Warwickshire County Council | Citizens' Panel on the Local Transport Plan

20th May 2021

Final debrief

Contents

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Key findings

1. **Panellists views towards travel and transport in Warwickshire are rooted in their experience as users of these services and residents of the county.** For most, their initial 'vision' for what the LTP should seek to achieve was therefore focused on changes which would have an immediate personal benefit i.e. reducing congestion, a faster / better connected bus network, and ensuring public transport was safe, clean and affordable.

2. **The Local Transport Plan was generally seen as comprehensive and spoke to the issues that mattered to them.** It was felt to cover a lot of ground (and areas which Panellists had not linked to transport before) and to be well thought through. Beyond considering the cost of services to users, participants struggled to identify additional themes or sub-themes. However, many also criticised the Plan for being too broad, and felt that achieving in all areas would be difficult under funding constraints.

3. **The themes of 'Wellbeing' and 'Environment' emerged early on as being of highest priority to Panellists.** They were able to easily make the connection to transport and could understand the personal relevance. The pandemic has brought issues relating to 'Wellbeing' to the fore, making this theme feel important and relatable. Meanwhile, the 'Environment' theme was also seen to have significant personal implications as well as being a major long-term challenge in which changes to travel can make a difference.

4. **'Economy' and 'Place' were harder to grasp and the link with personal transport use felt less intuitive, meaning they resonated less well.** For example, it was difficult to relate broad economic concepts like 'productivity and competitiveness' with supporting local jobs and high streets, which is a more tangible concern for Panellists. Similarly, though thriving communities or preventing isolation did feel important to Panellists, 'Place' struggled to stand out as a unique theme.

5. **There are some ongoing tensions between Panellists' desire for the LTP to put the environment at the heart of decision-making, and the expectation that there will be limited inconvenience to users.** There is clear support for prioritising the environment in future investments, with the caveat that panellists expect genuinely attractive / accessible public and active transport options, which are introduced gradually enough that no one feels constrained or limited to one form of transport.

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1 Background and methodology

Background and objectives

Warwickshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) was scheduled to continue through until 2026, but the decision was taken to bring forward the renewal date, in part due to the impact of Covid on the region, but also to reflect the challenges of tackling climate change, and developments in transport technology.

The council therefore initiated a statutory consultation process with stakeholders and the public on the LTP and the four 'key themes'. To run alongside this, Warwickshire County Council commissioned BritainThinks to run a Citizens' Panel with a more representative group of local residents.

The core objectives of this Panel were therefore to:
- Provide participants with an opportunity to build knowledge and develop informed opinions on transport and the LTP
- Validate whether the key benefits and issues for each theme have been correctly identified, and whether there are any gaps or opportunities which WCC should consider
- Allow participants to evaluate various trade-offs and deliberate with one another, ultimately reaching a mutually agreed set of recommendations to inform the development of the LTP.

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We took a four-stage process talking to residents about the Local Transport Plan

1. Launch event and induction groups	2. Online community	3. Deliberation groups	4. Closing event and post-research task
30-minute launch event with all Panellists followed by 5 1.5-hour focus groups • Explored spontaneous priorities and concerns relating to transport, and initial reactions to LTP themes	**1-week online community involving all Panellists** • Introduced panellists to the themes and sub-themes in the LTP using a mixture of text-based and video information	**5 reconvened focus groups each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes** • Reflected on LTP themes and sub-themes in detail	**45-minute closing event with all focus group with all Panellists, followed by an online form** • Panel feedback and input into prioritisation of themes and final principles for the LTP
X 4 60-minute in-depth interviews with 'hard-to-reach' residents	**'Hard-to-reach' residents sent information packs reflecting content of online community**	**X 4 60-minute reconvened in-depth interviews with 'hard-to-reach' residents**	*29 Panellists began the research, supplemented by in-depth interviews with 4 hard-to-reach residents. Further detail on the sample composition of the Panel can be found in the appendix*

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2 Background views on travel and transport

Panellists' preferred mode of transport varies according to journey type, rurality, and routine, but overall the car is dominant

Taking children to / from school

While some walked their children / allowed their children to **walk** to school, **car** was often preferred if the school isn't nearby, or the walk is felt to be unsafe.

This was also preferred if this journey needed to be incorporated with others (e.g., dropping young children off on the commute to work)

Commuting to / from work or uni

Public transport (mainly train) used by a minority where there was a direct route available.

Otherwise, **car** was also preferred for commuting because of it is often seen as the quickest and most cost-effective option, or safer if travelling at night.

Shopping / other essential trips

Car often used for weekly shopping to more easily transport purchases home, though those who live close to town centres may **walk**. Public transport was often described as too time-consuming for essential trips.

Leisure

Prior to the pandemic, Panellists were more likely to walk, cycle, or use **public transport** for leisure compared to other types of journeys, although **car** was often used for visiting attractions or family/friends further afield.

In the past year since COVID-19 struck, some Panellists say they have stopped commuting to work, and the need to 'stay local' encouraged most to try active forms of transport across all types of journeys. Looking forward there is some hesitancy about using public transport again.

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However, reliance on cars and problems associated with car travel are common causes of concern

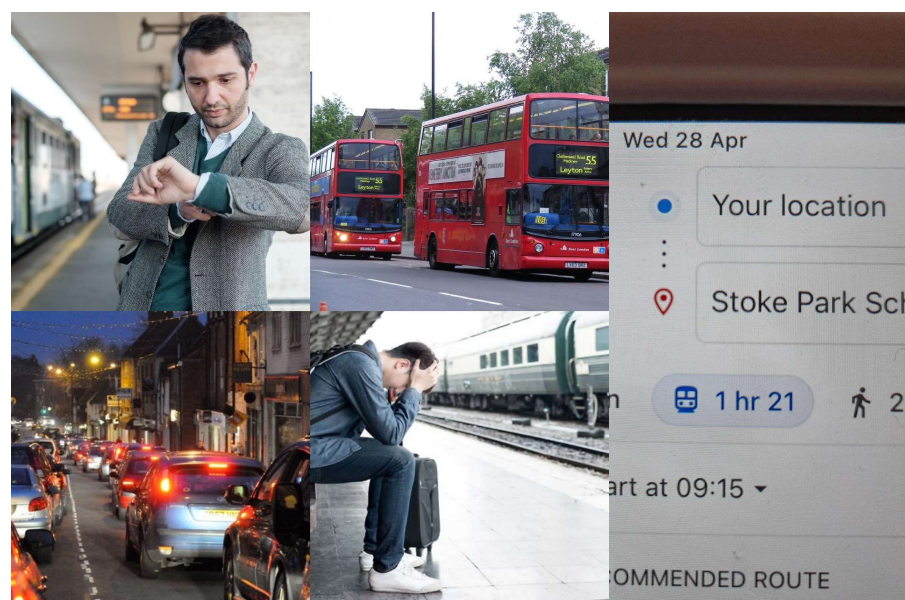| Congestion in town centres	Infrequent, unreliable and poorly connected bus network	Lack of protected cycle lanes in urban areas
Congestion emerged as a key issue across discussion groups. Car users cited multiple examples of areas prone to 'frustrating' traffic jams, which were **also criticised for creating pollution and putting visitors off town centres**. Some Panellists felt this would be **especially important to consider in light of housing growth / new developments** which they had noticed in their local area.	Many felt they **couldn't trust buses to arrive on time**, and those in rural areas have often found themselves having to travel a greater distance than by car to pick up the right route / connections.	Some Panellists liked the idea of cycling more, **but felt that many cycle lanes – particularly in urban areas - weren't sufficiently protected from other vehicles**.
"We need to look at town centres and how we divert traffic away from town centres so they become a safer, nicer environment...using park and ride and things like that, making it a nicer place to walk around."	*"If we want to go to Stratford, we've got to go to Coventry and then to Stratford, always via Coventry or Nuneaton; we haven't got transport to take us straight through to anywhere."* (Hard-to-reach resident)	*"I like my bike and I want more cycle paths that aren't just stuck on the side of the road. More like in the Netherlands; away from the road users."*

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These issues were reflected in the images participants selected to convey their associations with travel/transport in Warwickshire

At the beginning of the research we asked panellists to send in a picture which summed how they feel about transport in Warwickshire at the moment…

Gridlocked roads, high levels of pollution

Inconvenient / unreliable public transport

Pre-pandemic, most urban areas in the UK registered illegal levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution, and the nation's overall levels exceeded World Health Organisation limits

But there were positives in travel recognised too – notably rail connections between towns and rural cycleways/greenways

Overall, Panellists found it difficult to recall specific journeys around Warwickshire which had gone well, underlining that a good journey is often defined by being one that isn't remembered (i.e. straightforward and stress-free). That said, the following were mentioned as things which are liked about Warwickshire's current transport system:

Reliable rail services with good connections between urban areas	Cycleways / greenways	Payment / navigation technology
The **speed / quality of rail connections** between Warwickshire and London were praised in particular.	Those in rural areas liked that they had access to several cycleways / greenways, which had become **even more valuable through the pandemic.**	A small number spoke about how new technology had begun to **make navigating and paying for public transport easier**.
"The Chiltern service to London from Stratford is good because it is fast and not too expensive. They're trains are nice and they have internet."	*"The cycling greenway in Stratford is fantastic, as well as the tramway, which is traffic free, pleasant, and makes you feel safe."*	*"One bus service has a live bus tracker app, which is great, so you can check where the next bus is."*

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3 Transport vision

Panellists painted a vision of transport in the county with 'green' transport options and greater options for walking and cycling

High-tech, 'green' transport infrastructure

Pedestrianisation, more support for cycling, and better traffic flow

Improving the user experience formed the core of Panellists' 'transport vision'

✔ Integrated / well-planned

- Panellists want a system where **different modes of transport work well alongside each other** (e.g., being able to easy to switch between different modes of transport, cars and cyclists not being in 'conflict')
- There was also a strong desire too see plans to **reduce congestion / improve traffic flow** and better coordinate road works

"I think it could be joined up…so if you got to train station and needed the bus, they were all there, you could do your journey in one go."

✔ Fast, direct and reliable

- **Public transport was widely seen as more time-consuming and stressful** than travelling by car.
- Panellists therefore want a system which:
    - They can trust to arrive and get them to their destination on time
    - Offers more direct routes between smaller towns/rural areas
    - Is simple and easy to navigate

"Fast, cost-effective and reliable. Like the trams in Switzerland, with a screen showing the times, and less pollution on the roads."

✔ Safe, clean and affordable

- Feeling **safe** walking and cycling alongside road traffic, as well as to use public transport at night or when travelling alone/with children (particularly for women or those with a-typical working hours) was an immediate priority.
- **Affordability or 'value for money'** was also front of mind when discussing public transport; many said they didn't use public transport more often because **travelling by car is cheaper**.

"Public transport will be subsidised by the council and affordable."

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More broadly, a 'good' transport system in Warwickshire was envisioned to support the local economy and minimise environmental impact

Supports the local economy

Panellists wanted to see consideration for:
- **Shops and high streets –** they recognised that a transport system with better/more connections could encourage people to shop in local high streets and that pedestrianisation in town centres would improve the experience.
- **Tourism –** panellists were proud of Warwickshire's heritage, and wanted to see a transport system which enabled tourists to move easily around the county
- **Jobs –** helping people connect with employment was also recognised as an important part of a future transport system

"It can bring people in, and business in, it can build up Bedworth and bring the life back, make it vibrant. We're a ghost town and it's awful."
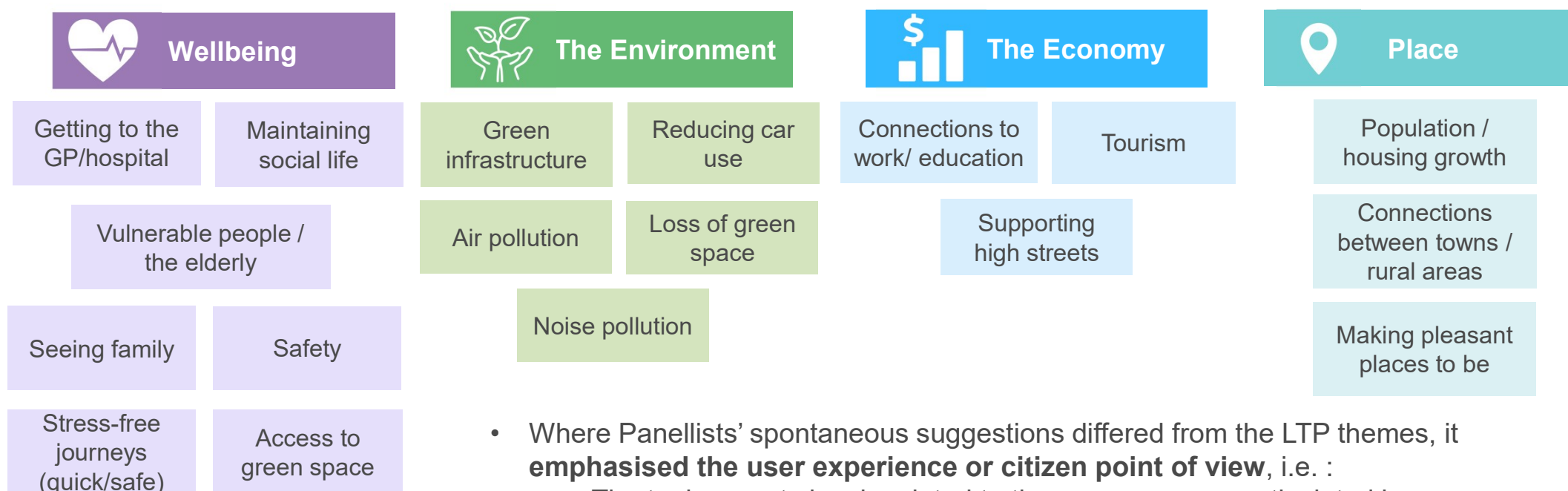*(Hard-to-reach resident)*

Green and non-polluting

- The sense of responsibility to protect the environment for future generations was front of mind, **echoing the wider national/international debate about climate change**.
- A shift to 'green' transport was also seen **protecting the health / wellbeing** of Warwickshire residents and their enjoyment of their local area.
- It was also felt to be important that Warwickshire's future transport system **harness 'green' technology** to minimise pollution.

"It should be reliable and sustainable. It would give you more freedom to do more activities. At the moment, if we want to go to Kenilworth Castle for example, we have to take the car. A great transport system will help attract tourists."

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When thinking about how to achieve this vision, Panellists' spontaneous considerations were resonant with the existing LTP themes

Wellbeing	The Environment	The Economy	Place

Wellbeing

Getting to the GP/hospital	Maintaining social life

Vulnerable people / the elderly

Seeing family	Safety

Stress-free journeys (quick/safe)	Access to green space

The Environment

Green infrastructure	Reducing car use

Air pollution	Loss of green space

Noise pollution

The Economy

Connections to work/ education	Tourism

Supporting high streets

Place

Population / housing growth

Connections between towns / rural areas

Making pleasant places to be

- Where Panellists' spontaneous suggestions differed from the LTP themes, it **emphasised the user experience or citizen point of view**, i.e. :
  - The topics most closely related to the economy were articulated in more tangible and person-centred language (e.g. supporting local high streets)
  - **Cost/affordability and reliability of public transport** were important issues but did not easily fit under any of the existing themes
  - There were also queries raised over **funding** of the LTP

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4 Views on the LTP

While Panellists know the Council is involved in transport, awareness of the LTP was very low

- **Most of the Panel was not aware** of the Local Transport Plan as a specific document or process

- Even **those who were aware didn't have a clear idea** of what it would exactly it was about or would involve

  - Those who had heard of it had encountered it through council election campaigns or had heard the name directly from the council

- There was a general assumption from both groups that the LTP would involve the **concrete detail of what transport there would be and where**

  - As such, the overarching "key themes" presented diverged from their immediate expectations

"They will need consider the infrastructure such as the bus lanes, and timing information. Give us what we want, not just what they think we want!"

"I mean, the buzz words are there, "effective", "implementation", but there aren't any details there yet. It sounds like a plan that has been thought before consultation and will just sit there and gather dust."

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The LTP and themes were positively received but there are areas for consideration that may help it connect better with residents

Comprehensive

Panellists saw the plan as **well conceived and thought-through,** covering issues important to them and bringing others to their attention**. No 'fifth' theme was suggested.**

"I didn't think the Council put this much thought into this at all! It's an eye-opener."

Missing references to cost and tech

For many, **references to the cost of public transport was missing,** with its impact on accessibility and decisions to use the car. For some, the **role of new tech** was felt to be missing.

Can feel quite abstract

Given the assumption that the LTP would provide specific information and detailed plans, the themes sometimes felt **very broad and abstract to Panellists at first.**

"In practice I appreciate that a limitation of any Plan is the issue of cost and funding so I think any considerations will be made with that, and national priorities in mind. However, I still believe it should be possible to come up with innovative solutions to the challenges faced."
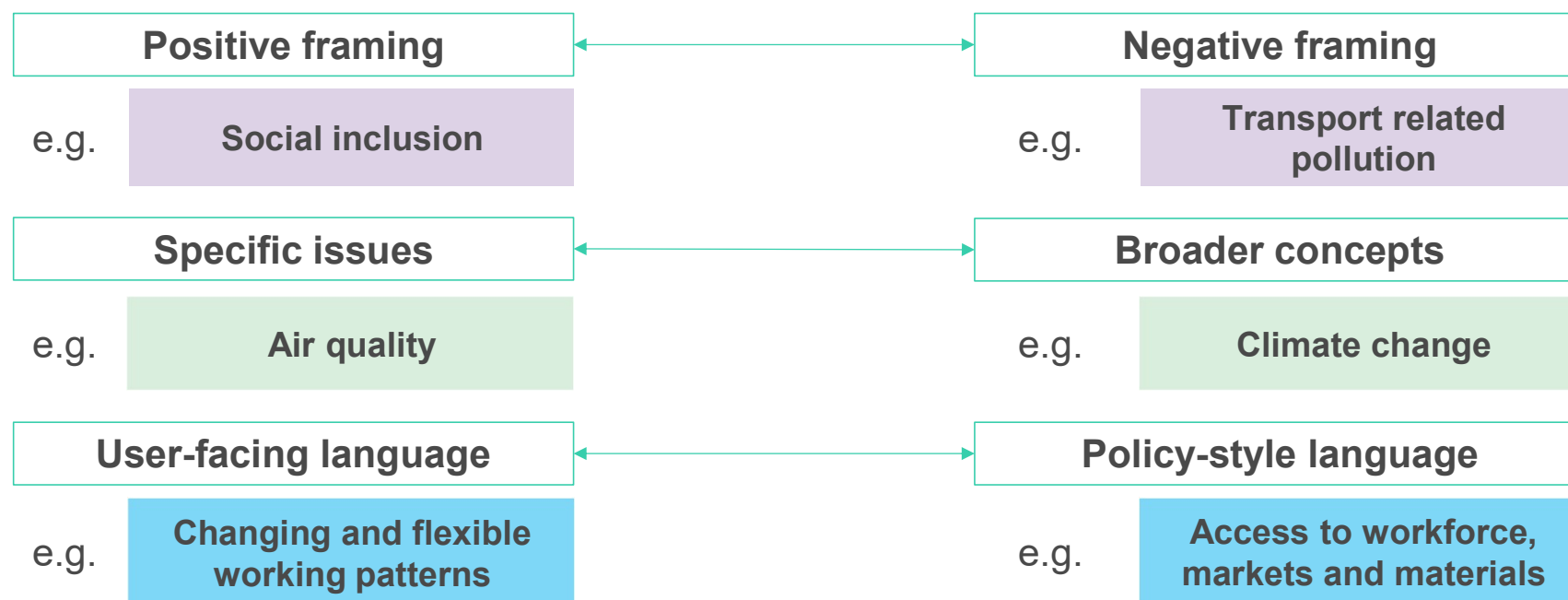
Can be too 'system-focused' in places

Panellists **interpreted the themes first and foremost as transport users and residents of the county**, with broader impacts needing more time and reflection to take on board.

Overall, the Panel was split 50/50 on whether the LTP can deliver on its aims – concerns about funding, the breadth of its ambition and the complexity of the plan were the things that undermined their confidence in delivery.

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The topics within the themes also felt comprehensive, but did not always feel comparable

It was very rare for a Panelist to suggest removing a sub-topic, but inconsistency between the presentation of the themes made them harder to digest and compare, such as:

Positive framing	Negative framing
e.g. Social inclusion	e.g. Transport related pollution

Specific issues	Broader concepts
e.g. Air quality	e.g. Climate change

User-facing language	Policy-style language
e.g. Changing and flexible working patterns	e.g. Access to workforce, markets and materials

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All themes were accepted, with Wellbeing and Environment immediately seen as the more important

Wellbeing has become more important since the pandemic struck.
It is person-centred, easily relatable on a personal level and has few perceived downsides.

Environment feels like an incredibly important and long-term challenge.
Panellists also found it easy to relate to transport on a personal level through pollution and green space.

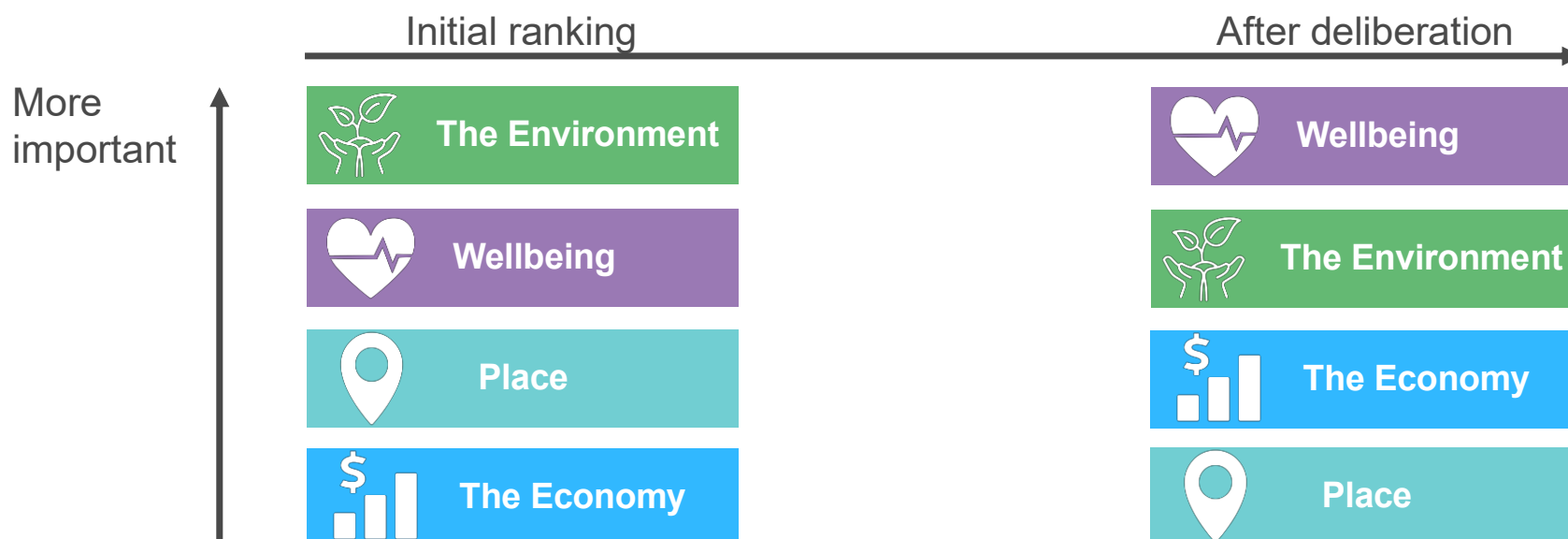**Economy is seen as important but can feel difficult to understand.**
It is not always easy to relate to on a personal level or to comprehend the implications.

Panellists struggled with Place as a theme overall although many of the sub-topics resonated well.
The specific elements often chimed with Panellists' priorities but they didn't always think of them as being place-related.

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Over the course of the research, Wellbeing and the Environment were cemented as the highest priorities for the LTP

- Through the process of deliberation, the **areas/issues perceived to be impacted by transport broadened in scope**.
- Considerations relating to wellbeing and environment remained most important to Panellists, with **wellbeing overtaking the environment to some extent**
- Many Panellists therefore 'doubled down' on their initial perspective that the **primary aim of the LTP should be reforming the transport system so it is more usable to residents** (and therefore better supports them going about their daily life) alongside tackling environmental concerns.

Initial ranking | After deliberation

More important

Initial ranking	After deliberation
The Environment	Wellbeing
Wellbeing	The Environment
Place	The Economy
The Economy	Place

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This theme is easy to relate to and feels like an especially important thing to consider in the Covid-environment

Immediately person-centred

- Wellbeing had clear and obvious personal benefits for Panellists, such as improved mental and physical health
- It had strong emotional resonance, particularly because of the pandemic negatively impacting their mental health and severely limiting their social lives

Easy to see the benefits for vulnerable groups

- This emotional resonance extended to being more easily to consider others than with some themes
- In particular, the mental health and stress of key workers and single parents, and the social isolation and medical needs of elderly people came to the forefront

Little or no tension with other topics

- Not only are the benefits clear, Panellists struggled to think of any downsides to prioritising Wellbeing
- By promoting green space or alternative forms of transport, it was even hoped to complement themes such as Environment and Place

"It makes great sense to have well being as one of the corner stones of the LTP as health of the individual and future generations is paramount."

"The pandemic has shown us our weakness for being isolated and restricted and how much not being able to get out has impacted on people's mental health."

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All sub-topics were accepted, with those that directly contributed to good mental and physical health seen as the most important

- **Mental health**, **access to health/social care** and **social inclusion** were ranked the most important
  - This meant seeing friends/family easily as well as being able to reach appointments

- **Security** was important, especially for those working/travelling at night (but was also seen to extend beyond a 'transport' issue)

- **Road safety** was seen as important but more as a hygiene factor rather than something with a strong link to Wellbeing
  - They were also to an extent seen as the result of human error rather than something that could be prevented through design

- **Pollution** was seen as extremely important, but perhaps as a better fit under the Environment theme

- **'Stress-free' journeys** was added to the list, ranging from avoiding delays to mitigating anxiety on public transport

"Every single person in society should have the opportunity and means to meet socially, and not be restricted by physical or mental disabilities."

"With an ageing population this aspect is going to become increasingly important. Access to physical mental and social care is vital and should be in the forefront of any LTP."

"I don't know how the council could prevent road collisions. These would always be around whilst motor vehicles use the roads."

"I know some people are really put off their public transport because of their anxiety."

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The Environment feels like such an important issue at the moment and Panellists see a clear link to transport

Feels like part of a social shift

- Many saw action on this as becoming inevitable, and wanted to see Warwickshire taking an innovative role in the national picture (e.g. promoting EVs)
- But there were queries as to how much impact the Council could have on global issues like the climate

Relevance now and for future generations

- Environment was felt to include topics that had an immediate impact on residents' quality of life, through avoiding pollution or having access to green space
- The bigger topics, such as climate change, were thought to have long-lasting consequences

But concerns about trade-offs with economy and driving

- Environment was felt by some to be in tension with some other priorities, for example whether not developing more transport could harm the Economy
- In addition, support for reduced car usage was matched by a desire to still have this option available

"Improvements in transport networks can bring positive change to our living environment. It's not just a negative. It can reduce congestion, reduce pollution, enable reestablishment of wildlife in different areas etc."

"The environment and our care of it must be the number one driver to support a sustainable and better future for generations. It cannot be removed from the plan."

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All sub-topics were broadly accepted, although flood prevention and noise pollution raised queries

- **Climate change** was seen as a key element in this theme, but can risk feeling 'too big' an issue to tackle in an LTP – the role of local transport systems needs in the bigger picture needs to be explained

- **Air quality** was seen as incredibly important
  - It resonated with existing concerns and the personal impact/benefits were understood

- **Loss of habitat and wildlife** had not been previously considered, but seeing it in the LTP raised its importance

- **Flood prevention** was vitally important to those at risk, but the connection to transport was not always clear

- **Noise pollution** was seen as quite niche

"This does need addressing but how can the council do this? Working with partners to facilitate electric vehicles and tree planting - if this was done on a large scale I would be proud of my council."

"Warwickshire seems to have real problems with air quality and the last fact (8/9 nationally) staggers me."

"Noise in association with travel is inevitable. It is unfortunate for those who live and work in those areas with high noise density. This does not affect me personally."

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The Economy was seen as important although the link between this, transport and user experience was not always clear

Big picture concepts can be hard to grasp	Direction of travel seems harder to work out
• This theme felt more complex than the others and harder to gauge from the perspective of a transport user • The personal impact of broader economic changes can be hard to work out, with some more technical language exacerbating this	• In addition, there was widespread uncertainty about what would happen to the economy in the future (e.g., long-term impact of Covid or Brexit) and therefore how transport would respond to (or mitigate) these challenges

But underlying recognition that it must be important

• Few were willing to describe the Economy as "unimportant", with jobs in particular a key consideration
• However, this theme felt by some to be 'business as usual', and wanted the 'newer' themes to be given more attention.

"Something to do with cost would go in hand - the cost of using the bus needs to be brought down."

"The economic elements are the traditional driver of transport development and need to be balanced by the other three."

Panellists reframed the Economy sub-topics to make them feel more user-centred and tangible

- **Productivity** was hard to grasp, while issues like **internet-based activity** and **Brexit** felt difficult for the LTP to address

- **Covid recovery** felt too abstract and **future working patterns** felt too uncertain to build into the LTP

- **Access to education, training and skills** and **access to workforce, markets and materials,** were important but not always understood or spoken about in the same language

- Panellists therefore suggested some more tangible topics, and wanted to see **cost and value** included too:

Getting to school and training	**Getting to work**

Supporting local high streets	**Encouraging tourism**	**Providing value for money**

"This economy thing doesn't mean anything to me…Brexit, I couldn't even tell you anything about it"

"We've got nothing, no further education, adult education, it's two buses if you don't have a car - that's an hour journey plus the time at the course, plus the cost of the courses; you need a direct bus at times of when courses start"

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Place had difficulty cutting through, and many struggled to see how this is a unique theme

The concept 'Place' by itself is hard to comprehend

- Some of the concepts within Place, such as having thriving communities or preventing isolation, did feel important to Panelists
- But the 'Place' label struggled to capture this for them, or to feel particularly unique as a theme

Feels less urgent for Warwickshire

- When taken to mean having nice places, many felt that Warwickshire already did quite well at this
- Both this, and being placed alongside "heavier" issues such as climate change or mental health, made Place feel less urgent

"Adequate roads, avoidance of congestion, safety for cyclists and pedestrians, pollution avoidance and a pleasant environment to live in are essential."

"Place has an effect but if the desire is to provide the best service for all irrespective of location then I think the theme of wellbeing already picks up the needs offered by place."

Overlaps with other themes more than most

- The other three themes were felt to have specific remits, even if they did sometimes cross paths
- Place, by contrast, felt like more of a catch-all
- Some questioned whether it could be dissolved into the other three themes

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The sub-topics performed better as individual issues than the theme of 'Place' per see

- The most important sub-topics were about improving quality of life (person-centred) rather than 'Place' as such:
    - **Public space and improvement of place and character –** because making Warwickshire a nice place to live, making high streets appealing and protecting green spaces all felt important
    - **Rural isolation and access between rural and urban areas** – because of the risk to wellbeing, especially amongst older people
- **Housing and development was more divisive** as it was a contentious topic for some but unclear what the LTP was proposing
    - Is it about bringing more people into the area?
- **National and international connections** felt somewhat outside the Council's remit, and an area where Warwickshire was already well-served.

"How an area looks is key to its success and people's happiness, something that was forgotten when planning roads of the previous decades. We don't want transport to trump heritage, nature or amenity - it should be a partner in these areas."

"Our area is rural and lacks public transport. People rely totally on cars to get to any shops, services, schools, childcare, work and activities as we have none of these."

"[National and international connections] are a minor issue which should be consistently maintained but does not need further significant improvement as this issue already appears to be well-served."

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5 Considering trade-offs
and key principles

Panellists think that the LTP should be guided by principles which prioritise the environment, but not at the expense of user experience

1 Ensure travel is affordable for everyone

2 Make greener ways of travelling a genuinely efficient and enjoyable alternative

3 Encourage people to try new methods of transport, and move people away from relying on the car

**4** Put the environment at the heart of all decisions

5 Make sure the plan is future-proofed for the longer term

- In the final vote to decide on the guiding principles, considerations for the **environment featured heavily**
    - That said, around a third ranked 'put people's <u>wellbeing</u> at the heart of all decisions' in their top 5 principles
    - And ensuring affordability emerged as the 'number 1' rule
- The desire for environmental concerns to be foregrounded is therefore moderated by an equally strong desire that the **future transport system is usable, inclusive, and brings clear benefits to all residents / better supports them in going about their normal routines**.

"The LTP should be inclusive and promote the health and well-being of its people and the nation. This is why modes of transport like walking and cycling should be encouraged as they are win/win as they aid the health of the environment and its people. Let's move away from assisting the car user and re-educate the transport users."

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More specifically, there is clear support for a move towards greener forms of transport
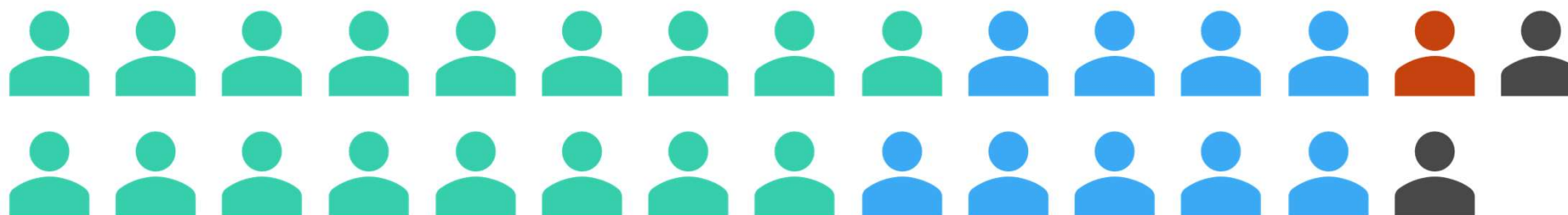
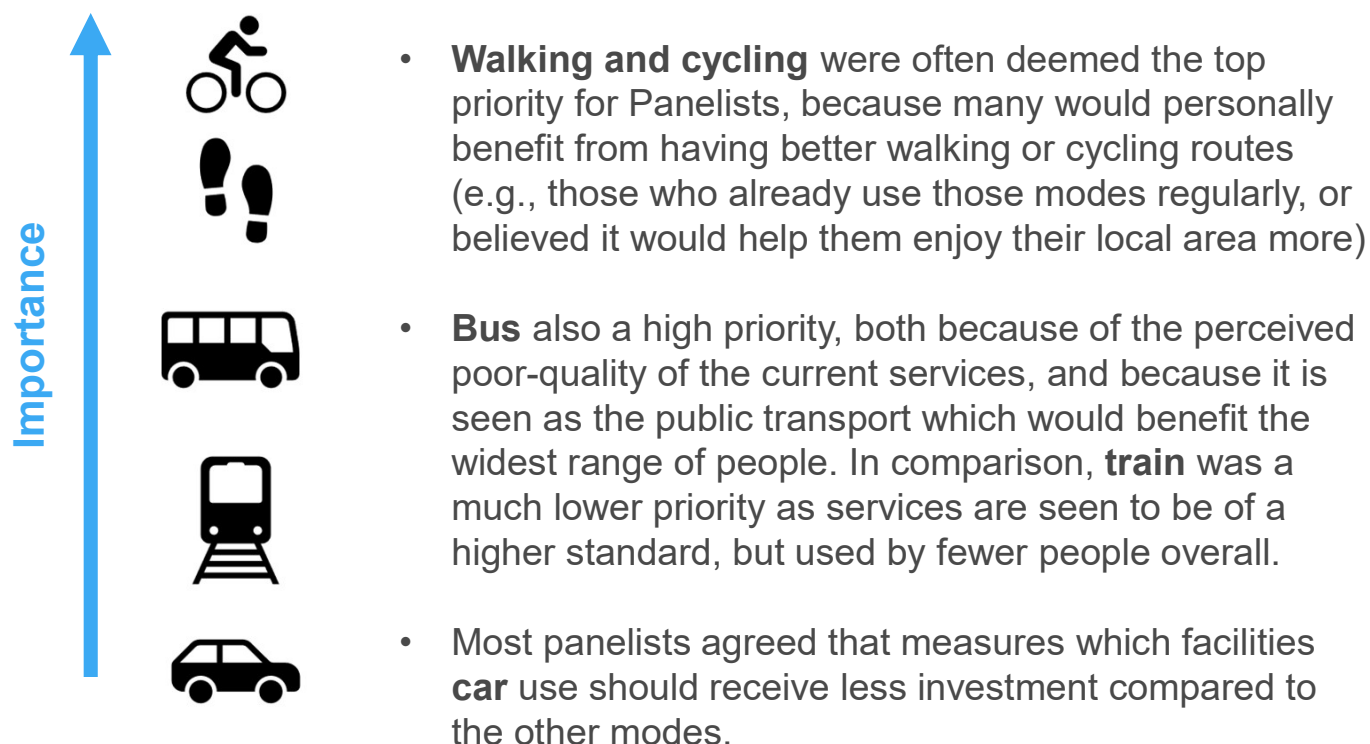| 17	9	1
Would support a move towards cleaner/greener forms of transport <u>even</u> if that means inconvenience for car drivers in the short/medium term	Would support a move towards cleaner/greener forms of transport <u>but only</u> if there's hardly any inconvenience for car drivers	Would not support a move towards cleaner/greener forms of transport and think that transport investment should continue to focus on facilitating car usage

27 out of 19 panellists responded to the post-research task

And there is support for prioritising funding of bus services, cycling, and walking

- The question of how funding would be prioritised across different modes of transport and across different aspects of the LTP was a key concern for panelists throughout the process.

Importance ↑

- **Walking and cycling** were often deemed the top priority for Panelists, because many would personally benefit from having better walking or cycling routes (e.g., those who already use those modes regularly, or believed it would help them enjoy their local area more)

- **Bus** also a high priority, both because of the perceived poor-quality of the current services, and because it is seen as the public transport which would benefit the widest range of people. In comparison, **train** was a much lower priority as services are seen to be of a higher standard, but used by fewer people overall.

- Most panelists agreed that measures which facilities **car** use should receive less investment compared to the other modes.

"I'd spend money on that to improve cycle routes […] particularly on main roads where it's really busy, and in town centres and suburbs."

"Bus needs the most investment at the moment – you can always catch a bus, and the bus goes through the town centre, so you could see what the town has to offer."
(Hard-to-reach resident)

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However, despite these positive views of green travel, there remained resistance to limiting or disincentivising driving

- Most Panellists see the move away from car usage as gradual and voluntary, driven by their being better public transport options on offer
- At present, **most struggle to see themselves using public transport for their most regular / most important journeys** e.g.,
  - Going to work and the school run, because these journeys are often combined but are difficult to complete in 'one go' without a car and/or being accompanied by small children
  - Shopping, because of the need to transport heavy / multiple items
- Some also **argued against this being a binary choice,** seeing the hallmarks of a 'good' transport system as:
  - People **not being constrained or limited** to one mode of transport
  - People **freely choosing to use public transport** because of its speed and reliability
- Without better-quality / more suitable alternatives already in place, many therefore felt that a move to limit / disincentivise car usage would be unfair (particularly on those who are low-income, vulnerable, women, or have small children)

"You need to sell the alternative, then you can look into stopping traffic."

"There aren't many alternatives other than move or buy a new car – If you're going to take something away then you need to replace it with something that's usable."

"I don't think it's going to go down very well… it needs to be done gradually and with good public transport."

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A concerted 'campaign' was also recommended to communicate the LTP to other residents

Social media

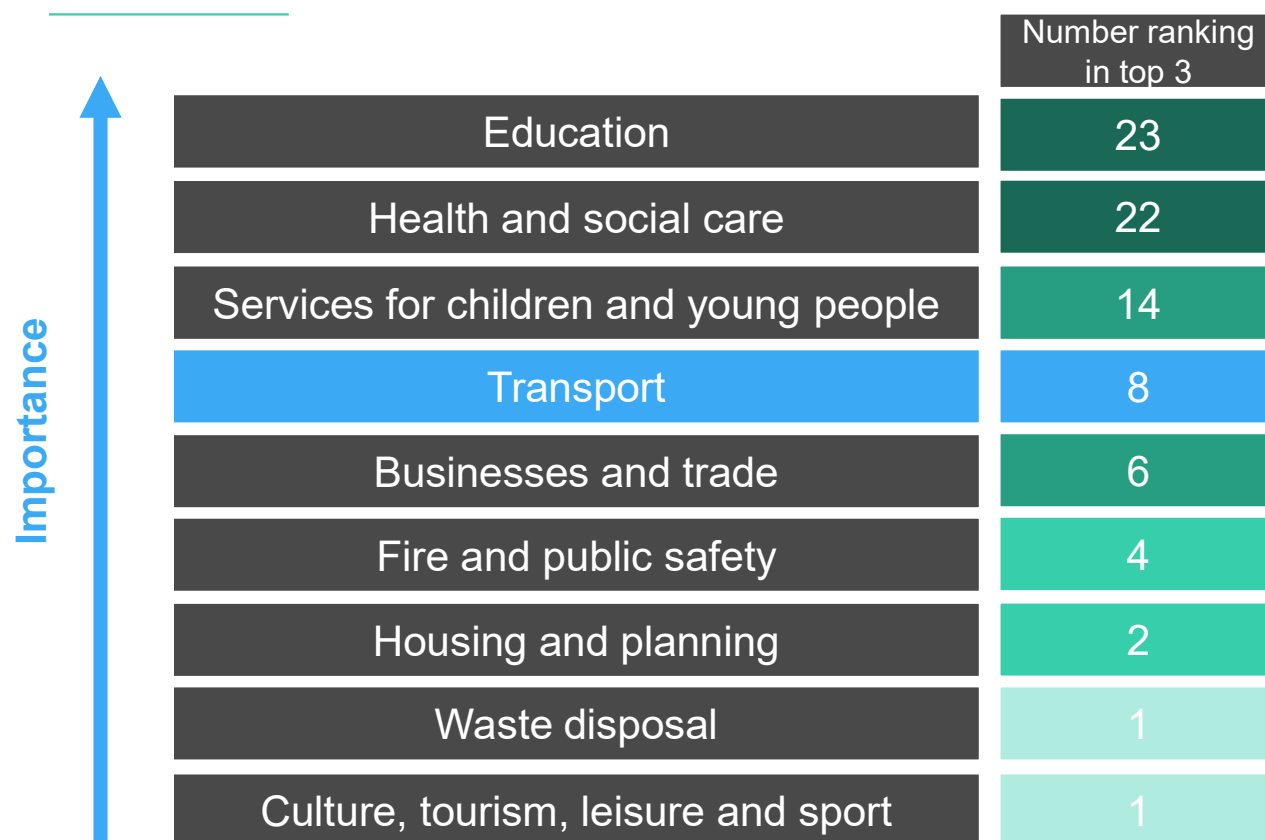**Print advertising**

Town hall events

- Most panelists suggested that **social media would be the primary channel** for any campaign, and that there could even be a dedicated website for the LTP.
- Many also recognised that **some residents are still best reached through print advertising** (in the newspaper, via billboards/posters, leaflets) and therefore should also be a key element.
  - A couple of Panelists also suggested that this advertising should be distributed through local / personal networks, such as employers and schools.
- Though uncertain how many residents would engage in this format, **town hall events and roadshows were also seen as important for offering the opportunity for people to ask questions of the LTP**. Additional surveys and online consultations were also suggested as a vehicle for capturing ongoing feedback.

"A more proactive approach - almost campaigning for a better transport system and environment. Look at how Manchester is promoting its walking and cycling strategy. For instance: have a walking and cycling commissioner with power, a budget and a high public profile (e.g. Chris Boardman in Manchester)."

"Social Media for sure! people may be more comfortable engaging from behind their keyboards rather than face-to-face and also a wider audience can be reached this way."

"Use employers, businesses and tourist attractions - get them involved, offer incentives for them to engage with their visitors and employees."

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Around a quarter ranked transport as a top 3 priority for investment, but typically below health, social care/services and education

Importance ↑

	Number ranking in top 3
Education	23
Health and social care	22
Services for children and young people	14
Transport	8
Businesses and trade	6
Fire and public safety	4
Housing and planning	2
Waste disposal	1
Culture, tourism, leisure and sport	1

- When asked at the end of the research (and therefore primed to focus on transport) which areas the council should prioritise for investment, **around a quarter of Panelists ranked transport within their top 3.**
- Panelists were **most likely to rank 'Health and adult social care' or 'education' within their top 3**, likely reflecting the **impact of the pandemic** on these areas in particular.

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6 Key findings and recommendations

Key findings

1. **Panellists views towards travel and transport in Warwickshire are rooted in their experience as users of these services and residents of the county.** For most, their initial 'vision' for what the LTP should seek to achieve was therefore focused on changes which would have an immediate personal benefit i.e. reducing congestion, a faster / better connected bus network, and ensuring public transport was safe, clean and affordable.

2. **The Local Transport Plan was generally seen as comprehensive and spoke to the issues that mattered to them.** It was felt to cover a lot of ground (and areas which Panellists had not linked to transport before) and to be well thought through. Beyond considering the cost of services to users, participants struggled to identify additional themes or sub-themes. However, many also criticised the Plan for being too broad, and felt that achieving in all areas would be difficult under funding constraints.

3. **The themes of 'Wellbeing' and 'Environment' emerged early on as being of highest priority to Panellists.** They were able to easily make the connection to transport and could understand the personal relevance. The pandemic has brought issues relating to 'Wellbeing' to the fore, making this theme feel important and relatable. Meanwhile, the 'Environment' theme was also seen to have significant personal implications as well as being a major long-term challenge in which changes to travel can make a difference.

4. **'Economy' and 'Place' were harder to grasp and the link with personal transport use felt less intuitive, meaning they resonated less well.** For example, it was difficult to relate broad economic concepts like 'productivity and competitiveness' with supporting local jobs and high streets, which is a more tangible concern for Panellists. Similarly, though thriving communities or preventing isolation did feel important to Panellists, 'Place' struggled to stand out as a unique theme.

5. **There are some ongoing tensions between Panellists' desire for the LTP to put the environment at the heart of decision-making, and the expectation that there will be limited inconvenience to users.** There is clear support for prioritising the environment in future investments, with the caveat that panellists expect genuinely attractive / accessible public and active transport options, which are introduced gradually enough that no one feels constrained or limited to one form of transport.

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Broad considerations for the LTP overall:

Ensure the sub-topics are 'user centred'

- Where possible, re-frame sub-topics from the user perspective so the benefit to residents is clear and relatable – how will focusing on this issue make transport quicker, more convenient, cleaner, safer and affordable? How will it make life happier and healthier?
- If a system-wide view is necessary, explain the link back to something tangible and personal
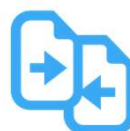
Review and streamline the sub-topics

- Consider bringing some sub-topics together or else strengthen their differences, e.g.:
  - Air quality *and* transport related pollution
  - Social inclusion *and* mental health
  - Rural isolation *and* connections between rural and urban areas
- Review sub-topics to ensure they are broadly comparable e.g. all have a positive frame, are in user-centred language, are the same 'size' issue

Reflect the enthusiasm for a 'green' vision

- Paint an inspiring vision of a modern, clean, enviable transport network that chimes with existing desires for a greener future
- Communicate where prioritising the environment is a 'win-win' for users (i.e. where it addresses some concerns related to wellbeing) and focus on how it will improve user experience, rather than inconvenience car users

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Specific considerations for each of the themes:

Wellbeing	The Environment	The Economy	Place

• Lead with the tangible ways in good transport contributes to mental and physical health
• Consider adding a sub-topic around reducing stressful journeys and access to green space
• Consider moving 'pollution' to the Environment theme
	• Lead with air quality and other factors that have a tangible impact on quality of life
	• Ensure that the personal/regional impact of climate change is communicated and that efforts to tackle it at a county level are seen to join up with national targets
	• Strengthen the link between transport and flood control
	• Build in references to new green tech
		• Consider reframing the sub-topics around the user/resident experience and making them feel more tangible/comprehensible e.g.:
		  • Jobs and education
		  • High streets /small businesses
		  • Tourism
		• And fold in the big issues like Covid-recovery, Brexit into these sub-topics
			• Consider reframing the sub-topics more squarely around the resident experience to increase relevance, e.g. making:
			  • Nice places to live
			  • Nice places to visit
			  • It easy to get between the places you want to go
			  • Sure new places have the infrastructure they need

Integrate references to new technology that will help deliver the LTP and, very importantly, find a way to talk about cost/affordability.

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Considerations for driving wider engagement with the LTP:

Prompt residents to consider what their 'transport vision' is and show how this is reflected in the LTP	Head off concerns about financial credibility by showing how the plan will generate returns as well as cost money	Emphasise the links between transport and education, health and social care, and YP services
Re-frame the themes from a user-perspective to increase comprehension and relevance	Show how the LTP will be bold and deliver a leading transport network that Warwickshire residents can be proud of	Use the Panellists to spread the message and engage others

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Thank you

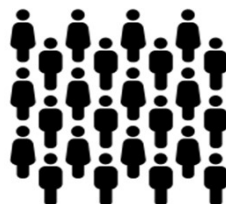info@britainthinks.com

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7 Appendix

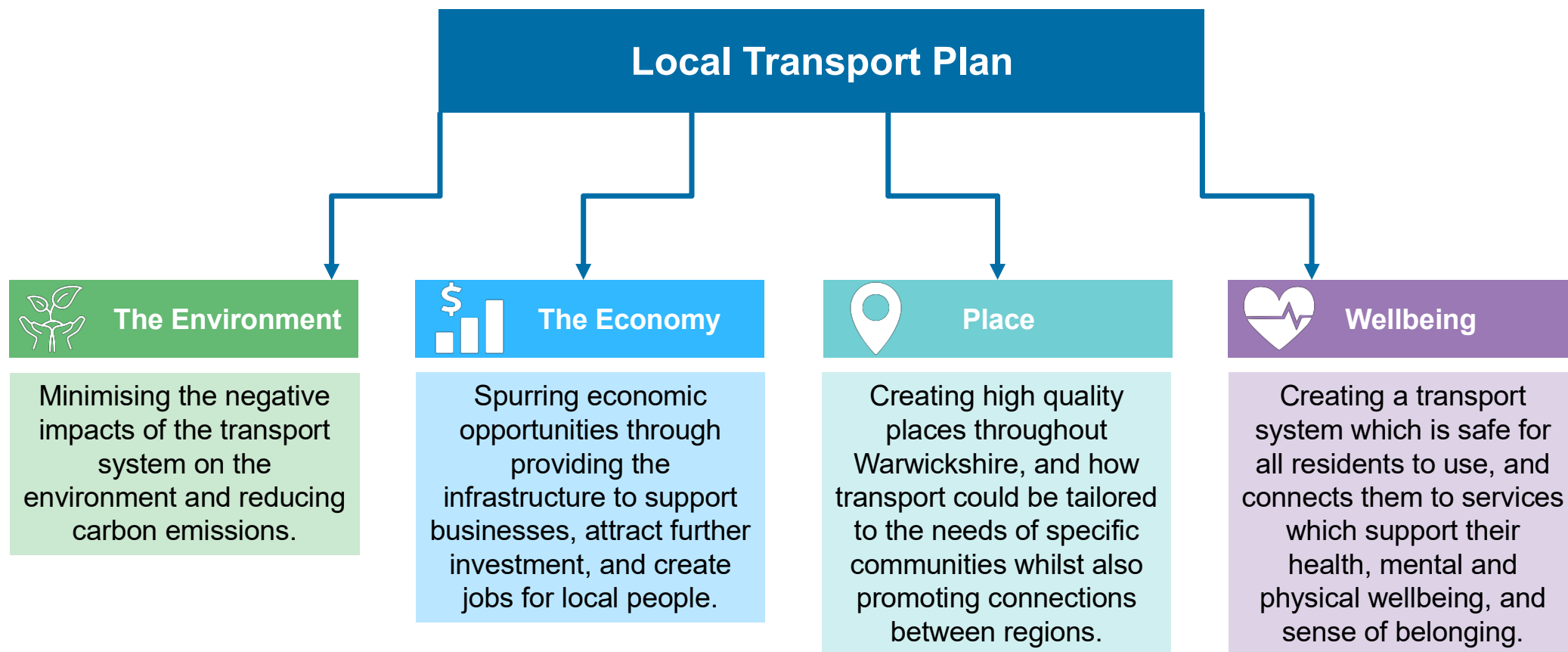# We recruited 33 members of the public to the Citizens' Panel

Participants were recruited using professional market research recruiters using tailored screening materials to ensure we achieved a balanced sample that reflects the diversity of the County

- 29 participants took part in the online deliberative research

- 4 vulnerable participants took part in 2 x telephone depth interviews instead:

  - 2 with mental health condition

  - 1 with physical health condition

  - 1 with no online access

Main deliberative strand quotas		Total
Gender	Female	15
	Male	14
Age	18-34	5
	35-54	16
	55+	8
SEG	ABC1	14
	C2DE	15
Ethnicity	BAME	4
Disability / health condition	Disabled / long-term health condition	9
Location	Urban	9
	Suburban	11
	Rural	9
Employment	North Warwickshire	4
	Nuneaton and Bedworth	6
	Rugby	6
	Warwick	7
	Stratford	6

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The four themes:

Local Transport Plan

The Environment

Minimising the negative impacts of the transport system on the environment and reducing carbon emissions.

The Economy

Spurring economic opportunities through providing the infrastructure to support businesses, attract further investment, and create jobs for local people.

Place

Creating high quality places throughout Warwickshire, and how transport could be tailored to the needs of specific communities whilst also promoting connections between regions.

Wellbeing

Creating a transport system which is safe for all residents to use, and connects them to services which support their health, mental and physical wellbeing, and sense of belonging.
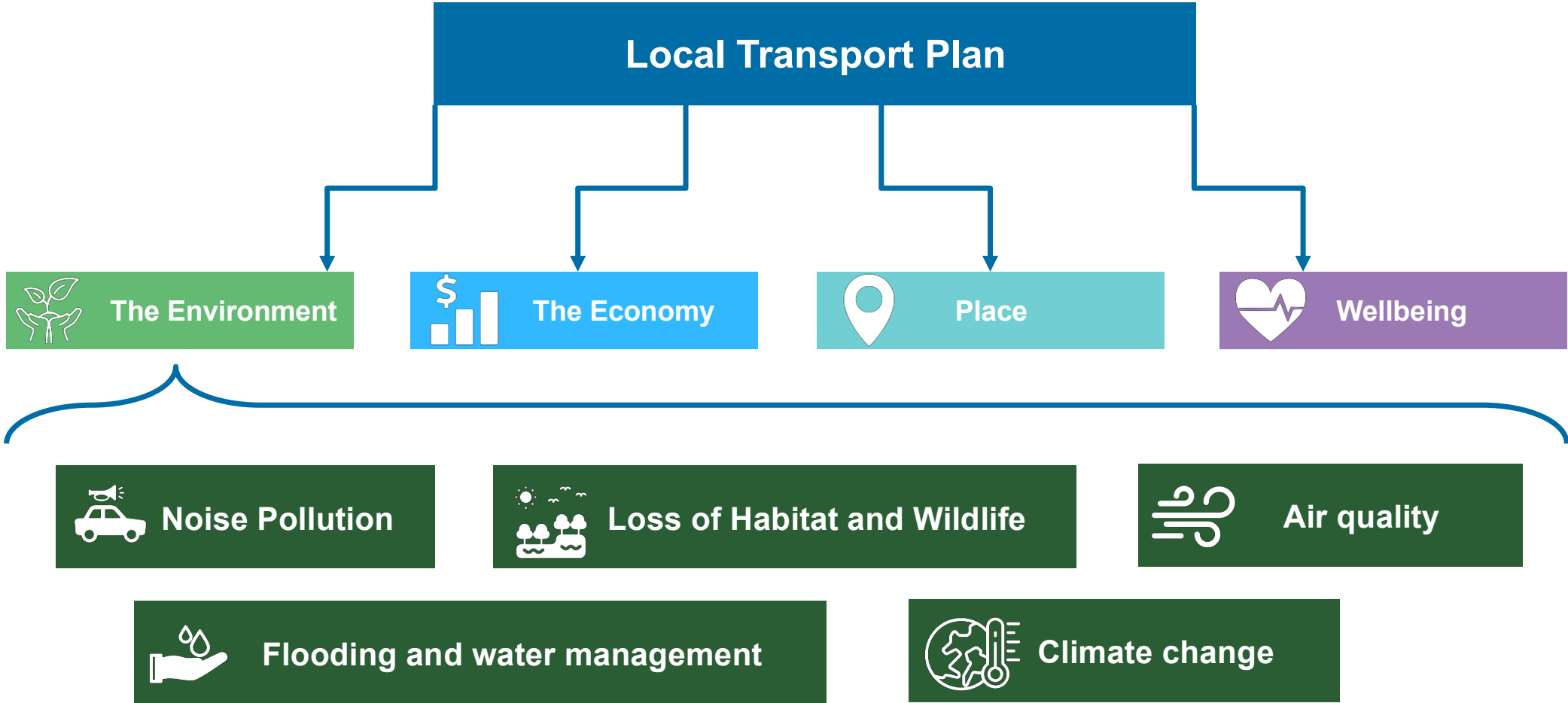
Theme: Wellbeing

Contributing to good mental and physical health were seen as the most important elements of the Wellbeing theme

Mental health	Importance score (OC): **4.4 / 5**	• This topic was felt to be the core aim of many of the others, such as social inclusion, safety, and being able to access mental health services.
Access to health and social care	Importance score (OC): **4.4 / 5**	• This was felt to be a really basic and crucial need. • Covid has highlighted the need for good physical health and access to this as well as mental health. • Older people were expected to benefit in particular.
Social inclusion	Importance score (OC): **4.1 / 5**	• The pandemic's strict limitations on social lives had taken a toll on most, if not all, Panellists. • Enabling this was seen to be a key part of getting back to normal, particularly for the elderly and rural dwellers.
Security and safety	Importance score (OC): **3.9 / 5**	• This topic did not attract as much attention, because whilst important it was seen as a basic requirement.

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OC = Online Community, where participants were first presented with the LTP sub-themes

Road safety, active lifestyles and pollution were also important, but with some reservations for each

Transport related pollution	Importance score (OC): 4.6 / 5	• Pollution is a prominent concern, but Panellists felt that this was better covered in the Environment theme
Road Safety	Importance score (OC): 4.3 / 5	• Panellists did not question the importance of being safe on the road, but they did question what impact the Council could have. • Human error rather than design were felt to be the main cause of car traffic accidents.
Supporting active lifestyles	Importance score (OC): 4.1 / 5	• Supporting active lifestyles was felt to be a good aim and to have benefits for health, the environment, and congestion through active transport • But those with disabilities were unsure how this related to them

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Theme: Environment

Local Transport Plan

- The Environment
- The Economy
- Place
- Wellbeing

Noise Pollution

Loss of Habitat and Wildlife

Air quality

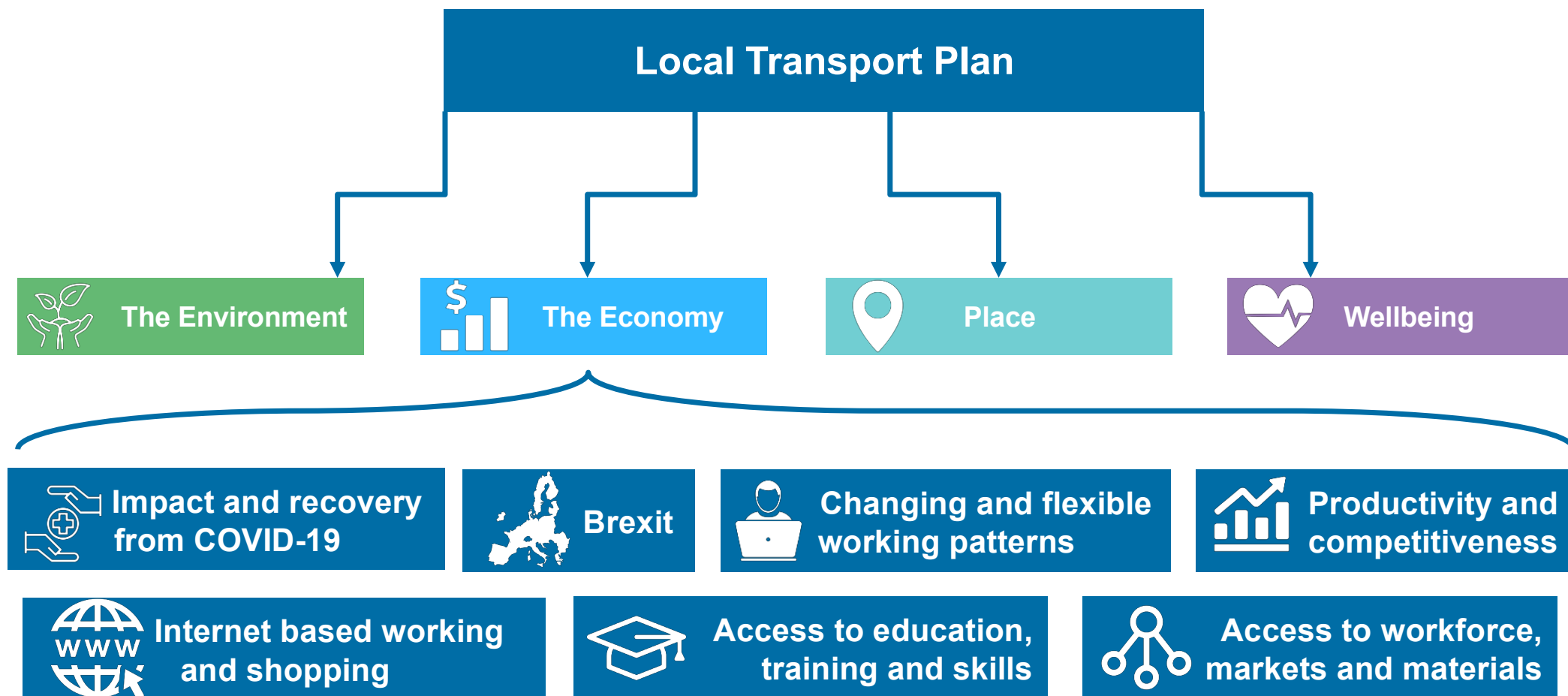Flooding and water management

Climate change

Air quality and habitat were seen to have immediate impacts on quality of life, with climate being a key long-term challenge

Air quality	Importance score (OC): **4.7 / 5**	• Transport pollution was a spontaneous concern, and there is fairly high awareness of the negative health impacts. • It was seen to had a clear impact on the daily lives of residents.
Climate change	Importance score (OC): **4.7 / 5**	• The status of climate change as the "big issue" here makes it feel urgent to deal with even though most impacts are anticipated for future generations. • But this makes some feel that it is better dealt with on a national or even global level.
Loss of habitat and wildlife	Importance score (OC): **4.5 / 5**	• A key feature of Warwickshire's identity for many Panellists was its green space and countryside feel. • This was felt to contribute to both its sense of place and of wellbeing, and Panellists wanted this to be protected.

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Water management was hard to relate to transport, while noise pollution felt like a comparatively small disadvantage

Flooding and water management	Importance score (OC): **3.9 / 5**	• Flooding is felt to be devastating if it effects you. • But the immediate relevance of transport can be hard to see. Dealing with the issue at the development stage (i.e., where you build houses) seemed more obvious.
Noise pollution	Importance score (OC): **3.6 / 5**	• Compared to some other topics, noise pollution could be seen as something irritating (and as a trade-off of living in an urban area), than a key issue. • However, it was recognized to have a big impact on certain people's lives (e.g. if they lived by a motorway – but their choice to live there is questioned by some).

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OC = Online Community, where participants were first presented with the LTP sub-themes
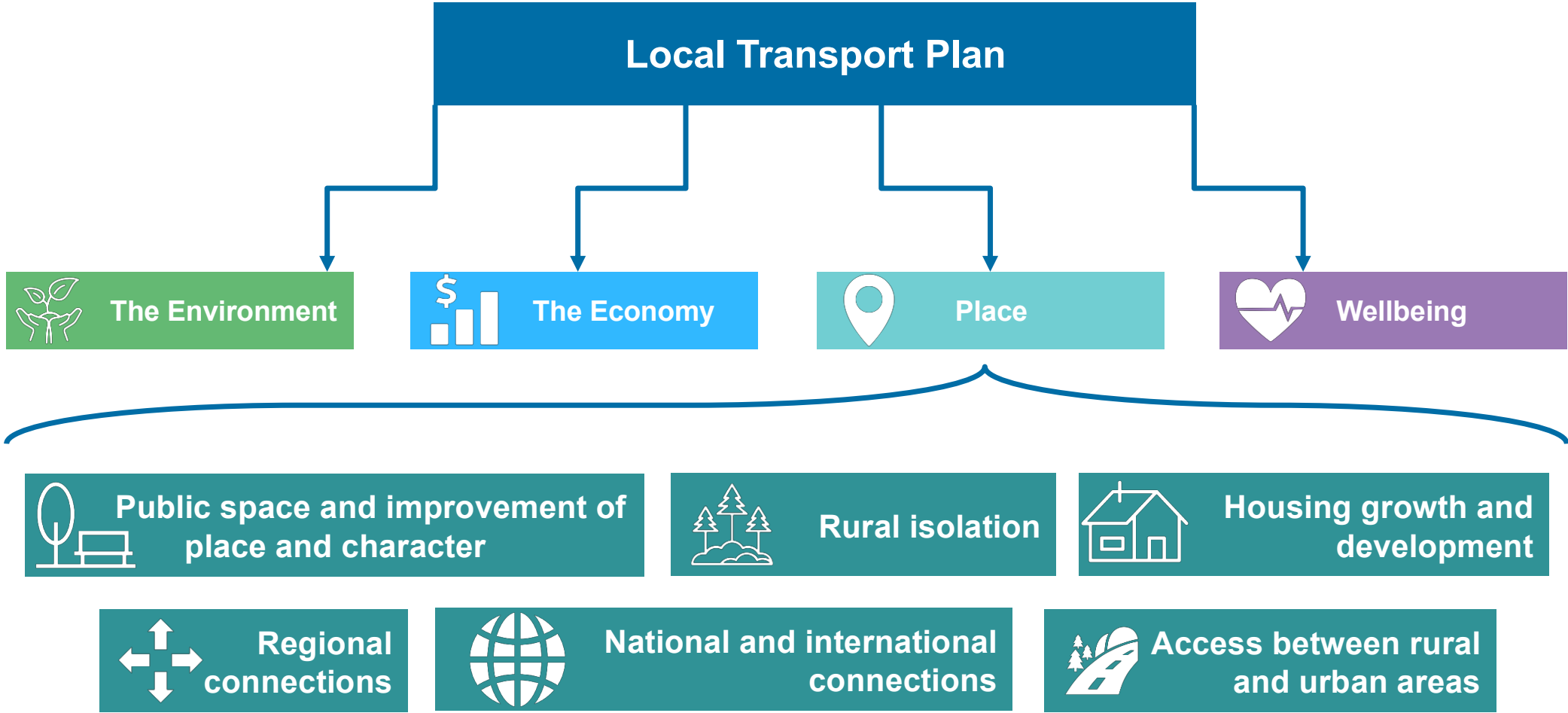
Theme: Economy

Recovering from and adapting to Covid were clear priorities, while topics linked to jobs also got more attention

Impact and recovery from Covid-19	Importance score (OC): **4.2 / 5**	• Given its impact on how Panelists live and travel, and broader impacts, this seemed like an obvious priority to consider. • But some thought that if the other areas were covered this didn't need to be included specifically.
Access to education, training and skills	Importance score (OC): **3.9 / 5**	• These two topics were harder to grasp because of the slightly abstract way they were presented. • Panelists found it hard to identify as part of a "workforce" or a "market", rather than as a worker or a shopper. • Similarly, being able to get your children to school felt more tangible than having "access to skills". • On reflection, these topics were both felt to be very important and key functions of a good transport system, even if hard to understand immediately.
Access to workforce, markets and materials	Importance score (OC): **3.5 / 5**	
Changing and flexible working patterns	Importance score (OC): **3.6 / 5**	• Many Panelists had personally changed how they work • Mostly, however, flexible work was thought to reduce pressure on transport rather than increase it. • Except for making sure key workers and shift workers could access public transport when needed.

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OC = Online Community, where participants were first presented with the LTP sub-themes

Productivity was hard to grasp, while internet based activity and Brexit felt difficult for the LTP to address

Productivity and competitiveness	Importance score (OC): **3.9 / 5**	• Panelists struggled to connect with the importance of these concepts to their daily lives even more than the "Access" themes. • For example, it was not always clear who they were competing with.
Internet based working and shopping	Importance score (OC): **3.2 / 5**	• While this shift had been noted, it was less clear what the LTP could or should do about it. • It felt like it had both pros and cons, such as improving congestion while reducing shopping on high streets.
Brexit	Importance score (OC): **3.1 / 5**	• Panelists mostly did not see how this would specifically effect Warwickshire, or its transport system. • It felt like a national issue that should be dealt with at the national level, and was one of the few topics that Panelists thought could just be removed entirely.

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OC = Online Community, where participants were first presented with the LTP sub-themes

Theme: Place

Most topics here were better received than the theme itself, and were interpreted as aimed at improving quality of life

Regional connections	Importance score (OC): **4.2 / 5**	• This was felt to be crucial to encouraging public transport use, with its benefits to wellbeing and the environment. • Some also saw this as key to including and promoting areas that had been "left behind" the major cities.
Public space and improvement of place and character	Importance score (OC): **4 / 5**	• Panellists saw this as the key topic of the theme - making all parts of Warwickshire a nicer place to live. • The importance of green public spaces had been highlighted by lockdown, as had making local high streets appealing.
Rural isolation	Importance score (OC): **4 / 5**	• This was felt to be especially important for the elderly or disabled living in rural areas and ensuring they could access shops or medical care. • But a minority felt that isolation was an inevitable part of rural life and part of choosing to live there.
Access between rural and urban areas	Importance score (OC): **4 / 5**	• Similar to above, this was hoped to reduce isolation whilst allowing those in urban areas to enjoy the countryside. • There were concerns about spoiling places' rural feel, but not if appropriate transport (e.g. local buses) was used.

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OC = Online Community, where participants were first presented with the LTP sub-themes

Housing growth was more divisive, while national and international connections felt out of the Council's remit

Housing growth and development	Importance score (OC): **4.3 / 5**	• This was one of the more divisive topics. Some felt this was definitely needed, while those (often who lived near major developments) felt that the expansions were often badly managed. • This made it difficult to consider whether this theme was about driving growth or relieving pressure on local areas.
National and international connections	Importance score (OC): **3.7 / 5**	• While the importance of these was not doubted, this did not feel as relevant to the Council's perceived remit and abilities compared to the other, more local, topics. • Moreover, many already feel these are of a high standard (e.g., rail connections to London).

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OC = Online Community, where participants were first presented with the LTP sub-themes