

England's main (sub-) Regional Planning: the patchy inheritance of Local Industrial Strategies

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Supported by the RTPI's [Small Project Impact Research \(SPIRe\) Scheme](#)



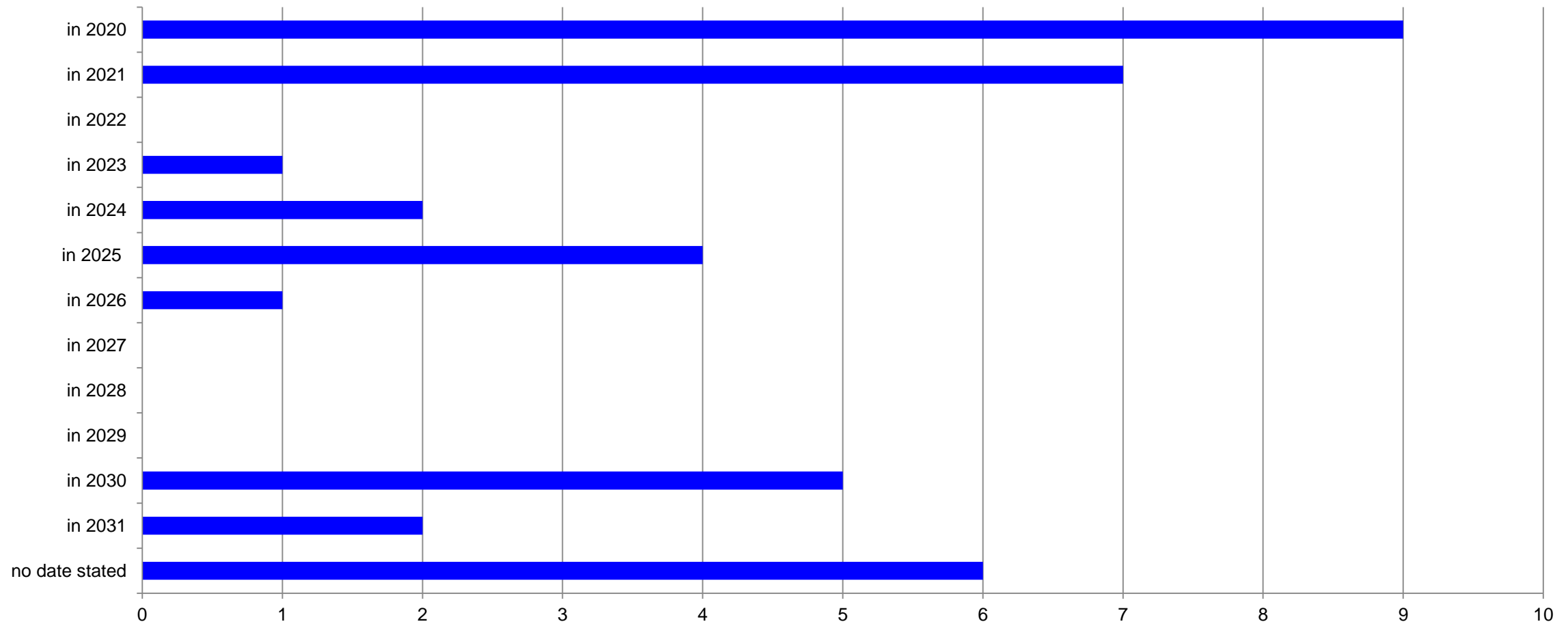
The bodies involved

- ▶ In England, 10 well-funded official Regional Development Agencies “replaced” after 2011 by 38 business-led LEPs
- ▶ “[LEPs] are there to serve a purpose. Economic strategy and the politics and applications of grants” (Interviewee)
- ▶ Huge variation in scale, 10 employees was the average: under reform
- ▶ After ideological softening, a UK “Industrial Strategy” of 11/17
- ▶ This played down the spatial element but proposed “Local Industrial Strategies” (LISs) and assigned them, controversially, to LEPs
- ▶ A thin advice Prospectus of 10/18
- ▶ Six pilots to be agreed by March, 2019(!); the rest by early 2020


The precedent of SEPs, also from all LEPs, 2014

- ▶ All LEPs were also required to write Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs) in 2014HH
 - ▶ Amateurism from government shown by the variety of end-dates (next slide)
 - ▶ One view now is that SEPs were simply bidding documents for Local Growth Funding, otherwise just “Soft Planning”
 - ▶ They may lack bold experiments in scenario planning.
 - ▶ Will LEPs will simply dust off their SEPs for the new funding purposes?
 - ▶ They may lack bold experiments in scenario planning.
 - ▶ The precedent provides vital lessons for new LISs, of greater importance
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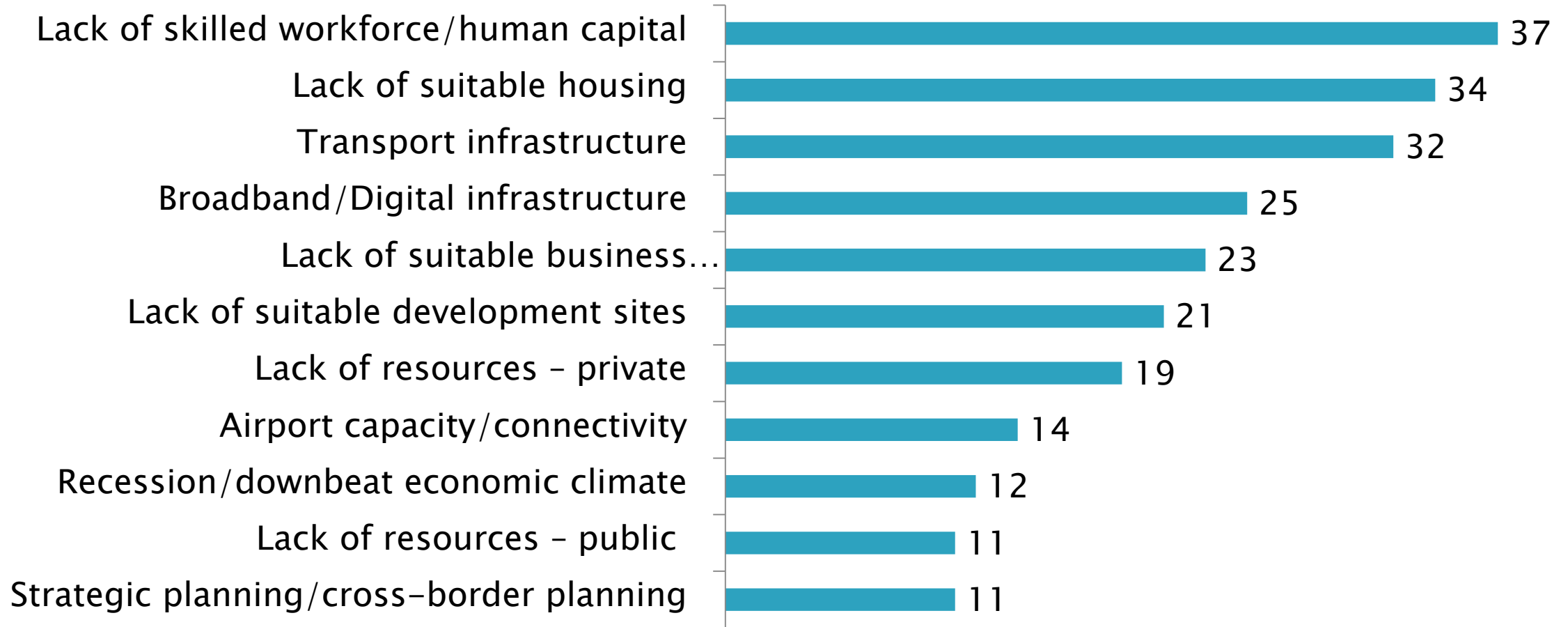
Number of SEPs (out of 38) with stated end date in each year



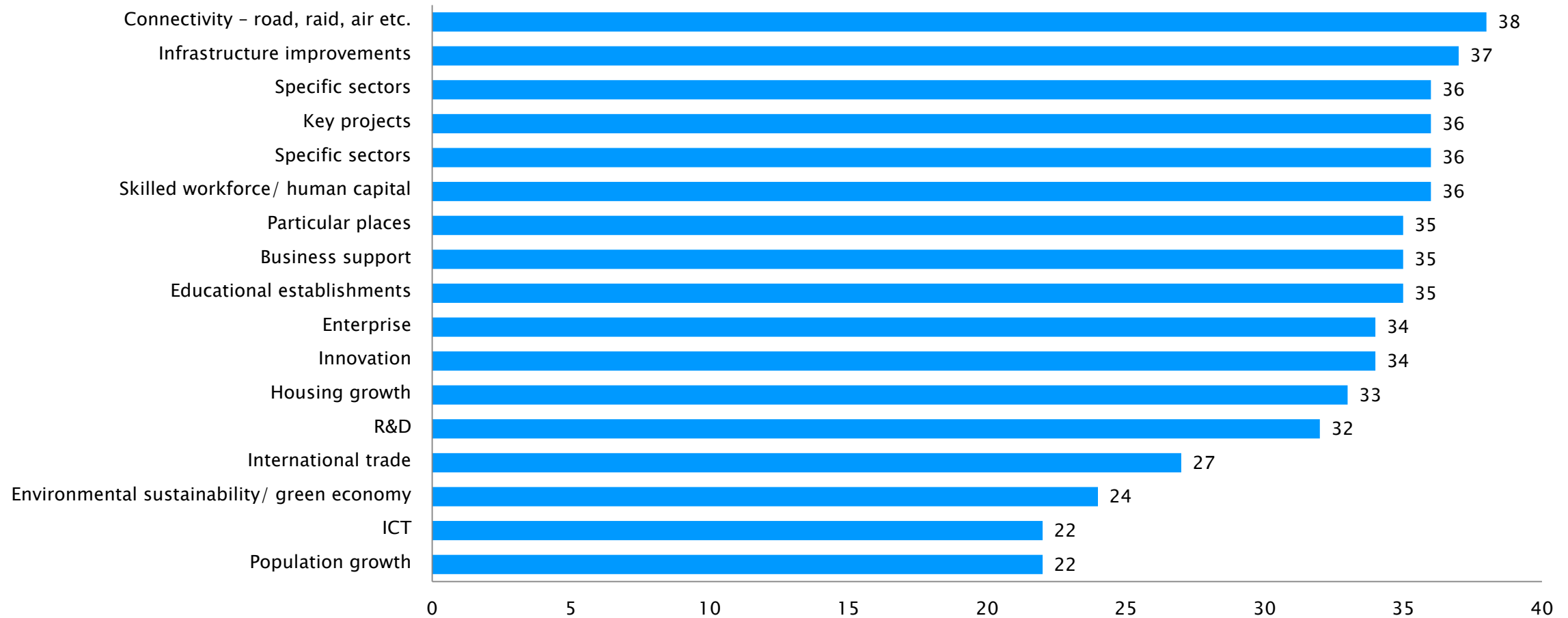
Research and reporting

- ▶ Securing sub-regional entities was essential from 2010
 - ▶ We supported LEPs *IF ONLY* because they met point
 - ▶ Desk-based review of local growth policy and LEPs
 - ▶ Rigorous content analysis of SEPs
 - ▶ On-line LEP questionnaire survey;
 - ▶ Interviews with LEPs
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Strong barriers to growth

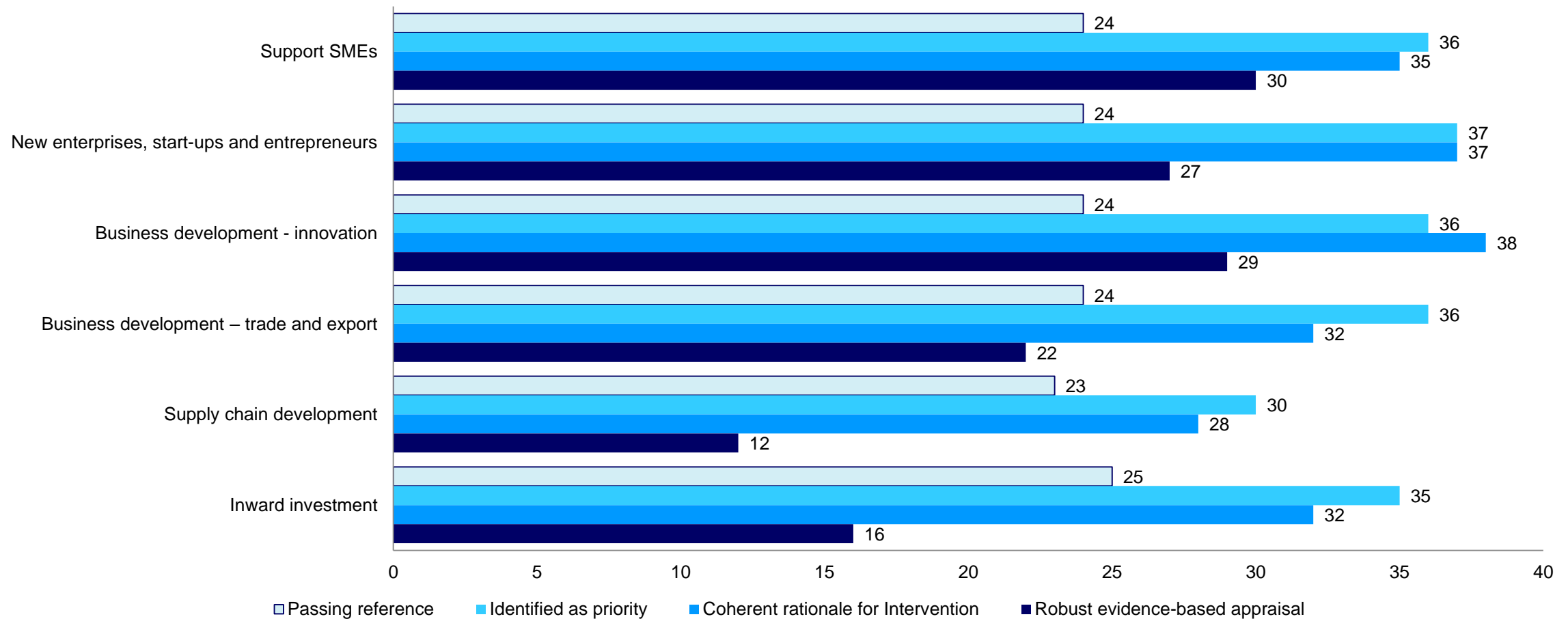


Strong consideration as growth drivers in 38 SEPs

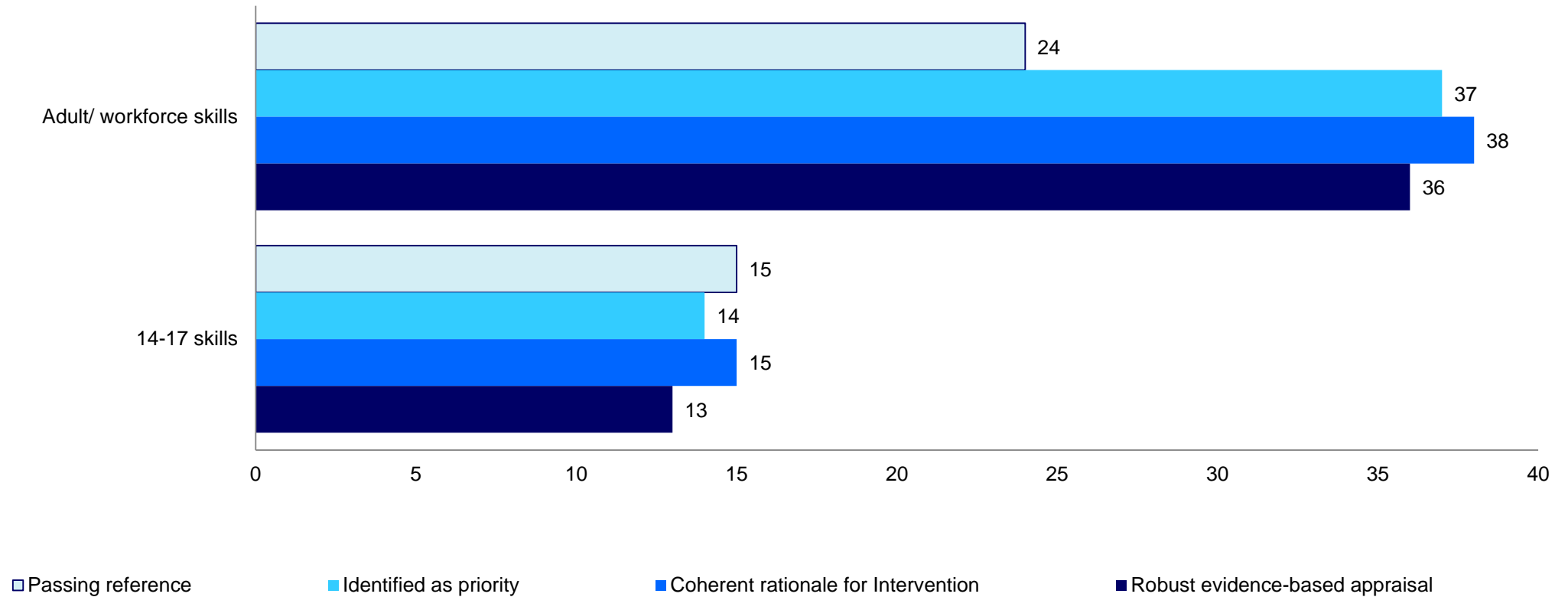


Enterprise and business development/investment

Number of SEPs which address enterprise and business investment/development themes



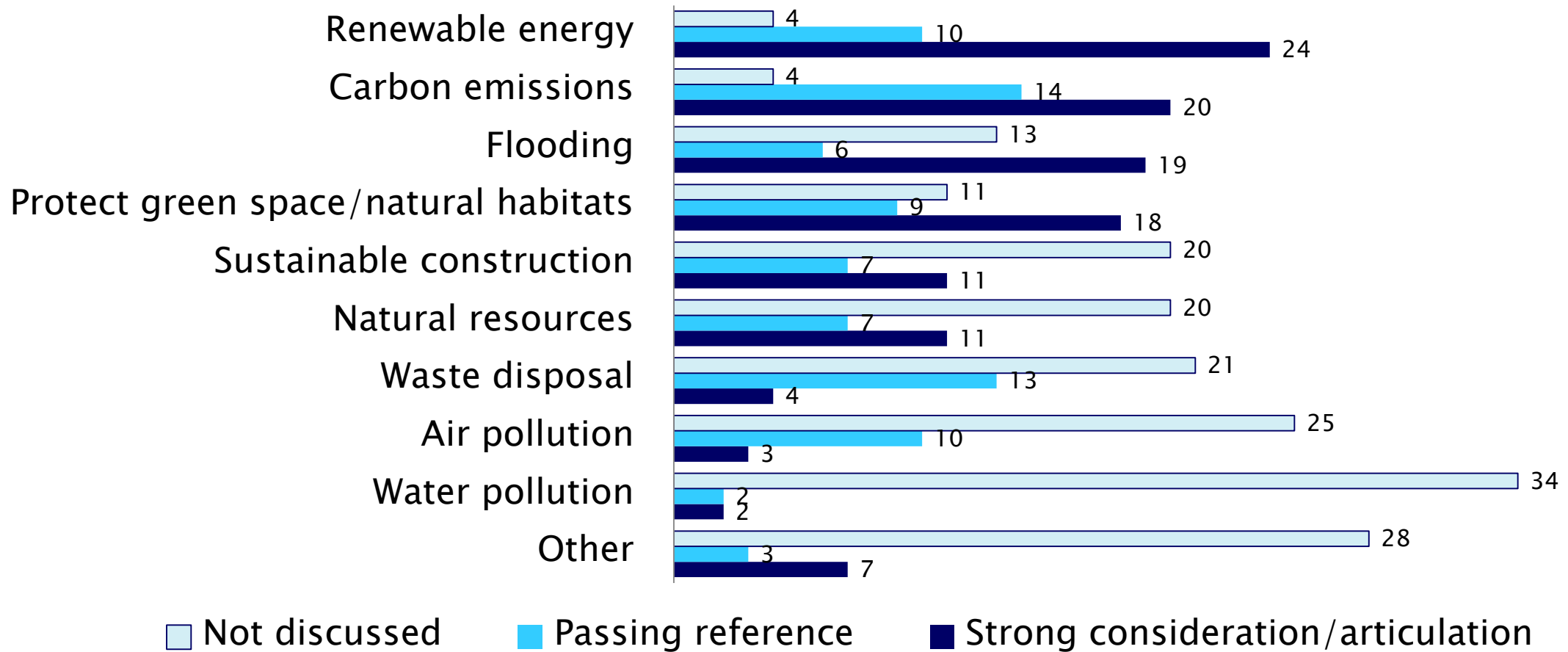
Number of SEPs which address skills and learning themes



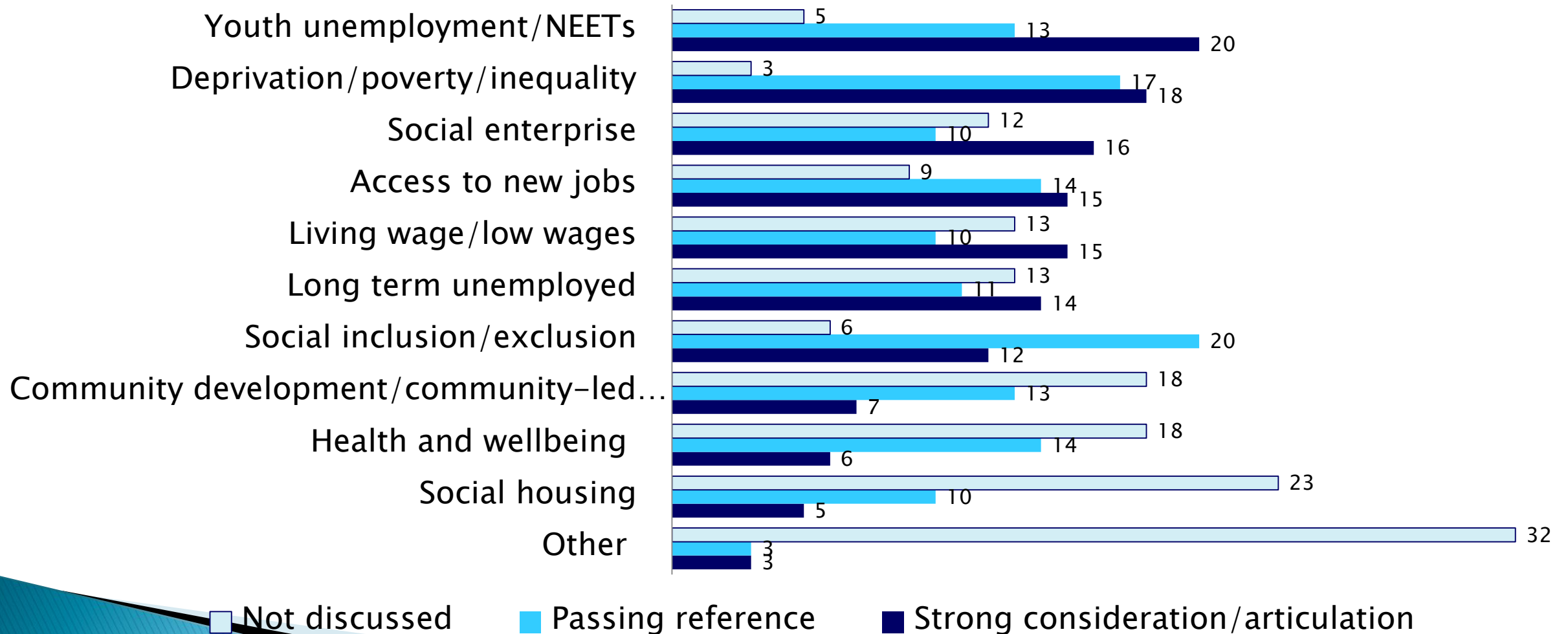
Proposals, recommendations and requests in SEPs directly related to the planning system

	Frequency
Changes to Local Plans	4
The need for planning permissions	16
The need for Strategic Environmental Assessments	2
The need for new roads, motorways, junctions (and similar road alignments)	37
The addition of new employment sites including science/technology parks	37
The deletion of surplus employment sites	3
Call for new and/or greater flexibilities or planning powers	23

Environmental considerations




Social considerations



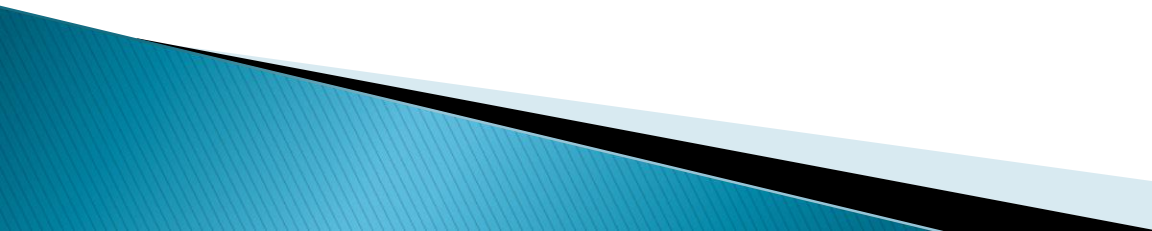
Our evaluation

- ▶ The *main feature* of today's charts is of a great spread of variation between LEPs in any one field of responsibility.
- ▶ LEPs continued to operate with an opaque remit and lack firm institutional foundations LEPs' work is good in parts;
- ▶ This field requires the best from RSA members' past practice of *numerical* work, Proportion of research, planning and strategy staff – from 100% to less than 20%
- ▶ Past circulars confused over supporting all business, both “basic” and “non-basic” establishments
- ▶ A good proportion of SEPs were regarded as internal documents, rather than broader plans for their area.
- ▶ It is valuable that LEPs aim to lead economic growth and job creation within a local area
- ▶ But some could form the basis for more robust spatial plans


National Audit Office, March, 2016

- ▶ LEPs found the work positive
 - ▶ There was "wide variation across the 39 plans in the way information was presented, time periods covered, and the evidence bases they used" (para. 2.11)
 - ▶ Additionally, the Department for Business did not define output metrics till after the plans were approved.
 - ▶ LEPs therefore used different definitions to describe the outputs of their planned interventions, such as jobs.
 - ▶ The Department's assessors reported that they found it challenging to assess the bids consistently".
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Any prospect of better strategies from the same sets of people?

- ▶ Still little prospect of consistency given the shortness of the delayed “Policy Prospectus”
 - ▶ Despite its talk of “robust evidence”, there’s nothing on the sources normally used by RSA members and local authority Economic Development Departments *even though*
 - ▶ This time there are to be regional workshops with area advisors, leading to agreement of each LIS with government
 - ▶ This is a pre-requisite for any Growth Funding and the replacement of EU funding streams of the Shared Prosperity Fund post-BREXIT
 - ▶ There is explicit mention of housing, land use and spatial impacts
 - ▶ There is a surrounding set of suggestions from think-tanks and endorsement of existing work from a “What Works” centre
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Wider implications for spatial arrangements

- ▶ The controversial use of LEPs perpetuates a tension with local authorities
 - ▶ Though that is resolved by placing LISs under the six elected Mayors of Combined Authorities (in some City Regions)
 - ▶ This use of “soft planning” sits awkwardly against the slow progress of strategic physical planning under different official initiatives (new minister on inter-authority co-ordination of Housing)
 - ▶ It ignores the revival of 1980s style community economic development as seen in the Labour Party’s identification with new co-operative policies in Preston
 - ▶ It mostly lacks recognition of regional priorities or the overall nature of responses to the places most hit by globalisation
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 - ▶ Final report is available at:
 - ▶ http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1400949/rtpi_research_report_planning_for_growth_final_report_9_july_2015.pdf
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