



Annual Planning Barometer

2019 Summary Report

INTRODUCTION

This is the second year in which Newgate Research has run the national Planning Barometer, the only nationally representative survey of councillors sitting on local authority planning committees.

Our survey polls planning committee members across England on a range of housing-related concerns: we repeat a number of questions each year to gauge longitudinal shifts in opinion on local and national planning policy, while also including new questions on topical issues.

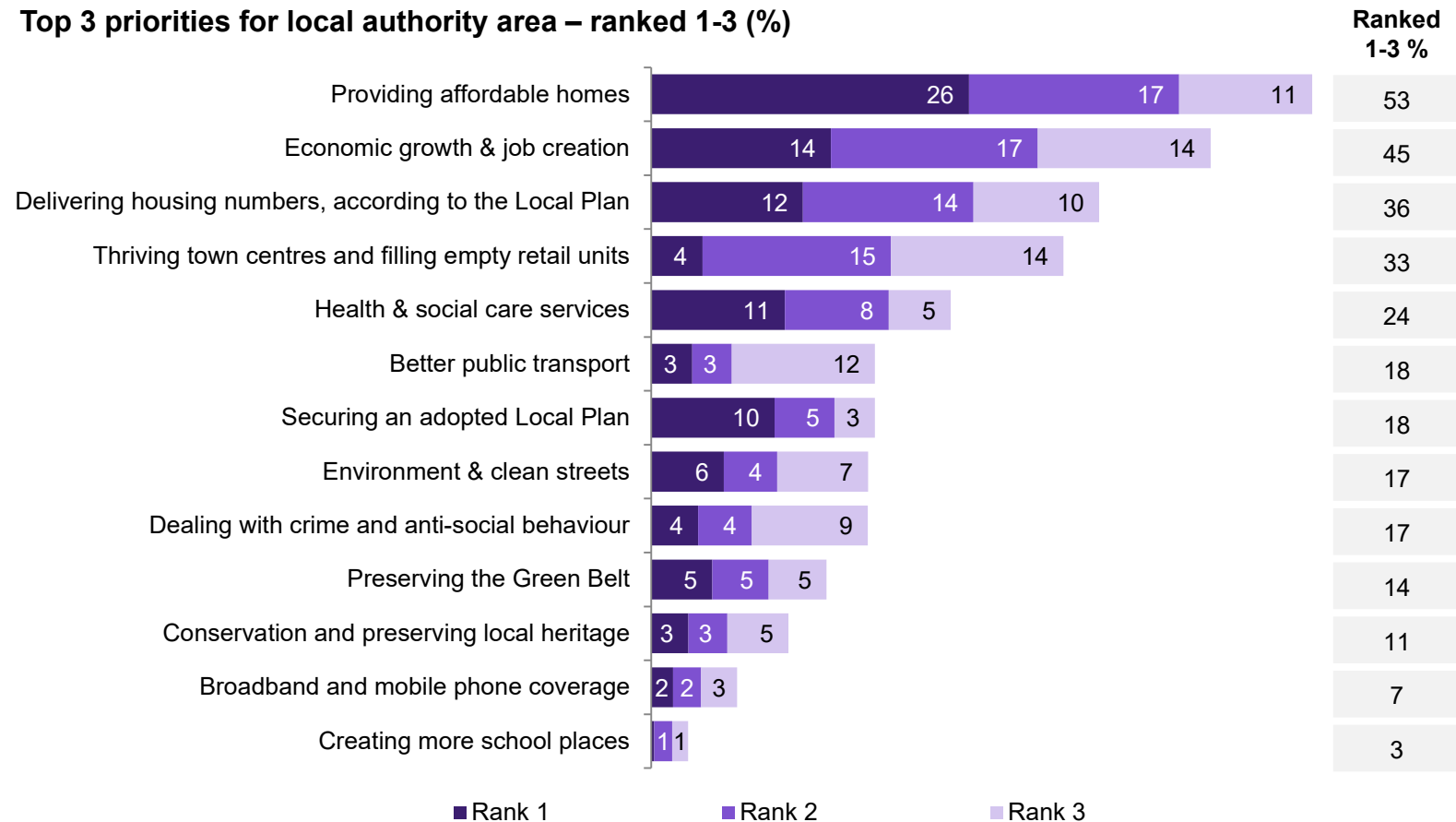
A total of 344 councillors participated in our survey between 18th February and 10th March 2019, from a population of 5,295 councillors. Data has been weighted to be nationally representative.

This summary report details findings of the 2019 survey. For further information please contact research@newgatecomms.com.

TOP LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR 2019

Providing affordable housing was by far the number one priority for local authorities

Top 3 priorities for local authority area – ranked 1-3 (%)



Q4. What do you see as the top three priorities in your authority area for 2019?
 Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data (n=344).



TOP LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR 2019

Providing affordable housing and dealing with crime were of particular importance in London, while securing an adopted local plan was a key priority in the South East, and East of England – broadband and mobile coverage are also key issues in the South West

| Top 3 local priorities for 2019 (in your local area) % | TOTAL | London | South East | South West | North West | East of England | West Midlands & Humber | Yorkshire & North East | North East | East Midlands |
|---|-------|--------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Providing affordable homes | 53 | 77 | 63 | 59 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 41 | 40 | 38 |
| Economic growth & job creation | 45 | 26 | 31 | 50 | 48 | 38 | 53 | 45 | 55 | 58 |
| Delivering housing numbers, according to the Local Plan | 36 | 34 | 44 | 41 | 21 | 51 | 21 | 50 | 25 | 40 |
| Thriving town centres and filling empty retail units | 33 | 20 | 30 | 26 | 48 | 21 | 32 | 36 | 50 | 33 |
| Health & social care services | 24 | 34 | 17 | 29 | 17 | 10 | 32 | 23 | 30 | 22 |
| Better public transport | 18 | 9 | 12 | 24 | 28 | 18 | 16 | 23 | 20 | 11 |
| Securing an adopted Local Plan | 18 | 6 | 33 | 9 | 10 | 41 | 21 | 23 | 0 | 22 |
| Environment & clean streets | 17 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 21 | 18 | 16 | 9 | 30 | 18 |
| Dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour | 17 | 54 | 11 | 6 | 24 | 8 | 16 | 14 | 10 | 20 |
| Preserving the Green Belt | 14 | 3 | 22 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 37 | 5 | 15 | 11 |
| Conservation and preserving local heritage | 11 | 11 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 5 | 14 | 10 | 16 |
| Broadband and mobile phone coverage | 7 | 3 | 3 | 21 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 9 | 5 | 7 |
| Creating more school places | 3 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| <i>Column n</i> | 344 | 35 | 99 | 34 | 29* | 39 | 19* | 22* | 20* | 45 |

Q4. What do you see as the top three priorities in your authority area for 2019?
Base: All respondents who gave a response – as shown on the chart.

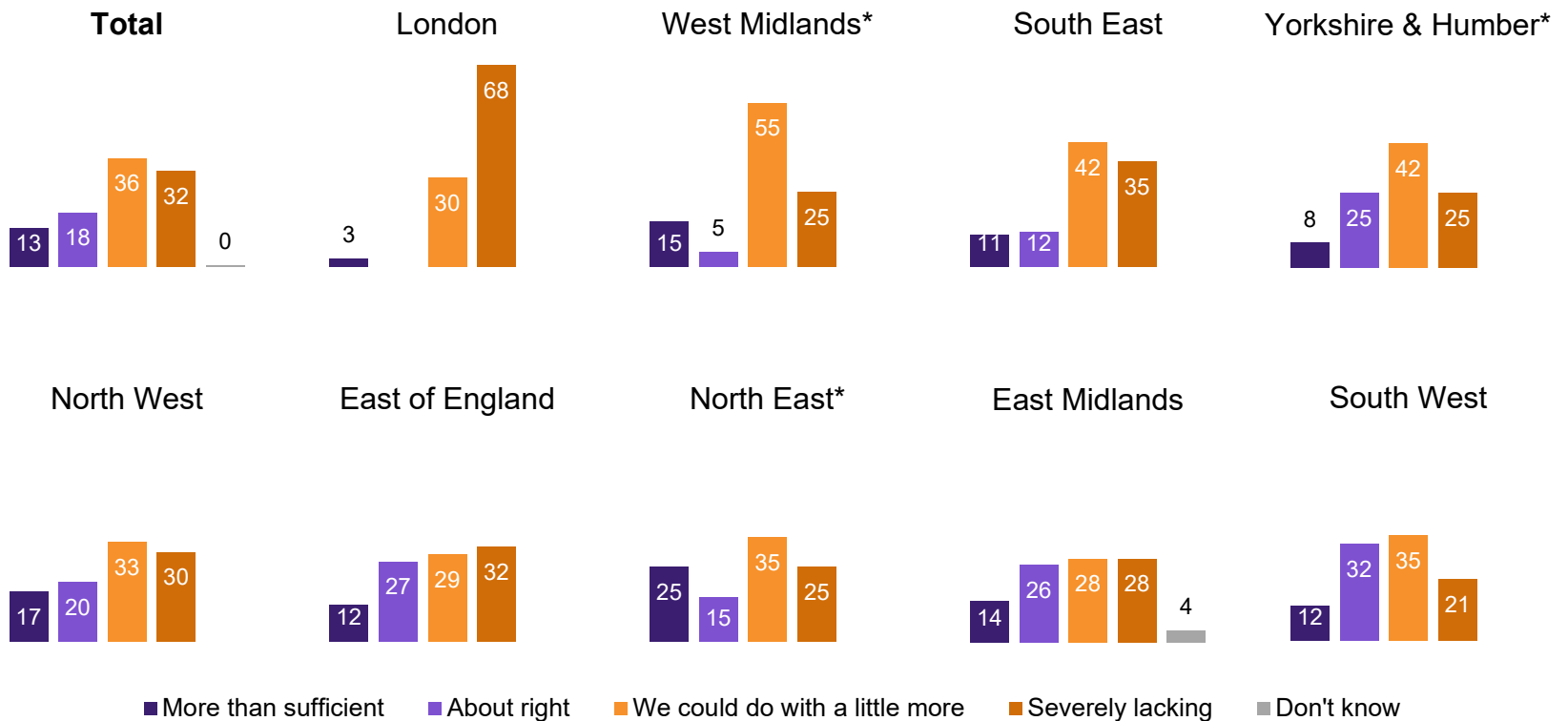
* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

 = Significantly higher than other areas
 = Significantly lower than other areas

HOUSING SUPPLY

Respondents in London, West Midlands, and the South East were much more likely to indicate a little or severe lack of housing

Description of local housing supply (%)



Q4. How would you describe the housing supply in your authority area?

Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=368), East Midlands (n=50), East of England (n=41), London (n=37), North East (n=20), North West (n=30), South East (n=110), South West (n=34), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=24).

* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.



HOUSING SUPPLY

Participants in London were significantly more likely to think that social and affordable rent housing was lacking, while those in the East of England were more likely to mention open-market

| Type of housing that is lacking % | TOTAL | London | South East | East of England | Yorkshire & Humber | North East | North West | West Midlands | South West | East Midlands |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| Social rent | 22 | 54 | 25 | 23 | 22 | 17 | 17 | 16 | 16 | 14 |
| Affordable rent | 20 | 49 | 26 | 19 | 19 | 17 | 14 | 8 | 18 | 18 |
| Shared ownership | 7 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Open market | 5 | 5 | 7 | 15 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Private rent | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Column n | 425 | 39 | 122 | 47 | 27* | 23* | 35 | 25* | 38 | 50 |

Q5. If you consider it lacking, which type of housing in particular? (tick all that apply)
Base: All respondents who gave a response – as shown on the chart.

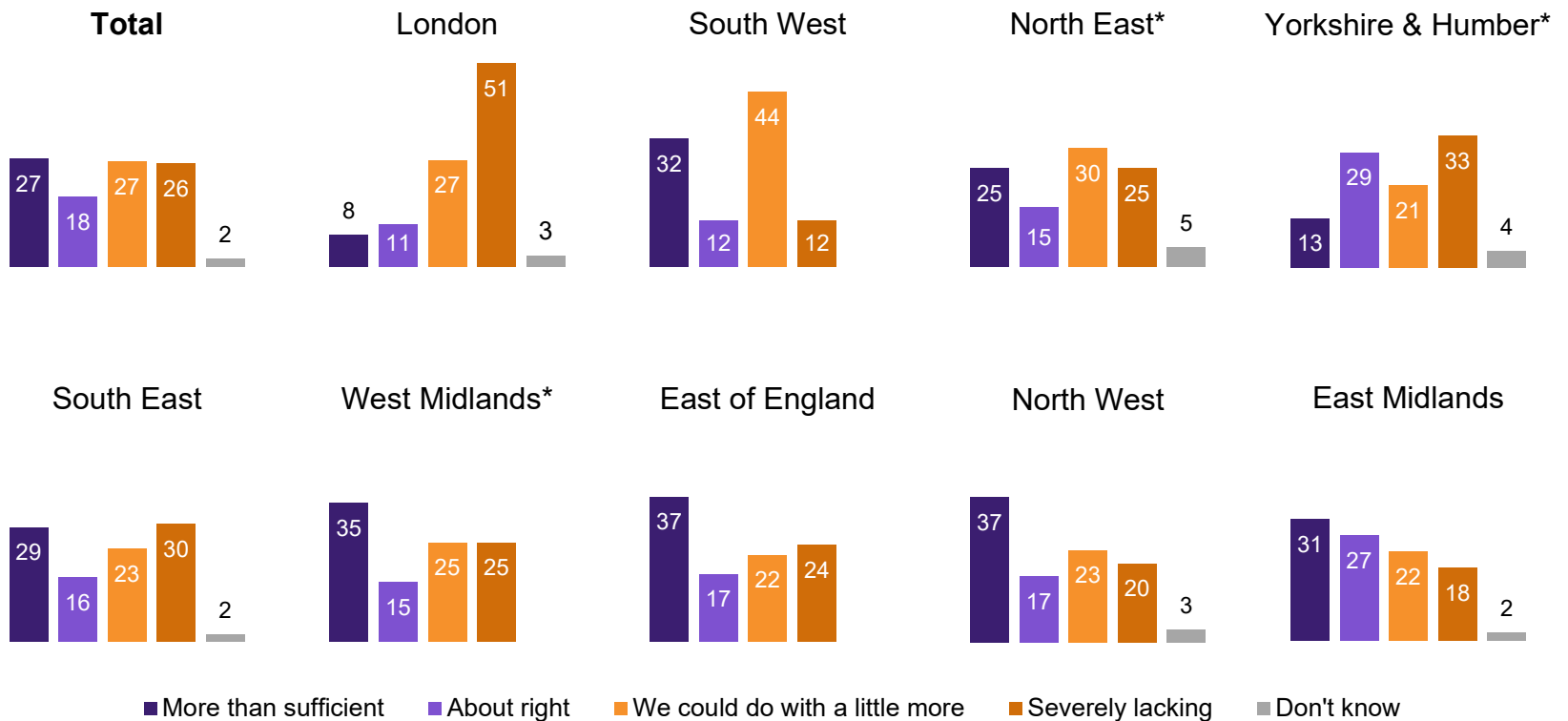
* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

 = Significantly higher than other authorities
 = Significantly lower than other authorities

HOUSING SUPPLY: IN THE EYE OF RESIDENTS

While most agree that their local area needs more housing, opinions are fairly mixed among local authorities, with London most likely say it is severely lacking

Description of local housing supply in the eyes of residents (%)



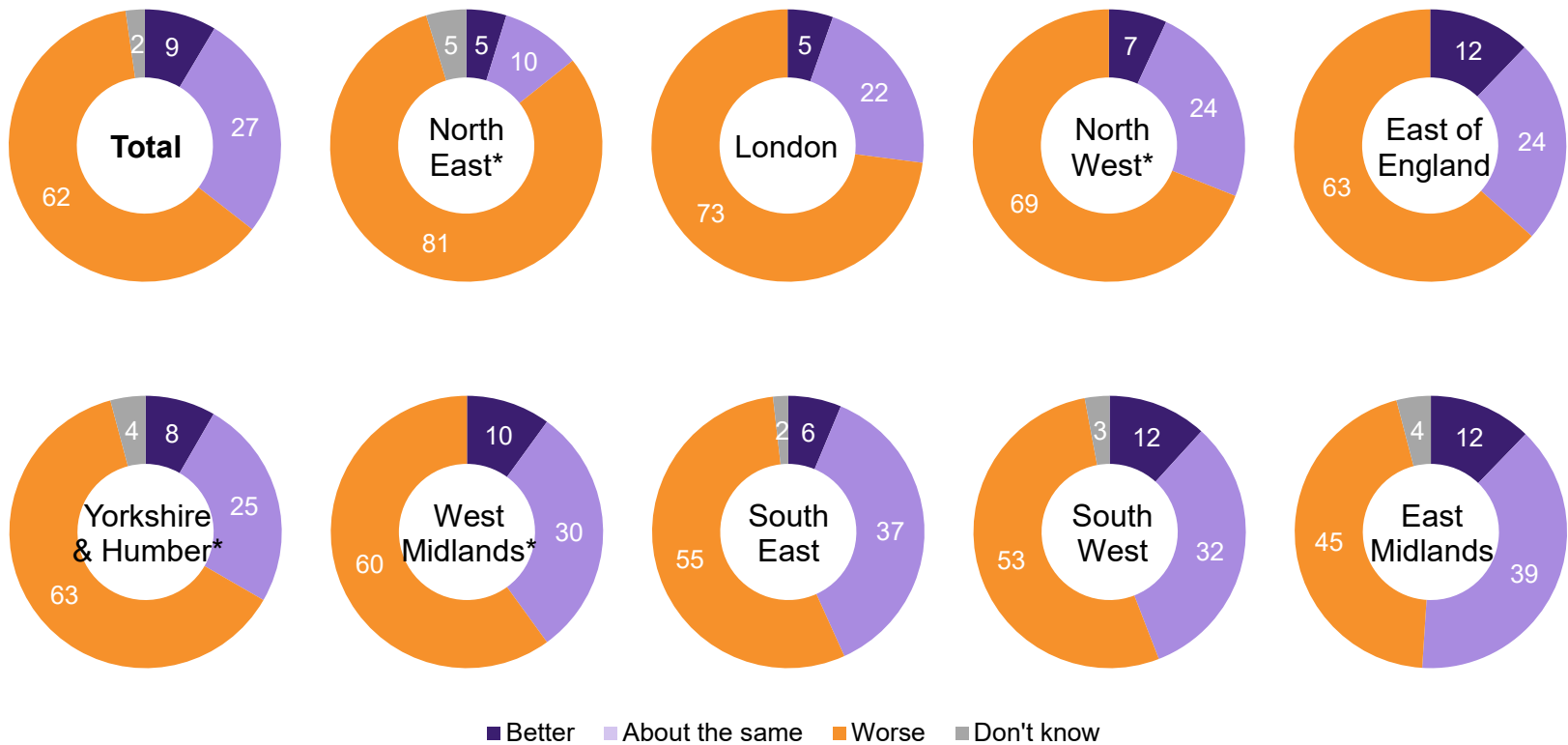
Q6. From your experience, how would residents describe the housing supply in your authority area?
 Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=368), East Midlands (n=49), East of England (n=41), London (n=37), North East (n=20), North West (n=30), South East (n=111), South West (n=34), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=24).

* Low sample (n<30), interpret with caution.

HOUSING CRISIS

Just shy of two thirds of respondents believe the UK housing crisis is getting worse, particularly in the North East and London

Perception of UK housing crisis (%)



Q7. Do you think the UK's housing crisis is getting better or worse?

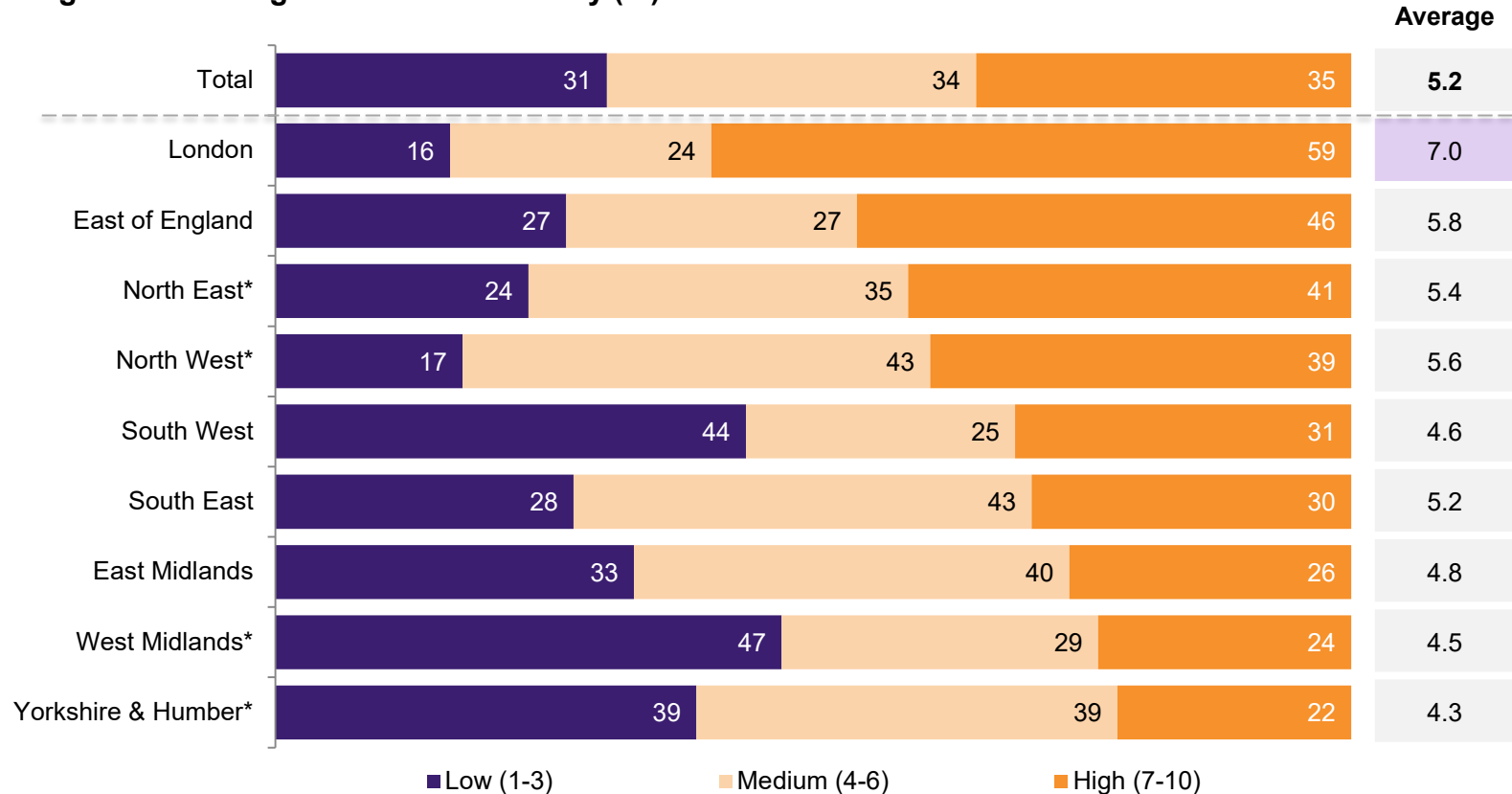
* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=368), East Midlands (n=49), East of England (n=41), London (n=37), North East (n=21), North West (n=29), South East (n=111), South West (n=34), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=24).

HOUSING CRISIS

Over a third of all participants believe the degree of housing crisis in their local authority is high (7-10 out of 10)

Degree of housing crisis: local authority (%)



Q8. On a scale of 0 to 10, to what degree would you say there is a housing crisis...in your local authority?

* Low sample (n<30), interpret with caution.

Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=331), East Midlands (n=42), East of England (n=37), London (n=37), North East (n=17), North West (n=23), South East (n=101), South West (n=32), West Midlands (n=17), Yorkshire & Humber (n=23).

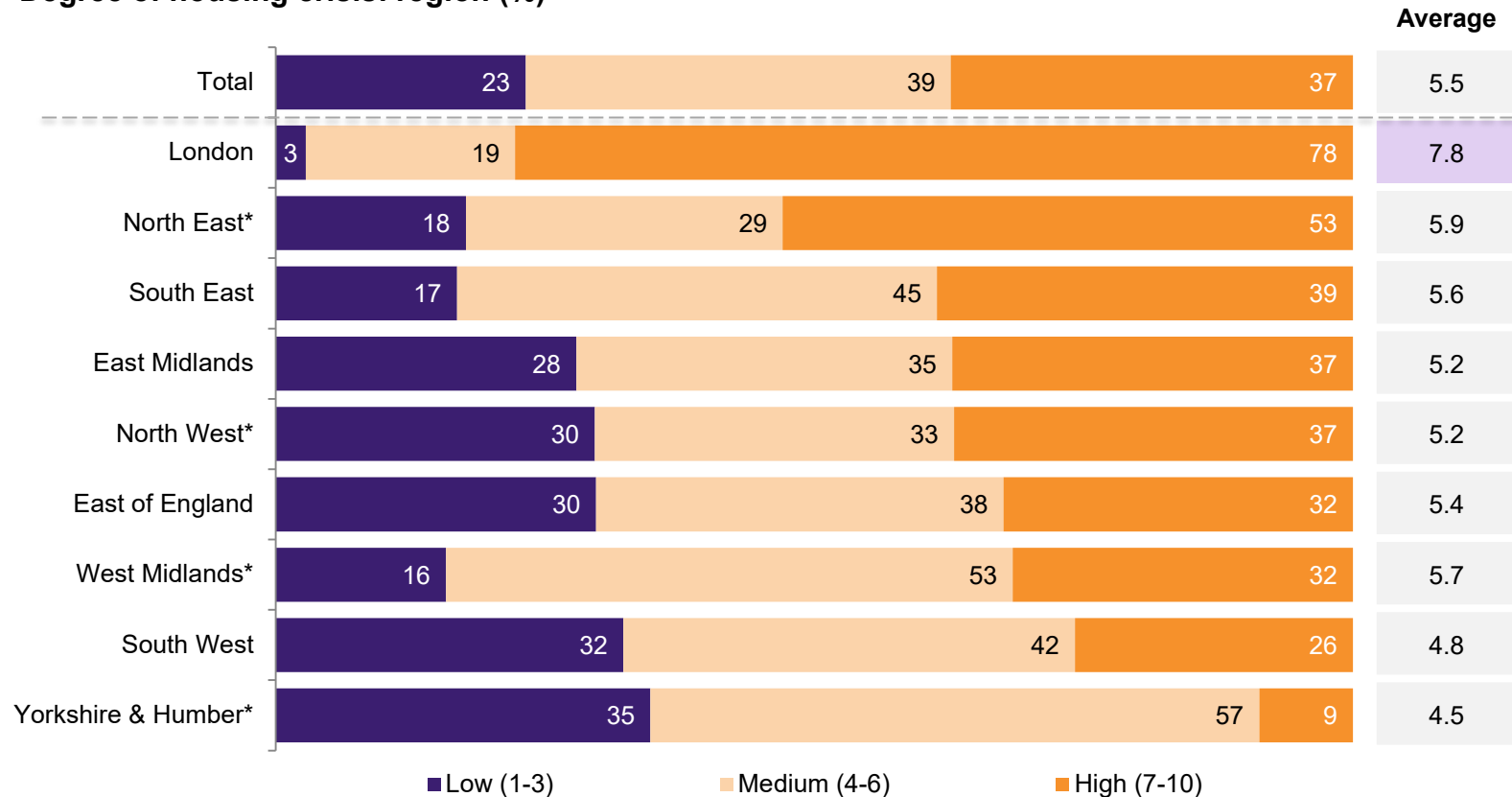
Significantly higher than other authorities

Significantly lower than other authorities

HOUSING CRISIS

Perceptions of housing crisis at a regional level are even higher

Degree of housing crisis: region (%)



Q8. On a scale of 0 to 10, to what degree would you say there is a housing crisis...in your region?

Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=336), East Midlands (n=43), East of England (n=37), London (n=36), North East (n=17), North West (n=27), South East (n=101), South West (n=31), West Midlands (n=19), Yorkshire & Humber (n=23).

* Low sample (n<30), interpret with caution.

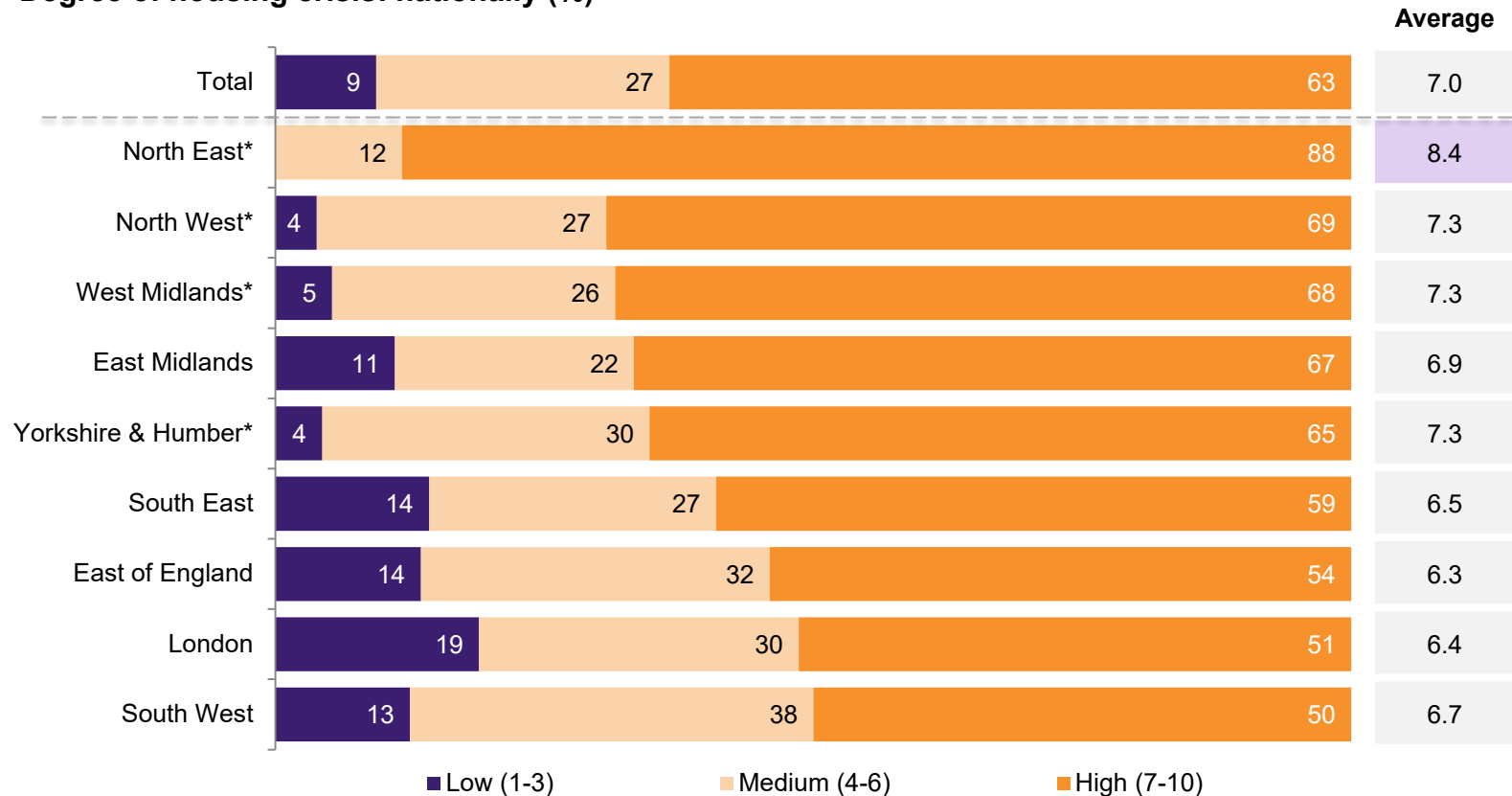
Significantly higher than other authorities

Significantly lower than other authorities

HOUSING CRISIS

Perceptions of a national housing crisis were much higher in the North East

Degree of housing crisis: nationally (%)



Q8. On a scale of 0 to 10, to what degree would you say there is a housing crisis...nationally?

Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=343), East Midlands (n=45), East of England (n=37), London (n=37), North East (n=17), North West (n=26), South East (n=105), South West (n=32), West Midlands (n=19), Yorkshire & Humber (n=23).

* Low sample (n<30), interpret with caution.

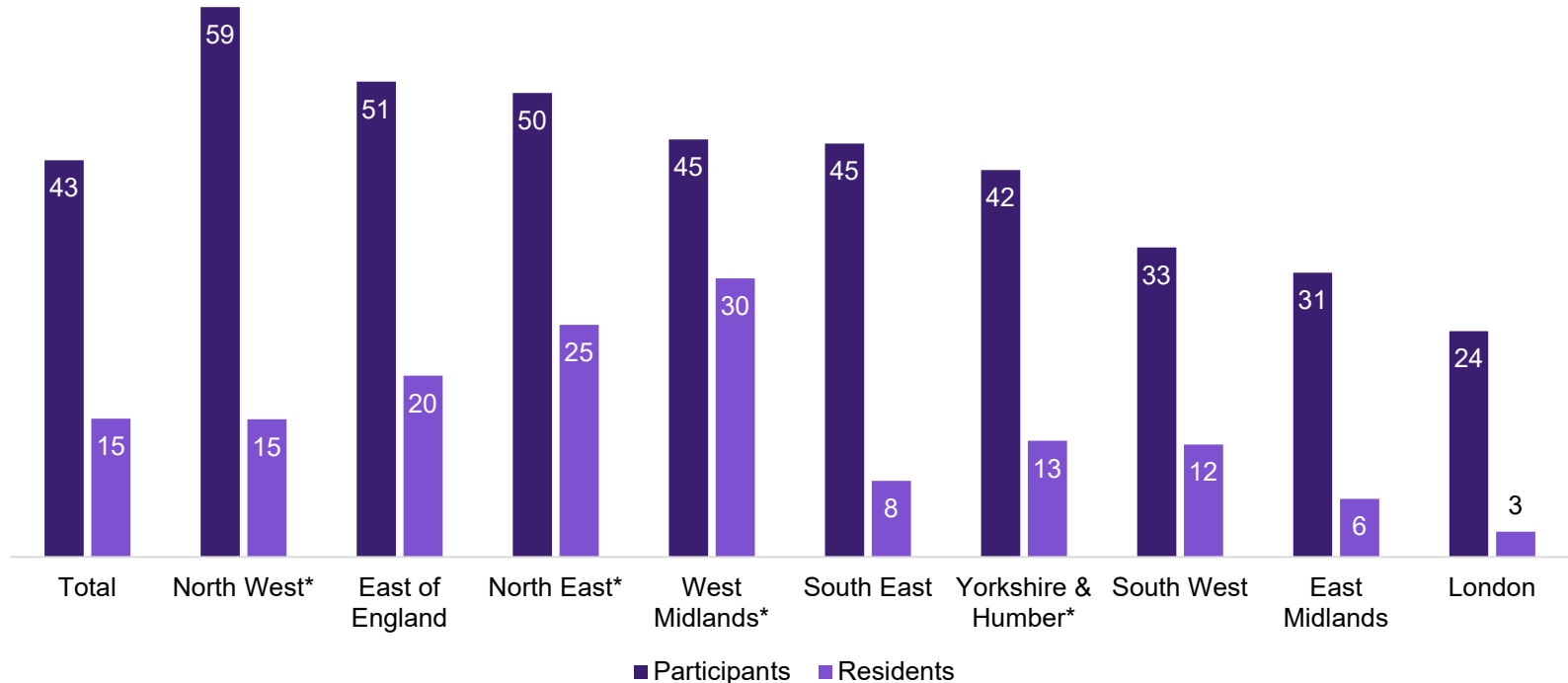
■ = Significantly higher than other authorities

■ = Significantly lower than other authorities

SUPPORT FOR REVIEW OF AUTHORITIES' GREEN BELT

Participants in the North West were most likely to support a review of the green belt, while those in the West Midlands had the highest perceived support from residents

Support a review of their authorities green belt – yes (%)



* Low sample (n<=30), interpret with caution.

Q9/10 - Would you / your residents be prepared to support a review of your authority's Green Belt (if applicable) if it meant that a sufficient supply of land for housing could be achieved? Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=363), East Midlands (n=49), East of England (n=41), London (n=37), North East (n=20), North West (n=27), South East (n=110), South West (n=33), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=24).

LOCAL AUTHORITY INITIATIVE TO DELIVER NEW HOMES

Just shy of a third of local authorities had taken some form of action to deliver new homes in their local area, with wholly-owned housing companies and partnerships the most common methods

Local authority has taken action to deliver new homes & methods used (%)



Q11. Has your local authority taken a decision to deliver new homes itself? / Q12. If yes, then by which method? * Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.
 Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=361), East Midlands (n=48), East of England (n=41), London (n=37), North East (n=20), North West (n=27), South East (n=109), South West (n=33), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=24).



BIGGEST LOCAL CHALLENGES

Slow build-out by developers was by far the most common challenge overall, while a lack of suitable sites was a significantly higher issue in London and the South East

| Biggest challenges to housing delivery in local authority area % | TOTAL | Yorkshire & Humber | North East | East Midlands | South West | North West | West Midlands | South East | East of England | London |
|--|-------|--------------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|--------|
| Slow build-out by developers | 65 | 79 | 74 | 73 | 70 | 65 | 65 | 57 | 51 | 46 |
| Strength of community opposition | 41 | 58 | 32 | 31 | 42 | 42 | 40 | 48 | 41 | 32 |
| Lack of suitable sites | 36 | 21 | 26 | 25 | 36 | 35 | 35 | 52 | 27 | 62 |
| Lack of resources in planning team | 22 | 25 | 26 | 10 | 24 | 19 | 25 | 17 | 22 | 27 |
| Lack of up-to-date Local Plan | 16 | 33 | 5 | 15 | 12 | 19 | 10 | 14 | 27 | 11 |
| Other | 16 | 4 | 21 | 19 | 15 | 19 | 10 | 17 | 20 | 19 |
| <i>Column n</i> | 356 | 24* | 19* | 48 | 33 | 26* | 20* | 107 | 41 | 37 |

Q13. In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges to housing delivery in your authority area? (tick all that apply)
 Base: All respondents who gave a response – as shown on the chart.

* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

 = Significantly higher than other authorities
 = Significantly lower than other authorities

HOUSING DELIVERY TEST & ACCOUNTABILITY

A significant majority agree that developers are most responsible for delivering against targets in their local plan

Most responsible for delivering homes against local plan target (%)



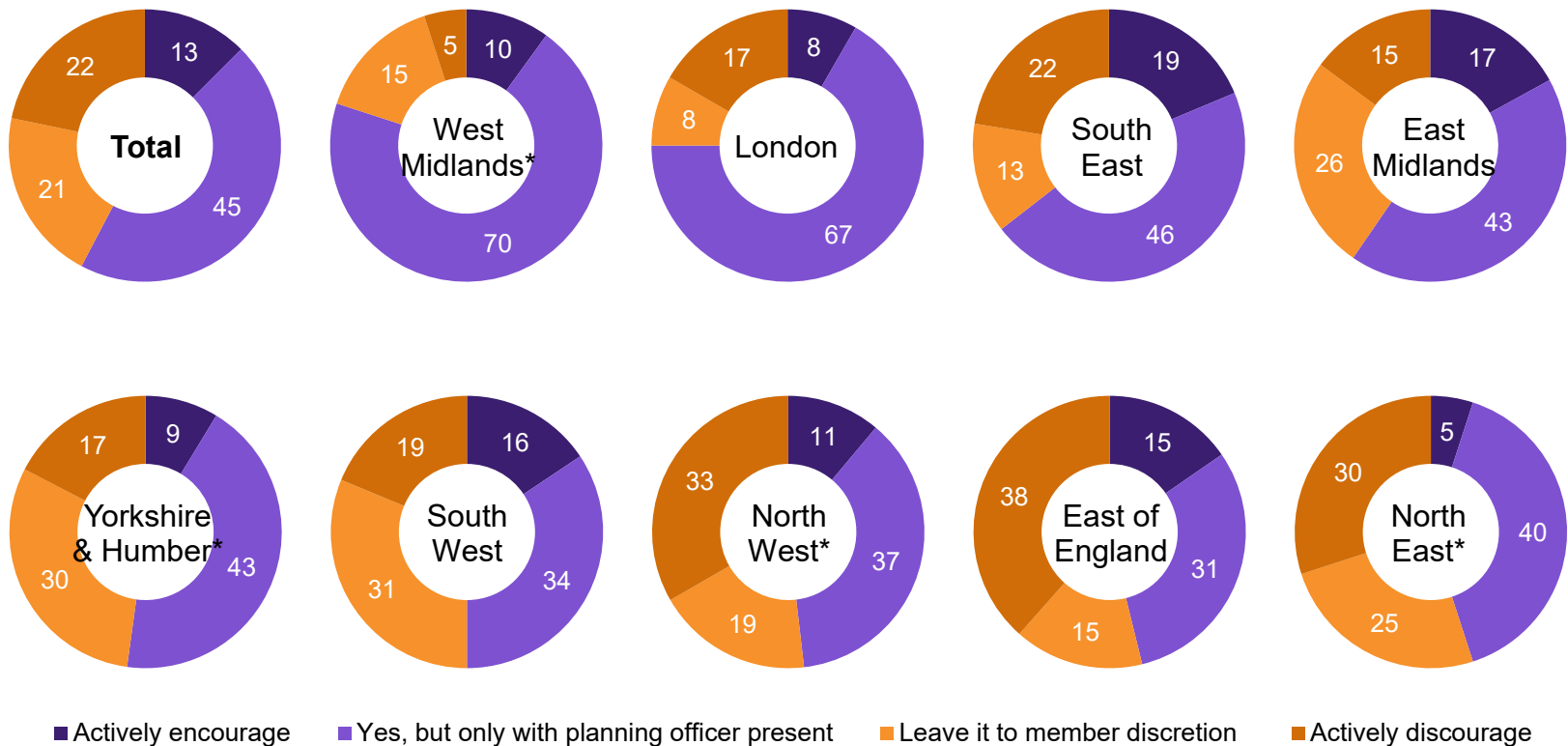
Q14. The Housing Delivery Test holds local authorities to account for the number of homes delivered against the target in their Local Plan. In your opinion, who is most responsible for delivering against that target?
 Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=356), East Midlands (n=48), East of England (n=41), London (n=36), North East (n=20), North West (n=25), South East (n=108), South West (n=33), West Midlands (n=19), Yorkshire & Humber (n=24).

* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

MEETINGS BETWEEN DEVELOPERS AND COMMITTEES

A majority of all participants were open to meetings between developers and committee members, though most specify the need for a planning officer to be present

Attitude towards meetings between developers and committee members (%)

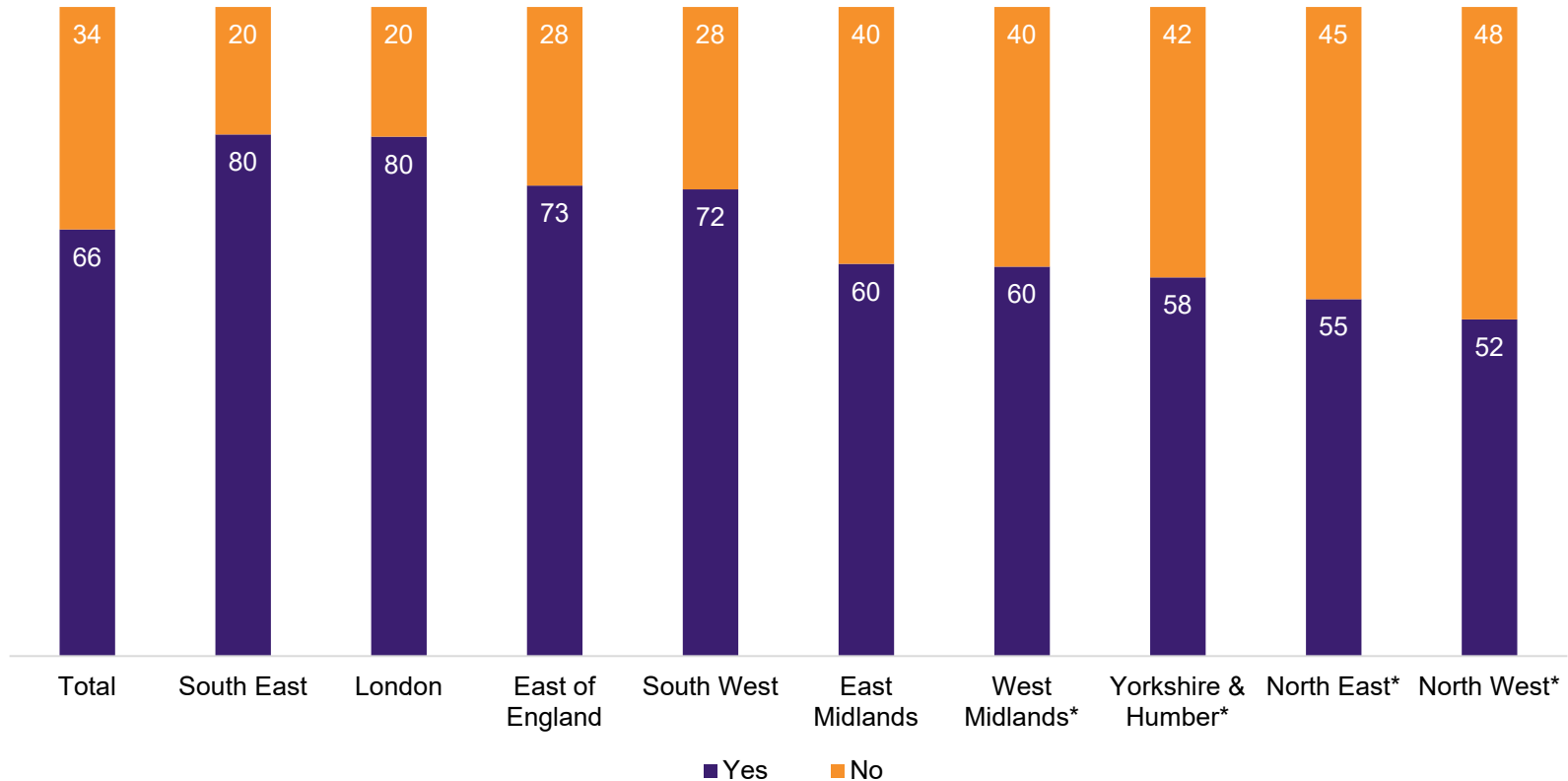


Q15. What is the view of officers in your authority towards meetings between developers and committee members on planning applications? Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=354), East Midlands (n=47), East of England (n=39), London (n=36), North East (n=20), North West (n=27), South East (n=107), South West (n=32), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=23). * Low sample (n<30), interpret with caution.

ATTENDANCE AT DEVELOPER PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Two thirds of all participants had attended a developer consultation in the last 12 months, with those in the South East and London the most likely to have done so

Attended a developer's public consultation in the last 12 months (%)



Q16. Have you attended a developer's public consultation event in the past 12 months?

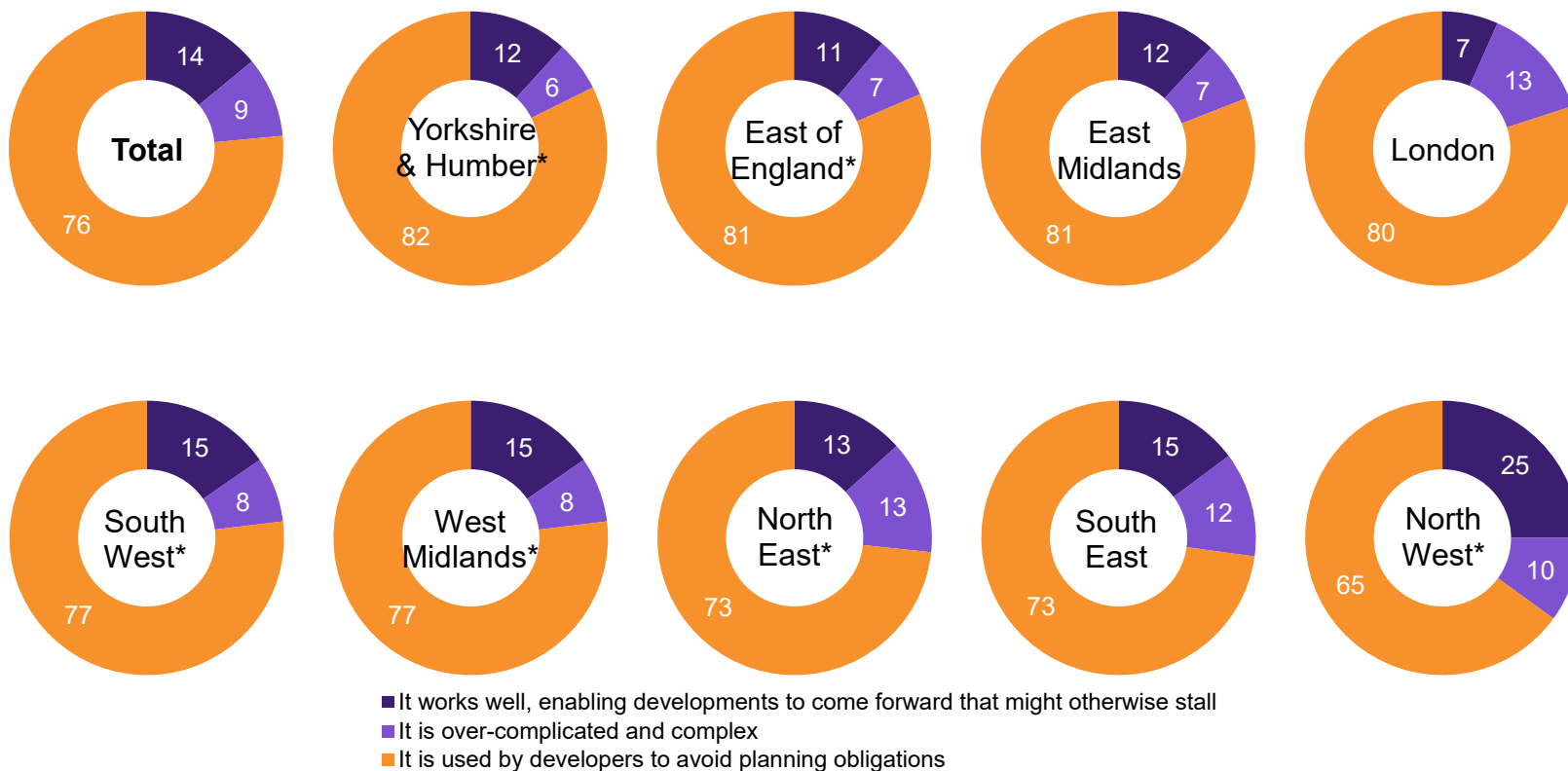
* Low sample (n<30), interpret with caution.

Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=355), East Midlands (n=48), East of England (n=40), London (n=35), North East (n=20), North West (n=27), South East (n=107), South West (n=32), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=24).

VIABILITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

More than three in four agreed that the viability assessment system is used by developers to avoid planning obligations

Description of the viability assessment system (%)



Q17. Which of these best describes the viability assessment system?

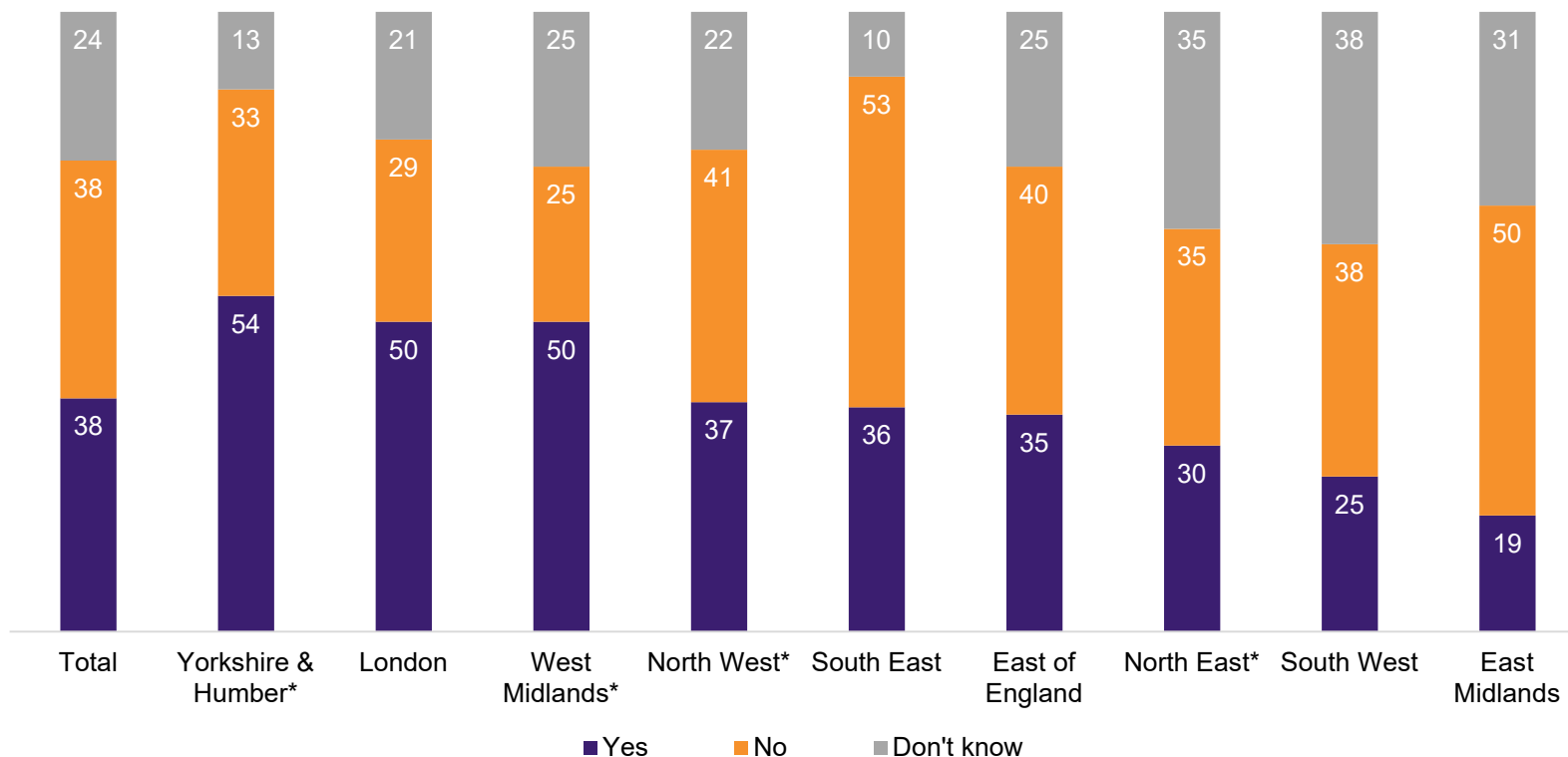
Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=271), East Midlands (n=42), East of England (n=27), London (n=30), North East (n=15), North West (n=20), South East (n=81), South West (n=26), West Midlands (n=13), Yorkshire & Humber (n=17).

* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

VIABILITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Yorkshire & Humber, London, and the West Midlands were most likely to have adopted tougher stances towards viability assessments in the last 12 months

Committee has adopted a tougher approach towards viability assessments in the last 12 months (%)



Q18. Has your Committee adopted a tougher approach towards viability assessments over the past 12 months?

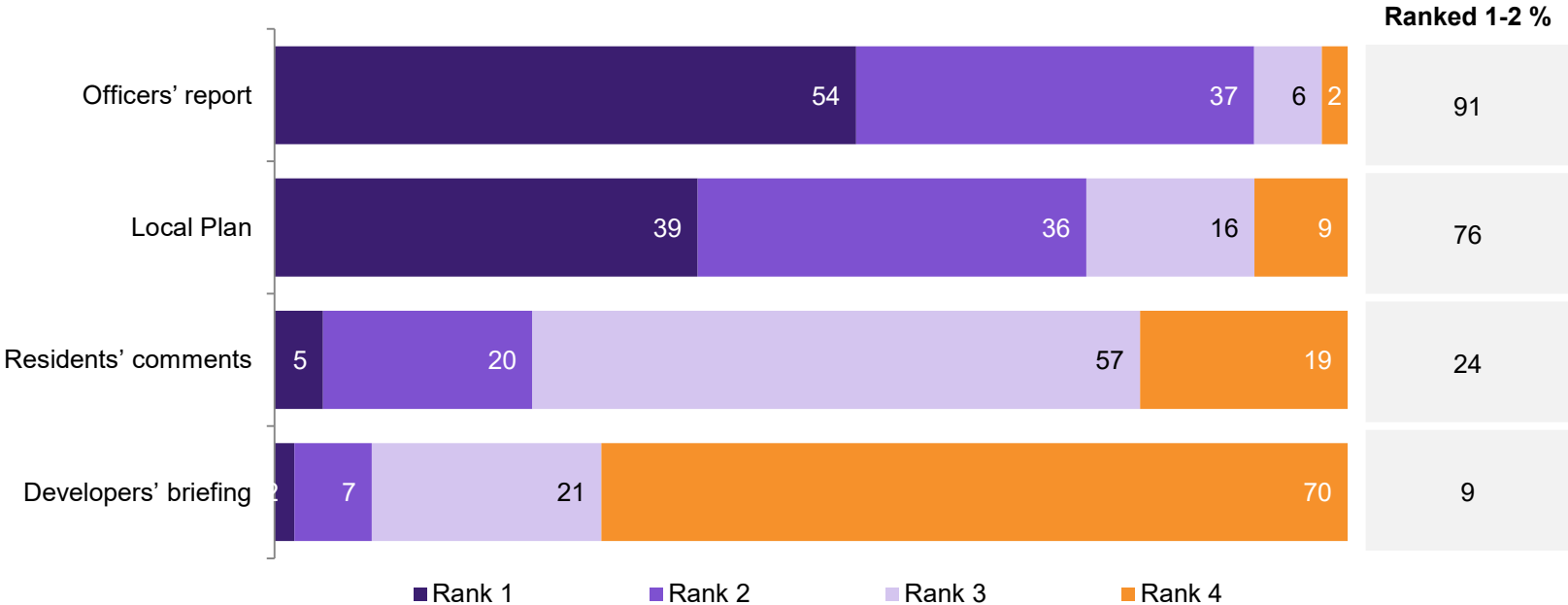
* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=352), East Midlands (n=48), East of England (n=40), London (n=34), North East (n=20), North West (n=27), South East (n=105), South West (n=32), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=24).

INFLUENCE ON APPLICATIONS

Officers' reports were deemed the most influential factor in determining an application, followed by local plans

Ranked influences in determining an application 1-4 (%)



Q19. Please rank the following in terms of relative levels of influence when determining an application.
 Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data (n=321).

* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

INFLUENCE ON APPLICATIONS

Officers' reports were deemed the most influential factor in determining an application, followed by local plans

| Column % | TOTAL | London | North West | Yorkshire & Humber | South West | East Midlands | West Midlands | North East | East of England | South East |
|----------------------|-------|--------|------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Officers' report | 54 | 66 | 63 | 57 | 55 | 51 | 50 | 50 | 49 | 48 |
| Local Plan | 39 | 31 | 29 | 38 | 34 | 42 | 39 | 50 | 49 | 42 |
| Residents' comments | 5 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Developers' briefing | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Column n | 321 | 32 | 24 | 21 | 29 | 45 | 18 | 18 | 37 | 97 |

Q19. Please rank the following in terms of relative levels of influence when determining an application.
Base: All respondents who gave a response – as shown on the chart.

* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.



IMPROVING AFFORDABILITY

The most common suggestions for improving affordability included focussing on delivering more affordable homes, building more homes generally, and increasing rental supply

| Suggestions to improve affordability % | TOTAL | Yorkshire & Humber | South East | North East | East of England | London | East Midlands | West Midlands | South West | North West |
|--|-------|--------------------|------------|------------|-----------------|--------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| Focus on delivery of affordable homes | 80 | 96 | 87 | 85 | 83 | 82 | 77 | 75 | 73 | 65 |
| Build more homes generally | 54 | 70 | 54 | 55 | 55 | 68 | 53 | 35 | 53 | 42 |
| Increasing the supply of rental property | 49 | 43 | 38 | 55 | 38 | 53 | 45 | 55 | 67 | 42 |
| Restrict purchase of new homes to local people for an initial fixed period | 29 | 35 | 37 | 10 | 33 | 41 | 26 | 30 | 33 | 19 |
| Reduce stamp duty tax | 28 | 26 | 46 | 20 | 35 | 18 | 21 | 35 | 27 | 19 |
| Provide more financial incentives to purchasers | 24 | 17 | 28 | 30 | 30 | 3 | 23 | 30 | 27 | 23 |
| Develop garden villages | 23 | 22 | 27 | 20 | 50 | 9 | 26 | 20 | 17 | 12 |
| Easier access to finance for developers | 11 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 17 | 15 |
| Affordability is not an issue in my area | 3 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Other | 6 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 18 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| Column n | 346 | 23* | 104 | 20* | 40 | 34 | 47 | 20* | 30 | 26* |

Q20. How can affordability be improved in your authority area? Please tick all that apply.
Base: All respondents who gave a response – as shown on the chart.

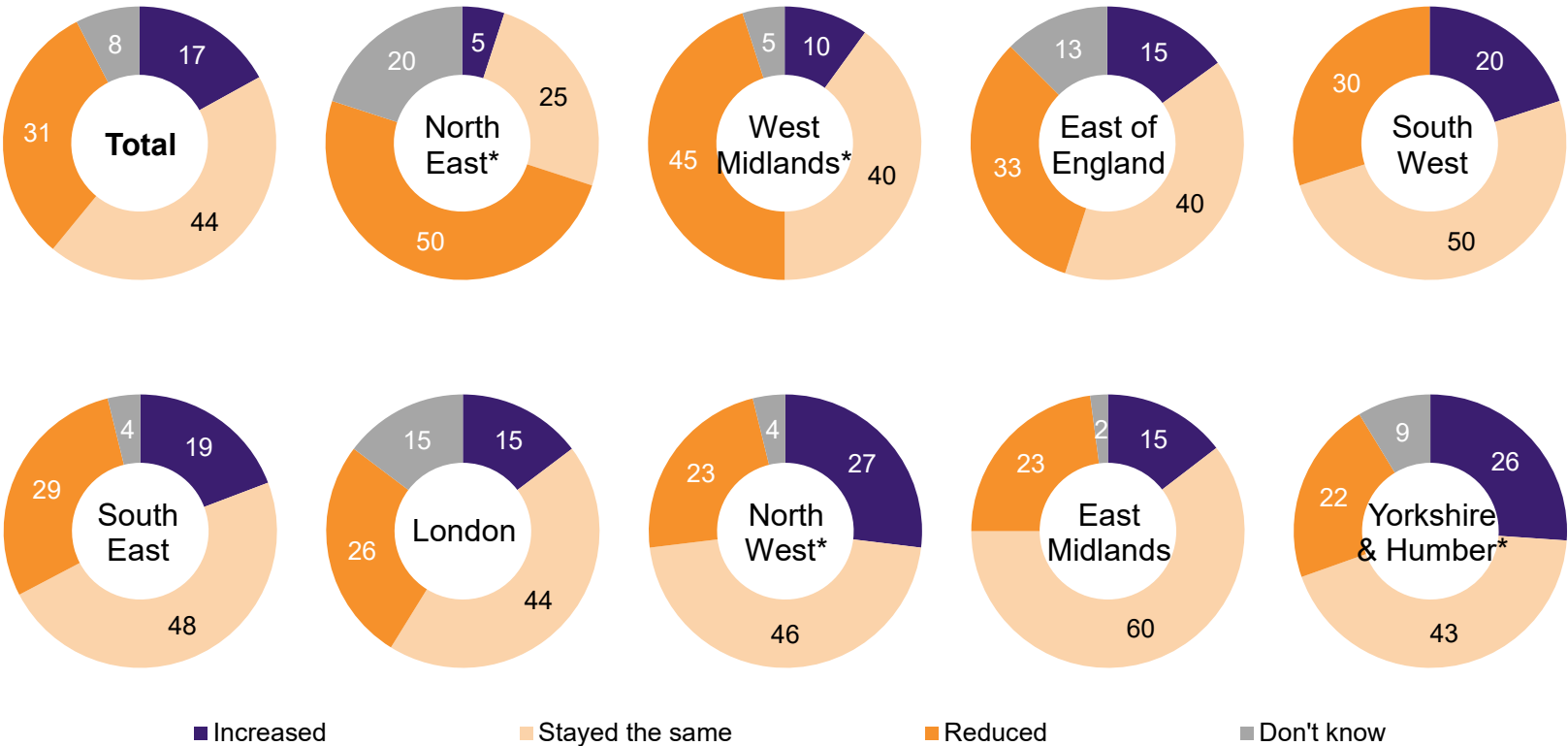
* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

 = Significantly higher than other authorities
 = Significantly lower than other authorities

PLANNING OFFICER RESOURCE

Just under a third of all participants believe that the planning officer resource at their local authority has been reduced in the last 12 months

Change in planning officer resource in the last 12 months (%)



Q21. Over the past 12 months, has the planning officer resource at your local authority...
 Base: All respondents who gave a response – Weighted data – Total (n=347), East Midlands (n=48), East of England (n=40), London (n=34), North East (n=20), North West (n=26), South East (n=104), South West (n=30), West Midlands (n=20), Yorkshire & Humber (n=23).
 * Low sample (n<30), interpret with caution.



VOTING AGAINST OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

9 out of 10 participants had voted against their planning officers recommendations at least once in the last 12 months

| Frequency voted against planning officer <12 months % | TOTAL | East of England | South West | East Midlands | West Midlands | South East | London | Yorkshire & Humber | North West | North East |
|---|-------|-----------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------|--------|--------------------|------------|------------|
| None | 9 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 13 | 19 | 22 |
| 1-2 times | 25 | 16 | 23 | 31 | 30 | 26 | 38 | 26 | 12 | 28 |
| 3-5 times | 40 | 39 | 53 | 33 | 25 | 42 | 32 | 35 | 50 | 50 |
| 6-10 times | 16 | 26 | 17 | 19 | 30 | 14 | 9 | 9 | 19 | 0 |
| Over 10 times | 8 | 18 | 3 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| Don't know | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Column n | 343 | 38 | 30 | 48 | 20* | 104 | 34 | 23* | 26* | 18* |

Q22. How often, in the past 12 months, have you voted against your officers' recommendations?
Base: All respondents who gave a response – as shown on the chart.

* Low sample (n=<30), interpret with caution.

 = Significantly higher than other authorities
 = Significantly lower than other authorities

VOTING AGAINST OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS



The most common grounds for voting against planning officer recommendations were neighbouring amenity, design, and highways & access – however there was a significantly higher number of votes based on affordable provision in London

| Grounds for voting against planning officer recommendation % | TOTAL | North West | West Midlands | South West | South East | East of England | Yorkshire & Humber | London | North East | East Midlands |
|--|-------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------|------------|---------------|
| Neighbouring amenity | 57 | 71 | 63 | 62 | 57 | 55 | 55 | 50 | 50 | 49 |
| Design | 57 | 62 | 79 | 52 | 60 | 53 | 45 | 53 | 43 | 60 |
| Highways and access | 50 | 57 | 63 | 59 | 56 | 53 | 50 | 20 | 29 | 53 |
| Affordable provision | 32 | 33 | 32 | 28 | 25 | 24 | 35 | 77 | 21 | 19 |
| Height | 18 | 24 | 26 | 10 | 15 | 18 | 15 | 33 | 7 | 16 |
| Other | 28 | 14 | 11 | 34 | 30 | 39 | 30 | 30 | 29 | 33 |
| Column n | 313 | 21* | 19* | 29* | 97 | 38 | 20* | 30 | 14* | 43 |

Q23. On what grounds did you vote against your officers' recommendation?.

* Low sample (n<=30), interpret with caution.

Base: Respondents who had voted against planning officer recommendation in the last 12 months and gave a response – as shown on the chart.

 = Significantly higher than other authorities
 = Significantly lower than other authorities

Further information.

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