

Milton Ernest Neighbourhood Development Plan - Summary of Questionnaire Results

DATE: 13 AUGUST 2015 AUTHOR: KEVIN WHITESIDE

Context

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Localism Act of 2011 provided the opportunity for local areas to progress plans that would become a 'material consideration' as part of the planning process – these are known as Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). Milton Ernest Parish Council has decided to go through the process of adopting such a plan.

The first stage is fact finding – to understand the desires and wishes of the local community. As part of that process, a questionnaire was delivered, on the weekend of 14 June 2015, to all Milton Ernest residents who were registered on the electoral role.

The questionnaire sought views on the following:

- Local issues: what people liked about living in Milton Ernest;
- Development: the appetite for development, its type, location design and impact;
- Business and commercial development: the type, amount, location and concerns and issues;
- Traffic and transport: issues and potential for improvement;
- Community facilities: identified needs; and
- Environment and open areas: preserving the historical and rural feel of the village.

Questionnaires were delivered to a every house in the parish – 225 were returned.

ANALYSIS

The questionnaire contained 17 sections with 112 questions, plus a short, optional, section about the responder. In 98 of the questions respondents were asked to rate issues between 1 and 5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important. The results were averaged to give an overall assessment about the view for each question.

In a number of sections there was space for additional views to be given through free text. At this stage the analysis these additional comments have not been taken into account. They will be added at a later stage.

Section 1 – Local Issues

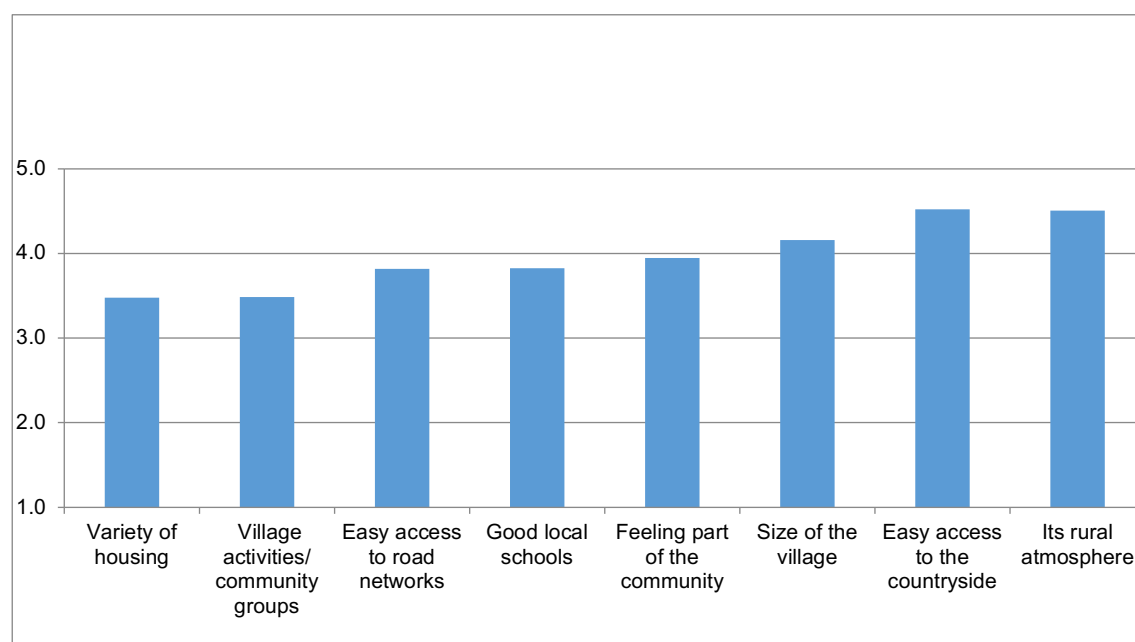
QUESTION 1: LIVING IN MILTON ERNEST

What the question asked

The question asked 'what do you enjoy about living in Milton Ernest?' It gave eight options and asked respondents to rank each one between one and five.

What we found

All options scored an average of more than three and therefore were seen to be important. The results are given below:



Standard deviation was generally low, although there was slightly more breadth of view about how good the local schools were.

Potential policy implications

In terms of policy implications, the responses show the importance of keeping the essences of the village very much as it is. This is particularly important in terms of rural atmosphere, size and feeling of community. The NDP should therefore seek to protect these.

Section 2 – Housing Development

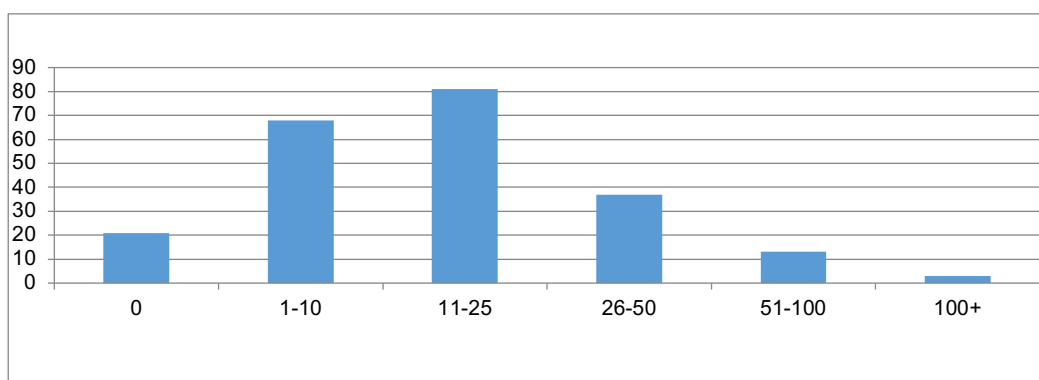
QUESTION 2.1: LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT

What the question asked

This question asked people how many houses they thought should be built in the village in the next 15 years. There were six options, varying between 0 and 100.

What we found

The results, shown below, indicate that there is some appetite for development with the large majority falling in the bracket that covered the options ranging from one to 50 houses.



Potential policy implications

The results of this question would suggest that the NDP should support new development of up to around 25 houses.

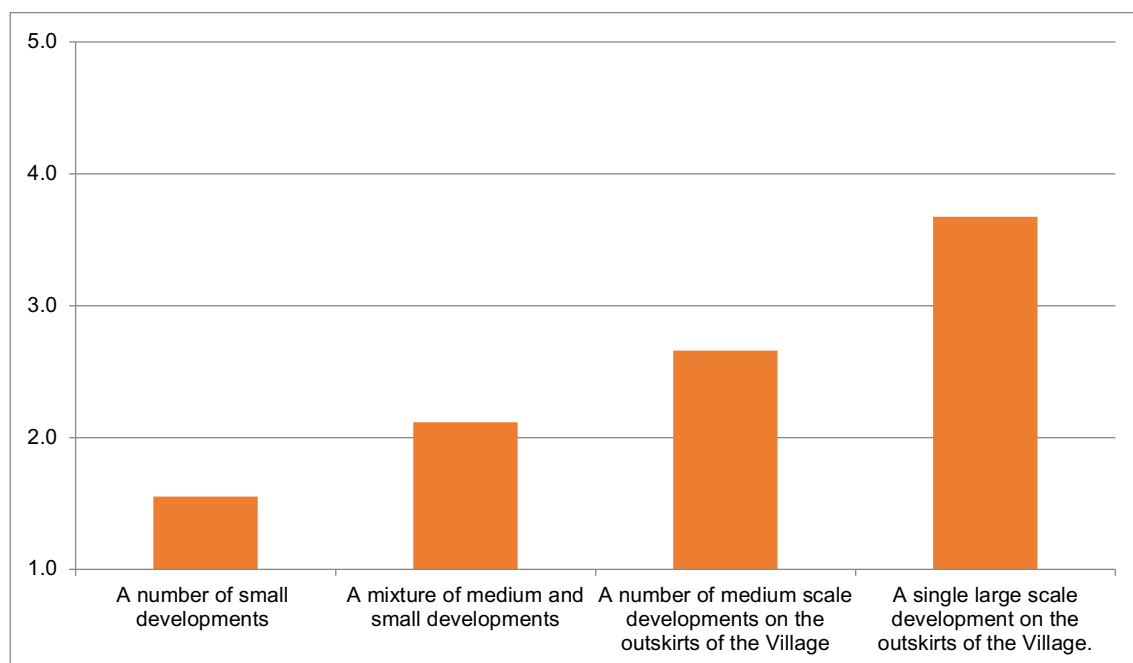
QUESTION 2.2: TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT

What the question asked

The question asked respondents to rank their preference for the type of development, ranking the four options between one and four.

What we found

On the graph below the scale is reversed – that is, the smaller the bar the higher level of importance as one was the highest ranking. This shows a clear preference for small and medium sized developments.



Potential policy implications

New housing should be focussed on new and medium sized developments within the existing village SPA (Settlement Policy Area). Larger developments outside the current SPA are not desirable.

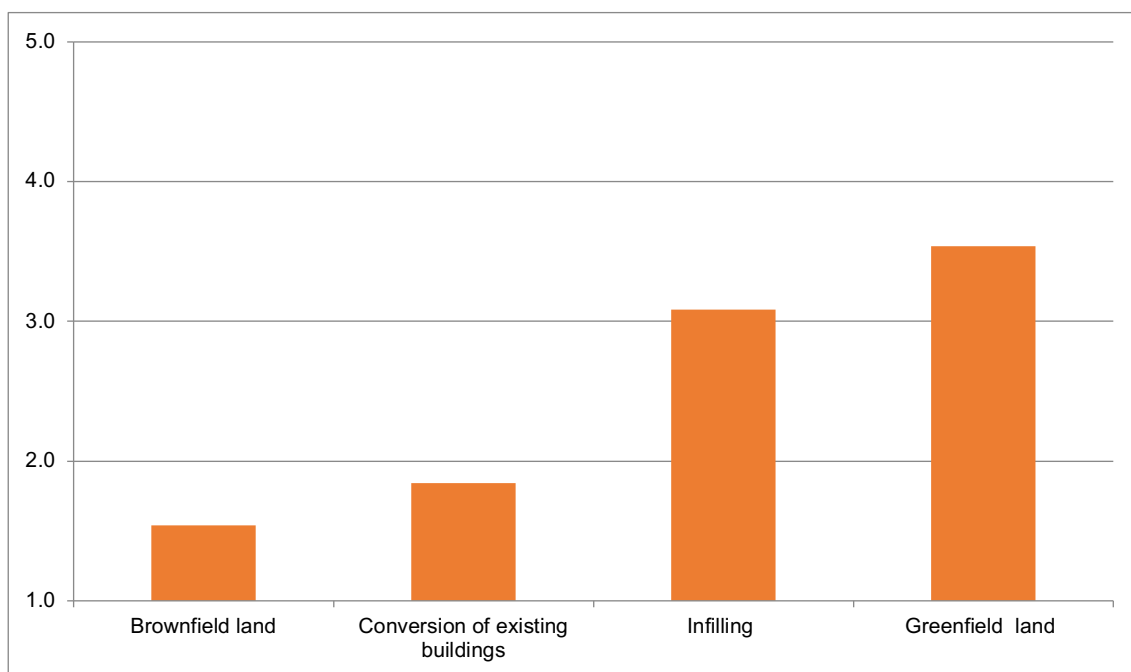
QUESTION 2.3: LAND USED FOR DEVELOPMENT

What the question asked

This question looked at the type of land being used for development with there, again, being four options to be ranked.

What we found

As with the question above the scale of the graph is reversed.



The results show a very clear preference for the use of brownfield sites, including the conversion of existing buildings.

Potential policy implications

New building should wherever possible be undertaken on brown field sites.

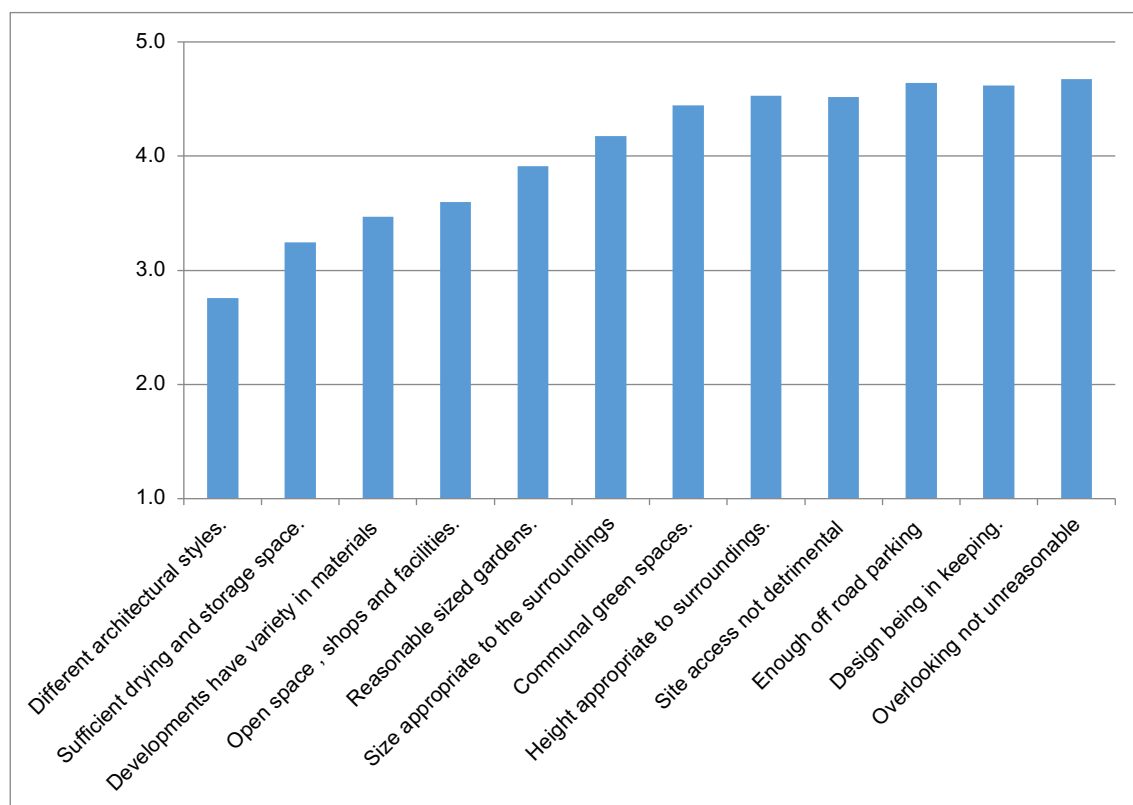
QUESTION 2.4: BUILDING DESIGN –STYLE AND IMPACT

What the question asked

The question asked respondents to assess 12 options, ranking each one between one (not important) and five (very important).

What we found

All the options but one (new design incorporating different architectural styles) score more than an average of three and therefore were seen as having some degree of importance. Those that scored over four were: footprint not being significantly larger than adjacent buildings, communal spaces were important, height not greater than surrounding buildings, site access not detrimental, provision of off-road parking, design to be sympathetic and overlooking of adjacent properties should not cause loss of privacy or have an unreasonable impact.



Potential policy implications

The extent to which the NDP can influence these factors is limited as it sits within the overall context of planning law. Nevertheless, the questionnaire does show clear preferences by the community for the type and style of development that they would prefer.

Development should be sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of size, height and style with the impact on the privacy on adjacent properties limited. In addition, it is important that sufficient off-road parking is provided so as not to add to the existing pressure on on-street parking.

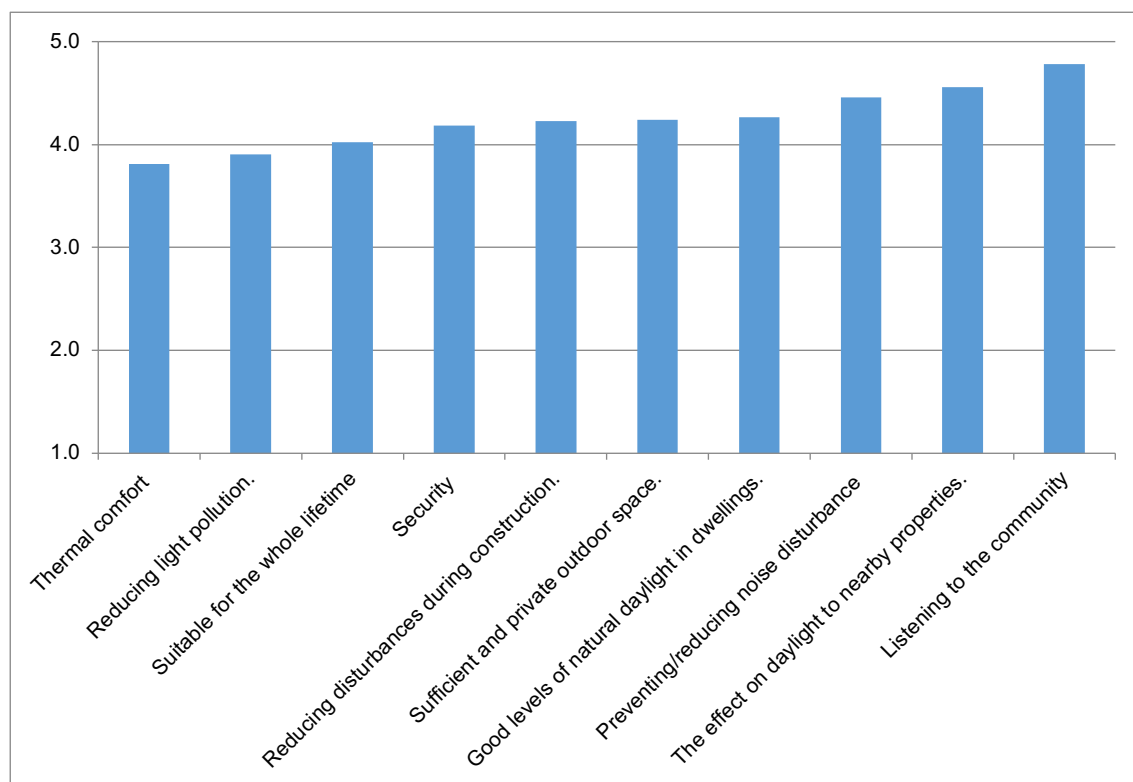
QUESTION 2.5: BUILDING DESIGN – LIVEABILITY

What the question asked

This question sought to understand peoples' view on the way design of buildings impact on their well-being.

What we found

All the ten options given scored more than 3.5 and therefore were felt to be important. The highest scorers were preventing nuisance between neighbouring dwellings, ensuring the impact of daylight loss on nearby properties was mitigated and (the highest scorer) listening to the community before initiating developments.



Potential policy implications

As with the question above, the ability of NDP to make a real difference in this area may be limited. However, the questionnaire does show the following policy desire:

- Buildings should be well-designed and future-proofed for a range of potential occupants, with good levels of natural lighting, thermal comfort and security. Plot sizes and design should provide sufficient space for general usage, mitigate noise and nuisance and minimise any reduction of natural light. It is important that the local community is consulted and listened to at the early stages of project development.

There will need to be coherence here with the policies of the Borough Council in terms of both planning and building control – NPD policies can help augment and strengthen Borough policies but cannot contradict them.

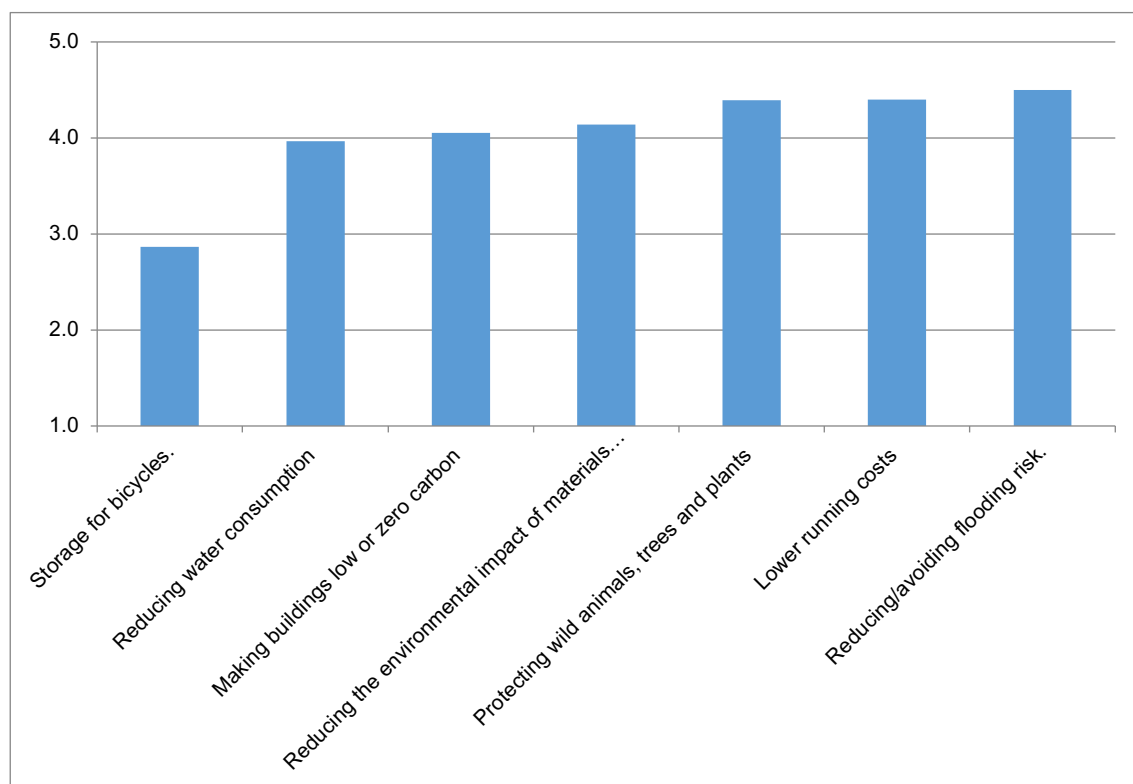
QUESTION 2.6: BUILDING DESIGN – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

What the question asked

This question looked at views around the environmental impact of development.

What we found

All seven areas in the question were seen as important, with exception of providing storage for bicycles.



Potential policy implications

With the caveats in the two questions above (that is coherence with Borough policies) the policy position arising from the questionnaire results is:

Developments should, as far as possible, be carbon-neutral with a particular focus on reducing water consumption and running costs, protecting the existing environment and mitigating flood risk. In addition, construction plans should seek to reduce the environmental impact of the work.

QUESTION 2.7: HOUSING NEED

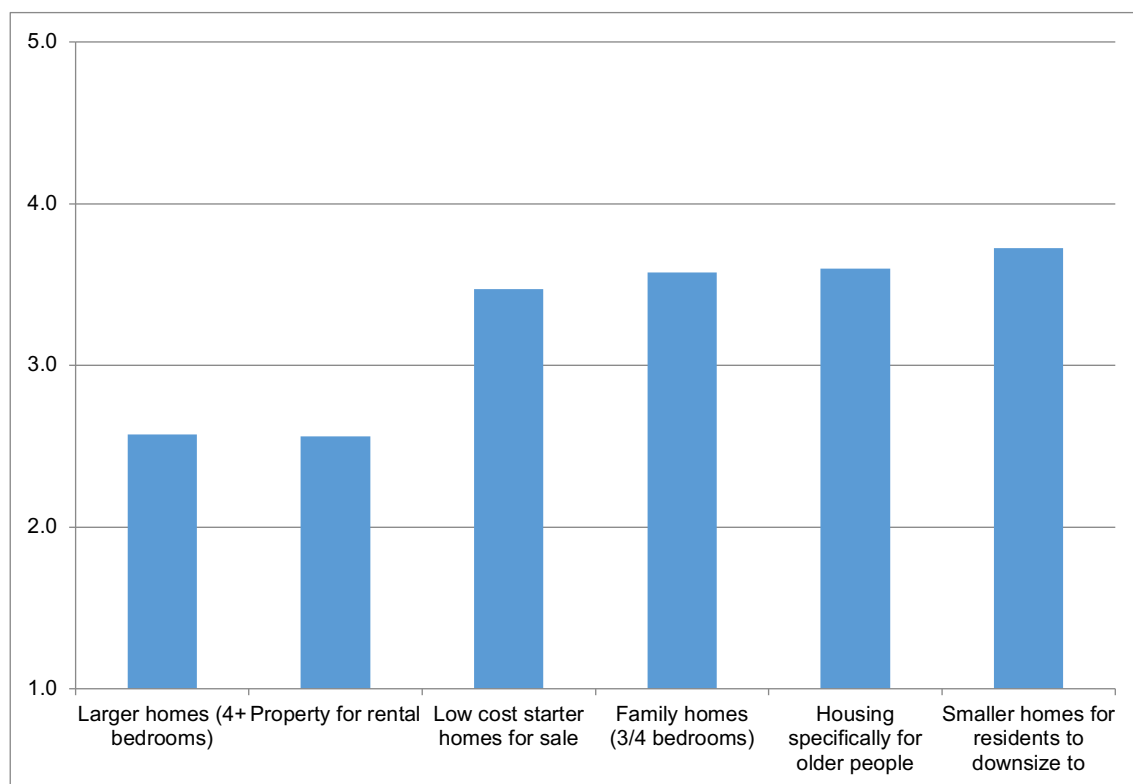
What the question asked

The purpose of this question was understand community preferences in terms of house size and type – in essence, asking; what does the village need?

What we found

The results were clear-cut: the focus should be on lower-cost homes that provide for older people (including downsizing) and for family homes. There was not seen as a need houses with more than four bedrooms.

The results did not show that there was a specific need for rental property.



Potential policy implications

The focus should be on lower-cost homes that provide for older people (including downsizing) and for family homes.

Section 3 – Business and Commercial Development

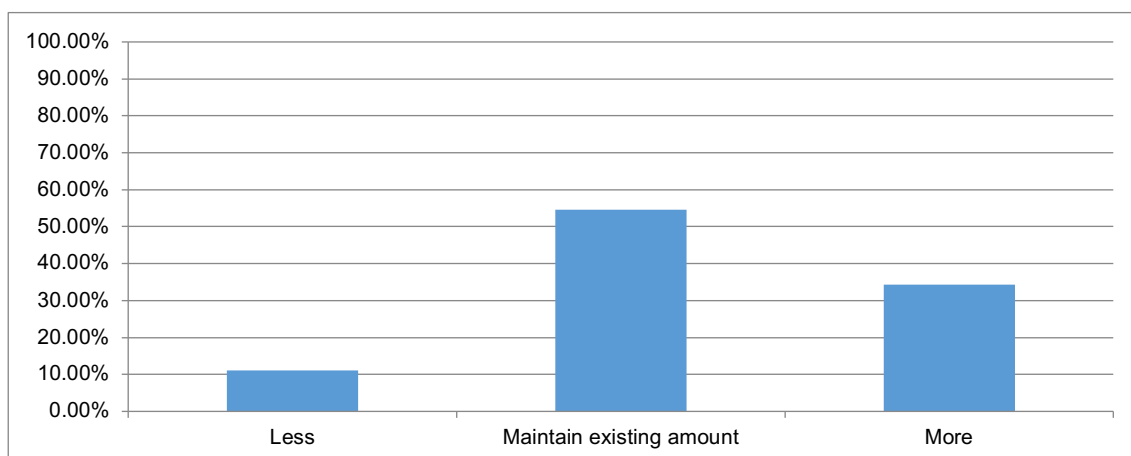
QUESTION 3.1: AMOUNT OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

What the question asked

This question asked views on commercial development – should there be more, less or about the same.

What we found

Over half the respondents felt the existing amount should be maintained with over 30 percent feeling that it should be increased. Only 10 percent felt that the amount of commercial and business development should be reduced.



Potential policy implications

The NDP should support the maintenance of business and commercial development in the village and, where appropriate, facilitate additional development.

QUESTION 3.2: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

What the question asked

This question looked at where any additional development should be – at Twinwoods, on other existing commercial and industrial land or on green field sites.

What we found

The results showed a clear preference for all, or some of any new industrial/commercial development to be at Twinwoods. Any such development not at Twinwoods should be limited to brownfield sites.

Potential policy implications

Business, commercial and industrial development should predominantly be focussed at Twinwoods with any other development being on brownfield sites. This requirement would not, however, apply to the provision necessary village facilities.

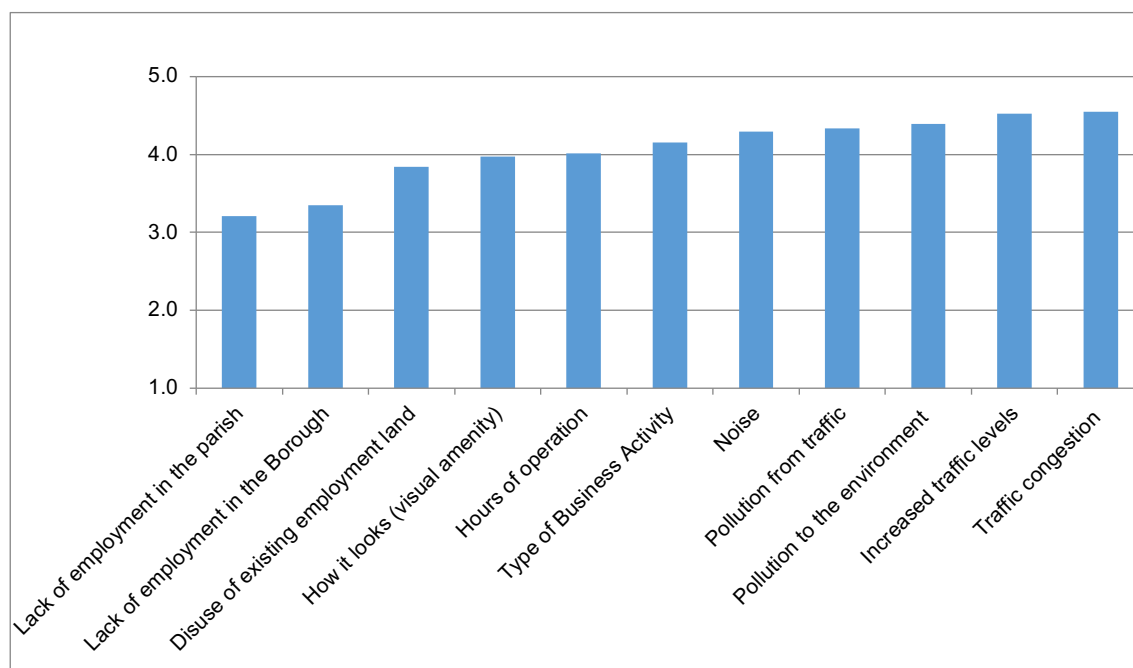
QUESTION 3.3: CONCERNS ABOUT BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

What the question asked

The question sought to understand community concerns about business and commercial development. Eleven options, many drawn from previous consultations, were given.

What we found

All the options were seen as having some degree of importance but top of the list were concerns about pollution, noise and traffic.



Potential policy implications

Any new business, commercial and industrial development must limit noise to acceptable levels, have effective plans for monitoring and controlling pollution and must demonstrate clearly that traffic generation will not have an unacceptable impact on the village in terms of congestion and safety.

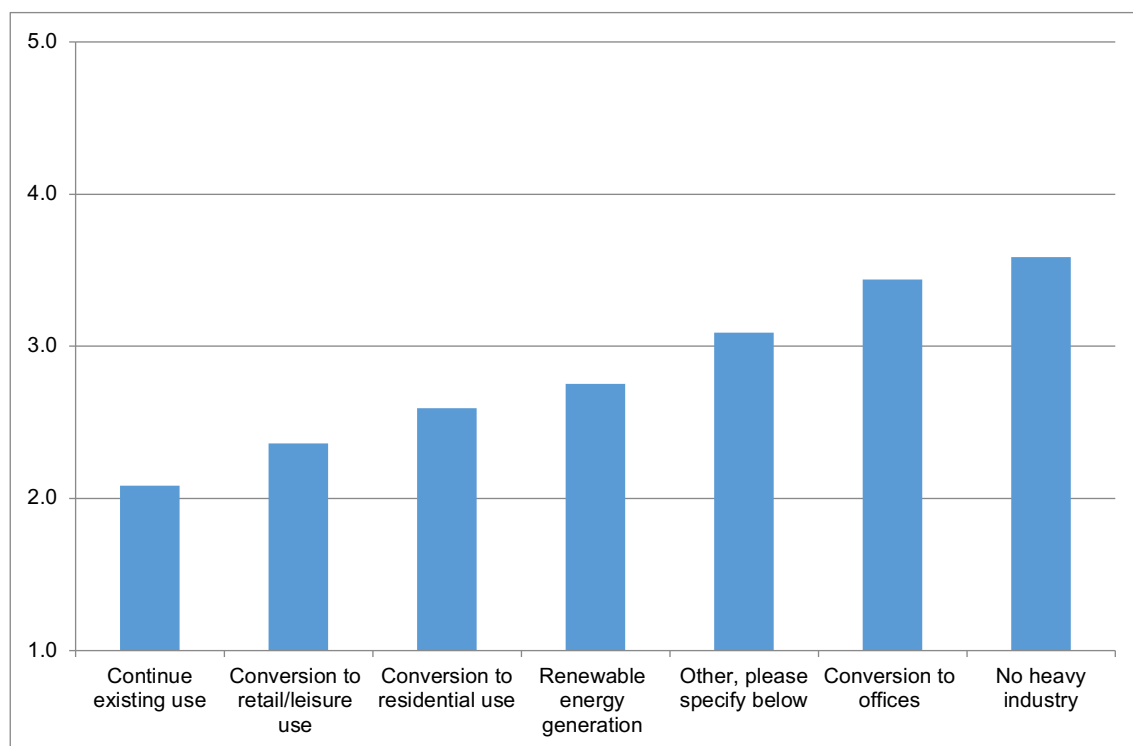
QUESTION 3.4: VIEWS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT OF TWINWOODS

What the question asked

This question asked about preferences for the type of any new development at Twinwoods. Five options were given with the potential for a sixth, free-text, option. The additional free-text options have not yet been analysed.

What we found

The results support for commercial and industrial use (including conversion to offices) but excluding the use of heavy industry. There was, specifically, little support for heavy industry; there was also low levels of support for the conversion of Twinwoods to housing.



Potential policy implications

Twinwoods should remain a business, commercial and light industrial development. The NDP does not support the introduction of heavy industry or the conversion of the site to a housing development.

Section 4 – Traffic and Transport

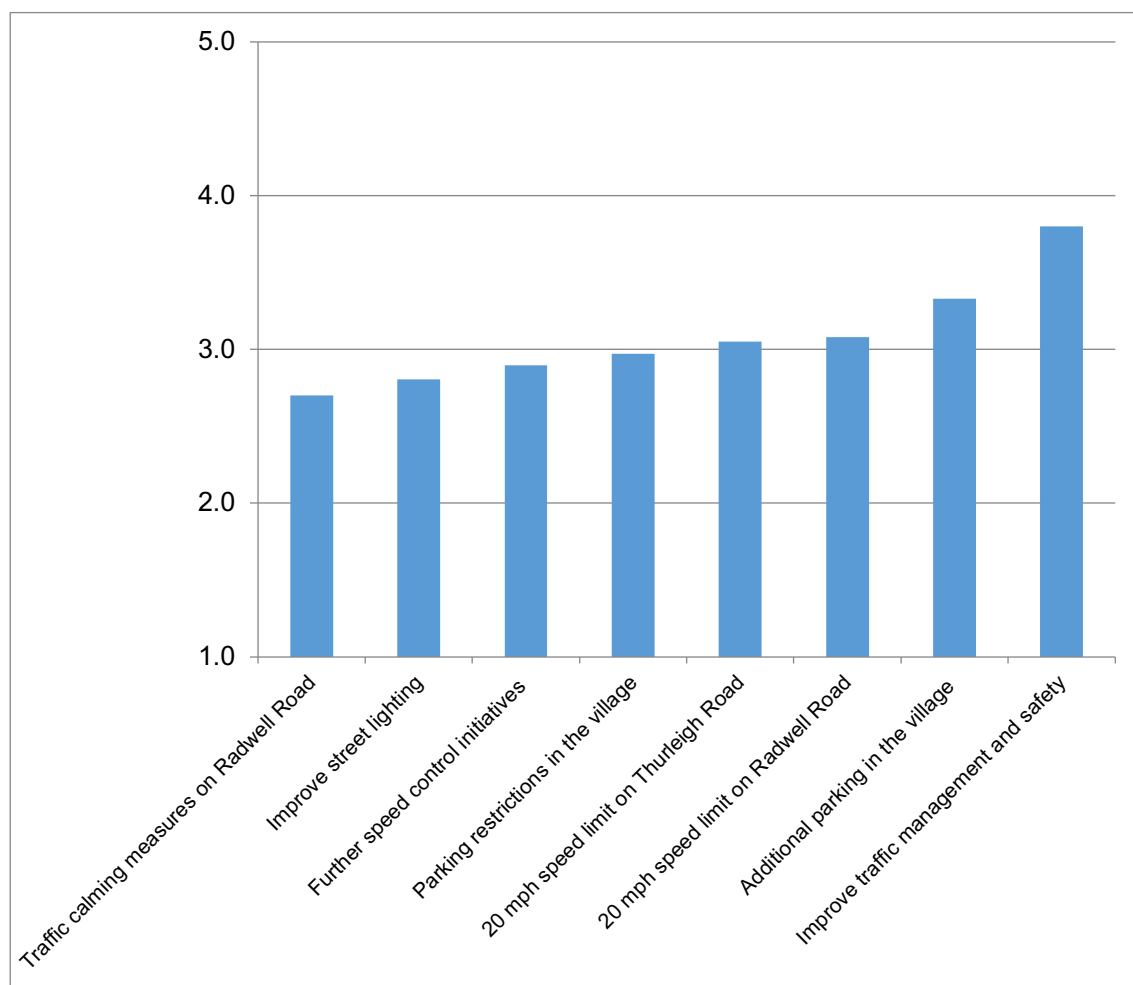
QUESTION 4.1: TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT ISSUES

What the question asked

The question asked about the key areas needed to address the traffic issues in the village. Eight options were given.

What we found

There was no clear support for any of the options seemed, although there was some measure of agreement on the need to provide improved traffic management and additional parking. It is also known that a number of comments were made about additional traffic issues, particularly in relation to the A6.



Potential policy implications

From the current analysis there is no clear policy position around traffic and transport issues.

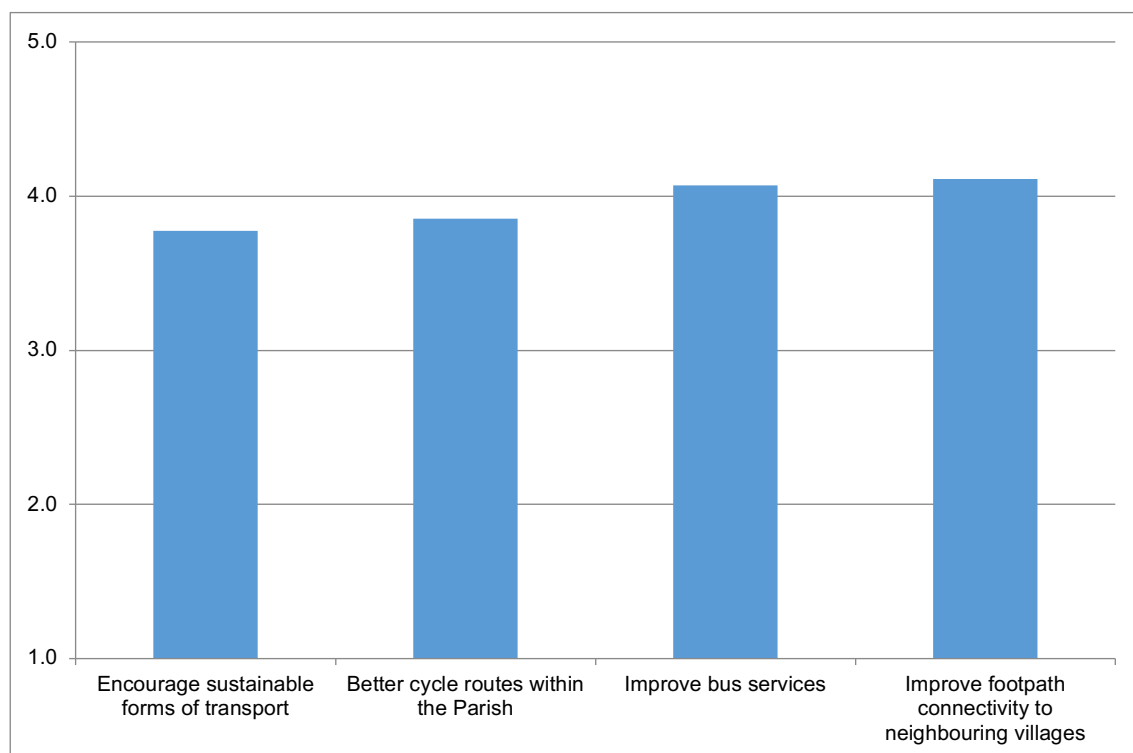
QUESTION 4.2: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

What the question asked

This question asked could encourage people to use sustainable transport, four options being given

What we found

There was a strong level of support for all the options.



Potential policy implications

The opportunity of development should be used to support cycle routes, bus services and to improve sustainable connectivity between villages

Section 5 – Community Facilities

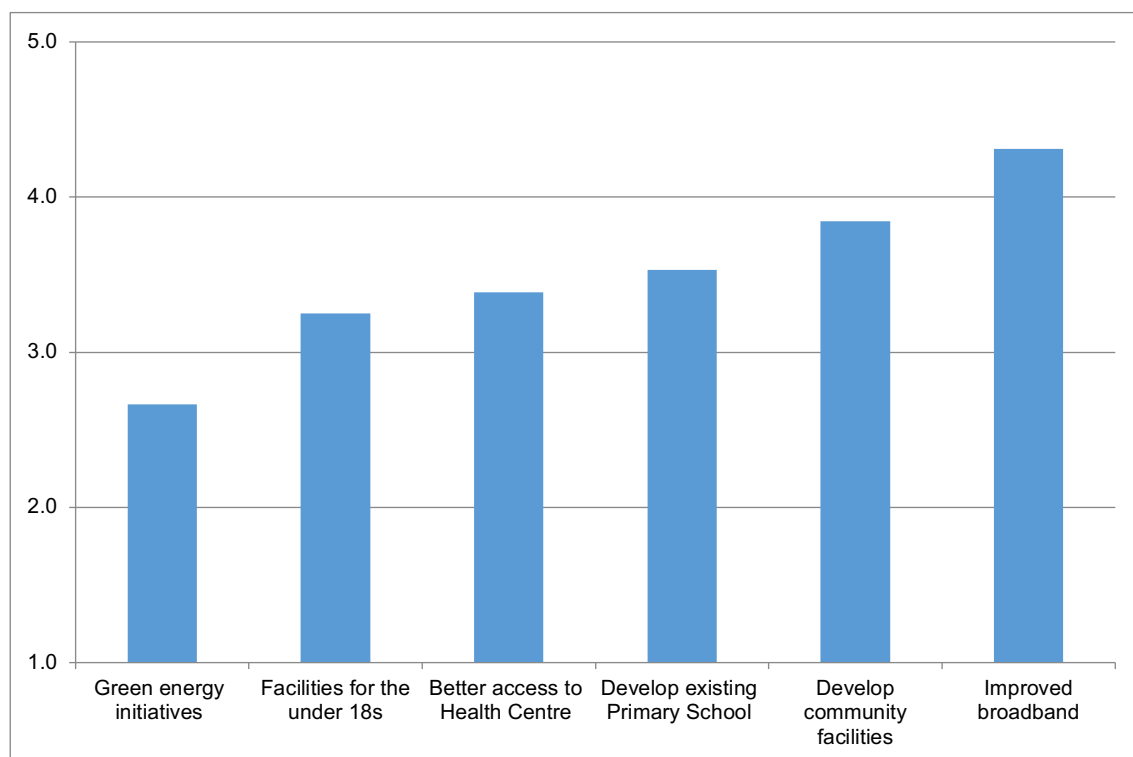
QUESTION 5.1: FACILITIES' NEED

What the question asked

This question what additional facilities the community would like to see over the next 15 years.

What we found

Most options were supported, with the highest score being for improved broadband. This was unexpected given that high-speed broadband is available in the village.



Potential policy implications

More work needs to be done understand how the preferences around community facilities can translate into policy, although this is beyond the immediate scope of the NDP.

Section 6 – Environment and Open Areas

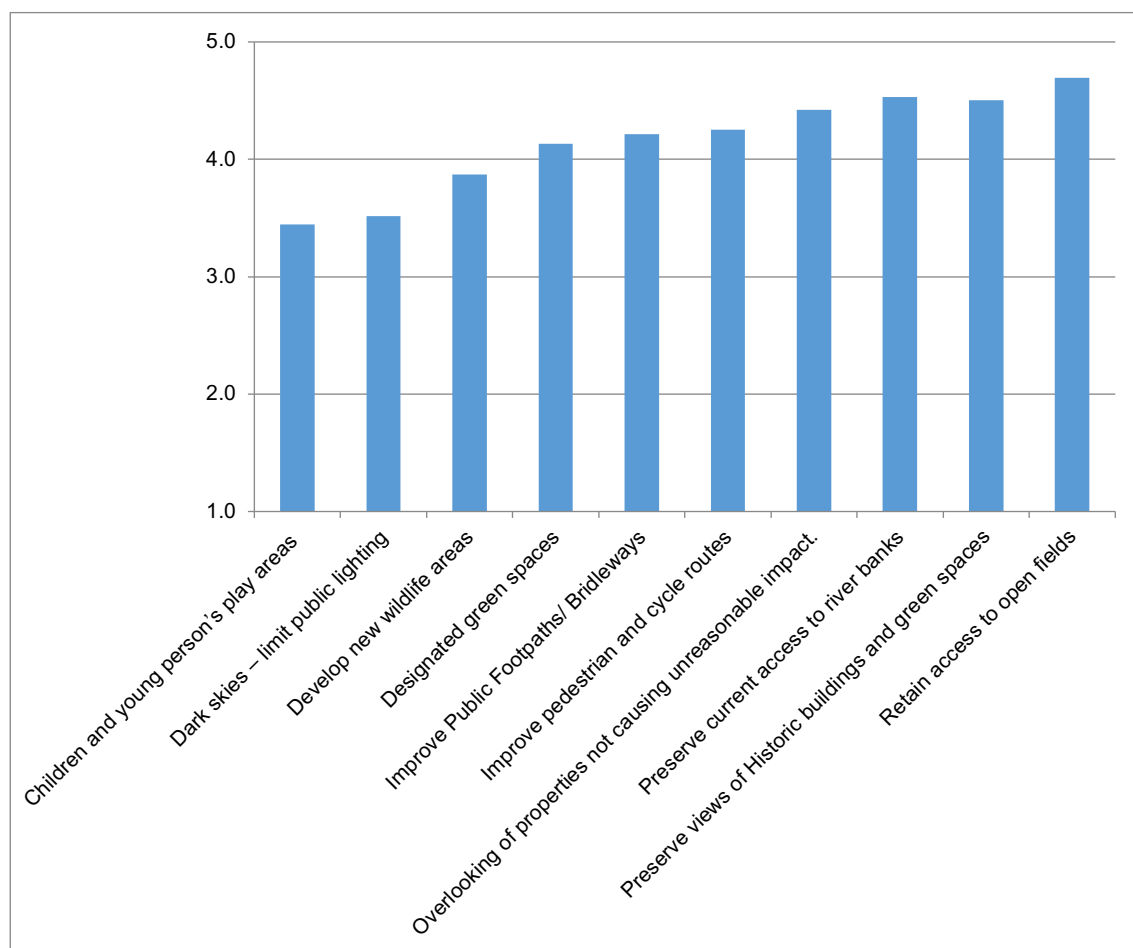
QUESTION 6.1: PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACES

What the question asked

This question asked, in relation to the historical and rural feel of the village, which areas should be preserved and improved. Ten options were given.

What we found

There was good to strong support for all options here. In particular access to the countryside and river banks by footpaths and bridleways was seen as important, as was retaining green spaces and views of historic buildings and the countryside



Potential policy implications

The retention of green spaces and wildlife areas is important. Access to the countryside must be maintained and improved.

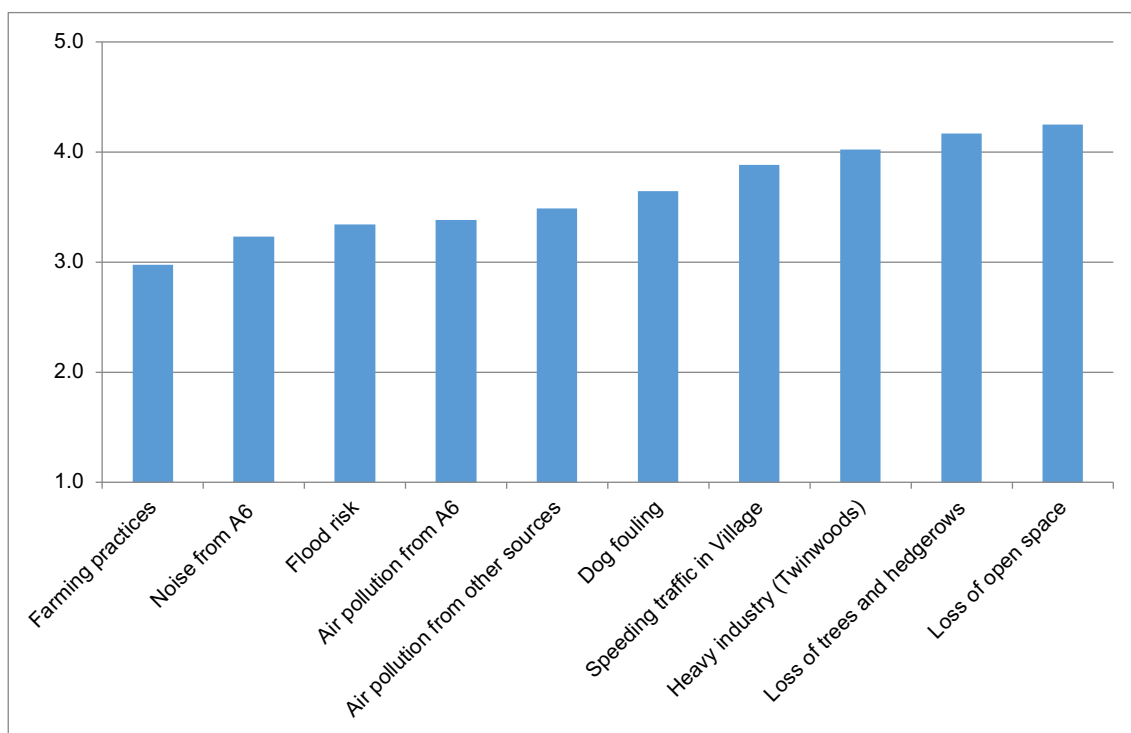
QUESTION 6.2: ISSUES PREVIOUSLY RAISED

What the question asked

A number of issues had been raised at previous consultation events. This question sought to understand the degree to which they were more generally considered to be a problem.

What we found

Whilst all remained an issue to some degree they did not receive the high level of importance that might have been expected. Speeding traffic was seen as an issue but from the question on traffic there was no evidence of support for measures that would reduce speed.



Potential policy implications

There is nothing in this section that has not previously been addressed.

Section 6 – Summary of policy implications

LIVING IN THE VILLAGE

- The NDP should seek to retain the rural atmosphere, size and feeling of the community

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- The NDP should support new development of up to around 25 houses.
- New housing should be focussed on new and medium sized developments within the existing village SPA (Settlement Policy Area). Larger developments outside the current SPA are not desirable
- New building should wherever possible be undertaken on brown field sites.
- Development should be sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of size, height and style with the impact on the privacy on adjacent properties limited
- It is important that sufficient off-road parking is provided so as not to add to the existing pressure on on-street parking.
- Buildings should be well-designed and future-proofed for a range of potential occupants, with good levels of natural lighting, thermal comfort and security

- Plot sizes and design should provide sufficient space for general usage, mitigate noise and nuisance and minimise any reduction of natural light.
- It is important that the local community is consulted and listened to at the early stages of project development.
- Developments should, as far as possible, be carbon-neutral with a particular focus on reducing water consumption and running costs, protecting the existing environment and mitigating flood risk.
- In addition, construction plans should seek to reduce the environmental impact of the work.
- The focus should be on lower-cost homes that provide for older people (including downsizing) and for family homes.

BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- The NDP should support the maintenance of business and commercial development in the village and, where appropriate, facilitate additional development.
- Business, commercial and industrial development should predominantly be focussed at Twinwoods with any other development being on brownfield sites. This requirement would not, however, apply to the provision necessary village facilities
- Any new business, commercial and industrial development must limit noise to acceptable levels, have effective plans for monitoring and controlling pollution and must demonstrate clearly that traffic generation will not have an unacceptable impact on the village in terms of congestion and safety.
- Twinwoods should remain a business, commercial and light industrial development. The NDP does not support the introduction of heavy industry or the conversion of the site to a housing development.

TRANSPORT

- The opportunity of development should be used to support cycle routes, bus services and to improve sustainable connectivity between villages

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- More work needs to be done understand how the preferences around community facilities can translate into policy

ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN AREAS

- The retention of green spaces and wildlife areas is important. Access to the countryside must be maintained and improved.