

Draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy

RESPONSE REPORT – FULL DETAIL

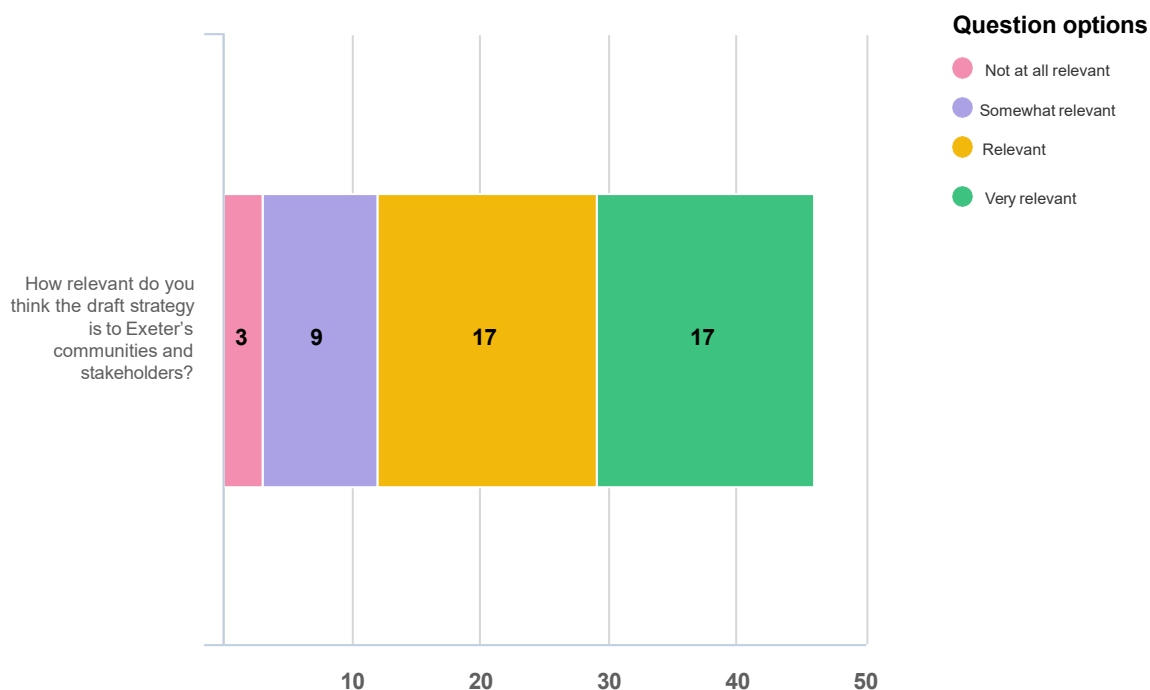
23 October 2025 - 11 December 2025

PROJECT NAME:

Consultation & Engagement Strategy

SURVEY RESPONSES

Q1 | Purpose and Aims



Mandatory Question (46 response(s))

Question type: Likert Question

Q1 | Purpose and Aims

How relevant do you think the draft strategy is to Exeter's communities and stakeholders?

Not at all relevant : 3

Somewhat relevant : 9

Relevant : 17

Very relevant : 17

2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18

Q2 | In what way do you think the it could be improved or strengthened?

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 01:11 PM

Listen to all people

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:13 PM

Commit to a mechanism allowing the 'community' to request a consultation topic not on the current council agenda.

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:26 PM

I moved to Exeter in April 2025. I have not seen any notices that there is a neighbourhood watch group in the area.

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:50 PM

Close scrutiny is required over time to ensure that group or sectoral contributions, political or polarized, are not submitted as mass individual responses to imbalance the Councils considerations of the issues presented. Such as might have occurred with planning consultations.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 01:21 AM

Ensure consultation responses are both accessible and demographically representative

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 09:31 AM

The principles are fine, it will be in the delivery. How will you know you have found the most excluded and unheard from individuals and groups. In what ways will you as a council change your approach from previous consultations to ensure you are approachable and really listening to communities voices.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 03:21 PM

Turning up the volume on the smaller voices and encouraging active citizenship and co-creation, where communities actively shape outcomes, not just respond to proposals.

Screen Name Redacted

10/25/2025 12:37 PM

Making the statements clearer & more concise

Screen Name Redacted

10/30/2025 01:09 PM

Be prepared to be flexible and to listen to what residents have to say are their priorities, not necessarily the targets that you want to achieve.

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 02:52

Reaching out to disability groups in the local area especially to those individuals who are challenged by online technology

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 05:03 PM

By saying what will be actually be done rather than having a long list of management speak and waffle.

Screen Name Redacted

11/01/2025 01:01 PM

ECC has lost a lot of trust from Exeter residents in recent years and there seems to be a huge bias and discontentment around local politicians and what the residents feel is best for their city. The strategy needs to focus on building up trust and listening and being more transparent. Not sure if this strategy does that.

Screen Name Redacted

11/02/2025 07:46 PM

Publicise as you are already doing

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 11:37 AM

I think you need to spell out purpose and aims. There isn't a point in the document or on the supporting webpage where you explicitly say "purpose" or "aims". I can see from the slide deck that "The five areas of strategic focus: what they are and how they can be achieved" would be the aim of the document, but I'm not sure everyone will understand that.

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 02:26 PM

I think you would engage more people by responding to their concerns and desires for the city. It's good to want to engage people but there needs to be a section on "what comes next" post engagement - what is the benefit of engaging

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 02:59 PM

There's a lot of emphasis on ensuring communities / people are consulted. This is of course important and central to this strategy. I would have liked to see some reference to how the consultation process enables the council to deliver on their agreed strategies and political manifesto commitments. i.e. we elect our political leaders with a mandate and we have strategies in place and agreed. The consultation process shouldn't really be a means of subverting or halting these. The consultation process should really be a means of improving the delivery, with citizen input, of these agreed strategies and political commitments

Screen Name Redacted

11/04/2025 01:45 PM

They are good, the importance of the Gunning principles resonates throughout the strategy.

Screen Name Redacted

01:34 PM

The aims look great, but they need to be actually implemented (unlike the 11/05/2025 consultation charter)

Screen Name Redacted 11/06/2025 08:02 AM	cOMMUNICATION
Screen Name Redacted 11/06/2025 06:05 PM	The Jigh Street could be more vibrant with more retail units if the rents were reduced.
Screen Name Redacted 11/07/2025 02:17 PM	More specific in nature
Screen Name Redacted 11/07/2025 03:22 PM	collect diverse feedback and experiences from all arts organisations, big and small that work in Exeter.
Screen Name Redacted 11/08/2025 10:43 PM	I don't actually know what the purpose and aims of the strategy are. Where are these listed in the strategy document? I can find fiffive areas of strategic focus but not the aims. You need to use consistent language.
Screen Name Redacted 11/10/2025 05:40 PM	You haven't stated what the Aims or Purpose are, that I can find on your website or the document itself, so I guess that would be a strong place to start. There's How and What, but no Why.
Screen Name Redacted 11/20/2025 10:21 AM	Really good aims. It may just be embedding these aims that is the challenge. Communicating them well, ensuring they are a part of everyone's workplan, ensuring everyone knows and feels that engagement is vital.
Screen Name Redacted 11/21/2025 11:52 AM	As a tool, it will only work with people who interact - there is a whole subset that ignore any municipal information completely. The results therefore will be biased towards those responses.
Screen Name Redacted 11/21/2025 11:56 AM	Nees to make it more simplified and in a way that reflects the majority of Exeter's residents. To the majority of the residents it's all gobbledygook. It appears weighted in the favour of the local authority. Just listen, pure and simple. Get out of your offices and listen. And do the job expected rather than seek confirmation over everything you.
Screen Name Redacted 11/21/2025 08:41 PM	I think you need to tailor your strategies to the best way to use the funding you have. All of the people, all of the time, getting what they want is not viable. You need to strategize to find out how much you can do realistically with the funding you have.

Screen Name Redacted

11/24/2025 05:48 PM

I couldn't see any section in the strategy document called purpose and aims, and was therefore unable to answer question 1 or this question. Only clicked 'somewhat relevant' in order to move to other questions

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 05:51 PM

By actually doing what the strategy says. By reimbursing people for their time, effort and lived experience. By consulting right at the start before planning begins.

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12/02/2025 05:57 PM

Emphasise use of established tools, e.g. online survey platforms, and processes which work in other parts of the country or are recommended by central government. This is to reduce effort, provide good facilities that people will use repeatedly and increase the value of feedback obtained.

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 11:28 PM

I have two main comments about areas where I think the strategy could be strengthened. 1. Mitigating "Participation Bias" and Self-Selection The current draft mentions the need for diverse viewpoints, but the use of surveys and a digital engagement platform will suffer from inherent "participation bias." Surveys capture the views of those with the most time or the strongest grievances, while failing to hear from the "silent majority" (working families, younger people, and those supportive of change but too busy to engage). To strengthen the Strategy, the Council must differentiate between "Open Consultation" and "Representative Engagement." Specifically: Commit to Representative Sampling: For major strategic decisions (e.g., transport changes or spatial planning), the strategy should mandate the use of professional market research (polling) with demographic quotas (age, geography, tenure) to establish a statistically accurate baseline of public opinion. Demographic Weighting: When reporting on engagement results, the Council should commit to comparing participant demographics against Census data. If a specific group (e.g., under-30s or renters) is underrepresented, this must be explicitly highlighted in the decision-making reports. Sortition (Citizens' Panels): To capture genuine "lived experience" without self-selection bias, the Strategy should consider pilot schemes for Citizens' Juries or panels selected by lottery. This ensures the Council hears from a cross-section of Exeter, not just established pressure groups. 2. Clarifying the Purpose of consultation: Data vs. Referendum The Strategy should explicitly state that consultation is a process of qualitative intelligence gathering, not a quantitative referendum. There is a danger that the public views consultation as a "vote," leading to disillusionment when a proposal proceeds despite numerical opposition. The text should clarify that the goal of consultation is to identify unforeseen impacts and implementation issues, rather than to provide a veto mechanism for necessary policy. This protects officers from having to treat "volume of correspondence" as the primary metric of success.

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12/03/2025 10:18 PM

The conventional model for public consultation in transport and traffic planning—often characterised by brief engagement windows, formal documents, and static public meetings—is increasingly viewed as counter-productive. It's hard work and generates anger and resentment. It's important to avoid The Noise vs. Data Problem: The model favours the "loudest" opposition group, often ignoring the "silent majority" who may support the changes but do not engage in adversarial public forums. Start early. Focus on the "Why." Make material easy to understand. Iterate to avoid finding desired solutions are unattainable. Support ideas with cheap pop-up examples (planters) and get feedback on a small scale at first, Actively seek feedback from underrepresented groups (e.g., low-income families, elderly residents, young people, shift workers) using targeted methods (surveys, community group visits) to ensure the feedback received is representative of the whole community, not just the organised supporters or opposition. Invest in data and trust data over opinion. Defend the data. Have data driven goals and be transparent through delivery. What do you want to change and what evidence is there for the need to change.

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12/04/2025 07:52 PM

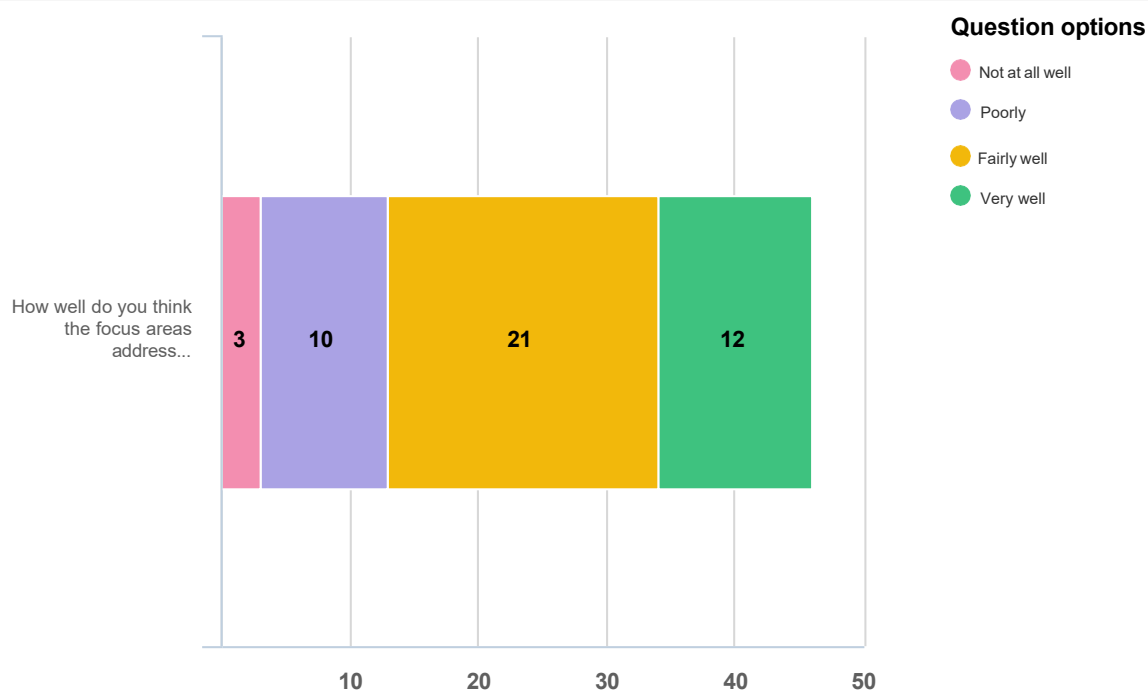
To include actual residents of Exeter, particularly those born & bred in Exeter

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12/04/2025 09:37 PM

Follow the Official consultation principles:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ae6d71ae5274a702130dc30/Consultation_principles_.pdf

Optional question (35 response(s), 11 skipped)**Question type:** Essay Question

Q3 | Five Focus Areas

Mandatory Question (46 response(s))

Question type: Likert Question

Q3 | Five Focus Areas

How well do you think the focus areas address the needs of Consultation and Engagement for people living in Exeter?

Not at all well : 3

Poorly : 10

Fairly well : 21

Very well : 12

2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

Q4 Are there any focus areas you feel are missing or need improvement?

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10/23/2025 04:13 PM

Expand on who selects the topics and why? Do they just relate to current administrative obsessions.

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10/23/2025 04:50 PM

I hope that communities covers and recognises the contribution of business to any city wide consultations.

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10/24/2025 01:21 AM

Demographic representation

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10/24/2025 03:21 PM

I think the strategy covers a lot of important ground, especially around being inclusive and using different ways to engage. It could go further to really meet the needs of people who are often excluded, like those facing digital exclusion, or social isolation. For example, it would help to see more emphasis on reaching people where they are, whether that's through trusted community groups, face-to-face conversations, or using formats that don't rely on digital access. Also, involving people earlier in the process would make engagement feel more genuine and empowering. It's also important that the strategy recognises that not everyone feels confident or safe speaking up, so creating spaces that feel welcoming and supportive is key. That could mean working with community leaders/champions, peer support groups, offering translation or interpretation, more visual and arts based approaches, or just being more flexible in how people can take part.

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10/25/2025 12:37 PM

Clarity & accessibility

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10/30/2025 01:09 PM

I'm sure that your aims are wide enough to encompass everything but that might mean your focus is drawn elsewhere.

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10/31/2025 02:52 PM

Balancing bias and managing expectations.

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 05:03 PM

These are so generic that they allow for no comment that is worthy of the name.

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10/31/2025 09:34 PM

More accessible places, including D/deaf accessible communities and communication- not text relay

Screen Name Redacted

11/01/2025 01:01 PM

Innovative and inclusive engagement is paramount to try and build back the mis-trust the public has with the Council.

Screen Name Redacted 11/03/2025 02:26 PM	Outline the point of engagements and outcomes you're hoping for once people have engaged. It's missing the "therefore"
Screen Name Redacted 11/03/2025 02:59 PM	I would urge very careful engagement with social media as a means of seeking citizen views. Most SoMe platforms are not now places where one can seek balanced views or positive engagement. SoMe is _not_ actually where most people are. Email/on-line surveys to your citizen database is probably a more balanced way of seeking engagement. There are existing groups within the city that you could access to get a balanced and positive engagement: faith groups/churches/mosques; Civic Society, Exeter Cycling Campaign etc
Screen Name Redacted 11/04/2025 01:45 PM	Would be good to see consideration being given to how young people are consulted. This survey, for example, has a clear document with clear objectives etc.. The same does not apply to all council consultations (for example the Grace Road disposal consultation) - There should be a real focus on ensuring that all consultations meet the high standards this consultation is providing an exemplar for
Screen Name Redacted 11/05/2025 01:34 PM	
Screen Name Redacted 11/06/2025 08:02 AM	n/a
Screen Name Redacted 11/06/2025 06:05 PM	People's views seemed to ignored and overruled
Screen Name Redacted 11/07/2025 02:17 PM	No, as long as the right people are involved who are dealing with issues on the ground
Screen Name Redacted 11/07/2025 03:22 PM	Need for a bigger music venue more green, open spaces, free to be enjoyed by all
Screen Name Redacted 11/08/2025 10:43 PM	I really dont think people care about this level of detail. They just want to know that they are being listened to and consulted. I couldn't care less whether you are going to pilot and test and improve. This is very internally focused. You should be reassuring your management about these things but we as the public dont need this level of detail.
Screen Name Redacted 11/10/2025 05:40 PM	Reflection, should probably sit under number 4
Screen Name Redacted 11/21/2025 11:56 AM	I can't see how what is proposed with make for an understanding of the communities.
Screen Name Redacted 11/21/2025 08:41 PM	I feel the best way forward is for better policing, within the city centre itself, leading to a hopefully better outcome for places like Sidwell Street.

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11/24/2025 05:48 PM

as for question 1, I am unable to understand what section of the draft engagement strategy this question refers to. When using a 'find' function, the only reference to focus areas mentioned the council's corporate plan but no other headings or information in the document as to what the 5 focus areas are.

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 05:51 PM

Working with existing local communities, groups and organisations to reach people who will not engage directly with the council because of prior experiences

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12/02/2025 11:28 PM

The overarching need across all five focus areas is for a commitment to scientific rigor in data collection and analysis. Without this, the Strategy risks being well-intentioned but fundamentally flawed due to self-selection bias. To genuinely achieve the goal of "Understanding Communities," the Council must move beyond reliance on open, self-selecting surveys, which overwhelmingly sample the angry or the time-rich. This requires embedding methodologies like representative polling and demographic weighting within the "Understanding Communities" and "Implement & Monitor" stages. Simply counting responses is not sufficient; the Strategy must ensure the data it gathers is a statistically representative sample of Exeter's diverse population, thereby making the resulting policy decisions robust, fair, and defensible.

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12/03/2025 10:18 PM

See previous comments. Take care that in the feedback loops, you are not listening to the loudest voices. Social media does not represent a good cross section of the community. You need to ensure that processes stop groups gaming the system (response from outside the area, multiple responses from one person). See out minority groups.

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12/04/2025 02:45 PM

Reporting - A clear roadmap of the consultation process and transparent reporting of the output and outcomes of consultation. Transparently inform participants of what was said, what that means in the context of the consultation, and the impact for residents of Exeter.

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12/04/2025 07:52 PM

Easier ways to consult with members of the public; particularly those born in Exeter

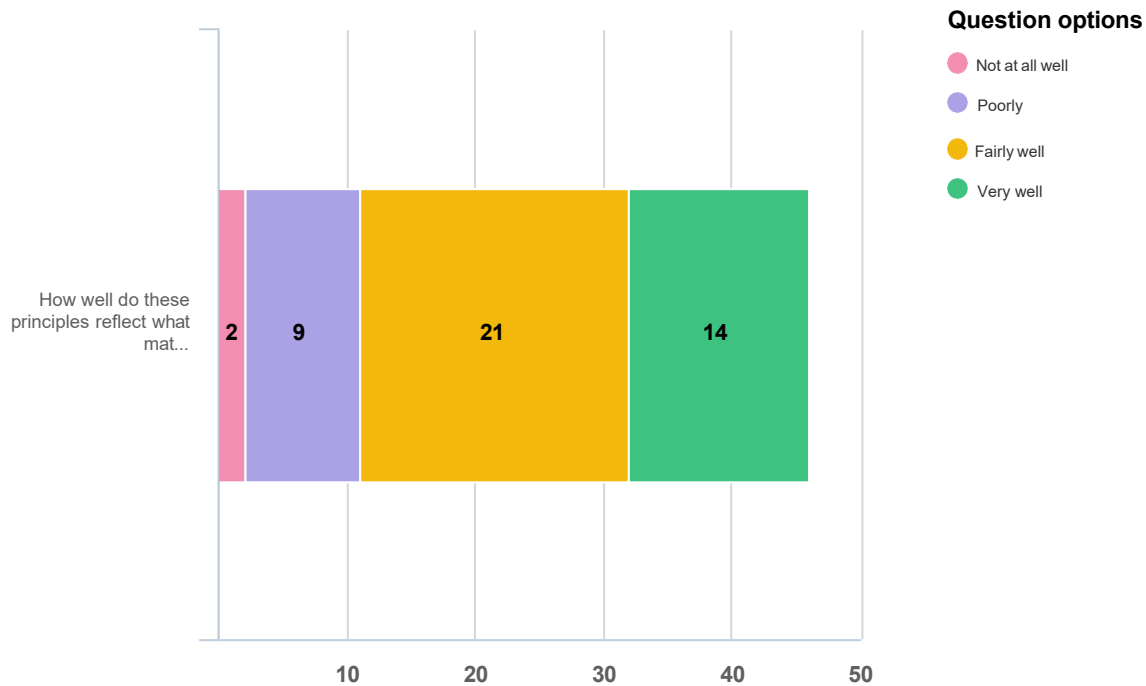
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12/04/2025 09:37 PM

The proposed focus areas are waffly. You should follow SMART objectives https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria

Optional question (29 response(s), 17 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q5 Principles guiding the strategy

Mandatory Question (46 response(s))

Question type: Likert Question

Q5 Principles guiding the strategy**How well do these principles reflect what matters to you when engaging with the Council?**

Not at all well : 2

Poorly : 9

Fairly well : 21

Very well : 14

2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24

Q6 Are there any principles you think should be added or strengthened?

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:13 PM

The methodologies will favour squeaky wheel/loudest voice responses. How will those who are not already minded to engage be canvassed?

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10/23/2025 04:50 PM

An essential element of the proposals.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 01:21 AM

Demographic representation

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 09:31 AM

The ethos is fine, it will be about the council staff's approach and showing they are embracing the principles in thought and deed.

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10/24/2025 03:21 PM

The principles in the strategy are all really important and align well with the kind of work we do at CoLab and with Common Ground. But I think a few could be strengthened or added to make the strategy even more meaningful for people who are often excluded. I think equity could be made more explicit. Inclusion is a great start, but equity means recognising that some people face bigger barriers and need different kinds of support to take part. It's about levelling the playing field, not just opening the door. Also, I'd suggest adding accountability as a principle. Communities need to know that their input leads to real change, and that the council will follow through on what's promised. That builds trust in a deeper way. And finally, care could be a guiding principle—especially when working with people who've experienced trauma, isolation, or exclusion. Engagement should feel safe, respectful, and genuinely supportive, not just transactional. It's that co-design stuff again..!

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10/25/2025 12:37 PM

Honesty

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10/30/2025 01:09 PM

No

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10/31/2025 02:52 PM

Integrity

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10/31/2025 05:03 PM

The principal appears to be that anything that will keep the current Exeter council in power must be promised. What will be done for those area that are hoovered up into Exeter to keep the current Exeter council in power, nothing it would appear.

Integrity needs to be in there.

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11/03/2025 02:26 PM

Efficiency, ease of access and simplicity. Simple things like having to create an account to respond to a survey can be a barrier to engagement. What questions are you asking around barriers to engagement?

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11/03/2025 02:59 PM

To your 'Principles' I would add..... * challenge and dismiss what is factually inaccurate. I've seen recent reports from Oxford City Council where the Officers' report simply dismissed some of the consultation feedback because it is factually incorrect. Recent 'consultation' exercises in Exeter (lead by DCC) would have benefitted from a similar approach. One principle therefore needs to be that Officer consideration of consultation feedback will be filtered / shaped by what is factually correct. * It is important to stress as a principle that *consultations are not referendums*. This needs underlining. * Consultations should be seeking citizen ideas to improve upon a scheme/proposals that _is going ahead_. i.e. if a council strategy says we will do something about, say, air quality in XXX road and Officers come forward with a scheme to deliver this then the consultation should be framed as "our agreed strategy commits us to improve air quality on XXX road and we are proposing to do x,y &z. Tell us how x,y & z can be improved to achieve the agreed goal" * the principles rightly stress the importance of good inclusion. Children have historically been ignored or not given a chance to input into schemes that affect them. Particular attention needs to be given to engaging with children in a way they can fully participate. I would suggest this is made explicit as a principle * Another principle that needs underlining is that all schemes need to be communicated well. Recent (again DCC!) consultations have not benefitted from well-thought-out communications which make the case for why change is needed. In addition Councillors, having voted for a scheme to be delivered and consulted upon, should be asked and expected to make the case publicly for the change that is being consulted on.

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11/04/2025 01:45 PM

They are good. Excellent work.

Screen Name Redacted

11/05/2025 01:34 PM

There seems (from facebook comments etc., in local groups) to be a huge amount of cynicism regarding the influence of filling surveys. To increase transparency and trust, it is critical to ensure that survey participants see clear collation of views and analysis of responses, so that they can see their viewpoints being considered, and affecting policy. There is either a gap in the consideration of the views of the public, or a gap in their understand of how their views are responded to, that is creating distrust. In particular, for example, a view that seems silly, or irrelevant, to a council official does not mean that that point should not be responded to (even if it is to provide a clear, non-patronising, explanation of why it is not a viewpoint that will affect a particular policy.

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11/06/2025 06:05 PM

Maybe if they were implemented

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11/07/2025 02:17 PM

No

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11/20/2025 10:21 AM

I think people want to be listened to and feel they are heard. This may be included in inclusion and empathy.

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 11:56 AM

This still doesn't really address that the council doesn't really listen to it's residents. Take the way that it's residents have to take part in this consultation, having to register to give their view. Is that really progress? Is that inclusive? What percentage of residents actually participate in these consultations?

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 08:41 PM

Just be realistic is what you can afford to do and the outcomes you expect.

Screen Name Redacted

11/24/2025 05:48 PM

That there is top to bottom understanding across all relevant staff of the engagement strategy and the important of complying with it. Without that, it's all just words

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 05:51 PM

They should all be strengthened and made commitments not aims

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 11:28 PM

The current definition of Inclusion should be strengthened to explicitly address selection and participation bias. Inclusion should mean not only making the process accessible but ensuring the voices captured are representative of Exeter's demographic profile. To achieve this, the Council must commit to: Proactive Demographic Balance: Define targets for response rates across key demographics (age, tenure, location, economic status). Measuring Non-Response: For significant consultations, the Council must analyze and report on which groups are missing from the data, and how the decision-making process has accounted for this unrepresentative data skew. Targeted Outreach: The strategy must go beyond general communication and mandate targeted, funded outreach to known under-represented groups, such as younger renters, shift workers, and low-income communities. A dedicated principle focused on the quality and scientific defensibility of the data is essential. The strategy is guided by strong values, but these must be underpinned by strong methodology. The principle of Rigour would ensure: Representative Sampling: For major policy decisions, open consultation (the self-selecting group) must be supplemented or benchmarked by methods designed for statistical validity, such as random, demographically-weighted polling. Data Integrity: The Council must commit to only treating responses as data when methodology is sound. For example, explicitly stating that volume of response does not equate to representative opinion, thereby preventing the "loudest voice" from dominating the process. Implementing effective anti-gaming measures (e.g., IP tracking, Captcha, or unique sign-ups for high-impact consultations) to prevent the submission of multiple responses by the same individual or bot. As well as verifying Residence Verification for Key Consultations: For high-impact consultations (e.g., The Exeter Plan, major transport

schemes), the Council must verify respondents identity and postcode or residency status to ensure responses reflect the community and aren't skewed by external actors. Evidence-Based Decision-Making: Consultation results must be clearly segmented, analyzed, and presented as evidence to the public, along with an explanation of how any unrepresentative bias was factored out during the decision-making process.

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12/03/2025 10:18 PM

Take care that in the feedback loops, you are not listening to the loudest voices. Social media does not represent a good cross section of the community. You need to ensure that processes stop groups gaming the system (response from outside the area, multiple responses from one person). See out minority groups.

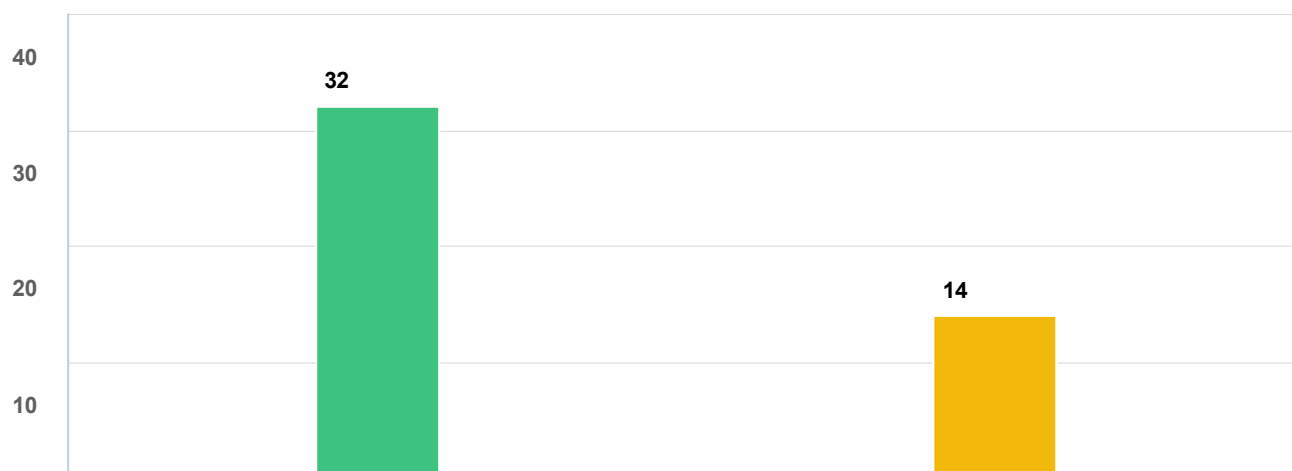
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12/04/2025 09:37 PM

Use SMART objectives

Optional question (24 response(s), 22 skipped)

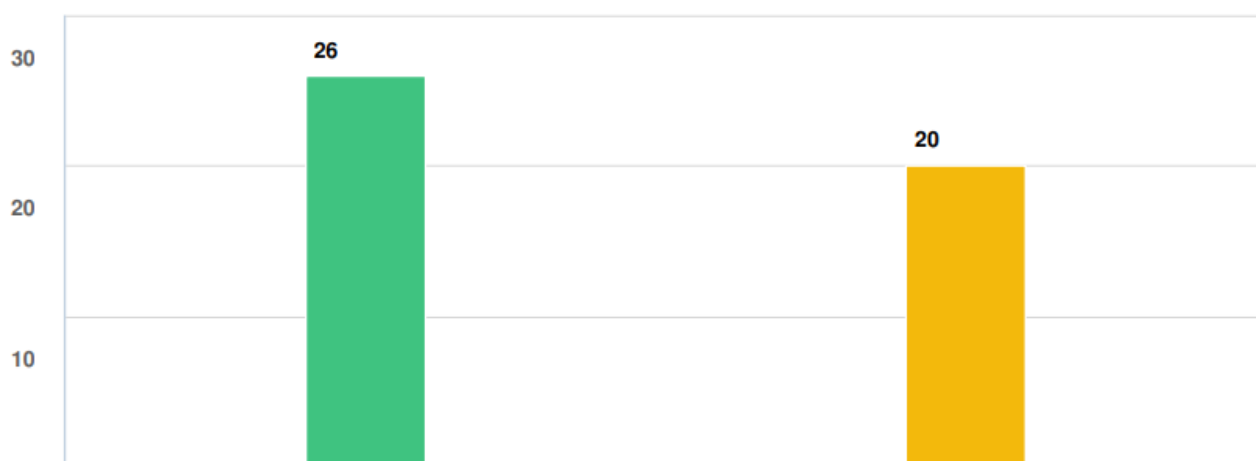
Question type: Essay Question

Q7 Will the proposed engagement methods in the strategy make it easier for you or your organisation to participate in consulta...**Question options**

☐ No ☒ Yes

Mandatory Question (46 response(s))

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q8 Are there any barriers that might prevent you or others from taking part in these activities?**Question options**

☐ No ☒ Yes

Mandatory Question (46 response(s))

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q9 If Yes, please tell us what those barriers are

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10/23/2025 01:11 PM

If they are ignored

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10/23/2025 04:13 PM

4 of the 5 are group consultations which encourages 'group think' and can suppress individual expression of opinions. Also require proactive involvement, and a willingness to attending meetings and events so availability, sociability and mobility. 'If you can't be bothered to turn up we are not interested in your opinion' Social media is a notoriously flawed way to obtain opinion or 'truth'

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 01:21 AM

Hard to reach groups. Young people, children. Isolated older people.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 03:21 PM

One of the biggest barriers is digital exclusion as a lot of people we work with don't have reliable internet access or feel confident using online platforms. Resources, learning and support around this would be beneficial, but to be fair, a lot of people don't want to learn and take on managing a digital life. There's also the issue of trust.. some communities feel disconnected from decision making and may not believe their input will lead to real change. Language and literacy can be a barrier too, especially for people who struggle with written materials. And also time and accessibility.. if events aren't held at convenient times or in familiar, welcoming spaces, people are less likely to take part.

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10/25/2025 12:37 PM

Reluctance to use technology, reluctance to join groups

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10/31/2025 02:52 PM

Accessible locations and accessible methods to participate ie scribes.

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10/31/2025 09:34 PM

More awareness of D/deaf communication, and neuro-affirming access

Screen Name Redacted

11/01/2025 01:01 PM

Exeter's elderly community do not necessarily have access to digital platforms or if they do it is limited. Sending out paper copies with either Council Tax updates, or other Council communication may assist.

Screen Name Redacted 11/02/2025 07:46 PM	Time of meetings would be better at different times to allow different people to attend, ie parents; shift workers etc.
Screen Name Redacted 11/03/2025 02:59 PM	Reconcile yourself to always being criticised for not consulting fully. There was never a change management process where all affected people say "I was consulted fully" ! Depressing perhaps, but true.
Screen Name Redacted 11/04/2025 01:45 PM	The strategy is quite high level, so without seeing more specific details (e.g. the type of technology solutions you are planning to use) it's difficult to say whether the strategy will make it easier or what the barriers are.
Screen Name Redacted 11/04/2025 07:45 PM	Lack of IT access
Screen Name Redacted 11/05/2025 01:34 PM	Anyone who does not have the digital connectivity to reach all the survey documentaiton, or use the digital platform
Screen Name Redacted 11/07/2025 03:22 PM	lack of trust, lack of transparency, poor communication amongst arts and community organisations, poor transport links especially in the evening, for people who live outside Exeter and wish to attend live music events.
Screen Name Redacted 11/08/2025 10:43 PM	Time
Screen Name Redacted 11/10/2025 05:40 PM	The people conducting those activities and their understanding about how to do it. For example - the 'roadshow' display that was used for the City Plan was put up in different parts of the city. At two which I attended there were no seats provided, yet it was expected for us to read materials that took about an hour. It's all very well having the correct buzzwords, it's the training and understanding of your team that matters on the ground.
Screen Name Redacted 11/20/2025 09:12 AM	The language used, needing to create accounts to participate and 95% of the community will be unaware that they are able to view and be involved in this.
Screen Name Redacted 11/20/2025 10:21 AM	Older people tell us time and time again that they struggle with digitalisation. Meeting groups where they are at or going out to assisted living complexes or GP surgeries will be key

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 11:52 AM

lack of information in the first instance. I joined this platform but am aware that many thousands more will have no knowledge of its existence.

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 11:56 AM

Digital platforms are not an easy access. And as any face to face activities are held in places and times suitable to the council rather than the working population it's seems like it's going to be 'lip service ' and a 'tick box exercise '.

Screen Name Redacted

11/24/2025 05:48 PM

knowing that engagement activities are on offer / live. Not having enough trust in the results being taken seriously to invest effort in engagement

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 05:51 PM

Prior experiences of consultations in name only from local authorities

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 11:28 PM

Time.

Screen Name Redacted

12/04/2025 02:45 PM

Digital exclusion may create barriers for people with sight loss and those not well versed in technology. People with sight loss are twice as likely to be digitally excluded when compared to the general population. This is strongly linked to age. The numbers of people aged 18-49 who don't use the internet are extremely small, and people with sight loss in this age group appear to be just as likely to use the internet as people in the general population. Older people are much more likely to not use the internet, with 63 per cent of people with sight loss aged 75 plus not using or having access to the internet (compared to a UK average of 52 per cent for the same age group) . With this in mind, any aspiration to implement digital methodology must not be at the expense of those who are already digitally excluded

Screen Name Redacted

12/04/2025 07:52 PM

Not being aware of any public consultations as not advised how to attend. Some people of my age do not have access to the internet

Optional question (25 response(s), 21 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q10 What engagement methods could be added or strengthened to make it easier for you to engage with the Council?

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:13 PM

I am not the one you should be worried about, after all by doing this survey I am already engaged and therein lies the problem. How to seek input from those who are not already engaged. How to find out why not, what mechanisms can be used to canvas the sceptics, the disillusioned, the apathetic.

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:50 PM

Direct access to senior officers by business groups has in the past been vital to the creation of genuine worthwhile and effective partnership in the past and I would hope this could continue to influence policy offered for public review.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 01:21 AM

Telephone contact, involvement via schools

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 03:21 PM

To make engagement more inclusive, it would help to build on relationships with trusted community organisations who already have strong relationships with people who are often excluded. Offering one-to-one conversations or informal drop-ins, which can feel more approachable than formal workshops. Use creative methods like visual storytelling, participatory art, or walk-and-talk sessions to make engagement more engaging and less intimidating. Developing positive relationships further by following up with communities to show how their input has been listened to and made a difference. This builds trust and could encourage future involvement and co-design.

Screen Name Redacted

10/25/2025 12:37 PM

Accessible 'drop in points', postal contact

Screen Name Redacted

10/30/2025 01:09 PM

None

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 02:52 PM

Phone interviews.

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 05:03 PM

I have no level of trust in the people making these proposals, the proposals are both vague and self serving.

Screen Name Redacted 11/01/2025 01:01 PM	Maybe the Council Offices could have an open day, I only found out recently, your office front was changed 20 years ago. Its not a place I visit, I'm not sure this is a challenge for you to reach all aspects of our community.
Screen Name Redacted 11/03/2025 11:37 AM	I know it is a high cost method but leafleting certain areas could be a good method. I only see these consultations as I work in local government, I'm not sure that my friends would see any consultations or engagements in their day-to-day life.
Screen Name Redacted 11/03/2025 02:26 PM	Online MS form which doesn't require accounts
Screen Name Redacted 11/03/2025 02:59 PM	I like the proposal to "Recruit and maintain groups of 'community researchers/ volunteers/ panels to support early-stage engagement on issues, to support us in gaining diverse community voices" You may not need to *recruit* to make this happen. There are already community groups (faith groups, self-help groups, local area groups, Civic Society, Cycling Campaign etc) which already exist and could be used as a means for reaching much of the community.
Screen Name Redacted 11/04/2025 01:45 PM	The strategy is quite high level, so without seeing more specific details (e.g. the type of technology solutions you are planning to use) it's difficult to say whether the strategy will make it easier or what the barriers are.
Screen Name Redacted 11/04/2025 07:45 PM	Local social groups eg church groups
Screen Name Redacted 11/05/2025 01:34 PM	The council could hold 'pop-up' sessions in communities, for example at local markets or fetes, where they provide a couple of laptops and an advisor who could encourage people passing to engage with the current consultations.
Screen Name Redacted 11/06/2025 06:05 PM	Public being listened to and not completivnored!!
Screen Name Redacted 11/07/2025 02:17 PM	To continue to have links with key stakeholders
Screen Name Redacted 11/07/2025 03:22 PM	inclusivity regardless of size of organisation, focus on individual projects and initiatives led by arts organisations, community interest companies, not for profit orgs and social enterprises and being listened too. we find a lack of awareness in terms of what is going on in the city in the evenings, the quay could be more vibrant if the majority of cafes, shops etc didn't close at 5pm.

Screen Name Redacted

11/10/2025 05:40 PM

Training for your teams in this sort of activity - from people in other sectors and community groups, maybe?

Screen Name Redacted

11/20/2025 09:12 AM

Face to face meetings, monthly meetings, invitations to meetings. A place in town the community can go to to discuss issues.

Screen Name Redacted

11/20/2025 10:21 AM

Removing as many barriers as possible for older people. Often mobility, digital, transport, health can be barriers. Collaborative working to access existing groups would be helpful and also working flexibly to meet people's needs.

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 11:56 AM

Door to door, short methods. Use of supermarkets to reach out to people. Stopping this culture of having to register and do everything online.

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 08:41 PM

Find out what the people of the area really want, not just what the Council want.

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 05:51 PM

Remote focus groups and interviews

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 05:57 PM

I think it is very important that the digital platforms are easy to use and well designed so the questions, sequencing and lay-out prompts people to think about the subject of the survey and provide good feedback in a form that can be readily used to inform plans and proposals. It is also important to have a consistent platform for most or all surveys, with a consistent look and feel. That will make the experience of completing surveys easier and encourage more people to respond.

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 11:28 PM

The council should consider including Representative polling / surveys Citizens juries / panels Targeted physical pop ups to reach under represented groups Stakeholder workshops Utilisation of existing community groups

Screen Name Redacted

12/03/2025 10:18 PM

The problem is mostly the other way round. How do you get views from the silent majority who don't necessarily seek to engage. How do you avoid engagement from people outside the area.

Screen Name Redacted

12/04/2025 07:52 PM

Consultation papers to be posted to everyone; particularly those in retirement living housing

Screen Name Redacted

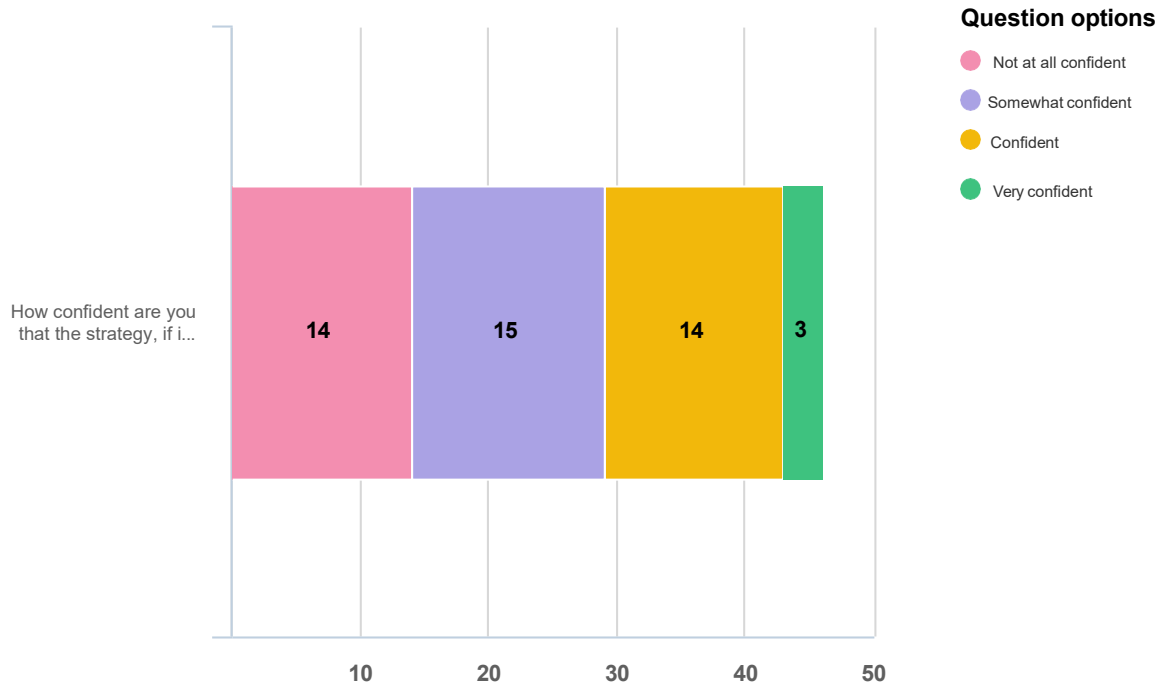
12/04/2025 09:37 PM

Avoid methods that provide obstacles to people with limited IT skills.

Optional question (29 response(s), 17 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q11 | Implementation



Mandatory Question (46 response(s))

Question type: Likert Question

Q11 | Implementation

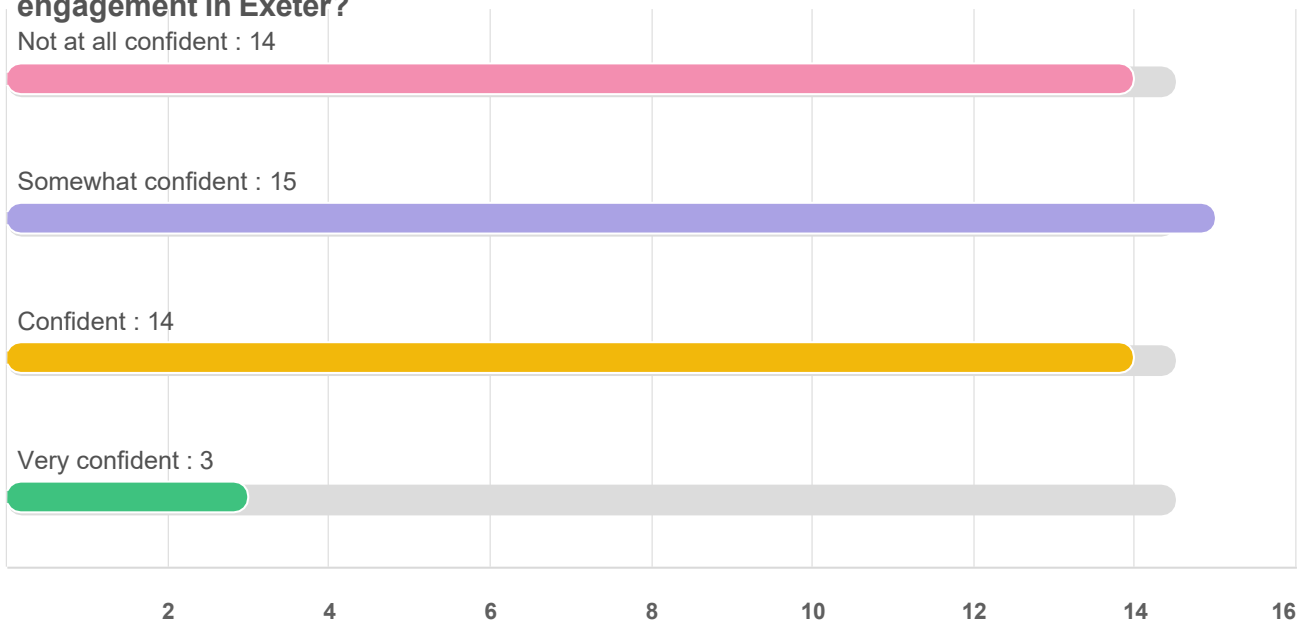
How confident are you that the strategy, if implemented, will improve consultation and engagement in Exeter?

Not at all confident : 14

Somewhat confident : 15

Confident : 14

Very confident : 3



Q12 What would help ensure the strategy is successfully implemented and monitored?

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:13 PM

How to assess the relevance of the subject to the communities priorities? How to ensure and measure that a realistic cross section of the community has responded? How to avoid question and poling scope bias in surveys. Should there be a third party assessor to ensure true inclusivity and relevance?

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:50 PM

Demonstration off the impacts that the engagement has genuinely had on the policies and outcomes following consultation.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 01:21 AM

Regular progress updates posted via usual ECC comms channels

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 09:31 AM

Getting to the widest amount of people, especially those whose voices are not heard.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 03:21 PM

To make sure the strategy is successfully implemented and monitored, I think a few things would really help: Clear accountability/visibility so that it's obvious who's responsible for delivering each part of the strategy, and regular updates so people know what's happening. Ongoing community involvement—not just during the consultation phase, but throughout the implementation. That way, communities can help shape how things are rolled out and keep the council grounded in real experiences. Feedback that forms part of an ongoing relationship. It's important that people see how their input has influenced and helped shape decisions. Flexibility is important so that the strategy can adapt based on what's working and what's not, especially as community needs change. This is a big ask, I know!

Screen Name Redacted

10/25/2025 12:37 PM

Openness & truthfulness. Previous consultations have been flawed & untrue

Screen Name Redacted

10/30/2025 01:09 PM

Enough resources

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 02:52 PM

Testing the process before implementation.

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 05:03 PM

Having someone who does not have a record of failure and debt creation in charge, i.e. not the current Exeter Council.

Screen Name Redacted

11/01/2025 01:01 PM

More communication that is not only digital. Promo's, maybe during the run-up to Christmas, have a stall somewhere, explaining about Exeter City Council, what the strategy is and how you are here to support us, as well as represent us.

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 02:26 PM

Have some residents on the board or as volunteer trustees to oversee and hold the council to account to responding to engagement and following the steps set out in the strategy

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 02:59 PM

Councillors to encourage Officers to come forward with bold plans and then support them in publicly speaking in favour of the changes they have voted to deliver.

Screen Name Redacted

11/04/2025 01:45 PM

Consultations are not referendums, they are an opportunity to question proposals and to gather evidence. If hundreds of people respond to a consultation arguing that the colour black is the colour white, their feedback should be rejected. This principle must be made clear to respondents throughout any consultation or engagement process. "If your feedback is proven to be materially incorrect by evidence gathered by this consultation, then it will be discounted by the decision makers. This will be accounted for in the report." I would urge Exeter City Council to make the importance of facts clear as part of their consultation and engagement strategy. It's staggering that this needs to be said, but it's the reality of the world we are now living in.

Screen Name Redacted

11/04/2025 07:45 PM

Ensure local councillors properly engage with all local people not just those that belong to their political party.

Screen Name Redacted

11/05/2025 01:34 PM

The 'Consultation Charter' has been in place for several years, and many consultations do not confirm to it. This strategy will only improve consultations if those who engage with surveys and consultations get active feedback to show they are being heard. Word of mouth will then increase participation rapidly. For example, completing a survey should provide an automatic feedback loop so that the participant receives the survey results and possibly even a response to the points they raise by email.

Screen Name Redacted

11/06/2025 06:05 PM

Input of local residents

Screen Name Redacted

11/07/2025 02:17 PM

Good communication. Lots of transparency. Anonymised illustrative examples of good practice

Screen Name Redacted

11/08/2025 10:43 PM

It not being a tick box exercise. People actually publishing what has changed as a result of a consultation.

Screen Name Redacted

11/10/2025 05:40 PM

Someone who isn't a part of ECC having oversight

Screen Name Redacted

11/20/2025 09:12 AM

There is no trust in the council and the way it spends money. So even with our involvement I would assume this is just a tick box to make it look like your involving the community, but actually what ever feedback you get, the council will just do what it wants.

Screen Name Redacted

11/20/2025 10:21 AM

Embedding it at every level of proceedings. Talking about engagement and having buy in from councillors as well as those working with people on the ground. Our clients have also articulated that they tire of engagement when they don't feel heard or feel that things change. Could their be an older person's representative on the Council to ensure consultation and learning is fed back?

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 11:52 AM

Though it may be somewhat improved, the failure comes when, in spite of this communication, people still see their council taxes rise, with less tangible improvements in the community around them. This problem is endemic in any organisation, and communication is not always the answer to better funding, caring or thinking.

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 11:56 AM

Stop being pompous and actually go and meet the people face to face.

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 08:41 PM

Encourage the constituents to participate.

Screen Name Redacted

11/24/2025 05:48 PM

all senior management and political leaders taking it seriously.
Monitoring of senior staff engagment is essential

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 05:51 PM

Seeing it actually implemented rather than a paper tick box exercise

Screen Name Redacted¹

2/02/2025 11:28 PM

The strategy needs specific, quantitative metrics to judge its success, for example: KPIs for Representation: Define measurable targets for addressing bias. For example: Demographic Alignment Score: Target a maximum variance of 10% between consultation respondents' age/tenure distribution and the latest Census data for every Strategic consultation. Targeted Outreach Success Rate: Track the percentage increase in responses from identified under-represented groups (e.g., U30s, Private Renters) year-on-year. The strategy must codify who is responsible for its success and its failure. Designated Strategy Lead: Nominate a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) at a Director level who is ultimately accountable for the Strategy's overall performance, reporting directly to the executive. Mandatory Training and Standards: Require mandatory, ongoing training for all relevant officers (not just the engagement team) on the new principles, especially regarding bias mitigation and data validation. This ensures the principles are embedded across all departments. Independent Review: Commit to a formal, independent audit of the Strategy's performance every three years to assess its effectiveness in addressing bias and achieving inclusion targets. Ensure adequate funding Dedicated Budget for Rigour: Allocate ring-fenced funding specifically for the new, rigorous methods for consultation such as: Commissioning Representative Polling (essential for combating self-selection). Funding small-scale Citizens' Juries/Panels. Anti-Gaming Technology and data integrity checks. Resource Allocation for Non-Digital: Explicitly allocate funds and staff time for the logistics of non-digital outreach (e.g., printing, postage, staffing pop-up sessions)

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 05:57 PM

Be rigorous about measuring success, (as in the final slide - 'Measuring Success Annually'), AND carry out continual improvement based on the results

Screen Name Redacted

12/03/2025 10:18 PM

See initial comments. Many changes need to be data driven and it's about explaining that more than collecting opinions. More effort required to ensure opinions are representative of the whole community and include minorities. Also, a more robust approach to ensuring data gets more weight than opinions that aren't supported by data.

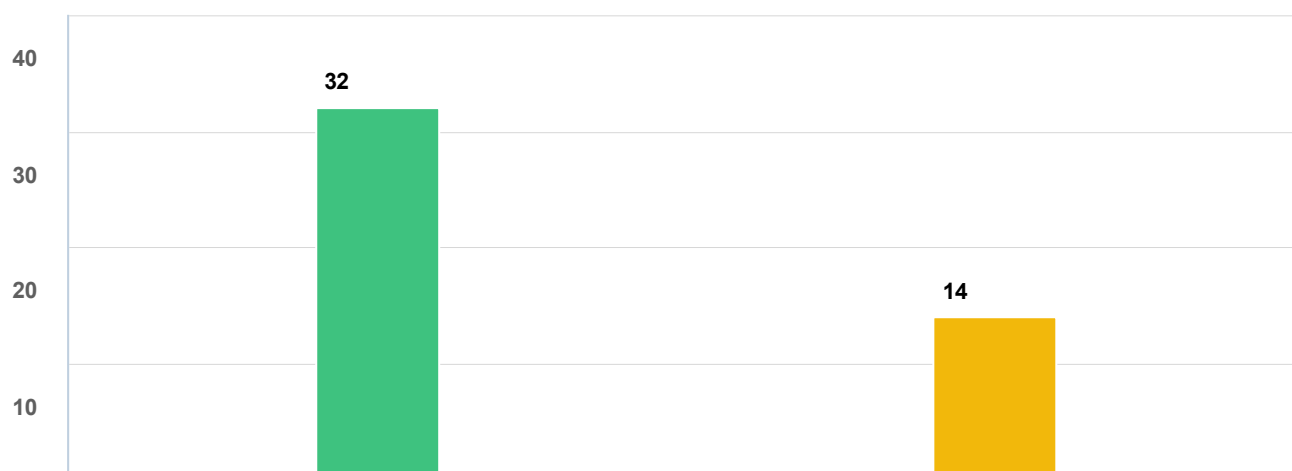
Screen Name Redacted

12/04/2025 07:52 PM

The Council need to listen

Optional question (30 response(s), 16 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q13 Do the proposed measures of success reflect what you think is important for understanding the impact of consultation and en...**Question options**

☐ No ☒ Yes

Mandatory Question (46 response(s))

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q14 What measures could be added or strengthened

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:13 PM

Who has oversight of this process, it's relevance, fairness and inclusivity? Are there any independent monitors to ensure impartiality and trust building? Are anonymous council officers going to mark their own score cards? Every one has an agenda and so transparency is the only way to ensure trust how is transparency realistically being delivered?

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:50 PM

Important that the process is seen to be the consequence of well considered engagement by the lasting and hopefully increasing metrics used to measure success.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 01:21 AM

Participation demography reflects city's demography

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 09:31 AM

Whether the community feels it has Equity in this and feels they have the power to influence the process.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 03:21 PM

The proposed measures such as increased participation, diversity, and trust are a good start. I think they could be strengthened by looking more closely at who is participating, not just how many. For example, are we hearing from people who are usually excluded like those facing homelessness or mental health challenges? Working with groups who can help with that would give a clearer picture of whether engagement is truly inclusive. Also, it would help to measure how people feel about the process, not just the outcomes. Do they feel respected, listened to, and safe? That kind of feedback is harder to quantify but really important for building trust.

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 05:03 PM

It's all about Exeter city, not about the community as a whole.

Screen Name Redacted

11/01/2025 01:01 PM

Not sure any further measures would make a significant difference.

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 02:26 PM

"You said we did" type publications via letter which show the value of engagement

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 02:59 PM

It's a difficult thing to measure the efficacy of consultations. I wish you well with this!

Screen Name Redacted

11/04/2025 01:45 PM

It's great to see the measures of the success of this strategy so clearly articulated. One comment I would make is that attendance isn't always a measure of success. Whilst it can be a positive for training or networking events, high attendance can sometimes show that something has gone wrong. If people aren't turning up to an event they are aware of, that can mean that things are okay. It would be good for there to be a measure around partnership working. For example, the number of partnership projects that are set up as a result of engagement activity. It would also be good to see all of these measures being linked back to the ECC corporate plan, so the various strategies are clearly talking to each other.

Screen Name Redacted

11/05/2025 01:34 PM

In "Annual Survey", as well as a survey (which will only be accessed by those already using the processes), the council could create, for example, ECC accounts that join local social media groups, and interact with those people that will engage with those groups, but not the official survey. This would provide a better overview of how people feel disconnected, and publicise the consultation processes.

Screen Name Redacted 11/06/2025 06:05 PM	Let's just say you can propose as many measures as you like but few will be implemented. This council is very good at backtracking
Screen Name Redacted 11/07/2025 02:17 PM	Measurable outcomes, in terms of change in people's life outcomes - e.g. moving from unemployment to employment, moving from isolation to being in community.
Screen Name Redacted 11/08/2025 10:43 PM	I dont think increasing the number of consultations should be a measure. People will get consultation fatigue
Screen Name Redacted 11/10/2025 05:40 PM	Absolutely open listening - such as public fora for people to propose developments and changes in the city.
Screen Name Redacted 11/20/2025 10:21 AM	Would be good to have good data on who is engaging, not just numbers.
Screen Name Redacted 11/21/2025 11:52 AM	see "Boaty McBoatface" for the reasons that asking every individual for input, is not always optimal progress.
Screen Name Redacted 11/21/2025 08:41 PM	Robust policing in the area. Being more aware of antisocial behaviour and dealing with it forcefully.
Screen Name Redacted 12/02/2025 05:51 PM	Having SMART objectives and KPIs for them.
Screen Name Redacted 12/02/2025 11:28 PM	Strengthen diversity: Added Measure: Demographic Alignment Score (DAS): Success should be measured by how closely the demographics of the consultation respondents align with the overall Exeter population (based on the Census or ONS data). A target should be set for a maximum variance (e.g., 10%) between the respondent profile and the city profile. This is the true measure of representative inclusion. Added Measure: Representative Sampling Requirement: Success should be defined by the Council's successful commissioning and utilization of representative polling for a minimum number of consultations per year, ensuring the "silent majority" is heard. Trust: Add a Policy Adoption Ratio: For qualitative insight, measure the number of new, non-obvious issues or solutions identified by the public that were subsequently adopted or directly addressed in the final policy, demonstrating that the consultation was not a foregone conclusion. Participation: Simply counting responses is a poor metric if those responses are duplicated or submitted by non-residents Add a Data Validity Score: Track the percentage of total responses that were identified, filtered, and removed due to anti-gaming checks (e.g., clear duplication, non-residency, or automated responses). A lower score indicates better data security and integrity. External/Internal Ratio: Track the percentage of valid responses that came from verified Exeter residents and local stakeholders versus those from external sources, ensuring local decisions are driven by the local community.

Screen Name Redacted

12/03/2025 10:18 PM

I would question the drive for more consultations. Fewer, but better consultations on the topics where public trust is most important is going to be more effective. Increasing numbers of people who respond is also not the best measure. The responses need to be more representative to avoid the loudest-voices problem. .

Screen Name Redacted

12/04/2025 02:45 PM

Consultation is a two way process . Clear and transparent processes to report to participants and residents of Exeter on the outputs, outcomes and impact of consultation should be included as part of Section 6.

Screen Name Redacted

12/04/2025 07:52 PM

To state things in plain English making it easier to understand questions you are asking

Optional question (23 response(s), 23 skipped)**Question type:** Essay Question**Q15 | Final Comments: is there anything else you would like to say about the draft strategy?**

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:13 PM

This is a good start but does not go anything like far enough. Surveys are only actionable if they can be shown to be truly representative of the effected communities opinions. Too often surveys are disregarded as only reflecting the views of the 'same old vocal few' and not the 'silent majority'. The only way to avoid that is to ensure 'the silent majority' is canvased in a scientific way. There is plenty of expertise in this this field but it does not seem to be fully reflected in the draft strategy.

Screen Name Redacted

10/23/2025 04:50 PM

A step in the right direction.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 01:21 AM

It looks well thought through!

Overall, the strategy feels thoughtful and very human, and it's great to see a focus on empathy, inclusion and innovation. It would be great to see it go beyond consultation and move towards community-led decision-making. That means building long-term relationships, sharing power, and making sure the most excluded voices are not just heard but actively shaping the future of the city.

Screen Name Redacted

10/24/2025 03:21 PM

Work with the community to get the engagement process at all the local groups.

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 02:52 PM

Screen Name Redacted

10/31/2025 05:03 PM

One of the worst strategy documents I have ever read. It is so vague in what it says and is full of mealy mouthed platitudes that, I assume, are meant to sound good but just give the impression of blandness and incompetence.

Screen Name Redacted

11/01/2025 01:01 PM

The strategy should also focus on listening, and ensure those in Focus Groups are representative of their communities but also are communicating this. I appreciate this is a 'hard sell' for the Council, and thank you for the work you have put in to date.

Screen Name Redacted

11/02/2025 07:46 PM

Keep at it!

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 11:37 AM

I like the document itself, it is mostly clear and well laid out. It would be good to see a report after the engagement has been completed to understand the feedback and the steps you've taken to address any feedback.

Screen Name Redacted

11/03/2025 02:59 PM

Allow me a few repeats of previous points: * consultation is not a referendum, and this needs to be repeatedly stressed * consultation should be about making a proposal better and usually not about "shall we make this change or not" * find ways of engaging the children better * use _existing_ community groups, faith groups, local area groups, charities etc to access people across the city * don't use consultations to ask "should we deliver on are already agreed strategy or not?" Thank you

Screen Name Redacted

11/04/2025 01:45 PM

I've lived in Wonford in Exeter for nearly 20 years, close to Burnthouse Lane. We love living here, but the area ranks highly on deprivation indices. This stretches right back to our origins in the old west quarter in the 19th and early 20th century. Subsequently a lot of organisations can access funding to work here, and carry out consultations to inform their plans. As a result, we can feel like we're being consulted constantly, whilst the result of previous consultations remain undelivered. We're currently waiting on football pitches, changing rooms and a wellbeing hub from previous consultations in Wonford. The NHS are considering a consultation on health inequalities on the estate. To address this Exeter City Council should look to establish a repository for all consultations that are carried out in Exeter, not just the ones they deliver. This will require careful wording of a GDPR data sharing clause and strong engagement with partners. Thanks for your hard work on this, you've done a really good job summarising a complex topic and pulling together a concise strategy.

Screen Name Redacted

11/06/2025 06:05 PM

Yes. I believe the council have a good of what they will be doing and no amount of feedback or interactions from the public will change their minds.

Screen Name Redacted

11/07/2025 02:17 PM

It looks good on paper, but there needs to be good life examples to celebrate to ensure that it means anything

Screen Name Redacted

11/08/2025 10:43 PM

I think you need to ask real questions that enable meaningful change as a result. The consultation around the council corporate plan was abysmal. It did not allow us to make comments on the plan, just say whether we thought th priorities would improve our lives. It is the worst survey I have ever completed.

Screen Name Redacted

11/10/2025 05:40 PM

It's all very good, however, historically ECC have been a car crash when it comes to consultation. Please use other people (Red Quadrant were good when you cut the arts funding) such as organisations in the creative industries to train your teams and help you to shape your consultations.

Screen Name Redacted

11/20/2025 10:21 AM

Thank you.

Screen Name Redacted

11/21/2025 08:41 PM

I think you need to make all constituents aware of this survey, until you do they will be an un-tapped source of what the locals really want.

Screen Name Redacted

11/24/2025 05:48 PM

it has too much jargon, and is not at all easy to follow.

Screen Name Redacted

12/02/2025 11:28 PM

The current Draft Strategy, while strong on aspiration, needs structural amendments to address the fundamental risk of wasted public funds and eroded trust. A strategy that prioritizes volume of response over scientific rigour (as detailed in previous sections) will inevitably lead to policies based on unrepresentative, self-selected data. This creates a cycle where: Resources are misspent managing and analyzing large volumes of skewed responses. Policies are delayed or diluted by the "loudest voice," failing to serve the silent majority of Exeter residents. Public trust collapses when residents feel the Council is either unable or unwilling to differentiate between genuine community opinion and organized opposition. The Council should adopt the principle of Representative Inclusion by mandating statistically valid methods (like polling and Citizens' Juries) and Data Integrity checks for all strategic consultations. The ultimate measure of success for this Strategy must be auditable evidence that all decisions are based on data that accurately reflects the full demographic and geographic spread of the city.

Screen Name Redacted

12/03/2025 10:18 PM

See comments under 1.

Screen Name Redacted

12/04/2025 02:45 PM

Guide Dogs welcomes Exeter City Councils commitment to strengthening engagement with people and communities in Exeter and the inclusion of a commitment to the Gunning Principles. Guide Dogs would highlight that The Equality Act 2010 sets out several key equality duties for public bodies in relation to consultation and engagement. In addition to the general duties and prohibitions on discrimination, public bodies are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The duty is anticipatory: authorities must proactively assess whether disabled groups are likely to experience substantial disadvantage and take reasonable steps to prevent or remove it. Responses to public consultations from disabled people require particular attention and even where consultation feedback is limited, existing research that shows significant adverse impacts on disabled groups triggers the duty.

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12/04/2025 07:52 PM

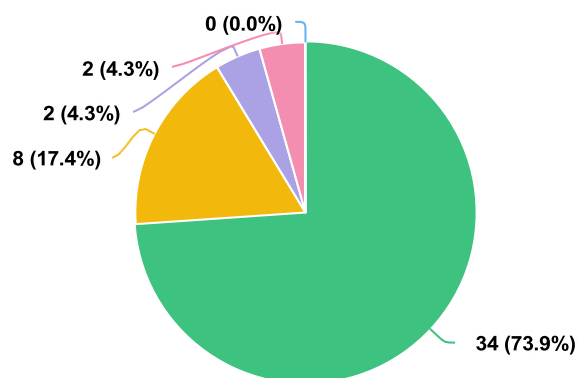
I would like a full consultation to be sent to everyone asking for views on a decent sized theatre/arena venue in the City Centre. This would also help with night time economy of the city; in turn making it feel safer for women

Screen Name Redacted

12/04/2025 09:37 PM

Have a rethink.

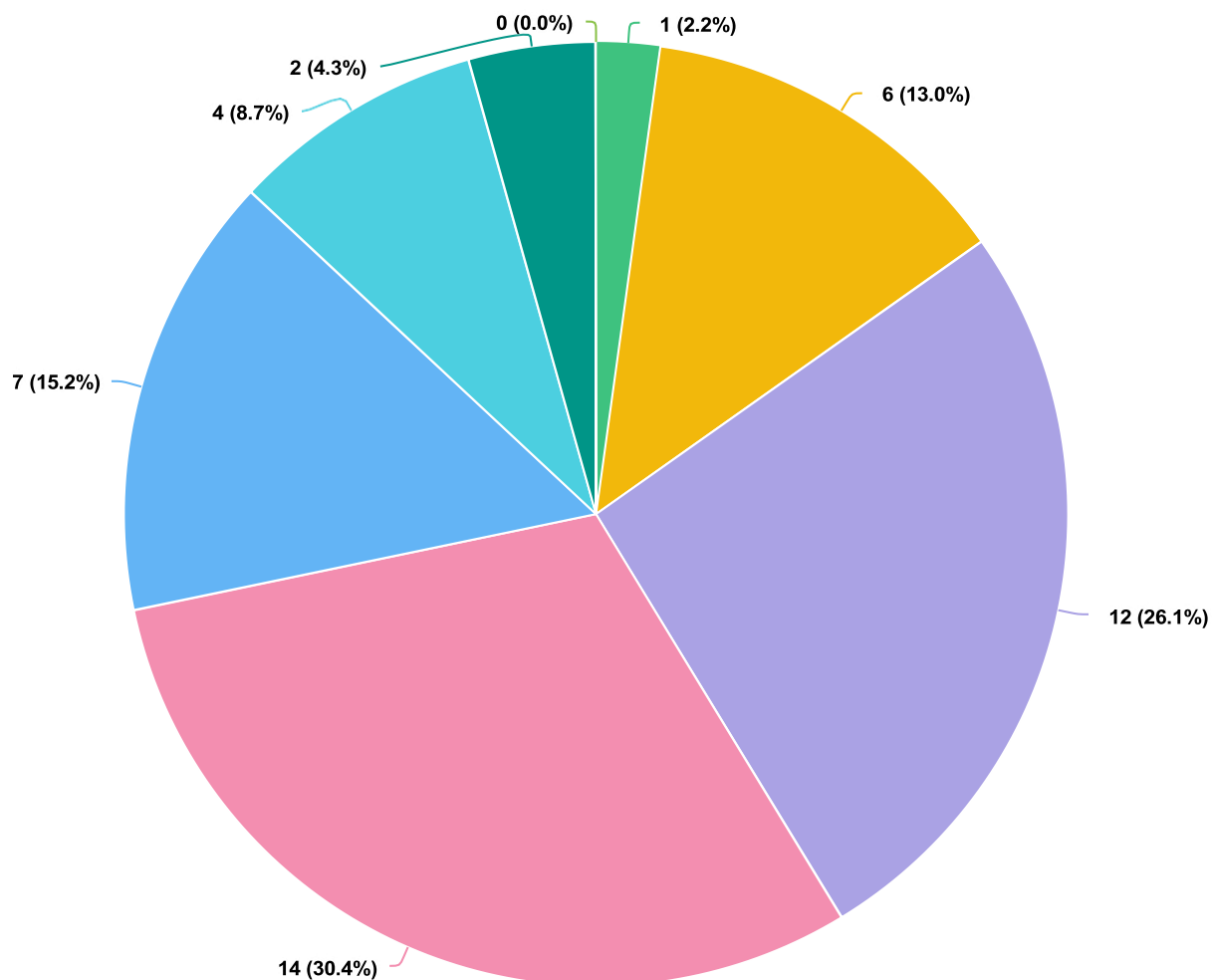
Optional question (24 response(s), 22 skipped)**Question type:** Essay Question

Q16 In what capacity are you answering?**Question options**

- ☐ (If you're answering on behalf of an organisation/ community group - please let us know which) ☐ I prefer not to say
- ☐ As a council member ☐ On behalf of an organisation/ community group ☐ As an individual

Mandatory Question (46 response(s))

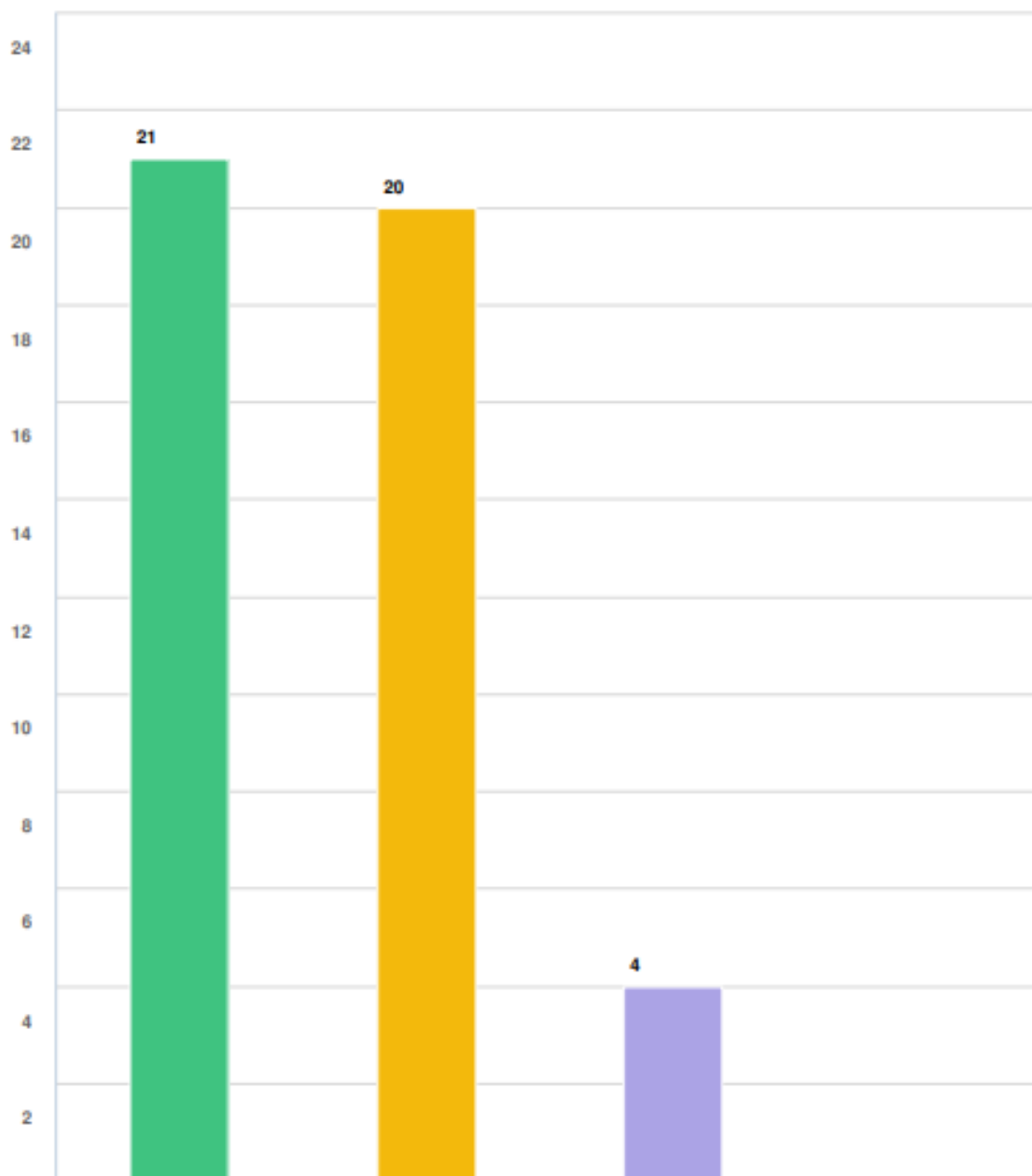
Question type: Dropdown Question

Q17 Which of the following age bands you fall into**Question options**

16 to 24 Prefer not to say 75+ 65 to 74 55 to 64 45 to 54 35 to 44 25 to 34

Optional question (46 response(s), 0 skipped)

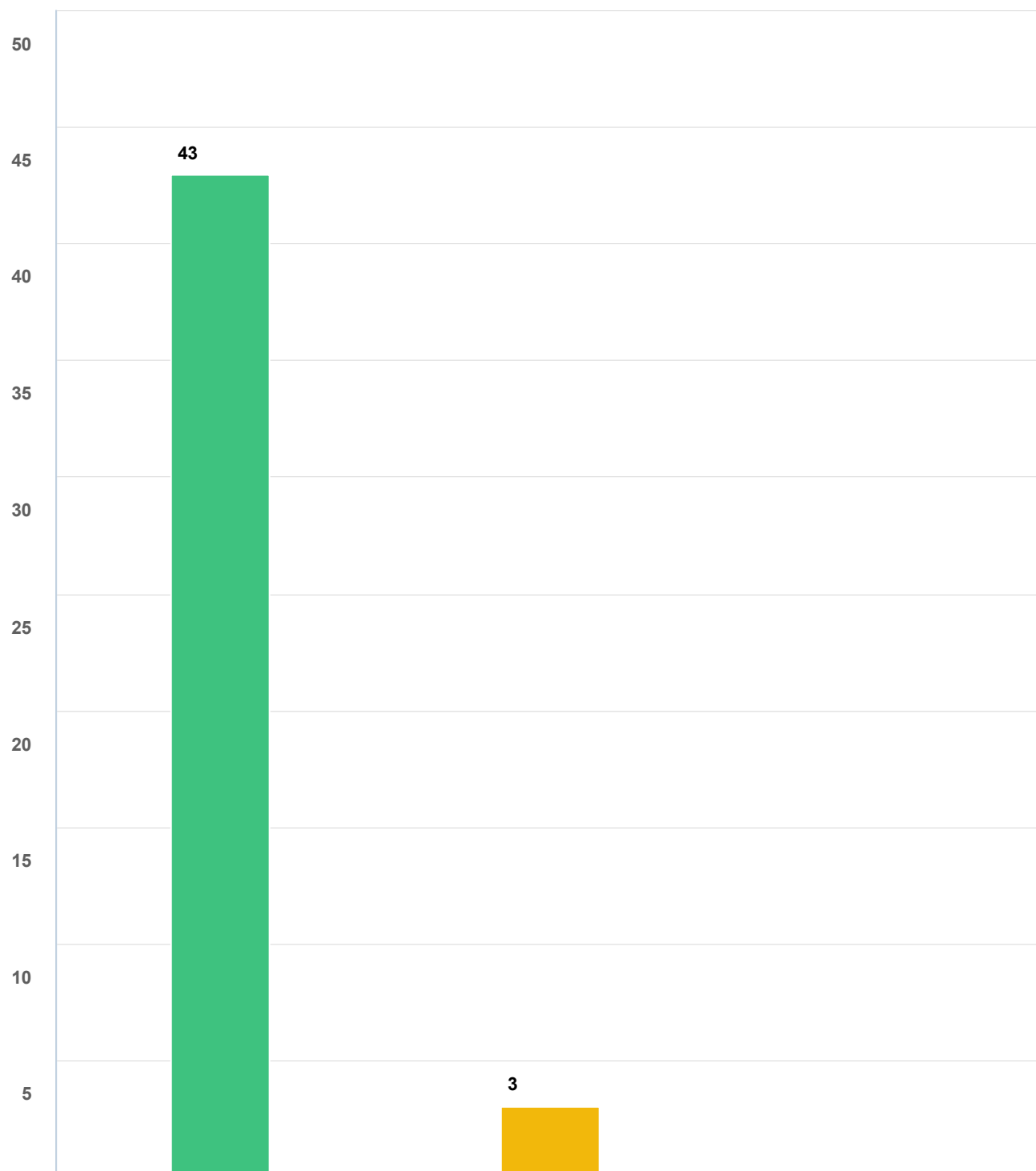
Question type: Dropdown Question

Q18 How do you describe your sex?**Question options**

☐ If you describe your sex in another way, please let us know ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Male ☐ Female

Optional question (45 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

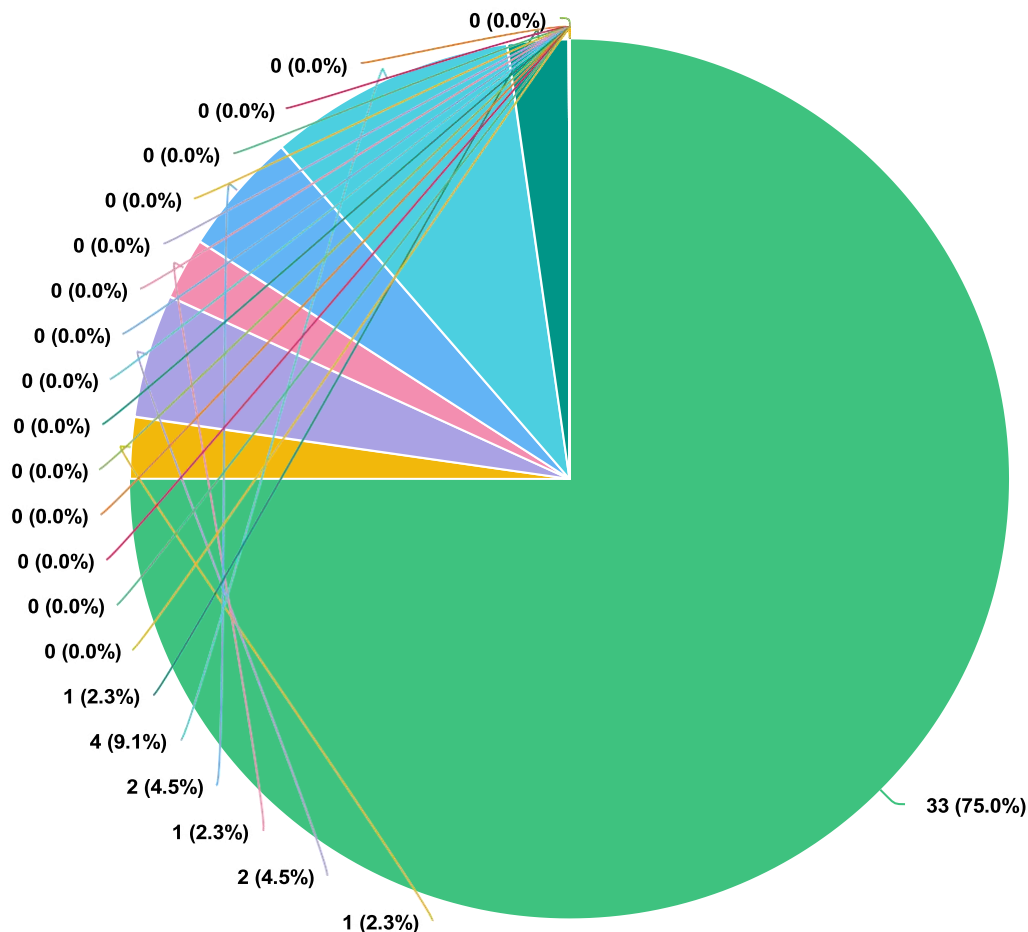
Q19 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?**Question options**

☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say ☒ Yes

Optional question (46 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q20 | What is your ethnic group?

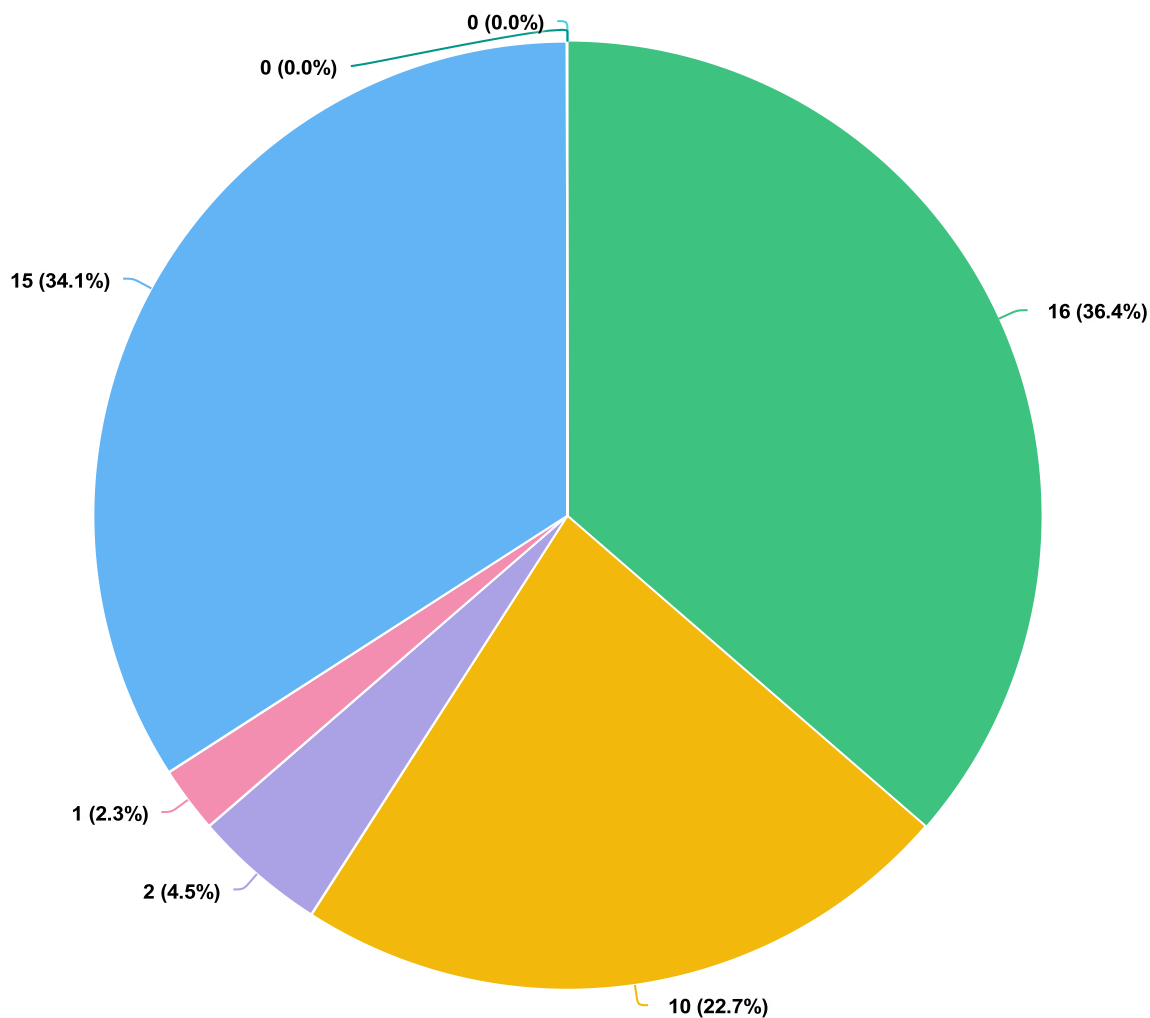


Question options

- Any other ethnic group
 ● Arab
 ● Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background
● Mixed/multiple ethnic groups White and Black African
 ● Mixed/multiple ethnic groups White and Black Caribbean
● Any other Black/African/Caribbean background
 ● Black/Black British Somali
 ● Black/Black British Caribbean
● Black/Black British African
 ● Asian/Asian British Chinese
 ● Asian/Asian British Vietnamese
● Asian/Asian British Nepali
 ● Asian/Asian British Bangladeshi
 ● Asian/Asian British Pakistani
● Asian/Asian British Indian
 ● White Roma
 ● White Gypsy or Irish Travelers
 ● Other (please specify)
● Prefer not to say
 ● Mixed/multiple ethnic groups White and Asian
 ● Any other Asian background
● Any other White background
 ● White Irish
 ● White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British

Optional question (44 response(s), 2 skipped)

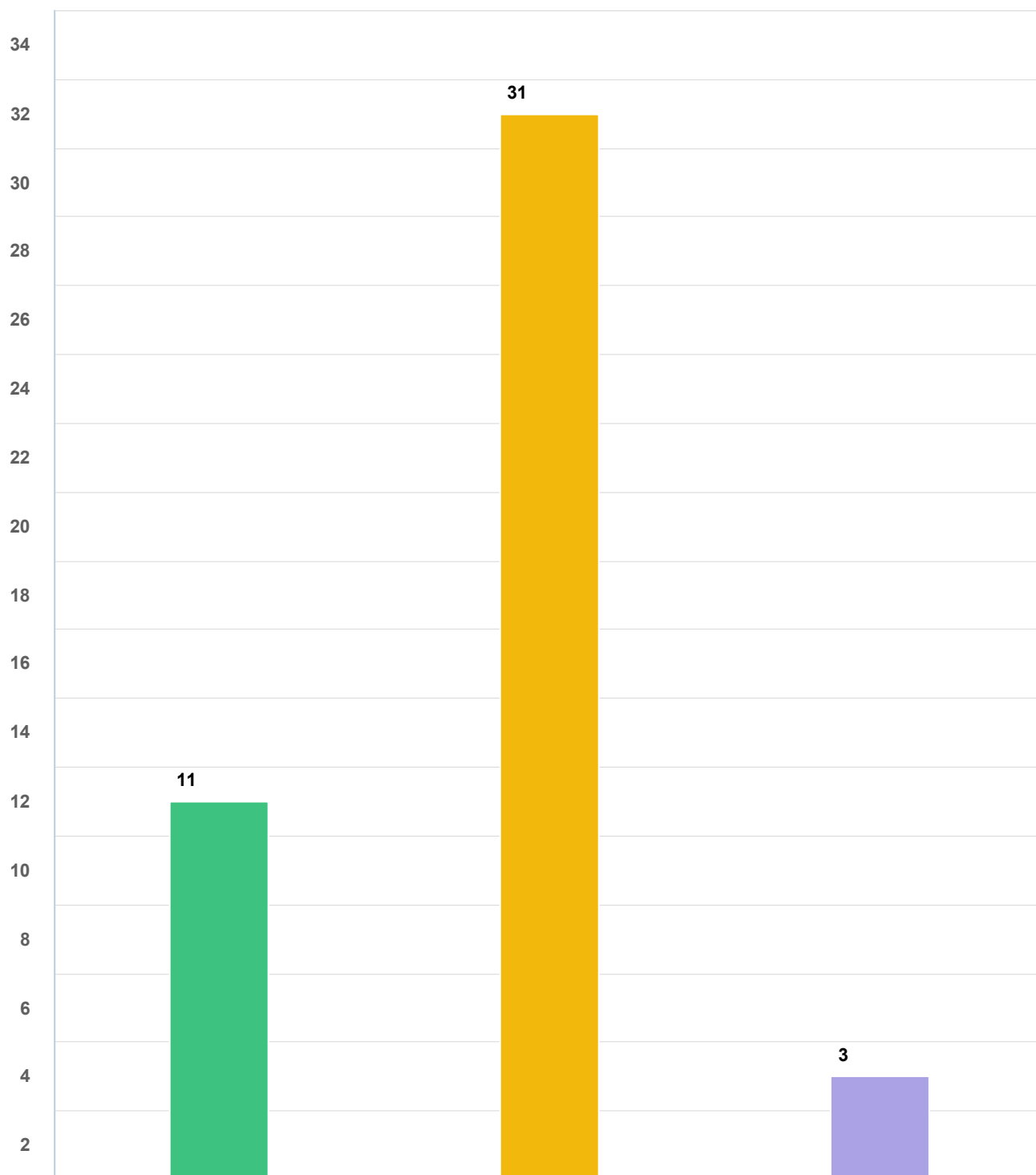
Question type: Dropdown Question

Q21 What is your employment status?**Question options**

● In part-time education ● In full-time education ● Retired ● Not in employment but actively looking
● Not in employment ● Working part time ● Working full time

Optional question (44 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Dropdown Question

Q22 Do you consider yourself to have a long-term health condition and/or disability?**Question options**

☐ Prefer not to say ☐ No ☐ Yes

Optional question (45 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Green Party Councillors response to the consultation and engagement strategy 3 December 2025

Purpose and objectives

1. Consultation Charter

The consultation does not explain the relationship of the proposed strategy to the Council's adopted **Consultation Charter**, which frames this work.

At the Councillor briefing on the draft strategy, Councillors were told that the Consultation Charter will be retained and run in parallel to the new strategy. This promises to be confusing for the public and staff.

Surely the Charter is the policy and we suggest that the two documents are integrated.

The Charter has a number of other principles wider than the Gunning principles, adopted by the Council, which should be respected.

2. The **purpose of the strategy is not clear**. It is written as though consultation and engagement is mainly a one-way street i.e. communities feeding *into* improving ECC's service development. The Strategy lacks any clear statement of aims and objectives in one place.

3. There is no explanation or example for how **community voices are integrated into decision - making processes** and how this complements the role of Councillors. There is no articulation of intention by the council for co-creation roles or supporting community-led solutions.

4. The **aims and objectives** of the strategy are not set out in one easy to understand section; (see point on confusing headings below)

Guiding principles

5. **Who to consult?** The draft strategy says nothing about priorities for groups to consult with, rather giving the impression that everybody should have a say on everything on every occasion. In some cases this might be appropriate in other cases those most affected should be the ones that are consulted most deeply. The Council's operating principles relating to this should be set out.

6. What to consult on:

As set out in the Consultation Charter the Council needs to be clear about the issues that will or won't be considering and if new or different ideas are or aren't invited. This could include a description of how the proposals were arrived at.

The Consultation Charter is not clear on who or how a consultation is initiated.

There is no comment on the role of evidence - quantitative or qualitative.

Budgets and other parameters should be shared with the public to enable transparency and inform decision making.

7. Ensuring the Council's position regarding any consultation is made clear.

The recent Grace Road disposal of public land consultation processes (last year and this year's) failed to set out the Council's position on why, as a Council, it was felt that disposal of the field was the best way forward. This lack of transparency, and allowing the developer to provide the consultation material, is very obviously not in line with the aspirations of the draft strategy document.

To ensure that this doesn't happen again, there needs to be statement about making the Council's position clear in relation to any engagement process, whether it is voluntary or a statutory consultation. If necessary there may need to be an independent or legal assessment of the consultation process where the consultation is a legal requirement.

Information and data

8. Setting out easy to understand facts and evidence: Where a consultation involves any technical, scientific or 'hard to understand' information, the Strategy should include something which commits the Council to providing plain English, evidence-based information that enables people to understand the consultation issues. Where technical words are needed they should be used and an explanation provided. For example when consulting on climate change the scientific facts should be shared as the base points.

9. Separating relevant and irrelevant feedback when summarising responses. Best practice is to be clear where responses are not relevant to the questions or consultation objectives, so that the consultation response summary only includes relevant responses. Irrelevant responses can be noted but should be described as such. For example, in Bath and North East Somerset, officer reports relating to a proposed Low Traffic Neighbourhood filtered out all responses that were based on factually incorrect assumptions. In Exeter, by contrast, the Heavitree LTN consultation reported all responses without any filter. This meant that the report showed fears of 'increased air pollution' as by far the biggest concern, yet it was known for certain that the trial would **not** give rise to increased air pollution ie because of the experience of LTNs elsewhere and local and data. The consultation report therefore gave an entirely false impression that air pollution was part of the LTN objectives (it wasn't) and that because so many people said it was their concern, it appeared to give validity to air pollution as a factual issue in relation to the LTN.

10. Better use of data from multiple sources. There's no description of how qualitative data i.e. feedback from the community and community organisations and others in the civic sector will be used and overlaid against other data for example the indices of multiple deprivation

Summarised drafting and unclear meaning

11. The draft strategy document is highly summarised which makes it hard to understand. Unfortunately, it reads in places like an internal document rather than an outward facing strategy document that the public can engage with.

Confusing and unclear headings. For example, the survey asks people to comment on aims and objectives but there is no heading for aims and objectives - instead we have a heading 'understand communities in Exeter' but without any explanation as to what the heading refers to ie is it an aim or objective or the strategy? The following heading 'Define scope and objectives' is very unclear and if it is an aim, it isn't expressed as such, in plain English. **Use of jargon** that will have no meaning for the lay person, for example 'rich data'.

Poorly drafted/highly summarised sentences that do not carry easy or clear meaning by themselves, eg

- “Introduce processes to create consistency, buy-in, and ownership” - processes where, by whom and for whom?
- “Openness and transparency in our work and processes”: openness and transparency by whom, towards who?
- Using ‘we’ in several places to refer to the City Council instead of saying ‘Exeter City Council’.

Methods of engagement

12. Inclusion & engagement methods.

The digital platform might be at the centre of engagement work, however there needs to be a comprehensive plan for community outreach to drive people to engage with a platform and any associated events. There should be a strategic overview kept to determine the level of engagement with the digital platform and other methods to assess their effectiveness (however that is to be defined).

Particular needs may require particular approaches e.g. engagement with young people, people with particular communication needs. There may need to be specialist people who are able to talk other languages or work with those who have complex communication needs. Robust equality impact assessment will be needed and developing a bank of approaches, tools and expertise appropriate to the nature and topic of the consultation will be needed.

The idea of community researchers and volunteers panels are a good ones. However that is not necessarily the same as community representation - or is cross section meant instead?

There needs to be clarity about community representation and support to enable representatives to feed back and engage with their wider community of interest. For example the Tenant Voice representative has to be reachable by all Tenants to be able to advocate for Council tenants - this process has improved over recent years.

13. Community Assemblies: If the council is looking to engage in complex issues, (and the challenges facing us as a society suggest that this will increasingly be the case), then it needs to be prepared to invest in community assembly type methodology. These methods enable a transparently - selected cross sample of the population (selection by transparent criteria) to be able to become informed in a meaningful way on ‘difficult issues’ and deliberate effectively on potential solutions. These are independently facilitated.

14. Consultation expertise:

Consultation and engagement should become embedded in the Council’s approach and be considered part of the transformation work. This should include a budget for consultation and engagement and a commitment set out in the strategy.

In order to be effective, there needs to be skilled people (may or may not be council officers) who are enabling engagement at face-to-face activities.

Officers with relevant skills and experience are likely to be needed to work with council officers who have a technical background in whatever the issue is but no expertise in consultation design, delivery and evaluation.

Consultations for a project may need to be planned over time so the methods and a ranges of approaches, as needed, should be set out as the start of a project.

15. Outdated engagement guidance on disposal of public land

It is noted that the Council may be required, by law, to use outdated methods for statutory consultations. For example: the disposal of public land has guidance dating from the Local Government Act 1972¹, which *'require a local authority wishing to dispose of open space under those powers to advertise its intentions in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks and to consider objections.'* This cannot be considered a reasonable basic response in 2025 and onwards, given the effective collapse of local print newspapers in Exeter and beyond. The strategy should contain at a minimum a basic level of proposed advertisement methods to consultations that are a minimum alternative for statutory consultations and at best consider if any other approaches are required.

Civil Society Covenant

16. If the Council is serious about the Civil Society covenant then it needs to take **active steps to recognise the voluntary, community, and social enterprise and co-operative sectors**. It is not clear if the definition includes other public bodies and businesses within the scope of the civil society, although we would not understand that to be the case having looked at the Government Website on the Civil Society Covenant.

17. Civil society is commonly understood to comprise community organisations, voluntary sector organisations and social enterprise - including co-operatives. There is currently **no mechanism in place to enable dialogue - that leads to action - between the council and these sectors of civil Society on an equal and partnership basis**. The Council has set up the Place Board and now the Exeter Partnership, (which is on an invitation - only basis) and thus does not recognise representatives from the range of civil society organisations to be able to engage with.

18. **Civil society infrastructure is weak**. There needs to be transparent and fair processes for organisations to be able to participate in mechanisms and consultations. and report back to those who aren't involved. Meetings need to be transparent, with plans, reports, minutes, etc publicly available.

19. **Petitions are an important part of the democratic process**. The survey does not cover how the Council might improve its petitioning system. There have been many petitions received by the Council sent to committees, but some have had no clear response or action taken as a result.

20. If the Council is looking to develop a **consultation and inclusion culture across the city** then it needs to be looking at how the strategy can be used to build this across organisations, both public, civil society and businesses, not just within the Council.

This needs to cover all scales and types of engagement but always with the goal of ensuring that diverse and often excluded voices are heard and involved in creating, or at the least having a chance to have meaningful input to, solutions and decisions that affect them. For example a community organisation might discuss an issue at its AGM and wish to share those discussion outcomes with the council. How could the Council accept their input as valid feedback ie because it is initiated by another organisation and not by a council consultation?

21. Being clear on the difference between collaboration and consultation. The only incidence of the word 'collaboration' in the strategy document is under the key principles heading, with the box 'Collaboration: **"We strive to always involve diverse stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, and community organisations."** This is not what collaboration means and this text highlights the lack of clarity around whether this Strategy is meant to be covering multi-actor collaboration ie a type of engagement where different parties work together to achieve something that they couldn't achieve at all, or as well, working alone. We suggest that the Strategy should have a separate section on the Council's position regarding collaboration with other organisations.

22. The **Councils Partnership Register** could be published/be readily available so that those who are not involved know who to contact if they are interested. This would aid transparency and accountability. This may seem tangential to consultation but partnership working is a logical extension of engagement and involvement.