



Upton 2030 is the logo and working title of the Upton by Chester Parish and District Neighbourhood Plan which is being prepared by the Upton by Chester Parish Council with a steering group working as a sub-committee of the council

**Upton Neighbourhood Plan.  
Issues and Opportunities Survey  
Report and Analysis of Results**

**22.3.2016**

**Introduction.**

The survey was prepared between October 2014 and October 2015 by the steering group based on issues and opportunities identified by the group and updated throughout the discussions and in consultation with the Parish Council to which it reported regularly and provided preliminary and final drafts. The survey was designed to identify the issues and opportunities as perceived by the public. The survey opportunity was open to residents, businesses, organisations, visitors and users of the area. It was not intended to find out whether people agreed or disagreed with policies, but just what issues mattered to them with the instruction at the start of the form. ***“Please complete the survey by ticking relevant boxes which matter to you most.”***

In the first few days of November 2015 the survey forms were delivered to every house and business in the parish with the magazine ‘Inside Upton’ and made available digitally with a link on the council website. Notices were placed in the Parish Council website, notice boards, Upton Library, the Doctors’ Surgery and shops and an exhibition was mounted at the pavilion and later moved to the library where additional forms were also available. Local businesses were invited to a briefing and consultation on 23 November and completed forms were collected on line and from the library, Bache Post Office, Spar, Tesco Express and The Race Horse. The survey closed as notified on 15 December 2015.

**Survey Response Overall Numbers and Distribution.**

A total 216 survey responses were received including 27 from couples mentioned on the same form. The survey programme did not automatically duplicate couples’ responses so the programme administrator duplicated these in summary form. 120 forms were completed by hand and were transcribed for computer and re-submitted for analysis with the on line forms. Two forms were entered twice and some entered anonymously, whether by accident or intent. The steering group agreed that anonymous responses were valid and no way has been found to delete accidentally duplicated responses, so these are included in the results described in this report. Current population figures are still to be confirmed but compared to the total of 4009 registered electors used in the 2014 Governance Review for Upton, Bache and Moston the response rate is approximately 5%. 36 respondents including some couples confirmed that they were willing to help in the further preparation of the plan. The approximate location of respondent’s addresses on a map shows a broadly even distribution of responses across the area. See plan attached.

**The Survey Form**

The survey form was designed with issues listed with a tick box under 16 topic sections such as Housing, Education, Countess of Chester Hospital, Health Services, Shops etc., with spaces and a request for any other comments under each topic. The results were therefore capable of analysis to identify issues, which mattered most, or to most people. The ‘any other comments’ were further analysed to identify the weight and details of

concerns as well as any additional issues or opportunities. All forms have been retained for record and inspection if required and original comments are available as separate lists under each subject and topic.

### **Synopsis of the Survey Results.**

Most of the results were predictable but there are some surprises. Some of the most surprising and potentially significant responses were those anticipating the impact of the driverless car, which could help to resolve much current traffic and transport issues including congestion, safety and car parking as cars could be called only when required and parking spaces could be redundant. There was little recognition generally of the potential impact of the demographic profile and the ageing population on housing, community, services, work and employment and this may will need to be further considered. The most commonly quoted issues by far were Unconventional Gas and Oil (Fracking) and Renewable Energy (86%), followed by parking and traffic at and around the Hospital and railway station (67%), shops (53%), schools (42.5%) and pedestrian access to the zoo (32%).

### **Detailed Results.**

The following is a description of the survey results for each of the 16 topic areas. A graphic representation and summary of the results is also provided as an 8-sheet appendix following the main text. Percentage figures for the tick box responses are out of the total number (216) of responses. Percentage figures for the other comments are out of the number who made comments on that topic and therefore it might be understood that these represent a significant degree of concern. Most of the results for 'any other comments' include a category for No Preference, Leave Alone, Do Nothing, Don't Know, Satisfied with Existing or No Relevant Planning Comment. These include issues of management or enforcement of existing regulations, as these are not relevant to a spatial plan except where they might be resolved by alternative designs as with parking on pavements. Cost and prices are also not relevant except where they affect planning policies such as encouraging alternatives to the use of private motor vehicles. Issues are described showing the numbers of respondents who cited them. Full details of the original comments are available and listed in categories, which may be useful for further development of planning policies. The categories are identified on the computer generated lists and forms by a few key words only, but are more broadly described in the text below.

### **Housing.**

Most respondents 44% thought there should be more housing accommodation with care facilities and 39% wanted more housing for the elderly. 41.25% wanted more affordable housing and 19% wanted general housing. From the any other comments the greatest number (25%) wanted no more housing or development including many citing infrastructure limitations and 16% of respondents expressly wanted no more housing in the green belt. 23% were concerned about affordable housing although affordability is perhaps not an issue for spatial planning but one for economic policies.

### **Education.**

60% of the respondents agreed with more use of educational facilities for the whole community. 55% wanted a broad range of services to suit our needs and 53% thought it important to address congestion and traffic. In any other comments the issues of traffic and parking were prevalent (42.5%) and several respondents noted the importance of promoting walking and cycling which has implications regarding the safety and convenience of travel routes.

### **The Countess of Chester Hospital.**

The issue that most respondents identified is Traffic and Parking (67%) with some including issues of vehicular access in the other comments. 36% wanted routes to the community park and 31% agreed with protection of the 1829 building and its surroundings. There was a high level of do nothing/ leave alone/non-planning comment (30%) but the most commonly cited issue was traffic and parking (63.5%).

### **Health Care.**

More doctors and medical services attracted the largest response (85%), with 52% wanting more dental services and 20% ticking alternative therapies. In the any other comments 20% cited issues of accessibility and parking at GP surgeries and several respondents noting the importance of keeping a local general practice.

### **Transport.**

Most respondents 57% ticked the box for controlling speed, 43% for improved bus services, stops, shelters and information, 42% ticked parking, 28% rail services and 14% ticked Park and Ride. The any other comments provided more details including provision of a bus shelter at Weston Grove, serious congestion on some bus routes and more and better cycle lanes.

### **Footpaths/ Bridleways and the Shropshire Union Canal.**

65% of respondents thought maintenance were an issue and 52% agreed that safety and lighting were issues. 30% wanted more routes and links. The comments reinforced the above concerns and provided greater detail.

### **Local Shops.**

The largest group of respondents 64% cited a good range and provision of local shops while 60% ticked the issue of premises and surroundings being well managed and maintained. 53% agreed with issues of access and parking and 28% with the greater use of upper floors. More details provided in the any other comments included 20% wanting no more fast food or betting shops, 14% no more supermarkets and 10% respondents noted issues of poor appearance. 4% noted the likely need to provide service facilities for electric cars.

### **Public Open Space and Green Belt.**

79% agreed that the Green Belt agricultural land and open space should be designated and protected; 54% that open spaces should be enhanced and better used; 26% that there should be more public open space and 15% that there should be development on existing open spaces. The other comments provide more detail including requests for more cycleways and footpaths, dog walks, seats, wildlife planting, and a multi-purpose covered open space. Many respondents wanted no development or no housing on open spaces (40%) but 3% did and suggested Marl Heys as it is being under-used.

### **Public and privately managed Public Buildings.**

68.5% agreed the importance of improving their usefulness. 66.5% agreed that they be retained and protected. 8.5% thought that they should be rationalised and their number reduced. In comments 39% suggested churches and the British Legion be used differently and 35% said do nothing or leave them alone.

### **Upton Golf Course.**

60% agreed that it was an important asset with 53% saying residents value its landscape and character. 44% agreed it is an important visual amenity and 12% said it is not important. The highest proportion of comments (41%) were to leave it alone. 22% suggested it should be marketed more towards local residents and 7% said it should be developed for housing.

### **Public Houses Hotels and Guest Houses.**

62% agreed that a sufficient provision was an issue. It is not clear whether people think the existing is sufficient or not. 37% agreed the issue of acceptable impact on residents and 12% agreed they be reduced and rationalised. The highest proportion of comments (47%) was to leave them alone. More people wanted more pubs (23%) than wanted no more (13%). Several complained about chain company food and wanted a restaurant and 6% raised issues of signage and impact on local residents.

### **Important buildings and Monuments.**

75% agreed with identification and protection of important local buildings. 70% agreed to preserve local boundary features and 60.4% agreed to review or extend Tree Preservation Orders and the Upton Conservation Area. In comments the greatest proportion was for doing nothing, leaving alone or non- planning comment (60%).

### **Street and Building Lighting and Safety.**

64% agreed with the issue of sufficient lighting. Again it is not clear whether people think the existing is sufficient or not. 32% agreed with the issue of night light pollution. 28% agreed with introducing CCTV and 24% with addressing appropriate external lighting. Comments provided greater detail including 30% improving light quality, introducing LEDs and 17% suggesting switching lights off at dead of night. 33% commented on light pollution from Unconventional Gas and Oil Development. One suggested relocation of lights and one suggested removal of trees to improve street lighting.

### **The Dale.**

68% agreed with planning for its future re-use. 53% with safeguarding the environmental and landscape assets and 41% with its continued community use. Comments provided greater detail including a note that several of the existing houses are already privately owned.

### **Chester Zoo.**

The survey form for this topic suggested 8 questions, which is the largest number for the 16 topics. 63% of respondents agreed with protecting the green belt. 59% agreed with improving access including pedestrian access. 44% agreed with employment, 42% with conservation, 31% with road traffic, 30% with community links, 20% with the issue of expansion of the site, 15% with car parking and 10% with noise and disturbance from the zoo. Most comments (38%) were for general support or not relevant to planning but next were 32% for better pedestrian access.

### **Our Future Economy and Industry.**

This topic attracted the greatest response of any in the survey. Employment opportunities attracted 46% of respondents. Integrating renewable energy in new developments attracted 44%. Coal Bed Methane had 44% and use of emerging technologies had 34%. Most of the comments by far (86%) were for no fracking and for development of renewable energy instead. A few respondents (6.4%) were happy with fracking and some wanted no industry at all in the area.

## **Conclusion.**

The above information together with the survey diagrams and statistics provide a useful indication of what the neighbourhood plan might address, although the degree of popularity is not necessarily a reason for inclusion in the plan and it may not be possible to please everyone. Other issues may arise and be added as the plan develops and more work may be required regarding demographic and technical changes, which may be expected throughout the plan period. It will be important to remember that the plan can only address spatial policies within the existing legislative framework. The parish may have very limited development resources but it can encourage appropriate development by others and discourage inappropriate development within the plan area. It is obvious from the above issues and comments however that there are a lot of things that the parish council can do to help make a better Upton in 2030.

## **Next Steps and Recommendations.**

Subject to the degree of interest and support offered by the community and the council, further consultation may be continued with interested parties, stakeholders, businesses and organisations and. The existing group and new volunteers could be involved in information gathering, identifying a Vision for Upton 2030, aims, objectives, strategies and then policies which could form the basis of the plan. There are professional planners amongst the existing volunteers but an amount of outside expertise may be required for later stages. If there is insufficient support shortly it may be necessary however to abandon the plan and seek other ways of determining and pursuing any planning policies for the area. The neighbourhood plan is probably the best and most effective way of influencing planning policy and making the local environment relevant to the community, which may continue to be, involved after its adoption. Without the plan many of these opportunities may be lost as there is likely be a reduction of initiative and interest in pursuing policies separately.

**The parish council is therefore recommended to: -**

- 1. Note this report and make it available to the public.**
- 2. Confirm its support and approval to progress with the preparation of the neighbourhood plan.**
- 3. Consider the means by which it may monitor the application, implementation and progress of the plan after its approval and adoption.**