

Design Action for South Gloucestershire Council

General Conclusions + Next Steps

**New Local Plan Strategic Development Locations
Consultation Report – SECTION 3**



Mark Pearson (Design Action) – 6th Feb 2018

General Conclusions

Transportation

- 1.0 There was general concern across virtually all events about the ability for the local highway infrastructure to cope with what was perceived to be an additional burden of traffic. In many instances congestion was reported to be already uncomfortably high.
- 1.1 The major initiatives that are to be included in the Joint Transport Study and form the transport packages to support the JSP SDLs will help in encouraging ‘modal shift’ and delivering the SDLs. It is understood further technical work is currently being prepared and will be subject to further public consultation later this year.
- 1.2 Some substantial improvements are identified as being desirable and necessary for main streets (Charfield and Coalpit Heath) and it will require some enlightened highway design to be brought to bear on these challenges.
- 1.3 Several communities rely on the A38 as a significant conduit southwards which also performs as a ‘relief route’ when the M5 is closed in emergency. Possible improvements to the A38 should be examined to address these matters. Thornbury and Buckover Garden Village are likely to be the locations most benefiting from any improvement.
- 1.4 The travel to work patterns seem relatively complex for most locations. However, there is consistently groups of people who need to get to the North Bristol / Central Bristol area and therefore the proposed Metrobus routes extending northwards will be very important. The possibility of a re-opened station at Charfield could also help. An attempt to create a better integrated public transport network would also be valuable to facilitate changes of mode and good connections.
- 1.5 The sustainability of the Buckover Garden Village location will rely on investment in public transport and the degree to which the garden village supports a strong employment focus.
- 1.6 There was quite wide interest in long-distance cycling routes, better connecting the district and whilst these may not be a major influence in achieving a ‘modal shift’ for commuters, the recreational and health values should be recognised. At Yate, Thornbury and Chipping Sodbury the proposed developments lie some way distant from the established town centres, and whilst local facilities may be provided as part of the development, it should be anticipated that active journeys ‘into town’ might be attempted for some by cycle, as well as walking. This may well point towards some desirable ‘off site’ improvements to cycling/walking networks.

Health Provision

- 2.1 This topic was raised quite generally and many communities hope for an improved provision as a consequence of the development and enlargement of their communities. In part, this emphasis may be explained by the age profiles of those that attended – with a strong representation from older age-groups that tend to rely more heavily on local primary health care services.
- 2.2 Some greater clarity about the strategy for provision of GP services ought to be established with the NHS / healthcare providers. It is inconceivable that the current provision will be adequate given the levels of development projected, but it seems likely that some rationalisation will be desirable – this seems to be a significant area for the Council to explore with its partners and for them to jointly consult with the public about the future strategy.

Access to the Countryside

- 3.1 This was another recurrent theme at virtually all the events and points towards the need to create future places that have strong walking and cycling networks able to link with the wider setting of the development locations.
- 3.2 Several of the sites had important local ‘green assets’ and these need to be identified and included within the network of ‘green infrastructure’ of new neighbourhoods.

Employment

- 4.1 The need to balance the proposed residential development with commercial, and other, uses that might generate local employment opportunities was generally understood and supported by most participants, although as a topic it was not particularly favoured for public investment - there may have been limited or less direct interest, since (as we have seen) the proportion of retirees attending the events was relatively high. However, the need for many existing residents to commute elsewhere to their place of work was certainly perceived to be ‘part of the problem’ with regard to the peak time traffic congestion that was commonly reported at most events.
- 4.2 Research/analysis needs to be drawn upon to more clearly understand business and commercial trends and initiatives and then a clearer approach pursued within each emerging masterplan to provide the types of site and the locational characteristics that might attract good quality private investment/jobs to the strategic development locations. This may well result in an overall strategy that is nuanced to respond to the particular set of circumstances and the specific opportunities presented in each place.

Next Steps

Place-making, Good Design and Community Engagement in the Next Stages

- 5.1 The diagram below/overleaf is our recommendation for the next stages of bringing forward these sites within the planning system. The processes should be a collaboration of all interests, but could be public or private-sector led depending on the circumstances of each site – but the engagement and involvement of local communities will be key given the rate and scale of change projected.

- 5.2 It will be essential to ‘aim high’ and achieve a step-change in the quality of development proposed. Exemplar projects and good precedents will be helpful in establishing the benchmarks for what is expected and to be specified in the forthcoming suite of planning documents. Strong development management is also needed to ensure the positive delivery of the new neighbourhoods.

South Gloucestershire SDL Sites – Recommendations for Next Steps

