Beyond 2018 Consultation

Your feedback on the draft strategic plan, Preparing Better Futures

Introduction

Locally and nationally, Scouting continues to deliver our 2014-18 strategic plan, Scouting for All. As a movement, we are proud that we are growing, becoming more youth shaped and inclusive while making a positive impact in our communities.

We are at an exciting moment in planning for Scouting's future. We have already had input from thousands of volunteers and young people, and we've also spoken to members of the public and key decision makers. We have created a proposal for the next strategic plan and asked for your views on it. The research and consultation that shaped the proposal is available on scouts.org.uk/beyond2018.

This briefing outlines the feedback we received following the consultation that took place at a District and County level on the proposed strategic plan.

Methodology

Throughout September and October 2017, we asked County/Area/Region, District and Youth Commissioners to engage adult volunteers, Scout Network members and Explorers in discussions regarding our draft strategic plan. Members were encouraged to discuss how supportive they were of the plan, how excited they were and how they would prioritise the initiatives contained within the plan. These were collected by the meeting facilitator and responses submitted via an online survey.

If a volunteer or young person wasn't able to take part in a meeting locally, they could submit individual feedback via the same survey.

We asked the following questions:

- Have we identified the right priorities for young people in Scouting, young people not yet in Scouting, adult volunteers and wider society?
- To what extent do you support the proposed strategic plan?
- What are you most excited about?
- What should we prioritise first?
- Is there any other feedback regarding the proposed strategic plan, or any particular considerations if you are a member in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland?

The feedback presented in this report represents input from 4,800 individuals via 400 submissions. 76% of these are adult volunteers and 24% young people (aged 14-18 years old). 95% of these respondents were represented through a local meeting or event and 5% were individual responses. 90% of respondents are from England, 6% from Northern Ireland, 3% from Scotland and 1% Wales. The fact that meeting facilitators would have had to interpret feedback and synthesise views into one response will have inevitably introduced some bias into the findings which could not be controlled, whereas individual responses may well have lacked context from line managers who had already engaged in the Beyond 2018 process.

Results and discussion

Headline results

Overall the majority (84%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they supported the proposed strategic plan, with strongest agreement that the plan has identified the right priorities for young people in Scouting (82% strongly agree or agree). Respondents had the least confidence that the right priorities had been identified for young people not in Scouting (66% strongly agree or agree).

Respondents were most excited about 'focusing on developing **amazing section leaders** with practical Scouting skills, transforming **adult recruitment** and ensuring clearer links to **employability skills'**.

Respondents would like to prioritise a 'focus on developing **amazing section leaders** with practical Scouting skills, transforming **adult recruitment** and reviewing **provision for 14-25** year olds'.

Identifying the right priorities

We asked volunteers and young people to what extent they thought the proposed strategic plan identified the right priorities for key stakeholders and whether they supported the plan overall. Across all respondents, 84% agreed or strongly agreed that they supported the strategic plan.
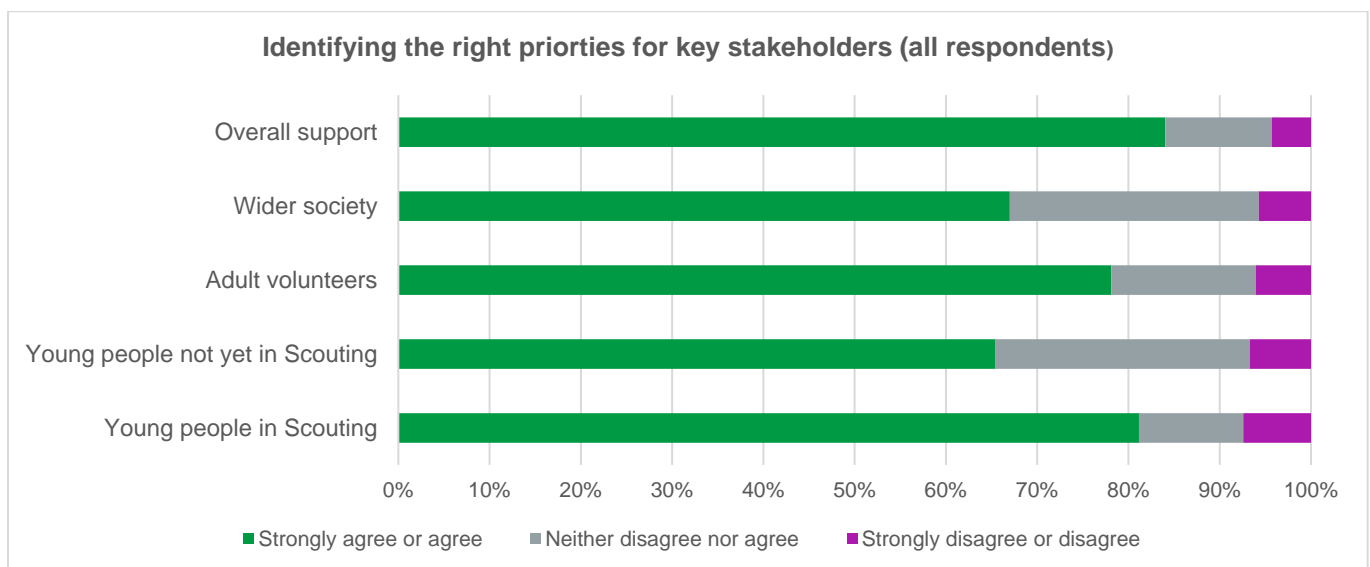

Figure 1. Identifying the right priorities (all respondents)

More respondents agreed that the right priorities had been identified for the two internal stakeholders - young people in Scouting (82%) and adult volunteers (78%) - than the external stakeholders - wider society (67%) and young people not yet in Scouting (66%). There was little disagreement with any of the five statements. Respondents were more likely to say that they neither disagreed nor agreed with the statements on external stakeholders as represented in figure 1.

More young people than adult volunteers agreed that the right priorities have been identified for wider society (see figures 2 and 3). More adult volunteers than young people agreed that the right priorities have been identified for volunteers.

Young people were more likely than adult volunteers to disagree with the statements, albeit by under 10%.
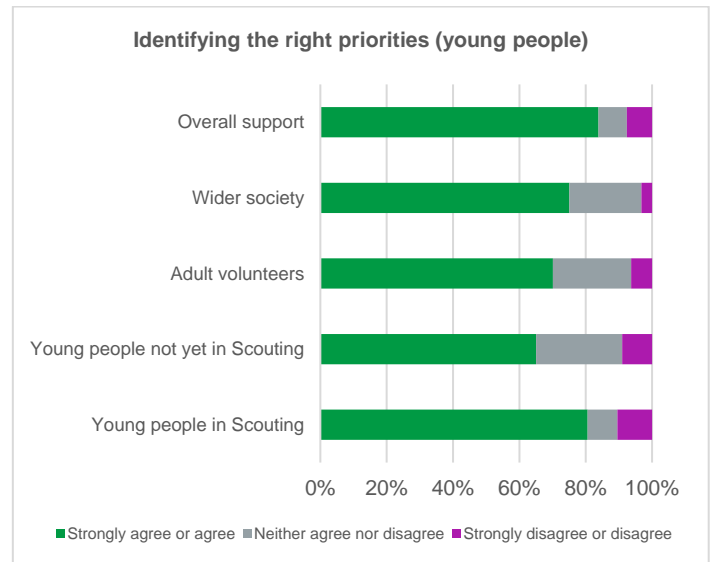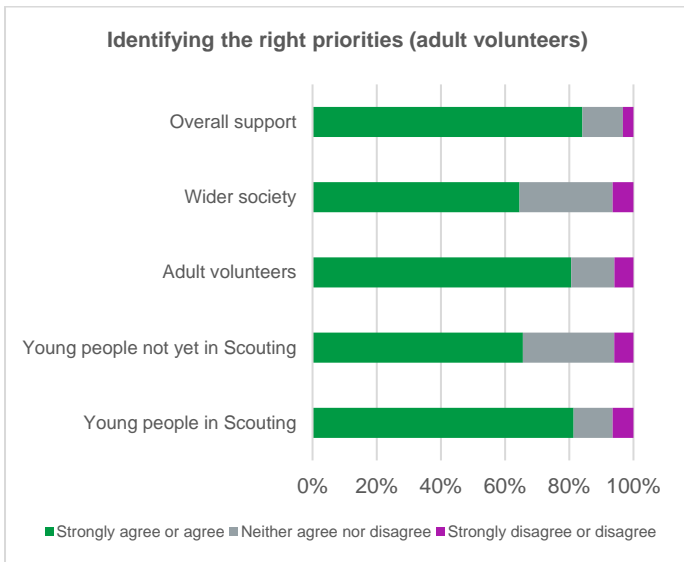
Figure 2. Adult volunteer responses to Question 1 (Thinking about the strategic plan as a whole, to what extent did you, or your meeting, agree with the following statements? The proposed strategic plan identifies the right priorities for…)

Figure 3. Young people responses to Question 1 (Thinking about the strategic plan as a whole, to what extent did you, or your meeting, agree with the following statements? The proposed strategic plan identifies the right priorities for…)

Figures 4 and 5 compare results of those who submitted their personal feedback (individual responses) and those responses discussed and submitted through a local meeting or event (meeting responses).

A higher percentage of meeting responses agreed or strongly agreed with each of the five statements than individual responses. Equally, individual respondents were more likely to disagree.

Figure 4. Individual responses to Question 1 (Thinking about the strategic plan as a whole, to what extent did you, or your meeting, agree with the following statements? The proposed strategic plan identifies the right priorities for…)

Figure 5. Meeting responses to Question 1 (Thinking about the strategic plan as a whole, to what extent did you, or your meeting, agree with the following statements? The proposed strategic plan identifies the right priorities for…)

As represented in figure 6, support held across all stakeholder consulted. There is less support for the plan by individual respondents (68%), a 17% difference between responses collected through meetings and individual submissions.

There is a notable increase in support of the plan by Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

Support for the plan

All respondants	Adult volunteers	Young people	Responses via individuals	Responses via meetings	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
84%	85%	84%	68%	85%	84%	89%*	92%*	94%

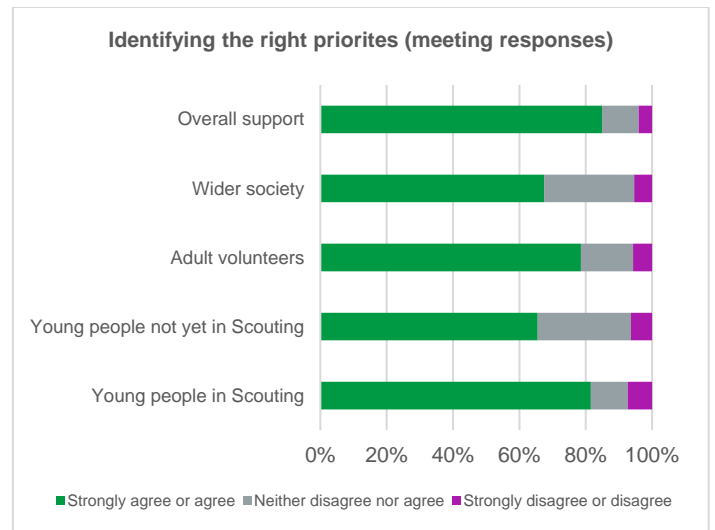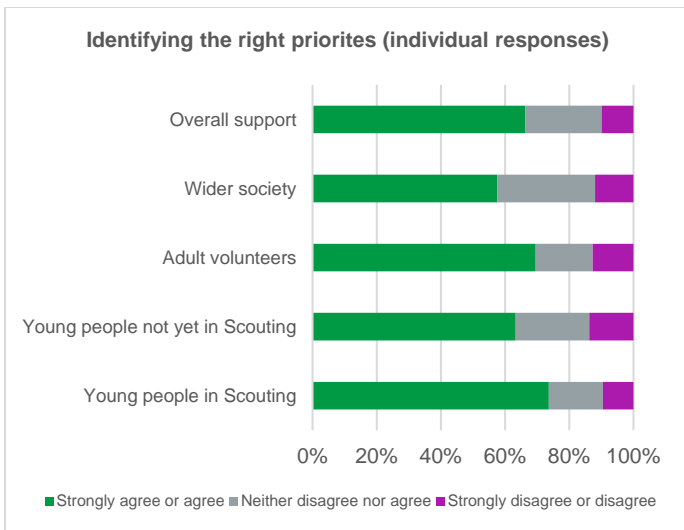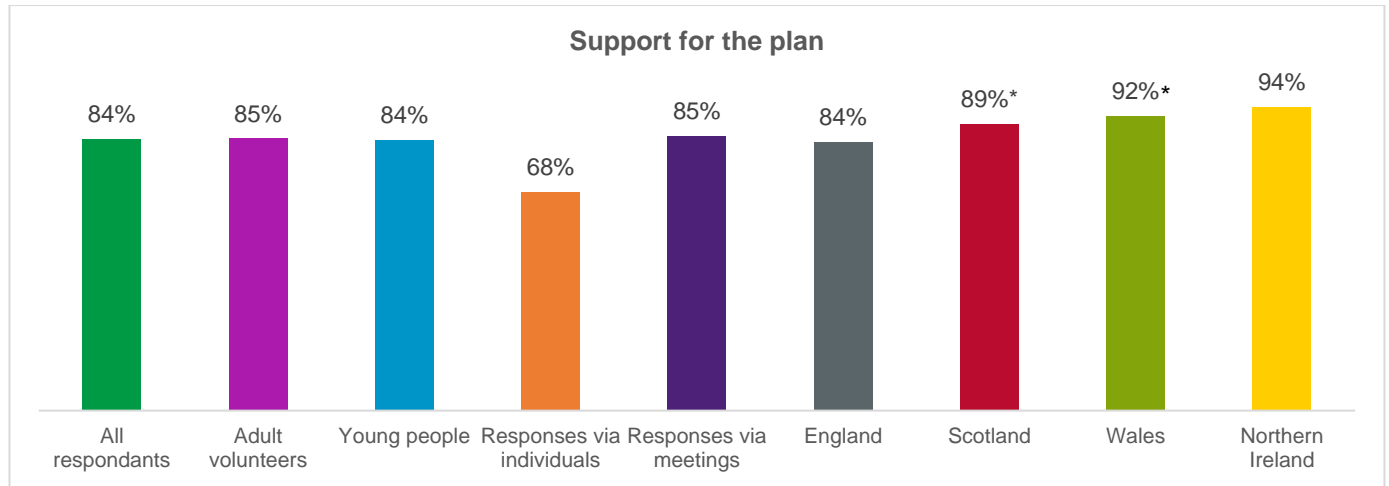Figure 6. Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed in response to Question 2. (Thinking about the strategic plan as a whole, to what extent did you, or your meeting, agree with the following statements? I/we support the proposed strategic plan.) *represents low sample size

Figure 7 shows that a greater proportion of individual respondents chose neither disagree nor agree and a higher number of individual respondents disagree with the plan than the rest of the segments.

Support for the plan across segments

Legend:
- Strongly Agree or Agree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Strongly disagree or Disagree

Segments (top to bottom): Northern Ireland, * Wales, * Scotland, England, Responses via meetings, Responses via individuals, Young people, Adult volunteers, All respondants

Figure 7. To what extent respondents supported the plan across different segments * represents small sample size

Excited about the plan

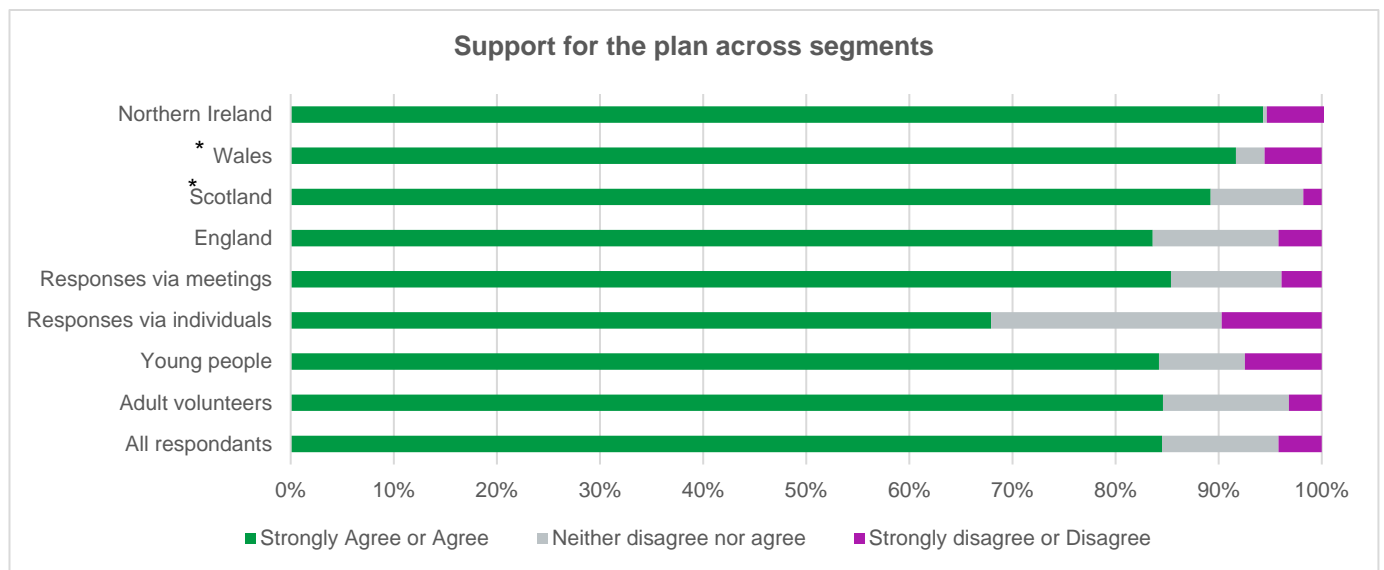We asked what three initiatives in the proposed plan were most exciting and Figure 8 shows that 'developing **amazing section leaders**, **transforming adult recruitment** and establishing **links to employability skills** (14-25 offer)' appear most often in respondents' top three.

Nearly 1 in 5 of all respondents put developing **amazing section leaders** in their top three.

Across adult volunteers, young people, those who responded individually and those who responded through a meeting, there is a similar pattern to Figure 8 with some small notable differences:

- More adult volunteers (10%) and individual respondents (11%) put **making training simpler** in their top three than young people (3%).
- 13% of young people put **links to employability skills** in their top three compared to 4% of individual respondents. Note that the majority of individual respondents were sections leaders, Group Scout Leaders or District roles.
- More young people put the **transform our image** initiatives of **uniform review, tools to promote Scouting** and **brand review** in their top three most exciting than did adult volunteers. See Figure 9 for comparison between young people and adult volunteers.
- More individual respondents put **digital tracking tools** and **self-service online resources** in their top three than responses collected through meetings (again, the majority of whom were section leaders, Group Group Scout Leaders or District roles).

Most exciting initiatives (all respondents)

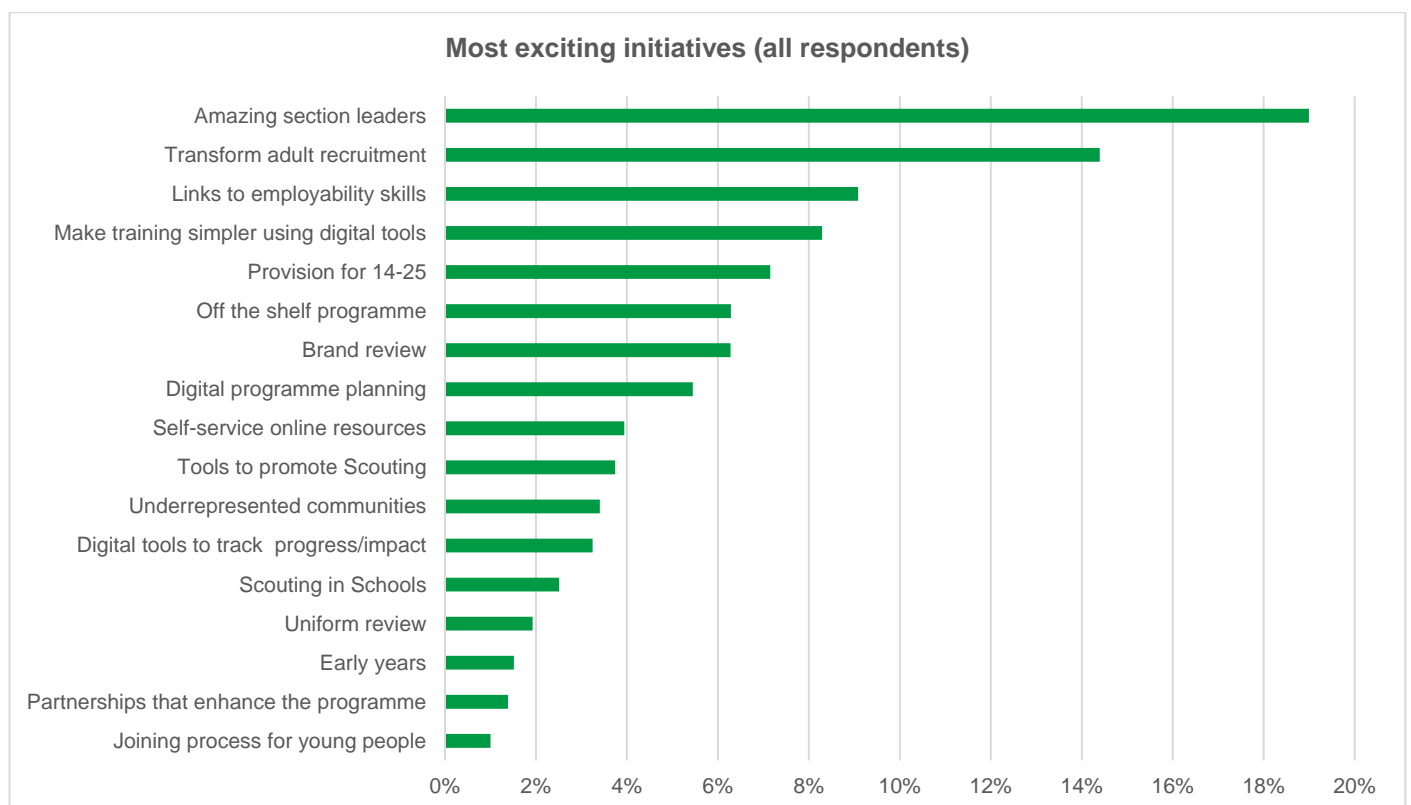| Initiative	
Amazing section leaders	19%
Transform adult recruitment	14.5%
Links to employability skills	9%
Make training simpler using digital tools	8%
Provision for 14-25	7%
Off the shelf programme	6%
Brand review	6%
Digital programme planning	5.5%
Self-service online resources	4%
Tools to promote Scouting	3.8%
Underrepresented communities	3.5%
Digital tools to track progress/impact	3.2%
Scouting in Schools	2.5%
Uniform review	2%
Early years	1.5%
Partnerships that enhance the programme	1.4%
Joining process for young people	1%

Figure 8. Most exciting initiatives - Percentage of respondents who chose the initiative in their top three (sample includes all respondents)

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Most exciting inititatives (comparison between responses by adult volunteers and young people)
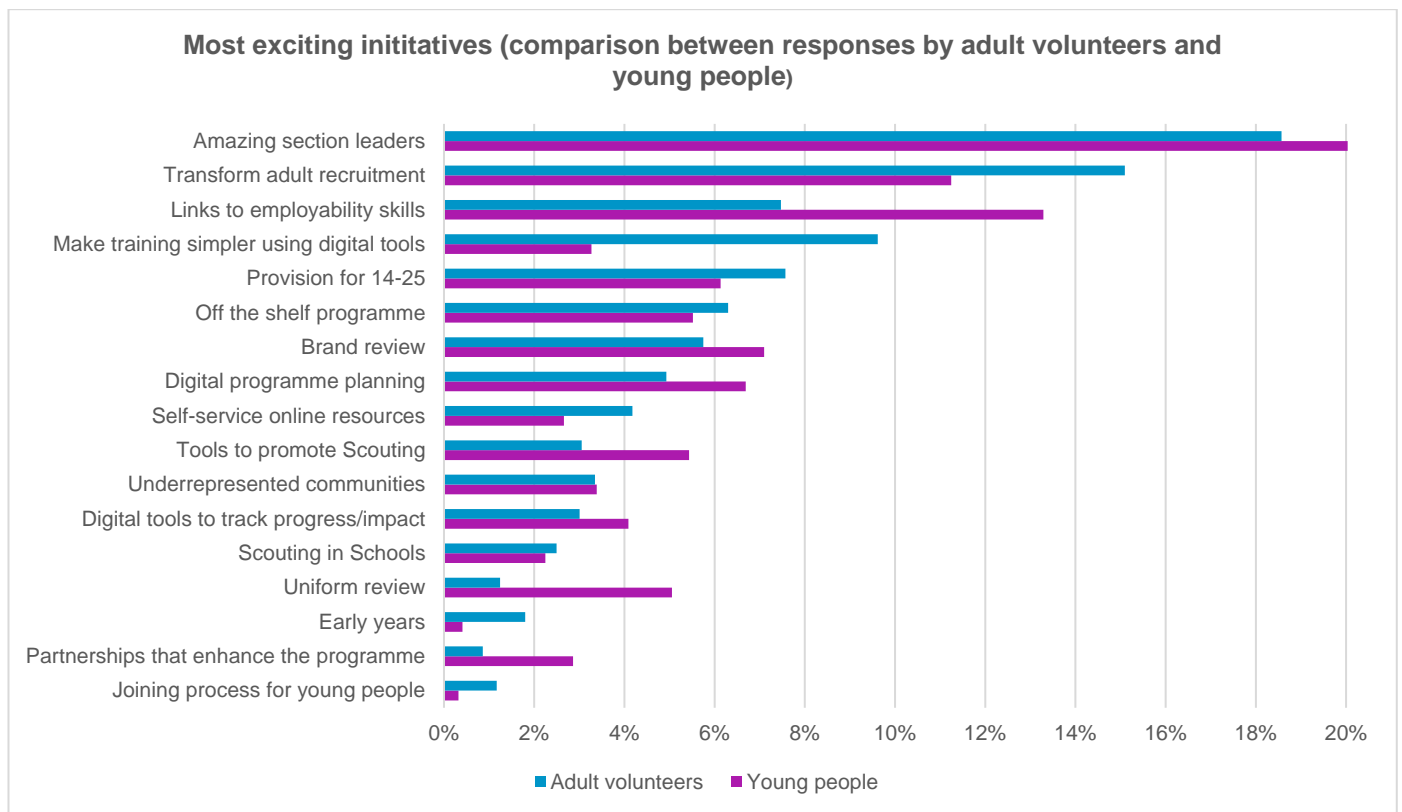
Figure 9, Most exciting initiatives - Percentage of respondents who chose the initiative in their top three (a comparison between adult volunteers and young people)

Priorities for the next five years

We asked which three initiatives in the proposed plan should be prioritised. Figure 10 shows that developing **amazing section leaders, transforming adult recruitment** and **reviewing the provision for 14-25** appear most often in respondents' top three.

The top five initiatives between the two questions of what was most exciting and what should be prioritised are the same.

Across adult volunteers, young people, those who responded individually and those who responded through a meeting, there is a similar pattern to Figure 10 with some small notable differences:

- More young people (13%) than adult volunteers (9%) put **review the provision for 14-25** in their top three.
- More young people than adult volunteers put **links to employability skills** in their top three making it their second most popular response alongside **reviewing 14-25 provision**.
- More individual respondents than young people put **digital programme planning** and **off the shelf programme** in their top three priorities.
- Following a similar pattern to Question 2, more young people than did adult volunteers put the **transform our image** initiatives of **uniform review, tools to promote Scouting** and **brand review** in their top three priorities as shown in Figure 11.
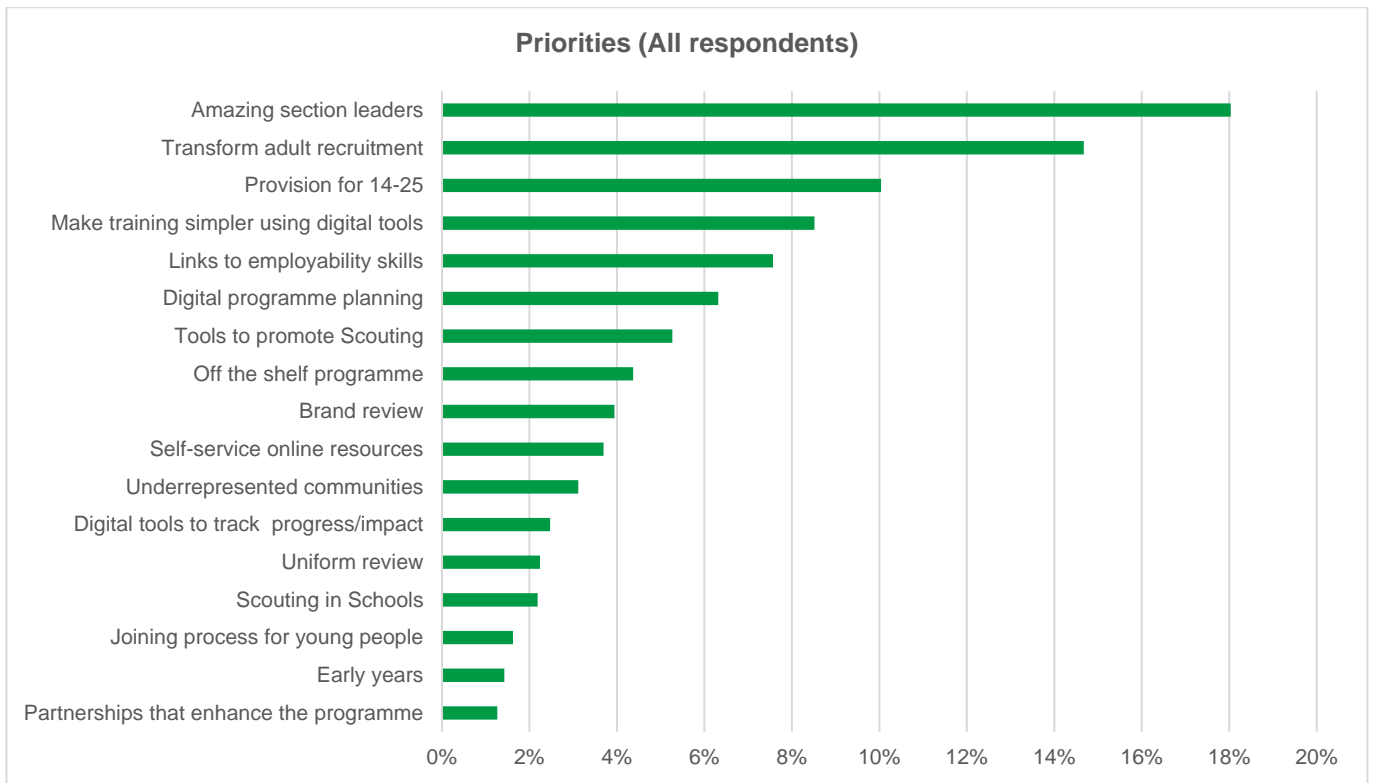
Priorities (All respondents)

Initiative	
Amazing section leaders	
Transform adult recruitment	
Provision for 14-25	
Make training simpler using digital tools	
Links to employability skills	
Digital programme planning	
Tools to promote Scouting	
Off the shelf programme	
Brand review	
Self-service online resources	
Underrepresented communities	
Digital tools to track progress/impact	
Uniform review	
Scouting in Schools	
Joining process for young people	
Early years	
Partnerships that enhance the programme	

0% 2% 4% 6% 8% 10% 12% 14% 16% 18% 20%

Figure 10. Priorities - Percentage of respondents who chose the initiative in their top three (sample includes all respondents)

Priorities (Comparison between responses by adult volunteers and young people)

Initiative	
Amazing section leaders	
Transform adult recruitment	
Provision for 14-25	
Make training simpler using digital tools	
Links to employability skills	
Digital programme planning	
Tools to promote Scouting	
Off the shelf programme	
Brand review	
Self-service online resources	
Underrepresented communities	
Digital tools to track progress/impact	
Uniform review	
Scouting in Schools	
Joining process for young people	
Early years	
Partnerships that enhance the programme	

0% 2% 4% 6% 8% 10% 12% 14% 16% 18% 20%
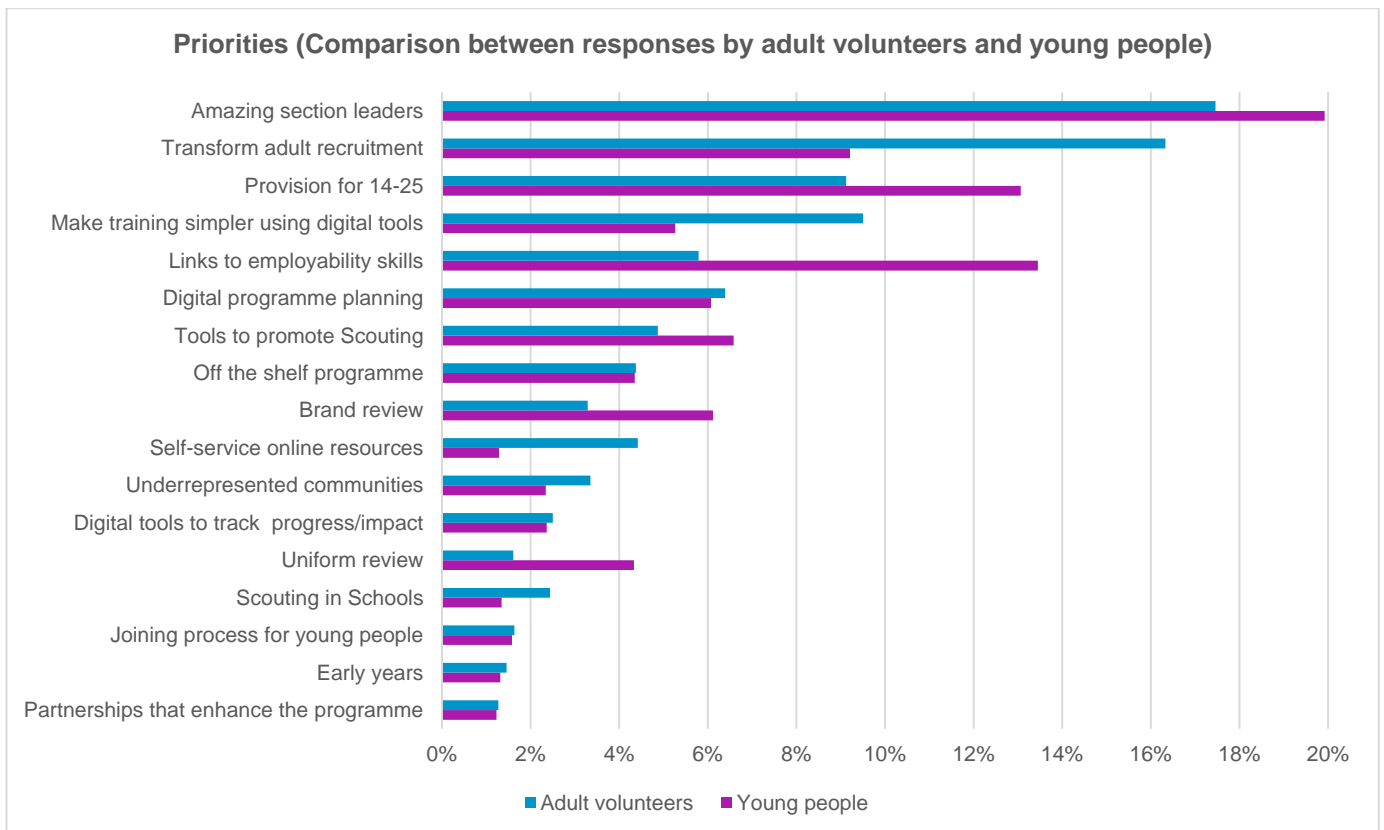
■ Adult volunteers   ■ Young people

Figure 11. Priorities- Percentage of respondents who chose the initiative in their top three (a comparison between adult volunteers and young people)

Qualitative feedback on the proposed strategic plan

The final question asked for any other views on the proposed strategic plan. This was an open question and comments were categorised under positive, neutral or critical by the person submitting the response. On analysis there were a number of themes that emerged and each comment was coded under each theme.

General feedback

There were a range of comments in support of the plan as a whole, particularly saying that the initiatives were good, the content wide ranging and re-emphasising the need to focus on quality programme and adult recruitment.

There was support for the consultation process and the opportunity to be involved. There was some feedback that the plan needed a greater emphasis on fun, outdoor activity and adventure, and recognising Scouting as a hobby.

> 'Strategic plan sounds good but is complicated to get your head around at first. It's very helpful to have initiatives to see how the objectives could be met. This is a huge step forward from the 2018 Vision when it was rolled out.'

> 'Generally, everybody was in favour of the plan however one of the key messages from our meeting is that Scouting is our hobby and needs to remain fun. At times it's more like work and too demanding.'

Feedback included the need for further detail on how the plan would be implemented and effectively managed as there was some concern about the organisation's ability to implement strategic programmes. Some suggested that the plan wasn't easy to understand and uses language that is too corporate. Requests were made for resources to communicate how to implement the plan at a local level.

Adult recruitment

There was strong support for a focus on adult recruitment. Suggestions included making the joining process quicker and smoother because it takes too long for a volunteer to take up their role. Feedback included the need to focus more on the retention of volunteers. Members said that turnover of volunteers is too high due to the slow joining process and overwhelming training. Feedback also included targeting alumni to become volunteers.

> 'The meeting felt that we required clearer tracking of the volunteer journey. E.g. the domino process used for a takeaway meal.....thank you for your order.....is in the oven.....out for delivery....you have it.'

Training

Developing amazing section leaders with practical skills and making training simpler had strong support. There were concerns that section leaders were not being given the opportunity to learn the basic practical skills for running an outdoor and adventurous programme.

There was support for making training simpler (as the current model feels overwhelming) through online tools but some feedback included the need to retain the hands-on practical training especially with regards to practical Scouting skills. Suggestions included mentoring and informal support groups.

> 'We do like the initiative to improve the training for our volunteers. It needs to be easier to access along with more relevant. It would be nice to see some practical skills training added for those who do not have previous Scouting experience.'

> 'More use could be made of mentors/informal support groups too, particularly for GSL's or section leaders new in post with limited Scouting experience. There is definitely a need to provide basic Scouting skills to many leaders. This could be done through mentoring?'

Digital

Comments were supportive, especially with regards to the use of digital tools in programme planning and tracking progress of young people, but there was criticism of how digital projects have been managed in the past, with specific mentions of Compass.

Other comments received cautioned against further digital development without considering locations that struggle with internet access, as well as considering synergies with existing tools (such as Online Scout Manager) before developing new ones.

> 'It sounds good on paper, but will it actually be delivered? I like the technical support, but how will we get a digital platform for delivery in shared halls (ie. without internet access and/or projection facilities)? I hope that lessons have been learnt form the roll out of Compass to ensure that the digital support is delivered effectively.'

14-25 provision

There was strong support for working with other organisations and companies to increase employment opportunities for young people and examples included working with BITC, Institute for Apprenticeships, UCAS and CIPD.

> 'Our meeting felt that many partnerships are forged with the younger sections but the 14-25 year olds are often overlooked. We felt that there are businesses out in the communities that could forge relationships and this age group could learn valuable workplace skills and Scouting values could be transferred.'

> 'The need to review the offer to 14-25 year olds was supported, but suggestions included closer ties to Groups rather than the District, and the emphasis to remain on being youth led.'

Some feedback included suggestions to revise the governance/management of Explorers to bring them closer to Groups. There were concerns of the drop off of young people in Scout and Explorer age ranges and what was being done to prevent this in future.

Early years

This initiative caused considerable debate. Both comments that were supportive and critical of the concept often pre-supposed a specific delivery model; an extension of the existing Beaver section, provision delivered through formal education, provision delivered by parents etc. Challenges raised included different skills and specialist training needed, challenging behaviour but predominantly, volunteers being already stretched and struggling with support to manage current provision, with a suggestion that the focus needed to be on the older age ranges instead. Across positive and negative comments, ensuring any delivery model secured additional volunteers was seen as essential.

> 'Extending Scouting to the under 6s divided opinion, with supportive and resistant opinions. There was enthusiasm for the initiative (was third in Q2), but there were realistic challenges within a Scout Group. These included the facilities within some premises, the need for some additional training and available adults. Should this age group be targeted as school based afterschool activities?'

Extend our reach

Although there were supportive comments regarding Scouting being delivered with schools (used as an example within extending our reach) additional explanation was needed. It was felt that there was an opportunity for Scouting to step in where schools and councils are cutting back on outdoor activity.

Concerns expressed included that the setting was too formal, it wouldn't be seen as volunteer led and that it wasn't helpful to 'parachute' people in to deliver Scouting. Some were also concerned that attention would be taken away from sustaining existing provision to instead create new provision in partnership with schools.

Perception and brand

There was strong support for the focus on skills for life and improving the perception of Scouting amongst parents, employers and the wider community. There was also strong support for tools to improve the perception of Scouting locally, particularly increasing the promotion of girls in Scouting.

> 'The 'Skills for life' message aimed at parents should not detract from adventure and social aspect of Scouts'

> 'Please work hard to change perceptions of Scouting. This is crucial to be able to reach communities who don't feel Scouting is for them. We are growing so we must be doing something right however our reach could be improved by a change in perception'

Some specific feedback included that resources needed to be age relevant and that some tools used at the moment are too childish. Some felt that the brand should continue to reflect fun and adventure.

> 'The concept of brand review on providing skills for later life is considered an important part of the ethos of Scouting. As an Association we need to emphasise the positive views of Scouting in the community and also the benefits to young people of belonging to an organisation which develops so many useful skills for use in later life.'

Uniform

Supportive comments regarding a uniform review included caveats such as keeping it simple, with not too many variants, affordable and inclusive of those disabled by society. Some commented that any uniform review needed to keep an identifiable uniform and preferably something formal as some didn't like the concept of casual options.

There were some comments that disagreed with the uniform review; that time and resources should be spent on recruitment and training. There was a concern that a review of uniform would be costly to implement.

Uniform is an important part of our identity. Any change should only be with careful consultation and we must retain an identifiable uniform suitable for formal as well as informal occasions.

> Please note that all quotes in the highlighted boxes are taken directly from the feedback submitted by County/District Commissioners following local consultation meetings with volunteers and young people