Core Strategy
Development Plan Document

Issues and Options for consultation

South Gloucestershire Council
**Abbreviations**

AONB  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
DPD  Development Plan Document  
DPH  Dwellings Per Hectare  
EiP  Examination in Public  
JLTP  Joint Local Transport Plan  
LDD  Local Development Document  
LDF  Local Development Framework  
LDS  Local Development Scheme  
MW  Megawatt  
PPG  Planning Policy Guidance Note  
PPS  Planning Policy Statement  
RIGS  Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site  
RSS  Regional Spatial Strategy  
SA  Sustainability Appraisal  
SCI  Statement of Community Involvement  
SNCI  Sites of Nature Conservation Interest  
SSSI  Sites of Special Scientific Interest  
SuDS  Sustainable Drainage Systems  
TTWA  Travel to Work Area
1.1 We are preparing new planning documents to replace the South Gloucestershire Local Plan and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. These new documents will guide future planning decisions in the area and together they will form the Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.2 The Core Strategy will be the key document in this portfolio of planning documents. It will be a spatial planning document that will set out the vision for the area based on evidence, community objectives and a detailed spatial strategy for future development in South Gloucestershire to 2026. This will be translated into policies and programmes that will identify the general location of new development, its type and scale, and the resources to deliver it, as well as protecting what is valued about the area.

1.3 The Core Strategy will be produced within the context of the Government’s national planning guidance, which is set out in various Planning Policy Statements. It will also take account of the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS). The RSS indicates the level of housing and employment growth which South Gloucestershire will have to accommodate, as well as the spatial planning policies for the local area.

1.4 As a spatial plan the Core Strategy will not just consider land use, but a comprehensive range of environmental, transport, economic and social issues as well. It will ‘join-up’ with plans and strategies of other organisations and agencies, as well as with ours, so that we are all working in the same direction. In particular, the Core Strategy will be closely integrated with the Sustainable Community Strategy and our Corporate Plan.
1.5 Based on the Core Strategy we will prepare other detailed plans for the area. More information on the range and content of these documents can be found in our Local Development Scheme. This is available to view on our website www.southglos.gov.uk/corestrategy

What is the Issues and Options Document?

1.6 Identifying the key issues and options for South Gloucestershire is the first stage in the production of the Core Strategy. It provides the opportunity to involve stakeholders and local communities in the development of issues and alternative options for meeting the future development needs of the area.

1.7 The role of this document is to set out ideas about the issues and challenges facing South Gloucestershire and to propose ways that the Core Strategy could address them. This includes work to develop ‘visions’ for different areas of South Gloucestershire. The document will also form the basis for more detailed development proposals that come later. A Sustainability Appraisal has been conducted on this document that shows how we have come up with the most sustainable options possible. This is available for comment separately.

1.8 The Issues and Options document has been prepared within the context of some uncertainty over regional planning policy. Although the subject of an Examination in Public in 2007 and a Panel Report, formal Proposed Modifications to the Draft RSS in response to the recommendations of the Panel Report have yet to be published by the Government. The Issues and Options document therefore takes account of the recommendations of the Panel Report, as this is the most recent publication.

How has it been prepared?

1.9 Over the past year we have been working with stakeholders and organisations to identify the key issues facing South Gloucestershire over the next 20 years. This engagement has included a questionnaire to residents about the area where they live, workshops for key organisations and individuals and a series of meetings. Alongside this we have been involved in communicating with residents and a wide range of organisations and individuals about the new planning system and their opportunity to inform and influence the Core Strategy. For further information on how the community can become involved in the Local Development Framework, please see our Statement of Community Involvement (available separately).

However, we do not fully agree with the Panel’s recommendations and some of the options we propose in the Spatial Strategy section reflect this. We will use the consultation responses to the Issues and Options document to help inform our response to the Proposed Modifications.
Introduction

How to use this Issues and Options document

What we would like from you

1.10 The aim of the Issues and Options document is to encourage further responses and to provide an opportunity to put forward any new ones. We would like to know what people think of the issues and options set out in this document. We would also like to know if there is anything we have not addressed that you think is important. To help you respond, questions are set out at various points in the report.

Why you should comment

1.11 The active involvement of local communities is now a key element in all stages of plan preparation – referred to as ‘front-loading’. If ‘front-loading’ is to work correctly, when the Core Strategy is finally submitted there should be general community agreement on the key issues and the way options have been selected. It is appreciated that not everyone may agree with what is being promoted or the reasons why. However, the new process will ensure that everyone has an opportunity to put forward their thoughts, ideas and suggestions in an open and fair way.

How you can comment

1.12 Your comments are invited on this Issues and Options document between Friday 2nd May and Friday 13th June 2008. There are a range of questions set out in the document which we would like your response to.

You may choose whether to answer all or only selected questions. You can make comments and answer questions in several ways:

- By logging onto the Council’s consultation website http://consultations.southglos.gov.uk (please note there is no www. at the start) where the document can be viewed, questions answered and comments made on-line. The document can also be downloaded.

- By post (using the question response booklet) to:

  SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL
  COUNCIL OFFICES (SWB 243)
  CASTLE STREET
  THORNBURY
  BS35 1ZZ

- By email to planningLDF@southglos.gov.uk
2.1 The Vision for the future of South Gloucestershire will provide a picture of how the area will develop over the next 20 years to address the issues which have been identified. In developing this vision it will be necessary to take account of:

- the vision of the South Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy
- the concerns, issues and priorities which come through our engagement and consultation work, and
- the visions for the Regional Spatial Strategy and for the West of England

2.2 It is suggested that the Vision should contain the following elements to guide the preparation of the spatial strategy and policies that will shape the future development of South Gloucestershire over the next 20 years:

- To plan and deliver well-designed, high quality and sustainable new and existing communities
- To enable a choice of housing, including an adequate supply of affordable and supported housing
- Sharing the benefits of economic prosperity
- Improving access to services and facilities
- Tackling congestion, minimising pollution and enhancing travel choice
- Reducing the need to travel and creating more opportunities for walking and cycling
- Protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment
- Applying measures to reduce the impact of climate change
- Achieving higher design standards and energy efficiency in new buildings
- Valuing and maintaining the character and distinctiveness of the different areas of South Gloucestershire and promoting a ‘sense of place’

The Sustainable Community Strategy has a vision of South Gloucestershire which can be summed up as ‘a great place to live and work’

"By working in partnership, our vision is for everyone who lives and works in South Gloucestershire to fulfil their potential, enjoy an excellent quality of life and support others in their communities whilst protecting the environment."

Regional Spatial Strategy vision:

- All communities enjoy the benefits of further development and where housing needs are satisfied
- The economy continues to prosper
- Rural parts of the region fulfil their economic potential with vibrant market towns at their core
- Bristol becomes a major European city
- Growth is supported by necessary infrastructure in step with development
The Vision

Question 1
Please indicate which of the following elements (from para 2.2) you consider the Vision should include:

- To plan and deliver high quality communities
- To enable a choice of housing, including affordable and supported housing
- Sharing economic prosperity
- Improving access to services and facilities
- Tackling congestion and enhancing travel choice
- Reducing the need to travel and creating more opportunities for walking and cycling
- Protection and enhancement of the environment
- Reducing the impact of climate change
- Achieving higher design standards and energy efficiency in new buildings
- Valuing character and distinctiveness and promoting a 'sense of place'

Please indicate any elements that you think we have missed out.

The West of England will have:

- One of Europe’s fastest growing and most prosperous sub regions which has closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities
- A buoyant economy competing internationally
- A rising quality of life for all
- Easier local, national and international travel, reduced congestion and improved strategic connections by road, rail, air and sea
- Cultural attractions that are the envy of competitor city regions across Europe
- Success secured in ways that are energy efficient, protect air quality, minimise and manage waste and protect and enhance the natural and built environment, and
- Built upon the benefits of its distinctive mix of urban and rural areas; real influence with regional and national government, by demonstrating vision and leadership and delivering these achievements.

(NB Visions for individual areas of South Gloucestershire will be developed in the Spatial Strategy section of the Core Strategy)
What you have told us

3.1 In order to help shape the future of South Gloucestershire, we have been seeking the views of the local community and stakeholders on the early identification of those issues we need to take account of in preparing the Core Strategy.

3.2 Workshops held last summer/autumn provided a range of views and concerns, including the following:

- Perceived economic decline in the East Fringe\(^1\) of Bristol resulting from housing redevelopment on employment sites
- More jobs than resident workers in the North Fringe\(^2\) of Bristol
- Changing shopping patterns undermining traditional high streets
- Traffic congestion
- Poor bus services
- Air quality concerns in urban areas
- Community requirements have lagged behind housing and employment development in North Fringe of Bristol
- Lack of community identity and ‘sense of place’ affecting parts of the urban area
- Rural settlements losing facilities

3.3 These workshops also provided views about the issues facing the area over the next 20 years with the level of growth proposed. These included:

- Need for improved and more integrated public transport system
- Urban intensification must not result in ‘town cramming’ and damage to the environment and loss of green spaces
- New communities could be a threat to existing urban communities e.g. increased pressure on services and facilities and additional traffic
- Villages on the urban fringe are in danger of being ‘swallowed up’ by urban extensions
- Need to ensure growth allows new communities to develop
- Need to link new and existing communities
- Increased congestion, light and noise pollution
- Need to provide housing for the elderly and families as well as the young
- Co-locate employment and housing to reduce need to travel
- Opportunity for greater self-containment of market towns and for supporting rural settlements

\(^1\)the East Fringe includes Downend, Emersons Green, Mangotsfield, Staple Hill, Soundwell, Kingswood, Warmley, Cadbury Heath, Oldland Common, Longwell Green and Hanham

\(^2\)the North Fringe consists of the communities of Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford, Harry Stoke and Frenchay
Setting the Scene

4.1 South Gloucestershire covers an area of 497 square kilometres and has a resident population of 252,000.

4.2 The settlement pattern of South Gloucestershire is characterised by urban development within the North and East fringes of Bristol and a large rural area containing the towns of Yate/Chipping Sodbury (population 34,500) and Thornbury (population 12,500) and over 40 villages. 60% of the population live within the urban area, 19% within the 2 towns and 21% within the villages and the rest of the rural area.

4.3 The area has strongly contrasting landscapes, from the internationally important habitats of the Severn Estuary in the west, to the rolling ridges and vales and the Cotswolds AONB to the east. Relics of historic settlements and the area’s industrial past (coal mining and manufacturing) texture the landscape.

4.4 The population structure is very similar to the national average, with 20% aged under 16 years, 65% aged 16 – 64 years and 15% in the 65 years and over age group. The proportion who are in employment is, however, higher than the national average (86% compared to 78%), reflecting the strong economy of the area. The service sector provides the majority of jobs in the area (78%), while the number of jobs in the manufacturing sector is higher than the national average because the aerospace industry is a major employer.

4.5 South Gloucestershire has seen substantial levels of development over the past 30 years (the population has grown by 13% in the last 15 years and by 23% in the last 25), but this development has not been matched by the provision of essential physical and social infrastructure. The heart of this growth is located to the south of the junction of the M4 and M5 Motorways around the intersection of the north/south east/west rail links in the vicinity of Stoke Gifford and Bradley Stoke (the North Fringe).

4.6 These strategic transport links (by way of nearby motorway junctions, Bristol Parkway railway station and the Avon Ring Road) provide for rapid access to many other parts of the UK and beyond and underpin the locational advantages which have attracted significant investment in new employment, retailing and residential development.

4.7 Major employers (which include national companies who have relocated their headquarters to the North Fringe) are the MoD, Orange, Axa Sun Life, Airbus UK, Rolls Royce, Frenchay Hospital and the University of the West of England (UWE). Cribbs Causeway (adjacent to the M5) has seen investment in a regional shopping centre, an associated leisure complex and large retail stores and showrooms.

4.8 While about half of workers who live in the North Fringe of Bristol (Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford, Harry Stoke and Frenchay) work in the North Fringe, this only represents 25% of the total workforce in the area. The remaining 50,000 employees (75% of the workforce) commute in from Bristol, the rest of South Gloucestershire or from elsewhere.

4.9 Substantial growth has also taken place in the East Fringe of Bristol at Longwell Green and Emersons Green and, beyond the Green Belt, at Yate/Chipping Sodbury. The expansion of Bristol exerts a considerable influence over the District and its environment. This expansion is currently contained by the Green Belt and motorways.
4.10 Congestion hot spots are a significant problem. It is estimated that at least £350m is lost to the economy of the West of England area each year due to time spent in congestion. Since 1991 traffic on the roads of South Gloucestershire has increased by 30% (compared to the national average of 21%), but within the North Fringe of Bristol traffic has increased by 50%. More people in South Gloucestershire have access to a car than the national average (87% of households compared to 73%). Improvements have been made to the public transport system in the urban areas, but traffic congestion continues to adversely affect bus journey times and reliability.

*the North Fringe consists of the communities of Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford, Harry Stoke and Frenchay
*the East Fringe includes Downend, Emersons Green, Mangotsfield, Staple Hill, Soundwell, Kingswood, Warmley, Cadbury Heath, Oldland Common, Longwell Green and Hanham

Map 1 South Gloucestershire and Surrounding Area
South Gloucestershire by 2026

Other Plans and Strategies

“Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of the places and how they function.”

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1)

5.1 To be effective, spatial planning needs to create a framework for investment in and regeneration of an area and co-ordinate and help deliver this framework. A role of the Core Strategy, therefore, is to determine what is required locally for economic investment, growth and quality of life and include the mechanisms for delivering this.

5.2 There are policies which limit what we can do locally, both by ruling out certain actions and strategies and by requiring the implementation of certain actions and strategies. These policies are prepared at international level (e.g. EU directives), national level (e.g. planning policy statements) and at regional level through the Regional Spatial Strategy.

5.3 At a more local level, a fundamental part of the planning system is ‘joining-up’ with plans and strategies of other organisations and agencies, as well as with those of South Gloucestershire Council, especially where they relate to the use and development of land. Close integration is vital to ensure that we develop a cohesive approach to delivering our communities’ aspirations and that all our strategies are working in the same overall direction. The Core Strategy will therefore need to take account of those strategies that relate to the West of England and South Gloucestershire.

5.4 The local level plans and strategies which we think are the most relevant to the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy are shown in the following list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West of England</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Vision for the West of England in 2026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Waste Core Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Bristol Joint Local Transport Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bristol Health Services Plan</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Gloucestershire</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Community Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening Communities Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children and Young People Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Accommodation and Care Strategy for Older People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gloucestershire Physical Activity and Sports Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gloucestershire Play Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Organisation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Various visions including town centre visions and Vision for the North Fringe</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Joint Waste Core Strategy

5.5 We, along with Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset and North Somerset Councils, are preparing a Joint Waste Core Strategy. This will sit alongside our Core Strategy and be part of our Local Development Framework. It will set out the vision and strategy for managing waste and the spatial strategy for delivering strategic recovery facilities. The Joint Waste Core Strategy will not just provide the strategy for waste facilities, but will also address waste minimisation and the opportunities for generating heat from waste. There will therefore need to be close integration between the two Core Strategy
Further information on the Joint Waste Core Strategy is available at www.rubbishorresource.co.uk

South Gloucestershire Sustainable Community Strategy

5.6 The Core Strategy is the key strategy for delivering the spatial elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy - South Gloucestershire 2026. This strategy was adopted in January 2008 and replaces the earlier strategy published in 2003.

5.7 The alignment of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the documents of the Local Development Framework will enable an integrated approach towards future development within South Gloucestershire and provide a framework for the delivery of sustainable development at a local level.

Our Future Transport

5.8 A 20 year vision for improving the transport system in the West of England Sub Region has been developed by the West of England Partnership on behalf of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils. The future transport vision aims to:
• Tackle congestion
• Improve road safety for all road users
• Improve air quality
• Improve access to job opportunities
• Help us to get to work and school efficiently
• Strengthen the local economy
• Improve our quality of life

5.9 The vision requires a comprehensive package of measures. It is estimated that to achieve the objectives will cost a total of £2.5 billion. Funding has yet to be established.
Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West

5.10 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West (RSS) will set out the broad development strategy for the region over the next 15-20 years. The Draft RSS was the subject of an Examination in Public in Spring/Summer 2007 and the report from the externally appointed examining panel was published in January 2008 (the EiP Panel Report).

5.11 The Secretary of State will publish changes (Proposed Modifications) to the Draft RSS and in doing so may not accept all the recommendations from the Panel, and also may introduce other changes to the Draft RSS. Until these changes are available we are using the recommendations of the Panel. We do not, however, fully agree with the Panel’s recommendations and will use the consultation responses to this Issues and Options document to help inform our response to the Proposed Modifications.

5.12 Bristol is the largest urban area in the South West and, together with Bath and Weston-super-Mare, is recognised as the economic hub of the region. The RSS strategy for the West of England is to realise this sub-region’s economic potential whilst seeking to achieve a high quality lifestyle for all.

5.13 A sufficient supply of economic development opportunities is therefore a key aim of the RSS, underpinned by the strategic objective of revitalising the economic potential of South Bristol and improving communication links between the M4, South Bristol, the M5 and Weston-super-Mare. This development needs to achieve a better balance between jobs and homes, and create greater opportunities for public transport, walking and cycling in place of car journeys.

Housing growth in South Gloucestershire recommended in the RSS Panel Report

The changes to the RSS will be taken account of in the Preferred Options document. It is anticipated that the Proposed Modifications will be published by the Government in July.

The Panel Report on the Draft RSS identifies a requirement for 106,350 new homes for the West of England and recommends that they should be provided in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Homes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bristol City</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gloucestershire</td>
<td>30,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath &amp; North East Somerset</td>
<td>18,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Somerset</td>
<td>26,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>106,350</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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5.15 The Panel Report identifies three urban extensions, Areas C & D in the Draft RSS and land at Yate/Chipping Sodbury. Area C is land west of the M32 & south of the M4 and Area D is land east of Kingswood. In addition the Panel Report makes specific mention of 2,500 dwellings within the North Fringe of Bristol at Cribbs Causeway and Filton. This represents land east and west of the A4018. These proposals are summarised on Map 2.

5.16 The RSS is also undergoing a partial review to set out the requirement for additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers by 2011. This was the subject of an Examination in Public in March 2008. The review work estimates a need for an additional 58 residential and 25 transit pitches within South Gloucestershire.

Employment and the Economy

5.17 The Draft RSS (endorsed in the Panel Report) identifies a need for at least 92,000 new jobs by 2026 within the Bristol Travel To Work Area (TTWA), but does not say how many of these jobs should be provided in each unitary authority. This TTWA comprises Bristol, most of North Somerset (excluding the Weston-Super-Mare area) and most of South Gloucestershire. A small part of the rural area of South Gloucestershire is included within Bath TTWA.

5.18 Severnside is next to the large Avonmouth industrial area within Bristol City. The Draft RSS makes no reference to either of these areas other than to recognise that coastal defence works are expected to be necessary to enable their economic potential to be realised.

5.19 The RSS Panel Report suggests that a Joint Area Action Plan be undertaken for the Avonmouth/Severnside area between Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council in recognition of the area’s important strategic role and the need for long term planning.

5.20 The RSS also identifies the opportunity for an increase in local services at the Cribbs Causeway retail centre to serve local communities, but not to the scale of a formal town centre.

Bristol and Bath Green Belt

5.21 The Panel Report retains the outer boundary of the approved Green Belt, but amends the inner boundary to remove the areas of search for the urban extensions from the Green Belt. The detailed boundary of the Green Belt is to be established through the Local Development Framework of the appropriate Unitary Authority.

Minerals

5.22 The Draft RSS requires unitary authorities within the West of England to make provision for the extraction of 94.95 million tonnes of crushed rock between 2001 and 2016. This is equivalent to 5.93 million tonnes per annum.

5.23 Gloucestershire may be 8 million tonnes short of its target figure, as a result of not being able to extract sufficient crushed rock from the quarries in the Forest of Dean. To address this potential shortfall, the Draft RSS indicates that, since neighbouring authorities in the West of England (and possibly Somerset) supply similar markets, they should examine whether the shortfall can be met from these areas instead.
5.24 From what you have told us at the workshops referred to in Section 3, from the picture we’ve set out in Section 4 of what South Gloucestershire is like now, and taking account of the RSS strategy for the West of England, we have identified what we consider to be 8 key issues which the Core Strategy will need to address. These are set out in the following paragraphs and are closely aligned with the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

1. Delivering Growth

5.25 A key challenge is to find appropriate locations to accommodate the level of housing and jobs identified in the RSS, in a way which supports sustainable communities and provides mixed development to enable people to make sustainable transport choices, while keeping impacts on the existing natural and built environment to a minimum. Key to achieving successful new communities is ensuring integration with existing communities and facilities, as well as the timely delivery of services and facilities, including education and training, to support the new development.

5.26 The rate of housing development in recent years has been much lower than anticipated, due to delays in bringing forward sites allocated in the Local Plan. To meet the level of housing growth identified in the RSS will require an accelerated rate of construction, together with a commitment to quality design and more affordable home ownership options.

2. Improving Existing Communities

5.27 The rapid rate of development experienced in the North and East Fringes of Bristol has not been matched by supporting services and facilities. Bradley Stoke, in particular, has suffered from the slow development of supporting services and its town centre is still in development.

5.28 The main town centres have tended to become more focused on meeting food and other day-to-day needs with non-food shopping dominated by out of centre facilities. In some cases this is impacting on the viability of the local town centres. The older, traditional urban areas of Staple Hill, Kingswood and Hanham continue to experience changing economic fortunes. As a result they have performed less well than neighbouring areas, experiencing a loss of economic vitality and enterprise caused by employment closures, rationalisation programmes and relocations and changing shopping patterns.

5.29 Given the scale of growth proposed by the RSS, a key challenge will be to secure the successful integration of the new development with existing communities and infrastructure. This growth will also present opportunities for existing communities to benefit, for example through additional services and facilities.

3. Tackling Congestion and Improving Accessibility

5.30 South Gloucestershire has experienced high levels of development over the past 30 years, as a result of its strategic position on the road and rail network. This has led to high rates of traffic growth, increasing congestion, unsustainable commuting patterns and longer journey...
times, particularly in the North Fringe of Bristol. Congestion and longer journey times have created difficulties in delivering a reliable public transport service. Car ownership levels are also high.

4. Continued Economic Prosperity

5.31 South Gloucestershire has a buoyant economy and a number of major national companies have relocated to the area. The aerospace industry although less dominant than in previous decades, is still a major employer. The retention of current major businesses is key to ensuring the continuation of South Gloucestershire’s economic prosperity.

5.32 The concentration of major companies in the North Fringe of Bristol, the number of jobs created and ease of access to the national road network has led to significant in-commuting. Current planning policy seeks to achieve a more balanced mix of development in the North Fringe of Bristol by focusing major new housing development in the area and restraining further growth in jobs. However, long lead-in times in bringing forward the housing development and continued strong employment growth is threatening to undermine this restructuring.

5.33 Within the South West, South Gloucestershire is an important producer of aggregates and specialised bricks. The quarry industry provides a significant number of jobs in the rural area.

5.34 There is currently a gap between the skills required for the types of jobs in South Gloucestershire and the skills of the resident workforce. There is also a disparity in job opportunities across South Gloucestershire. A key challenge will be to provide a more equitable distribution of opportunities and thereby share prosperity between all of the resident workforces.

5. Providing Housing for All

5.35 In the last 20 years the population of South Gloucestershire has grown by around 18%. This same level of growth is projected for the next 20 years, with the number of people over 65 and 85 increasing by 55% and 78% respectively. Housing stock is relatively new with half of all private housing being less than 50 years old. The majority of new housing development in recent years has been concentrated within the Bristol urban area and this will continue as major urban extensions are planned. However, there are pockets of poorer housing stock within this urban area.

5.36 Over the past few years house prices have risen steadily in South Gloucestershire compared to incomes. This has resulted in an affordability gap with people unable to rent or buy homes on the open market. This is a particular issue in rural areas, where there is both a limited supply of affordable housing and where property prices are highest. Contributions to the overall supply of affordable housing has been lower than envisaged due to the slow rate of housing development on major sites in recent years.

6. Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

5.37 A significant proportion of South Gloucestershire’s countryside and estuary is protected by national and international environmental designations and the area also has a good quality built environment. These environmental assets are increasingly under threat from
development pressure. Development is also putting a strain on environmental resources.

5.38 A wide area alongside the River Severn is under threat from tidal inundation, and localised flooding from the rhine (man-made drainage ditches) system. Other areas within South Gloucestershire are also at risk from fluvial flooding.

7. Improving Health and Well-being

5.39 Residents of South Gloucestershire are generally healthier and have a better life expectancy than the national average, reflecting the relative affluence of the area. But there are small pockets of deprivation within the North and East Fringes of Bristol and Yate resulting in lower life expectancy and poorer health. As recognised nationally, there is an upward trend in the incidence of chronic diseases, which have a big impact on quality of life, due in part to the increase in the elderly population and to the increased incidence of child and adult obesity.

5.40 Health and mental well-being is influenced in part by the opportunity for physical activity, including walking and cycling, access to formal and informal community meeting spaces and green spaces, the design and layout of the local environment, fear of crime, as well as by diet.

8. Reducing and Adapting to Climate Change

5.41 Climate change is occurring as a direct result of global warming brought about by the man-made increase in greenhouse gases. Activities in South Gloucestershire contribute slightly higher emissions than the UK average per year and significantly higher than the South West average. This higher average is mainly due to the amount of emissions from transport, industry and commerce in the district. Awareness of environmental issues is increasing and this has led to calls for more sustainable ways of living and more sustainable forms of development.

Question 2

Please indicate which of the following Key Issues you agree with:

- Delivering Growth
- Improving Existing Communities
- Tackling Congestion and Improving Accessibility
- Continued Economic Prosperity
- Providing Housing for All
- Protecting and Enhancing the Environment
- Improving Health and Well-being
- Reducing and Adapting to Climate

Please indicate any issues we have missed out.

5.42 The diagram on the following page shows how these 8 Key Issues of the Core Strategy are closely aligned with the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Diagram 1  Relationship between Key Issues and Priorities

Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities

- Promoting safer and stronger communities
- Being healthier
- Modernising health and community care services
- Investing in children and young people
- Valuing the environment
- Managing future development
- Maintaining economic prosperity

Core Strategy Key Issues

- Improving existing communities
- Tackling congestion and increasing accessibility
- Improving health and well being
- Continued economic prosperity
- Delivering Growth
- Providing housing for all
- Improving health and well being
- Protecting & enhancing the environment
- Providing housing for all
- Continued economic prosperity

Improving health and well being

Tackling congestion and increasing accessibility

Reducing & adapting to climate change

Tackling congestion and increasing accessibility
Key Issue 1: Delivering Growth

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES

- Investing in children and young people
- Valuing the environment
- Managing future development
- Maintaining economic prosperity

Delivering Growth Facts

- Between 1996 – 2007 11,379 dwellings have been built – the equivalent of 948 per annum
- The population of South Gloucestershire has grown by 13% in the last 15 years and by 23% in the last 25
- Between 1996 – 2007, around 162ha of employment land has been developed
- The provision of key infrastructure has not kept pace with development in some areas of the District

6.1 Section 5 of this Issues and Options document sets the scene for this key issue, discussing the requirements of the RSS, and subsequent EiP Panel Report, and the need to ensure that development in South Gloucestershire takes place in the context of sub-regional and local plans and strategies. The EiP Panel Report proposes that South Gloucestershire should accommodate 30,800 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026, and this section discusses a number of the strategic issues arising from this.

6.2 Delivering the proposed level of development in South Gloucestershire requires a coordinated and well-planned approach. This includes ensuring that the four Unitary Authorities comprising the West of England (South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City and North Somerset Councils) continue to work together.

6.3 The Draft RSS and resultant EiP Panel Report both propose that provision should be made for at least 92,000 new jobs across the Bristol travel to work area (TTWA) by 2026. This TTWA covers...
the majority of South Gloucestershire, and provision needs to be made for employment growth that helps sustain the economy in South Gloucestershire, but does not compromise the regeneration objectives of the Vision for the West of England. This is now considered even more important in light of the higher growth required in South Gloucestershire as a result of the Panel Report.

6.4 The current and future transport infrastructure in South Gloucestershire and the wider West of England is a key consideration. Key Issue 3: Tackling Congestion and Improving Accessibility and relevant sections of the Spatial Strategy part of this document discuss the issues in more depth.

6.5 Infrastructure is not just relevant in the context of transport. New development places increased pressure on a range of services and facilities (or ‘infrastructure’), for example children and young people’s facilities, other community facilities, employment and health provision. These pressures need to be understood and appropriate action taken to provide for new needs that arise.

6.6 The South Gloucestershire Local Plan contains a number of allocations that are yet to be developed, the majority of which are within the North and East Fringe of the Bristol urban area. Across the District, these allocations amount to around 7,000 dwellings.
6.7 A Green Belt is a planning designation designed to prevent urban sprawl by protecting open land on the edge of some towns/cities from development. There is a tightly defined Green Belt around the Bristol urban area, the inner boundary of which follows the limits of existing development or development that is already committed. Draft RSS proposals require that this inner boundary is altered to accommodate the future growth in the urban extensions.

6.8 The vast majority of new development is likely to take place in close proximity to established communities. New development has the opportunity to offer existing communities a range of benefits, such as improved public transport provision in certain areas, the creation of new employment opportunities and improvements in the provision of community facilities. Likewise, established communities are able to offer benefits such as existing transport links, establish retail areas and a variety of community activities. In order for new development to be a real success, there is a need to integrate new and existing development and communities to take advantage of these benefits.

What You Told Us

• Green fields and green space are important

• The Green Belt is important, and there is scope to extend it

• The scale of growth must be made clear in the Core Strategy

• Large scale developments need to be of benefit to existing communities as well as the new community

• Small scale development should not be seen in isolation with regard to Section 106 contributions

• Development should not be confined to urban areas

The Issues

6.9 In order to address what you have told us, and the matters arising as a result of our own analysis, the following issues have been identified as appropriate to the Core Strategy:

• The need to be clear about the scale and location of growth

• Timely delivery and integration of development in South Gloucestershire and the West of England Sub-Region

• The role of the Green Belt in continuing to support the long term Core Strategy objectives

• The provision of transport Infrastructure and services

• The provision of other types of infrastructure (for example economic, children and young people’s facilities, other community and social facilities, and health provision)

6.10 These issues have been addressed in more detail and for different areas in South Gloucestershire (North and East Fringes of Bristol, Yate/Chipping Sodbury, Thornbury and rural settlements) in the Spatial Strategy section of this Issues and Options document.
Providing Infrastructure

6.11 The current approach to securing funding for new infrastructure required as a result of new development is through the implementation of Local Plan Policy and the Section 106 process. The Government’s emerging Community Infrastructure Levy proposals, if adopted, will provide a national framework allowing local authorities to introduce a ‘levy’ or ‘tariff’ (i.e. a developer contribution on each new dwelling) on new development to finance new infrastructure provision.

Evidence base (work in progress):
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) - A joint study with 5 other authorities has been commissioned.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- Employment Land Review
- South Gloucestershire Housing Needs Survey by John Herington Associates 2003
- Community Profiles

Local plans and strategies
- Sustainable Community Strategy
- South Gloucestershire Local Plan

Question 3
Do you think a policy that seeks a developer contribution on each new dwelling to ensure the delivery of infrastructure requirements should be established?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If No, please explain

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Key Issue 2: **Improving Existing Communities**

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES**

- Promoting safer and stronger communities
- Maintaining economic prosperity

**Existing Communities Facts**

- Close to 70% of all retail floorspace is outside of town centres
- Less than 50% of frontages in Chipping Sodbury, Downend, Hanham and Staple Hill town centres are shops
- 52,000 commute out of South Gloucestershire to work and 52,500 commute in
- Ratio of jobs to resident workers is 2:1 in the North Fringe of Bristol and 1:2 in the East Fringe of Bristol
- Around 650 new affordable dwellings have been delivered through the planning system in South Gloucestershire since 1996

7.1 Many of the communities within South Gloucestershire are well established and have varying levels of local services and facilities. While this Core Strategy will have a more significant impact on the communities to be created in the areas of major new development, it can still have an influence on the viability and vitality of existing communities.

7.2 There are imbalances between jobs and economically active residents in many of the communities in South Gloucestershire. Creating a better balance would provide the opportunity for people to both live and work in the same area. This is one potential way to reduce the congestion problems faced in certain areas of the District. In some areas the imbalance causes out-commuting, whilst in other areas in-commuting occurs due to a greater level of jobs than economically active residents.
7.3 In many areas the availability of affordable housing does not meet identified needs. This inevitably alters the social mix of communities, as many cannot afford to live in areas where they have grown up and/or wish to reside.

7.4 Vital and viable town/local/village centres are a key element of successful and sustainable communities. To meet the needs of local communities requires a network of centres that are accessible by public transport, cycling, walking and car. Some centres are showing signs of decline as a result of changes in the way people shop and because of increasing competition from out of town retail parks.

7.5 Both the amount and quality of the open space, sport and recreation facilities in South Gloucestershire varies significantly across the district. These green spaces are not only essential to the health and well being of communities, but provide tree shade to enable urban areas to adapt to climate change through cooling down. Ensuring sufficient provision and access to green spaces should be an objective of the Core Strategy.

7.6 The pace of housing development over the past 10-20 years has not always been matched by the provision of necessary infrastructure or the provision of homes that are genuinely affordable. Some areas are lacking sufficient retail, health and community facilities. The public transport network is also not serving communities. There is a need not only for an improved service, but for walking and cycling to be better integrated into existing community areas.

7.7 There are a few neighbourhoods in Cadbury Heath, Filton, Kingswood, Patchway and Staple Hill that have been identified as priority neighbourhoods of relative disadvantage (from the English indices of deprivation 2004). There are also 6 neighbourhoods that rank in the most deprived 20% areas in England in terms of education, skills and training and a further 19 neighbourhoods that appear in the 20% most deprived areas in the South West.

7.8 The linking and integration of new and existing communities (as discussed under Key Issue 1) is a key consideration here. The benefits of integration, some of which are identified in paragraph 6.8, are too important to be missed.

What You Told Us

- The Core Strategy should look at existing communities and identify opportunities for change and improvement.

- It’s unrealistic to seek re-balancing. The issue of commuting to work will not be addressed by co-locating housing and employment – this is too simplistic an approach

- Greater effort is needed to make the public transport system work

- The Council needs powers to influence developers as to ‘what’ is actually built

- The problem of declining town centres needs to be tackled. Maybe the Core Strategy should just accept that people will drive to shops and supermarkets

- The retail hierarchy is working in many areas. But non-food shopping is a challenging issue due to out of centre retail parks
Gloucester Road, Bristol is considered to be a good example of a shopping centre that works with many small shops and public transport to other destinations.

A mix of uses horizontally and vertically is considered to be a key factor in centres.

### The Issues

#### 7.9
In order to address what you have told us, and the matters arising as a result of our own analysis, the following issues have been identified as appropriate to the Core Strategy:

- The need for existing town centres to adapt their function to reflect changing shopping patterns and improve their attractiveness
- The need to adapt existing communities so that people have the opportunity to work near to where they live
- The need to achieve a wide choice of high quality homes, both affordable, low cost and market housing, to address the requirements of the whole community
- Redressing deficits in the provision of infrastructure (e.g. public transport and transport networks, retail facilities, health and community facilities and open space provision)

#### 7.10
These issues have been addressed in more detail and for each of the different areas in South Gloucestershire (North and East Fringes of Bristol, Yate/Chipping Sodbury, Thornbury and rural settlements) in the Spatial Strategy section of this Issues and Options document.
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES

• Promoting safer and stronger communities
• Being healthier
• Managing future development

Travel Facts

• Monitoring has shown that the North Fringe of Bristol has experienced traffic growth of 52% between 1991-2006. Since 2001, this has been 30% greater than the national average

• It is estimated that at least £350m is lost to the economy in the West of England area each year due to time spent in congestion and this is expected to rise to almost £600m by 2016 (JLTP)

• 10,000 people travel from the North Fringe of Bristol into central Bristol for work every day. 18,000 people travel in the opposite direction (Census 2001)

• 18,000 people travel from the East Fringe of Bristol into central Bristol every day for work, but only 5,000 travel in the opposite direction (Census 2001)

• 87% of the population of South Gloucestershire have access to a private car. This is above the national average of 73%

• A Council survey (‘Snap Shot Survey’ March 2007) showed that 66% of people employed by major employers in the District travel to work alone by car

8.1 A safe, efficient, reliable and integrated transport system is essential to our quality of life. Recognising the important interrelationship between transport and land use is crucial to securing long-term sustainability goals.

8.2 It is important to the economic, social and environmental well being of South Gloucestershire and the wider West of England to tackle congestion. This can be done by promoting alternatives to single car occupancy, managing demand for travel and influencing travel behaviour. Improving accessibility is about enabling easier access to key services (for example employment, education, health) for all.

8.3 In terms of delivering new development, transport and accessibility issues are not confined to the administrative area of South Gloucestershire. The four Unitary Authorities in the West of England have now adopted a strategic approach to planning and delivering transport improvements that suit the complex nature of the trips across the West of England sub-region. The Final Joint Local
Transport Plan (JLTP) covering the period 2006-2011 sets out this approach and a vision for the next 20 – 30 years. The vision is also set out in ‘Our Future Transport’ described in paras 5.8 and 5.9 of this document.

8.4 Across the West of England there are four shared priorities. These are tackling congestion; improving accessibility; road safety and air quality. In South Gloucestershire particular problems include:

- Congestion and its cost to the local economy. In particular, congestion hot spots such as the North Fringe of Bristol
- The need to ensure there is good accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking to key employment areas as well as facilities and services
- Public transport is adversely affected by congestion in urban areas which increases journey times and can make them unreliable
- In rural areas it is the lack of infrequency of public transport provision that limits access to services, facilities and employment and creates a reliance on the private car

What You Told us

- Need for integrated bus system with both radial and orbital routes
- Need for safe segregated provision for cyclists on road and, where sufficient room available, shared space on pavements (this will require the control of car parking on pavements)
- Need for better coordination of public transport services to enable integration
- The image of public transport, cycling and walking should be improved
- S106 Agreements should ensure that public transport/cycling/walking provision and funding should be required/provided before house building commences
- Freight parks/distribution centres with train access needed, to remove freight from the roads
- There is a need for more Park and Ride facilities in South Gloucestershire, serving Bristol
- New infrastructure is required to deliver the RSS growth levels – particularly in areas of search C and D

The Issues

8.5 In order to address what you have told us and the matters arising as a result of our own analysis, the following issues have been identified as appropriate to the Core Strategy:

- The need to tackle congestion and improve accessibility by providing options for people to make more sustainable journeys
- The need to make provision for new transport infrastructure through new development, and doing this at the right time

Potential options to address these two key issues follow.
Tackling Congestion and Improving Accessibility

8.6 The Joint Local Transport Plan and the Vision for the West of England consider tackling congestion and improving accessibility as important issues to be addressed in this area. Providing a step change in public transport provision and promoting alternatives to single occupancy car journeys are ways of tackling these issues.

8.7 Early stakeholder engagement suggests that reasons for not using the bus to get to work include the time it takes, the lack of direct services and the timing of bus services. This same engagement also suggests that very few residents actually use the bus for work. In those areas where bus use is higher, fewer of the residents have access to a private car.

8.8 Through new development, opportunities to reduce car use and promote alternatives to the private car must be taken advantage of. Mixed-use development is often cited as one solution to reducing the use of the car, providing people with the opportunity to live and work in close proximity. Providing public transport, walking and cycling services and facilities that make alternatives to the private car a real option and applying standards to parking provision are also measures aimed at reducing single occupancy car journeys.

8.9 The Joint Local Transport Plan outlines a number of solutions aimed at tackling congestion and improving accessibility. The extensive consultation that was undertaken for that process and forthcoming consultation on emerging Major Scheme Bids for Government funding will help to inform the Core Strategy Preferred Options document.

Making Timely Provision for Transport Infrastructure

8.10 Ensuring the timely implementation of transport infrastructure improvements and additions (such as public transport, cycling and walking facilities) to serve new developments is important in achieving communities where there are realistic and comparable alternatives to the car.

8.11 New development inevitably increases the use of the transport network in South Gloucestershire, and increases the demand for improvements and additions to this network. Ideally, new transport infrastructure to support growth should be delivered alongside such development, but funding is not always available. In such instances, both existing and new residents can be negatively affected. The challenge here is to find a means of delivering sufficient infrastructure and new housing in a way which avoids such impacts.

8.12 The RSS Implementation Plan discusses a variety of potential funding sources to aid in the delivery of new development, including regional funding allocations, the regional infrastructure fund concept and Section 106 contributions.

8.13 The current approach to making provision for transport infrastructure through new development is primarily spelt out in the Local Plan. The approach is effectively two fold:

• Seeking developer contributions towards public transport, pedestrian and cycle links and other necessary transport improvements which relate to proposed new development
• In the North Fringe of Bristol specifically, a range of transport improvements needed to support new development are identified, and policy is aimed at ensuring such improvements are delivered, through developer contributions for example.

8.14 The Government’s emerging Community Infrastructure Levy proposals provide the opportunity for this situation to be reconsidered, and a question about the principle of a developer contribution on each new dwelling is presented in Key Issue 1.

8.15 Many of the transport issues of relevance to the Core Strategy relate to the location of new development. These issues are addressed in the Spatial Strategy part of this document.

Evidence base (work in progress):
- South Gloucestershire Transport; Annual Progress Report, July 2005

Local Plans and Strategies
- Joint Local Transport Plan 2006/07- 2010/11
- Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (2006)
- Our Future Transport
Key Issue 4: **Continued Economic Prosperity**

### SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES

- Investing in children and young people
- Maintaining economic prosperity

#### Economic Facts

- Since 1991, 30,000 new jobs have been provided in South Gloucestershire

- In the East Fringe of Bristol there are fewer jobs than economically active residents

- South Gloucestershire unemployment rate = 1% at April 2007, but there are unemployment rates of 2.7% + in several wards, including Staple Hill and Kings Chase

- One Regional Shopping Centre at The Mall, Cribbs Causeway and 11 town centres - Kingswood, Yate, Thornbury, Staple Hill, Chipping Sodbury, Hanham, Downend, Filton, Patchway, Emersons Green and Bradley Stoke

- Retail floorspace within South Gloucestershire is split between town centres and non-town centre locations
  
  Town centres & edge of centres = 28%
  Retail parks & freestanding stores = 48%
  The Mall Regional Shopping Centre = 24%

- 5 quarries in South Gloucestershire produce 2.5 – 3 million tonnes of crushed rock each year

#### 9.1 Since 1991, South Gloucestershire has been one of the fastest growing areas in the UK in terms of residential and commercial development. The majority of new economic development has taken place in the North Fringe of Bristol, for example, new Business Parks at Aztec West, Almondsbury Park and south of Bristol Parkway Station. Around 3-5,000 new ‘knowledge’ associated jobs will be provided in a new Science Park at Emersons Green.

#### 9.2 The area has a well-established manufacturing sector, which is characterised by the civil and defence aerospace and aircraft industry. This sector has been in decline for a number of years. Major new employers, such as Orange, the MoD Procurement Executive and Naval Support Command, and the Royal Mail together with significant development and employment at Cribbs Causeway continue to support economic prosperity. The University of the West of England is helping to develop a range of relevant skills to support continued economic prosperity in the area, and is a major employer in its own right.

#### 9.3 As discussed in the Sustainable Community Strategy, a number of centres in South Gloucestershire, particularly Patchway, Downend, Staple Hill, Kingswood and Hanham, are facing challenges from changing shopping patterns and new centres and retail parks. A loss of traditional employment sites to other uses has also been experienced. It is important that these centres continue to serve the economic and social needs of these communities. The Spatial Section of this Core Strategy Issues and Options document discusses this issue in more detail.
9.4 The Draft RSS suggests that the West of England is the economic hub of the region. It does not give specific amounts of anticipated new jobs for South Gloucestershire in the plan period, but does give a figure of ‘at least 92,000 jobs’ for the Bristol Travel to Work Area. The RSS makes it clear that, in this area, ‘housing provision needs to be in step with economic growth, and of sufficient scale to ensure a better balance between jobs and homes, creating greater opportunities for journeys to work by public transport, walking and cycling’. Map 4 show travel to work flows into and out of South Gloucestershire. A similar number of people (approx 52,000) travel out as travel in to South Gloucestershire.

What You Told Us

• There is a need for a better balance of jobs across the area
• Local job opportunities/employment sites need to be retained
• Identify and focus attention on places of deprivation in urban and rural areas
• Need effective public transport links between residential and employment areas
• Improve transport into areas with best prospects of employment growth e.g. North Fringe of Bristol
• There is a need to strike a balance between mineral activity and its impact
• There is a problem of declining town centres, and
• Retail hierarchy is working in many areas but the issue of comparison shopping is more challenging

The Issues

9.5 In order to address what you have told us, and the matters arising as a result of our own analysis, the following issues have been identified as appropriate to the Core Strategy:

• Safeguarding Employment Land
• To meet the employment land and premises requirements of indigenous businesses and key sector businesses
• Sharing economic prosperity with all communities in South Gloucestershire
• How to achieve the long term economic potential of Severnside

• Creating/sustaining successful town centres

• The need to ensure a supply of minerals

Delivering new employment is addressed under Key Issue 1: Delivering Growth. Severnside is addressed in the Spatial Strategy part of this document.

**Safeguarding Employment Land and sharing economic prosperity**

9.6 The South Gloucestershire Local Plan seeks to safeguard both existing and proposed employment sites by allocating them as ‘Safeguarded Employment Areas’. Reasons for safeguarding land include:

• Ensuring a sufficient supply of employment land

• Ensuring well located employment sites remain in employment use

• Providing people with the opportunity to work near to where they live by keeping long established employment areas in particular

• Providing a broad range of employment uses

• Promotion of mixed use development

‘Employment’ land is effectively land used for jobs, and refers to land in a variety of different employment uses.

9.7 Certain types of employment land are under pressure for redevelopment. Demand for new office and residential land and development is high in South Gloucestershire, and non-office employment types are under continual pressure to relocate or are being displaced. This problem varies in different areas of the District, both urban and rural. This is a particular issue in Priority Neighbourhoods and other areas experiencing deprivation, where the opportunity to share in the economic prosperity of South Gloucestershire needs to be made available.

9.8 Without the necessary protection, the choice and availability of land for employment uses is likely to diminish, removing opportunities for continued and/or new investment in the local economy and workforce. However, safeguarding employment land which does not come into use can lead to the potential for vandalism and dereliction.
Meeting the needs of existing and key sector businesses

9.9 South Gloucestershire has an exceptionally high employment rate of 87% of the working age population (compared with 78% nationally). Reasons for such a high level of employment include the key business sectors (such as aerospace, engineering, other manufacturing sectors, defence, environmental technologies, high technology, financial services and creative industries, and the rural economy) and new business start ups. In order to sustain the economic vibrancy of South Gloucestershire and the provision of local jobs, both existing and new employers need to be supported.

Retail and Town Centres

9.10 There is much cross boundary trade between South Gloucestershire and neighbouring areas. Residents of neighbouring authorities use centres close to the border with Bristol, The Mall Regional Shopping Centre at Cribbs Causeway and our retail parks. Similarly, the District has competition from the centres of Bristol and Bath. Extensive redevelopment in the Broadmead area of central Bristol is currently taking place to create Cabot Circus. How this will impact on centres in South Gloucestershire will need to be assessed.

9.11 In addition to The Mall Regional Shopping Centre, there are 11 town centres within South Gloucestershire as follows:

**Major Town Centres**
1. Emersons Green
2. Kingswood
3. Staple Hill
4. Thornbury
5. Yate
6. Bradley Stoke

**Minor Town Centres**
7. Chipping Sodbury
8. Downend
9. Hanham
10. Filton
11. Patchway

9.12 All but Patchway are identified in the Local Plan. Patchway centre will be extended to accommodate additional services and facilities to support the new development at Filton Northfield and is therefore included as a minor town centre in recognition of this.

9.13 Government policy is aimed at protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres through, in part,
focusing new retail and other town centre development in these centres in preference to elsewhere.

9.14 Over the past two decades the role of the town centres in South Gloucestershire has become more focused on meeting day-to-day convenience\(^5\) needs, and comparison\(^6\) shopping has become dominated by out of centre facilities. In certain areas, principally within the Bristol urban area, competition from out of centre investment is impacting on the viability of the town centres.

9.15 In response to changing shopping patterns, some town centres have developed an evening economy. This is reflected in the increasing proportion of shops in non-retail use (e.g. cafes, food take-away outlets and similar). The retail profile in centres has also changed with a trend towards more lower value retail units (e.g. discount and charity shops).

9.16 Comparison floorspace is predominantly in out of centre retail parks. These are at Cribbs Causeway, Filton and Longwell Green. With increasing pressure for further floorspace, including convenience, and for a greater variety of goods to be sold, the traditional role of these retail parks has been changing over recent years. We will be commissioning a retail study this year that will look at the future role of these retail parks and whether present growth can or should be limited.

\(^5\)Convenience retailing is the provision of everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.

\(^6\)Comparison retailing is the provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

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**Question 5**

Should the major and minor town centres outlined below remain in their respective category or be removed? (Town centres are the first choice for retail development, so investment will go to these centres in preference to anywhere else)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Town Centres</th>
<th>Remain</th>
<th>Remove</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Emersons Green</td>
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<td>2. Kingswood</td>
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<td>3. Staple Hill</td>
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<td>4. Thornbury</td>
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<td>5. Yate</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Bradley Stoke</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minor Town Centres</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Chipping Sodbury</td>
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<td>8. Downend</td>
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<td>9. Hanham</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Filton</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Patchway</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you have suggested the removal of any centre, please explain why:

If you think any of the centres above need to be moved from ‘Major’ to ‘Minor’ (or vice-versa), please specify which centres and why:

If you think any potential town centres are missing from the list, please specify which centres and why:
9.17 Within South Gloucestershire, crushed rock production in recent years has been in the order of 2.5 – 3 million tonnes a year from the five active quarry units in the district - Chipping Sodbury, Tytherington, Wickwar, Wick and Cromhall Quartzite.

9.18 Ibstock’s Cattybrook Brickworks near Almondsbury produces about 50 million bricks a year. The clay for this brickworks comes from the adjacent claypit, the satellite claypit at Shortwood, and from selected imported clays.

9.19 In terms of providing sufficient aggregates to meet economic need, the Government has forecast overall future requirements for crushed rock and apportioned this between the various regions according to the nature and extent of crushed rock within each region. These regional guideline figures have been apportioned to sub-regional levels and incorporated in Regional Spatial Strategies.

9.20 The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy requires the West of England to make provision for 5.93 million tonnes of crushed rock a year. It also requires mineral planning authorities to maintain a crushed rock landbank (a stock of aggregate reserves with planning permission) of at least seven years in the period to 2016 (i.e. to 2023) and recognises that their ability to meet RSS targets will be tested against environmental factors as development plan documents are brought forward. In the West of England, crushed rock extraction only occurs in South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. The current extraction split between these areas is South Gloucestershire 60% and North Somerset 40%. Recent production rates have been in line with this split.

9.21 South Gloucestershire has a significant landbank, as well as further resources in Preferred Areas identified in the South Gloucestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, to enable production from existing quarries to continue for many years. An initial assessment suggests that, if the current extraction split is similar to now, future requirements can also be met without the need to identify any more land.

9.22 The Draft RSS identifies a potential shortfall of 8 million tonnes of crushed rock from quarries in the Forest of Dean, which would mean that Gloucestershire would be unable to meet its forecast apportionment. This is due to limited reserves remaining at these quarries.
and significant environmental impacts if further working were to be allowed. The RSS suggests that quarries in the West of England and Somerset may be able to cover this shortfall.

9.23 Gloucestershire County Council consulted on Preferred Options for their Minerals Core Strategy in early 2008. Their current assessment is that the potential shortfall to 2026 is only 3 million tonnes, rather than 8 million tonnes. Two of the three Options put forward for consultation involve this shortfall being met within Gloucestershire but outside of the Forest of Dean. Only one option looks for the shortfall to be met from quarries outside of Gloucestershire.

9.24 Provided that there are no unforeseen difficulties in working the crushed rock permitted reserves and the Preferred Areas, the 3 million tonnes shortfall could be provided from South Gloucestershire quarries without the need for further land to be released. There is of course no certainty that the quarry companies would choose to serve the markets that presently use the Forest of Dean rock with a South Gloucestershire alternative, but the areas are close enough geographically that this could be feasible.

Evidence base (work in progress)
- Annual Employment and Non-Residential Land Availability Survey
- Employment Land Study
- Town Centres and Retailing in South Gloucestershire
- Shopping parades and single shops survey, SGC
- Retail study for South Gloucestershire (to be commissioned)
- Annual Reports by the South West Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP)
- Aggregate Monitoring Surveys (AM2001 and AM2005)
- Technical and Strategic Assessment of Aggregate Supply Options in the South West Region
- Information from individual mineral operators (may be subject to commercial confidentiality)

Local plans and strategies
- South Gloucestershire Local Plan
- South Gloucestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan
- Sustainable Community Strategy

Question 7
How much, if any, of the potential 3 million tonnes shortfall from the Forest of Dean quarries should South Gloucestershire make provision for? (please specify and explain)
Key Issue 5: Providing Housing for All

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES

- Promoting safer and stronger communities
- Modernising health and community care services
- Managing future development

Housing Facts

- Around 104,600 dwellings in South Gloucestershire, of which approx 10% are affordable housing managed by Housing Associations

- The housing stock in South Gloucestershire is relatively new - over 50% of the private stock has been built since 1964

- South Gloucestershire has the second highest proportion of households in owner occupation in the South West

- Housing completions the last five years have averaged 550 - 690 dwellings per year

- About 4.1 years of deliverable housing land as at December 2007, compared to requirement to have 5 years of land supply available

- South Gloucestershire target to negotiate 1/3rd affordable homes on sites over a threshold size of 15 dwellings (0.5 hectares) in urban areas, and 5 dwellings (0.2 hectares) in rural areas. Around 650 have been delivered through the planning system since 1996

- Net housing densities on large sites in South Gloucestershire increased to an average of 46 dph (dwellings per hectare) in 2006/07

- Housing provision on previously developed brownfield sites totals 400-500 dwellings per year

- Forecast 55% increase in next 20 years in over 65 year age group

10.1 The key to delivering sustainable housing development is to provide everyone with the opportunity of living in a decent home which they can afford in a community where they want to live. The challenge facing South Gloucestershire is how to respond to demands to accelerate the supply of housing while also planning for a wide choice of high quality homes that will meet the needs of the community, including those who cannot afford market housing, and in particular those who are vulnerable or in need.
10.2 Housing is one of the biggest users of development land and the planning system is tasked with delivering an adequate supply of housing that is well designed, provides a mix of housing to accommodate a wide variety of households and is at a price which is genuinely affordable. This requires a flexible land supply to ensure a sufficient quantity of housing, and locations which have good access to jobs, services and infrastructure and offer a range of community facilities.

What you told us

- Need for more ‘starter’/affordable homes across the district
- Need to meet housing needs of the elderly
- Smaller homes needed in rural areas and the North Fringe of Bristol
- Housing density should not be applied without reference to other factors
- Concern about urban intensification and loss of green space, employment & other facilities to housing development

The Issues

10.3 In order to address what you have told us and the issues and concerns that have been identified, the Core Strategy will cover the following:

- The achievement of an adequate supply of housing and housing land
- Work with others to improve the amount and type of housing that is genuinely affordable for those who need it
- Achieving an appropriate mix of both affordable and market housing across a variety of tenures
- Appropriate housing densities
- Achieving high quality housing which can be adapted to meet people’s changing needs

10.4 At the heart of this issue is the provision of an adequate supply of housing land, which is well located, to meet future housing needs and demands. The RSS Panel Report dwelling target for South Gloucestershire requires significant increases in the rate of housing construction across the district. This overarching issue is discussed in a number of places in this Core Strategy, including Key Issue 1: Delivering Growth and the Spatial Strategy sections.

10.5 A range of new housing types will also be needed in South Gloucestershire. The objective is to create sustainable, inclusive communities across the district. A key focus will be to ensure a variety of general family housing is provided. However, the specific needs of particular groups will also need to be recognised and planned for. This will include providing extra care housing for older people that will promote independence, flexibility and choice, housing for single people, accommodation for students in further and higher education and sites for travelling showmen. Gypsies and Travellers are a specific group for which the Local Authority has a statutory obligation to provide suitable site provision and ensure suitable housing is available. Their needs are being addressed in a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document which is currently in preparation. Housing design is addressed in Key Issue 6: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment.
Key Issue 5: Providing Housing for All

Affordable Housing

10.6 Affordable housing includes social rented housing and intermediate housing, an example of which is the ‘Homebuy’ product. Affordable housing is provided to specified eligible households who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market. Affordable housing is vital in creating sustainable communities, enabling people to remain in areas where they have grown up, work and are part of the community.

10.7 A South Gloucestershire Housing Needs Survey undertaken in 2003, and validated in 2006, identified that the level of supply of affordable housing is substantially below the level of need, and that the level of unmet need ranged from 768-1,061 dwellings per annum. Around one third of this need resulted from existing unmet need, and the remainder from new households and in-migrants to the area unable to buy. The need is distributed throughout the district and not simply confined to the larger urban areas, being particularly acute in rural areas.

10.8 Housing need in South Gloucestershire far surpasses supply and therefore we seek to provide as much affordable housing as possible. We currently seek 33.3% affordable housing on all new residential developments over a threshold size of 15 dwellings (0.5 hectares) in urban areas, and 5 dwellings (0.2 hectares) in rural areas. This target is based on delivering the maximum affordable housing if no public subsidy is available.

10.9 The Panel Report on the Regional Spatial Strategy proposes that at least 35% of all housing developments should be affordable, with authorities specifying rates of 60% or more in areas of greatest need.

10.10 The main way to deliver affordable housing through the planning system is by negotiated provision with landowners and developers. Policy establishing the amount of affordable housing to be sought is based on a number of considerations, including the scale of housing need and the economic viability of sites, and the likely profile of households requiring market housing.

10.11 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is being undertaken for the West of England Housing Market Area with surrounding local authorities to update the current position in respect of housing need and demand. The findings of this study will inform the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy, particularly regarding the scale of affordable housing needed.

Question 8
What should be the percentage of affordable housing sought on new developments, if the evidence base supports it? The minimum figure recommended in the RSS Panel Report is 35%

- Higher than 35% (specify new percentage)
- Use Panel Report percentage of 35%
- Lower than 35% (specify new percentage)
10.12 As well as the overall amount of affordable housing, it is also important that the right tenure of affordable housing is provided, i.e. the split between social rented housing and intermediate affordable housing which best enables overall needs to be met. The John Herington Needs Survey identified a tenure split of 77% social rent and 23% intermediate affordable housing. This figure will be reviewed following the findings of the SHMA Study and consideration will be given to setting down formal policy targets for the split between social rented housing and intermediate affordable housing in the Core Strategy.

The Mix and Type of Housing

10.13 The creation of inclusive mixed communities is one of the key Government planning objectives in terms of housing. The mix and type of housing provision will be an important element in securing this objective. A variety of housing consisting of a mix of tenures, size, type and price, covering affordable and open market housing, will therefore be essential in meeting this objective. Particular attention will also need to be paid to the special requirements of specific groups in particular families with children and older people.

10.14 Developers will be encouraged to bring forward housing that reflects the range of households requiring market housing, whilst the SHMA will provide guidance on the size and type of affordable housing needed in the area and the likely profile of households requiring market housing.

10.15 On major strategic sites there will be an opportunity to secure a full mix of housing and to ensure that density policies allow adequate family sized homes with private gardens and informal open space. There will also be opportunities to provide specialist housing such as gypsy and traveller sites, travelling showman’s sites and sheltered/extra care housing and ensure that they are effectively integrated as part of mixed and balanced communities.

10.16 On smaller sites new housing developments need to contribute to the wider housing mix in the area. This will be particularly pertinent in and around town centres where many new developments have tended to consist of one and two bedroom flats and where there may be a shortage of family housing.
Key Issue 5: Providing Housing for All

**Efficient Use of Land and Housing Densities**

10.17 National policies state that the priority for development should be previously developed (brownfield) land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. However, this priority has to operate within a wider land supply framework which identifies sites for development and looks at the deliverability of housing and most importantly its location.

10.18 The Core Strategy will need to set a target for housing development to be achieved on previously developed land, supported by strategies for bringing such land into use, and showing how this is to be achieved. The Regional Spatial Strategy will set a regional target of at least 50% of new development on previously developed land, including the conversion of existing buildings. This is the same as the current target set in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan. The equivalent national annual target, however, is at least 60%. Since 1996, 47% of new dwellings in South Gloucestershire have been on previously developed land.

10.19 A large amount of the brownfield housing development which has taken place in South Gloucestershire over the past 10 years has been in urban areas and has involved the redevelopment of employment sites, petrol stations, car showrooms and existing older housing areas, as well as the development of gardens and the subdivision of houses into flats. Much of this development was on ‘windfall’ sites, which are sites which have become available unexpectedly rather than having been allocated for development in a local plan.

10.20 Concern has also been raised about the continuing intensification and conversion of existing dwellings, particularly in some residential areas, due to the impact this has had on character and amenity. The different options for addressing this is set out in the Spatial Strategy sections of this document relating to the North and East Fringes of Bristol.

10.21 The continued availability of suitable brownfield land is a key factor in the contribution that such land can make to housing supply. But, it is essential that the drive for housing on previously developed land does not compromise the vitality of the urban areas through over congested streets, diminishing open spaces and the loss of employment sites, services and facilities.

10.22 National policy requires that land, whether previously developed or greenfield, is used efficiently. The density at which housing can be built depends on such things as a site’s location, the proximity of services and public transport, the characteristics of the local area, and the need to achieve a mix of housing. Recent guidance sets out a national indicative minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) but local authorities are allowed to set out a range of net housing densities across their area to reflect local characteristics. The Panel Report on the Draft RSS proposes that local authorities aspire to an average net density of 40 dph, and achieve average net densities within the Bristol urban area of 40-50 dph (and higher within the most accessible locations), and a minimum of 40-50 dph in the planned urban extensions.

10.23 The RSS densities are higher than current policies in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan which expect a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) with higher densities of upwards of 50 dph around town centres and in locations well served by public transport.
10.24 The South Gloucestershire Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document, adopted in August 2007, suggests the following net density targets:

- Up to 50-75 dph within 400 metres of town centres
- Up to 40-60 dph within 800 metres of town centres
- Up to 30-50 dph within 400 metres of local centres
- Up to 30-40 dph over 400 metres/800 metres from a centre which may have potential to be developed

Visual examples of what different housing densities in South Gloucestershire look like are set out in the Appendix.

10.25 Over the past 3 years in South Gloucestershire housing densities have increased such that 97% of new dwellings have achieved a minimum density of 30dph and 67% are above the 50 dph density.

Question 11
What is the most appropriate approach to housing density and the development of brownfield land?

☐ Try to minimise the amount of greenfield land developed by promoting high densities and high brownfield targets. This will lead to pressure for developing non-housing sites and open spaces in urban areas; or

☐ Take a more flexible approach to density and brownfield targets to reflect the location, character of the area, mix of housing required and need to provide green spaces. This will lead to pressure for the release of greenfield and/or Green Belt land around the edge of urban areas.

Question 12
Should the Core Strategy include a policy which restricts intensification of housing on residential plots (e.g. converting houses into flats, and building in gardens) where this would have an adverse impact on the character and amenity of an area?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Evidence base (work in progress):
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)- A joint study with 5 other authorities has been commissioned.
- South Gloucestershire Housing Needs Survey by John Herington Associates 2003
- Residential Land Availability Survey
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- Urban Housing Capacity Study

Local plans & strategies
- South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2006
- Housing Strategy 2004-2009 (being updated)
- Sustainable Community Strategy
Key Issue 6: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities

- Valuing the environment
- Managing future development

Environment Facts

- 11,800 ha of South Gloucestershire is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- The Severn Estuary is a Special Protection Area, RAMSAR site and candidate Special Area of Conservation
- 22 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- 7 Local Nature Reserves, 268 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCOs) and 52 Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS)
- 31 Conservation Areas, 33 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 7 Historic Parks and Gardens, part of 1 Historic Battlefield, over 2,000 listed buildings and 1,100 locally listed buildings
- Over 80sq.km/32sq.miles has a high probability of flooding (defined as Flood Zone 3 in PPS 25)

11.1 South Gloucestershire has a diverse and rich natural and built environment. The built heritage and landscapes of South Gloucestershire are an important element in providing a sense of place and civic pride for residents and visitors.

11.2 Development can result in irreversible changes to the environment and natural resources, so it is crucial for the planning system to limit the impact of future development on the environment.

11.3 Government policy recognises that the condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on our quality of life, and that the conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment brings social and economic benefit for local communities. Planning recognises the value we all place on the environment, by protecting and enhancing environmental assets and helping to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality.

11.4 Development can also deplete natural resources and cause damage and pollution. It is necessary to minimise this demand on the environment by ensuring the prudent use of natural resources. The use of energy and natural resources is covered in this document under Key Issue 8: Reducing and Adapting to Climate Change.

11.5 The landscape of South Gloucestershire has many contrasts, ranging from the hills of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to the flat expanses of the historic landscapes of the Severn levels to the west, to the urban landscape on the edge of Bristol.

11.6 The economic growth of the Bristol urban area, and the resultant expansion of its urban fringes, exert a considerable influence and pressure for development over South Gloucestershire and its environment. These areas experience significant levels of traffic congestion, with the impact of lessening air quality in certain areas.

11.7 Development pressures are also associated with the main transportation corridors, with a consequent impact upon both the landscape and air quality.
What you have told us

• An attractive local environment with access to green space is important to residents
• Important to protect environmental assets and biodiversity
• Concern about declining standards of street care and public spaces
• Good quality design is required (which should include energy efficiency) to promote healthy environments and increase well-being
• Environmental pollution (especially air, dust and noise) is a problem in urban areas
• Building on areas at risk from flooding must be avoided

The Issues

11.8 Many of the issues related to the environment are cross-cutting, in that they relate to a number of themes in this Issues and Options document, including traffic and congestion, climate change, future development and health and well-being.

11.9 Local development frameworks need to include policies protecting environmental assets including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, listed buildings, conservation areas and locally important assets, as well as preventing environmental pollution and flooding. Nationally and internationally important environmental designations are all protected from inappropriate development under national policy and we are not, therefore, asking questions about them in this Issues and Options document.

11.10 From what you have told us and the matters arising as a result of our own analysis, we consider that the main issue for this Environment theme is the protection of locally important assets and the need for good quality design. The issue of flood risk is considered under Key Issue 8: Reducing and Adapting to Climate Change.

Local Environmental Assets

11.11 Much of South Gloucestershire’s wildlife interest occurs at a local level outside of national and international designations. Similarly there are many buildings and structures which make a significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area but have no statutory protection. Policies in the current Local Plan safeguard these interests.

Question 13
Please indicate which of the following locally important features and interests you consider should be protected

- [ ] Archaeological interests
- [ ] Buildings and structures
- [ ] Nature conservation (biodiversity)

NB National and internationally important buildings, features and interests have statutory protection
Key Issue 6: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

Design

11.12 Good design can make places better for people. Ensuring that new development fits in with the character of its surroundings helps to create a sense of place and reinforce civic pride. Good design is not just about how buildings and places look but about how they function. This includes the ability for pedestrians and cyclists to move easily and safely around a place, for public spaces to be clearly identified from private spaces and for crime and the fear of crime to be designed out and for the buildings and places to minimise the use of energy, carbon dioxide and resources.

11.13 Good design should result in development which is varied, both in the type and size of housing provided and by including a mix of uses. This increases the ‘vitality’ of the area and provides the opportunity for people to live, work, shop and socialise locally.

11.14 Key components of good design in development are:

- The layout should be pedestrian and cycle friendly and designed so that walking and cycling are encouraged as safe alternatives to using the car.

- Streets, buildings and open spaces should connect with each other and the existing patterns of streets and open spaces – to make it easy to get to and move through and allow service and public transport to be accessible to all.

- Streets should be designed to be liveable (attractive and usable spaces), which also accommodate vehicles, so as to create an attractive public realm and reinforce local character and distinctiveness.
• Spaces around buildings should be well designed for users of all ages and abilities

• The design of external areas should respond to the character, biodiversity and heritage of the site and its surroundings, as well as to the needs of the community

• Play areas should form part of the integral landscape design

• Landmarks, focal points, views, lighting, public art and signs should be retained or created to improve legibility (finding your way around a place)

• Enclosure should be contrasted with openness to exploit views as well as respect the character of the area

• Minimise the use of energy and resources

• Successful co-ordination of proportions, materials, colour and detail and how these relate to the character and identity of the surroundings. Buildings should also be functional for intended users

11.15 Places that have a mix of uses, type and tenure of buildings, an attractive appearance and a distinct character, tend to create a safe and secure community.

11.16 In designing liveable places it is also important the new buildings themselves are functional and work well for the intended users. Access to and around the buildings must be easy for all. The buildings themselves must be designed to allow future adaptation, particularly so residents can alter their homes to accommodate changing lifestyles. This includes the design of Lifetime Homes to allow for an ageing population and disabled people to remain independent as long as possible, whilst remaining within a community.

**Question 14**

Please indicate which of the following you consider to be components of good design?

- [ ] Pedestrian and cycle friendly layout and design
- [ ] Well-connected streets, buildings and open spaces
- [ ] Streets designed as liveable (attractive and usable) open spaces
- [ ] Well designed spaces around buildings
- [ ] Design of external areas should reflect surroundings and community needs
- [ ] Play areas should be integral to landscape design
- [ ] Using features and landmarks to define legibility (ability to find one’s way around)
- [ ] Contrast between enclosure and openness across a development
- [ ] Minimise the use of energy and resources
- [ ] Good design of buildings (colour, material, detail and proportion)

Please indicate any elements which we have missed off our list.
Key Issue 6: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

Local plans & strategies
- South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2006
- The South Gloucestershire Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document 2007
- Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan
- Strategy for the Severn Estuary
- Forest of Avon Plan
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Locally Listed Buildings Supplementary Planning Document 2008
Key Issue 7: **Improving Health and Well-being**

### Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities

- Promoting safer and stronger communities
- Being healthier
- Modernising health and community care services
- Investing in children and young people

### Health And Well-Being Facts

- As a whole, South Gloucestershire residents are healthier and have a greater life expectancy than the national average.
- Population forecasts suggest that the number of people aged over 65 in South Gloucestershire will increase by 55% in the next 20 years with over 85s increasing by 78%.
- Early indications show a lack of green space, sport and recreation facilities in a number of areas in South Gloucestershire.
- Access to green space/public footpaths is the aspect that local residents like most about South Gloucestershire.
- An attractive and pleasant environment is the most important aspect of the local area for South Gloucestershire residents (Viewpoint 2007).
- People in the most deprived wards of the District (Kings Chase, Staple Hill, Patchway, Woodstock and Filton) are twice as likely to die from lung cancer and have up to 4.7 years shorter life expectancies than other areas.
- Cardiovascular disease and cancer are on a downward trend whilst diabetes is increasing due in part to the increase in obesity and the ageing population.

#### 12.1 Health and Well-being

Health and well-being is a significant topic area. It covers a variety of issues, not all of which are traditionally considered to be within the remit or influence of the land use planning system. The following definition provides a useful starting point for this theme:

“Health is not only the absence of disease but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without the distinction of race, religion, political or economic and social conditions.”

*World Health Organisation: Health for All*

#### 12.2 In the context of spatial planning this definition widens the scope for the planning system to influence health.

The role of planning is not limited to the provision of health facilities. It has been expanded to ensure that the design of new development takes account of issues such as; enabling walking and cycling, the provision of formal and informal community meeting spaces and of sports facilities and green spaces, providing local shops, reducing the fear of crime and the promotion of mental well-being.

#### 12.3 Nationally and locally there is a drive to increase participation in physical and social activity and to encourage improvements in health and well-being.

The role of spatial planning here is to provide the opportunities for people to live healthy lifestyles and improve wellbeing. This is as important to older people as it is to the young.
There is an increasingly ageing population locally and nationally, which gives rise to a number of considerations, a key one of which is inclusiveness. The concept of Lifetime Homes introduced in Key Issue 6 can be extended to whole neighbourhoods – Lifetime Neighbourhoods. This concept is one in which community infrastructure such as transport, good shops, green spaces, public toilets, and benches, are consciously planned for people of all ages and conditions in mind.

What you have told us

- There is a need to increase and co-ordinate health care provision
- There is a need to protect and increase the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities
- Encouraging participation in physical activity has positive health implications
- There is a need to increase community cohesion
- Increasing accessibility to services increases well-being

The Issues

In order to address what you have told us and the matters arising as a result of our own analysis, the following issues have been identified as appropriate to the Core Strategy:

- Ensuring a sufficient amount and quality of community infrastructure (such as libraries and community meeting places)
- Ensuring sufficient and appropriate protection and provision of green space, sport and recreation facilities
- Recognising the importance of green space/green infrastructure both in terms of community benefits and urban cooling

Health and Education

Local development frameworks need to consider the provision of health and education, and this is of particular relevance in the context of this Key Issue and the Spatial Strategy part of this document. The overarching objective of this key issue is to encourage healthy lifestyles and well-being for all ages.

In terms of health, the Director of Public Health has identified ways in which the problem of child and adult obesity and associated problems can be tackled. These include increasing physical activity, improving access to fresh and healthy food, reducing poverty and improving living conditions. In providing for walking and cycling and for access to green space, sport, play and recreation facilities as well as in supporting the Priority Neighbourhoods initiative the Core Strategy is recognising its role in contributing to the health agenda.

In terms of education, a number of national programmes are changing the way in which new schools are run, and enhancing the role of all schools in local communities. The Core Strategy has to consider the provision of new schools, and the enhanced role of existing schools (particularly secondary schools) in providing extended services to the community such as ICT, clubs, sports facilities and extra tuition.
12.9 The majority of significant issues related to health and education provision are established in other plans and strategies, and we are not, therefore, asking questions about them in this Issues and Options document.

Community Infrastructure

12.10 Community facilities such as libraries, community halls and other meeting spaces are important community assets. Extra care housing schemes also have the potential to act as community hubs. New development clearly puts additional pressure on these facilities, and in the case of larger scale applications the level of development may be such that new facilities are required on site to meet the needs of new communities.

12.11 The National Public Libraries Tariff is a policy which introduces the need to seek money from developers (contributions) at a rate of £90 per person in new housing through the planning system. New development inevitably increases the pressure on existing service provision, and without seeking appropriate contributions, access to public libraries and the scope and choice provided is likely to suffer.

12.12 Community meeting places, such as village halls, church halls and community centres play an important role in the cohesion of communities (i.e. uniting the community and providing venues for people to take part in social and physical activities). We currently seek money and/or new buildings by negotiating with developers to improve or provide facilities. However, there is no set method for this. The average contribution achieved on larger scale developments in the recent past is in the region of 0.18 sqm/person for community meeting spaces only (not including ancillary facilities for sports use).

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**Question 15**

Do you agree that the Core Strategy should include a policy which seeks a developer contribution on each new dwelling to ensure the sufficient provision of libraries?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If No, please explain why and provide an alternative approach

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**Question 16**

Do you agree that the Core Strategy should include a policy which seeks a developer contribution on each new dwelling to ensure the delivery of new/improvements to existing community meeting places through new development?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If No, please explain why and provide an alternative approach
12.13 Green space, sport and recreation provision makes an important contribution to ‘sustainable development’. It provides places where people can exercise, socialise and spend free time, while at the same time providing the potential for habitat creation, contributing towards the design of new development and reducing temperatures in urban areas. For the purposes of this Core Strategy, green space, sport and recreation ranges from football pitches to allotments, from equipped children’s play areas to green corridors, and from churchyards to woodlands. Within South Gloucestershire, there are over 2,500 ha of such space.

12.14 The Council is currently undertaking a full green space, sport and recreation audit, the aim of which is to:

- Establish the current level of open space, sport and recreation provision in South Gloucestershire, and
- Provide a basis on which decisions about appropriate contributions from new development towards green space, sport and recreation provision can be made

This work is being undertaken in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17). This work will result in a Green Space Strategy, which will address the detail of green space, sport and recreation delivery and management.
‘Formal’ Sport, Play and Recreation

12.15 The Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council’s Play Policy and Strategy, and the South Gloucestershire Physical Activity and Sports Plan all share common aspirations for formal sport, play and recreation, including:

• The need to increase participation in physical activity
• The need to ensure a high quality of provision for sport, play and recreation
• The need to provide a variety of activities to participate in
• The need to ensure that provision is accessible to all

The role of the Core Strategy is to ensure this is achieved through new development.

12.16 The Council’s current approach to sport, play and recreation provision is to apply the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) standards to the amount of provision that should be made per 1,000 people. These standards specify the quantity of sports provision, children’s equipped play space and non-equipped play space that should be provided through new development.

12.17 The Core Strategy provides the opportunity to replace national standards with local standards of provision, the advantages of which include a better reflection of local need, circumstances and demand for space and supporting infrastructure. The detail of such standards would be set out in the Green Space Strategy.

Informal Green Space and Recreation

12.18 The District has a significant and highly valued range of less ‘formal’ assets e.g. commons and open spaces within the urban areas. Appropriate additions and enhancements to these is an important consideration. Work undertaken by the Forest of Avon and Avon Wildlife Trust has begun to identify such opportunities, and this work is to form an important part of the South Gloucestershire Green Space Strategy.

12.19 Informal green/recreational spaces play a very important role in the design and character of new and existing development, in habitat creation and in species protection. Inappropriate development may fragment existing provision, breaking up existing networks of green space and changing the character of areas. Existing networks of green space provide the opportunity to encourage active travel (for example walking and cycling) in place of car travel, so improving the health of residents. The Green Space Strategy will explore in detail the existing network of green spaces. The Spatial Strategy part of this Issues and Options document seeks views on the current level and quality of green spaces in the Bristol urban area, Yate and Thornbury.

Question 17
In order to meet the formal sport and recreation needs of a growing population, should we:

- [ ] Continue to apply the national standards?
- [ ] Develop local standards?
- [ ] Other option (please specify)

Question 17
In order to meet the formal sport and recreation needs of a growing population, should we:

- [ ] Continue to apply the national standards?
- [ ] Develop local standards?
- [ ] Other option (please specify)
12.20 There is a need to provide usable public green space and recreation through new development. It must link with existing green spaces, expanding and improving existing networks. It should consider how all age groups can benefit from provision, and the ways in which different age groups use different spaces (for example children playing in streets). The Green Space Strategy provides the opportunity to explore these opportunities.

12.21 The Council currently has policies for the protection of a variety of informal green space and recreation spaces. However, we do not apply any set provision standards in planning policy (i.e. we do not have a set standard by which we seek a set contribution from developers). National standards do exist, but like the standards that apply to formal sport and recreation, they do not reflect local need and demand.

Evidence base (work in progress):
- Ongoing PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit
- Green Infrastructure in the West of England data sets

Local Plans and Strategies
- The Green Infrastructure Study for the West of England
- Forest of Avon ‘Forest Plan’
- Bristol Health Services Plan
- South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan
- South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document
- South Gloucestershire Physical Activity and Sports Plan
- South Gloucestershire Play Policy and Strategy
- National Public Libraries Tariff (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council)
- Joint Accommodation and Care Strategy for Older People
- Cycling and Walking Strategies (LTP)

Urban Cooling

12.22 As touched upon in the introduction to this section, the provision of green space is an effective way to reduce the higher temperatures in urban areas. One of the effects of climate change will be to increase the temperature difference between rural and urban areas. This is described as ‘the urban heat island effect’ because the warmer urban air lies in a ‘sea’ of cooler rural air. Green space provision will help to mitigate against this, and the potential of urban cooling will be an important consideration for the Green Space Strategy.

Question 18
In order to meet the needs of a growing population for informal green space and recreation should we:

☐ Apply the national standards?
☐ Develop local standards?
☐ Other option (please specify)
Key Issue 8: Reducing and Adapting to Climate Change

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES

• Valuing the environment
• Managing future development

Climate Change Facts

• Predicted increase in average temperatures of 1.5 - 5.5°C over next 80 years in the South West region

• Temperature rise to be accompanied by changing rainfall pattern - up to 30% increase in winter and up to 50% decrease in summer

• Tidal level in Severn Estuary predicted to rise by 1 metre over next 100 years

• In 2003 South Gloucestershire contributed approx 2,688,000 tons of CO2 emissions to the atmosphere, which equals 10.9 tonnes per head of population (UK average = 10 tonnes and South West average = 8.7 tonnes)

• Sources of emissions in South Gloucestershire:
  • Industry and Commerce 37%
  • Road Transport 34%
  • Home Energy Use 23%
  • Waste to Landfill 5%
  • Changes in Land Use 1%

13.1 Global warming over the last 50 years is largely man made, caused by increases in the atmosphere of heat trapping gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane, mainly from the burning of coal, gas and oil for energy. If these ‘greenhouse’ gases increase, less heat can escape back into space and the natural greenhouse effect is enhanced making the earth warmer and changing the global climate. We can expect a changing pattern of more extreme weather with increased severity and frequency of storms, floods and droughts. Sea levels will also rise due to the melting of glaciers.

13.2 In order to address the issue of climate change, we must take action both to mitigate its effects by reducing the emission of the gases that cause it and to adapt to the existing and expected future changes in our climate. This will require significant changes to lifestyles and development. It is also recognised that measures for mitigation and adaptation will not necessarily be compatible.

13.3 South Gloucestershire has higher than average emissions from transport, industry and commerce. We have to accommodate a significant amount of new development over the next 20 years which will increase the number of houses, businesses, population and transport movements. If current trends in energy consumption from these activities continued without change then emissions would rise as a result. Reducing travel, promoting low carbon modes of transport, and those aspects of climate change related to the location of development, are addressed elsewhere in this document.

13.4 The Council’s Climate Change Strategy has a target to achieve at least a 60% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2050, with a reduction of 20% by 2010. This is
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a challenging aim and significant actions are required to meet the target. The actions that have been identified which are relevant to planning include:

• Enabling a shift towards more sustainable lifestyles and development
• Reducing energy use and use energy more efficiently
• Increasing the generation of energy from renewable sources
• Reducing emissions caused through travel
• Reducing emissions from waste by cutting down on the amount of waste produced and increasing recycling
• Assessing the likely impact of climate change and implementing appropriate adaption measures

What you have told us

• Improve energy efficiency and renewable energy production in new development
• Aim for higher standards for energy efficient design in all development
• Avoid building on areas at risk of flooding
• Efficient public transport infrastructure will reduce CO₂ emissions
• More compact development will reduce the need to travel
• Cool urban areas down by protecting existing green spaces and providing more spaces

• Better water management needed

The Issues

13.5 In order to address what you have told us and the issues and concerns that have been identified, the Core Strategy will cover the following:

• Mitigating the impact of climate change through reduced energy consumption
• Measures to adapt to climate change

13.6 Reducing the impact of waste and waste management on climate change is being addressed in the Joint Waste Core Strategy see www.rubbishorresource.co.uk for more information.

Reducing Energy Consumption

13.7 Reducing the need for energy, more efficient use of energy, alternative “renewable” energy sources, (e.g. solar, wind, tide, geothermal and biomass), as well as more efficient technologies (e.g. combined heat and power) will all help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
13.8 The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (as amended in the Panel Report) recommends the following targets for renewable energy within the South West.

**Renewable electricity**

By 2010 a minimum of 509-611MW onshore renewable electricity, of which 35-52MW to be located within the West of England.

By 2020 a minimum of 850MW onshore renewable electricity. There is no sub-regional distribution.

Offshore renewable electricity targets of 56MW by 2010 and 400MW by 2020

**Renewable heat**

By 2010 100MW renewable heat generation in the South West, and by 2020 500MW.

**Renewable energy in new development**

In larger-scale development, provision of sufficient on-site renewable energy to reduce CO₂ emissions by users of the buildings constructed by 20%.

13.9 In April 2007 there was 11.47MW of installed onshore renewable electricity in the West of England and 55.69MW of installed renewable heat in the South West, both of which leave a significant shortfall at 2010 if the current rates of energy installation are not increased.

13.10 There are many different ways in which renewable energy can be generated, including:

- **Wind power** – use of large or small wind turbines to generate electricity
- **Water power** – using tidal or river flows to generate electricity (this could include a Severn Barrage)
- **Growing and burning quick growing crops or heating waste to generate electricity or heat** (e.g. biomass or combined heat and power)
- **Using heat from the ground** (geothermal heat exchange systems)
- **Solar power to produce electricity or heat water**

13.11 Depending on the type and location of development, different renewable and low energy systems will be technically and financially viable. Government guidance makes it clear that it is up to the developer to determine what type of technology is appropriate for their proposal, and that it is for the Core Strategy to set targets for how much renewable energy should be generated in new development.

**Question 19**

In order to meet the targets in the Council’s Climate Change Strategy, should larger-scale development be required to include facilities to generate renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions by over the 20% set in the Regional Spatial Strategy?

- [ ] No
- [ ] Yes (the suggested percentage is)

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1MW (megawatt) is the average amount of electricity used by 1200 homes each year. Source: Regen SW
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13.12 Certain types of energy generation have specific locational requirements (e.g. the need for wind speeds and flows, or the availability of biomass crops locally). It is open for the Core Strategy to identify broad locations within South Gloucestershire that would be suitable for particular types of energy generation if this would help to secure such development.

13.15 Policy G of the Draft RSS (as amended in the Panel Report) sets challenging targets for energy efficiency in new development. The aim is that all new residential development achieves at least Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, and that by 2016 achieves the higher targets of Level 5/6. Levels 5/6 would result in development achieving zero or low carbon emissions through the use of energy efficiency measures and on-site renewable energy and low carbon technologies. A further aim is for non-residential developments to move towards zero carbon emissions by 2016. These targets are more ambitious in terms of timescale and scope than national targets and are based on a sound evidence base which has demonstrated viability. This Council could set a more ambitious timetable for achieving Levels 5 and 6 of the Code if local circumstances could be demonstrated to justify this.

13.16 Ways to reduce the amount of energy and resources that a development consumes, in addition to on-site energy generation, include:

- Re-use and conversion of existing buildings, walls and structures
- Retention of rainwater on site

Question 20
Can you suggest any other ways that the Core Strategy could encourage renewable energy provision to meet the targets in the South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy?

Question 21
Are there particular area(s) of South Gloucestershire which should be identified for the following types of energy generation:

- Wind power?
- Water power?
- Growing Biomass Crops?
- Generating heat or energy from Biomass or Waste?
- Geothermal heat exchange?
- Solar power?

Sustainable Construction

13.13 The construction, subsequent use and maintenance of buildings represent a major use of resources and materials. The use of non-renewable energy, and the resultant by-products, produce atmospheric pollution which can affect human health, damage crops and wildlife, cause acid rain and contribute towards global warming.

13.14 There are national standards set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes for assessing the environmental efficiency of buildings using a range of criteria including carbon emissions, water efficiency, materials and waste management. Currently the Council’s Design Checklist requires development to reach Level 3 of the Code.
• Orientation and location of buildings and trees to maximise solar gains and/or improve shelter from the element

• Appropriate use of natural slopes and landscaping/tree planting schemes

• Provision for the storage and collection of waste and recyclable materials

• Using passive solar gains, natural lighting, natural ventilation and grey water recycling in the design of buildings

13.17 The Joint Waste Core Strategy will address in more detail waste minimisation, the integration of waste collection facilities and the provision of waste management facilities in new development (see www.rubbishorresource.co.uk for more information).

Question 22

(A) What should we include in Core Strategy policies to ensure that more sustainable development is achieved in the future?

(B) To meet the aims and target of the Council’s Climate Change Strategy, can South Gloucestershire justify requiring new development to reach Levels 4, 5 and 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes at earlier dates than those set out in the Draft RSS Policy G?

☐ No
☐ Yes

If Yes, then what levels and timescales are appropriate?
13.18 The consequences of changing weather patterns are already having an effect in the UK with more frequent incidences of flooding following rainfall. The Core Strategy will need to include policies both to protect against flood risk and to ensure that any development proposals will not be located in areas known to be at risk from flooding.

13.19 As part of our evidence base we will be commissioning a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the whole of South Gloucestershire. This will provide the necessary information to enable us to identify and quantify which areas are at risk from flooding and will inform the Spatial Strategy.

13.20 Current best practice requires surface water run-off from development to be controlled using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs), which involves controlling the release of rainwater close to its point of fall. However, this has only been in practice in recent years. The traditional practice has been to pipe the water away to watercourses. Surface water disposal is increasingly under pressure from impermeable surfacing in both old and new development. For example, the trend in hard surfacing front gardens to provide parking space is adding to the pressure on drainage systems. Increasingly flooding results at times of heavy rainfall as drainage systems are unable to cope with increased water flows.

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**Question 23**
In areas of flood risk, which of the following actions do you consider is the most appropriate:

- [ ] To avoid development on floodplains?, OR
- [ ] To allow development which has been properly designed for a flood risk location?

**Question 24**
Can you suggest any other ways, in addition to Sustainable Drainage Systems, to reduce the risk of flooding from surface water run-off?

**Evidence base (work in progress):**
- Ongoing PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Flooding study for the Severnside/Avonmouth Area

**Local plans & strategies**
- South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2006
- The South Gloucestershire Design Checklist Supplementary Planning Document 2007
- South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan 2006