

Environmental Framework Consultation Summary

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Environmental Framework has been consulted on to support the preparation of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan. The consultation asked stakeholders for their views on how we should reflect national policy and the local evidence base in the local plan through a series of general and topic based questions.
- 1.2. The consultation ran for six weeks from 9th March to the 20th April 2016. Over forty responses were received from a range of stakeholders. This included the key statutory bodies, such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, developers, residents and other organisations, like the Forest of Marston Vale Trust and CPRE.

2. Overview of key trends

- 2.1. The Environmental Framework covers a broad and diverse range of environmental issues and subjects; therefore we invited consultees to respond only in relation to those areas they were interested in.
- 2.2. Questions, which are shown at the end of each chapter in the current version of the Environmental Framework, were designed to give us an indication of stakeholder preference to various approaches, as well as gather more in depth comment and opinion for further analysis.
- 2.3. The feedback received highlight further areas which it felt should be more fully considered. They also indicated preferred approaches in relation to issues such as tranquillity and the use of different standards for conservation in different areas. This opportunity was also used to canvass opinion on preferred approaches to renewable energy and other green technologies, particularly in relation to sustainable building methods.

3. Next steps

- 3.1. The responses are currently being reviewed with the following action to be taken.
 - Where there are issues of clarity highlighted with regards to the Environmental Framework itself, these will be rectified in the document itself.
 - Comments relating to each topic area will be collated, considered and used, alongside the evidence of summarised in the environmental framework itself, to shape and inform the approach taken to the range of environmental policies to be included in the new Local Plan. These will then be subject to further consultation (as part of the Local Plan itself) as part of the local development framework.
 - Once finalised and tested through examination, the Environmental Framework document will be further update to reflect this local policy. At this time how environmental policy is incorporated into other areas of the council's duties (such as highways) will also be highlighted.