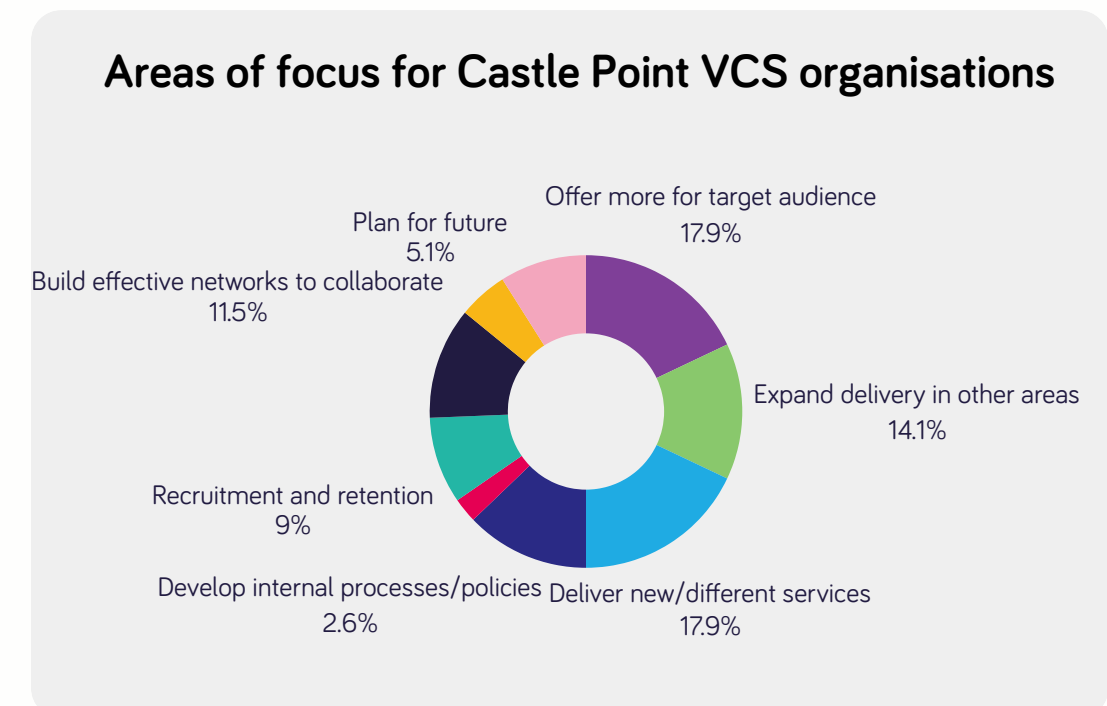
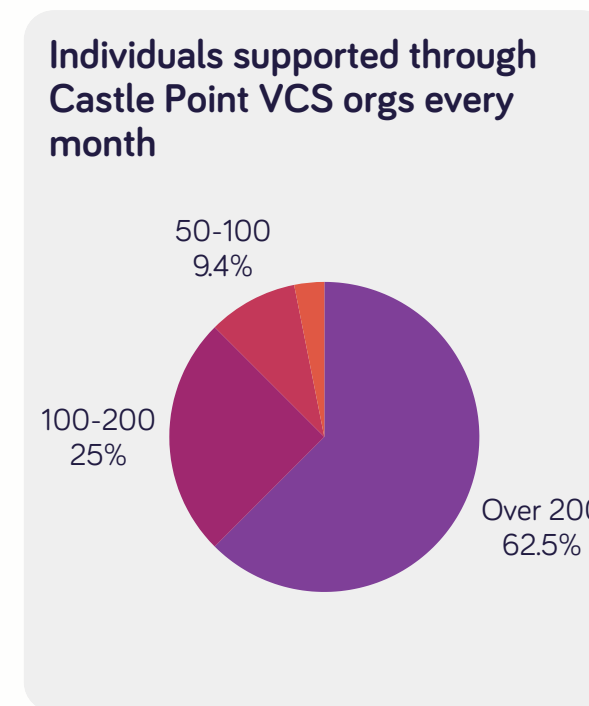
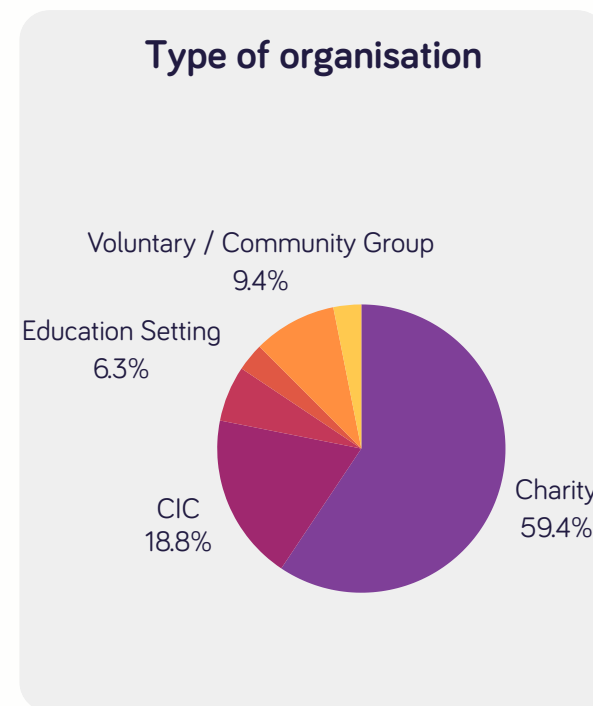
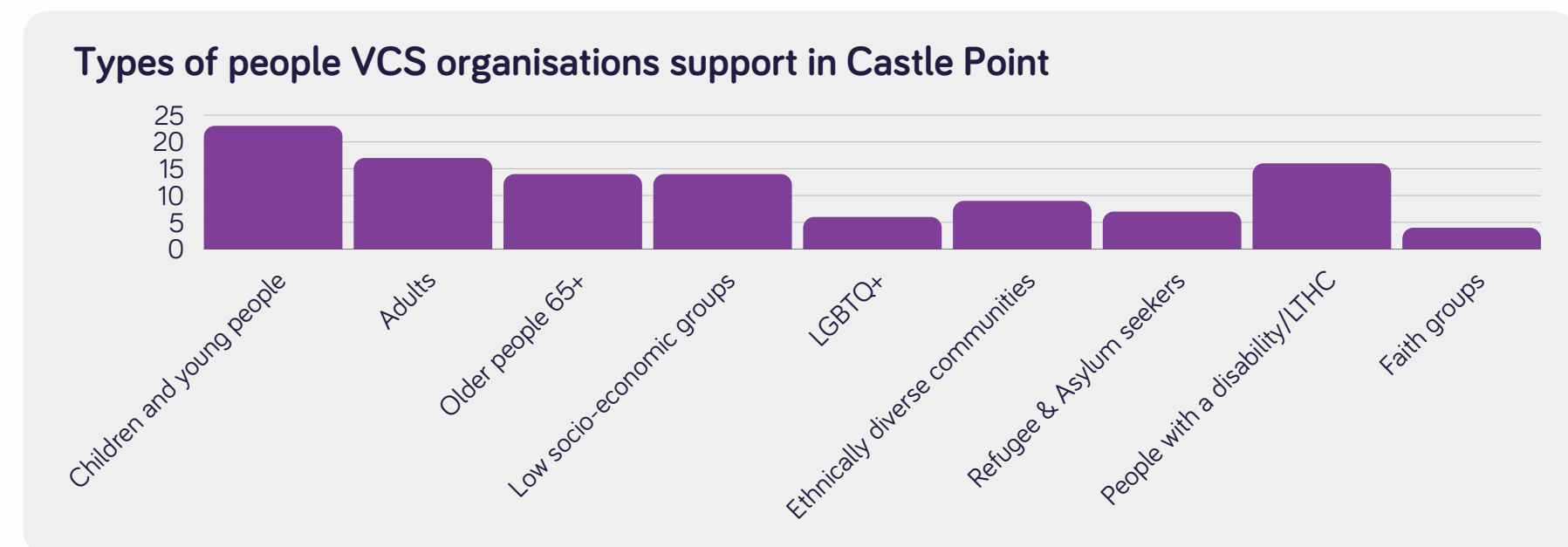
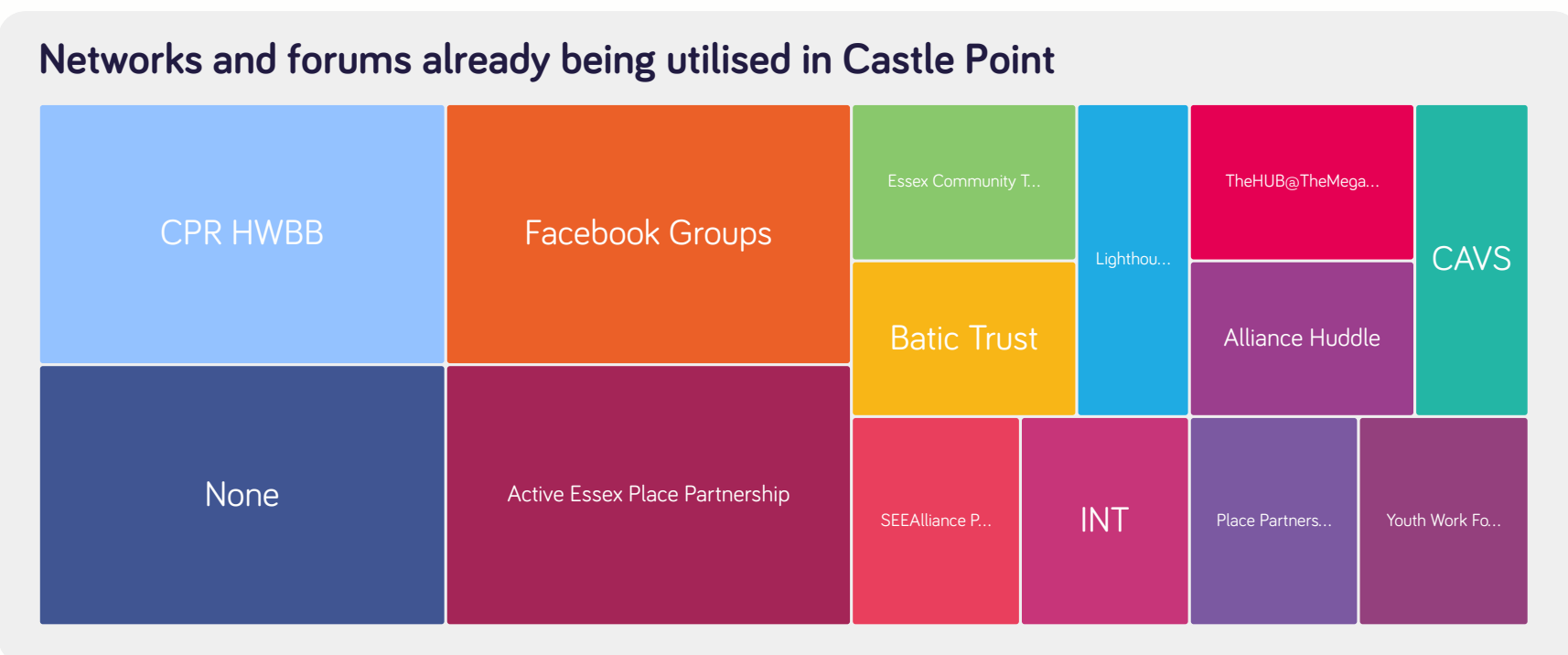
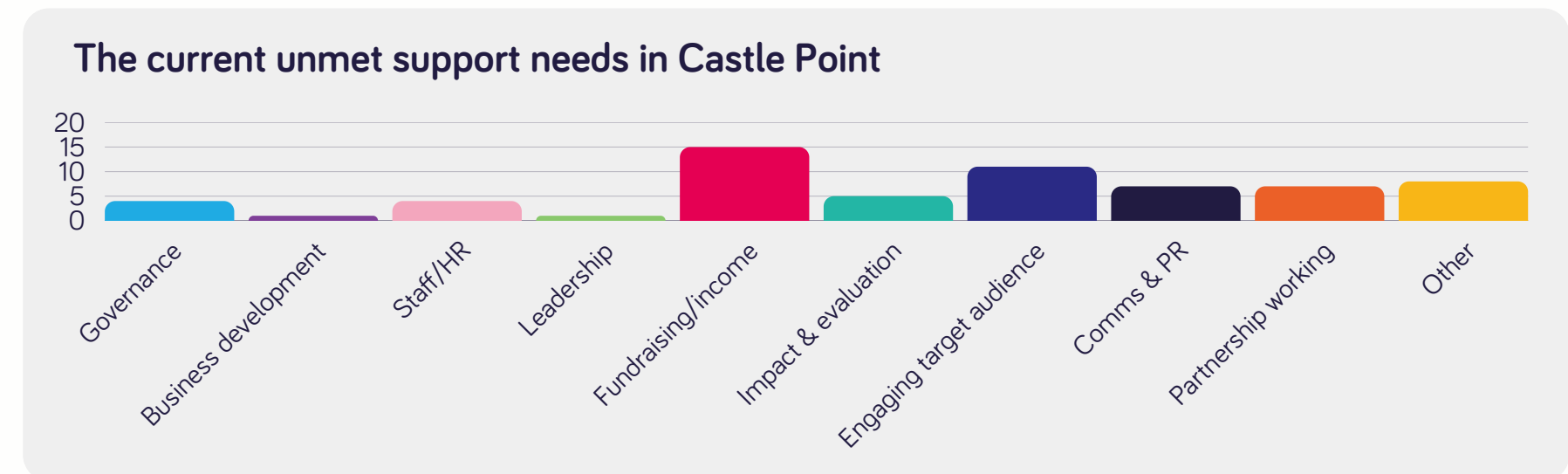
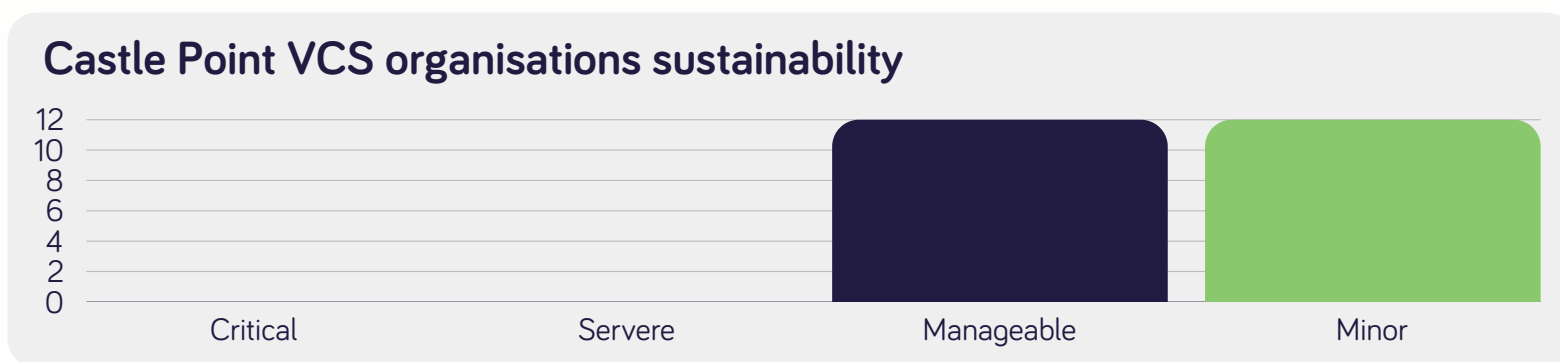




This place plan, is based off of **32** VCS organisations completing the survey correct as of 27.5.25.





This place plan, is based off of **32** VCS organisations completing the survey.

Fundraising and income generation is the most common unmet support need, followed by **engaging target audience, partnership working and comms and PR**

Training opportunities will include:

- Diversifying income
- Bid writing skills (small, large and partnership grants) and fundraising skills and delivering effective campaigns
- Developing effective communications and publicity
- Comms and PR
- Engaging new audiences and building relationships
- Access to countywide training and development opportunities

Networks will include:

- Meet the funder
- Regular networking opportunities
- Regular e-bulletin of funding opportunities local, county, national
- Peer to peer leadership and mentoring

Bespoke support will include:

- 121 with Active Essex to discuss local needs unmet through E-Portal
- Matchmaking and brokering service with other local organisations

Community Participation:

Castle Point will be higher priority for discovery and sharing days from TAWS/ATF as volunteer recruitment and engaging our community were common high priority support needs.

What does the survey not tell us? What does their response tell us beneath the surface?

Castle Point has distinct communities and the needs of each are vastly different.

Locally, there is a movement towards more VCS organisations working in Canvey Island, having recently attracted ECC levelling up funding, Sport England Place Partnership and Plan for Neighbourhoods system and place based working investment. Sport England Place Partnership has investment for VCS organisations training and development that will support capacity building, ABCD, system leadership and opportunities to connect, share and learn.

Comms and PR comes out as a priority need for support and this is consistent with what we have heard in Sport England Place Partnership. Mentoring and peer support has not been referenced, but all organisations have listed support needs, particularly around fundraising. **More listening exercises would be helpful** to understand this in more detail and how best organisations would like to access support. There is an intention to deliver listening exercises in Castle Point in June 2025 in partnership with CAVS, who have new leadership.

There are references of help required for mentoring and support, as well as regular **updates on governance and support for trustees**. It has also been referenced that there are constant changes in the partnership landscape, so regular and effective communications will be key to develop effective networks.

Responses suggest there are **limited local networks**, with partnership/networking referenced as a common unmet support need, as well as the CPR HWBB and SEE Alliance being the only local networks or forums mentioned more than once. Lack of access to facilities or a want for improved facilities also appears which aligns to the Greater Essex Community Needs Index Report which shows **Castle Point having the highest proportions of LSOAs with acute needs for civic assets**.





What else have we found/heard?

What support would you value right now and in the future?

1. Listening event and networking

An event is scheduled for the 18th June to hear from local organisations to develop the local offer

2. More people knowing about us and our service

There is a common theme from organisations wanting to reach a wider audience and this is expressed by support required including social media, website, spreading the word and developing a coms strategy.

3. Access to facilities

Sports clubs and some charities have expressed a need for greater access to facilities which aligns to the Greater Essex Community Needs Index Report which shows Castle Point having the highest proportions of LSOAs with acute needs for civic assets

4. Affordable VCS Training

Access to free or affordable training for staff, volunteers and trustees would be appreciated by local organisations.

3
forums
presented at
1
Listening
event
delivered

Have you accessed anything past or present that has been particularly useful?

Collaboration with other local organisations. Regular funding opportunity updates. Using AI, national infrastructure orgs and independent expert consultants for specific needs.

Funding

01

Many organisations struggle with securing funding, particularly for core operational costs. While project-based funding is more readily available, it often leaves essential day-to-day expenses, such as staff salaries, rent, and infrastructure, unsupported. This creates financial instability and forces organisations into a continuous cycle of searching for new funding sources to stay afloat. Long-term sustainability remains a pressing concern, as reliance on short-term grants makes strategic planning and keeping good staff and volunteers difficult.

Increasing demand in VCS Services

02

Castle Point has an aging population with many communities living in high areas of deprivation. Some organisations have reported that more people are being pushed below the poverty line which is increasing demand in their services, particularly when there are cuts to statutory services. People with disabilities, long term health conditions and SEND appear to have increasing unmet demands that local VCS organisations are trying to keep on top of but require additional resource to meet demands.

Top
challenges:

03

Recruiting volunteers and access to training

Recruiting, retaining and training volunteers remains a key challenge for local organisations that rely on them to deliver vital services. Volunteer capacity is particularly needed for bid writing and supporting to generate additional income. These factors highlight the need for more flexible and creative approaches to engaging and supporting volunteers locally.

04

Amplifying our services

A common theme for organisations in Castle Point is the desire for more support for getting their message out to a wider audience. Marketing, advertising and engaging more local people has been raised as a challenge. Community participation element of Your Essex Community may support as would access to mentors who can provide dedicated advice and support for organisations looking to build capacity and grow.



Championing the VCS locally

- Align Castle Point's Place Plan and report progress through the Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board "Community Resilience" sub group.
- Work with SEE NHS Alliance colleagues to ensure the role of local VCS organisations is valued, concerns of the sector are heard and the sector is kept abreast of changes in the health system.
- Work collaboratively with Castle Point Borough Council to ensure relevance and importance of the sector is not lost in LGR / Devolution conversations
- Use CAVS VCS networks to gather local voice of the the sector and plug into other local networks and forums.
- Establish a two-way communication between Castle Point VCS insight and ECC Communities and Wellbeing Team who can advocate for the sector at system level.

What's the plan this year? (June 2025-April 2026)

Support and Training

- Regular networking including "Meet the funder" opportunities
- Bid writing skills workshop
- Fundraising and diversifying income strategy workshop
- Developing a communications strategy workshop
- Marketing skills
- Mentoring for emerging and scaling organisations
- Asset based community development workshop
- Recruiting and retaining volunteers advice
- Provide bespoke 121 support for VCS organisations where appropriate and requested
- Work with community participation element lead to offer opportunities to share learning and best practice to help organisations better engage with communities and target audience

Signposting and adding value locally

- Share relevant opportunities through CPR HWBB, Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, CAVS and Place Partnership.
- Add value to existing VCS offer from CAVS and other infrastructure organisations
- Signpost to other Your Essex Community elements and resources
- Signpost to other sector support from county and national organisations
- Signpost VCS organisations to business and skills support and networks
- Signposting to core funding opportunities
- Align resource ringfenced in Place Partnership expansion for VCS capacity building

Universal Offer

- Signpost to county offer which will include lunch and learn sessions.
- Provide a first point of contact for VCS support
- Run a scored application process to identify local place partners delivering part of the place plan
- Provide insight and support needs to Your Community Essex elements and grow the E-Portal
- Continue to gain insight, listen and adapt place plans accordingly