You've told us what you think.

Now let's decide what to do.

The story so far

The Black Isle is being supported by Highland Council to prepare its own community-led plan for the future.

The **first stage**, between March and May, took place at 9 drop-in events around the Black Isle, online, and through school events - which are still continuing. The point was to establish what matters to the Black Isle community as a whole.

The **second stage**, focussing on today's two events, is to share everyone's feedback and organise more events to explore solutions and actions.

The **third stage** will take place over the summer. We will share a draft a plan for everyone to check and review before it is finalised.

Once the Black Isle plan is finished later in the year, it will be **the community's plan**: a blueprint for action by local communities, the public sector and investors.

11
drop-in events
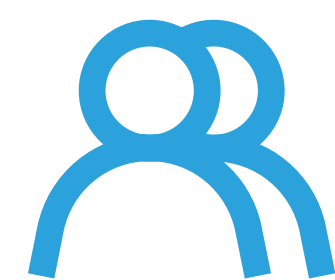
466
participants

60
online responses

over 3,000
comments

Why have we invited you back?

1. **So you can see and discuss the results from the first stage.**

Each pair of display boards has the questions and information from the first stage, plus a new board summarising results and quotes.

2. **So you can explore how to address the emerging priorities.**

You'll see ideas and experience from elsewhere to get you thinking. You might have other ideas too. Let's be ambitious but practical!
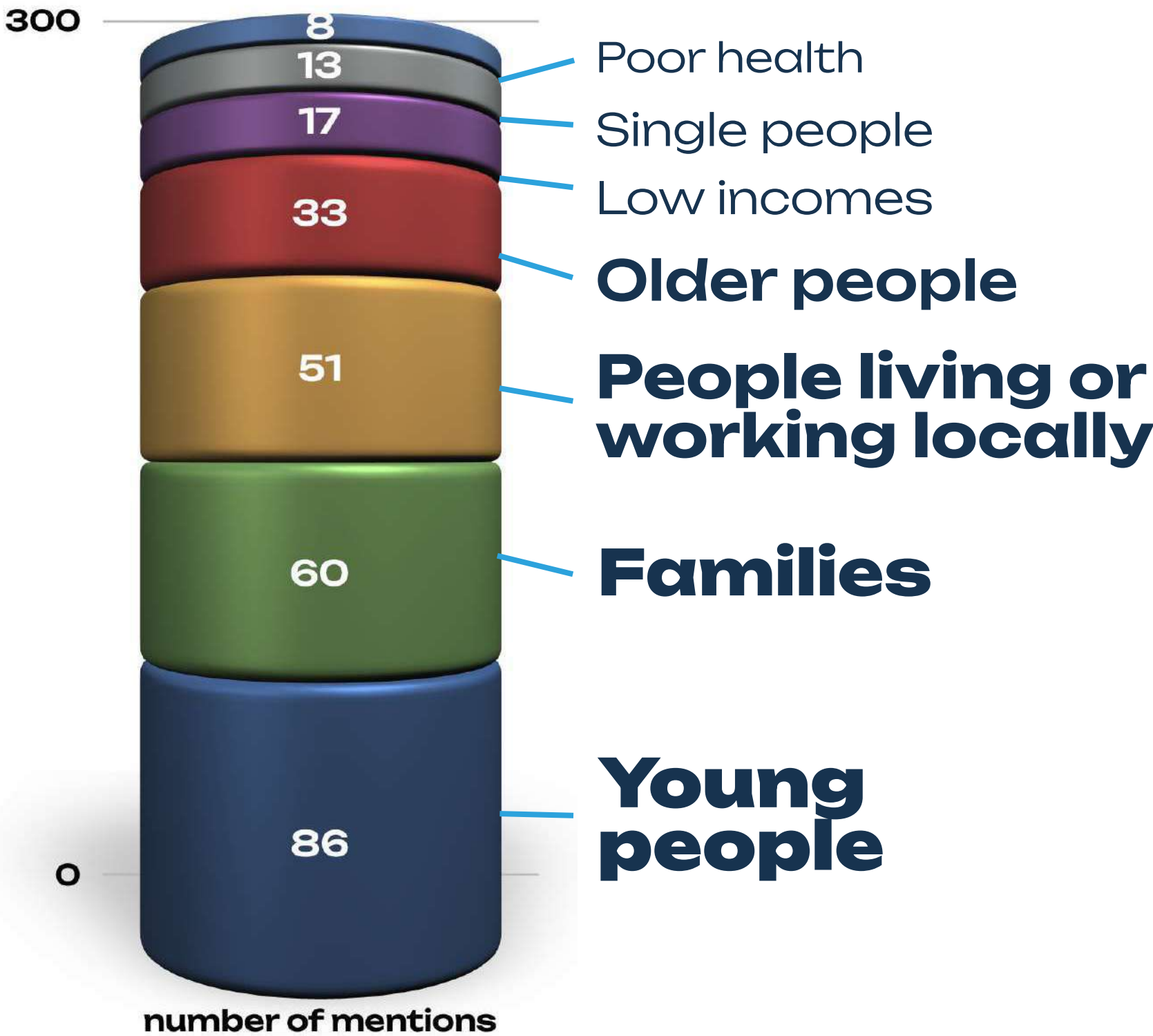
1 **Population & housing**
2 **Community facilities & services**
3 **Getting about**
4 **Jobs and business**
5 **Nature & environment**
6 **Tourism**
7 Anything else?

1 Population & housing

Who particularly needs homes locally?

300

- 8 — Poor health
- 13 — Single people
- 17 — Low incomes
- 33 — **Older people**
- 51 — **People living or working locally**
- 60 — **Families**
- 86 — **Young people**

0

number of mentions

Young people, with limited funds who want to stay on the Black Isle or return to it to work
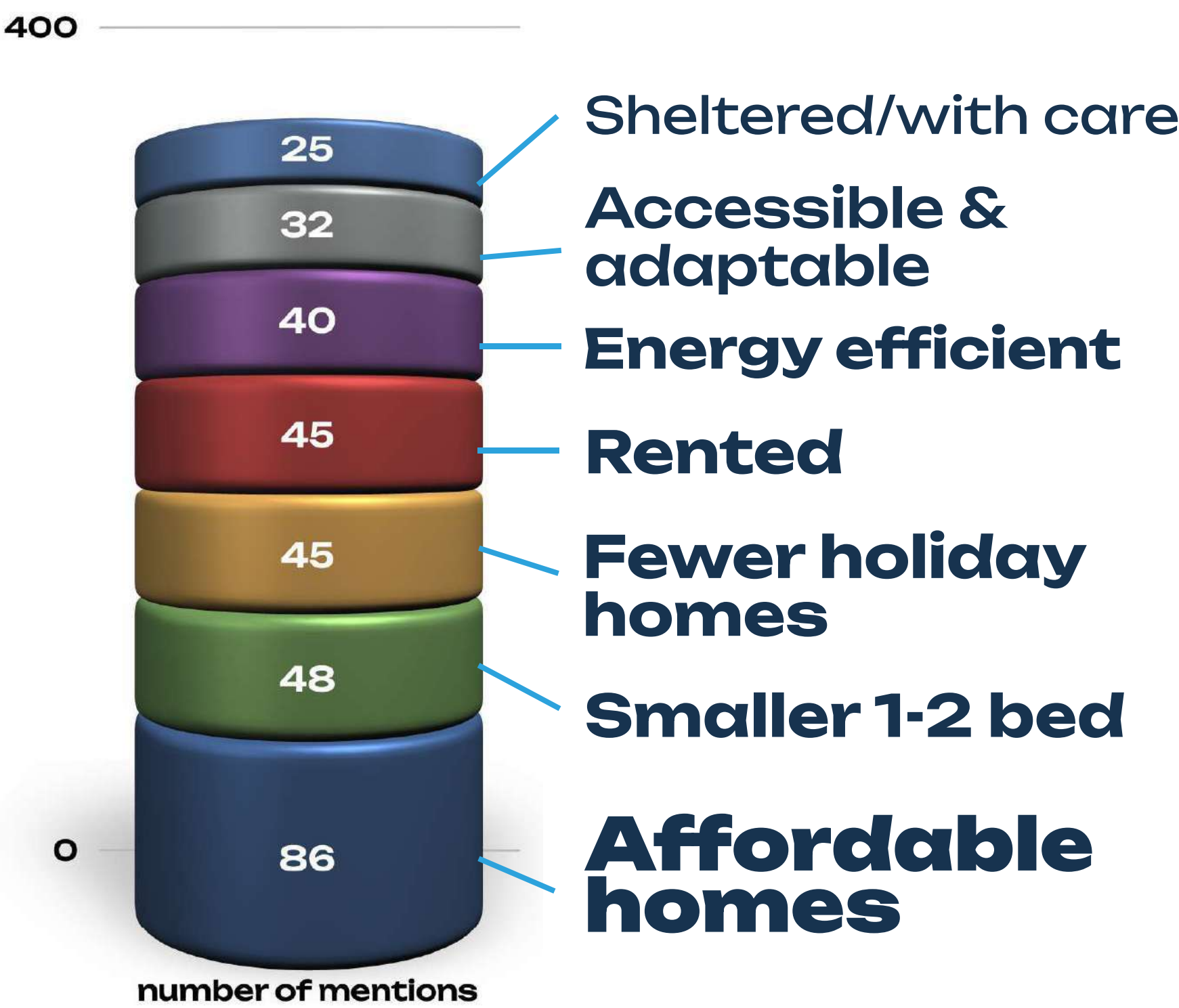
all localities need to grow sensibly...Small scale is the way, distributed across existing settlements

A variety of housing for different age groups and needs

Existing population when aging need to downsize/find an adapted home to remain self-sufficient in own area.

In North Kessock, we have had a lot of housing growth in the last decade. Lots of young families now which is great, but ... no new facilities. Impossible for young people to stay locally once they leave home.

What kind of homes do our communities need?

400

- 25 — Sheltered/with care
- 32 — **Accessible & adaptable**
- 40 — **Energy efficient**
- 45 — **Rented**
- 45 — **Fewer holiday homes**
- 48 — **Smaller 1-2 bed**
- 86 — **Affordable homes**

0

number of mentions

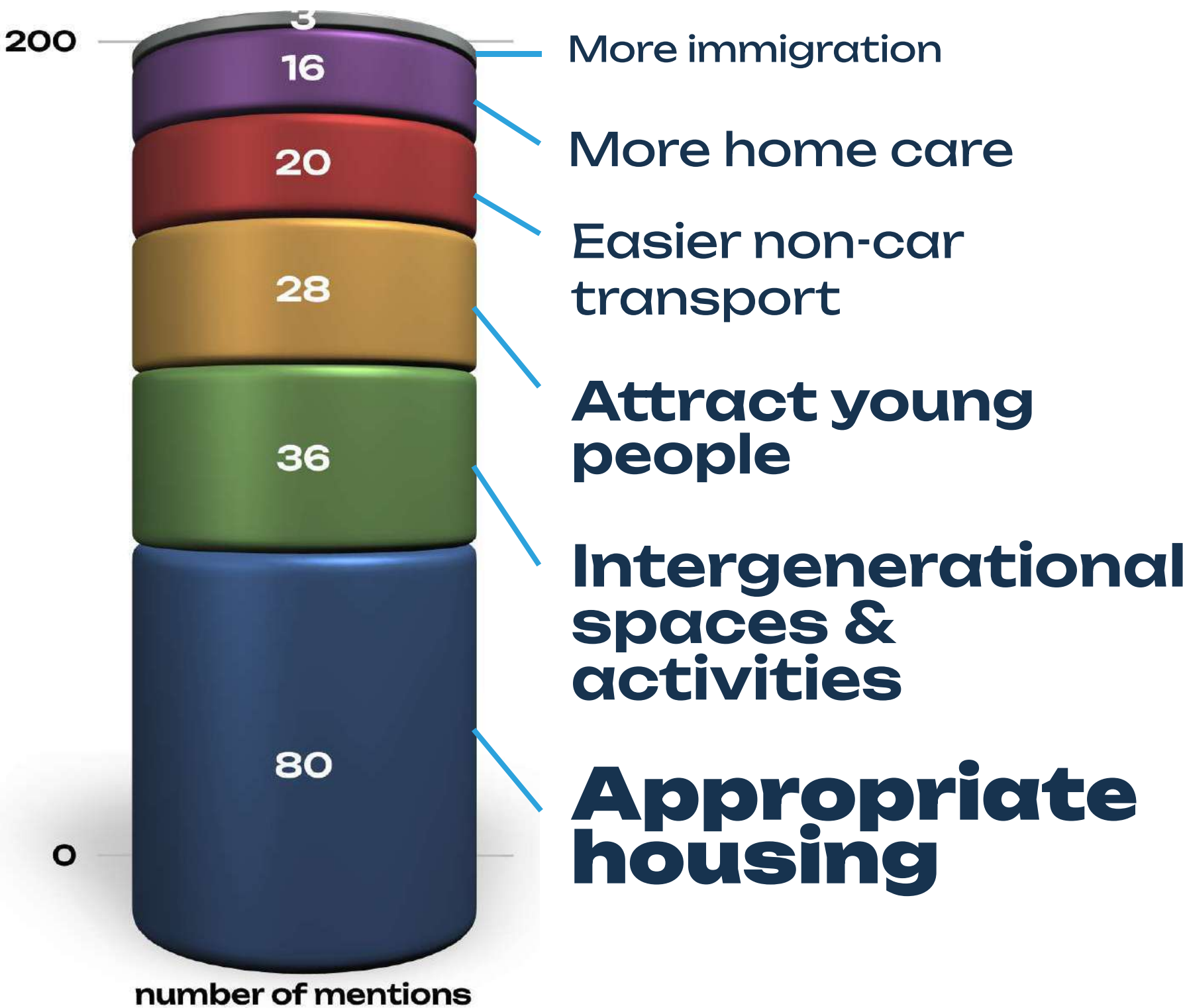*Smaller properties for young couples and downsizing older people*

Social housing prioritising those who are from local area and/or work in local area

Old housing stock expensive to heat/renovate. Unaffordable to young people and many working families.

Restrict holiday home purchases – introduce conditions/restrictions

Smaller, affordable, eco-friendly, low cost to run homes - well insulated, solar panels, low cost heating

How should our communities respond to having more older people & fewer younger people?

200

- 3 — More immigration
- 16 — More home care
- 20 — Easier non-car transport
- 28 — **Attract young people**
- 36 — **Intergenerational spaces & activities**
- 80 — **Appropriate housing**

0

number of mentions

More jobs

Tax holiday homes heavily

More frequent and later public transport links making it more enticing for young people to move to the area, more local places to visit. A gym/ leisure centre. More opportunities for dining and shops.

Support networks, appropriate activities ... and support for older folk and folk living alone.

Community bursaries to support our young people through education, with proviso they work for a set period in the community!

Housing for Local Needs Association for Black Isle, with homes in each community and local nomination
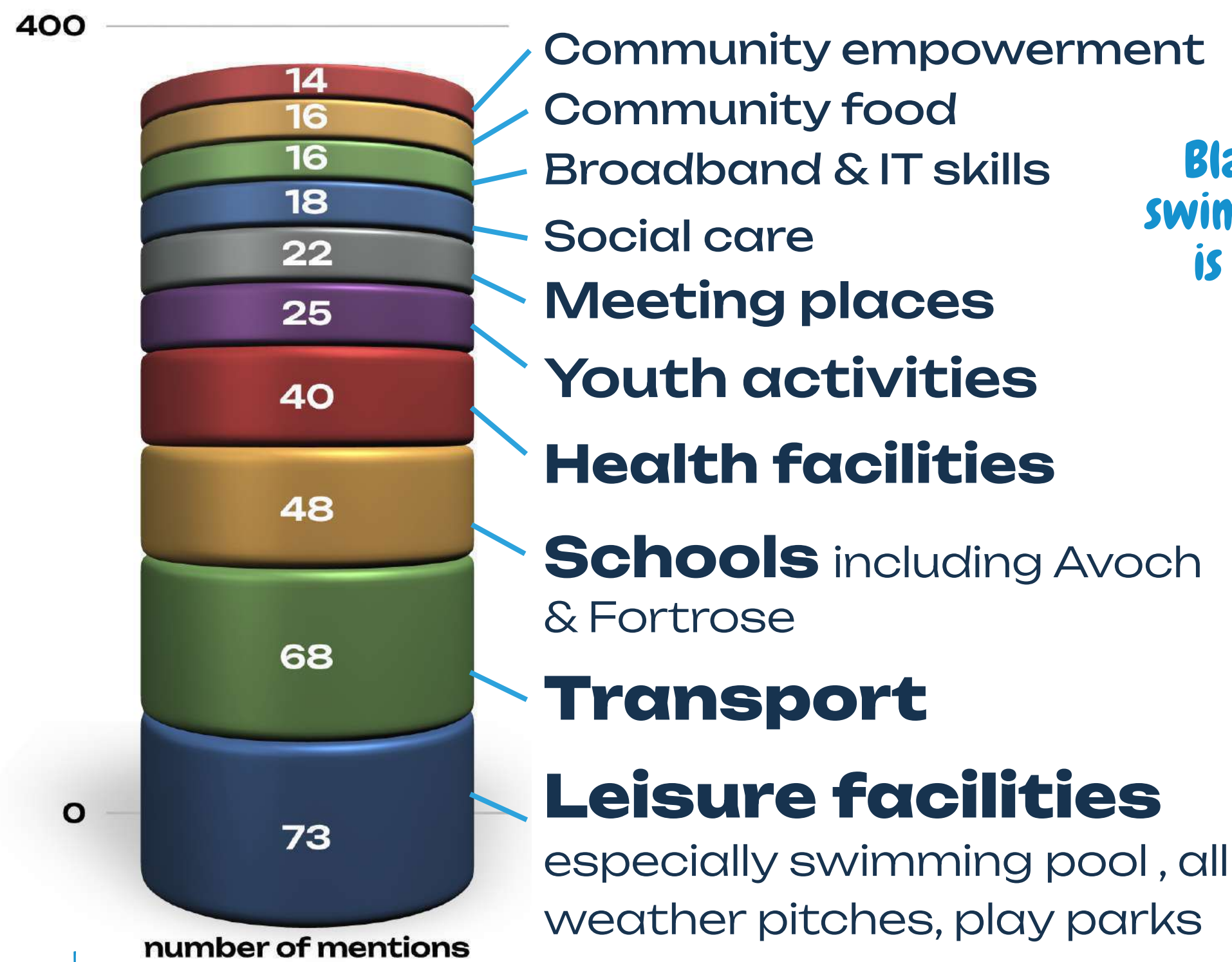
Thinking of our health & wellbeing:

What and where are the **gaps in services, facilities and activities** across the Black Isle?

The schools (at all levels) need upgraded they're falling apart!

Skateparks would be good

400

- 14 — Community empowerment
- 16 — Community food
- 16 — Broadband & IT skills
- 18 — Social care
- 22 — **Meeting places**
- 25 — **Youth activities**
- 40 — **Health facilities**
- 48 — **Schools** including Avoch & Fortrose
- 68 — **Transport**
- 73 — **Leisure facilities** especially swimming pool, all weather pitches, play parks

0

number of mentions

Black Isle needs a swimming pool, there is a fund started (years ago)

I like swimming, but you have to drive ages to get there so I think there should be a swimming pool.

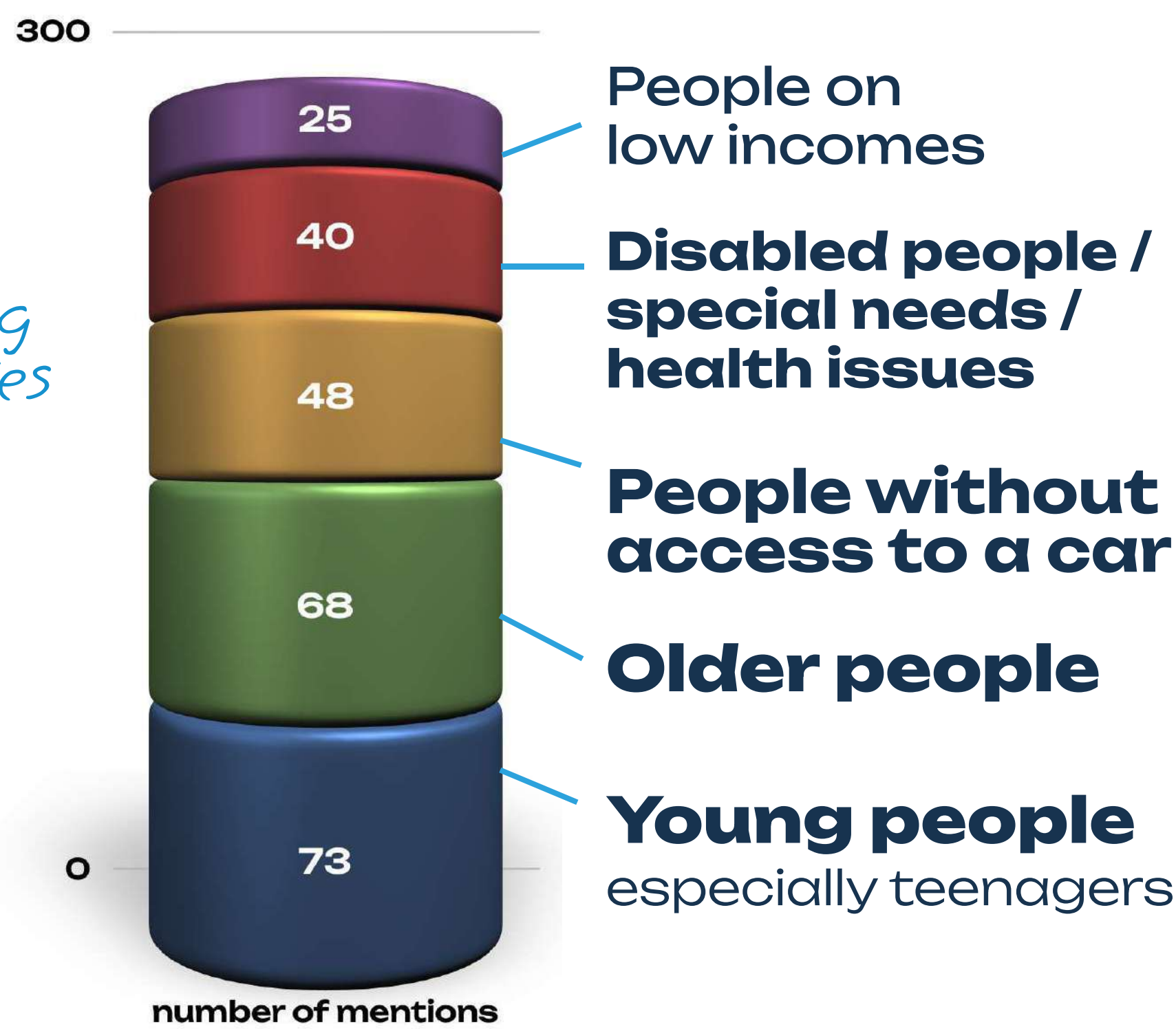*All weather and floodlit sports pitches (see Tomatin)*

Access to health services, GP, hospital etc

Public transport very poor for non-drivers, young or old. Access to health services. Need more access to social opportunities – café, events, etc

Who in our communities is being **left behind?**

Young families

Points system has to be revised. Too many people are being allocated housing who are moving onto the Black Isle. People who already live and work on the Black Isle should be given priority.

300

- 25 — People on low incomes
- 40 — **Disabled people / special needs / health issues**
- 48 — **People without access to a car**
- 68 — **Older people**
- 73 — **Young people** especially teenagers

0

number of mentions

Young people (15–25ish). Those without cars. Low income (no transport, higher food costs locally).

Elderly. Disabled. Non-drivers.

Cinema in Cromarty doesn't cater for teenagers. I'd like a better range of films – too adult or child orientated and we don't get asked what we would like to see

Low paid, seasonal, zero-contract workers … Young people who seek opportunities other than going to university. People who feel isolated.

What are the opportunities & challenges, small or big, for communities to do more for themselves?

70

- 10 — Land and buildings
- 13 — Public sector collaboration
- 17 — Volunteer capacity
- 21 — Funding

0

number of mentions

Challenges

Challenges – volunteer exhaustion, funding, Highland Council cooperation.

Opportunities: community trust, community ownership

30

- 3 — Involve more young people
- 3 — Community gardens
- 3 — Community clean ups
- 3 — Climate change
- 5 — Create community hub
- 6 — Volunteers
- 6 — Community ownership

0

number of mentions

Opportunities

What are the **challenges of getting about** within and between our communities, and further afield to nearby places, **particularly for people without access to a car?**

400

- 23 — Roads maintenance
- 41 — **Safe walking** including footways, surfaces, dropped kerbs, lighting, in & around villages
- 55 — **Road safety** especially traffic speeds & volume
- 65 — **Safe cycling** especially lack of safe network of routes
- 140 — **Public transport** especially bus routes, times & reliability

0

number of mentions
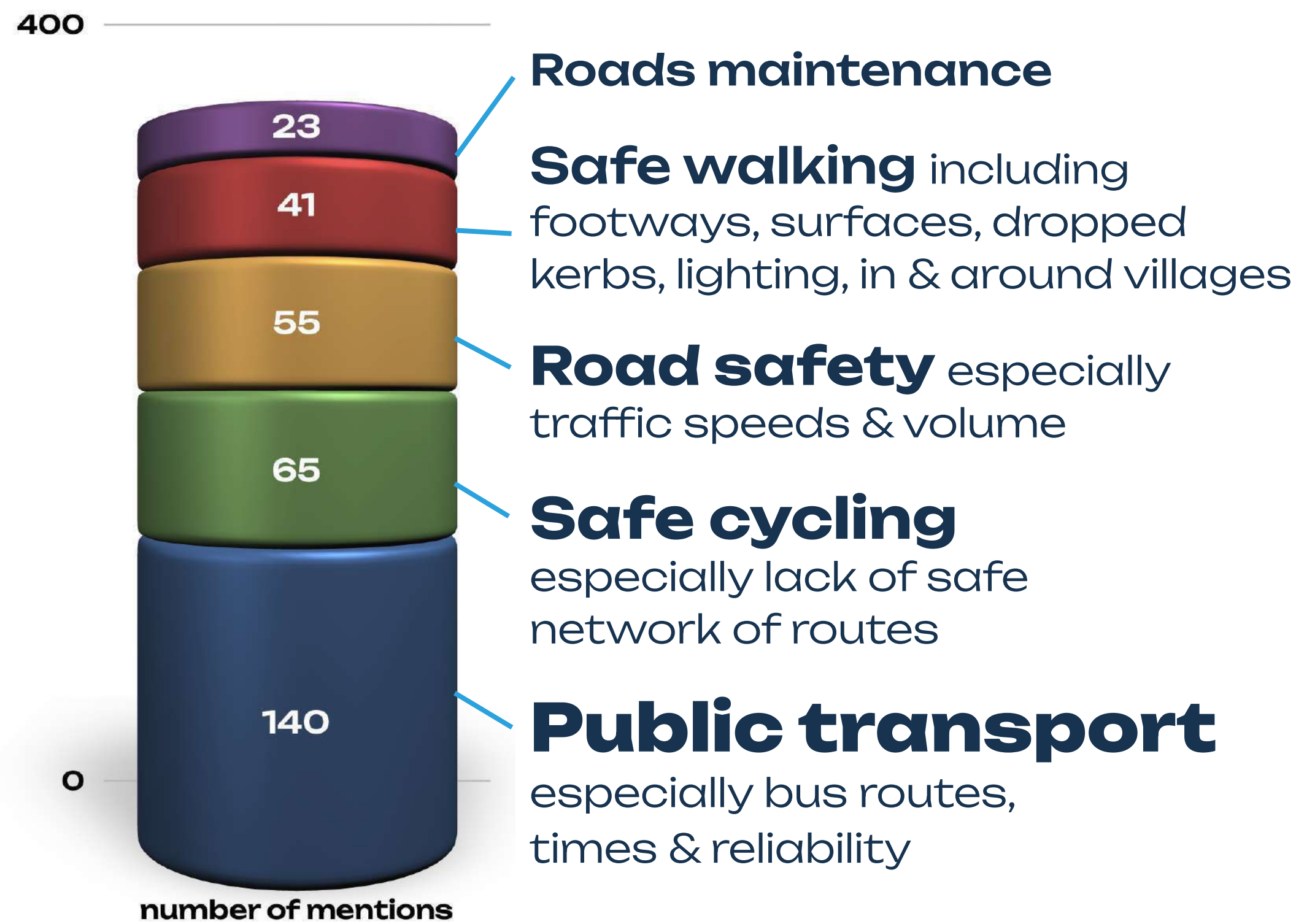
The roads are very unpleasant places to be if you are a pedestrian or cyclist

Traffic is terrible in Munlochy. Pollution and noise, awful.

Poor to non existent public transport between communities. Cycle and walking isn't always practical... Transport to & from Fortrose for the sports centre and late activities at school would help.

No regular bus route linking south side to Resolis / Culbokie / Dingwall

Infrequent bus timetable not into Community everywhere. No Black Isle only bus!

Paths on rural roads

Pavements and walking routes – poor surfaces, lack of drop kerbs for mobility issues

Studying at UHI just isn't practical

Electric bikes for rent

Volume of traffic on most roads (and speeds plus potholes) makes cycling dangerous

Buses infrequent (and unreliable at times). Routes on a loop (e.g. Jemimaville/Mount High and Davidton). Get charged charge for two journeys if going through Cromarty.

How can we **make it safer, more sustainable and more affordable** to move around our towns, villages and further afield?

300

- 19 — Car share
- 44 — **Walking** especially safer footways & pedestrian-friendly villages
- 46 — **Roads** including speed limits, potholes, A9 junctions
- 92 — **Public transport** especially buses & community transport, also taxis, ferries & rail
- 95 — **Cycling** especially safe routes, also electric bikes & bikes on buses

0

number of mentions
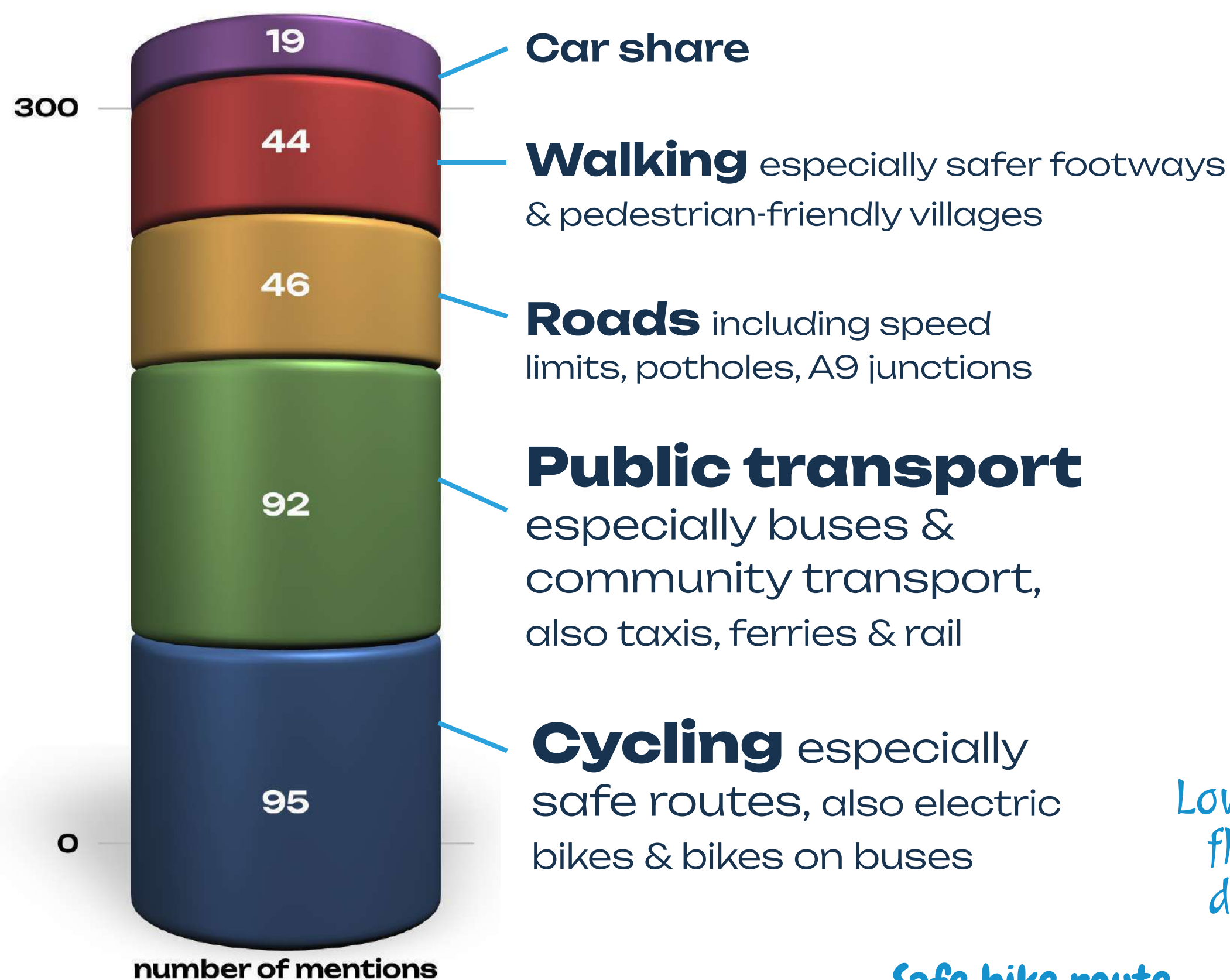
NIGG FERRY ALL YEAR, SO PEOPLE CAN WORK THERE.

A circular bus or multiple shuttle buses would be great, especially in summer to help the tourists move around without their cars whilst supporting the high streets.

Are there options for community buses? Low-cost, go where needed, flexible, possible door to door service for disabled people

Free – regular – comfortable public transport. This is the future of any forward thinking, green place

20 mph speed limits in all villages/near schools

Safe cycle track from Muir of Ord to Tore

Separate bike routes from car routes

Paths on rural roads

Safe bike route between Munlochy and Avoch

Bus service that runs round the Black Isle allowing e.g. secondary children access to their friends in evenings.

Smaller more, frequent buses, e.g. trying to get to Fortrose from Cromarty for appointments

What will most **help people access good quality work opportunities** in our communities?

Good comms (broadband, roads), but services to attract/keep people – schools, health, etc.

There aren't enough well-paid jobs

180

- 12 — Childcare
- 13 — Affordable housing & space to work from home
- 20 — Small business / homeworker spaces & networking
- 25 — **Apprenticeships, training & employability services**
- 28 — **Broadband/mobile coverage, digital skills**
- 67 — **Transport**

0

number of mentions

Transport to work and education

Involve Muir - factories, transport links, part of the Green Zone

Business hubs for folk that work at home. Hot desks.

Affordable housing for locals. Schooling with after-school care option. Funding for small businesses.

More non-car transport options, e.g. the MoO industrial estate doesn't even have pavements, never mind a cycle route.

More facilities for start-ups & apprenticeships in all sectors for young folks.

How can we **support local businesses** to thrive?

We need to ensure that there are always local businesses involved in any event, e.g. Loch Ness 24 should have had local stores and musicians.

Vastly improved affordable public transport both within and to outside the Black Isle.

120

- 10 — **Local procurement** by public sector & big firms
- 10 — **Tackle skills shortage** training, apprenticeships, attract skilled workers
- 14 — **Premises** around the Black Isle
- 16 — **Business support** including marketing, energy, development costs
- 20 — **Transport** including public transport, roads, walking & cycling, infrastructure
- 44 — **Use local businesses**

0

number of mentions

Training locally for skills shortages

Renewable sector → significant skills shortage

MORE START UP LOCAL GRANTS

low cost business units for start ups or small businesses that don't necessarily need a shop front

Shop local – use it or lose it

Small business units in the village - so people don't need to only locate in urban centres and jobs available locally.

Where might our **future employment and business opportunities** lie?

Tidal generator in Cromarty. Hydrogen storage battery for communities.

We tend to look inward.. look bigger? We can't all live on cottage industries.

160

- 8 — **Young people**
- 9 — **Trades & construction**
- 10 — **Health & social care**
- 10 — **Green freeport**
- 14 — **Self-employment, homeworking, micro businesses**
- 17 — **Farming, food & land management**
- 18 — **Resilient & sustainable local businesses**
- 25 — **Tourism & leisure**
- 43 — **Green energy & green tech**

0

number of mentions

Remote working, tourism, the care sector, rewilding, hydrogen production and distribution.

Low carbon holidays; walking, cycling, sailing rowing etc

Local food growing feeding into local eateries and community markets

IN HOSPITALITY AS THERE ARE HARDLY ANY RESTURANTS AND CAFES FOR SUCH A TOURISTY LOCATION.

Green energy sector

Renewable energy and energy efficiency

Which aspects of our natural and built environment are most valuable and need most attention?

Number of mentions:

- 7 — Rivers & water quality
- 8 — History & heritage
- 11 — Housing stock
- 13 — Rural character
- 14 — Litter, flytipping, dog dirt
- 20 — Protected sites SSSIs etc
- 20 — Parks & public green spaces
- 25 — Farmland
- 36 — Forest, woodland & hedges
- 51 — Coast & sea dolphins, birds, pollution, erosion, Chanonry Point, Udale Bay

150

0

number of mentions

ENCOURAGE GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE (TOO MANY STERILE GARDENS WITH ONLY GRAVEL AND GRASS).

Nature networks - connect local areas with hedges, trees.

The beaches and sea - treat them well. The footpaths locally are badly signed and poorly maintained.

Erosion along the beach, particularly the walk out to Chanonry Point

Green spaces need protected in villages

Use local resources, e.g. for construction. Community energy. Funding to retrofit all homes. Rewilding. Consume less.

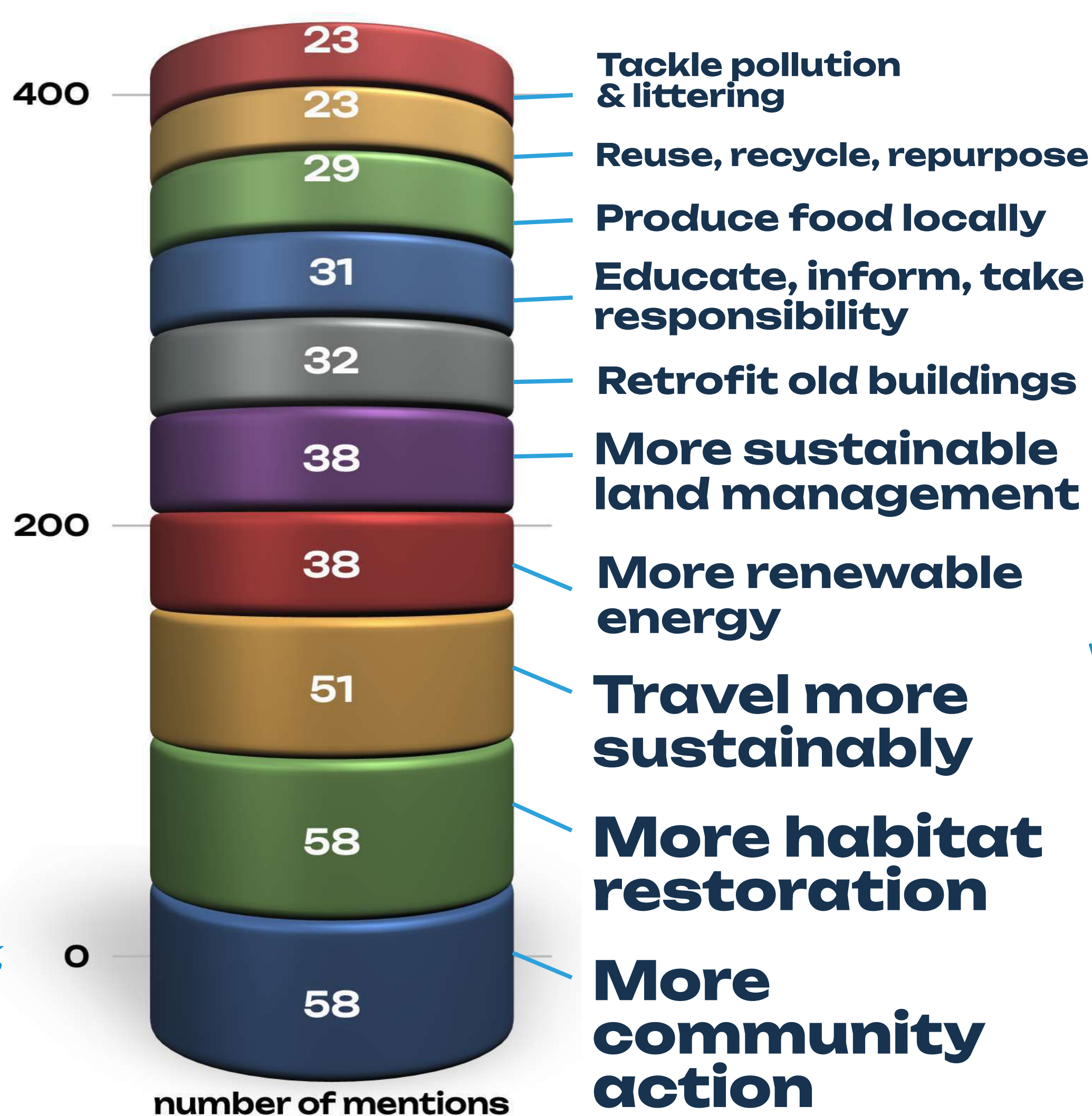*Coastal wildlife and birds, number one resource and need protecting!*

Can we improve the sea bed in our inner firth? Have heard of seaweed planting in other places. Get fish back in the firth?

No net loss of biodiversity. Wildlife-friendly land management practices incentivised.

Too much spraying destroying soil and insects. Stop clearfelling. Replant with natives, including conifers/softwood.

What do we as a community need to do locally? What support do we need?

As a community, how can we most effectively tackle climate change?

Number of mentions:

- 23 — Tackle pollution & littering
- 23 — Reuse, recycle, repurpose
- 29 — Produce food locally
- 31 — Educate, inform, take responsibility
- 32 — Retrofit old buildings
- 38 — More sustainable land management
- 38 — More renewable energy
- 51 — Travel more sustainably
- 58 — More habitat restoration
- 58 — More community action

400

200

0

number of mentions

Make most of green spaces to grow food and increase biodiversity and soil health.

Encourage native woodland: limit plantations, replace with native species

Look at incentivising non-intensive farming on Black Isle.

Community green power generation - wind/solar.

Very concerned at sea level issues and impact on Avoch, Rosemarkie and road between Fortrose and Avoch. Does Council have a plan? Massive cost implication.

LOTS OF IDEAS LOCALLY, BUT NEED FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUPPORT TO DEVELOP IDEAS.

Support farmers to move to more environmentally friendly methods, e.g more wild edges, organic

Transparency from Freeport development - environmental monitoring during their plans and growth.

Energy efficiency should override listed building concerns .... people should be allowed to install double glazing, solar panels

community energy

Stop wildfowling in Udale Bay.

What and where are the **biggest challenges?**

180

0

number of mentions

- **11** — Staff availability, housing & transport
- **13** — 'Dirty' camping, litter, dog dirt
- **17** — Too many holiday homes
- **20** — **Type of visitors** too many short stay, rushing through
- **21** — **Camper vans**
- **38** — **Transport** including public transport, road network, parking
- **58** — **Facilities** especially toilets & Chanonry Point / Rosemarkie

Don't wreck the environment - innovative ways of getting tourists to sites of natural beauty like Chanonry Point without their cars. Massive car parks are not the answer.

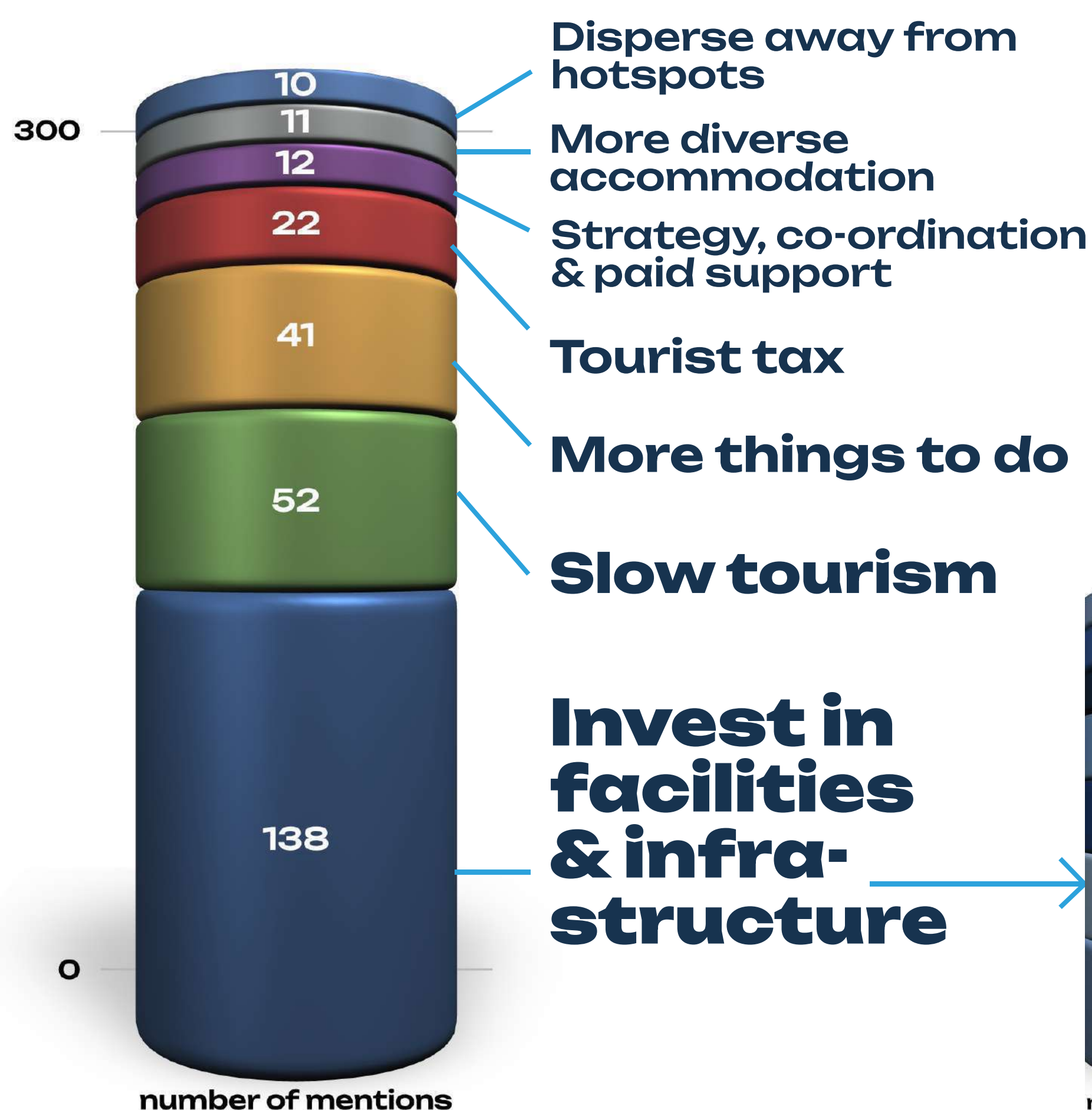Difficult to provide constant service, e.g. restaurant — nothing doing on a Monday/Tuesday, Black Isle is shut!

Staff for tourist businesses - affordable accommodation for staff needed.

Tax holiday homes and put money into the local community/infrastructure

Expand and maintains footpath network. Create safe bike routes, off-road wherever possible

MORE TO DO FOR LOCALS ALSO MEANS MORE FOR VISITORS TO SPEND ON. ARE THERE WATER ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE EXPLORED?

Need an info centre so that the visitors can find out what the Black Isle is all about and what facilities are available.

NC 500 creates litter and waste ... Need to move tourism so it supports local economy rather than people passing through and not funding local services.

There's already an increased inflow of tourists into the Highlands, but not enough resources / facilities to accommodate them or take advantage of business opportunities

...and **biggest opportunities** to make more of tourism as a force for good for locals and visitors alike?

300

0

number of mentions

- **10** — Disperse away from hotspots
- **11** — More diverse accommodation
- **12** — Strategy, co-ordination & paid support
- **22** — **Tourist tax**
- **41** — **More things to do**
- **52** — **Slow tourism**
- **138** — **Invest in facilities & infra-structure**

number of mentions

- **13** — Public transport
- **17** — Campervan facilities
- **17** — Chanonry Pt / Rosemarkie
- **26** — Toilets
- **29** — Roads, parking, EVs
- **34** — Walking & cycling
- **49** — Information

Fun activities – Links in Cromarty, Outdoor Arts for Tourists & Visitors, encourage them to come back

More local events (visitors and locals)

long term funding for a project officer to involve tourism business in ... intensification of the Black Isle Tourism's "Slow tourism" drive, very different... from the NC500 appeal

Slow tourism led by local communities and businesses

What about motorhome parking and water and waste disposal at village halls. This would help take them away from inappropriate nuisance parking. Halls can charge for this too? £15 per night.

Telling the story of our heritage and nature beyond Fortrose and Rosemarkie better

BLACK ISLE HERITAGE CENTRE, PARTICULARLY TO FOCUS ON FORTROSE, ROSEMARKIE AND AVOCH BUT FURTHER AFIELD AS WELL POSSIBLY AN EXTENSION TO GROAM HOUSE

Focus on publicising local food and drink, e.g. Black Isle Dairy

Better use of North Kessock "Harry Gow" location to promote the Black Isle - opportunity.

7 Other issues & opportunities

Issues

10	Co-operation within communities
13	Freeport impact
20	Communities not listened to

50

0

number of mentions

Conon Bridge – include us please!

STRONG FEELINGS IN TORE ABOUT ROAD SAFETY, PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL, PUBLIC HALL AND CONCERNS OVER THE SPRINGFIELD DEVELOPMENTS

In what way can the Freeport be considered green? We need a clear statement of environmental and climate change benefits.

No resilience and joined up working

Communities and Community Councils should have more control of common good funds.

Local voices ignored

Ageing population and volunteers - who will take over?

The freeport is an opportunity and a threat. We need genuine engagement to make sure stakeholders can benefit.

Lack of interest within the community to engage

If the Black Isle was in Norway, with a population of 10,000 it would be its own free-standing local authority, with its own budget to run services such as schools and care homes. Unless the management of resources is devolved to a much more local level, we will always lose out

Need to bring folk together more. events must be advertised well within the village.

We need funding for permanent / long term stable community organising... Need to included working age people and young people in the organisation of our communities... Also leaving room for businesses, not everything should be volunteer run... people need to earn a living

Opportunities

The Black Isle is a wonderful community – given funding and professional assistance. We could do it all by community effort.

Funding from Greenport

Many don't want to be part of community - group, but are happy to help. Would it be possible to have organisation that takes on all the admin/paperwork and enables volunteers to do the "Doing"?

PURCHASE OF SOME OF BLACK ISLE FORESTS OWNED BY FLS AS A RESOURCE FOR LOCAL JOBS, HOUSING, BUSINESSES, FUEL, AND RECREATION AND WILDLIFE

More community-wide things like we used to have – gala, bonfire night etc – to get people together

Promote Pictish Heritage Trail (with Easter Ross)

Community Councils to have more powers devolved to them - and funds to support them.

Lots of groups – church, Cromarty Cares, Cromarty Arts, youth work, Library, history society, etc etc. Can we speak more?

Charge a tourist tax, we pay it abroad and doesn't stop us going

Old Raddery School not being used now. What a waste and was beautiful grounds and building. Ideas for this?

Common good control should be in local hands and transparent.

Invest in increasing community capacity to raise funding and manage assets. By pilot projects, training, technical support, facilitators, etc.

Redcastle, OLD SCHOOL HOUSE (and the school next door) should be put back into proper educational use, e.g. could be an educational centre for renewable energy - solar/ground, source pumps, wind, and provide workshops for small businesses

Community asset transfer of Chanonry Point to local community

a major project building on community efforts to boost the heritage and slow tourism attractions of the Black Isle - a Black Isle Heritage Centre, built near Chanonry Point.