and shape where and how development happens in their area, provided they align with local and national policies and are approved by a local referendum."

Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their area and shape how it grows in the future. Local people can decide where new homes, shops, and offices should be built, what they should look like, and what infrastructure should be provided.

A Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies for the use and development of land and, once approved in a local referendum, becomes part of the statutory development plan, meaning it must be considered when deciding planning applications. Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders can grant planning permission directly for specific developments.

Neighbourhood Plans and Orders must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local authority's Local Plan (Dorset Council) and comply with national planning policy. Together, they provide a powerful set of tools for communities to plan for the type and location of development that meets their needs, while aligning with the wider area's strategic priorities.

Having an adopted Neighbourhood Plan also means that the community receives a larger share of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from chargeable developments. The share increases from 85% (for communities without a Plan) to 25% once a Plan is in place.

Why is this needed in Swanage?

"We have a unique opportunity to shape Swanage's next chapter. A Neighbourhood Plan lets us decide where new homes, shops, and offices should go, and helps protect the character of our special town."

Swanage faces growing pressures, including an aging population, demand for new housing, and development and infrastructure challenges. National government policy is also driving higher housing targets across Dorset. Neighbourhood planning gives the community a stronger voice and a shared vision for how Swanage should develop, linking with the current Swanage Local Plan (SLP), and helping deliver our place in the new Dorset Local Plan, now in preparation.

The former Purbeck District Council prepared the SLP jointly with Swanage Town Council and the Swanage Town & Community Partnership. This was formally adopted by the former District Council in June 2017. The SLP sets out a vision for Swanage and provides the strategy for the delivery of development and supporting infrastructure within Swanage. However, it only covers the period to 2027, and with Dorset Council's new Dorset Local Plan underway and currently being consulted upon (which will supersede both the SLP and the PLP once adopted), it is now time to look ahead and consider replacing the SLP with a Neighbourhood Plan to guide development and infrastructure for at least the next 18 years.

It is developed by the local community and must be endorsed by residents at a referendum before it can be adopted. This will involve a formal consultation on the written Draft Swanage Neighbourhood Plan, to take place in early 2025.

Who is leading the preparation of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan?

The preparation of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan is being led by the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. This is a sub-committee of the Town Council's Planning and Consultation Committee. The Steering Group comprises of six town councillors and up to six community representatives with relevant skills and experience. Currently the Steering Group's community representatives include members of Sustainable Swanage, Planet Purbeck, the Purbeck Society, and the Swanage Community Housing Group.

Over the past eighteen months, the Steering Group has been undertaking research and gathering evidence in order to create a list of policy ideas for the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy Themes

- The policy themes that are under review for inclusion in the Draft Swanage Neighbourhood Plan include:
1. **Swanage Settlement** - Assessing how sustainable development principles can be applied, and modification of the settlement boundary to incorporate new housing allocations where necessary.
 2. **Housing Mix** - Reviewing the appropriate mix of dwelling types and tenures based on identified local housing needs.
 3. **Development Sites** - Seeking views on constraints and opportunities of potential development sites.
 4. **Town Centre** - Proposals to enhance the town centre and improve its vitality and viability.
 5. **Townscape Character** - Safeguarding existing designated areas of distinctive local character and inviting comments on report findings that identify the value of undesignated heritage assets and areas of special character in Swanage.
 6. **Open Space and Recreation** - Safeguarding existing designated open spaces (that have not been classified as local green spaces) and identifying and seeking comments on potential new spaces, to ensure sufficient locations throughout the parish for sport, recreation and leisure activities.
 7. **Local Green Spaces** - Safeguarding existing designated local green spaces, seeking comments on why these spaces are considered special, and identifying and seeking comments on potential new green spaces for protection.

WELCOME to get involved!

Have Your Say

Complete survey now

Who's Listening

Toni Powell

Dorset Coast Forum Coordinator
Dorset Coast Forum

Phone: 01305 224622
Email: dorset.coast@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Young People Survey 2025

Aged 9-18? It's your plan too! We have a **dedicated survey** for young people living in Swanage.

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan
Young People Survey 2025 KS3-5
Ages 9-18 years

Why should young people be part of neighbourhood planning? Your voice matters: you live here too, so you should help shape it. This survey is NOW OPEN until 8 November 2025

Community Engagement Events

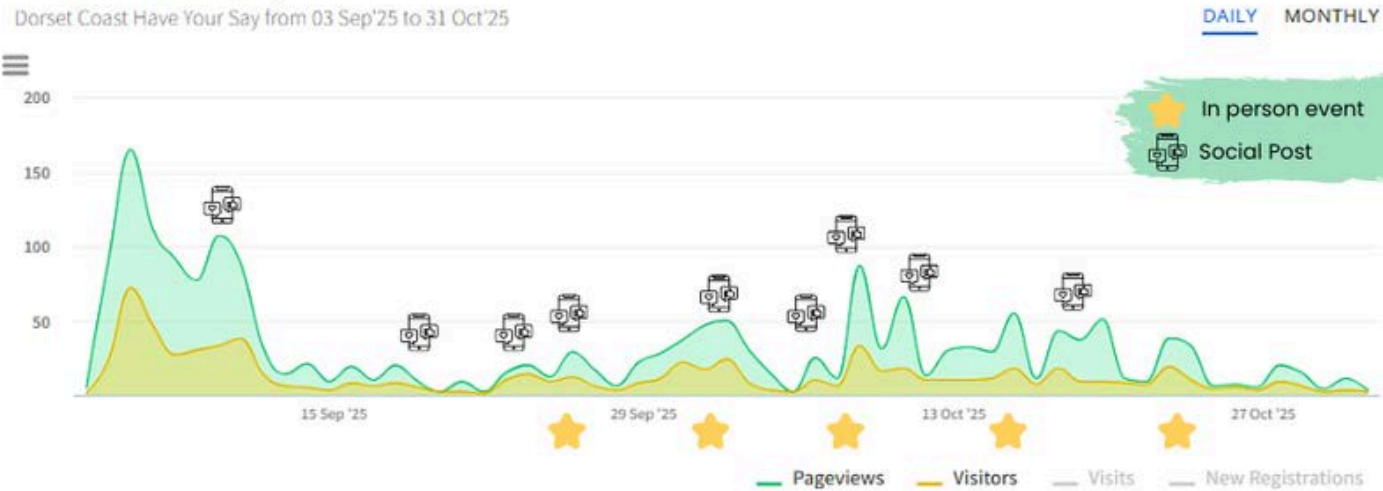
The Forum Centre, 2 to 5pm
25 September 2025

All Saints Church Hall, Dorset Stars to Spin
01 October 2025

The Dorset Coast Have Your Say webpage has a dedicated area for information and engagement related to the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan. Between 4th September and 31st October 2025 there were 891 visits to the webpage. The graph below shows the number of webpage visits during this engagement period and also the timings of our in person and online events and social media posts.

Visitors Summary

Dorset Coast Have Your Say from 03 Sep '25 to 31 Oct '25



Webpage Traffic Sources:

- 60.2% of webpage visitors came directly to the site
- 10.1% from social media, predominantly Facebook
- 17.6% came via search engines including Bing and google
- 7.9% via referrals from websites such as Swanage News and Swanage Events.

The Survey

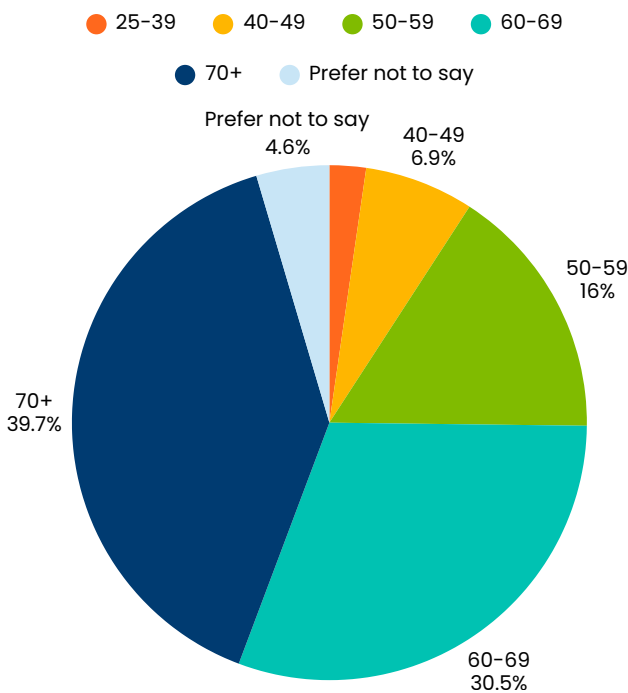
Note: for in-depth data and analysis plus a copy of the survey questions see appendix.

Who answered the survey?

- 140 people responded in total.
- 113 respondents (80.7%) are aged 50 or over. The youngest respondent was aged 25-39. **A separate youth survey and schools engagement was offered as part of this engagement. Results can be found in the Youth Survey Report.*
- 86.9% of respondents do not consider themselves to have a disability.

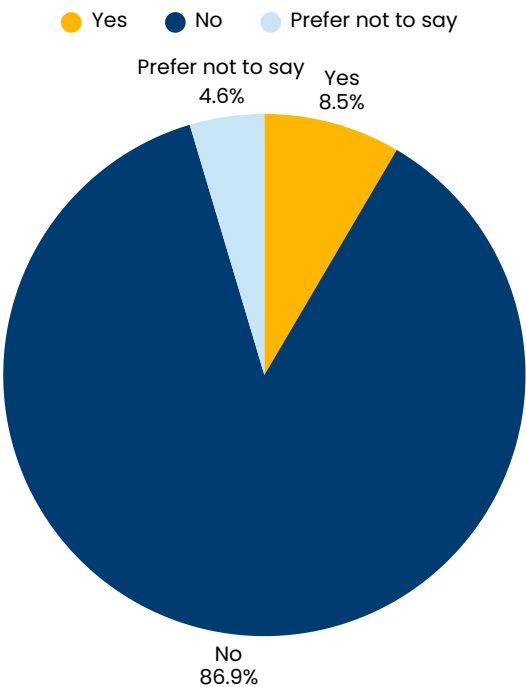
Question 31: What is your age group?

131 responses, 9 skipped



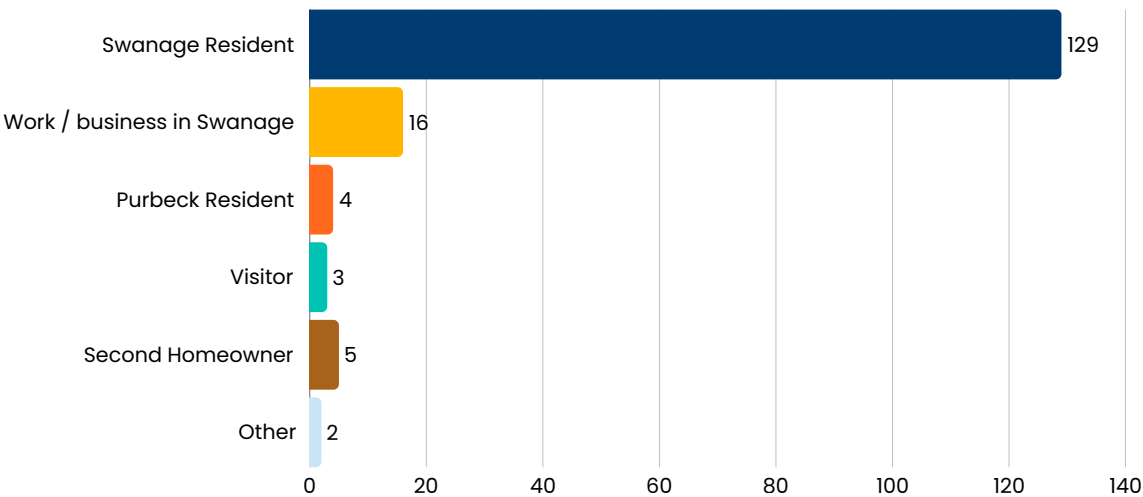
Question 32: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

130 responses, 10 skipped



Question 1: What is your connection to Swanage?

139 responses, 1 skipped



Other responses include a developer and a potential resident.

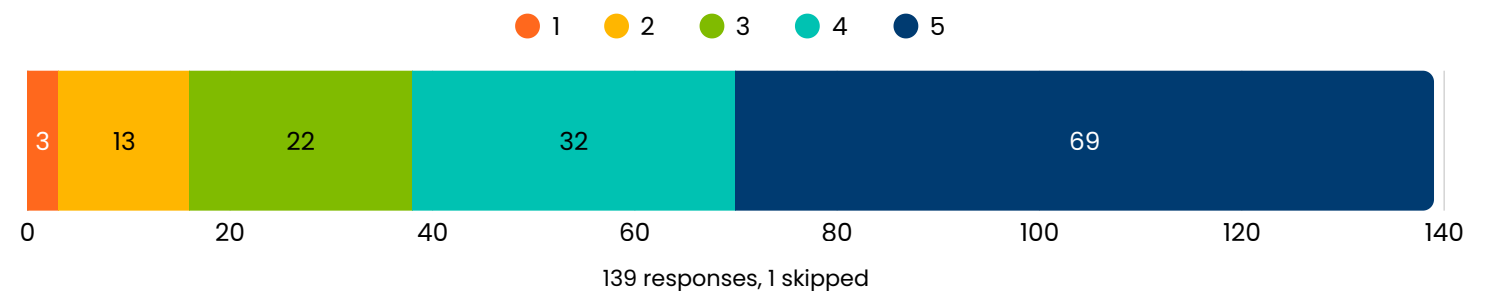
Survey questions were based on the policy themes. The policy themes that are under review for inclusion in the Draft Swanage Neighbourhood Plan include:

- 1. Swanage Settlement** – Assessing how sustainable development principles can be applied, and modification of the settlement boundary to incorporate new housing allocations where necessary.
- 2. Housing Mix** – Reviewing the appropriate mix of dwelling types and tenures based on identified local housing needs.
- 3. Development Sites** – Seeking views on constraints and opportunities of potential development sites.
- 4. Town Centre** – Proposals to enhance the town centre and improve its vitality and viability.
- 5. Townscape Character** – Safeguarding existing designated areas of distinctive local character and inviting comments on report findings that identify the value of undesignated heritage assets and areas of special character in Swanage.
- 6. Open Space and Recreation** – Safeguarding existing designated open spaces (that have not been classified as local green spaces) and identifying and seeking comments on potential new spaces, to ensure sufficient locations throughout the parish for sport, recreation and leisure activities.
- 7. Local Green Spaces** – Safeguarding existing designated local green spaces, seeking comments as to why these spaces are considered special, and identifying and seeking comments on potential new green spaces for protection.
- 8. Community Facilities** – Identifying what community facilities should be safeguarded and improved where needed and where possible.

Section One – Housing

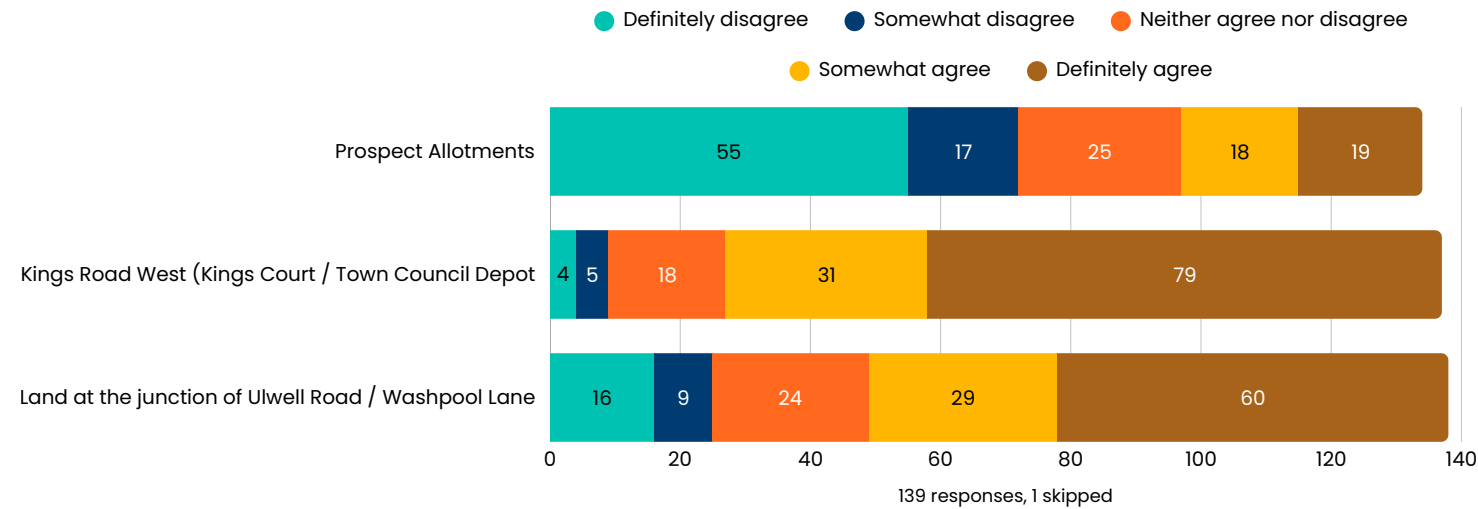
Question 3: The main way of delivering new affordable homes is part of larger open market housing schemes. In which case, the more homes planned for in total, the more affordable homes should be delivered, and Dorset Council now has a policy requiring almost all new homes to be used as a primary residence, not for second homes.

With that in mind, and on a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest, to what extent should the plan prioritise delivering affordable homes?



Question 4: Another way of delivering new affordable homes is to allocate land already in public ownership.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following sites are suited to the delivery of affordable housing for people with a local connection?

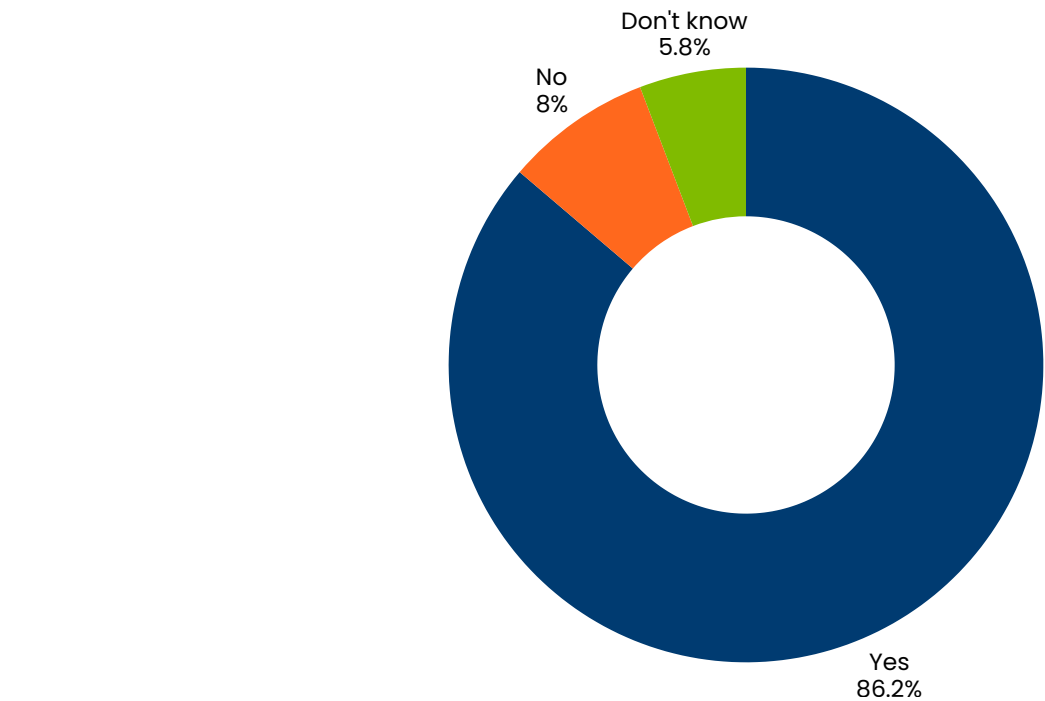


Prospect Allotments has the strongest negative sentiment with 72 respondents disagreeing to some extent. The overwhelming sentiment for Kings Road West is agreement and only 9 respondents disagree to some extent. Ulwell Road / Washpool lane is somewhat popular (89 respondents agree to some extent) but this is less extreme than Kings Road West.

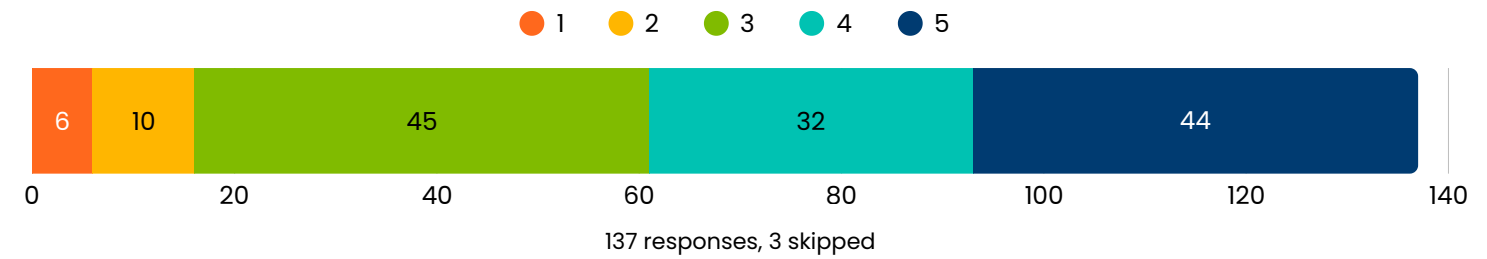
Question 5: In many urban areas across the UK, older sites are being redeveloped for mixed use spaces of commercial and residential uses.

An example of this is the redevelopment in Commercial Road.

Do you agree that this would benefit areas of Swanage? e.g. Commercial Road, Kings Court Business Centre?



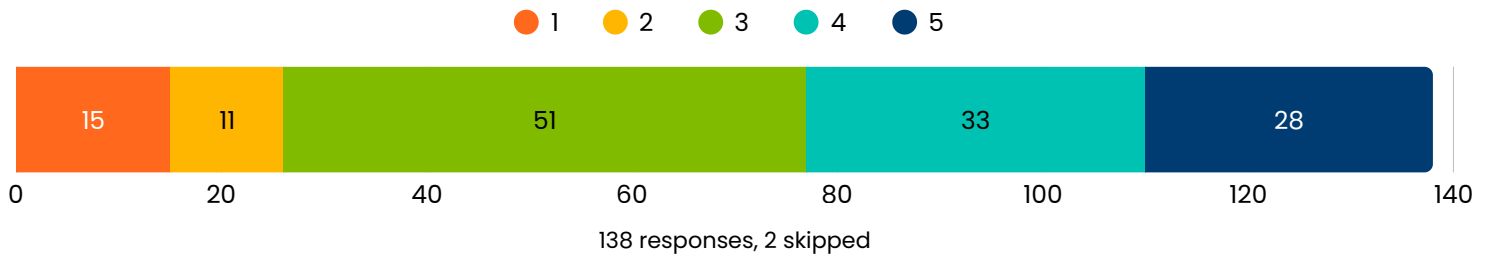
Question 6: With the previous question in mind, and on a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest, to what extent should our plan prioritise redeveloping land for mixed use schemes?



The majority of respondents lean toward making mixed-use redevelopment a priority, with the largest single group (44 people) giving the highest rating. Neutral responses (45) suggest some uncertainty or conditional support perhaps depending on location or design specifics.

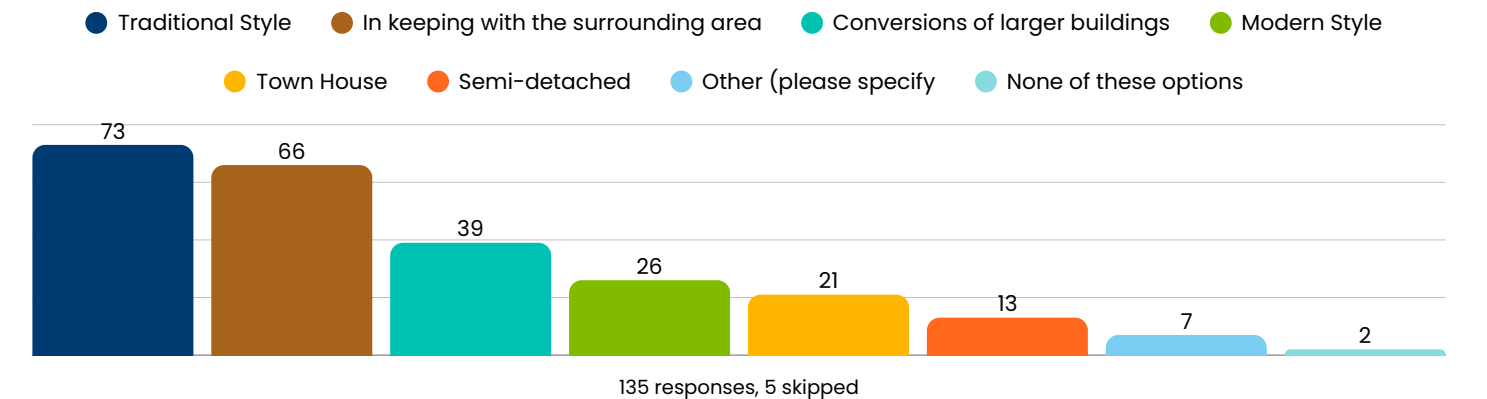
Question 7: To make mixed development schemes viable, especially on brownfield land, they need to be built at a higher density than may be common to the surrounding area. This need not undermine local character if designed well and it is planned to have site-specific design policies to manage this.

With that in mind, and on a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being lowest priority and 5 being highest, to what extent should our plan allow for redeveloping land at higher densities?



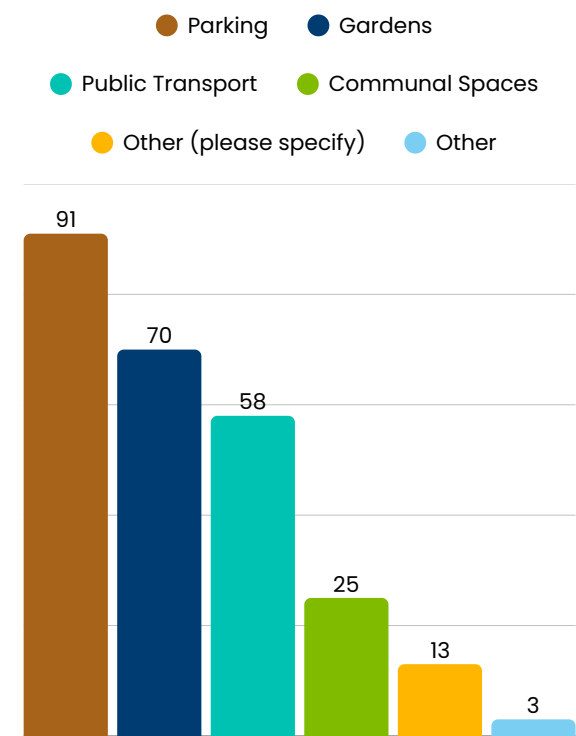
There is moderate support overall with 61 respondents favouring (to some extent) higher density redevelopment. The largest single group is neutral in response (51 choosing 3) suggesting people may be cautious about density changes.

Question 8: What are your preferences for the design and layout of new housing? (Please select up to two options)



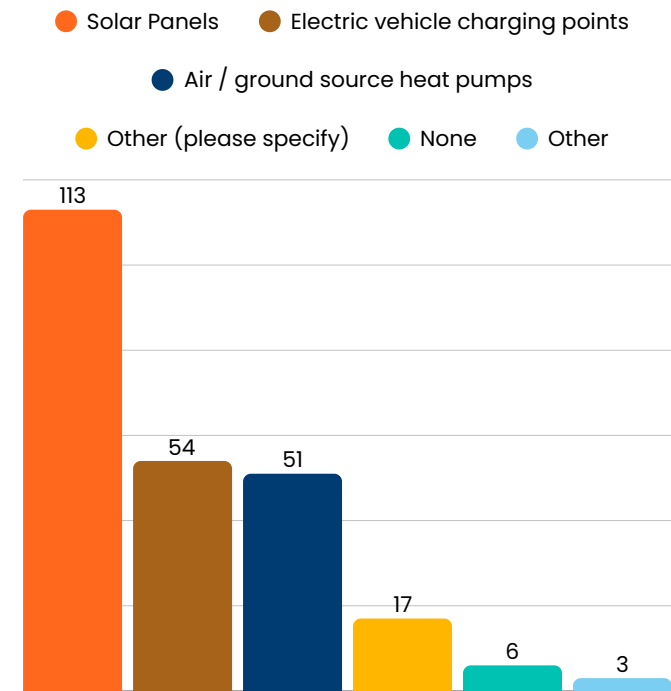
Other responses included emphasis on high quality design, innovative construction and environmental specifications. They also mention being careful to avoid altering the towns character.

Question 9: What amenities do you feel are important for new homes? (please select up to two options)



135 responses, 5 skipped
Other answers included energy efficiency measures and space for bin storage and walking routes.

Question 10: What sustainable features do you think should be included in new housing developments? (please select up to two options)



135 responses, 5 skipped
Other answers included high quality insulation and ventilation. rainwater recovery schemes and bird and bat boxes.

Question 11: If the primary resident population grows, it may increase the demand on local services and infrastructure, like schools and health facilities.

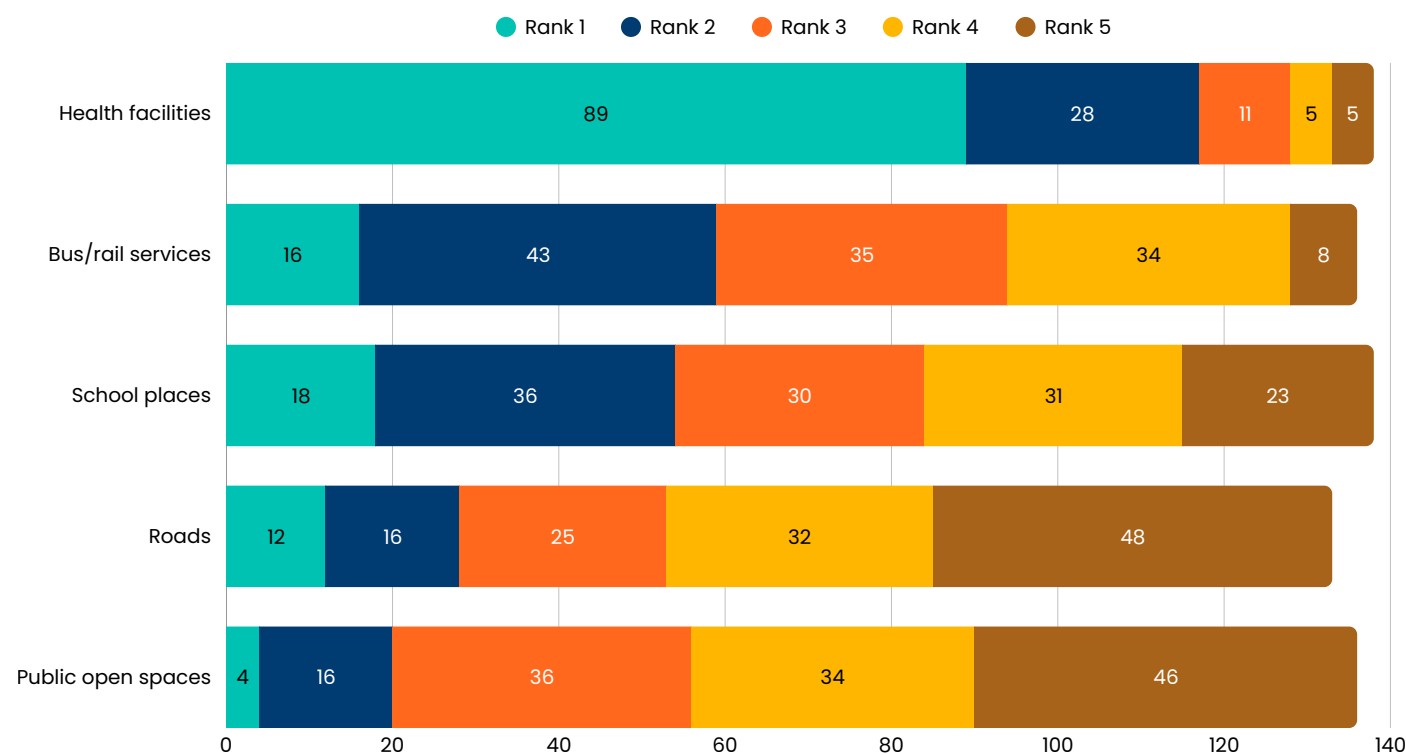
In which case, what do you think the priority should be for improving local services and infrastructure (please rank with 1 being the most important)?

The average rank scores from respondents are as follows:

Option	Average Rank
Health Facilities	1.65
Bus / Rail Services	2.85
School Places	3.02
Roads	3.60
Public Open Spaces	3.74

134 responses, 6 skipped
A lower average rank shows a higher number of people placing it as a higher priority.

However we can also look at the raw counts for each ranking on each option. This chart shows the number of people who chose each rank for each option.



130 respondents gave complete rankings. Incomplete responses were on paper surveys.

Health facilities are the clear number one priority with 89 respondents or 64% placing it as the number one priority and 84.2% place it in the top two. Public transport (bus/rail services) and school places follow as secondary priorities, while roads and public open spaces consistently rank lower, often in fourth or fifth place. This suggests a strong emphasis on essential services and sustainable transport over road expansion or recreational space in the context of growth.

Question 12: Please add here any other local services not included that you think should be added to the list in the previous question.

Comments were tagged by the Dorset Coast Forum team to allow the contents to be categorised further. The most tagged categories (excluding any repeats from the options above) were:



Supermarket



Utilities



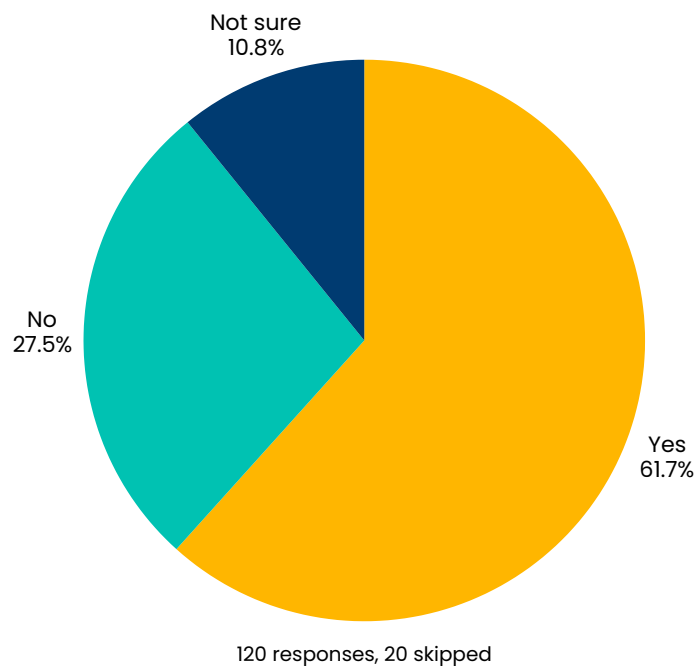
Emergency Services

73 responses, 67 skipped

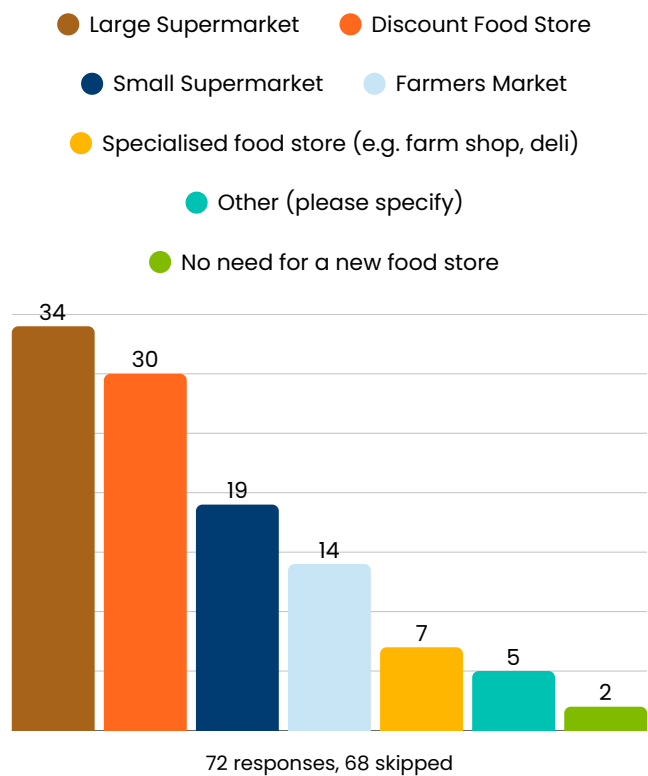
Section two – Town Centre and Potential Development

The second section of the survey aims to find out more about the respondents views on opportunities to enhance the town centre to improve its vitality and viability, and potential new commercial development.

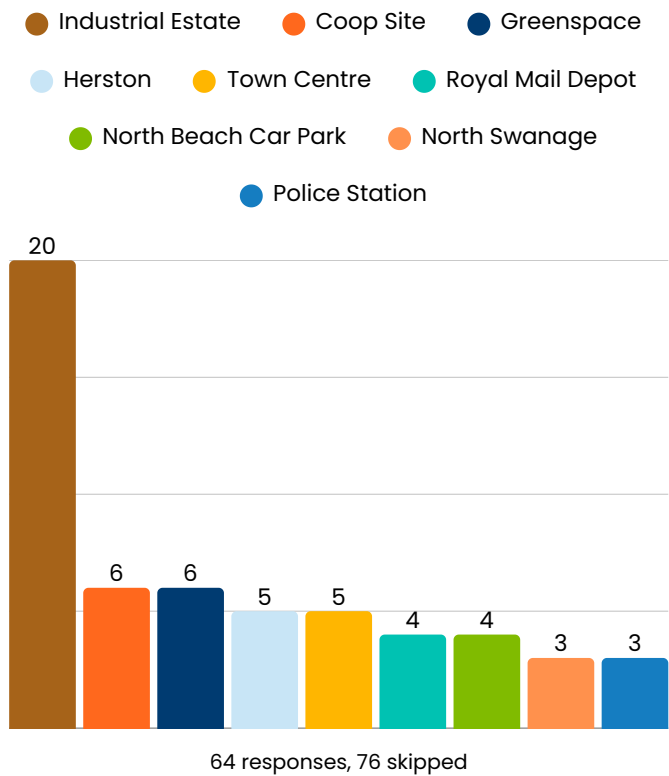
Question 13: Would you like to see a new food store site allocation within Swanage?



Question 10: If you agree that there is a need for a new food store in Swanage, what type should it be? (Please select up to two options)

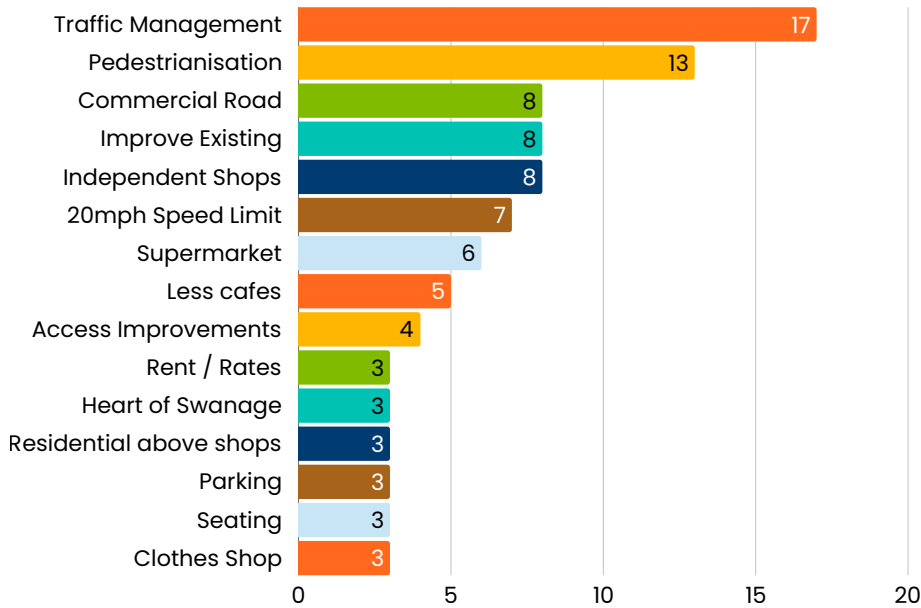


Question 11: Where in Swanage do you think a new food store should be located?



Question 13: What ideas do you have for how the town centre could potentially be improved?

Comments were tagged by the Dorset Coast Forum team to allow the contents to be categorised further. The chart below shows the most frequently used tags.



“Support with the rent for first two years to bring in young crafts people to set up their business”

“Steps to discourage inconsiderate illegal parking and facilities to provide more parking”

“I would like to see the Commercial Road area opened up to make it more visible. Perhaps this could be done if the redevelopment of the Post Office/Sorting office takes place. This is an ideal area for small independent shops and cafe culture environment, hopefully completely car free.”

“Road improvements in town centre in line with those in Institute Road i.e pedestrians favoured and traffic calmed but flowing steadily”

“Insist via planning permission that shop owners keep traditional/original shop fronts as area is in conservation area.”

“We should make this a smarter area to attract more small businesses and artists into the area (the Old Brewery area in Lyme Regis is a good example of what can be done with an old commercial area that is not on the seafront). Put cobbles down, do some greening up with flower beds, etc.”

“Supporting our local independent businesses should be an overriding priority not introducing international competition in the retail sector. Work on the appearance and pedestrian facilities of the town centre”

“Pedestrianisation of institute road and high street and restriction on number of charity shops/discount shops/random junk shops. Development of run down areas in high street.”

Section Three – Potential Development Opportunities

In this section of the survey respondents were asked to look at the sites across Swanage which had been identified for use for new or more commercial development.

Question 17: If these sites became available for development in the future, which sites do you think are most suitable? (Please Rank with 1 being the most suitable)

The average rank scores are as follows:

Option	Average Rank
Former Post Office, Kings Road West and Sorting Office, Kings Road East *	1.90
Kings Court Business Centre, Town Council Depot, Kings Road West *	2.06
Former Greystone Garage site, Victoria Avenue	2.79
North Beach Car Park, De Moulham Road ***	3.97
Spa Beach Huts and part of land adjoining to the north, Shore Road **	4.25

118 responses, 22 skipped

A lower average rank shows a higher number of people placing it as a higher priority.

**Potential for mixed-use development (commercial and residential)*

***Beach huts only, as indicated in recent Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme public engagement.*

**** Potential hospitality, retail, or leisure use.*

The most preferred site is the Former Post Office, Kings Road West and Sorting Office, Kings Road East. Whilst that and Kings Court Business Centre, Town Council Depot, Kings Road West are close in number, the average scores are wider for the other three, where more people responded with a rank of 3, 4 or 5. This indicates lower support for development at these sites.

Question 18: Please add here any other potential development sites not included that you think should be added to the list in the previous question.

Top responses:



Police Station
8 respondents



Greenspaces such as:

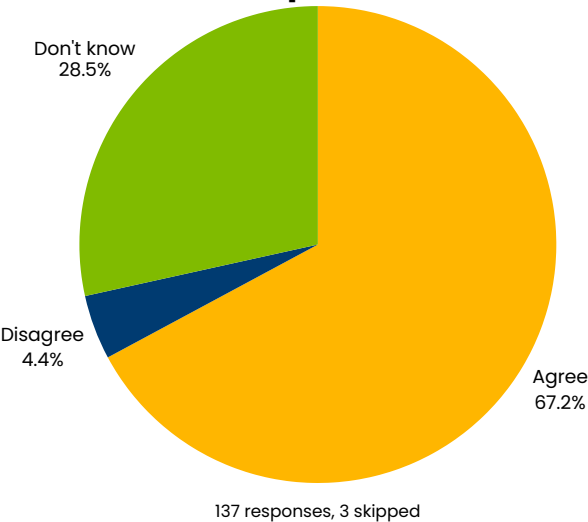
- Between Emmanuel Church and Swanage School
 - Land off Prospect Way
- 7 respondents

30 responses, 110 skipped

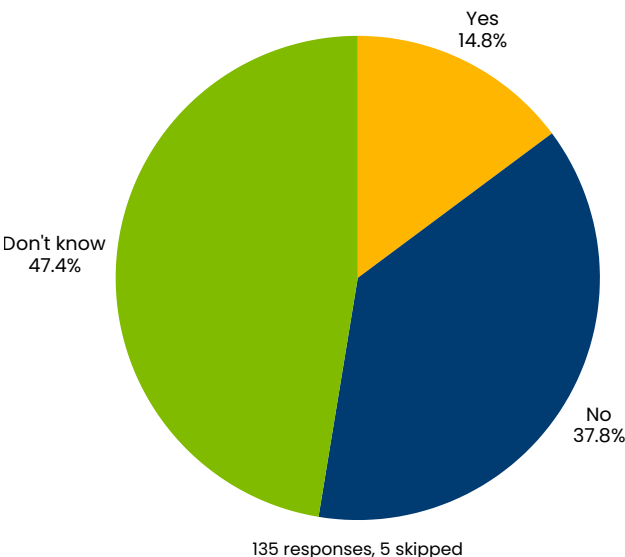
Section Four – Townscape Character

Respondents were asked to look at the map of Character Areas, including existing and potential new areas of distinctive local character.

Question 19: Do you agree with the existing and potential areas of local character on the map?



Question 20: Are there any areas of special character that you feel are missing?

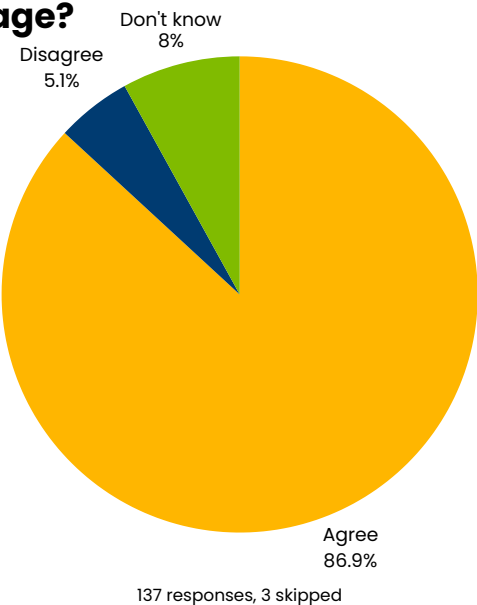


If respondents answered yes to question 20, they were asked to **tell us about any areas of special character that are missing from the map**. Results included the old Police Station, Green Seafront, WWII Sites, Various Farms, Whitecroft and Godlingston Manor and Swanage School

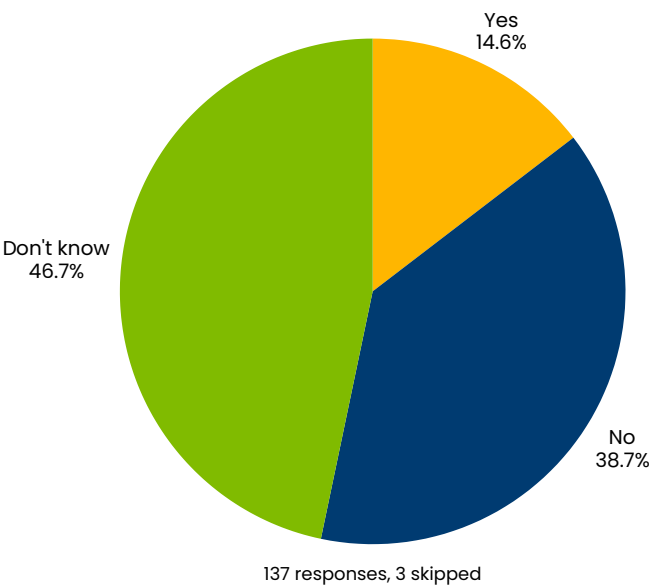
Section Five – Green and Open Spaces

Respondents were asked to take a look at the Open and Green Spaces map which determines which spaces should be protected by the Neighbourhood plan. Some of these spaces are already protected in the existing Swanage Local Plan and some of these are being proposed for the first time.

Question 22: Do you agree with the sites selected as green and open spaces for Swanage?



Question 23: Do you think that there are any green spaces missing from the list?



If respondents answered yes to question 20, they were asked to **tell us about any areas of green or open spaces that are missing from the map.**

Results included:

- Land around the Prospect Allotments
- Cauldron Barn Farm Park
- Land at Priests Way

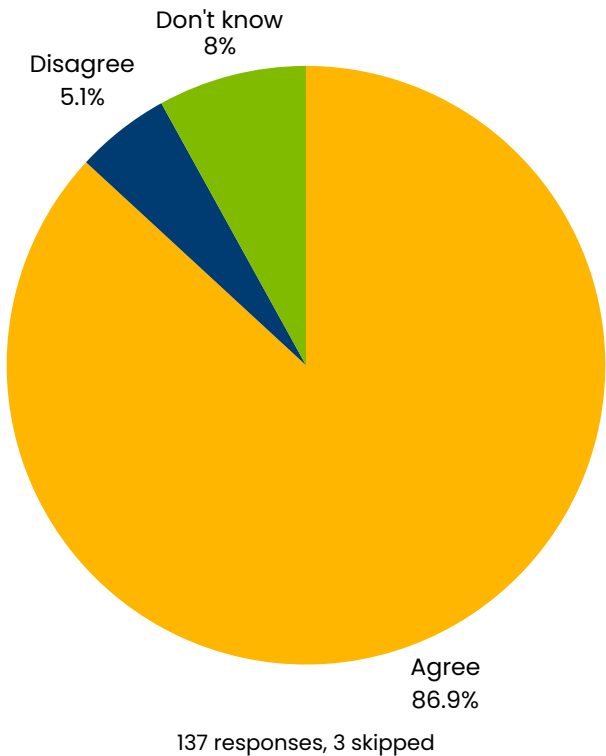
19 responses, 121 skipped

Section Six – Community Facilities

Community facilities provide for the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community. Community facilities were listed as follows:

- Gainsborough Care Home (former James Day Care Centre)
- Swanage Medical Practice
- Swanage Schools
- The Focus Centre (former Swanage Children's Centre, Day Centre, and Youth & Community Centre)
- Swanage Library
- Swanage Hospital
- Swanage Town Hall
- Swanage Museum and Heritage Centre
- Local shops (such as those at Herston)
- The Mowlem Theatre

Question 25: Do you feel there are existing community facilities that are missing from the list?



The pie chart shows that a large proportion of the respondents feel there are more or different community facilities needed.

Question 26: If yes, please tell us what existing facilities should be added to the above safeguarded list.

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

The Loft, Commercial Road

Care Homes

Police Station

Churche

Durlston Country Park

Fire Station

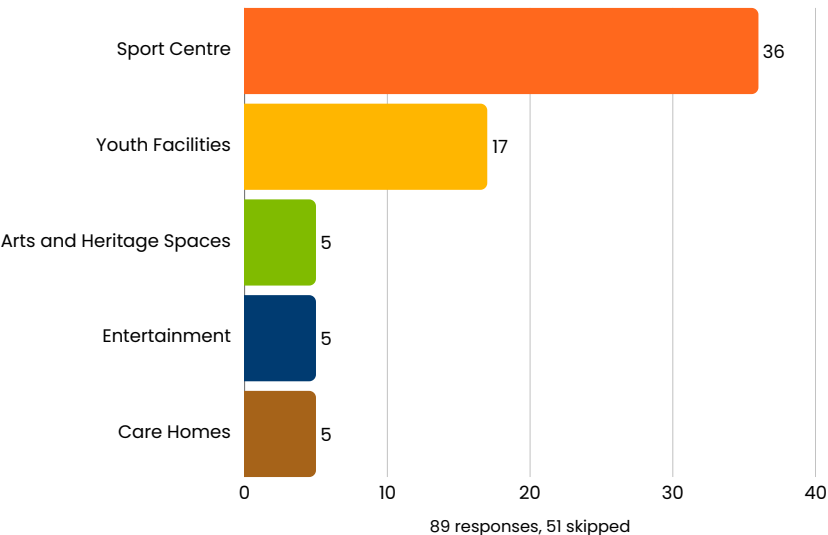
Dentists

Swanage Railway

Herston Hall

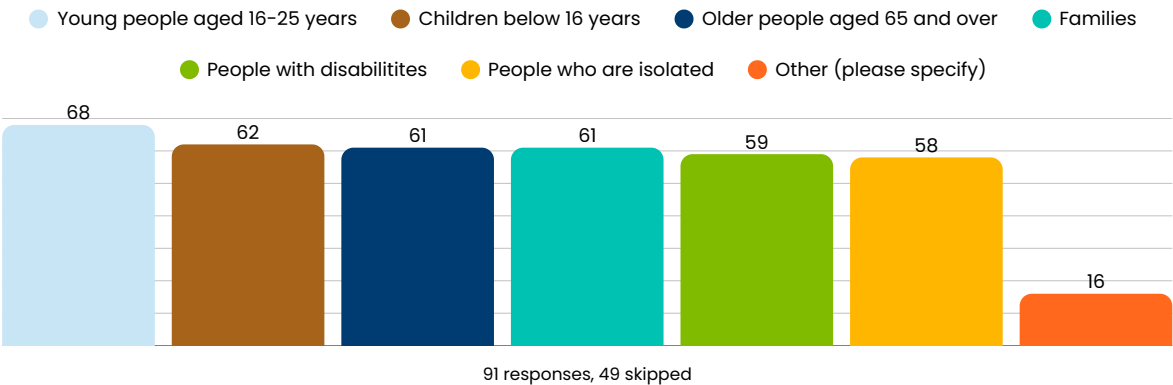
56 responses, 84 skipped

Question 27: Thinking about people of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds, what new facilities do you think would benefit Swanage communities?



The top five responses once tagged are shown in the chart. A sports centre was the most mentioned by respondents along with facilities for young people. Both are mentioned far more than any others.

Question 28: Who will this new community facility support? (Please select all that apply)



Responses in the other category include everyone, visitors and tourists and new mothers.

Question 29: Please tell us of any other comments, ideas, or feedback you may have about the proposals for the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan that has not been included in your responses so far.

Responses to this questions were tagged. The most common tags were infrastructure, Beauty of Swanage, Prospect Allotments and affordable housing.

“
Swanage needs to be developed with more infrastructure as in water sewerage etc. It also needs services expanded before even thinking about future development in housing.
”

“
Swanage is attractive to residents and visitors alike. Any development must strike a balance between the respective needs.
”

“
With any development, it is really important to not lose the character and beauty of this area which makes it so unique.
”

“
It would be a travesty if the allotments were moved. It takes many years and tremendous effort and expense to get an allotment into shape. Many allotmenters are aged and just about manage as it is
”

“
Any development should ensure affordable homes are built before the developers 'sold for profit' homes. Social housing should be first priority for STC to house local health /education /community workers
”

“
There is a difficult challenge to meet both the needs of tourists and, at the same time, residents.
”

“
We need more housing for social rent. "Affordable" is not affordable for many people
”

“
It should be a condition of any planning decision for new development that relevant infrastructure must be checked.
”

“
Any large development in the Swanage area without the increased infrastructure, i.e. doctors, dentists, supermarket etc., would be insane, not to mention access roads in and out of Swanage.
”

“
In terms of housing, this must prioritise houses e.g. 3 beds or more for families. There is already a surplus of flats, so adding more, e.g. above shops achieves nothing.
”

80 responses, 60 skipped

Key Findings

The engagement revealed strong priorities around affordable housing, sustainable design, and infrastructure improvements, alongside clear support for revitalising the town centre and safeguarding community facilities. Respondents emphasised the need to balance growth with environmental and heritage protection, ensuring Swanage remains attractive to both residents and visitors.

Housing Priorities

Affordable housing is the top priority, with many respondents strongly supporting its inclusion, alongside significant backing for mixed-use redevelopment and sustainable design features such as solar panels and EV charging points. Respondents also emphasized traditional architecture, essential amenities like parking and gardens, and improvements to health facilities, public transport, and schools to support future growth.

Town Centre & Commercial Development

Respondents expressed strong interest in improving the town centre, with suggestions focusing on traffic management, pedestrianisation, and revitalising areas such as Commercial Road. There was clear support for enhancing the appearance of the high street, encouraging independent shops, and creating a more attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment.

Potential Development Opportunities

Central brownfield sites were strongly favoured for future development, particularly for mixed-use schemes combining housing and commercial space. Respondents showed little appetite for development on Seafront or green spaces, reflecting a clear preference for reusing existing built areas rather than encroaching on valued open land. Additional suggestions focused on sites like the former Police Station, reinforcing the community's view that development should prioritise locations with minimal impact on Swanage's natural and heritage assets.

Townscape Character

There was broad support for the proposed character areas, with respondents emphasising the importance of preserving Swanage's distinctive identity. Suggestions for additional areas of special character included historic buildings such as the WWII sites and former Police Station, seafront spaces such as the Green Seafront, and local farms, highlighting the community's commitment to safeguarding heritage and ensuring new development complements the town's unique setting.

Green and Open Spaces

There is strong support for the proposed list of green and open spaces to be protected, with 86.9% agreeing and only 5.1% disagreeing. Although most did not suggest additions, some respondents felt some spaces were missing, most notably land around Prospect Allotments, Cauldron Barn Farm Park, and land at Priests Way, indicating community desire to extend protection to valued local areas.

Community Facilities

Respondents agreed that more community facilities are needed to meet the needs of all age groups and abilities. A sports centre and youth spaces were the most requested additions, alongside safeguarding existing amenities such as healthcare, cultural venues, and churches. Feedback also stressed the importance of inclusive facilities that support families, older people, and those who are isolated, reinforcing the role of community infrastructure in promoting health and wellbeing.

General Comments

- Feedback consistently emphasised the need for balanced growth, prioritising affordable housing, sustainable design, and improved infrastructure, alongside protecting green spaces and heritage assets.
- There were regular comments and concerns about retaining Swanage's character, heritage and beauty.
- There is strong opposition to moving Prospect Allotments and this was mentioned throughout.
- There is a clear appetite for revitalising the town centre and enhancing community facilities to meet the needs of all age groups.
- There are calls for more social housing and prioritising local needs over second homes.

Lessons Learned

Understanding Neighbourhood Planning

Explaining what a Neighbourhood Plan can and cannot do helped manage expectations and encouraged constructive feedback. Future engagements should continue to clarify scope and limitations upfront.

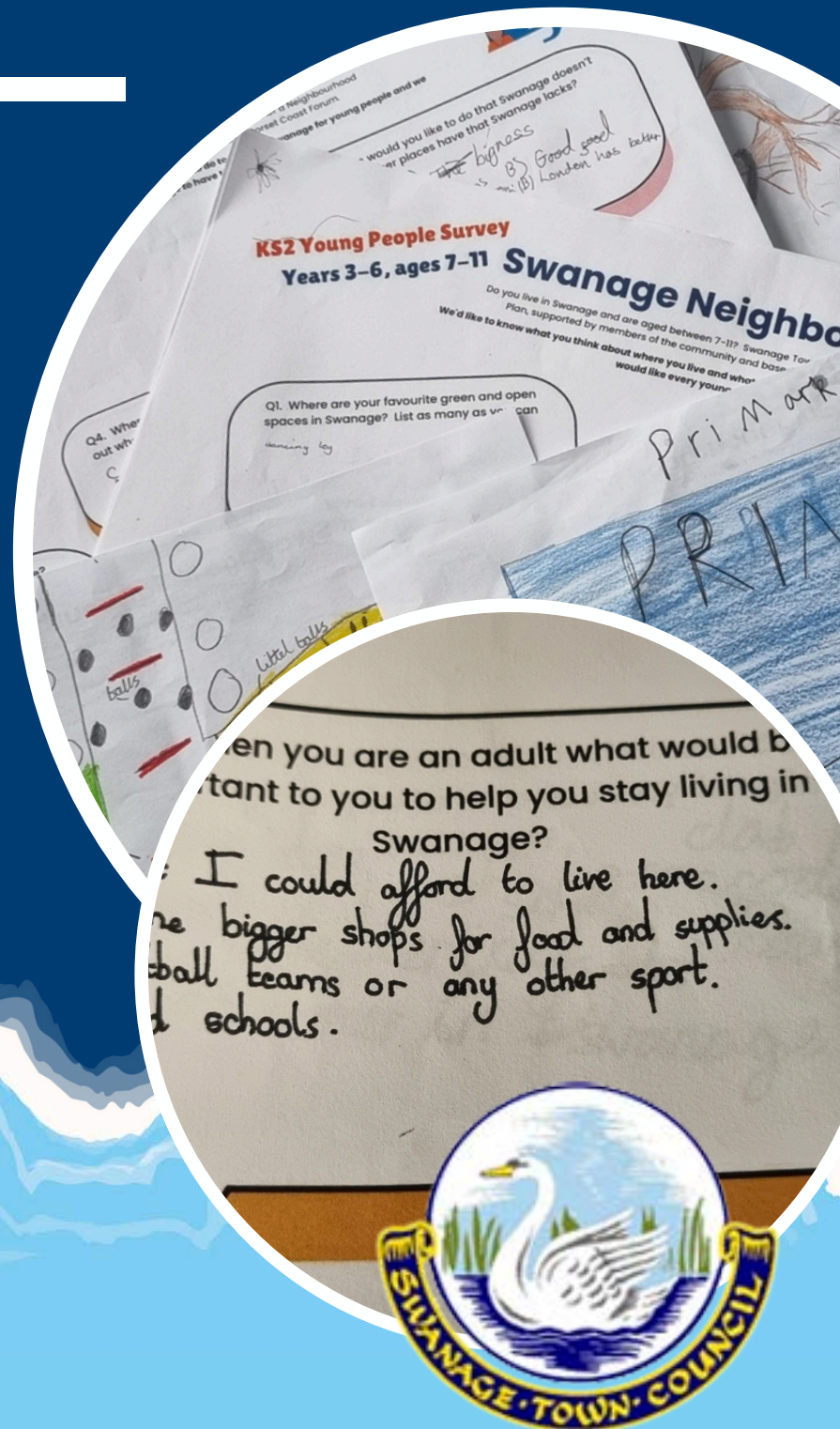
Targeted Engagement

Most respondents to the main survey were aged 50+, highlighting the need for more focused engagement with younger residents and working age groups, possibly through schools, youth organisations, and digital platforms. The Youth survey and schools questions ensured that we reached more young people under 18. Any further engagement needs to also focus on reaching younger adults in Swanage.

For more details visit: <https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/swanage-neighbourhood-plan> or contact Dorset Coast Forum Project Officer, Elaine Snow elaine.snow@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Children & Young People (CYP) Survey Results 2025

SWANAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Working with communities to promote, enhance and protect our coast.

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a.Appendix 1 Promotional resources

b.Appendix 2 Mark Your Map resources

c.Appendix 3 Teacher/Youth Leader Toolkit

Children & Young People (CYP) Surveys

1. Introduction

The Neighbourhood Plan process will provide residents, businesses, service providers and local organisations with a unique opportunity to help guide development within the designated area, plan the future delivery of local services and facilities, and ensure that Swanage remains a vibrant and sustainable place to live, work and do business.

To support the successful development of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan, Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) supported the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to undertake a consultation with young people in the designated area.

2. Survey Methodology

2 surveys were developed by DCF based on the topics and questions in the main resident survey which ran concurrently. The surveys were divided by educational Key Stages/age – a **KS2 paper worksheet survey** for ages 7–11 years and an **online survey for KS3–5** for ages 11–18 years. These surveys form the basis of this report. The surveys were available during October–November 2025 for a period of 4 weeks. Direct contact was made via email to both local primary and secondary schools, youth organisations and sports clubs to promote the surveys. A promotional poster for the youth surveys also featured at the community engagement events hosted by DCF in Swanage.

KS2 Survey

The KS2 survey was teacher-led and completed by primary school pupils in school using a pre-prepared worksheet (Figure 1) following guidance provided in a Teacher/Youth Leader Toolkit (see Appendix 3). Support for schools was provided by members of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group team and completed surveys collated by them (Figure 2). Responses were inputted by DCF using a Microsoft Form in order to collate the data for analysis.

Pupils were also asked to draw on the back of the worksheet what they would like a future Swanage to look like (Figure 3) – those pictures have been collated, photographed and returned to the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in their original, and electronic, format.

KS3–5 Survey

The KS3–5 survey was self-led using a link to a Microsoft Form created by DCF. Promotion of the survey (see Appendix 1) was through printed posters provided to schools and displayed in the community and through a social media campaign through DCF channels which also appealed to parents/carers/teachers to get Swanage young people involved. Secondary school teachers were also provided with guidance provided in the Teacher/Youth Leader Toolkit (see Appendix 3).

The completed surveys were then analysed by Dorset Coast Forum. Excel spreadsheets containing all responses and data have been provided to the SNP Steering Group link.

Make Your Mark Map – Green and Open Spaces

DCF printed 12 A0 size copies of the Green and Open Spaces map/poster used during the main community engagement events for the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to share with local schools and youth groups. Accompanying posters were also provided to explain the task (see Appendix 2). DCF have not been provided with the results of this task so no comment is available on whether they were utilised.

Notes

Note that all the questions in the KS2 survey and the majority of the questions in the KS3–5 survey were open-ended with freeform replies, which have been analysed to create a finite list of identifiable opinions. Although using open-ended questions has resulted in an unbounded and wide range of responses, it is expected that the same set of questions asked with tick box questions would give a different, or more focussed, set of results. For example, asking “Why do you like the summertime?” might produce a lot of responses of “It’s hot”, however if you offered tick boxes for “It’s hot”, “It’s dry”, and “It’s not windy” then the answers would be different.

Unlike a census, the data collected was not truly representative of every single 7–18 year old living in the designated area, it is only a subset, which will be skewed in several ways. For example, the vast majority of KS3–5 surveys were completed by one age group 13–14 years, suggesting the lead teacher/s for that year group (Y9) were good at engaging their pupils to complete the survey.

Because of this, some statistics will be particular to a school location, age or interest group.

3. Summary KS2 Survey 77 responses (note some worked as a team so approximately 100 pupils participated)

Considering all responses, the following general statistics are available:

- 57.1% aged 10
- 33.8% aged 9
- 9.1% aged 11
- 68% of the total were from one of 2 schools – St Mark’s or St Mary’s

What I like most about Swanage:

- 65% named Days Park as their favourite open or green space
- 52% rated the beach as what they like most about where they live
- 36% rated the parks/green spaces/nature as what they like most about where they live

What Swanage lacks that other places have:

- 27% felt that Swanage most lacked a water park
- 19% would like a wider range of shops/fast food outlets

Communication:

- 40% most often found out about what is going on in Swanage from friends, family or neighbours
- 16% found out this information from social media
- 8% found out this information from school/youth leaders

3. Cont. **Summary KS2 Survey**

Future living in Swanage:

- 26% stated that finding a suitable job was the most important thing to help them stay living in Swanage
- 21% felt they needed to be able to afford a home in Swanage
- 21% wanted continued access to the beach and green spaces/nature

What I like least about Swanage:

- 16% stated that litter/rubbish was the thing they liked least about living in Swanage
- 8% did not like tourists and the busy summer months
- 6% did not like the seagulls and seaweed on the beach
- 5% wanted dog free zones (where they play)
- 12% felt that there was nothing they disliked about living in Swanage

4. Summary **KS3–5 Survey 44 Responses**

Considering all responses, the following general statistics are available:

- 93.2% aged 13–14
- 4.5% aged 11–12
- 2.3% aged 17–18
- 0% aged 15–16
- 11.4% stated they had a disability
- 97.7% attended Swanage School

Living in Swanage:

- 23% felt access to the beach was the best part of living in Swanage
- 28% wanted more activities aimed at teenagers
- 18% wanted more shops that appealed to them, 23% felt this would improve Swanage
- 11% disliked the crowded summer months and tourists
- 7% wanted to feel safer in the community or have access to safe places to hang out

How I rate living in Swanage (1–10, 10 being the highest rating):

- 22.7% rated at 10
- 15.9% rated at 9
- 6.8% rated at 8
- 11.3% rated at 7
- 13.6% rated at 6
- 15.9% rated at 5
- 15.9% rated at 4
- 2.3% rated at 1
- 0% rated at 2
- 9% rated at 1
- the average rating for living in Swanage was 6.09

Future Living in Swanage:

- 11% would like to remain living in Swanage when they are older
- 43% would not like to continue living in Swanage when they are older
- 45% would consider continuing to live in Swanage when they are older
- 66% believed access to affordable housing would influence them staying living in Swanage
- 63% believed future job opportunities were an important factor
- 50% felt an improved range of shopping outlets would influence them to stay living in Swanage in the future

4. Cont. **Summary KS3–5 Survey**

Housing:

Types of new homes:

- 65.9% homes suitable for families
- 61.3% homes suitable for young people
- 36.4% accessible homes
- 31.8% homes suitable for older people
- 27.3% rental properties
- 13.6% social housing

Types of new home design:

- 56.8% off street parking attached to the property
- 52.3% designed to support wildlife
- 43.2% energy efficient
- 38.6 in keeping with buildings already in the town
- 34.1% conversions of larger buildings (apartments)

Facilities:

- 77.3% felt that there were not enough facilities for young people in Swanage
- 22.7% felt that there were enough facilities for young people in Swanage
- 25% stated the skatepark was the most important current facility in Swanage
- 13% stated the Mowlem was the most important current facility in Swanage
- 41% stated that shops/fast food outlets would be the sort of extra facilities they would like
- 48% were unsure what facilities or support services could be developed to support the mental and physical health of young people
- 9% felt a sports centre/gym would benefit the town

Transport:

- 65.9% used public transport
- 34.1% did not use public transport
- 14% were taken by car to where they wanted to go
- 36% used public transport to go to Poole
- 14% used public transport to go to Wareham
- 6% used public transport to go to Bournemouth
- 19% used public transport to get around Swanage and the local area
- 18% felt better access to free or cheaper travel, more frequent public transport and all year round access would encourage them to use public transport more

Ease of travel:

- 27% felt it was really easy to travel to where they wanted to go
- 26% found it quite easy
- 30% rated it okay
- 5% found it difficult to travel to where they wanted to go

Commuting to school/college work:

- 43% took less than 15 minutes to commute
- 43% took less than 30 minutes to commute
- Overall 86% could commute in 30 minutes

Main mode of transport:

- 41.7% said they cycled, scooted or walked all the time to get to where they wanted to be
- 38.2% used the bus service every now and then

4. Cont. **Summary KS3–5 Survey**

Green and open spaces:

- 20% said King George V playing Field was their favourite green and open space
- 16% said Days Park was their favourite Green and open space
- 45% used green and open spaces to meet and hang out with friends
- 30% used them to play sport, walk or just enjoy nature
- 50% used green and open spaces on a weekly basis
- 11.4% used green and open spaces on a daily basis

What I value in Swanage:

- 57% valued Swanage's green and open spaces
- 57% valued the shops/cafes/businesses
- 50% valued the surrounding coast, fields and countryside
- 7% valued the community buildings
- 14% valued the town's historic buildings

Communication:

- 77% found out what was going on in Swanage from friends and family
- 48% from school
- 14% from social media
- 3 participants who answered the question if they would like to be involved in the future Swanage Neighbourhood Plan process said yes (16% of the 18 people who answered this question)

Wishlist:

- 32% wanted a greater range of shopping outlets in the future
- 8% wanted better and cheaper travel options
- 29% wanted continued access to green/blue spaces and a greater range of sports or other activities for their age range

5. Learning Summary

Whilst the overall participation for both the KS2 ages 7-11 and KS3-5 ages 11-18 surveys was good, results must be considered as a subset of the CYP population of Swanage, for example no one aged 15-16 completed a survey.

Completion of both surveys did require either direct intervention by the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group supporting teachers (KS2 survey) or through encouragement given to young people by teachers, parents or youth leaders (KS3-5 survey). Only 5 young people in total appeared to have completed the KS3-5 survey before additional adult encouragement was made.

However, the data collected does provide some useful indication of how Swanage CYP feel about the facilities, environment and future needs of the town.

Next steps:

- consider contacting the 3 young people who expressed an interest in continuing to be part of the draft plan process. Could a CYP SNP subgroup be created?
- utilise current communication resources such as school councils, organised youth/sports/parent groups to check understanding, gain data in subsets that did not participate or could provide additional information (e.g. disabled young people) and refine knowledge.

Figure 1 : KS2 survey worksheet



HAVE YOUR SAY

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan

Do you live in Swanage and are aged between 7-11? Swanage Town Council are putting together a Neighbourhood Plan, supported by members of the community and based on feedback collected by Dorset Coast Forum.

KS2 Young People Survey
Years 3-6, ages 7-11

We'd like to know what you think about where you live and what you'd like us to try to do to improve Swanage for young people and we would like every young person in Swanage to have their say!

Q1. Where are your favourite green and open spaces in Swanage? List as many as you can

Q2. What do you like most about where you live?

Q4. Where do you most often find out what is going on in Swanage?

Q5. When you are an adult what would be important to you to help you stay living in Swanage?

Q3. What activities would you like to do that Swanage doesn't have/What do other places have that Swanage lacks?

Q6. What do you like least about living in Swanage?

I am years old

Tell us your school or youth group name:



Draw it!

Use the back of this sheet to draw what you would like a future Swanage to look like

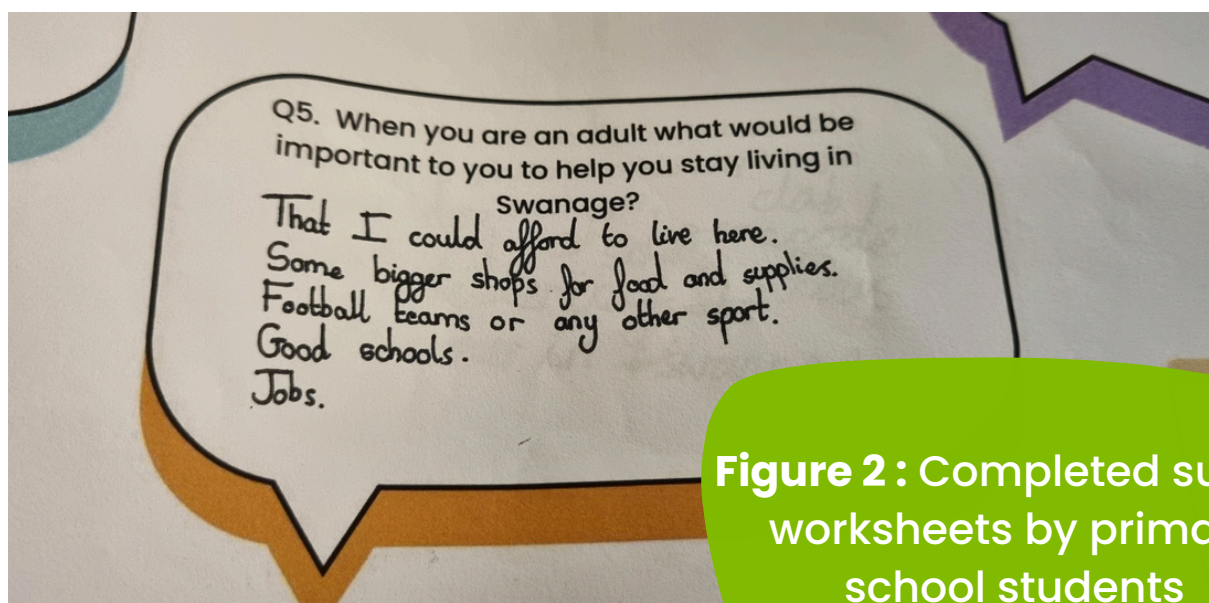
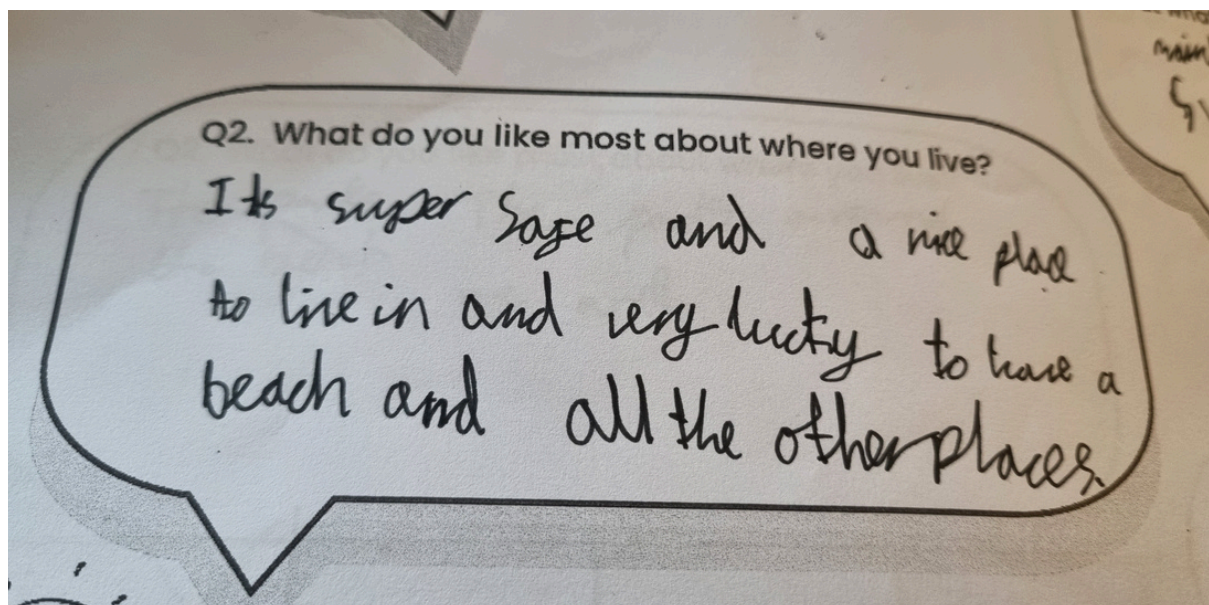
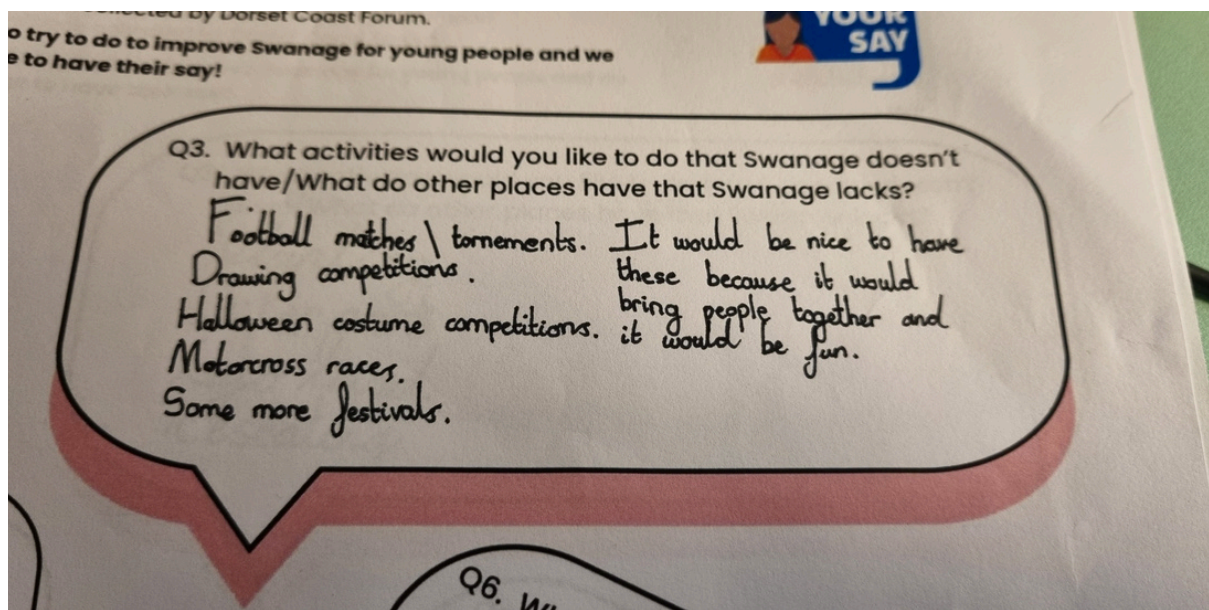


Figure 2 : Completed survey worksheets by primary school students

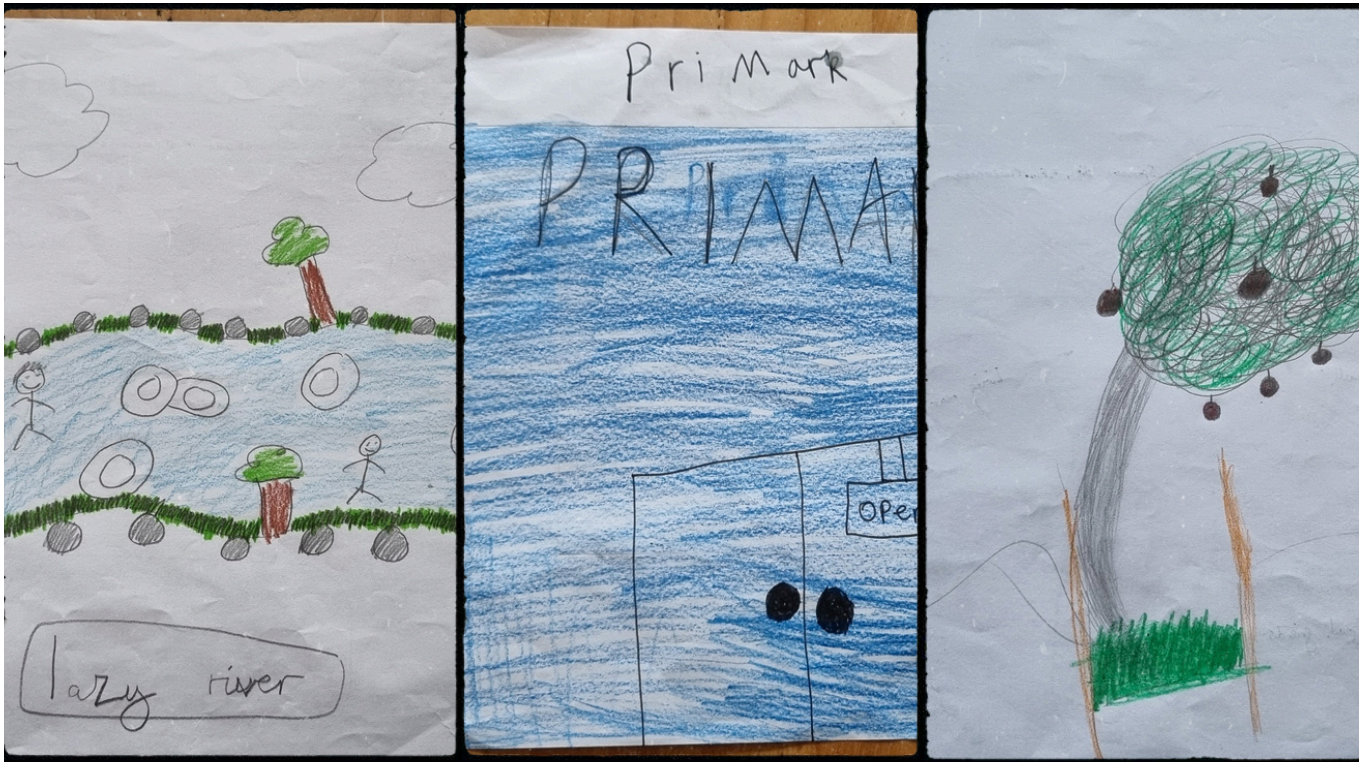


Figure 3 : Aspirations for Swanage drawn by primary school students

KS2 Survey Analysis - primary school pupils ages 7-11 years

The KS2 survey responses using a pre-prepared paper worksheet used in class were translated into data by Dorset Coast Forum via a Microsoft Form. Pupils were also asked to draw on the back of the worksheet what they would like a future Swanage to look like - those pictures have been collated and provided to the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

77 forms were completed but some students worked in teams of 2 or more. Approximately 100 pupils participated in the survey overall.

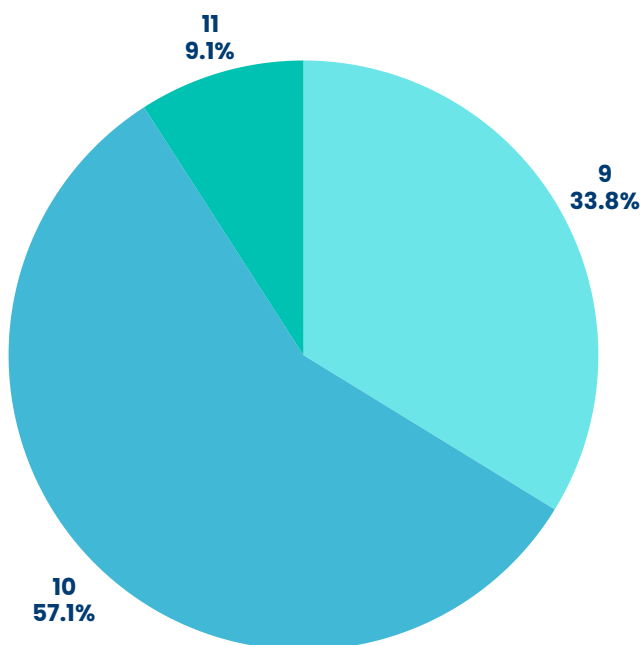
Swanage Neighbourhood Plan - Young People Survey 2025 KS2 ages 7-11 years

October 2025

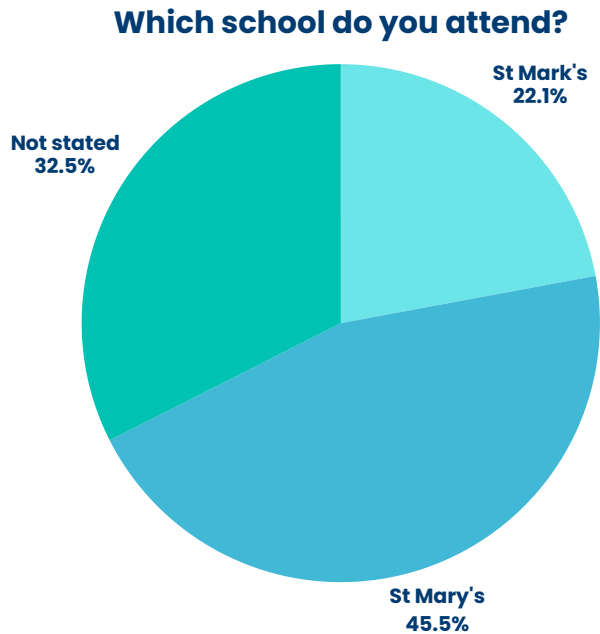
This survey was completed by primary school pupils in school using a pre-prepared worksheet during October 2025 and their responses have been inputted by Dorset Coast Forum using this form. Pupils were also asked to draw on the back of the worksheet what they would like a future Swanage to look like - those pictures have been collated

Q1.

How old are you?



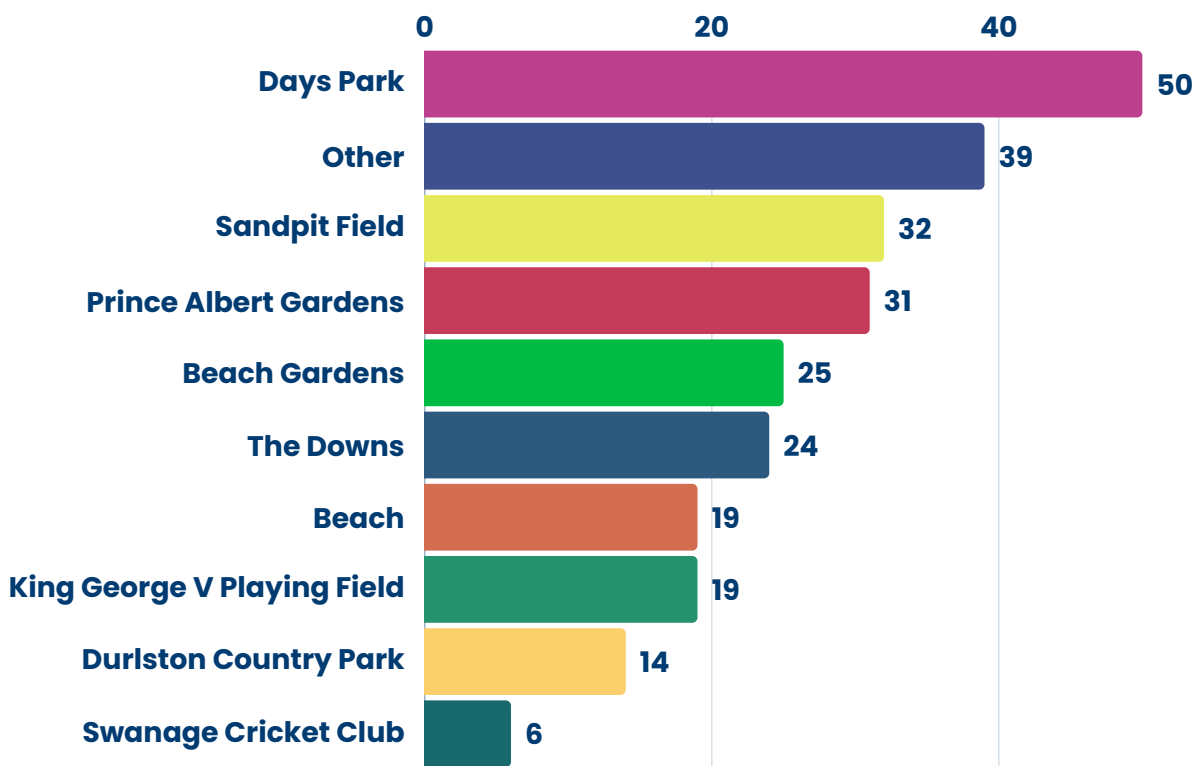
Q2.



Some pupils did not write on the worksheet which school they attended and they are included in the not stated percentage.

Q3.

**Where are you favourite green and open spaces in Swanage.
List as many as you can**



Other green and open spaces mentioned included places outside of the designated area, specific sporting locations such as tennis and football clubs and Cumulus, or the general fields and gardens available for them to play in.

Q4. What do you like most about where you live?

40 respondents (52%) answered beach for this question.

open spaces
Parks and the beach
Swanage
close to the beach
cream shops
shops
beautiful places
beach
walks
arcade
sea
views and the beach
Lots of space
beach being public
green space
Greenery and beach
lucky to have a beach
beach is nice
live really close
places

**"I like the big gardens,
open spaces and the
parks"**

**"Cinema, arcade and
the sea"**

**"It's super safe and a nice
place to live in and lucky to
have a beach and all the
other places."**

**"I like that there is lots of
greenery on dog walks. Swanage
also has lots of different places to
visit."**

**"I love the views and the
beach. I also love the
little shops and cafes"**

Enjoyment of access to the beach scored 52% with a wider range mentioning some sort of sporting or physical activity they have access to and enjoy e.g. tennis and football.

**"Beach. I also appreciate all
the clubs that offer room for
everyone"**

**"The community for a start
and the wondrous wildlife as
well as the beach being public.
The theatre productions"**

Q5. What activities would you like to do that Swanage doesn't have/what do other places have that Swanage lacks?

20 respondents (27%) answered Water Park for this question.



“Multisport area with no dogs and have more football pitches”

“McDonalds. Ferris Wheel. Indoor Rock Climbing”

“Swimming gym in the sea every week”

“Football tournaments. Drawing & Halloween costume competitions. Motocross races. More festivals. It would be nice to have these because it would bring people together and it would be fun.”

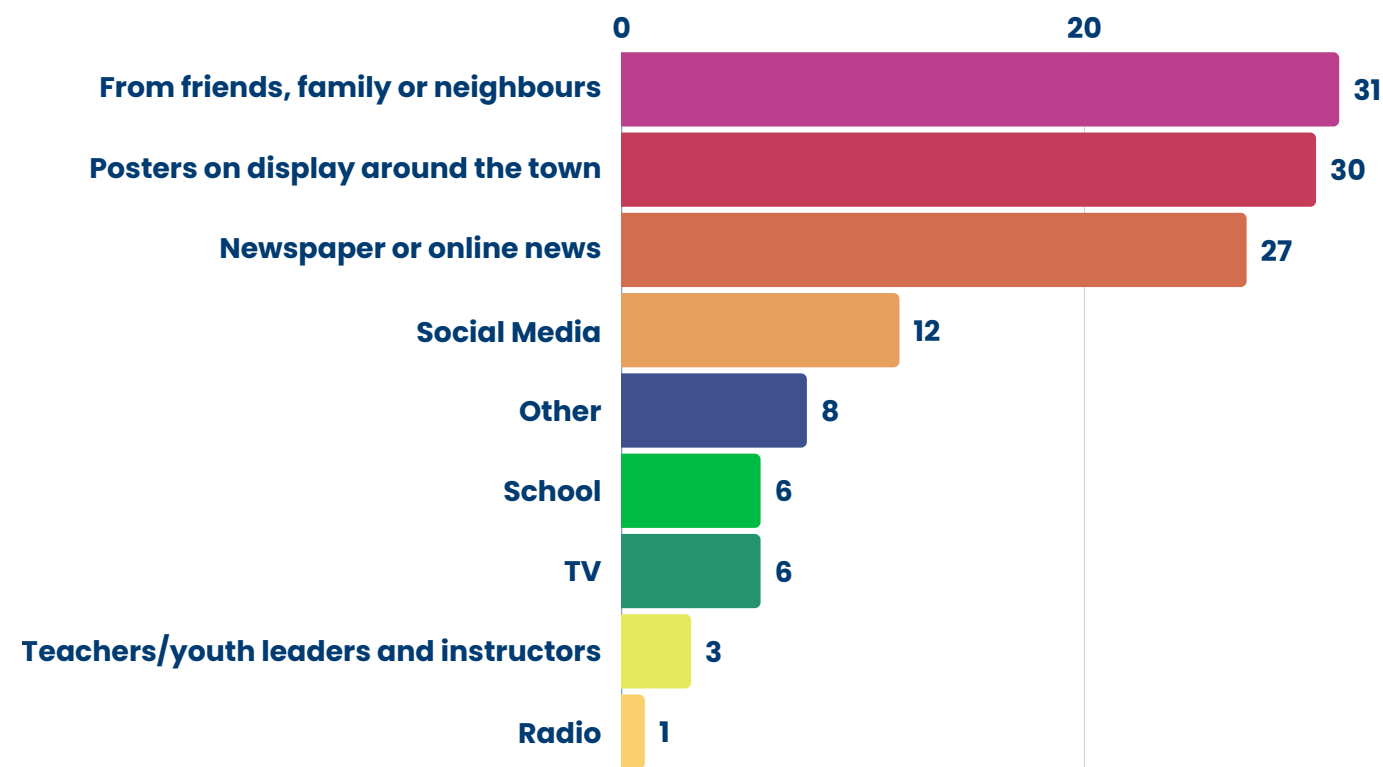
Water Park with food and drink!”

The addition of a Water Park was the most mentioned with 27% of participants believing it would be something that would enhance what Swanage has to offer. An improved range of shops and outlets, from shoe, toy and clothes shops (Primark) to McDonalds, featured in answers as well as activities that respondents had enjoyed in other places and felt Swanage would benefit from – ice skating, swimming pool, archery, rock climbing, trampoline park etc.

There were some strong opinions on the need for dog free areas in designated green spaces (assumption that dog fouling could be a problem where they play sports but this requires further consultation with Swanage children and young people).

Q6.

Where do you most often find out what is going on in Swanage?



Communication and finding out about what is available for young people to access in this age range in Swanage provided interesting data for future engagement with CYP. Social media 16% is less than half as effective as word of mouth recommendations through family and friends 40%. Parents/carers were an important source of information, as was the traditional use of posters displayed in the right locations around the town and news outlets either online or paper based.

Only 6 respondents, 8%, cited school as a source of local information suggesting the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group could investigate creating better links with schools to utilise school newsletters and in-school communication platforms more effectively in the future (parents may be relaying information they are reading in school comms outlets).

Utilising School Councils could be an excellent way of fostering peer to peer information share and further CYP insights that might be required in the future.

Q7. When you are an adult what would be important to you to help you stay living in Swanage?

18 respondents (26%) answered jobs for this question.



“Lots of jobs and a massive cinema”

“Clothing stores and an Aldi or something also more jobs that pay more money”

“To make sure no green land gets covered in buildings”

“That I could afford to live here. Some bigger shops for food and supplies. Good Schools. Jobs.”

“Fair priced houses. Child friendly places”

When asked to look to the future these primary school aged pupils were focussed on jobs and where they would live – 26% referenced securing a job and 21% referenced homes and affordability of living. Greater access to a wider range of shops was again mentioned and the protection of the beach as a vital community asset and local green spaces – 21%.

“It is important that there is still The Mowlem and Swanage will still be a town.”

“I would like to keep the woodland and green spaces in Swanage.”

Q8. What do you like least about living in Swanage?

5 respondents (7%) answered litter for this question.

Word cloud content:

- litter
- big rubbish
- People
- smell
- Places
- shop
- lot
- traffic
- houses
- bins
- summer
- Dogs
- prices
- Smell of seaweed
- bins smell
- holiday
- faraway places
- little for a place

“I don’t like that there is a lot of houses everywhere”

“Dogs around when I am playing football”

“Nothing. Swanage is a nice place to live”

“How people litter and make it so less healthier and it smells worse”

“The question is tough but I’d say the lack of interest towards the museum as it offers little for a place on the Jurassic coast”

Perhaps the most insightful of all the questions posed and with the greatest range of answers. Topics covered range from the impact of litter 16%, lack of no dog zones 5%, seagulls and seaweed issues 6%, the weather to an interesting thread of comments regarding the summer months and tourists.

“Litter. Busy. Antisocial behaviour. Expensive houses. Holiday makers. Young vapers”

“There’s not much activities going on until summer”

Cont. Q8. What do you like least about living in Swanage?

Whilst some felt that tourists and the busier summer months were something they didn't like 8%, they also referenced a greater range of activities available during the summer season. There could be an opportunity to provide clubs and activities to connect CYP who are residents with visiting CYP and create some shared experiences that benefit all.

Notably, 12% did say that there was nothing they would change about Swanage!

KS3-5 Survey Analysis - secondary school pupils ages 11-18 years

The KS3-5 survey responses by secondary school pupils were recorded using a self-led Microsoft Form promoted through posters, social media posts and via schools. 44 responses were received. The average time to complete was 48:19 minutes.

This was a lengthy survey than the KS2 one with additional categories relating to the neighbourhood plan.



Swanage Neighbourhood Plan - Young People Survey KS3-5 ages 11-18 years

Do you live in Swanage and are aged between 11-18? Swanage Town Council are putting together a Neighbourhood Plan, supported by members of the community and based on feedback collected by Dorset Coast Forum.

We'd like to know what you think about where you live and what you'd like us to try to do to improve Swanage for young people and we would like every young person in Swanage to have their say!

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

It is a community-led planning tool that allows local people to shape development in their area - where new homes, shops and offices should be built, what they should look like, and what infrastructure is needed.

Why should young people be part of neighbourhood planning? Your voice matters: You live here too, so you should help shape it.

- Fresh ideas: Young people often think outside the box, which can lead to new and creative solutions.
- Make a difference: Getting involved gives you a sense of ownership and helps push for positive change.
- Stronger plans: Including all age groups within a community makes plans more fair and long lasting.
- Better communities: When young people join in, it helps build stronger, more connected neighbourhoods.

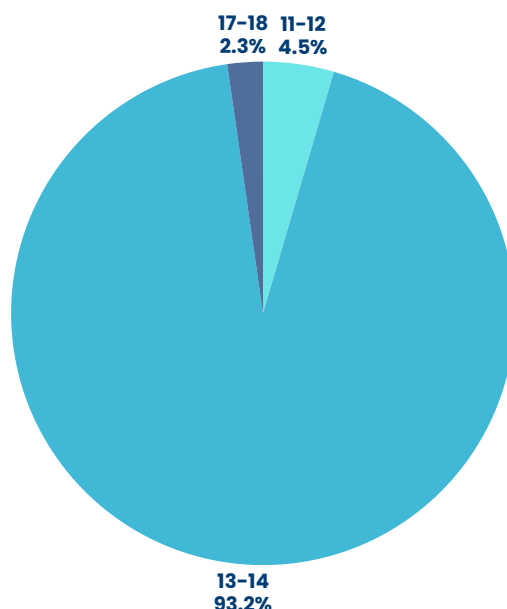
GETTING INVOLVED MEANS YOU HELP CREATE PLACES THAT ARE FUN, SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE FOR EVERYONE!
This survey will be open until 9th November 2025



Section 1: About me

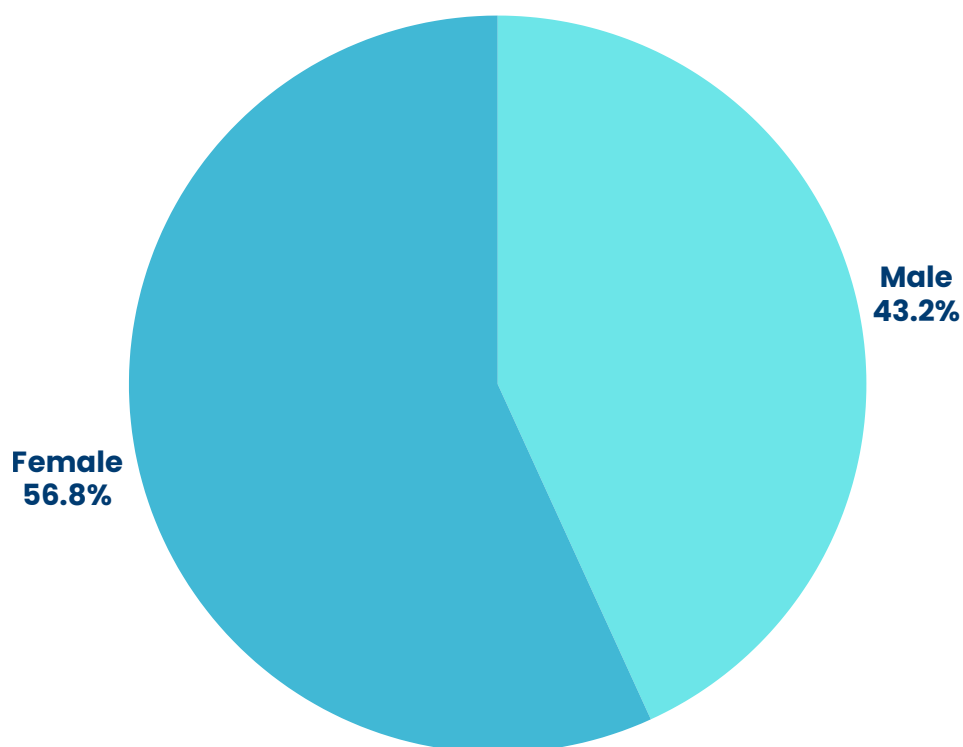
Q1.

How old are you?



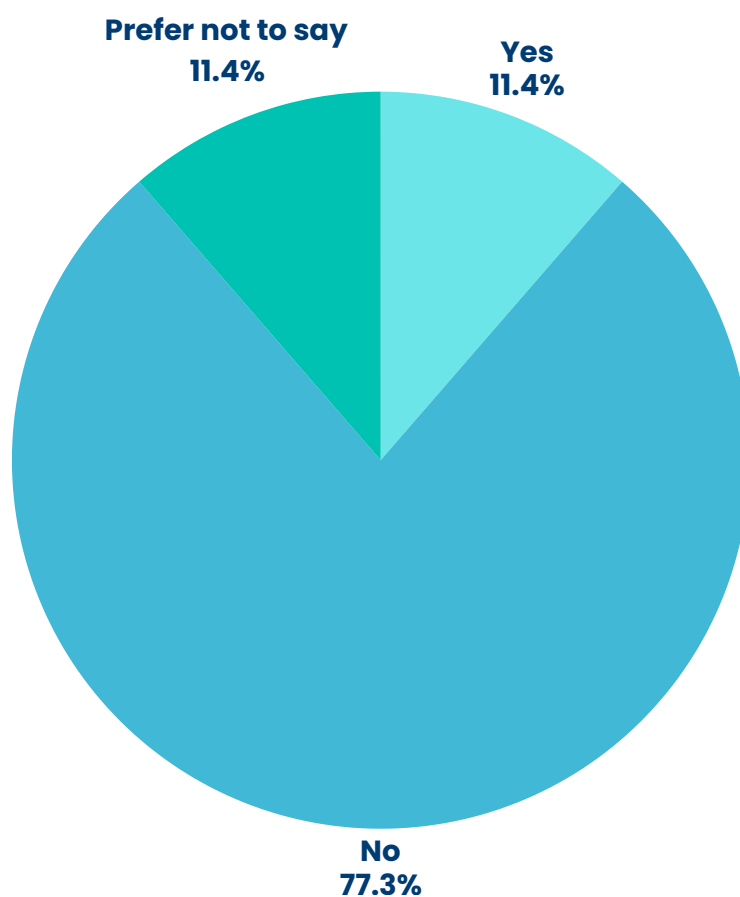
Q2.

Are you?



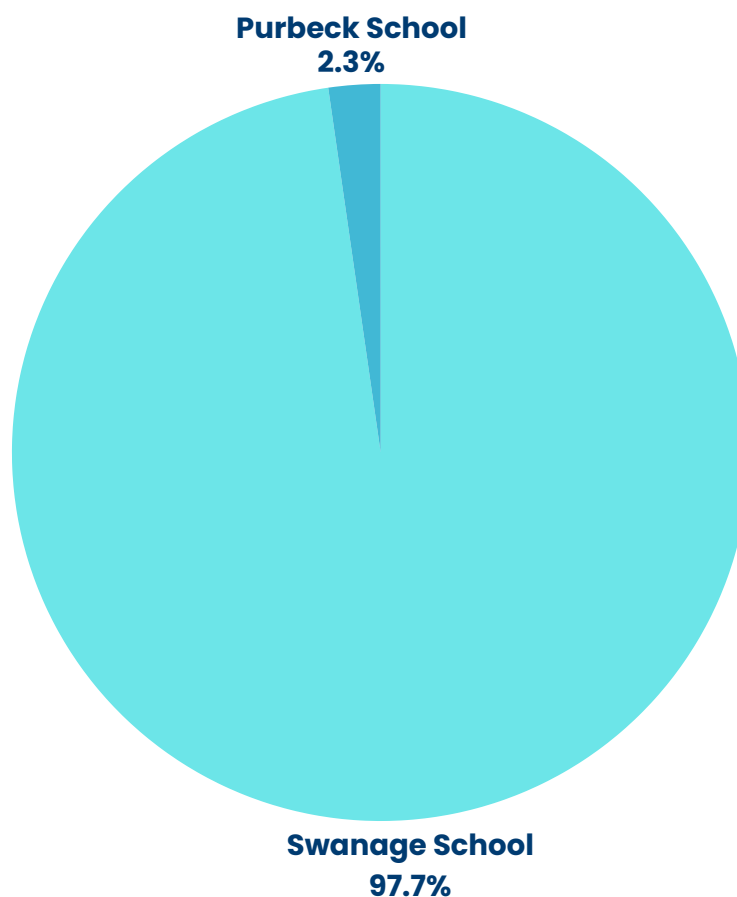
Q3.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



Q4.

Which school or educational setting do you attend?



93% of the 44 respondents were in the 13-14 years age range and 98% of them attended Swanage School. Despite extensive promotion through local youth organisations, schools and on social media, for the majority of the time the survey was live, only 5 young people had responded independently.

A third email was sent by Dorset Coast Forum to teachers at the 2 main schools in the age range and it is notable that one teacher in particular at Swanage School responded that they would ensure the survey was promoted as something that could be completed in class, breaks/lunch or form time. This resulted in a further 39 young people completing the survey and indicates the importance of engaging the whole community and in particular schools to encourage young people that their opinions do count and participation in a neighbourhood plan is central to planning the future of their community.

Section 2: Living in Swanage

Q5. What do you most like about living in Swanage?

10 respondents (23%) answered Beach for this question.

Word cloud showing responses for Q5. The word **Beach** is the most prominent. Other words include: sunny weather, parks and arcade, community spirit, parks, Nice Views, school and shops, Beach- Access, friends, swanage, living close, things to do and places, cricket and football, sea, beach and carnival, beach and town, town/seaside club, School, and local community.

“There is a few things to do and places to hang out with my friends”

“The sea and the community spirit”

“Living close to the water”

“The surrounding nature”

“The beach and carnival in summer”

Access to a beach, 23%, was the most noted answer for this age range reflecting the top score for the same question in the KS2 survey.

The parks, access to nature, the views, places to hang out with friends and the community spirit featured equally.

“Clean air - the beach and access to the countryside”

“The beach and the cricket and football club”

Q6. What do you like least about living in Swanage?

6 respondents (14%) answered shops for this question.

Lidl or Tesco shops and transport charity shops dog poo no shops teenagers in a park
summer holidays Teenagers **shops** swanage not much shops
mcdonalds and kfc Old People lack of shops school different schools
alot of other kids activities- Focus food and other stuff Things get boring

“Tourist season”

“Not much shops for clothes, food and other stuff”

“There is not much for teenagers”

“No where to hang out safely”

“Crowded in summer, limited organised ‘youth’ activities, focus on old people”

Similar to the KS2 survey comments about the lack of appealing shops for young people 18% and the town becoming crowded in the summer 11% were highlighted.

In contrast to the younger age group there were comments about the lack of activities for teenagers 28% and feeling safe in the community 7%.

Q7. What would you like to see/improve in Swanage?

10 respondents (23%) answered shops for this question.

activities for teenagers
shops that are open
shops in langton
eg more shops
people
McDonalds
kids
Swanage
quality shops
shops for teenagers
shops in town
better
things
shops
parks
food place
bigger shops
shops or hangouts
teenage shops
skate park

“People being less judgemental”

“Train connection to Wareham”

“More clubs/events for my age group and cheaper access to sports”

“More teenage shops or hangouts”

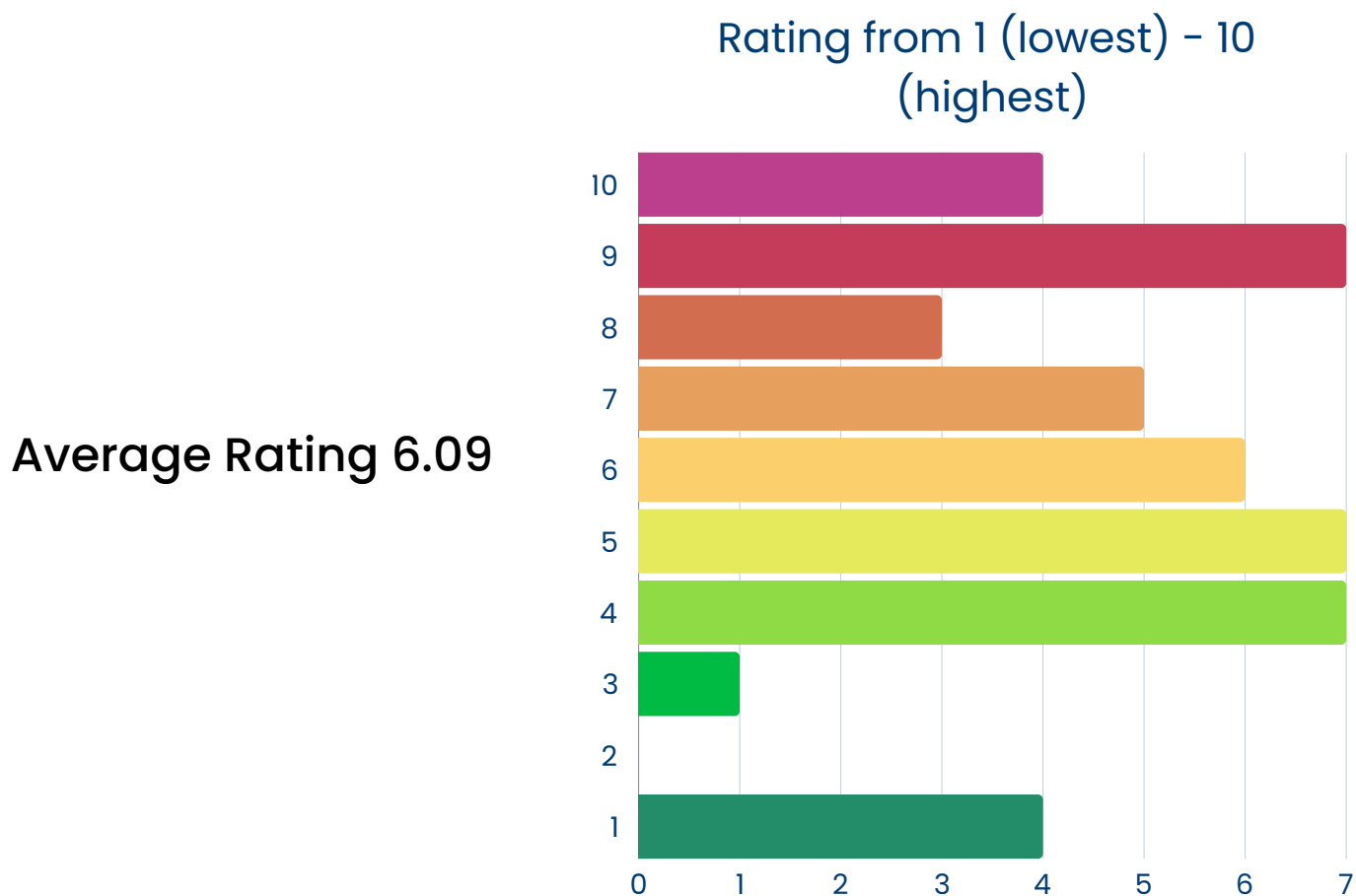
“Cycling opportunities”

Again the focus for what would improve Swanage cited better shops for their age range with a score of 23%. Over a quarter of the respondents mentioned additional access to leisure activities – either sporting or just more focussed on teenagers.

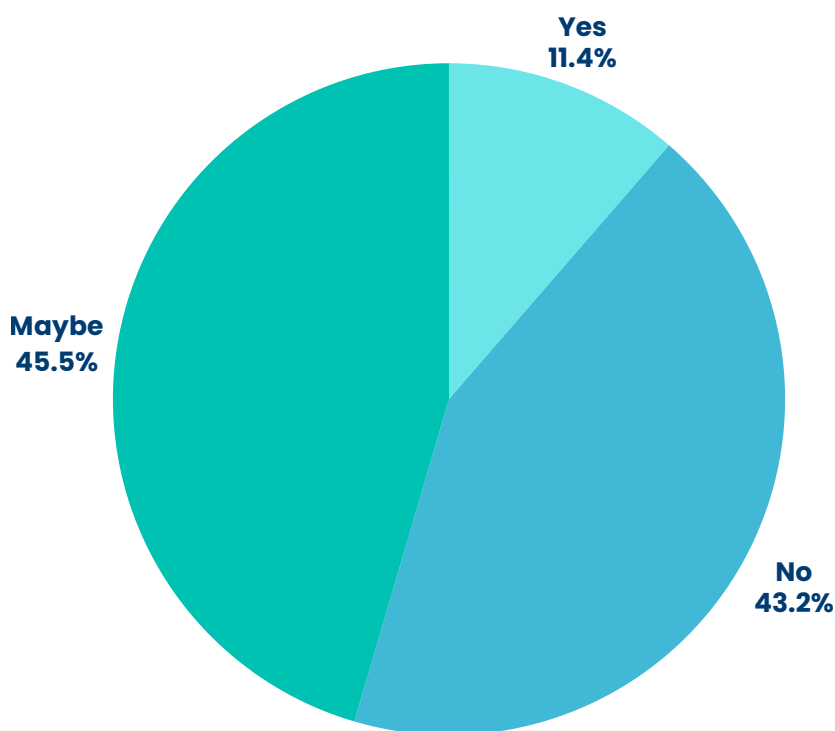
“An indoor area where kids can hang out”

“Parks/skate park improvements and more things for younger people”

Q8. Overall, tell us how much you rate living in Swanage as a younger member of the community



Q9. Would you like to remain living in Swanage when you are older?



Q10. Please give reasons for your answer

“I like the views and community, but it isn’t near anything and there isn’t much to do for young people”

“Depends on jobs”

“I just like living by the sea”

“Planning to go back to my childhood town, Bracknell”

“It is not convenient because most shops are far away”

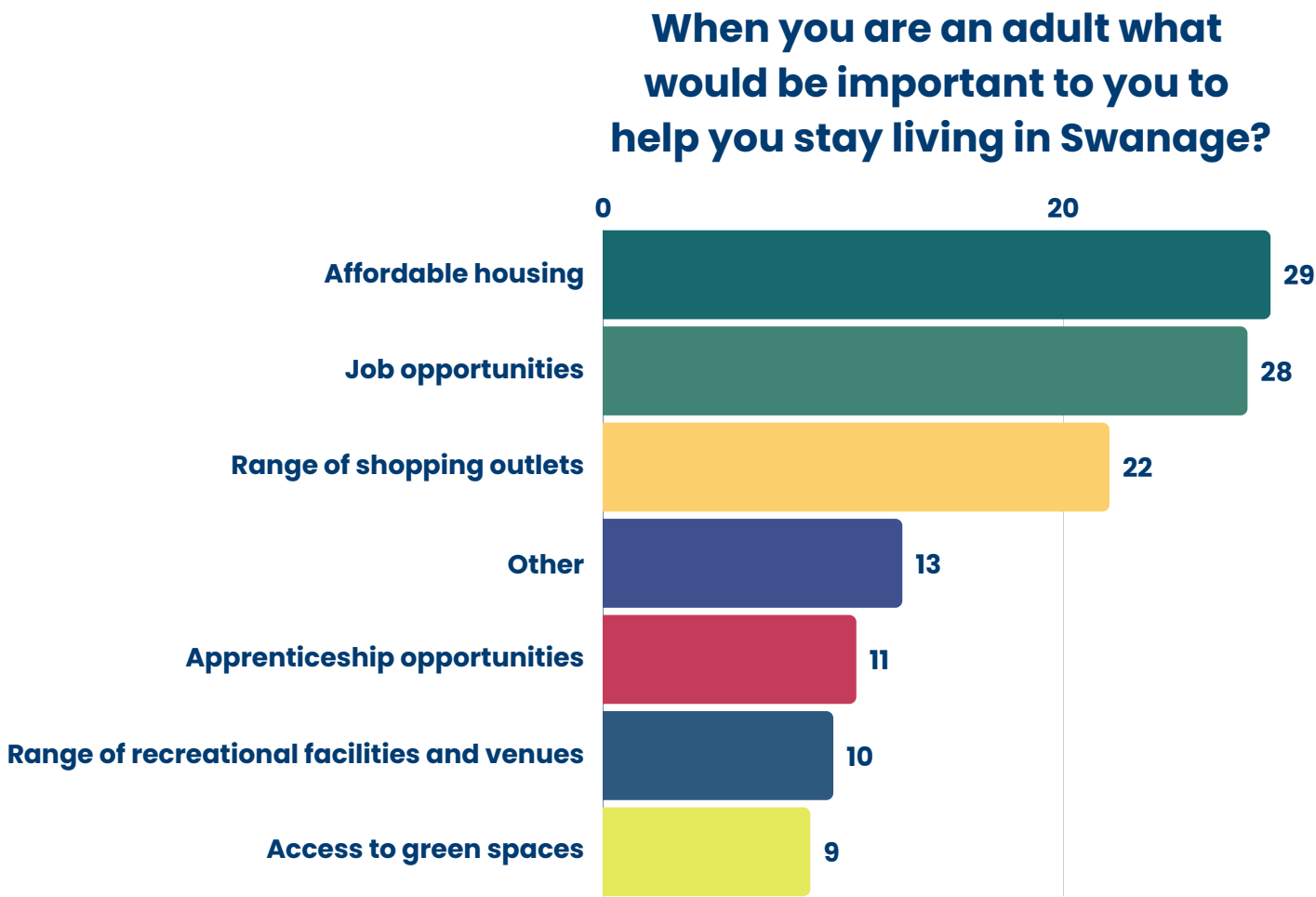
The results for this section – **Yes 11.4%, No 43.2% and Maybe 45.5%** perhaps offer a insight into the aspirations of this age range that do not just relate to Swanage. The desire to travel, explore other places and more urban areas as well as looking towards securing a satisfying job in the future is evident and not unusual for teenagers.

A recognition of their enjoyment of the natural environment Swanage offers is commented on as something which they recognise is valuable, but potentially more so to an older demographic.

“When I am older I would like to live in Swanage because of the amazing beaches”

“I want to travel and get better possibilities in life, or maybe stay for a little bit but not long”

Q11. When you are an adult what would be important to you to help you stay living in Swanage? (tick all that apply)



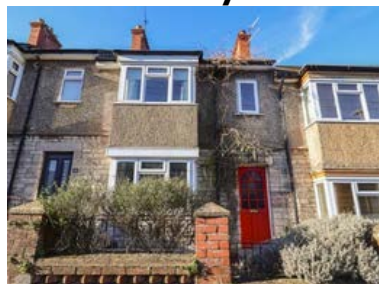
Q12. If other, please give more detail

Of the 24 responses when asked to give further detail about what would be important to them to encourage them to stay living in Swanage as an adult, 33% were unable to quantify an answer. Housing, jobs and retail scored highly indicating this majority 13-14 age range who completed the survey are already looking towards the affordability of Swanage in their future.

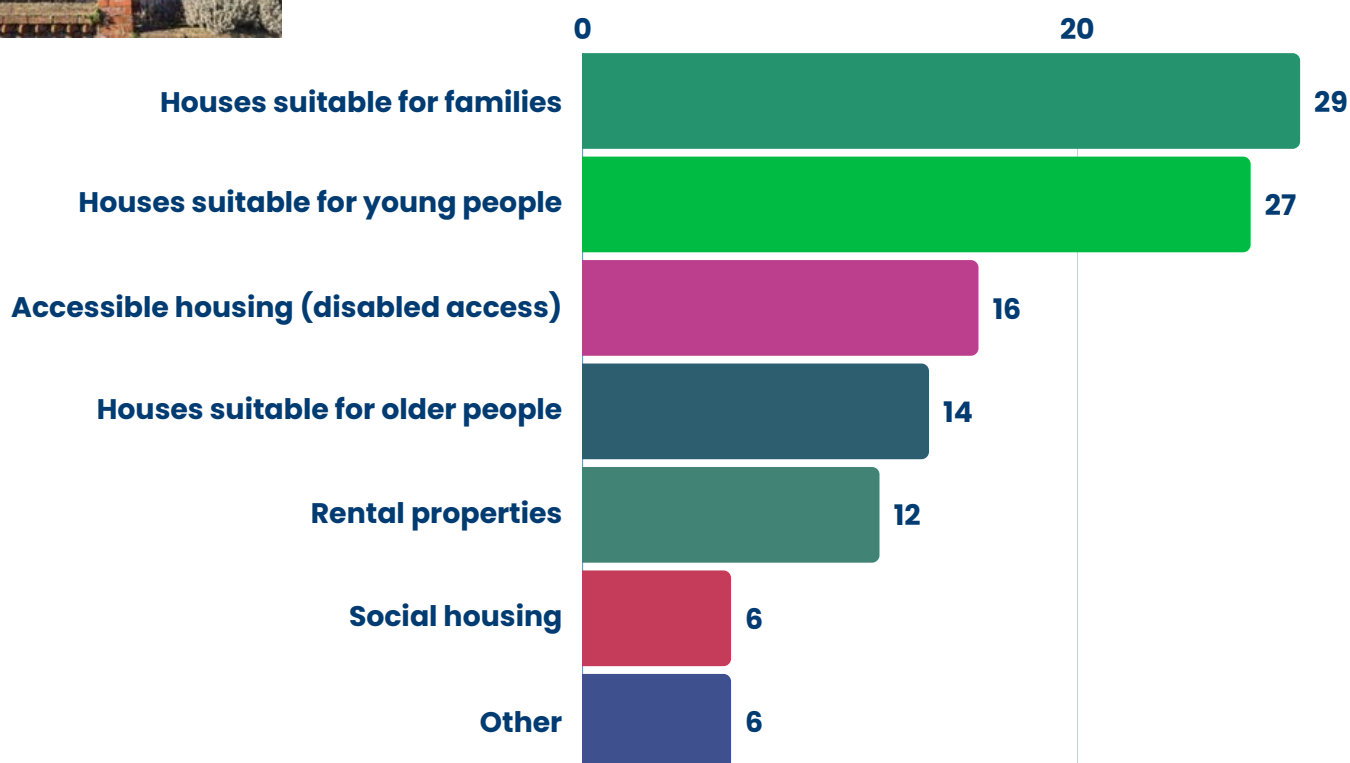
Further exploration of this topic would be recommended, particularly when access to green spaces was the lowest scoring option yet previous answers to questions have suggested CYP do value it at their current age range.

Section 3: Housing

Q13. If new homes are built in Swanage, which of the following do you think are most needed? (tick all that apply)



If new homes are built in Swanage, which of the following do you think are most needed?

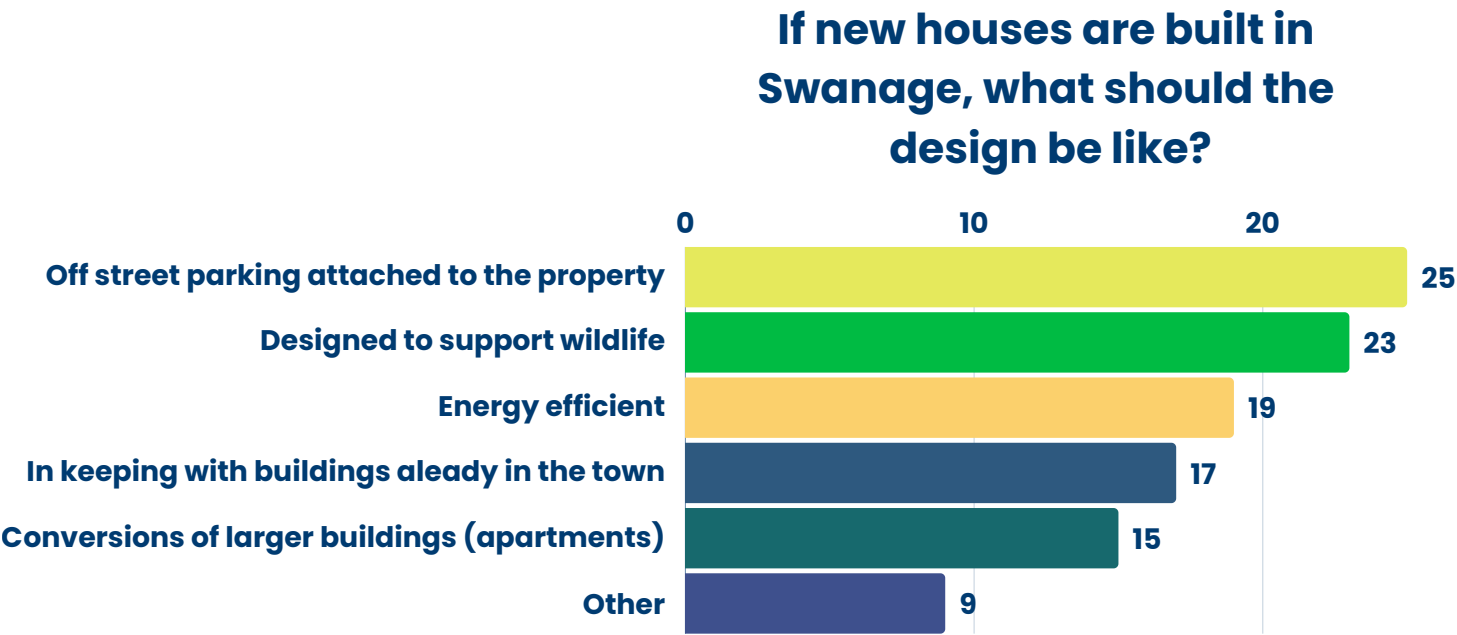


Q14. If other, please describe which type of housing you think is needed?

**“Everybody
needs a safe
shelter”**

“Cheaper”

Q15. If new houses are built in Swanage, what should the design be like? (tick all that apply)



Q16. If other, is there anything else you would like the new buildings to have?

“Not huge holiday homes and affordable for poor families/homeless people”

“Modern design”

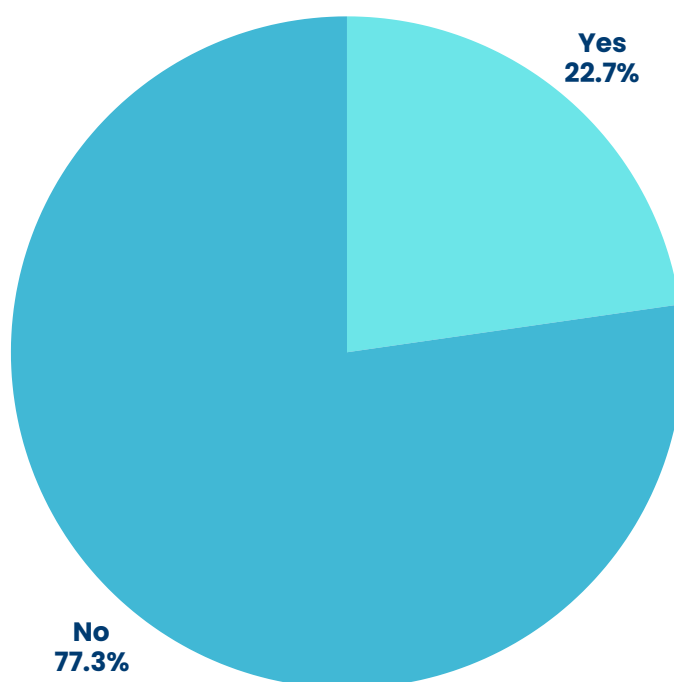
The highest score, 57% was for new builds to include off street parking, closely followed by buildings that incorporated or supported wildlife, 52%.

43% were favourable to energy efficient homes for the future. 34% would like to see apartment buildings and 38% wanted traditional looking buildings in keeping with the town.

Section 4: Facilities

Q17.

Are there enough facilities for young people in Swanage?



Q18. Which facility in Swanage is the most important to you and why? *For example: the library, the skatepark, the Mowlem theatre/cinema, the shops etc*

11 respondents (25%) answered Skatepark for this question.



Valued facilities in the community included the highest scoring at 25% the skatepark, 13% mentioned the Mowlem whilst the library, shops and arcades also featured in responses.

More than two thirds of those surveyed felt that there were not enough enough facilities currently for young people in Swanage.

“The library so people can read and go somewhere quiet”

“Swanage Pier for fishing”

“Mowlem, most of my performances are there”

“The library, because it offers books to people who can’t afford them”

“School park Scouts”

Q19. What extra facilities would you use?

9 respondents (20%) answered shops for this question.

Word cloud showing responses for Q19. The word **shops** is the most prominent. Other words include: better shops, shopping places, chip shops, police stations, nicer toilets, jd sports, starbucks, centre, toilets, fast food, box store, food chains, food places, clothing shops, skatepark, primark, clothes shops, thike pop, and thrift shops.

Additional shops relevant to their age range featured again – fast food shops and general larger food shopping opportunities. Increased access to public toilets was commented on as were mentions of indoor facilities such as an ice hockey ring, sports centre and youth club.

Q20. Are there any activities or support services that you would like to see developed or introduced in your local area that would improve the mental and physical health of young people? Think about facilities that are not currently in Swanage.



48% did not feel (or were unable to specify) that there was anything extra that could be provided to improve the mental and physical health of young people in Swanage. 9% felt that a sports centre/gym or some kind would be a facility that would benefit the town.

Other options offered included more support for volunteering, a college or sixth form centre and a centre for those who struggle with mental health and social anxiety.

Do you use public transport?



13 respondents (36%) answered Poole for this question.



Frequency of travel ranged from everyday (school trips) to every week, once or twice a month or a few times a year.

Q23. If no, why not? Is there anything that would make it easier for you to travel around Swanage/Purbeck/Dorset?

“A rail link to Wareham - you can then get a train quicker!”

“Buses more often”

“More bus routes all year round”

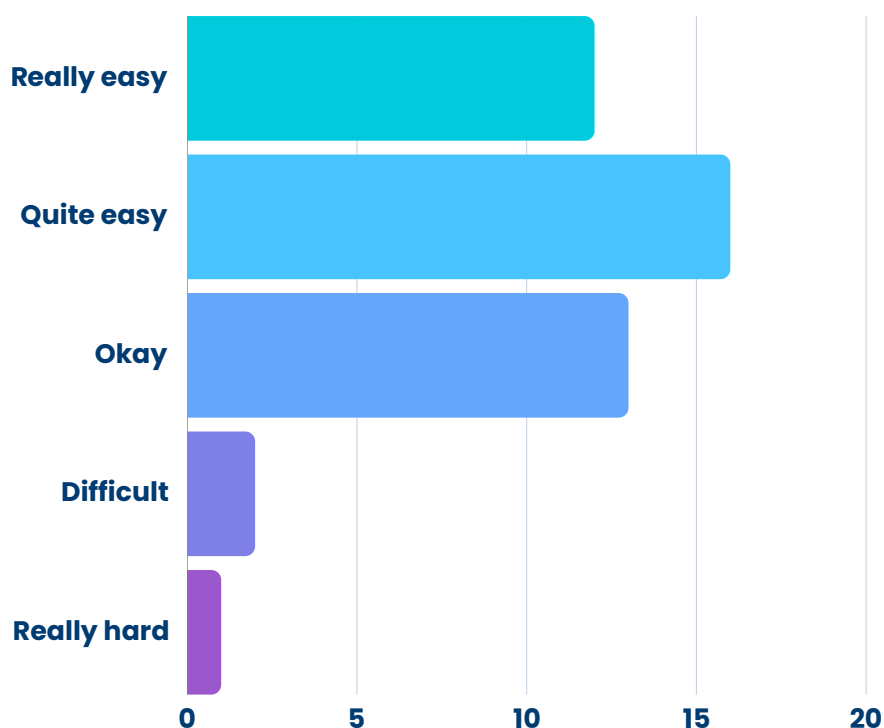
“I don’t use public transport because my parents drive”

“Free transport for people under 18”

18% of those who answered this question mentioned access to buses – for instance free travel, better and more frequent routes all year round. Comments included that because Swanage was small walking to where they wanted to go was easy and 14% said they were taken to where they wanted to travel by car.

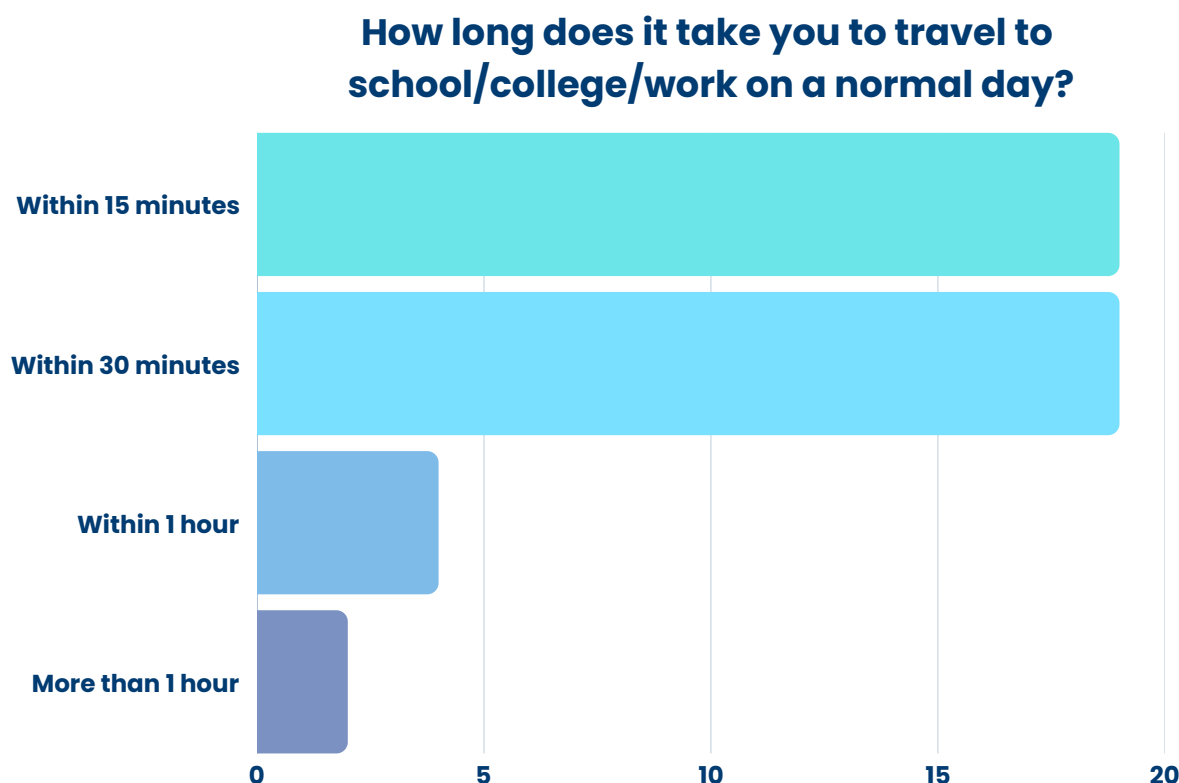
Q24.

How easy is it to get to the places you need to access such as schools and shops?



The vast majority (93%) felt that travel access to places they want to go was reasonably easy with 27.3% saying it was really easy. Only 1 respondent said it was really hard.

Q25.



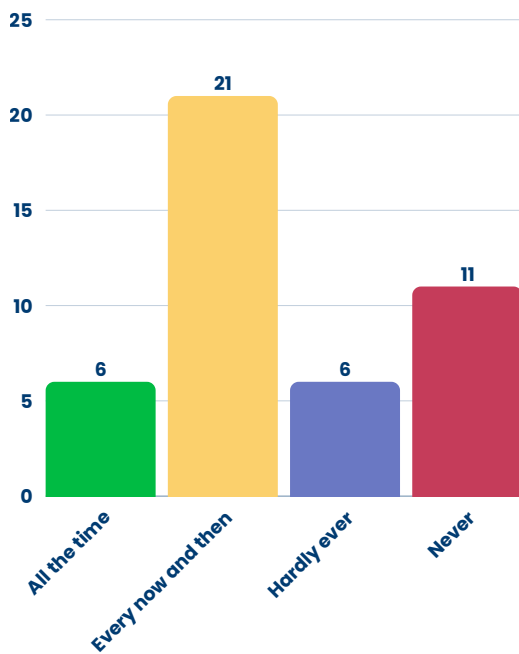
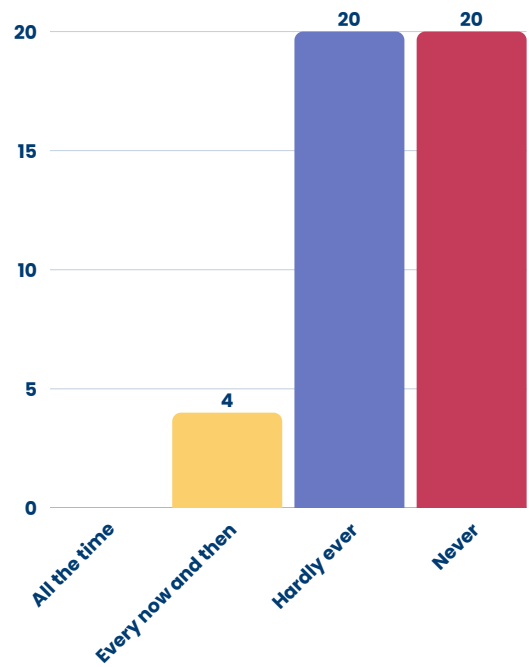
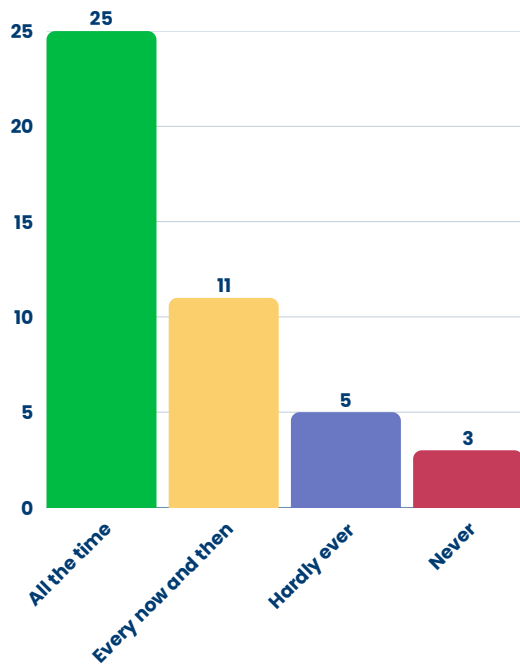
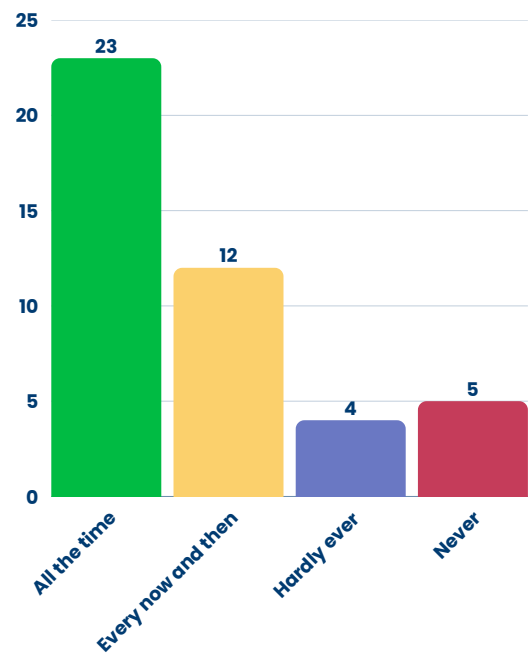
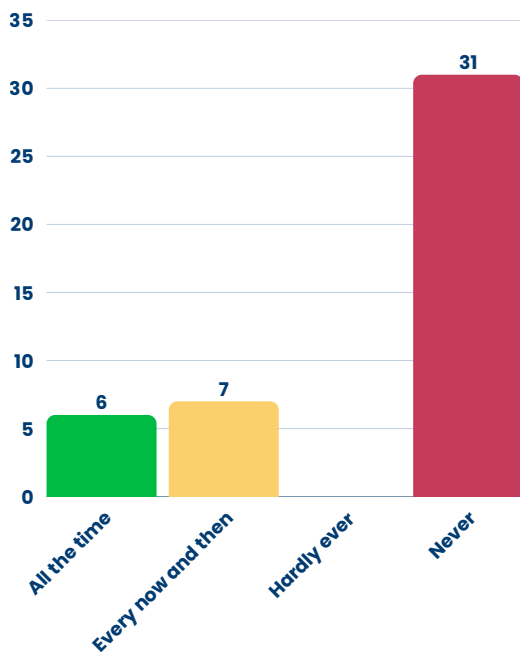
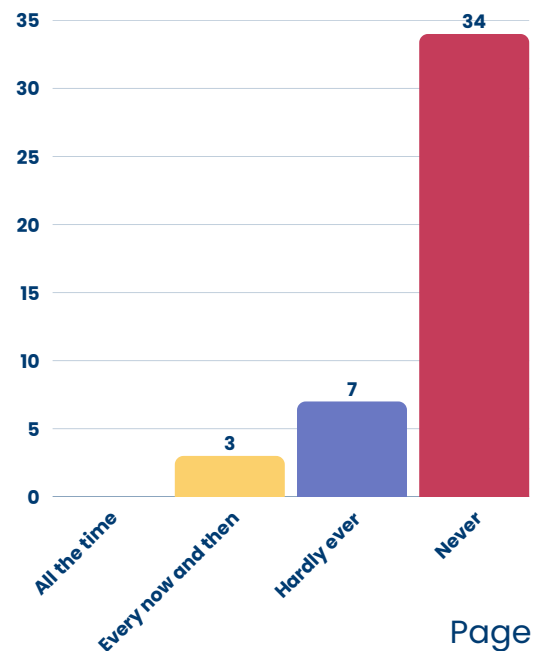
43% said their daily travel commute was less than 15 minutes and 43% said it was achievable within 30 minutes – so 86% of respondents had a commute of 30 minutes or less. 9% completed their journey in under an hour, 5% had a commute of an hour or more.

Q26. How do you get about? (tick all that apply)

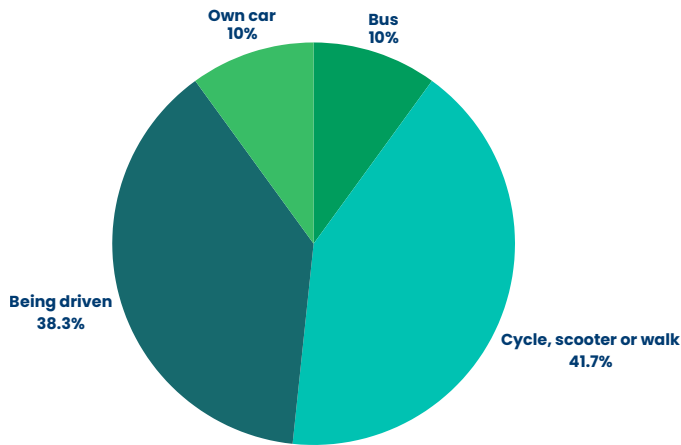
The next question offered respondents to identify how often they used a particular mode of transport:

- Bus
- Train
- Cycle, scooter or walk
- Being driven
- Own car
- Motor scooter or/bike

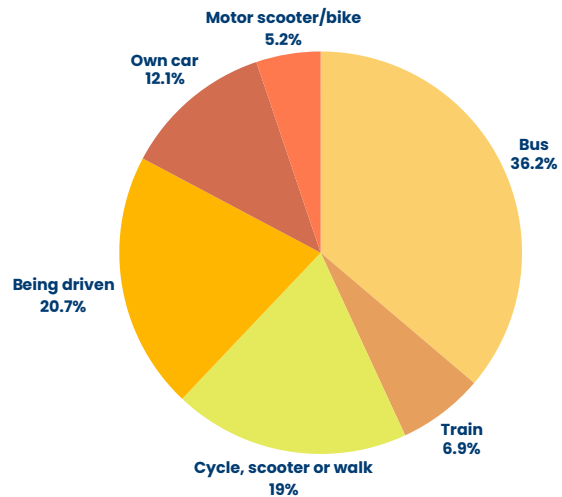
Responses were separated into all the time, every now and then, hardly ever and never.

Bus**Train****Cycle, scooter or walk****Being driven****Own car****Motor scooter/bike**

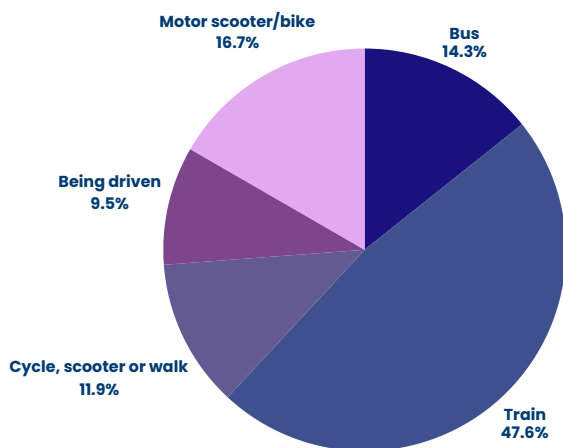
I use this transport ALL THE TIME



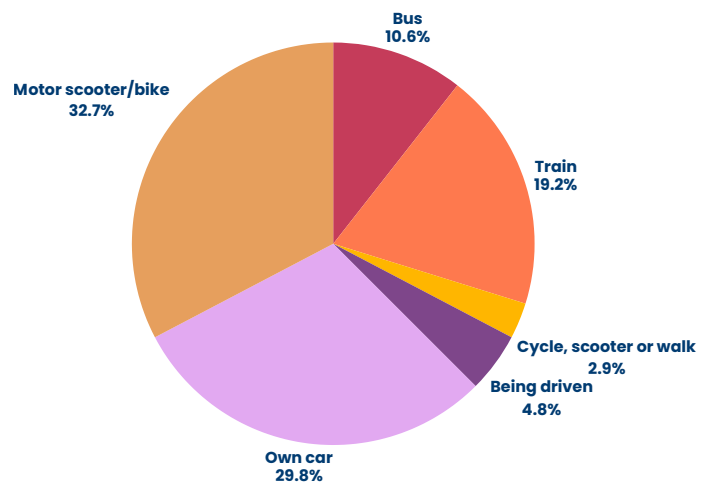
I use this transport EVERY NOW AND THEN



I use this transport HARDLY EVER



I use this transport NEVER



The majority of respondents either spent all their time walking, cycling or scootering 41.7% to where they wanted to go or being driven there 38.3%.

Travelling by bus 38.2% was the most popular form of transport used every now and then.

Travelling by train scored the highest 47.6% in the hardly ever used category and, unsurprisingly given the majority age range of those who completed the survey (13-14 years), 63% never used their own motorised travel.

Section 6: Green & Open Spaces

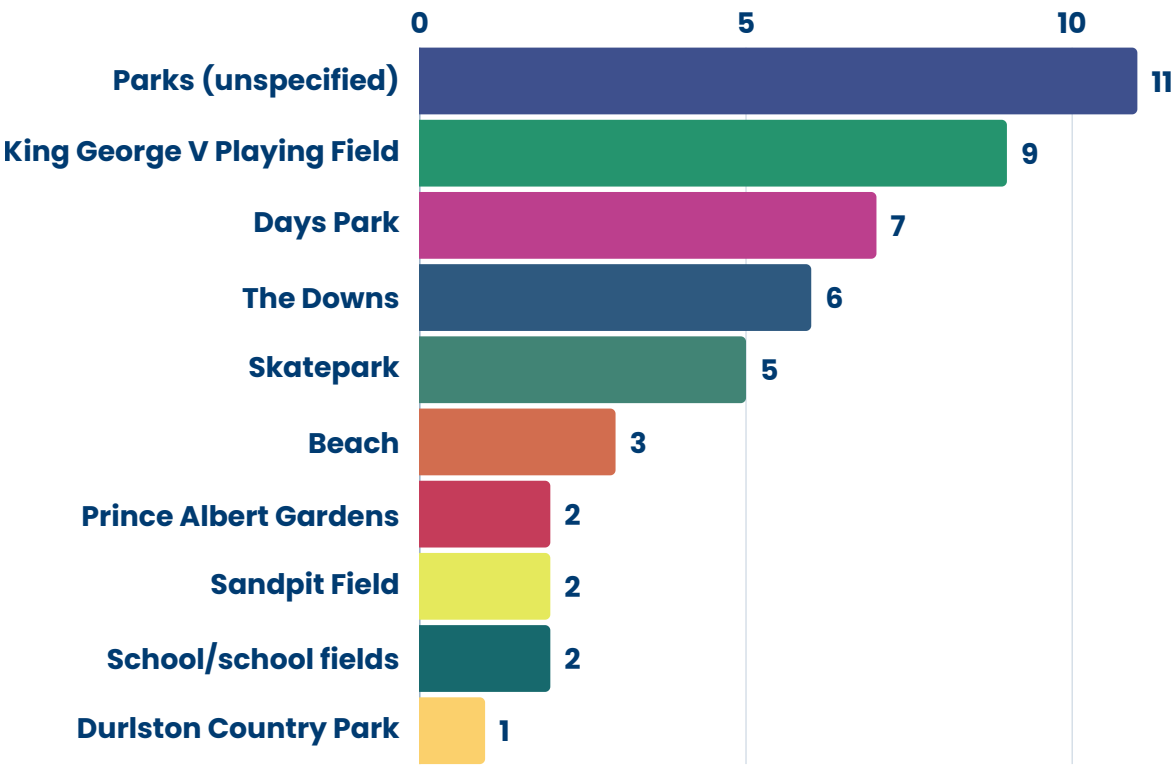


Q27. Please tell us where is your favourite green or open space in Swanage ?



Respondents were given free access to name their favourite green or open space, 20% named this as the King George V Playing Field.

Where are you favourite green and open spaces in Swanage. List as many as you can



Q28. Why is this space important to you and why do you use it? *For example, to meet friends or play sport?*



“An area where I feel safe and can meet up with friends”

“To sit down with friends and chat”

“I like remembering going there to either walk dogs or play in the park when I was young”

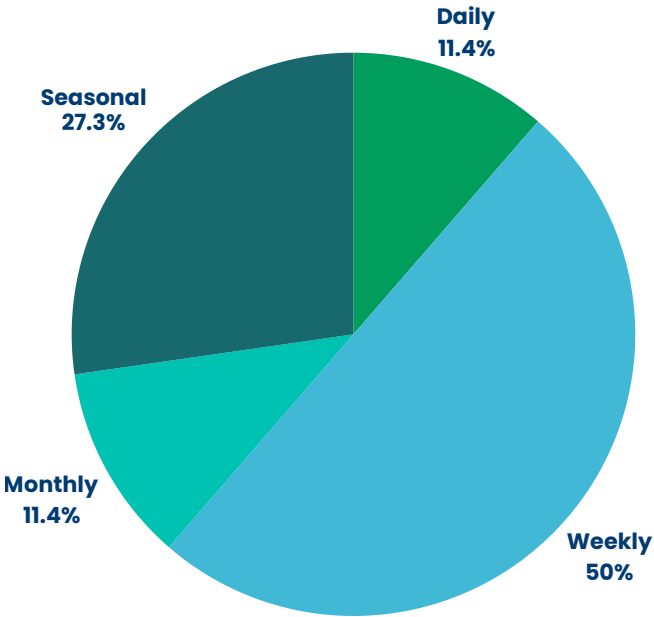
“This space is important because I play football there every Saturday”

“..we always hangout in the park ‘cause there isn’t much shops and fun things”

Q29. **How often do you go there?**

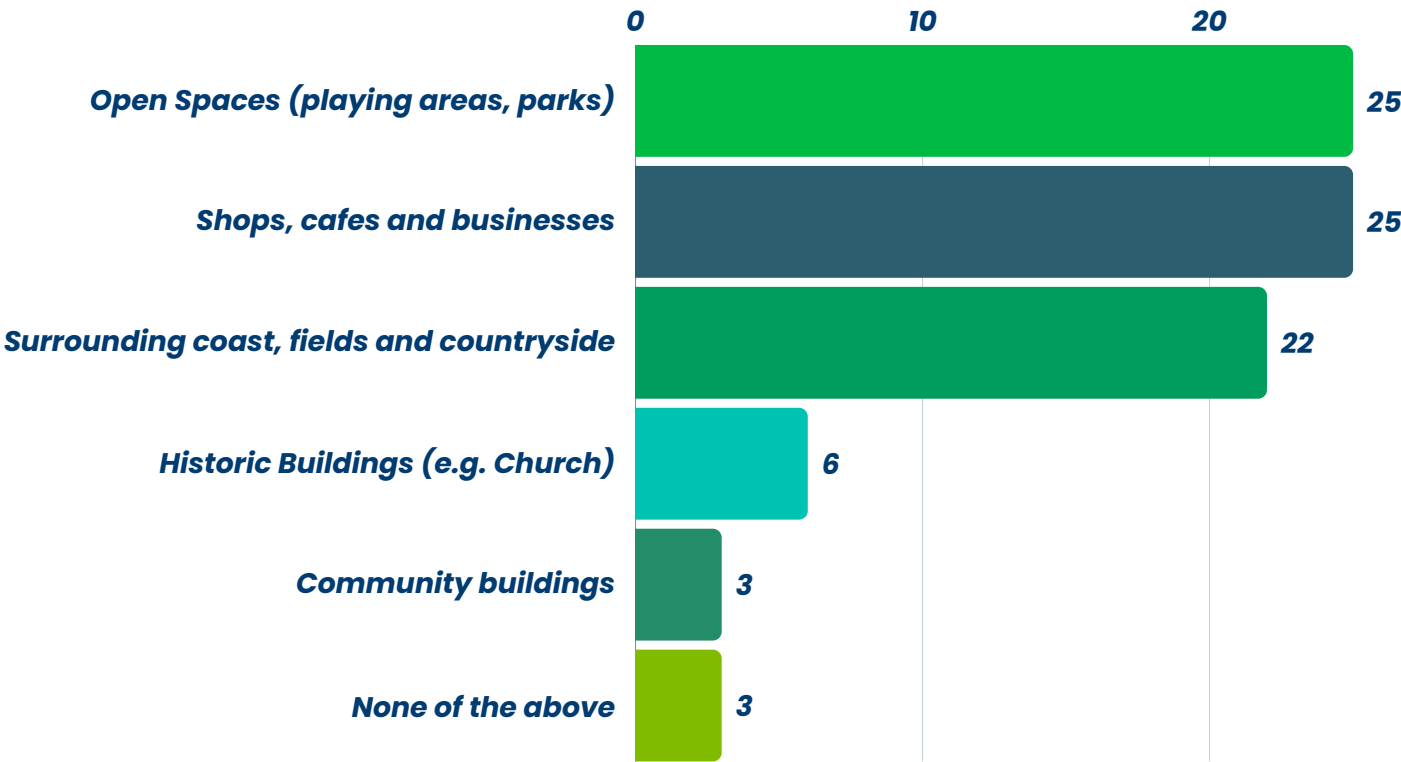
Overall, 45% said that these green or open spaces are valued so they can meet and hang out with friends. Access to somewhere they play sport or enjoy outdoor activities like swimming or walking the dog was mentioned by 30% of all respondents.

50% used green and open spaces weekly and 11.4% on a daily basis.



Q30.

Which of the following in Swanage are most important to you? Tick all that apply



57% valued Swanage’s open spaces equally to the shops, cafes and businesses in the town and 50% valued the surrounding coast, fields and countryside.

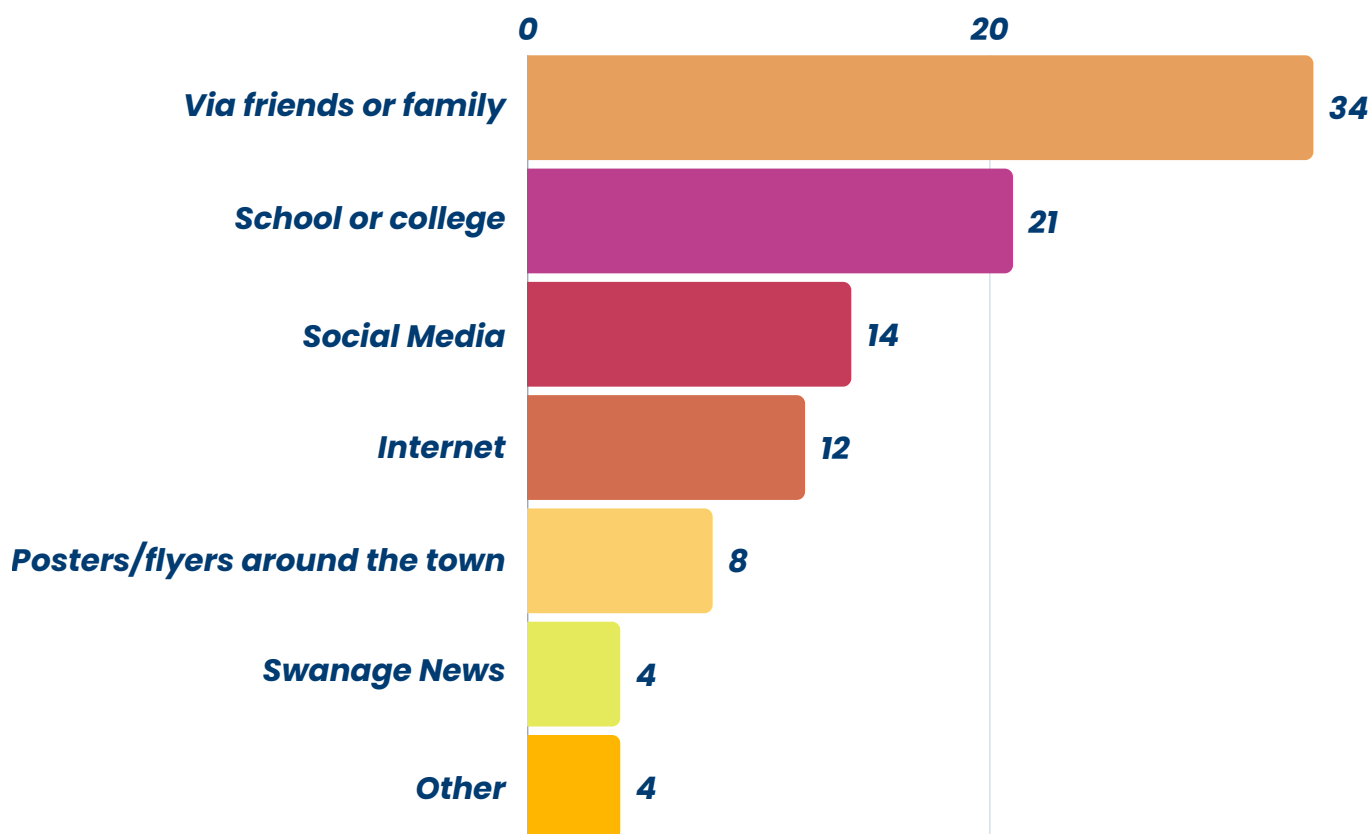
7% rated community buildings important and 14% the town’s historic buildings.

Access to sociable places to spend their time reflected the responses to previous questions.

Section 7: Communication

Q31-32.

Where do you most often find out what is going on in and around Swanage? Tick all that apply



Communication and finding out about what is available for young people to access in this older age range provided interesting data for future engagement with CYP. Social media 32% is less than half as effective as word of mouth recommendations through family and friends 77%. School/college was also an important source of information 48%.

Although 9% of respondents identified other sources of 'what's on' information they were unable to specify what that might be.

Q33. Are you interested in participating more in the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan process?

18 respondents replied to this question. Of those 83% said NO – 3 participants did provide a parental contact email for further contact and involvement in the process and these will be provided to the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Section 8: Wishlist Swanage

Q34. Is there anything else that you feel could be done to improve Swanage in the future? (*Please describe*)

9 respondents (24%) answered shops for this question.

A word cloud centered around the word 'shops'. The word 'shops' is the largest and most prominent. Other words include 'good shops', 'younger', 'places such as Weymouth', 'parks and shops', 'buses', 'tesco', 'teenages', 'food places', 'fun things', 'clothing shops', 'shops and places', 'food', 'people', 'thrift shops', 'bigger shops', 'better shops', and 'Primarks and H&Ms'. The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central 'shops'.

“Connection – further to places such as Weymouth & Dorchester – buses should run later”

“Work experience”

“Get a bigger store PLEASE like an Aldi”

“More shops and places to go for younger people”

“More teenage hangout areas”

There were 38 responses to this question. Overall, 32% mentioned shops or some kind either those that would appeal to their age range or supermarkets. 8% of answers were around the topic of travel – more options and cheaper. 29% of answers related to green spaces, sports and increased access to a range of activities.

Appendix 1: Promotional resources

SWANAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

HAVE YOUR SAY

HAVE YOU TAKEN THE SURVEY YET?!

Do you live in Swanage and are aged between 11-18? Swanage Town Council are putting together a Neighbourhood Plan, supported by members of the community and based on feedback collected by Dorset Coast Forum.

We'd like to know what you think about where you live and what you'd like us to try to do to improve Swanage for young people and we would like every young person in Swanage to have their say!

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

It is a community-led planning tool that allows local people to shape development in their area - where new homes, shops and offices should be built, what they should look like, and what infrastructure is needed.

GETTING INVOLVED MEANS YOU HELP CREATE PLACES THAT ARE FUN, SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE FOR EVERYONE!

This survey will be open until 31st October 2025

Scan the QR code to complete the online survey by **31 October 2025**

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan - Young People Survey 2025 KS3-5 ages 11-18 years

Dorset Coast Forum

SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL

SWANAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Aged 11-18? Live in Swanage? It's your plan too!

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

HAVE YOU TAKEN THE ONLINE YOUTH SURVEY YET?!

Dorset Coast Forum

SWANAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

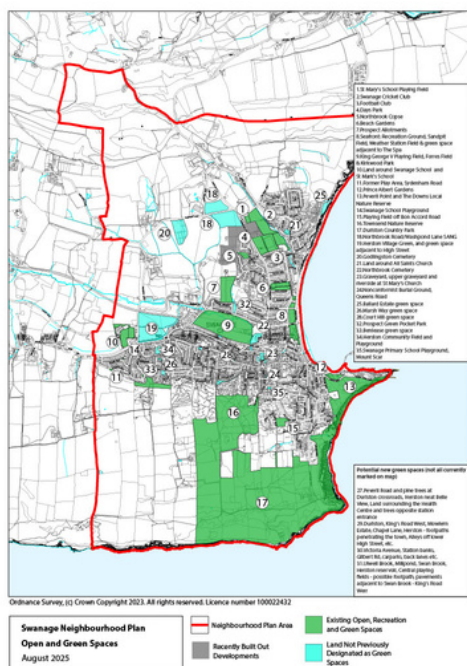
Aged 11-18? Live in Swanage? It's your plan too!

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

HAVE YOU TAKEN THE ONLINE YOUTH SURVEY YET?!

Dorset Coast Forum

Appendix 2: Make Your Mark Map and posters - Local Green and Open Spaces



Appendix 3: Teacher/Youth Leader Survey Toolkit

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan



Young People Surveys 2025 Teacher/Youth Leader Toolkit KS2-5 ages 7-18 years

Do the young people you support live in Swanage and are aged between 11-18? Swanage Town Council are putting together a Neighbourhood Plan, supported by members of the community and based on feedback collected by Dorset Coast Forum.

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Why should young people be part of neighbourhood planning? Their voice matters: They live here too, so they should help shape it.

- Fresh ideas: Young people often think outside the box, which can lead to new and creative solutions.
- Make a difference: Getting involved gives you a sense of ownership and helps push for positive change.
- Stronger plans: Including all age groups within a community makes plans more fair and long lasting.
- Better communities: When young people join in, it helps build stronger, more connected neighbourhoods.

GETTING INVOLVED MEANS YOUNG PEOPLE HELP CREATE PLACES THAT ARE FUN, SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE FOR EVERYONE!

The youth surveys will be open until 31st October 2025

What can you do?

As a valued educator or community youth leader, we are asking you to help encourage every young person who lives in Swanage aged between 7-18 to complete the survey relevant to their Key Stage:

- KS2 have a one sheet paper survey with the opportunity to also draw what they think the future of Swanage should look like
- KS3-5 have access to independently complete a survey via a Microsoft Form which could be completed in a school computer-based setting or at home, it can also be easily accessed via a mobile phone

- Display a poster for the KS3-5 online survey in school or at your youth setting
- Invite a member of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan team to come to your school for an assembly or why not ask us to lead a school or youth session on how the neighbourhood plan process can include the ideas and opinions of young people
- **Display the map of Swanage's Green & Open Spaces so that young people can mark the spaces that are important to them** – if you'd like us to come into your school or youth setting to support this, please ask

KS2 'How to' Survey Top Tips

Q1. Where are your favourite green and open spaces in Swanage? List as many as you can - You can use the Green & Open Spaces map as a prompt.

Q2. What do you like most about where you live? - Give some examples as a prompt – sense of community, access to public transport, recreational facilities, range of things to do etc.

Q3. What activities would you like to do that Swanage doesn't have/What do other places have that Swanage lacks? - Share all the activities that are currently available in Swanage – what's missing?

Q4. Where do you most often find out what is going on in Swanage? - Communication – is this through friends or family, posters they read, social media etc?

Q5. When you are an adult what would be important to you to help you stay living in Swanage? - This could range from jobs, housing to community facilities.

Q6. What do you like least about living in Swanage? – is it hard to get to the places they value, do they wish there were more shops, do they feel valued and supported etc?

DRAW IT – encourage them to illustrate what a future Swanage could look like

KS3-5 Survey Top Tips

- The survey will take 20-23 minutes to complete
- young people with additional needs could be supported by an adult to complete the survey – Immersive Reader is embedded
- QR code link is here:



Swanage NP: Project Plan

21.11.25

Action	Who	N	D	J	F	M	A	Notes
205 Drafting: informal consultation period	DCF							completed
207 Drafting: NP document production	ONH							completed
208 Drafting: Site Assessment Report	AECOM							in progress
209 Drafting: informal consultation review	NPSG/ONH/DCF							completed
210 Drafting: evidence document review	ONH							in progress
211 Drafting: Liase with DC and promoters	NPSG/ONH							in progress
212 Drafting: NPSG review	NPSG/ONH/DCF	X						26.11.25 (ONH online)
213 Drafting: final document production	ONH							
214 Drafting: NPSG review	NPSG		X	?				8.12.25 (or 10.1.26 fall back)
215 Drafting: TC approval	TC		X	?				15.12.25 (or 19.1.26 fall back)
301 Pre-Sub: Reg 14 consultation prep	NPSG/DCF							
302 Pre-Sub: Reg 14 consultation period	-					?		5.1.26 - 16.2.26 (or to 2.3.26 fallback)
303 Pre-Sub: review reps	NPSG/ONH					?		
304 Pre-Sub: liaison with DC etc	NPSG					?		
305 Pre-Sub: NPSG review	NPSG/ONH				X	?		23.2.26 (or 9.3.26 fallback)
401 Sub Plan: Submission NP document	NPSG/ONH							
402 Sub Plan: Basic Conditions Statement	ONH							
403 Sub Plan: Consultation Statement	NPSG							
404 Sub Plan: updated evidence	NPSG							
405 Sub Plan: NPSG review	NPSG						X	13.4.26
406 Sub Plan: TC approval	TC						X	27.4.26
407 Sub Plan: Submission to DC	TC						X	TBC
501 SEA	AECOM/ONH							
502 HRA	AECOM							

Characteristics of Swanage

59. Swanage is a traditional seaside tourist resort located at the end of the A351, on the south east coast of Purbeck. It is the largest town in Purbeck and includes a wide range of facilities, services and attractions, typical of a tourist town. Swanage is dissected by the railway which effectively splits the town into South and North Swanage.
60. Herston, one of the two conservation areas in Swanage, was once a separate manor before it became absorbed into the town. It still retains its village character with its own shops, post office, churches and local school.

Social characteristics

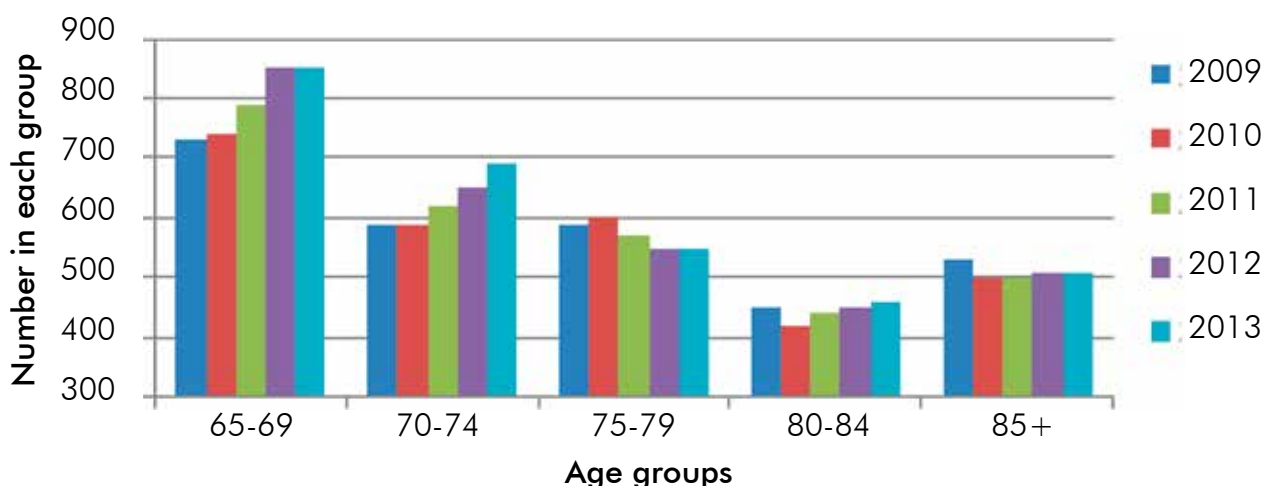
Population

61. Its location makes Swanage one of the most self-contained towns in Dorset. The current population of Swanage is around 9,500 but as shown in the table below this has decreased since 2001. During the high peak holiday season Swanage's population increases substantially with more than 151 thousand staying visitor trips.³

Swanage population (all ages)							
Year	1991	2001	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Population	9,520	10,140	9,730	9,570	9,590	9,560	9,570

Table 1: Swanage population changes since 1991^{4 5}

62. Swanage has a higher proportion of older people than both the Dorset and the UK average with almost 31.5% of the population aged 65 and over compared to 26% for Dorset and 17% for the UK.



Graph 1: Breakdown of older population in Swanage from 2009 to 2013⁶

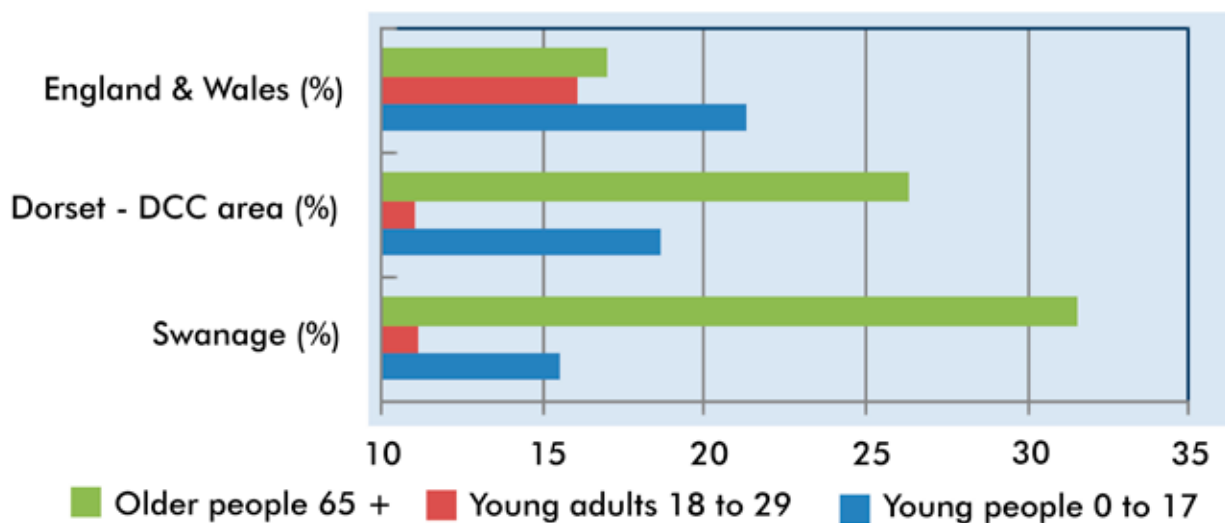
³ The South West Research Company Ltd, *Tourism Summary 2013 Volume and value reports for Swanage* (BH19 postcode) www.tswrc.co.uk

⁴ Figures for 2009 to 2013 are from DCC experimental Mid Year Estimates based upon Office for National Statistics Mid Year Estimates for Output Area geography and Patient Register data estimates.

⁵ Figures for 1991 and 2001 are based on census data, as summarised at: <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/343663>

⁶ Population figures (2012 Mid Year Estimates) <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/343663>

63. Swanage has a lower than average population of young people compared to Dorset and England and Wales.



Graph 2: Comparison of older people 65+ to young people under 29 ⁷

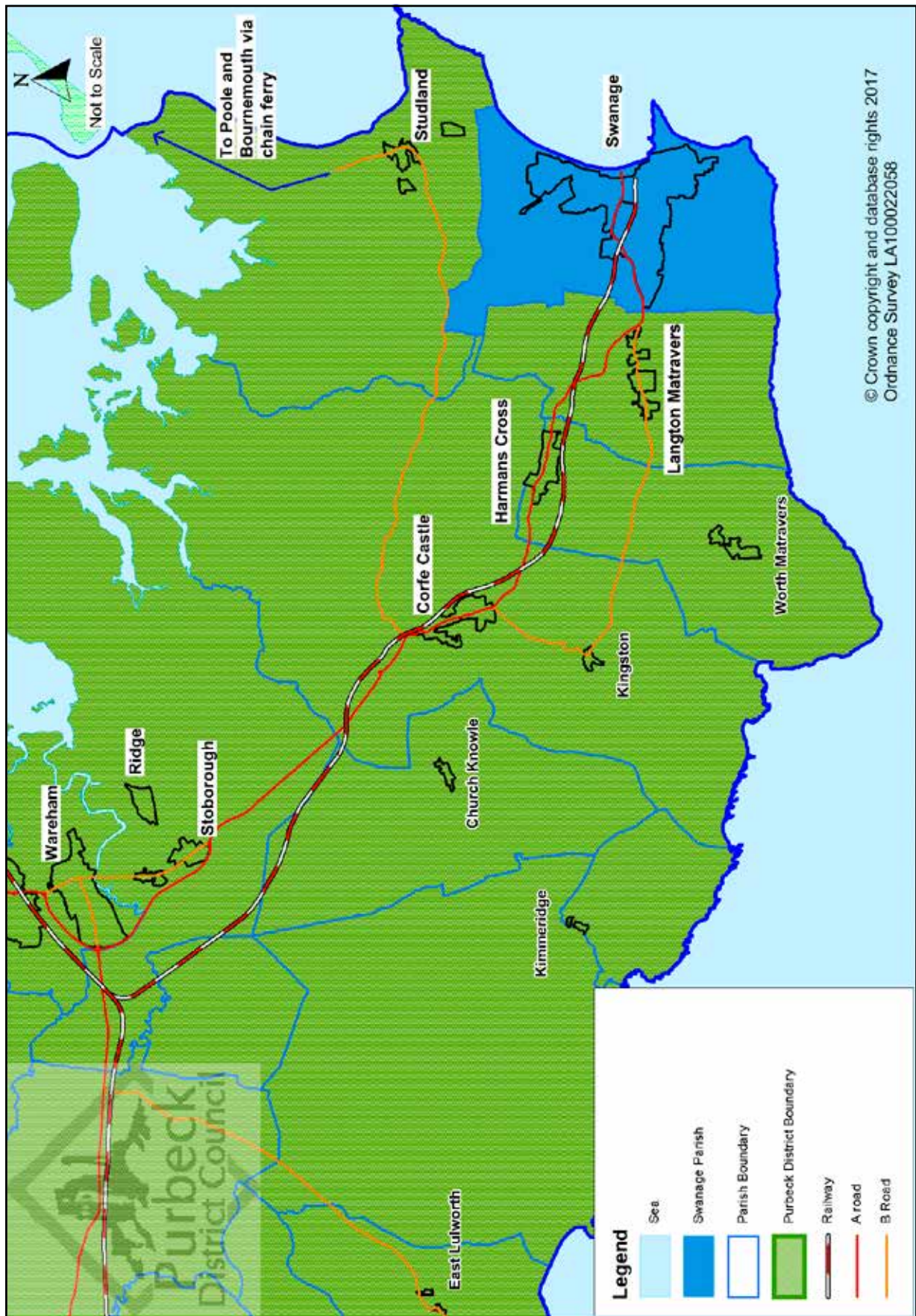
64. Affordable housing is an issue in Swanage. Approximately 17% of the housing supply is second or holiday homes compared to 3% across Dorset. The following table demonstrates the current average house price to earnings ratio.

BH19 (Swanage) Average house price/earnings ratio - 2014			
	BH19 postcode	BH postcode	NATIONAL
Average current value	£296,400	£282,600	£258,700
Average Earnings	£22,699	£19,219	£24,478
Price/Earnings ratio	13.06	14.70	10.57

Table 2: Average house prices/earnings ratio ⁸

⁷ Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2012 Mid Year Estimates <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/343663>

⁸ Source: Calnea Analytics (<http://www.mouseprice.com>) proprietary price data and earnings survey data - updated quarterly.



Map 2: Swanage context map

Community facilities and services

65. Swanage has a good range and variety of community facilities which include:

- 3 primary schools and 1 secondary school with a full size sports hall;
- a medical centre, hospital and dental surgeries;
- numerous churches and halls;
- sport and leisure clubs and facilities;
- pubs, restaurants, cafes and shops;
- a town hall, library, museum, theatre and tourist information centre; and
- post offices, banks, and professional services.

66. Following the Dorset County Education Authority review of education, the schools in Swanage have been reorganised from a three to two tier system. St Mark's and St Mary's Schools have been relocated and rebuilt, and the new Swanage School now provides secondary education. This is outside the control of Dorset County Education Authority. Depending on future demand, the Swanage School may require a sixth form facility.

67. Swanage has numerous community and voluntary organisations, including sports and leisure clubs and groups. Most are accommodated in the existing facilities; although some groups are in need of appropriate facilities.

68. The Swanage School has a full size sports hall which is available for hire outside school hours. Swanage Town Council is planning new changing facilities at Forres Field.

Environmental characteristics

The built environment

69. Swanage developed from a small agricultural and fishing settlement, into a small town founded on stone quarrying. Later, with the arrival of the railway in 1885, the town became popular as a seaside resort. The evidence of its past can be seen in the layout of the town and the mix of buildings and architecture.

70. The most distinctive buildings in Swanage are late 19th century, including the Town Hall and Purbeck House (Hotel). Swanage has a large number of inter-war suburban houses, many of which were used as guest houses in the past. There are also a relatively large number of post-war and modern housing estates.

71. The town contains two conservation areas, one is Herston and the other covers the historic town centre and Peveril Point. These areas have the greatest architectural and historic interest and include the majority of the town's listed buildings.

72. The valley and the surrounding hills are drained by Swan Brook which runs through the town via a culvert under Station Road.

The natural environment

73. Swanage is set within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is covered by a number of environmental designations. Other important natural environmental areas include Durlston Country Park (part of which is a National Nature Reserve), Townsend Nature Reserve and Ballard and Peveril Downs.
74. Although Swanage is not directly adjacent to heathland, it lies within 5 kilometres of Studland and Godlingston Heaths and new development must provide adequate mitigation to avoid adverse effects on the heathlands.
75. Swanage Bay runs from Peveril Point to Handfast Point. The bay faces east and is protected by Peveril Point from major south-westerly storms. The Isle of Wight provides some level of protection from easterly storms but Swanage's economic centre is most at risk from easterly storms.
76. The coastline and seafront at Swanage has the following designations:
- Dorset & East Devon World Heritage Site;
 - Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
 - Studland Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - Purbeck Ridge Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - Purbeck Heritage Coast; and
 - Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
77. Swanage bay has a range of attractions along its frontage including the pier, the stone quay and Victorian parade, water sports, diving, boat trips, the Blue Flag beach, amusement arcades and beach gardens.
78. The Purbeck Way walking route and South West Coast Path provide access to the countryside, Durlston Country Park and the Jurassic Coast.



Map 3: The natural setting of Swanage

Swanage seafront character areas

- North of Shep's Hollow
- Shep's Hollow to Ocean Bay slipway
- Ocean Bay slipway to Mowlem
- Mowlem to Stone Quay
- Stone Quay to Peveril Point and the Downs

North of Shep's Hollow

Character

79. The area is characterised by relatively low (c.25m) exposed Wealden cliffs leading to high (>120m) chalk cliffs in the north, both backed by farmland. The Wealden cliffs suffer regular erosion and numerous small landslips are characteristic. Further north small falls occur in the chalk and there is historic evidence of major landslides. The beach mainly consists of pebbles in the north but towards Shep's hollow longshore drift deposits sand that escapes the beach recharge scheme in the south of the bay. Even in summer this part of the bay is relatively quiet with just a few walkers and sunbathers. Offshore there is no speed restriction and jet skis and powerboats use the area close inshore. Some beach angling takes place.

Issues

80. Landslips occur mainly in winter and are caused by heavy rainfall and high tides and easterly winds removing material from the base of the cliffs. Ongoing erosion will continue, with the frequency likely to increase due to rising sea levels and increased storminess. The SW Coastpath on the cliff top will need monitoring and diverting in the event of a significant landslip, and the steps at Shep's Hollow are vulnerable to storm damage. There is no coast protection.

Shep's Hollow to Ocean Bay slipway

Character

81. The area is characterised by relatively low (<25m) Wealden cliffs, exposed in the north of the section but partially covered by beach huts further south. The Ballard Estate tops the cliffs north of the Pines Hotel and to the south, large houses, small hotels and B&Bs line the cliffs. A promenade runs on top of the sea wall from the Bull and Boat to below the Pines Hotel. The beach is mainly sand with groynes placed at roughly 50m intervals. A 5 knot speed limit is in operation approximately 200m offshore from May to the end of September. The outdoor activity company 'Land and Wave' operate from the beach to the north of the Bull and Boat and PWC (personal watercraft) launching occurs near the slipway.

Issues

82. The cliffs below the Ballard Estate are protected only by groynes and sand replenishment. There is no sea wall and as a consequence high tides and easterly storms remove debris from the foot of the cliffs thereby increasing the possibility of cliff regression.

83. The promenade sits on top of the sea wall which is the primary coast protection measure for the section to the south of Ballard Estate. The sea wall is protected by a new groyne field (installed 2005/6) and though the beach has been replenished, high tides and easterly storms can overtop the sea wall. Small landslips regularly deposit material onto the promenade and this is normally removed by beach hut owners. Larger landslips can create a major removal problem e.g. the section below the Pines Hotel is still covered by a 2012 landslip.
84. Beach huts are vulnerable to damage from landslips and there are issues over admission of liability (i.e. proving whose land is responsible from landowners above). Terraced beach hut schemes help to stabilise the cliffs and more schemes are currently being considered. Future beach hut development should seek to avoid any significant impact on the character of Swanage Bay.

Ocean Bay slipway to the Mowlem

Character

85. This section is characterised by a sandy beach backed by a sea wall and promenade. Shore Road runs alongside the promenade and this is backed by medium cliffs with low density mixed development (including a new set of apartments to the north) including flower gardens and grassy spaces. South of Victoria Avenue, Shore Road (which is closed to traffic May to October) is backed by municipal beach huts and other tourism developments. The beach normally achieves Blue Flag status and is the main amenity beach for the Town. There are a few private beach huts on the beach backing up to the sea wall and two ice cream kiosks. There is a 5 knot speed limit 200m offshore, a designated swimming only area below Cliff Cottage and a few seasonal moorings of the Bull and Boat. The Ulwell stream crosses the beach near the Bull and Boat and the outlet jetty from the flood relief scheme is located at the end of Victoria Avenue. There are private slipways at each end of this section. The beach is accessed from the promenade by several sets of steps and ramps.
86. Beach businesses include kayak and pedalo hire, ice cream kiosks, deckchair hire and Punch and Judy. Activities include beach games, swimming and sunbathing.
87. The presence of green spaces along this part of the sea front forms a notable characteristic of the area and this element is highly valued.

Issues

88. Shore Road is the main access road to the town from the north, and a bus route with car parking (metered), it is a very busy road, particularly in summer. The consequent congestion slows down vehicular traffic. The promenade is in effect only a pavement and narrow enough to cause people to occasionally step into the road to pass oncoming pedestrians. To the south of Victoria Avenue, the road is closed during the summer months and this permits more relaxed access along the route and to the beach.
89. The slipway at Ocean Bay is mainly used to allow personal watercraft (PWC's) and motor boats to access the beach for launching. At busy times the road adjacent to the slipway is congested with craft on trailers. There is some negative interaction between PWCs and bathers though the 5 knot speed limit controls speed after launching. The slipway near the Mowlem is rarely used, apart from access for beach cleaning.

90. The geology is not exposed, but some slumping has occurred in front of the undeveloped high ground to the west of Shore Road. The Town Council undertook a major stabilisation of the recreation ground in 2014/15 to the south of Victoria Avenue, which incorporated a beach hut redevelopment scheme.

Mowlem to Stone Quay

Character

91. The section is characterised by a sea wall with promenade on top, in front of housing and tourism amenity developments with limited vehicular access for private parking. The beach is only accessible at low water spring tides. Swan Brook exits south of the Mowlem and there is a public slipway (only very occasionally used) near The Square. The Stone Quay is used primarily for access to local boat trip businesses with some limited use by private individuals to access boats at anchor. Shallow water limits the number of moorings and anchorages. There are no railings on the seaward side of the promenade between The Square and the Stone Quay. Strolling and crabbing are the main activities.

Issues

92. Easterly storms and high tides can combine to cause significant overtopping of the sea wall with flooding and the deposition of debris. Waves can penetrate up Swan Brook with the potential to cause flooding and compression, thereby damaging the culvert which runs alongside Station Road.
93. Some large structures such as The Mowlem and Quay Court have been considered by some to create a negative visual impact.
94. There is scope to improve some aspects of the public realm within this area.

Stone Quay to Peveril Point and the Downs

Character

95. The area is characterised by developments associated with access to the sea, beaches are limited, mainly shingle and small pebbles, and include Monkey Beach and the Sailing Club beach, known locally as Buck's Shore. There is limited bathing and the principal activities relate to boating.
96. The maritime uses which occupy this part of the bay are important for the town. Running from the Stone Quay eastwards, boat based activities include, sea fishing trips, sightseeing trips, Pilot Gig rowing, Sub-Aqua diving, dinghy sailing and commercial inshore fishing. There is a listed Victorian Pier, a Lifeboat Station to the east of the boat park and slipway and 'National Coastwatch' man the old Coastguard look-out at Peveril Point. 'The Downs', a major recreational area, overlooks Durlston Bay and provides a significant green backdrop. This area also includes the Town's principal visitor car park with access to the shore and promenade near the entrance to the Pier.
97. Wessex Water's sewage treatment works (built 1998) are located adjacent to the Pier and Sailing club with an outfall pipe forming a walkway to the outfall at Peveril Point. Peveril Point contains a notorious 'race', particularly on spring tides, and there is a Trinity House Buoy marking the outer safety route.

- 98. Swanage Pier is used by 'strollers' and anglers and in summer allows boarding access to bigger boats travelling to Bournemouth and Poole. The main mooring area lies to the north and east of the Pier.
- 99. Other significant heritage features within this area include; Wellington clock tower, coastguard cottages, and wartime period structures including a pill box and bunkers.

Issues

- 100. The principal issue relates to high spring tides, low air pressure and easterly storms. In these conditions, overtopping of the sea wall can often occur with debris deposited on the road and pavement particularly outside of the 'East Bar' and 'Pier Head'. These conditions also cause problems for dinghies on the beach at the Sailing Club and cause damage to the structure of the Pier and occasionally to the sea wall itself.
- 101. There is no easy access to shore (no safe place to leave tenders) for visiting yachtsmen and boat owners even in calm weather though a water taxi service is available at times. Strong easterly winds make mooring dangerous and local commercial boat owners, including fishermen, regularly take their boats to Poole Harbour if a strong easterly is forecast. This materially affects the profitability of these companies and leads to a cessation of related tourism activities in the winter and early spring thereby limiting the attraction of Swanage outside of the main season.

Economic characteristics

Retail and town centre

- 102. Swanage has the largest town centre in Purbeck and is valued by residents and visitors for the diverse range and number of independent shops and businesses. These include restaurants, cafes, takeaways, food and non-food shops, pubs, bars, hotels, banks and other professional services. The town is also served by two small supermarkets. The largest car park in the town centre is adjacent to one of the supermarkets.
- 103. The main shopping area includes Station Road, Institute Road and the High Street, with some additional facilities in neighbouring streets.
- 104. The town currently lacks a town centre focal point or open area that could be used to hold a market or other events.

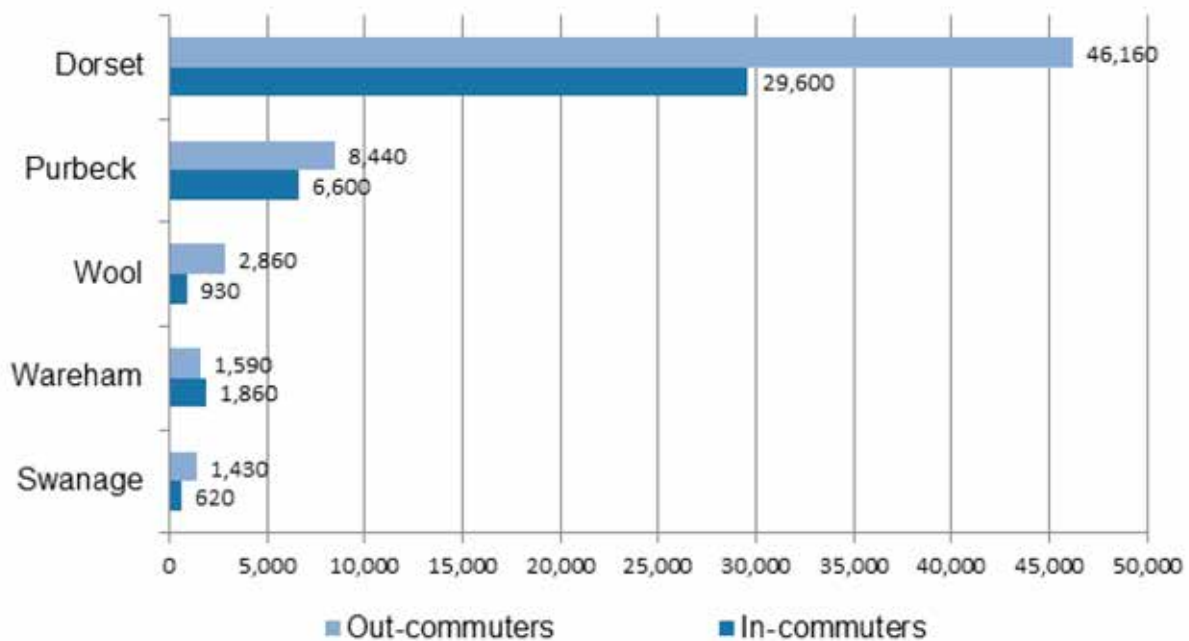
Employment

- 105. Swanage supports a mixed economy which includes light industrial space, business facilities, retail and tourism related employment. This mix has often meant that the economy of the town is subject to some seasonal variation. The table below sets out some key employment statistics for Swanage.

Employment statistics	Swanage	Wareham	Lytchett Minster & Upton
Total number of people working in the town	2900	2900	1200
Total number of firms (not self employed)	390	240	150
Work patterns	Percentage of the working population		
Full-time	55%	60%	60%
Part-time	45%	40%	40%
Main employment sectors	Percentage of all sectors		
Production and construction	11%	27%	19%
Distribution, accommodation and food	39%	23%	20%
Finance, ICT and professional services	6%	8%	10%
Other market services	6%	7%	14%
Public Administration, education and health	38%	35%	38%

Table 3: Swanage employment statistics compared to other Purbeck towns (2009 data)

- 106.** Other than the tourism and service sector, the main employers in the town include: Dorset County Council, Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust, Ibstock Bricks Ltd, Wire Fittings Ltd, Swanage Hospital and Swanage Town Council.
- 107.** More people out-commute from Swanage than in-commute. The net difference is an 810 loss in Swanage compared to a 270 gain in Wareham. This difference may not be entirely attributed to people from Swanage working in Wareham, although there may be an opportunity to reduce the out-commuting from Swanage by improving the opportunities for employment at the town.



Graph 3: A comparison of commuting trends across Dorset ⁹

Tourism

108. Tourism forms an important part of the Swanage local economy. The town offers a diverse range of attractions and activities which include: a blue flag beach, promenade and Swanage Pier and the Swanage Heritage Railway. Around the town are attractions such as Durlston Country Park, Ballard Down and Old Harry rocks. Swanage is the eastern gateway to the Jurassic Coast and the Coastal Path and is a centre for educational holidays, water sports, climbing, walking, cycling and other types of adventure activities.

Key tourism facts ¹⁰

- 151,000 staying visitor trips
- 885,000 day visits
- £72.2 million direct visitor spend
- £73.5 million total visitor related spend
- 1,500 actual jobs supported by visitor related spend.

⁹ Source: Census of Population 2001, ONS

¹⁰ The South West Research Company Ltd, Tourism Summary 2013 Volume and value reports for Swanage (BH19 postcode) www.tswrc.co.uk

Accessibility and Transport

- 109.** The main access route to and from Swanage is via the A351 or via Ferry road and the Sandbanks chain ferry. Both routes can become severely congested during peak holiday periods due to a bottleneck at Corfe Castle and the limited capacity of the chain ferry. Swanage Railway is currently undertaking work to re-connect the mainline rail link to Wareham.
- 110.** Swanage has two regular public transport bus links to Poole and Bournemouth via the Sandbanks Ferry and through Corfe Castle and Wareham. The number 40 bus service is currently being reviewed and a reduced evening service may be introduced. Transport around town is currently covered by the Swanage Hopper Dial a Bus and during the summer the Durlston Bus. Both bus routes are dependent on funding from Dorset County Council and so this could be at risk in the future.
- 111.** The Purbeck Transport Strategy sets out future transport schemes and improvements in the district. The Strategy includes specific projects which are relevant to Swanage, including the Swanage to Wareham Rail Reconnection, and improvements to bus services and the walking and cycling network.



Any methodology or criteria used in decision-making should also be made available, such as the criteria used to select sites for housing, employment or other kinds of development or designation of Local Green Space.

The main advantage of producing a background document is that it would allow the neighbourhood plan to focus on the policies, with a summary of evidence, rather than being weighed down by large amounts of technical data.

The neighbourhood plan may include an overview and summary of evidence and community engagement and explain how they have informed the vision, aims, and policies in the plan. This demonstrates that the plan is based on a solid understanding of the area and reflects the views of the wider community.

Publicity and engagement

Publicising the proposal to prepare a neighbourhood plan

In order to make the process as open and transparent as possible and to ensure wide community involvement, it is advisable to begin with publicity and awareness-raising activities, to let people know that a neighbourhood plan is proposed. The aim should be to make sure that everyone knows about the plan and has an opportunity to participate.

The local planning authority should be able to provide support, especially through its own newsletters, publications or by placing notices in libraries and

other public buildings. Also, local radio stations and newspapers could be approached. Depending on the size of the proposed neighbourhood area, it may be possible to post leaflets through letterboxes. Notices and/or leaflets could be prepared to place in local public buildings and shops. Social media (such as Twitter and Facebook), and presence at local events (such as markets and festivals) can also be used. There may also be opportunities for publicity through other local organisations and their networks.

It is important to create and maintain a neighbourhood plan website where more information can be obtained and where interested parties can follow the progress of the plan. This should include contact details, including an email address.

As with evidence gathering, publicity and community engagement should commence from the earliest stage, but will continue throughout the process, including pre-submission consultation on the draft plan.

Key stakeholders and local partners

In addition to publicising the proposal to produce a neighbourhood plan, it is useful to identify and approach key local stakeholders and any potential partners. These are local organisations, groups and individuals that have a particular interest in the area.

There are various reasons why partnership working is useful. Some partners may agree to become part of the neighbourhood forum, where one is proposed, or neighbourhood plan working or steering groups. Some may work closely to support the preparation

of the plan. They would be able to provide information and advice, contributing to the evidence base, and may even help in writing parts of the plan. Also, some local groups may have wider memberships or networks, so can help in publicising the plan and in getting local people involved, especially minority and hard-to-engage groups. Thus, they can make life much easier for the parish or town council or neighbourhood forum and contribute significantly to the production of the plan.

Local stakeholders and/or partners could include:

- local councillors;
- local shopkeepers and small businesses;
- major employers and business organisations, including chambers of trade or commerce;
- community groups such as residents' associations, local civic or amenity societies, local history groups or sports clubs;
- landowners of key sites or organisations with significant property holdings and developers with site options;
- local trusts and project groups, such as community development trusts, land trusts or building preservation trusts;
- not-for-profit organisations representing minority groups (e.g. elderly, disabled, young people, low-income, LGBT+ groups, faith groups and ethnic groups);
- educational establishments such as schools, colleges and universities;
- community facilitators or activists;
- local institutions such as arts centres, performance venues, architecture or built environment centres;
- health and social care organisations;
- regional or local branches of professional bodies.

Different working arrangements with stakeholders or partners could include:

- inviting individuals to join the neighbourhood forum;
- inviting them onto steering or working groups tasked with the preparation of the plan;
- meetings to discuss their views and the interests of their members or communities;
- working to develop the community engagement programme and discussing ways in which they can engage their members or communities;
- help in compiling and interpreting the evidence base;
- inviting them to contribute to the development and writing of the plan;
- consulting at key stages in the plan preparation;
- use as a source of professional advice and support.

Circulation lists

Explicit permission is required to add people's names to publicity and circulation lists. New regulations issued in 2018 are tightening requirements. The local authority should be able to advise further on this and other aspects of data protection.

The importance of community and stakeholder engagement

The idea behind neighbourhood plans is that they are community-led. The neighbourhood forum or parish/town council leads and co-ordinates the plan-making process. Other community members may become actively involved in the plan-making process. This may be through membership of the forum or of steering/working groups, through informal working arrangements or through community and stakeholder engagement activities.

Effective community engagement and a robust evidence base are the foundations on which an effective neighbourhood plan will be built. It is important to seek to engage the wider community too, to gain from their knowledge and seek their views.



Community engagement is necessary and important for several reasons:

Statutory requirement.

Planning legislation requires publicity and consultation to take place on emerging neighbourhood plans. However, this tends to be late-stage, for example consulting on the draft plan prior to submission. Early stage, informal engagement is also required, from the earliest stages of the plan-making process. When a completed neighbourhood plan is submitted for independent examination, it will have to be accompanied by a consultation statement, demonstrating that the legal requirements for consultation have been met.

Gaining support.

Early community engagement is essential in gaining knowledge and understanding, developing consensus, avoiding misconceptions and creating confidence in the process. This is especially important for neighbourhood plans, which are subject to a public referendum at the end of the process. The possibility of a 'no' vote is greatly reduced if people are aware of the plan, understand its scope and limitations and have had the opportunity to participate in its production. Good community engagement helps to create a sense of public ownership and acceptance. Failure to engage communities properly at an early stage is one of the main causes of conflict later in the planning process. This can lead to additional costs and delays.

Better outcomes.

Finding out what people think and drawing on their knowledge is an important part of developing understanding of the area. It is impossible to write policy for a community unless there is a strong level of understanding of that community. The community knows a lot about its own neighbourhood and also includes people with a range of skills and specialist knowledge. This can include people with expertise in business, land and property, social and community issues and environmental matters. Effective community engagement leads to more realistic and deliverable plans and policies.

Democratic deficit.

The referendum will involve a simple 'yes' or 'no' vote on a complex document dealing with a range of issues. Properly engaging people from the beginning ensures that there is an opportunity to influence the content of the plan through a participatory process, rather than just having the option to accept or reject it in its entirety. Residents will have to weigh up carefully the things in the draft plan they are happy or unhappy about in order to reach a judgement. Democratic legitimacy will come from the combination of the referendum, effective community engagement and legally compliant consultation.

Stages of community and stakeholder engagement

The process of plan-making can be almost as important as the plan itself. It helps generate the content of the plan and provides the means to demonstrate that people and businesses are really behind it, which will give it momentum for the delivery phase.

There are different stages for engaging local communities and stakeholders. It will be useful to plan the overall programme at the start. However, there also needs to be considerable flexibility, so that the programme can respond to issues arising.

Where intensive community engagement has recently been

undertaken for other purposes, the material obtained may be useful in informing the neighbourhood plan.

The following guidance describes broad stages for running a community engagement programme. The reality is more likely to be a continuous and constantly evolving programme. So the following stages should be considered as a general guide, rather than a rigid and linear order of events. Feedback on the outcomes of community engagement should be provided at all stages.

Early engagement

In some ways the most important stage of community engagement is at the beginning. This should be undertaken before the plan's vision and aims are developed.



The purpose is to gather information, awareness of people's views and to identify key issues and themes. These may inform the vision and aims and policies of the plan.

Care should be taken to ask open questions and avoid 'loading' the process.

Simple questions may be asked, like:

- what is good about the area?
- what is bad about the area?
- what are the neighbourhood's qualities as a place to live and work in?
- what issues affect the area (now or in the future)?
- what change would you like to see?

Such questions allow individuals to present their own points of view. Local residents and businesses may have very different ideas of an area's merits and problems to those leading the plan-making process and it is important that there is an opportunity to express these.

These questions can be used on a variety of groups, including school-age children. A technique that works particularly well with school children is to ask them to draw and/or describe how they would like the area to be in the future.

More specific questions could also be asked based on local circumstances. For example, people's views could be sought on the local retail centre, local parks, or the future of key sites and buildings.

As wide a range of views as possible should be sought. It is useful to employ a range of techniques. The responses should allow common themes to

emerge. It may also identify more specific themes, such as access for people of limited mobility.

Once responses have been collated and analysed, feedback should be provided, for example through the website, newsletters or through later engagement events.

Mid-stage engagement

Early community engagement should help to identify key themes and issues and these can be used to inform the vision and aims for the plan. Later community engagement can include consultation on the draft vision and aims and also workshop events or discussions to examine specific issues/themes. This can be an interactive process.

Mid-stage community engagement should be designed to provide information needed to develop the detail of the neighbourhood plan. For example, discussions could focus on a town centre or local shopping centre, housing needs, or a key public space. For some sites, policies or proposals, different options may be discussed so that people can discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.

In developing aims, policies, proposals or site allocations, different options may be considered and be subjected to consultation to find people's preferences. Options could include things like the sites for new housing, commercial development or community facilities.

Simple voting on different options should be avoided. It is the reasoning behind people's preferences that are of more importance. For example, asking people to vote for different sites would be difficult to trans-

late into site allocations. A better approach would be to consult on a site selection methodology and criteria and to ask for comments on the advantages and drawbacks of various sites. This will then allow the community to form balanced and evidence-based judgements on site allocations.

Workshops can be useful, where options can be discussed and examined. In presenting options, it is better to keep them simple and site or subject specific rather than presenting complex sets of options for a range of sites and subjects in an area. The thinking behind each option should be explained fully, preferably with lists of possible advantages and disadvantages. This helps people to make an informed decision.

Consulting on options may not produce any clear preference. Ultimately, it is for those preparing the neighbourhood plan to make rational decisions, exercise judgements and seek to achieve consensus and minimise conflicts. Decisions must be based on a clear planning rationale and evidence.

Consulting on the completed plan

Once a draft plan has been produced, it must be subject to a pre-submission consultation (see later section on Pre-submission consultation).

Few people will have the time or inclination to read a detailed document. Therefore, it may be useful to produce a concise summary version. This can set out the aims, main themes and general direction of policy, but in very concise form. It should also set out where the full version of the plan may be examined (on-line and printed copies) and how people may respond.

Local partners and others interested in the detailed content of the plan will have the opportunity to comment on matters of detail. There is a requirement to consult with certain statutory bodies and the local authority should be able to advise on this.

The plan may then be amended, taking account of any representations received (see later section on Pre-submission consultation).

Good practice in community engagement

The community engagement strategy/programme needs to be designed for the specific community in question. For example, an area with a population of 100 will need a very different approach to one with 50,000 people. The former could involve direct conversations with all residents. The latter would need to rely more on mass communication, such as media or web-based engagement. Larger populations will require larger budgets, if they are to be engaged with effectively.

Community engagement and consultation is now an established part of planning. However, it is not always done well. The following should help to guide the development of effective programmes of community engagement in the neighbourhood planning process.

In designing community engagement and consultation programmes, it is desirable to target the widest range of people, including both genders and minority or hard-to-reach groups, for example young and elderly, single parents, LGBT+ people, ethnic groups, disabled groups, low income, disadvantaged groups. The best way of engaging will depend on the target group.



Good practice includes:

Clear purpose: There needs to be a clear idea of why community engagement or consultation is being undertaken and how the outcomes will inform the plan. This then informs the format of engagement, so that community feedback is properly recorded and can inform the plan content.

Front loading: Community engagement should be undertaken before work commences on writing the plan - this is called 'front-loading'. The purpose of early community engagement is to gather information and awareness of people's views, to inform the plan.

Capacity building: It will often be necessary to include awareness-raising, education and training in consultation activities so that those participating in community engagement events are informed about the purpose of the plan and the kind of issues it can deal with. This allows informed participation in the plan-making process and is especially important where complex issues are being considered, such as methodologies and criteria for site allocations.

Open process: Inviting and welcoming new members of the neighbourhood forum or steering or working group helps to better reflect the diversity of the neighbourhood area. It is important that all neighbourhood forums maintain an open and inclusive membership policy. This helps to avoid any later suggestion that only a select number of people were involved.

Avoiding tokenism: The purpose of undertaking community engagement is to inform the content of the plan. If the outcomes have already been determined, then community engagement is tokenistic. In effect it is a public relations exercise. This leads to scepticism and disillusionment.

Being creative: Community engagement needs to be stimulating and enjoyable. It should be relevant to people's lives and give an opportunity to everyone to contribute. Too often it is dull and inaccessible and therefore fails to engage. Developing effective community engagement events requires real skill and creativity.

Managing expectations: Community engagement exercises can raise unrealistic expectations if they are poorly run, leading to disappointment and cynicism. It is necessary to explain the scope and limitations of the planning system and of neighbourhood plans. This includes understanding that they are a means to an end (policy), not the end itself (actual sustainable growth and development).

Targeting: Whilst some people will naturally want to get involved in neighbourhood planning, targeting will be necessary to reach some. This could include the elderly, young people, ethnic groups and other minority or hard-to-engage groups. Working through local partnerships is one of the ways of spreading the reach of community engagement activities.

Accessibility: Careful thought needs to be given to make consultation accessible, including location, timing, media, and format. Events should be informal and unthreatening - for example, those running events may be better dressed informally. They should be timed to avoid clashing with key events, such as sports events, and to cater for people who work at different times. Jargon should be avoided or, where unavoidable, be clearly explained. Indeed, the term 'neighbourhood plan' may be off-putting to some people, whereas they would be more than happy to talk about the area in which they live.

Digital and social media: Full use should be made of digital and social media. Every neighbourhood plan should have a website and email address. Social media is an effective means to disseminating information, encouraging dialogue and targeting different audiences. With the exception of areas with very small populations, where one-to-one engagement is possible, social media should be considered as an essential part of proper community engagement and consultation.

Feedback: It is essential to provide feedback on community engagement activities at all stages of the plan-making process. This means telling people what has been said and then to explain how this informs the emerging plan.

Common mistakes – what to avoid

Consultation is often done badly. Things to avoid include:

Standing in the library with a thick technical document. Not surprisingly, few people will read a completed neighbourhood plan document.

Talking at people at a public meeting. Public meetings allow little time for each person to speak and can be dominated by a few forceful individuals and be confrontational, which can be intimidating for some. They are a poor means of obtaining community input.

Consultants producing options, before consulting anyone. It is poor practice to commission consultants to produce detailed options, before consulting the local community.

Publish and defend. This applies where completed or well-advanced documents are produced before any community engagement takes place.

Boring the people you need to engage. Public meetings, presentations comprising dense slides of text, and boring speakers should be avoided.

Assuming people lack knowledge. The fact that many planning issues are complex is all the more reason why there is a need to draw on the skills, knowledge and understanding of the wider community.

Leadership without consultation. Good leadership is rooted in listening and entering into dialogue. Only weak leaders think they need to instruct and to ignore the opinions of others.

Predetermined outcomes. There is no point wasting time and money on 'consultation' if there is no opportunity to influence what happens. Indeed, statutory consultation of this kind is unlawful.

Community engagement techniques

It is advisable to use a range of community engagement techniques. Different people respond to different approaches. A range of locations should be used for community engagement events, especially in larger neighbourhood areas. Different timings may also cater for people with diverse working patterns.

Some different techniques are as follows:

Workshops: Workshops can take many forms, but essentially they are interactive events where people can make their views known and discuss issues with other participants, often working in smaller groups. They do involve time commitments, but have the advantage of allowing participants to get more involved and for issues to be examined in detail.

Shop units or street stalls: These are a faster and less time consuming form of engagement, aimed at passing people. They need to be sited where there are strong pedestrian flows. They can include a range of ways of participating, from questionnaires to comment boards. It is useful to target local events, such as festivals or market days, which can attract larger numbers of people.





Questionnaires: These have the advantage of being low-cost and of potentially being circulated to large numbers of people. They can include paper-based and on-line versions. Analysing returned questionnaires can be very time-consuming and this needs to be taken into account in their design. Multiple-choice questions are relatively easy to analyse. However, there also needs to be scope for free expression. It is important also to ask open questions and to avoid loaded questions.

Model making: Getting local people to make three dimensional models or layouts of how their area could be developed is a creative and often engaging way of considering options and developing ideas for sites or areas. The outcome of such workshops could be to inform and illustrate briefs for key development sites.

Digital and social media: All neighbourhood plans should have a website and email address. The website may be used for reporting on progress, making available key evidence documents (such as technical reports), providing links to web-based engagement, publicising events, and providing feedback on outcomes of previous engagement activities. Social media is useful for publicising events and sometimes can be a platform for ‘live’ discussions, though this requires careful management.

School and college projects: It can be quite challenging to gain access to schools. An effective approach can be to work through teachers and identify opportunities to incorporate neighbourhood planning into existing lesson plans, e.g. debate, or art and drawing. For older age groups, pupils or students can be asked to design their own questions to engage their peers.

Pre-submission consultation

The Regulation 14 consultation

Neighbourhood planning regulations (Regulation 14) require the draft neighbourhood plan proposal to be the subject of a pre-submission consultation before it is submitted to the local authority for independent examination. The consultation should last at least 6 weeks. The neighbourhood planning body will need to approve the consultation draft of the plan and that the Regulation 14 consultation takes place.

Prior to the pre-submission consultation, it is sensible to discuss the draft plan with the local planning authority to check if there are any concerns over meeting the basic conditions. This would allow these to be addressed, prior to the consultation.

Pre-submission consultation requirements include publicising the draft plan to people who live, work or run businesses in the area. The publicity must include details of the proposed neighbourhood plan, where and when it may be viewed, and how to make comments on the plan and by what date. In addition, the plan must be sent to the local planning authority. Certain statutory bodies must be consulted, including the county council (if applicable), the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. The local planning authority should be asked to provide a list of contact details for the statutory consultees.

It is also advisable to consult any neighbouring local, town or parish councils, significant landowners, local businesses and local community organisations, such as chambers of commerce, civic societies and local trusts. Anyone on the neighbourhood plan database that has previously been involved should also be consulted.

Many people will not want to read through the whole document, so it is useful to produce a simple leaflet or display boards that set out the main aims and the focus of the policies in the plan. Drop-in centres may be a useful means of allowing people to ask questions or discuss the plan on a one-to-one basis. The draft plan proposal should be uploaded to the neighbourhood plan website. Printed copies should be made available at convenient locations, such as libraries, community centres, council offices and other key public buildings. Copies should be available to send to people who can't access a digital or displayed copy.

Considering representations and modifications

Any comments received by the end of the consultation period must be considered conscientiously by the neighbourhood planning body. All representations need to be considered, but it is legitimate for the neighbourhood plan body to take a different view. Indeed, different representations may demonstrate opposing views. A planning judgement needs to be taken.

A decision will need to be made over whether or not to amend the neighbourhood plan in response to each representation. The decisions on whether or not to amend the plan, and the reasoning behind them, should be recorded, as this information will need to be incorporated into the consultation statement (see later section on the consultation statement).

The neighbourhood planning body will need to agree the modifications and approve the resulting draft of the plan for submission to the local planning authority.

