

## Overview Feedback from Mini-Questionnaire – March 2017

Overall, of those that voted, 89% were in favour of the infrastructure on new estates – the roads, the children's play areas, public open space and 'balancing ponds' being maintained by the relevant local authority rather than by a private management company financed by the estate residents.

84% were in favour of the houses being sold freehold, rather than on 999-year leases.

The most indignant responses concerned leaseholds, especially if they were sold on to finance companies.

*"An appalling practice designed only to line the pockets of fat cat,"* said one. *"Leaseholders would be impoverishing themselves and enriching people and companies in the Cayman Islands, Virgin Islands, Lichtenstein and other tax havens,"* said another.

Others felt leasehold flouted the long-held principle that an Englishman's (or Englishwoman's) home is his/her castle. *"How can people spend hundreds of thousands on a house and not own it?"*

On the question of who should maintain the estates, the prevalent opinion was that unadopted estates run by management companies were divisive.

Many took a practical view: *"From experience, chasing money for a residents management company leads to neighbours falling out when residents don't or can't afford to pay."* *"Take a look at the condition of most private roads, usually poorly maintained."* *"These facilities can be used and are for the benefit of the community and should be publicly managed."* In short: *"We should not create ghettos."* And besides, resident management companies could go bankrupt and what then?

A running theme among responses was horror at the thought of up to 170 wheelie bins lined up along the Banbury Road, if Cherwell District Council adheres to its policy of not collecting refuse from private roads.

Among the antis, a few felt a management company might actually make a better job of maintaining new estates. One or two candidly admitted they would prefer unadopted estates because it might reduce their own council tax. But the most common view was – *"Caveat emptor."*

While unwilling to buy properties leasehold or on unadopted estates themselves, they felt it was not our business to interfere with the market. *"If they are daft enough to buy a house under such circumstances, it's up to them."* Or to put it another way, *"We are not a nanny state."*

On the leaflets, there was space for additional comments, not necessarily related to the two specific questions. Traffic problems, road safety, the absence of bungalows and the need for better public transport were all raised. One favoured *"Land tax to be implemented, and mass council housing programme!"*

Another suggestion made us smile: *"I am not aware if there is a place for retired men to meet up like a 'man shed'. But I think the men would benefit from such a place – maybe the 'Old Bowling Club House' as now the British Legion is closing."*

And what survey would be complete without this comment: *"Swimming pool would be beneficial to the young and old."*

Now it is the steering group's task to incorporate these preferences – at least the ones that attracted more than an 80% consensus – into the neighbourhood plan. We're at last within striking distance of completing the plan and then it will go out to public consultation in the parish and, ultimately, with the modifications you propose, to a referendum. So, stand by for more leaflets dropping through your letter box. I think we can be proud that this neighbourhood plan really will be a communal effort so thanks again for your patience and diligence.