

Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation Strategy Consultation

Public and stakeholder feedback

June 2024



1 Introduction and Methodology

At the end of February 2024 Shropshire Council invited members of the public and stakeholders to have their say on a draft Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation strategy for Shropshire (2024 to 2028). The draft strategy describes the critical importance of housing as more than just shelter, emphasising the importance of providing more homes that meet various housing needs, especially for older, vulnerable, and disabled individuals.

The draft strategy focuses on supporting people to live independently in accommodation suited to their needs. It aligns with The Shropshire Plan 2022 to 2025 and its objective to promote healthy living.

Shropshire Council recognises the current challenges of housing supply and the need for accommodation for vulnerable populations. The draft strategy advocates for additional homes to be provided, including 'move-on' housing for people taking a step into independence, and supported housing schemes targeting areas of highest need. There is also a strong focus on working in partnership with housing providers locally to focus on the prevention of homelessness.

The consultation on the draft strategy was widely promoted to encourage the participation of as many people in Shropshire as possible. The consultation was shared via Shropshire Council's newsroom, through the 'Get Involved' pages on the Council's website, through local newsletters and mailings and through more targeted invitations to participate issued to stakeholders.

Despite communications, response rates were low. The consultation period was extended to try to increase participation but interest in the draft Strategy was not significant at a time when other high-profile consultations by Shropshire Council may have been attracting attention. With the consultation period extended to allow additional communications, the eventual open period was for just over 13 weeks from 28 February 2024 to the 31 May 2024.

In total 43 consultation responses were received. The feedback is set out within this report and it will inform the recommendations presented to Cabinet when the draft Strategy is presented for final approval.

The report is structured into the following sections:

- Section 1 (this introduction) provides a description of the survey background and methodology.
- Section 2 outlines the profile of consultation respondents.
- Section 3 covers the overall feedback and detail of the comments provided.
- Section 4 provides a brief summary of key findings and conclusion of the report.

2 Profile of Respondents

42 respondents completed the online consultation survey and 1 submitted a written consultation response. The written consultation responses have been integrated into analysis of the comments within the survey. Demographic data was only collected through the survey, but this provides important information to help Shropshire Council understand the profile of respondents and whether any feedback has been missed from key groups or respondent types.

The type of respondent is shown in **Figure 1**. The chart illustrates that 49% of the respondents described themselves as individuals or members of the public and 19% as representatives of a local group or organisation. 33% (14) did not specify. The written consultation response was from a member of the public. Many thanks are extended to the organisational respondents. Those who were happy to be identified included:

- Positive Steps for Shropshire
- Jigsaw Community
- Sight Loss Shropshire

Three of the other organisational responses were linked to local government, one a housing provider and one a representative of a local business.

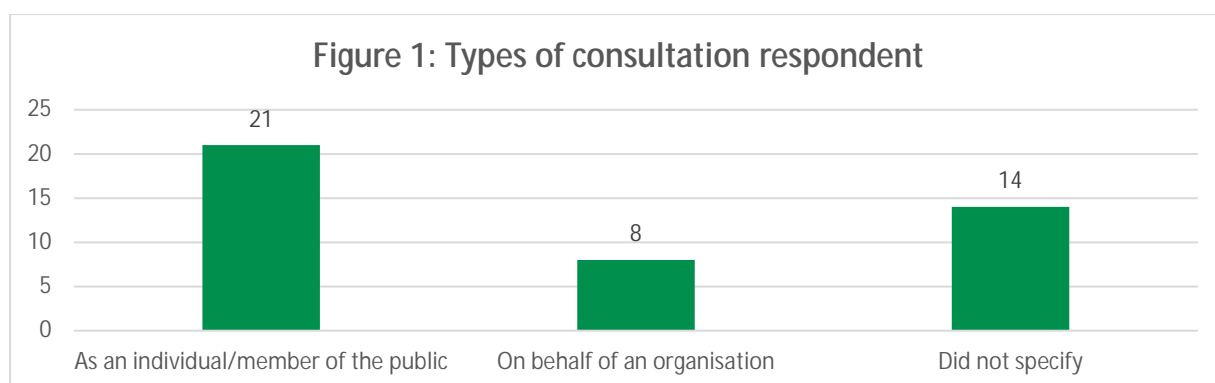


Figure 2 displays that more women responded to the consultation (50%, 9) compared to men (28%, 5). This pattern is seen within most, but not all, of Shropshire Council's consultations. Research suggests that women are more likely to respond when a consultation response is submitted on behalf of a household. 22% (4) preferred not to say/provide a gender. 24 survey respondents did not answer the question. Based on these small numbers it is difficult to draw too many conclusions from this gender analysis. In the same way, only 18 survey respondents completed the question asking for age group. The responses are shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 2: Gender of consultation respondents

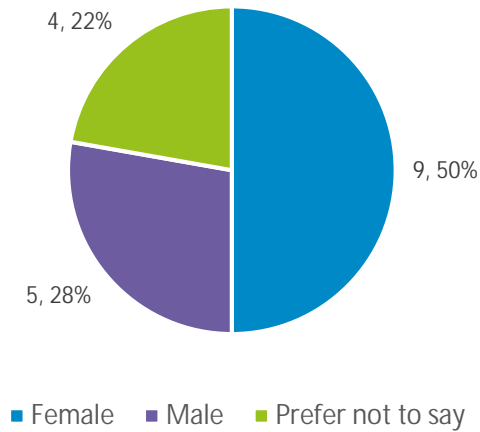
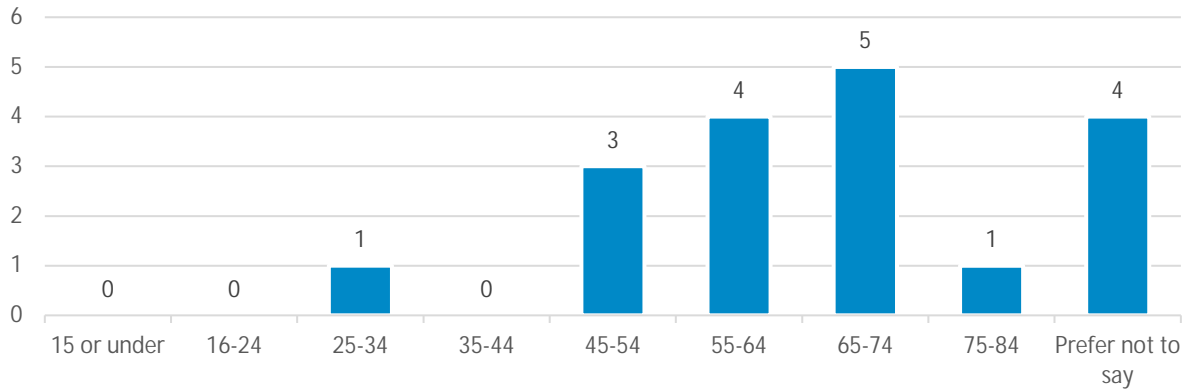


Figure 3: Age group of consultation respondents



The survey respondents were asked a few questions about their housing status and needs. The first question asked ‘Does your household own or rent accommodation?’. The results are shown in **Figure 4** below. 13 of the 42 survey respondents are homeowners, either with a mortgage or through outright ownership (72% of all those who responded to the question). As Figure 4 illustrates, the responses to the consultation were not necessarily from those in need of housing, although it should be noted that many people did not complete this section of the survey on personal characteristics.

Figure 5 illustrates the response when survey respondents were asked ‘Within the next 5 years, do you anticipate anyone in your household making use of any of the following types of support or accommodation?’ The response to this question highlights that a proportion of the respondents (who could select multiple options) are looking ahead to consider future accommodation needs. Support with aids and adaptations and independent supported living schemes were the top types of support identified by the respondents.

Figure 4: Consultation respondents by household type

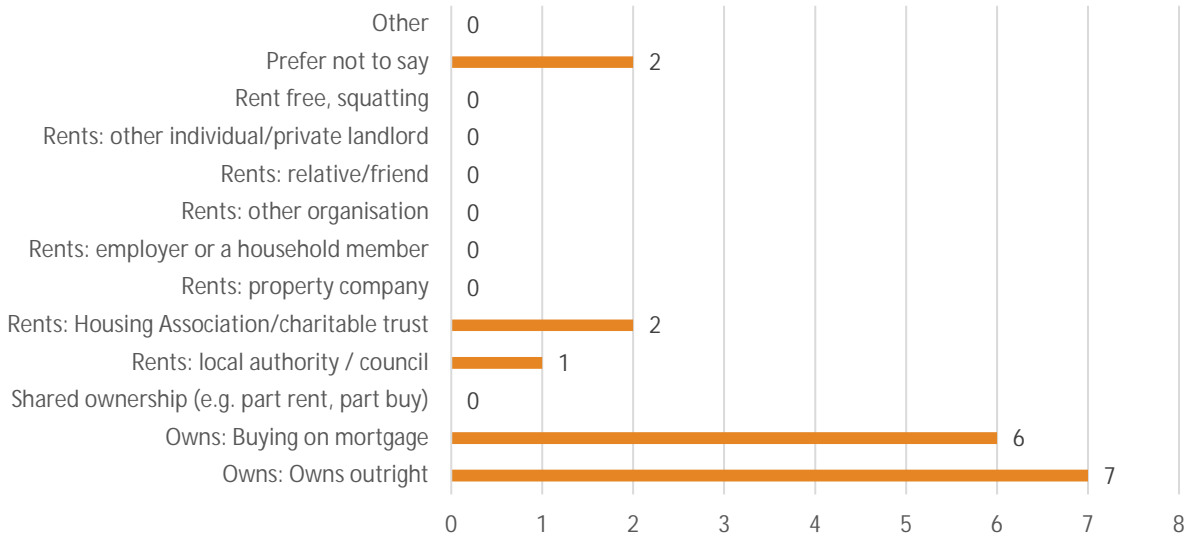


Figure 5: Consultation respondents by housing needs (next 5 years)



The age of some of the survey respondents could have been behind some of the thoughts to the future. To check needs of the sample further, the respondents were asked if they have any long-standing illness or disability that limits their daily activity. 4 survey respondents answered 'yes' and 10 said 'no'. 4 preferred not to say and 24 skipped the question. The needs of the survey sample, when described in more detail included mobility concerns, vision and social or behavioural needs (for example associated with autism, attention deficit disorder or Asperger's syndrome). Respondents were given the opportunity to add a comment to describe any of their own needs in relation to the information set out within the draft Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation Strategy. There were 5 comments in total, all shown below:

- *“More bungalows needed to help people be self independent.”*
- *“My husband has mobility issues.”*
- *“Being put in what was sheltered housing has had terrible consequences on my life. I moved in my 30s, and they didn't cope lost job opportunities and have been bullied for over 18 years. Not supported for 7 years.”*
- *“I currently Care for my Adult son with Learning Disabilities, he is currently working with Adult Social Care towards finding suitable Supported Living in the local area.....I have no idea from this draft how this change in Strategy will affect him.”*
- *“I need to live close to the public transport network.”*

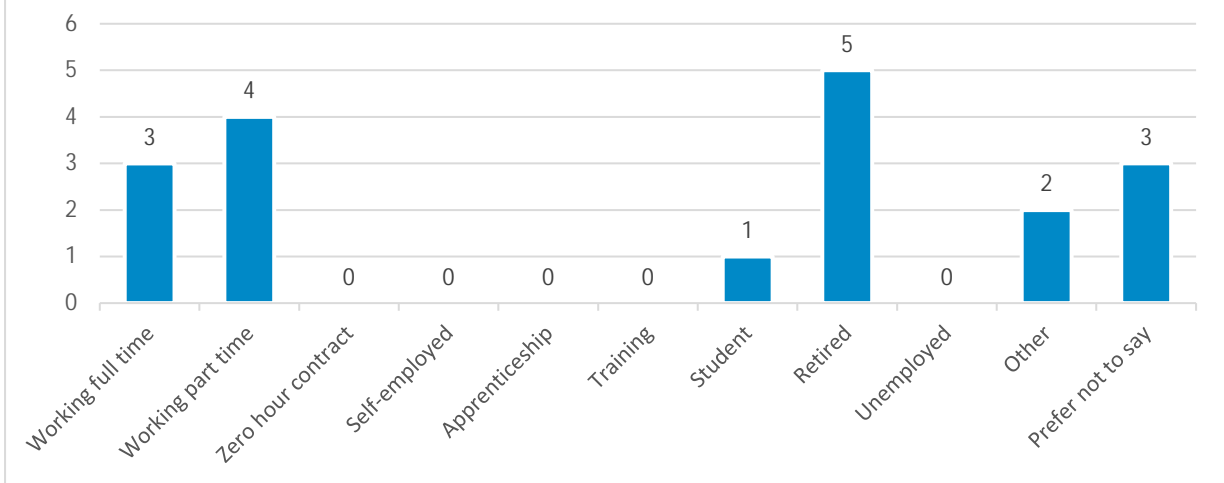
Survey respondents were also asked if they are serving members of the armed forces, veterans or a family member of a veteran or serving member. This information can help Shropshire Council in understanding, and meeting the needs of, those linked to the armed forces. The response highlighted that 1 respondent is a serving member of the armed forces and 1 respondent is a family member of a veteran or serving member of the armed forces.

In every public consultation Shropshire Council works to understand the ethnic background and religion of respondents. This is important information and can illustrate if people of different backgrounds and characteristics have, or have not, had their views considered in the decision-making process. In this instance the sample was very small and it is too difficult to draw too many conclusions from the data but the responses suggest that those survey respondents within the same who chose to complete the questions are predominantly white (British; Irish; Welsh) Christians. As a result it is recommended that the feedback is used with some caution since it is unlikely the feedback reflects a full diversity of different needs from people with different characteristics. Despite this, the strategy itself and the supporting Equality and Social Inclusion Health Impact Assessment, highlight the need to consider potential impact on people with different protected characteristics and those who may be vulnerable and in more need of housing support.

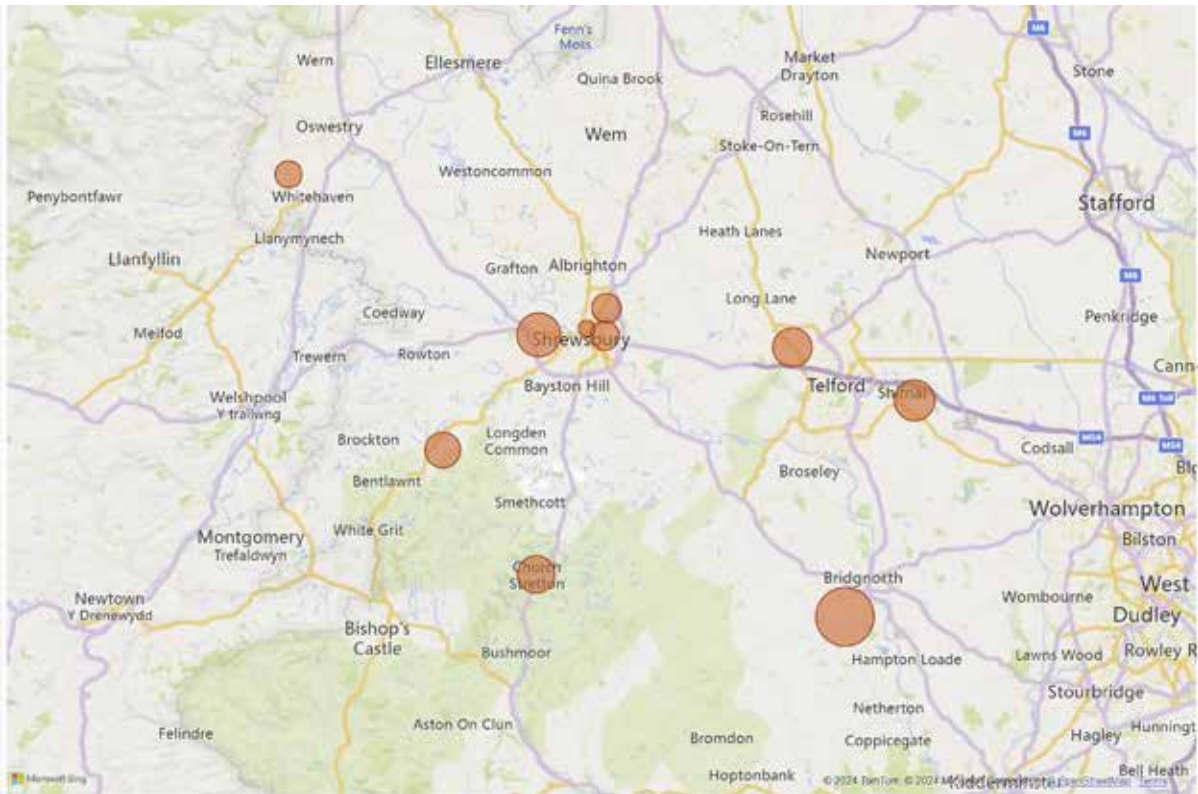
Figure 6 displays the employment/ daily lives of survey respondents. Only 15 of the 43 respondents provided information, and of those 5 are retired, 7 work either full time or part time 1 is a student and 2 selected 'other'. 3 preferred not to say.

The last question within the demographics section of the online consultation survey, asked about home location. This is included to allow Shropshire Council to understand if responses are representative of the whole county or limited to certain geographical areas. Due to the small sample, the **Map 1** shown on the following page, only shows approximate locations (based on partial postcodes). This prevents anyone from a small respondent sample from being identified. As the map illustrates, despite the low numbers there is a good spread of response from the whole county although the north and north east of the county did not attract any respondents happy to provide a partial postcode (some of the 24 respondents who did not wish to respond may live in other locations).

Figure 6: Employment/daily lives of consultation respondents



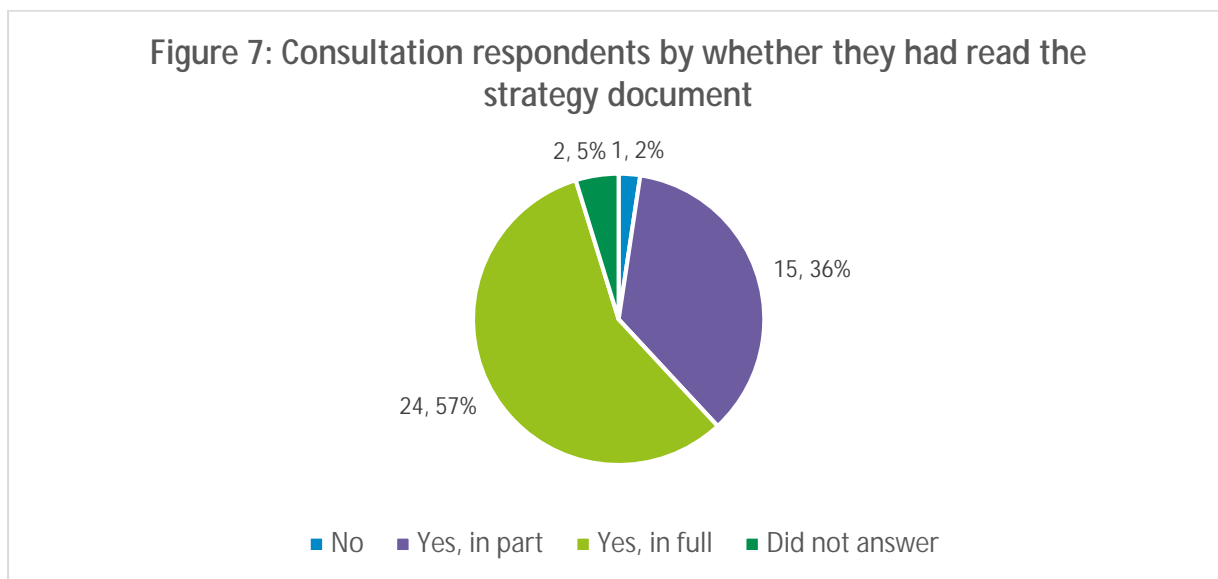
Map 1 Approximate locations of survey respondents



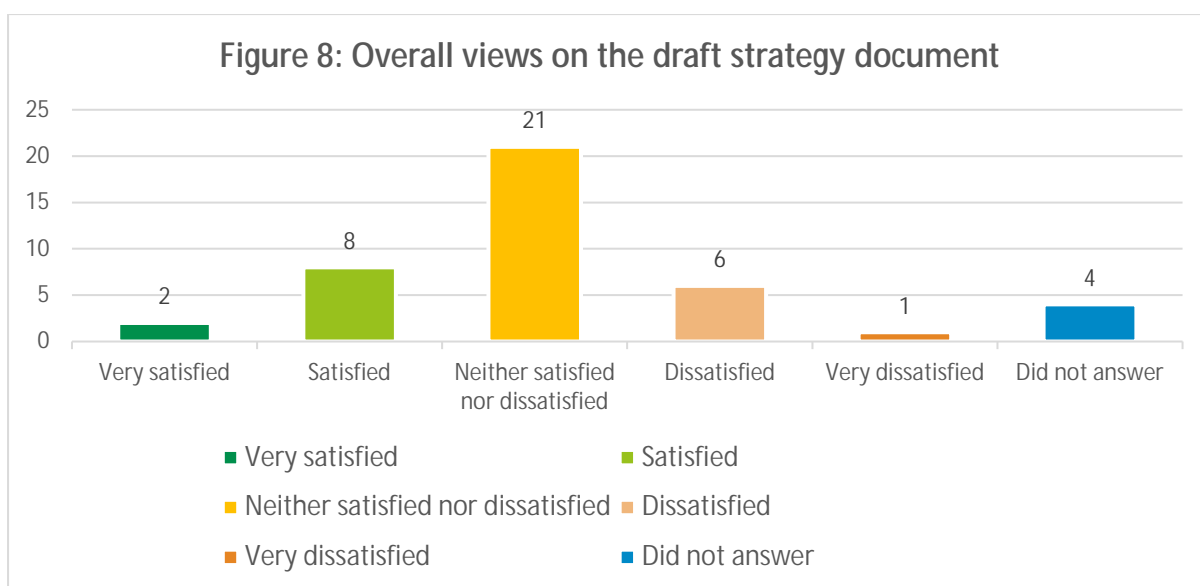
The next section of the report considers the feedback provided by the 43 consultation respondents related to the content of the draft Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation Strategy.

3 Overall survey results and feedback

To check understanding of the proposed strategy, the 42 survey respondents were asked if they had read the strategy document, provided on the Council's 'Get Involved' webpage. The results, shown in **Figure 7** below, illustrate that only 1 respondent had not read the draft strategy, 24 had read it in full and 15 in part. This suggests that most respondents have a good understanding of the aim, objectives and approaches set out.



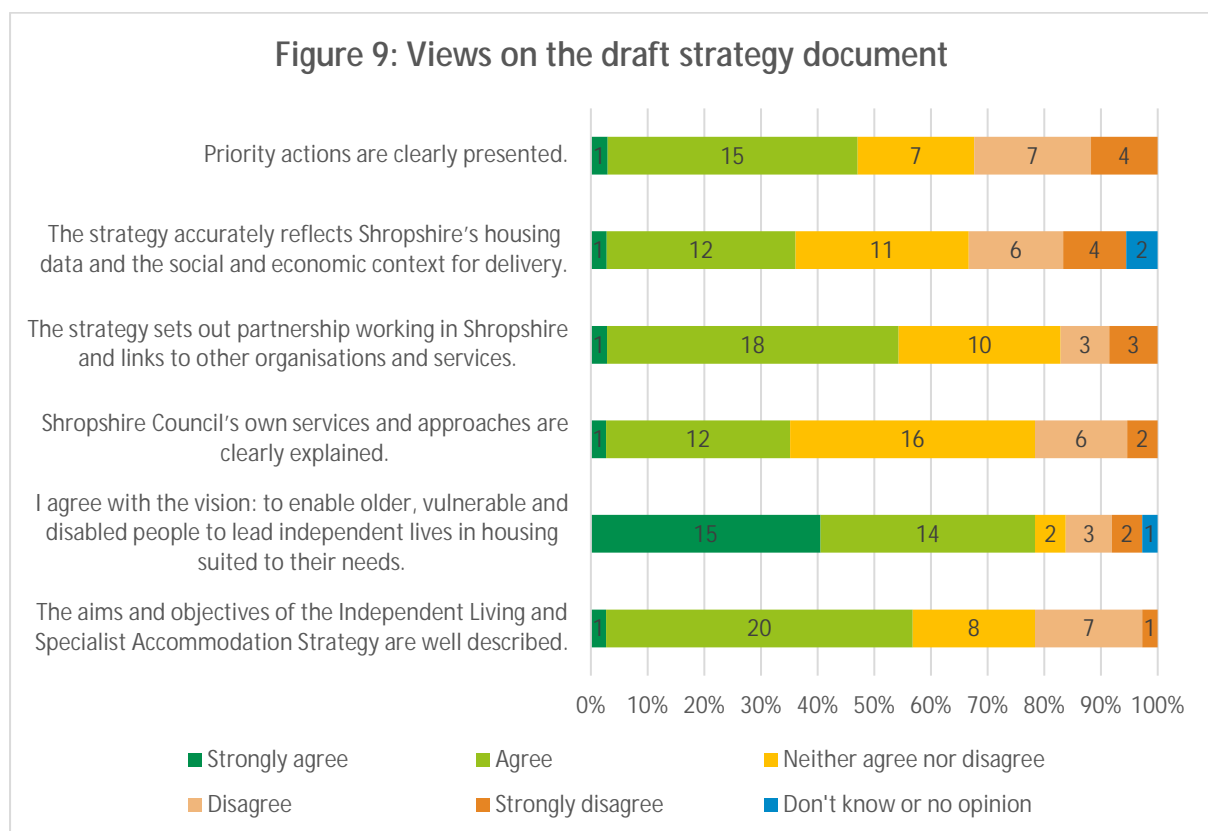
Consultation respondents were asked how satisfied they felt, overall, with the draft strategy and the feedback is shown in **Figure 8**. **More respondents felt neutrally about the draft strategy compared to those with a view (21, 50%).** 24% (10) were very satisfied or satisfied and 17% (7) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. 4 did not answer the question.



To understand the overall feedback to a greater degree, all survey respondents were asked for their views on 6 statements about the strategy:

- The aims and objectives of the Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation Strategy are well described.
- I agree with the vision: to enable older, vulnerable and disabled people to lead independent lives in housing suited to their needs.
- Shropshire Council’s own services and approaches are clearly explained.
- The strategy sets out partnership working in Shropshire and links to other organisations and services.
- The strategy accurately reflects Shropshire’s housing data and the social and economic context for delivery.
- Priority actions are clearly presented.

The results are presented in Figure 9. As the chart shows, the feedback was predominantly very positive. On average 15 of the respondents agreed with each of the statements. The feedback was most positive about the vision to enable older, vulnerable and disabled people to lead independent lives in housing suited to their needs. Although predominantly positive in nature, there were some who were concerned that the priority actions were not clearly presented or that the draft strategy doesn’t quite reflect the social and economic context for delivery. Some of the comments to other questions, explored within the following pages, suggest that the diverse and high level of needs of people with different economic characteristics and health needs are the underlying cause for some of these concerns.



There were 3 questions within the survey which help explain this to a greater concern covering: likes, dislikes and any gaps in the draft strategy.

Survey respondents were asked 'Is there anything you don't like?(Please add comments if you are dissatisfied with the draft strategy document overall, or if you selected disagree/strongly disagree for any of the 6 points listed above). There were 17 comments provided (1 wrote 'nothing' to express there wasn't anything they didn't like). Due to the small number, all 16 points are provided below. The comments have been grouped and appear to fall into 4 main areas: suggestions for changes, comments about meeting need, economic issues and other concerns. Some of the other comments suggest a general dissatisfaction with council policy and approaches which may be influencing feedback on this strategy:

Suggestions

- *"It would be good to see Employment as more of a central focus to the strategy."*
- *"It has not included the issue with allocations and the strategy hasn't taken that into account."*
- *"18.1 A person who is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse has a priority need under homelessness legislation (irrespective of vulnerability) - this makes it seem like DA is not a vulnerability which is wrong. 18.4 The Whole Housing Approach is considered more suitable for individuals experiencing domestic violence - this needs changing to say domestic abuse."*

Comments about meeting needs

- *"Equal focus needed on housing for adults with learning disabilities there is a high number of individuals who could receive support if only there was housing available."*
- *"As someone who lives with Cerebral Palsy and quite active within the social care arena, there are a number of items, that in my opinion need attention."*
- *"Very global and non-specific putting all 'vulnerable' groups in one strategy with potentially very different housing needs. Differences need to be considered"*
- *"Not enough focus on the housing needs of those people who are severely impacted by learning disability and neurodivergence. In fact, so overlooked are they in the strategy they didn't even have their own blue heading - just merged into the section under physical disability. This is a terrible oversight of their needs."*
- *"Putting neurodiverse and people with mental health in retirement communities can lead to conflict and lack of support, sheltered housing is barely working. Younger people need different support than the elderly."*
- *"Main focus is on the elderly population, as usual the SEND population are forgotten- their needs are not reflected at all in any way in this document. There is not a single clear action on how any of this will be achieved or how this will improve SEND QOL."*

Wider community needs and economic challenges

- *"The policy focuses on the vulnerable, not the community at large. There is a need for affordable housing in general. By focusing on a client subset, the policy effectively marginalises them and thus their needs."*
- *"It assumes that only people who are financially challenged are vulnerable. You are also vulnerable if you own your own home. You can only move to appropriate accommodation if it is available. No bungalows are being built because of the obsession with housing density. The folly of this obsession has been shown in Birmingham where most of the sixties high rise blocks have now been demolished. We are people and all of us need a home not just a roof over our heads."*
- *"It starts with the basic flaw that all vulnerable people are economically challenged. This is fundamentally not true. There are many people who own their own home but are very vulnerable due to ill health or old age and have no support network. They too need help to downsize to suitable accommodation. Not financial help but the opportunity to*

downsize to a property that better suits their needs. No-one is building these types of properties that are completely independent and available to all age groups. The only properties of this type on the market are linked to other schemes and limit resale possibilities at a later date. Many of these schemes just prey on the vulnerable to extract funds that would otherwise be passed onto the family. It's a national disgrace."

Other concerns

- *"1) I suspect this document is restricted to housing development to be commissioned by SC and that there will be no similar commitment to property on the open market. The Council's Policy needs to be explicit with regard to Climate Action and housing supply appropriate to need, despite national government backing the developers to increase profit margins. 2)References in The Shropshire Plan until 2025 are hollow: references to BETTER HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES & IMPROVED WASTE COLLECTION! As our pavements are constantly dug up by competing Communication Companies & sub - contractors of STW monitor sewers surrounding our homes, I fear being flooded by sewage each time it rains! So I don't feel safe and happy in my community. 3) 6.2 Not ambitious enough. Push forward on ON - SHORE WIND GENERATION. See LAWRENCE WESTON COMMUNITY 4) Definitions - what is DISPERSED MOVE - ON unit? 6.3 and 6.4 What does "accessible" housing mean? Wheel - chair accessible? 7.2 and 7.3 Ambiguous. Concerned that this is not a long term plan. For people suffering Dementia, they need to be familiar with their 'home', otherwise they will reject the accommodation. It is cruel to move them once their symptoms become evident."*
- *"It's quite a lot of waffle."*
- *"The draft just gives a general outline and doesn't go into enough detail of what it will actually mean for the vulnerable groups of people mentioned."*
- *"It's all very well putting verbose wording on paper but from previous targets and aims that the council have failed to meet, it means nothing."*
- *"There are no specifics, the council would rather throw £17m at preparatory work towards a road that will contaminate Shrewsbury's water supply. Prioritising needs to be done & it hasn't been for quite a few years."*

In order to understand if survey respondents were pleased with any elements of the draft strategy they were asked 'Is there anything you particularly like about the draft strategy?' There were 12 comments in total and all are shown below.

- *"Clear and short enough."*
- *"It caters for a broad spectrum of people."*
- *"Provides positive options for those most affected by rough sleeping and inadequate accommodation."*
- *"It is a very good and worthwhile strategy and I agree with what it sets out to achieve. It is, however, limited to only those people who are both vulnerable and economically challenged. It needs to encompass everyone who is vulnerable."*
- *"The idea of more accessible homes being built."*
- *"The focus on early intervention and / or prevention."*
- *"I am pleased that this area is being looked at. I do feel that housing for vulnerable populations should be prioritised and I agree that preventative work is crucially important to avoid the impact of a crisis on individuals and to avoid the damage done to individuals as a result of a crisis- I work in Mental Health and there is a great need for more specialist accommodation."*
- *"Strongly agree need to support those with enduring mental health problems. Support based on need."*
- *"4.1 Please target the HIGHEST NEED - young people with the most challenging behaviour and mental health, however, accommodation alone will not achieve these*

young people living closer to their families. 4.2 I agree with more effort to achieve COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS with statutory & voluntary organisations to support vulnerable population. EXAMPLE: Could ALD walk the dogs of the elderly? 4.7 share approaches with comparator authorities e.g. BRISTOL - LAWRENCE WESTON COMMUNITY & WIND GENERATOR 6.1 accessible & energy - efficient housing design to result in REDUCED ENERGY & FUEL consumption.”

- “Why are you obsessed with immigrants when so many of our own have no decent place to live?”
- “Lots of things you are only seeking to do.”
- “That this has been at least drafted, however, we know there are no funds for it.”

The third open comment question asked respondents if there are any gaps in the draft strategy. This will allow changes to be made, based on the public and stakeholder feedback, before a final version is presented to Cabinet for approval. There were 19 comments highlighting gaps, and these are grouped into themes and shown below. These include service and/or involvement gaps, Special Educational Needs, disabilities and mental health, economic issues and affordability and other concerns:

Service and Involvement Gaps

- “As a sight loss charity we find that many of our beneficiaries wish for a space to test out assistive day-to-day equipment (e.g. talking scales, liquid level indicators etc.). No such place is open to the public in Shropshire. The Independent Living Centre in Telford is a very good example of how to support visually impaired people staying independent in their homes.”
- “You have not mentioned the role of the Shropshire Council Shropshire Occupational Therapy team who will be involved with recommending the adaptations.”
- “I am not sure if this strategy refers to the entire population or is restricted to those who require rented housing? If it refers to the whole population: I am soon to retire and I am dreading the thought of being confined to my cold, damp home 24 hours per day. The bus pass is what I am looking forward to, as I hope the rides will be warm. As a single person, I worked hard to purchase a house, which when sold will not provide enough capital to purchase a small, energy efficient, single storey home. Having cared for my mother before she lost her mobility to Dementia resulting in life in a care home, I am determined to live independently in my own home. In the limited new bungalows on the market, I am disappointed to see the use of log burners and/or air - source heat pumps without a source of renewable energy. The role of the MARCHES ENERGY AGENCY is missing in this strategy. There is mention of grants, but in my opinion MEA needs to be encouraging communities to generate renewable energy. Perhaps the SC has a role to promote Collaborative Working between the developers and MEA. There are more vulnerable and diverse people than before, but how do we propose to meet the challenges in an innovative way? Care homes combined with a Nursery (Early Years Provision).”
- “11.4 doesn't mention DA but is shown in figure below as 3rd main reason for homelessness main duty. Appendix 2 - action plan - DA needs to be talked about throughout rather than just its own section e.g. first point doesn't take into account those that are unable to access online services due to being monitored - it is not safe for everyone to access things online. All policies and procedures need to be looked at through a DA lense for our DAHA accreditation so should be mentioned throughout the action plan. Action plan page 4 - last point - Sanctuary Scheme assessors should be included in this. The safety, both physical and emotional, needs to be thought about throughout.”

Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Mental Health

- *“SEND.”*
- *“Learning disability housing particularly supported living.”*
- *“Yes, the needs of those people who have high level needs in relation to ASD and LD.”*
- *“Yes, there are a scheme called HOLD - Home ownership for people with long term disabilities which is not offered in Shropshire but has changed many lives. Why is it not offered here? Also why is it assumed that older people wants to live in a flat where they can't keep a pet. Pets are known to reduce anxieties and loneliness...”*
- *“Neurodiverse and mental health and physical disability villages, change the entasis of elderly and disability as these schemes can't always adapt from being housing for the elderly, leading to neglect and bullying. Staff not coping with needs of younger community.”*
- *“It doesn't discuss the issue with the latest Homepoint update and their tags- as a wheelchair user under 55 I haven't been able to bid on anything since the update, this is because most often that may be wheelchair accessible or adaptable are not tagged so I can bid on them or it won't let me bid on over 55 properties despite me having a medical need, also there is an issue with some of the landlords such as [provider name removed for confidentiality] who refuse to provide their sheltered wheelchair accessible flats to anyone under 55 for any reason. This means adapted and adaptable properties are being given to those who don't need them the most. This is leaving me and many others at risk of homelessness due to unsuitable accommodation. So, whilst I agree we need more suitable accommodation how, with a system such as Homepoint, will you ensure they go to those that really need them? Most the young disabled people I know are living in unsuitable accommodation because often an elderly person who may not have a mobility need or may only need level access is being allocated a property that may be more suitable for a wheelchair user as there is less options for them, disability should be prioritised over age.”*

Economic issues and affordability

- *“The word 'employment' only appears 3 times in the strategy. The Section titled 'Shropshire's Vision' and 'Early intervention and Prevention' make no specific reference to the importance of stable employment.”*
- *“See above. How about affordable rental housing for young working families?”*
- *“Yes. No consideration from vulnerable people to buy appropriate accommodation for themselves. Help those who can to help themselves. It would save money in the long term.”*
- *“Yes. You need to consider those individuals who are vulnerable but not necessarily economically challenged. Just because you own your own house doesn't mean that you don't need help and support. Please look for an extra scheme alongside that already proposed to help those property-owning vulnerable people to help themselves.”*

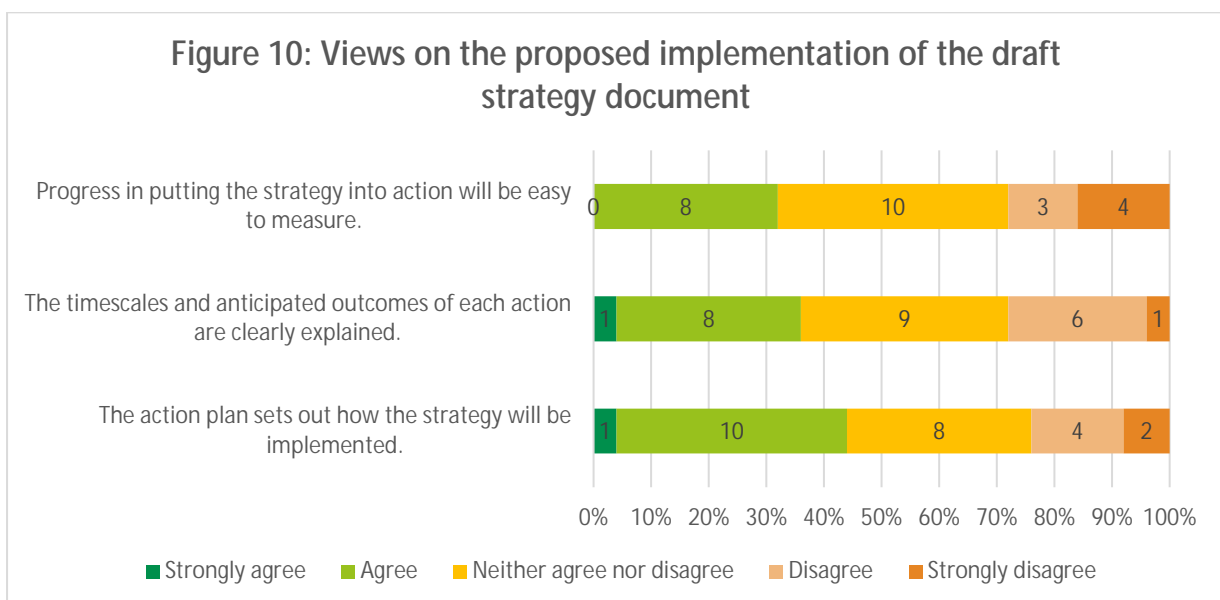
Concerns and sceptical comments

- *“A dedication to actually achieve something practical.”*
- *“Money, councillors in the council who will act on this. No confidence in Shropshire Council what-so-ever!”*
- *“It didn't excite me it seemed pretty standard stuff. It didn't seem to show much innovation or radical new thinking.”*
- *“I would like a lot more details of what it means for individuals.”*
- *“Yes. Where are they going to magic the correct type of housing required from?”*

The next question included within the consultation survey was designed to obtain feedback on the proposed implementation of the strategy. Respondents were asked to provide a view on 3 statements:

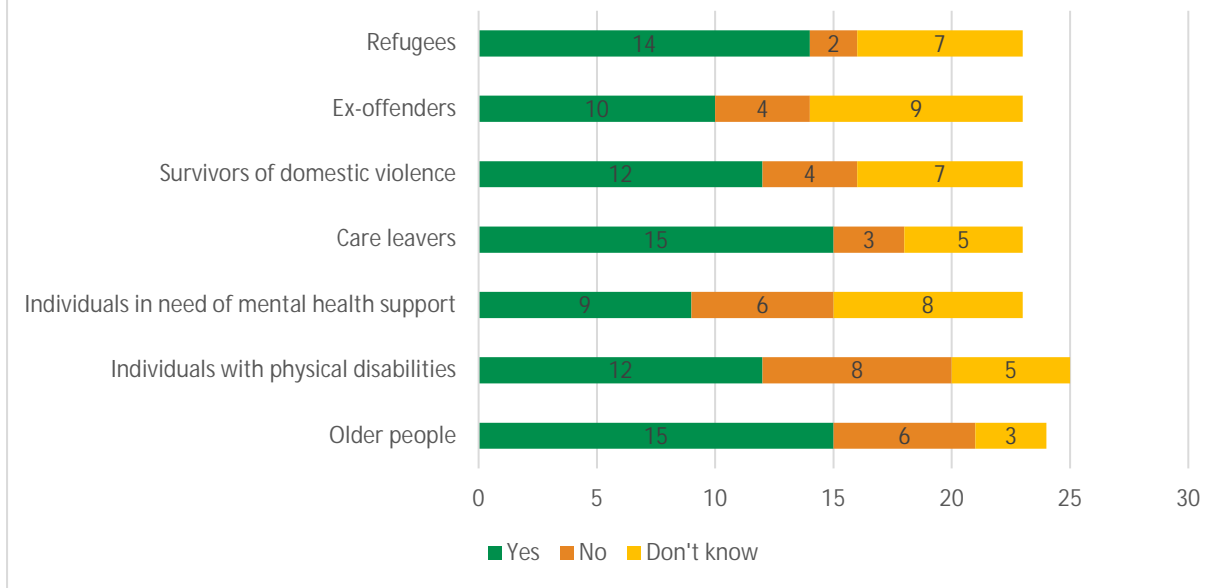
- The action plan sets out how the strategy will be implemented.
- The timescales and anticipated outcomes of each action are clearly explained.
- Progress in putting the strategy into action will be easy to measure.

Figure 10 displays the responses received. As with some other questions, **many respondents did not have very strong views and felt neutrally** about the statements provided. There was overall agreement that the action plan sets out how the strategy will be implemented (11 agree or strongly agree and 6 disagree or strongly disagree). 8 agree that the progress of the strategy will be easy to measure and 7 disagree or strongly disagree. 9 agree or strongly agree that the timescales and anticipated outcomes of each action are clearly explained, 7 disagree or strongly disagree.



The final questions within the consultation survey predominantly sought to understand views concerning whether the needs of key groups have been addressed within the draft strategy. The first question read ‘The strategy aims to respond to the needs of the following key groups. Is this achieved?’ **Figure 11** displays the results. Overall, more people felt that the strategy does address the needs of key groups, with an average of 12.4 selecting ‘yes’ and an average of 4.7 selecting ‘no’. More respondents selected ‘yes’ for older people, care leavers and refugees than for any other groups. Respondents were less sure for those with mental health needs and ex-offenders. There are concerns about whether the needs of individuals with physical disabilities have been fully addressed (8 respondents selected ‘no’). The respondents were asked to add a comment to explain any concern. 11 comments were provided, and these are shown beneath **Figure 11**.

Figure 11: Views on whether the draft strategy meets needs



General comments

- *“It's a strategy until you start to do it there is no way to determine if you will be successful and therefore fulfil your aims or not.”*
- *“With all the budget cuts and unwise spending decisions (such as buying shopping centres) it seems impossible that the Council will be able to make any impact at all.”*
- *“It won't happen, our taxes have been thrown at NWRR & purchasing of a shopping centre for £51m & it's now only worth £17m!”*
- *“You haven't given enough details on what it will mean for any of these groups.”*
- *“You need to help people to help themselves. Encourage them to take responsibility for themselves. Instead we are all put in one of 2 boxes. Those who look after themselves and everyone else. Those who need looking after. They don't all need looking after they just need a bit of help to look after themselves.”*
- *“First, get the housing, then you might be able to meet the needs of the above groups.”*

Specific comments

- *“What about independent living for people with Learning Disabilities/Autism?”*
- *“Where are people with SEND who do not have physical disabilities?”*
- *“Where are the people with ASD/LD - it's not a mental ill health issue - they have been over-looked.”*
- *“Rehabilitation services are overstretched with up to a year waiting lists for a home assessment.”*
- *“There are many people with needs who will not be helped at all by this scheme particularly, but not limited to, the elderly.”*

The comments reflect some of the key points made in response to earlier questions within the survey. They highlight concerns over Shropshire Council's ability to deliver the strategy, with more specific concerns raised in relation to meeting the housing needs of people with learning disabilities, ASD, SEND, older people and those in need of rehabilitation.

The last question within the set of questions about meeting needs, sought to understand whether members of the public had any thoughts to inform the Council's work concerning impact assessment. The question read '*Shropshire Council has carried out an Equalities, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment for the draft strategy. This is to ensure that people of different protected characteristic groups are not adversely impacted by any changes delivered as a result of this strategy. Issues of diversity and equality and health are important, and an increasing area of focus with costs of living increases. Please use the space below if you have any other comments to make about the strategy's impact.*' There were 9 full comments in response, and these are shown below (one comment was very partial, so this has been removed due to lack of text):

Equality impact

- *"Age is also a protected characteristic and you have not included elderly people who are vulnerable but not economically challenged."*
- *"There is a huge interest and market for supported living for people needing discharge from hospital LD. I understand that social care funding is in crisis however the lack of suitable housing available is a huge issue for people with LD/Autism in Shropshire which is preventing discharge and moving on."*
- *"You make little mention of the army of informal and family carers of the vulnerable people whose needs you aim to be meeting."*

General concerns

- *"It is the ESI&H Assessment that prevents it from working. Stop putting us all in boxes! We are all people."*
- *"It will address some issues and help some groups but where will the land come from and the cost is quite often extraordinary high. There are less expensive options."*
- *"I don't understand from reading your draft what any of the changes from the existing Policies are so are unable to judge what the impact will be."*

Lack of confidence in Council's ability to deliver

- *"I don't trust this council to follow through with this!"*
- *"No impact, just words. Easy to say, but very hard to carry out with the present council."*
- *"As usual I expect the local authority know exactly what they are going to do and this is simply a tick box exercise that will not be listened to at all."*

The issues of concern include economic eligibility and how this may impact on older people, the importance of suitable housing for people with learning disabilities and/or Autism (including hospital discharge) and the needs of those caring for vulnerable people.

The last question within the survey was open and allowed for any other comments. 11 survey respondents took the opportunity to add a comment. The comments appear to cover four main themes: meeting needs, influencing future housing provision, comments about the need to listen and engage effectively and general dissatisfaction with Shropshire Council.

Meeting needs

- *“Helping people anticipate their future needs so they can put their own practical plans in place could be a cost-effective preventative strategy too.”*
- *“Please ensure that everyone’s needs are considered. Minorities are not separate to the general population.”*
- *“I think it’s really important you discuss how you will make sure these properties will go to those who need them most.”*

Influencing future housing provision

- *more housing in safe places needed for people with learning disabilities. Putting people in mixed vulnerable groups in housing schemes can cause conflict and does not always work. I would like that to be considered.*
- *The housing need is not currently being met because the council is not ensuring the developers are building for local need. The vast estates that have been built in Shrewsbury in the past 7 years are isolating vulnerable people far from local services. Dependence upon on - line interaction is driving mental health issues amongst our children and our adults. The planned built environment is not achieving the aims of this document.*

Comments about the importance of listening and engagement

- *“Please find a way to hear about the needs of people with no voice - who is advocating for those severely impacted by their ASD and LD. I feel this strategy overlooks them and increase the risk of them only having access to more institutional forms of housing. They deserve more and better.”*
- *“I hope this is a real consultation and not just another tick box exercise.”*
- *“I suppose this is just another tick box meaningless exercise.”*

General concerns about Shropshire Council

- *“The draft seems to focus on what you want to achieve with no details other than financial costs for the Local Authority.”*
- *“We need an independent investigation into Shropshire Council!”*
- *“Time and time again this council have had the opportunity to build single story “homes” which would be suitable for an increasing aging community. However, they have regularly shown themselves to be swayed by outside interests and shown their own naivety and inability to run this county.”*

The next and final section of the report brings all the feedback provided together and highlights some key findings from the consultation.

4 Summary and Conclusion

The report details the consultation process for Shropshire Council's draft Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation strategy for 2024 to 2028. The strategy emphasises the importance of housing for older, vulnerable, and disabled individuals and aims to support independent living aligned with The Shropshire Plan 2022 to 2025 and its objective to promote healthy living. The strategy covers the council's own services and approaches, as well as partnership working with other organisations and stakeholders. Despite significant efforts to promote the consultation, response rates were low, with only 43 responses received over a 13-week period.

The survey respondents were asked to provide some demographic and personal information to help the council understand their profile and housing needs. The respondents were mostly women, homeowners, and individuals or members of the public. Some of them anticipated needing support or accommodation in the next five years, such as aids and adaptations or independent supported living schemes. Some of them also had long-standing illnesses or disabilities that limited their daily activities. There were also a few individuals with links to the armed forces. The respondents were spread across the county, although the north and north east had fewer responses.

The feedback highlighted a need for more accessible housing, support for aids and adaptations, and independent supported living schemes. Concerns were raised about the lack of focus on housing for adults with learning disabilities and neurodivergence, as well as the need for housing that accommodates a wider population of people with low incomes and health needs.

The strategy was generally well-received, with most respondents understanding its aims and objectives. However, some felt that the priority actions were not clearly presented, and that the strategy did not fully reflect the social and economic context for delivery. Comments suggested a need for more specific actions and a broader focus beyond some of the groups identified as needing support within the survey and strategy document.

In conclusion, while the draft strategy sets a positive direction for addressing the housing needs of Shropshire's vulnerable populations, it requires some refinement to ensure clarity of actions and inclusivity of all vulnerable groups. There is now an opportunity to use the feedback to consider any amendments before the final draft is submitted to Shropshire Council's Cabinet for final approval.

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