



Horsforth Town Council

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Neighbourhood Plan Preliminary Survey Results

Background

The concept of a [Neighbourhood Plan](#) was introduced as part of the 2011 Localism Act and they are intended to enable local communities to better shape their area.

The Neighbourhood Plan also directly influences planning decisions made by Leeds City Council. Decisions on new developments (both granting and refusing planning permission) often refer to elements of the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan. So, the Plan allows the community to indirectly shape the future of Horsforth through the planning decisions made by Leeds City Council. It also provides Horsforth Town Council with guidance on which to support or object to planning applications in their monthly Planning, Licencing and Traffic committee meeting.

Our Neighbourhood Plan was approved by the City Council following public consultation in 2019 and is due to be renewed in 2028. The Town Council have set up a working group to carry out this exercise, and the survey within Horsforth Matters is the first step in the process. In this round of consultation, the Town Council sought to understand whether the public felt the Neighbourhood Plan is meeting the objectives set out in 2019. The survey also sought to understand the priorities of the public for future development in Horsforth.

Summary of Findings

Of the 130 respondents, just half (65) had heard of the Neighbourhood Plan. Generally, where members of the public had heard of the Plan, their opinion of its impact was larger.

The top three issues covered by the Plan were as follows:

1. Protecting Horsforth's natural heritage, including landscape and green space (71 respondents)
2. Development and growth of local businesses (50 respondents)
3. Preserving Horsforth's character and appearance and conserving Horsforth's built heritage assets (49 respondents)

Residents had a slightly better than average opinion of the impact of the Plan on these priorities (scoring 3.1, 3.1 and 3.2 respectively for these three issues).

As free-form comments, traffic, crime and the availability of services and facilities for local people were consistently highlighted.

Methodology

The online survey went live via a Mailchimp link on the 16th of October 2024. The survey ran until the 31st of January 2025. Links to the Survey were advertised via the Town Council social media platforms and were amplified by Town Councillors on social media throughout the survey period. The online survey was also featured via the West Leeds Dispatch website on the 12th of January 2025.

Finally, a paper copy of the survey was distributed via Horsforth Matters (the Town Council newsletter), which was delivered to addresses across Horsforth in December 2024. This paper copy featured instructions to post the physical survey response to the Town Council office.

As part of the survey, members of the public were asked to answer the following questions. All questions were optional:

1. Are you a resident of Horsforth
 - Yes/No
2. Have you heard of the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan?
 - Yes/No
3. To what extent has the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan benefitted the following areas in guiding the development in Horsforth:
 - Note that the priorities were taken from the list of “Objectives” identified within the made Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Each of the following questions asked the public to rank their answer from 1 to 5, with 1 being “strongly disagree”, and 5 being “strongly agree”
 - “Sustainability and environment”
 - “Development of facilities and services”
 - “Transport system infrastructure (including encouraging less car use)”
 - “Growth in housing”
 - “Protecting and supporting new community assets”
 - “Support improved walking, equestrian, cycling, public right of way and car parking”
 - “Preserving Horsforth’s character and appearance and conserving Horsforth’s built heritage assets”
 - “Protecting Horsforth’s natural heritage, including landscape and green space”
 - “Ensuring new build developments complements the local character”
 - “To encourage and support the growth and development of local businesses”
4. Reviewing the same statements as above, please tick *three* statements above that you feel are the most important issues for the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan to cover.
 - Tick-box options for three of the top issues.
5. Are there any other areas you think that the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan would benefit in covering?

- Free-form suggestion box

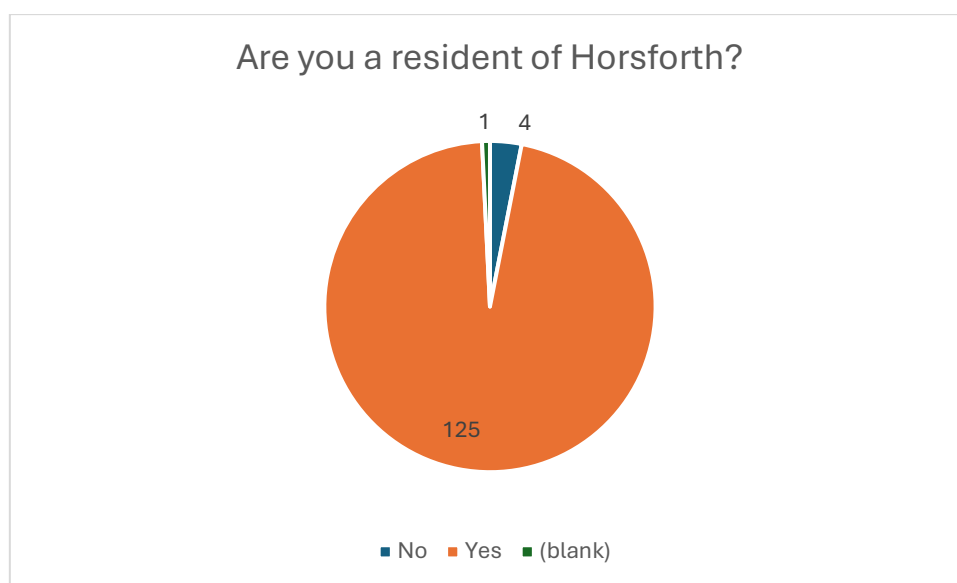
Results

130 survey responses were received from via online and paper sources. The responses are summarised below.

Question 1

Are you a resident of Horsforth?

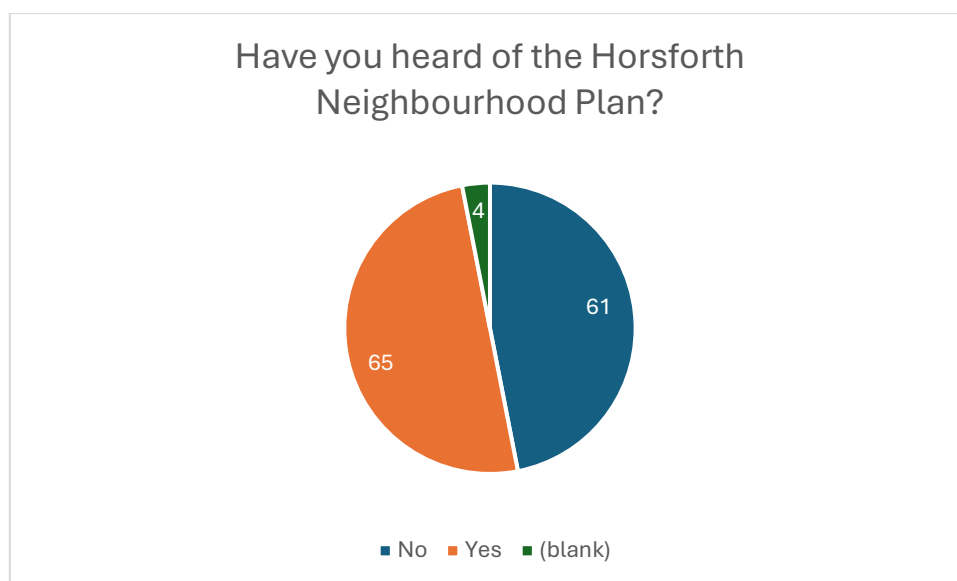
Yes	No	Did not answer
125	4	1



Question 2

Have you heard of the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan?

Yes	No	Did not answer
65	61	4

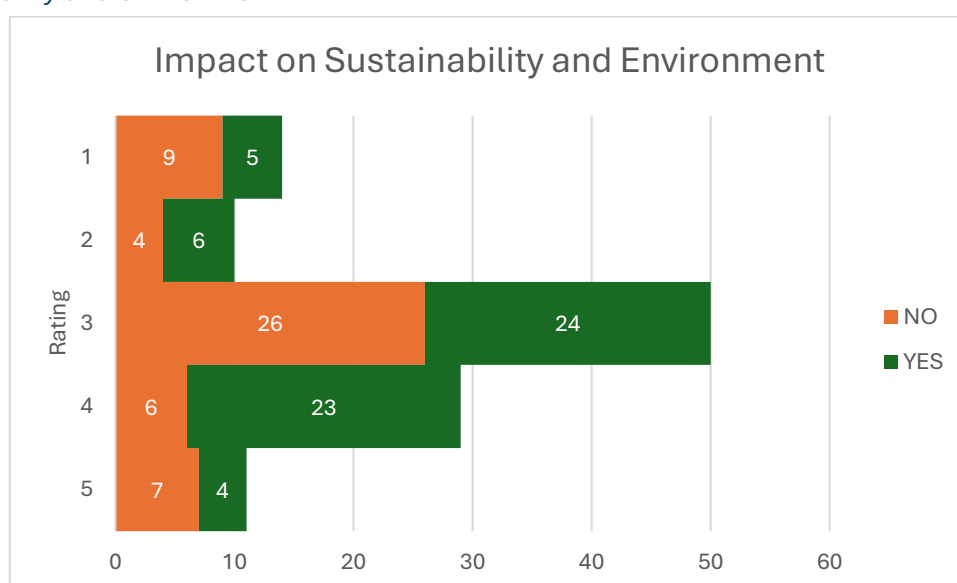


Question 3

To what extent has the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan benefitted the following areas in guiding the development in Horsforth.

Note for each bar chart, No/Yes relates to whether the respondent answered Yes or No to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan)

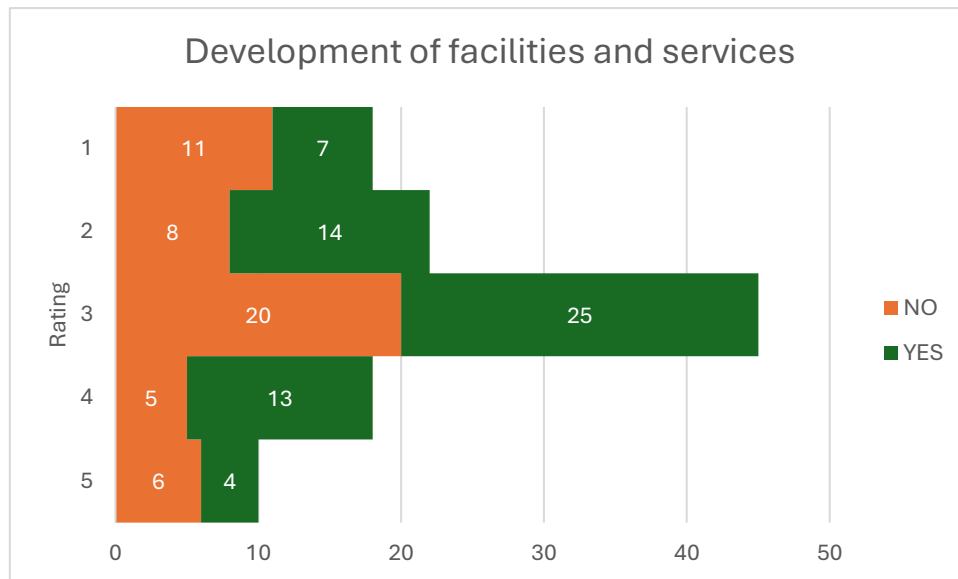
Sustainability and environment



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
3.0	3.2	3.1

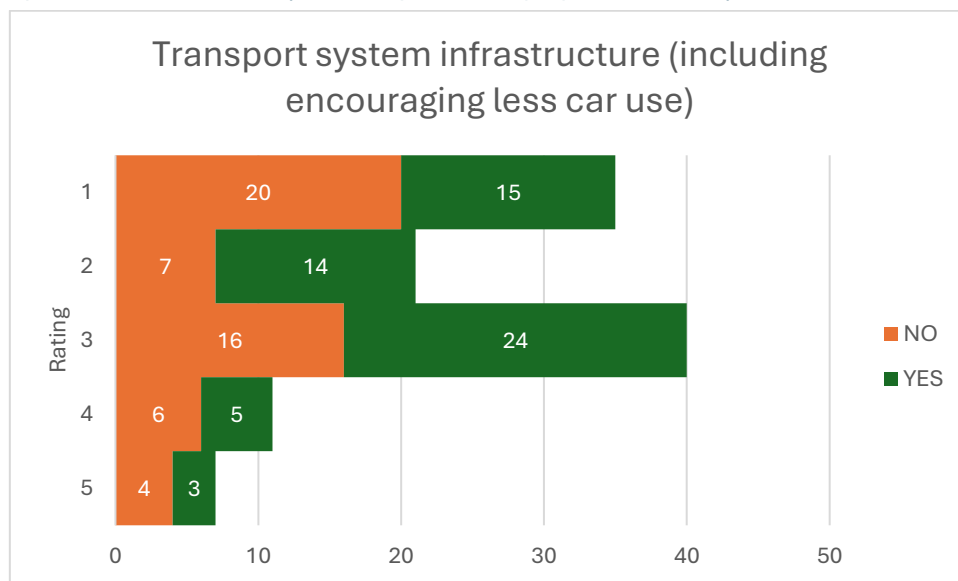
Development of facilities and services



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
2.7	2.9	2.8

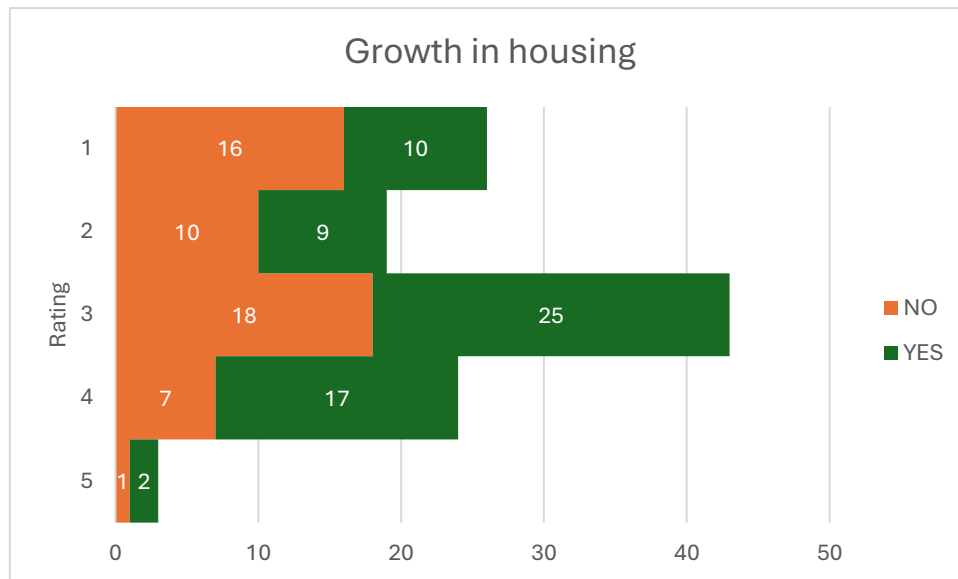
Transport system infrastructure (including encouraging less car use)



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
2.4	2.5	2.4

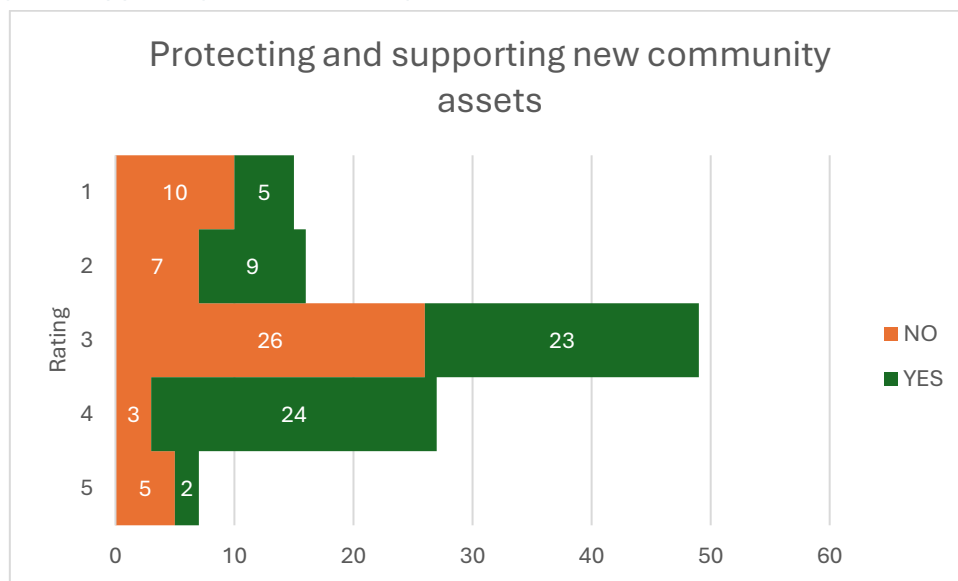
Growth in housing



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
2.4	2.9	2.6

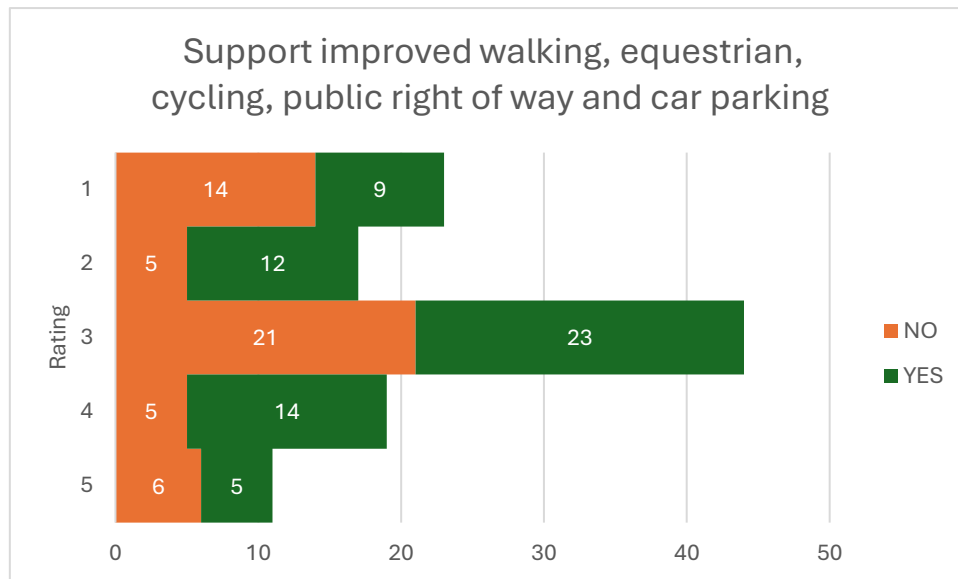
Protecting and supporting new community assets



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
2.7	3.1	2.9

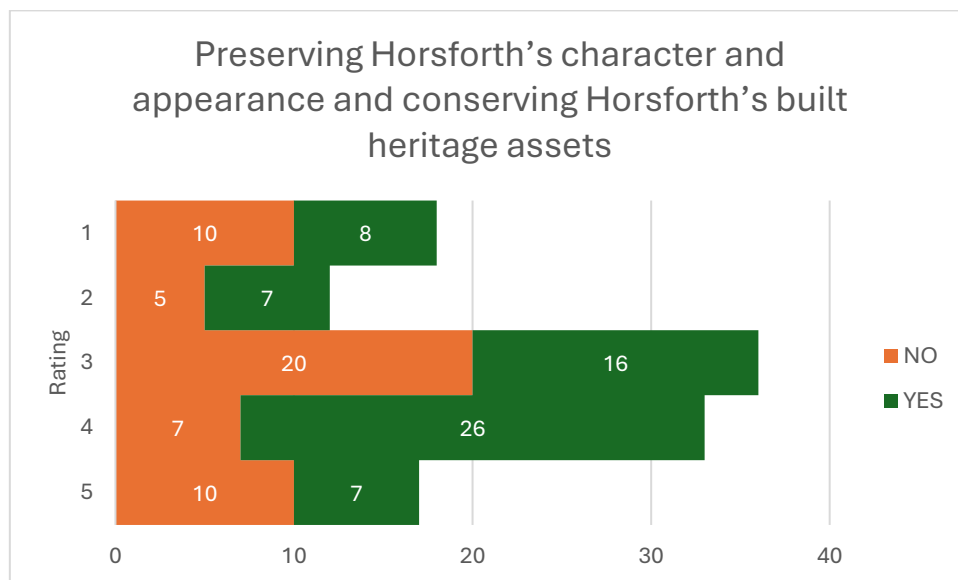
Support improved walking, equestrian, cycling, public right of way and car parking



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
2.7	2.9	2.8

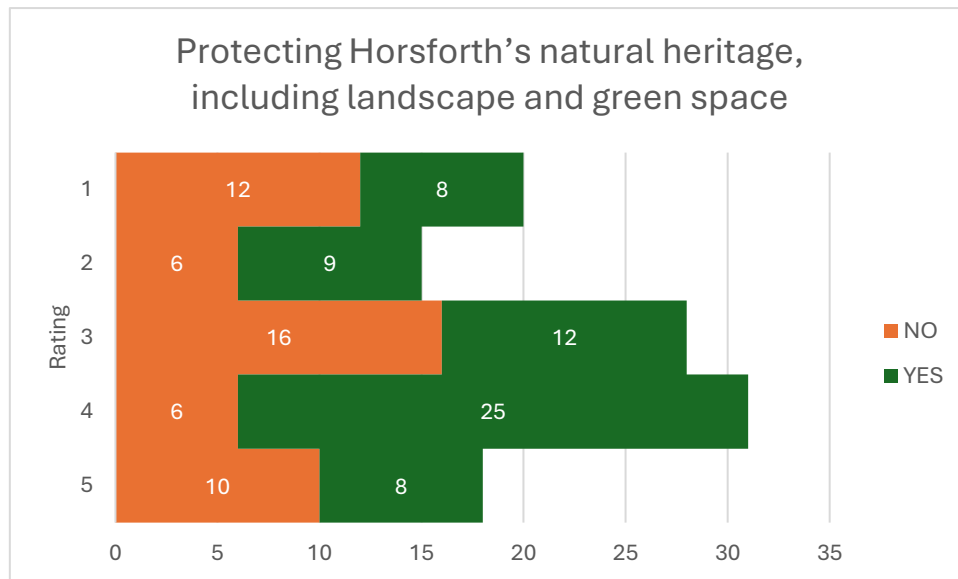
Preserving Horsforth's character and appearance and conserving Horsforth's built heritage assets



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
3.0	3.3	3.2

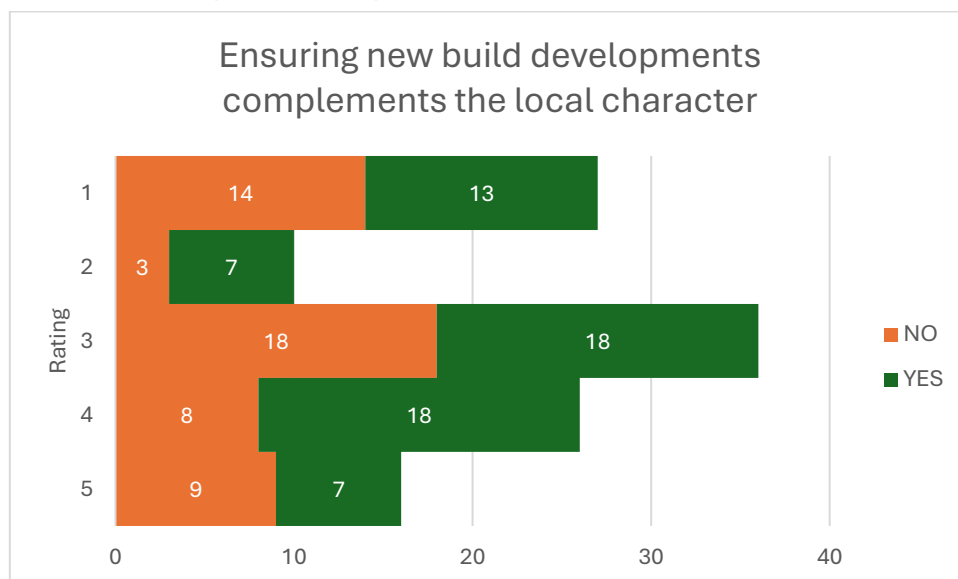
Protecting Horsforth's natural heritage, including landscape and green space



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
2.9	3.3	3.1

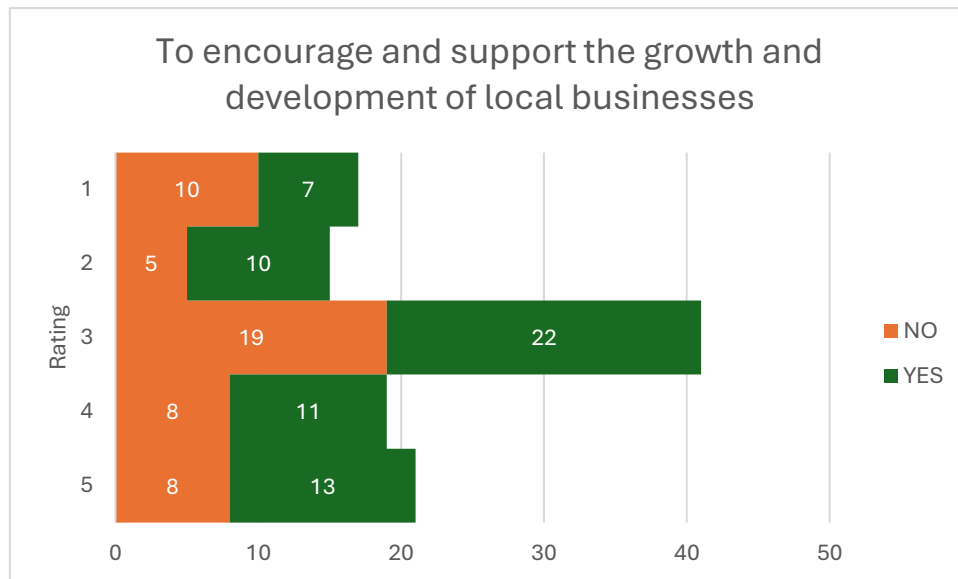
Ensuring new build developments complements the local character



Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
2.9	3.0	3.0

To encourage and support the growth and development of local businesses

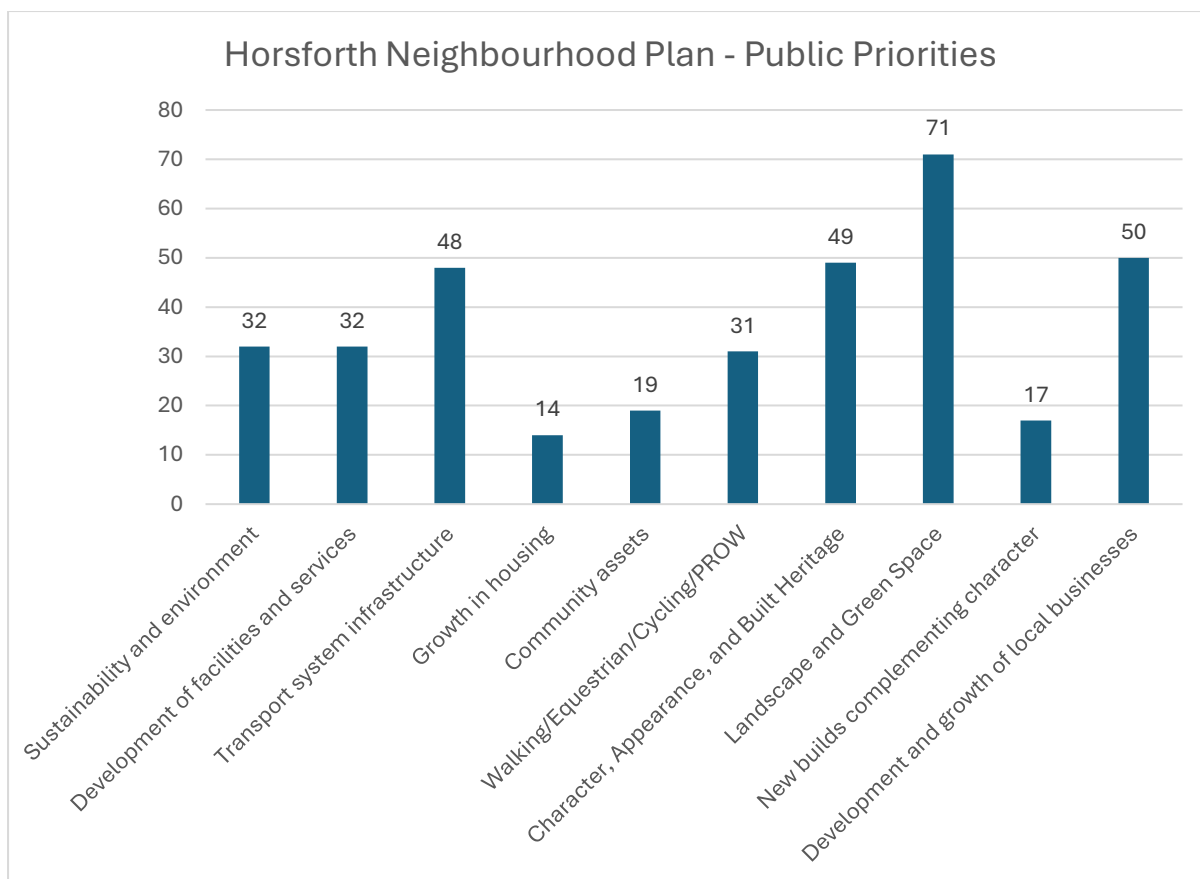


Average score filtered by response to Question 2 (e.g. whether they were aware of the Neighbourhood Plan) as well as the overall average:

No	Yes	Total
3.0	3.2	3.1

Question 4

Top Priorities for Horsforth Residents:



Priority	Times listed as top three	Average rating of the benefit of the plan in this area		
		No	Yes	Total
Sustainability and environment	32	3.0	3.2	3.1
Development of facilities and services	32	2.7	2.9	2.8
Transport system infrastructure	48	2.4	2.5	2.4
Growth in housing	14	2.4	2.9	2.6
Community Assets	19	2.7	3.1	2.9
Walking/Equestrian/Cycling/PROW	31	2.7	2.9	2.8
Character, Appearance and Built Heritage	49	3.0	3.3	3.2
Landscape and Green Space	71	2.9	3.3	3.1
New builds complementing character	17	2.9	3.0	3.0
Development and growth of local businesses	50	3.0	3.2	3.1

Question 5

Comments made by members of the public:

- “Stop all the road works. There is too much traffic going no where”
- “Would like to see Machell land specifically included as protected green space. Footpaths across hunger hills also need protecting.”

- “Improved road infrastructure for cars. The current system is gridlock at commuting, school pick up and lunch times through Horsforth. Support in reducing crime in the area, looking at social media horsforth groups this seems to be in the increase.”
- “The over building of houses in the area has badly impacted on facilities and roads. Education is important.”
- “Speed restrictions especially around the Victoria's. On street parking. Upkeep of the park, ie new bins and safe footpaths.”
- “Please find some other way of encouraging motorists of their cars than constantly gumming up the roads with unnecessary roadworks.”
- “Support, promotion and facilitation of community food growing and nature recovery on public land, eg parks, housing, highways land. Energy efficient new homes - well insulated, with solar panels. Improvements to Town Street, New Road Side and Station Road to make them a more welcoming space, using Healthy Streets <https://www.healthystreets.com/what-is-healthy-streets>. Horsforth Climate Action has made a start on this. Tree planting on New Road Side and on verges in residential areas. Litter reduction. Improvements to paths in Hall Park. Re-opening of the Ballroom above the library. Use of 3 The Green as a true community space. Secure cycle parking. Reduction in car use, including around schools.”
- “Firstly, this is a terrible survey. Just because I’ve heard of the NP doesn’t mean I know what is in it, what it is for, or what impact it has had.”
- “I thought the plan was very vague in terms of what it planned to do. It mostly read as a very thorough and informative summary of Horsforth as a place, but with very few actual things it planned to achieve. It seemed like more of a tick box activity so that we could say we had a plan as i know there are financial benefits for having one in place. It would be good if we could be clearer on what specific things a future plan aims to deliver. Specifically I’d like to see improvements in park pathways (noted the council has done good stuff here already, more would be great), promotion of the many great cycls lanes we have now and will have in the future, continued collaboration with Horsforth Town Team who do great work, public toilets in Hall Park, parking facilities at both train stations so people can use them in peak times, bus services and timetables joined up with train services and their timetables. We should also remember that not every penny needs to be spent on 3-5 The Green as often seems the case.”
- “Provision for young people”
- “More facilities and support for young people”
- “I’m proud of Horsforth’s FairTrade status (which we don’t hear about any more) and the Town Of Refuge (or whatever the correct name is). I would like to these more celebrated and supported. But above all - anything relating to climate change and car-free spaces / times.”
- “Kirkstall Forge station when is there going to be lighting on the footpath and when are trees and shrubs to be trimmed as it gets darker it does not feel safe to walk this path”
- “The council should start to have more of a focus on community energy and the development of low-scale community energy networks or heat networks in order to become a net zero town. We should look at models like net zero neighbourhoods. Areas like Otley benefit from more investment due to their focus on these things and Horsforth will be left behind. Horsforths current approach is a very old-style view of environmentalism based on inaction and not doing things, rather than actively tackling issues and developing projects.”

- “Get local businesses to make their employees & customers to use public car parks rather than residential streets, no one pays to park - sort this out. Let residents be able to use their street instead of them being car parks for people who don't live there. Sort out the dangerous mess that is pick up & drop off around Broadgate school. Why not school streets like other schools in Leeds have set up? Too many nail bars & hairdressers, not enough shops. No more flats without proper parking. Get Lamberts open as something (dear god, not flats) as it's a beautiful building. No plastic windows on listed properties. If Leeds is a child friendly city, then no parking fee for the park – it's ridiculous. Ping pong table in the park. Make town St traffic free on certain days, cars, cars cars. Actually have a plan, justify what the Town Council do. Tickets won't work.”
- “Ban front garden hot tubs”
- “As a new parent that walks my child to school. Stanhope Drive is extremely dangerous. It's narrow and used as a cut through by everyone. Cars travel so fast down the street. Even though it would be annoying I believe it should be turned into a one way street for the safety of everyone that lives in the area”
- “We are gridlocked in Horsforth we can't travel in any direction for 6 hours in any given day. Any planning should take this into account.”
- “Anti social behaviour ruins Horsforth. Some parts of the town are now “no-go” areas. The young people congregating at the top of Broadgate lane at Alfie's bench dealing and smoking weed make it a scary place to be. No point in creating a greener environment or looking at the style of new housing when crime is not being addressed”
- “The awful mess of the ring road and the roads leading up to it and the horsforth horse round about. The huge size of the cycle lanes is circa to demand. Unfortunately we do not live in a country where cycling to work is practically all year round, nor do the vast majority of people want to cycle. All this has done is create more congestion thus having an advice effect on the environment. A box to tick should also be crime in the local area. Petty theft by opportunists are on the rise. Rarely do I go a day without seeing a post on a neighbourhood group about someone having something stolen or someone entering someone else's property to attempt to steal something. This is making a lovely area becoming an unpleasant place to live. I have lived in horsforth 3 years and had 5 people attempt (once successful) to steal something from my property.”
- “Assisting with charging in Fink Hill car park as it will cause chaos to surrounding streets”
- “Horsforth will continue to grow as a place to live but the support for businesses and the complementary services and facilities will continue to lag behind. Ultimately, Horsforth will become a large residential area with no facilities to support it. The current transport situation, specifically around Horsforth roundabout & the A65 route is an abomination. This 'vision' to reduce car usage will not work in the current climate as alternatives are not good enough & are not an efficient replacement. Cycle lanes, (I'm a cyclist), are a great idea but they will not replace the car nor will cycle use significantly increase due to this - the disruption to build is phenomenally frustrating. The addition of Kirkstall Forge station is a massive improvement yet getting to the station is challenging at best & parking is limited owing to a massively reduced capacity. Plus, the back-up from Kirkstall Bridge is now impacting any routes from Horsforth towards the city centre. Currently, the far west corner of the ringroad is utterly impossible to navigate without huge delays and standing traffic - for much of the day. Please do continue to preserve the character of Horsforth but the transport routes through, the major artery of the A65

for example, need significant management and control - and how Horsforth can facilitate the links to the airport are again a constant headache. A direct train/tram route to the airport is needed, linking direct to the city - in haste - yet will not likely be completed in my lifetime. Sadly, a ridiculously long 'plan' that details a great deal, says all the right things yet delivering it will be its achilles heel. Focus on one thing - transport to, through and out of the town - people may then opt to support other initiatives.”

- “Given LCC does not automatically refer to our Neighbourhood Plan it's important residents should be made aware that when responding to a planning application, they have to refer LCC Planners to the Dev Plan otherwise it will be ignored. This survey is a bit simplistic and the paper version even more so.”
- “School places, surgery and doctor provision, civic amenities eg library provision, police support, citizen advice facilities, traffic planning commensurate with a town with over 24,000 residents.”
- “Warm spaces for elderly”
- “Anti-social behaviour of young people”

Analysis

With just half (65) of the respondents (130) aware of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is clear more work is needed to publicise the existence of the Plan.

On average, those aware of the Plan's existence had a slightly better opinion of its ability to achieve the stated objectives (3.0 vs 2.8 for those unaware of the existence of the plan).

The top three identified priorities of the plan, per the public response, are as follows:

1. Protecting Horsforth's natural heritage, including landscape and green space (71 respondents)
2. Development and growth of local businesses (50 respondents)
3. Preserving Horsforth's character and appearance and conserving Horsforth's built heritage assets (49 respondents)

The rating of the plan's success in achieving these priorities was slightly above average (3.1, 3.1 and 3.2 respectively).

The bottom three identified priorities of the plan, per the public response, are as follows:

1. Protecting and supporting new community assets (19 respondents)
2. Ensuring new build developments complements the local character (17 respondents)
3. Growth in housing (14 respondents)

However, one area of concern is that the public believe that the plan is not achieving its aims with regards to Transport system infrastructure (including encouraging less car use), which was the 4th highest priority as identified by 48 respondents. A score of just 2.4 was achieved in this area. The Town Council should explore what more work can be done to bring this element of the Plan back on track.

In terms of the free-form comments, the following were common themes:

- Traffic issues, including speeding and congestion.
 - This is unsurprising considering the low rating mentioned above
- Crime, including anti-social behaviour

- Provision for young people (including youth services and school places)
- Services and facilities
- Energy use, the environment and sustainability

A couple of comments were made about the survey itself, highlighting that perhaps the intention of the survey needed to be made clearer, within the context of the review being in an early stage.