



# Shaping the future of **Buckskin & South Ham**

Community feedback - sharing your insights  
May 2024



# Introduction and summary

Last November we began engaging with the community in Buckskin and South Ham to ask you to work with us over the next two years to create a plan for the future of the neighbourhoods, to improve the area and increase opportunities for everyone. We explained that we wanted to bring additional investment to make that plan happen.

To start this off, we wanted to hear about your views and experiences of living and working in the area, so that we can then - together - identify options for change. These options may include refurbishing homes and the regeneration or renewal of parts of the neighbourhoods.

**This report tells you about what we heard.**

## Who helped us?

We commissioned two independent specialist companies to help us capture your feedback:

### The Young Foundation

Is the UK's home for community research and social innovation. They are specialists in working with communities to undertake research themselves to inform projects and policy. They recruited and trained a team of Community Researchers who all live in Buckskin and South Ham. The Community Researchers developed a detailed survey and used this to have conversations with, and to interview, about 50 other residents. Other residents completed the detailed survey online. You can see more about what they found out on pages 16 to 20.

### Something Collective

Are specialists in community engagement and helped to organise the seven listening events and the on-line quick survey. They also analysed all of the feedback received via the website. You can see more about what they found out on pages 08 to 12.

**This gave us a snapshot of the key points from those who got involved, and we've used this as a starting point. There will be many more opportunities to share your views over the coming months.**

## How did we hear from people?



Seven drop-in events.



In-person interviews, using a team of local Community Researchers.



Online - with two surveys on the website.



A digital map - where people could drop a pin and make comments.

## How many people got involved?



**4,000+**  
people visited our website to find out more, and shared their feedback.



**200+**  
people came to one of our events.



**500+**  
people filled in a survey.



**50+**  
people had conversations with, and were interviewed by, the community researchers.



**100+**  
people said they'd like to join a working group.



# What you told us – key messages

Overall, we heard that most people have a deep sense of belonging to the area, are proud of their community and many want to continue living here in the future. People talked to us with huge pride about the move that many families made from London for a new life, for a new home in a green place, as part of the London overspill programme.

## Key things that people particularly liked were:

- 1. **Community:** People really value the relationships they have with their neighbours and local friends.
- 2. **Parks:** Stratton Park and Russell Howard Park are really appreciated, and people enjoy using them.
- 3. **Inside your homes:** Many people liked the internal design and layout of homes and felt that they were a safe space.
- 4. **Range of different types of homes:** People like that there are different sizes and types of home in the area, enabling extended families to live locally and people to move within the area as their needs change.
- 5. **Schools, churches and Westside:** People were positive about the services that exist, really valuing the schools, churches and the service that Westside Community Association offers.

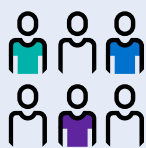


But we also heard about a lot of things that people didn't like or would like to see improved. Many people also felt that it would be better for their children to live somewhere else in the future.


## Some key facts about your community

As well as talking to people, we have also looked at the data available from the Office of National Statistics, public sector bodies and the census.

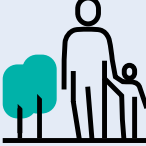
Using this data, we can compare Buckskin and South Ham against national data and data about other similar areas. This tells us:




The total population is about 12,000 – roughly 10% of the population of Basingstoke.




It is a young population with over 21% of people aged 0-15.




Over time it seems that older residents are moving away and being replaced with an increasing number of young families and single parent households.




Overall household incomes are close to the England average, but lower than other similar places in the South-East of England.




There are 21% of people with high-level qualifications (Level 4 qualifications and above) but a large number of people (23%) who don't have any qualifications.



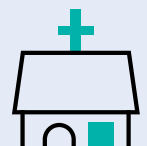
Most working age adults are working (96%), but some are working in jobs where the earnings are low.



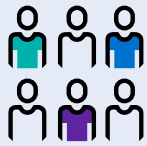
Younger adults tend to have lower-level qualifications than older people and more work in lower skilled jobs. There are also quite a number who are unemployed (8%).




Most people are in good health, but there are many people who are experiencing poor physical and mental health, with 16% suffering from depression and a significant number of emergency hospital admissions for self-harm.



There are a fairly large number of Christians in the community (43%).



Most of the population is White British (about 80%). The remaining population is very diverse. The 16% of people who were born outside of the UK come from lots of different countries.



There are many people in the area who do not own a car – 25% of households.



## Key things that people didn't like, or could be improved, included:

- 1. Safety:** Safety is a big issue. We heard about anti-social and criminal behaviour – many people thought that this was, in part, because there's a lack of affordable and safe things for young people to do out of school. Many young people do not feel safe themselves.
- 2. Getting around:** People felt that the layout of the area could be improved and be made to feel safer. They mentioned hidden spaces in alleyways and poor lighting making some areas feel unsafe. It's hard to walk around, particularly if you have a buggy or use a wheelchair; public transport is unreliable and expensive; and there aren't safe cycle routes. The layout in some places also means that people know their neighbours less than in other places.
- 3. Homes:** People spoke about the dated design and poor unequal layout of some of the properties, the cost of upkeep and how it's difficult and costly to keep homes warm which causes damp and associated health concerns. Many felt that their homes could be easier to maintain, more affordable to run and with better storage, and that the environmental sustainability of homes should be improved, both to contribute more positively to the planet and to save people money.
- 4. Cars and parking:** People talked about parking, some because they find it hard to park and others because they see poor parking positioning as making it harder to walk and cycle. Others talked about safety concerns relating to some people driving too fast.
- 5. Parks:** The parks can feel unsafe, particularly at night, and could be more interesting and offer more opportunities for sport and play.
- 6. Services:** People felt concerned about the loss of services due to the closure of Westside Community Centre, the butchers on Kings Road and the Beacon Pub. A lack of medical services (such as GP and dental practices and pharmacies) and transactional services (such as post offices and ATMs) was also highlighted, and a shortage of community police support.
- 7. Information:** People said it was hard to find out what was happening in the local area, and that it can be difficult and expensive to access things happening in the Leisure Park and other places.
- 8. Employment and skills:** People felt that there could be better access to opportunities to develop skills and find employment and that young people particularly struggle to access these.







# Collective engagement

SOMETHING  
COLLECTIVE

## Something Collective research - listening to you

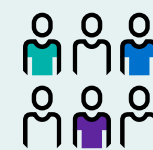
### Overview

#### Something Collective research

During November and December 2023, Something Collective supported the community engagement activities in Buckskin and South Ham. This report describes the activities, along with views and suggestions from community members about the area now, and any opportunities and ideas for change in the future.

#### Engagement with the local community took place in three parts:

- A series of four listening events in various locations within Buckskin and South Ham
- A quick survey and map on the website
- Three local school listening events to engage directly with young people and their families.



**302** people took part in the **engagement process**, either attending an event or completing the quick online survey\*.



**1,150** open comments received.



**124** people attended listening events.



**4,015** visits to the **Commonplace website** during the engagement period.



**76** young people and families attended **school events**.



**4,750** leaflets delivered to residents.










**197** surveys completed, 95 at an event and 102 online.

\* There may be duplication of participants who attended an event and completed an online survey.




## Listening events

During these drop-in sessions, people were encouraged to meet the team, ask questions, give their views, and share ideas for improvements to the area.


<b>Ridgeway Centre</b> 14 November 2023		<b>31</b> attendees
<b>St. Andrew's Church</b> 16 November 2023		<b>48</b> attendees
<b>St. Joseph's Church</b> 16 November 2023		<b>22</b> attendees
<b>Chiltern Primary School</b> 27 November 2023		<b>10</b> attendees
<b>Ridgeway Centre</b> 27 November 2023		<b>23</b> attendees
<b>Park View Primary School</b> 29 November 2023		<b>16</b> attendees
<b>Aldworth School</b> 5 December 2023		<b>50</b> attendees

## Overarching themes

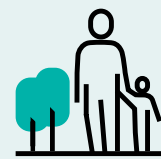
During the engagement process, a series of patterns grew from the community feedback, which have been drawn together by Something Collective into a set of themes.



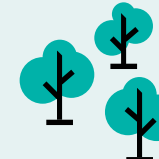
**Social infrastructure**  
Places and spaces for people to come together.




**Local services**  
Shops, banks, health services, utilities, jobs, and skills.



**Getting around**  
Roads, paths, cycle routes, public transport, different mobility needs.



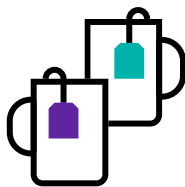
**Green spaces**  
Parks, access to nature, leisure opportunities, biodiversity.



**Housing**  
All housing types, and varying tenures (rental and home ownership).

## Social infrastructure

**257** community comments



### What you liked

- Strong sense of pride in the local community
- Celebration of local groups such as Westside Community Association, the Men's Shed, and several churches in the area
- Strong sense of history in the area, with many long-term residents

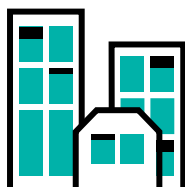
“ I’d never heard of this place called Basingstoke, but my husband cycled down here from London and back in the same day. He got home and said that’s the place for us!

### What you didn’t like

- Closure of community facilities including Westside Community Centre, the Beacon and the Kings Road butchers
- Lack of clubs and activities for all ages, limited variety of types for varying interests
- Lack of seating, shelters and furniture to meet up at outdoor spaces
- Lack of spaces to meet up indoors
- Drug dealing and drug use
- Graffiti and vandalism
- Boredom fuelled anti-social behaviour

## Local services

**180** community comments



### What you liked

- Several long-standing shops and food outlets on the estate were valued
- Existing provision, such as occasional repair café, as a way of tackling waste

“ We have no Post Office counter, no chemist, no doctors, no dentist and no cash machines in Buckskin.

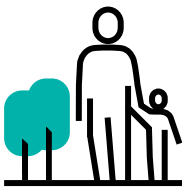
### What you didn’t like

- Lack of transactional services such as ATMs, post offices and food shops
- Lack of GPs, pharmacies, and dental practices
- Shortage of community police support and a desire to see a greater presence
- Lack of spaces to learn and grow
- Poor waste and recycling facilities and services



# Getting around

382 community comments



## What you liked

- Proximity to the town centre
- Some people can walk to town easily

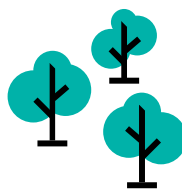
“ Unlevel pavements - really dangerous when we’re walking outside, especially in the dark.

## What you didn’t like

- Dangerous road conditions due to people parking in the road
- Lack of cycling paths and facilities throughout the neighbourhood
- Poorly maintained walking routes
- Badly lit and hidden spaces in alleyways and pavements are making the area feel unsafe

# Green spaces

190 community comments



## What you liked

- People value the existing parks and green spaces
- Stratton Park and Russell Howard Park highly valued by all age groups
- Number of green spaces overall in the area was highlighted as a point of difference
- Good opportunities for sports and leisure activities, such as football and running

“ Everyone goes to Stratton Park after school. The sports pitches are always full, and every group has their own bench.

## What you didn’t like

- Open green spaces lack a variety of planting or habitats, with few features or landscape design
- Currently the parks feel unsafe at night
- Lack of facilities for fitness and sports activities
- Lack of spaces for young people including accessible play for wheelchair users and people with additional needs, need for more stimulating play for older children

# Housing

141 community comments



## What you liked

- Original estate design with a mix of housing types created good opportunities for coming together
- Good amount of green space around homes
- Having a good relationship with neighbours scored the highest

“ We’ve lived in three different houses in Buckskin and South Ham, we’ve always had the freedom to find somewhere to suit the changing needs of our family.

## What you didn’t like

- Dated design with poor unequal layout of properties, and lack of storage
- Cost of upkeep and running homes
- Layout and spaces for parking affecting neighbourhood relations
- It’s difficult and costly to keep homes warm which causes damp and associated health concerns





## What young people had to say

“ There was a desire to learn career specific skills and gain work experience locally. This included creative skills, coding and skills for the food and drink industry.

“ There was a focus on cheaper and more accessible technology and wifi, as well as a desire for more spaces to spend time away from phones.

“Improved mental health provision was a priority for young people.

“ Many new activities were suggested, with a focus on sports, games and creative activities.

“ There were requests for better, more regular public transport and more accessible routes for cyclists and disabled people.

“ More outdoor social spaces were requested, as well as a new local library.

“ A community nature garden was suggested, that everyone could contribute to.

“ Many new activities were suggested, with a focus on sports, games and creative activities.

“ There were requests for better, more regular public transport and more accessible routes for cyclists and disabled people.

“ More outdoor social spaces were requested, as well as a new local library.

“ A community nature garden was suggested, that everyone could contribute to.





# Community voices

## The Young Foundation - shaping a fairer future

We are the UK's home for community research and social innovation

### Community reflections

Over the autumn 2023, seven local residents trained as Community Researchers and spent time co-designing the community listening survey with The Young Foundation's Institute for Community Studies.

The team reached out to the community to gather your views on the needs and priorities of the Bucksin and South Ham neighbourhoods. One sentiment that shone through was that many people here feel a deep sense of belonging, and there are many people and places they want to celebrate. Which isn't to say things are perfect. Residents were also very clear on what is needed to improve the neighbourhoods: more opportunities for young people to aspire to, better lighting in public spaces, and more funding that allows for community connection.

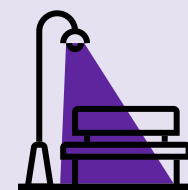
313

completed the  
community  
listening survey

50

face to face  
conversations  
were held by  
the Community  
Researchers

### The Community Listening Survey key themes



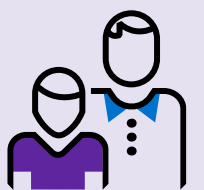
Safety



Community  
celebration and  
pride, strength,  
and trust



Leisure and  
facilities



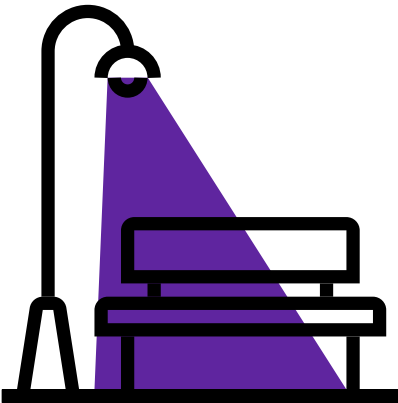
Children and  
young people



# Safety

## What you told us

Safety was the top priority for many local residents. It was the issue that the Community Researchers were told was most important in affecting how people feel about the area. It was affected by perceptions of crime, anti-social behaviour, the design of the built environment with poorly lit alleyways, and the difficulty in navigating the area as a pedestrian.



People were much more likely to feel safe during the day (78%), than at night (46%).

## What you'd like to see improved

The community wanted to see a greater Police Community Support Officers presence, improved lighting, and more spaces where you could spend time together safely.

“ During the day it's fine, although South Ham doesn't really provide a lot of places where to spend time ... Also, all the small footpaths between houses are a jungle, people throwing stuff at houses, leaving garbage, shouting.

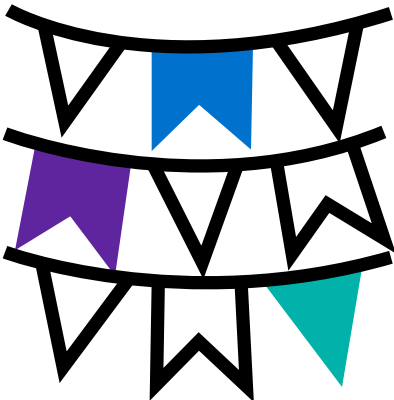
“ A lot of places have no good street lighting, so when it's dark out you are very unsafe as so black outside.

“ Prescelly Close, I feel safe as all of my neighbours and I look out for one another.

# Community celebration and pride, strength, and trust

## What you told us

The community wanted to make sure that they could celebrate Buckskin and South Ham and express the pride they feel for the area. The social networks and communities that people have, are one of the things local residents value most.



50% of respondents would be happy to still be living in the area in 10 to 15 years' time. And 49% felt there were people in the area they could rely on.

## What you'd like to see improved

The community explained how few places there were to spend time with one another or meet other residents. People tend to rely on their homes and gardens as spaces to socialise.

And despite a sense of being a strong and proud community, your feedback highlighted that people did not feel empowered, with only 15% of respondents feeling that they were able to influence decisions made about the local area.

The reputation of Buckskin and South Ham affected how people related to the area - and it was felt that more work could be done to communicate the good work going on.

“ The neighbours in our close have become a family unit. I know I could knock on anyone's door for anything from a friendly smile and hug to a hand with something around the house that I'm unable to do alone.

“ In South Ham we have a good community vibe, we know each other's names, speak to one another and look out for each other.

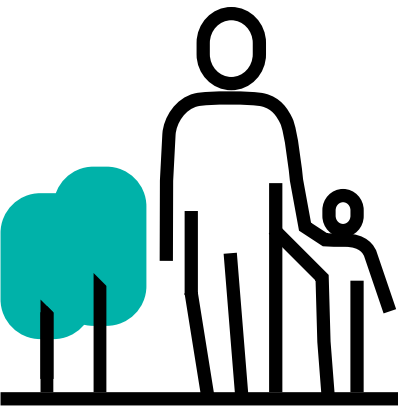
“ There's a great sense of community in the area, people will always help someone if they can.



# Leisure and facilities

## What you told us

Your feedback highlighted that there are several local spaces that act as important anchors in the area. The churches, which provide warm spaces, food, and guidance. Schools, which 42% of residents feel provide children and young people with a good start in life. Parks and green spaces valued by dog walkers and those with young children.



62% of residents felt that they could easily access all the facilities and services provided within the community. However, the survey highlighted the inaccessibility of these spaces for those reliant on public transport, and those with physical or mental conditions.

## What you'd like to see improved

The community explained that they felt the absence of facilities, particularly as some key spaces have recently closed. You felt a key priority was to make sure there are enough accessible and affordable spaces, managed by people that valued the community.

You told us that you felt access to employment opportunities are poor overall. Whilst the availability of casual or irregular employment was high - giving flexibility for parents and students; prospects for those seeking to build a career could be improved.

In the longer-term you'd like to see improved methods for active and affordable sustainable travel, and the availability of more cycle routes.

“ More grocery shops, I love all the parks. I spend most of my time in the parks. I love to play sports with friends. I go there with my dog.

“ I spend my time crafting at home and doing a bit of gardening. Not being a driver there isn't much available for me to access easily.

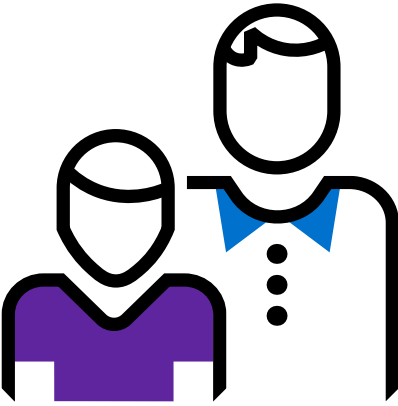
“ Some kind of accessible community hall for all. A place for the lonely to come together and not feel so alone.

# Children and young people

## What you told us

A lack of opportunities for children and young people and the limited freedom they currently experience was highlighted as a concern to the Community Researchers. When co-designing the survey, some were able to draw on their lived experience as a young person in the neighbourhoods.

The Community Listening Survey revealed that just 14% of young people aged 16-24 felt they had places where they could spend time in the area.



During the survey, the community was asked if they'd be happy for their children to stay living in this area for the rest of their lives. Only 24% felt that they would be happy with this outcome.

## What you'd like to see improved

The community spoke of the importance of giving young people a safe, warm, accessible, and affordable space to hold as their own as vital to reaching them in their time of need, and that this space simply does not exist in the area.

However, you felt that there are also long-term opportunities for change for children and young people, such as encouraging local employers and education providers to undertake outreach in Buckskin and South Ham. Also, by making sure they can access key skills and experiences that will support them as they move into adulthood - providing equal opportunities that allow them to engage as active members of the community and access better jobs.

“ More opportunities for young adults and teenagers to be involved in the community. Clubs etc. they can go to, or a skate park!

“ Less traffic, parking is a problem which means it's worrying to let my child out safely to walk around all of the parked cars moving around them.



# What happens now?

Your feedback has provided valuable insight into how you feel about living or working in Buckskin and South Ham.

**Please get in touch if you think we have missed anything, or you don't agree with anything.**

We now want to start to work with you to look at options for change and improvements. We want to focus on keeping and enhancing what you value about your neighbourhood, while also finding ways to tackle the issues and concerns that you have identified.

This is just the start of our journey, and there will be different ways for you to get involved depending on how much time you have available. This will include some paid roles (like the Community Researchers and Community Co-design Associates) and there will also be some specific opportunities for young people to get involved and gain access to skills development.

**Please get in touch now if you are interested in these.**

There will be lots of other ways to be involved: via our website and drop-in sessions at key points over the next year.

You'll find more information on current opportunities in the May edition of Your Community Newsletter.

## Find out more

**Email:** [yourcommunity@sovereign.org.uk](mailto:yourcommunity@sovereign.org.uk)

**Phone:** 0300 7771010

Calls from UK landlines are charged at local rates. Charges from mobile telephones vary. The charge for your call will depend on your mobile phone provider and the contract that you have with them.

You'll also find lots of useful information on our website

**Website:** [www.shapingthefuture.commonplace.is](http://www.shapingthefuture.commonplace.is)

Sovereign Network Group is the trading name of Sovereign Housing Association Limited, which is charitable. DEV-32445

