

# **STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES ON THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS DOCUMENT**

**DECEMBER 2022**

Maldon  
District  
Council

**Local  
Development Plan**



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 The Council is reviewing its Local Development Plan (LDP). The present LDP was approved on the 17 July 2017.
- 1.2 The Issues and Options Document Consultation was carried out in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 represents the first statutory stage in preparing a Local Plan/LDP and specifies who must be notified of the preparation of the plan and that relevant stakeholders must be invited to make representations on the content of the plan and that these representations must be considered.
- 1.3 The consultation ran from 17 January 2022 to 14 March 2022. There were 490 respondents. This Statement sets out a broad summary of the comments for all the questions raised in the consultation. Some of the questions which were similar to each other are grouped together. A full table of the responses is appended to this document, including the response from Essex County Council.
- 1.4 Some comments received were of either a defamatory or discriminatory nature and have been redacted from the Statement of Consultation's Appendix. A separate record of all redacted comments has been kept for audit purposes.

## 2.0 Respondents Profile Summary

- 2.1 In terms of the consultation the breakdown of those making comments is as follows.
  - Members of the public 361
  - Parish Councils 21
  - Developers 17
  - Businesses 16
  - Statutory Consultees 15
  - Special Interest Groups 10
  - Planning Agents 7
  - Promotors 7
  - Local Authorities 6
  - Community Groups 2
- 2.2 The demographic age of respondents was in order of the number of respondents, as follows.
  - Age not given 107
  - 55 – 64 = 104
  - 65 – 74 = 79
  - 45 – 54 = 72
  - 75+ = 47
  - 25 – 34 = 20
  - 18 – 24 = 4

2.3 The gender split in regard to respondents were as follows.

- Male – 210
- Female – 164
- Age not given – 94

2.4 In terms of ethnicity of the respondents.

- Not given – 121
- White – 337
- Mixed – 6
- Indian - 1
- Chinese – 1

2.5 The Council will use these figures as a baseline against future consultations for the review of the LDP and is going to be carrying out some additional consultation work for the age group below 18 as there were nil responders from this demographic cohort.

### **3.0 Duty to Cooperate Bodies**

3.1 With regard to the Duty to Cooperate Bodies there were 11 respondents. These were as follows.

- Essex County Council.
- Chelmsford City Council
- Basildon District Council
- Sport England
- Colchester Borough Council
- Rochford District Council
- Historic England
- National Grid
- Natural England
- Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership
- Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
- East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- NHS Property Services Ltd
- Environment Agency
- Highways England

3.2 Where comments related to the Vision, Issues and Objectives of the LDP, these where possible will be incorporated into an updated version. Where comments related to any incorrect facts these have been amended. All the other comments have been noted and will form the basis for ongoing discussions with Duty to Cooperate Bodies as necessary or be incorporated into emerging policy.

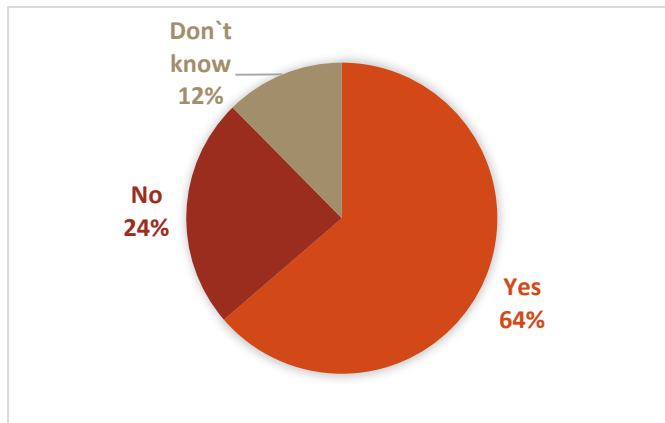
## **2.0 QUESTIONS 1 to 7 SUMMARY**

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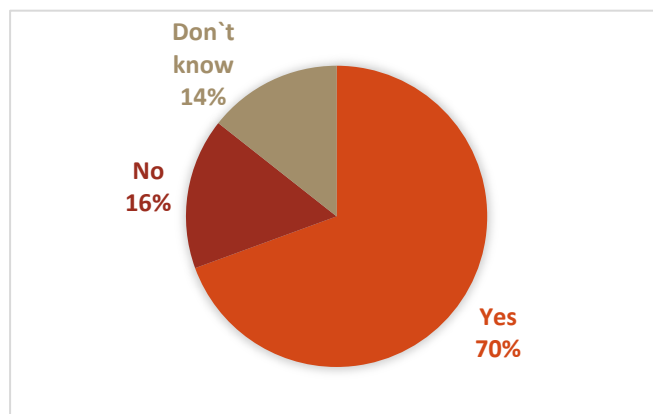
2.1 The first seven questions of the Issues and Options Consultation correspond to the first part of the reviewed LDP. These are.

- Spatial Picture of the District
- Strategic and Cross Boundary Issues
- District Issues
- Vision
- Objectives

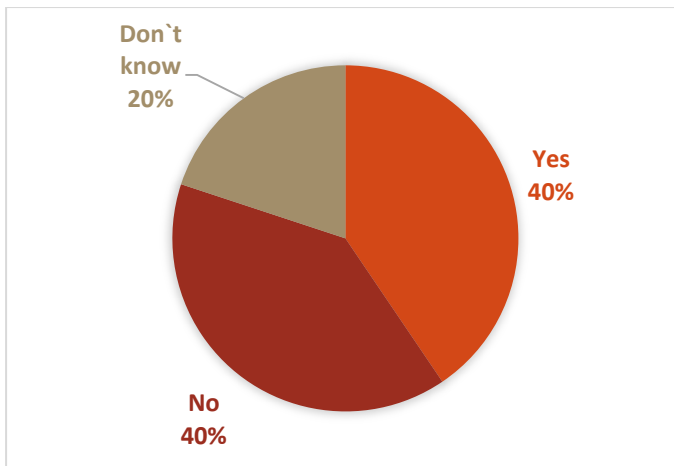
2.2 **Question 1** - Do you agree with this spatial picture of the District?



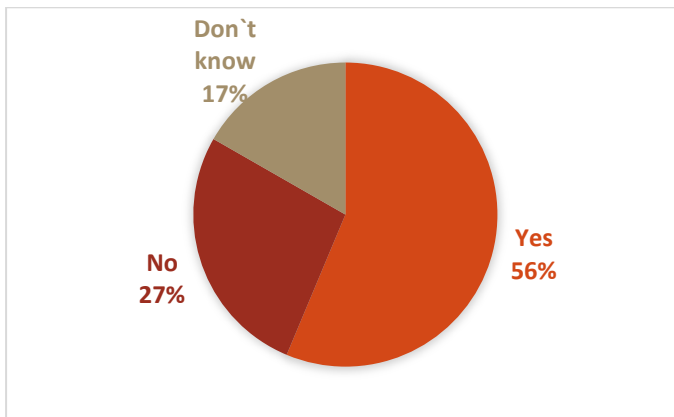
2.3 **Question 2** – Are the issues still relevant?



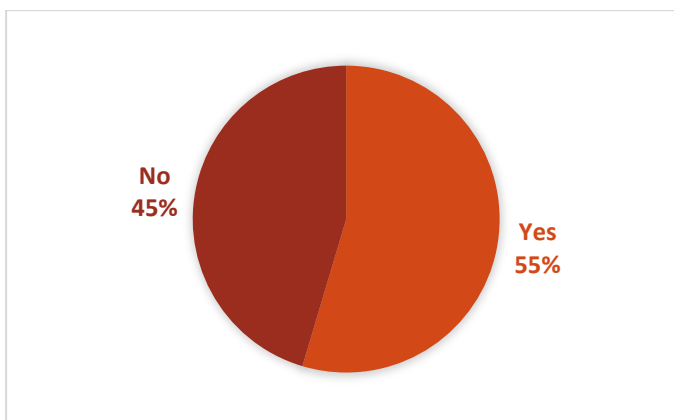
2.4 **Question 3** - Do you consider these to be the extent of strategic and cross boundary issues applicable for the Maldon District?



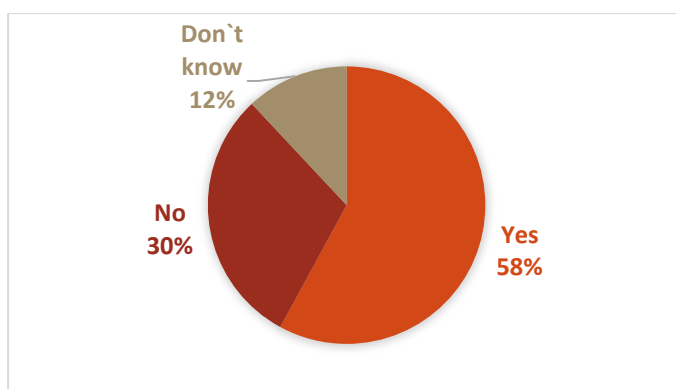
2.5 **Question 4** - Are these key issues the right ones or are there any key issues that you think have been missed?



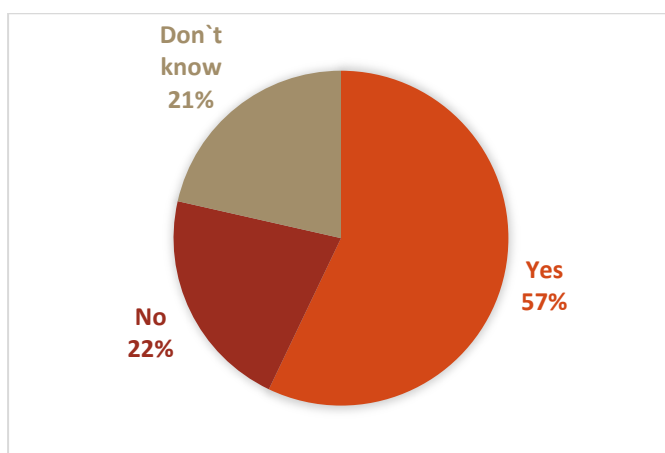
2.6 **Question 5** – Do you agree with the amended Vision?



2.7 **Question 6** – Do you agree with the objectives of the LDP Review?



- 2.8 **Question 7** – Are there other objectives that the LDP should aim to achieve?



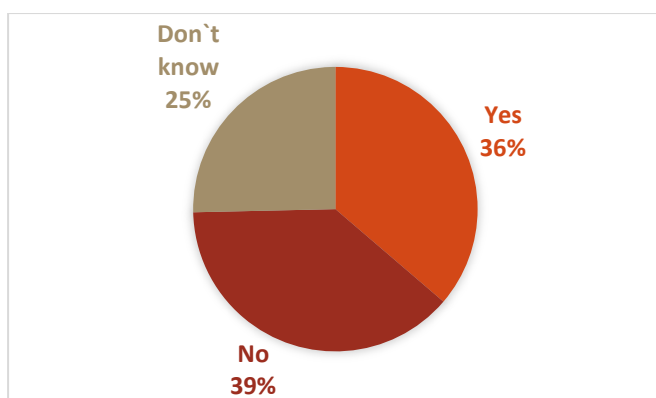
- 2.9 There were a number of comments made from respondents concerning the above sections of the LDP Review. In the main the consultation mood was quite positive, however there were a lot of comments through the majority of public responses about not wishing to see any further growth in the District at all and various questions as to why infrastructure in general is not being delivered now. The concern about infrastructure delivery, is a priority indicator that the Council needs to have closer scrutiny over as the LDP Review moves forward.

2.10

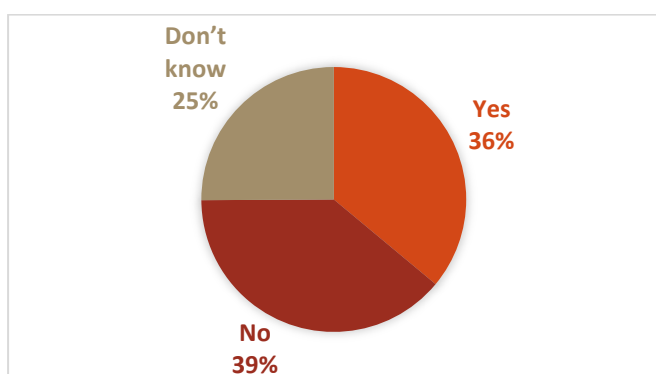
### 3.0 QUESTIONS 8 TO 14 AND QUESTION 17 SUMMARY

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- 3.1 **Question 8** - Do you agree with the Council using the standard methodology in the calculation of its housing target for the period 2023 – 2043?

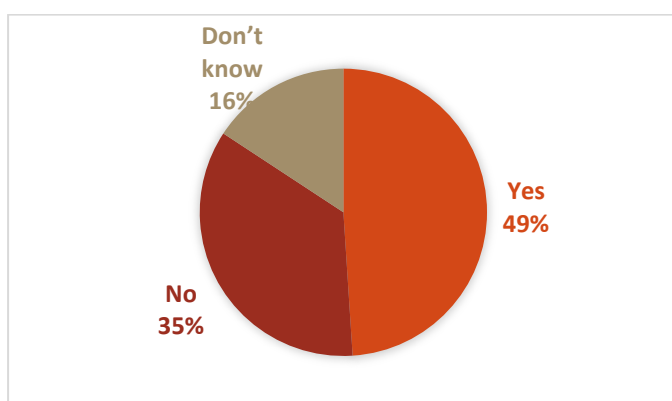


- 3.2 There were quite a few of the consultees who believed that the amount of housing required should be less than the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) standard methodology suggests. There was also some concern about the shortage of affordable housing in the District and suggestions that other surrounding authorities should take the District's housing growth because they have more services and facilities.
- 3.3 The minimum housing requirement for a local planning authority is set out in the Government's NPPF Standard Methodology. In 2022, this is a floor not a ceiling target and the starting point for calculation in a LDP Review. The Council will be updating the Local Housing Needs Assessment prior to setting its final housing requirement for the LDP Review when the matter will be reviewed alongside the amount of affordable housing needed across the plan period and any changes to national policy.
- 3.4 The Council is meeting neighbouring authorities and other public bodies regarding the Duty to Co-operate and has to give due consideration to them if they requested that the District accommodate some of their growth. This is in accordance with the Greater Essex Unmet Housing Needs Protocol which was negotiated and agreed countywide as part of the Duty to Co-operate. At the present time there is no evidence that the District cannot accommodate its own growth needs, but further work remains outstanding to test this thoroughly.
- 3.5 **Question 9** - Should the Council have a contingency or buffer figure in its housing target to ensure that it always has a continuous supply of housing over the plan period and if so, what should that buffer be?





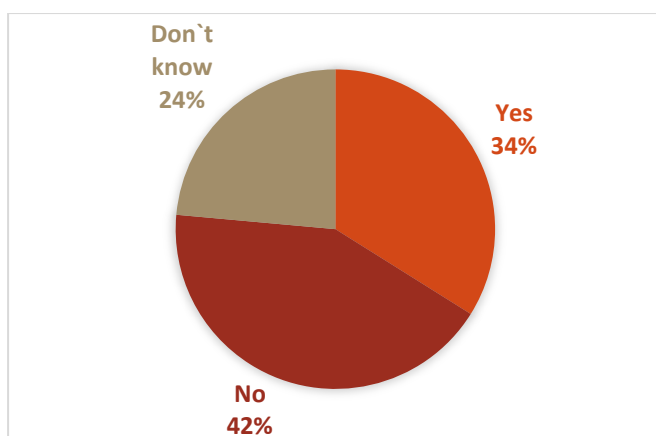
- 3.6 Discounting those comments that did not know, there was a fairly even split response as to whether a buffer should be included.
- 3.7 The recommended buffer from the Homes Building Federation is 20% but one of the consultees suggested as a starting point that the council should be analysing past delivery, which is a sound principle in terms of assessing a suitable buffer. If this was to be followed, at the present time the District has a shortfall of housing which is approximately 10% of what should have been delivered since 2014.
- 3.8 **Question 10** - Should the plan period be longer than 15 years, should the period be 20 years, so that infrastructure can be planned in over a longer period?



- 3.9 There were mixed views given by consultees over how long the plan should run for. Answers of between 15, 20 and for some 30 years were suggested. There were also quite a number of comments concerning the perceived lack of infrastructure provision that had come forward in the present plan period which looked forward 15 years.

- 3.12 The following three questions refer to the Settlement Pattern

**Question 11** - Do you agree with the updated Settlement Pattern and how the settlements in the District have been grouped together?



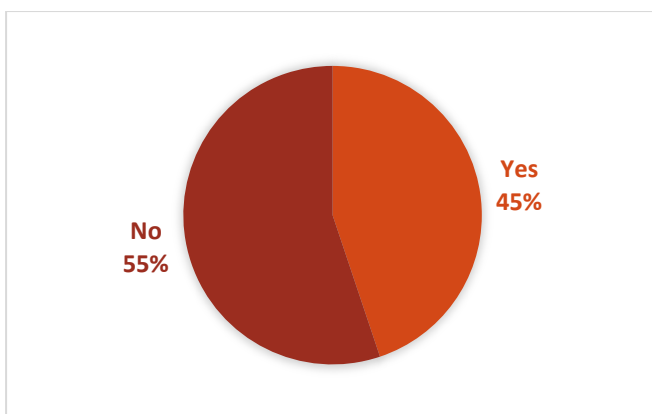
**Question 12** – If you do not agree how should they be grouped together

This question was answered 178 times.

**Question 13** - Referring to the table on the Council's website which sets out all the services and facilities for each settlement – are there any comments about this or matters which need to be altered or changed?

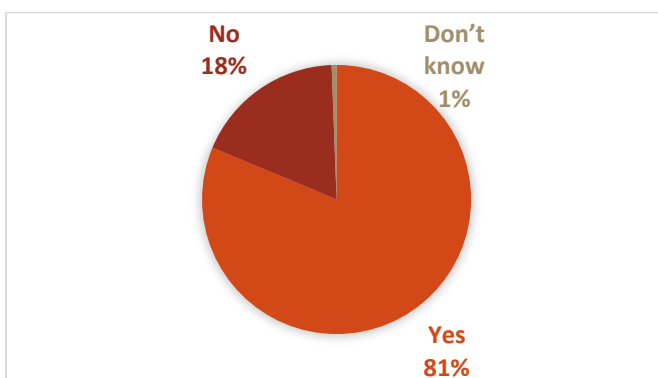
This question was answered 198 times.

- 3.13 There were mixed responses, some of the respondents submitted helpful evidenced answers about the different types of services and facilities in their settlement and these have been transferred into the evidence for the Rural Facilities Study Update. One settlement raised a number of concerns about the Rural Facilities Study Update and they have been met and the issues they raised have now been resolved.
- 3.14 Many responses were influenced by the fact that many respondents did not understand what the Settlement Pattern was and believed that the higher up the Pattern their settlement appeared, the more growth they were going to automatically receive from the council. This was despite the consultation document stating clearly that *"It is important to note that where a settlement is in the pattern does not necessarily dictate where growth is going to go in the future."* This had the effect of respondents making statements about their settlements based not on evidence, but on the fact that they did not want growth; which is not a material planning consideration.
- 3.15 **Question 14** - Do you agree with the approach set out above for major infrastructure projects?



Many of the responses to this question commented about their concern about local infrastructure and lack of provision.

- 3.16 **Question 17** - Do you think it is appropriate to include in the LDP Review a policy dealing with major infrastructure projects such as the Bradwell B Nuclear Power Station, to be activated if this type of project comes forward?



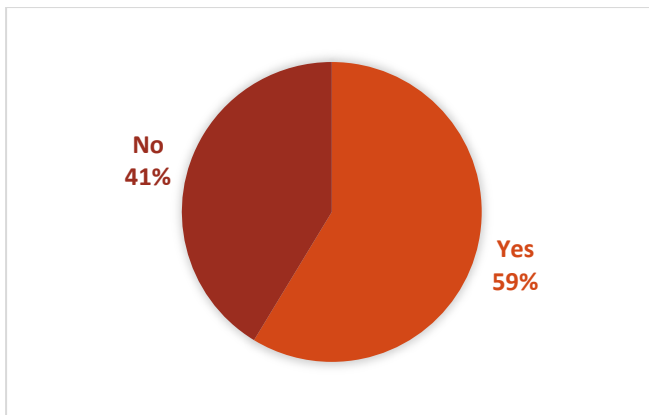
- 3.17 There was more support for the proposal of a major infrastructure policy in question 17 than question 14, this may have been because the explanation accompanying it was more detailed and therefore respondents understood the implications better. Some of the respondents were however referring to local and strategic infrastructure which would not be covered by this proposed policy and would instead be included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Infrastructure Policy. There was quite a lot of negative comments about the Bradwell B National Strategic Infrastructure Project; this was to be expected and cannot be commented on further as the Council is not the decision-maker.

#### 4.0 QUESTIONS 15 AND 16 SUMMARY

- 4.1 **Question 15** - Which growth option do you consider to be the most appropriate for the District of Maldon?

This question was answered 327 times.

- 4.2 **Question 16** - Do you believe that there is another suitable growth option for the District, perhaps a combination of any growth options?



4.3 There were broad range of comments on the options set out in the consultation paper. These were as follows.

Option 1 - Respondents felt broadly speaking that this option would protect green spaces more.

- The majority of the services and facilities are already in the main towns.
- The towns have publicly accessible transport facilities and more employment opportunities.
- Urban extensions and garden suburbs next to towns minimises impact elsewhere and helps deliver infrastructure.
- This helps to protect the more rural settlements.
- There would be a need to allocate medium and small sites as well in the future to ensure choice in the market.
- The option failed last time. The towns do not have the infrastructure to take more growth, they have taken their share of growth in the past. It would be better to allocate into the north of the District to link up with the A12.
- Move the growth into neighbouring authority areas.
- Need to ensure there is not urban sprawl and towns and villages don't merge together.
- This option may place additional strain on services and facilities, it would not allow investment on infrastructure in other parts of the District.
- It would maximise sustainability in the towns.
- The existing infrastructure in the towns must be able to cope with the increase in growth. Easier to expand what is already there.
- It's the least unattractive option.
- It will spoil the charm of Maldon. Will result in too much development in the same places as before
- Large villages can also take growth.

Option 2 - The broad comments on this option were that it protects the character and landscape of the district.

- It will address the damage to Burnham.
- It is the best form of sustainable development.

- Any building in the villages should focus on small sites for local builders.
- The inclusion of more settlements could help deliverability.
- Existing infrastructure could be expanded.
- The other large villages could take more growth.
- The option could encourage growth in a district with an aging population and diminishing working age population.
- The option should include the medium villages as well.
- The road connections and amenities would be unable to cope.
- It will result in too much development in the same places. The option is similar to option 3.

Option 3 - The broad comments were that many of the settlements do not have enough suitable sites.

- Large villages are sustainable.
- This option is similar to option 2.
- It would focus growth in the most sustainable settlements which already have services and facilities.
- Without new housing, issues of affordability could get worse.
- It would reinforce the existing settlement pattern.
- We should look to opportunities along the railway line.
- This option will assist smaller builders, allows growth to be spread more evenly.
- Levels of growth should be spread proportionately in line with populations.
- This option will achieve economies of scale.
- This could lead to an under-delivery of housing.
- Distribution by population size of settlement could lead to an under-delivery.

Option 4 - Comments concerning this option were:

- that it will give the opportunity for all settlements to improve
- there is a need to consider different transport options
- will enable settlements to grow more slowly
- there will be an impact on infrastructure
- There, will be an inability to pay for infrastructure.
- The option will put pressure on services, impact on the rural villages.
- It will share the growth.

Option 5 - Comments made concerning this option were:

- that this is a chance to integrate services and facilities in one place, could be close to the A12 and trainlines.
- The option offers an opportunity for infrastructure and will reduce pressure on communities.
- It should target a new settlement.
- It needs to include smaller sites for local builders.
- The option will have too long a lead in time and would need an interim strategy to ensure delivery of housing supply.
- A new garden village should be considered in the south near to a railway station.

- Climate change and infrastructure needs to be considered.
- The option would be very damaging and would require substantial amounts of infrastructure.
- It would work well with options 6 and 7.
- It would protect the countryside.
- The option would create similar problems to the existing strategy.
- The road networks and other infrastructure would need substantial improvement.

Option 6 - Comments made concerning this option were:

- This option would benefit from links to the A12 corridor, Danbury, and Hatfield Peverel.
- There is still the need with this option to ensure the continuing support for the towns Maldon, Heybridge, and Burnham.
- The option would create similar problems to those that already exist.
- Economies of scale funding would go outside the district.
- Development would be closer to Colchester and Chelmsford.
- Good access to the A12
- No windfall development.
- This option would be discharging responsibility for infrastructure to neighbouring authorities, ignoring sustainable communities such as Maldon and Burnham.
- Loss of rural character of small villages.
- Would need good cycle routes to the towns.
- Impacts could be mitigated against by pepper-potting.
- Put development where infrastructure already is.
- Have had an over-reliance on Maldon/Heybridge and Burnham.
- Focus growth in areas which are less dense.
- Danbury is already over-burdened.
- Closer to strategic transport links.
- Tiptree already has services and facilities.
- This option would not resolve the affordable housing problem in the south of the District.

Option 7 - There was opposition to this option, but this was mainly skewed by the fact that there was a large site in one of the settlements in the HELAA, which was evident from the detailed comments given about that settlement. At the present time the Council cannot comment on whether individual settlements can or cannot accommodate future growth, or on sites which have not had any technical evidence work prepared or concluded for them for the LDP Review. The Council needs to make a choice on where that growth is going to go in a broader strategic sense, and this was one of the reasons for the Issues and Options Consultation.

Other comments were that:

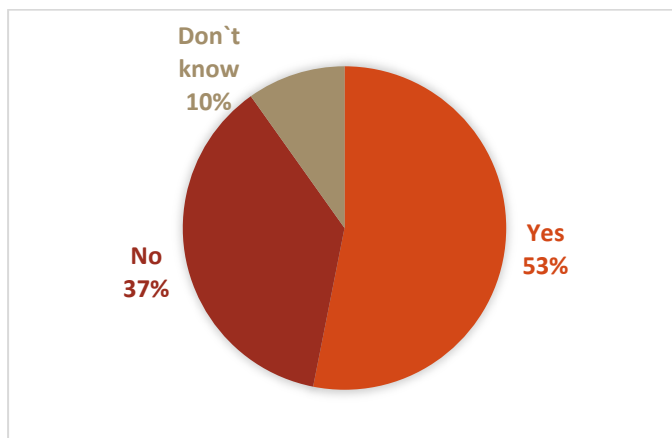
- the north has already taken sufficient growth around Maldon/Heybridge,

- The railway has both insufficient capacity and on the other hand the railway is a sustainable form of transport with capacity,
- Impacts on landscape,
- Focus growth around the railway stations for a greener solution.
- There is sufficient growth in the north more development needs to go in the south.
- Villages with a railway should be ranked higher.
- The option does not spread development around locations.
- Could provide a catalyst to offer new services to locations and a modal shift in transport.

## 5.0 QUESTIONS 18 TO 22 SUMMARY

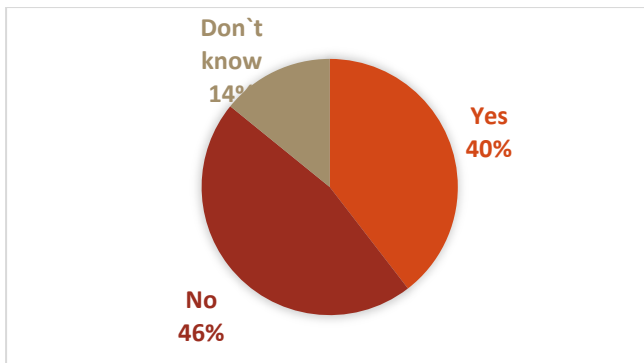
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- 5.1 **Question 18** - Would you consider the delivery of housing appropriate on areas of land where there are disused agricultural buildings, or derelict land in or adjacent to large, medium, and small villages?



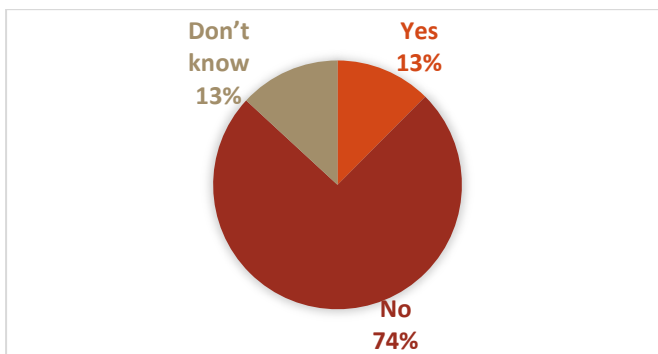
There was quite a lot of support for this issue, though many of the respondents wanted all development to go on brownfield land only. This is not possible, not even as a starting point because the district does not have a history of significant industrial land use and derelict industry sites so there are limited brownfield land opportunities. Therefore, it is inevitable that greenfield sites will be required to accommodate future growth.

- 5.2 **Question 19** - Housing can be delivered in larger quantities, but using less greenfield land, by building at higher densities. Would you consider this appropriate if sites with higher densities were designed to ensure they achieved a high quality of design?



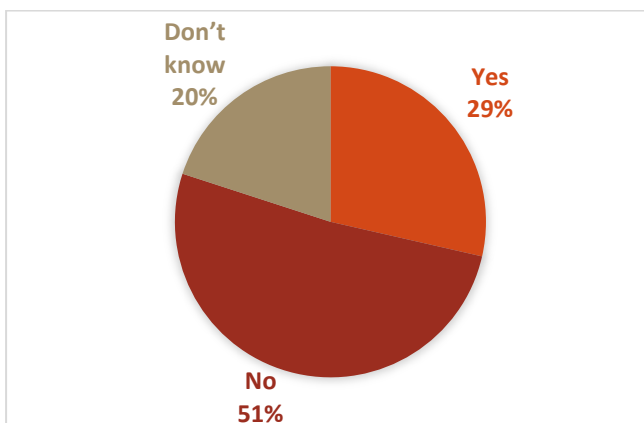
In terms of the support/object/don't know responses - 123 respondents supported the statement set out in the question, with 144 not supporting it. 44 respondents did not know.

- 5.3 **Question 20** - Do you agree with building at higher densities in all settlements. What would you think was appropriate in terms of housing and higher densities?



In terms of support/object/don't know responses – 37 respondents supported the statement set out in the question, with 221 not supporting it. 39 respondents did not know.

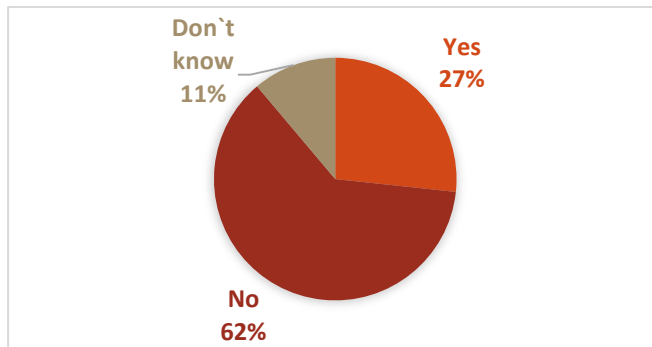
- 5.4 **Question 21** - Would you support minimum density standards to uplift the delivery of housing and ensure land in Maldon District was used as efficiently as possible, or do you think design, or other factors should dictate density on housing sites?





In terms of support/object/don't know responses – 80 respondents supported the statement set out in the question, with 144 not supporting it. 56 respondents did not know.

- 5.5 **Question 22** - Would you consider higher density housing appropriate in large, medium, and small villages, if the design was to a higher standard and the character of the settlement was still respected?



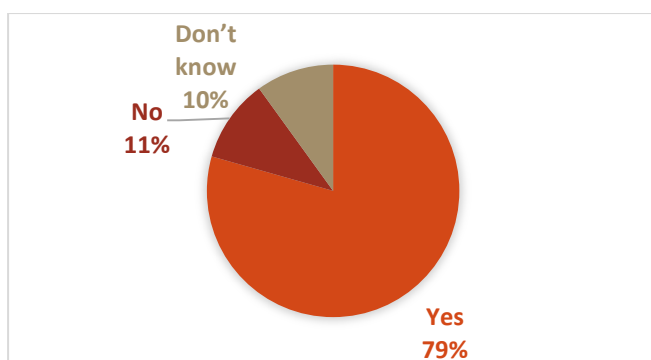
In terms of support/object/don't know responses – 79 respondents supported the statement set out in the question, with 184 not supporting it. 33 respondents did not know.

- 5.6 With regard to questions 19, 20, 21 and 22, the respondents focused on concerns around higher density developments, especially the unsuitability of higher density in rural locations, the impact on character and the linked issue of height of development. This could however mean that in rural locations more land will need to be used to accommodate housing at lower densities if that is what is desired. Some respondents felt that higher density could still be focused on the District's towns and development should be on brownfield land.

## 6.0 QUESTIONS 23 AND 24 SUMMARY

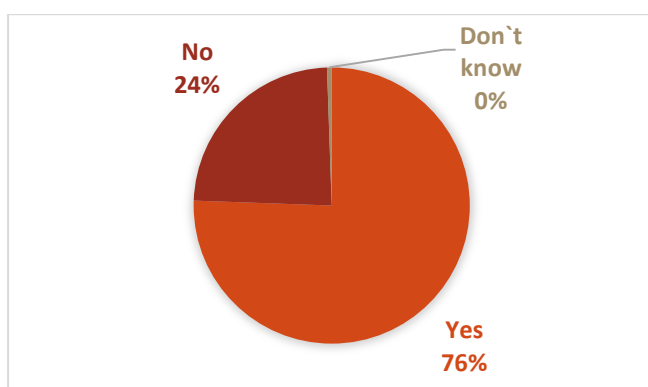
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- 6.1 **Question 23** - Is it appropriate to develop land for housing that has been previously used for commercial uses such as employment and retail which is otherwise vacant, underused and derelict?



- 6.2 This issue was generally supported. However the main concern from respondents was that employment land would be lost as a result to housing without having safeguards put in place. This is a valid concern, the present LDP does not set out clearly enough what is expected of developers when they put forward applications for the change of use of employment or commercial land. This also will make it difficult for decision makers to ascertain whether the land should be given permission for a change of use to something other than employment and retail land.
- 6.3 **Question 24** - It is difficult for Maldon District to have a policy that states that brownfield land should be developed first for housing because of the lack of brownfield land sites in the District. This could also inadvertently lead to the redevelopment of active employment land to residential the consequences of this could lead to job losses and a decline in employment sites.

Therefore, instead of 'brownfield land first', should the Council instead place a greater emphasis on encouraging the development of brownfield land for housing? This may mean less affordable housing and other benefits comes forward, but it could redevelop sites which are an eyesore and blight on settlements and residents.

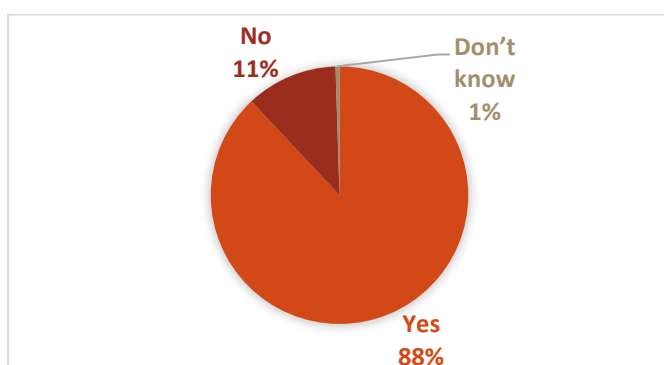


- 6.4 There was quite a lot of support for this issue, though many of the respondents also wanted all development to go on brownfield land and/or were concerned that there would be a loss of employment land to housing which could impact on the economy. Putting all housing development on brownfield land is not possible in Maldon District, not even as a starting point because the district does not have a history of significant industrial land use, with large derelict sites so there is limited brownfield land

opportunities or opportunities to build within existing settlement boundaries. Therefore, it is inevitable that greenfield sites will be required to accommodate future growth. However, the Council can look to ensure that through stronger LDP policies and when carrying out work on site allocations that brownfield land is prioritised in the settlements chosen for growth.

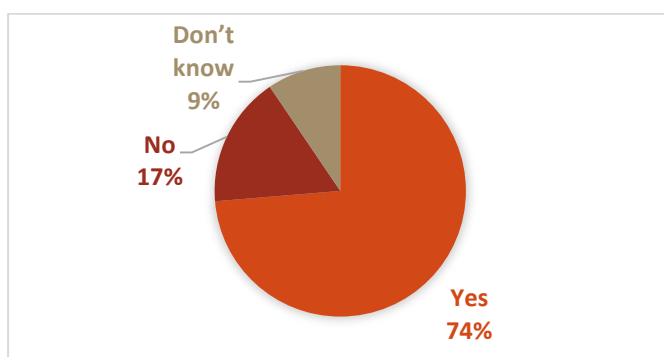
## 7.0 QUESTIONS 25 AND 26 SUMMARY

- 7.1 **Question 25** - Should the medium and small settlements retain some form of a settlement boundary, albeit more flexibly drawn?



- 7.2 There was significant support for this with respondents believing that taking away settlement boundaries would lead to urban sprawl. The support from some respondents was caveated with the need to be more flexible in the approach the Council is going to take. Other respondents wanted the matter to be put into the hands of the parish councils via a Neighbourhood Plan, though a Neighbourhood Plan still needs to be in conformity with the Council's LDP Review and national planning policy.

- 7.3 **Question 26** - Should the Council develop a windfall policy for all or specific settlements, potentially capping the number of units for each site coming forward and ensuring the protection for key views, green infrastructure gaps and the historic environment in each village?

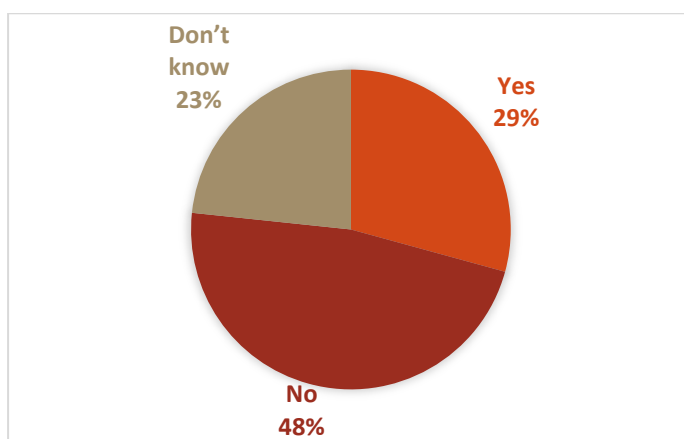


- 7.4 There was quite a high level of support for this proposal. Respondents were seeking a more flexible approach in terms of decision making, the support was however more for the larger settlements rather than the smaller ones. Protection for key features was also supported as was

ensuring that sites were allocated instead of allowing them to come forward as windfall, which is a legitimate concern, and the Council could remedy this by seeking to allocate its full housing requirement.

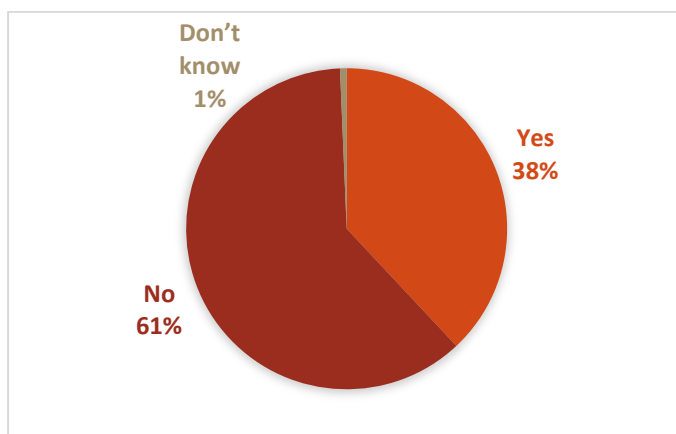
## 8.0 QUESTIONS 27 TO 30 SUMMARY

- 8.1 **Question 27** - In the event of an increase of need, should the Council look to establish both private and public sites for Gypsies and Travellers in the future, recognising that not all needs can be catered by one tenure of provision?



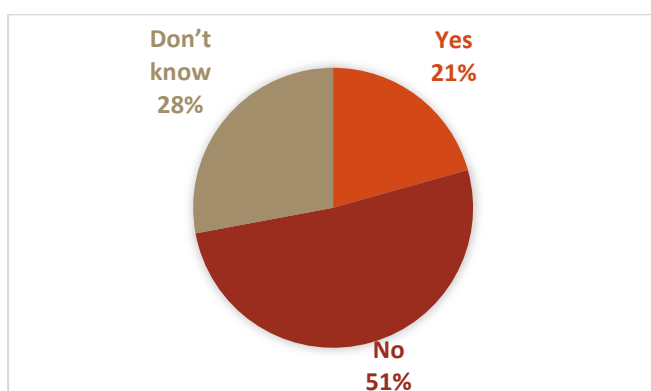
- 8.2 The creation of new public and private sites in the Maldon District is broadly supported, however concerns have been raised about the size of new sites, ensuring that their locations are suitable and accessible and can be supported by existing facilities. These are valid concerns, and the Council can address these issues through site selection and criteria in planning policy to support decision-making. Some views have been expressed preferring either private, or public provision of new sites, but not both. There have also been some objections to any further provision being catered for in the Maldon District.

- 8.3 **Question 28** - In the event of an increase of need, should the Council seek to intensify or expand existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites as much as possible, where it is suitable to do so?



- 8.4 Whilst there is some support for the expansion or intensification of existing sites, most of this is conditional support which seeks assurances on applying the same rules to the settled community; reviewing whether sites are suitable to be intensified or expanded; only intensifying or expanding small sites, or only allowing it where it does not cause harm to the nearest settlement or surroundings. A few comments support one or the other, but not both. There are objections to either taking place in the District, particularly around Great Braxted due to existing issues with some sites in that area.

- 8.5 **Question 29** - In the event of an increase of need, should the Council consider how it could use its Settlement Pattern, Rural Exception Sites and/or Windfall Policy (if implemented) to support the increased provision of new sites in sustainable locations that can serve the community's needs better?



- 8.6 There are varied answers to this question, which do not show conclusive support to any of the options for how Settlement Patterns, Rural Exception Sites or Windfall Policies could be used to increase provision. Most responses reaffirm answers that only existing sites should be expanded - regardless of their location in the Settlement Pattern. There has been some direct objection to using this approach to find more sites, although just as many people needed more information/ were unsure as to how it should be tackled. Concern has been expressed as to how the Council is reviewing needs as there are some assumptions that needs will not have increased. A Town Council has also expressed the importance of Transit Sites being provided. Transit Sites are a Duty to Co-operate matter across the whole of Greater Essex and Maldon District Council cannot resolve this particular matter on its own.
- 8.7 **Question 30** - Is there anything else the Council should be considering for homes for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?

This question was answered 82 times.

- 8.8 There are varied answers to this question, not surprising as it was designed to be a 'catch-all' question. Most comments have been made advising the Council to be mindful that new sites need to offer a good quality of life to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople residents, be

close to education/health care services, be connected to utilities and offer ease of access for larger vehicles.

In a similar fashion there has been a suggestion that the sustainability of new sites is considered, together with how they can integrate renewable energy solutions. These are all good suggestions of criteria that could be included in the updated LDP Review policy for Gypsy and Traveller Sites.

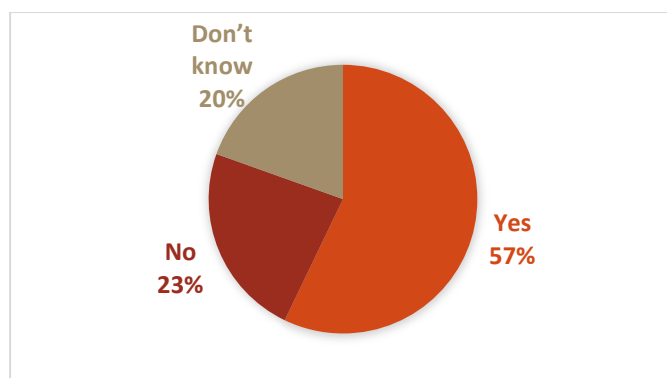
In addition, there has been a call from some people that the Council asks the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Community what it needs and seeks to engage with them proactively as part of the LDP Review. The Review has already been commissioned in the form of an update to the Maldon District Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment which has interviewed households around the District and determined what their family needs are.

There have been some suggestions as to where new sites should not be located, as well as where they should be located in the future. Comments have also been provided on the Council's role in Planning Enforcement and fairness in policy.

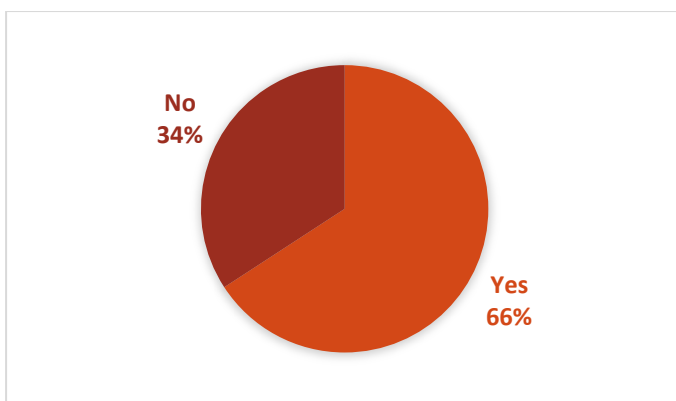
## 9.0 QUESTIONS 31 TO 33 SUMMARY

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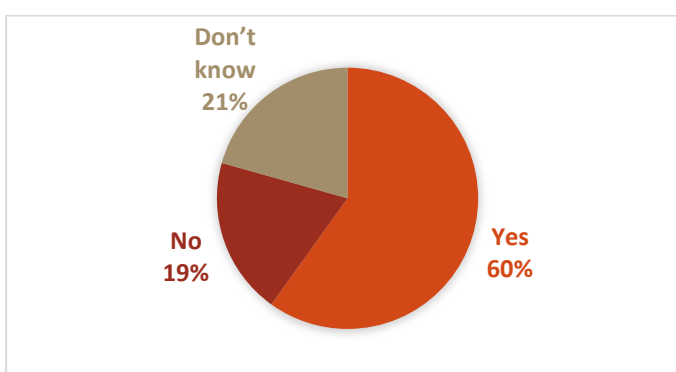
- 9.1 **Question 31** - Should the Council seek a proportion of self-build/custom build plots on larger housing sites?



- 9.2 **Question 32** - In addition to the above, should the Plan also allocate specific sites in the LDP Review exclusively for self-build/custom build, either put forward by people who want to self-build or caveated by policy that they can only be brought forward by self-builders?



- 9.3 **Question 33** - Should the Council in the development of a self-build/custom build policy consider ensuring that smaller low-cost housing units are encouraged to come forward?



- 9.4 In terms of questions 31, 32 and 33, there was support for seeking a proportion of self-build, custom build developments on larger housing sites. In terms of allocating specific sites the support was not as strong with concerns around deliverability and these respondents were looking for a more flexible approach. In regard to smaller low-cost self-build housing units there was quite a lot of support linked to the higher cost of housing in the District.

Many of the respondents however seemed to believe that self-build and custom build development would not be built to a high standard and that they did not have to comply with the design policy. This is not the case, as with all other development in the District they would have to conform to the Council's reviewed design policy as well as Building Regulations.

## 10.0 QUESTIONS 34 TO 38 SUMMARY

- 10.1 **Question 34** - Designing beautiful spaces and buildings, how important do you think it is that we should actively plan to create beautiful spaces and buildings?

This question was answered 235 times.

- 10.2 There is considerable support for the active planning of beautiful spaces and buildings, especially as this is now a requirement of the NPPF and

National Design Guidance. Respondents have pointed out that 'beauty' is however subjective, and question how this will be judged. Good design is not just about looking good; places and buildings also need to function well.

- 10.3 Comments highlighted that well designed places and spaces can reduce public health and policing costs by benefiting people's health and wellbeing, encouraging walking and cycling, enabling social interactions, creating safer places, boosting the local economy and tourism, and reducing pollution. Several comments highlighted that the way we use and value our local open spaces has changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, and that having accessible open space in, and around residential development is crucial to people's well-being. Some felt that design criteria/ design codes should not be overly prescriptive, or stifle development, but rather, should encourage creativity and innovation. Although there was support for more specific design guidance for medium and large developments.

Frequently mentioned design considerations in the comments:

- Essential to retain local character, use vernacular architecture
- New development should complement the character and nature of the local area
- Needs to be well designed - liveable places, building proportions, quality of materials, windows, spaces around buildings, not crammed in, mix of architectural styles and housing types
- Places and buildings need to function well
- Protect existing and create new green / open spaces, use native planting, and be wildlife friendly
- Affordable
- Sustainable
- Mitigate climate change - efficient buildings, green energy - EV charging
- Support innovative design
- Connected footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways from residential areas to employment, community facilities and outdoor spaces.

- 10.4 **Question 35.** What do you think about the design policy in the LDP 2017 (Policy D1) and the Maldon District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2018? Do they need amending?

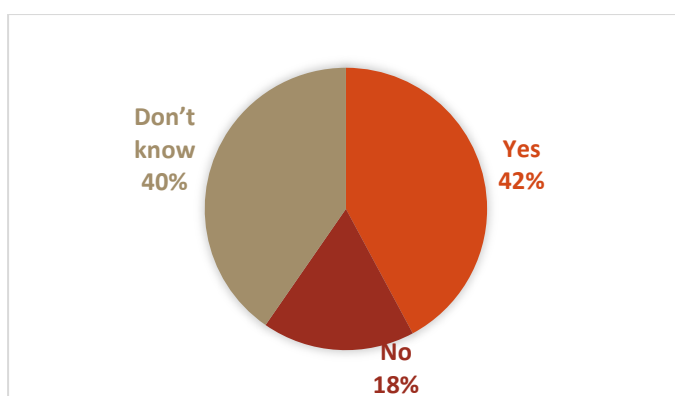
This question was answered 121 times.

- 10.5 Many of the consultees have recognised that the design policy and MDDG need to be revised to ensure that they are up to date with the current NPPF and National Design Guide. Similar numbers of comments were made that the current policy was either too flexible, or too prescriptive. There was a general view that design wasn't taken seriously enough in the Council's planning decisions, and that the guidance already in place was not being used consistently. A range of interesting amendments were suggested, including the following topics:



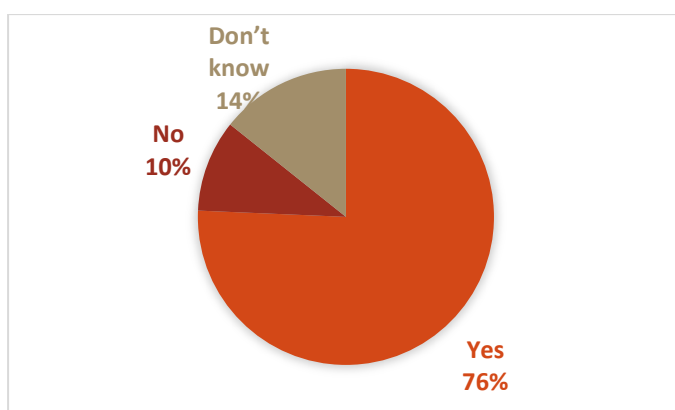
- Using simpler language
- Enabling more active design
- Adding information on engaging with the emergency services
- More innovative design
- Design response to climate change/net zero/energy efficiency
- Specialist housing / adaptable housing/ lifetime homes
- Access and connectivity (walkers/cyclists/horse riders)
- Biodiversity/nature conservation
- Quality of materials / modern materials and modern methods of construction /recycled materials

10.6 **Question 36** - Should the Council seek to endorse the Essex Design Guide with a Maldon District supplementary section? Would this be a more flexible approach to design?



10.7 Similar numbers of respondents agreed, disagreed, or didn't express a preference on the Council endorsing the Essex Design Guide; which does not only cover residential development, but also commercial, green spaces and highways. In this respect, there was no clear policy steer from the consultees. There was, however, consensus that design guidance needs to be flexible and result in development that fits in with the local area.

10.8 **Question 37** - Should the Council in its design policy encourage support for modern innovative design and design to counter the effects of climate change?



10.10 The encouragement for modern/contemporary design was generally supported, although some commentators did not like the look of modern/contemporary design and others raised concerns that such designs may not be suitable in all areas, in particular historic areas and villages. There was widespread support for design that countered the effects of climate change, although concern was raised about the additional build costs this could result in, and whether this would fit in with existing local character. The increasing standards in the Building Regulations will result in costs coming down over time, as green building technologies and techniques become more mainstream. It does need to be recognised that responding to climate change may lead to changes being made to building designs and development layouts which diverge from the existing local character, but that this will not automatically mean a loss of aesthetics if done well. From the responses, it is clear that the LDP needs to be flexible enough to accommodate rapid changes in building technologies and to not overly restrict design styles. Suggestions for policy included encouraging Modern Methods of Construction; the reuse of recycled building materials; and the requirement for energy efficient measures such as solar panels. Some people suggested that the Building Regulations, National Design Guidance and Essex Design Guidance be used, whilst others supported having local design guidance.

10.11 **Question 38** - Please provide comments below on design matters you consider to be particularly important. We would be especially interested in your views on whether we should include general design guidance on relevant site allocations.

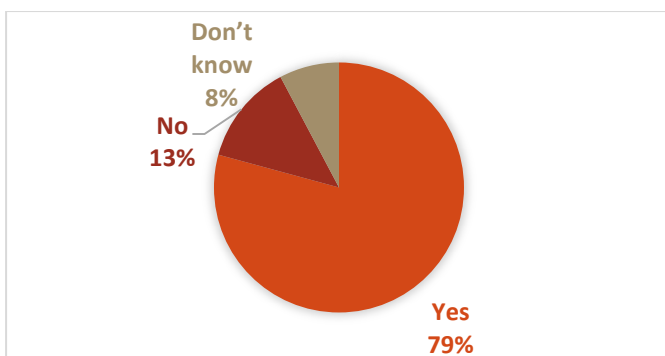
This question was answered 146 times.

10.12 Significant support has been expressed for the provision of bespoke, site-specific design guidance or design codes for site allocations. The view is that these do not need to replicate District level design guidance but should focus on site specific issues. No consultee disagreed with the idea of having design guidance for site allocations. The general view is that new development should complement existing local character and be designed with the local context in mind. Many consultees prefer traditional, vernacular architecture, although others are fully supportive of innovative design. A key theme running throughout the responses has been the need for environmentally conscious, climate resilient, low carbon, and energy efficient development. Strong support was expressed for incorporating alternative energy technologies, such as heat pumps and solar panels.

## 11.0 QUESTIONS 39 TO 42 SUMMARY

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11.1 **Question 39** - Should the LDP Review make climate change one of its key priorities?

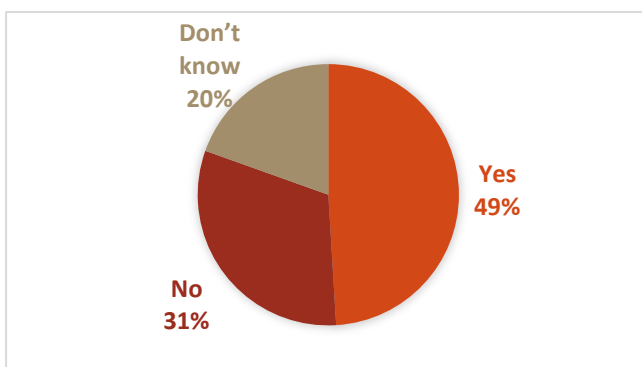


- 11.2 **Question 40** - What do you consider to be important in terms of development and climate change? Are on-site renewables such as photovoltaics, ground source heat pumps, etc as important/more important as off-site renewable energy projects such as on-land wind farms, solar farms, district heating networks, etc?

This question was answered 214 times.

- 11.3 In regard to questions 39 and 40, most comments are generally supportive of the use of renewable energy and measures to mitigate climate change. Supportive of both on-site and off-site renewables, but a higher level of support/prioritisation for on-site. Some concern over off-site about the other potential impacts it can have (visual impact, ecology etc). There was an emphasis on locating developments in suitably sustainable areas. Concerns over flood risk; avoid building in flood zones and provide flood mitigation.

- 11.4 **Question 41** - Should we plan for net-zero carbon from plan adoption in 2023? This would require all new development to be net-zero carbon upon adoption of the plan. If yes, would the Council need to bring forward any additional guidance to support this?



- 11.5 **Question 42** - Should we plan for net-zero carbon from a specific future date? This would require all new development to achieve net zero carbon from a future date in the plan process, set out in policy. It could allow time for the development industry to adjust to the higher standards and may mean we can secure more affordable housing and community benefits from development, earlier on in the plan process.

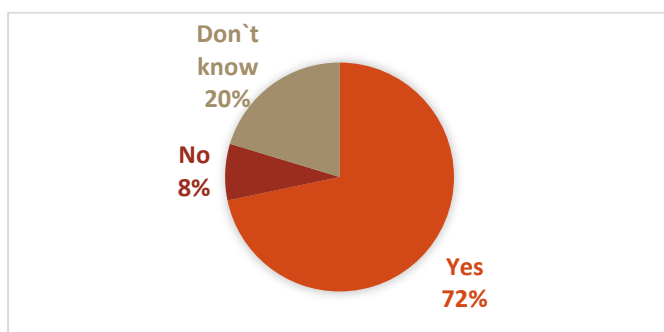
This question was answered 142 times.

- 11.6 With regard to questions 41 and 42, overall, the comments on this question were positive but concern was raised that whilst it was a positive aspiration, the Council would be unable to meet it or that it would be too costly to make development viable. Given that the time of the adoption of the plan has now slipped the national requirements for development to meet climate change goals may also move and it will be easier to meet net zero carbon targets. The LDP Review will be having a whole plan viability assessment, and this will analyse whether the draft policies would affect development costs in terms of viability. This should allay concerns about the cost of implementing this policy.

## 12.0 QUESTIONS 43 TO 51 SUMMARY

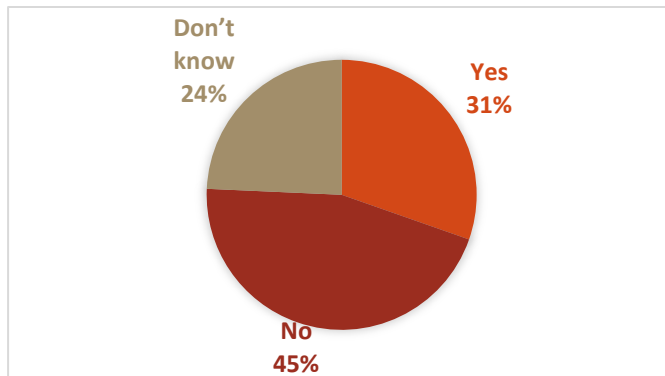
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- 12.1 **Question 43** - Should the LDP policies strongly support the economy in terms of a transition to a low carbon economy, ensuring development and growth opportunities are supported through this process?

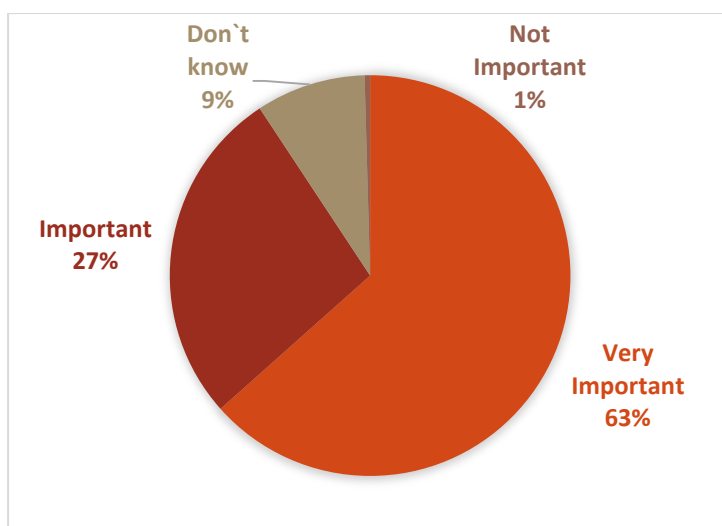


- 12.2 The responses overall are supportive of LDP Review policies that facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy, but there are notable queries and concerns about how this would be achieved and what this would mean for development in the district. There is clear recognition that the transition would require a cross-sector partnership approach, with local businesses and communities being fully engaged in decision-making. Local businesses should be supported in their resilience to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and in their resilience to respond to changes in the employment sectors and labour markets.
- 12.3 Some respondents commented that the infrastructure deficit in the district already resulted in a lack of connectivity, and that this has an adverse impact on businesses looking to relocate or grow. Not all respondents understood that climate action requires the decarbonisation of all sectors of the economy to meet legally binding Net Zero targets and is therefore, a national and local priority for policymaking and decision-taking. This lack of awareness and understanding about the scope and scale of climate action or that climate action is a key part of sustainable development was further evident in suggestions that there should be exceptions made for climate action in rural areas and by default, a more gradual transition to a low carbon economy as part of sustainable development.

- 12.4 **Question 45** - Should the Council contain a policy preventing the redevelopment of employment premises to residential units? If so, should the scope of such a policy be limited in any way? Please explain the rationale for your answer.

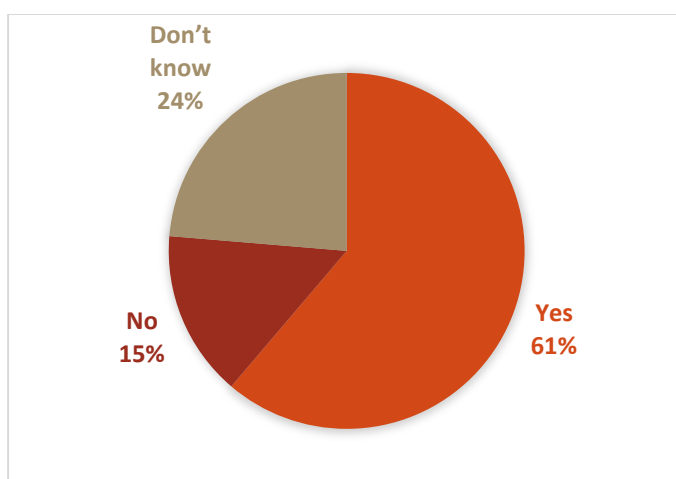


- 12.5 The responses overall recognise the importance of balancing the competing interests of land for employment and housing through flexible planning policies that plan positively for redevelopment, but there are notable concerns about employment land being developed too easily for housing because of the potential greater profit to be made. Those respondents who expressed concern typically valued a reactive 'case by case' approach to decision making instead of a specific policy. It is clear that any policy would need to be clearly justified to alleviate any concerns and contain a criteria-based approach that would demonstrate sufficient rigour. There is a clear need to increase the understanding and value to the district of a 'plan-led' system and the importance of planning positively for sustainable development.
- 12.6 A number of respondents highlighted the changes to people's work-life balance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that could potentially lead to permanent changes for land-use requirements, particularly given the rise in home working and decrease in commuting. Some respondents commented that the infrastructure deficit in the district needed addressing prior to the development of more housing, but that this should not be to the detriment of the district as a place to live and work.
- 12.7 **Question 46** - How important is the rural economy?



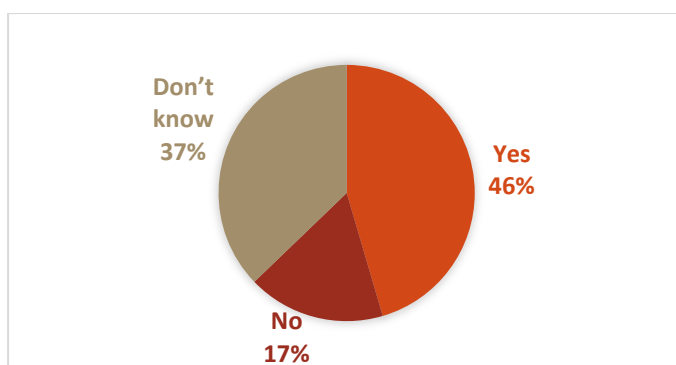
12.8 Overall, there was strong support for the proposal that the rural economy should be supported and from the responses it comes across as an important component of life within the District.

12.9 **Question 47** - Should the Council support the development of live/work housing units?



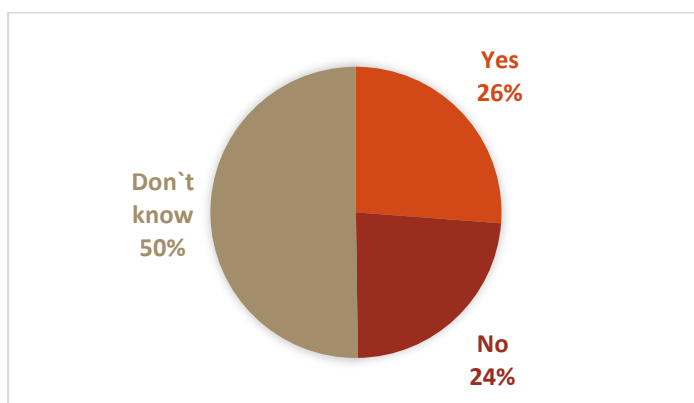
12.10 There is support noted for live/work housing units in response to changing work patterns and the rise in homeworking. The reduction in work-related car journeys was welcomed and viewed as a way to reduce overall carbon emissions from the district, but respondents highlighted the need to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is in place to optimise this transition. Improvements to transport and digital connectivity were included in more general comments about the general design of new housing and employment hubs that respond to the market but that also reflect climate action. Respondents clearly recognise the opportunities that live/work housing units provide, although some were reticent about the size and scale of any work-related uses permitted.

12.11 **Question 48** - Should the nature, size and type of policy support noted for Maldon and Burnham-on-Crouch's High Streets' change? How would you like the high street to change?



12.12 Respondents were generally supportive of local businesses and the number of independent shops on the high street in Maldon and Burnham and a wish for it to remain this way, although some consider the high street as a concept to have already declined. Comments such as providing more parking, reducing and/or eliminating parking fees, pedestrianisation, reducing business rates, stopping the impact of online shopping are not matters the LDP can address, but they are wider issues the council should be aware of. Some comments were saying that there are too many coffee shops/betting shops/charity shops, and that there was a need for a wider range of different uses. A few comments supporting social/leisure/community uses on the high street in order to combat isolation and loneliness. One comment noted there should be more support for village high streets and not just Maldon and Burnham High Streets, to reduce the need to travel.

12.13 **Question 49** - Do you believe this policy (Policy E5 in LDP 2017) requires modification? If so, how would you like to see it changed?



12.14 **Question 50** - Do you believe this policy (Policy E5 in LDP 2017) encourages tourism or is it too restrictive?

This question was answered 102 times.

12.15 In regard to questions 48 and 49, more than half of comments consider the policy to be too restrictive and that tourism should be encouraged; some comments stating tourism should be encouraged but not to the detriment of considerations such as the character of an area, ecology etc and ensure there is enough parking. Some comments consider the policy to be appropriate as it is currently, however there is limited explanation as

to why this is. A few comments from people who do not want to encourage tourism or are unsure.

- 12.16 **Question 51** - How could planning policy encourage more visitors to the District other than day visitors?

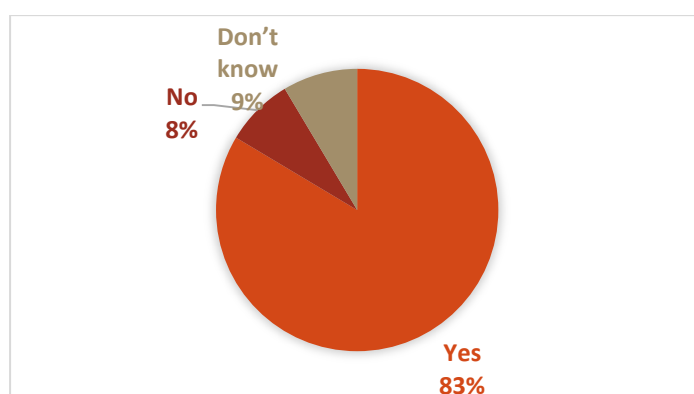
This question was answered 120 times

- 12.17 Majority of respondents were supportive of developments for tourists, particularly tourist accommodation including camping and caravan sites, however it was considered the current policy was not overly supportive of tourism. It was also noted more tourist attractions were needed that took advantage of the district's landscapes. Comments were also submitted regarding better promotion of the district and its offerings which are matters outside the LDP Review, but which the council should be aware of.

### 13.0 QUESTIONS 52 TO 60 SUMMARY

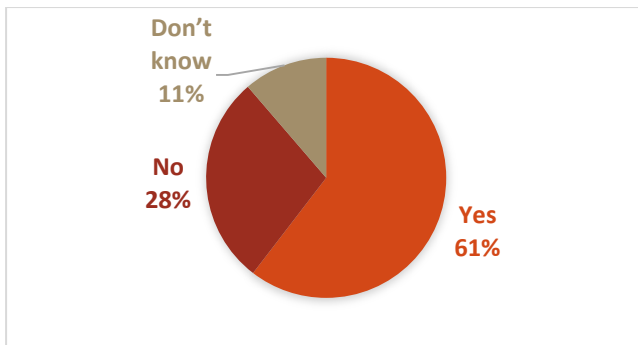
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- 13.1 **Question 52** - Should the Council consider having protected landscape views in the District, even though this even though this may place development pressure elsewhere?



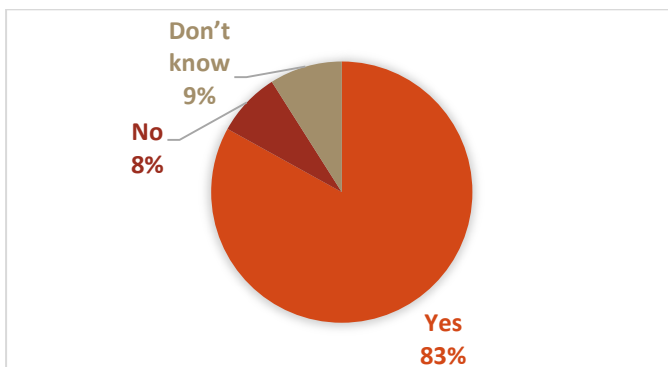
- 13.2 The majority of respondents were in favour of protecting landscape views however concern was raised regarding how this would be achieved and whether this would be found sound at examination as national guidance has moved away from local designations.
- 13.3 **Question 53** - In terms of access and sustainable transport in the District, what is most important to you?
- This question was answered 201 times.
- 13.4 **Question 54** - Should the Council focus future growth on those areas with higher levels of commuter access either by bus or train?



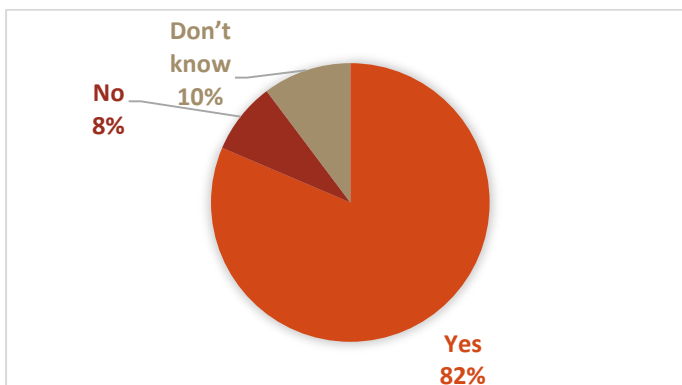


13.5 In regard to questions 53 and 54, many of the respondents are concerned about the transport networks across the District. Overall, respondents felt that development should be located where there is access to bus or train networks. They are seeking a better more sustainable transport system in the District but there is also a recognition that the District is more rural in nature and that the car is still required. Improvements to cycle lanes and accessibility for walking are seen as important, as are improved bus services.

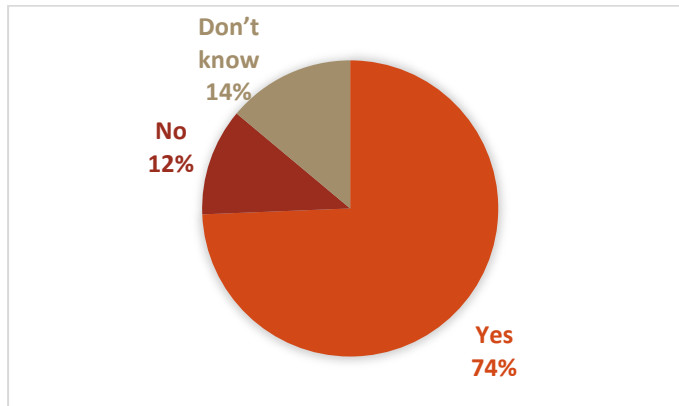
13.6 **Question 55** - Should all new development be linked to its settlement by a footpath wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or double buggy/pram?



13.7 **Question 56** - Should development have to demonstrate that it can provide safe footpath/cycle links/ connections, which incorporate green infrastructure and support active travel choices?

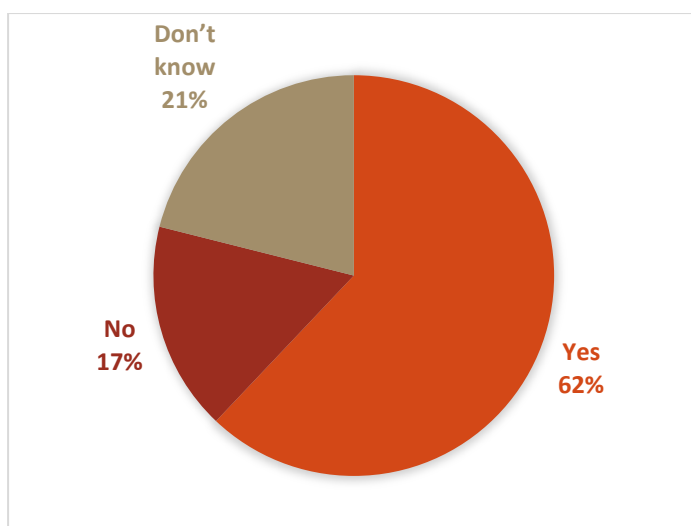


- 13.8 In regard to questions 55 and 56, the majority of the respondents were supportive of the proposals, but there was also support to include cycle lanes and bridle ways.
- 13.9 **Question 57** - Should the council continue to explore and support complementary projects delivered outside the planning system that can support travel choice and a shift away from the use of the car in the District?



13.10 Whilst many respondents could see the benefit of exploring complementary projects and initiatives delivered outside the planning system to move away from car use, there was a sense of realism in many answers. These recognised that large parts of the District were rural and remote in nature, settlements more scattered and that there were therefore practical limitations in what can be achieved with cars felt to be a necessity for many people. However, there was support for improvements in towns. The Dengie Dart was mentioned specifically as being good for local communities. There were suggestions of the council supporting the roll out of other projects which were technology-based (such as increasing electric vehicle charging points, lift-sharing, and self-driving vehicles), that were mode-based (such as getting more commuter/shopper bus services in the District, more bridleways/cycle lanes, re-instating railway links to Maldon, demand-responsive transport, etc) and that were place-based (such as transport link improvements between Maldon and Crouch Valley Railway, improvements between Tollesbury & Tiptree, traffic speed measures.)

- 13.11 **Question 58** - Should the Council take into account the advantages of locations which stand to offer the better chance of securing new infrastructure due to critical massing of development?



13.12 Whilst many respondents could see the benefit of critical massing of development to stand a better chance of securing new various forms of new or expanded infrastructure, there were many caveated answers. These included assumptions that existing towns or certain scales of settlement might already offer better economies of scale than other alternatives and critical mass could work better in these more established locations.

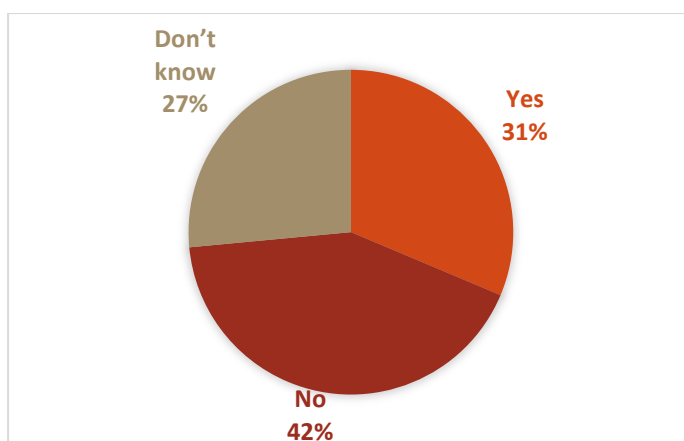
There were comments that the District does not have the infrastructure to support existing growth and this will just get worst if investment in infrastructure does not come before development, which is the way the current S106/CIL arrangements work.

Some assumed the term infrastructure in the question only meant transport related projects, rather than infrastructure in more general terms and that the council should not write-off locations that already have good transport infrastructure or capacity to otherwise take more development.

It was also pointed out whilst critical massing can often secure new infrastructure, this should not mean the council does not consider what local advantages smaller scale developments offer as well.

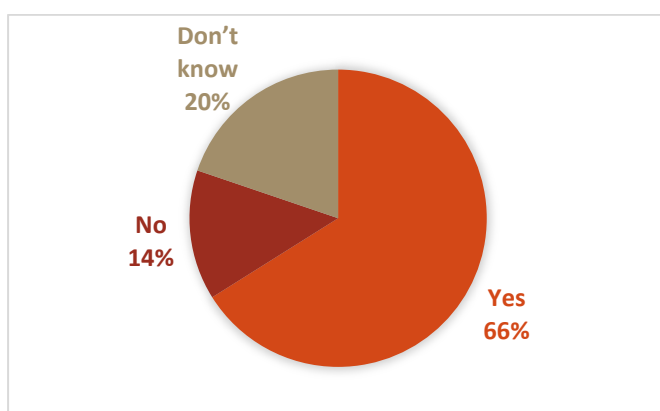
Of those that disagreed or were doubtful of this approach, there was concern that development would promise but still not deliver like is believed to have occurred previously; that it should instead be prioritised where there was capacity in infrastructure/services and then focused on sustainable settlements in larger villages where some other services already exist which would enable smaller developers to bring benefits more in proportion to settlements; or that this approach would be impact on the uniqueness of Maldon District if focussing growth in one location. There were also concerns this approach would just lead to a few bigger developments which are not favourable.

13.13 **Question 59** - Affordable housing is often the biggest influence on viability, so should the Council continue to prioritise this policy requirement over other infrastructure contributions or design quality across the District?



13.14 The respondents were split in their comments with slightly more respondents not in favour, but there were caveats in that it should not be at the expense of infrastructure and quality design. There were also some respondents who were concerned about the affordability of housing in the District. The NPPF does set out that the Council should deliver all of its housing need and that does include affordable housing. The Local Housing Needs Assessment sets out what that need is and the Council in its review of the LDP will have to ascertain whether this is possible along with the infrastructure, design, and climate change requirements of development. In order to make sure policy constraints do not make development unviable the LDP will have a whole plan viability assessment.

13.15 **Question 60** - Should we consider spare capacity within our existing infrastructure when we determine where new development should go?



13.16 The majority of respondents were supportive of the statement that spare capacity within existing infrastructure should determine where new development should go. Though there were concerns that this should not be the only criteria for the selection of growth areas. This is a legitimate concern because there are a number of factors which will help the Council select firstly its growth areas and then the sites which should be allocated. Some of the respondents believed that there was no spare capacity.