SGNP - Review of Drop-In session data
How can this data help inform Site Evaluation Criteria?

Dec 2018 – Draft 2

Introduction

Two public drop in sessions were held at the end of October 2016 in the early stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process. My understanding of these sessions was that they aimed to identify the key themes of interest to the community. These key themes were then to be explored in a more structured and rigorous way and through a full Household Survey (questionnaire) to a wider community.

The capture of information was (deliberately) unstructured so as not to constrain or lead thinking. The following questions were asked:

Q1. What do you like about the Stoke Golding area?
Q2. What don't you like about the Stoke Golding area?
Q3. Can the Stoke Golding area be improved?
Q4. What facilities does the Stoke Golding area need for now and the future?
Q5 & Q6. Any other comments?
Q7 *Was there a question 7?*
Q8 Which community green spaces do you value and which other green spaces do you consider important and not to be used for development?

For questions 1-8, attendees were asked to fill in post-it notes with their comments. There was also a red dot / green dot exercise where people placed red and green dots on a map according to where development might be preferred and where green spaced was valued.

The total number of attendees over the 2 sessions was around ??? people and in the region of 30-70 post it notes were logged against each question. Post event, the data was categorised into themes and recorded in a number of spreadsheets. Because of the unstructured nature of the comments the categorisation was approximate.

So how useful is this data in informing Evaluation Criteria?

I think the answer to this has to be "not very", because:

1. Attendance wasn't particularly high and so the number of comments were quite limited in statistical terms
2. Responses were often non specific – e.g we value countryside
3. Responses were non discriminatory – i.e. people did not have to say what was most important

Having said that, there are some clear themes that emerge. These themes could potentially give some site evaluation criteria headings, but they do not have the detail to allow evaluation of the criteria – i.e. there are no real measures. How would we assess impact on the countryside for example?

Drop In Theme	Drop-in Comments	My Comments
Development	A strong feeling that we have already seen a lot of development and that people want minimal development in the future.	Not sure this is a theme in its own right. It is more likely about "character", "countryside", "community" and "traffic"
Village Character	Worried about loss of character and "village feel".	This is quite nebulous and I don't there is a clear understanding of what is meant by "character" and "village feel". Many other neighbourhood plans have articulated the different character areas of the NP areas and what makes them special and unique (and also what needs improvement). The Conservation Area Appraisal covers part of the village, but what about the other areas? HBBC have produced an Urban Character Assessment for Stoke Golding – has this been looked at? Could this be developed further?
Countryside and Open spaces	Countryside surrounding the village is highly valued and many concerns about it being destroyed by development. Also quite a lot about value of footpaths.	Another nebulous area. What is valued? Why is it valued? What are the key view and vistas. We have very little data about what areas or aspects of the countryside are valued. Again HBBC have a produced Landscape Character Assessment covering the "Stoke Golding Rolling Farmland" character area. This may be a useful start.
Community	Friendly people, community spirit. Clubs and societies	Yet another area that is difficult to define. Most people who live think it has a special community vibe. How can that be articulated and then protected and enhanced? How would this impact choice of sites. As an example, whilst the Convent development had limited impact on most residents its location and lack of connectivity means it has been difficult to integrate.
Traffic and Transport	Very strong feelings about traffic, particularly speeding	New developments need to be well connected to key services in the village by walking and

	and to a lesser event parking and rat running. Comments about state of paths. Rather less said about public transport	cycling routes and should prioritise walking and cycling within the development. New developments should look to minimise additional (car) traffic.
Services	Existing services are valued especially post office, schools, pubs, doctors and shop. On the one had concerns about ongoing sustainability (e.g. schools) but on the other hand concerns about capacity (e.g doctors)	We need to understand capacity issues better. How quickly could schools integrate new residents? Can the doctors scale for increased demand. Could new development improve existing services or provide new ones. But not another hairdresser please!!

Conclusions

I know others are looking at the Household Survey and this data may prove to be more helpful. However, if we want to do the job properly I still believe that we need as an input to the site selection process:

1. A well articulated **Appraisal** of what we have now.
   What is valued and what needs to be preserved. What are the issues that need to be addressed? What is meant by the character of the village and what aspects of the countryside are most valued. What services need to be improved?
2. The future **Vision and Aims** that the Neighbourhood Development Plan is seeking to deliver. Do we want to grow to attract more services? Are we happy to become a dormitory town? Do we want to be a retirement village? Do we want to attract more families? Do we want to attract more tourism? Do we want to create more green spaces? Do we want better sports and leisure facilities? Do we want more local job opportunities? These are fundamental questions that will lead to different evaluation criteria and subsequent evaluation.