Buckover Garden
Village Event

New Local Plan Strategic Development Locations
Consultation Report – SECTION 2F

Mark Pearson (Design Action) – 6th Feb 2018
**Buckover Garden Village Consultation Event**

**Profile of the Participants**

1. Numbers Attending + Demographic Profile

![Age Distribution Chart](image)

1.1 Attendance was dominated by those in middle and older age groups. This is the expected and normal pattern for this type of consultation event.

2. Where People Lived

![Location Map](image)
2.1 The distribution of blue dots (indicating where people lived) shows a strong attendance from Buckover and its rural area, including Falfield. There was also a strong contingent from Thornbury. It will be noted that there were some 13 fewer responses to this question than those that answered about their age, so some attending declined to indicate where they lived.

3. Where People Worked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where do you work?</th>
<th>Board #1</th>
<th>Board #2</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buckover (rural)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avonmouth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Bristol</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Bristol</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester/Chelt</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroud</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornbury</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 A large number of those attending (44 out of 93) did not answer this question – if we refer to the age profile question above, then it seems likely that this might be explained by a high number of retirees being present – yet only 4 declared themselves here to be in that category.

3.2 The strongest concentration was of people travelling southwards to their place of work (Central Bristol + North Bristol – 13 individuals). No doubt of those 19 that reported ‘other’ then some of these would also be in this similar direction.

3.3 Thornbury and the rural area surrounding Buckover together provided 13 responses – indicating that a reasonable number were either working within the immediate area or possibly ‘working from home’.
Commentary on the Written Feedback

4. Good Points about the Existing Place

4.1 From the feedback received, it is clear that a strong majority of those attending the consultation event were against the development proposition as a matter of principle.

4.2 The main positive features of the current place can be attributed to its largely undeveloped/rural character. These included the open space and landscape qualities, the wildlife, the footpath network. Several respondents explained that the agricultural land was of ‘good’ and ‘very good’ quality and wanted ‘brownfield’ sites to be prioritised instead.

5. Negative Points about the Existing Place

5.1 The greatest drawback with the existing place was seen to be traffic congestion – particularly when the M5 is closed in an emergency and the A38 is then used as a ‘relief road’. There were other reports of regular rush-hour times when traffic is stationary/slow-moving.

5.2 Most commentators predicted even greater daily flows of commuting traffic - given that public transport was considered to be poor/unattractive, and most ‘good’ employment opportunities lay elsewhere.

5.3 The sense that the general infrastructure was already operating at full capacity was another common theme – this included observations about primary healthcare (both local GPs and the main Southmead Hospital).

6. Aspirations for the Future Place

6.1 The strength of concern was most clearly evidenced in responses about the ‘future vision’ for the development – where many simply explained that a ‘Garden Village’ was not wanted.

6.2 Some made suggestions for alternative locations – the Tortworth proposal had caught the interest of some and it was suggested by others that a location on the eastern side of the M5 would be better.

6.3 An altogether alternative planning strategy of not having a new settlement at all, but dispersing the housing around the area (as extensions to each existing settlement) was put forward by several respondents.

6.4 The current lack of more sustainable/public transport was clearly recognised and many thought that this was a crucial aspect of any possible future vision. This included some comments that hoped for a rail-link to Yate and possibly beyond to be re-established.
6.5 It seems that very many participants were not convinced that the new settlement would be self-sufficient in terms of key infrastructure and both a physical and functional coalescence with Thornbury was feared – placing greater demands on existing services and also with insufficient visual separation in terms of landscape division or wedge. There was further scepticism / concern that the ‘Garden Village’ principles would not be adhered to / maintained during later stages of the process, leading to normal ‘housing estate’ characteristics emerging.

6.6 A good deal of scepticism was expressed in terms of the (anticipated) late delivery of infrastructure – with many advocating that this should be invested in and delivered first – in advance of the new residential development.

7. Priorities for Investment

7.1 The first board suggests that public transport was seen as the top priority for investment with healthcare and education facilities close behind. The second board was more really a demonstration that, in creating a completely new place / community, then investment in all areas will be crucial...
‘Drawing on’ Buckover...

8. Ideas and Thoughts generated by the ‘Tabletop Workshops’. The images that follow show the outcomes of conversations and sketches that were explored ‘live’ with participants. This allowed ideas to be plotted spatially, as an overlay to the concept diagram. Some of the key points that arose are noted below each image:

8.1 Many suggestions for alternative locations for a Garden Village. Concern over transport and what should happen in the ‘green gap’?
8.2 Various notes – concerns over impacts on Thornbury (how to be complementary rather than competing)? Promotion of low carbon development and need to provide affordable homes supported. Buckover infrastructure to be delivered early, to avoid additional burden on Thornbury services.
8.3 ‘Green bridge’ to join two halves of the place together. High Street and school as ‘anchors’ of local centre. Calls for innovative and visionary housing design and provision of self-build plots. How to make a true village and not a dormitory for commuters?
8.4 Option for more concentrated employment / business park in northern location - closer to motorway junction.
8.5 Many doubts expressed – capacity of A38, wrong location (too close to Thornbury), worries about drainage, concerns for SSSI’s and wildlife, unclear about Metrobus and cycling along A38, anticipating congestion, fear that ‘green gap’ will be infilled, etc.
**Recommendations**

The broad themes of public opinion that we have analysed and recorded above should generally influence future actions but, at a technical level, the following recommendations are put forward:

9. Evolving the Concept Diagram / future Framework Plan

9.1 Consider combining the Buckover Framework Plan with the Thornbury Framework Plan, so that the ‘green gap’ is central to the thinking about the combined arrangement?

9.2 Ensure that the development densities (and therefore land required) are verified as being accurate, given the ‘Garden Village’ concept and anticipated population.

9.3 More testing of options is likely to be necessary before firmer conclusions can be reached about the Framework Plan – community workshop(s) should be pursued and continue to explore a variety of different approaches for key issues. (esp. position of local centre, optional strategies for relating to / crossing A38 and strategy for employment uses)

10. Key Points for a future Master-planning Brief

10.1 Preserve rural quality of Crossways Lane as potentially a vital link in the future (especially for cycling).

10.2 Other points will emerge once greater certainty is achieved regarding the Framework Plan...

11. Other Important ‘Early Actions’

11.1 Research and obtain formal commitments to legal and constitutional arrangements that would robustly govern the ‘Garden Village’ concept. This is crucial in attempting to secure support from those that remain sceptical and lack trust in the initiative.

11.2 Research planning policy and other potential legal mechanisms that might provide the greatest protection to the ‘green gap’. Explore / consult on the potential role of this space as a viable and functional green space which has enduring value.

11.3 Clear communication strategy needed - conveying how all the practical matters are being researched, analysed and resolved and a more compelling case made for this precise location being chosen.