



# ABERFELDY NEW MASTERPLAN

**Public consultation report**

**Round 1: November-December 2020**

February 2021

POPLAR  
**HARCA**

**ECOWORLD**  
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**Lowick**

**ZCD Architects**

[aberfeldynewmasterplan.commonplace.is](http://aberfeldynewmasterplan.commonplace.is)



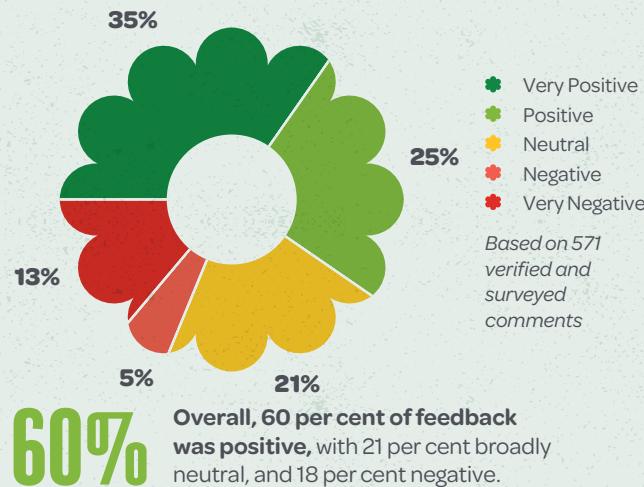
# ABERFELDY NEW MASTERPLAN

## YOUR FEEDBACK

Poplar HARCA and EcoWorld London held the first public consultation on the Aberfeldy new Masterplan in late 2020.

**More than 2,800** people visited our website, with **over 200** people completing our survey either online or by post.

## THIS IS WHAT YOU TOLD US.



We asked people to rank their priorities for the regeneration of Aberfeldy. Improved infrastructure, including social facilities and transport options was a clear winner. Making the neighbourhood safer and more cohesive was second, while improved public realm and open spaces was third. The top three was followed closely by new homes, particularly affordable and social rent housing.

**By a margin of two to one** people were supportive of the proposed relocation of Culloden Primary School, but some were concerned about the size of the school and the amount of play space.



*"I love the notion of the vehicular underpass being a cycle/pedestrian route"*

**Nearly two thirds** backed plans to pedestrianise the vehicular underpass and provide a new A12 junction. However, some were concerned about vehicle access to the area.



### Your feedback by theme

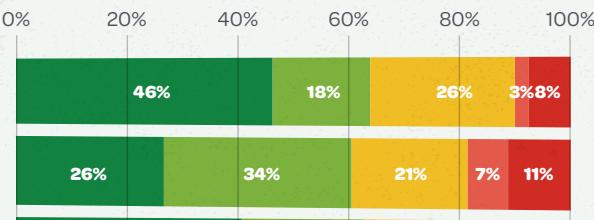
Broken down, here's how people felt about each theme. You were particularly positive about the principle of regeneration, traffic reduction measures and new affordable homes.

- Very Positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very Negative

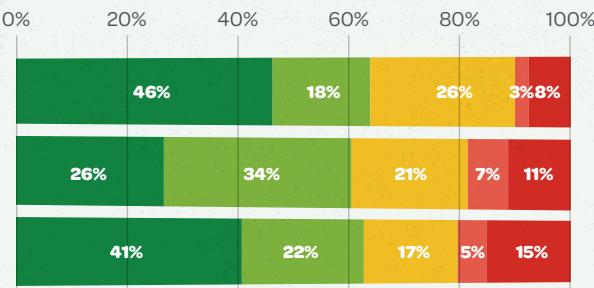
...about the regeneration of Aberfeldy in principle?



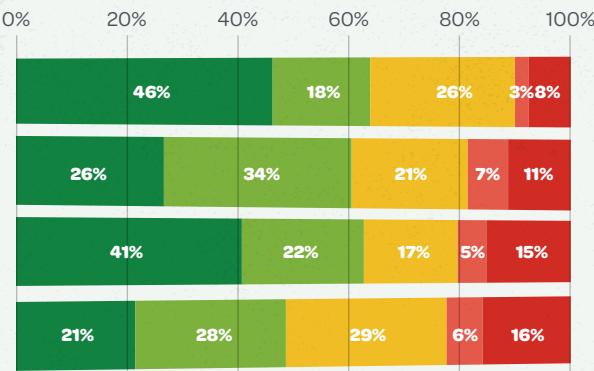
...about the overall layout and mix of uses proposed for the Aberfeldy New Masterplan?



...about our ideas for reducing traffic and designating Abbott Road as a healthy street linking green spaces?



...about the scale of the buildings we have proposed, in the context of maximising the delivery of affordable housing?



...about our plans to deliver up to 1,880 modern well-built homes, including affordable housing for existing and future residents?



Overall sentiment combined



## KEY QUESTIONS FOR US

There were some common questions and areas that some residents want clarification or further information on. These are outlined in full in the report.

- Will Culloden Primary School be smaller if it is relocated, particularly play space?
- What will happen to traffic in the case of the pedestrianisation of the A12 vehicular underpass?
- How many affordable homes will there be?
- Will I keep my parking spot in the new masterplan?

Our plans to deliver **up to 1,880** new homes, including affordable housing was very well supported. Almost two thirds of you felt positively about our plans.



*"Not enough space so building higher is good for creating more homes"*

*"I am looking forward to a new Aberfeldy Village with a better outlook for all residents"*



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## INTRODUCTION

For over a year, Poplar HARCA and EcoWorld London have been collecting residents' views and aspirations about the Aberfeldy West and Nairn Street estates. This culminated in the ballot result of 93.1 per cent of tenants and leaseholders voting in favour of comprehensive regeneration in the autumn last year on a 91.1 per cent turnout. Since then, a consultation was launched to incorporate the views of the whole Poplar neighbourhood, managed by consultation and community engagement specialists Lowick. This report sets out the initial results of that exercise and ongoing youth engagement work conducted by ZCD Architects.

The first public consultation took place in November-December 2020. Due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and social distancing rules, this had to be held 'at a distance'. A consultation pack was sent to 4,906 addresses in the local area which included a 20-page booklet with information about the emerging masterplan for Aberfeldy, a two-page survey and a freepost response envelope. The survey included 10 questions that sought to gauge the views and attitudes of local residents, workers and visitors towards the proposals and specific features, as well as their priorities for the area.

A dedicated consultation hub was also set up using the Commonplace consultation platform, at <https://aberkeldynewmasterplan.commonplace.is/>. More than 2,800 people have now visited the website, and over 200 completed our survey either online or by post.

This was complemented by two online 'meet the team' webinars which were held on 17 and 21 November 2020. We are thrilled to see so many people engage with the plan – it really helps to get a broad and representative view of the community's needs.

In parallel, Facebook and Instagram adverts promoted the website to those in the local area for 30 days with the objective of creating a more inclusive and effective public consultation. The campaigns generated 80 contributions and brought 2,447 visitors to the website. Facebook and Instagram advertising were also implemented for the two public webinars, to ensure a maximum number of people were aware of them.

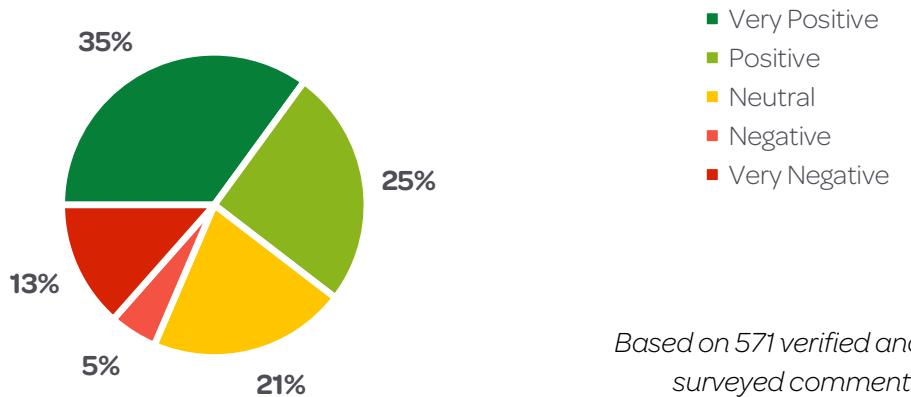
In addition to the public consultation there has been ongoing discussions with the Aberfeldy Residents' Steering Group (RSG) which was set up to manage communications between the project team and residents and to represent the matters and concerns of the community on the estate. Any resident within the ballot area can join and it has more than 100 members– a significant portion of the Aberfeldy population.

ZCD Architects has been leading a unique consultation among local school pupils at Langdon Park School and Culloden Primary School to expand the breadth of engagement and ensure that everyone's voices are heard, including young people who are rarely asked how they like to use their area and what would make it feel safer, more welcoming and well used. This engagement included the creation of a Young Person's Manifesto on open space, which will feed into the design process and allow young people to directly space the spaces and places they want to use.



## YOUR FEEDBACK

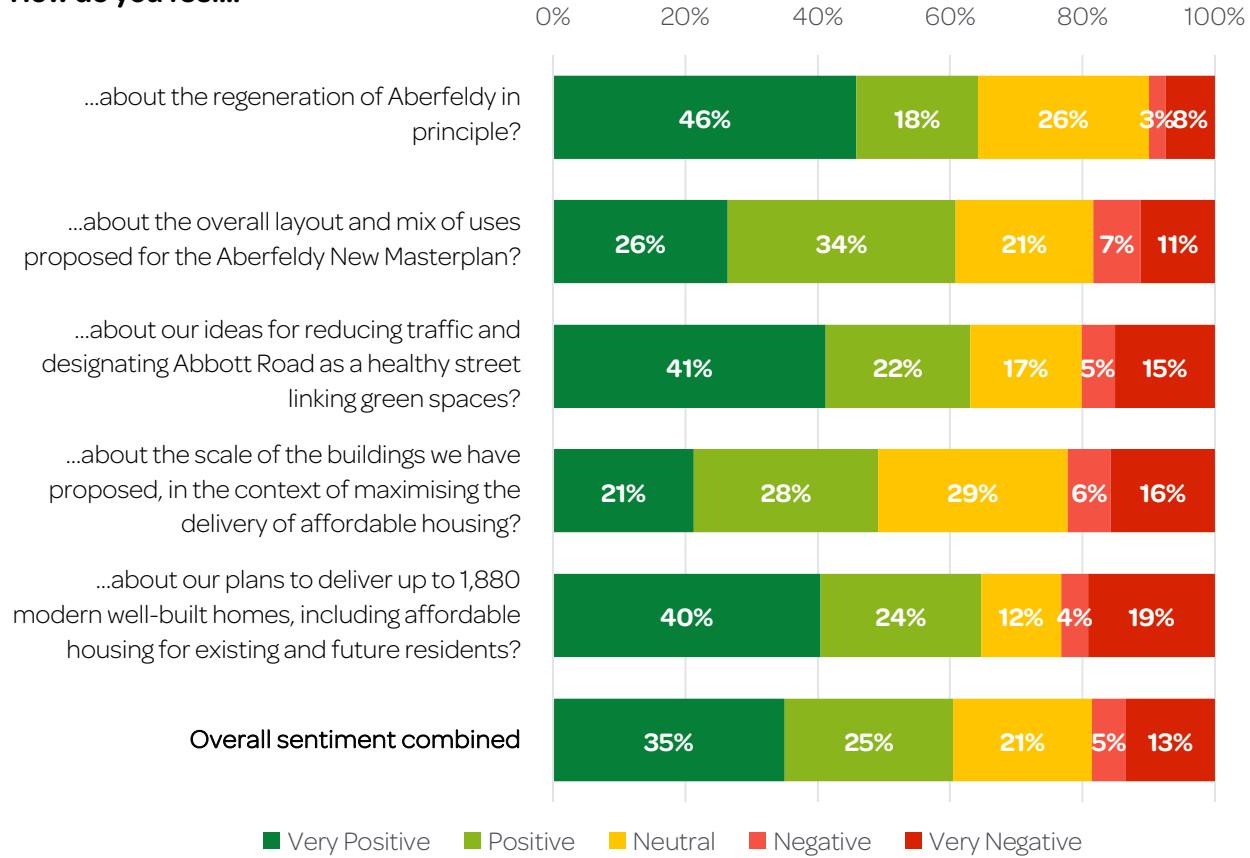
**Chart 1: Combined comment sentiment across all feedback**



Across all feedback we received on the Aberfeldy New Masterplan, 60 per cent of the sentiment was very positive or positive, with negative or very negative sentiment only constituting 18 per cent of responses. This was reflected throughout the individual responses to various aspects of the scheme, with all aspects receiving a large plurality or majority of positive responses.

**Chart 2: Comment sentiment by theme**

### How do you feel...



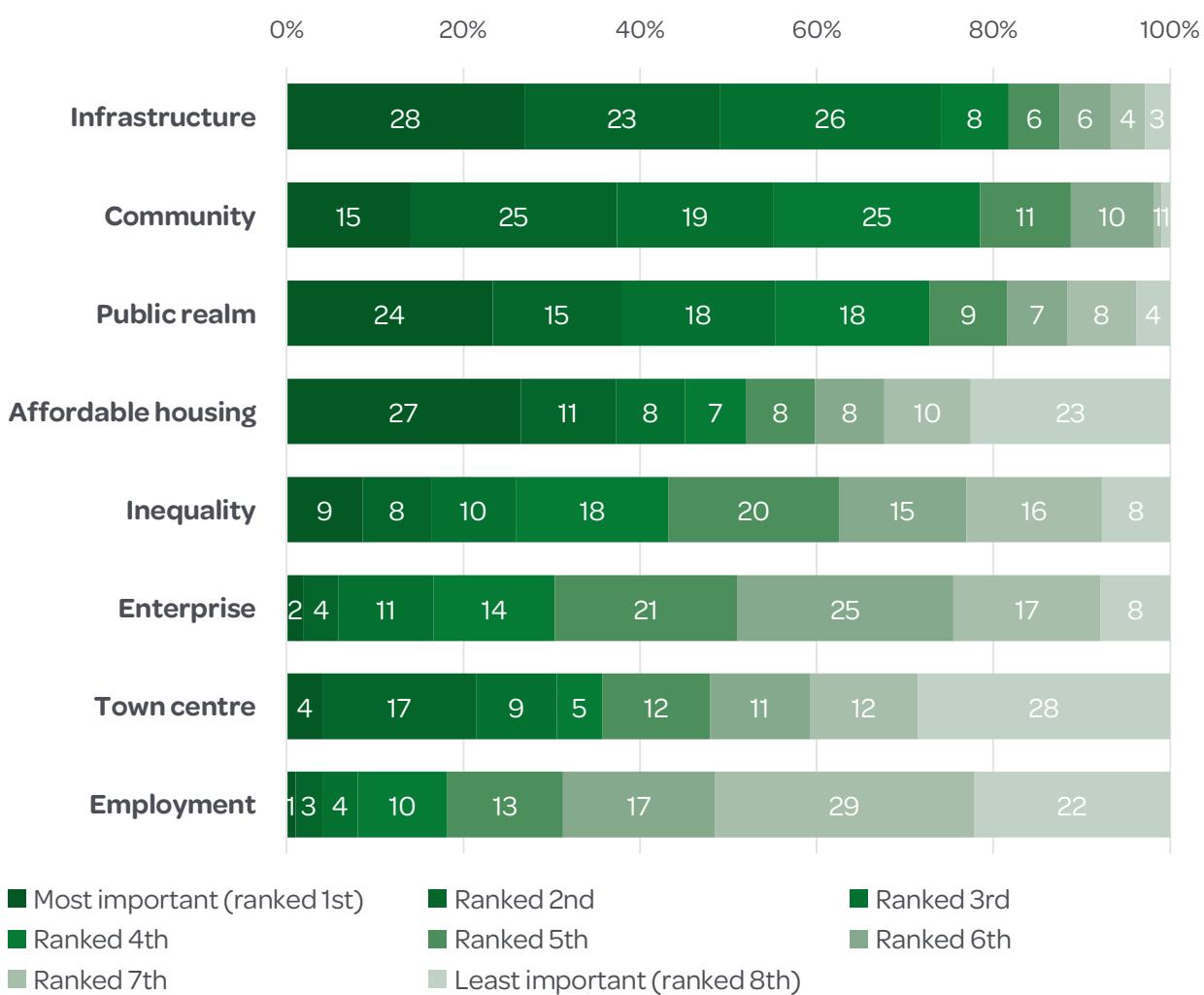
## THE SITE, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, AND OUR VISION

The principle of the regeneration of Aberfeldy, as a whole, had very positive support among respondents, with nearly half (46 per cent) feeling very positive and a total of 64 percent positive. Just 11 per cent were negative or very negative the idea echoing the sentiment of the estate regeneration ballot.

There was some a noticeable general opposition to development in the area in the written feedback, but this remained the minority and many residents also expressed their support and optimism about the scheme. Air pollution was a key issue for many residents as was population density and the impact that had on infrastructure.

### Chart 3: Which of the following objectives do you see as a priority for the Aberfeldy New Masterplan?

We asked residents to rank eight scheme objectives, based on the eight Tower Hamlet's regeneration pillars, in the order of their priorities for Aberfeldy. The chart below sets out the votes and a ranking based on the priorities given.



The statements were:

- Improved infrastructure, including social facilities and transport options (improved infrastructure)
- Making communities safer and more cohesive (community safety)
- Building more high quality, affordable housing which meets the needs of residents (affordable housing)
- Encourage and support local enterprise (supporting enterprise)
- Reducing inequality, particularly health inequality, and enhancing wellbeing (reducing inequality)
- Improve the public realm and environment with cleaner streets, better air quality and more green spaces (public realm)
- Boost local employment (employment)
- Open up the town centre and new markets (town centre)

Improved infrastructure, including social facilities and transport options was a clear winner. Making the neighbourhood safer and more cohesive was second, and a key priority for the community in written comments, while improved public realm was the third most popular option followed closely by new homes, particularly affordable and social rent housing.

We feel these results only strengthen the case for the vision for Aberfeldy to be a mixed-use redevelopment which seeks to look at the challenges and opportunities for the area holistically, maintaining the local vibrancy and community feeling, improving local infrastructure and facilities, as well as providing many new homes for existing and future residents. A less ambitious approach would not be able to achieve those wider benefits.

## **THE EMERGING MASTERPLAN**

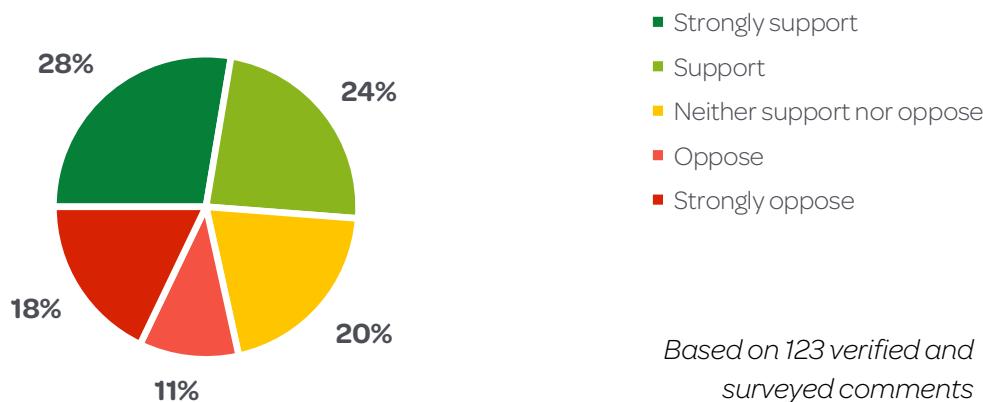
The layout and mix of uses had generally positive support but were not a particularly contentious topic. In total, the overall layout had 60 per cent positive, 21 per cent neutral and 18 per cent negative sentiment. New shops and better links to the area were positives.

Two possible scenarios for the masterplan were shown, one without the relocation of Culloden Primary School (Scenario A) and one with (Scenario B). Half of respondents (52 per cent) supported the relocation of Culloden Primary School and less than a third (29 per cent) opposed the plans in Scenario B. Nevertheless, some people wanted further clarity on the size of the new school site, and more detail on the design and location of play space. There were also a number of comments supporting the move and recognising the benefit of the new location for air quality and access to open space.

While no decision will be made regarding the school as part of the proposed planning application, and it will be subject to a future design, consultation and application process, it is clear that some further information and commitments may be required around the option of relocation to secure wider support for Scenario B.



**Chart 4: Are you supportive of including the potential to relocate Culloden Primary School away from the A12, adjacent to Millennium Green, as shown in Scenario B?**



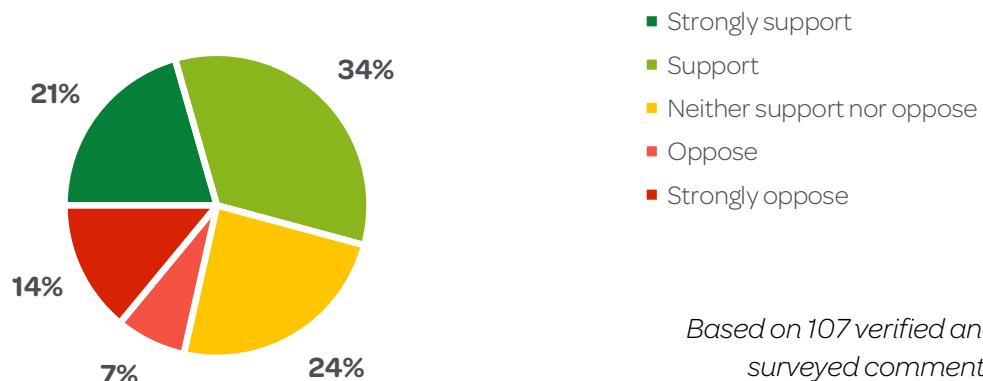
## SCALE AND MASSING

The scale and massing of new homes was one of the more balanced elements of the scheme. While significantly more respondents supported the scale of the buildings (49 per cent) as to those that opposed (20 per cent), the highest number of responses were neutral. From the written comments associated with this section it is clear that many of those who were very negative about this issue would not support any significant scale of development in the area. One person stated that only building “below four floors” would be acceptable and another that there should be “no more buildings”.

However, most of the concerns focussed around the pressures on wider social infrastructure and transport from increased density. Many of these were pre-existing and could only be remedied by significant investment through regeneration or external funding.

Views were rarely commented upon, however, one respondent, who was supportive of the approach to scale and massing, said that the view of Balfron Tower should be “celebrated” while another, negative about the scale, worried they would lose their view of Canary Wharf.

**Chart 5: Do you support our intention to place the taller buildings along the A12, in line with the feedback from our ‘Planning for Real’ exercise with Aberfeldy residents?**



Following a Planning for Real exercise with Aberfeldy residents last summer, a key insight from the responses was that the preferred location for taller buildings was along the A12 corridor rather than toward the centre of the site or facing open spaces. This remained true in the public consultation feedback with 55 per cent supporting that approach and just 21 per cent opposing. While considerations such as heritage and key views must be accommodated, it is fair to say the location of height along the A12 has public endorsement.

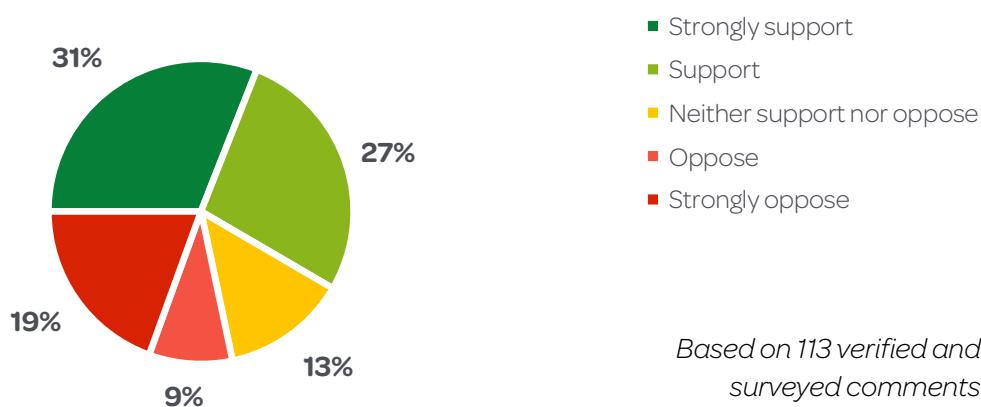
While there are a minority of local residents who do not support higher density development or taller buildings in principle, broadly the approach set out has now been supported both at the estate ballot stage and in this public consultation. Significantly larger public benefits follow from delivering the Aberfeldy New Masterplan at this scale and density. This should also be seen in the context of the priority given by the public to social infrastructure, transport, safety and social cohesion, open space and affordable housing delivery. A significantly lower density and lower rise scheme would not be able to deliver many of those wider aspirations.

## STREETS AND SPACES

The reduction in traffic and designating Abbott Road as a ‘healthy street’ was extremely well supported, with 41 per cent of respondents very positive and 22 per cent positive (63 per cent overall). The written feedback was more mixed, with some respondents arguing that there was a significant need for cars for uses such as work and questioning where traffic will go instead. Others noted that traffic reduction was good for safety and air quality, and one person called it “the most important improvement” of the area proposed.

Some comments indicated that their opposition was a proxy for concerns about parking. Those who already have parking permits have already been given a commitment through the estate regeneration ballot that this will be maintained.

**Chart 6: Do you support the proposals to reroute traffic to a new junction in order to allow for the A12 vehicular underpass to be repurposed into a pedestrian and cycle east-west link between Aberfeldy and Jolly’s Green, including the creation of new public realm at Highland Place?**



Public realm was well supported with more than half (58 per cent) of respondents supporting the creation of Highland Place and the pedestrianisation of the vehicular underpass. This however is contrasted to the 19 per cent of people that strongly opposed this element, with vehicle access and movement a key priority for them in comments.

While this something to note, it is still significantly lower than those who strongly support the plans (31 per cent). In the written comments there was also some significant misunderstanding of the proposals, many stating they didn't support removing a way to access the A12 from Aberfeldy and felt this would isolate the area for vehicle drivers rather than connect it. The proposals would continue to provide southbound access to the A12 as part of a new junction alignment and vehicle access to all areas.

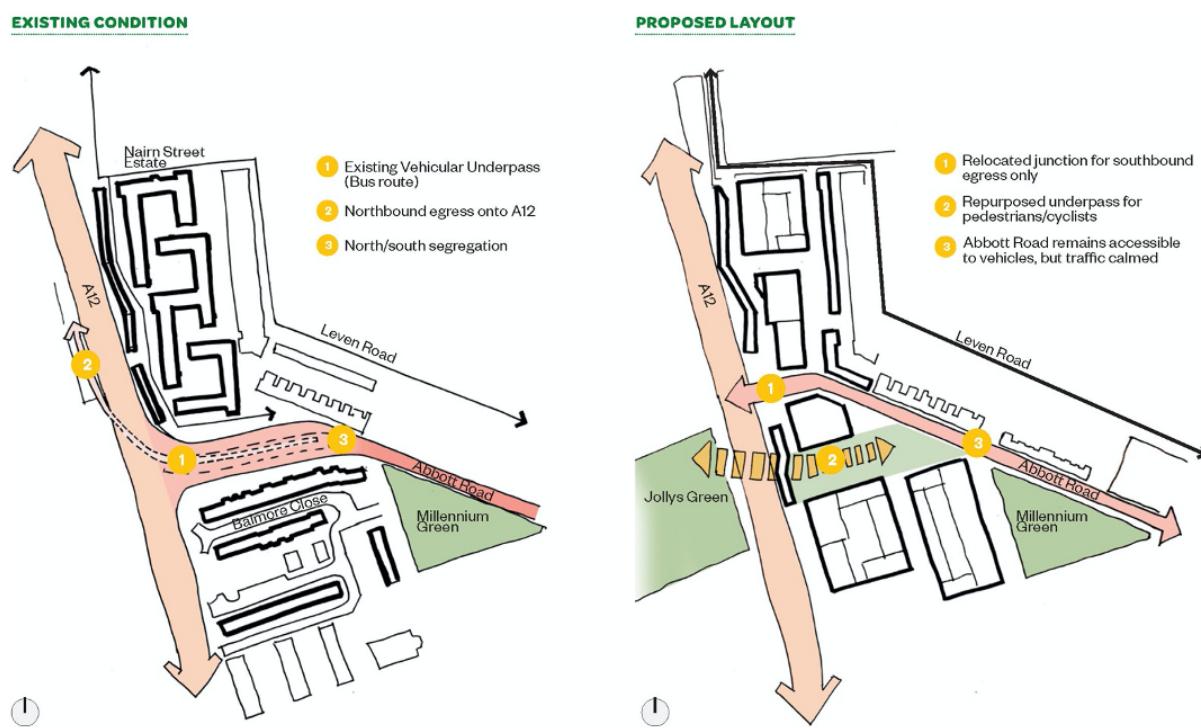


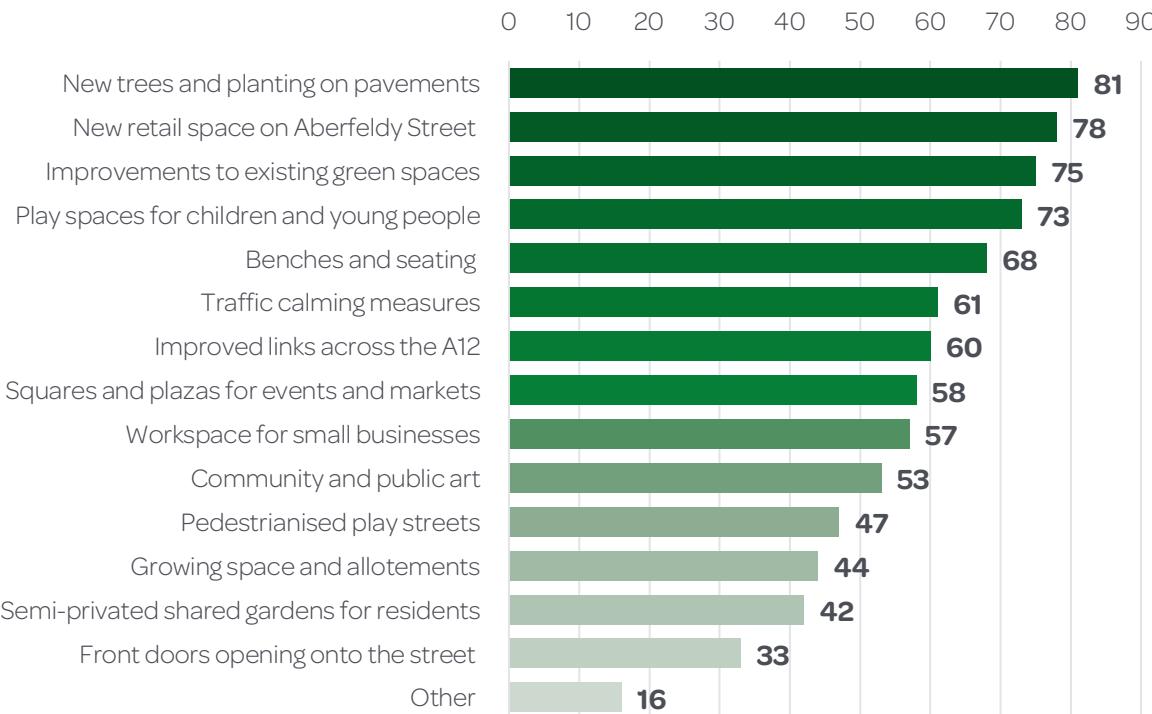
Figure 1: Diagram showing the existing and proposed A12 junction alignment

It should be noted that the top three ranked objectives are all relevant to the proposed healthy streets approach. Based on some of the concerns expressed over car access, parking and traffic there is likely scope to increase support when more detailed information is available, such as around the routing of the 309 bus and arrangements for vehicle access.

On wider approaches to public realm, respondents were allowed to select multiple options from a list of elements they would like to include. The most popular elements were new trees and planting on the pavement, and new retail space on Aberfeldy Street. Improvements to existing green spaces was also popular. The least popular option was front doors opening onto the street, perhaps associated with concerns over anti-social behaviour. Among suggestions on the 'other' option were greater pedestrianisation, a dog park, wider pavements and outdoor exercise space.



**Chart 7: We have set out some very initial ideas for the design of new public spaces, their uses, and landscaping improvements. What elements would you like to see us include?**



## NEW HOMES

The plans to deliver up to 1,880 new homes elicited the most positive reaction of all elements of the scheme. 64 per cent were positive about this aspect with 40 per cent of those very positive. Nevertheless, this theme also received the highest negative sentiment at 23 per cent. New homes are often divisive and based on generic polling around attitudes to new housebuilding in London the headline feedback does not indicate any significant opposition specific to this site, indeed it indicates an unusually high degree of support.

Many of those who responded negatively referenced concerns over density, stating there were "far too many people living in the area already" and services such as GP's were "under pressure." The difficulty of finding parking was often referenced by this group. The need to deliver wider infrastructure and facilities alongside homes was often the key concern of neutral respondents, and some were suspicious that housing would not be affordable.

Many of those in support emphasised the crucial importance of delivering new affordable housing, and many referenced delivering a significant proportion of "truly" or "genuinely" affordable homes at social rent as their priority. Others noted concerns over those in temporary accommodation or overcrowded and the need for "well built and bigger" homes.

Overall, the majority supported an ambitious proposal which would maximise the delivery of affordable housing and wider public benefits.



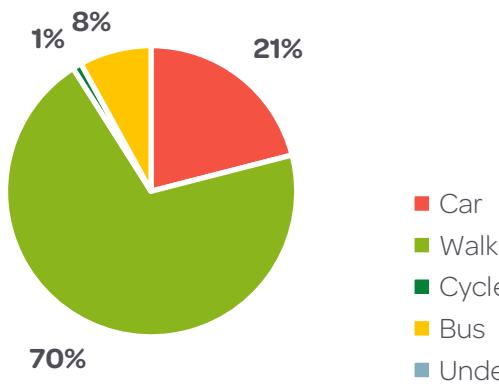
## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGEMENT

ZCD Architects have carried out five sets of sessions with pupils from year 5 at Culloden Primary School and pupils from year 9 at Langdon Park School in November and December 2020. The sessions involved talking to them about their everyday lives in their local area, how they get about, the places they like and don't like and what ideas they have to improve them.

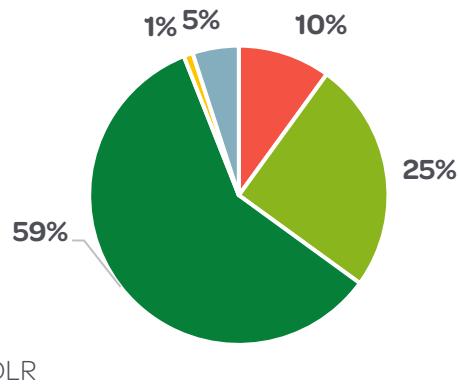
We went on a walking tour of Aberfeldy, looking at the high street and the open spaces, including the River Lea and the pupils analysed the spaces, letting us know where they felt they could play safely, meet friends and enjoy themselves and when and where they couldn't.

**Chart 8: Travel to school amongst year 5 pupils at Culloden Primary School**

**How did you get to school today?**



**How would you like to get to school?**



At Culloden Primary School we talked to all three classes in year 5 and found most of them would love to cycle to school, but at the moment only one does. At Langdon Park school they told us how much they loved the area, but also about the bad bits, such as the Jolly's Green foot tunnel and many of the spaces after dark.

**On Jolly Street Tunnel/Underpass:** "I would like to walk to school but my dad drives me because the foot tunnel is dark and smells. Older people hang out there and smoke. I would like to use it to get to school but it is unsafe."

**On Millennium Green:** "There isn't much to do here, just birds and broken glass. Abbott Road is busy, but cars don't go that fast and we use the zebra crossings here."

**On the 'Blue Pitch' / MUGA:** "I use the blue pitch to play football with my Dad. A good thing is that it is not locked up, you are free to do what you want. A bad thing is that older people go and hang out there, they use fireworks. I would like bigger gates; at the moment it is hard to get in - there is only one small entrance."

**On East India Green/AV:** "I come here a lot with my sister and brother because I live nearby. I think it is social space, I meet my friends here and it is safe enough to come here on my own. I like that there are houses around the AV and people make it feel safer. There are lots of bits to play on so it's good for lots of ages."



Over three sessions they developed their own manifesto for Aberfeldy which the design team are using to help develop the proposals.

### **Aberfeldy New Masterplan Manifesto**

#### **I want to live in a friendly place**

- A special place which is like nowhere else
- Welcoming
- Communal events
- Where I know, trust and rely on my neighbours
- With lots of diversity on the streets, where people from different backgrounds talk to each other
- Low vandalism and theft

#### **I want to live in a place where I'm free and safe to do what I like**

- Less restrictions for ball games
- More things to do in green areas
- Overlooking
- To be able to play a variety of ball games including football, cricket, basketball, netball, tennis and table tennis
- There should be better lighting and safer to walk around everywhere even after dark

#### **I want it to be a place for all ages**

- A More shared green spaces that are 'open' and for all ages
- More play equipment for teenagers: bucket swing, climbing frame, social benches, bigger adventure stuff, fountains
- Keep PFC, an affordable cafe, a dessert shop, and shops selling clothes, necessities and technology
- Colourful and clean
- Spaces for peace and quiet
- Growing spaces (private & shared)

#### **I want to be able to get around freely**

- Nicer to walk around
- Safe crossings
- I want to be able to cycle around everywhere
- Bicycles for all ages and bike stores
- Good transport (buses/trains)
- Accessible

#### **I want to live in a green, eco-friendly environment**

- More nature, more grass, rooftop gardens
- Stop global warming and not waste fossil fuels
- Use renewables
- More bins especially recycling bins.
- Solar powered lights
- Re-use rainwater

We will be returning to Langdon Park this term, with an online session, to show the pupils the proposals for Aberfeldy so that they can tell us whether their manifesto is being met. We will meet the children from Culloden School again once we can.

We hope that in the summer term we will be able to hold an exhibition to showcase all the pupils work, so that everyone in the community can come and have a look at what they have been doing.



## **RESIDENTS' STEERING GROUP**

The Residents' Steering Group (RSG) has a major say in decisions about the regeneration and have been involved throughout the process. The RSG are currently being consulted on shaping the masterplan and the design through a series of workshops.

### **Housing - 10th December 2020**

Our first RSG workshop took place on 10 December 2020, focusing on homes. The meeting covered a range of topics, predominantly focussing on housing, both inside and outside, as well as outdoor community spaces, giving residents an opportunity to express their priorities and aspirations.

Inside homes, the clear consensus was for kitchens to be separate. Views on storage was mixed, with some residents commenting their satisfaction with their storage space while others felt they needed more. One aspect many residents wanted to see improved upon was windows, with the majority of feedback in this regard focusing on size.

Residents were also asked their views on outdoor space. A lack of privacy was noted as a top concern for many residents, and fences around the garden was a key aspect that residents wanted to see improved. There was also strong consensus around improving public spaces, particularly in regard to Millennium Green. Amenity space for uses such as planting flowers and growing food was also mentioned several times.

Reflecting on their homes one resident told us: "A separate kitchen would be very important. We also need storage next to the entrance door. We would like a separate entrance to the kitchen and the living room." As was a common theme on privacy, one resident said: "It's important that gardens offer privacy and aren't overlooked."

### **Open Spaces - 26th January 2021**

Our Open Spaces RSG workshop took place on 26 January 2021. The meeting provided residents with an opportunity to directly communicate with the project team and to express their priorities and aspirations for open spaces in Aberfeldy.

Alongside the project team, members of the RSG explored and debated Aberfeldy's existing and proposed open spaces, including Braithwaite Park, Millennium Green, Leven Road MUGA, the Jolly's Green underpass and the proposed new open space, Highland Place. There was a clear consensus that Millennium Green was inadequate and was predominantly being used, as one resident bluntly put it, as "a dog's toilet" with many other residents sharing a similar sentiment.

Safety and security were key themes across most of the existing open spaces. This was true of Braithwaite Park and Millennium Green but particularly of the pedestrian underpasses which was described as "horrid", "scary", "dingy" and "dangerous" by residents with one noting that "[You] have to turn back when going through to see who's behind you."



A partnership between Ecoworld London and Poplar HARCA

In contrast however, the proposed open spaces such as Community Lane and All Hallows Square were mostly well appreciated. Residents said they "liked the concept". However, residents did raise a couple of concerns such as how Community Lane will be maintained. Residents were keen to see good quality retail offerings on and would prefer natural wood and materials to the use of colour.

