

Executive Summary

Appendix B

- This Consultation Report has been prepared by Development Communications Limited (DevComms) on behalf of Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) in respect of formal consultation undertaken on a Draft Strategic Masterplan Framework Document for North Weald Bassett.
- Policy P6 of the adopted EFDC Local Plan requires a Strategic Masterplan to be prepared and accompany any planning applications for allocated sites within the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area. The endorsed Strategic Masterplan will be taken into account as an important material consideration in the determination of any planning applications.
- The formal consultation on the Draft Strategic Masterplan Framework Document was led by EFDC and undertaken between 21 November 2023 and 16 January 2024. A programme of public consultation was developed with regard to policy requirements set out in the EFDC Statement of Community Involvement and Masterplanning Briefing Note.
- The consultation arrangements included a consultation page on EFDC website with access to online and pdf feedback form, copies of the Strategic Masterplan Document (and feedback forms) on deposit at three locations including the Civic Offices in Epping; and two public exhibitions held in North Weald.
- 18 feedback forms were received together with a further 18 emails and letters from the local community and statutory consultees. The feedback included a wide range of issues, some which are relevant to the masterplan and others that will be considered in relation to planning applications that come forward.
- The issues relating to the Strategic Masterplan will now be considered before it is finalised and subsequently endorsed.



1. Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by Development Communications Limited (DevComms) on behalf of Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) in respect of formal consultation undertaken on a Draft Strategic Masterplan Framework Document for North Weald Bassett.

Policy P6 of the adopted EFDC Local Plan requires a Strategic Masterplan to be prepared and accompany any planning applications for allocated sites within the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area. The endorsed Strategic Masterplan will be taken into account as an important material consideration in the determination of any planning applications.

The Strategic Masterplan is being prepared in accordance with a Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note published by Epping Forest District Council in October 2018. This sets out the Council's intention that Strategic Masterplans will be formally endorsed to become a material planning consideration. The Council also requires the Strategic Masterplan to be prepared in a form and manner that will allow future adoption as an SPD.

Vistry Group is leading a team that has been developing the Strategic Masterplan for North Weald Bassett. Vistry has been engaging with the local community on the Masterplan since 2018 and undertook a widespread community consultation exercise in June 2023.

A Draft Strategic Masterplan Framework Document was subsequently prepared and approved for formal consultation at a meeting of EFDC's Cabinet on 13 November 2023. Formal consultation on Masterplan was led by EFDC and undertaken between 21 November 2023 and 16 January 2024. DevComms has been appointed to collate and report on the consultation responses, solely on behalf of the Council. Appropriate GDPR provisions have accordingly been in put place.

This report provides details of the consultation undertaken and the feedback received.



2. Policy Content and Background

2.1 EFDC Statement of Community Involvement

Epping Forest District Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in November 2019.

The section titled "Principles of Community and Stakeholder Engagement on Strategic Sites for Developers" relates to community engagement in respect of Strategic Masterplans. It expects that "appropriate effective engagement and consultation will take place with stakeholders and the local community, including Town and Parish Councils, in order to build a sense of community ownership and inform the progress of Strategic Master Plan or Concept Framework".

Also that: "Any communication or engagement activity will be easily accessible to the community, both through how it's shared and in the way it is written. At each stage it will be made clear whether there is an opportunity to provide comments/ feedback and how these comments will be used or responded to".

It sets out the requirement for a six-week period of consultation on the Draft Masterplan or Concept Framework that will involve at least a public exhibition and formal methods of collecting views on the Master Plan or Concept Framework through the Councils website.

2.2 EFDC Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note

The Briefing Note includes the following requirements in relation to public consultation on the Draft Strategic Masterplan:

- It is anticipated that public consultation should last for a minimum of six weeks and incorporate a variety of methods to maximise participation and feedback. As a minimum, copies of documentation should be made available at the reception of respective Council(s), on Council(s) website(s), in local libraries, and at local Parish / Town Council offices. The use of a static and / or staffed exhibition will be encouraged.
- The site promoter(s) will be responsible for designing and printing materials required for the public consultation, such as leaflets, banners or boards. The use of feedback forms should be encouraged where appropriate. The Council(s) will be responsible for collating and analysing any feedback received through consultation.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the scope and purpose of public engagement is clearly articulated in order to avoid confusion or 'consultation fatigue' within the local community.
- It is the intention of the Councils that the Strategic Masterplans will be formally endorsed to become a material planning consideration in the consideration of pre-application proposals and the determination of subsequent Planning Applications. The Council(s) may also choose to adopt the Masterplans as a Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD') at a future point in time. To that effect,



the Council require the Strategic Masterplan to be prepared in a form and manner that will allow future adoption as a SPD.

2.3 SPD regulations

Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for producing Supplementary Planning Documents. This would require a Consultation Statement to be prepared prior to any adoption, should the Strategic Masterplan become a Supplementary Planning Document.



3. Scope of Community Engagement

3.1 Summary of Engagement Approach

Epping Forest District Council is dedicated to fostering a strong and inclusive community through active engagement and collaboration.

A programme of public consultation was developed with regard to policy requirements set out in the EFDC Statement of Community Involvement and Masterplanning Briefing Note. In summary, the consultation comprised:

- Consultation page on EFDC website with access to online and pdf feedback form
- Copies of the Strategic Masterplan Document (and feedback forms) at the Civic Offices in Epping, Parish Hall in Thornwood Common and Library in North Weald Bassett Library
- Two public exhibitions held at St Andrew's School in North Weald

The Consultation was advertised by:

- A press release issued by EFDC
- A link on the EFDC website home page
- Banners at locations where hard copies of the Document were on deposit
- A brochure issued by Vistry to over 3,000 addresses in North Weald Bassett Parish

A dedicated phone line and email address was provided and advertised on consultation material.

Statutory consultees were also written to by EFDC and invited to comment on the Strategic Masterplan Document.

A presentation was given to North Weald Bassett Parish Council on Monday 20 November which summarised the latest draft masterplan document and provided details of the formal consultation.

3.2 Online engagement

A specific page relating to the North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan consultation was created on the EFDC website and could be accessed through a link from the homepage. The webpage provided a summary of the Masterplan, a copy of the full masterplan document, a pdf download of the feedback form and a link to an online version of the feedback form. It also provided details of the public exhibitions and locations where hard copies of the Masterplan Document could be viewed. A screenshot of the webpage can be found at Appendix A.

3.3 Deposit copies of Masterplan

Full printed copies of the Draft Strategic Masterplan Framework Document were available for inspection throughout the consultation period at key locations. These comprised the District Council offices in Epping, the Parish Hall at Thornwood Common and North Weald Bassett Library. Hard copies of the feedback form were also



provided and a banner advertising the consultation and providing contact details. A copy of the banner can be found at Appendix B.

3.4 Public Consultation Events

Two public consultation events were held at St Andrews Primary School in North Weald Bassett. The school was chosen as the venue as it is located within the masterplan area and has been used for previous exhibitions regarding the Strategic Masterplan. The events were held on:

- Saturday 9th December from 10:00 till 14:00
- Tuesday 12th December from 16:00 till 19:00

10 exhibition boards were included in the exhibition which covered a wide range of topics related to the Masterplan. A copy of the exhibition boards can be found at Appendix C.

Hard copies of feedback forms were also provided at the exhibition. EFDC officers and members of the masterplan development team were on hand to discuss issues with visitors to the exhibitions.

3.5 Community brochure

Vistry Group, which is leading the masterplan team issued a 6-page brochure to the local community at the start of the consultation period providing details of the formal EFDC consultation, including the public exhibitions and ways of providing feedback. This was issued via Royal Mail to circa 3,000 addresses. The brochure was hand delivered to 100 addresses directly neighbouring the masterplan area to ensure those closest received a copy in a timely manner. A copy of the brochure can be found at Appendix D

3.7 Press release

A copy of the press release published by EFDC can be found at Appendix E.

3.8 Feedback form

The feedback form sought to provide a balance of open and closed questions in order to seek a wide range of views whilst obtaining quantifiable feedback. It sought feedback on the level of agreement with the masterplan vision; general layout; and a range of principles relating to the masterplan. It also provided the opportunity to provide open feedback on any aspect of the masterplan. A copy of the feedback form can be found at Appendix F.



3.9 Data Protection

A statement was included on the online feedback forms which detailed how collected data would be used. This detailed that in undertaking public engagement with the local community, Development Communications Limited (DevComms) is a Data Controller under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

At all times, processing of personal data is carried out in accordance with GDPR regulations, with the feedback form providing an 'opt-in' option and information on respondents' rights under GDPR.

Only data required for the purposes of the consultation was requested on the feedback form.

The feedback collated during the engagement exercise is held by DevComms and will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research on the Strategic Masterplan.

Consultation respondents will only be contacted again in the future in relation to the Masterplan proposals if they have explicitly stated that they would like to be kept updated.



4. Feedback

4.1 Overview of Feedback

In summary, the following engagement and feedback was received from the formal consultation on the Strategic Masterplan:

- 30 people attended exhibitions
- 18 feedback forms were received
- Four emails from local residents
- Also, three emails and letters from those representing landowners or sites within the masterplan area, including St Andrew's Primary School.
- Eleven further responses from statutory consultees.

Further detail on the feedback is set out in this section.

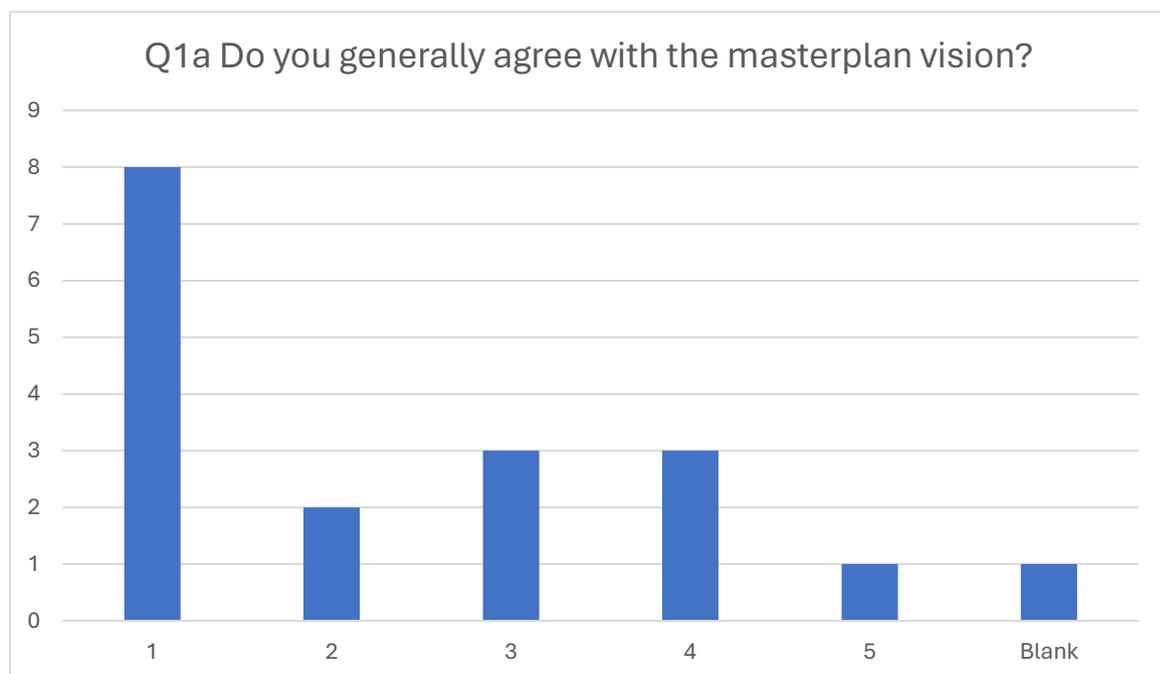
4.2 Feedback from completed forms

Feedback from completed forms mainly comprised responses from local residents but also included responses from or on behalf of three of the landowners within the Masterplan Area and the Conservators of Epping Forest.

The following is a breakdown of the feedback provided by those who chose to complete a form either in hard copy format or online:

Question 1: Masterplan vision

Respondents were asked to rate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement in Q1a (1 disagree – 5 agree).



Question 1b: Why have you given this score?

The responses to the question from members of the local community comprised:

- Object to more building / keep as a village
- Increased traffic
- Too dense / out of character
- Insufficient facilities / utilities
- Broadly in agreement / vision is sensitive
- Surface water drainage
- Destroy nature and outlook
- Need better transport facilities

Feedback from landowners was supportive of the content of the Strategic Masterplan.

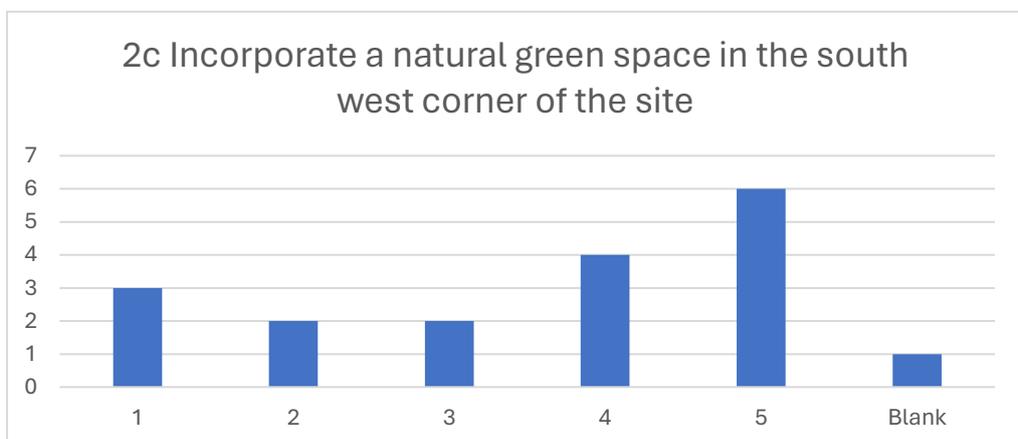
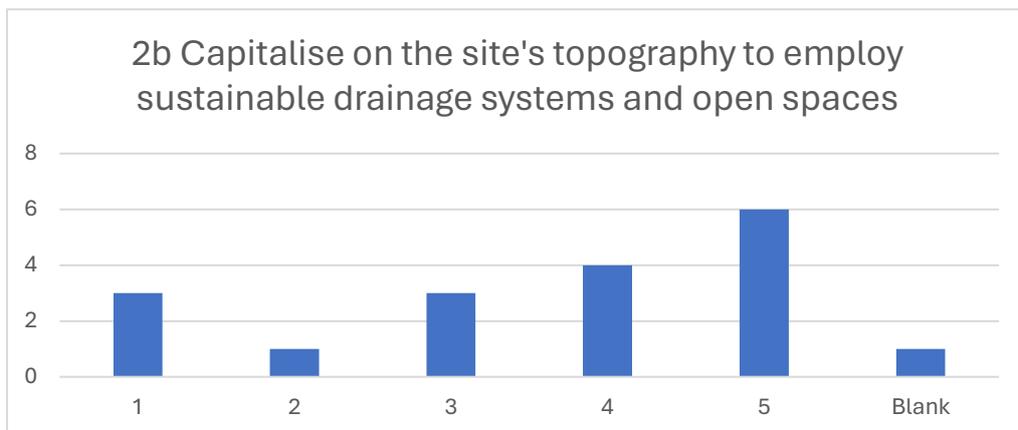
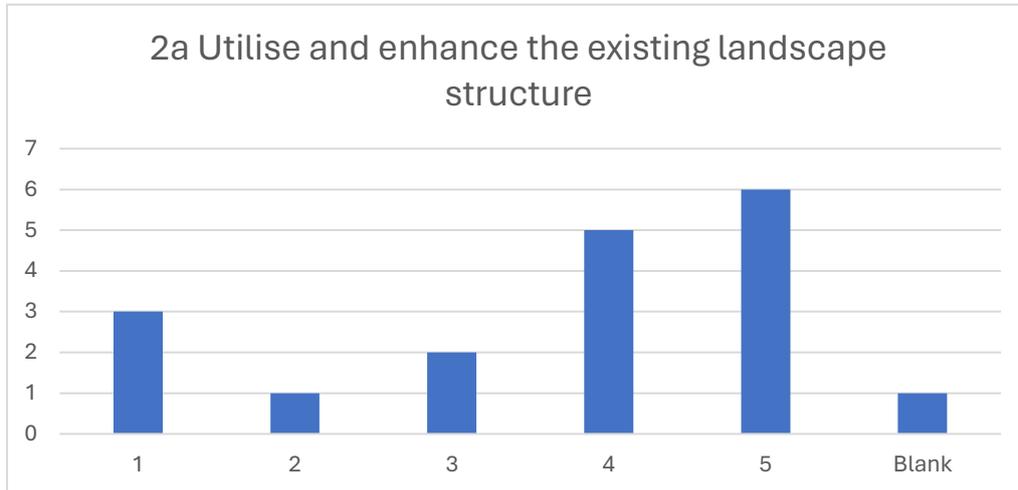
The response from the Conservators of Epping Forest is reported with other statutory consultee responses.



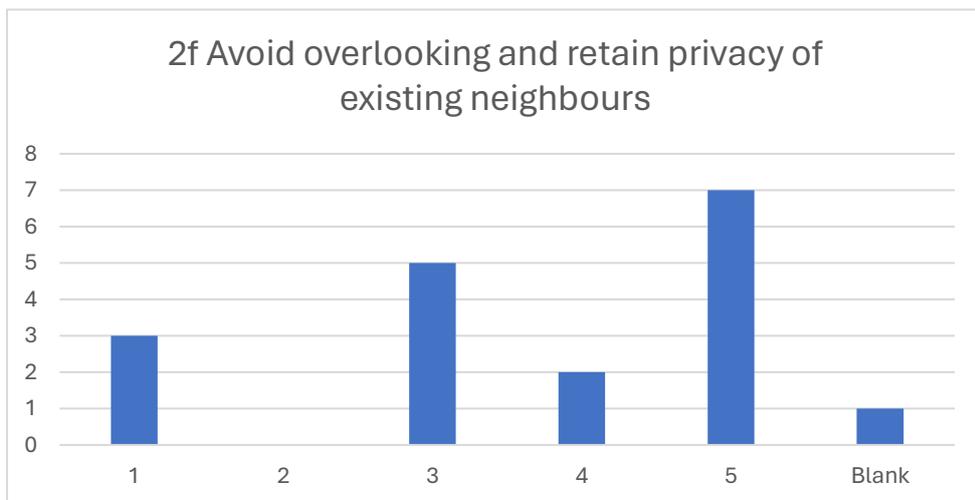
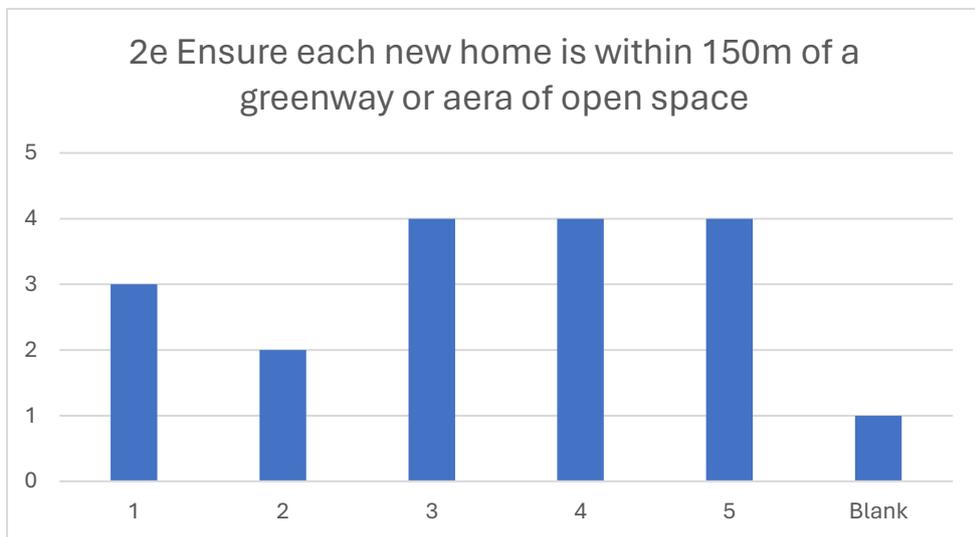
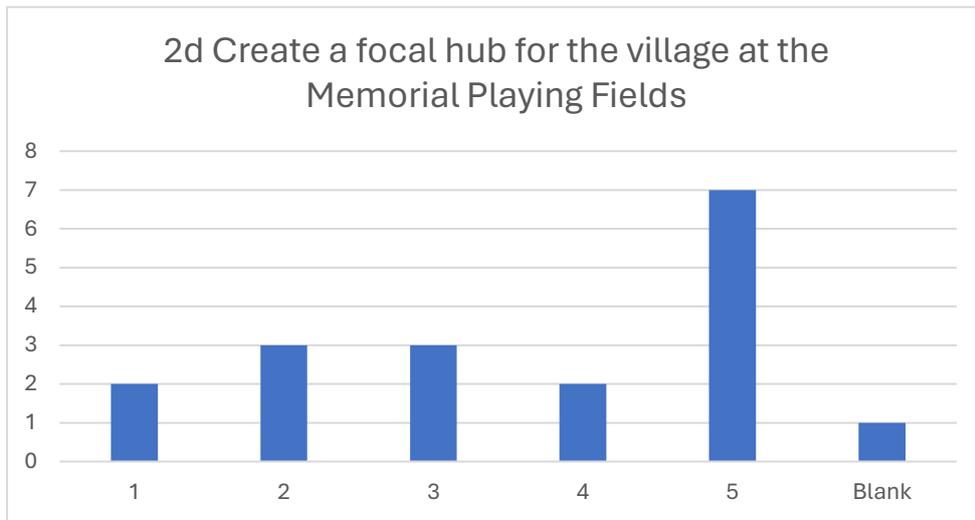
Question 2: Themes

Respondents were asked to rank the extent to which they agreed with the themes and principles that underpin the masterplan vision. These comprised 18 principles under the headings of six themes. Responses were ranked from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree) and are set out below.

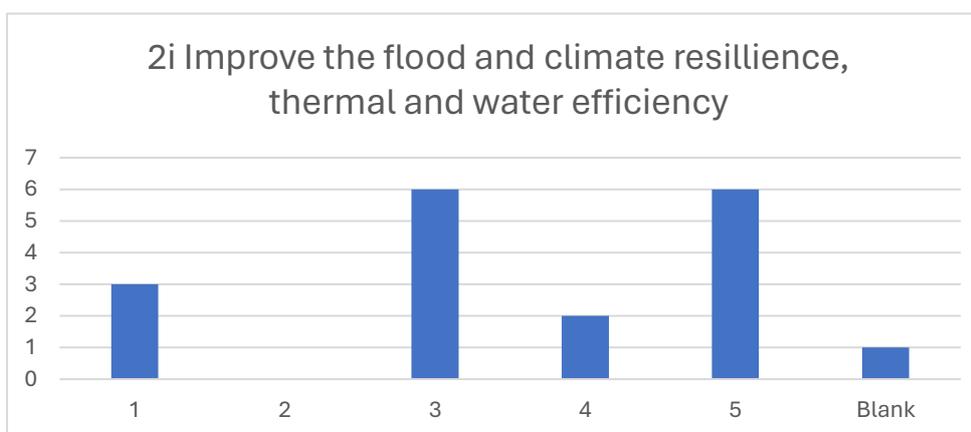
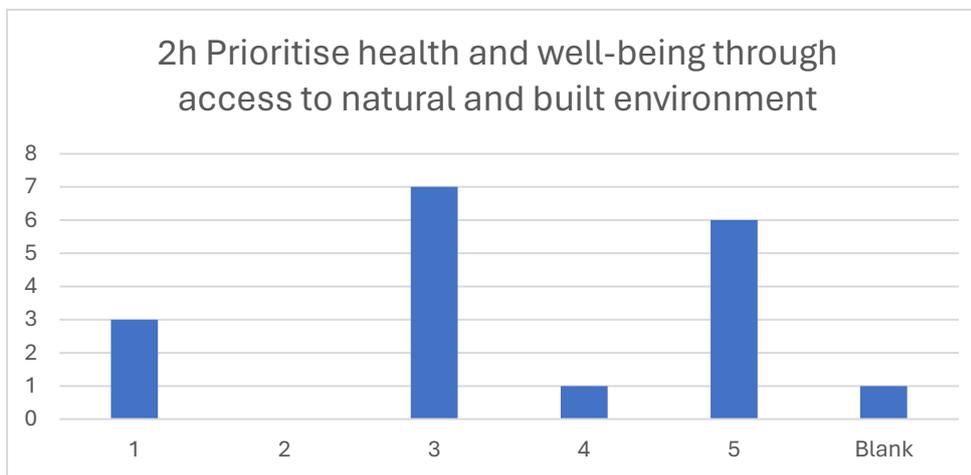
Landscape & Topography



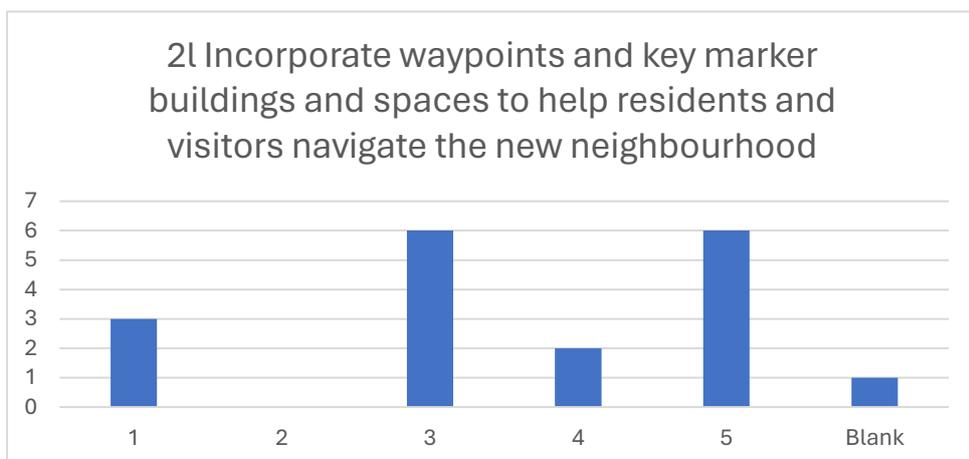
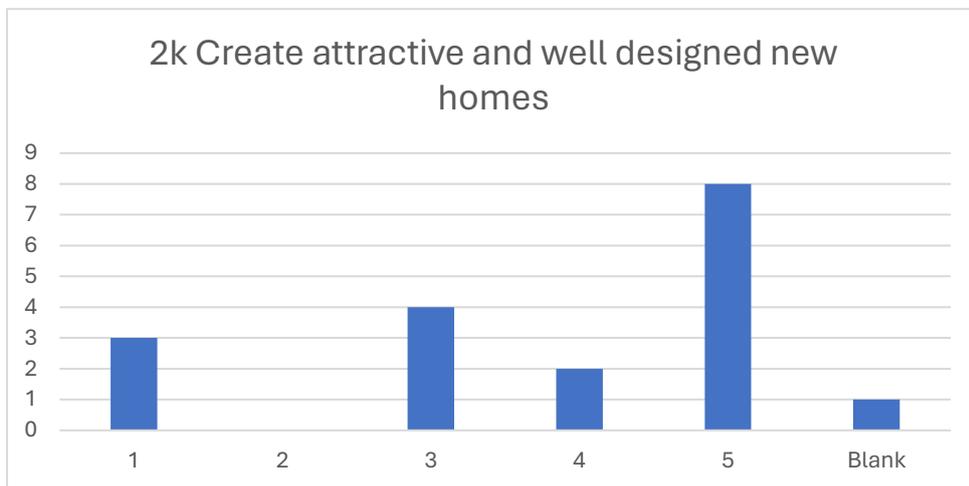
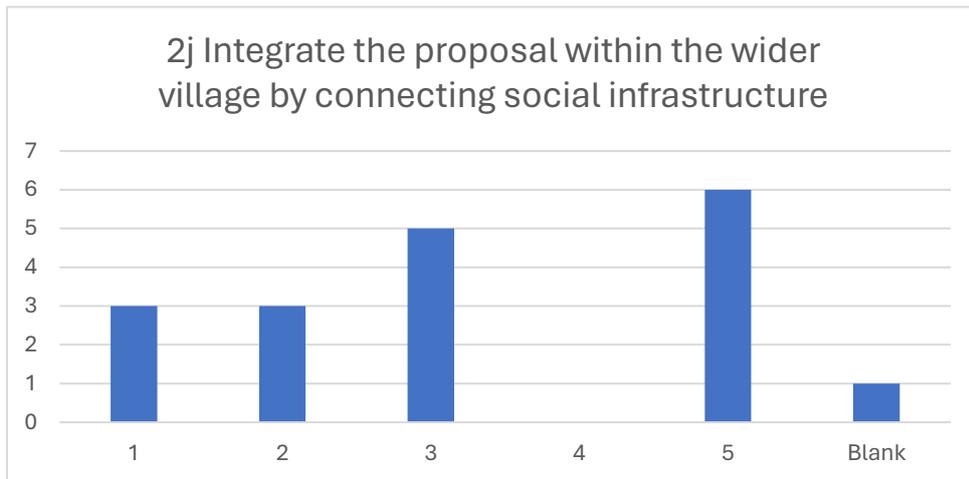
Open Spaces and Focal Points:



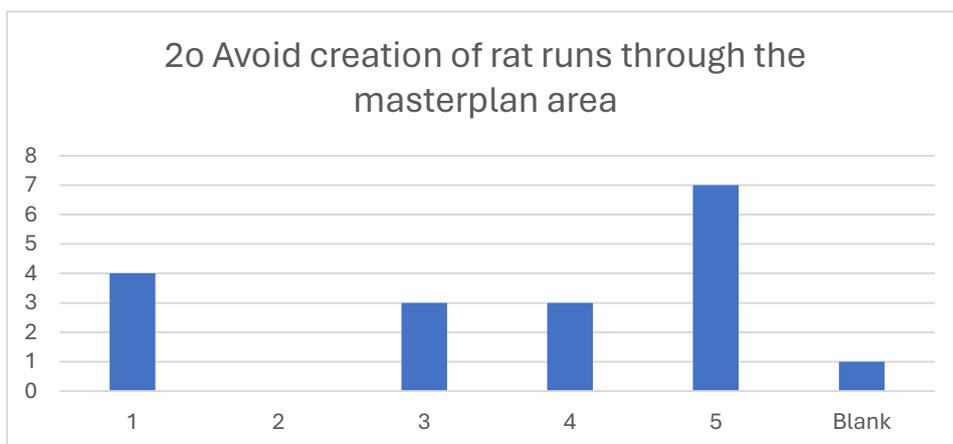
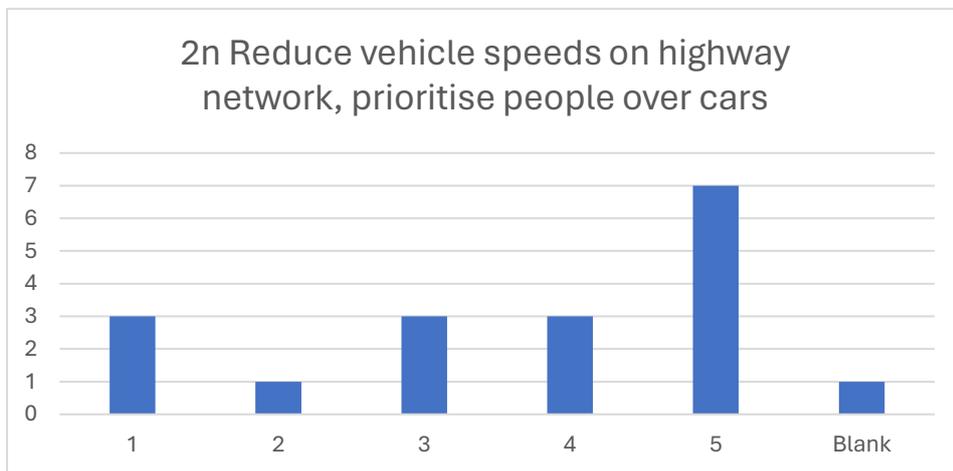
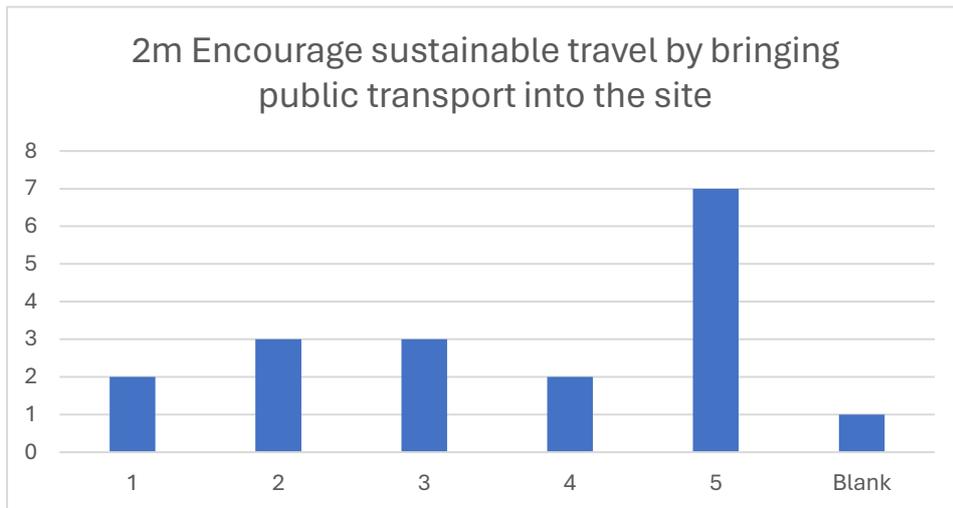
Creating a Highly Sustainable Place:



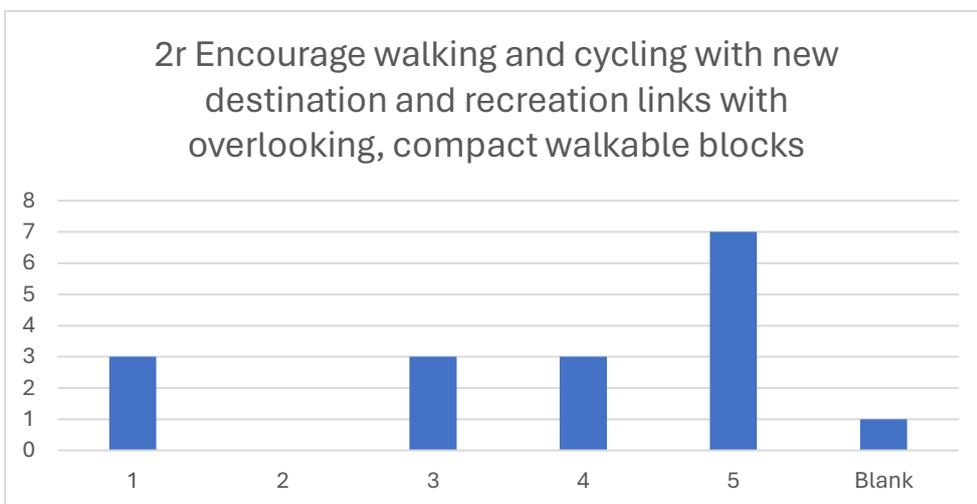
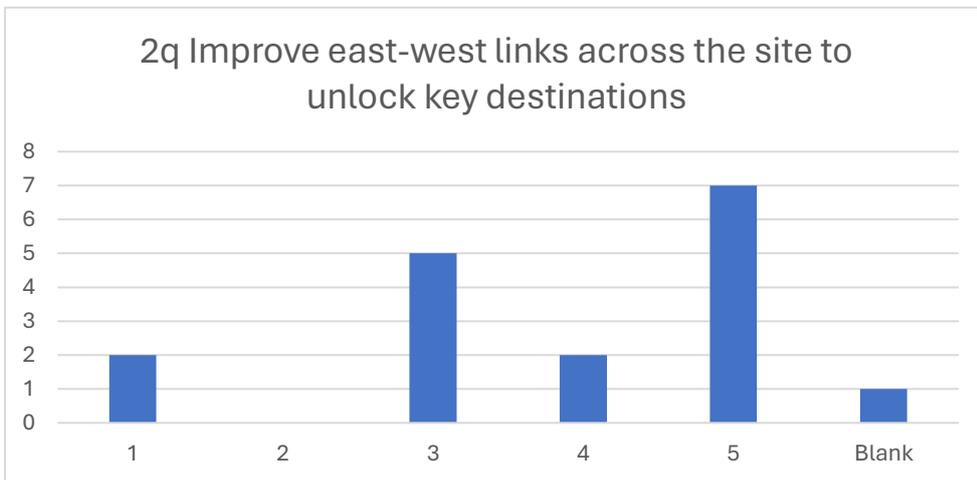
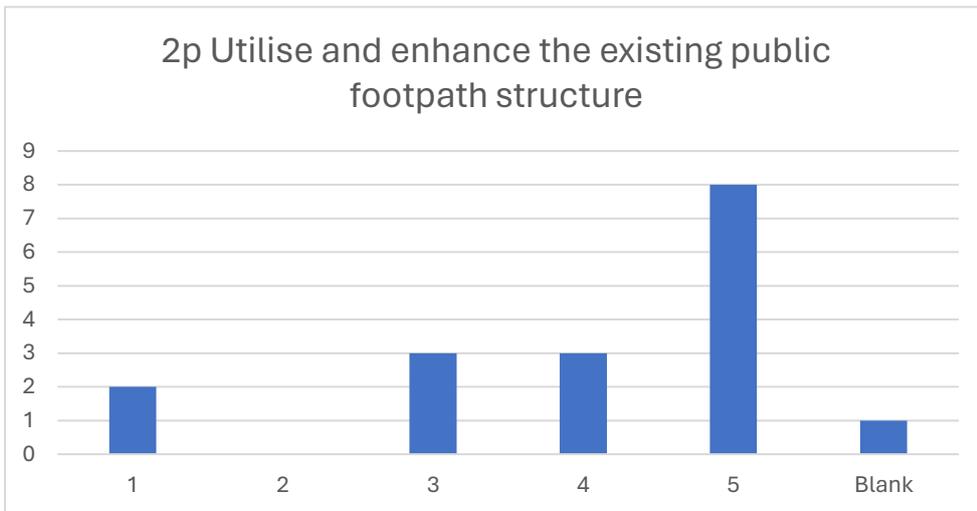
Integration & Legible Urban Form:



Public Transport & Vehicular Access:

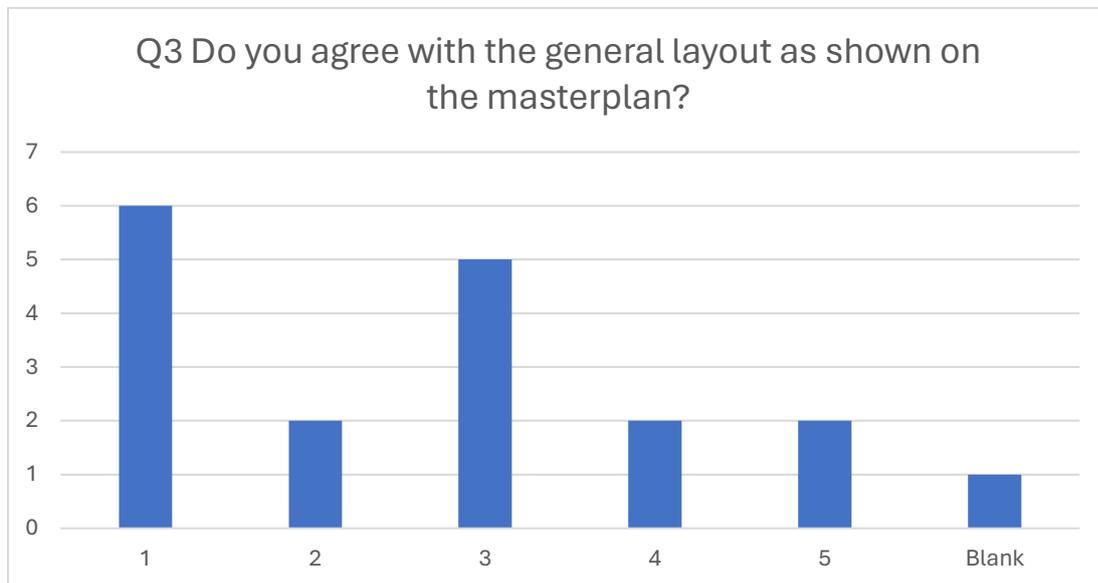


Enhancing Public Right of Way:



Question 3: Do you agree with the general layout as shown on the masterplan?

Respondents were asked to rate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement in Q3 (1 disagree – 5 agree).



Question 4: Comments on the Masterplan

The responses to the question from members of the local community comprised:

- Need better water supply / pressure
- Need better sewerage and waste
- Cripsey Brook long term maintenance should be in place to cope with overflow / Surface water drainage
- How will future management of water bodies be funded and overseen? / maintenance of open areas
- Loss of open green spaces
- More trees required
- Footpaths should remain
- Need layby north of A414 by Rayley Lane roundabout for disabled people to access public transport
- Need footpath along A414 to Talbot Roundabout
- More school buses for north of village
- No access to village via Church Lane
- Need parking strategy / minimum 3 spaces per home
- Zero ready homes needed
- Maintain privacy of existing home owners
- Need publicly available Construction Management Plan
- Object / disagree with masterplan
- Object to scale / change in character
- Farmland should be retained
- Traveller site not needed

Feedback from landowners comprised:

- Chase Farm is an industrial estate but is shown as housing
- Incorrect rights of way shown across Chase Farm
- Housing design should be traditional

The response from the Conservators of Epping Forest is reported with other statutory consultee responses.



4.3 Feedback from Letters and Emails

Four emails were received from the local community which raised the following issues:

- Need to improve local bus services in terms of frequency, later into the evening and to Chelmsford
- Keen for discussions relating to land for primary school and early years
- How will development affect Vicarage Lane?
- The Masterplan only relates to North Weald, not North Weald Bassett
- Urban references made in Masterplan but the village is rural
- Outcomes (such as modal change) are either subjective or based upon little research
- A minimum of 1,050 indicates cramming in as many homes as possible
- The impact on the A414 has been neglected and an additional roundabout will add to the dangers of using that strategic highway
- Can't see how bus routes down High Road and A414 will be practical
- Concern with density in a village setting
- What are the other developers and what plans do they have?
- Does the traveller site include space for a paddock?
- Significant issues in running an orchard and play areas
- Impact on Green Belt in North Weald Bassett Parish

An email was received from St Andrews Primary School which raised the following issues:

- Supportive of the Masterplan
- Strongly against additional primary school
- Support the expansion of the existing school
- Include new vehicular access to the north of the School and use existing entrance for pedestrian access
- Open to the idea of opening existing and any proposed sporting and leisure resources out to the community
- Consider lighting footpath that runs alongside the school

Two further emails and letters were received on behalf of other landowners and the issues are summarised below:

- Supportive of the production of the document but has raised some fundamental concerns
- Site NWB.R1 has been designed to include two LAP play areas, which is more appropriate than one LEAP
- Not clear on how NWB.R1 would be served by buses
- One single SUDs basin will be adequate for site NWB.R1
- It is logical for a potential new bus route to use the proposed access into site NWB.R1 from the A414
- Measures to make the stretch of the A414 between the existing and proposed roundabouts a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians is essential



- NWB.R1 should be served by a direct access from the A414 for all vehicles and all movements, provided that its use ceases once the link between R1 and R3 is delivered
- Object to the reliance on proposed roundabout as the only permanent means to access NWB.R1/NWB.T1
- Question whether second pedestrian path leading to R2 is necessary
- A bus route, bus stop and school drop off point within NWB.R1 are supported in principle but the direct access from the A414 should be retained permanently for buses (and potentially for all users)
- Consider combined bus stop / school drop off
- Strongly urge that additional pedestrian crossing across the A 414 is provided within close proximity to the access to NWB.R1
- Pedestrian and cycle access should be provided at the southern edge of R1 to Blackhorse Lane
- Indicative location of traveller site cannot be provided as shown and alternative locations are suggested
- Clarity on minimum site area for traveller pitches required
- Range of densities for site R1 somewhat welcomed
- References to building heights are supported
- Object to suggested mechanism relating to traveller site in infrastructure delivery table
- Chase Farm should be shown as industrial site
- Incorrect reference to rights of way across lane

4.4 Feedback from Public Consultation Events

During the public consultation events held on the Saturday 9th December and Tuesday 12th December 2023, issues were raised in discussion with EFDC officers and members of the Masterplan team. These can be summarised as follows:

Transport and access

- Support new roundabout access on A414
- General queries regarding traffic modelling and infrastructure upgrades
- Junction 7 motorway junction capacity and need for upgrading
- Traffic volumes heading east to Ongar
- Queries relating to the need for additional bus services

Drainage and sewerage

- Sewage capacity – concerns with current capacity
- Potable water pressure and connection point – report that Blackhorse Lane residents experience low water pressure.
- Surface water drainage at times of high rainfall water flows south into village (rather than north)

Other

- Contamination – comments about land historically being used as a landfill for the deposit of contaminated material



- Report of buried WWII bomber straddling the site boundary.
- Fire safety – concern that there are not sufficient strategic gaps to prevent the rapid spread of fire
- In principle objection to the loss of agricultural land
- General questions about development parameters / green corridors along the boundary; and rear access to gardens

A composite list of all non-statutory feedback can be found at Appendix G.

4.5 Feedback from statutory consultees

Responses were received from the following statutory consultees:

- North Weald Bassett Parish Council
- Epping Forest Heritage Trust
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Essex County Council
- National Highways
- EFDC Air Quality
- Thames Water
- Harlow and Gilston Garden Town
- Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board
- Conservators of Epping Forest

A composite list of all non-statutory feedback can be found at Appendix G.



5. Summary and conclusions

- The formal consultation included a comprehensive range of ways in which stakeholders could access information on the Strategic Masterplan and provide their feedback. This met and exceeded the policy and regulatory requirements.
- There was a relatively low level of response from the wider community as part of the formal consultation, although a wide range of quantitative feedback was received. This had been preceded earlier in 2023 by a widespread community consultation by Vistry Group which elicited a higher level of response, which resulted in changes being made to the Draft Masterplan.
- There were a range of responses to Q1 “Do you agree with the Masterplan Vision” although the overall responses were more weighted to disagree. There was a similar response to Q3 “Do you agree with the general layout as shown on the Masterplan”.
- There was also a spread of responses to Q2 themes and principles. However, responses were more weighted to agreeing with the themes and principles that underpin the Masterplan vision.
- A good level of response was received from statutory consultees and landowners which raised a wide range of issues. These will be reviewed and appropriate changes made to the masterplan before it is finalised.

