

Our Greenwich

Community Engagement Pledge

Look back and consultation report

Improving the quality of health
and life of our residents



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I. Look back - overview

Background

Following approval of the budget 2023/24, it was agreed the council would establish a stand-alone community engagement team to ensure there is a strategic approach to engagement. It was agreed the team would champion use of a range of different methods of engagement with local residents, business and the voluntary and community sector, utilising community engagement best practice to review, discuss and consult on services, policy changes and decisions.

It was also agreed the improvements and changes to community engagement would include a data driven, consistent approach and a set of engagement principles to help grow and develop engagement leading to a more representative involvement of the borough's communities.

For the new team and the whole council to begin to work differently, encourage and deliver more community engagement and uphold the highest standards in this field, an engagement framework has been developed with key stakeholders and utilising sector insight.

This report outlines and details the work undertaken to develop Royal Borough of Greenwich's community engagement framework which consists of Our Greenwich: Community Engagement Pledge and the accompanying Community Engagement Handbook.



Phased approach

Ensuring a complete and in-depth process could be led and making time for each stakeholder to contribute to the development of the engagement framework, led to a six month period of research and discovery, consultation, analysis and reflection.

Each of the phases has focussed on different stakeholders and was conducted in a variety of ways to make the whole process inclusive and accessible whilst also modelling the behaviours and efforts which the council would want to be synonymous with around community engagement.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Liaising with council officers and elected members	Meeting and engaging with residents, communities, partners and voluntary and community sectors	Refinement of the draft engagement framework with colleagues, reference group, workstream groups and critical friend consultancy

Stakeholders

As a corporate framework, to be used by all colleagues and teams at the council as well as being adopted for use by Royal Borough of Greenwich partners – the key stakeholders of this project have been identified as;

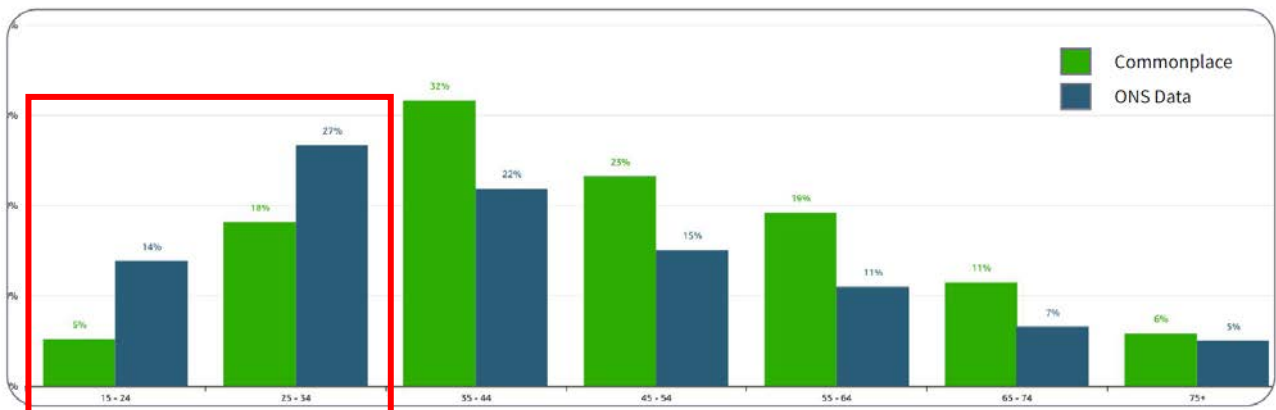
Elected members	All elected members from the front and back bench and opposition.
Council officers	All employees of the council and council organisations such as GSP/GSS Ltd.
Community and voluntary organisations and partners including statutory partners	This would be all organisations working in or for the borough on a non-profit making basis, liaising with the community and / or providing community services on behalf of or independent of the council.
Residents	Anyone who lives, works or is educated in the borough.

Engagement benchmarking

Information here, is a breakdown of consultations data from the six year period 2017 to 2023. It highlights where effort and attention is needed in community engagement to address underrepresentation – when as a council, we move to put engagement at the centre of our community relationships. It also informed how the engagement around the framework could be undertaken.

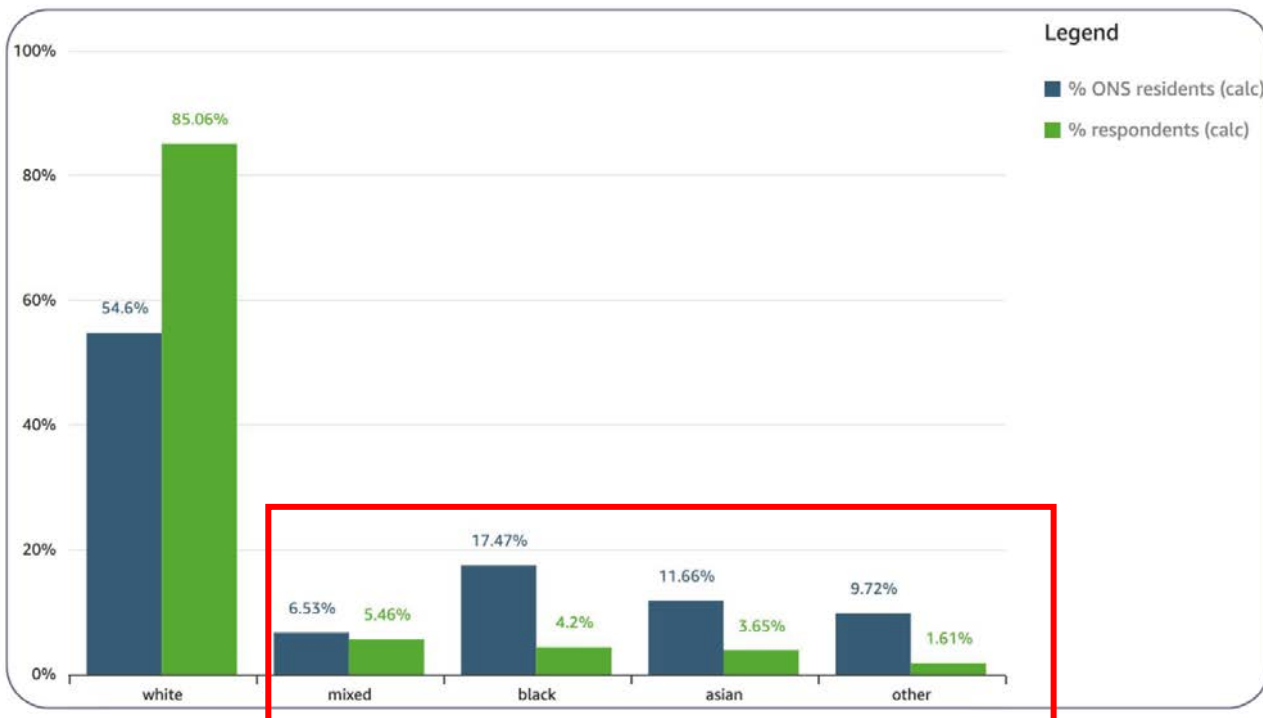
Age (in comparison to the Office for National Statistics)

- There is good engagement with middle and older generations being overrepresented in consultation participation proportionate to the makeup of the borough.
- Work is still needed to bring younger residents (under 35 years of age) of the borough to engage through consultation processes.



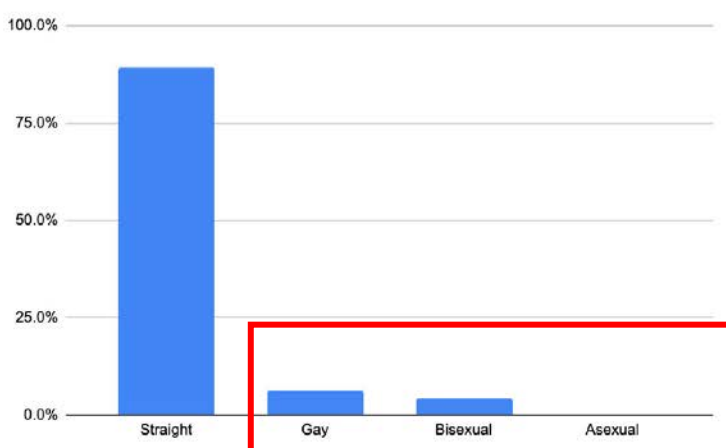
Ethnicities (in comparison to the Office for National Statistics)

- There is a significant overrepresentation from residents who identify as white (85.5% of participants in consultation activities are from white communities when the borough is 54.5% white)
- This means there is under representation in consultation participation from all non-white communities (less than 15% when 45.5% of the borough residents are from non-white communities).

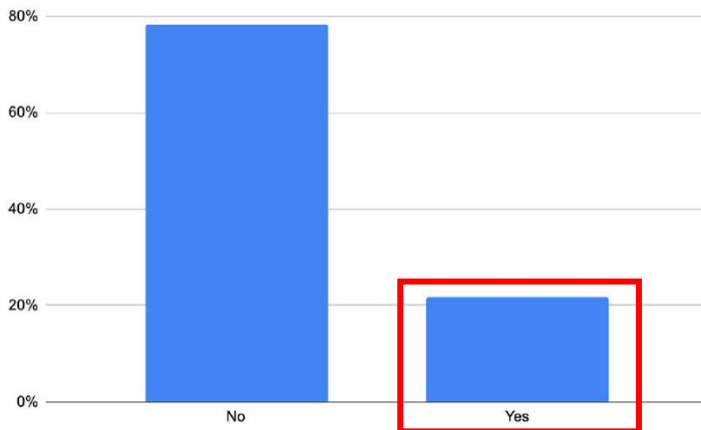


Health, disability and sexual orientation (in comparison to the Office for National Statistics)

- These communities are well represented in consultation participation when compared to the ONS data of the borough.



Sexual Orientation	count	%
Straight	10365	88.4%
Gay	711	6.1%
Bisexual	501	4.3%
Asexual	23	0.2%
TOTAL	11600	



Disability	count	%
No	4318	78%
Yes	1199	22%
TOTAL	5517	

Background and sector research

Prior to work with Greenwich communities, partners and council officers to begin to draft and research a community engagement framework, some time was taken to explore the wider context for this work.

Royal Borough of Greenwich as one of the 32 London Councils (33 including City of London) would sit alongside numerous other inner London authorities that work either with a central engagement team and/or use an engagement framework or strategy to guide the implementation of this workstream.

Further exploration and benchmarking against other local authorities is underway and will complete in the summer 2024.

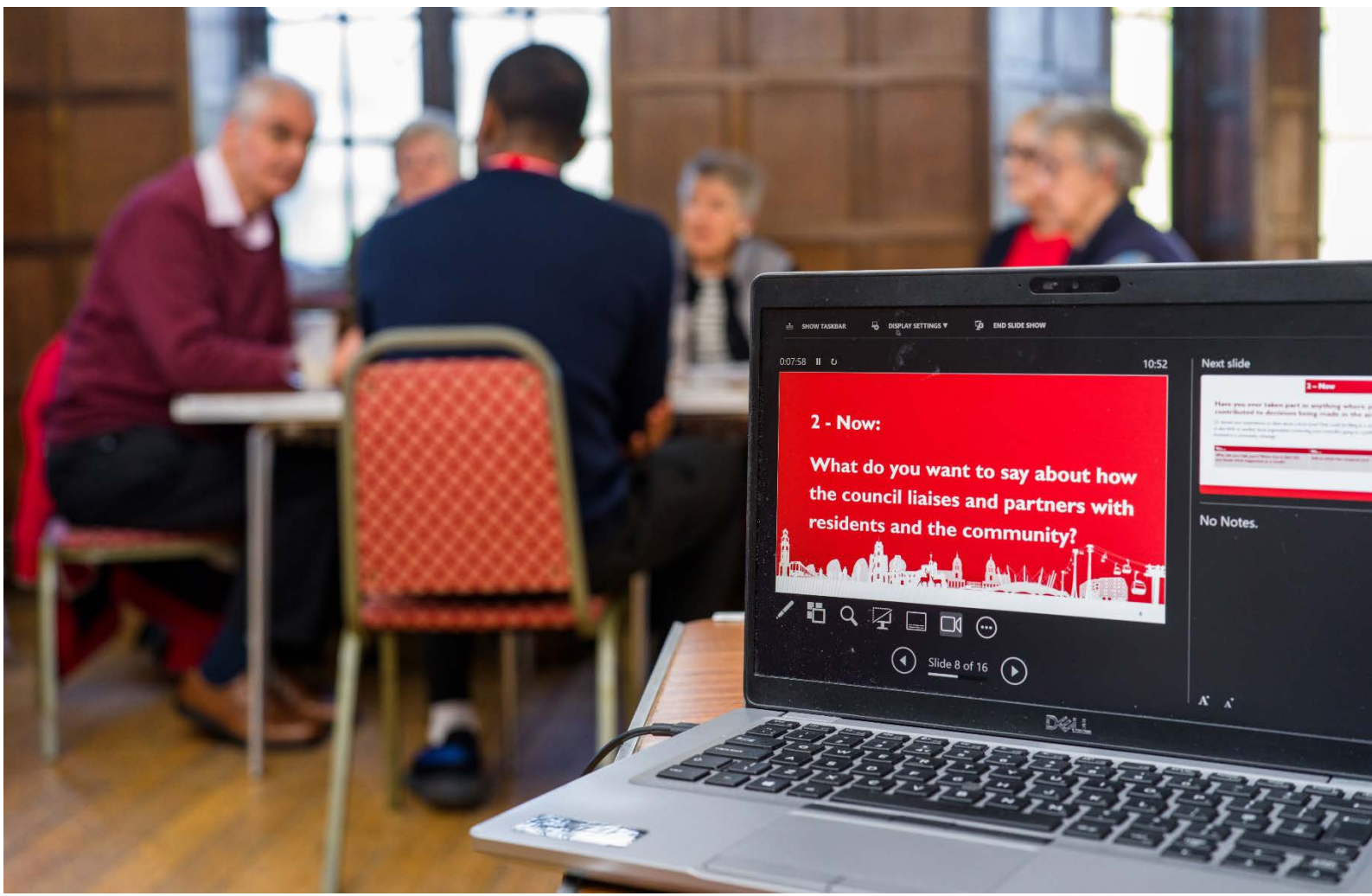
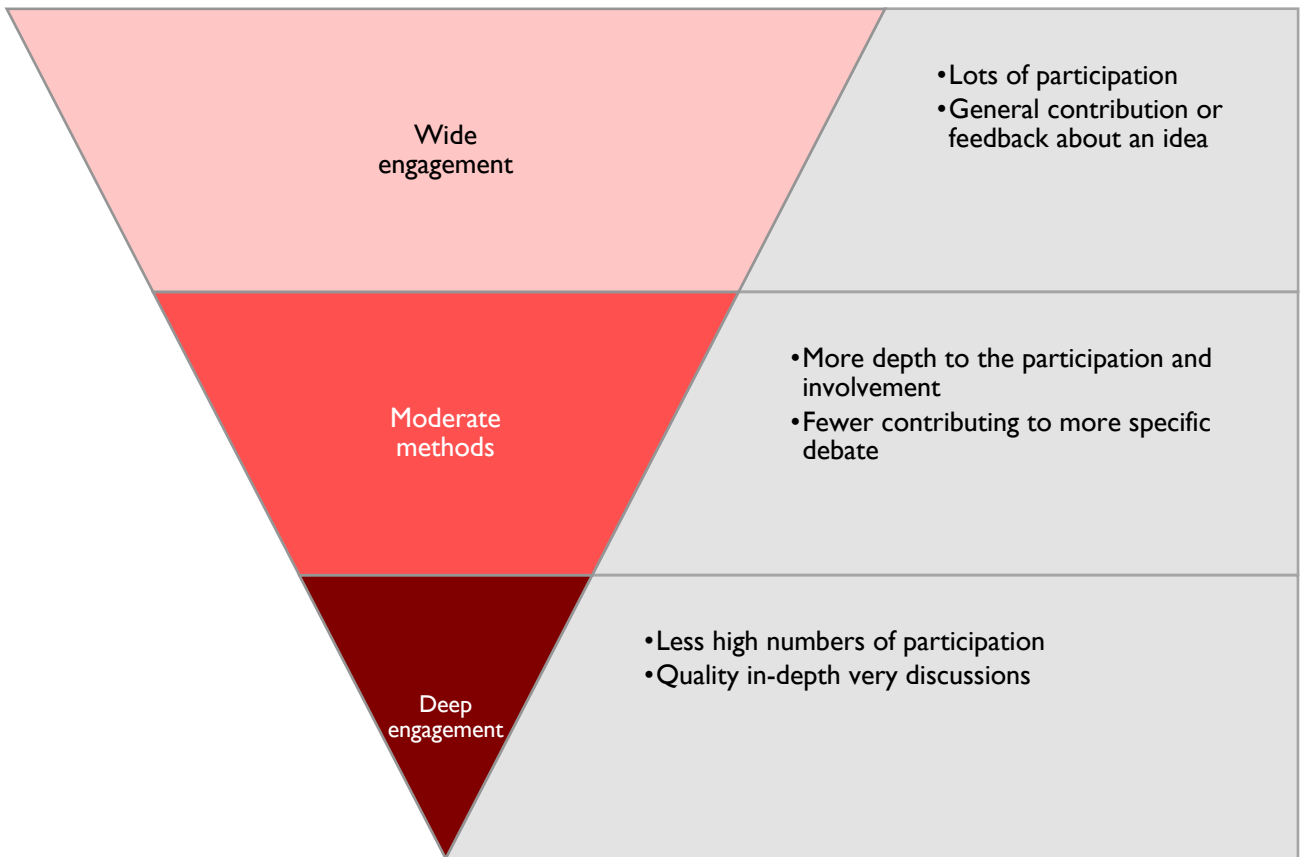
Royal Borough of Greenwich’s resident engagement team is a member of the London Council’s Community Engagement Network and the Mayor of London’s Community Engagement Collaborative.

During this work, the council liaised with Involve (The Involve Foundation) involve.org.uk, as advisor and critical friend. The process also included a cross council directorate reference group of 20+ council officers, and rigorous project management with both a project group and project board made up of senior executive directors of the council.

Enabling participation

The process to research, consult on and draft the community engagement framework, sought to be seen as an exemplar of what engagement methods can be undertaken, in different ways, for different communities to gather feedback from a variety of settings. A framework that highlights community engagement should enable and encourage residents, partners and communities to participate in its development and for their voices to be seen in the resulting framework.

The number of those participating in this process was important, but so was the quality of the conversations and the diversity of everyone involved and so the activities in Phase 2 captured wide and general contributions, moderate methods for more conversations and deeper engagement activities for more in-depth debate.



Engagement activity delivered – by type of conversation depth


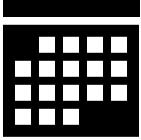

NB: ** ‘conversationalist’ were trained in conducting surveys and feedback for this process and could come from the community, council staff, elected members and residents of the borough.

Engagement type	What	Where	No of events	Participant number
Preparation	Questions development session	Woolwich Front Room	N/A	N/A
Wide engagement (General contribution or feedback)	Consultation survey	Online you-make-greenwich.commonplace.is/.	N/A	See below point??
		Face-to-face survey completion through council events like Sparkle in the Park and Eltham Christmas lights switch on events. (officers supporting)		As part of the survey events (below)
		Printed surveys available a community sites, leisure centres and libraries.	N/A	See below point ??
		Support sessions at council advice hubs and welcome spaces. (officers supporting)	1	4
Moderate methods (More depth to the participation and involvement Fewer contributing to more specific debate)	Consultation survey event	Longer conversations with residents at council events Sparkle in the Park and Eltham Christmas lights switch on events etc. (officers supporting)	9	125
	Consultation survey workshop session	Deeper discussions held at advice hubs and other council activities	5	42
	In-depth community conversations	Libraries and community centres. (officers supporting)	6	43
Deep engagement (Quality in-depth very subject focussed discussions)	Sector discussions	Organisation sessions and workshops such as liaising with VCS and faith groups individually.	4	34
	Statutory and Voluntary Sector Workshop	Workshop with voluntary and community sector organisations.	1	33

2. Look back - activities and analysis

Phase I Research and Discovery - council officers and members

This phase began on 04 September and concluded activity on 06 October. During that time a variety of sessions and discussions took place with council officers from across the entire organisation and elected members.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted 33 staff and member sessions with 237 council colleagues involved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertook over 50 hours of council research workshops engaging with staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved over 20 different council teams participating from all directorates - showing the breath of council contribution and commitment to change

Phase I Activities

Beyond researching what the engagement framework could and should contain, this phase of research and discovery aimed to;

- Reach as many different teams as services as possible
- Work across the council
- Give the platform to staff to discuss the current relationship and engagement work with residents and communities
- Explore ways of supporting further and different ways of engaging with residents and communities
- Map the amount of engagement activity that was already happening across the council
- Map what kinds of engagement activity was being delivered (beyond just delivering consultations)
- Find out if colleagues would share knowledge and insight
- Prepare the council and staff for the arrival of a community engagement framework



List of workshops and the teams consulted and engaged

Directorate	Team
Chief Executive's office	General Management Team (executive directors) GMT
Children's Services	Integrated Commissioning
	Quality improvement
Communities Environment & Central	Communications
	Information, Safety and Communities
	Environment and Leisure / Sports
	Corporate Governance
	Electoral Services
	Events
	Waste and Recycling
	Directorate away day (all directorate teams)
	Environment and Leisure / Parks and open spaces
Department Directors / Departmental Leadership Teams	Communities, Environment & Central DMT
	Children's Services DMT
	Finance & Legal Services GMT
	Health & Adult Services
	Regeneration, Enterprise & Skills GMT
Elected members	Labour Group workshop/s
Finance and Legal Services	Advice and Benefits
	Digital and Customer Services
Health & Adult Services	Adult Social Care (Families)
	Public Health
Housing and Safer Communities	Environmental Health
	Housing Services / Tenancy support and engagement
	Enforcement
	Community Safety
Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills	Business Employment and Skills
	Planning and Building Control



Phase I Analysis

The breakdown of the considerable amount of feedback from inside the council looked in depth the council's current position and how to utilise strengths, how engagement should work and what the changes would be that come from refreshed and reviewed engagement activity.

I. Current position and how to utilise strengths

- a) Drawing on the skills, experience and information of others
 - i) Getting professional advice on approaches
 - ii) Sharing and using data that already exists
 - iii) Working with colleagues, partners and communities to design and implement those approaches
 - iv) Factoring in lived experience and creating opportunities for co-design and co-production where appropriate

- b) Timing - connected to the above
 - i) Planning engagement early and coordinating with other teams and partners so that it can be designed well and land well
 - ii) Avoiding clashes and duplication
 - iii) Maximising the impact that engagement can have

- c) Clarity, consistency and capacity
 - i) Being clear with the council and others what engagement is for and what it can achieve

- ii) Using consistent approaches across the organisation, informed by resources, training and skills development that result in high quality engagement.

2. **How engagement should work**

- a) Implement a range of engagement approaches and opportunities
 - i) Reflect the need for breadth and depth, enabling people to participate in different ways, levels of intensity and time period
 - ii) Improve accessibility and inclusivity. (There are arguments both for more online tools and more face-to-face or non-tech approaches, emphasising different views about what the right balance should be.)
- b) Willingness to listen and to share power
 - i) Use approaches that help us to hear more seldom heard voices
 - ii) Set up structures that help share power and give people a deeper role in decision-making
- c) Reciprocity, relationships and network building
 - i) moving beyond engagement that feels disconnected and transactional and towards an engagement culture which better connects council teams to communities

3. **Changes that come from engagement activity**

- a) Acting on engagement findings and communicating that back
 - i) Telling participants and wider communities how engagement has had an impact (explaining why if not)
- b) Using data collected actively and collaboratively
 - i) Sharing engagement findings with other teams and partners to maximise their value and to support the key points of number 1.

The teams who took part in the process also shared ideas and action to form their own engagement plan with equalities, diversity and inclusion activity.








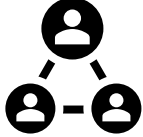
Phase 2 Consultation and Engagement - residents and organisations




Phase two began on 18 November 2023 and concluded 26 January 2024. This phase of engagement with residents, communities and partners aimed to understand the following things, relative to the framework and to how the council can look to improve activities;

- What is the relationship like currently between the council and residents
- Find out from residents if they would be interested in community engagement and decision making
- What kind of activities would they take part in
- What suggestions they might have for community engagement activity
- Feedback on potential engagement framework content

Phase 2 Activities

During Phase 2, the council;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Received 292 online consultation responses (and a total of 439 online contributions from residents)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcomed 281 residents who met the engagement team at face-to-face events and sessions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Held 26 public engagement workshops
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivered 69 hours of public community engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distributed paper surveys to 36 libraries, leisure centres and community centres across the whole borough
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-ordinated and delivered 11 deeper community conversations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visited 13 Greenwich wards visited
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Received 45 completed resident paper surveys
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Liaised with 35 community organisations and partners who took part in the engagement framework process

Phase 2 Resident consultation and survey questions

The questions asked in the paper surveys, the online consultation and at face-to-face events were always the same. When a more insightful or deeper conversation was possible and needed, a summary set of fast questions was asked, which always, never the less, contributed to the original 12 survey questions. All of the information, comments and event activities feedback was uploaded to the main online consultation space at <https://you-make-greenwich.commonplace.is/>.

- How often are you in touch with the Council about local issues or a service you use?
 - Every day or most days
 - Once or twice a week
 - Once or twice a month
 - A few times a year (less than 10)
 - Never
 - Other
- How would you describe your experience of interacting with the Council?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Average
 - Poor
 - Very poor
 - Other
- What is your best experience interacting with the Council around local issues? What happened here that made your experience good?
- What is your worst experience interacting with the Council around local issues? What happened here that made your experience bad?
- Have you ever shared your experiences or opinions about a local issue with the Council? If so, how? (For example, filling in a survey, talking to a councillor, going to a local meeting or something else?)
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know or not sure
 - Other
- Can you share any thoughts about or ideas for how local people could play a bigger role in Council decisions that affect them?

7. We want to create more opportunities for people to contribute to decision-making in the borough. How interested would you be in sharing your views and ideas with the council in the following ways?

- Community planning forums
- Focus groups
- Citizens panels
- Corporate decisions
- Scrutiny meeting
- Committee meetings

a. Is there anything more you'd like to say or to be included?

8. Would you be interested in receiving updates from the council on engagement opportunities for local people?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know or not sure

9. How much do you agree with this possible Community Engagement Framework content?

*Regarding refreshed and new **approaches** to engaging with you and your community, the Council commits to continuous development of our community relationships.*

For example, by:

- *improving and increasing the number of opportunities for community partnerships and collaborations*
- *encouraging community networks to flourish so that resources, information and engagement opportunities are more easily available and shared*
- *highlighting the voice of residents through their suggestions and various opportunities such as consultations, focus groups and panels and ensuring public reporting on outcomes*
- *building community capacity to contribute to decision making through support, training and opportunities.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

a. Is there anything more you'd like to say or to be included?

10. How much do you agree with this possible Community Engagement Framework content?

Regarding a new set of **Council principles** to engaging with you and communities, the Council will:

Create open dialogues and share relevant communications.

For example, by:

- sharing clear information
- ensuring communications are available in accessible and inclusive formats
- creating jargon and acronym free materials
- asking the community for feedback.

Work to create and sustain great community relationships.

For example, by:

- building trust with partners and residents
- enhancing and working with community expertise and knowledge
- being respectful and responsive to community and resident needs.

Foster honesty and clarity around decision making influence and the impact of community involvement.

For example, by:

- highlighting what can be achieved
- providing the necessary time for engagement and building community knowledge and relevant capacity
- making sure activity is needs and evidence based
- sharing outcomes and impact.

Collaborate together with residents' communities.

For example, by:

- working locally with stakeholders
- liaising on the ground with communities
- developing engagement activities together
- being available.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

a. Is there anything more you'd like to say or to be included?

11. How much do you agree with this possible Community Engagement Framework content?

Regarding a new set of Council **consultations pillars** to engaging with you and communities, the Council will ensure:

Pillar 1. Consultations have a clear purpose.

For example, they:

- are defined and necessary
- highlight the type of consultation (statutory, legal, informal etc)
- clarify the level of influence upon the subject (advice, insight, feedback, policy).

Pillar 2. Are designed with residents.

For example, they:

- are developed with the community when at a formative stage of any project
- give relevant information, options and survey questions
- are clear and understandable for informed responses.

Pillar 3. Consultations respond to each community.

For example, they:

- are tailored to needs and preferences of a community
- suited to a specific group or community of residents and are accessible (for example, when consultation takes place).

Pillar 4. Consultations give tangible outcomes.

For example, they:

- report on consultation evaluations
- use consultation responses in the decisions made
- share consultation impact and use.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

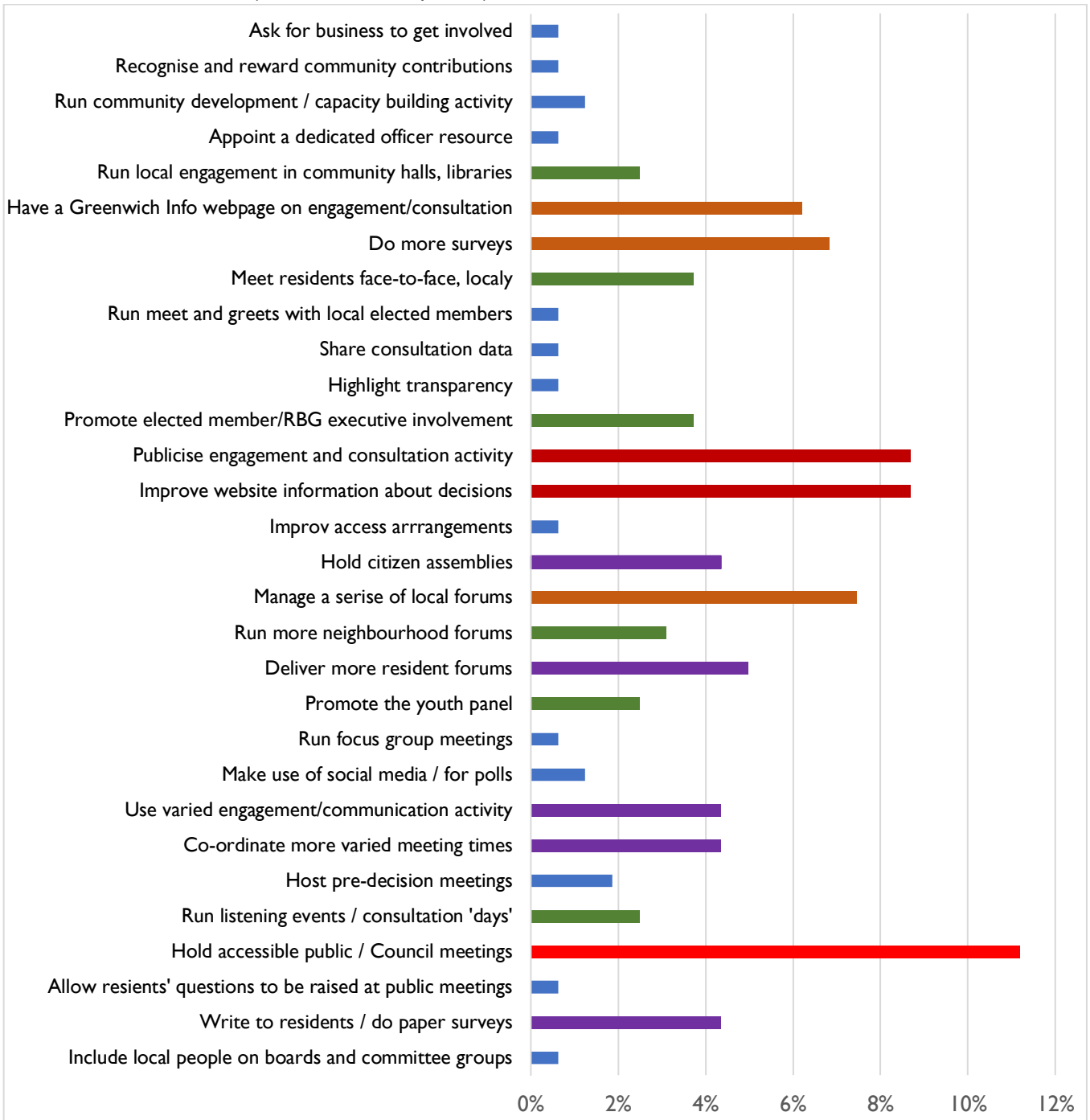
a. Is there anything more you'd like to say or to be included?

12. And finally, is there anything else you'd like to say about what the Council should do to become better about including you, your neighbours and community in decisions that affect residents of the borough?

Phase 2 Analysis

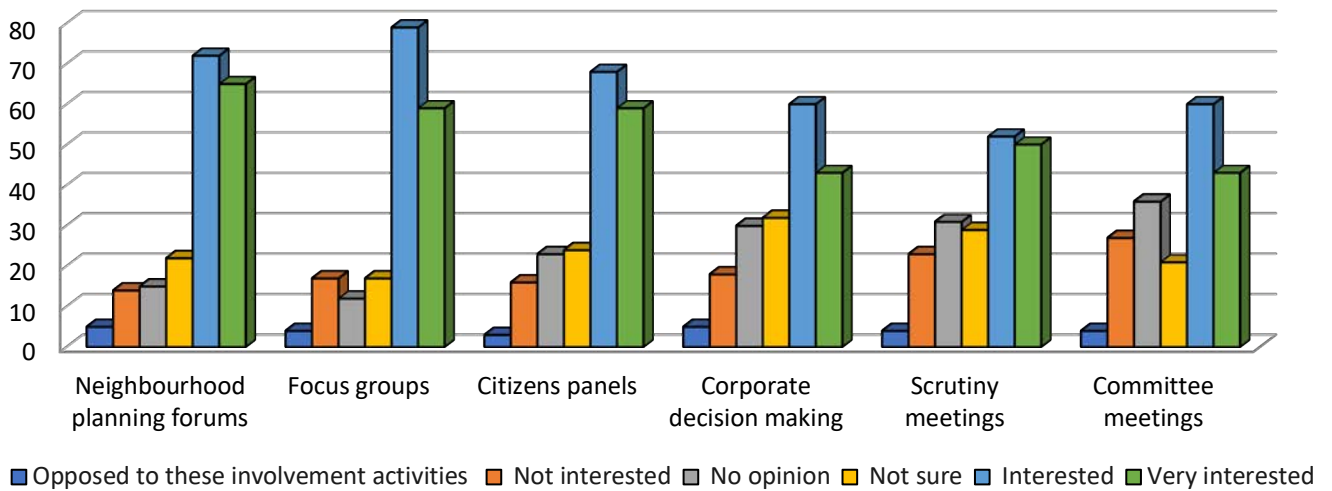
The 12 questions asked, fell into two fields of analysis – 1) are residents in contact with the council and what their current relationship is like or 2) can residents highlight opportunities for more and better engagement with the council and what their thoughts would be on possible engagement framework content. Here below is the analysis of questions 6 and 7, 9 to 11.

Q6 - Can you share any thoughts about or ideas for how local people could play a bigger role in Council decisions that affect them? (=161 resident responses).



Framework: Many of the suggestions above are now part of the Our Greenwich: Community Engagement Pledge action plan.

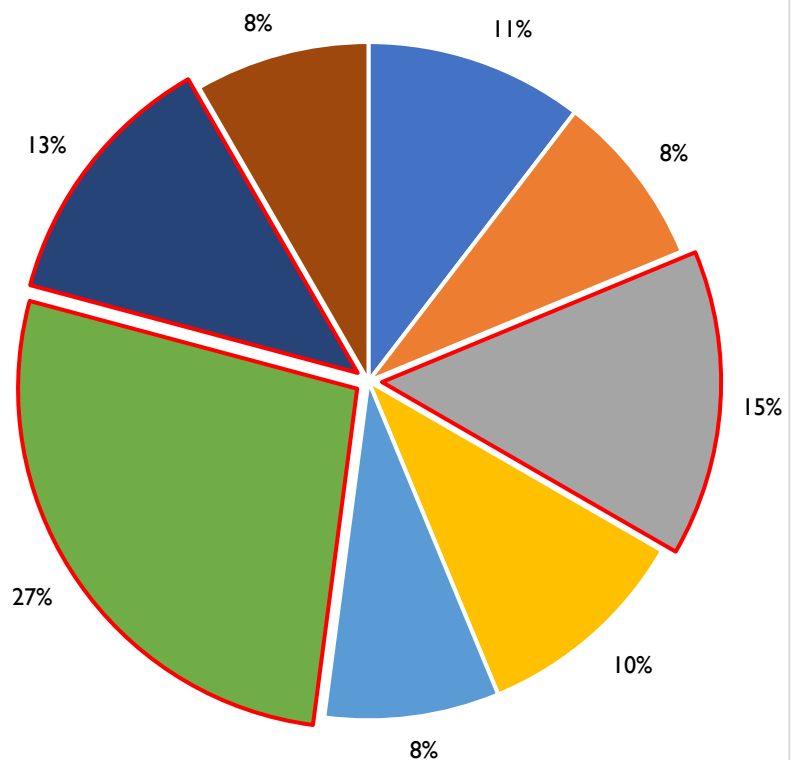
Q7 - How interested would you be in sharing your views and ideas with the council in the following ways? (=161 resident responses).



Framework: These responses are influencing the council to deliver more opportunities for residents to get involved in many of the possible ways indicated.

Q7 – Through the open comments box, residents said the following; (=104 resident comments).

- The council needs to understand and involve the community
- Residents should be able to liaise directly with the council around decisions
- The council needs to actively listen to residents
- The council must inform the community about what is happening around them
- The council must ensure engagement benefits the community and share results
- The council needs to remove barriers for residents to participate in feedback groups
- The council needs to get things done, not just talk or not deliver. Actions speak louder than words!
- The council needs to respond to residents' needs

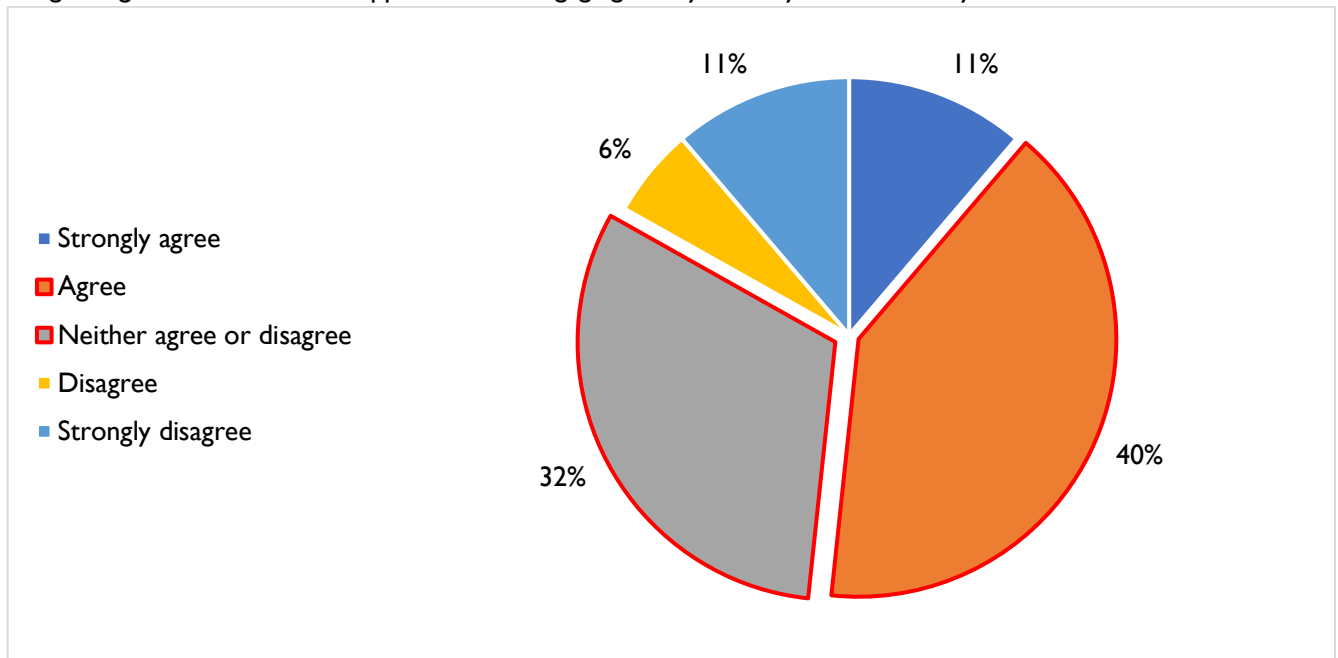


Framework: The top three suggestions above are now written into the Community Engagement Pledge.

Within the survey, three questions (questions 9, 10 and 11) asked residents for feedback on potential content for the framework. These three questions also allowed residents to offer open dialogue commentary on their impressions of current community engagement and their contribution to decisions made by the council.

Q9 - How much do you agree with this possible Community Engagement Framework content? (=267 resident responses). (see above question content)

“Regarding refreshed and new approaches to engaging with you and your community”



51% of residents taking part, agreed with this possible framework content.

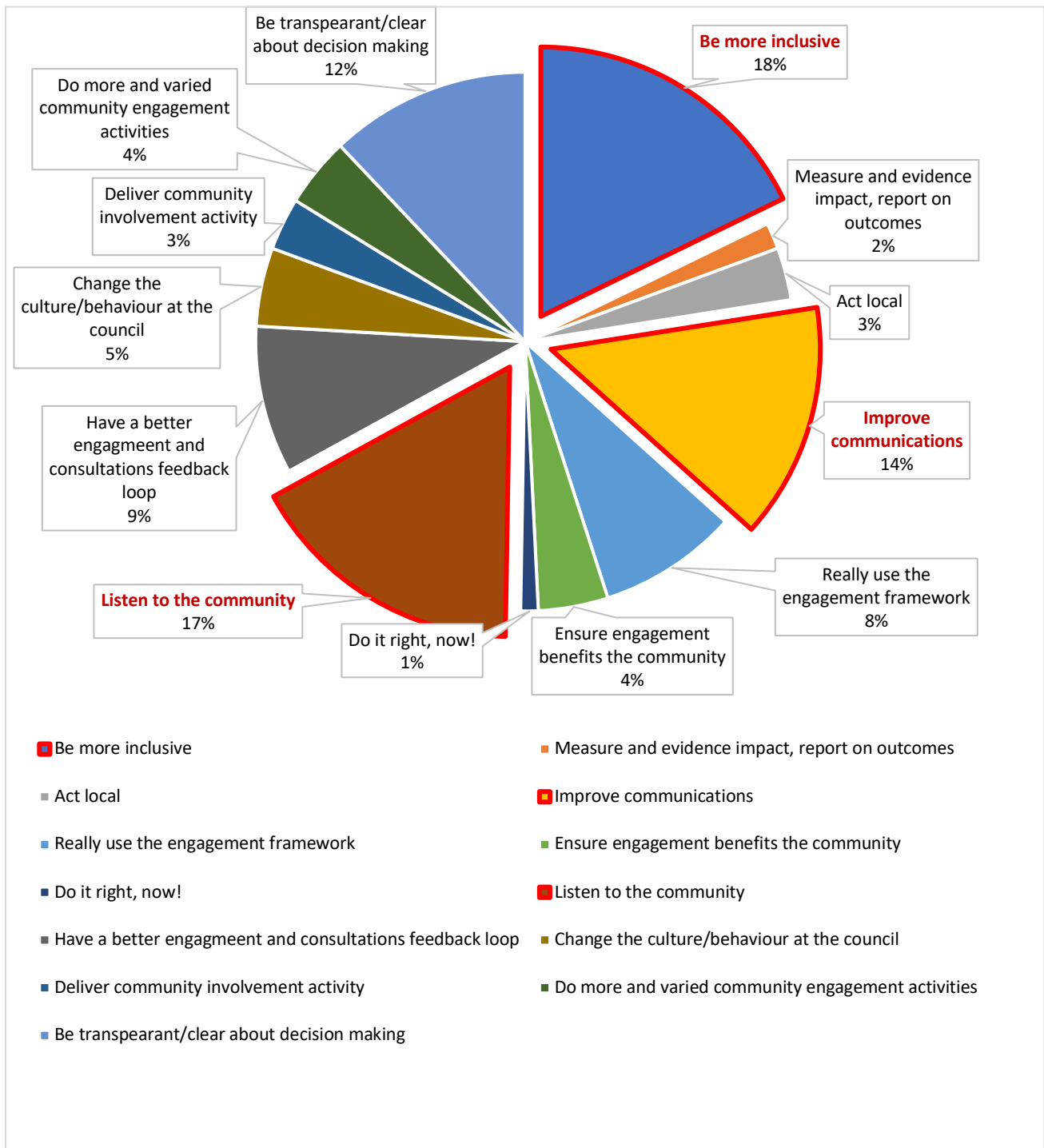
49% of residents taking part either disagreed, strongly disagreed or had no opinion on this possible framework content.

Framework: The suggested ‘approaches’ to community engagement have been omitted from the framework as the opinion to use was only marginal and not much value as being added overall.



The **main subjects of comments and feedback** highlighted by questions 9, 10 and 11 clustered around repeated key messages. These messages are shown below in the following data graphs taken from these questions.

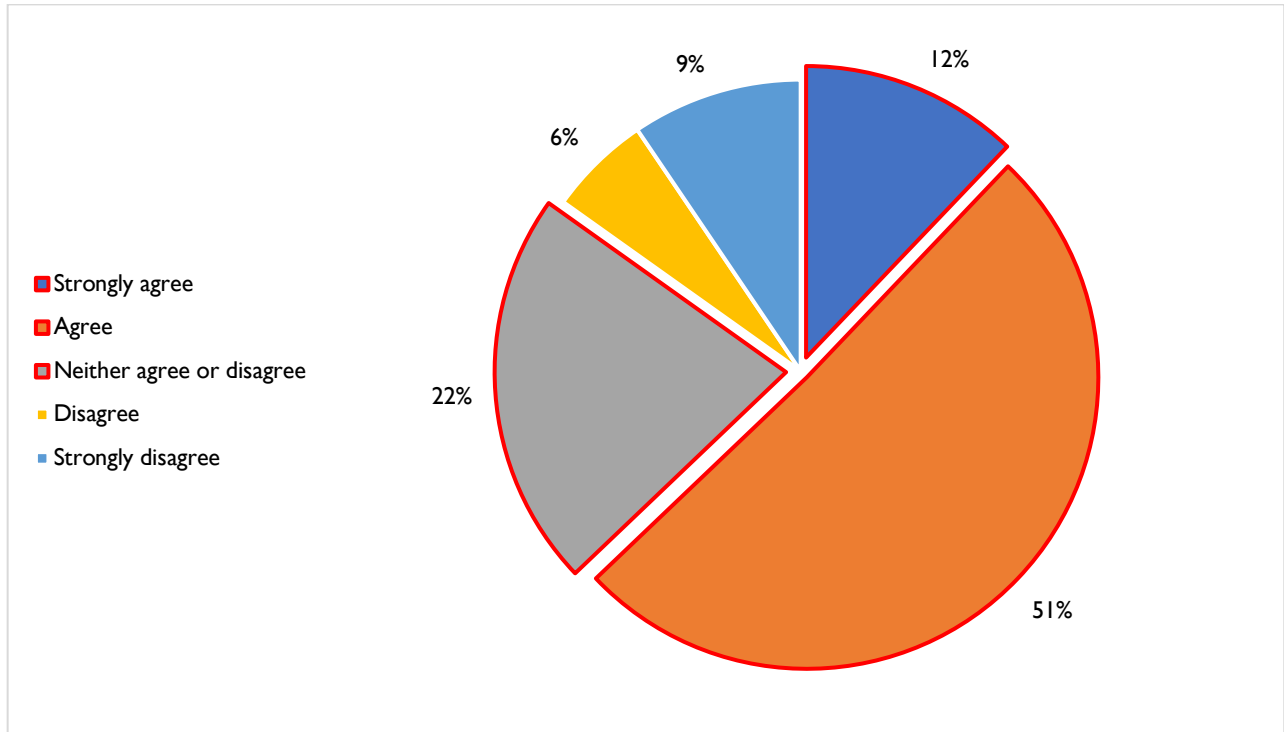
Q9 - Regarding refreshed and new approaches to engaging with you and your community, the Council commits to continuous development of our **community relationships**. Comments:-



Framework: The top three suggestions above are now written into the **Community Engagement Pledge**. Many of the other comments are also included within the Pledge.

Q10 - How much do you agree with this possible Community Engagement Framework content? (=264 resident responses). (see above question content)

“Regarding a new set of Council principles to engaging with you and communities”

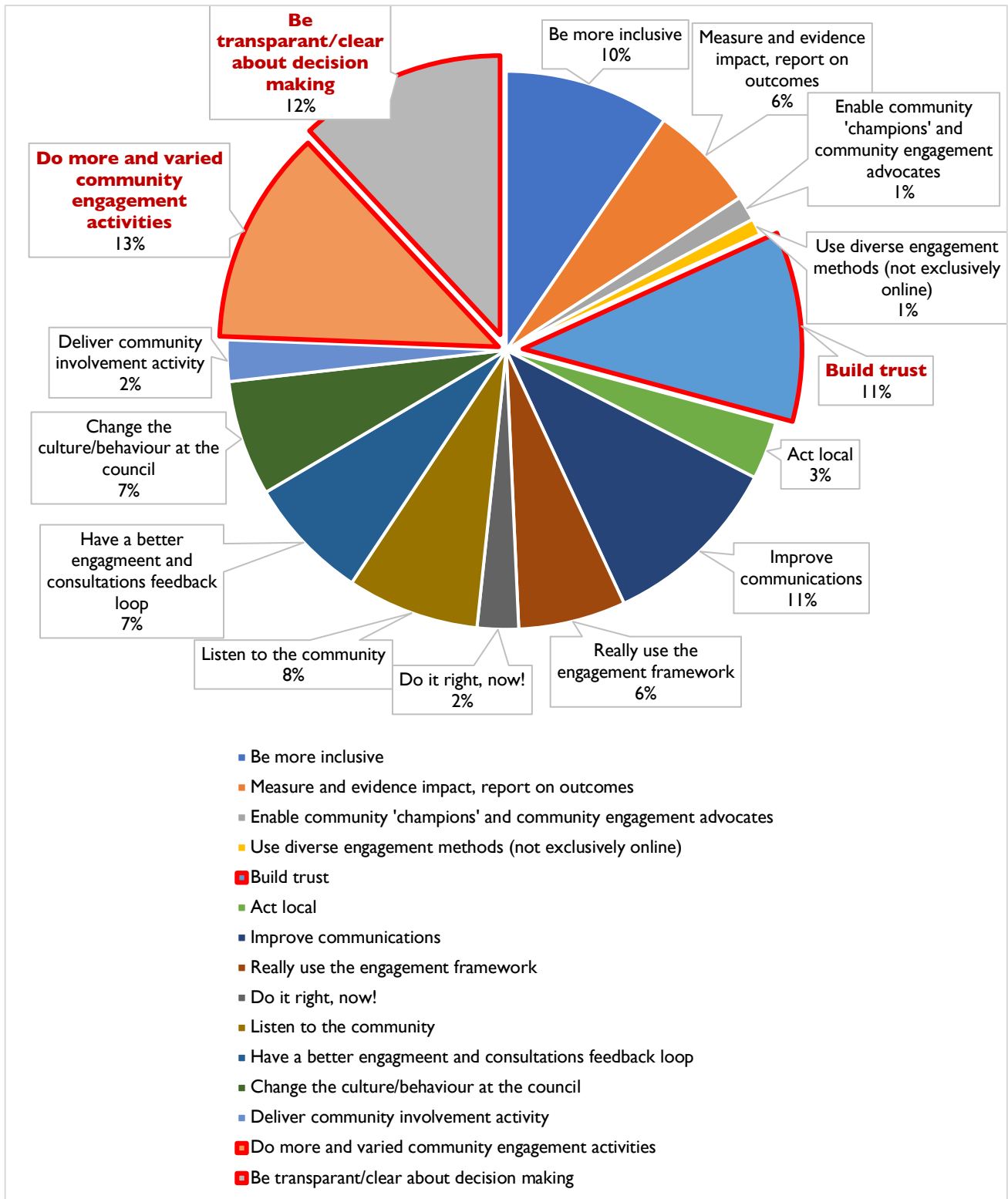


63% of residents taking part agreed with the possible content into the framework.
22% of residents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Framework: The suggested ‘principles’ to community engagement are now within the Community Engagement Pledge.



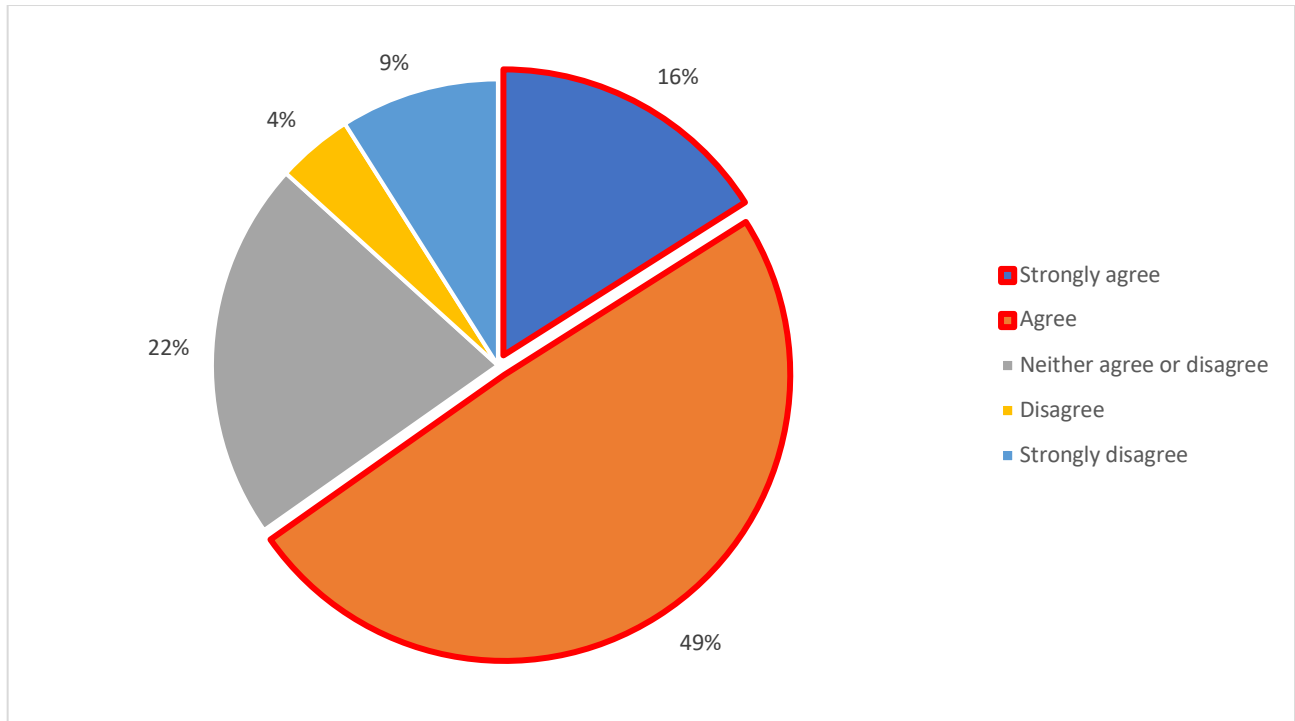
Q10 - Regarding a new set of Council **principles** to engaging with you and communities. Comments:-



Framework: The top three suggestions above are now written into the Community Engagement Pledge. Many of the other comments are also included within the Pledge.

Q11 – How much do you agree with this possible Community Engagement Framework content? (=256 resident responses). (see above question content)

“Regarding a new set of Council consultations pillars to engaging with you and communities.”

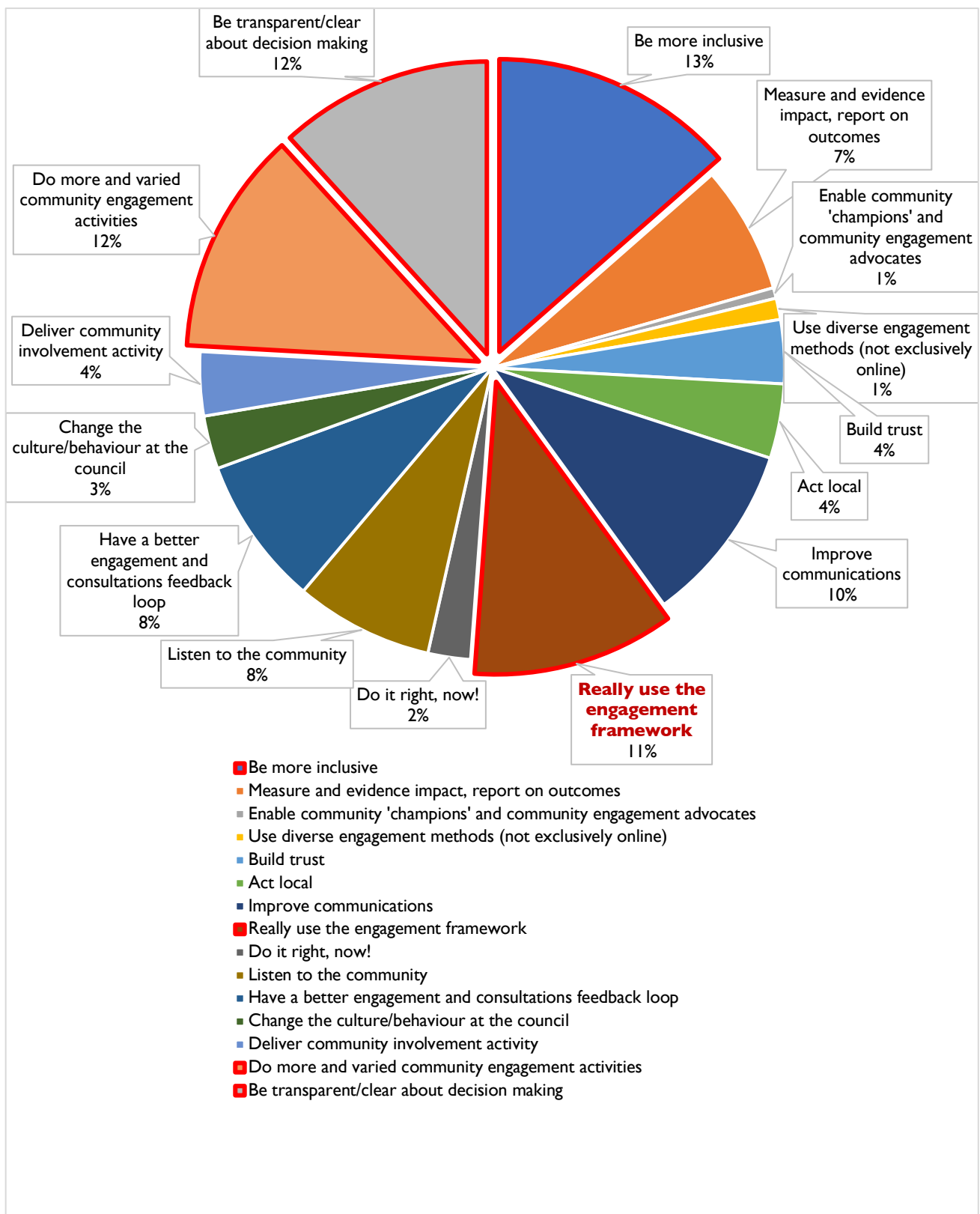


65% of residents taking part, agreed with the possible content into the framework.
13% of residents disagreed.

Framework: The suggested ‘consultation pillars’ to community engagement are now within the Community Engagement Pledge. However, the use of the terminology has changed and is included as consultation practice following further feedback from residents.



Q11 - Regarding a new set of Council consultations pillars to engaging with you and communities. Comments:-



Framework: The top three suggestions have already been highlighted and written into the Community Engagement Pledge. The 4th suggestion is therefore added to the Pledge as are many of the other comments.

Phase 2 Voluntary sector involvement and analysis

In January 2024, 33 participants from a range of VCS organisations attended a sector workshop in Woolwich. Rob Francis, from Involve, shared some background to the workshop including emerging messages from engagement around the Framework. (Hebe Foster from Telescope also shared some of her team's relevant findings in connection with their work to support the Council's VCS Strategy.)

Those in attendance were asked about their recent experiences of engaging with the Council. They gave examples of engagement, although mostly quite fundamental around sharing information and some consultation with no-one feeling those interactions were ever in the 'empowerment' space.

Some appreciated the challenges that council colleagues face with their time and resources stretched and they reported positive aspects of engaging with the council. Most points that participants made reflected on negative experiences, in particular:

- **Patch data management and communications management** mean that organisations seem to fall off contact lists; can receive duplicatory and mixed messages (e.g. from different council officers / teams) which in turn can create misunderstandings and unnecessary delays
- **Timing:** a mismatch between council cycles and everyone else's which mean that on the one hand, grant application periods and consultation periods are too short for the sector to manage whilst on the other hand, the council can seem slow to respond to situations which are urgent for VCS orgs and the people they support
- **Cumbersome processes** around grant applications compounded frustrations about short timeframes
- **Over-reliance on email communication** and a lack of telephone or face to face contact was felt to undermine good relationship-building
- Not feeling understood or in some cases appreciated

Future engagement

Participants discussed what good engagement would look and feel like, using some short scenarios as a focus for their discussions. Their discussions emphasised:

- Planning ahead – talking to other council teams (to coordinate) and to VCS orgs early on
- Clarity on what engagement can impact and thus why it is worth partners taking their time
- Getting VCS advice on how different types of residents will want / be able to engage
- Building relationships and ongoing routes to dialogue rather than just isolated, one-off engagement interactions 'when the council wants something'
- Maximising the breadth and depth of engagement by using more creative methods; making it more accessible by using a range of approaches and locations, and incentivising participation.
- The council using its convening role to bring VCS orgs and communities together around engagement topics
- Feedback loops – from more immediate 'here's what we heard' to longer term involvement of VCS orgs and citizens in reviewing the implications of past policies and projects.

Phase 3 Creation of the draft framework

Fuelled by the engagement and consultation feedback, suggestions and thoughts received from all stakeholders and the sector expert consultancy, analysis of all of this information got underway in February 2024. Using a manual method of reviewing and drawing out of main themes and comparisons, plus the data analysis report from the online consultation hosted on the Commonplace site (you-make-greenwich.commonplace.is) the information captured was then used to create the content of a draft engagement framework.

This process involved hours of work looking in detail at statistical data and reading through the hundreds of community comments.

Phase 3 Activities

The draft engagement framework was then reviewed by members of the community engagement project group (which includes both Deputy and Assistant Chief Executives and the Assistant Director – Corporate and Central Services) whilst also going back to the cross-directorate community engagement reference group for sections and the draft action plan to be specifically discussed.

Further deep dives into specific plans for implementation were discussed at several workstream meetings (see workstreams below).

Overall, nothing was omitted from the draft. The content was improved, refined and clarified, making the draft framework better, clearer and able to be acted on by the council and all colleagues. There were small additions to the framework's completeness.

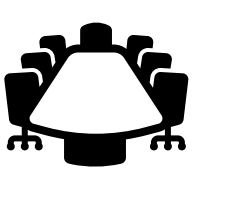
Lastly, a considered approach was taken to proofread and put the document into Plain English.



3. Approval, adoption and implementation

To ensure the Our Greenwich: Community Engagement Pledge makes a difference, changes the way the council operates around community engagement and the voice of residents comes through the decisions made, a suite of actions and activities is underway for the next three years;

Council change and developments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinating 6 council workstreams, underway to deliver council wide change and engagement improvements
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Behaviour and Culture including EDI

- Establishing behaviours and culture for community engagement of the council and officers

Training, Standards and Toolkit

- Training and tools for staff to support different forms of community engagement and participation

Data and Technology

- Ensuring there are the right technology solutions to support the approach to community engagement and participation and the council is collecting, sharing and gathering insight from the data collected

Governance and Processes

- Ensuring there is a process for forward planning community engagement, expectations for the type of engagement that is needed to support decisions

Impact Monitoring

- Developing an approach to measuring impact and monitoring change in levels of engagement and perceptions within communities

Establishing the Corporate Service

- Establishing the enabling corporate resource that can guide, support and challenge work across the organisation

Resident and sector - community engagement panel

Since the main key stakeholder for all of this work is the community itself including residents, community organisations, voluntary and statutory partners – a community engagement panel is being established to provide continuous oversight, support and scrutiny of the delivery of the Community Engagement Pledge.

A terms of reference will be developed with the initial panel members which will also include how to join the panel as a member, and specific panel roles and responsibilities, membership terms and co-ordination.

The panel launches at the same time as the engagement pledge.

Key Cabinet decision

As at the date of this report, the drafted Community Engagement Pledge and Handbook are intended to form part of the July 2024 Cabinet meeting agenda, being held post local, Mayor of London, local and general elections. Subject to approval by Cabinet, the framework will be adopted for use from this point.

Community engagement team

community.engagement@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/community-engagement

