

Newcastle East High Streets Project

Engagement Feedback

December 2022



Contents

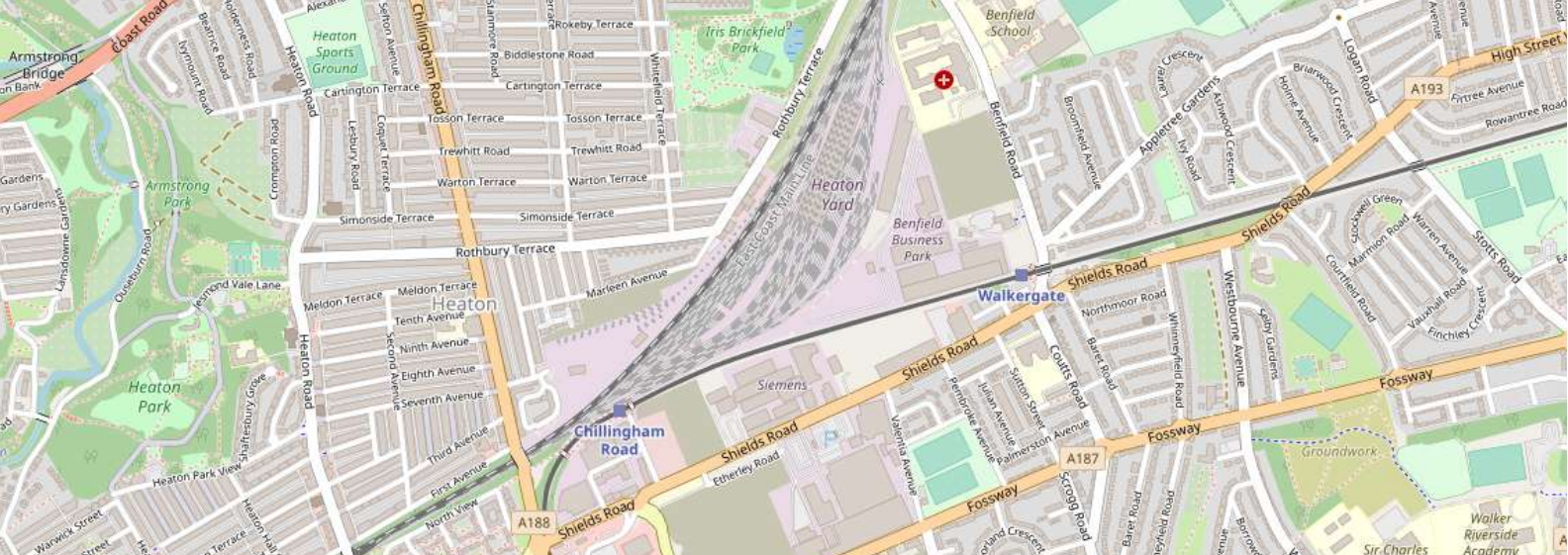
1-4	●	Introduction & Executive Summary
5-6	●	6 Key Messages
7-9	●	Engagement Methodology & Participants
10-14	●	Shields Road
15-19	●	Chillingham Road
20-22	●	Heaton Park Road
23-25	●	Heaton Road
26-28	●	Welbeck Road
29-30	●	Other East End Locations
31-32	●	Social Media Commentary

Appendices

33-37	<i>1: Participant Demographics</i>
38	<i>2: Photo Contributions Received</i>
39-41	<i>3: Thoughts on Recent Reports</i>

Introduction & Executive Summary





Newcastle City Council have secured £1.9m North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) funding to deliver a 2-year transformation programme to revitalise high streets in the east end of the city.

In addition to informing interventions in other parts of the city, this pilot will deliver changes on the ground to tackle issues around empty properties, poor quality public realm and connectivity, with a focus on Chillingham Road, Heaton Road, Heaton Park Road, Shields Road and part of Welbeck Road. Together with business support provision and grants to animate space and foster collaborative actions between residents, community groups and businesses, the project will develop a spatial and investment plan, co-produced with the local community.

This report presents the results of a community engagement exercise, undertaken by Newcastle City Council. Engagement ran from mid-August to the end of October 2022 and was designed to allow members of the public to have their say on the future of east end high streets (see overleaf for a description of each of the five high streets). This is the first stage in a three-part process of:

Engagement

Aug-Oct 22

Reaching out for input and ideas, inspiring and sharing best practice.

Consultation

Nov 22 - Mar 23

Developing the outline plan and launching the consultation on it.

Co-design & Implementation

Apr 23 - Jun 24

Consolidating foundation, co-designing, delivering “quick wins” and preparing for next phase.

The Five East End High Streets

Chillingham Road

Chillingham Road is located within the Heaton Ward and has a designated District Centre. The centre is linear in form, extending roughly 450m along the road. An assessment of the centre in October 2022 noted that there were approximately 90 units with a vacancy rate of around 8%.

Heaton Road

Heaton Road spans across both the Heaton and Ouseburn Wards and has a designated Local Centre. The centre is long and linear in form, extending roughly 750m along the road. An assessment of the centre in October 2022 noted that there were approximately 50 units with a vacancy rate of around 4%.

Heaton Park Road

Heaton Park Road is located within the Ouseburn Ward and does not have a designated centre under the current retail hierarchy. It has a parade of shops which is roughly 100m in length. An assessment of the street in October 2022 noted that there were approximately 25 units with a vacancy rate of around 13%.

Shields Road

Shields Road is located within the Byker Ward and has a designated District Centre. It is an expansive centre that primarily runs roughly 900m along the west end of the road while also encompassing the area between Shields Road and the A193 and the southern end of Heaton Park Road. An assessment of the centre in October 2022 noted that there were approximately 165 units with a vacancy rate of around 12%.

Welbeck Road

Welbeck Road spans across both the Byker and Walker Wards and has a designated Local Centre at the west end of the road. The centre is roughly 350m in length and predominantly linear in form, though it spreads outwards at the roundabout junction with Roman Avenue and St. Anthony's Road. An assessment of the centre in October 2022 noted that there were approximately 40 units with a vacancy rate of around 5%.

Overleaf, we see the location of the five high streets.

Location of the Five East End High Streets



Executive Summary

This report presents an analysis of first stage engagement feedback on the Newcastle East High Streets Project. This aimed to gather views and ideas about five high streets, with a focus on public space, how people get around, buildings and their use.

Engagement ran from mid-August to the end of October 2022, with **close to 1,000 online and face-to-face contributions** collected from across the east end and beyond. Participants tended to be women (61%), aged 25-44 (55%), White English/Welsh/Scottish/NI/British (86%), with no disability (77%) and living in the wards of Heaton, Ouseburn and Byker (65% in total).

Statistical findings should be regarded only as a *possible indication* of public opinion, rather than statistically representative - due to a number of important factors which are explained within this report.

A majority of contributors focused on one of five high streets - **Shields Road, Chillingham Road, Heaton Park Road, Heaton Road and Welbeck Road**, with **Shields Road** attracting the largest slice of comments. Four of these five locations (the exception being Heaton Road) attracted a majority of negative comments (with contributors feeling 'unhappy' or 'dissatisfied' about these locations/high streets).

This unhappiness/dissatisfaction was particularly evident in relation to both **Shields Road and Welbeck Road**, and slightly less evident in relation to both Chillingham Road and Heaton Park Road.

The current **quality and feel of public space** is consistently the main driver behind negative comments. Transport links (commonly translating as 'excessive traffic'), insufficient green space and a poor variety in terms of the current retail offer, often compound negative feelings.

However, whilst many contributors expressed concerns about what they saw as a clear and continuing deterioration in some east end high streets (again notably Shields Road and Welbeck Road), others were less critical. Across the **Heaton area**, there was a greater feeling of *some*, but not overly drastic change being needed.

In terms of actioning positive change, a need for **less traffic** appears as a TOP THREE environmental improvement in relation to four of the five areas, often sitting alongside an accompanying need for better walking space.

Increasing trees, green spaces and pocket parks is also a frequently suggested environmental improvement across the east end.

Encouraging small, independent shops, and particularly those selling **fresh food**, additionally proved popular across locations, as did **the provision of cinema, theatre, music, comedy clubs and other cultural opportunities.**

6 Key Messages



1

Consultation feedback is presented impartially and independently, providing a snapshot of views and ideas

Close to 1,000 contributions were collated and analysed objectively and accurately, to fairly represent the views of contributors, without agenda or preconception. We cannot say that these contributions are representative of all those connected to the east end, but nor are they intended to be. This is largely due to the self-selection of contributors and the ability of contributors to make multiple comments.

2

Of the five high streets, Shields Road is the most commented upon

Shields Road attracted the largest public commentary, with 80% of commentators raising issues or concerns. There is less positivity across older generations, among whom there is a comparison with better days gone by. Comments generally relate to concerns around retail provision, anti-social behaviour and the need for increased greening, decluttering, people friendly space and more small, independent shops selling fresh food.

3

The quality and feel of public space are one of the main reasons behind negative responses

Feelings of decline are felt to have moved people away from the high streets in the east end. There are a number of issues highlighted in relation to the environmental streetscape, including insufficient green space, appearance of empty properties and a lack of child friendly provision.

4 The volume and speed of motorised traffic is frequently mentioned

Traffic is regarded as heavy, polluting and not conducive to pedestrian safety, deterring people from seeing high streets as attractive destinations. Connectivity between the high streets and neighbourhoods, as well as the difficulty of using active travel to get around the area, are highlighted as problems. Less traffic appears as a top three environmental improvement in relation to four of the five high street areas, with better pavements and walking space requested, alongside safer crossings.

5 There is a desire to enhance and diversify the high street offer

There was felt to be a poor variety in terms of the current offer. Small independent shops including those selling fresh food, the provision of cultural opportunities, activities for older people, children and families were frequently requested.

6 There is a need for further engagement to address gaps identified in the report

From the feedback gathered, there is a clear need for further engagement regarding Welbeck Road, only 12 contributions were received, which accounts for just 2% of all Commonplace and face-to-face responses. There is also a need to extend engagement to underrepresented groups during the subsequent project phases. Further co-design and participatory work is planned to aid in the re-imagining of the future of high streets, help develop ideas and create positive change.

Read on for the detail behind these key findings...

Engagement Methodology & Participants

I USED TO
GET EVERYTHING AT
THE SHIELD

LL
MITY

I what happened
to department
store

'I would go to
Shield Rd now -
I used to go
all the time.'

'They need
revamping -
they need a good
clean. They need
more flowers,
and plants.'

'Everything was
there that I
needed now there's
nothing!'

'Shield road is
beyond repair.'

Shields Rd

'Used to be
the heart of
the community,
but not now.'

'If I was a
young person now,
I would never go.'

'Butchers, jam
grocers, veg & fruit
everything used to
be so fresh.'

Rd.
the
's there,
it'
salute mess
what

The engagement exercise encouraged people to leave their comments, thoughts and ideas on Newcastle's east end high streets, (and also two recent high street related reports - see Appendix 3) using a number of different methods and channels.

Commonplace - Online Engagement Platform

The Commonplace online engagement platform enabled people to view and comment on the east end's high streets by clicking on an interactive map, describing how they felt about the identified location, and leaving comments, suggestions and ideas for improvement, directly relating to that location and to the wider east end. A voice recording software feature, also enabled participants to leave a verbal comment. In addition, contributors could also upload or submit photographs - see Appendix 2.



Participants could also take the opportunity to agree with comments and sentiments left by others.



Locally Collected Feedback

Additional, face-to-face feedback was collected via participation at community events and walks organised by the project. These included:

- **Walker Workers Week x 2** (26th and 29th July 2022)
- **East End Library Information Sessions (including Summer Reading Challenge) x 3** (1st, 15th and 22nd August 2022)
- **Byker Launch Event** (24th August 2022)
- **East End Walk with Red Beard Tours x 2** (14th and 17th September 2022)
- **Building Futures East Community Event** (18th October 2022).

Two sessions as part of the Newcastle Arts Residency Programme 2022/23 also collected qualitative feedback. The artists are working in partnership with local community projects, retailers and Nexus, the operator of the Tyne and Wear Metro, to creatively explore and develop new ideas to help shape the future of Shields Road and Welbeck Road. The programme will complete at the end of March 2023, during which time further comments will be gathered by the artists to complement the findings of this report.

Direct Contact with the City Council

People could also email, write to or telephone the City Council with their thoughts.

Social Media Platforms

The project and engagement were also promoted [on the City Council's website](#) and social media channels - [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

The Quality and Reliability of the Data

Whilst the online survey was not designed independently, the data from it was presented to Eljay Research, who have analysed and reported on this independently of Newcastle City Council. This ensures a clear impartiality of consideration and presentation. Findings have thus been independently collated, analysed, detailed and summarised within this report. In considering the quality and reliability of the data collected, there are a number of salient points to bear in mind.

Firstly, the engagement exercise was self-selecting, and as such, the data should be regarded as a snap-shot of *possible* or *indicative* opinion on the east end's high streets rather than a robust, systematically sampled data-set. This self-selection *may* have resulted in a bias of participation by those with particular views or concerns, skewing the representativeness of participants in the context of the wider community.

Secondly, what is also uncertain, is the *degree* of statistical accuracy - particularly related to quoted percentages - in the context of not only this self-selection, but also in the absence of the demographic characteristics of many contributors *and* the demographic profile of the intended audience. As the survey was open to anyone with a connection to, or interest in the area, we are unable to quantify the *actual* demographic characteristics of this group, so we have no actual reference point from which to report on potential bias in the overall survey data.

Thirdly, it's also important to note that individual Commonplace contributors were able to make *multiple contributions* – *with* an individual's views potentially being expressed more than once during the engagement period. Of the 200 individuals who made Commonplace contributions, almost half (98) made just one comment. A further 91 made between 2 and 9 comments, whilst 11 people made between 10 and 41 comments. Contributors were also able to make *multiple agreements* with other comments. Most contributors (77%) chose not to make any agreements.

When interpreting the findings within this report, they should therefore be regarded as an *indicative, rather than robustly representative*, snap-shot of opinion.

To Note

- Grateful acknowledgements are extended to all participants for their valuable contributions.
- Where contributors indicated that they were '*happy*' or '*satisfied*' with an East End location these have been aggregated and reported as '*positive*'. Similarly, '*unhappy*' and '*dissatisfied*' feelings have been aggregated and reported as '*negative*'.
- Percentages have been rounded and may therefore not total exactly 100. Percentages have also been calculated excluding missing/declined responses. Many contributors chose not to provide demographic information, resulting in some analyses not being directly comparable.
- Participants have been quoted anonymously, to preserve confidentiality, and using their own words to preserve authenticity. Quoted comments have been used to provide 8 examples of common themes and feelings.

642 Commonplace Contributions



Of these, there were 335 comments and 307 agreements with these comments. This includes 1 voice recorded contribution.

200 *individuals* made an online contribution via Commonplace.

88 Locally Collected Contributions



Collected face-to-face at a number of sessions in the east end and as part of the Artist Residency Programme.

1 Email Contribution



Made directly to the City Council



251 Social Media Contributions



Made online by 151 *individual* commentators.

Appendix 1 of this report presents the demographic characteristics of participants who chose to provide this information.



Findings which should not be regarded as statistically representative



Intended as an indication of public opinion and of the key themes underpinning views

Shields Road



234

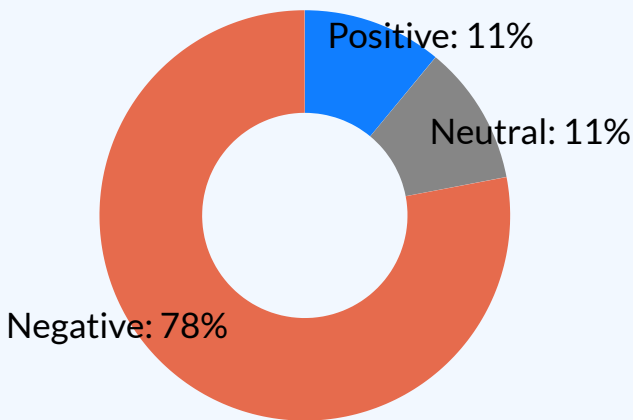
contributions were received about Shields Road

This figure accounted for just over a third (33%) of all Commonplace and face-to-face contributions - by far the highest proportion of all areas.

Those commenting on Shields Road tended to be residents of Byker, Ouseburn and Heaton wards - but with additional representation from residents of wards further afield. The main focus of their comments was the High Street itself, with a notable number of negative feelings directed towards it.

Overall Feelings About Shields Road

Overall Feelings About Shields Road



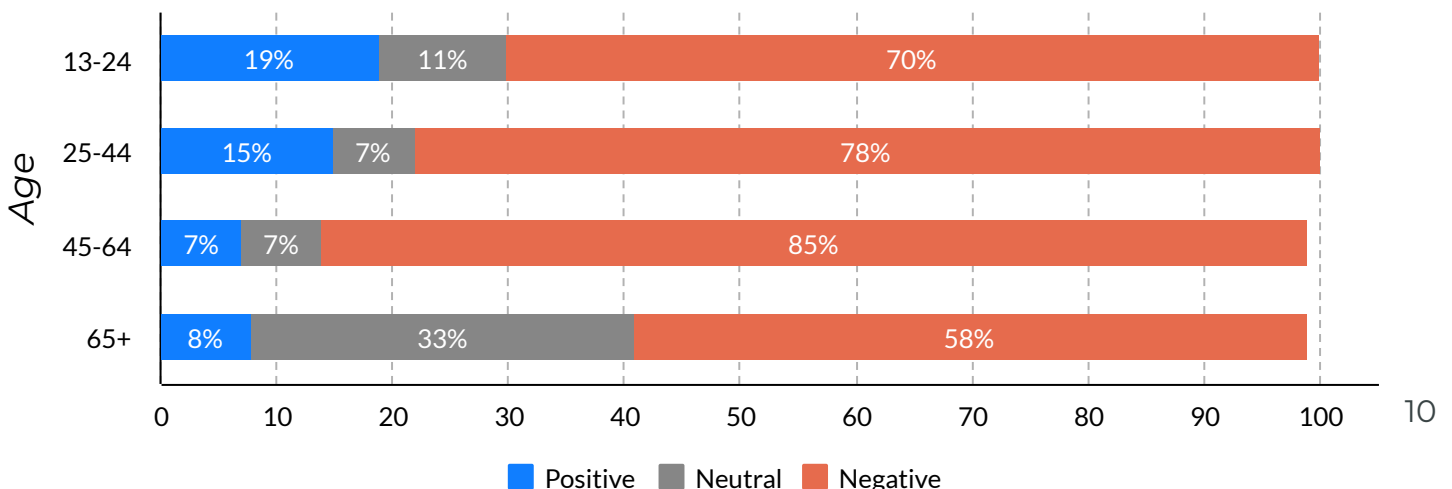
Just under 80% of contributions received about Shields Road were negative.

This compares with just 11% which were positive and 11% which were neutral in their sentiment.

How Overall Feelings About Shields Road Differ by Age

Negative feelings were evident across all age groups - though it's interesting to note that younger people (aged up to 44) were MORE POSITIVE in their views than those aged 45+.

Overall Feelings About Shields Road by Age






What Underpins Current Feelings About Shields Road?

Here we see the main reasons which underpin current positive and negative feelings about Shields Road.




CURRENT NEGATIVE FEELINGS about SHIELDS ROAD

MAIN THEMES (most frequent underlined)

Quality/feel of public space (61%)		Dirty, litter, dog fouling, closed buildings, illegal parking, beggars and lack of safety
Variety of retail (38%)		Lack of variety, too many charity shops and takeaways. Lack of small, independent shops
Green space (27%)		A general lack of green space in the vicinity
Public amenities/ buildings (27%)		Closed, derelict and rundown buildings
Transport links (17%)		<u>Excessive volume of traffic</u>, poor road layout, air pollution from traffic
Community activities (14%)		No detail given

CURRENT POSITIVE FEELINGS about SHIELDS ROAD

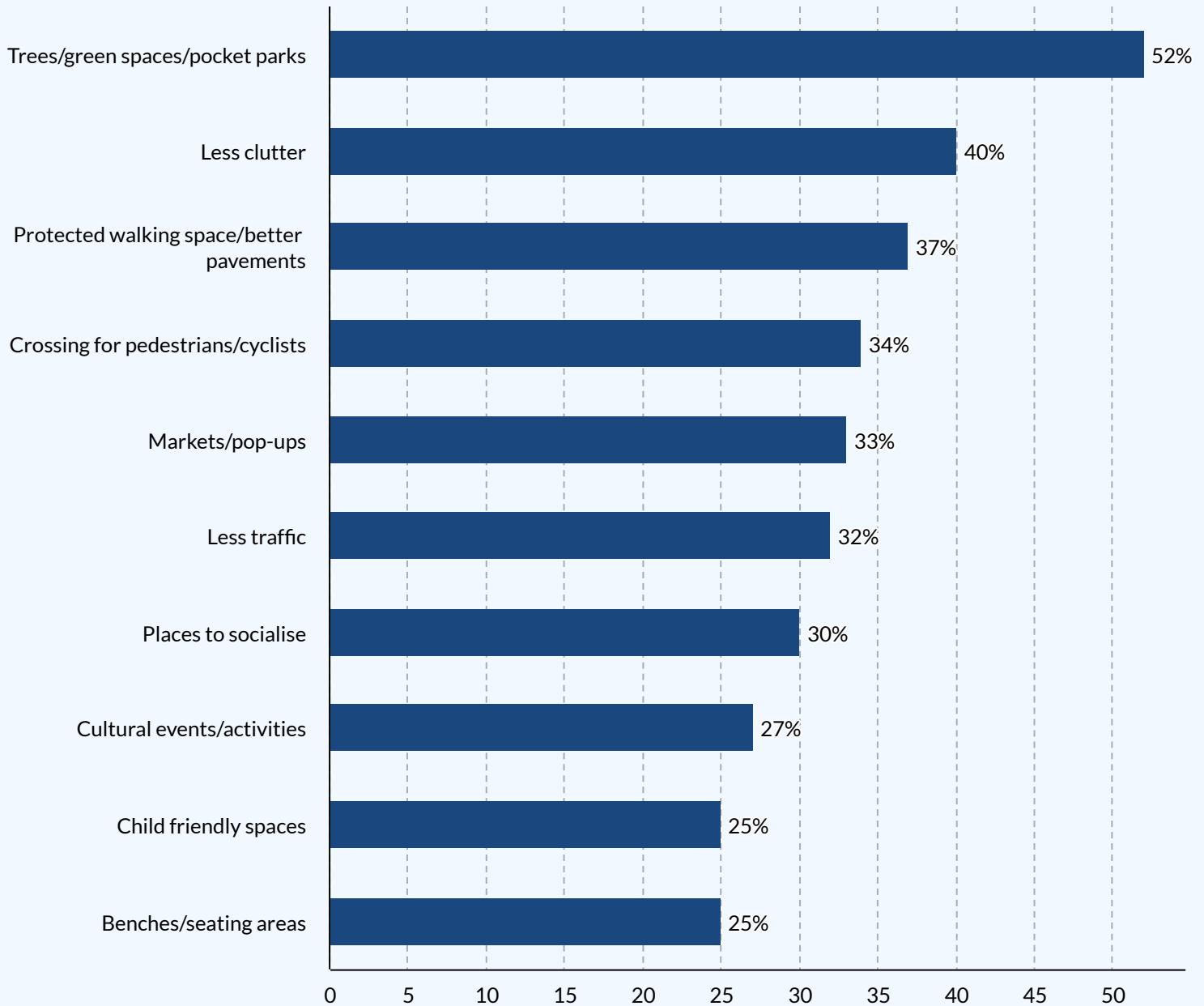
MAIN THEMES

Leisure facilities (6%)		Existing East End Pool & Library, gym, climbing wall and boxing gym
Variety of retail (6%)		A selection of shops selling everyday goods
Transport links (6%)		No detail given

Suggested Improvements to Shields Road

Here we see the **top 10** suggested improvements to Shields Road - with increased greenery (52%) leading the way, followed by a need to declutter (40%) and provide better walking space/pavements (37%).

Suggested Improvements



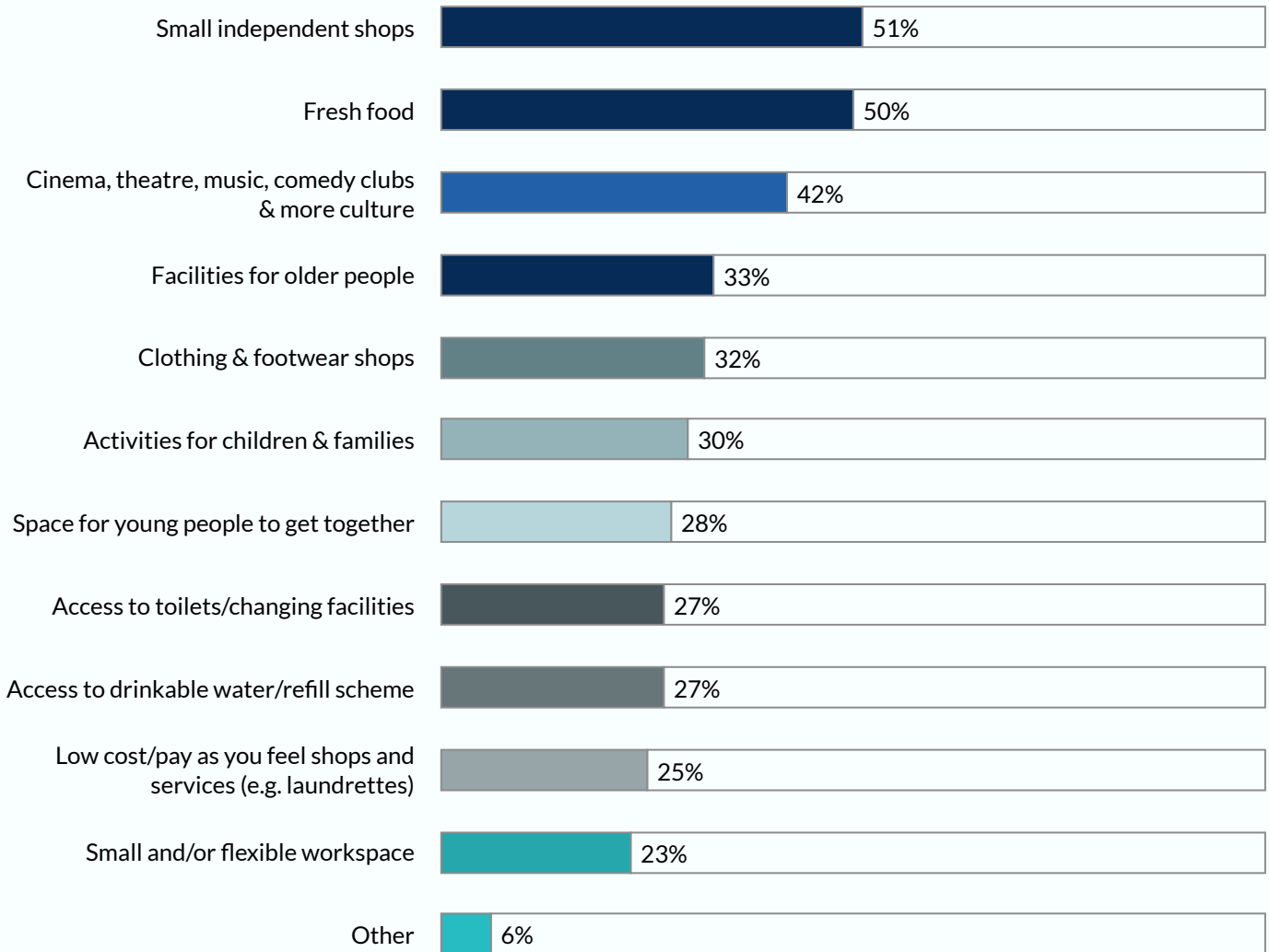
A number of additional comments highlighted a need to also:

- Clean and brighten shop fronts, removing graffiti
- Increase police/traffic warden/street warden patrols
- Tackle the problem of on-street drug users, beggars and alcoholics
- Provide fast access to service professionals - police, mental health, etc.
- Limit the number of pubs, charity shops, beauty salons
- Address the issue of empty buildings and retail units.

Enhancing the High Street Offer

Here we see the most frequently requested additions to Shields Road, with a clear emphasis on the provision of small independent shops (51%) and fresh food (50%), followed by cultural venues (42%).

Additions to Shields Road



A number of additional comments highlighted a need to also:

- Provide a wider retail experience - with butchers, greengrocers, health food, a post office, clothing shops, etc.
- Provide communal gardens, pocket parks, vegetable growing spaces and planters
- Site colourful litter bins
- Provide more and wider pedestrian crossings and dropped kerbs
- Increase seating areas
- Provide educational activities for teenagers
- Offer soft play facilities
- Introduce traffic calming measures
- Improve street lighting
- Pedestrianise Shields Road
- Improve cycling provision, with secure parking and designated spaces.

Thoughts on Shields Road

A selection of participant comments - including some collected as part of the Artist Residency Programme:

"The area would be vastly improved through green spaces, as there's very little on the high street itself".



"I think Shields Road is reet canny place in a lot of ways. But the place needs investment and encouragement for local, low-cost businesses for the people of Byker, Shieldfield and Walker to use and enjoy. I'd like to see more community enterprises, greengrocers, low-cost bakeries, community art projects and youth projects that are run and led by local people".



"I very rarely go to Shields Road unless I have to. There are too many homeless people, druggies and alcoholics".



"As a Byker resident who is very engaged with the community, I find it so frustrating to see so many long-term empty retail units. Local organisations could put those to good use, as drop-in cafe spaces or food cooperatives".



"It's intimidating, not just at night but during the day".



"The pavements need de-cluttering, especially where railings should be removed! The pavements are narrow and the railings make it feel like a prison or a battery hen cage".





Chillingham Road

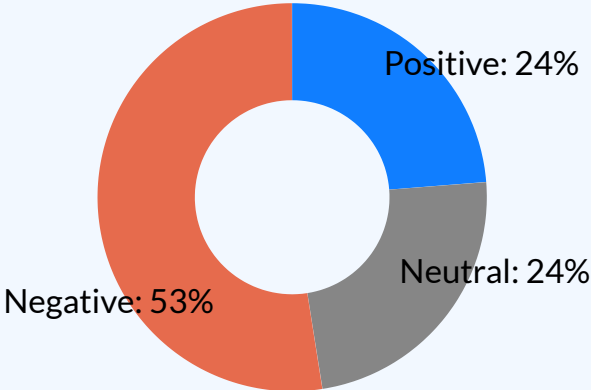
146

contributions were received about Chillingham Road

This figure accounted for just over 20% of all Commonplace and face-to-face contributions - the second highest proportion of all areas. Those commenting on Chillingham Road tended to be residents of Heaton ward - but with some representation from residents of wards further afield. The main focus of their comments was the High Street itself, with a notable number of negative feelings about it.

Overall Feelings About Chillingham Road

Overall Feelings About Chillingham Road



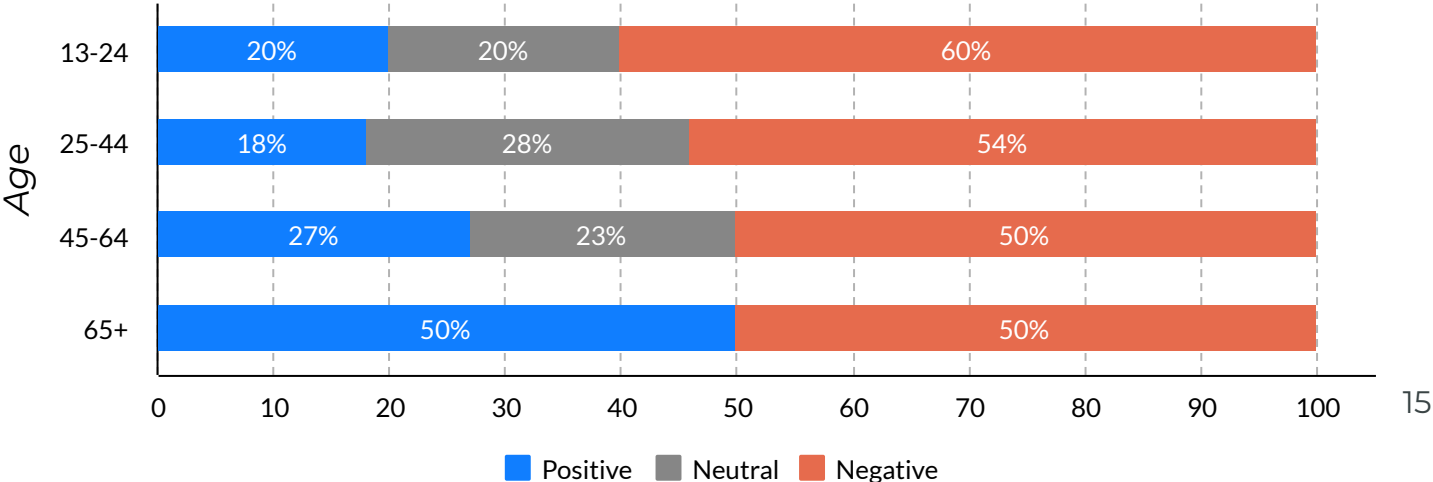
Just over half (53%) of contributions received about Chillingham Road were negative.

This compares with 24% positive feelings and 24% which were neutral in their sentiment.

How Overall Feelings About Chillingham Road Differ by Age

Broadly speaking, older participants (aged 65+) were more positive than younger participants about Chillingham Road. However, note a large slice of negative feelings evident across ALL age groups.

Overall Feelings About Chillingham Road by Age



What Underpins Current Feelings About Chillingham Road?

Here we see the main reasons which underpin current positive and negative feelings about Chillingham Road.

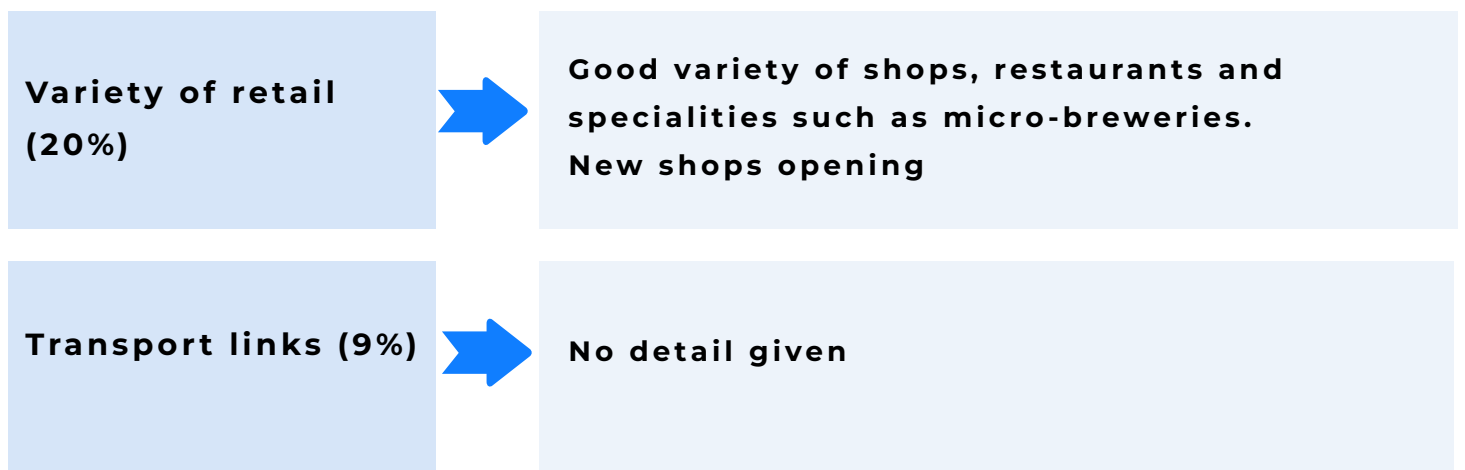
CURRENT NEGATIVE FEELINGS about CHILLINGHAM ROAD

MAIN THEMES (most frequent underlined)



CURRENT POSITIVE FEELINGS about CHILLINGHAM ROAD

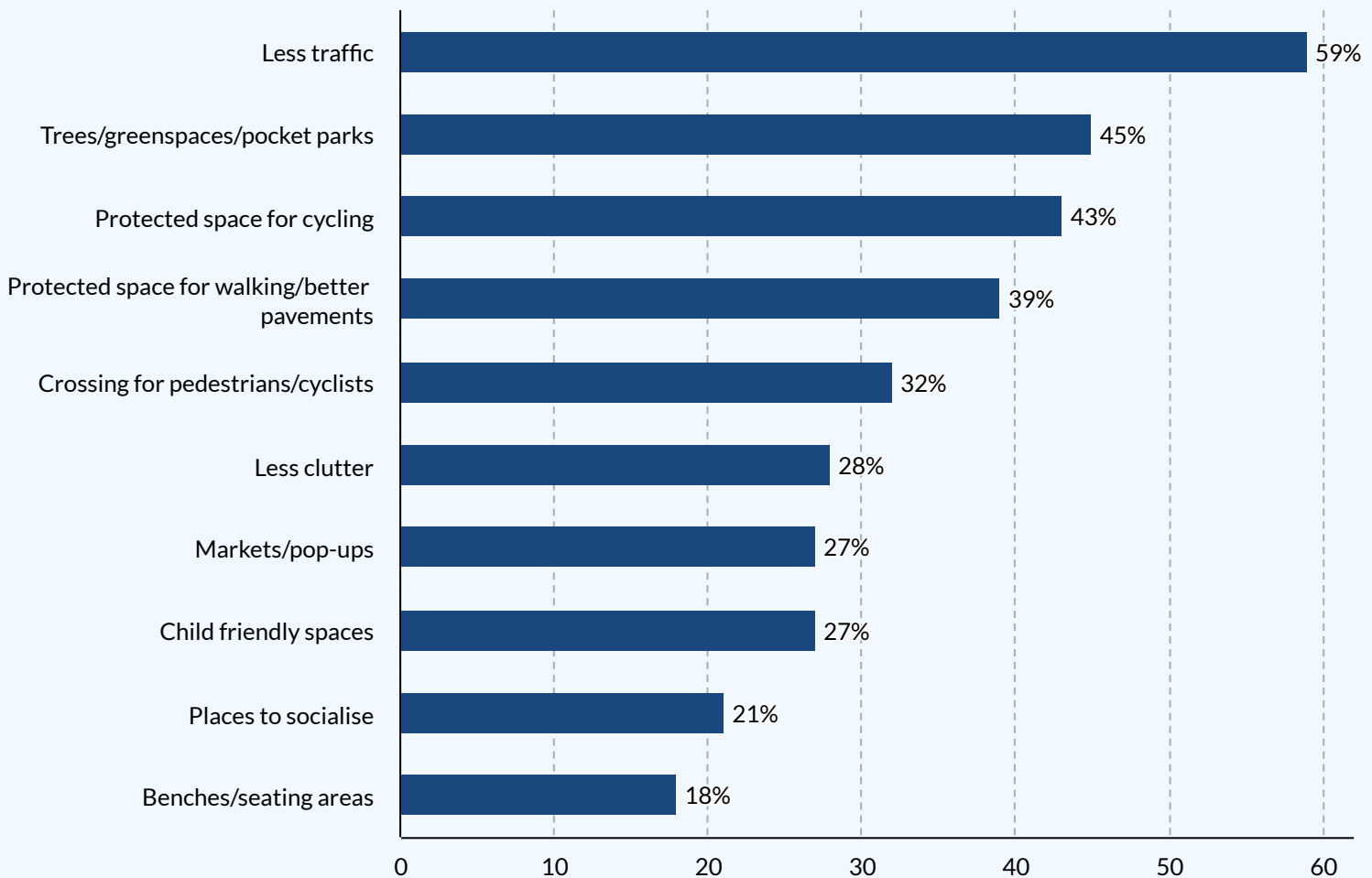
MAIN THEMES



Suggested Improvements to Chillingham Road

Here we see the **top 10** suggested improvements to Chillingham Road - with less traffic (59%) leading the way, followed by increased greenery (45%) and protected space for cycling (43%).

Suggested Improvements



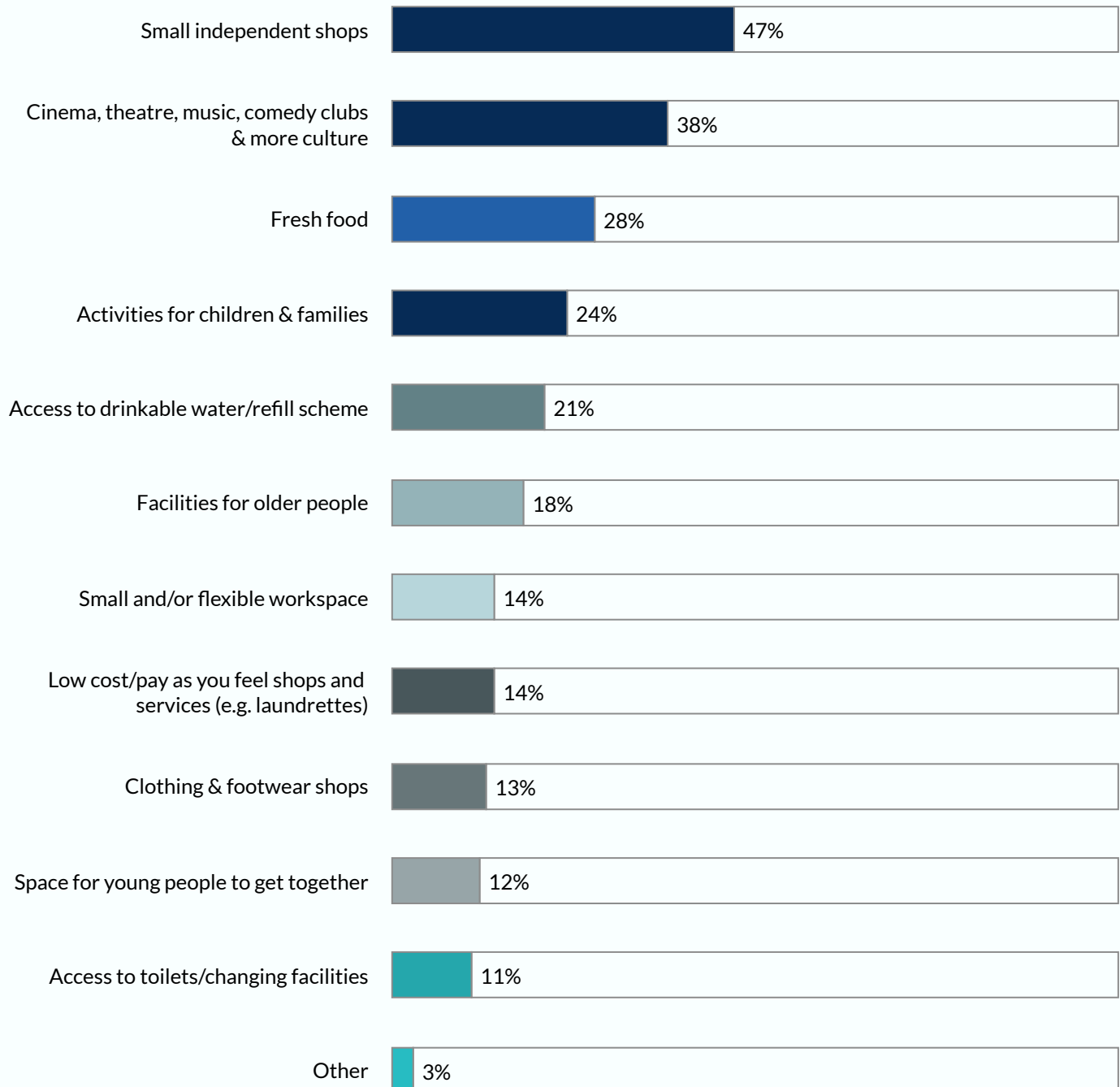
A number of additional comments highlighted a perceived need to also:

- Cap housing rents and have fewer student lettings
- Encourage a low traffic neighbourhood
- Limit vehicle access to side streets and introduce traffic calming measures
- Introduce complete pedestrianisation
- Green the back lanes
- Limit the number of homeless/bail hostels in the area
- Regulate and improve on-street parking
- Provide additional CCTV
- Repair existing street furniture
- Widen pavements
- Provide more support for small businesses
- Further support and prioritise cycling
- Provide additional pedestrian crossings
- Enforce fines for littering
- Limit the number of charity shops and takeaways/opening hours.

Enhancing the High Street Offer

Here we see the most frequently requested additions to Chillingham Road, with a clear emphasis on the provision of small independent shops (47%), followed by more cultural venues (38%) and fresh food (28%).

Additions to Chillingham Road



A number of additional comments highlighted a perceived need to also:

- Provide a wider retail range - including bakers and a sweet shop
- Provide more public spaces
- Increase seating provision
- Site recycling bins
- Increase greenery and well-maintained planters
- Provide access to drinking water.

Thoughts on Chillingham Road

A selection of typical participant comments included:

"We need extensive tree planting in the area to soften up the high street and to block noise. All side streets should be blocked with planting, like they have done on the quayside".



"The volume of traffic needs to be reviewed here with a push towards more sustainable infrastructure, with protected cycling links integrated within the current pedestrian facilities".



"Remove barriers that block some side streets to allow better traffic flow and easier access around Heaton".



"There are far too many takeaways. It needs a wider variety of shops, clothing, shoes, a bakers, a decent sweet shop and a bargain food store, etc. More things for little children and older people".



"The traffic on Chillingham Road is an issue, but not sure how that can be addressed. It would be better if the side streets/back lanes were closed to traffic so you could walk down them safely with children".



"Change the feel of the road so it feels more like a destination rather than a through-route. We need more crossings, preferably zebra, for pedestrians, to enable them to access the businesses they want without walking half-way down the street and then waiting a couple of minutes for a green light".



Heaton Park Road



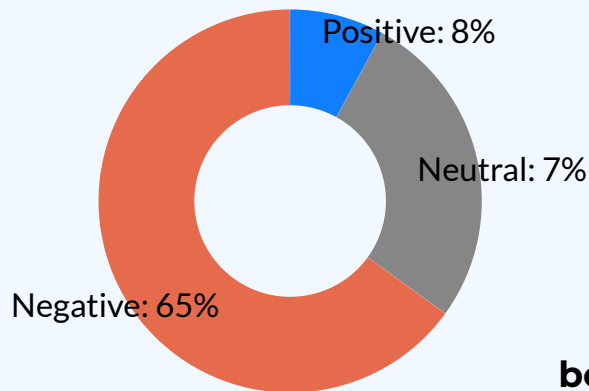
92

contributions were received about Heaton Park Road

This figure accounted for 13% of all Commonplace and face-to-face contributions. Those commenting on Heaton Park Road tended to be residents of Ouseburn and Heaton wards - with some representation from residents further afield. The main focus of their comments was on getting around this area and the High Street itself, with a notable level of negative feelings directed towards both.

Overall Feelings About Heaton Park Road

Overall Feelings About Heaton Park Road



Almost two-thirds (65%) of contributions received about Heaton Park Road were negative.

This notably compares with just 8% positive feelings and 27% which were neutral in their sentiment.

Negative feelings were equally evident across **both of the age groups** commenting on Heaton Park Road (25-44 and 45-64).

What Underpins Current Feelings About Heaton Park Road?

Here we see the main reasons which underpin current negative feelings about Heaton Park Road.

CURRENT NEGATIVE FEELINGS about HEATON PARK ROAD

MAIN THEMES (most frequent underlined)

Quality/feel of public space (54%)



Litter, noise, pavement parking, badly maintained pavements

Transport links (13%)



Unsafe cycling due to cars, lack of cycling route links, speeding traffic, lack of safe pedestrian crossings

Green space (11%)

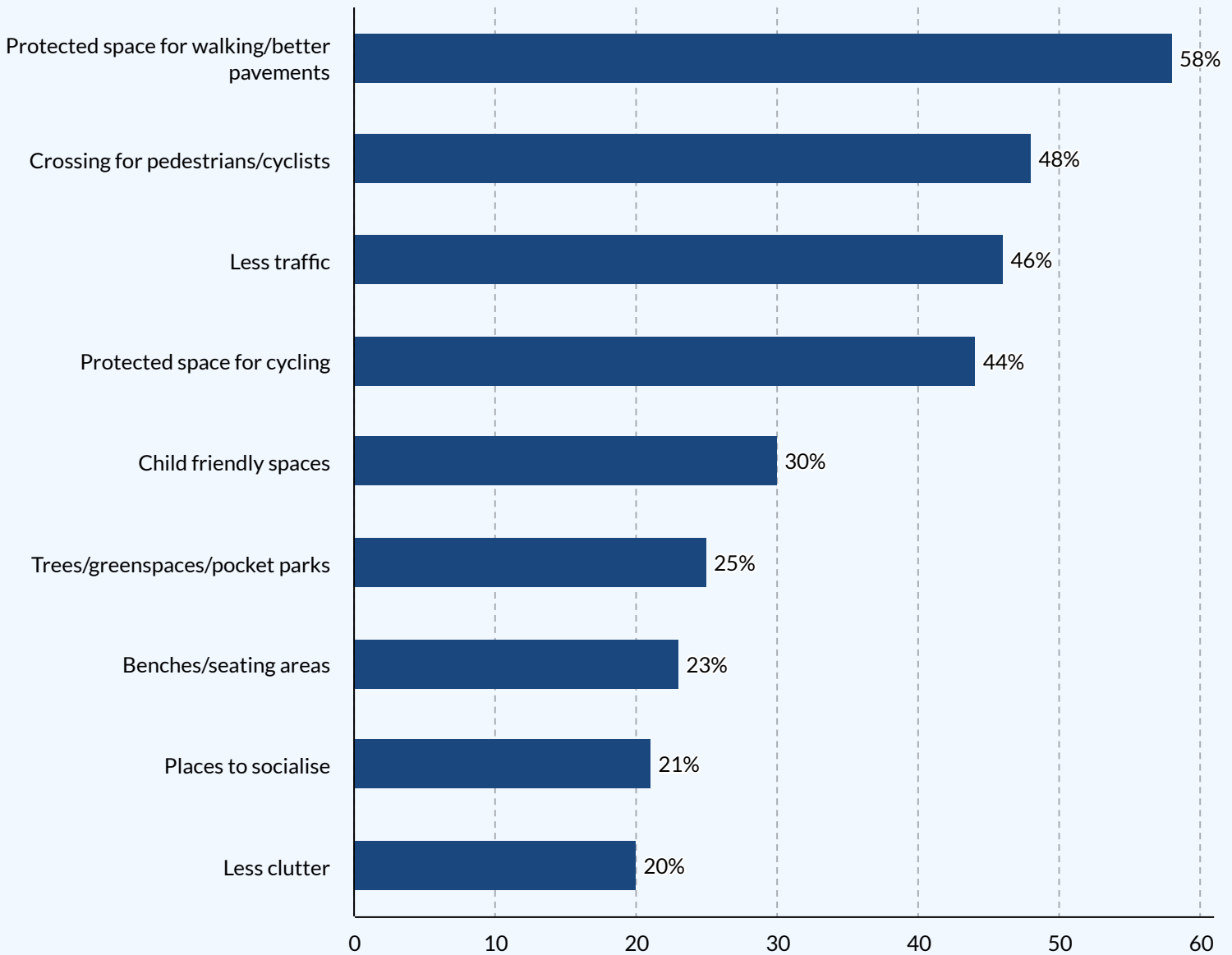


Park needs improvement, road needs more trees and planters

Suggested Improvements to Heaton Park Road

Here we see the **top 9** suggested improvements to Heaton Park Road - with protected space for walking/better pavements (58%) leading the way, crossing for pedestrians and cyclists (48%) and less traffic (46%).

Suggested Improvements



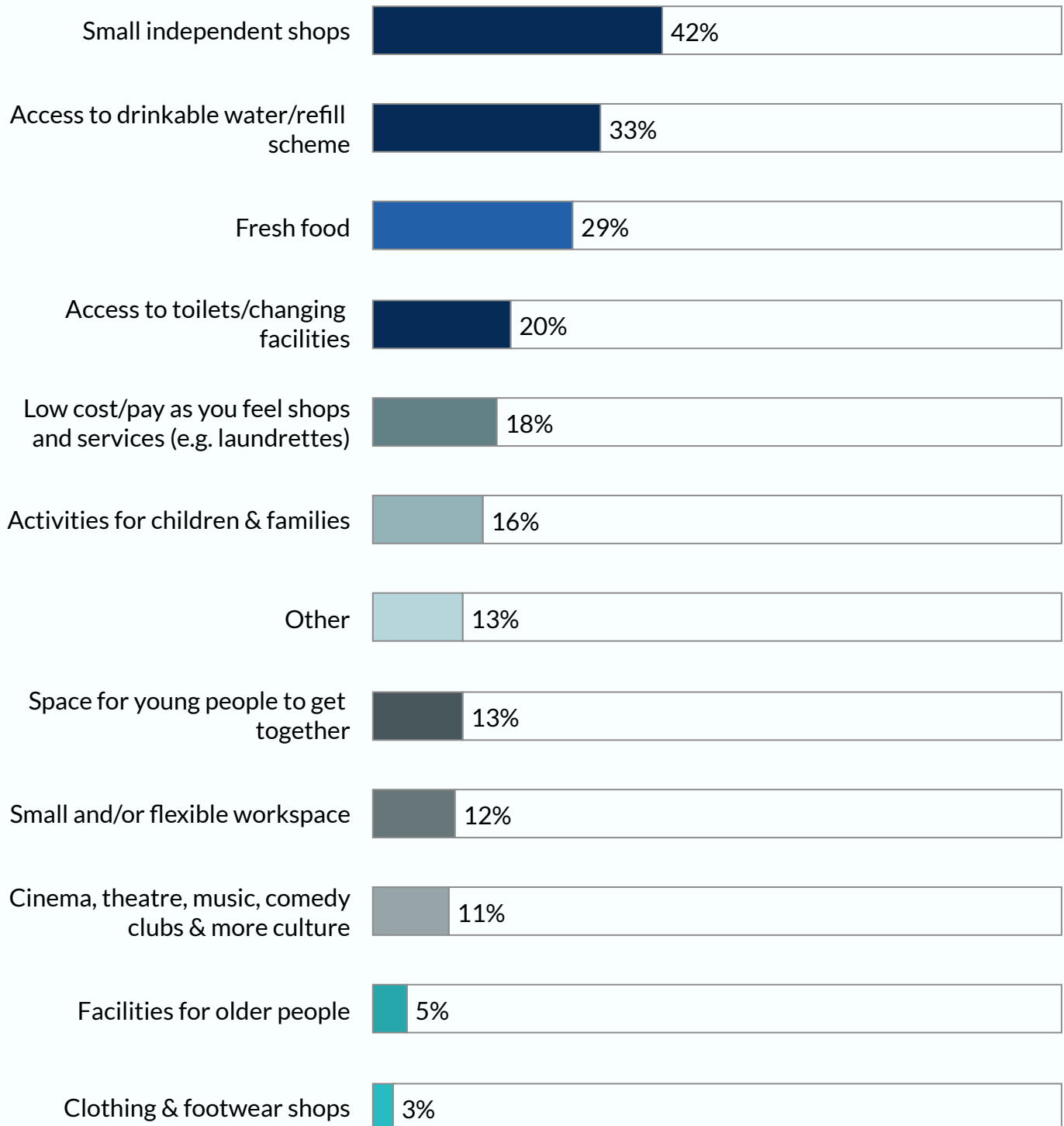
A small number of additional comments highlighted a perceived need to also:

- Introduce traffic calming measures
- Encourage low traffic neighbourhoods
- Improve bus shelters
- Take police action against anti-social behaviour
- Improve cycle lane markings
- Prioritise cycling and walking
- Regulate parking
- Clean back lanes
- Link to Byker
- Regulate noise pollution.

Enhancing the High Street Offer

Here we see the most frequently requested additions to Heaton Park Road, with a clear emphasis on the provision of small independent shops (42%), followed by access to drinkable water/refill scheme (33%) and fresh food (29%).

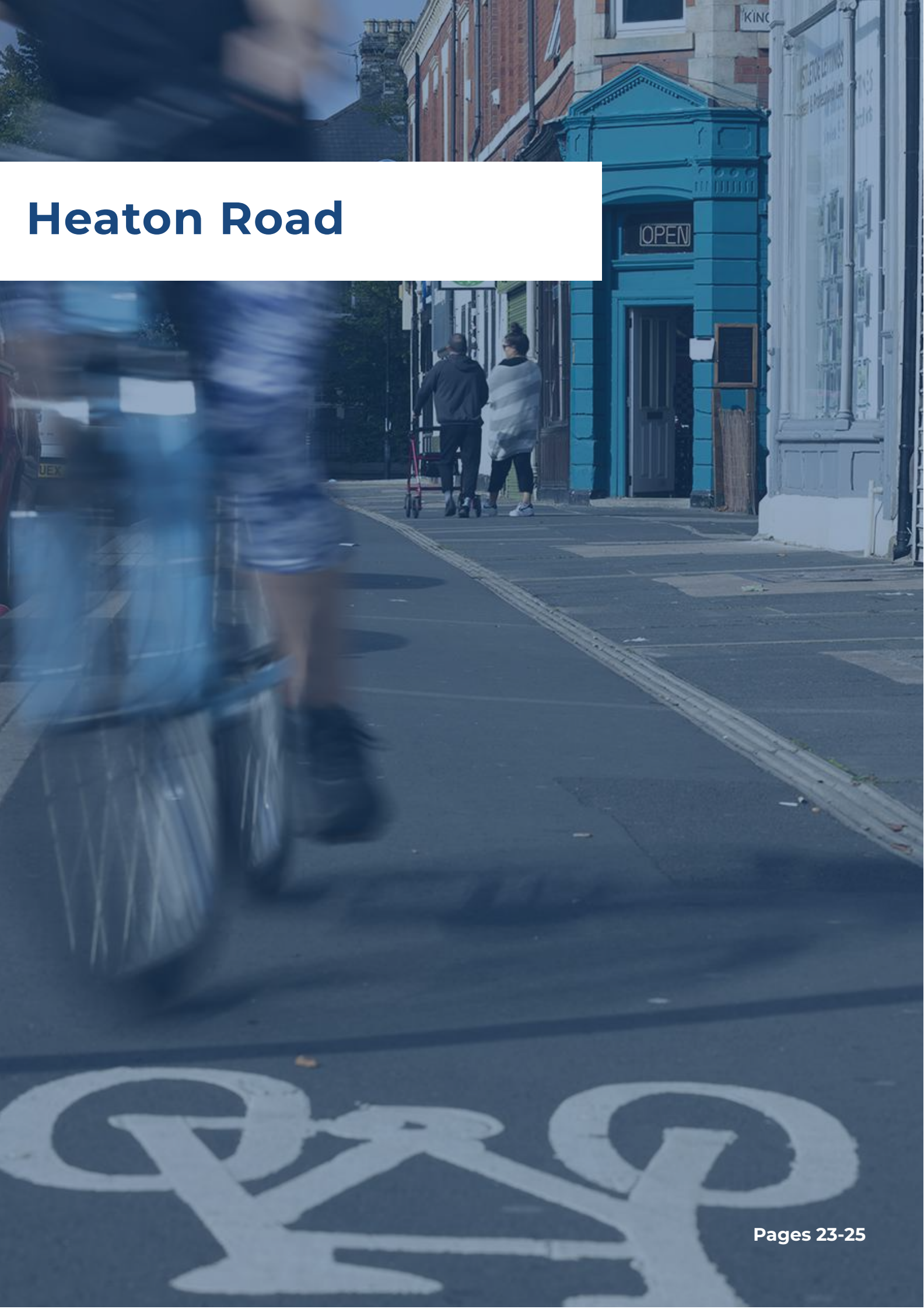
Additions to Heaton Park Road



A small number of additional comments highlighted a perceived need to also:

- Provide more litter bins
- Provide more planters.

Heaton Road



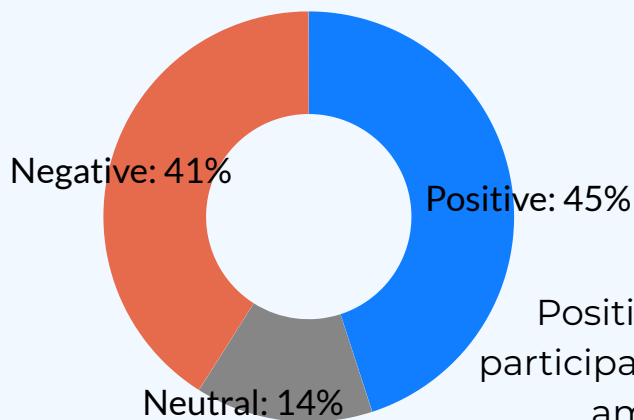
73

contributions were received about Heaton Road

This figure accounted for 10% of all Commonplace and face-to-face contributions. Those commenting about Heaton Road tended to be residents of Heaton and Ouseburn wards. The main focus of their comments was the High Street itself, together with getting around, with positive and negative feelings directed towards both.

Overall Feelings About Heaton Road

Overall Feelings About Heaton Road



There were very mixed feelings about Heaton Road.

45% of contributions were positive feelings, alongside 41% which were negative and 14% which were neutral.

Positive feelings peaked among the youngest participants aged 25-44 (51%) and was notably lower among the older 45+ age groups (26%).

What Underpins Current Feelings About Heaton Road?

Here we see the main reasons which underpin current positive and negative feelings about Heaton Road.

CURRENT **NEGATIVE** AND **POSITIVE** FEELINGS about HEATON ROAD

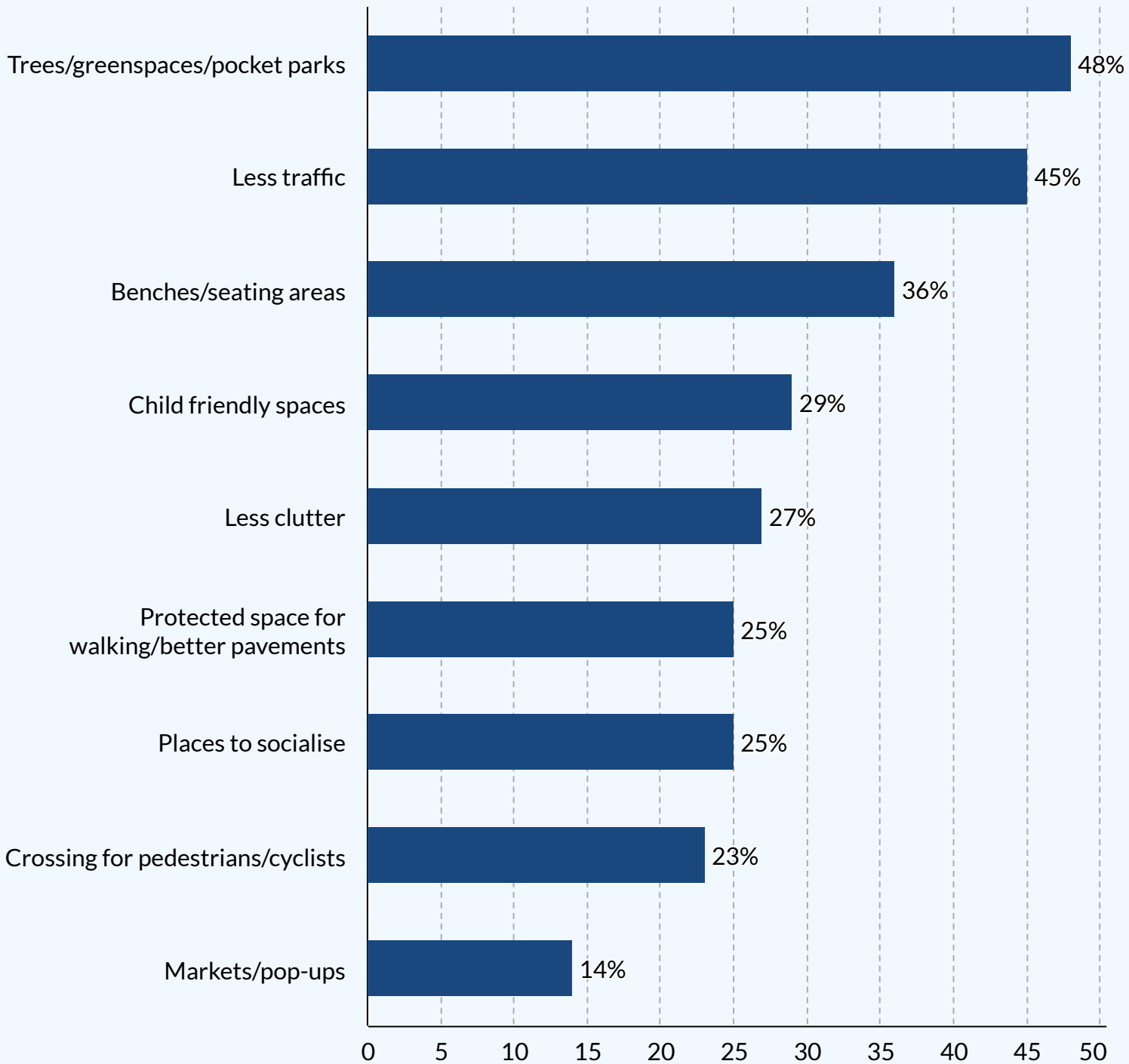
MAIN THEMES (most frequent underlined)

Quality/feel of public space (27%)	➔	Litter, <u>pavement parking</u> , tardy pavement repairs, dog fouling
Variety of retail (27%)	➔	Good variety of restaurants, food stores, independent shops
Quality/feel of public space (26%)	➔	Attractive streetscape, safe pavements, cycle lane

Suggested Improvements to Heaton Road

Here we see the **top 9** suggested improvements to Heaton Road - with increased greenery leading the way (48%), together with less traffic (45%), followed by the provision of benches/seating areas (36%).

Suggested Improvements



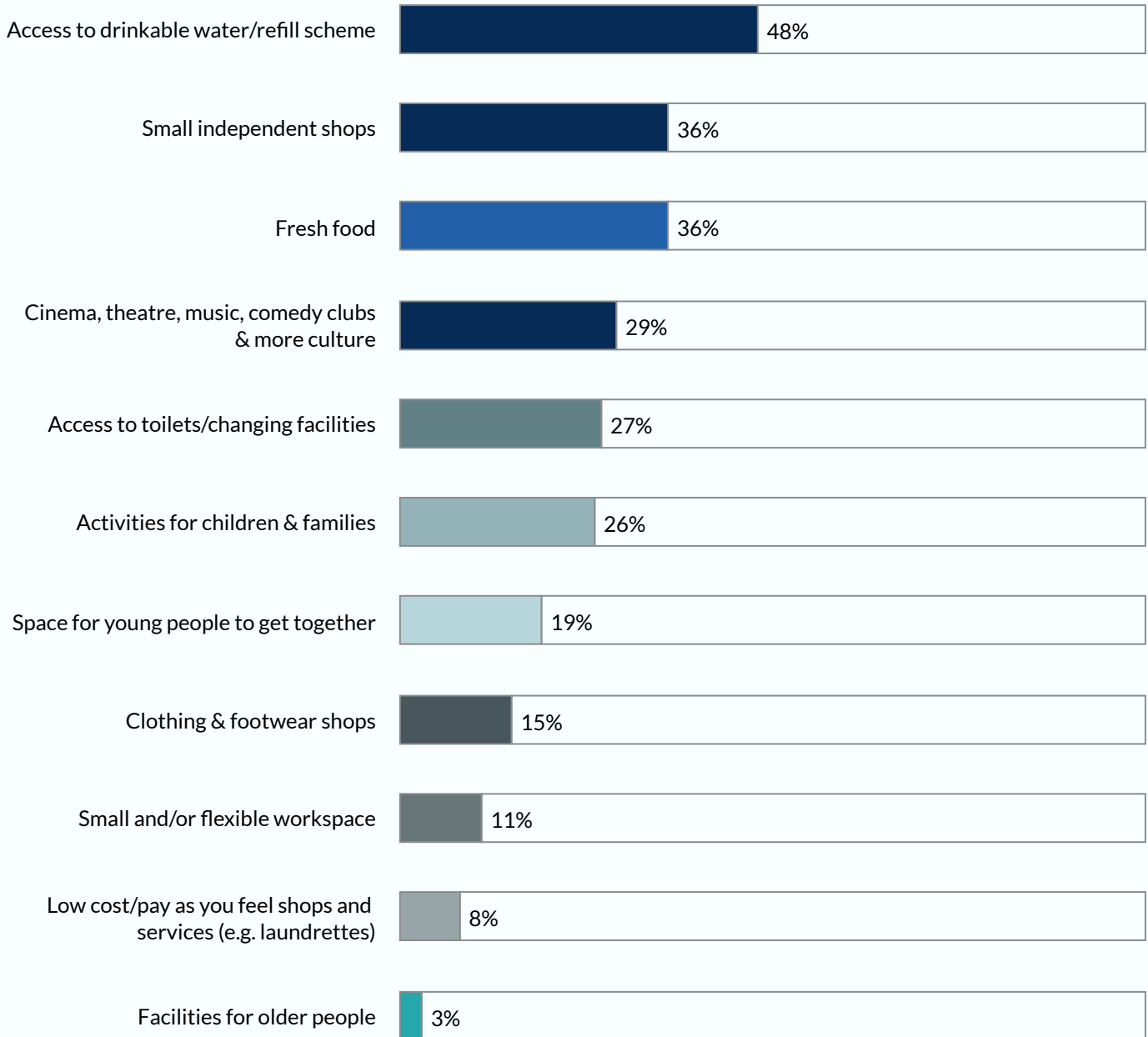
A small number of additional comments highlighted a need to also:

- Encourage improved cyclist behaviour
- Tidy and revamp shop fronts
- Re-open empty units
- Clean up graffiti.

Enhancing the High Street Offer

Here we see the most frequently requested additions to Heaton Road, with a clear emphasis on access to drinkable water/refill scheme (48%), followed by small independent shops (36%) and fresh food (36%).

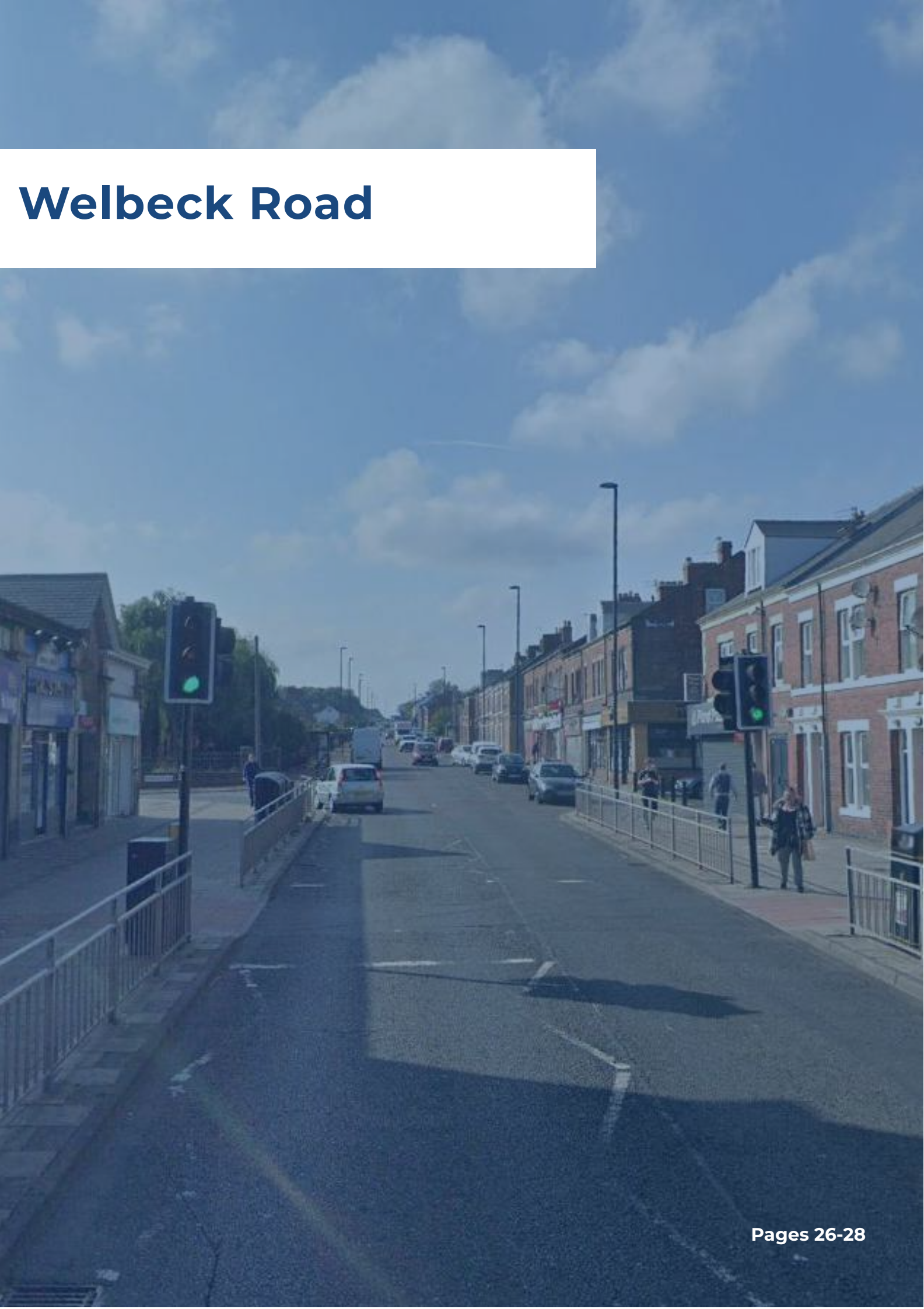
Additions to Heaton Road



A small number of additional comments highlighted a need to also:

- Provide cultural and community spaces and events and activities for young people
- Increase greenery and planters
- Provide more seating
- Provide additional pedestrian crossings
- Create public spaces/squares
- Provide additional parking spaces.

Welbeck Road



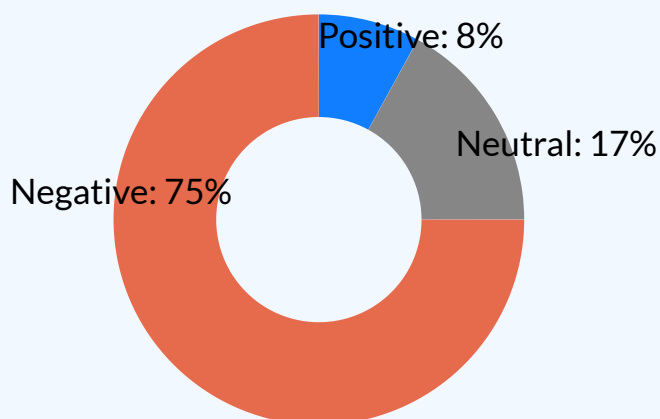
12

contributions were received about Welbeck Road

This figure accounted for just 2% of all Commonplace and face-to-face contributions. Engagement as part of the Artist Residency Programme will help to gather further views and ideas. The main focus of comments was the High Street itself, with a notable level of negative feelings directed towards this.

Overall Feelings About Welbeck Road

Overall Feelings About Welbeck Road



Three-quarters of all contributions about Welbeck Road were negative.

In contrast, just 8% of contributions were positive feelings, alongside 17% which were neutral.

What Underpins Current Feelings About Welbeck Road?

Here we see the main reasons which underpin negative feelings about Welbeck Road.

CURRENT NEGATIVE FEELINGS about WELBECK ROAD

Quality/feel of public space (50%)

Variety of retail (50%)

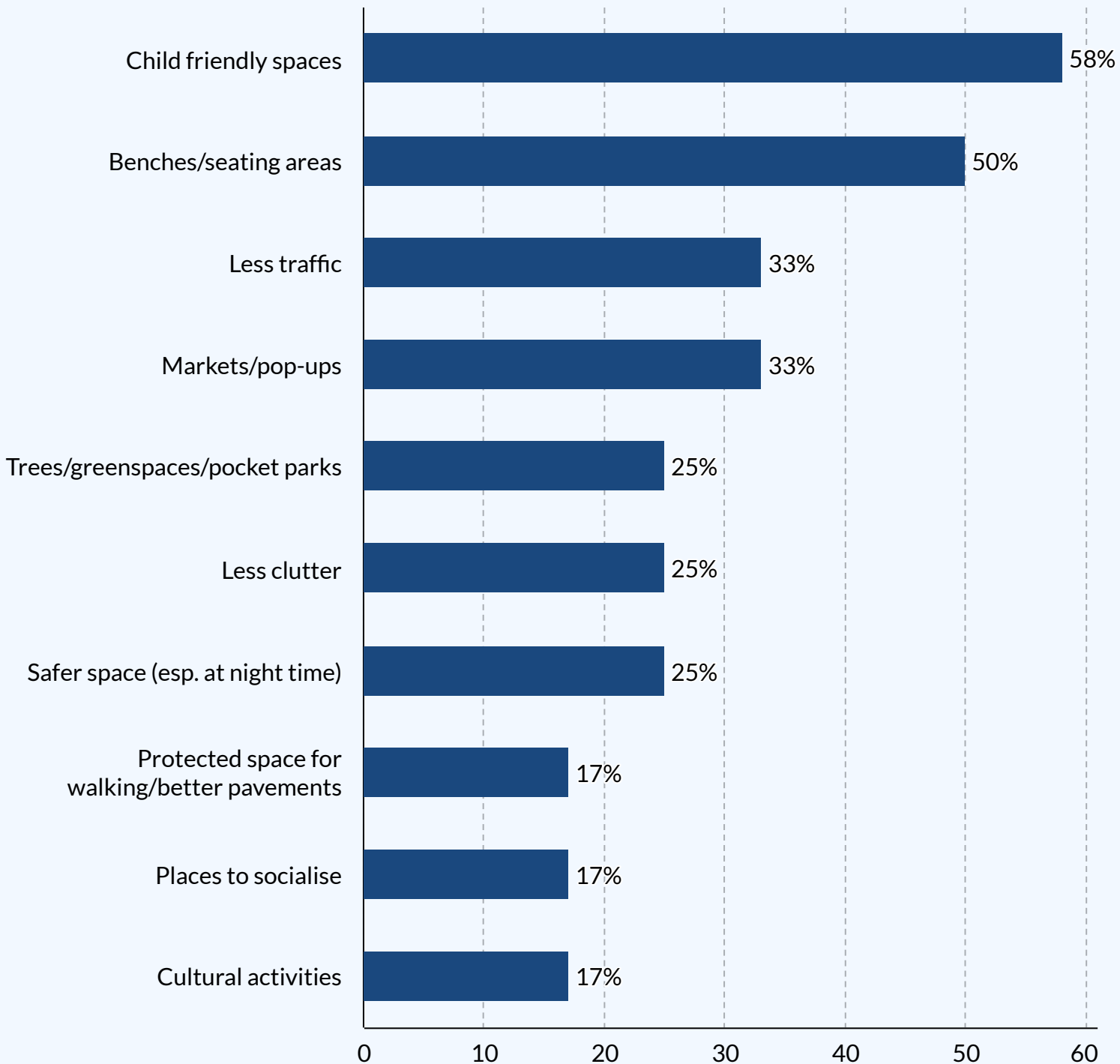
Green space/public amenities/leisure facilities (all 25%)

Few open comments - just 5 - were received about Welbeck Road. These - together with comments collected as part of the Artist Residency Programme - detailed comments about a previously thriving shopping area which is now seen as rundown, old and unloved.

Suggested Improvements to Welbeck Road

Here we see the **top 10** suggested improvements to Welbeck Road - with child friendly spaces (58%) leading the way, followed by the provision of benches/seating areas (50%), less traffic (33%) and markets/pop-ups (33%).

Suggested Improvements



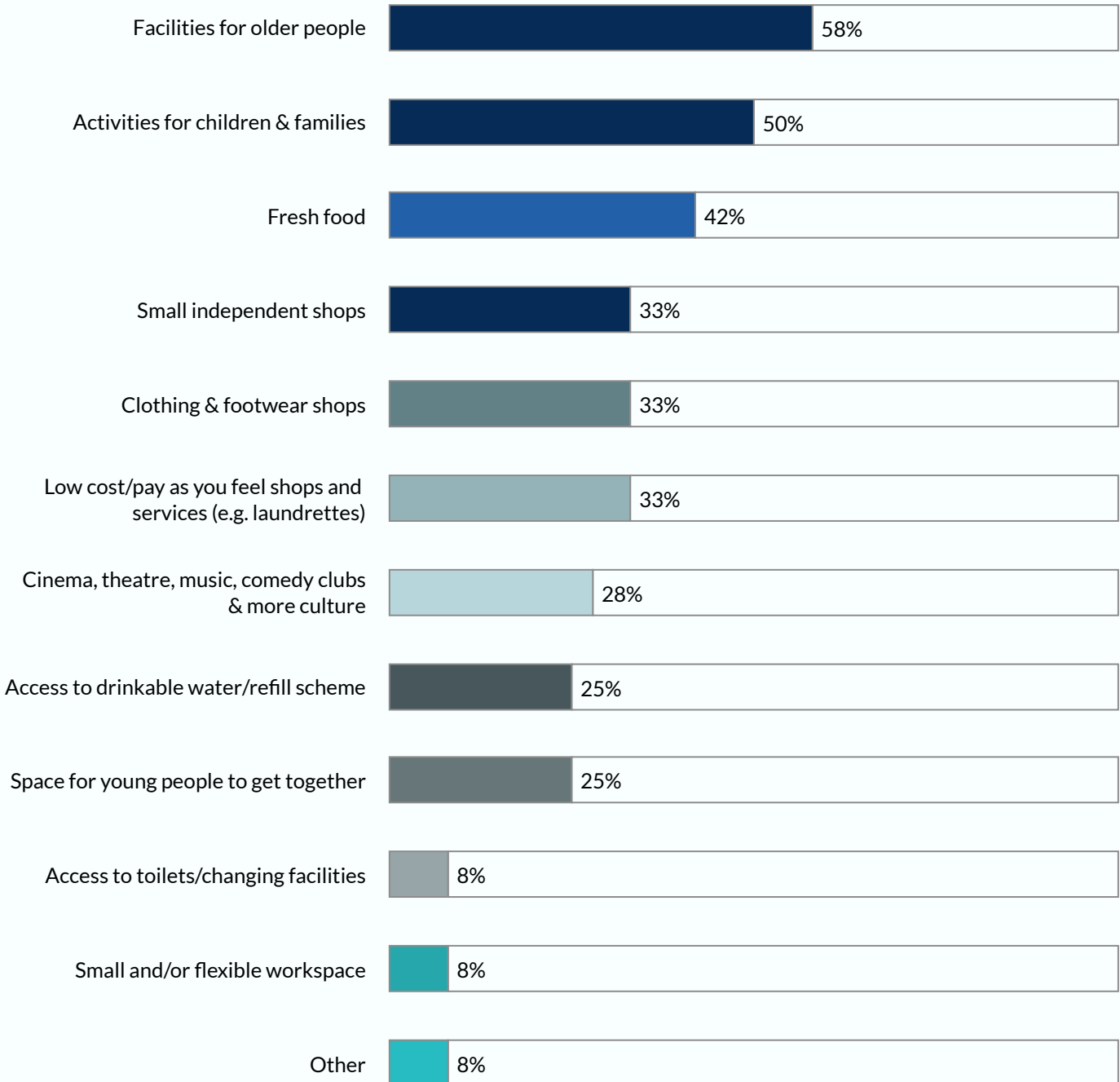
A small number of additional comments highlighted a perceived need to also:

- Improve the pavements
- Limit the number of betting shops
- Increase police patrols
- Improve the retail offer.

Enhancing the High Street Offer

Here we see the most frequently requested additions to Welbeck Road, with a clear emphasis on facilities for older people (58%) and activities for children and families (50%), followed by fresh food (42%).

Additions to Welbeck Road



A small number of additional comments highlighted a perceived need to also:

- Provide better housing
- Provide greener meeting spaces
- Limit the number of betting shops
- Increase parking provision
- Increase traffic lights
- Develop a cultural hub.

Other East End Locations



118

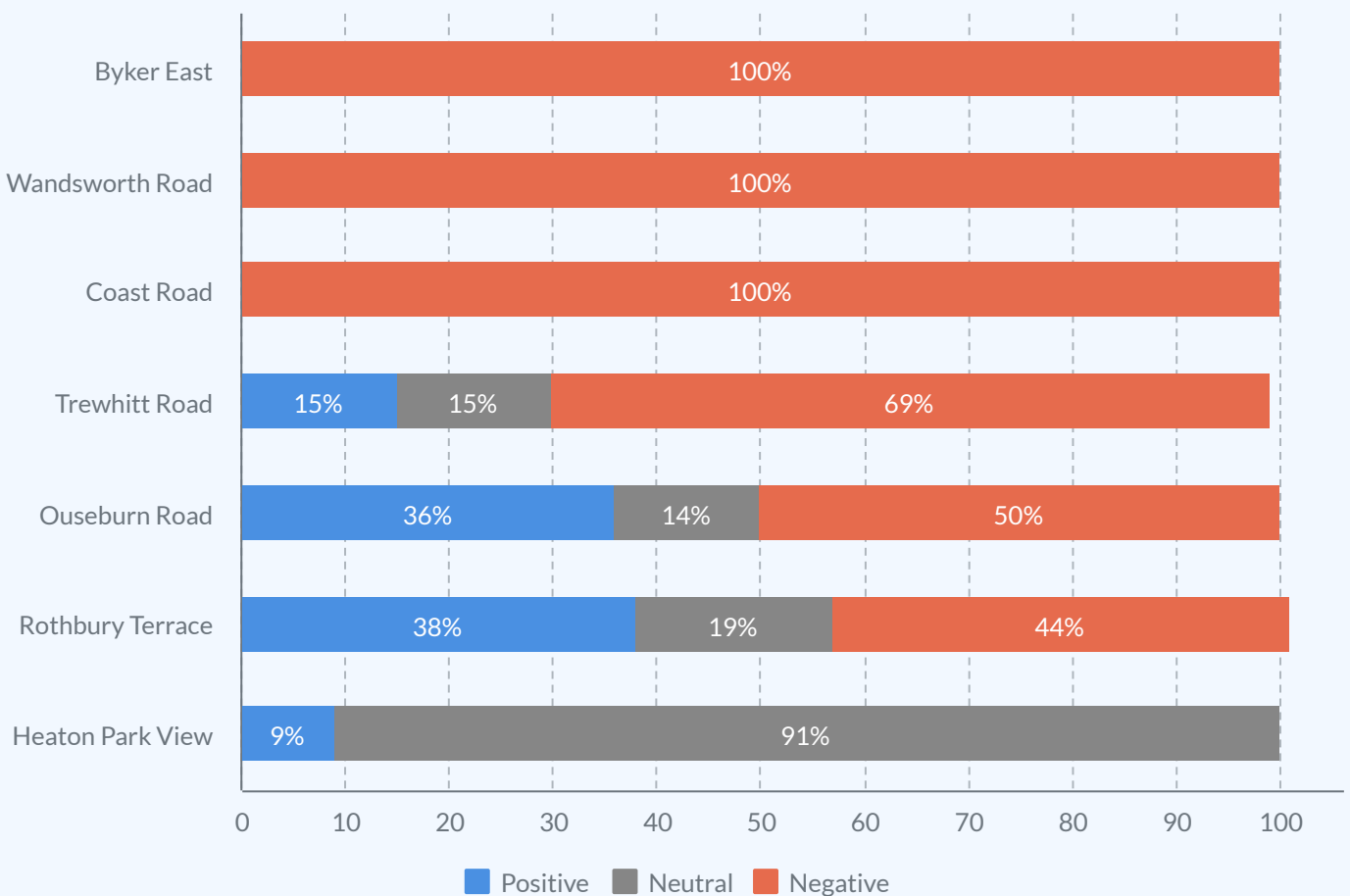
contributions were received about other East End Locations

These contributions were made about locations across the length and breadth of the east end. Here, we take a look at the main sentiments and themes to emerge from the seven locations which received more than 10 contributions - the highest receiving 16.

Overall Feelings About Other East End Locations

Note some significant levels of negative feelings related to these locations - but bear in mind that these are compiled from very small numbers of contributions (between just 11 and 16).

Overall Feelings About Other East End Locations



What Underpins Current Feelings About Other East End Locations?

Here, we see the main reasons which underpin negative feelings about each location - with a clear focus on transport-related concerns.

Byker East

Transport link concerns that the roundabout is difficult to navigate by either a pedestrian or cyclist, creating a barrier between Shields Road and Byker Old Town.

Wandsworth Road

Transport link concerns that this is supposedly a cycle route but is a car-dominated environment. Excessive parking on corners and double yellow lines - exacerbated by on-street parking for local shops - makes it difficult to cross.

Coast Road

Safety and traffic concerns that the underpass feels unsafe, while traffic at this location runs red lights. Suggestions for ANPR cameras to prevent this, whilst junctions should be re-designed to prioritise pedestrians.

Trewhitt Road

Transport concerns that this road is excessively busy and should be blocked off at the access to Chillingham Road due to loading, parking and speeding traffic. Suggestions that local residents should be given priority over commuters and businesses.

Ouseburn Road

Opposing points of view that rat-run traffic should be tackled/prevented on this road, preventing speeding, increasing road safety for pedestrians and resurfacing the road. Others feel that that the road is a legitimate route for cars, with an absence of accidents.

Rothbury Terrace

Traffic concerns about pavement parking, speeding traffic, littered back lanes and anti-social behaviour.

Heaton Park View

Considered to be a useful cycle route, but with some traffic light modifications needed and greater emphasis on sturdy bike racks and cleaner back lanes in this area.

Social Media Commentary

Social Networks



Facebook



Instagram



Twitter



Google+



Pinterest



Tumblr



LinkedIn



WhatsApp



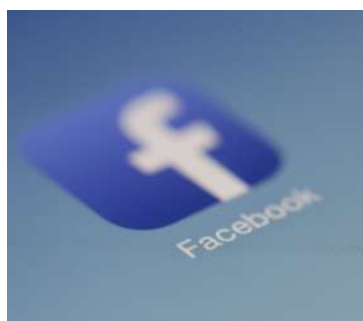
Messenger

During the engagement period, a number of social media posts were made by Newcastle City Council on their Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages.

These posts drew 251 relevant comments, posted by 151 commentators.

This analysis does not, and cannot, record every comment made about the project via social media, but rather provides a useful snapshot of opinion.

Here we see the main themes to emerge from this commentary:



Social Media Thoughts

A selection of typical participant comments included:

"All in the east of the City? Perhaps you should use that money to improve the City Centre, which is a dump these days, or spread it more evenly across the City!"



"Most local shops on Shields Road are closed down now. There is literally zero motivation for any new business to open there. New food takeaways are the only thing that you see open".



"I'm originally from that area and was shocked when I visited last year. Any improvement will be welcomed by all".



"Get all the streets cleaned up... they are absolutely disgusting. That would be a start".



"You could start by increasing police foot patrols to help with the drink/drug and anti-social behaviour problem on Shields Road".



"The west end needs help more!"



Appendix 1: Participant Demographics

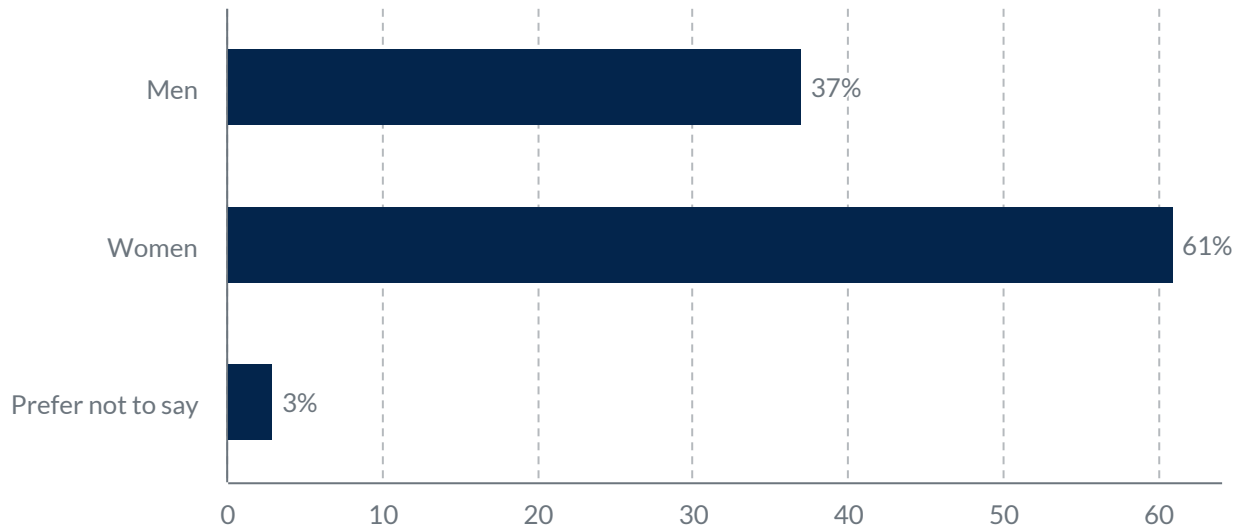


Among Commonplace and face-to-face contributors, a wide spread of demographic characteristics were evident. Let's take a look at those...

The Gender Identity of Participants

Significantly more women (61%) than men (37%) participated in the engagement.

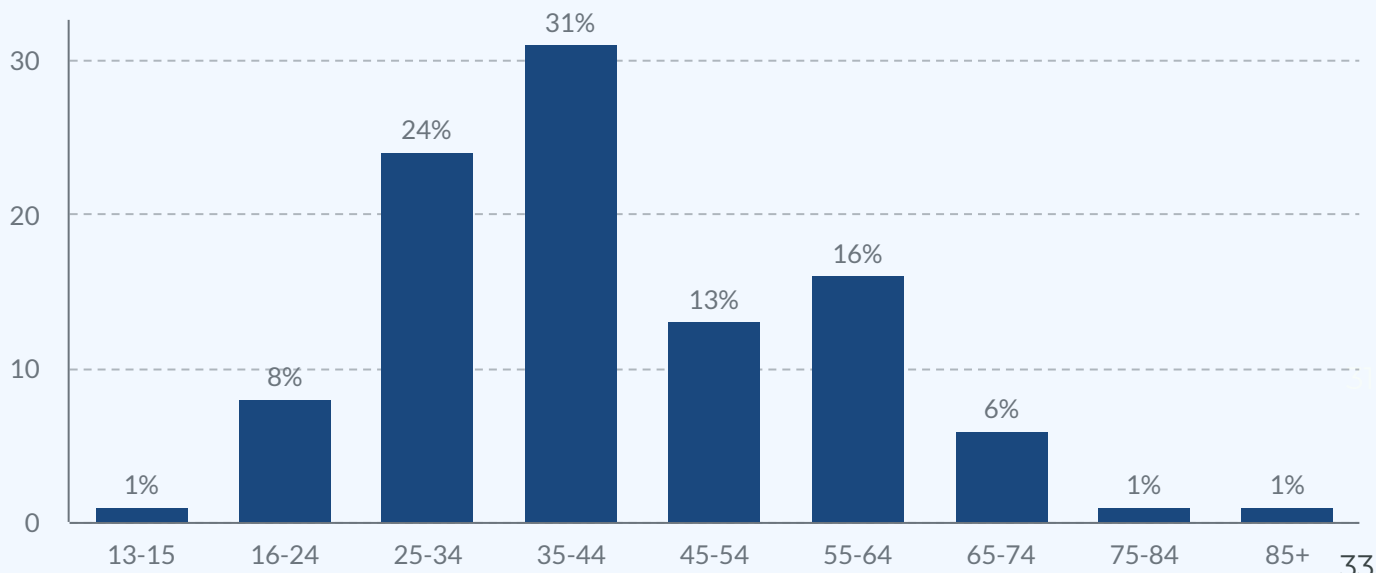
Gender Identity of Participants



Age of Participants

Participants were typically aged 25-44, with 55% within this age range.

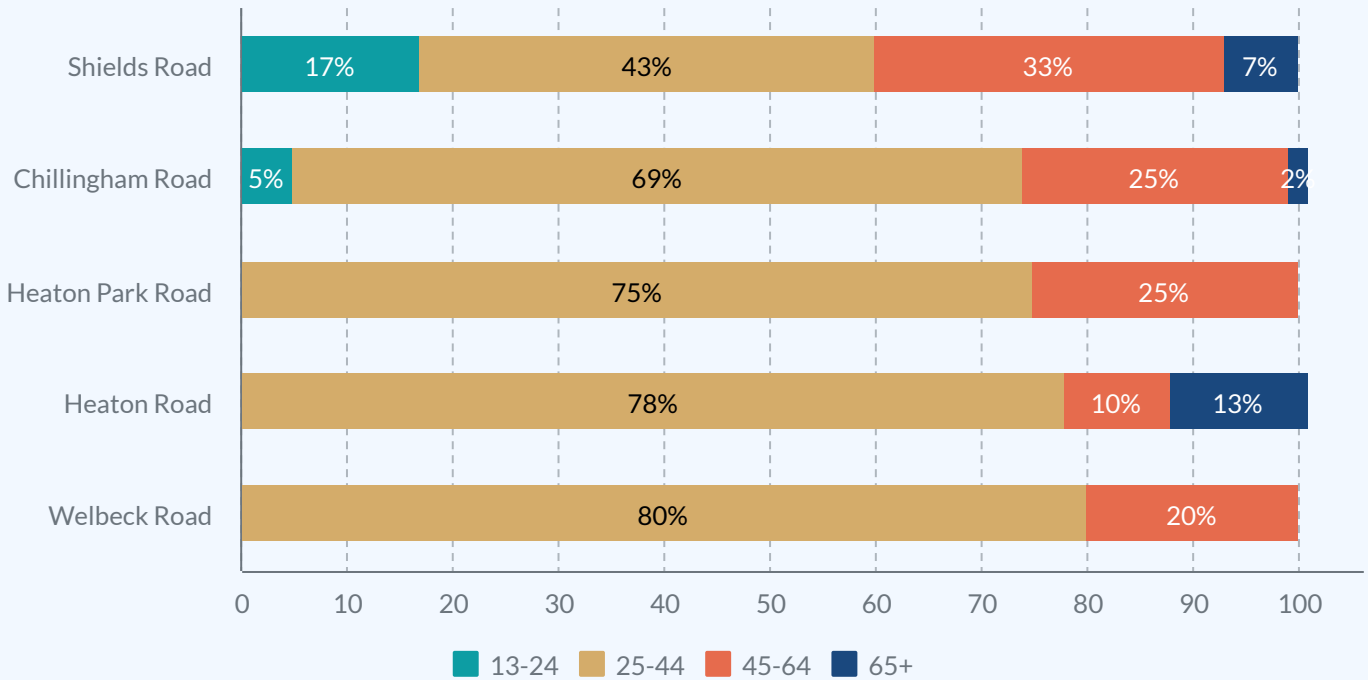
Age of Participants



Age of Participants by Location Commented On

We can also take a look at the age of participants according to which location they were commenting on.

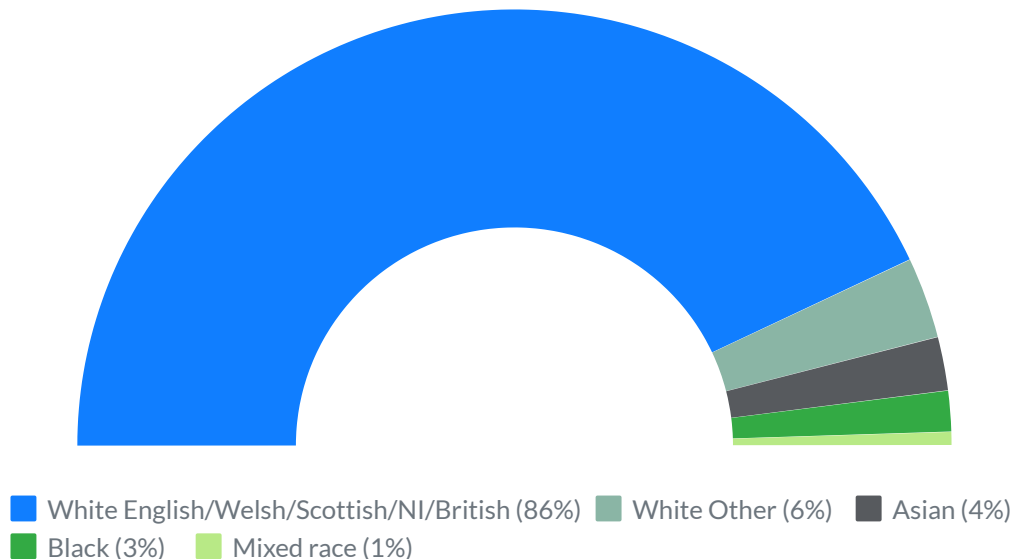
Age of Participants



Ethnicity of Participants

86% of participants described their ethnicity as White English/Welsh/Scottish/NI/British. 14% described their ethnicity as being of a minority ethnicity - including White Other, Asian, Black and Mixed race.

Ethnicity of Participants



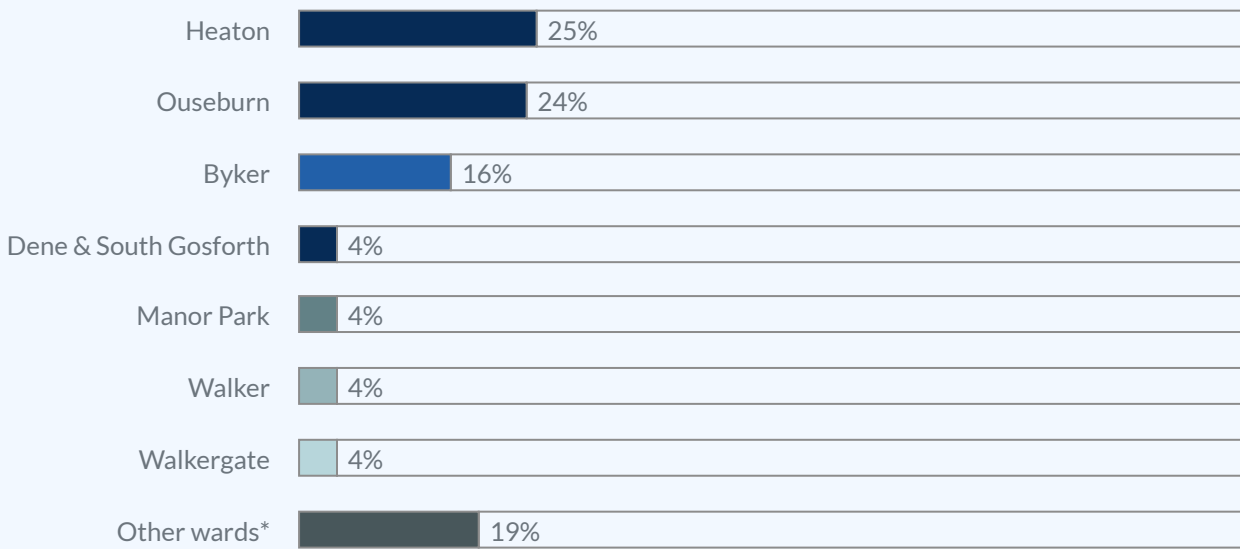
Disability of Participants

Just over three-quarters (77%) of participants indicated that they had no disability. Among those who did (23%), visual, hearing, physical, mental, learning and chronic conditions/impairments and illnesses were indicated.

Residence of Participants

Just under half (49%) of all participants were residents of the wards of Heaton and Ouseburn.

Residence of Participants

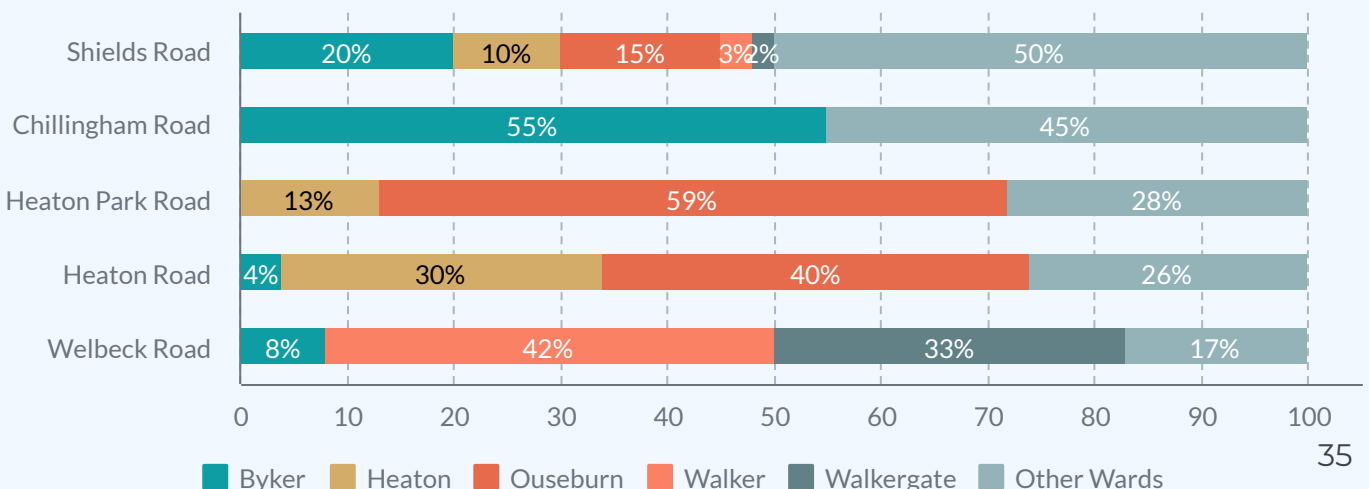


* Each with no more than 3% of participants.

Residence of Participants by Location Commented On

Shields Road contributors were the most wide-ranging in terms of their age.

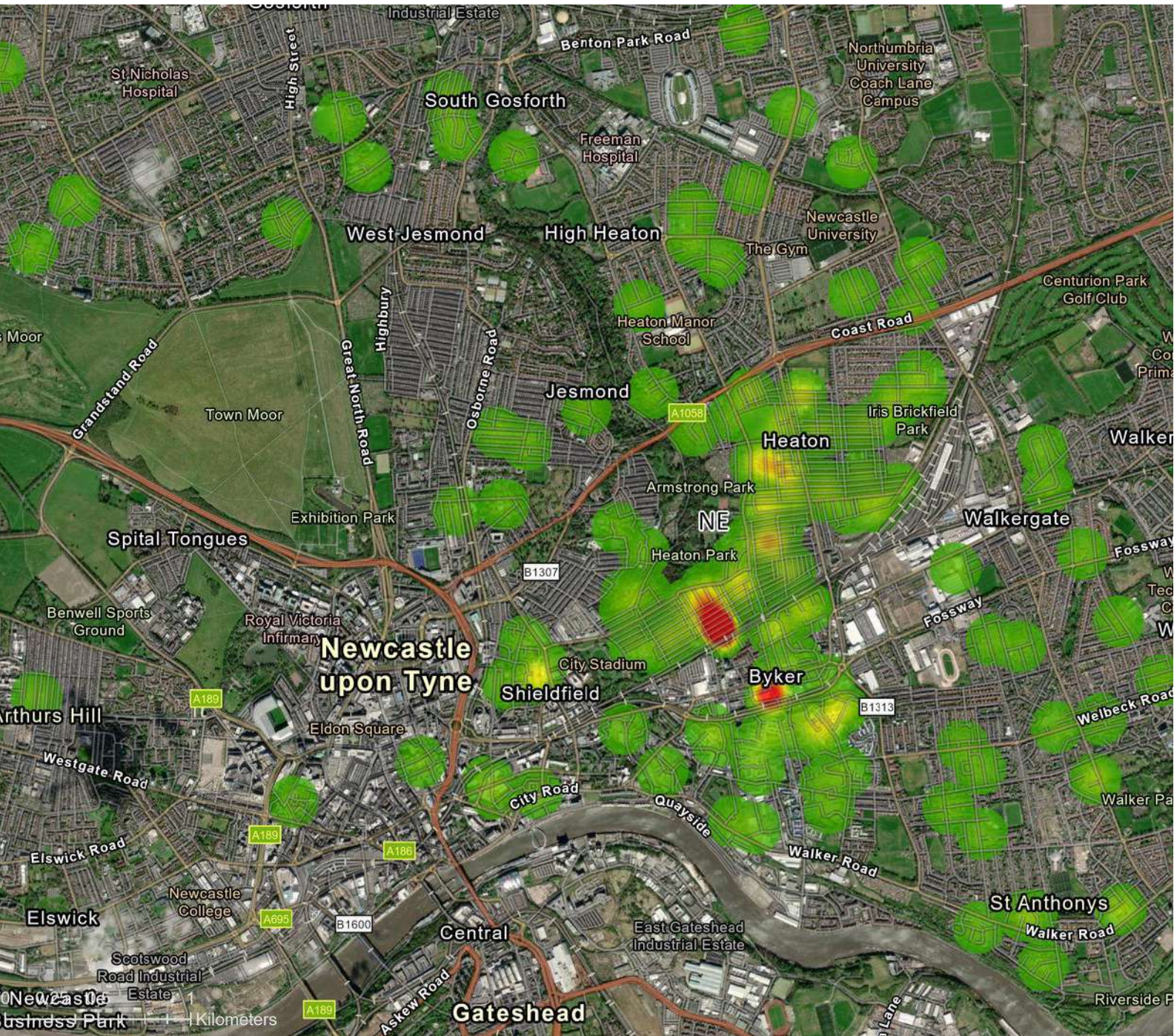
Residence of Participants



Mapping the Residence of Participants

Here we see a heat map of participation, plotting the postcode of those who chose to provide this information. To provide a focus on the heart of the east end, this map does not show contributions from further afield.

Residence of Participants



Participants



Lower number



Higher number

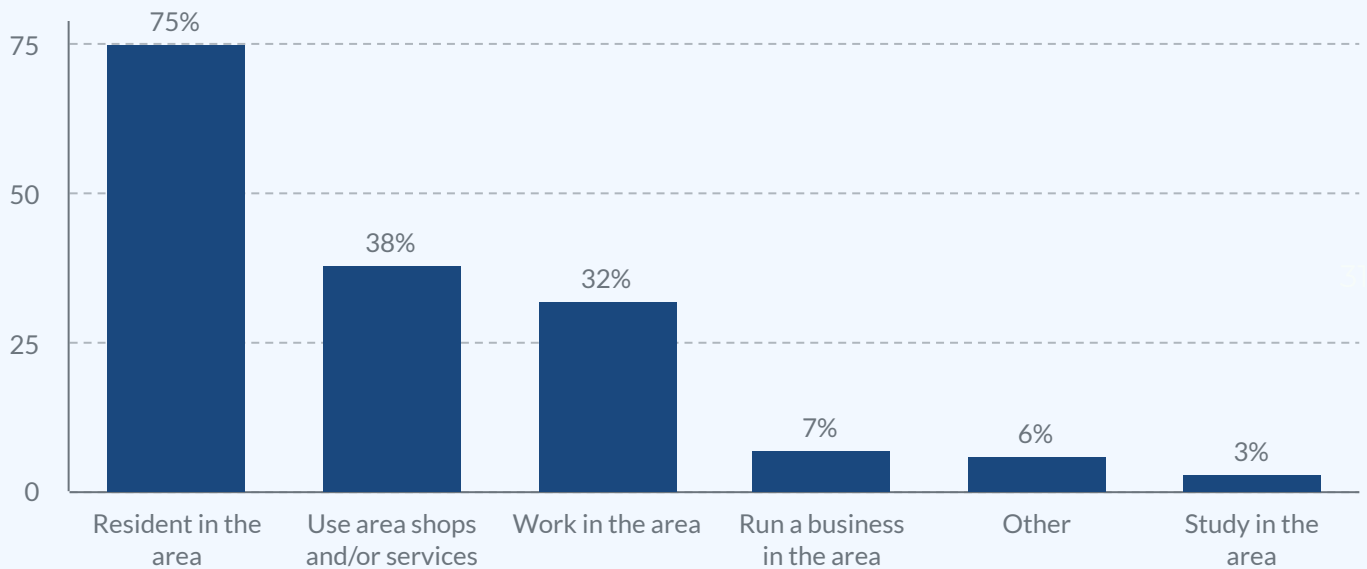


Highest number

Participant Connection to the Area

Participants were typically residents in the area (75%). Just under 40% used the area's shops and/or services, while 32% worked in the area. More than one connection was sometimes specified.

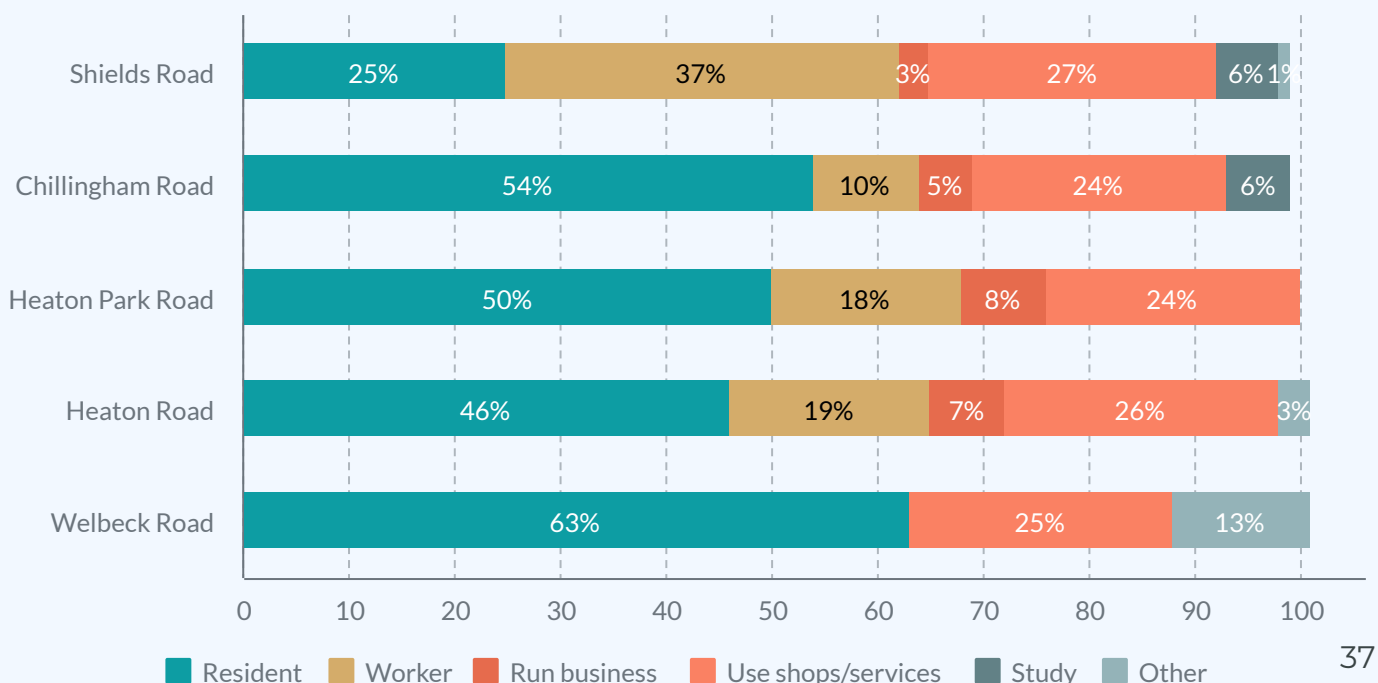
Participant Connection to the Area



Connection to the Area of Participants by Location Commented On

Shields Road contributors were the most diverse in terms of their connection to the area.

Connection to the Area of Participants



Appendix 2: Photo Contributions Received



Three contributions were received.

1. Problems with bins and rubbish on Chillingham Road.

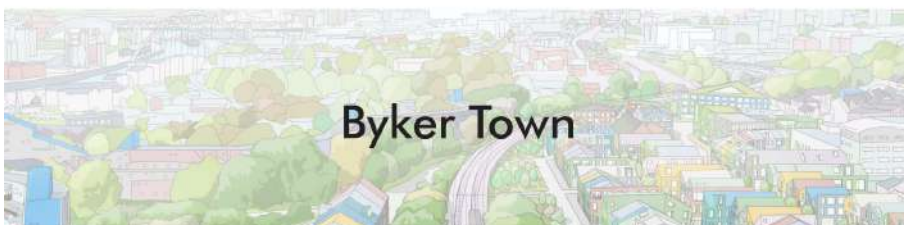


2. Bad parking near Chillingham Road.



3. Also received a concept proposal for the area from Architects MawsonKerr.

<https://www.mawsonkerr.co.uk/projects/byker-town/>



Appendix 3: Thoughts on Recent Reports

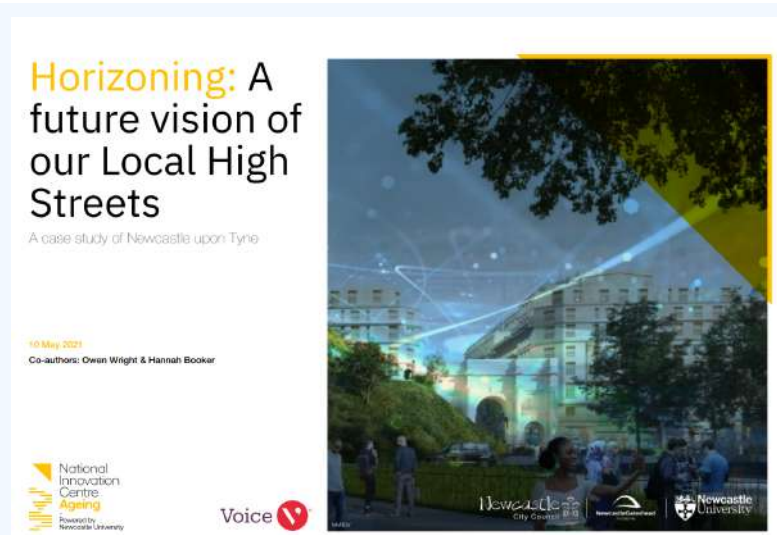


Inviting Comments on Two Recent Reports

Newcastle City Council, like many other local and national organisations, were also keen to understand what local high streets might look like in the future.

Two reports were uploaded to the Commonplace platform, with residents encouraged to comment on these, in addition to adding their own ideas.

The report below highlighted an opportunity to re-visit thinking of the city and its local high streets in a novel way. It invited consideration of trends around Place for all, including healthy/sanative streets, hybrid hubs and authentic living.



Horizoning: A future Vision of Our Local High Streets, Owen Wright & Hannah Booker, National Innovation Centre Ageing, Newcastle University, May 2021.

A second report took a strategic look at the role community businesses can play in addressing the challenges of UK high streets. It considers how community businesses can succeed in high streets, what they can contribute, and what support they need to make a long-term difference to restore 'pride in place' in struggling town centres.

Community Businesses and High Streets: 'Taking Back and Leading Forward'.

Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, August 2022.



Horizoning Report Feedback

27 comments and agreements were received about the Horizoning report, giving it a mixed reception.

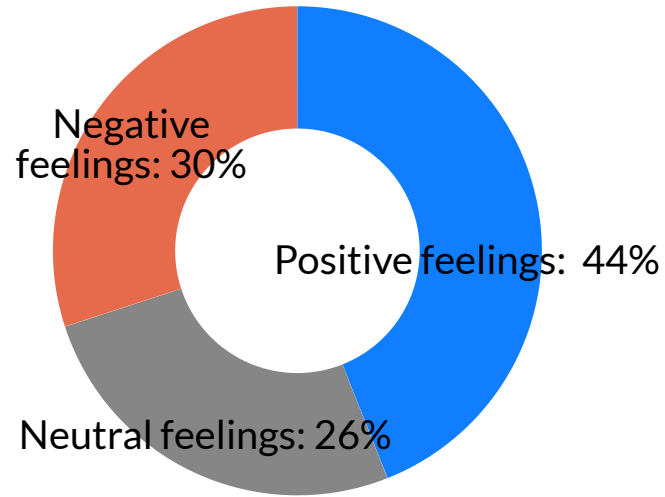
Horizoning: A Future Vision of Our Local High Streets



- Inspiring
- Visionary
- Concept details
- Valuable reading



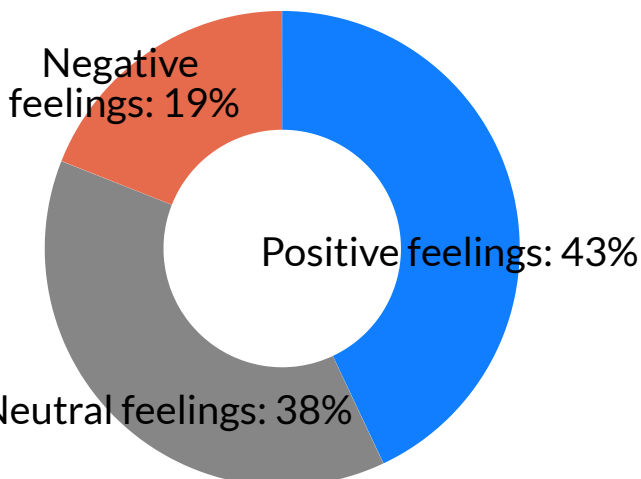
- Too lengthy
- Poor visual readability
- Unrealistic/futuristic
- Jargonistic
- Too distant
- Promoting needless change
- Neglects to address parking



Community Businesses and High Street Report Feedback

Community Businesses and High Streets: 'Taking Back and Leading Forward'.

21 comments and agreements were received about the Community Businesses and High Streets report, again giving it a mixed reception.



- Good recommendations
- Futuristic approach
- Concept details
- Community focus
- Partnership opportunities
- Funding of small businesses



- Too business-oriented
- Lack of practical detail re change
- Jargonistic

Thoughts on the Two Reports

A selection of typical participant comments included:

"Some of the ideas, particularly arising from global trends, are quite inspiring but there's little content on how this can be put into practice in our local shopping streets".



"Can we have a people-friendly version that just tells us what the ideas are please?".



"It seems very futuristic, when in reality we need to see a reversal of changes to make the high-street successful again".



"Implementing some of the ideas around sanative streets & a place for all would massively improve most high streets in Newcastle".



"I like that local people are participating in the future development of their high streets".

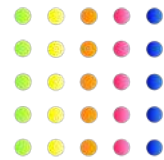


"I like the idea of giving funding for existing small businesses to stay open, too many are closing and nothing opening in their place as rents are too high".



Newcastle
City Council 

**NORTH
OF TYNE**
~~~~~  
**COMBINED  
AUTHORITY**



eljay research