

# Concrete Products Manufacturing Works Redevelopment: Assessing Housing Needs in Bleadon



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## **Executive Summary**

As an initial form of public consultation for the proposed re-development of the concrete products manufacturing works in Bleadon, North Somerset, Marshalls Mono Ltd (Marshalls) instructed an independent assessment of the Housing Needs of the village.

Through the use of a structured postal questionnaire and a site visit, an initial assessment has been made of the housing needs in Bleadon and views of the respondent village residents regarding development in the village envelope.

The questionnaire gained better response rates (33.4%) than the anticipated norm of 20-25% and can be considered representative of the Bleadon resident views.

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the returned questionnaires provided a wide range of views on the proposed re-development of the Marshalls site.

14% of Bleadon residents expressed a need to move within the village envelope in the next 5 years. A development aiming to cater for these existing residents, as well as attracting outsiders into Bleadon, would be recommended on the site.

The respondents understandably feel wary of a new development. However, with further public consultation and a sensitive mixed-use development that helps to provide for those wishing to downsize within Bleadon, attract a young professional demographic to the village and provide much-needed amenities should be welcomed, according to the conclusions of this exercise.

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## **1. Preface**

- 1.1. Marshalls Mono Ltd. ('Marshalls') own a 3.25 hectare site on Bridge Road, Bleadon, North Somerset in close proximity to the A370. The site, a former quarry, is an operational manufacturing facility that manufactures and distributes concrete flag and kerb products.
- 1.2 Marshalls are intending to expand their Newport site to create a modern, high capacity manufacturing facility for the South West. The decision to construct this new production facility at this alternative location has been driven by the physical constraints of the Bleadon site. Consequently, it is currently intended that the Bleadon site will close following the successful commissioning of the Newport development. Therefore, in advance of its anticipated closure, Marshalls are preparing the site for redevelopment by seeking an alternative use planning consent.
- 1.3 Marshalls has engaged The University of Leeds to conduct a Housing Needs Study to assess the community's property needs as an initial form of public consultation.
- 1.4 Postal questionnaires were sent out across the Parish of Bleadon that, in conjunction with a site visit, aimed to discover the housing needs of Bleadon and the village's opinion regarding the future re-development of the site.
- 1.5 The Housing Market Assessments Draft Practice Guidance states that "it will be important to consider the views of the local community...and to incorporate local knowledge when considering a development"<sup>1</sup>
- 1.6 Through this independent project, The University of Leeds has provided a detailed analysis to advise Marshalls on the most appropriate development.

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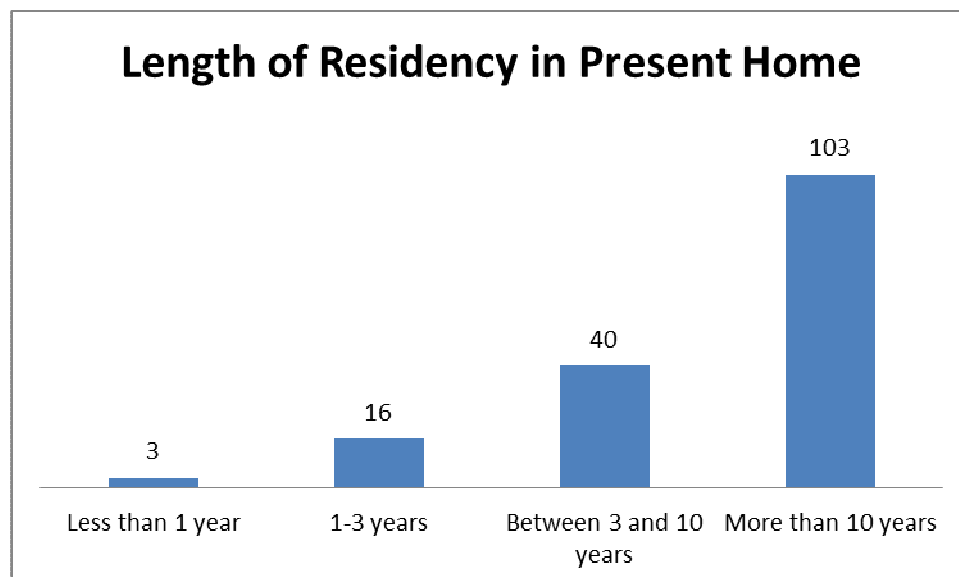
<sup>1</sup> (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005, p.10)

## **2. Methodology**

- 2.1 A postal questionnaire was developed to assess the housing needs of the residents of Bleadon.
- 2.2 To increase return rates the questionnaire was limited to three double sided A4 sheets of paper, with a signed covering letter attached. A freepost envelope was enclosed and the University origins of the research were highlighted.
- 2.3 The questionnaires were circulated with an edition of the March Parish Newsletter, aiming to improve return rates.
- 2.4 The questionnaire left a space for residents to express their thoughts at the end; this section will be qualitatively analysed.
- 2.5 The structured questionnaire will be quantitatively analysed to produce visual representations of the results.
- 2.6 A site visit was conducted to gain an appreciation of the local area and to support the questionnaire results. Photographs of the village and surrounding area were taken during the site visit to serve as an aide memoire and assist in providing context to the responses.
- 2.7 Photographs taken on the site visit will also be qualitatively analysed to provide a balance to the questionnaire results.

### 3. Quantitative Analysis

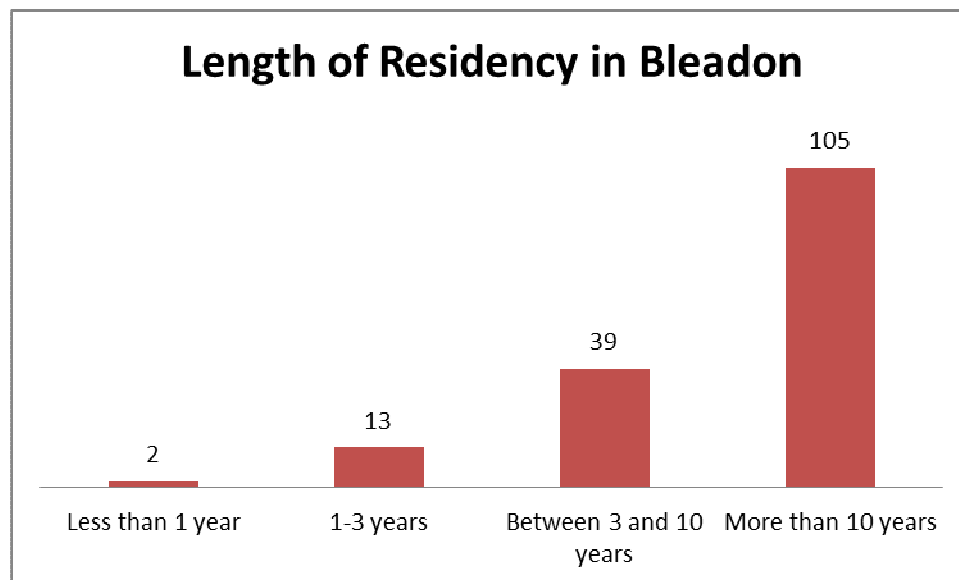
- 3.1 The questionnaires returned indicated a variety of views amongst the residents of Bleadon. The return rate of the questionnaires at 33.4% was better than the anticipated norm for such exercises of 20-25%<sup>2</sup>. Although a higher response rate would clearly have been preferred, the study has enough significance to be representative of the Bleadon population.
- 3.2 Questions one to eleven were designed to help better understand the existing housing stock in Bleadon and the population demographics. The analysis of the responses identified some dominant patterns throughout the village of Bleadon.
- 3.3 All but one of the returned questionnaires indicated that their house in Bleadon was their main residency.
- 3.4 The majority of the returned questionnaires (63.6%) specified that they had lived in their current property for more than 10 years.



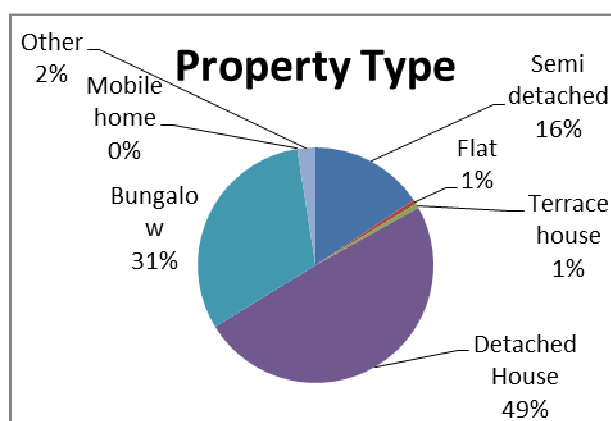
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<sup>2</sup> (Sociological Research Skills)

- 3.5 An even larger percentage (64.8%) of returned questionnaires indicated that they had lived in the village for more than 10 years.



- 3.6 The property structure of Bleadon, indicated by the type of property, the tenure and the bedroom size is deemed to be an indicator of the affluence of an area.
- 3.7 The village has a majority of detached properties (47.5%) and bungalows (30.9%) this suggests that the village is one of a relatively high affluence. There are a small number of semi-detached houses, flats and terrace houses.

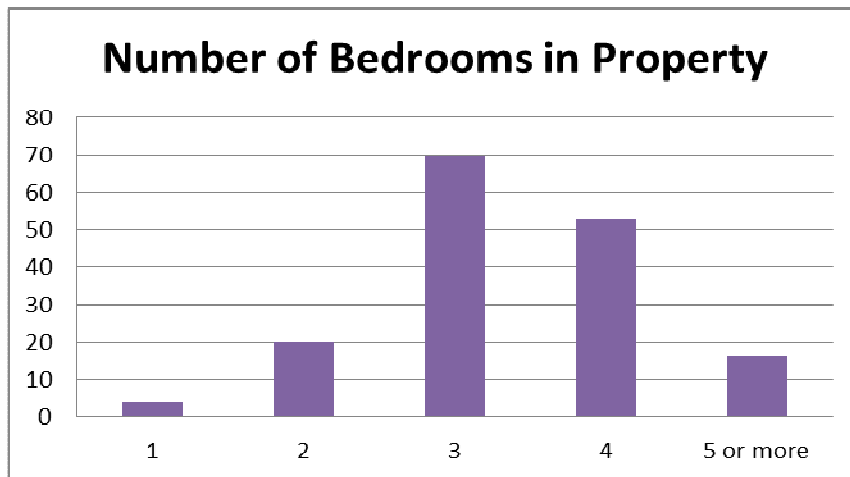


- 3.8 The photographs overleaf illustrate the typical housing stock of Bleadon.









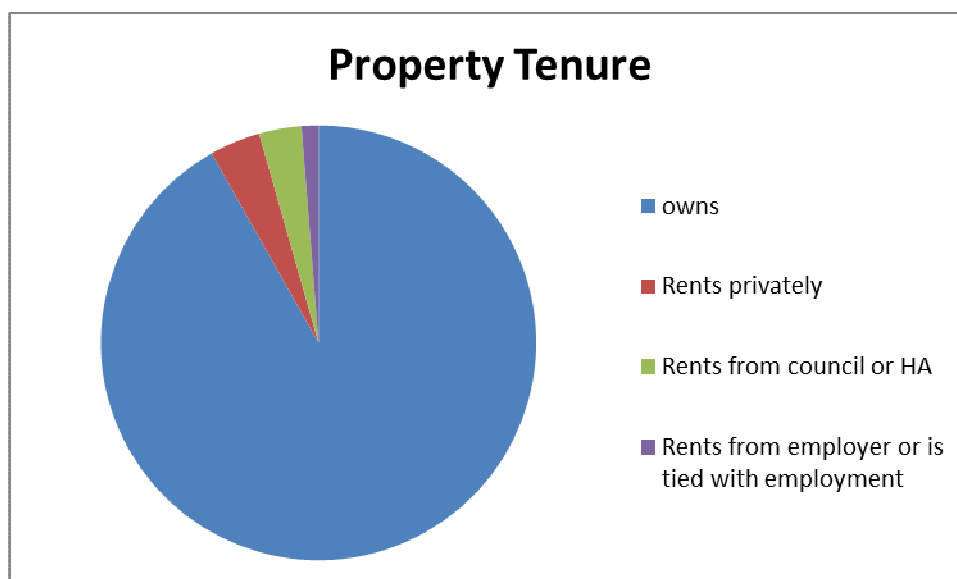
3.9 The number of bedrooms in the residences in Bleadon again indicates the size of the properties and the affluence of the village.

[Average= c 3.4 beds]

3.10 42.1% of the houses in Bleadon have three bedrooms with another 32.7% having four.

The average number of bedrooms in a house in the UK is 2.8<sup>3</sup>. The responses suggest that properties here are larger than the national average suggesting higher than average affluence.

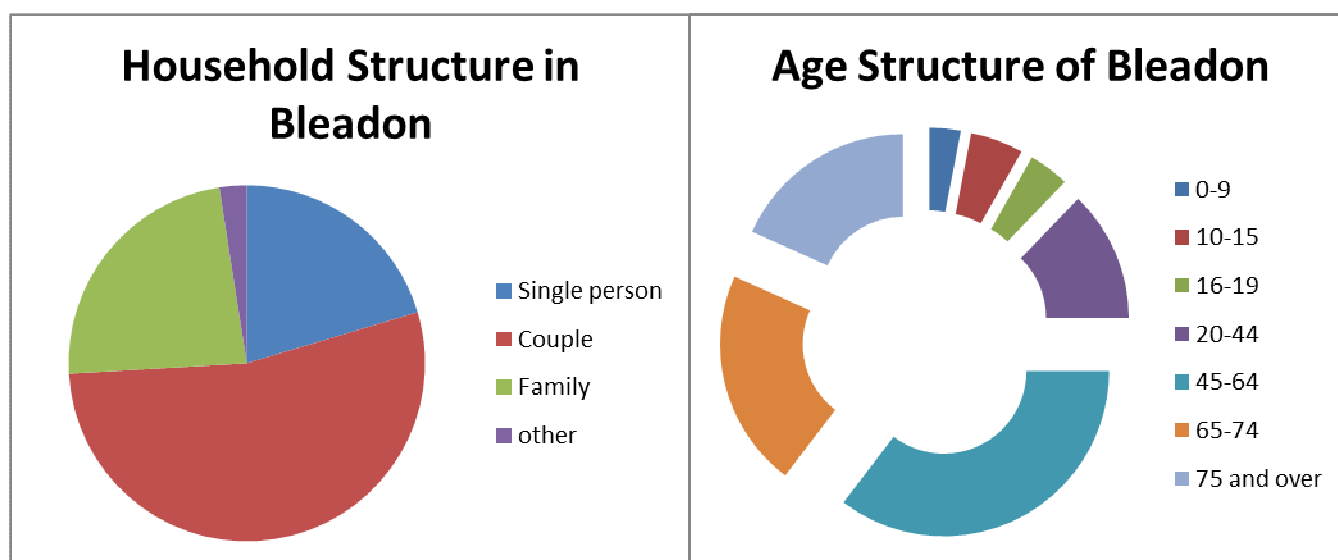
3.11 The returned questionnaires indicated that 92% of Bleadon residents own their own home. This is in comparison to 66% across England in 2010-2011<sup>4</sup>. This again suggests a higher than average level of affluence in Bleadon.



<sup>3</sup> (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010, p. 26)

<sup>4</sup> (BBC, 2012)

3.12 The study would suggest that the residency and age structure are higher than the national average age (40 years old<sup>5</sup>) with a considerable percentage of older couples (39% of 65 years and older).

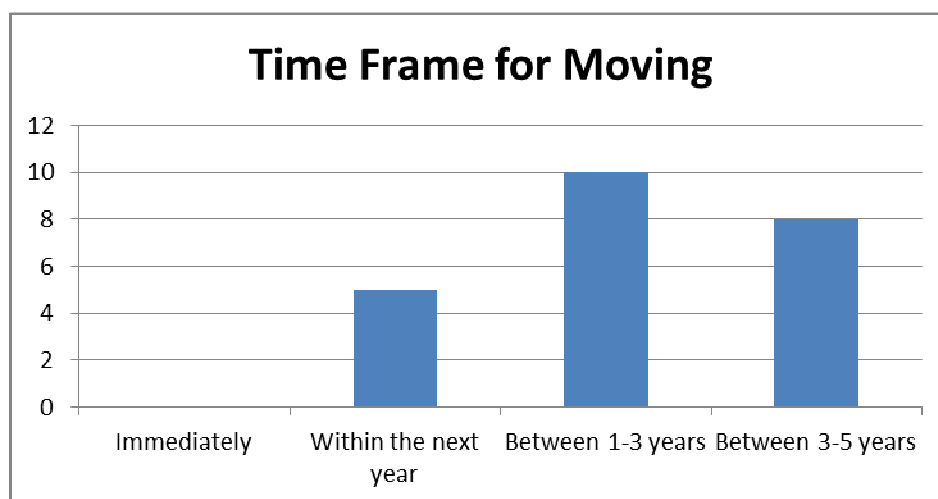


3.13 The first section of the questionnaire has provided an overarching view of the current housing stock, the demographics and affluence of Bleadon as a backdrop against which an assessment of the future housing needs of the village can be addressed.

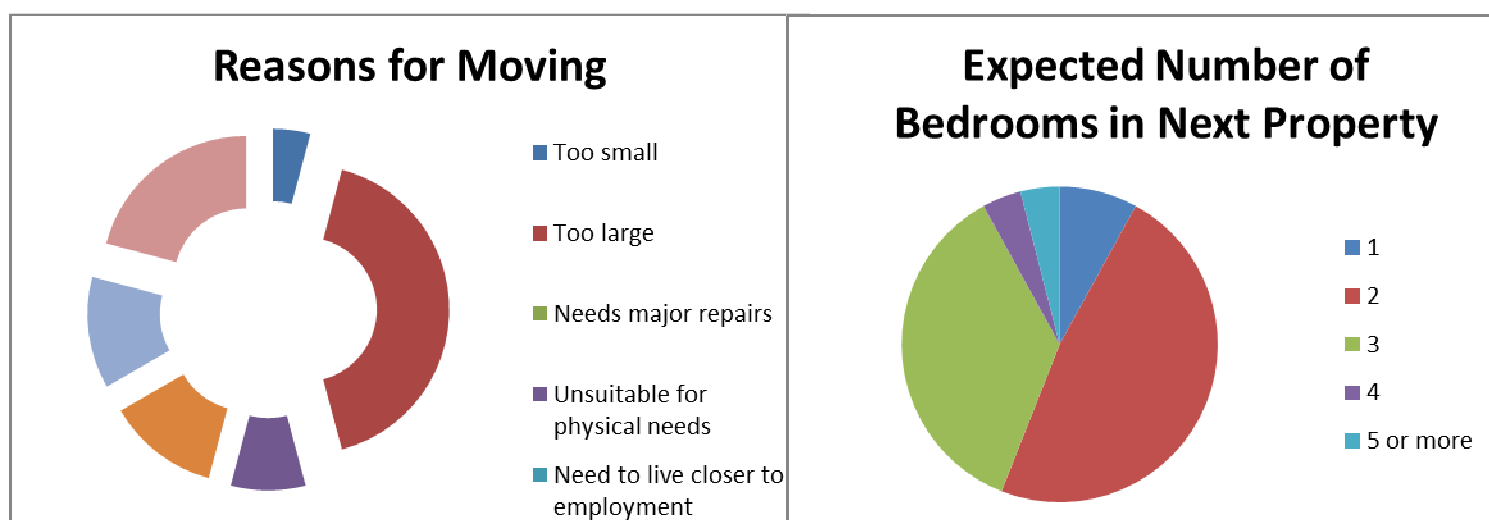
3.14 The second part of the questionnaire aims to identify the actual housing needs within Bleadon. 14% of respondents indicated a need to move within Bleadon over the next 5 years. However, a development on the site would not only aim to satisfy existing Bleadon resident's future requirements but also seek to encourage inward migration from outside of the Parish into the village.

<sup>5</sup> (DirectGov, 2009)

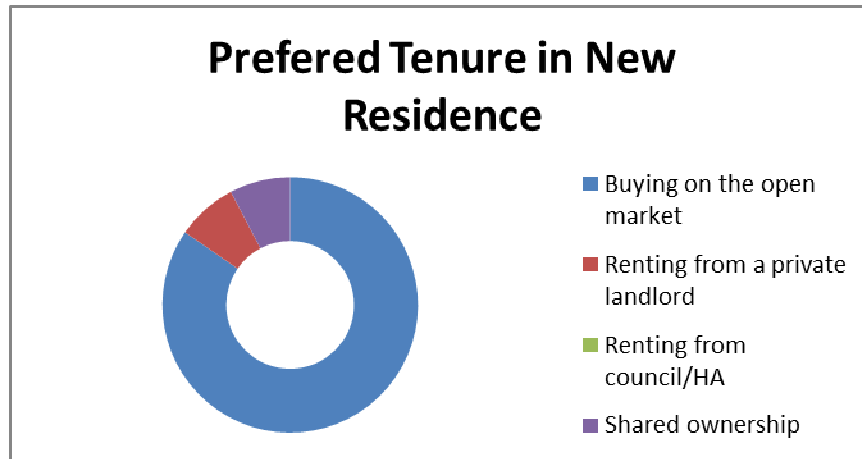
3.15 Of the 14% of respondents, who indicated a wish to move within the village in the next 5 years, 78% stated that they would wish to move within a one to five year period that helps to indicate the timeline for the requirement of new housing stock.



3.16 71.4% of those wishing to move said that their existing property was too large. With the high percentage of retired couples and older single people, a need for a percentage of smaller, more manageable housing within Bleadon is apparent. The number of bedrooms expected in their next property also suggests a need for some smaller properties.



- 3.17 The preferred tenure of those wishing to move was predominantly buying the house on the open market (85%). A small number wished to rent from a private landlord (8%) or have shared ownership (8%).

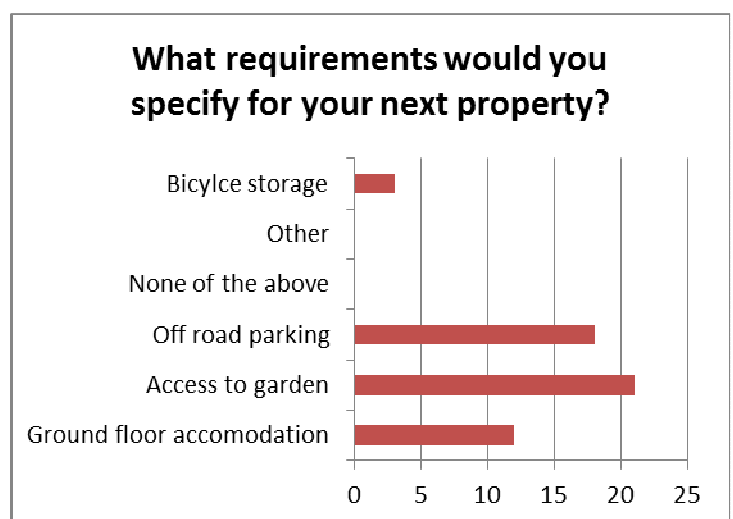


- 3.18 None of those desiring to move indicated a need for social housing. This suggests that, although there is a need for smaller properties, there is little or no need for social housing for the current Bleadon population. None of the residents wishing to move are registered on the North Somerset County Council Housing Register or waiting list. This would tend to support the conclusion that Bleadon's existing population does not need social housing.

- 3.19 The features and requirements desired within respondent's next properties suggest that off road parking, access to

garden and ground floor accommodation should be considered in any new development. Bicycle storage was also identified as a consideration, which could clearly have

beneficial implications for a development in the context of sustainability and environment.



#### 4. Qualitative Analysis of Questionnaires

- 4.1 The quantitative analysis of the completed questionnaires would suggest that, although there is not a strong need for housing to be supplied for the current Bleadon residents, there is a small number of residents who desire to move and stay within the village. Most of the residents that indicated a desire to relocate within the village suggest a need to downsize and move to a more manageable house, with access to a garden, off road parking and ground floor accommodation as being requirements for any new property.
- 4.2 The qualitative analysis of the completed questionnaires showed that the residents care about Bleadon and wish to stay in a village atmosphere that remains rural and does not become an extension of Weston- Super-Mare. There was no acknowledgment towards the change of use of the manufacturing site located within the village envelope to a predominantly residential use being more sympathetic and in-keeping with the village as a rural habitation. One respondent wrote that the site should *“be residential not commercial. Out of character in position it is in”*.
- 4.3 Many expressed concerns about the development of the green belt surrounding Bleadon for example one respondent stated *“I hope there are never any houses built on the green fields”* with another indicated that *“[they] support the keep Britain ‘green’ campaign and in that I mean green fields and countryside not concrete jungles”*. As the subject site, a former quarry, is a brown field site, it is in line with established best practice and principles as well as according with the newly published National Planning Policy Framework in protecting to green belt and developing brown field as well as aligning with Bleadon residents’ views.

- 4.4 The rural surroundings of the village can be seen in the below image, which was taken from the South East of the site.



- 4.5 A small number of residents suggested Bleadon did not have any more housing needs. The number of properties on the market in Bleadon was recorded on the site visit (5 properties recorded) and in some questionnaires. “*We do not need any more housing in Bleadon. There are always plenty of properties up for sale*”. However the small number of comments regarding this market saturation and the five properties on the market recorded on the site visit is still relatively small compared to the size of Bleadon’s population.

- 4.6 A small number of respondents felt very strongly that any new development would put more pressure on the existing infrastructure one resident suggested; *“we need better drainage for total area and much improved electricity service as our present one is constantly interrupted. We have already rejected one housing development on the other side of bridge road. We have no schooling or doctors in the area and only limited shopping facilities”*. Another suggested that infrastructure improvement must be considered with any new development; *“You cannot look at housing in isolation the infrastructure must also be considered”*.
- 4.7 Others were concerned with the aesthetic of the village, suggesting that any development should be in keeping with the “Bleadon village feel”. *“Bespoke housing that fits Bleadon”* was a requirement of one respondent with another suggesting, *“It is important to retain the ‘village character’ of Bleadon to prevent it from becoming just an annex of Weston-Super-Mare”*.
- 4.8 There was also a small number suggesting that Bleadon needed further mixed development to provide amenities, such as small offices, a small convenience store, a post office and a doctors or dentist surgery to both encourage a younger population into the village and enable elderly residents to access basic amenities. For example: *“Village needs to grow significantly to be viable eg post office services, bus service...”* *“sensitive development in the village is required to encourage more families into the area, in turn greater provision such as GP practice and recreation ground/ open space for events would be welcome for example”*.



4.9 During the site visit, the limited amenities available in the village were documented.

The only village amenities available are two small convenience stores, a petrol station and a post office. The petrol station and one of the small shops are pictured below.



4.10 The apparent need for some of the Bleadon residents to downsize was supported from a number of the respondents comments. A respondent stated *“There would appear to the people living on Bleadon Hill and within the village would welcome the opportunity to downsize from their large properties”* with another supporting this statement suggesting there is a *“Need for people to downsize and release capital. A lot of single (widows) people occupying 3 or 4 bed houses”*.

4.11 In contrast there were a small number of respondents indicating a need for *“more starter homes for younger locals”* due to the *“ageing population”* in the village. Another respondent suggested Bleadon *“should be aiming at the young married/ singles with or without families”*.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 From the quantitative and qualitative analysis of completed postal questionnaires received various conclusions can be drawn.
- 5.2 The residents of Bleadon are content with the village and wish to continue to live in the village as long as possible.
- 5.3 There is an ageing population in Bleadon with 39% of those returning the questionnaires being 65 or over. 35% were 45-64 years old, this forecasts a heavily increasing ageing population within the village over the next 2 decades.
- 5.4 A number of the elderly residents seem to find Bleadon increasingly isolated due to poor public transport and the lack of amenities in the village.
- 5.5 The large majority of Bleadon residents, 92% of returned questionnaires, own their home. This indicates an above national average affluence in the village.
- 5.6 Although only 14% of returned questionnaires indicated that they intended to move within the village in the next 5 years, a number of returned questionnaires highlighted the need to attract younger families into the area.
- 5.7 Of those wishing to move, 42% stated the reasons for moving was that their current house was too large.
- 5.8 The specific requirements of those wishing to move included off road parking, access to garden, ground floor accommodation and bicycle storage.
- 5.9 From the site visit the lack of amenities in Bleadon was immediately apparent.
- 5.10 The lack of amenities and increased pressure on existing infrastructure was also a concern of a number of residents.

- 5.11 From the qualitative analysis of the questionnaires a desire for Bleadon to remain a 'rural village' was apparent. There is understandable concern about the design and positioning of a development.
- 5.12 Inevitably the suggestion of a development within the village envelope has caused a split of opinion throughout the village. However there is a balance between those against and those for the proposed development of the Marshalls site, with 51% of the respondents who wrote a comment indicating a conclusive desire for a development in Bleadon and 33% opposing a development in Bleadon
- 5.13 Requirement for lower cost housing within the village to satisfy the requirements for existing (elderly) residents to downsize or for younger people who have grown up in the village to be able to afford to continue to live there when they leave the parental home.
- 5.14 There is a general desire to avoid development on greenfield sites. Clearly the Marshalls site is a brownfield with a long history of industrial use.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 From analysing the responses and with the benefit of the site visit to support the results, it is the conclusion of this report that a mixed use development of residential, retail and commercial be recommended.
- 6.2 In accordance with the consensus of the respondents, the majority of the development should consist of residential properties. A mixture of properties including, smaller bungalows for single people or retired couples to downsize to whilst remaining in Bleadon, as well as larger family housing to attract a younger population into Bleadon, would be suitable.
- 6.3 A development of the Marshalls site should seek to compliment the rural outlook and aesthetics of the village setting.
- 6.4 The inclusion of off-road parking, some ground floor accommodation, garden space and bicycle storage should be considered.
- 6.5 Within the development, a small number of retail and commercial space could be included. This would help to improve the quality of life of the elderly residents by providing access to amenities as well as aiming to create a sustainable economy within Bleadon.
- 6.6 A development of the Marshalls site should consider the increased pressure on the village's infrastructure, in accordance with respondents views.

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## **Appendix 1- Example of Covering Letter and Questionnaire**

The School of Geography

University of Leeds

Leeds

LS2 9JT

Dear Resident,

Please find attached a Housing Needs Survey proforma commissioned by Marshalls plc in connection with its site off Bridge Road, Bleadon.

I am an undergraduate of Leeds University BA Geography Department and I have been commissioned to develop the survey and analyse the results to understand what, if any, the housing needs of the Community of Bleadon are at this time.

I hope that you will participate in this housing needs survey and I look forward to receiving your complete response prior to the 28/02/2012.

Yours Faithfully

Frances Steer

(University of Leeds)

*This survey will be anonymous and I can confirm that no details will be used for any marketing purposes. However if you wish to disclose your name and address on a completed form you will be automatically entered into a draw to win £100 worth of Marks and Spencer Vouchers.*

**Q1. Is this your principal residence?**

☐

Yes

*Go to Qu. 2*

☐

No

*There is no need to complete the questionnaire.*

*Please return using envelope provided*

**Q2. How long have you lived in this home?**

☐

Less than one  
year

☐

1-3 years

☐

Between 3 and 10 years

☐

More than 10  
years

**Q3. How long have you lived in Bleadon?**

☐

Less than one  
year

☐

1-3 years

☐

Between 3 and 10 years

☐

More than 10  
years

**Q4. What type of property is your home?**

☐

Semi-detached

☐

Flat

☐

Terraced House

☐

Detached House

☐

Bungalow

☐

Mobile Home

☐

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5. How many bedrooms does your home have?**

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3



4

5 or more

**Q6. Does your household own or rent this home?**

Owns

(with or without a mortgage)

Rents Privately

Rents from Council or  
Housing  
AssociationRents from employer of,  
or tied with employment of, household  
member**Q7. How many people of each age are there in your household?***please write the numbers in the relevant boxes.*0-9  
years

10-15 years

16-19 years

20-44 years

45-64 years

65-74 year

75 years and over

**Q8. How would you describe this household?**

Single Person

Couple

Family

(one or two adults with children)

Other

**Q9. How many cars does your household own?**

One

Two

Three or more

**Q10. Do any members of your household regularly use the First Bus service, Number 83 Worlebury to Bleadon?**

☐

Yes

☐

No

**Q11. Does your household as a whole, or anyone in your current household, expect to move within Bleadon in the Next 5 years**

☐

Yes

*Please continue to Qu.10*

☐

No, do not expect to need to move

*No Need to continue please return questionnaire by enclosed envelope*

**Q12. When would the household expect to need to move?**

☐

Immediately

☐

Within a year

☐

Between one and three years

☐

Between three and five years

**Q13. Why does your current home not meet the household's needs?**

☐

Too small

☐

Too large

☐

Needs major repairs

☐

Unsuitable for physical needs

☐

Need to live close to employment

☐

Temporary accomodation

☐

Need to live close to family

☐

Other

**Q14. How many bedrooms would you expect to have in your next property?**

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5 or more

**Q15. What type of accommodation would you prefer to move into?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buying on the open market                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Renting from a private landlord |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renting from Council/<br>Housing Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Shared ownership                |

**Q16. What requirements would you specify for your next property?**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ground floor accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Off road parking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other            | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle storage  |

**Q17. Are you on the North Somerset County Council or Housing register or waiting list?**

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

If you would like to provide any further comment on the housing needs of Bleadon please do so in the space provided below.

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If you would like to be entered into the draw to win £100 worth of Marks and Spencers Vouchers, please detail below you name and address.

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