Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

Engagement programme findings

Colchester Borough Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council

TRAVERSE

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DECEMBER 2021

Version control

Document information	
Title	Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community
Subtitle	Engagement programme findings
Dates	9th December 2021
Status	Final draft
Classification	Released
Project code	11280
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Introduction

Background and context

Over the next thirty years a new Garden Community featuring between 7,000 and 9,000 homes, new community facilities, as well as space for new businesses and jobs will be created on the Tendring Colchester border. It will have its own distinctive character and identity. It will be carefully constructed to fit into the existing landscape and include important landscape buffers between the site and existing developments in Colchester, Wivenhoe, and Elmstead Market.

It will feature an innovative, high-quality design with a strong emphasis on tackling climate change and sustainability, energy efficiency and affordability. It will include education and community facilities, including for sports and leisure, as well as providing new and improved green spaces, parks, and areas for play. A balanced blend of jobs, housing and infrastructure will also be important.

The responsible local authorities (Tendring District Council and Colchester Borough Council in partnership with Essex County Council) are in the process of developing a "Development Plan Document" (DPD) to set the vision, objectives, design principles and policies setting out how the Garden Community will be designed, developed and delivered, following its allocation in the Tendring and Colchester Section 1 Local Plans in early 2021.

As part of a broader engagement and consultation strategy for the Garden Community, Traverse and Community Regen were commissioned to design and facilitate an engagement programme over the Summer and Autumn of 2021. This work was carried out in close collaboration with masterplanners Prior + Partners. This programme was designed to inform the vision and spatial options that form part of the masterplanning and DPD development process.

As part of this work, a Community Liaison Group (CLG) comprising of local people was recruited and formed in April 2021. See Appendix i for more details on the recruitment approach and membership of the CLG. The Community Liaison Group provides local people's perspectives on the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community project. It involves different members of the community meeting regularly to:

- Review information and updates about the project regarding plans and developments.
- Discuss ideas, feed in views and recommendations to help influence and shape the progress of the project, including how other local residents and communities are engaged and involved.
- Feed ideas into the Development Plan Document, which will guide the project's vision, themes, and principles.
- Share relevant information with the wider community, when needed.

The engagement programme

The engagement programme was designed in close collaboration with the CLG to reach a wide and diverse group of residents of the area surrounding the site and wider local area, by providing different routes to engage, and through publicising the programme widely and through existing groups. See Appendix ii for more detail on how the programme was publicised.

The programme was designed to engage with residents around five themes: Nature; Movement and Connections; Community and Social Infrastructure; Buildings, Places, and Character; and Sustainable Infrastructure. It consisted of the following activities:

- A survey (via street interviews, hard copies, and online) designed around the five themes outlined above.
- A "postcard from the future" activity (hard copies and online) inviting people to share three key hopes for the Garden Community.
- A series of workshops (largely online), following the same format: an introduction to the DPD development process and the Garden Community provided by Prior + Partners, followed by facilitated discussion around each of the five themes outlined above.
- A vision refinement workshop with the CLG to build on and contextualise emerging findings from the programme.

The target audience for this programme was existing residents of the local area, as well as community stakeholders including the TCB Garden Community Member Group (a group including senior political representation from each local authority), Town and Parish Councillors, and Local Plan Committee Councillors.

This programme ran in parallel to process led by local authorities, consisting of online engagement activities hosted on their website[1] between February and October 2021, and a number of workshops with statutory stakeholders to complement the workshops in this programme. The findings from this parallel process have been reported on separately.

The CLG gave feedback on the framing and language used in the survey and postcard activity, and advised on best routes for promoting and involving different parts of the community. CLG members were involved in distributing hard copy surveys, and promoting planned engagement activities through their own networks. CLG members were also involved in carrying out street interviews alongside the engagement team. The CLG have been a valuable sounding board and played a vital role throughout the period of engagement, supporting a more inclusive and wider reaching engagement programme.

The table below summarises the different engagement activities, and how many people were involved.

[1] talk.tcbgardencommunity.co.uk

Engagement activity	Format	No. people involved
Vision workshop with CLG	CLG members sharing key aspirations and concerns, to feed into framing and design of subsequent engagement activities	12
Survey	Street interviews, hard copies and online	268
Postcard from the future activity	Hard copy and online	15
Workshops	TCB Garden Community member group (in person)	7
	Local Plan Committee councillors (online)	6
	Town and Parish Councillors (online)	12
	Residents (across 3 x online workshops)	26
Vision refinement workshop with CLG	CLG members fed back on and provided additional context and nuance around emerging findings from engagement programme	12

Fig. 1: A table summarising engagement activities and levels of participation.

How to read this report

This report summarises the findings from the engagement programme. It is organised into five findings chapters which correspond to the five key strategic themes outlined above.

A separate report has been produced by the local authorities, who ran a series of engagement tools on their website between February and October 2021, as well as holding workshops with statutory stakeholders to complement the workshops in this programme.

All survey responses, postcards and notes from the workshops were reviewed and analysed thematically. Each source of data collected from local residents is given equal weight within the report. However, resident quotes are taken from survey responses, to ensure these quotes are verbatim. Quotes from participating councillors are taken from online post-it notes they filled in during the workshops. Findings have been organised into a vision, ambitions, and concerns in relation to each theme.

We use quantifiers to give relative weighting to qualitative data, instead of reporting on numbers or percentages of participants, because numeric quantifiers would be misleading given the sample size.

- 'Most' or 'majority' when a clear majority of participants shared a similar view
- 'Some' when a minority of participants shared a similar view
- 'A few' when a small number of participants shared a similar view

Findings are presented in thematic paragraphs, with the most common view on that topic at the start of the paragraph. Where multiple views on an issue are presented, more prominent views are generally reported first. We use terms such as 'consistent', 'commonly held', or 'less common', to show the relative frequency of occurrence of views.

Chapter 1: Nature

Chapter overview

In the survey and across the workshops, participants were asked which green spaces or features should be retained or enhanced, what types of open spaces and green infrastructure they would like to see, and how the Garden Community could enhance biodiversity.

This chapter starts by exploring participants' views from across the engagement programme in more detail, focusing on what participants felt should be protected in the area, how the Garden Community should integrate with the natural world, and how the development can enable people's interaction with nature. Finally, this chapter highlights participants' main concerns about the impact of the Garden Community on the natural world.

Nature: Vision

Participants presented an **ambitious** vision about how the Garden Community can work with, rather than against, the natural world. This includes protecting existing natural habitats, designing the Garden Community to incorporate nature, creating new wild spaces within and around the development, and providing plenty of opportunities to interact with nature.

Throughout the engagement process, participants emphasised how important the natural world is. Participants spoke about the value of the natural world to their **family and social lives**; their **physical and mental wellbeing**; and to the wider **health of the community**. Participants underlined the contribution of the natural world to the **character and identity** of the area and highlighted the importance of protecting natural spaces to help build **resilience** to climate change. As such, the importance of the natural world to participants is revisited across the different chapters in this report.

Nature: Ambitions for the Garden Community

Existing natural assets

Most participants highlighted specific natural places and features that should be protected or retained. The most common example participants gave was the **Salary Brook** area, which most participants highlighted as a valuable space that should be protected from the Garden Community and future developments. While most of these participants referred only to 'Salary Brook' or the 'Salary Brook Nature Reserve', a few participants specified that the entire Salary Brook area, including the surrounding valley slopes, footpaths, the nearby woodland, and the land to the south of the Brook, should be protected. A few participants also suggested expanding the boundary of the reserve to ensure its protection into the future.

Similarly, most participants spoke about the importance of **woodland,** with some of these participants talking about the contribution of the woodland to both the biodiversity and the character of the local area. Some of these participants provided specific examples of woodland that should be protected, which included: Churn Wood, Home Wood, Wivenhoe Woods, Sixpenny Woods, the Strip, and Elmstead Woods.

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One resident said: "Protect and enhance the woodland, and other habitats, particularly Churn Wood. Ecologically, the edge of woodland is a very important space (high diversity of birds and mammals), so avoid building up to the woodland boundary, create/save grassland space which isn't for high-impact amenity use."

Some participants also spoke about the importance of old lanes too, such as Slough Lane and Turnip Lodge Lane, to highlight the value of existing **hedgerows** and **trees** to the area's wildlife. Deer, moles, bats, badgers, foxes, hedgehogs, birds were given as examples of wildlife that relies on the current area's natural environment, and some residents spoke about the importance of the area's diversity of bird species.

In addition to woodland and other green spaces, some participants spoke about the importance of **water** to the area. These participants pointed to the value of rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes – as above – to the biodiversity and character of the area. Some participants highlighted water voles, aquatic birds, and reptiles as examples of the wildlife that rely on the area's water. One participating councillor from the Local Plan Committee workshop also spoke about the importance of retaining access to rivers for the wellbeing of local residents.

Although most participants focused on seeing nature within the Garden Community, some participants spoke about the importance of natural sound too. A few participants spoke about traffic noise, and one postcard respondent put this as their top ambition for the Garden Community in 2050. Similarly, one postcard respondent spoke about the importance of hearing birdsong.

Nature within the Garden Community

Overall, most participants felt that the natural world should not have to move to make space for people. Most participants felt that the Garden Community should, as much as possible, **integrate** within and around the natural world. Where this is impossible, these participants felt that the Garden Community should **offset** its impact with the creation of **new wild spaces**, by planting wildflowers, shrubs, and trees.

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> One resident said: " Ensur[e] that nature has a home so that the area isn't just devoid of all things natural."

A few of these participants focused on the importance of wild, natural space to the **identity** of the area, which they felt should continue to **feel rural**. In line with this view, a few participants highlighted that agricultural and brownfield land should be prioritised for development over wildlife areas. This view was echoed by one participating councillor, too.

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> One of the participating Town and Parish councillors said: "Protect the beautiful, tranquil farming landscape and all spaces people can enjoy during a walk or cycle."

Moreover, some participants highlighted the importance of protecting rural views from neighbouring areas. These participants spoke about the importance of using **green buffers** to ensure that the Garden Community does not cause the surrounding areas to feel less rural. One participant spoke about the importance of protecting the rural feel of Crockleford Health, although they did not talk specifically about buffers. A few participants suggested specific buffers between Greenstead and Longridge, and a few participants again spoke about using Salary Brook and its surrounding area as a buffer. Participating Town and Parish councillors, and those from the Local Plan Committee, emphasised the importance of green buffers to the surrounding area.

Some participants also said they wanted the design of the Garden Community to ensure that **local wildlife** can continue to flourish in the area. Some of these participants suggested having dedicated wildlife corridors to allow animals to avoid roads, and a few participants suggested having hedgehog holes in fencing or other

barriers. Overall, most participants wanted the Garden Community to support and benefit biodiversity in the area, with some participants highlighting that the development should aim to increase **biodiversity**, not just protect it. In one CLG meeting, members spoke about the potential importance of biodiversity to the character and identity of the Garden Community, too.

Some participants said they wanted to see the Garden Community augment the natural world in a positive way, by designing-in natural spaces that help the area to be **resilient** against natural shocks, such as flooding. Similarly, some participants referred to the importance of trees in providing shade, which could help to protect residents during increasingly hot summers.

Experiencing nature in the Garden Community

Across the different engagement activities, most participants spoke about the value of **experiencing** and **interacting** with nature. Some participants spoke about the ways in which they currently interact with nature in the area, and provided examples of hiking, running, cycling, and dog-walking. Most postcard respondents spoke about the importance of nature to their vision for 2050, too.

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One resident said: "People just need spaces to enjoy nature, walk their dogs, and escape from the concrete jungles taking over the countryside."

Some participants spoke about the importance of protecting existing **footpaths** and **cycle paths**, such as the Colchester Orbital route, and suggested that these routes could be enhanced by linking them to new planned routes through the green areas within the Garden Community. A few participants saw nature as **an opportunity to connect and work with existing local areas too**, noting that green foot and cycle paths should help to integrate and connect the different local areas together, via the Garden Community, rather than contribute to their separation.

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One resident said: "Please retain as many hedgerows, mature trees, etc. as humanly possible. They are vital, and provide lots of aesthetic character. Please build around them i.e. integrate them into the design, rather than bulldoze through them and try to re-establish elsewhere […]"

Some participants also proposed additional **outdoor recreational spaces**, such as a country park and lakes for wild swimming, sailing, or other water-based activities to ensure all residents could interact with nature in some way. A few participants suggested that any new, planned pathways could contain interactive elements, and incorporate historic or rural features of the local area to encourage their use. Participating councillors from the Local Plan Committee workshop highlighted the importance of ensuring that green space is accessible for people with disabilities, and that all residents can enjoy the natural world.

Some participants also saw opportunities for the Garden Community to use the natural world as **a vehicle for positively engaging local people with the development** as it takes shape. Some of these participants suggested running community gardening events and opening allotments to encourage people to participate in the project moving forward. A few participants suggested connecting young people to the development through voluntary and charity sector **environmental projects**, which could include wildlife monitoring.

Nature: Concerns

One of the participating Town and Parish councillors said: "Biodiversity is the natural world around us, all of the organisms - the plants, animals, insects and ecosystems which live on our planet. So, don't destroy the existing biodiversity by putting thousands of houses on a massively biodiverse area."

Most participants saw the potential of the Garden Community to offer a bold, radical, green alternative to previous housing developments. While most responses across the engagement were aspirational and made suggestions about what the Garden Community should offer and could be, some of these participants were **sceptical** that their vision, or something close to it, would be realised. Often, their reservations were driven by scepticism towards the intentions of those behind the development. When reflecting on the theme of nature, most participants, even those with aspirations for the Garden Community, voiced concerns about the **ecological impact** of the development and whether it would be able to offset any damage.

One resident said: "[B]uilding these garden villages, which is another name for a very large housing estate, is destroying a large amount of green areas, with trees and teeming wildlife. The ecological/biodiversity impact is huge. A nature reserve or protected land for public use must be provided and plenty of green corridors."

Across the different strands of engagement, but particularly the survey, there was a minority that offered consistent, firm objections to the development overall. When reflecting on the theme of Nature, some of these participants voiced specific concerns about the contribution of the building industry to climate change. A few participants felt that any development on the area would be fundamentally harmful to the environment.

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One resident said: "The land? It certainly won't be enhanced by pouring concrete all over it!"

Chapter summary

Ambitions

Participants…

- wanted the Garden Community to integrate as seamlessly as possible into the natural environment.
- wanted the Garden Community to benefit local biodiversity.
- wanted any environmental impact to be offset by the creation of new natural and wild spaces.
- wanted the Garden Community to provide lots of opportunities for people to interact with nature.

Concerns

Participants…

- wanted to ensure that the ecosystem won't be damaged by the development of the Garden Community.
- wanted to ensure that the Garden Community won't affect the area's rural identity.
- were concerned that the green intentions of the Garden Community would be undermined by developers' desires to maximise profit.

Key spatial considerations

- Protect existing natural assets.
- Make the natural world an integral part of the Garden Community.
- Create local opportunities to experience and interact with nature.
- Contribute to the area's rural identity.

Could you set out up to three words that would best describe the types of open spaces you would like to see in the Garden Community?

Fig. 1: A word cloud visualising responses to the survey question: "Could you set out up to three words that would best describe the types of open spaces you would like to see in the Garden Community?". Bigger words were used more frequently across the responses.

Chapter 2: Movement and Connections

Chapter Overview

Across the workshops and the survey, participants were asked how to encourage walking, cycling, and the use of other forms of transport in the Garden Community. Participants were also asked about car use and public transport, and how the use of environmentally friendly forms of transport could be enabled.

This chapter begins by exploring participants' views about the role of cars in the Garden Community, then examines participants' thoughts on public transport and the Rapid Transport System, before considering their views on alternative forms of transportation.

Movement and Connections: Vision

Participants overwhelmingly supported a push towards **renewable energy** and **alternative transport**. While participants were divided on the overall approach the Garden Community should take to cars, participants largely supported the provision of electric vehicle charging points. Participants felt that localised green **public transport** should be at the heart of transportation planning within the Garden Community. In addition, most participants were supportive of the Garden Community encouraging alternative forms of transport, such as bicycles and e-scooters.

Movement and Connections: Ambitions for the Garden Community

Cars

Across the workshops and surveys, participants had opposing views on cars. Some participants wanted the Garden Community to strongly discourage or prohibit car use; other participants felt that doing so would simply cause problems for residents, as car use was inevitable. This conflict is reflected in fig. 2, below, which shows that

survey participants were close to evenly split in how important they felt creating car-free zones or limiting car parking across the Garden Community was.

> One resident said: "Be vehicle free as much as possible! Keep vehicles to a minimum, so only emergency vehicles, have a development transportation system in place like a tram system for people to get around, this can move between the edge of the development parking areas & the Town railway station, via the Uni of Essex. Let us replace car lined roads with tree lined pathways."

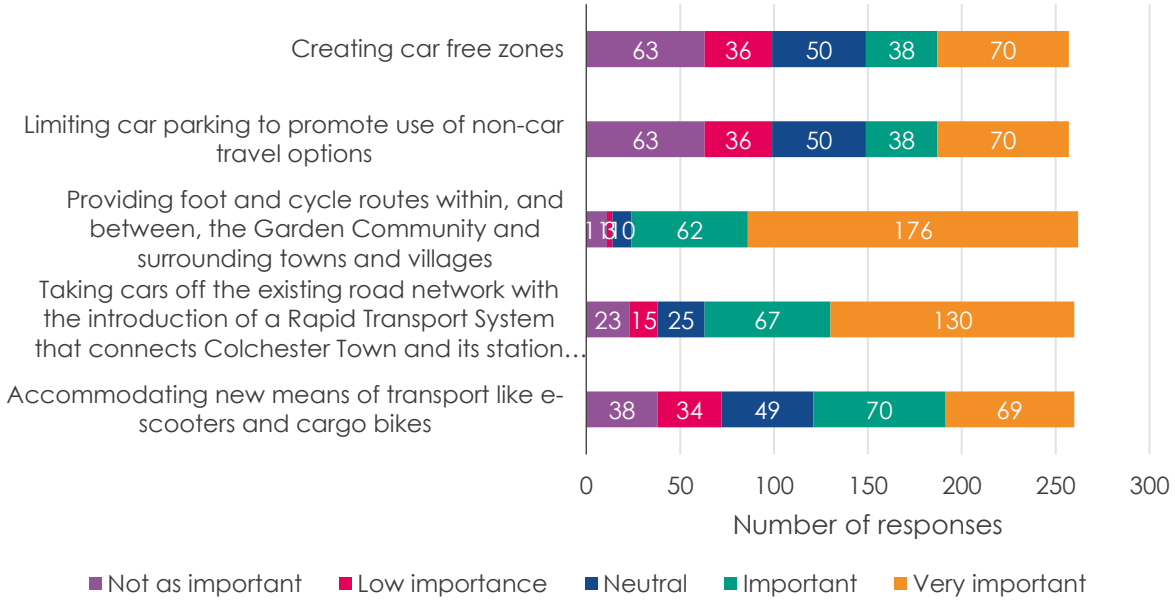
Participants that supported provision for car use generally felt that it was too soon to predict, and plan for, the decline of cars. Moreover, these participants pointed to the importance of **car access** across the Garden Community for delivery access, maintenance and tradespeople, the emergency services, and for people with disabilities too. One participant highlighted that **disabled parking** should be provided across the development, even in places where car use is discouraged, to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive. In the CLG group, some members spoke about the importance of emergency service vehicle access, too.

> One resident said: "Make sure the houses have ample parking for the people who will be living there so the roads are not blocked by parked cars, i.e. a four bedroom house needs four off street parking places. All residences to have dedicated car charging facilities."

A few participants said that houses should only provide space for one car, while a few others felt that houses should provide space for one car per resident. Some participants highlighted that limiting parking will encourage **street parking**, which would ultimately cause congestion issues and be detrimental to the feel of the Garden Community. Some participants offered alternative parking solutions, which included **park and ride** systems and **tolls** for visitors to the development. One participant suggested that there could be community residential parking, rather than driveways.

However, participants generally agreed on the importance of providing **charging points** for electric vehicles, including at each home and at any parking spaces provided across the community. CLG members also agreed on the importance of electric vehicle infrastructure to the Garden Community.

Fig. 2: Responses to the survey question "Thinking about how to support active and environmentally friendly travel in the Garden Community, how important are each of the following approaches to you?"



Public Transport

Most participants agreed that the development should focus on ensuring that people **want to use public transport**, rather than discouraging car use. Some participants felt that this means public transport should be affordable and accessible. In addition, these participants felt that public transport needs to be at least as convenient as using the car and should be cheaper overall. A few participants suggested this could be achieved through discounts or season ticket schemes for residents.

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One resident said: "Ensure that the public transport offered is regular, affordable and accessible to all. Residents who need to travel outside of the community area which isn't accessible via public transport are not penalised in any way."

A few participants also wanted it to feel "prestigious", and highlighted that it should be **clean, modern**, and **beautiful** to encourage people to use it. A few participants also highlighted how public transport could be integrated into green spaces, and one participant provided the example of **green tram tracks**. Some participants highlighted that public transport vehicles should use green energy, too.

Some participants noted that public transport has a **bad reputation** across the region, which could affect uptake in the future. In line with this view, a few participants felt that public transport in the development should be council-run or controlled by one company. These participants pointed to perceived issues caused by competition in local public transport provision.

Some participants emphasised wanting all aspects of public transport to **work together** coherently. A few participants noted that, without effective, localised public transport systems, people will continue to drive to train stations or other transport hubs, which could undermine their optimistic vision for the role of public transport in the Garden Community.

In addition, a few participants highlighted that focusing on local transport systems, rather than just the connection between Essex and London, will help to prevent the area from becoming a commuter village. To these participants, commuter villages lacked the **community spirit and heart** that they envisaged for the Garden Community.

Some participants mentioned the **Rapid Transit System** (RTS) and highlighted that it should exceed expectations. A few participants emphasised that it should be one part of wider improvements in the region's transport system, rather than focusing on Hythe and Colchester train stations.

Alternative Transport

Participants also reflected on how the Garden Community could facilitate people using **bicycles** or **scooters,** rather than using their cars. Across the different strands of engagement, most participants spoke about the need for a **fair distribution of different amenities** between different areas of the development. This was often linked to similar requests for 15-minute neighbourhoods, in which all residents live near to the things they need. For these participants, easy access to different amenities is key to using cars less frequently and walking or cycling more.

Some participants focused on how alternative vehicles will be stored. These participants highlighted the importance of easy access to these vehicles from their homes, with **storage** at the front of the house and close to the road. In addition, some participants noted the importance of convenient storage near amenities that includes protection from the weather. One participant suggested Dutch-style bicycle ports as a positive example.

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One resident said: " Build safe and dedicated footpaths and cycle lanes, bike lockers etc. like they have in Denmark and of course the Netherlands. Learn from best practice…"

In line with requests for public transport discount schemes, some participants suggested that residents should be given access to a bicycle discount scheme, and a few participants suggested that bicycles could be included with each house as part of the purchase.

However, participants were **divided on the merits of e-scooters**. A few participants suggested that e-scooter or bicycle hire networks, similar to the hop-on, hop-off e-scooter scheme recently trialled Colchester should be promoted across the development.

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One resident said: "Wide, well-lit cycle paths which can be shared by cyclists and pedestrians. NB that in my own experience as a cyclist, e-scooters and cargo bikes are not that great; they are quite dangerous as they go too fast on cycle paths and also get left all over the place (often blocking cycle-paths and pavements)."

Most participants felt that the provision of high-quality **cycle paths** would help to encourage residents to cycle more. Most of these participants focused on the safety of the cycle paths, stating that they should be **well-lit**, **secure**, and **protected from traffic**. A few participants felt that there should be cycling superhighways, and some of these participants felt that it was important to protect pedestrians from cyclists too.

A few participants also highlighted the importance of making sure that all the **cycle paths link together in an intuitive and convenient way**, noting that, in some towns and cities across the UK, cycle paths are intermittent and often come to a dead end. Some members from the CLG also spoke about the importance of well-connected, safe cycle paths, and mirrored residents' views on cycling infrastructure.

A few participants also noted that the pedestrian and cycle paths should be part of the natural environment, not an afterthought to roads. This would help to encourage people to use them.

Similarly, a few participants spoke about the need for more **separation** between pedestrians and roads and suggested that over or underpasses would be preferable, compared to crossings. These participants also noted that this would help with traffic management in the development too.

Movement and Connections: Concerns

Across participant reflections on the theme of Movement and Connections, there was relatively less overt opposition to the development as a whole. Nevertheless, most participants again expressed concerns about the potential **impact** that the Garden Community could have on the surrounding area. In particular, these participants were concerned about the impact that a **population increase** would

have on **traffic** in the area, and the pressure this would put on existing public transport.

> 66 One of the participating Town and Parish councillors said: "The RTS will be slow and expensive, and people will stick to their car - look at the Colchester Park and Ride for evidence of take up."

Participating Town and Parish councillors were particularly concerned about the **RTS**. A few councillors highlighted that public transport systems, particularly the RTS, were unlikely to be faster or more **convenient** than using a car. Other councillors were also concerned about the **cost of the RTS** to the users. One councillor said that it was important that **existing local bus services** were not re-directed through the Garden Community, resulting in longer services for existing residents. A few participants felt that the RTS proposal was unclear and did not feel that the language used to describe what it offered was intuitive. These participants voiced confusion on whether it was a bus service or not. On **e-scooters**, a few other participants felt that they pose a danger to pedestrians and highlighted that they can exclude people with disabilities.

Chapter summary

Ambitions

Participants…

- agreed on the need for electric vehicle (EV) charging points.
- felt that the focus should be on providing high quality public transport.
- wanted public transport to be green and attractive.
- wanted public and all other forms of transport to work together.
- wanted easy access to amenities.
- wanted easy storage of alternative vehicles.

Concerns

Participants…

- were divided over car-related infrastructure.
- felt that cars should be separated from cyclists and pedestrians.
- were concerned about the impact of population increases on traffic.
- felt the language used to describe the RTS is confusing.

Key spatial considerations

- Provide convenient EV infrastructure, in homes and across the Garden Community.
- Ensure using alternative vehicles is easy and convenient.
- Provide storage space for alternative vehicles.
- Protect cyclists and pedestrians from cars.
- Ensure that alternative transport and public transport works together. This includes:
  - Cycle routes to public transport hubs.
  - Cycle storage at public transport hubs.
  - Convenient local public transport to national public transport hubs, such as railway stations.

Chapter 3: Community and Social Infrastructure

Chapter Overview

Across the workshops and the survey, participants were asked about the type of community and social facilities they would like to see in the Garden Community. Participants were asked what would make the Garden Community a healthy place to live, what could be done to ensure it is still a good place to live in 100 years, and how the Garden Community should be managed into the future.

This chapter first explores participants' thoughts on how the Garden Community can help to foster good health, before examining what participants felt was required for the longevity of the Garden Community. The chapter then examines participants' thoughts on stewardship of the community, before looking at the types of infrastructure requested by participants. The chapter closes by reviewing participants' main concerns about Community and Social Infrastructure.

Community and Social Infrastructure: Ambitions for the Garden Community

Most participants' responses emphasised a holistic view of how health and general wellbeing can be supported in the Garden Community. These participants outlined how all aspects of the Garden Community can affect **mental** and **physical wellbeing**, and emphasised the links between **recreation** and **inclusivity** to mental health. Most participants said they wanted the Garden Community to foster **community spirit and a sense of shared responsibility** among future residents. Participants also focused on the importance of providing for the needs of all residents and ensuring that the community remains **vibrant**.

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One of the participating Local Plan Committee councillors said: "Happy and healthy is created by bringing people together."

Community and Social Infrastructure: Findings

Health

Overall, most participants took a holistic view of **health** and **wellbeing** when reflecting on what could make the Garden Community a healthy place to live. Most participants again highlighted the value of being able to **interact with nature** and access green space for both the physical and mental wellbeing of residents. This includes both public and private spaces, such as gardens.

Similarly, most participants again spoke about the importance of cycle- and footpath, amenities within walking distance from homes, reducing traffic, and improving public transport as contributors to the mental and physical wellbeing of residents. A few participants also made links between the resilience of the community to the effects of climate change and the wellbeing of residents.

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One resident said: " Try to keep the feeling of rural to support healthy outlooks for residents."

Some participants spoke about the need for a range of **recreational space** that is accessible for people with different needs. This included indoor gyms and other sporting facilities, such as swimming pools, and outdoor spaces, such as tennis courts, running routes and wild cycle paths. Members of the CLG group spoke about the importance of setting up a sinking fund to ensure that necessary equipment for recreational activities was maintained and replaced as necessary too. Some of these participants spoke about the ability of natural spaces to link different recreational spaces together, and form larger, multi-use leisure and recreation areas. A few participants emphasised that they wanted the Garden Community to be a place to play, not just a place to work.

Some participants spoke specifically about the provision of **health infrastructure** in the area. Most of these participants wanted localised health infrastructure that was up and running from the point of residents moving in. In addition, some participants noted that healthcare should be localised rather than centralised and fit in with the 15-minute neighbourhood model.

A few participants also made links between the provision of **social** and **community spaces** to **health**. Some of these participants highlighted the importance of accessibility and independent living within the Garden Community, to ensure that it caters to the needs of all residents. They talked about community projects, such as community kitchens, being able to provide employment opportunities for residents with learning disabilities, and provide community hubs that help to combat loneliness within the wider community.

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One resident said: "Green spaces, trees along streets, not too many houses packed in for profit but design for well living. Link in with Marketfield Farm or Marketfield Grows to maintain land or a farm space to increase employment for adults with learning difficulties, provide local healthy produce and a nice place for families to visit."

Longevity

Most participants spoke about the need to ensure that the Garden Community is **sustainable**. To some participants, this meant that the development is "future-proofed" and builds resilience to climate change into its design. For some other participants, this meant that the materials used across the development were high quality, and that the buildings themselves would last for a long time. Norwich's Goldsmith Street development was given as a positive example by one participant.

Some participants focused on the **social sustainability** of the community. To these participants, the longevity of the development was tied to the experience of residents: the development should provide for all the needs of the community moving forward and help to maintain a healthy, vibrant social community. These participants often focused on the availability of employment for residents and the ability of the community to be self-contained.

Stewardship

Some participants said that the development needs to foster a sense of community and shared responsibility for the maintenance of the Garden Community to ensure its longevity. Some of these participants spoke about the importance of stewardship providing employment opportunities for local people. Some other participants felt that **community stewardship projects** should be developed alongside the Garden Community, and the development could set up ongoing litter picking, tree planting, or community gardening projects as it is built.

These participants felt that this would help to ensure that future residents understood that community spirit was at the heart of the development, and being a resident there came with **social responsibilities**. One participant felt that using commonhold leases would help to encourage this too.

Conversely, a few other participants felt strongly that the **council should take responsibility for** the upkeep of the Garden Community, rather than it being the residents' responsibility.

Participants also spoke about the way the Garden Community could be **managed** moving forward. Participants suggested either moving to a **parish council model**, including residents in direct decision-making, and/or setting up a **homeowners' or residents' association**. There was no consensus on the type of system, but there was a general sense that residents should be involved in the process. One participant also suggested having a **phased management model**, which transitions from one form of stewardship to another as the development progresses.

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One resident said: "The formation of a resident management body with elected members, like a town council but with an additional operational remit and the ability to hire local residents as employees for park management; rangers wardens, caretakers and gardeners."

Some participants felt that residents could be **rewarded for participating** in maintenance or community activities through either a payment system funded by local maintenance fees or through council tax reductions. Some other participants felt that stewardship schemes should focus on providing employment opportunities for local people. Some participants spoke about self-funded maintenance through resident-run cooperative businesses, such as community kitchens, too.

Community facilities

Across the different workshops and the surveys, participants provided examples of a range of amenities, facilities, and community spaces that the Garden Community should provide. For **community spaces**, most participants felt that there needed to be multipurpose community centres, which catered both for small and large groups. Most participants mentioned the importance of churches and multifaith places of worship across the Garden Community. Some of these participants also spoke about the role that faith groups could play in running local community facilities. Most

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One resident said: "All local services should be provided within the community including shops, GPs, schools, churches and community centres (sports and social)."

participants wanted community facilities to be distributed across the Garden Community, in line with their vision for 15-minute neighbourhoods.

For **socialising** and **leisure activities**, most participants emphasised the importance of outdoor spaces for socialising, and some of these participants spoke positively about the Garden Community fostering a **'café culture'**. Some participants spoke about the importance of mixed-use space and integrating different commercial, recreational, and business spaces, which they felt would help to build a community spirit. A few participants also highlighted the importance of cultural spaces, for both socialising and engaging with the arts. One CLG member mentioned the importance of ensuring that the Garden Community did not become a "bedroom community".

Participants also spoke specifically about the importance of providing space for **activities for children and young people** and ensuring that the community caters for all ages. Although a few participants mentioned the role that the church could play in running community groups, a few other participants felt that there should be separate provision of youth clubs and activities, which they felt could help to increase uptake and ensure that these groups remain inclusive to people of all faiths.

Community and Social Infrastructure: Concerns

Most participants voiced concerns about the impact that this development would have on the surrounding areas' **community and social infrastructure**. These concerns were often driven by participants' experiences of their local provision, such as being unable to book a local community centre, for example.

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One of the participating Local Plan Committee councillors said: "Our Neighbourhood Plan consultation shows that the community facilities in our Parish are inadequate. We should be addressing this before thinking about spending money on new communities."

Some of these participants reported that existing community centres were often full, and were prohibitively expensive for small groups to hire. Participating Town and Parish councillors also highlighted this concern, too.

Most participants spoke about education and highlighted the importance of planning out how early years, primary, and secondary education provision should work together to benefit residents. Some participants were concerned about the Garden Community's proposed plan for **secondary education**; a few participants felt providing only one secondary school would be insufficient. A few participants were concerned that education infrastructure would not be in place ready for when residents started moving in, which would put stress on existing schools.

A few participants felt that the plans for the Garden Community prioritised the wellbeing of future residents, but that the mental and physical **wellbeing of current local residents** should be prioritised instead. Similarly, one participating councillor questioned how the Garden Community would benefit the most deprived people from the surrounding area.

Most participants were **opposed to maintenance fees**, although some suggested that they might be necessary. A few participants again expressed concerns about the **intentions of the developers**, expressing feeling that profit would inevitably be prioritised over community infrastructure. This position was mirrored by CLG members, too. A few other participants stated that they felt the survey was more about **ticking boxes and paying lip-service** to local residents, rather than actually listening to their concerns and ideas. One participant felt that the proposal should do more to outline how it will avoid the failures of other areas, such as Harlow and Milton Keynes, rather than focusing on ambitions. This participant argued that these towns felt soulless, to the agreement of others present in the workshop.

Chapter summary

Ambitions

Participants…

- wanted all aspects of the Garden Community to support mental and physical wellbeing.
- felt that interaction with nature and green space was essential for the wellbeing of residents.
- wanted indoor and outdoor recreational spaces.
- wanted the Garden Community to be accessible and provide opportunities for all people.
- wanted the Garden Community to run community stewardship and development projects alongside the building process.
- wanted a range of community spaces that cater to different types of groups.
- felt that the development should foster social interaction.
- wanted spaces specifically designed for children and young people.

Concerns

Participants…

- wanted to protect existing local infrastructure, particularly health and secondary education provision, from the pressures of increased population.
- wanted the Garden Community to plan for the challenges of the future.
- were divided on maintenance fees and how the development should be stewarded.
- were worried about the effect of the development on the wellbeing of current local residents.

Key spatial considerations

- Provide accessible recreational space that caters for all residents.
- Ensure there is both indoor and outdoor space for recreational activities.
- Build flexible, local community spaces for neighbourhoods to use.

Think about the local area of Colchester and Tendring. Could you set out up to three things that make it distinctive and special?

Fig. 3: A word cloud visualising responses to the survey question: "Think about the local area of Colchester and Tendring. Could you set out up to three things that make it distinctive and special?". Bigger words were used more frequently across the responses.

Chapter 4: Buildings, Places and Character

Chapter Overview

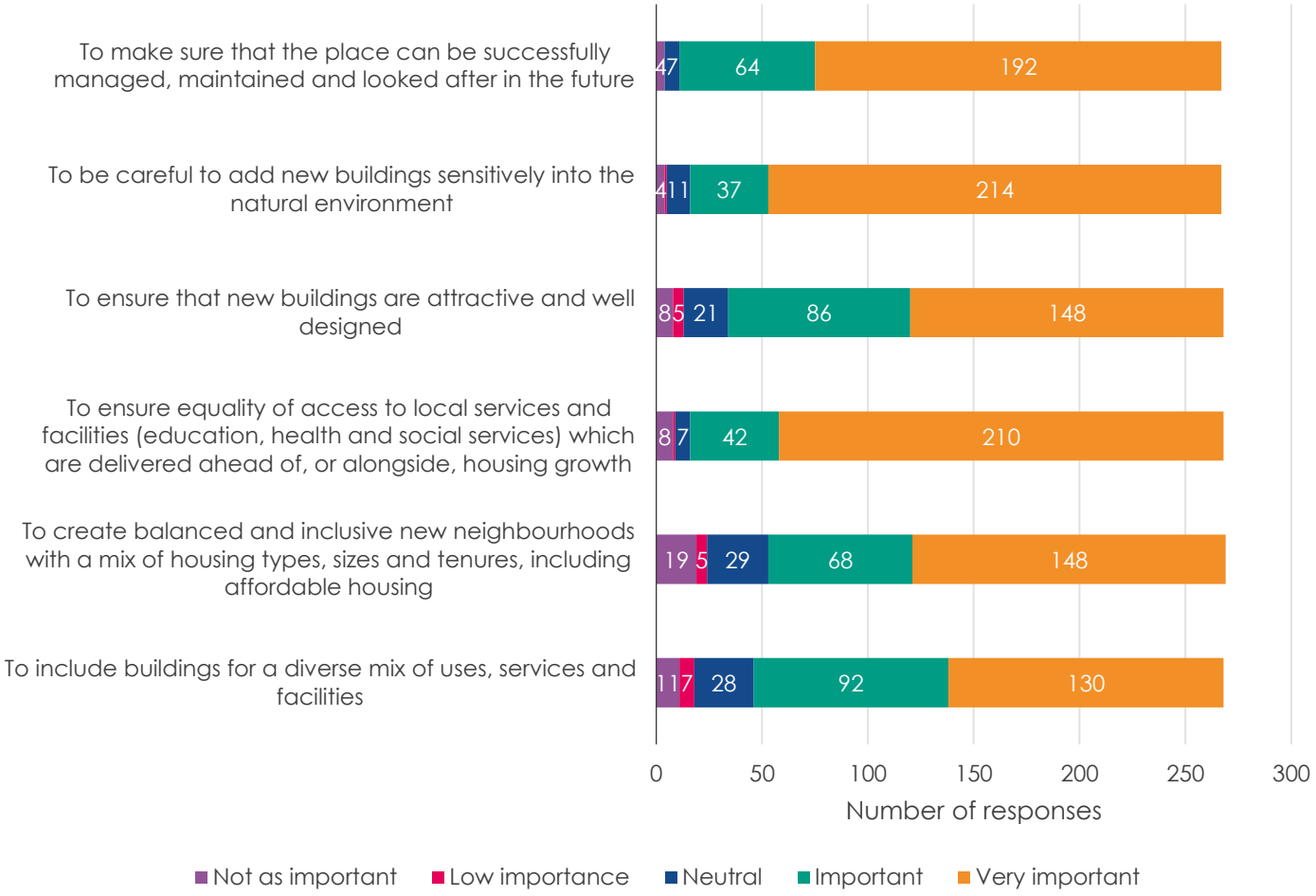
Across the different workshops and the survey, participants were asked what could be done to ensure that the Garden Community was a unique and distinctive place. Participants were also asked about the types of employment space they would like to see, whether there were any heritage assets that should be included in the plans, and the types of building designs they would like to see in the area.

This chapter opens by discussing participants' thoughts about the local assets that should be retained. It then examines participants' views about the style and type of housing the Garden Community should provide.

Buildings, Places and Character: Ambitions for the Garden Community

Participants felt that the **area's existing assets** presented opportunities for the development. Once again, most responses focused on **nature**. Most participants want to see **bold, modern housing** that is green by design and can respond to residents' needs across their lives. **Distinctiveness** was an important theme, with participants wanting to see a Garden Community with its own unique identity or – looking at this from another angle – which did not diminish the identity and character of surrounding settlements. Most participants wanted to see collections of **small neighbourhoods** and communities, each with sufficient **amenities within walking distance** for residents. Participants also saw the Garden Community development as providing opportunities for **employment and training**.

Fig. 4: Responses to the survey question "Think about the design of the buildings and places in the Garden Community. What is most important to you?"



Buildings, Places and Character: Findings

Existing assets

> One resident said: "The green spaces between the villages, the small town/village feel of the large number of small places in the north Essex area, the ability to be in a large town or city in a short space of time - the very best of both worlds."

Most participants generally agreed about the area's **assets** that the development should integrate into the Garden Community, with most focusing on the natural landscape, historic sites, and the overall rural feel of the area.

Most participants wanted the area to feel **wild and rural**, and to make nature a key part of the space. Most participants commented that woodland was part of the distinctive character of the area and should be retained or expanded where possible. Some participants also talked about the contribution of the coastline, rivers, and estuaries to the identity of the area. Some participants highlighted the importance of tranquil spaces for **peace and quiet** and reflection. These participants highlighted that natural spaces often presented opportunities for this.

Most participants also talked about the various **historic sites**, particularly the area's Roman history. Some participants also spoke about the opportunities this history offers to the Garden Community, and how it could be incorporated into interactive, educational walks for residents and visitors.

> One resident said: "History, vibrant culture and diverse geography including the coast."

Some participants spoke about the importance of **activities** within the area, noting that the existing towns and cities provide a range of opportunities for **entertainment and socialising**. Some participants spoke about the importance of the community feeling safe and welcoming, and being a place that helps residents to flourish. Some participants spoke about the importance of the area feeling vibrant and bustling, and spaces for cultural and social events, such as concerts, art exhibitions, theatre and beer festivals contributed towards this. A few participants commented that there was always something to do.

Homes

Participants disagreed on the **style of the houses** and the density. While a few participants believed that high density housing is greener and would protect more of the local environment, most that discussed density wanted to see low density housing. Most participants felt that the design should be bold and modern, but "considerate" and "not jarring". A few participants wanted the Garden Community to use design cues from the local area, while most felt that the area should avoid using the local Victorian or Tudor Revival style. CLG members also spoke about the importance of the quality of houses that were built, emphasising that they should be high quality and built to last.

There was again general agreement that the Garden Community should **integrate well into its natural surroundings** and should "feel green". In addition, most participants felt that it should be green by design, not by addition or as an afterthought. These participants referenced Holland, Denmark, and Germany, but also emphasised that they did not want it to feel as though it was an imitation of somewhere else.

Most participants felt that the Garden Community should feature collections of different designs to make it feel like a mixture of **small communities**, rather than one big development. This linked to ideas about the importance of nearby amenities and the Garden Community using the **15-minute neighbourhood model**, which a few participants explicitly referenced. CLG members also highlighted the importance of close amenities, too. Some participants also spoke about the importance of **housing for life**. These participants felt that the houses should be designed to be adaptable as residents' needs change over the course of their lives, which might include having children, becoming a carer, or experiencing changing personal accessibility requirements.

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One resident said: "Good quality building so houses are still functional. Owner occupied housing, so property owners are committed to improving the locality and invested in the community."

Some participants also spoke about the need for genuinely affordable housing and social housing within the Garden Community. A few of these participants emphasised that high quality housing should be available to all. These participants emphasised that this would help the Garden Community feel like a community, too. A few of these participants felt that houses marketed as affordable were often unaffordable to local people.

Businesses and amenities

Most participants wanted **local amenities and businesses** within **walking distance** of small neighbourhoods. Some of these participants were particularly opposed to the Garden Community creating large out-of-town retail parks, which they felt had contributed to the wider decline of the town centre across the UK. Some participants spoke about the importance of space for **local business**, including independent, artisanal shops and cafés. In one CLG meeting, a few members spoke about the importance of shops taking on the local character of the area, even if they were national chains. Similarly, a few participants suggested including permanent market space for local sellers. Where possible, these participants felt that businesses should mirror the ideals of the Garden Community, with priority given to green businesses.

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One resident said: "Lots of parks and green spaces inclusive with peaceful residential areas; lots of restaurants and shops with coffee and tea rooms, vibrant shops and community areas; recreational parks and sports areas with lots of trees and wild meadow areas."

Employment

Most participants felt that the development should prioritise the creation of **jobs for local people**, and this should include opportunities for independent living jobs too. Some participants spoke about the importance of the building process creating **training and employment opportunities** for the surrounding areas, and one participating councillor suggested that the development should make connections to the University, to provide relevant courses and training that match onsite employment needs.

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One resident said: "Employment opportunities present the greatest challenge. A town without employment is a dormitory. Provision of seed bed units at low cost and provision for home working with good access to mega-data, provided by the University, to service the likely jobs of the future, e.g., creative, care, health, data, HR and environmental."

A resident and one participating councillor suggested that the Garden Community should try to attract certain businesses from the **tech, digital, and creative industries**, although most participants did not talk about the types of industries that should be encouraged in the area. One participating councillor from the Town and Parish workshop emphasised the importance of attracting businesses to the area.

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> One participating Town and Parish councillor said: "The local plan just pretends jobs will happen and they won't unless big national companies can be persuaded to move to set the ball rolling."

In addition to facilitating people **working from home** through housing design, some participants felt that there should be space available for remote workers in the community to come together to work, such as **office pods**. Some participants highlighted that the 15-minute neighbourhood model supported home workers too, as it provided the opportunity to leave the house for meetings or for breaks. CLG members also spoke about the importance of communication infrastructure that ensure people will be able to continue to work from home virtually.

Buildings, Places and Character: Concerns

Some participants were again concerned that the aspirational vision for the Garden Community would not be realised. These participants were particularly concerned that the development would end up **feeling generic**, and similar to other recent housing estates. One CLG member mentioned their dislike of Thorpe, which they described as "soulless". Some participating Town and Parish councillors voiced similar concerns, too. Some Town and Parish councillors were particularly concerned about the lack of a central focal point for the town, as they felt this would help to give purpose and identity to the development.

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> One participating Town and Parish councillor said: "The city will be unique and distinctive - but not in a good way because it has no history, identity or unifying rationale - you are starting at the wrong point - the raison d'être comes first. Is it a place with a purpose or a dormitory?"

Some participants were also concerned about the impact of the development on the **identity** of the surrounding local areas. In particular, these participants were worried about the size of the development increasing, or about the possibility of future developments into the areas currently designated as green buffers. These

participants felt that green buffers would help to prevent the local areas, such as Crockleford Health, from **losing their identity.** CLG members voiced strong concerns about the potential impact of the development on the surrounding areas, and spoke about the importance of buffers.

Chapter summary

Ambitions

Participants…

- wanted the area to still feel rural and include tranquil space for reflection.
- felt the Garden Community should make the most of the area's history.
- wanted the area to have vibrant and bustling spaces for socialising.
- wanted the Garden Community to feel distinctive.
- wanted the houses to be adaptable, so that the houses can respond to the changing needs of their residents.
- wanted the Garden Community to provide employment, working space, and training for all its residents.

Concerns

Participants…

- were worried that the development will end up feeling like any other generic housing estate.
- were concerned about the impact the Garden Community will have on the identity of the local area and of existing settlements nearby.

Key spatial considerations

- Build modern housing with bold but considerate designs.
- Create houses that are green by design.
- Ensure an equitable distribution of amenities throughout the development.
- Use buffers to protect the surrounding areas.

Imagine walking through the new Garden Community in the future. How would you like it to feel?

Fig. 5: A word cloud visualising responses to the survey question: "Imagine walking through the new Garden Community in the future. How would you like it to feel?". Bigger words were used more frequently across the responses.

Chapter 5: Sustainable Infrastructure

Chapter Overview

Across the different workshops and the survey, participants were asked about the types of green energy they would like to see used by the Garden Community. Participants were also asked for their thoughts on how the Garden Community could be resilient to climate change, and how it could help to address climate change.

This chapter opens by examining participants' thoughts on how the Garden Community could be sustainable. It then examines participants' views on Sustainable Infrastructure, before reviewing participants' thoughts about sustainable housing. It closes with a discussion of participants' concerns around the sustainability of the Garden Community development.

To most participants, sustainability and challenging climate change are key values that often drove their responses across the different areas of engagement. This chapter covers any remaining thoughts around Sustainable Infrastructure that participants offered.

Sustainable Infrastructure: Vision

Participants were in favour of using **green energy**, and some participants felt that the Garden Community should aim to go **beyond net zero** and present an alternative model of housing that other places aspire to. Some participants felt that it was important that the Garden Community's green aspirations are seen through every aspect of the development.

Sustainable Infrastructure: Ambitions for the Garden Community

Sustainability

> One survey respondent said: "This is such a good opportunity to be transformative and act as a pilot for how the rest of the county could grow and adapt to reduce the impact of climate change. We need to stop using gas central heating. Renewable energy needs to become the norm."

Most participants were in favour of using **renewable energy**, with some participants emphasising that the Garden Community should aim to go beyond net zero. When reflecting on the types of energy that the Garden Community should aim to use, a few participants emphasised the role that they felt **hydroelectricity** could play, given the local coastline, rivers, and estuaries. Across the workshops, participants spoke about the possible value of **hydroelectric**, solar, wind, and geothermal energy sources in the Garden Community. Similarly, CLG members spoke about the possibility of the Garden Community being self-sufficient.

> One survey respondent said: "All houses and buildings to be 100% energy efficient and run off renewable energy. Ideally, as few roads as possible to encourage pedestrians and cyclists."

Most participants talked about the importance of the Garden Community **offsetting** its impact on the natural landscape through tree planting, gardening, and the creation of wild spaces. These participants saw this as an essential part of the Garden Community helping to address climate change. However, another participant noted that the **maintenance** of the green spaces should not require high energy solutions, such as mowing, but should also seek to be sustainable.

Infrastructure

The **differing opinions around cars** between participants featured in some of the responses here too, with some participants again suggesting a more radical shift away from car use. Participants generally agreed, again, on both the value of designing a place that enables reduced car use for addressing climate change and

the importance of electric vehicle infrastructure. Most participants also made links to cycling, walking, and public transport here too.

Some participants again spoke about the importance of being **resilient** to future shocks, particularly flooding. The TCB Garden Community Member Group (a group including senior political representation from each local authority) highlighted the high-water table across the area, and also questioned whether the area could be particularly prone to flooding. One workshop participant mentioned "sponge cities" and sunken gardens as examples of approaches that the Garden Community could adopt.

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> One survey respondent said: "Have water meadows to avoid flooding, buildings can be developing, the land needs space for the flooding to go to."

Participants also spoke about the importance of **waste management** across the community, with some participants suggesting different types of **water reuse** technologies, such as using rainwater to flush toilets or rainwater sprinkler systems. A few participants questioned how sewage would be managed, and wanted the Garden Community's green vision to be applied to waste management too.

Homes

Most participants agreed on the need for the development to be **resilient** and **future-focused** in its housing design. This included using building design to offset the potential impact of hotter summers on residents. A few participants said that houses should be well insulated, incorporate heat pumps, use triple-glazing, and protect against both **hot summers and cold winters**. One participating Town and Parish councillor highlighted the importance of ensuring that these technologies are included in the design of the homes, as they can be prohibitively expensive to retrofit.

In addition, some participants wanted **green building materials** and processes to be essential elements of the development, mitigating its environmental impact overall.

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> One survey respondent said: "It could be an exemplar of how to undertake sustainable new developments if done well. But this needs a real focus on quality of design for the whole community, as well as building quality under sustainable principles. Cutting corners and doing things cheaply is absolutely not the way to do this though."

Sustainable Infrastructure: Concerns

> One resident said: "For the long term, not the short term (so doing things properly rather than rushing to build lots of poor, low-quality housing with lack of services as seems to happen all too often)."

Participants expressed more concerns in relation to this theme than others. Across the different strands of engagement, firm objections to the development overall were driven by concerns about its **potential impact** on local residents, its potential impact on the local natural environment, or the environmental impact that the building industry has more generally.

> One survey respondent said: "The biggest way by no doubt is to lower the embodied carbon by using greener building techniques. The average home takes 50 to 80 tonnes of carbon to build. The equivalent of driving around the world 4.5 times. So, 40,500 times for the Garden Community. Really trying to use Cross-Laminated Timber would actually offer a positive impact to offset other elements."

Some participants were very concerned about the **environmental impact** of the building process in terms of carbon emissions and/or its implications for biodiversity. To some of these participants, any building and development was fundamentally at odds with fighting climate change. For others, these perceptions of the building process drove demands for the Garden Community to offset its environmental impact. This view was also mirrored by a few Town and Parish councillors, too.

> One participating Town and Parish councillor said: "Unleashing thousands of tonnes of CO_2 from construction is its biggest climate change problem to existing residents."

Some participants highlighted potential **tensions and trade-offs** between renewable energy and other plans for the development. For example, one participant questioned whether options like solar roof tiles are durable and questioned the

reliability of smaller green energy solutions. A few participants also questioned who would be responsible for the maintenance of green technologies within homes.

Chapter Summary

Ambitions

Participants…

- suggested a range of renewable energy sources that they would like the Garden Community to use.
- wanted the Garden Community to develop green spaces.
- wanted systems of water recycling and reuse to be incorporated into the design of the Garden Community.

Concerns

Participants…

- highlighted some potential trade-offs that could come from using different green technologies, particularly around their long-term maintenance.
- wanted homes in the Garden Community to be resilient to the impacts of climate change and able to cope with natural 'shocks' like flooding.
- were concerned about the environmental impact of the building process, both in terms of carbon emissions and ecological impact.

Key spatial considerations

- Design the Garden Community to ensure resilience to natural shocks.
- Ensure that green spaces in the Garden Community are low maintenance.

Could you set out up to three ways in which the Garden Community can help address Climate Change?

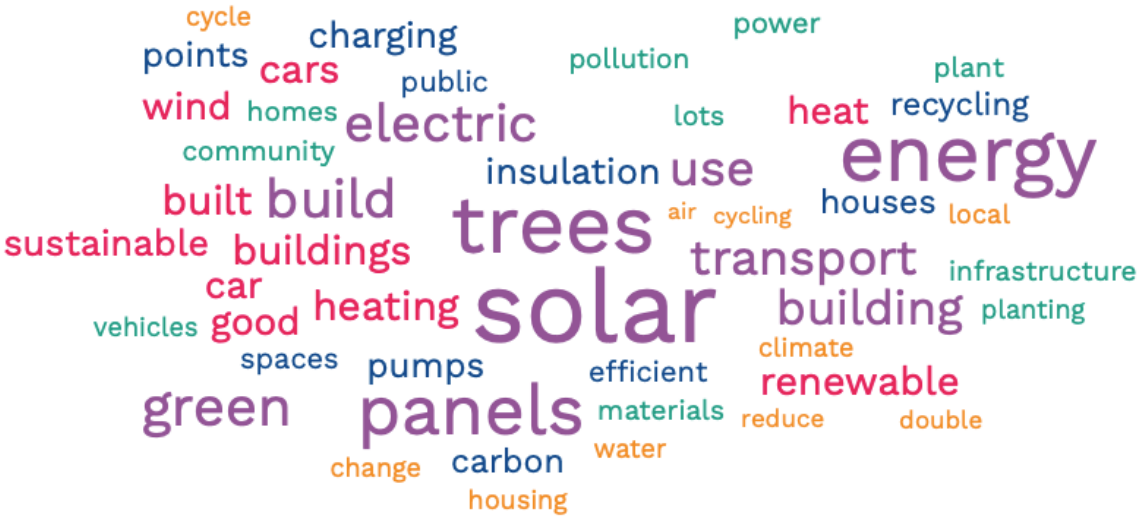


Fig. 6: A word cloud visualising responses to the survey question: "Could you set out up to three ways in which the Garden Community can help address Climate Change?". Bigger words were used more frequently across the responses.

Conclusion

Overall, most respondents provided aspirations, ideas, and visions for what they would like the Garden Community to be. Most of these ideas centred around the Garden Community providing a radical alternative to other recent housing development projects, which future developments could aspire towards. While these participants offered a positive vision about what the project could be, this was voiced alongside reservations about whether or not the Garden Community could live up to these expectations. Throughout the engagement process, there was a consistent minority that were fundamentally opposed to the development of the Garden Community. These participants primarily focused on the environmental impact of the building industry, the ecological impact the Garden Community would have, and the effect of the development on the surrounding towns and villages.

When thinking about **Nature** in the Garden Community, participants spoke about the value of the natural world to their family and social lives; their physical and mental wellbeing; and to the wider health of the community. Participants underlined the contribution of the natural world to the character and identity of the area and highlighted the importance of protecting natural spaces to help build resilience to climate change.

Participants were particularly concerned about the impact that the Garden Community might have on the natural world in the area, and the environmental impact of the development overall. Participants talked about natural features, assets, and places that they felt the Garden Community should protect, which included the Salary Brook area; woodland, including Churn Wood, Home Wood, Wivenhoe Woods, Sixpenny Woods, the Strip, Elmstead Woods; hedgerows and trees, particularly those lining old roads; and rivers and other water features. Participants felt that, wherever possible, the Garden Community should integrate into the existing natural landscape, rather than build over it. Participants also wanted the Garden Community to contribute to the area's rural feel. This would help the Garden Community to create opportunities for people to interact with nature, which participants felt was essential.

When reflecting on **Movement and Connections** in the Garden Community, participants overwhelmingly supported a push towards using green transport, which they felt the Garden Community should facilitate. Participants spoke a lot about the importance of good, accessible, and affordable public transport, which they felt was essential. Cars were a particularly polarising topic, and many participants were concerned about the impact of the population increase from the development on traffic in the surrounding area.

When it came to **Community and Social Infrastructure**, participants again emphasised the importance of the health and wellbeing of residents and spoke about how the Garden Community could support this. Participants wanted plenty of recreational space which also provide opportunities to interact with nature.

Participants also wanted to ensure that the health and wellbeing of all residents were considered, and that the Garden Community is an inclusive space.

Across the workshops and the survey, participants made it clear that they wanted the Garden Community to be a vibrant place that residents were proud of, which had a strong sense of community and shared responsibility. Participants saw community projects based around social interaction, including community gardens and allotments, as important for fostering community spirit as the development moves forward. Participants were particularly concerned about the pressure that the Garden Community would place on local resources, and voiced frustrations about the existing provision of community spaces and healthcare.

In relation to **Buildings, Places, and the Character** of the Garden Community, participants wanted to see bold, modern housing that is green by design. Participants wanted the area to have a distinct identity and were particularly concerned about the development feeling generic and featureless. Participants also spoke about the 15-minute neighbourhood model and talked about the value of small neighbourhoods and communities differentiated by design. Participants also spoke about the potential value of the area's historical and natural assets to the development and emphasised the importance of the Garden Community contributing to employment and training across the region.

When thinking about **Sustainable Infrastructure** in the Garden Community, participants spoke about the importance of the Garden Community in presenting a radical alternative to existing developments that other projects could aspire towards. Going beyond net zero and enhancing biodiversity were particularly important to these participants. Participants also spoke about the importance of the area being resilient to natural shocks, particularly flooding, and helping to protect residents from the impact of climate change moving forward. Participants were concerned about the ability of the developers to realise the more aspirational aspects of the development, and this drove the majority of participants concerns or reservations about the project. Some participants emphasised the environmental and ecological impact of building and development more generally, which drove views in opposition of the development overall.

Key spatial considerations

Participants wanted the Garden Community to protect and use existing natural assets, including the area's biodiversity. This means ensuring that nature plays a role in people's day-to-day lives, and that residents experience the natural world regularly. It also means that the Garden Community should provide a home for the natural world. This could involve wildlife corridors, access between houses for hedgehogs, and ensuring trees support local birdlife.

When thinking about movement and connections, participants wanted all forms of transport to complement one another. This means that cycle routes should form convenient links to amenities and to public transport hubs, and that local, regional, and national public transport should connect. Participants want using green

transport, including electric vehicles, to be convenient. This means that there should be convenient storage for alternative vehicles and good electric vehicle infrastructure. Participants also wanted the Garden Community to ensure that cyclists and pedestrians were safe, which could mean ensuring that there is separation from cars.

Participants wanted the Garden Community to provide dedicated outdoor and indoor recreational space, which could include gyms, individual and team sport facilities, and a place for water sports. Participants wanted this space to be accessible and useful for all future residents. Participants also want local, neighbourhood community spaces that were affordable and flexible.

When thinking about buildings and places, participants wanted the Garden Community to feel distinctive, bold, but also considerate. Participants also wanted houses to be green by design. They wanted the Garden Community to have a distinct identity, and to use buffers to help separate it from the surrounding area. Participants also wanted an equitable distribution of amenities throughout the Garden Community, rather than in a centralised centre or out-of-town retail park.

Participants wanted the Garden Community to augment and use nature to help ensure the area's resilience to potential future shocks, such as flooding. This could include using wetland areas, or forests. This also extended to trees lining the streets, which could help to keep the Garden Community cool in future hotter summers. Participants also wanted the green space in the Garden Community to be low maintenance and support nature. This could mean using wildflower meadows rather than extensive lawns or grassy areas.

Appendices

i: Community Liaison Group recruitment and membership

CLG recruitment: An extensive recruitment process was promoted to local people via local organisations and community networks inviting local residents to apply to join the CLG. This was followed by interviews held by an independent panel of interviewers. The aim was for the CLG to reflect the diversity of the area in terms of people and experiences. 12 local people were selected as members of the CLG.

CLG Membership:

Name	Role
Manda O'Connell	Chair
Lucas Carroll	Deputy Chair
Lois Whitnell	Deputy Chair (Youth Rep)
Dr Benjamin Marlow	Member
Christopher Burns	Member
Claudia Alsdorf	Member
Frank Howard	Member
Fern Lovett	Member
Mark Woodgate	Member
Michael Lucking	Member
Peter Hill	Member
Pauline Scott	Member

ii: Marketing the engagement programme

The marketing of the engagement programme aimed to reach a wide range of people both online and offline.

Offline activity included: print adverts in local newspapers and magazines; hard copies of the survey and postcard from the future distributed in community locations by the Community Liaison Group; and posters in community spaces.

Online activity included: e-newsletters; direct email; Spotify advertising, online advertising; non-paid social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn); and paid social media (Facebook).

iii: Workshop programme

Engagement workshop	*Date (2021)*	*Time*	*Format*
TCB Garden Community Member Group[2]	16th September	09:30-11:30	In-person
Local Plan Committee	22nd September	18:00-20:00	Online
Town / Parish councils	27th September	18:00-20:00	Online
Resident workshop 1	23rd September	14:00-16:00	Online
Resident workshop 2	28th September	18:30-20:30	Online
Seldom heard groups workshop 1	29th September	17:00-19:00	Online
Seldom heard groups workshop 2	5th October	10:30-12:30	Online
Seldom heard groups workshop 3	6th October	17:00-19:00	Online
Vision refinement workshop with CLG	13th October	18:00-20:00	Online

[2] A group including senior political representation from each local authority

iv: Workshop slides

WORKING TOGETHER

OUR ROLE IN THE ROOM TODAY

- Provide Information in a clear and timely manner
- Facilitate discussions so we can extract key information to inform the masterplan

YOUR ROLE IN THE ROOM

- You bring knowledge and experience
- Engage
- Listen
- Respectfully ask questions
- Provide feedback and comment – please use post it notes as much as possible

WAYS WE WILL WORK TODAY

- Everyone has an equal voice
- Respect each other and let other attendees say what they wish to
- Be non-judgemental
- It's okay to challenge as long as it is constructive
- Mobiles on silent – or mute yourself if it is ringing
- Be succinct

- We will keep to time
- Feel free to use that chat and put questions on in it
- Use the hand symbol to let all know you wish to speak to the room
- 'Bike Rack' to raise and park an issue please put it into the chat
- Are we ok to record?

AGENDA

1. TCB GARDEN COMMUNITY
2. WHAT TYPE OF PLACE?
3. SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

1 TCB GARDEN COMMUNITY

PLAN-MAKING PROCESS
KEY DEFINITIONS

What is the Section 1 Local Plan?

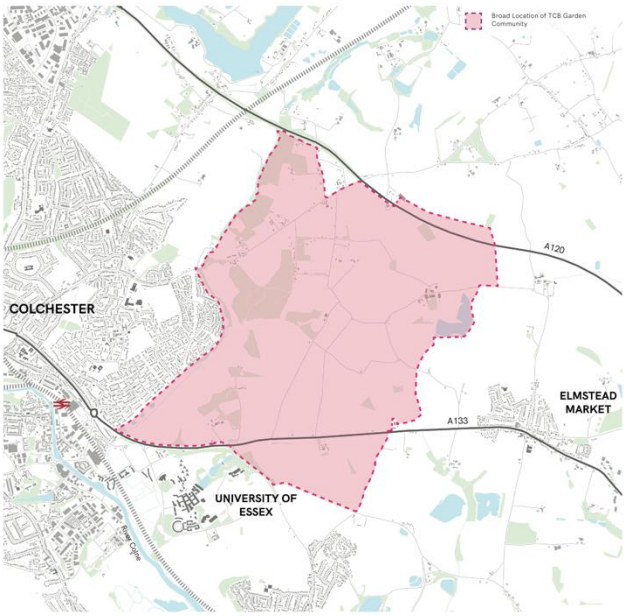
A plan prepared jointly by Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Braintree District Council.

Address some of the key strategic issues in North Essex. E.g. numbers of additional homes and jobs across the area that will be needed covering the period to 2033.

At the heart of the strategic vision is a new garden community, to be sensitively integrated within the existing historic built and natural environment, and based on Garden City principles.

What is a DPD?

A Development Plan Document (DPD) will be prepared for the garden community, containing policies setting out how the new community will be designed, developed and delivered in accordance with polices of the Section 1 Local Plan.

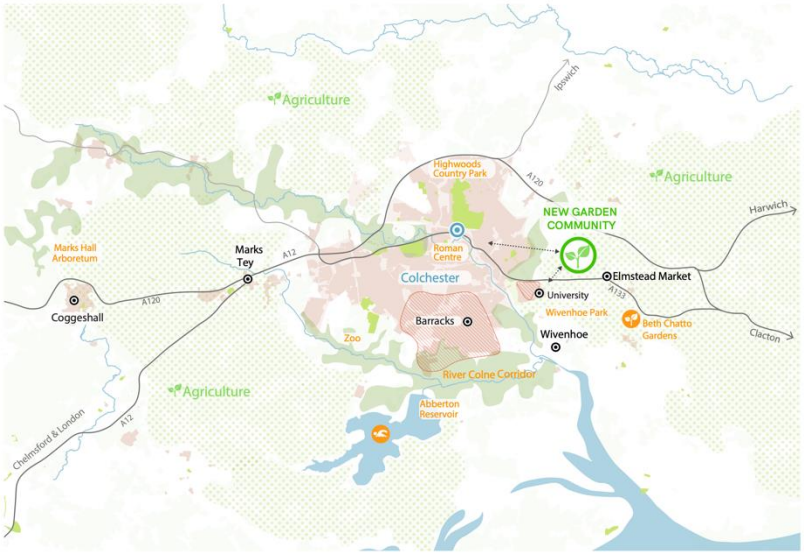


PLAN-MAKING PROCESS
PROGRAMME

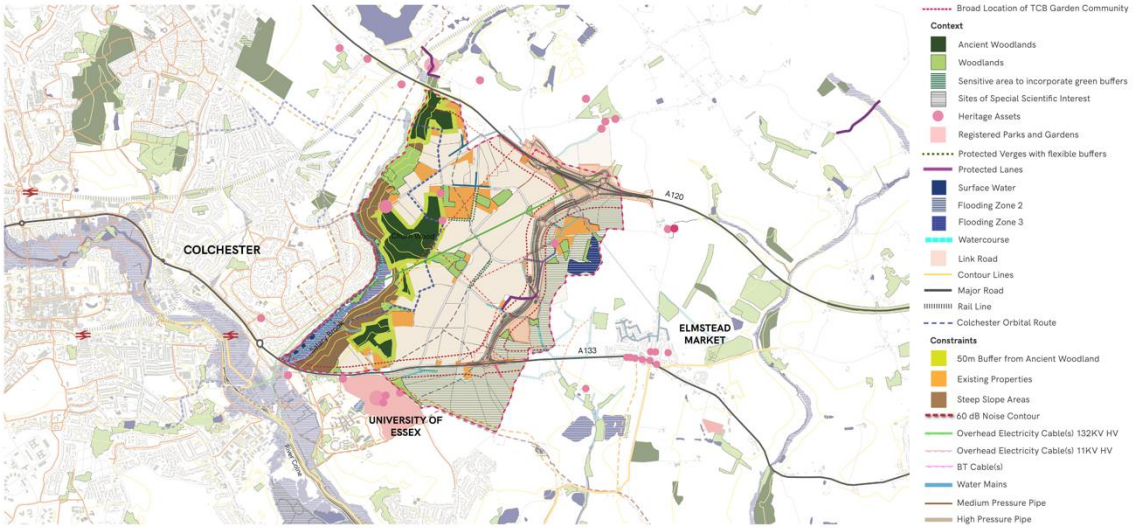
DPD PHASE 1 (9-12 MONTHS) → **DPD PHASE 2 (6-9 MONTHS)** → **DPD PHASE 3 (12-18 MONTHS)**

1. TCBGC DPD Evidence Base and Scoping
   June / July 2021
2. TCBGC Vision
   Summer 2021
3. TCBGC Masterplan Options + Preferred Options (Regulation 18)
   Autumn / Winter 2021
4. TCBGC Draft Plan DPD (Regulation 19)
   Spring/Summer 2022
5. Submission of DPD for Examination
   Autumn 2022
6. DPD Examination
   Winter 2022
7. DPD Adoption
   Summer-Autumn 2023

LOCAL CONTEXT



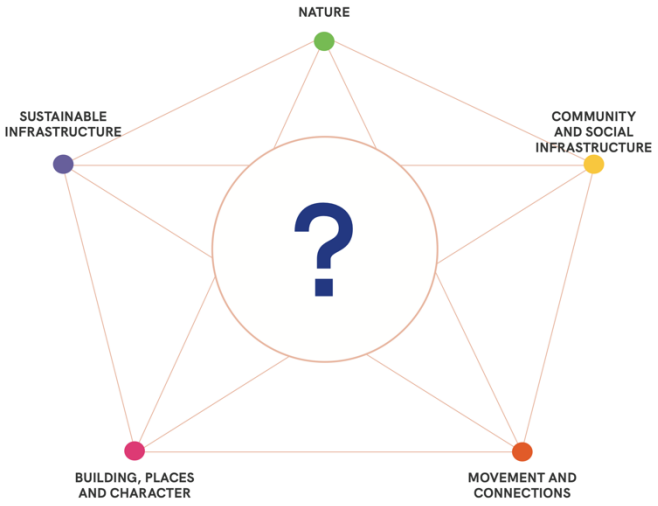
KEY CONSIDERATIONS



2

WHAT TYPE OF PLACE?

WHAT TYPE OF PLACE WILL THE GARDEN COMMUNITY BECOME?



The 2019 State of Nature report found that populations of the UK's most important wildlife had fallen by 60% over the last 50 years.

Source: Public Policy Exchange, Improving Biodiversity in the UK: Post-Pandemic Priorities to Tackle Nature's Dangerous Decline

More than 90%

of people in England are known to visit public green spaces, and think it is important to have public green spaces nearby.

Source: Green Capital, Green Infrastructure for a Future City

NATURE

GET ACTIVE IN EBBSFLEET

DOWNLOAD THE BETTERPOINTS APP VIA ITUNES AND GOOGLE PLAY

BetterPoints

Over 9 million people

in the UK say they are always or often lonely. 51% of all people aged 75+ live alone. Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health.

Source: Loneliness Research, Campaign to End Loneliness

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCUTRE

Long term stewardship

can offer the benefits of high quality managed open space, protection of the visual amenity of the village and a strong, cohesive and vibrant community.

Source: Bournville Stewardship Services Lawley Village, Bournville Village Trust

A sense of community

has been associated with improved well-being, increased feelings of safety and security, participation in community affairs and civic responsibility.

Source: Creating a sense of community: The role of public place. Francis et al., 2012. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 32.

In the UK our cars are parked for 96% of the time (80% at home and 16% elsewhere).

Source: The International Garden Cities Institute

Cycling for commute

People who cycle for travel purposes (i.e. rather than simply for recreation) are four times as likely to meet physical activity guidelines as those who don't.

Source: Public Health Matters, Public Health England

MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIONS

The future of deliveries

Four models are predicted to dominate last mile delivery in the future: Autonomous Guided Vehicles (robots!) with parcel lockers, drones, and bike couriers.

Source: Parcel delivery: The future of last mile. McKinsey & Company, 2016

Opportunities for connection

Where people live in segregated areas, the opportunities for them to mix and form meaningful relationships are more limited, potentially leading to higher levels of anxiety.

Source: Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, HM Government, March 2018

BUILDING, PLACES AND CHARACTER

Anchoring new neighbourhoods and homes to the local context through design enriches the area and evokes a strong visual identity which fosters a sense of ownership and community.

Source: Creating a sense of community: The role of public place. Francis et al., 2012. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 32

Renewable energy generation

On-site systems typically yield significant cost savings, over time, as well as improving the reliability of power supply.

Source: Clean, on-site energy generation, World Health Organisation

The implementation of SuDS

can greatly benefit green spaces and biodiversity and therefore should be used as much as feasibly possible.

Source: Essex County Council's online SuDS Guide

SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

3

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

LINK TO THE ENGAGEMENT WEBSITE

https://talk.tcbgardencommunity.co.uk/

v: Survey

Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Communities Survey

Introduction

Over the next thirty years a new Garden Community featuring between 7,000 and 9,000 homes, new community facilities, as well as space for new businesses and jobs will be created on the Tendring Colchester border. It will have its own distinctive character and identity. It will be carefully constructed to fit into the existing landscape and include important landscape buffers between the site and existing developments in Colchester, Wivenhoe, and Elmstead Market.

It will feature an innovative, high-quality design with a strong emphasis on tackling climate change and sustainability, energy efficiency and affordability. It will include a full range of health, education, and community facilities including for sports and leisure, as well as providing new and improved green spaces, parks, and areas for play. A balanced blend of jobs, housing and infrastructure will also be important.

The responsible local authorities (Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council) are in the process of developing a "Development Plan Document" (DPD) to set the vision, objectives and design principles for the Garden Community, following its allocation in the Tendring and Colchester Local Plans in early 2021.

This questionnaire invites you to consider the key themes that will help to define the vision for the Garden Community. It is part of a wider and ongoing process of community engagement that will inform the DPD. You can find out more, and share other ideas at https://talk.tcbgardencommunity.co.uk/

Character and Identity

Q: Think about the local area of Colchester, Wivenhoe, and Elmstead Market. What do you think are the 3 most distinctive features of the local area?

1._____

2._____

3._____

Q: Imagine walking through the new Garden Community. How would you like it to feel? Please try to provide up to 5 words that describe the place you imagine.

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

Buildings and Places.

Q: Think about the design of buildings and places in the Garden Community. What is most important to you?

- To include buildings for a diverse mix of uses, services and facilities.
- To create balanced and inclusive new neighbourhoods with a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing.
- To ensure equality of access to local services and facilities (education, health and social services) which are delivered ahead of, or alongside, housing growth.
- To ensure that new buildings are attractive and well designed.
- To be careful to add new buildings sensitively into the natural environment.
- To make sure that the place can be successfully managed, maintained and looked after in the future.

Grid question, rating each statement on scale of importance [not at all important, low importance, neutral, very important, extremely important]

Q. Aside from homes, what else would you want to see provided in the Garden Community?

_____ (free text box)

Q: Do you have any other views or ideas on the types of buildings, uses or places that could be included in the Garden Community plans?

_____ (free text box)

Nature and Community Spaces

Q: Do you know of any special existing natural features or assets in the local area that should be retained or enhanced as part of the Garden Community?

_____ (free text box)

Q: What do you think would help to make the new Garden Community a healthy place to live?

_____ (free text box)

Q: There are two main approaches to designing green space in the Garden Community. The first approach is that it can be spread throughout the new community. The second is that it can be concentrated around the edge of the new community to create "buffers" which separate it from existing villages and settlements. Which would you prefer?

- There should be wide areas of green space separating the new Garden Community from existing communities
- Green space should be spread throughout the new Garden Community

Q. Think about the open spaces in the Garden Community – spaces for play and events, spaces for sport and recreation as well as areas of openness for quiet contemplation. What 5 words would best describe the types of open spaces you would like to see in the Garden Community?

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

Long Lasting and Sustainable

Q: What could we be doing now to ensure the Garden Community is a great place to live in 100 years' time?

_____ (free text box)

Q: What do you think are the 3 main ways in which the Garden Community can help address Climate Change, including promoting renewable energy and low carbon living?

1._____

2._____

3._____

Q: Think about the long-term management of the Garden Community, in terms of how decisions are made, and the work that it done to look after and maintain it. Where could local residents contribute most to the long-term management of the Garden Community?

_____ (free text box)

Movement and Connections

Q: Thinking about how to support active and environmentally friendly travel in the Garden Community, how important are each of the following approaches?

- Accommodating new means of transport like e-scooters and cargo bikes.
- Taking cars off the existing road network by introducing a Rapid Transport System that connects Colchester Town and its stations with the University and with the new Garden Community.
- Providing foot and cycle routes within and between the Garden Community and surrounding towns and villages.
- Limiting car parking to promote use of non-car travel options.
- Creating car free zones.
- *Grid question, rating each statement on scale of importance [not at all important, low importance, neutral, very important, extremely important]*

Q: Do you have other view or ideas around how to encourage people in the Garden Community to walk, cycle and use public transport rather than use their cars?

_____ (free text box)

Final Question

Q. Do you have any other ideas about the kind of place you want the Garden Community to become?

_____ (free text box)

vi: Survey respondent demographics

Fig 7: Age of survey respondents

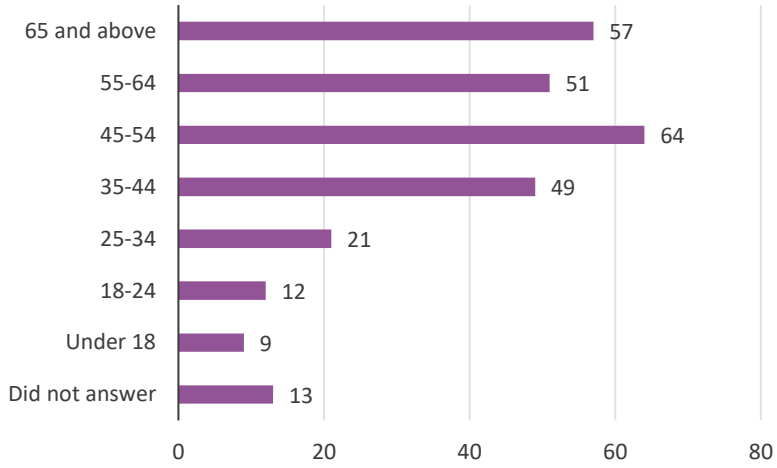


Fig 8: Ethnicity of survey respondents

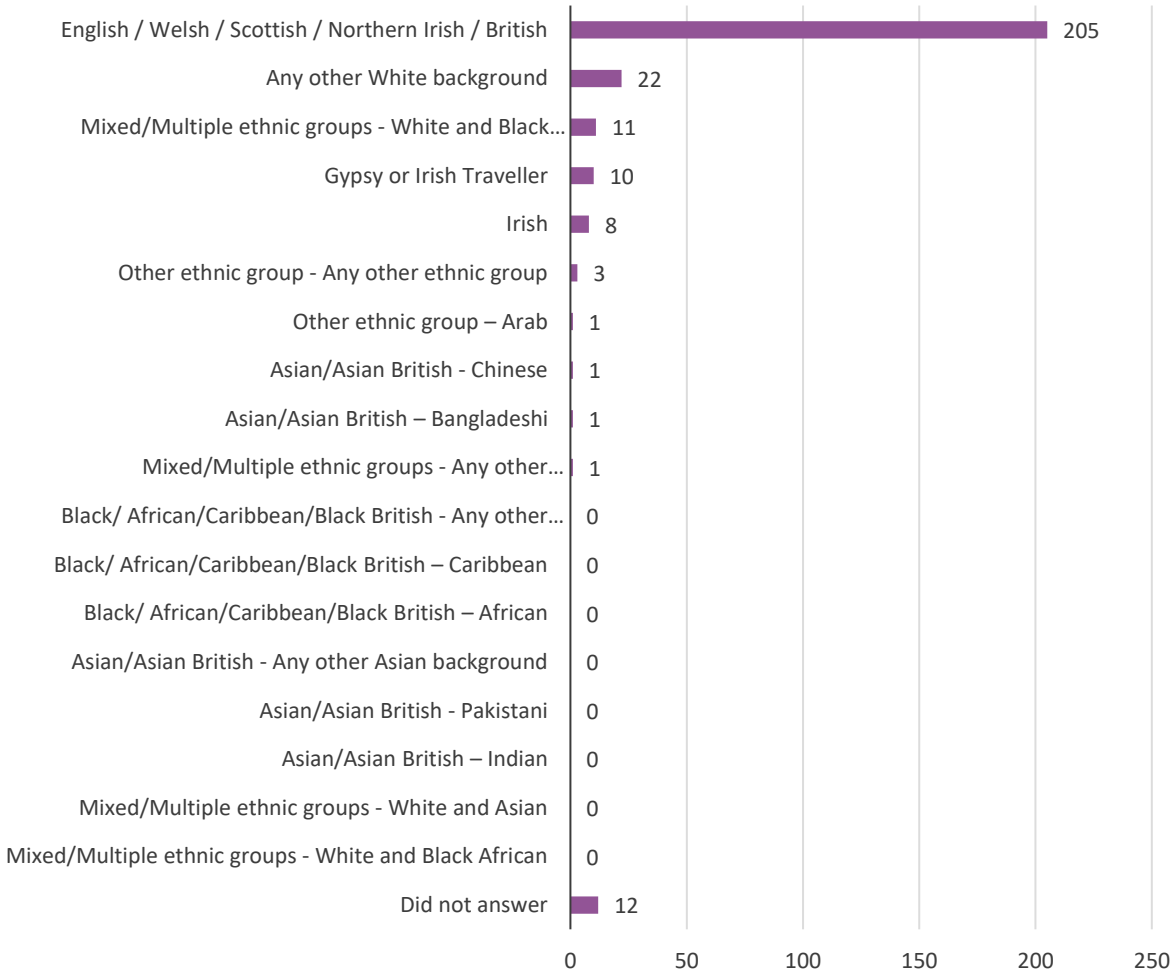
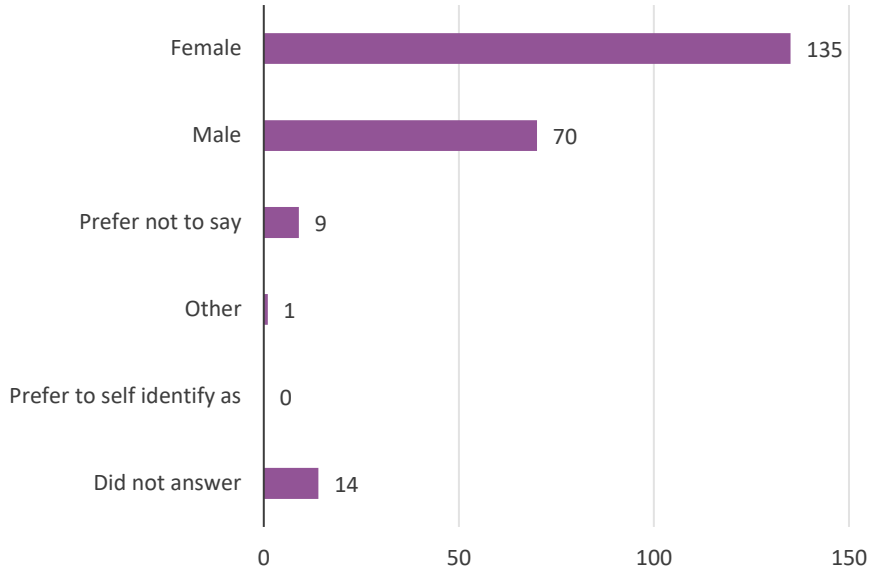


Fig 9: Gender of survey respondents



vi: Postcard activity

You're part of a vibrant and diverse new community on the Tendring Colchester border.

What 3 things do you and your family most enjoy about where you live?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

TRAVERSE

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