

Shaping where you live 2035

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Communityplan

This Community Says...



Community Plan

Covering the parishes of Campton & Chicksands, Clifton, Henlow, Meppershall, Shefford, Stondon

Community Area 15

Final: July 2017

**Central
Bedfordshire**

A great place to live and work.

Foreword

Central Bedfordshire Council's aim is to maintain and enhance the quality of the area for communities, businesses and visitors to ensure we have a vibrant area that is able to grow sustainably. Community planning is a new approach which will engage local people including residents, Town and Parish Councils and interest groups to build a picture of how everyone lives, works and travels today.

In the future we want to create communities with schools, jobs, health provision and good transport links. That means we need to plan for infrastructure and services to ensure that Central Bedfordshire continues to be a great place to live and work. This is why we are working with the local community to understand what you value about where you live, where the opportunities are and where there might be current issues that need to be addressed.

Community Planning is about identifying all of these elements and giving you the opportunity to help shape the future of your community, while adding valuable local knowledge and information to future development decisions.

Cllr Nigel Young, Executive Member for Regeneration



Community Planning in Central Bedfordshire

Our vision is to start a proactive, ongoing dialogue with the local community about local needs and opportunities through community planning. By understanding the opinions of local people as to what needs improvement, along with what they love and want to keep, we can produce Community Plans which we can refer to in decisions about development in the future. These Plans will be used in a number of ways, including influencing the Local Plan which deals with the overall approach to sustainable growth for the area. Consultation and engagement are requirements of the process of developing the Local Plan. Community planning goes well beyond those requirements and in addition, we very much see that the "life" and use of community plans will extend beyond the Local Plan.

In order to structure our plans clearly, we have developed six growth themes, Local Character, Environment, Transport, Jobs & Business, Growth & Infrastructure and Homes.

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A Community Plan will capture what local people believe are the key issues or opportunities under each of the themes and identify where local people want investment to be spent to improve their Community Area. Central Bedfordshire Council believe that Community Planning will build an understanding of local needs and pressures on a particular area and to ensure that existing and new communities benefit from high quality development and targeted improvements.

Community Plans will be used as evidence base for the Local Plan, but will also be used to assist Central Bedfordshire with making future planning decisions. Community Plans can also be used to feed into Neighbourhood, Parish or Town Plans.



The 6 Growth Themes



Local character

What we have we love. Our history, countryside and communities. We need to build, with care to enhance what we have.

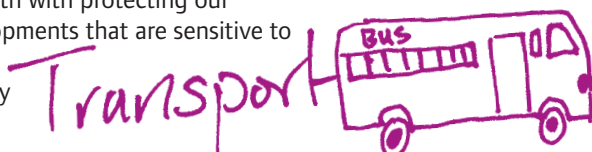
How do we look after what you value about where you live? We need to balance development with protecting our villages, market towns and beautiful countryside. We want to use local character to inform development to ensure that we achieve the best we can.

Environment

Our environment is important. It influences how & what we create. We need quality development.



How do we balance the need for growth with protecting our environment? By having quality developments that are sensitive to the environment, to climate change and to ensure growth is dealt with responsibly for the next generation.



How do we get around? With more of us on our cycleways, roads, rail. How do we improve & maintain our transport links?

We need to plan growth that has good connections, not only to jobs and facilities, but also to recreation services and the countryside. We need to look at improving our existing transport networks and make the most of opportunities for new links.

Jobs and Business

Where will everyone work? Supporting local businesses to grow & attracting new business. We need to create jobs for all.

How do we support the economy of your community and proposed growth in your area? We need to invest and attract business. Regenerating areas can help to attract new investment to improve job prospects.

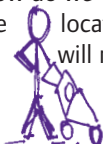


Growth & Infrastructure



Where to place homes & services. Supporting market towns, villages & new settlements. We need to plan places to grow communities.

Where can this growth go and how do we get the best opportunities for you and your community? We need to consider not only the locations for growth, but also what other facilities, services and infrastructure these areas will need for the next generation.



Homes



Homes for every stage of life. A house is not a home until it's lived in. We all need a home we're proud of.

What type of housing does your community need? Looking at the local population, from young to old, we need to ensure that the area can accommodate changes in lifestyle, affluence or choice. Quality homes for all, for now and tomorrow.

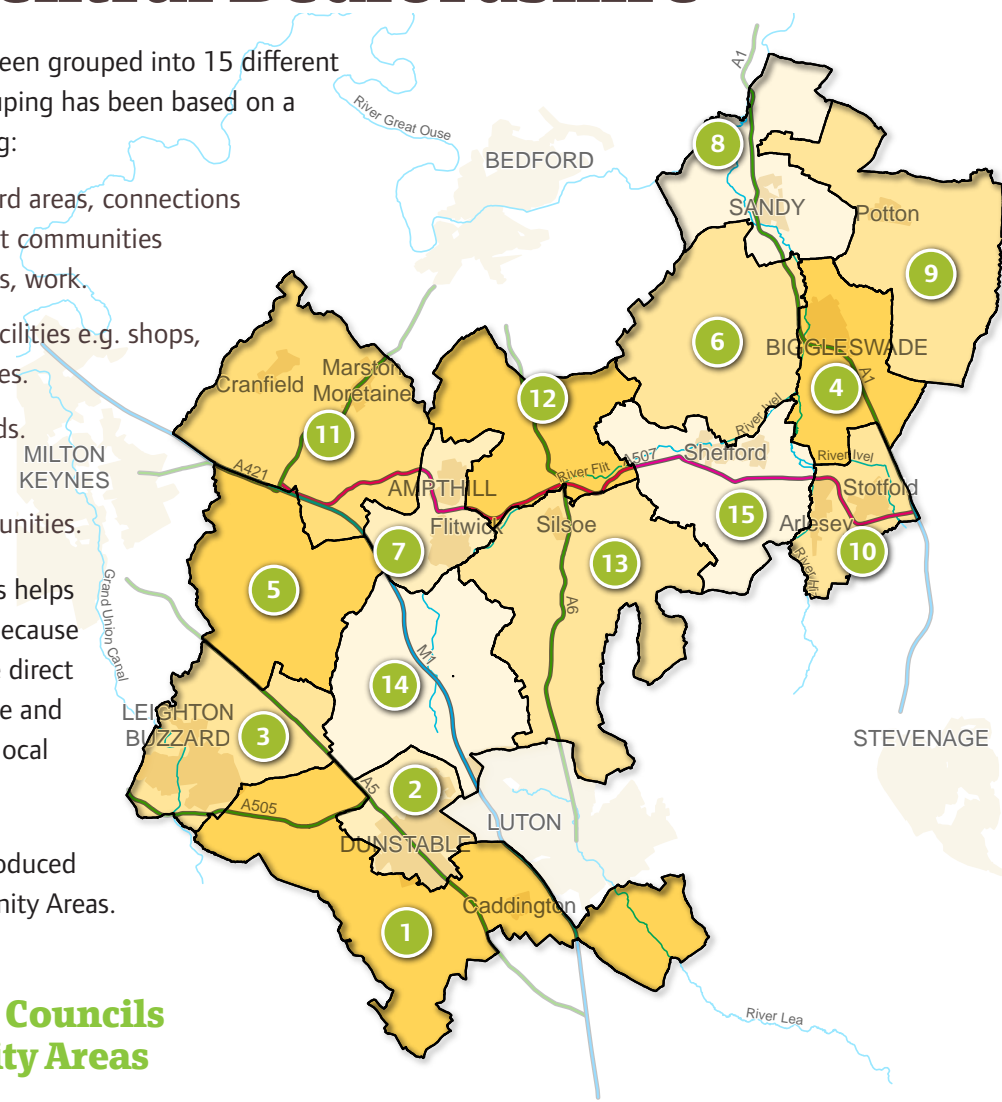
Community Areas within Central Bedfordshire

Towns and Parishes have been grouped into 15 different community areas. The grouping has been based on a number of factors including:

- Natural catchment or ward areas, connections and associations amongst communities e.g. for shopping, schools, work.
- Access to services and facilities e.g. shops, post office, leisure services.
- Town and rural hinterlands.
- Shared characteristics, similar issues and opportunities.

Grouping the areas like this helps local residents to engage because they will be able to see the direct relevance to where they live and help us consider all of the local issues and opportunities.

One Community Plan is produced for each of the 15 Community Areas.



Town and Parish Councils within Community Areas

Community Area	Town and Parish Councils
1	Billington, Caddington, Eaton Bray, Hyde, Kensworth, Slip End, Stanbridge, Studham, Tilsforth, Totternhoe, Whipsnade
2	Dunstable, Houghton Regis
3	Battlesden, Eggington, Heath & Reach, Hockliffe, Leighton Buzzard
4	Biggleswade, Edworth, Langford
5	Aspley Guise, Aspley Heath, Bryan, Eversholt, Husborne Crawley, Milton Bryan, Potsgrove, Woburn
6	Northill, Old Warden, Southill
7	Flitwick, Ampthill, Steppingly
8	Moggerhanger, Blunham, Tempsford, Sandy
9	Dunton, Everton, Eyeworth, Potton, Sutton, Wrestlingworth & Cockayne Hatley
10	Arlesey, Astwick, Fairfield, Stotfold
11	Marston Moretaine, Cranfield, Ridgmont, Brogborough, Lidlington, Millbrook, Hulcote & Salford
12	Clophill, Haynes, Houghton Conquest, Maulden
13	Barton-Le-Clay, Flitton & Greenfield, Gravenhurst, Pulloxhill, Shillington, Silsoe, Streatley
14	Chalgrave, Chalton, Harlington, Sundon, Tingrith, Toddington, Westoning
15	Clifton, Campton & Chicksands, Henlow, Meppershall, Shefford, Stondon

Community Planning Events within Central Bedfordshire

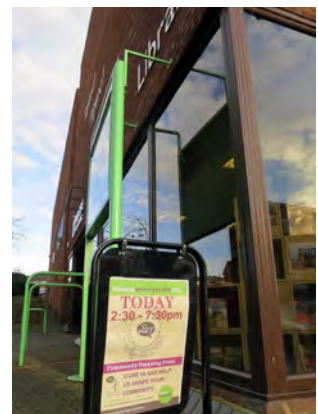
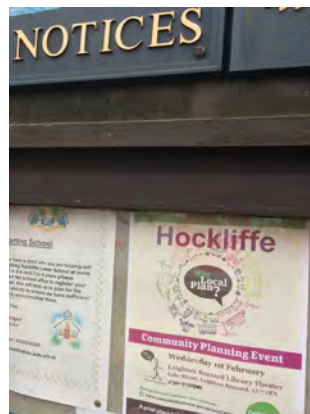
The first stage in community planning was to hold an event with residents in their local area to find out what they wanted to raise with us. For each Community Area, a drop-in event was organised at a local venue for the public to attend. The drop-in event consisted of a number of exhibition boards providing general information on community planning and a map table illustrating an Ordnance Survey plan of the Community Area.

Upon arrival, members of the public were greeted, invited to read the available exhibition boards and given a feedback form to be completed at the map table. Each feedback form was given a unique reference number. The feedback form comprised of two questions under each of the six growth themes (twelve questions in total) and included a coloured sticker for each of the themes (feedback form is in the Appendix). These stickers were numbered with the unique reference for each feedback form. For each theme, the member of the public was asked

to select one category that they felt strongly about, then using the appropriate sticker, to locate this on the map and expand on why they chose this location on the feedback form. This meant that the numbered sticker on the map could be linked to the completed feedback form. Optional questions were also posed to help us understand who attended the event. Collected data from the event is in the Appendix.

Council officers were available at every event to talk to people, discuss local issues, answer questions and listen to concerns and opportunities. At many events, local town, parish and ward councillors were also present to talk to the community.

The following pages of the Community Plan introduce this Community Area and the feedback from its community that attended the engagement event. The methodology opposite indicates how this Community Plan has been prepared.



Our approach

1. Analysis

The feedback for each growth theme has been analysed to understand what the community felt about their area in order to fairly represent individual responses within this Plan, as well as determining whether there was a collective voice on particular issues.

2. Interpretation

Under each theme, there is an information graphic and a plan. The graphic illustrates the percentage of people that had chosen each category based on the number of people who had responded to that particular theme. The plan shows where the community located their stickers on the map table. These are represented by coloured circles that relate to the category that had been chosen.

3. Hot Spots

Where there were multiple issues highlighted in one location on the map or lots of people highlighting the same issue at the same location these were grouped into a 'hot spot'. These are illustrated as a larger circle on the plan and (where relevant) depicted as a pie chart if more than one category was chosen for that particular area.

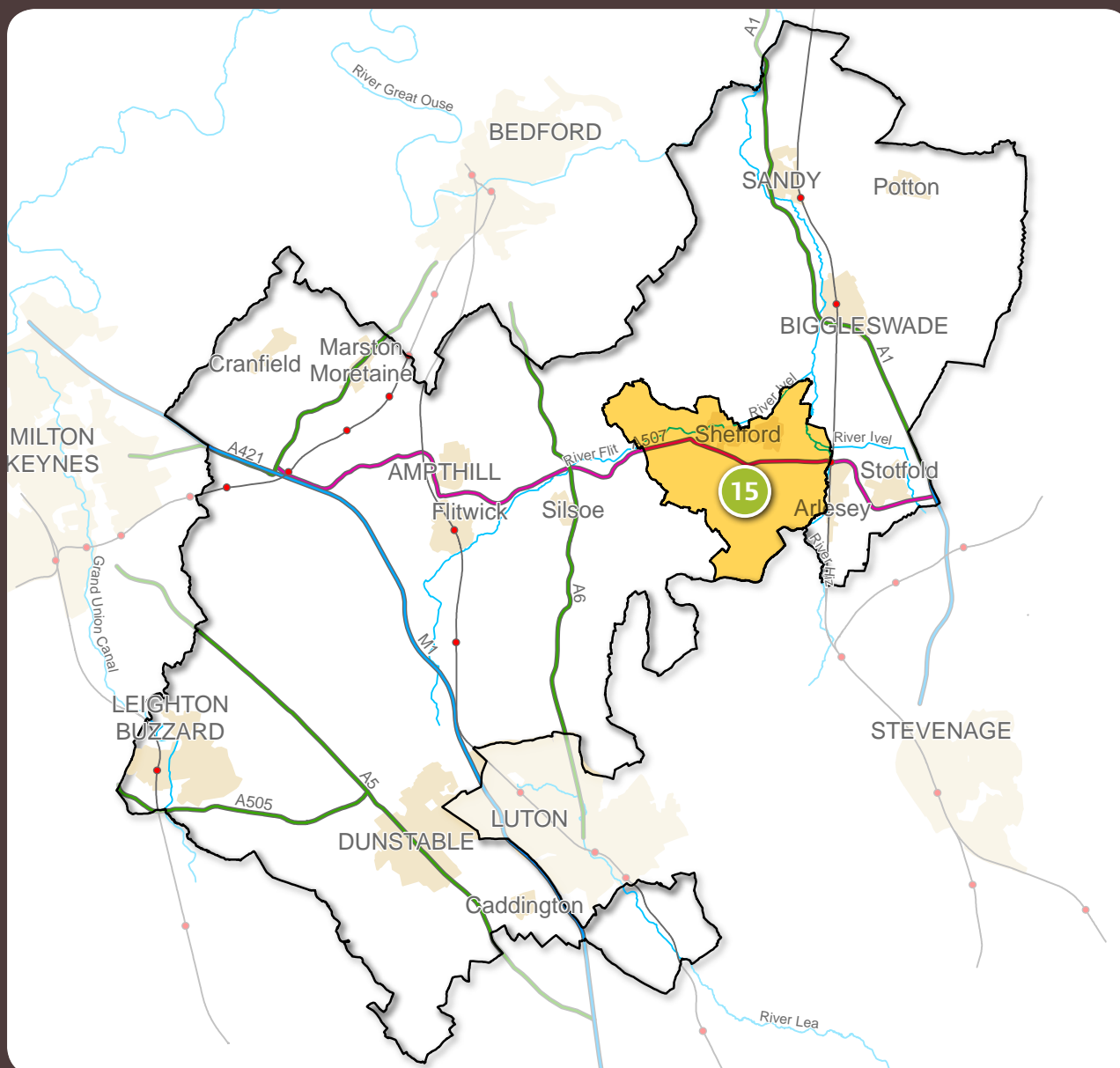
4. Trends

Following analysis of the data from the feedback forms and the stickers on the map, pointers regarding the themes are pulled together based on individual and collective voices that have arisen from the community. These trends identify what is important or needs improvement within the Community Area and therefore what the potential future opportunities for the area are.

Exceptions to this process occurred which were dealt with as follows:

- Placing stickers on the map without ticking a category. Where this occurred, stickers are recorded as 'Location only'.
- Ticking more than one category. Where this occurred, their choices are divided evenly across the categories within the analysis process.
- No category selection or sticker but a written response provided. Where this occurred, comments were considered at the analysis and interpretation stage.
- Sticker to represent the whole of Community Area. Where this occurred, it has been recorded in a statement box next to the map.

Community Area within Central Bedfordshire



Community Area

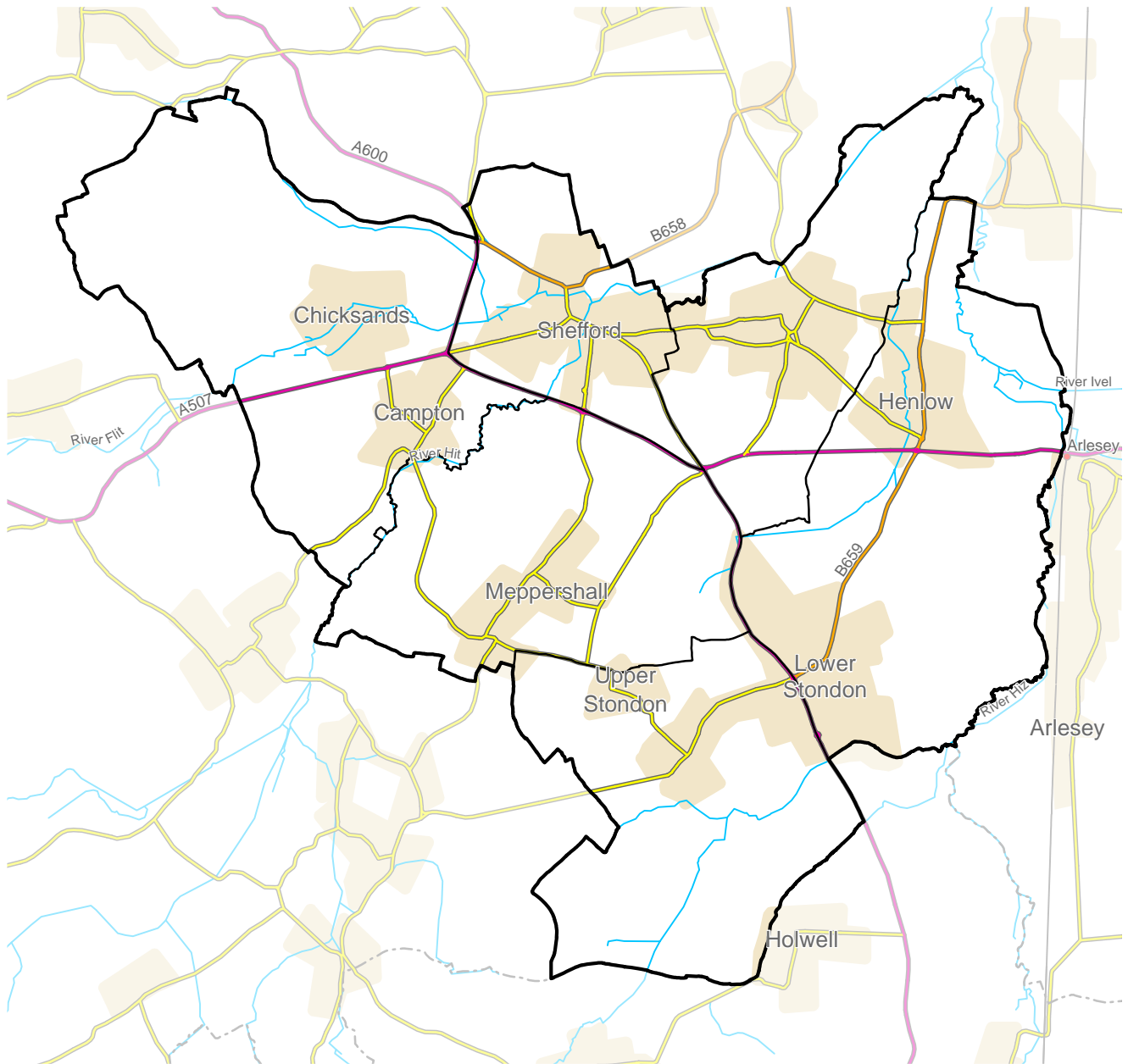
This Community Plan relates to Community Area 15, which includes the parishes of Campton & Chicksands, Clifton, Henlow, Meppershall, Shefford and Stondon. This Community Area is located in the centre of Central Bedfordshire, between the A1 and the A6, with the A6 providing access to Bedford, and contains a number of settlements. The Area contains a network of local roads, as well as the A507, A600, B659 and B658. The nearest towns are Biggleswade and Stotfold to the east.

The Area population is approximately 18,330*. This Area has an age demographic consistent with rest of Central Bedfordshire. In terms of dwelling types, this Area is consistent with the rest of Central Bedfordshire.

Campton & Chicksands, Meppershall and Stondon currently have Parish Plans published or in development. Shefford, Henlow and Stondon have Neighbourhood Plans in development. Clifton does not have Parish Plans or Neighbourhood Plans published or in development.

In total, 151 people attended the drop-in event on Thursday 2nd March 2017 which was held at Shefford Baptist Church from 2.30pm until 7.30pm. All parts of the Area were represented with the highest number of attendees being from Shefford and Meppershall. The people who attended mainly shop in Shefford and those who were in employment primarily work in the Community Area or in nearby towns.

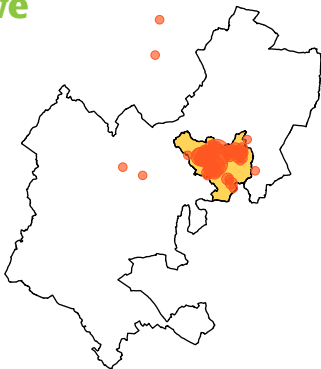
Plan of Community Area



Where participants from the area live, work & shop

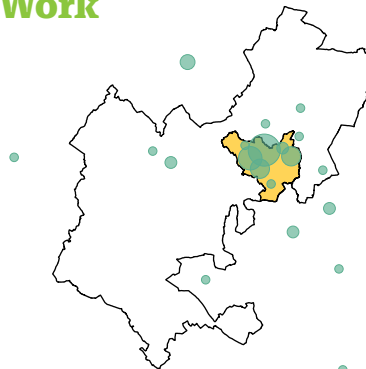
Dot size represent the amount of people, e.g. the larger the spot, more people.

Live



The people who visited the event lived in the areas shown above.

Work



The people who visited the event mainly worked in the areas shown above, with 1 person working in Hoddesdon, Stanmore and Ware, and 2 people working in London (off the map).

Shop



The people who visited the event shopped in the areas shown above, with 1 person shopping in London (off the map).

Local Character

Feedback

90% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Local Character. No-one answered that they thought there are no improvements to be made to Local Character. Six people answered that they currently have no issues related to Local Character in the Community Area.

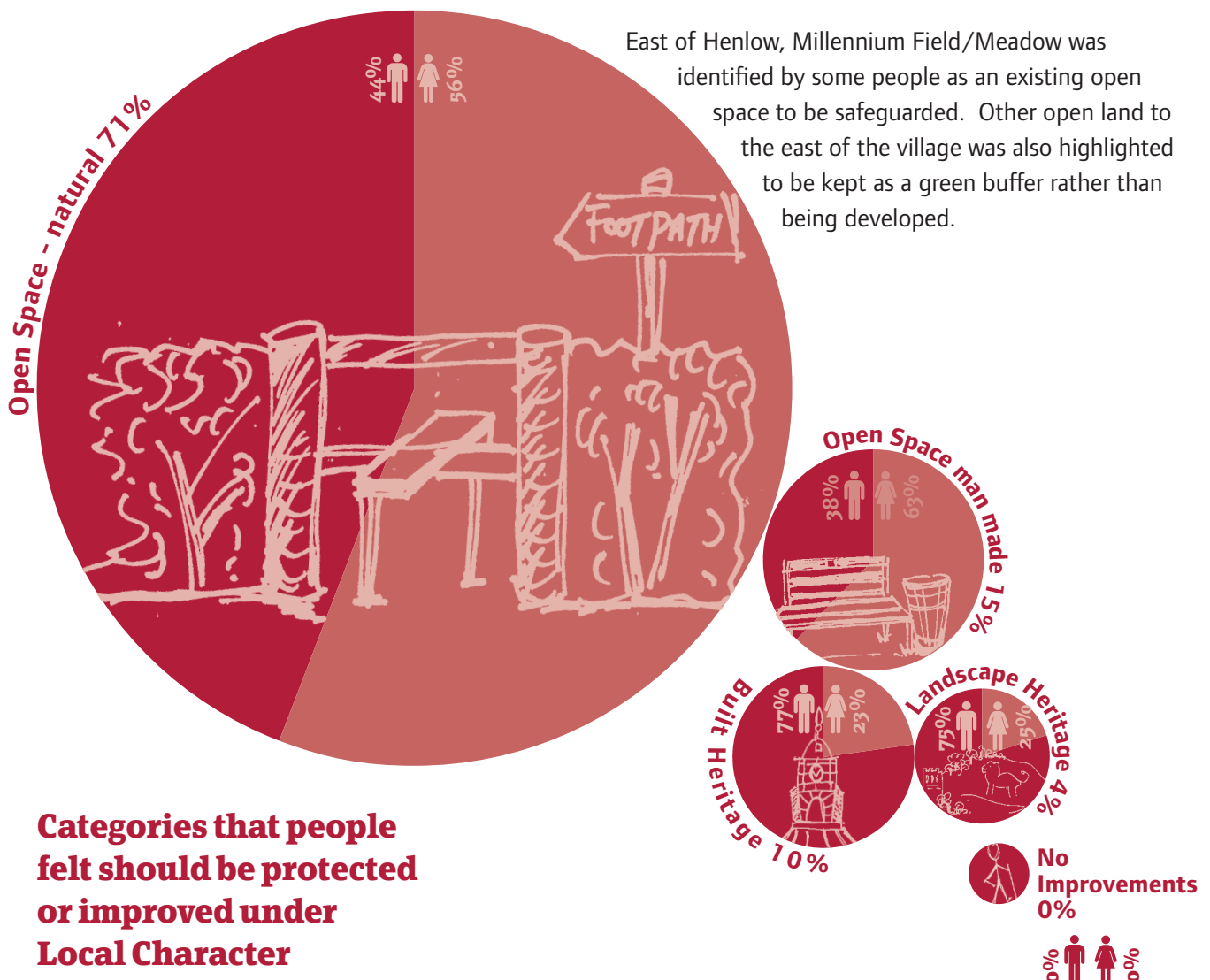
From those who responded, the most popular category of Local Character that people would like to see protected or improved, by a clear margin, was Natural Open Space (at 71%).

Analysis

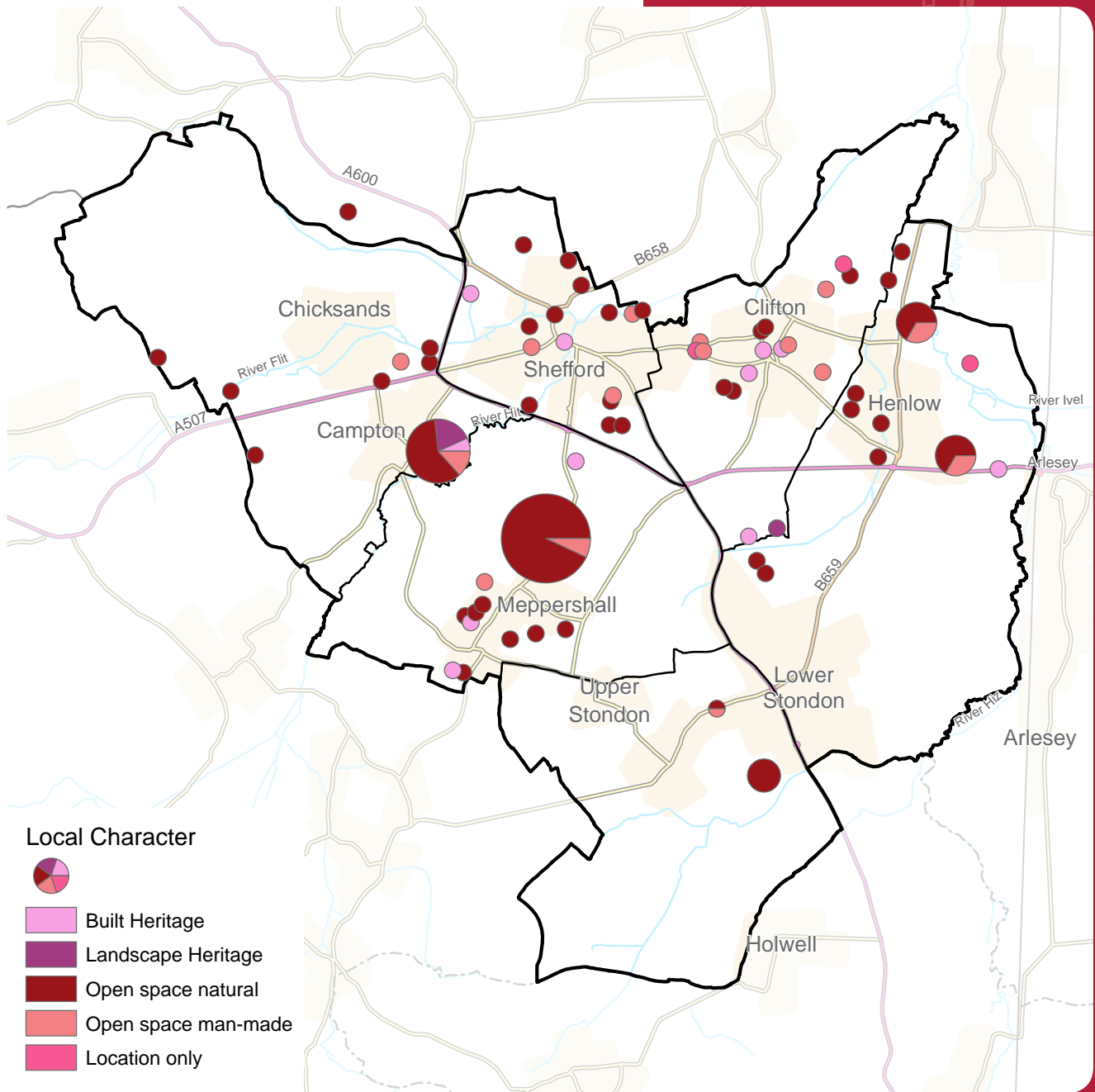
There were a number of locations where people felt strongly about Local Character, particularly to the north of Meppershall and of Campton, with smaller concentrations of responses east of Henlow and south of RAF Henlow.

Many people indicated that the protection of natural open space in the Area was important to them. Existing open spaces and countryside, particularly between settlements, were indicated as in need of protection and enhancement, some places being considered as being under threat from development. The rural character of the villages were identified as important with distinctive buildings noted as being valued.

In Campton, numerous people identified parkland at The Glebe as open space that is important to the character of the village and in need of preservation.



Map showing the places where particular protection of, or improvements to, Local Character should take place



Other comments included retention of open space in and around settlements; tree planting and footpath creation at Henlow Airfield; expanding Sandy Smith Nature Reserve; protecting the buildings of Shefford High Street; provision of green corridors through new developments; creation of community woodlands; Baulk Wood could be extended; making the most of views from Great Hill; increased dog patrols in Clifton Park; protection of heritage at RAF Henlow; and improved management of the Ivel navigation.

Trends

People want to protect the rural character of the surrounding countryside within the Area.

The Glebe at Campton and Henlow Millennium Field were identified as needing to be protected.

Transport

Feedback

91% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Transport. Eleven people answered that they currently have no issues related to Transport in the Community Area.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Transport that people would like to see improvements made to was Vehicular (at 35%), followed by Buses (at 22%).

Analysis

The main location where people felt strongly about Transport was to the north of Meppershall, south of the junction of the A507 and Shefford Road.

Several people indicated that safe and improved cycle and foot routes, particularly between Meppershall and Shefford, would help to reduce traffic. Improved bus services would also assist with this, alongside traffic calming measures.

Arlesey station was identified by a few people as needing improved bus links to it and better capacity on the trains.

Elsewhere, comments relating to vehicular transport included requests to reduce the number and severity of speed bumps through Shefford, requests to restrict parking in Shefford and Henlow to improve traffic through flow, improvements to the A507 in various locations to ease congestion, general road improvements to cope with new development, traffic calming in villages, and better upkeep of roads.

In relation to buses, comments included improved bus services between settlements, particularly in more rural areas, bus links to Arlesey train station that match to train times, bus links to hospitals and health centres, and evening bus services. In terms of trains, people suggested that the Hitchin to Bedford line should be restored and that Shefford needs a train station. Parking at Arlesey station was also raised as a concern.

Categories people felt should be improved under Transport



Train 6%



On Foot 17%



Cycle 20%



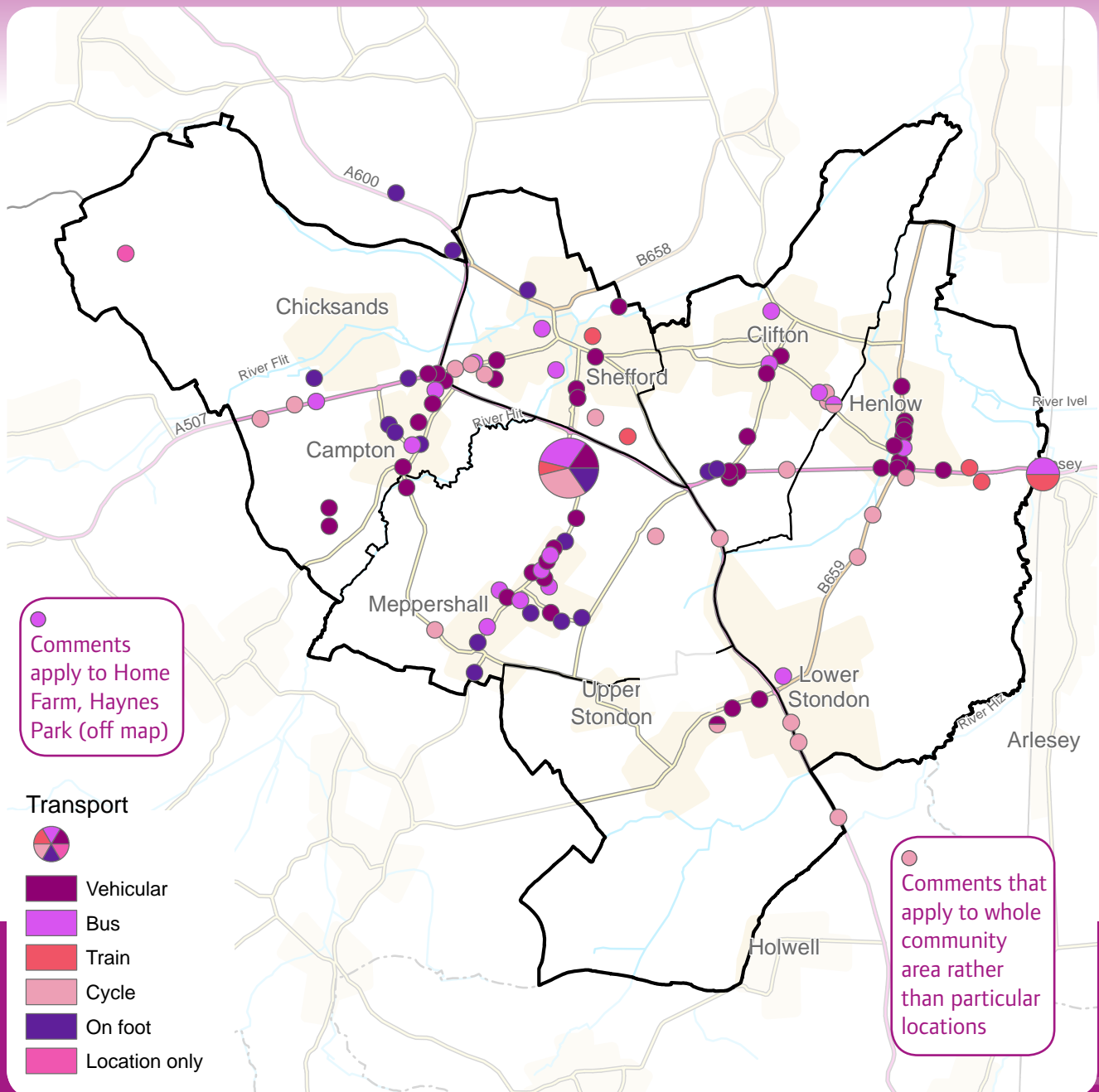
Bus 22%



Vehicular 35%



Map showing the places where particular improvements to Transport should take place



Other comments related to cycle and footpath improvements and included need for the provision of a range of types of cycleway from leisure to functional; segregated foot and cycleways between settlements, linking to schools and local amenities; improvements to and maintenance of footpath routes; better signposting of routes; and a general increase of footpath provision.

Trends

Vehicular – Improvements to A507 to reduce congestion and traffic calming in villages.

Buses – improved services between settlements and to Arlesey station.

Cycleways/footpaths – network of segregated cycleways and footpaths between settlements and to schools and local amenities.

Jobs and Business

Feedback

91% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Jobs and Business. Thirty-one people answered that they do not currently have any issues related to Jobs and Business in the Community Area.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Jobs and Business that people would most like to see investment in was High Street Development (at 28%), closely followed by Small Start-ups (at 26%).

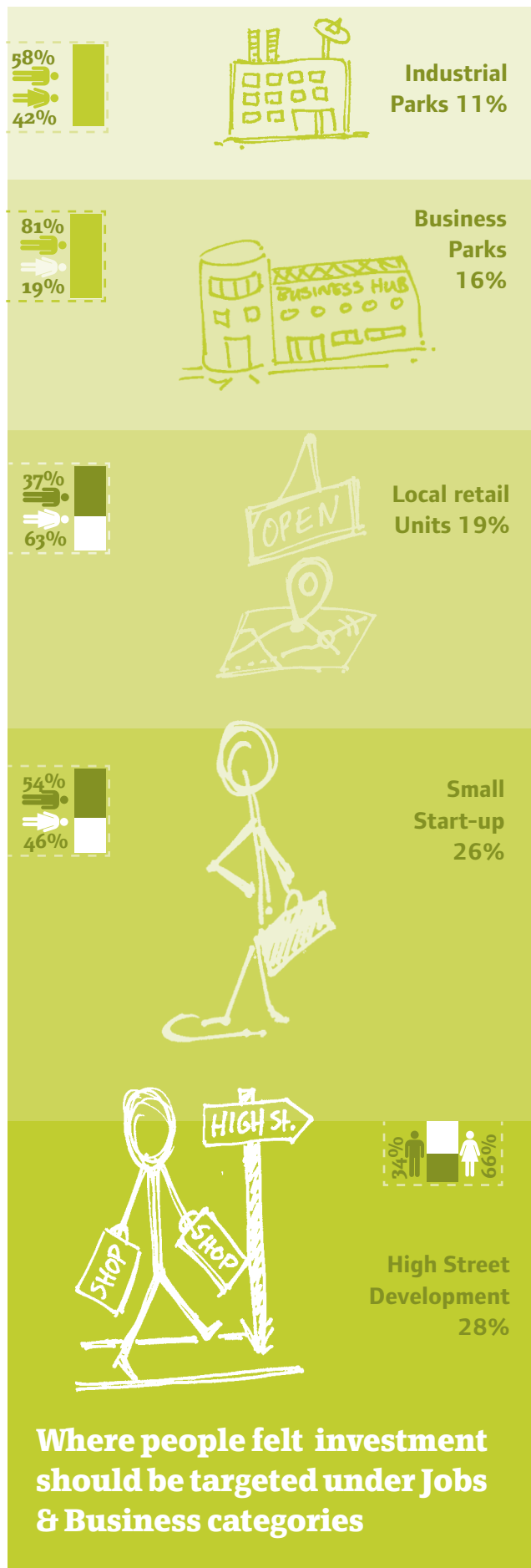
Analysis

The main locations where people felt strongly about Jobs and Business were Shefford, Meppershall and Henlow Airfield.

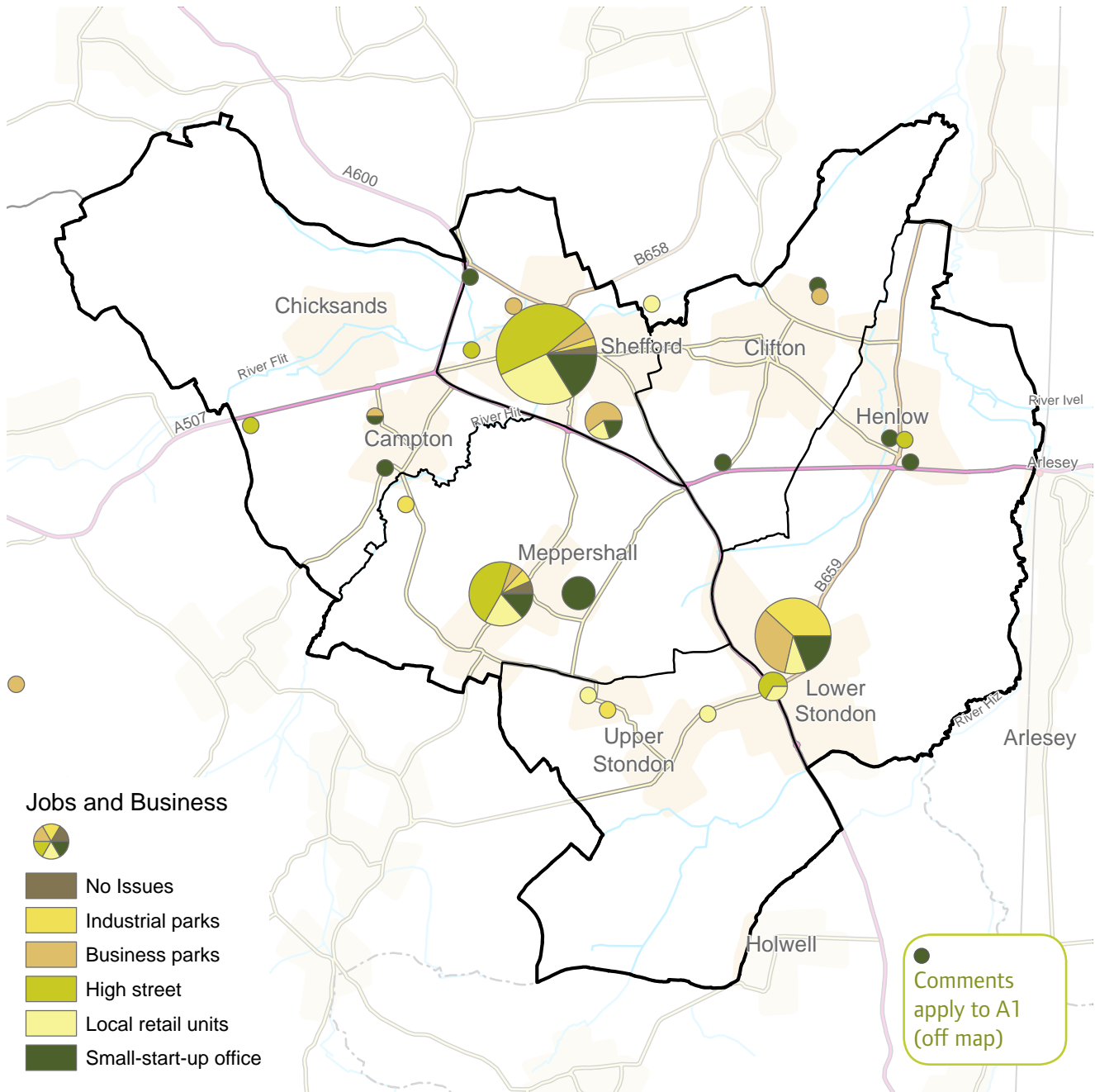
The majority of people in Shefford commented on the need for High Street Development, including greater variety, improving the markets, less food takeaways and better supermarket options. The need for small scale job opportunities in the town centre was also mentioned. A few people also suggested out of town business and retail parks might be an option in Shefford or Biggleswade.

At Meppershall, small-scale industrial units, business parks or start-up businesses were identified as possible options to allow some employment within the village. The retention of the Sugar Loaf as a pub, rather than redeveloping it, was identified as a priority by a number of people. Better stocking of the village shop was also requested.

Henlow Airfield was identified as a potential location for an industrial park or a business park, to create more local jobs. It was suggested that this could reduce the need for commuting. A small number of people suggested that this should be low density development to ensure that there isn't high traffic generation.



Map showing the places where particular investment to improve Jobs & Business should take place



Other comments included introducing light industry to reduce commuting; a range of employment types should be provided; edge of village locations in all communities should be identified; securing major employer(s) at Wrest Park; ensure there is sufficient parking near High Streets; use of small units; and creation of small shared facilities.

Trends

Greater variety on Shefford High Street.

Small scale employment opportunities of all kinds in Meppershall, as well as retaining the village pub.

Potential for an industrial park or a business park at Henlow Airfield to create local jobs.

Environment

Feedback

92% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Environment. Seven people answered that they currently have no issues related to Environment in the Community Area.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Environment that people would like to see improved in the future within their Community Area was Wildlife Habitats (at 75%).



Categories people considered to be the most valuable Environment attribute to look after for the future

Analysis

The responses for Environment were spread across the Area, with particular concentrations around Meppershall, north of Campton, at Henlow Airfield, south east of Shefford, north and south of Clifton and north of Henlow.

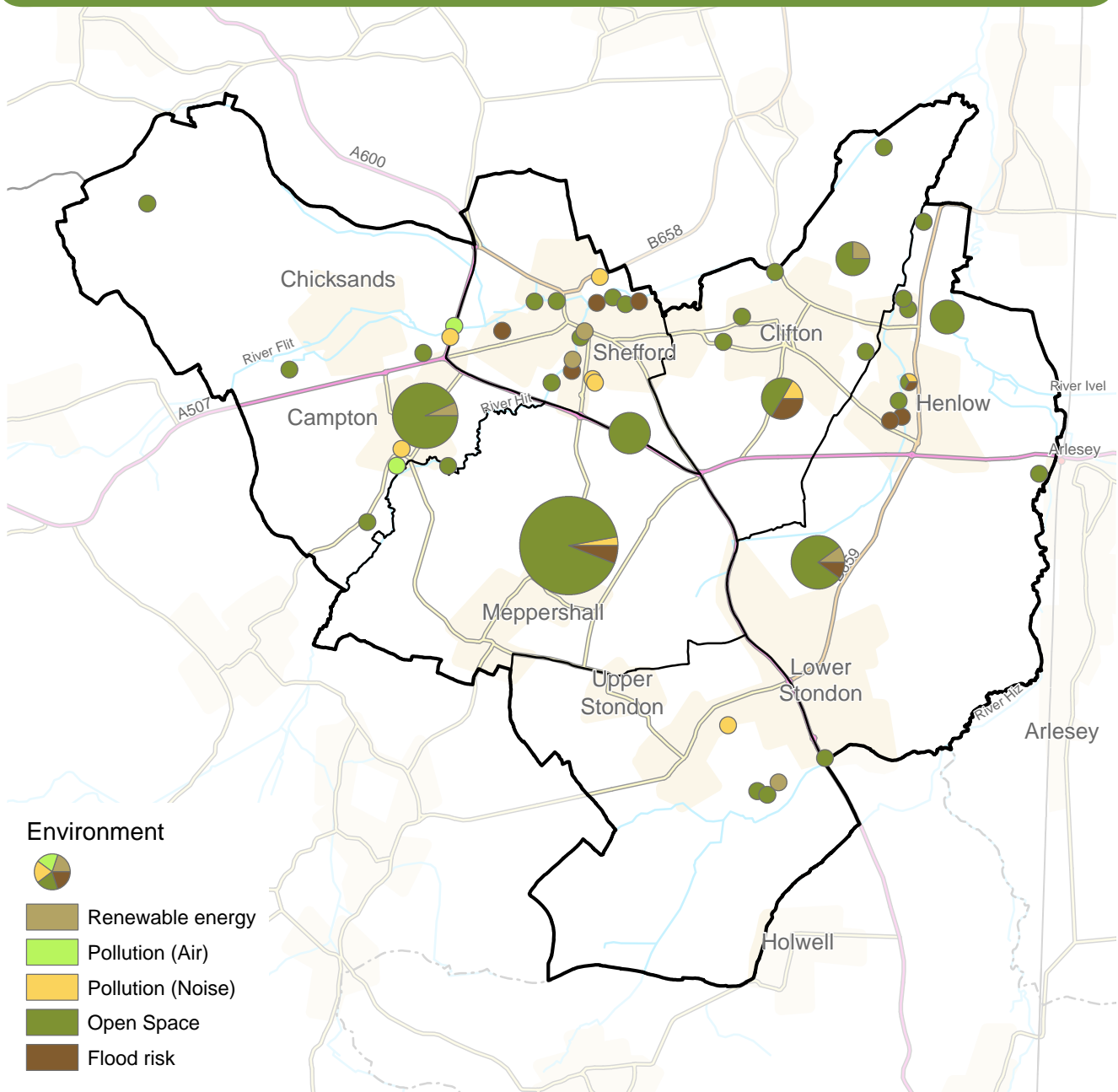
Around Meppershall, reference was made to the need to protect the open space between Meppershall and Shefford for wildlife, as well as protecting Nunswood and open spaces in general from development.

People also commented on the increase in flood risk due to increased housing and noise pollution from traffic and light aircraft.

In relation to Campton, a number of people commented that open spaces should be preserved, with The Glebe named in particular. Improved maintenance and access were also mentioned.

At Henlow Airfield, a number of people requested that the closure of Henlow Camp should be seen as an opportunity to provide a park area with increased access and protection of wildlife. The airfield was also identified as having potential for wind turbines.

Map showing the places that were considered the most valuable attributes to look after for the future



In relation to natural open spaces other comments included enhancement of habitats along rights of way; protecting the area around Millennium Field and Henlow Grange; supply of information boards along managed walkways; extending Baulk Wood; improvements to Sandy Smith Nature Reserve and the road to it.

Other comments included the use of solar panels on industrial units; potential for energy generation on the Ivel; noise pollution from the A600 and A507; a need for flood mitigation on New Road, Clifton; the need for gullies to be cleared more frequently; avoiding developing in flood plains; and the drainage system in Shefford not being up to scratch.

Trends

Protection of the open space between Meppershall and Shefford for wildlife, as well as protecting Nunswood and open spaces in general from development.

Preserve The Glebe, Campton.

Increased access to open space at Henlow Airfield.

Homes

Feedback

87% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Homes. Twenty-three people answered that they currently have no issues related to Homes in the Community Area.

From those who responded, the most popular categories of Homes that people considered were needed within the Community Area were Affordable Homes, Older Generation and New Starter Homes (all at 27%).

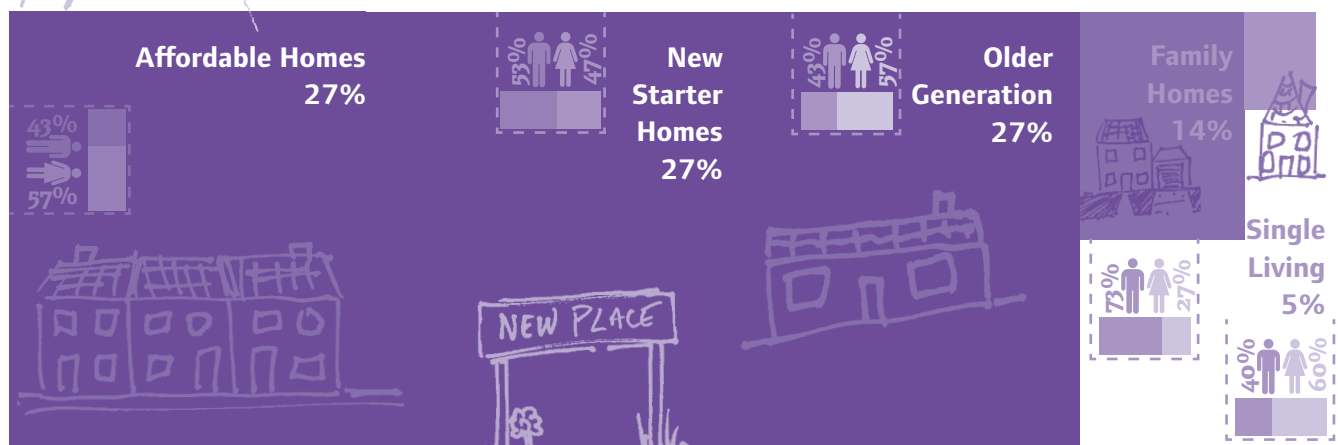


Analysis

The main locations where people felt strongly about Homes were south of Shefford, Henlow Airfield and Meppershall, with other concentrations of responses at Campston Clifton and Henlow.

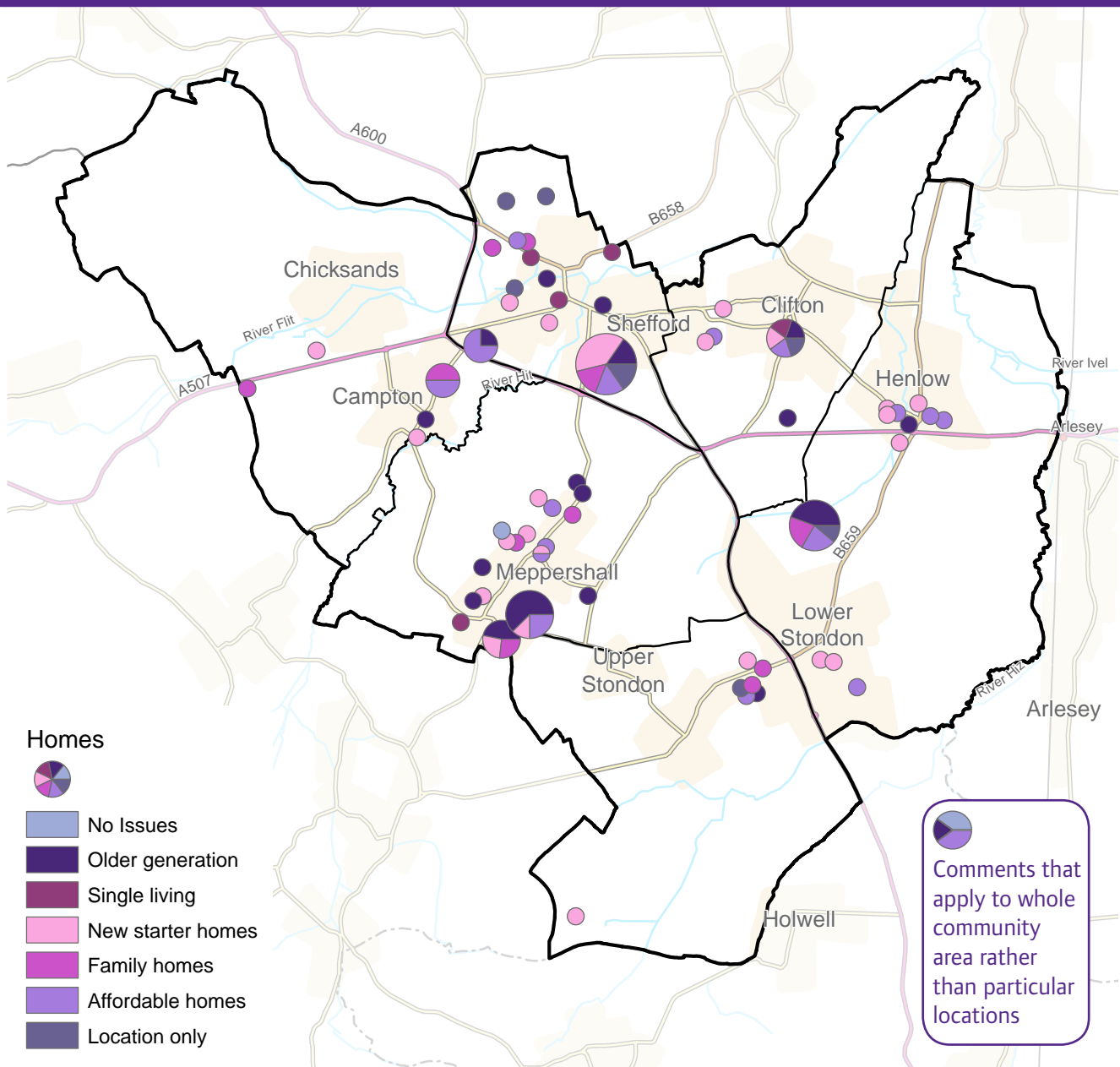
In relation to the responses south of Shefford, comments included the need for a mix of affordable housing, that allows older people to downsize and free up larger homes for younger people. Around Meppershall, concerns more frequently related to providing smaller homes for older people as well as to stop local people having to move away. Around Campton, affordable homes was the more predominant response, with the need for a good range of homes required, similar to the existing profile.

At Henlow Airfield, a number of people considered that there was an opportunity to provide new housing, particularly for older people and affordable housing. In Henlow itself, starter homes for first time buyers were the greater priority, alongside affordable homes for local people.



Types of homes people consider to be needed within the area

Map showing the places where there were considered to be opportunities to provide new homes



Other comments included that housing developments need to be mixed to allow the population to interact; infrastructure needs to be improved to accommodate more development; the need for bungalows and sheltered accommodation for older people, incorporated into communities; prioritising infill development; a need for starter homes in villages; and better correlation between what people need and what is actually built. There was also a suggestion that new villages and towns would be preferable to adding to existing villages that struggle to cope.

Trends

Provide a mix of housing types throughout the Area, including homes for older people to downsize.

Provide affordable housing as well as homes for older people and starter homes, similar to existing profiles.

Opportunity for new housing at Henlow Airfield.

Growth & Infrastructure

Feedback

91% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Growth and Infrastructure. Eighteen people answered that they currently have no issues related to Growth and Infrastructure in the Community Area.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Growth and Infrastructure that people considered most needed in the Community Area was Healthcare (at 29%) closely followed by Schools (at 28%).

Analysis

The main locations where people felt strongly about Growth and Infrastructure were Shefford and Meppershall, with smaller concentrations of responses at Clifton, Henlow and Henlow Airfield.

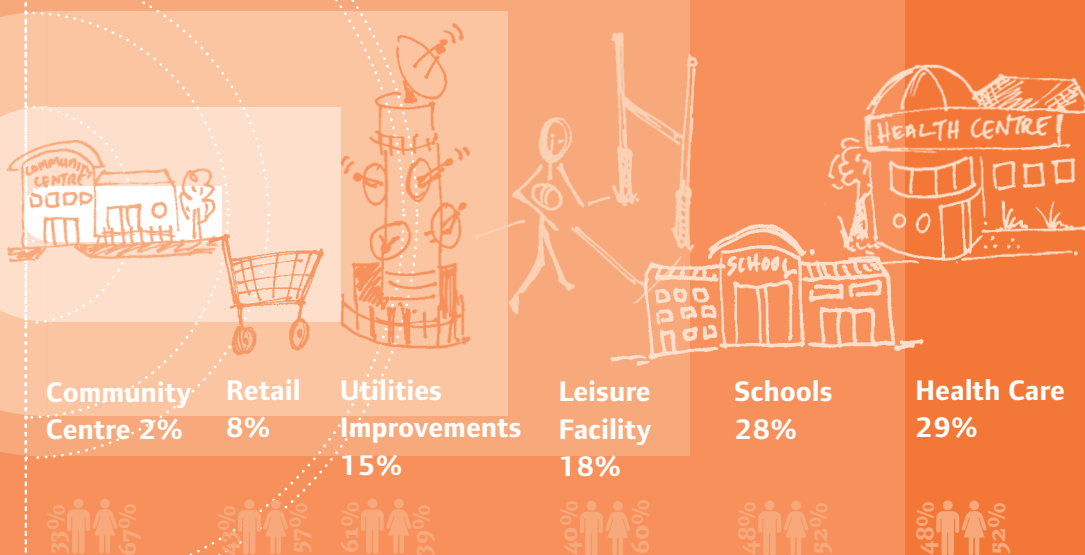
Within Shefford, an area to the south east of the town was identified as a potential location for a larger doctor's surgery, a new school or a new swimming

pool and football pitches. Elsewhere in the town, the need for additional lower school places was identified, as well as an additional supermarket, increased numbers of shops and leisure facilities.

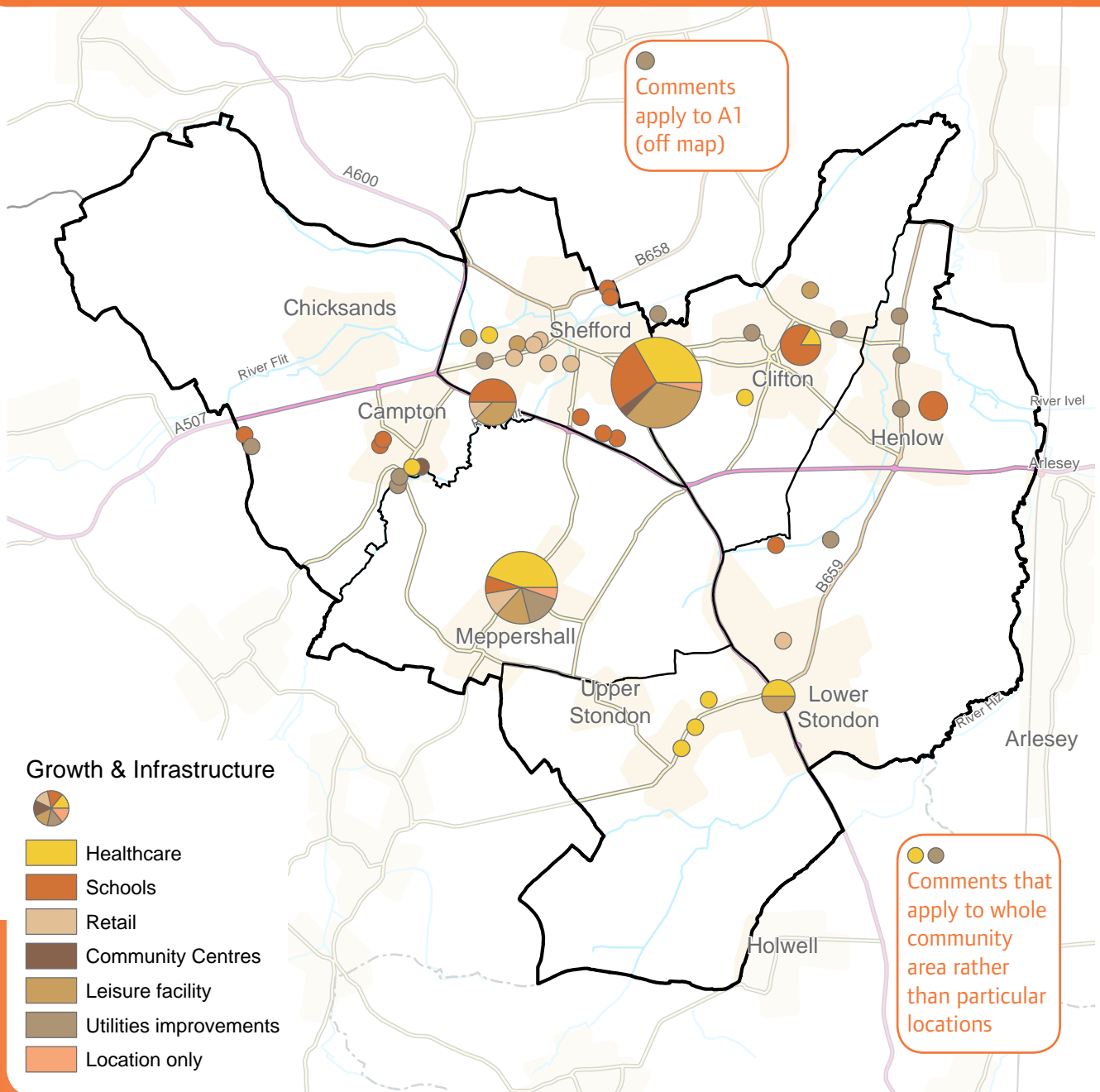
In Meppershall, a doctor's surgery was also requested by a number of people, particularly as Shefford is currently overloaded. New grammar schools were proposed and reference was made to the need to retain the village pub as a social centre. Poor internet speeds were also highlighted as a problem.

Other comments included Clifton Primary School being over crowded; a need to expand Henlow Middle School; a suggestion that care homes are currently in short supply; a visiting GP once a week for elderly people in villages would be useful; increased provision of dentists taking on NHS patients; retain existing leisure facilities at Henlow Airfield when the camp closes; better broadband and mobile coverage; and water and sewage supplies need improvement.

Categories people would most like to see improvements made to infrastructure within the area



Map showing the areas where there were considered to be opportunities to provide or improve infrastructure facilities



Trends

Increase in the number of doctors available.

Increase in the number of school places.

Increase leisure facilities in Sheffield, particularly a swimming pool and football pitches.

Improve broadband speed and mobile reception in rural areas.

Event: Findings

The people who attended the drop-in event for this Community Area identified the following **Future Opportunities** to protect or improve their locality under the growth themes:

Local Character

- To protect the rural character of the surrounding countryside within the Area.
- To protect The Glebe at Campton and Henlow Millennium Field.

Transport

- Improvements to A507 to reduce congestion.
- Increased traffic calming in villages.
- To improve bus services between settlements and to Arlesey station.
- An increased network of segregated cycleways and footpaths between settlements and to schools and local amenities.

Jobs & Business

- Introduce a greater variety of shops and businesses on Shefford High Street.
- Allow small scale employment opportunities of all kinds in Mepershall, as well as retaining the village pub.
- Potential to create an industrial park or a business park at Henlow Airfield to create local jobs.

natural Glebe
development area
 open building
 space character
 green
village
 field Maintain
 countryside
 Campton Shefford
 preserve land
 important Henlow
 Meppershall

footpath
 Meppershall route Campton
Shefford improve
 Arlesey school
traffic road
 car access local
 cycle
 bus
 village service
 station Henlow
 parking

development
 industrial housing
 business village
Henlow
 units Street
 small park
 local
 retail town
shop RAF
 area employment
 pub
Shefford
 job

The WordCloud diagrams illustrate the top twenty words used by the people who attended the drop-in event within their commentary for each growth theme. The size of the words reflect the number of people who wrote them.

Environment

- To protect the open space between Meppershall and Shefford for wildlife.
- To protect Nunswood and open spaces in general from development.
- To preserve The Glebe, Campton.
- To increase access to open space at Henlow Airfield.



Homes

- Provide a mix of housing types throughout the Area, including homes for older people to downsize.
- Provide affordable housing as well as homes for older people and starter homes, similar to existing profiles.
- There is an opportunity to provide new housing at Henlow Airfield.



Growth and Infrastructure

- Increase the number of doctors available.
- Increase the number of school places, particularly in Shefford, Clifton and Henlow.
- Increase leisure facilities in Shefford, particularly a swimming pool and football pitches.
- Improve broadband speed and mobile reception in rural areas.



Shaping where you live 2035



What happens next?

Community Planning is a continuing process and this Community Plan, which collates all the information gathered at the event, is the first time this type of information has been collected. There will be a series of actions arising from the Community Plan which are likely to influence or shape planning policy in the Local Plan, decisions on planning applications, and decisions on where money arising from development should be spent. These actions are identified in total within the 'Overview Statement of Community Planning' which details how they will be dealt with. Central Bedfordshire Council will seek to work in partnership with organisations including Town and Parish Councils, developers and other agencies to deliver on these actions.

For more info on community planning ...

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/community-planning

More information on the Local Plan can be found here...

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/localplan

Disclaimer Central Bedfordshire Council is the statutory Planning Authority for the area and therefore is bound by legislation and must have regard to government guidance on planning matters.

Community Plan produced in consultation with Central Bedfordshire Council supported by www.lda-design.co.uk

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