

Response to Neighbourhood Plan consultation July 2021

The survey on the draft policies closed on 7th June with 423 responses. A big thank you to everyone who took part and contributed, we were very pleased with the number of people who responded and so clearly care a great deal about Bovingdon. We asked people who had registered an interest from the last consultation to take part, we publicised the survey through community groups, businesses, schools, advertising and word of mouth.

We have analysed the responses for all 4 areas of the plan – Housing, Economy, Community and Transport. Generally, your feedback supported all the policies we had drafted and we will now complete the final elements of the Neighbourhood Plan, with a view to completing the statutory consultation in Autumn 21. Our intention is for residents to adopt the plan through public referendum in Autumn 2022. We are working closely with Dacorum Borough Council to ensure our Neighbourhood Plan needs to align with emerging new Local Plan.

Areas we will be further examining in Bovingdon are:

- Whether infrastructure provided by doctors, dentists and Affinity Water is adequate to support more homes
- The most suitable site for allotments in discussion with Dacorum Borough Council and other landowners
- Whether higher levels of affordable housing for sale are required to meet local demand on the sites to be designated
- How to ensure pedestrian access from Lancaster Drive across the Molyneux Avenue housing site
- The proposed density of the Molyneux Avenue site

Some specific comments were made, which we can also answer:

- The medical or care home facilities proposed on the Grange Farm site will provide some additional infrastructure
- We have been assured by the Grange Farm developer that the trees on the site will be protected
- Green spaces lost by the developments will be re-provided elsewhere, wherever possible. A wild area on developments will be explored.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of suitable accommodation for downsizing. This is addressed in the variety of housing specified in the plan, which includes new 1 and 2 bedroom homes
- While there is support for more affordable homes, this is unlikely to be achieved when developing small sites
- We are investigating a suitable “meanwhile use” for the area allocated for a school on Grange Farm, to prevent this area being developed for additional housing in the future.
- We will be engaging with all groups who hold community assets, such as the sports clubs and Scouts, to discuss how they can, together with the Parish council, maximise & improve access for Bovingdon residents.
- We will seek suitable access to public transport for all housing developments.

We assessed the housing sites by scoring 14 proposed sites against fixed criteria. The best scoring sites were then chosen taking into account the total number of homes we believed we could support. These criteria included:

- Loss of open space
- Availability and deliverability of the site
- Impacting negatively on views
- Infrastructure required to develop the site
- Whether the site is protected, or green belt
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Housing

Q1. Do you support Grange Farm and Molyneux Avenue as the most suitable sites for new homes from our shortlist?

The feedback here was mixed, however 66% were in favour of some development, with 58% on these two sites

Q2. How important do you think it is to maintain a strategic gap between Bovingdon and other settlements?

The results confirmed the need to maintain a gap with 91% expressing it as an important or top priority

Q3. How important do you think a Design Code will be to the Neighbourhood Plan?

The results confirmed 96% of respondents thought it would be important to preserve the character of areas within Bovingdon

Community

Q4. Do you support Local Green Space designation of the following sites?

Of 370 answers, there was an overwhelming yes with Bovingdon Green on 92%, followed by the Churchyard on 91%.

Q5. Do we need community allotments in Bovingdon?

Results confirmed the need and desire for allotments, with 82% saying yes to a need for allotments, however, only 23% (88) would use a plot

Q6. How important to you are the following options for accessing the countryside?

Results confirmed the importance of footpaths to the village, especially maintaining them. We will continue to investigate an access route from Lancaster Drive to either Howard Agne Close, Hadland Close or The Bourne.

Q7. Do you think the following views are worth protecting?

The importance of protecting all 5 views was confirmed with Bury Farm looking west the most popular to Homefield Spring looking east the least popular. There were 2 new views suggested which we will consider. Out of 370 answers, there was an overwhelming yes to protecting all 5 views

Q8. Would you support the designation of Bovingdon Green as a conservation area?

This was an overwhelming Yes at 88.9%.

Economy and Environment

Q9 – Do you support the following proposals?

9.1 Protect existing retail employment.

Survey results confirmation of strong support for the existing retail employment, and retail shops. Out of 365 answers, 93.42% were in favour with only 1.64% saying No.

9.2 Promote new retail employment.

Results indicate that a large number of the respondents would like to see the addition of new retail employment opportunities in the village, with 66.58% of the returns supporting the policy.

However, 20% of the returns indicate a concern about the effect new retail employment may have on the village. 14.25% of returns expressed No Opinion.

9.3 Safeguard existing employment areas

As with 9.1 there was a very positive response in favour of the policy (90.41%) with a very small minority (2.19%) not supportive of the policy.

9.4 Encourage new small Businesses

An encouraging 85.48% of the returns indicate a very strong support for the policy. A small number were not in favour, expressing concerns that small Business premises will have an impact on 'infrastructure' both in use of Green Belt land and traffic flows of the village.

9.5 Support home-based Businesses

Again, a very strong response in support of the policy. Reinforcing the village's support towards local Business and Retail with 84.38% in favour of the policy.

Q10. Do you think ultrafast Broadband and modern mobile communications are important for local businesses?

There was overwhelming support for the development and installation of good communication networks for Business (and of course residents), with 90.68% of the answers in favour and less than 1% opposed.

Transport

Q11. How important is improving Road Safety and reducing traffic congestion?

95% thought it was a High priority

Q12. Would better Public Transport encourage you to use it more?

There was an Equal split in responses between Likely/ Neutral /Unlikely. This policy is unproven, possibly reflecting a lack of confidence in public transport in the area.

Q13. How important is it to improve public parking spaces in the village centre?

94% thought it was very important or important

Q14. If improved pedestrian & Cycle Routes to the village were provided would it encourage you to walk or cycle rather than drive?

56% responded said that were likely to walk or cycle, 25% were Neutral, and 19% said they were unlikely to

There was significant feedback in the written comments on Transport and the Parish council is considering how best to address the concerns raised adding the ideas suggested into the Neighbourhood Plan action plan. There are a number of improvements to the roads and parking which the County Council Highways team are implementing. These include:

- A 20 MPH zone outside the school at the start and end of the school day, as well as improved signage
- Clearer definition of the pedestrian zone outside Jarmans and the Co-op
- Upgrading the gateways into the village to serving to slow down the traffic