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Proposed Buckover Garden Village for up to 3,000 homes

“Learning from the Community”

We understand that in relation to the Department of Communities and Local Government's call for submissions to its "Garden Cities Towns and Villages" initiative there were a total of 51 bids submitted and only 12 are to receive financial funding at this time. It is important to note that non inclusion in the DCLG's decision does not prejudice the Buckover Garden Village site's allocation in the draft Joint Spatial Plan.

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We have been encouraged by the support that we have received, especially from those who are fed up with the "same old, same old, building on the edge of town". We are continuing with our work to show why we believe something different such as a new, well planned settlement at Buckover is worthy of inclusion in the JSP.

This work includes technical studies related to transport infrastructure, meeting employment, health and education needs, and ensuring a new garden village is complimenting and not competing with Thornbury and Falfield.

In recent months the Tortworth Estate has been meeting with various interested local parties regarding the proposed Garden Village at Buckover. At the same time the West of England Partnership has endorsed a number of housing sites for consultation in its draft Joint Spatial Plan, including the Garden Village, and is now asking the public for their views on both the draft JSP and Joint Transport Strategy.

Whilst the Councils have been doing their work the Tortworth Estate has been listening to what people have to say about future house building. Whilst there has naturally been concerns about how the housing needs are going to be met, Tortworth Estate are pleased that people have been willing to engage and discuss with them their concerns, hopes and ideas at face to face meetings.

The Tortworth Estate want South Gloucestershire Council to carry out its public consultation without any competing consultation from the Estate and so have decided to hold its own public consultation at a later date. This will avoid any possible confusion over who is being asked about the various proposals and will allow the democratic process to run its course without interference.

However, our discussions to date have revealed some key principles that local people want us to adopt should the Garden Village proceed.

Just some of these include:-

- 1) Recognising that although the Buckover Garden Village site is not in the green belt it will be important to provide a green buffer on the site to prevent any chance of perceived, or otherwise, coalescence with Thornbury.
- 2) Resources must be devoted to help build a community "spirit" from the outset and not just leave communities to do it for themselves.
- 3) Not only is there a need to recognise the transport pressures of today but to ensure transport solutions for ten, fifteen years time are also achieved. One answer we support is the extension of the MetroBus to Thornbury.
- 4) Realising that any changes to the A38 or M5 junctions must not create additional problems for Falfield, Thornbury and the surrounding areas i.e. don't solve one traffic problem just to create another.
- 5) The need to create employment at a very early stage of the development, and have an eye on helping the local economy.
- 6) Provide assistance to services that are already under pressure such as health and education.
- 7) Ensure a broad range of housing including self-build and bungalows. The needs of younger people starting out on the housing ladder must be addressed as well as older people wishing to downsize.
- 8) The importance of Tortworth Estate retaining an interest in the development of the Garden Village such that it is not just "sold on" to others who may not reflect the values and ethos of the Estate.

Robert Moreton of Tortworth Estate, said, "*The work we are currently undertaking has been really beneficial in setting principles and I want to thank people for taking the time to talk with us. What we have learned already will help as we hold consultation events next year when we can ask the wider public, from a much more informed standpoint, about what they think. In addition, we have been able to explain a bit more about what guides my family as custodians of the Estate into the future. For instance, on the subject of employment - not many people may be aware that we have a number of employers on the Estate, some of whom with our support have been able to grow their businesses creating further jobs. These employers began with 7, 2, 4 and 2 people respectively and now employ 50, 18, 18 and 20 and are hugely successful. This is just one example of how I want to use the experience of what we have achieved in the past to help us achieve in the future.*"

Rob Garnham of Mediation in Planning Ltd said, "*We are still at an early stage of engagement but the principles that we have picked up from local people already has been a great help in understanding their concerns. When we have explained that our over-riding mantra is to "compliment not compete" with existing communities and facilities, our engagement has been much more constructive.*"

Through the winter months the Tortworth Estate will continue to meet with interested groups e.g. young adults concerned over the affordability and shortage of housing, and we will also undertake additional transport and land use work. In addition, updates and further information can be found on our web page at:- <http://www.tortwortheastate.com/gardenvillage>

Notes to Editors:-

This statement has been issued by Rob Garnham, Mediation in Planning Ltd, on behalf of the Tortworth Estate. For all further enquires please contact Rob directly on 07799 895929 or email rob@mediationinplanning.co.uk

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