QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM. AUGUST 2016

Introduction

This document is an executive summary of the results of our two surveys, the residents survey with 843 responses and the business survey with hundred and 116 responses. There are links to these summaries at the end of this document and PDFs of the summaries are also circulated. These results can be used with focus groups to prompt further understanding and probe specifics on question responses. The initial implications of these results are listed under each question set. The neighbourhood planning forum can decide to complete further analysis on these results as the base data is available and electronically stored.

Initial analysis of RESIDENTS RESULTS and implications for focus groups/neighbourhood planning

Q1-Q3 housing development

804 respondents suggested there was a housing need for affordable housing, privately owned and starter homes. 776 respondents suggested a range of housing types for the future. The most frequently suggested were sheltered housing, retirement, new build semi-detached and nursing homes. This was followed by new build bungalows and new build detached and terraced homes. There was general consistent concern on the impact of additional housing on virtually all the different Town and Hamlets infrastructure.

Implications

The Neighbourhood plan will need to ensure that the types of houses reflect the communities needs as above as these are deemed to be appropriate and needed within the survey. There will need to be alignment with the provision of all infrastructure development alongside the additional housing. It is worth noting respondents age profile distribution is skewed into the age range 50 - 74. Whilst responses in other age groups were obtained and these are also in reasonable numbers, focus groups participants on housing should be sought in the age profile demographic of between 20 – 30. The existing housing types planned in the core strategy should also be reviewed against the results of these questions - can we challenge housing types?

Q4-Q6 *economy and employment*

823 respondents suggested manufacturing, tourism, retail and education priorities for businesses in the Town and Hamlets. The next frequent suggestions from 811 respondents were technological, farming and office businesses. For tourism the types of facilities needed were bed and breakfast, hotel, pubs and restaurants and museums and galleries followed by self-catering accommodation. Of those in employment, approximately 480 respondents, almost all were working within the Town and Hamlets or from home.

Implications

Neighbourhood plan will need to ensure that these types of businesses are encouraged within the land-use zoning and planning. Given that existing respondents largely work in the Town and Hamlets, that is they do not commute, this could be important for future employment and sustainability (less travel), and encouraging these types of businesses to relocate from nearby cities and towns. It may be necessary to understand more about those that commute for work to other locations. The tourism results do actually illustrate that residents would like to see the growth of tourism in the Town and Hamlets, again land-use priorities within the plan could reflect this.

*Q7 town centre developm*ent

The five most important developments of the town centre were improved traffic management, development of redundant buildings, car parking, increased range of shops and a marketplace.

Implications

The forum should consider land-use, specifically allocating and identifying locations for these developments. The free-form comments, see later section, also identify traffic/roads is a significant concern that requires future infrastructure planning. Identifying redundant buildings and ownership could also provide opportunities for developing the town centre. Retail can benefit from further discussion with a focus group, especially with trends in retail moving towards online purchasing.

Q8 further development of facilities in the Hamlets

757 respondents suggested that community facilities, shops, recreational facilities cafes and a village centre were priorities in the hamlets.

Implications

This is a large number of respondents and clearly they are not all resident in the Hamlets. Further analysis will be required of those who do live in the Hamlets on this question. A Focus group could address these issues in more detail to understand what is required and where in the Hamlets facilities are planned.

Q9-13 traffic, transport and accessibility

Less traffic, traffic management, encouraging more visitors and improved safety were considered the main benefits from a town centre access road in question 9. Transport services were considered inadequate by majority of the respondents (831), it was only pasts and cycle path that were just considered adequate by a majority of correspondence. The rest were considered inadequate for the increasing population of the town and hamlets. Parking for new houses was overwhelmingly considered inadequate and respondents required additional off-road parking provision. A majority of correspondence work were concerned about speeding in their local area.

Implications

The provision and design of parking and vehicle access to new developments are important considerations for the neighbourhood planning forum and focus groups. Residents clearly could articulate the benefits of new town centre access roads and consequently this should be a planning priority for the neighbourhood plan. Alongside this planning for transport services are important infrastructure and planning considerations.

Q 14-17 natural environment and the built historic environment

The qualities of the natural environment of a neighbourhood were considered to be the distinctive landscape, Devon banks and hedgerows, woodland, flora and fauna, and country lanes. Important countryside features were public footpath's, Simmons Park, nearby Dartmoor woodlands and Riverside access. 59% of respondents (811) thought there should be more protected environmental zones. Priorities for new buildings to complement the built environment were redeveloping brownfield, green spaces, protecting the character of existing local buildings and considering the design size and location of new buildings.

Implications

Existing land use and the location of new development to avoid damaging the existing built and historic environment are important considerations for the neighbourhood planning forum. Understanding the existing natural environment and built historic environment-where they are and where they can be improved and protected as an important area for the forum and focus groups. The priorities of developing brownfield, ensuring adequate green spaces with new developments, new development designs and protecting the historic nature of the Town and Hamlets are priorities for the plan.

Q 18 energy and low carbon alternatives

Respondents mostly supported energy-efficient buildings, solar panels on homes, hydroelectricity, solar panels on farms or commercial buildings and community energy cooperatives. Large wind turbines and solar farms on agricultural land were the least preferred methods of local energy production.

Implications

Neighbourhood plan needs to consider the location, land-use and incentives for owners and developers to install solar panels and create energy-efficient buildings. The types of houses and buildings in new developments need to reflect this community view. Why a new buildings roofs not constructed of solar panel material? Can we insist they are?

Q19 society, community facilities and services

This question analyses the use of existing facilities by frequency. For example, 26% of respondents never use the library and 79% the BMX track, whilst 35% use supermarkets daily and 56% use local shops weekly. This question contains a lot of useful information about use of facilities and to some degree the lifestyle of residents. Education facilities, childcare and Bowling Green are least used and this probably reflects the respondent demographic.

Implications

This question requires further analysis to determine the extent of use and alignment with the demographic of respondents. Also focus group questions on understanding facilities used and required in the future are important areas for further research so facility planning can be built into the neighbourhood plan.

Q 20 facilities needed in Town/Hamlets

Local independent shops, a primary school, preschool nursery, doctor's surgery and footpath's were some of the higher priority needs identified by 276 respondents. A BMX track, supermarkets, Bowling Green and racquet sports courts were lower priority needs identified.

Implications

This question requires further analysis to determine the extent of use and alignment with the demographic of respondents. The priorities identified in the initial results require further discussion with focus groups and in land-use planning.

Q 21-Q 23 Personal situation and Respondent analysis

The distribution of ages of respondents is slightly more skewed to the 50 to 74 age group. There are 57 responses from children below the age of four and 59 under eight. Correspondingly there were 64 responses from people aged over 80. 40% of respondents were retired, 29% in full-time work and 14% in part-time work. 26% have lived in Okehampton for between 11 and 20 years and 28% over 31 years. Significantly 18% of the respondents are relatively new to the town having moved here within the last five years.

Implications

Focus group participants should be recruited from those below 50 years of age in addition to the theme or topic requirement. Further testing analysis of the demographic and its influence on the results should be performed.

Analysis of free comment section in resident's survey

The comments section in the resident's survey was analysed by the theming the topics and then by completing a frequency analysis, that is how many respondents mentioned the theme. This is often a good measure of the strength of feeling of respondents, as it takes time and effort to write additional comments and these will usually indicate a significant interest or concern.

Topic/theme	Frequency	Rank
Traffic/roads etc.	100	1
Facilities in the Hamlets	49	2
Town centre development	34	3
Railway services	29	4
Economy and employment	20	5
Social and community facilities	14	6
Housing (affordable et cetera)	10	7
Natural environment/history/culture	6	8
Energy and low carbon	4	9
Un helpful comments and irrelevant to planning	40	10
Total responses/comments	306	

Significantly 33% of respondents who express comments were concerned with traffic and congestion in the town. Focus groups can be structured around some of these themes or opportunities sort to gain further evidence and opinion on the specific themes and issues.

Initial analysis of BUSINESS RESULTS and implications for focus groups/neighbourhood planning

Q1 business categorisation

Business respondents were typically from retail, professional and scientific, construction and accommodation and food. Only 2 manufacturing companies responded.

Implications

This data needs to be contrasted the resident survey on the economy and employment. This is a reflection of what economy employment we have, based on respondents, and that in the residents survey of what we need. This would illustrate any gap that needs consideration within neighbourhood planning and encouraging businesses to locate within the Town and Hamlets. This has implications for land-use as business land footprints and infrastructure requirements vary between types of businesses.

Q2 recent business setups less than five years

This is a free-form question and will require further analysis within the business questionnaires.

Implications

Further analysis of responses required. Reasons for choosing Okehampton and the hamlets would be important considerations for encouraging other similar businesses to relocate.

Q3 how many employees

The majority of businesses have 2 to 10 employees, sole traders account for 26 of the respondents and small businesses (11-24) for 18 of the respondents. There were six respondents who have more than 25 employees.

Implications

The provision of services for sole traders and small businesses important planning issues to consider. Further employment analysis, how many businesses there are, how many jobs and what is needed for a sustainable economy and employment in the area are important planning and development considerations.

Q4 employees home locations

Significant percentages of employees live locally, with 34 respondents reporting over 75% of employees live locally.

Implications

Given the local workforce is largely recruited by the businesses in the area, it would be important to understand the future skills, education and employability of the local workforce. For planning purposes this would need to match with new businesses attracted to the area and the quantity and quality of the local workforce.

Q5 work space currently occupied

The vast majority of businesses work from home, occupy older buildings, are shop restaurants or occupy under 1000 ft.² of space.

Implications

There are small businesses, having small land-use footprints with low employee numbers. Can improved business spaces release land and buildings for development of small residential/other brownfield developments? How sustainable are the small businesses within the planning timeframe? What future business space requirements are required?

Q6 agricultural enterprises, size and type

There were only six respondents to this question. The other category received the most responses, 66%, there were traditional farms, a forestry, horticulture (2) and a smallholding. Size ranges from under 10 acres to over a hundred acres.

Implications

There are too few respondents to understand the implications, other than there is a need to understand aggro agricultural enterprises in more detail as a significant proportion of the land in the town and hamlets is currently agricultural.

Q7 suitability of workplace

83% of respondents (89) considered their premises are likely to remain suitable, and 41% were taking steps to improve or extend. Interestingly 32% (11) wished for a live and work unit in the area, although the majority did not require this. 78% of respondents would not like to rent or purchase additional land in the Okehampton area.

Implications

New business premises for most existing businesses and not really required, this could imply business growth needs to come from attracting new businesses to the area. This would have course require new property and buildings. It also implies these businesses are not expecting to grow their business or work space.

Q8 suitability for industrial sites or business premises

This is a free-form question and will require further analysis within the business questionnaires.

Implications

Further analysis of responses required.

Q9 types of businesses to be attracted to the area

This is a free-form question and will require further analysis within the business questionnaires.

Implications

Further analysis of responses required.

Q 10 employment and skills

64% of respondents consider their workforce would benefit from skills improvement. Approximately half of business respondents had had difficulty recruiting staff and only 22% had recruited recently in the last 12 months. 64% were optimistic that they would correct recruit apprenticeships/offer work experience placements in the future.

Implications

Q 11 businesses customer's locations

A significant number of the businesses customers are in Okehampton and the surrounding area, the rest of Devon making up a further proportion with overseas and the rest of UK accounting for lower concentrations of customer locations.

Implications

Existing businesses are predominantly serving Devon and the local area, where customers are local. Should we be encouraging businesses that have a national and global customer base? Will this attract more businesses and associated visits and possibly tourism? Are the local markets saturated with local suppliers now? Are there local customer needs not met by current local businesses? Further analysis of economy, local businesses and growth trends.

Q 12 transport network effect

The A30 was cited as an advantage, as were the local road network. The lack of electric charge points (85%) and building site access (73%) had no effect on the businesses surveyed. Public transport, parking and visitor and staff parking were disadvantages for 77 of the 88 businesses surveyed

Implications

Infrastructure has an impact on businesses, both positively and negatively, consequently planning for infrastructure based on the nature and type of businesses that need to be attracted to Okehampton is an important neighbourhood planning consideration. This alongside the results the residents survey highlight the importance of this infrastructure planning for the local economy, businesses and residents.

Q13 sourcing local services

Predominantly businesses are using local services on financial, building, legal property and creative. 18 respondents were using local IT services and 11 web development. Local hospitality was used by 19 respondents.

Implications

This illustrates the interactive nature of the local economy, and the connectivity between businesses within the area. Provides a snapshot of the supply chain network. It requires further work to identify new businesses suitable for the town and if these would find local customers to buy their goods/services.

Q 14 benefits for local businesses

The top five priorities for local businesses were more tourists and visitors, more parking, better maintained road network, faster broadband and better public transport. Did not appear to be significant demand for local hot test facilities, organise car sharing schemes or better security.

Implications

There is alignment with the residents survey again and the implications for neighbourhood planning are specifically to look at infrastructure and the development of facilities and land-use that encourages tourism and visitors.

Q 15 environment and alternative energy sources

45% of respondents did not require any of the renewable energy alternatives. Solar panels on commercial buildings were considered as benefit by 45% of respondents. Solar panels on community buildings and on farms or connected buildings each achieve 36% of responses. Large wind turbines were seen as a benefit for only 7 respondents out of the 75 answered the question.

Implications

These results require further analysis to understand the nature of the businesses responding. Although these results suggest solar panels are popular with businesses, solar panels on agricultural land and lunged large wind turbines would appear to be unpopular.

Q16 are your buildings well insulated

This is a free-form question and will require further analysis within the business questionnaires.

Implications

Further analysis of responses required.

Q 17 neighbourhood planning policies

Overall or businesses required preservation of historic buildings, tree planting and screening, considering climate change, tree planting to screen agricultural buildings and minimisation of pollution.

Implications

This is encouraging, businesses are likely to respond, and hopefully contribute to, the protection of the environment through planning policy, accepting conditions to do so. It's of course possible this question is answered in relation to other new businesses and not their own business.

Q18 other policy planning suggestions

This is a free-form question and will require further analysis within the business questionnaires.

Implications

Further analysis of responses required.

Q 19 other suggestions for developing business opportunities

This is a free-form question and will require further analysis within the business questionnaires.

Implications

Further analysis of responses required.

Q 20 being kept informed on progress with neighbourhood plan

84% wished to continue to be informed.

Implications

A mechanism is required to update businesses, possibly through the email contacts we established for the survey. Business focus group, retail focus group are options that could be considered.

Q 21 business information provision

Over 90% of respondents completed their business details and 87% the contact person.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The initial analysis of the two surveys has generated some interesting themes on which to base focus groups and further analysis. In looking at the two surveys together there are some consistent themes on the development of the Town and Hamlets; town centre development, economy and employment, traffic road and infrastructure, the natural environment and tourism amongst the higher priorities mentioned in both surveys. There is clearly potential to start to shape planning policies, an evidence-based neighbourhood plan which would have significant community and business support. The themes that emerge are interconnected and prioritising one over another could have unintended consequences or an unbalanced Town and Hamlets. Considering these as a joined system to ensure all parts of planning policy fit together, like a jigsaw, will be a priority for the neighbourhood planning forum in drafting planning policies and suggesting and allocating land-use.

The next steps are suggested as follows:

1. Take forward summary survey results and discuss implications during focus groups and neighbourhood planning forums.
2. Identify further topics or questions that arise from the initial analysis, consider if sufficient data is already available within the survey for analysis.
3. Identify additional resources to complete further analysis of the survey's data
4. Identify other themes and topics for analysis which are not contained within the two surveys
5. Start to build a key evidence base for the emerging themes and focus groups
6. Commence focus trip group data collection

Secure links to survey summaries

Residents Survey Link

https://www.surveymonkey.net/results/SM-NQ626YDM/

To access this survey summary, you will require a password: okehamforum1

Business Survey Link

https://www.surveymonkey.net/results/SM-33ZDFYDM/

To access this survey summary, you will require a password: okehamforum