



CONSULTATION 8th & 9th SEPTEMBER : SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The intention of this short paper is to summarise the public feedback from the Alton Neighbourhood Plan (ANP3) consultation held on 8th and 9th September 2023. The intention is that this will facilitate further development of ANP3 policies and importantly inform potential housing site selections.

NOTIFICATION AND PREPARATION

Full details of ANP3 definition is contained on the Alton Town Council (ATC) website at <https://www.alton.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>. A detailed project plan showing dates of each activity is set out there.

Altonians were made aware of the second public consultation as an integral part of the May 2023 consultation. In addition, a detailed notification was included in the summer edition of the Altonian newsletter, which goes out to 14904 households in the town. (This notification followed a detailed ANP explanation given in the spring edition of the Altonian.) The September consultation was also advertised in the Alton Herald newspaper the week before the event.

Additionally, the ANP working group (WG) runs a Facebook page and an Instagram account

CONSULTATION DELIVERY

The Consultation, held in the Alton Assembly Rooms, was open to the public from 3pm until 7pm on 8th September, and from 10am to 1pm the following day. A formal booking-in system was conducted, with full GDPR management of data. A carefully developed presentation was printed in colour on to 37 A1-sized sheets, and arranged for display on boards for the public viewing. Numerous Post-it notes, cards and pens were available for the public to respond to questions posed on the boards, and to provide opportunities for comments and input to the emerging Plan. There were also copies of the draft Design Code, Housing Needs Assessment and the Sustainability Environmental Analysis made easily available for the public to read. A short presentation by the chair of the WG was made hourly. There were sufficient WG volunteers on both days to host and answer questions from the public.

The 37 display panels were posted on to the ATC website in pdf format for any person to access and, if they so wished, to provide further feedback.

OPPORTUNITY TO FEEDBACK

During the two days of the consultation, 370 attendees were registered as they arrived to view the display. Many of them chose to make comments on the Post-it notes or cards as input to the developing ANP3. In total, 887 separate contributions were received over the two days, and a handful more were subsequently submitted by e-mail.

The feedback comments were then grouped, insofar as was possible, to reflect the headings of the various display boards, and the distribution of these comments is shown in the following table.

Scenario Planning	511
Neighbourhood Development Orders and Town Centre	58
Transport and Travel	64

Health and Wellbeing	47
Housing and Design	32
Community and Open Space	54
Other Policy Areas	21
What have we missed	19
Other Comments	47
Vision for Alton	34
TOTAL	887

Each of these individual contributions has been typed verbatim into a text document, and a spreadsheet developed in an attempt to identify support or otherwise for specific aspects.

ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Scenario planning

The WG have used Scenario Planning methodology to develop four Scenarios for future housing development in the ANP designated area. These were carefully articulated in the presentation boards, with maps and supporting SWOT analysis. Attendees were encouraged to comment on the suggested site allocations. Detailed summarised results are available in the accompanying spreadsheet, but show a massive resistance to Scenario 3, with 276 opposed to it and just 3 in support. The comparable figures for the other scenarios are:

Scenario 1: 18 in support, 2 opposed

Scenario 2: 15 in support, 12 opposed

Scenario 4: 7 in support, 25 opposed

Under the heading of Alternative Scenarios there was recorded a small acceptance for some form of development around the A31 corridor to the South East of the area, despite the opposition to Scenario 4 that includes these sites.

It is clear that there was an extremely significant input from Holybourne residents who currently have an active campaign running in the village to resist the potential development of a greenfield site that is identified in East Hampshire's Land Availability Assessment and for which the landowner has put forward some outline proposals. This influence is confirmed by the analysis of Postcode information provided by those in attendance. Holybourne has 12.7% of the town's population, but contributed 51% of the attendance at the consultation.

Community feedback is clear, consistent and sizeable related to Scenarios 1 and 3. Feedback on scenarios 2 and 4 are commented on less and the feedback is mixed".

Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDO)

In addition, the use of NDOs was considered as part of the ANP3 WG activity for brownfield sites and comment was invited on this option. From the data it is considered that some 71 responses supported brownfield development in the town by means of NDO.

Housing

There was a considerable number of housing orientated comments covering more than 28 separate areas, all of which can be viewed in the accompanying spreadsheet. However, the most important of these were:

- Road capacity, parking and safety (170)
- Worries about groundwater and flooding (54)
- Insufficient infrastructure (50)
- Select brownfield first (47)

Other comments related to adverse health outcomes, loss of village character, loss of open space and agriculture land and loss of rural tranquility.

Within this section there were a further 38 comments in support of, and 10 against, developments around the A31 corridor.

Transport and Travel

There were 73 transport and travel comments, the most important of which were:

- Traffic and Safety in Holybourne (27)
- Better public transport (13)
- Better cycling provision (6)

Health

There were 72 health-related comments, the most important of which were the lack of GP and dentist provision, the health and wellbeing value of the countryside, potential educational shortfalls, and the expansion or protection of the Community Hospital.

Housing Design

There were 57 comments under this heading, the main ones being Solar Panels for new houses (12) and heat pumps on flats (9).

Community & Open Spaces

There were 65 comments on Community and Open Spaces, the two most important being to protect green spaces (13) and to protect the Holybourne countryside and play area (14).

Other Policy Areas

There were 25 diverse comments on Other Policy Areas, the main one being to upgrade the sewerage system (5).

What have we missed?

There were 20 separate comments for this section, with nothing significant emerging.

Suggestions for Alton Vision

It is not possible to quantify in numerical terms the most popular from the 59 varied returns on this question. However the following bullet points should provide a basis on which to build:

- Good recreational facilities
- Friendly, helpful, compassionate community to live in - it is!
- Good mix of different types of household, e.g. youth, family, elderly, etc
- Adequate good quality amenities
- Diverse commerce
- Eco friendly

- A vibrant Town Centre with much more accommodation and centralised, coordinated parking

ANALYSIS OF POST CODE AREAS OF ATTENDEES

It was important to do an analysis of from where attendee's to the consultation had come and this data was extracted from the booking in sheets. In summary:

- Attendees came from a wide area.
- 91% from Alton (inc. 51% from Holybourne) and 9% from elsewhere.
- Proportionally, Holybourne had a very significant turnout given the population size of 2,282 (2021 census) with Alton being 17,874 (2021 census).
- Within Alton, only one street/road had a comparatively high turnout and which was Grebe Close at 22. Windmill Lane was the next highest at 6;
- There appears to have been representation from most areas of Alton with but with notable gaps around Greenfields, Manor and Eastbrooke in particular.

The high turnout in Holybourne is attributed to the perceived plan to build a significant number of homes within the village.

SUMMARY

We analysed the data thoroughly using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. It is significant that the findings from both approaches, independently researched, are complimentary and do not contradict each other."

Some attendees offered comments that clearly were outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan; for instance, under Community and Green Spaces, the provision of kayaking on Kings Pond was suggested!.

ANP Policies

There are a number of themes which were consistent throughout the responses which should be reflected in the policies. These are: Character, Regeneration, Safety & Wellbeing and Infrastructure First

ANP Scenarios

There was support for "scenario 1 plus NDO". Attendees gave limited feedback on Scenario 2 suggesting it is not highly contentious. There was very strong opposition to Holybourne/Scenario 3 and very little support. There was mixed feedback on A31 sites, a small balance in reserved support.

Attachments:

- A. Extract showing summary of consultation analysis.
- B. ANP data analysis V2

Attachment A Extract showing summary of consultation analysis.

Precis

Analysis of all ANP public engagement comments from September 8th and 9th 2023

Common Themes

	% of total comments	
Holybourne not suitable for development. Predominant reason— Traffic	352	42
Need infrastructure first including GPs Dentists and hospital before building	78	
Brownfield First—preserve productive land	71	16
Band of land North of A31, South of Windmill hill could take large development	40	
NDO's a good idea	39	
Protect the countryside and green spaces—good for health and well being	39	
Dont affect the Skyline and farming fields, nothing above 145 m contour	26	
More affordable housing	22	
Windmill Hill an area of preservation—dont build here—noise from A31	14	
Shops not Flats. Revitalise town centre. Make it pedestrian	14	
We need a new community centre with cinema theatre dance music etc	14	
Only sustainable, energy efficient houses should be built with solar/heat pumps.	10	
To be a small but thriving, vibrant town with character and safety including the green environment	10	
Building on Site 31 should not go ahead. Dont build North of Basingstoke Road	10	
Bio-diversity – bats and other wildlife would be threatened by this proposed development.	9	
We need more buses	9	
Scenario 1 good idea	8	
Wooteys ward has already absorbed 275 houses. It (new houses) really does need sharing out. Development in Alton and Holybourne needs to be proportionate and in keeping	8	
We need better cycling routes	8	
Scenario 2 viable	7	
We should support the Neatham Down development	7	
We should be appealing to local government for a reduction in our 'quota' as nearly half of our area is within a National Park.	6	
Controlled infill in Holybourne only/ Holybourne should be looked at for development	5	
/developer should fund exit road onto A31	4	
Scenario 4 is good	4	
Happy to change car parks to dwellings	4	
Anstey Lane and Gilbert White Way dangerous Traffic from new houses	4	
West and East of old Odiham road were refused planning permission on appeal by a government inspector.	3	
A very big thank you to all working on Alton's NP. A difficult task!	3	
A Mixed approach to Scenarios would be better than additive approach	2	
All building must insist on sustainability – solar roofs!	2	
Holybourne Sites close to A31 least impactful if new junction formed	2	
Build on Penns Place and in Petersfield-Problem solved	2	
Thousands of houses have been built in and around Alton that already put a significant strain on services.	2	
Disagree with all negative comments about Holybourne	1	
Scenarios are confusing	1	
Scenario 1 Crazy	1	
Please don't turn Alton the town we love into another Basingstoke.	1	
Build smaller houses for the ageing population in Alton. Not flats but ground floor accommodation.	1	
Really feel that comments from the last consultation have been valued. Well done.	1	
Totally agree with the order of the Scenarios for building houses	1	
Field above Diggers exiting into the corner of Hall Road in Manor Estate	1	
Loss of strategic gap with Beech is in conflict with the Beech NP.	1	
The climate is in crisis losing/reducing carbon capture is foolish.	1	
Too many greedy landlords	1	
New Railway station North end of Holybourne	1	
A northern bypass needed	1	
	847	

Scenario Identification and Action Plan—page 16

1	2	3	4
312	526	761	1829

Qualitative Analysis of Consultation Comments

Introduction

The comments made at the public consultation provide a significant amount of qualitative data. A qualitative analysis was conducted to add to the quantitative work provided by others.

Objectives were:

- Derive full value from the consultation.
- Demonstrate we have listened thoroughly.
- Identify “golden threads” and drive consensus.

Data Analysis

We analysed this qualitative data by conducting thematic analysis, a method that is inherently flexible and exploratory. We followed six phases of analysis. These phases were (1) familiarisation with the data – we read the data several times, taking notes; (2) coding, we created labels describing concepts in the data; (3) we generated themes, where codes were grouped to describe patterns in the data; (4) we reviewed themes, where the themes were checked back with reference to the data to ensure they captured a coherent story; (5) we named the themes, where consideration was given to expanding or shortening theme names; and (6) we wrote our conclusions. We conducted two code sweeps of the data with several iterations of analysis between the six steps.

We shared the draft analysis with members of the steering group to ensure it represented a coherent narrative free of bias, and was finally presented to the whole steering group where it was agreed that it was consistent with the quantitative analysis produced by others.

Discussion of Themes

Four themes were generated from 27 codes. There follows an explanation of each theme and examples are given of comments relating to the most pervasive codes.

<u>Codes</u>	<u>Themes</u>
Village Identity and Character Skyline/bowl/countour concerns Sprawl Support/Opposition to A31 sites Opposition to Holybourne/Scenario 3 Agricultural Loss Scale of development National Park Comments Satellite Village Comments Share Development Across Town Re-arrange scenarios/consider specific sites	Character
Support for Scenarios 1&2 Brownfield First/Preferred Environmental Concern Support NDO/Comments Related to Town Centre Car park rationalisation Affordable/Social Housing	Regeneration
Concerns for elderly and disabled Wellbeing concerns Safety Concerns Flooding Use of Green Space for leisure	Safety and Wellbeing
Support Services Concern (GP, Dentist etc) Infrastructure Concerns Public Transport Traffic Congestion Concern Cycling	Infrastructure First

Character

- The emphasis on character is a common concern – it is not a divisive issue.
- Different areas of Alton have unique characteristics. That, in itself, is a characteristic - Alton is not one homogenous settlement.
- Alton is characterised by a market town with a rural setting “in a bowl” and by Holybourne with it’s discrete village identity, where scale is an important factor.
- A feature of this consultation is the large number of negative comments from Altonians which warn against loss of character.

- There are a significant number of positive comments about the need to *restore* character of the town centre.

Example comments relating to preservation of Alton's character:

"Urban sprawl in an inappropriate location"

"keep any building below 145 contour"

"...skyline...I believe this must be maintained to keep Alton's appeal"

Example comments relating to Holybourne village identity:

"fundamentally change the nature of the village for the worse"

"Holybourne will lose it's character and identity"

"40% increase in size...will destroy the character of the village"

Example comments relating to the restoration of character:

"the town needs to lift it's game and ambition"

"lifting the spirit of a town now rather lacking heart"

"Let's go more "market town" and less "downmarket" town"

Regeneration

- Nearly all comments about the town centre relate to making improvements rather than expressing fear of harmful effects.
- Altonians feel the centre of the town has been neglected.
- Altonians see the regeneration of the town centre as a way to restore the vitality of that area and to provide more housing capacity of the right type.
- Altonians also see this as a way to reduce the adverse effects of overdevelopment and unsustainable development in other parts of the area.

Example comments related to regeneration:

"Brownfield sites should be the priority. Car parks in Alton are sufficient and in some cases underused"

"I feel NDO is a great plan, to ensure sustainability and countryside wildlife is protected"

"Brownfield in the town centre should be addressed first"

Wellbeing and Safety

- There are numerous comments relating to both safety and wellbeing.
- Access to greenfield amenity features in many wellbeing comments
- A sense of community and place is linked to wellbeing

- Wellbeing concerns are not location specific – they are felt by all
- There are several mentions of safety, many of which are linked to traffic concerns
- Many safety comments relate to Holybourne but other areas of Alton are referenced too

Example comments related to wellbeing:

“I feel safe to walk as a female on my own with my children”

“the wellbeing impact would be significant”

“lovely green space used by walkers/dog walkers and runners and families – good for mental and physical health”

Example comments related to safety:

“Emergency services already have difficulty”.

“Increase in traffic along single-track roads and be unsafe”

“it is dangerous for children and the elderly in particular”

Infrastructure First

- Numerous comments suggest infrastructure and public services must be provisioned in advance of new dwellings being developed.
- Comments suggest that infrastructure and public services are already stretched.
- Many comments relating to the inherent constraints of the roads in Holybourne but concerns are expressed elsewhere too

Example comments related to infrastructure concerns:

*“Insufficient infrastructure – doctors/dentists etc in Alton to support further developments”**“Roads are an important consideration. The Basingstoke Road has deteriorated since Redrow has been built and is very narrow – as a pedestrian it is dangerous. Much more good cycleway provision.*

“Holybourne cannot sustain more traffic”

Conclusions

ANP Policies

- Taken together these themes represent a golden thread evidenced by community feedback.
- These themes should be reflected in ANP policies

ANP Scenarios

- Overall message is “regenerate and make much more of what we already have” and “don’t spoil what we value”
- Support and enthusiasm for “scenario 1 plus NDO”

- Limited feedback on Scenario 2 suggesting it is not highly contentious
- Very strong opposition to Holybourne/Scenario 3, very little support
- Mixed feedback on A31 sites, a small balance in *reserved* support
- Consensus would be achieved by “Scenario 2 plus NDO”, this would also be consistent with the themes generated by community feedback.