

# Wisbech Online Regeneration Plan Public Consultation Survey Results 2025

Wisbech Town Board

## Summary

This report summarises the key findings from the public consultation survey regarding the Wisbech Regeneration Plan as part of the ongoing Pride in Place Town Board work.

Each question is analysed individually, followed by an overall summary of the results. Charts are included for clarity.

This consultation was undertaken online from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of November in 2025.

The consultation was undertaken by Wisbech Town Board and delivered by Fenland District Council across various digital platforms.

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## 1 - Demographics and respondents

Most respondents live in Wisbech or nearby villages. Majority are residents (95%), with small representation from businesses and groups. Age distribution shows most respondents are between 45 and 74 years old.

The Survey received 380 responses.

### **Respondent Location:**

In Wisbech	54.62%
Outside of Fenland	1.58%
Village / rural location (please state)	43.80%

### **Respondent Group:**

Resident	94.96%
Group / organisational representative	2.12%
Business representative	2.92%

### **Respondent Age:**

Under 16	0.26%
16-24	1.58%
25-44	19.26%
45-59	33.77%
60-74	34.83%
75+	10.29%

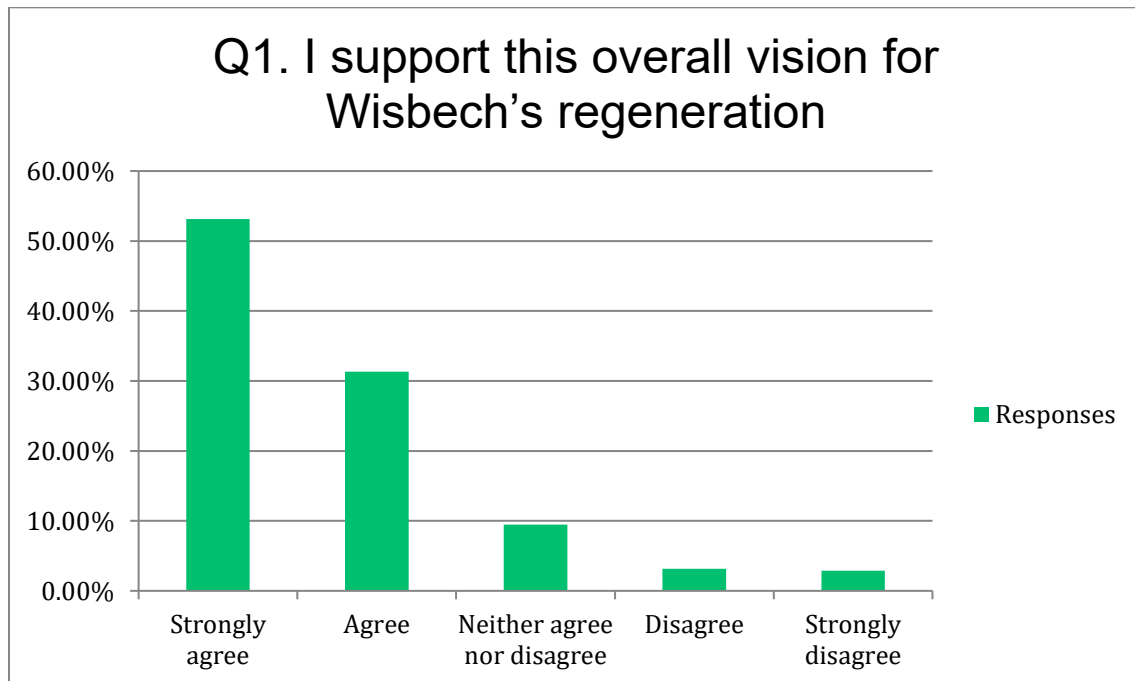
## 2- Summary of questions:

No	Question	Type	Theme
Q1	I support this overall vision for Wisbech's regeneration	Closed	Vision
Q2	Town centre should be more welcoming and vibrant	Closed	Public Realm
Q3	Local heritage and culture are Wisbech's greatest strengths	Closed	Heritage
Q4	Antisocial behaviour and crime discourage town centre visits	Closed	Safety
Q5	Where in the town centre do you feel warden presence is most required?	Open	Safety
Q6	A stronger community presence is needed	Closed	Community
Q7	Not enough activity spaces for the community	Closed	Community
Q8	More local jobs and business support are needed	Closed	Economy
Q9	Better access to training and apprenticeships	Closed	Skills
Q10	River, parks and open spaces are underused	Closed	Public Realm
Q11	Streets and public spaces should be cleaner and better maintained	Closed	Public Realm
Q12	Everyone should feel included in the town's future	Closed	Inclusion
Q13	Local people should be informed and involved	Closed	Communication
Q14	Decisions should be transparent and accountable	Closed	Governance
Q15	Regeneration must deliver real local benefits	Closed	Outcomes
Q16	Any other thoughts or suggestions	Open	General
Q17	Where do you live?	Closed	Demographics
Q18	Which community group do you represent?	Closed	Demographics
Q19	What age group are you in?	Closed	Demographics
Q20	Where did you see this questionnaire being advertised?	Open-ended	Demographics

### 3- Summary of Responses:

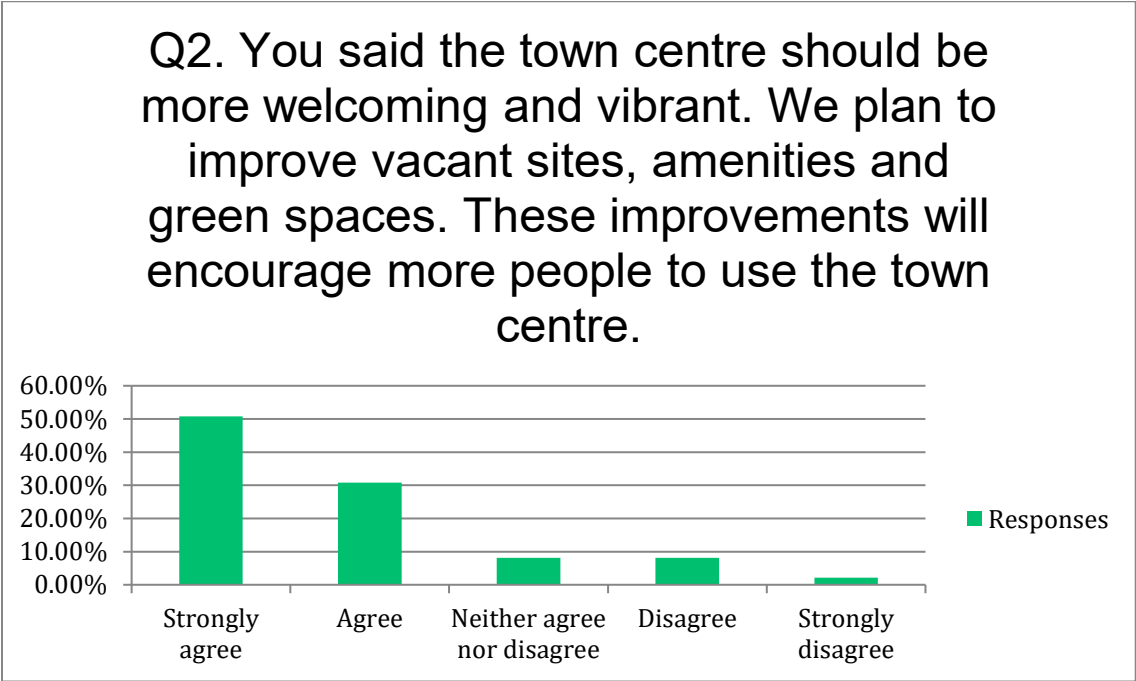
**Q1:** I support this overall vision for Wisbech's regeneration.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	53.16%	202
Agree	31.32%	119
Neither agree nor disagree	9.47%	36
Disagree	3.16%	12
Strongly disagree	2.89%	11
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



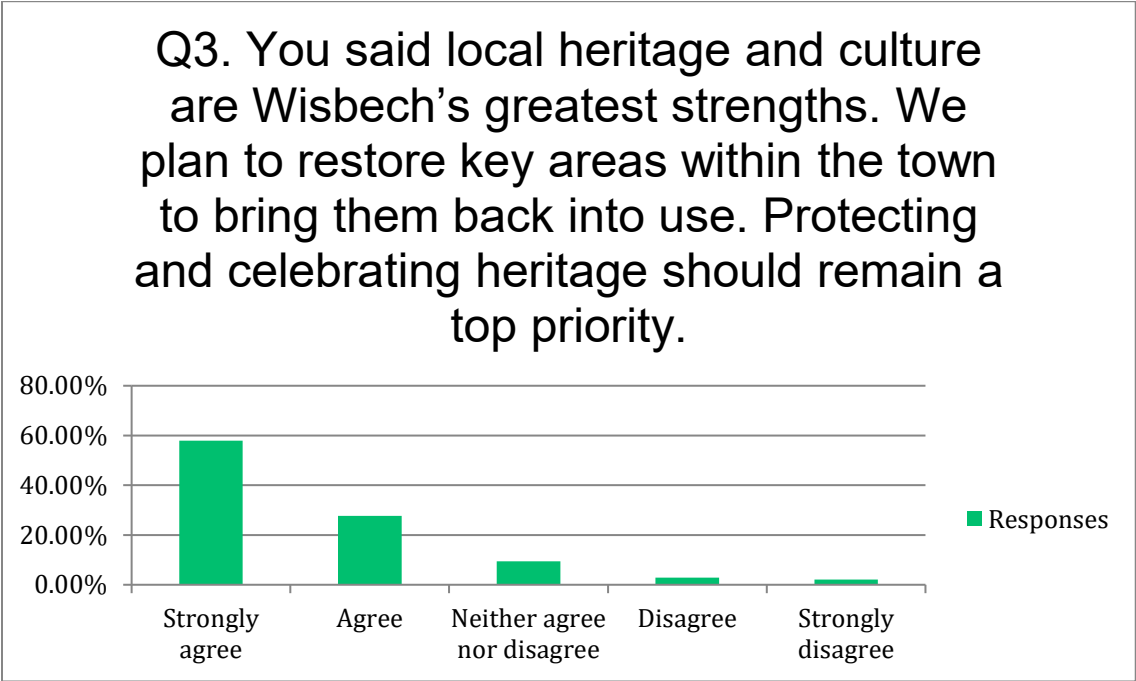
**Q2:** You said the town centre should be more welcoming and vibrant. We plan to improve vacant sites, amenities and green spaces. These improvements will encourage more people to use the town centre.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	50.79%	193
Agree	30.79%	117
Neither agree nor disagree	8.16%	31
Disagree	8.16%	31
Strongly disagree	2.11%	8
Answered		380
Skipped		0



**Q3:** You said local heritage and culture are Wisbech’s greatest strengths. We plan to restore key areas within the town to bring them back into use. Protecting and celebrating heritage should remain a top priority.

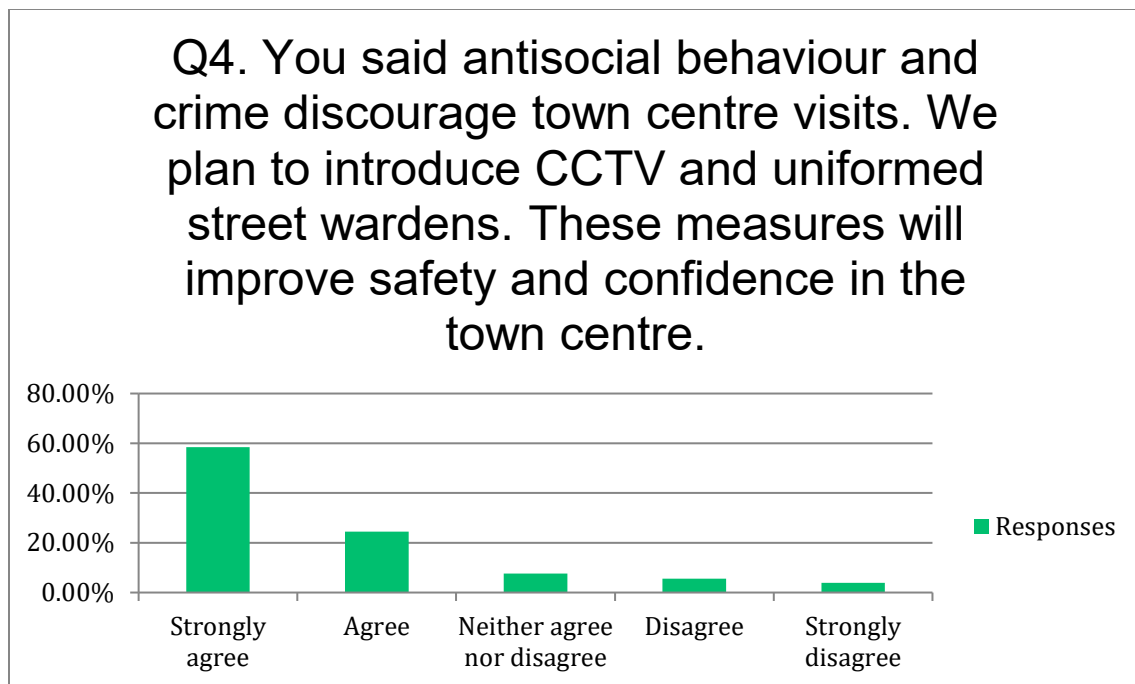
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	57.89%	220
Agree	27.63%	105
Neither agree nor disagree	9.47%	36
Disagree	2.89%	11
Strongly disagree	2.11%	8
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>





**Q4:** You said antisocial behaviour and crime discourage town centre visits. We plan to introduce CCTV and uniformed street wardens. These measures will improve safety and confidence in the town centre.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	58.42%	222
Agree	24.47%	93
Neither agree nor disagree	7.63%	29
Disagree	5.53%	21
Strongly disagree	3.95%	15
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



**Q5:** Wardens form a key part of our ongoing engagement with the public and our target of reducing antisocial behaviour. Where in the town centre do you feel warden presence is most required? (Open Question)

Results Summary:

### 1. Most Frequently Mentioned Locations

- **Market Place / Market Square** – by far the most common response.
- **St Peter’s Church Gardens / Church Grounds** – repeatedly highlighted as a hotspot.
- **Norfolk Street** – often linked to drug dealing and antisocial behaviour.
- **Wisbech Park** – especially evenings and after dark.
- **Horsefair Shopping Centre / Bus Station** – cited as problematic areas.
- **Museum Square / Crescent** – mentioned several times.

### 2. General Coverage

- Many respondents said **“everywhere”** or **“all over town centre”**, reflecting a perception that antisocial behaviour is widespread.
- Some suggested flexible/mobile patrols to avoid simply displacing issues.

### 3. Specific Issues Raised

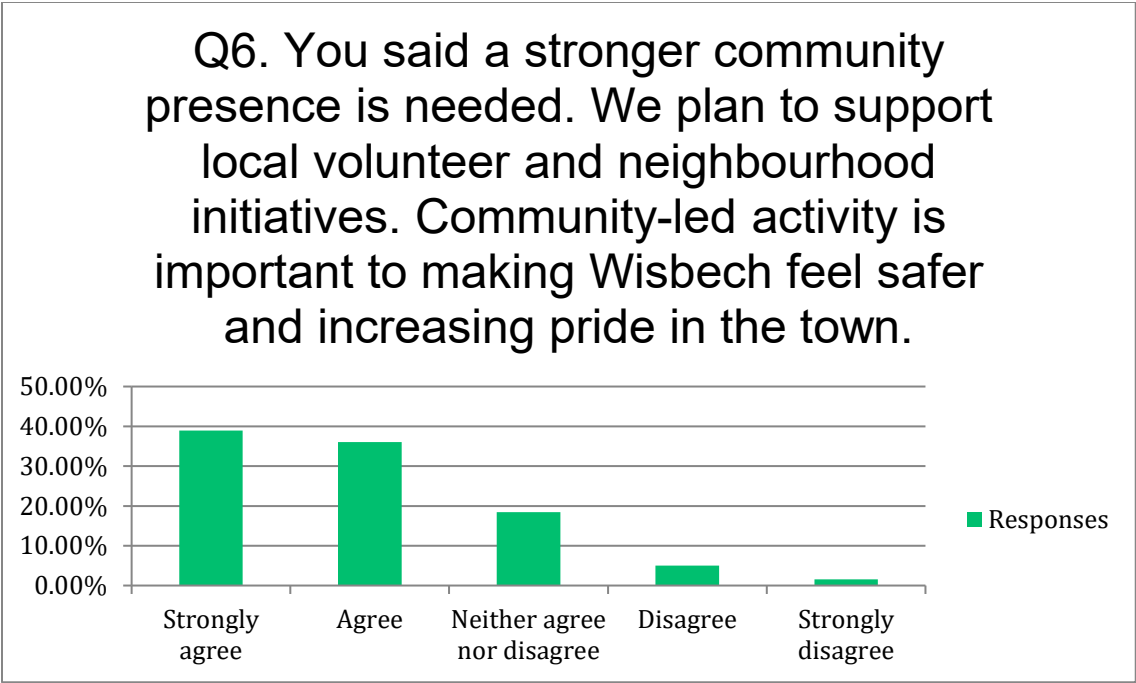
- Street drinking, drug use, and intimidation in public spaces.
- Illegal parking and misuse of pedestrian areas.
- Groups congregating near benches, car parks, and green spaces.

### 4. Alternative Views

- A notable minority argued wardens are ineffective and called for:
  - More police presence instead of wardens.
  - Investment in CCTV and lighting rather than personnel.
- A few respondents opposed wardens entirely, citing cost concerns.

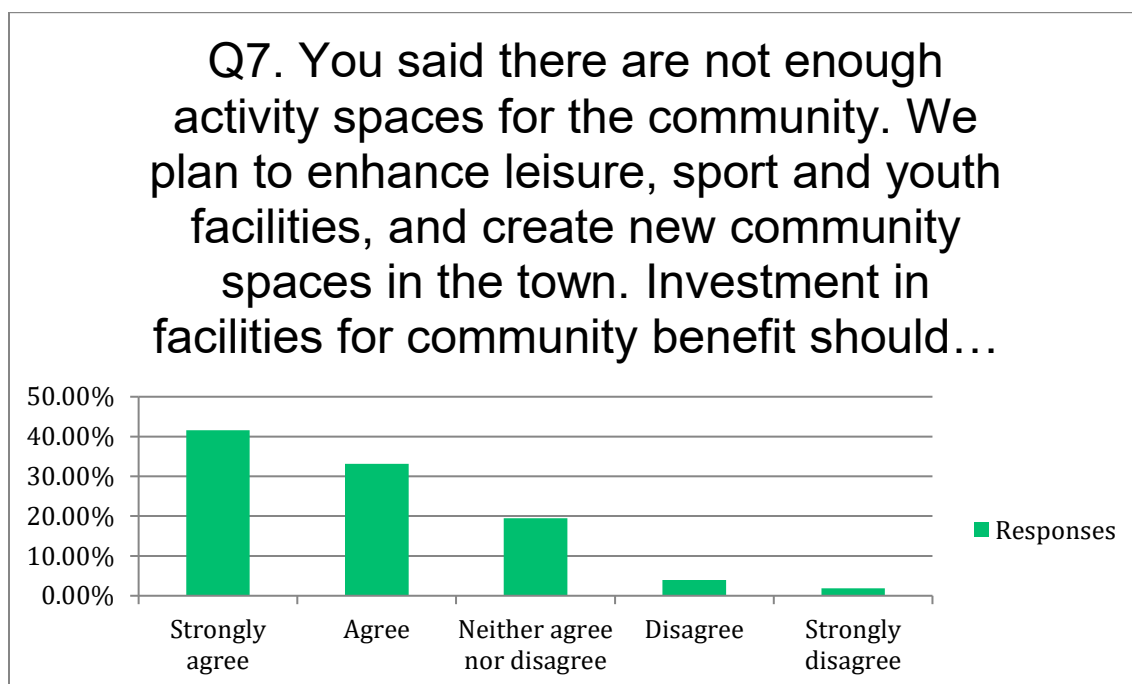
**Q6:** You said a stronger community presence is needed. We plan to support local volunteer and neighbourhood initiatives. Community-led activity is important to making Wisbech feel safer and increasing pride in the town.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	38.95%	148
Agree	36.05%	137
Neither agree nor disagree	18.42%	70
Disagree	5.00%	19
Strongly disagree	1.58%	6
Answered		380
Skipped		0



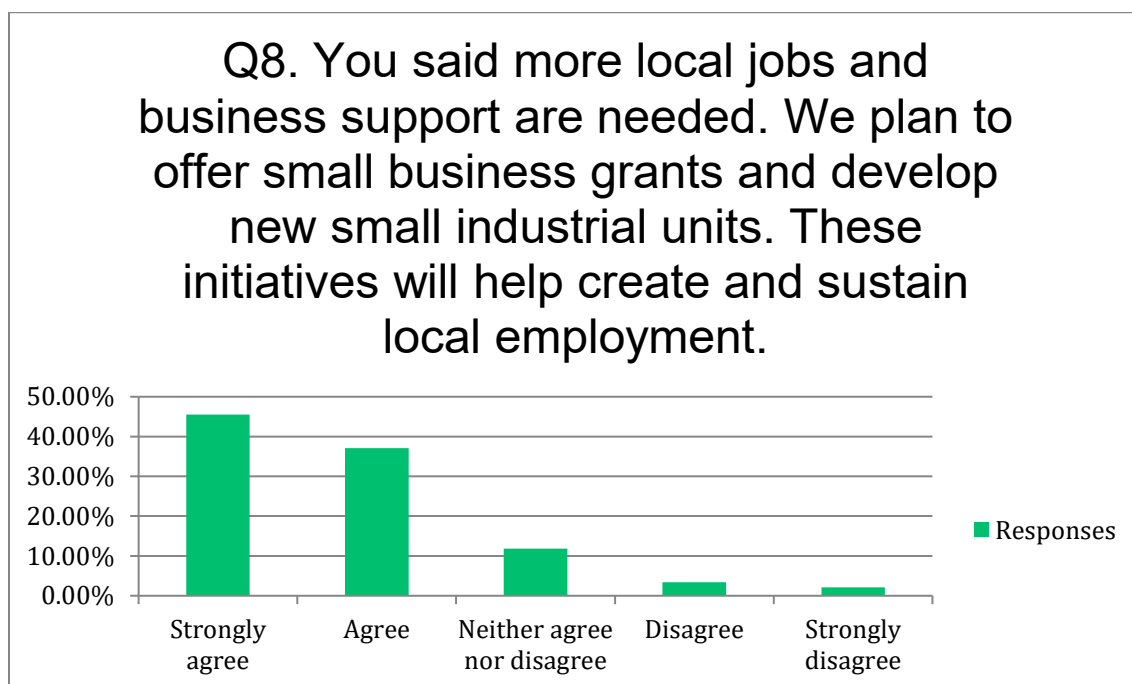
**Q7:** You said there are not enough activity spaces for the community. We plan to enhance leisure, sport and youth facilities, and create new community spaces in the town. Investment in facilities for community benefit should be a key regeneration priority.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	41.58%	158
Agree	33.16%	126
Neither agree nor disagree	19.47%	74
Disagree	3.95%	15
Strongly disagree	1.84%	7
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



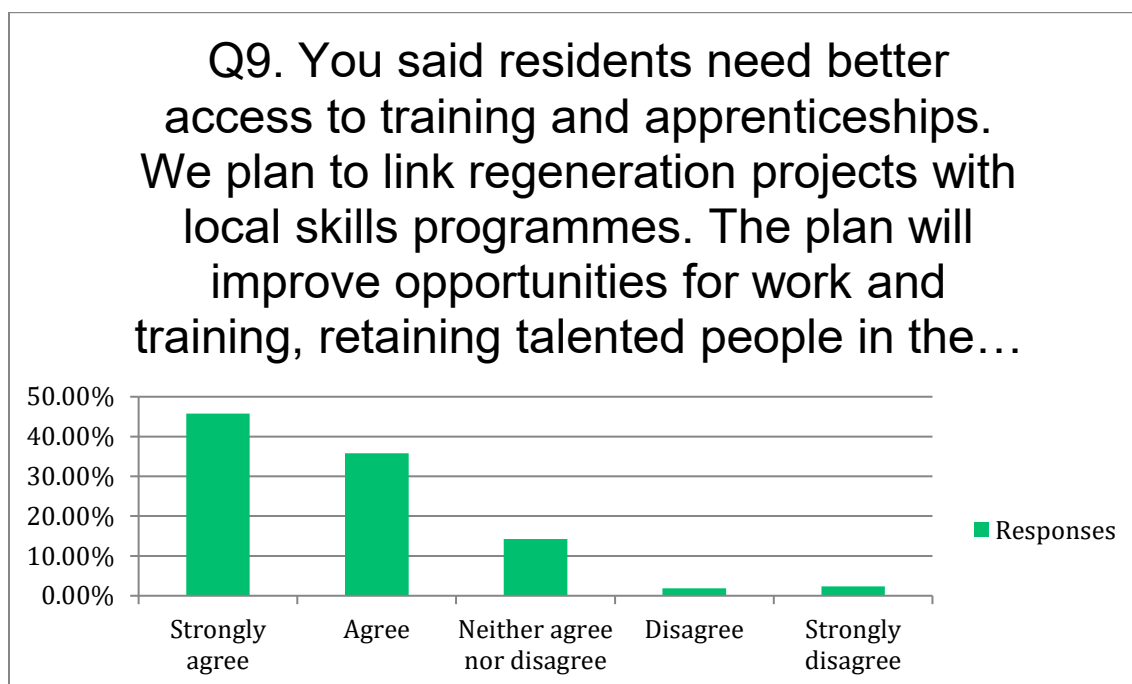
**Q8:** You said more local jobs and business support are needed. We plan to offer small business grants and develop new small industrial units. These initiatives will help create and sustain local employment.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	45.53%	173
Agree	37.11%	141
Neither agree nor disagree	11.84%	45
Disagree	3.42%	13
Strongly disagree	2.11%	8
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



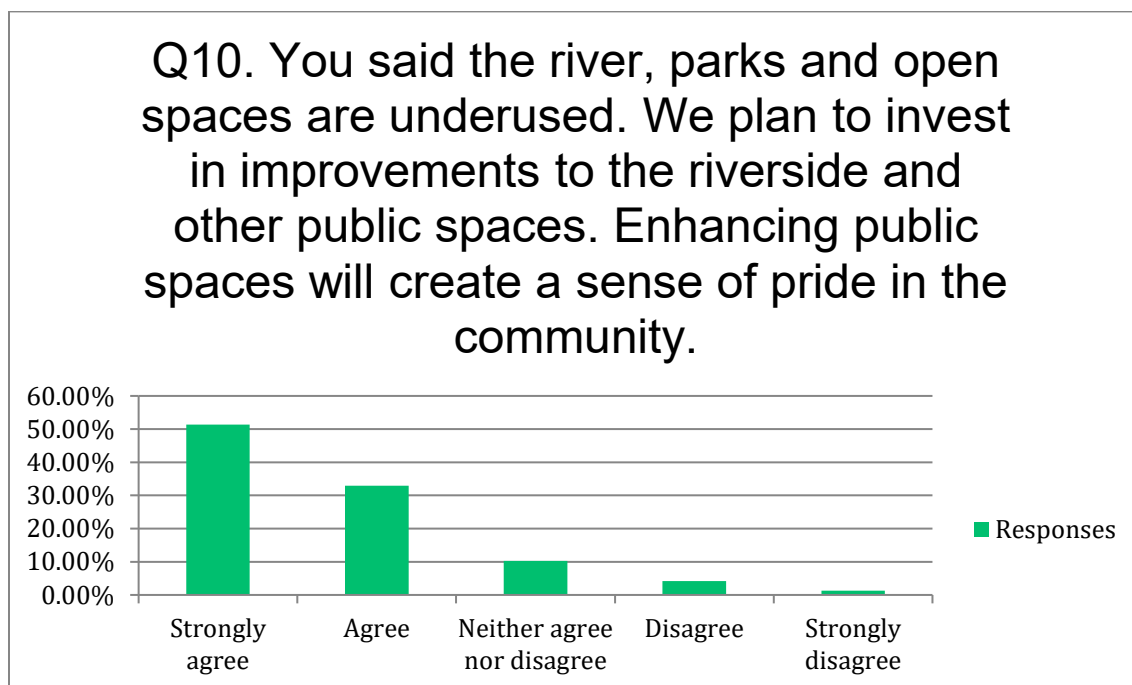
**Q9:** You said residents need better access to training and apprenticeships. We plan to link regeneration projects with local skills programmes. The plan will improve opportunities for work and training, retaining talented people in the town.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	45.79%	174
Agree	35.79%	136
Neither agree nor disagree	14.21%	54
Disagree	1.84%	7
Strongly disagree	2.37%	9
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



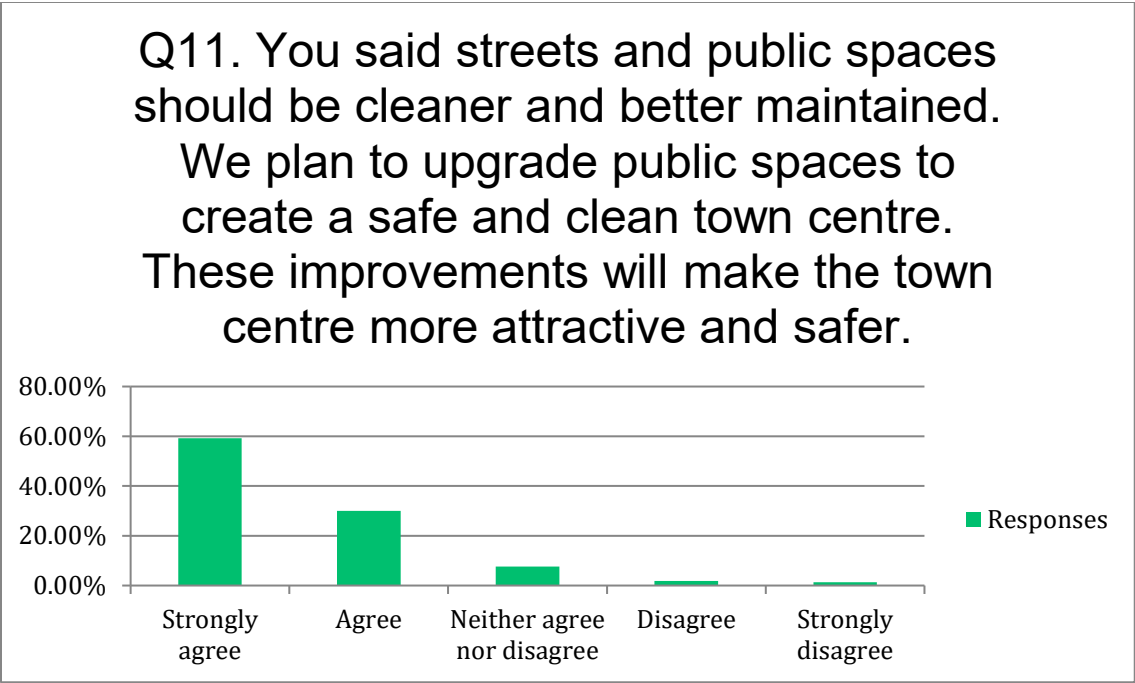
**Q10:** You said the river, parks and open spaces are underused. We plan to invest in improvements to the riverside and other public spaces. Enhancing public spaces will create a sense of pride in the community.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	51.32%	195
Agree	32.89%	125
Neither agree nor disagree	10.26%	39
Disagree	4.21%	16
Strongly disagree	1.32%	5
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>



**Q11:** You said streets and public spaces should be cleaner and better maintained. We plan to upgrade public spaces to create a safe and clean town centre. These improvements will make the town centre more attractive and safer.

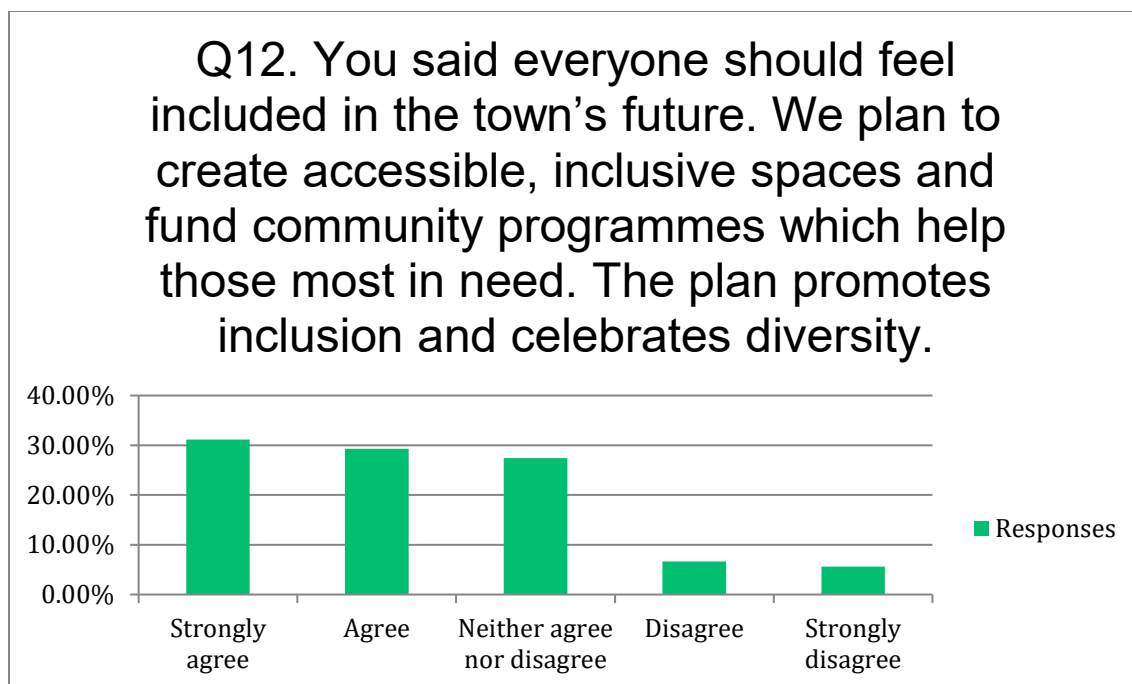
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	59.21%	225
Agree	30.00%	114
Neither agree nor disagree	7.63%	29
Disagree	1.84%	7
Strongly disagree	1.32%	5
Answered		380
Skipped		0





**Q12:** You said everyone should feel included in the town’s future. We plan to create accessible, inclusive spaces and fund community programmes which help those most in need. The plan promotes inclusion and celebrates diversity.

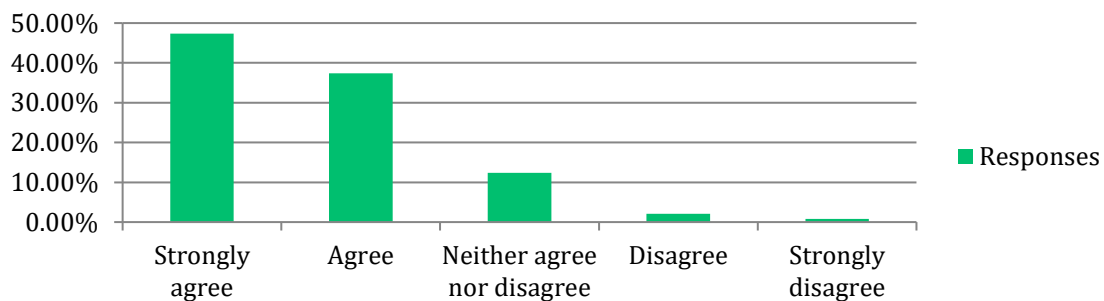
Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	31.12%	117
Agree	29.26%	110
Neither agree nor disagree	27.39%	103
Disagree	6.65%	25
Strongly disagree	5.59%	21
<b>Answered</b>		<b>376</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>4</b>



**Q13:** You said local people should be able to be informed and involved. We plan to provide regular updates through meetings, the website and social media as well as ongoing consultation as the plan is delivered over time. Communication will keep residents well informed about progress across the town.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	47.37%	180
Agree	37.37%	142
Neither agree nor disagree	12.37%	47
Disagree	2.11%	8
Strongly disagree	0.79%	3
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

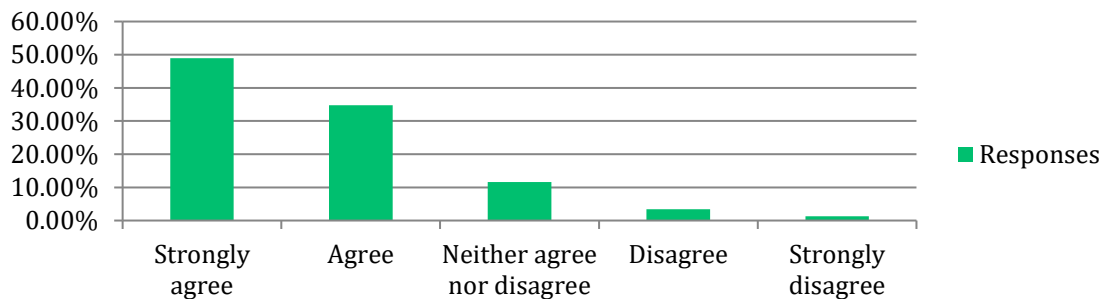
Q13. You said local people should be able to be informed and involved. We plan to provide regular updates through meetings, the website and social media as well as ongoing consultation as the plan is delivered over time....



**Q14:** You said decisions should be transparent and accountable. We plan to publish Board minutes and agendas on the Town Board website. This will give me confidence that the Town Board is being open and transparent.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	48.95%	186
Agree	34.74%	132
Neither agree nor disagree	11.58%	44
Disagree	3.42%	13
Strongly disagree	1.32%	5
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

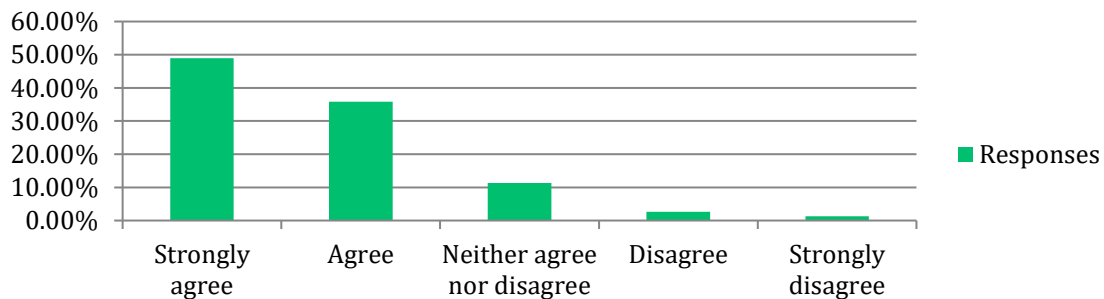
Q14. You said decisions should be transparent and accountable. We plan to publish Board minutes and agendas on the Town Board website. This will give me confidence that the Town Board is being open and transparent.



**Q15:** You said regeneration must deliver real local benefits. We plan to measure success through visible change, safety and participation. The proposed outcomes will make a positive difference to everyday life.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	48.95%	186
Agree	35.79%	136
Neither agree nor disagree	11.32%	43
Disagree	2.63%	10
Strongly disagree	1.32%	5
<b>Answered</b>		<b>380</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		<b>0</b>

**Q15. You said regeneration must deliver real local benefits. We plan to measure success through visible change, safety and participation. The proposed outcomes will make a positive difference to everyday life.**



**Q16:** Please share any other thoughts or suggestions you may have about the Wisbech Regeneration Plan, this can include ideas for potential projects or highlighting key issues important to you. (*Open-ended*)

## **Results Summary**

### **1. Safety and Crime**

- Concerns about drug dealing, street drinking, and intimidation in public spaces.
- Suggestions for CCTV expansion, better lighting, and enforcement of alcohol bans.

### **2. Transport and Connectivity**

- Rail link restoration repeatedly cited as critical for regeneration.
- Calls for better road maintenance, addressing potholes, and improving A47/A1101 routes.
- Parking issues: illegal parking enforcement and maintaining free parking.

### **3. Town Centre and Economy**

- Desire for more shops, restaurants, and leisure facilities to attract visitors.
- Reduce prevalence of charity shops, vape shops, and betting shops.
- Suggestions for lower business rates and incentives for independent businesses.

### **4. Public Spaces and Heritage**

- Support for heritage-led regeneration and restoring historic buildings.
- Improve parks and riverside areas for social activities and tourism.
- Calls for cleaner streets, more bins, and better maintenance.

### **5. Community and Inclusion**

- Requests for greater transparency and accountability in decision-making.
- Ensure community involvement, including rural areas and youth engagement.
- Mixed views on diversity and inclusion—some supportive, others critical.

### **6. Major Concerns**

- Incinerator project seen as a major threat to regeneration and health.
- Scepticism about whether plans will be delivered or are “lip service.”
- Worries about antisocial behaviour overshadowing improvements.

## **4 - Interpretation of Findings**

The Wisbech Regeneration Plan Public Consultation Survey paints a clear picture of both optimism and concern among residents and stakeholders. While the quantitative data shows strong support for the proposed initiatives and the Regeneration Plan, the qualitative responses reveal underlying issues about a broad spectrum of issues facing the town.

### **1. Strong Support for Regeneration – But Conditional**

Across the closed questions, agreement levels consistently exceed 75%, with some priorities—such as improving cleanliness (Q11) and enhancing public spaces (Q10)—reaching nearly 90% support. This suggests that the community broadly endorses the vision for a revitalised Wisbech. However, this support is not unconditional. Open-ended responses repeatedly stress that cosmetic improvements alone will not change perceptions unless deeper social issues are addressed. For example, respondents argue that “tidying and prettifying up an area will not make it safer,” highlighting that safety and enforcement are prerequisites for regeneration to succeed.

### **2. Safety and Crime Dominate Public Concern**

The most prominent theme in open responses is fear of crime and antisocial behaviour. Words like “unsafe,” “intimidating,” and “drug dealing” appear frequently. Many respondents describe avoiding the town centre altogether, particularly Norfolk Street and St Peter’s Gardens, due to visible drinking, drug use, and groups congregating in public spaces. While CCTV and wardens are proposed as solutions, scepticism is high.

### **3. Transport and Connectivity as a Catalyst**

Another recurring theme though largely outside the scope of the Pride in Place programme is the urgent need for improved transport links, particularly the restoration of the rail connection and improvements to the A47 and A1101. The Council is working with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to address these strategic issues. Many respondents view this as the single most transformative intervention, enabling economic growth, attracting visitors, and reducing isolation. Parking enforcement and maintaining free parking are seen as essential to sustaining footfall in the town centre.

### **4. Economic Revitalisation and Retail Mix**

Respondents’ express frustration with the current retail offer, dominated by charity shops, vape stores, and betting shops. There is strong demand for a more diverse mix of businesses, including restaurants, cafés, and independent retailers. Lowering business rates and offering incentives are suggested as ways to attract investment. Several comments link economic decline to social issues, arguing that without tackling crime and improving safety, businesses will not thrive regardless of financial incentives.

### **5. Heritage and Public Spaces – Valued but Under Threat**

Heritage emerges as a point of pride and a potential driver for tourism. However, respondents warn that neglect of historic buildings and poor maintenance undermines this strength. Calls for restoring Georgian architecture, improving shopfronts, and enhancing riverside areas are common. Parks and green spaces are seen as assets but currently perceived as unsafe due to antisocial behaviour.

## **6. Major Challenges – Incinerator and Trust**

The NSIP energy from waste (incinerator) scheme on the edge of the town has been highlighted by some respondents as a risk to regeneration efforts by damaging the town's image, health, and environment. However, as an approved development this falls outside the scope of the Pride in Place programme to influence.

There is also some scepticism about governance and delivery. Transparency measures, such as publishing Board minutes and ongoing communication, are welcomed and will be crucial to ensuring community support for the Programme.



## 5 - Conclusions

The findings suggest that regeneration cannot be purely aesthetic or infrastructure led. Success depends on a **holistic approach** that prioritises:

- **Safety and enforcement** as the foundations for all other improvements.
- **Community engagement and trust-building**, ensuring transparency and visible progress.
- **Balanced investment** in heritage, public spaces, and retail diversity to create a vibrant, inclusive town centre.

Without addressing these core issues, even well-funded initiatives risk being perceived as superficial. Conversely, tackling crime, improving connectivity, and fostering genuine community involvement could transform Wisbech into a safer, more attractive, and economically resilient town.