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## NEIGHBOURS COME OUT IN FORCE

Neighbourhood Plan Open Days are a great success

Last Sunday's fabulous summer weather brought Stratford residents out in large numbers, many taking time to call into the Town Hall to check proposals of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Organisers were delighted to welcome a busy stream of people keen to discuss suggestions for the Plan that will give Stratford residents legal rights to shape the future of their town.

At any one time, six of the forty residents who volunteered to prepare the Plan were on hand to explain its proposals and gather feedback. They reported that although some residents had seemed a little cynical about it to begin with, they became enthused by the fact that members of the team really were part of the community, and that the views of ordinary residents did matter.

Over the two Open Days, the issues that gained most interest were congestion around the town, regeneration, pedestrianisation and shared spaces.

Ken Thomas, who lives on Banbury Road, thought most of the suggestions in the plan were very sensible and couldn't find much he didn't agree with: "My greatest concern is the pedestrian congestion at the bottom of Bridge Street with people waiting for buses and crossing the road. I've come to discuss suggestions for improving that, perhaps different drop off points in town and maybe a bus terminal at the Leisure Centre."

Resident Matt Keenan was very happy to see proposals for the industrial areas in Stratford, despite owning one of the businesses that would need to be relocated to allow for its regeneration: "My family runs a building company from a rented unit in Masons Road. I'd prefer to buy premises with outside space but there's nowhere suitable in town. The proposal for an industrial park near the A46 is ideal, especially if I could buy a unit rather than rent from a developer, and for something within a small business' price range."

And there was a surprise in store for the team working on the Neighbourhood Plan; Daniel Lynch went to Sunday's Open Day to give his suggestions for solving the town's traffic congestion but ended up becoming one of the volunteers, offering his professional help in preparing the Plan: "I'm a

Civil and Structural Engineer. I'm passionate about Stratford and I've lived here all my life, so I just want to help out."

All visitors to the Open Days were invited to fill in the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, a document which allows you to prioritise the issues you think our Plan should deal with and give your suggestions for solutions to specific issues.

Feedback will be incorporated into the finalised Neighbourhood Plan which, if supported by more than 50% of residents voting in a referendum, will form a new tier in planning policy.

Over 600 questionnaires have been returned so far but you have plenty of time to record your views. You can pick up a copy of the questionnaire from the Town Hall or download it from [www.ourstratford.org.uk](http://www.ourstratford.org.uk) . They must be returned by 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

As well as having full details of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, visitors to the website can also listen to feedback from some of the local people who attended the Open Days.

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