Shaping the Future of Two Waters

Consultation Feedback

Commonplace

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

CONTENTS – WITH QUICK HYPERLINKS
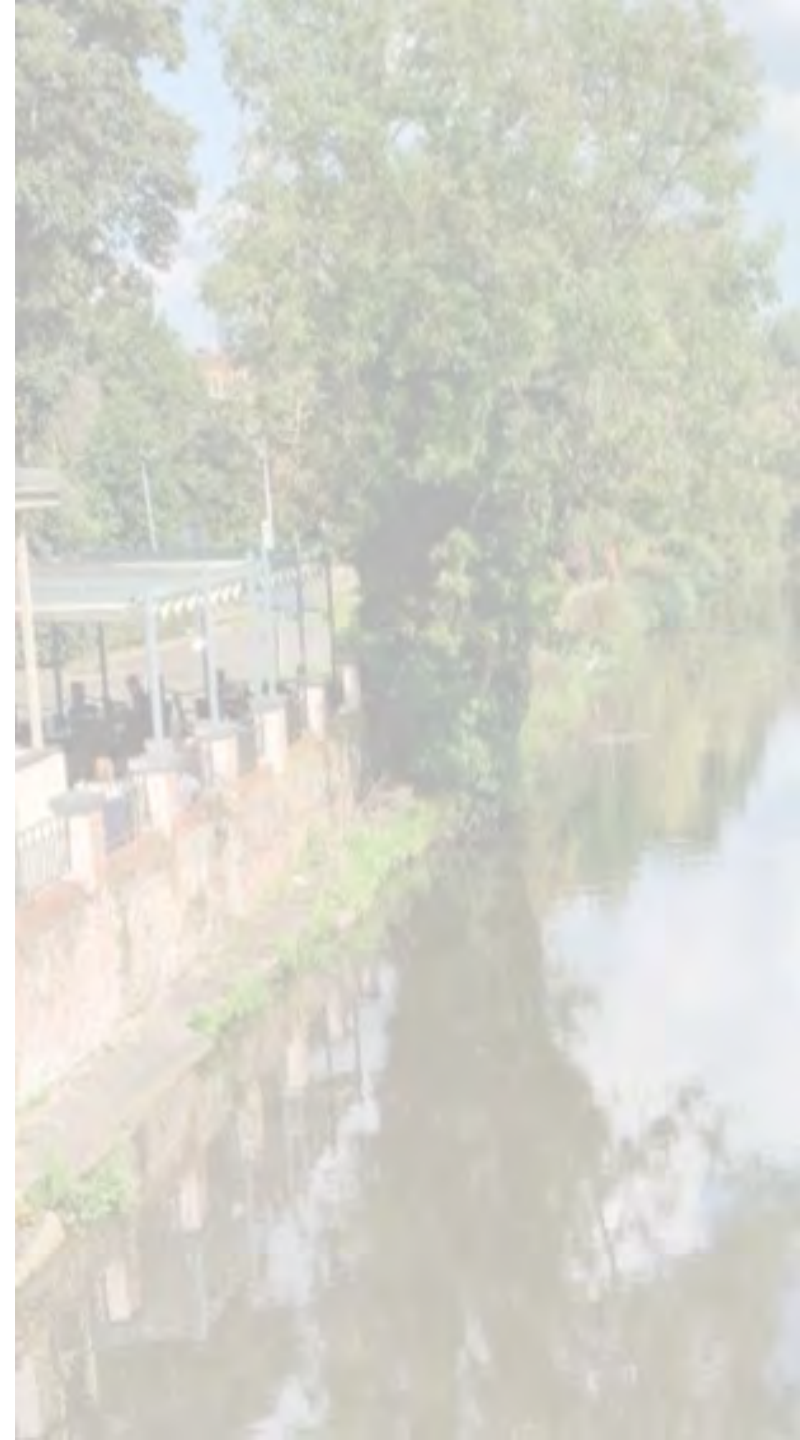
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Two Waters Consultation

In 2021 we were awarded funding by the Government to explore and trial new ways of engaging with local communities. In our trial we held a web-based consultation on the Two Waters area on Commonplace – an online citizen engagement platform. We chose to focus on Two Waters, as this area has experienced some of the biggest changes in recent years and is continuing to evolve. In this consultation, we wanted to understand how the community feels about Two Waters as it is currently, and what you would like future guidance to focus on. The consultation launched on the 14th April 2022 and closed on the 30th June 2022.

Who Participated in the Consultation

There were over 400 participants to the consultation. Participants tended to be residents within Dacorum Borough (often living in the HP1 and HP3 postcode areas), working full-time, aged 45-64, of a white ethnicity and without a disability or long-term illness. In total, participants made close to 1,000 contributions.

Key Findings

The consultation focused on 5 separate elements:

- **Have your say:** where visitors could view the map and leave comments - 246 comments with 265 agreements.
- **3D model proposal:** where visitors could view the proposed 3D model for Hemel Hempstead and provide feedback - 52 comments with 6 agreements.
- **Website feedback:** where visitors could provide feedback on their website experience - 33 comments (with no agreements).
- **Evidence:** where visitors could view the background evidence gathered - 9 comments and 10 agreements.
- **Learn more:** where visitors were able to read more about the project - 9 comments with 21 agreements.

In summary, being 'close to nature', 'important to the character of the area', 'attractive', having a 'sense of community' and 'feeling safe' emerged as key reasons for a place having a **positive** sentiment. 84% of positive contributions about open land and natural spaces focused on being close to nature. Clearly, if a place is near nature, attractive and gives the area some character, it is more likely to be well received by the public.

Boxmoor Common, Sunnyside Rural Trust (Hemel Food Garden) and Durrants Lakes scored highly in terms of how participants felt about them. Both the Box Moor Trust land and the Grand Union Canal were frequently felt to be unique, local landmarks, contributing to an attractive environment. The former was often felt to require preservation and protection.

In contrast, **negative** sentiments were typically influenced by 'I don't like the design' and 'not attractive'. These tended to focus on business, science or retail parks, and industrial areas. Boxmoor and Apsley High Street both received a mixed response from consultation participants, with some concerns that they were unattractive and congested.

Looking to the future, increasing nature, walking and cycling routes, and open and community space in the area, were frequent requests from participants. The proposed 3D model for the area also attracted a mixed response – with a frequent suggestion that it needed to include more detail.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Engagement Overview

We know from our recent Local Plan consultation that the continued regeneration of Hemel Hempstead remains a key priority for our community, and we're keen to take this forward by exploring new opportunities.

As a key part of this, we are looking to identify several new 'Opportunity Areas' across the town. One of those has been identified in the south of Hemel Hempstead, known locally as Two Waters.

Why We Selected This Area

We chose to focus on Two Waters, as this area has experienced some of the biggest changes in recent years and is continuing to evolve. Two Waters is an informal name given to an area comprising parts of Apsley and Corner Hall, Boxmoor, Kings Langley and Nash Mills. A map of the area is shown overleaf.

Our survey questions drew on responses we had received to previous consultations in 2017 on the Two Waters Masterplan – 2020-2038 and in 2020 on the Regulation 18 Dacorum Local Plan (2020-2038) Emerging Strategy for Growth.

In this consultation, we wanted to understand how the community feels about Two Waters as it is currently, and what you would like future guidance to focus on. We were particularly interested in design and character and used 'area types' from the National Model Design Code - 2021.

Your feedback will help us develop a vision of what each area type should look like in Two Waters.

The Proptech Engagement Fund

In 2021 we were awarded funding by the Government to explore and trial new ways of engaging with local communities. In our trial we held a web-based consultation on the Two Waters area on Commonplace – an online citizen engagement platform.

This consultation was not statutory, meaning there were no planning laws regulating it, which gave us the flexibility to test new technologies. The findings of this trial will be fed back to the Government, and will inform their policies and proposals on how planning consultations should be undertaken in the future. As we develop formal planning documents on the Two Waters area we will undertake statutory consultation in line with planning laws.

The Two Waters Study Area – Showing the Character Areas Referenced Here
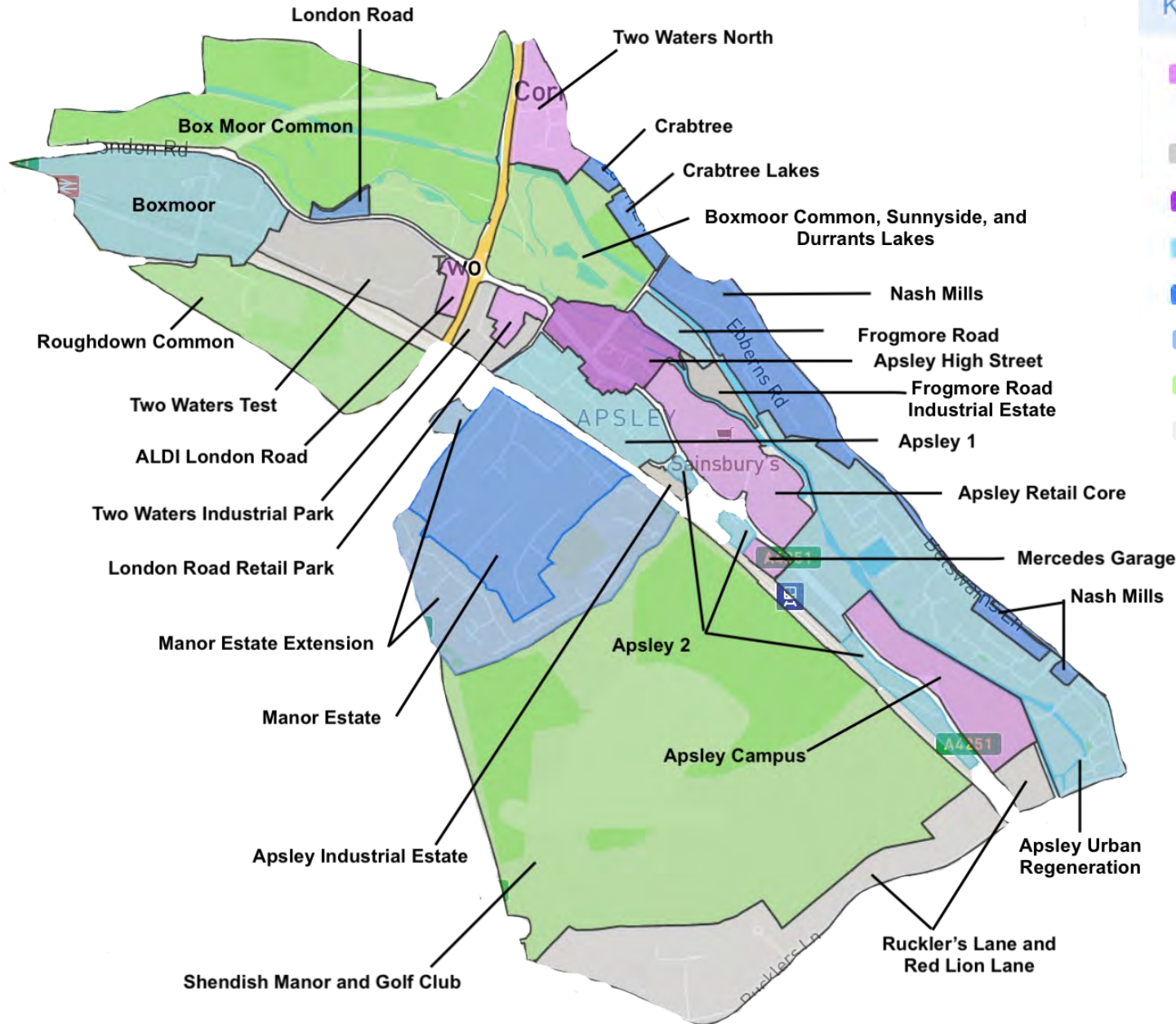
KEY

- Business, Science or Retal Park
- Industrial Area
- Local Centre
- Urban Neighbourhood
- Suburbs
- Outer Suburbs
- Open Land and Natural Spaces
- Villages

Character areas labelled on the map: London Road, Two Waters North, Box Moor Common, Crabtree, Crabtree Lakes, Boxmoor, Boxmoor Common, Sunnyside, and Durrants Lakes, Nash Mills, Roughdown Common, Frogmore Road, Apsley High Street, Frogmore Road Industrial Estate, Two Waters Test, Apsley 1, ALDI London Road, Apsley Retail Core, Two Waters Industrial Park, Mercedes Garage, London Road Retail Park, Nash Mills, Manor Estate Extension, Apsley 2, Manor Estate, Apsley Campus, Apsley Urban Regeneration, Apsley Industrial Estate, Shendish Manor and Golf Club, Ruckler's Lane and Red Lion Lane

Community Response

This engagement report covers consultation results gathered from the Two Waters web page hosted by Commonplace.

The consultation launched on the 14th April 2022 and closed on the 30th June 2022.

There were 6,989 visitors to the Two Waters website. There were 372 participants who provided their email address, and a further 39 anonymous participants. In total, participants made 986 contributions.

Respondents

View respondents

A person who contributed to a Commonplace website by either adding a comment or an agreement.

Visitors

View visitors

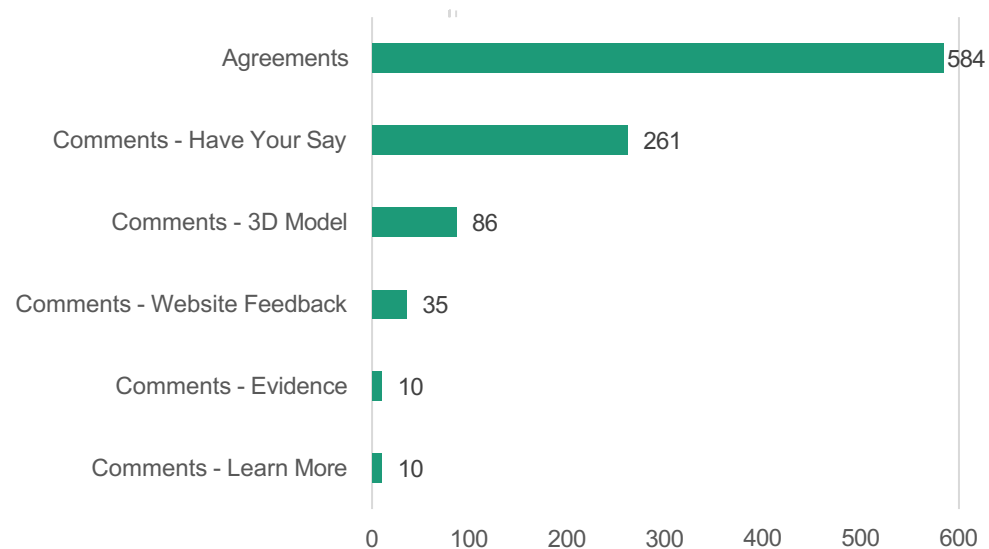**Contributions**

View contributions

The total number of comments and agreements by respondents to express their opinion.

Contributions By Section

The 986 contributions to the consultation comprised 402 comments and 584 agreements. Contributions were made to 5 separate elements:

- **Have your say:** where visitors could view the map and leave comments - 246 comments with 265 agreements.
- **3D model proposal:** where visitors could view the proposed 3D model for Hemel Hempstead and provide feedback - 52 comments with 6 agreements.
- **Website feedback:** where visitors could provide feedback on their website experience - 33 comments (with no agreements).
- **Evidence:** where visitors could view the background evidence gathered - 9 comments and 10 agreements.
- **Learn more:** where visitors were able to read more about the project - 9 comments with 21 agreements.

The above figures **exclude** anonymous and "unconfirmed" contributions. The graph below shows **all** contributions.

Section	Value
Agreements	584
Comments - Have Your Say	261
Comments - 3D Model	86
Comments - Website Feedback	35
Comments - Evidence	10
Comments - Learn More	10

*Contributions **including** those which were anonymous/"unconfirmed".*
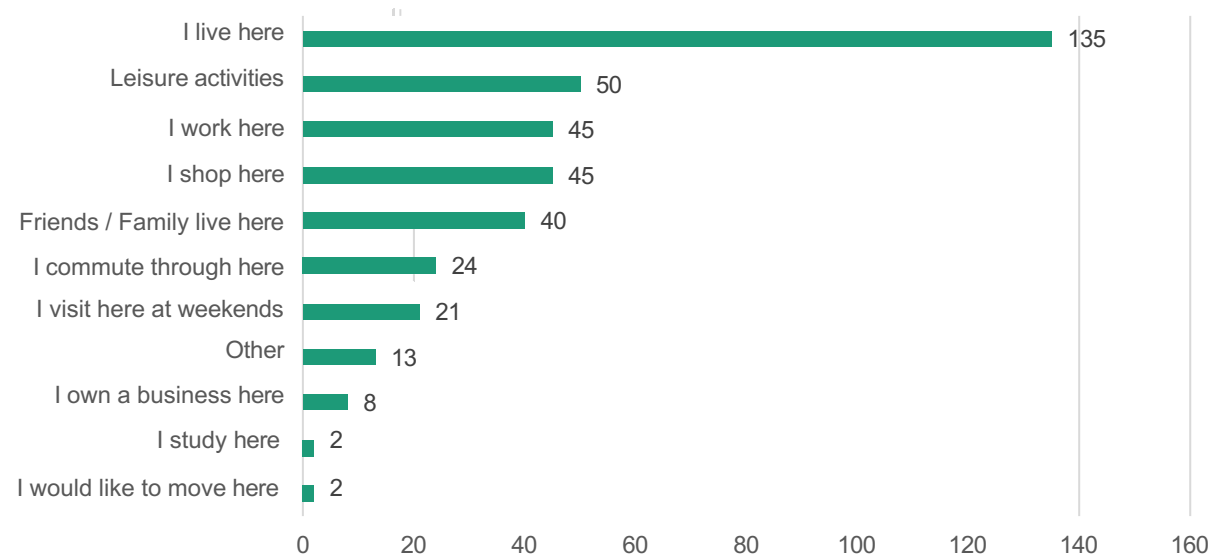
Connection to the Area

Participants tended to be residents within Dacorum Borough, as shown in the chart to the right.

This was substantially higher than the next most common connection of leisure activities.

Leisure, work, shopping and visiting friends and family were all within a similar range.

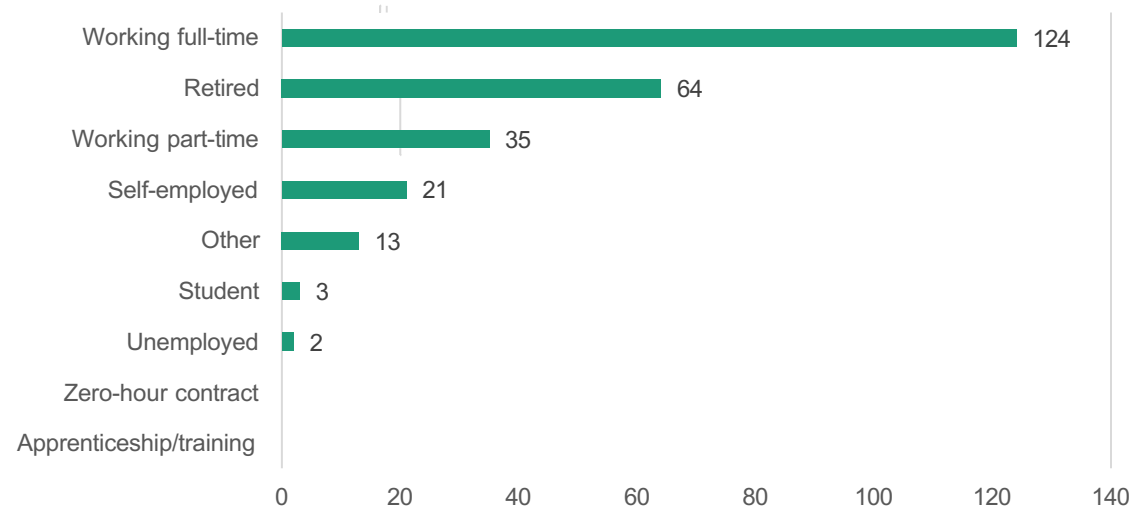(More than one connection to the area could be specified).

Connection	Value
I live here	135
Leisure activities	50
I work here	45
I shop here	45
Friends / Family live here	40
I commute through here	24
I visit here at weekends	21
Other	13
I own a business here	8
I study here	2
I would like to move here	2

Employment Status

We can see from the chart to the right, that the majority of those who contributed on the Commonplace survey were in full-time employment.

There were very few students or unemployed respondents and none at all who were completing training or an apprenticeship, or employed on zero-hour contracts.

Employment Status of Participants

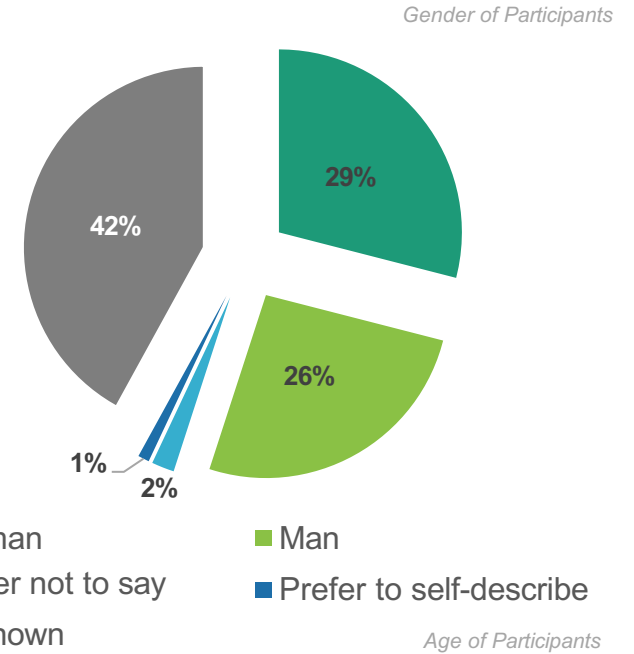| Employment Status	Value
Working full-time	124
Retired	64
Working part-time	35
Self-employed	21
Other	13
Student	3
Unemployed	2
Zero-hour contract	
Apprenticeship/training	

Who We Engaged

Participants were asked to provide information relating to a number of demographic characteristics, alongside their contribution. These characteristics included their gender, age, ethnicity, disability/long-term illness and their postcode. It was important for us to collect this information so we had a clear picture of the consultation's reach and the representativeness of the collective response.
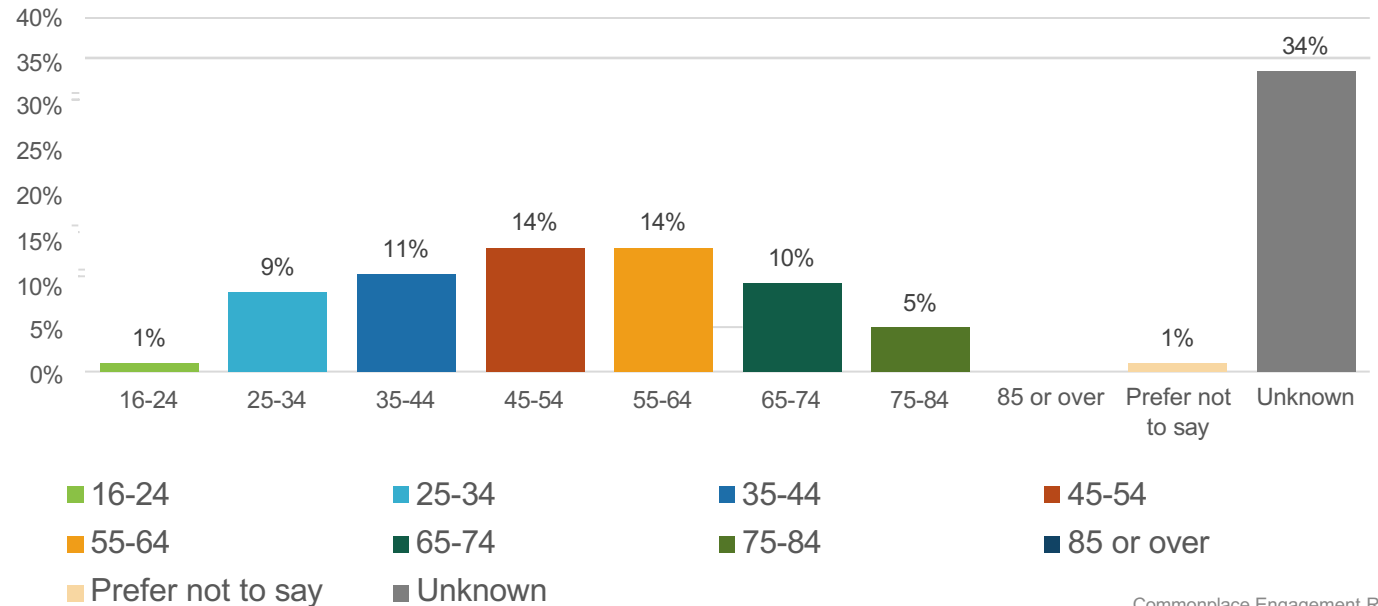
Participant Gender and Age

Here we see the gender and age of participants.

217 participants (58%) specified their gender. The consultation attracted slightly more females (29%) than males (26%).

Gender of Participants

29%

42%

26%

1%

2%

- ■ Woman
- ■ Man
- ■ Prefer not to say
- ■ Prefer to self-describe
- ■ Unknown

Age of Participants

245 participants (66%) specified their age.

The most frequent age profile of participants was 45-64 years.

Age	%
16-24	1%
25-34	9%
35-44	11%
45-54	14%
55-64	14%
65-74	10%
75-84	5%
85 or over	
Prefer not to say	1%
Unknown	34%

- ■ 16-24
- ■ 25-34
- ■ 35-44
- ■ 45-54
- ■ 55-64
- ■ 65-74
- ■ 75-84
- ■ 85 or over
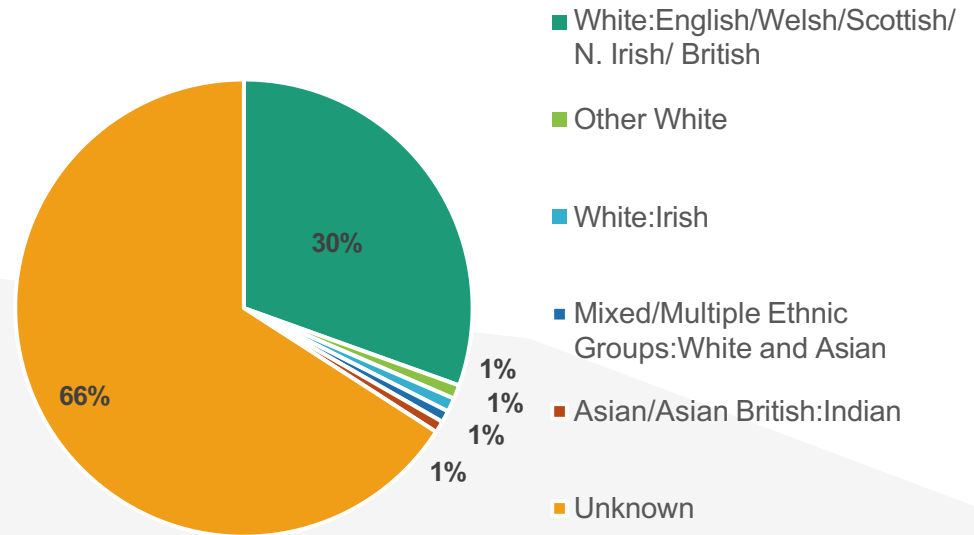- ■ Prefer not to say
- ■ Unknown

Participant Ethnicity

119 participants (33%) specified their ethnicity.

Here we see that that a majority of those who provided this information were White, White Other or White Irish.
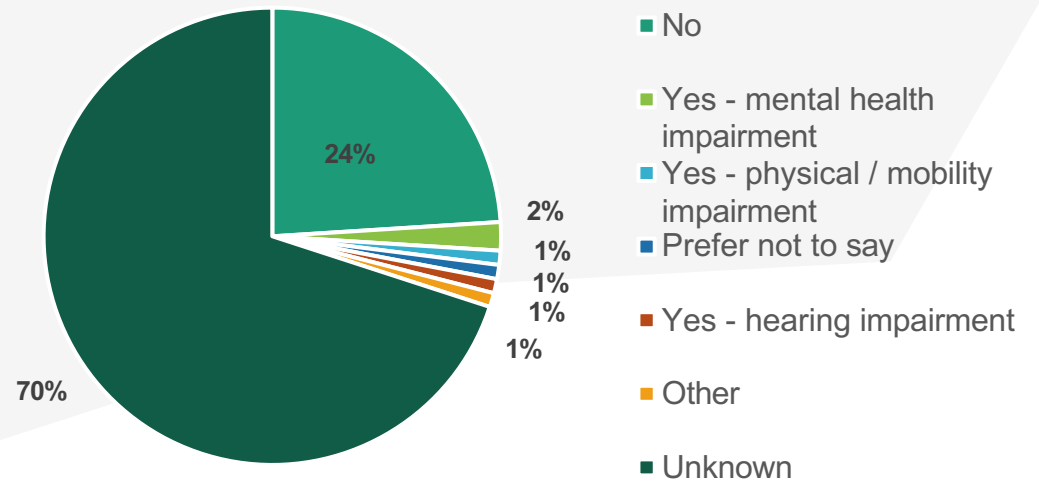
A small proportion were of a minority ethnic origin.

Legend:
- White:English/Welsh/Scottish/ N. Irish/ British
- Other White
- White:Irish
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups:White and Asian
- Asian/Asian British:Indian
- Unknown

Pie chart values: 30%, 66%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 1%

Participant Disability and Long-Term Illness

112 participants (30%) specified whether they had a disability or long-term illness.

The majority of those who provided this information did not identify as having a disability or long-term illness.

Of those who did, the most frequent type of disability specified was a mental health impairment.

Legend:
- No
- Yes - mental health impairment
- Yes - physical / mobility impairment
- Prefer not to say
- Yes - hearing impairment
- Other
- Unknown

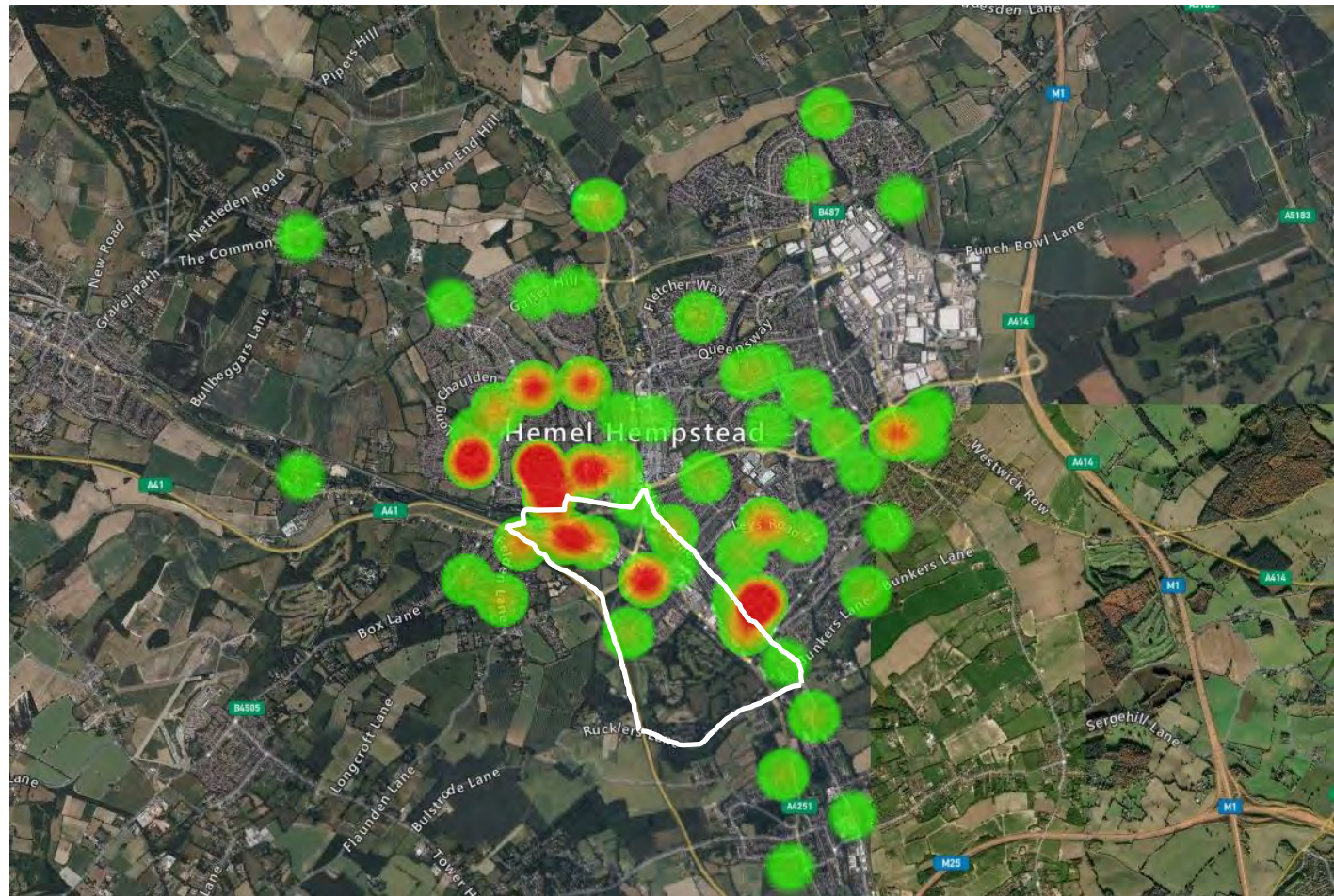Pie chart values: 24%, 70%, 2%, 1%, 1%, 1%

Participant Postcode

Here we see the study area boundary (in white) and participant residence. This heatmap is a visual way of representing the distribution of participant postcodes.
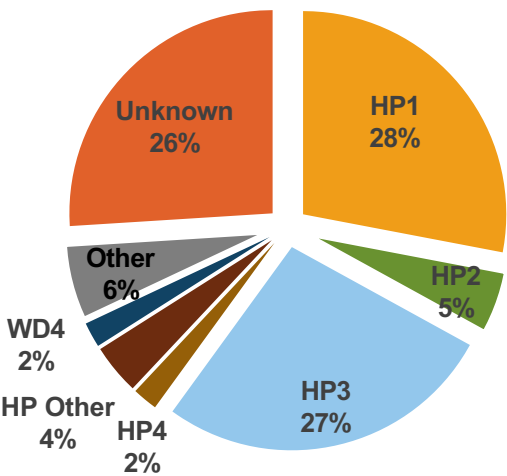
276 participants (74%) specified their postcode.

A majority of these participants were residents with an HP postcode. Many of these were residents of the HP1 and HP3 postcode areas.

The majority of the Two Waters study area is in the HP3 postcode area.

Participant Postcodes

Pie chart — Participant Postcodes:
- Unknown 26%
- HP1 28%
- HP2 5%
- HP3 27%
- HP4 2%
- HP Other 4%
- WD4 2%
- Other 6%

Heatmap of Hemel Hempstead / Two Waters study area

Red areas indicate the highest density of responses, with **amber areas** indicating a medium density and **green areas** indicating a lower density.
The postcodes of participants residing further afield are not shown, due to the scale of the map.

SENTIMENT

SENTIMENT AND PLACE

Questions Asked

Having selected an area on the map, contributors were asked:
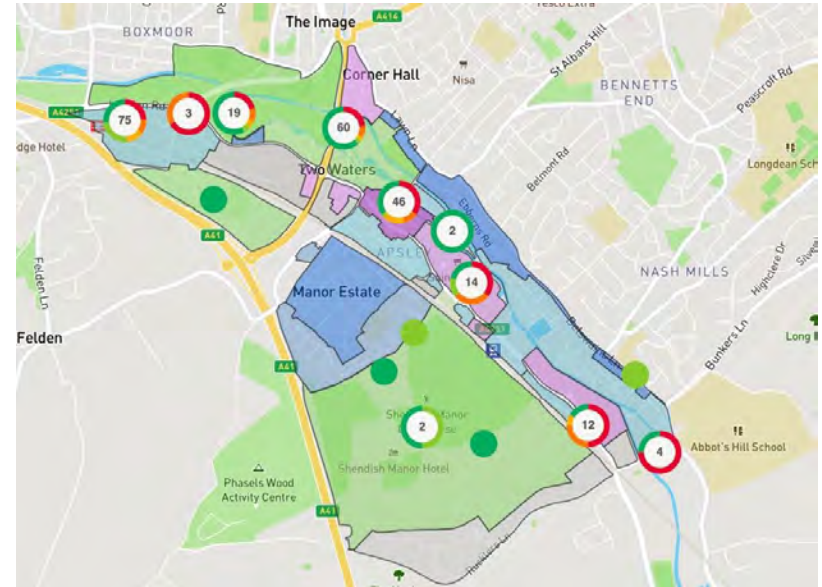
- **What is the place, building, street or green space that you have marked on the map?**

- **How does this place make you feel? A *single* selection from options of:**

  - **Happy**
  - **Somewhat happy**
  - **Neutral**
  - **Somewhat unhappy**
  - **Unhappy**

- **Why do you feel this way?**

How Commonplace Works

Commonplace uses a map to allow the public to drop a place tag on a place or feature on a map and leave feedback by answering the survey questions situated on the sidebar.

Image of Commonplace Heat Map

What is the place, building, street or green space that you have marked on the map?

How does this place make you feel?

Why do you feel this way? (Select all that apply)
Select one or more options

Close to Nature	Sense of community	I like the design
Not enough Nature	No sense of community	I don't like the design
Cycle friendly	Vibrant	Good mix of businesses
Bad for cyclists	Dull/boring	Appeals to a variety of ages
Streets easy to get around	Attractive	Calm
Poor connections	Not Attractive	Busy
Feels safe	Important to the character of the area	Congested
	Pedestrian Friendly	Public Art
	Bad for Pedestrians	No-one around
	Fun at night	Accessible

Inaccessible
I like to eat or drink here
I like to exercise here
Add something else

Do you have any other comments

Record a voice note, **we'll transcribe it.**
Click on the the blue button to have your say

Images of Consultation Questions

SENTIMENT OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

What Influences Positive and Negative Sentiment?

Having selected how they felt about a place (their sentiment), participants were then asked 'why do you feel this way?'. They were able to select as many reasons as they felt applied, from a given list of 32 possible reasons – and also leave additional comments. Below, we see the top 5 reasons behind positive and negative sentiment.

Being 'close to nature', 'important to the character of the area', 'attractive', a 'sense of community' and 'feels safe' emerged as key reasons for a place having a **positive** or **mostly positive** sentiment. Clearly, if a place is near nature, attractive and gives the area some character, it is more likely to be well received by the public.

In contrast, both **negative** and **mostly negative** sentiments were typically influenced by 'I don't like the design' and 'not attractive'.

Top 5 Place Tags: Reasons for a Positive Sentiment

1	**Close to nature**	**99**
2	**Important to the character of the area**	**91**
3	**Attractive**	**77**
4	**Sense of community**	**71**
5	**Feels safe**	**59**

Top 5 Place Tags: Reasons for a Negative Sentiment

1	**Not attractive**	**57**
2	**I don't like the design**	
3	**Dull/boring**	
4	**Not pedestrian friendly**	
5	**No sense of community**	**18**
5	**Busy**	**18**

Detailed Breakdown

Influencing POSITIVE Sentiment	Number of Comments
Important to the character of the area	71
Attractive	60
Sense of community	57
Feels safe	48

Influencing MOSTLY POSITIVE Sentiment	Number of Comments
Close to nature	25
Important to the character of the area	20
Attractive	17
Sense of community	14
Feels safe	11
Pedestrian Friendly	11

Influencing MOSTLY NEGATIVE Sentiment	Number of Comments
I don't like the design	14
Not attractive	14
Dull/boring	10
Feels unsafe	9
Not pedestrian friendly	8

| Influencing NEGATIVE Sentiment	Number of Comments
Not attractive	43
I don't like the design	24
Not pedestrian friendly	18
Dull/boring	18
Busy	18
No sense of community	18

A Closer Look at Positive Feelings

The images here are screenshots from the Commonplace website, showing the places where there were a higher density of **positive** comments.

These tended to be in areas on, or close to **green spaces**. Being close to nature in these spaces is an important aspect for participants, with 84% feeling that this underpinned their positivity.

The idea of these places being *important to the character of the area, being safe and being attractive* was also frequently evident.
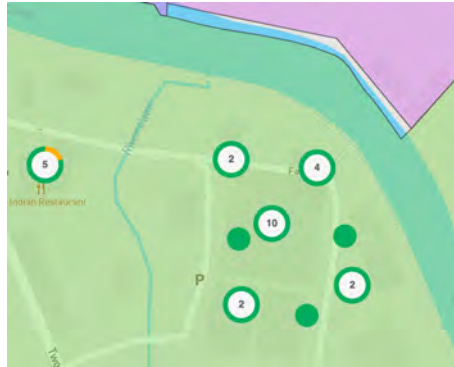
Area around Sunnyside Rural Trust

Area around Station Moor

84%

of positive contributions about open land and natural spaces, focused on **being close to nature.**

A Closer Look at Negative Feelings

The images here are again screenshots from the Commonplace website, showing the places where there were a higher density of **negative** comments.

These tended to focus on **business, science or retail parks,** and **industrial areas**.

Here, the main criticisms of these spaces clustered around perceptions of them being *unattractive/dull/boring and badly designed*, in addition to providing *a poor pedestrian experience.*
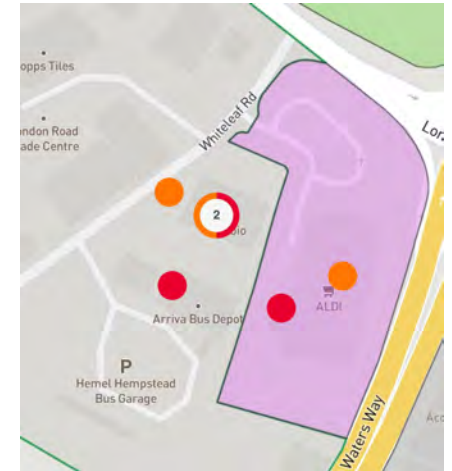
Areas (shown above and below) around London Road
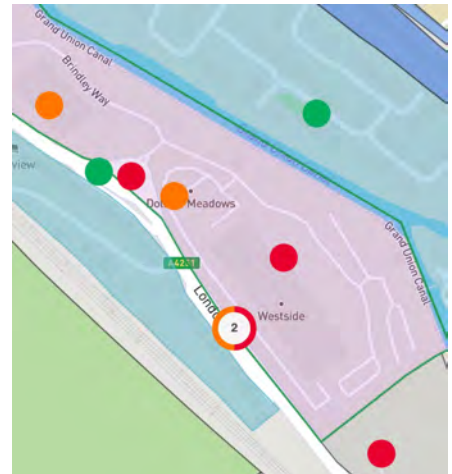
50%

of negative contributions about business science and retail parks, in addition to industrial areas, focused on **perceptions of unattractiveness.**

Improvement Matrix - 1

The improvement matrix gives an overview of the character areas that were commented on in the Commonplace consultation. There were 26 character areas, of which 18 received comments. These character areas can be viewed here. The table shows the number of comments each character area received (listed in descending order of comments received) together with the average sentiment score. The matrix also summarises the themes and comments that came from the contributions, alongside a featured public comment.

Character Area	Number of Comments Received/ Community Sentiment	Summary of Themes	Additional Comments Raised	Featured Public Comment
Boxmoor	86 Comments Average Sentiment score 48.97	- Close to nature - Important to the character of the area - Not attractive - I don't like the design - Congested - Attractive - Sense of community	- Value/preserve open and green space - Limit high-rise development - Infrastructure capacity concerns in the context of proposed development - Tackle traffic congestion	*"There should be no high rise buildings here. Nothing should spoil the sense of space and the views across Station Moor and Roughdown Common beyond".*
Apsley High Street	35 Comments Average Sentiment score 48.53	- Congested - Not attractive - Important to the character of the area - Sense of community - Appeals to a variety of ages	- Has a run-down/depressed feel - Update shopping facilities - Widen shopping experience away from niche provision - Improve road safety - Tackle traffic congestion - Value Frogmore Paper Mill - Improve building aesthetics	*"It's congested, with too much traffic and unsightly buildings/shops".*
Boxmoor Common, Sunnyside and Durrants Lakes	35 Comments Average Sentiment score 84.52	- Close to nature - Important to the character of the area - Sense of community - I like to eat and drink here - I can meet friends and family here - Feels safe	- Value/preserve open space - Value of Sunnyside facility - Increase environmental maintenance around water areas - Improve lighting	*"It's important that the council looks at ways of further funding and enhancing this space, with the values of the Sunnyside Rural Trust at the forefront".*
Boxmoor Common	31 Comments Average Sentiment score 77.78	- Close to nature - Important to the character of the area - Attractive - Calm - I like to exercise here	- Value/preserve open space - Limit high-rise development - Improve paving - Improve parking - Improve road safety	*"The green spaces are very relaxing and need protecting, as do the surrounding areas. High-rise buildings should not be considered nearby. They would have a large negative impact on the views in and around the moors and common areas".*

Key: ▮ 0-20 Negative   ▮ 40.1-60 Neutral   ▮ 60.1-80 Mostly Positive

▮ 20.1-40 Mostly Negative   ▮ 80.1-100 Positive

Improvement Matrix - 2

Here, we continue the character areas. Again, the matrix summarises the themes and the comments that came from the contributions (listed in descending order of comments received), alongside a featured public comment.

Character Area	Number of Comments Received/ Community Sentiment	Summary of Themes	Additional Comments Raised	Featured Public Comment
Two Waters West	11 Comments **Average Sentiment score 15.00**	- Not attractive - I don't like the design	- Demolish Symbio - Limit high-rise development - Value of open space	*"This site was always going to be a major opportunity for redevelopment, but it should be attractive, not harm the moor, include sufficient parking, and include the benefits that come with development, irrespective of the cost of decontaminating the site".*
Shendish Manor & Golf Club*	8 Comments **Average Sentiment score 82.14**	- Close to nature - Important to the character of the area - Attractive - Calm - Feels safe	- Value of open space - Beautiful views over the valley - Very popular with walker post-Covid - Good, accessible location - Limit mass housing development	*"An important green space for the local area, both for walking and also the character of the local area and views from the other side of the valley. It should not be considered for mass housing development as suggested in the emerging Dacorum Local Plan".*
Two Waters North*	8 Comments **Average Sentiment score 17.86**	- Not attractive - No sense of community - Dull/boring - I don't like the design	- Improve paving - Consider new facilities at roundabout site - Relocate B&Q building to Maylands - Limit high-rise development	*"Scruffy, untidy and an unsightly welcome to the town".*
Apsley Urban Regeneration*	7 Comments **Average Sentiment score 46.88**	- Sense of community - Bad for pedestrians - Important to the character of the area	- Improve bridge - Improve paving - Make it a destination - Encourage local businesses - Explore 'green' solutions - Improve parking	*"The canal footpath needs improvement so that it is useable year round. In the winter it becomes a wet muddy mess and difficult to navigate".*
Apsley Campus*	5 Comments **Average Sentiment score 20.83**	- I don't like the design - Dull/boring - No sense of community	- Improve road markings - Improve parking facilities - Consider site for mixed-use development - Limit new office space	*"Redevelopment presents opportunity, but please not massively cramped with next to no parking".*

Key: ▉ 0-20 Negative   ▉ 40.1-60 Neutral   ▉ 60.1-80 Mostly Positive

▉ 20.1-40 Mostly Negative   ▉ 80.1-100 Positive

Improvement Matrix - 3

Here, we continue the character areas. Again, the matrix summarises the themes and the comments that came from the contributions (listed in descending order of comments received), alongside a featured public comment.

Character Area	Number of Comments Received/ Community Sentiment	Summary of Themes	Additional Comments Raised	Featured Public Comment
Apsley Retail Core*	5 Comments **Average Sentiment score 41.67**	- Feels unsafe - Bad for pedestrians - I don't like the design - Not attractive	- Improve footbridge across the canal as an important pedestrian link route - Improve paving - Valued shopping experience	*"The footbridge across the canal and the linked footpath to the retail park need an upgrade. This is an important pedestrian link route".*
Apsley 1*	4 Comments **Average Sentiment score 37.50**	- Bad for pedestrians - Not attractive - Congested - Dull/boring - Bad for cyclists	- A need to improve the High Street - Dog fouling problems - Increase environmental maintenance/litter bins - Poor aesthetic of some housing	*"I feel Apsley High Street from McDonald's down to Dunelm is awful and needs/deserves council investment".*
Nash Mills*	4 Comments **Average Sentiment score 56.25**	- Attractive - Vibrant - Sense of community - Not attractive	- Value of open spaces - Improve paving - Clear litter/fly tipping - Increased greening	*"A designated asset of community value".*
Rucklers Lane and Red Lion Estate*	4 Comments **Average Sentiment score 10.00**	- Congested - Bad for pedestrians - Feels unsafe - Bad for cyclists	- Improve parking rather than housing - Implement double yellow lines - Inappropriate siting for business - Planning permission not being enforced	*"Wrong place for businesses of this kind - planning permission is not being enforced".*
Frogmore Road Industrial Estate*	3 Comments **Average Sentiment score 75.00**	- Public art - Appeals to a variety of ages - Vibrant - I like the design - Sense of community	- Infrastructure capacity to support the increasing population - Improve parking - Tackle road congestion - Search for greener solutions	-

Key: ■ 0-20 Negative   ■ 40.1-60 Neutral   ■ 60.1-80 Mostly Positive

■ 20.1-40 Mostly Negative   ■ 80.1-100 Positive

Improvement Matrix - 4

Here, we continue the character areas. Again, the matrix summarises the themes and the comments that came from the contributions (listed in descending order of comments received), alongside a featured public comment.

Character Area	Number of Comments Received/ Community Sentiment	Summary of Themes	Additional Comments Raised	Featured Public Comment
Roughdown Common*	3 Comments **Average Sentiment score 100.00**	- Calm - Attractive - Close to nature - I like to exercise here - Can meet friends and family here	- Value of open spaces	*"Frogmore Paper Mill is a very important landmark, for Hemel and the world! There is a real sense of community with all the volunteers who work there".*
London Road*	1 Comment **Average Sentiment score 0.00**	- Not attractive - I don't like the design - Dull/boring	- Improve aesthetics of buildings	*"Hideous buildings completely out of character".*
ALDI London Road**	0 Comments **Average Sentiment score 25.00**	- None	- None	-
Mercedes Garage**	0 Comments **Average Sentiment score 0.00**	- Congested - Not attractive - Dull/boring - Feels unsafe - Not enough nature	- None	-

* Treat findings with caution as based on very small participant numbers.
** Participants gave these areas a sentiment score, but did not make any comments.

Key: ■ 0-20 Negative   ■ 40.1-60 Neutral   ■ 60.1-80 Mostly Positive

■ 20.1-40 Mostly Negative   ■ 80.1-100 Positive

DESIGN FEATURES

DESIGN FEATURES - FEEDBACK

Local Landmarks Which are Felt to be Unique

Here we see the top local landmarks which participants felt to be unique.

Note that these views are dominated by an appreciation of the Box Moor Trust land and the moors (69 mentions – equating to 26% of participants who answered this question).

The Grand Union Canal and the two rivers also feature strongly (also 69 mentions – equating to 26% of participants).

Following on from these we see the historic Frogmore Paper Mill – also regarded as unique by 22 participants – equating to 8% of participants.
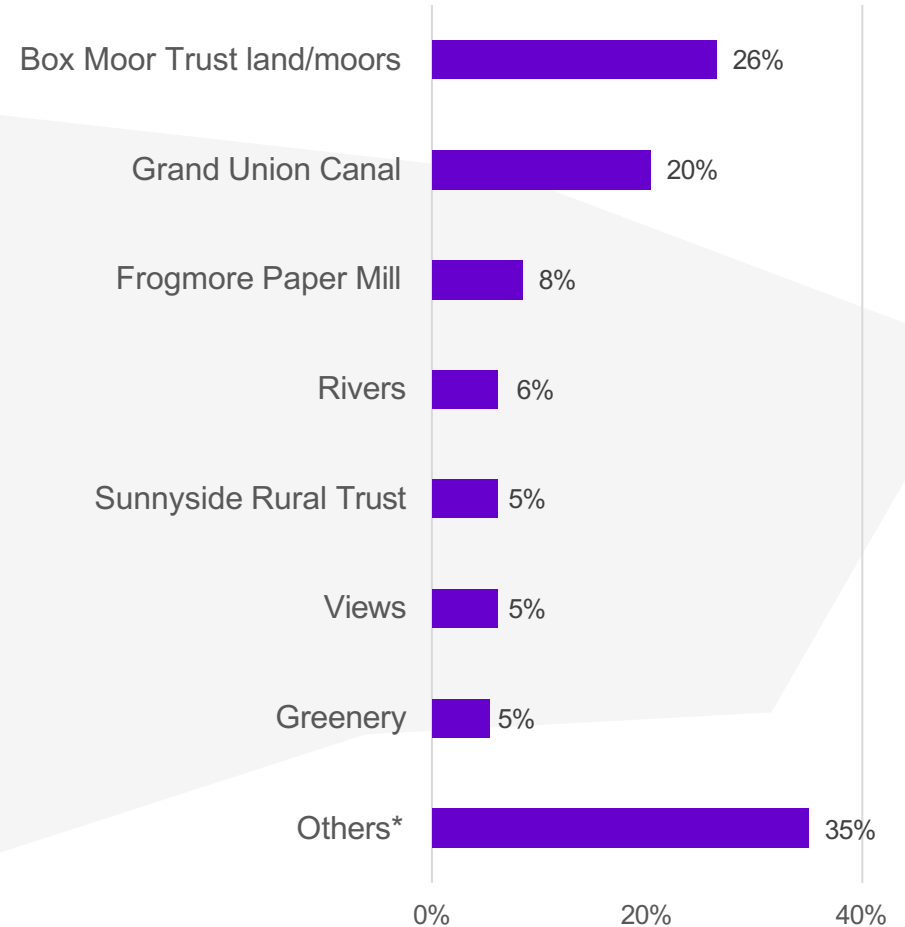
Sunnyside Rural Trust was mentioned by 14 participants (5% of participants).

Broader brush 'landmarks' included the views and the greenery of the area – both mentioned by around a dozen participants and equating to around 5% of all mentions.

* A myriad of other local landmarks felt to be unique included Roughdown Common, local churches, Shendish Manor, the area's heritage and history, the Plough roundabout (known locally as the 'magic' roundabout), the railway bridge, grazing livestock, The Fishery Inn, Cricket Club and Apsley High Street.

> 'Boxmoor Common, Sunnyside Rural Trust and the Grand Union Canal - all accessible to the public with nature at their heart.'

Are there any local landmarks that you think make Two Waters a unique place?

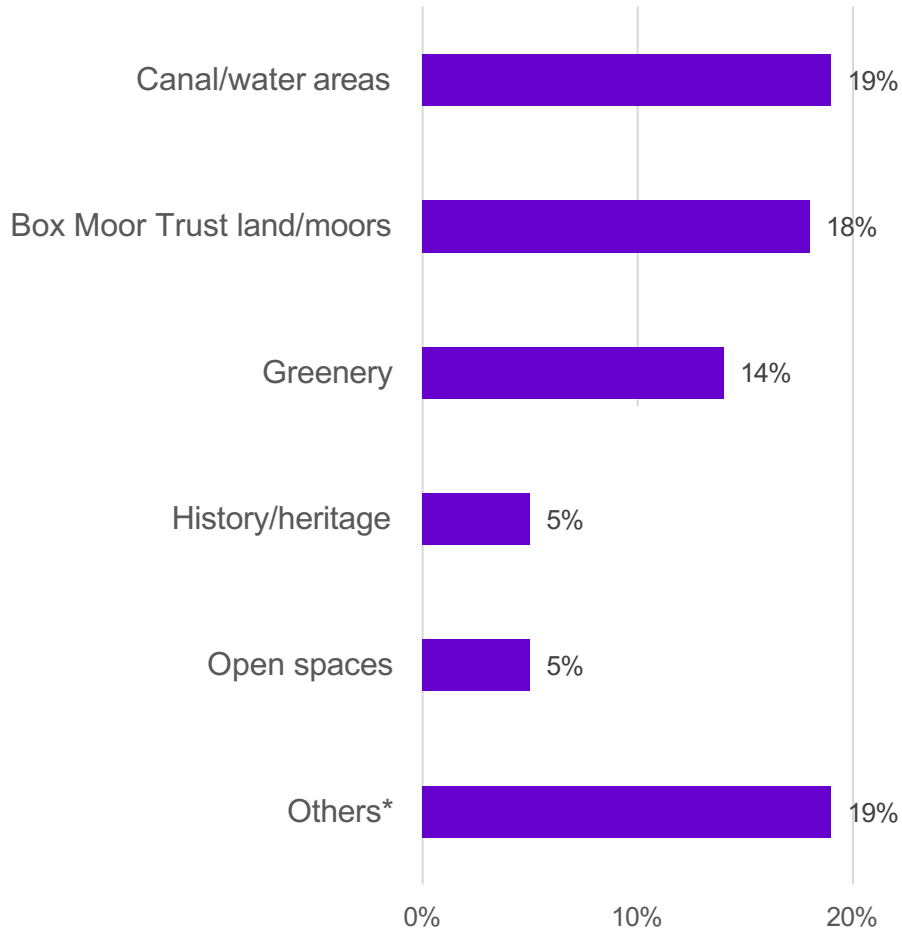| Landmark	%
Box Moor Trust land/moors	26%
Grand Union Canal	20%
Frogmore Paper Mill	8%
Rivers	6%
Sunnyside Rural Trust	5%
Views	5%
Greenery	5%
Others*	35%

> 'The gorgeous access we have to the moors and the rivers, the canal walks, Sunnyside Cafe and Apsley High Street all make Two Waters a wonderful place to live.'

DESIGN FEATURES - FEEDBACK

Key Features Which Create an Attractive Environment

Are there any key features in Two Waters that you think create an attractive environment?

Feature	Percentage
Canal/water areas	19%
Box Moor Trust land/moors	18%
Greenery	14%
History/heritage	5%
Open spaces	5%
Others*	19%

Here we see the top features which participants felt help to create an attractive environment within the area. Note that these features often overlapped with those considered to unique landmarks.

Again, there is an appreciation of the Canal/water areas (50 mentions – equating to 19% of participants who answered this question) and Box Moor Trust land and the moors (48 mentions – equating to 18% of participants).

The greenery of the area (36 mentions – equating to 14% of participants) was also frequently felt to be a key feature of the area.

Following on from these we see the areas' history/heritage – regarded as a key feature by 14 participants – equating to 5% of participants.

Open space was mentioned by 12 participants (5% of participants).

* Again, a myriad of other key features included Sunnyside Rural Trust, Shendish Manor, grazing livestock, the towpath, flint and brick buildings, the Cricket Club and Roughdown Common.

DESIGN FEATURES - FEEDBACK

Important Views Which Need to be Protected

Here we see the top 7 important views which participants felt needed protection.

Note that these views are again headed by an appreciation of the Box Moor Trust land and the moors (63 mentions – equating to 24% of participants who answered this question). This land emerges as the number one view – by quite some margin – which is felt to require protection.

Some way behind this sits Roughdown Common (23 mentions – equating to 9% of participants). The Grand Union Canal and the two rivers are slightly behind this (21 mentions – equating to 8% of participants).

Following on from these we see the topic of the skyline (with mentions by 20 participants – equating to 8%) - with many participants keen to stress that the vista should not be dominated by high-rise development.
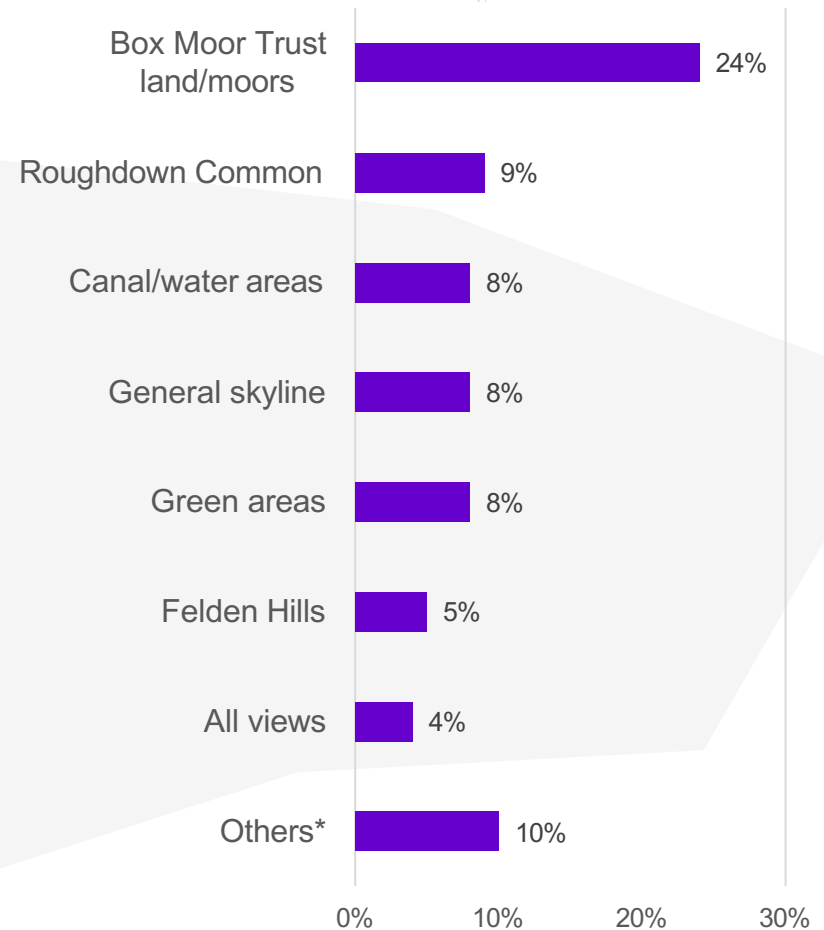
Green areas in general (20 mentions – equating to 8% of participants) were also mentioned in broader, less specific terms, as views which should not be impeded.

* A raft of other important views felt to require protection included local churches, Shendish Manor, the area's heritage and history, London Road, Sunnyside Rural Trust and local parks.

'All of the green spaces - the park or flower gardens, the common land, the canal and the river are all unique and special and would be ruined by development.'

'PROTECT the moorlands - they are SO important and I feel lucky to have them near to me and to spend time there. Enhancements only, please.'

Are there any important views you feel need to be protected?

View	Percentage
Box Moor Trust land/moors	24%
Roughdown Common	9%
Canal/water areas	8%
General skyline	8%
Green areas	8%
Felden Hills	5%
All views	4%
Others*	10%

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

LOOKING TO
THE FUTURE

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE - FEEDBACK

What would you like to see more of in the area?

What People Want to See More of in the Area

Nature was the number one option which people requested more of in the area. Specified by 116 participants, it clearly emerged as the most popular element.

This was followed by improved walking and cycling routes (97 mentions – equating to 37% of all participants who answered the question).

More open space was often also at the forefront of participants' minds (75 mentions – equating to 29% of participants), as was more community space (73 mentions – equating to 28% of participants).

An increase in the number of restaurants and bars (54 mentions – equating to 21% of participants) was the fifth element to be requested by more than 20% of participants.

* A number of other suggestions included protection of the area's history and heritage, more coffee shops, more affordable housing, more brownfield development, more floodlighting, more meeting places and improved parking facilities. Each was mentioned by up to 4 participants.

Category	Percentage
Nature	44%
Improved walking/cycling routes	37%
Open space	29%
Community space	28%
Restaurants and bars	21%
Space for growing food	16%
Public art	15%
Space for businesses	4%
Others*	7%

An analysis of additional, accompanying comments provided by participants showed that the most frequent related not to providing more, but to protecting the current status and resolving traffic issues:

- **Limiting the scale and height of high-rise developments – 16 comments (6%)**
- **Preserving the areas current assets/features – 14 comments (5%)**
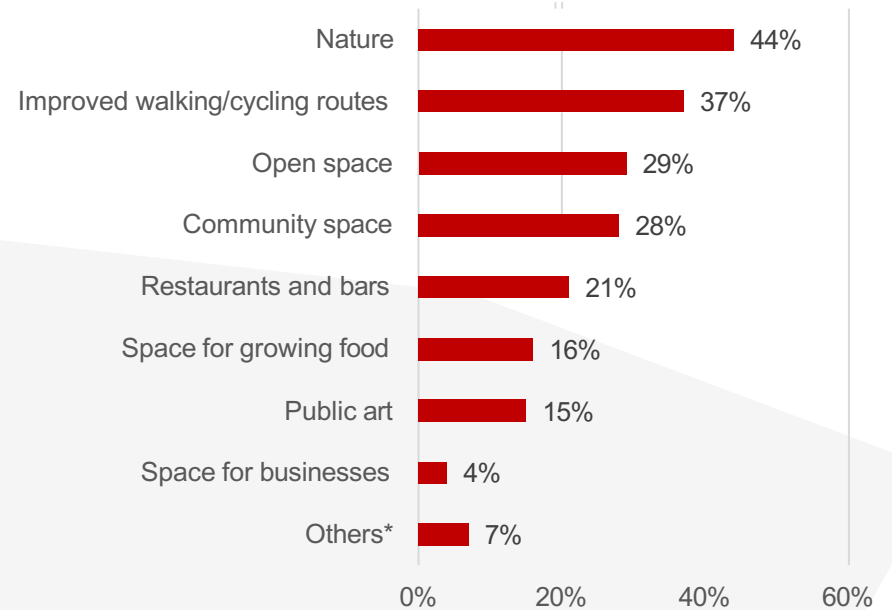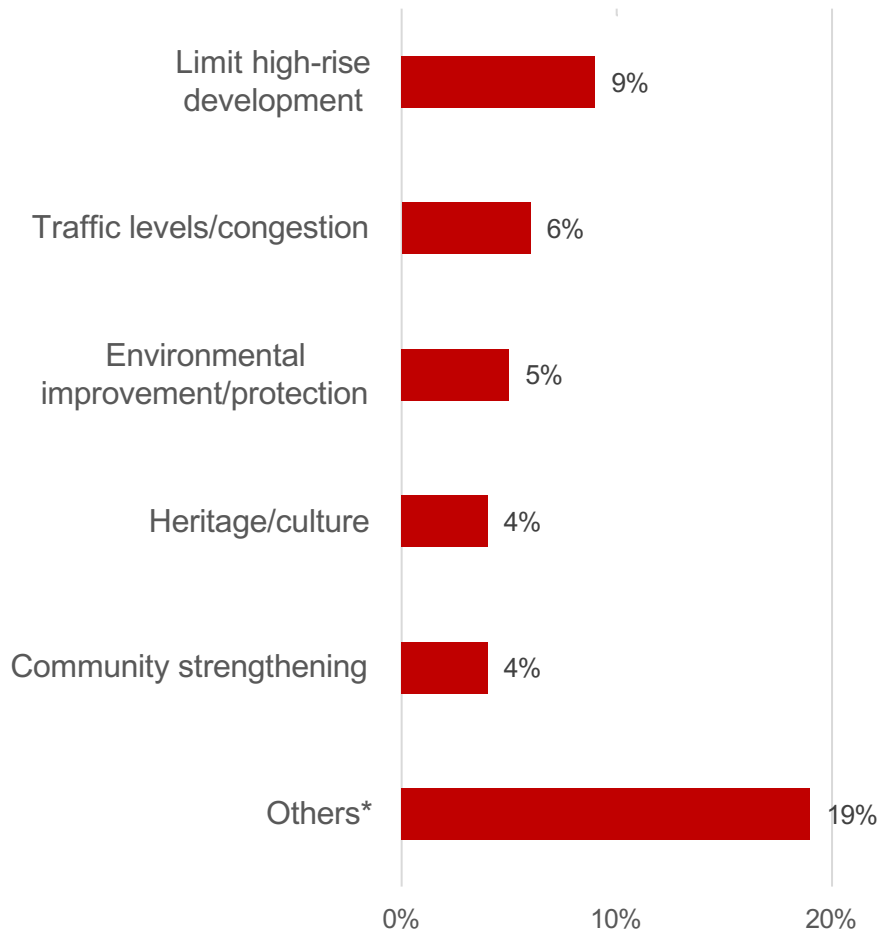- **Addressing traffic congestion/issues in the area – 11 comments (4%).**

'The space we have here is precious, and for the good of the community, sustainability, mental health, and the environment in general. This needs to be preserved and managed sensitively to ensure that we do not suffer from any overcrowding, overdevelopment or increased congestion.'

'I feel so strongly that this area could be a beautiful and safe-feeling community space with a small amount of investment.'

'Mostly what is needed is not 'more' but better.'

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE - FEEDBACK

Suggested Areas of Focus When Preparing New Guidance for Two Waters

Do you have any further comments on what you think we should focus on when preparing new guidance for Two Waters?

Category	Percentage
Limit high-rise development	9%
Traffic levels/congestion	6%
Environmental improvement/protection	5%
Heritage/culture	4%
Community strengthening	4%
Others*	19%

Here we see the top 5 areas of focus which participants felt should be taken into consideration when preparing new guidance for Two Waters.

The limitation of high-rise development (exceeding four storeys) received 24 mentions – equating to 9% of participants who answered this question).

Following this, and as previously mentioned, was improving traffic levels/congestion, mentioned by 15 participants – equating to 6% of participants.

Environmental improvement/protection, heritage and cultural considerations and strengthening the community (via the provision of meeting places, hubs etc.) completed the top 5.

* Again, a raft of other suggestions for guidance focus included considering the capacity of the current infrastructure, increasing consultation, seeking greener solutions, improving the areas' aesthetics and providing canal-based activities.

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

LEARN MORE

LEARN MORE - FEEDBACK

This section of the consultation included more detailed information about the engagement.

This information included:

- **Why views were being sought**
- **Details about the Proptech Engagement Fund**
- **Reference to previous engagement about the area**
- **What views were being sought on**
- **How to provide feedback**
- **When feedback was needed by.**

Thoughts on Missing Information within the Consultation

Participants were specifically asked to comment on anything which they felt was missing within the scope of the consultation and the information provided. Just a handful of participants made suggestions. These included a need to include/consider:

- **Air pollution**
- **Cycling routes and infrastructure**
- **Boundaries to the area**
- **People camping in the area**
- **Increased detail of area plans.**

Just 9 participants felt that issues had been missed within the scope of the consultation.

Each of these issues was highlighted by no more than two participants.

EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE - FEEDBACK

Background Evidence

This section included an interactive document detailing a collection of background evidence under six themes.

These themes were:

- **An Overview**
- **Living in Two Waters**
- **Employment Opportunities**
- **Embracing Nature, Our Rivers and Parks**
- **The Rich Heritage of Two Waters**
- **Transport and Movement.**

'Story maps' were used to present key information within these six themes, including information relating to the current landscape/demographics/characteristics within each, and some detailing historical evolution. Interactive maps were also available, giving participants the opportunity to graphically view and explore locations.

Few participants – just 3 – provided feedback on the actual evidence presented.

Their main concerns included:

- **Issues with the boundary definition of the area**
- **Non-reference to previous development scope**
- **Disagreement with the location of bus service stops.**

1 An Overview
2 Living in Two Waters
3 Employment Opportunities
4 Embracing Nature, our Rivers and Parks
5 The Rich Heritage of Two Waters
6 Transport and Movement

'Since when has the north-eastern area of Kings Langley been part of Two Waters? It is not, and should never be considered in that context.'

'In 2013, development scope was limited by constricted roads. That feedback has been discarded in later documents.'

'I'm not convinced about your assertion that the majority of bus services stop at Hemel station. They stop at the bus station which is a mile away.'

3D MODEL

THE 3D MODEL PROPOSAL - FEEDBACK

The 3D model page within the consultation showed a selection of example 360° images extracted from a 3D model of Hemel Hempstead being created with VU.CITY. Images could be viewed from a number of angles and perspectives - including ground and aerial views - with the ability to be visualised at all levels. Seasonal and landscaping variations were also enabled.

The Image Tower (previously the Kodak Tower). One image in context with immediate surroundings (left), and the other from a skyline view, showing the shape of the tower viewed near the horizon (right).

The residential streets of Cedar Walk and Corner Hall Avenue from above (left), and from a street view level (right).
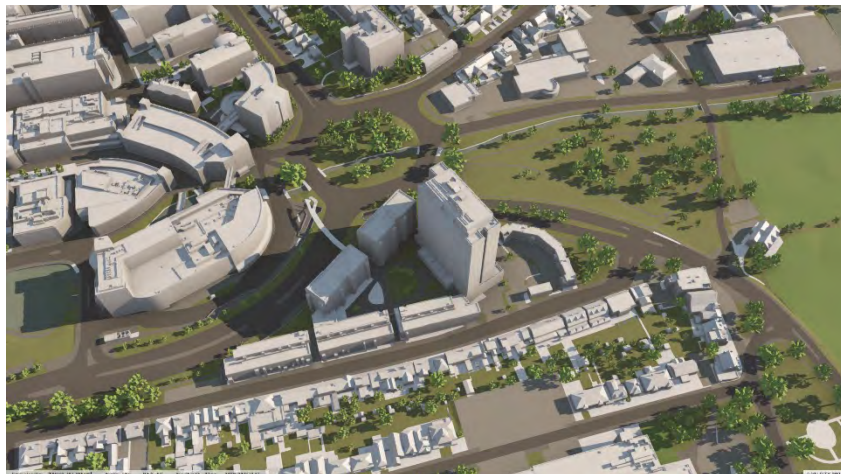
THE 3D MODEL PROPOSAL - FEEDBACK

The 3D model page within the consultation showed a selection of example 360° images extracted from a 3D model of Hemel Hempstead being created with VU.CITY. Images could be viewed from a number of angles and perspectives - including ground and aerial views - with the ability to be visualised at all levels. Seasonal and landscaping variations were also enabled.

A comparison of St Albans Road (A414) with trees (left) and without trees (right).

A comparison between the shadowing caused by the Image Tower in February (left) and August (right).
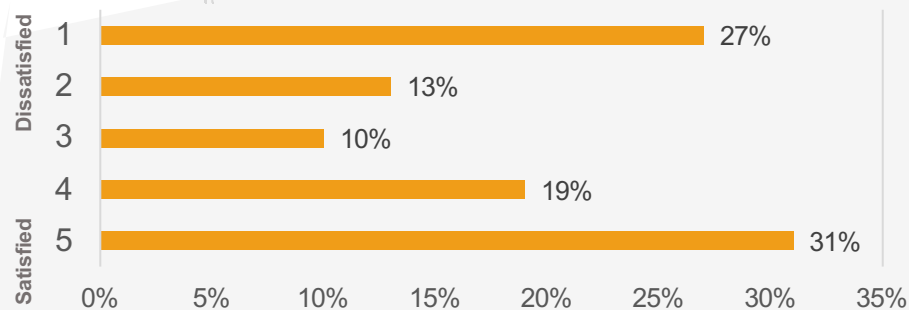
THE 3D MODEL PROPOSAL - FEEDBACK

Rating the Proposed 3D Model

Participants were asked to indicate on a 1-5 scale how satisfied/dissatisfied they were with the proposed 3D model. 84 participants provided feedback on this section of the consultation.

Their opinion was split, with exactly half (50%) of these participants expressing satisfaction, but with 40% expressing dissatisfaction.

10% of participants sat somewhere between the two.

Dissatisfied		
1		27%
2		13%
3		10%
4		19%
Satisfied 5		31%

Average satisfaction with the 3D model proposal:

3.13 out of a an optimum rating of 5

Feedback on the Proposed 3D Model

A number of participants also provided accompanying feedback on the 3D model proposal.

Taking a look at critical comments, just under a quarter of respondents (23%) felt that the 3D model lacked detail. Further criticisms focused on what was felt to be the dull appearance of the images, the usability of the feature on the website and perceptions that it was effectively a 'waste of money'. More positively, a handful of participants commented on the helpfulness of different perspectives as an innovative aid to understanding.

Theme	Total	% of participants
Critical - lacking detail	20	23%
Critical - dull appearance	7	8%
Critical - waste of money	5	6%
Critical - other	4	5%
Critical - difficult to use	2	2%
Mixed	2	2%
Positive - helpful perspectives	3	3%
Positive - aids understanding	2	2%
Positive - innovative	1	1%

'Add some details to blank walls.'

'All the buildings are grey and have no doors/windows. It would be better to have brick buildings in a brick colour. Missing doors and windows take away character.'

'It's a bit too basic, you need to colour code the areas that are being developed differently to the areas that remain. Add people and parked cars/vans everywhere.'

'These are helpful tools and I particularly like the ability to see street view levels and landscaping as this is something that make a huge difference in the look and feel of an area.'

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

WEB FEEDBACK

WEBSITE - FEEDBACK

In addition to the main consultation and its themes, comments were also collected on the *actual experience of participating in the consultation.* A news item and email, sent out out to all respondents, invited these specific views. A small proportion (35 respondents) of those who had participated in the consultation, gave feedback on the actual consultation website itself. It should be noted that there *may* have been a tendency for those who were *dissatisfied* with the experience to be more likely to respond.
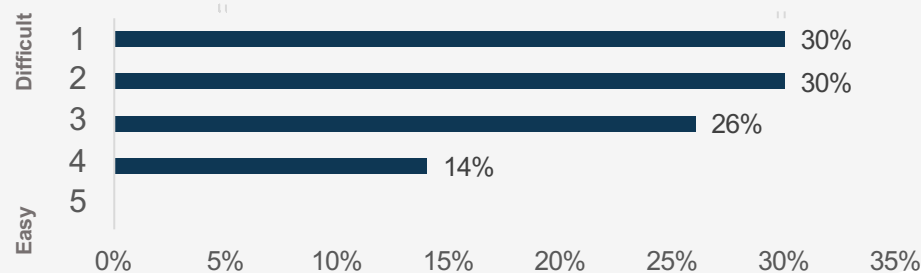
Previous Planning Consultation Participation

The majority of these respondents (68%) had experience of participating in a previous planning consultation. However, it was encouraging to see that almost a third were new contributors.

Ease of Use of the Commonplace Website

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1 was 'very difficult' and 5 was 'very easy', respondents rated their use of the Two Waters consultation webpages. Feedback was often unfavourable, with 60% of contributors regarding ease of use as 'difficult'. Key themes which underpinned difficulty of use included: a lack of user-friendliness (23%), a lack of their contribution being acknowledged (9%), a lack of simplicity/ease of understanding (3%), repetitive and irrelevant questions (6%) and unrealistic images (3%).

In contrast, some respondents were more complimentary about the Commonplace consultation hosting, with positive perceptions of the value of map pinpointing (14%), a fast and easy feedback experience (6%) and praise for the ability to read the comments of others (3%).

68%

of participants had previously participated in a planning consultation.

Difficult/Easy	Percentage
1	30%
2	30%
3	26%
4	14%
5	

'It was great to be able to pinpoint comments to particular places on the map.'

'It felt like it had not been created for a member of the public. Should be simpler, clearer and less like it was created by town planners, for town planners.'

'It's really hard to view and then comment on anything from Dacorum.'

'It was good to read comments from other users.'

'Get normal members of the public to test websites/feedback forms before they go live.'

Average consultation website 'ease of use' rating: **2.26** **out of a an optimum rating of 5.**

WEBSITE - FEEDBACK

Use of the Voice Contribution Software Feature

The vast majority of participants (97%) chose NOT to use the voice contribution software feature included on the consultation website. Key reasons for this feature not being used included a preference to comment by text (37%), a lack of awareness of this feature (20%) and feeling uncomfortable being recorded (14%).

Making Planning Consultations More Inclusive

A number of suggestions were made to boost the inclusivity of future planning consultations.

These included

- **Making consultations more user/public friendly (23%)**
- **More rigorous website testing (9%)**
- **Printed materials (6%)**
- **Wider distribution/publicity (6%)**
- **Face-to-face engagement (3%).**

3% of participants used the voice contribution software feature.

However **17%** would consider leaving voice contributions in future consultations.
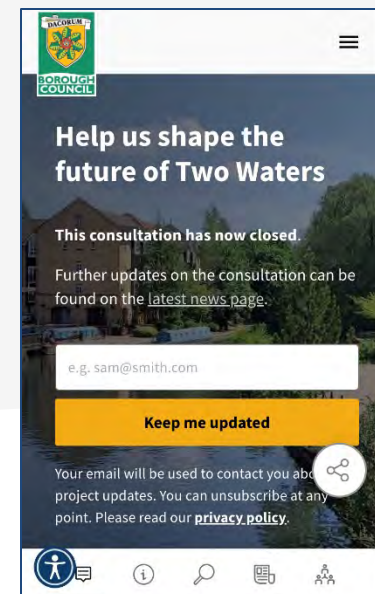
'Print them and distribute in libraries/ shops etc and publicise them more...'

'Make the diagrams easier to understand.'

Unless you're using social media, read local news online or sign up to the DBC website you could be excluded from having any knowledge of local planning consultations. This excludes many people from being included. The demise of a good local newspaper has also contributed to this situation..'

'Have a usable site. I'm not sure if it's been checked across devices and platforms for use ability? When someone who works in marketing comms and is relatively tech savvy is unable to use it, I think you have a problem.'

'Consider the needs of the user/potential responder not just planning professionals.'

Get out onto the streets and actually talk to people! be patient and allow time for things to percolate through on the jungle telegraph. use of social media also consult with interested local organisations - Scouts and churches, residents groups etc.'

'Tell more people about them. Make it easier and more straightforward to comment.'

Thank you...

...to everyone who participated in the consultation.

Your contribution is valued and useful and will play a vital part in shaping the future of Two Waters.