SUTHERLAND IMPACT AND RECOVERY SURVEY

2020

BACKGROUND

Sutherland Community Engagement Project – 2018/2019
In 2018 the Sutherland Community Partnership (SCP), with the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust (KoSDT), launched the Community Engagement project, funded by the Scottish Government's Aspiring Communities Fund.

The outcome of the project was the creation of Locality Plans for five priority areas identified across Sutherland which were published in 2019. The priority areas were identified, based on a range of data sources, as Golspie, Brora, Helmsdale, Creich and Kinlochbervie.

During the project, the SCP recognised that other areas in the county would benefit from a similar consultation. The Community Engagement team carried out additional work across Sutherland and additional Community Plans were published.

To see the individual Plans please visit the Sutherland Community Partnership website.

Sutherland Adaptive and Collaborative Communities Project – 2020/2022
Building on the success of the Community Engagement project the SCP, with KoSDT, was successful in a further application to the Aspiring Communities Fund. The Sutherland Adaptive and Collaborative Communities (SACC) project started in August 2020 and will run to April 2022.

The SACC project is informed by the Locality and Community Plans published in 2019 and will feature collaborative and community-led working. Focussing on the five priority areas the Project Team is working with the Locality Groups to advance their Plans and supporting them drive development forward by identifying and planning community-led projects, aimed at tackling inequalities, to deliverable stage.

The project will also work across Sutherland by developing theme-based projects aimed at tackling inequalities and further identified priorities across the county. The project aims to bring new or enhanced services to some of the most vulnerable and hardest to reach communities through partnership and collaborative working.

Covid-19 Impact - 2020
The SCP are aware that the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted communities across Sutherland to varying degrees during 2020.

The SACC project must respond accordingly. The first phase of the SACC project was to undertake this Survey to review priorities which were previously identified and assess their relevance against the Covid-19 pandemic. The SACC project work will reflect the Priority and Additional Themes identified within the Survey to support communities recover from the impact of Covid-19.

INTRODUCTION

The Sutherland Impact and Recovery Survey was available for four weeks between September and October 2020. It was predominantly promoted through e-mail and social media activity.

Notifications of the Survey were distributed by e-mail, advertised on a variety of Facebook pages and advertised in the Northern Times and Kyle Chronicle publications.

Paper copies were offered if required, there was no uptake on this offer. Due to Covid-19 restrictions it was deemed not safe or appropriate to circulate paper copies which were not pre-requested.

All responses received were online through the surveymonkey link. A total of 84 responses were received.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Analysis of survey data was carried out using a mixed methods approach: quantitative and qualitative.
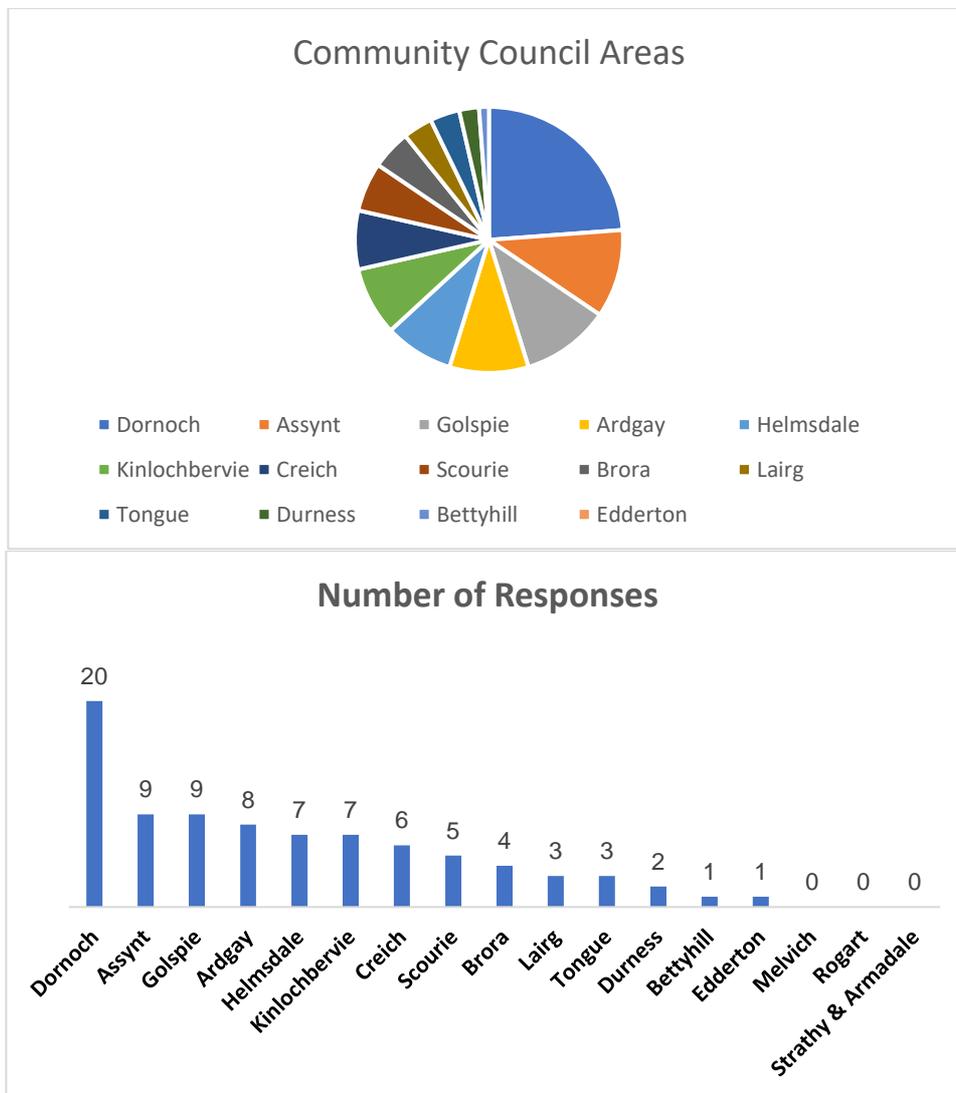
Due to the nature of the survey's design ratings from respondents to each category (e.g. Public Transport, Housing, etc.) were averaged in order to gain an overview of priorities in the community. To fully understand and accurately convey the views of respondents, analysis of open responses to each question was also needed.

Individual comments were analysed to identify the ***common themes*** within each question. By grouping comments into common themes, it was possible to identify priorities by counting the number of times a common theme had been mentioned.

For example, in the category of "Housing" if a comment stated *"Housing is too expensive"* this was annotated "House prices". This was repeated for each comment within each category and once this had been done the frequency of each annotation within that category was recorded, providing the themes within respondent's comments on each category and the frequency that they occur provide context for the average ratings of the categories.

RESPONSES AND RESPONDENTS

A total of 84 responses to the survey were received from community groups and individuals across Sutherland.

Community Council Areas

Legend: Dornoch, Assynt, Golspie, Ardgay, Helmsdale, Kinlochbervie, Creich, Scourie, Brora, Lairg, Tongue, Durness, Bettyhill, Edderton

Number of Responses

Area	Responses
Dornoch	20
Assynt	9
Golspie	9
Ardgay	8
Helmsdale	7
Kinlochbervie	7
Creich	6
Scourie	5
Brora	4
Lairg	3
Tongue	3
Durness	2
Bettyhill	1
Edderton	1
Melvich	0
Rogart	0
Strathy & Armadale	0

From the 17 Community Council areas across Sutherland responses were received from 82%, or 14 of the areas. Of the 84 responses, 60 were completed as a resident and 24 were completed on behalf of a community organisation.

The response rate is recognised as low in relation to the total population of Sutherland, circa 12,000 to 13,000.
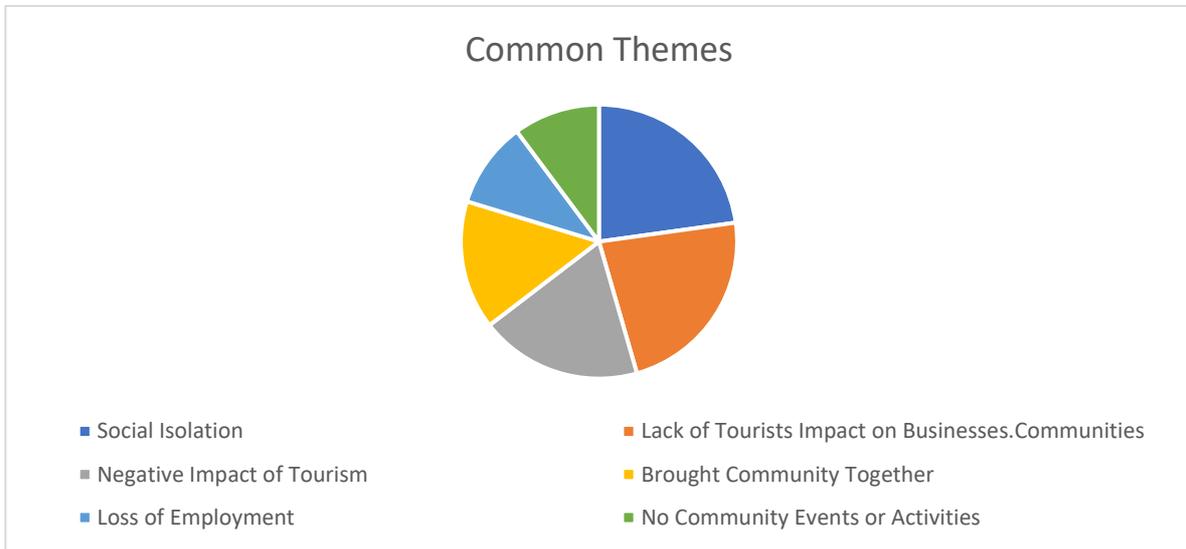
The data gathered within the Survey is being used as indicative only and will not dictate specific project activity without further evidence or guidance from strategic partners of the SACC project.

The 84 responses have been broken down into the five priority Locality areas and details of the data gathered was input to Locality Group meetings post the Survey closing in December 2020. The locality data has informed Locality Groups on local priorities, it should be noted that due to the scale of the response rate the data will not define project activity locally. The Survey was managed as a soft touch approach and as an introduction to the SACC project but is not the core focus of activity.

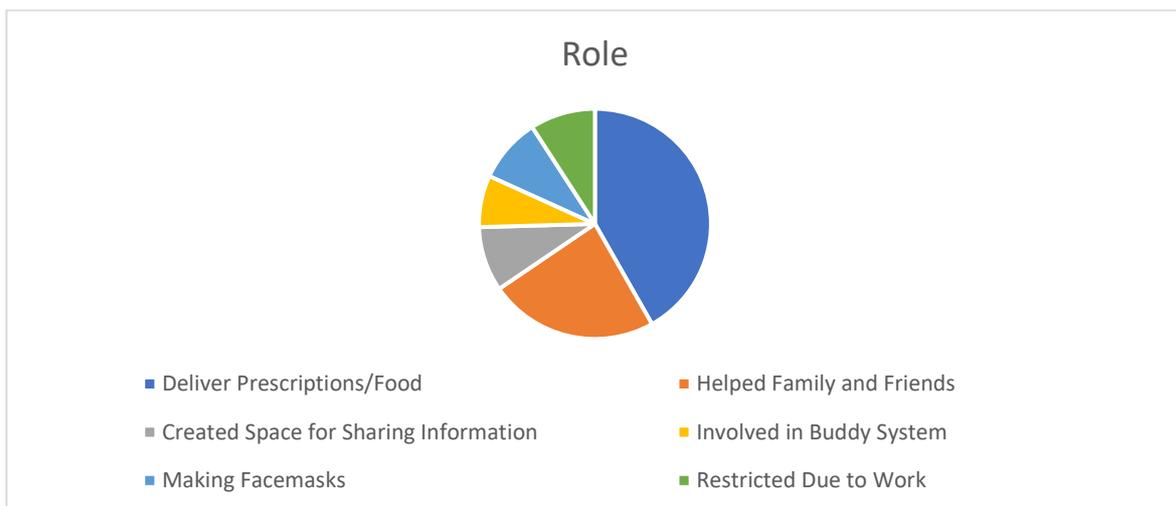# COVID-19 IMPACT QUESTIONS

Question:
Please give us a summary about what impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on your community: From the responses received the top common themes mentioned were:

Common Themes

- Social Isolation
- Lack of Tourists Impact on Businesses.Communities
- Negative Impact of Tourism
- Brought Community Together
- Loss of Employment
- No Community Events or Activities

Additional themes mentioned included: Impact on mental health and wellbeing; Lots of volunteering; Increased use of foodbanks; No access to transport; Projects stalled; Increase in poverty; Praise for local shops; Climate Anxiety.

Question:

Please tell us about the role you have played in supporting your community overcome the impact of Covid-19: From the responses received the top common themes mentioned were:

Role

- Deliver Prescriptions/Food
- Helped Family and Friends
- Created Space for Sharing Information
- Involved in Buddy System
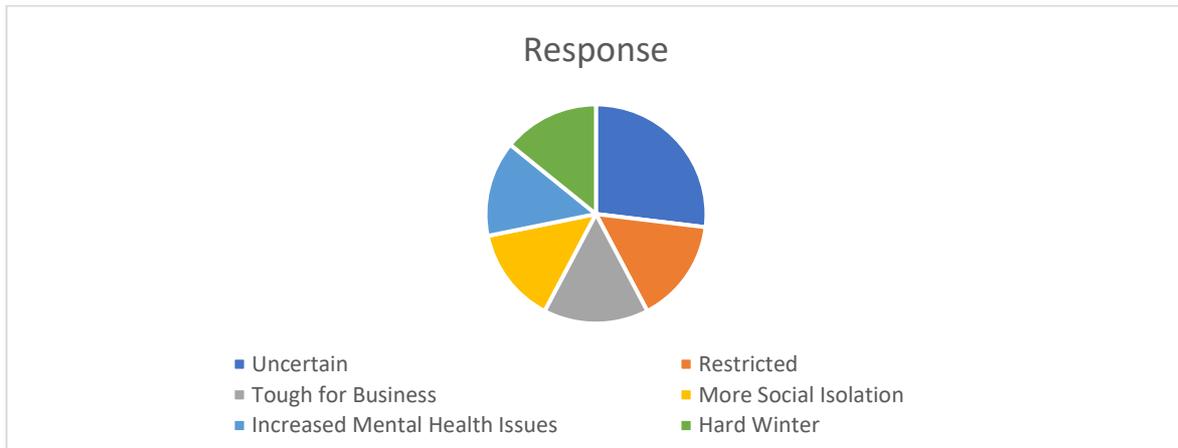- Making Facemasks
- Restricted Due to Work

Additional themes mentioned included: Purchased goods locally to support local business; Weekly zoom worship services; Started a community magazine and hardship fund; Volunteered at the community garden.

Question:

What does the future look like in your community because of Covid-19 over the next 3 - 12 months:
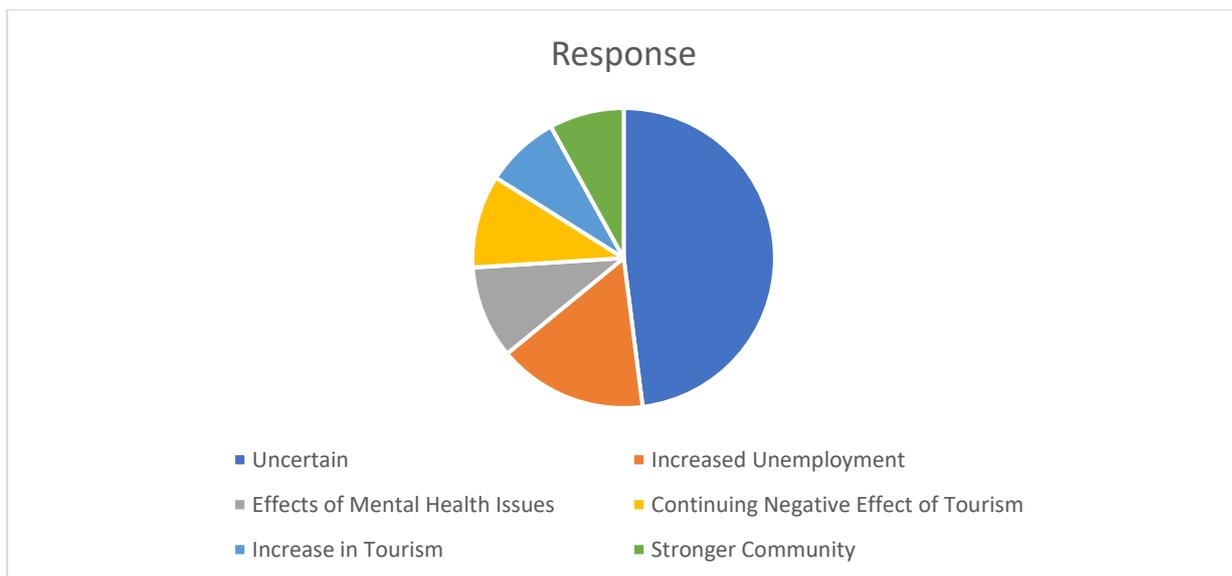From the responses received the top common themes mentioned were:

Response

- ■ Uncertain
- ■ Tough for Business
- ■ Increased Mental Health Issues
- ■ Restricted
- ■ More Social Isolation
- ■ Hard Winter

Additional themes mentioned included: Continued negative impact of tourism; No social activities; Unemployment; Increase in food/fuel poverty; Impact on economy; Reduced physical activity

Question:

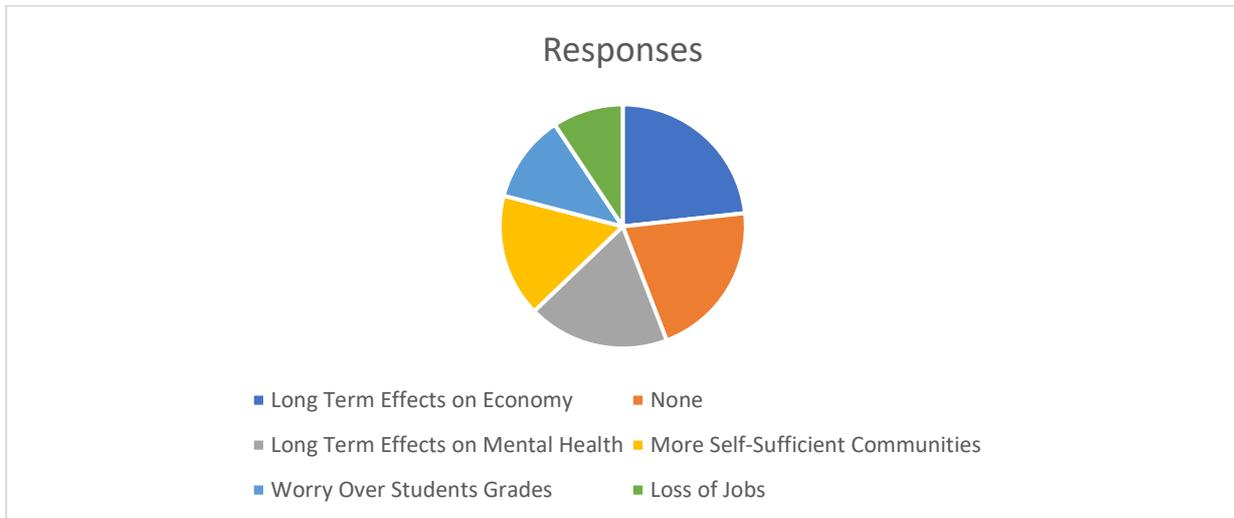**What does the future look like in your community because of Covid-19 in 12 months time:** From the responses received the top common themes mentioned were:

Response

- ■ Uncertain
- ■ Effects of Mental Health Issues
- ■ Increase in Tourism
- ■ Increased Unemployment
- ■ Continuing Negative Effect of Tourism
- ■ Stronger Community

Additional themes mentioned included: People leaving; Social isolation; Continuing restrictions; Economy starting to recover; A vaccine; Ageing population; Increasing inequality of health, education and transport provision.

Question:
Do you have any concerns or aspirations about the future because of Covid-19: From the responses received the top common themes mentioned were:

Responses

- Long Term Effects on Economy
- None
- Long Term Effects on Mental Health
- More Self-Sufficient Communities
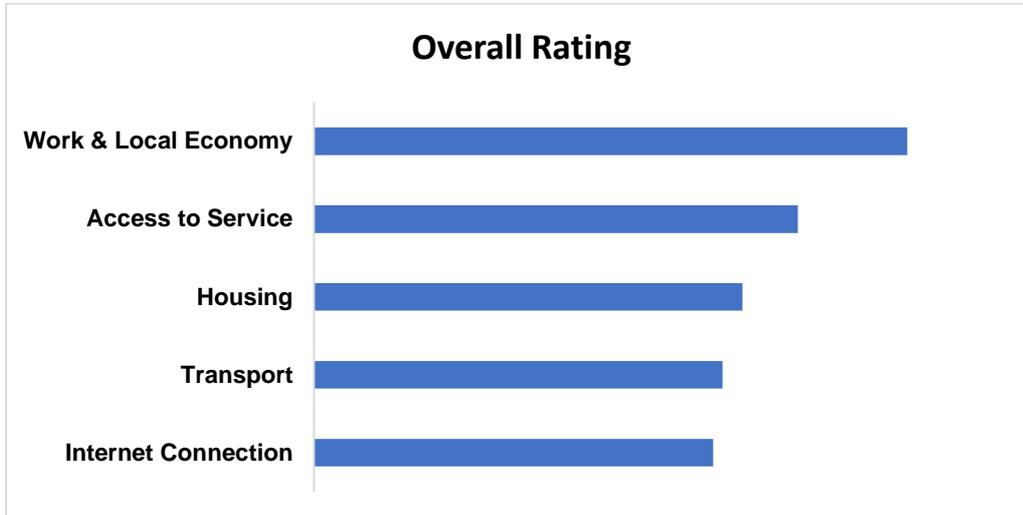- Worry Over Students Grades
- Loss of Jobs

Additional themes mentioned included: Green agenda lost; Long term effects of social isolation; Long term effects on physical health; Improvement of tourism facilities; More people could move here if working from home is the new normal; Loss of local facilities that benefit the community
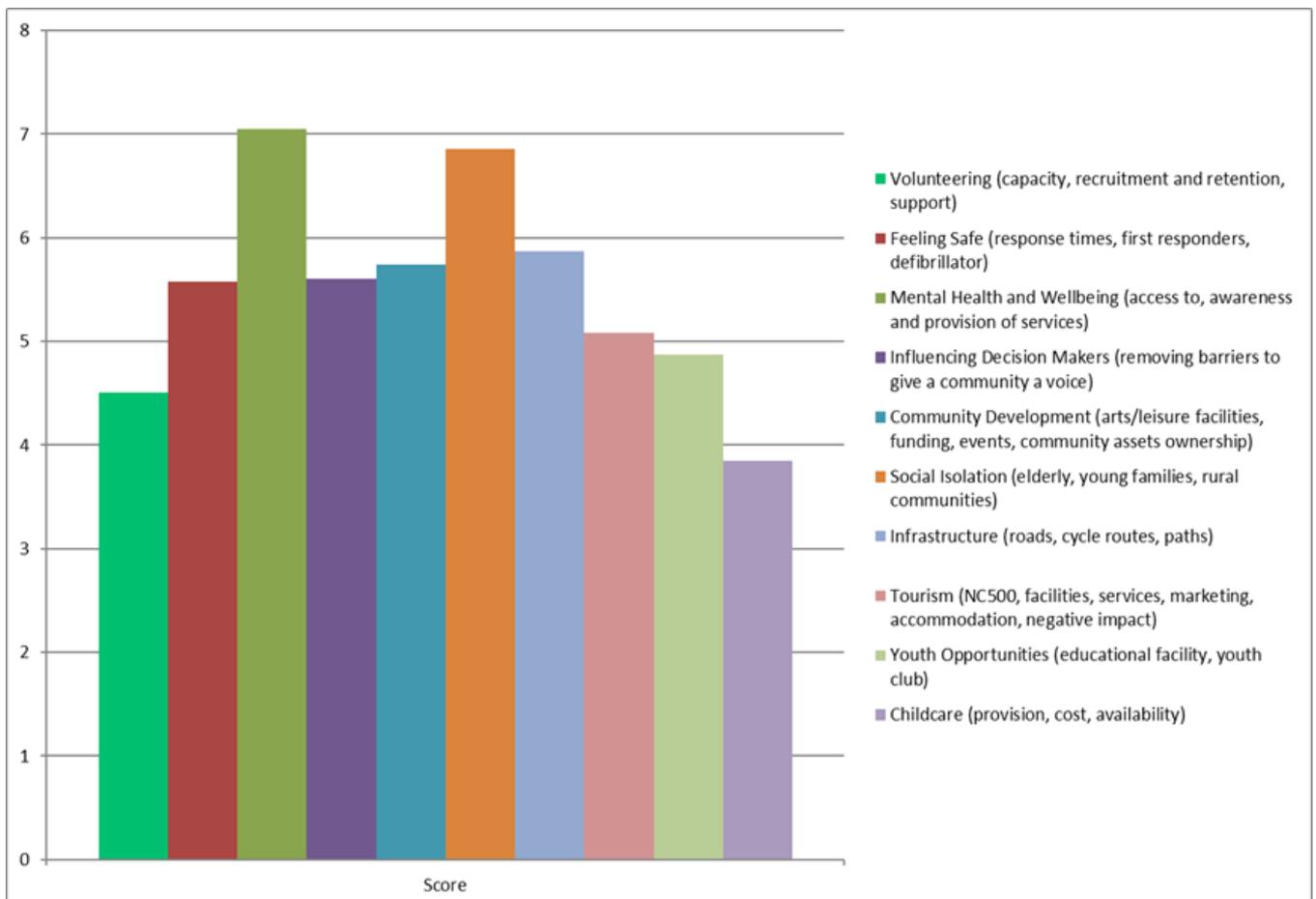
PRIORITY THEME QUESTIONS

Question:
The Community Engagement project identified five priority themes across Sutherland as a whole. Considering the impact of Covid-19 please rank these in order of importance in your opinion. 5 being Least Important and 1 being Most Important.

Overall Rating

Theme	
Work & Local Economy	
Access to Service	
Housing	
Transport	
Internet Connection	

Question:
The Community Engagement project identified several additional themes to be considered across Sutherland as a whole. Considering the impact of Covid-19 please rank these in order of importance in your opinion. 1 being the Most Important and 10 being the Least Important.

- Volunteering (capacity, recruitment and retention, support)
- Feeling Safe (response times, first responders, defibrillator)
- Mental Health and Wellbeing (access to, awareness and provision of services)
- Influencing Decision Makers (removing barriers to give a community a voice)
- Community Development (arts/leisure facilities, funding, events, community assets ownership)
- Social Isolation (elderly, young families, rural communities)
- Infrastructure (roads, cycle routes, paths)
- Tourism (NC500, facilities, services, marketing, accommodation, negative impact)
- Youth Opportunities (educational facility, youth club)
- Childcare (provision, cost, availability)

Score

Question:
Please explain your ranking in more detail here. (100 words maximum)

35 Feeling ignored
28 Tourism is having a negative impact on us
17 Holistic Approach
14 Tourism management / investment needed
11 Difficult to prioritise
7 Nothing for children/young people
7 Unequal access to services/investment
6 Need childcare
6 Worried about vulnerable people
6 Tourism is/can be a good thing
6 No/poor Mental Health provision
6 Infrastructure problems
6 Feel some priorities are already covered
5 Covid has made things worse
4 Mental health is in crisis/has been tested
4 Getting to medical appointments is a problem
3 Worried about over-reliance on volunteers
3 Repopulation aspirations, or depopulation concerns
3 Priorities speak for themselves / as I see fit / you asked, I told you
3 Community need to get more involved
2 Geography is a problem
2 Funding is the priority
2 Community development covers everything
2 Caring for people
2 Sustainable/diverse workforce and economy
2 Covid has made tourism, mental health & feeling safe important, no other change
2 Social cohesion will offset isolation
1 Need private sector investment
1 Informal support for social isolation and mental health
1 Drugs & alcohol problems result of mental health issues
1 Finding volunteers now is OK but worries about long term
1 Poverty will be reduced by creating affluent community
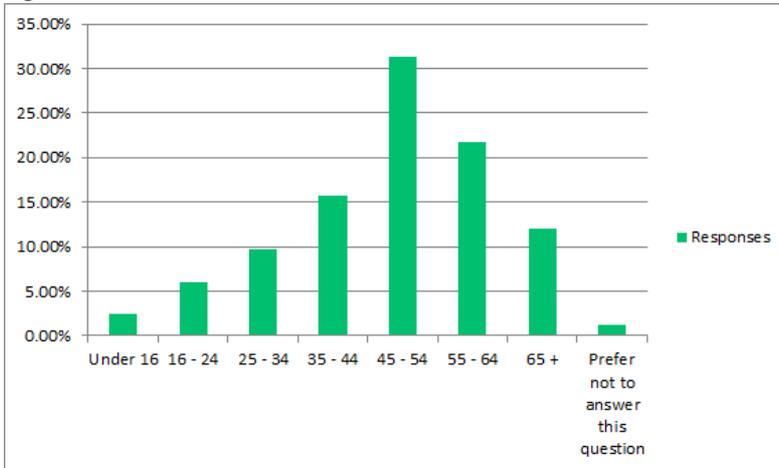**1 Communication is a priority**

Question:

If there is any further information you wish to share and input to this Sutherland Impact and Recovery Survey, please include it here. (100 words maximum)
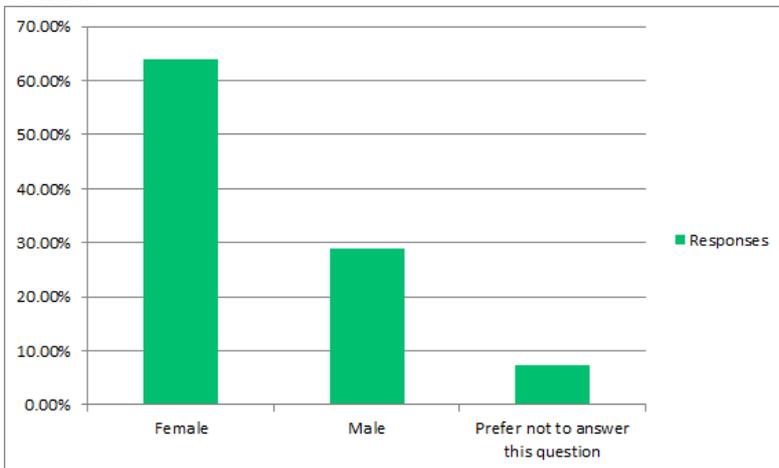
8 Climate change
7 Need houses and jobs
6 Unsustainable tourism
6 Positive things from Covid
5 Need to work harder to connect communities and make them fairer/more inclusive
4 We need to be forward thinking/strategic/ambitious
4 Sutherland needs listened to
4 Unhappy with survey
3 Better health care needed
3 Infrastructure & Facilities
3 Negative things from Covid
3 Need positive action
3 Advice for the team
3 Invest in Communities
2 Over-reliance on volunteers
1 Prefer to meet the needs of visitors not chase them away.
1 Communities are different NW and EC
1 Provide a voice for the intense local frustration.
1 Need consistent clarity
1 Need Balance Young/Old. Development/Environment. Sustainability/Respect.
1 Brexit will have a bigger impact than Covid, especially if no deal.
1 Sutherland at the Coos tail for resources.
1 Dornoch heavily dependent of tourism, especially golf
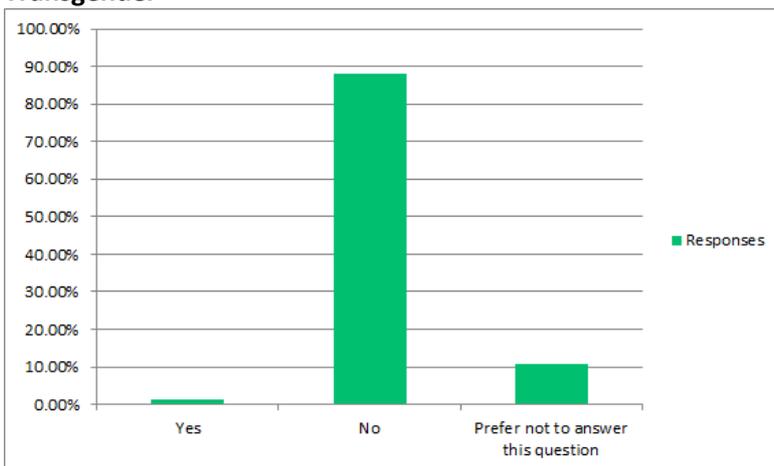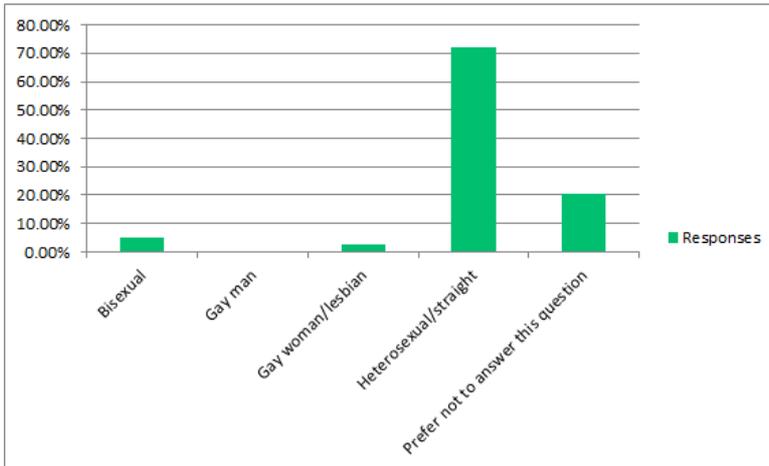
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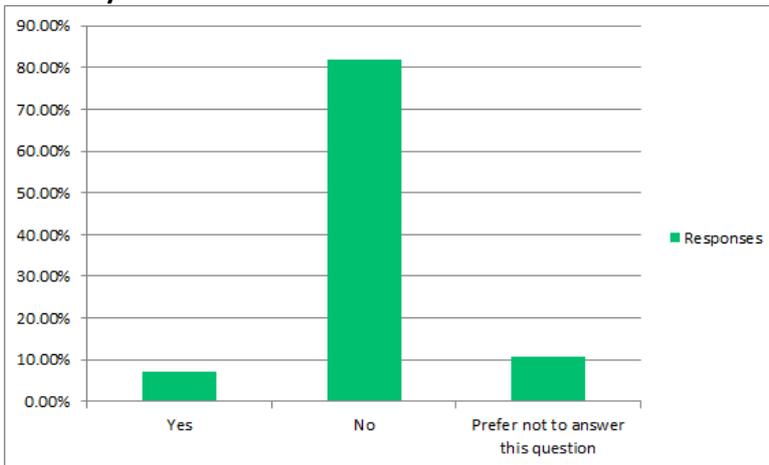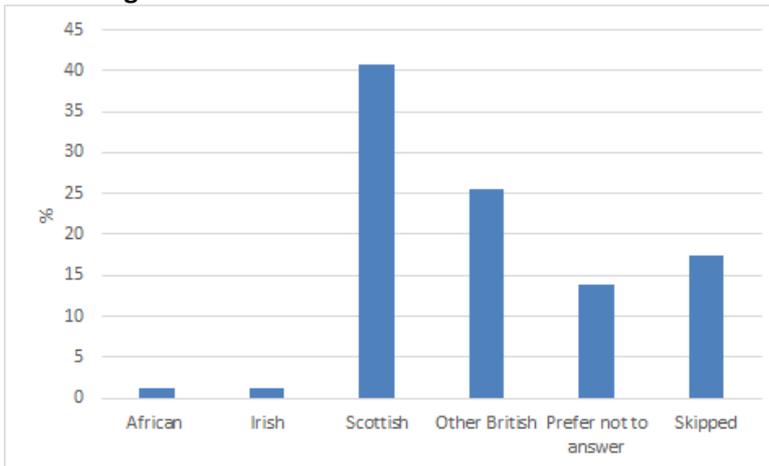
Age

Gender

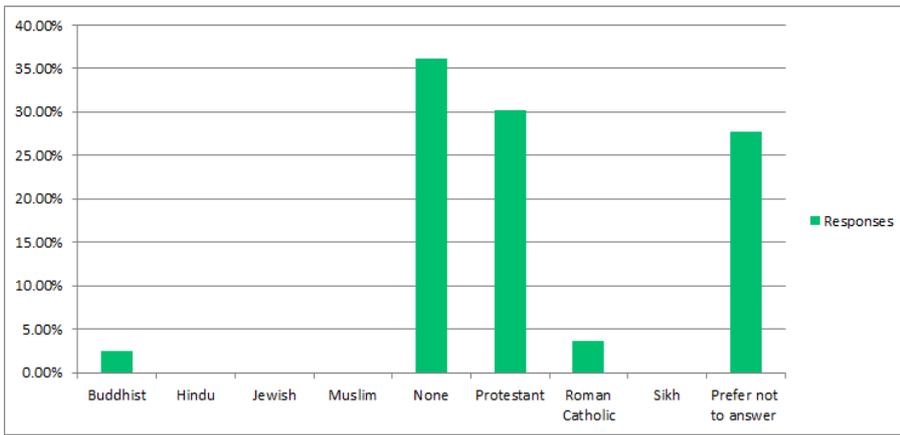
Transgender

Sexual Orientation

Disability

Ethnic Origin

Religion or Belief

Caring Responsibility