



## Issues & Options Consultation – The main issues raised

The Issues and Options consultation ran between 4 August and 30 September 2016. This represented the first formal consultation stage of the Local Plan Update and opened discussion about what the local plan should contain. We asked a number of questions about different planning issues that should be dealt with in the update and what people saw as the future for Wokingham Borough.

This report summarises the main issues which have arisen through the consultation, based around the different topic areas. Where relevant, the level of response and agreement to continued policy approaches have been shown.

### 1. Vision and Objectives

Main ideas for consideration in the LPU vision and objectives:

- Thriving businesses with flexible employment options and a highly skilled, innovative workforce
- Strong communities that are lively, diverse and healthy
- Open space for leisure and nature
- Ease of movement and strong connections including cycle and pedestrian routes and sustainable transport
- Housing for all and the appropriate infrastructure to support it
- Achieving a work life balance
- Digital connectivity
- Agreement of a balance of the environmental, social and economic pillars to guide objectives within the LPU

### 2. Plan period

- Agreement for the LPU to cover the period up to 2036
- Need to ensure consideration of issues and opportunities beyond the plan period also

### 3. Where should development go?

#### The Options Identified...

**Option 1:** Continue the approach of a small number of large developments that provide for their own infrastructure needs based on garden town/village principles

**Option 2:** A large number of smaller developments around the Borough

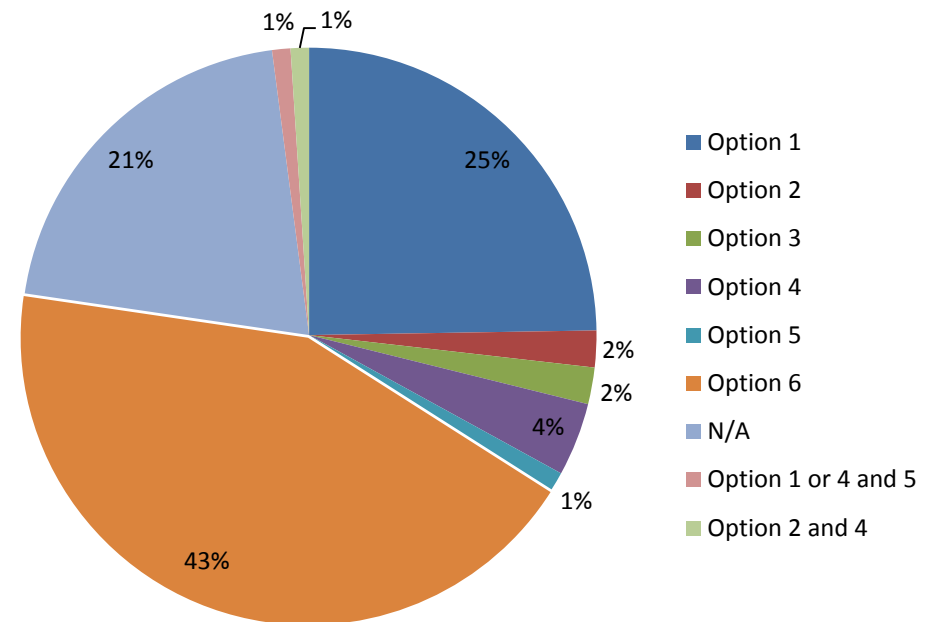
**Option 3:** Do nothing and let the market dictate when and where development will take place

**Option 4:** Focus development at existing larger settlements

**Option 5:** Focus development at existing smaller settlements

**Option 6:** A combination of some / all of the above approaches

*Which option should the Council use for where development should go (its spatial strategy)?*



Answer	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6	N/A	Option 1 or 4 and 5	Option 2 and 4
Number of respondents	24	2	2	4	1	42	20	1	1

- The majority of developer responses were Option 6
- Resident responses were split between Options 1 & 6

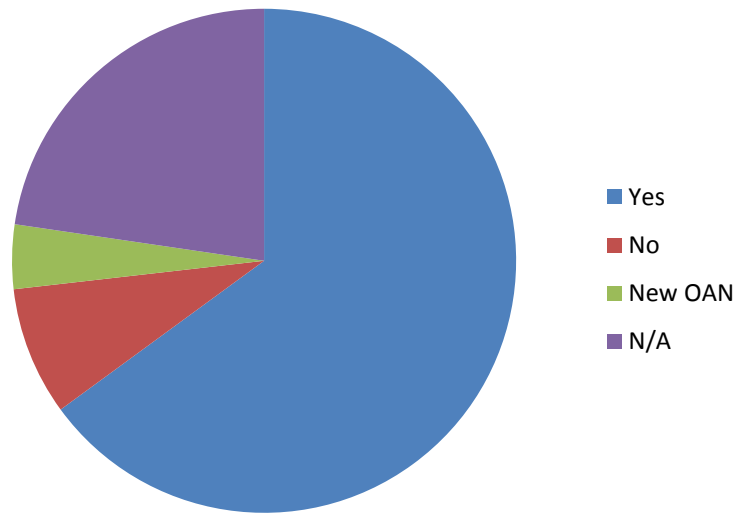
Main issues:

- Infrastructure should be provided alongside development
- Brownfield developments in areas of Green Belt should be utilised
- Consider development at existing settlements where there is a shortage of infrastructure in order to warrant new infrastructure
- Consideration of lead in times for different types of developments will need to be considered
- Settlement boundaries should be reviewed

## 4. Housing

### Housing need

*Do you agree that we should plan to provide for the existing and future housing needs of people, as identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment?*



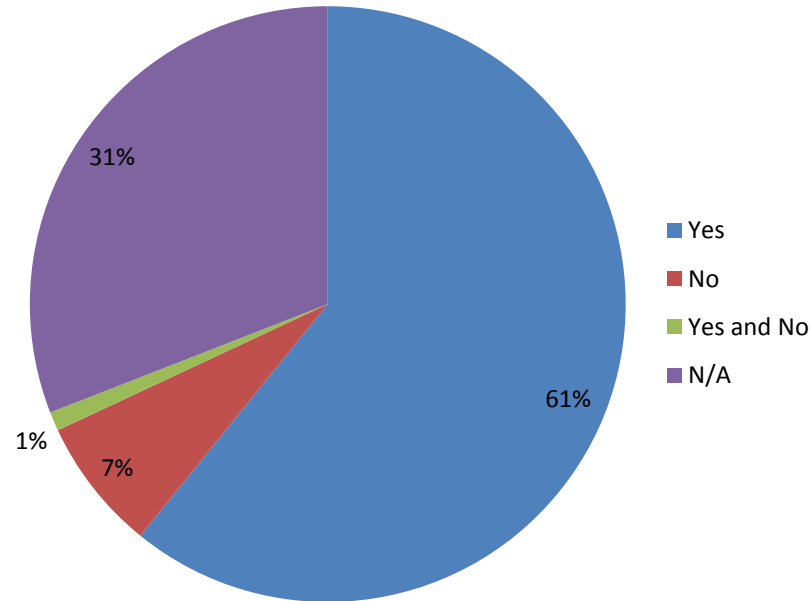
Response	Yes	No	New OAN	N/A
Number of Responses	63	8	4	22

#### Main issues:

- We should provide for the need as set out in the Berkshire (including South Bucks) SHMA 2016
- Ensure diversity in the housing provided – social, affordable, sizes
- Ensure mitigation of effects of large developments on smaller settlements and ensure positive impact on existing communities
- Identify a range of sites in order to meet the need
- Views expressed that the SHMA is not fully robust and the Objectively Assessed Housing Need identified is too low

**Mix of housing**

*Do you think we should have a policy to ensure that a range of homes are provided? If not, what approach should we take?*



**Main issues:**

- The market should be left to naturally dictate the mix of housing in the borough
- An appropriate dwelling mix is needed in order to provide smaller, more affordable properties suitable for older and younger people
- Any policy introduced should be flexible to reflect locations of developments; certain developments will be better suited to accommodate a mix of housing

Response	Yes	No	Yes and No	N/A
Number of Response	59	7	1	30

### ***Affordable housing***

Main issues:

- Flexibility needed in mix of tenure, size, etc. of affordable housing
- Promotion of social integration and cohesion across developments and areas
- Realistic targets for provision, taking into consideration viability

### ***Gypsies & Travellers***

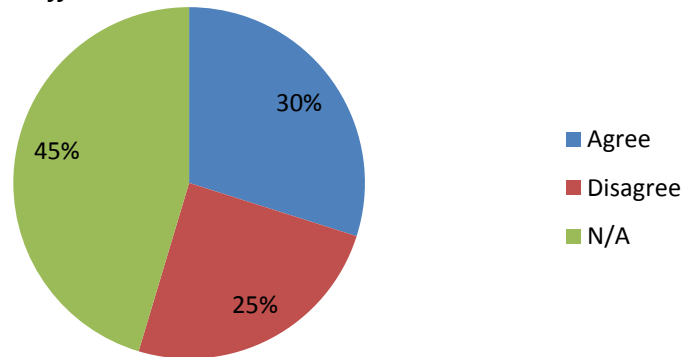
Main issues:

- We should meet the need identified for gypsies and travellers
- Maximise the potential of existing sites
- Further understanding is required of the appropriate size, location etc. of sites
- Different views expressed about whether sites should be close to services and infrastructure, or away from settlements

## Starter Homes

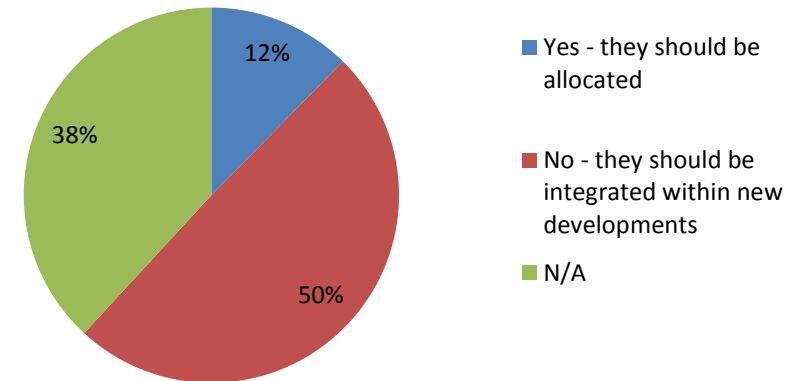
In March 2015, the Government introduced the concept of Starter Homes, which are homes for first-time buyers aged under 40, and which are sold at a minimum 20% discount below market value for the first occupier only. This discounted sale price is capped at £250,000 outside of London.

*The Government is currently proposing that developments of 10 homes or more should provide 20% Starter Homes. If local authorities are given some discretion do you agree with this threshold or should we be looking to provide a different standard?*



Response	Agree	Disagree	N/A
Number of Response	29	24	44

*If there is discretion for local authorities to set their own Starter Home policy, should land be allocated for Starter Homes or should they be integrated within new developments?*



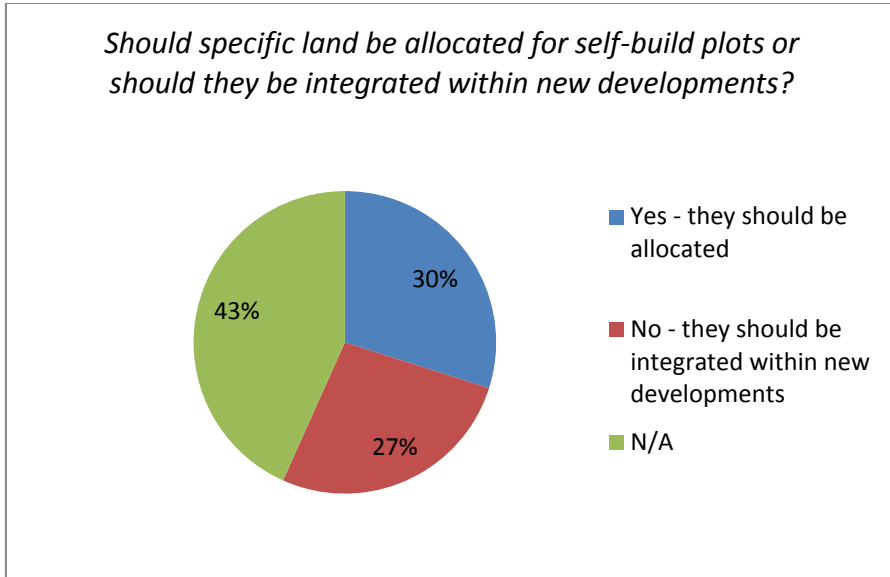
Response	Yes - they should be allocated	No - integrated within new developments	N/A
Number of Response	12	48	37

### Main issues:

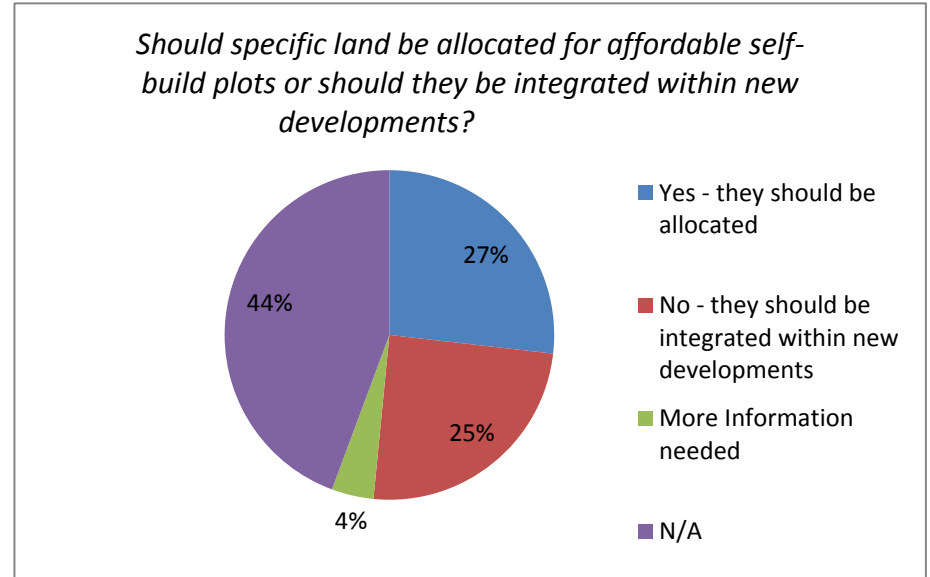
- General support for starter homes, although not enough information currently regarding the introduction of them to provide full comments
- Developers' view that starter homes should form part of the provision for affordable housing
- Support for allocation of plots for self-build integrated into larger developments
- Further understanding of the self-build need and government requirements necessary

**Self-build and custom build**

The Government published new planning legislation and guidance for providing for people who wish to build their own homes. This can include building a home yourself, getting others to build it for you or part of a community project ([see the Self Build Portal for further information](#)).



Response	Yes - they should be allocated	No - integrated within new developments	N/A
Number of Response	29	26	42



Response	Yes - they should be allocated	No - integrated within new developments	More Information needed	N/A
Number of Response	26	24	4	43

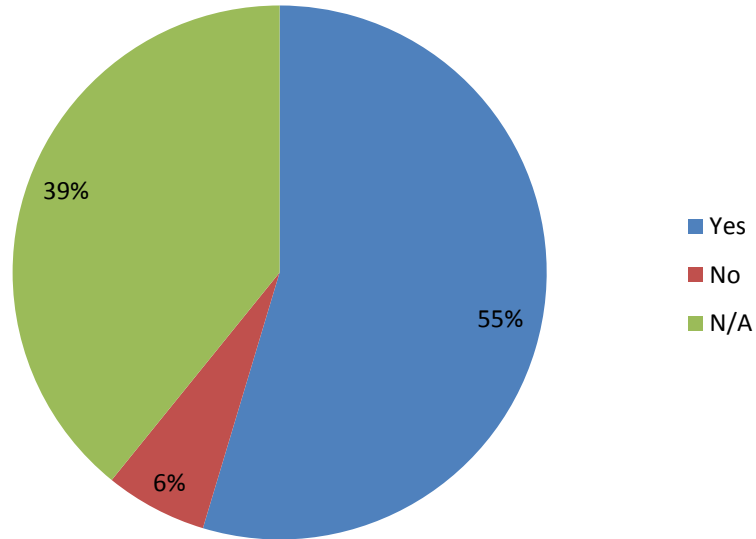
**Main issues:**

- The allocation of areas for self-build and custom build within SDLs would encourage architectural variety
- Flexibility in whether to allocate in large developments or ad-hoc outside settlements
- Potential timeframe for allocated plots not built out to revert back to conventional housing



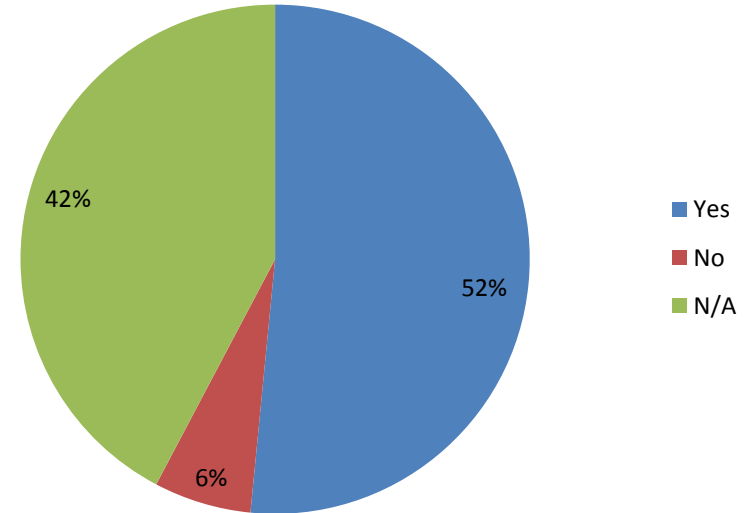
**Housing for older people and other vulnerable groups**

*Should the Council have a specific policy about accommodating Older People's Housing Need?*



Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	53	6	38

*Should the Council have a specific policy which supports proposals for accommodation for other vulnerable groups?*



Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	50	6	41

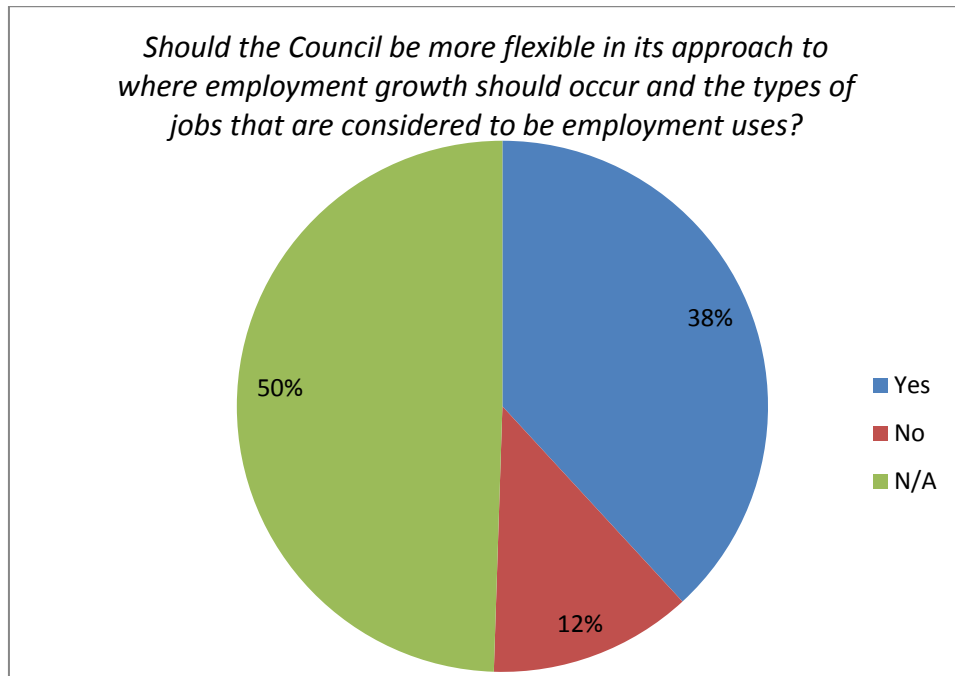
**Main issues:**

- Consideration should be given to smaller units, rather than only care homes and sheltered accommodation
- Choice of type and tenure should not be too limited

## 5. Employment & Retail

### Employment

The current policy approach is very focussed on preserving certain types of employment uses based around offices, industry and warehousing (known in planning as 'B' Use Classes). However, other types of uses, that don't fall within the 'B' Use Classes, also create jobs and could complement such uses, i.e. a café.



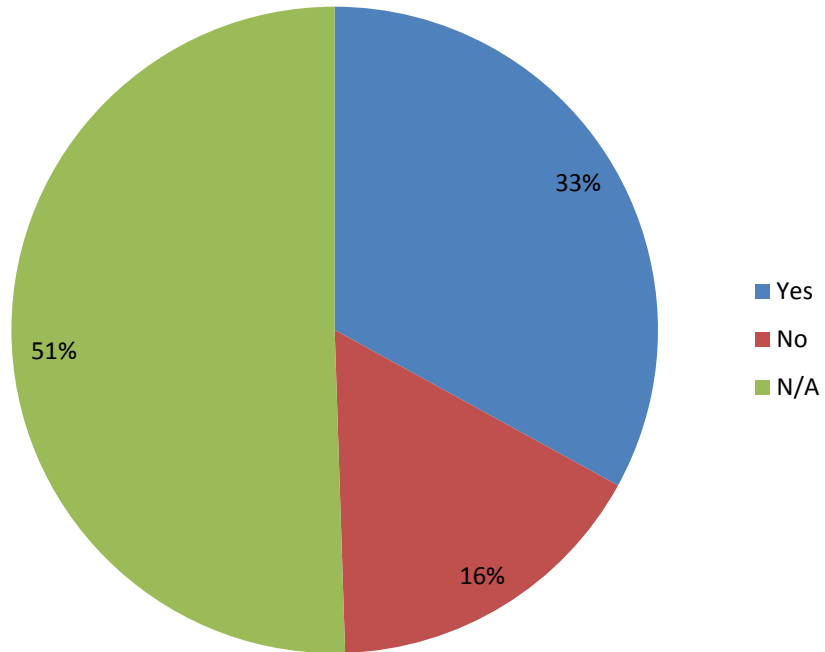
#### Main issues:

- Employment and working habits are changing and we need to adapt and be flexible
- Employment must be supported by e.g. sustainable transport, improved broadband, etc.
- Further focus on - Innovation hubs, communal space, starter businesses
- Include other community and leisure uses within employment areas if appropriate rather than limiting to B uses
- Flexibility should not mean unsustainable locations

Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	37	12	48

## Retail

*Do you think we should continue to apply the same policy approach to retail development?*



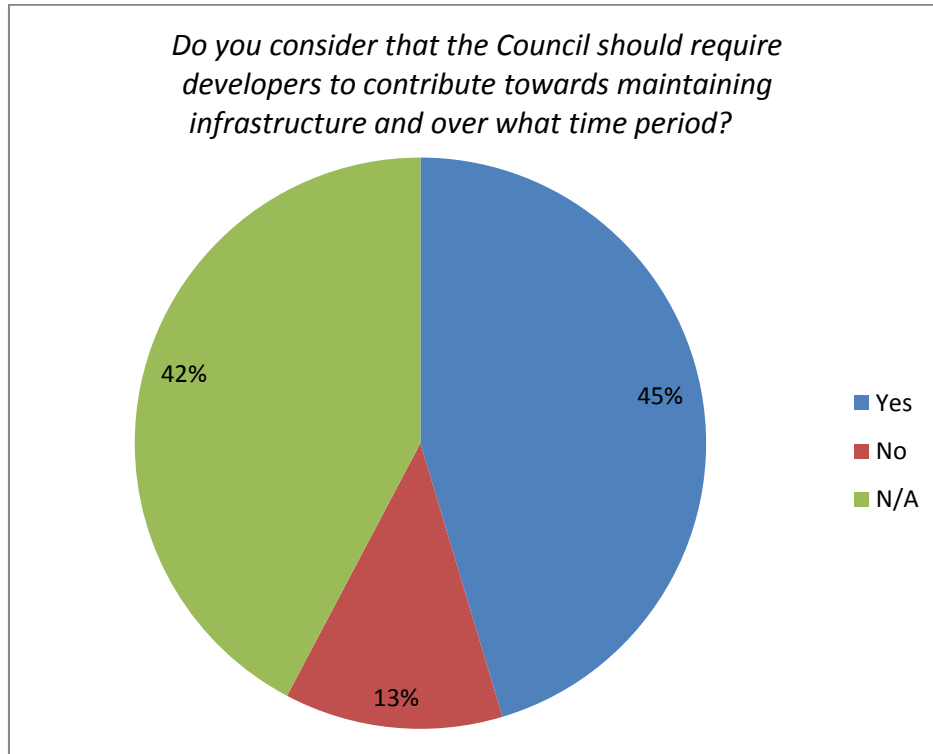
Main issues:

- Need to understand that shopping habits are changing and improve flexibility of the retail experience
- Support of local, independent businesses

Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	37	12	48

## 6. Infrastructure and Community

### Infrastructure planning



#### Main issues:

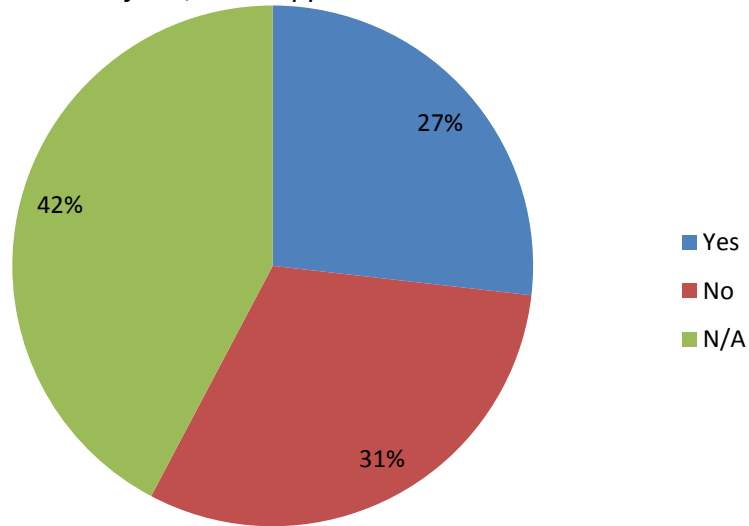
- Provision of infrastructure to meet both the physical and social needs of the community
- New infrastructure should be provided before/during housing being built, rather than after
- Necessary infrastructure suggested includes: health, sports and leisure, transport, education, retail, community facilities, broadband access, green infrastructure
- Various views were expressed towards the proposed time for developers to contribute to maintenance of infrastructure ranging from not at all, to forever, with a number of respondents stating 10 years
- Consideration of renewable energy opportunities – wind turbines, solar power
- Safe cycling
- Need for a more consistent approach to cross-border issues regarding development

Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	44	12	41

- The majority 'Yes' responses were from Residents and Town & Parish Councils
- The majority of developers did not answer the question regarding maintenance

## Open space

*Should the Council continue the policy approach of allowing the loss of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land as long as a suitable alternative is provided? If not, what approach should we take?*



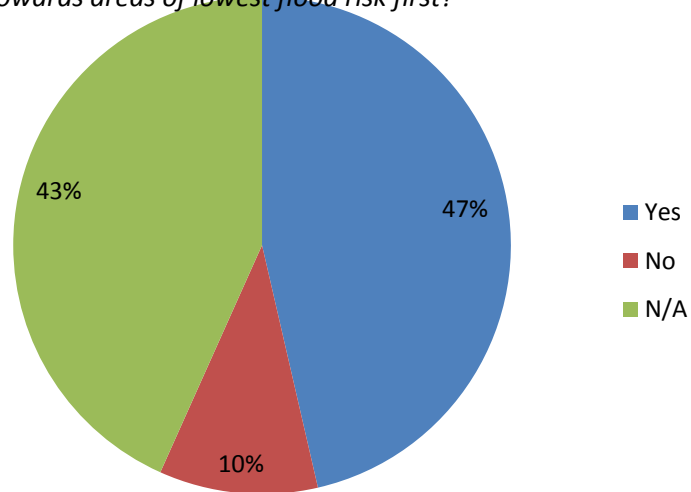
Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	26	30	41

### Main issues:

- Open space should only be lost if it is not fit for purpose
- Any alternative provided should be better rather than equivalent to that provision lost
- Any alternative must be local and accessible
- Where respondents said no to a continued policy approach, views expressed were largely that all open space should be retained

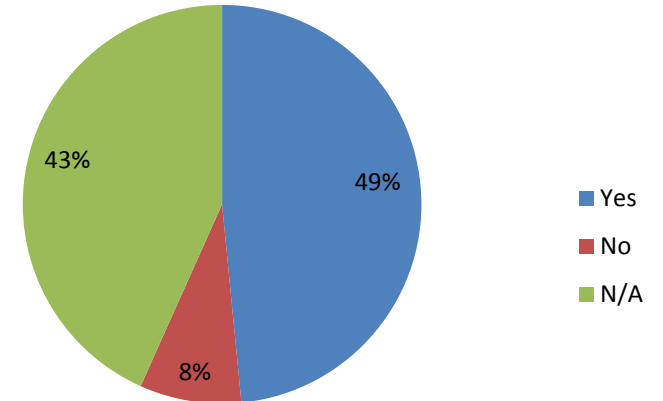
## 7. Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems

*Do you agree with the current approach to flooding; minimising the risk of flooding and guiding development towards areas of lowest flood risk first?*



Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	45	10	42

*Do you think that the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems should be required on all residential development including Minor applications for 1-9 dwellings? If not, what approach should we take?*

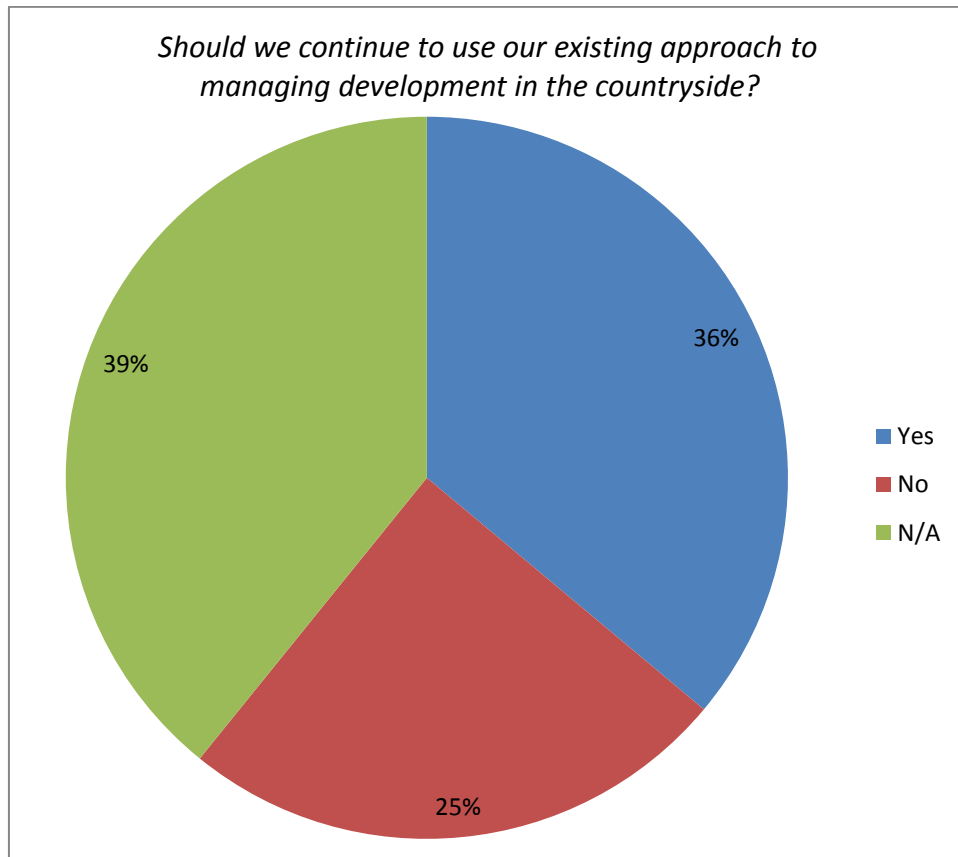


Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	47	8	42

### Main issues:

- Views expressed were largely in agreement with a continued approach, so long as it is applied with sufficient rigor
- Take a more positive approach to flood mitigation
- Utilise green infrastructure

## 8. Countryside



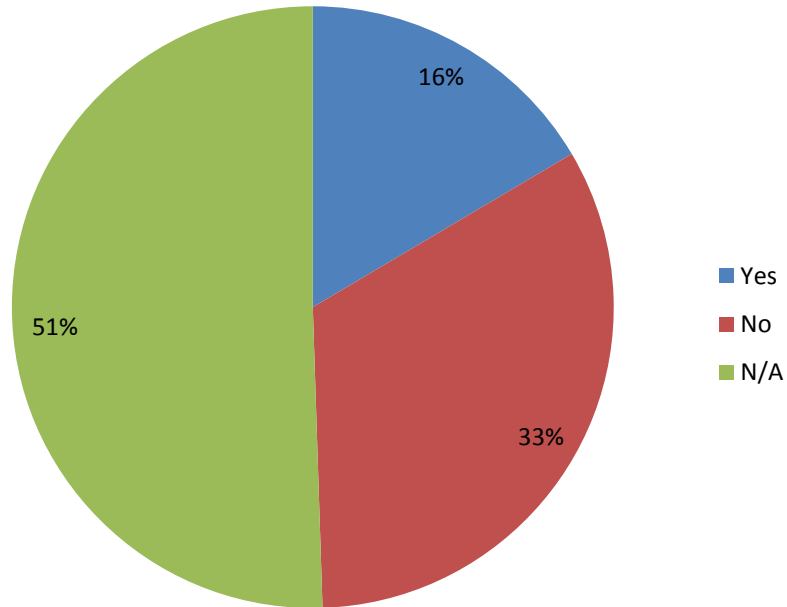
Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	35	24	38

### Main issues:

- Development in the countryside should be restricted and sensitively handled
- Retain separation between settlements with green gaps
- Consideration at a local level needed based on sustainability of locations and sympathetic to local area

## 9. Green Belt

*Are there locations within the Green Belt for sustainable development that would warrant us looking at altering the Green Belt boundaries?*



Main issues:

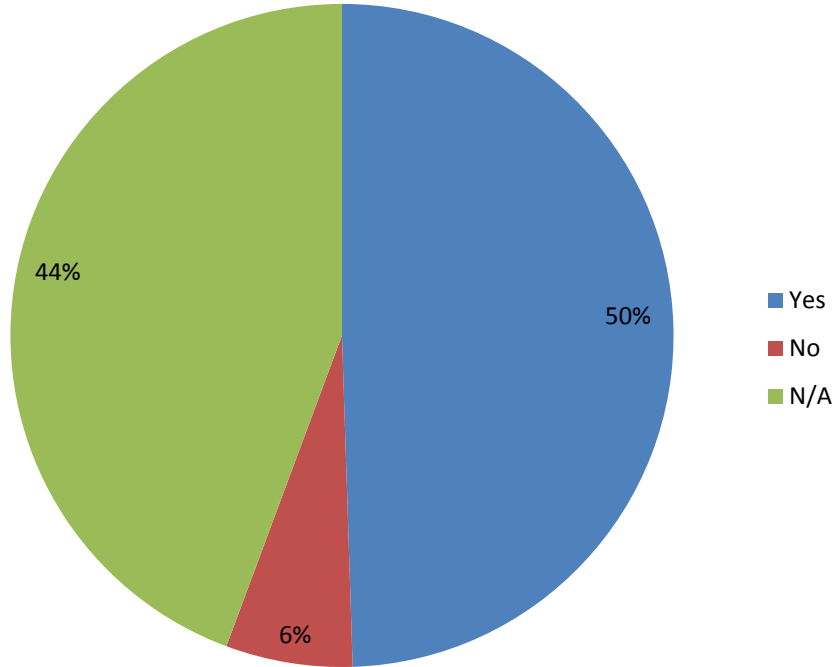
- Allow development of brownfield sites within the Green Belt
- Continue to protect the Green Belt

Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	16	32	49



## 10. Natural Environment

*Do you agree with the Council continuing this approach to protecting designated nature conservation sites? If not, what approach should we take?*

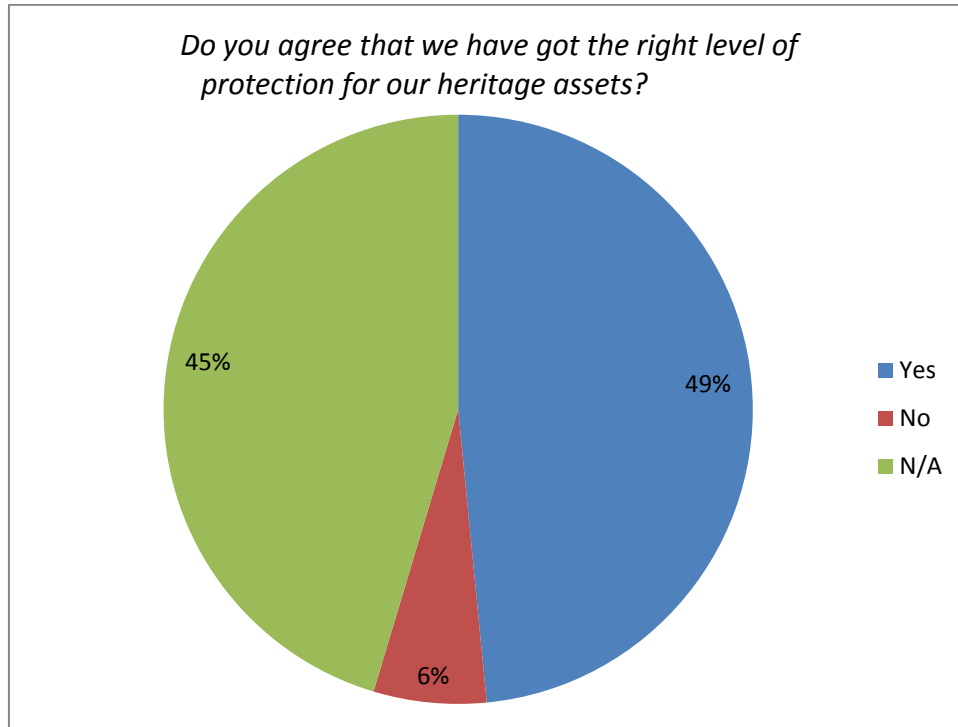


### Main issues:

- Protection should be afforded to areas with no designation which support biodiversity, rather than only those with local designations
- Policies should positively impact the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment

Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	48	6	43

## 11. Heritage & Historic Environment



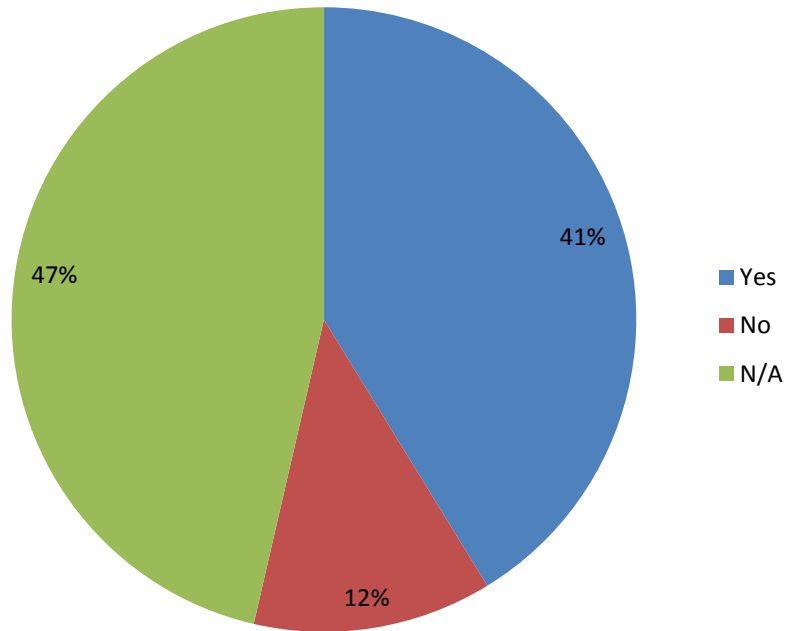
Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	47	6	44

### Main issues:

- Take account of significant assets through the plan making process
- Give communities the opportunity to submit features for inclusion in the Buildings of Traditional Local Character register
- Ensure protection without being too restrictive eg. To allow improvements

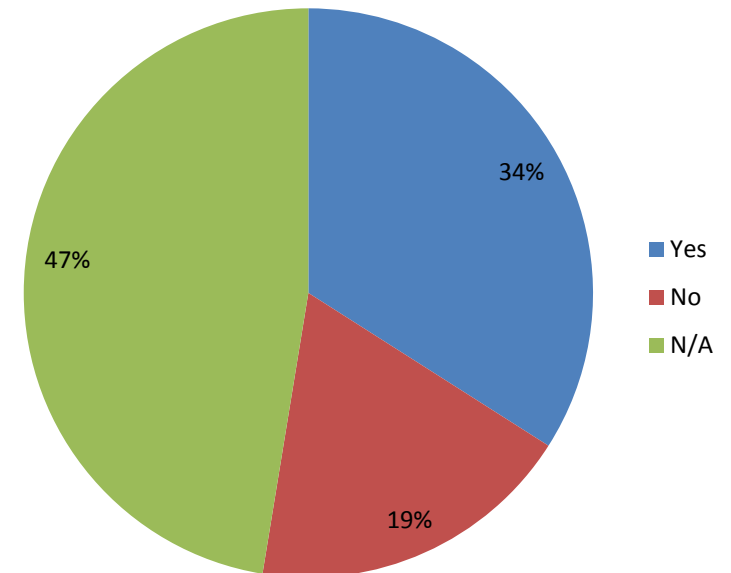
## 12. Sustainable Design

*Should we 'opt in' to the tighter Building Regulations requirement for water efficiency?*



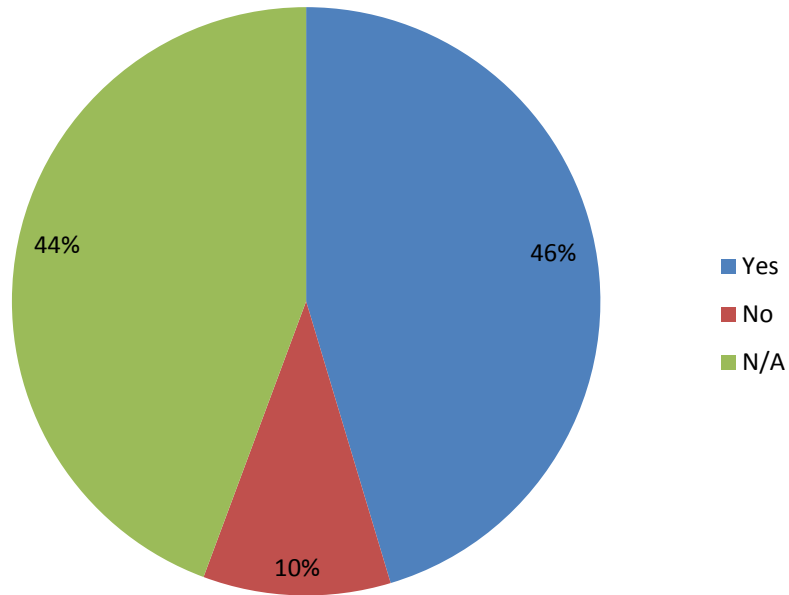
Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	40	12	45

*Should we specify what proportion of new housing should be within Categories 2 accessible and adaptable dwellings and 3 wheelchair user dwellings?*



Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	40	12	45

Should we 'opt in' to central government's minimum living space standards?



Main issues:

- There is a national standard – ensure consideration of viability and affordability if tighter restrictions will be used
- An incentive may be more appropriate
- Will need evidence to support any changes

Response	Yes	No	N/A
Number of Response	44	10	43