SOUTHAMPTON
CITY VISION
Local Plan

Draft Plan with Options

Consultation Results
Part 1: Headline Results

STRATEGIC APPROACH

HOMES

ECONOMY

INFRASTRUCTURE

ENVIRONMENT

TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

SITES

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SOUTHAMPTON
C I T Y   C O U N C I L

Draft Plan with Options – Consultation Results (Regulation 18)
Headline Summary
January 2024

Background

The first consultation on Southampton City Vision took place in spring 2020, but many events with schools, communities and businesses were cancelled due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Whilst overall there was a good response, with over 3000 people giving their views, some communities were not well represented.

The pandemic has accelerated a shift change in the way we engage and consult communities with a greater emphasis on digital formats. The government recognise this growing need and want to support Local Planning Authorities in understanding the tools available and what works well. In February 2022 a Pilot consultation was run based on key Local Plan Issues, as part of the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Community's (DLUHC) PropTech Engagement Fund. The pilot enabled us to test a new digital tool and the results have shaped the approach taken forward to the statutory Regulation 18 Consultation. A second round of funding was secured in Spring 2022 for a 3D model of the city centre and other key centres. This was used to help people better visualise proposed options for the city.

The second consultation under Regulation 18 took place from 31 October 2022 to 3 January 2023 on a draft plan with options. Below is a summary of the consultation approach and the initial headline results.
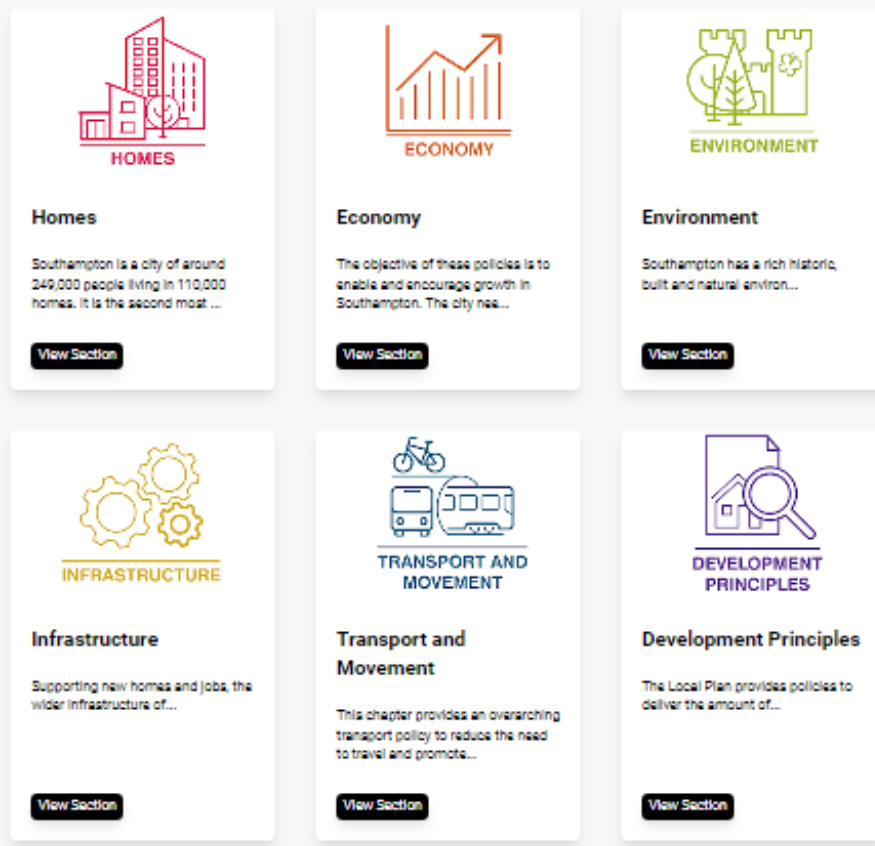
Approach – Consultation

The consultation was delivered on the digital platform 'Bang the Table'. Due to the quantity of information that needed to be provided, it was divided into a number of topics, which mirrored the chapters of the Plan. The screenshot below shows these topic 'tiles', each linked to the details of individual policies and proposed options.

For each policy the proposed policy text, any options and the overall approach was presented with the ability for consultees to comments on each and agree/disagree with options.

Due to the scale and complexity of a Local Plan at this stage, we felt it important to offer an alternative to the detail described above and created a 'quick survey'. This was based on the key strategic objectives of the plan, a simple 'emoji face' was used to ask how people felt about each of these, they were then asked to pick which three they felt were most important.

How are we going to achieve this? The key themes of our plan.

Homes

Southampton is a city of around 249,000 people living in 110,000 homes. It is the second most ...

View Section

Economy

The objective of these policies is to enable and encourage growth in Southampton. The city nee...

View Section

Environment

Southampton has a rich historic, built and natural environ...

View Section

Infrastructure

Supporting new homes and jobs, the wider infrastructure of...

View Section

Transport and Movement

This chapter provides an overarching transport policy to reduce the need to travel and promote...

View Section

Development Principles

The Local Plan provides policies to deliver the amount of...

View Section

In addition to the digital platform, copies of the Plan and supporting documents were available in the Civic Centre and at libraries together with paper response forms and paper copies of the quick survey.

During the consultation team members hosted drop-in sessions at each of the libraries and attended a wide range of meetings with resident groups, business groups and schools.

Approach – Communications Plan

Communication Objectives:

- Maintaining or improving on the level of engagement/consultation responses
- Ensuring we measure quality, not just quantity of responses;
- Utilising community networks and local champions to spread the word – trusted voices in local communities;
- Maximising the benefits of the consultation software and 3D modelling to make the consultation more engaging and accessible;
- Gathering quality information that can be used alongside other evidence to take the right options forward in the Plan.

Key messages:

- Role of the plan – what it does in shaping the city for the future (Southampton Stories videos can help demonstrate)
- Your city – you know your local area and are best place to influence its future
- Long term – real things on the ground for decades to comes – let's get it right.

- Making Southampton a better place to live and work
- Businesses – the right spaces and connectivity to thrive and grow

A wide range of communication channels were used and focussed on a cascading approach. Key stakeholder groups were contacted in the lead up to the consultation, briefed and asked to share information through local networks, all social media assets and content were provided to ease this process. All elected members were also briefed, in person and provided with an information pack. Appendix 1 details all channels.

Results

How many took part:

The consultation ran from 31 October 2022 to 3 January 2023. In total almost 1,600 participated, the majority of which (1,350) did so by completing the quick survey. Over 1,000 responses to the quick survey were received from members of the 'People's Panel', via SNAP, 21 paper copies and the remaining responses were on Bang the Table. For future consultations we aim to integrate the People's Panel with Bang the Table, so all results are in one place.

More detailed comments on individual policies required people to register details on-line. In total 162 people registered and made 1032 comments across the 74 policy surveys.

In addition, a number of responses were not made via the digital platform with 58 documents being received via email. These are mainly from developers/agents and statutory consultees (national organisations), all of whom provided lengthy responses covering multiple policies. Through the consultation period team members attended a range meetings and events, talking face to face to stakeholders, who may or may not have made a formal response through the channels outlined above. Approximately 350 attended an in-person event or meeting during the consultation.

Who took part:

Only those wishing to make comments on policies were required to register and therefore asked to provide some basic demographic information. A decision was taken not to request this information for those only wishing to complete the quick survey, in order to keep it quick. Below is a chart showing the age profile of respondents alongside the age profile of those who responded to the 2020 consultation:

Age Profile of Respondents. 2020 and 2022 Consultations
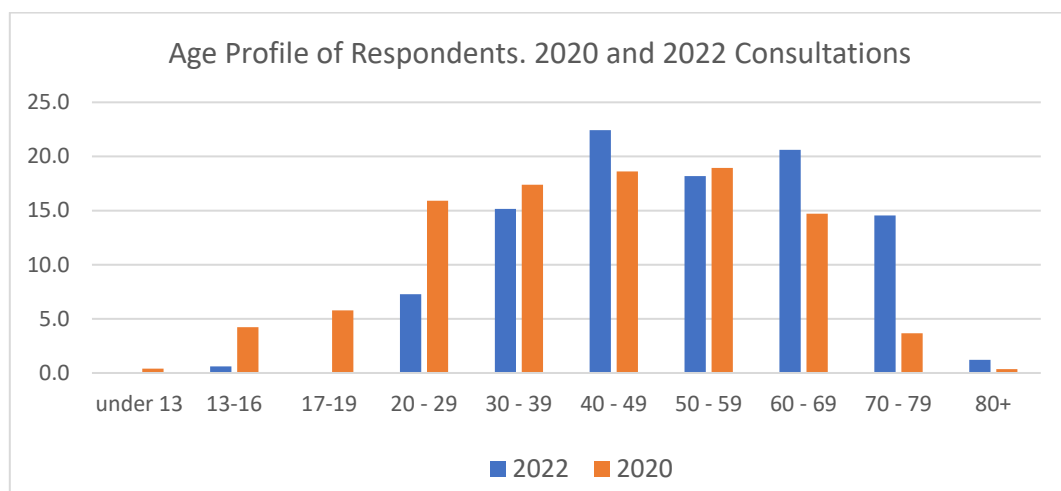
The chart shows that there were a higher proportion of older people responding to the most recent consultation than previously. However, this may be more an impact of the content, the first consultation was a quicker, simpler, high level set of questions. This recent consultation was lengthy and complex and required people to take a lot more time to respond, something that older people may have. If we had collected demographic information of those completing the quick survey it may have shown a younger profile, similar to the previous consultation. In addition to what is shown in the chart we also collected feedback from two school groups, a total of 63 young people aged 7-11 years.

People were also asked their gender and ethnic group; gender was fairly balanced whilst for ethnic group there was a higher proportion of white British than in the local population. A note of caution must be added to all information on respondents, as the total number is small.

What did people engage with:

Over 1,000 comments were received on Bang the Table. Email responses are more complex, but the initial processing has identified all policies that are referred to, counting each as an individual comment equates to a further 300, all of which have been sorted by theme and are summarised in the table below.

Theme	Bang the Table	Email	TOTAL
Strategic Approach	51	14	65
Homes	229	51	280
Economy	80	30	110
Environment	200	82	282
Infrastructure	130	41	171
Transport and Movement	66	11	77
Development Principles	120	68	188
Sites	120	30	150
Other Comments	36		36
Total	**1032**	**327**	**1359**

The largest number of comments were on the Environment policies which received a total of 282 comments; the biodiversity policy having the highest number of comments at 61. This was closely followed by comments on the Homes policies (280), with particular interest in the density policy (84 comments) and housing mix (55 comments).

What did they tell us?

As part of the consultation 77 options were presented alongside the proposed policy text. For the majority of these there is a clear level of agreement with one of the suggested approaches, however this headline information now needs to be considered alongside the detailed comments on the policies, made both on the system and those submitted by email. This processing will take some time and this more detailed analysis and summaries of the comments will be published in the spring.

How did people find out about the consultation?

Bang the Table provides detailed analytics regarding when people visited the site, whether they simply looked at a page, downloaded a document or went onto respond. It is important that we understand all visits, not just those who responded as this can help to understand the true levels of

engagement with the consultation and the varying levels of success of the different elements of the communications campaign.

During the course of the consultation the Bang the Table site had over 3,300 visitors and almost 950 document downloads. Almost 2,000 visits were a direct link, most likely from the wide range of e-alerts that were sent out periodically throughout the consultation. Below is a summary of the impact of the different communication tactics:

- There is a broad trend where the visitor numbers to Bang the Table increase with the posting of the substantive social media messages about the consultation (i.e. not the library event posts). This trend is repeated on the SCC City Vision webpages.
- The type of post (video or image) did not appear to influence the number of visitors to the site, but nevertheless does have an impact on the number of impressions each post received on social media.
- The most effective post subjects would seem to be: Development Principles (252 same day visits), Launch (100), Shirley Library (100, possibly benefitting from the Development Principles post the previous day) and the Quick Survey (91). Social media posts on these subjects coincided with the largest numbers of single day visits to EHQ barring one anomalous result on the 24th November.
- This result, 284 visits on the 24th November, coincides with my engagement in the comments section of a Daily Echo story on the approval of development at Friary House ([Southampton apartment block with no parking gets green light | Daily Echo](#)) where I, as a private citizen, referred commenters to the consultation.
- However, Hampshire Live's article on Mayflower Quarter on 6th December did not see any significant difference in visitor numbers, although there is a slightly smaller drop off in visits following the Monday post compared to some weeks.
- The figures suggest that the subjects that have a direct impact on residents (development principles, quick survey, city centre car parking) were the most effective at driving traffic to EHQ. Future engagement could look to pick out specific policies to highlight which are most relevant to residents rather than promote the core themes.
- Facebook (306) referred the most visitors followed by Twitter (73), LinkedIn (67) and Nextdoor (4). However, LinkedIn had the most impressions over the consultation (18,946), closely followed by Facebook (18,830), then Nextdoor (15,085) and Twitter (12,454).
- Facebook had the highest engagement rate (5.68%), followed by LinkedIn (3.85%), and Twitter (2.9%). Nextdoor does not track engagements.
- 572 referrals came from .gov sites, likely SCC City Vision webpages
- The SCC City Vision webpages saw an increase from 38 views per week to an average of 220 views per week over the consultation period.
- The consultation period also resulted in a 149% increase in time spent on a City Vision webpage over the average for the SCC website as a whole. Similarly the City Vision webpages had a significantly lower bounce rate (visitors leaving after visiting only one page), down 16.82% on the average, and higher exit rate (visitors leaving after visiting more than one page), up 15.31% on the average.

Conclusions:
- The new digital tools do not appear to have improved levels of engagement with younger people or other hard to reach groups. However, the successful sessions with schools

demonstrated that children and young people engage positively in a more structured environment with their peers.

- The use of 3D model in the consultation was limited. At the outset of the project it was hoped that some of this information could be integrated into the consultation platform. However, the model requires such high levels of processing power, this would effectively be un-useable for the majority, particularly given the high proportion who are on mobile devices. Therefore just a few images of skylines were inserted to appropriate policies such as that on tall buildings.

- The majority of 'site visits' came from people using a direct link, this was included in all e-alerts and seems to be the most effective way of engaging residents.

- More research is needed to understand why BME groups continue to remain under-represented in our consultations, is this down to physical barriers that we can manage such as language? Is it a lack of trust or simply a lack of interest or understanding of the relevance?

- The quickest and most structured approach to questions (quick surveys) got the highest number of responses.

- Despite the introduction of a new digital platform, 58 documents were received via email in response to the consultation.

- The team set up 'drop-in' sessions at each of the six libraries throughout the consultation period. In total 28 people attended. In contrast there was far more engagement with people when attending events/meetings organised by community, businesses or other interest groups.

Appendix 1: Detailed Communications Approach

Tactic	Message/Purpose	Timings	Frequency
Members pack & briefing	Note coving overall vision and purpose of the plan. Note stating the role of members in supporting the consultation. Social media materials, postcards & posters (with QR codes). Email invite to briefing to follow a week after pack sent out.	Oct. 2022	
Pack for other community champions	Note coving overall vision and purpose of the plan. Note stating how they can help support the consultation. Social media materials, postcards & posters (with QR codes). Offer to attend local events/meetings.	Oct. 2022	
Video – what is Southampton City Vision?	Animated video explaining what the plan is and why it's important to get involved. To sit on SCC webpages and be using in social media/e-alerts throughout consultation.	Oct. 2022	
Video – Southampton Stories	Spotlight on range of development across the city which demonstrate the results of Local Plan		Use as required in promotional material
Video – Leader/Cllr Bogle	The importance of the plan to the city – encouraging people to get involved and have their say		
Press Release & briefing	Can we give press a 'sneak preview' and get them to positively promote?		
Social media content	Have your say message. Programme of messaging throughout the consultation period highlighting different themes and key development sites.	Oct-Dec 2022	As required

Social media adverts	Have your say message. Programme of messaging throughout the consultation period highlighting different themes and key development sites.	Oct-Dec 2022	As required – monitor & adapt strategy if required
Outdoor digital display assets in the city	Key messaging about consultation and why people should have their say. QR code?	Ongoing	Booked across November and December
E-newsletters to Statutory and General Consultation bodies	Mail out to all those on Planning team database with overview of consultation and link to complete (send out at launch, mid-way and last week reminder).	Oct-Dec 2022	As required
E-newsletters – People's Panel	Mail out to People's Panel inviting them to respond to consultation. (send out at launch, mid-way and last week reminder).	Oct-Dec 2022	As required? (check with Rachel)
E-newsletters – other appropriate SCC lists	Your city, your say	Oct-Dec 2022	As required
	City News		Weekly
Community Engagement Team	SCC team to cascade information to community/resident/faith groups and to advise on alternative methods etc	Ongoing	
Children & Young People	In person sessions to be arranged via Hayden Collins and Sallie White. Schools, youth forum and junior wardens (Ian Mitchell). Propose 'graffiti wall' with key themes and guiding questions – facilitated sessions to get ideas.	Nov-Dec 2022	
Southampton Voluntary Service	Various contacts to help share information and potential face to face mtgs/events	Oct-Dec 2022	

Tenant groups	Various contacts to help share information and potential face to face mtgs/events	Oct-Dec 2022	
Businesses	Business e-news	Oct-Dec 2022	Weekly
	Invest In Southampton, social media		
	Barclays Eagle Lab		
	Go Southampton		
	Chamber of Commerce		
	Ocean Innovation Centre		
	My Journey – workplace list		