



Have your say

Wirral's Biodiversity Strategy Consultation Report



Consultation: 26 June 2023 – 24 July 2023

Report: 15 August 2023

Contents

1.0 Executive Summary.....	3
1.1 Key Findings.....	4
2.0 Methodology.....	5
2.1 Questionnaire.....	5
2.2 Analysis of Respondents	6
2.3 Interpretation of Results	6
2.4 Communication	7
3.0 Results.....	8
3.1 The Questionnaire.....	8
3.2 Ideas Board.....	20
3.3 Map	21
4.0 Demographics and Site Traffic.....	23
4.1 Demographics.....	23
4.2 Have Your Say - Site Traffic	27



1.0 Executive Summary

Biodiversity is the variety of natural things around us such as the different types of animals and insects, their habitats, and their ecosystems.

Having varied and good biodiversity is important because it can provide us with many functions such as cleaning our air and our water and pollinating our food. It can also help store carbon from emissions and provide natural flood defences.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to planning (such as new developments) and land management that leaves the natural environment in a better state than it was before.

From November 2023, all planning permission granted in England, with a few exceptions, will have to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG under the Environment Act 2021.

In Wirral, we have a rich biodiversity, from our coasts, lowland heaths, and woodland to our environmental sites of national, European, and international significance – with eleven Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) across the borough.

The council's declaration of an environment and climate emergency in July 2019 recognised the importance of biodiversity through our aim to double our tree canopy cover, transform our open spaces and build a resilient borough.

As a council, we need, and want, to continue to do everything we can to protect what we have and continue to improve our biodiversity. This will start with BNG being built into the Wirral Local Plan 2021-2037 under development policy and being applied to all developments from November 2023.

To continue to deliver on this, we plan to produce a BNG Strategy for Wirral. This strategy will address how we can respond and act on our new duties to protect biodiversity, but we also want it to reflect what our residents think.

1.1 Key Findings

- 116 people in total were engaged: 111 completed the questionnaire, 6 placed a pin on the map and 9 put ideas on the ideas board.
- 89.2% of the responses said they were aware (37.8%) or very aware (51.4%) of biodiversity. 3.6% said they were unaware (1.8%) or very unaware (1.8%). (Question 1)
- 92.7% of the responses said that biodiversity is important (12.8%) or very important (79.8%). 4.6% said that biodiversity is low importance (1.8%) or not at all important (2.8%). (Question 2)
- 87.4% of the responses agreed that supporting natural ecosystems e.g., habitat provision, pollination, water filtration is important. The next most popular options were conservation of biodiversity for future generations (85.6%), creating wildlife corridors (84.7%) and enhancing sites to promote biodiversity (82.0%). (Question 3)
- 80.2% of the responses said that development was this biggest threat to biodiversity in Wirral. The next most popular options were habitat loss (71.2%), land management practices (62.2%) and climate change (55.9%). (Question 4)
- All priorities had a high level of agreement. The priority that respondents agreed with the most was, “Harness the wealth of local knowledge and expertise to identify opportunities and solutions to local biodiversity issues.” (Question 5)
- Alternative suggestions for our biodiversity priorities included: (Question 6)
 - Engage with other bodies (18.2%).
 - No building on greenfield sites (18.2%).
 - Planning process changes (15.9%).
- Initiatives in Wirral that respondents told us about included: New Ferry Butterfly Park (13.0%), multiple community groups caring for our green spaces (10.9%), Wirral Wildlife (10.9%) and reduce mowing (6.5%). (Question 7)
- 64.5% of the responses said that they would be willing to be engaged to support biodiversity. 17.3% said they were not willing to be engaged, and 18.2% said they didn't know. (Question 8)
- Ideas board: of the ideas placed on the ideas board, the most prevalent themes were to reduce mowing (36.4%), focus on gardens (27.3%) and plant trees (18.2%).
- Places tool: there were 6 contributors, and 13 pins were placed on the map. 3 priority habitats were identified, 2 priority species: great crested newts and bats, 6 areas for habitat creation and 1 area for habitat enhancement.

2.0 Methodology

Through the Wirral's Biodiversity Strategy Consultation, people were asked to tell us what they understand about biodiversity, how they think it affects Wirral and their community, what is most important to the borough in terms of biodiversity, any current projects they are involved in and if they would like to support us to continue to protect Wirral's biodiversity.

The consultation was carried out between 26 June 2023 and 24 July 2023. The approach used was an online public consultation through the 'Have your say' consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk with a page dedicated to the Wirral's Biodiversity Strategy Consultation. Useful information provided on the site included a document detailing the draft priorities of the Biodiversity Strategy, a document and video explaining biodiversity net gain and relevant links on the council's website.

An online questionnaire, an ideas board and a map were provided for residents to engage with. Respondents were also able to request paper copies, get help completing the questionnaire, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the 'Have your say' website alongside the online questionnaire.

Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered at the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on Monday 23 October 2023.

2.1 Questionnaire

The consultation questionnaire was developed around understanding stakeholder views on the following key areas:

- Respondents' awareness of biodiversity
- The importance of biodiversity
- Biodiversity themes important to stakeholders
- The threats and challenges to biodiversity
- Their views on the proposed key priorities for Wirral's Biodiversity and Net Gain Strategy
- Current initiatives in place to support biodiversity
- Whether respondents would be willing to be engaged and contacted to develop biodiversity community action.

To enable further understanding, and in-depth analysis, respondents were invited to provide free-text comments to expand on their ideas or concerns. Following closure of the consultation, the responses to each of the direct questions were collated and the responses included in this report. For the free-text comment questions, a text coding approach was used based on the reoccurring themes. This data was then collated and summarised in the report.

2.2 Analysis of Respondents

Respondents to the online tools were provided with the option to provide demographic information about themselves. It must be noted that this is an option and that not all respondents included this information. This data allows the demographic results to be included in this report to enable analysis of the scope of responses and representation from different demographic groups.

2.3 Interpretation of Results

In terms of the results, it is important to note that:

- The public consultation is not representative of the overall population but provides information the opinion of those residents who engaged.
- For some questions, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a statement, on a scale of Strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The average score out of 5 for each option was calculated to enable us to identify those statements that were most agreed with. The higher the average score, the higher the level of agreement with the statement.
- Free-text questions that offered respondents the option to provide written feedback could have covered multiple themes. Therefore, with free-text responses were categorised using a coding system. The percentages given, reflect the percentage of respondents who made the comment. As they may have made more than one comment, the total percentage may exceed 100%.
- For some questions, respondents were asked to select one or more options. The percentages given, reflect the percentage of respondents who selected the options. As they may have made more than one options, the total percentage may exceed 100%.

2.4 Communication

The consultation was promoted through the council's corporate digital communication channels. This included:

- Consultation on Have Your Say website, through the Climate Action Hub.
- Organic social media post on council's corporate accounts – reach 4,853 people (Facebook only), 12,259 impressions and 388 engagements including 72 link clicks (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn).
- Targeted (paid for) social media advert to Wirral residents – 25,008 impressions, 74,292 impressions and 743 link clicks.
- Media releases issued to local print and digital media, covered in Birkenhead News.
- Wirral View news articles with 110 page views and 55 engaged.
- Resident email to over 21,000 email addresses – with an average open rate of 49%.
- Internal news shared with council staff through Exec View (internal staff e-newsletter) and staff intranet.

3.0 Results

3.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was responded to by 111 people. 111 responses came through the online portal, no paper copies were requested or completed. No questions were mandatory so respondents could choose which questions to respond to.

3.1.1 Question 1: How aware do you feel about biodiversity?

111 people answered this question. Respondents selected one option that they agreed with. Overall, 89.2% of the responses said they were aware (37.8%) or very aware (51.4%) about biodiversity. 3.6% said they were unaware (1.8%) or very unaware (1.8%).

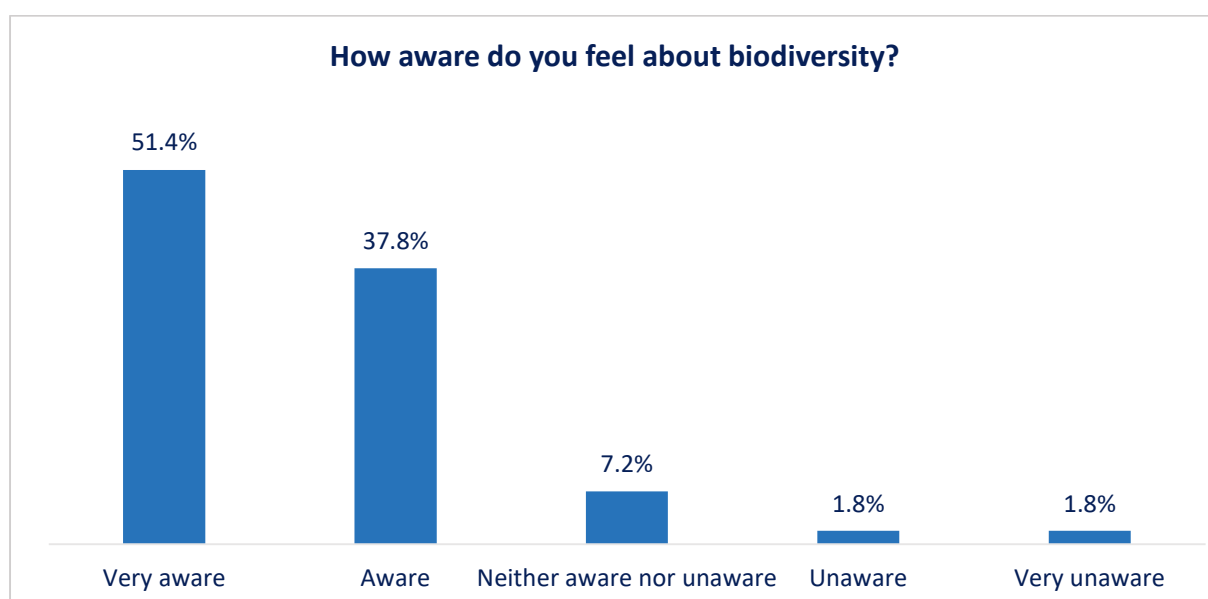


Figure 1: Chart displaying results to “How aware do you feel about biodiversity?”

How aware do you feel about biodiversity?	Total	%
Very aware	57	51.4%
Aware	42	37.8%
Neither aware nor unaware	8	7.2%
Unaware	2	1.8%
Very unaware	2	1.8%
Total	111	100.0%

Table 1: Table displaying results to “How aware do you feel about biodiversity?”

3.1.2 Question 2: How important do you think biodiversity is for Wirral and our communities?

109 people answered this question. Respondents selected one option that they agreed with. Overall, 92.7% of the responses said that biodiversity is important (12.8%) or very important (79.8%). 4.6% said that biodiversity is low importance (1.8%) or not at all important (2.8%).

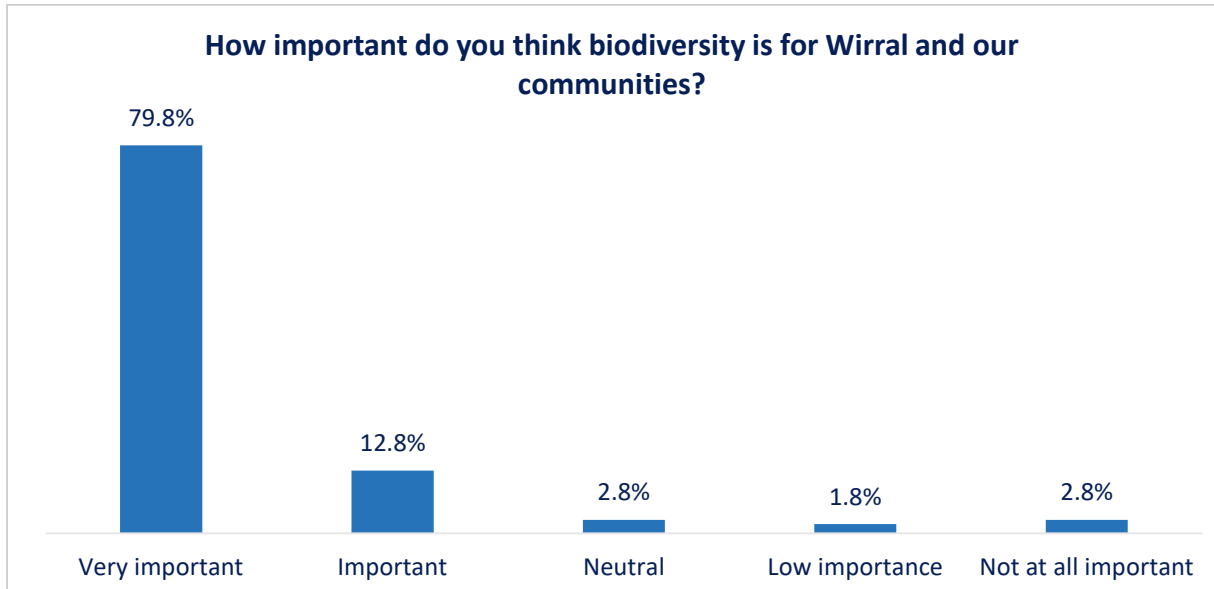


Figure 2: Chart displaying results to “How important do you think biodiversity is for Wirral and our communities?”

How important do you think biodiversity is for Wirral and our communities?	Total	%
Very important	87	79.8%
Important	14	12.8%
Neutral	3	2.8%
Low importance	2	1.8%
Not at all important	3	2.8%
Total	109	100.0%

Table 2: Table displaying results to “How important do you think biodiversity is for Wirral and our communities?”

3.1.3 Question 3: What biodiversity themes do you think are important in Wirral? Please select all that apply.

111 people answered this question, and they may have selected more than one option. 87.4% of the responses agreed that supporting natural ecosystems e.g. habitat provision, pollination, water filtration is important. The next most popular options were conservation of biodiversity for future generations (85.6%), creating wildlife corridors (84.7%) and enhancing sites to promote biodiversity (82.0%).

16 people selected “other” and answered the free text option and may have discussed more than one theme. Of these, there was only one common theme, mentioned by 4 respondents, which was encouraging homeowners to enhance biodiversity on their property.

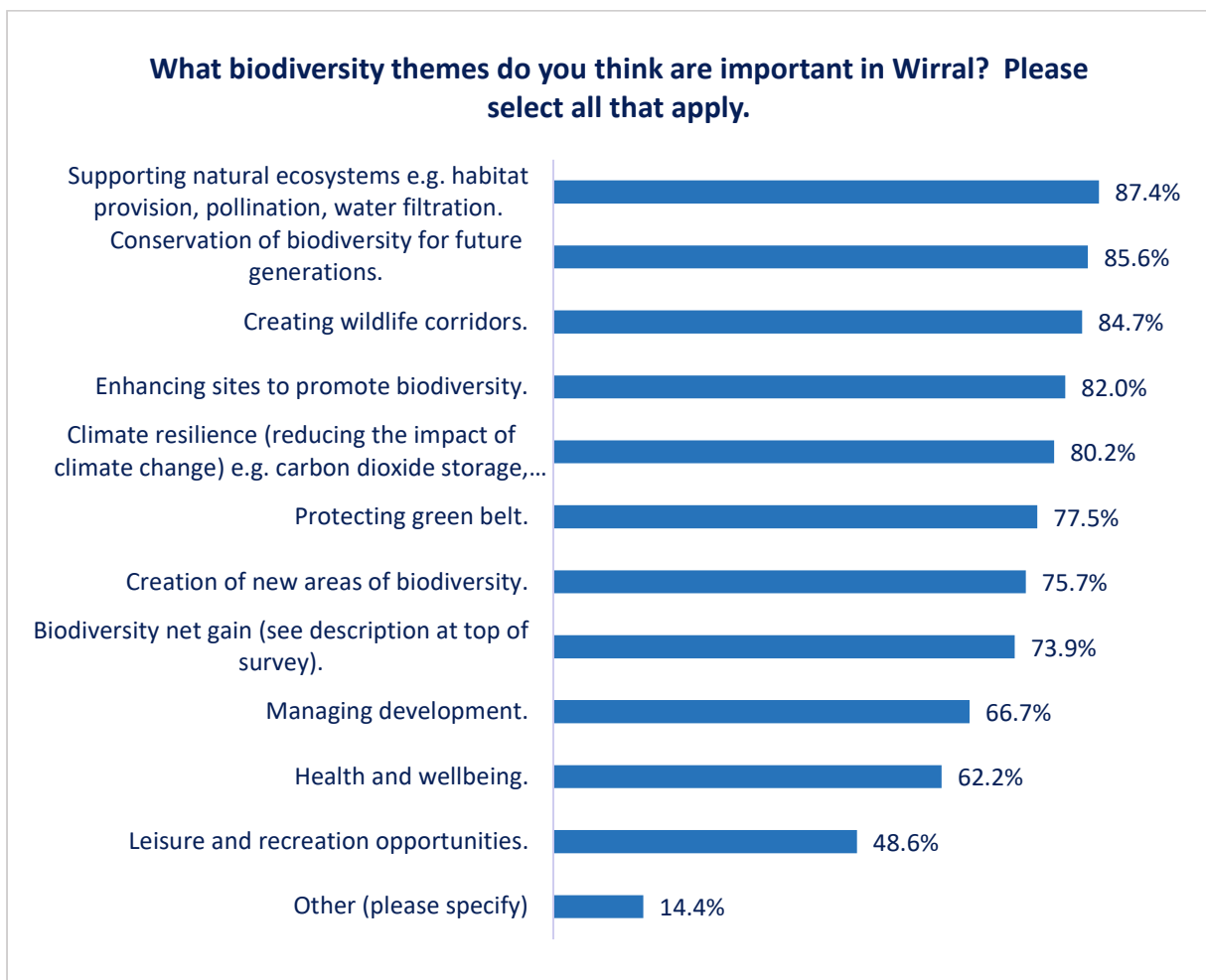


Figure 3: Chart displaying results to “What biodiversity themes do you think are important in Wirral? Please select all that apply.”

What biodiversity themes do you think are important in Wirral? Please select all that apply.	Total	%
Supporting natural ecosystems e.g. habitat provision, pollination, water filtration.	97	87.4%
Conservation of biodiversity for future generations.	95	85.6%
Creating wildlife corridors.	94	84.7%
Enhancing sites to promote biodiversity.	91	82.0%
Climate resilience (reducing the impact of climate change) e.g. carbon dioxide storage, natural flood defences, resilient ecosystems.	89	80.2%
Protecting green belt.	86	77.5%
Creation of new areas of biodiversity.	84	75.7%
Biodiversity net gain (see description at top of survey).	82	73.9%
Managing development.	74	66.7%
Health and wellbeing.	69	62.2%
Leisure and recreation opportunities.	54	48.6%
Other (please specify)	16	14.4%

Table 3: Table displaying results to “What biodiversity themes do you think are important in Wirral? Please select all that apply.”

3.1.4 Question 4: What do you consider the greatest challenges and threats to biodiversity in Wirral? Please select all that apply.

111 people answered this question, and they may have selected more than one option. 80.2% of the responses said that development was this biggest threat to biodiversity in Wirral. The next most popular options were habitat loss (71.2%), land management practices (62.2%) and climate change (55.9%).

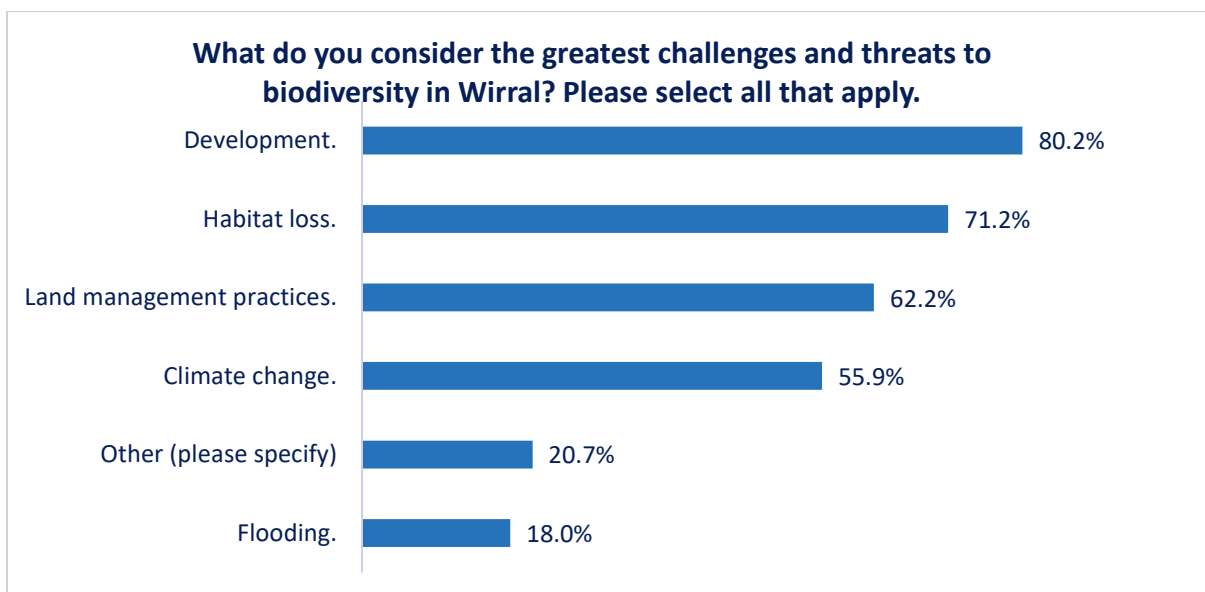


Figure 4: Chart displaying results to “What do you consider the greatest challenges and threats to biodiversity in Wirral?”

What do you consider the greatest challenges and threats to biodiversity in Wirral? Please select all that apply.	Total	%
Development.	89	80.2%
Habitat loss.	79	71.2%
Land management practices.	69	62.2%
Climate change.	62	55.9%
Other (please specify)	23	20.7%
Flooding.	20	18.0%

Table 4: Table displaying results to “What do you consider the greatest challenges and threats to biodiversity in Wirral?”

23 people selected “other” and answered the free text option and may have discussed more than one theme. Of these, there were 2 common themes. 5 people discussed that there is a lack of awareness from the community about biodiversity, with some mentioning careless use of recreation areas, and others discussing general ignorance of our environmental impact. 5 respondents levelled criticism towards Wirral Council, saying that there was a lack of joined-up-thinking and not enough action.

3.1.5 Question 5: Wirral Council has developed six draft priorities to support and uphold biodiversity, please help us shape these by telling us whether you agree with them.

For each priority, respondents selected their level of agreement. In the results below, a higher number means a higher level of agreement.

The priority that respondents agreed with the most was, “Harness the wealth of local knowledge and expertise to identify opportunities and solutions to local biodiversity issues,” with a score of 4.52. The priority with the second highest level of agreement was, “Promote awareness of biodiversity, supporting and encouraging positive action from communities, businesses and organisations in Wirral,” with a score of 4.45.

The statements for which there was the lowest level of agreement were “Secure measurable biodiversity net gain for all development projects in Wirral,” and “Embed the biodiversity objective in all that we do in Wirral Council,” with scores of 4.23, however all priorities had a high level of agreement.

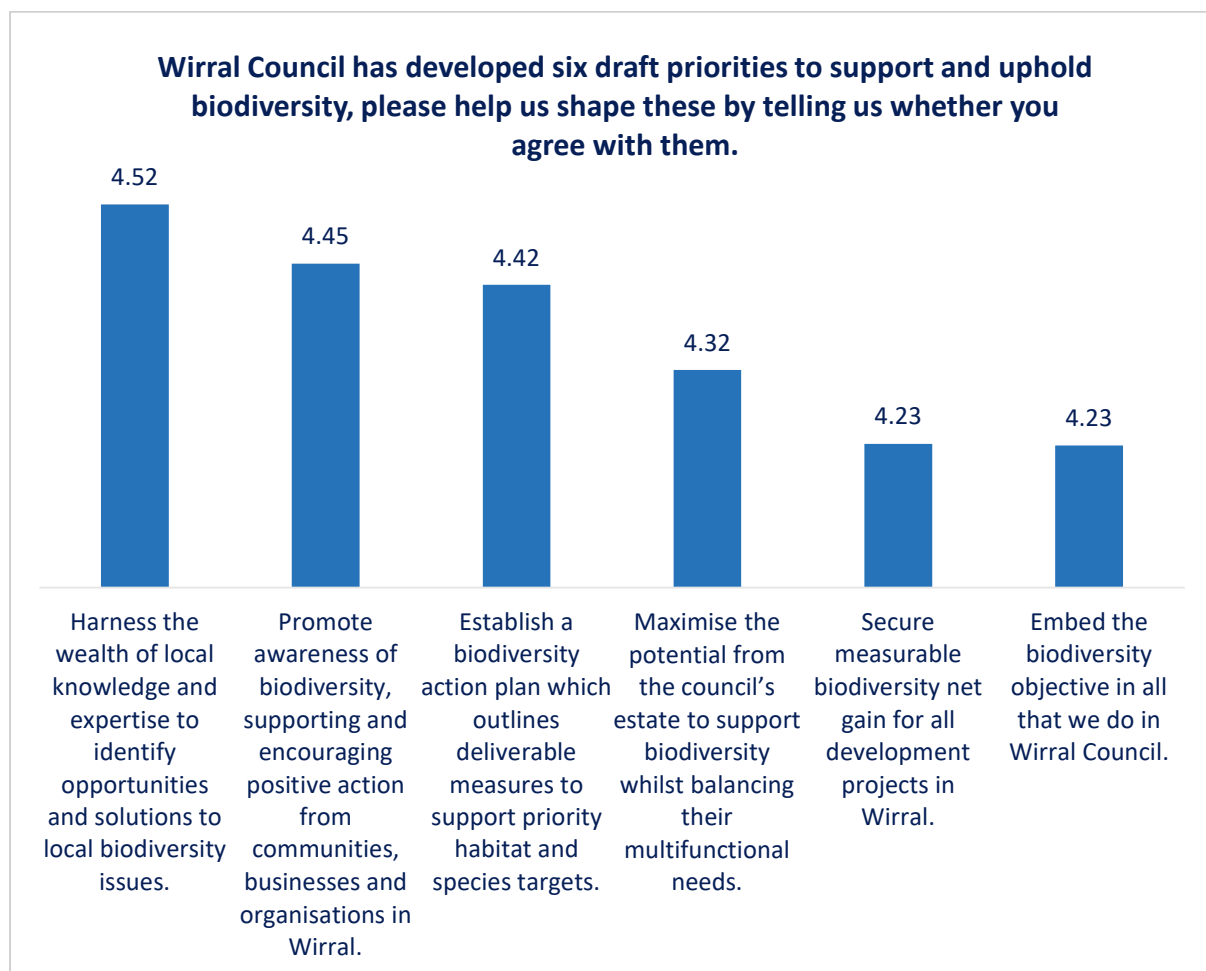


Figure 5: Chart displaying results to “Wirral Council has developed six draft priorities to support and uphold biodiversity, please help us shape these by telling us whether you agree with them.”

Wirral Council has developed six draft priorities to support and uphold biodiversity, please help us shape these by telling us whether you agree with them.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Dis-agree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Average score
Harness the wealth of local knowledge and expertise to identify opportunities and solutions to local biodiversity issues.	77	25	2	4	3	4.52
Promote awareness of biodiversity, supporting and encouraging positive action from communities, businesses and organisations in Wirral.	70	26	8	2	3	4.45
Establish a biodiversity action plan which outlines deliverable measures to support priority habitat and species targets.	75	21	7	3	5	4.42
Maximise the potential from the council's estate to support biodiversity whilst balancing their multifunctional needs.	64	29	8	6	3	4.28
Secure measurable biodiversity net gain for all development projects in Wirral.	66	19	14	6	5	4.23
Embed the biodiversity objective in all that we do in Wirral Council.	67	18	14	8	4	4.23

Table 5: Table displaying results to “Wirral Council has developed six draft priorities to support and uphold biodiversity, please help us shape these by telling us whether you agree with them.”

3.1.6 Question 6: If you have alternative suggestions for our biodiversity priorities across Wirral, please add them below.

44 people answered this free text question. Below are the top themes that emerged from the free-text comments as a percentage of the number of people who provided an answer to the question. As the percentage reflects the proportion of respondents who made the comment and that respondents may have made more than one comment in their answer, the total percentages may exceed 100%.

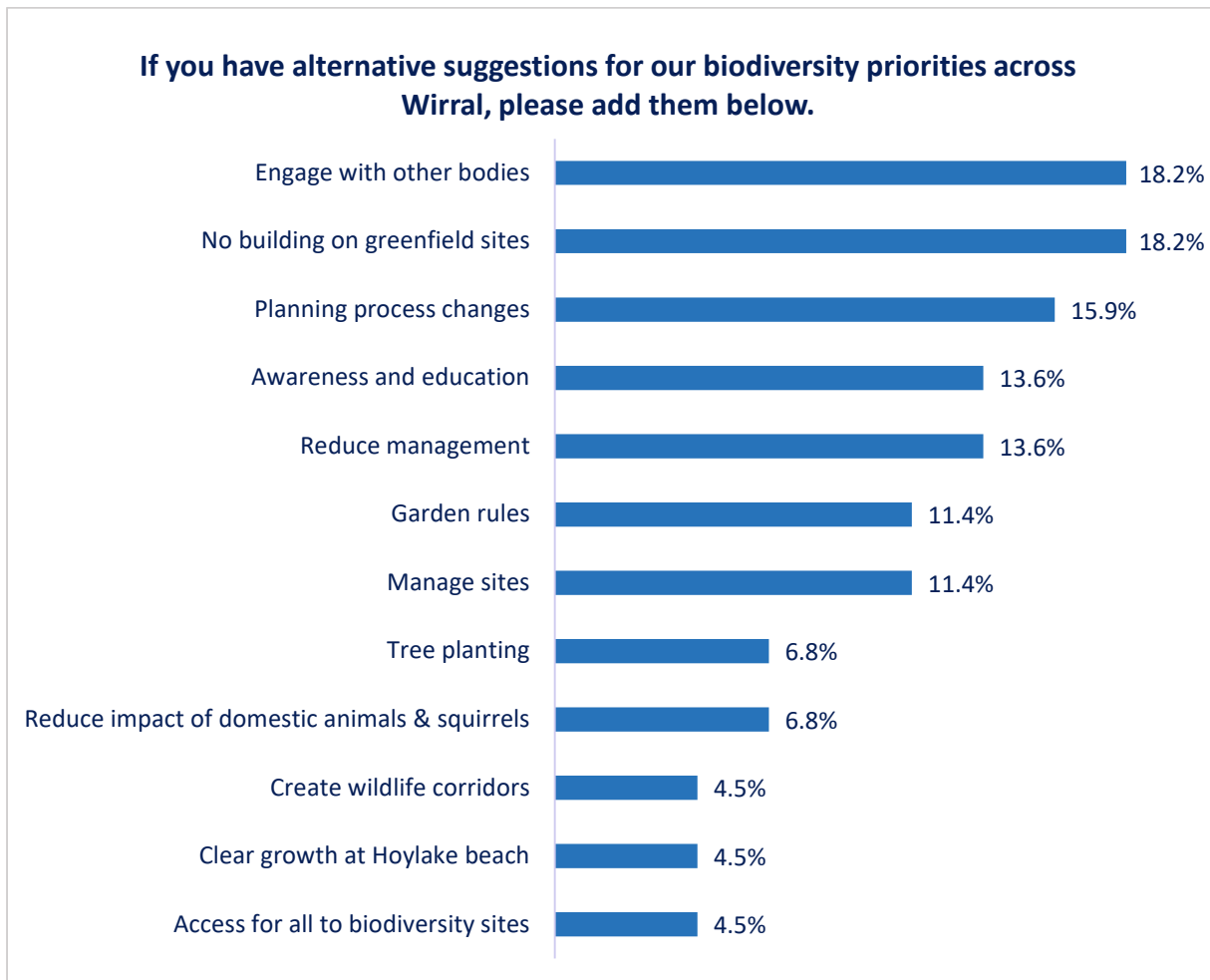


Figure 6: Chart displaying results to “If you have alternative suggestions for our biodiversity priorities across Wirral, please add them below.”

If you have alternative suggestions for our biodiversity priorities across Wirral, please add them below.	Total	%
Engage with other bodies	8	18.2%
No building on greenfield sites	8	18.2%
Planning process changes	7	15.9%
Awareness and education	6	13.6%
Reduce management	6	13.6%
Garden rules	5	11.4%
Manage sites	5	11.4%
Tree planting	3	6.8%
Reduce impact of domestic animals & squirrels	3	6.8%
Create wildlife corridors	2	4.5%
Clear growth at Hoylake beach	2	4.5%
Access for all to biodiversity sites	2	4.5%

Table 6: Table displaying results to "If you have alternative suggestions for our biodiversity priorities across Wirral, please add them below."

The most common themes discussed were:

- **Engage with other bodies (18.2%).** Respondents suggested that the council should use local knowledge, and some suggested specific bodies that should be engaged, including:
 - Facilities management companies
 - Building services
 - Community forests
 - Community groups (friends of Parks and "in Bloom" volunteers)
 - Local ecologists
 - Farmers
 - Highways agency and National Rail (regarding the land at the side of motorways and railways)
 - Hitachi
- **No building on greenfield sites (18.2%).** Respondents do not want developments built on green belt land.
- **Planning process changes (15.9%).** Some felt that changes need to be made to the planning process, to ensure biodiversity is sustained and improved. Some felt that the planning process must not be delayed, and others said that development rules should be enforced.
- **Awareness and education (13.6%).** Respondents said that awareness and education were important, with 2 people specifically mentioning that children should be educated.
- **Reduce management (13.6%).** People said that areas should be allowed to grow wild, and that mowing should be reduced.

3.1.7 Question 7: We want to identify, celebrate, and learn from initiatives in Wirral that support the enhancement and creation of biodiversity. Please tell us of any local initiatives and actions that are already taking place in Wirral.

46 people answered this free text question. Below are the top themes that emerged from the free-text comments as a percentage of the number of people who provided an answer to the question. As the percentage reflects the proportion of respondents who made the comment and that respondents may have made more than one comment in their answer, the total percentages may exceed 100%.



Figure 7: Chart displaying results to “We want to identify, celebrate, and learn from initiatives in Wirral that support the enhancement and creation of biodiversity. Please tell us of any local initiatives and actions that are already taking place in Wirral.”

We want to identify, celebrate, and learn from initiatives in Wirral that support the enhancement and creation of biodiversity. Please tell us of any local initiatives and actions that are already taking place in Wirral.	Total	%
New Ferry Butterfly Park	6	13.0%
Multiple community groups caring for our green spaces	5	10.9%
Wirral Wildlife	5	10.9%
Reduce mowing	3	6.5%
Wirral Tree Wardens	2	4.3%
Scout litter picking	2	4.3%
Wildflower planting	2	4.3%
Wirral Countryside Volunteers	2	4.3%
Wirral Ranger	2	4.3%
Hoylake beach - important for biodiversity	2	4.3%
Incredible Edible	2	4.3%

Table 7: Table displaying the results to “We want to identify, celebrate and learn from initiatives in Wirral that support the enhancement and creation of biodiversity. Please tell us of any local initiatives and actions that are already taking place in Wirral.”

3.1.8 Question 8: Would you be willing to be engaged and support biodiversity and net gain in future work to develop biodiversity community action? By selecting “Yes”, you give us your permission to contact you on the email address provided at registration.

110 people answered this question. Respondents selected one option that they agreed with. 64.5% of the responses said that they would be willing to be engaged to support biodiversity. 17.3% said they were not willing to be engaged, and 18.2% said they didn’t know.

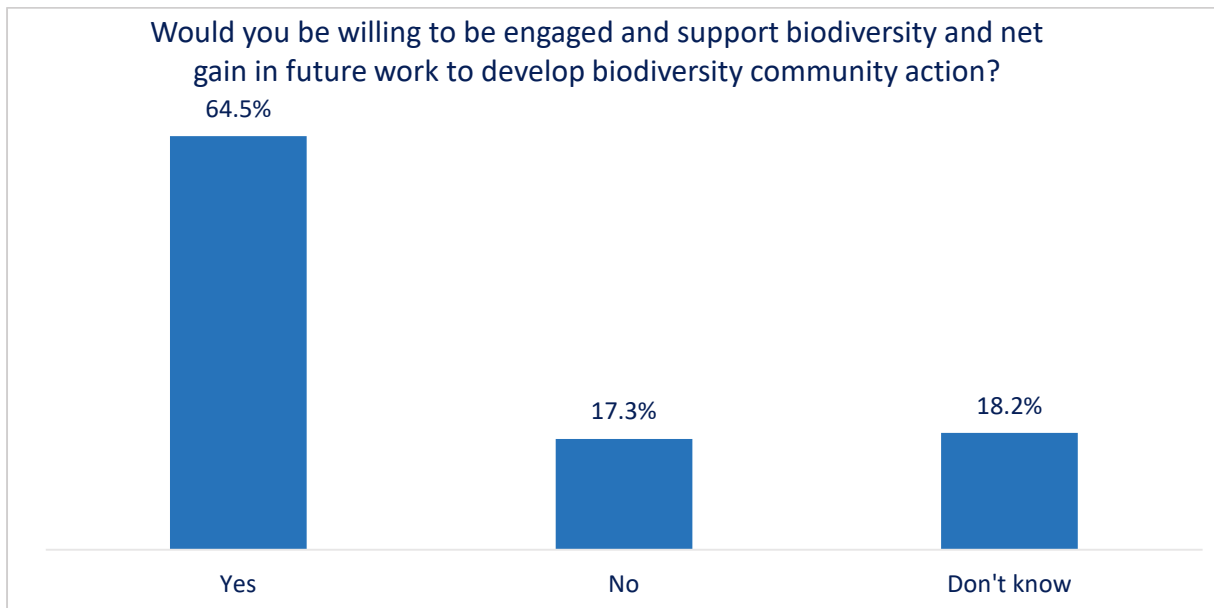


Figure 8: Chart displaying results to “Would you be willing to be engaged and support biodiversity and net gain in future work to develop biodiversity community action?”

Would you be willing to be engaged and support biodiversity and net gain in future work to develop biodiversity community action? By selecting “Yes”, you give us your permission to contact you on the email address provided at registration.	Total	%
Yes	71	64.5%
No	19	17.3%
Don't know	20	18.2%
Total	110	100.0%

Table 8: Table displaying results to “Would you be willing to be engaged and support biodiversity and net gain in future work to develop biodiversity community action?”

3.2 Ideas Board

Respondents were asked to share their ideas to promote biodiversity in Wirral on an ideas board. 9 people engaged with the ideas board, with 11 ideas and 11 likes.

Below are the themes that emerged from the ideas as a percentage of the number of people who provided an answer to the question. As the percentage reflects the proportion of respondents who made the comment and that respondents may have made more than one comment in their answer, the total percentages may exceed 100%.

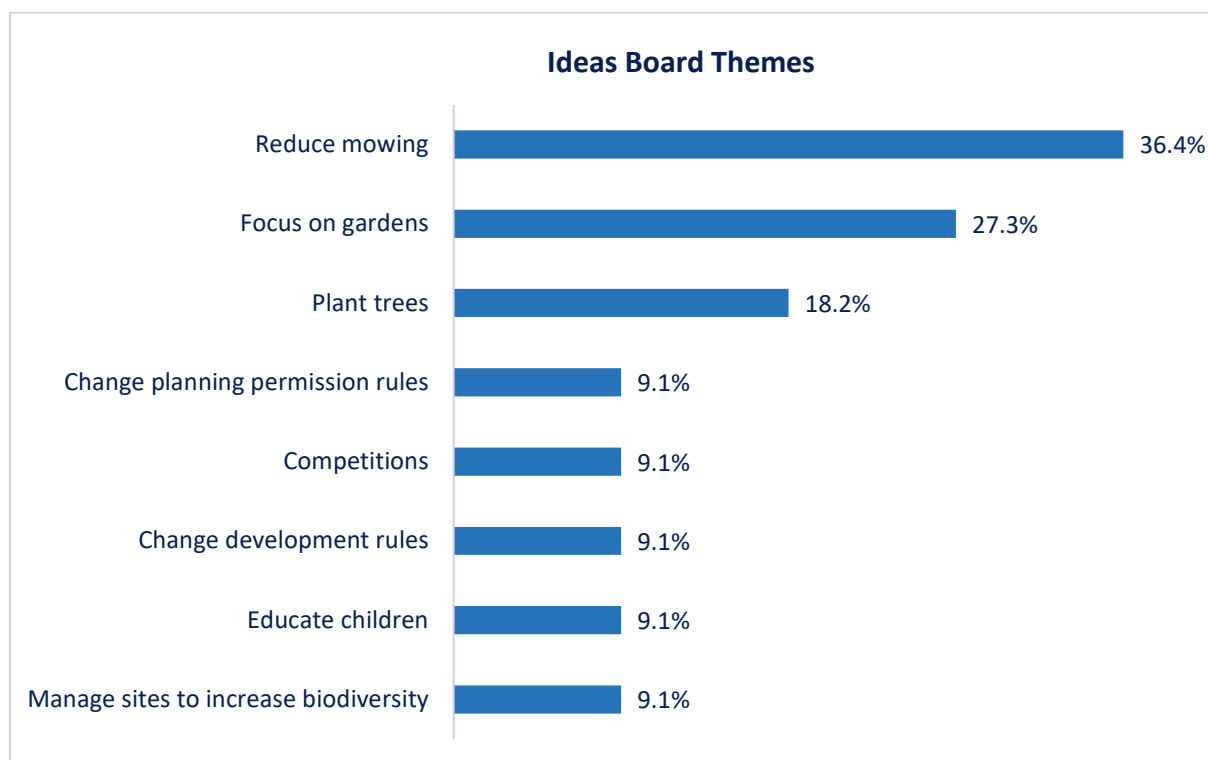


Figure 9: Chart showing themes from the ideas board

- **Reduce mowing (36.4%).** Respondents said that mowing should be reduced to allow more wildflowers to grow and increase the biodiversity.
- **Focus on gardens (27.3%).** People said that there should be a focus and possibly incentives to encourage residents to create areas for biodiversity in their gardens.
- **Plant trees (18.2%).** Respondents said that more trees should be planted.

The idea with the most likes (3) was:

Idea: Grasslands / verges

Description: Go further than No Mow May, and only cut grasses once or twice per year, except the border strip with paths and roads. Divert labour resource to tree planting, tree maintenance, and other habitat maintenance.

3.3 Map

Users were invited to place pins on a map to show the following:

- Priority habitats - areas of habitat that could be identified as a priority for action and protection.
- Priority species - areas that are important to various species in Wirral.
- Habitat creation - areas that could be used for habitat creation and/or enhancement initiatives, such as unused spaces and open green spaces.
- Habitat enhancement - areas where there are opportunities to enhance existing habitats that may be in poor condition or have potential.
- Wildlife corridor - areas that link up fragmented habitats, or where corridors could be created for wildlife to move through.
- Education/ recreation opportunity - areas that are good for education and recreation to enable more people to access nature.

There were 6 contributors, and 13 pins were placed on the map.

The details are shown below:

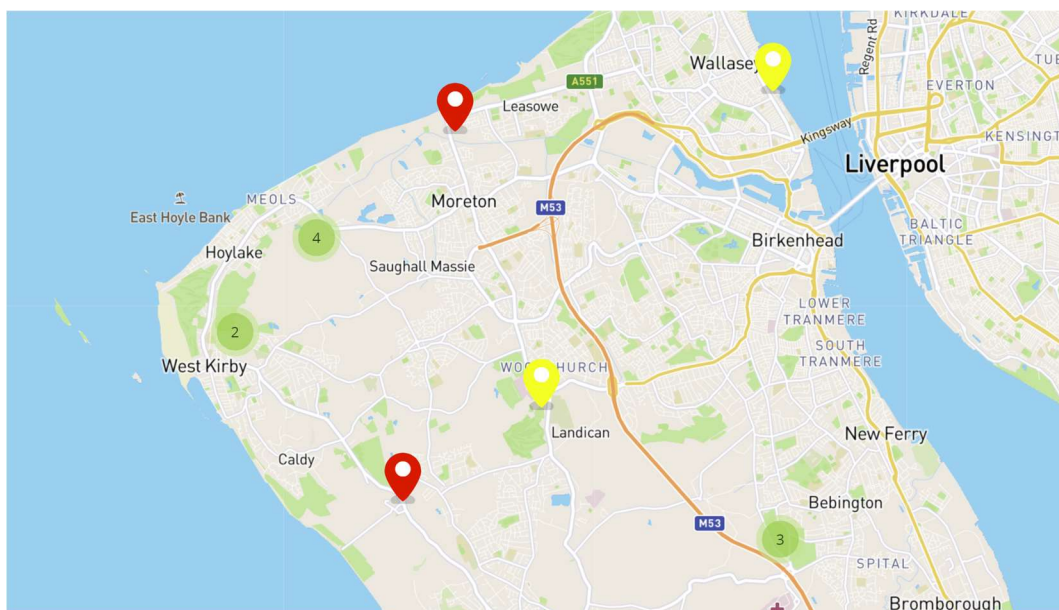


Figure 10: Map showing location of pins

CATEGORY	COMMENT	LOCATION
Priority habitat	<p>This patch of land and verges next to the Cottage Loaf are home to a variety of invertebrate species such as Skipper butterflies and Burnet moths.</p> 	Land next to the Cottage Loaf, Telegraph Road, Thurstaston, Wirral, CH61 0HQ
Priority habitat	This area of seasonal wetlands hold breeding birds and appears from the boundaries to be excellent botanical habitat	Ditton Lane, Wirral, CH46 3SJ
Priority habitat	Make sure this land becomes local greenspace.	The Sheepfield, Grange Road, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 4EQ
Priority species	Possible great crested newts on site	Brackenwood Road, Bebington, Wirral, CH63 2LT
Priority species	Bats identified on site - protected species.	Mount Road, Bebington, Wirral, CH63 2LU
Habitat creation	This whole area should be totally rewilded as a natural wetland. It will then attract birds and other wildlife and become a hugely important nature reserve which will present educational and commercial opportunities as visitors come to observe the wildlife and landscape.	Previous site of Hoylake Municipal Golf Club
Habitat creation	Make use of the disused tennis courts and bowling greens by creating community gardens which attract wildlife and can be used to educate the public about horticulture and biodiversity.	Land to the west of Arrowe Park Rd, Wirral, England CH49 5LW
Habitat creation	Give neighbours the padlock and allow us to develop the steep bank with wildflowers - would also mean there would be no need for Wirral employees to mow it	Egremont Promenade, Wallasey, CH44 8BG
Habitat creation	This should be rewilded to Willow Carr and seasonal wetland	Land east of George Road, Hoylake, Wirral, CH47 4BE
Habitat creation	Re-wilding in BNG plan for CAT of golf course	Brackenwood Road, Bebington, Wirral, CH63 2PG
Habitat creation	This used to be a pond which was filled in without permission during the 1980s. This could be reintroduced as a new habitat and a community nature feature.	Land south of Acres Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 9SQ
Habitat creation	This green belt has been 'land banked' by the owners. It floods and could make a great community-inspired wetlands project. It is situated by a public footpath.	Land to the west of Birch Road, Meols, Wirral, CH47 9RH
Habitat enhancement	These fields are naturally wet meadows - they should be managed as such. The SSSI at Meols Meadows has degraded markedly this sort of area could be a replacement	Land behind Barn Hey Crescent, Meols, Wirral, CH47 9RW

Table 9: Table showing comments and locations of pins

4.0 Demographics and Site Traffic

4.1 Demographics

Registration was required to engage in the online Wirral’s Biodiversity Strategy consultation. The registration form included questions regarding demographics including gender, age group, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, however not all questions in the registration form were compulsory and respondents could choose to select ‘prefer not to say’ or skip the question. The demographics results are summarised below. The same questions were included on the paper-copy questionnaires.

Most respondents (83.3%) classed themselves as local residents.



Figure 11: Chart displaying registering

The age group profile is illustrated below with the most common age groups being 55-64 years (35.3%), followed by 45-54 years (20.6%) and 35-44 years (18.6%). There were no under 16s and the age groups 16-24 and 75+ only made up 2.0% of respondents each.

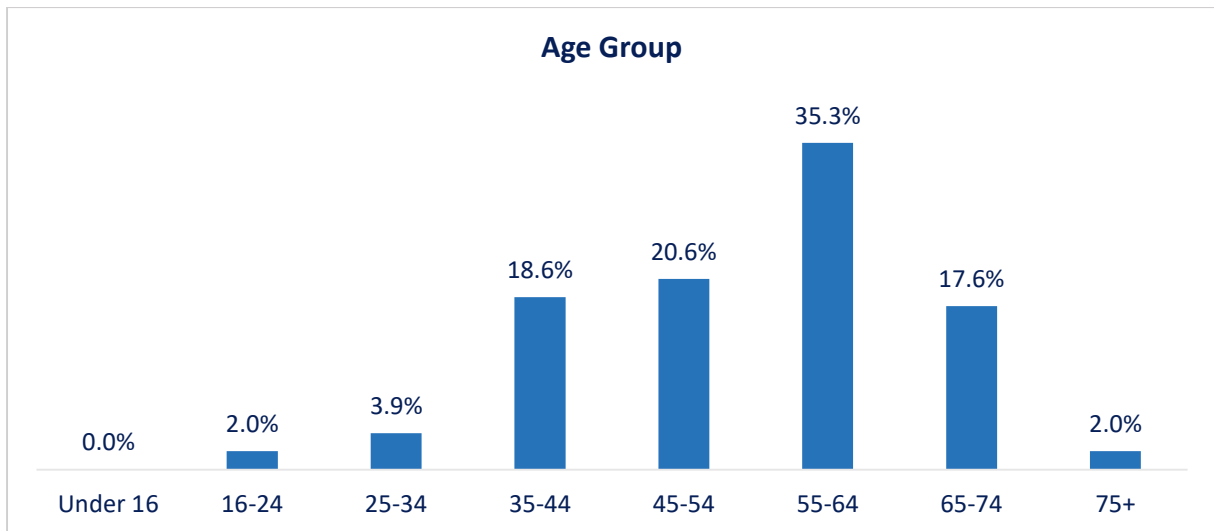


Figure 12: Chart displaying age groups

60.4% of respondents identified as female and, 33.7% male. 5.0% preferred not to say and 1.0% preferred to use their own term.

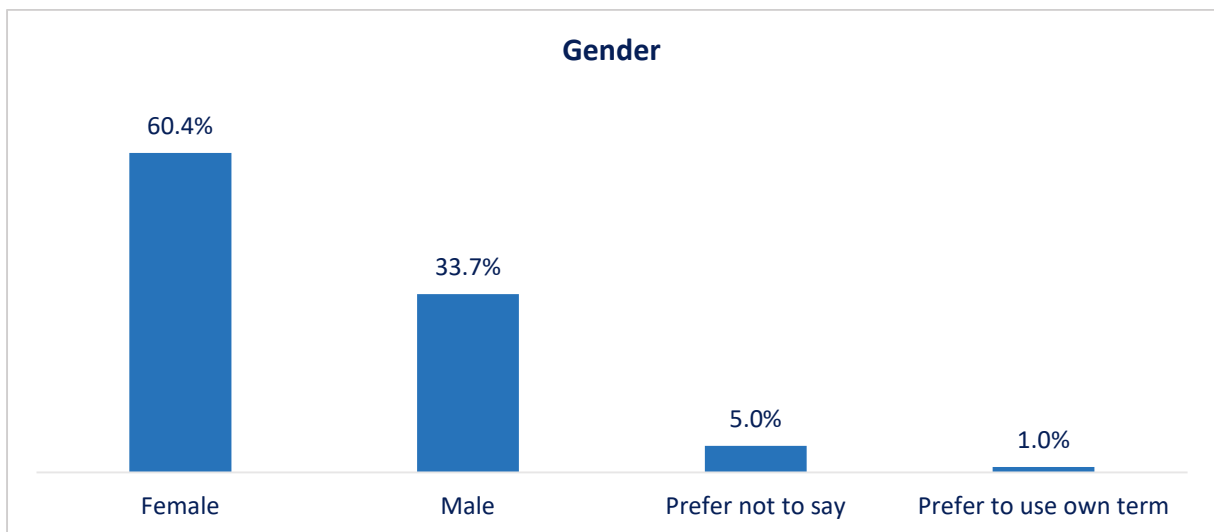


Figure 13: Chart displaying gender

74.5% of respondents were heterosexual, 4.9% were gay/ lesbian, 2.0% bisexual and 18.6% preferred not to say.

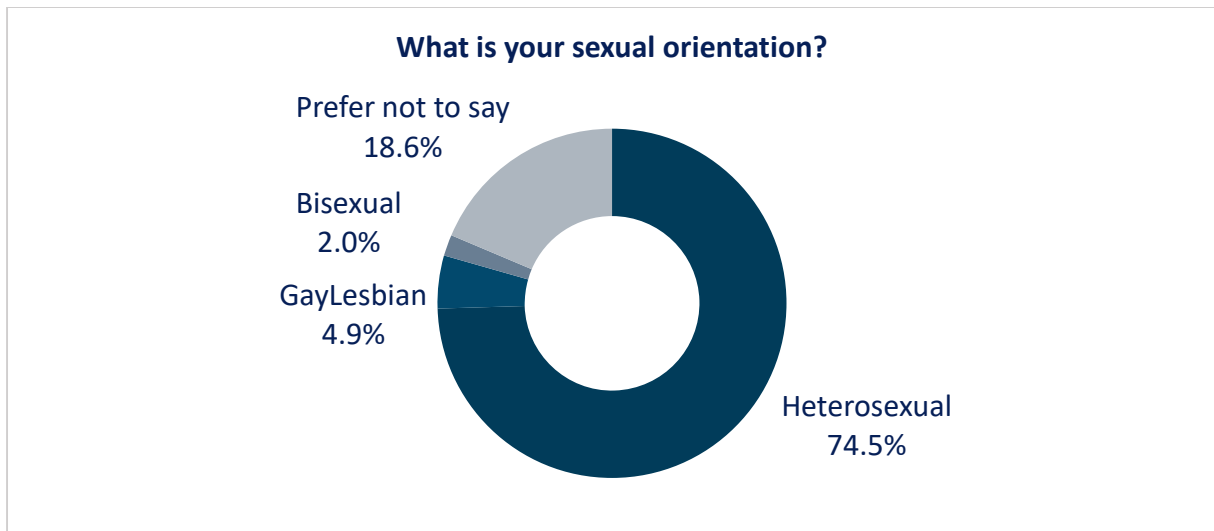


Figure 14: Chart displaying sexual orientation

88.9% said they did not have a disability whilst 7.4% of respondents said that they had a disability. 3.7% preferred not to say.

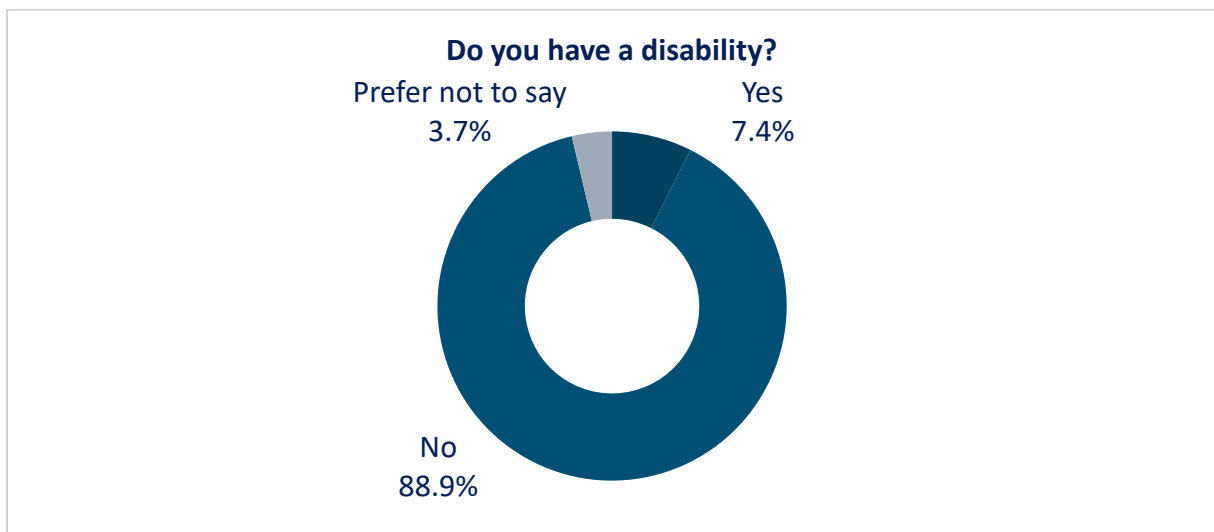


Figure 15: Chart displaying disability

The majority (91.5%) of respondents identified as White – English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British.

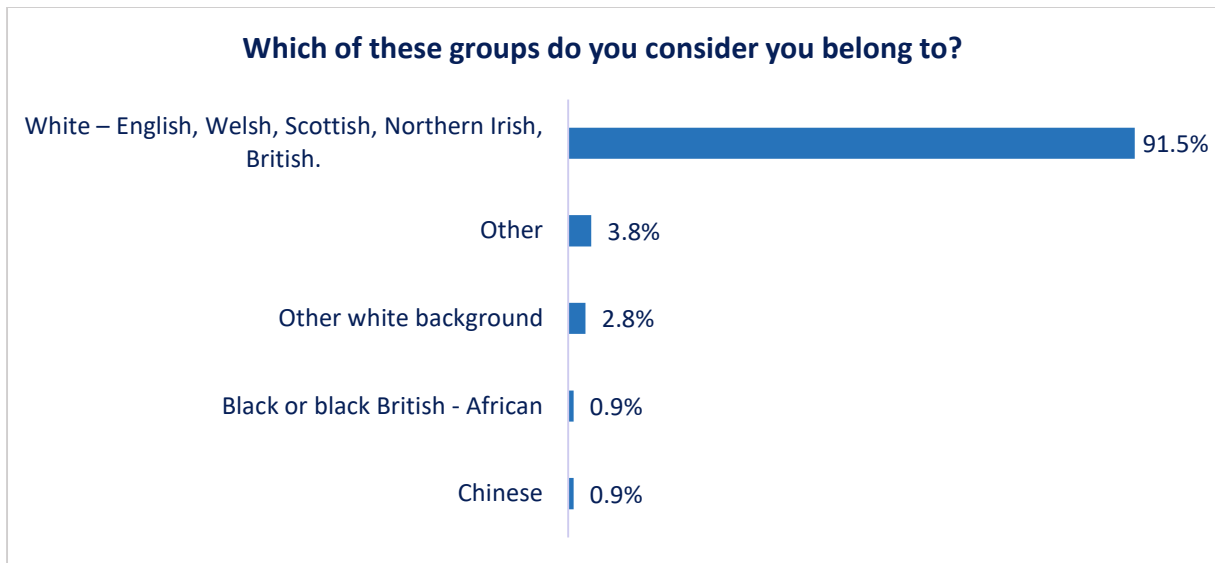


Figure 16: Chart displaying ethnicity

The most represented ward was Hoylake and Meols (15.1%) followed by West Kirby and Thurstaston (9.4%) and Pensby and Thingwall (7.5%).

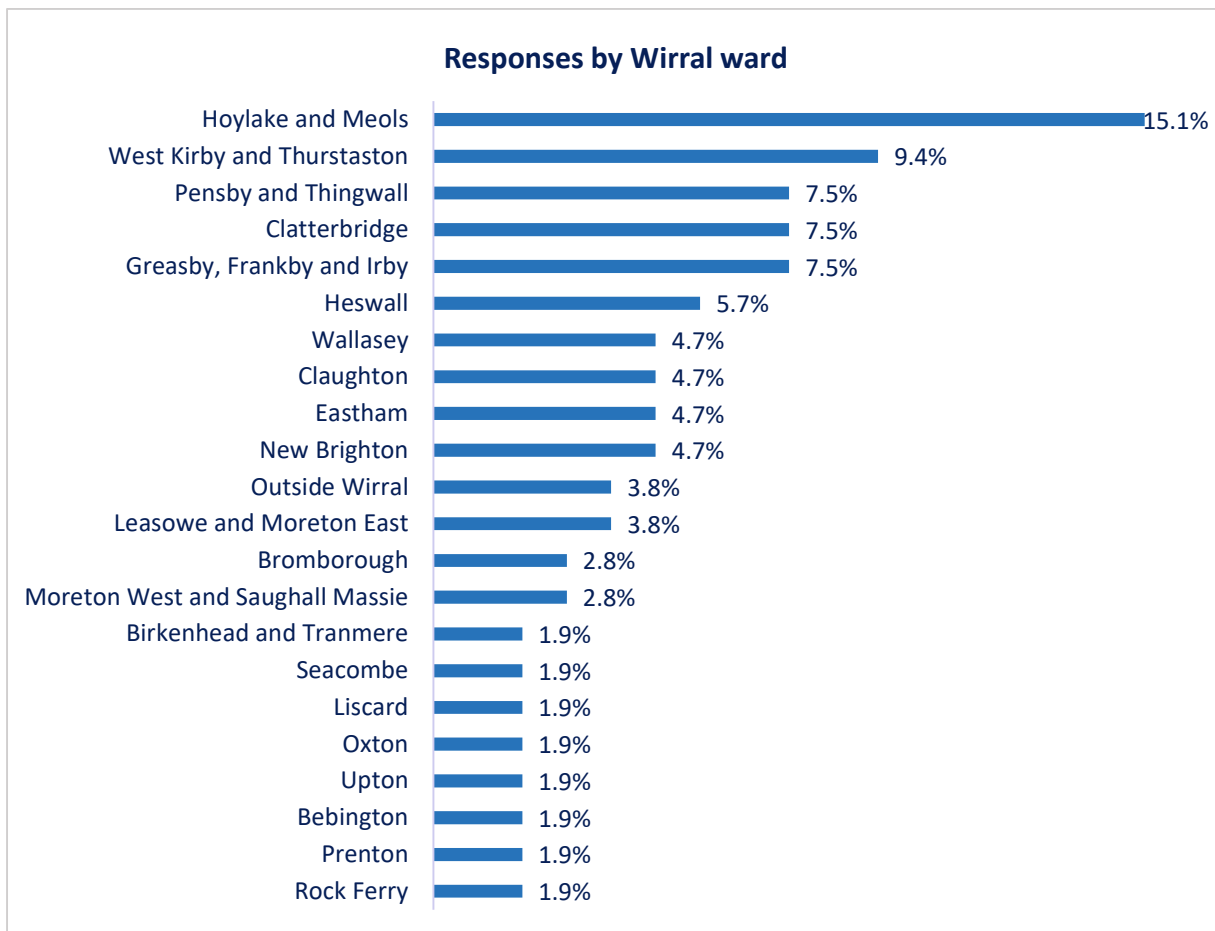


Figure 17: Chart displaying Wirral Ward representation

4.2 Have Your Say - Site Traffic

Reviewing the site activity, visits, and how people visit the site can be useful to evaluate if people are aware of the site, as well as to ensure engagement activities are deployed effectively, and to a wide range of different people – enhancing public engagement in the future. 851 unique visitors viewed the Wirral’s Biodiversity Strategy consultation on the Have Your Say site. Of these, 239 visited multiple project pages and 29 downloaded a document. 116 people in total engaged with the tools: 111 completed the questionnaire, 6 placed a pin on the map and 9 put ideas on the ideas board.

These figures cannot be viewed as definitive as they are based on site tracking through ‘cookies’ and there are a number of factors that can impact on this. These include that cookies may be disabled or deleted, individuals may access the site multiple times through different devices or different browsers. However, the figures can be used to gauge how much interest has been generated in individual projects through the rate of engaged participants.

The route that people access the site is known as the traffic source. The ‘Have your say’ portal allows analysis to be carried out on traffic source, and if they lead to engagement in the site tools such as the questionnaire. This analysis allows a greater understanding of which communication and promotional tools to use to optimise engagement.

For this project a range of traffic sources have been reviewed and summarised in the table below. Most visits to the site were either links clicked from social media sites (550) or direct visits where people typed the internet address into their web browser (116). The level of engagement from social media sites was 8.2%, and from direct visits 7.1%.

Traffic Source	Aware Visits	Informed Visits (%)	Engaged Visits (%)
DIRECT	297	116 (39.1%)	21 (7.1%)
EMAIL	25	10 (40%)	3 (12%)
.GOV SITES	10	10 (100%)	7 (70%)
SEARCH ENGINE	40	26 (65%)	5 (12.5%)
SOCIAL	550	177 (32.2%)	45 (8.2%)
REFERRALS	128	98 (76.6%)	36 (28.1%)

Table 10: Site traffic sources