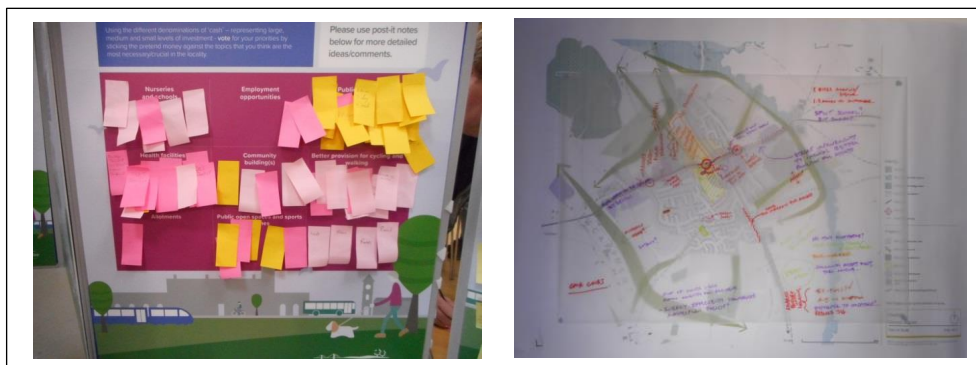


Design Action on behalf of South Gloucestershire Council

Charfield Event

**New Local Plan Strategic Development Locations
Consultation Report – SECTION 2A**

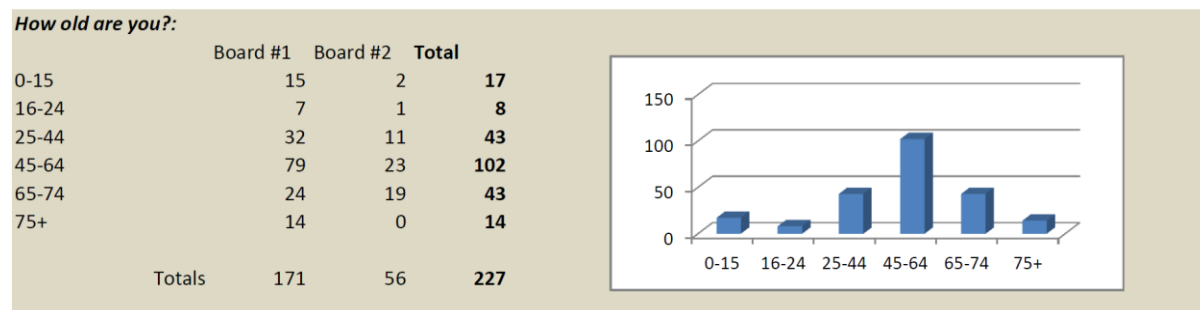


Mark Pearson (Design Action) – 6th Feb 2018

Charfield Consultation Event

Profile of the Participants

1. Numbers Attending + Demographic Profile

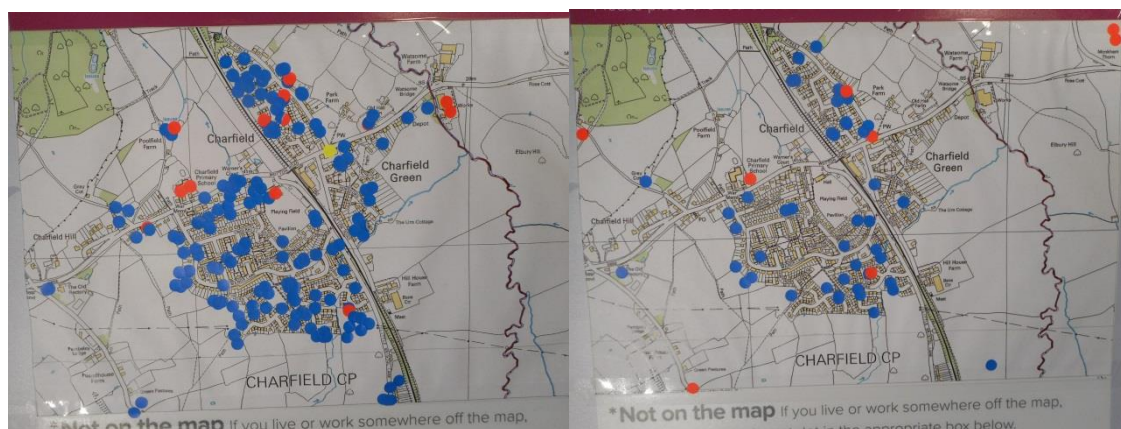


- 1.1 Although dominated by those in middle-age, the demographic profile shows a relatively healthy engagement and interest from all age-groups.

2. Where People Lived

Where do you live?:

	Board #1	Board #2	Total
Charfield	168	46	214
Avonmouth			0
Central Bristol	1	1	2
North Bristol			0
Gloucester/Chelt			0
Stroud			0
Thornbury	1		1
Yate			0
Other	1	9	10
Totals	171	56	227



- 1.1 The distribution of blue dots (indicating where people lived) shows that there was good representation at the event from all parts of the village....

3. Where People Worked

Where do you work?:			
	Board #1	Board #2	Total
Charfield	11	8	19
Avonmouth	3		3
Central Bristol	8	3	11
North Bristol	14		14
Gloucester/Chelt	10	4	14
Stroud		2	2
Thornbury	12	1	13
Yate	10	3	13
Other	37	9	46
Carer	4		4
Disabled	5		5
Retired	40	23	63
Unemployed	1		1
Student		2	2
Totals	155	55	210

- 3.1 It will be noted that 17 of the total attending (as recorded above) declined to answer this question – this is most likely due to retirees perhaps not realising that they could indicate their status as ‘non-working’?
- 3.2 There is a strikingly broad and healthy range of work-place locations and this includes a strong contingent of those employed very nearby or quite possibly ‘working from home’.
- 3.3 It would seem that just under a third of those attending were retired members of the community.

Commentary on the Written Feedback

4. Good Points about the Existing Place

What's good about this place?: (main themes from the post-it notes)	
location	14
access to countryside	46
views	15
community/'village'	74
school(s)	13
access to doctors surgery	3
park / playing fields	6
community facilities	22
wildlife	16
quiet/safe	19
stream	2
ecological soundness/green assets	36

- 4.1 There was a pronounced response that identified the strong community/village spirit of Charfield as being one of the best qualities of the place. This is probably reflected in the good level of engagement and the broader demography of those taking part in the consultation event compared with some other locations.
- 4.2 A large number of observations related to the ease of access which residents enjoyed to the neighbouring countryside. Walking and, more particularly, dog-walking seemed to be a popular and frequent activity, with some residents describing the ability to 'walk around the village' on paths as being particularly attractive. Some younger participants valued the access this provided to the riverside.
- 4.3 Open space providing the setting of the village was regarded as an important asset not least in terms of its wildlife and more generally in providing other ecological assets/habitats.
- 4.4 The relatively modest existing Community Facilities of Charfield were appreciated and seemed to be well-liked and used by a good proportion of the participants.
- 4.5 Many observed on the safe and peaceful environment that Charfield seemed in their experience to convey.

5. Negative Points about the Existing Place

What's not so good?: (main themes from the post-it notes)	
traffic / pollution + congestion (inc M5 jnc)	78
poor public transport	49
walking + cycling routes (+ to elsewhere)	13
lack of employment opps	5
lack of doctors surgery / dentist	22
lack of retail + leisure facilities	14
quality of footpaths / road surfaces	10
dog waste	2
lack of school capacity	15
facilities / activities for young people	2
homes for older residents	2
loss of green space	6
no affordable homes for young people	8
dangerous / speeding traffic	27
sewage treatment capacity	1
crime	2
lack of allotments	1
flooding	3
play facilities	1
parking	3

- 5.1 The most profound concerns identified were to do with road traffic. A large majority of responses cited the congestion, pollution and difficulties in exiting side-roads as a major problem. Additionally, many commented upon the dangerous nature of the main road – speeding traffic and the blind ‘chicane’ caused by the rail bridge making it difficult for pedestrians to cross and for drivers to negotiate junctions with safety. The presence of the school on the main road was noted as a concern by some.
- 5.2 Public transport provision was regarded as weak, there were accounts of young people having to walk home along dark rural roads as a consequence of accessing facilities elsewhere in the evenings.
- 5.3 In terms of general infrastructure, the lack of local primary health care facilities was seen as the main deficit. The school (which many treasured and thought highly of) was also noted as being ‘at capacity’. The retail and leisure facilities of the village were thought to be in need of improvement.

6. Aspirations for the Future Place

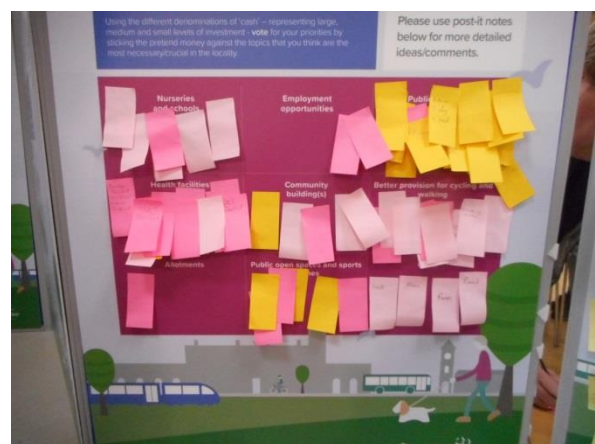
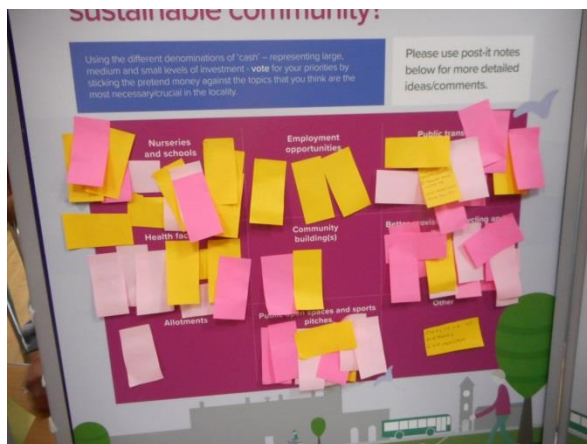
<i>Future Vision / Aspirations?:</i> <i>(main themes from the post-it notes)</i>	
Better housing mix (smaller types)	9
Housing for elderly / retirees	2
Small-scale developments / self-build	3
More affordable homes (for locals?)	5
No more houses	9
Avoid becoming a town	20
Keep green assets (trees / hedges)	7
Better footpaths	5
Longer distance walking + cycling routes	6
Safeguard green space + natural beauty	20
Promote Well-being / Healthy lifestyles	4
Sympathetic / locally appropriate design	6
Employment near existing mills	1
Encourage sustainable + public transport	2
Make the main road safer / quieter	15
Better sports/play facilities	5
Do not build the station	2
Infrastructure (inc highways) built first	9
Maintain good access to countryside	5
Promote food production	1
Protect older buildings + their settings	3
Safeguard distant Cotswold views	3
Strong School	1
Create Local Centre	1
Facilities for young people	1
Improve Community Hall	2
Do build a new station	5
More tree-planting + greenspace	1
Build less social housing	1
Yes to more houses	1
Change nothing	1
Better movement network	1

- 6.1 In looking to the future, then it is not surprising that many wished to preserve the natural beauty of the village setting and to safeguard open space. This was coupled in several comments with a concern that, in expanding Charfield, it might lose its intimate village character and become a 'town' (assumed to have less community spirit?)...
- 6.2 The main road was identified as a major difficulty if not addressed and improved – with many anticipating that a larger population with more vehicles would make the existing congested situation even worse. Significant numbers felt that highway infrastructure

improvements needed to be achieved before further residential development should be contemplated.

- 6.3 There were very clear observations that the housing types being provided by recent developments were targeted at a narrow audience. They generally represented an unaffordable prospect for many local people. A better mix, including a greater proportion/variety of smaller types, was thought to be needed. Housing for older people and sites for self-builders were also identified as being in demand.
- 6.4 A number of respondents wished to see no further development at all in the village.
- 6.5 The idea of re-establishing a railway station was supported, although not in very great numbers - and some thought it a bad idea since they felt it might attract additional traffic to the village.

7. Priorities for Investment



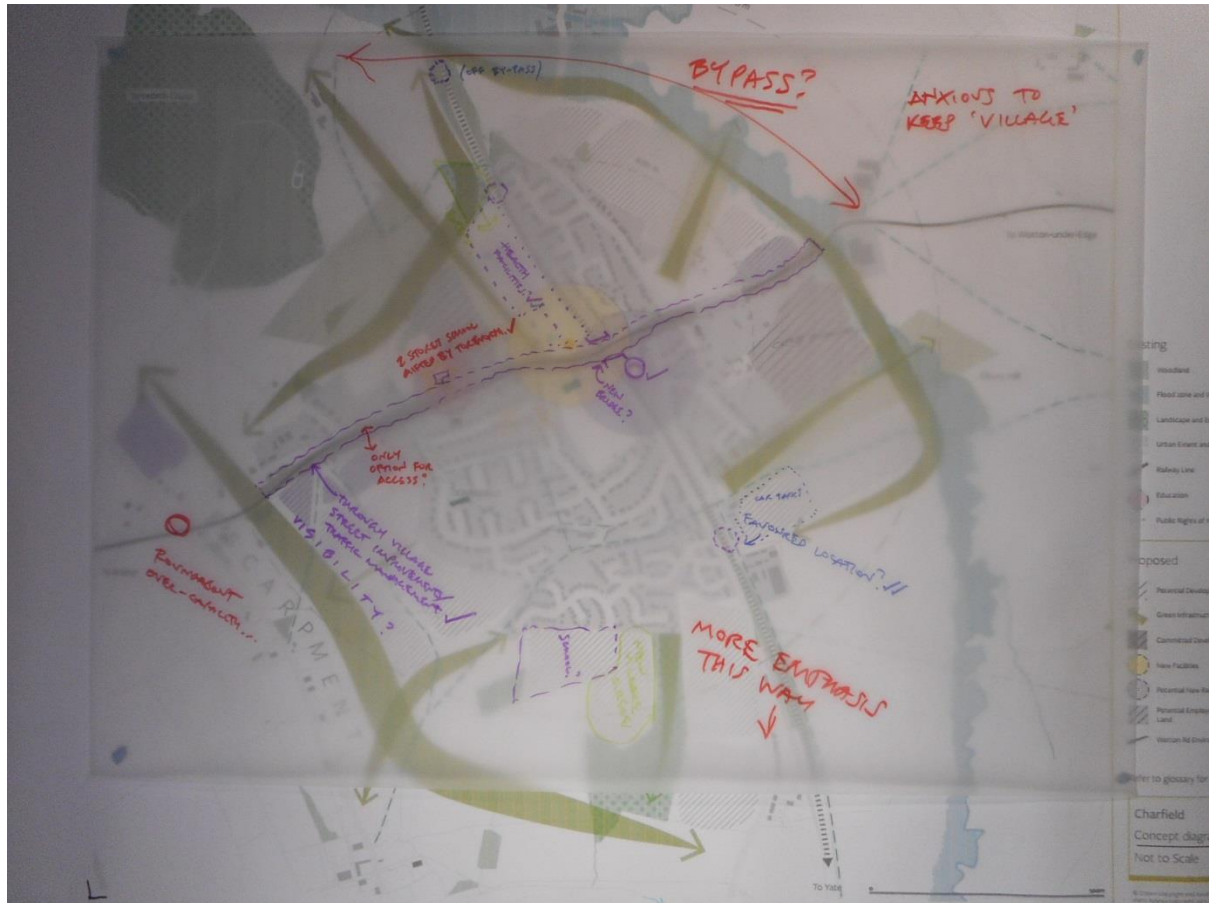
- 7.1 The distribution of responses showed that investment in public transport was most favoured and then good support in evidence for improved health facilities was also noted. By contrast employment was not particularly favoured and there was apparently little or no interest in allotments.

‘Drawing on’ Charfield...

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 Original Site of Station would not have sufficient capacity for car-parking – use new site on northern side of main street? Suggestions for a by-pass?



- 8.2 Idea for a by-pass to the northern side of village also serving new location for railway station. Whole of main street needs to be re-considered and improved in highway design – slower, safer, better environment for pedestrians and cyclists, etc. Suggestion that development ought to be more clearly focussed on the southern side? Other options for new station site indicated – with southern possibility most favoured? New school and ‘village green’ located below Grade 1 listed church – as part of the protection of its setting? Health facilities as part of local centre on land to north of main street in centre of village.



- 8.3 Railway Station / Local Centre favoured for central site on northern side of main street. Important green infrastructure on south/south western side of village – wildlife/flooding/setting of church. Dangerous junctions to main street highlighted. Cycle route to KLB school. Land needs to be set aside / safeguarded for station parking and also for improved retail provision. Habitat + flooding issues alongside the river corridor.



- 8.4 Dangerous road junctions again highlighted. River corridor recognised as important for wildlife and amenity.



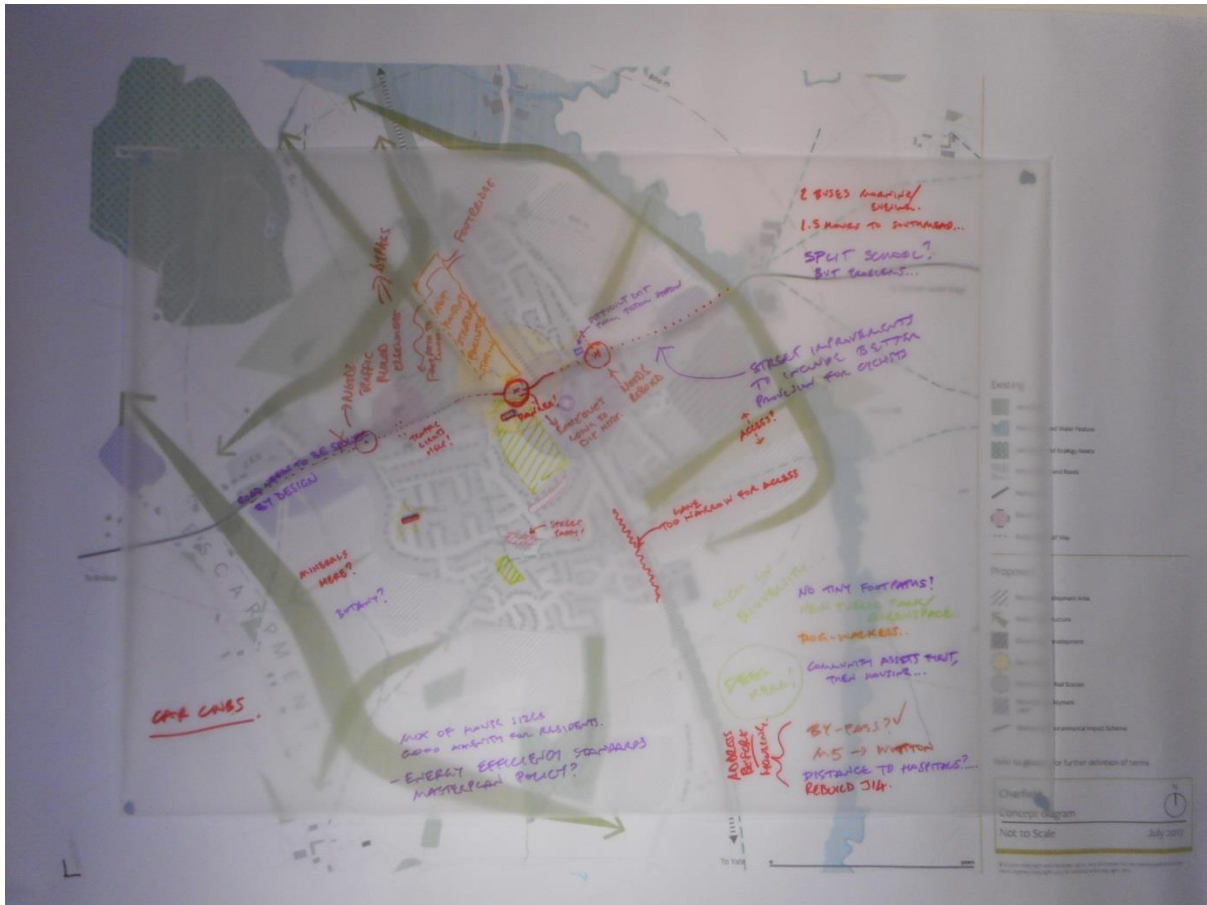
- 8.5 'Green corridor' associated with river again highlighted for its ecological values. Land in centre of village north of main street favoured as station car park. Existing Community Centre could be part of an improved 'hub' (wider local centre facilities)? Dangerous road junctions again plotted. Some of the key views out of the village indicated.



- 8.6 More priority for employment sites called for, but concern over potential appearance of the site locations, as indicated. Could existing workspaces at Charfield Mill be expanded to provide greater employment opportunity there? Could one of the new employment sites be used to relocate car-dealership away from former railway station site in centre of village? This and the site on the other side of the main street suggested as use for station/improved local centre. Steep slopes and surface water run-off from fields (causing flooding) noted in south western quadrant. Calls for doctor and dentist provision.



- 8.8 Sites in centre of village favoured for community centre and new shops with car-parking. Railway station indicated as being re-established to the south (again as a 'Parkway' type) but consider highway access... Supermarket and housing suggested for the original station site.



- 8.9 Further evidence that main street needs to be re-configured / re-conceived – safer, better for cycling, ‘slower by design’, etc. Central sites should be “not housing – strategic facilities + station”? Timely provision of infrastructure highlighted – deliver early... Further support for a by-pass. Improved environmental/energy standards for new housing?

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 An enhanced movement network that might legibly connect the centre of the village with outlying sites, needs to organically influence the concentric model used to generate the initial Concept Diagram. This will involve identifying and improving (or creating new where necessary) key secondary streets as 'radial routes'.
- 9.2 The setting of the Grade 1 listed church to the south west of the village needs to influence the pattern of expansion in this quadrant.
- 9.3 The river corridor needs to be recognised as a much more significant element of green infrastructure within the Framework Plan.
- 9.4 Consider suitability of locations for employment land in relation to the types of work opportunity that it might be desirable to attract.

10. Further Key Points for a future Master-planning Brief

- 10.1 For Charfield to become a sustainable location for housing growth at the scale suggested then the range of services and facilities needs to be improved. A central location for a strengthened 'local centre' (including public realm/open space) needs therefore to be identified and safeguarded by the Masterplan.
- 10.2 Ensure that aspirations in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan are integrated as fully as possible into the Masterplan Brief.
- 10.3 A network of green routes needs to be included within the Masterplan to provide and safeguard good quality links from existing residential neighbourhoods out to the wider landscape for recreational walking and exercise.
- 10.4 Consider the feasibility of introducing bespoke planning policy specially associated with the Masterplan that might be able to more successfully influence the type/mix of new housing provided.

11. Other Important 'Early Actions'

- 11.1 Develop a design brief and commission scoping study to investigate feasibility for options to improve Wootton Road (the main street) as a better and safer environment for all users/modes of transport. Enlightened highway design essential.
- 11.2 Progress feasibility work to investigate likely location for a re-established railway station. Whilst the housing growth may not be predicated on the creation of a new station, if it is to be provided, then the improved movement network required to access it will have impacts on the design of the enlarged village and its logical anatomy as a settlement.
- 11.3 Explore options/feasibility for attracting local primary healthcare facilities to become established in the village.
- 11.4 Technical studies that might assess the secondary road network within the village and test the feasibility of it being selectively upgraded should be progressed.