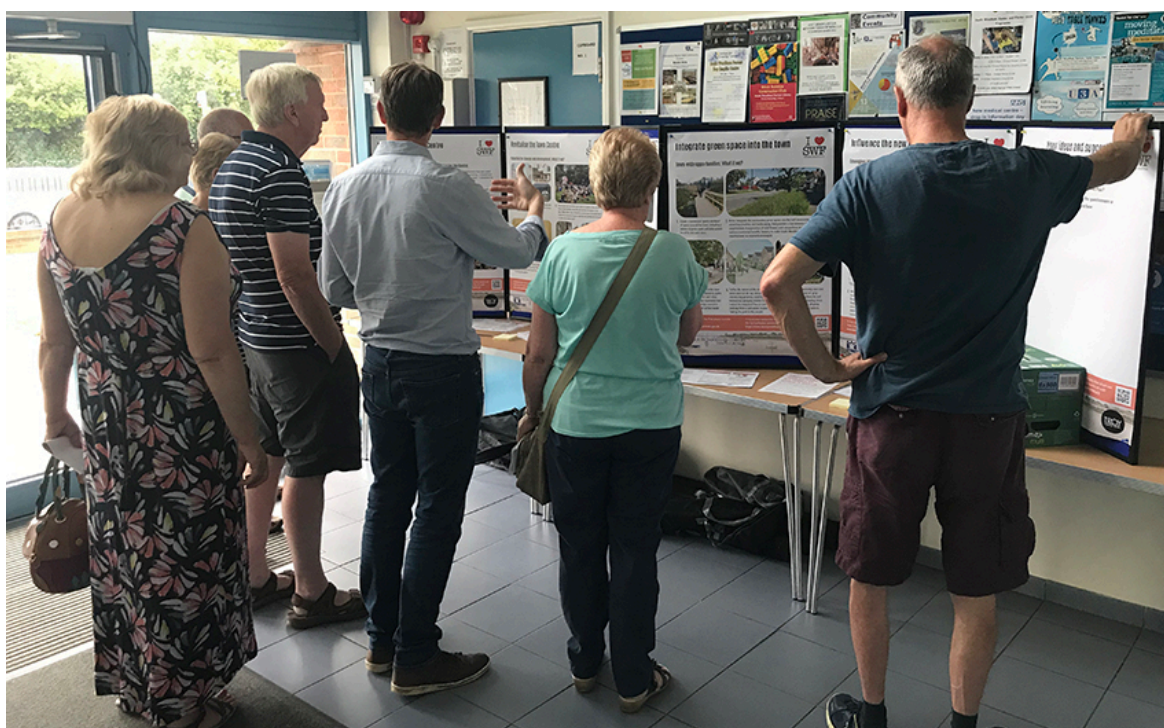


SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION EVENTS ON EMERGING IDEAS



AUGUST 2019

1. OVERVIEW

During the course of July and August 2019 the Town Council consulted on emerging ideas for the Neighbourhood Plan. A set of boards were prepared (appended to this summary paper) for display in the Town Council office and were available for viewing from 9 July through to 16 August. The boards were staffed at two events, timed to coincide with other activities and thus increase footfall and awareness of the Plan. These were:

1. Health centre drop in and information event on Saturday 13 July 2019.
2. Summer 'fun in the park' event on Thursday 15 August 2019.

Alongside these events a survey was prepared, both online and in hard copy. The consultation was advertised by the Town Council through its social media channels (including the website and Facebook pages) as well as through the weekly Focus magazine delivered to every household in the town.

In total, 322 responses were received to the survey. The majority of these were from people living in South Woodham Ferrers (96%), though with some working in or visiting the town. A proportion of respondents (around 10%) both live and work in South Woodham Ferrers.

Despite one of the events being timed alongside 'fun in the park' the response rate was skewed by age. Of those who provided their age, less than 10% of all responses were from those aged below 35. Responses from those in age bands 45-54, 55-64 and 65-75 were fairly evening represented, each accounting for around 23% of total responses received.

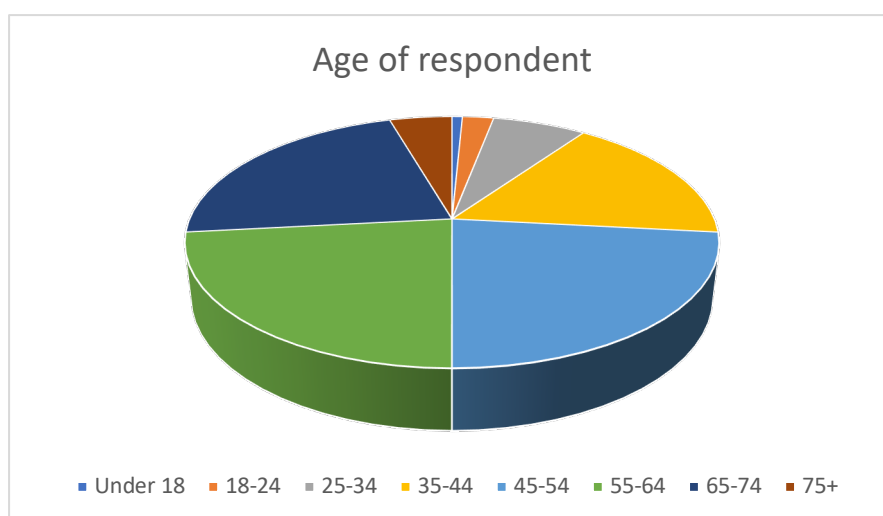


Figure 1: Respondents to survey grouped by age band.

2. THE TOWN CENTRE

VISION

Respondents were asked how they felt about the proposed vision for the town centre, summarised on the display material as:

"We believe the town centre should be more than just a retail centre. It should be the centre of everything. It should have a main square that is the town's living room. It should be the civic hub and heartbeat of the town"

As the chart below shows, strong support was expressed for the vision, with 90% of all respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

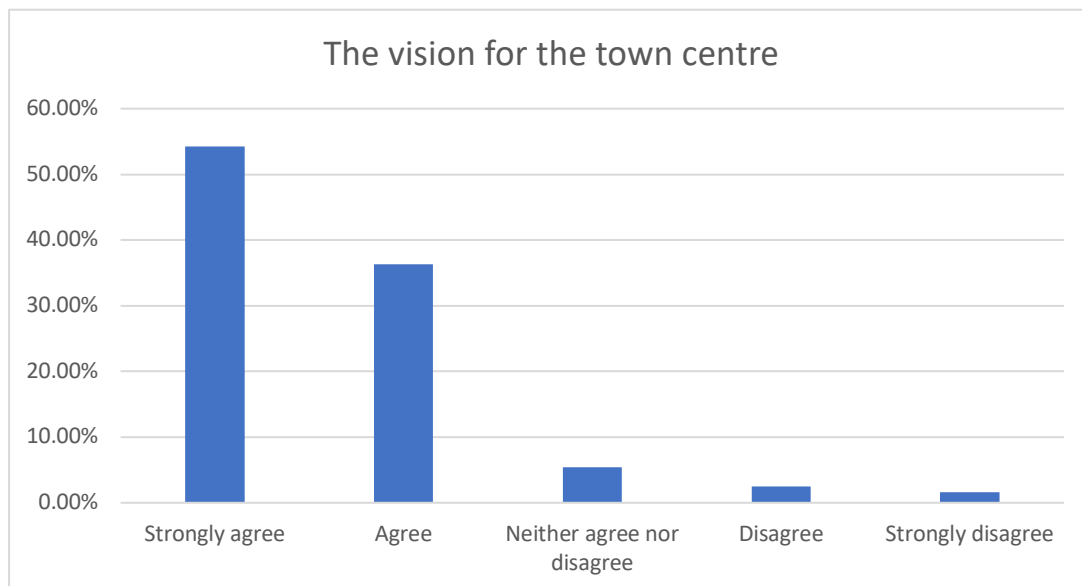


Figure 2: Responses to question about the proposed vision for the town centre

INITIATIVES

A series of questions were posed in relation to 'non land-use and development' opportunities which might form projects in the Neighbourhood Plan and which could help be a catalyst for change. The questions asked:

- >> Q2: Should we...prepare a 'place branding' strategy for the town through which a year-round programme of events are curated, linked back to the unique identity of the town?
- >> Q3: Should we...establish a business forum that brings together members of the business community with the common goal of identifying and progressing projects to improve the quality of the town centre?

>> Q4: Should we...enhance the quality of the public realm, creating a separate identity and function for the different squares and spaces in the town, creating a more welcoming and convivial central area?

Responses are shown in the chart below. Strong support was received for all ideas, with more than 70% either agreeing or strongly agreeing to each question. Support for establishment of a business forum is particularly strong, with 83% of respondents in agreement with this.

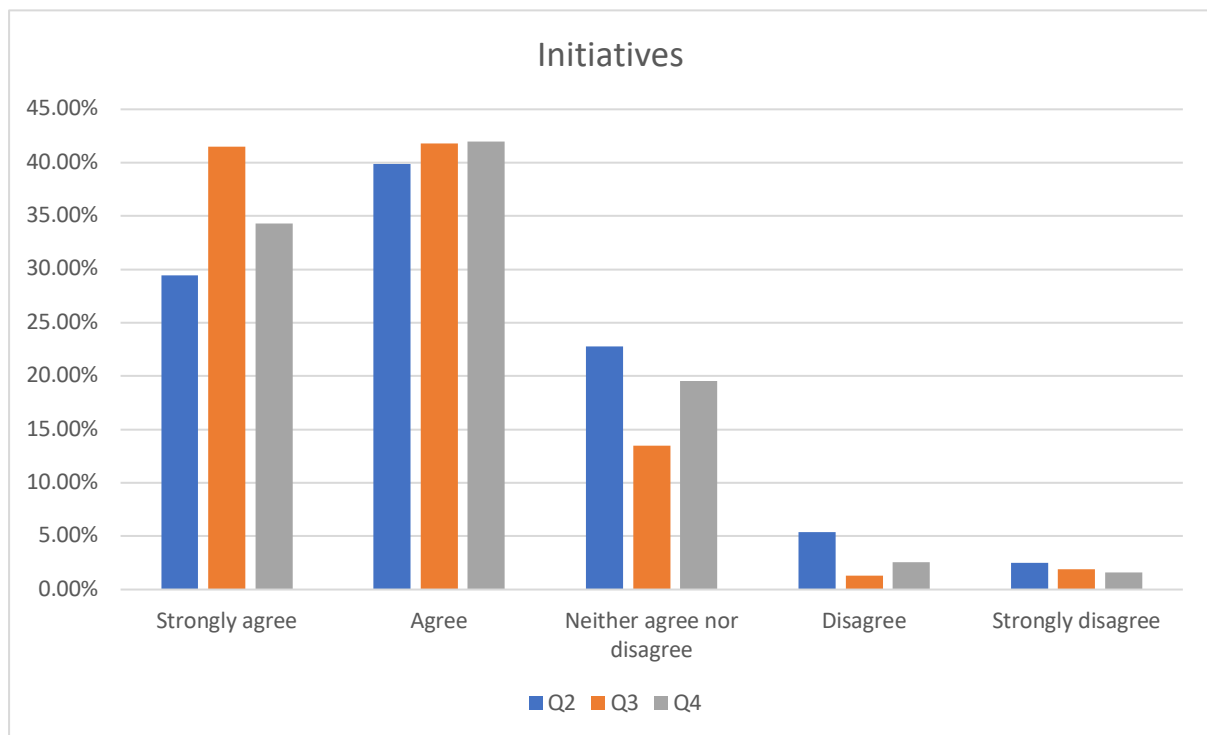


Figure 3: Responses to questions about possible non land use and development projects and programmes for the town centre

USES AND ACTIVITIES

Respondents were asked whether we should look to encourage new activities and uses to locate in the centre that create footfall, new life and activity throughout the day. Again, this was strongly supported, with 84% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. When asked what uses should be encouraged in the centre, the main suggestions were:

- Regular markets, craft fairs and opportunities for selling local produce.
- Promoting a greater range of outdoor events and entertainment.
- Provision of family uses and activities.
- Leisure and recreation, including a cinema and other cultural activities.

PARKING

Respondents were asked about parking provision in the town centre and relationship between this and areas of shopping. The following questions posed were:

- >> Q6: Should we...re-design and or rationalise areas of car parking (for example, through decking) to provide space in the town centre for other uses?
- >> Q7: Should we... open up views and routes through from the car parks into the heart of the centre, encouraging more people to move into and spend time in this space?

Responses to the question about rationalising parking were fairly evenly split though balanced towards disagreement (40%). But the importance of improving links from the car park into the centre was recognised and agreed with (60%).

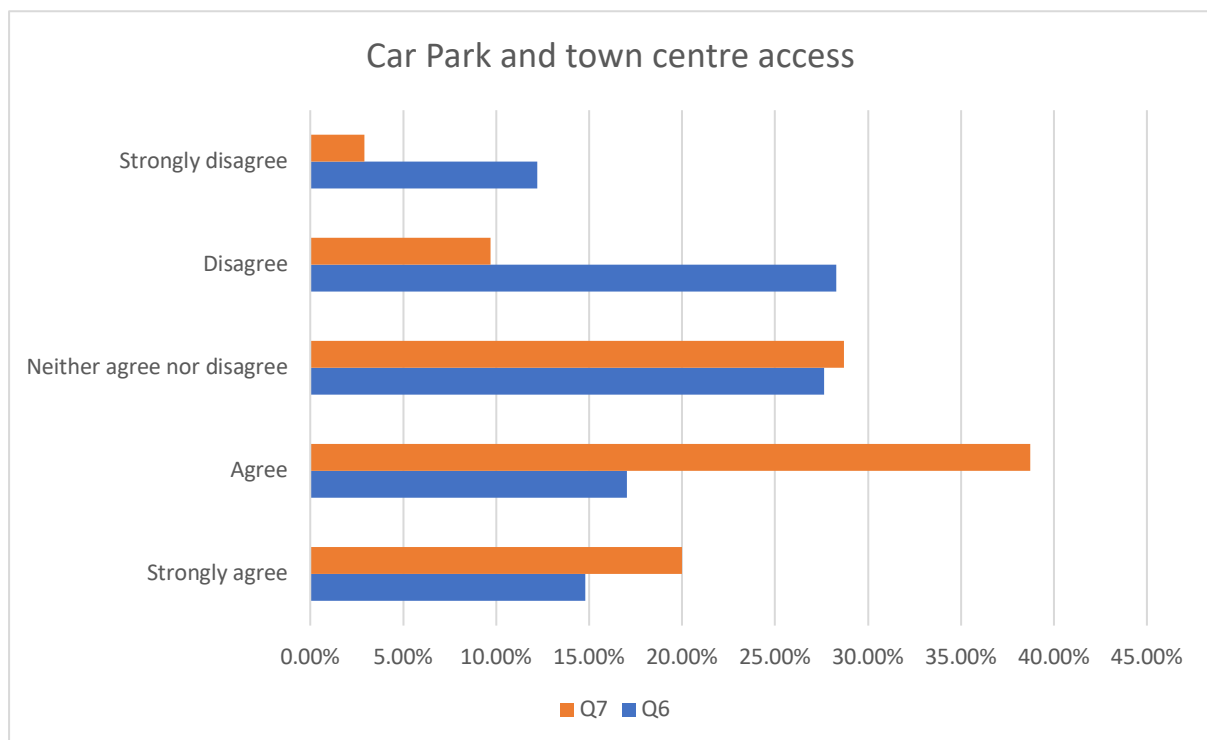


Figure 4: Responses to questions about the car park and visual links to and from these

FOCUS OF THE CENTRE

Respondents were asked about the focus of the town centre. Two options were presented, being:

- >> Q8a: Should we... focus all retail activities on the central spine from ASDA to Trinity Square, creating a true High Street, with the Bandstand being the key space for events and activities?
- >> Q8b: Should we... turn the centre around to face the main car park, creating new street fronts and a new square that caters for different needs as the future of the 'High Street' changes?

Stronger support was expressed for option (a), strengthening the central spine, than for option (b), turning the centre around. Almost 80% registered agreement or strong agreement with option (a) compared to 40% for option (b). The responses suggest that some people were in favour of both ideas.

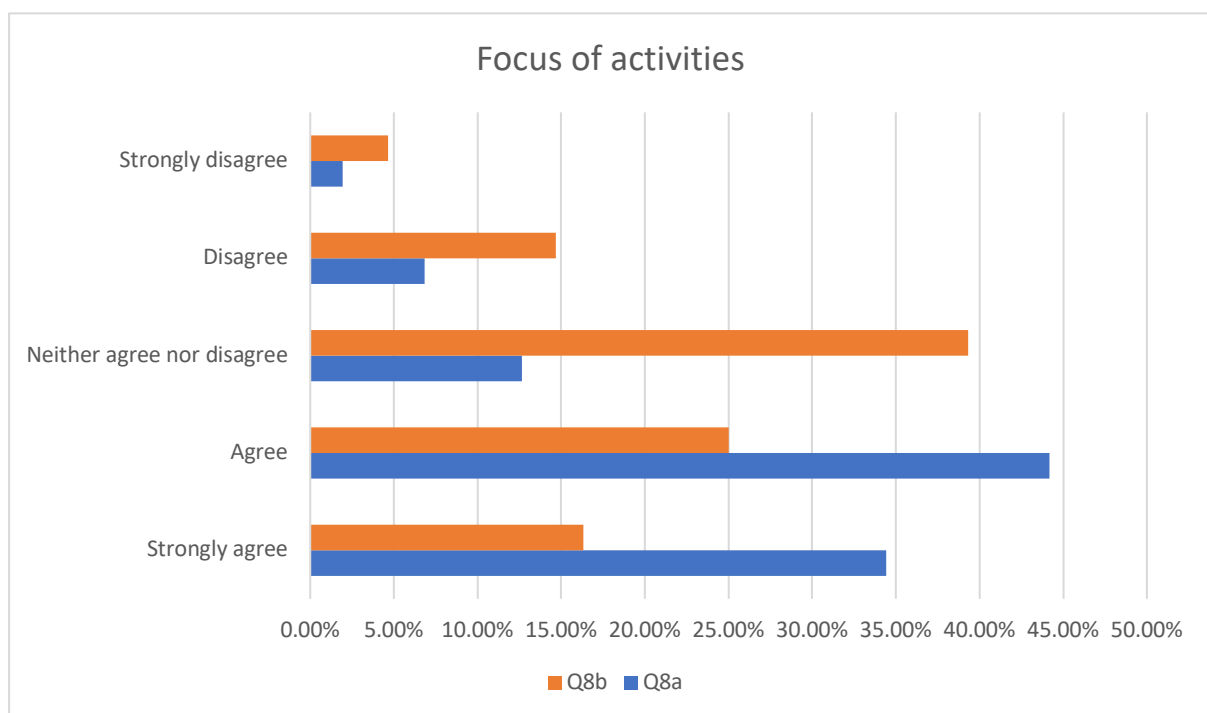


Figure 5: Responses to questions about the orientation of the town centre

3. ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

Respondents were asked the following about access and movement:

- >> Q10: Should we...treat streets as spaces too, providing plentiful and well-defined routes and crossing points along the main road network, transforming these from places for cars to streets for all?
- >> Q11: Should we...make streets safe for cycling, re-balancing road provision and creating safe and attractive cycle routes that allow movement by all ages and abilities for everyday trips?
- >> Q12: Should we...improve the network of alleyways, making them safe and attractive for all to use at all times of the day, including provision of new lighting and encouraging development to have building fronts that look onto the alleyways?
- >> Q13: Should we...plan for an improved public transport service alongside other emerging technology, such as 'mobility as service', promoting these as attractive alternatives to private car use and ownership?

As shown in the chart below, the majority of respondents expressed support for all ideas, with more than 60% saying they agreed or strongly agreed with all suggestions. Particularly strong support was expressed with ideas about the alleyways, with 90% either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

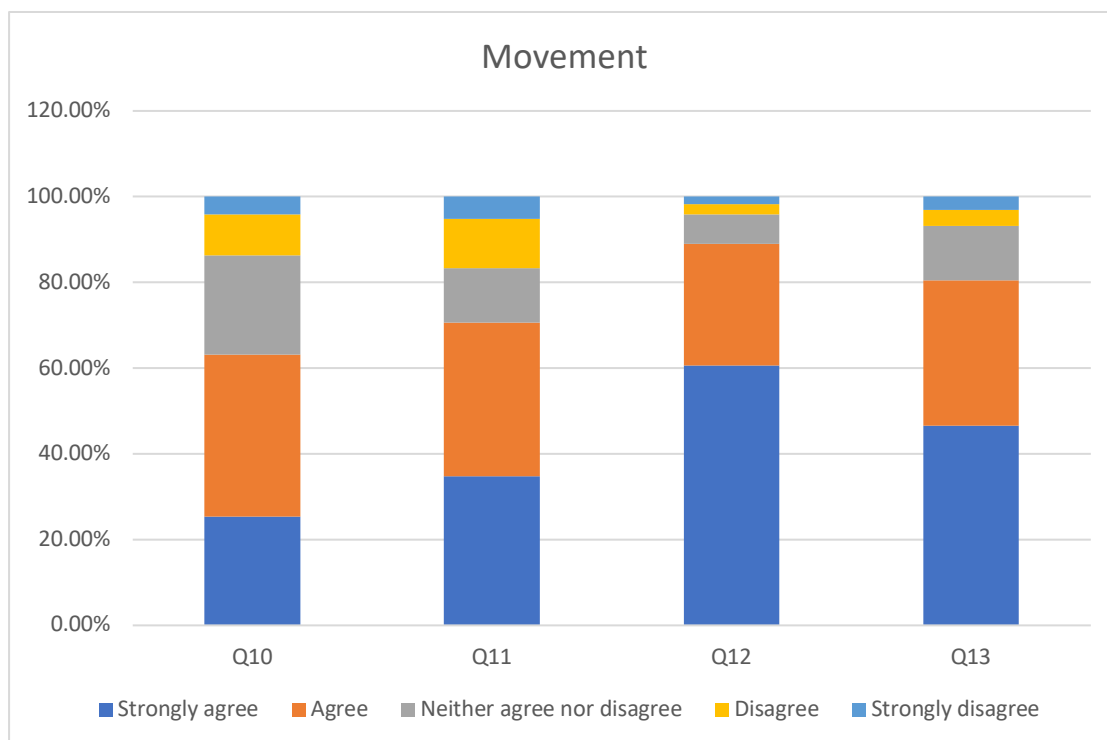


Figure 6: Responses to questions about access and movement in South Woodham Ferrers

4. GREENING SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS

Respondents were asked the following about ideas for greening the town:

- >> Q14: Should we...create a connected “green necklace” of accessible open space that wraps around the town, including a variety of green, open and play spaces for all to visit and enjoy?
- >> Q15: Should we...better integrate the surrounding green space into the built environment through new street tree planting and landscaping, providing a link between the two?
- >> Q16: Should we... create a new green link along the former route of the railway to Maldon, providing for access to the countryside for walking and cycling?
- >> Q17: Should we...break the barrier created by the main road network with new crossing points along Ferrers Road, so that access to surrounding green space is safer for all?
- >> Q18: Should we...soften the public realm in the town centre with trees and planters, green walls and places to sit and relax, improving the visitor experience but also helping to manage concerns about surface water run-off?
- >> Q19: Should we...soften the nature of the residential street, introducing greenery and creating home zones that reduce the impact of the car, making these safe places to play?
- >> Q20: Should we... look to convert unused ‘grey’ areas, such as unused parking areas and garage courts, into space for biodiversity, community gardens and local food production?

As presented in the chart overleaf, respondents expressed support for all ideas, though with some variance between questions. Questions 14, 15, 16 and 18 received in excess of 80% agreement or strong agreement from all respondents. This fell to 75% for Q17 (making it easier to cross Ferrers Road), and then 70% to 65% for Q19 and Q20 respectively. However, this still represents a strong response and welcomes interventions in the public realm, including within residential areas.

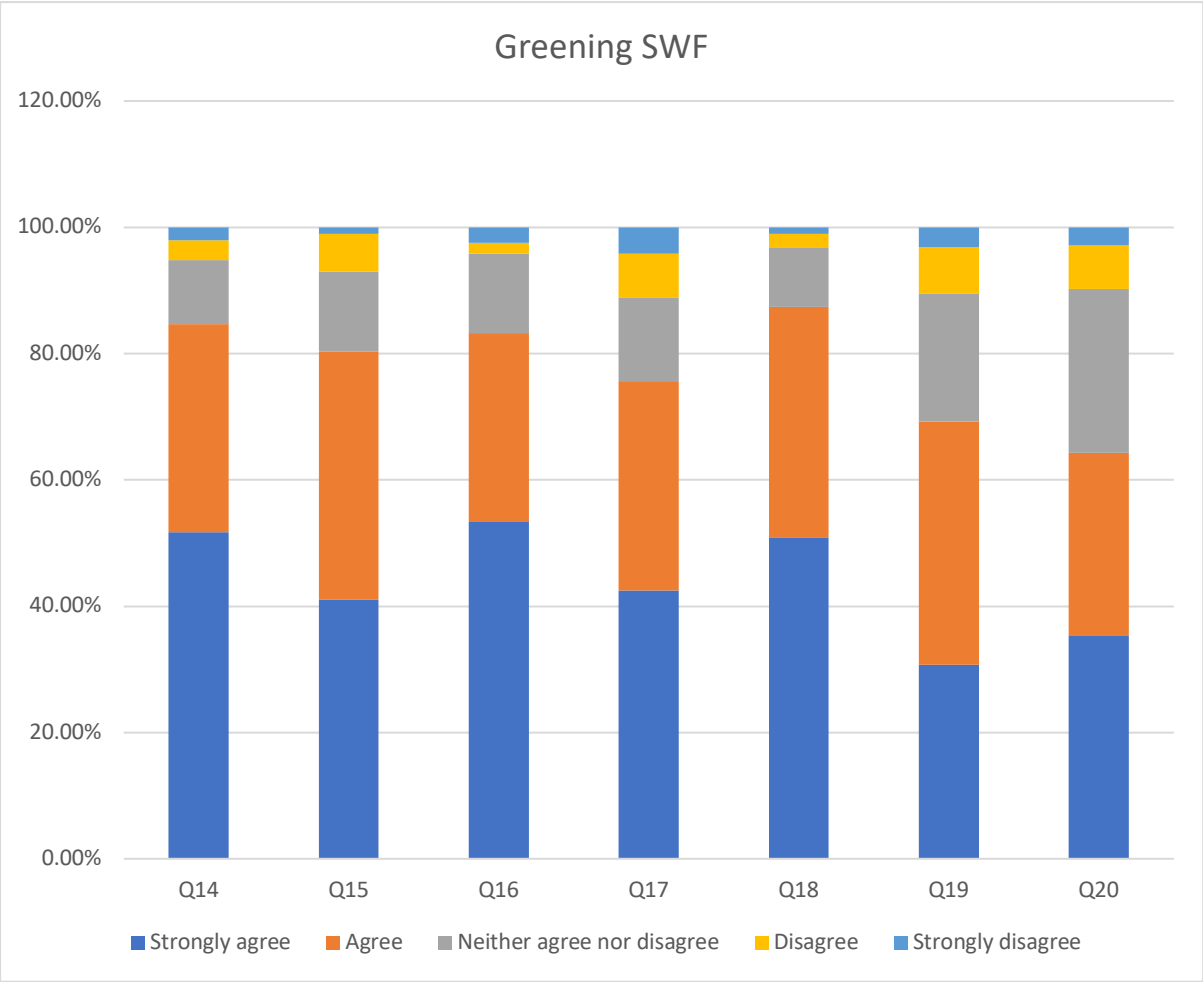


Figure 7: Responses to ideas for greening South Woodham Ferrers

5. NORTHERN GROWTH AREA

DESIGN AND USES

We asked respondents a range of questions about the design and mix of uses to be provided in the new northern growth area. The questions were:

- >> Q21: Should we... require that the design of any new development responds to local character, delivering a variety of housing types to create choice and interest?
- >> Q22: Should we... promote a strong landscape-led approach to design that retains views to and the setting of Radar Hill, and with green space and play areas integrated within areas of new housing development?
- >> Q23: Should we... support the provision of self-build housing opportunities and encourage the delivery of flexible housing types, responding to the changing circumstances of individual households?
- >> Q24: Should we... use development to help invest in town-wide infrastructure improvements, making the best use of existing schools and direct funding to new and improved social and community facilities.
- >> Q25: Should we... focus provision of new facilities along a key spine extending into the development area that connects the railway station and village hall with the new health centre?

As shown in the chart overleaf, very strong support was expressed in relation to influencing the design and layout of the growth area (80%), and, in particular, respecting the setting of Radar Hill (88%). Strong support (84%) was also given to the need to invest in town-wide infrastructure. When asked what infrastructure was required, the main suggestions were:

- Better public transport (bus and train services).
- Youth clubs, sports and leisure facilities.
- Reinvesting in and making better use of existing facilities (e.g.: town centre medical buildings, police station and Chetwood School)

Respondents were more unsure about the provision of self-build housing, though with more than 55% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, only 18% disagreed with this suggestion; the balance not answering either way. Equally, some (around a quarter) were unsure about the need for a spine between the new growth area and existing built-up area along which community facilities and services should be located. However, more were in favour of this (60%) than not.

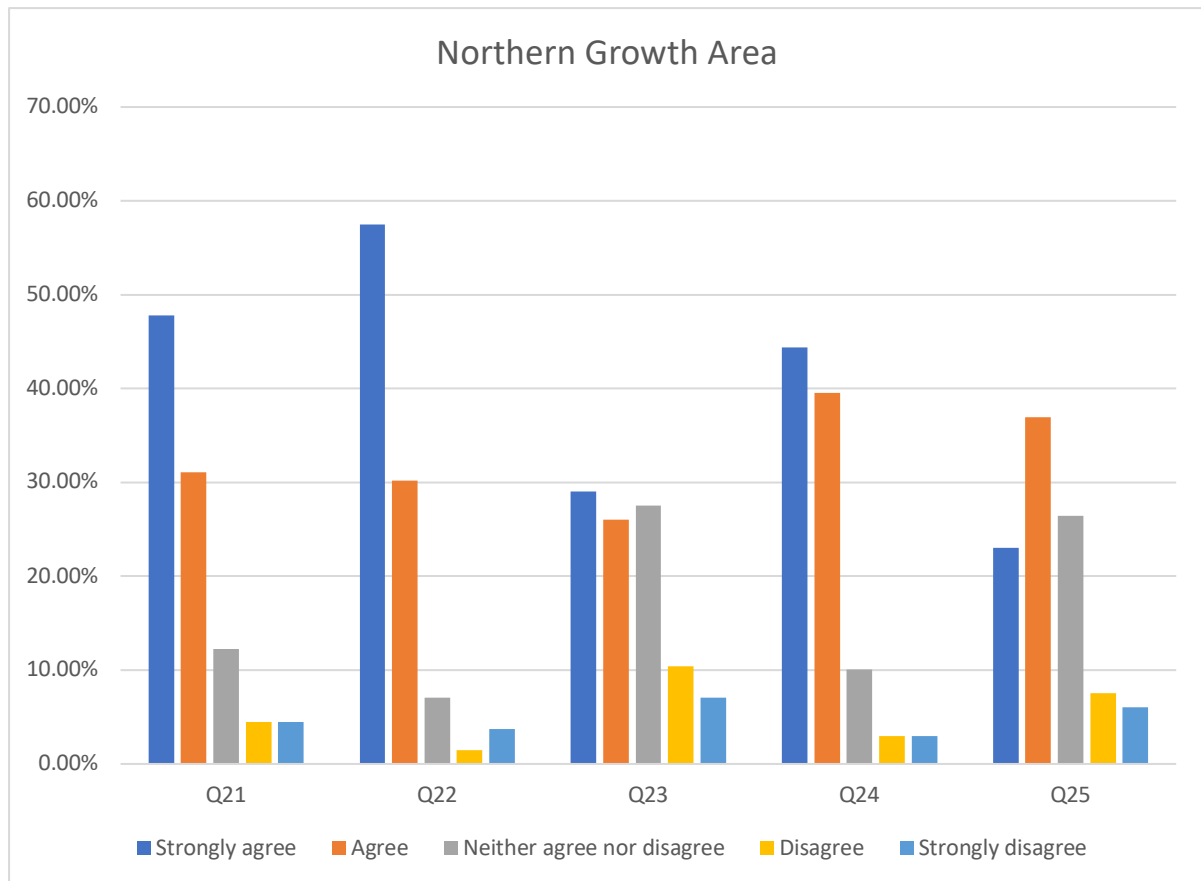


Figure 8: Responses to questions about the design and mix of uses in the Northern Growth Area

BURNHAM ROAD

Two options were presented in respect of Burnham Road and how this might be crossed to help integrate the new development with the existing community. The questions were:

- >> Q27a: Should we... integrate the new growth area with the existing by transforming Burnham Road into a 'central street' which slows traffic down and providing safe places for people, of all ages and abilities, to cross the road?
- >> Q27b: Should we... integrate the new growth area with the existing by exploring provision of a bridge over Burnham Road, maintaining existing traffic conditions?

As the chart below shows there is no real consensus, with both options being equally supported.

- Some suggested traffic should not be slowed as this would just lead to increased congestion, whereas others said it was essential to slow traffic to make it safer for people to cross.
- Some suggested a bridge would be a good idea and help maintain traffic flow, but others suggested this might be difficult to use for all, including the elderly and those with pushchairs.
- Some suggested that a new ring-road should be provided, that there shouldn't be any new housing development here in any event, and that the medical centre should not be located to the north of the town.

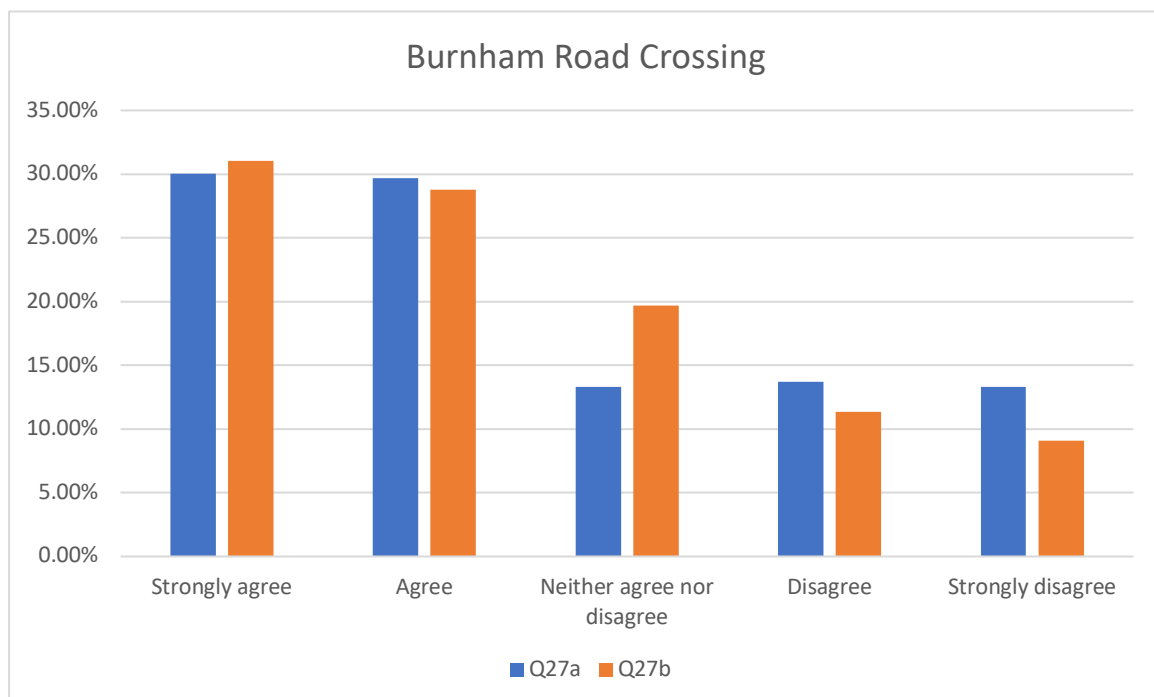


Figure 9: Responses to options for provision of crossing points along Burnham Road

6. SUMMARY

The consultation responses indicate support for the majority of ideas presented. There do though appear to be some contradictions within the results: Although the majority said that town centre car parking should not be rationalised, strong support was expressed elsewhere for measures that encourage people to travel by other means. This was also reflected in questions as to what infrastructure is needed in the town, with many suggestion better public transport.

The responses suggest that both land use / development and non land use / development projects should be progressed in the town centre, and that emphasis should be placed on making the 'High Street' work better, including better links and routes to this, and improved public realm, and promotion of other activities and uses, including markets and cultural events, that would drive footfall to this area.

All movement and greening ideas were well supported, particularly making improvements to the network of alleyways.

The northern growth area remains an area of contention, particularly in respect of crossing Burnham Road, with little agreement as to how this might best be resolved. Many were critical of the housing allocation and the relocation of health services to the north of the town: both of which are decisions outside the control of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, it is recognised that the benefits of growth can be captured to reinvest in infrastructure in the town, including, interesting, provision of youth clubs and facilities for younger members of society: despite very few people from this age group responding to the survey. The majority were keen to see the design and layout of the development influenced through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Overall, this recognises strong support for the emerging ideas and the potential for these to be translated into locally specific policies and projects.

APPENDIX A: PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Revitalise the Town Centre



A vision for the Centre

We believe the town centre should be more than just a retail centre. It should be the 'centre of everything'. It should have a main square that is the town's 'living room'. It should be the civic hub and heartbeat of the town.

"Retail + civic and community + employment + entertainment and activities + housing + green space + places to play + places to learn + a cultural centre + a market place + a meeting place + great streets and spaces"

Place strategies and ideas. What if we:

1. Prepare a 'place branding' strategy for the town through which a year-round programme of events are curated, linked back to the unique identity of the town, including its design legacy, relationship with water and potential for local food and drink production, raising the profile of the town centre and attracting visitors to spend time and money here.
2. Establish a business forum or similar for the town centre that helps to co-ordinate and lead on activities and initiatives that help it to compete with other centres.
3. Enhance the quality of the public realm, creating a separate identity and function for the different squares, including new tree planting, places to sit and relax, creating a more welcoming and convivial central area.



To find out more about the Plan please visit the Town Council website:
www.southwoodhamferrersstc.gov.uk

To leave your comments on the emerging ideas please use the SurveyMonkey questionnaire or scan the QR code:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FN3NJCX>



SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL



Revitalise the Town Centre

Potential for change and development. What if we?



1. Open up views and routes through from the car parks into the heart of the centre, encouraging more people to move into and spend time in this space.



2. Encourage new activities and uses to locate in the centre that create footfall, new life and activity throughout the day. What other uses should be encouraged to locate here? Could the amount of space used by car parking be reduced to allow for other uses?



3. Focus all retail activities on the central spine from Asda to Trinity Square, creating a true High Street, with the Bandstand being the key space for events and activities, including the market.



4. Turn the centre around, creating new street fronts and a new square, and allowing new development to come forward within a set of design principles that allow for flexible use over time to cater for different needs as the future of the 'High Street' changes.

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SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL



Improve access and movement for all



Emerging ideas. What if we?



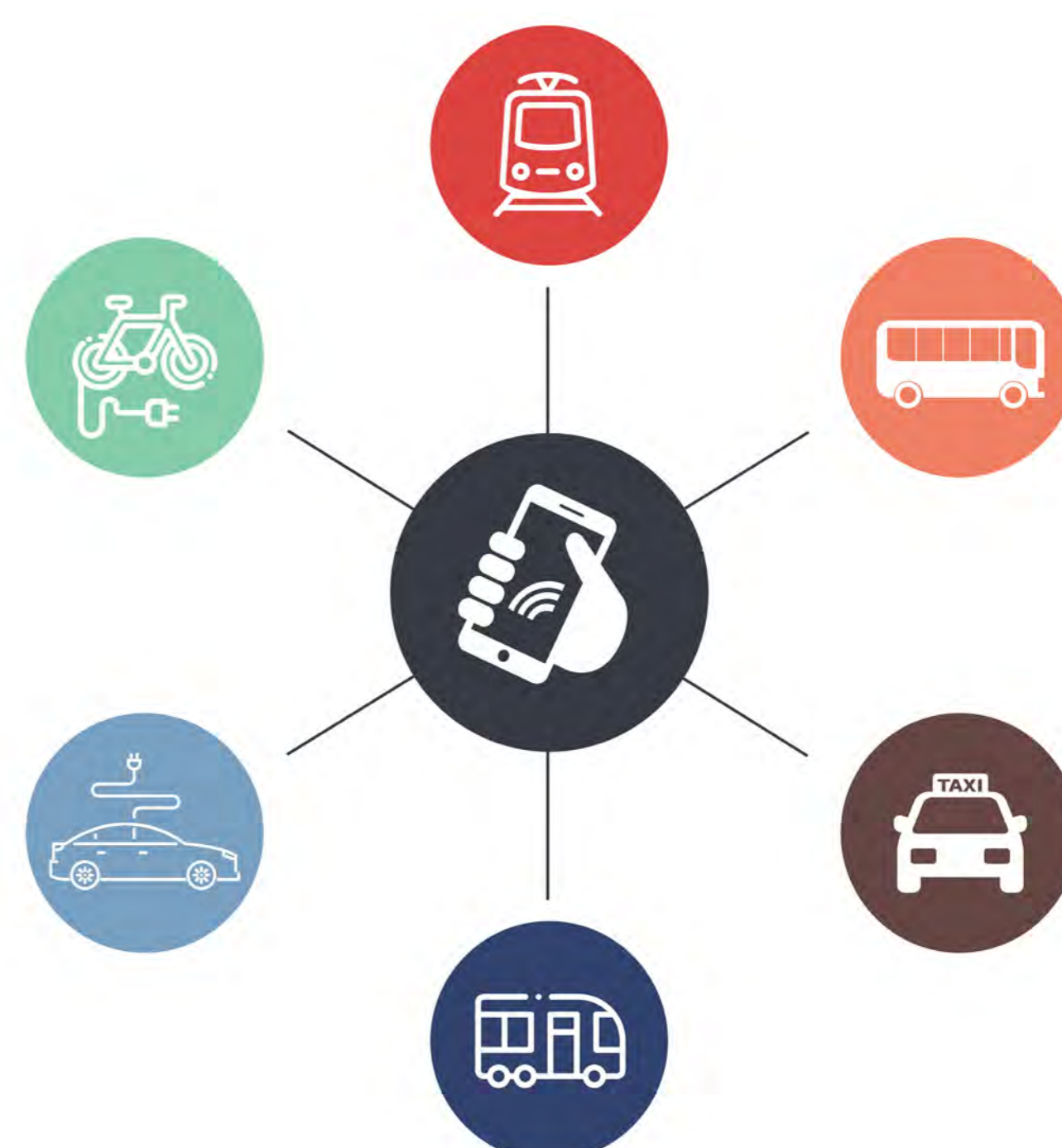
1. Treat streets as spaces too, providing plentiful and well defined pedestrian routes and crossing points along the main road network, transforming these from places for cars to streets for all, and where vehicle 'capacity' is retained but space rebalanced for the benefit of all.

2. Make streets safe for cycling, allowing short journeys currently made by car to be replaced by bike, rebalancing road provision and creating safe and attractive cycle routes that allow movement by all ages and abilities for everyday trips.



3. Improve the network of alleyways making them safe and attractive for all to use at all times of the day, encouraging people to walk and promoting active and healthy lifestyles.

4. Plan for an improved public transport service, alongside other emerging technology, such as 'mobility as service', promoting these as attractive alternatives to private car use and ownership.



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**SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL**



Integrate green space into the town

Town-wide opportunities. What if we?



1. Create a connected “green necklace” of space around the town, including a variety of green, open and play spaces for all to visit and enjoy.

2. Better integrate the surrounding green space into the built environment, through street tree planting and landscaping, that provides a link between the two. This could include incorporation of wild flowers and raingardens, bringing biodiversity and environmental benefits, helping to make South Woodham Ferrers the ‘riverside country town’ as originally envisaged.



4. Soften the public realm in the town centre with trees and planters, green walls and places to sit and relax, improving the visitor experience but also helping to manage concerns about flood risk and surface water run-off.

5. Soften the nature of the residential street and cul-de-sac environment, introducing greenery, creating homezones and play streets that reduce the impact of the car and making these a safe place to play: ‘taking the park to the people’.

6. Foster community ownership and civic pride through conversion of ‘grey’ areas into space for biodiversity and local food production, including reuse and transformation of the alleyway network and under-utilised spaces.

To find out more about the Plan please visit the Town Council website:
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SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL



Influence the new growth area

Emerging ideas. What if we?



1. Require the design of development to respond to local character, delivering a variety of housing types to create choice and interest, based around a permeable street grid to encourage walking and cycling, and where parking is accommodated, but does not dominate the street scene. Responding to the legacy of the Essex Design Guide, this should be an exemplar and innovative development, setting a benchmark for future neighbourhood design. Could it be an 'expo for the 21st century garden town'?

2. Take a strong landscape-led approach to design that retains views to and the setting of Radar Hill, that provides access to green space and integrates streets trees and rain gardens in the urban environment.



3. Integrate the new area with the existing, transforming Burnham Road into a 'central street' which slows traffic down and helps create a cohesive and connected community. Are there other ways to connect the communities?

4. Support provision of self-build housing opportunities and encourage delivery of flexible housing types, that allow for change over time responding to the changing circumstances of individual households.

5. Use development to help invest in town-wide infrastructure improvements, making the best use of existing schools and directing funding to new and improved social and community facilities.

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SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL





Your ideas and suggestions



The ideas presented here are based upon feedback received at earlier consultation events.

Do you have any ideas or suggestions that should be considered as part of the Neighbourhood Plan?

Please let us know by completing the questionnaire or leaving comments on a sticky note here:

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SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
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South Woodham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan
Summary of Consultation Events on Emerging Ideas, August 2019