

Committee: Local Plan Leadership Group
Title: Feedback on Consultation on Theme 1: Where you live
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Summary

1. This report feeds back on the comments received on the First Consultation (Issues and Options) Theme 1: Where you live.

Recommendations

2. That members note
 - a. the consultation responses and the Forum's views
 - b. potential actions to address issues
 - c. that no final recommendations will be made until all comments have been considered (consultation ends 21 April 2021)
3. That members, if desired, provide any feedback e.g. for officers to consider later when making final recommendations, for Forum members' reference.

Financial Implications

2. None at this stage.

Background Papers

3. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Impact

4. None

Communication/Consultation	Consultation is on going
Community Safety	n/a
Equalities	Forthcoming policies will be subject to an equalities and Health Impact Assessment

Health and Safety	n/a
Human Rights/Legal Implications	n/a
Sustainability	Forthcoming policies will need to meet the sustainability objective of the Council
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	n/a

Situation

Background

5. In preparation to the formal consultation on a draft Local Plan the Council is consulting on a series of 9 themes. The starting point for the consultation on each theme is the Community Stakeholder Forum whose purpose is to inform, start a discussion and generate comment.
6. The first theme was on the topic of Where You Live and was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 11 November. The Forum heard a presentation from Dr Noha Nasser on '15-minute neighbourhoods' and then discussed the points raised in her presentation. Dr Nasser's presentation and a video of the Forum are available on the [website](#).
7. Following the Forum the theme was open for public consultation asking the general question of 'What do you value about where you live and how would you like to see it improve in the future?'. People are invited to make comments up to the close of the whole consultation on all the themes on 21 April. However, comments received within the first four weeks would be summarised and presented back to the Forum for comment and to this working group.

Summary of consultation responses

8. Between the 11 November and 9 December 2020, 33 people responded to the theme.
9. Appendix 1 is a summary of these comments. Common themes are shown on the infographic adapted from the consultation document. This is followed by a more detailed summary of the comments.

Community Stakeholder response

10. Appendix 1 was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 13 January 2021. They were asked to consider if any of the comments were particularly pertinent, surprising or hadn't raised an issue.

11. Some members were surprised by the comments about lack of open space. Others felt that these comments related to large green amenity spaces. Whereas there is a lot of farmland there are less parks. The importance of having a large area of open space to relieve the pressure on Hatfield Forest was specifically mentioned.
12. The appropriateness of a 15-minute community to a rural district was questioned. It was considered that village populations are too small to support a 15-minute neighbourhood and that people had to drive to larger towns. An alternative view was put forward that providing more services locally reduced the need for car journeys. It could also be a reason to stop sprawling development.
13. The responses clearly showed that people are proud of where they live; proud of the heritage and feel strongly that it needs to be protected.

Officer comments

14. The places that people valued are recognised and the local plan needs the appropriate protection policies. Strong design policies are needed to deliver development which respects the existing character. The Council will need to consider policies which allow development that reflects or creates a new rural vernacular which people can be proud of; that is affordable and that is integrated or connected to the village or town centre.
15. Policies are also needed to ensure new services and facilities are provided to support new developments.
16. The need for local job opportunities was identified. The Council may wish to consider more innovative policies than allocating employment land.
17. In relation to the issue of parks raised by the Forum members, there are only 7 parks in the whole of Uttlesford and perhaps the local plan needs to consider any imbalance in the diversity and distribution of open space/green spaces across the district.
18. In relation to thinking about the development strategy, the comments raise some interesting questions. For example how does the Council take into account views that consider existing settlements to be the right size against views that support the provisions of an improved bus service or new local shop (which would need an increased population to support them)? Or the view that residents do not expect a range of services in villages and the recognised reliance on the car against the Council's aims to combat the climate crisis? Should the local plan consider a strategy based on 15-minute neighbourhoods and what do these look like in a rural district?
19. When developing policies which affect the environment where people live, the Council will need to be mindful of its duty under the Equality Act 2010. Of relevance here is to ensure that policies don't negatively impact on people due to their protected characteristic – to ensure that everyone has access to a good home, employment, healthy environment and services and facilities.

20. Reliance on the car and lack of efficient or practical alternatives is identified as a big issue (covered in theme 4)

What happens next

21. The consultation on this theme remains open until 21 April 2021.

22. Officers and the Forum will consider any feedback made by members at this meeting. Final recommendations, taking into account all comments on all themes will be prepared after the close of consultation in April. The Council will use the comments to determine its vision, strategy, policies and prepare the draft Local Plan.

23. Early comments made on Theme 2: Character and Heritage will be presented to the next meeting of the Working Group.

Risk Analysis

24.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Insufficient regard is given to the comments received on the consultation	1 Little	3: Could lead to unsound plan.	Members and officers to carefully consider results of consultation, and clearly explain reasons for decisions made.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.