



Wrexham City Board Engagement Summary

November 2024

Prepared by Mike Corcoran for Wrexham City Board



SECTION 1:

Just One Thing

If you could change just one thing about Wrexham City Centre, what would it be?

Across June, July and August of 2024, we asked this question to school pupils, community groups and members of the public in and around Wrexham.

Engagement was carried out by Wrexham City Board members, with the Children's University (at Wrexham University) undertaking extensive engagement with local schools.

In total

- **Over 35 school and community groups took part**
- **Over 1,500 people shared ideas**
- **Over 3,600 unique insights were gathered.**

Insights were thematically analysed and codified by Wrexham University, identifying 5 key themes which all insights fell into.

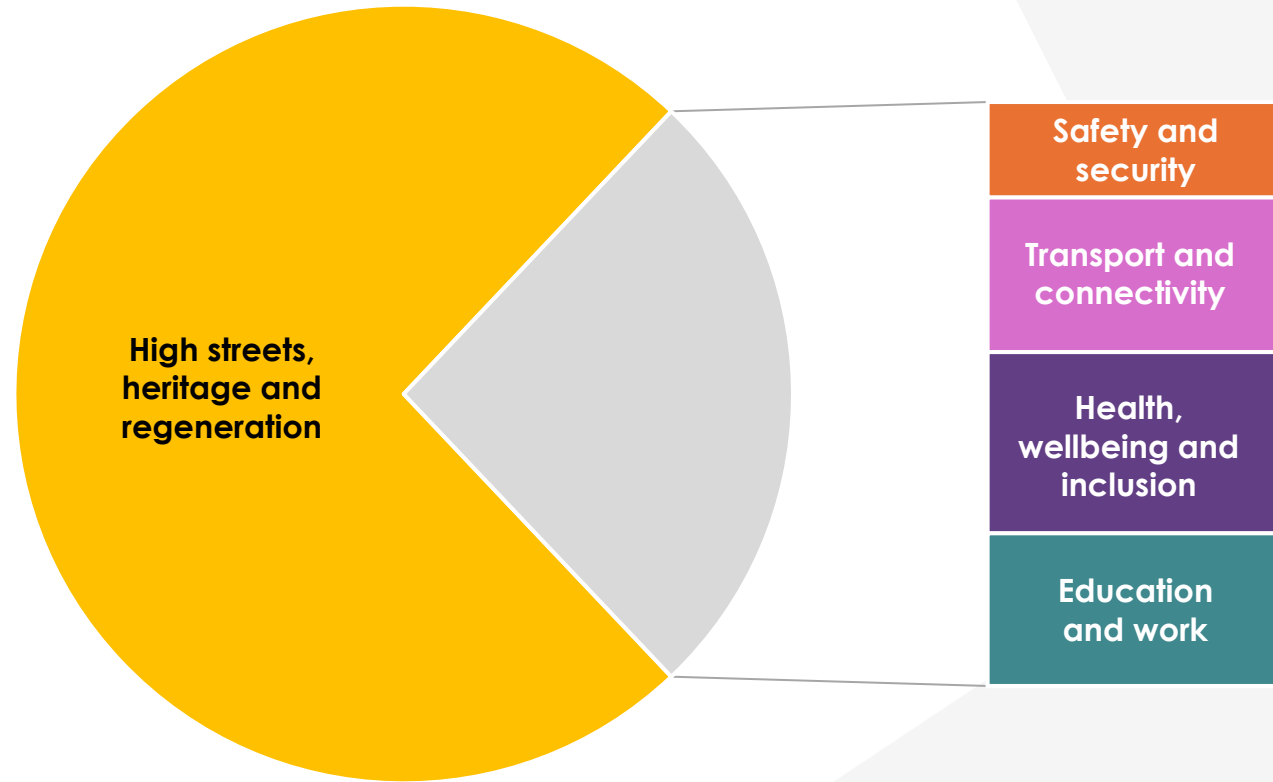
If you could
change just one
thing about
Wrexham City
Centre, what
would it be?

1.1. OVERVIEW

**Young people want more things to do
in the city centre!**

1.2. THE BIG FINDING

The key themes emerging from 'Just One Thing' aligned strongly with the board's key priorities, with 'High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration' a clear leader, accounting for 74% of all insights shared.



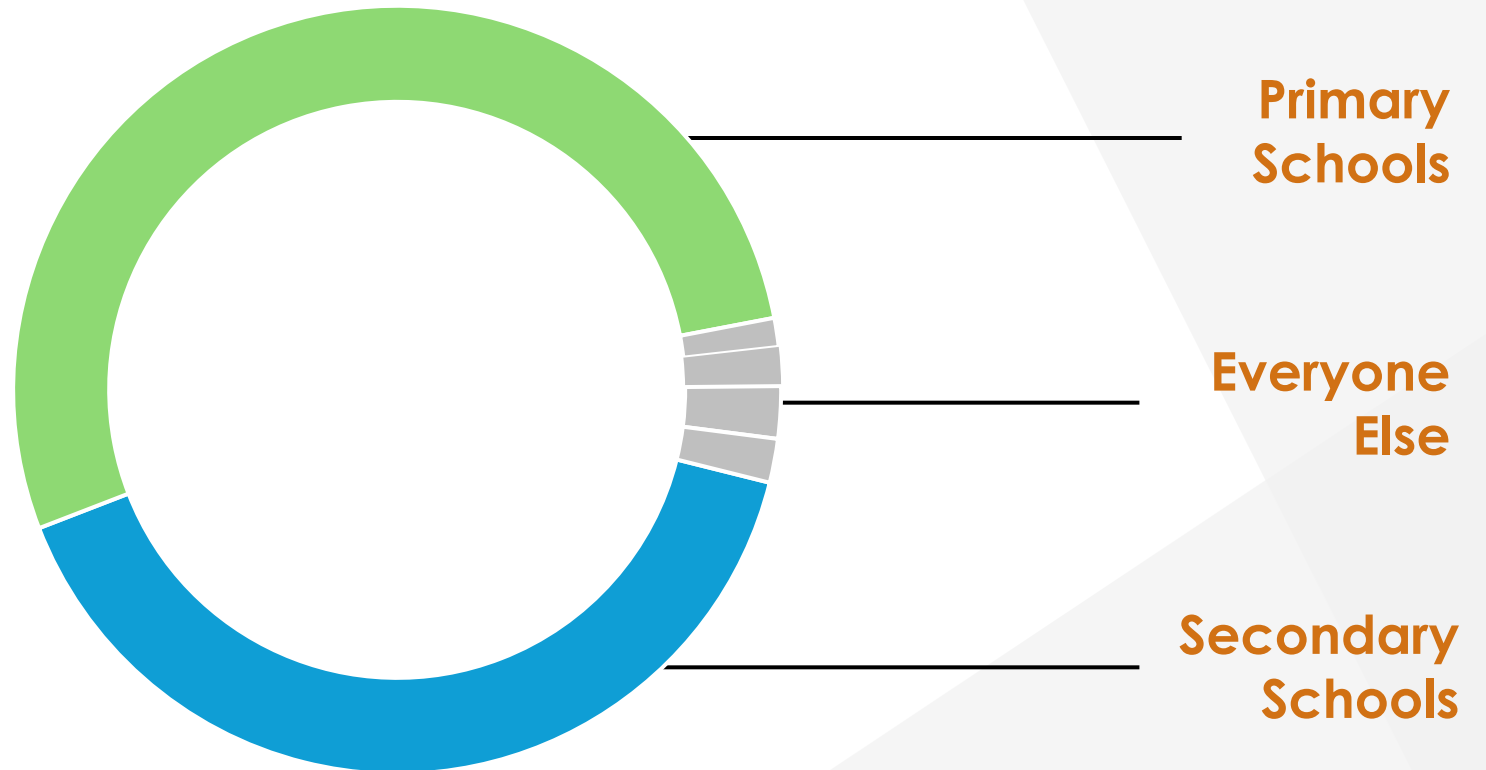
1.3. THE DETAIL

Over 90% of all insights came from school students.

The key themes give a good sense of what matters most to school age children in Wrexham.

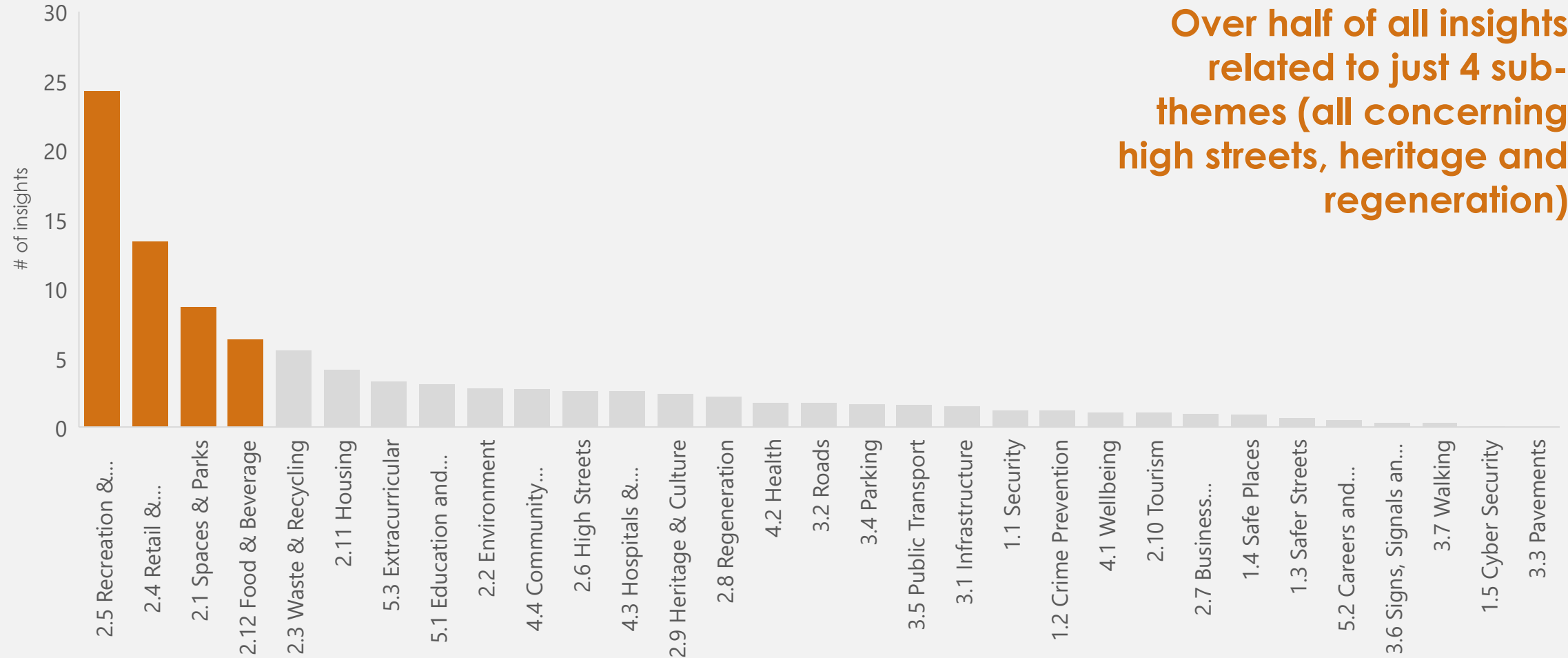
But there is rich insights in the margins and details of the data too.

Every insight has an equal value!



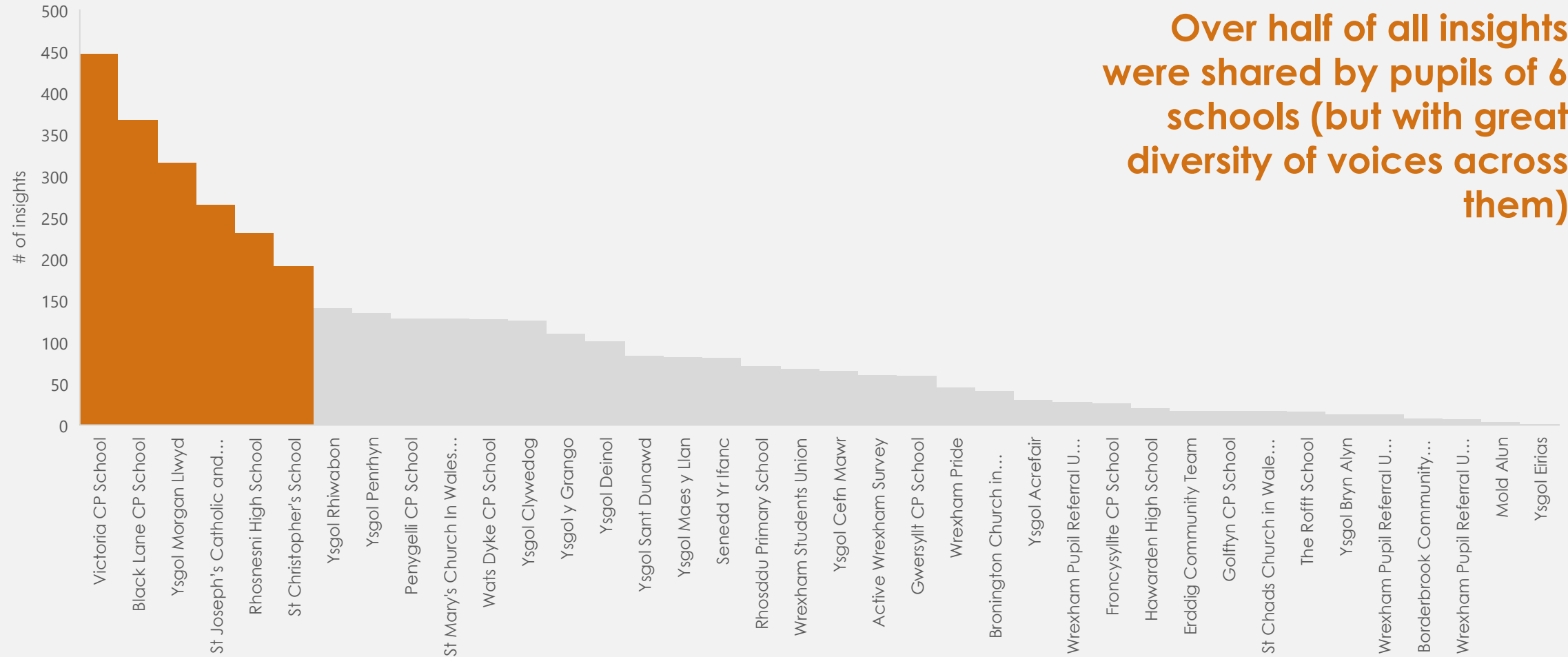
1.3. THE DETAIL

Over half of all insights related to just 4 sub-themes (all concerning high streets, heritage and regeneration)



1.3. THE DETAIL

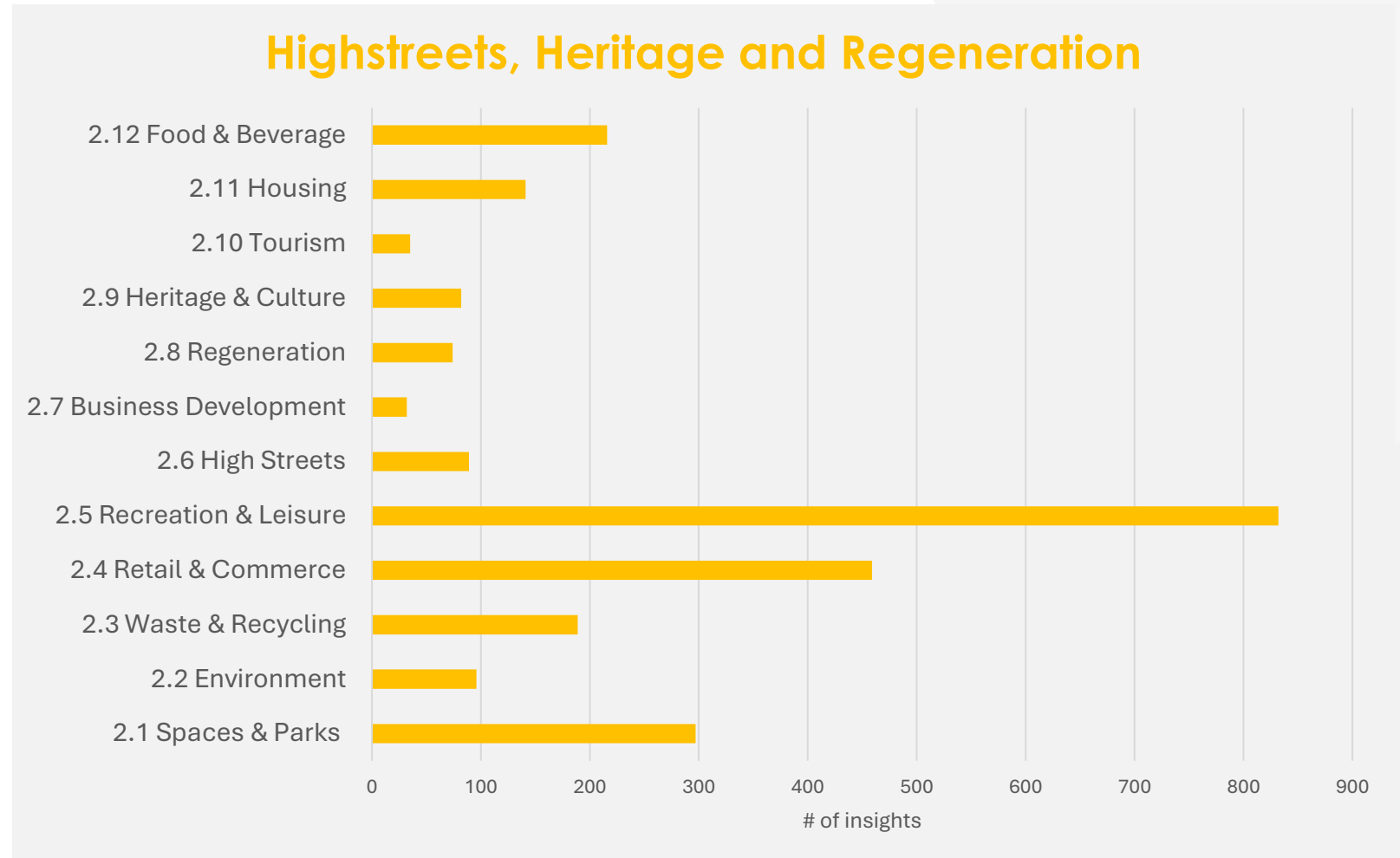
Over half of all insights were shared by pupils of 6 schools (but with great diversity of voices across them)



1.3. THE DETAIL

“My idea is to add more activities to the streets, such as, dance workshops, signing, and more museums”

1/2576 comments



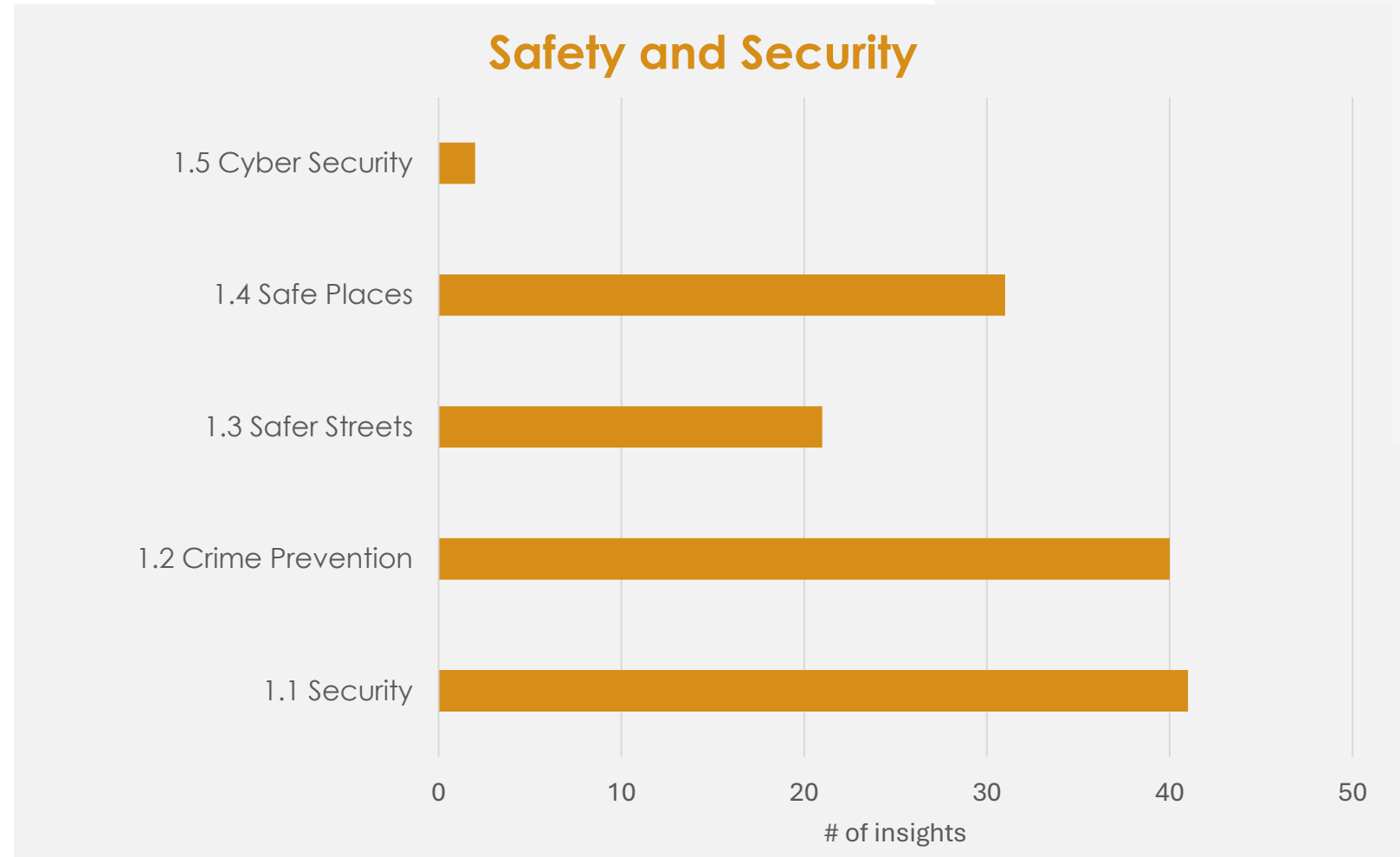
1.4. THEME-BY-THEME

“The town feels too unsafe now even when you are walking around in the daytime, the groups of males and sometimes joined with females hanging around can be overwhelming.

Something big needs to be done about the unsavoury characters that seem to have taken the town over in the past few years.

Wrexham used to be a safe happy place to live it's not now.”

1/147 comments

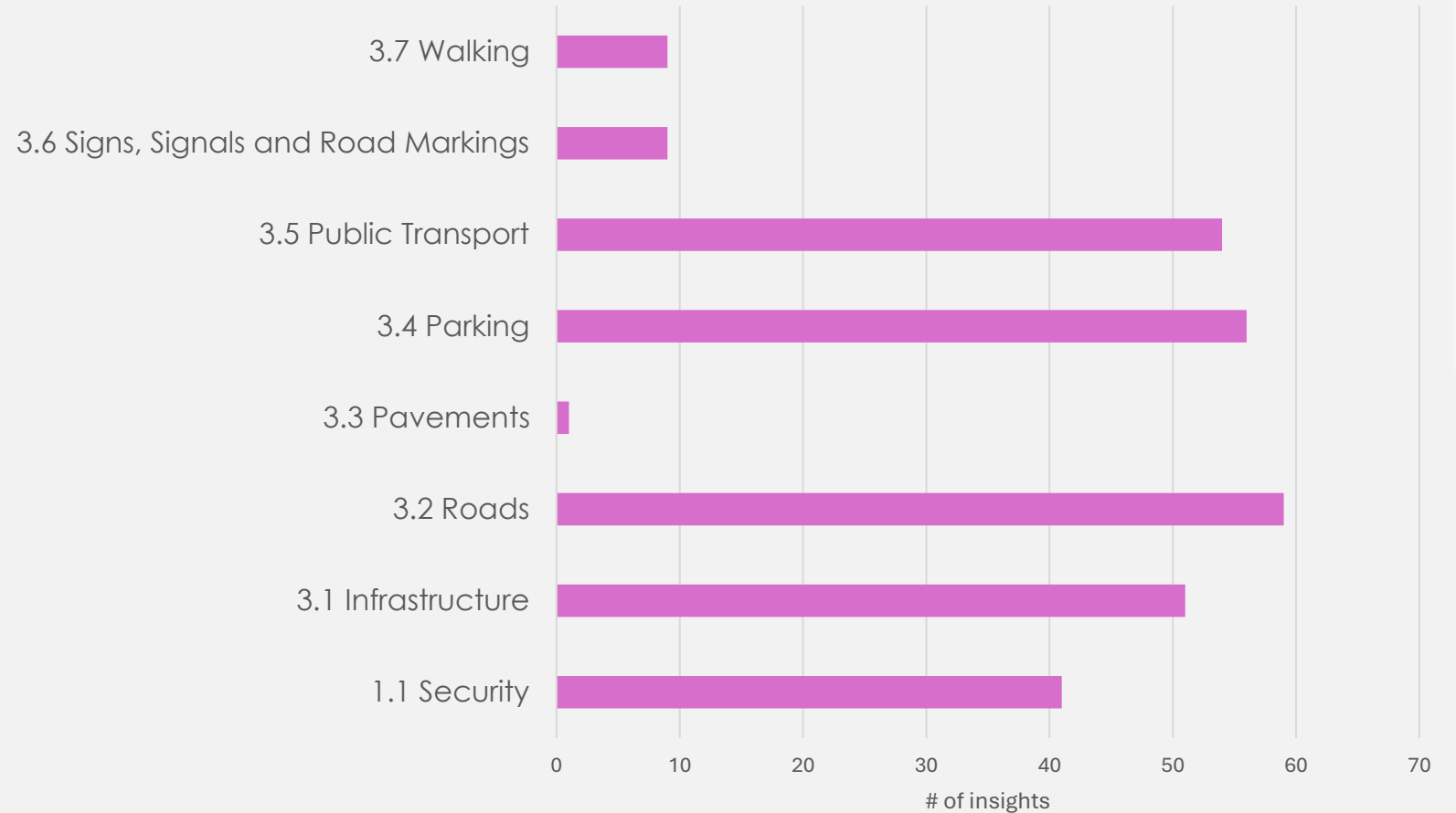


1.4. THEME-BY-THEME

“Maintain pavements for wheelchairs, they are not flat and difficult to get onto.”

1/238 comments

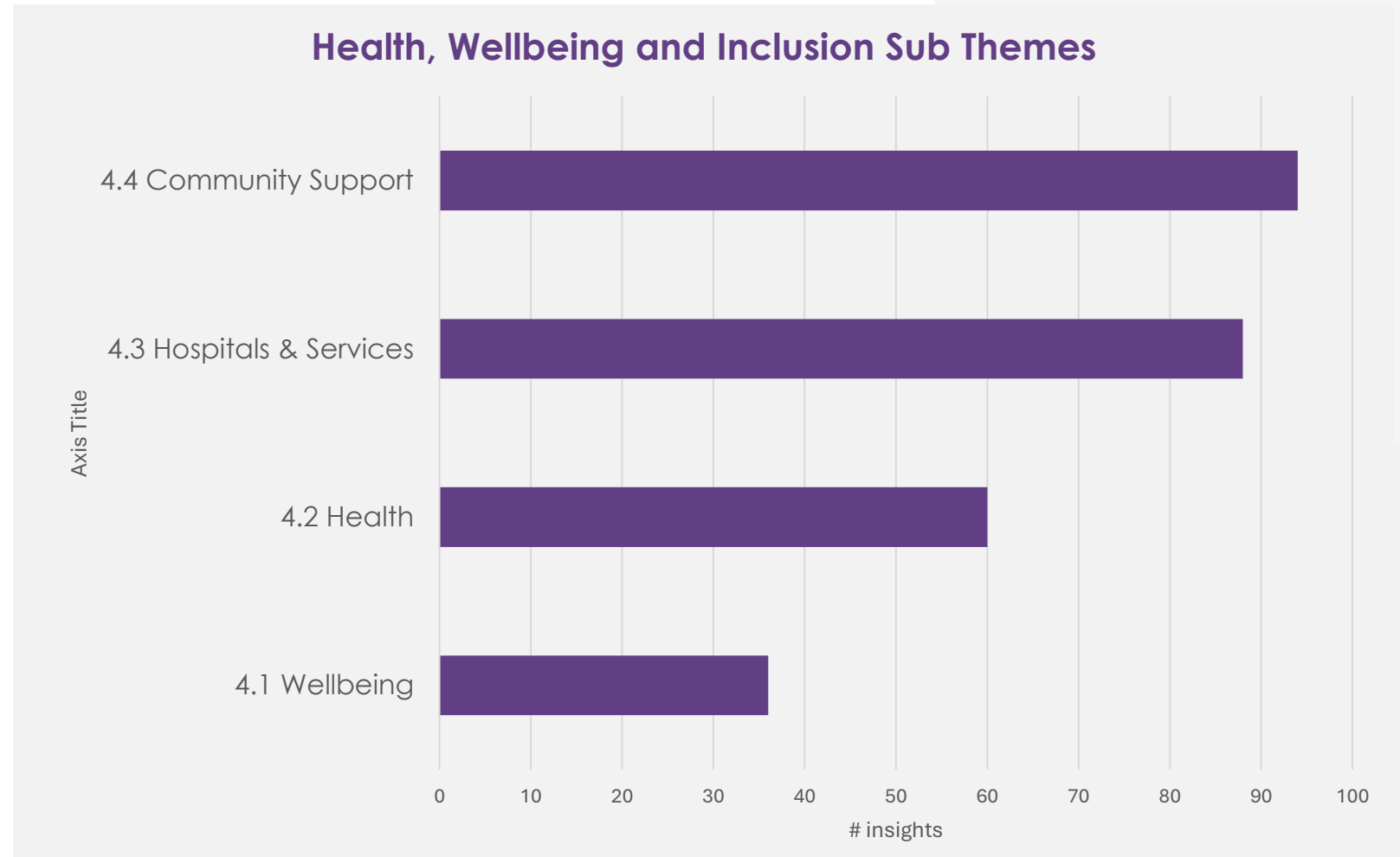
Transport and Connectivity Sub Themes



1.5. THEME-BY-THEME

“More associations like CAMHS to help teens, we need places they can feel safe to talk, where they can feel loved and supported and not alone.”

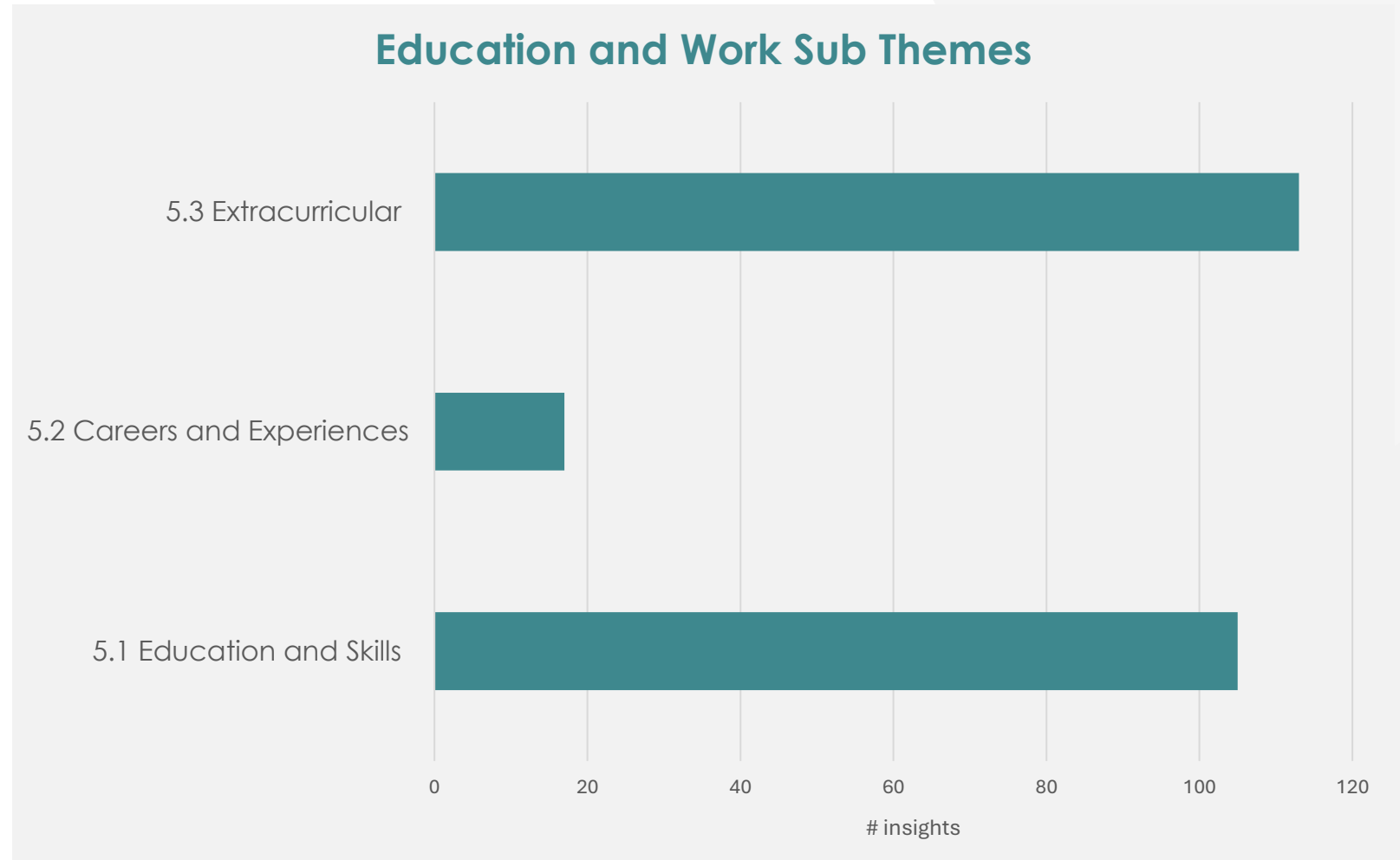
1/279 comments



1.4. THEME-BY-THEME

“[We need a] children’s Board – because children do not get any input so if you have ideas you can say them loud and proud.”

1/235 comments

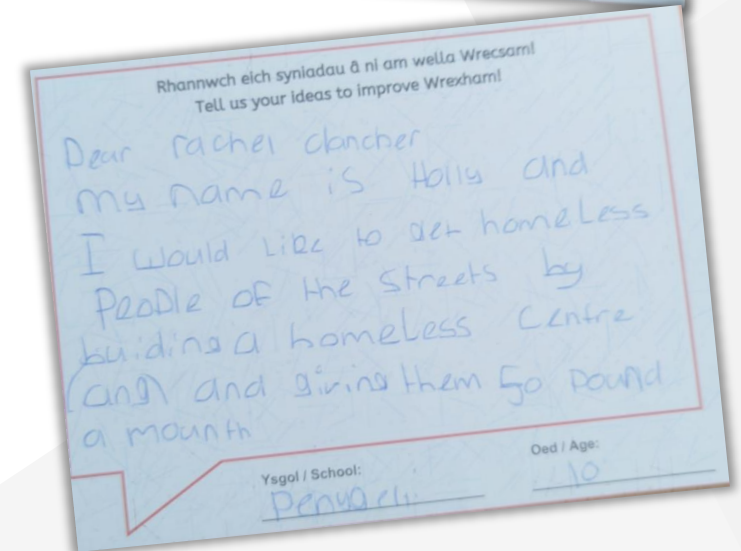
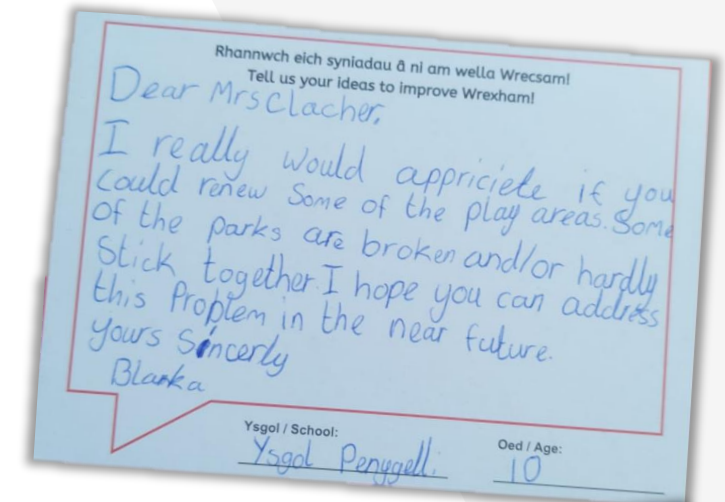


1.4. THEME-BY-THEME

Wrexham University have collated all insights gathered into a simple, searchable and editable data archive.

We can:

- Create 'mini-insights briefings' relating to specific themes and topics.
- Pull quotes from the archive relating to any theme, sub-theme, or group, to inform our discussions and decision making.
- Further analyse the data, to explore themes, patterns and correlations.
- Add to the archive, with fresh insights as part of a regular (or continuous) 'Just One Thing' exercise.



1.5. WHAT NEXT?

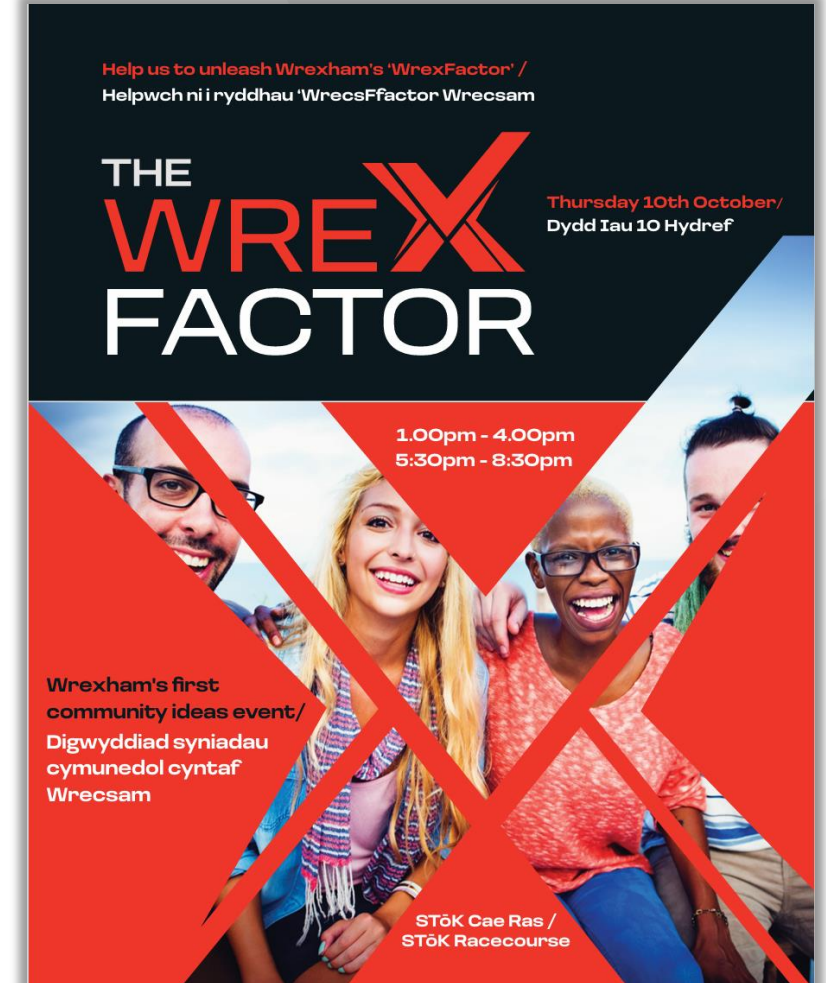
SECTION 2: The WrexFactor

On 10th October 2024, the Wrexham City Board invited the people of Wrexham to 'unleash the city's WrexFactor'

The event:

- Adopted a 'community hackathon' format, and was facilitated by Cwmpas, who pioneered the approach in Wales.
- Was attended by 128 people – of all ages, of wide-ranging interests, and inclusive of business owners, charity workers, educators, entrepreneurs, elected representatives, and many members of the general public.
- The event was recorded by the Welcome to Wrexham film crew.
- Over the course of two 3-hour sessions, people worked in teams to creatively explore '**the hero projects and ideas which can transform our city centre**', and to develop pitches for their own project ideas.

2.1. OVERVIEW



Over the course of the events, thousands of individual ideas were generated, and a total of 16 ideas for 'hero projects' were pitched to an expert panel.

Cwmpas have collected the full findings of the event into a comprehensive report which:

- Details the approach and methodology followed.
- Presents every point made by participations during each of the sessions' exercises.
- Details of every team's pitch, and the feedback they received from panellists.
- Includes a high-level summary of the key themes emerging from all of the discussions which took place.



2.1. OVERVIEW



OD 24

2.2. THE BIG FINDING

Community collaboration

During both sessions there was a broad and rich representation of people and organisations from across Wrexham.

The positive value of this was commented on several times and this diversity was integral not only to the ideas being produced but also the confidence that around each table, and throughout the event as a whole, the views and voices of the people of Wrexham were being heard.

The format of the event maximised the collaborative nature of the ideas by placing people in diverse teams where people worked together for the first time with others from across several sectors and backgrounds. There was immediate value created by the format of these teams working together for the duration of the session from mapping strengths and challenges through to developing and pitching.

Extract from Cwmpas report

2.3. THE KEY THEMES

Perceptions and joined up thinking

An emerging theme for the day was the need to overturn lingering perceptions. It was acknowledged that the work of Rob and Ryan, and the success of the football club has done much to remove negative perceptions of the town. The spirit of the WrexFactor, a wholly positive atmosphere of community idea generation, leaned into this believable ambition.

Whilst there are many challenges to overcome in the city centre there is an evident spirit to change perceptions even further for the good of the community. In line with this there was an emerging theme that any fresh ideas being implemented need joined up thinking and coordination, and the avoidance of a fragmentary approach.

“Less disjointed” decision making was the order of the day.

Extract from Cwmpas report

2.3. THE KEY THEMES

Brand identity and confidence

There is a challenge that initiatives will be dispirit unless there is a coherent and compelling vision behind them. This speaks to the essence of placemaking, and a strong theme in the discussions and pitches was around brand identity for the city.

What is Wrexham's unique brand and identity and how can this be owned and communicated by residents and to visitors? There were related sub-themes around being a "City of Festivals," uniting under one brand the plethora of festivals that take place in Wrexham over each calendar year. But how will the festival idea work with ideas around heritage and hospitality, with being an "Indie market town" and with the football club. One group suggested that the exploration of the Wrexham brand be an "exercise with an open dialogue."

Building on the open public engagement at the WrexFactor how can people across Wrexham be involved in this dialogue around brand identity?

Extract from Cwmpas report

2.3. THE KEY THEMES

Getting here

Understandably transport was a prominent theme on the day at both sessions. This produced a variety of responses, from the need to support affordable or free transport for under-25s, to the "WrexPress" tram, and the travel card to make integrated travel much easier.

Again, as expected, there was a concern to remove the reliance on car travel into town, to invest in new Park & Ride facilities, a 24-hour bus service, and to make it easier to get around. There are many challenges around existing infrastructure, and what transport options are desirable, feasible, and viable. However, it is clear that changes to how transport works for locals and visitors was a significant theme on the day.

Getting people to Wrexham was one important conversation point, but once people are in the city centre, there were several ideas on making it a better experience.

Extract from Cwmpas report

2.3. THE KEY THEMES

Safety, dwell time, and retail

In line with the prominence of transport as a theme was the issue of safety. Whatever attractions Wrexham has in its city centre none of them will work unless it is a safe place to be. Safety is the side of the coin that ensures that nothing detracts from the visitor experience, whether that means curbing daytime drinking or making a “sanctuary” for those experiencing homelessness.

Doubtless, finding appropriate positive measures forward on this will be a matter for careful consideration.

Several groups highlighted the need for empty shops to be filled by independent traders, of the need for better rates and decisions being made locally (knowing that landlords are invariably not local). Groups also spoke of the need to increase dwell time through a “hub and spoke” approach and zoning to demark the varied offer that Wrexham can bring around entertainment (Eagle’s Meadow featured several times in conversations), art, and leisure.

Extract from Cwmpas report

2.3. THE KEY THEMES

Art, festivals, entertainment, and young people

Perhaps, as expected, there was a clear thread through the conversations around the desired City of Culture status. Coupled with this was the idea of Wrexham as a “City of Festivals” and a more joined up approach to make that happen. As mentioned, a zone approach would enhance the entertainment offer.

In the evening session one group highlighted the need for more opportunities for young people to set up high street businesses, whilst another group pitched the idea of a versatile Youth Hub in the city centre that could be a positive focal point for activities for young people (and one co-designed with them for relevance and appeal). Young people featured in pitches around transport, especially when it came to travel affordability.

Extract from Cwmpas report

2.3. THE KEY THEMES

Scale of ambition: hotel, high line, and waterfront

Of the many ideas put forward at the event both sessions included the idea of luxury accommodation to meet the need of new visitors to Wrexham and in keeping with the VIP status of new visitors and the football club owners. There was a background theme of more and better accommodation, with the apex of this being a luxury hotel in the city centre.

There idea was pitched at both sessions. In identical fashion, both sessions included the pitching of a High Line to maximise green walking routes into and around the city. It was suggested that this idea could link in with heritage and culture. It is worth bearing in mind that. Another large-scale idea pitched was the creation of a waterfront in the city centre with a new hotel.

Extract from Cwmpas report

2.3. THE KEY THEMES

This document was created by Mike Corcoran on behalf of Wrexham City Board.

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