



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

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Westmorland and Furness Design Code

Early Community Engagement Report

Prepared by: **PLACED**

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PLACED



Report Summary

Westmorland and Furness Council, working with LUC, McMullan Studio and PLACED, are developing an area wide Design Code to set a clear vision for design quality across the local planning authority area. The early phase of engagement included a survey exploring design preferences and local views on development. The survey, open from 8 July to 9 September 2024 both online and on paper, received 132 responses. Additional feedback was also received from Parish Councils and Statutory Consultees.

Key findings

Public spaces and safety

Participants often mentioned the need for public spaces that could host various events and activities. Some respondents noted that current designs often fail to meet the needs of disabled people, particularly in terms of accessibility and safety, hence streets and public spaces should cater to a diverse range of users, including disabled people, older people, families, and young people. While many acknowledged the need for adequate lighting for safety, there was a strong preference for Dark Skies compliant lighting.

Local Character and Materials

Some participants expressed concern about new developments that fail to respect local architectural traditions. Many suggested that the use of traditional materials, such as local stone and slate, should be encouraged. Some respondents proposed that modern, innovative designs could be incorporated, provided they were sympathetic to the local context.

Sustainable and Energy-Efficient Design

Some participants felt that current practices were not sufficiently environmentally friendly and called for more sustainable approaches. There appeared to be widespread support for incorporating sustainable features in new developments.

Many participants suggested that features such as solar panels, air source heat pumps, and green roofs should be standard in new buildings. Some respondents proposed that the Design Code should require higher energy efficiency standards than current building regulations.

Affordable Housing and Local Needs

Many participants suggested that there should be a greater focus on smaller homes, flats, and bungalows to meet the needs of first-time buyers, young families, and older residents wishing to downsize. Some respondents expressed concern

about the proliferation of second homes and holiday lets, particularly in popular tourist areas.

Green Spaces and Biodiversity

It was often suggested that new developments should incorporate green areas and wildlife habitats. Some participants proposed that the Design Code should require developers to demonstrate how they will achieve biodiversity net gain in their projects. There seemed to be strong opposition to building on greenfield sites, especially when brownfield sites were available.

Many participants valued the incorporation of trees, planting, and sustainable drainage systems. Some respondents expressed concern about the loss of green spaces in urban areas and suggested that future designs should prioritise the inclusion of natural elements.

Community-Focused Development

Many participants emphasised the need for new developments to foster a sense of community. It was suggested that developments should include central community spaces, play areas for children, and easy access to local amenities. The importance of variety in housing was mentioned by several participants, who suggested that developments should include a mix of housing types and avoid uniformity in design.

Transport and Accessibility

Many suggested that new developments should prioritise walking, cycling, and public transport to reduce car dependency. Active travel promotion emerged as a priority for many respondents. Several participants called for designs that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, with dedicated cycle paths and pedestrian-friendly zones.

Maintenance

Many respondents suggested that the success of any design improvements would depend on ongoing care and community involvement. Some participants expressed concern about the current state of maintenance in public areas.

Many respondents supported the idea of repurposing empty or underused buildings, particularly in town centres. Converting empty shops or commercial buildings into residential properties could help meet housing needs while revitalising urban areas.

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Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council, working with LUC, McMullan Studio and PLACED, are developing a comprehensive Design Code to establish a clear vision for design quality across the council area, excluding those parts within the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks.

The Design Code is envisioned as a crucial tool to support the new Westmorland and Furness Local Plan by providing detailed coding and guidance on various aspects of design, from building materials to street layouts, whilst respecting the unique character of the region's towns, villages, and rural areas.

In line with national guidance on Design Codes an early phase of community and stakeholder engagement has been conducted to ensure the emerging Design Code reflects local views and preferences. A further phase of engagement on a draft Design Code will also take place in 2025.

Community and stakeholder engagement was seen as vital to understanding what residents and others identify as good design in their local contexts. This report provides a comprehensive record of the comments and information collected during community engagement.

Engagement overview

The early community engagement process included the following elements:

- Survey – open Monday 8 July to Monday 9 September 2024, total responses: 132 (125 online responses and 7 paper responses).
- Additional letters received from Parish Councils and Statutory Consultees.

The early engagement process centred around a comprehensive survey. This explored design preferences, local views on development, and sought to understand the different characters of places across Westmorland and Furness (excluding those parts within the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks). It was structured around the ten characteristics of well-designed places as identified in national guidance.

Participants were encouraged to share their views on these aspects, with the understanding that their input would play a crucial role in shaping future developments in the area. The Council emphasised the importance of local knowledge in crafting a Design Code that would be both technically fit for purpose and reflective of local priorities and preferences.

The Design Code and the associated early engagement opportunities were supported by an online project page and in-person events promoting the parallel Westmorland and Furness Local Plan engagement. The online project information is available here (at the time of writing):

<https://consult.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/planning-policy-designcode/>

Promotion overview

The survey was promoted through various channels to reach a wide audience across the sub-region, including in-person events, email, social media, poster/flyer, website and newspaper.

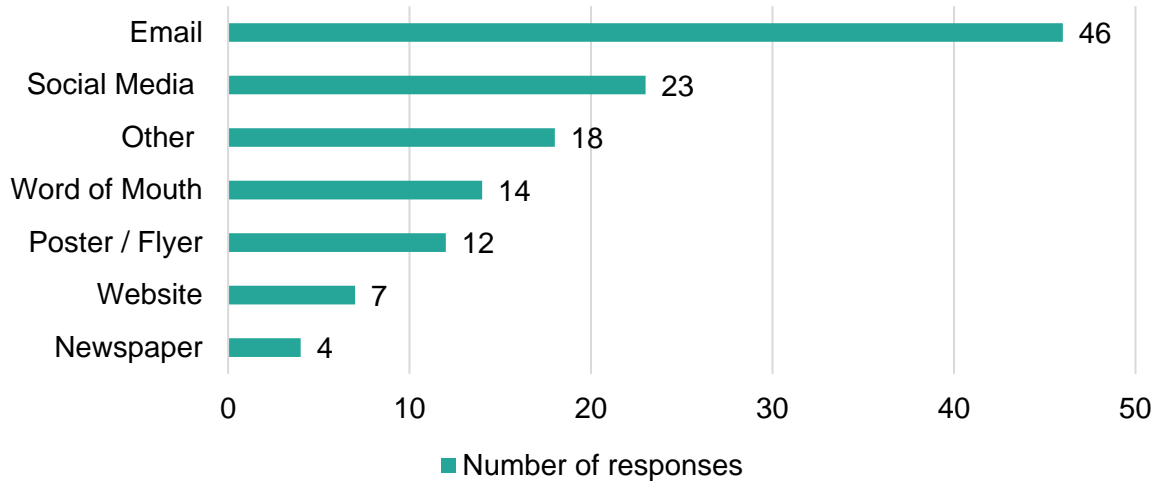


Chart 1: Responses to the question ‘How did you find out about this consultation?’

Email emerged as the most effective medium, with 46 respondents learning about the survey via email. 23 participants heard through social media and 18 respondents learned about the survey through other unspecified means, whilst 14 became aware via word of mouth. Posters and flyers reached 12 people, website informed 7 respondents and newspaper reached 4.

Who we engaged

To help understand who we reached we collected information about participants through the online survey. We have engaged with a diverse cross-section of the community, summarised below. The data presented reflects the responses received through the online survey platform only.

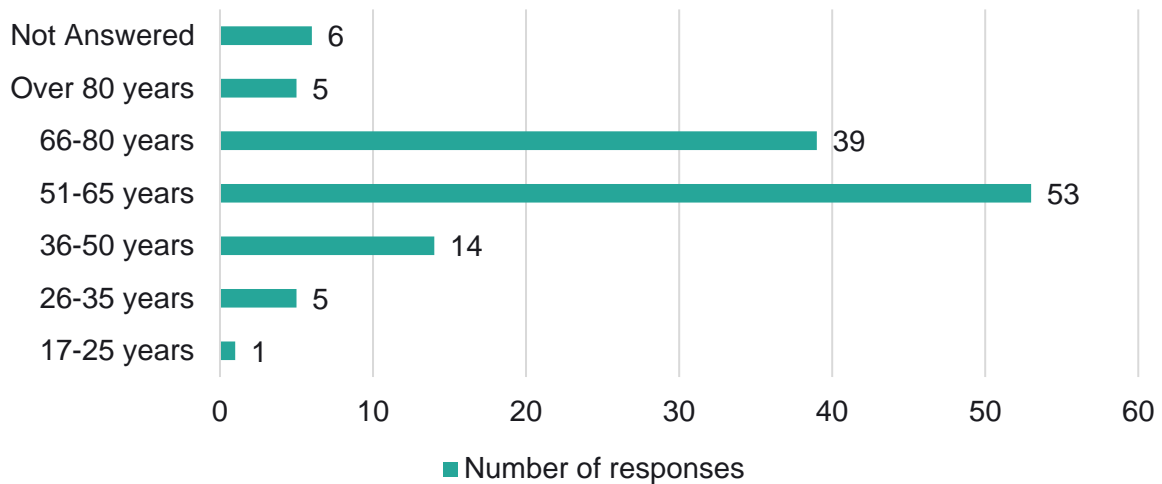


Chart 2: Responses to the question ‘which age category do you fall within?’ Results are labelled with the number of responses for each option.

The majority of survey participants were within the 51-65 age group (53 participants). The second highest group of participants belonged to the 66-80 age group (39 participants). 14 participants were from 36-50 years, and 5 participants from both the 26-35 years and over 80 age groups. Only 1 Participant was from 17-25 age group and 6 participants did not disclose their age. We note the relatively low participation by those under 50 and particular under 35.

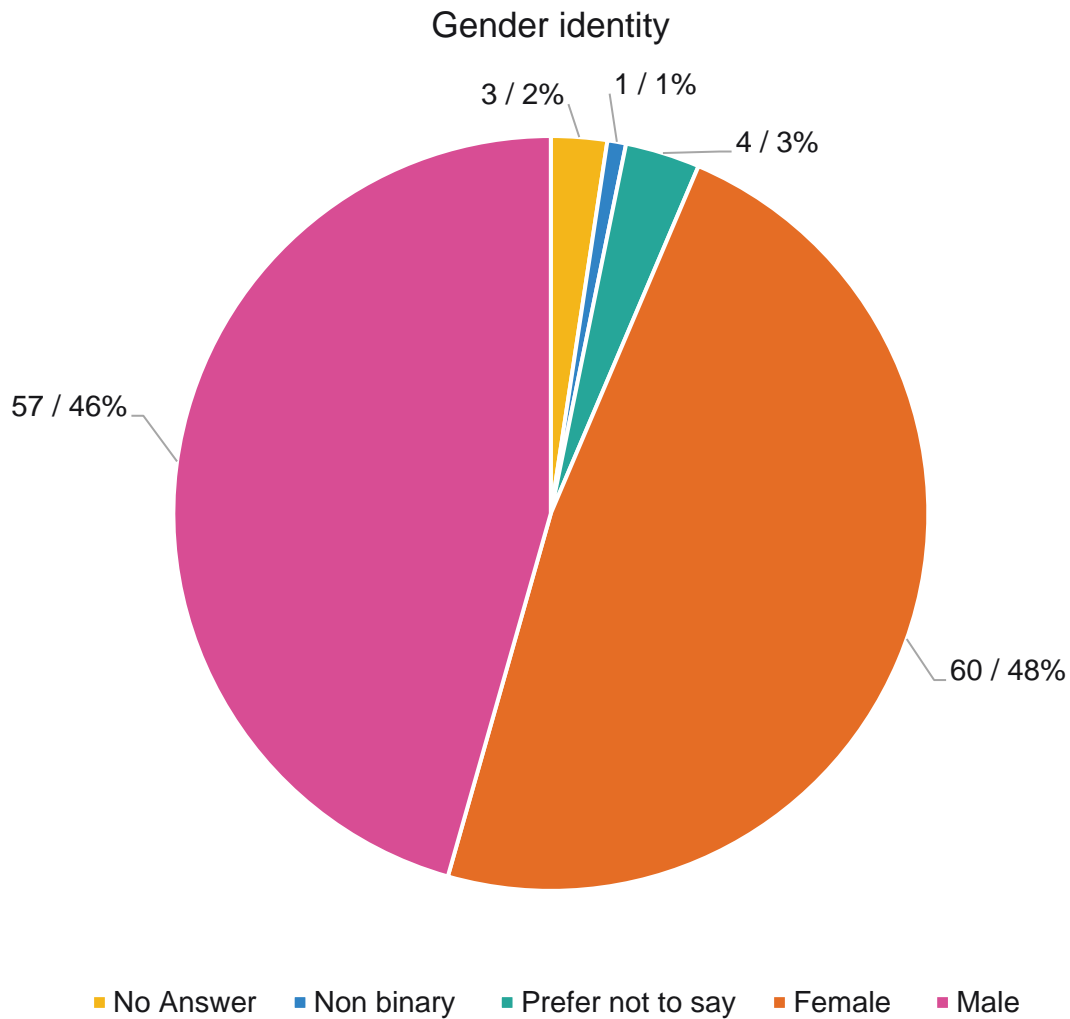


Chart 3: Responses to the gender identity question. Both number and percentage of responses are shown.

The survey attracted a nearly equal number of male and female respondents, with 60 females and 57 males participating. A small number of respondents identified as non-binary or preferred not to disclose their gender identity.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

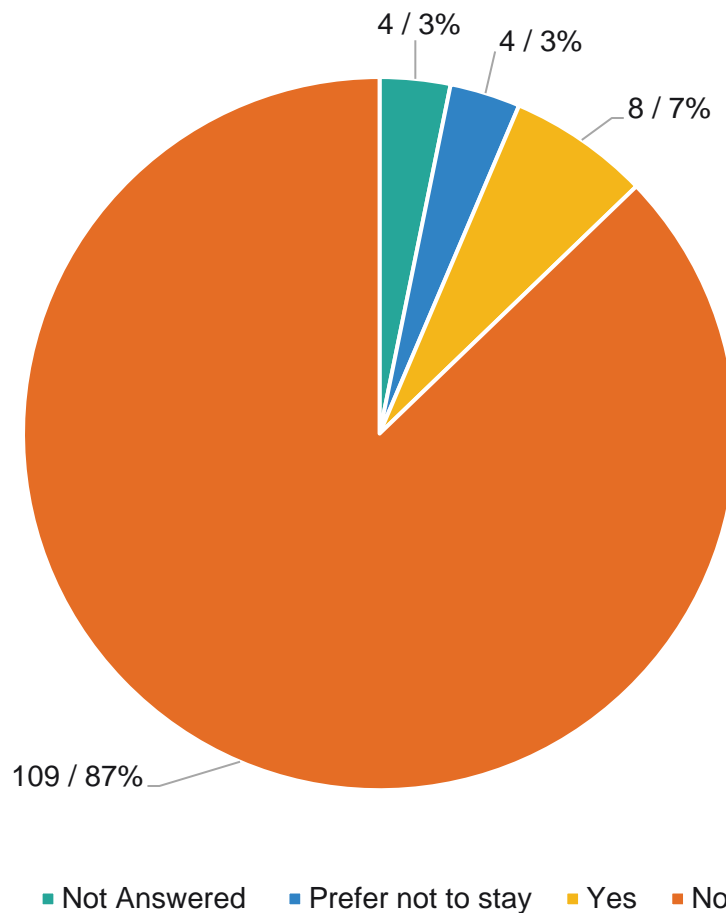


Chart 4: Responses to the question ‘Do you consider yourself to have disability?’ First number in the pie chart represents the number of responses and second number represents that number in percentage.

Most respondents did not report having a disability; however, a small number of participants did report being disabled. Small numbers either did not answer or preferred not to disclose this information.

We also received responses through the survey or via letters from the following Parish and Town Councils:

- Lakes Parish Council
- Grange-over-Sands Council
- Dalton with Newton Town Council
- Kirkby Stephen Town Council
- Kirkby Ireleth Parish Council
- Kendal Town Council
- Penrith Town Council
- Arnside Parish Council
- Morland Parish Council (letter)
- Great Salkeld Parish Council (letter)

We received some contributions from the following local organisations and statutory consultees. Most of these completed the survey. Where specified we received a letter.

- North Pennines National Landscape
- Kendal BID
- Sporadic Illustration
- Helsington Laithes Manor
- Nielsens Ltd
- Human Support Group
- Farrer Huxley (Landscape Architects)
- Penrith Action for Community Transition (PACT)
- Kendal Swifts
- Keswick Swifts
- Environment Agency
- Clean River Kent Campaign (CRKC)
- Kendal Futures
- Home Group
- Friends of the Lake District
- Peninsula Environmental Action Together (PEAT)
- Furness Creatives
- St Matthews Community Halls
- Swifts Local Network (Swifts & Planning Group)
- South Lakes Housing
- Zero Carbon Cumbria
- Historic England (letter)
- Coal Authority (letter)
- United Utilities (letter)
- Cumbria Constabulary (letter)

Findings from early engagement

This section summarises the findings from this early engagement phase, highlighting the themes and concerns that emerged most prominently from participants' responses. We asked a range of questions to understand more about what people value about the places which make up Westmorland and Furness. We also asked their views on how the design of development should respond to the places they live, work and know well.

We have presented our analysis of each survey question separately. It is important to note that our quantitative analysis represents only the views of those who participated in the survey. We have incorporated views shared via letter when considering survey comments.

Understanding more about Westmorland and Furness

Question 1: How would you describe the character of your local area?

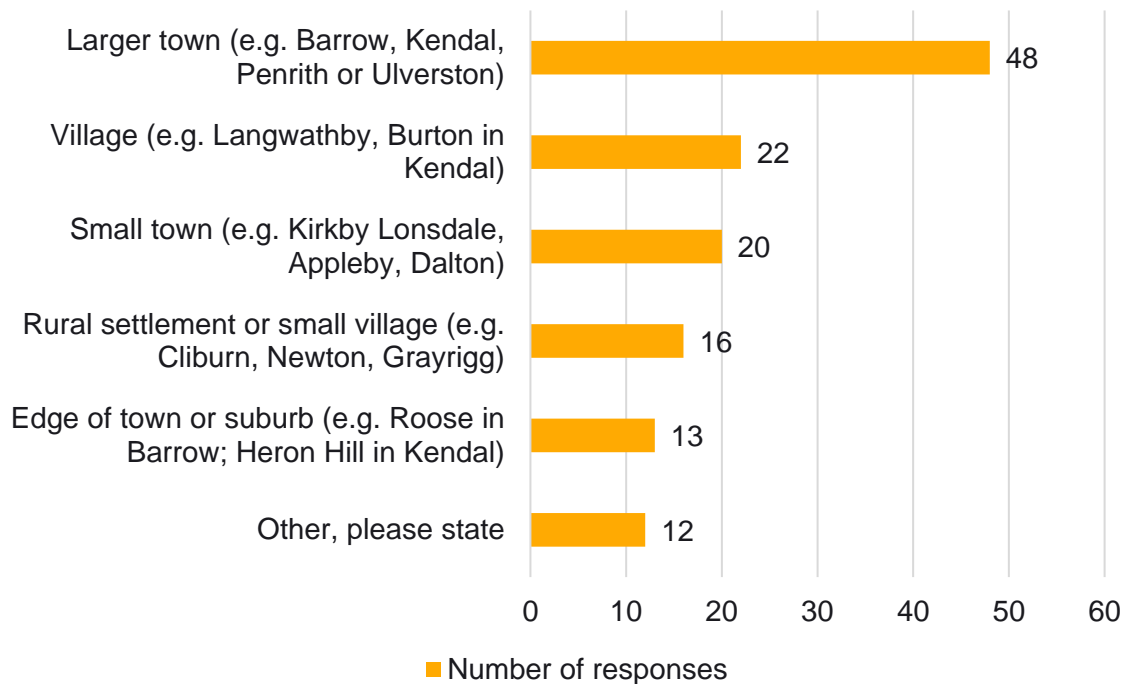


Chart 5: Responses to the question ‘How would you describe the character of your local area?’

The most voted options were ‘Larger town’ with 48 responses. ‘Village’ got 22 votes, ‘Small town’ received 20 votes, and ‘Rural settlement or small village’ got 16 votes. ‘Edge of town or suburb’ options received 13 votes and other had 12 votes.

Comments related to understanding Westmorland and Furness

Participants provided various ‘other’ responses, from specific hamlets in the countryside or within a designated National Landscapes, and towns more generally within a National Park.

A few participants indicated they were responding from an organisational perspective, and therefore covered a larger area in their responses. These included, the North Pennines National Landscape, and a business and charity covering the whole of Cumbria.

Question 2: What design features or qualities make your local area in Westmorland and Furness unique or special and why?

Built Environment

Participants frequently commented on the importance of traditional architecture and building materials in defining local character. Many highlighted the use of local

stone, such as limestone, sandstone, and slate, in historic buildings. It was suggested that these traditional materials and architectural styles should be preserved and incorporated into new developments to maintain local distinctiveness.

Some respondents expressed concern about new housing developments that were perceived to be out of character with existing settlements. It was suggested that future developments should be more sympathetic to local character and building traditions.

The historic cores of towns and villages were highly valued by many participants. Features such as narrow streets, yards, ginnels, and market squares were frequently mentioned as contributing to local character. In Kendal, for example, respondents highlighted the importance of the town's yards and historic street pattern.

Natural Environment

Many participants emphasised the importance of green spaces within towns and villages, as well as easy access to the surrounding countryside. It was suggested that these green spaces provided important amenity value, opportunities for recreation, and contributed to the overall character of settlements.

Views of the surrounding landscape were highly valued by many respondents. Participants from various locations mentioned the importance of views to nearby hills, fells, and bodies of water such as Morecambe Bay. It was suggested that these views should be protected and considered in future development plans.

Biodiversity and wildlife were important to many participants. Some respondents highlighted specific habitats or species that they felt were important to protect.



Image 1: An image provided by a respondent showing a village settlement close to the estuary and coast.

Community and Culture

Many respondents highlighted the importance of community facilities and events in contributing to local character and quality of life. Village halls, community centres, and local events were frequently mentioned as important assets.

The cultural heritage of towns and villages was valued by many participants. This included references to local history, traditional industries, and cultural events.

Some participants expressed concern about the impact of tourism on local communities, particularly in areas within or near the Lake District National Park. It was suggested that a balance needed to be struck between supporting the local economy and preserving community character.

Transport and Accessibility

Many respondents valued the ability to access local amenities, green spaces, and surrounding countryside on foot or by cycle. It was suggested that future developments should prioritise walking and cycling infrastructure to maintain and enhance this accessibility.

Public transport links were mentioned by some participants as important features of their local areas. However, others noted that public transport provision was limited in some rural areas and could be improved.

Some respondents expressed concern about traffic congestion and its impact on local character and quality of life. This was particularly noted in smaller towns and villages experiencing increased tourism or new housing developments.

Local Amenities

Many respondents valued the presence of independent shops and businesses in their local areas. It was suggested that these contributed to local character and should be supported.

Cultural amenities such as libraries, museums, and arts venues were mentioned by some respondents as important local assets. For example, participants from Kendal highlighted the importance of Abbot Hall Art Gallery and local music venues.

Some respondents expressed concern about the closure of local shops and services, particularly in smaller settlements. It was suggested that maintaining a range of local amenities was important for community vitality and reducing car dependency.



Images 2 and 3: Images provided by respondents showing views and unique features of Westmorland and Furness.

Heritage Sites and Landmarks

Participants frequently mentioned specific heritage sites and landmarks as key features of their local areas. For example, respondents from Penrith highlighted the importance of Penrith Castle, the Beacon, and the Monument (clock tower) in the town centre. It was suggested that these landmarks played a crucial role in defining local identity and should be preserved and celebrated.

In Ulverston, the Hoad Monument was mentioned as an important focal point for the town. Respondents from Cartmel emphasised the significance of the Priory in defining the village's character.

Waterways and Coastal Features

Many participants highlighted the importance of rivers, canals, and coastal features in shaping local character. The River Kent in Kendal, the Lancaster Canal in Burton-in-Kendal, and the promenade in Grange-over-Sands were frequently mentioned. It was suggested that these waterways and coastal features provided important recreational spaces and contributed significantly to local distinctiveness.

Some respondents expressed concern about flood protection measures impacting the character of riverside areas, particularly in Kendal. It was suggested that flood protection works should be designed sensitively to maintain the amenity value of rivers.

Dark Skies and Tranquillity

Several participants valued the tranquillity and dark skies of their local areas, particularly in more rural locations. It was suggested that these qualities should be protected from light pollution and inappropriate development.



Images 4 and 5: Images provided by respondents showing a unique location and beautiful skyscape of Westmorland and Furness.

Industrial Heritage

Some respondents highlighted the importance of industrial heritage in shaping local character. This included references to former mining areas, traditional crafts, and manufacturing heritage. It was suggested that this industrial heritage should be preserved.

Specific Local Features

Participants often mentioned unique local features that contributed to the character of their areas. For example:

- The Loki Stone in Kirkby Stephen was highlighted as an important piece of cultural heritage.
- The Lido in Grange-over-Sands was mentioned as a key feature of the town's seaside character.
- The 'Yards' in Kendal were frequently cited as important elements of the town's historic fabric.

It was suggested that these unique local features should be protected and enhanced as part of any future development.

Changing Character of Town Centres

Some respondents expressed concern about the changing character of town centres, particularly the loss of independent shops and the increase in empty properties. It was suggested that efforts should be made to support local businesses and find new uses for vacant buildings to maintain the vitality of town centres.

Question 3: Thinking about the look and feel of places, how would you break down Westmorland and Furness to describe the varied character of area?

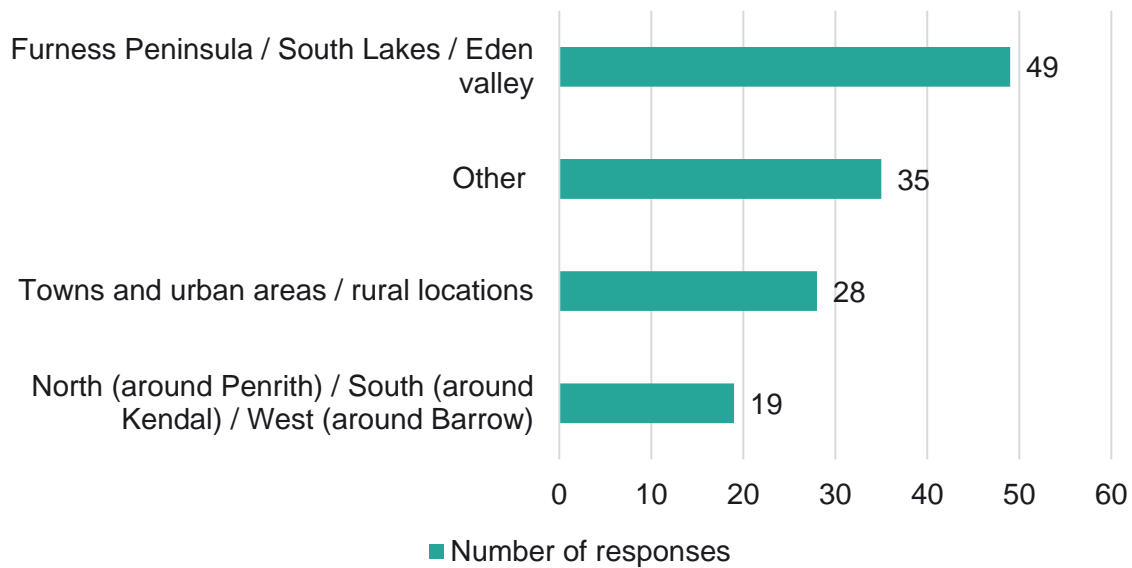


Chart 06: Responses to the question ‘How would you break down Westmorland and Furness to describe the varied the character of area?’

‘Furness Peninsula / South Lakes / Eden Valley’ got the highest number of responses with 49 votes. ‘Other’ received the second highest number with 35 votes. ‘Towns and urban areas / rural locations’ received 28 votes, and ‘North (around Penrith) / South (around Kendal) / west (around Barrow)’ received 19 votes.

Other comments

Rural and Urban Distinction

Participants suggested that the area was predominantly rural with some built-up spaces, whilst others noted the gradual urbanisation of certain regions. It was suggested that a more nuanced approach to categorisation might be needed to accurately reflect the varied character of the area.

Geographical and Administrative Divisions

Several participants proposed dividing the area into distinct geographical regions. Common suggestions included:

- Furness Peninsula
- South Lakes
- Eden Valley
- North Pennines
- Kendal area
- Penrith area

Some mentioned the break down as Barrow, South Lakes, Central and North Lakes. One participant suggested that the former Eden Council area should be two

areas: North (around Penrith) and the Eden Valley. Some respondents felt that the administrative boundaries of former districts (such as parts of Eden or South Lakeland) could serve as a basis for categorisation.

Unique Local Characteristics

Participants emphasised the importance of recognising the distinct qualities of individual towns and villages. It was suggested that factors such as local geology, architectural traditions, and cultural heritage significantly influenced the character of different areas. For instance:

- The Cartmel Peninsula was described as having a unique character, combining elements of a retirement location, rural area, and National Landscapes.
- Grange-over-Sands was noted as not fitting neatly into existing categorisations, with suggestions that it should be considered alongside nearby communities such as Allithwaite, Cartmel, Flookburgh, and Cark.
- Alston Moor was highlighted as being particularly distinct from other rural areas.

Landscape and Geological Factors

Participants suggested that landscape features and underlying geology played a crucial role in defining local character. Factors mentioned included:

- Coastal areas
- River valleys
- Mountainous regions
- Local stone and building materials

It was noted that these geological factors influenced everything from dry stone walls to building colour, texture, and architectural features.

Urban Character and Development

Some participants commented on the character of urban areas and ongoing development:

- The distinct character of towns such as Ulverston, Barrow, Kendal, and Penrith was noted.
- Concerns were raised about urban sprawl and the erosion of green gaps between communities, with specific mention of development between Grange and Allithwaite.
- The importance of recognising historic features such as yards, stone-built terraces, and wash houses was highlighted.

Many participants suggested that a more detailed approach to categorisation would be beneficial. It was felt that even within broadly similar areas, there could be significant variations in character that should be acknowledged in the Design Code.



Understanding design preferences

Question 4: From the following list, please select the three things you value most about the design of buildings

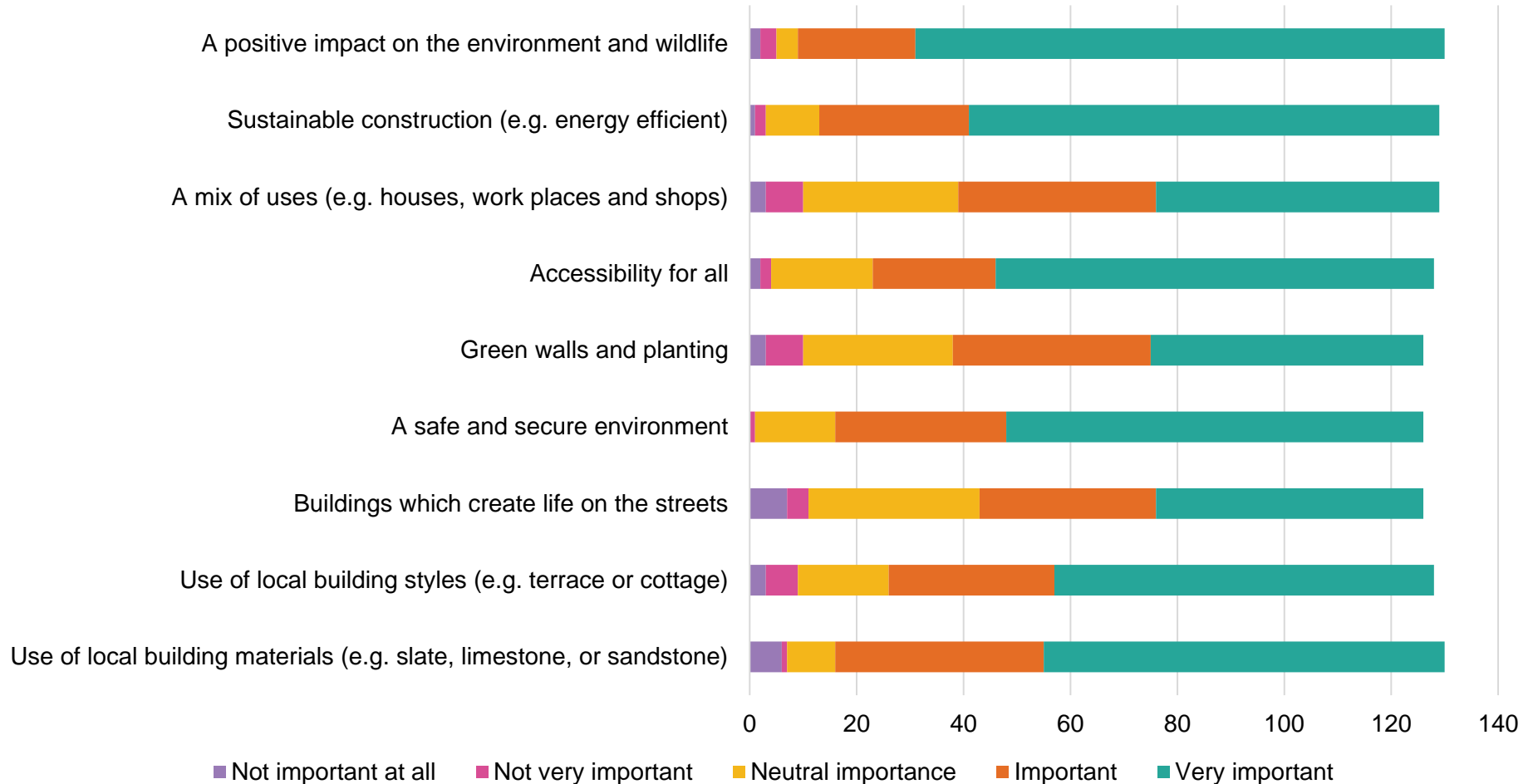


Chart 7: Responses to the question 'From the following list, please select the three things you value most about the design of buildings?' Response numbers are given in the table below.



Table 1: Survey response numbers to the question 'From the following list, please select the three things you value most about the design of buildings?'

Please rate the importance of the following design features.	Not important at all	Not very important	Neutral importance	Important	Very important
A positive impact on the environment and wildlife	2	3	4	22	99
Sustainable construction (e.g. energy efficient)	1	2	10	28	88
A mix of uses (e.g. houses, work places and shops)	3	7	29	37	53
Accessibility for all	2	2	19	23	82
Green walls and planting	3	7	28	37	51
A safe and secure environment	0	1	15	32	78
Buildings which create life on the streets	7	4	32	33	50
Use of local building styles (e.g. terrace or cottage)	3	6	17	31	71
Use of local building materials (e.g. slate, limestone, or sandstone)	6	1	9	39	75

Comments related to the design of buildings

Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

Respondents frequently emphasised the importance of energy efficiency and sustainability in building design. Many suggested that new developments should incorporate features such as solar panels, ground source heat pumps, and small wind turbines as standard. Some participants expressed concern about the lack of energy-efficient heating in new housing developments. There were calls for buildings to be carbon neutral or better, with some suggesting that this should be compulsory for all new builds. Several respondents highlighted the need for designs that consider climate change, flooding risk, and environmental resilience.

Local Character and Materials

Many participants valued the use of local building materials and styles that respect the area's character. The use of traditional materials, like red sandstone, limestone, and slate, was mentioned. However, some respondents suggested that while local styles are important, there should also be support for good modern design that complements the existing character and contemporary designs that are still respectful of the environment. Some respondents highlighted the need to maintain existing views and avoid urban sprawl.

Green Spaces and Biodiversity

The inclusion of green spaces and features that support biodiversity was a recurring theme. Many respondents valued the integration of green walls, green roofs, and extensive planting in new developments. Some suggested that green spaces should be linked to provide corridors for wildlife. The importance of preserving existing mature trees and hedges was highlighted by several participants. Some respondents called for the inclusion of large ponds and other features to support local ecosystems. The preservation of valuable farmland was also mentioned, with suggestions to prioritise brownfield sites for development.

Community-Focused Design

Many participants valued designs that fostered a sense of community. This included the inclusion of community hubs, 'village halls', and playgrounds. Some respondents emphasised the importance of creating spaces for social interaction, such as benches and open areas where people can sit and chat. The need for developments to be grouped in ways that encourage community formation was also mentioned. Empty buildings could be used to create community or arts facilities.

Accessibility and Infrastructure

Several respondents highlighted the importance of accessibility and adequate infrastructure. This included ensuring new developments are accessible by public transport, have sufficient parking, and are well-connected to existing services. Some participants stressed the need for infrastructure improvements to support new buildings, including schools, healthcare facilities, and road networks. Some

suggested that road, utility, and community infrastructure should be in place before large housing developments are completed. The importance of designs that promote safe traffic conditions was also mentioned.

Affordability and Local Needs

Many respondents emphasised the need for affordable housing that caters to residents. Some suggested implementing restrictions or disincentives on second homes, holiday homes, and holiday lets to ensure housing remains accessible to the local community. The importance of providing a range of housing sizes, including smaller homes for young people, single individuals, and older people, was frequently mentioned.

Quality and Longevity

Some respondents stressed the importance of build quality and longevity in new developments. There were calls for better supervision of construction to ensure high standards and good use of funding. A few participants suggested that houses should be built larger than current needs to accommodate future requirements, with references to statutory minimum floor spaces in other countries.

Question 5: From the following list, please select the three things you value most about the design of streets and public spaces

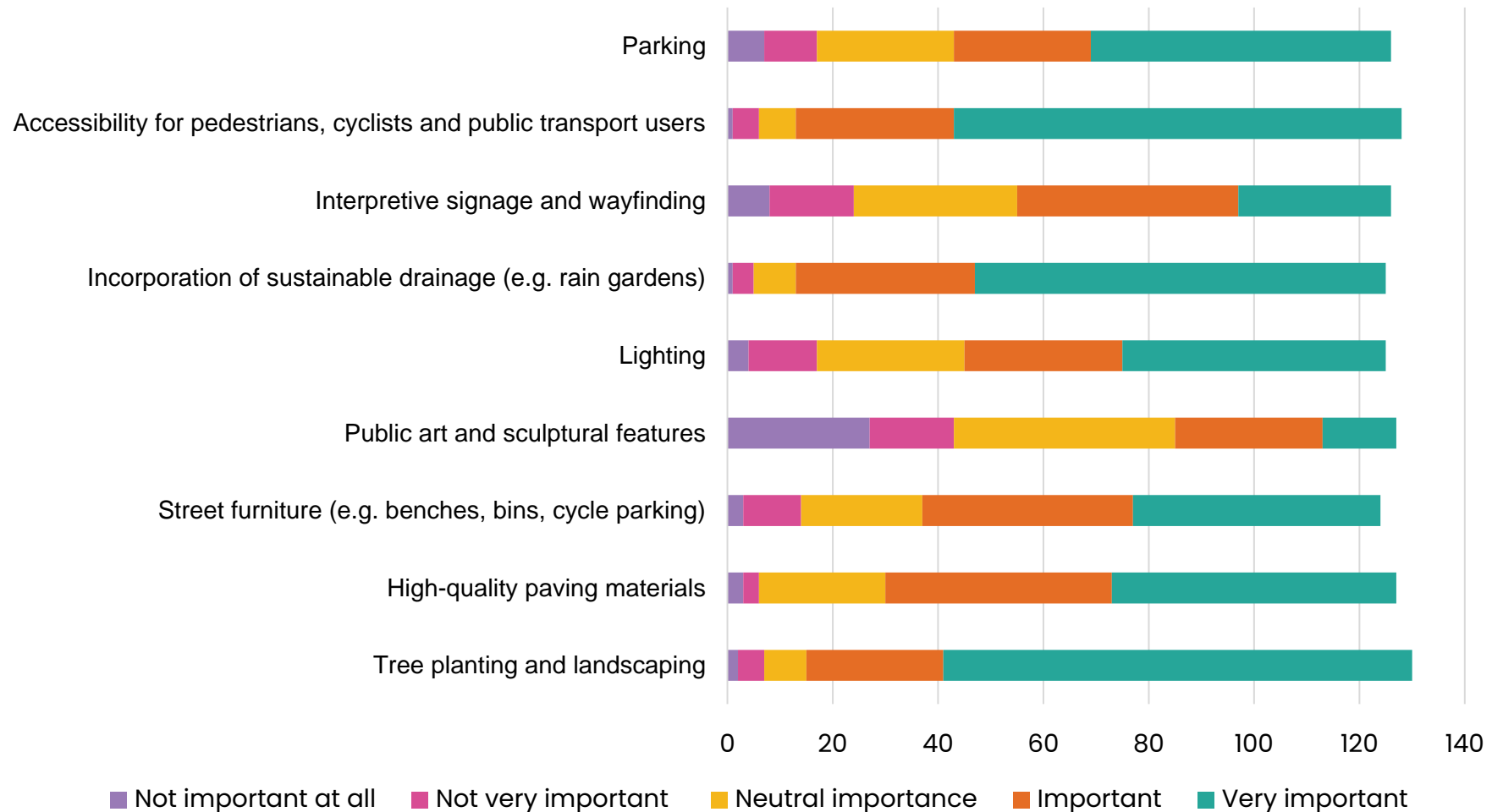


Chart 8: Responses to the question 'From the following list, please select the three things you value most about the design of streets and public spaces?' Response numbers are given in the table below.



Table 2: Survey response numbers to the question ‘From the following list, please select the three things you value most about the design of streets and public spaces?’

Please rate the importance of the following design features of streets and public spaces.	Not important at all	Not very important	Neutral importance	Important	Very important
Parking	7	10	26	26	57
Accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users	1	5	7	30	85
Interpretive signage and wayfinding	8	16	31	42	29
Incorporation of sustainable drainage (e.g. rain gardens)	1	4	8	34	78
Lighting	4	13	28	30	50
Public art and sculptural features	27	16	42	28	14
Street furniture (e.g. benches, bins, cycle parking)	3	11	23	40	47
High-quality paving materials	3	3	24	43	54
Tree planting and landscaping	2	5	8	26	89

Comments related to streets and public spaces

Pedestrian-Friendly and Inclusive Design

Many respondents emphasised the importance of creating pedestrian-friendly and inclusive public spaces. They suggested that designs should cater to diverse groups, including disabled people, older people, people with children, women, and teenagers. Some participants called for more pedestrian-only zones and safe crossings, particularly near schools. There were also suggestions for better walkways and improved accessibility. Several respondents stressed the need for public toilet facilities and appropriately designed benches to accommodate disabled people.

Sustainable and Nature-Friendly Features

A significant number of participants valued designs that incorporate nature and support biodiversity. Many suggested the integration of trees, shrubs, and other planting in street designs. Some respondents called for the use of permeable paving materials to aid ground water management and flood prevention. Several participants emphasised the need for designs that provide opportunities for nature, both for its own sake and for human well-being.

Lighting and Dark Skies

Lighting was a contentious issue, with many respondents emphasising the need for balance. While some stressed the importance of lighting for safety, there was an emphasis on ensuring that all lighting is Dark Skies compliant. Several participants called for the preservation of dark spaces, particularly in rural areas. Some suggested the use of red street lighting, which is considered better for wildlife. The need for the right colour temperature, shielding, and focused lighting was also mentioned. Some suggested that responsible lighting guidelines, such as those provided by Friends of the Lake District, should be followed to minimize light pollution.

Active Travel and Reducing Car Dependency

Many respondents called for safe cycle routes, dedicated cycle paths, and better integration of cycling infrastructure with pedestrian areas. Some suggested adopting a "continental view" on street design, similar to the Netherlands, where pedestrians and cyclists have priority on many streets. Several participants advocated reduced car parking in public spaces and prioritising blue badge holders and residents for available parking.

Community Spaces and Flexibility

Several respondents highlighted the importance of creating flexible public spaces that can accommodate various community activities. They suggested designing areas that could host pop-ups, installations, events, and entertainment. Some called for the provision of power, water, and waste management facilities to support

these activities. The need for seating areas with shade was also mentioned. The importance of accessible green spaces, play areas, and community facilities was frequently mentioned.

Street Furniture and Aesthetics

Some participants commented on the importance of well-designed street furniture that does not obstruct access or negatively affect visual aesthetics. There were calls for consistent bins and recycling facilities to encourage proper waste disposal. Some suggested that all street signs and furniture should be made from recycled materials and be unobtrusive. The inclusion of public art that is challenging and inspirational, rather than corporate or generic, was also suggested.

Local Character and Durability

Several respondents emphasised the importance of designs that reflect local character, particularly in terms of planting choices and materials used. The need for durable materials and designs that can withstand long-term use was also highlighted. Some participants stressed the importance of keeping variety in design, producing individual properties rather than "carbon copies."

Maintenance

A recurring theme was the importance of long-term maintenance for all design features. Some respondents suggested that successful implementation of these design elements would rely on a sense of civic pride, and adequate dissemination of information about the reasons for changes.

Thinking about safety and sustainability

Question 6: What features would make you feel safer on your local streets?

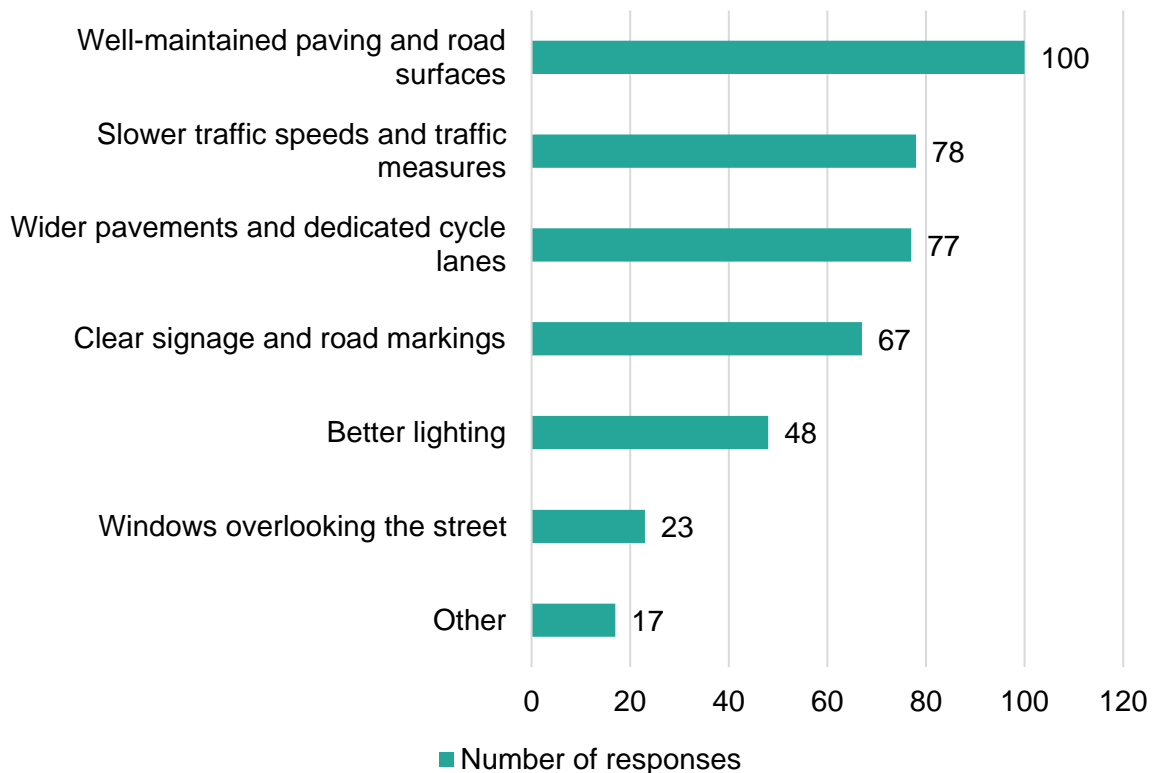


Chart 9: Responses to the question 'what features would make you feel safer on your local streets?'

'Well-maintained paving and road surfaces' received the highest number of votes, with 100 votes. 'Slower traffic speeds and traffic measures' were supported by 78 participants, closely followed by 'Wider pavements and dedicated cycle lanes', which got 77 votes. 'Clear signage and road markings' were voted by 67 respondents, whilst 'Better lighting' received 48 votes. 'Windows overlooking the street' got 23 votes. Additionally, 17 respondents selected 'Other', suggesting there may be further safety and accessibility measures not captured in the main list.

Comments related to safety and sustainability

Traffic Management and Road Safety

Participants' suggestions included implementing 20 mph speed limits in towns and villages (excluding arterial roads), installing speed bumps on blind bends, and providing more pedestrian crossings, particularly on busy roads. Some respondents noted that traffic calming measures in residential areas and enforcing parking restrictions in dangerous areas could contribute to increased safety. It was suggested that creating low traffic zones and school streets could prioritise pedestrian safety. However, some participants cautioned that speed restrictions should be appropriate for each road, as blanket slow speeds might encourage

overtaking in some cases. Some respondents proposed that new estates should have multiple access roads to prevent congestion.

Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

Many suggested that new developments should prioritise walking, cycling, and public transport to reduce car dependency. The importance of improved infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling was highlighted. They suggested wider pavements, where possible without affecting local character, and dedicated cycle lanes separate from both roads and pavements. Connected and safe cycle routes throughout towns were seen as essential, as well as pedestrianised zones, particularly in town centres. Some respondents highlighted the need for footpaths and cycle ways on main access routes to villages. It was noted that cycle infrastructure should be better connected, avoiding situations where cyclists are forced into dangerous intersections. However, some respondents cautioned that dedicated cycle lanes might not be feasible in all towns and could potentially create hazards if not properly implemented.

Public Transport

As noted elsewhere, several participants mentioned the need for improved public transport, calling for regular and affordable options and encouraging alternatives to car use. Some participants again emphasised the importance of reducing car dependency overall to create safer streets for all users.

Lighting

Lighting was also raised here as a common theme, with varied opinions. Some called for improved street lighting, particularly since the conversion to new lights. Others emphasised the need for sensitive lighting that respects dark skies criteria. It was suggested that lighting should be site-specific rather than providing blanket coverage.

Maintenance and Security Measures

Regular maintenance was highlighted as important for safety, with participants suggesting improved hedge cutting, particularly along cycle routes and narrow lanes, and maintaining clear visibility on rural country lanes. Some participants suggested increased security measures, such as the installation of CCTV systems, use of ANPR cameras, and increased presence of Community Police. It was noted that a more nuanced approach might be necessary, as the relevance of different safety features could vary depending on location and circumstances.

Urban Design and Broader Considerations

Several responses touched on broader urban design considerations. Participants suggested creating more open spaces that are less enclosed and visible to others, increasing trees and greenery to improve well-being and reduce stress, and designing spaces that encourage social behaviour rather than restricting use.

It was suggested that guidance from resources should be incorporated to ensure public spaces are safe and appealing to all users like children and young girls.

Question 7: How should new development in Westmorland and Furness be more environmentally friendly?

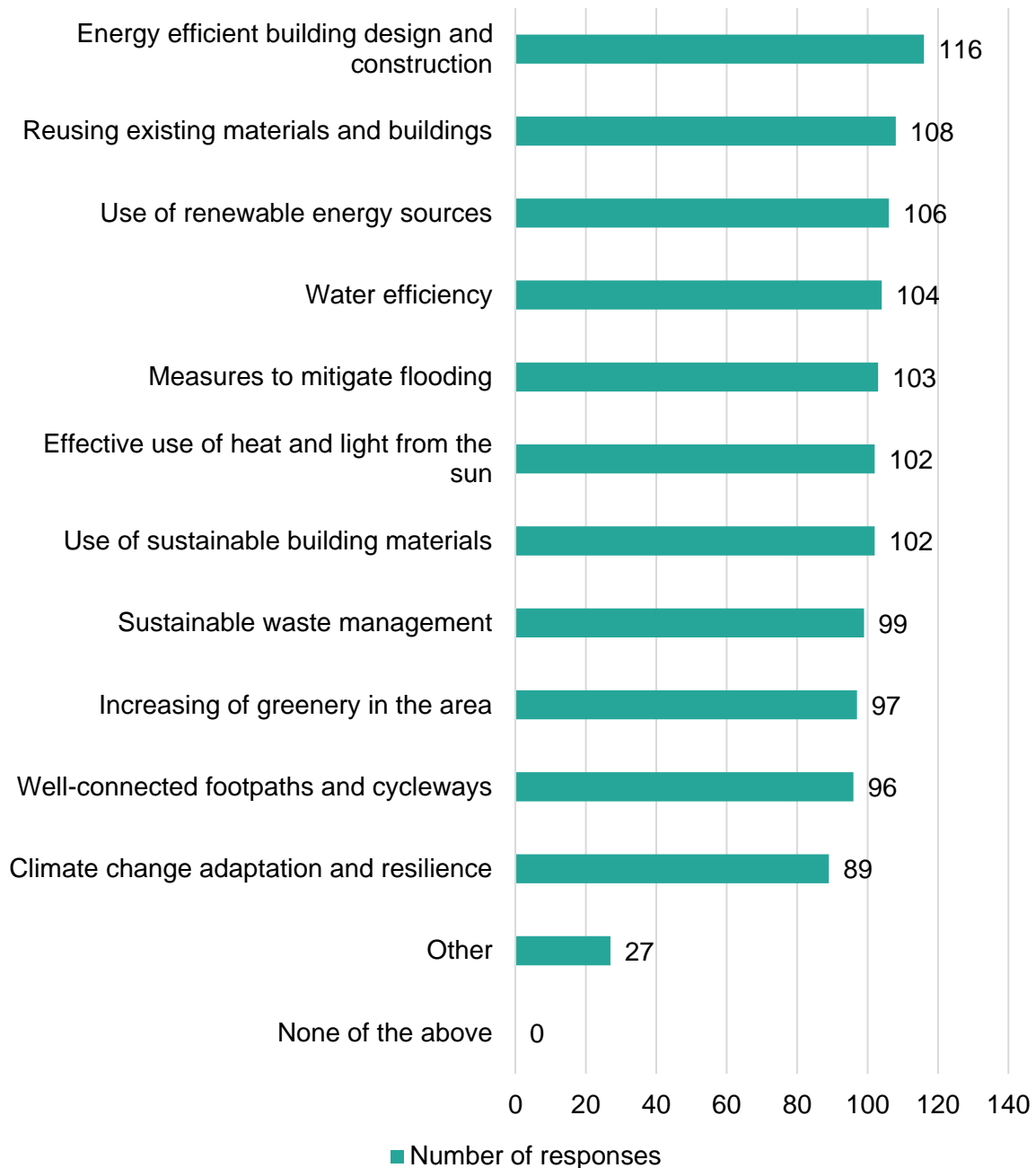


Chart 10: Responses to the question 'How should new development in Westmorland and Furness be more environmentally friendly?'

All options were voted for to quite high levels, suggesting that many supported all measures to ensure development is environmentally friendly. The most voted for options were 'Energy efficient building design and construction' with 116 votes. This was closely followed by the 'Reuse of existing materials and buildings', which received 108 votes. 'Use of renewable energy sources' received 106 votes, 'Water

efficiency' got 104 votes and 'Measures to mitigate flooding' received 103 votes respectively.

'Effective use of heat and light from the sun' and 'Use of sustainable building materials' were equally supported, each receiving 102 votes. 'Sustainable waste management' was voted by 99 respondents, whilst 97 voted for 'Increasing greenery in the area'. 'Well-connected footpaths and cycleways' received 96 votes, and 'Climate change adaptation and resilience' got 89 votes.

It is worth noting that 27 respondents selected 'Other', suggesting additional priorities not captured in the main list. No respondents selected 'None of the above', suggesting that all participants found at least one of the listed sustainability measures to be important.

Comments related to environmentally friendly design

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Participants often emphasised the importance of energy efficiency and renewable energy in new developments. Many suggested that solar panels should be mandatory on all new builds, heat pumps were also mentioned as a potential design stipulation for all new housing. Some respondents highlighted the need for energy efficiency to be prioritised over other factors to reduce demand for gas, electricity, or oil for heating. There were also suggestions for exploring alternative energy sources, such as tidal power.

Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation

A significant number of participants stressed the importance of incorporating features that support biodiversity and wildlife conservation in new developments. Many called for the mandatory inclusion of swift bricks, bat boxes, and other nesting provisions for birds. Some suggested the use of 'Bee Bricks' from local suppliers. Participants also emphasised the need for developments to include areas that encourage insects, plants that attract bees, and ponds that support aquatic life. The creation of wildlife corridors, such as connected gardens for small mammals, was also suggested. Some respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining green and blue corridors next to rivers and avoiding pesticide and fertiliser runoff from farmland.

Water Management and Flood Prevention

Water management and flood prevention were recurring themes in the responses. Participants suggested the use of permeable surfaces to reduce flooding and runoff, the creation of natural filter areas for road rainwater runoff, and the separation of rain and foul sewage to avoid overloading the sewage system. There were also calls to avoid building on flood plains and to implement flood prevention measures at the source, such as planting trees and 're-wiggling' rivers on hilltops.

Urban Planning and Transportation

Many participants touched on aspects of urban planning and transportation that could make new developments more environmentally friendly. Suggestions included designing developments to encourage walking and cycling, providing secure cycle parking at all homes. Some respondents emphasised the importance of locating new buildings for easy access to services such as schools and shops without needing to drive. There were also calls for better public transport access and the creation of pedestrian-only areas.

Sustainable Building Practices and Materials

Several participants highlighted the reuse of existing buildings over new construction, while others emphasised the need to build structures that are designed to last. The use of local materials, such as bricks from local brickworks, was recommended. Some participants cautioned against building on greenfield sites, instead advocating for the use of brownfield sites to promote sustainability and protect agricultural land.

Question 8: What improvements to transport infrastructure and services would you like to see to support sustainable growth and improved connectivity?

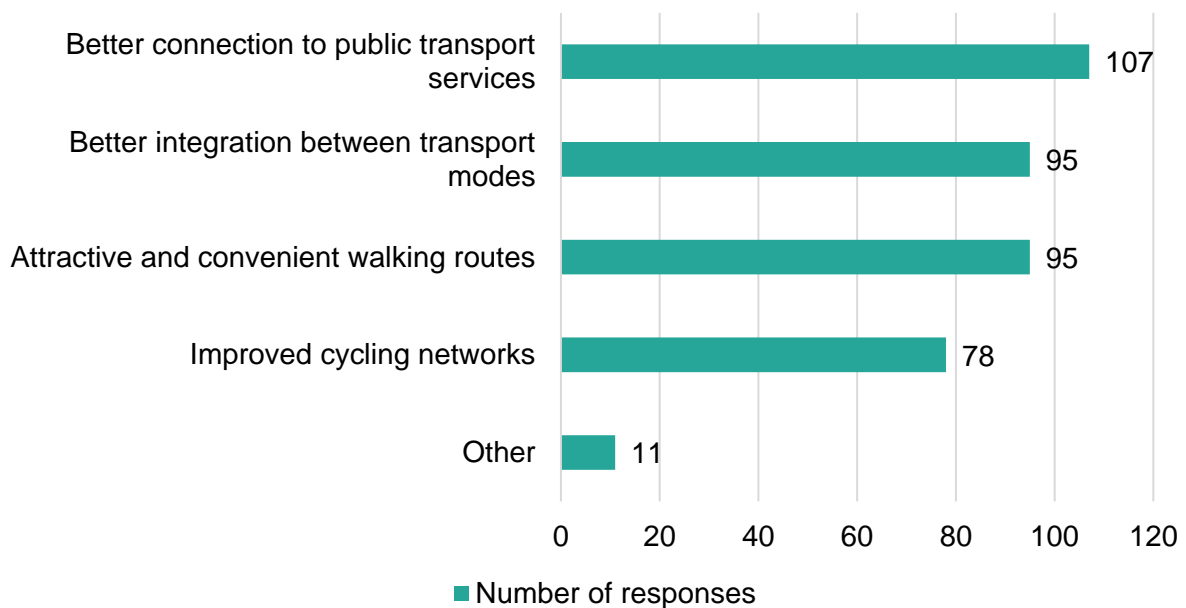


Chart 11: Responses to the question ‘what improvements to transport infrastructure and services would you like to see to support sustainable growth and improvement?’

The most voted for option was ‘Better connection to public transport service’ with 107 responses. ‘Better integration between transport mode’ and ‘Attractive and convenient walking routes’ each received with 95 votes. ‘Improved cycling network’ got 78 votes, and ‘other’ received 11 votes.

Comments related to transport infrastructure

Public Transport Enhancement

Many participants suggested that better and more affordable bus services were crucial, with some calling for higher frequency routes, and more reliable and punctual services. Several respondents highlighted the lack of bus services in certain areas, particularly in new housing estates and rural villages. There were also calls for local buses to operate in the evenings and for improved connections between towns and cities. Some participants suggested that new housing developments above a certain size should have bus routes funded by the developers.

Active Travel Infrastructure

A considerable number of respondents stressed the importance of improving infrastructure for active travel modes such as walking and cycling. Many called for the creation of off-road cycle routes that would allow cyclists to access all areas of a town without having to use major roads. Some participants noted that existing cycleways in places like Kendal were not fit for purpose and suggested that future designs should involve input from the cycling community.

There were also calls for wider pavements and more pedestrian-friendly environments. Some respondents suggested that new off-road routes should be designed for multiple users, including walkers, wheelchair users, and horse riders.

Integrated Transport Solutions

Several participants highlighted the need for better integration between different modes of transport. Suggestions included improving connections between bus and rail services, providing secure cycle parking at transport hubs, and allowing bicycles to be carried on buses. Some respondents called for the creation of park-and-ride facilities, free local buses, and delivery hubs to alleviate traffic volumes in certain areas.

Road Infrastructure and Safety

While many responses focused on alternatives to private car use, some participants mentioned the need for improvements to road infrastructure. Suggestions included upgrading the A590 and addressing issues with potholes. Several respondents called for the implementation of 20 mph speed limits in certain areas to improve safety and reduce noise and pollution.

Rural Connectivity

Several responses highlighted the specific challenges of rural connectivity. Participants called for improved bus services linking villages to main transport networks and suggested exploring innovative solutions such as community-run transport services.

Sustainable Growth and Environmental Considerations

Some respondents emphasised the need to balance transport improvements with environmental considerations. Suggestions included ensuring that any new lighting is low-level and directed to reduce light pollution, and promoting a 'healthy living' agenda that prioritises walking and cycling over car use.

Policy and Implementation

Several participants noted that while the Design Code may have limited direct influence over transport services, it should emphasise the importance of sustainable transport in the design and layout of new developments. Some respondents called for more community consultation in transport planning, while others stressed the need for local authorities to have sufficient power to implement effective transport solutions.

Looking to the future

Question 9: Thinking about different types of development or design features, what should the Westmorland and Furness Design Code be supporting and what should it be preventing?

Comments related to development of design features to be supported

Use of Local Materials and Character

Many participants emphasised the use of materials such as local stone (including sandstone, limestone, and slate) could help new buildings blend with existing structures. Some respondents proposed that the North Pennines Building Design Guide could be used as a reference for appropriate materials and styles in certain areas.

However, it was also noted that good design need not always imitate traditional styles. Some participants suggested that modern, energy-efficient materials could be incorporated into well-designed buildings without compromising local character.

Improved transport infrastructure and accessibility were frequently mentioned by participants. Many suggested that new developments should prioritise walking and cycling, with some proposing that car-free or car-limited developments should be considered. The need for adequate public transport links was also emphasised.

Several respondents mentioned the importance of providing sufficient parking in new developments to prevent issues with on-street parking. However, others suggested that reducing car dependency should be a priority in new designs.

Sustainable and Energy-Efficient Design

Many suggested that features such as solar panels, air source heat pumps, and green roofs should be incorporated into new buildings. Some participants proposed that all new builds should be required to include such energy-efficient features.

The importance of designing for climate change resilience was also highlighted. Some respondents suggested that developments should incorporate features to manage rainwater runoff, such as sustainable urban drainage systems and permeable paving.

Many participants suggested that new developments should prioritise smaller homes, flats, and bungalows to meet the needs of first-time buyers, young families, and older residents wishing to downsize. Some respondents proposed that a minimum percentage of affordable homes should be required in all new developments.

Several participants emphasised the importance of building homes that local people could afford to live in, rather than focusing on holiday homes or second homes. It was suggested that stricter controls on second home ownership might be necessary in some areas.

Planning Process and Implementation

Some participants expressed concerns about the planning process and the implementation of design guidelines. It was suggested that there should be more local involvement in the planning process and stricter enforcement of agreed design standards. Some respondents proposed that the Design Code should be flexible enough to accommodate the specific needs of different areas within Westmorland and Furness.

Repurposing of Existing Buildings

Many respondents advocated for the repurposing of empty or underused buildings, particularly in town centres. It was suggested that converting empty shops or commercial buildings into residential properties could help meet housing needs while revitalising urban areas. Some participants proposed that this approach should be prioritised over building on greenfield sites.

Landscaping and Green Spaces

The importance of incorporating green spaces and landscaping into new developments was frequently mentioned. Many respondents suggested that new estates should include communal green areas, trees, and spaces for wildlife.

Several respondents mentioned the importance of preserving existing landscape features, such as dry-stone walls in the Eden Valley. It was suggested that new developments should work with the existing landscape rather than dramatically altering it.

Community Focused Development

Many participants emphasised the need for new developments to foster a sense of community. Suggestions included creating central community spaces, incorporating play areas for children, and ensuring easy access to local amenities and necessary services within walking distance.

The importance of variety in housing estates was mentioned by several participants. It was suggested that developments should include a mix of housing types and avoid uniformity in design.

Comments related to development of design features to be prevented

Inappropriate Development Styles

Many participants expressed concern about generic or 'box-like' housing developments that could be found anywhere in the country. It was suggested that the Design Code should prevent the use of standard house types that do not reflect local distinctiveness.

Several comments mentioned the need to prevent tall buildings or structures that might be out of character with the local area. It was suggested that the height of new buildings should be carefully considered in relation to their surroundings, particularly in smaller communities.

Second Homes and Holiday Lets

Participants expressed concern about the increase of second homes and holiday lets in certain areas. It was suggested that the Design Code should include measures to prevent or limit the conversion of residential properties into holiday accommodation, particularly in areas where this is affecting local communities.

Protecting Local Character

Respondents often mentioned the importance of preserving local character in new developments. Many suggested that the Design Code should prevent the use of materials and designs that are incongruous with the vernacular architecture of the area. However, as noted, others have suggested the buildings should not simply imitate existing traditional styles.

Environmental Concerns

It was suggested that the Design Code should prevent developments that do not incorporate sustainable features. Some respondents proposed that developments which rely heavily on fossil fuels or fail to address climate change resilience should be prevented. The issue of light pollution was mentioned by several participants, particularly in rural areas.

Housing Density and Types

Several respondents expressed concern about over-development and high-density housing estates. It was suggested that the Design Code should prevent cramming too many houses into small spaces without adequate provision for green areas or community facilities.

Many participants mentioned the need to prevent an over-emphasis on large, expensive houses or 'executive homes'. It was suggested that a better mix of

housing types should be encouraged, with more focus on affordable homes and properties suitable for first-time buyers and local residents.

Loss of Green Spaces, Nature and Biodiversity

The protection of green spaces and prevention of urban sprawl were recurring themes in the comments. Many participants suggested that the Design Code should prevent building on greenfield sites, particularly when brownfield sites are available. Some respondents specifically mentioned the need to protect agricultural land from development.

Several comments highlighted the importance of preventing the loss of wildlife habitats and biodiversity. It was suggested that the Design Code should require developers to demonstrate how they will achieve biodiversity net gain in their projects.

Infrastructure and Community Need

Many participants expressed concern about new developments being built without adequate infrastructure or consideration for community needs. It was suggested that the Design Code should prevent developments that would put excessive strain on existing services such as schools, healthcare facilities, and transport networks.

Several respondents mentioned the need to prevent car-dependent developments, particularly those on the outskirts of towns. It was suggested that new developments should prioritise walking, cycling, and public transport connections.

Planning Process and Enforcement

Some respondents suggested that the Design Code should prevent developers from ignoring local plans or design briefs. It was proposed that there should be stricter enforcement of agreed design standards and planning conditions.

Several comments highlighted the need for genuine public consultation in the planning process, with some suggesting that the current practice of 'paying lip service' to consultation exercises should be prevented.

Question 10: In no more than 3 words, how would you like to describe the design of Westmorland and Furness in the future?

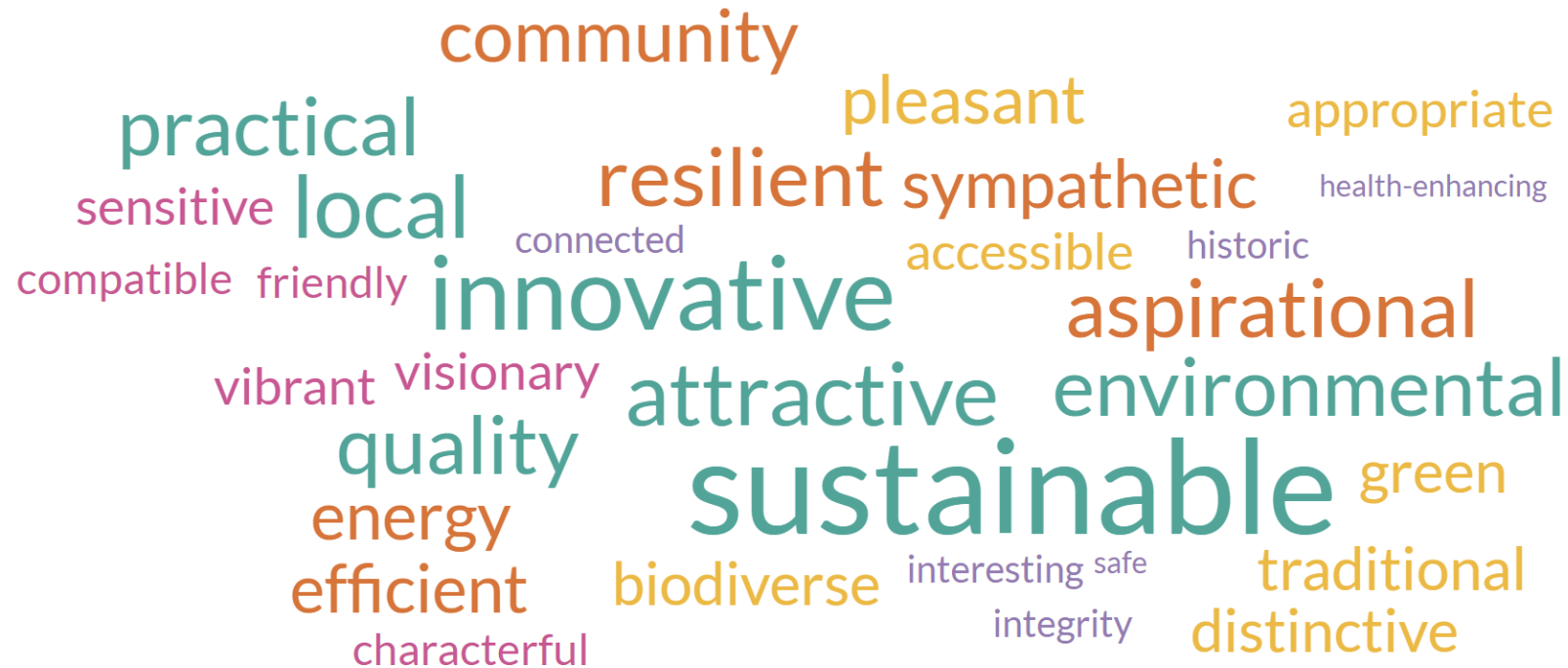


Chart 12: Word cloud displaying the words provided in response to this question, larger text indicates more commonly suggested words.

Additional comments provided

Sustainable Development and Environmental Considerations

Participants suggested that landscaping should enhance biodiversity, with many respondents advocating for the inclusion of native plants, trees, and green spaces. Some participants proposed that new developments should incorporate features such as green roofs, solar panels, and small wind turbines to promote energy efficiency.

Many participants expressed concern about building on flood plains. It was suggested that flood plains should be enhanced to perform their natural role, and that novel approaches such as soakaways, water collection systems, and filter beds should be incorporated into new developments to manage rainwater runoff.

Affordable Housing and Local Needs

The provision of affordable housing for local residents was a recurring theme in the comments. Many participants suggested that priority should be given to providing homes for people who wish to live and work locally, particularly young people. Some respondents expressed concern that houses built for local buyers often do not go to local buyers and suggested that stricter rules or guidelines might be needed to address this issue.

Planning Process and Implementation

Many participants expressed concerns about the planning process and the implementation of design guidelines. Some suggested that construction sites should be inspected to ensure compliance with agreed terms. Others emphasised the importance of early public consultation and information sharing.

Several respondents stressed the need for flexibility in the Design Code to accommodate the specific needs of different locations across the diverse Westmorland and Furness area. It was suggested that the Design Code might require dedicated sections for distinct areas.

Some suggested that more transparency and responsiveness to public input could help address these concerns.

Location specific character and challenges

We also received several location specific comments which we have pulled together here.

Participants frequently commented on the diverse character of different areas within Westmorland and Furness. The Lake District National Park was mentioned as providing benefits to adjacent areas without the influx of tourists. Penrith was noted for its situation in the Eden Valley and its distinctive red sandstone buildings and dry stone walls. Some respondents suggested that Grange-over-Sands had a

unique character due to its proximity to Morecambe Bay, its promenade, and iconic buildings including a stabilised lido.

Sandylands Play area in Kendal was noted as well-used and liked. Participants mentioned the importance of maintaining facilities like the car park at Berners Close.

The River Kent was mentioned, with many participants expressing concerns about protecting and improving its ecosystem and preventing pollution. Some respondents from Staveley mentioned issues with sewage discharges into the River Kent. A few participants suggested the development of a tidal power barrage in Morecambe Bay.

Some participants felt that Endmoor had become an unattractive sprawl due to poorly planned developments, with particular criticism directed at a recent housing development off Sycamore Close. It was reported that a new development in Lindal, featuring large three-storey timber-framed houses, was not selling well, which some participants felt indicated a mismatch between development and local needs.

Some respondents mentioned the need for improvement in Kendal's Cheapside and Finkle street areas for potential outdoor socializing spaces and mentioned the white tower blocks at St Anthony's Close in Milnthorpe demonstrate poor design integration with surrounding scale and context, despite their street-level appearance.

Some respondents expressed concern about the promenade upgrade in Grange-over-Sands being viewed as poor quality by some residents. A few participants suggested the need to maintain a green gap between Grange-over-Sands and Allithwaite, as specified in the approved Local Plan.

Some participants suggested extending the Threlkeld railway line path to Penrith. Wartbarrow Lane was mentioned as one of the worst roads in the area, especially in winter. It was reported that Cartmel Lane between Allithwaite and Cartmel was particularly challenging for pedestrians.

Some respondents suggested the need for an upgrade to the A590. Others expressed concern about the single access road to new developments, suggesting Green Lane in Flookburgh as an example.

Kendal was frequently mentioned, with some suggesting that its cycleways were not fit for purpose. Others felt that the town needed an improved bus service and bus station. Some respondents suggested reducing heavy traffic in Kendal's town centre and increasing green spaces. It was reported that cycle lanes on Barrow Island were considered dangerous by some users.

In the Cartmel Peninsula, participants reported feeling unsafe due to the volume of traffic, roadside parking, and vehicles driving too fast. It was suggested that no more housing development should occur in this area until these issues are

addressed. Some suggested that Cartmel could benefit from a parking system similar to Hawkshead.

In Allithwaite, it was reported that there was only one bus per day to Kendal, which some felt was insufficient. A few participants suggested creating a walking/cycling route across the rail bridge from Allithwaite to Arnside.

Some respondents mentioned a lack of bus services to new estates like Levens View near Heversham, and to villages such as Bardsea and Urswick. In Kirkby Stephen, some participants suggested a need for regular daily bus services to Kendal and Penrith.

Comments from parish councils

Many of the Parish Councils completed the survey, and so their responses are also captured in our analysis above. However, to be able to understand some of the specific things raised by Parish Councils we have drawn out common themes from their responses.

Local Character and Heritage

Respondents frequently mentioned the importance of local building materials and traditional architectural styles. Many valued the varied roofscapes and building sizes in their towns.

Natural Environment and Green Spaces

The preservation of green spaces, including parks and countryside access, was often highlighted. Many emphasised the need for landscaping in new developments, using native trees and shrubs. Some mentioned the importance of retaining features like dry stone walls.

Sustainable Design

Energy efficiency and sustainability were common themes. Respondents often called for the incorporation of features like solar panels in new builds. Some suggested allowing heritage uPVC windows and double glazing in listed buildings for improved energy efficiency.

Transport and Connectivity

Improved public transport, especially better rail connections, was frequently mentioned. Many respondents emphasised the need for safe cycling and walking infrastructure. Some highlighted the importance of adequate parking in new developments.

Affordable and Appropriate Housing

The need for affordable housing and homes suitable for first-time buyers was a recurring theme. Some respondents expressed concern about large 'executive'

homes and second homes. There were calls for a mix of housing types within developments.

Community Infrastructure

Many responses stressed the importance of providing adequate infrastructure alongside new housing, including schools, healthcare facilities, and shops. Some mentioned the need for social spaces and community facilities within developments.

Design Quality

Respondents often called for high-quality design that respects local character while allowing for some innovation. Many expressed a desire for greater variety in new housing developments, moving away from uniform estates. Some mentioned the importance of creating safe, accessible spaces for all users, including children and disabled people.

Comments from statutory consultees

Letters received by statutory consultees have all be received directly by Westmorland and Furness Council and shared with the design team. Below is a short summary of the suggestions made in these responses.

Security in Design

Suggestions were made to ensure that the Design Code supports security by incorporating the Police's Secure by Design guidance and requiring new development to achieve secure by design accreditation.

Heritage

Recognition of the important of heritage to the character, economy and well-being of the area. Highlighted by national planning guidance and national design code guidance. The design code is an opportunity to identify specific design and context features which define local character.

Conclusions and next steps

The findings from this early community engagement have informed the development of the Design Code. All feedback gathered has been carefully documented and presented to Westmorland and Furness Council and the design team to ensure community perspectives are embedded within the draft Design Code.

Looking ahead, we will continue to engage with local people, businesses and stakeholders as the draft Design Code develops. Further public consultation is planned for later in 2025, providing additional opportunities for the community to review and comment on the draft Design Code.

You can continue to follow the Design Code at the project website. You can also sign up the Westmorland and Furness Council's Local Plan mailing list where you're received updates on the Local Plan and Design Code. Visit:

<https://consult.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/planning-policy-designcode/>