

West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025 Questionnaire Responses

- 1. Given the challenges facing Skelmersdale, do you believe a Skelmersdale Leadership Board is the right mechanism to support the regeneration of the area?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	80.00%	8
No	10.00%	1
Unsure	10.00%	1
Total		10

80% of respondents felt that a Skelmersdale Leadership Board is the right mechanism to support regeneration in the area and that this should be prioritised to help to focus and drive regeneration.

- 2. If so, who or what organisations would you like to see represented on the board and why?**

6 comments were received and suggestions included a mixture of private business, public sector and third sector representatives.

- 3. What do you see as the key objectives of a Skelmersdale Leadership Board?**

6 responses were received with the general consensus that the Board should drive forward regeneration within Skelmersdale with the overall aim of improving the image of the town.

- 4. Do you believe having a dedicated Skelmersdale Regeneration Officer within the Borough Council will help to support the delivery of regeneration in Skelmersdale?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	66.67%	6
No	0.00%	0
Unsure	33.33%	3
Total		9

67% of those who responded felt that a dedicated officer will help to support the delivery of Skelmersdale's regeneration, suggestions including how it is essential to quickly move things forward. The 33% who were unsure questioned what the role involves and if it would be cost effective.

- 5. How can the Council better engage with local businesses?**

6 suggestions were proposed and included visiting businesses in their place of work, business events/forums, a dedicated officer and through development of social media.

- 6. Do you believe that West Lancashire currently has sufficient land available to accommodate future employment growth in the borough?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	62.50%	5
No	0.00%	0
Unsure	37.50%	3
Total		8

A total of 8 responses were received with 62.5% of respondents stating they thought there is sufficient land available to accommodate future growth. Of the 37.5% who were unsure comments questioned the use of green space and ensuring that empty units should be filled first.

- 7. The West Lancashire Economy Study 2014 shows that Skelmersdale is a key employment location and supports around 43% of all the jobs in the borough. Taking this into account, do you think it is necessary to have additional employment land/premises available in Skelmersdale to help create more jobs?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75.00%	6
No	0.00%	0
Unsure	25.00%	2
Total		8

- 8. Are you aware of any locations or signage that needs particular improvements within and/or on the edges of the employment areas, i.e. Pimbo, Stanley, Gillibrands or White Moss Business Park?**

A total of 5 comments were received all concurring that better signage is required, suggesting better signposting of business estates, general updating and maintenance and consider signage examples in other locations e.g. Warrington.

- 9. Do you agree that improving the existing former new town housing estates within Skelmersdale should be a priority for the Council?**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	100.00%	7
No	0.00%	0
Total		7

100% of those who responded felt that improving the housing estates should be a priority for the Council.

- 10. Are there any particular areas within Skelmersdale that you believe should be prioritised for improvements?**

7 responses provided a wide range of suggestions including: Tanhouse, Birch Green, Digmaor, the Concourse and town centre. Some respondents felt that improvement of Skelmersdale as a whole is required.

- 11. How important to you is it to have a Wet & Dry Leisure Centre in Skelmersdale town centre?**

Respondents were asked to use a rating scale (1 being unimportant, 5 being important) to indicate the importance of a Wet & Dry Leisure Centre in Skelmersdale town centre.

	1 - Not Important	2	3	4	5 - Important	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	14.29% 1	14.29% 1	14.29% 1	14.29% 1	42.86% 3	7	3.57

A total of 7 responses, 3 of which felt this was important.

12. Do you believe Skelmersdale town centre is the best location for a Wet & Dry Leisure Centre?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	71.43% 5
No	14.29% 1
Unsure	14.29% 1
Total	7

71% of respondents felt that the town centre is the best location.

13. How important is it to you that Skelmersdale's night-time economy is improved?

Respondents were asked to use a rating scale (1 being unimportant, 5 being important) to indicate the importance of improving Skelmersdale's night-time economy.

	1 - Not Important	2	3	4	5 - Important	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	28.57% 2	57.14% 4	7	4.43

Of the 7 respondents 57% felt that it was important. The mean score was 4.43 which is just below the important category.

14. How important is it to you that we have good quality and attractive public realm within Skelmersdale town centre?

Respondents were asked to use a rating scale (1 being unimportant, 5 being important) to indicate the importance of having good quality public realm in Skelmersdale town centre. 83.33% felt that it was important.

	1 - Not Important	2	3	4	5 - Important	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	83.33% 5	6	4.83

15. Are you supportive of a rail station in Skelmersdale town centre?

100% of respondents stated that they are supportive of a rail station in Skelmersdale. Qualitative comments stated that this will be a vital component in the regeneration of Skelmersdale.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	100.00%	7
No	0.00%	0
Unsure	0.00%	0
Total		7

16. Do you believe that a rail station in Skelmersdale would improve the image and perception of the town?

75% of respondents felt that the rail station would improve the image of the town. One respondent stated that Skelmersdale's offer needs to be improved to make people want to come for leisure.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75.00%	6
No	0.00%	0
Unsure	25.00%	2
Total		8

17. Would you be supportive of an off-road cycling/walking route?

100% of respondents said they would be supportive of an off-road cycling/walking route that connects major settlements.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	100.00%	7
No	0.00%	0
Total		7

18. What purpose would you use a cycling/walking route for?

Respondents could select more than one answer and a total of 8 people made 17 selections with leisure and visiting other towns and villages being the most popular answers. Only one respondent said they would not use the routes.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Leisure (cycling/walking)	75.00%	6
Commuting to work	37.50%	3
Getting to school/college/university	25.00%	2
Visiting town centres and associated facilities	62.50%	5
Would not use	12.50%	1
Total Respondents: 8		

19. Do you believe that improved rail transport in and out of West Lancashire is important to the overall growth of the economy?

85.71% of respondents believe that improved rail transport is important to the economy's overall growth with qualitative responses saying this is vital and better connections and trains are needed.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	85.71%	6
No	0.00%	0
Unsure	14.29%	1
Total		7

20. What do you see as the main issues with the current rail provision?

A range of qualitative responses were received with respondents feeling parts of the borough are badly connected with lines that don't interlink (e.g. Northern Rail and Mersey Rail), the northern parishes are disconnected and Ormskirk is not directly connected to Southport, a missed opportunity for leisure. Rolling stock needs improvement and the rail service is outdated and expensive. Skelmersdale rail link is vital.

21. Are you supportive of a new brand for Skelmersdale to help develop a sense of pride in the town and a marketing tool to promote the town?

71% were supportive of a new brand for Skelmersdale. 1 respondent unsure and 1 not supportive.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	71.43%	5
No	14.29%	1
Unsure	14.29%	1
Total		7

22. If yes, would you be interested in becoming an ambassador for Skelmersdale?

2 respondents stated they were interested and 2 who would like to but could not commit the time.

23. What do you see as the strengths of Skelmersdale that should be taken into consideration when developing a brand?

Some quality responses were received, including making Skelmersdale a leading place for "something" e.g. manufacturing, construction etc. and championing our strengths. Respondents believe that the quality of our industry should be reflected in the brand.

24. Do you think there are negative perceptions of Skelmersdale, and if so, what do you believe these to be?

100% of respondents feel there are negative perceptions of Skelmersdale with crime, housing stock and the town centre being the main issues. Respondents feel the town has been neglected.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	100.00%	7
No	0.00%	0
Unsure	0.00%	0
Total		7

25. In your opinion, is West Lancashire being promoted adequately as a visitor/tourism destination at the present time?

There was some uncertainty around the visitor offer with 67% of respondents unsure about how it is promoted. Some believed that it was taken care of by a 'tourism department' and thought they had seen adverts in the local press.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	16.67%	1
No	16.67%	1
Unsure	66.67%	4
Total		6

26. What do you see as the borough's visitor/tourism offer? For example; is it the borough as a whole as a place to visit and spend leisure time, or should we be focusing on individual attractions, towns and villages?

All 3 qualitative responses received concurred that the visitor offer is different things as the borough is so diverse.

27. There are several possible ways to improve secondary school provision in Skelmersdale; please indicate which you think is the most appropriate:

Respondents could select more than one category and 6 people made a total of 10 selections with improved teaching standard and school buildings being equally important. Qualitative replies stated that the current school buildings did not provide the best environment conducive to learning.

Answer Choices	Responses	
New school buildings	66.67%	4
Improved teaching standards	66.67%	4
Better liaison with Edge Hill University / West Lancashire College	33.33%	2
Total Respondents: 6		

28. Do you have a problem recruiting skilled staff within your own organisation or business? If yes, do you have any views as to why this may be the case?

60% of respondents stated they did not have a problem recruiting skilled staff. 1 respondent stated that they struggled to recruit HGV drivers.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	40.00%	2
No	60.00%	3
Unsure	0.00%	0
Total		5

29. There is a great deal of good partnership working taking place across the borough to help young people develop the necessary skills and qualifications to enable them to secure employment. Do you have any ideas as to how we can better equip young people for employment once they leave school, college or university?

Two qualitative responses were received and they both stated that they felt students needed placements in businesses to increase their practical skills to help them become work ready.

30. As a local business, would you be interested in working with other organisations such as the Borough Council, University, College or schools in developing ideas and projects that would support the skills agenda?

75% of respondents were unsure and one stated that they would be interested in the skills agenda.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	25.00%	1
No	0.00%	0
Unsure	75.00%	3
Total		4

31. Do you consider the proposed Strategic Themes to be sufficient to meet the long term needs of West Lancashire's economy?

Two responses were received and both respondents felt the themes were sufficient.