

Yateley, Darby Green and Frogmore Neighbourhood Plan Phase Two

Background

We have drafted our initial vision and objectives for the YDF Neighbourhood Plan, and used it to conduct an initial consultation with the community. The headline points are:

1. 492 people responded to our online survey
2. 94% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with our vision and objectives
3. Of our 17 initial objectives, 13 were ranked in their “top five” by at least 25% of respondents. These were (numbers in brackets indicate the top 6 objectives when ranked by respondents):
 1. Protect open spaces and waterscapes (4)
 2. Ensure development is supported by infrastructure (e.g. medical and school capacity) (2)
 3. Ensure new development is of an appropriate type, size, density and quality that contributes to the community's needs (3)
 4. Encourage better facilities for young people (5)
 5. Safe, well maintained and well lit public spaces
 6. Campaign for better public and community transport
 7. Preserve historic buildings and views
 8. Better traffic management
 9. Encourage biodiversity by providing habitats for local wildlife
 10. Cycle/pedestrian paths and other facilities to encourage healthy lifestyles
 11. Provide sufficient affordable housing, particularly starter homes and flats (1)
 12. Encourage sympathetic redevelopment of shopping and business facilities
 13. Protect strategic gaps between communities (6)
4. In addition, there were 174 comments submitted. There were a significant number of comments specific to Blackbushe Airport that were submitted as the result of a request from the airfield’s management. While we should still respect these as legitimate responses, they do skew the figures when attempting to analyse the feedback. Therefore I’ve excluded the Blackbushe specific comments from this list of the 10 subjects most frequently commented upon:
 1. More smaller and starter homes (17 comments)
 2. Road and pavement repairs (17 comments)
 3. General support and thanks (12 comments)
 4. More infrastructure for new developments (health etc) (11 comments)

5. Maintain open spaces and common land (11 comments)
6. Reduce crime and disorder (11 comments)
7. Better transport links (10 comments)
8. Improve parking at the shops (9 comments)
9. Improve the shopping parade (7 comments)
10. Deal with traffic congestion (6 comments)

Our conclusion is that this gives us a clear mandate to proceed to develop more detailed proposals drawing on this steer from the community. Fuller analysis of this data is available in the report prepared by the Town Council Clerk on this survey.

Phase Two

Our proposal for Phase Two is to set up sub-groups to explore the viability of developing neighbourhood plan content under 5 key headings:

Housing and Development

This group should look at the requirements to ensure that future development is of an appropriate type, size, density and quality that contributes to the community's needs. It should incorporate the need for more starter homes and affordable property, the requirement for development to be properly supported by infrastructure, and should also address the community's desire to protect the strategic gaps between communities and preserve historic buildings and views.

Clearly there is significant overlap here with the Local Plan currently under submitted for approval by Hart District Council, and our recommendation is that we should work closely with Councillors and Officers at Hart to ensure that we build our community's objectives into our collective plans.

Traffic and Travel

This group should look for opportunities within the Neighbourhood Plan to improve public and community transport, manage traffic flows and potential congestion more effectively, ensure our roads and pavements are kept in good condition and provide better parking for residents and businesses.

We recognise that many of these objectives may sit outside the permissible scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, but in mind the request from Yateley Town Council to look more broadly at the needs of the community, we would encourage the group to propose solutions that reflect the views expressed by the community in our consultation.

Open Space and Wildlife

Protecting our open spaces, waterscapes and wildlife have been identified as priority areas. This group should propose policies that support these objectives, taking into account the local areas of special scientific interest and protection areas. Where appropriate, this group should consider policy ideas that would encourage biodiversity when new developments are proposed. Also under this heading should come the consideration of highly-valued views, wildlife corridors, and the provision of suitable trees, hedges and fencing.

Community and Leisure

Supporting our objectives to ensure Yateley remains a healthy and happy place to live, this group should look to propose approaches to local leisure and youth activities, and also ensure that our plan discourages anti-social behaviour and crime.

This group should take the lead in engaging with local sports and leisure clubs, as well as the police and other community services, and in seeking out opportunities to provide facilities for residents of all ages, but particularly noting the provision of play and leisure facilities for the young, and suitable access and support for the elderly and disabled.

Business and Regeneration

This group should look at opportunities to improve and promote the businesses within our community. Of particular interest will be retail and other public-facing service business which through the provision of commercial premises have a visual as well as an economic impact on the community. Proposals should balance the need to support commercial success with the impact on local residents and non-customers

Sub-group approach

The output from these sub-groups should be a set of policies for inclusion in the final Neighbourhood Plan that can be supported by relevant evidence, including evidence of consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Each sub-group should take time to consider in detail the impact of the Hart Draft Local Plan on their area of interest within Yateley, Darby Green and Frogmore. They should also consider examples of other local plans from neighbouring communities to provide templates and inspiration for the kind of thing we could expect to do within our plan.

Each group should also consider how best to engage with stakeholders, both in terms of providing evidence to support policy proposals, and to demonstrate a strong level of consultation with the wider community. An early recommendation is that each group would draw up a formal stakeholder engagement plan, identifying who they need to speak to, and setting out a timeline for that engagement

We would expect each sub-group to meet at least monthly in order to progress their areas of research, with regular updates provided to the overall Steering Group. We should also agree at the August Steering Group meeting a timeline for this phase that gives a reasonable amount of time to put together proposals, but also provides a clear deadline to ensure that we make good progress through this next phase.

We probably don't have enough people currently actively engaged in the Neighbourhood Plan process to populate these sub-groups, assuming that we would want somewhere in the region of 6 people per group (so $5 \times 6 = 30$ people actively involved, admitting that there might be some overlap between groups). We should therefore also discuss how to recruit more volunteers into the sub-groups, and how best to balance the composition of the groups.