

Homes, Spaces, Places - Summary of Consultation Responses, Scoping Consultation, July - September 2024

Introduction

- 1.1 Homes Spaces Places is at an early stage of plan making and the scoping plan sets out key local issues and considerations. We asked what people thought the plan ought to contain and for views about the key issues relevant to Tameside. We did this to help steer the plan in the right direction in accordance with legislation and guidance on plan making. This report should be read alongside the **HSP Duty to Co-operate Log of Collaboration and Statement of Compliance**, which are available on the Council's webpage: www.tameside.gov.uk/homesspacesplaces.
- 1.2 The published high level Scoping Document sets out some baseline data including infographics on the specific facts and figures across seven themes and you gave us your views via, letter, email and online survey around:
- Centres
 - Environment
 - Jobs
 - Homes
 - Travel
 - Places
 - People
- 1.3 This document aims to summarise your comments on each of these topics; you also offered approaches and ideas on how the borough could be improved in the next 15 years.
- 1.4 We wanted to hear whether we are focussing on the right issues and how the plan should influence development for the next 15 years. It is important to consider that planning policy needs to be evidence led, justified and present an appropriate strategy to the apparent issues.

Consultation Events and methods

- 2.1 The Planning Policy Team held a Scoping Consultation from 8th July to 16th September 2024 asking you to consider the scope of HSP. Who will did we involve?
- Specific consultation bodies – these are organisations which are detailed in regulation, a number of which are the government's advisory bodies or are parties responsible for providing infrastructure and utilities for example.
 - General consultation bodies – these are typically community and voluntary bodies and those representing different interest groups.
 - Elected representatives – Elected Members, Members of Parliament and the Mayor of Greater Manchester.



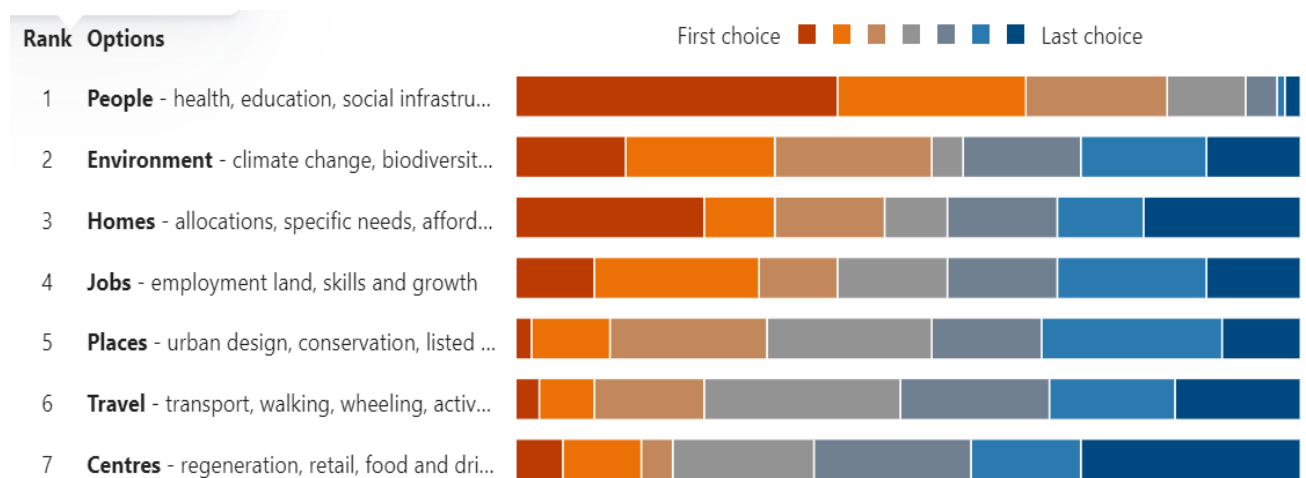
- The general public – those who live in, work in or visit the borough.
- Businesses – those with business interests in the borough.
- Landowners, developers and agents – those with a direct interest in the borough.
- Duty to Cooperate bodies – such as neighbouring councils. A detailed list is provided in Appendix 1.

- 2.2 The consultation involved specific engagement through internal and external stakeholders’ workshops, Council Member engagement, Youth Council engagement, Business Breakfast, promotion in shopping areas, Stalybridge Street Fest and through social media and the Council’s website. The main form of feedback was via online survey and email.
- 2.3 Running in parallel, a Call for Sites provided an opportunity for anyone to put forward land within the borough that has the potential for future development or that they thought should be protected.
- 2.4 Just less than 300 responses were collected through the online survey, Call for Sites app or through emails from a range of businesses, organisations, Members and residents. Thank you to those who participated and made their views known. A summary of issues raised is set out under each thematic area below:

Full Survey Priorities

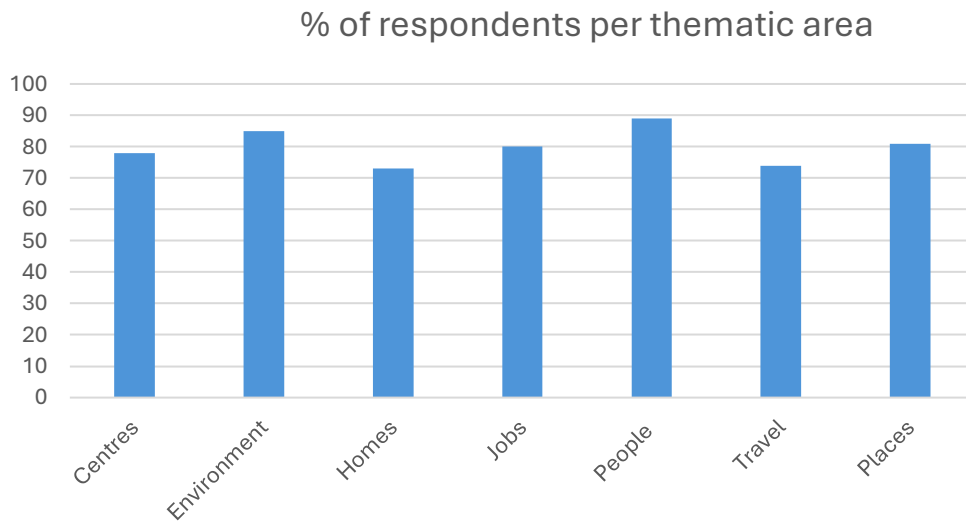
- 3.1 The top thematic priority from the full online survey was **People** (which includes health, education and social infrastructure) with **65%** of respondents selecting it as the top priority (1st or 2nd priority); whilst 33% of those responding selected ‘Environment (climate change, biodiversity and environment) or Homes theme as their first or second choice. 31% considered Jobs and employment as a priority for the plan, putting it as first or second choice in question 4. Places (12%), Travel (10%) and then Centres (16%) were considered important, but placed further down the rankings. More detail is set out below:

Question 4: The Structure of Homes, Spaces, Places is proposed to be split into the following key themes. You were asked to order them into importance to you, from most important at the top.



Which themes should be covered within the scope of HSP?

3.2 The following graph shows the percentage of those filling out the full survey that support the inclusion of the seven proposed themes in HSP:



3.3 As set out below, there are a number of cross-cutting issues in each theme for example, the need for accessible green spaces has been highlighted as a high priority within the People, Places and the Environment themes and the importance of the delivery of affordable housing was mentioned under both the Homes theme, as well as the Centres.

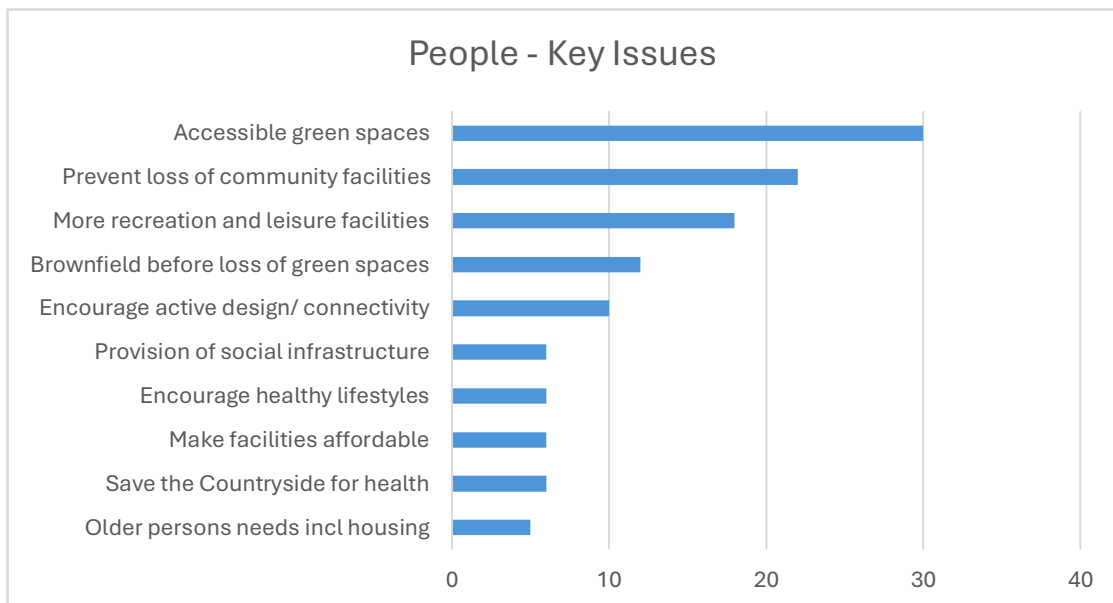
3.4 There were also several non-planning issues highlighted, such as zero hours contracts, anti-social behaviour and other social matters raised. These have been noted followed up with other Council departments where applicable.



Top priority – People

3.5 Following the consolidation of the results of the online survey and emails submitted during the consultation, the ‘People’ topic, which relates to topics around community, health, access to green space and social infrastructure, was highlighted as the number one priority for Homes, Spaces, Places, with 89% of respondents¹ wishing to see it included. The top ten key issues referenced by respondents under this theme are listed below, with a real focus on the importance creating, improving, and maintain local green spaces for physical and mental health alongside the retention of community facilities.

Top priorities under the People theme



Word Cloud of most frequent words



3.6 The top online survey and email responses are as follows in order of priority:

¹ Full online survey result



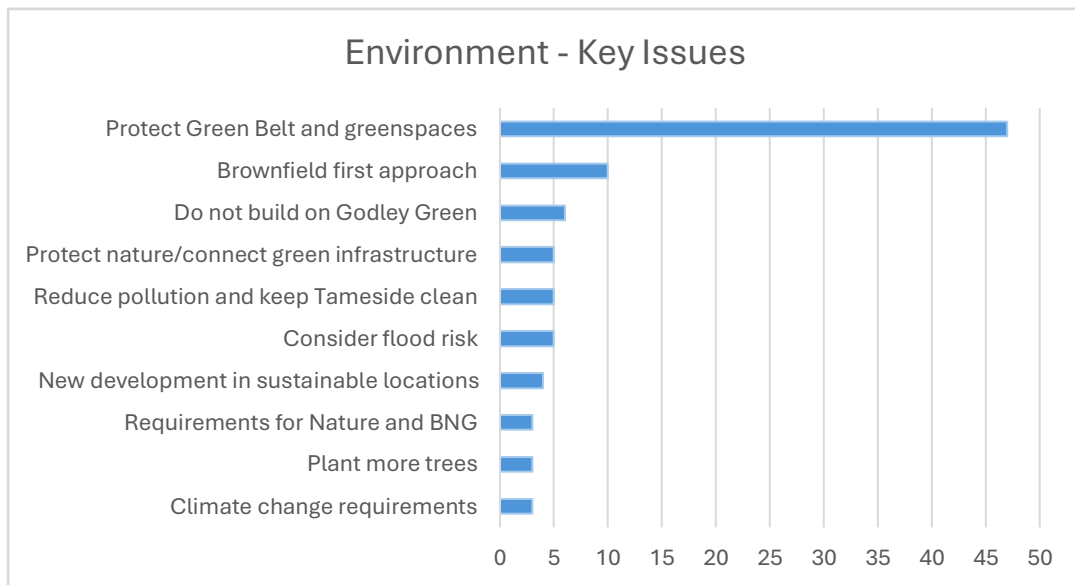
1. **Protect, improve and create new accessible green spaces and parks** – top priority was given to the need for HSP to contain policies to help protect, improve or create greenspaces, parks or facilities to ensure increased access to all for sports, leisure and recreation; including informal or ‘wild spaces’ and countryside areas. These were considered vital for the mental, as well as physical health of Tameside’s communities;
2. **Prevent loss of existing community facilities**- many commented on the need to prevent the loss of sports, recreation and community facilities; citing the recent loss of leisure facilities, such as Ashton Swimming Pool and the impact this could have on the community’s health and well-being in the future;
3. **More recreation and leisure facilities** – the provision of skate parks, BMX tracks, outdoor and indoor hubs/facilities for young people was a common thread in comments received; also more safe places and facilities for children including playgrounds and open spaces are essential part of ‘play’ when growing up in Tameside (should be free or affordable);
4. **Brownfield before greenfield sites for new development** – there was strong support for a ‘brownfield first’ approach to development, with many commenting that local green spaces are valuable to the community;
5. **Incorporate active design and connectivity between places** into new development and existing places, such as Hattersley and Godley (traffic free and safe routes), to encourage walking, cycling and active lifestyles;
6. **Ageing population and planning for the needs of the most vulnerable, including new housing** – whether it be specialist housing, adapted housing, spaces for warmth or community support to reduce loneliness featured highly in responses. Design requirements or codes were solutions suggested;
7. **Protect, improve or enhance social infrastructure** to support new development – provision of GPs, green open spaces, dentists and services, hospitals – some of this can be achieved through developer contributions others through place-making and regeneration; **accessibility to health services** and their availability was also mentioned numerous times in feedback;
8. **Encourage healthy lifestyles. People and community** at the centre of heart of strategic planning; along with their **health and well-being** came out strongly in the responses; this reflects the need to have health objectives running throughout Homes, Spaces Places. It is important to understand the ‘**needs**’ of the community; ideas such as green social prescribing to reduce loneliness and boost mental health;
9. **Make facilities more affordable**; existing facilities are not always affordable;
10. **Save the Countryside for the enjoyment of the community**; this includes improving access to wider countryside areas to help improve the health and well-being of residents.



Environment

- 3.7 Environment was considered to be a high priority next to People, with 89 % supporting this theme in the plan. The topic covers the range of environmental topics including Green Belt, climate change, biodiversity and wildlife, waterways and flood risk.
- 3.8 By far the largest response was around the need to protect Tameside’s Green Belt and green spaces from new development, considered as important for nature, wildlife and physical and mental well-being of the community. (see the top ten issues below in the graph and summary):

Top ten priorities under the Environment theme



Word Cloud of most frequent words



- 3.9 Respondents identified the key priorities relating to the **Environment** topic, as follows:

1. **Do not build on the Green Belt or on green spaces. Protect our green and blue infrastructure** - A desire to see the Green Belt and existing green spaces protected from development was by far the most frequent comment raised by respondents. These spaces were seen as important for nature and wildlife, but also for physical health and mental wellbeing. Similar comments can also be seen in other topic areas of the scoping document;



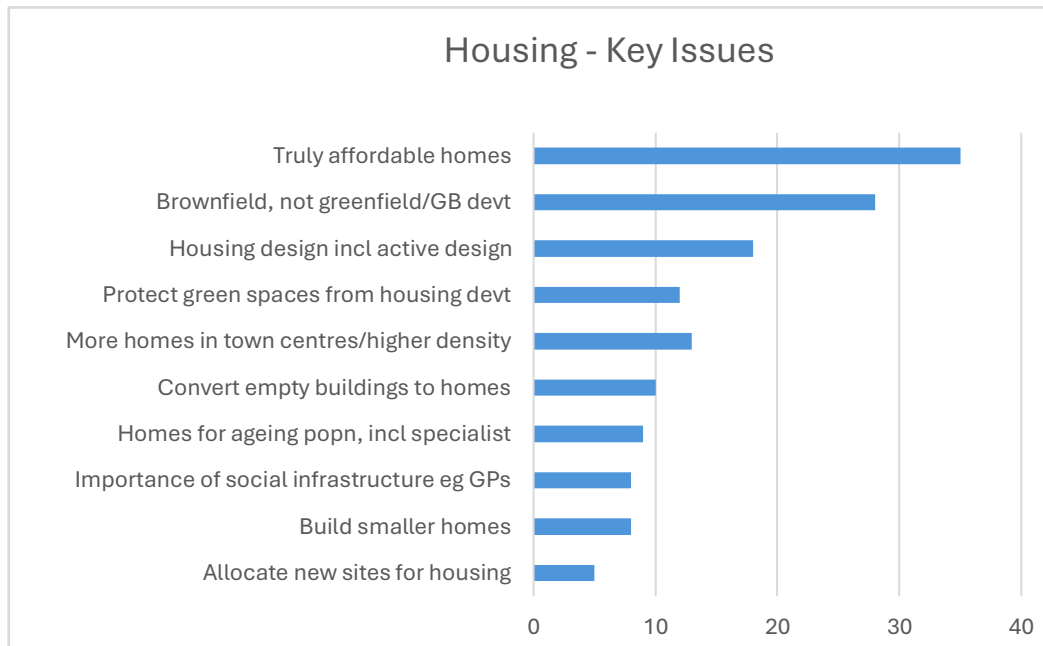
2. **Build on and re-use brownfield sites or existing buildings** - Alongside protecting the Green Belt and green spaces, respondents wanted to see development on brownfield land and for empty buildings to be reused;
3. **Do not build on Godley Green** - Land at Godley Green has been removed from the Green Belt and allocated for development in Places for Everyone and was specifically mentioned by some as an area of Green Belt they did not want to see developed;
4. **Need more and better connected spaces for nature** - Respondents wanted to see more open spaces protected for nature but also to better connect existing protected areas to benefit wildlife;
5. **New housing should be energy efficient and sustainable** – policies to ensure new development is low carbon and designed to be more energy efficient;
6. **Keep local areas, canals and rivers clean.** Provide more bins/recycling facilities in public areas. Increase street cleaning;
7. **Developers should consider flood risk.** Development in areas at highest risk of flooding should be avoided;
8. **New developments need to be designed with nature in mind.** They should secure improvements to nature and biodiversity;
9. **Plant more trees** – new developments should include the provision of more trees
10. **New development requirements: the** requirement for development to consider carbon and energy, sustainability, flooding and water efficiency is already set out in PfE policies.



Homes

- 3.10 The Homes theme was considered a number one priority for large number of respondents (80% of those responding to the full online survey, with the key priorities set out in the graph below.
- 3.11 Concern focused around the need for more truly affordable homes and priority to development on brownfield land and buildings around the borough.

Key priorities under Housing theme



Word cloud of frequent responses



- 3.12 Respondents identified these issues as top ten priorities as follows, in order of preference:
 1. **Truly Affordable homes;** priority needs to be given to the provision and investment in affordable housing across Tameside, this should be truly affordable for residents, with a particular emphasis on the need for more social rented homes or rented homes;
 2. Build homes on **brownfield, not greenfield** and save the Green Belt from development; the ‘brownfield first’ approach was actually more of a ‘brownfield only’ and the overwhelming majority of responses made on this topic were to retain local



green spaces and Green Belt from housing development. This is considered as critical for health and well-being;

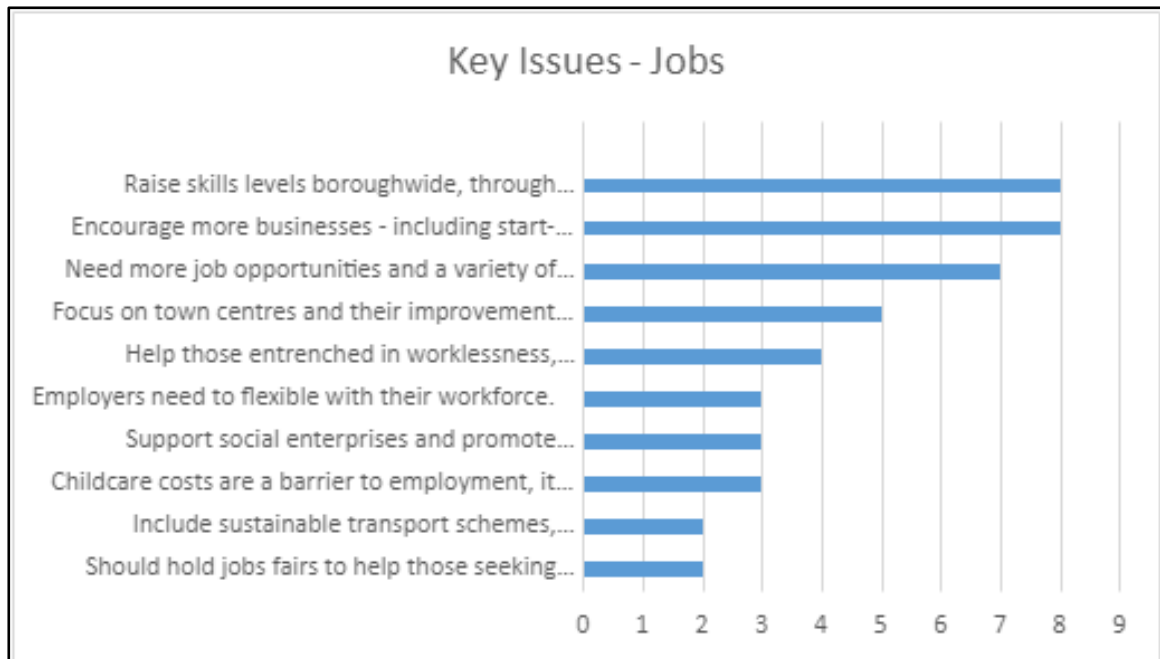
3. **Quality homes through good design;** quality housing design, as well as incorporation of active design and accessibility was mentioned frequently in the comments; a focus on sustainable construction with more energy efficiency measures is likely to save on energy costs for new residents, as well the need to ensure resilient design, through the incorporation of sustainable drainage; water efficiency. In addition, many comments on the need to incorporate active design for health and well-being (including green spaces); connectivity to ensure access for all (particularly wheelchair users, pushchairs and bikes).
4. **Homes in town centres and at higher densities,** including flats; a key solution suggested is to build at a higher density within town centres (to increase footfall) or generally at higher densities to accommodate more homes and save local green spaces/ Green Belt. This could then accommodate a growing number of single householders, young or couples, or older persons close to existing shops and amenities;
5. **Protect green spaces and Green Belt** from housing development; a recurring theme is the value placed on local green spaces, parks and countryside including the Green Belt, seen as invaluable for health, well-being, recreation and leisure and should not be lost in the quest to build new homes;
6. **Fill empty homes and shop units;** respondents want to see any empty stock – housing, offices or shop units being converted into new homes to meet local needs; if this requires working with private landlords or CPOs then the Council should be proactive. This overlaps with the comment that the Council should look to replace any existing poor housing stock.
7. **Homes for ageing population** – with an ageing demographic, focus should be on homes suitable for older persons and provision of specialist homes – recognising the social and economic benefits of doing so. In addition, the plan could require new homes to meet adaptable and accessible standards, including wheelchair accessibility and set a requirement for all new developments;
8. **Smaller homes;** many expressed a frustration at new housing developments which focus on ‘executive boxes’ and the need for the provision of smaller affordable market or homes for rent to broaden the choice available for residents of Tameside;
9. **Social infrastructure;** overlapping with the ‘People Topic’ many felt that new developments should be planned along infrastructure improvements, such as doctors, dentists, school expansions, green spaces and other health infrastructure to support new growth;
10. **Allocate new housing sites** – with the update to NPPF, some felt that HSP provides the opportunity to identify and allocate new housing sites in the plan to align with the NPPF; whilst a minority wished for the Council to consider a Green Belt review;



Jobs

3.13 Over three quarters of respondents to the full survey or emails agreed that the theme of Jobs, including employment land, jobs and training, was an important issue for inclusion in HSP with a real focus on issues around raising the borough’s skills levels and encouraging new businesses (full details below), the key priorities for respondents are set out in this graph:

Key priorities under the Jobs theme



Word cloud of most frequent words



3.14 Respondents identified the key priorities relating to the **Jobs** topic, as follows in priority order:

1. **Raise skills levels boroughwide** - through motivating younger people to learn a trade or to go to University, also by supporting employers to provide training and apprenticeships;
2. **Need more job opportunities and a variety of employment** - particularly for younger people and stay at home parents;
3. **Encourage more businesses** - including start-ups, high end companies, and growth sectors, with well paid jobs, to locate in the borough and support local traders and employers;

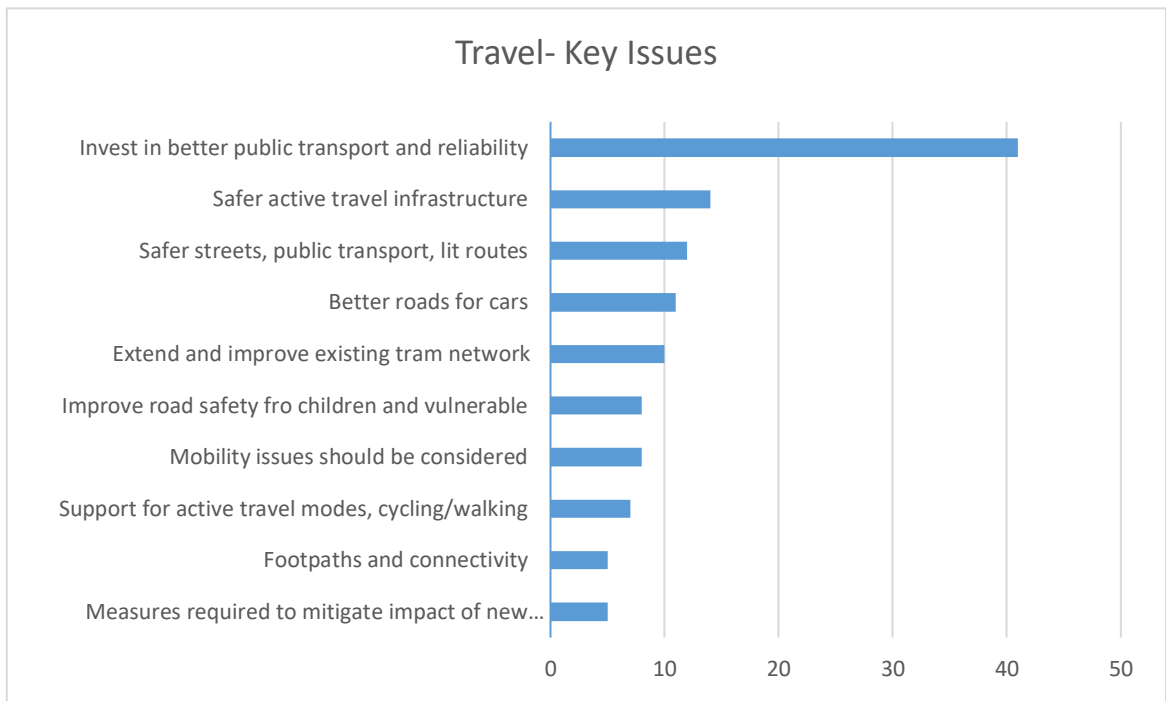


4. **Focus on town centres and their improvement** - encourage businesses to locate in them and create more jobs;
5. **Help those entrenched in worklessness** - including the long-term sick, with targeted support that incentivises and encourages to return to work;
6. **Employers need to be flexible with their workforce;**
7. **Support social enterprises and promote volunteering** - as a pathway to work, by improving learning and skills;
8. **Childcare costs are a barrier to employment** - They should be free;
9. **Include sustainable transport schemes, including public transport, in new development from the outset** - this is proven to boost opportunities by removing barriers to accessing jobs; and
10. **Hold jobs fairs** - to help those seeking employment.

Travel

- 3.15 The Travel theme includes public transport, road infrastructure, pedestrian access and parking. Many agreed that this theme was a priority for HSP and should be given consideration in policies. Responses focused on the need for better public transport; in terms of access to more buses, trains and trams and reliability as well as public safety and onward travel.

Key priorities under Travel theme:



Word cloud of most frequent words in online survey



3.16 Key topics raised in relation to the ‘Travel’ theme in order of occurrence:

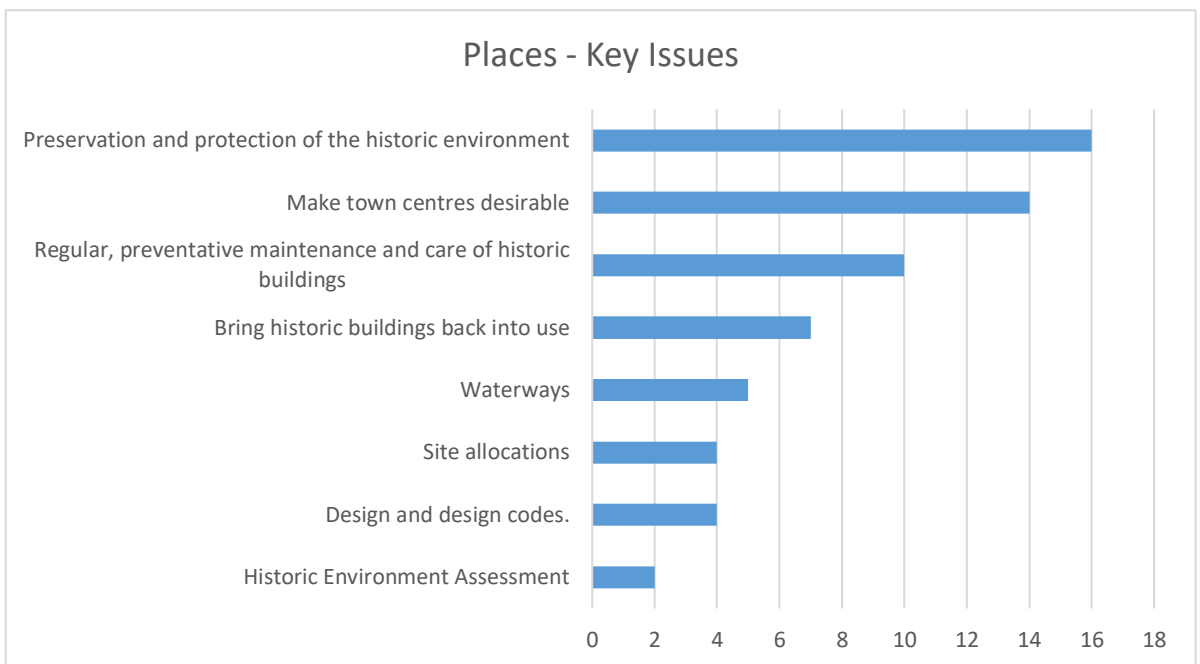
1. **Invest, expand and improve public transport** so that it is more reliable, affordable and connects better between homes, towns and places of work. By far the highest priority amongst the respondents;
2. **Extend and improve the tram network and improve connections to other transport modes, eg buses and trains** this will encourage more usage and make onward journeys easier;
3. **Safety and facilities to support existing transport modes;** public safety whilst travelling and better workplace facilities for cycling would encourage more people onto public transport and encourage active travel;
4. **Safer streets and well-lit pedestrian routes are seen as essential;** pedestrian safety particularly at night is raised as an issue;
5. **Better roads for cars; investment in road infrastructure;** some perceived the recent investment in cycle lanes and dedicated bus lanes as a barrier to car travel;
6. **Improve road safety for children, less mobile and visually impaired** through traffic calming measures, better crossings and modal shift; a move away from car use also has the positive impact of improving quality of air;
7. **Mobility issues for older persons and disabled should be considered** in plan; cycling and walking is not always the best option and public transport should also take account of access for less mobile;
8. **Support for active travel; walking, cycling, wheeling;** create or improve safe active routes as a design priority;
9. **Support for new footpath links to greenspaces and better maintained footpaths** to encourage walking for leisure, recreation and active travel; new links should be created as part of new developments;
10. **Support for measures that mitigate the impact of new housing developments;** in terms of traffic generation and parking issues and prevent new areas of congestion;



Places

3.17 Places as a theme covers Tameside’s heritage, historic buildings and design issues and is something that 80% of those responding to the full survey considered to be an important topic for inclusion in HSP. Survey and email comments focused on the protection of Tameside’s historic buildings, particularly on improvements to older buildings and conservation areas within town centres (a full summary below). This graph highlights the issues respondents raised most:

Key priorities under Places theme from online survey and emails:



Word Cloud of most frequent words in the online survey



3.18 Key topics raised in relation to the ‘Places’ topic focused on, in priority order (highest to lowest):

1. **Preservation and protection of the historic environment.** Respondents have noted the historic environments contribution towards making Tameside unique and distinctive. As such there is support for the preservation and protection of historic



buildings, mills, marketplaces, structures (including memorials), waterways and places of value. Support for appropriate policy and levels of protection also extends to heritage assets 'at risk' e.g. Apethorn Farmhouse.

2. **Make town centres desirable.** Respondents noted that whilst Tameside has many towns, each is distinct. There is also a desire to protect and promote the attractiveness of towns and cultural assets including conservation areas, waterways, cultural zones and heritage action zones. To make town centres desirable again there is a need to consider the impact of hot food takeaways and new development on the appearance of towns. Improvements to active travel to centres. Services such as libraries and community buildings should be maintained and funded, rents should be reduced to encourage traders, help provided for start-up businesses and marketplaces should not be left as empty spaces.
3. **Regular, preventative maintenance and care of historic buildings.** Respondents have called for the regular repair and maintenance of historic buildings, noting that reduced spending and lack of regular preventative maintenance causes damage and leads to more costly repairs. Designated heritage assets identified in relation to this included Stalybridge Civic Hall, Hyde Town Hall, Ashton Town Hall and Stamford Park alongside buildings and places of local heritage value including the former Hyde Library, former Coop building in Droylsden and the Ashton Canal.
4. **Bring historic buildings back into use. Respondents highlighted those vacant older buildings including** homes, public (former libraries and town halls), commercial and industrial (including mills) and places of worship should be made accessible and brought back into use, for example, as affordable homes.
5. **Waterways.** Respondents have proposed that canals be considered as non-designated heritage assets as they are distinctive and aid local place making. It is also suggested that canals can become leisure destinations by improvements to access for walking and wheeling. As such it has been recommended that a specific policy to guide and manage development affecting waterways and specifically their connectivity, surveillance and sustainable development be included within the plan.
6. **Design and design codes.** There is support for high quality and well-designed homes with areas of new public realm and open spaces within strong urban design frameworks to create distinctive and well-connected places with a strong sense of place. Whilst clear policy on design expectations and use of design codes would help to achieve this aspiration, there is concern that these should not be overly prescriptive but provide a good framework for good design and not negatively affect the viability of the site.
7. **Site Allocations.** There is support both for and against the allocation/ redevelopment of brownfield land and green field sites. However, any allocations should consider the impact on heritage assets using an up-to-date evidence base.
8. **Historic Environment Assessment.** The Plan needs a proper description and assessment of the historic environment and the contribution it makes to the area.

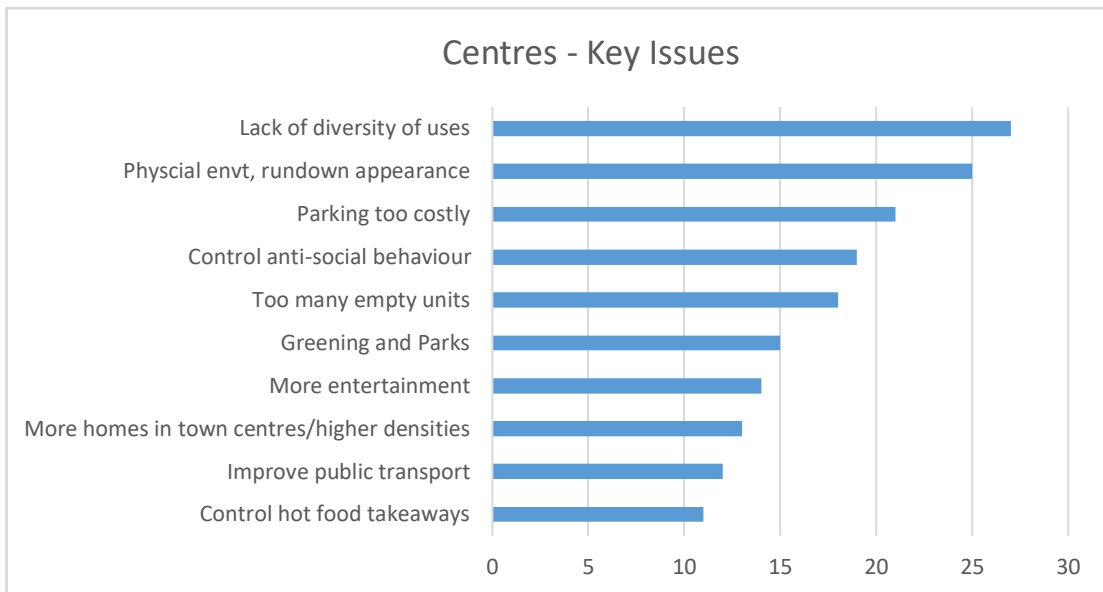


For example, the industrial legacy of textile mills as part of Tameside’s identity and opportunities. The contribution of historic environment to character of areas, economic well-being and quality of life of communities should feature in the Plan’s vision and objectives for its contribution to place making, economy and culture and provide a firm base for the rest of the Plan and policies.

Centres

3.19 Over three quarters (78%) of respondents to the full survey supported ‘Centres’ as a key theme for HSP. You told us that the following are the top ten issues relating to centres in Tameside:

Key priorities under the Centres theme



Word Cloud of most frequent words in the online survey



3.20 The highest priorities under the Centres theme in order (most important first):

1. **Lack of diversity of uses and shops in centres**– need for more diversity and choice; and need to support independent shops and businesses; to support new start-ups and particularly in making use of empty units and vacant land;
2. **Physical environment** of centres have a run-down appearance, with too many empty shop units and land;



3. **Parking considered too costly** comments about the recent price rises in Council car parks are perceived to be deterring shoppers in Tameside's centres; one suggestion was for parking to be free at certain times of day or for special events;
4. **Reduce anti-social behaviour and improve community safety;** comments included the need to provide more policing; support the night-time economy; make people feel safer in centres; some residents (including young people) see anti-social behaviour as a barrier to visiting certain centres, particularly at night;
5. **Too many empty shop units** – that could be used for a range of services (including health and community uses) or new homes;
6. **More greening, parks and open spaces-** trees, planting, wildlife and green spaces and places to meet and relax in centres;
7. **More entertainment for young (arts, culture and community events)-** on the back of the success of Stalybridge Street Fest and other community events, many highlighted the success of these events and the importance of promoting and supporting centres; also the need to celebrate the history and culture of places, with the use of art and events to attract visitors and shoppers to centres.
8. **Improve public transport and active travel-** reduce car use for cleaner air, healthier lifestyles and connectivity; make it easier and safer to travel (for work and leisure);
9. **More homes within town centres, including converting empty shop units/ buildings-** including more homes for young and older persons and affordable homes. It is considered that a town centre population will increase footfall, increase the use of shops and services in centres;
10. **Control certain non-retail uses through planning controls or policy –** respondents were keen to see increased planning controls for some non-retail uses within Tameside's centres; many mentioned the proliferation of vape shops, takeaways and betting shops and considered them to have a negative effect on residents.

The Next Steps

- 3.21 Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out the online survey, email or chat to us at the pop-up stalls during the HSP Scoping consultation period.
- 3.22 The next stage is to consider all the consultation comments submitted and to use this data and insight to inform the structure and content of Homes, Spaces, Places. The next steps will include us commissioning updates of existing and new evidence to support the development of an Issues and Options plan which it is intended will be issued early in 2025 for consultation.

