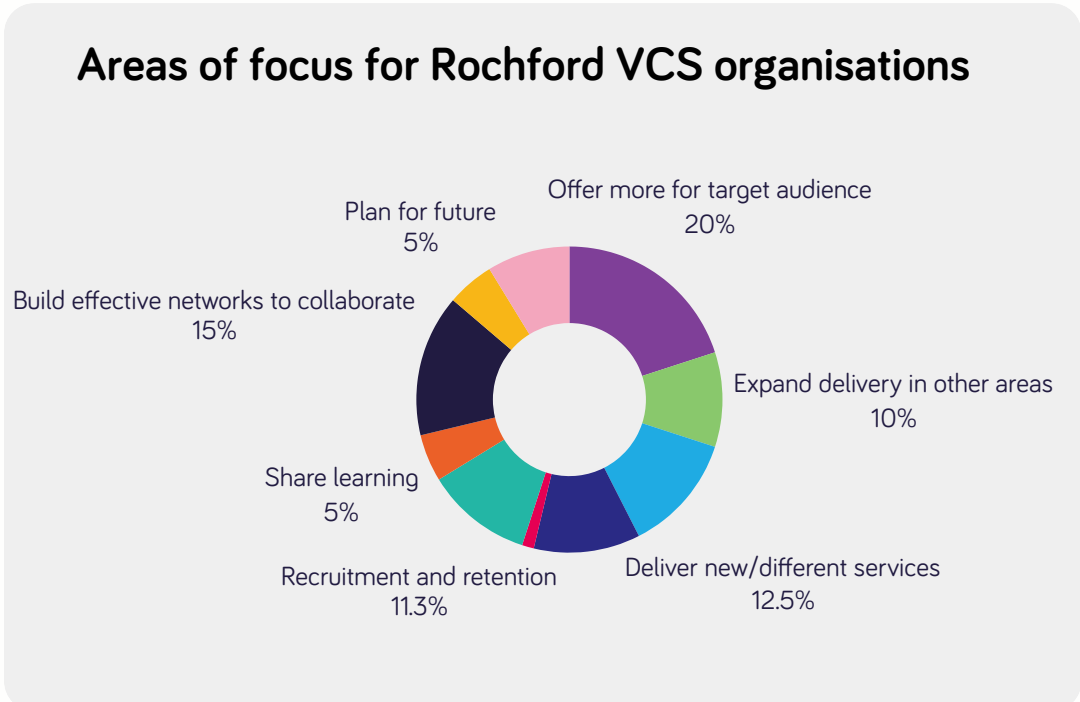
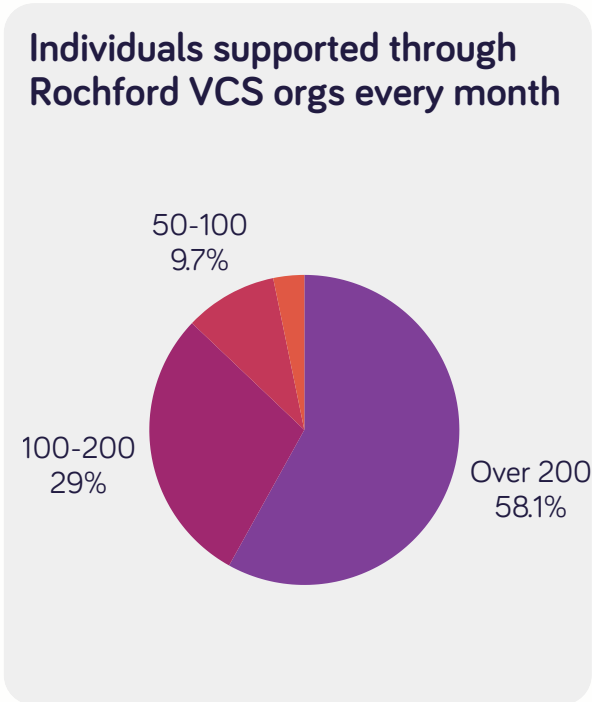
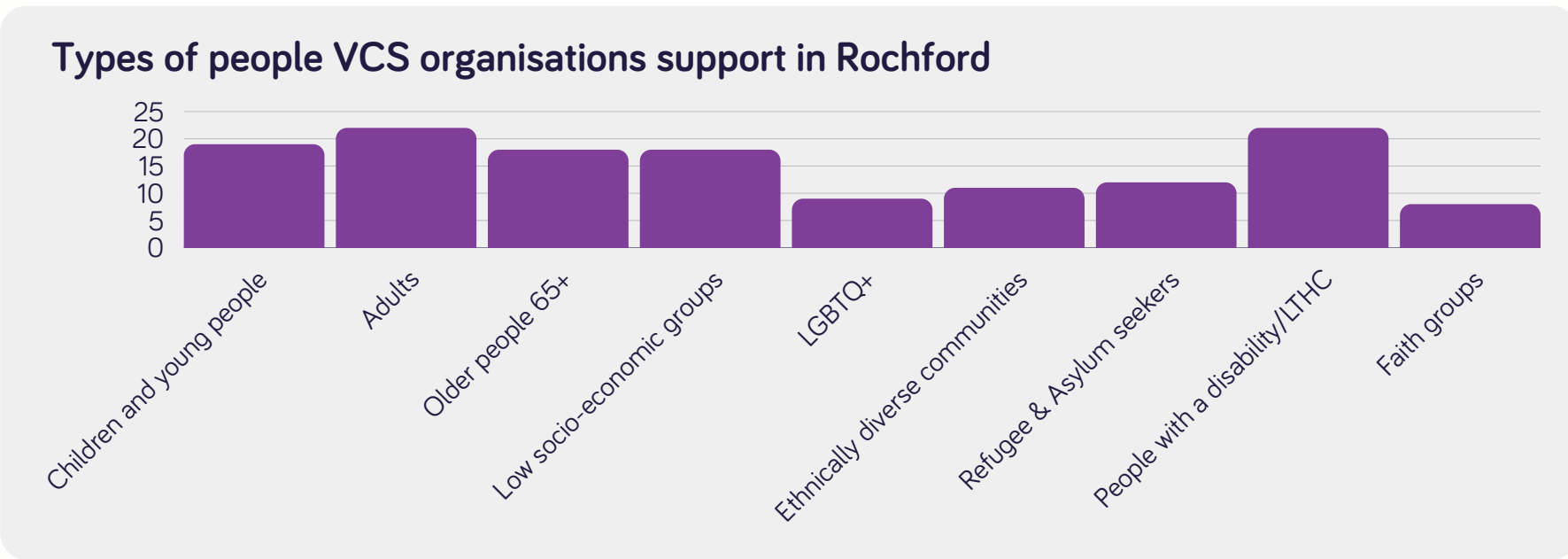
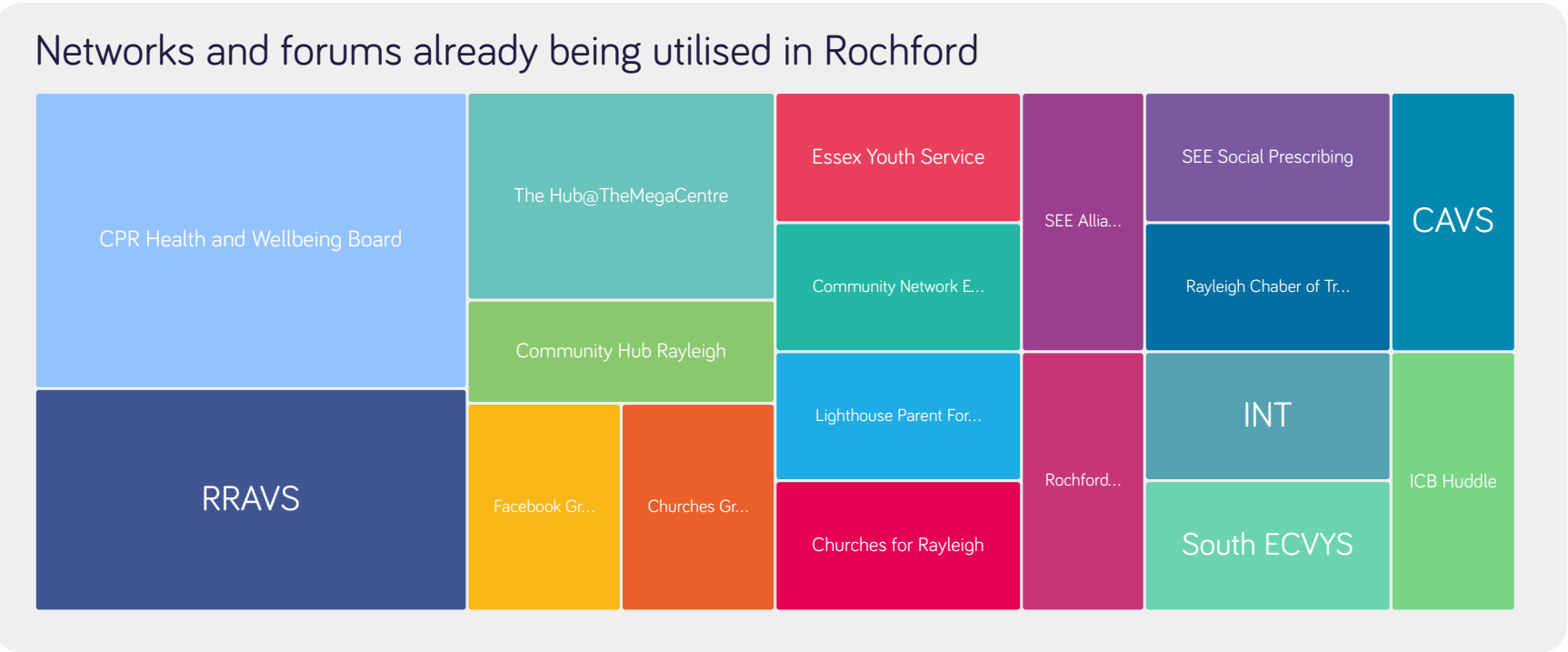
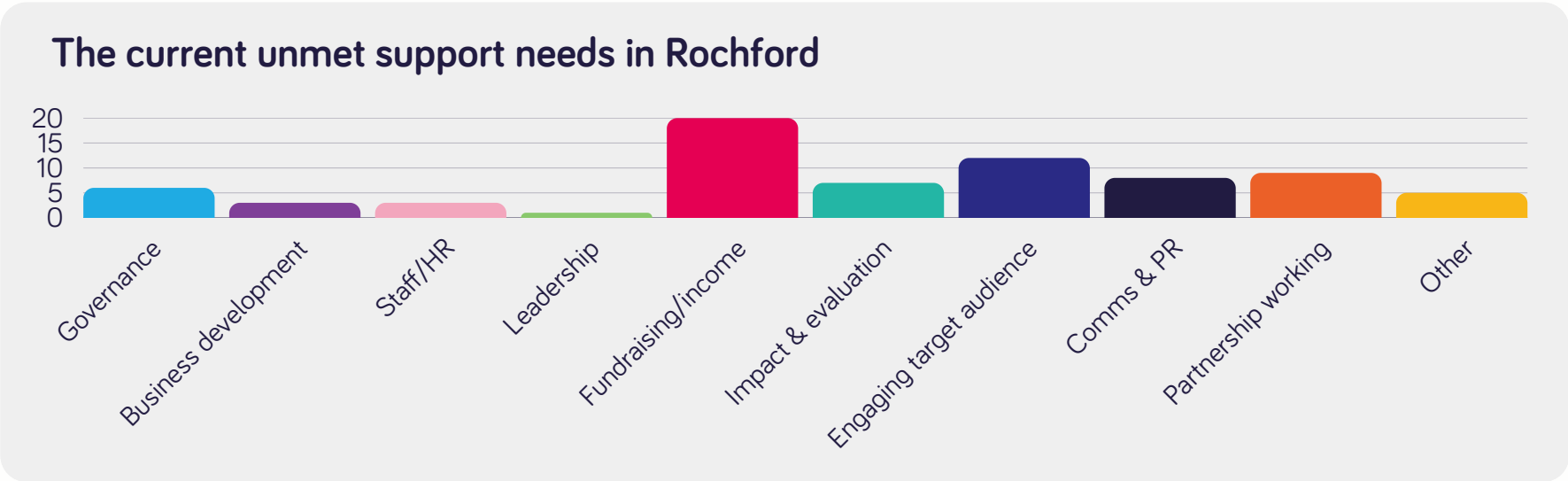
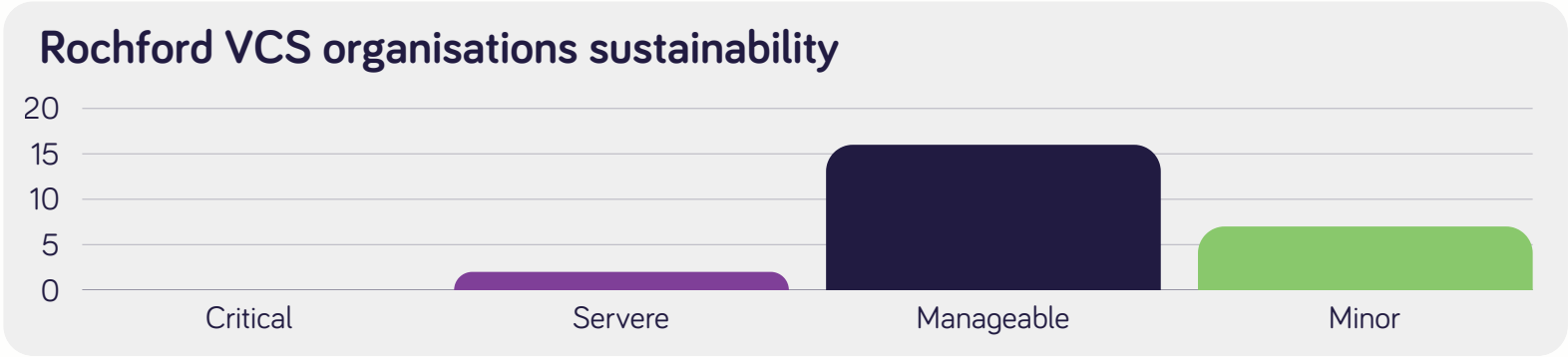




This place plan, is based off of **31** VCS organisations completing the survey correct as of 27.5.25.





This place plan, is based off of **31** VCS organisations completing the survey.

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

Training opportunities will include:

- Diversifying income
- Bid writing skills (small, large and partnership grants)
- Fundraising skills and delivering effective campaigns
- Developing effective communications and publicity
- Asset-based-community-development
- Trustee recruitment and developing highly skilled boards
- 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
- Local business relationships

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:

Rochford 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?

While Rochford is generally seen as an affluent area, there are pockets of significant deprivation at the neighbourhood level and the rurality of the district presents further challenges for those impacted by the cost of living crisis. Many local VCS organisations report an increasing demand on their services and in particular, the needs of residents coming to them for support are **requiring more complex support** which would previously had been picked up by statutory services.

Rochford organisations share a want to be able to have more **capacity for developing strategies** and forward plans, but demands on delivery make this hard to achieve. **Mentoring and peer support** has not been referenced, but all organisations have listed support needs and a common theme includes the **desire to network and build partnerships with others**. **Funding** is a key issue for Rochford organisations and support **diversifying income, fundraising and bid writing** would be welcomed. It's likely any additional **listening exercises** or **networking** should have some **funding** element to it to attract Rochford organisations.

Survey responses suggest there are **limited local networks**, with partnership/networking referenced as a common unmet support need and there are **opportunities to grow networking** and partnerships outside of more formal meetings.





What else have we found/heard?

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

1. Capacity building

Organisations in Rochford share their desire to want to build skills, capacity and ability to grow their organisations and would welcome support to be able to.

2. Specific support and training

There are references from Rochford organisations that require specific or topical training or ad hoc support. This includes developing a EDI policy and learning about AI.

3. Diversify income

Organisations in Rochford require support to diversify their income and become more sustainable.

4. Building relationships and expanding reach

There is a want for more networking and partnership opportunities from Rochford organisations as well as increasing ability to engage communities.

3
Local forums
presented at

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

Rochford boasts numerous organisations that actively participate in various local networks and partnership meetings, but there are gaps. There is currently limited VCS organisation 'open invite forums' or networking opportunities which insight suggests would be valuable and could be developed to meet local 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 difficult.

Partnership Working and Networking

02

Rochford is home to numerous organisations that actively engage in various forums and networks. Insights indicate that currently, there is an unmet need in the locality with many opportunities to connect with other organisations typically found through partnership meetings, such as the CPR Health and Wellbeing Board. Rochford organisations would welcome more opportunities to connect with others and build partnerships.

Top
challenges:

03

Capacity for Strategy

Many organisations report that they do not have the capacity to be able to develop strategies and forward plans. This aligns to funding concerns and the challenge of securing core costs funding on top of readily available delivery funding. Organisations require support to be able plan for the future, build capacity

04

Increasing demand and unfunded system reliance on the VCS

Some organisations have reported that more people are being pushed below the poverty line which is increasing demand in their services. It is felt that the VCS is picking this up, unfunded, and they are also picking up more complex support needs that has previously been resourced by statutory services. Organisations also report that statutory services are becoming more reliant on the VCS taking cases and they are relied on by communities to help families waiting in limbo (e.g. longer waits for SEND diagnosis). 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.



Championing the VCS locally

- Align Rochford'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 Rochford District Council to ensure relevance and importance of the sector is not lost in LGR / Devolution conversations
- Use Rochford VCS forum to gather local voice of the the sector and plug into other local networks and forums.
- Establish a two-way communication between Rochford 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

- Establish a Rochford VCS forum with regular networking
- Bid writing skills workshop
- Fundraising strategy workshop
- Developing a communications strategy workshop
- Provide regular "meet the funder" opportunities for local, county and national funds
- 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, RRAVS and Rochford VCS forum
- Add value to existing VCS offer from RRAVS 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 funding opportunities

Universal Offer

- Signpost to county offer which will include 'creating the conditions' series and lunch and learn sessions which will pick up specific topics which have been requested across the county.
- 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