

Results of “Your Neighbourhood, Your Islington” Core Strategy consultation.

February 2009

1.0 Summary

Between 15 September and 2 November 2008 the council conducted a major consultation on the Core Planning Strategy - otherwise known as Your Neighbourhood, Your Islington.

This important document will influence decisions about how the borough will develop up to 2025 and beyond, so the council wanted to make sure that all residents and stakeholders had a chance to give their views.

In total the consultation produced over 2200 responses. This report sets out a summary of the main findings.

2.0 Methodology

The consultation set out a number of issues and options for the future development of the borough on issues such as housing, open space and employment. The consultation was designed to find people’s priorities for the different issues to inform the future policy development of the Core Strategy.

A number of different methods were used to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation in it.

A 16-page summary was created with involvement from local residents. This summary leaflet explained the purpose of the Core Strategy, along with the context of future housing, population and job growth across the borough. It then introduced the main issues, setting out the key questions for each issue, and the consequences of the different approaches that could be taken.

A questionnaire was included within the leaflet to invite people to set out their priorities by single choice answers for each issue. Spaces were available for people to add further comments throughout the questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire were two ranking questions to ask for people’s priorities about transport, as well as their priorities about the contributions made by developers to the local community.

The summary leaflet and questionnaire were distributed to all 90,000 households in Islington. Brochures were also sent out to all the libraries, with posters sent to libraries, community and health centres across the borough. In addition, a letter was sent to over 1400 individuals and organisations that have previously expressed or were identified as potentially having an interest in the consultation. While our database proved useful for contacting some groups, further research scoped a whole range of additional community groups in the borough. We then contacted hundreds of different groups offering to meet with them.

Awareness was raised through publicity in numerous council publications and e-bulletins including the residents' newsletter IslingtonNow and the staff magazine and e-bulletin.

Council Officers went to 40 venues, including libraries, leisure centres, markets, community events and festivals across the borough to speak to residents, answer questions, and raise awareness of the consultation. Competition prizes of a pair of Eurostar tickets and shopping vouchers were used as an extra incentive.

A large effort was made to involve groups who do not traditionally get involved. Local businesses and the voluntary and community sector were targeted through specific publications and newsletters.

A one-day workshop was held with local disabled residents, working with Disability Action in Islington. The workshop was attended by 20 local disabled people from across six main impairment groups. The day identified many inequalities that disabled people face in their everyday lives and possible options for addressing them. A workshop was also held with the Islington Women's Design Group. Further work is currently ongoing to engage with young people in the borough by working with Young Advisors. The results from these other more in-depth consultations will be published separately.

A questionnaire was also sent out through the council's citizens panel. This is a broadly representative collection of around 1000 residents who have volunteered to be involved in different council consultations. This provided us with 630 responses. The questionnaire responses totalled 1581, providing a combined total of 2211. This represents a very large response rate for a high level strategic planning document which are traditionally difficult to engage people in.

Finally, written comments were also received from other stakeholders such as Government agencies and the Greater London Authority. These will be published separately, along with details of how they have been responded to.

The consultation period lasted officially for 7 weeks from 15 September to 3 November, however questionnaires were distributed at the end of August and beginning of September, allowing people around 9 weeks to comment.

3.0 Results

All the figures below are based on the percentage of people answering each question. Non-responses to questions are not included in the quoted percentages. As the results of the citizens panel and the questionnaire were largely similar they have been combined to help show the total overall opinion for each question. However, any significant differences are highlighted.

3.1 Profile of questionnaire and citizens panel respondents.

In general, more women responded than men. This was particularly the case for the questionnaire where almost 60% of respondents were women. The citizens panel however was much closer to representing the borough average.

Table 1: gender of respondents

Gender			
	Questionnaire (%)	Citizens Panel (%)	Borough average (%) ¹
Male	41%	46%	48%
Female	59%	54%	52%

The age of respondents broadly mirrors that of the borough as a whole, with two notable exceptions: the under-representation of people aged 16-24, and the over-representation of those aged 45-64.

Table 2: age of respondents

Age			
	Questionnaire (%)	Citizens Panel (%)	Borough average (%)
Under 16	0.2%		
16-24	2%	3%	16%
25-44	40%	48%	50%
45-64	41%	35%	22%
65+	15%	15%	12%

Of those who stated their ethnicity, there was an under-representation of black, Asian and mixed-background respondents, with 90% of the respondents categorising themselves as white. The citizens panel however, had a higher level of representation amongst the black and Asian communities to more closely reflect the population profile of the borough.

¹ Population profile is drawn from Census 2001 and ONS mid-year estimates 2007.

Table 3: ethnicity of respondents

Ethnicity			
	Questionnaire (%)	Citizens Panel (%)	Borough average (%)
White	90%	83%	75%
Black	4%	9%	12%
Asian	2%	3%	5%
Mixed	2%		4%
Chinese and other	2%	6%	3%

14% of questionnaire respondents said they were disabled, had an impairment, or a long-term limiting illness, this is broadly similar to the population profile of the borough as a whole. By comparison, a slightly lower proportion of respondents to the citizens panel (one in ten) declared themselves to have a disability.

Table 4: profile of disabled respondents

Disability			
	Questionnaire (%)	Citizens Panel (%)	Borough average (%)
Has a disability	14%	10%	18%
Does not have a disability	86%	90%	82%

3.2 Distribution of respondents by postcode

The profile of respondents by postcode highlights a significant response from each of the largest geographical postcode areas: N1, N4, N5, N7, N19 and EC1. The greatest number of responses (over 30%) came from the N1 area.

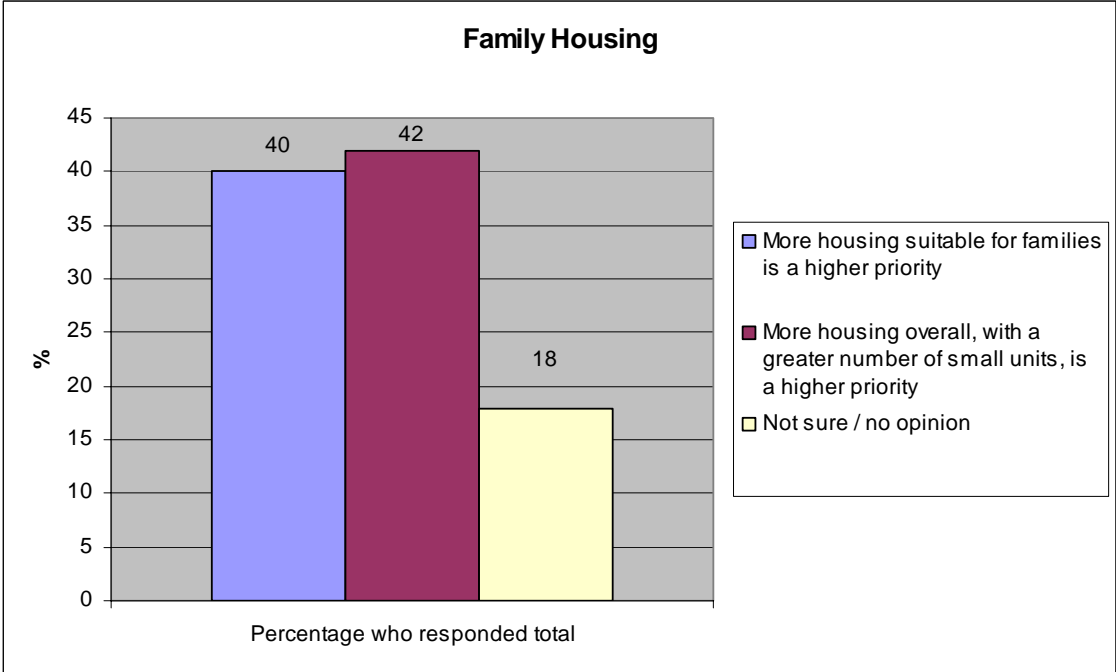
Table 5: respondents by postcode

	Questionnaire		Citizen's Panel	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
N1	522	34.6%	182	30.7%
N4	111	7.4%	46	7.8%
N5	215	14.2%	85	14.3%
N6	2	0.1%	2	0.3%
N7	209	13.9%	117	19.7%
N8	1	0.1%	1	0.2%
N16	16	1.1%	4	0.7%
N19	244	16.2%	97	16.4%
EC1	151	10.0%	48	8.1%
EC2	1	0.1%		
WC1	28	1.9%	11	1.9%
Non Islington	9	0.6%		
Total	1509	100%	593	100%

3.3 Priorities for housing

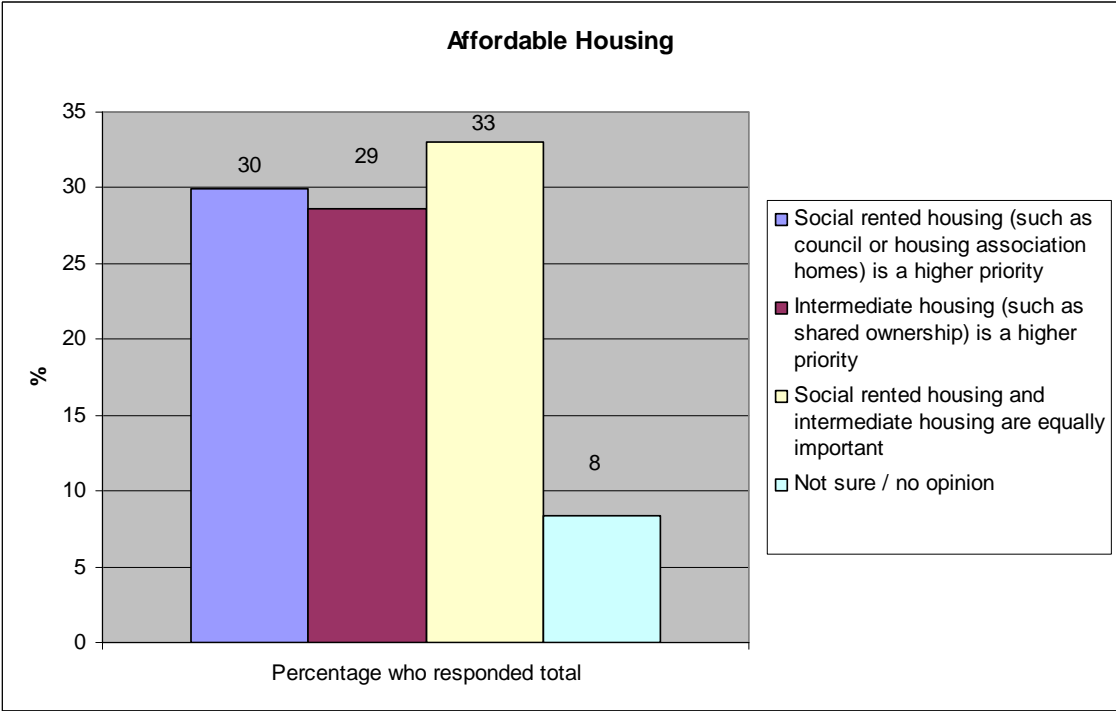
Family Housing

More family houses and a greater number of smaller houses were both seen as a priority in the future by respondents, with around 40% of respondents favouring each priority. There was a slight preference for more housing overall by the citizens panel, with 10% more respondents stating this as their priority.



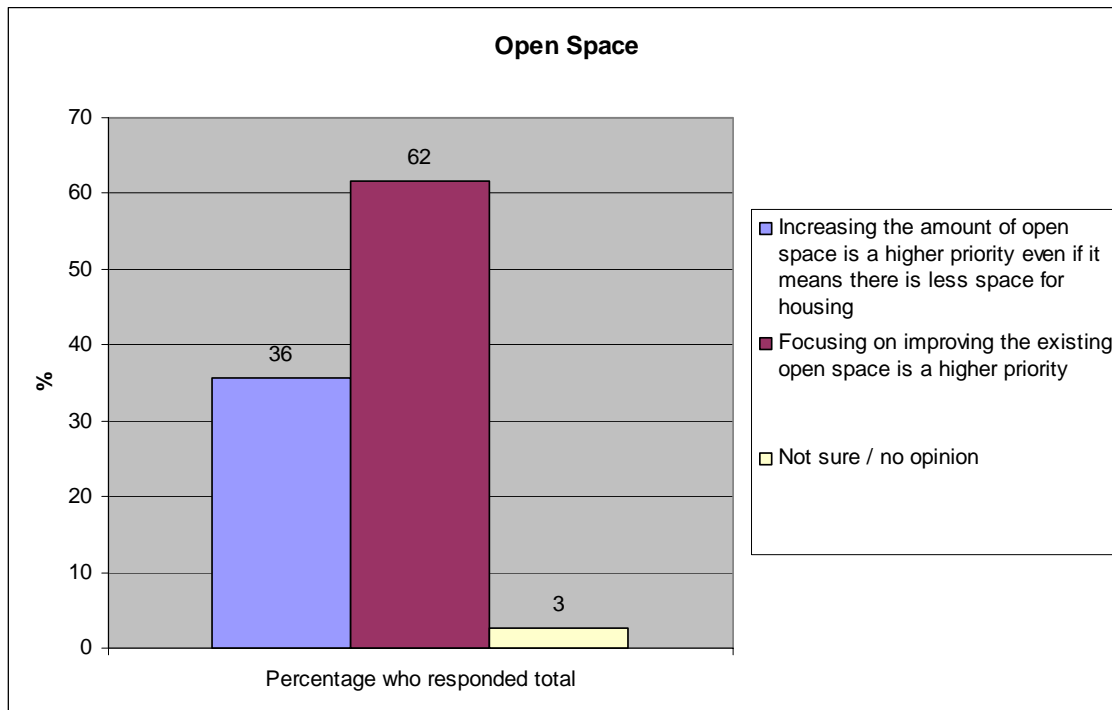
Affordable Housing

Social rented housing (such as council housing) and intermediate housing (such as shared ownership), were both seen as a priority with almost 30% of respondents supporting each. In addition, one in three respondents chose the option that placed them with equal importance. The most noticeable difference in opinion was the citizens panel where almost 20% more respondents stated a preference for social housing over intermediate housing.

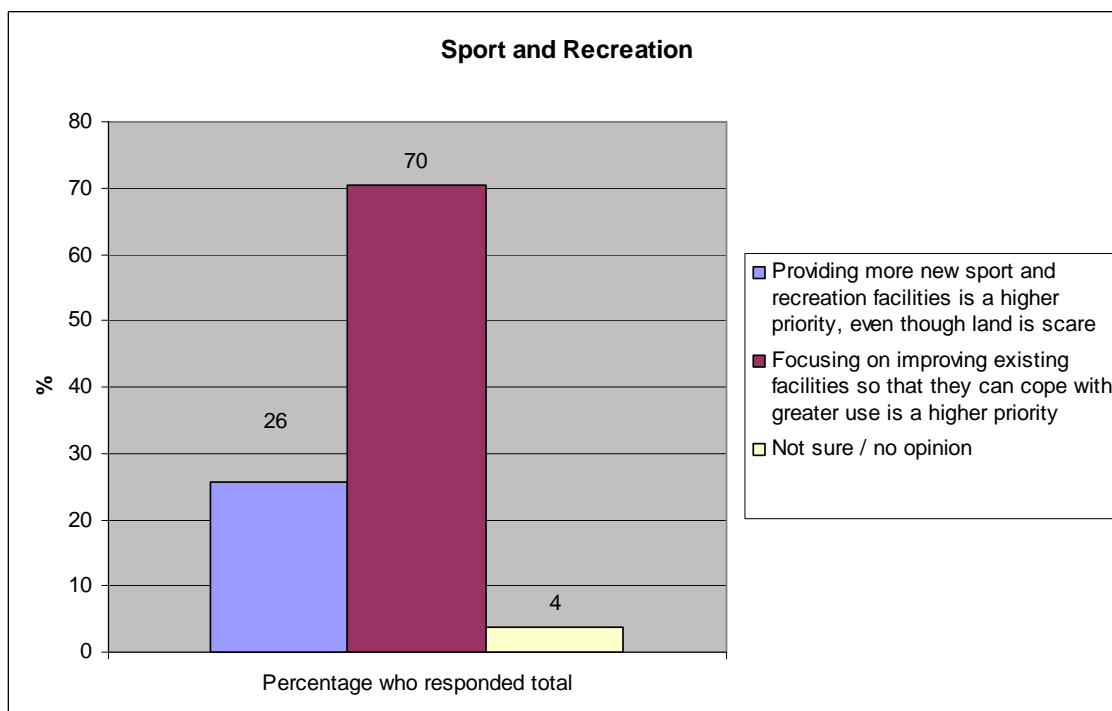


3.4 Priorities for open space, play space, sport and recreation

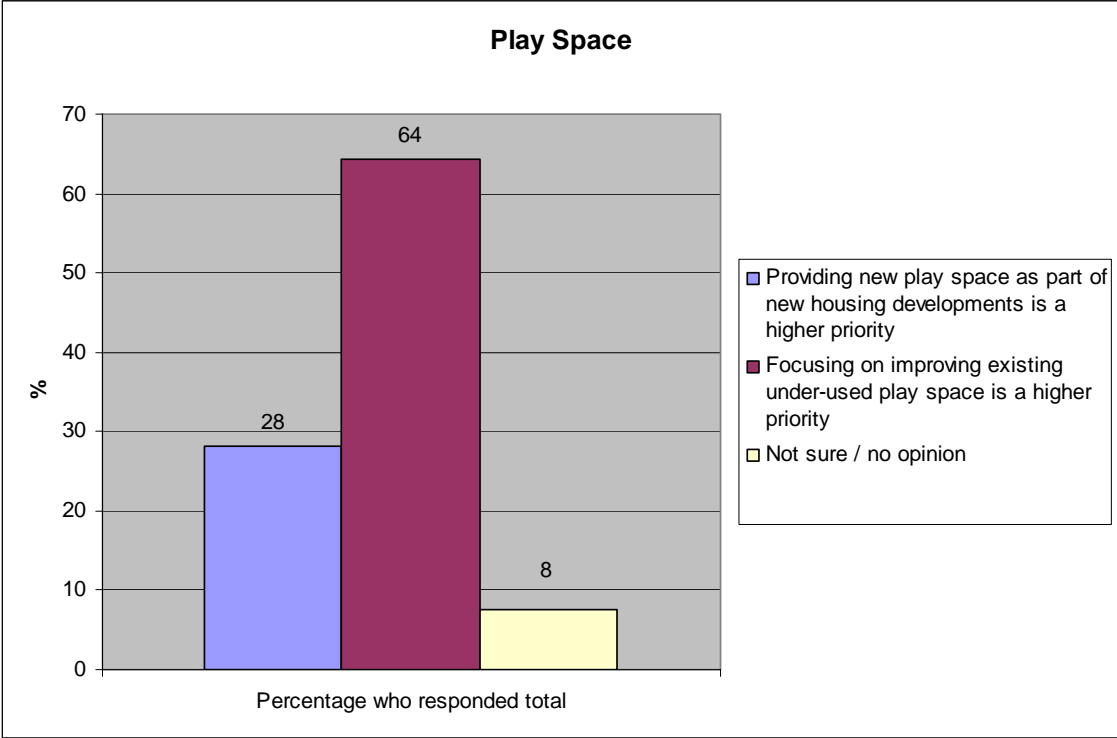
A clear majority of respondents (over 60%) stated a preference for improving existing open space provision. A significant minority however (over a third) supported an increase in the amount of open space overall.



There was overwhelming support by 70% of respondents for improving existing sport and recreation facilities. A significant minority however (one quarter) supported more new facilities in the future.

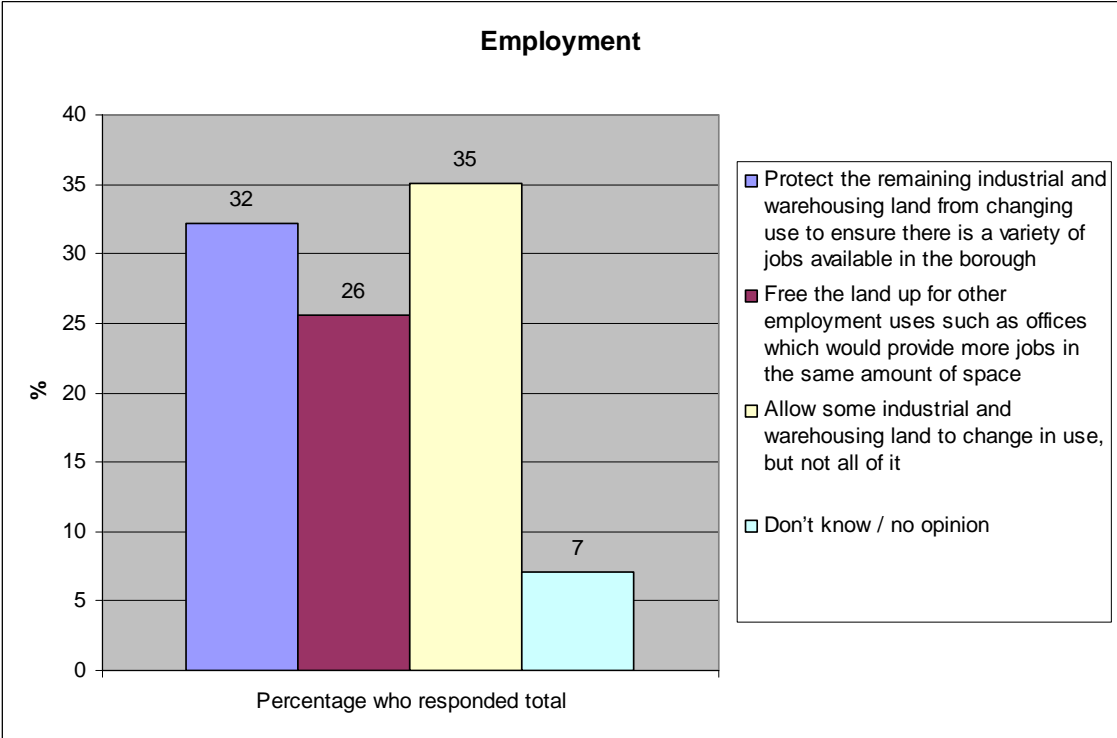


As with open space and sport and recreation, the clear preference, identified as a priority by almost two thirds of respondents, was to improve existing under-used play space. Over a quarter of respondents however also wanted new play spaces to be provided as part of new housing developments.



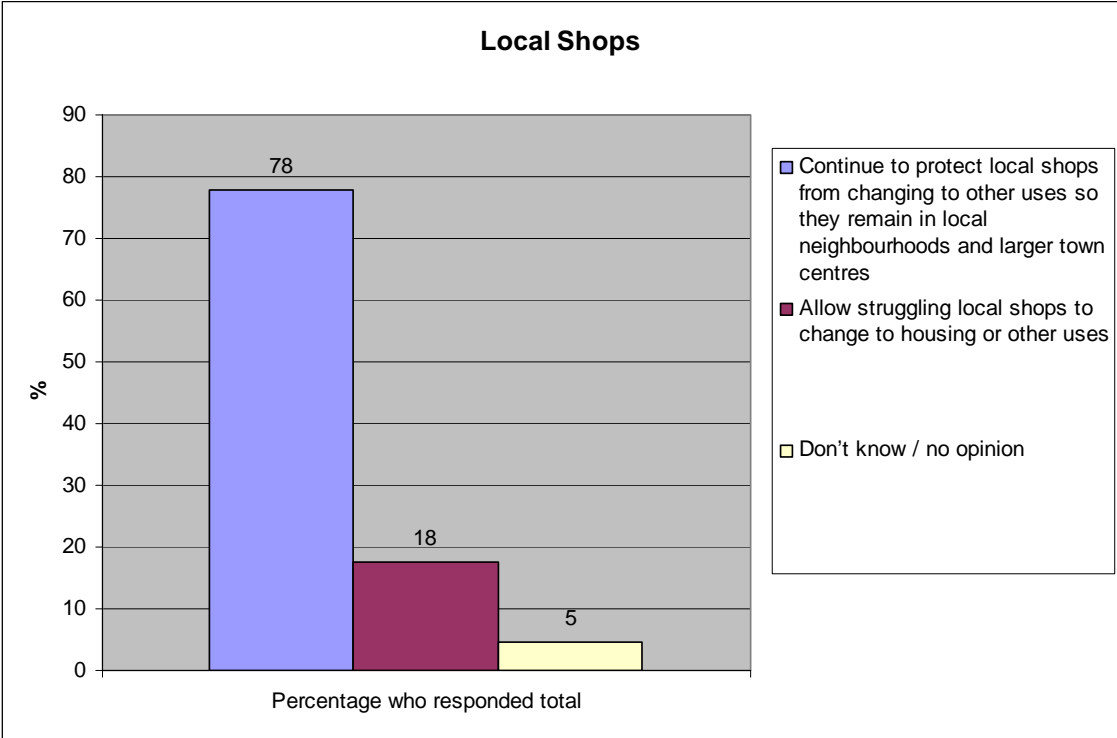
3.5 Priorities for employment

There was a clear desire to keep some, or all, of industrial and warehousing land, with almost 70% of respondents choosing an option which protects at least some of it. A quarter of respondents however wanted to free this land up for other employment uses such as offices.



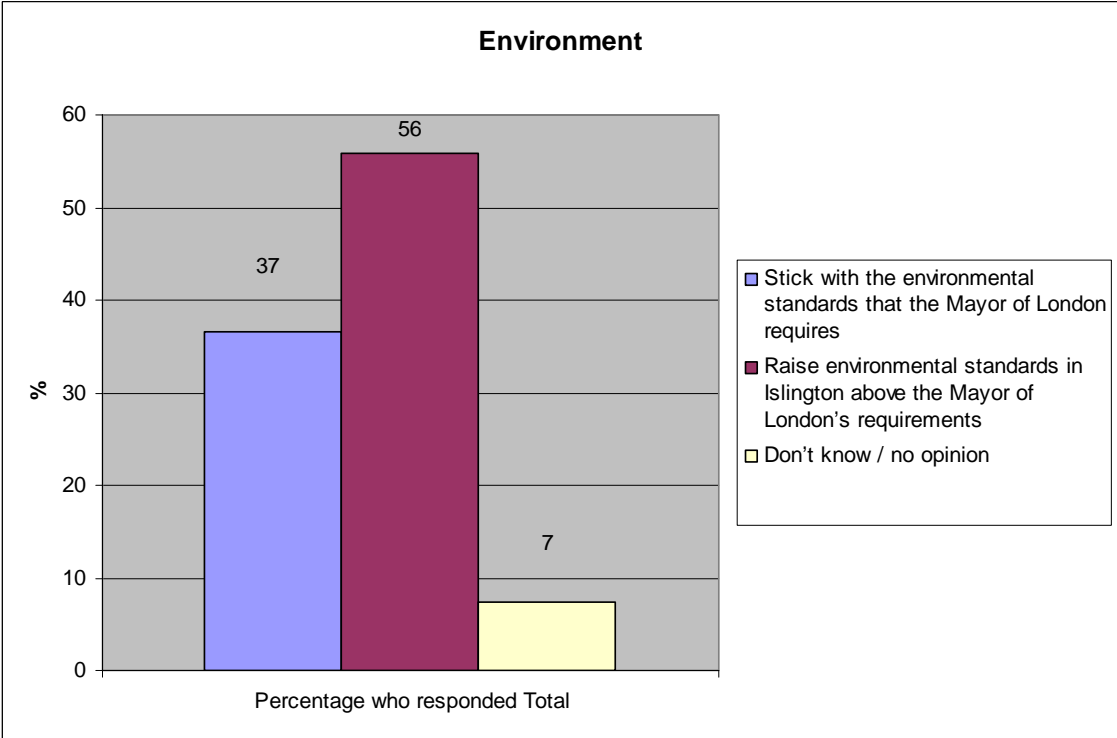
3.6 Local shops

There was strong support (almost 80% of respondents) for the council to protect local shops from changing use. Only one in six people (18%) favoured allowing struggling local shops to change to other uses.



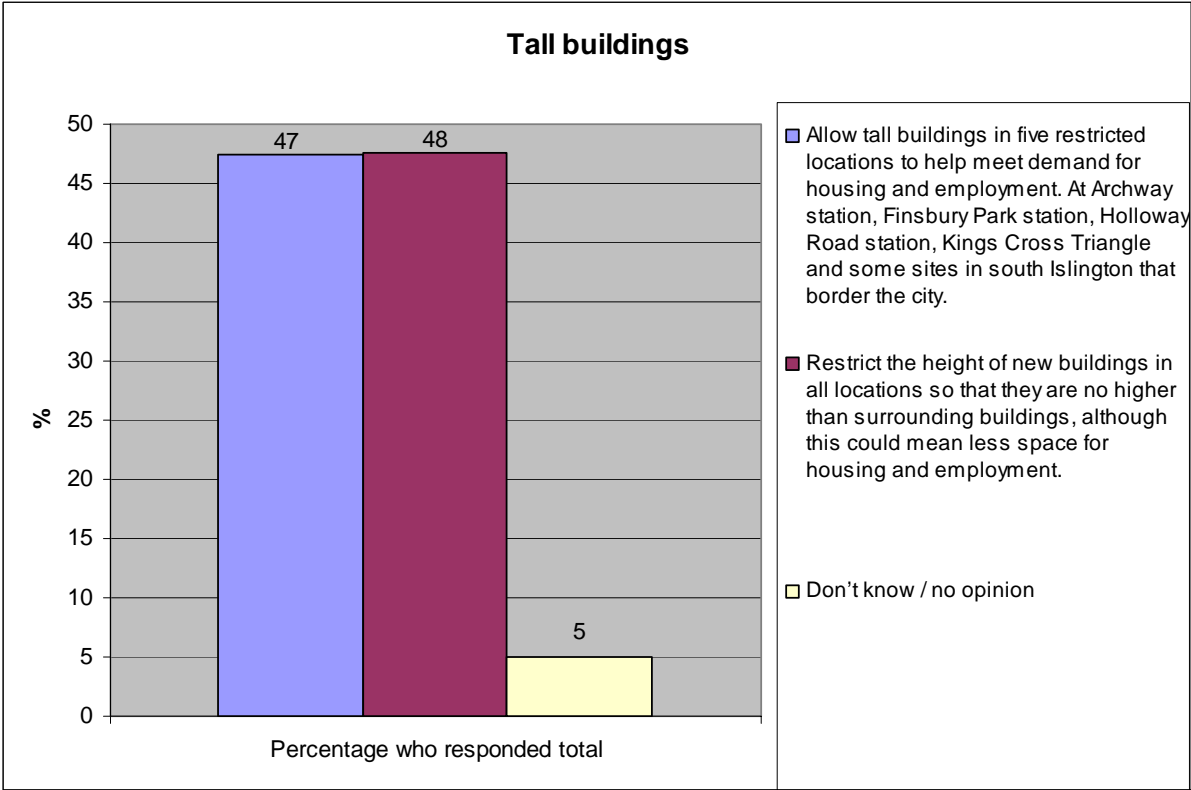
3.7 Protecting the environment

The majority of respondents (56%) wanted Islington to raise its environmental standards above those of the Mayor of London. Just over a third of respondents however, wanted the borough to stick with the Mayor's standards in the future.



3.8 Tall buildings

Opinion was greatly divided on the approach to tall buildings. Almost half of respondents were in favour of allowing tall buildings in five restricted locations, whereas the same proportion wanted to restrict the height of new buildings.



3.9 Transport priorities

When respondents were asked to rank their priorities for improving public transport, cycle and pedestrian routes to reduce traffic congestion there was no clear standout preference. Almost a quarter of respondents ranked each option similarly as being their number one priority. This indicates that addressing all of these transport priorities will be important.

Table 6: Priorities for transport

Transport option	Percentage of respondents who ranked option as most important	Percentage of respondents who ranked option as least important .
Better cycle paths	25	32
Better pedestrian routes	24	22
Better bus routes	25	14
Improved capacity of Train/tube station	26	32

3.10 Priorities for future development

Respondents were asked to rank their priorities for future contributions by developers when new buildings are built to reduce their impact on the local community and environment. Affordable housing was thought to be a very important priority. A much higher percentage (33%) ranked this as their number one priority - almost double that of any other priority. Greater percentages of people also placed improved transport links (17%), and reducing the environmental impact of buildings (16%) as a priority. By contrast, higher percentages of people placed childcare and training opportunities as their least important themes.

Table 7: Priorities for future development

Option for future contributions by developers.	Percentage of respondents who ranked option as most important	Percentage of respondents who ranked option as least Important.
Affordable housing	33%	9%
Business premises	9%	12%
Environment	16%	10%
Open space	11%	7%
Play Space	5%	11%
Training	5%	18%
Childcare	4%	23%
Transport	17%	10%

4.0 Next Steps

Responses to the questionnaire and the Citizen’s Panel, along with the written responses received from other stakeholders will play a valuable role in helping to develop the Core Strategy. There will be ongoing consultation on a draft of the document in Summer 2009, before a final formal consultation in Autumn 2009.