

North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2036

EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENT:

QUESTIONNAIRE DATA AND SUMMARY STATEMENTS

DECEMBER 2017





NORTH CRAWLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Questionnaire data and summary statements

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is pleased to now publish the results of the questionnaire that was circulated around the village earlier this year. We had over 1,000 comments to read and consider, which will all be helpful in progressing the Neighbourhood Plan. The findings are presented in the following tables along with short statements that summarise the comments made (all the comments made in an unattributed form will be made available soon). Based on your feedback, we are looking to develop a plan with policies that address Housing, Transport, Heritage & Design, Landscape & Green Spaces, and Community Facilities.

Question 1

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
1	Are the following Characteristics of North Crawley Parish important to you?						
	1 Access to Public green spaces and footpaths	0%		2%	22%	75%	0%
	2 Quiet, small country lanes	0%	0%	7%	33%	57%	2%
	3 Dark skies, limited amount of street lighting	4%	9%	25%	30%	30%	1%
	4 Open countryside, field patterns, hedgerows	0%	0%	5%	20%	72%	2%
	5 The conservation area in the High Street	0%	1%	16%	34%	47%	1%
	6 Tranquillity and quiet	0%	1%	5%	30%	62%	2%
	7 Mix of young and old in the community	0%	0%	5%	37%	56%	1%
	8 Low levels of crime and anti- social behaviour	0%		1%	13%	83%	3%

Comments:

North Crawley is a beautiful, safe, working village with a strong sense of community. All generations mix, not just young and old and this gives North Crawley its whole character. Villagers want it to continue to feel like a village. It is a rural parish and apart from some tidying up and care and attention it's a lovely environment.

Villagers expressed a great deal of confusion over the 'conservation area' and exactly what this covers (this will be indicated on future Neighbourhood Plan maps). Some residents also remarked that traffic is a concern and that Folly Lane has become a 'rat run'. There is also a great deal of speeding and increased traffic noise on Orchard Way.

Question 2

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
2	Do you think the following are positive aspects of life in the parish?						
	1 A sense of belonging to a community		1%	9%	41%	49%	1%
	2 Ample car parking	4%	9%	17%	44%	25%	2%
	3 Activities and groups within the parish		1%	17%	53%	29%	1%
	4 Sports clubs		0%	25%	45%	29%	1%
	5 Local employment opportunities	3%	13%	42%	31%	10%	1%
	6 Footpaths to access open countryside	0%	1%	4%	28%	66%	1%
	7 Public transport links to nearby towns	2%	5%	17%	36%	39%	1%

In response to general questions about positive aspects of life in the village, the overwhelming comments (18) referred to a negative aspect, the inadequate public transport in North Crawley. Some also commented on a very restricted bus service at weekends, however one observed that the buses seem to run empty! Clearly statistics for passenger numbers and the viability of the service needs to be examined. One suggestion was for smaller vehicles with greater frequency.

The next topic that is key in people's minds was again related to roads and transport and eleven comments referred to a lack of adequate parking throughout the village. This fact seems to have a significant impact of the lives of villagers for it to feature so prominently in the comments relating to many different questions.

Other topics did not elicit such strong feelings but it is clear villagers feel a sense of community and that it is important to cherish and maintain this. North Crawley is a rural, residential and farming village, fortunate to have access to country footpaths and open countryside.

Question 3

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
3	Do you think the following are negative aspects of life in the parish?							
	1	Danger to pedestrians	3%	20%	22%	33%	20%	2%
	2	Danger to cyclists	4%	15%	27%	32%	20%	2%
	3	High traffic levels	1%	7%	13%	32%	45%	2%
	4	On-street car parking	3%	11%	25%	33%	26%	3%
	5	Slow broadband	4%	13%	25%	31%	26%	1%
	6	Poor mobile phone coverage	4%	13%	27%	29%	24%	3%
	7	Lack of mains gas	7%	13%	35%	23%	21%	2%

Comments:

Roads Traffic and Transport drew the most comments for Question 3 and repeat some comments made elsewhere in the Questionnaire.

Many residents are very concerned at the sheer volume of traffic currently in the village at peak times and are concerned that any new development will only make this problem worse. In addition, speeding and inconsiderate road users seem to be a common complaint. The current speed limits are not enforced and this concern has been passed to the Parish Council.

More than thirty residents raised the issue of 'on-street' parking and pointed out that there simply aren't enough parking spaces in the village currently. If any new build is permitted it must have adequate provision. Several residents have also commented that 'on street' parking acts as a traffic calming measure, particularly in the High Street.

Cycling clubs using the village drew several critical comments and were described in very strong terms. A constructive comment suggested that cycle clubs should be engaged with and asked to be more considerate of other roads users in our village community.

Question 4

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
4	With regard to housing in the parish, do you think:							
	1	There is a need for more houses in the parish	17%	19%	16%	33%	15%	0%
	2	There should be more 1 or 2 bedrooms houses	14%	16%	22%	31%	16%	1%
	3	There should be more 3 or 4 bedroom houses	15%	14%	28%	32%	9%	1%
	4	There should be more 5 or 6 bedroom houses	30%	30%	29%	7%	3%	1%
	5	There should be more Flats	48%	28%	15%	4%	1%	3%
	6	The current mix of housing is about right	3%	11%	15%	49%	19%	3%

Comments:

Affordable housing and the requirement for no further development within the village drew nearly equally the highest number of comments for Q4

A requirement to provide affordable housing for young families and first-time buyers was mentioned by 50% of the comments in the affordable housing category, with priority given to people who have family connections within the village. It was also said that there was a need for smaller homes to allow villagers to down size possibly due to retirement but have the opportunity to remain in the village.

21 comments stated that they did not want to see any new development in North Crawley.

Their reasons included, the protection of the surrounding countryside, fear the village would lose its identity, loss of open spaces, need to retain the existing village feel and character.

Question 5

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
5	Do you think the parish needs more homes of the following type?							
	1	Affordable housing	17%	14%	15%	36%	16%	1%
	2	Privately rented accommodation	24%	25%	35%	14%	2%	1%
	3	Shared ownership houses	22%	19%	30%	23%	5%	1%
	4	Privately owned houses	11%	7%	29%	42%	11%	1%
	5	Privately owned bungalows	13%	13%	30%	33%	11%	1%
	6	Retirement properties	13%	14%	29%	30%	13%	1%

Comments:

Q5 had similar comments to Q4 with Affordable housing attracting the most comments and again stressing the need to accommodate younger families.

Nine comments felt there was a need for retirement homes to be considered when looking at the types of homes to be built. A similar number of comments stated that they did not feel there was a need for any development in and around the village.

A number of residents raised the point that more rented accommodation was not always a good thing for the village, stating transient home occupiers might not help build the village community spirit. There was also some concern about the ongoing maintenance of rented properties.

Four comments said that they thought there was a need for social housing but the majority of these comments also stated that any social housing should stay under the control of a housing association or the council and not be allowed to be used for buy to lets etc.

Question 6

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
6	I think that the total number of new homes built during the next 15 years should be:						
1	Limited to no more than 35 in total	9%	17%	15%	18%	36%	4%
2	Limited to between 36 and 50 in total	27%	17%	10%	25%	15%	6%
3	Limited to between 51 and 100 in total	47%	24%	7%	10%	7%	5%
4	Unlimited – each application should be considered on its merits	60%	14%	7%	3%	11%	5%

The majority of residents agree to a limited amount of new housing in the range of 10 - 15% increase. However, any new development must complement the current look and feel of the village. Some feel that new housing should be available for local people to be able to stay in the village.

Some have indicated a preference for infill of a small number of houses, whereas others feel this will close the village in and would prefer to see a small estate of fewer than 30 houses built within the village envelope. There is a concern about the lack of infrastructure and recognition that any new development must be sited where facilities already exist and access does not create further traffic problems.

Question 7

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
7	Any new housing developments should be :						
	1 A single estate that could incorporate new green spaces	39%	22%	10%	17%	9%	3%
	2 Several smaller estates built separately over the years	26%	23%	19%	21%	9%	3%
	3 Clusters of 5 or 6 houses spread around the parish	13%	16%	14%	38%	16%	3%
	4 Infill with just 1 or 2 houses on various sites around the parish	13%	12%	16%	32%	26%	2%

Most residents are not in favour of a single, larger development and would rather have small clusters of houses in several locations, built over a number of years to facilitate and smooth the integration of newcomers.

Mention is made of fattening, rather than lengthening the village, to avoid joining up with Cranfield and/or Newport Pagnell and to ensure that any new development is part of the main village structure.

Question 8

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
8	The style of the new housing should:							
	1	Be designed to complement nearby properties	2%	1%	5%	32%	58%	1%
	2	Be modern eco-friendly buildings	12%	12%	31%	29%	13%	2%
	3	Be a mixture of styles	13%	18%	19%	36%	12%	2%
	4	Include adequate off-street parking	1%	1%	3%	27%	66%	1%

Comments:

There was an overwhelming number of comments that were supportive of ECO or environmentally friendly housing construction providing the external design was in keeping with the existing housing.

Whilst there was not one preferred style mentioned in the comments, there were many comments suggesting that any new housing style should be consistent across the village so the village does not end up with seemingly random designs.

There were many comments that expressed a preference for in-keeping designs rather than ultra-modern designs.

There was an overwhelming number of comments requesting that future developments must include adequate off road parking for each new residence and not rely on street parking.

Question 9

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
Bearing in mind the suitability of access roads, any new development should be sited :							
1	Between Kilpin Green and Little Crawley	21%	13%	21%	29%	13%	3%
2	At the Cranfield end of the High Street	17%	16%	21%	31%	12%	3%
3	At the Newport Pagnell end of the High Street	24%	21%	22%	26%	4%	3%
4	On the Newport Pagnell side of Chicheley Road (Moat Farm site)	30%	20%	21%	23%	4%	2%
5	To the south of the High Street – behind St Firmin’s	28%	23%	25%	18%	4%	3%
6	To the south of the High Street – behind the allotments	22%	16%	30%	24%	4%	3%

Comments:

Comments were split between supporting some planned development and being opposed to any development at all. Those in favour of some development cited the need to keep young people in the village and thus provide affordable housing.

There was a clear concern in many comments about the impact of more housing on traffic and a suggestion was made to build a bypass on the south side of the village and build on the north side of that bypass. However, others did not want to see development that would affect the conservation area and the historic and central aspect of St Firmins.

Some respondents were unclear about the location of some of the suggested sites and so a map will be provided, plotting these and also plotting the sites mentioned in the comments.

The comments were supportive of protecting the character and historical aspects of the village and ensuring that it remained a rural village with rural views beyond. Footpaths and green spaces were felt to be important and any development should respect current rights of way and perhaps develop others, such as a footpath connecting Little Crawley with the village along Chicheley Road.

A number of comments supported infill rather than large estates but urged against ribbon development leading to a sprawling village that risked joining up with neighbouring towns/villages. A number of comments referred to development being within the village boundary or envelope, not infilling on the approaches to the village, to ensure that the community did not become spread out and disconnected from village activities and amenities.

Those who felt that a larger development might be appropriate felt that it should be within the village boundary and of a smaller size, not one big development. One comment suggested providing small plots for self-build opportunities for existing residents and/or offer local builders the chance to build small clusters of housing.

Development sites suggested other than those listed were in and around: Brook End; Folly Lane; Pound Lane; Orchard Way and Little Crawley, importantly, any development in these areas should provide improved utilities. These areas were also named by other respondents as places that should not be developed for reasons of: lack of utilities; traffic issues; spoiling the rural character; urban sprawl; loss of open countryside and important wildlife habitat.

Question 10

			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
10	The plan should allow for the building of the following:							
	1	Light Industrial Units	49%	25%	13%	9%	2%	2%
	2	Offices	39%	21%	22%	16%	1%	2%
	3	Shops	26%	12%	23%	32%	5%	2%
	4							
	5	I would like to work in the parish as well as live here	17%	15%	47%	9%	4%	8%

Comments:

Little support for industrial units, offices or employment opportunities with concern over more traffic, possible heavy lorries etc and concern over negative impact on village. Some support for idea of cottage industries.

Many felt that it was important to support the local shop, pubs etc and that people could shop in MK/NP/Cranfield, although issues around public transport were mentioned.

Some expressed support for a café/coffee shop/ community provision. Some support for a dental practice/doctor's if only as an outpatient facility

Question 11

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
11	The parish would benefit from						
	1 Speed bumps	27%	34%	13%	16%	9%	1%
	2 Other traffic calming measures	10%	11%	20%	39%	16%	4%
	3 Permanent speed cameras	14%	20%	21%	26%	17%	3%
	4 A pedestrian crossing in the High Street	9%	12%	18%	34%	26%	2%
	5 Cycle routes to nearby towns and villages	5%	6%	23%	34%	30%	3%
	6 Lower speed limits	5%	17%	21%	29%	25%	2%
	7 Restricting on-street parking	8%	14%	22%	33%	22%	1%
	8 More off-street parking	1%	3%	18%	44%	33%	1%
	9 Being more wheelchair friendly	1%	2%	40%	34%	19%	3%

Comments:

Little support for speed bumps mainly because of the negative environmental impact.

Support to review the current speed limits through the village and the use of permanent or temporary speed cameras or ensure the current speed limits are better enforced.

Support for traffic calming measures, including a pedestrian crossing, but little consensus for what would be the best methods (i.e. roundabouts, lower speed limits, bumps etc).

Support for off-road parking as in Q3.

Support for a cycle route linking villages to MK/NP.

Support for on-road parking slowing down traffic.

Concern about the traffic situation in folly Lane.

Question 12

12 The following existing amenities are important to me :			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No strong opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No answer
1	St Firmin's Church		2%	4%	21%	41%	30%	2%
2	Village shop		1%	0%	3%	34%	61%	0%
3	Farm shops		1%	1%	20%	50%	28%	1%
4	Public houses		0%	1%	9%	40%	49%	1%
5	Village hall		1%	1%	9%	48%	41%	1%
6	Village school		1%	0%	11%	30%	57%	1%
7	The Institute (and clubs that meet there)		0%	1%	8%	38%	52%	1%
8	The sports field (and clubs that use it)		1%	1%	7%	34%	57%	1%
9	Riding school		3%	6%	57%	24%	9%	1%
10	Allotments		1%	2%	33%	43%	20%	1%
11	Children's play area		1%	1%	7%	38%	52%	1%
12	Parks & open spaces		0%	0%	2%	23%	72%	2%

Comments:

Many respondents felt that all of the listed amenities are important to the village and the community even if they indicated that they were not important to them personally.

Villagers value the amenities and it was recognised that in order to keep the clubs, pubs and shops alive there needs to be an increase in the number and age range of villagers – attracting and keeping young people and families in the village was felt to be important.

A number of comments praised the village shop, some wanted it to be bigger and others felt it should incorporate a post office.

Some would like to see improvements to the children's play area, in particular for younger children, and better access along footpaths around the village for people with disabilities and also for bikes and pushchairs. Suggestion was made of creating a country park, with a lake, to encourage dog walkers away from the playing field.

Comment was made about the village hall being underused as a community facility. The school was seen as a valuable community resource even if only a small number of children from the village attend and it was mentioned that after school childcare was lacking in the village. There is support for protecting and even increasing the number of allotments.

Other amenities not listed but valuable to members of the community are Wellies Day Nursery, The Gun Club, the mobile library, the ice cream van and the fish and chip van.

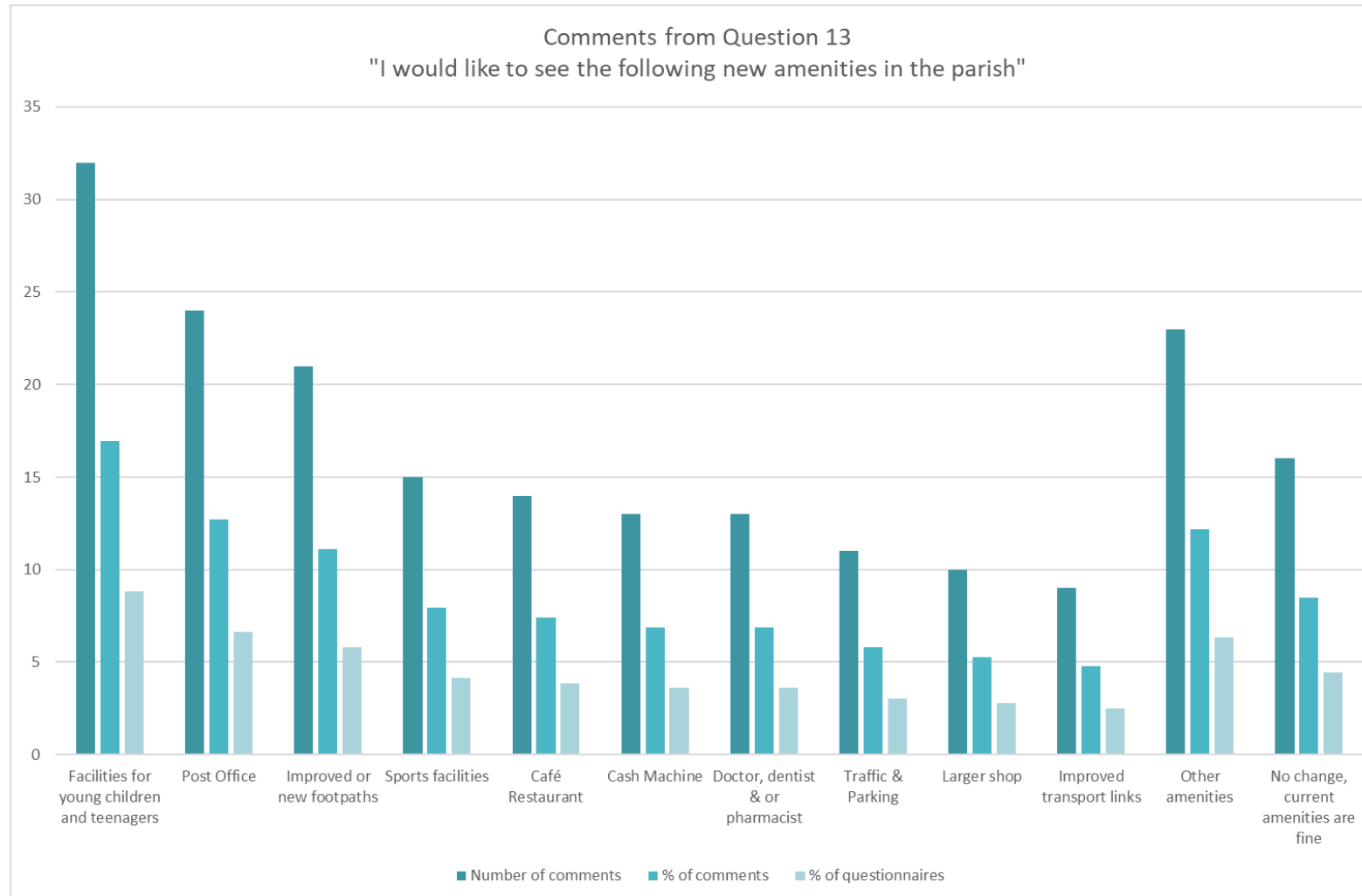
There was support for additional amenities, such as a drop in medical facility/surgery, banking facilities and post office, although others disagreed stating that these facilities are available close by in Newport Pagnell and Cranfield.

Question 13

13. I would like to see the following new amenities in the parish:

There is no numerical data with these comments but to put them in perspective but we do know the following:

- There were 362 completed questionnaires
- 426 residents participated
- 189 comments were received in answer to Question 13



Please note that on this chart, "Number of Comments" is a number, the other two bars are percentages.

14 & 15. Additional Comments:

There was a recognition from some that development is needed if the village is to be sustainable into the future and this must include affordable housing for young families. The majority view appears to be that new development must be on a small scale and should not include social housing or privately rented accommodation. There were a number of comments against housing being bought up by private landlords and villagers want to ensure that new housing is available to existing residents and local young people. A small number of comments requested more bungalows for elderly residents and/or a retirement complex providing care and support facilities for elderly residents.

Traffic considerations were emphasised with potential solutions, such as bypassing the village, put forward. To address these concerns, the Neighbourhood Plan should include a traffic management policy. Villagers are keen to ensure that there remains a network of quiet lanes, where traffic should be kept to a minimum and new development should be discouraged. Cyclists were mentioned negatively on several occasions and cycle lanes provided as a solution. It was requested that cycle clubs should be approached by the Parish Council and asked to be more considerate of other road users and even use different routes.

The number of comments about the lack of public transport indicate that the Neighbourhood Plan should include a sustainable public transport policy. It was emphasised by some that the Neighbourhood Plan should reflect the needs of the village as a whole, both now and into the future.

One comment asked for the same values that had been applied to previous planning applications to continue to be applied in order to protect the rural nature of the village, its heritage and the natural environment are important to many residents.

Issues for the Parish Council include: maintenance of footpaths, e.g. cutting overhanging trees and hedgerows; traffic calming measures to enforce speed limits – not speed bumps or more signage.

Parking is clearly a concern and any new development should include plenty of off street parking. A suggestion was made to build another car park behind the High Street, to keep cars off The Green. Alternatively, on street parking was viewed as a useful traffic calming measure.

The lack of utilities in some areas of the village was cited as a reason for not developing in those areas. Others stated that if development is to go ahead then the developers should be responsible for improving existing utilities and introducing gas to the village.

Comments relating to the desire of individuals to develop their own land are not included here, they will be addressed once the call for sites is complete.

Background to Smith Jenkins appointment:

The Steering Group is pleased to announce that we have appointed Smith Jenkins Ltd, a local planning consultancy, to assist us with the next steps of the plan. This will be funded by a government grant. Sam Dix from Smith Jenkins is chartered town planner with a background in Neighbourhood Plans having worked at Milton Keynes Council and assisted other groups in Newport Pagnell, Sherington, and Olney. Sam will attend future meetings and events for the Neighbourhood Plan and provide advice to ensure it is effective and meets legal requirements. Sam is available to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan via email sam@smithjenkins.co.uk or phone (01908) 410422.