



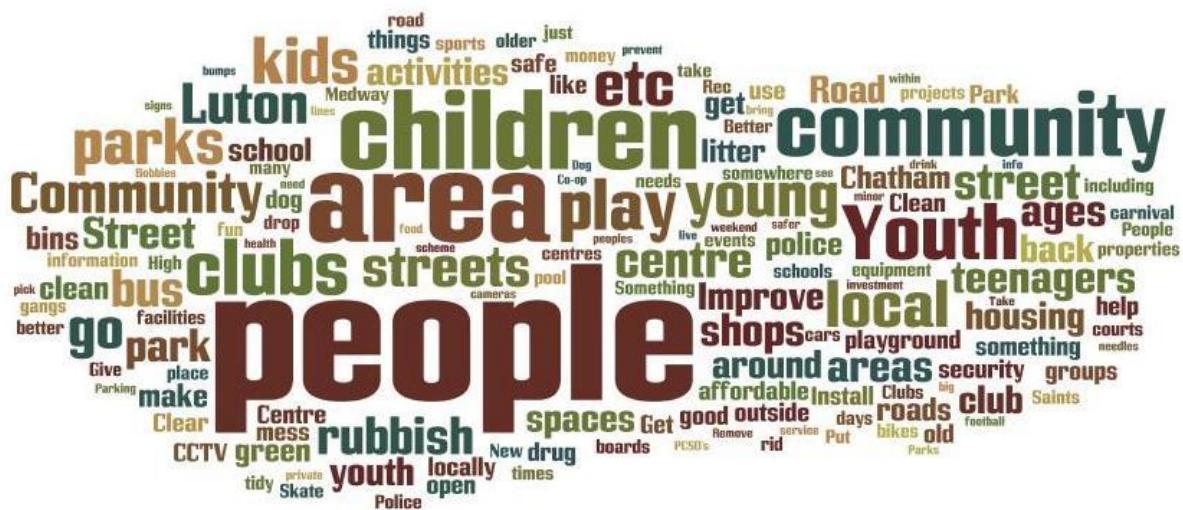
Arches local

Creating Local Change

Community Research

Participatory Appraisal Research Findings

February 2015



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The All Saints Community

guidance.

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1. Introduction

In July 2013, 3Ps was commissioned to provide community research training and support to put community volunteers at the heart of creating a local vision for a disadvantaged part of Chatham. Arches Big Local was suggested as a highly appropriate name for this initiative.

3Ps: People Promoting Participation, is an established organisation that specialises in putting people, particularly residents and volunteers, at the heart of community engagement. Based in York, we work across the UK on a wide variety of community projects.

All the engagement methods we use are highly interactive and are designed to generate maximum involvement, particularly from traditionally 'hard to reach' groups.

One of our specialisms is Participatory Appraisal, a form of engagement that is highly interactive, using a range of visual and interactive methods that allow everyone to participate and have their say. These techniques are particularly successful in generating feedback from young people, older people, ethnic minorities and other 'hard to reach' groups.

Our work is based on the ideas that people are experts in their own situation, their knowledge and experience should be respected, and that they should be fully involved in decisions or developments that affect them. Whilst we do organise and facilitate public meetings and events, we prefer to consult people 'on their territory', i.e. by going to places we know they will be (cafes, supermarkets, sheltered accommodation schemes, parent and toddler classes, schools, etc.)

We also have extensive experience, and a highly successful track record, of training volunteers and residents to carry out their own research, and of supporting them in that process.

This report details work carried out by Roger Newton (3Ps) and a number of local residents trained in community research over the period March to October 2014. The core aims of this project were to consult and discover local people's thoughts and ideas about their locality, by actively engaging residents in participatory research which would allow them to identify solutions to issues in their own community.

1. Community Research: Methodology

The methods used in the community research were determined by the context of the project, and were guided by:

- the background to the commissioning of the research
- the existing aims of Arches Big Local and how this research project fits within them,
- the most appropriate methods of collecting data.

This section clarifies how and why particular types of data were collected, as well as how the scope and quality of the data gathered was assessed and where necessary, re-evaluated.

2. Training



Photo 1: Community researchers in a training session

Volunteer community researchers were recruited and trained in Participatory Appraisal techniques in March 2014. These included:

- Mapping
- Timelines,
- The ‘washing line’,
- Spider diagrams,
- Graffiti walls
- Cause and effect diagrams.

The research team ‘practised’ their research techniques on each other, so that their own responses and ideas became part of the research they were about to undertake.

3. Outreach

The community researchers began their outreach work in March 2014. They completed a total of 17 outreach sessions at a variety of locations, including:

March 2014	All Saints' Church Hall – Training Day
March 2014	All Saints' Church Hall – Training Day
March 2014	All Saints' Church Hall – Training Day
March 2014	All Saints' Church Hall – Coffee Morning
March 2014	Sure Start Children's Centre
March 2014	Big Local Steering Committee
April 2014	All Saints' Centenary Event
May 2014	Luton Library, Chatham
May 2014	Salvation Army
June 2014	Sure Start Centre
June 2014	Children's Centre (Outside front door)
July 2014	Otway Terrace
July 2014	All Saint's Primary School
September 2014	All Saint's Church
September 2014	10th Anniversary Children's Centre – (Bishop of Rochester Academy)

The methods employed by the volunteer researchers enabled them to gain experience and confidence through approaching other residents in the local community.

The predominant use of the H-form diagram (see below) as a research tool involved volunteers working together to engage and interview residents regarding their positive and negative thoughts about the area, as well as ideas they would like to see put into practice. This information was recorded by a member of the research group and placed in the appropriate section of the H-form poster ('positive', 'negative' or 'idea') where the residents as well as the researchers could then compare what others thought about the local area. This research tool enabled researchers to work as a team and engage residents on a one-on-one basis, where they understood that their thoughts and opinions were genuinely important.

The use of ‘washing lines’ entailed volunteer researchers encouraging residents to openly peg their opinions about the local area on a scale from very positive to very negative. This method was useful in public places in order to attract attention to the project.



Photo 2: Community researcher with the “Washing Line”

The timeline approach, where residents contributed to and discussed an illustration of how the area had changed through time and what they felt was important about it, was particularly useful in a group setting where it encouraged conversation.

4. Data Analysis

The research team entered all the data into a spreadsheet and held an open event at the Community Centre in October 2014. Themes from the ideas gathered in the research were reviewed by the steering group and members of the public.



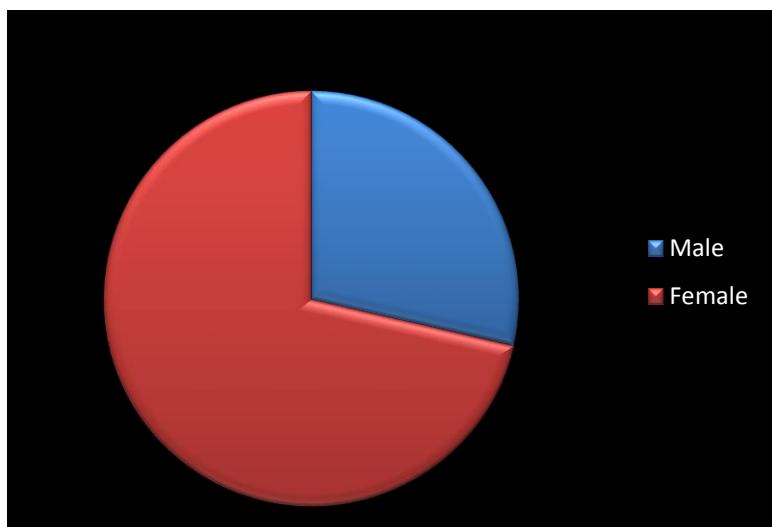
Photo 3: Theming data at the Open Event in October 2014

Information Gathered

The key information collected from the research sessions which took place between April and September 2014, were the ‘positives’, ‘negatives’ and ‘ideas’ that local people had about the local community. These are vital in creating an informed picture of the success of the Arches Big Local as it is, and in helping to develop ways in which it can have a future as relevant as possible to the community it serves. A total of 674 comments were gathered, during 17 sessions from 202 people. (This included responses from 2 previous events in 2013: the mobile farm event and ten pin bowling event).

Gender of Respondents

The research has attracted a greater response from females than males; this may be due to the specific locations chosen (especially at the Children’s Centre) and the times of day / days of the week chosen to conduct the research. Future research could target locations where males are known to be present in larger numbers (e.g. working men’s clubs or popular local pubs) and at times when males (particularly younger age males) are available to be consulted.



Male/Female	Entries
Male	38
Female	95
Total:	133

Figure 1: Gender of respondents

Age of Respondents

A broad range of ages was represented and response from the working age category 25 years to 44 years was very high. However the younger and older age ranges proved more difficult to engage. Again this may be due to the location and times of the outreach sessions and any future research could focus on the older and younger age ranges. Some respondents did not give their age.

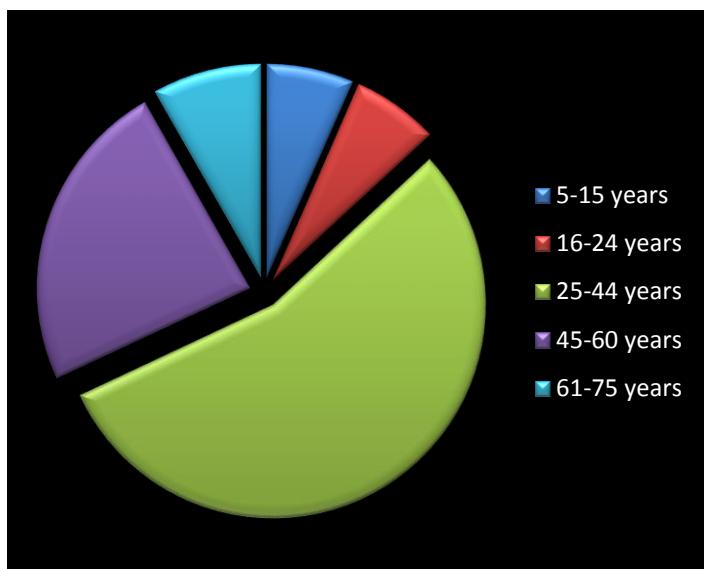


Figure 2: Age of respondents

Ethnic Background of Respondents

Respondents in this research came from a broad spectrum of ethnic backgrounds, and reflected a wide range of views.

It is recommended that any future research should focus more upon the views of minority ethnic views within the Polish, Slovakian, African, Caribbean and Asian/British communities.

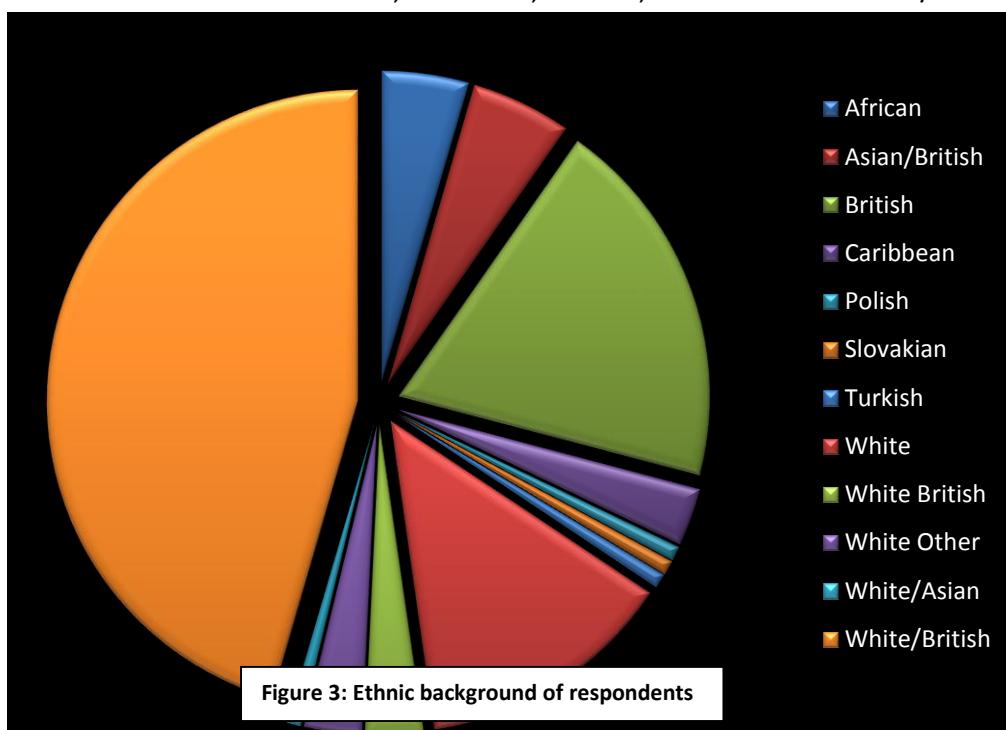


Figure 3: Ethnic background of respondents

Ethnic Group	Entries
African	6
Asian/British	7
British	26
Caribbean	4
Polish	1
Slovakian	1
Turkish	1
White	18
White British	4
White Other	4
White/Asian	1
White/British	61
Total:	134

Postcodes of Respondents

Respondents came primarily (72%) from the Big Local area postcode (ME4) with an additional 14% from the ME5 area. The remaining 14% of respondents came from outside the area (see below).



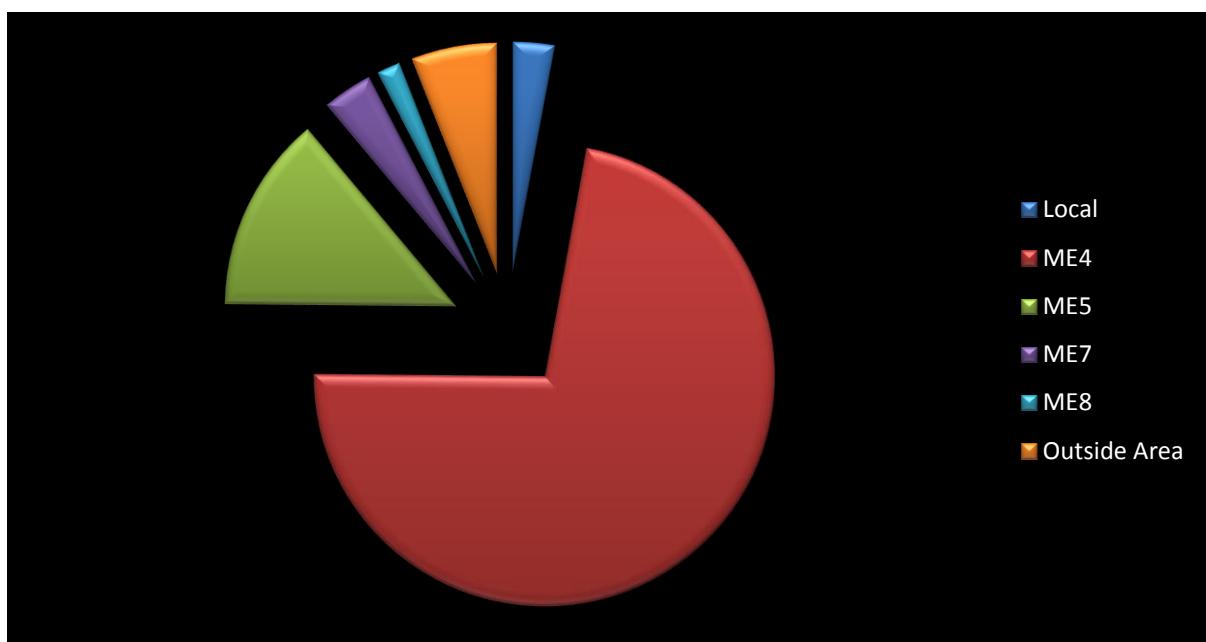


Figure 4: Postcodes of respondents

Area	Entries
Local	14
ME4	352
ME5	67
ME7	17
ME8	8
Outside Area	29
Total	487

6. Top 10 Theme Areas

A summary of the top 10 themes under 3 heading of positive, negative and ideas is below. An attempt has been made to break the data down into themes. This is difficult because the issues often interlink and the choice of themes is always subjective, depending on the opinion of the researcher.

A list of all the comment themes are in the tables following the text and a full list of the original data is recorded in the spreadsheet.

“Wordles” have also been created for each set of responses. A ‘Wordle’ offers a way of generating “word clouds” from text that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text, giving a visual impression of the strength of emerging themes.

a) Top 10 Positive Theme Areas



Figure 5: Positive Theme Wordle

- People

One of the 3 highest positive themes to emerge was 'local people'.

Comments included: "the majority of local people are amazing, friendly warm and helpful", "lots of people who care about the environment", "friendly people" and "loads of friends and "neighbours."

• Shops & shopping

Local shops and the shopping experience were highly thought of by many people, this was at a high street level; “High Street has good shops”, and at a neighbourhood level; “Glencoe corner shop is reasonable price” and “corner shop on Glencoe listens to people.”

Other local shops were mentioned including; "Chip Shop" "Bakery" and the "Local Tesco."

- Access - 'being close'

Some people greatly valued the proximity to “open space right on my doorstep”, “Fresh air not too far”, “being close to Parks” and “walking around the area” with “open access from Pentagon to river.”

Others valued “being close to town and shopping area”, and “can walk to shops.” The proximity to other local amenities was also mentioned by some, including: “close to play area” and “being close to schools.”

- **Sure Start**

The local Children's Centre and Sure Start Nursery were very highly regarded by their service users and are seen by many parents as an important community asset.

- **Local services**

Other local services mentioned by respondents included: “Community Office <All Saints> welcomes everyone and gives individuals time; nothing is too much for the staff”, “Church community group <All Saints>”, “CVS <Council for Voluntary Service>”, “libraries”, “Post Office”, and “<The> Drop in Centre Canterbury Street.”

- **Parks**

The parks are a treasured local asset for many people; “en-route to nice green spaces- Luton Rec and Capstone Park”, “Capstone Park central to everything” and “Gym/exercise equipment in park.”

- **Arts & Heritage**

The area is seen by some as “Historic area” with “loads of heritage”, and some respondents have an “awareness of Medway history and role in the world.”

There is also an “awareness of Medway's arts industry and “lots to do – theatre / cinema / museum.”

- **Clubs & Activities**

Some people felt that there were “lots of clubs and activities for families”, “community events”, “All Saints Church has lots going on all week, “Wednesday night Slovak Club, “Sam's Place After School Club” and “Good coffee and crafts.”

- **Travel & transport**

Local transport links were seen as excellent by some people; “the motorway structure M20 & M2, once you are out of Medway”, “good links to London” and “travel links to other areas.” Some people felt that there were “good bus routes and “good train routes.”

- **Play areas**

Local play areas were well regarded; “kids play area near Pentagon, “nice under used children’s play area Town Hall Gardens”, and “play grounds.”

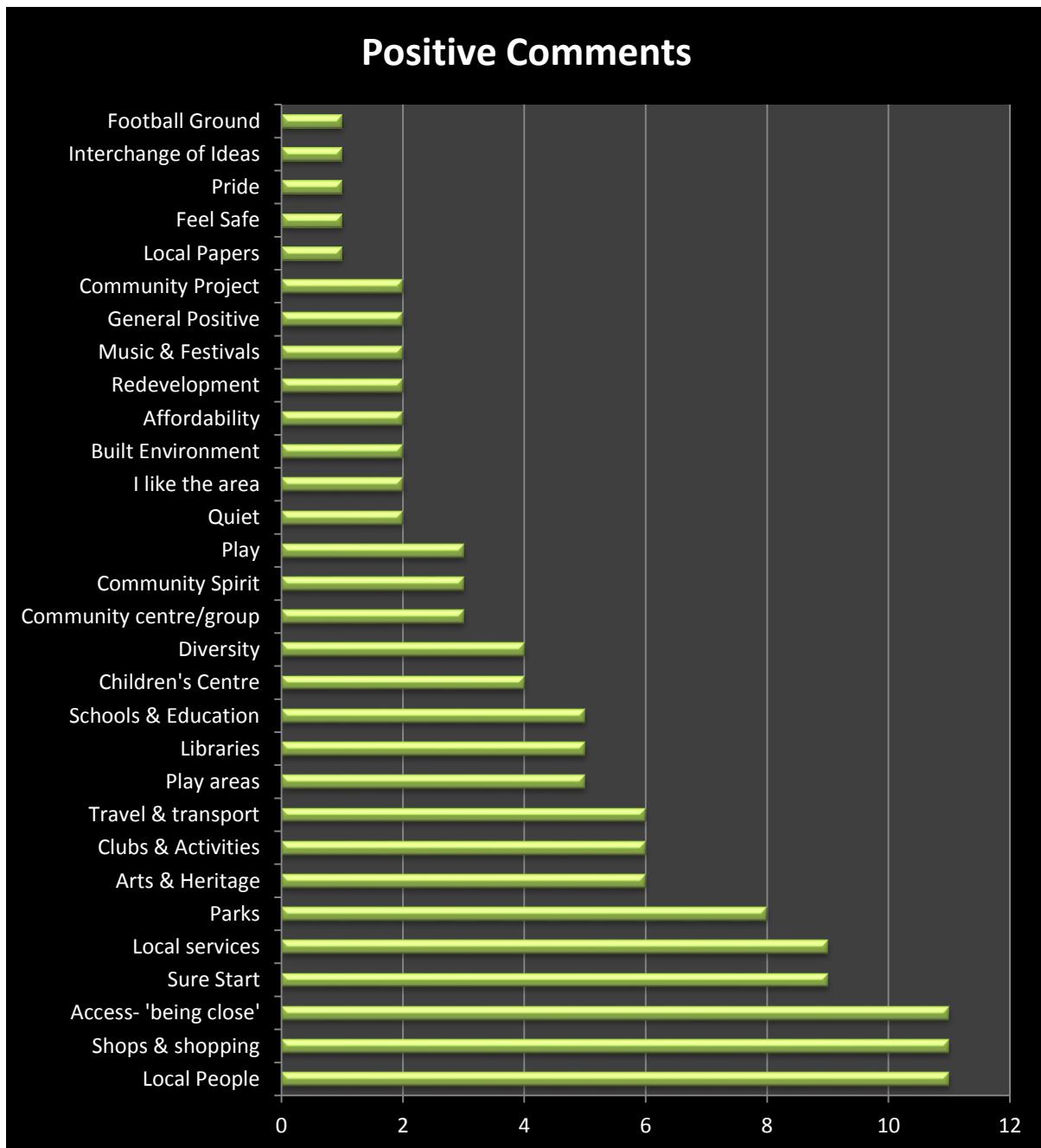


Figure 6: Positive comments by theme

Positive Comment Theme	Number of Comments
Local People	11
Shops & shopping	11
Access - 'being close'	11
Sure Start	9
Local services	9
Parks	8
Arts & Heritage	6
Clubs & Activities	6
Travel & transport	6
Play areas	5
Libraries	5
Schools & Education	5
Children's Centre	4
Diversity	4
Community centre/group	3
Community Spirit	3
Play	3
Quiet	2
I like the area	2
Built Environment	2
Affordability	2
Redevelopment	2
Music & Festivals	2
General Positive	2
Community Project	2
Local Papers	1
Feel Safe	1
Pride	1
Interchange of Ideas	1
Football Ground	1
TOTAL	130

b) Top 10 Negative Theme Areas



Figure 7: Negative Theme Wordle

- **Litter**

The main negative theme to emerge from the research concerned litter. This theme was commented upon by people from a wide range of age groups, gender and ethnic backgrounds. The issue was sometimes seen as adding to the perception of the area as being ‘run down’ and also as a safety and hygiene issue. Examples of specific comments include:

“rubbish and glass stops you wanting to take children to the park”, “too much rubbish on the street”, “rubbish and furniture outside houses causing roads to look run down” and “rubbish on pavements.”

- **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

The second negative theme concerned drug and alcohol abuse and in particular the public nature of the problem and its effect on the perception of the area and potential harmful effect on children and young people. Specific comments included:

“alcohol consumption in the street”, “people drinking in public by schools”, “drug sale and use”, “drunk people and drug addicts tend to hang out in doorways”, “Glencoe Alley magnet for drug users” and “drug addicts hanging around outside doctors surgery and chemists.”

- **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Antisocial behaviour was mentioned and this was often linked to the issue of drug and alcohol abuse mentioned above. Specific comments included:

“bad language being used loudly in the streets, parks with teenagers dossing, drinking, smoking, etc.”, “teenagers wreck the children’s play areas”, “gangs hanging around”, and “spitting on streets – offensive”.

- **Dog Mess**

Dog fouling and ‘mess’ was mentioned by many respondents, as well as there being “not enough dog bins” and “improper disposal of dog waste bags”.

- **Parking and Cars**

Some people felt that there was “too much <traffic> coming through the town” and some specific problem areas were mentioned “very chaotic with cars at school drop off (Otway Terrace area).”

General problems with parking were mentioned, specific comments included:

“not enough parking space around the old buildings”, “parking on double yellow lines no traffic wardens” and “parking on the pavement blocking access for disabled scooters” and “not enough space for pedestrians - cars take up the space and are taking over the area.”

- **Poor Housing**

Many respondents felt that there was “poor quality housing” with “lots of run-down buildings” and “derelict” and “untidy” properties.

Often the properties suffer from “poor housing maintenance” and are “crap, disgusting, damp.”

- **Nothing for Kids**

It was felt by many respondents that there was a “lack of services for 5-18 year olds in area” and that “11-16 year olds have nothing to do, with a “lack of facilities for teenage youth”.

In particular it was said that there was “not enough things to do at weekends for young children i.e. Fêtes.”

- **Fly tipping**

Fly tipping was specifically mentioned in many responses and this has strong links to the earlier theme of ‘litter’. Some specific areas including ‘Castle Road’ and ‘Glencoe Alley’ were highlighted as being “used for fly tipping.”

- **Don’t feel safe**

All comments concerning this theme were from females (25 – 60) and included:

“crowds of boys - don’t feel safe”, “don’t feel safe walking about”, “intimidation by gangs”, “don’t feel safe especially evenings” and “scary to be out on your own.”

- **Young people hanging around**

Again the comments received in this theme were predominantly from females and included:

“Chatham High Street youths loitering”, “teenagers hang around with nothing to do”, “young people hanging around on the streets”, “large gangs of teens roving” and “older kids hanging around the park.”

One male respondent commented “I dread the 6 weeks holiday because of youths Children’s Centre's play park can have 200 people banging on windows – intimidating.”

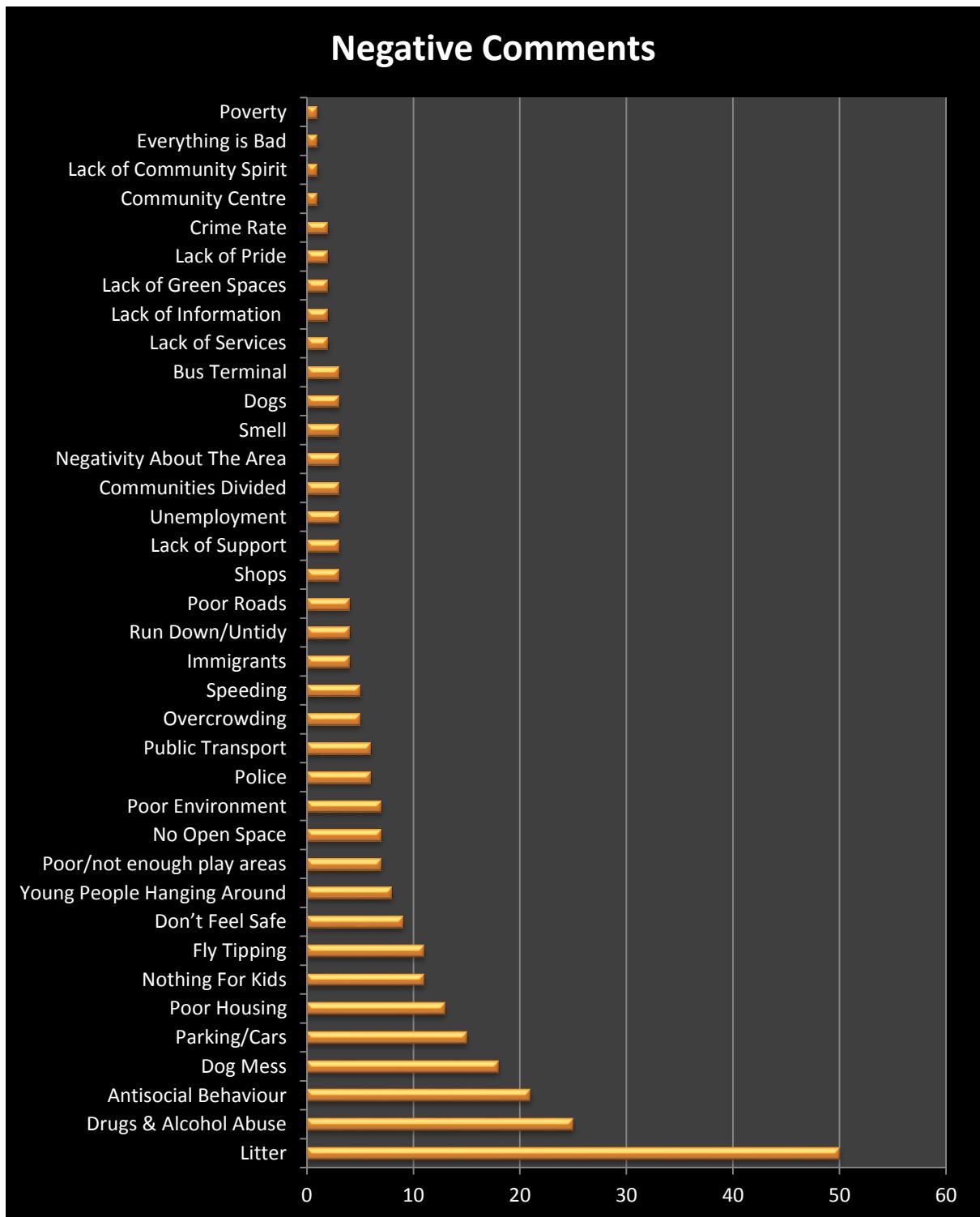


Figure 8: Negative comments by theme

Negative Comment Theme	Number of Comments
Litter	50
Drugs & Alcohol Abuse	25
Antisocial Behaviour	21
Dog Mess	18
Parking/Cars	15
Poor Housing	13
Nothing For Kids	11
Fly Tipping	11
Don't Feel Safe	9
Young People Hanging Around	8
Poor/not enough play areas	7
No Open Space	7
Poor Environment	7
Police	6
Public Transport	6
Overcrowding	5
Speeding	5
Immigrants	4
Run Down/Untidy	4
Poor Roads	4
Shops	3
Lack of Support	3
Unemployment	3
Communities Divided	3
Negativity About The Area	3
Smell	3
Dogs	3
Bus Terminal	3
Lack of Services	2
Lack of Information	2
Lack of Green Spaces	2
Lack of Pride	2
Crime Rate	2
Community Centre	1
Lack of Community Spirit	1
Everything is Bad	1
Poverty	1
TOTAL	274

c) Top 10 Idea Themes



Figure 9: Ideas Theme Wordle

- **Youth Facilities**

The largest theme from ideas was ‘youth facilities’. This theme included: “more for young people 13-17”, “give young people 16-17 somewhere to go”, “somewhere for kids to congregate”, “give teenagers something to do”, “free clubs”, “more investment and emotional health for young people” and “more youth facilities needed.”

Specific suggestions included: “football for young people”, “youth funding and facilities centrally located particularly green spaces skate parks and bike parks”, “youth activities to promote positivity within youth groups around All Saints”

Better use of existing facilities was also suggested by some respondents; “more use of school facilities outside of school opening times, sports clubs, computer clubs, library.”

Improved information for young people was also suggested; “giving teenagers enough information to know where to go”

- **Improving the environment**

Many respondents thought that it would be a good idea to “clean up <the> area”, in order to “make it a nicer place to live” and noted that “if it looks good we start to take pride.” The clean-up could include; “cleaning area especially under Luton Arches”, with improved “road and street sweeping.”

There could be a “Task Force to clean up area on a long term basis”, with “Clean up volunteers” and this could include “better maintenance of <the> environment.”

Individual properties could be involved; “cleaning front yards”, “paint/wash and clean properties” and “ask owner to tidy up their properties.”

There could also be “murals and street art on the bridge and walls.”

- **Improving the amenities**

There were a wide range of improvements suggested in the local area. Some health related suggestions were; “female health drop in clinic (for all ages not just teens)”, and “town centre minor injuries unit.”

Some suggested improvements at ‘the rec’ included; “improve steps at Luton Rec (101 steps), “install toilets at the Rec”, and “have more activities at the Rec including refreshments stalls.”

Some respondents expressed a desire for; “more businesses”, “more restaurants locally”, and “services for families.”

Specific related schemes included “Community Energy buying”, “somewhere to hold more big community events” and “somewhere legal for off road bikes.”

- **Reducing litter**

In addition to the ‘improving the environment’ theme or generally cleaning up of the area there were specific ideas to reduce litter; “more bins to reduce litter”, “skips to clean up rubbish”, “fines for dropping litter”, and “talking rubbish bins.”

It was also suggested that more education was needed; “improve parenting about litter - too many shouting and screaming”.

Some felt that “Luton needs tidying up by the tenants due to the rubbish dumped on the roads and side streets”, “large items disposed of correctly” and “not throwing beds on pavement.”

- **Green Spaces**

Some respondents wanted; “more green spaces”, “more open parks”, “upgrade the green spaces / more parks /more flowers in the area”, “Parks, more greenery”, “more local parks to housing area” and “more parks for children of all ages with interesting, adventure and fun play equipment /security to prevent it being vandalised/ areas which are safe no needles etc. / toddler’s parks / Behind the Co-op make this into a playground.”

Improving existing areas was also a theme; “doing up The Lines - make nice park etc., something for teenagers etc.”, “hanging basket community green projects”, “more planting improve park areas”, “trees and shrubbery incorporated around the area.”

- **Police**

Ideas for policing included, “more Bobbies on beat”, “police on bikes” , “greater police presence” and “increase the number of police locally as the area is intimidating to travel around.”

It was felt by some that “<The> Police <need> to clamp down on alcohol and drug use in public.

There was a divergence of opinion on the subject of PCSOs, with some respondents saying; “employ more police get rid of PCSO's”, but others in support of PCSOs saying “need PCSO's back” and “community support officers.”

- **Youth club**

In addition to the youth facilities there was also a more specific youth club theme: “start youth club to get kids off the streets”, “Pool tables, (Youth Club)”, “Pinball (youth club)”, “Arcade games (Youth club)”, “Transform the Lines- Youth club and park” and “Clubs and activities for children of all ages including afterschool clubs, youth clubs, weekend clubs / not church run.”

- **Activities for children**

Many respondents wanted: “activities for children locally”, “Children’s Play Areas for children to play on locked up so teenagers can't get in and ruin it, “more things for children to keep them off the streets”, “more things for children to do 5+” and “parks for different age group – All Saints gardens has too many older kids hanging around / kids breaking into cars / generally hanging around.”

- **CCTV & Safety**

Community safety and CCTV was another key theme; “install CCTV to make people feel safer”, “better security like CCTV cameras in strategic locations”, and “monitor / get rid of gangs of people that hang around the streets and intimidate people / young people / other gangs of people.”

Other related ideas included; “Police checked people could have a sign in the window - this is a safe haven where children can go - linked to neighbourhood watch”, and “ cold callers ban”.

- **Community Spirit & Involvement**

Many respondents wished for “bringing the community together” , “community spirit” , “listening to people’s views about what they would like to see”, “bring back Luton Roads community feel”, “get new residents involved in Arches Local in preservation of wider area not just where they live”, “something for everybody, not just one group” and “mix the community better.”

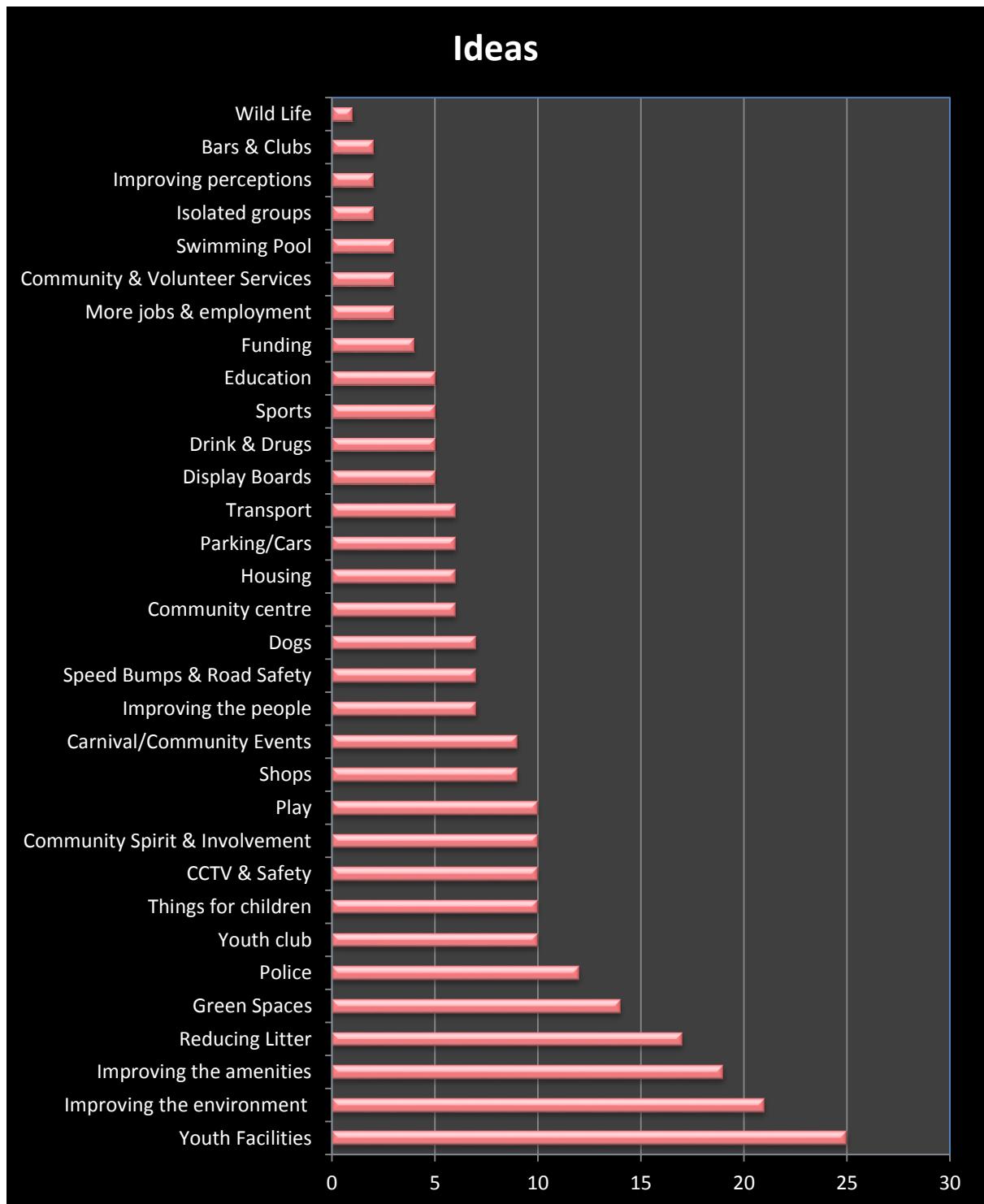


Figure 10: Ideas comment by theme

Ideas Comment Theme	Number of Comments
Youth Facilities	25
Improving the environment	21
Improving the amenities	19
Reducing litter	17
Green Spaces	14
Police	12
Youth club	10
Things for children	10
CCTV & Safety	10
Community Spirit & Involvement	10
Play	10
Shops	9
Carnival/Community Events	9
Improving the people	7
Speed Bumps & Road Safety	7
Dogs	7
Community Centre	6
Housing	6
Parking/Cars	6
Transport	6
Display Boards	5
Drink & Drugs	5
Sports	5
Education	5
Funding	4
More jobs & employment	3
Community & Volunteer Services	3
Swimming Pool	3
Isolated groups	2
Improving perceptions	2
Bars & Clubs	2
Wild Life	1
TOTAL	261

d) Cross Cutting Themes

A further analysis was made to identify any broader themes that cut across all of the positives / negatives and ideas in an attempt to offer a summarised picture of the data. The key themes that emerged were:

- Environment
- Safety
- Youth
- Amenities
- Community
- Opportunities
- People
- Transport
- Information
- Heritage
- Services

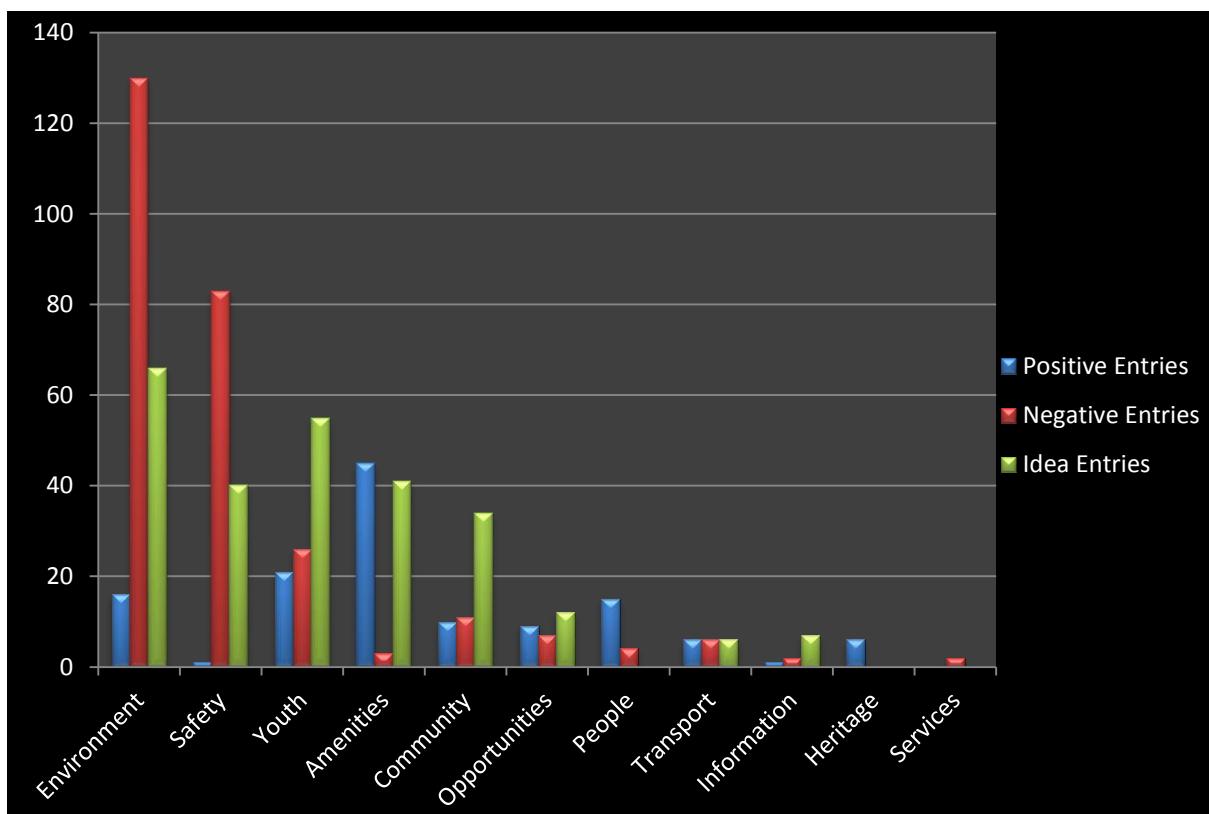


Figure 11: Cross-cutting themes

Overall Theme	Negative Entries	Positive Entries	Idea Entries	Total
Environment	130	16	66	212
Safety	83	1	40	124
Youth	26	21	55	102
Amenities	3	45	41	89
Community	11	10	34	55
Opportunities	7	9	12	28
Local People	4	15	0	19
Transport	6	6	6	18
Information	2	1	7	10
Heritage	0	6	0	6
Services	2	0	0	2
Total	274	130	261	665

7. Conclusions and next steps

This research has been conducted by local residents living in the Arches Big Local area, to gain the views of other residents in the area and nearby surroundings.

It reflects what people feel is positive and negative about the area, and provides some concrete suggestions and ideas about what could be done in the future to improve people's quality of life.

- The sense of community and local people, shops and amenities, and location of the area were all seen as strengths of the locality.
- Litter, drug abuse, and anti-social behaviour were identified as issues that negatively affect resident's quality of life, and that need addressing.
- Investing in facilities for young people, cleaning up the local environment, and improving local amenities were mentioned frequently as suggestions for future action, along with a wide range of other ideas.

It is recommended that future planning in the area takes account of these views and builds on local ideas to improve the quality of life for people living in the area of the Arches Big Local.