

## Appendix B: Summary of Early Engagement Responses

An early engagement on the new local plan took place between 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024, asking for reflections on the challenges and opportunities facing the borough with regard to topics on living, working, environment and movement & infrastructure. The engagement also asked for people's aspirations for the future of the borough. The following is summary of the responses.

### Living

- Need for affordable homes – both rental and ownership
- Need for a range of homes to suit first time buyers, families, older persons, students
- Need for houses and bungalows, not just apartments
- Build on brownfield sites and reuse empty buildings/offices
- Need to protect the Green Belt
- New homes to be well designed, good quality, energy efficient
- New homes to be environmentally sustainable (eg. solar panels, well-insulated, heat pumps)
- New homes to be sustainably located, near existing transport links, facilities and services, and enable community interaction
- Sufficient infrastructure is needed, prior to new housing development
- Access to green space is important for all residents
- New developments should focus on walkability, access to cycle routes and public transport, but sufficient parking also needed

### Working

- Better transport links and public transport needed to enable access to existing and new business areas, and reduce congestion on roads
- Town centres should be attractive, vibrant and safe, with good retail and leisure facilities, and flexibility of tenure for other uses
- Hatfield town centre in particular to be improved so both town centres in the borough are viable
- Local population growth should be supported by growth in employment, retail and leisure
- Need to attract and support small and medium businesses and business start-ups in the borough
- Collaboration between local businesses and education providers needed to create more apprenticeships and provide skills for high level jobs
- Concern over loss of employment uses, and need for retail uses in employment areas to be protected

### Environment

- Preserve the Green Belt
- Protect green spaces and green corridors and introduce greenspace in built up areas eg. through living walls, green roofs, tree-lined streets
- Protect wildlife and biodiversity eg, through measures like swift bricks
- Prioritise brownfield sites for development, convert unused offices and buildings, and build in existing built up areas near public transport links, facilities and services
- Avoid coalescence of villages so communities can maintain their own identities

- Air, noise and light pollution and fly tipping are a problem in the borough
- Measures to help achieve net zero should be used on all new developments eg. good insulation, solar panels, heat pumps, car charging points
- Improve public transport, reduce traffic congestion and ensure new developments are locationally sustainable rather than car dependent

## Movement and Infrastructure

- Infrastructure delivery should be agreed prior to new housing developments being approved – including medical facilities, schools/creches/specialist education provision, public transport/active travel routes, and utilities
- Improvements to public transport and active travel routes are needed to encourage reduced use of cars and help achieve net zero
- Cycle routes need to be well maintained, safe and fully connected to encourage usage
- Improvements to train and bus services including additional bus routes and greater frequency of services is needed (including in evenings)
- Introduce integrated ticketing across public transport services
- Road maintenance and introduction of 20mph speed limits is needed
- Improved road safety, bus services and footpaths near schools would encourage less car dependency and reduce congestion around schools

## Aspirations

- Retain the characteristics of the borough as a pleasant and well-functioning place to live, incorporating the two main towns and surrounding villages set within the Green Belt
- Protect the Green Belt and green spaces to encourage biodiversity, wildlife, for recreation, and to promote health and wellbeing
- Borough to be a calm, peaceful place to live and work - a safe, healthy, clean and unpolluted place that people can be proud of, with a strong sense of community
- Housing to be built on brownfield land and sustainable locations which are walkable/cyclable, and near to public transport, education and health services and amenities
- For town centres to be thriving and active with more leisure facilities, and a greater number and variety of restaurants and shops, providing opportunities to socialise
- For good quality jobs and a stable economy, supported by a mix of good quality, affordable homes in sustainable locations within the borough, reducing the need for car dependent travel
- A green environment with environmentally resilient homes, solar panels on all new buildings and trees/vegetation

The comments from individuals and/or groups are available at:

<https://www.welhat.gov.uk/ourlocalplan>