

Batchworth: Neighbourhood Plan



Consultation Statement

Volume 1 (of 4): Summary

November 2023

Batchworth Community Council



BATCHWORTH

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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1. This document

This is the Consultation Statement prepared to accompany the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan. It sets out the process of consultation that has been undertaken in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, and how that has informed the submission version.

The Consultation Statement is presented across four separate volumes:

- Volume 1 presents a summary of the consultation undertaken.
- Volume 2 presents an overview of the initial consultation events to generate ideas for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Volume 3 presents a summary of consultation associated with the vision, objectives and policy ideas generated in response to the initial consultation events.
- Volume 4 presents a summary of the formal Regulation 14 consultation on the pre-submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The document you are reading now comprises Volume 1 of the Consultation Statement.

Consideration has been given to all comments and responses made in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The consultation responses informed the content of the pre-submission draft of the Neighbourhood Plan that was subject to consultation at the Regulation 14 stage. The responses to the Regulation 14 consultation showed strong support to the policies and projects within it, ratifying the work undertaken before it, and showing a strong link back to the ideas, suggestions and concerns raised through earlier rounds of consultation.

2. Key stages and timeline of events

Initial Neighbourhood Plan activities

During 2020 residents of Batchworth were invited to participate in an online survey making use of Commonplace, allowing respondents to, spatially, indicate those things they like about the area, those they don't, and those things that need working on.

Subsequent to this a series of nine focus groups workshop events were convened across the area, with respondents to the Commonplace survey invited to participate. The workshops took place in late 2020 and early 2021 and were held at different locations across the Neighbourhood Plan area, with discussions focussed around key themes emerging from the Commonplace survey.

Using a combination of the Commonplace survey and messages arising at the workshops a series of ideas were generated for the Plan. These, and the consultation process followed to arrive at this point, are presented in Volume 2 of the Consultation Statement.

Consultation on the vision, objectives and policy ideas

Volume 3 of the Consultation Statement presents a summary of the consultation associated with the draft vision, objectives and emerging policy ideas for the Neighbourhood Plan. This took place in July and August 2021. This sought to determine whether the vision and objectives were a fair reflection of messages received during the initial consultation activities.

Alongside the vision and objectives, the material prepared for the consultation also presented a series of 'what if' propositions. Respondents were asked to say how they felt about these and provide supporting comments. The propositions, and responses to these, form the basis of policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Overall, responses to the consultation signalled strong support for the vision, objectives and merging ideas.

Regulation 14 consultation

Following feedback to the consultation outlined above a first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared. This was shared with Three Rivers District Council in December 2021 for comment. An extensive set of comments were provided by the District Council (prepared on their behalf by Stephen Tapper Planning Ltd and Capita) in February 2022.

The review undertaken by the District Council considered the policies in the draft Plan against the NPPF and the Three Rivers Core Strategy and Development Management Policies. It provided suggestions as to policy wording and

amendments, which were reviewed and incorporated in the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The report from Three Rivers District Council stated:

“It is considered that the neighbourhood plan, as currently drafted, generally meets the basic conditions... The policies are well drafted and in the main meet the characteristics of good development plan policies. Once made, the neighbourhood plan, when read together with the Three Rivers Local Plan, should ensure that development is sustainable and complementary to the different character areas that comprise the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan area”.

Following amendment to the draft Neighbourhood Plan to reflect comments from the District Council it was then resent to the District for the purposes of screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment, involving consultation with the statutory consultees. The Screening report was received in September 2022 and screened out the Neighbourhood Plan from assessment.

Work towards production of the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documentation was then undertaken. Consultation was undertaken between May and July 2023, falling between the local elections (and associated pre-election ‘Purdah’ period) and school summer holidays.

A summary write-up of the Regulation 14 consultation is presented in Volume 4 of the Consultation Statement. This includes copies of material used and responses received from residents, statutory consultees and other interested parties. The responses to the consultation showed strong support for the Plan and policies within it, with Figure 1 (overleaf) indicated the overall level of support for each policy (from those who completed the survey).

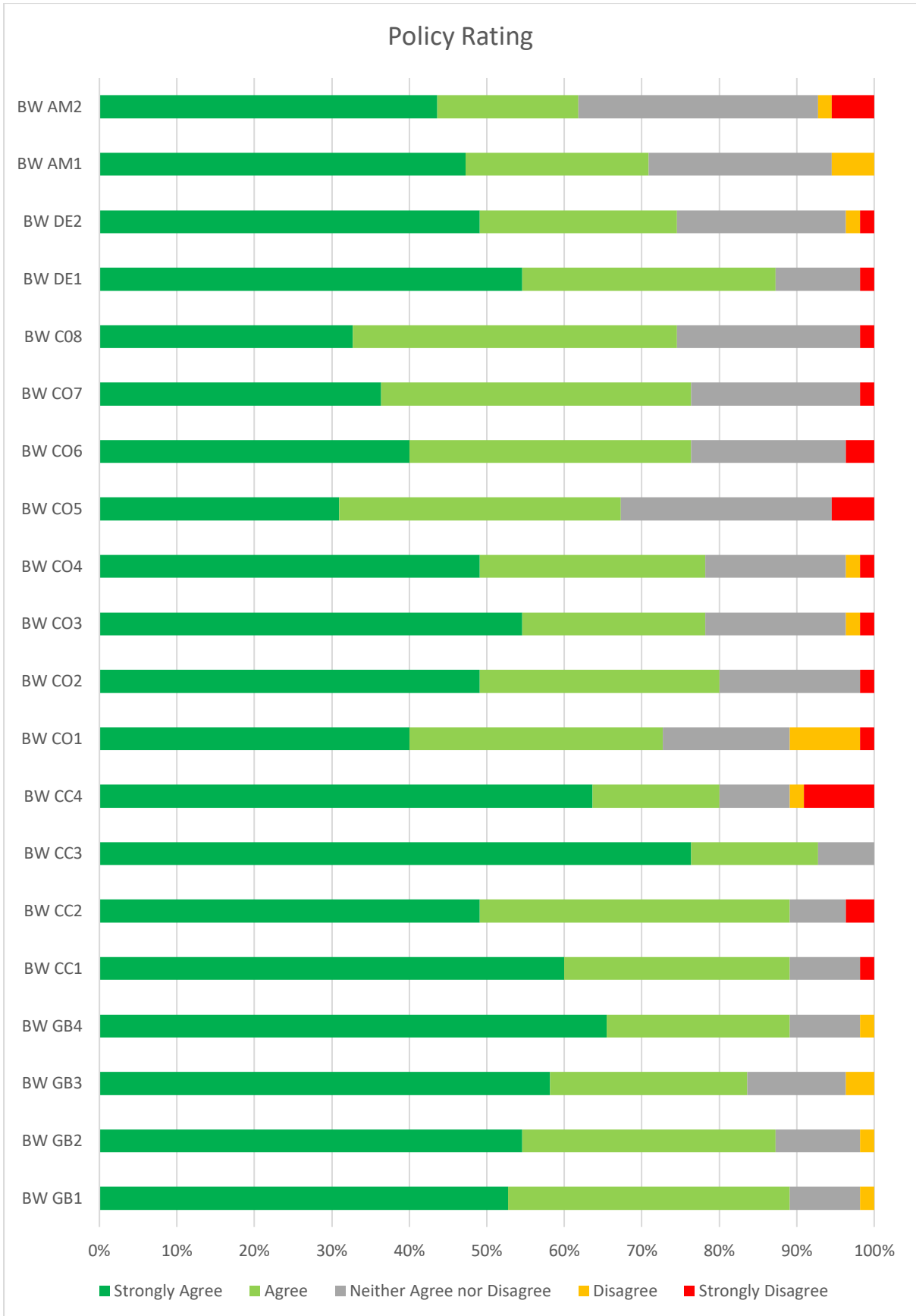


Figure 1: Chart displaying overall responses to each of the policies in the draft Plan

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