

# **Letchworth Town Debate Consultation Report**

**November-December 2013**

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## 1. The consultation, analysis and reporting process

### 1.1. About the University's role

The University of Hertfordshire's Centre for Sustainable Communities was asked by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to undertake the facilitation, analysis and reporting of a two-week consultation with Letchworth residents on the question - **should more homes be built in Letchworth?** It was thought that as a neutral organisation with expertise in consultation process and analysis the university could act as an 'honest broker'; providing useful input both to facilitate the process and report on its results.

We therefore ensured we had expert engagement staff present throughout the two-week exhibition opening hours at Letchworth's Community Hub (weekdays, some early evenings, and weekends) to facilitate visitors' consideration of the issues at hand and help ensure their views were recorded on 'comments cards' available for this purpose. 673 people visited the Exhibition and 157 filled out comments cards.

At the consultation venue this facilitation work was supported by a series of information boards developed by the Foundation, explaining different aspects including the town's development principles, reasons for posing the question "Should more homes be built in Letchworth?", the timeline of planning work to date on these issues, and exploration of implications of any decision to build more houses. These boards were also downloadable from the Foundation's website at <http://www.leitchworth.com/your-views>

This overarching information was supported by a series of technical reports available in hard copy at the Community Hub. These covered findings on issues including economics, design, energy, transport, water etc. Again this material was very well signposted on and downloadable from the Foundation website at <http://www.leitchworth.com/your-views>

The facilitators also took part in a number of 'surgeries' at the Hub where key issues were discussed with expert consultants. These sessions were run by non-Foundation staff, although normally at least one Foundation staff member was present. We helped to facilitate four specialist surgeries on areas thought likely to be of particular concern and for which technical reports had been commissioned, namely:

- Thursday 21st November - Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners – Socio Economics – 2pm to 6pm
- Monday 25th November – Cascade – Biodiversity – 2pm to 6pm
- Wednesday 27th November – Cascade – Flooding and Hydrology – 2pm to 6pm
- Thursday 28th November – Cottee Transport Planning – Transport – 2pm to 8pm

A considerable number of people decided to make their comments by email, through Facebook or on the Heritage Foundation's website. There were 97 email – many with detailed comments, 58 online comments on the Foundation's website, 136 Facebook comments on the Foundation's website and five letters sent to the Foundation.

At the close of the consultative period on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November we then undertook a detailed review and analysis covering consultation responses from the Community Hub, email, letters, Facebook and website forum comments. The comments cards were typed up by Foundation staff and have been included as Appendix One to this report.

As contextual material we also viewed the market research online questionnaire and forum consultative data from an online consultative process (both area-based and reflecting Letchworth's demographic profile) that had been separately commissioned by the Heritage Foundation. The report of that work is included as Appendix Two to this report.

This facilitation, review and analysis work informed a detailed verbal and PowerPoint presentation given to the Governors on the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> December. It also forms the basis for this report.

## **1.2. Nature of the consultation**

The Heritage Foundation explained why they were consulting and how to make views known – including through letter drops to households, information in local news media, through social media including Facebook and Twitter, and through information prominently located on their website. They provided a range of ways for people to be consulted and express their views, as set out in the following information box drawn from the Foundation's website.

### **Should more homes be built in Letchworth?**

What do you think?

We have an important decision to make and would like your views.

Responding to the nationwide demand for new homes, we have identified a site north of the Grange Estate that could accommodate up to 1,000 homes.

This is an important moment for Letchworth Garden City and we want your views to help inform our decision. From 18 to 29 November, we will be holding an exhibition in the Community Hub outlining research about the potential impact of either adding more homes or staying as we are. All the information from the exhibition, including all the panels, is available at the bottom of this page.

Share your views by:

Visiting the exhibition at the Community Hub, 43 Station Road between 18-29 November - open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10am to 6pm; Thursday 10am to 9pm and Saturday and Sunday 10am to 3pm; or downloading the exhibition panels from here;

Submitting comments on our forum below;

Sending us your comments here;

Adding comments to our Facebook page or tweeting us @letchworthgc.

#### Discussion Forum - Getting Started

Click here to create a username and enter your email/website address. We'll then email/website you your password to log-in with and post your comments on our Discussion Forum. We will only moderate strong or offensive views or language.

If you wish your comments to remain anonymous, please use our online form to supply your feedback.

Source: <http://www.letchworth.com/your-views>

### **1.3. Principles for reviewing the consultation responses**

In order to take an unbiased and neutral view of the consultation responses we established a number of principles for their review as follows:

The approach is *de novo* – there has been no pre-ordained view about the right answer to the question posed by the consultation. All the material has been considered as new.

All the material from each source noted above has been considered thoroughly and carefully.

It is acknowledge that those motivated to respond by location or other factors may have the strongest views – both for and against - and this may shape responses.

Therefore, the online market research work with the Connect Letchworth panel and the 'interactive online community' helps to balance this by being area-based and demographically grounded.

There has been a need to consider recognize that, for example, email responses, comments on the website forum and letters may take stronger positions than those received on comment cards, as they have not benefitted from discussion and may not have reviewed any supporting material or information. There was a need to be aware of this in undertaking the review of responses.

Given the complexity of the issues in relation to building any new houses the 'live' consultative process has needed to be largely qualitatively based. It has therefore not been possible to simply take a quantitative approach alone to the review – i.e. led only by counting responses with most negative or positive views.

At same time there is value in understanding which areas have elicited the most comments, and the nature of those comments, and the numerically based coverage in this report reflects the utility of considering these as part of the review.

#### **1.4. Data sources for reviewing consultation responses**

As stated above, the consultation process produced a range of sources of data for reviewing the consultation responses. These encompassed consultation 'comment cards' at the Hub plus email, letters, Facebook and comments on the Foundation website Forum. This is summarised here:

Data sources for review of consultation responses:

- 157 comment cards filled out - from 673 visitors to the Exhibition
- 97 emails – many with detailed comments
- 58 online comments on the Foundation's website
- 136 Facebook comments - on the Foundation's website
- 5 letters

It is worth noting that we were aware that during the Exhibition the Foundation received a petition (with a 9 month live period) against the development north of the Grange. At the point of writing this had received 683 online and 313 written comments - mainly from the Grange residents. However, this was not part of the consultation process so comments from this do not form part of this review. The online petition has the following template text, although many responses do not follow this.

Petition text:

To:

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and NHDC

Stop the Expansion of Letchworth Garden City on Green Belt Land.

So many people will be affected if this is allowed to go ahead. I appreciate that land owners are ethically bound to submit land for housing if that land is or could be suitable. In this instance though it is against Ebenezer Howard's principals. It would destroy the very identity of the worlds first garden city. The green belt...

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course housing is required and necessary but new towns should be built not keep joining all the existing one's together. Socially to do this is destructive. We need open spaces or crime and poverty will increase.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Source: supplied by Letchworth Heritage Foundation



## **2. Reviewing consultation responses**

### **2.1. Range of views documented and reviewed**

Having read through all of the responses it appeared that views as to whether new houses should be built in Letchworth reflect a continuum from outright and complete opposition through to strong support. These can be categorised in the following way:

- Opposed to new houses being built on edge of town site (north of the Grange) or generally
- Opposed to new houses being built on edge of town site – with certain caveats
- Opposed new houses being built – except for brownfield or standalone new garden city
- Support for new houses being built – with reservations and conditions
- Support for new houses being built – with suggestions for improvements
- Wholeheartedly supported – with ideas for maximising benefit

Views about consultation process and the Foundation's role rather than the topic per se were also areas which drew a number of responses and these are reviewed at the end of this section of the report.

### **2.2. Opposed to new houses being built on edge of town site or generally**

A number of reasons have been given for opposition to building new houses being built on the edge of town site or generally. These reasons tend to be framed by those commenting as both 'in principle', and relating to practical difficulties and problems expected to be caused, or exacerbated by, any development. It is evident that many of the most vociferously opposed are residents of the Grange or areas close by (many stated as much).

#### *In principle opposition*

Of those opposed to new houses being built on edge of town site or generally, the 'in principle' arguments include the following:

- Building any new houses goes against Ebenezer Howard's vision for the garden city in a variety of ways
- Letchworth should be protected and preserved rather than grow further and this is in line with Howard's principles for the town
- Development on green belt is against Ebenezer Howard's intentions for the garden city to be surrounded by agricultural land and well separated from other developments
- Letchworth needs to both maintain greenbelt and stop 'co-joining' other towns or urban developments in the vicinity
- Housing and development shaping of any new areas will undermine the green nature of Letchworth

- Any new houses constitute would cause an increase in population over the optimum level for a garden city
- Any new houses are for outsiders rather than Letchworth people
- Garden city heritage is at risk - any new houses will undermine or even destroy the heritage qualities of the town which are expressed through its character, housing style, large gardens and relationship to nature

A number of comments are provided here as examples of the kinds of perspectives found in the 'in principle' objections:

*"Ebenezer Howard designed Letchworth, the first garden city, with open spaces in mind. The Grange Estate is a contained area within the city and should be left alone as it is." (Email/website)*

*"I am opposed. Letchworth is an example to the rest of the world and Howard's ideals could not be upheld if another huge estate is tacked on to its boundaries." (Comment card)*

*"The development goes against Ebenezer's population specification for the Garden City." (Comment card)*

*"I have concerns and feel very disappointed about the new housing plans. If Letchworth Garden City was an 'average style' town it would not matter, but because it is special and part of Ebenezer's town and country vision it is important that these new houses are not built on the greenbelt." (Letter)*

*"Not keen to see Letchworth expand and particularly not on green belt land. The town is about its optimal size as originally envisaged. I would be very sorry as a long term resident to see this unique town change very much more." (Comment card)*

*"Do not destroy Letchworth Garden City's greenbelt & prime agricultural land with 1000+ new homes." (Email/website)*

*"The area is Green Belt, and more importantly for Letchworth, forms part of the Greenway, which will be ruined in that area.... Should we allow 1000 more homes to be built there? Absolutely not, it would ruin everything that is good about Letchworth and I am shocked it would be the Heritage suggesting it as that is the body in place to PROTECT it! (Email/website)*

*"As a 25 year old Letchworth resident who still lives with my parents, I like many people of a similar age would like to have a house of my own. However, I value my local community for its quality of life; the whole ideology of the Town-Country as endorsed by Ebenezer Howard is still very much existent today. Letchworth and surrounding area residents appreciate this. To build such a massive development threatens to destroy the beauty and integrity of the area as we know it. The rush to move out of the family home as soon as possible is not nearly enough a decent excuse to build so many more houses. My view is that*

*yes, maybe you want a home to call your own, but most people also want a pleasant environment in which to live in. Urban sprawl does not create a happy home environment for most people. People love the surrounding greenbelt and countryside for its recreation and beauty.” (Email/website)*

*“I moved to the Grange in Letchworth Garden City back in 2007 mainly because of all the green space around us. It only takes about 90 seconds walk to get to see the Greenway and surrounding fields which I love. Sir Ebenezer Howard's vision I believe, did not include a crowded city. But if you were to let the building of 1000 houses, would surely go against his vision. It would need far more infrastructure with roads, schools etc causing noise and traffic. I cannot believe that the Heritage Foundation would allow this to happen and I would be very disappointed if this were to go ahead.” (Email/website)*

*“I think that before to many expansion plans are laid, the people running the foundation need to read its own publications on principles of the Garden city. Then look closely at what they are proposing, and have already allowed to be built. Not keep on making the same mistake of selling off the town's heritage which they are there to uphold. The key word which is forgotten by those who are the custodians of our heritage is GARDEN City. However if expansion is going to go ahead maybe land on the Willian side of the town would make more sense as the vast majority of house owners commute daily on the A1.” (Email/website)*

*“Well our views are simply NO! and to enlarge, certainly not, north of the Grange. Ebenezer Howard wouldn't have approved this project as he wanted open spaces to live in a healthy environments not like the cramped slums of Victorian London he experienced. No doubt the houses in the “new estate” would be like Fairfield Park, nicely architected, but so close together for the example of a garden City”. Also the ABUSE OF THE GREEN BELT (we are sure you are getting millions of Pounds for the land) is destroying the open space image. Some of us have lived in the Garden City since World War 2 and is rapidly losing its world-wide image as a Garden City “(Letter)*

*“The Heritage Foundation goes to great lengths to maintain original design principles. The size of the town is part of this and should also be preserved. If it goes much above the 30,000 it can no longer be called a Garden City. How bizarre it will be that the World's First Garden City is not a Garden City!” (Letter)*

#### *Opposition particularly focused on use of greenbelt*

While many people who are opposed to any new houses being built mentioned the greenbelt, there were also a number of ‘in principle’ objections which were especially focused on use of greenbelt. As well as comments of the kind given as examples above, ‘In principle’ objections about use of greenbelt land generated comments of the following kind:

*"Letchworth is the world's First Garden City. It is 35 miles north from London Kings Cross on the railway line to Cambridge. It was created as an alternative, an utopia, to the overcrowded and unhealthy living conditions in London of the late 19th century. Wide roads, bright homes and gardens, social opportunities, freedom, the beauty of nature and a healthy environment – all these were important aspects integrated into this stunning town planned by Ebenezer Howard and built by architects like Parker and Unwin. They were inspired in their ideas by Morris, Ruskin, Russell, Shaw. The list is long. Many names are of world-fame. This concept inspired the garden city movement worldwide. Letchworth, the world's first garden city, was based on a dream in the late 19th century – it was conceived at a time of massive social and environmental problems. And still our ancestors had the strength to imagine how a good healthy future could look like for them and their children. An essential aspect of Letchworth Garden City is the greenbelt and the fields around it. Many ideas Ebenezer Howard considered would today be called 'sustainable'. Now this amazing town with its beacon status is under threat: North Hertfordshire District Council and the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation want to build on the greenbelt land of the World's First Garden City." (Email/website)*

*"I feel very strongly that no further housing should be built in Letchworth other than on brownfield sites and that this should be social housing rather than profit-making by developers. Encroaching any further on the countryside will completely vitiate the unique vision of Ebenezer Howard and his three magnets. It would destroy any possibility of inhabitants enjoying a balanced existence of work, leisure, and access to nature. People came here initially to experience an alternative lifestyle. We now enjoy the benefits of this, with a marvellous range of activities for such a small community. I would hate to see this destroyed by thoughtless development. I have great concern for the homeless and this is why I feel so strongly about the need for social housing. We ought to be able to provide for the homeless other than by selling off our wonderful assets to developers." (Email/website)*

## My views...

*PLEASE LEAVE THE GREEN BELT ALONE.  
I THOUGHT AND BELIEVED THIS WAS THE LETCHWORTH BIBLE.*

(Source: Comment card)

### *Opposition in practice*

A considerable number of those responding stated that they are opposed to new houses being built for a range of 'in practice' reasons. In practice arguments form a

part of – or a basis for - their opposition to building any new houses, especially on the edge of Letchworth. It is worth noting that some respondents explained that they are not opposed to new houses in principle but have serious practical concerns. Among reasons of this kind that have been put forward are:

- Building houses on the greenbelt undermines its value in agricultural and food provision terms
- Building houses on the greenbelt brings Letchworth Garden City too close to other urban developments
- Building houses on the treasured asset of the greenbelt undermines the environmental and amenity value of the green space to the northern edge of the town
- Building houses on this part of the green belt will wreck the countryside edge to Letchworth and the Greenway for walkers, dog walkers, joggers and others
- New houses will not be affordable and are only being developed for financial reasons
- New housing will be poorly planned and designed, including being at too high densities and without adequate private garden space
- There will be too few social housing units
- Impacts on existing residents in the vicinity in terms of alterations to local character, increased traffic, pressure on services, loss of green amenities, increased noise, more people etc) will be extremely negative and serious
- As new jobs will not be developed locally, new houses will inevitably cause many new commuter journeys by car – exacerbating problems of already ‘horrendous traffic’ and inadequate public transport now and in the future
- As local shopping facilities will be inadequate, many more journeys by car to gain access to retail services elsewhere will be caused
- New houses will not contribute to revitalising the town centre
- New housing will make existing serious traffic problems of congestion, rat runs, poor road quality, pavement parking, station parking, and parking insufficiency much worse
- New housing will put an intolerable burden on overstretched services including for school places, GPs, dentists and police
- New houses will overburden infrastructure including for water, energy and sewerage
- Any new development threatens local quality of life and community cohesion
- Any new development will cause serious disruption during its construction phase, with a range of serious impacts on local communities
- New houses will lower the value of existing properties
- New houses will cause increases in crime and anti-social behaviour
- New houses will be another in a long line of botched development examples
- The value derived from new houses will not be used to benefit existing residents

Examples of these kinds of views are documented from comment cards, emails, website forum and letters, as follows:

*“I am against the use of greenbelt agricultural land North of the Grange Estate for housing development. The Economic Assessment of Growth Options is heavy going but appears to contain no analysis of jobs apart from those directly*

*flowing from the house construction therefore we cannot see where all the new population would work.” (Comment card)*

## My views...

I AM TOTALLY OPPOSED TO ANY HOUSES BEING BUILT ON GREEN BELT LAND, BROWN FIELD SITES ONLY FOR DEVELOPMENT. THE SIZE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT OF 1000 PLUS HOUSES WOULD PROBABLY MEAN AT LEAST 3000 CARS POSSIBLY TRAVELLING THROUGH THE GRANGE ESTATE. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE WOULD BE A MAJOR LOSS. OF ALL THE LAND THE HERITAGE OWNS, WHY SUCH A LARGE CHUNK IN ONE AREA SO FAR FROM THE A1 MOTORWAY. MUCH BETTER TO CARRY ON FARMING EXISTING LAND FOR FOOD. OF ALL THESE POSSIBLE HOUSES, HOW MANY WOULD BE SOCIAL HOUSING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE & HOW MANY PRIVATE PROPERTIES WOULD BE FOR PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE AREA.

THIS AREA HAS BEEN DESIGNATED ONE OF THE DRIEST IN THE COUNTRY, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IN A DROUGHT, THE SEWAGE SYSTEM STRUGGLES AS IT IS. THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SURROUNDING TOWNS & VILLAGES WOULD RESULT IN GREATLY REDUCED "GREEN" AREAS. I FEEL THAT IF THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION RELEASES THE LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT THEN EBENEZER HOWARDS LEGACY FOR THE WORLD'S FIRST GARDEN CITY WOULD BE DESTROYED FOR EVER.

(Source: Comment card)

*“The Grange needs a green space but it will be lost. The roads are narrow and will clog with station parking. All in one place? Why not distribute local-to-the-development employment? Cohesion with existing community? “Relocalisation and the end of growth, Peak Oil...how is this planned to meet these challenges? (Comment card)*

*“I am not in agreement with the increase of houses being built because it means an increase in Traffic, an extra burden on all Public facilities eg.. schools, Electricity. Also we have no police station which is manned”. (Comment card)*

*“I am very concerned about any development on prime farmland – food production will become vital in the near future and we degrade this at our peril. Building on brownfield should be the top priority and population control the second”. (Comment card)*

*“The proposed development would ruin a valuable amenity for the town. The superb views across agriculture would be blotted out. The Greenway and the footpaths are widely used by many people for a variety of purposes. I’m strongly*

*against any change to the beautiful area. There is no other area like this near Letchworth. It should be preserved" (Comment card)*

*"Letchworth cannot take any more major development. There are few local jobs – especially ones that pay a livable wage. The traffic is gridlock. It takes me one and a half hours to do a 15 mile commute to Welwyn as the roads out to the A1M are gridlocked. Local people cannot afford local homes. (Comment card)*

*"We are concerned that the road system will not be able to cope with the increase in traffic. Access to the A1M through Letchworth Gate would make it even more congested than it is at present. Station parking is also an issue as at present cars are parking anywhere they can find a space". (Comment card)*

*"I am not in agreement with the selling of the site north of the Grange or the building of houses on it. Once a few acres have been sold and developed it is only a matter of time before another section is identified to go the same way, and then another, and then.....Erosion of the green surround/belt around the Garden City must be protected at all times otherwise there won't be any green spaces left, either for the people or the wild life. A thousand homes will generate nearly two thousand cars, all trying to drive through the Grange Estate – rush hour will be horrendous" (Email/website)*

*"Of course it is not a good idea. More houses, More people More cars. More pollution. More crime. More concrete covering the planet. Less wildlife. Already we have much infilling of available spaces. Enough is enough". (Comment card)*

*"This is an objection to this proposal as the plan is flawed in that it will swallow up prime farmland and also infringes on the greenbelt" (Email/website)*

*"There is no convincing argument for taking over greenfield areas to build houses for people who will have to commute to London or Cambridge for employment – assuming they are employable" (Comment card)*

## **My views...**

*Concerned about:-*

- \* Transport – road infrastructure – Options 1, 2 & 3 would all feed additional traffic through the junction with Icknield Way Norton Way North and cause congestion. Linked to –*
- \* Secondary schools are on the other side of town, putting additional strain on this junction.*
- \* One of the joys of Letchworth was that traffic passed by on South side and town centre. This has changed in the last 10 years and these proposals will exacerbate the problem.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Source: Comment card)

*“In my view another 1000 houses at the Grange would overcome the already lack of infrastructure in and around the town. The town was planned over 100 years ago as suitable for horse and cart transport, there were no cars...each new house will have at least one car so there could be several hundred more coming to the station” (Letter)*

*“What are the benefits to the existing residents? Will there be improvements to the infrastructure/amenities in the surrounding area? What public transport proposals will be implemented?” (Comment card)*

### **2.3. Opposed to new houses – but with caveats**

The next group of responses to be reviewed are those opposed to new housing development on the edge of Letchworth – but with caveats. A number of respondents stated that they are opposed to any development on the edge of Letchworth (rather than brownfields sites) but say that if the development of new houses does go ahead north of the Grange despite their objections then certain aspects must be addressed through the planning, design, building and management of any new housing development. This is generally framed as a need to follow garden city principles, and requirements noted include the following:

- Dealing effectively with infrastructure problems such as traffic increases which will seriously exacerbate congestion, parking and rat run problems
- Dealing with ecological impacts on wildlife and flora as well as water issues
- Mitigating greenbelt alienation such as high quality farmland loss
- Mitigating loss of greenbelt in terms of highly valued green space access and amenity
- Mitigating loss of greenbelt in terms of views, countryside feel and getting too physically close to other urban developments
- Dealing with problems expected that the nature of the design and planning of new houses will lead to a lack of good tenure mix, houses which are too dense or crammed in, too small gardens, poor environmental standards, too expensive and too much of a dormitory for incoming resident commuters by car to other places
- Dealing with an expected lack of walkability or cycle ways and poor expected provision of local shops, services and inadequate bus routes of low frequency.
- Making sure that new houses are only for local people

The following are representative comments in this area:

*“Development, particularly in a Garden City is undesirable but I think, unavoidable. My concerns are that the housing reflects the identified needs e.g. size of house, price of house, and that careful thought is given to the infrastructure necessary to support a site of this size. Just ‘adding it on’ is not an option – integration is essential” (Comment card)*



*"Hope we are not too late to contribute to this consultation. I am writing this on behalf of two of us after we have discussed it at length. While we understand the need for a certain amount of new housing, we feel that greenbelt is there for a reason and it should be preserved. It wasn't designated as such with the caveat 'until housing pressure becomes too high' or something! We also have grave concerns about overcrowding in the Southeast and empty homes/demolishing of derelict homes in Northern cities. I know it is not the HF's role to solve this, however why should Letchworth feel obliged to accommodate the fallout from bad national planning and employment distribution? Surely it could lead to further desolation in the North as well. We live on Norton Road and while the existing roads may be able to cope with extra traffic (which I dispute – St Nicholas School is a nightmare at school run times), the PEOPLE having to live by and cross over them cannot! Yes improving the junctions would help but it does not justify any of this unsustainable development. What happens in another 20 or 30 years when we can't afford to maintain the present infrastructure and need to build more houses to pay for it? The reason we like Letchworth is because it has a defined edge and hasn't sprawled out too far into the surrounding fields. If it does go ahead (it would sadden me very much and make us consider moving away, especially if the traffic gets any worse) I hope that the new houses would be built to passivhaus standards and with the best sustainable models in mind, such as the communities in Freiburg, Germany have done. Housing coops should be invited and ideally facilitated to build communities rather than developers coming in, making a profit and then disappearing again. The HF has a rare opportunity to create something more imaginative and positive than the bog standard make-a-fast-buck model. My husband says if it is built then the two spur roads mentioned would need to be built because of the traffic issues I have mentioned, although I am more in favour of cycle routes and car-free neighbourhoods (as I have seen in Freiburg – it can be done and is not pie-in-the-sky! You just need to be a bit bolder and stop following the car-enslaved flock, which benefits nobody, least of all the flock itself)."*

*"While we seem to need to increase housing stock, given the break-up of marriages, single parent families and immigration, new estates come with hazards. I can think of two which would need careful planning to avoid:*

- 1. the considerable rapid run-off which would affect the surrounding land and increase the discharge in local streams thereby increasing the risk of flooding.*
- 2. The considerable infrastructure needed to support the estate, including pressures on sewerage, schools, medical services etc.*

*If these and other such problems are catered for then it might be a good idea to do our part. However, the country is covered with ill thought out developments which cause havoc and I do not hold out much hope that the whole scenario will be properly thought through. Greed will probably take over and developers will be given the green light." (Email/letter)*

## My views...

I hope that the infrastructure of the town and capacity with services such as doctors, etc. will be taken into account when new homes are considered. Also

traffic & associated issues like parking. It will be a shame to see more farmland disappearing under bricks & mortar.

(Source: Comment card)

### 2.4. Opposed except to brownfield development or new standalone Garden City

A considerable number of those responding stated that they were opposed to new houses being built in Letchworth except on brownfields or alternative sites, while others, conversely, said they were not opposed in principle as long as this was only on brownfield or alternative sites. In both cases a number said that they were pleased that brownfield areas were being considered.

This 'brownfields or other alternatives' view was a fairly widely argued position, with some variations explored below. A considerable number responding who were opposed to any development of housing on the edge of Letchworth, for greenbelt protection and other reasons, argued that brownfields sites within the town should be focus of any future development. Perspectives in this area included the following:

- Brownfield building would uphold Ebenezer Howard's vision
- A focus on brownfields is seen as a way to avoid greenfield 'town merging' – such as between Letchworth and Stotfold
- Brownfield development can lessen problems of congestion and pressure on services and infrastructure – existing and new
- Arguments that the town cannot accommodate sufficient houses on brownfield areas are not accepted – as many as possible houses should be built on brownfields
- Brownfields should always be developed first, and in any case instead of greenfield or greenbelt sites

- Further work should be undertaken to identify further brownfield and greyfield sites that would be suitable for new houses within the town
- Employment land, industrial sites, and vacant industrial or commercial buildings (over and above identified possible development sites within the consultation documentation) should be identified and new houses built there or new dwellings retrofitted in existing interesting buildings
- Building of 'beautiful sustainable houses' as infill should be the aim
- Currently empty properties should be occupied
- Brownfields housing development will engender greater town cohesiveness than would new houses further away on the edge of town
- Social housing arrangements could be altered to better fit households to the size of available dwellings which would in turn free up existing housing space
- Town centre shop top and underused retail sites should be reused for housing – as part of a strategy to reanimate the town centre
- The stress should be on locating new development in walking distance of the town centre and station
- A stand alone new garden city should be developed elsewhere at a good distance from other settlements (with one example suggested of land between Letchworth and Hitchin)
- A small scattering of town edge developments should be undertaken in other parts of Letchworth - especially on the south side of town

Among comments of those opposed to new houses being built in Letchworth except on brownfields or alternative sites, are the following examples:

*"Letchworth is supposed to be Garden City so it would be a shame if the green spaces surrounding it were built on. As mentioned there are plenty of brown field sites that could be built on, which are currently eyesores. A recent good example of this was Phoenix Park which was previously an eyesore. The redevelopment was welcomed in the area, as it was an improvement on the derelict and dangerous site. Building on green fields is not an improvement and therefore will not get the support of local residents." (Email/website)*

*"I appreciate that there is a need for an increase in housing but have grave concerns in using the proposed green belt site. The brown field sites should be considered. We are custodians of this beautiful Garden City and should be upholding Ebenezer Howard's vision of living and open spaces and not building on green fields/green belt. These are fundamental principals and totally against the ethos of the Garden Cities Movement. Having read through the surveys I have to disagree with some of their findings. Lets get to the 'nitty gritty'. Transport and the main arteries to the proposed development are a concern. To drive along Grange Road at school times, morning and evenings with the parked cars and buses trying to get through is not an easy task so I cannot agree with their findings in this aspect. Schooling - having closed Norton School the increased number of children will have to travel the other side of town which is not an easy journey. Doctors - the Nevells Road Surgery are full and not taking any more new patients. These are the realities of such a decision, and no amount of consultation and surveys can convince me that this is the right site for the people of Letchworth" (Email/website)*

*"No, Letchworth does not need hundreds of new homes. But if the Heritage Foundation has decided it does need new homes I hope it will use brownfield sites first." (Email/website)*

*"Good to see that brownfield sites are being considered – very commendable. There is a need for further housing – and I do not think that Letchworth should decide to stagnate in its development. I am concerned that farmland is being considered" (Email/website)*

*"I am pleased that other brownfields sites eg Blackhorse Road are also in the frame. We have three adult children and welcome any moves that will bring supply of housing more in line with demand." (Comment card)*

*"Just a thought. What about moving the existing industry out of Blackhorse Road - putting it into the many gaps round the industrial area and turning Blackhorse Road into a residential street" Comment card)*

*"I have just visited the exhibition at the Community hub regarding the selling of land north of the Grange Estate for the building of new homes. I am in full agreement with the building of homes on the brown-field sites identified in the exhibition, and I am sure that if more research was done, with the right frame of mind, other sites could be identified." (Email/website)*

*"Brown sites must be used for housing first. Farm land must be left always to be used to feed us all so putting houses on the Grange is a no." (Comment card)*

*"I accept that there is a need for more housing. However I don't accept the fact that building on green belt land is the solution. As so many have already explained, there are many brownfield sites in Letchworth standing derelict and utterly useless which could be transformed into very pleasant smaller new areas of housing". (Email/website)*

*"I am not against 1,000 new homes being built in Letchworth as long as there is no flooding risk or wildlife and environmental impact and if the town infrastructure is not adversely affected by the extra residents. However, I do question why the new homes should be built on farmland/green belt when there are several alternative brownfield sites available within the town which are not currently in use. Surely it would be better to build on these rather than on green belt?" (Email/website)*

*"Please when building new homes use only brownfield sites, ...there is George W Kings abandond site, also the old electricity station and many more. If all the developers have to quote for developing only brown field sites in Letchworth then it will be a 'level playing field'. They'll have nothing to complain about. Any new homes should be in keeping with the Garden City, not tower blocks or eye sores. We should build where we can to house people, but only on pre-used*

*sites. Never on Greenfield land. It is only because it is more profitable that developers always want Greenfield land.” (Email/website)*

*“I am opposed to building on any Green Belt anywhere. Clear all the old factory buildings and waste ground and build on them. I do not think that the present infrastructure can cope with many more people as a whole, this includes, roads, rail, sewage, water, schools, etc.. Hertfordshire has more traffic than any other county, this is why our roads are in a bad way according to the powers that be so why add to the problem. I could go on but I think I have made my point.” (Email/website)*

*“Build another small(?) garden city elsewhere. We are special because we were the first” (Email/website/Online comment) “Why all in one spot? Why not share the homes around the boundary of Letchworth. There are sites on the other side of town which are farmland and would be just as suitable. (Letter)*

*“I support many smaller developments. Not fewer bigger developments....The Heritage Foundation is unable to demonstrate that Planning and Development decisions are always a success. The concept of many smaller developments makes the inevitable failure(s) to be less significant and more easily corrected”. (Online comment)*

*“There is a considerable tract of land beside the A1 motorway – has this been considered for development –if not why?” (Comment card)*

*“I would favour instead the concept of a completely new settlement, perhaps centred on the area ten to twenty miles north-west, which has ideal connections to both train and motorway networks.” (Email/Website)*

*“Whilst it is undeniable that more homes are required to meet a growing population, I feel that a multi pronged approach is required:-*

*1. Greater use needs to be made of existing housing stock, in particular social housing by eliminating the tenancies for life and ability to pass on tenancies to other family members and moving social housing tenants whose circumstances have changed and they live in properties which are too large.*

*2. There are a number of other sites around Letchworth that could be used in addition that the one identified, as I feel that 1000 homes on just this one site with more infrastructure is excessive. I believe that a number of smaller developments would be far better, utilising land near the Lordship estate/Willian, in the area by the Leisure Centre bordered by the A1(M, the area of Standalone Farm adjacent to Wilbury Road and around the Norton village area.*

*3. You could also develop the prefab site at Fernhill.*

*4. It is apparent that "family units" are getting smaller and hence a greater emphasis on apartments and two bedroomed homes generally is required.*

*Lastly the one thing you must not do is to spread Letchworth out to the extent that it loses it's distinct boundaries with Stevenage/Hitchin and Stotfold."*  
(Email/website)

## **2.5. Support new houses being built in Letchworth – with conditions**

A number of those responding supported arguments in favour of building new houses but had concerns that this would lead to problems that would make life worse for existing and new residents unless well planned and designed. These concerns mirrored some of those argued by consultees opposed to development, but were reframed as conditions of support. Views from this perspective include the following:

- New house building, as postulated in the Exhibition material, 'seems reasonable' and does not mean excessive population increase
- Not against new houses being built in principle - as long as these are in line with Garden City principles such as low housing densities, and abundant private and public green space
- New houses can be supported as long as housing quality and sustainability are properly taken into account
- If fewer numbers of houses are built than currently proposed (i.e. 500 rather than 1000 north of the Grange or as infill) then this is supported
- New house building is supported If it is made affordable - including self build plots
- New houses would be supported If more are in the social rented tenure
- New houses would be supported If traffic and parking related issues can be resolved (car use)
- New houses would be supported If tied to town centre revitalisation
- New building would be positive If physically located close to or otherwise well connected to the town centre
- This can be supported as long as assurances given that no more new housing will be proposed until 2031
- The character of new development needs to reflect garden city heritage and character with 'sympathetic architecture and tree planting'
- Any new houses built need to avoid previous mistakes in the nature of development at Stotfold and in the town itself

Examples of views expressed in support of new houses being built in Letchworth – with conditions – are provided below:

*"I appreciate that there is a requirement for additional housing stock in Letchworth as without it the population will decline as people move out of the area to find new homes. From the reports I see that the foundation will uphold the principles of the Garden City master plan and consider the flora and fauna of our local environment. However, I am concerned about the demand the additional population would place on the water available to us. Additional commuting will result unless potential employers can be encouraged to move*

*into the area and this would obviously impact on pollution in our area".*  
*Comment card)*

*"I appreciate that there is a need for housing but have 2 main concerns about the proposed site: (1) Loss of productive farmland (2) pressure on services including roads." (Comment card)*

*"Worried about increased traffic coming into Letchworth. Norton Way North and Green Lane already well used and congested especially in rush hour. Must make sure there are facilities for schools and medical needs." (Comment card)*

*"Provided appropriate infrastructure is provided, there is no doubt in my mind that more homes should be built in Letchworth." (Email/website)*

*"A sound proposal as long as care is taken to preserve LGC principles and affordable housing is included. However a 10 year hold on any further allocation of land should be introduced." (Comment card)*

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*Comment card)*

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*"A sound proposal as long as care is taken to preserve LGC principles and affordable housing is included. However a 10 year hold on any further allocation of land should be introduced." (Comment card)*

*"Following my visit to the exhibition in the community hub I am leaning towards being in favour of new homes to the north of the Grange Estate. My views have moved in this direction based upon the predictions about population in the future. `I do not want Letchworth to lose any its current vibrancy...my general acceptance is tempered by a few thoughts...the planned development appears to have the existing greenway bisecting it and I'd like to see this retained or replaced...I'd like to see the original mix of housing types and sizes is maintained. In 'old Letchworth' social and private housing is integrated. This was not the case*

*when estates such as the Grange, Jackmans and Lordship were developed and I feel this a shame and doesn't benefit the town as a cohesive community", (Email/website)*

*"We need more houses, preferably for young people and families. Development around the Grange will be fine and also brownfield sites also. There needs to be more provision for school places." (Comment card)*

*"I am writing to you regarding the building of new homes in Letchworth. As the arguments against the proposal seem to have found a steadfast and vocal group of supporters on social media, I would like to put forward a different opinion. I am in favour of building new homes in Letchworth. Letchworth was founded as a progressive, forward-looking town and was quickly populated by pioneering people. It simply goes against the spirit of the original Letchworth to try to preserve the town in aspic, and not create new homes and attract new pioneering spirits to such a special place. With an ageing population and a struggling town centre it would also be short-sighted not to try to reverse the downward trend by attracting more people to this very special town. Letchworth deserves to be better known!*

*There are, however a few considerations I would urge the Heritage Foundation to take into account in making the final decision...." (Email/website)*

## **2.6. Support new houses being built in Letchworth – with suggestions for improvements**

A number of those responding stated their support for the building of new houses in Letchworth – both on the edge of the town and in brownfield locations, but had suggestions about how the new houses could most positively support individual residents' needs and the town's character and amenity. Often these suggestions were a reframing of points made by others in a more opposed way. Points in favour (with suggestions for improvement) included the following:

- To support the growth and rebalancing of the town's age profile toward younger people and families
- New housing offers the opportunity for a housing size and style mix to suit the needs of older people
- To provide affordable homes for young people and families - both local and incomers
- To provide opportunities for more social housing to be built by housing associations and other public bodies - ensuring a diverse social mix
- To help ensure the town's economic vitality, including the town centre in future
- To offer a chance to build attractive architecture at low densities in keeping with Garden City heritage based on sound design principles
- To offer a chance to build sustainable eco-homes within a self sustaining community that does not destroy or undermine the local environment and habitats
- To develop houses planned with adequate off street parking space



- A chance to plan and design a low density walkable area focused on local services with good infrastructure including alternatives to driving (medical, retail, schools, public transport, green access, etc)
- To ensure new houses are properly separated from other developments
- To ensure new houses are well related to local jobs
- To share the benefits of Garden City living with others

Examples of this perspective include the following comments:

*"I'm generally in favour of growing and rebalancing the town's population and prefer new extension over infill. Sensitive, sensible infill can have a place."  
(Comment card)*

*"Agree with reasons behind development. Must be good separation between new and old – retain Greenway and wildlife." (Comment card)*

*"Please do build more houses, reflecting the history of the town in the architecture, eco-homes and more 3-4 detached family houses within the £250-400 bracket." (Comment card)*

*"I fully support the proposed development, on the condition that enough 'affordable social housing' be they commercial or available to rent, are provided. I am sure the Heritage Foundation would not allow a development which would not be in line with the principles of the Garden City, and we must accept that there is not enough housing which is affordable for people in this area, which means people often have to move away from the area, resulting in a loss of our community." (Email/website)*

*"Yes the development does need to go ahead. We would like 2 bedroom homes for older people who do not want flats". (Comment card)*

*"We do need the extra housing. The north of Grange Estate is a good choice. I would be concerned to have more access roads into the new development. Suggest we need three. Please make sure you preserve the Greenway."  
(Comment card)*

*"I have no problem we need more housing. But we don't need a Great Ashby type estate. Houses packed in for max profit." (Comment card).*

*"I support the idea because Letchworth is in need of new housing that supports future generations and encourages them to stay in the area." (Comment card)*

*"Clearly there is an urgent need for more housing and it is reasonable that some development will be necessary in the area. Brownfield infill will meet some of the demand but the "Design Principles" could be better satisfied in a self contained larger area rather than fragmented smaller developments. We have read the documents with great interest and conclude that, subject to some reservations, we are strongly in favour of the proposed development on land north of the*

*Grange Estate. Ebenezer Howard was forward looking and we do not think the proposed development compromises his principles any more than did the earlier Grange and Jackmans developments.*

*The zero growth option would lead to further deterioration of the town centre and job opportunities in the town. Growth of 1000 dwellings would lead to an increase of the prosperity and vitality of the area and enhance the socio-economic balance across the town. It is clear from the documentation that the infrastructure and services could cope with the population increase. There is some concern regarding the ecological impact particularly in relation to hedgerows but we feel that this can be solved. It would be essential for the "Design Principles" to be implemented in full to maintain the character of the town. Transport is a major concern to and from the town centre and out of town and requires further consideration. The option of a spur road to Norton Road would be dangerous and the option to the Stotfold Road would be preferred. We hope our opinions are helpful." (Email/website)*

## **2.7. Views expressed about process, information and role of the Foundation**

Both those who are opposed to any development of houses north of the Grange or on other sites and those in favour of new houses expressed views about the Heritage Foundation's role in the process – some of which were quite trenchant. The Foundation's motivation in posing the question is disputed by a number of opposed respondents in various forums, but this was especially apparent in responses received from those not taking part in the face-to-face consultation process. Views about process, the nature of the consultation topic, the information provided, and the Foundation's role included the following:

- The decision has already been taken to build more houses, with LGCHF wanting to 'push through' development
- Technical reports are not trusted or seen as biased – the data and assumptions are questioned in relation to economic arguments for growth, traffic analysis (described as laughable) or for flood risk assessment ('not needed').
- The consultation period is deemed too short and just an attempt to 'brainwash' residents - 'views of those opposed will not be listened to'
- Expensive consultation costs are borne by residents and are 'a waste of money'
- There is distrust about the use that any income from new houses would be put – 'money and greed are the real reasons for this proposal'
- The Foundation needs to sort out development issues such as housing quality, empty shops, and traffic congestion in the town before considering any new house building

Examples of comments made in this area are noted below:

*"I have a question – how much as this exercise cost and how much has the whole consultation cost?" (Comment card)*

*"I do know that many people in this town feel that the decision has already been made or it is too ludicrous that it will never happen – and they may not reply to your consultation. I don't understand why they feel that their opinion will not make a difference and do not come forward. However I hope that you will consider the points that you have received from the people who really care about our town and are very happy and proud to be part of such a great community. I am slightly bothered that the Heritage Foundation governors mostly live out of town or South of the town so don't really understand the negative impact this huge housing will have on the town. My own family have lived in Letchworth since the 1920s and I hope that it remains a small friendly town, somewhere easy to live and be happy for many more generations." (Email/website).*

*"Should we allow 1000 more homes to be built there? Absolutely not, it would ruin everything that is good about Letchworth and I am shocked it would be the Heritage suggesting it as that is the body in place to PROTECT it!" (Email/website)*

*"It seems clear that from a lawful point of view, this proposition is entirely unlawful and a betrayal of the trust put in the heritage foundation by the people of Letchworth." (Email/website)*

*"To build on land north of the Grange Estate is nothing short of a travesty....This threatened area is a beautiful asset to the Garden City ideals and I find it astounding that the Heritage Foundation and all that it stands for is instrumental in allowing it's possible demise. Will Norton Common be next?" (Email/website)*

*"It will be absolutely disgraceful if these plans go ahead – shame on you!!!!" (Email/Website)*

*Congratulations on the consultation." (Comment card)*

### **3. Numerical breakdown of comments**

#### **3.1. Why include numerical breakdown**

As noted in the first section of this report, the issues relating to whether new houses should be built in Letchworth are complex. For this reason, in our view, it is not possible to solely rely on numerically based material to analyse responses to the consultation question. However, the analysis of comments, by numbers received in relation to different points, does have a useful part to play in the overall reporting. This is because it helps to indicate how commonly held particular views are among those responding to the consultation, and the nature of those views.

On that basis the following section considers in a quantified way points made across the range of comments on cards, Facebook, email, the website forum and through letters. In total there have been 1322 comments made about issues relevant to the consultation question. These specific comments are embedded within the smaller number of individual responses across this range of data sources as follows:

- 1322 comments overall
- 472 card comments
- 545 letters and email comments
- 143 Facebook comments
- 162 forum comments

In this section these specific comments have been divided into three areas:

- Outright 'no's' and matters of concern
- In principle and conditional support and
- Suggestions and miscellaneous comments

It is worth noting that this structure to an extent mirrors the more qualitatively based discussion – with a 'continuum' of comments apparent.

#### **3.2. Outright 'no's' and matters of concern**

There are 40 outright 'no's' to any new housing development. Of the outright 'no's' to building new houses in Letchworth, the majority come from comments posted on Facebook (22), while nine come from card comments, eight from letters and emails and one from the web forum.

The breakdown of matters of concern comments is as follows:

- 240 card comments
- 366 letters and email comments
- 55 Facebook comments
- 95 forum comments

In relation to matters of concern, there are certain thematic areas which are clearly dominant, including transport and traffic which have received the most adverse comments at 137 – split fairly evenly across comments on cards (58) as well as letters and emails (58), with fewer comments in Facebook (9) or the online Forum (12).

The next biggest area that is a matter for concern is loss of greenbelt, the countryside or farmland with 120 comments; the majority of which come from letters and emails (63), with somewhat smaller numbers from card comments (33), Facebook (10) and the online Forum (14).

A smaller, but still reasonably substantial, number of comments (97) reflect the view that the town should use brownfield or derelict industrial land for any new houses. There are 45 letters and emails, 24 card comments, and equal numbers of Facebook and online Forum comments (14 each).

Fewer again but still reasonably substantial numbers (72) comment that building houses would break the Garden City model and character – with 41 letters and emails, 22 card, five Facebook and four online Forum comments.

Insufficient school places are the next biggest matter of concern – with 29 letters and emails, 23 card comments, seven Facebook and four online Forum comments.

The impact on the Greenway meanwhile has received 34 comments – with 17 letters and emails, six card, three Facebook and eight online Forum comments.

The impact on ecology and wildlife has the same number of overall comments (34) - – with the split slightly different at 10 letters and emails, 15 card comments, one Facebook and eight online Forum comments. This is of concern to more people who visited the Exhibition than those who responded by email and letter, suggesting it is a more spatially spread view rather than a location specific one to the Grange area.

Inadequate infrastructure is a matter of concern for thirty-one people overall – with 22 letters and emails, two card comments, two Facebook and five online Forum comments. The emphasis on email and letter comments here suggests this is a particular issue for those in the immediate vicinity of the possible new house building area north of the Grange.

Inadequate parking, including at the station, is a concern for twenty-four people overall, with 14 card comments, 10 letters and emails, 2 Facebook and 5 forum comments.

For 23 people no benefit is perceived to the local economy or town centre from new houses and population. There is a slightly larger number of such comments from emails and letters (11) than card comments (nine) suggesting the former respondents may not have read the economic analysis. There has also been one Facebook comment and two forum comments to this effect.

Fear of co-joining of towns is a concern for 19 of those responding overall, broken down as five card comments, nine letters and emails, two Facebook and three forum comments.

Twelve people are concerned about impact on views and landscape, with three card comments, eight letters and emails, and one forum comment.

Anxieties about lack of water supply and sewerage treatment have elicited four card comments, three letters and emails, and three forum comments.

Ten people comment that it is the Heritage Foundation's role to preserve the town with one card comment, six letters and emails, and three forum comments to this effect.

A number of areas have received fewer than 10 comments as 'matters of concern' and these are listed in the table below. It is worth noting that these comments are split across face-to-face and more passive consultative forms, but there are no Facebook comments in each of these topic areas.

The following table and figure show the range and number of comments, which can be grouped as 'matters of concern'. While the table covers all topic areas raised, the figure shows the areas mentioned 10 or more times.

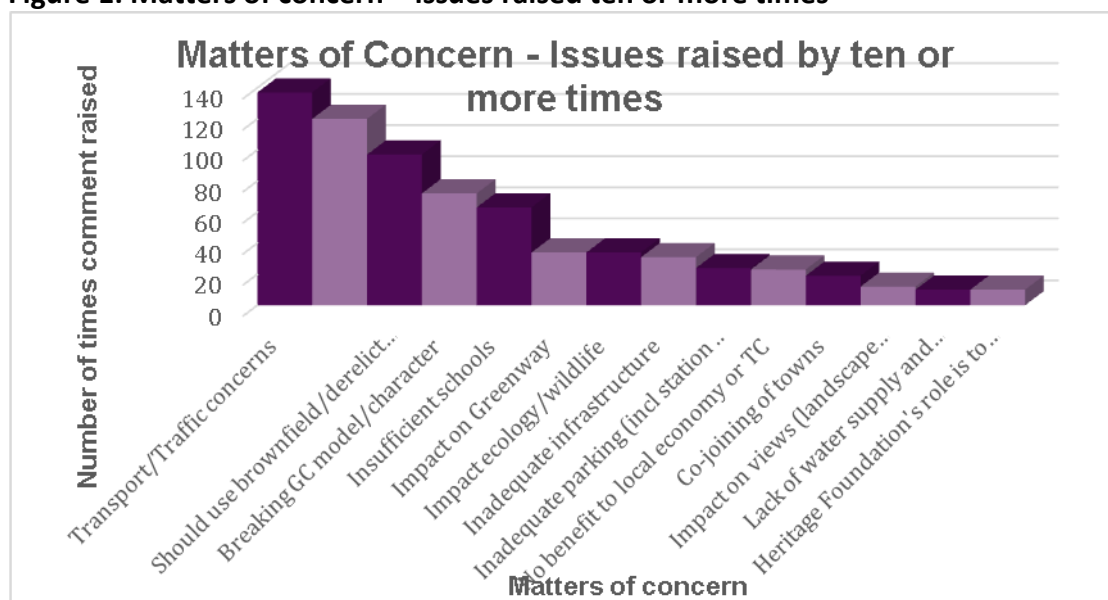
**Table 1: Matters of concern – comments in total**

Transport/Traffic concerns	137
Loss of greenbelt/countryside/farmland	120
Should use brownfield/derelect industrial land	97
Breaking GC model/character	72
Insufficient schools	63
Impact on Greenway	34
Impact ecology/wildlife	34
Inadequate infrastructure	31
Inadequate parking (including station parking)	24
No benefit to local economy or TC	23
Co-joining of towns	19
Impact on views (landscape impact)	12
Lack of water supply and sewerage treatment	10
Heritage Foundation's role is to preserve the town	10
Detached from town	8
No need for new homes	8
More crime	7
Will be too separate	7
Will not provide local housing	6
Pollution	5

Should use smaller sites	5
Develop other green field sites	5
New housing will be of poor standard	2
Further erosion	2
No flooding	2
Site is ok, but should be reduced	2
House prices will go down	2
Already over crowded	2
Reduced quality of life	2
If site is smaller = less infrastructure	1
Could it be further away?	1
Maintain Greenway	1
Greater use of existing housing stock first	1
Housing would not be desirable	1

Source: Collated by Letchworth Heritage Foundation from comments received through different consultation forms

**Figure 1: Matters of concern – issues raised ten or more times**



Source: Constructed by Letchworth Heritage Foundation from comments received through different consultation forms

### 3.3. Conditional support

The breakdown of specific comments of conditional support is as follows:

- 166 card comments
- 127 letter and email comments
- 52 Facebook comments
- 45 forum comments

Sixty-four comments support houses for local people and reflecting local housing needs, with 32 of these coming from comment cards, 12 from letters and emails, 15 from Facebook and five from the online forum.

A need for more housing is supported by 59 comments, with 24 comment cards, 17 letters and emails, and nine Facebook and forum comments each.

Ensuring adequate infrastructure is a condition of support across 32 comments - with 15 comment cards, nine letters and emails, five Facebook and three forum comments.

The need for more GP surgeries is also a condition for support in 31 comments overall, split as 15 comment cards, eight letters and emails, and four Facebook and forum comments each.

Similarly 31 comments relate to a desire that good design which is Garden City based be included – with 12 coming from comment cards, 12 from letters and emails, two on Facebook and four from the forum.

Thirty-one comments equally relate to investment into the local economy, seen as a necessary condition for new houses, with 12 comment cards to this effect, 11 emails and letters, six Facebook comments and two forum ones.

20 comments suggest that homes should be sustainable – broken down as nine comment cards, seven letters and emails, and four forum comments.

The same number give conditional support, based on roads being improved, with the source split showing higher levels of support for this view from the more passive forms of consultation that face-to-face – with five comment cards, 12 letters and emails, one Facebook and four forum comments.

Seventeen comments see a need to reinvest any proceeds from house building for local benefit, with three comment cards, two letters and emails, eight Facebook and four forum comments.

Dealing well with car parking requirements is a factor in conditional support for eleven comment; fairly evenly split as five comment cards, five letters and emails, with one forum comment.

A fairly wide range of topic areas are offered conditional support but have elicited fewer than 10 comments each, as set out in the table below. These cover physical and social infrastructure, services, environmental requirements, food, travel and access issues, design quality and community building among other matters.

Often the number of responses has been fairly evenly split across the different forms of consultation, although the need to maintain the Greenway is mentioned by larger numbers of those emailing or writing in (six) than visiting the community hub (two).



It is also notable that comments about a wider range of topics have come from those who actively engaged face-to-face by visiting the exhibition and speaking to facilitators, experts and staff.

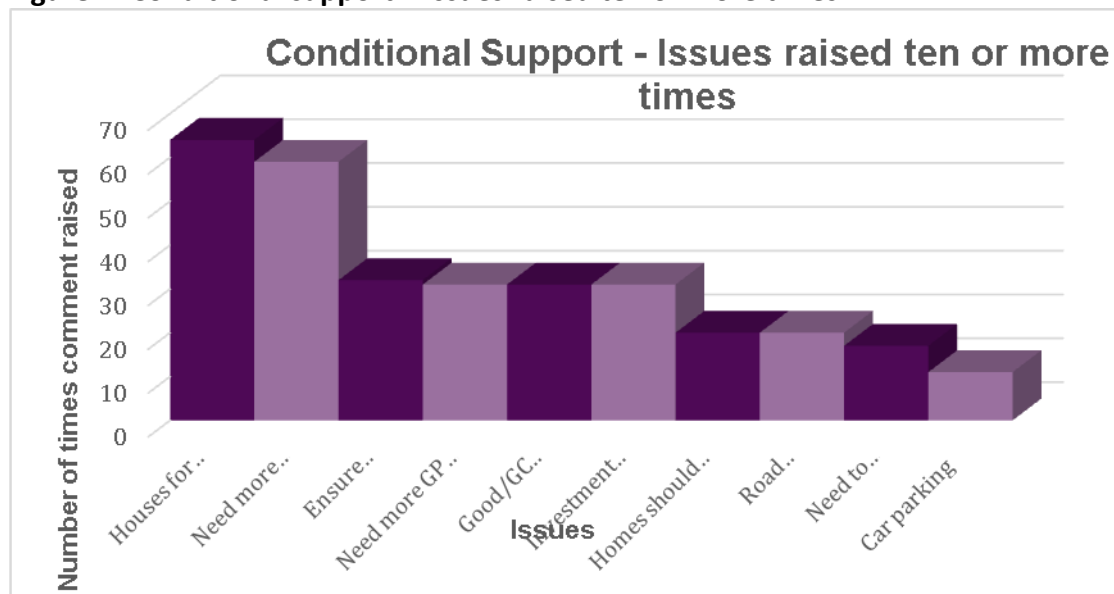
The following table and figure show the range and number of comments, which can be grouped as offering conditional support for building more houses in Letchworth. While the table covers all topic areas raised, the figure shows the areas mentioned 10 or more times.

**Table 2: Conditional support – comments in total**

Houses for local people and reflect local needs	64
Need more housing	59
Ensure adequate infrastructure	32
Need more GP Surgeries	31
Good/GC Design should be included	31
Investment into local economy	31
Homes should be sustainable	20
Road improvements	20
Need to reinvest for local benefit	17
Car parking	11
Should not be too dense	8
Maintain Greenway	8
Ecology and trees	8
New cycle routes required	7
Improved public transport	7
Water supply should be considered	6
Ensure appropriate density	6
Need a community centre/youth facilities	5
Water/flooding	4
Need open space	2
Should be gap between Grange and development	2
Should include allotments	2
Station parking	2
Proposal not excessive	1
Avoid co-joining	1
Should include design competitions	1
Need self build	1
Development will help infrastructure delivery	1
Community should be self sustaining/village	1
Must move forward not preserve in aspic	1

Source: Collated by Letchworth Heritage Foundation from comments received through different consultation forms

**Figure 2: Conditional support – issues raised ten or more times**



Source: Constructed by Letchworth Heritage Foundation from comments received through different consultation forms

### 3.4. 'In principle' support – and suggestions and miscellaneous comments

There are 39 'support in principle' comments overall from those consulted.

As well as these 'in principle' support comments there is a third grouping of comments, which offer suggestions or are miscellaneous, as follows:

- 39 card comments
- 32 letter and email comments
- 6 Facebook comments
- 20 forum comments

These is a relatively broad set of suggestions and miscellaneous comments that relate to a range of some thirty-seven topic areas relevant to any new houses in Letchworth. These are often framed as alternative ways to develop new dwellings rather than directly addressing the question as framed in the consultation. For example, many of the 'develop brownfields only' suggestions fall in to this category.

Also as can be seen from viewing the table below, there are issues about both content and process that have elicited quite divergent views from relatively small numbers of those responding.

Thirteen comments note a need to consider the future of the town centre as a related matter in any new house development in the town – with three comments on cards, five by email or letter, two on Facebook and three by way of the forum.

Ten comments reflect the view that Letchworth should consider developing a new town, Garden City or villages instead of the question as set out in the consultation,

with three card comments, four by email or letter, and three from the forum. One comment suggests that new development should be self-sustaining. Alternatives sites are proposed – such as developing west of the A1 (one comment) and that employment should be part of any housing scheme (one comment).

Nine comments are in agreement with developing brownfield sites – made up of seven card comments, one by email or letter, and one comment on Facebook. In this case it is notable how many more comments come from the face-to-face part of the consultation than other sources.

Conversely two say that brownfield sites should not be developed (one comment card, one Facebook). In a related way, four comments note a concern about other sites; three feel that the former power station should be used for housing, and two that the density should be increased in Works Road, with Blackhorse Road released for housing.

One comment suggests that the Grange is undervalued and another that the Grange land is not productive.

Also connected to this topic area are four comments that there should be self-build plots, two comments that empty homes should be restored, one that there should be housing in the town centre, and one that existing social housing tenancies should be looked at to better fit household to house size. One forum comment asks that gardens not be developed.

Similarly, when design is mentioned, with a need for good and diverse design being noted in five card comments, these comments mostly come from the face-to-face part of the consultation.

Access design and infrastructure is mentioned in one comment, in terms of roads in poor condition with weak signage, and another comment is that a park and ride should be developed.

Comments also bring out ‘lateral’ issues such as a view that commercial rents in Letchworth are too high, with this view emanating from letters and emails (four comments) as well as Facebook (one comment).

In terms of the financial aspects some say that the process is only about generating profit (4 forum comments) while others suggest that financial considerations should not lead (one card comment, three emails and letters).

Two forum comments suggest that this question is being posed due to immigration issues and one that population should be reduced.

In terms of process, while four comments congratulate the Foundation on the consultation, and two say that a careful, thoughtful approach has been taken, one comments suggests the consultation cost is too high, another that the period for

comments has been too short, another that the exhibition should be in a more central location, one that young people should be engaged, one that there has been inadequate information about the process, one that more information is needed and one that the report of the process should be made public.

**Table 3: Suggestions and miscellaneous comments – comments in total**

Need to consider Town Centre	13
Should develop a new town/GC/villages instead	10
Agree with brownfield sites	9
Needs good/diverse design	5
Commercial rents too high and should be reduced	5
Congrats on consultation	4
Need self building plots	4
Concerned about other sites	4
Financial considerations should not lead	4
Only for profit	4
Should use former power station for housing	3
Think a careful thoughtful approach is being taken	2
Should increase density in Works Rd & release Blackhorse Rd for housing	2
Do not develop brownfield sites	2
Should ensure empty homes are restored	2
Roads are in poor condition and signage is weak	2
Immigration issues	2
Employment should be part of the scheme	1
Should develop west of A1	1
Should reduce population	1
Will have little impact on south of the town	1
Consultation exercise cost too high	1
Need to engage young people	1
Grange land not productive	1
Period for comments is too short	1
Housing in the town centre	1
Exhibition should be in a more central location	1
Look at existing social housing tenancies	1
Grange is under valued	1
Should provide park + ride	1
Report should be made public	1
Shouldn't build another school	1
Development should be self sustaining	1
Governance issues	1
Need more information	1
Inadequate information about process	1
Don't develop gardens	1

## **4. Discussion at the Governors meeting**

### **4.1. Governors' meeting process**

Following the analysis of the consultation responses, these findings were presented to the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation Governors meeting on the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013, at the Goldsmith Centre, Broadway, Letchworth Garden City.

In attendance were the nine Trustees of the Foundation, 13 Foundation Governors, Foundation staff John Lewis, David Ames, Glen Dawson, Jas Kaur and Tim Roxburgh, and consultants, Susan Parham and Emma Cranidge (University of Hertfordshire) Ben Fowler (Audience Net), Ciaran Gunne-Jones (Nathaniel Lichfield Partners) and Gordon Kruse (Cottee Transport Planning).

All the comment cards that had been received were put on notice boards for the Governors to read prior to the meeting. The Governors were also provided with the technical reports summary boards which were displayed in the Community Hub, (and the reports themselves). Each of the consultants was available to take any questions from the Governors before and during the meeting.

John Lewis welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the consultants and staff members. Glen Dawson provided an outline of the 12-day town wide dialogue, which took place from 18-29<sup>th</sup> November at the Foundation's Community Hub in Letchworth town centre, as well as having a number of online opportunities to read through relevant material and to comment. Glen noted that the dialogue had been facilitated by the team from the University of Hertfordshire, with the Foundation providing support.

Susan Parham from the University of Hertfordshire summarised the results from the 12 days of consultation. It was noted that 673 people attended the exhibition, while 1322 comments were received via the cards, e-mail, through the Foundation's website and on Facebook. Susan presented a detailed summary and analysis of the results (which is further elucidated in this report).

Emma Cranidge, who led the consultant team working with Dr Parham, also spoke briefly about the nature and findings from the consultative process.

Ben Fowler presented the results of the on line market research, which encompassed an online survey that was split into two categories. A hand-out was provided to the Governors, summarising the results of this work.

### **4.2. Facilitated discussion**

Dr Parham facilitated the subsequent discussion.

Clarification was sought from Audience Net regarding the two different figures, which showed two different percentages in relation to those in favour of the houses being developed north of the Grange (pages 13 and 14 of the Audience Net presentation).

Ben Fowler explained that the percentages may be different due to the wording in each question and it was acknowledged the second figure was lower (63% and 54% in favour of housing development) as some of the concerns may have been highlighted in the second question. It was acknowledged that even with the concerns being evident the figures showed that a larger proportion of people still believed that more housing was required than did not.

It was suggested that access to the site should be through one access point rather than two and this should be through Norton, as this would make people come into Letchworth Town Centre, which would be a benefit to trade in the town centre. It was noted that two access points were shown in the technical report on transport to avoid congestion.

A governor noted that there was acceptance that additional housing was needed in Letchworth, but there was concern that the site north of the Grange may not be the right location, as this would break Garden City Principles. Rather, housing should be within the confines of the existing town by developing on brownfield sites.

Comment in response was made that previously developed sites have already been identified for development and there was no capacity for brownfield redevelopment to entirely meet housing need.

Clarification was sought on the population modelling and sensitivity analysis applied. Concern was expressed in relation to the impact on the Greenway, in terms of its contribution to health and wellbeing, as well as any loss of views.

A Governor noted that there should be greater consideration of the long term planning of the town, with a master plan, which sets out proposals up to 2100.

Clarification was sought on the traffic modelling methodology and it was confirmed that the model was based on a survey of the Grange undertaken in September/October 2013 and checked against another scheme of similar size.

A Governor suggested that traffic analysis should be at least town wide.

It was confirmed that Herts County Council would ensure appropriate education and road provision is made should housing north of the Grange proceed.

Sports and leisure facilities on the Greenway should be retained.

Governors expressed concern about the loss of Green Belt, increased traffic and impact on the Greenway.

In contrast other comments were made that the number of houses proposed was quite small when compared to other locations in the district, and that only 4.5% of agricultural land would be lost if this development proceeds.

It was highlighted that if the land north of the Grange was offered for development it would create significant income for the Foundation, which would then be invested back into the town.

#### **4.3. Voting process and decision**

John Lewis acknowledged this is a big decision for the town and its long-term future. John also advised that some employment land had been put forward, including the GW King site, for about 150 homes.

John Lewis advised the Governors that the Trustees present would not be voting this evening and would be voting and taking a decision at the Board meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December, following which the Governors would be advised of the Board's overall decision which would then be publically communicated.

The voting by the Governors would be by show of hands to the following question:

*"Should we put forward the land north of the Grange for inclusion in the next stage of the Local Plan process?"*

The vote was then taken and counted by Jas Kaur, and confirmed by David Ames and John Lewis:

- 9 Governors were in favour of the land north of the Grange being put forward for inclusion in the next stage of the Local Plan Process.
- 4 Governors voted for not supporting putting forward the land north of the Grange for inclusion in the next stage of the Local Plan process.

It was therefore concluded that the majority vote from the Governors was in favour of putting forward the land north of the Grange for inclusion in the next stage of the Local Plan process. The Trustees would note the decision of the Governors and take a vote on 10<sup>th</sup> December Board meeting.

The meeting then turned to next steps and the Chairman of the Foundation thanked the Governors for participating in the debate. He thanked the University for their assistance in facilitating the dialogue and the other consultants for attending and providing the technical reports. He also thanked the Executive and staff for the professional and inclusive approach adopted in managing the town wide dialogue. He acknowledged that this was a complex decision for the Governors to undertake.

In terms of process, the Chairman advised that the next stage would be a debate and a decision by the Board on the 10<sup>th</sup> December which would then be communicated

to North Hertfordshire District Council following which a communications statement would be issued.



## 5. Report summary

As this report's purpose has been to document the process of the consultation and report on the views expressed, there is no 'conclusions' section included. However it is worth summarising what this report has covered:

Section One explained the nature of the university's role as a neutral party reviewing consultation responses; described the nature of the consultation aims and process; established principles for reviewing consultation responses; and outlined the data sources for the review work, that is, the different kinds of consultative responses considered. These were:

- 157 comment cards filled out - from 673 visitors to the Exhibition
- 97 emails – many with detailed comments
- 58 online comments on the Foundation's website
- 136 Facebook comments - on the Foundation's website
- 5 letters

Section Two explored the range of views documented through the consultation process. It included summaries of the issues raised and numerous direct examples of comments from the range of consultation responses (comments cards, emails, letters, online forum, Facebook). The comments were presented as a continuum from opposed to new houses being built on edge of town site or generally, opposed to new houses – but with caveats; opposed except to brownfield development or new standalone Garden City; offering support new houses being built in Letchworth – with conditions; through to support for new houses being built in Letchworth – with suggestions for improvements. The section also documented views expressed about process, information and the role of the Foundation.

Section Three offered a numerical breakdown of comments, including explaining why this would be useful in a predominantly qualitative exercise. The section then reviewed in numerically based terms, the outright 'no's' and matters of concern, the conditional support responses and 'In principle' support as well as suggestions and miscellaneous comments.

Section Four covered the discussion by governors at the Governors meeting following the consultation period; describing the meeting process; documenting the presentations about consultation methods and findings, the facilitated discussion, and providing details of the Governors' voting process and decision.

This short final section (Section Five) summarises the report's contents and the two Appendices contain the typed up Comments cards (Appendix one) and the Online Market Research report (Appendix Two).



## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Comments cards

#### Comment cards

Monday 18/11/13

1. Not against in principle
2. "Income would be reinvested into the town" – but can any of it be used to create jobs? If so, shout about it!
3. Very important to be able to say that Letchworth average income per head – currently low – will be increased, thus encouraging a better shopping offer.
4. Congratulations on the consultation.

There is a considerable tract of land beside the A1 motorway – has this been considered for development – if not, why? The old GATES garage in Station Road is being considered, but I have been told this is already earmarked as an extension to Bennett Court – the retirement home next door. In an ever-decreasing need for shops why not consolidate these into blocks and covert the remainder into apartments? Wildlife & Environment: There are poor statements in this regard ie 'Consider Changes' 'Can look into' 'It is expected'. These statements mean very little in real terms.

Lovely view from there e.g. Garden Centre. That would go, also don't agree with using Green Belt. Where are all these families going to find jobs and work? BIG NO!

We need more houses, preferably for young people and families. Development around the Grange will be find and also brownfield sites. There needs to be more provision for school places. Not so long ago when my children were looking for secondary schools, they had the choice of 4 – now it is only 2, and now they are very enlarged. More young people in the town will be good. Also youngsters who grew up here want to be able to live where they grow up.

I strongly object to any further development as the Heritage Foundation has a duty to conform to the provisions of the (?) that establishing the Garden City. In my opinion the Heritage Foundation will be in breach of its legal duty to protect the "Garden City". In the past, the development of the Grange, Jackmans, Manor Park, The Dairy etc have already eroded the principle of the Garden City. The time has come to call a halt.

It is good to see that "brown field" sites are being considered – very common double. There is a need for further housing – and I do not think that Letchworth should decide to "stagnate" in its development.

I am concerned that farm land is being considered – and it is essential that ecological matters should be carefully planned. My initial reaction is that these matters are being thought through.

As an ex deputy head of Norton Secondary School, I was given to understand that there was a covenant on the school playing field. Is this not true? The playing field off Cashio Lane will present a problem in gaining public support!!

Access to and from the Grange site must be very carefully considered – the traffic flow is already excessive and daunting.

1. Using green belt and arable agricultural land – should be a last resort!

2. a) concern over water supply – no reservoirs built in SE in 30-40 years in spite of increasing population and immigration. No sensible solutions in light. Groups water – complex.  
b) Sewage treatment:- increasing Letchworth population by 10%. Available capacity – 1 existing plant near the proposed development. Expansion? Ability to keep volume/BOD of discharge to small watercourses within consent limits? If not smell, nuisance, unlimited fines!
3. Traffic. In town, Norton Way North is already very busy, extremely so at peak times. Similarly Norton Road with a roundabout onto Norton Road at the bottom of a hill near a bend, I could see serious gridlock at peak times and term time. The roads were not built for heavy traffic. Similarly for the proposed extra Fairfield access.
4. Infill on brownfield first. A number of options available on derelict industrial land.
5. Important to retain standards of design, density etc to retain LGC character.
6. Schools, GPs, other services. Ironical that schools have been closed because of falling roll.

Initial concern is 2 independent bodies:

1. LGCHF
2. HCC



Could both select the sites in Norton and result in over-developing the north of LGC

1. We live in Norton Way North and are concerned about an increase in traffic down Norton Way North. Already there is so much traffic that we often find it difficult to get our car safely onto the road.
2. I feel that you have done a lot of research to the best possible solution.
3. As a member of RSPB and a supporter of wildlife and wish the flora/fauna eg birds, animals, flowers and trees to be protected.
4. Exhibition – the light purple areas seem ok. The big deep purple area takes away farmland and I am not so happy about that.
5. If built I think local people should have first choice for the houses.

1. If site is “non-strategic” (<1000) there will be no legal reason to provide infrastructure.
2. Norton Road is already a rat-run – much of it heavy and aiming for the A507/A1(M).
3. Lack of water supplies in my areas but prone to intermittent flooding. Most new developments are almost entirely hard-standing which makes flooding more likely.
4. Despite your comments about enough GP surgeries it is very difficult to get an appointment.
5. There is a great need for more schools.
6. Transport – parking for the station already causes problems and most people will have to commute.

No! Unless for our own people and taking up too much green land. Everything is becoming concrete.

No there are enough already.

Keep to Garden City Principles (in the style of housing). Must have new road link (not into Norton Road North). Cycle ways.

It seems a reasonable proposal. The number of homes suggested would increase the population by approx. 10% which does NOT seem too excessive.  
I think consideration to a sports centre or youth club should be considered as there are currently a lot of youngsters hanging around the shops on the Grange.

There is a need for self-build plots within Letchworth.

Concerns:

Roads and the roads on the Grange are at this time congested and no more please.

Tuesday 19/11/13

Absolutely opposed:

- a betrayal of Garden City principles
- worried about road access
- concerned that agreement of other potential sites went through with no publicity. ie Talbot Way and Norton School Site

If this expansion gets the go ahead then please design with community in mind. This means don't build soulless estates with just a mass of cloned housing units with no shops, pubs etc. There are so many estates where you have to use the car to get provisions. Also how about diversity in housing. Letchworth was designed for all sorts of houses, not clones of half white/half brick houses.

Also new roads would be required to join the A1(M) north of Letchworth, otherwise town centre and environs would get gridlocked.

Also, it is different to get Doctors and Dentist appointments in Letchworth. Please consider Dr and Medical Centre in the expansion, to alleviate overcrowding.

I am very concerned about any development on prime farmland. Food production will become vital in the near future, and we degrade this at our peril/  
Building on brownfield sites should be the top priority. Population control then second.

I appreciate that there is a need for housing but have 2 main concerns about the proposed site:

- 1) Loss of productive farmland
- 2) Pressure on services including roads.

I would like to be assured that throughout Hertfordshire all possible alternative sites have been considered before proceeding with this proposal.

Worried about increased traffic coming into Letchworth. Norton Way North and Green Lane already well used and congested especially in rush hour.

Must make sure there are facilities for schools and medical needs.

#### Grange Development

- Concern is road access through the Grange, which already has restriction on the flow of traffic due to on road parking.
- We want the new residents to drive in the town. Will additional parking be included in the scheme eg. Land along the railway from Bridge Street (back of Nevells Road) (Could this be provided by the developer?)
- ? Schools and community buildings.

#### Wednesday/Thursday 20 & 21/11/2013

I am against the use of greenbelt agricultural land North of the Grange Estate for housing development. The "Economic Assessment of Growth Options" is heavy going but appears to contain no analysis of jobs apart from those directly flowing from the house construction. Therefore we cannot see where all the new population would work.

The authors of that document lose credibility when they tell us of a "3,100m<sup>2</sup> Sainsbury's located within the town centre" (Para 4.40) and that there is a potential allocation site "land east of Blackhorse Road" (Para 4.31) – since Blackhorse Road uses E-W land east is past the end of the road. What seems to be shown is North of the road. We are told Lister Hospital is under 4 miles from LGC (para 4.58) but as the crow flies it is exactly 4.0 miles from Letchworth Station and as the ambulance travels that becomes 5.5 miles or to the Grange Estate 7 miles (75% more).

The traffic analysis may be correct according to its own rules but we already have a long-term parking problem in LGC and as a consequence roads such as Cowslip Hill have compromised capacity. There may be 2 trains/hour to London but at commuter times they already are full.

Letchworth, as can be seen at the ex-Heritage Museum, was planned to be 32,000 population and self-sufficient in jobs surrounded by agricultural land.

DO NOT BUILD NORTH OF GRANGE ESTATE.

I am against a possible 1,000 houses being added to the Grange Estate. Letchworth as the World's First Garden City is an example to the rest of the World and Howard's Ideals could not be upheld if another huge estate is tacked on to its boundaries.

The traffic flowing around Letchworth has increased considerably in recent years and would only get worse.

Just a thought.

What about moving the existing industry out of Blackhorse Road, putting it into the main gaps around the industrial area and turning Blackhorse Road into a residential street. It already comes off a residential road and would possibly cut down on the traffic down there.

I'm generally in favour of growing and re-balancing the town's population, and prefer a new extension over infill. Sensitive, sensible infill can have a place.

Of course it is not a good idea.

More houses

More people

More cars

More pollution

### More crime

More concrete covering the planet. Less wild life. Already we have had much infilling of available spaces.

Enough is enough.

If you are still undecided put it to the VOTE. The only democratic thing to do.

The proposed development would ruin a valuable amenity for the town. The superb views across Bedfordshire would be blotted out. The Greenway and other footpaths are widely used by many people for a variety of purposes. I am strongly against any change to the beautiful area.

There is no other area like it in or near Letchworth. It should be preserved.

### Water supply?

Top of hill – pressure is high

- but often we have restrictions when Stotfold never does
- Little houses – single person households are a rising demographic
- Grange land not overly productive, no flooding as high.
- Access is good over the Grange.

The development goes against Ebenezer's population specification for the Garden City.

I am especially concerned about the traffic implications: getting to the station from there especially and being able to park anywhere there in the Town Centre.

And finally: Norton School would have been the obvious secondary school choice for the area but was closed and pulled down only a few years ago.

I am pleased that other brownfield sites eg. Blackhorse Road and Works Road are also in the frame.

We have 3 adult children all struggling to buy their first houses and welcome any moves that will bring supply of housing more into line with demand.

I run round the Greenway though I would miss the fields, the above views would prevail!

Recognise the need for more homes, particularly for first time buyers. But because of the problems created on estates like Marmet Avenue, High Avenue... with lack of parking, all future developments should be planned on the basis of 2 parking spaces per property, even 1 bedroom properties.\*

Further parking areas need to be created in the town centre.

\*Enough parking must be provide if access is provided from north east and west sides of the estate. Also to encourage bus services to service the estate.

I have no problem, we need more housing. But we don't need a Great Ashby (Stevenage) type estate, houses packed in for more profit.

I do not think it will benefit the town centre as the prepared access will mean people will drive to Baldock or Biggleswade because they are just as close and better parking than the town centre.

Where will the children go to school?

People will use their cars because public transport is too infrequent. Someone said about a tram way – but there's one space and not enough people would use it (a white elephant). I think it would not be part of Letchworth, but like Fairfield estate an entity of its own.

The Grange needs a green space – but it will be lost.

The roads are narrow and will clog with station parking. All in one place? Why not distribute local-do-the development employment?

Cohesion with existing community?

Relocalisation and the end of growth, peak oil and declining EROEI – how is this planned to meet these challenges?

(c 2018-2020 PeakAll –oil)

I am not in agreement with the increase of houses being built because it means an increase in traffic, an extra burden on all public facilities eg. Schools, Electricity. Also we have no Police Station which is manned.

I think Letchworth Garden City should be able to accommodate this development if:

- It is less crammed in than Phoenix Park is and car parking off the roads is planned for.
- How are we going to lure with commuters from this development onto the railway? There is little parking at LGC station.
- How are they going to access the shopping in LGC? The focus seems to be to get them onto the A1.
- Can the A1 cope with this number of commuters?
- Will the new development follow the Garden City principles? How will the 30% density be achieved?

Development, particularly in a Garden City, is undesirable but, I think, unachievable. My concerns are that the housing reflects the identified needs eg. Size of house, price of house, and that careful thought is given to the infrastructure necessary to support a site of this size. Just 'adding it on' is not an option – integration is essential.

Friday 22/11/13

Letchworth needs more housing to maintain a vibrant community and provide for young families ie. affordable housing.

Brown sites preferable. Grange development raises issues.

- 1) The green belt is a valuable asset to Letchworth people and the ethos of the town. This proposal would be detrimental to the great work done on creating the much loved Greenway. How would this be accommodated?
- 2) Infrastructure – access to site (possibly Fairfield or Norton/Stotfold Road) both dangerous and/or narrow roads and would mean further impingement on greenbelt.
- 3) Schools – figures in report suggest ample spare capacity. That is not borne out by comments in the community and is an essential consideration for larger developments.

Great care must be taken not to damage what Letchworth Garden City stands for.



1. Use brown field sites first because
2. Greenfield sites grow food for the extra population
3. Schools. HCC sold off the nearest school
4. Transporting children to nearest schools will create massive extra transport, fuel, environment etc etc
5. Money the main reason – its cheaper to build on green fields than brown.

Not keen to see Letchworth expand and particularly no on green belt land. The town is about its optimal size as originally envisage. I would be very sorry, as a long term resident, to see this unique town change very much more.

Details of the infrastructure please.

There is no way lorries can go up Eastern Way safely.

Will the trees behind the recreation be kept, will they be looked after if they are?>

If this is the size of a village can it now be further away.

Can brownfield sites be used first/more found rather than use green belt.

No – increasing populations does not solve problems – it only increases them!  
How about a plan for reducing the population by 10%!

In favour – need more housing.

Saturday 23/11/13

- I support the building of new homes, as long as the feel/look of Letchworth remains as it is now, without overcrowding becoming an issue.
- There should be gardens throughout the development and perhaps a new school/schools to accommodate.
- Job creation would be a benefit to support new population.

Living in the south of LGC the development will have no direct effect on me, however I am no in favour of building on green belt land. I appreciate the need for additional housing in UK, so if a decision to build is taken I would suggest the following considerations be taken. Private motor vehicle movements must be restricted, ideally by making public transport or walking, cycling more convenient than driving.

If private vehicle access to the site was from the north only journey times to LGC centre would be shorter by other means. Allowing traffic to the site via Grange estate should be avoided.

A good mix of social and owner occupied housing.  
Eco housing fit for 21<sup>st</sup> Century and energy saving.  
Good size gardens and plenty of open spaces.

Off road parking for at least 2 vehicles per household.  
Communal areas – playgrounds, wildlife garden, biodiversity project.  
Convenience store, and community hall but no pub. Post office.  
Possibly takeaway food shop/shops.  
Plenty of trees in keeping with Garden City.  
KEEP GARDEN CITY PRINCIPLES.  
Community hall could have a licence for alcohol.  
20mph limit throughout development.  
This must be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century project fit for the 1<sup>st</sup> Garden City.

Seems to be a lack of family homes in the 250k to 450k range. These homes would be useful for growing families or as the next home for young families who move to the area.

Build 3-4 bedroom homes on the current brown field sites first. There is no need to destroy green belt land when brown field sites can be found amongst the many empty factory sites in Letchworth.  
BROWN FIELD FIRST PLEASE.

I am in principle happy for more homes in Letchworth with the following provisions:

- 1) Traffic routes need to encourage the use of local shops by not connecting the site to roads to Bedfordshire.
- 2) Housing density. The mistake made in Great Ashby narrow roads and no parking.
- 3) Schools
- 4) Community Centre?

I think the proposed new development near the Grange Estate is too large, 50% of proposed housing would be fine, providing access roads are sufficiently wide enough to cope with the extra traffic.

Where are the children who will live in the new houses go to school??

Brown field sites to be used for housing – excellent idea.

PLEASE consider parking issues when giving planning consent.

For the development proposed to the rear of the Grange Estate. I would prefer there to be a gap between the new houses and the existing. Also for the Greenway to remain in its existing route.

Generally in favour, I think the town would benefit from more people, at least the small increase proposed.

Roads – it's been five years since I was regularly driving around the Grange, but even then there seemed enough cars on close roads. I support the necessity of an external road north, and thus to the A1.

GPs – having had to ring repeatedly to get a GP appointment, I disagree about the current GP capacity being sufficient (No complaint about my GP, just capacity).

New homes should be built using the Passivhaus principle, or similar.

Pavements and roads should be permeable and used to harvest water.  
Cycle tracks need to be separate from roads.  
Is there an implication for school places? Will children be able to walk to schools from the developments?  
Will there be local shops built into the developments?

Construction is necessary due to population increase.  
Important to build in keeping with current buildings/estates.  
Spread businesses, social gathering areas (shops etc) to ease congestion.

The proposed infill sites (such as the former Council depot and GW King sites) benefit from the existing infrastructure to support new housing.  
However the proposal to build new homes to the north of the Grange estate does not. The Grange is a cul-de-sac with only two roads leading to and from it. The additional homes and vehicles cannot be supported by existing health, education and retail provision. The quality of life for existing residents will diminish significantly. The development is not sustainable. We would also question how many new affordable homes will be built for local people within this. Otherwise, all who are attracted are more London commuters who bring little to the community.

Please do build more houses, reflecting the history of the town in the architecture, eco-homes and more 3-4 detached family houses within the £250k-£400k bracket.

We are concerned that the road system will not be able to cope with the increase in traffic. Access to the A1M through Letchworth Gate would make it even more congested than it is at present.  
Station parking is also an issue as at present cars are parking anywhere they can find a space.

Agree with reasons behind development. Must be good separation between new and old – retain Greenway and wildlife.

Letchworth cannot take any more major development.  
There are few local jobs – especially ones that pay a liveable wage  
The traffic is gridlock – it takes me 1.5 hours to do a 15 mile commute to WGC as the roads out to A1M at gridlocked and A1M gridlocked – the J7 backlog trails back to J9.  
Local people cannot afford local homes.  
The town centre is rubbish and parking a nightmare and very expensive  
The South East of England is sinking under commuters!

In principle, we support the proposal but due regard needs to be paid to:

- 1) Access
- 2) Parking in town and for commuters
- 3) Attracting more affluent residents with an age mix
- 4) Adequate schooling and health care
- 5) Architectural style needs to be attractive and varied.

I'm against a new housing estate.

- In my opinion the town centre is currently undergoing change and the number of shops is not being sustained by the current population levels. However, new housing project on the outskirts may not address this.
- A new estate could impact on the character of the town detrimentally and I feel it to be against the spirit of Letchworth.
- Housing prices may be impacted negatively.

I believe that if you build on the Greenbelt at the back of the Grange, it won't be long before Letchworth, Stotfold and Fairfield Park are on big town.

Parking and traffic are bad enough with out of town commuters using Letchworth Railway station. Our road is blocked with parked cars from 06:00 to 19:00 every day.

I don't believe that the people trying to push this through have any understanding of the principal ideas of Letchworth Garden City. Ebenezer Howard will be turning in his grave.

Housing development should, I believe, be focussed towards empty wasteland, brownfield sites or buildings that do not have occupancy prior to developing new greenbelt land. These instances already have much of the infrastructure needed.

I am concerned that attention is not being paid towards how the city centre will be affected by an increase in homes? There seems to be a lack at present of shops that draw in and retain the town's people in the area. Money is therefore being drawn away from local business towards Hitchin, Stevenage, Cambridge. As part of future development town centre development should be considered too,

### Sunday 29/11/13

If the community is self-sustaining, with its own community facilities, and has its own school so that it will be its own village, this would be good. However I have lived in an established estate at the edge of a town through a redevelopment which added 1 mile of houses outside our estate.

Despite a buffering dual carriageway, it was disrupting. The biggest difficulty was a massive influx into the local doctor, shop and school, rearranged buses etc. Classes at the primary school rose from 33 to 46-50 in each class in a year, with major difficulties in integrating new pupils on an almost weekly basis. The Wilbury Road is not an easy road to use now, and the roads on the Grange are not capable of carrying extra traffic. The routes into town, Cowslip Hill and Norton Way North are difficult now, Cowslip Hill is a "more by consent of other road user" now.

Fairfield has impressed me, and has created its own community. I hope this extension can do the same.

Please can the houses be built to a good standard.

Too many recent estates have houses that will be slums in 20 years. Decent sized rooms, private outdoor space, and low energy use is vital.

I support the idea because Letchworth is in need of new housing that will support future generations and encourage them to stay in the area. With the prices of houses rising it is

important for more affordable houses to be available, however there are limited resources in terms of water supply. Building needs to be empathetic with the environment.

No!

There would less water. Less electricity. Less animals and less farming estate.

Carefully consider a social mix on an estate, eg minimise noisy, anti-social families amongst people of disability and greater age ie pensioners.

Please try to conserve habitat for birds, wildlife and flora – more trees please!

Need for cheap rental industrial units or units for sale.

For example, only 1 single unit for sale in the town today

Need SME to provide jobs.

We need to make sure that the people living in the new area have the opportunity to prosper will be incentivised to live a positive life.

WE HAVE ENOUGH LAND IN THE UK FOR EVERYONE TO BE HOMED. WHY ARE WE BUILDING ON DEPRIVED AREAS?!?!?

WHAT ABOUT THE LAND BETWEEN LETCHWORTH/HITCHIN?!?

WE NEED TO BUILD A NEW TOWN/VILLAGE!!!

With good prospects for the individuals living there.

Yes I think they should build the new estate beside the Grange because it will help people in the future to be able to get better houses.

I appreciate that there is a requirement for additional housing stock in Letchworth as without it the population will decline as people move out of the area to find new homes. From the reports I see that the Foundation will uphold the principles of the Garden City master plan and consider the flora and fauna of our local environment. However, I am concerned about the demand the additional population would place on the water available to us. Additional commuting will result unless potential employers can be encouraged to move into the area and this would obviously impact on pollution in our area.

Monday 25/11/13

HYDROLOGY Mon 25 Nov

- 1) All housing “passivhaus” should incl water.
- 2) Water butts are useless (almost) either overflowing or dry – therefore perhaps collect surface/grey water more collectively (groups of houses/whole “estate” etc)
- 3) Maybe use reed/solid beds to part cleanse grey water for reuse on gardens/in toilets etc (use passivhaus/Freiburg principles throughout)
- 4) Use lie of the land to facilitate 3 above

- 5) Use either new or exist sewage works (close by) to aid both sewage and food waste (via collection or via sink macerator).

I feel that you should build 500 beautiful sustainable houses on the infill spaces you have identified. Build another small (?) Garden City elsewhere. We are special because we were the first one.

Yes the development does need to go ahead.

We would like 2 bedroom homes for older people who do not want flats.

I am totally opposed to any building on good arable land.

Tuesday 26/11/13

Delighted to see that the small areas eg Geo King and beside the railway near bridge/Works Road will be developed.

I hope that if the north of Grange is developed, it will be done in such a way that a mixed age, mixed income population is attracted.

Will NHH and Howard Cottage be given sites for social housing?

If large areas of similar housing are developed in one go, I am most worried that a "Wilbury estate" is created where we now have a huge number of elderly. I hope you will look at Kevin McCloud's Triangle development in Swindon with the small shared allotment and his other eco ideas.

Will there be opportunities for self-build projects?

Obvious concerns about schools/surgeries and distances – parents pay bus fare these days – the north of the Grange is a long way from Letchworth/Baldock Schools.

All in favour of new homes but not expensive overdeveloped houses that only make developers rich. Lots more council houses that don't get sold off for nothing. Even so-called affordable houses usually are anything but.

This appears to be an essential development for Letchworth. There seems to be enough green area around the site which will limit the intrusion of buildings.

Stick to your principles.

Avoid dense housing.

Consider more sheltered housing.

Cater for commuter parking (car park on Gates/Ford site may encourage use of shops)

Don't put housing on GW King site – encourage industry/employment.

There is no convincing argument for taking over Greenfield areas to build houses here for people who will have to commute to London and less to Cambridge for employment – assuming they are employable.

I have a question – how much has this exercise cost and how much has the whole consultation cost?

My concerns...young people! Having worked with young people for 13 years now and there is a NEED for young people to engage in positive activities. Youth Connexions has more or less fallen. Something in Letchworth town easily accessible is needed. If you would like to discuss please contact me. I would love to help.

I am opposed to the proposed construction of a further 1,000 homes on the Grange Estate for the following reasons:

- 1) The increase on the Estate will be approximately 3,000 persons and a similar number of cars. A popular route between GE and the Town Centre for vehicles and pedestrians is via Cowslip Hill. Daily this road is effectively a single track road due to commuter parking. An increase in car numbers using this road will cause major congestion and an increase in “road rage” incidents.
- 2) Similarly an increase in night-time pedestrians will result in some increase in incidents of vandalism.
- 3) There is no mention as to whether electricity, water and sewage can cope with an increased population (Biggleswade is near the limit of its electricity supply).

### Wednesday 28/11/13

Need houses for youngons of the town.

Go green and heat Letchworth like Ebenezer Howard was going to do. 1 heat source biomass pellets.

3 x cheaper than gas. Austria 117 houses run off 3 boilers.

Herzes German BIAD

RHI Government pay back for town generation for next 20 years. All the thing and good you could do for the town with the payback.

As a member of one of the pioneer families I appreciate the need to move with the times but I am concerned about the following in respect of new development:

- 1) Building on the green belt
- 2) Increasing population above E Howard’s optimal 32,000 level
- 3) Transport problems
- 4) Increased car parking in the town
- 5) Where would the newcomers shop

Please do not increase the size of the town willy nilly.

More homes are needed in the country. We should not say NIMBY. The socio economic study suggest that Letchworth would benefit from an increase in population. The development should ensure that the principles of Letchworth Garden City are adhered to. Siting of amenities and school should minimise the need for use of cars.

Cannot deny we do require more feasible housing for residents in LGC. But will the main be to go through private construction developers or sustained, affordable accommodation with current housing associations?

The price of new housing is unaffordable to young families today.

My other fears revolve around standards for environment, wildlife, education, as I feel there is enough pressure on local schools already.

With another 1,000 dwellings and 2,000 more vehicles on our already overloaded population proposed I hope that more provision will be made for improved public transport and services to be considered; together with more off road and green spaces for public use and not for parking only.

I would like to see as many as possible of new homes to be built on brown field sites and spread the development rather than a huge take-over of family land in one place, which has an enormous impact on one area. Let us spread the load.

I personally feel that you shouldn't build on the fields. Maybe choose the field with the less wildlife and build some homes on there but only on a little bit of field. THINK ABOUT THE WILDLIFE! Feed the population.

I think that we need more homes for people to feed the growing population.  
But I don't think that you should build on top of fields and places where people walk their dogs and wildlife lives!

I think it is a bad idea and a good idea because there is already a lot of conflict through estates but a good idea to have more homes.

I think it's a bad idea because people walk their dogs there and kids can play there.

Cheap houses should built one bedroom flats for young people.

I don't mind if they build because it can't effect to much, but the more you build less it's going to stay a garden city.

I think it's a good idea to have more houses.

I am against building on the field – its greenery! I think you'd be ruining a great chance to build up nature – you could have a nature reservation anything to do with nature. Don't build!

I think it's a VERY BAD IDEA TO BUILD ON THE FIELDS.

I walk my dogs on there because (like many people) it's the only safe place you can take your dogs off of their leads.

They need walks or they'll get morbidly obese!

I regret use of green belt land, but realise it has to be done. I do, however, feel that the Grange site is rather far out of town. The elderly will find it difficult to get into the town. A



proposal that bus services will be improved has to be seen to be believed, owing to the recent changes by Arriva, which have not helped Norton Community. Can they be relied on? The re-routing of the greenway and retention of sufficient green belt left to provide the Garden City ethos must be seriously considered.

Thursday 29/11/13

I do not agree to any further building of any more homes in Stotfold and Letchworth. Because of the existing roads in Stotfold are not capable of taking any more traffic in or out of Norton Road and Hospital Road.

Not too devastating providing the Greenway is protected, the mix of housing should be privately owned as well as providing social housing. Self-build good idea.  
Good news that the allotments are safe.  
The only concern is schools, doctors etc.

Make use of brownfield sites first before Greenfield sites and damaging wildlife.

My views are there is numerous factors to consider and I have looked at them carefully. A building decision shouldn't be taken lightly as well you know.  
There are predicted advantages and disadvantages to the suggested new build and because of the information given I don't believe it is a risk the Letchworth Garden City should take. Once built you cannot put back to the environment as a whole.  
PLEASE I ASK A BETTER SOLUTION. YOU HAVE OUR FUTURE IN YOUR HANDS. NOT JUST NOW BUT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.  
Where will Green belt be if it keeps being used!!!

I appreciate that more houses are needed and they have to go somewhere, and while I hate to see the loss of countryside, I am pleased that brownfield sites are being considered as well.

The 'Greenway' would need to be protected or moved? Could more trees be planted to offset loss – could some hedgerows be retained? We need assurance that this development would meet our housing needs until 2031 and that we would not then be asked to find room for more once and if we had agreed. The character of the new development should reflect the character of the original garden city with sympathetic architecture and tree planting.

As a resident on Norton Road, I have grave concerns. All the proposals will result in a significant increase of traffic on Norton Road and Green Lane. The road is already extremely busy especially during rush hour and school times. I have witnessed a large number of accidents on the Norton Road, Green Lane junction including accidents where cars have overturned and ambulances have been called. In addition, it is already difficult to cross these roads. I have a daughter who needs to cross both roads. This is already difficult as there is no crossing point on Norton Road and the lollypop man is only there at particular times on Green Lane. Extra housing means extra pedestrians trying to cross these roads. There are also a large number of walkers and dog walkers trying to cross these roads. I am also concerned for the residents of Cashio Lane and Croft Road. Increased housing will change the character of these roads and to against the principles to the Garden City.

We do need the extra housing. The site north of Grange Estate is a good choice.

I would be concerned to have more access roads into the new development. Suggest we need three. Surrounding roads need increased capacity. Please make sure you preserve the Greenway.

A sound proposal as long as care is taken to preserve LGC 'principles' and 'affordable' housing is included. However, a 10 year hold on any further allocation of land should be introduced.

It is obvious that we need more affordable housing in general.

#### Objections

- 1) Why on green belt?
- 2) Why so many houses?

Smaller pockets of development would be more desirable. Also, why not use brown field site, especially around the industrial area.

Brown sites must be used for housing first. Farm land must be left always to be used to feed us all, so putting houses on the Grange is a NO.

What are the benefits to the existing residences?

Will there be improvements to the infrastructure/amenities in the surrounding area?

What public transport proposals will be implemented?

What was the outcome of the previous consultation and other proposed sites in Letchworth.

Visibility of the income generated from the sale of land. Who will decide and which priorities will be addressed.

What will be the effect to housing prices in the existing estate?

To build on the brownfield sites where you have sewage and electricity – gas already. Don't encroach on Ebenezer's Green belt and ruin the lives of people on the outskirts of the Grange estate. I'd be delighted to see the Geo King site used for housing and not left as the eyesore it currently is with its overgrown brambles and trees encroaching onto the backs of our gardens!

Not happy about losing agricultural land but as an extension to the Grange Estate it makes sense. Would increase the traffic density of existing roads some of which are hard pressed.

On balance I oppose the development north of the Grange on the following grounds:

1. Traffic. The Cottee Transport report addresses the problems of traffic flow in the Grange but not elsewhere in Letchworth in roads such as Norton Road, Wilbury Road, Bedford Road, Cowslip Hill and Wilbury Hills Road where there are already problem areas. Improved bus services (assuming this happened) would not solve the problems.
2. Loss of green belt land – seems contrary to Garden City principles.
3. Loss of wildlife habitat exacerbated by proposed link road to Stotfold Road.
4. Doubts as to whether the development would generate the jobs envisaged in the Lichfield & Co Report. This report also envisages migration from the town if the development does not take place. It does not state where to – but presumably outside North Herts – as it states house prices are less in Letchworth than elsewhere in North Herts. Brown field sites should be used.

In favour.

Try to get housing mix that modifies the current high % of social housing in LGC.

Good cycle routes or/and regular shuttle bus to town.  
Improve junction at Eastholm to slow traffic and reduce noise.  
Use development to show off Garden City principles in a modern setting.  
Improve cycle access across railway.

The country needs many new houses and we have to provide our share.  
This scheme seems pretty well thought out and I feel supportive of it.

Traffic along Gernon Road is already a problem- volume increasing and speed limit often exceeded. A big problem for me for access. Reversing with the above, in addition to big vehicles stopping opposite my house for Iceland and Argos.  
Activities and youth clubs needed for more young people. Congregations at weekends already worrying – scooters and skateboards on pavements and shopping area. This will inevitably increase – shops needed for Estates.

We live in Norton Road Stotfold and have done for 55 yrs the traffic is now horrendous, because extra traffic from bypass. Have police been consulted about the amount of accidents on Norton Road. We who live there have to put up with enough traffic now, and we have trouble getting out of our drive not. Do the powers that be not care about the impact this will have on people's lives. We have had enough already.  
Brown field sites should be used first.

I do not feel that the land north of the Grange Estate should be built upon – we will spread and meet the next villages. There is not enough structures in place to deal with the extra traffic and people that will be generated.

There is now much brownfield land in Letchworth GARDEN CITY left empty that could be built upon why use virgin fields??

The whole principle of a garden city is being ignored. The houses being built cannot sustain a family and their needs – gardens too small. VERY little social housing.

LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY used to be a unique place to live – we are not a generic town.

More people does not necessarily equal more facilities!!

A lifelong Letchworth GARDEN CITY resident.

Friday 30/11/13

Whilst fully understanding the need for more housing both nationally and locally, LGC has a unique set of values and principles that were established by E Howard over a century ago. One of the over-riding principles regards open green spaces and a 'surrounding belt of lane'. Although this would just about be maintained, the whole character and 'feeling' of LGC would be compromised by this development. I have lived in LGC my whole life and despite travelling around the world, I relish returning 'home'. I see a report stating my GP capacity is sufficient to cope... I already struggle to get an appointment!!! I hope this doesn't sound like 'nimbyism', I am just worried 'my' town will be altered for the worse....forever.

I am not against development in principle. In fact I believe that there should be a presumption in favour of development unless there are serious objections (defining serious objections is difficult!)

This development area does raise questions for me on the grounds that there could be more suitable sites nearer the town centre where people could walk to the station.

One hopes that the site has not been chosen because it is the other side of the Grange Estate with its associated social housing. Estate agents have often called the area south of Letchworth as "THE FAVOURED SOUTH SIDE OF THE TOWN". Could it be that such views have strewed the decision to develop in the north of the town.

I would hope that if the development went ahead serious consideration and encouragement would be given to self build community groups and keep faith with the principles of the community benefitting from the benefits of the development. Design competitions like the cheap cottages exhibition should be instigated to ensure good quality design.

I am totally opposed to any houses being built on green belt land, brown field sites only for development. The size of this development of 1000 plus houses would probably mean at least 3000 car possibly travelling through the Grange Estate. The destruction of the environment and wildlife would be a major loss.

Of all the land the Heritage own, why such a large chunk in one area so far from the A1 motorway.

Much better to carry on farming existing land for food. Of all these possible houses, how many would be social housing for local people and how many private properties would be for people outside the area.

This area has been designated one the driest in the country, what would happen in a drought.

The sewage system struggles as it is. The proposed expansion of surrounding towns and villages would result in greatly reduced "green" areas.

I feel that if the Heritage Foundation releases the land for development then Ebenezer Howard's legacy for the World's First Garden City would be destroyed for ever.

A recent experience on the Grange at a possible access point to this development (Western Way/Northfields), a sewage drain popped its lid and the field was flooded with raw sewage which almost reached the Pix Brook river.

Are there enough schools for new families, over recent years schools have been closed to build houses on.

Whatever decision is finally decided on, it should be done by the majority backing of the local population and local relevant organisations, not be Government threatening to impose their will, or possible compulsory purchasing or either land or homes.

Maps misleading – no boundary between Herts and Beds.

The Green belt land has not been marked - greenbelt is in Herts only and not in Beds. It looks like an empty space – but there is a real danger that Beds will allow building on the land – urban sprawl.

No awareness of historic relevance of Letchworth – see how you describe Ebenezer Howar in your panel 'shorthand typist + social reformer....(p4)

LGC was a unique concept and should retain its current character. The impact on Letchworth of an additional 1500 dwellings will be greater than the reports suggest particularly with regard to traffic, GPs and schools. The prospect of increased traffic through Norton past St Nicholas School and Bickerdykes is of concern for road safety reasons. GPs dispute the assertion that there is spare capacity – the Nevells Road surgeries are at capacity or close to it in facilities that do not permit expansion.

Is the Da Vinci school really going to attract or be able to cater for sufficient students to enable the secondary schools to cope with the increase in numbers.

Peak hour exiting from LGC are already heavily congested particularly Letchworth Gate. large increase in population will make this worse. Use Brownfield sites only.

Farm land needs protecting, this is Green Belt land as the original plans for the 1<sup>st</sup> Garden City. Concerns about traffic from Grange Road, Orchard Way and Eastern Way. Buses are unable to travel due to parking. Will bungalows be provided in new build and who will social housing be allocated to, local people or from London area or other areas. Senior schools need to be considered. Local public transport, doctors, hospitals etc. Water supply and flooding is a concern also, train and station need improvement.

I do not wish to join together with Stotfold, and build across the whole of the area in the future. Car parking in Letchworth is in short supply.

Brown sites are available for use. Public transport is a serious problem from Norton area to town.

I am all in favour of building on the brownfield sites but totally opposed to the expansion of the Grange Estate for a number of reasons, ie:

Insufficient jobs in Letchworth

No additional parking planned for commuters

Cottee report suggest 55% traffic down Cowslip Hill and Norton Way North, however Cowlip Hill is impossible to get down since it's used as a commuter car park.

There's no additional capacity.

Improving the Cowslip Hill/Wilbury Road junction will only serve to make matters worse.

Both my wife and I feel the site is not ideal for housing.

- Transport issues – parking/commuters/rail parking
- Access roads are extremely poor at present with little scope for improvement
- Facilities for recreation ground do not support the present use
- Bus services are poor and we doubt that bus services could be improved as there is a general lack of interest from bus companies.
- Cycling provision is a good idea however we doubt this would be a great 'hit' with residents for commercial/work reasons. Leisure possibly.
- There is not sufficient work opportunities in the Garden City to accommodate the increase in numbers.
- Protect the Greenbelt that already exists.

I have 6 grandchildren currently attending the C of E primary school in Norton. The traffic is dangerous going past the school at 08.00 – 9.00 and 3.00 – 3.30. The road going past the school can barely cope now, how is it going to cope if these dreadful developments go ahead. The lollypop lady was actually knocked down this year when stopping traffic for the children to cross the road. This development certainly cannot come to the area near Norton and Letchworth – the whole concept of Letchworth GC is for a green area. Put it somewhere else now near our beautiful town and surrounding area!!!

New homes should not be built near the Greenway or Green belt site. There are plenty of buildings standing idle ie George King and others in Blackhorse Road. If the new traffic go down Cowslip Hill, it wouldn't cope. The traffic is too much now. Static cars parked all down Cowslip Hill make matters really dangerous.

Think of the local people of Letchworth, Letchworth should be Letchworth not build any more houses, we haven't got the roads etc to cope with any more people and homes. Please think again.

Wilbury Road is also very dangerous.

What will happen to our lovely 'greenway walk'. We regularly walk with our grandchildren round it and find it so beautiful and such an asset. What would happen to it. Don't you think the Heritage Foundation would go down considerably if they gave way to building of such a development. I think a lot of people would take a down view of them if they gave way to such proposals. Not to mention all the wildlife that would be eliminated. Please keep the Greenway as it is.

I hope that the infrastructure of the town and capacity with services such as Doctors etc. will be taken into account when new homes are considered. Also traffic associated issues like parking. It will be a shame to see more farming land disappearing under bricks and mortar.

- 1) Ensure health and education services (additional) included in planning as essential inclusion – also supermarket.
- 2) Suggest all new development is affordable housing (will also attract workers from London)
- 3) Set up a scheme to support new buyers and deposits
- 4) Cheaper multi storey car park at station
- 5) Make town smaller by bringing in shops from Station Road/end of Leys Avenue into empty shops to make a smaller hub of shopping area therefore no empty premises – then make Station Road and Leys Avenue into more housing areas to let
- 6) Ensure all new housing development includes porous parking areas in front - re drainage/prevention of flooding.

Too much extra traffic through Norton already dangerous road.

No secondary school.

Too far away from town centre and station.

Our green belt should be protected!

It will be too near to Stotfold.

All new housing is north of town. Grange is large enough.

Letchworth has a unique heritage. There are two large areas of the town which do not share this and they are the Jackman's and Grange Estates. It would be a terrible shame if the new houses were not under the care and management of the Heritage Foundation on an ongoing basis. My key concerns are that the infrastructure and amenities in the town can be developed to support the additional population.

I would like to see the views of the police as an advantage of living in an ageing population may be lower crime rates and I would be concerned if this will change as a result of this housing growth.

Currently station parking is already an issue with vehicles parking all the way down Cowslip Hill so I think the station parking shortfall will need to be considered as an issue on its own merit.

Please leave the Green belt alone.

I thought and believed this was the Letchworth bible.

I will be sad to lost the fields on the grange site, as I often walk there with my dogs and children.

It is so nice having the countryside on our doorstep without having to pay to get there, as I'm on a low income so can't afford public transport and definitely not a car.

I am concerned about the extra pressure on the wildlife habitat.

I am concerned about the extra pressure on schools and doctors surgeries, more traffic that will be generated.

I understand that we need more housing, but it is such a lot of green space to lose.

The development should not happen unless the following are resolved to the benefit of the environment:

- 1) Water supply – where from and ecological implications of that?
- 2) Energy supply – where from and ecological implications of that?
- 3) Food supply – where from and ecological implications of that?
- 4) Building materials supply – where from and ecological implications of that?
- 5) What is the sustainable level of population for the area (North Herts) ie with no overall damage to the environment here or elsewhere eg. Medieval population level
- 6) Where are the next 1000 houses to be built after these?
- 7) All housing should be social housing
- 8) All existing ecological features be retained eg Hedges, trees
- 9) Building houses without jobs creates unemployment
- 10) The development must contribute to reducing not increasing the carbon footprint of the area
- 11) The development must assume much high level of energy cost than present including reducing the use of cars
- 12) If necessary, build a new Garden City between Baldock and Royston rather than expanding existing towns.

This is a garden city and to build 1000 houses on greenbelt land should not be allowed and we hope the Heritage will protect it for the people of Letchworth.

What Letchworth needs is:

- 1) Jobs – very few at present
- 2) Things for people to do in Letchworth

Only then does it need more housing on the scale proposed at Grange.

Create some jobs and eg replace the Plinston Hall and just develop some brownfield sites in the centre (eg The Wynd)

Building on the scale in Grange will do nothing for Letchworth except provide jobs for people from outside the area and make money for the Heritage Foundation by selling off the green land it is supposed to protect “the surrounding belt of countryside”.

Concerned about:-

- Transport – road infrastructure – Options 1,2 + 3 would all feed additional traffic through the junction with Icknield Way/Norton Way North and cause congestion.  
Linked to-
- Secondary schools are on the other side of town, putting additional strain on this junction

- One of the joys of Letchworth was that traffic passed by on south side and town centre was rarely congested. This has changed in the last 10 years and these proposals will exacerbate the problem.

Concerned that Howard's original concept of 33,000 homes will be ignored.  
Already traffic flow problems through Letchworth town centre since arrival of Morrisons.  
Erosion of fewer and fewer green spaces.

1000 new homes mean a minimum 1500 new cars. Roads are already over parked and difficult to negotiate with dangerous blind access at junctions.  
To add this development – in the Green belt at that – will see the end of the Garden City principle. To keep the traffic flowing the grass verges (once our holy cows!) probably need to go to accommodate the amount of on street parking.  
To take agricultural land when we need to be more self sufficient in food production, add 50% more woodland (The Woodland Trust) provide more wetlands to reserve for birds (RSPB) etc etc etc, is undesirable. Letchworth has seen massive development since the war. The Grange, Jackmans, Lordship and Manor Farm estates developments have increased Letchworth population well beyond its original planned size. There are few green spaces within the town and we have to drive further and further to enjoy a walk.  
The relentless building and population increase in the South East needs to be slowed, and encouraged further north.  
If the Heritage Foundation feels a need to do something, I'd prefer the land to be used to provide the first of several Park and Ride sites around the town. This might help to get the cars off the town streets and reduce the slum look the town generally has.

Garden Cities (a lot out the FIRST) intended to have max 30k population. We are already over that. If we expand, LGCHF should stop 'boasting' about its status world-wide and promote itself as the next Stevenage.  
Our green living LUNG and the round Letchworth Greenway really matters to lots of people. Please leave it alone. Cascade identify a number of ecological implications. I am deeply unconvinced that the actions proposed will meet these challenges.  
I am profoundly AGAINST this expansion.  
We would like to see the report presented to LGCHF in December on which their decision is based. Very important that this is PUBLIC!!

In some respects this would seem to be a good site option.  
But there are a lot of things that need sorting esp traffic and its implications to the present housing on the Grange and surroundings. Also school, health centres and similar facilities.

Care needs to be taken with design which will give the area a special character of its own. An emphasis on neighbourliness. Local shops in walking distance and school. All houses whether social housing or not of equal status. It is important to look ahead at the needs of older people in families with provision for houses which allow for the older generation and their children to interact and look after each other.  
If housing is provided for single people there needs to be provision for socialising. Communal building and areas where people can connect.



I agree that new housing should be built beyond The Grange. This should be mostly affordable housing and aimed at young couples and families. This is a long distance from the town so good bus links, fast, regular and reliable, are essential. We need these families to use the town facilities. Our town needs to prosper. An extra population will put pressure on parking near the station, this needs to be addressed. The access roads to the East and West of the development are essential. Good luck!

The main concern is ACCESS ROADS to the large proposed development on the Grange. Southfields is already a "speedway" and because Wilbury Road and Northfields have speed bumps, Southfields will be the preferred access. Therefore, this proposal MUST have other access roads as Southfields cannot cope with more speeding traffic.

My most concern is the extra traffic and access for a 1000 homes we must be talking of 1500+ vehicles. I live in Northfields and would expect to be affected by access to the new site. I would like to see plans for the access points. Even if you have access along the Stotfold Road I cannot see people using this if people are heading west.

- The existing congestion will be made worse, even with the introduction of any of the propose access roads. Traffic pollution will increase for existing residents in Western Way and noise pollution will also increase, especially with the introduction of a new school, not to mention noise generated during the construction process.
- The existing greenway provides a good habitat for wildlife, if this is eroded further by the inclusion of more construction and roads, the ecology nature needs a rural corridor to survive, these plans do not allow for this!
- A social housing provision provides the added concern for existing residents ie security implications for existing residents – properties/gardens and outbuildings – increase
- Is potential crime, theft? Already had theft from garden!!

I can understand the argument for more housing created by the ageing population and the need to regenerate the town centre via the commercial influence of another 1500 homes. I am encouraged to see that the Heritage Foundation would be involved in the planning, design and ongoing management of these new homes.

The report tells us that the deprived areas in Letchworth are in the large injections of council built property.

We must keep our eye on the town infrastructure typically station parking which extends into residential areas currently.

- 1) Generally LGC is the best place in the UK to come home to. But not wishing to be greedy, I have doubts about the wisdom of extending housing (no matter how well designed) into what Sir Ebenezer defined as an integral part of the Garden City; namely the agricultural belt. Perhaps it's too late to say this now, since it's half a century since Borg-Warner caused Letchworth and Baldock to rush into each other's arms, and the damage was confirmed and extended by Jubilee Road and all those bits: very nicely made, all of them, but a contravention of the definition of the Garden City.

- 2) In this excellent exhibition, you have stressed the proper need for pedestrian and cycle routes not clashing. It's a bit late to say that for Letchworth, though Milton Keynes has done it much better.
  - 3) Our Greenway walk is brilliant, but building out beyond it will not really help its aims and development up to now.
  - 4) Apologies for the wobbly writing.
- Concerned about building on greenfield site and its impact on the "Greenway". Also, where are you going to educate the children from 1000 new homes?
  - Particular problem with secondary age children when our only 2 schools are bursting at the seams.
  - Where is access going to be? The Grange roads are very narrow.
  - Please use the brownfield sites which would have less impact on both roads and education.
  - How many empty properties, both residential and commercial, are there in Letchworth which could be utilised first?
  - Would any of the proposed housing be available for first time buyers who at the moment cannot possibly buy in Letchworth.
  - Any building on greenbelt will mean that our town will begin to merge with the surrounding towns/villages. Where will our identity go then?
- 1) The use of school playing fields in theft of opportunity for future generations
  - 2) Looking at the Fairfield development the parking and traffic concerns have not been met.
  - 3) The use of green belt is wrong when there is derelict brown field land available.

We have only just moved house this year to a property on the North of the Grange Estate and a major reason for this particular house was its closeness to the open countryside for walks for ourselves and our dogs. We appreciate we don't have any rights to having open countryside but this was one of the major reasons for moving to this particular location. I agree we need more housing for young people but do not believe that these houses will be any cheaper or affordable. Most will be sold for the same inflated prices to people outside of Letchworth who can afford them. I know there will be some earmarked for social housing but don't feel it would be enough. It has been said that there will be still a green belt (albeit only 1 field depth!) but how long will it be before these fields will also be consulted upon for building more houses. All brown field sites must be built on first before any green belt get considered for housing.

- I don't believe, that at current house prices, new build housing for outright purchase will benefit the local community.
- The loss of countryside close to our home will have a negative impact on our quality of life.
- The loss of further greenbelt countryside is contrary to the aims and principles of Mr Howard.

Stop new homes being on green belt farmland as the land has never been built on.

The plan for expansion of the Grange estate looks good. Improvements to road access and local facilities will need to be made.


Access to town, and especially station, will create traffic chaos in existing roads around station. Additional car parking would be essential.

The expansion should only be on BROWNFIELD sites within Letchworth not on GREENFIELD sites to prevent sprawling.

The development itself seems excellent BUT the location is wrong. The green belt already have narrow will be very much reduced with great loss of wildlife. The birds population in Letchworth has considerably eliminated in the 40+ years I have lived here.

So I would say NO to this project. Letchworth is in danger of being practically joined to its neighbours.

## Appendix 2: On Line Market Research Report



**Should more homes be  
built in Letchworth?**

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**A community wide  
consultation**



## Background

To coincide with the timing of the exhibition '**Should more homes be built in Letchworth Garden City?**', Audiencenet conducted a community wide consultation amongst a representative sample of all Letchworth residents above the age of 15 years.

The consultation involved both quantitative and qualitative methodologies:-



**Quantitatively:** 309 respondents, drawn from the '**Connect Letchworth**' resident's panel, completed an online questionnaire containing a mixture of pre-coded and open-ended questions.



**Qualitatively:** 40 respondents, from across the five wards of Letchworth, took part in a week-long, interactive online community, with tasks and research topics moderated by experienced qualitative researchers.



## Quantitative Research: general views on new housing



Over **two-thirds** of the adult population of Letchworth are **generally supportive** of the idea of additional housing in Letchworth.



The majority of residents of the Grange (58%) lent their support to the development of additional housing in Letchworth, per se.



Almost three-quarters (73%) of Letchworth residents believe that it is right that Letchworth adds its share of new housing stock to the North Herts quota.



Half (51%) of the adult population would support the development of industrial land in preference to increasing housing density (10%) or developing farm land (3%). 36% supported the idea of a balance of all three options.



## Quantitative Indications: the site north of the Grange Estate



Whilst nearly two-thirds of the community agreed that it's important to “*preserve **Green Belt** land at all costs*”, over half agreed with the statement that:

*“It is important to the future of Letchworth that the town grows and expands with the provision of **more housing**”*



Opinion **for** and **against** developing the site north of the Grange Estate was fairly evenly balanced with a small majority (54%) in favour, against 46% opposed.

Amongst those living in the Grange ward, 58% were against the idea and 42% were in support.



## Quantitative Indications: the site north of the Grange Estate



Key concerns expressed by residents in relation to the possible development were the potential impact on local...



Schools: 79%



Traffic: 78%



Environment: 77%



Healthcare: 76%



## Qualitative Research - overview



There was significant support for the overall concept of more affordable new housing in Letchworth but opinion was very much divided *for* and *against* the development of 1,000 new homes at the potential site north of the Grange Estate.



The greatest perceived advantage of new homes being built in Letchworth was that the increase in population size would be likely to stimulate the town centre and hence help to address their major point of criticism of the town.



## Qualitative Research: concerns / opposition



Opposition to the potential new development, north of the Grange Estate, centered around the location being on Green Belt land. Key concerns held that it would be to the detriment of the natural beauty of the area and that the roads around the development would become too congested.



Many also suggested that it would be better to spread new housing development over a variety of smaller sites as well as to look to locations like the brown field areas.

Concern was further expressed as to whether the current infrastructure in Letchworth would be able to support 1,000 new homes, especially in terms of: roads, schools and GP surgeries.



# Qualitative Research: principals

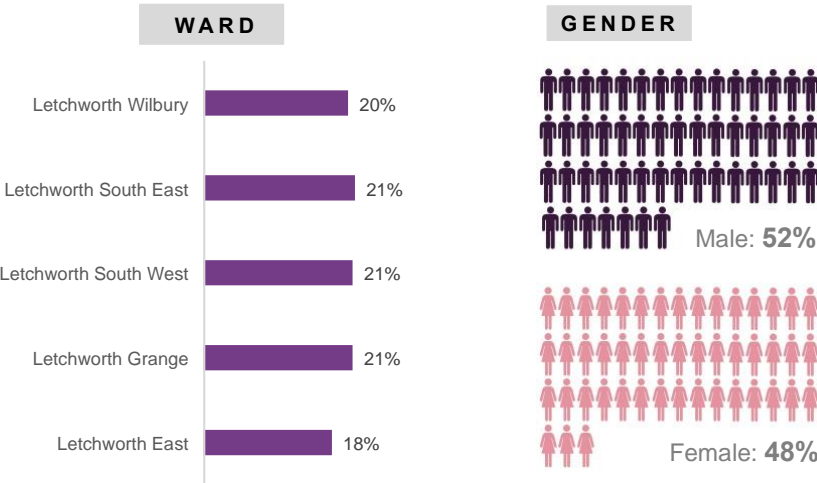


Strong support was evident for the continued ideals of the "Garden City". However, concern was expressed as to the ability for such a major development (i.e. 1,000 new homes) to maintain those ideals.

The intention to work within Garden City principles clearly did resonate well with residents and there was strong support for the Heritage Foundation re-investing derived revenues into the town, providing that funds went to the areas of most benefit to the community.



**Total sample for the quantitative online survey = 309 Letchworth residents**

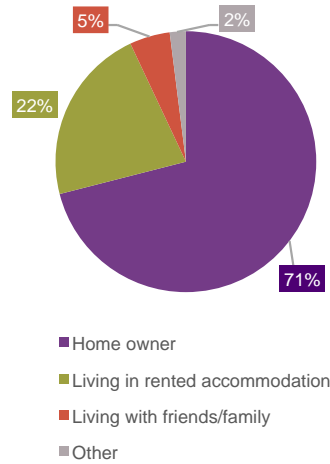
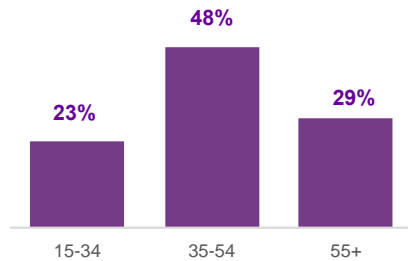






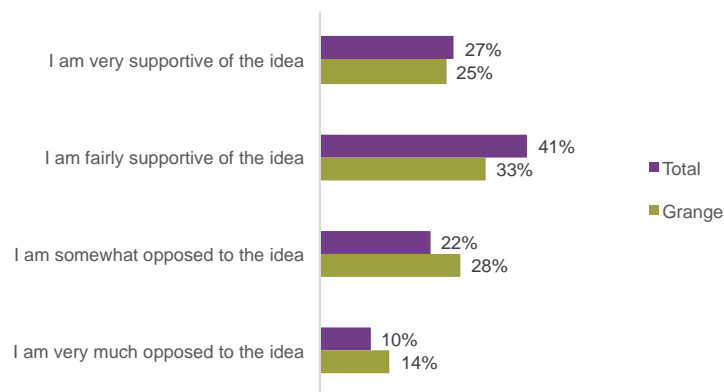
**Total sample for the quantitative online survey = 309 Letchworth residents**

#### AGE



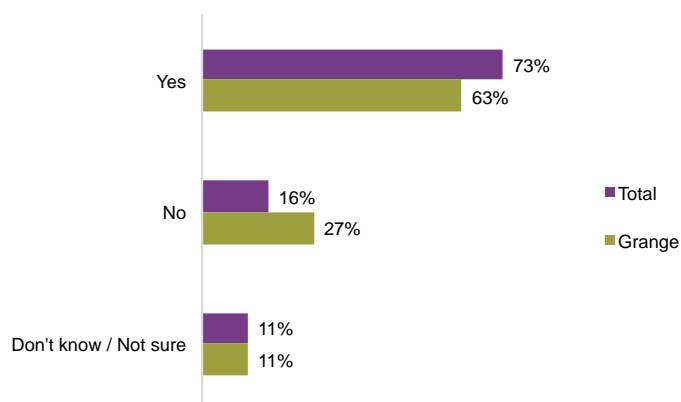
**Do you think that there is a need for additional housing in Letchworth?**

**68%** are supportive of the idea, **32%** are against the idea





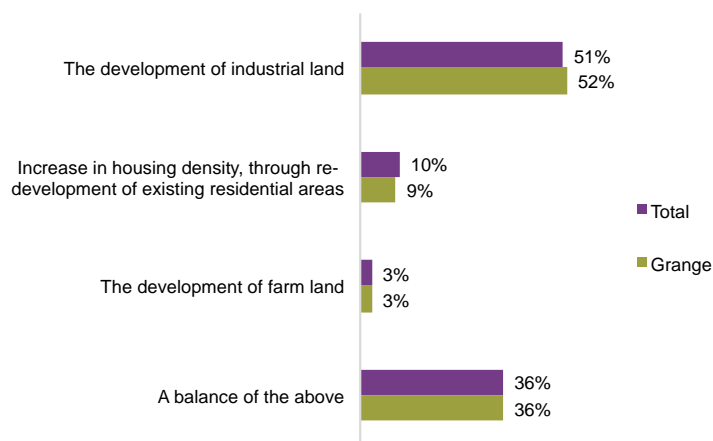
## Do you feel that it is right that Letchworth adds its share of new housing to the North Herts quota?



**FULL QUESTION:** North Herts District Council has estimated that the minimum requirement for new homes to be built in the region in the period up to 2031 is 10,700. This housing is to be built across: Hitchin, Royston, Letchworth and Baldock. Given that there is a legal requirement for new housing to be built in North Herts, do you feel that it is right that Letchworth adds its share of new housing to the North Herts quota?



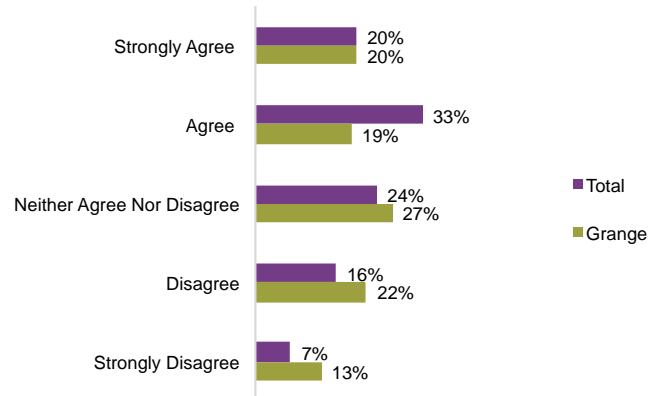
## If the decision is definitely taken to build new homes in Letchworth, which of the following 3 options would you personally support in preference?



**“It is important to the future of Letchworth that the town grows and expands with the provision of more housing”**



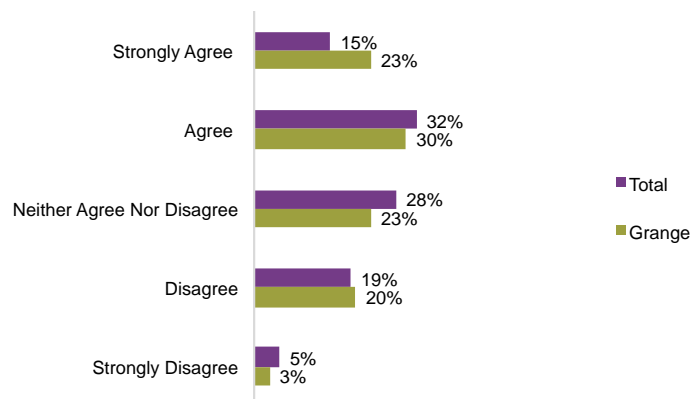
**53%** agree, **23%** disagree



**“It is important to maintain Letchworth as it is today”**



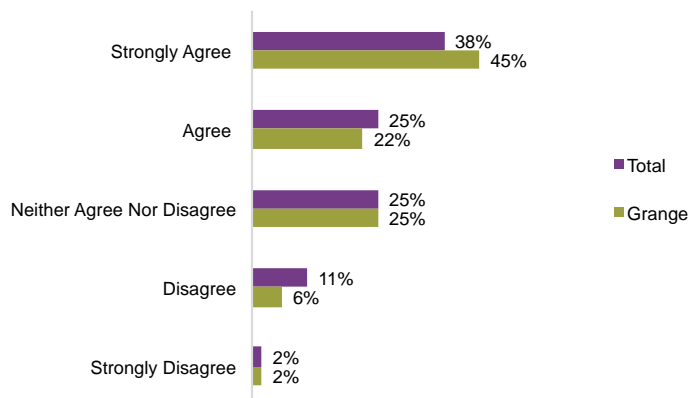
**47%** agree, **24%** disagree





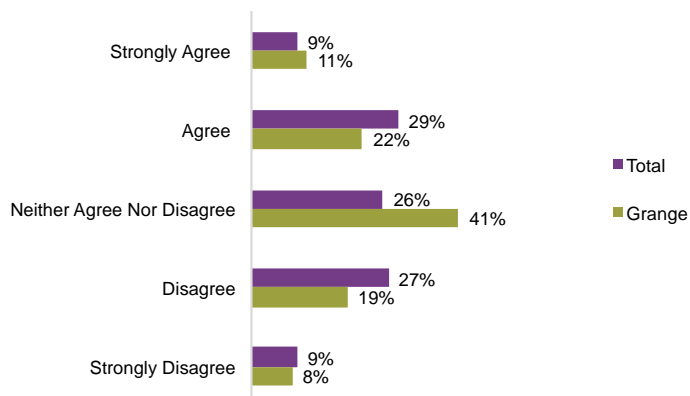
## “It is important to preserve Green Belt land at all costs”

**63%** agree, 13% disagree



## “Existing residential areas could be re-developed to increase the density of existing areas where possible”

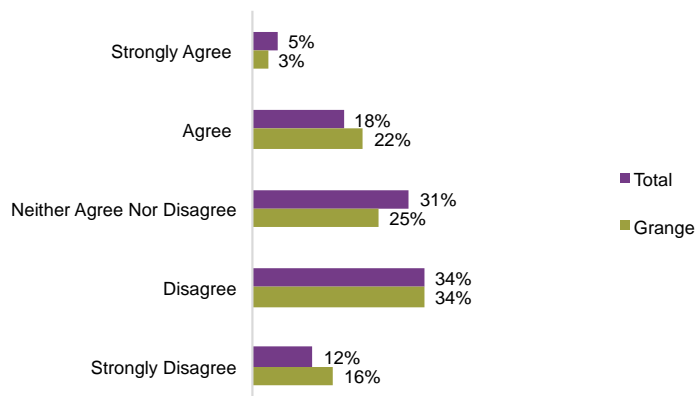
**38%** agree, **36%** disagree





## “Giving industrial land up to the development of new housing in Letchworth would threaten jobs”

23% agree, 46% disagree



## Online Community

The screenshot shows a web interface for a 'Community Consultation'. On the left, under 'My Activities', there are several discussion topics with their status and time left: '6.0 The Heritage Foundation's Approach To Creating New Homes' (A new forum, about 20h left), '7.0 Reinvesting The Income Into The Town' (Almost finished!, about 20h left), '4.0 Maintaining The Principles Of A Garden City' (Please tell us your thoughts), '5.0 Key Topics For Discussion' (Please read through each attachment and tell us your thoughts), '2.0 New Homes In Letchworth' (Please tell us your thoughts), '3.0 Proposed Site' (Please see the attached picture), and '1.0 Let's get to know each other' (Welcome to the online community). At the bottom is a 'Community Updates' section with a 'show everyone's' dropdown and a text input field 'What's on your mind?'. On the right, under 'Community Managers', there are profiles for Paul Dixon, Ben Fowler, and Karen Mulvey, each with a brief introduction and contact information. Below this is a 'Welcome to the Letchworth online community' message. The top of the page shows '52 Notifications', a user profile for 'Paul', and an 'Admin' link. A 'Help' button is visible on the far right.





## TASK 1: Life in Letchworth



?

- Most people praised Letchworth, particularly claiming that it was a good environment to raise children due to the green spaces and schools.



?

- Most of the respondents spoke about the appeal of the heritage of the town as well as the parks and green areas.



?

- Virtually all were disappointed with the closure of many retail stores in the area and felt that the town was in need of more high street stores and incentives such as rent decreases for smaller retailers.



?

- Many were impressed with the commuter links and transport connections to London but were disappointed with the bus links within Letchworth and felt these could be improved.



## TASK 1: Life in Letchworth

I like Letchworth because of the parks and common, has a real countryside feel. I think the shopping centre needs revamping.

**Female 30-44**

The most attractive thing about living in Letchworth is the green wide open space. it would be nice to improve the town, encouraging new business, not just food shops.

**Male 60 +**

Improvements, maybe more restaurants, we usually go to Hitchin for an evening out. Maybe wider choice of shops too, not much that interests me here besides the bookshops.

**Male 30-44**





## TASK 2: New Homes In Letchworth

- Many did feel there was a need for more affordable housing in Letchworth and the majority thought it was only fair for Letchworth to contribute to the North Herts quota
- Some were concerned, however, that the building of new houses in the area would not adhere to the 'Garden City' principles and would become an urban sprawl
- The greatest advantage to participants was that the increase in population would stimulate the town centre and help address the unprompted concerns they identified in Task 1.
- Most participants did not feel that Letchworth had the infrastructure to support 1,000 new homes, with the key areas of concern including:-
  - Lack of schools
  - Already congested roads becoming busier
  - Loss of green spaces



Audience.net



## TASK 2: New Homes In Letchworth

We seriously need more amenities and a better internal infrastructure...otherwise forget about building new houses! People just won't want to come and live here... as there is nothing here for them.

**Female 60+**

It's unfair to claim Letchworth has a separate status plainly down to its roots as a 'garden city'. There's a housing crisis in the UK and Letchworth needs to help too. It would bring more consumers into a dead town centre. This should hopefully bring more shops and revitalize the high street.

**Male 18-19 years**

It's difficult because the services and the local council seem at capacity already. The roads are like car parks when everyone is back from work and most of LGC's roads aren't particularly wide in the first place.

**Male 30-44 years**

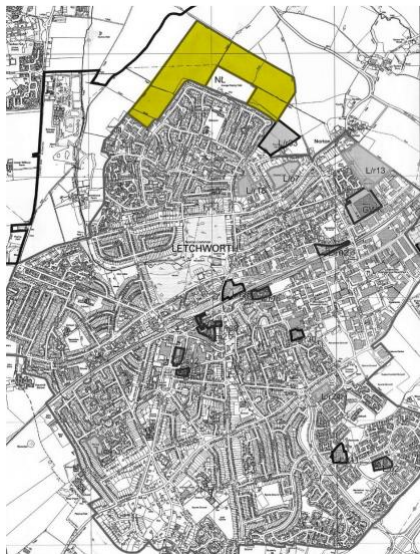
My reservations are about which areas you choose to inhabit or invade upon. Letchworth has beauty for many reasons, one namely so, is its rural setting. It's not overpopulated by concrete areas. The green is the beauty. Who wants to be in a garden city that is purely concrete?

**Female 30-44 years**



Audience.net

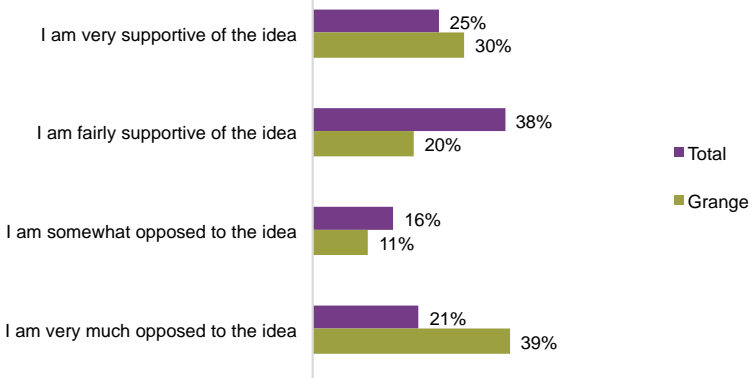
The 309 residents taking the online survey and the 40 residents in the online community were all shown this image indicating the site North of the Grange estate.



What do you think about the idea of building 1,000 new homes on this site?



**63%** were supportive of the idea, **37%** were opposed to the idea



**FULL QUESTION:** The Letchworth Heritage Foundation has identified a site north of the Grange Estate that could accommodate up to 1,000 homes. This site is highlighted in yellow in the map below. What do you think about the idea of building 1,000 new homes on this site?

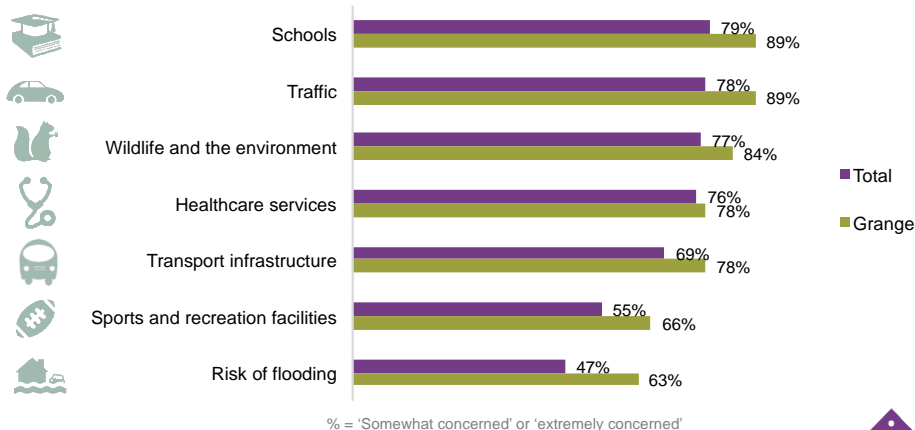




**If the building of 1,000 new homes in the site north of the Grange were to go ahead, how concerned, if at all, would you be about the potential impact on each of the following?**



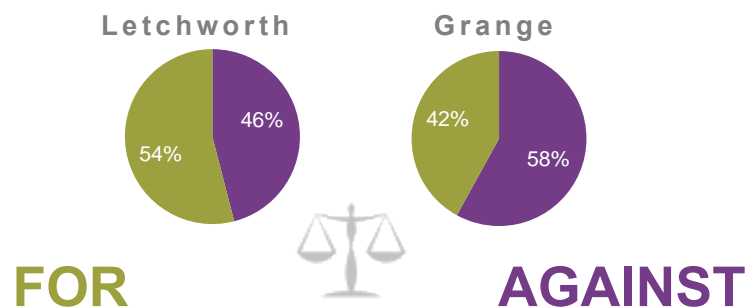
The top four concerns were the impact on schools, traffic, wildlife / environment and healthcare services



% = 'Somewhat concerned' or 'extremely concerned'



**Which side of the debate, summarised below, do you think has the stronger case?**



"Building more homes in the area north of the Grange will bring more jobs and investment to Letchworth, benefit young families who want to buy their first home and lead to improved local facilities through investment by the Council and Heritage Foundation."

"Building more homes in the area north of the Grange will put more pressure on local infrastructure, such as transport, reduce the green belt area around Letchworth and put too much pressure on existing local schools, healthcare, sports facilities etc."





### TASK 3: Proposed Site

- The biggest concern was that the development was being built on the Green Belt and would result in a loss of scenery and recreational activities.
- While many thought the site seemed logical as it is the largest free area in Letchworth, many maintained that smaller brown belt areas should be utilised i.e. Geo W King site
- For participants who were currently living within the Grange, the biggest concern was an increase in traffic in the area.



- Other general areas of concern included:-



- The absence of schools in the area, which provided a disconnect with those the proposition would be trying to attract
- The lack of proximity to public transport – a problem for commuters
- The likely decreased value of current houses in the area, due to the depletion of the Green Belt



### TASK 3: Proposed Site

This location seems ideal as it is far enough out of town to avoid a feeling of over crowding but close enough for the residents to have access to the town centre. Plus a new development could raise the profile of the Grange.

**Male 30-44**

I think it wrong to use a green space if a brown-field site is available but I do not have enough knowledge to know if such a suitable site exists.

**Female 60 +**



### TASK 3: Proposed Site



I believe that supporting services, road networks, car parking do not support an increase in population that would follow with building the proposed new housing. I am concerned that the planned location is not suitable adjacent to an existing established 1950's development i.e. the Grange Estate.

**Male 45-59**

This would build across some of the Greenway, which I would actively oppose. It seems a complete nonsense to add this much housing to a part of town not well-served by secondary schools (if Norton School hadn't been closed there wouldn't have been a problem).

**Female 30-44**

The proposed site at the north of the Grange Estate in my opinion is the wrong location and far too big. Access to the site would cause major traffic problems during the build and once the homes are occupied, Norton Road is already a very busy road, the Grange Estate with only 2 roads for access at times during the day can be a nightmare already. Any access road built on Norton Road or Stotfold Road will only increase traffic on already busy roads.

**Female 45-59**



### TASK 4: Maintaining The Principles Of A Garden City



- All the participants held the principles of the Garden City in high regard - most stated that they were proud to live in a city which stood by these ideals
- Most felt that the ideals remained both appealing and personally relevant, though some suspected that they may be somewhat too idealistic for the current times and way of living
  - This opinion was being driven by the rise in population and the need for new housing
  - Whilst they believed that the Garden City principles should remain a guiding light, there appeared to be an acceptance that occasional compromise may occur



## TASK 4: Maintaining The Principles Of A Garden City



- In terms of the potential new housing development not being in keeping with the stated Garden City principles, many spoke of:-
  - The destruction of the Green Way
  - Concerns that there would not be enough jobs for the new residents
  - The already failing local transport system
  - Congested roads , exacerbated by the new development ?

## TASK 4: Maintaining The Principles Of A Garden City



I don't believe that a development of this size can maintain the Garden City principles - there would need to be too many compromises and, in my experience, space and gardens are the first thing to go. Transport would be an insurmountable issue with a development of this size.

**Female 30-34**

The stated principals are in place to enforce and enrich what we currently already have. If they could be adhered to, would make for a wonderful future. Letchworth is a beautiful green area, but it's not adverse to development and new ventures. Yes as it upholds the originality of our town and what it stands for. It's also paves the way for future generations to be able to build upon a base and foundation that's strong.

**Male 35-44**

I feel that for the ideals of the town to remain unchanged, large projects are impossible. This is as to retain the availability of green spaces and of nearby accessible shopping areas, homes must remain close to the centre. However I more importantly feel that Letchworth was built as a place for those who did not have the access to green spaces and this transcends any other factor, even including their deterioration. Thus I think more housing in Letchworth is essential to retain the key ideals in reality of our town.

**Female 15-19**

## TASK 4: Maintaining The Principles Of A Garden City



Of course the projected development of 1,000 houses will contravene and compromise the principles but we should aim to ensure these are minimised. We should ensure the developers build to our principles with decent sized access roads, reasonably sized plots with gardens bigger than postage stamps, a good mix of housing stock and no building above four storeys high.

Male 60+

I value these principles and they are a large part of why I like Letchworth so much. I feel that they are still exactly what Letchworth should be about today. I do not think that building 1000 new homes is really in keeping with these principles though as I don't imagine that any new builds would be built with the design principles in mind as it would be too costly. I also feel that green space would be lost due to the build which is a fundamental part of The Garden City.

Female 15-29



## Task 5: Flood Risk



Most felt this report was irrelevant as there was no immediate flood risk in the area. They did, however, appreciate the report being made available.



## Task 5: People, Public Services & Jobs



- Many were unsure that Letchworth could support a larger population in terms of jobs, due to the lack of local businesses
- The schooling points also surprised them. It was argued that a new school needs to be built, with many remarking that some existing schools are still using porta-cabins
- The respondents were also surprised by the statement that there was currently an adequate amount of GP's in the area, with some stating that they were unable to get an appointment with their local GP

## Task 5: People, Public Services & Jobs



Both my family and friends who have relocated to the area have struggled to gain secondary school places in recent years - in several cases people have been offered places in Stevenage.

Female 30-44



I had not realised that population growth in Letchworth has been basically static since the 70s! It is interesting to see the statistics about possible growth scenarios, the +1500 homes scenario does seem to be the best option when they are set out like that as it seems to predict a lot more under 65s moving here, which I think Letchworth needs.

Female 15-29

I am surprised to read that the GP provision in the area is considered to be adequate. This contradicts my experience - I have it on first hand from the GP head of the surgery I attend that his practice is over capacity and are not accepting any more new patients. I would suggest that this situation must follow at other surgeries in the town. I certainly question these findings.

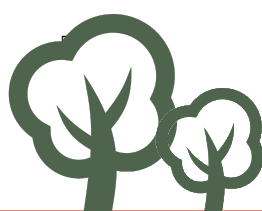
Male 60 +



## TASK 5: Wildlife & Environment



- Some were concerned over the loss of fauna and flora but others were philosophical that this was simply an inevitability with development
- Hedge groves should be replanted where possible
- Some questioned the 'desk study' stating that the statement that the impact could be reduced by changing farming methods elsewhere sounded unrealistic



## TASK 5: Wildlife & Environment



Wildlife and Environment - I am not in favour of the loss of such a large area of farmland. However, it would appear that mitigating action can be taken to solve many potential problems.

**Female 45-59**

Wild-life, is something that will adapt with the housing development. I understand it will be a disruption to the environment but things will redevelop as there is plenty of land around there

**Male 30-44**



## TASK 5: Roads & Traffic



- Increased traffic congestion, from an increasing population, was of significant concern
- Most liked the idea of the two new access roads on Norton Road and Stotfold Road but questioned whether it would be plausible
- Many were appreciative of improving the local public transport system
- Some felt parking needed to be improved, especially near the railway station
- Some spoke about better cycling facilities, fitting in with the Garden City ethos
- Others were concerned about the increase of air and noise pollution in the area
- It was further argued that the absence of schools in the development area would add to peak hour traffic



## TASK 5: Roads & Traffic



Traffic will be the major concern. I think opening a road up to the Stotfold road will really help. it would be useful to do now anyway! Having so much more traffic going through the other 2 exits on the grange will just cause chaos! Improved bus services and links will also be a great thing

**Male 30-44**

Roads and Traffic, the proposal for all these new road access is great. The roads connecting out of town are minimal so the addition of more is good. It will give job opportunity too. The walking resident also has to be considered. Introduction of more buses again great as long as the demands there. Again more job opportunity and less congestion possible as with a reliable transport service, people will leave the car behind. Or with road access will choose to walk.

**Female 30-44**

This answered the question of extra traffic for me. I like that consideration has been given to bus routes and to providing pedestrian and cycle paths - I think that Letchworth has better facilities for cyclists than most places and would like to so that continue as I think it fits well with the Garden City ethos.

**Female 15-29**





[www.audiencenet.co.uk](http://www.audiencenet.co.uk)



heritage  
foundation  
Letchworth Garden City



At this stage in the survey, residents with concerns were directed to the reports corresponding to their concerns via links to the Heritage Foundation website.

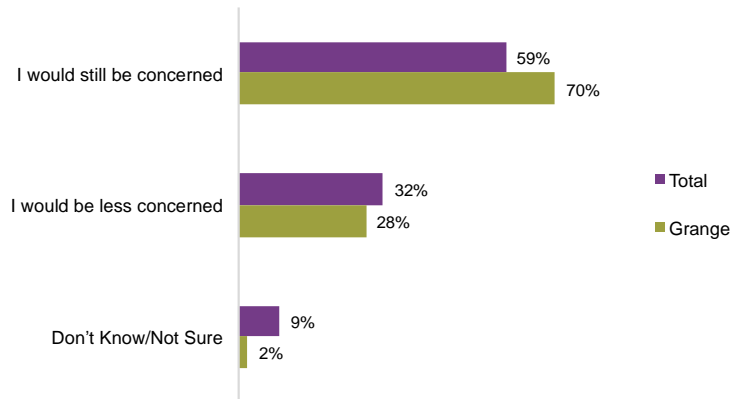


heritage  
foundation  
Letchworth Garden City

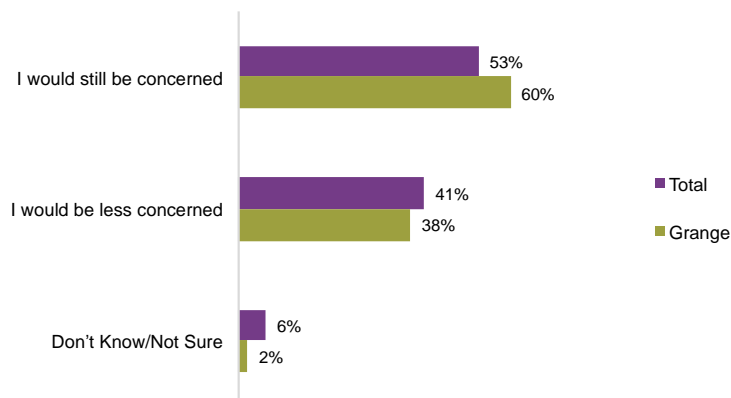
audiencenet



Having read about those plans to mitigate the potential impact on local traffic, what do you think now about the potential impact on local traffic?

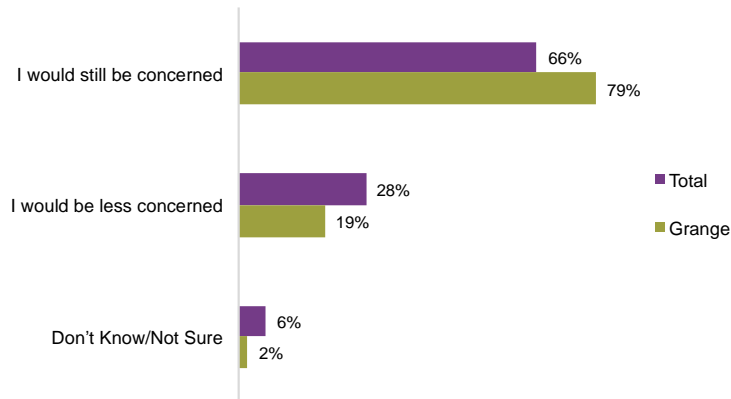


Having read about those plans to mitigate the potential impact on local transport infrastructure, what do you think now about the potential impact on local transport infrastructure?

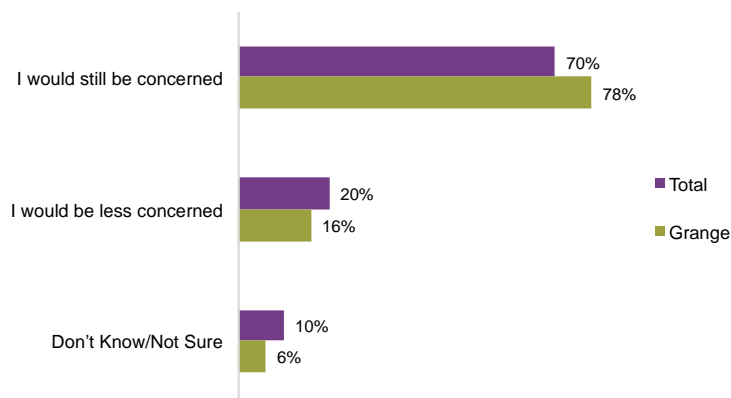




Having read about those plans to mitigate the potential impact on local schools, what do you think now about the potential impact on local schools?

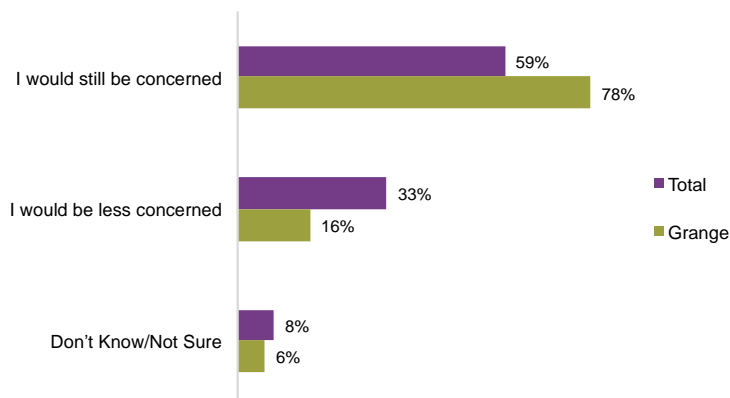


Having read about those plans to mitigate the potential impact on local healthcare services, what do you think now about the potential impact on local healthcare services?

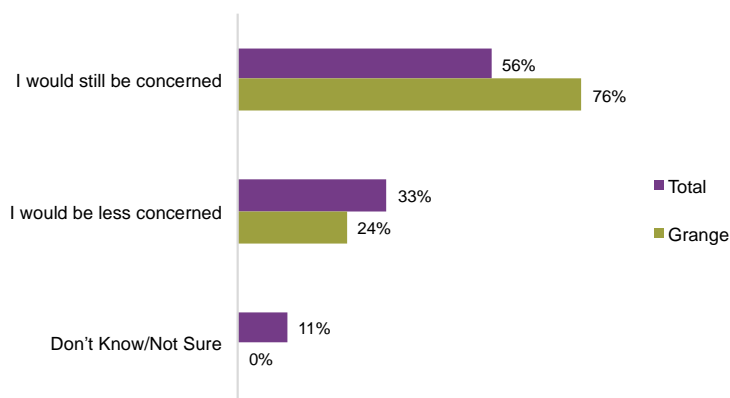




Having read about those plans to mitigate the potential impact on local wildlife and the environment, what do you think now about the potential impact on local wildlife and the environment?

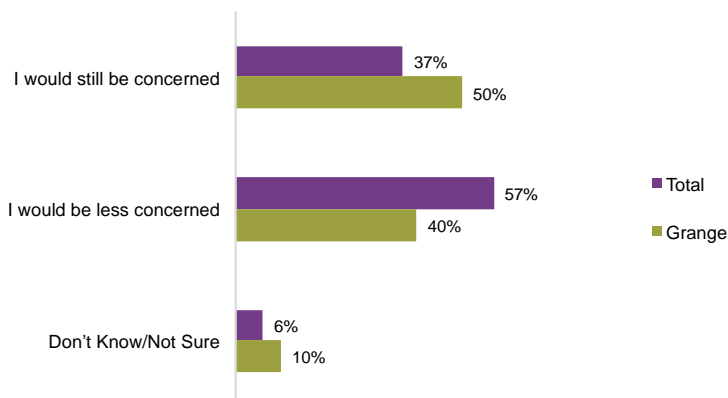


Having read about those plans to mitigate the potential impact on local sports and recreation facilities, what do you think now about the potential impact on local sports and recreation facilities?





Having read about those plans to mitigate the potential impact on risk of flooding, what do you think now about the potential impact on risk of flooding?



## TASK 6: The Heritage Foundation's Approach To Creating New Homes

Having read the stated objectives, the participants were asked whether they agreed with the Heritage Foundation's approach, in relation to the development of new homes, and whether they could foresee any problems or opportunities

- All participants supported the objectives, claiming that they demonstrated that the Heritage Foundation were interested in maintaining and improving the amenities in Letchworth
  - They felt that the new objectives demonstrated that the Foundation has an understanding of local issues
- Most thought that if the objectives were followed by the developers, the principles of the 'Garden City' could be maintained
- However, the majority did feel the sheer size of the development would not allow for these objectives to be followed
- Some of the participants were more cynical and wanted to know what guarantees would be in place to ensure these objectives were followed
- The objectives which received the most praise were:
  - Low density developments
  - Cycle Ways
  - Apprenticeship and training schemes for local people by appointed contractors
  - Garden City layouts
- Concerns were raised about:-
  - Road congestion caused by the development
  - Developers not following the objectives





## TASK 6: The Heritage Foundation's Approach To Creating New Homes

I support the above objectives 100%. The opportunities offered to the local community as a direct result from the development on these new housing with offer apprenticeships and jobs for local residents  
**Female 30-44**

1000 homes is a massive development if attempted all at once - would one developer be responsible for the whole lot, in which case the objectives should be achievable, or would the estate be developed piecemeal, in which case I can see a lot of these falling by the wayside as individual parties foist their own agendas on the area with no overall control. I agree with some other commenters that these principles are in no way adhered to in other developments in LGC. How can we guarantee that they will stick to them this time?  
**Female 30-44**

I think it is not if but when, probably the cynic in me. But a mixed housing tenures would be more favourable. Problems where to begin:- theory is wonderful thing it allows you to do thing with out complications, in reality it can be very different. 1,000 homes mean 1,000 more car on the roads, even with the proposed set up it will have a big impact on the routes around Letchworth. Existing facilities will be over stretched even if the housing only aloud for two people per house. you can make numbers add up to what ever you want to and say it works??  
**Male 60 +**

Other than the problems for wildlife and residents losing their views of the greenway, the only other problems I can think of are the increase in traffic, especially along that main road, which is already so busy during school run times, and whether or not they're making the homes with suitable parking. The other developments I've seen in Letchworth seem to be lacking in parking  
**Female 15-29**

All the above make sound sense, apprenticeships sound like a positive way to future proof self employment but a lot of people can't afford to work in such lowly paid areas so support for the youth that are most likely to take on these roles should be monitored. Educating locals on what's on their doorstep such as the cycle ways would help people to jump on board and appreciate the town they live in. The opportunities will always be around but getting the key messages to the right people is the hard part.

**Male 30-34**



## TASK 7: Reinvesting The Income Into The Town

Participants were asked whether the reinvestment of derived income into the town affected their views as to whether or not 1,000 new homes should be built at the site to the north of the Grange Estate

- Whilst there was strong support for the principle of reinvestment to the benefit of the town and its community, the concept of re-investment did not change anyone's view on the proposed development, per se
  - Where participants originally supported the idea, these investments were seen as just another reason for the development to go ahead
  - Non-supporters were still of the opinion that the development was too large for one area
- Some respondents were also looking for guarantees as to how the funds would be allocated to ensure transparency
- Whilst most found the investments appealing, they still felt that the largest problem caused by the development would be related to a lack of infrastructure
- Some were also concerned by the potential loss of income for the Heritage Foundation that could result from selling off part of the Greenway and questioned the longer-term implications.

