



**Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk,  
NR33 0EQ**

# Scrutiny Committee

## **Members:**

Councillor Stuart Bird (Chairman)  
Councillor Mike Deacon (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Edward Back  
Councillor David Beavan  
Councillor Judy Cloke  
Councillor Linda Coulam  
Councillor Tony Goldson  
Councillor Louise Gooch  
Councillor Tracey Green  
Councillor Colin Hedgley  
Councillor Geoff Lynch  
Councillor Keith Robinson  
Councillor Caroline Topping

Members are invited to a **Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee**  
to be held in the Conference Room, Riverside, Lowestoft  
on **Thursday, 2 March 2023 at 6.30pm**

This meeting will be broadcast to the public via the East Suffolk YouTube  
Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jirQ1RB9VN8>

An Agenda is set out below.

## **Part One – Open to the Public**

**Pages**

---

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Substitutions</b>
----------	--

<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of interests, and the nature of that interest, that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the Meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.	
<b>3a</b>	<b>Minutes</b> To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 26 January 2023.	<b>1 - 5</b>
<b>3b</b>	<b>Minutes</b> To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 February 2023.	<b>6 - 10</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Matters Arising Update Sheet</b> To receive the Matters Arising Update Sheet in response to the queries raised at the meeting held on 16 February 2023. <i>(To Follow)</i>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Democratic Accountability within the Planning Process ES/1489</b> Report of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management	<b>11 - 100</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23 ES/1490</b> Report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee	<b>101 - 122</b>

## **Part Two – Exempt/Confidential**

There are no Exempt or Confidential items for this Agenda.

**Close**



Chris Bally, Chief Executive

## **Filming, Videoing, Photography and Audio Recording at Council Meetings**

The Council, members of the public and press may record / film / photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and press are not lawfully excluded.

The Council cannot guarantee public seating areas will not be filmed or recorded. By entering the Conference Room and sitting in the public seating area, those present will be deemed to have consented to the possible use of filmed images and sound recordings. If you do not wish to be recorded, please speak to a member of the Democratic Services team at the earliest opportunity.

If you require this document in large print, audio or Braille or in a different language, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01502 523521 or email:

[democraticservices@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eastsoffolk.gov.uk)



**The national Charter and Charter Plus Awards for Elected Member Development**  
East Suffolk Council is committed to achieving excellence in elected member development  
[www.local.gov.uk/Community-Leadership](http://www.local.gov.uk/Community-Leadership)

<p><b>Unconfirmed</b></p>
---------------------------



Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, on **Thursday, 26 January 2023 at 6.30pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Caroline Topping

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Mick Richardson

**Officers present:** Chris Bing (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Ben Bix (Democratic Services Officer), Cassandra Clements (East Suffolk Services Managing Director), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Siobhan Martin (Head of Internal Audit Services), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer)

**1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Deacon, with Councillor Byatt attending as substitute; and Councillor Robinson, with Councillor Richardson attending as substitute.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest from Members. The Strategic Director declared a non-financial interest in accordance with the Officer Code of Conduct, having been appointed as a Director on the Board of the companies.

**3 Review of Governance Arrangements for the Council's Local Authority Trading Company (LATCO) Group Structure**

The Leader of the Council introduced report **ES/1431** and in so doing explained that there was a scheduled break clause in the current Joint Venture arrangements with Norse to deliver its Waste Management, Street Scene, Grounds Maintenance and Facilities Management services which would be reached in June 2023. The Leader explained that the Joint Venture with Norse had been successful, Norse had grown significantly since its inception and now had a large and diverse portfolio with its own priorities. Options had been examined for the future of service delivery and as part of

the options appraisal, Cabinet had considered the continuance of the extant arrangements but considered it prudent to bring the services delivered by Norse Commercial Services Ltd under closer control by the Council as a client, whilst not undertaking the services directly itself. In line with best practice and having taken external advice, Cabinet had chosen to establish a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) as it was a vehicle which enabled robust governance arrangements and opportunities for the Council to scrutinise and challenge service delivery on behalf of residents.

The Chairman thanked the Leader for his introduction and sought clarification from the Monitoring Officer of the Group structure. The Monitoring Officer summarised that the council had established a number of companies under a group structure, and the reporting lines were illustrated in the report. East Suffolk Services Ltd was 'Teckal' company which could be awarded contracts for works, services or supply from its controlling public sector owner (East Suffolk Council) without having to go through a competitive tender process. The Teckal company must be 'inwardly and not outwardly focused'. The Teckal 'rule' required that at least 80% of the activity of the Teckal company – at least 80% of its turnover – must be for its public sector owner. The Chairman then invited questions from Members.

Councillor Lynch asked how the Council would monitor whether 80% of the activity had been undertaken for the Council as owner. The Leader explained that reporting on activity was a role for the East Suffolk Services Managing Director and that the Shareholder Reference Group, and the Governance and Audit Committee would receive assurance reports. Councillor Hedgley was conscious of the financial failure of companies owned by Croydon and Warrington councils and sought assurance that East Suffolk Council had sufficient debt mitigation in place. The Leader explained that the governance arrangements were designed to mitigate failure, the Shareholder Reference Group (SRG) would oversee the direction of the companies and manage any underperformance. The frequency of SRG meetings ensured that the risk of failure would be adequately mitigated. The Leader emphasised that the foundations of the companies were being formed at that the Council had taken the best possible external advice. The Strategic Director concurred and illustratively explained how the Council had seed funded the companies and provided loans which would be repaid. Capital assets such as vehicles had been purchased by the Council to reduce the initial liabilities on the companies.

Councillor Goldson enquired about the nature of the Council's shareholding and what would happen in the event of any future opportunity for the company to expand. The Leader and Monitoring Officer responded that the Council was the sole shareholder, and that any expansion of the company would be a Reserved Matter as set out in the Shareholder Agreement. The Strategic Director cautioned that the company couldn't act on such matters unilaterally and would have to report to the Shareholder Reference Group with a business case. Councillor Goldson countered that the SRG was comprised of Cabinet Members, not of the whole council, and the Monitoring Officer clarified that the decision-making bodies were constituted robustly and would be enabled to act in accordance with the Shareholder Agreement and Local Government legislation. Furthermore, Executive arrangements empowered the Scrutiny Committee to undertake its strategic review role.

Councillor Gooch was similarly concerned about accountability and review mechanisms and referenced a recent Municipal Journal article which had opined the need for joint training for Members appointed to the Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees. The Leader cautioned that Members appointed to those committees were trained and skilled in their roles according to the terms of reference of each committee. The distinction was that the Scrutiny Committee should have a more strategic emphasis, whilst the Audit and Governance Committee would receive detailed reports from auditors. Good governance was not about joint training nor duplication of distinct roles.

Councillor Beavan referred to the CIPFA report recommendations and asked how contract management would be strengthened. The Strategic Director described how the Council had recognised the challenge from the extant joint venture arrangement and had put into place new specifications for ESSL and 3 FTE contract management roles had been created. The East Suffolk Services Managing Director concurred and emphasised the importance of improving communication and the development of key performance indicators in contract management.

In response to Councillors Hedgley and Beavan, the Leader and the Monitoring Officer explained that the Council's existing Access to Information Procedure Rules, set out in the Constitution, were applicable to meetings of the Shareholder Reference Group and to any commercially sensitive information held by the Council. However, the activities within the commercial 20% of the company would be confidential, and whilst the SRG was open to visiting Members, the ESSL Board meetings were not.

Councillor Gooch was concerned that Norse staff may have been unsettled in the recent past and sought clarification of whether a whistleblowing mechanism would be in place for staff in ESSL. The East Suffolk Services Managing Director assured Members that a Workforce Policy would be in place to re-engage staff with a focus on wellbeing and organisational values; and that there were escalation mitigations to address workforce matters including the Board, external audit, and the sourcing of external legal advice where necessary. The Chairman was concerned about the press coverage of recent pay negotiations and sought assurance about forthcoming TUPE negotiations. The East Suffolk Services Managing Director explained that pay negotiations had gone well and that harmonisation of roles would be achieved through negotiation by 1 July 2023.

In response to further questions from the Chairman, Councillors Byatt, Coulam, Green, Lynch and Topping the Leader and Officers clarified that:

- Payroll and support services for the companies would be sourced from within East Suffolk Council through Service Level Agreements
- The existing taxi mechanical testing and MOT facilities would be part of the LATCO and there would be investment in its infrastructure and improvement to the service
- There were synergies between ESSL and the Council on Net Zero decarbonisation aspirations
- The 3-year time period for Business Plan was based on best practice advice and risk appetite, rather than alignment with any existing leases or the district election cycle; and would be reviewed annually

- The current Business Plan did not foresee engagement with other Councils. However, the annual review would enable flexibility and responsiveness to socio-economic improvement for service users
- The composition of the Shareholder Reference Group reflected the 'as is' role titles, a future Cabinet could however adjust the terms of reference as necessary. The SRG was a decision-making sub-committee of Cabinet and therefore did not include Assistant Cabinet Members. Directors of the Companies would be trained as necessary.
- The LATCO could not expand by absorbing another company without reference first to the Holding Company and subsequent decision of the Shareholder Reference Group
- Councillor Lynch was assured that internal auditors would have unfettered access to any information they requested and that there would be training for Audit and Governance Committee Members sourced from the Member Development budget
- The Head of Operations had written to all Town and Parish Councils to explain the forthcoming transition, and any quotes for services agreed with Norse would subsequently be honoured by East Suffolk Services Limited.

The Chairman asked whether there was an indicative schedule for the proposed annual review by the Scrutiny Committee, and whether Members could be trained accordingly. The Leader emphasised that the Scrutiny Committee would continue set its own work programme, could source its own training and would be mindful to avoid duplication with the work of the Audit and Governance Committee when planning its work programme for 2023/24. The Chairman further noted that CIPFA had cautioned that the LATCO approach was a 'reasonably risky' option and sought assurance from the Leader that risks were being mitigated. The Leader explained that staying with the extant Joint Venture arrangement with Norse was arguably of greater risk, and the Cabinet had fully appraised each option prior to making its decision. Robust governance arrangements would mitigate risk and enable the Council to have greater influence over the direction of the company.

The Chairman was cognisant that a Teckal company was a company which could be awarded contracts for works, services or supply from its controlling public sector owner without having to go through a competitive tender process and sought clarification of Teckal rule that required that at least 80% of the activity of the Teckal company must be for its public sector owner. The Leader stressed that the Vision for the Company was not one of making profit for the Council, it was about improving services for local people. The Strategic Director explained that the arrangement was not an impediment to future growth. If growth opportunities presented themselves, then the Company could, with the agreement of the SRG, create a non-Teckal subsidiary which would not be limited to the 80-20% rule.

Councillor Green described how her telephone service interactions with Norse had not been satisfactory and asked how cultural change would manifest itself. The Leader contextualised how the Council had a good culture amongst its staff and illustrated how the learning from that would be manifested in East Suffolk Services Limited. Akin to the Council, there would be a shared vision for ESSL and the Managing Director would recruit a management team that valued and had experience of excellent customer service and improvement. The East Suffolk Services Managing Director

concurred and described how she had been shadowing call centre staff to understand the issues and was concerned with the unsuitable systems that staff had to use. Training and upskilling would be provided utilising the Council’s existing training offer, there would be appraisals and performance management for staff and an individual underperformance would be addressed.

Councillors Richardson and Beavan were concerned about the transition of existing staff and management from Norse to East Suffolk Services Limited. The Leader cautioned that there should be little or no impact in the first instance as the LATCO approach was about growth and investment in the future. The trajectory for staff would be the same as those that worked for the Council, they would be empowered and upskilled to grow into their roles and have opportunities for progression, including through apprenticeships. The East Suffolk Services Managing Director expressed her gratitude to local Norse management for accommodating early engagement with staff to prepare and re-energise them for the transition. Staff had expressed a desire for significant cultural change. The Leader stressed that the learning the Council had from the successful merger of the two former Councils had given staff and Members significant experience and highlighted the early recruitment of the Managing Director as fundamental in delivering the transition from the Norse to East Suffolk Services Limited.

In response to final questions from Councillors Byatt, Goldson and Topping, the Leader confirmed that Norse had accepted that the Council had utilised the contractual break clause and were content to support a smooth transition to ESSL. The Council had contacted third parties with which Norse had contracts to advise them of the transition to ESSL; and similarly, Norse would be thanked for their support during the transition.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Leader summed up by thanking the Committee for its challenging questions and urged the Committee to note that the foundations of ESSL were being formed with robust governance arrangements.

The Chairman invited the Committee to debate the report. There being no debate, the Committee by assent

**RESOLVED**

That the report and the responses to the questions raised by Members, be noted.

**4 Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme**

The Chairman acknowledged that the Committee had been busy with 2 meetings in consecutive weeks and thanked Members for their attendance and participation. The next Committee meeting on 16 February would be to review of the impact of the new integrated care system on Council services.

The meeting concluded at 8.20pm

.....  
Chairman



<p><b>Unconfirmed</b></p>
---------------------------



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, on **Thursday, 16 February 2023 at 6.30pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor Edward Back, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tony Goldson, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor Keith Robinson

**Other Members present:**

Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Mary Rudd, Councillor Ed Thompson

**Officers present:** Ben Bix (Democratic Services Officer), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Nicole Rickard (Head of Communities), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer)

**1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Beavan, Deacon, Hedgley and Topping. Councillor Thompson was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Beavan, Councillor Byatt attended as substitute for Councillor Deacon; and Councillor Daly attended as Councillor Topping's substitute.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Green declared a disclosable pecuniary interest due to her employment in agenda item 5, for which a dispensation had been sought. The Chairman verified that on 10 January 2023, the Monitoring Officer had notified Councillor Green, the Chairman and the Clerk that he had granted a dispensation to Cllr Green under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, as a member with a disclosable pecuniary interest arising from her employment, to participate and speak on the agenda item but not to vote. The Monitoring Officer reasoned that Cllr Green would be able to provide a valuable insight into the matter for members from her employment, knowledge and experience but should not vote on any recommendation(s) in the report due to her pecuniary interest.

Councillor Goldson declared an Other Registerable Interest (not directly related) as a Public Governor of James Paget University Hospital Trusts.

**3 Minutes**

Upon the proposition of Councillor Goldson, seconded by Councillor Gooch, the Committee unanimously

## **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **4 Matters Arising Update Sheet**

The Committee noted the Matters Arising Update Sheet in relation to queries raised at the last ordinary meeting of the Committee.

### **5 Integrated Care Systems**

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health introduced report **ES/1462** which provided an overview of the purpose and history of the new Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) that covered the East Suffolk district. The report described East Suffolk Councillor and Officer engagement in the new structures, and the alignment between ICS and East Suffolk Council (ESC) priorities. The similarities and differences between the two systems – Norfolk and Waveney ICS (NW) and Suffolk and North East Essex ICS (SNEE) were illustrated at each of the three levels of the structure – system, place and neighbourhood. The challenges around structures, resources, funding and priorities were set out alongside the opportunities associated with the new integrated way of working particularly the increased emphasis on prevention and early intervention. The Cabinet Member cautioned that the new structures were just seven months old and were finding their feet in terms of optimum structures, new delivery partnerships and resource allocation. Consequently, a review of progress of both Integrated Care Bodies after the first 12 or 18 months of operation under the new structures could be a timelier consideration for the Scrutiny Committee in the future.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for her introduction and opened the questioning by asking whether the lack of coterminosity with existing local government boundaries was a barrier to closer working relationships. Officers acknowledged that whilst the ICSs were finding their feet, there were opportunities for ESC Officers to engage with and influence matters that related to ESC priorities. Engagement opportunities varied between the north and south of the district; in the north of the district, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) met as a single meeting with a shared agenda, and in the south of the district the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams were well established, and the ICS had contributed to the funding of the Integration and Partnerships Manager role. The Strategic Director emphasised that ESC was seen as a good partner on preventative and early intervention work. Turning to Member engagement, the Cabinet Member reflected on past imbalances in how Members had engaged in strategic health matters between the north and south of the district, and that greater emphasis was being placed on rebalancing engagement in the south of the district. In response to Councillors Green and Byatt, the Strategic Director explained that Member participation and engagement was set out in the terms of reference of each body.

Councillor Goldson queried what the benefits for residents and patients would be of the introduction of the ICSs. The Head of Communities described that the intention was for a collaborative approach focused on places and local populations with a shift toward early intervention and prevention, away from organisational autonomy, competition and a separation of commissioners and providers. Locally, there would be alignment with Strategic Plan priorities and the priorities of the eight Community Partnerships, such as mental health support for young people. The ICSs would enable greater opportunities for people to engage with and shape how health services were delivered.

In response to questions from the Chairman, Councillor Lynch and Councillor Gooch regarding how the impact of the ICSs would be measured, the Cabinet Member and Officers clarified that:

- The role of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) was to allocate NHS budgets and commission services for residents within the Integrated Care System area (the functions previously held by clinical commissioning groups - CCGs) and some of the direct commissioning functions of NHS England
- Aspects of the impact of the ICSs on East Suffolk residents would be measured through the priority KPIs set out in the East Suffolk Strategic Plan which included social prescribing and mental health priorities, rather than crisis care
- Integrated Neighbourhood Teams included clinical representation
- Various levels of the two ICS structures received performance monitoring reports – including the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams
- NHS England would measure the overall impact of ICSs through its own suite of KPIs
- The Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) were accountable to NHS England
- External factors such as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living challenges were likely to manifest themselves in Wider Determinants of Health data over time; and
- Having a ‘seat at the table’ enabled the Council to influence health matters strategically, and it was confirmed that there was a greater willingness within the NHS to work in partnership.

Councillor Goldson expressed his view that there were funding and structural imbalances between the two ICSs which led to a perception that there were inconsistencies in services for patients in the north of the district. Councillor Lynch cautioned that a recent report on funding showed that per capita funding in the north of the district was greater than in the south; Councillor Goldson countered that the north was starting from a lower base. The Chairman invited Officers to clarify matters. The Head of Communities clarified that funding was allocated by the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) according to the priorities for each area (including the Core 20 Plus 5) and emphasised that the Council’s role was to advocate for funding for its district-wide preventative health priorities. The Cabinet Member concurred that the ICS structures varied between the north and the south of the district and highlighted that the Suffolk and North East Essex System had been established earlier than the Norfolk and Waveney System, and that she had requested greater resource from Suffolk Public Health to support the Norfolk and Waveney ICS.

Councillor Gooch asked firstly which body would review the effectiveness of the introduction of the new structures and secondly, how good practice would be shared between the two ICSs operating within the East Suffolk District. The Strategic Director described how there were review and accountability mechanisms built-in to the governance arrangements of the ICSs through progress monitoring against their 5-year plans and through Board oversight. Secondly, the Head of Communities stressed the benefits of ESC Officers attending meetings of both ICSs to share good practice and highlighted that there was practical evidence of integration through co-location of the Integrated Neighbourhood Team staff in the south of the District e.g. in Leiston.

Councillor Byatt sought assurance that human resources and IT were aligned to enable productive partnership working. Officers explained firstly that two new staff had been recently recruited to increase preventative health capacity using funding in part from the NW ICS. Secondly, whilst there was no single IT system, the benefit of partnership working was manifested in greater sharing of data. Councillor Gooch enquired as to whether the new roles were health specialists and the Head of Communities explained that the skill set for roles were a background in health, wellbeing and leisure, project management and community enabling which aligned to the Council's preventative priorities. Councillor Lynch was cognisant that smoking reduction would be a health prevention priority and asked what the number of smokers were in each of the ICS areas, and what the preventative reduction target was for that cohort. Officers undertook to provide a written response as a Matter Arising to a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Green summarised the nature of her work within the Woodbridge Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) and expressed her contentment that frontline services had been co-located in the same building which would for example enable a nurse to liaise directly with a social worker on the same site. Councillor Green commended the work of the Integration and Partnerships Manager on developing the 'Connect space' to enable partnership working between the INT, the community and voluntary sector, and health service providers. Overall, there had been an improvement in signposting for patients within the SNEE system. Turning to the success measures, Councillor Green was of the view that indicators around keeping people well at home, and a reduction in referrals would be indicative of the impact of the new systems. Strategically, Councillor Green queried whether there was sufficient Member engagement in the systems. The Cabinet Member responded that engagement in the south of the district was improving from where it had been prior to the establishment of East Suffolk Council but cautioned that there were limitations on representation due to the terms of reference of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership currently. The Strategic Director added that further member engagement would be explored with the ICS system.

Councillors Thompson and Robinson shared anecdotes about their interactions with health services and concurred that there appeared to be different approaches to services according to location. Officers re-stated that each ICS was bespoke for its area and would allocate its funding according to the priorities in its area. The Chairman acknowledged the anecdotes about access to services and queried whether GPs engaged in preventative interventions such as social prescribing, or whether the NHS

saw that role as a role for its partners. Officers responded that there were social prescribing schemes across the District delivered by VCSE partners and that the Ipswich and East Suffolk Alliance in particular had invested significant funding in social prescribing. In addition there were indications that there was a shift in GPs recommending preventative health interventions and that Healthwatch were continually using patient feedback to influence and improvement in GP services. Councillor Coulam was concerned that patients could no longer afford prescriptions due to cost-of-living pressures and asked what support was available to those patients. The Head of Communities empathised and illustrated the role of Financial Inclusion Officers in promoting exemptions and pre-payment certificates to those that were in need of support.

In congruence with Councillor Daly, Officers emphasised the importance of the voluntary sector in delivering preventative health interventions. Social prescribing was delivered in partnership with the Shaw Trust in the south of the District through the Connect for Health contract (and by Citizens Advice East Suffolk in Lowestoft and Access Community Trust in South Waveney), and Suffolk Mind had partnered with the Council on preventative Mental Health support programmes. Early intervention on slips trips and falls awareness and mitigation projects had also benefitted from support from voluntary sector partners.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Strategic Director summed up by thanking the Committee for its challenging questions and acknowledged that after the election, there would be an opportunity for a Member briefing on ICSs if that was desirable. The Chairman invited the Committee to debate the report. There being no debate, the Committee by assent

## **RESOLVED**

1. That a table setting out the prevalence of smoking in each of the East Suffolk ICS areas alongside the preventative reduction target for that cohort, be reported as a Matter Arising to the next suitable meeting of the Committee; and
2. That the report and the responses to the questions raised by Members, be noted.

## **6 Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme**

The Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and participation in what would be the penultimate meeting of the Committee for the municipal year due to the commencement of the pre-election period on 16 March. The topic for the final ordinary Committee meeting on 2 March 2023 would be a review of democratic accountability within the planning process.

The meeting concluded at 8.31pm

.....  
Chairman



**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, 02 March 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Democratic Accountability within the Planning Process
<b>Report by</b>	Cllr David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	<p>Philip Ridley Head of Planning and Coastal Management 01394 444434 <a href="mailto:Philip.ridley@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">Philip.ridley@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Ben Woolnough Planning Manager (Development Management) 07833 406681 <a href="mailto:ben.woolnough@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">ben.woolnough@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Katherine Scott Principal Planner (Technical Lead, Development Management) 07867 155568 <a href="mailto:katherine.scott@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">katherine.scott@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
-------------------------------	------

Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not Applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose and high-level overview

**Purpose of Report:**

Scrutiny Committee requested a review of the Democratic Accountability within the Planning Process in accordance with the questions in the scope attached as Appendix A

**Recommendation/s:**

That the Scrutiny Committee consider this report on the Democratic Accountability within the Planning Process and note the changes implemented to the Referral Process for the determination of planning applications following the approval of the recommended changes agreed by the Strategic Planning Committee at its meeting on the 6 June 2022. Any comments of the Scrutiny Committee will also be passed on to the June 2023 Strategic Planning Committee in its annual review of the Referral Process.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

**Governance:**

Not Applicable

**ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

Not Applicable

**Environmental:**

Not Applicable

**Equalities and Diversity:**

Not Applicable

**Financial:**

Not Applicable

**Human Resources:**

Not Applicable

**ICT:**

Not Applicable

**Legal:**

Not Applicable

**Risk:**

Not Applicable

<b>External Consultees:</b>	Not Applicable
-----------------------------	----------------

## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal:		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b> As set out in the report.			



## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1	Background facts
1.1	<p>The scope of the Scrutiny Committee's queries in respect of the democratic processes are as set out in Appendix A. Cllr Ritchie presented a report to the Strategic Planning Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022 which amongst other matters considered some the questions raised by the Scrutiny Committee meeting. That report and its accompanying appendices are contained in Appendices B, C, D, E, F and G. The recommendations were agreed and the changes implemented from July 2022 and have generally been well received. The minutes of that meeting are contained in Appendix H.</p>
2	Current position
2.1	<p><b>What democratic processes are there for Committee Members (including as a Ward Cllr), Ward Councillors not on Committee, Town &amp; Parish Councils, applicants and objectors?</b></p> <p>Consultation and engagement on planning applications and for emerging policy documents is undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement which was agreed by Cabinet. All engagement is in accordance with this and the statutory requirements. All information is available on the council's website and comments can be made electronically. The council's Uniform software system for viewing planning applications, has all submission details and all responses received. All customers can register to be alerted for updates on any applications in their area. All councillors are automatically connected for alerts so they can be aware of applications in their ward.</p> <p>All parties including Ward Members can submit written comments on an application throughout its lifetime, including after receiving a notification that an item is going to the Planning Referral Panel. However, it is strongly recommended that they submit any written comments prior to the expiry of the consultation period. This is to ensure that their comments are received prior to the application being considered and determined.</p> <p>It should also be noted that the comments from Ward Members, the Town/Parish Council and/or need to be received by the closure of the consultation period in order to potentially trigger the referral process (see paragraph 2. 4 below).</p> <p>Whilst efforts are made to bring any late comments from Ward Members to the attention of the Referral Panel members, it should be noted that if the comments are received after the notification of an item going to Referral Panel they cannot be considered by officers when making their recommendations or be included in the written report to the Panel, and there maybe instances where comments submitted at such a late stage do not reach officers in time for them to be reported verbally to the Panel meeting.</p>

2.2	<p><b>Why do we have a Referral Panel and how does the process work, how is it publicised to Members and who is involved?</b></p> <p>As set out in the report at Appendix B the referral system was implemented when East Suffolk Council was established to enable the caseload of the planning committees to be carefully managed so they were considering only those cases where there were clear planning issues which warranted further consideration and debate. Without such a system in place the planning committees would not be able to function effectively given the council receives a significant volume of planning applications (almost 4,500 in 2022).</p> <p>The Referral Panel process and who is involved is detailed on page 63 of the <a href="#">Constitution » East Suffolk Council</a>.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Why do Ward Councillors not receive a further alert when a planning application is referred to the Referral Panel?</b></p> <p>They do. All Ward Members are alerted to the agenda of the following week's Referral Panel through a Teams message sent every Friday afternoon. All Ward Members with Referral Panel items in their ward are 'tagged' in that message and offered the opportunity to join the meeting. This has been a successful method of alerting members and they have contributed to this Teams chat when wishing to join the meeting or sending apologies. Therefore, all ward members now are notified when an application in their ward is being considered.</p>
2.4	<p><b>Should there be a greater involvement of Ward Councillors in the Planning process e.g. Ward Councillors speaking at referral panel</b></p> <p>With the changes implemented by the Strategic Planning Committee in June 2022 ward members are invited to observe Referral meetings and to confirm whether there were any factual errors in what is being considered and Referral Panel members are also invited to ask questions of the ward member.</p> <p>This is also covered in the report at Appendix B. Ward members now can attend Referral meetings to be satisfied that there are no material errors of fact in what is being considered.</p> <p>Ward members should also take advantage of the opportunity to make comments within the consultation period if they have an opinion on an application (see paragraph 2.1).</p> <p>Based on Figures 1 – 4 of Appendix L of the Strategic Planning Committee Report (Appendix E to this report), the map in Appendix M of the Strategic Planning Committee Report (Appendix F to this report) and paragraphs 2.34 -2.36 of Appendix B the extent of Ward member engagement in the planning application consultation process has been consistently low in most wards over the three proceeding years (April 2019 to March 2022).</p> <p>Emerging figures for the current financial year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023) also show that there is limited Ward Member involvement through the submission of</p>

	<p>written comments on Referral Panel items, with just 8% of applications having a written comment from Ward Members during the consultation period/prior to the drafting of the Report to the Referral Panel (as of 7 February 2022). These are shown by ward in Figure 1 of Appendix I.</p> <p>However, it is noted that Ward Members are engaging with the Referral Panel Meeting Process, with 40% of members having attended at least one Referral Panel Meeting where there has been an item in their ward (between 1 April 2022 and 7 February 2023). Although, it should also be noted that over this period there have been a number of Wards which have had items at the Referral Panel where no ward member attended the meeting (shown in grey in Figure 2 of Appendix I)</p> <p>It appears that in many cases when Ward Members are not engaging with the Planning Application Process until they are notified that an item is to be presented to the Referral Panel. By not engaging earlier in the process and/or responding during the consultation period, they are missing their opportunity to trigger the referral process.</p> <p>On applications which haven't triggered the referral process due to comments from the Town/Parish Council and/or statutory consultees, the Ward Member comments can still trigger the Referral Panel Process. However, it is extremely rare for this to occur, due to the lack of written comments received from Ward Members.</p> <p>As outlined above, early engagement from Ward Members during the consultation period is key to ensuring their involvement has greatest impact of the process pathway that the application follows for determination (I.e. whether the item triggers the referral panel process, is heard at Planning Committee or is delegated to officers for determination). Therefore, yes they should be more involved with the process, but to do so they must engage with the opportunities that are already available to them.</p>
2.5	<p><b>Should a limited call in provision for Ward Councillors be introduced to bypass the referral panel - similar to the former Waveney process?</b></p> <p>Such a former process also existed in Suffolk Coastal. The updated Referral panel system is working well and the feedback from visiting members has been that the changes have helped alleviate some of the perceptions as to how some thought the panel was operating. In addition, the Scheme of Delegation in the Constitution allows the Chairman of the Planning Committees and the Head of Planning to be able to directly require an application to be considered by Planning Committee where deemed appropriate (page 63 of <a href="#">Constitution » East Suffolk Council</a>). The practices in place for the consideration of planning applications enables the council to maintain an effective process and to meet and exceed required government targets.</p> <p>The Council must be conscious of officer resource. A considerable amount of extra time is spent producing committee reports, presentations and presenting to the Planning Committees. Officers have very high caseloads and have to prioritise a mix of committee and delegated decisions. An increase in Committee items may</p>

	not be sustainable in maintaining an efficient planning service with good quality decision making, particularly with extreme difficulty in recruitment of experienced planners.
2.6	<p><b>Do all speakers have sufficient time (3 minutes for public etc and 5 for Ward Councillors)?</b></p> <p>This matter refers to the length of time for public speakers to address the Planning Committee when they hear and consider planning applications. It is nationally recognised that public speaking at planning committee meetings is generally allowing 3 minutes per representative. Those that can speak are the applicant/agent, relevant Town or Parish Council and an objector plus ward councillors and we allow them 5 minutes.</p> <p>The Committee members have a written report, PowerPoint presentation and public speaking, where they can also ask questions of officers and public speakers to clarify matters, and when assessed as a package there is more than sufficient opportunity to enable the Committee to make a sound lawful decision.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances and where the Chairman allows, and only for the more complex applications the Chairman may agree before the meeting to lengthen the time for public speaking.</p> <p>The Head of Planning and Coastal Management has confirmed he is not aware of any criticism of the organisation and procedures for speaking at Planning Committee meetings in respect of Planning Applications.</p> <p>The opportunity for the Planning Committee to ask questions of speakers is not common in other Local Planning Authorities and often this can provide a great deal further insight and speaking time for the benefit of the Planning Committee.</p>
2.7	<p><b>Should there be more liaison with Town and Parish Councils e.g. Officers visiting Parish Councils when planning applications, particularly controversial ones, are discussed?</b></p> <p>Liaison with Town and Parish councils is generally good. The majority of representatives from Town and Parishes (usually the clerk) contact the relevant case officer and/or manager to be able to discuss applications and find out more information on the case. Case officers are organised on an area team basis and it is expected that good customer engagement works both ways with the councils and officers. The Town or Parish Council is the collective local representative and have the experience and knowledge to be able to understand and appreciate the material planning issues needing consideration. Given the statutory consultation periods and the need to meet and exceed government performance targets it is not possible to arrange such meetings in the consultation period given the volume of work. Ward Members are also able to engage and make the locals views available to case officers and all are able to review all the documentation and responses on the web site.</p>

	Officers have often made good efforts to attend Town and Parish Council meetings, including in the evening, when they are dealing with large or complex applications. If Town or Parish Councils request a meeting with the Planning Manager or Head of Planning, the majority of the time that is agreed and a range of very constructive meetings have taken place in recent months.
2.8	<p><b>What are Town and Parishes views about how they can participate in the planning process? (reference to SALC survey they did?)</b></p> <p>With the forthcoming elections in May the planning management team are putting together a package of engagement opportunities to meet and inform the new town and parish councils and offer further engagement and training (following District Councillor training). Due to Covid restrictions and staff changes the previous engagement forums had been stood down but they will be enacted from June this year and will no doubt again pick up matters raised in the Scrutiny Committees questions.</p>
2.9	<p><b>What democratic processes do other Councils have for the involvement of Members and participants?</b></p> <p>East Suffolk Council planning team regularly engages with colleagues in neighbouring councils and nationally to consider best practice elsewhere. The introduction of Ward Member participation in the Referral Panel was actually inspired by insights from a new Principal Planner in the Planning Team based on their experience of a similar process at West Suffolk Council.</p> <p>On the night of this meeting the Head of Planning and Coastal Management and the Planning Development Manager are away undertaking important work to learn from and observe best practice. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management is away leading an LGA Peer Review of a planning authority in the west country and the Planning Development Manager is at a national planning conference for 2 days being updated by the government and Planning Advisory Service on best and emerging practice to feed into the continuing improvements in the service.</p>

3 Reason/s for recommendation	
3.1	This report provides detailed responses and provides evidence that the matters raised in the Scrutiny Committee's scope have been positively addressed. Noting the detailed responses any further comments from this Committee will be reported to the June 2023 Strategic Planning Committee as agreed.

## Appendices

Appendices:	
<b>Appendix A</b>	Scrutiny Committee - Democratic Accountability within the Planning Process.

<b>Appendix B</b>	Strategic Planning Committee 6 June 2022 – Report “Review of the North, South and Strategic Planning Committees and the work of the Referral Panel 2021-2022”
<b>Appendix C</b>	<p>Strategic Planning Committee 6 June 2022 – Report Appendices A to D</p> <p>Appendix A - Diagram explaining the process through which Planning Applications can trigger the Referral Process and reach the Planning Referral Panel.</p> <p>Appendix B - Major, Minors and Others at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, with overall proportions, details by month and by ward.</p> <p>Appendix C - The reasons items were at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, with overall proportions, details by month and by ward.</p> <p>Appendix D - The reasons items were at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, by ward on a map of the district.</p>
<b>Appendix D</b>	<p>Strategic Planning Committee 6 June 2022 – Report Appendices E to I</p> <p>Appendix E – Public Speaking on items at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.</p> <p>Appendix F – The proportions of North and South areas at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.</p> <p>Appendix G – The numbers and proportions of Major, Minors and Others at Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.</p> <p>Appendix H – The timeliness of Major, Minors and Others at Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.</p> <p>Appendix I – The number and proportions of ‘Planning Applications’ by ward, at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.</p>
<b>Appendix E</b>	<p>Strategic Planning Committee 6 June 2022 – Report Appendices J to L</p> <p>Appendix J – The proportions of ‘Planning that were at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by ward on a map of the district.</p> <p>Appendix K – Details by Parish of the number and proportions of ‘Planning Applications’ at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.</p>

	Appendix L - Referral Panel items with comments from Ward Members between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.
<b>Appendix F</b>	<p>Strategic Planning Committee 6 June 2022 – Report Appendices M to O</p> <p>Appendix M - Referral Panel items with comments from Ward Members between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by ward on a map of the district.</p> <p>Appendix N – Referral Panel items with comments from Town/ Parish Councils between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.</p> <p>Appendix O - Numbers and Proportion of Referral Panel items with comments from Town/ Parish Councils between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by Parish.</p>
<b>Appendix G</b>	<p>Strategic Planning Committee 6 June 2022 – Report Appendices P to R</p> <p>Appendix P – Referral Panel items with comments from Town/ Parish Councils between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by ward on a map of the district.</p> <p>Appendix Q - The overall number of items at the Referral Panel with comments from Ward Members or the Town/Parish Council between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.</p> <p>Appendix R – The outcomes of Referral Panel between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.</p>
<b>Appendix H</b>	Strategic Planning Committee 6 June 2022 – Minutes of Meeting
<b>Appendix I</b>	Ward Member engagement with planning applications at the Planning Referral Panel 1 April 2022 – 7 February 2023

#### Background reference papers:

None

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### 2022/23 WORK PROGRAMME

#### MASTER SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR AGREED TOPICS

Date of Review	Title of Review	Reasons and Objectives of the Review	Lines of Enquiry	Responsible Cabinet Member and Officers	Guest Speakers	Outcome
2 March 2023 (RS)	<b>Review of Democratic Accountability within the Planning Process</b>	To ensure that the Council's democratic processes used when determining Planning Applications are robust and fit for purpose	<p>What democratic processes are there for Committee Members (including as a Ward Cllr), Ward Councillors not on Committee, T&amp;PC, applicants and objectors?</p> <p>Why do we have a Referral Panel and how does the process work, how is it publicised to Members and who is involved?</p> <p>Why do Ward Councillors not receive a further alert when a planning application is referred to the Referral Panel?</p> <p>Should there be a greater involvement of Ward Councillors in the Planning process eg Ward Councillors speaking at referral panel</p> <p>Should a limited call in provision for Ward Councillors be introduced to bypass the referral panel - similar to the Waveney process?</p> <p>Do all speakers have sufficient time (3 minutes for public etc and 5 for Ward Councillors)?</p> <p>Should there be more liaison with Town and Parish Councils eg Officers visiting Parish Councils when planning applications, particularly controversial ones, are discussed?</p>	David Ritchie Philip Ridley Ben Woolnough	Paul Ashdown & Debbie McCallum SALC	The Council has a democratic planning process that all Members and participants have confidence in



			<p>What are Town and Parishes views about how they can participate in the planning process? (reference to SALC survey they did?)</p> <p>What democratic processes do other Councils have for the involvement of Members and participants?</p>			
--	--	--	---	--	--	--



ES/1489

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 06 June 2022

<b>Subject</b>	Review of the North, South and Strategic Planning Committees and the work of the Referral Panel 2021-2022
<b>Report of</b>	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
<b>Supporting Officers</b>	Ben Woolnough Planning Manager (Development Management) 01394 444681 <a href="mailto:ben.woolnough@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">ben.woolnough@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a>  Katherine Scott Principal Planner (Technical Lead, Development Management) 07867 155568 <a href="mailto:katherine.scott@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">katherine.scott@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a>

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
-------------------------------	------

Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards

## Purpose of the Report and High-level overview

**Purpose of Report:**

This report provides a review of the work of the Strategic, North, and South Planning Committees, and the operation of the Referral Panel. It sets out the volume of application traffic and level of Ward Member comment. It includes a statistical analysis of the route of determination of all applications. It also makes some suggested amendments to the Referral Panel process.

**Options:**

Not applicable.

**Recommendation/s:**

1. That the content of the report be noted.
2. That it be agreed that with effect from 1 July 2022 Ward Members are invited to the Planning Referral meetings to answer questions on factual matters and this process change be reviewed by the Committee in June 2023.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

**Governance:**

None.

**ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

None.

**Environmental:**

None.

**Equalities and Diversity:**

None.

**Financial:**

None.

**Human Resources:**

None.

**ICT:**

None.

**Legal:**

None.

**Risk:**

None.

<b>External Consultees:</b>	None
-----------------------------	------

## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b> To provide information on the performance of the development management and enforcement section			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	This report provides Members of the Strategic Planning Committee with an analysis of the work of the three planning committees and the Referral Panel for decisions in the year from April 2021 to March 2022. In January 2022 the role of Principal Planner (Technical Lead) was created and Katherine Scott took on this role. This includes a responsibility for monitoring of the referral process and reporting on it. Thanks to increased attention in this role the report is now able to present a more comprehensive set of data for the last year and this will continue going forward.
1.2	This report should be read alongside the reports on planning performance and appeals decision which are being presented to the Strategic Planning Committee.

2 Current position	
2.1	In April 2019, East Suffolk Council brought into force a new scheme of delegation aligning the former authorities of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. This scheme sets out the means by which applications will be determined and seeks to clarify which applications will be determined by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management and which will be referred to the Planning Committee for consideration.
2.2	The scheme of delegation was established following extensive dialogue with former councillors of the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney DC's including reviewing established best practice nationally and it seeks to secure an appropriate balance between efficiency of the service determining applications to meet national targets and securing a robust process that allows public scrutiny in the planning service.
2.3	As part of the work programme of the Strategic Planning Committee it is to review the work of the Committees and the Referral Panel each year. When this has been discussed previously the reports were accepted but is acknowledged that there was some concern from some members about the Referral Panel process and some amendments have been made to improve it. The concerns being raised were relating to the transparency of resolving the determination route and the role of Ward Members in the process. Additionally, the Council has been made aware of concerns from some Town and Parish Councils regarding the Referral Panel process, forwarded to officers by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

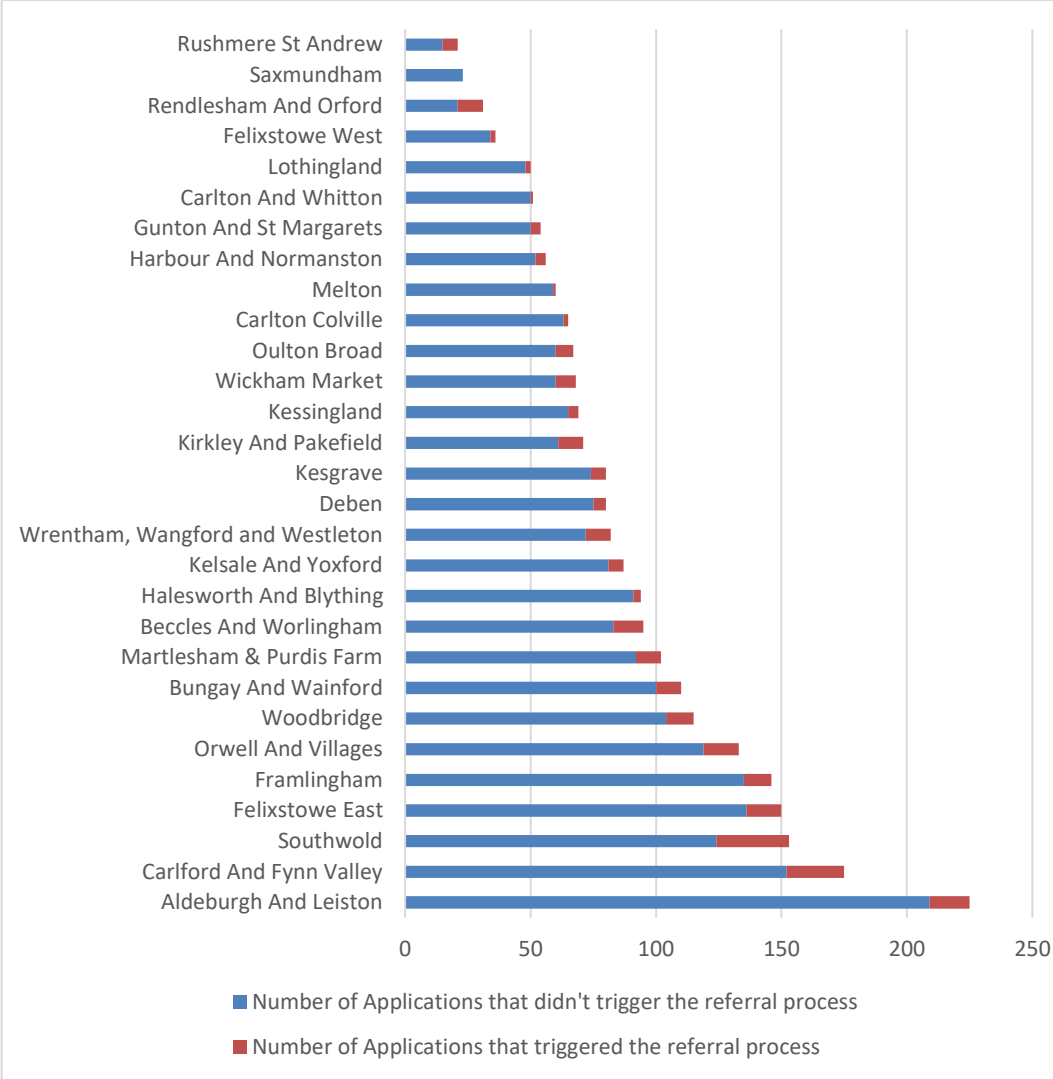
2.4	<p>The scheme of delegation is laid out in the Council’s constitution and reads as follows:</p> <p>“All planning application_decisions including decisions concerning Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) decisions or considerations requiring Habitat Regulation Impact Assessments (HRA)are delegated to Head of Planning and Coastal Management UNLESS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Planning Application is, in the opinion of the Head of Planning and Coastal Management and/or the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Committee, of significant public_interest; would have a significant impact on the environment; or should otherwise be referred to Members due to its significance in some other respect; or</li> <li>2. The applicant or landowner is East Suffolk Council;</li> <li>3. The applicant, or agent, is an East Suffolk Councillor or an East Suffolk Council employee, or the applicant, or agent, is a close relative of an East Suffolk Councillor or East Suffolk Council employee; or</li> <li>4 The referral process is triggered</li> </ol> <p>In which case, if item 4 is invoked, the Planning Application will be referred to the Referral Panel – the panel will discuss with the Head of Planning and Coastal Management (based on planning grounds) to either refer the application to Planning Committee for decision or remain delegated to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management.”</p>
2.5	<p>The diagrams in <b>Appendix A</b> to this report and <b>Appendix A to the Performance Report</b> (also on this agenda) show, in diagrammatic form, how the referral process is operated. In essence, the referral Panel process is triggered on any planning application where the view of the planning officer is contrary to that of either the Town or Parish Council, statutory party or Ward Member, where they relate to material planning considerations.</p>
2.6	<p>For the process to be instigated those comments need to be received during the prescribed consultation period, unless a formal extension of time has been granted in writing.</p>
2.7	<p>The Planning Service has undertaken training sessions both with Ward Members and representatives from Town and Parish Councils to help the understanding of the process and how to form consultation responses in the best way to aid the Referral Panel in determining the pertinent issues surrounding the application and whether those instigate sufficient weight to justify a round table discussion at Planning Committee. This is in addition to communicating such information by written notes.</p>

2.8	The Planning Service is committed to continuing working with our Ward Members and Town and Parish Councils. Further Town and Parish training is planned for this summer.
2.9	The potential routes for the determination of applications via the scheme of delegation are illustrated in Appendix A to the Performance Report on this agenda (Application Process Diagram).
2.10	<b><u>NOTIFICATIONS TO WARD MEMBERS, AND TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS</u></b> Public Access is set to send out notification alerts to all those registered with a Public Access account within their saved geographical search area. These pre-set notification alerts check if an existing record (i.e. an application) that meets the search criteria has already been included (if not notification will trigger for it) and if the description or status has changed, it then sends out a notification alert.
2.11	All East Suffolk Councillors are set up with Public Access accounts, and as a result, all Ward Members are notified via email alerts from the Public Access System as a minimum when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An application is validated within their ward, and thus available for them to view online and submit comments if they wish,</li> <li>- If the address or description is revised during the application process,</li> <li>- When the application status is changed e.g., when an application is scheduled for a Planning Committee, and</li> <li>- When the application is determined.</li> </ul>
2.12	All ward members also receive a weekly message via Teams message on the “Notification of Upcoming Planning Referral Panel meetings” chat, which includes the agenda listing all the items to be considered at the next Referral Panel meeting and requesting them to reply if they wish to attend to observe. Ward members often respond to that weekly message to confirm that they wish to attend the meeting. They are subsequently informed via email from the case officer of the outcome of the Panel meeting.
2.13	Over 90% of Town and Parish Councils have a Public Access account set up through formal clerk email addresses. This is an expectation of Town and Parish Councils since notifications are not sent manually and Clerk’s/Town or Parish Councillors are expected to monitor notifications regularly. Those that have a Public Access are therefore notified via email alerts from the Public Access system as a minimum when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An application is validated within their area, and thus available for them to view online and submit comments if they wish,</li> <li>- If the address or description is revised during the application process,</li> <li>- When the application status is changed e.g., when an application is scheduled for a Planning Committee, and</li> <li>- When the application is determined.</li> </ul>

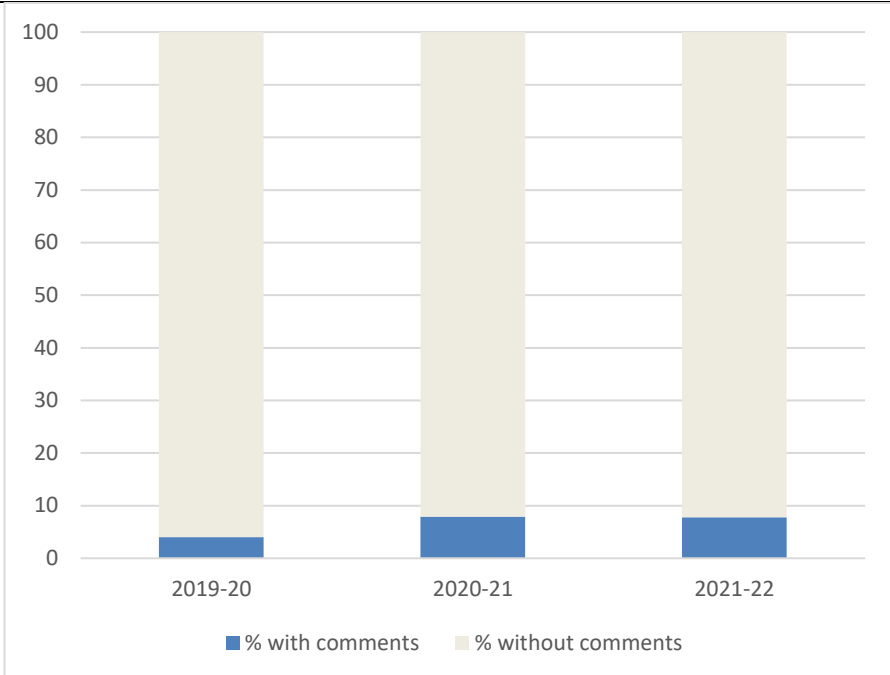
	Town and Parish Councils are also formally consulted on all applications within their area (as required by the Development Management Procedure Order and our Scheme of Community Involvement).
2.14	All other parties (e.g. members of the public) who have signed up to Public Access and saved searches are also notified via Public Access email alerts of applications and updates to applications which meet the search criteria they have inputted and saved, in addition to any of the usual formal consultation processes.
2.15	<b><u>THE REFERRAL PANEL PROCESS</u></b> As outlined above the presentation of an application to the Referral Panel can take place as a result of the comments received from either the Ward Member, Town/Parish Council and/or a statutory consultee during the consultation process being contrary to the 'Minded to' recommendation of officers.
2.16	The Referral Panel meet every Tuesday and is made up of both the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the North and South Planning Committees. To aid a decision on the route of determination to be made by the Panel, Members are furnished with both a written report and a detailed visual and verbal presentation of the application by officers.
2.17	All ward members are also notified each Friday afternoon of the items on the agenda of the meeting scheduled for the following Tuesday and are invited to attend to observe they wish. This notification takes place via a Teams message on the "Notification of Upcoming Planning Referral Panel meetings" chat, (which all Councillors are members of).
2.18	All Ward Members, the Town/Parish Council and agent/applicant are also subsequently informed via email by the case officer of the outcome of any relevant items following each Panel meeting. In the case of Ward members this is any applications within their ward and with Town/Parish Councils any applications within their parish.
2.19	In June 2021 the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning took a report to the Strategic Planning Committee providing with a recommendation that no changes were made to the scheme. The Committee agreed with the recommendation but requested a further report be presented to the June 2022 Committee with relevant background information on how the Panel is performing.

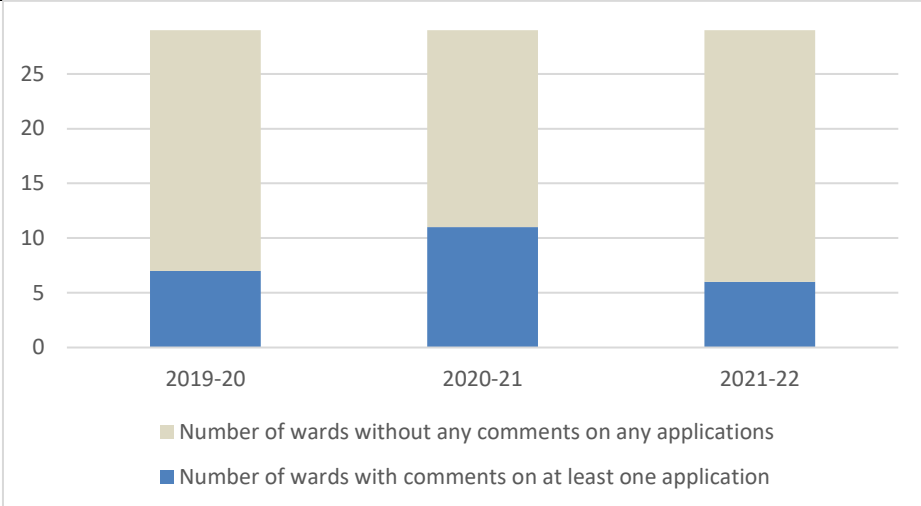
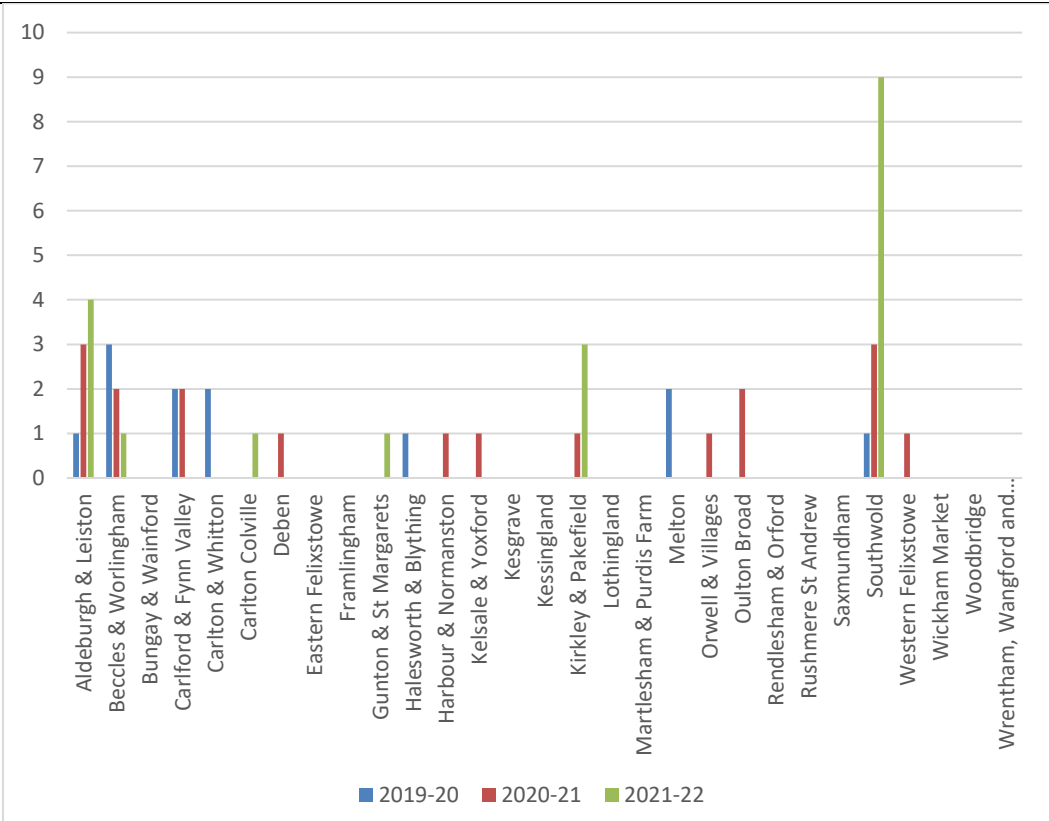


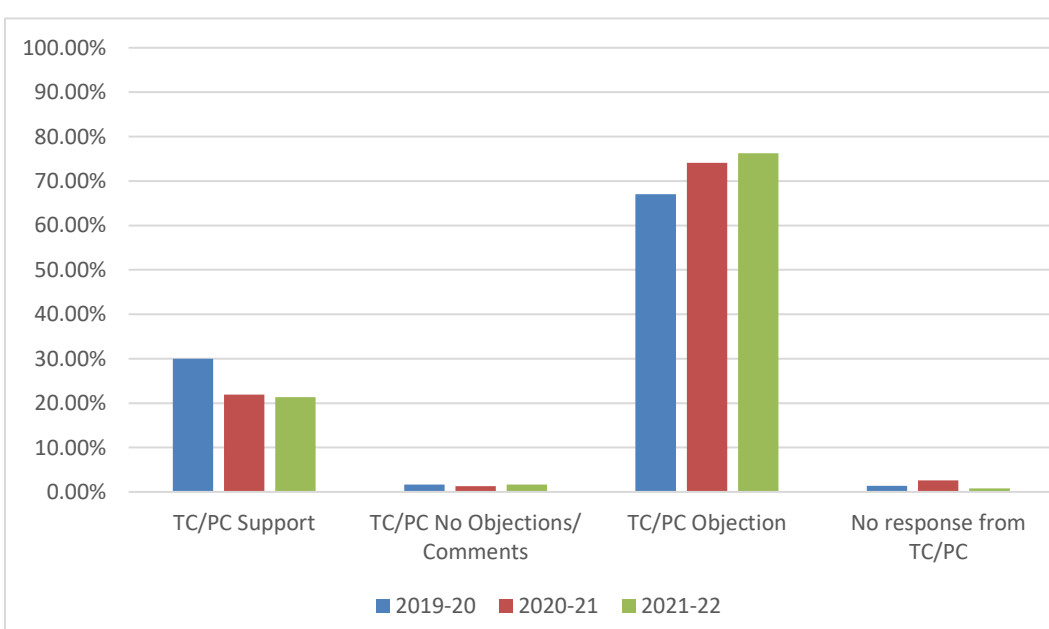
2.20	<p>Between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, East Suffolk Council has determined a total of 2714 formal planning applications* required on Government Quarterly returns, 289 more than the same period on the preceding year (2425 in 2020/2021 period). The detail surrounding the performance of such is laid out in the planning performance report tabled at the Strategic Planning Committee.</p> <p><i>(* Planning applications in this context being householder/other, minor and major applications and other forms of applications that grant formal consent such as prior notification applications and those for Listed Building Consent. This total does not include other forms of application such as discharge of conditions and non-material amendments)</i></p>
2.21	<p>During the same period, there were 2560 applications of a type that could have potentially triggered the Referral Process. For reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the preceding year, 1 April 2020 - 2021, 2,327 applications that could have potentially triggered the referral process were received, and</li> <li>• During the year 1 April 2019 – 1 March 2020, 2,529 applications that could have potentially triggered the referral process were received.</li> </ul>
2.22	<p>From the 1 April 2021 until the 31 March 2022 a total of 244 planning applications have presented to the Referral Panel. For reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in the preceding year, 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021, 230 applications were presented, and</li> <li>• during the year 1 April 2019 - 1 March 2020, 295 applications were presented to the panel.</li> </ul>
2.23	<p><b>Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix G</b> show the number of items at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, split into Major, Minor and Other, application scale types. There are more ‘Others’ at Referral Panel than ‘Minors’ or ‘Majors’. This is to be expected as more of this scale of application are submitted. The number of ‘Majors’ is significantly lower than ‘Minors’ or ‘Others’, however, this could be explained by two potential factors, there are less applications of that scale submitted, and many ‘major’ cases have been called directly to committee (<b>see Appendices B and C</b>)</p>
2.24	<p>In terms of the geographical spread across the district, between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, there were an equal number of applications within north area and south area (the geographical areas that feed into those Planning Committees), with 122 in each. This is a significant change from the preceding two years, during which there were significantly more north area items than south area items (<b>Appendix F</b>).</p>
2.25	<p>It is also interesting to note that 28 (95.6%) out of the 29 wards had at least one item at the referral panel during 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. The spread of items at the Referral Panel across the wards is shown in <b>Appendices I and J</b>, and in <b>Figure 1</b> below.</p>

	 <p><b>Figure 1: Number of applications and proportion triggering Referral Panel Process shown by Ward for 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, (organised so the wards with the highest application numbers are at the base of the chart)</b></p>
2.26	<p>There are a significant number of parishes within these wards, which have not had an item at the Referral Panel (see <b>Figures 1 in Appendix K</b>). However, this may be in part because many of these parishes are relatively small and therefore have not have many applications (<b>Figures 2 and 3 Appendix K</b>).</p>
2.27	<p>As shown in the graphs in the appendices, there are also particularly parishes which appear to have had a larger proportion of their applications triggered to the referral panel.</p>
2.28	<p>Of the 244 reports presented, the Referral Panel determined that 214 could be delegated to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management for determination and 29 applications were referred to the Planning Committee. The rate of delegation for these applications sits at 87.7%. For comparison, the delegation rate in the preceding year was 81% (2020-2021) and 85% for 2019-2020. A slightly lower percentage of applications are therefore being referred to the</p>

	Planning Committee. These figures are illustrated in the graphs/charts in <b>Appendix R.</b>
2.29	However, the percentage of items at the referral panel that are delegated/referred to committee should not be considered in isolation. It is important to bear in mind that the determination process route of an application decided by the panel is based to a significant degree upon the comments received from the Ward Members, Town/Parish Council and statutory consultees on that application, and whether the issues they raise are material planning issues that warrant referral to Planning Committee for debate and the determination of the application.
2.30	<b><u>Ward Member comments</u></b> All Ward Members are set up on the Public Access System, so they receive notifications via email on all valid applications received within the geographical area of their ward. All members are therefore made aware of all applications within their ward and have the opportunity to review and comment on the application.
2.31	In order to influence the referral process, Ward Members should comment within the consultation period, the dates for which are published on Public Access for all to see, and therefore accessible online to Ward Members for all applications within their wards.
2.32	Where written comments are received from Ward Members which are contrary to the 'minded' to recommendation of officers, the Referral Process is triggered (i.e.. Ward Member Objection, and officer minded to support or Ward Member in Support and Officer minded to Refuse).
2.33	However, written comments are received from ward members on relatively few applications presented to the referral panel.
2.34	In the last financial year (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022), only 19 of the 244 applications at referral panel had comments from Ward Members, a percentage of 7.8% of the applications before the panel (0.4% Support, 4.1% Objection, 3.3% No Objections/comments neither objecting or supporting), with 225 applications (92.2%) of the applications at the panel having no response from a ward member). These figures are set out in more detail in <b>Appendix M.</b>
2.35	In the preceding financial year (1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021), only 18 of the referral panel applications had comments from Ward Members. This is a percentage of 7.9% of the applications before the panel (1.3% Support, 5.8% Objection, 0.9% No Objections/comments neither objecting or supporting). These figures are set out in more detail in <b>Appendix L .</b>
2.36	In the year prior to that (1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, only 12 of the 299 applications had comments from Ward Members, a percentage of just 4%. These figures are set out in more detail in <b>Appendix L .</b>

2.37	As shown in <b>figure 2</b> below, over the past three financial years there has consistently been a relatively low proportion of applications at the referral panel with comments from the ward members.												
	<div><table><thead><tr><th>Financial Year</th><th>% with comments</th><th>% without comments</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2019-20</td><td>~4</td><td>~96</td></tr><tr><td>2020-21</td><td>~8</td><td>~92</td></tr><tr><td>2021-22</td><td>~8</td><td>~92</td></tr></tbody></table></div> <p><b>Figure 2: Percentage of those applications at Referral Panel with and without comments from Ward Members</b></p>	Financial Year	% with comments	% without comments	2019-20	~4	~96	2020-21	~8	~92	2021-22	~8	~92
Financial Year	% with comments	% without comments											
2019-20	~4	~96											
2020-21	~8	~92											
2021-22	~8	~92											
2.38	It is also interesting to note that the comments received are not spread across all of the wards/the district as a whole. During the past year (1 April 2021 - 1 March 2022) the comments received from ward members only came from 6 of the 29 wards. This means that in 79% of wards no comment has been received from a ward member in relation to an application at the referral panel. These figures are illustrated on <b>figure 3</b> below and on the diagram in <b>Appendices L and M</b> which set out geographically the percentage of items at the Referral Panel on which written comments had been received from the ward member.												
2.39	In the preceding year (1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021) the Ward Members comments came from 11 out of the 29 wards. This meant that 62% of wards had no comments from a ward member in relation to an application at the referral panel.												
2.40	In the first year (1 April 2019-2020) the 12 comments from Ward Members comments came from 7 different wards. This meant that 76% of wards had no comments from a ward member on an application at the referral panel.												

	 <p><b>Figure 3 – Number of wards with and without any comments on at least one application at the Planning Referral Panel.</b></p>
2.41	<p>Over the three-year period (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2022) there has also been uneven distribution of comments received from each ward on applications at the Referral Panel, as illustrated in <b>Figure 4</b> below.</p>
	 <p><b>Figure 4: The number of applications with comments from the Ward Member at the Referral Panel shown by Ward</b></p>
2.42	<p>Based upon Figure 4 above, a significantly higher number of the comments on applications have been received from the Southwold Ward (Reydon, Southwold, Walberswick) (one ward member), Aldeburgh and Leiston Ward (three ward members) and Kirkley and Pakefield Ward (three ward members). A number of the wards have had no comments at all. This includes some larger wards such as Eastern Felixstowe, Kesgrave and Woodbridge.</p>

2.43	Based upon the data, it appears that whilst some ward members are submitting written comments on at least some planning applications within their area, a significant number of Ward Members do not appear to be submitting any comments. Although this statement should be caveated by the fact that if a member submits comments on an application which accord with the recommendation of officers, and there are no contrary views from the Town/Parish Council or a statutory consultee, the referral process would not be triggered and therefore such applications do not show within the figures above.																				
2.44	<b><u>Town and Parish Council Comments</u></b> The majority of cases at referral panel have comments from the relevant Town or Parish Council. This has been the case not only for March 2021 – April 2022, but also the preceding two years.																				
2.45	The Towns and Parishes across the district vary significantly in size and there are also known to be variations in the way in which the Town/Parish Councils review and respond to consultations on applications. For example some have planning boards or planning committees who advise or provide the responses on behalf of the Town/ Parish Councils, or have other panels and/or an officer who assists with and advises the Town/Parish Council on planning matters. This appears to be reflected in the level of detail provided and the nature of the objections or support within the comments provided by the Town/Parish Councils.																				
2.46	Over the three-year period there has been a gradual increase in the percentage of cases at the Referral Panel on which Town/Parish Councils have made Objections and a decrease in the proportion of cases they have supported (as illustrated in <b>Figure 5</b> below and in <b>Appendix N</b> ).																				
	 <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Response Category</th><th>2019-20 (%)</th><th>2020-21 (%)</th><th>2021-22 (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>TC/PC Support</td><td>30.00</td><td>22.00</td><td>21.00</td></tr><tr><td>TC/PC No Objections/Comments</td><td>2.00</td><td>1.00</td><td>2.00</td></tr><tr><td>TC/PC Objection</td><td>67.00</td><td>74.00</td><td>76.00</td></tr><tr><td>No response from TC/PC</td><td>1.00</td><td>3.00</td><td>1.00</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response Category	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)	2021-22 (%)	TC/PC Support	30.00	22.00	21.00	TC/PC No Objections/Comments	2.00	1.00	2.00	TC/PC Objection	67.00	74.00	76.00	No response from TC/PC	1.00	3.00	1.00
Response Category	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)	2021-22 (%)																		
TC/PC Support	30.00	22.00	21.00																		
TC/PC No Objections/Comments	2.00	1.00	2.00																		
TC/PC Objection	67.00	74.00	76.00																		
No response from TC/PC	1.00	3.00	1.00																		

**Figure 5: Percentage of responses from Town/Parish Councils on Referral Panel items 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020, 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021, and 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.**

2.47	During the 2021-2022 financial year, the highest number of 'planning applications' per parish were received within the parish area of Lowestoft, which received 220 applications. It had 18 items which triggered the Referral Panel process (8.2%).
2.48	The second highest number of 'planning applications' per parish were received within the parish area of Felixstowe, which received 188 applications. It had 16 items which triggered the referral panel process (8.5%).
2.49	Woodbridge received the third highest number of 'Planning Applications' at 110, and 12 triggered the process (11%). Aldeburgh received the fourth highest number of 'Planning Applications' at 99, and 5 triggered the referral process (5%),
2.50	Lowestoft and Felixstowe being the parish areas in which the largest number of 'planning applications' is to be expected as they are the largest settlements within the district. They also had a comparable percentage of items triggering the Referral Panel Process.
2.51	The overall percentage of 'Planning Applications' triggering the Referral Process during the period was 9.9%. Therefore, both Lowestoft and Felixstowe were slightly below this average.
2.52	In comparison, the parishes with the highest percentage of applications triggering the Referral Process were Aldringham-cum-Thorpe, Redisham, and Wrentham at 100% triggering the Referral Process. However, it should be noted that those parishes only received 3 or less 'Planning Applications' each during the period, and therefore they are not directly comparable with larger parishes where a greater number of 'Planning Applications' were received.
2.53	As illustrated in the figures within <b>Appendix O</b> , the next highest Referral Rate by parish were the parishes of Iken and Wissett, each at 50%. However, they also only received a small number of 'planning applications' at just 6 and 2 respectively for the period. There are also a number of parishes where no applications triggered the Referral Process, but they had relatively few 'planning applications' (e.g. Saxtead, Benacre etc) or they received no 'planning applications' at all (e.g. Sotherton, Great Glemham etc).
2.54	<p>The parishes of significant note are those which received a larger number of 'planning applications' and either had a small percentage triggering the referral process or a larger percentage triggering the referral process. For example, during the 2021/2022 period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melton received 50 'Planning Applications', but none triggered the referral process.</li> <li>• Southwold received 69 'Planning Applications' and 11 triggered the process (16%),</li> <li>• Waldringfield received 21 Planning Applications' and 8 triggered the process (38%), and</li> <li>• Walberswick received 31 Planning Applications' and 12 triggered the process (38.7%).</li> </ul>

2.55	The above patterns in the figures can be seen in the graphs/charts within <b>Appendix O</b> , and geographically in <b>Appendix O</b> .
2.56	<p><b><u>Statutory Consultees</u></b></p> <p>Unfortunately, the data collected for the past three financial years, does not include information on the number of items at the referral panel meeting which have been triggered by the comments/views of statutory consultees being contrary to the minded to recommendation of officers, and therefore a direct numerical comparison between the years and how that may have affected the number of items at the referral panel cannot be set out here.</p>
2.57	However, anecdotally based upon experience of reviewing many of the reports for the referral panel over this time, only a very small number of applications are triggered to the referral panel by the comments of a statutory consultee and in the few instances when they are, often the application has also been triggered to the panel by the comments from the Town or Parish Council.
2.58	This data is being collected for the financial year 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023, so it can be provided within the report in June 2023, in a numerical format.
2.59	<p><b><u>NORTH &amp; SOUTH PLANNING COMMITTEES</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Routes to Planning Committee</u></b></p> <p>Planning Applications are triggered directly to either the North or South Planning committee by one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Planning Application is, in the opinion of the Head of Planning and Coastal Management or the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee, of significant public interest; would have a significant impact on the environment; or should otherwise be referred to members, due to its significance in some other respect; or</li> <li>- the applicant or landowner is East Suffolk Council; or</li> <li>- the applicant, or agent, is an East Suffolk councillor or an East Suffolk Council employee, or the applicant, or agent, is a close relative of an East Suffolk councillor or East Suffolk Council employee; or</li> <li>- the application is referred by the Planning Referral Panel</li> </ul>
2.60	<p>In terms of the applications determined by either North or South Planning Committee during the last financial year, there were 111 agenda items (97 applications, as some were deferred and returned to later meetings). As illustrated in <b>Figure 1</b> in <b>Appendix C</b>, the reasons items were at committee were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 34.2% were taken to Planning Committee directly by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management or the Chairman/Vice chairman of the Planning Committee,</li> <li>- 36.9% were at Planning Committee due to an East Suffolk Council connection (i.e. the applicant or landowner is East Suffolk Council; or the applicant, or agent, is an East Suffolk councillor or an East Suffolk Council employee, or the applicant, or agent, is a close relative of an East Suffolk councillor or East Suffolk Council employee)</li> </ul> <p>And</p>



	- 28.8% were referred to Planning Committee via the Planning Referral Panel.
2.61	There was some variation in the proportion of items at committee for each reason per month but not to significant degree as to warrant concern, especially when the variation in the total numbers at committee each month is also taken into consideration ( <b>Figure 2 in Appendix C</b> ).
2.62	There is also some variation for the reasons items were taken to committee across the wards, as illustrated in <b>Figure 4 in Appendix C</b> .
2.63	The proportion of items taken to Planning Committee due to an East Suffolk Council connection within the Eastern Felixstowe ward appears to be particularly higher. However, this included a significant number of applications relating to beach huts, that were considered in March 2022, and thus potentially inflates the figures for that ward.
2.64	The proportion of items taken to committee due to being taken directly by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management or the Chairman/Vice chairman of the Planning Committee also appears high within the Carlford and Fynn Valley Ward. However, the above the graph in <b>Figure 4 in Appendix C</b> shows the number of agenda items, rather than individual applications, and includes the duplicate applications within Grundisburgh that were taken to committee by the Head of Service, and then were on the agenda numerous times as they were initially deferred for a site visit and further information, following which an appeal against non-determination was submitted and so the applications returned to committee for a decision on whether to defend the appeal and the determination of the other application.
2.65	There is also variation in the scale of applications going to committee. <b>Appendix B</b> illustrates the proportions of Majors, Minors and Others presented to North / South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. Figure 2 in the Appendix shows that 49% of cases at North/South Planning Committee are 'Minors', with 27 % of items being 'Majors' and 24% being others.
2.66	The split between Majors, Minors and Others at Planning Committee also varies geographically across the district. <b>Figure 4 in Appendix B</b> shows the proportions of Majors, Minors and Others within each ward.
2.67	<p><b><u>Public Speaking at Planning Committee</u></b></p> <p>As illustrated in <b>Figure 1 in Appendix E</b>, in terms of the levels of public speaking on all items at North or South Planning Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Town or Parish Council spoke on 30.6% of items,</li> <li>- A third Party spoke on 28.8% of items,</li> <li>- The applicant or their agent spoke on 64% of items, and</li> <li>- The ward member is specifically referred to in the meeting minutes as speaking as the ward member on 19.2% of items (i.e. excluding a member of the Planning Committee who spoke during debate as a member of the committee rather than as the ward member)</li> </ul> <p>-</p>

2.68	It is also interesting to understand the proportion of public speaking on items for each of the potential reasons they were determined at Planning Committee. <b>Figures 7, 8 and 9</b> below show the proportion of speakers on items for each of the three reasons items were at committee.
2.69	In terms of the proportions of speaking on items at Planning Committee that had been referred by the Planning Referral Panel (illustrated in <b>Figure 2 in Appendix E</b> ): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Town/Parish Council spoke on 10 of the 32 Items,</li> <li>- A third party spoke on 11 of the 32 Items,</li> <li>- The Applicant/Agent spoke on 23 of the 32 Items, and</li> <li>- The Ward Member(s) spoke on 6 of the 32 Items.</li> </ul>
2.70	In terms of the proportions of speaking on items at Planning Committee due to direct referral by the Head of Service or Committee Chairs (illustrated in <b>Figure 3 in Appendix E</b> ): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town/Parish Council spoke on 18 of the 38 Items,</li> <li>• A third party spoke on 16 of the 38 Items,</li> <li>• The Agent/Applicant spoke on 30 of the 38 Items, and</li> <li>• The Ward Member(s) spoke on 30 of the 38 Items,</li> </ul>
2.71	In terms of the proportions of speaking on items at Planning Committee due to an East Suffolk Council connection (illustrated in <b>Figure 4 in Appendix E</b> ): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town/Parish Council spoke on 6 of the 41 Items,</li> <li>• A third party spoke on 3 of the 41 Items,</li> <li>• The agent/applicant spoke on 19 of the 41 Items, and</li> <li>• The Ward Member(s) spoke on 3 of the 41 Items,</li> </ul>
2.72	In terms of items referred to Planning Committee by the Referral Panel, the Town or Parish Council spoke on just 31.25% of items, which is disappointing when the majority of the cases going via this route were referred to Referral Panel as a result of the comments from the Town or Parish Council. We will continue to monitor this level of participation to review.
2.73	It is also unfortunate that few ward members attended on applications referred to Planning Committee by the Referral Panel, with ward member speaking being just 18.75% of such cases.
2.74	The proportion of Town or Parish Councils speaking on items which were taken direct to Planning Committee by the Head of Service and/or the Planning Committee Chairs, is higher (47%) than that for items taken via the referral panel (31%).
2.75	The proportion of items which were taken direct to Planning Committee by the Head of Service and/or the Planning Committee Chairs, that the Ward Members spoke on (34%) is also higher than for items referred by the Referral Panel (18.75%).

2.76	The proportion of items with third party speaking was also higher on items taken direct to Planning Committee by the Head of Service and/or the Planning Committee Chairs (42%) than for items referred via the Referral Panel (34.38%) and those within and ESC connection (7.32%).
2.77	<b><u>Planning Committee Outcomes</u></b> In terms of the proportions of applications at North / South Planning Committee that are Approved or Refused, in comparison with those that are delegated, during 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, details are provided in <b>Appendix K of the Performance Report</b> . In terms of applications determined at Planning Committee 12% were refused and 88% were approved.
2.78	<b><u>Timeliness of Determination</u></b> It is important to note that when determining the determination route on individual applications, all applications that trigger the Planning Referral Process are taken to the Planning Referral Panel and at those meetings when the Panel decide on the determination route, consideration is only given to whether there are material issues that require or justify referral to Planning Committee for debate, they do not consider the timeframe implications for the determination of the application.
2.79	However, as this report is examining the Referral Panel Process and the Planning Committee process as a whole, it is important to understand both the democratic process and the potential implications upon the timeliness of decisions when items travel via the Planning Referral Panel and/or Planning Committee process. Therefore, this section of the report sets out the timeframe implications of the different determination routes.
2.80	The Referral Process can add to the determination timeframe for the determination of a Planning Application because after the expiry of the consultation period, there is a lead in time for the drafting of the report and the presentation of the item at the weekly panel meeting, and then if delegated the completion of the decision process, or if referred to Planning Committee, the reporting to committee process. Generally taking an application to referral panel will add 1-2 weeks to the determinations process, whereas taking an application to the Planning Committee can add 4-6 weeks to the application process.
2.81	The statutory time periods for determination of planning applications are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8 weeks for other/minor applications</li> <li>- 13 weeks for Major applications</li> <li>- 16 weeks for applications accompanied by an Environmental Statement (EIA development)</li> </ul>
2.82	These time periods can all be extended with an agreed extension of time (EOT) from the applicant and for the purpose of government returns on application statistics, applications with EOTs are deemed to be determined 'within time'. Generally, the majority of applicants/agents will agree EOTs however this is less likely to be agreed on refusals or applications which have generated concerns over delays. A minority of agents will not agree EOTs as a matter of principal, in some cases they believe that it misrepresents the performance of the Council.

2.83	As illustrated in the <b>figure 2 within Appendix I of the Performance Report</b> , in terms of applications passing through the Referral Panel and then delegated to officers for determination just 17% were determined within the government targets, 41% were determined within an agreed extension of time and 42% were out of time.
2.84	In comparison the overall figures for applications that are delegated to officers without triggering the referral process, are significantly higher in terms of the proportions in time, as illustrate but a visual comparison of <b>figures 2 and 5 within Appendix I of the Performance Report</b> .
2.85	As illustrated on the <b>figure 4 of Appendix I of the Performance Report</b> , in terms of applications determined via North / Planning Committee just 4% were determined within the government targets, 59% were determined within an agreed extension of time and 37% were out of time.
2.86	<b><u>OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERING FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS</u></b>  Based upon the figures for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022, the Councils planning service is determining application mainly within government determination targets, but it is noted that the figures for Minor and Other applications are only marginally above the set national targets in a number of quarters and were lower within the last two quarters ( <b>Appendix G of the Performance Report</b> ). Workloads also remain high ( <b>Appendices B, C, D and F of the Performance Report</b> ).
2.87	It should also be noted that in terms of the national picture for all councils, East Suffolk Council is lower quartile for its speed of determining applications. Whilst this is acknowledged, and it is being managed, regard needs to be had to the size of the council area and the many differing constraints that have to be taken in to account to ensure we deliver quality development, or if an application is refused, to successfully defend the position.
2.88	Therefore, having regard to the speed of determination statistics and the rates of delegation it delivers outcomes which are above the threshold of the governments targets. Any further added processes into the system at the council will reduce the outputs and potentially put pressure on the council if it is deemed to be a poor performing council by the government. The sanction for this would be to allow applicants to make planning applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate for determination. This risk needs to be avoided otherwise local determination will be removed.
2.89	Therefore, whilst acknowledging the above are there any other improvements that could be introduced which would provide added value into the system and provide greater public confidence in the planning service we provide.
2.90	Of the concerns that have been raised the majority relate to the operation of the Referral panel. Acknowledging that this Committee have supported its operation in recent years there has again been a number of parishes raising concerns. These relate to the transparency of the process and whether the material

	planning issues being raised are properly understood by the panel ahead of them determining the determination route.
2.91	The report has provided significant amounts of data on the participants in the panel process and whilst it can be seen there is mainly limited participation it may be that that participation is limited due to the inability to actively participate in the process. It is therefore recommended that ward Members are invited to the panel to be able to answer questions and provide factual updates on matters that have been raised regarding the locality of the proposal and its relationship with neighbours. In proposing this it must be understood that the panel are not considering the outcome of the application but the appropriate route for its determination (i.e. if there are sufficient material planning considerations to justify referral to planning committee). If accepted this amendment will be introduced from July 1 <sup>st</sup> 2022 and will be subject to review again in June 2023.
2.92	It is also noted that the Council's Scrutiny Committee, in its work programme, is also wanting to review the planning service and in particular the determination process. It is to consider this at its meeting in March 2023. In discussing this with the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee it is suggested if the changes to the Referral panel are introduced in July then it will be able to consider the impact of those changes and make recommendations that can feed in to the meeting of this Strategic Planning Committee to be held June 2023 when it again considers the work of the Planning Committees and referral panel.
2.93	There has also been concern raised that the length of time available for public speaking at meetings is too short a time for participants to get their key messages across. Three minutes is allowed for all participants which must be seen alongside a detailed written report, officer presentation and the ability of members to ask speakers questions such that when debate on the application commences a full understanding of the material issues has been presented. As always there needs to be a balance between providing a robust process for determining planning applications and efficiently using council time. It is considered that three minutes enables this to be done and the Chairman and members have the ability with further questioning to seek further clarification. Most councils allow for three minutes of public speaking and this is understood to be the norm across Suffolk. Many Councils also do not allow questions to be asked of public speakers as is established here. This additional process is considered to be highly beneficial to the committee process and provides a thorough insight for members wishing to gain a deeper understanding of proposals and issues. It should also be noted that for the most complex of applications the Chairman has discretion to lengthen the speaking time where appropriate.
2.94	<p><b><u>CONCLUSION</u></b></p> <p>The Council operates at a high delegation rate which enables the Planning Committee's to look at those applications that warrant wider debate in the public arena, hear the views of interested parties and allow public scrutiny of those important and significant applications. It is important that Planning Committees are not overburdened with volume of applications, and that</p>

	appropriate time is allowed for full and proper debate on those applications what warrant such.
2.95	Equally it is important to avoid overburdening officers with planning committee items since they can be incredibly time consuming, requiring more detailed reports, comprehensive PowerPoint presentation preparation and time attending the committee and associated prior meetings. Officers can find that time which can be applied to their delegated caseload can be compromised considerably in months when they have multiple planning committee items.
2.96	Overall, it is clear from this report that both the weekly scheduled 1.5 hour Referral Panel meetings and the monthly 3.5 hour North and South Planning Committees are not short of business. Considerable officer and member time is already committed to these meetings and the opportunity to add any greater amount of business to those meetings is limited without extra weekly Referral or monthly Committee meetings.
2.97	Officers are committed to working closely with our Town and Parish Council's and will provide further guidance and assistance to enable enhanced dialogue in the planning application process. It is intended that this report will provide a clear picture to communities of the scrutiny the Council already gives its applications and the significant influence Town and Parish Councils have on the decision making process, particularly the time given to cases through the Referral Panel process.
2.98	It is also important to note that there is limited communication from Ward Members on applications, which sits at just 19 applications of a total of 244 (7.8%) that were presented to the Referral Panel. All Ward Members are notified of all Planning Applications received within their ward, and contrary views of Ward Members is one of the key triggers of the Referral Process. Officers would welcome enhanced dialogue with Ward Members on planning applications.

### 3 How to address current situation

3.1	Yearly monitoring and reporting to Strategic Planning Committee
-----	---

### 4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	That the contents of the report are noted
-----	---

## Appendices

Appendices:	
Appendix A	Diagram explaining the process through which Planning Applications can trigger the Referral Process and reach the Planning Referral Panel.
Appendix B	Major, Minors and Others at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, with overall proportions, details by month and by ward.
Appendix C	The reasons items were at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, with overall proportions, details by month and by ward.
Appendix D	The reasons items were at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, by ward on a map of the district.
Appendix E	Public Speaking on items at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.
Appendix F	The proportions of North and South areas at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.
Appendix G	The numbers and proportions of Major, Minors and Others at Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.
Appendix H	The timeliness of Major, Minors and Others at Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.
Appendix I	The number and proportions of 'Planning Applications' by ward, at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.
Appendix J	The proportions of 'Planning that were at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by ward on a map of the district.
Appendix K	Details by Parish of the number and proportions of 'Planning Applications' at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.
Appendix L	Referral Panel items with comments from Ward Members between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.
Appendix M	Referral Panel items with comments from Ward Members between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by ward on a map of the district.
Appendix N	Referral Panel items with comments from Town/ Parish Councils between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.

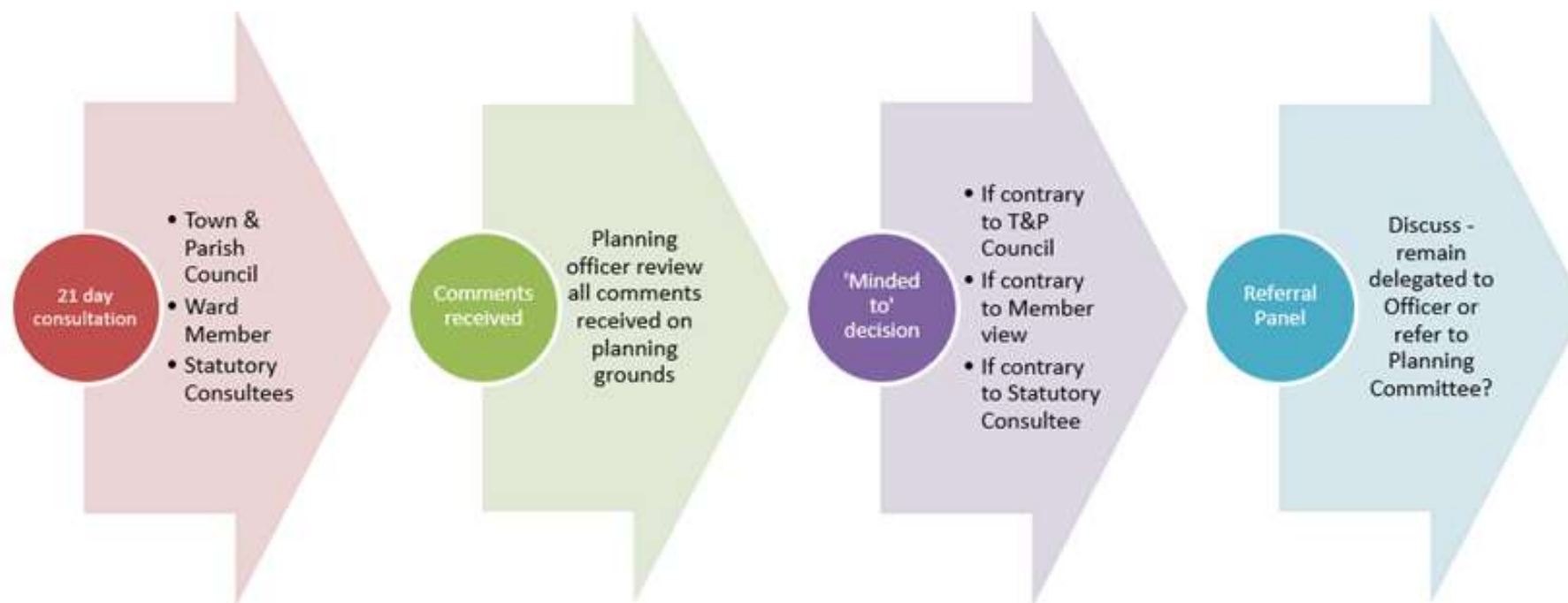
Appendix O	Numbers and Proportion of Referral Panel items with comments from Town/ Parish Councils between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by Parish.
Appendix P	Referral Panel items with comments from Town/ Parish Councils between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by ward on a map of the district.
Appendix Q	The overall number of items at the Referral Panel with comments from Ward Members or the Town/Parish Council between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.
Appendix R	The outcomes of Referral Panel between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2022.

#### Background reference papers:

None.



# Referral Process



**Appendix B:** Major, Minors and Others at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, with overall proportions, details by month and by ward.

Figure 1: Number of Majors, Minors and Others items at North/South Planning Committee between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

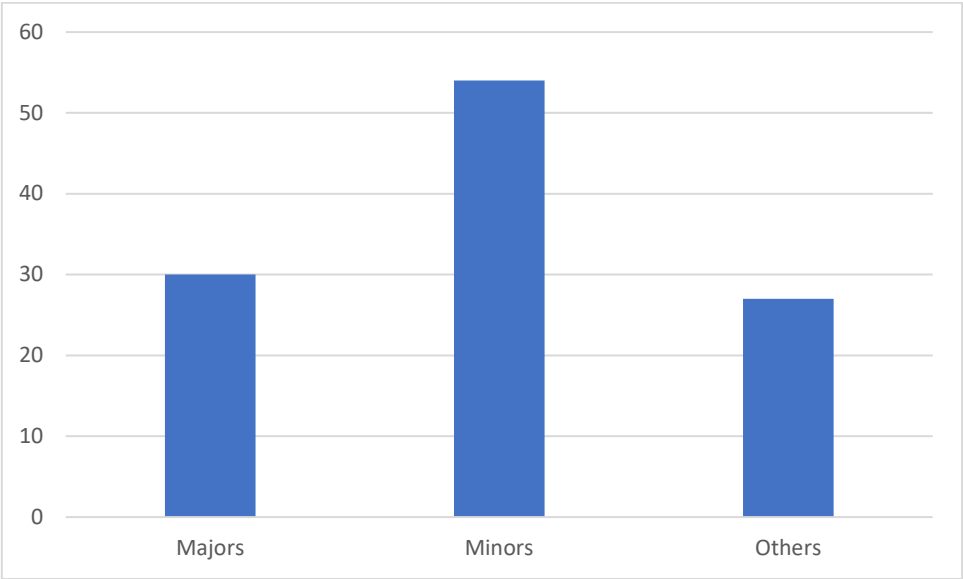


Figure 2: Items at North / South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, in terms of the proportion of Majors, Minors and Others

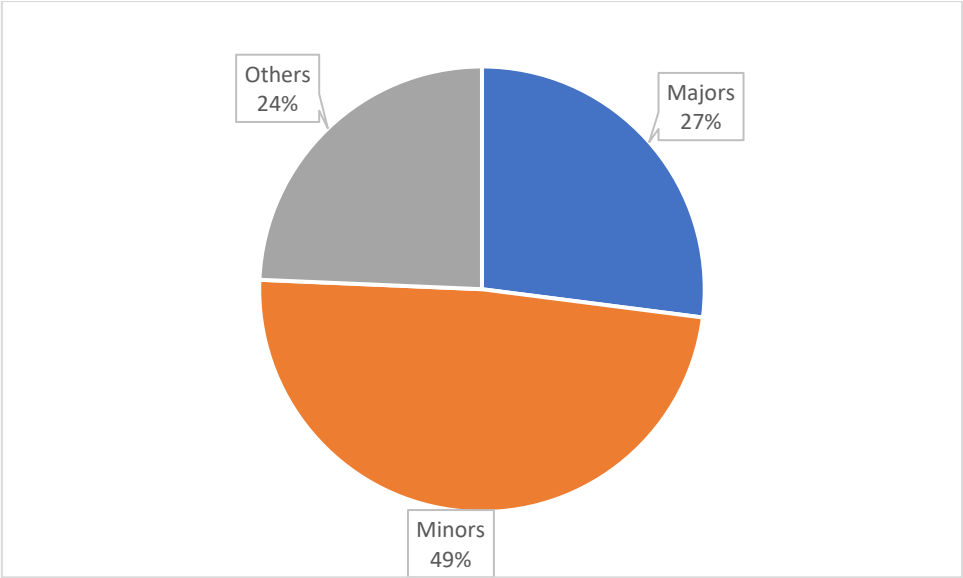


Figure 3: The proportions of Major, Minors and Other items at North / South Planning Committee within each ward between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

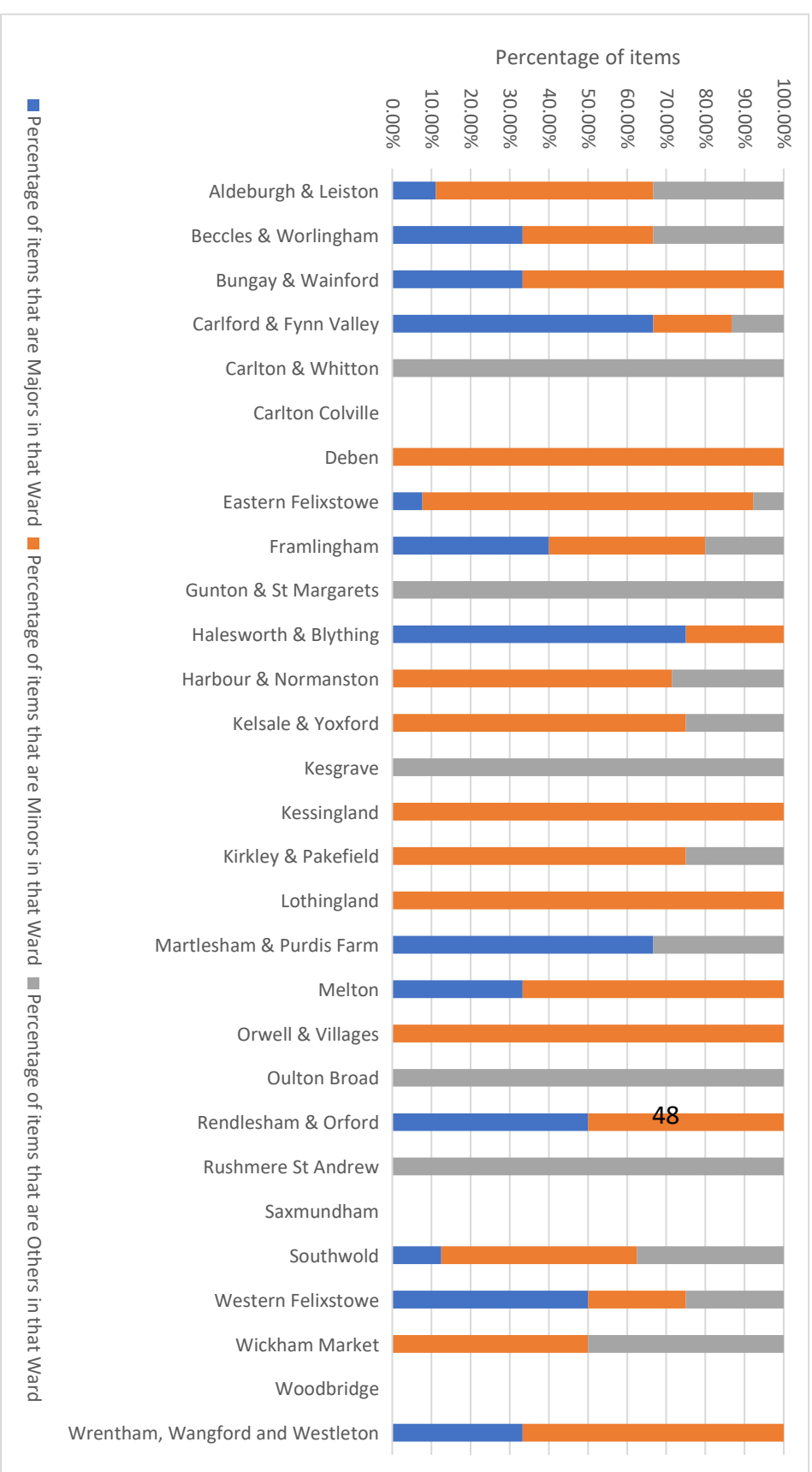
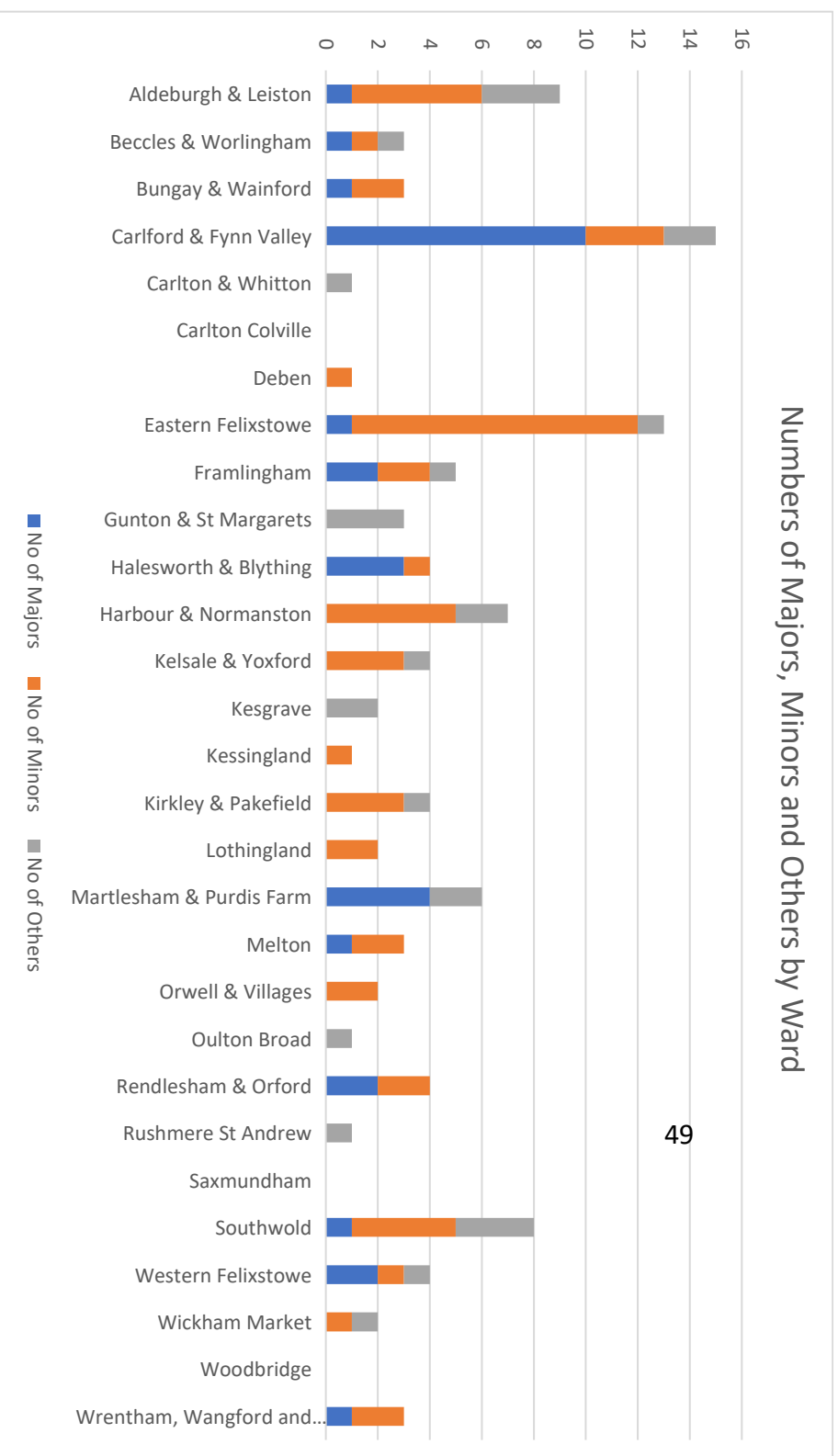


Figure 4: The numbers of Major, Minors and Other items at North / South Planning Committee within each ward between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022



**Appendix C:** The reasons items were at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, with overall proportions, details by month and by ward.

Figure 1: The proportion of items at Planning Committee because of an ESC Connection / Referred by Panel /called in directly (e.g. referred by Head of Service) for the period 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

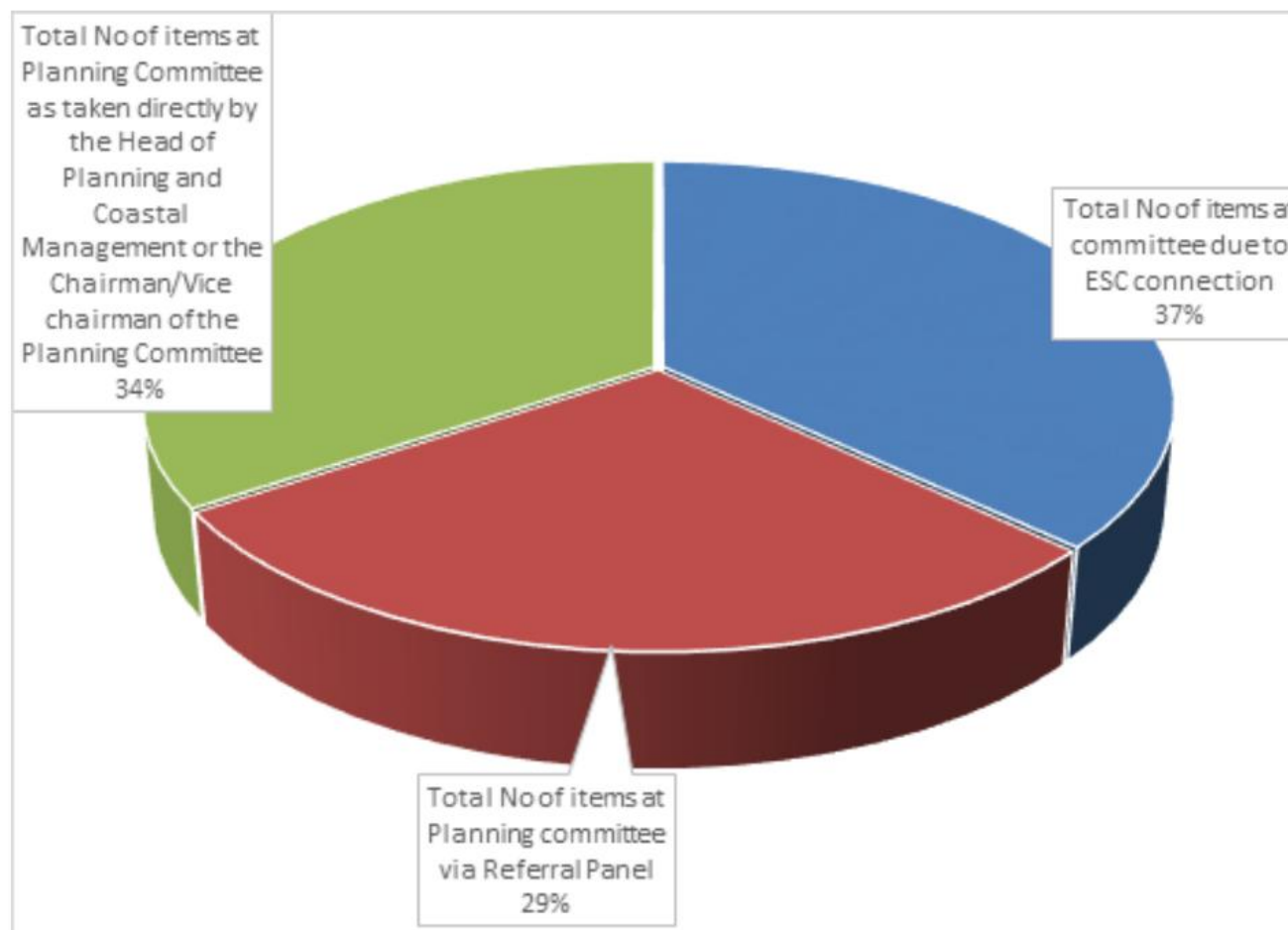


Figure 2: Reason items were at committee as a percentage of the number of items presented each month (1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022)

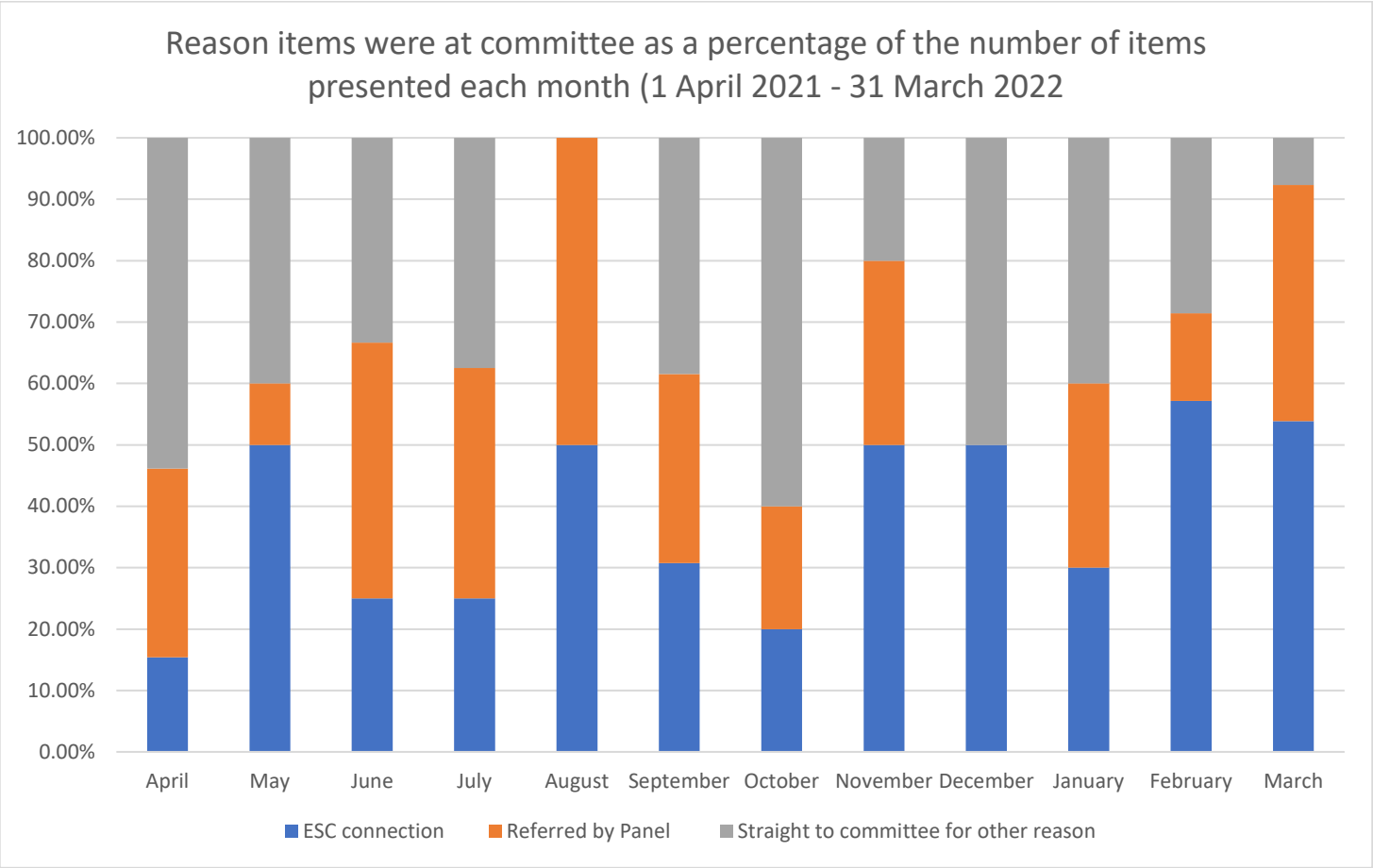


Figure 3: Number of items at North and South Planning Committees per month (1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022)

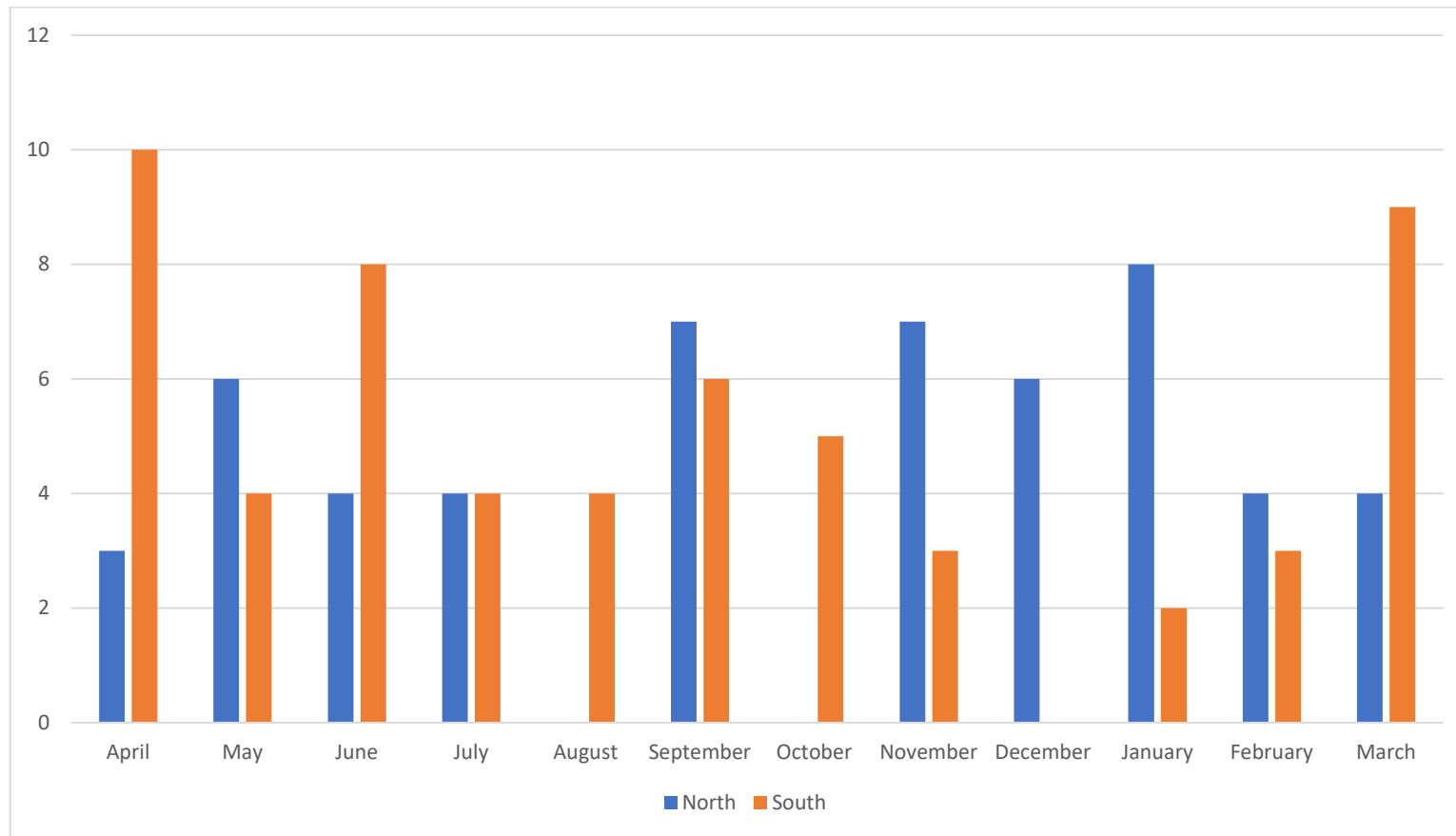


Figure 4: Number of Items at Committee by Ward (1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022)

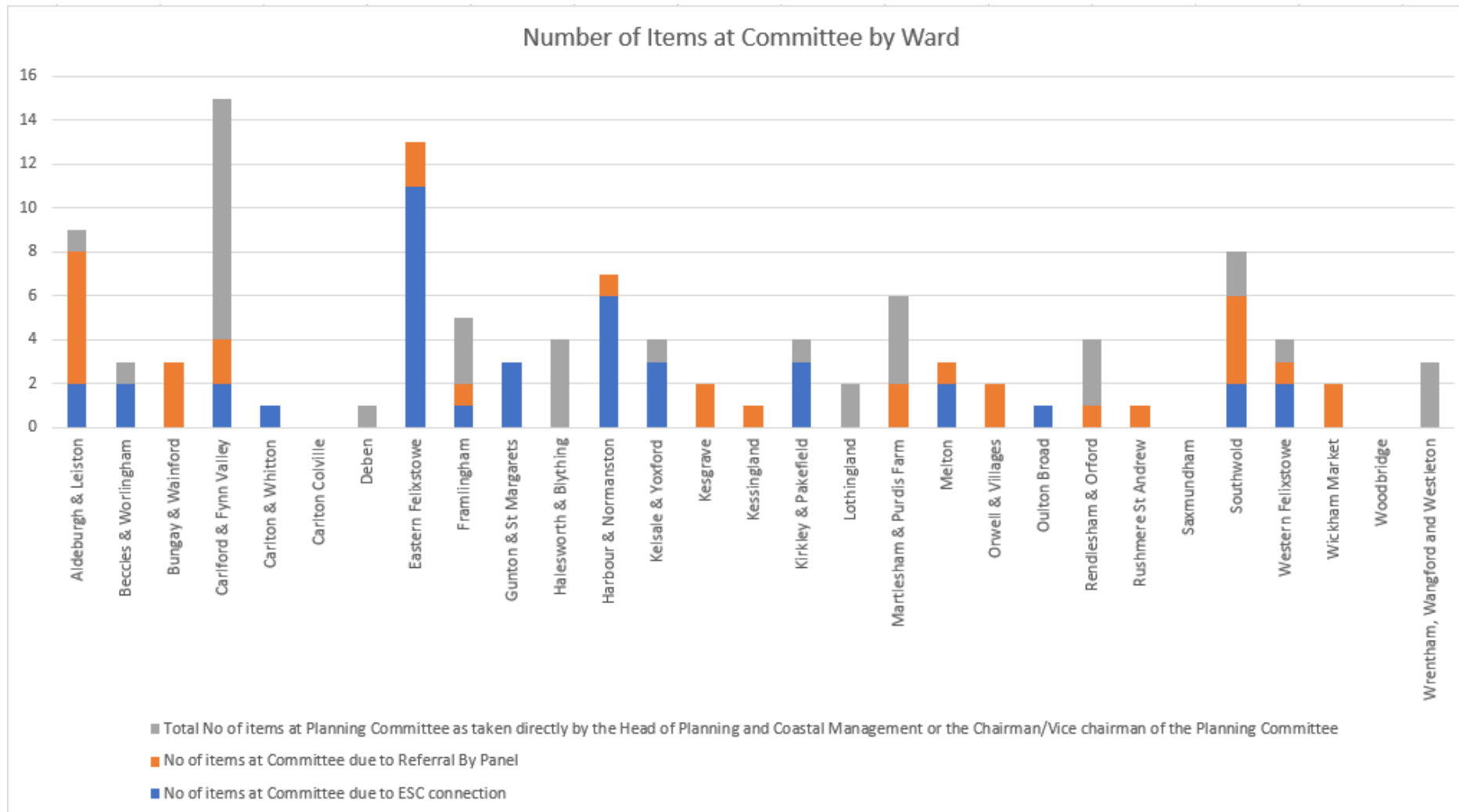
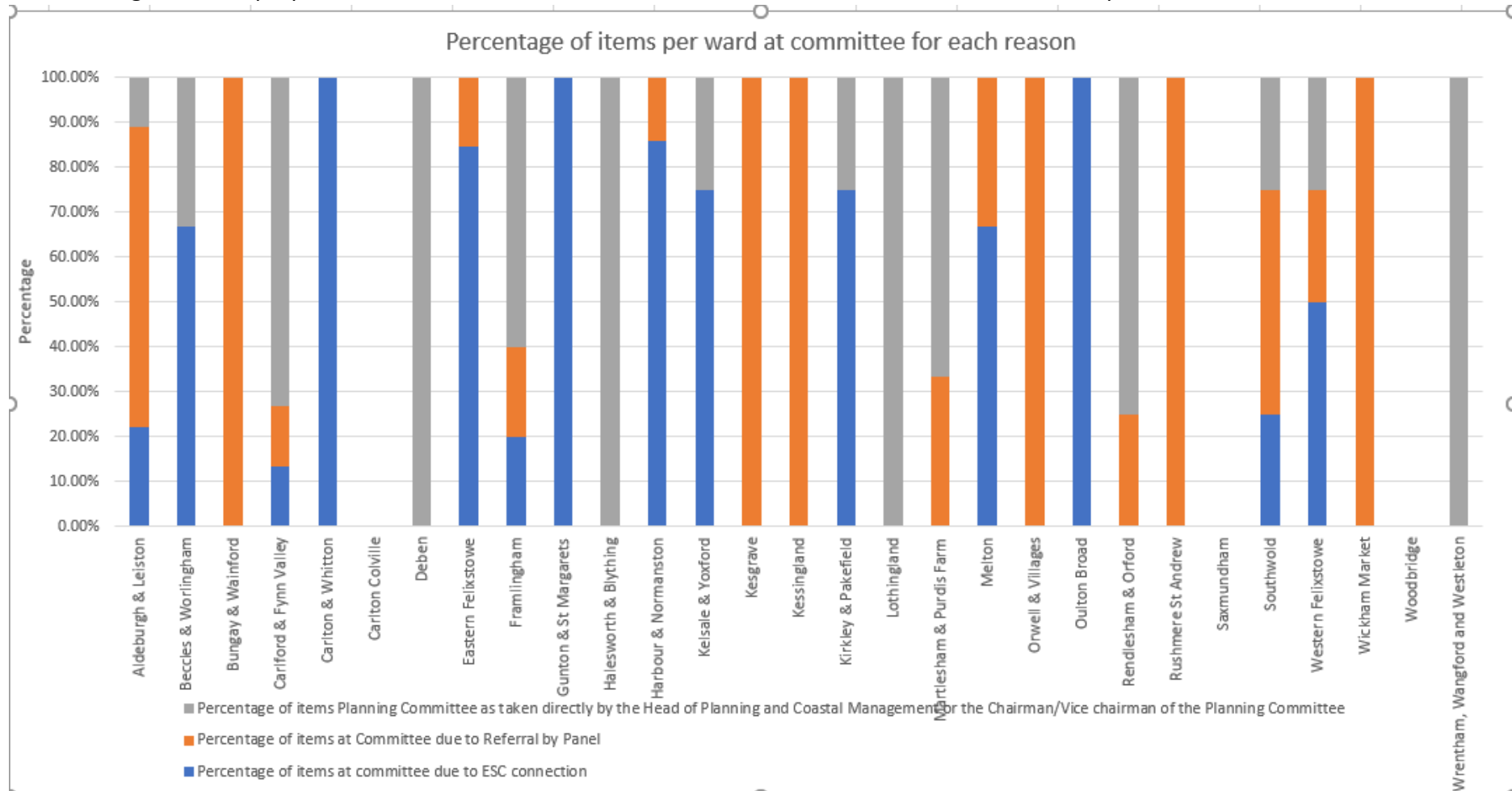




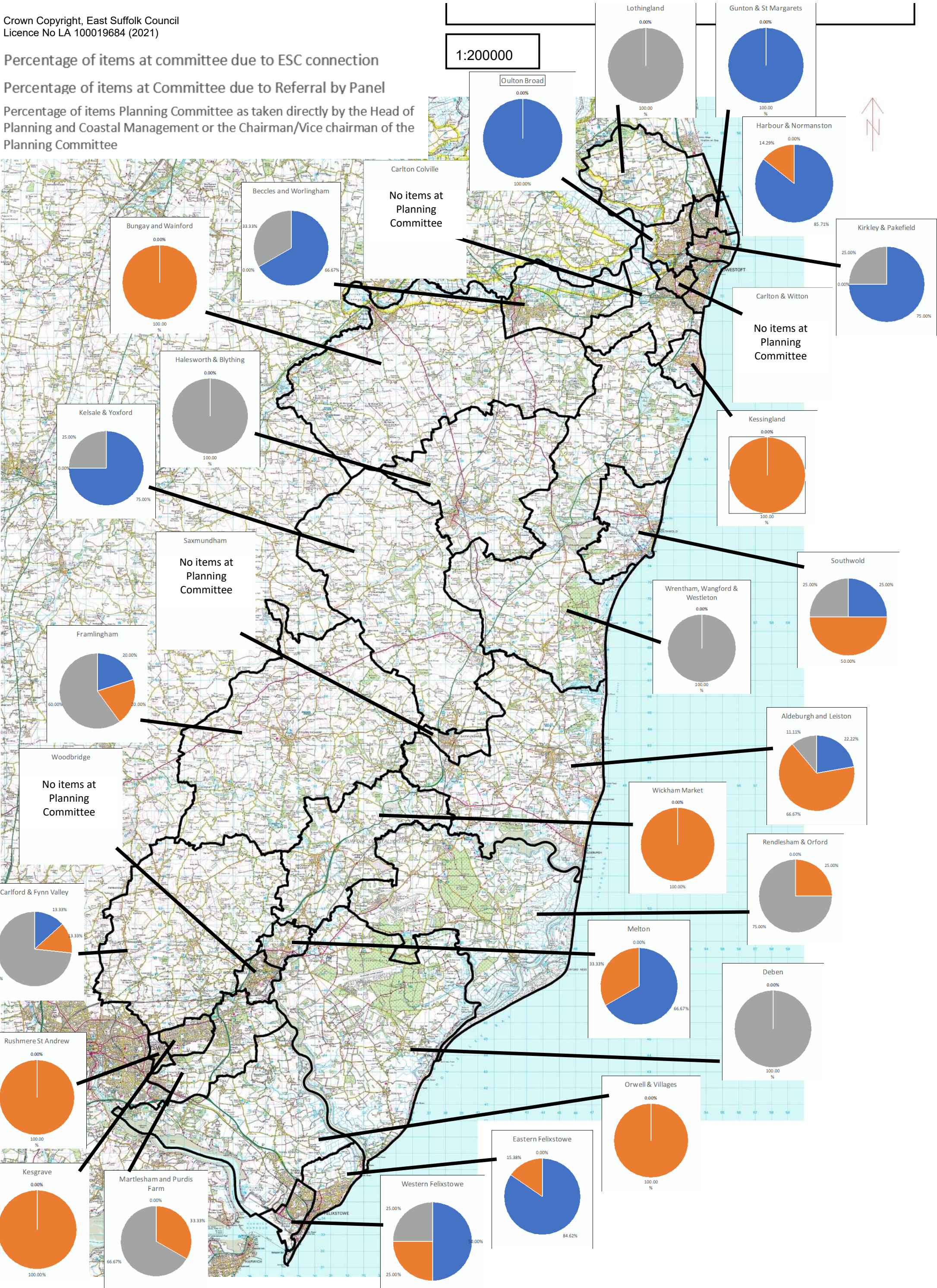
Figure 5: The proportion of items at Committee for each reason within each ward between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022





## Appendix D - Percentages of reasons why items in each ward were at North / South Planning Committee 2021-2022

- Percentage of items at committee due to ESC connection
- Percentage of items at Committee due to Referral by Panel
- Percentage of items Planning Committee as taken directly by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management or the Chairman/Vice chairman of the Planning Committee





**Appendix E: Public Speaking on items at North and South Planning Committees between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.**

ES/1489

Figure 1 : Overall percentage of Planning Committee items on which a potential speaker spoke 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

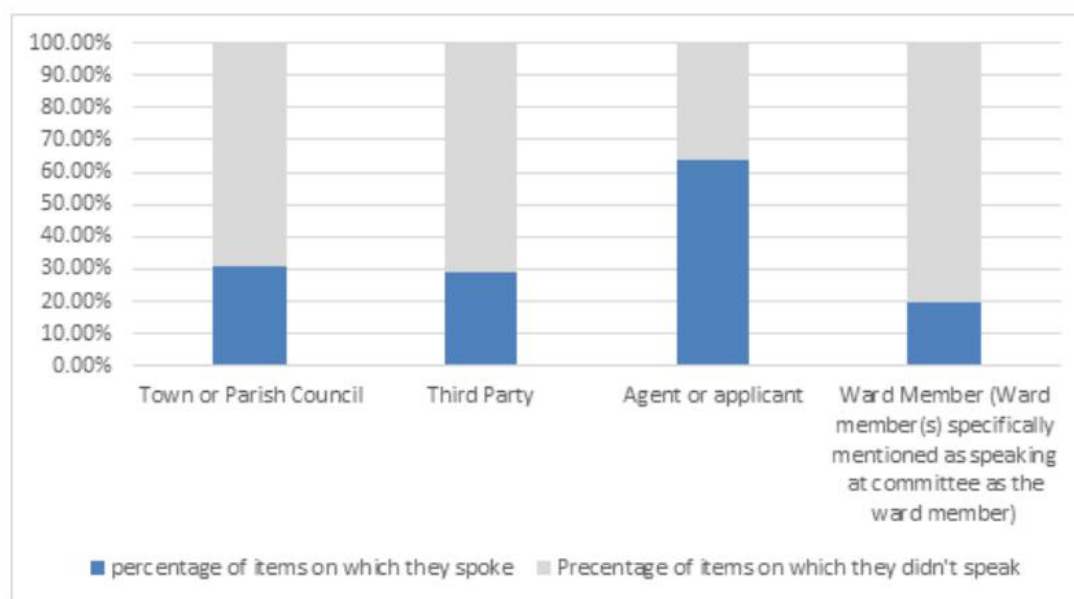


Figure 2: The percentage of items at committee via the Referral Panel on which each potential type of speaker spoke.

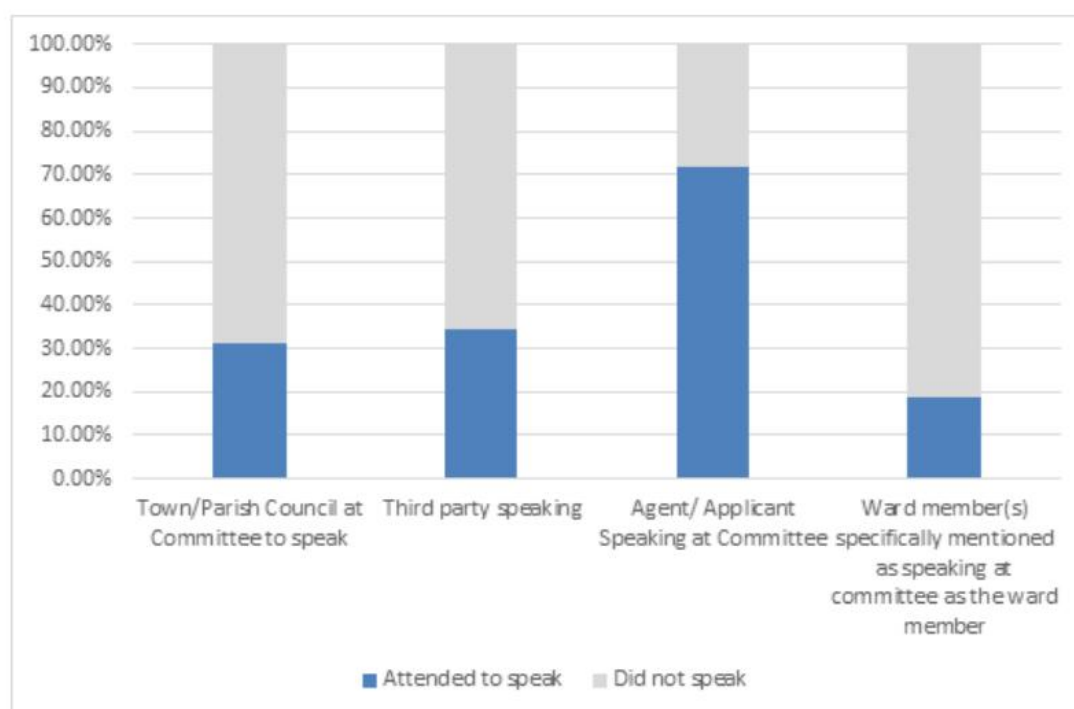


Figure 3: The percentage of public speaking on items at committee due to direct referral by the Head of Service or Committee Chairs

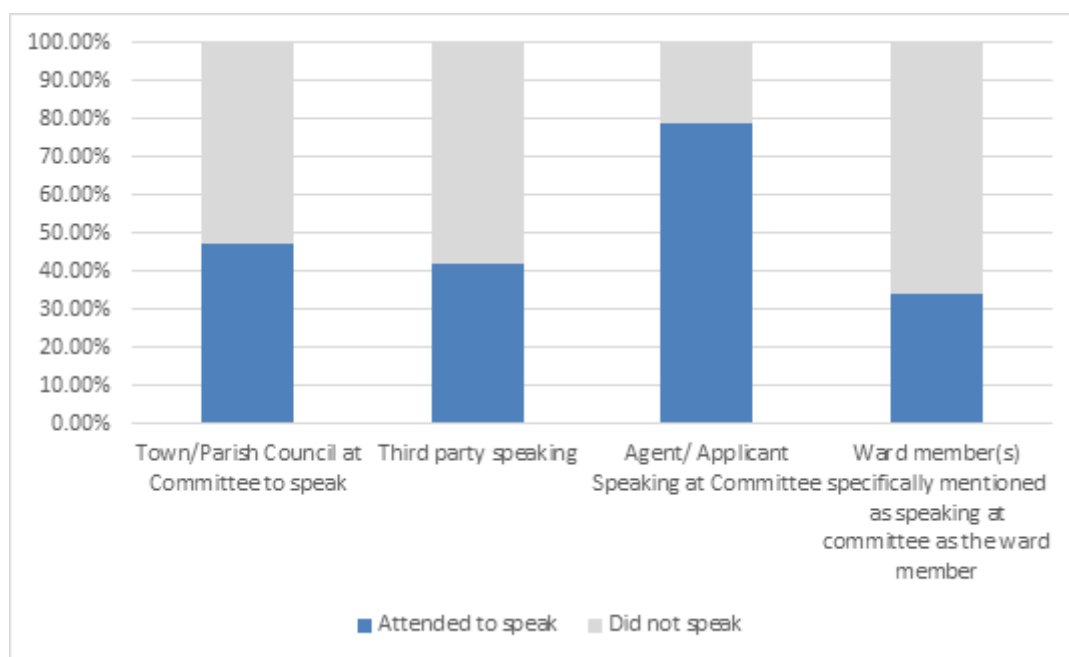


Figure 4: The percentage of public speaking on items at committee due to an East Suffolk Council connection (e.g. ESC were the applicant, or the applicant was an ESC elected member, member of staff or close relative).

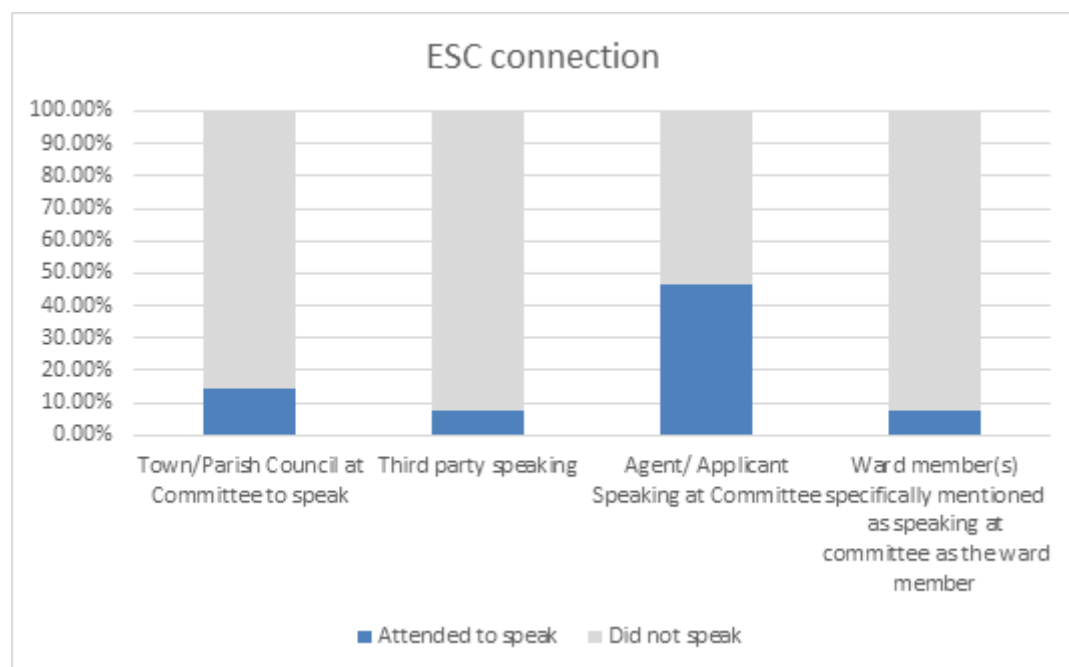
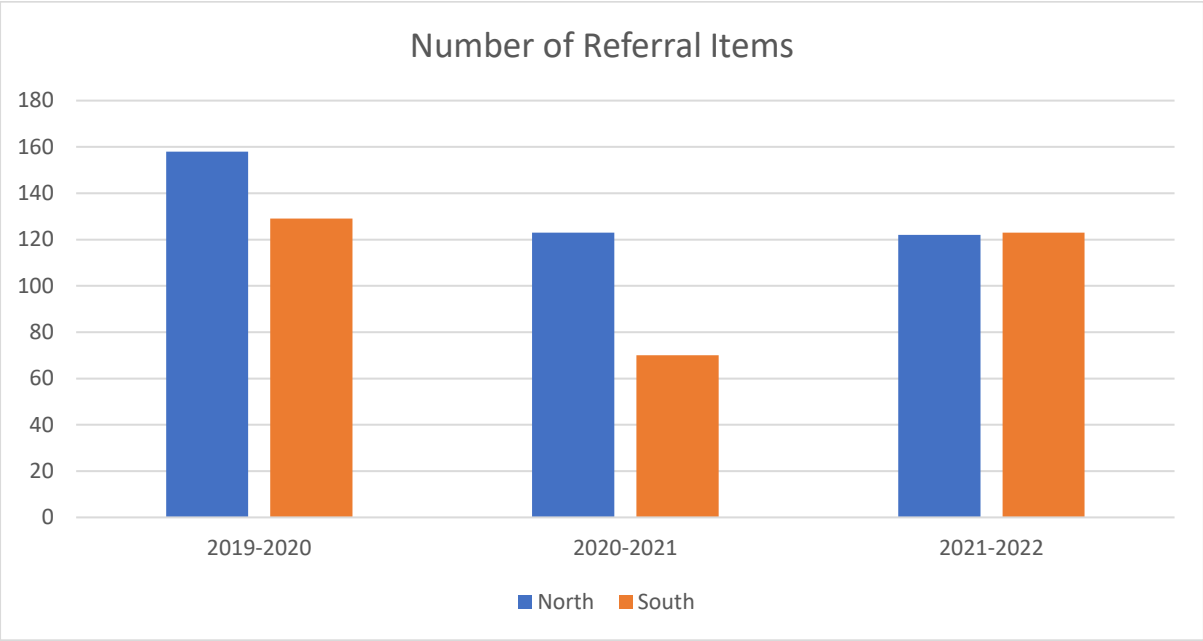
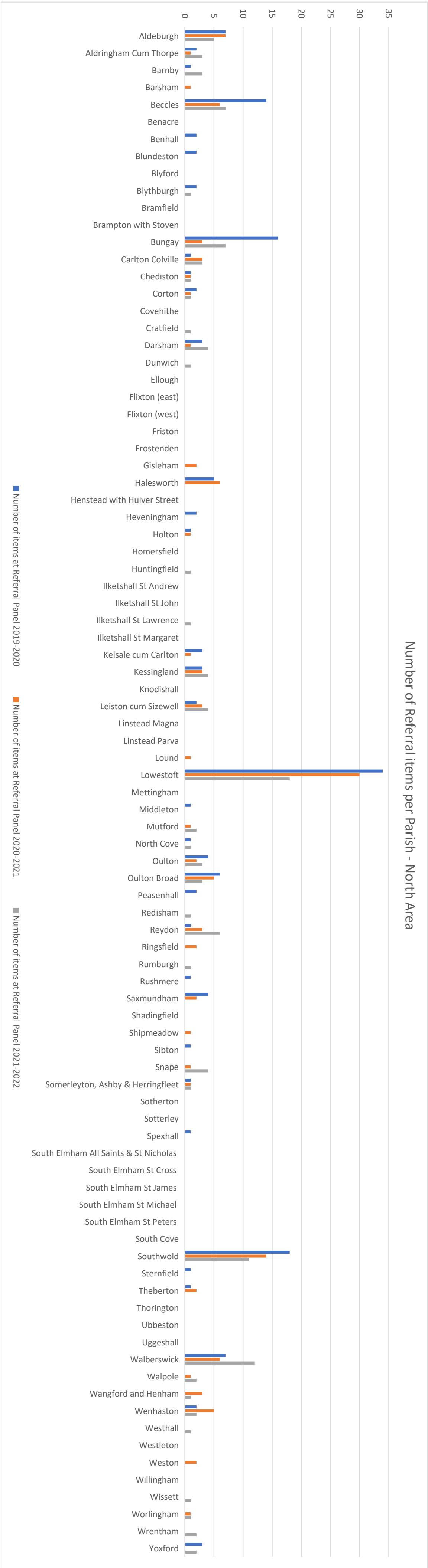
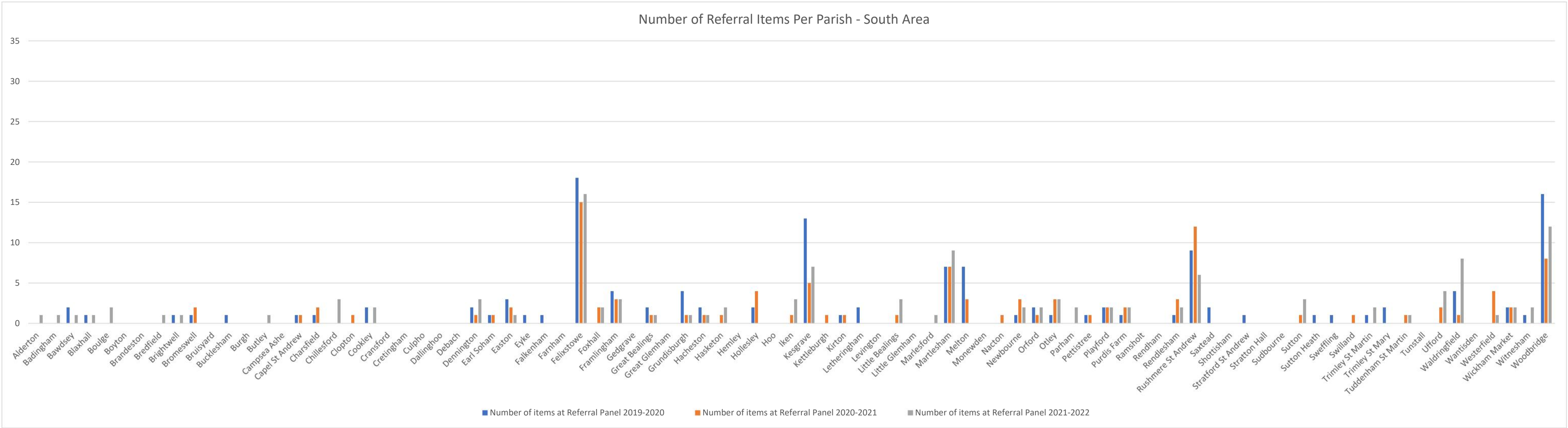


Figure 1: The number of North/South Referral Items each year







**Appendix G:** The numbers and proportions of Major, Minors and Others at Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Figure 1: The Number of Majors, Minors and Others at Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

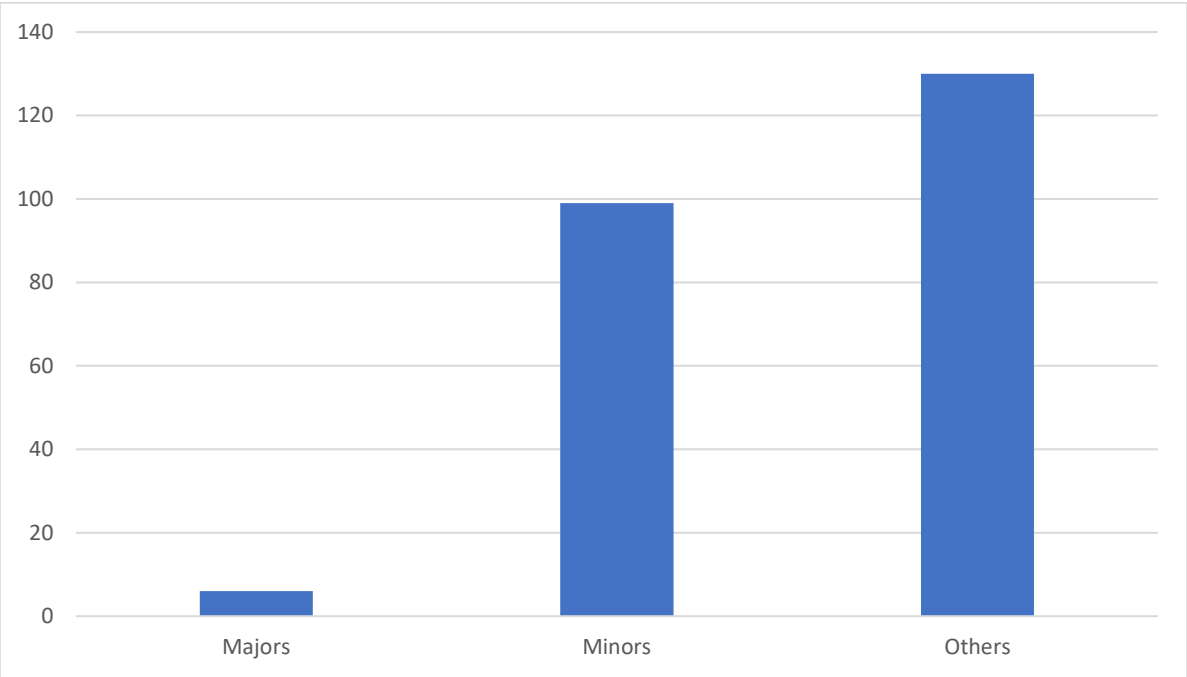
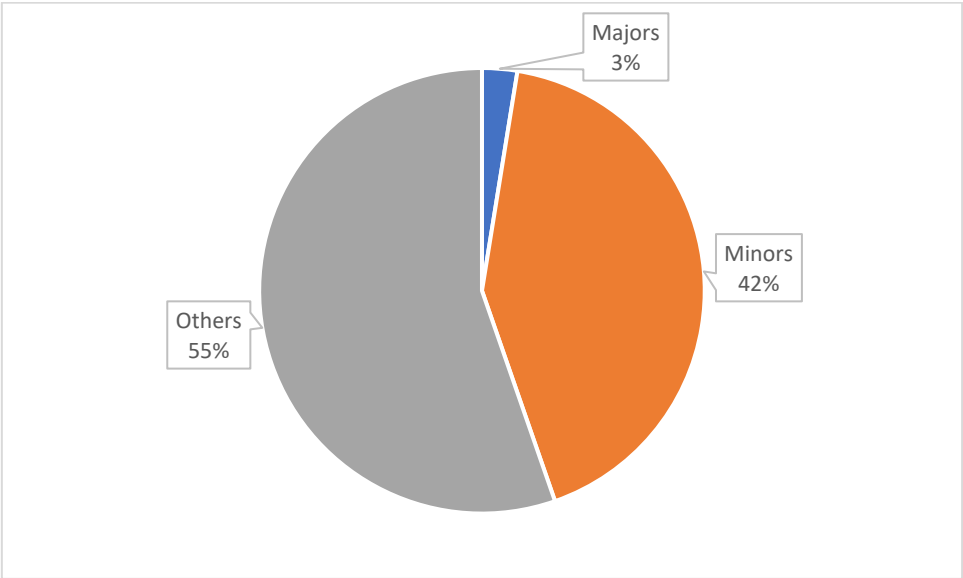
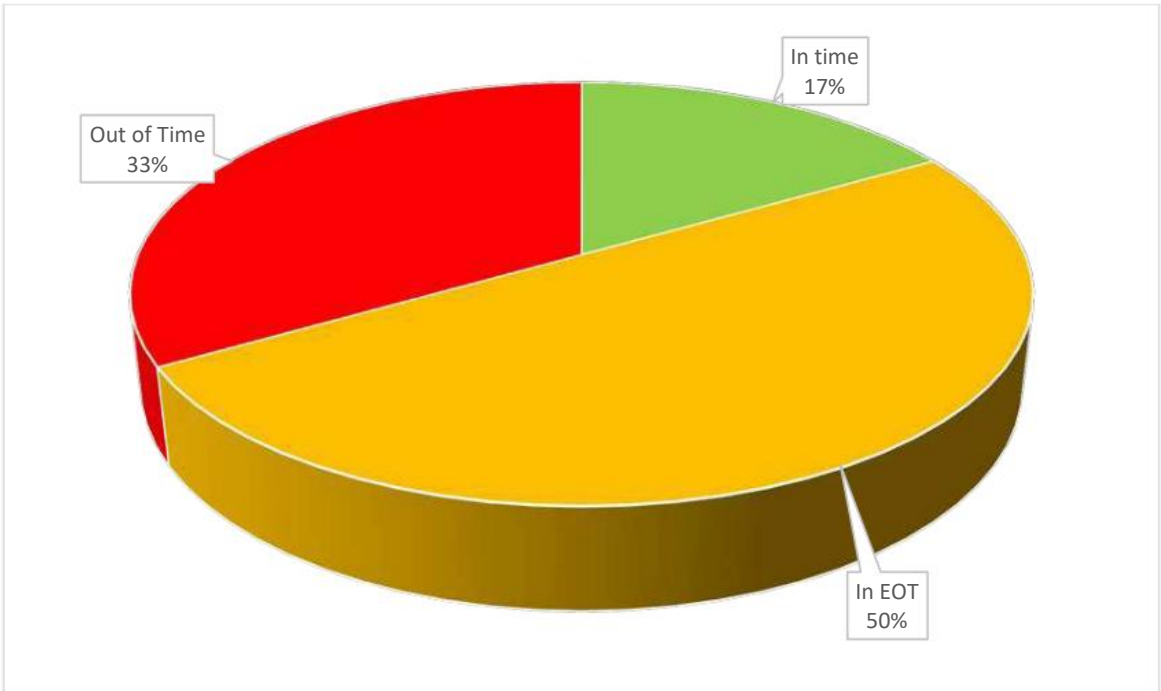


Figure 2: Items at Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, in terms of the proportion of Majors, Minors and Others

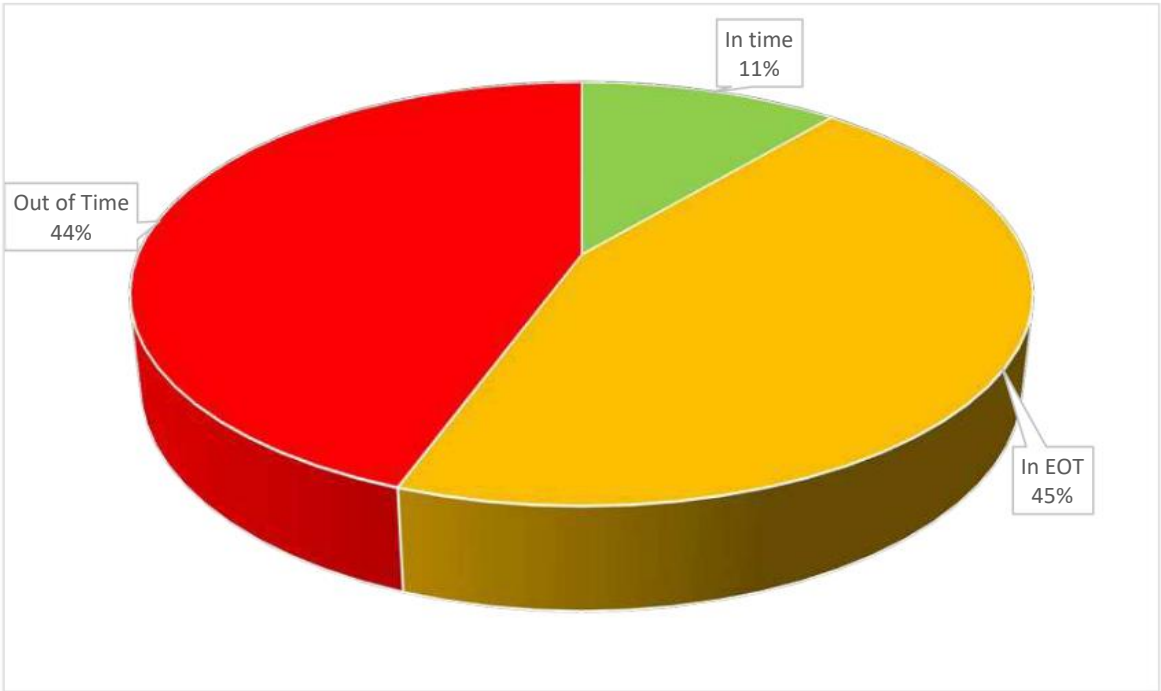




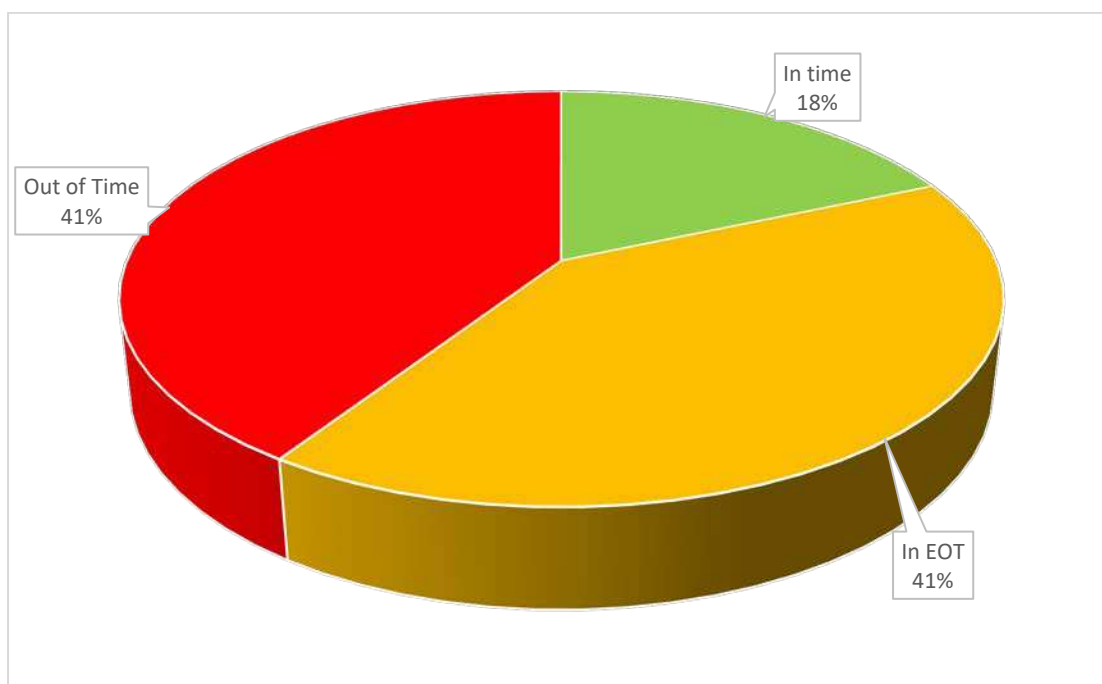
**Figure 1:** The proportions of Majors going via the Planning Referral Panel Prior, which were determined within the government target time, within an agreed Extension of Time (EOT) and out of time/beyond the government target date or an agreed EOT.



**Figure 2:** The proportions of Minors going via the Planning Referral Panel Prior, which were determined within the government target time, within an agreed Extension of Time (EOT) and out of time/beyond the government target date or an agreed EOT.



**Figure 3:** The proportions of Others going via the Planning Referral Panel Prior, which were determined within the government target time, within an agreed Extension of Time (EOT) and out of time/beyond the government target date or an agreed EOT.



**Appendix I:** The number and proportions of 'Planning Applications' by ward, at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Figure 1: The percentage of applications within each ward that could have triggered the referral process between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

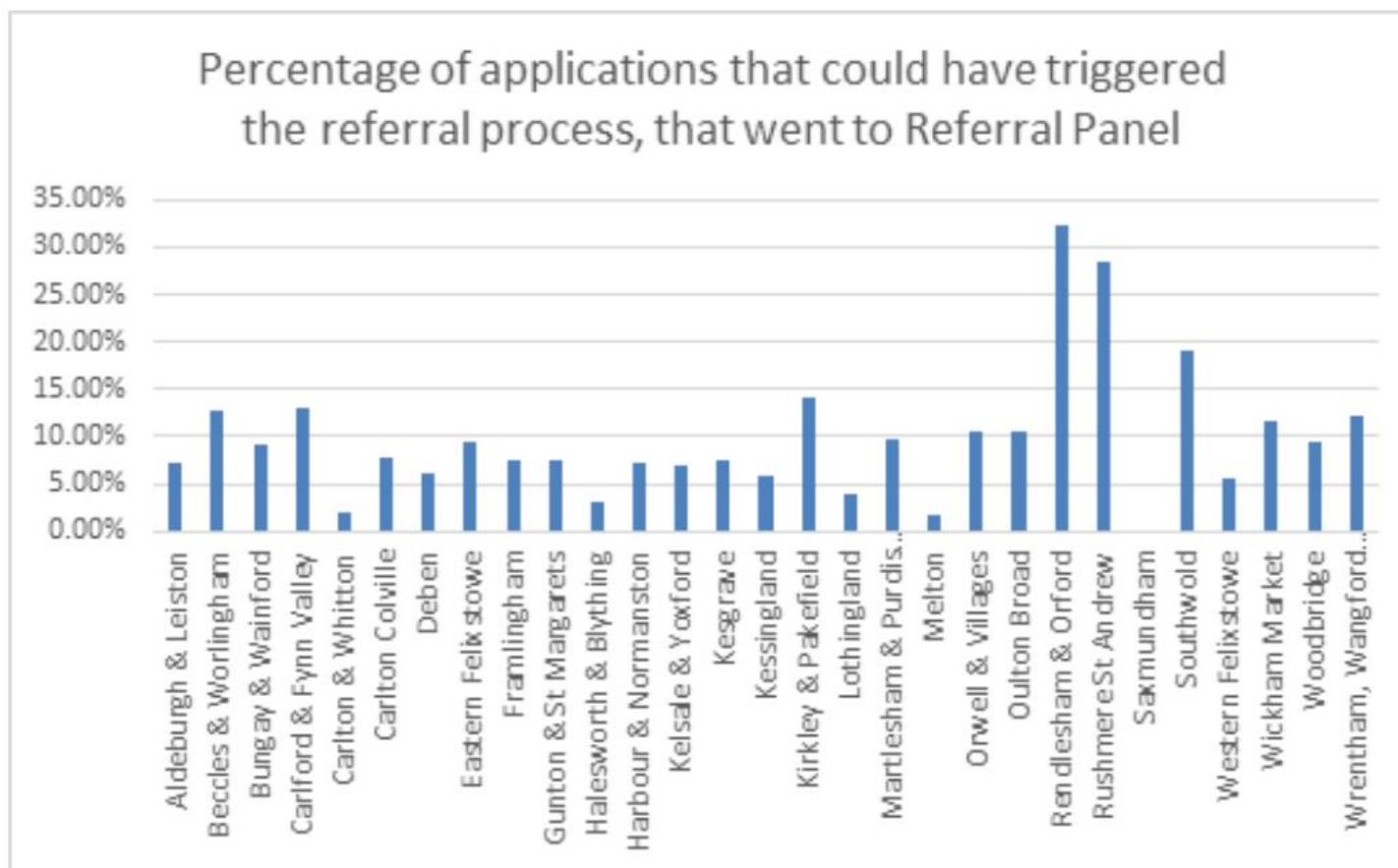


Figure 2: The total number of applications that could have triggered the referral process and did between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

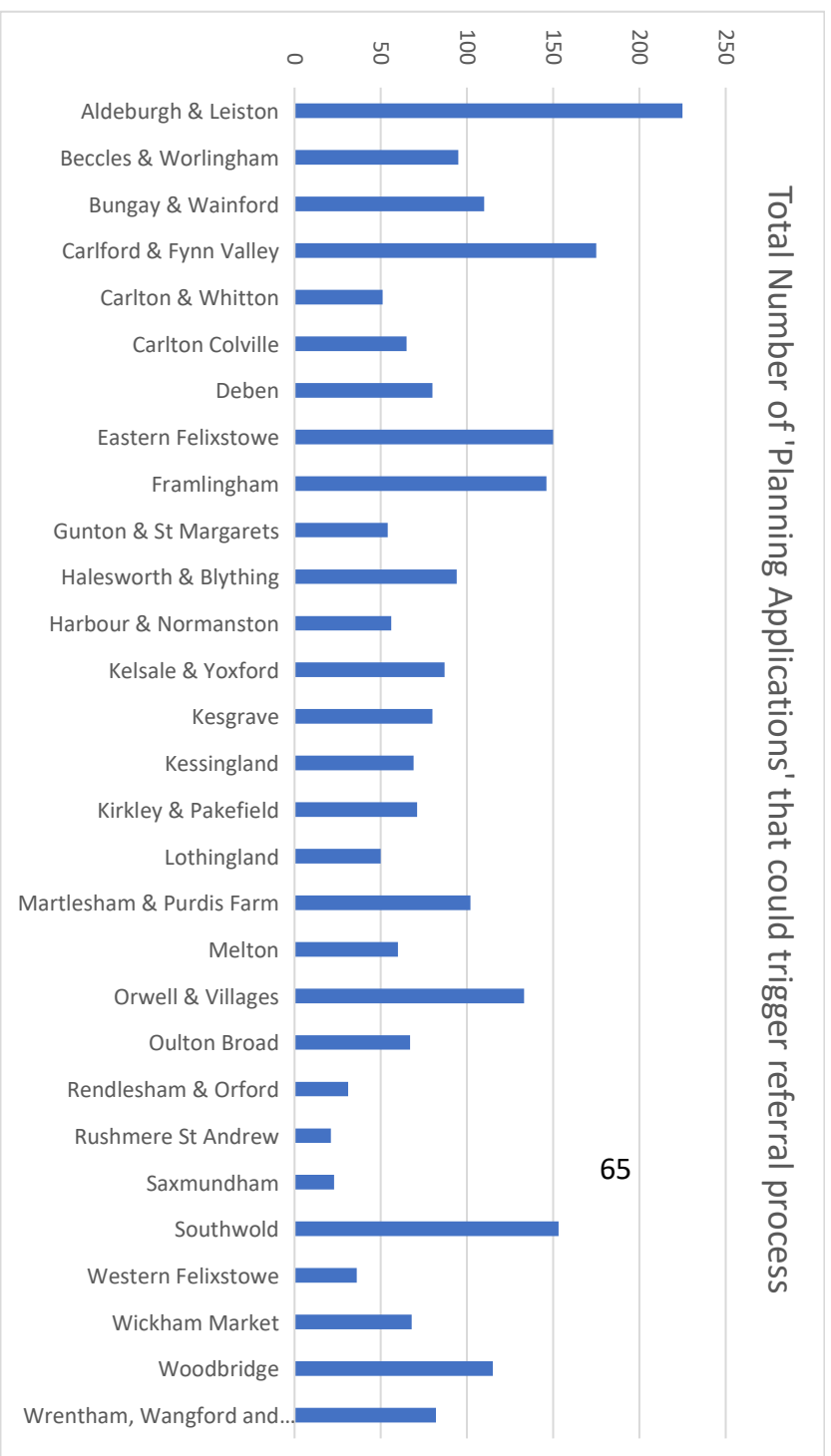


Figure 3: The total number of applications within each ward that triggered the referral process between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

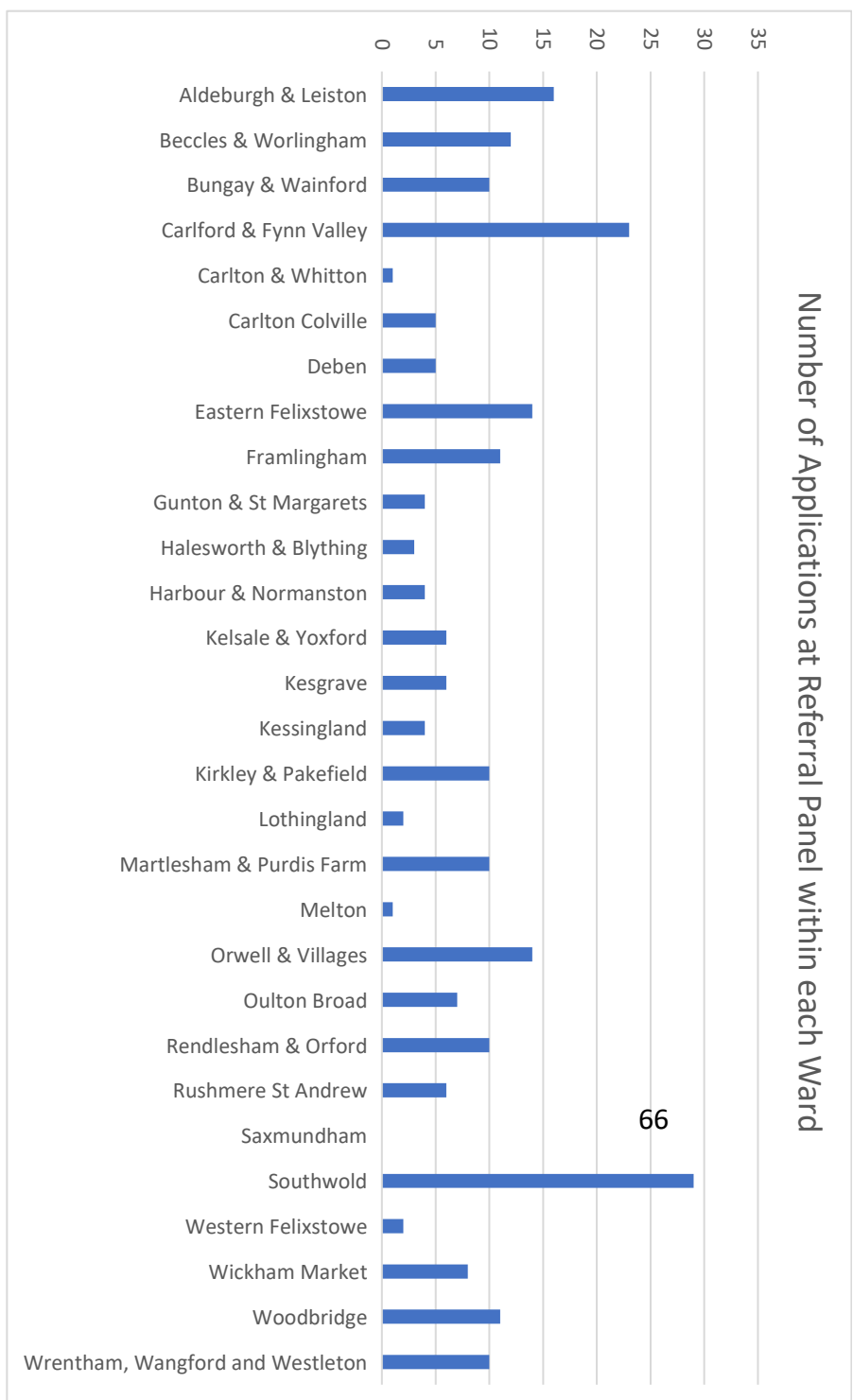


Figure 4: The proportion of applications within each ward that could have triggered the referral process and did between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

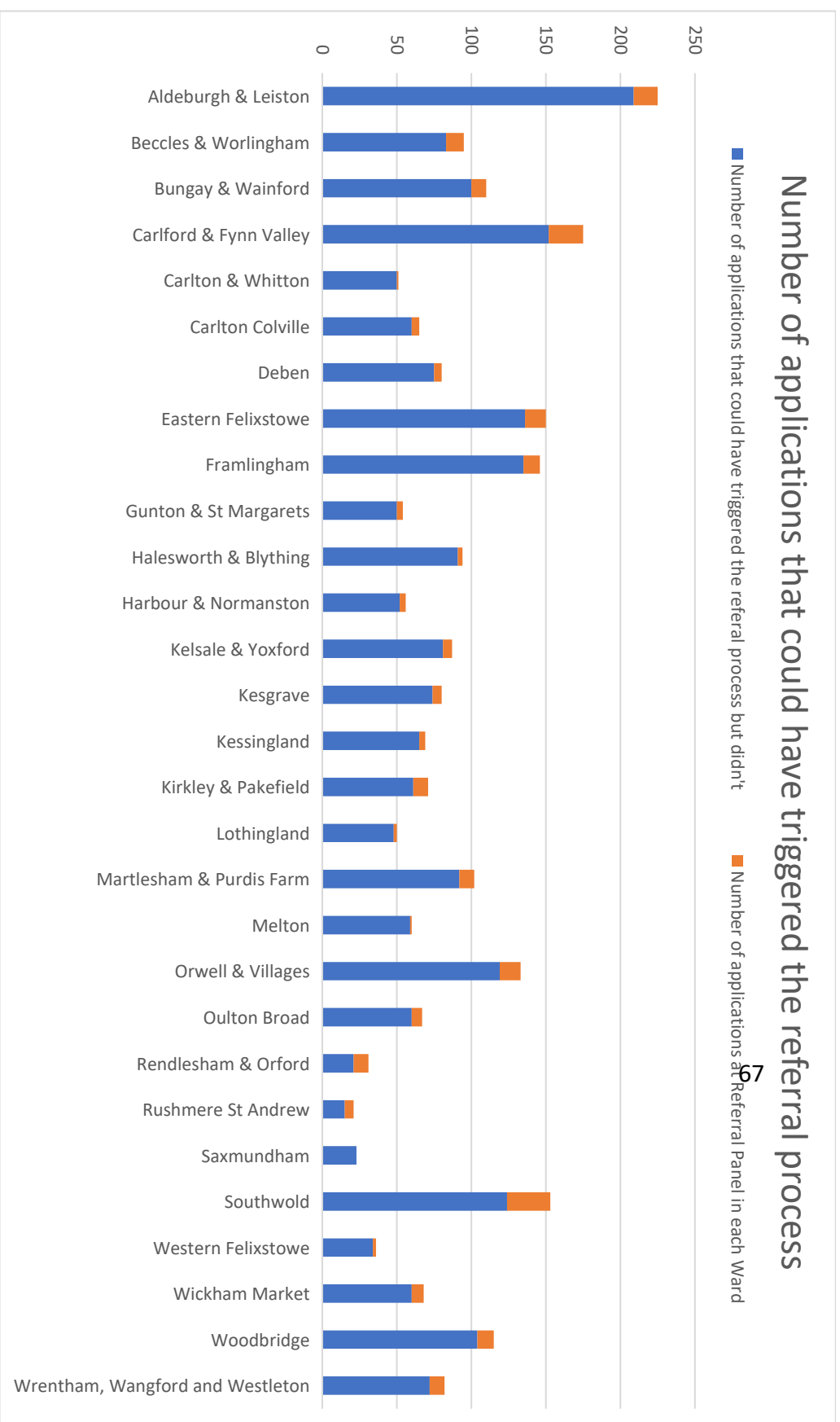


Figure 5: Number of applications and proportion triggering Referral Panel Process shown by Ward for 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, (organised so the wards with the highest application numbers are at the base of the chart)

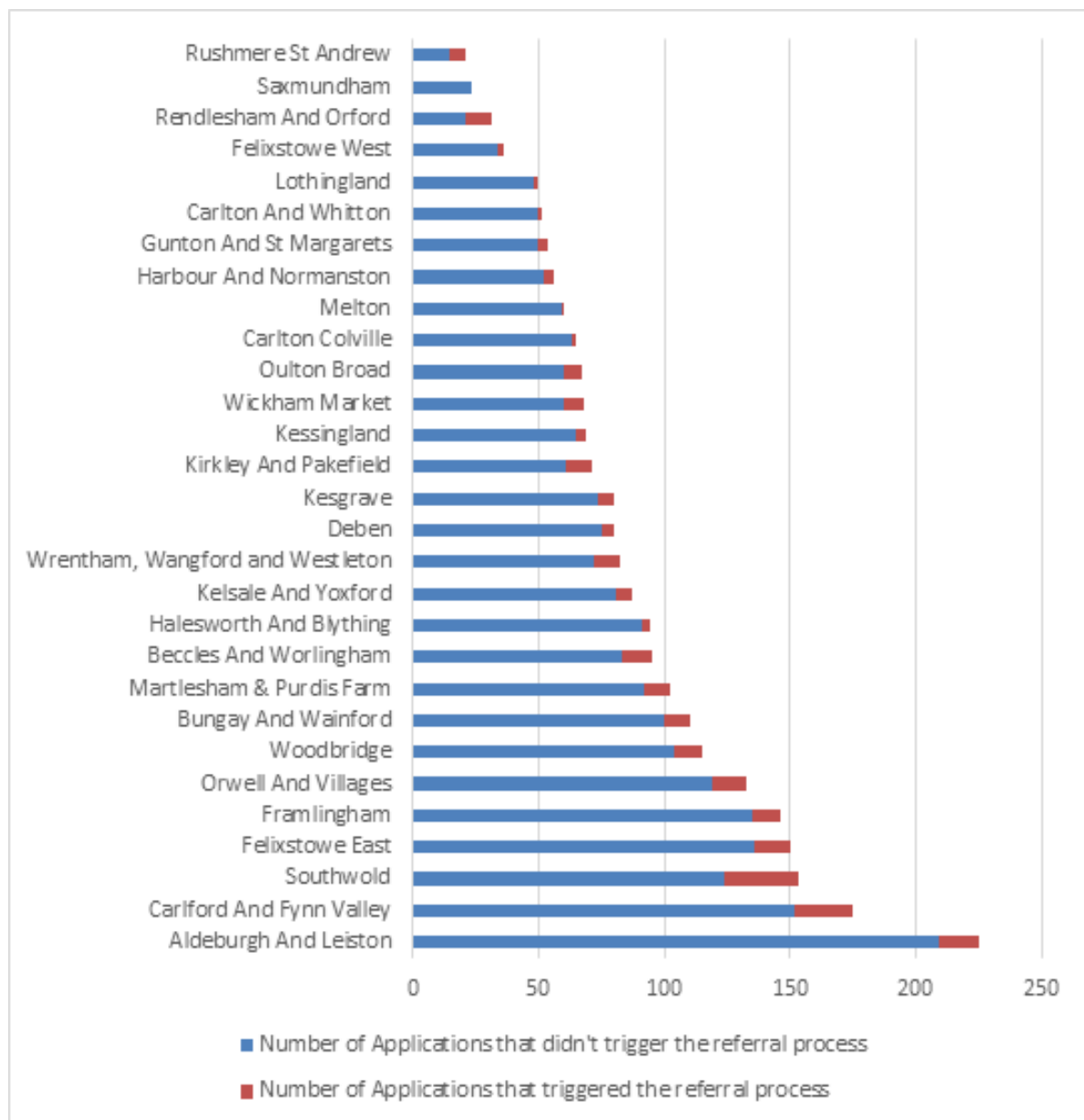
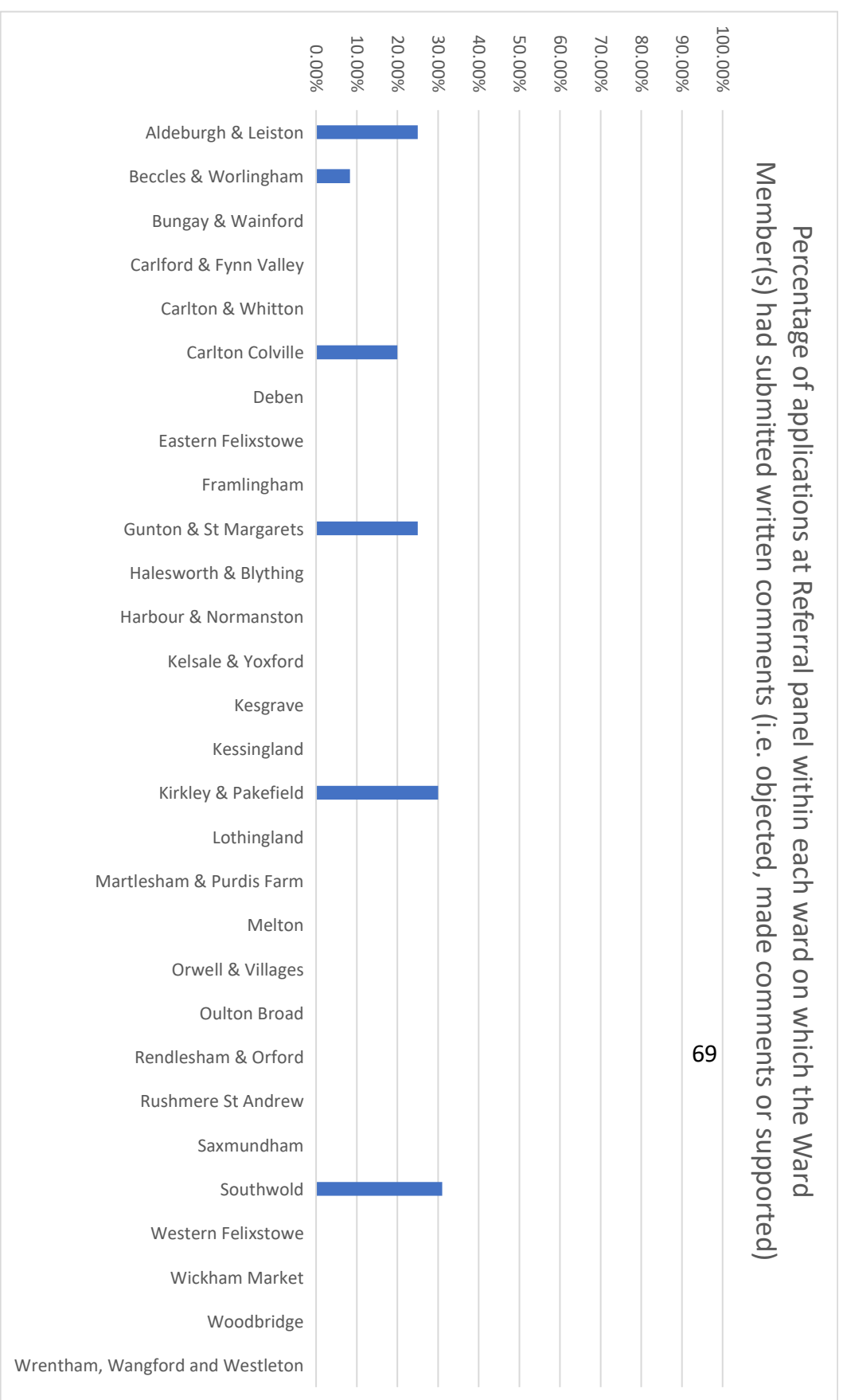


Figure 6: The percentage of applications within each ward at the referral panel which had written comments from the Ward Member between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022





East Suffolk Council

Crown Copyright, East Suffolk Council  
Licence No LA 100019684 (2021)

■ Percentage that didn't trigger Referral Process  
■ Percentage that did trigger the Referral Process

1:200000

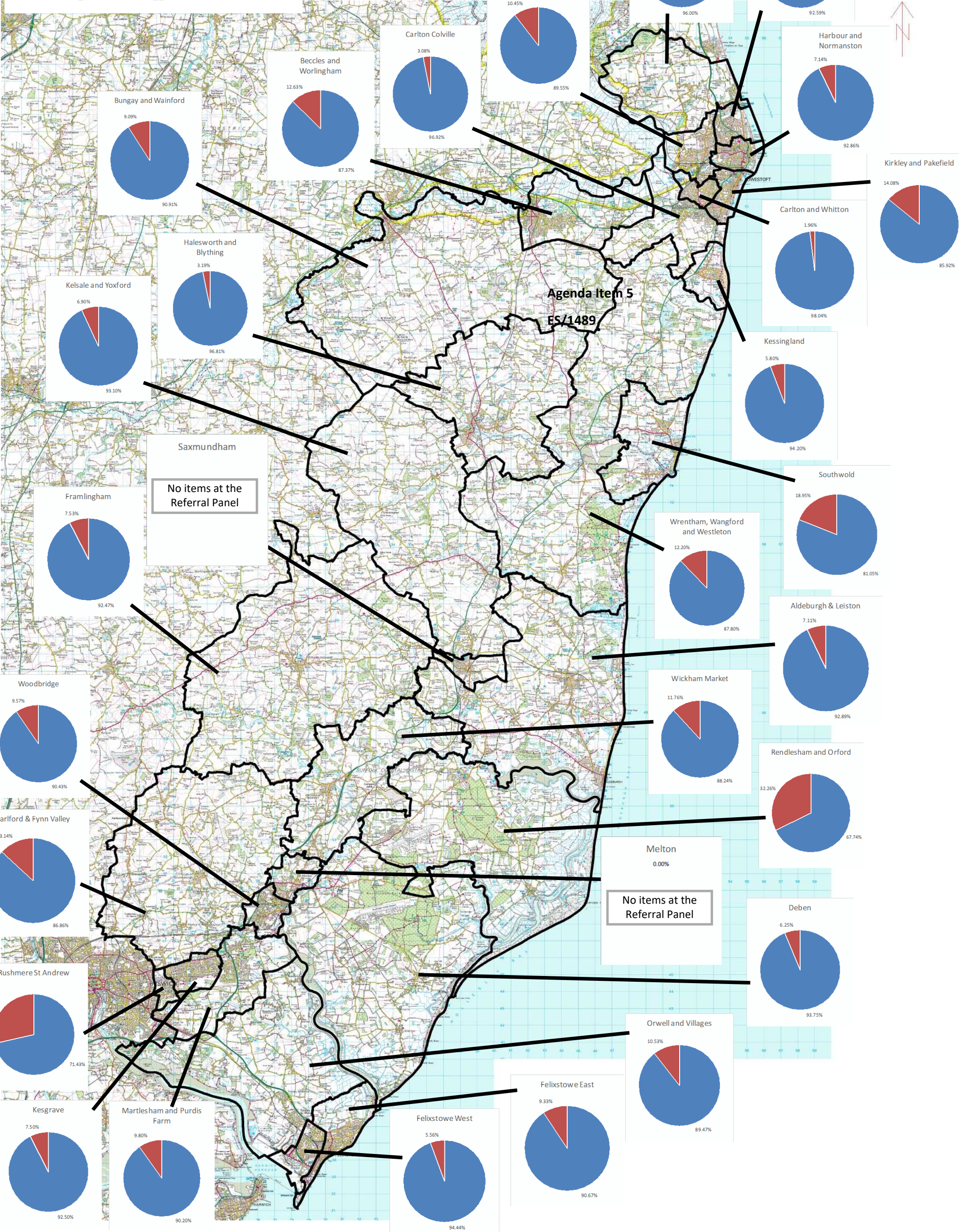




Figure 1 : Number of 'Planning Applications' and number triggering Referral Panel by Parish in alphabetical order

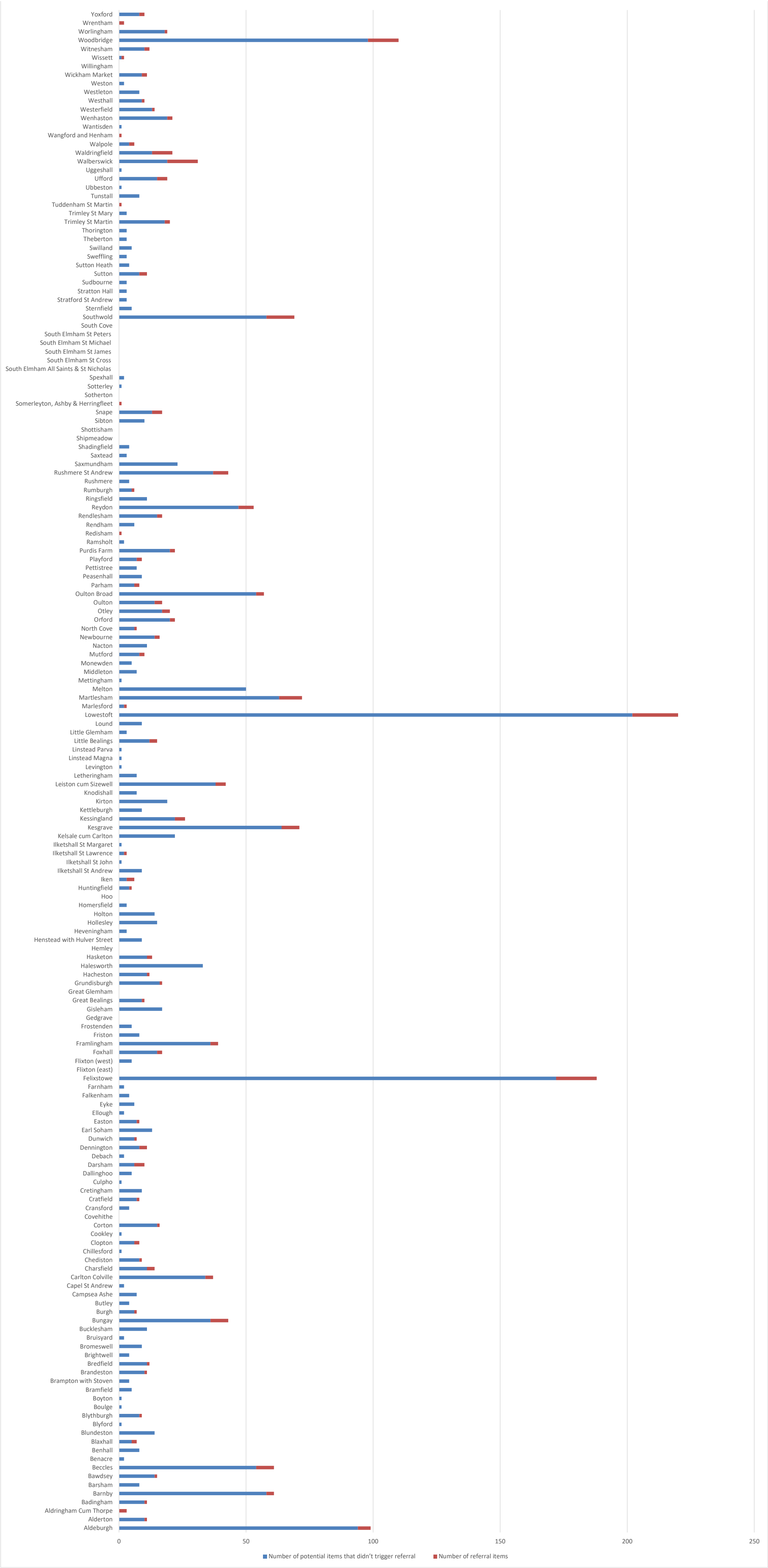


Figure 2 : Number of 'Planning Applications' and number triggering Referral Panel by Parish, in order of total number of 'Planning Applications'

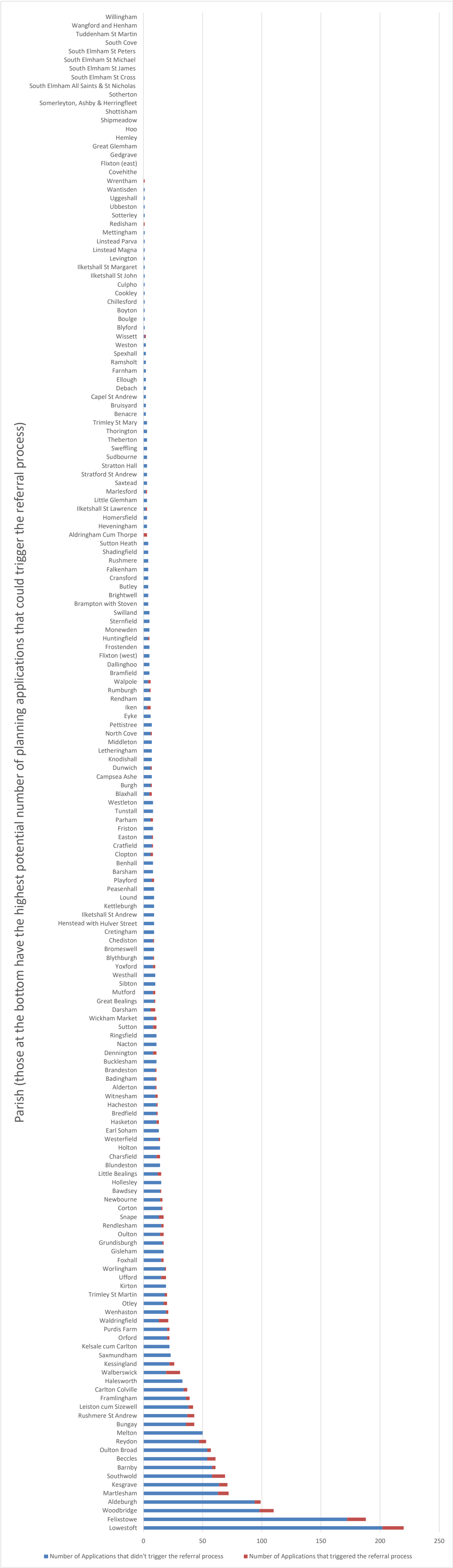


Figure 3: Percentage of 'Planning Applications' triggering Referral Process, ordered by number of planning applications received within each Parish

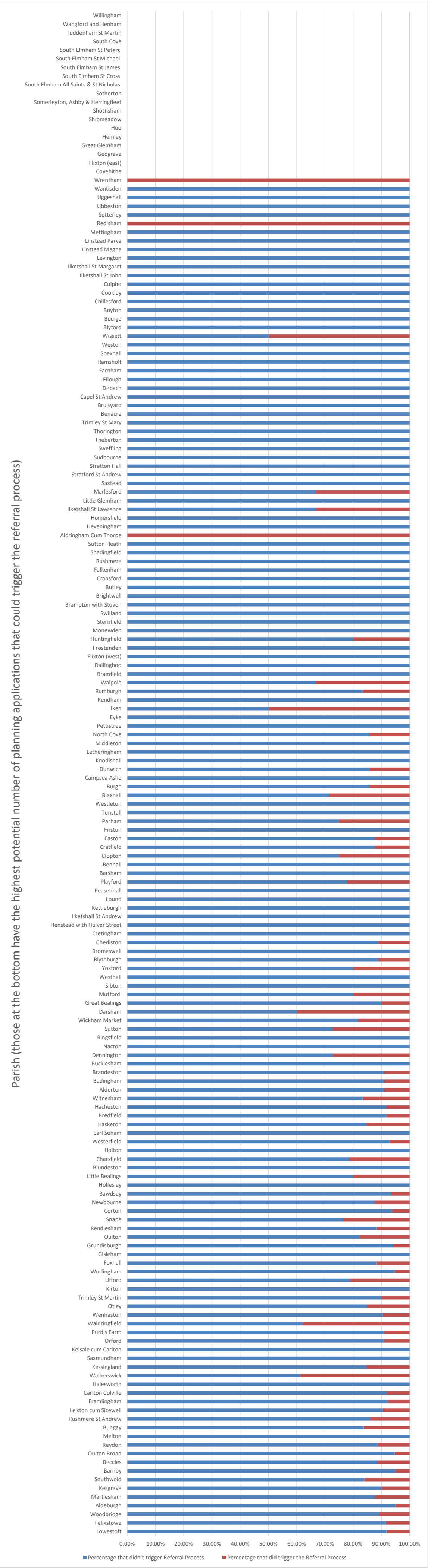


Figure 1: Percentage of those applications at Referral Panel with and without comments from Ward Members 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022

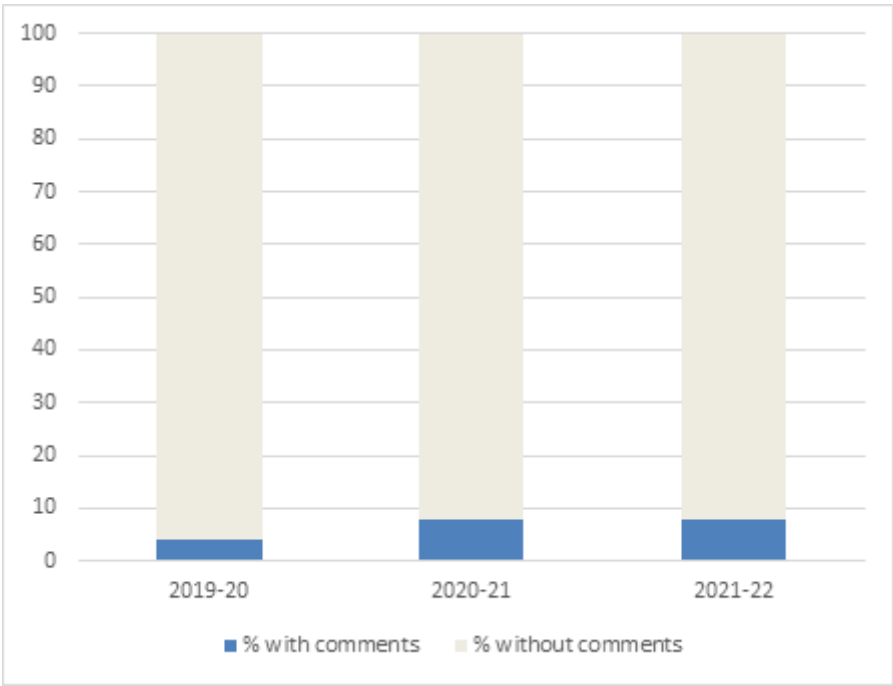


Figure 2 – Number of wards with and without any comments on at least one application at the Planning Referral Panel 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022

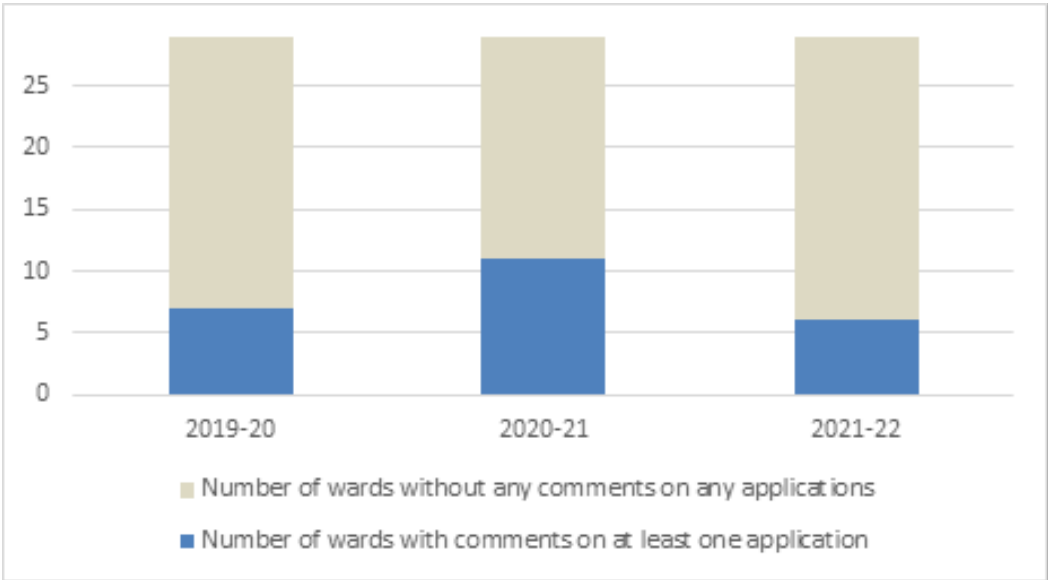


Figure 3: The number of applications with comments from the Ward Member at the Referral Panel shown by Ward 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022

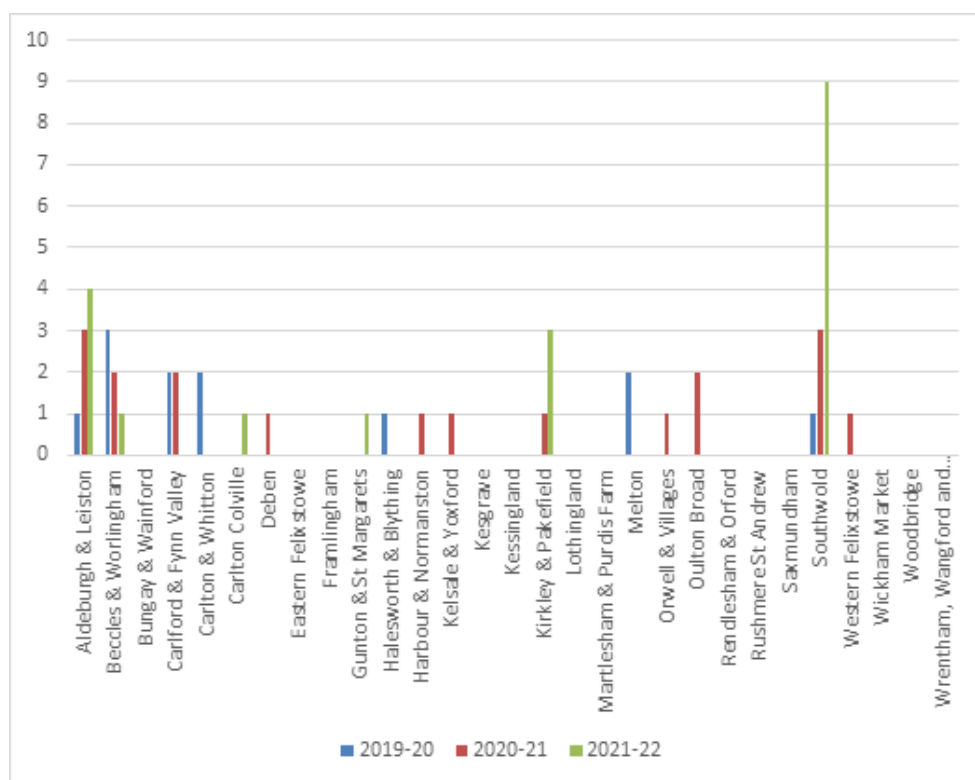
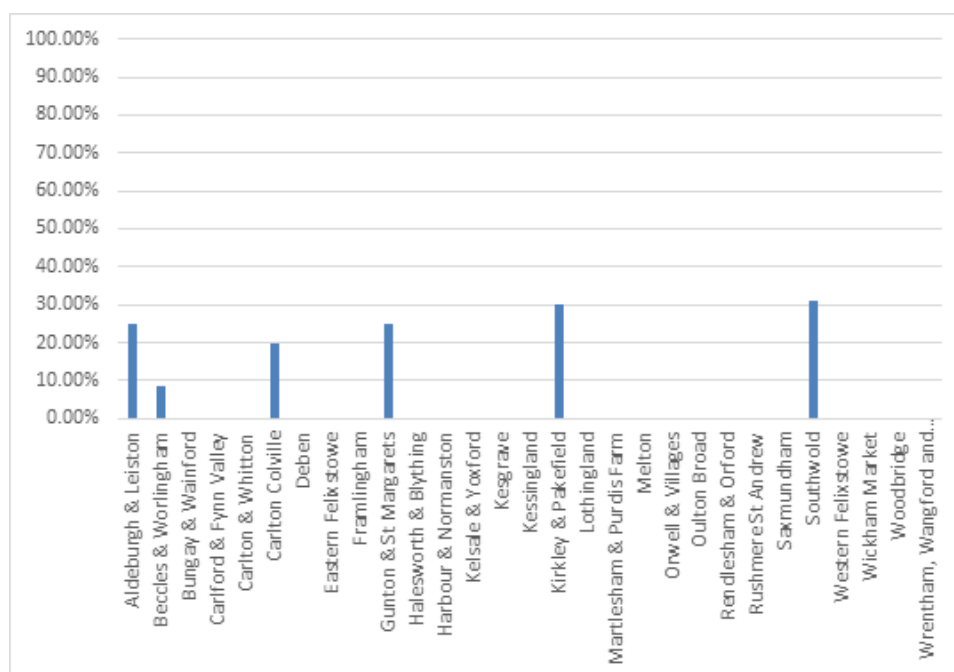


Figure 4: Percentage of applications at Referral panel within each ward on which the Ward Member(s) had submitted written comments (i.e. objected, made comments or supported) 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022





East Suffolk Council

Crown Copyright, East Suffolk Council  
Licence No LA 100019684 (2021)

- Percentage of applications at Referral panel within each ward on which the Ward Member(s) made written comments
- Percentage of applications at the Referral Panel on which no written comments were received from the Ward Member

Appendix M: Referral Panel items with comments from Ward Members between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by ward on a map of the district.

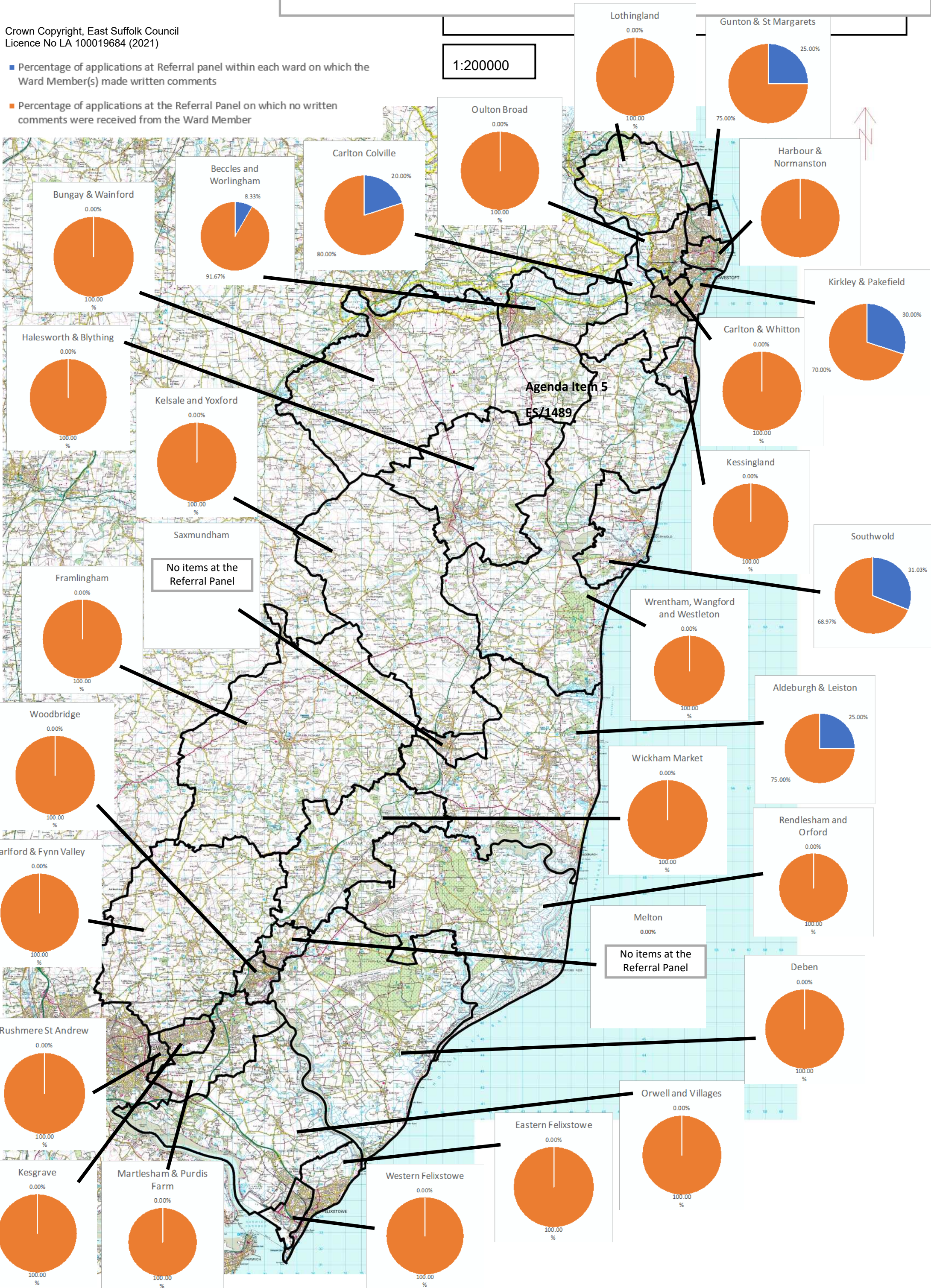




Figure 1: Percentage of responses from Town/Parish Councils on Referral Panel items 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

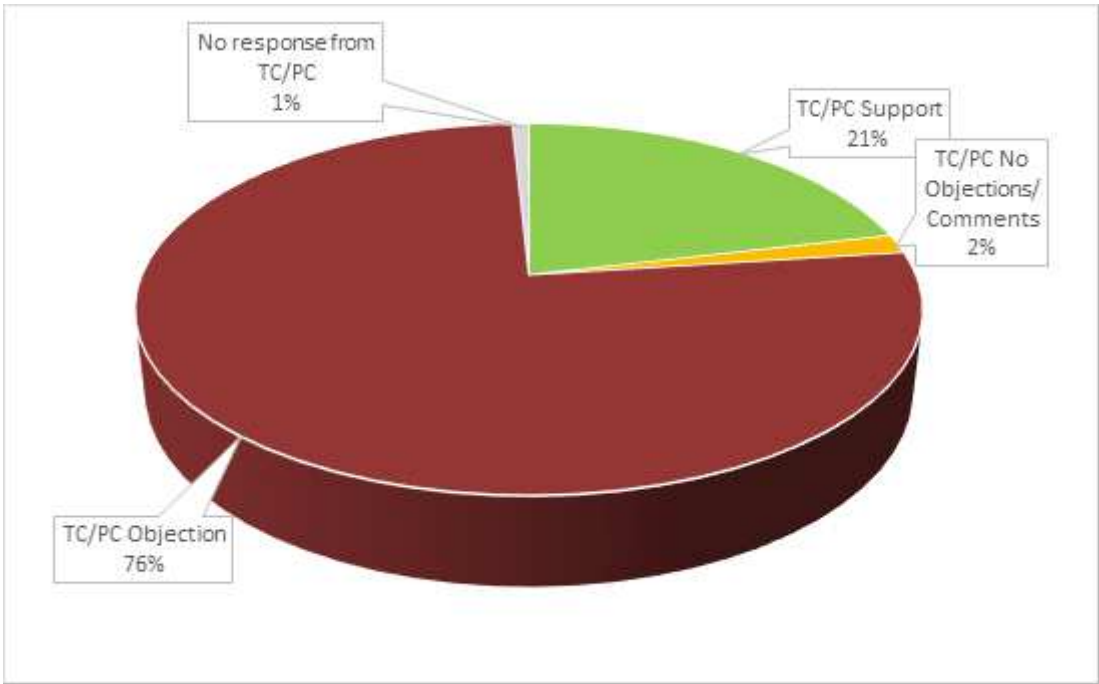


Figure 2: Percentage of responses from Town/Parish Councils on Referral Panel items 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

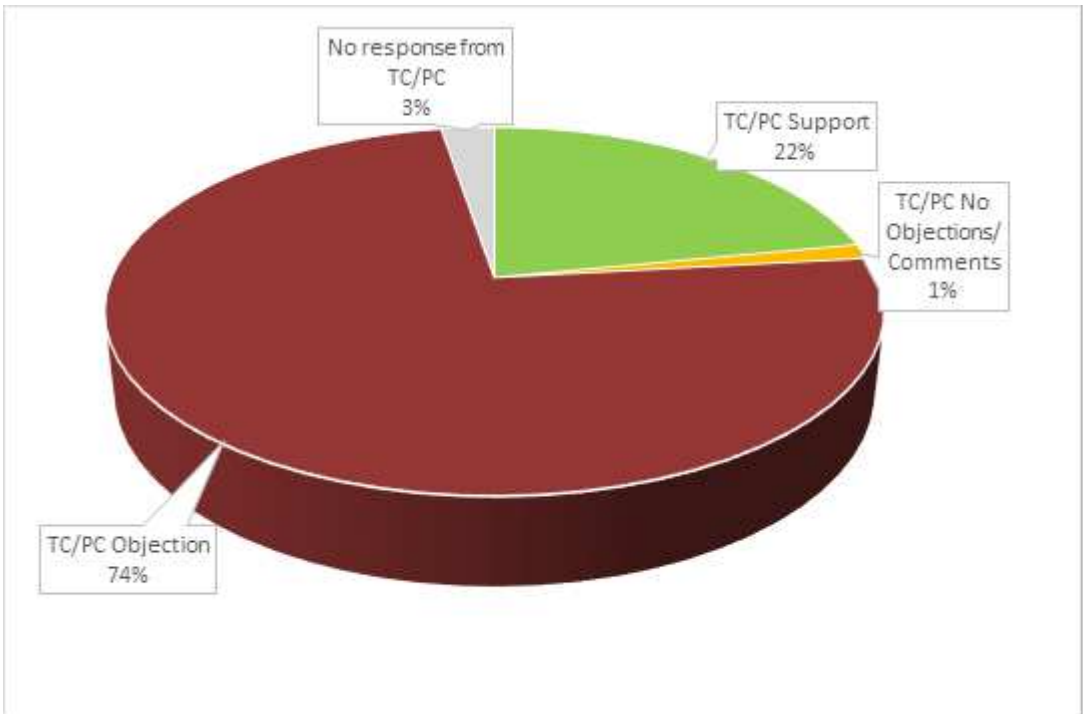
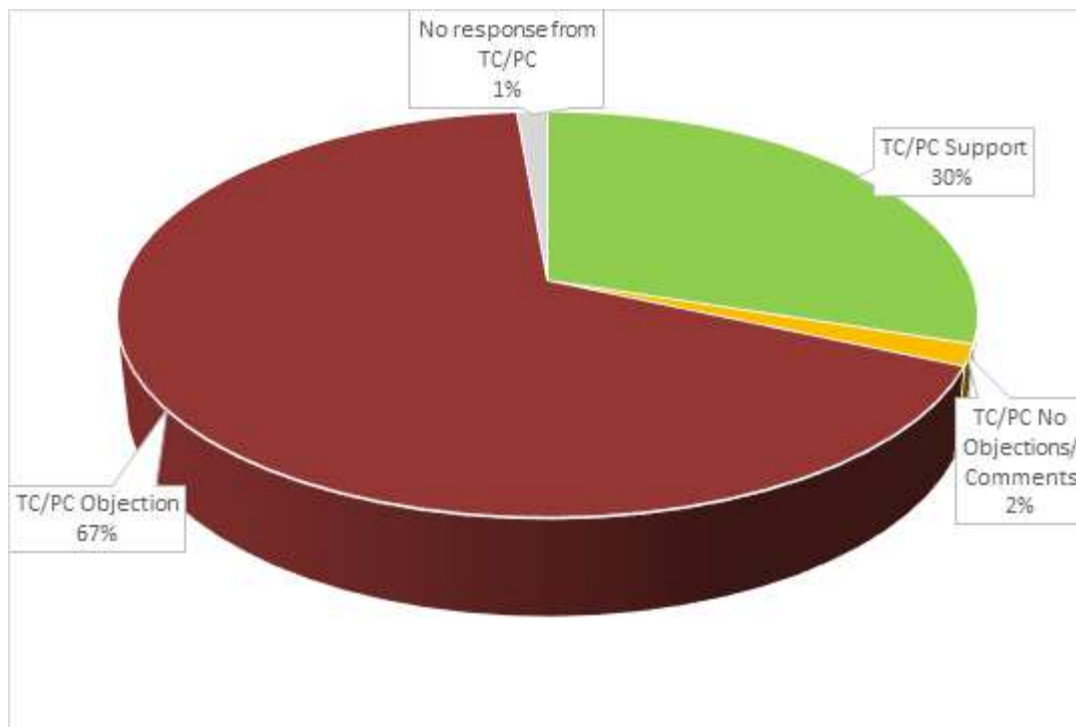
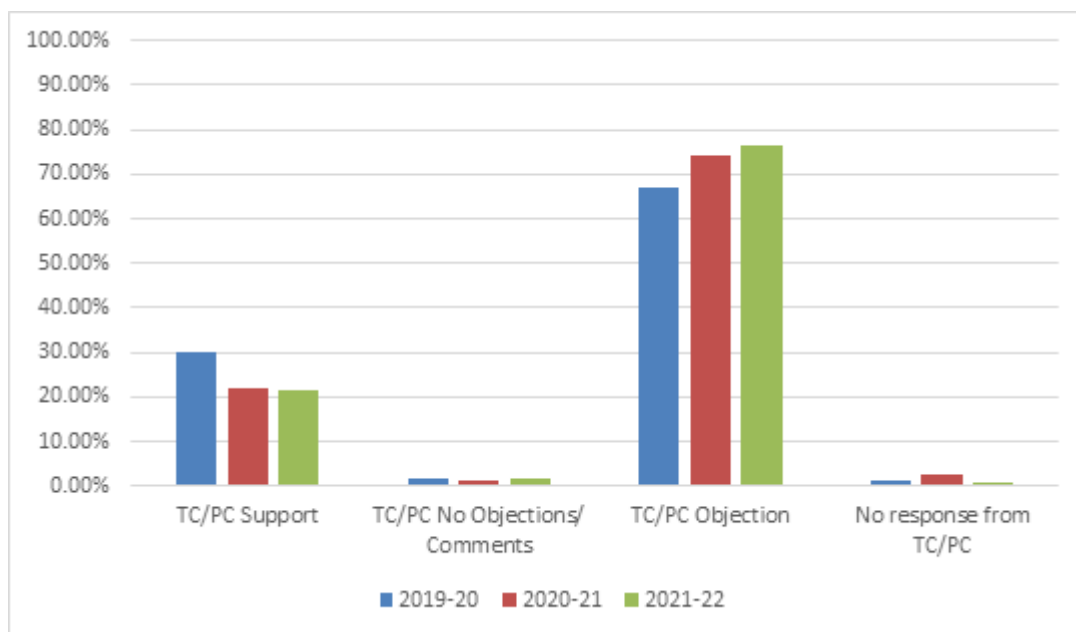


Figure 3: Percentage of responses from Town/Parish Councils on Referral Panel items 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020





**Figure X: Percentage of responses from Town/Parish Councils on Referral Panel items 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020, 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021, and 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.**



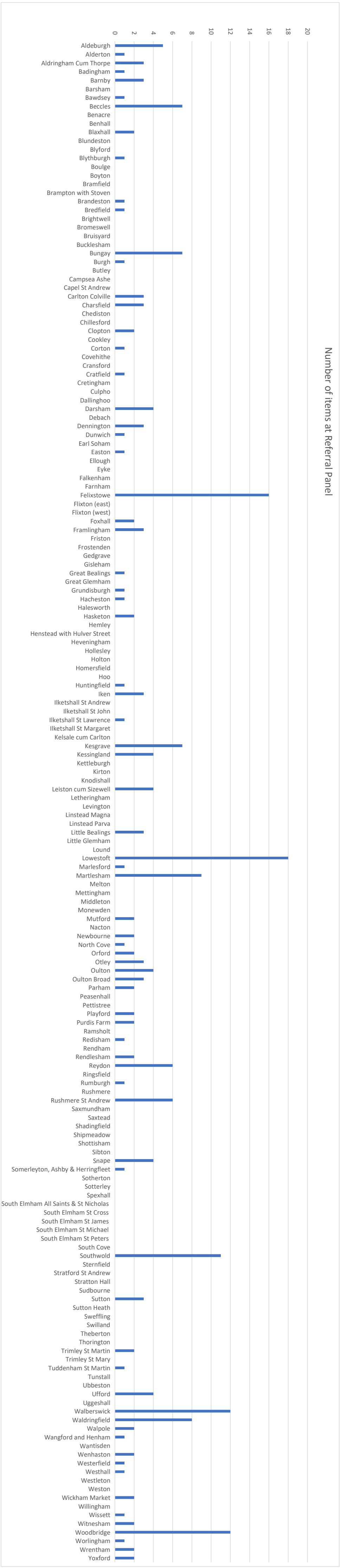
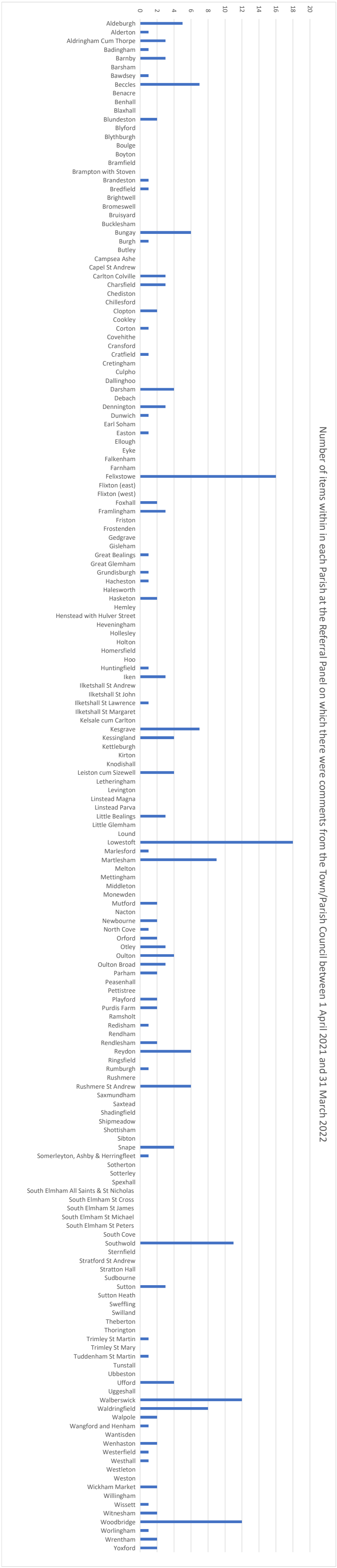
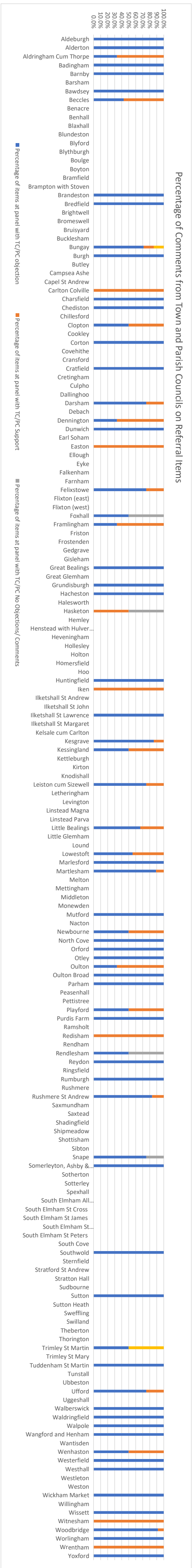


Figure 1: The total number of items at the Referral Panel shown by Parish between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022



**Figure 2:** The total number of items at the Planning Referral Panel by Parish, on which comments were received from the Town/Parish Council between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

Figure 3: The proportions of Support, Objections or No Objections/Comments from Town/Parish Councils on items at the Planning Referral Panel by Parish, between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022



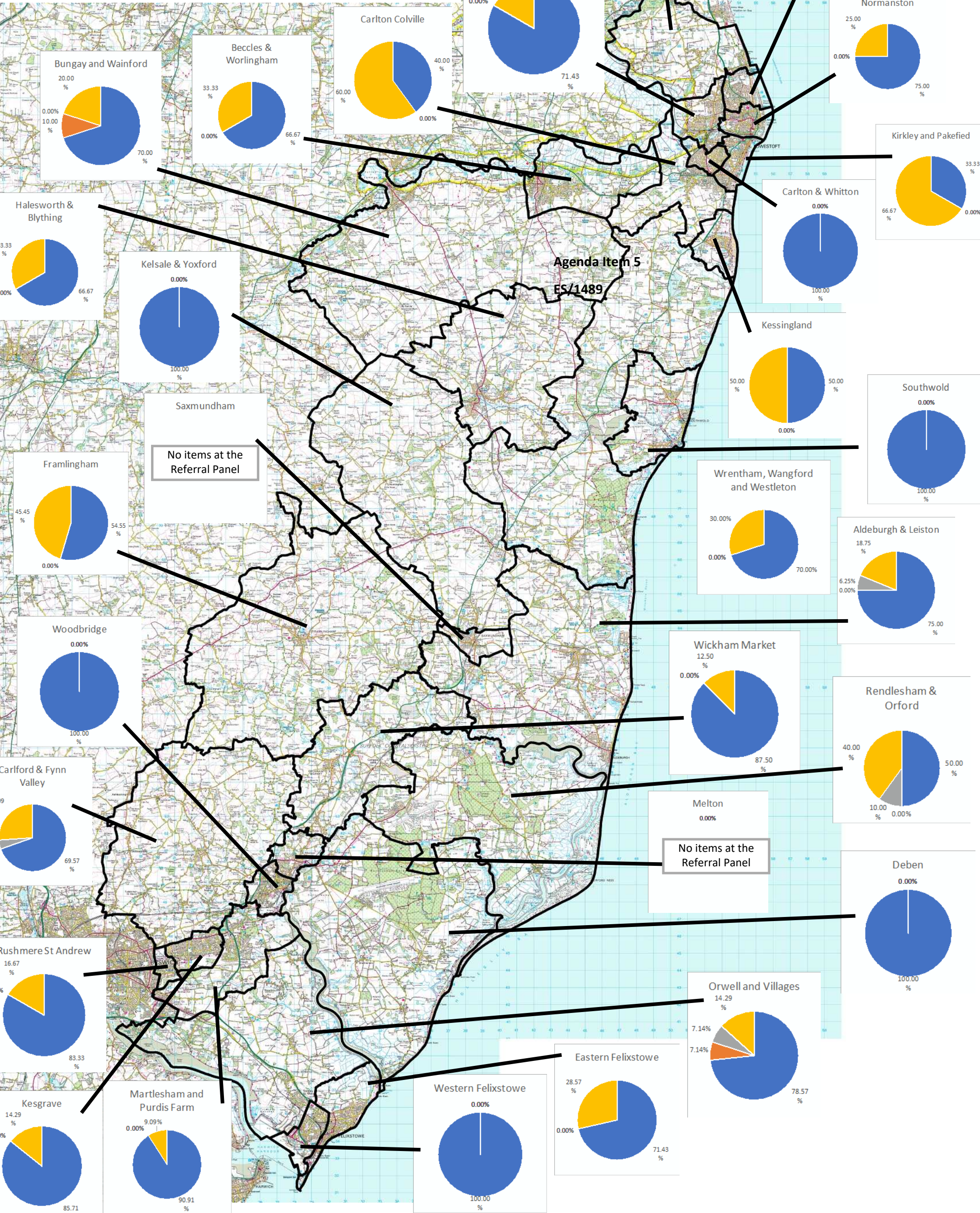


East Suffolk Council

Crown Copyright, East Suffolk Council  
Licence No LA 100019684 (2021)

Appendix P: Referral Panel items with comments from Town/ Parish Councils between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 shown by ward on a map of the district

- Percentage of items on which the Town/Parish Council Objected
- Percentage of items on which the Town / Parish Council did not submit any comments
- Percentage of items on which the Town / Parish Council made comments / no objections
- Percentage of items on which the Town/ Parish Council supported





**Appendix Q:** Proportion of comments on items at the Referral Panel between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

Figure 1: Proportion of items at the Referral Panel with or without comments from the Town or Parish Council between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

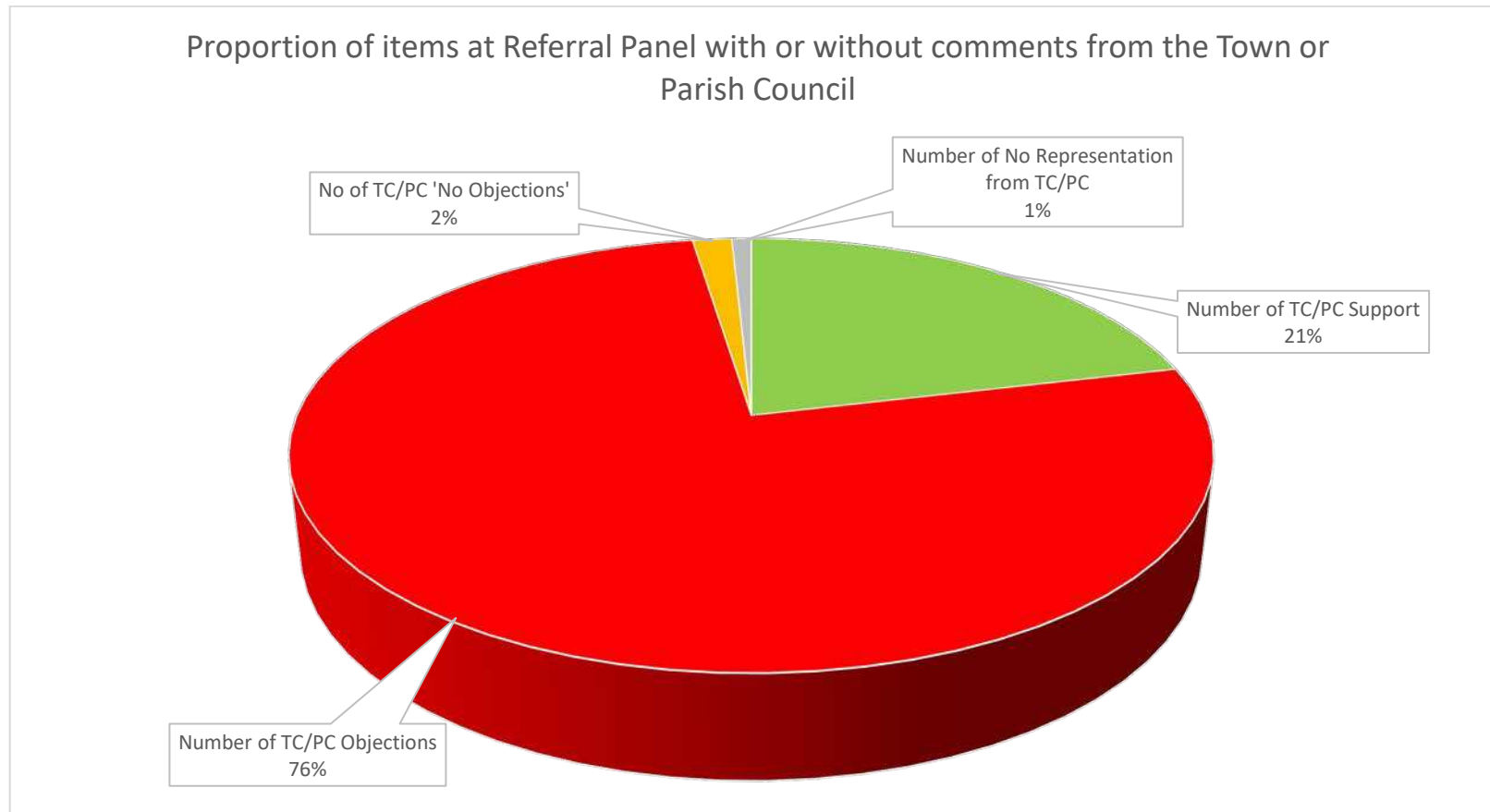


Figure 2: Proportion of items at the Referral Panel with or without written comments from Ward Member between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022

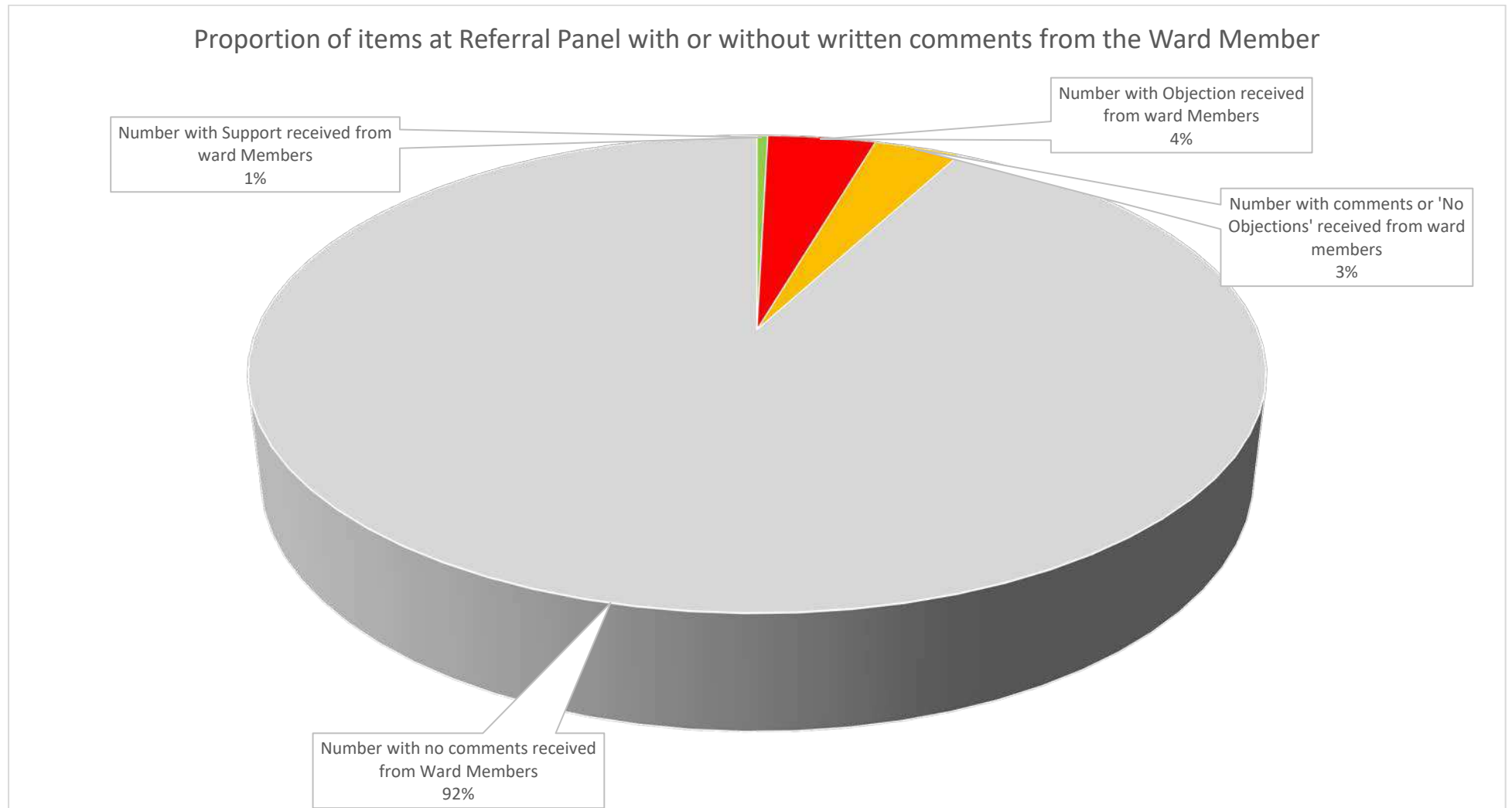


Figure 1: The proportions of items referred to Planning Committee, Delegated back to officers, withdrawn or deferred between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

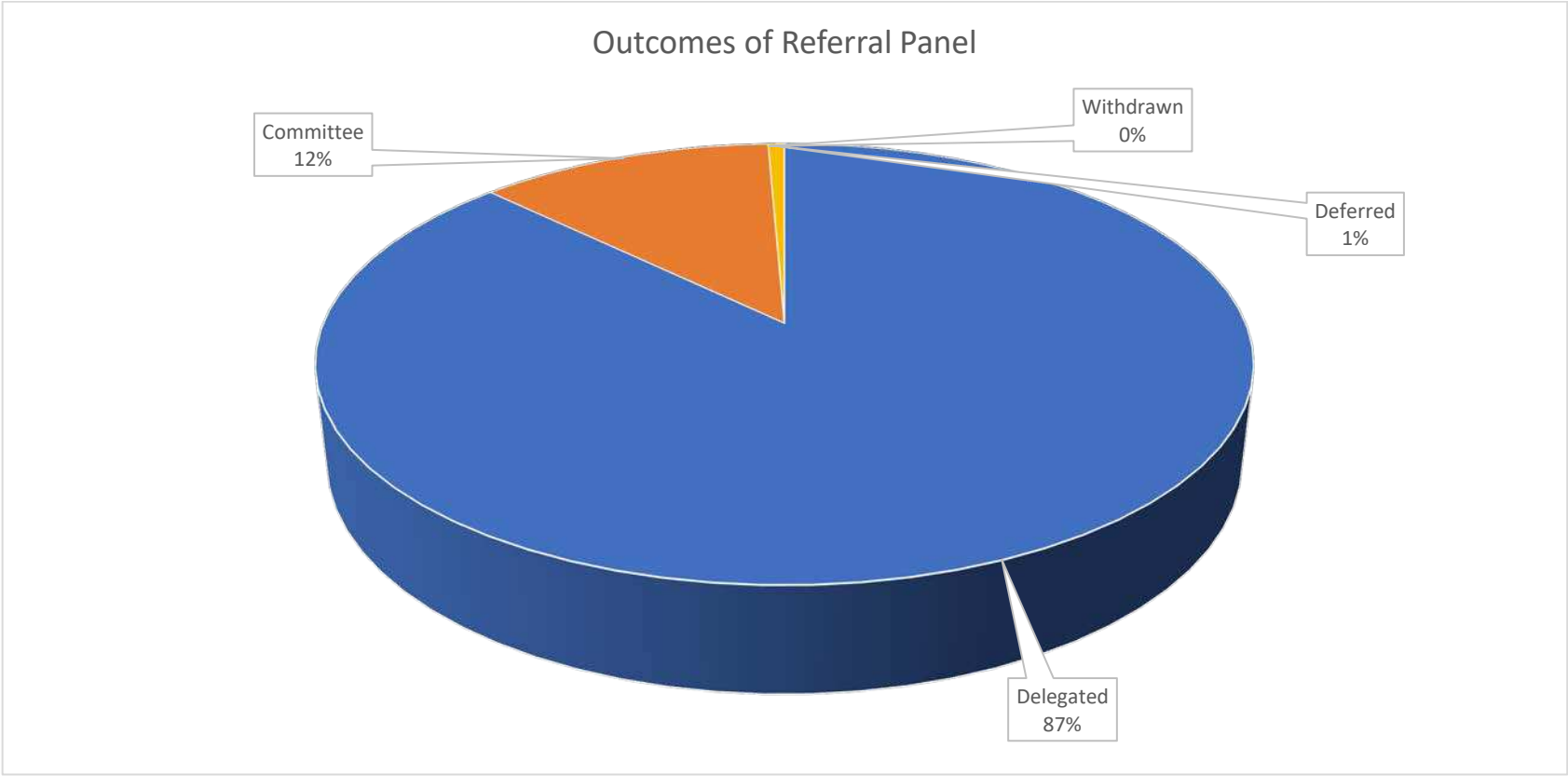




Figure 2: The proportions of items referred to Planning Committee, Delegated back to officers, withdrawn or deferred between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

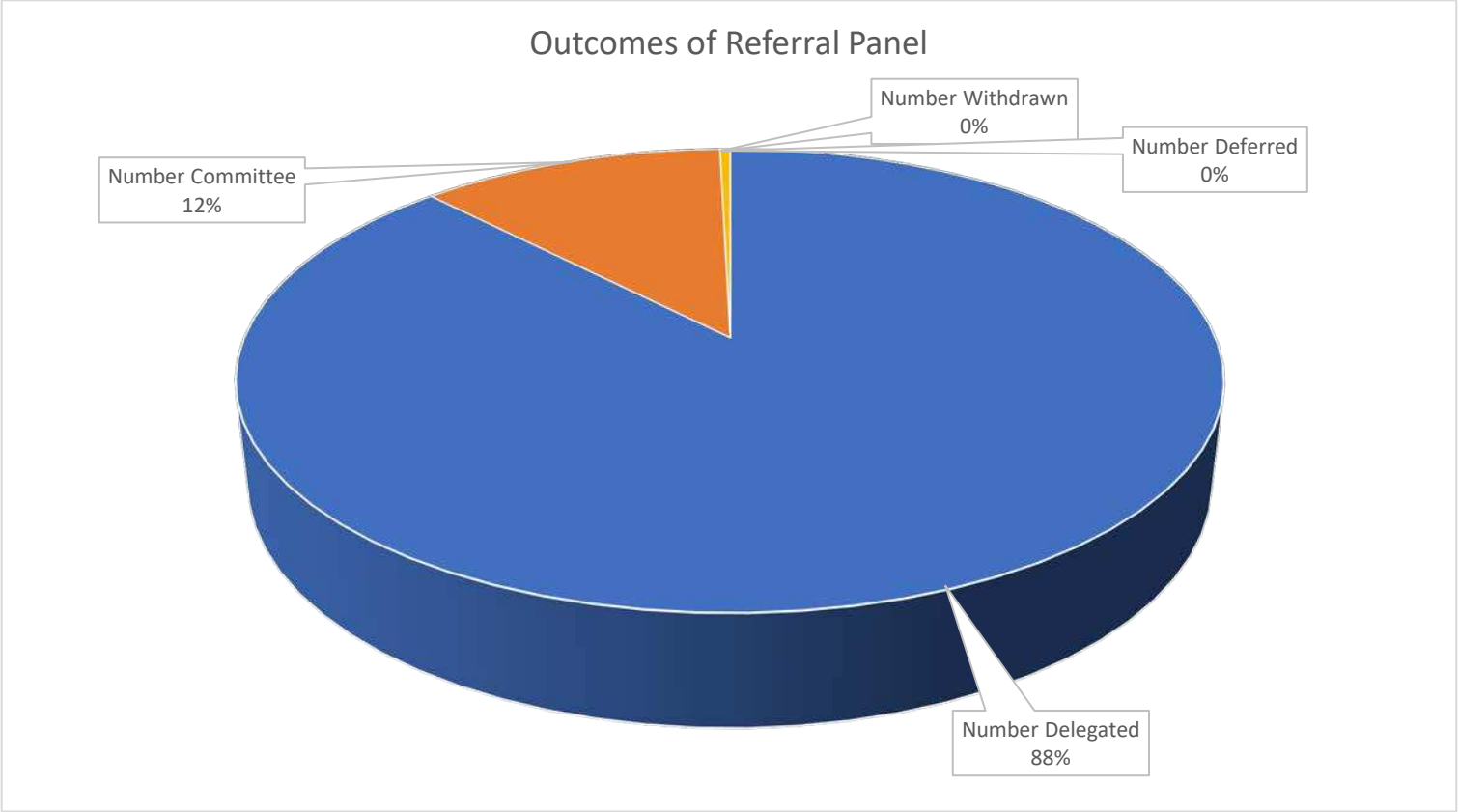
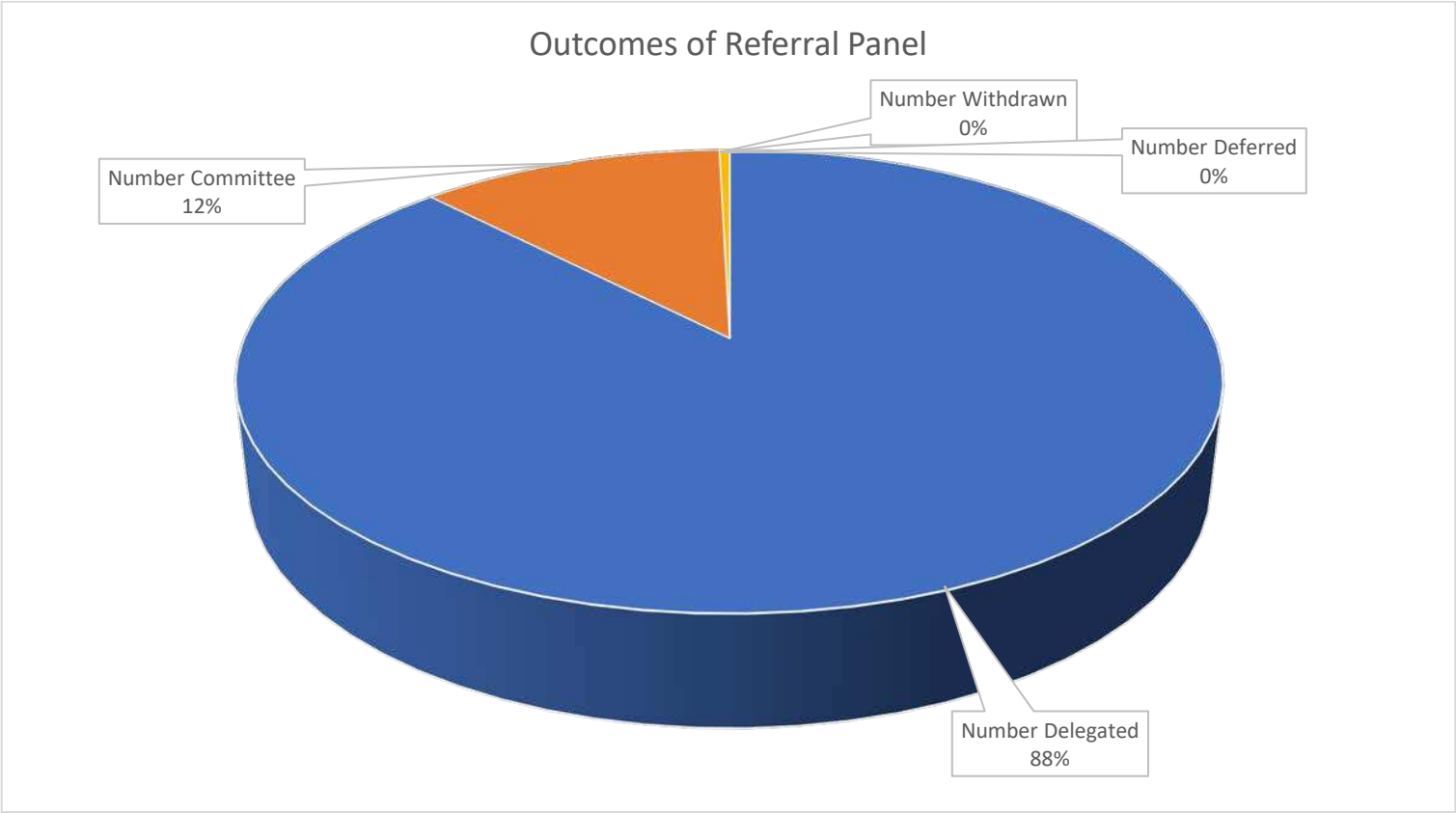


Figure 3: The proportions of items referred to Planning Committee, Delegated back to officers, withdrawn or deferred between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.



<p><b>Confirmed</b></p>
-------------------------



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held in the Conference Room, Riverside, Lowestoft, on **Monday, 06 June 2022 at 10.30am**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Debbie McCallum, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett

**Other Members present:**

Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Peter Byatt

**Officers present:**

Nicola Biddall (Rights of Way Officer), Cate Buck (Senior Enforcement Officer), Naomi Goold (Energy Projects Manager), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Andrea McMillan (Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services)), Philip Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management), Katherine Scott (Principal Planner), Robert Scrimgeour (Principal Design and Conservation Officer), Ben Woolnough (Planning Manager (Development Management)), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

---

**1 Election of a Chairman**

The Clerk sought nominations for the election of a Chairman for the 2022/23 Municipal Year. Councillor Paul Ashdown was nominated by Councillor Debbie McCallum and this nomination was seconded by Councillor David Ritchie. There being no other nominees, it was duly

**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Paul Ashdown be elected as Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

**2 Election of a Vice-Chairman**

The Chairman sought nominations for a Vice-Chairman for the 2022/23 Municipal Year. Councillor Debbie McCallum was nominated by Councillor Paul Ashdown and this nomination was seconded by Councillor Stuart Bird. There being no other nominees, it was duly

**RESOLVED**

That Councillor Debbie McCallum be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

### **3 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

*Councillor Coulam arrived at the meeting at this point (10.33am).*

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Norman Brooks, Mike Deacon and Mark Newton. Councillor Peter Byatt attended the meeting as Councillor Deacon's substitute.

*NOTE: Councillor Kay Yule submitted apologies for absence prior to the meeting, however these were not received by the Democratic Services Officer until after the conclusion of the meeting and were therefore not given to the meeting at this time.*

### **4 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **5 Minutes**

It was by a consensus

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **6 Energy Projects Update**

The Committee received a presentation on energy projects in East Suffolk from Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development.

Councillor Rivett provided an update on the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) taking place in the district, providing a detailed update on Sizewell C. Councillor Rivett noted that a decision was still forthcoming on this project and that the Secretary of State had issued post-examination information requests; a six-week delay to the issuing of a decision was announced on 12 May 2022 and a new decision date would be no later than 8 July 2022.

The Committee was advised that the Secretary of State had approved the East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two offshore wind farms, following a recommendation of approval from the Examining Authority and the planning balance detailed by the Secretary of State was outlined. Councillor Rivett announced that the decisions were now subject to Judicial Review applications which were pending.

Councillor Rivett provided an update on the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR), the British Energy Security Strategy and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Rivett.

Councillor Rivett said that the goal to treble nuclear power output by 2050 was part of the government's energy strategy and further details would be forthcoming on how this would be achieved. Councillor Rivett acknowledged that the Development Consent Order (DCO) process was a slow and thorough process and was unsure how this could be sped up whilst retaining the ability for key stakeholders to contribute to the process in a meaningful way. Councillor Rivett was of the view that energy from a variety of different sources would be needed to increase capacity and noted that he and officers would be attending a briefing on the OTNR later that week.

In response to a question on modular reactors in relation to the United Kingdom's history of producing nuclear powered submarines, Councillor Rivett advised that any new reactor design needed to be rigorously tested and could take up to 10 years to be developed.

Councillor Rivett confirmed that East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two offshore wind farms remained subject to Judicial Review and decisions on these challenge were pending. Councillor Rivett advised that the Council continued to feed into the ONTR and that he had met with ministers to speak about the need for tangibles when looking at co-ordination.

Councillor Rivett answered a question on the possibility of onshore wind farms and noted the significant site area of East Anglia One North compared to the proposed final operational site area for Sizewell C. Councillor Rivett reiterated that one source of energy was not a "silver bullet" for reaching net zero and stated that the government had not approached the Council about possible onshore wind farm sites in the district. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management added that given the constraints of the district's geography it would be difficult to develop a policy to identify possible onshore wind farm sites.

Councillor Rivett outlined how floating, tethered offshore wind turbines would work, noting that it was not always possible to replace a wind turbine on the base of a previous one.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Rivett and the officers for the presentation.

## **7 Review of the North, South and Strategic Planning Committees and the work of the Referral Panel 2021-2022**

The Committee received report **ES/1171** of Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management.

Prior to introducing the report, Councillor Ritchie updated the Committee on changes to the senior structure of the Development Management team, noting that there were now three Principal Planners in the team and that Katherine Scott was now the Principal Planner with the technical lead for the team.

Councillor Ritchie considered that the statistics set out in the report showed that the Planning Referral Panel system was effective but acknowledged it had received some criticism from Members. Councillor Ritchie noted that the system was similar to the one operated by West Suffolk Council, but the chief difference was that West Suffolk Council allowed Ward Members to speak at Referral Panel meetings.

Councillor Ritchie said that the report proposed a change to the Planning Referral Panel process to allow Ward Members to answer factual questions only. Councillor Ritchie considered it was important that this was the limit of Ward Member involvement in Planning Referral Panel meetings as the Planning Referral Panel was not determining applications but only deciding the route they take for determination, either to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management for determination under his delegated authority or to the Planning Committee North or Planning Committee South for determination by Members.

Councillor Ritchie noted the thoroughness of the report presented to the Committee and invited the Principal Planner to give a presentation to the Committee on the statistics contained therein.

The Principal Planner outlined the life cycle of a planning application and highlighted the points where the Planning Referral Panel process could be triggered, as well as the process of the Referral Panel itself.

The Committee was advised that in the 2021/22 Municipal Year a total of 244 applications had been to the Planning Referral Panel, with 122 in the north area of the district and 122 in the south area of the district. 3% of these applications were majors, 42% were minors and the remaining 55% being other applications. The Principal Planner noted that there had been an increase in both the number and the proportion of applications in the south of the district going to the Planning Referral Panel compared to the previous two Municipal Years.

The Principal Planner provided an overview of the cases received at Planning Referral Panel meetings by Ward, with a further breakdown by parish and application type. It was noted that the geographical area with the most applications in the north of the district was Lowestoft and that the geographical area with the most applications in the south of the district was Felixstowe. The Principal Planner also highlighted the figures for areas adjacent to Ipswich and for market towns in the district.

The Committee was provided with the numbers and proportions of applications within each parish and how they had triggered the referral process for the previous three municipal years.

The Principal Planner outlined the Referral Panel outcomes for the previous three municipal years and noted there had been consistency over this period in the number of applications referred to either Planning Committee North or Planning Committee South for determination.

The Principal Planner provided a breakdown on the work of the Planning Committee North and the Planning Committee South and the reasons for applications being referred to Committee and detailed the proportion of business at each committee.

The Committee was shown a breakdown of public speaking at planning committees and the Principal Planner advised that the most common speaker was the applicant or their agents. The Principal Planner also noted the proportion of major, minor and other applications sent to the planning committees.

The Principal Planner outlined the determination route and effects upon time to determine applications.

*Councillor McCallum left the meeting room at this point (11.23am).*

The Principal Planner outlined the recommendations set out in the report.

*Councillor Plummer arrived at the meeting at this point (11.24am).*

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Ritchie and the officers.

In response to questions on the changes to allow Ward Members to answer questions on factual matters, the Chairman reminded members of the Committee that they should continue make comments on applications during the consultation stage, as this would allow the Planning Referral Panel to direct questions to Ward Members when they considered a factual matter to be erroneous.

Councillor Cooper complimented the Principal Planner for the amount of work put into the report.

*Councillor McCallum returned to the meeting room at this point (11.27am).*

There being no further questions the Chairman sought a proposer and seconder for the recommendation set out in the report. On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Cooper it was by a majority vote

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the content of the report be noted.
2. That it be agreed that with effect from 1 July 2022 Ward Members are invited to the Planning Referral meetings to answer questions on factual matters and this process change be reviewed by the Committee in June 2023.

*NOTE: Councillor Plummer abstained from voting on this item as she had not been present for the presentation of the report.*

## **8 Appeals Performance Report – 14 February to 19 May 2022**

The Committee received report **ES/1172** of Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report and highlighted that of the 17 appeals determined by Planning Inspectors during the period 14 February to 19 May 2022 13

had been dismissed and four allowed, which resulted in a dismissal rate of 76.5%. Councillor Ritchie invited the Planning Manager (Development Management) to comment on the report.

The Planning Manager said there were no appeal decisions of note and recommended that members of the Committee read the appeal decision summaries at Appendix A to the report.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Ritchie and the officers.

Councillor Rivett expressed his thanks to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management and his team and was of the view that the high rate of dismissals showed that excellent advice was being provided to the Council's planning committees.

Councillor Ritchie sought an update on the backlog of appeals to be considered by the Planning Inspectorate. The Planning Manager advised that appeals were still taking some time to be determined and that although the new fast track process for public inquiries had been successful, appeals going to hearings or written representations were still taking a long time to be concluded.

In response to a question on the split decision appeal summarised in the report, the Planning Manager explained that this was an application that had been directed to the Planning Referral Panel and delegated to officers for a decision, where it was apparent that there was merit to the equestrian element of the proposals but not the residential element so a split decision was issued resulting in one part of the application being approved and the other part refused, which was then appealed by the applicant.

There being no further questions the Chairman sought a proposer and seconder for the recommendation set out in the report. On the proposition of Councillor McCallum, seconded by Councillor Rivett it was by a unanimous vote

## **RESOLVED**

That the content of the report be noted.

## **9 Enforcement Performance Report – January to March 2022**

The Committee received report **ES/1173** of Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report and noted that in the period January to March 2022 more enforcement cases had been closed than had been opened. Councillor Ritchie informed the Committee that there was the possibility to increase the capacity in the Enforcement team to further improve its performance and invited the Planning Manager (Development Management) to comment on the report.

The Planning Manager confirmed that officers were looking to improve the processes and services the Enforcement team provided and noted that a recent review of the service by the Council's Internal Audit team had assisted in highlighting where further improvements could be made. The Planning Manager advised the Committee that a



comprehensive report would be presented at its September 2022 meeting outlining how these improvements would be achieved, including enhanced enforcement update reporting to the Planning Committee North and the Planning Committee South.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Ritchie and the officers.

Councillor Blundell asked if reporting to committees could include information on cases where possible enforcement action was being investigated. The Planning Manager explained that reporting was currently only on cases where an enforcement notice had been served and that publicly reporting on potential enforcement cases did not take place. The Planning Manager advised that part of the improvements referred to would include how to process requests from Ward Members on possible enforcement issues outside of the committee process.

In response to a question on enforcement timeframes, the Planning Manager noted that no two cases were the same and that enforcement action is suspended when a planning application is made and this suspension can last until the application is heard on appeal by a Planning Inspector. The Planning Manager said that the focus needed to be on processing notifications of possible planning breaches and investigating them in a timely manner, adding that the priority was the quality of the investigation not the speed in which it was conducted. The Planning Manager acknowledged that the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020/21 had created more complaints of planning breaches for the team to action.

*Councillor Daly arrived at the meeting at this point (11.39am).*

Councillor Bird highlighted that planning enforcement was being reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 16 June 2022 and encouraged Members to visit and engage in this meeting.

In response to a further question on speeding up enforcement cases the Planning Manager reiterated the various complexities each case had and advised that future reporting would provide more detail on the status of each case. The Planning Manager noted that there were elements outside of the Council's control which delayed matters, such as court hearing dates, and said that a member of the Council's legal team would be present at the next meeting to cover this and other legal aspects of planning enforcement.

In response to a comment from Councillor Plummer, members of the Committee were advised by the Chairman to pass back enforcement issues to their town and parish councils wherever possible.

There being no further questions the Chairman sought a proposer and seconder for the recommendation set out in the report. On the proposition of Councillor Blundell, seconded by Councillor Pitchers it was by a majority vote

## **RESOLVED**

That the content of the report be noted.

*NOTE: Councillor Daly abstained from voting on this item as he had not been present for the presentation of the report.*

## **10 Planning Performance Report - April 2021 to March 2022**

The Committee received report **ES/1174** of Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report, which covered the whole of the 2021/22 Municipal Year, and focused on the figures for the fourth quarter of the year which showed that 90% of major applications had been determined in a timely fashion, ahead of both the national and the Council's own local stretched targets. Councillor Ritchie noted that in the case of minor and other applications this figure was lower, 64% for each, which was below the national and local targets.

Councillor Ritchie stated that 5,549 planning applications had been received in 2021/22 which represented an increased workload for the Council's planning service, particularly in relation to householder applications. Councillor Ritchie was confident that improved processes would be reflected in figures in the near future and invited the Principal Planner to give a presentation to the Committee.

The Principal Planner highlighted the quarterly returns summarised by Councillor Ritchie and provided a breakdown on the number of major, minor and other applications received in the last three municipal years; the Principal Planner noted this showed a consistent increase, particularly in other applications due to the number of householder applications received.

The Committee was shown figures on the number of planning applications validated in the previous three municipal years, the quarterly returns for the previous three years (since the formation of East Suffolk Council), the total number of applications received each municipal year, including the proportion of application types and the proportion approved and refused.

The Committee received statistics on the routes of applications to appeal, noting that 94% of applications appealed had been refused by officers under delegated authority, and the outcome of appeals in 2021/22.

The Principal Planner noted that in each of the last three municipal years the number of enforcement cases closed exceeded the number opened and there was a trend that showed the fewer received, the more closed. The Planning Manager (Development Management) added that the statistics showed that complaints peaked during the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020/21.

The Principal Planner outlined the recommendation set out in the report.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Ritchie and the officers.

The Committee was advised that statistics on retrospective applications were not kept as they were not considered differently to other applications received. Councillor Ritchie advised that it was not illegal to build without planning permission and that to

do so was accepting the risk that planning permission may later be refused and development taken down.

*At this point in the meeting Councillor Stuart Bird declared a Local Non-Pecuniary Interest in the item as a member of Felixstowe Town Council and Chairman of that authority's Planning and Environment Committee.*

Councillor Bird sought clarity on how applications in conservation areas could be validated without this being acknowledged in the design and access statement, noting that since January 2021 Felixstowe Town Council had considered 78 such applications with 14 making no mention of the conservation area.

The Planning Manager advised that there was a more strenuous process for some applications in conservation areas, but this was not universal to every application in a conservation area, citing the example of a one-storey extension application not requiring anything additional to an application outside of a conservation area. The Planning Manager said that any discrepancies were picked up at the application stage and that officers were rigorous in ensuring applications were not validated incorrectly, advising that a piece of work was going to be undertaken to update the Council's local validation list.

In response to a question on updates on major sites, the Planning Manager noted that the statement of community involvement set out the expected engagement between a developer and the community at an earlier stage of planning but that more work was needed to encourage developers to keep the community informed when there were delays during development itself.

*Councillor McCallum left the meeting room at this point (12.07pm).*

There being no further questions the Chairman sought a proposer and seconder for the recommendation set out in the report. On the proposition of Councillor Blundell, seconded by Councillor Bird it was by a unanimous vote

## **RESOLVED**

That the content of the report be noted.

## **11 Planning Policy and Delivery Update**

The Committee received report **ES/1175** of Councillor David Ritchie, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report and welcomed Andrea McMillan as the Council's new Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services), having taken over from Desi Reed who had retired after 32 years of service with East Suffolk Council and its predecessor authorities. Councillor Ritchie took the opportunity to wish Ms Reed well for her retirement.

*Councillor McCallum returned to the meeting room and Councillor Rivett left the meeting room at this point (12.10pm).*

Councillor Ritchie noted the ongoing work of the Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services team and highlighted the recent expansion of the service. Councillor Ritchie said it was important that this service had been strengthened ahead of proposed changes to the planning system by the government and this would also reduce the Council's reliance on consultants for specialist pieces of work. Councillor Ritchie invite the Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services) to comment on the report.

The Planning Manager noted that the Council's new Design Champion and Specialist Services Manager would begin employment the following week and this would bring the Specialist Services team to full complement.

*Councillor Rivett returned to the meeting room at this point (12.13pm).*

The Committee was advised that both the Sustainable Construction and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) had recently been adopted by the Cabinet and that an initial consultation on a Healthy Environments SPD would be undertaken shortly to inform the scope of the document. Consultation was also planned for the Draft Housing in Clusters and Small Scale Residential Development in the Countryside SPD.

The Planning Manager noted that approximately seven to eight of the Neighbourhood Plans in development in the district were reaching the latter stages of the process, as set out in the report.

The Committee was reminded that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was due to receive its second reading later in the week and several changes to the planning system were anticipated based on the information in the Planning White Paper published in 202 and the more recent Levelling Up White Paper, to make the planning system more genuinely plan-led. The Planning Manager expected that secondary legislation and changes to national policy documents would be forthcoming.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Ritchie and the officers.

The Planning Manager explained that the changes to the planning system would require any material planning considerations to 'strongly indicate otherwise' if a decision was to be taken contrary to local and national planning policies. Councillor Daly, who had posed the questions, suggested that more training on this issue would be useful when the changes came into effect.

In response to a question on street votes, The Planning Manager (Development Management) highlighted that there had been some miscommunication on this proposed change and that they would be used for streets coming together for the gentle intensification of an area.

There being no further questions the Chairman sought a proposer and seconder for the recommendation set out in the report. On the proposition of Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Bird it was by a majority vote

**RESOLVED**

That the content of the report be noted.

*NOTE: Councillor Rivett abstained from voting on this item as he had not been present for the entire duration of the presentation of the report.*

## **12 Strategic Planning Committee's Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme.

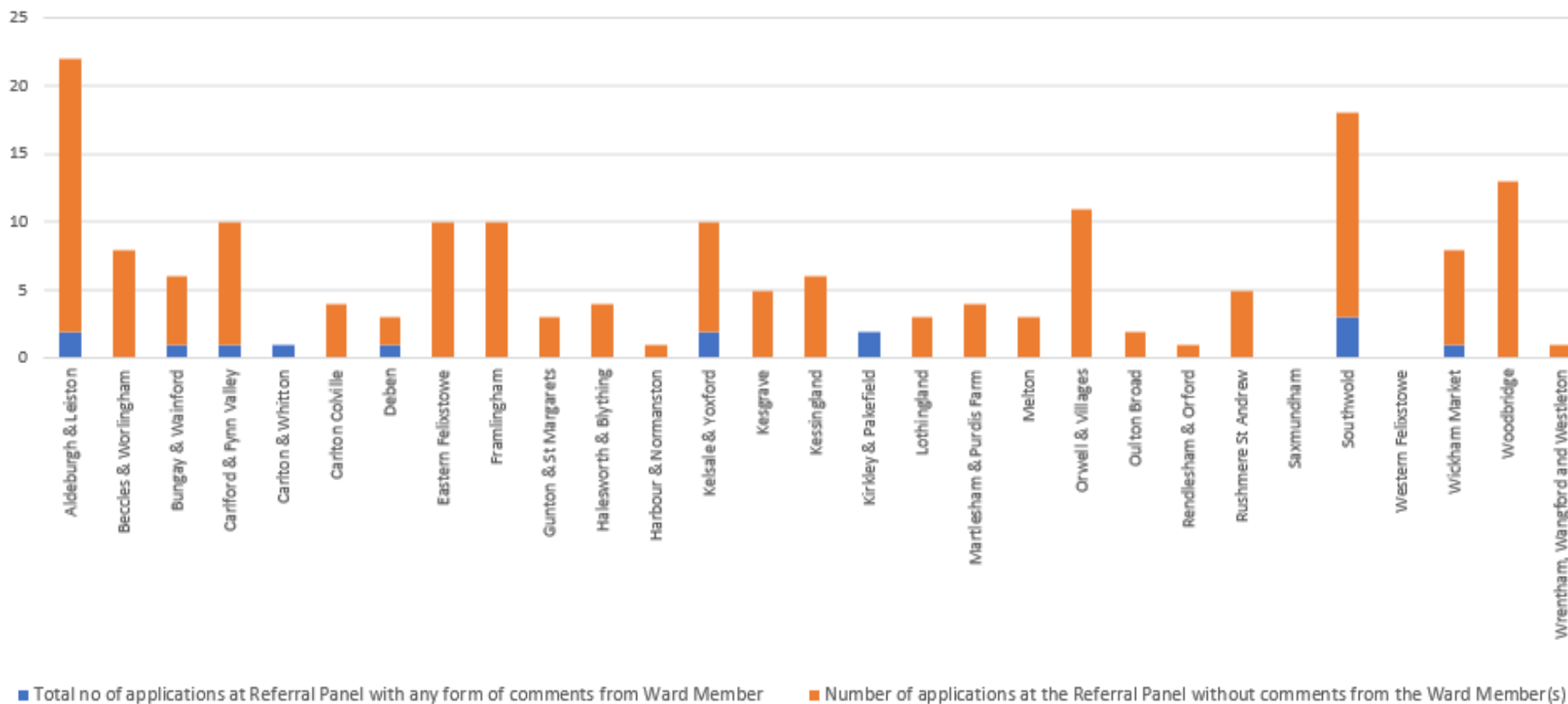
It was agreed that officers would produce a major application update on Brightwell Lakes to be presented to the Committee at its meeting being held on 5 September 2022.

The meeting concluded at 12.26pm

.....  
Chairman

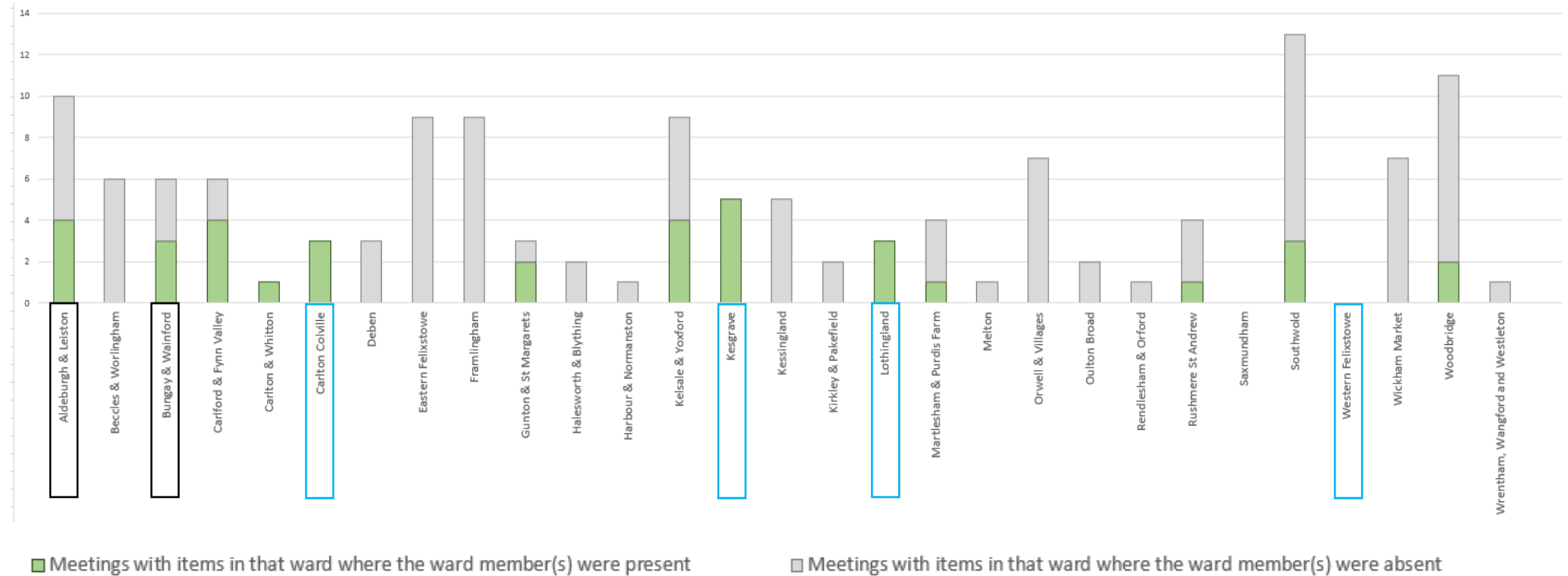
## Appendix I: Ward Member engagement with planning applications at the Planning Referral Panel 1 April 2022 – 7 February 2023

**Figure 1** - The number of applications at Planning Referral Panel with/without written comments from the relevant Ward Member(s) 1 April 2022 – 7 February 2023



## Appendix I: Ward Member engagement with planning applications at the Planning Referral Panel 1 April 2022 – 7 February 2023

**Figure 2** - The number of Referral Panel meetings with an application for each ward, where at least one of the relevant Ward Member(s) were present 1 April 2022 – 7 February 2023 (a relevant ward member is one who represents the ward in which there was an application).





**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, 02 March 2023**

<b>Subject</b>	Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Stuart Bird, Chairman
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Sarah Davis Democratic Services Officer <a href="mailto:Sarah.davis@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">Sarah.davis@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> 01502 523521

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
-------------------------------	------

Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is <b>NOT</b> in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards



## Purpose and high-level overview

**Purpose of Report:**

This report provides a formal summary on the activities and achievements of the Scrutiny Committee during the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

**Options:**

No other options were considered.

**Recommendation/s:**

That the Scrutiny Committee receives and comments on the Annual Report by the Chairman of the Committee prior to it being taken to Full Council.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

**Governance:**

The Committee is required to produce an Annual Report which is considered by Full Council.

**ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

The policies and strategies that directly apply to this proposal depends on the contents of the Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.

**Environmental:**

Not applicable

**Equalities and Diversity:**

Not applicable

**Financial:**

Not applicable

**Human Resources:**

Not applicable

**ICT:**

Not applicable

**Legal:**

Not applicable

**Risk:**

Not applicable

<b>External Consultees:</b>	Not Applicable
-----------------------------	----------------

## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</b> The Scrutiny Committee Annual Report is part of the Council's good governance arrangements.			

## Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The Scrutiny Committee is required to create an annual report of its activities and achievements which is considered by Full Council.
2 Current position	
2.1	Not applicable
3 How to address current situation	
3.1	Not applicable
4 Reason/s for recommendation	
4.1	To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee has an opportunity to comment and amend the Annual Report as necessary before it is considered by Full Council.

## Appendices

Appendices:	
Appendix A	Annual Report 2022/23
Background reference papers:	
None	



# SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



March 2023

## **Our Vision for Scrutiny Activity**

Scrutiny at East Suffolk Council aims to enhance the quality of life for all who live and work in the District by ensuring the provision of a safe, clean, attractive and prosperous environment for our communities.

Scrutiny aims to be objective, evidence-based, transparent and constructive and to reflect the interests and concerns of local communities.

## **CONTENTS**

<b>Foreword by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
---	---------------

<b>The role of Scrutiny</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
-----------------------------	---------------

- What we do
- The principles of good public scrutiny
- What we do not do

<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
---------------------------	---------------

- Membership (2022/23 Municipal Year)
- Roles and responsibilities
- The Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2022/23
- Member Working Groups/Task and Finish Groups
- Membership of Outside Bodies
- Call-ins and Councillors' Calls for Action
- Training and Development
- Budget

<b>Looking ahead</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
----------------------	----------------



## **Foreword by the Chairman**

**Councillor Stuart Bird,  
Scrutiny Committee Chairman 2022/23**

As Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, I am delighted, once again, to be able to present the Annual Report of East Suffolk Council's Scrutiny Committee, the last for this term of office. This Report provides a retrospective record of the work undertaken by the Committee, its activities, and achievements in the 2022/23 Municipal Year as well as details of how the Committee will reflect on activities over the whole term with a view to suggesting possible improvements for the new Scrutiny Committee in the next term of office 2023-2027.

I continue to be supported by Councillor Mike Deacon, a very experienced and enthusiastic Vice-Chairman, as well as the other 11 dedicated Members of the Committee. We all work together, cross-party, to support and facilitate this extremely important statutory function.

The Committee's main priorities each year are as follows:

1. To act as a counterbalance that complements the decision-making powers of Cabinet in terms of the strategic direction of the Council.
2. To examine various areas of the Council's work and, in some cases, the work of partner organisations that have significance for our local communities and residents.
3. To scrutinise as a "critical friend" individual Cabinet Members on their key deliverables for the year, thereby enabling the Committee to identify if they can add any value to the pre-decision stages and the ultimate outcomes for the Council.

The Committee scrutinised all the Cabinet Members on their portfolios as well as reviewing specific topics, both those matters that affected internal Council services and also those it felt were particularly important to communities and residents such as:

- The Planning Enforcement Process
- The Council's Progress Following the Declaration of a Climate Emergency
- How the Council Engages with Housing Tenants
- Democratic Accountability within the Planning Process

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank everyone who has participated in this year's Scrutiny process.

Lastly, I hope this Report reflects what I feel has been a very productive year in Scrutiny and that you find it informative and interesting.

**Stuart Bird**

# THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY

## What we do

The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a new set of “political management arrangements” for the running of Councils, including the formalising of executive arrangements for local government to be balanced by a strong scrutiny function to ensure decision-makers were held to account.

**To carry out this scrutiny function, the arrangements included the power to do *anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social, or environmental well-being of the area.***

The role and purpose of scrutiny is to add value to the delivery of public services through providing strong but measured challenge both to the Cabinet and to external organisations where there are issues of public concern. It acts as a 'critical friend' to decision makers by beneficially examining the Council's policies, key decisions, and service provision to ensure they are appropriate, efficient, transparent, accountable and in the best interests of the District's residents. Since 2010, several pieces of legislation have further emphasised the value of scrutiny within modern and effective government, including reviewing issues which lie outside the Council's responsibilities. This is achieved by having co-operative relationships between scrutinised bodies and the Committee.

Scrutiny is led by local, elected Councillors working with other local bodies and local communities to help the constructive improvement of services. Scrutiny uses open and transparent processes and is an influencing, rather than a decision-making, body. It provides co-ordinated reviews of policy and service performance in line with strategic objectives and corporate priorities. Its challenges are constructive and purposeful. It is objective, focused, and realistic in its reviews. These are evidence-based so demonstrating that scrutiny is credible and useful at adding value.

***Scrutiny is a catalyst for positive change, promotes and acknowledges good practice and challenges under-performance.***

Meetings of the Committee are open to the public and mostly held in the evenings. The Committee has endeavoured to engage with the wider community and to involve stakeholders at its meetings, as appropriate.

The Scrutiny Committee is also the Council's designated **Crime and Disorder Committee** for the purposes of the Police and Social Justice Act 2006 (s19-22) and this requires the Committee to review community safety issues annually.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 (s190) gave Councils powers to scrutinise local NHS trusts, including Primary Care Trusts. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 gave more powers to local government to scrutinise other public organisations, including bodies such as, for example, the Environment Agency. In 2022/23, the Committee did not specifically review any aspects of health provision other than the impact the new Integrated Care System will have on our own Council Services, but the power remains available to do so as considered necessary.

The Scrutiny Committee conducts its proceedings in accordance with its Terms of Reference (as set out in Part 2, Section C, Functions and Responsibilities of the Constitution) and the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (as set out in Part 3, Procedure Rules, of the [Constitution](#)).

## The Principles of Good Public Scrutiny

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny promotes the value of scrutiny in modern and effective government and has identified the following four principles of good public scrutiny:

- ***To provide a critical friend “challenge” to executive policymakers and decision-makers***
  - ***To enable the voice and concerns of the public***
- ***To be carried out by “independent minded governors” who lead and own the scrutiny role; and***
  - ***To drive improvement in public services***

## What we do not do

The Scrutiny Committee does not deal with quasi-judicial matters such as Planning or Licensing, except if there were to be a significant system issue. It does not deal with issues that are, or should be, resolved by the separate corporate complaints procedure or through internal systems within Service Teams. The Committee does not deal with vexatious or discriminatory issues or matters that are not of wider community significance, the latter being more appropriately pursued through the relevant Service Team, Ward Councillor or Cabinet Member with responsibility for the area in question.

Scrutiny does not become involved where there would be duplication of existing work, or if its review would be untimely or would not lead to effective outcomes.



# SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## Membership 2022/23

The Committee comprises 13 Members and is politically balanced with 9 Conservatives, 2 Labour and 2 GLI Members. The Membership has slightly changed over the past year and I would like to thank Councillors Gandy and Gee for their valued contribution to the Committee. The current membership is as follows:



Stuart Bird (Chairman) (CON)  
Chairman since May 2019



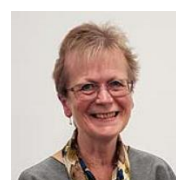
Mike Deacon (Vice-Chairman) (LAB)  
Vice-Chairman since May 2019



Edward Back (CON)  
Member since May 2019



David Beavan (GLI)  
Member since May 201



Judy Cloke (CON)  
Member since May 2019



Linda Coulam (CON)  
Member since May 2019



Tony Goldson (CON)  
Member since May 2022



Louise Gooch (LAB)  
Member from May 2019 to  
May 2022 & from  
December 2022



Tracey Green (CON)  
Member since May 2019



Colin Hedgley (CON)  
Member since May 2021



Geoff Lynch (CON)  
Member since May 2019



Keith Robinson (CON)  
Member since May 2019



Caroline Topping (GLI)  
Member since May 2019

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Council's Constitution contains detailed role descriptions outlining the purpose, duties, and responsibilities of the various members of the Committee, as well as the qualities and skills required. They are designed to be used as a guide and a working document but are not intended to be prescriptive or exclusive. These can be found within [Part 2, Functions and Responsibilities](#), of the Constitution on our website, but a brief summary is also provided below.

### Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee

At East Suffolk, the Chairman is a member of the Administration Group of the Council; the Vice-Chairman is a member of an Opposition Group.

The Chairman provides leadership and ensures the Committee is Member-led and has ownership of its work programme. S/he aims to develop positive relationships and encourages contributions from Members. The Chairman also ensures the Committee works inclusively and that the role of scrutiny is conducted in an enabling environment.

### Committee Members

Members of the Committee contribute actively at the meetings with fairness and impartiality. They will participate, as appropriate, in the collection and assessment of evidence to produce effective recommendations and follow up on any recommendations made. Committee members take an overview of all the activities the Council is involved in and can decide to scrutinise issues.

### Partner and public involvement

The views of local people are of importance to the primary aim of scrutiny – *improving the quality of life for the local community*. Partners and the public can contribute specific expertise to topics being examined from the perspective of either a service provider or a service user. Their involvement adds value and strengthens the links with stakeholders.

The work of the Scrutiny Committee also provides Members with additional opportunities to engage with groups within the community who may not readily get involved directly in the work of the Council. Therefore, it remains important for the Scrutiny Committee to be outward-looking and to consider how partners and the public might be involved in its work.

Such involvement may be through formal 'co-option' or invitations to representatives of groups to contribute expert knowledge or evidence, or to members of the public to contribute their views.

**Scrutiny welcomes and encourages our Partners as well as members of the public who live or work in the District to get involved and suggestions for the work of our Committee will be considered for their suitability. Please email our Scrutiny Support Officer [Sarah.Davis@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Davis@eastsoffolk.gov.uk) in the first instance.**

## **The Committee's Work Programme 2022/23**

The Committee decided to continue scheduling 11 meetings per year in its Work Programme as it enabled Members to focus on one topic per meeting and avoided the need to arrange ad-hoc meetings. Meetings were held on the following dates:

19 May 2022  
16 June 2022  
14 July 2022  
29 September 2022  
27 October 2022  
17 November 2022  
15 December 2022  
19 January 2023  
26 January 2023  
16 February 2023  
2 March 2023

Each year, the Committee has a number of reviews it must carry out such as the Budget (19 January 2023) as well as a requirement to sit at least once a year in its statutory role as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee (15 December 2022).

For the remainder of its meetings in 2022/23, Members decided to focus primarily on reviewing matters that affected Council Services and those issues that were deemed to be of particular importance to the District's communities and residents. Below is a brief summary of the key highlights of the Committee's discussions - the related full formal Committee reports and resulting minutes may also be viewed on the Council's [website](#):

### **19 May 2022 – The impact of flexible working on the workforce, Council resources and productivity**

#### **Key points discussed:**

- Whether the Council was meeting its statutory obligations
- The Agile Working Guide produced
- Savings brought about by flexible working in time and cost
- The ability to relocate staff to East Suffolk House and Riverside from other sites no longer fit for purpose, instead of considering new office space
- The initial adaption to working from home as a result of national lockdowns and the Council maintaining services following this change
- Support put in place by the IT department to successfully enable home working on a larger scale
- DSE self-assessment for officers working from home
- The role of managers in ensuring correct DSE practices when working from home
- Staff survey completed on flexible working arrangements and its results
- The long-term effects of working from home during national lockdowns on working practices and employee expectations
- The impact of working from home on absence rates
- The additional costs placed on employees when working from home
- The impact of flexible working on new starters and apprentices

- Line management of employees working from home
- The impact on employees whose roles did not allow them to work from home
- Health and safety risks working from home
- Minimising the risk of employees working excessive hours from home
- Access to health and wellbeing support
- Impact of working from home on employees with caring responsibilities
- The Council's responsibility and liability for accidents occurring when employees work from home
- Unison input and its own staff survey, with its results detailed

<b>Resolution(s)</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Council Officers ensure that staff and Members were sent regular reminders on the best practice for WFH and agile working.</li> <li>2. That a suggestion be made to the 2023 Scrutiny Committee that they might want to review the position in relation to agile working.</li> </ol>

## **16 June 2022 – Review of the Planning Enforcement process**

### **Key points discussed:**

- The current quarterly reporting to the Strategic Planning Committee
- The current monthly reporting to the Planning Committees North and South
- Internal Audit's involvement in reviewing systems and processes for Planning Enforcement
- Changes to the management structure
- The Enforcement Action Plan to be presented to Strategic Planning Committee in September 2022, in response to the recommendations of Internal Audit
- The impact of COVID-19 on the work of the team
- The role of the Planning Enforcement Policy in how complaints are investigated
- Changes introduced in recent years to speed up processes
- Whether outsourcing Planning Enforcement had been considered
- The need for a seamless Planning Authority
- Enforcement of major planning breaches
- Whether the team had the appropriate resources
- Comparisons between the Council's Planning Enforcement service and similar Council Planning departments
- The process when enforcement cases are passed to the Council's legal team
- Whether legal action could be sped up
- The performance of the Council in relation to legal action on enforcement
- The possibility of introducing a Compliance Officer
- Time limits for legal proceedings

<b>Resolution(s)</b>
That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management note that the Scrutiny Committee would support the principle of exploring opportunities for additional resource in the compliance and monitoring area to support and improve the Enforcement Service.

## **14 July 2022 – Review of the Council’s progress following the Declaration of a Climate Emergency**

### **Key points discussed:**

- Three main areas of focus – reduction of carbon footprint, communicating to the outside world, biodiversity
- Embedding the environment in the Council’s decision making
- Various guidance documents authored to support the Council’s environmental focus
- Running front-line services environmentally whilst ensuring value for money and meeting residents’ expectations
- Member/officer collaboration on environment and climate change
- The Environment as a core theme of the Council’s strategic plan
- The Environment theme delivery plan
- The Environment Task Group
- Key Performance Indicator dashboard tracking progress
- Solar panel installation on Council buildings
- Tetrapak recycling
- Rates of recycling against general waste per household
- Contamination of household recycling bins
- Campaigns on recycling
- Bin inspection process during collections, to avoid contamination
- Meeting the Council’s CO<sup>2</sup> emissions target by 2030
- The conversion of waste trucks to run on hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO) and the impact of this on the Council’s carbon footprint
- Measuring the Council’s carbon emissions
- Encouraging manufacturers to reduce packaging
- How money raised by green charges/taxes is spent
- Low carbon energy
- Environmental protection within Planning – heating systems in new builds and sustainable construction
- Retrofitting the Council’s housing stock with energy efficient heating systems
- The impact of the cost of living crisis on fuel efficiency
- Engagement with town and parish councils in relation to flytipping and littering
- Availability of electric vehicle charging points in East Suffolk
- Recycling electric vehicle batteries
- Air quality

<b>Resolution(s)</b>
<p>That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment and Officers provide the following information to the Scrutiny Committee to be reported to the next meeting on 29 September 2022:</p> <p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happened to the batteries of scrapped electric vehicles?</li> <li>• What was the latest situation in relation to the problem with contaminated Blue Bins in previously identified streets in Lowestoft?</li> </ul> <p>Information Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the practicalities and costings of providing more publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points on Council owned land?</li> <li>• What was the proposed plan for retrofitting the Council's Housing Stock including indicative timescales and costings, and would this be achieved in time to meet this Council's target to be carbon neutral by 2030?</li> </ul>

## **29 September 2022 – Review of the Sale and Disposal of Council Assets Procedure**

### **Key points discussed:**

- Process of all disposals going through Cabinet per the Constitution, with some exceptions
- The notification process to Members when assets disposed of in their Ward(s)
- Process of selling land for garden extensions
- Valuation process
- Internal and external checks
- Loss of asset value and future maintenance liability
- Mapping of assets on Uniform
- Asset transfers
- The Council's Asset Strategy and if should be reviewed
- HR resources for Asset Management
- Use of external valuers
- Surplus assets
- New properties built by the Council
- Subsidy Control
- The sale of the former Suffolk Coastal District Council Melton Hill offices
- Commercial tenants and rent arrears
- C2 category properties owned by the Council and their state of repair
- Protecting assets from negative equity
- The Right To Buy (RTB) process

<b>Resolution(s)</b>
<p>That the report be noted and the Cabinet Member and Officers be asked to report back to Members on the following queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any C2 category properties in such a poor state of repair that they need to be disposed of?</li> <li>• Would the Council lose a lot of money if the value of a Council House dropped and the tenants then put in an RTB?</li> <li>• What are the latest performance figures regarding the KPI – 5% surplus for more than 12 months?</li> <li>• What is the RTB process and how are valuations done, including how can we protect the Council and ensure any upgrade investments in individual properties were reflected in the valuation?</li> <li>• A link to the Uniform asset map and the name of team members Councillors could contact for assets within their Ward</li> </ul>

## **17 November 2022 – Review of How the Council Engages with Housing Tenants**

### **Key points discussed:**

- Methods of collecting rents from tenants, utilising modern methods
- The ongoing production of a Tenancy Engagement Strategy, including the creation of a Residents Board and a Tenant Scrutiny function consisting of tenants and residents (leaseholders)
- Annual visits for gas and electrical maintenance testing
- Engagement being targeted and prioritised according to risk
- A programme of stock condition surveys coming forward through the new Asset Management Plan
- Design of the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR), future questions and sample size
- Options for elderly tenants to downsize
- The Council's role in promoting retired living schemes and offering support for wellbeing
- The risk of digital exclusion during the STAR survey
- The commissioning of the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) report to provide a catalyst and framework for the Council to develop its Tenant Participation Strategy
- Safeguarding vulnerable tenants
- The out of hours service
- Tenant engagement
- The Annual Report to tenants
- The Officer Board, comprising officers from the Council's Communities and Housing Teams, to ensure alignment on community projects
- Resources

<b>Resolution(s)</b>
<p>That the report be noted and the Cabinet Member and Officers report back to Members on the following Matters Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can the Ward Members be briefed on the outcome of Tenant Engagement workshops that take place in their Ward?</li> <li>• What information about tenants do the Out of Hours call responders hold? Particularly with regard to vulnerable tenants.</li> <li>• The Head of Housing to consider feedback from Councillors Deacon and Green about their recent interactions with the out of hours service.</li> </ul>

## **15 December 2022 – East Suffolk Crime & Disorder Committee: Review of the East Suffolk Community Safety Partnership**

### **Key points discussed:**

- The refreshing of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Action Plan between March and November 2022
- The CSP's primary topics – Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Anti-Social Behaviour and work with partner agencies to address these issues
- Funding for the CSP
- Funding for infrastructure improvements such as lighting, fencing and CCTV
- The "Ask for Angela" activity and its effectiveness
- Domestic Abuse champions
- The number of Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors available in Suffolk
- Work to change the behaviour of men regarding VAWG
- The Crucial Crew project
- Reporting anti-social behaviour
- Co-ordination of publicity on how to report anti-social behaviour
- The new Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan, including KPIs to enable monitoring the effectiveness of interventions
- The proposed Criminal Exploitation Hub, to be located in Lowestoft
- The Criminal Exploitation (previously County Lines) priority
- The Police and Crime Commissioner providing updates by Ward as part of reporting to outside bodies

<b>Resolution(s)</b>
<p>That the Scrutiny Committee note the current position of the CSP, including the CSP Action Plan and the priority areas Violence Against Women and Girls and Anti-Social Behaviour</p>



## 19 January 2023 – The Council’s Budgets

### Capital Programme 2022-23 to 2026-27

#### Key points discussed:

- The decline in the number of public conveniences in Lowestoft Town Centre
- The value for money of the Southwold Enterprise Hub
- The number of housing completions achieved in 2022/23 and the reasons the budget for new builds had been reduced
- The Earmarked Reserves for capital projects
- The procurement of swimming pool covers to help reduce energy costs
- The variation of the Environment and Port Health expenditure line
- The expenditure to date for the refurbishment of St Peter’s Court in Lowestoft

Resolution(s)
That Cabinet be recommended that 1. The General Fund capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27 including revisions as shown in Appendix B 2. The Housing Revenue Account capital programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27 including revisions as shown in Appendix G.

### Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Report 2023/24 to 2026/27

#### Key points discussed

- The value for money of retrofitting the Council’s housing stock
- The size of the wall insulation budget
- The condition of the Council’s housing stock including works required to ensure all Council properties had at least an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C
- Council house rents including the level of rent arrears and refunds of overcharged rent

Resolution(s)
That Cabinet be recommended that 1. The draft HRA budget for 2023/24, and the indicative figures for 2024/25 to 2026/27. 2. Movements in HRA Reserves and Balances 3. Proposed rent increase of up to 6%. 1% less than the Government 7% rent Cap for 2023/24 rent setting. 4. Service charges and associated fees for 2023/24 5. Rent and Service Charges to be charged over a 50-week period unless being used for Temporary Accommodation when a 52-week period will be applied. 6. A report be made to the Environment Task Group within 12 months setting out a detailed programme to deliver HRA Housing Stock retrofitting projects.  To note the following: 1. Revised outturn position for 2022/23. 2. Changes affecting public and private sector housing and welfare to be noted. 3. Effects of the cost-of-living crisis to the HRA to be noted.

## Draft General Fund Budget and Council Tax Report 2023/24

### Key points discussed

- The Second Homes premium
- The disposal of Council assets
- The investment of land for economic development
- The achievability of the Council's ambition to be carbon neutral
- The levels of green waste and the increase in subscription charges
- The reduction in parking income
- The cost and use of agency staff at the Council

Resolution(s)
That Cabinet be recommended that 1. To approve the 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget as set out in the report and summarised in Appendix A5 and notes the budget forecast for 2024/25 and beyond; 2. To approve the reserves and balances movements as presented in Appendix A7; and 3. To approve a proposed Band D Council Tax for East Suffolk Council of £181.17 for 2023/24, an increase of £4.95 or 2.81%.

## 26 January 2023 – The Review of Governance Arrangements for the Council's Local Authority Trading Company (LATCO) Group Structure

### Key points discussed

- The overall Group structure
- The definition of a "Teckal" company and how activities would be monitored to ensure our companies met the criteria to be a Teckal company
- The nature of the Council's shareholding and opportunities to expand in the future
- Accountability and review mechanisms, including by the Scrutiny Committee
- Contract management including key performance indicators
- The access rights of Councillors to information about a LATCO and attendance at meetings
- How the change will affect existing Norse staff, including TUPE and pay negotiations, and staff training to ensure good customer service was provided

Resolution(s)
That the report and responses to the questions raised by Members, be noted.

## 16 February 2023 – The impact of the new Integrated Care Systems (ICS) on Council Services

### Key points discussed:

- The ICS structures varied between the north and the south of the district and the Suffolk and North East Essex System had been established earlier than the Norfolk and Waveney System
- Opportunities for ESC Officers to engage with and influence matters that related to ESC priorities

- Past imbalances in how Members had engaged in strategic health matters between the north and south of the district
- Alignment with Strategic Plan priorities and the priorities of the eight Community Partnerships, such as mental health support for young people
- The role of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the allocation of funding
- Having a 'seat at the table' enabled the Council to influence health matters strategically
- There were review and accountability mechanisms built-in to the governance arrangements of the ICSs through progress monitoring against their 5-year plans and through Board oversight
- Two new staff had been recruited to increase preventative health capacity using funding in part from the NW ICS
- The role of Financial Inclusion Officers in promoting exemptions and pre-payment certificates to those that needed support
- Social prescribing was delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector

<b>Resolution(s)</b>
That a table setting out the prevalence of smoking in each of the East Suffolk ICS areas alongside the preventative reduction target for that cohort, be reported as a Matter Arising to the next suitable meeting of the Committee
That the report and the responses to the questions raised by Members, be noted.

## **2 March 2023 – Review of Democratic Accountability within the Planning Process**

**To be completed after publication of this draft report.**

In addition to the above reviews, the Committee held scrutiny sessions of the Cabinet Members regarding elements of their portfolios as follows:

- 16 June 2022 – Cllr David Ritchie – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management – Development Management and Local Plan
- 14 July 2022 – Cllr James Mallinder – Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment – Waste Management and Environmental Protection
- 29 September 2022 – Cllr Craig Rivett – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development – Energy/Renewables and Economic Development
- 27 October 2022 – Cllr Norman Brooks – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport – Civil Parking Enforcement and Transport & Infrastructure
- 27 October 2022 – Cllr Letitia Smith – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism – Tourism/Grants
- 15 December 2022 – Cllr Stephen Burroughes – Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Experience, ICT and Commercial Partnerships – Leisure Commercial Partnership and Customer Services

## **Member Working Groups/Task and Finish Groups**

There were no Task and Finish Groups held during the period of this report.

## Membership of Outside Bodies

The Leader of the Council has requested that the Scrutiny Committee decide on the appointment of representatives to external forums with a scrutiny function. In July 2022, the Committee considered and appointed the following for the 2022/23 Municipal Year:

- **Suffolk County Council Joint Health Scrutiny Committee** – Cllr Ed Back as the named representative with Councillor Colin Hedgley as the nominated Substitute.
- **Suffolk County Council Joint Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Committee** – Cllr Judy Cloke as the named representative with Councillor Keith Robinson as the nominated Substitute.

## Call-ins and Councillors' Calls for Action

There have been no Call-ins or Calls for Action in the period of this report.

## Training and Development

Whilst Scrutiny Committee Members feel that training developed specifically for them is vitally important to support the continued development of the Committee, they did not feel it was necessary to have any specific training in 2022/23, following the excellent session they had in 2021 entitled "Developing Scrutiny and Building the Team" and the Away Evening in February 2022.

## Budget

The Scrutiny Committee has an annual budget of £6000, however, none was spent in the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

# LOOKING AHEAD

The Scrutiny Committee continues to evolve by regularly reviewing its processes and procedures to identify any areas for development so that we continue to focus on the ‘big things’ where a positive impact may be delivered for the Council and residents.

Following the review of Committee procedures at the beginning of 2022, a number of changes were made and implemented in the 2022/23 Municipal Year, principally the abolishing of Scoping Forms, slightly changing the Cabinet Member Sessions to make them more targeted and effective, together with the provision of an Away Evening to develop the Annual Work Programme.

An Away Evening has been organised for April 2023 to review not only these changes but also the effectiveness of the Committee over the past four year term with a view to making some recommendations for the new Scrutiny Committee to consider in 2023/24. The review will involve previous Members of the Committee, together with regular Substitutes, as well as obtaining the views of Cabinet Members and Senior Officers involved in the Scrutiny process.

As membership of the Committee will possibly change following the elections in May 2023, an Away Evening will be held in June 2023 to enable the new Scrutiny Committee to formulate their 2023/24 Work Programme using the following as a basis:

## **Key features of an effective work programme**

**A Member led process, shortlisting and prioritising topics – with support from officers – that:**

- **reflects local needs and priorities – issues of community concern as well as Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy priorities**
  - **prioritises topics for scrutiny that have most impact or benefit**
    - **involves local stakeholders**
  - **is flexible enough to respond to new or urgent issues**