

Growing Baldock

Statement of Community Involvement



October 2025

Urban&Civic

Hertfordshire



Executive Summary

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by Urban&Civic and provides a record of the pre-application public consultation and stakeholder engagement undertaken in relation to the growth of Baldock.

There have been discussions and plans for the growth of Baldock for many years, all of which have helped to inform thoughts on the future. This is reflected in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan, which sets out strong expectations for how that growth should happen.

In 2021, Urban&Civic were appointed as master developer partner for Hertfordshire County Council's Baldock North Urban Extension project, to work in partnership with the County Council, who own the land, to deliver up to 3,200 homes and supporting infrastructure, including schools, green spaces and transport improvements.

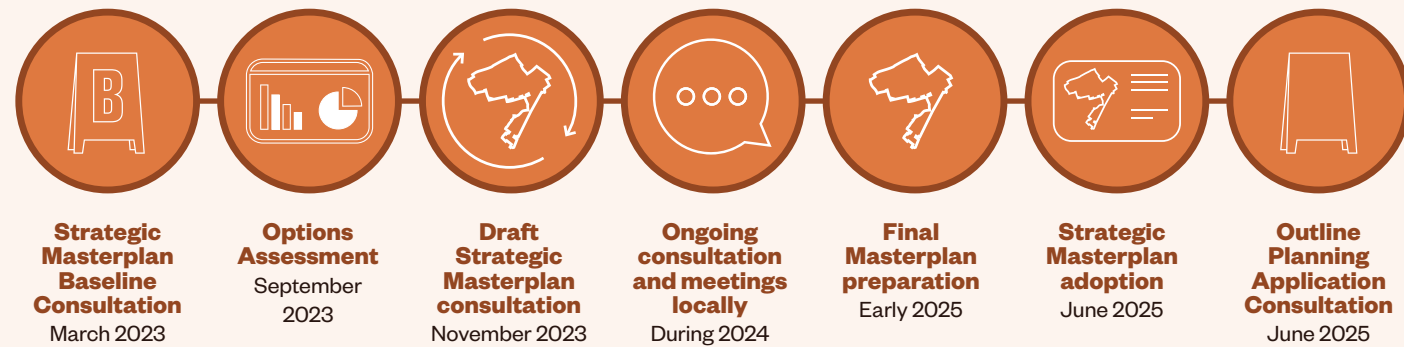
It was agreed Urban&Civic would prepare a Strategic Masterplan in accordance with Local Plan policy, prior to the preparation of an Outline Planning Application.

To shape the masterplan, Urban&Civic undertook a programme of consultation between 2023 and late 2025. The engagement was extensive and centred on working with local groups and the community of Baldock and the surrounding villages, engaging them in 'The Baldock Conversation'.

The consultation was undertaken as a staged process with ongoing conversations throughout, including with the Growing Baldock Advisory Forum, a community group set up with a selection of representatives from the local area. A dedicated interactive consultation website www.growingbaldock.co.uk was also launched, with ongoing updates to a growing mailing list.

In summary, the key stages of consultation

included:



The Baldock Conversation will continue into the detailed planning stage and beyond, as Growing Baldock moves into implementation.



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Introduction

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared by Urban&Civic to support the Growing Baldock Outline Planning Application (OPA).

In June 2021, Urban&Civic was appointed as master developer partner for Hertfordshire County Council's Baldock North Urban Extension project, to work in partnership to deliver up to 3,200 homes and supporting infrastructure, including schools and green spaces, over the next 20 years.

The development is being led by Urban&Civic, who are working with Hertfordshire County Council, the landowner.

The site was allocated for development in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan in 2022, under a series of allocations including BA1, BA10, BA2 and BA3. In accordance with Local Plan policy SP9, a Strategic Masterplan was prepared for the development, setting out how it would feel and work, informed by the requirements of the Local Plan. Alongside this, many people fed their thoughts into the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan, which sets out some core principles on the way Baldock should grow well and sustainably.

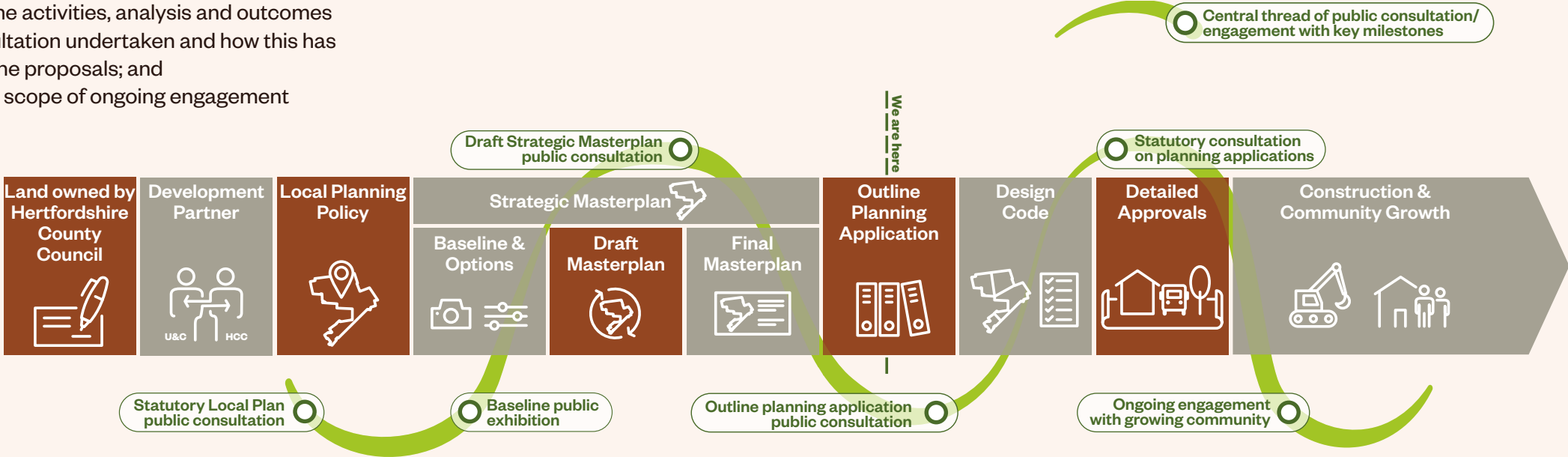
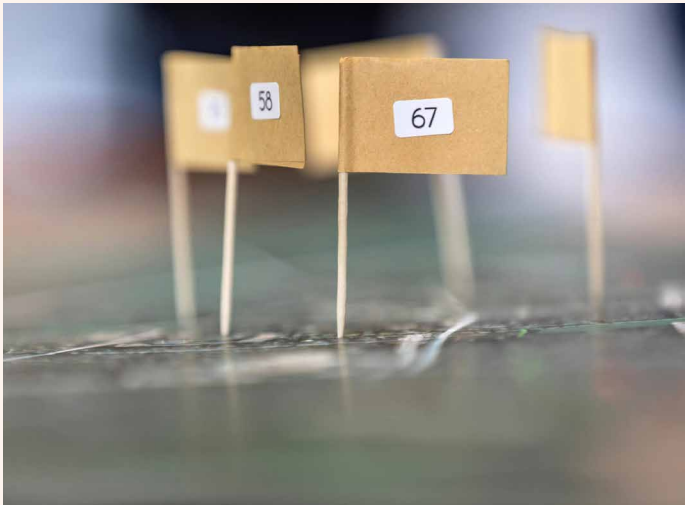
Given the scale of the new development, relative to the existing town, and the multi-locational aspect of the Local Plan allocation sites, it was essential to ensure that the key stakeholders were mapped and engaged at each stage of the process across statutory partners, key technical and interest groups and the wider community of the town and its surrounding villages. An engagement strategy to achieve this was developed with and signed off by North Herts Council (NHC) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

The Growing Baldock Strategic Masterplan was approved by NHC Full Council in June 2025. The Strategic Masterplan includes the vision and key principles for the areas to be developed, and how they will work with the existing town and surrounding villages. It was prepared in stages to align with the North Hertfordshire Strategic Masterplan Brief (2022), including the collation of baseline evidence, options testing and public consultation, culminating in the final Strategic Masterplan report.

The purpose of this SCI is to demonstrate how Urban&Civic, in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), have engaged with the community over the last two years through the development of the Strategic Masterplan and how their feedback has helped to shape the plans now included within the OPA.

The SCI:

- Provides a summary of the OPA proposals, including a summary description of the Application Site, its location, the vision and context;
- Outlines Urban&Civic's approach to engagement;
- Describes the activities, analysis and outcomes of the consultation undertaken and how this has influenced the proposals; and
- Outlines the scope of ongoing engagement activity



▲ Figure 1: Key Planning and Consultation Stages

2.0

A Summary of the Application Proposals

The description of development for which planning permission is sought is:

Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for means of highway access into the development from the A505/Royston Road, North Road and Clothall Road; for up to 3,200 homes, up to 16ha of employment, waste and leisure infrastructure, a mixed use local centre, up to 1 secondary school, up to 2 x primary schools, up to 1 SEND school, health hub, green infrastructure (including parks, formal sports provision, play, habitat areas, informal open space and structural planting), internal street network, access junctions and railway crossing, public transport infrastructure, pedestrian/cycle network (including PRow diversions, active travel routes, mobility hubs and crossing of the railway), utilities and drainage infrastructure (including diversions of existing and provision of new infrastructure, pumping stations, sustainable drainage, primary substations, rising main/strategic sewer and renewable energy infrastructure), ground remodelling/earthworks and any necessary demolitions.

3.0

Context

Planning Policy Context

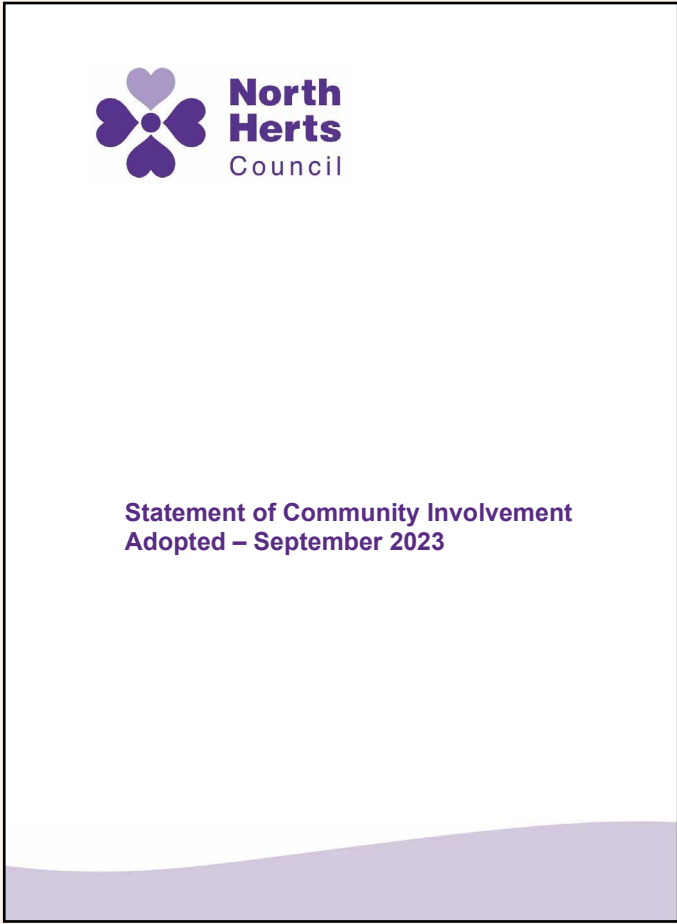
The relevant components of the adopted Development Plan for this application are the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (NHLP), 2011 – 2031, and the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan (2021).

The NHLP was adopted on 8th November 2022 and sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the whole of North Hertfordshire for the period up to 2031. The Local Plan addresses the key issues in the District including the allocation of at least 13,000 new homes.

The policy also identifies that of the 2,800 homes allocated at site BA1, approximately 1,400 of these will be delivered by 2031. This policy also requires sites to deliver up to 40% Affordable Housing where this is viable, with a broadly even split between smaller (1-2 bed) and larger (3+ bed) properties. Demand for self build development must also be provided on specific sites.

In addition to these overarching strategic policies, there is a clear policy basis for the proposals, and the site is identified in the Local Plan as a series of allocations: BA1 (North of Baldock) for 2,800 homes; BA2 (Land southwest of Clothall Road) for 200 homes and BA3 (Land south of Clothall Common) for 245 homes (see Figure 2). Site BA4 (Land east of Clothall Common) lies outside the OPA boundary and is allocated for 50 homes. In addition, site BA10 Royston Road as employment.

NHC also have an adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2023) which sets out how consultation should be undertaken as part of the Development Management process, including in relation to the development of Strategic Masterplans prior to a planning submission, all of which was adhered to.



▲ Statement of community Involvement

Strategic Masterplan Vision

The Growing Baldock Vision was developed collaboratively, initially through workshops with HCC and NHC, and then with wider stakeholders as part of discussions around opportunities and constraints. It was then tested and evolved further with the Growing Baldock Advisory Forum, made up of local representatives from the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan Group, Revivel, Baldock Beats Waste, local parish and district councillors, and through the 2023 Strategic Masterplan consultation.

Growing Baldock will deliver a new neighbourhood of open spaces, homes, community facilities and employment areas that is part of and intrinsically linked to the existing town. Baldock will grow in an environmentally, socially and financially sustainable way through excellent planning, design, construction and operation.

The new development will strengthen Baldock as a vibrant town with a rich and distinctive history by helping reveal and celebrate the historic environment through the creation of a heritage trail, new community assets, public realm and community events and activities.

The Baldock Greenway will connect new and existing open spaces around the town, supporting active

travel and healthy lifestyles and providing access to the surrounding countryside. On site provision of green spaces will alleviate pressure on the Ivel Springs and Weston Hills Local Nature Reserves and provide substantial new ‘space for nature’ and biodiversity net gain. Growth will be planned so that every resident’s first choice of movement can be to walk, cycle, or use public transport to meet their daily needs. This will be reflected in the wider transport strategy for Baldock, working with the council to improve walking and cycling routes through and around the town.

New education, health, employment and community facilities will complement and enhance existing provision in Baldock, including strengthening existing education provision before delivering new facilities, and meeting the needs of all children within Baldock. Day to day needs will be met on site in locations that are easily accessible by sustainable modes of travel, to encourage social interaction, well-being and strong communities. Enhanced connections to the town centre, and increased footfall will support the heart of the town and its diversity of shops and businesses.

The development will achieve net zero in operational carbon emissions through building design, minimising construction emissions, local renewable energy production and storage (where feasible) and via carbon offsetting.

The ‘Master Developer’ Approach

The Urban&Civic approach is about more than just building more homes: it looks at all the things a place needs to work sustainably, and ensures they are delivered ahead of and alongside those homes. This means while the number of homes in this development is large, it can only come forward with the schools, health provision, play and green space people need.

Furthermore, supporting infrastructure is all designed in from the start: so that play areas are close to homes, schools are a short bike, scoot or walk away, and critically they are all designed and delivered to create a sustainable community. We know that the delivery of those essentials will come forward alongside the homes, as we are the ones who deliver them, and we work with the local authorities to commit to the timing and phasing for when and how they will come forward.

This development is a fundamental part of Baldock’s future, and Urban&Civic are committed to working with the town, its residents and all local partners on an ongoing basis. We want to be a good neighbour and our Communities team will continue to work with the existing and future new residents to keep the discussions going and ensure we grow Baldock together.



4.0

Growing Baldock Community Stakeholder and Advisory Forum meetings

From 'day one', U&C and HCC have been committed to developing the future of Baldock with full engagement from local partners and local communities. This is a fundamental part of U&C's approach to master planning and design and is at the heart of the approach to formulating the application proposals.

In its engagement with the public and stakeholders, U&C set a series of overarching principles:

- To be part of the community: As an example of U&C's response to this principle, U&C proactively sought to support local events such as Ecofest.
- To work through issues and aspirations with key partners and stakeholders: U&C acknowledge that major development will present a range of challenges and opportunities to a local area. It is inevitable that some of these will be viewed as negative impacts but that others will be opportunities for new facilities or approaches. U&C committed to working collaboratively with the local community and the local authorities to develop designs, approaches and interventions which minimise the impacts of the new development and maximise the benefits. We set up a dedicated Advisory Forum made up of local

representatives from the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan Group, Revivel, Baldock Beats Waste, local parish and district councillors, for updates and themed discussions and workshops on the key topics, transport, education and green spaces.

- To take an evidence-led approach: U&C has employed a dedicated design team with extensive experience of master planning strategic sites and with a track record and detailed technical knowledge of the local area. U&C has undertaken extensive research, survey work and consultation to build a robust evidence base to support the proposed development. U&C consider that it is crucial to engage with the local community to share and test data to ensure it reflects the experience of those living with and around the site. U&C committed to being open and transparent with the evidence collected.
- To be ambitious for the development and the local area: U&C take a long term interest in their strategic sites. U&C's aspiration is that through developing a shared vision for the development, achieving a quality of design and delivery and sustained investment and maintenance, the new communities and places will be respected nationally, recognised internationally and cherished locally.

5.0

The Baldock Conversation - Consultation Process

Given the scale of the new development, in respect to the existing town, and the multi-locational aspect of the allocation, it was essential to ensure a robust engagement process. An engagement strategy to achieve this was developed with and signed off by NHC and HCC.

We wanted to make sure that everyone who wanted to, could play a role in shaping the town's future growth. Understanding people's views and the knowledge of existing residents was a key part of this. We called this approach, 'The Baldock Conversation', to reflect the genuine engagement to take this ambitious project forward in the right way for new and existing residents.

There were many opportunities throughout the planning process where residents could meet the full team and share their views. This included public events and smaller focused discussions with individual groups, schools, and healthcare providers.

Key to the Baldock Conversation was also making clear the team were available at all times, not just during the formal consultation periods, to listen to ideas and issues of importance to people locally.

Many of the smaller follow up sessions were inspired by points raised at larger events, allowing us to get into the detail and really understand any issues, concerns or opportunities.

In the next sections we set out a summary of the work undertaken at each key stage in the process.





9

Drop-in events/
exhibitions with over
1,000 attendees



4

Online Q&A
sessions



50+

Meetings with local
groups/ organisations
incl schools and Parish
Councils



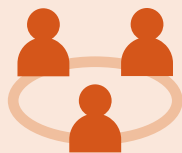
6

Neighbouring
resident sessions



5

North Herts Community
Forum meetings -
Baldock and Villages



9

Growing Baldock
Community Stakeholder
& Advisory Forum
mettings



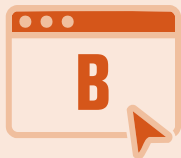
3 years

Of Ecofest



2

Young people session at
Knights Templar



10,000+

Website
hits



494

Facebook
sign-ups



300+

Mailing list
sign-ups



10

E-news
updates



3

Widespread leaflet drops
by hand (to over 5,000
addresses)

An Introduction to Growing Baldock – March 2023

The first objective was to understand how Baldock currently works for its residents. To gain the best understanding of the site and the local area, we reviewed background information and consulted local experts and stakeholders on key topics such as heritage and archaeology, community, drainage, ecology, green infrastructure, transport, design, landscape, and utilities.

This work was shared with key partners and formed the basis of initial themed workshops with statutory authorities and key interested parties. The information in the reports was further tested with the local community, in public events in March 2023.

This engagement work at this point consisted of:

- Targeted promotion to the core stakeholders and interested groups identified for face to face meetings before, during or after the consultation events;
- Widespread promotion to the town and local villages for two drop-in consultation events at the Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre; and



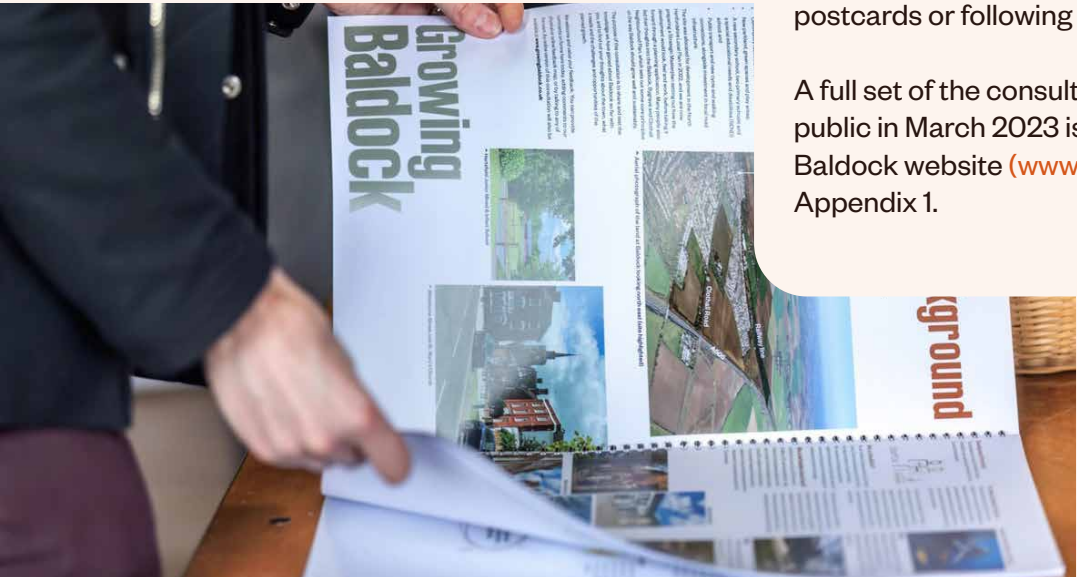
- An online consultation, supported by social media promotion, using the same core material and hosted on the Growing Baldock website.

The content shared in the events covered the background of the site, including its allocation and local policy; the master developer approach and U&C’s role within the project; and asked residents their thoughts on the many aspects of growing a community such as transport, education and ecology as well as their knowledge of the town and how it functions.

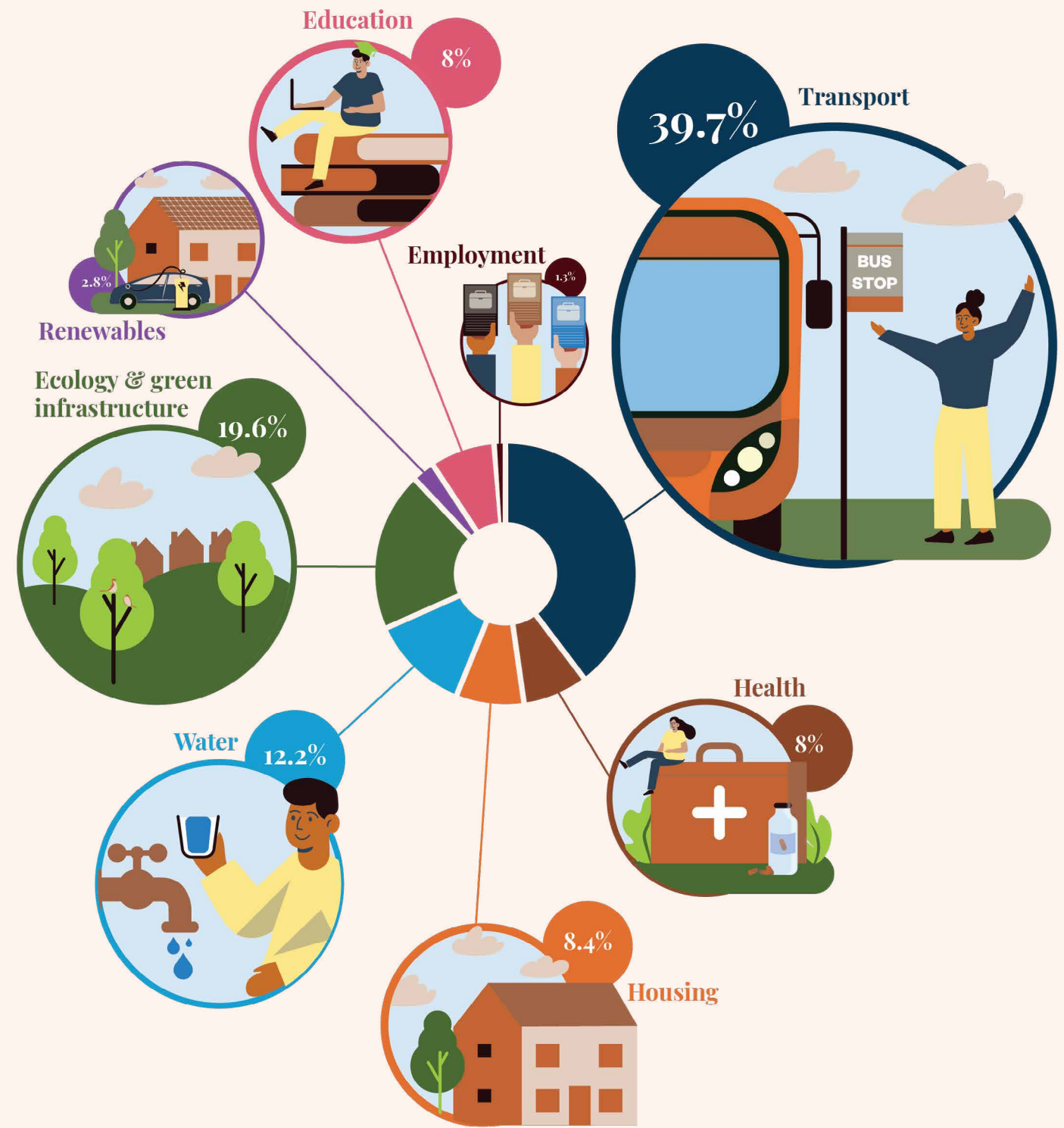
During March, we met over 400 residents who shared their thoughts on key themes surrounding building a community. Residents contributed more than 700 comments, both at the events and through our online consultation.

We held a series of public exhibitions on different days/ times with large scale panels and members of the U&C and consultant team on hand to answer questions. We also had large aerial maps with attendees to mark up with flags to identify ideas or issues. Comments could be left on the day on postcards or following the event via the website.

A full set of the consultation content shared with the public in March 2023 is available on the Growing Baldock website (www.growingbaldock.co.uk) and in Appendix 1.



A summary of the key themes discussed by the community during March 2023 is presented below:



▲ Figure 03: Key topics raised by the community – March 2023 from 400 comments

Figure 04 below captures the core issues that were raised in the initial public consultation events in March 2023 and how they were responded to at that time to inform the draft Strategic Masterplan.



▲ Figure 04: Comments arising from consultation, March 2023

1. Ivel Springs
We are exploring how sustainable drainage systems within the development can support recharging the aquifer as well as working with the wider local water cycle. We are also talking with the water companies to ensure future water supplies are robust and sustainable for the development and wider area. New homes will also feature water reduction technologies, and encourage sustainable use of water.

2. Green space
We will provide not just new areas of accessible green space for people and nature – such as Bygrave Common and Walls Field – but also corridors throughout the development to connect with wider green areas. The Baldock Greenway will be a key part of connecting these new important spaces, alongside enabling sustainable connections to existing Nature Reserves at Ivel Springs and Weston Hills.

3. Royston Road
The team have been meeting with residents of Royston Road individually to discuss the planned approach, and identify issues which need picking up at the right stage of the future development process. The principle is to work with and design around the existing properties: respecting privacy and accesses and establishing landscape buffers where possible between new and existing homes.

4. Bygrave Road
We are proposing to make existing roads such as Bygrave Road better for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. This also enables us to enhance the habitats along the road side.

5. Raised land ('Green Space east of Clothall Common')
This is an important place which people enjoy walking through and want to retain – even though everyone had different names for it! It has also become home to important insects and birds, so we have ensured it remains green space in the plans.

6. Development edges
Our discussions with those living on the boundaries of the new development have varied depending on the location and current and future views/neighbours. We will establish character areas which will explain how the boundaries between new and existing homes will be designed: the spaces between buildings and gardens, what planting might go there, and the design of the new homes. We are not proposing large areas of land between the existing and new homes, as we are looking to create one Baldock where the new development integrates well with the existing, but we will find ways that ensure privacy is protected, and landscape design reduces the negative impact of losing views.

7. Clothall Common
We have developed key principles to ensure our approaches to transport reduce the risk of increased car trips through Clothall Common and improve the opportunities for existing residents to use improved cycling and walking routes, and better bus services to get to town and connect to wider amenities.

8. Walls Field
We recognise the importance of Walls Field to residents and heritage partners, and have evolved plans to ensure this area remains as open green space, with opportunities for a wildflower and grassland setting, heritage information displays and light touch play facilities which reflect the historic setting.

9. Medical centre
Discussions continue to support the existing medical centre and explore timings for a new centre within the development, south of the railway line, so it can be easily accessible by as many people as possible. We will explore the services to be delivered and finalise timings through the planning process.

10. Town centre
The importance of the town centre and the need to strengthen it is clear, and the approach set out today supports improving access to the town centre for all Baldock residents, including for the new homes. It is important that new facilities complement and do not compete with facilities in the town, and make the High Street and surrounding roads better for people to spend time or walk and cycle around.

Knights Templar school
The principle set out at the consultation is for one secondary school provider for Baldock to enhance the strong and well loved reputation of Knights Templar. To ensure it has space to grow, options for locations for the larger school were explained to ensure sufficient capacity is provided.

12. Whitehorse Street junction
The proposal is to rework the junction and the wider network, to keep more through traffic out of the centre of Baldock and reduce the number of directions you can travel via the junction. This will discourage “through traffic” vehicles from coming through the junction and the town centre and enable a safer design for those walking and cycling.

13. Railway station
We have drawn on the feedback to explore options that prioritise more inclusive access to the station for wheelchair users, and better access for walking and cycling from the north-east corner of the station, to make traffic flow better through and around the station. We will not put more parking at the station, as we want people to walk, cycle or catch a bus to the station. We are working with Network Rail to explore station improvements.

14. Railway bridge
We are looking at bold measures which take traffic routing through Baldock away from needing to use North Road and making it more of a local route. This will see traffic management put in place and the width reduced to one car lane, controlled by traffic lights, with the rest of the road providing a safe cycle and walking route through to the station and town centre.

Options Testing and Preferred Option
- May 2023 onwards

This phase of work was taken forward in two key ways:

- 1. Working with stakeholders and technical working groups; and
- 2. Through direct discussions with Community Groups and the establishment of an Advisory Forum, with agreed Terms of Reference. The Forum included representatives from the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan Group, Revlvel, Baldock Beats Waste, local parish, district and county councillors, as noted above.

An options workshop involving key stakeholders (a range of NHC and HCC officers representing different disciplines, plus the Wildlife Trust, Sport England, Historic England and Anglian Water) was undertaken in May 2023 during the early stages of options testing and Strategic Masterplan production. The emerging masterplan was then the subject of a Design South East Design Review in July 2023 and a further design workshop between U&C, NHC and HCC officers was held in August 2023. You can read the Options Report here [Options Report.pdf](#).

Throughout the process, a series of task group meetings themed around movement and access, green infrastructure and land use, took place, involving officers and stakeholders in key design discussions on issues directly influencing the emerging Strategic Masterplan.

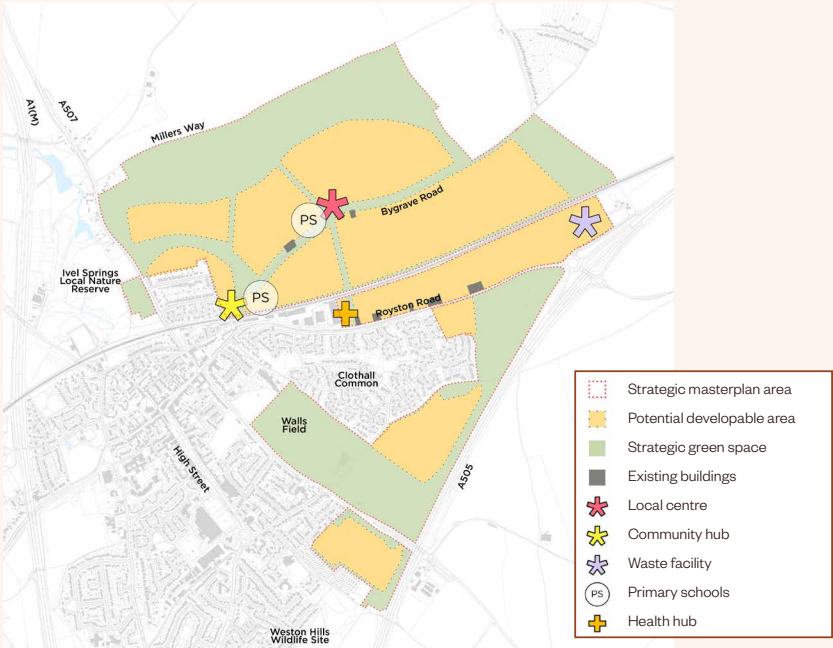
In these discussions various iterations of the masterplan were tested against an agreed set of criteria: response to the baseline, compliance with place making objectives, compliance with policy and feasibility and delivery.

The suite of technical and design inputs discussed and refined over several months culminated in a consensus on various matters, which were presented in the Options Report as ‘fixes’.

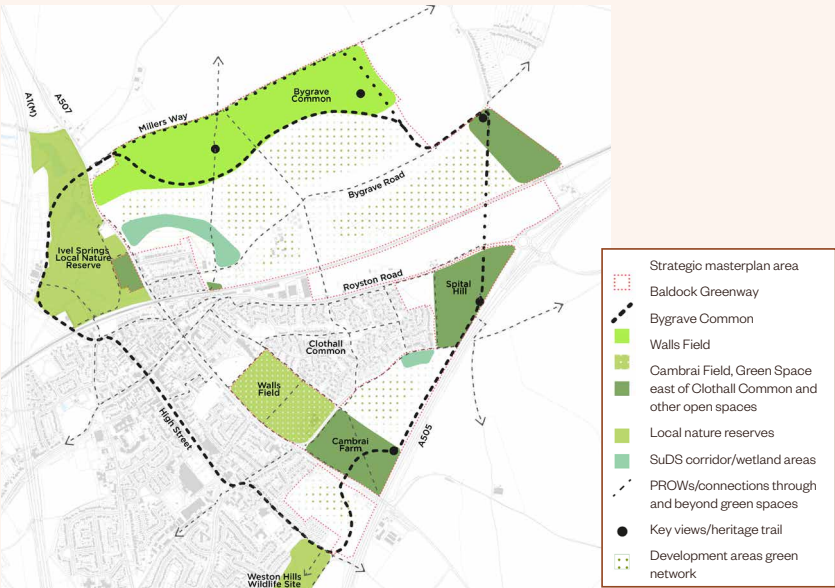
These reflect the status of parameters at the time of the Options Report, some of which evolved as the Strategic Masterplan was finalised, as shown in the Framework Plans in sections 5–10 of the document (<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/documents/s27818/Appendix%20A%20-%20Growing%20Baldock%20Strategic%20Masterplan.pdf>)

The Options Report also identified two areas where further work was required before a ‘fix’ could be achieved: education, particularly secondary school provision and archaeology. As part of identifying the secondary school as an area where further work was required at this time, an alternative option for the location of the secondary school was explored, envisaging the secondary school in parcel BA3, rather than BA1.

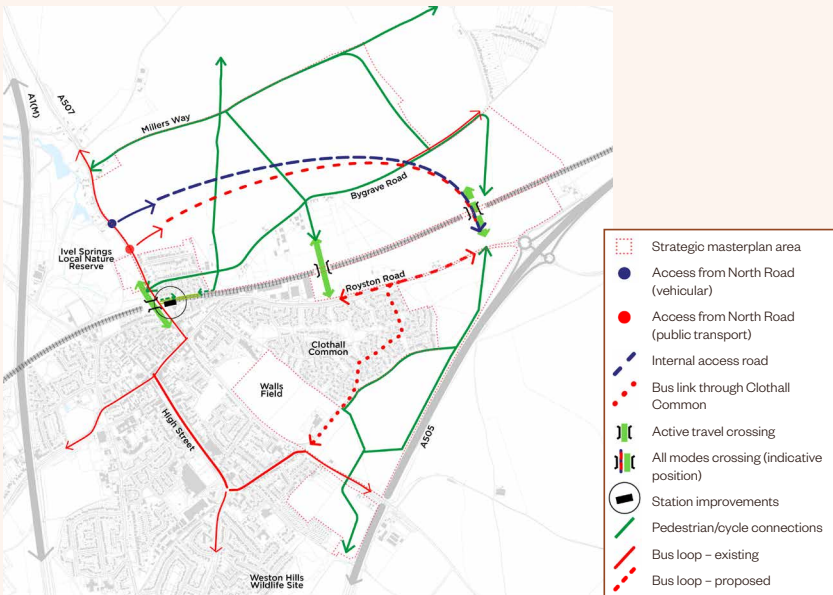
This was the subject of extensive discussion and exploration with NHC and HCC (education and highways) and we expand on the latest position in the Planning Statement that accompanies this planning application.



▲ Figure 05: Land Use Fixes (Options Report)



▲ Figure 06: Green Infrastructure Fixes (Options Report)



▲ Figure 07: Movement and Access Fixes (Options Report)

The input of the community and wider interest groups was also brought into the options testing stage through a series of parallel meetings and events. The approach mapped out key representative groups and responded to those who had brought up key issues, ideas and opportunities in discussions on the baseline work.

Meetings provided an opportunity to present the latest thinking and options on each theme, share the latest key framework diagrams, and ensure the group’s views and inputs were brought into the wider options testing approach.

A schedule of these meetings and themes during 2023 is set out below:

Date	Topic
26 April 2023	First meeting project introduction
23 May 2023	Transport
19 July 2023	Green Infrastructure
26 July 2023	Community Infrastructure
16 August 2023	Transport
20 September 2023	Water (with Revlvel)

Alongside these meetings the team also held additional meetings and attended events including:

- Baldock Ecofest (May 2023 and September 2024) – meeting residents and answering questions on future plans and particularly ecology and sustainability
- The site’s direct neighbours (10 July 2023) – including Salisbury Road, Bygrave Road, Royston Road, Hillside Park – 3 Q&A sessions with over 70 attendees
- The Knights Templar School (4 July 2023) – several meetings with the Headmaster and the leadership team, including a sustainability session with the student Green Knights team
- Ashwell residents (4 July 2023) – drop in session sharing the plans for Growing Baldock with the community, providing an opportunity to better understand the interconnections with Baldock for facilities and amenities, and to inform some of the thinking about transport planning. Strong turnout of over 100 people across the four hour session.

- Baldock Area Forum (17 July 2023 and 11 September 2023), U&C attendance to provide project overview and updates
- Meetings and site visits with local Councillors
- Meetings with local and national stakeholders including:
 - » Baldock Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association (BALGA) including a site visit (April 2023)
 - » Friends of Baldock Green Spaces (FOBGS) (24 July 2023)
 - » Baldock Forum (group of Headteachers and Chair of Governors of the schools in Baldock and the surrounding area) (8 November 2023)
 - » Baldock and Letchworth Scouts (4 May 2023)
 - » Girlguiding Baldock (14 November 2023)
 - » Rotary Club of Baldock (26 April 2023)
 - » The Baldock Surgery and NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex (23 August, 02 October 2023)
 - » Sport England (1 August 2023)
 - » Historic England site meeting (12 July 2023)
 - » Revlvel (14 March 2023, 13 September 2023)
 - » Affinity Water (2 January 2023)
 - » British Horse Society (BHS) (10 August 2023)
 - » Christchurch Baldock (20 November 2023)
 - » Baldock Benefice (including St Mary’s Church Baldock) (30 November 2023)
 - » Hillside Park (Owner, Manager and Chair of the Residents) (20 October 2023, 30 November 2023) including a site visit

Feedback from the discussions with all stakeholders, members and events, were continually informing the full Strategic Masterplan process, being drawn into the options testing, supporting the refining to a preferred option and concluding on a strategic masterplan, all of which informed the Outline Planning Application.



Draft Strategic Masterplan - November 2023 onwards

Ongoing discussions were undertaken between U&C, HCC and NHC to finalise the approach for the draft masterplan. In October 2023 the draft masterplan was presented to the North Herts internal Project Board to seek support for public consultation on the draft plan and this was granted.

In November 2023, a series of public consultation events were held to gather public views and preferences regarding the preferred masterplan for the development site. This included four face to face exhibition style engagement events, including a session with students at The Knights Templar school, providing the opportunity to demonstrate how the Strategic Masterplan had evolved in line with feedback received to date, and share the preferred options being set out in the draft masterplan.

The consultation in November had a particular focus on:

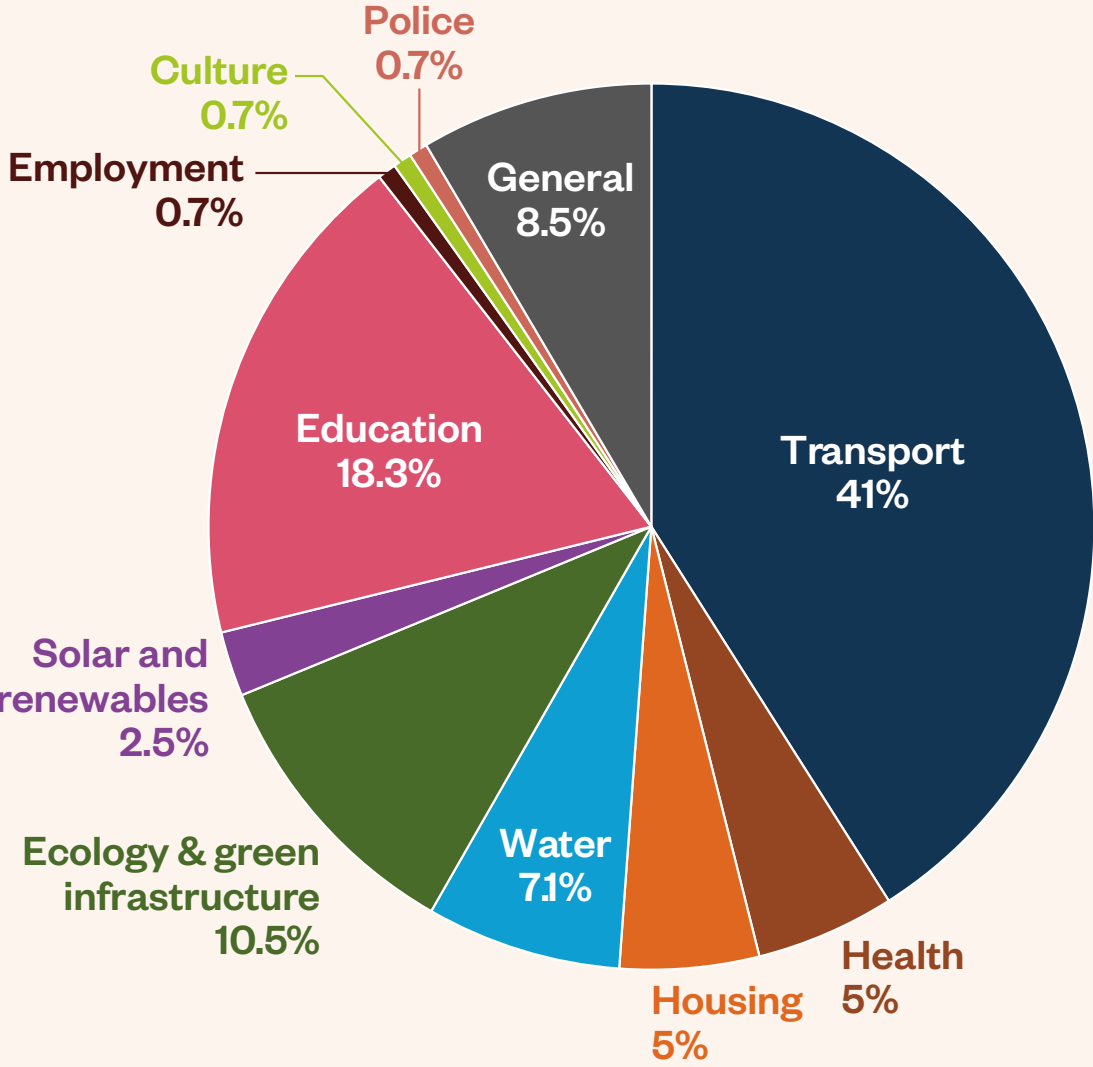
- Feedback and actions taken since the March events;
- The Baldock Greenway and connecting green and blue infrastructure throughout the town and wider area;
- Transport and proposed changes to the local network to support the new homes, and create a culture of active travel;
- Education and the secondary school location options; and
- A cohesive approach to planning other community facilities and amenities to work with the town and local villages: termed the “One Baldock” approach.



▲ Preferred options consultation, November 2023

Across the four events in November over 400 people attended and over 300 comments were received. A copy of the material shared during November is included in Appendix 3.

A summary of the key themes discussed by the community during November 2023 is presented below:



▲ Figure 08: Key topics raised by the community – November 2023

Transport as the leading area of focus again, with the proposed interventions provoking useful and specific feedback on potential impacts based on people’s local knowledge and everyday experience. Further work to assess any unintended consequences of the interventions in key locations, informed the OPA. Several comments were made on the need for improvements to the train station, more capacity on trains and the lack of bus services and connections to necessary destinations including Stevenage hospital.

Education was the second most commented on area with the highest number focusing on the options presented for secondary education provision, to which attendees were asked to express their preference. The majority of respondees supported the idea of one new school for Baldock in a new location. There was a strong preference for locating the new school on BA3, albeit with some concerns about impacts on existing roads with the additional traffic this would bring.

Green spaces: There were a number of supportive comments for the Baldock Greenway and improved pedestrian and cycling provision generally. A number of BALGA members commented positively on the proposed increased provision of allotments.

Health: Comments related to the provision of healthcare with a consensus that more was needed and that any new location should consider the mobility of those using the service and provide adequate parking and access by public transport if it was moved out of the high street.

Housing: 5% of comments were linked to housing provision including the need for a high level of affordable housing with a good mix of property types to include bungalows and larger family homes all with a high environmental performance.

Water and the River Ivel received 21 comments albeit this was fewer than the 50 comments received in March. The focus was still predominantly on water extraction and sewage capacity but with recognition that the issue was being taken seriously and the proposed drainage strategy seeks to help recharge the River Ivel.

Other topics with a small number of comments included the need for more policing, a larger cemetery and a splash pad. There were also a number of Ashwell residents who noted their concerns about reduced access to Baldock, particularly the train station by both car and bike and the need for Ashwell to remain in the Knights Templar catchment area.

The consultation was followed up by formal responses from Bygrave, Ashwell and Radwell Parish Councils which also stress additional points on:

- the role of Bygrave Road /Ashwell Road and perceived reduction of vehicular connection with the town (from Bygrave and Ashwell);
- concern around Whitehorse junction changes to journeys from Radwell;
- impacts of controlled flow under the Railway bridge;
- concern around car access and needing more parking to key amenities including the station and doctors surgery;
- concerns that reducing traffic into Baldock will route traffic through the villages;
- needing to plan for farm traffic movements; and
- air pollution around the A507.

A number of key points raised during consultation were reviewed by the team to shape the final proposals in the Strategic Masterplan and ultimately the Outline Planning Application, as outlined below:

Topic	You Said	We did
Helping you get around	Transport was a leading area of focus, both through the events, and within comments made online. We shared detailed proposals of traffic interventions and changes, which gave the opportunity for residents to consider specific impacts based on their local knowledge. These comments have provided fresh insight to support our review of some of the proposals, with improved understanding of potential consequences. Whilst roads dominated this topic, there were also several comments made on the need for improvements to the train station, more capacity on trains and the lack of bus services and connections to necessary destinations, including Stevenage hospital.	We held follow up meetings with residents of the Football Close and Icknield Way area to better understand their access requirements and thoughts on possible solutions to the traffic congestion in that area. We attended meetings with Radwell, Ashwell and Bygrave village residents to discuss and better understand existing transport issues and the potential impact of the changes we are proposing. Discussions continue with Network Rail about opportunities to improve access to the station. We also continue to work with the local transport authority to review and finesse our transport strategy and await the launch of a new modelling programme to run through the proposed scenarios.
Education	Education was the second most commented on area with the highest number focusing on the options presented for secondary education provision. Whilst some alternative solutions were made, the majority of responses supported the idea of one school for Baldock. There was a preference for locating the new school on BA3 if relocation was required, with some concerns that the existing roads could be overwhelmed with the additional traffic this would bring.	We worked closely with the Local Education Authority (HCC), the District Council and the leadership team at Knights Templar School to find a solution for the secondary school.
Public rights of way and green infrastructure	The need for good quality architecture and design to integrate new homes visually with existing properties. There were a number of supportive comments for the Baldock Greenway and improved pedestrian and cycling provision generally. A number of Baldock Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association (BALGA) members commented positively on the proposed increased provision of allotments.	Survey work continued to help us better understand local ecology and existing green spaces. We met with BALGA and visited their shop to discuss their access and space requirements. We have been working on how we can improve cycling and walking opportunities for residents and conversations with NHDC on public rights of way and green infrastructure have continued.
Healthcare	Over five percent of comments were about the provision of healthcare with a consensus that more was needed. It was highlighted that any new location should consider the mobility of those using the service and provide adequate parking and access by public transport if it was moved out of the town.	Discussions continued to support the existing medical centre and explore timings for a new centre within the development, south of the railway line, so it can be easily accessible by as many people as possible. We are exploring the services to be delivered and finalise timings and approach.
Housing tenure	Another five percent of comments were linked to housing provision, including the need for a high level of affordable housing with a good mix of property types to include bungalows and larger family homes. New homes should be specified to maximise their environmental performance.	This was noted - the development will include a range of different types and tenures for Affordable Homes, tailored to local need.

Topic	You Said	We did
Water and the River Ivel	Water and the River Ivel still received 21 comments but this was less than the fifty comments received in March. The focus was still predominantly on water extraction and sewage capacity, but with acknowledgement that we had taken Revlvel's points seriously from our interim engagement with them.	The views shared supported the draining modelling work we have done to recharge the aquifer through drainage, looking to minimise water use and maximise water reuse in the later stages of the development. We are also working with Project Zero to pilot innovative schemes for water efficiency in homes and through encouraging behaviour change as well as through on site water capture and recycling to minimise mains use.
Other topics	Other topics mentioned a handful of times included the need for more policing, a larger cemetery and a splash pad. There were also a number of Ashwell residents who noted their concerns about reduced access to Baldock, particularly the train station by both car and bike. The need for Ashwell to remain in the Knights Templar catchment area was also highlighted.	All comments and concerns were noted and continued to feed into our discussions and plans for Growing Baldock.



The table below, and figure opposite, show how the topics raised during November were considered by the team.

	Issue	Detail	Next steps
1.	Future of Bygrave Road	Concern that closure of Bygrave Road will impact on those living in villages and coming into the town.	The scheme will be delivering a new road (together with a required bridge) connecting North Road and Royston Road through the development north of the railway line. Once this is in place, all users of Bygrave Road will use the new connection, enabling two routes from Baldock to the north east neighbouring villages. The new road connection provides a safer vehicular route, and enables Bygrave Road to be safer for walking, cycling or public transport use. The approach will continue to be tested through the planning process, but it is thought to be the right approach for the growth of the town (as set out in the Access and Movement section on page 61).
2.	Parking capacity at the Station	Access to Station Road and parking provision is inadequate. Parking is needed at the northern entrance of the station.	Feedback from the community, as well as the technical transport work, all stress that the car should be less dominant within the town. This requires improving the active travel connections. More parking being provided will encourage more people to drive to the station, and so the approach to building additional capacity at the station is to ensure a safe northern access from the new homes by bike and walking. This will be further tested as the transport strategy is developed in detail but remains the current position to achieve the overall modal shift away from cars.
3a.	Town centre transport interventions	Consider altering the location of the restrictions to Football Close and Icknield Way.	Experience from local residents and regular uses of these routes will helpfully inform how the details of these interventions evolve as the planning process moves into more detail at outline and phased applications and reserved matters applications. A follow up session will be arranged with local residents to explore the issues further to help define the future options of an intervention here.
3b.		Norton Road modal filter	This is under review with the transport consultant team. Detail of the exact location and type of modal filter to follow in the outline planning application. Close collaboration with the Letchworth Heritage Foundation will ensure the plans are not in conflict with planned development north of Letchworth (LG1).
3c.		Left-turn ban Whitehorse Street to North Road	The inclusion of this left-turn ban has been reviewed by our transport consultants who conclude that keeping the left-turn ban whilst allowing access for residents of Football Close and Icknield Way remains the best approach. However, the left-turn ban could be introduced only if other traffic demand measures in the town and A1(M) J9 capacity enhancements are not sufficiently effective.
4.	Secondary School location	Primary concerns were around traffic impact at South Road / Clothall Road junction	Initial transport modelling has confirmed that the Wallington Road/South Road/Clothall Road roundabout can accommodate the additional trips that would be generated by a secondary school on BA3. All opportunities to provide the optimal environment for walking and cycling will be explored.
5.	Access to Clothall Common	Concerns were expressed about the bus only route into Clothall, but no additional vehicle access to the north, especially if the school is located at BA3. Access for emergency vehicles was also raised as a priority for Clothall Common residents.	This is being reviewed by the design team and will inform the outline planning application.
6.	Weight restrictions limit for HCVs	Support for approach to limit HGV use of the town as a cut through. Comments on options to extend the current weight restrictions coming into force to include a wider area including key routes in the town.	This will be further explored with HCC who are managing the process and outcomes of this. There are some challenges with ensuring the restrictions are enforceable and effective so this will be an ongoing discussion as the transport strategy continues to evolve.
7.	Health provision	Concern about ensuring further or relocated provision is accessible for all	The detailed plans on whether there will be an additional surgery or a larger relocated health centre within the development area is still in discussion and will be finalised later in the planning process – with specific consultation around this. Ensuring effective access to the surgery from existing residents as well as the new community will be a fundamental part of this process. This will also be further tested and consulted on as part of outline planning and later detailed planning applications.



▲ Figure 09: Map of comments arising from consultation – November 2023

Ongoing Engagement – 2024

To complement the consultation events we also organised and attended events and meetings with a number of local groups to help to inform the ongoing development of the plans including the Strategic Masterplan document.

This included:

- Ongoing co-ordination and meetings of the Growing Baldock Advisory Forum which brought together representatives of the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan Group, Revivel, Baldock Beats Waste, local parish, district and councillors for updates and themed discussions and workshops on key topics.
- Holding an information and Q&A session of the residents of the Football Close area to better understand their thoughts and concerns on the proposals to change vehicular access to these roads.
- Ongoing meetings and visits with local schools, including the Headteachers of The Knights Templar School, Hartsfield JMI School, St John's Catholic Primary School, St Mary's Infants School and Weston Way Nursey
- Meetings with Parish Councils and residents of Radwell, Ashwell and Bygrave.
- A drop in session for Ashwell residents; sharing the plans for Growing Baldock with the community there and also an opportunity to better understand the interconnections with Baldock for facilities and amenities and to inform some of the thinking about transport planning. Strong turnout of over 100 people across the four hour session.
- Holding three Q&A sessions for the site's direct neighbours (including Salisbury Road, Bygrave Road, Royston Road, Hillside Park). Over 70 attendees came and shared their views.
- Taking a stall at the Baldock Ecofest in September 2024, meeting residents and answering questions.
- Meetings with local and National stakeholders, including Revivel, BALGA, Friends of Baldock Green Spaces, local equestrians and access groups.
- Regular attendance at the Baldock Area Forum to provide project updates and listen to feedback.



Outline Planning Application Consultation – July 2025 onwards

The Strategic Masterplan was adopted by North Herts Council in June 2025. Consultation continued after the Strategic Masterplan adoption from July 2025 onwards, building on the previous feedback and to inform the emerging OPA. A further Design Review session with the Design South East panel was also undertaken in June 2025 to consider the draft OPA parameters and design principles.

Over 300 members of the public attended three in person events in July 2025, one in Baldock Community Centre and two in St Mary’s Church Hall, largely local residents including representatives from local groups. The events were advertised widely, held at a variety of times and days of the week, including into the evening and a Saturday, with a leaflet drop, e-news bulletins to our mailing list and Facebook posts. A series of large exhibition boards were on show, covering key themes such as sustainability, green space and nature, homes and facilities. Given the interest in transport a separate booklet was produced for attendees to review the proposal in more detail. The same information was also loaded to the website.

Over 250 written responses were received, including 185 completed postcards at the three drop-ins, the remainder as emails or comments via the website. A copy of the consultation material shared in July 2025 is included in Appendix 3.

The most frequently mentioned comments in the written feedback are listed below:

- 1. Two-way traffic should be retained at Baldock railway station (15 mentions)
- 2. Baldock railway station will need additional car

parking to cope with the increase in residents and ensure no overspill in surrounding residential streets (12 mentions)

- 3. Baldock train station should be expanded (12 mentions)
- 4. Supporting infrastructure should be in place before new homes are built – (9 mentions)
- 5. Not enough emphasis on water (river/ pollution/ drainage) as it’s a key concern locally – (9 mentions)
- 6. Increase in traffic/ congestion is a concern – (6 mentions)
- 7. Leave Walls Lane as natural land, it’s a better buffer than the proposed Heritage Park – (6 mentions)
- 8. Ensure a cohesive approach to secondary school provision by expanding Knights Templar School or building an annex on the same site – (6 mentions)

Overall, the most frequently mentioned comment was in relation to transport. The second most cited topic was ecology/ green space, followed by comments in relation to housing and facilities.

We also received the results of a survey undertaken independently, which received 235 responses. The feedback notes car access to the town centre is critical, that there is a negative sentiment locally towards the transport proposals and that there’s been insufficient engagement with businesses to date.

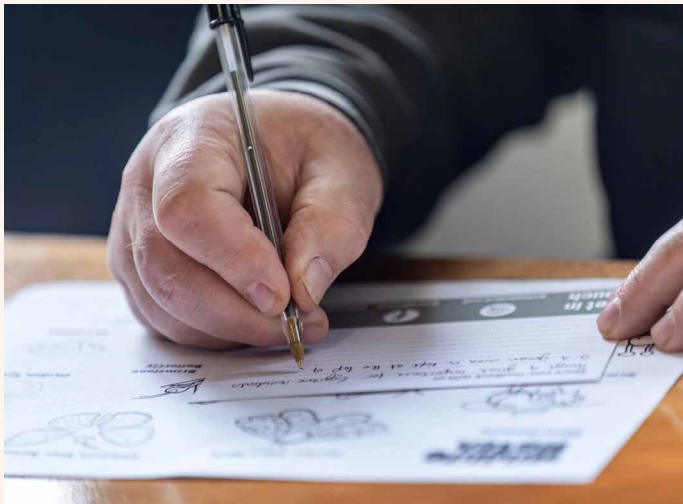
All the feedback received was actively considered by the project team to inform the outline planning application documents and ongoing discussions locally, as part of detailed design work.

Additional meetings were arranged with groups and individuals to discuss specific items, this included:

- Guides/ Brownies – July 2025
- Ashwell Parish Council – 14th August
- Bygrave Parish Council – 14th August
- BALGA to discuss allotments – Monday 22nd September
- Neighbours bordering the site (Clothall Common, Laxton Gardens, Park Homes, Salisbury Road,

Icknield Way and Football Close), 4 sessions across two dates, 22nd and 24th September

- Growing Baldock Advisory Group – 10th September
- Baldock Community Forum – 15th September



6.0

Conclusions and Continuing the Baldock Conversation

As evidenced throughout this SCI, Urban&Civic has consistently undertaken in-depth engagement with local communities and stakeholders, providing opportunities to shape plans for their local area.

Since the consultation website was launched in January 2022 it has had over 10,000 hits, with peaks shown in March 2023, November 2023, April 2024 and July 2025. The website includes a mailing list for those wishing to keep up to date with the project.

Key communications methods to raise awareness of the project and advertise engagement events and public consultation have included physical and digital flyers, website updates, updating the mailing list, social media and utilising a range of local and partner websites and communications networks to promote events and engage stakeholders.

Overall, we have welcomed hundreds of members of the public to local events and recorded their feedback, using it to shape the proposals wherever possible.

The consultation also included setting up a dedicated Advisory Forum with representatives from the wider community, meetings with key groups of and local interest groups.

This ethos will be continued in future consultation surrounding the development as well as the long-term governance of Growing Baldock. Urban&Civic will establish arrangements for the planning, development and long-term stewardship that will continue to put local people at the heart of the decision-making process.

This will include:

- Regular updates on the project website.
- Continued updates to the community, monitoring and responding to enquiries and feedback from the public.
- Further engagement and events with the local community and young people, including through the Growing Baldock Advisory Group.
- A Social Value Statement
- Facilitating a Community Plan for new and existing residents to enable local people to make the most out of the proposed amenities and connect with their new neighbours.

