Buckinghamshire County Council

Transport, Economy and Environment

Highways Development Management Guidance

Consultation report

October 2017

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the responses to the Development Management Guidance consultation undertaken between 15th August and 25th September 2017.

The online 'Survey Monkey' questionnaire received 50 responses and there were a further five written responses. This small sample size and some slight demographic imbalances mean that the messages drawn from the data should be used with some caution and is used to identify additions and improvements, rather than to examine specific levels of support.

The analysis of these responses has helped to identify respondent's views and to help inform the strategy. Key messages from respondents identified in the report include:

Comments on the impacts of development:

- Being realistic about how likely people are to change their travel behaviour and ensuring provision for cars remains appropriate.
- Highlighting general concerns about levels of development.
- Considering cumulative impacts where there are multiple developments in an area.

Comments on how we respond to applications for development:

- The biggest group of comments were concerned with ensuring the policies are put into practice and agreements made with developers are enforced.
- Highlighting the need for infrastructure (primarily road infrastructure) to keeping pace with development.
- Ensuring all modes of transport are thought of: with infrastructure and information for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and electric vehicle drivers.
- Concerns about HGVs on certain routes.
- How local people could be involved in applications.

Comments on how the document works:

- To ensure the needs of those who want a shorter document are met, we will add an executive summary to the Guidance.
- Confusion over the place of the guidance and the County Council (as highway authority) in the planning process. We will amend the document to make this clearer. The title of the document will also be amended from policy to guidance, based on feedback from the district councils.
- A range of detailed comments on wording and other similar details.

The main report explains these comments and how we have built upon them in more detail.

Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction

In April 2016 Buckinghamshire County Council adopted its Local Transport Plan 4. The Plan sets out how transport can play its part in realising the Council's vision to make Buckinghamshire a great place to live and work. It is the Council's highest level transport policy and will be supported by more detailed documents.

In the LTP4, BCC have committed to producing separate Development Management Guidance:

> **Policy 3 - Managing the impact of new developments -** We will keep Buckinghamshire thriving and attractive by getting the best deal from new development. Our dedicated Development Management Policy will help developers to ensure new development meets Buckinghamshire's needs.

To ensure we develop guidance that works for Buckinghamshire's we consulted on a draft of the Guidance between 15th August and 25th September 2017. This document explains the consultation process and provides a summary of responses.

The Guidance is divided into four chapters including this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 explains how we consulted and Chapter 3 explains who responded. Chapter 4 describes what people said and how we've responded to their comments. Chapter 5 offers a brief explanation of the next steps for the Guidance.

Chapter 2 – How did we consult?

The consultation was carried out between 15th August and 25th September 2017. A draft of the Guidance was made available and an online 'Survey Monkey' questionnaire provided to help people respond. The survey consisted of a mixture of multiple choice and free text questions (including a number of demographic questions to help us understand who was responding).

The primary audiences of the consultation were members of the public and those involved in the development industry. It was designed to provide a quick and easy way for people to tell us what they think about the draft Guidance. Its online format was selected to reach a large audience and encourage groups which don't usually engage with traditional consultations to participate. A small number of responses were also made by email and post.

The survey was publicised using social media, emails to known stakeholders, items on the Council's website, through a successful press release and via a number of stakeholder organisations.

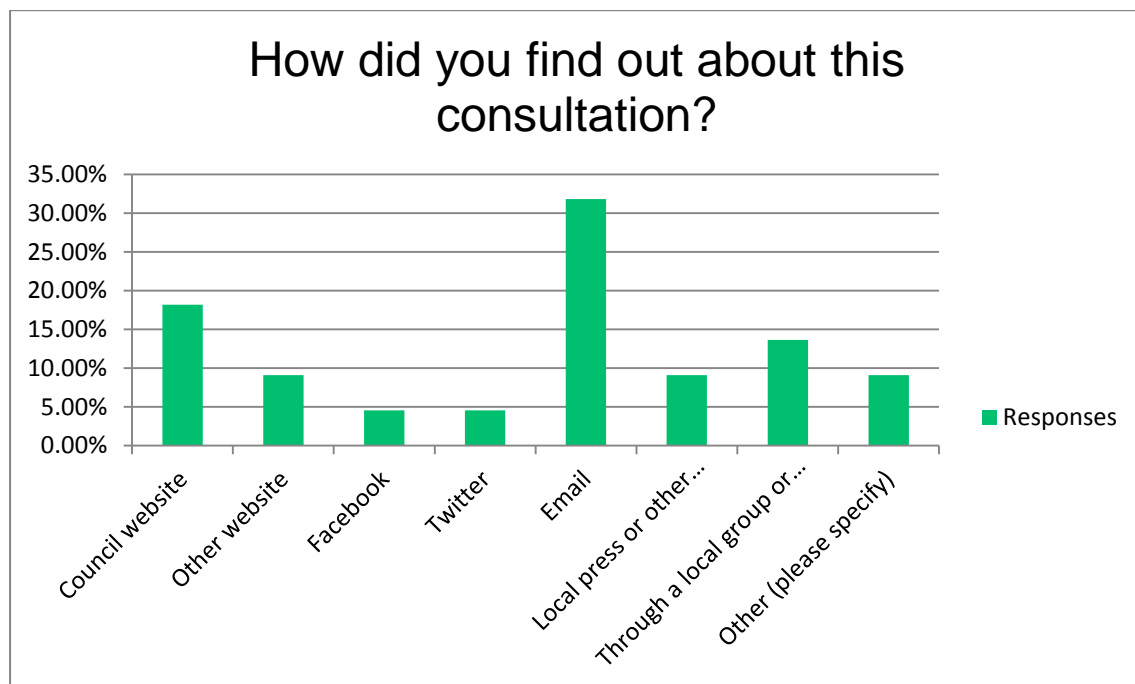Figure 1 shows how respondents said they heard about the consultation.

Figure 1 - How did you find out about this consultation?

Chapter 3 – Who Responded?

This section provides an overview of who responded to the consultation. This information helps us to understand how we should use the responses in other chapters.

Response rate

The consultation received 50 responses through the online survey.

A small number of written responses (five) were also received; these are not included in the breakdown of respondents in the sections below. However, the comments are considered in the remainder of the document and have informed subsequent drafts of the guidance.

This response rate is not as high as recent consultations on the Local Transport Plan, Freight and Parking. However, it is comparable with similar consultations undertaken on relatively specific subjects that are not usually 'controversial' (in the way freight and parking generally are). Therefore, whilst disappointing the sample size is not unusual and does not invalidate the data. In recognition of the small sample size, the messages drawn from the data have been used in this document to identify issues rather to examine specific levels of support.
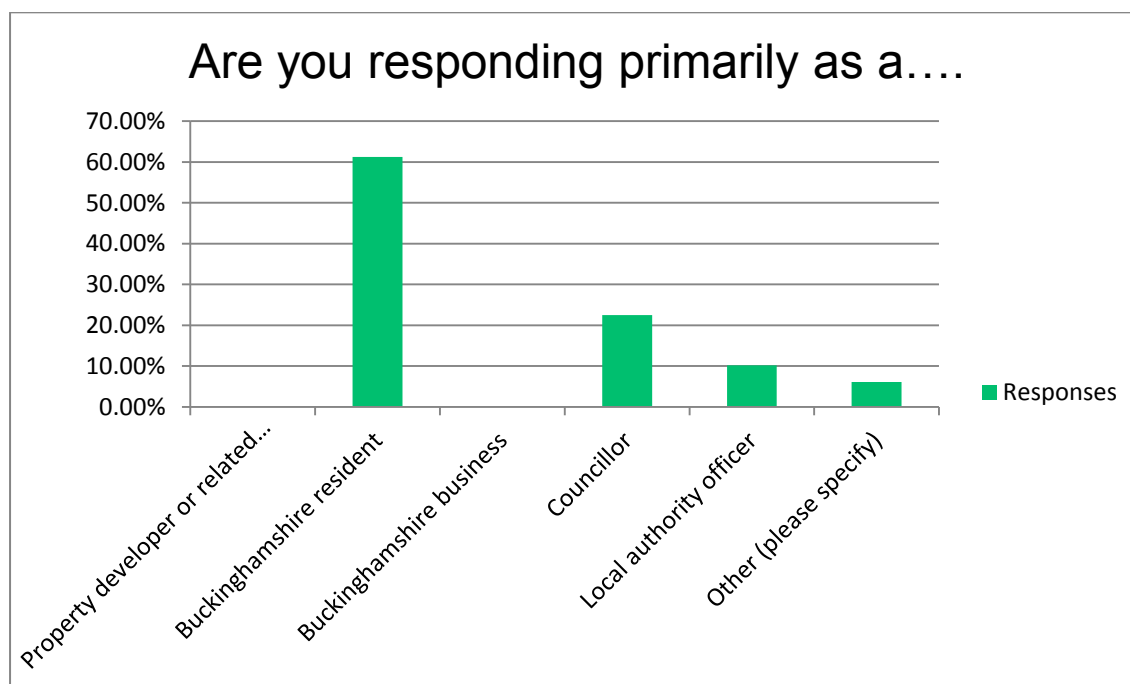
Reason for responding

Figure 2– Reason for responding

Respondents primarily responded as residents (61%). Smaller numbers of Councillors (22%) and Local Authority Officers (10%) also responded. Unfortunately no representatives of businesses or property developers responded; this should be considered in the interpretation of the results of the remainder of the survey. One written response was received from a developer (see the Other Responses section of Chapter 4).
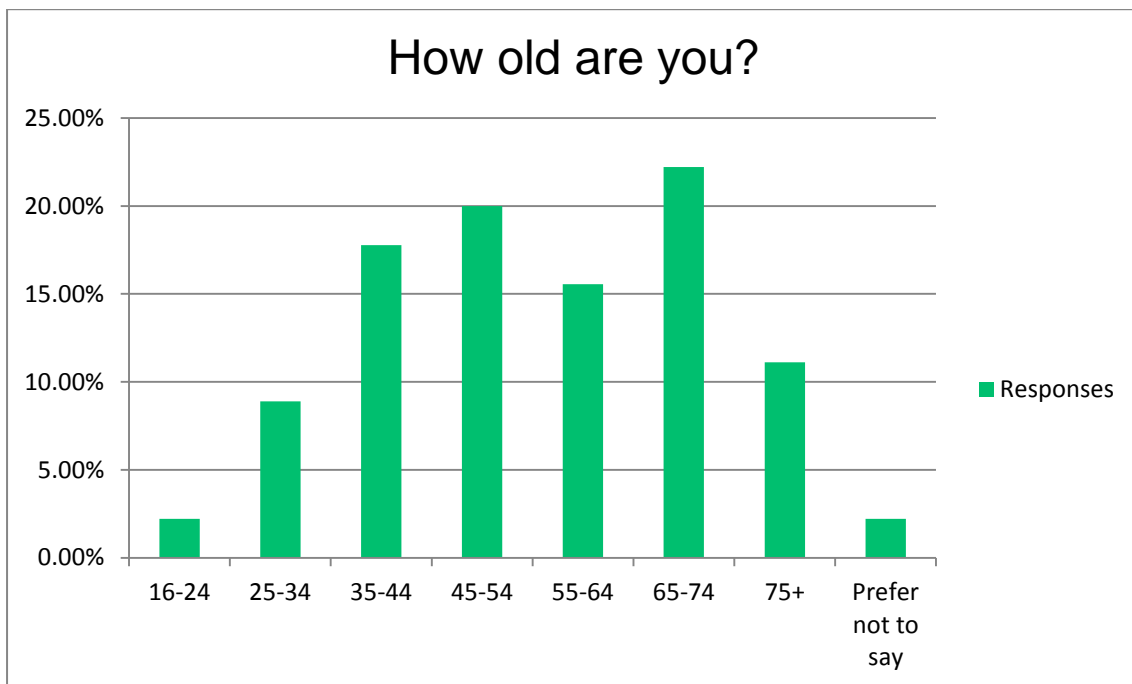
Age

How old are you?

Figure 3 - Age

Of the responses received, all but one included their age. The majority were spread across the age categories between 35 and 74. Whilst responses from 25-34 year old were relatively low they were higher than often received in consultations of this type. There was a low response from the 16-24 age group, so results should not be generalised within / to this age group specifically.
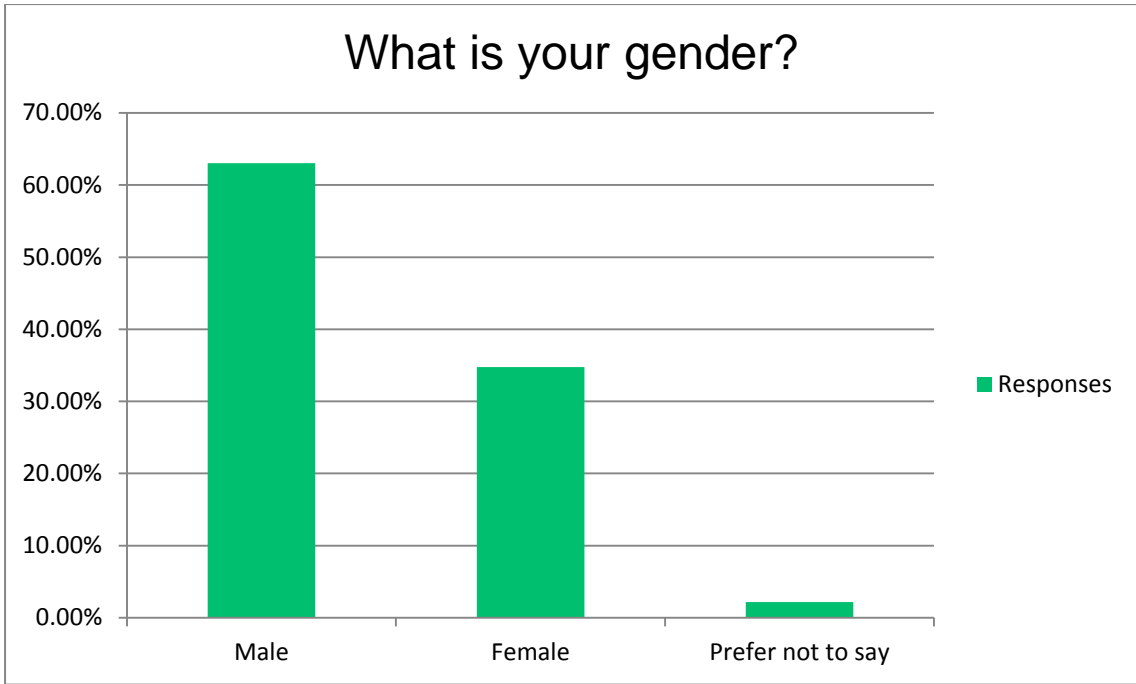
Gender

Figure 4 - Gender

The graph above shows that females were underrepresented in the response. This should be considered in interpreting its result and in resultant developments to the Guidance.
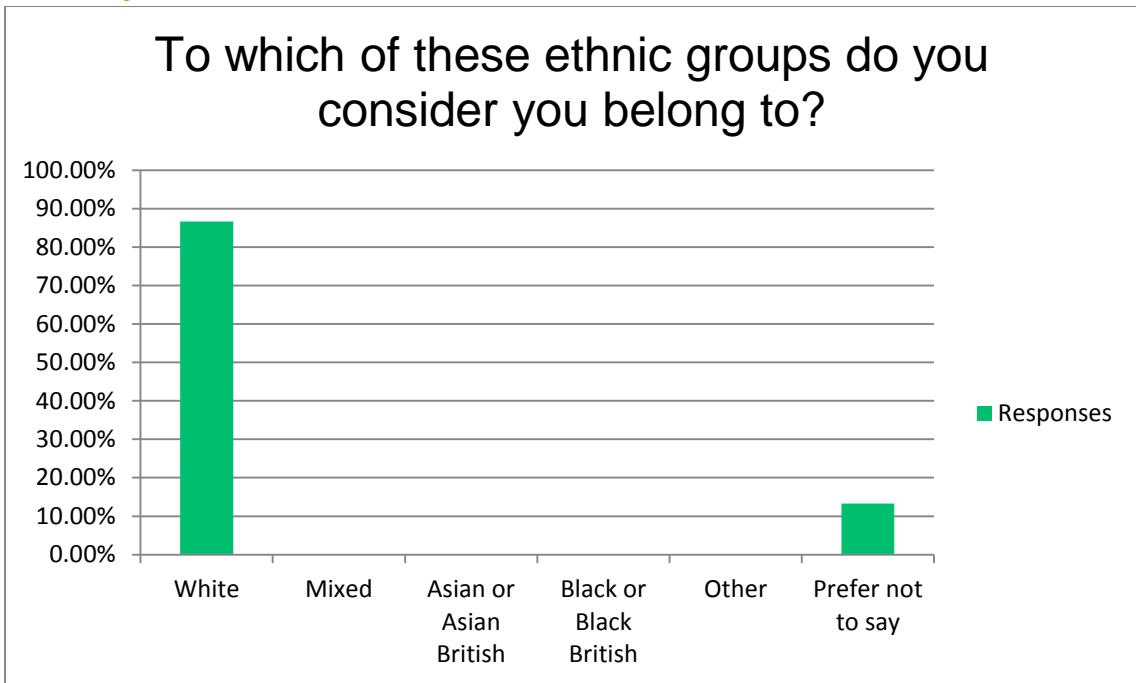
Ethnicity

Figure 5– Ethnicity

87% of respondents stated they were white, which aligns reasonably with the ethnicity for Buckinghamshire as a whole, where 86% of people identify as white. The remainder of

respondents chose not to say which ethnic group they consider themselves to belong to. This means we cannot be sure how well Mixed, Asian or Asian British, or Black or Black British ethnic groups are represented. This should be considered in interpreting its result and in resultant developments made to the Guidance.

Location

Development Management Policy Consultation
Responses (by postcode)

Buckingham

MK17
(1)

MK18
(3)

OX27
(1)

LU7
(2)

HP22
(2)

HP19
(5)

HP20
(1)

Aylesbury

HP21
(4)

HP17
(7)

Princes
Risborough

Chesham

HP5
(4)

OX9
(1)

HP27
(1)

HP15
(1)

Amersham

HP7 9NP
(1)

HP14
(2)

HP11
(1)

High
Wycombe

SL8
(1)

UB9
(1)

SL1
(1)

SL6
(1)

SL3
(1)

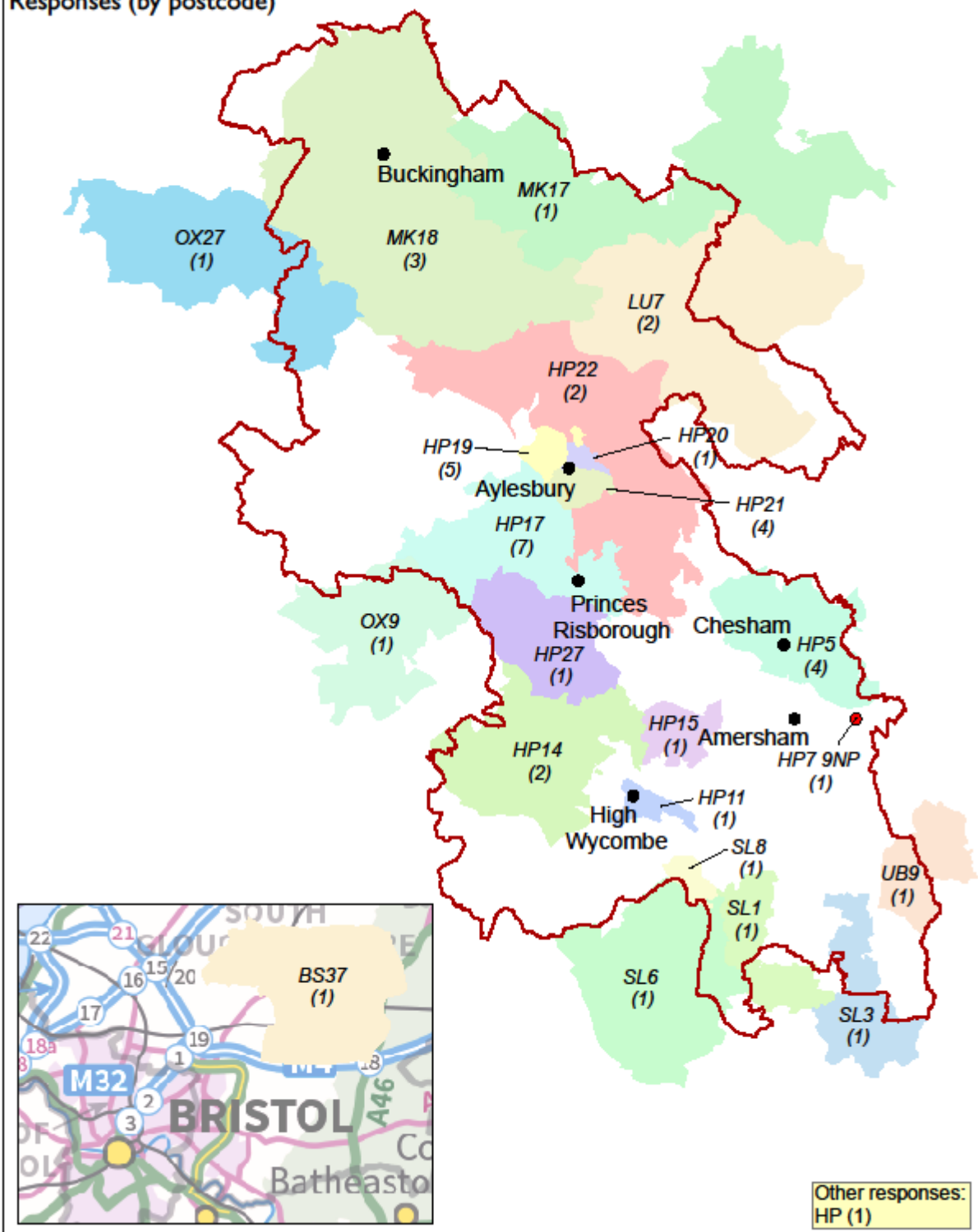BS37
(1)

BRISTOL

Batheasto

Other responses:
HP (1)

Figure 6 below shows the locations given by respondents. The responses are generally well distributed, with concentrations in Aylesbury. Responses from the High Wycombe area are relatively low.

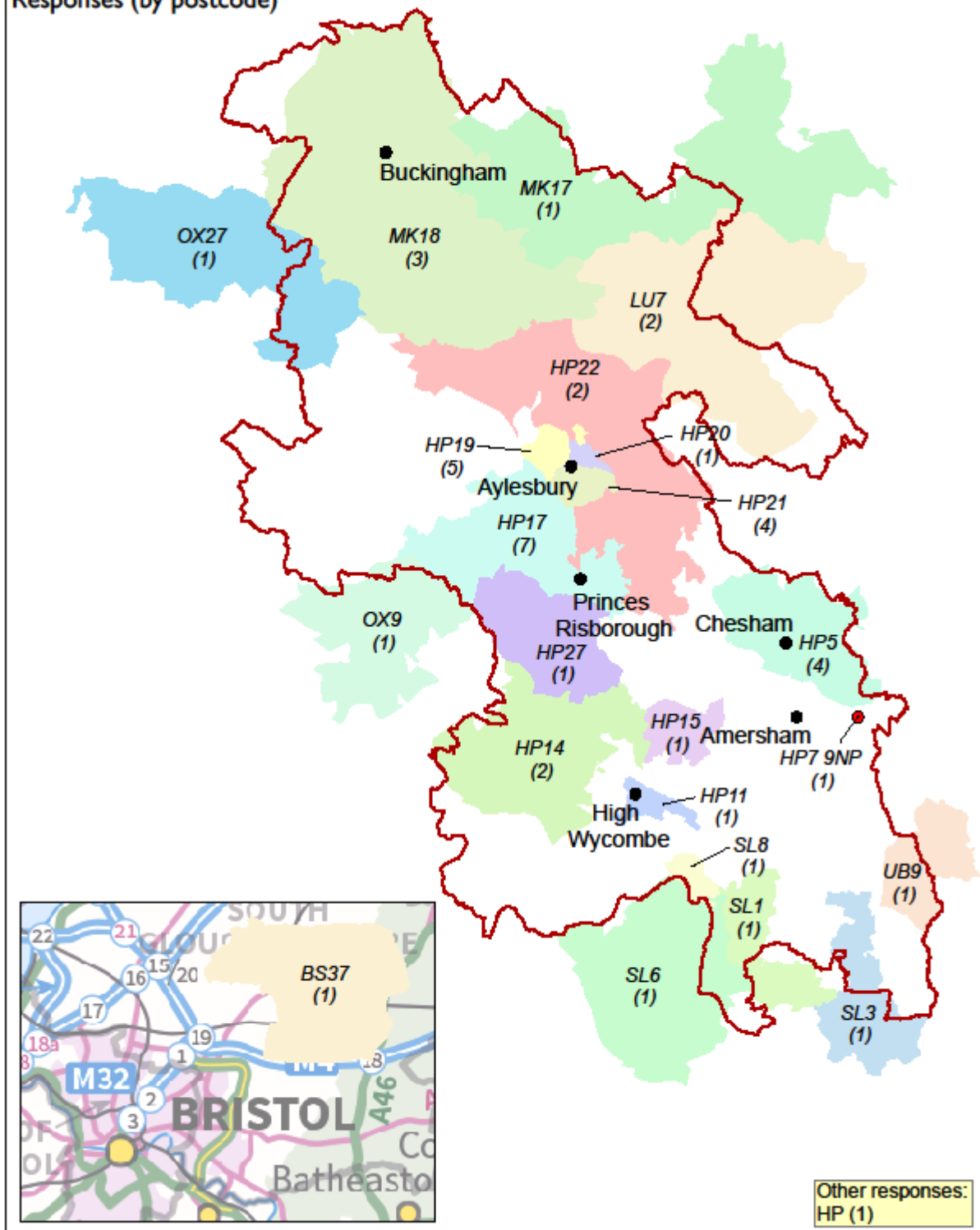Development Management Policy Consultation Responses (by postcode)

Other responses: HP (1)

Figure 6 - location

Chapter 4 – What people said

Questions 2 and 3: Creating great developments

"Do you agree that having this policy will make new developments better places to live, work and relax?" and *"How could we improve the policy to ensure new developments better places to live, work and relax?"*

Responses to Question 2 were predominantly positive, with 62% or respondents stating they thought the Guidance would help make better places (as seen in Figure 7). 17% of respondents disagreed with this and 22% had no feelings either way. This suggests a general appetite for the document but some concerns about its effectiveness.
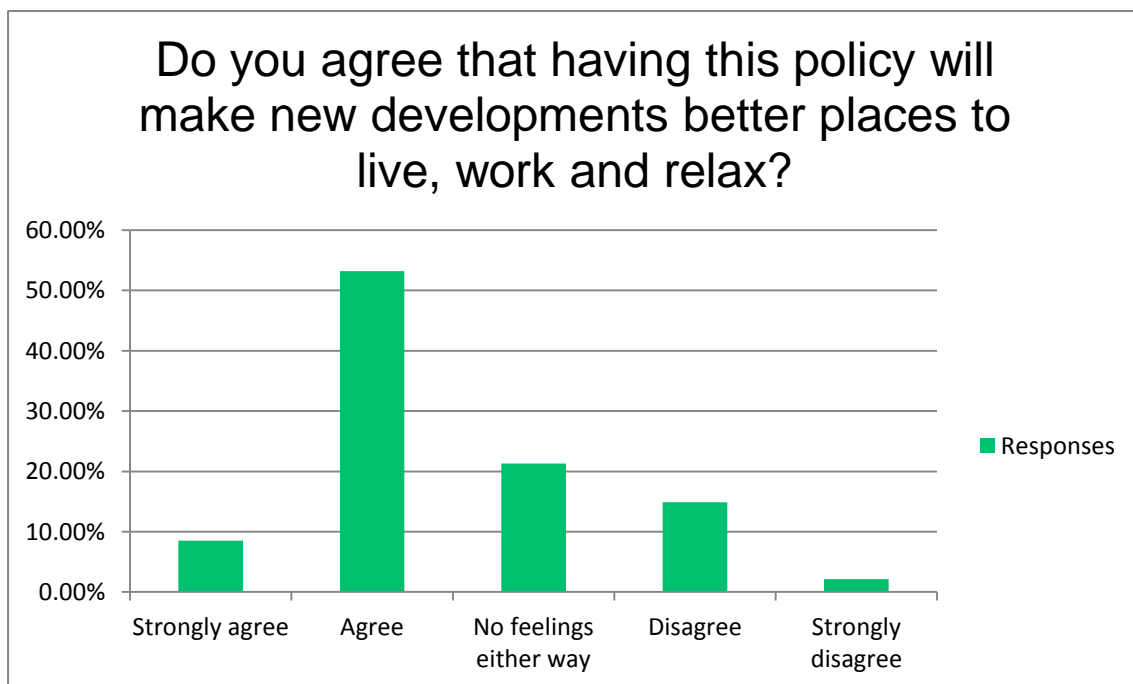

Figure 7 - Will the Guidance help make developments better

Question 3, explored how the Guidance could be improved to work even better. Responses were analysed using a simple 'coding' process, where similar comments were grouped together to identify common themes and issues. Key improvements suggested by respondents were:

Summary of response(s)	Improvement to the Guidance
Being realistic about how likely people are to change their travel behaviour and ensuring provision for cars remains appropriate.	The Guidance follows Buckinghamshire's Countywide Parking Guidance in aiming to make provisions that meet demands for all modes, encouraging sustainable travel where it is not an option but not underproviding for drivers in an attempt to force them out of their cars. We are pleased to see support for this

	approach.
Considering cumulative impacts where there are multiple developments in an area.	It is important that developments consider cumulative impacts where appropriate. We will check that this is clear in all relevant sections of the Guidance and add an executive summary which includes this issue.
Providing more detail on how developments should be designed.	The Guidance is primarily designed to be a practical working guide for developers. It needs to be a concise document that sets out the principles we want development to follow. If it was expanded to provide in-depth detail on how developments should be designed, it would quickly become unwieldy and impractical to use. Questions 6 and 7 suggested respondents found the Guidance easy to use but a number of comments already felt it was too lengthy.
Ensuring mitigation measures are delivered and maintained.	It is important that measures agreed to mitigate the impact of a development are delivered. We will check that this is clear and suitably prominent in the Guidance.
Ensuring people are aware of the Guidance, so that it is used.	We will work with the district councils and directly with developers to promote the Guidance. It will also be published on our newly developed Highways Development Management webpages.

Questions 4 and 5: Developments that work for Buckinghamshire

"Do you agree that having this policy will help new developments have a more positive impact on local people and places?" and *"How could we improve the policy to ensure new developments will have a more positive impact on local people and places?".*

A small majority of responses to Question 4 were positive, with 55% or respondents stating they thought the Guidance would have a positive impact (as seen in Figure 8Figure 7). 23% of respondents disagreed with this and 21% had no feelings either way. This suggests general support for the document but some concerns about its effectiveness.
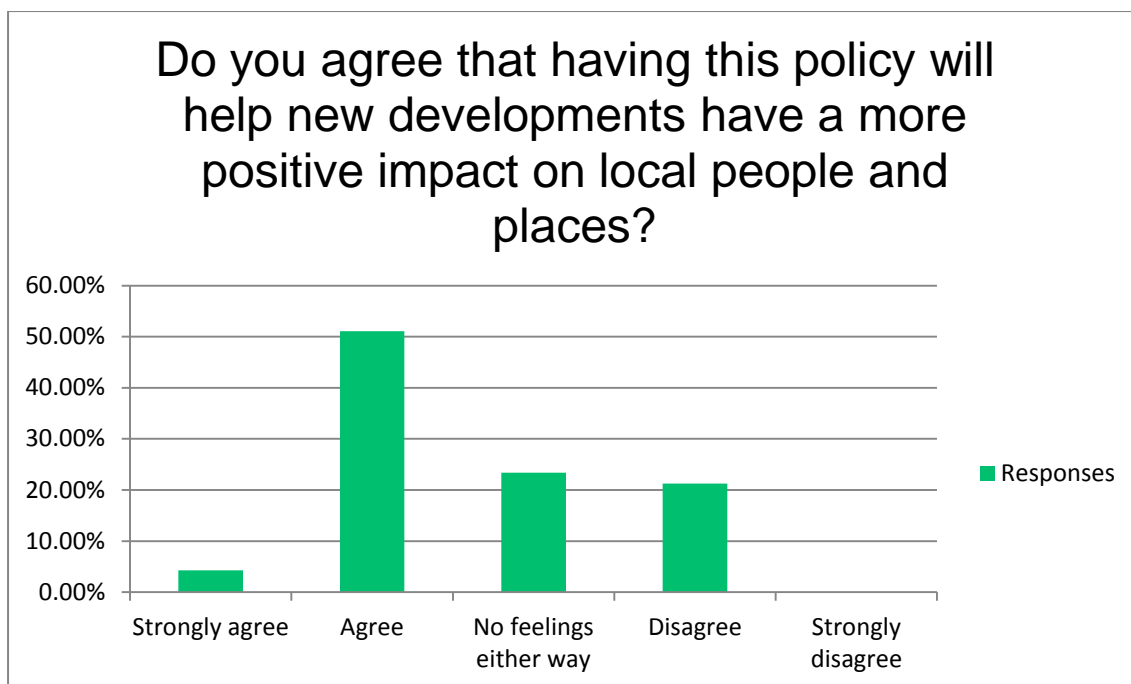
Figure 8 - **Will the guidance help developments have a positive impact**

Question 5, explored how the Guidance could be improved to work even better. Responses were analysed using a simple 'coding' process, where similar comments were grouped together to identify common themes and issues. Key improvements suggested by respondents were:

Summary of response(s)	Improvement to the Guidance
The biggest group of comments were concerned with ensuring the policies are put into practice and agreements made with developers are enforced.	As noted above, we will check that this is clear and suitably prominent in the Guidance.
Considering cumulative impacts where there are multiple developments in an area.	As noted above, we will check that this is clear in all relevant sections of the Guidance and add an Executive summary with a reference to this issue.
How local people could be involved in applications.	The County Council, as Highway authority, is consulted by the district council when they receive planning application. It is up to the districts to decide how best to involve the public in these applications. The time we are given to respond does not allow us to undertake additional consultation with the public. Changes noted below to make the role of the County Council in the planning processes clearer should help to address uncertainty regarding this.
Discouraging HGVs from certain routes.	Buckinghamshire County Council is also developing a Freight Strategy alongside this Guidance, which will address this issue.
Providing better links to services by more sustainable modes of transport, to avoid generating more traffic.	The Guidance explicitly seeks to provide access for all modes of transport and all members of the community. We are pleased to see support for this approach.

Questions 6 and 7: A document that works

"Is the policy document easy to understand and use?" and ***"How can we improve the document to make it easier to understand and use?"***

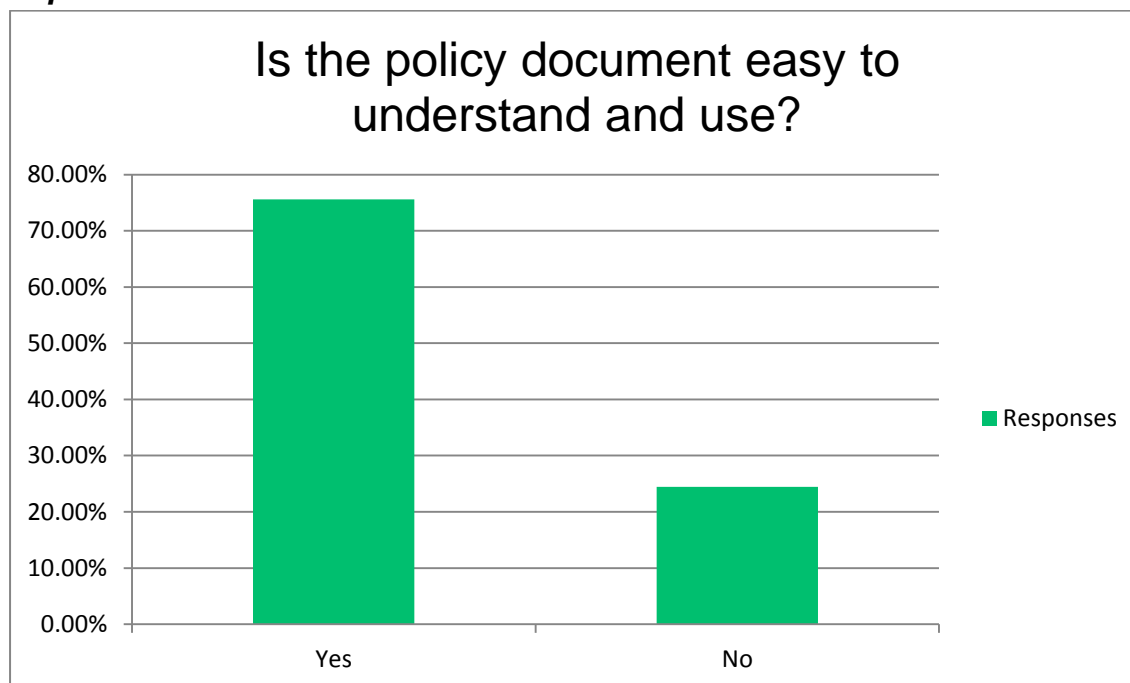## Is the policy document easy to understand and use?

Figure 9 - "Is the policy document easy to understand and use

Figure 9 shows that the majority of respondents (76%) feel the Guidance is easy to understand and use. Responses to Question 7 that suggested improvements to make it easier to understand and use were mainly focused on the length of the document, suggesting it would be easier to use if it was shorter.

We have aimed to keep the Guidance as short as possible (and it shorter than many similar policy documents). There are some issues which are covered in more than one place on purpose: to ensure users who only read one section still get all the guidance they need. In doing this we have had to balance usability with brevity. Given the significant number of comments expressing a desire for the Guidance to be more detailed, in response to Question 3 (see above), it would not seem appropriate to reduce the guidance further, particularly as its length was a concern only to a minority of respondents. To ensure the needs of those who want a shorter document are still met, we will add an executive summary to the Guidance.

Question 8: Good examples

"Are there any places (in Buckinghamshire or elsewhere) where you think developments work particularly well in relation to transport & travel?"
Only a small number of responses (12) identified examples of places they thought worked well in terms of transport and travel. Within these there was no clear theme, although Fairford Leys, Oxford and Milton Keynes received more than one mention each. Given this

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limited response it has not been possible to identify additional examples to include in the Guidance.

Question 14: Additional comments

"If you have any additional comments please tell us here"

A small number (14) of general comments were made in response to this question. These included:

- Highlighting general concerns about levels of development. The level of development seen in the county is controlled by the district councils not Buckinghamshire County Council. However, we work closely with district to understand the transport impact of their local plan proposals.
- Highlighting the need for infrastructure (primarily road infrastructure) to keeping pace with development.
- Ensuring all modes of transport are thought of: with infrastructure and information for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and electric vehicle drivers.

These comments have not led to the identification of any specific changes to the Guidance. However, they offer helpful information on the context the Guidance will need to address.

Other responses

As noted in Chapter 3, a small number of written responses (five) were also received; these are not included in question-by-question analyses above. It is difficult to summarise these responses here but changes have been made to the Guidance where appropriate, these include:

- Added explanation of the place of the guidance and the County Council (as highway authority) in the planning process. The title of the document was also amended from policy to guidance, based on feedback from the district councils on this.
- A range of detailed comments on wording and other similar details.

Chapter 5 - Next steps

The responses made to the consultation have informed a revised draft of the Guidance. The revised draft will be proposed for adoption as Buckinghamshire County Council's Guidance in 2018. This will include the amendments indicated in Chapter 3 of this report.