

## 1.0 Economic Growth Framework, Visitor Economy Destination, & Heritage Plans Consultation

### 1.1 Key Findings from the Community Survey

#### 1.1.1 Economic Growth

##### Economic Strengths

- Key strengths include a robust independent retail sector, accessible green spaces, effective transport links, and strong community engagement.

##### Economic Challenges

- Main challenges involve high commercial rents, inadequate infrastructure, declining town centres, environmental issues, and the rising cost of living.

##### Economic Priorities

- Top priorities for growth are revitalising town centres (55.2%), enhancing area attractiveness (46.3%), improving sustainability (44.8%), fostering business growth (38.8%), and boosting tourism and leisure (35.8%).

#### 1.1.2 Visitor Economy

##### Attractions in Gedling

- Gedling Country Park and Newstead Abbey are primary attractions, noted by 85.3% of respondents for their natural beauty and historical significance.
- Local events and markets also draw visitors, with 33.8% and 32.4% recognition, respectively.

##### Suggestions for Enhancement

- There is strong support for improving leisure and recreational activities (64.2%) and enhancing nature access (61.2%) to attract more visitors.
- Developing shopping experiences and exploring Gedling's industrial heritage and historical figures are seen as potential areas for growth.

##### Community and Infrastructure Recommendations

- Enhancements in visitor facilities, cleanliness, and accessibility are recommended, alongside more community-focused events to increase engagement and footfall.

- Specific suggestions include making historical sites more accessible, improving park facilities, and hosting more cultural events to showcase Gedling's unique offerings.

#### 1.1.3 Heritage

##### Heritage Activities and Interests

- **Participation** - 76.6% of respondents engage in visiting heritage sites, showing strong interest in local history.
- **Popular Activities** - Trails and festivals (54.7% and 51.6%, respectively) and exhibitions and heritage tours (53.1% and 46.9%, respectively) are popular, indicating a preference for interactive and educational heritage experiences.

##### Themes of Interest

- **Social History** - The most popular theme, with 59.1% interest, suggesting a community eager to explore the broader social narrative of their area.
- **Industrial and Historical Figures** - 54.5% show interest in the industrial heritage of Gedling, particularly coal mining and railways. There is also an interest in key historical figures (34.3%).

##### Improving Heritage Access

- **Accessibility Needs** - Respondents emphasise improving physical access to heritage sites, suggesting enhancements like levelled pathways, more seating, and better public toilet facilities.
- **Educational and Community Engagement** - There is a call for more downloadable apps and information boards to provide interactive learning experiences. Community events like heritage open days and themed festivals are suggested to engage a wider audience and enrich the local heritage experience.

##### Unique Aspects of Gedling's Heritage

- The unique blend of industrial and literary heritage, coupled with the natural and urban landscape, offers diverse educational and cultural exploration opportunities. Community initiatives focusing on heritage events are highlighted as valuable for engaging all age groups and celebrating Gedling's rich history.

To inform the Economic Growth Framework, Visitor Destination Management Plan and Heritage Strategy, an online questionnaire was created and distributed through various channels by Gedling Borough Councils Communications Team as well as partner organisations.

The online survey was launched and distributed during the week commencing 9th January and remained open until the end of February. A total of 71 responses were received, providing valuable insight into the community's perspective on the borough. Respondents shared what they believe would benefit both the area and the wider community, as well as the types of improvements they would like to see to enhance the borough and the lives of its residents. An analysis by survey question is set out below.

## 1.2 Economic Growth

### 1.2.1 What do you think are the key strengths of the Gedling economy?

#### Key Strengths Identified

- **Local Businesses:** Independent retailers and small businesses were highlighted as key strengths.
- **Green Spaces:** The availability of parks and open spaces, such as Gedling Country Park, was a strong point.
- **Transport Links:** Good access to Nottingham and surrounding areas through public transport and road connections was cited as an asset.
- **Community Engagement:** Several responses mentioned community spirit and local business collaboration.

#### Specific Comments

- *"Variety of businesses, mainly independent retailers and plenty of green spaces."*
- *"Transport links, independent local businesses."*
- *"The growth in housing is critical, the Chase Farm development is vital."*
- *"Local small businesses, a variety of services including care, retail centres, and some visitor attractions."*

### 1.2.2 What do you think are the key challenges facing the Gedling economy?

#### Key Challenges Identified

- **Business Growth:** High commercial rent costs and competition from larger businesses were significant barriers to local business growth.
- **Infrastructure Issues:** Concerns over road conditions, inadequate public transport, and overcrowded schools.
- **Town Centre Decline:** Many noted the state of town centres, particularly Arnold, with vacant retail units and a lack of investment in revitalising these areas.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Issues such as littering and lack of green spaces in urban areas were raised as challenges.
- **Cost of Living:** The cost of living, alongside reduced local government services, was seen as a limiting factor for the local economy.

#### Specific Comments

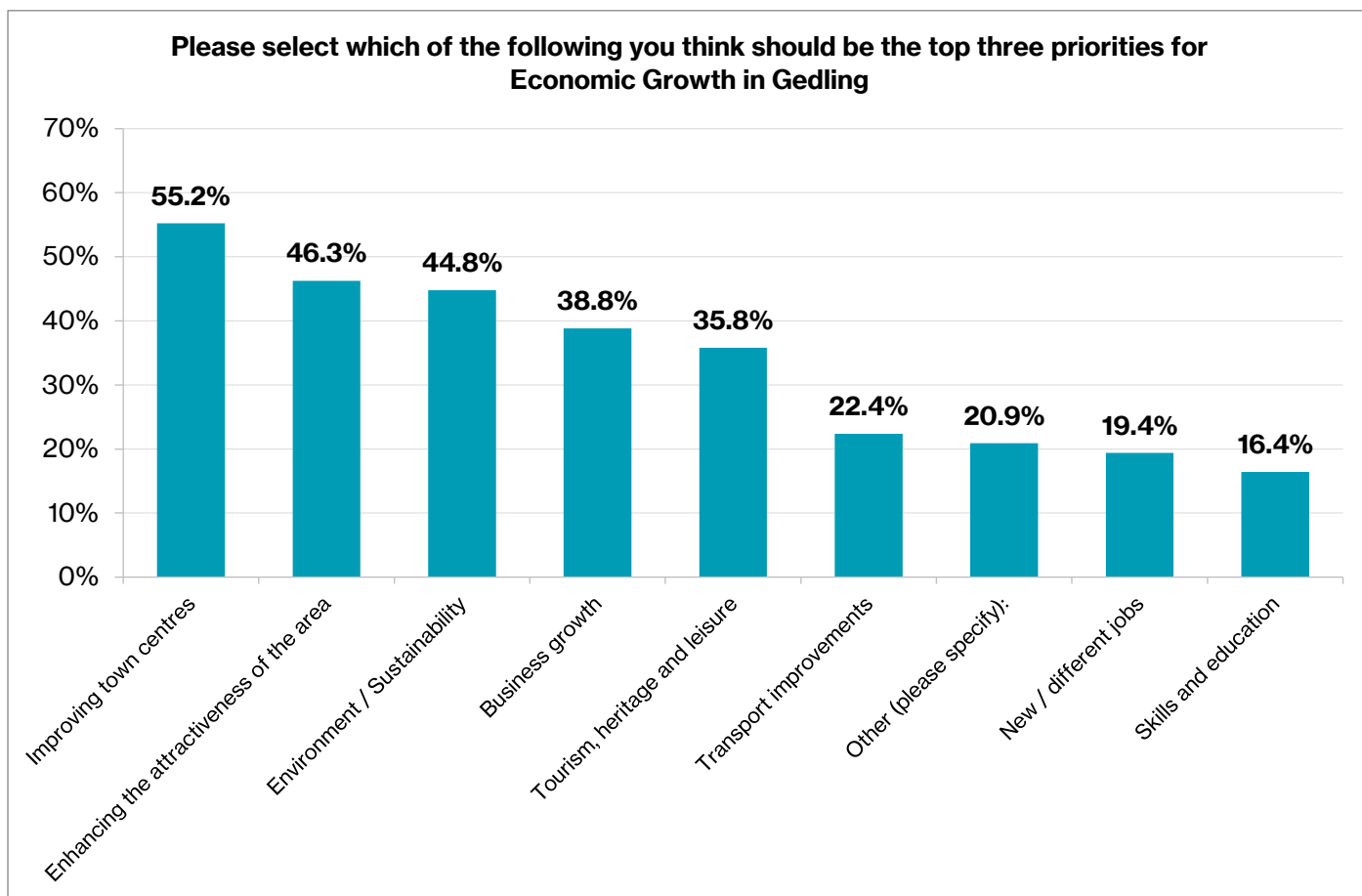
- *"Encouraging further business growth due to restrictions from public transport, lack of parking, and rising rent costs."*
- *"Lack of secondary school provision and flooding problems plus fixing roads."*
- *"The lack of industry."*
- *"Not enough local businesses or support for them, they seem to be pushed out by larger corporations."*
- *"Poor infrastructure such as roads and public transport."*

### 1.2.3 Please select which of the following you think should be the top three priorities for Economic Growth in Gedling. Business growth, enhancing the attractiveness of the area, environment / sustainability, improving town centres, new / different jobs, skills and education, tourism, heritage and leisure, transport improvements, Other (please specify):

#### Top Priorities for Economic Growth

- **Improvement of Town Centres (55.2%):** A significant number of respondents wanted to see local town centres revitalised, especially Arnold.
- **Enhancing the Attractiveness of the Area (46.3%):** Respondents wanted Gedling to become more appealing to visitors and residents through better public spaces and cleanliness.

- **Environment and Sustainability (44.8%):** Sustainability initiatives and improving green spaces were a focus for many.
- **Business Growth (38.8%):** Encouraging local business development was another key priority.
- **Tourism, Heritage and Leisure (35.8%):** Respondents highlighted the importance of developing Gedling’s tourism, heritage, and leisure offerings, including cultural events and heritage site promotion.



### Specific Comments

- "Improve town centres, make the area more attractive for businesses and residents."
- "Focus on environmental sustainability, renewable energy projects, and green spaces."
- "We should encourage locally based events like the fayre in Carlton, which 30 years ago was fun. Maybe update the event to a steampunk, anime/charity-based festival."
- "There is a great opportunity to locate a digester at the bottom end of the country park, which could produce methane and compost. Also, look at power generation from mine waters in the old pit workings."
- "Antisocial behaviour needs addressing; it is putting people off the area."
- "The precinct is a mess and unwelcoming. The market is non-existent—attract proper stalls, not wax melt sellers. We need a fishmonger, cheesemonger, unprocessed bread or pasties."
- "Improving our road infrastructure is a top priority. Roads are scruffy, and patching is only ever temporary and a waste of money."
- "Activities for young people to get out and socialise. We need better and more up-to-date leisure centres—not old, run-down courts like Carlton."
- "Include natural heritage when looking at heritage."
- "Would also select improving town centres, tourism, heritage and leisure, and transport improvements."

### 1.3 Visitor Economy

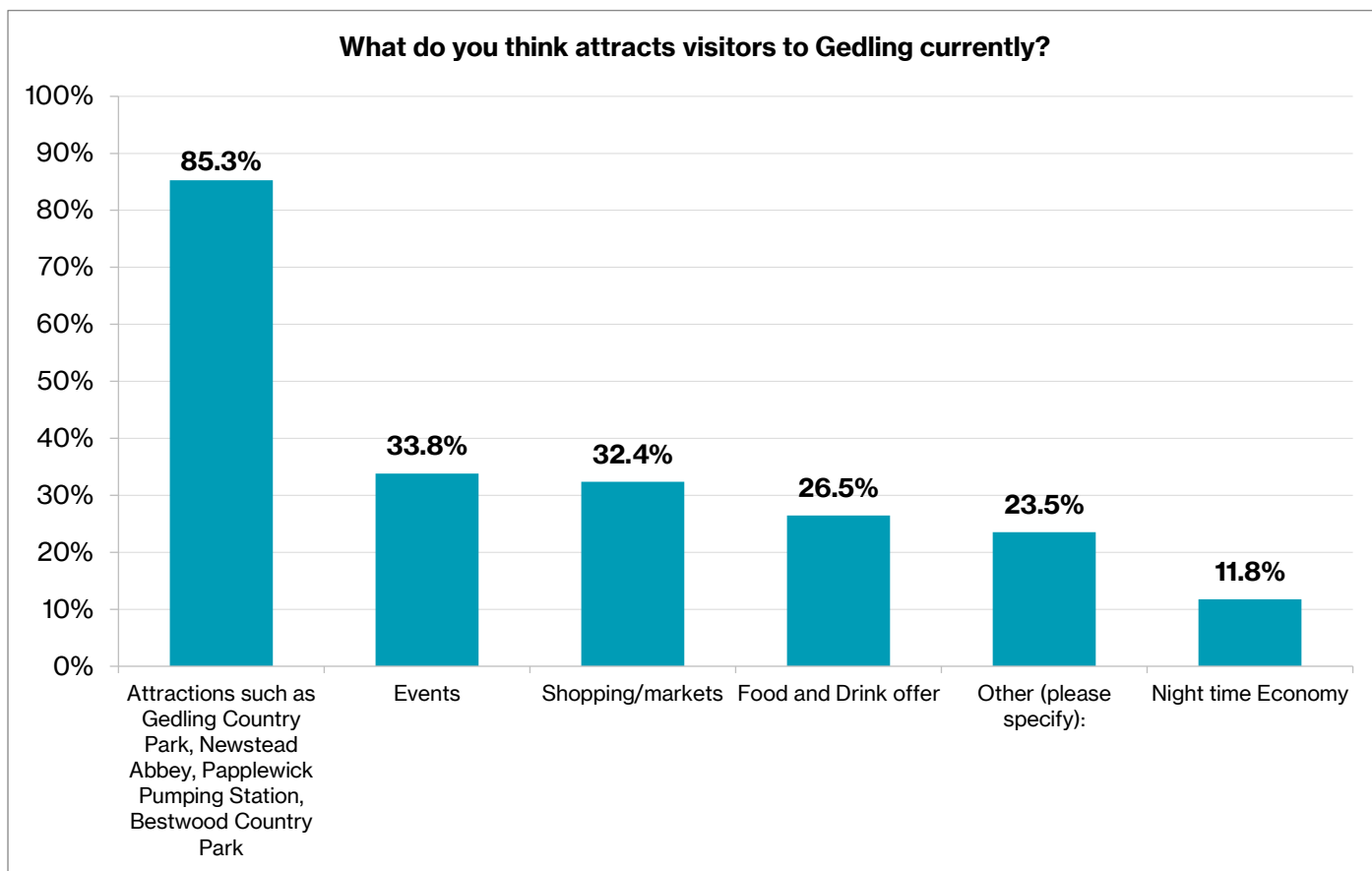
#### 1.3.1 What do you think attracts visitors to Gedling currently?

##### Attractions Identified

- **Gedling Country Park and Newstead Abbey (85.3%):** These were the most commonly mentioned attractions, with respondents highlighting the natural beauty and historical value.
- **Events (33.8%):** Local events organised by businesses and community groups were also highlighted as key attractions.
- **Shopping and Markets (32.4%):** Local shopping areas and markets were identified as important draws.

##### Specific Comments

- "Independent shops like Project pies on Carlton Hill street."
- "Leisure centres and library courses and cinema shows."
- "Themed weekends at Papplewick Pumping Station."
- "Well run recreation grounds and recent real improvements made to facilities at various recreation grounds."



### 1.3.2 Are there any particular themes that could be developed to attract more people to visit Gedling or to spend longer in Gedling?

#### Suggestions for Improvement

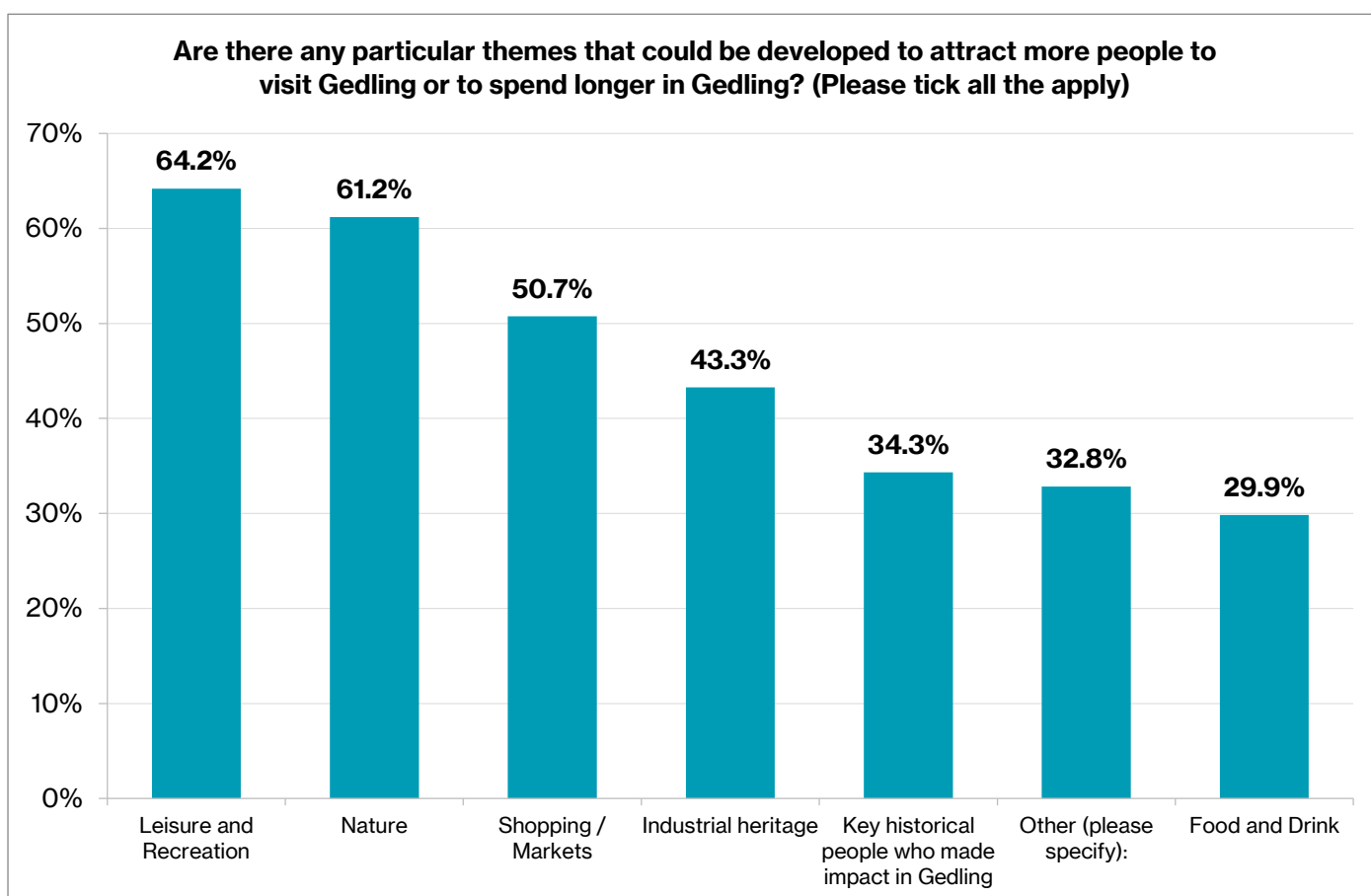
- **Better Leisure and Recreation (64.2%):** Most respondents see potential in developing leisure and recreational activities.
- **Nature (61.2%):** Highlighting natural attractions and enhancing access to green spaces was a major theme.
- **Shopping/Markets (50.7%):** Enhancing local shopping experiences and markets was also seen as attractive.
- **Industrial Heritage (43.3%) and Key Historical People (34.3%):** There's interest in exploring Gedling's industrial past and notable historical figures.

#### Key Comments

- Respondents suggested making heritage sites like Robin Hood's chair more accessible and improving cleanliness in public areas.
- Enhancements in cafes and recreational facilities were recommended, such as better customer service and dog-friendly policies.
- Events like family days and health promotions were proposed to increase visitor engagement.

#### Specific Comments

- *"Making more of things that can be free - river walks, the lagoons, improving old railway trails for walking with historical features."*



### 1.3.3 Do you have any other suggestions on how more people could be attracted to visit Gedling?

#### Suggestions for Attracting More Visitors

- **Community Events and Activities:** Frequent community-focused events throughout the year to cater to various interests and increase footfall.
- **Accessibility and Cleanliness:** Calls for better publicity, free parking, and enhanced cleanliness in towns and parks to improve overall attractiveness.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Suggestions include repairing roads, improving transport, and making public spaces more multi-use and dog-friendly.
- **Enhancing Local Attractions:** Proposals for more artisan markets, better food and drink facilities, and conservation-focused events to enrich visitor experience.

#### Specific Comments

- *"Make heritage sites more accessible, like Robin Hood's historical locations."*
- *"Focus on conservation events and improve facilities at local parks to attract families and nature enthusiasts."*
- *"Increase footfall through festivals and local markets that celebrate Gedling's unique culture and history."*

## 1.4 Heritage

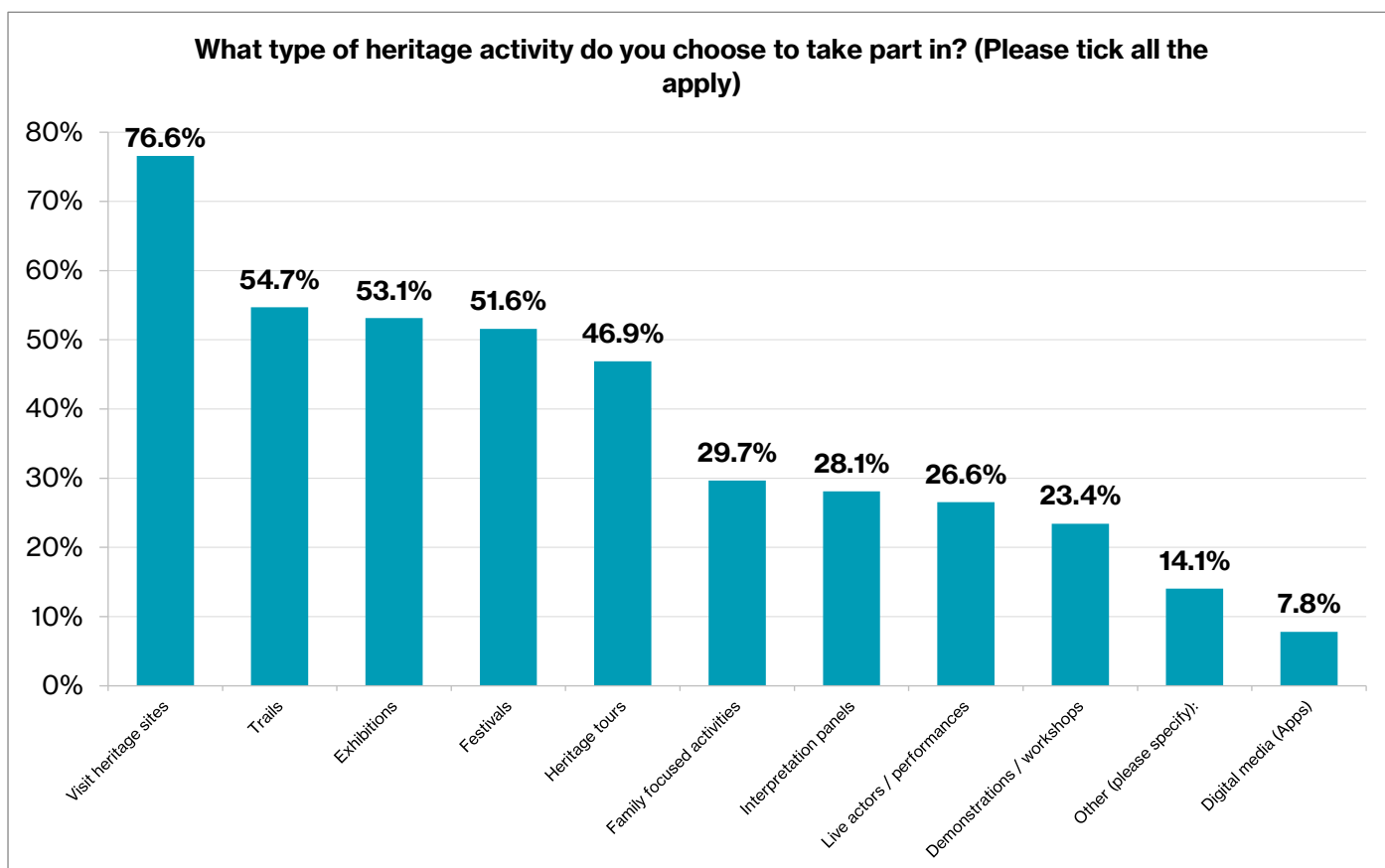
### 1.4.1 What type of heritage activity do you choose to take part in?

#### Heritage Activities

- **Heritage Site Visits (76.6%):** Most respondents actively participate in visiting heritage sites, indicating a strong interest in local history.
- **Trails and Festivals (54.7% and 51.6% respectively):** Trails and festivals are popular, suggesting a preference for engaging and interactive experiences.
- **Exhibitions and Heritage Tours (53.1% and 46.9% respectively):** Exhibitions and guided heritage tours are also favoured, emphasising the desire for educational activities.

#### Specific Comments

- "Excellent guided walks offered by Nottingham Civic Society - can similar walks be developed for different areas of Gedling on themes like coal mining, the brick making industry, the 'Real Oliver Twist', the railway history, the lace making industry etc. The Smith banking family and the beautiful house they built."
- "Lots of walks, looking into history of our local area, how maps have change, the old railways, the mining industry, what has shaped us, pubs, restaurants and social events."



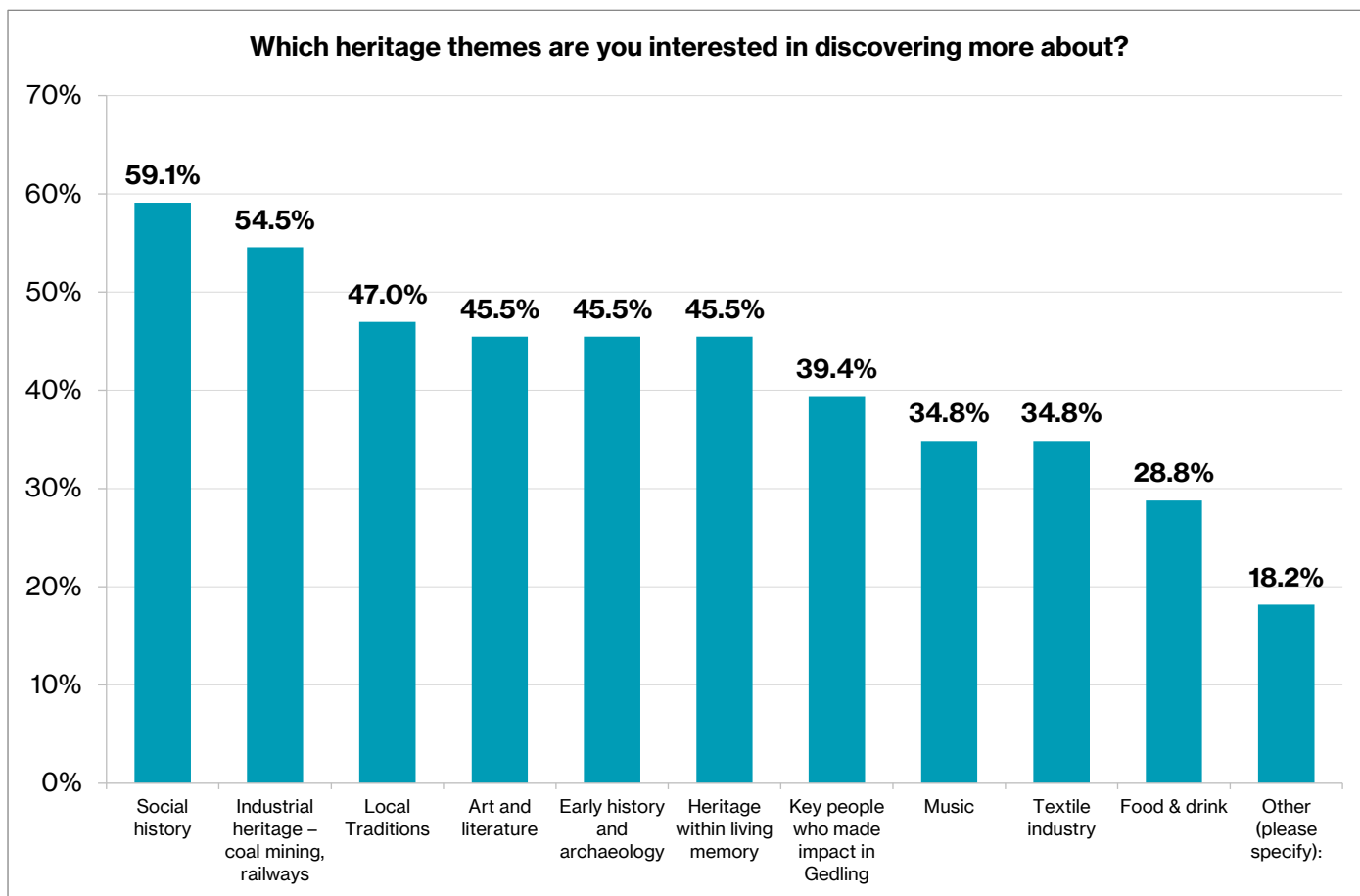
### 1.4.2 Which heritage themes are you interested in discovering more about?

#### Heritage Themes

- **Social History (59.1%):** The most popular theme, with a strong interest in the broader social history of the area.
- **Industrial Heritage – Coal Mining, Railways (54.5%):** Significant interest in Gedling’s industrial past, particularly coal mining and railways.
- **Local Traditions (47.0%):** Half of the respondents are keen to explore local customs and traditions.
- **Art and Literature, Early History and Archaeology, Heritage within Living Memory (All 45.5%):** Close interest in the arts and early regional history and more recent heritage.

#### Specific Comments

- *"Rebels. Luddites etc. Labour history? From General Lud to the UDM, the borough has a fascinating working class history."*
- *"Gravestone reading."*
- *"Highlight framework homes and linking up to other areas like Ruddington’s lace making, coal etc."*
- *"Crafts (history/heritage) - stained glass, soft furnishings, environmental/green heritage, diverse communities' contributions."*
- *"Industrial heritage - the brickyards. Natural history and heritage."*



### 1.4.3 How can access to heritage in Gedling be improved?

#### Suggestions for Improving Access to Heritage

- **Accessibility and Facilities:** Respondents emphasised the need for better physical accessibility, including levelled pathways, more seating, and accessible public toilets. Improved transport links and parking facilities were also highlighted.

#### Specific Comments

- *"I have health needs myself and would love to access the open spaces more...there are no public toilets or if so, only in one place so you cannot wander a trail, not enough seating for rest breaks."*
- *"Easy transport links not using cars."*
- *"EV charging stations at sites."*
- *"Panels with large fonts, and kept clean. Sites kept litter free."*
- *"Accessible pathways. Recognise the wildlife heritage - badgers, foxes, hedgehogs in urban environments."*
- *"Better advance publicity of events. Costumed volunteers demonstrating/talking about heritage crafts, life in the past."*
- *"Produce some walk leaflets that incorporate heritage assets."*
- *"Make pathways and pavements safe."*
- *"Make precinct safe and welcoming. Restore buildings."*
- *"More family-orientated literature and activities."*
- *"More information on how to access the sites/opening hours/busy & quiet times."*

### 1.4.4 What are the opportunities to share heritage in Gedling?

#### Opportunities Identified

- **Community Engagement:** Respondents emphasised the importance of heritage open days and community festivals as means to engage all age groups and showcase local history and talent.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Suggestions included the development of downloadable apps and information boards that offer interactive learning experiences about local heritage.
- **Enhancing Accessibility and Information:** Respondents noted the need for improved physical access to heritage sites, such as level pathways, and better publicity of events to attract a wider audience.

#### Specific Comments

- *"Heritage open days, we all want to snoop around places such as Gedling House, see archive records, old photos, learn more about the older traditions of the area."*
- *"More could be done to celebrate the heritage of the brickyards."*
- *"Encourage micro influencers, community events, farm market days, and a permanent site or sites for heritage activities."*
- *"Community events and festivals. Downloadable (not just an app) walking routes with heritage interests highlighted."*
- *"Pumping station open days."*
- *"I think festivals are good, but shared community events and partnerships are also important. For example, Arnold U3A runs a local history group who research information about the area, its history and industrial development which could contribute to other activities."*
- *"Social media marketing."*
- *"An app that people can follow as they walk around the area telling them about the history."*
- *"An adventure trail for families that allows children to follow the clues and complete a quiz."*

### 1.4.5 What is unique about heritage in Gedling?

#### Unique Heritage Aspects

- **Industrial and Literary Heritage:** Strong ties to the Industrial Revolution and literary figures offer unique educational and cultural exploration opportunities.
- **Natural and Urban Mix:** The area's blend of green spaces with industrial history creates a unique landscape for residents and visitors.
- **Community Initiatives:** Local enthusiasm for more heritage-focused events like open days and community festivals to better engage all age groups and celebrate Gedling's history.

#### Specific Comments

- *"We have a vast expanse of heritage from brickwork to coal to railways... but we do not seem to use this to its full potential."*
- *"The Trent, Ouse Dyke, The Dumble's, and Railway heritage are what make Gedling special."*
- *"Heritage open days are popular; people are keen to learn more about the older traditions of the area."*
- *"More can be done to celebrate the heritage of the brickyards and protect local wildlife like bat colonies and hedgehogs."*

- "A permanent site for heritage activities would help raise awareness and appreciation for Gedling's history."
- "Link with Tolkien, his aunt lived on a farm in Gedling and some of his ideas for the Hobbit came from his local walks."

## 1.5 Additional Comments

### 1.5.1 Is there anything else you would like to add?

#### Additional Comments

- **Community Engagement:** Respondents suggested quarterly meetings with the council to discuss local issues and ideas, emphasising community involvement in decision-making.
- **Environmental Concerns:** A focus on keeping areas clean and litter-free was prominent, with calls for lower business rates and tax relief to foster economic growth.
- **Event Accessibility:** There's a need for more events and activities tailored to working adults and couples without children, with better scheduling outside typical working hours.
- **Transportation:** Improved, affordable transport options were highlighted, especially between key areas like Arnold and Gedling.
- **Heritage Promotion:** Many expressed that Gedling's rich heritage, including historical sites and connections to notable figures, is underpromoted and could be leveraged more effectively.

#### Specific Comments

- "Heritage open days are needed to showcase places like Gedling House and local history."
- "Focus should be on bringing jobs/leisure/events closer to where people live, making towns more vibrant."
- "Possibly an update of the Gedling Borough Guide to include more on its heritage."
- "With limited resources for the council, engage community even further - are there key focus groups that could be created up to help. Create wider steering committees, tap into the wealth of knowledge that business people have, especially those who have retired and have time to help. This is across a broad spectrum of experience and business types."
- "The towns in Gedling are essentially Nottingham suburbs. Focus should be on bringing jobs/leisure/events from the city to where people live."

## 1.6 Summary

The comprehensive consultation summary from the Gedling Borough Council's Economic Growth Framework outlines community perspectives on local economic growth, the visitor economy, and heritage strategies. Key insights are split into the three themes and include:

**Economic Growth** - The local economy benefits from a foundation of independent businesses, abundant green spaces, and strong transport links, supported by an active community. However, significant barriers such as rising rental costs, infrastructure inadequacies, and town centre decline challenge further growth. The community's feedback highlights the need for strategic interventions to mitigate these issues and enhance economic stability.

**Visitor Economy** - Key attractions like Gedling Country Park and Newstead Abbey are pivotal in drawing visitors. There is a recognised potential to increase visitor numbers through enhanced leisure activities, improved shopping experiences, and expanded market offerings. Developing these aspects could make Gedling a more attractive destination for tourists and locals alike.

**Heritage** - Residents express a strong interest in accessing more engaging heritage activities. Popular suggestions include organising more open heritage days, developing educational applications, and improving the marketing of the area's rich historical and cultural sites. These initiatives could help deepen the local and visitor engagement with Gedling's heritage.

**Community Feedback** - Feedback indicates a community eager for more involvement in decision-making, suggesting regular meetings with the council to address local issues. Environmental concerns and the desire for more inclusive event planning also feature prominently, pointing towards a community focused on sustainability and equitable growth.