

Shaping where you live 2035

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Communityplan

This Community Says...



Community Plan

**Covering the parishes of Arlesey,
Astwick, Fairfield, Stotfold**

Community Area 10

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.

Transport



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.

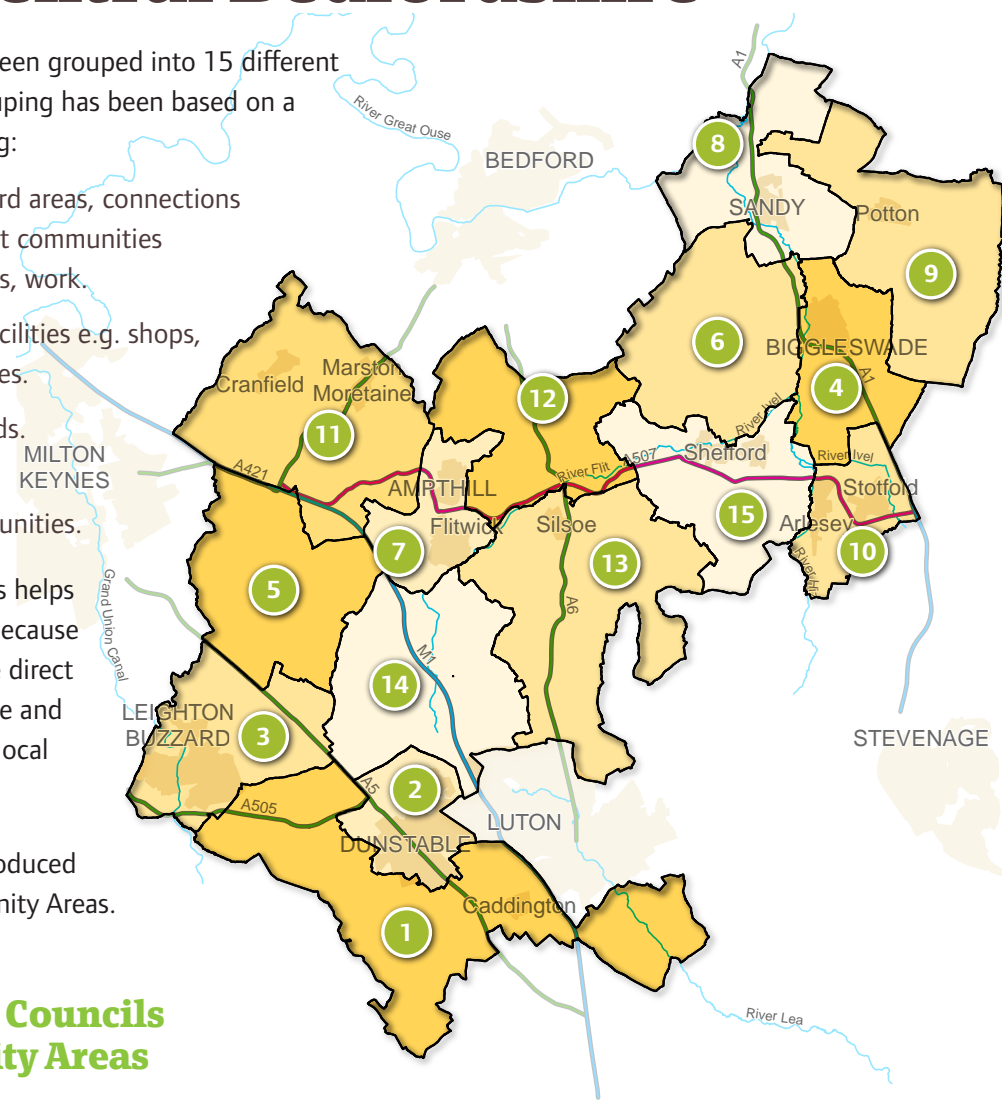
Community Areas within Central Bedfordshire

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, Tilsworth, 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

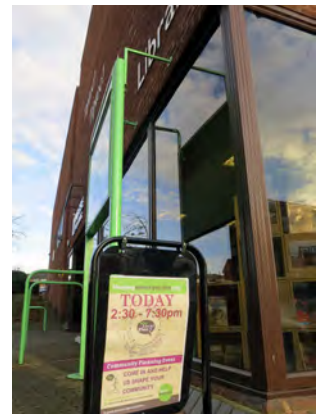
The first stage in community planning was to hold an event with residents in their local area to find out what they wanted to raise with us. For each Community Area, a drop-in event was organised at a local venue for the public to attend. The drop-in event consisted of a number of exhibition boards providing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

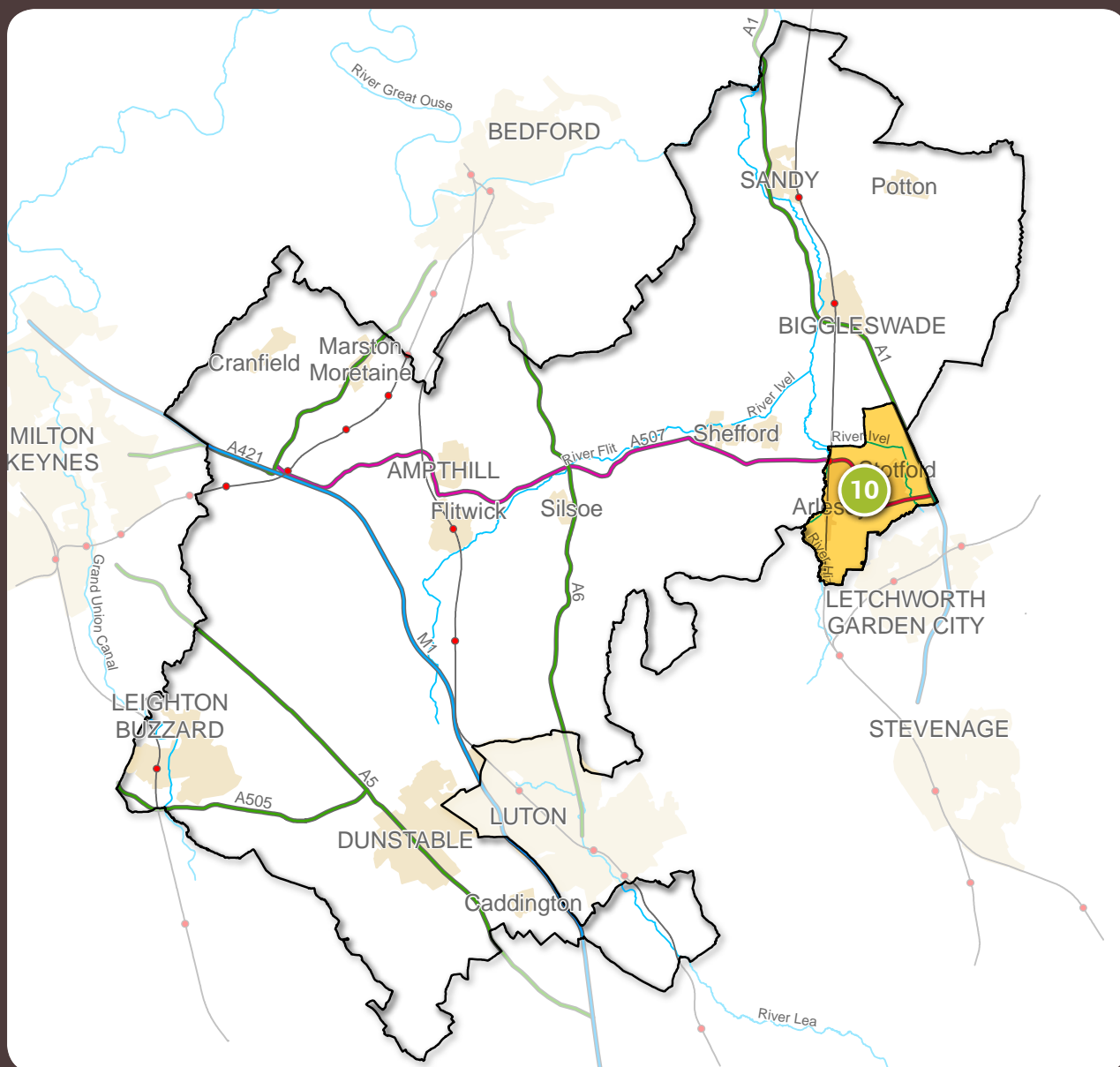
4. Trends

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 10, which includes the parishes of Arlesey, Astwick, Fairfield and Stotfold. This Community Area is located in the east of Central Bedfordshire, containing a small number of towns and villages. The Area is intersected by the A507, and the A1 runs along the eastern border, providing links to Biggleswade to the north and Letchworth Garden City and Stevenage to the south. The East Coast Main Line railway cuts through the western part of the Area, with a station in Arlesey. Local roads between settlements are generally linked to the A507.

The Area population is approximately 15,210*. This Area has a significantly lower retired population and a

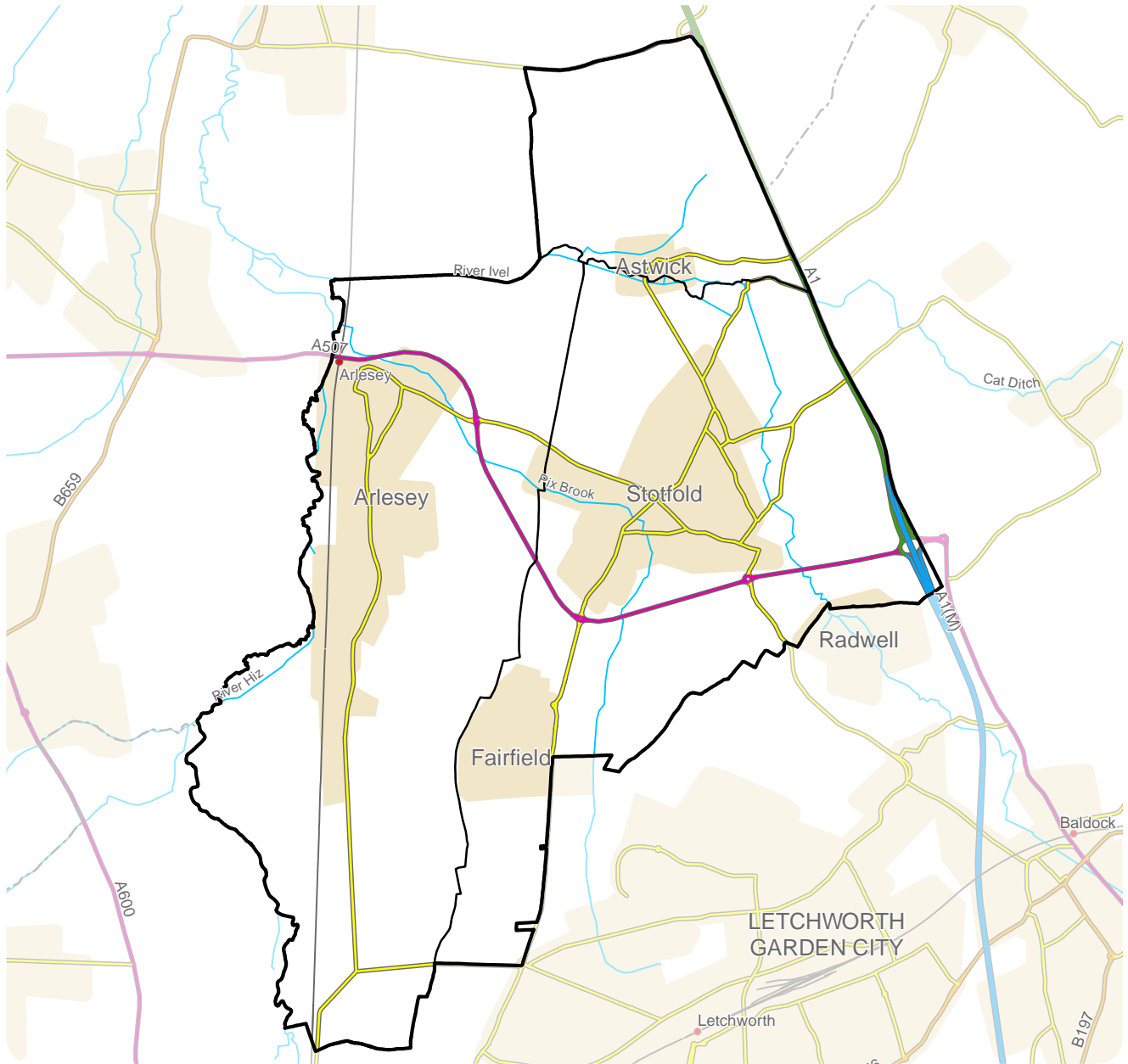
higher working population when compared to the rest of Central Bedfordshire. In terms of dwelling types, the Area has a high percentage of flats when compared to the rest of Central Bedfordshire.

Stotfold and Fairfield have published a Parish Plan or have one in development. Arlesey and Fairfield currently have Neighbourhood Plans in development.

In total, 99 people attended the drop-in event on Thursday 9th February 2017 which was held at Oak Hall in Stotfold from 2.30pm until 7.30pm. All parts of the Area were represented with the highest number of attendees being from Stotfold. The people who attended mainly shop in Letchworth or Stotfold and those who were in employment primarily work in the Community Area, in London or in nearby towns.

*based on Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census, Usual Resident Population

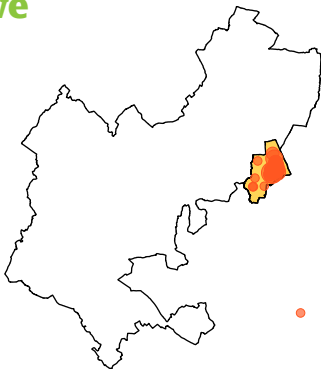
Plan of Community Area



Where participants from the area live, work & shop

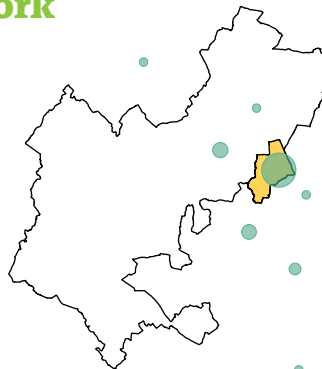
Dot size represent the amount of people, e.g. the larger the spot, more people.

Live



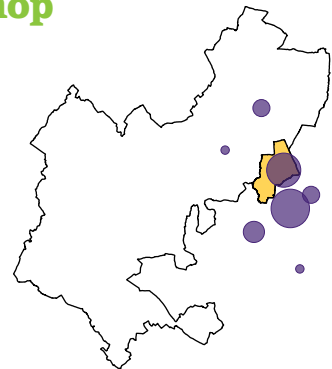
The people who visited the event lived in the areas shown above.

Work



The people who visited the event mainly worked in the areas shown above, with six person working in London (off the map).

Shop



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

Local Character

Feedback

92% of people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Local Character. Nobody considered that there were no improvements to be made to Local Character within the Community Area. Two people indicated that they currently have no issues with regards to Local Character in their Area.

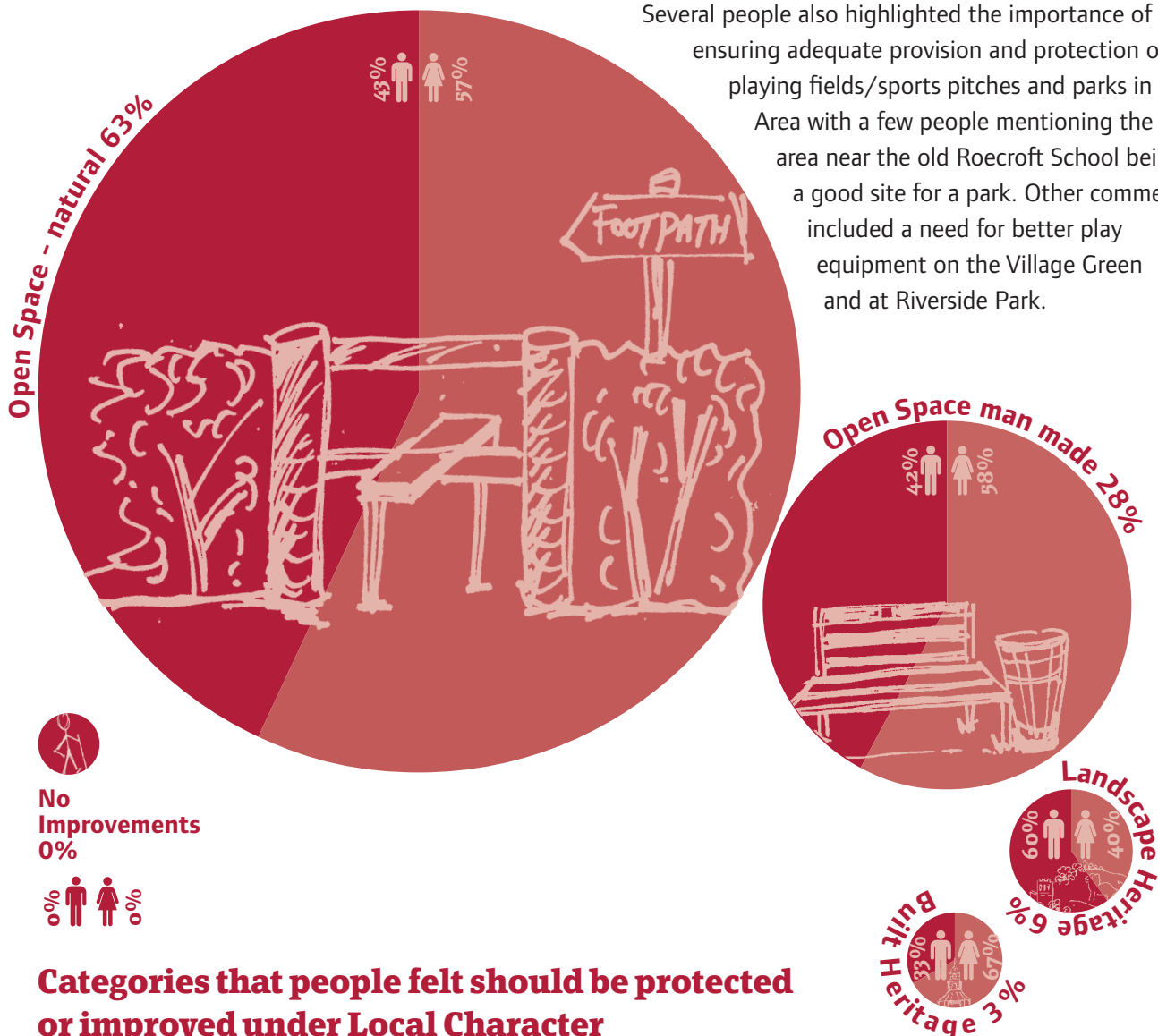
From those who responded, the most popular category of Local Character that people would like to see protected and improved was Natural Open Space (at 63%) followed by Man Made Open Space (at 28%).

Analysis

The main location where people felt strongly about Local Character was Stotfold, particularly the eastern boundary of the town. Several people highlighted issues associated with Local Character in Astwick, Arlesey and Fairfield.

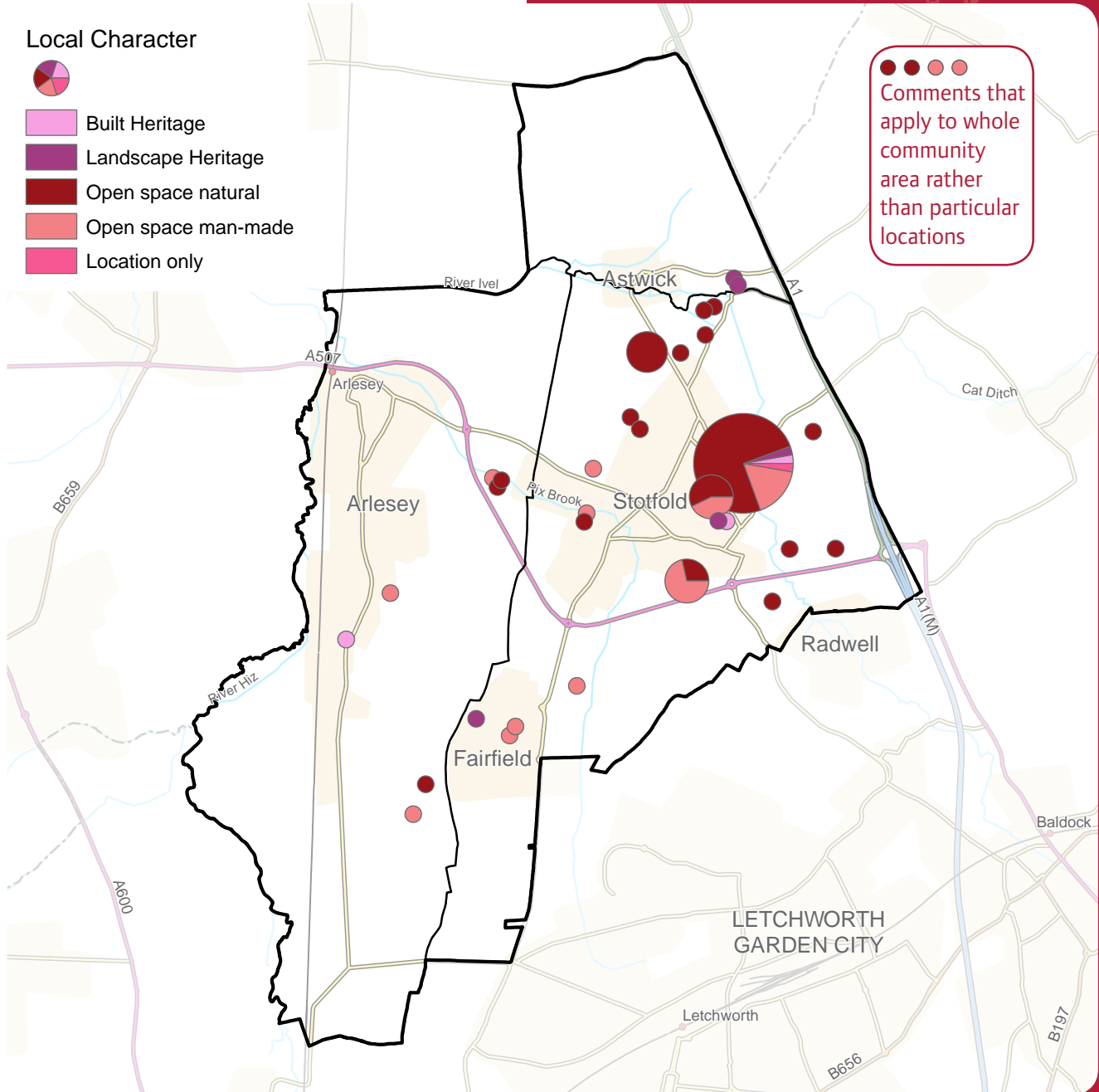
A large number of people answered that they would like to see the open spaces across the entire Community Area protected, this included areas for walking and viewing wildlife. Comments related to protecting open spaces included expanding on Stotfold Mill local nature reserve; keeping local allotments; introducing a nature study centre; protecting toads during their migration; using brownfield land if development is necessary (not green field); and developing Green/Blue Lagoon as a country park.

Several people also highlighted the importance of ensuring adequate provision and protection of playing fields/sports pitches and parks in the Area with a few people mentioning the area near the old Roecroft School being a good site for a park. Other comments included a need for better play equipment on the Village Green and at Riverside Park.



Categories that people felt should be protected or improved under Local Character

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



Other comments included protecting historical buildings in Stotfold such as St Mary's Church; concern that the local towns and villages do not coalesce; preserving the cricket field and Village Green in Fairfield and protecting built heritage and parks in Arlesey.

Trends

To maintain and protect the character of the countryside surrounding settlements within the Area.

To protect and enhance existing public open spaces for leisure, recreation and wildlife.

To improve the play areas in Stotfold.

Transport

Feedback

89% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Transport. Seven people indicated that they currently have no issues with regards to Transport in their Area.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Transport that people considered needed improving in the Community Area was Vehicular (at 36%) closely followed by Buses (at 33%).

Analysis

The main locations where people felt strongly about Transport was around Stotfold, with several people also placing their stickers around Arlesey Railway Station, as well as the whole Community Area in general.

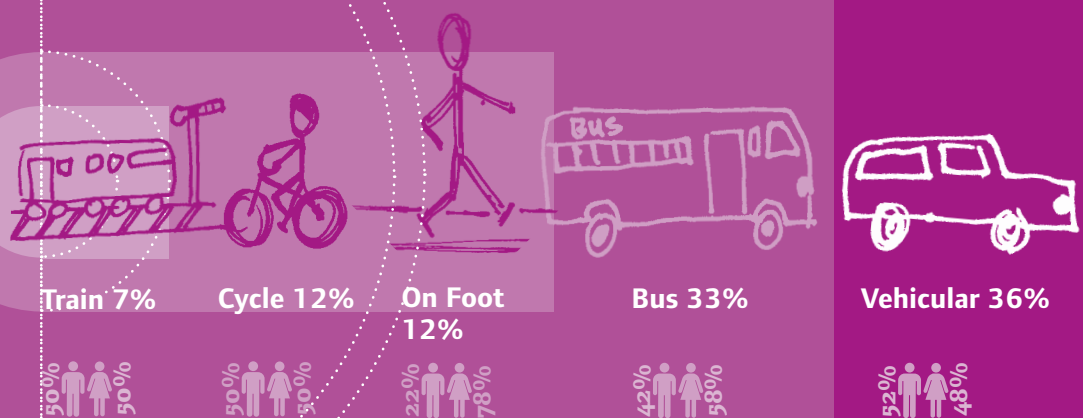
Many people answered that the road infrastructure in the Area, particularly in Stotfold, needed improving. People highlighted that parking on narrow streets (some people suggested widening the roads) in Stotfold causes congestion and that more intense traffic calming measures should be implemented,

especially on the roads in the centre of Stotfold. Some people suggested using a one-way system to help with this. People showed concern for the impact of a growing population on the road infrastructure in the Area. Other comments included improvements to the A507/Norton Road roundabout and a need for more zebra crossings.

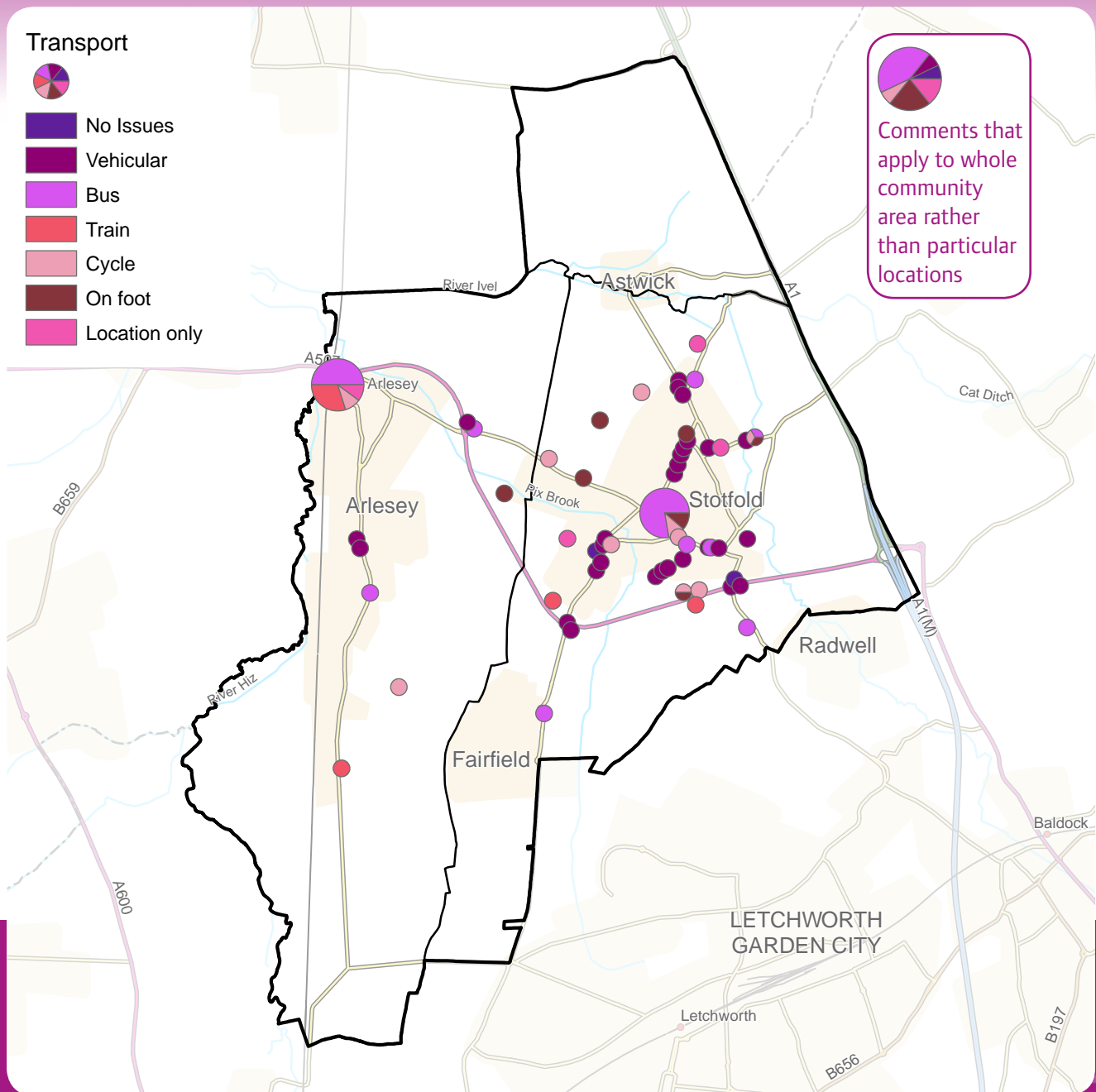
A number of people answered that they would like to see an improved bus service in the Area including more frequent buses to stations, hospitals and surrounding towns such as Biggleswade. Other people asked for the bus timetable to coincide with trains leaving from Arlesey Station to prevent long waiting times between modes of transport.

Other comments included improving pavements in the Area; a need for more, safe cycleways across the entire Community Area; a need for all weather footpaths in Stotfold; safer routes to local schools; a need for more trains; and that forms of non-motorised travel should be promoted and encouraged.

Categories people felt should be improved under Transport



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



Trends

Vehicular - Improve road infrastructure within the Area, particularly in Stotfold to address congestion and pedestrian safety/movement.

Buses - Regular and more frequent bus service in the Area, particularly to Arlesey station and nearby towns.

Cycleways/footpaths - Network of safe links across the Community Area to promote non-motorised travel.

Jobs and Business

Feedback

91% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Jobs and Business. Nine people indicated that they currently have no issues with regards to Jobs and Business in their Area.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Jobs and Business that people would like to see investment made to was High Street Development (at 44%) followed by Local Retail Units (at 25%).

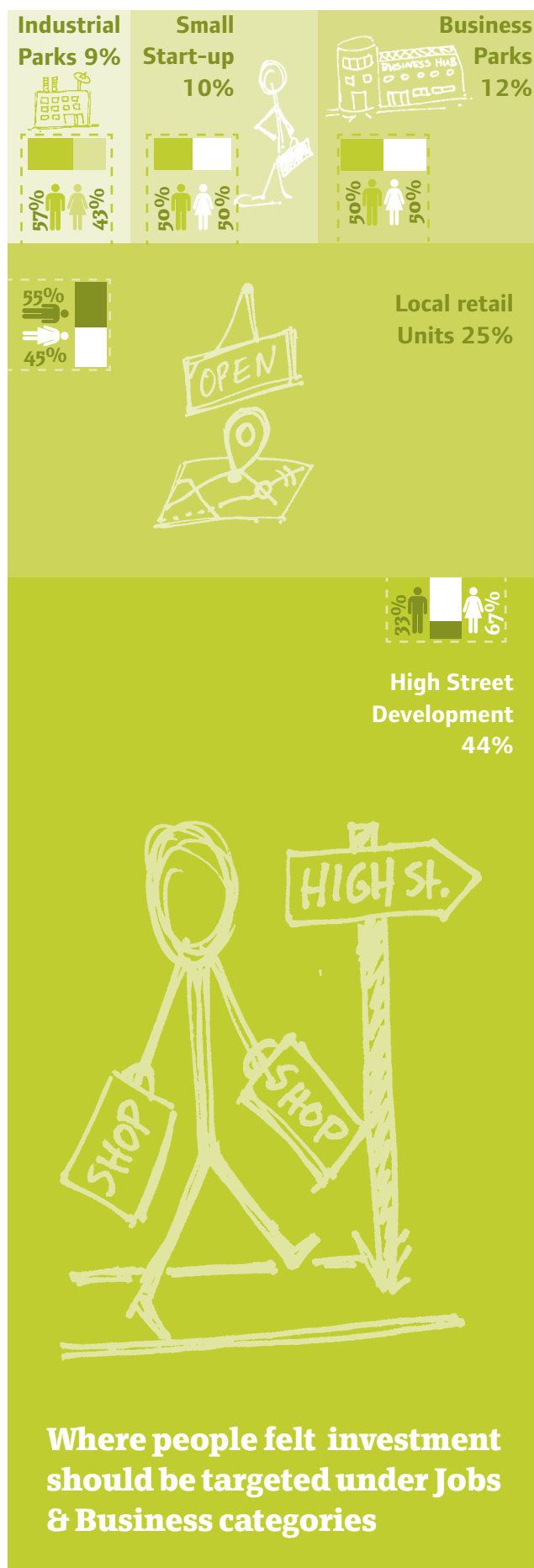
Analysis

The location where people felt most strongly about Jobs and Business was Stotfold, with most people placing their stickers near the High Street.

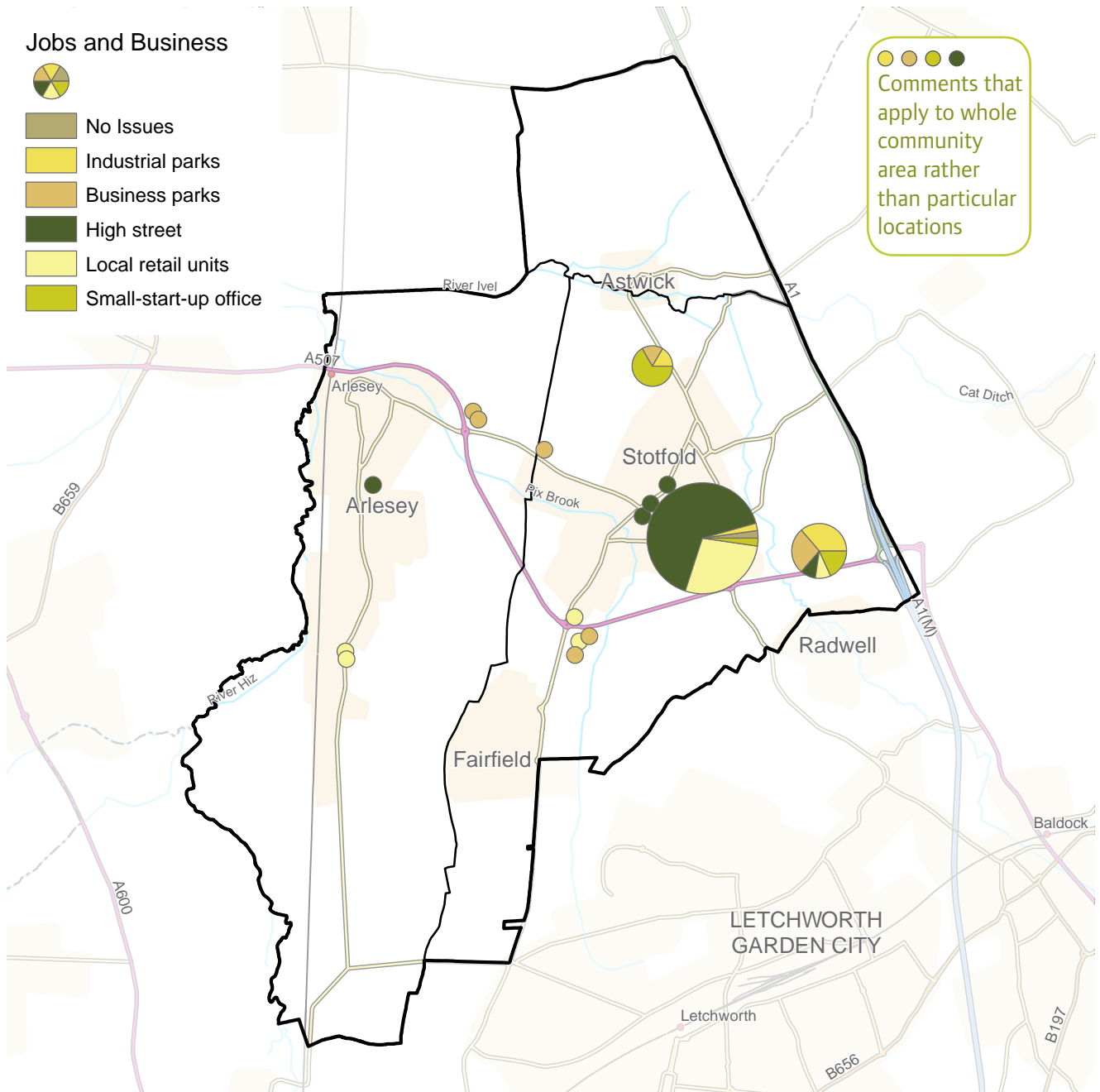
A large number of people answered that they would like to see the High Street in Stotfold developed and made 'more attractive' to shoppers and potential retailers. People stated that the provision of high quality, local retail units is poor and that there are too many estate agents, hairdressers and nail salons. Several people commented on need for more family based cafes, restaurants and pubs. The consensus was that people felt residents of Stotfold shouldn't have to travel outside of the town to shop.

Other comments relating to retail in Stotfold included a need for more shops for the elderly, young and disabled; a proposed site for retail development opposite the Community Centre; a need for another large supermarket; a suggestion that improved parking should come before retail expansion; a need for a central feature and a need for shops for residents who live on the outskirts of Stotfold.

Several people also highlighted the importance of business and industrial parks in the Area. Plots near the A1 and the north of Stotfold (Fen End) were highlighted as locations for business parks. It was suggested that these would provide employment opportunities for people in the Area and would make use of unutilised spaces.



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



Other comments included improving the High Street in Arlesey; a need for high-tech businesses, not warehouses; a need for small-start up offices (near the A1); a suggestion of a shopping centre near Stotfold/ Arlesey roundabout and concern of the availability of space for new business ventures.

Trends

Encourage shops, cafes and restaurants to the High Street in Stotfold, whilst addressing parking needs of town.

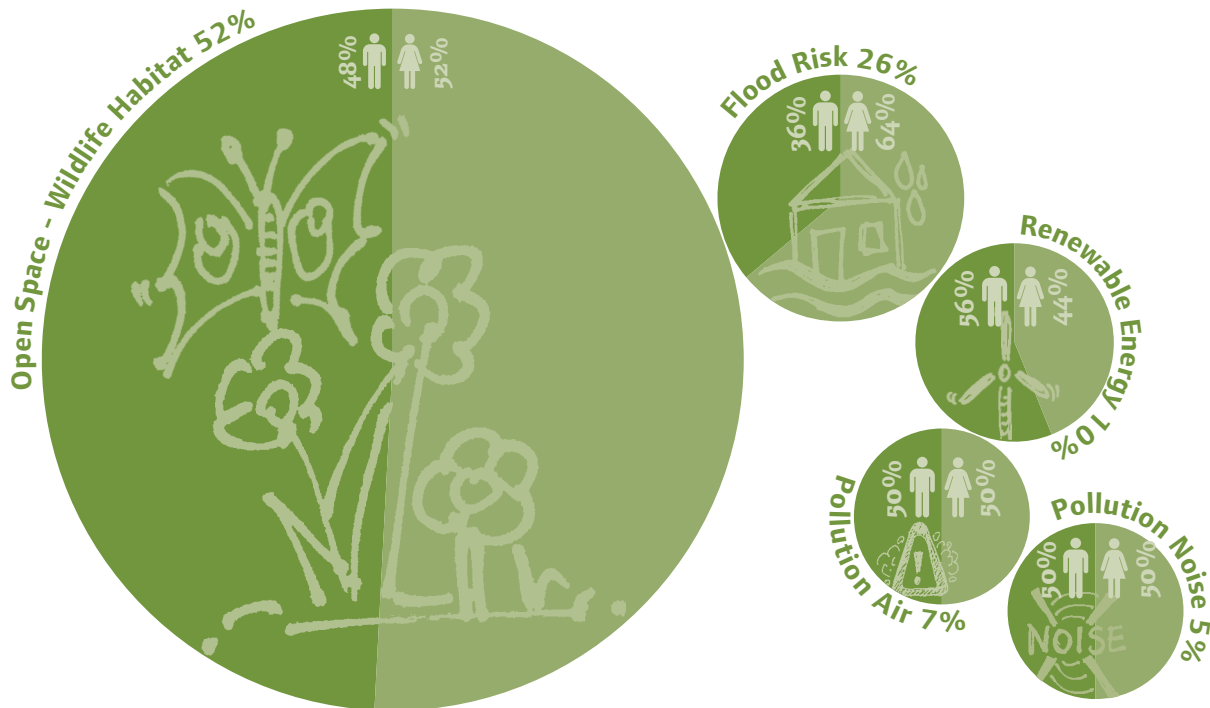
Encourage business parks near the A1 and north of Stotfold to stimulate employment in the Area.

Environment

Feedback

88% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Environment. Two people indicated that they currently have no issues with regards to the Environment.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Environment that people considered needed to be protected and improved on in the future was Natural Open Spaces (at 52%) followed by Flood Risk (at 26%).



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

Analysis

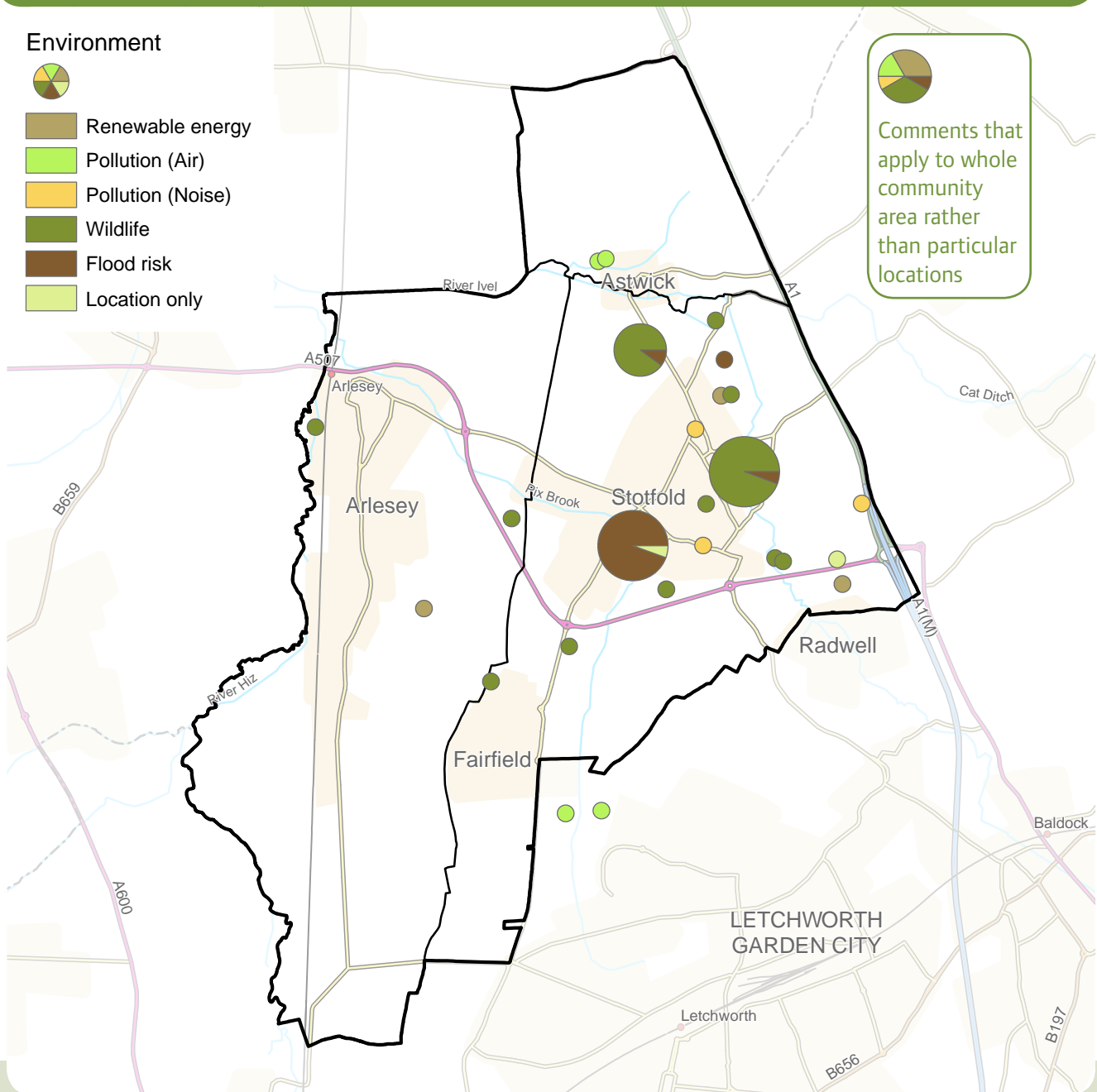
The main locations where people felt strongly about the Environment was in Stotfold with a number of people placing their stickers near Pix Brook and the open spaces around Stotfold Mill, as well as the whole Community Area in general.

The majority of people answered that they would like to see open spaces protected across the entire Community Area, particularly the Mill and Riverside east of Stotfold. People asked that the nature reserve in Stotfold be extended; that there needs to be an increase in litter picking; that wildlife habitats should be protected; and that development should only be on brownfield sites.

A number of people highlighted that flooding around Pix Brook is a big issue and that the houses in this area regularly flood due to over development and lack of green spaces. People suggested the addition of more culverts as well as making sure that pipes and drains are regularly cleared.

Several people also commented that solar technologies should be included on all new developments as well as permeable drives and an efficient recycling system.

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



Other comments included concern over noise pollution from Luton airport flight path and the A1; protecting the children's play area next to the old Roecroft School; the use of traffic calming measures to reduce noise pollution in Stotfold; concern over smells from the chicken farm and sewage in Astwick; a need to protect and enhance Blue Lagoon; and concern over excessive air pollution from Letchworth water treatment plant.

Trends

Wildlife habitat associated with open countryside to be protected.

Flood risk needs to be resolved in the area associated with Pix Brook.

Renewable energy to be promoted in the Area, particularly in new developments.

Noise and air pollution arising from A1 to be resolved, particularly where close to settlements.

Homes

Feedback

86% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Homes. Seventeen people indicated they currently have no issues with regard to Homes in their Community Area.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Homes that people thought was needed within the Community Area was Older Generation Homes (at 64%) followed by Affordable Homes (at 20%).

Analysis

The two locations where people felt strongly about Homes in order of popularity, were Stotfold and Fairfield. Several comments were also related to Arlesey as well as the whole Community Area in general.

People showed concern over the provision of all types of Homes. However, the majority of people answered that there was a need for homes for the older generation. These include flats, bungalows, retirement homes, warden controlled homes and sheltered accommodation with onsite medical care. People suggested that available land around Larksfield Surgery should be used. People highlighted that elderly people were not able to downsize and stated that they should be able to continue to live in the area they grew up in. A need for sheltered accommodation was also highlighted in south Arlesey.



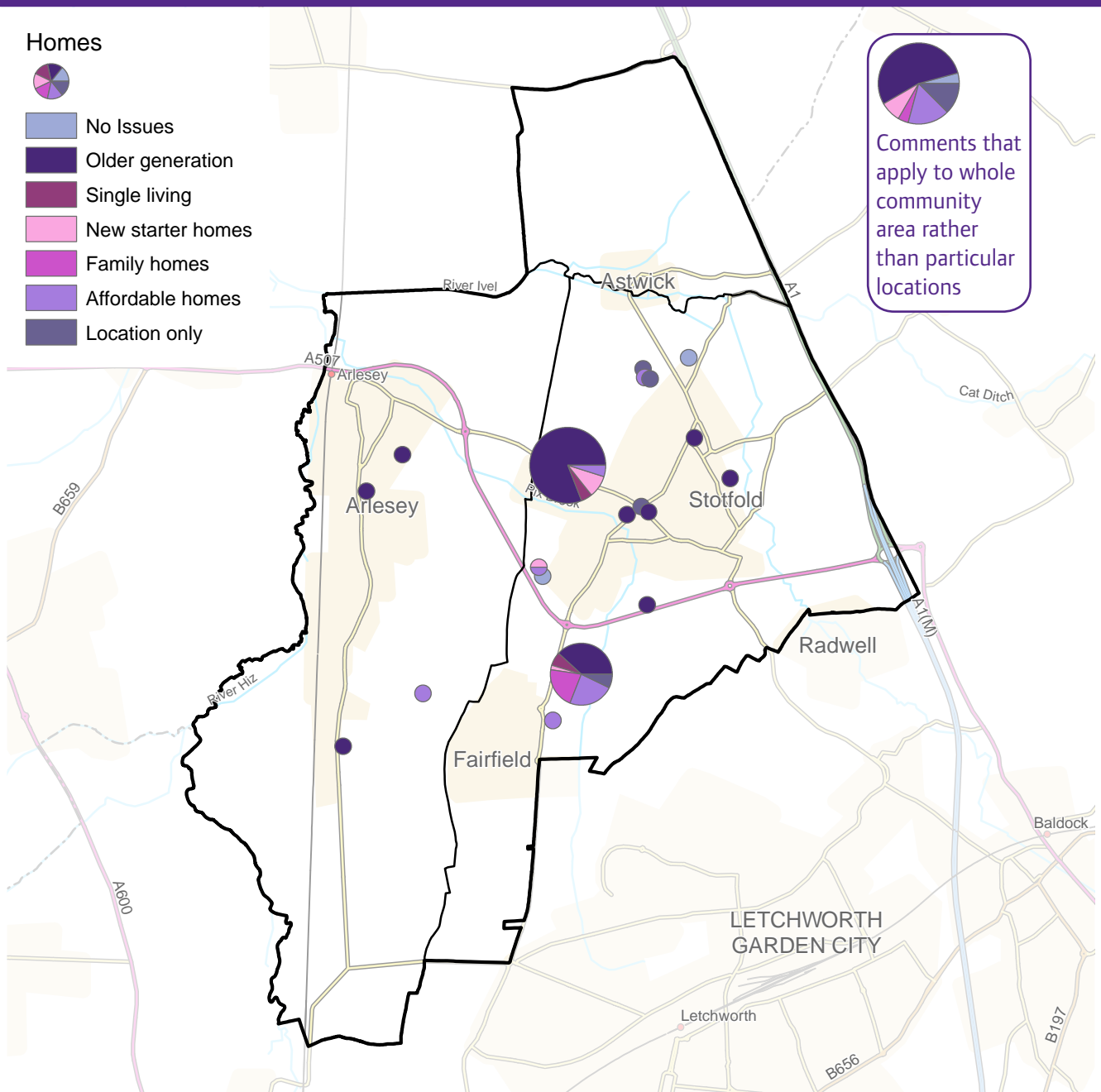
Other people commented on a need for affordable homes and small starter homes for the younger generation. It was suggested that government support might help with the provision of new affordable homes. Concern was also shown for the lack of shared ownership properties which also help younger people to become independent.

Other comments included a need for family homes with large gardens; that the local people should put pressure on house developers to build responsibly and incorporate renewable technologies into new builds; a need to replace Halworth House; and several comments on the area not needing anymore housing especially when the local infrastructure is already struggling.



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



Trends

Provide homes for the elderly in the form of downsizing properties such as bungalows, sheltered accommodation and care homes near to local facilities.

Provide affordable housing (whether rent or part-purchase) so that families and young people can stay in the Area.

Improvements to infrastructure needed before considering any further growth within the Area.

Growth & Infrastructure

Feedback

88% of the people who attended the event answered one or both questions on Growth and Infrastructure. Nobody responded that they had no issues with Growth and Infrastructure within their Community Area.

From those who responded, the most popular category of Growth and Infrastructure that people considered was needed within the Community Area was for Healthcare (at 59%). Most of the remaining categories were similarly weighted at around 10%.

Analysis

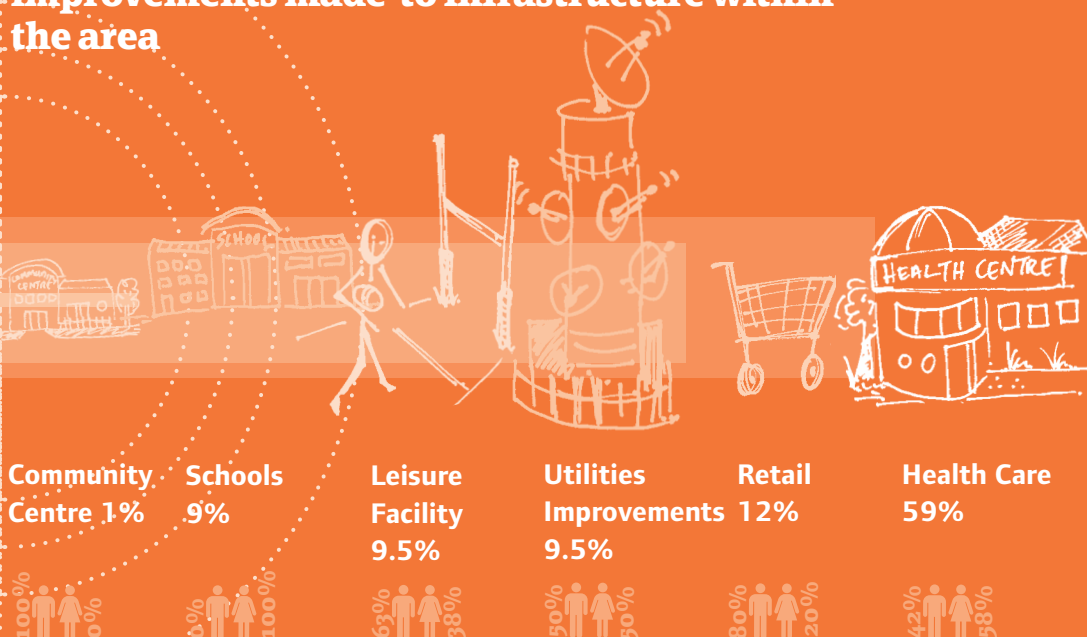
The main location where people felt strongly about Growth and Infrastructure was Larksfield Surgery, with other responses scattered around Stotfold and the villages in the Area, and the Community Area in general.

The majority of people stated that healthcare improvements were needed in the Area and highlighted that the current provision of GPs and medical support staff was inadequate.

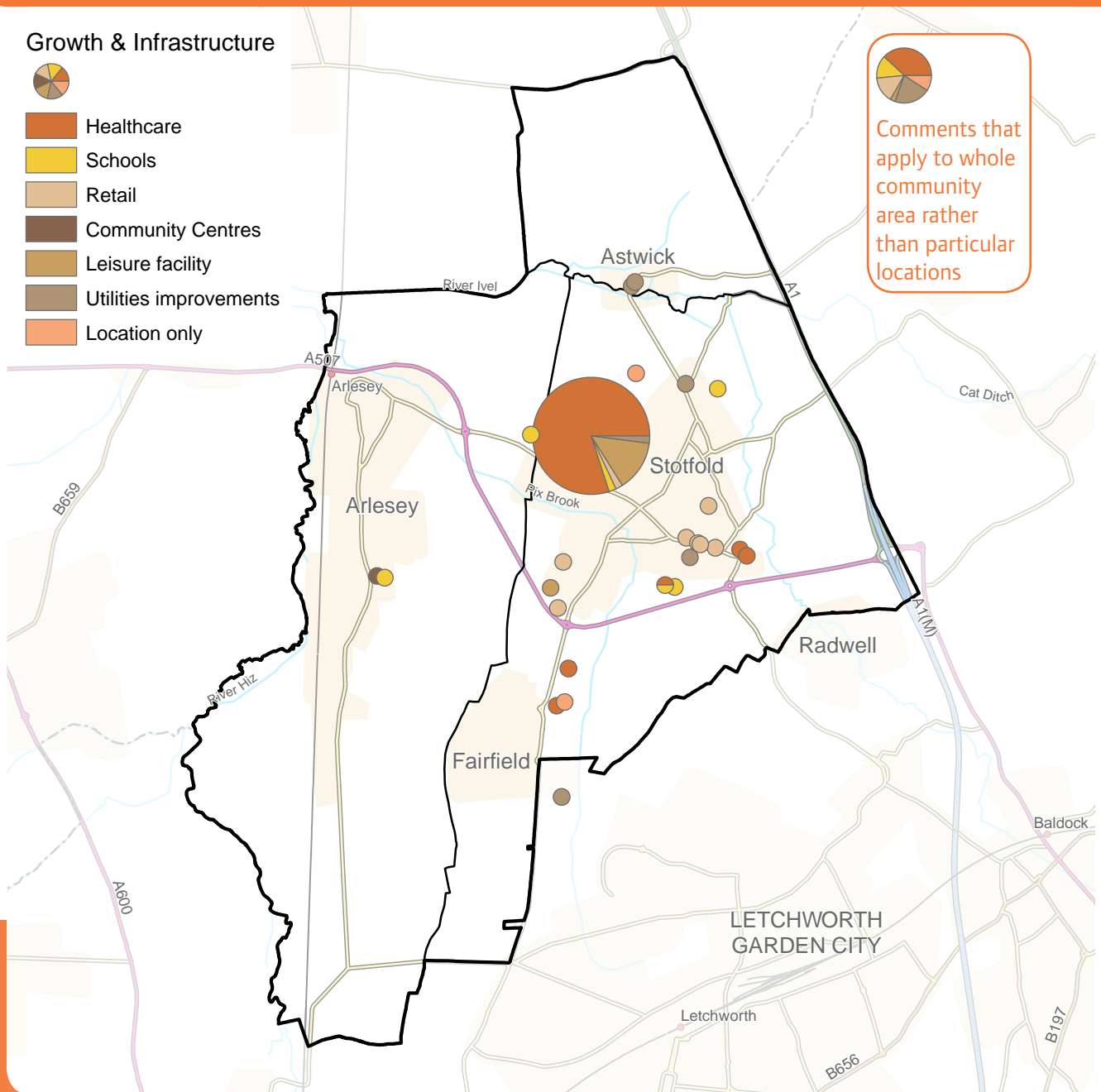
People answered that Larksfield Surgery needs to be expanded or another surgery needs to be built, especially given the expected increase in population. Other comments related to healthcare included the need for a second pharmacy; a suggestion that a minor injuries unit that deals with diagnostic assessments etc. would be beneficial; that further care, in addition to the GP service, such as physiotherapy is required; and that a 'Health Hub' is needed in Fairfield.

Other comments included a need for a larger supermarket in Stotfold; concern over new housing putting strain on infrastructure; a greater variety of retail in Stotfold; a desperate need for more schools in Stotfold and a need for a larger lower school in Arlesey; better leisure facilities, including swimming pools and tennis courts that are within walking distance of Stotfold; ensuring adequate drainage and foul infrastructure across the Community Area; a need for improved broadband; more local shops in Stotfold; a need for mains gas and cable in Astwick; and concern that the community centre in Arlesey is in need of refurbishment.

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

As a priority, improve and expand healthcare facilities within the Area.

Address education provision in the Area with any further growth considered.

Improve utilities service across the Area, including drainage, foul, broadband and mains gas.

Provide leisure facilities within Stotfold.

Event: Findings

The people who attended the drop-in event for this Community Area identified the following **Future Opportunities** to be protected or improved within their locality under the Growth themes:

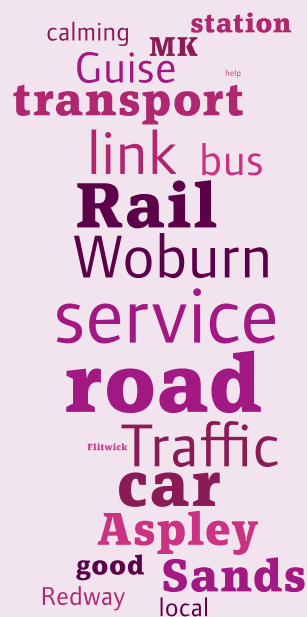
Local Character

- To maintain and protect the character of the countryside surrounding settlements within the Area.
- To protect and enhance existing public open spaces for leisure, recreation and wildlife.
- To improve the play areas in Stotfold.



Transport

- Vehicular - Improve road infrastructure within the Area, particularly in Stotfold to address congestion and pedestrian safety/movement.
- Buses - Regular and more frequent bus service in the Area, particularly to Arlesey station and nearby towns.
- Cycleways/footpaths - Network of safe links across the Community Area to promote non-motorised travel.



Jobs & Business

- Encourage shops, cafes and restaurants to the High Street in Stotfold, whilst addressing parking needs of town.
- Encourage business parks near the A1 and north of Stotfold to stimulate employment in the Area.



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

- Wildlife habitat associated with open countryside to be protected.
- Flood risk needs to be resolved in the area associated with Pix Brook.
- Renewable energy to be promoted in the Area, particularly in new developments.
- Noise and air pollution arising from A1 to be resolved, particularly where close to settlements.



Homes

- Provide homes for the elderly in the form of downsizing properties such as bungalows, sheltered accommodation and care homes near to local facilities.
- Provide affordable housing (whether rent or part-purchase) so that families and young people can stay in the Area.
- Improvements to infrastructure needed before considering any further growth within the Area.

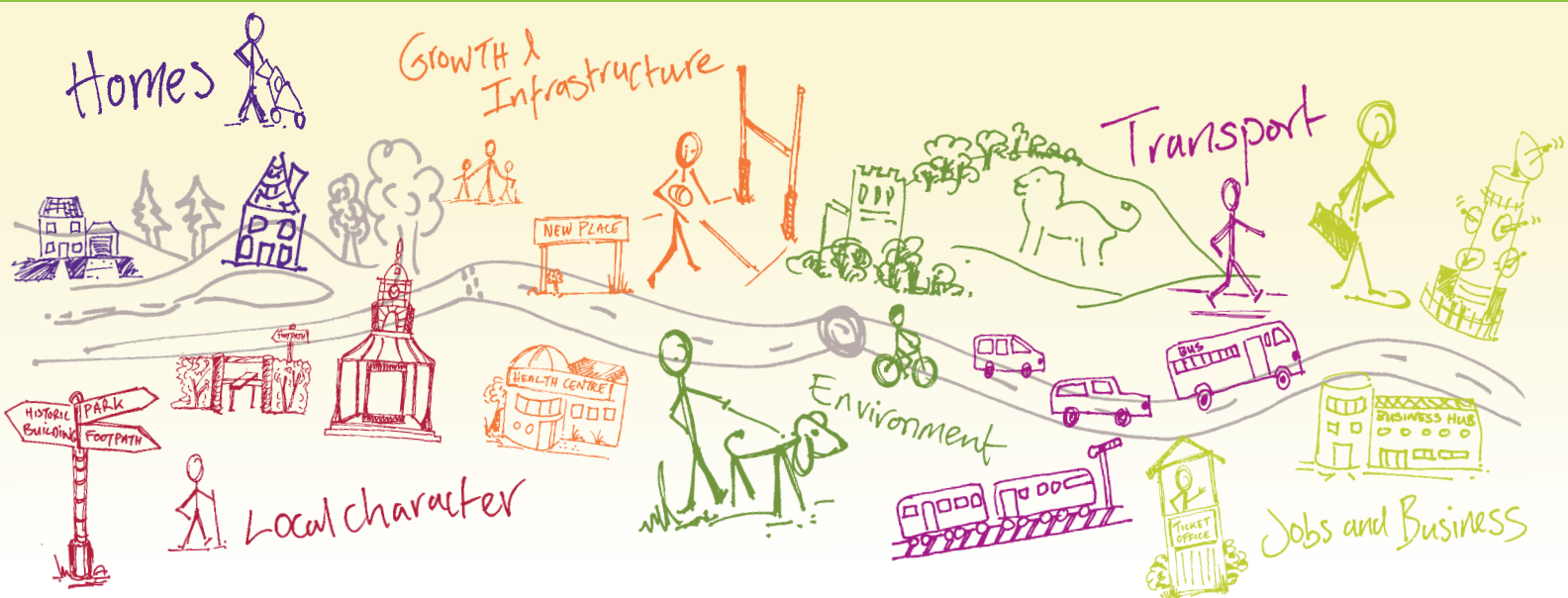


Growth and Infrastructure

- As a priority, improve and expand healthcare facilities within the Area.
- Address education provision in the Area with any further growth considered.
- Improve utilities service across the Area, including drainage, foul, broadband and mains gas.
- Provide leisure facilities within Stotfold.



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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