Introduction

Hart District Council (HDC) sought to explore the opportunity for a new garden community after joining the government's Garden Community Programme in 2019. The area of investigation being within Murrell Green and Winchfield.

HDC wanted the community to be involved from the early stages of the project. The Communities' Survey was open to all residents and anyone working or volunteering in the district. The responses received contribute towards the project's evidence base.

The survey received 1,197 responses between 27 May and 5 July. Respondents completed a series of questions about the key themes around garden communities. The questions aimed to capture what makes an exceptional garden community.

A sizeable number of respondents used template answers published by a local campaign group. Many of the template responses used similar wording throughout the survey. In many cases, these template responses did not answer the question being asked, but expressed a general objection to the project.
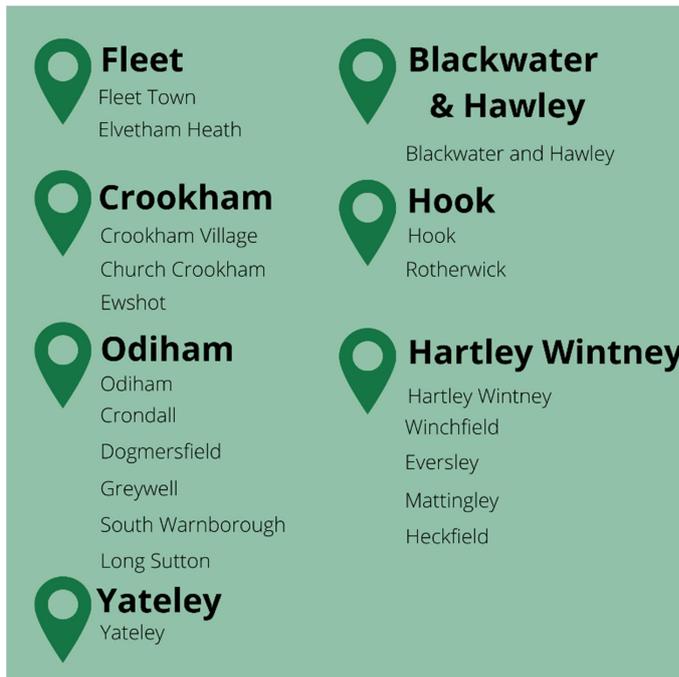
In the first question of the survey, we asked respondents to rank key aspects of garden communities by placing them in order of importance. These included, 'Green Spaces', 'Community & Wellbeing', 'Sustainable Transport', 'Future Proofing' and 'Homes & Heritage'. We calculated an aggregate score for the answer options based on the weight of ranked position and response count for the answer choice. The results determined the order of topics summarised in this report, from the highest score to the lowest. We discuss this score and more details on the results for this question within the report, at the beginning of each of the sections corresponding to the answer choices.

The report comprises the following sections: Respondent Profile, Green Spaces, Community & Wellbeing, Sustainable Transport, Homes & Heritage, Future Proofing, Impact of COVID-19.
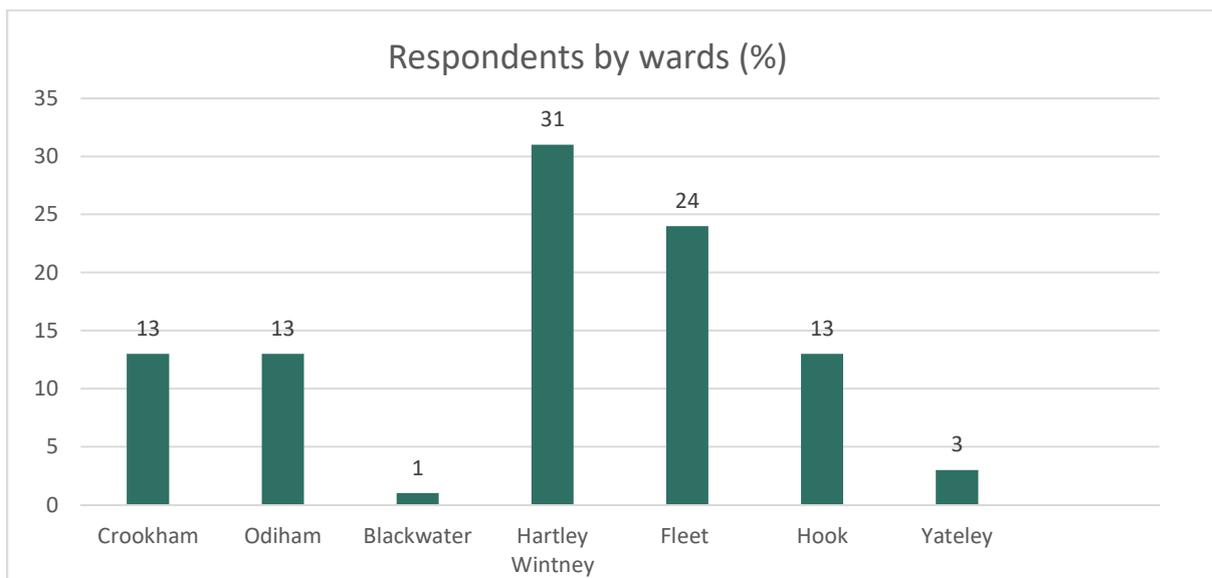
Respondent Profile

The survey collected 1,197 responses, which makes up 1.23% of the district's population (Office of National Statistics, Population estimates mid-2019). We gave respondents the option to answer a series of questions about their age, location, gender, living situation, and employment.

We asked respondents to select the nearest town or village to where they live. When analysing the results, we grouped the towns and villages into seven areas which correspond with the district's wards. This was to determine the representativeness of the responses, and the most accurate population data relates to wards rather than settlements. Fleet includes Fleet Central, Fleet East, and Fleet West wards. Crookham includes Crookham East, and Crookham West and Ewshot wards. Yateley includes Yateley East and Yateley West. The graphic below highlights which town/village option from the survey questionnaire falls under which ward.

The largest share of respondents came from the ward of Hartley Wintney (31%). Hook (13%) and Odiham (12%) also recorded a response rate higher than their proportion of population within the district. We received lower than expected responses from Fleet (24%), Crookham (13%), Yateley (3%), and Blackwater and Hawley (1%). 447 respondents skipped this question. Therefore, we cannot factor the location of roughly 37% of respondents into these statistics.
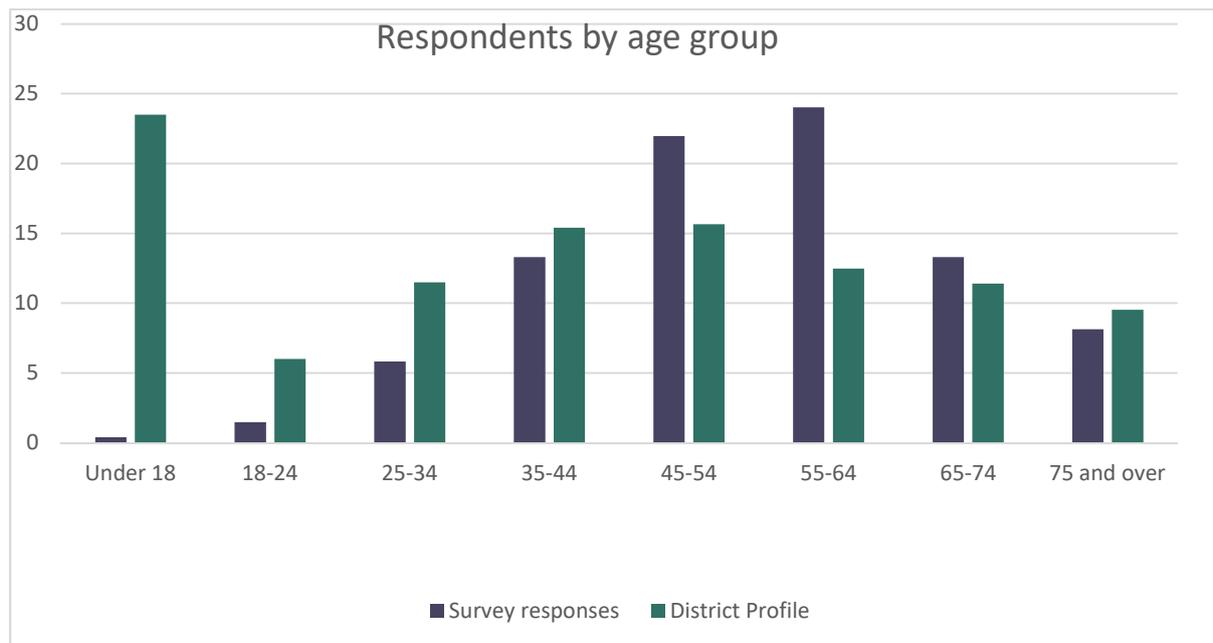
The chart below shows the percentage of respondents from each ward.

The highest responses came from the 45-54 (22%) and the 55-64 (24%) age groups, whereas the population numbers for these groups within the district are 16% and 12 %

respectively (based on the ONS mid-2019 population estimate). The younger age groups were underrepresented in the survey. 18–24-year-olds, who comprise 6% of the district's population, submitted only 1.49% of the responses. Only 8% of respondents were under 35, whereas 39% of the district's population fall within this age group. More from the 75 and above age group (8%) responded than the under 34s.The age group from 75 and above makes up 10% of the district's population. 12% of respondents declined to give their age.

The chart below shows the comparison of the number of respondents within each age group compared to the district's profile.

43% of respondents work full time, 10% of respondents work part time, and 9% are self-employed. Retired respondents make up 27% of participants. Only 1.47% of respondents said they are unemployed. 0.53% of respondents are students, and 6% said they 'Prefer not to say'.

Green Spaces

We asked respondents to compare aspects of garden communities by placing them in order of importance. An aggregate score was calculated for each answer choice so we could determine which was most important for the respondents overall. The answer choice with the largest aggregate score is the most preferred choice.

Green Spaces was the highest ranked out of the five aspects of the garden communities that the survey asked about, with the aggregate score of 4.03. 55% of respondents ranked it as most important for them.

We asked respondents to indicate what the most important uses of green spaces in promoting health, wellbeing, and quality of life are and pick their top three. 'Woodland

(including increasing tree cover)' received the most responses (51%), 'Natural wildlife habitats/corridors to enhance biodiversity' (48%), and 'Open green spaces' (39%).

When asked about opportunities to enhance biodiversity and the natural environment within garden communities, respondents also strongly indicated that they would prioritise 'Enhancement of the existing habitats' with 64% ranking it as the top answer. 'Enhancement of ecological connectivity by creating more, bigger, better well connected/linked areas of biodiversity' scored second with 14%. 'Creation of new habitats', 'Use of flood management to create water habitat, wetland areas' and 'Controlled access to protect and encourage biodiversity' received under 5% of top picks. 9% of respondents picked as a top priority 'Active stewardship and management' but received second to last aggregate score. This shows that while there was a significant number of respondents that considered it a top priority, overall, it ranked 5th out of 6 in terms of importance, with an aggregate score of 2.66.

When asked about any other aspects of delivering ecological and biodiversity gains within the new garden community that we should consider, we received 494 responses. 71% of those expressed objection to the project, 12% of which were the same template answers. Others suggested provision of ample green spaces (6%) and enhancement of biodiversity (5%). Protection and planting of trees (4%), and environmental education (2%) were key themes.

Prioritising 'enhancement, protection and provision of green spaces' was a common thread across the whole survey:

- 'Access to green space nature' was identified as a top factor contributing to creating a community identity, with 64% of respondents picking it as one of their top three.
- 56% of respondents said that 'Informal recreational space (meadows, trails)' was very important to achieve a vibrant mixed-use community.
- 'Protection and enhancement of the natural environment' was identified as the most important way to ensure that the natural and historic environment of the local area is reflected and respected, by 68% of respondents.
- 'Green infrastructure that supports a variety of uses such as play, walking, cycling and community events' was also picked as one of the three most important aspects of future proofing by 36% of respondents.

"More sustainable energy, e.g., making solar panels standard on all new houses. Enhanced insulation - above the industry standard requirement. Provision of allotments. No solid fuel heating, including log burners, etc." – anonymous response.

"How about having wide street scene – and instead of the normal verges, having wildflower meadow - so each and every street becomes a green corridor?" – anonymous response.

Community & Wellbeing

Respondents rated Community & Wellbeing as the second most important aspect of the garden communities, with the aggregate score of 3.53, compared to 4.03 received by 'Green Spaces'. 24% of respondents picked Community & Wellbeing as their top choice.

When asked about what contributes the most to creating a community identity, the top three answers were 'Access to green space and nature' (64%), 'Good transport connectivity within

the community and with other settlements' (38%), and 'Access to good leisure, sport, health and wellbeing facilities' (21%). 39% of respondents picked the 'Other, please specify' option and 75% of these responses expressed opposition to the project. 14% of these were template answers. 30% of all answers to this question mentioned retaining countryside as the most important factor contributing to creating community identity.

In terms of the facilities that should be prioritised to achieve a vibrant mixed-use community, we received a good spread of responses, with the weighted average score similar for most of the answers. However, the highest scored options were 'Informal recreational space (meadows, trails)' and 'Health and wellbeing provision (GP surgery, dentist, optician, well-being services)' marked as very important by 56% and 52% of respondents, respectively. 'Full educational provision (early years through to college/apprenticeships/training)' received the third overall score, with 39% of respondents marking it as very important. We also received 472 comments, 60% of which expressed opposition to the project going ahead, 13% of those were template answers. 34% of all comments mentioned the need for good infrastructure, especially road and rail, but also public transport, walking and cycling routes and social infrastructure (schools, GP surgery). 13% of comments highlighted the importance of green spaces.

"Areas of natural ancient woodland that is not made into trails etc. Plus, allotment spaces. Corner stores, not just central retail hubs. A variety of architectural styles and self-build" – anonymous response.

We received 629 responses to a question about other spaces where respondents go to connect with people. 29% of respondents expressed opposition to the project, and 8% were template answers. 17% of respondents said there were no other spaces where they connect with others. 37% referred to green and rural spaces.12% said they meet others in pubs and cafes, and 6% go to the surrounding towns.

Many respondents (29%) suggested that a 'new Parish Council' would be the best form of governance for the areas of public space in a new community. 11% of respondents did not know what the best option would be, 10% picked a 'Community Trust' and 9% chose a 'Co-operative Society'. 26% of respondents chose the 'Other, please specify' option where 71% of comments opposed the project. 17% said that Hart District Council should not be governing the public space in a new community. 6% said that the existing parish councils should oversee them. 10% said that the question was premature.

Sustainable Transport

Respondents identified Sustainable Transport as the third most important aspect of a garden community, with an aggregate score of 2.96 and 8% of respondents ranking it as their top priority.

The survey asked a question about the most important features of a sustainable and integrated transport system. 56% of respondents picked as one of their top three 'Safe, convenient, integrated cycling and walking routes', 'Walkable neighbourhoods for local services and schools', and 'Connecting bus and train services', received 39% and 36% of responses, respectively. 34% of respondents chose the 'Other, please specify' option. 72%

of those responses expressed opposition to the project, of which 18% were template answers. 12% of respondents highlighted the need for a suitable capacity of the transport network to be provided. 8% highlighted that investing in the existing infrastructure was a priority.

We asked respondents about various factors which may encourage them to use a more sustainable mode of transport. We received an even spread of responses, with the weighted average score between 2.57 and 3.29 out of 5. 'High quality direct and reliable public transport links' was narrowly a top pick, with 30% saying it was 'very likely' to encourage them to switch to a more sustainable mode. 'Better quality of the public transport infrastructure' and 'Convenient journeys' were a close second and third, with 29% and 25%. 'Need to reduce pollution/reduce your carbon footprint' came fourth overall but had a higher percentage of respondents saying that it was 'very likely' to impact their decision compared to 'Convenient journeys'. We received 248 comments in relation to this question. 75% of the comments opposed the project, and 25% of those were template answers. 6% of respondents suggested we should address current transport needs as a priority. Others said that transport needs to be available to people of all ages and accessible for wheelchair users and others with disabilities.

"Roadways designed to support future transport solutions including self-drive / automated electric vehicles enabling individual transport for all." – anonymous response.

Homes & Heritage

Homes and heritage was the fourth most important aspect of garden communities. It scored 2.40 and 7% of respondents ranked it as a top priority.

45% of respondents picked 'Energy-efficient homes' when asked about the top three most important ways to ensure new homes are designed to respond to existing and future challenges. 39% of respondents chose 'A mix of homes for all stages of life' and 28% chose 'Affordable homes'. 37% of respondents picked the 'Other' option. 79% of these responses expressed opposition to the project, 21% of which were template answers. 9% of respondents said that the best way to respond to future challenges is to keep the green spaces. 8% highlighted brownfield sites as a priority.

The survey results revealed that almost double the number of renters valued affordable housing compared with homeowners. When asked about what is most important to ensure that new homes are designed to respond to existing and future challenges, only 26% of homeowners selected 'Affordable housing', compared to 42% of renters. 53% of respondents who said they were 'Unemployed', or a 'Student' selected 'Affordable housing' as important. Whereas only 26% of those in 'Full-time employment' prioritised affordable homes.

The survey asked about the best ways to reflect and respect the natural and historic environment of the local area. Respondents ranked 'Protection and enhancement of the natural environment' as the most important, with a 3.45 out of 4 aggregate score and 68% of respondents picking it as their top choice. 'The layout and design of buildings to respect the landscape' came second with a 2.49 score and 13% of respondents choosing it as the most important. Respondents ranked 'Ensure that architectural style reflects the local area's character' third with a score of 2.05 and 14% of respondents placing it first. 'Maximising the

visibility and appreciation of local heritage sites' came last with a score of 2.01 and 4.82% of respondents picking it as most important.

We received 610 responses to the question about other measures that we should consider to reflect and respect the natural and historic environment of the local area. 62% of respondents used the answer box to express their objection to the project, 8% of those were template responses. 5% of respondents said we should not consider other measures. 5% referred to a reduction in size of the proposed community. Respondents also mentioned the provision of more green space, green infrastructure, and green buffers between settlements. Use of local materials and builders was also a theme.

"Houses of all types - every house being built nowadays is either designed for families or 1 bedroom flats that are designed for people who will spend 99% of their time out – there is nothing being designed for the ever increasing number of people who do not have children, who spend most of their time at home and would like to have a study to work in (without having to have 4 other bedrooms), that don't want an open plan kitchen etc." – anonymous response.

Future Proofing

Future proofing was the fifth most important aspect of garden communities. 7% of respondents ranked it as a top priority. It achieved an aggregate score of 2.08.

The survey asked respondents to select three of the most important aspects of future proofing. 38% of participants said that 'Room for the community to grow without joining with surrounding towns/villages' is most important. In second with 36% was 'Green infrastructure' which can support play areas, walking, cycling and community events. The third most selected answer was 'Flexible local services (health, education) that can adapt to changing needs', receiving 31%. 36% of respondents picked the 'Other, please specify' option and 80% of these responses expressed opposition to the project. 21% were template answers.

We asked respondents to indicate which future technological opportunities a new garden community should anticipate. We asked them to rank from 1 to 7, 1 being most important. 'Widespread and improved use of the internet' scored the highest, receiving an aggregate score of 5.80. Scoring second highest was 'Renewable energy and real-time energy monitoring systems', with a score of 5.05. Ranking in third place was 'Intelligent public transport, highways and traffic systems', scoring 4.29.

The survey asked if there are any other future technological opportunities we should think about. The question had 380 comments. 38% of responses expressed opposition to the project. 11% of these were template answers. 10% of all answers flagged the importance of introducing solar panels, producing self-sufficient homes, and said that renewable energy was important. Suggestions included ground and air source heat pumps, solar and wind energy, and carbon neutral homes. 6% of participants said that electric vehicles and charging points are important opportunities to think about.

"All new houses should have solar panels, waterbutts, water storage/recycling water for toilet flushes, etc." – anonymous response.

Impact of COVID-19

We asked how participants mostly travel to work during the Covid-19 pandemic. 40% of participants said they 'Work from home', and 25% said 'I don't work'. Driving was the most popular form of transport during Covid-19, scoring 16%. 13% of respondents picked the 'Other, please specify' option. 57% of these responses expressed opposition to the project. 34% of these were template answers.

The survey asked how respondents will mostly travel to work once the Covid-19 pandemic is over. 28% of participants selected 'Drive', 25% said 'I don't work' and 21% said they 'Work from home'. 'Public transport' only received 6% and 'walking/cycling' only 6%. 13% of respondents picked the 'Other, please specify' option and 59% of these responses expressed opposition to the project. 28% were template answers.

When asked how respondents mostly undertook their main food shop during the Covid-19 pandemic, 46% of participants said they 'Drive to supermarket/shop/market (including using Click & Collect)'. 31% said they 'Use a home delivery service', and 9% said they 'Walk/cycle to the supermarket/shop/market (including using Click & Collect)'. 14% of respondents picked the 'Other, please specify' option. 54% of these responses expressed opposition to the project moving forward. 26% were template answers.

The survey also asked how respondents will undertake their main food shop once the pandemic is over. 51% said they will 'Drive to supermarket/shop/market (including using Click & Collect), 26% said they will 'Use a home delivery service' and 10% will 'Walk/cycle to the supermarket/shop/market (including using Click & Collect)'.

The survey asked how respondents mostly undertake the school run during the Covid-19 pandemic. 63% answered 'Not applicable', 12% said they 'Drive', and 11% said they 'Walk/cycle'. 10% of respondents picked the 'Other, please specify' option and 69% of these responses expressed opposition to the project. 35% were template answers.

"The pandemic has taught us that many people can work from home, cutting down on pollution while remaining productive - in some cases more productive." – anonymous response.