

Shaping Your Community: Engaging with residents and businesses. Interim Report, November 29th 2017.

Background

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2036 is currently being developed and will guide the development of housing, employment land, infrastructure and community facilities in the Borough over the next 20 years. A new plan gives the Council and our communities a chance to look afresh at what sort of places and facilities we need in the future.

From December 2015 to February 2016 an “Issues and Options” consultation document gave residents, businesses and other organisations the opportunity to get involved by giving their thoughts and views. In response to the consultation, around 3,300 individual representations were received from over 1,150 respondents. The outcomes and recommendations were reported in June and July 2016.

In July 2017 the Full Council considered an ‘Emerging Local Plan’ and the council have stated what their preferred options are in terms of the location of new housing development in the Borough. Further technical work is ongoing in order to inform the plan. Part of this work includes a commitment from the Council to carry out further engagement with residents to help shape the plan.

Whilst the council received responses from 1,150 people as part of the Issues and Options consultation, it was clear that there remained a low level of understanding about the purpose of a Local Plan and how it might affect residents and businesses in the borough.

Purpose

It was with this in mind that ‘Shaping Your Community’ was developed. A two way engagement process, not part of the formal planning process or a duty to consult, but focussed on getting information out and gaining insights from residents and businesses and about their priorities and needs.

How

Shaping Your Community was launched in October 2017. Businesses and residents were targeted through two key channels. Firstly, with a digital survey that was distributed through a wide range of existing networks managed by the Council’s Economic Development team, One Community, Local Area Managers and Schools and Colleges. Alongside this, the survey was distributed to a number of digital mailing lists including those who had expressed a specific interest in receiving information about business and the economy, the Local Plan and the general E-Newsletter from Eastleigh Borough Council. The digital campaign was followed by invitations to businesses to attend a choice of four meetings held across the Borough and to parish councils both within Eastleigh Borough and those within Winchester. Paper surveys were also distributed to libraries across the Borough, the Wildern School, dial-a-ride bus services and minority ethnic groups.

The survey was supported by a wide range of information that could be accessed via the Eastleigh Borough Council’s website, which also hosted the survey. This information included links to all of the key technical information on the Local Plan, should people want to look in more detail, some key facts and a short video which explained the Local Plan. This video was a key element of the ‘Shaping your Community’ campaign. It strips away all of the technical details and explains in plain English why Council’s must have a local Plan, what they are for and how this affects residents and businesses. This video was key to engaging with a wider audience and improving understanding amongst the public.

Results: who responded?

Overall more than 1,500 surveys were completed by residents and businesses from across Eastleigh Borough and from neighbouring parishes in the Winchester area. Of these over 70 paper copies were completed via distribution to specific hard to reach groups such as older people and minority ethnic groups. In addition to the survey responses there were a number of meetings held with businesses and parish councils. Over 30 businesses were represented at the meetings held across the borough. Representatives from seven neighbouring parishes in Winchester attended a meeting held for them, with around 25 attendees. The majority of Eastleigh Borough's ten parishes were also represented at a separate meeting with 30 attendees.

This has resulted in both a good sample size in terms of the survey, with huge value and meaning added to the survey results through the discussions at each of the meetings.

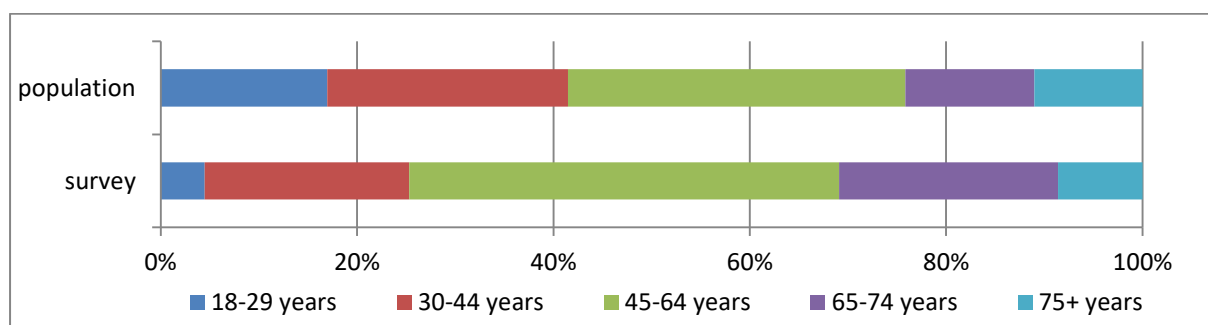
There were two separate surveys, one for businesses and one for residents, in order to identify the different issues faced by these two key groups. Analysis is therefore separate.

Residents Survey results:

Insights on local residents:

The survey included a number of questions such as residents' age, gender, ethnicity and what area they lived in. This is vital information in helping us to understand who we are hearing from and therefore being able to assess if those people represent the population as a whole. This is critical to enable us to understand if the views we receive are balanced. This information was monitored throughout the survey period and measured against information about the whole population. This enabled us to identify gaps in responses, such as certain age groups or ethnic groups, and look at other ways of reaching these. Of those who did respond we know the following:

- Almost 90% lived within the Borough of Eastleigh
- Almost 90% are buying or own their own home. In Eastleigh Borough as a whole just 74% are in this position. We therefore have not got a good representation of those who are renting or living with parents, this is partly a reflection of the age of respondents.
- More females than males completed the survey, 55% compared to 42%.
- The age of respondents does not match the age profile of the Borough. Overall there were very few responses from the 18-29 year age group, with more from the older age groups.



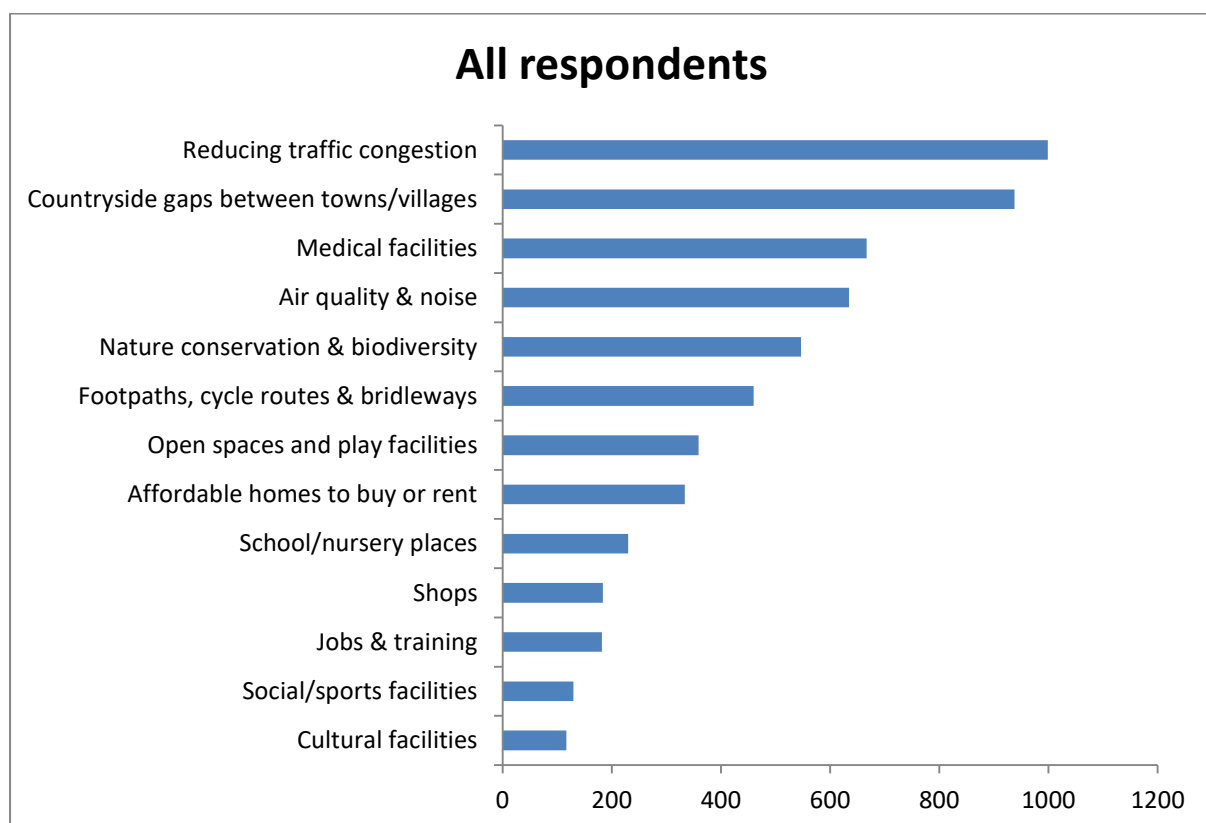
- Around 10% of responses were from people living outside of Eastleigh Borough. Of those living within the Borough there were fewer responses from those living in Bursledon, Hamble and Netley area and Botley, Hedge End and West End area. There were significantly more responses from those living in the Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath area. Around a third of responses from within the Borough were from residents of this area, however just 16% of the Borough's population live in this area.

There is a good representation of the borough as a whole with the survey providing a statistically significant sample at the 95% confidence level with a 3% interval. However the respondent insights have shown two clear areas for further analysis.

1. The 18-29 year age group is significantly under-represented, it is therefore important to assess if this age group had identified different issues to other age groups.
2. The area of residence: there is significant over representation from one area of the Borough. Analysis by area is therefore important to establish if residents in different parts of the Borough have different issues.

What matter most? All respondents:

The key question in the survey asked residents to choose what mattered most to them and their families from a list of issues, they were limited to four choices from a total of 13. Whilst it is recognised that everything on this list is important, the purpose of this approach was to establish residents' priorities. The chart below shows the results of this question based on all respondents.



The issues that are important to the largest number of residents are reducing traffic congestion with 68% of respondents choosing this from the list, followed by maintaining gaps between towns and villages chose by 64% of respondents. Other major issues are medical facilities and air quality and noise with over 40% of respondents highlighting these as a key issue.

Respondents were given the opportunity to add comments and explain their choices and almost 1,000 people provided more information that helps us to better understand the survey results. Whilst there were some very specific comments the vast majority followed very similar themes which are summarised below.

- Residents feel that the borough is already **overcrowded or overpopulated** and that infrastructure improvements have not kept up with house building resulting in the area being **very congested** at peak times.

- Many felt that this isn't helped by **poor or disconnected cycle routes**.
- They feel that the level of **congestion is contributing to air and noise pollution**. Many specific locations were mentioned including Hamble Lane, Chickenhall Lane along with noise levels from the airport and the motorways being mentioned.
- Residents feel that the **green space that is left should be preserved**, as further house building would make things worse, in terms of congestion, air quality and noise.
- Many residents also mentioned extremely **long waiting times at their GP surgery**, all stating 4-6 weeks wait for a non-emergency appointment, this was consistent across the borough.
- Residents have chosen to live in Eastleigh due to its semi-rural nature and access to Countryside, they feel that this may no longer exist.
- Many feel the countryside is valuable resource, and warning that we can't get it back once it's built on.
- Residents want to be able to **access shops and schools close to their homes**, with safe routes.
- **Public transport is felt to be inadequate**, which has meant further reliance on driving, adding to congestion.
- **Parking** is sometimes limited and costly, particularly in Eastleigh town centre.

In addition residents were also asked if they had other priorities that were not on the list, but important to them. Many of those stated were related to the list above, however two key issues that were identified were public transport and parking. Below, the 'word cloud' illustrates all of the comments made, the larger the word appears, the more it was mentioned.

Q4 Is there anything you would add to this list, which would be one of YOUR top four priorities?



We know from the analysis of respondents that more people aged 45-74 years and more people from Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath completed the survey. It is therefore important to establish if there is a difference of opinion depending on age and where people live so we can understand if some issues become more or less significant as a result.

Differences by age group:

Whilst there are some key similarities in priorities irrespective of age, there are also some notable differences, based on the top four priorities by each age group:

- For all age groups 'reducing traffic congestion' and 'countryside gaps between town/villages' were amongst the four issues most chosen.

- For those aged 18-29 years 'affordable homes to buy/rent' was top, and yet this was significantly lower on the list for all other age groups.
- Medical facilities only came up amongst the top four most chosen for those age 65+ years.
- Nature conservation and biodiversity was high priority for the 18-29s, 30-44s and 45-64s, but not the older age groups.
- Open space and play facilities was a top four issue for the 30-44 year olds only.
- Air quality and noise was an issue for those in age groups 45-64, 65-74 and 65+ years.

When compared to the overall results the top two issues remain the same, however due to the over representation of those aged 45-64 years and 65-74 years there is potentially weight added to certain issues, which are more important to these age groups, such as air quality and noise. Meanwhile less weight is given to issues identified by the younger age group which is not well represented such as affordable housing to buy/rent.

Differences by area of residence:

The key issues for residents across Eastleigh Borough and those in neighbouring parishes are all similar. In fact just one difference exists between those issues which have been selected most. For all areas three of the four most selected issues are the same:

- Reducing traffic congestion
- Countryside gaps between towns/villages
- Air quality and noise

There is a clear geographical divide between the one other issue that is amongst the four most selected. For all those living in Eastleigh Town, Chandlers Ford/Hiltingbury, Botley, Hedge End & West End and Bursledon, Hamble & Netley the other key issue is medical facilities.

For those living in Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath along with those living outside of the Borough, the other key issue is nature conservation and biodiversity.

Due to the over-representation of survey responses from the Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath area it is important to recognise that their views will have potentially added weight to the overall results.

What Parish Councils said:

Two meetings were held with parish councils, one for those within Eastleigh Borough and one for those in neighbouring Winchester. Both events were well attended and generated a good level of discussion. At each meeting a general background on the local plan was provided, along with what the survey had shown at that point. These headline results were used as the basis for discussion with some key questions for Parish Councils:

1. Are these results true for your area?
2. If so, what are stories/issues behind this information?
3. If not, what are the most significant issues in your area?
4. How can these be addressed?

Winchester Parish Councils' meeting:

Whilst there is still further work to be done to complete compiling all notes and summarising discussions, some key headlines have emerged at this stage:

- Discussion around the duty to cooperate and a feeling that Eastleigh Borough Council had not worked fully with Winchester City Council.
- Need for more information about what technical studies had been carried out and are ongoing and who Eastleigh Borough Council was working with on the range of issues.

- There was a ‘fear of the worst’ due to the lack of information that they felt was available and had been shared with them.
- Feeling that there was not equality in the level of investigation into the viability and suitability of all of the strategic growth options.

Eastleigh Borough Parish Councils’ meeting:

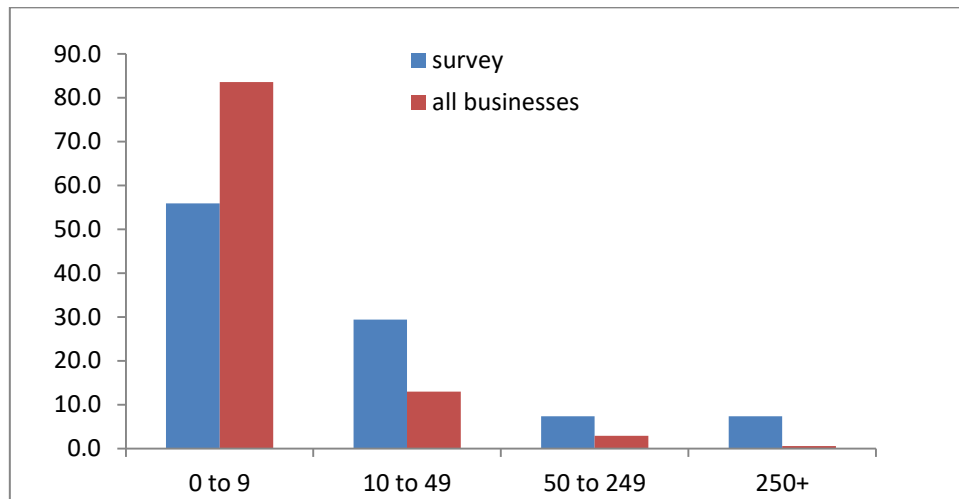
The meeting with Eastleigh parish councils had a different structure, with discussion taking place in groups, split by area. This was done in recognition that different issues are important in different parts of the borough and a more local discussion would help us to better understand these differences. It was also felt that some of the valuable detail would be lost in a larger group discussion. There was significant local detailed information recorded, below are the common themes of discussion:

- Traffic congestion, also an issue in off peak times in some areas
- Allbrook Bridge, not suitable for larger vehicles, but often traffic cuts through or forced to if there is an incident on the motorway.
- Countryside gaps are essential, no-one wanted urban sprawl. Green spaces an access to the countryside.
- Affordable homes, social housing and homes for life are all needed.
- Health facilities, and transport to get to them. It is not just the waiting times but as GP surgeries have closed some now finding accessing them is difficult without private transport.
- Public transport, not adequate to enable people to get to work, shops and doctors.
- Want to have the opportunity to be involved in master planning.

Business Survey results:

Insights on local businesses:

- Of the 68 responses there was a good spread from across the Borough, but the highest number was from businesses located in Eastleigh Town.
- Over half of those who responded have been located within Eastleigh Borough for at least ten years.
- The majority of businesses are UK owned, however more information is required in order to understand the international nature of businesses and their supply chains.
- Businesses who responded to the survey were based in a wide range of premises.
- More responses were received from larger firms, as compared to the average across the borough.



Almost 84% of businesses in the borough are 'micro-businesses', many of these are likely to be very small, perhaps just one or two employees working from home. If they are working from home then business rates are not being paid, which also means we have no official record of them and their location. Only with this information are we able to contact them and get them involved. This is far easier with larger firms, as demonstrated by the chart which shows the responses by size of business as compared to the average across the borough.

What matters most?

The key survey questions focussed on establishing from businesses what mattered most to them, firstly in terms of availability and secondly in terms of cost. Analysis of this key information is presented for all respondents and has then been analysed by location of businesses, in order to establish if the issues are different in different part of the borough. Secondly analysis is done by size of company, again to establish if different issues are faced depending on size of business.

Overall results show that in terms of both availability and cost appropriate land/buildings and broadband are the most significant issues for businesses across the Borough.

Availability

In terms of availability the most important factors for businesses are:

- Local Customers
- Appropriate land / buildings
- Broadband

The chart below shows the results, whilst those listed above are the top three, other significant issues are parking and skilled staff.



Are the results different across the borough?

All businesses were asked their location which enables us to look at the survey results by area to see if the issues are different in different parts of the borough. The number of responses to the survey is small so this is not a statistically significant sample. However it does give a good insight into issues and what needs to be looked at in more detail.

Overall there are significant similarities in the top three issues across the borough. Land and buildings was a 'top 3' issue in all areas, with the exception of Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton

Heath. Broadband was in the top three in all areas except Eastleigh Town where it was fourth on the list. 'Local customers' was identified as a top issue in all areas except Chandlers Ford and Hiltingbury.

Parking was identified as the most important issue in both Eastleigh town and Chandlers Ford and Hiltingbury and skilled staff were top of the list in Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton.

Does the size of business change the priorities?

Each business is in one of four size categories, measured by the number of staff, micro-businesses with 0-9 employees, small with 10-49, medium with 50-249 and large with 250+ employees.

The results show that:

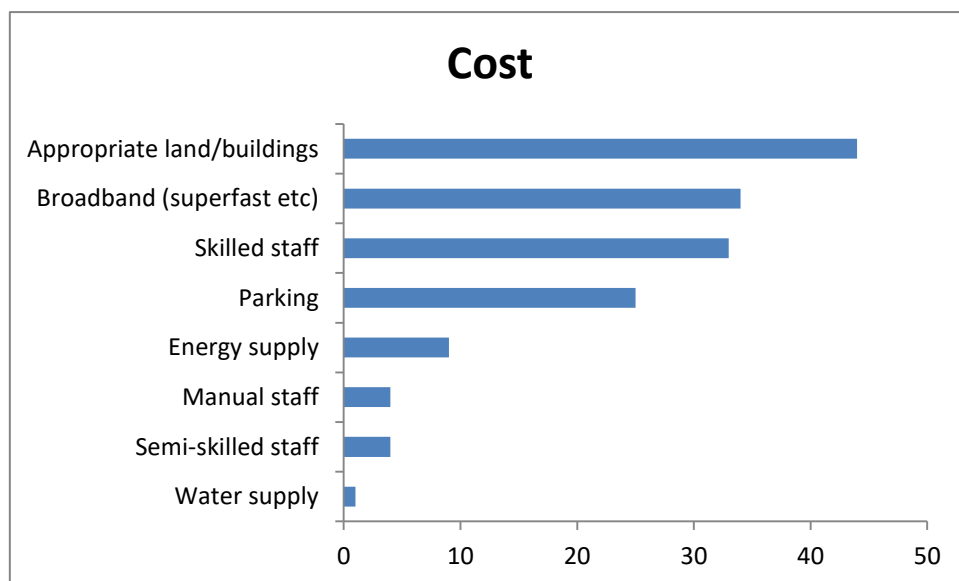
- Availability of local customers is an issue for all sized businesses.
- Broadband is an issue for micro and small business but less so for medium and not for large.
- Skilled staff is an issue for medium and large business, but less so for micro or small.

Cost

In terms of cost the most important factors for businesses are:

- Appropriate land / buildings
- Broadband
- Skilled staff

The chart below shows the results, whilst those listed above are the top three, another significant issue is parking.



Are the results different across the borough?

The cost of appropriate land and buildings was a top three issue in all areas of the Borough with the exception of Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton. Broadband is a top issue in all areas except Eastleigh town where it was fourth on the list. Parking is amongst the top three in all areas with the exception of Botley, Hedge End and West East. The cost of skilled staff is also a significant issue across much of the borough.

Does the size of business change the priorities?

The cost of appropriate land/buildings is a top issue for all sized businesses, broadband is more an issue for micro and small businesses whilst the cost of skills staff is an issue for all except micro-businesses.

What businesses said

In each of the four business meetings the headline results of the survey were presented and used a basis for discussion. The key questions that were asked were:

1. Are these the priorities for your business?
2. If so what are the barriers and opportunities?
3. What else is an issue for your business?
4. What can Eastleigh Borough Council do to support you?

Staff/Skills	<p>Skilled staff Semi-skilled staff Manual staff</p>	<p>Whilst skilled staff is highlighted by the survey, it was clear from discussions with businesses that staff with a wide range of skill levels are needed across the borough.</p> <p>Staff with specific digital skills</p> <p>Some EU citizens have returned home following the referendum, due to uncertainty resulting in shortages.</p> <p>Eastleigh College have had a fall in students taking the lower skills courses. This may be due to the requirement for all students to have GCSE in English & Maths</p> <p>Very specific technical skills required in the lens industry, not available in colleges</p> <p>Are we building the right houses to attract people with the right skills? Graduates.</p> <p>Further work needed on skills needs across the borough, working with colleges and surrounding universities.</p>
Physical infrastructure	Appropriate land/buildings	<p>Not enough land available to attract larger businesses.</p> <p>Smaller businesses are finding premises the biggest barrier. The incubator is full and businesses that have grown cannot move out as there are insufficient premises available to take this next step.</p> <p>Need for basic office accommodation, not high tech expensive spaces.</p> <p>Need for more start-up/enterprise units.</p> <p>Shortage of storage space, given the proximity to the port and lack of space in Southampton, Eastleigh is ideally placed but need to allocate space and address access.</p>
	Parking	<p>Parking for employees and customers is a particular issue for town centre businesses as the cost of parking is very high</p> <p>Park & ride, need to actively seek a solution, can the Local Plan address this? This will address both parking and traffic congestion in Eastleigh town centre.</p> <p>Are parking costs/journey to work impacting on Eastleigh town centre's ability to attract staff with the right skills?</p> <p>On-street parking is widespread, due to cost and availability where it is needed. This then causes congestion and access issues.</p> <p>M&S reported high levels of interest for role at their new town centre store but many wanting a transfer from the Hedge End store were put off due to the lack of parking.</p>

	Events at Wildern school, lots of additional cars parking in surrounding streets, causes congestion.
Broadband (superfast etc.)	Broadband is highlighted as a more significant issue for those outside of Eastleigh Town centre and particularly small and micro businesses. Home-based micro businesses are reliant on domestic broadband services which are inadequate for their needs.
Water supply	Water supply was not highlighted as an issue through the survey responses or at the business meetings
Energy supply	Energy supply was highlighted by some of the smaller businesses in the survey but not highlighted in any discussions by businesses.
Supply chain	Local suppliers was a minor issue highlighted in the survey, more detailed analysis shows that only micro-businesses stated this was an issue. No further detail was discussed at meetings.
	Local customers were a key issue highlighted by the survey. This was true across all parts of the borough and a top issue for all size of business. This was difficult issue to understand at the meetings as the customer is very different for different sectors and size of business. There is a need to have more targeted discussions by sector and size to understand this issue fully.

Other issues:

At each of the four business meetings the issue of traffic congestion dominated discussions. Businesses reported a number of specific issues affecting different parts of the Borough which all came under three broad themes:

- Ability to get goods in and out
- Ability to get staff in and out, larger firms have adopted flexible working, different shift patterns and travel plans but this still remains a significant issue
- Ability for customers to access, particularly an issue for Eastleigh town centre.

This issue is also linked to many others identified through this engagement. Is it a potential barrier to:

- Attracting businesses to the area
- Attracting staff with the right skills to the area
- Attracting customers

Solutions must look at links with parking issues, sustainable transport and public transport.

Traffic congestion is also the most significant issue identified through the residents' survey. Whilst the Local Plan can help to improve traffic flows around new developments, it cannot offer solutions to long standing problems. Residents also make clear links between congestion and pollution.

Conclusions

There is still further, more detailed analysis to be carried out on both the data collected from the surveys and all of the comments made through these and the meetings held with businesses and parish councils. This further analysis may identify other issues that have yet to be highlighted. However this initial analysis does clearly highlight the key priorities for residents and businesses across the borough and in neighbouring Winchester.

Residents:

- Traffic congestion and maintaining countryside gaps between settlements/avoiding urban sprawl, are the top two issues, irrespective of age, gender or area of residence.

- Medical facilities become increasingly important with increased age. Comments have shown that it is not just excess waiting times for appointments but ability to get to surgeries due to distance and lack of public transport.
- Air quality and noise are a significant issue with residents identifying clear links:
 More houses = more cars, but inadequate infrastructure, therefore creating congestion, declining air quality and increase noise.
 Therefore many fear that further new housing will just worsen this problem
- Affordable housing was the top priority for those aged 18-29 years but with so few respondents in this age group this issue doesn't rank very highly overall.
- Nature conservation and biodiversity was an important issue for those living in the north of the Borough and in the neighbouring Winchester parishes.

Businesses

- Traffic congestion was also a major issue for businesses in terms of getting both goods and staff to and from work spaces.
- There is a need to better understand the needs in terms of the right type and range of premises required. Small start-up businesses have limited options of premises to grow into, there is a risk of losing businesses to neighbouring areas.
- There is a wide range of skills shortages, high, specialist technical and low all required. More work is needed to fully understand the needs across the Borough.
- Broadband is a particular issue for smaller businesses, often those working from home outside of Eastleigh town where speeds are lower.
- The survey showed that the availability of customers is an issue. This is complex and varies between businesses and therefore needs further research.

Recommendations

It is clear from both the survey and the meetings with businesses and parish councils that there is a need for further engagement in order for the council to gain a better understanding of the issues, and the links and interdependencies between some of these issues. Eastleigh Borough Council must use this existing information and build on this in the future in order to ensure that its strategies, both in terms of the Local Plan and Corporate Strategy, are delivering what residents and businesses need and what improves quality of life and adds value to the local economy.

The issues outlined above can be addressed by Eastleigh Borough Council and its partners in a number of ways:

1. The council must ensure the Local Plan supports the needs of residents and businesses, both existing and future, by allocating sufficient land for new housing and employment spaces, along with the necessary infrastructure, settlement separation and green spaces.
2. Long term delivery of the Plan – in implementing the plan the council needs to take a proactive role to ensure:
 - (a) The right mix and tenure of housing; including sufficient affordable housing.
 - (b) The right mix of employment spaces is delivered, so that as businesses develop and grow, the right premises are available within the borough.
 - (c) Working with partners, the necessary infrastructure is provided, again taking account of local issues and circumstances.
3. A range of issues were raised by residents and business, which cannot be addressed specifically by the Local Plan or how it is implemented. Because these issues are important the council should work with partners to ensure they are addressed. Examples include:
 - (a) Skills - Eastleigh Borough Council's economic strategy and delivery of this must address the issues raised about skills needs across the Borough, and gaining a better

understanding of supply chains, in particular one of the key issues raised through this engagement of local customers.

- (b) Public Transport – the council needs to work with its partners to ensure that there is adequate access between housing, services and work places.

Future Engagement

Shaping Your Community has been successful in engaging large numbers of members of the public from across the borough with a quick and simple format. This led to greater numbers of people giving us their views than at the Issues and Options stage of the Local Plan.

Whilst a survey can only provide headlines, these give a clear indication of the priorities of residents and businesses. Meetings have added value and it is clear that the conversation needs to continue to fully understand the issues and what role the Council can play in addressing them.

It is important to note that all businesses who attended the meetings were pleased that they had been asked to give their views and would welcome the opportunity to keep dialogue open. Parish councils both within and outside the borough also welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues. The Council has a responsibility to maintain and build on this work and learn from this process so it can be improved in the future.

Recommended actions:

Final report on the engagement and how the information will be used, to include:

- Analysis of individual comments from the surveys and meetings.
- Detailed data analysis, including impact of age profile of respondents.
- Link to the Local Plan.
- Issues identified that cannot be addressed through the Local Plan or its implementation.
- Specific actions that can be taken based on issues raised: 'You said we did'.
- How the conversation will continue with residents and businesses.

Ongoing Engagement with the Local Plan process

- Keeping everyone informed of key dates/milestones.
- Master planning.
- Regulation 19 Consultation.

Helen Owens
November 29th 2017.