The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) 2018, now submitted for examination, contains proposals for four new communities at Banwell, Churchill, Nailsea and Backwell (known as strategic development locations - SDLs).

Last year North Somerset carried out some early consultation aimed at 'generating ideas' for these new villages and communities. Work has now commenced on the new Local Plan which will provide more detailed policies.

The Local Plan Issues and Options consultation runs from 3 September - 10 December 2018. As part of this consultation process workshops are being held with representatives from the local communities where the strategic development locations are proposed. The workshops are focusing on the key principles and place-making elements for these areas which can then be further considered and refined through the Local Plan.

This report sets out the feedback from the discussion at the Mendip Spring Garden Village workshop.

The meeting began with an acknowledgement from officers that North Somerset Council is aware of the unprecedented opposition from residents in Churchill and the surrounding villages to the proposals in the JSP and Local Plan 2036 for Churchill/Mendip Spring garden village.

There was a strong feeling among participants that discussion of the Local Plan is premature given that the JSP has not been through the examination process.

### Session 1: Hopes and Fears

**Hopes:**

- Create a sense of community - developers tasked to create community.
- Better public transport
- Significant proportion of affordable housing, including social housing for local young people who have a connection to the villages.
- Housing should not just be standard volume house builders’ types
- Better, high quality design
Need infrastructure and drainage. Drainage is a real issue. Would like existing problems properly resolved before any more houses can even be considered.

A detailed landscape assessment will be undertaken to inform the development

Want infrastructure to work and enable getting to Bristol easily

That it isn’t developed by volume house builders

That the scheme is not built, or its delivered at ‘The Vale’ instead. Houses should be built close to centres of employment i.e. Bristol

That there would be opportunities to take just 2% of the Green Belt around Bristol and relocate it to Mendip Hills.

There is more emphasis on existing built up area where there is existing transport infrastructure

That there is a review regarding relocating the Green Belt.

A Green Belt assessment should be carried out in North Somerset. A very small proportion of Green Belt that is strangling Bristol could be reallocated to beside the Mendip Hills AONB

Smaller piecemeal development which does not flood the area with housing

That there’s a better understanding of what is actually deliverable not just what is hoped for.

Fears:

Impacts on local road network especially Congresbury and Stock Lane - could cause chaos at local junctions

Deliverability of the infrastructure - it is too expensive to be delivered, what if HIF or other funding does not happen? Proposal not achievable given high costs.

Poorly related to transport

Until the road pattern resolved cannot determine the size of development

Should not be building roads in the 21st Century

To concrete over this land in Churchill/Mendip Spring with houses and major new roads, when there is a good alternative location close to the jobs in Bristol, would be a terrible legacy for future generations.

No public transport therefore everyone will be car dependent

 Destruction of the green fields

Concern over drainage, risk of flooding existing homes

Will not meet the Government’s Garden Village criteria

NSC hasn’t got the resources to deliver a proper Garden Village it will just be a large housing estate.

Churchill/Mendip Spring is a North Somerset Council proposal that cannot be sustainably delivered.

Housing will be too dense
Lack of local employment opportunities. Thatcher’s is unlikely to grow as it is highly mechanised.

Putting people in dormitory settlements remote from facilities leads to other problems

Alternatives have not been properly considered

Location is unsustainable and it will be a commuter town for Bristol

Housing is for Bristol – Bristol has fastest employment growth in Europe but poor air quality and people commuting will exacerbate this problem.

Housing will not be affordable to the locals because of level of jobs and high cost of infrastructure

By protecting Green Belt, AONB and Flood plain there will be an area in the middle which joins up

When public transport becomes unviable ceases to operate

Commuter housing estates

Problems with drainage due to level, may need to pump - will this be resolved at the JSP?

Developers will ignore aspirations

Will create an overflow for W-S-M

Some volume house building is good, elsewhere the same builder is poor

Concerned that all the land including the ‘alternatives’ will be required.

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**Session 2: Discussion of scenarios**

- Flooding – Health and Safety issues around open channels and swales
- Lack of viability/local affordability
- Need community hub and spirit with sports facilities. Community Hall essential, early on.
- ‘A centre’ needs to be achieved early on, where people can meet. Village needs a focus
- Walking and cycling should be encouraged.
- Community adhesion required with local management not a management company
- Need good public transport to reduce reliance on cars
- Maintain the Green Infrastructure
- Need New Town legislation or developers will take the lead, NSC does not have the power to dictate how the SDL will develop and can’t manage a development like this.
- The Council would need to acquire the land so that one body needs to oversee the whole project to ensure that it is properly planned and executed
- Needs variety of housing sizes and tenure, need affordable housing for rent, starter homes and homes for the elderly
• Need right proportion of social housing
• Affordable housing should be for local people and need social renting for young people, concern that viability could reduce affordable housing
• Need to keep the young people in the community – need to provide housing for local young people.
• Quality of housing important
• Need to understand what “high-quality” design means
• Concern that the area could be blighted or developed piecemeal
• Need a pledge that the road gets delivered first
• No plans to improve Yatton or roads going north
• How do you achieve uniformity in design with multiple developers? Developers win over NSC all the time. NSC should buy the land and let to the developer.
• People will drive into Bristol, so the housing should be closer to Bristol
• Some of the wettest ground has been allocated for employment
• Need to do something with Stock Lane.
• Need a direct cycle route to the Strawberry Line
• Distance to Weston is not cyclable/sustainable
• Without separation Churchill will lose its identity
• Proposal needs a landscape strategy as visible from the AONB
• Poundbury considered better practice
• Mendip Spring is wet
• Strawberry line is dark and wet and rhydes make it dangerous to cycle in the dark to or from Yatton Station.
• As Weston is employment-led should this be as well?
• Windmill Hill is not sustainable as a recreation facility for the proposed amount of housing as it is small and has issues with dog fouling.
• Windmill Hill will not screen the proposed development from the AONB
• Need to improve things for existing settlements -links to shops/post office
• Churchill lacks a centre
• Need to understand how density affects development

Session 3: Discussion of key development priorities and principles – what makes a good place?

Major concerns that were expressed about the effect that the proposed SDL will have on the lanes and roads in the surrounding villages. Particularly if the Banwell Bypass is constructed in isolation with the impact of the additional 1,900 houses, that inextricably linked to the project, particularly on villages along the A368, Sandford, Churchill, Upper Langford, Rickford, Burrington, Blagdon and beyond as well as the A369 east of the
A38, B3134 and of course the A38. There doesn’t appear to be any evidence of an assessment having been carried out.

Detailed traffic modelling needs to be undertaken, of impacts on the surrounding area for the various scenarios at the relevant dates and for the results to be shared with the local communities. In particular, total clarity is need about whether the JSP and the Local Plan will be proposing a new Junction 21A on the M5 and a modified junction on A38/A368 at Churchill Gate – whether or not those and other road improvements are directly related to the proposed SDLs, to existing congestion or to other issues on the network such as the implications of committed and proposed airport expansion.

Other comments:

- Almost impossible to do Banwell bypass without the Sandford/Churchill bypass
- A weight restriction on Stock Lane would help
- The best arterial route would be a route to Clevedon, Yatton and the M5 J20
- Congresbury rejected a bypass due to infilling
- Windmill Hill is a lovely place used by locals, additional users will spoil it
- Loss of wildlife
- Retained green space needs to be kept natural
- Existing trees need to be kept
- You can’t put 3,000 houses on 40% of the space without high density
- Bespoke house design not the standard housing types volume builders provide.
- Beautiful land between the development and Congresbury will be destroyed - have officers walked the area?
- Needs some local shops
- SDL should be separate from Langford, but there is concern that any separation will get filled in anyway.
- Road to the crossroads should not go through the playing fields
- Need a holistic masterplan from the council to comment on, need info on school places, shops and how it will be managed
- Development is not sustainable or in the right place
- Place-making is not happening – need to establish ground rules then people will engage
- Need to attract employers. Employment will have to be highly skilled in order to pay the salaries needed to buy houses here as they will incur abnormal building costs.
- Ashton Vale could attract high tech jobs because it would be linked via the metrobus to the new Bristol University quarter by Temple Meads. Bristol has a shortage of office space.'
- Proposal is under the airport flight path
• Airport development plans only provide 450 jobs, 300 FTEs based on 15 million passengers by 2035. The majority of these will be minimum wage.
• Should build houses near jobs not try to attract jobs to houses
• Need to be aspirational with jobs - need higher paid jobs or young will not be able to afford to buy houses here.
• Need to think about home working and co-working
• Land at Mushroom farm but lorries need to use j21a
• Concerns were also raised regarding the disappearance of the improvements to the A38 beyond Bristol Airport.

Miscellaneous

• Why should other parishes be involved in designing Churchill’s Garden Village?
• Lack of information
• Why can’t we build in the flood plain, Holland does it
• Green Belt is an unnecessary constraint
• Expansion of the airport into the Green Belt justifies further use of the Green Belt
• A planning vacuum will continue
• Confusion over the transport proposals especially the changes to the JSP which appear to delete some proposals
• Things have not moved on in the last year
• Other Authorities are relaxing the Green Belt around Bristol, Long Ashton area more sensible.
• Nailsea and Backwell considering ‘nibbling into the Green Belt’ - contradiction in the Issues and Option Document
• Pleased that the review of settlement boundaries will only allow development within the settlement.
• Allowing development ‘adjacent’ to settlement boundaries causes sprawl

Further comments from the Parish Council:

1. NSC speakers introduced the workshop by recognising the high level of local opposition which exists to the ‘Mendip Spring’ proposal. This manoeuvre effectively removed much repeat critical comment from the group sessions.
2. Any debate was of limited value with the NSC Facilitator determined to adhere to an optimistic schedule which restricted comment from the floor. Promises to return to contentious issues were not kept even though the Workshop finished marginally early.
3. In principle we do not believe any binding issues regarding the Local Plan can be considered ahead of the Government Inspectors report on the Joint Spatial Study.