



# APPENDIX 01 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE VISION

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Dacorum Borough Council has adopted a placeshaping approach, which is rooted in community participation. The Council carried out consultation in autumn 2022 and asked the community 21 important questions. The results are included in this document and have helped to shape the Hemel Hempstead town Centre Vision and future Hemel Place Strategy. Other engagement methods included stakeholder workshops and 1:1 engagement with partners.



**HEMEL IS A FAMILY OF WELCOMING  
NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THRIVING  
COMMUNITIES. WORKING  
TOGETHER WE WILL SHAPE OUR  
FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE.**



# WHERE IS HEMEL

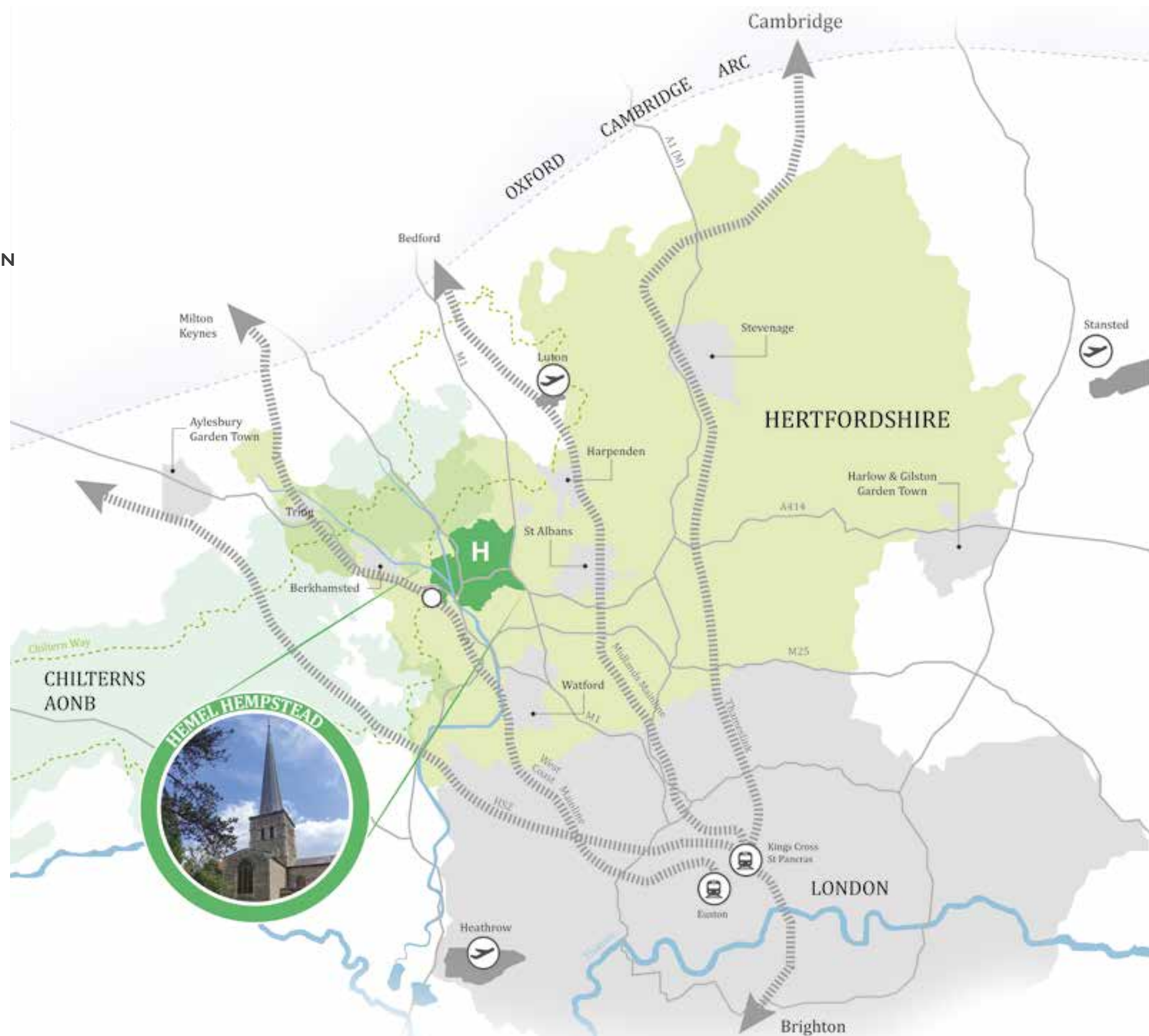
**24** MILES NORTH-WEST OF LONDON

**1539** HENRY VIII GRANTED A CHARTER OF INCORPORATION TO HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

**93,591** HEMEL HEMPSTEAD POPULATION\*

**26** MINUTES  
EUSTON STATION

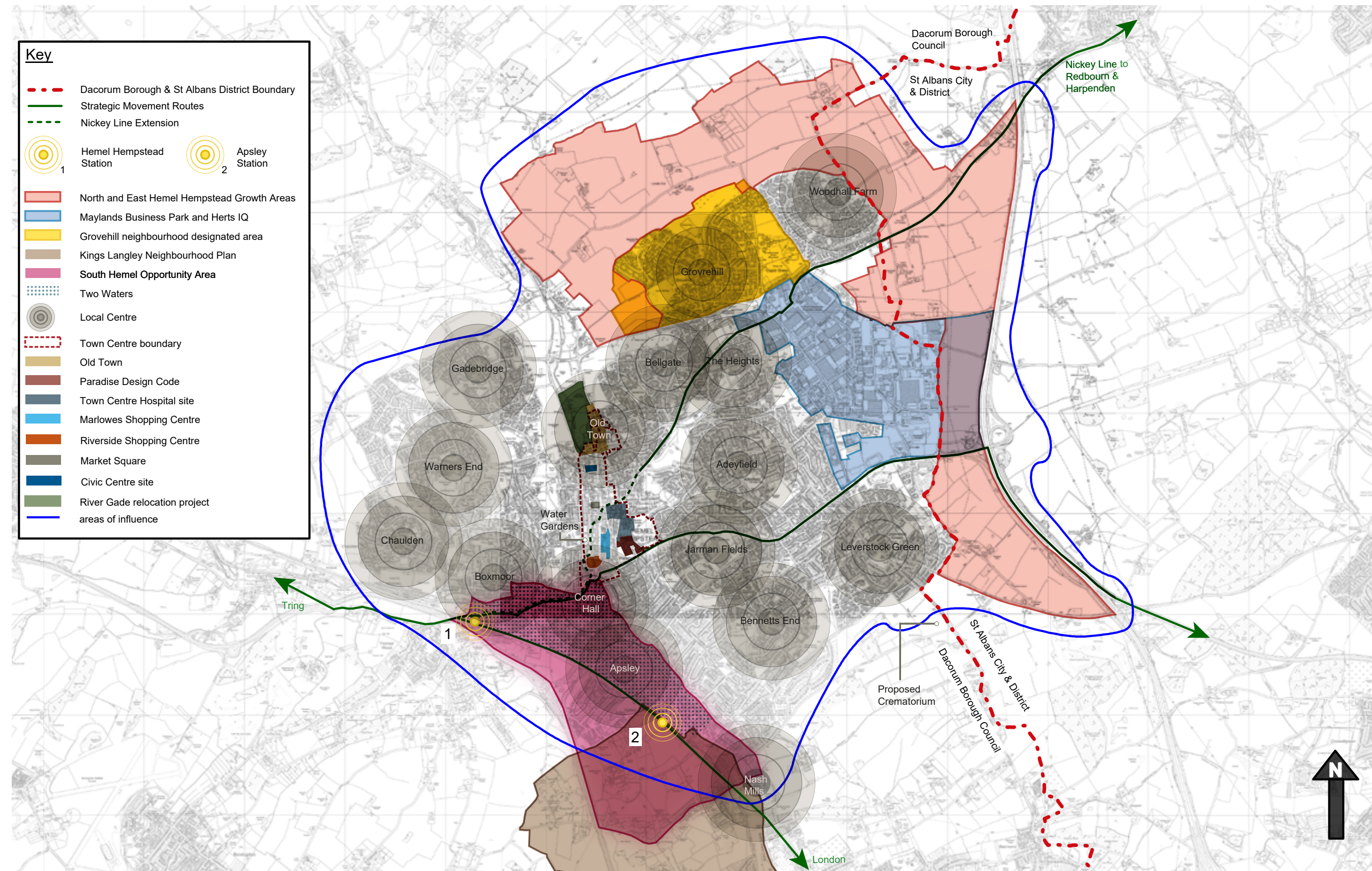
**25** MINUTES  
LUTON AIRPORT



# HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

# HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

# HEMEL BUBBLE PLAN



\*Dacorum Borough Council Data Dashboard - Hemel Hempstead total population in 2019

# SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENTS

The engagement process aimed to capture local knowledge and empower communities to take part in the future of the Hemel Hempstead and its town centre. The process sought to reach as wide as possible to involve the full diversity of Hemel's communities, including those under-represented groups that are seldom heard.

The engagement aimed to ensure that the Hemel Place and Town Centre Strategies were guided by the views and priorities of strategic and delivery partners, businesses, community stakeholders as well as the wider public, residents and visitors. The Hemel Place team held a variety of events and communication methods to ensure a wide range of opinions and voices were captured and presented. The engagement approach was designed to provide multiple opportunities for interested parties to have their say in shaping the Hemel Place and Town Centre Strategies.

The engagement process included the following activities:

- Hemel Place Board meetings
- One-to-one conversations
- Stakeholder workshops
- Presentations at stakeholders events
- Think Hemel website
- Surveys on Commonplace

The following pages provide an overview of the engagement undertaken. For full details of the engagement process, please see the separate appendix document.

### Hemel Place Board

At the beginning of the process, the Council established the Hemel Place Board partnership of key stakeholders

from the public, private and third sectors that have a strong presence in Hemel Hempstead and are essential for the future success of the town. The Board meets bimonthly and provides strategic directions for the growth of the town and the content of the new Place Strategy.

### One-to-one conversations

Conversations were held with stakeholders and were aimed at understanding their main priorities. Conversations were held using video calls or in-person meetings.

### Stakeholder workshops

Themed workshops were held with stakeholders and Council officers as an opportunity for a detailed discussion over priorities and ambitions for the Hemel Place and Town Centre Strategies. The presentation included key findings from the appraisal work and research so far. A series of questions were posed to prompt discussion about the Town Centre, according to the theme of the workshop:

1. A vibrant destination for enterprise
2. Where connections matter
3. Enhance your wellbeing in Hemel

### Presentations at stakeholders events

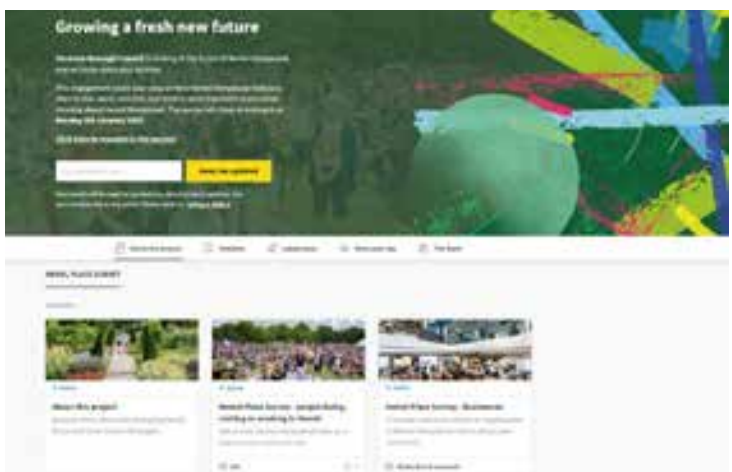
The Hemel Place team attended several stakeholders events such as the Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassador breakfast where the project was presented to businesses and other key partners.

### Think Hemel website

A new website has been created. The website includes information on the Hemel Place project, regular progress updates, contact information, Hemel visuals and photos, and engagement event invitations. The website will continue to be updated to record project development: [www.thinkhemel.com](http://www.thinkhemel.com)

### Surveys on the Commonplace platform

Between November 2022 and January 2023 the Hemel Place team launched a survey aimed at residents, visitors and businesses hosted on a commonplace platform. The surveys have helped to shape and inform the new Hemel Place and Town Centre Strategies.



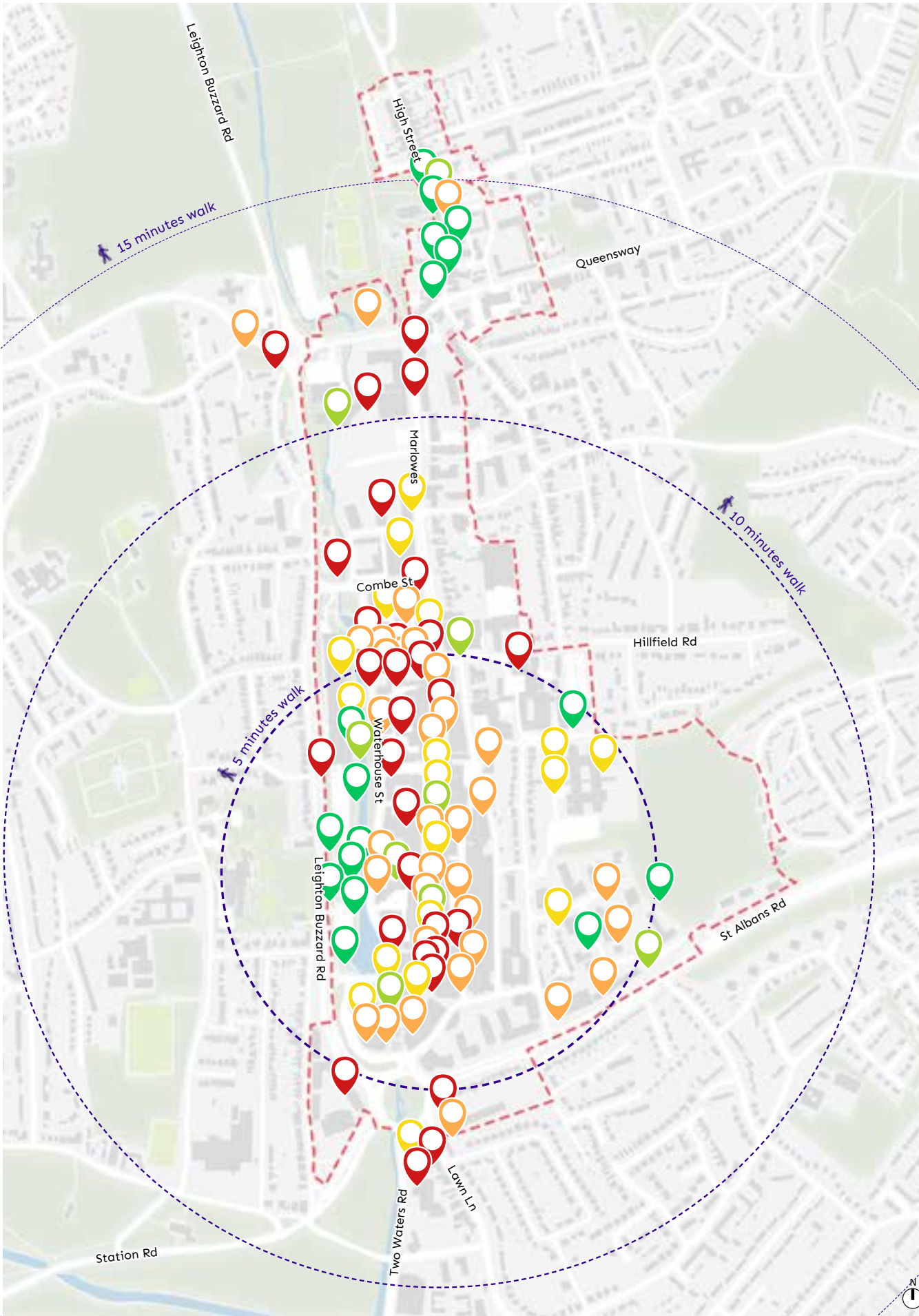
# WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT HEMEL TOWN CENTRE?

As part of DLUHC's pilot testing programme Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) have been developing design codes to guide the quality of future places in the Town Centre. Between July and November 2021, a 6-week community consultation period was open on the Commonplace platform where DBC requested residents their feelings about the town centre and a sentiment map was produced as part of the process.



**65%** of the overall **POSITIVE** contributions said it was due to being close to nature. Positive comments tend to be in areas on or close to green and pedestrian friendly spaces. Positive comments are also located in the Old Town described in many comments as attractive place to visit and close to Gadebridge Park.

**45%** of the **NEGATIVE** contributions said it was due to being **Not Attractive**. Negative comments tend to be in the new town centre and in particular in Market Square and along the Marlowes. These areas are described as dull, unsafe and with a lack of green areas. 27% of the comments about the town centre were specifically about Market Square.



STRENGTH

- Jellicoe Water Gardens
- Outstanding green spaces and blue infrastructure around the town centre (e.g. Gadebridge Park, Boxmoor)
- Strong linear active frontage along the Marlowes up to the Old Town
- Old Town
- Easy access to green spaces
- Good parking and servicing strategy

WEAKNESSES

- North-South orientation of town centre
- Vacancies (sporadic)
- Difficult to drive to public transport, not designed to carrying lots of shopping
- Lack of range in evening / nigh –time uses
- Topography
- Too much space
- ASB doesn't feel safe
- Disconnected to the station
- Employment areas out of centre
- Leisure offer in HH is condensed in Jarmans
- Strategic sites not in Local Plan
- Lack of high quality homes in town centre – lot of affordable and social rent
- Town centre not ready to pitch, need more endorsement from local plan
- Poor evening economy
- Lack of an artistic/entertainment venue – need a replacement for the pavilion
- Marlowes shopping centre has a high level of vacancies and a poor environment
- Lack of commercial demand for office space, made worse by Covid
- Lack of direct public transport connections to settlements outside the borough (C.Beds)

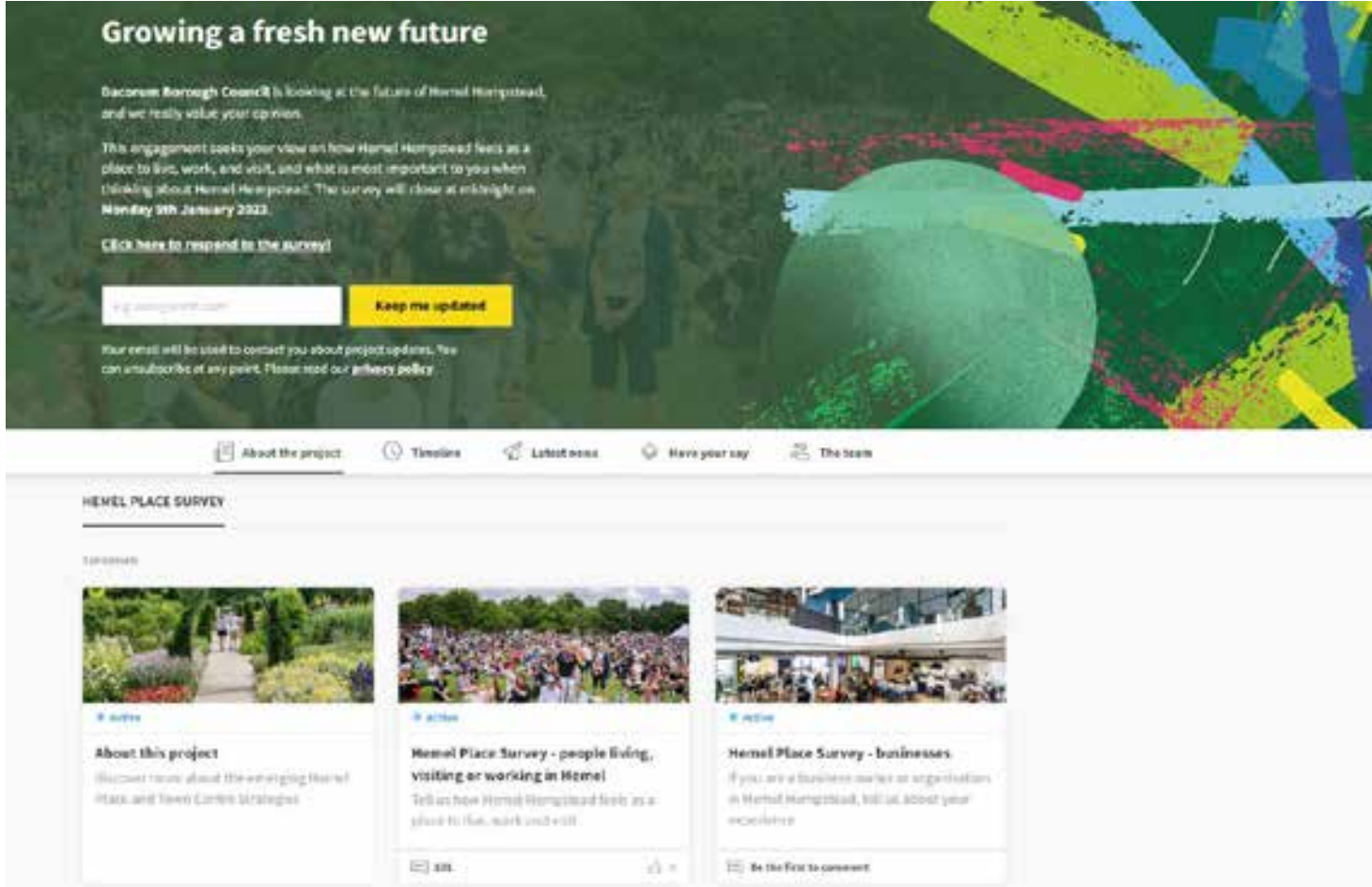
OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve east-west connections in town centre
- Relocation and condensation of retail
- Destination town
- Extend the historic trail to include town centre, Water Gardens, Paper Mills, etc.
- Asda site relocated on Market Square?
- Cherry bounce retirement homes?
- Redevelopment of Market Square is a major opportunity – the site should be expanded to include the bungalows and other nearby buildings
- HH market vibrant footfall
- Hans encourage vibrant sense of place
- Link to Gadebridge park could be improved
- Increase in people living in town centre à more expenditure in town centre
- Watford à has it worked? What learnings from other towns seeking transformation
- Routine of cleaning all play areas
- Create a new landmark building
- Health offer around hospital site and bus interchange (e.g. boxing club) – A healthy quarter
- Welwyn – how are they doing? Are they doing well?
- Who aiming into Bank Court? Old Town and the Plough are traditionally entrances

THREATS

- Safety in service yards
- Cost of living will have knock effect on retail and businesses
- Increase in internet shopping and less use of town centre shops
- Distance from train station
- Planning reform and Gov uncertainty
- Reducing car parking could undermine the vitality of the town centre + loss of DBC income
- Lack of unique selling point means that cannot compete with other settlements
- Reduction of biodiversity NET gain November 2023
- Satisfy SANG clean safe and green
- Water Gardens listed status (?)
- Stand-alone developments e.g. increased building heights without any consistency in design
- People in charge use cars
- Political issues, disabled parking bays
- High deprivation in town centre
- Poor quality of existing housing
- Pigeons – how can reduce them and the use of pigeons spike that are everywhere in the town centre
- Façade of Bank Count building facing the Marlowes (Hightown) is very dirty and deteriorated. Can we enforce it?

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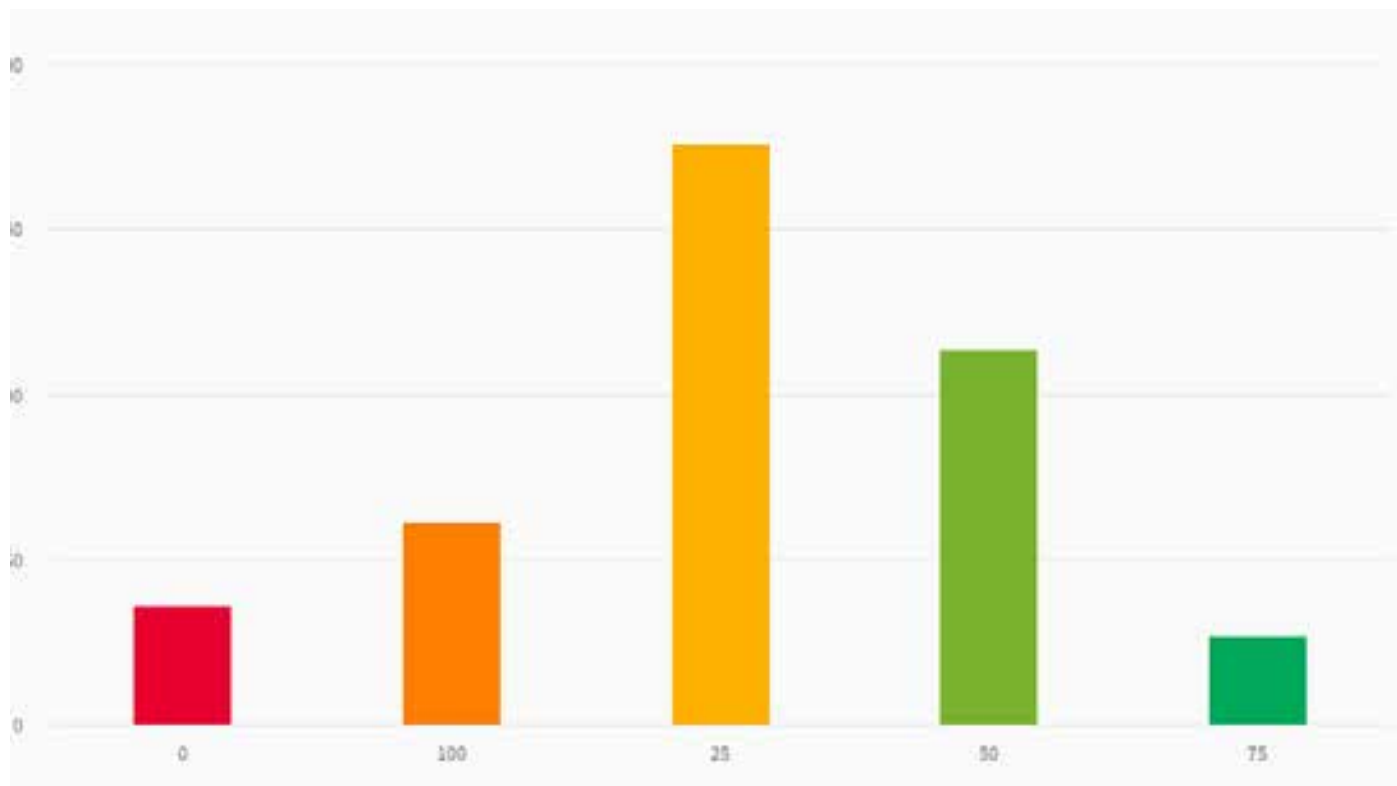


THE QUESTIONS ASKED :

1. How proud of Hemel Hempstead are you?
2. Why do you feel this way?
3. What would make your score even better?
4. Please tell us three things that are most important to you for the future of Hemel Hempstead?
5. Where is your favourite place in Hemel?
6. Why is this your favorite place?
7. Where is your least favourite place in Hemel?
8. Why is this your least favorite place?
9. If you live in Hemel Hempstead, where do you consider is the heart of your community?
10. Could you please give us the name of this place?
11. How can we as communities support each other with the cost of living crisis and other challenges?
12. Are there any community activities or groups providing support that you would like to make us aware of AND/OR that you feel is missing from this community?
13. If you have a disability or health condition, how do you feel Hemel Hempstead supports you as a place to live?
14. What is your impression on how communities interact with each other in Hemel Hempstead?
15. Do you feel that Hemel Hempstead is a community that promotes acceptance, inclusion and a sense of belonging to all its residents?
16. What do you consider most important to you when thinking about a place to live?
17. If you work in or visit Hemel Hempstead, would you consider living here?
18. What is the reason behind your answer to question 17?
19. How often do you visit Hemel Hempstead town centre?
20. Why do you visit Hemel Hempstead town centre?
21. What would make you visit the Town Centre more often?



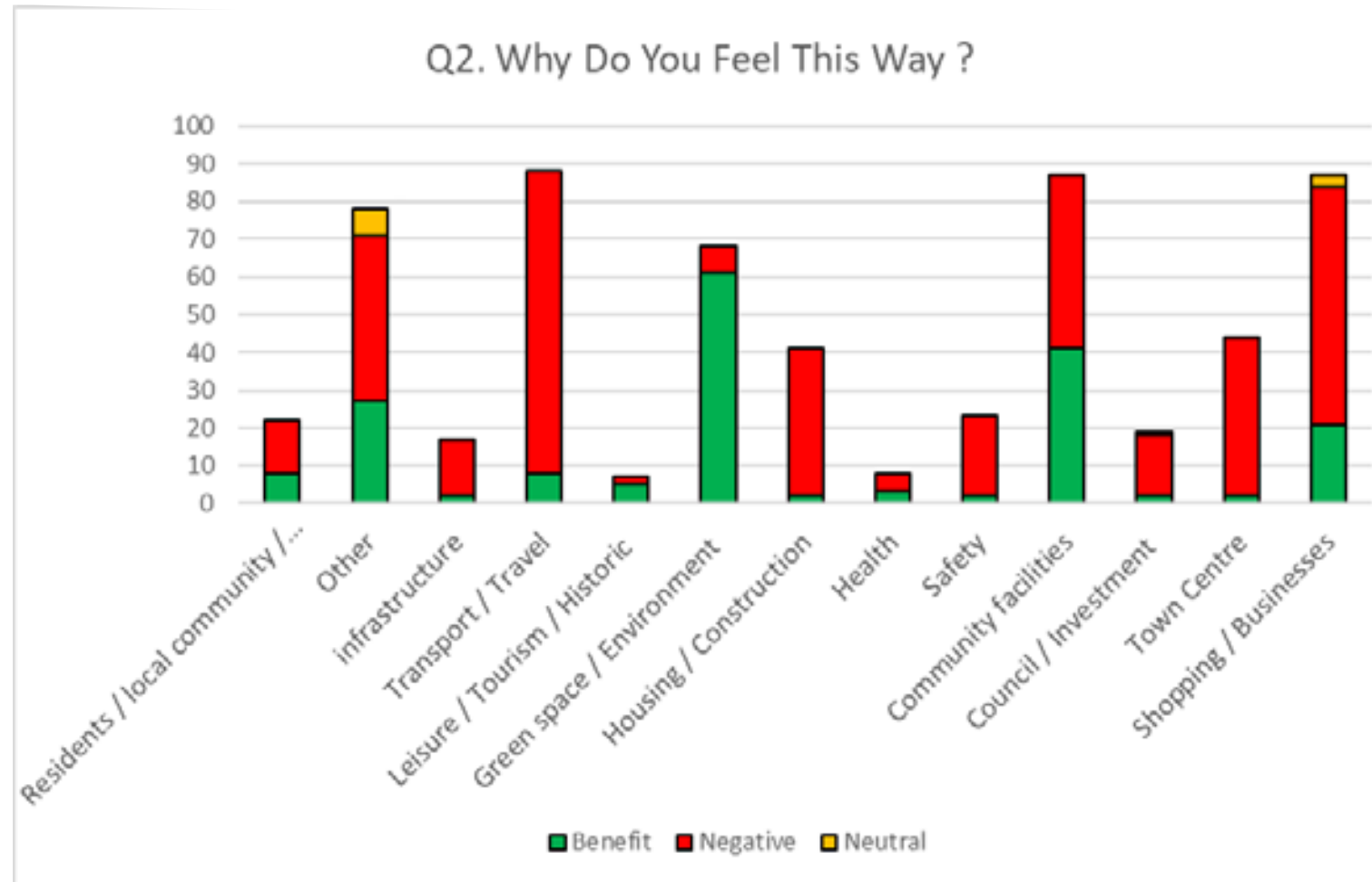
1. HOW PROUD OF HEMEL HEMPSTEAD ARE YOU?



This chart shows how proud the respondents of the survey were of Hemel Hempstead. This question provided respondents with five options to choose from, ranging from not proud at all to extremely proud.

The results show that 42% had a neutral view on Hemel with 34% having a positive perspective compared to 24% who had a negative perspective.

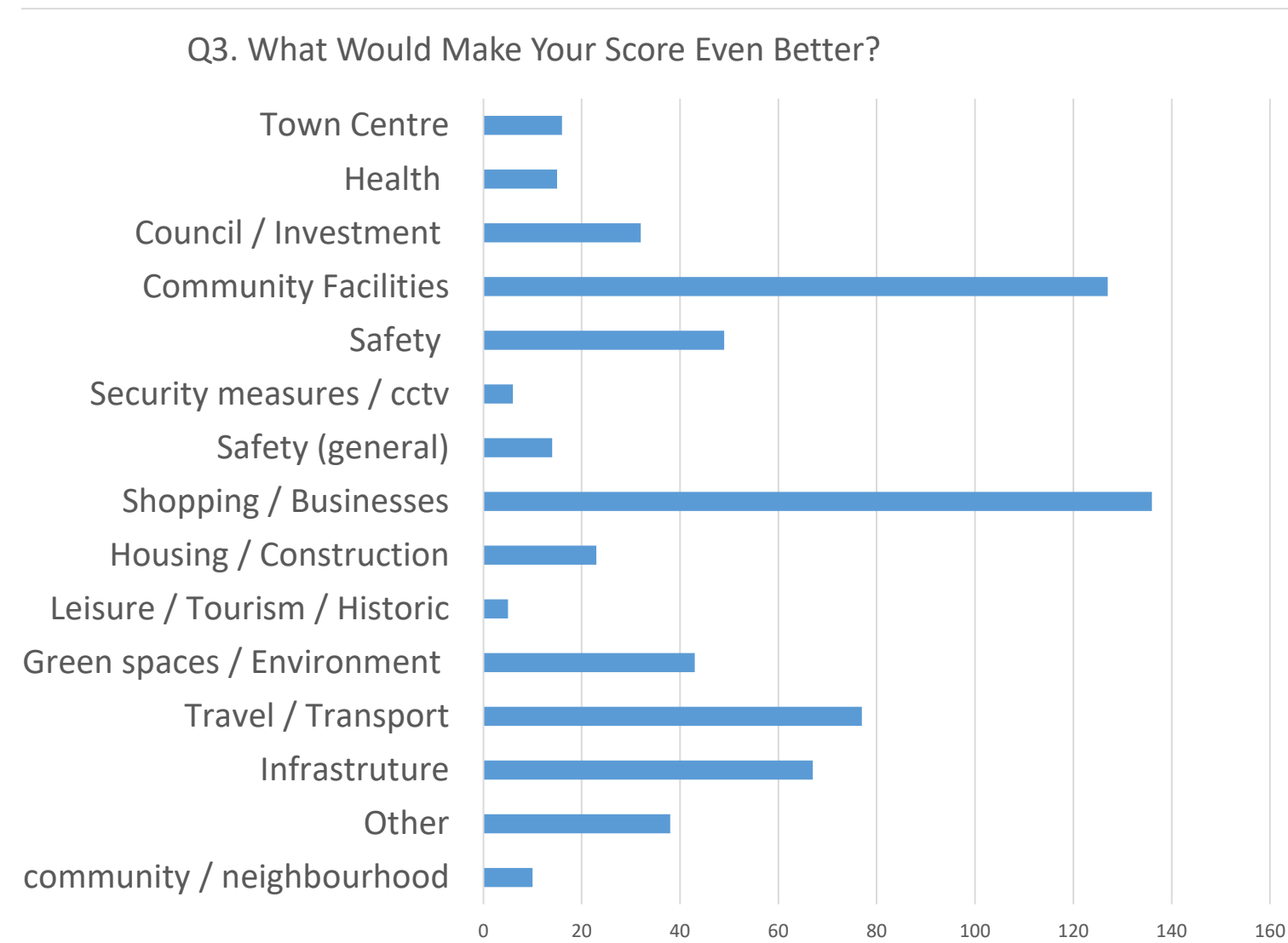
2. WHY DO YOU FEEL THIS WAY?



This graph combines the viewpoints of respondents following their answers to question one. This question provided a platform where respondents could provide their opinions openly. These answers have been summarised into relevant categories and further broken down into a positive or negative sentiment of the response.

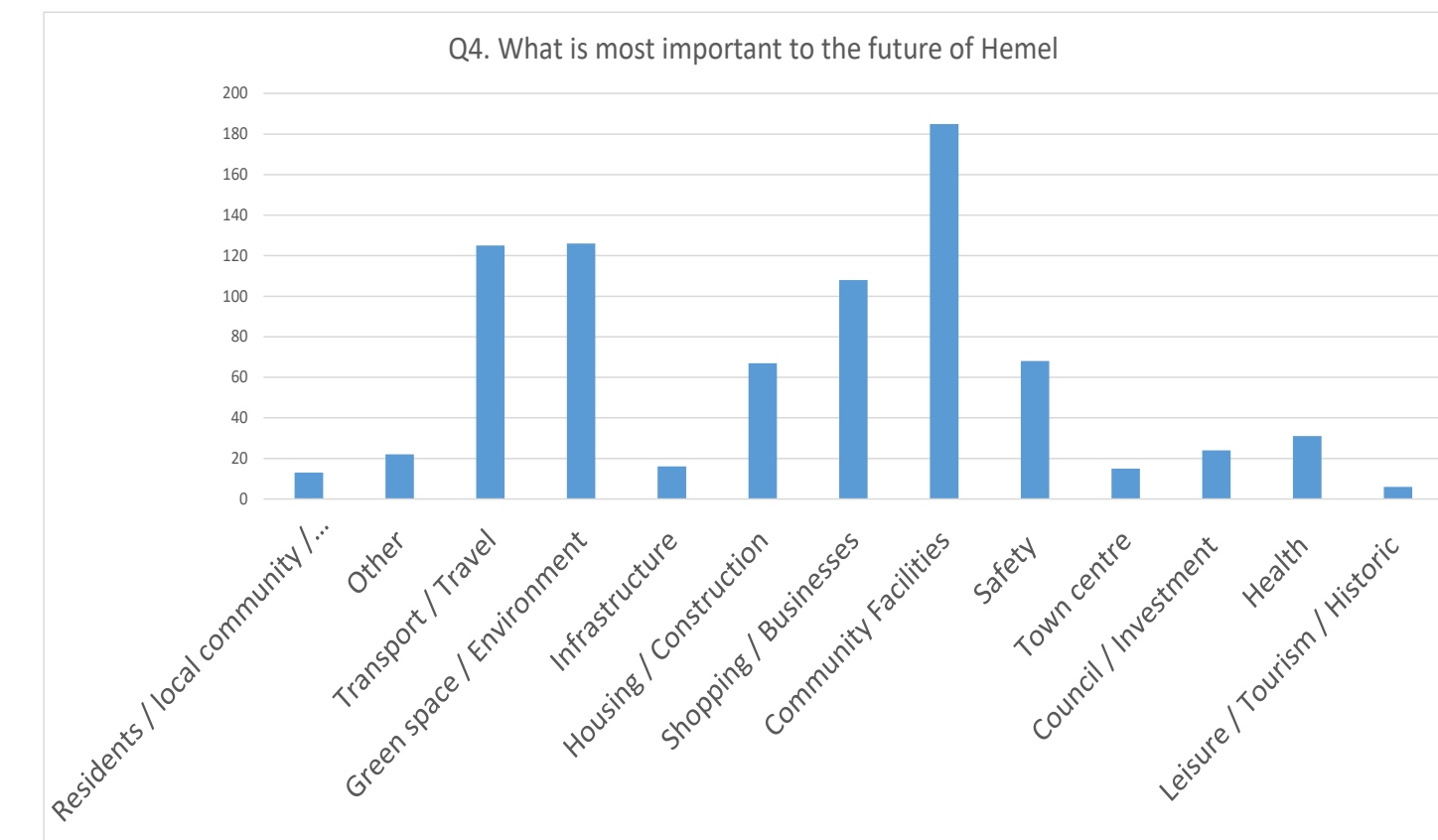
Travel, transport, shopping and businesses were the key topics that those responding had a negative view on. The majority of positive responses were in relation to green space, environment and community facilities. The fact that these were responded to the most shows what is most important to the respondents.

3. WHAT WOULD MAKE YOUR SCORE EVEN BETTER?



This shows that improvements to shops and businesses would make the communities score even better. Community facilities are another key concern within the community followed closely by transport, infrastructure and safety.

4. PLEASE TELL US THREE THINGS THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU FOR THE FUTURE OF HEMEL HEMPSTEAD?



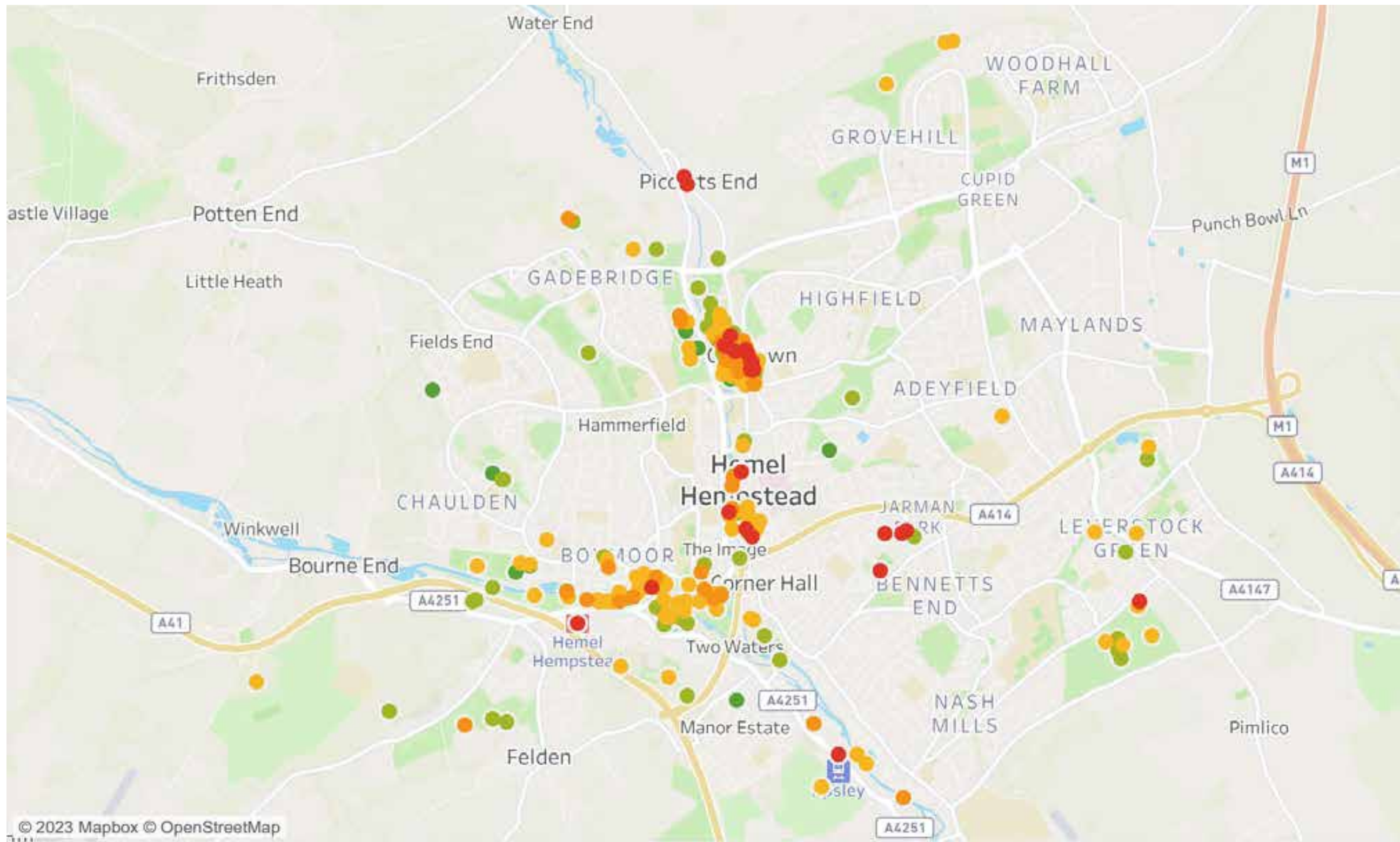
This question provided open text for respondents to make comment on what is important to the future of Hemel.

The clear priorities for the respondents was community facilities with over 180 comments. This topic has shown significant responses throughout the questions showing that these are extremely important to those who responded in the survey. Other key topics included; travel, transport, green spaces and shopping. Leisure, tourism and historic came out as the lowest priority at the time on responding.



5. WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

■ not at all proud ■ not too proud ■ neutral ■ somewhat proud ■ very proud

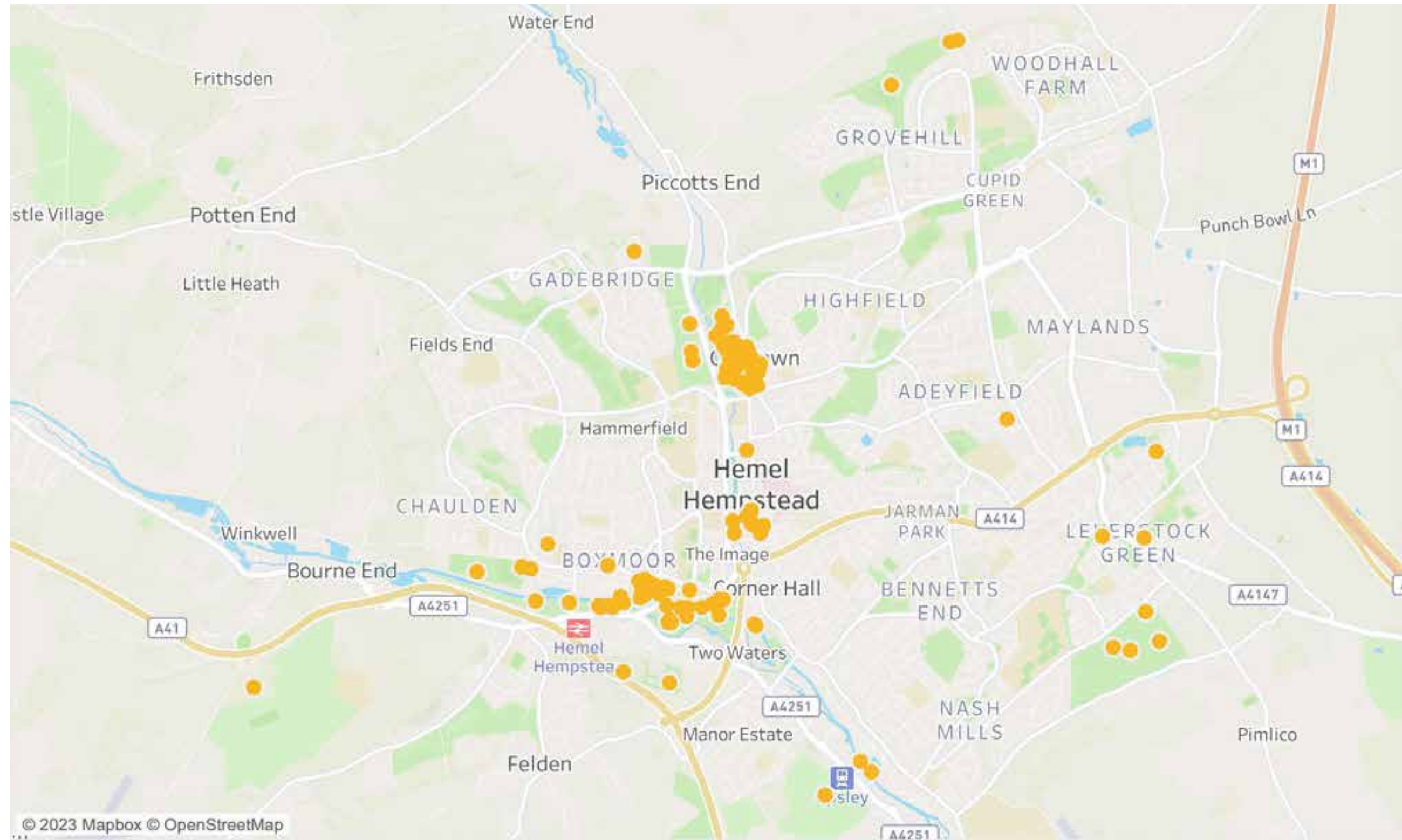


This map shows where respondents dropped a pin to showcase their favourite place within Hemel. This is broken down by the sentiment of their comments.

Green spaces such as Gadebridge Park as well as other local parks and canals had a significant amount of votes. Hemel Old Town also had a high proportion of respondents' choices.

5. WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - Neutral ■

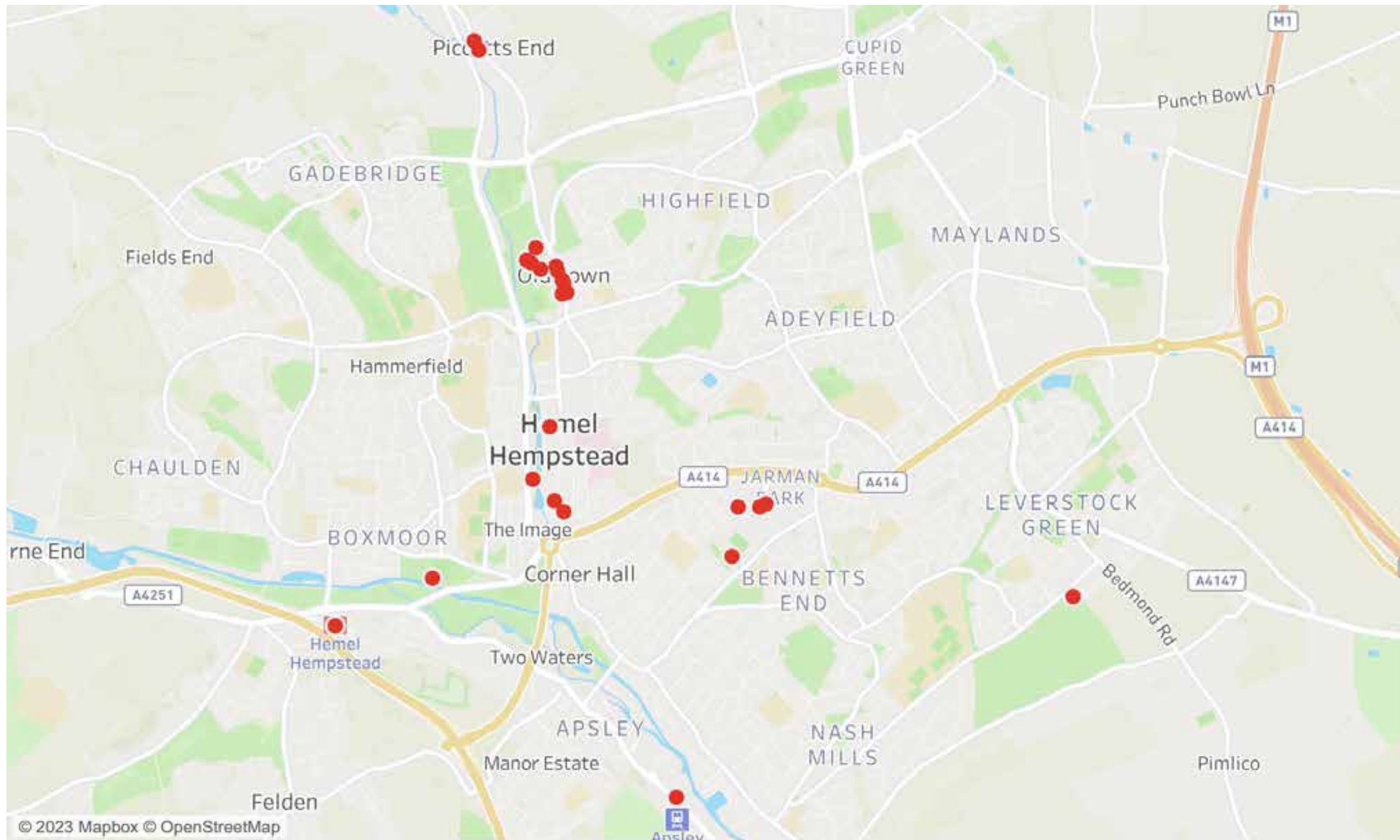


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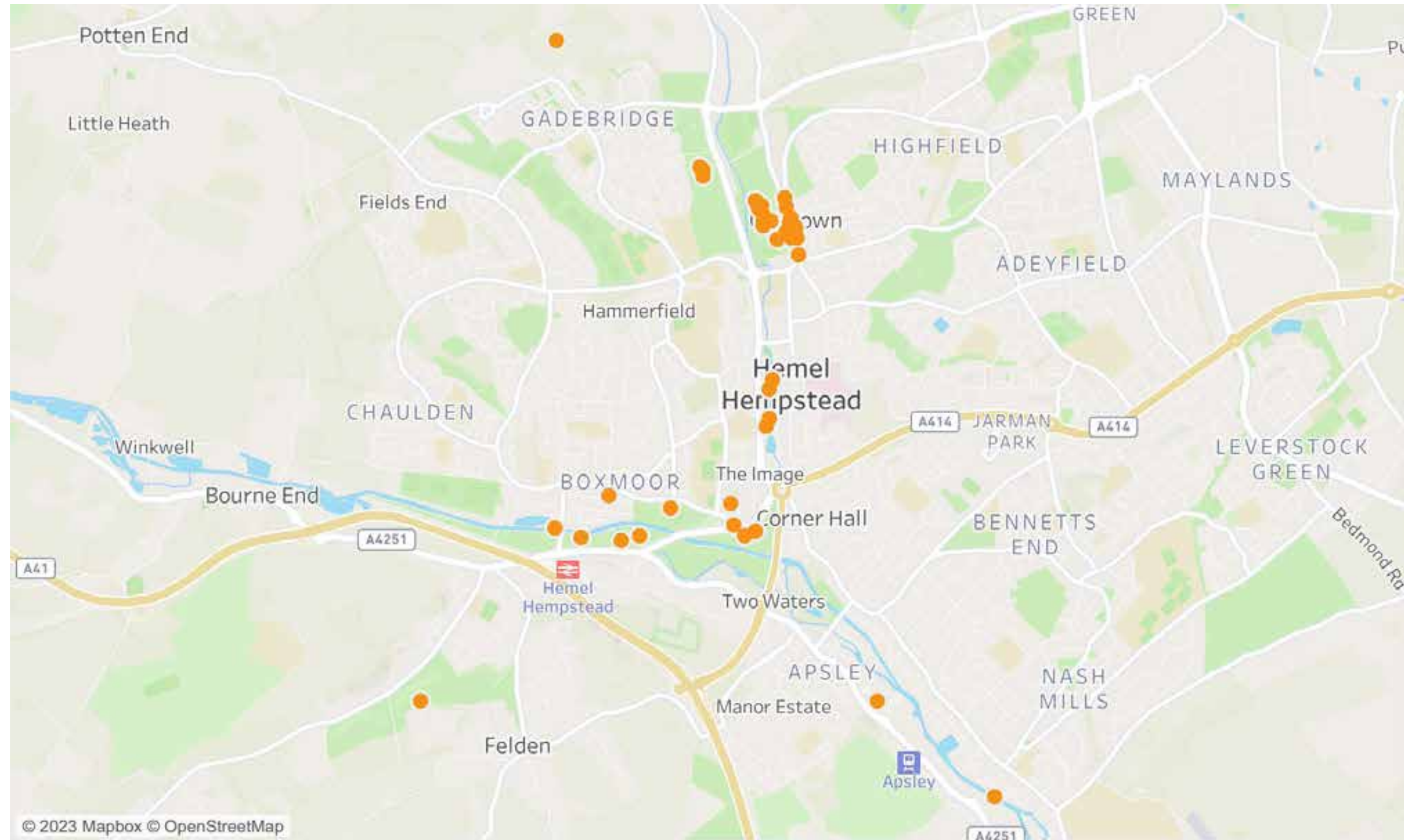
5. WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - Not at all proud ■



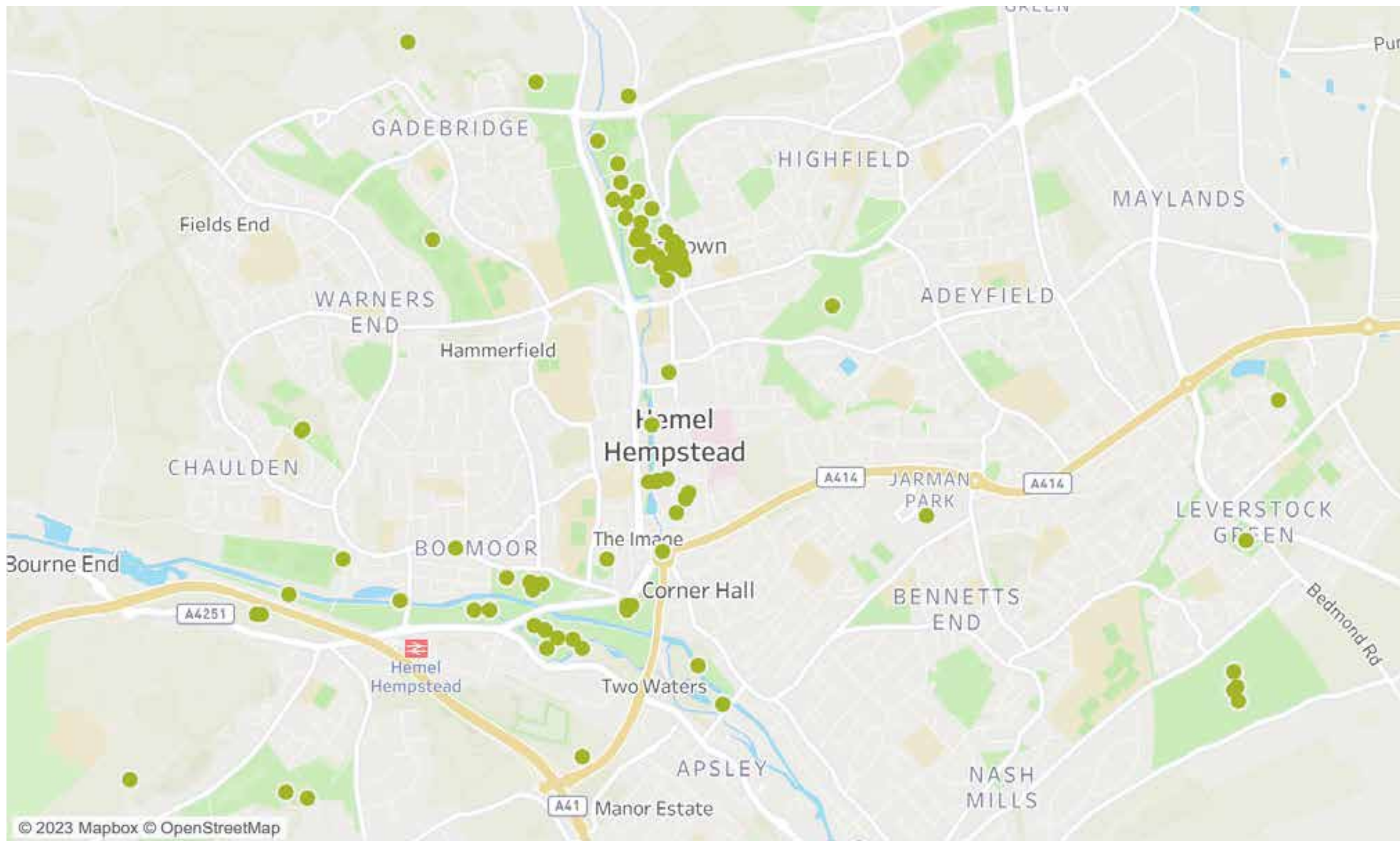
5. WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - not too proud ■



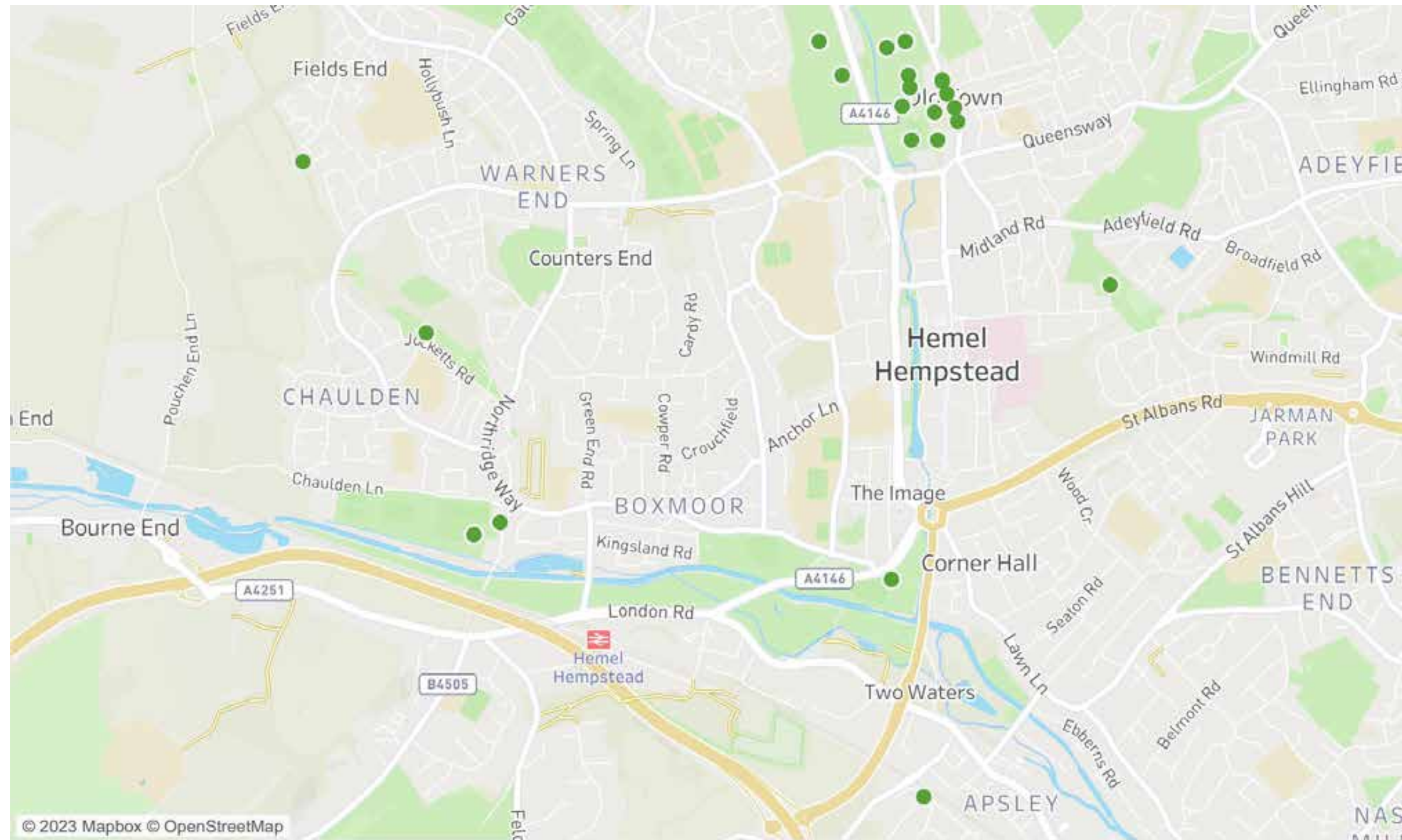
5. WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - somewhat proud



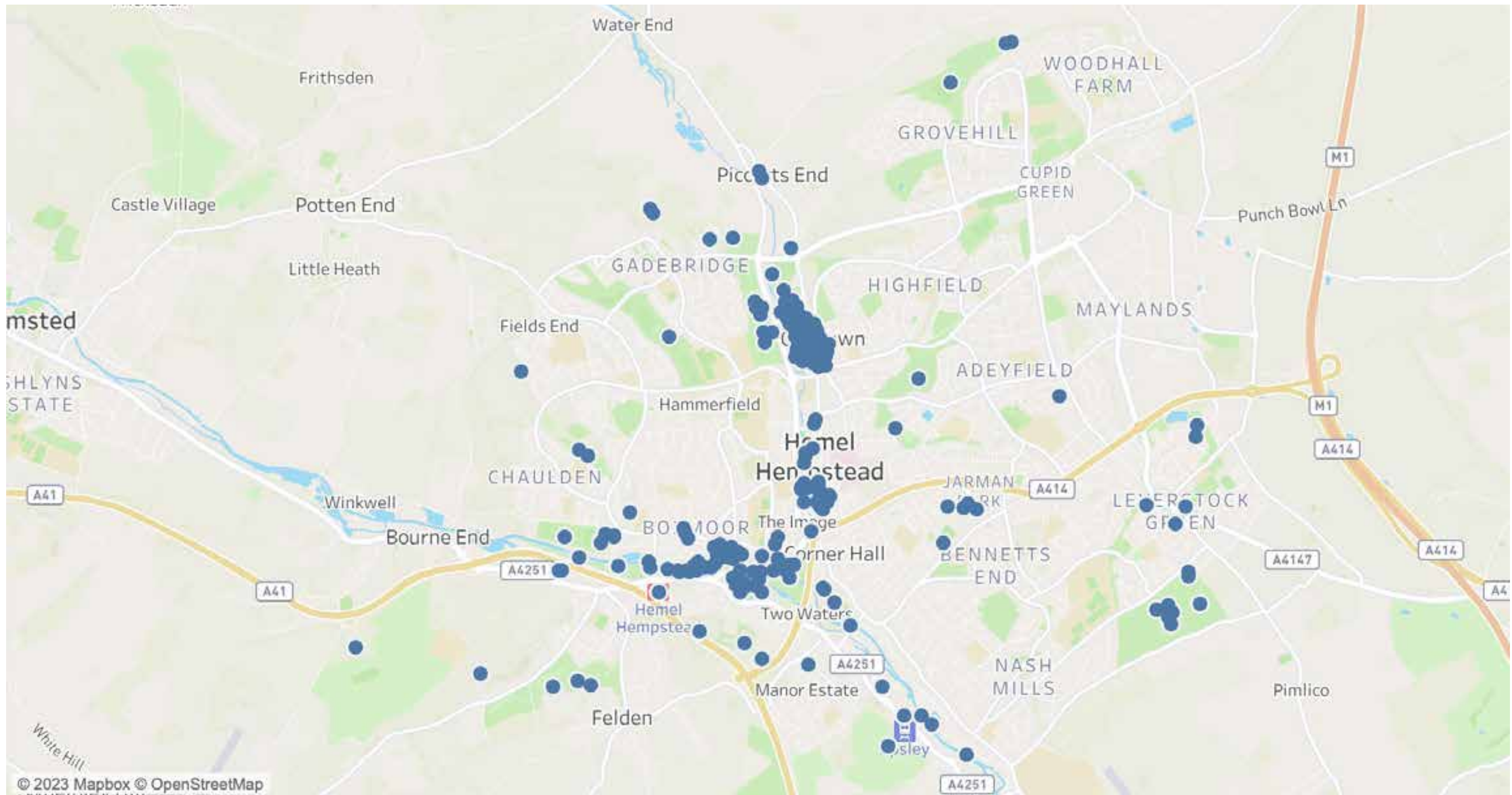
5. WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - very proud

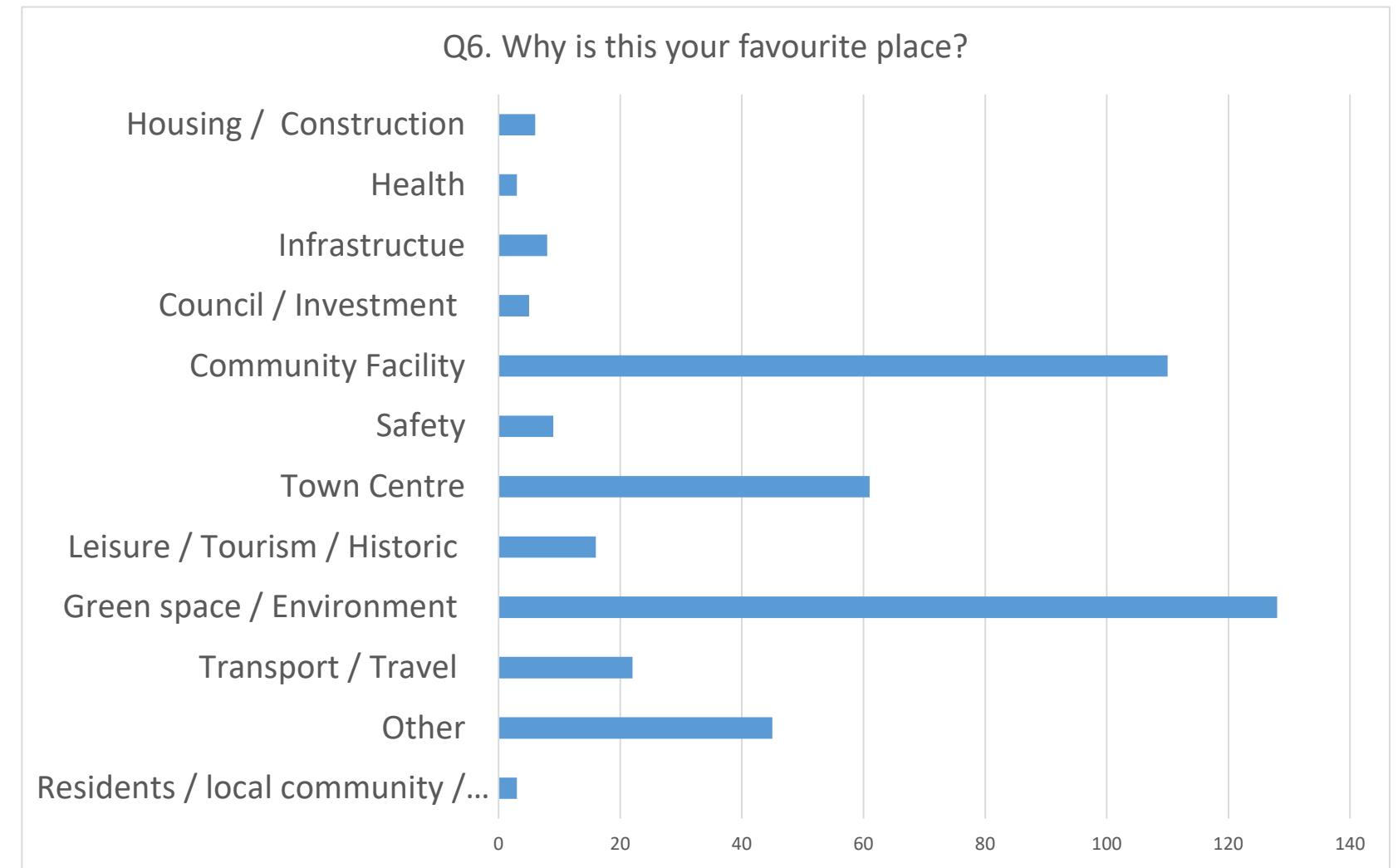


5. WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Outliers >4 mile radius around the centre point excluded



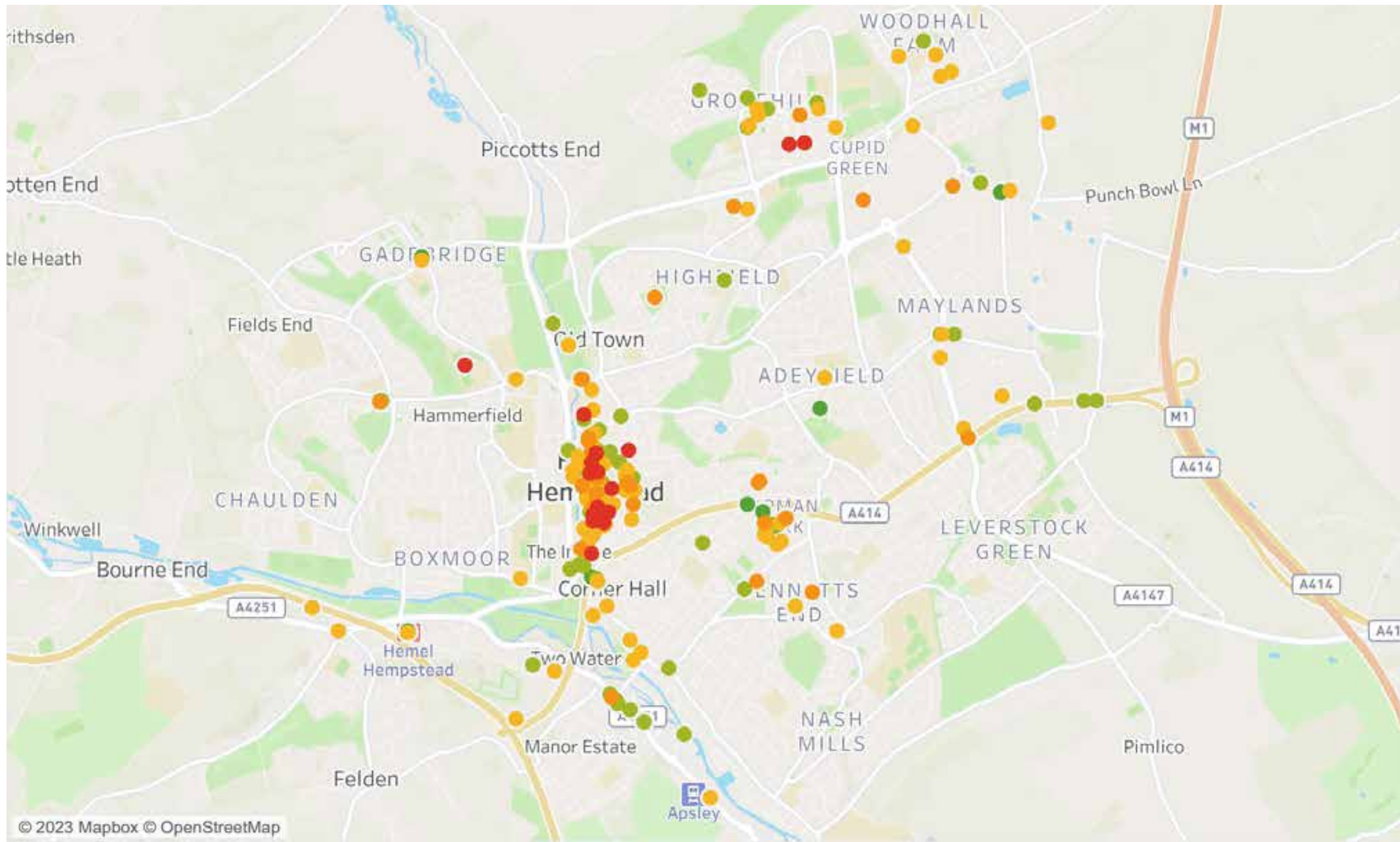
6. WHY IS THIS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE?



This question follows on from question five to provide in depth responses. Community facilities and green spaces were the key reasons as to why the areas chosen where favourite places. This aligns with respondents choosing Gadebridge Park as one of their preferred places.

7. WHERE IS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

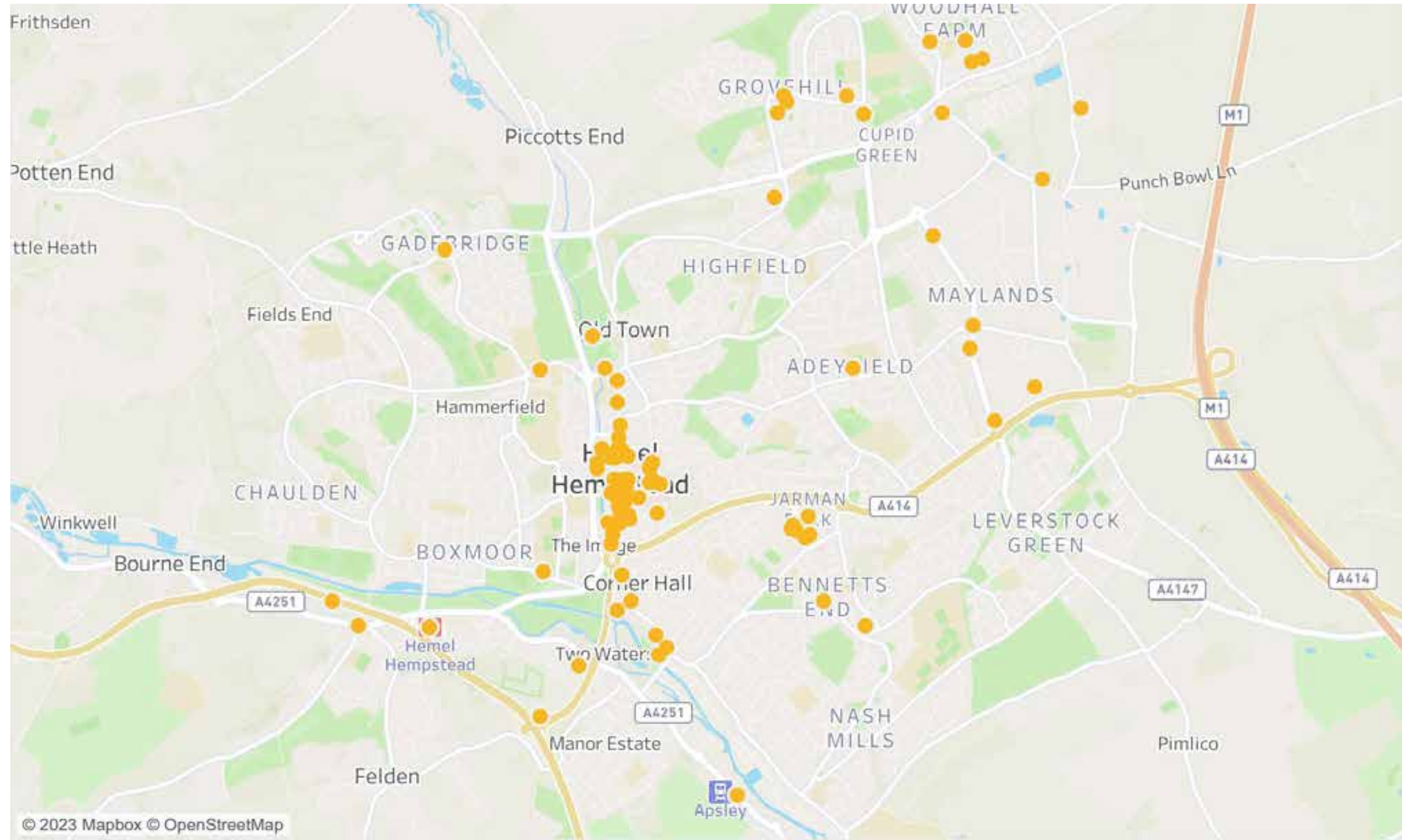
■ not at all proud ■ not too proud ■ neutral ■ somewhat proud ■ very proud



This map shows where respondents dropped a pin to showcase their favourite place within Hemel. This is broken down by the sentiment of their comments. Green spaces such as Gadebridge Park as well as other local parks and canals had a significant amount of votes. Hemel Old Town also had a high proportion of respondents' choices.

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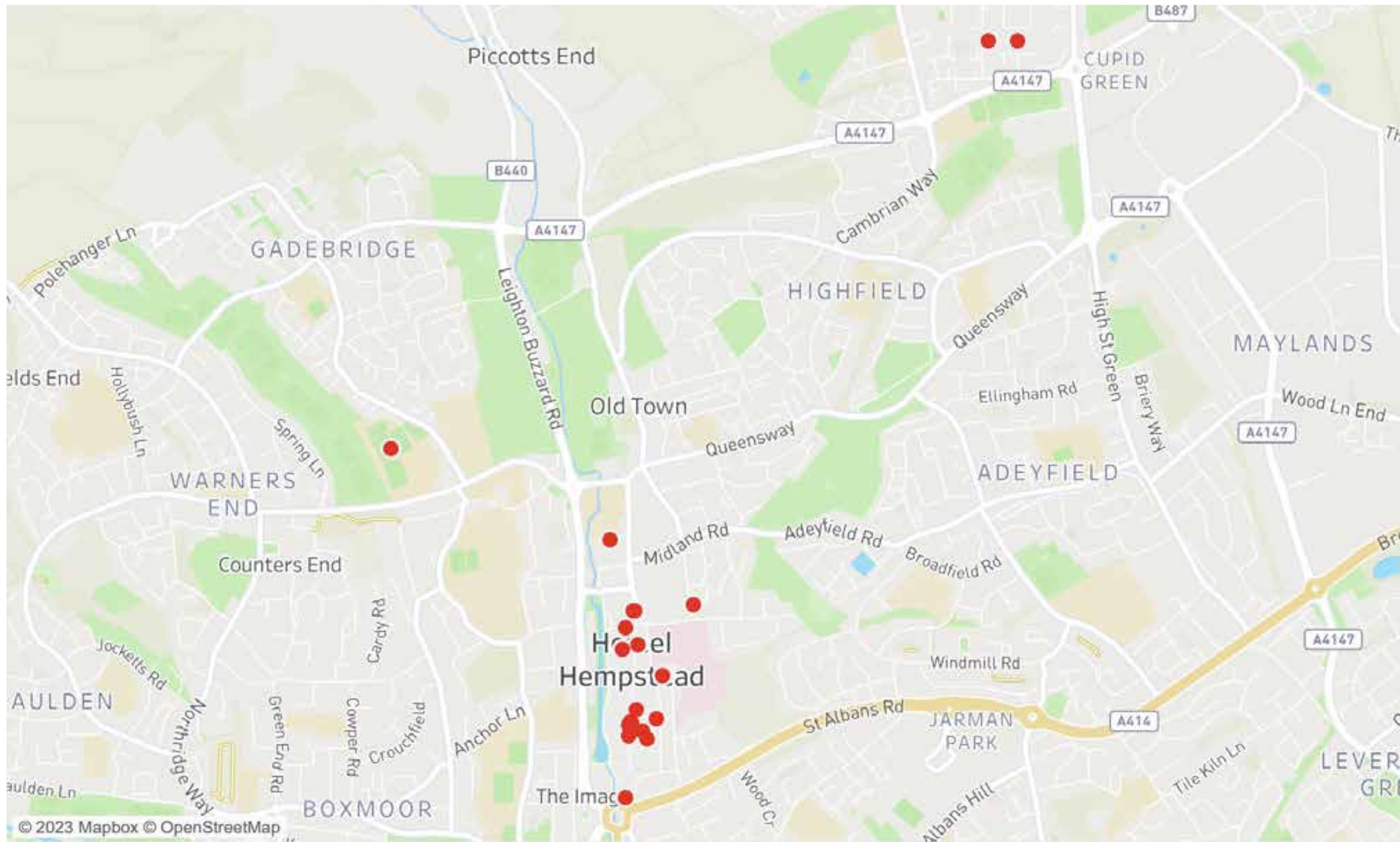
Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - Neutral ■



This map shows where respondents dropped a pin to showcase their favourite place within Hemel. This is broken down by the sentiment of their comments. Green spaces such as Gadebridge Park as well as other local parks and canals had a significant amount of votes. Hemel Old Town also had a high proportion of respondents' choices.

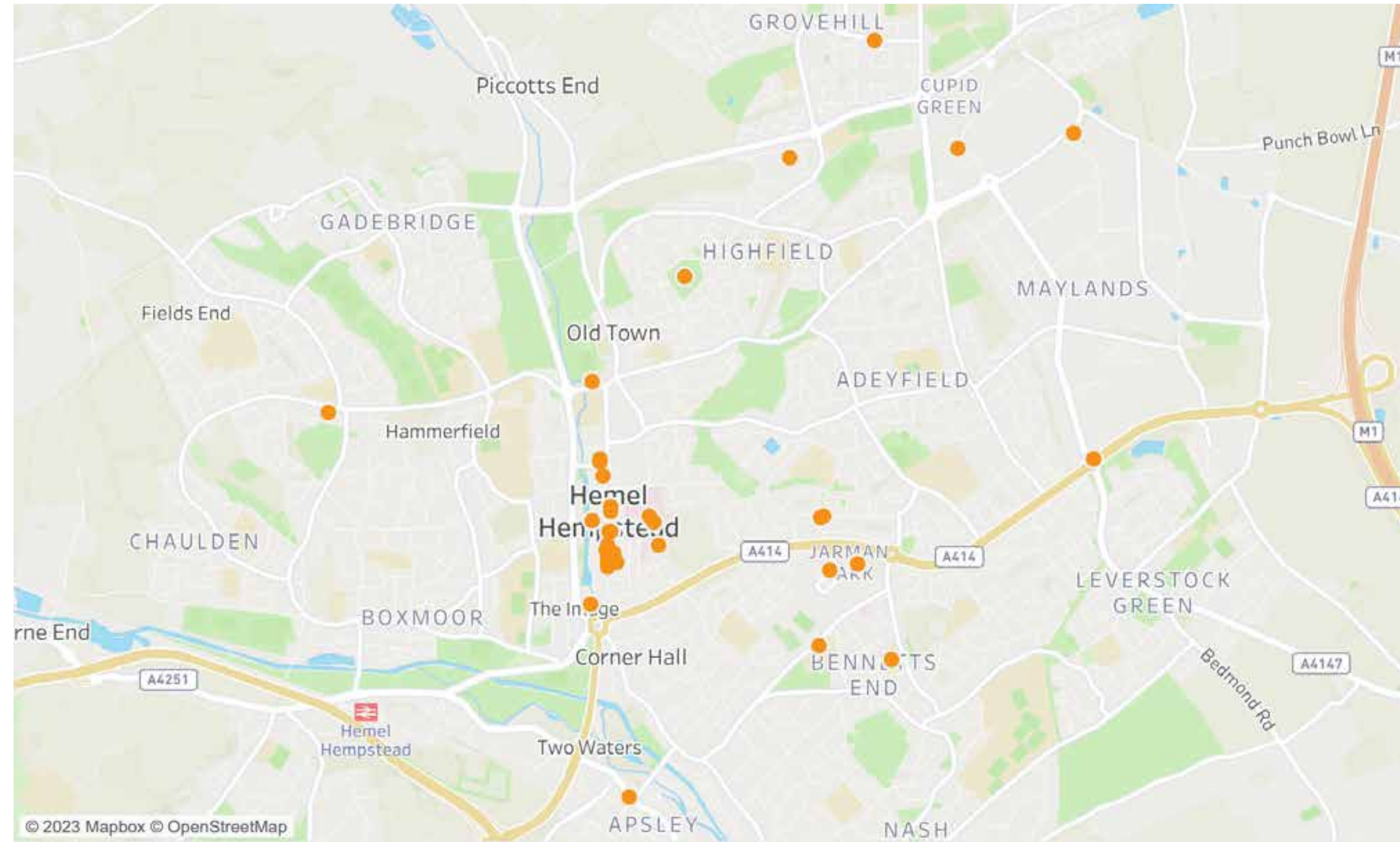
7. WHERE IS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - Not at all proud ■



7. WHERE IS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - not too proud ■



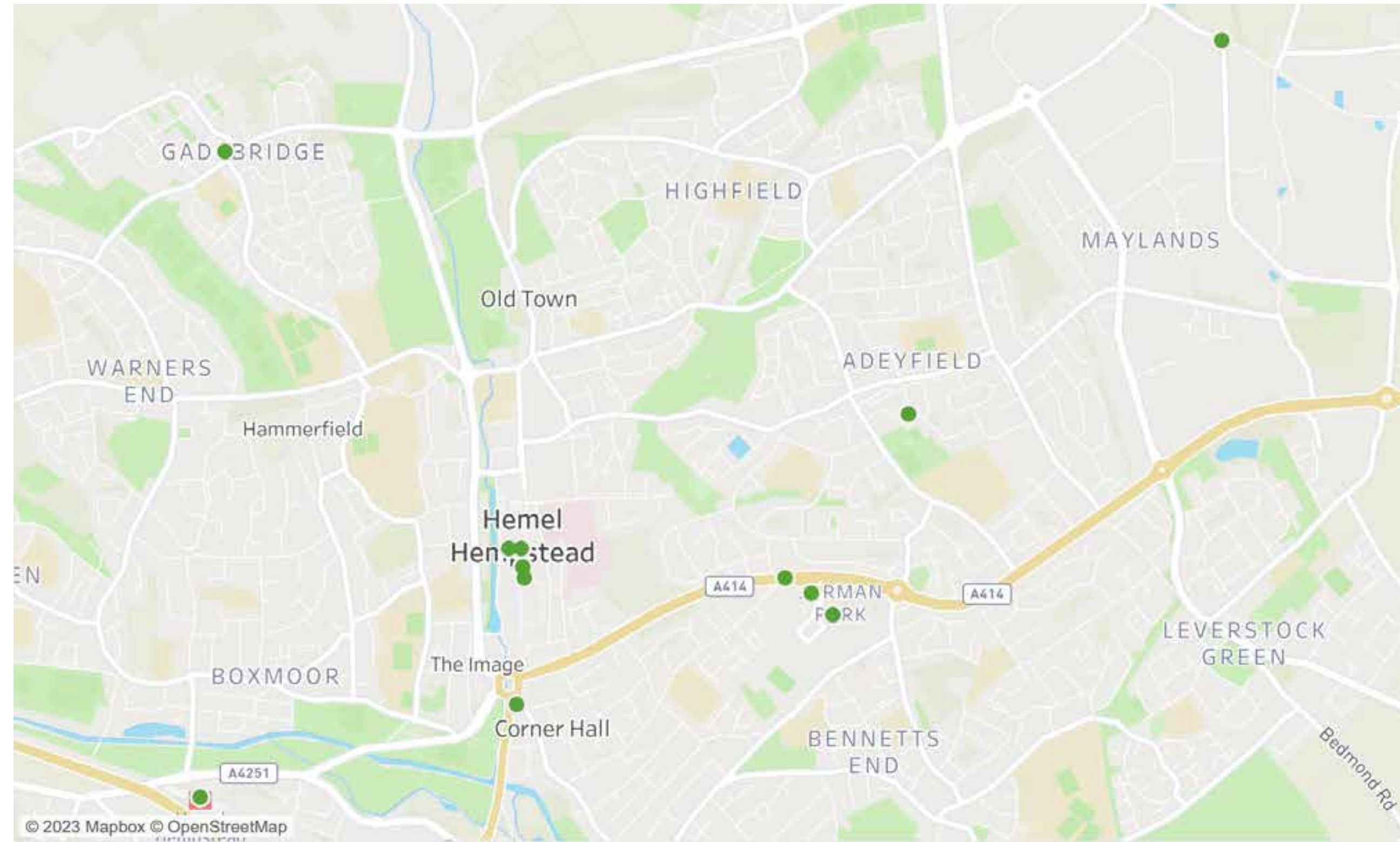
7. WHERE IS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - somewhat proud



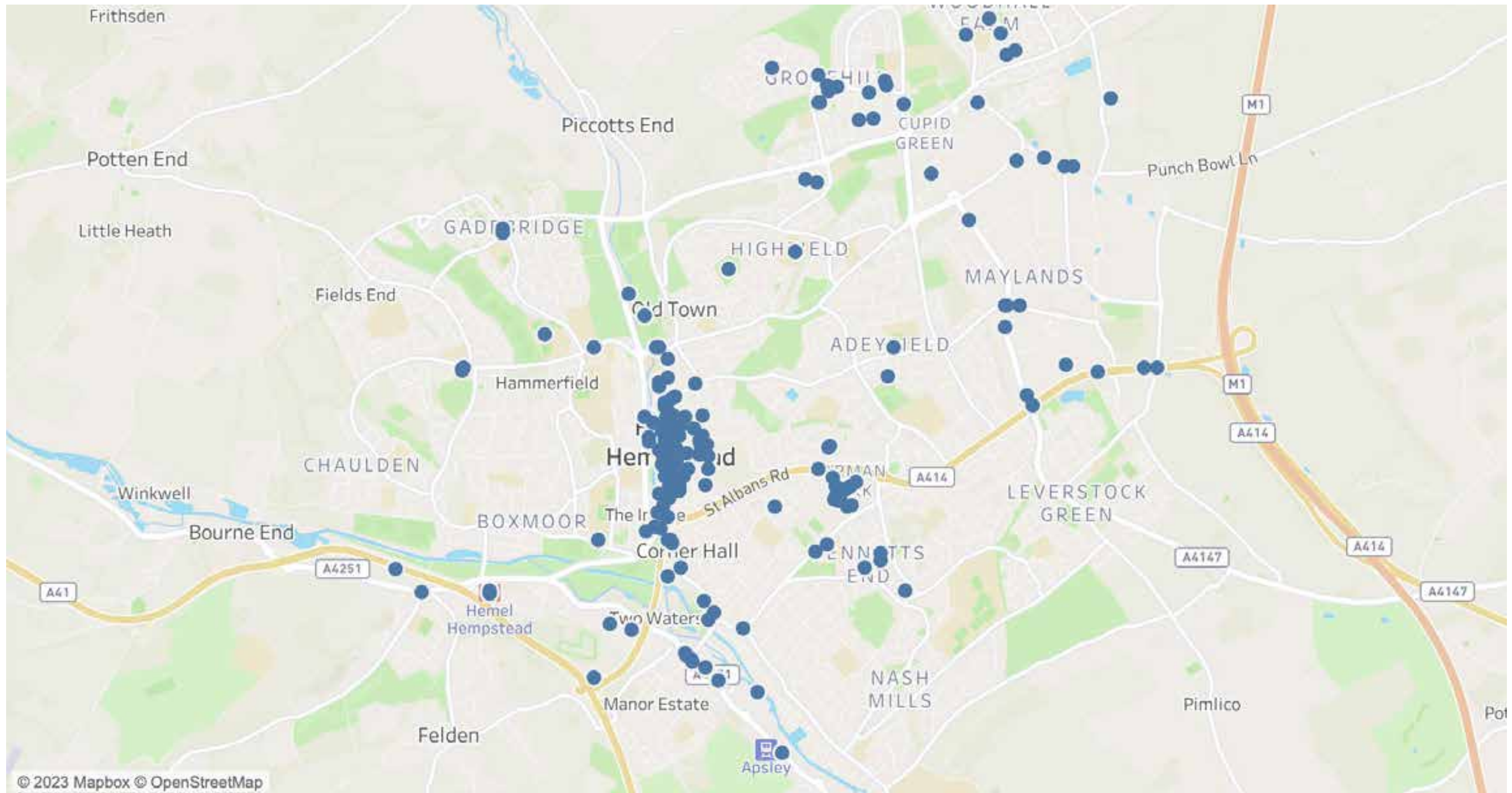
7. WHERE IS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Colours indicating 'How proud of Hemel are you?' - very proud

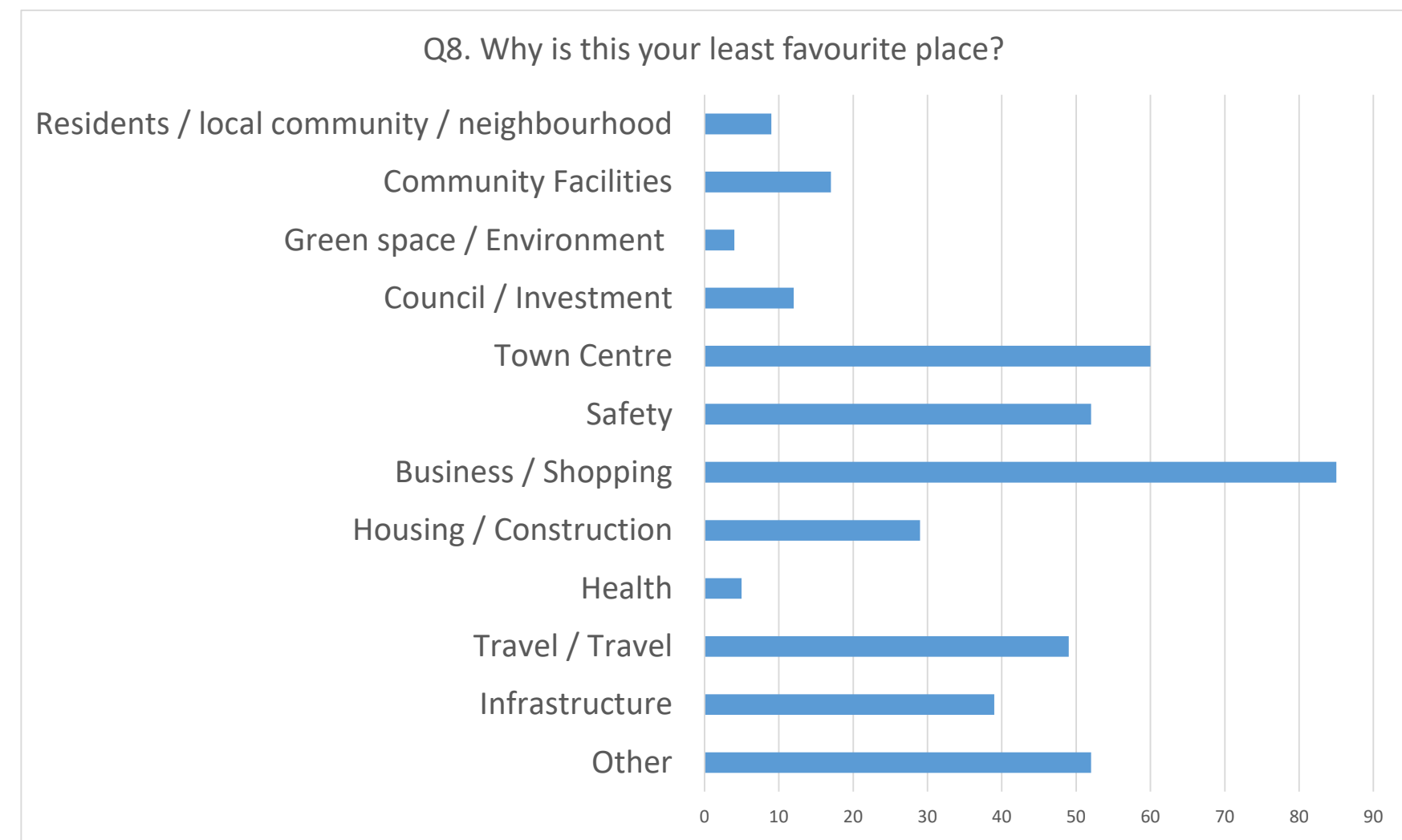


7. WHERE IS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE PLACE IN HEMEL?

Outliers >4 mile radius around the centre point excluded



8. WHY IS THIS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE PLACE?



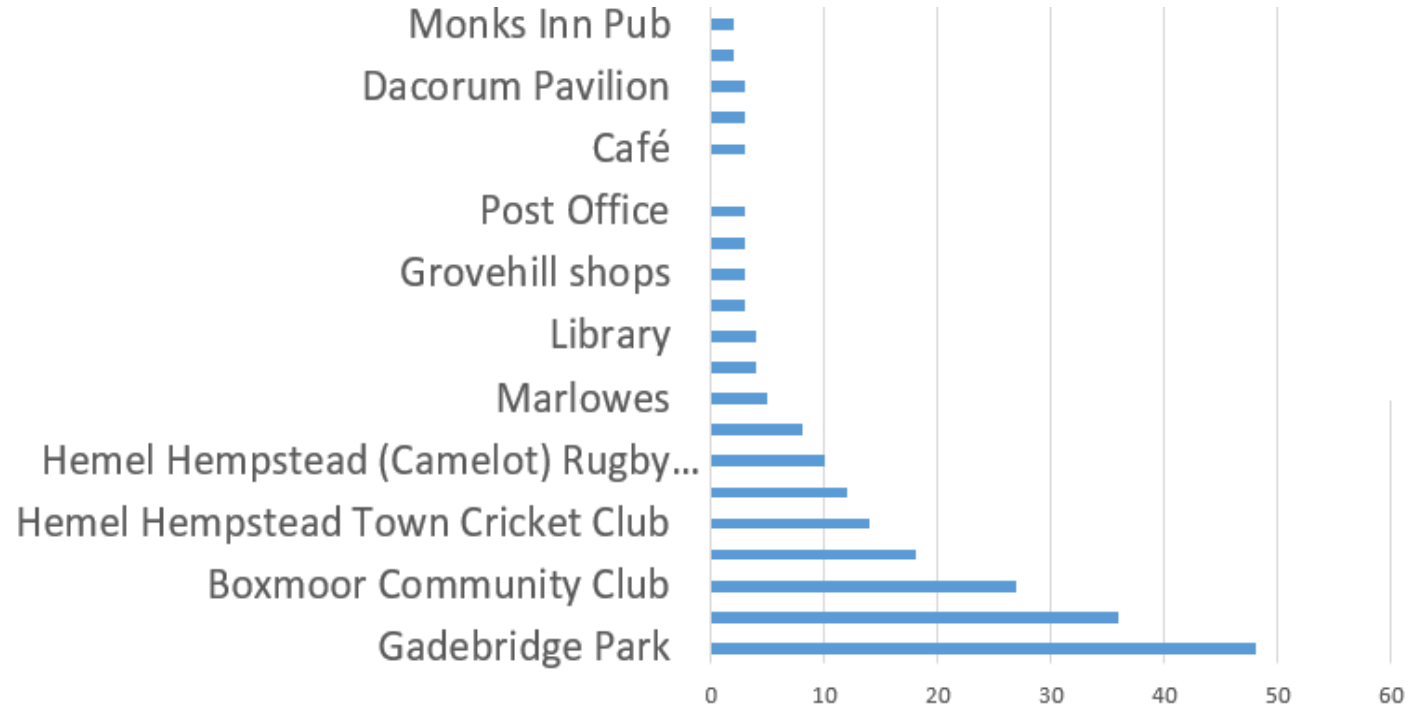
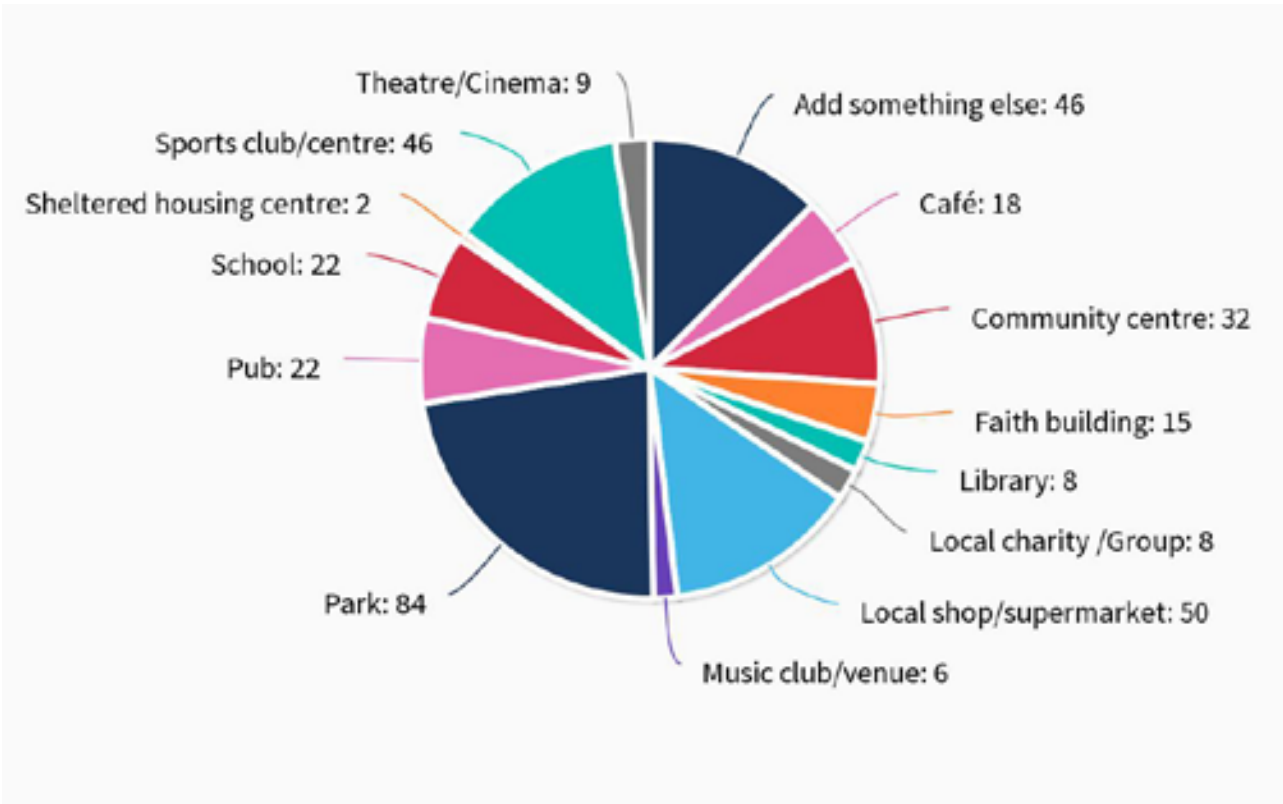
Following on from question seven, respondents were provided with the opportunity to provide open comment as to why this was their favourite place.

Businesses and shopping was the largest contributor this response. Many respondents provided comment on wanting to see more and diverse of shops in the town centre. Safety and travel also rated highly in respect to why the place described was their least favourite.



9. IF YOU LIVE IN HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, WHERE DO YOU CONSIDER IS THE HEART OF YOUR COMMUNITY?

10. COULD YOU PLEASE GIVE US THE NAME OF THIS PLACE?



This question provided a pre-defined set of places that the respondent could choose from. Those in the 25-34 category chose community centres and parks as the heart of the community. Schools and parks were most important to those aged 34-44 which is likely to families with children. 65-74 year olds chose parks, sports clubs, shops and supermarkets which is likely to be those of retirement age.

Gadebridge Park came up as the most popular following on from the results of previous questions. The town centre was also highly ranked showing that respondents saw it as the heart of the community but following on from question three where respondents would like it improved as a priority. The town centre was also ranked as the least favourite place for many in question seven.

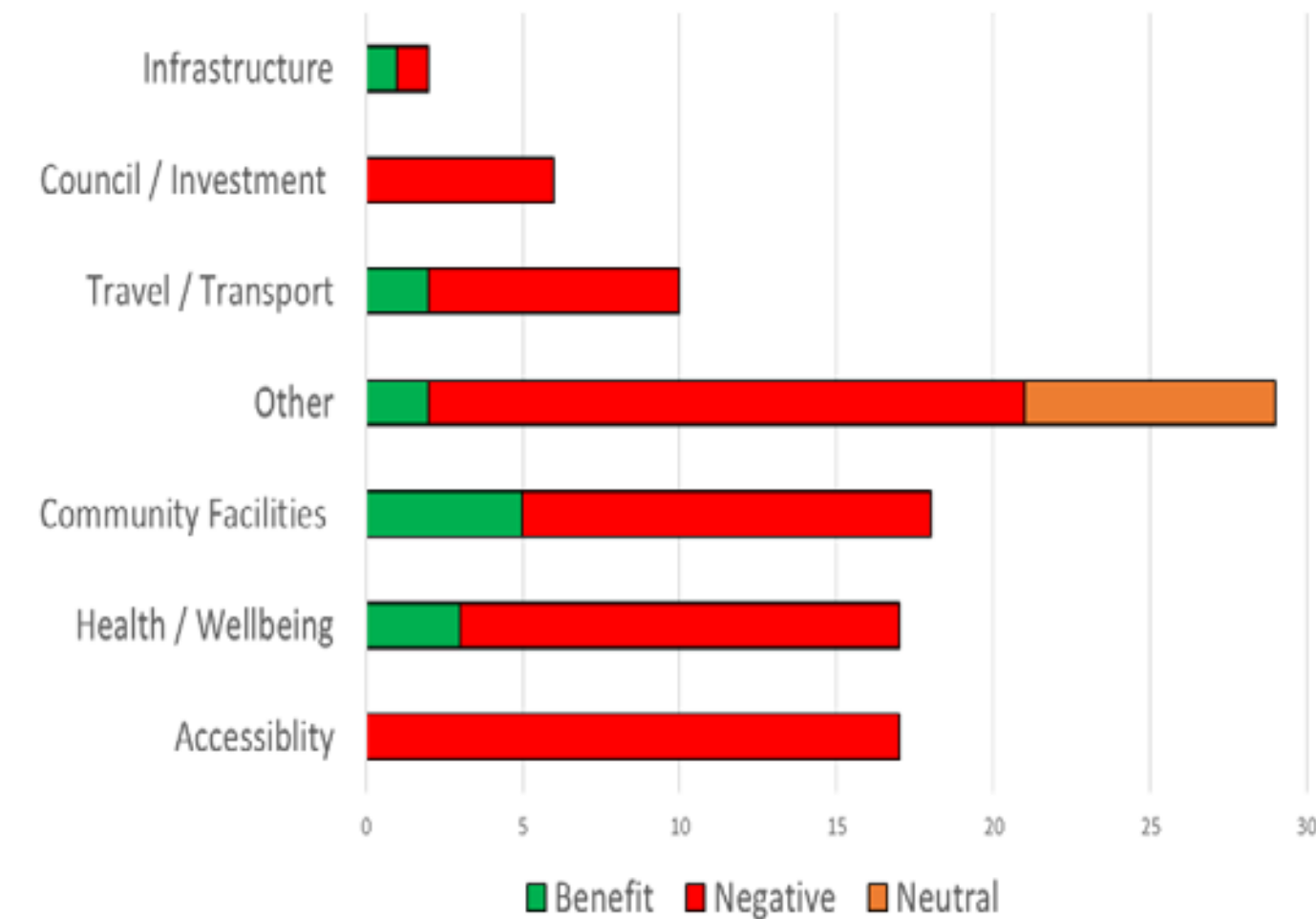
11. HOW CAN WE AS COMMUNITIES SUPPORT EACH OTHER WITH THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS AND OTHER CHALLENGES?

12. ARE THERE ANY COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES OR GROUPS PROVIDING SUPPORT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE US AWARE OF AND/OR THAT YOU FEEL IS MISSING FROM THIS COMMUNITY?



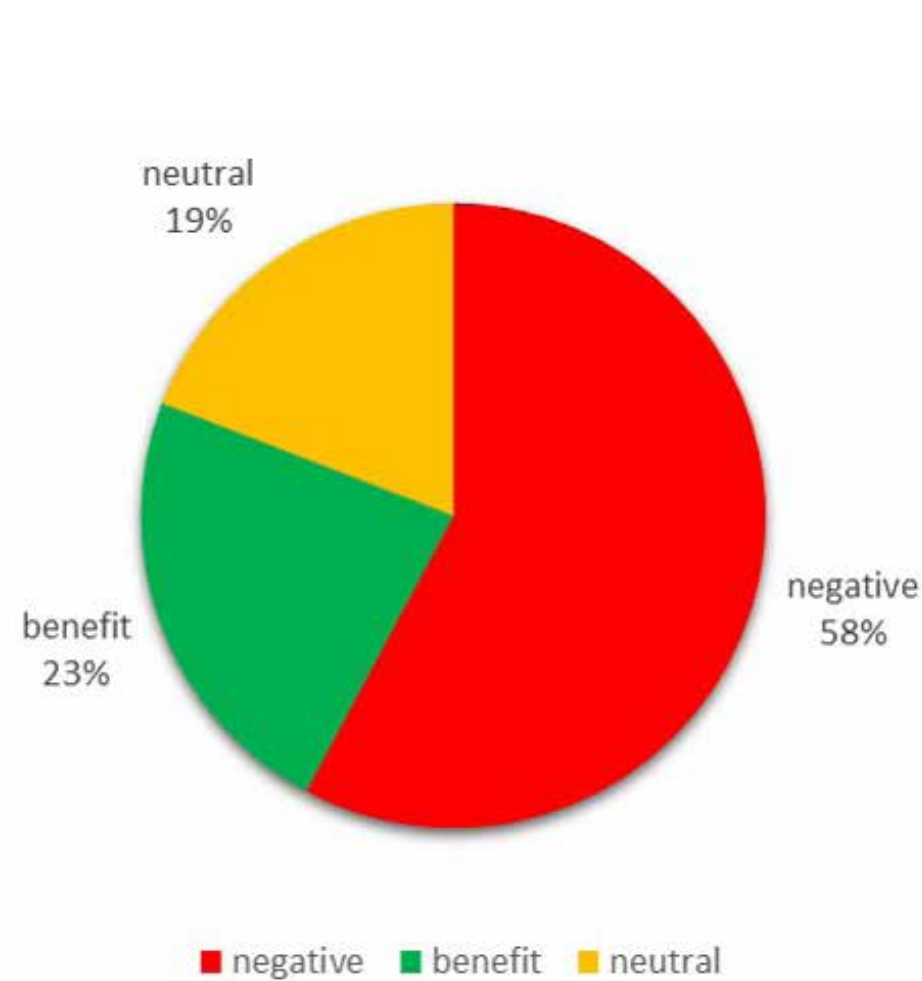
This graph shows the topics which were mentioned as part of an open-ended question. The topics that respondents felt were most important for communities was facilities, the town centre and investment. Those with the least mentions include health and events.

13. IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY OR HEALTH CONDITION, HOW DO YOU FEEL HEMEL HEMPSTEAD SUPPORTS YOU AS A PLACE TO LIVE?



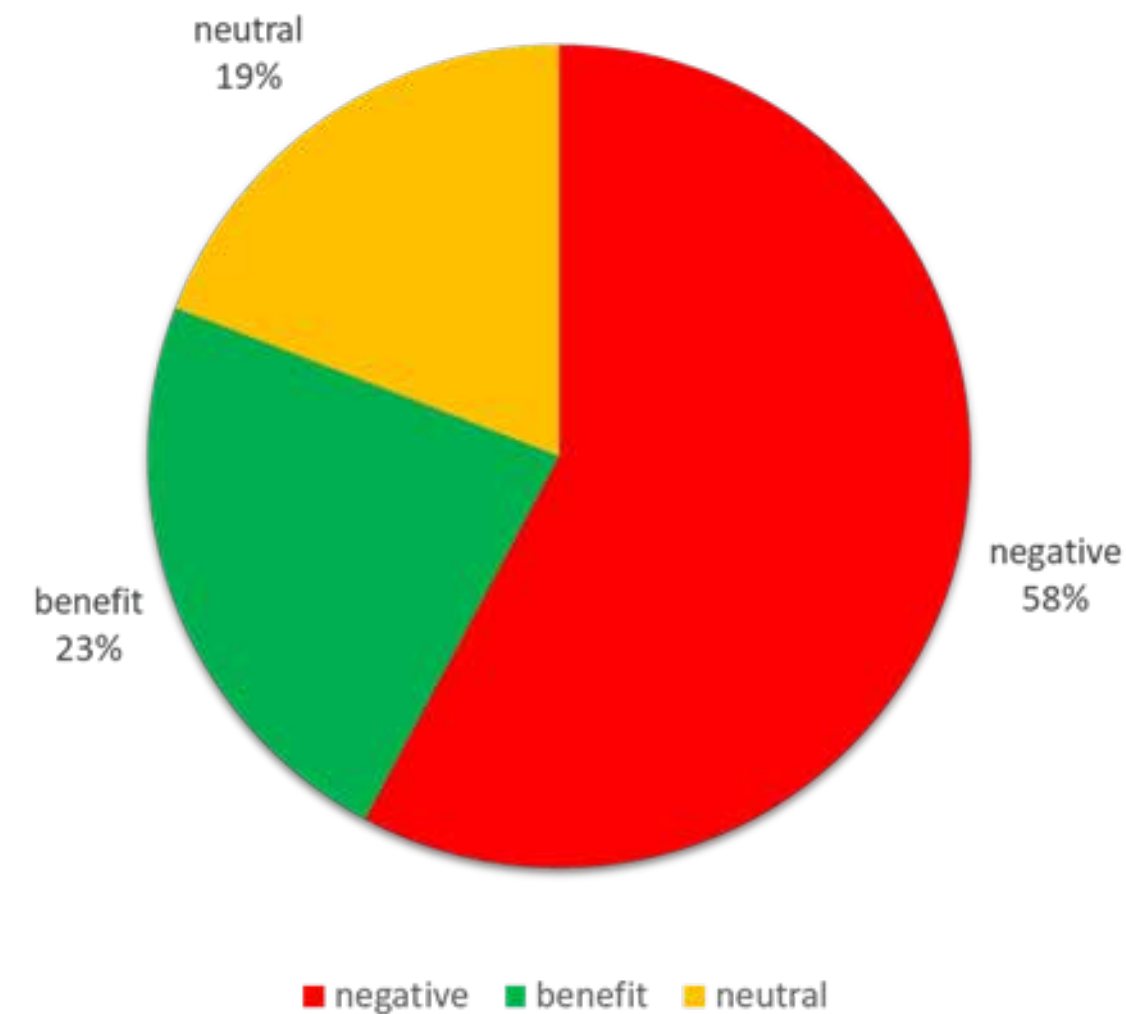
This question was open question to allow respondents to make comment. Accessibility was extremely important to respondents but the majority currently had a negative sentiment towards the availability of this towards them. Community facilities had the most positive perspective but overall a mixture of opinion on this topic.

14. WHAT IS YOUR IMPRESSION ON HOW COMMUNITIES INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER IN HEMEL HEMPSTEAD?



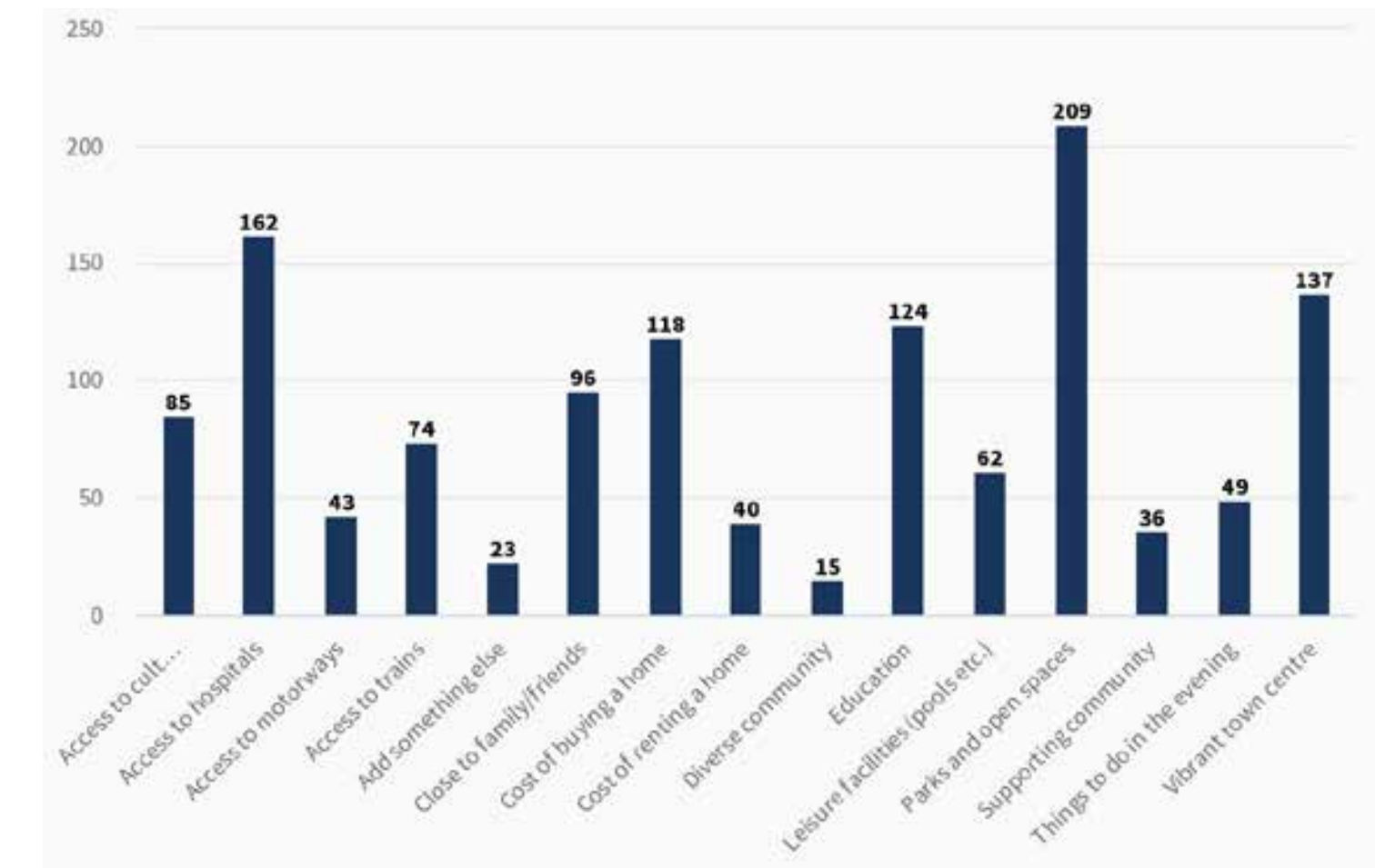
This graph shows the overall sentiment towards how respondents felt toward this question. This was open-ended to allow free text. 58% of the responses had a negative viewpoint to them with 23% positive. 19% were neutral with some respondents making referencing to not know how communities interact with each other in Hemel.

15. DO YOU FEEL THAT HEMEL HEMPSTEAD IS A COMMUNITY THAT PROMOTES ACCEPTANCE, INCLUSION AND A SENSE OF BELONGING TO ALL ITS RESIDENTS?



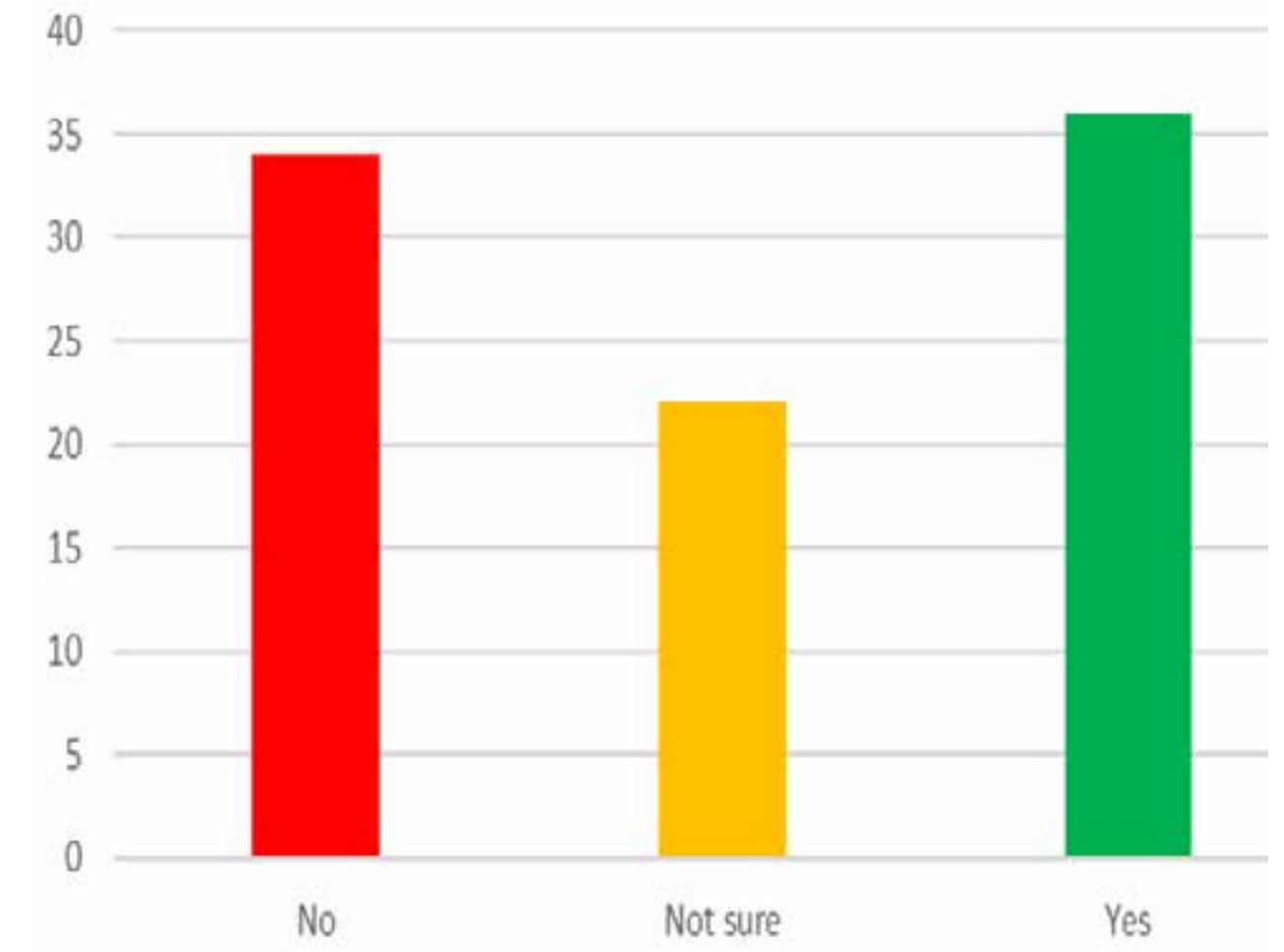
This graph represents the sentiment of the answers that respondents provided in an open text form. 62% of the responses had a negative viewpoint to them with 24% positive. 14% were neutral with some respondents making referencing to not knowing if Hemel promotes acceptance, inclusion and belonging.

16. WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU WHEN THINKING ABOUT A PLACE TO LIVE?



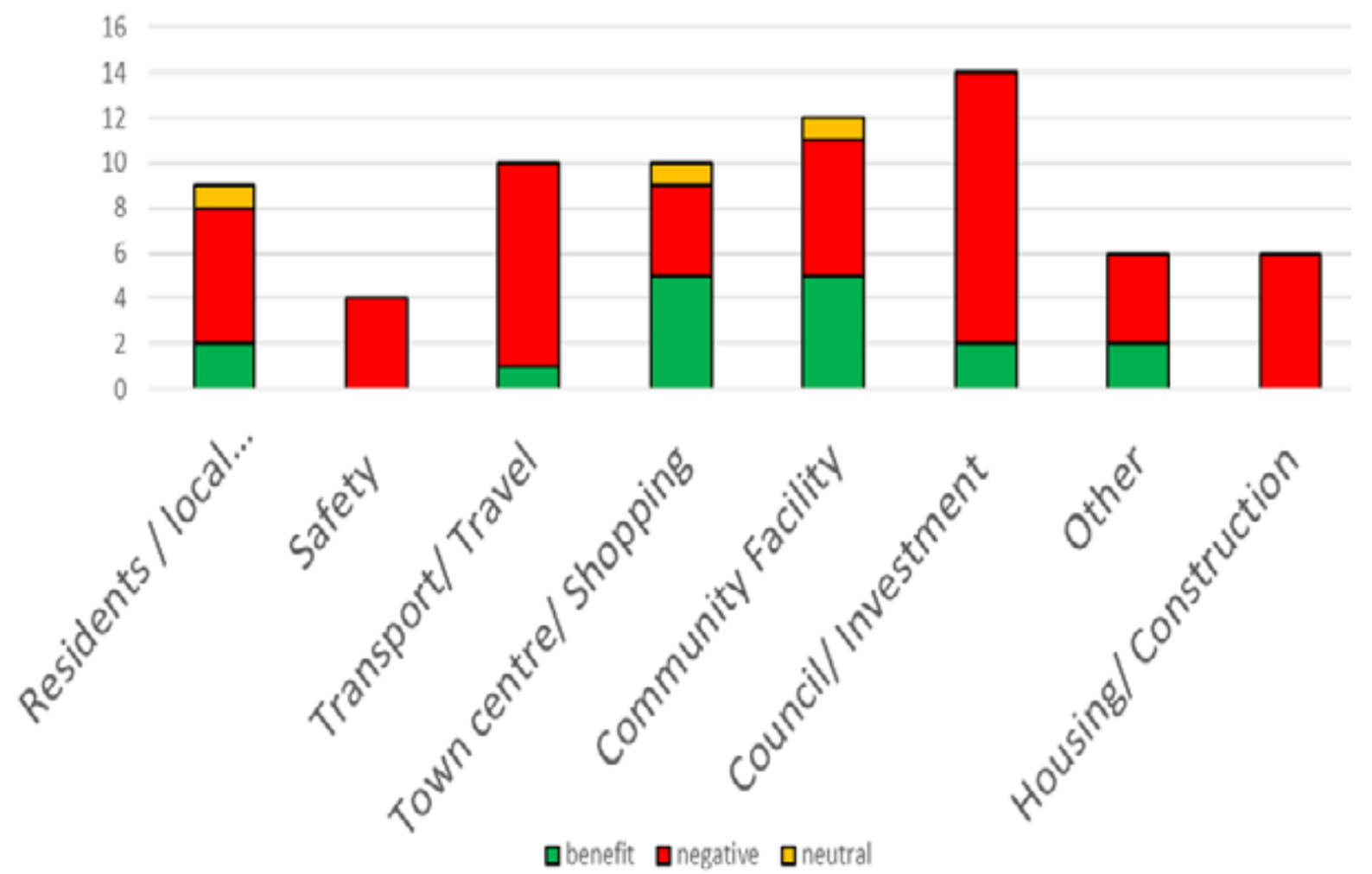
This graph shows the respondents choices on this topic in a closed question form where there answers are pre-determined. The three top choices were; parks (16%), hospitals (13%) and vibrant town centre (11%). Based on the results from previous questions hospitals and the town centre are likely to be the main reasons why more people are not choosing to live in a place like Hemel. Although parks have been one of the favourite places throughout the survey results.

17. IF YOU WORK IN OR VISIT HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, WOULD YOU CONSIDER LIVING HERE? (MOVE TO QUESTION 19 IF NOT RELEVANT)



This question was a closed question with options provided to answer. There was an almost even split between yes and no on this question. 36 answering yes, 34 answering no and 22 not sure.

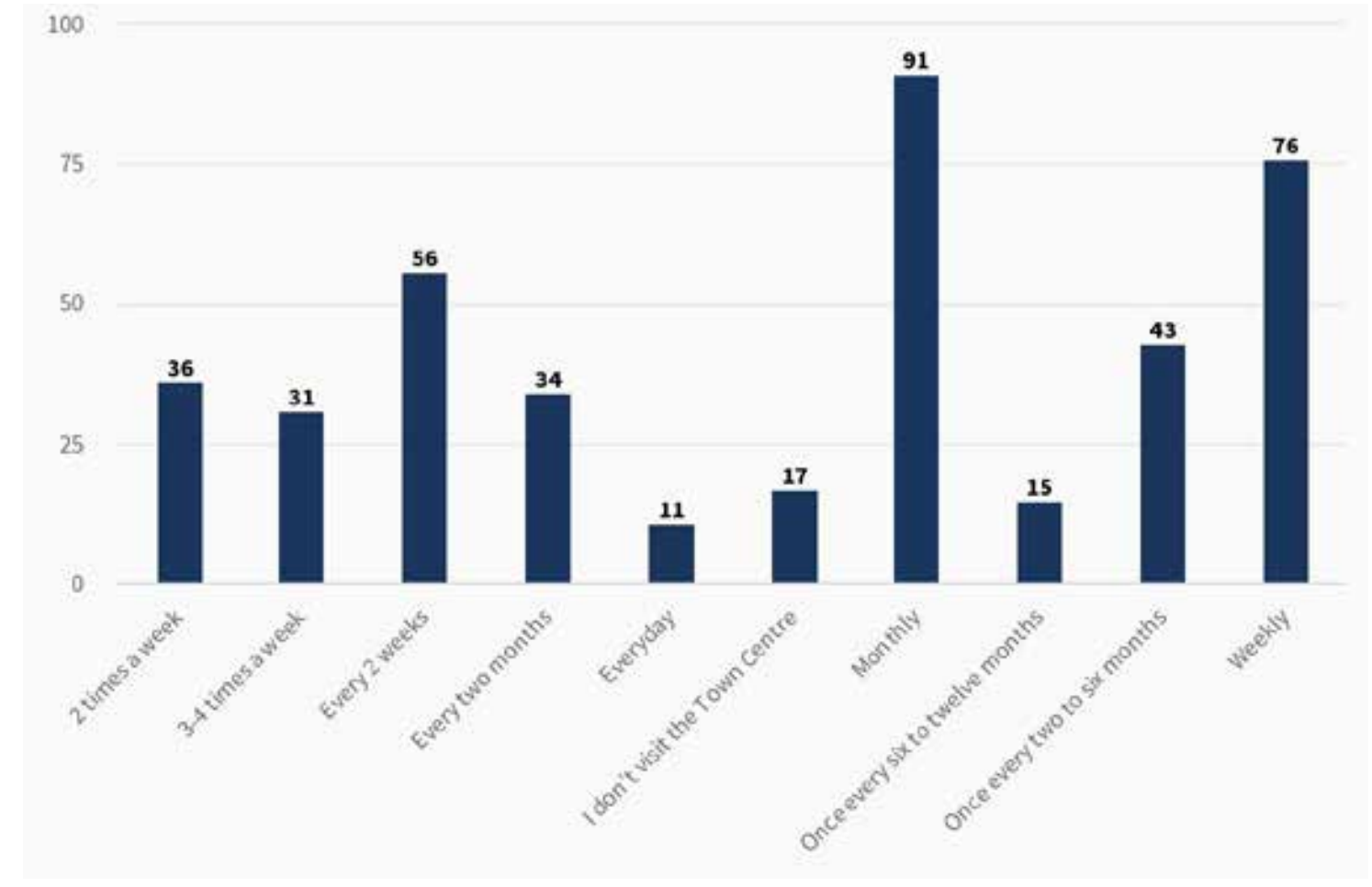
18. WHAT IS THE REASON BEHIND YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 17?



Following on from question 17 respondents were given a free text box to go into detail about their answer. A proportion of the respondents discussed council/investment, which had a negative view, but positive comments related to community facilities.

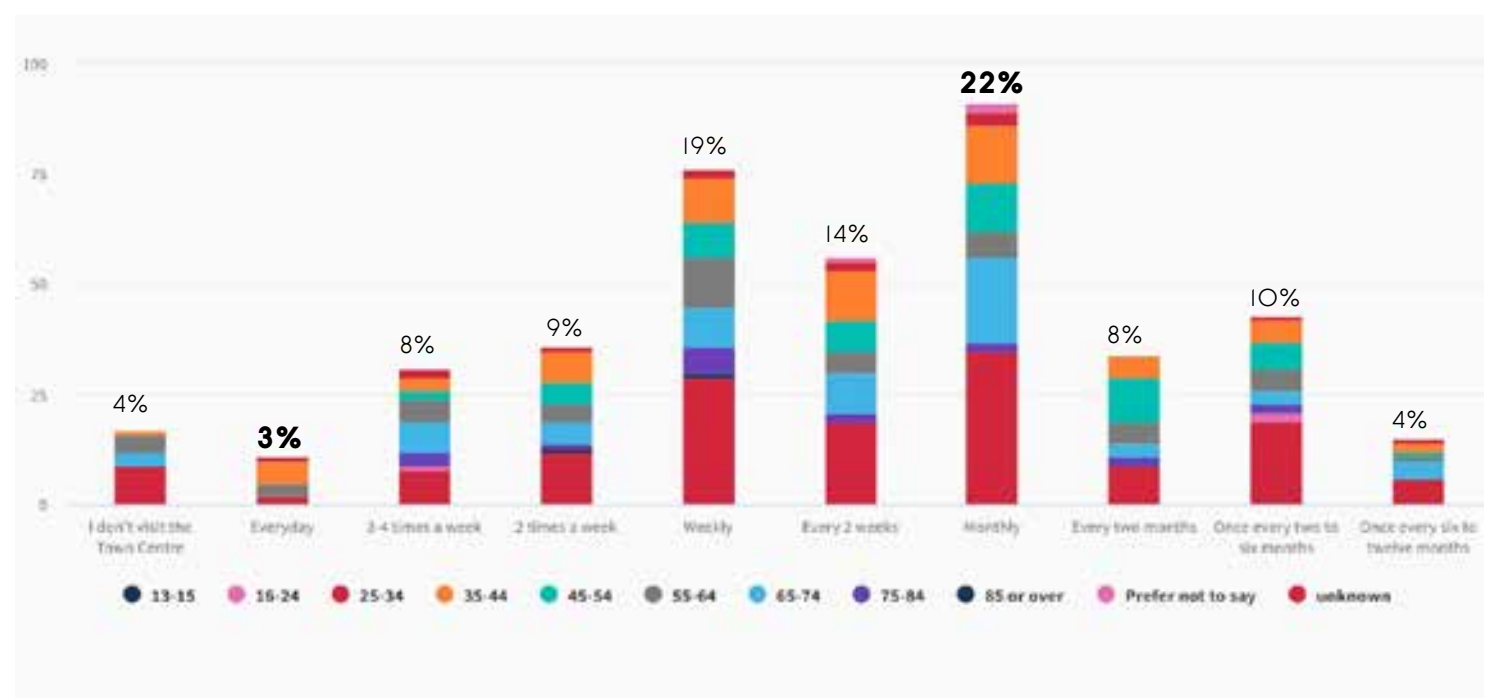
HEMEL PLACE SURVEY - TOWN CENTRE

19. HOW OFTEN PEOPLE VISIT HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE?

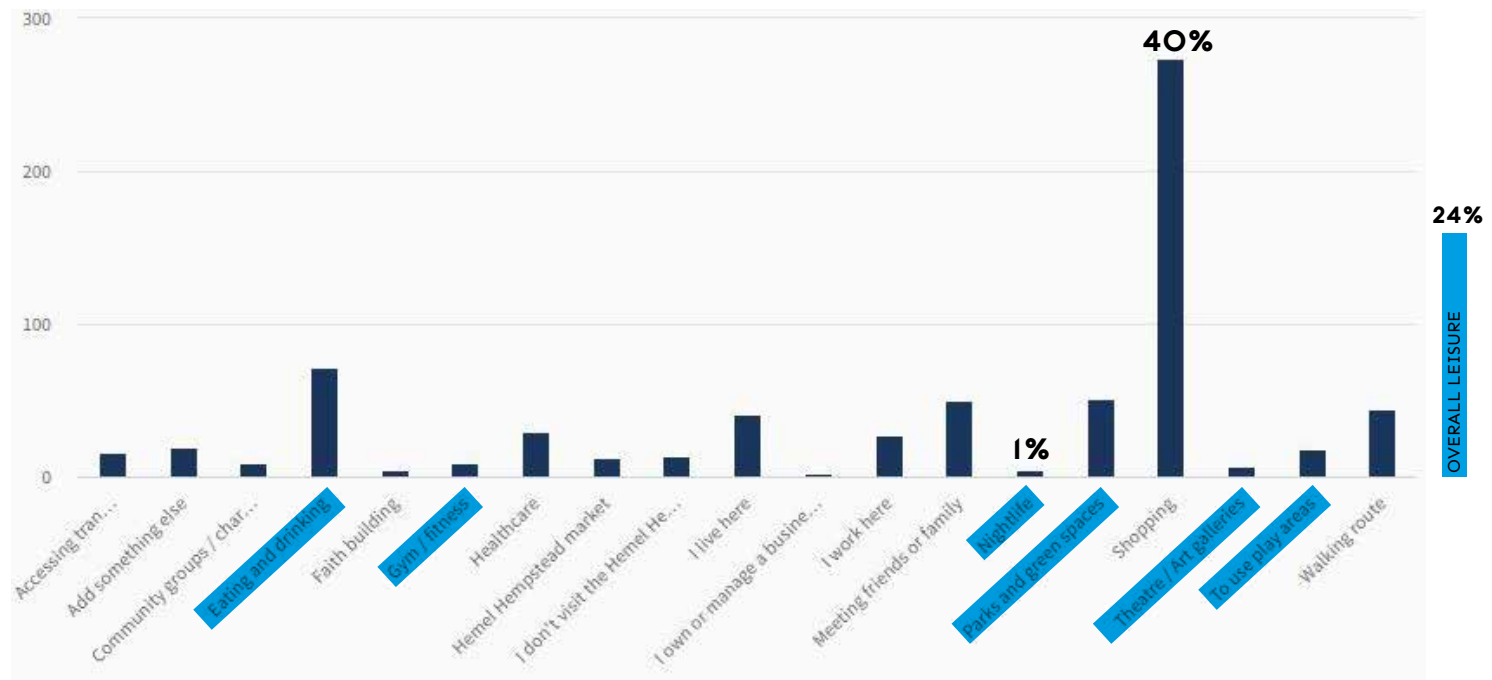


22% of people responded that they visit the town centre 'Monthly' followed by a 19% of people visiting the town centre 'Weekly'. Only the 3% of the responded are visiting the town centre 'Everyday'. Following the narrative on the town centre people may come to the town for a certain reason but not on a regular basis.

18. HOW OFTEN PEOPLE VISIT HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE? (DATA SPLIT BY AGES)

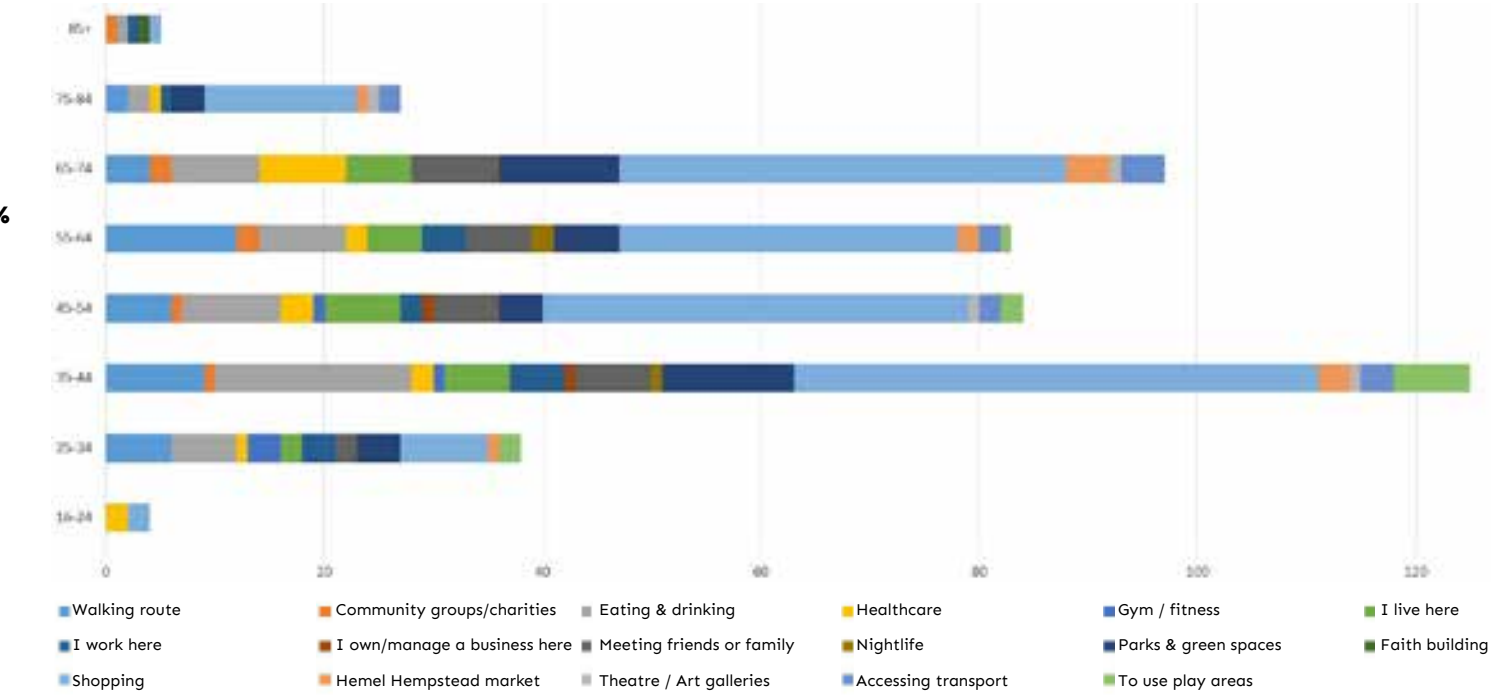


20. WHY DO YOU VISIT HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE?



40% of people responded that they visit the town centre is for 'Shopping' and only the 1% responded 'Nightlife'. This chart highlights that shopping is the predominant activity in the town centre suggesting also a lack of a diversified offer especially for young generations. However, the overall sum of leisure activities (incl. eating & drinking, gym/fitness, nightlife, parks and green spaces, theatre/art galleries and play areas) represents the 24% of activities in the town centre.

20. WHY DO YOU VISIT HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE? (DATA SPLIT BY AGES)



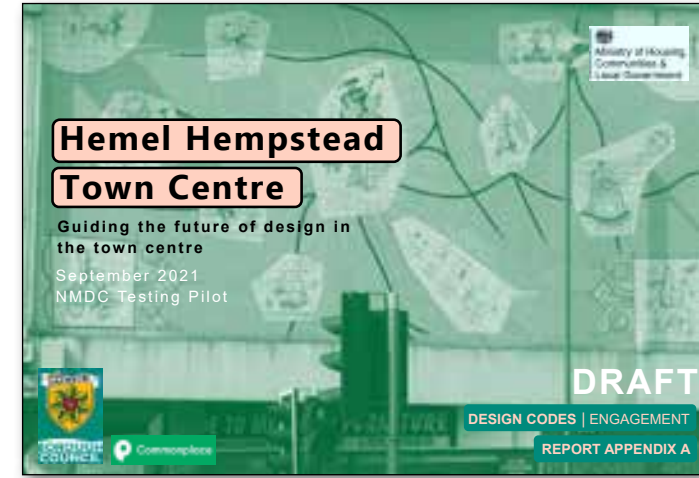
As the results of question 2, the majority of people visit the town centre for 'Shopping'. The diagrams highlights that families seem to be attracted by the town centre and its proximity to 'Parks and Green Spaces' (Gadebridge and Boxmoor are located nearby). The chart also shows that older generations go to the town to join 'Community Groups/Charities', an activity that is not undertaken by younger generations. The chart also highlights that people aged 16-24 only go to the town centre for 'Healthcare' and 'Shopping'. This represents a huge opportunity to create activities that promote night-time and attract younger generations that are currently not visiting the town centre.

21. WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU VISIT THE TOWN CENTRE MORE OFTEN?



Following on from question twenty this question explores the view in more detail via an open-ended text box. By a large proportion, shopping and retail were the most documented views. This again follows on from previous questions on priorities and encouraging visitors to Hemel. Travel and transport follow behind as key topics.

PARADISE DESIGN CODE  
ENGAGEMENT REPORT

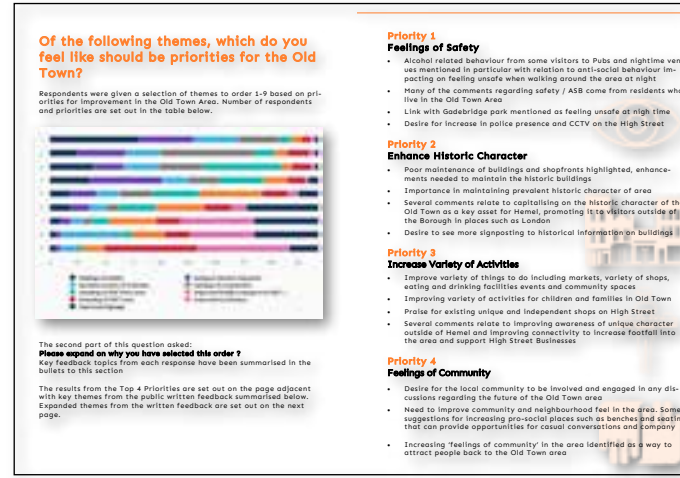


The Paradise / Wood Lane Industrial Estate will be the case study for testing how applied design codes in Hemel Hempstead could improve the neighbourhood providing a high quality mixed use development with new homes.

Dacorum launched an online community engagement to seek views on how the council should set design guidance for future new development coming forward in the town centre.

The council was keen to hear from local residents, businesses and community groups about your favourite places, spaces and buildings in Hemel Hempstead town centre. Feedback was important to be sure the town centre meets the current and future needs of the community and contribute to the unique character of Hemel Hempstead. The consultation was launched for 3 months and closed on 15th November 2021.

HEMEL OLD TOWN  
ENGAGEMENT REPORT



The Hemel Old Town is a thriving and historic part of Hemel Hempstead, and the Old Town Place project aims to support the ambitions of businesses and communities in the area, and create a better place where the local community can thrive and feel pride.

Dacorum is exploring new opportunities to improve the Old Town and as part of this programme, the council launched a community consultation so that people living, visiting and working in Hemel could share their views on the Old Town. The consultation was open for 6 weeks and closed on 8th June 2022.



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