Council Plan 2008-2011

“Achieving excellence for our residents and their communities, ensuring South Gloucestershire continues to be a great place to live and work”

OUR FUTURE CHALLENGES

OUR CORPORATE AIMS
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Foreword by the Leader of South Gloucestershire Council

In June 2007, I was elected Leader of the Council. I have been proud to participate in developing South Gloucestershire into a Council officially recognised as ‘good’ in the first ten years of its life. Our Council Plan sets out my administration’s blueprint for building upon these foundations through an ambitious strategy of achieving excellence for our residents and their communities.

Our Shared Vision

The South Gloucestershire Partnership has agreed a 20 year vision for the area – “The South Gloucestershire 2026 Sustainable Community Strategy”. It was developed as a central plan to influence and guide the work and activities of partner organisations. We are committed to delivering this vision:

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.

Put simply; to ensure that South Gloucestershire continues to be

“A great place to live and work”

Our Council Plan sets out how we will deliver this vision.

Our Council Plan

We face many and varied challenges as a Council; ranging from the pressures of housing growth, an aging population, increasing expectations from residents and the constant drive to achieve improved efficiency.

However we believe that, working with our staff and partners, we have capability to innovate, develop and implement successful solutions to meet our challenges. This Plan sets out the Council’s seven corporate aims for meeting our area’s vision:

1. Investing in Children and Young People
2. Improving Health, Modernising Community Care and Health Services
3. Managing Future Development
4. Promoting Safer and Stronger Communities
5. Valuing the Environment
6. Maintaining Economic Prosperity
7. Ensuring we are ‘Fit for our Future’ - our Internal Improvement Programme
Whilst all of these areas are important to us, with finite resources we are acutely aware of the importance of careful prioritisation. As an administration we will be placing a special focus in the medium term on achieving excellence in the first three of these aims, together with a cross cutting theme of access and transportation which is of critical importance to our success. We will deliver:

- Excellent standards of achievement for all our young people
- Our older people experiencing good health and well-being with a focus on sustaining independence and personalised care in later years.
- Future housing development which is vibrant, cohesive, sustainable and well integrated with our existing communities
- Through innovative partnership working a transport infrastructure that rivals any major European City

Achieving excellence will require the commitment and endeavour of every member of staff contributing their own unique skills, expertise and ideas.

A culture of striving for continuous improvement is what we want to foster and develop across the Council, with our energy and capacity focussed on delivering our ambitious vision for South Gloucestershire.

These challenges, and the many others we face, are considerable but we are all here to serve our residents and we must all rise to the challenge of their needs and aspirations.

Across the Council there is impressive dedication and commitment from our staff and many examples of excellence and best practice. We must now expand and enhance this through challenging targets which stretch us all.

John Calway  
In order to make South Gloucestershire ‘a great place to live and work’ the core values of South Gloucestershire Council are:

**Excellence** for our customers and communities

Strong **Community Leadership**

**Valuing** our **Staff**

Engaging with our partners

**Equality** of opportunity for all

Protecting the **Environment** for future generations

Using our resources to deliver **Value for Money**
Our Area Profile

The district covers 49,700 hectares with a population of 254,400.

The population of South Gloucestershire is projected to reach 267,200 by 2011, an increase of nearly 21,560 (8.7%) from the 2001 census and a 46,836 (21%) increase from 1991. It is expected that:

- The number of households will increase by over 7,000 to 111,000
- The number of people over 65 will increase by 24%
- 12,000 people will be 80 years or older
- The number of 15 to 24 year olds will increase by nearly 12,000 to 38,000

Our black and minority population is not large (4.2%) and is mostly located in our urban areas.

60% of the population lives in the built up areas immediately adjoining Bristol, namely Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Kingswood, Downend, Staple Hill and Hanham, 19% live in the towns of Yate, Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury and the remaining 20% live in the more rural areas of South Gloucestershire.

The number of dwellings within the district is also expected to rise to 111,670 by 2011 an increase of 10,765 from 2001. By 2026 it is proposed that a further 30,800 dwellings must be developed within the area.

The average house price in South Gloucestershire (2006) was £182,959, a 5% increase on the 2005 figure. This is the smallest rate of increase in the last decade.

This demonstrates that the general demographics of the area are changing rapidly. This puts considerable strain on all of the services which the Council must continue to deliver to its residents and service users.

Our Council

Our Council provides many of the key public services required to meet the needs and expectations of our growing population. We educate over 58,000 children and young people in 114 schools and 18 youth clubs as well as caring for 170 children and young people who are looked after. We help more than 4,850 older people and those with disabilities to continue living in their own homes.

This is in addition to protecting the rich environment and diverse communities in which we live and at the same time ensuring that the aspirations of the residents for quality jobs and homes are met. From children’s services to community care, from planning the development of our infrastructures to strengthening the prevention and reduction of crime, from waste collection to environmental protection, South Gloucestershire Council provides over 150 public services which are vital to the residents of the area.
We are a 3 star Council which is recognised to be “improving well” (Audit Commission, Annual Comprehensive Performance Assessment). Since our 2002 CPA inspection and the delivery of the last corporate plan, the council has worked hard to become an excellent authority. Residents’ satisfaction is above the national average, reflecting a growing reputation for strong service provision. But we are not complacent and will continue to improve.

Our ambition is to seek excellence in service provision for our residents. Meeting their needs and aspirations is at the core of everything we do. We aim to be an excellent Council which is improving strongly, and to be recognised as such both by residents and the Audit Commission.

Our Council Plan sets out how we will turn our ambitions into action. It is supported by more detailed implementation plans which show how we will deliver our priorities and measure our performance.

Working Together

Partnership is at the heart of everything we do. If we are to achieve an excellent quality of life we will only succeed if we work with others.

We are determined to work constructively with:

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Our people

Our greatest assets are the committed staff that we employ and the dedicated and hard working councillors elected by our residents.

Internally, we have successfully established a culture of collaborative working. Much of what South Gloucestershire Council wants to achieve requires a joined-up approach to service delivery which cuts across our political portfolios and departmental structures. This is the only way in which issues such as child care and protection, health promotion, planning for our communities, skills development and the provision of integrated and community transport will be successfully tackled.

Within the Council we work collectively, across themes, departments and services to ensure that we face our shared challenges together.

Our approach focuses on ensuring that we can implement strategic change and grow the skills of people in the council to deliver excellent services now and in the future.

The key goals of our Human Resources and Workforce Development Strategy are:

■ Developing leadership skills and capacity across the Council:
  We are clarifying and promoting our leadership values, behaviours and expectations, building skills and creating a culture where leadership is implicit and shared.

■ Attracting, developing and retaining talented individuals:
  We are developing our approach to strategic workforce planning to support the Council’s priorities. This includes modernising our recruitment process, through e-enabled recruitment, succession planning and developing our staff and managers within the ethos of a learning organisation.

■ Enabling high performance:
  We are supporting managers to achieve improved staff performance by aligning HR policies and procedures with the business needs of the Council, ensuring that we have a motivated, healthy and involved workforce, supporting the improvement and change agenda through a capacity building programme and further embedding our performance management culture.

We have also developed our Ethical Framework which sets out the high standards of conduct expected of Members and staff. We have adopted a new Code of Conduct for Members and we have in place a Standards Committee which provides guidance to Members on the provisions of the Code of Practice and ensures the ethical governance of the Council.
Managing our Money

Compared to other similar councils, South Gloucestershire is a low spending council, with performance at or above average, and a council tax that is around the average.

The Council has a gross revenue budget of just over £400M a year. Over £200M of this is funded by specific government grants, mostly for schools. £100M is funded from the Council tax payer, £50M from general government grant and a share of the non-domestic rate pool. The balance of around £50M comes from fees and charges, and minor grants.

The financial outlook will continue to be challenging, with spending tending to increase faster than Government funding, and council tax increases effectively capped.

The Council has an agreed and published three year medium-term financial plan 2008 - 2011 which outlines the Council is in good financial health:

- A balanced and sustainable budget with unearmarked balances remaining around the 5% target, and council tax increases within the 5% guideline

- That high priority service developments generally have to be funded by reductions in spending in lower priority areas.

- The six years up to 2010, will have seen spending on Community Care increase in relative terms by 26%, and spending on support functions and capital financing costs decrease by 16% and 13% respectively. By the end of the six year period, the annual cost of support functions will have reduced by around £18M a year.

Over the six years the Council will have shifted £9.4M from support services and interest costs of debt, to front line services. The major beneficiaries have been health and community care where £5.1M has been injected, environmental services, where £2.4M has been added, largely to waste management services, and £2.5M to Children and Young People, much of which is extra grant funding from Government. Funding for community initiatives (safer and stronger) has increased.

The Council expects to continue to direct both revenue and capital resources to the high priority areas set out in this plan, and to fund these investments by continually looking to become more efficient, and by attracting investment funds to provide major infrastructure improvements. The Council aspires to become an excellent council with an excellent score for the use of resources. It also expects to continue to be a low spending Council, and to have a council tax around the average level. It expects to increase its performance to above average.
National policy is developing to address a number of key national issues or priorities such as Children and Young People, Healthier Communities and Older People, Safer and Stronger and Sustainable Communities. This means the need for integrated public services and greater partnership working as well as there being a requirement for public sector spending restraint.

The Government’s white paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities” radically affects local government by focusing on changes in a number of key areas such as:

- Responsive services and empowered communities
- Effective, accountable and responsive local government
- Strong cities and strategic regions
- Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper
- Efficiency - transforming local services
- Community cohesion.

We must address these national issues in a local context as they have a direct relevance for our area and they have helped shape the priorities we have set ourselves.
South Gloucestershire is a great place to live and work. 94% of residents are satisfied with their local area. Public opinion on this issue has remained fairly consistent since respondents were first asked this question in 1999.

There are, however, a number of challenges of a cross-cutting nature, which we will need to address in order to meet the changing needs of our residents and their communities.

Diverse Communities and Equalities

With no single town centre in South Gloucestershire, we want to ensure all communities achieve their potential.

South Gloucestershire has many distinct and diverse communities, both of interest and of place. We want to encourage cohesive communities that can remain stable while accommodating cultural, social, economic and environmental change. We are determined to tackle inequalities whilst maintaining South Gloucestershire’s diversity.

Our society and communities are living with constant change. We need to understand the issues our communities face and ensure our future policies and services recognise these issues and help communities respond positively to these challenges. Key to this will be our planning policies, the need for housing and affordable homes, and the look and feel of our built environment.

Public involvement in decision-making and devolving power to individuals and local organisations is increasingly important. We want to empower people to take an active part in local democracy, in decision-making and in supporting their own communities.

Our part in the West of England

The West of England is the most strategically significant sub-region within the South West and one of the key centres for future growth.

The West of England Partnership consisting of the four neighbouring authorities: South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and Bristol was formed as a means of tackling strategic issues such as the economy, waste disposal, housing, cultural facilities, transport.

Bristol is designated as a ‘core city’ and the West of England as the ‘city region’. Rapid growth within this region presents a number of cross boundary opportunities and challenges that we cannot deal with alone. South Gloucestershire will play a key part in delivering these objectives.
The Local Context
- What Makes South Gloucestershire Unique

Future Development

Because of our position in the West of England and close proximity to Bristol, South Gloucestershire continues to be one of the fastest areas of development of homes and jobs in the country. The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy proposes that development will continue at high levels for the next 20 years, placing enormous pressure on the infrastructure quality of life and the environment in South Gloucestershire.

The economic prosperity of South Gloucestershire and high levels of employment, housing and population growth also make tackling traffic congestion a major challenge. Traffic growth has increased significantly since 1991. In 2001 72% of residents travelled to work by car compared to 62% nationally with only 7% using public transport compared to 15% nationally.

We recognise the need to ensure that new communities have the services and facilities they need to make them sustainable.

While responding to this challenge, it will be important to maintain the things that residents most value particularly its heritage, access to green spaces and the special relationship between town and country.

We are determined to challenge and manage the planned level of development in a way that minimises adverse environmental impact, encourages sustainable communities and town centres and ensures the benefits of new developments are shared by all.

The Local Development Framework will set out everything to do with the development and the use of land. Many other plans and strategies will also need close integration 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.

Quality of Life

Children & Young People - Standards at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are significantly above national average and higher than or in line with similar authorities. After a number of years of increases, overall standards at Key Stage 4 stalled in 2006 to a level which was broadly in line with national averages but below that of similar authorities. A similar pattern was to be found at post 16. Raising standards at Key Stage 4 and post 16 are therefore key priorities for South Gloucestershire.

Improving Health, Modernising Community Care and Health Services - We have a generally healthy population. Life expectancy has increased by 3.5 years for males and by 2.1 years for females from 1991-93 to 2003-5. There is also above average demographic growth, particularly for the 85+ age group. Our vision is for health and care services that are closer to home or delivered in home. That is why our priorities, in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, are the development of community based health services to create local facilities offering a broader range of services with less reliance on hospital visits and also to provide local social care services that support independence and reduce the need for admission to a care home.
Promoting Safer and Stronger Communities - The recorded crime rate in South Gloucestershire fell slightly last year to 42.5 crimes per 1000 population, which is significantly below both national and regional averages. The fear of crime in South Gloucestershire has also fallen recently, however, research suggests that about 1 in 4 residents (27%) continue to feel unsafe when outside during the night. Residents tell us that feeling safe is as important as being safe and further action aimed at providing this reassurance is required.

Although South Gloucestershire is relatively affluent, there is a small number of priority neighbourhoods. We therefore need to prioritise action to tackle poverty and inequality.

Valuing the Environment - Our countryside, environment and heritage are some of the key assets that contribute to the quality of life in South Gloucestershire. In the face of major pressures for new development, we have been successful in minimising the impact on these features. For instance in 2006, 66% of new dwellings were built on previously developed land (brownfield sites). This represents the greatest proportion of brownfield development in the last decade. We must maintain our commitment to protecting and enhancing these assets in the future.

Climate change is a major global challenge. The Council recognises the scale of the issues that need to be tackled and is committed to carry out its part in responding to the challenge. We have already adopted a climate change strategy for the area and we are now embarking, with our partners, on the actions required to minimise and mitigate our effects on the climate. As a result, the Council has implemented a Carbon Management Programme.

The total recycling rate of household waste within South Gloucestershire increased to 39.5% in 2006 - 2007 making us one of the top performing councils in the Country. We are committed to increasing our performance.

Maintaining Economic Prosperity - According to the latest figures 86.7% of the area’s working-age population are in employment, which means that we have one of the highest rates of economic activity in the country. Over recent years the increase in the number of VAT registered businesses has been higher than the regional growth rate. We need to maintain the economic prosperity of the area and ensure that all our communities benefit.

We are passionate about maintaining the unique character of our area and rising to the challenges this presents. Our priorities demonstrate our clear commitment to:

“Achieving excellence for our residents and their communities, ensuring that South Gloucestershire continues to be a great place to live and work”.

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First and foremost, we will support our schools to provide educational excellence and enhanced life opportunities and choices for all our young people.

**PRIORITY 1. ENJOY AND ACHIEVE** - To aim for excellence in all our education provision, in particular to raise standards in early years, at Key Stage 4 and post 16. To ensure that all children and young people have encouragement and opportunities to learn, play, enjoy and achieve wherever they are. To continue to develop and implement capital investment strategies to improve the quality of school, play and youth facilities.

We will:

- Improve attainment and progress in all secondary schools at Key Stages 3 and 4 and post 16.
- Improve achievement in nursery, early years and at Key Stages 1 and 2 in those settings/schools where standards are not as high as they should be and for those groups of pupils who may be at risk of underachievement.
- Ensure that there are high quality school buildings, play and youth facilities across all areas of South Gloucestershire, with particular regard to new developments.

We will of course implement the other key actions in the Children and Young People Plan.

**PRIORITY 2. ECONOMIC WELLBEING** - To ensure that all children and young people grow up in strong and secure families and vibrant communities. To enhance the curriculum, training and employment opportunities for young people so that they will develop the knowledge, academic, practical and life skills to enable them to achieve rewarding adult lives.

We will:

- Raise aspirations, achievement and progression of all young people over the 14-19 phase.
- Develop more flexible curriculum opportunities and provide guidance and support tailored to the needs of individual young people so that they can gain the skills they need to continue in learning and/or obtain good quality employment.
- Increase the range and quality of childcare and out of school opportunities for families.
**PRIORITY 3. BE HEALTHY** - To ensure that all children and young people enjoy the best possible physical and mental health and healthy lifestyles in particular in relation to obesity and sexual health.

**We will:**

- Work with health partners to prevent children becoming overweight and to promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity for all children.
- Improve access to sexual health and contraceptive advice and services in young people friendly venues.
- Continue to develop, in partnership with Health, the comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to improve access to timely, integrated, high quality, multi-disciplinary mental health support.

**PRIORITY 4. BE SAFE** - To ensure that all children and young people are safeguarded, protected from harm and neglect and feel safe and secure at all times. To promote multi-agency preventative support for those children and young people identified at an early stage of being at risk of social exclusion including homelessness.

**We will:**

- Work with partners to continue to support parents and develop joined up services which identify difficulties at an early stage and take action to prevent them escalating.
- Continue to ensure that all young people, and vulnerable children in particular, enjoy security and stability in their lives.
- Work with partners to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded from harm, neglect, injury and bullying.

**PRIORITY 5. POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION** - To ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to achieve their aspirations, take increased responsibility for their own futures, be creative and play a full and positive part in their communities. To extend the range of and access to positive activities and opportunities for young people.

**We will:**

- Continue to develop the active participation of children and young people in decision-making affecting them and in the way in which the Council plans its services.
- Join up youth services and improve the range of opportunities available to young people.
- Improve access to transport for young people to enable them to participate in activities, education, employment and training opportunities.
What it will mean for our residents:

Improved achievement and standards in all our schools and early years settings, and better services for children and young people and their parents and carers so that all our children and young people can enjoy better health, are safe, act responsibly, are able to participate in decisions that affect them and have the best possible preparation for adult life.

Case Study:

Over the next three years, we will be investing in an Authority Wide project to improve standards in all our secondary schools, particularly at Key Stage 4. This project will target additional resources at a number of secondary schools each year to:

- Focus on those subject areas which are underperforming.
- Develop a more effective personalised approach to learning which challenges, motivates, engages all students and increases their confidence.
- Improves the way in which the Key Stage 3 curriculum is delivered so that students are better prepared for Key Stage 4, and new vocational and diploma courses.

We aim to:

- Secure at least two levels of progress between Key Stages 2 and 3 and between Key Stages 3 and 4 for all leavers.
- Improve the percentage of students achieving the higher levels at Key Stage 3 and, by the end of the project, achieve a pass rate of 70% five A*- C or equivalent and 56% five A*- C including English and Maths.
Our Corporate Aims

Improving Health, Modernising Community Care and Health Services

So that South Gloucestershire’s people lead healthier lives and all communities share the benefits. People enjoy high quality health and community care services that focus on their individual needs and enables them to retain their independence.

“Our health is vitally important to us all and we will work closely with the NHS to promote healthier lifestyles. We will also champion the interests of our residents to promote access to the best possible local healthcare and hospital provision. With an aging population and the increasing aspiration of continuing independence modernising our caring services is crucial. Our approach is centred upon the needs and aspirations of the individual and helping them stay independent.”

Cllr. John Godwin - External Affairs and Partnerships
Cllr. Matthew Riddle - Community Care and Housing

Priority 6. Health and Wellbeing - To improve the integration of mental health services for working-age and older people. To bring health and care services closer to where people live. To provide a wider range of health and social care services to enable people to avoid hospital admission or delayed hospital discharge.

We will:

- Work with the Primary Care Trust to improve the range and local accessibility of health and social care services.
- Work with the Primary Care Trust and other partners to improve services in the areas of worst health and improve the take-up of health services by those who need them most.

Priority 7. Healthy lifestyles - To help people choose a healthy lifestyle by providing an environment, information, support and services that make the healthy choice the easy choice. To make planning for health needs and healthy lifestyles an integral part of planning our new communities.

We will:

- Increase opportunities for people to be physically active to help prevent obesity and increase the awareness of the value of a healthy diet.
- Build on smoke-free legislation to support people to stop smoking.

Priority 8. Quality of Life - To provide services for older and vulnerable people to retain and maximise independence and live at home; together with an ambitious programme of extra care housing development.

We will:

- Reduce admissions to residential and nursing care homes by investing in services that support older and vulnerable adults’ capability to live at home, including extra care housing.
- Invest in resources dedicated to ensuring that service users avoid hospital admission wherever possible and avoid hospital discharge delay.
- Increase the travel options available to our elderly and disabled residents.
Improving Health, Modernising Community Care and Health Services

**PRIORITY 9. POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION** - To modernise and develop first class services for adults with learning difficulties.

*We will:*

- Reduce the number of service users in residential care settings by investing in alternative supported housing solutions.
- Move away from traditional day-centre services and offer greater opportunities to participate in mainstream and community-based activities including employment opportunities.

**PRIORITY 10. EXERCISING CHOICE AND CONTROL** - To develop high quality services that provide individuals with greater choice and independence.

*We will:*

- Expand the Direct Payments service and pilot individual budgets to enable service users to exercise greater control over the resources allocated to meet their needs and promote self-assessment to give service users a greater say in defining their own needs.
- Ensure that all service users receive a welfare benefits check and target fuel poverty initiatives towards the most vulnerable.

**PRIORITY 11. FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT** - To work with health and social care providers to further improve responses to adult protection issues.

**PRIORITY 12. ECONOMIC WELLBEING** - To invest in additional resources to improve access to work for vulnerable adults.

*We will:*

- Develop our vocational services to offer increased levels of support into employment for adults with learning difficulties and adults with mental health needs.
- Expand our support to carers to enable them to sustain or enter employment.

**PRIORITY 13. PERSONAL DIGNITY AND RESPECT** - To raise quality standards for adults in hospitals and institutional settings and develop the knowledge and skills base of the health and social care workforce.

*We will:*

- Develop and provide a comprehensive training programme for organisations involved in the delivery of care services for older and vulnerable adults, prioritising dignity and respect as key themes in the provision of care.
What it will mean for our residents:

Our residents will enjoy rapid access to health services in local health centres that previously required visits to hospital. The overall health of the population will improve and health inequalities will reduce with those in most need benefiting most from targeted health services. We will increase the number of older people supported to live at home. Older people will have the option to live in the safe and supportive environment of extra care housing whilst retaining the sense of independence that is so important to them. Social care services will provide greater choice and control to the individual.

Case Study:

Your Council is committed to the provision of extra care housing for older people to enable many more older people to continue living at home in comfort and safety and will commence its second extra care development on Council land in the centre of Kingswood. Your Council is also working in partnership with the Primary Care Trust and jointly investing in a new multi-million pound health centre in Yate. The new health centre will be a state of the art resource bringing health services closer to where people live, and previously only available at hospitals, as well as a new Children’s Resource Centre.
**Our Corporate Aims**

**Managing Future Development**

So that we deal positively with the challenges posed by more growth, by planning in a sustainable and integrated way for high quality homes, associated employment opportunities, local community facilities and a convenient and safe transport network, which meet our communities’ needs and aspirations.

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**PRIORITY 14. HOUSING** - To plan to meet the housing needs of existing and future residents and to enable an adequate supply of affordable and supported housing.

*We will:*

- Meet the challenge of growth arising from the draft Regional Spatial Strategy through our Local Development Framework.
- Ensure that all new developments deliver the number, type and range of affordable housing required to meet local housing needs.

**PRIORITY 15. SUSTAINABLE NEW COMMUNITIES** - To engage stakeholders, local communities and developers in planning and delivering well-designed, high quality and sustainable new and existing communities. To ensure that new communities have access to a full range of community facilities and formal and informal open spaces.

*We will:*

- Work with local communities, developers and other partners to prepare Concept Statements and Development Briefs to guide the delivery of new communities identified in the Local Development Framework.
- Ensure that social and community infrastructure, such as schools, local health facilities, shops, community meeting places and open spaces are planned and delivered as part of new developments and are well integrated with our existing communities.

**PRIORITY 16. TRAVEL AND ACCESSIBILITY** - To deliver improvements to the transport system that tackle congestion, minimise air and noise pollution, reduce high carbon travel, enhance travel choice (particularly for public transport, cycling and walking). To reduce the need to travel by promoting alternative ways of working and creating more opportunities for walking and cycling.
We will:

- Work with our partners in the West of England to tackle congestion caused by the current transport infrastructure deficit by implementing the major public transport and highway improvement schemes set out in the Joint Local Transport Plan.

- Deliver a Park and Ride facility at Parkway, carry out major improvements to a number of junctions on the Ring Road and investigate opportunities for the provision of further public transport, cycling and pedestrian improvements.

- Work with schools, health providers and employers to improve access to jobs and facilities, to develop Green Travel Plans and to minimise the impact on the transport network of planned new developments.

- Work with bus operators and community transport groups to increase the number of people using public transport.

PRIORITY 17. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- To deliver new development that is needed in ways which improve and enhance our natural and built environment and heritage and which minimises the environmental impact. To ensure that all new buildings are energy efficient, are capable of being used flexibly in their lifetimes and are of high quality design.

We will:

- Ensure that new developments conserve and, where appropriate, enhance South Gloucestershire’s biodiversity, its green infrastructure and the area’s natural and built environment.

- Ensure that new development is planned in a way that minimises its impact on the Green Belt, the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the open countryside, wildlife habitats and land subject to environmental designations.
Ensure that Concept Statements and Development Briefs for new communities secure a high quality of life for future residents by balancing development needs with environmental protection and enhancement.

Residents can expect to see the start of development of sustainable new communities at Filton Northfield, Emersons Green East, Wallscourt Farm and Harry Stoke. These will be of high quality design, will provide a significant amount of housing that is affordable for local people and will be accompanied by all the necessary physical and social infrastructure. Residents can also expect to see the implementation of major improvements to local bus services, as part of the Greater Bristol Bus Network, and for proposals to be well advanced for Rapid Transit schemes in South Gloucestershire.

Case Study:

Your Council is pioneering partnership working with colleagues in Bristol, North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset Councils to deliver a £250 million programme of transport improvements across the area over the next seven or eight years. This major programme will result in a significant improvement to public transport services in our area.

We are expecting to start work on the first of these schemes, the Greater Bristol Bus Network, during 2008. This £70 million scheme will deliver improvements in all aspects of bus provision and will encompass over 30 local bus services. Measures such as bus lanes and improvements to service frequency will improve journey times on many services and enhance all round bus reliability. Bus stop enhancements and real time passenger information systems will provide up to the minute details on local bus services to help residents plan their journeys. New, improved vehicles will be fully accessible, and will allow easy access for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

The next scheme we will be developing is a Bus Rapid Transit scheme that will provide a step change in public transport provision. Guided vehicles providing state of the art services will provide fast and frequent journeys between Emersons Green and Bristol City Centre, the first phase in a network of such services.
Our Corporate Aims

Promoting Safer and Stronger Communities

So that all South Gloucestershire's communities are strong and safe, people are encouraged to participate in the life of the communities to which they belong and differences are respected.

“We will work with our partners and local communities with the ambition of both reducing the incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour and the fear of these incidents. Our aspiration is for strong communities free from the blight of these problems and a genuinely ‘Safer South Gloucestershire’ for all.”

Cllr Heather Goddard - Communities

PRIORITy 18. BE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE - To continue to prevent and tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse and the fear of crime effectively. To tackle violence effectively, in particular domestic violence and all hate crime incidents. To reduce reoffending through targeted joint working. To expand current Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services.

We will:

- Work with the police and other agencies to reassure the public and reduce the fear of crime.
- Work with the police and other agencies to reduce anti-social behaviour through the timely use of early interventions.
- Strengthen prevention and reduction of crime, particularly violent crime, through the Safer South Gloucestershire Strategy, Domestic Violence Strategy, Hate Crime Strategy and Youth Justice Plan.
- Work with the police and other agencies to reduce the level of crime committed by Priority and Prolific Offenders.
- Increase the number of people in South Gloucestershire accessing structured drug treatment services.
- Work with partners to promote ways to prevent the harm associated with alcohol misuse and increase the number of individuals accessing structured treatment for alcohol problems.

PRIORITy 19. PROMOTe EQUALITy oF OPPORTUINItY AND rEDUCe DISADVANTAGE - To reduce inequalities that exist within South Gloucestershire. To support vulnerable communities and tackle deprivation. To improve opportunities for vulnerable people who face barriers because of where they live or because of personal characteristics, and which prevents them sharing in the greater benefits enjoyed by the wider community. To improve housing conditions and standards for vulnerable people. To sustain an environment for a thriving voluntary and community sector.

We will:

- Reduce the number of vulnerable people at risk of financial exclusion, especially older people, disabled people, minority ethnic communities or people living in priority neighbourhoods by increasing the number of successful new and increased benefit claims.
Promoting Safer and Stronger Communities

**PRIORITY 20. BE CLEANER AND GREENER** - To enhance South Gloucestershire’s attractiveness with well-managed and maintained streets and green spaces.

- Deliver the actions identified in the Cleaner South Gloucestershire Strategy particularly improving education and enforcement in relation to litter, graffiti and fly-posting.
- Deliver our strategy for maintaining and improving our public open spaces.

**PRIORITY 21. PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT AND COHESION** - To increase the involvement of people in the life of their communities and in the decision-making processes that affect their quality of life and the services they receive

**We will:**

- Increase the proportion of people who feel they have opportunities for participating in decision-making in their area, particularly those from minority communities.
- Strengthen the capacity of our partners in town and parish councils as well as our voluntary and community sector.
- Increase the percentage of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together.
- Reduce the percentage of residents who think that people in their area are victimised because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.

- Ensure that public services meet the needs of people and disadvantaged groups living in priority neighbourhoods.
- Work to achieve level 4 of the Local Government Equalities Standard within the life of this plan developing information systems and monitoring against defined targets.
- Increase the take-up of community learning to support people in need of skills for life and up to a level 2 qualification.
- To reduce homelessness through effective prevention and Housing Options & Advice services.
- Maximise people’s ability to live independently by provision of appropriate support and advice.
PRIORITY 22. DEVELOP COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE - To ensure there is sufficient social space, buildings and networks to create vibrant, cohesive communities and enable rich, cultural participation and opportunities for interaction.

We will:

■ Work in partnership with the Leisure Trust to improve the quality of leisure facilities in South Gloucestershire to increase participation, with particular focus on deprived communities.

■ Deliver solutions that give access to the investment necessary for the enhancement and refurbishment of council-owned community buildings.

What it will mean for our residents:

Residents will feel able to participate in the communities to which they belong, cultural differences will be respected, learning will be stimulated and a feeling of stronger community life will be enjoyed. Residents will feel safe in their communities and be reassured that crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol and anti-social behaviour are being dealt with.

Case Study:

Your Council is working with Safer and Stronger community groups in Staple Hill, Patchway, Kingswood, Filton and Cadbury Heath to identify local needs and develop action plans with local people and partners.

Residents in Staple Hill have already seen their views acted upon and are benefiting from improved services relating to traffic and transport, and a cleaner environment, and the sense of community strength this brings.

Over 1000 local residents have been involved in developing community action plans so far, as part of our priority neighbourhoods’ work.
Our Corporate Aims

Valuing the Environment
So that South Gloucestershire will be a place where people respect the natural world, and historic and cultural environment, take action to protect, enhance and enjoy their environment and live low carbon, sustainable and healthy lifestyles.

“South Gloucestershire is made up of distinct local communities which we want to make stronger, safer and cleaner places to live. We respect the environment in which we live and want to improve it for everyone’s quality of life. We are determined to make our full local contribution to the vital global environmental challenge.”
Cllr Brian Allinson - Planning, Transport and Strategic Environment

**PRIORITy 23. CLIMATE CHANGE** - To cut emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change.

**We will:**

- Achieve a year on year reduction in energy use in Council buildings and a year on year increase in energy efficiency in private sector housing, through advice and a grants programme.

- Promote and support the development of renewable energy installations.

- Promote low carbon travel and reductions in the carbon footprint of new developments.

- Assess the likely impacts of climate change and work with our communities to manage these impacts.

**PRIORITy 24. RESOURCE USE, POLLUTION AND WASTE** - To cut consumption of resources, prevent pollution and waste and live within environmental limits.

**We will:**

- Produce and implement a waste strategy that will increase the amount of household waste that is recovered, and recycle or compost half of the total collected to reduce the amount of household waste that goes to landfill.

- Monitor air quality and take steps to control pollution levels and keep them below nationally recognised standards.
PRIORITY 25. NATURAL, HISTORIC AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT -
To conserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environment and promote local access and enjoyment by all.

We will:

- Work with our communities to conserve, enhance and manage our Green Belt, countryside, open spaces and rural areas, and to protect biodiversity, and to improve the quality of those areas for wildlife and recreation.

- Increase the level of diversity and community participation in the protection and enhancement of our local heritage.

- Implement high design standards in new development that create a sense of place and identity, that are appropriate to their setting and achieve sustainable communities.
PRIORITY 26. MEET NEEDS LOCALLY - To strengthen local supply chains and promote the use of local goods and services.

We will:

- Promote the local sourcing of food and continue to buy as much of our own food locally as possible.
- Protect and promote the vitality of local town centres, local shops and local services.

What will it mean for our residents:

During the life of the Council Plan, residents can expect to be involved in initiatives to conserve and enhance our natural and built environment, to see further improvements in the way we manage waste and to have access to a wide range of guidance on how to lead lifestyles that minimise our impact on climate change and the local environment.

Case Study:

Your Council works in partnership with SITA South Gloucestershire to increase its household waste recycling performance to 50% and is currently one of the top Unitary Authorities for recycling and composting.

In 2008/9 SITA South Gloucestershire propose to build an in-vessel composting plant to enable food to be collected weekly in the green bin. Food, cardboard and green garden waste, collected in the green bin will be taken to the in-vessel composting plant and converted, under controlled conditions, into a usable plant food/soil conditioner.

Up to 30,000 tonnes of biodegradable waste will therefore be diverted from landfill thus avoiding the production of damaging greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide.
“Sustaining a vibrant local economy and skills base is crucial to the future success of South Gloucestershire. We want to support and secure our existing businesses and employment. We will also work to regenerate our town centres, promote the rural economy and share the benefits of economic development. Our communities need successful and sustainable economies.”

Cllr. John Godwin - External Affairs and Partnerships

**PrioritY 27. Business Competitiveness and Economic Growth** - To improve productivity and competitiveness and safeguard/increase jobs in key sectors including aerospace, engineering, other manufacturing sectors, defence, environmental technologies, high technology, financial services, creative industries and the rural economy.

**We will:**
- Work with partners to deliver the Science Park at Emersons Green.
- Support and encourage the long term future of our key business sectors (e.g. lobbying to safeguard aerospace investment and jobs, supporting development proposals).

**PrioritY 28. Business Development** - To increase the number, survival rates and growth rates of starter and small enterprises in South Gloucestershire including social enterprises.

**We will:**
- Work with Business West and other agencies to support starter and small businesses and social enterprises.
- Encourage local trading through the publication of a bi-annual business directory and other company listings.

**PrioritY 29. Skills and Workforce Development** - To raise skill levels and meet the skill and workforce needs of employers including the growing sustainability industry.

**We will:**
- Support the sub-regional West @ Work project in delivering area based and sector based skills initiatives that benefit South Gloucestershire.
- Work with the West of England Learning and Skills Council to achieve agreed workforce skill targets in South Gloucestershire.
Maintaining Economic Prosperity

PRIORITy 30. EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PREMISES - To meet the employment land and premises requirements of indigenous and key sector businesses where sustainable and consistent with strategic employment and regeneration objectives.

We will:

- Provide an industrial and offices sites and premises enquiry service in partnership with the West of England Partnership Invest West Team.
- Critically assess alternative uses on safeguarded employment sites.
- Review employment land allocations and requirements for the next 20 years through the Local Development Framework.

PRIORITy 31. SHARING THE BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH - To ensure that all parts of South Gloucestershire and all groups share the benefits of economic development, in particular priority areas, rural areas and disadvantaged groups.

We will:

- Work with partners in priority areas to increase the number, range and quality of jobs.
- Support disabled people into training and employment in partnership with other agencies.
- Support rural diversification and regeneration through planning policies and targeted rural initiatives.

PRIORITy 32. TOWN AND DISTRICT CENTRES - To sustain and improve the vibrancy and vitality of town and district centres including Kingswood, Staple Hill, Downend, Yate and Thornbury.

We will:

- Work with town and district partnerships to improve town and district centres through, for example, traffic management, parking and environmental improvements.
What it will mean for our residents:

Residents will benefit from the choice of a large number and wide variety of jobs in a buoyant local economy. They will be able to acquire new skills that will help them adapt to changing labour market needs and progress their careers. Many residents currently not in work will be supported into training and employment. Businesses will benefit from continued economic growth and from policies and programmes aimed at meeting their business support, premises and skill needs. Businesses and residents will benefit from town and district centre improvements, from priority area improvements and from programmes aimed at supporting rural areas.

Case study:

A 25 hectare Science Park is being developed by the South West of England Regional Development Agency in partnership with the University of the West of England, Bath University, the University of Bristol and other partners including South Gloucestershire Council and will generate several hundred jobs during the construction stage and over 5,000 jobs when fully complete and occupied. Local people will be able to benefit from a wide range of jobs such as management, administration, IT, catering, security, as well as the core, high skill, technical/research jobs.

The Science Park will give a major economic boost to the Kingswood area which has suffered many job losses in recent years. The new jobs created during the construction phases and thereafter by businesses locating on the Science Park will offer people in the Kingswood area, including the unemployed, school leavers and those on low wages, the opportunity to obtain local and better paid jobs.

Work is to shortly start on phase 1 of the £300 million Bristol and Bath Science Park at Emersons Green adjacent to the Avon Ring Road. This first phase is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.

Demand for premises on the Science Park is likely to come from businesses and research establishments in the aerospace and defence, digital technologies and biotechnology sectors. It will also meet the needs of existing businesses looking to expand and new businesses drawn to the area by its location and communication advantages.

Over the next five years South Gloucestershire Council will work with the Regional Development Agency, developers, businesses, Jobcentre Plus, the West at Work project and other partners (e.g. local schools) to ensure that local people are given the appropriate advice and support to compete successfully for jobs at the Science Park.
Our improvement programme identifies six areas of focus, each of which have clear links and common objectives and are absolutely critical to the continued success of South Gloucestershire Council. The programme will ensure that we continue to be a well-managed and effective Council.

**PrioritY 33.**

**think customer!**

We will:

■ Put customer care at the heart of everything we do, ensuring that our council is easy for our customers to access and do business with, at a time, and in a way, that suits them.

**PrioritY 34.**

**inspirational leadership**

We will:

■ Build on the strengths and enhance the talents of our political and managerial leadership, promoting the ownership of future priorities amongst councillors and staff and strengthening organisational identity.

**PrioritY 35.**

**delivery through partnership**

We will:

■ Deliver improved outcomes for our communities through productive partnerships.

“Achieving our vision for the future requires our resources to be aligned closely to our service priorities. It is fundamental that we achieve the best value from our investment and resources. For us our people are our greatest resource and our priority is to maximise the benefit to our residents of their skills, knowledge and expertise.”

Cllr. Allan Higgs - Corporate Affairs
Delivering our Internal Improvement Programme – “Fit for our Future”

**PRIORITY 36.**

**investing in our staff**

We will:

- Continue to recruit, retain and invest in a highly skilled and performing workforce which responds to the future needs of the council, has the capacity and capability to achieve its objectives, harnessing the council’s reputation as a friendly, open, participative and fair organisation to work for.

**PRIORITY 37.**

**smarter working**

We will:

- Integrate modern working and business transformation into the council to support the delivery of our overall objectives, meet the changing needs of our customers, provide councillors and staff with the tools to perform efficiently and optimise the use of our accommodation.

**PRIORITY 38.**

**value for money**

We will:

- Provide good quality, value for money services that compare well in terms of cost and efficiency with the top performers.
What it will mean for our residents:

Residents and other public organisations will have assurance that the Council is well-managed and allocates its scarce resources wisely to deliver quality services to the community and meet its top priorities, in alignment with the sustainable community strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

The Council’s customers will feel that we work with, listen to and involve them in our decision-making and action. The Council will understand and represent local people’s needs and concerns, and co-ordinate with partners on action to deal with these concerns. Local people will recognise Council services and they will understand how the council is responding to the needs of their community.

More people living in South Gloucestershire will have access to services when and how they want to access them. Our customers will experience more consistently friendly and helpful responses from Council staff who keep customers informed on progress and resolve customer enquiries as efficiently as possible. Local people will feel that we treat everyone fairly, challenge inequalities and promote opportunities for all.

Case Study:

The Council is moving forward with ambitious plans to improve access to services for its residents through a range of new initiatives, rationalisation of premises and taking advantage of new technology. This will include the creation of a much needed, new One Stop Shop in the Patchway/Filton area, and 3 multi-agency children’s service centres at key locations across the district as part of the Council’s commitment to ‘every child matters’.

The Council is moving forward with an ambitious plan to reduce its office accommodation as part of its drive to continue its improvement of services to the customer. We will be moving out of many old and leased offices and spending less money on a new office. Not only does this mean we will spend less money on property, we will be bringing teams of people to work together in the same building, which will help us be more efficient in the way we work together to serve the customer.

This rationalisation will include a new office block for 1000 staff at Badminton Road on the outskirts of Yate, ready for occupation during 2010. Through a fundamental review of business processes and the introduction of new technology we will be working more flexibly, enabling the Council to reduce its overall costs. In addition, the new office block will enable us to achieve some of our environmental aspirations in reducing our carbon footprint, through the use of renewable technologies such as solar hot water heating, biomass boilers, and rainwater recycling. Overall, this project will produce savings for our residents in the region of £1.3million per annum on average over the life of the project and free up resources to improve the Council’s services to customers.
If you would like a copy of this plan in an alternative format such as Braille, larger print or a different language, please contact us on 01454 865433. This is also the number to ring for additional copies of the plan. Alternatively you can download a copy of the plan from our website: www.southglos.gov.uk/councilplan