

## Brookwood and Bridley Neighbourhood Forum

### Report of Questionnaire Survey February 2015



**Background** The Neighbourhood Forum issued 1600 questionnaires throughout the plan area in October 2014. A total of 422 were returned, giving a positive response rate of around 26%.

#### Who responded?

The vast majority of responses were from residents at 84%, with 70% of these from Brookwood, 22% from Bridley, 7% from Sheets Heath and the remainder elsewhere within the plan area. Of the responses received, 84% said they lived in the area, 6.5% worked in the area, and 9.5% live and work in the area.

The age groups of respondents were 7% aged 16 to 29, 62% aged 30 to 64, and 31% over 65. Again, this would indicate that more targeted research may be needed, to capture the views of specific age groups, particularly younger people.

#### What did you say?

Encouragingly, 94% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the area as a place to live, with 4% not expressing a view either way and less than 2% being dissatisfied.

On **HOUSING**, 51% thought there was enough housing available for local people to buy or rent, but this response could have been influenced by the wish not to see further development within the plan area, so should be treated with caution. 21% thought not, and a significant 28% did not know. Affordable housing, family housing, starter homes and rented accommodation were selected as being most in need by those responding to this question. The Neighbourhood Plan will need to address housing provision in line with the statutory plans covering the area. Policies around housing will need to cover potential sites, style, density, design and tenure.

On **THE LOCAL ECONOMY**, 30% of respondents thought there were enough local employment opportunities in the area, 25% thought not, and 45% did not know. Similarly, 49% thought there were enough premises/areas for business, 18% thought there were not, and 33% did not know. This is a topic that the Neighbourhood Plan will need to explore in greater depth, and including targeted consultations with the business community.

Encouragingly, 97% of respondents thought it important to retain the **BROOKWOOD VILLAGE CENTRE**, with shops and other commercial units, with only 3% saying it was not important. The existing Local Plan defines the core area of the village as a protected village centre, whereby loss of commercial units will be resisted through the planning process. This overwhelmingly positive response justifies the retention (and possible expansion?) of this policy in the Neighbourhood Plan, and demonstrates the value of local facilities to those who live and work in the area. A number of new businesses were advocated by respondents, including a pub, pharmacy, food shops and various service outlets. The planning process cannot actively achieve specific business take up, but can be used to ensure that suitable premises are available and not lost to non-commercial uses, through the possible use of an Article 4 Direction, for example.

On **TRANSPORT**, 31% of respondents said they used public transport often, with 54% using it occasionally, and 15% never. 17% travel to work, study or shop on foot, 6% use a bicycle, 48% use a car, 22% travel by train, and 7% take the bus. These responses reflect the typical modal split for such journeys in an area like Brookwood, but demonstrate some potential to increase non-car use through improvements to public transport and the local walking and cycling environment.

On **PARKING**, only 41% were satisfied or very satisfied with parking provision for residents and local businesses, with 32% being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and 27% not expressing a view either way.

**TRANSPORTATION, TRAFFIC AND PARKING ISSUES** attracted the highest number of individual comments, relating to bus provision, station parking and traffic impact, the functioning of the existing CPZ, insufficient residents parking in some areas, inconsiderate parking and vehicle movements, the impact of heavy lorries, the role of Connaught Road as an A road, lighting and footpaths throughout the area (and particularly in the Bridley area). The details have not been included in this summary, but will be the subject of a future report, which will form part of the evidence base for the emerging plan. The development of the Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to tackle many of these issues in the longer term, working with the local authorities and service providers.

On **ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE**, many people take advantage of the many open spaces and facilities available in the plan area. 13% use the Country Park, 10% use the Recreation Ground or tennis courts on Sheets Heath, 20% visit Sheets or Brookwood Heaths, 18% visit the Cemetery, 7% use the Children's Playground and 6% use the local golf courses. A further 6% use the Church Hall, 15% use the Memorial Halls, and 5% use the Social Club.

Many people indicated through their comments that they also use the Basingstoke Canal for informal leisure. The highest response for improvements was to upgrade the Children's Playground, followed by requests to see the introduction of other leisure facilities such as a gym, swimming pool and Youth Club in the area. Better maintenance of existing facilities was also advocated, particularly the tennis courts and canal paths.

On **PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY**, 94% felt safe and secure when at home, but 6% did not. When walking the streets in the area, 91% felt safe and secure, but 9% did not. Comments relating to inadequate street lighting and narrow footpaths were highlighted in this response.

Finally, many comments were made in respect of the open question on how to improve the area as a place to live. These are too numerous to include in this summary report, and will be the subject of a separate review as part of the evidence base for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

### **What Next?**

The responses to this initial survey by the Neighbourhood Forum have highlighted a range of key issues for further investigation and development through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

These **KEY ISSUES** can be summarised as:

**Housing** – provision, tenure, style, design, density.

**Employment** – site provision, retaining the village core, boosting commercial activity and premises take up, including a specific policy for Martlands industrial estate as a separate topic study.

**Transportation, Traffic and Parking** – public transport service provision, improving modal split, traffic provision and highway management, including the CPZ, parking provision and management, improvements to the pedestrian environment.

**The Environment** – protecting green spaces, promoting greater use, the Basingstoke Canal. The built environment, local character and distinctiveness, assets, eyesores and opportunities.

**Leisure** – protecting and improving existing facilities, seeking new provision, encouraging use.

**Safety and Security** – the street environment, footpath and lighting improvements.

This list of Key Issues is not exhaustive and will be expanded and developed as the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan progresses.