

**SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE CORE STRATEGY INCORPORATING POST  
SUBMISSIONS CHANGES (PSC) SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF BUSINESS WEST**

Business West (BW) represents over two thousand business members and through our business leadership team "the West of England initiative" we operate across Bristol, Bath and the West of England area. We are a powerful voice of business with member companies both small and large in every sector. We also play a leading role in the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

In response to the inspector's questions our submissions are as follows:

**1. Is the overall strategy consistent with sustainable development principles as contained in the Planning Framework?**

BW is generally supportive of the spatial strategy adopted in the PSC as set out in chapters 4 and 6. However it is concerned that the PCS does not provide economic and physical linkages between the North Fringe and Severnside/Avonmouth to ensure that sustainable development principles are properly observed. In particular it is considered that without greatly enhanced connectivity required between business and homes in the North Fringe and proposed development in Severnside/Avonmouth, opportunities to realise the potential for significant sustainable growth within the Severnside/Avonmouth area as set out in Bristol City Council/South Gloucestershire Avonmouth/Severnside Outline Development Strategy 2012 (ASODS) will not be realised .

At paragraph 2.3.2 (iii) of ASODS it is recognised for instance, that there are, or could be, strong links between high value manufacturing industries across the North Fringe, including UWE, Severnside/Avonmouth to the west, and Bristol and Bath Science Park to the east. Whilst there is strong competition for high value industries outside the area, BW is of the view that there is merit in a "northern arc" strategy of higher value modern industrial development linking the North Fringe with Severnside/Avonmouth to the west and Bristol and Bath Science Park to the east. (see scenario 3 ASODS). Currently, the study identifies at 2.2.3 that distribution and logistics development is very attractive to the area as it has a relatively good access to the motorway network. However, the current high rate of job growth to date, driven by distribution and logistics development is unlikely to be sustained in the future. By linking the areas economically as suggested above into a "northern arc" of higher Value and diverse modern industrial development, the area is likely to become a significant national and international resource and drive long term sustainable, high value employment. It is difficult to envisage a more convenient and competitive

location across the UK given its important economic linkages (access to market, supply chain and access to labour), access to motorway and rail network and land availability.

It is believed that the main obstacles challenging the potential for realising opportunities in the North Fringe/Avonmouth/Sevenside (as opposed to those that apply to Avonmouth/Sevenside solely) are threefold:

- (i) The PSC identifies Sevenside/Avonmouth as a separate and distinct industrial area. Whilst there is some logic in considering its past and current role primarily in distribution and logistic development, a more diverse economic strategy that links the area to the "heart" of economic innovation and intelligence in the North Fringe would provide the area with a national profile and range of business opportunities. Sustainable job growth is also believed to be greater the more diverse the industrial make up.
- (ii) As identified in ASODS, although the area has close proximity to the national motorway network it has limited motorway connectivity and local network capacity. It is also relevant to note that the PSC identifies that the current transport infrastructure is close to capacity and will be at capacity following the development of all the new communities envisioned. BW believes that in order to ensure that all opportunities are realised for sustainable development linking jobs, homes and community services, there is a need for a "northern arc" development and movement strategy across the North Fringe incorporating Sevenside/Avonmouth and including, in time, a low level bridge across the Avon.

BW recognises that there are significant environmental and policy issues, such as the extent of the Green Belt. However it is important for the local planning authority to investigate options not only for new communities as set out in the PSC but across the M5 to investigate how Sevenside could be linked with the new communities in the North Fringe.

The opportunity for a movement corridor across the North Fringe and Sevenside/Avonmouth has been brought into sharp relief with the closure of

Filton Airfield and the proposed new community at Cribbs/Patchway. It is a significant opportunity not only to realise opportunities in Sevenside/Avonmouth but also to ensure that the location of jobs and the location of houses are strategically located to minimise journey distances. As the PSC currently stands it is thought that the opportunity to deliver a spatial structure that accommodates

the most efficient use of land, to ensure that jobs and housing are strategically located in this area, has not been realised.

(iii) BW believes that the opportunity for long term sustainable high value employment across this "northern arc" cannot be overstated and will stand the best chance of being realised if the opportunity for Filton Airfield to be redeveloped as a significant employment hub is maximised. BW would like to see a much greater emphasis on employment uses at Filton airfield than BAE Systems currently propose.

2. **Are there other spatial options which would be more likely to deliver better outcomes for South Gloucestershire during the planning period?**

Whilst the PSC as at chapter 4 and CS5 identify the prime areas for future growth within the core strategy period, the emphasis appears to be focused on development of existing commitments in the north and east fringes of Bristol and on sustainable communities at Cribbs, Patchway and Bradley Stoke.

Sevenside is mentioned as a strategic location for employment uses subject to resolution of flood risk from environmental infrastructure issues. It is not seen as a natural extension into the North Fringe but essentially as a satellite development and as part of the Avonmouth area. BW suggests that a "northern arc" incorporating the Sevenside/Avonmouth area is a more robust and attractive strategy.

Also, by including Sevenside effectively as a natural extension to the North Fringe albeit, separated by a green belt and land of high environmental importance, the justification for resolution of infrastructure issues identified in CS5 will be more easy to rationalise through government funding measures.

3. **Is the overall balance of growth between identified settlements clearly founded on the evidence base and is it likely to be effective in promoting sustainable development across the borough?**

No comment.

4. **Is the spatial strategy deliverable in the plan period and have the risks to delivery been properly assessed?**

No comment.

5. **Is there sufficient flexibility in the CS to allow for change of unforeseen events?**

No comment.

6. **Have cross boundary implications of the strategy been taken into account?**

More recently there has been evidence of joint work between the authorities both through the Local Enterprise Partnership but also on joint studies such as the ASODS. However the PSC will need to incorporate findings within the ASODS so that in particular connectivity of the Severnside/Avonmouth area to both the motorway network and the local road network is improved and that the area realises its full potential by its proximity to high value industries.

BW also believes that with joint working across the sub region there is a once in a century opportunity to deliver very significant numbers of jobs and houses, both of high quality and sustainability, if a really bold and strategic approach is taken to the enormous development area that the North Fringe and Avonmouth/Severnside represent. The result could transform the economic prospects of the whole Bristol city region in a way that commences the sub region's journey towards the vision identified in Bristol 2050.