Somerset Improving Lives Strategy

2019-2028

Consultation output report

Somerset County Council

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Key Findings

The consultation survey was completed by 203 respondents. These included a number of individuals, groups and organisations including Parish, Town and District councils.

There was overwhelming support for the proposed vision, and four strategic priorities.

Respondents were in agreement with the approach being taken however, recognised the need for more **detail** on how the strategy would be delivered, especially in the context of budget restraints.

Key themes that emerged from the free text comments were concerns about **housing**, **infrastructure** and the **environment.**

Respondents agreed that **collaboration** was essential to delivering the four strategic priorities, supporting a need to **align** strategic plans and priorities across partner organisations.

Beyond the issue of financial support which was frequently raised, many respondents highlighted the need for clear lines of two-way **communication** between the Health and Wellbeing Board, the general public, organisations and partnership boards.

Many respondents wanted to **contribute** to delivery of the strategy, either in a **voluntary capacity,** or through ongoing **engagement** and **consultation**.

We asked respondents what support they required from the Improving Lives (Health and Wellbeing) Board to help deliver on these priorities. **Communication** was identified as a key theme with a desire for a two-way communication stream between the Improving Lives (Health and Wellbeing) Board, partner organisations and the public.

Many people also identified a role for the board in providing **system leadership.** There were some respondents who called for more **scrutiny** of the board, their activities and achievement against the Improving Lives Strategy.

The results of this consultation will be used to inform the final Improving Lives Strategy. Results from individual components of the consultation have been shared with relevant stakeholders including the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment working group.

Contents

Introduction

The Improving Lives in Somerset strategy presents a ten-year vision for how we want all organisations to work together as a partnership to improve the lives of our population. The strategy is owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board; a collaborative board made up of key leaders from the local health and social care system.

Since 2013 there has been a Health and Wellbeing Strategy in place which is due to expire at the end of 2018. A new strategy for 2019-2028 has been developed in draft format which presents four priority areas for action. These priorities have been developed taking into consideration findings from the consultation with key stakeholders, and are backed by a strong evidence base considering the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The new strategy recognises the importance of the wider determinants of health and is called 'Improving Lives' to reflect this overall ambition.

The purpose of this consultation was to seek views and gather opinions from individuals, groups and organisations on the Health and Wellbeing Board's draft Improving Lives Strategy for 2018-2029.

This report presents the key findings from the public consultation and identifies themes that have emerged from the responses. This information will be used to inform the final version of the Improving Lives Strategy, due to be published at the end of 2018.

Methods

The consultation ran from the 14th June to the 17th August 2018.

The consultation was supported by a dedicated consultation webpage which hosted all consultation documents, the online survey and an easy read version of the survey to download (www.somerset.gov.uk/improvinglives).

As part of the consultation we also welcomed comments made online and by letter, email or over the phone and these methods were promoted on consultation literature. Consultation information was sent to Town and Parish Councils, Somerset County Councillors, District Councillors from all five District Councils and local voluntary and community organisations. Information was also sent to a range of other stakeholders and interested parties and the consultation was further promoted through social media and on the Somerset County Council Homepage.
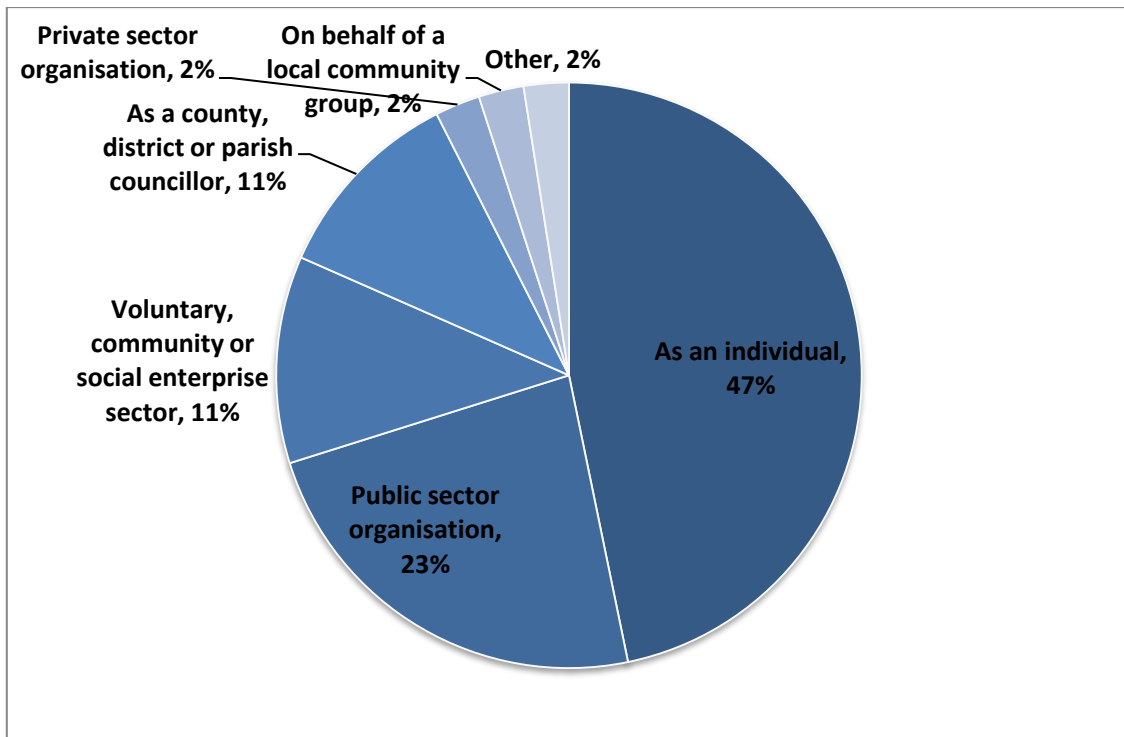
An online survey was available for respondents to complete throughout the consultation period; it could be access through the consultation webpage or in hard copy format on request.

Response

There were a total of 203 responses; 3 paper submissions and 200 online submissions.

The majority of responses received were from people completing the consultation as an individual (figure 1).

Private sector organisation, 2%
On behalf of a local community group, 2%
Other, 2%
As a county, district or parish councillor, 11%
Voluntary, community or social enterprise sector, 11%
As an individual, 47%
Public sector organisation, 23%

The results of this consultation cannot be considered statistically representative of the views of all Somerset residents (appendix 1). However, the response received and the number of organisations represented provides a useful indicator of wider opinion and the key issues that need to be considered.

There were 419 individual comments made on the online survey and 3 detailed responses received by email. Therefore it is not possible to include the full text of all comments within the main body of this report. A full list of comments is available on request.

Results

Question 1. Do you agree with the vision?

We have a vision for Somerset. Over the next ten years, we want all organisations to work together as a partnership to make Somerset:

- A thriving and productive Somerset that is ambitious, confident and focussed on improving people's lives

- A County of resilient, well-connected and safe and strong communities working to reduce inequalities
- A County infrastructure that supports affordable housing , economic prosperity and sustainable public services
- A County and environment where all partners, private and voluntary sector, focus on improving the health and wellbeing of all of our communities

There was strong support for the proposed vision with 90% of respondents saying they either agreed or strongly agreed with it.
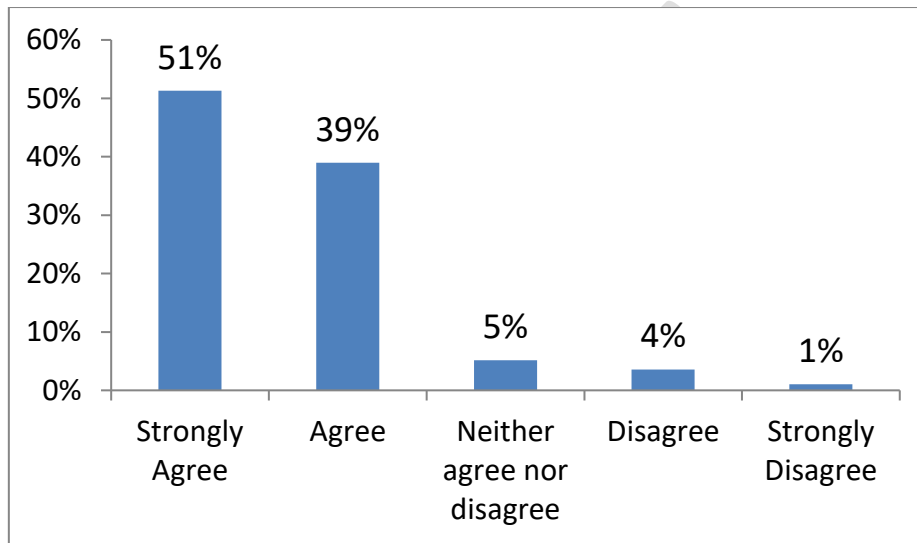

Figure 2. Do you agree with the vision?

A total of 56 respondents provided additional comments on the vision. The most commonly mentioned issues were housing (10 respondents), the environment (10 respondents) and infrastructure (8 respondents).

Several respondents commented on the ambition of the vision but noted that it would require funding (5 respondents), while others questioned how the vision would be achieved (6 respondents). The importance of inequality and how this would tackled in the new strategy was raised by 6 respondents.

Comments
"The vision must align with that put forward by the SCC, the LEP, districts and other key strategic bodies. Unless the visions align the impact of operational activity will not be maximised to the benefit of all."

"I think well connected communities and improved health and wellbeing are linked - we need more towns and villages to be more accessible through better design so people are not reliant on cars."

"A thriving healthy natural environment (essential to the health and well-being of people and communities) needs to feature prominently in this vision"

"Voluntary and third sector organisations will need support (financial and professional) to make up for a shortfall in statutory provision. This needs budgeting for. The voluntary sector cannot make up for the shortfall without adequate input."

Question 2.

Do you agree that we are taking the right approach?

This question aimed to elicit if the proposed approach of identifying four key strategic priorities to focus on over a ten year timeframe was the right one for Somerset.

There was strong support for the approach being taken with 69% of respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the approach.
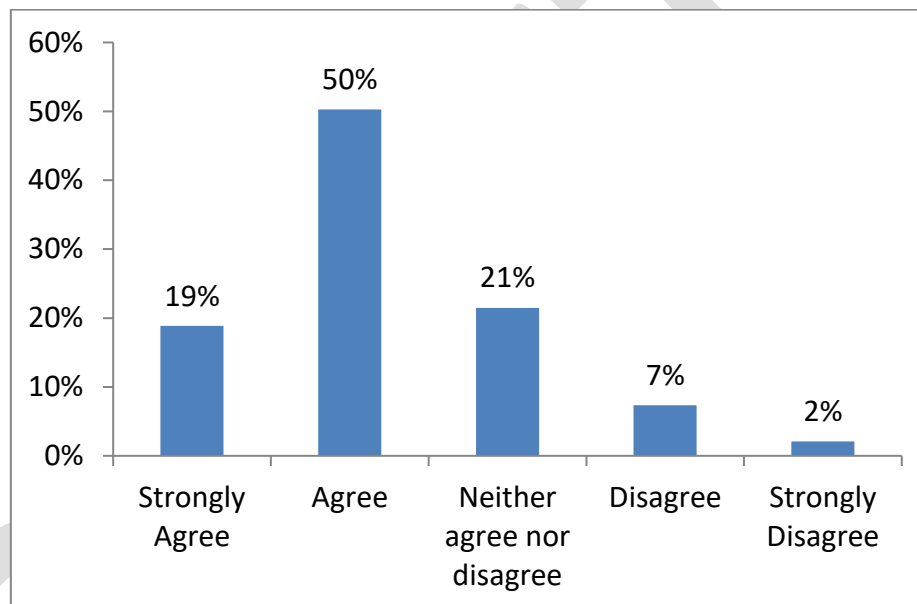

Figure 3. Do you agree we are taking the right approach?

A total of 59 respondents provided comments on the approach being taken. Most commonly respondents wanted more detail about how the strategy would be implemented and monitored (17 comments). There were 41 respondents (21%) who neither agreed nor disagreed with the approach being taken and many of these commented it was because they did not understand what the approach was.

The need for collaboration and different agencies working together to deliver the vision was highlighted by 12 respondents.

Comments

"A sea change is required to focus on prevention and effective problem solving through far simpler processes and shared budgets both within and between different agencies. It's about focusing on results not the process that attempt to get you there."

"This is probably the right approach, but the devil is in the detail of how such approaches can be turned into viable, sustainable and economic provision, where needed most."

"The alignment with other key strategies and priorities is vital"

"We would also ask if there's an opportunity for local priorities / actions to be developed under the priority headings – working with town council, local organisations etc. to do this? This would feel like a really engaging approach as the needs in various parts of the county are going to be vastly different and local communities are best placed to comment on this and how to deliver against the priorities in their area."

Question 3. Do you support the four strategic priorities?

- o **Priority 1:** A county infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services
- o **Priority 2:** Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment
- o **Priority 3:** Fairer life chances and opportunity for all
- o **Priority 4:** Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer

Overall there was strong support for all of the four strategic priories with 87% of people agreeing or strongly agreeing with priority 1, 92% with priority 2, 93% with priority 3 and 95% with priority 4. There were 7 people (4%) who strongly disagreed with priority 1. Of those who disagreed only one commented to explain why, stating that the desire to increase economic prosperity was likely to conflict with the priority to increase fairer life chances.
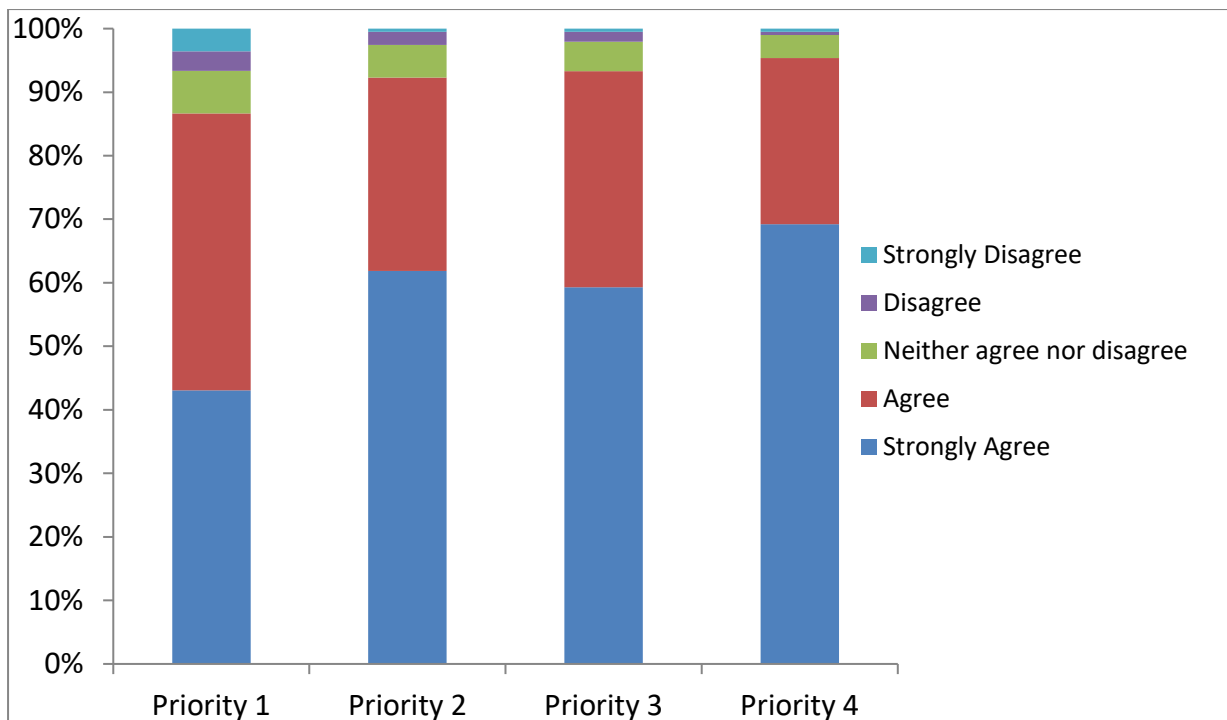
Figure 4. Do you support the four strategic priorities?

Respondents were asked to provide comments on the strategic priorities and a total of 50 comments were made across all of the priorities.Most commonly people wanted more detail on how the strategic priorities would be achieved (16 respondents).

The theme of infrastructure was raised by 11 people and again the issues of the natural environment and climate change were raised by 5 people.

Comments

 "Agree in part, but our infrastructure also needs to be sustainable and reflect Somerset's unique environment"

"Not much you could disagree with but although it's important to have aspirations or a vision, to achieve change these things often need tackling in chunks (eg Home First, Symphony, Community Agents, and soon Positive Lives)."

"I think most people in Somerset would broadly agree with these high level priorities, but they will want lot more detail on how these strategic priorities will be delivered in practice."

"Priority 1 is HIGHLY LIKELY to conflict directly with Priorities 3 and 4. Macro economic growth inevitably leads to greater inequality. Driving productivity leads to shrinking rights for workers."

"More needs to be done to help lonely and isolated individuals and this starts with access to services not just digitally, equity across the patch, better and more transport options for people trying to stay connected. Creating age-friendly communities."

"The Parish Council agrees with the priorities included in the proposed strategy but feels that it is crucial that they are translated into actions"

Question 4. How relevant is each of the strategic priorities for you or your organisation?

Most people felt the strategic priorities were either quite or very relevant for them or their organisation, with over 90% agreement for all priorities.
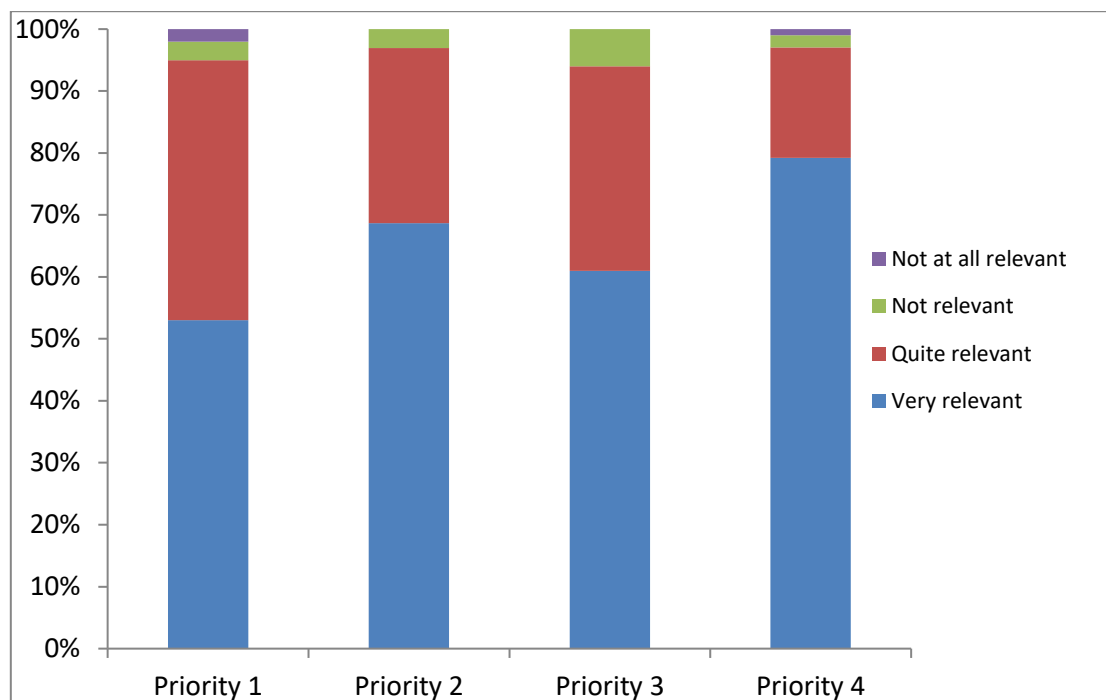
Question 5. How would you like to be involved to support the delivery of the four priorities?

There were 107 comments received on this question. A simple thematic analysis was undertaken of the comments to identify key themes. There were 7 key themes which emerged from the data. These were; the role of the voluntary and community sector; collaboration between different organisations; contribution to the Health and Wellbeing Board; communication between the Health and Wellbeing Board and its partners and the public; alignment of strategic priorities between partner organisations; the role of communities; and the desire for the provision of financial support.

Key theme	Number of comments
Voluntary and community sector	20
Collaboration	18
Contribution	15
Communication	12
Alignment	10
Communities	8
Financial support	1

Table 1. Key themes: How would you like to be involved to support the delivery of the four priorities?

Many respondents reported ways they are already involved in delivering against the four strategic priorities. This included 20 respondents who reported being involved in a voluntary capacity, including those who were Parish Councillors and others who were involved in various community and charitable groups.

Overall, 18 respondents commented on the need for collaboration and described various ways different organisations and groups collaborate to deliver improved lives. This was also linked to a number of respondents highlighting the need to align strategic priorities between different organisations in order to achieve these priorities.

There were 15 respondents who wanted to be able to further contribute to the improving lives strategy either through continued consultation or being part of strategic partnerships delivering against specific priorities. The need for good two-way communication between the Health and Wellbeing Board, individuals, communities and organisations was highlighted by 12 respondents.

Comments

"We are grant funded by SCC and we hope to continue to be able to receive core funding to work within this strategic context improving lives and addressing barriers to opportunity and wellbeing as they arise"

"The forum would appreciate a clear channel to be able to share information with the Health and Wellbeing Board. As a forum we are keen to empower families with information and help them to build resilience. The forum would like to increase the level of training and peer to peer support we are able to offer families locally."

"As a Parish Council representing a rural area we are involved in trying to improve the lives of the residents in our Parish in all four areas covered by the Somerset Strategy 2019-2028. We will continue to work with Somerset Health and Wellbeing to promote improvements in all these areas in our community."

"Cross mapping our strategy to the improving lives strategy and working more effectively with partners will help us do this more efficiently."

"There should be use of existing forums and established 'bodies' like Parish Councils, National park (particularly relevant given the facts about West Somerset), etc. These should all be encouraged to act with 'one voice' and engage with their local communities."

"As a GP in Taunton I would like to see more "joined-up" working. social; prescribing and people being empowered to keep themselves healthy and manage their health conditions"

"to be kept informed about progress, to attend stakeholder participation events where appropriate"

Question 5. What support from the Health and Wellbeing Board do you need to achieve this?

There were 113 provided who provided a comment on this question. A simple thematic analysis was undertaken of the comments to identify key themes. There were 7 key themes which emerged from the comments. These were; communication between the board, partner organisations and the public; funding or financial support; collaboration between partner agencies; system leadership; scrutiny of the board; recognition of the contribution of partner organisations; an opportunity to contribute to the health and wellbeing board.

Key theme	Number of comments
Communication	26
Money	13
Collaboration	8
Leadership	7
Scrutiny	4
Recognition	3
Contribution	3

Table 2. Key themes: What support from the Health and Wellbeing Board do you need to achieve this?

Communication was most frequently mentioned with 26 respondents highlighting the importance of good communication from the Health and Wellbeing Board. It was recognised that communication needed to be two-way with respondents expressing desire to both receive information from the Board but also the opportunity to feedback on progress and priorities. There was an acknowledgement that the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board was to provide strategic leadership and ensure that other partnership plans were aligned with the improving lives strategy.

Thirteen respondents commented on a desire for funding to be able to deliver any of the strategic priorities while 8 highlighted the importance of collaboration. There were 3 comments that related to a desire for more recognition of the work being undertaken to improve the health, wellbeing and lives of the local population.

Scrutiny was mentioned in 4 of the comments with a desire for more scrutiny of the Health and Wellbeing Board and achievement against the strategic priorities of the strategy.

Comments
"As a strategic voice, the board should be driving a commitment to bringing everyone one (all partner organisations) along the journey with them. they should be an advocate for change and improvement."

"Set the strategic direction that all partners align with. Partners' plans to be visibly aligned so the contribution of services, projects and initiatives can be seen."

"Regular communication and involvement in formulation of strategy. Clarity on responsibility for improvement on health and wellbeing between the two strategies."

"Greater appreciation and public recognition of the benefits of the natural environment, attending relevant forums to support development of high quality green infrastructure, supporting nature and wellbeing initiatives and encouraging funding to enable them, encouraging local authorities and health and social care sector to recognise, value and support nature and wellbeing"

"The forum would appreciate a clear channel to be able to share information with the Health and Wellbeing Board. We would like to see a commitment to more public engagement from the board to ensure their work is robust in understanding local needs as data only shows part of the picture."

"Timely and clear information and communication channels that are open and two way Occasional conferences or discussion groups"

"The opportunity to be a member of a public panel to monitor SCC's delivery to the 'vision', 'objectives' and any subsequent 'pledges'."

"clear leadership and inclusivity of approach"

"Greater scrutiny by Healthwatch and other community partners."

Question 7. Have we used the right evidence to inform 'Improving Lives'?

A summary of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was provided alongside the draft strategy for the consultation.

The majority of respondents (82%) felt the right evidence had been used to inform the development of the 'Informing Lives' strategy. Some respondents were not aware of the evidence used and others provided feedback on specific areas which may need development. There were 37 comments made on this question.

Comments

"Yes - but good to also consider the role of volunteering / social action in supporting economic prosperity (pathway to employment and sharing of skills between sectors via employer sponsored volunteering). Also in terms of other priorities important part it plays in connecting individuals and improving health and wellbeing... and how volunteering can unite people from various backgrounds / inequalities (people are interested in who you are as a person)"

"Priority 2 looks fantastic as it finishes '...communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment.' This is absolutely right and should form 50% of one of four priority areas. Frankly I am astonished that there is no reference, evidence or comment on this in the 'Improving Lives' evidence."

"We agree, however it would be good to see a series of more local JSNAs to support the board to deliver the right things in the right places – in order not to further exacerbate differences across the county."

"There is also a great deal of anecdotal knowledge and information held at a more local level, which should be used if the H&WB Board ever plans initiatives to address these priorities at this level."

"I feel as do others in my village, that we are being forgotten, left out of Somerset life for the sake of those living in the town centers"

Appendix 1. Demographics of respondents

Demographic	Respondents (%)
What is your age?	
0-17	0%
18-34	5%
35-64	70%
65+	20%
Prefer not to say	5%
What is your sex?	
Male	35%
Female	58%
Transgender	0%
Prefer not to say	7%
Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long term health condition?	
Yes	19%

No	75%
Prefer not to say	6%
What is the nature of your disability/long term health condition?	
Mobility	10%
Physical	38%
Visual	0%
Hearing	2%
Learning Disability	2%
Mental Health Condition	10%
Prefer not to say	38%
Do you consider yourself to have a religion or belief?	
Religion	33%
Belief	20%
None	37%
Prefer not to say	11%
What is your ethnic group?	
White	89%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	2%
Asian	1%
Black/African/Caribbean	0%
Other ethnic group	1%
Prefer not to say	8%
Do you consider your sexual orientation to be?	
Heterosexual	88%
Gay Man	0%
Lesbian	2%
Bisexual	2%
Prefer not to say	9%
Do you provide care for anyone (e.g. a parent, child, other relative, an elderly person, friend or neighbour) who has any form of disability (sensory loss, physical, learning disability, mental health problem) long or terminal illness?	
Yes	27%
No	66%
Prefer not to say	8%