

South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020

# **Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report**

**8 October 2020**

## Status of this Scoping Report

This Scoping Report was prepared by the Council in autumn 2020 and this was the start of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Local Plan 2020. Its purpose was to set the context and objectives, and establish a baseline, as is required at the scoping stage of undertaking the SA for the Local Plan 2020.

This scoping stage of the SA involved understanding the social, economic and environmental baseline for the plan area as well as the sustainability policy context and key sustainability issues. The Scoping Report included the following:

- The policies, plans and programmes of relevance to the new Local Plan and the relationships between them and the new Local Plan and the SA;
- Baseline information on environmental, social and economic issues in South Gloucestershire which provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely effects of options for the Local Plan and helps to identify alternative ways of dealing with any adverse effects identified. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations require assessment of effects in relation to a number of different SEA topics<sup>1</sup> and the inter-relationship between these;
- Key sustainability issues were identified making use of the analysis of the baseline information collected. Alongside the sustainability issues the likely evolution of these without the Local Plan 2020 was also presented; and
- A Sustainability Appraisal framework was prepared, setting out the SA objectives against which options and subsequently policies would be appraised. The SA framework provides a way in which the sustainability impacts of implementing a plan can be described, analysed and compared. The SA objectives define the long-term aspirations of the area with regard to social, economic and environmental considerations. During the SA, the performances of the plan options (and at a later stage, the sites and policies) are assessed against these SA objectives.

This SA Scoping Report was published in October 2020 for a five week consultation period with the three statutory consultees (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England) in line with the requirements of The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>2</sup>. It was also made available on the Council's website.

Responses were received from each of the statutory consultees during this period and a summary of these responses is included in Appendix 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan 2020: Phase 1 consultation document which is available to view [online](#).

These responses have been considered and some amendments have been made to the review of plans, policies and programmes, the baseline information and the key sustainability issues. Updated versions of the review of plans, policies and programmes and the baseline information are presented in Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan 2020: Phase 1 consultation document (see Chapter 3 and Appendices 2 and 3). The review of plans, policies and programmes and the baseline information will continue to be updated as appropriate throughout the SA process to ensure that they remain current. The updated SA framework is also presented in Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan 2020: Phase 1 consultation document (see Table 3.2 in Chapter 3).

This scoping report has been republished at this stage to show the development of the SA to this stage of the Local Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Topics include: biodiversity, population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage), and landscape.

<sup>2</sup> Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633

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## 1) Introduction

The Local Plan 2020 is a development plan document that will cover the administrative area of South Gloucestershire.

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. For these documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC). Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.

The purpose of this Scoping Report (SR) is to provide the context for, and determine the scope of, the Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of South Gloucestershire's Local Plan 2020, and to set out the framework for undertaking the later stages of the SA/SEA.

In summary the SR involves:

- reviewing other relevant plans, policies and programmes;
- considering the current state of the environment, as well as social and economic factors in South Gloucestershire;
- identifying any key environmental, social and economic issues or problems which may be affected by the Local Plan 2020; and
- setting out the 'SA framework', which comprises specific sustainability objectives against which the likely effects of the Local Plan 2020 can be assessed.

Given the early stages of Local Plan preparation, the information contained within this Scoping Report will be updated and included in subsequent versions of the full SA/SEA Report.

### The Plan Area

South Gloucestershire lies immediately to the north and east of the City of Bristol and is part of the [West of England Combined Authority](#) area<sup>3</sup>. The neighbouring authorities are Stroud, Wiltshire, Bath & North East Somerset and Bristol City. The district has close links with Bristol but some communities in the north and east of the authority also have functional links with places in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Bath & North East Somerset and into South Wales.

South Gloucestershire has a population of 282,600<sup>4</sup>. Around 87% of the population live in the suburban areas to the north and east of Bristol and the market towns of Yate, Chipping



<sup>3</sup> The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) is made up of three of the councils in the region – Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City and South Gloucestershire.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the latest (2018) Mid-year population estimate

Sodbury and Thornbury. The remaining 13% live in the more rural areas of the authority. The area has benefited from a prosperous, innovative and diverse economy. The proportion of the population in employment in South Gloucestershire (82.7%) is higher than the national average (75.9%)<sup>5</sup>, which reflects the strong economy of South Gloucestershire and more widely the West of England.

The majority of South Gloucestershire's residents work within the service sector (around 80% of working residents). There are several key employers in the authority providing manufacturing and advanced engineering roles, with major employers like Airbus UK, GKN Aerospace and Rolls Royce specialising in advanced research and development. The University of West of England (UWE) and the Bristol and Bath Science Park, provide a world class environment for businesses in science and advanced technology.

There are a range of designated town centres, as well as local high streets across our authority, which provide shopping, community and leisure facilities, as well as employment opportunities.

South Gloucestershire has a rich and varied natural and built environment. The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers 11,800ha (22%) in the east of the authority and includes a number of villages and settlements. Landscape ridges, hillsides and views frame the urban area and provide the setting for rural villages and settlements. Trees and woodlands currently cover approximately 11% of South Gloucestershire.

The area also contains a high number of internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation areas – such as the Severn Estuary being designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Ramsar site. In addition there are 22 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SSSI), 271 locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI's) and 46 regionally important Geological Sites (RIGS). South Gloucestershire also has 10 local nature reserves, 75 registered commons (covering 1.17% of the area) and a diverse range of nationally and internationally important wildlife species.

## **The South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020**

The existing adopted **South Gloucestershire Local Plan Core Strategy** (2013) has a number of key objectives. These objectives focus around the need to reduce and adapt to climate change; manage future development; manage economic prosperity; provide housing for all; improve existing communities; tackle congestion and improving accessibility; manage the environment and heritage; and improving health and wellbeing. To supplement this, the **Policies, Sites and Places Plan** (Adopted 2017) provides more in-depth criteria through which these objectives can be achieved.

Given the time since the Core Strategy and its spatial principles were examined, coupled with a number of changes that have occurred both nationally (such as a change in national planning guidance) and locally (e.g. the Council's Climate Emergency declaration), a review of the Local Plan has commenced in order to bring the policies in the plan up to date, and to meet the future needs for the next 15 years.

The Council will be looking to commence a Phase 1 consultation on its Local Plan 2020, focusing on the issues and priorities of South Gloucestershire; the beginning building blocks of a spatial strategy; the concept of urban lifestyles and the beginning steps for creating sustainable rural communities.

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<sup>5</sup> Employment Rate (aged 16-64), Annual Population Survey (Oct 2018-Sep 2019), ONS

Phase 1 also includes a few drafted policies (such as climate change, parking provision, urban lifestyles and policies surrounding the Oldbury Nuclear Power Station).

The next stage of the plan preparation will build upon the consultation responses to this phase 1 stage and will look at how these concepts are evolving. In addition, background evidence work will continue to be compiled and will help inform the Phase 2 document. The intention is for Phase 2 to be ready to release in 2021, in line with the Local Plan Delivery Programme<sup>6</sup>.

The new Local Plan for South Gloucestershire will also need to be in conformity with the emerging sub-regional mayoral plan, the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), which is currently being prepared with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). As part of this we will have to work with neighbouring authorities to ensure the identified need for new homes and jobs of the whole area are addressed and accommodated. The SDS will set the number of new homes, jobs, significant infrastructure and broad strategy principles, which Local Plans in the area will need to plan for and reflect. As such, any decisions being undertaken at the SDS level, will directly inform the Local Plan 2020.

The SDS will be subject to sustainability appraisal and will have a supporting Scoping Report, baseline information and sustainability objectives. As further detail emerges on the SDS and supporting sustainability appraisal the SA/ SEA Report for the Local Plan will consider whether there is a need to update the proposed approach to the appraisal of our Local Plan 2020.

## **Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process, as is advocated in [Planning Practice Guidance](#), whereby users can comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive through a single integrated Sustainability Appraisal process.

The terms 'Sustainability Appraisal' and 'SA' should henceforth be taken to mean 'Sustainability Appraisal incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive'.

The SA process is made up of a number of stages, as set out below in Table 1a.

Stage	What is required?
A	Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.
B	Developing and refining options and assessing effects.
C	Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
D	Consulting on the preferred options for the Plan and the SA report.
E	Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Plan

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<sup>6</sup> [South Gloucestershire's Local Plan Delivery programme \(LDPD\)](#)

Table 1b below sets out the main tasks involved in the scoping stage (Stage A).

Stage	What is required?
A1	Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives.
A2	Collecting baseline information.
A3	Identifying sustainability issues and problems.
A4	Developing the SA framework.
A5	Consulting on the scope of the SA.

The SEA Directive was transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (commonly referred to as the 'SEA Regulations'). This Scoping Report includes some of the required elements of the final 'Environmental Report' (the output required by the SEA Regulations).

Table 1c below signposts the relevant sections of the Scoping Report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements (the remainder will be met during subsequent stages of the SA of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020). This table will be included in the full SA Report at each stage of the SA to show how the SEA Regulations requirements have been met through the SA process.

SEA Regulations	Where covered in the SA Scoping Report?
<b>Preparation of an environmental report</b> in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated (Regulation 12 (2)). The information to be given is (Schedule 2):	The full SA Report for the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 will constitute the 'environmental report' and will be produced at a later stage in the SA process.
a) An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme, and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	Sections 1 and 2.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	Sections 3 and 4.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	Section 3.
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.	Sections 3 and 4.
e) The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	Section 2.

SEA Regulations	Where covered in the SA Scoping Report?
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium, long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above issues.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
i) A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Regulation 17.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
j) A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
The report shall include such of the information referred to in Schedule 2 as may reasonably be required taking account of current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, the stage of the plan or programme in the decision-making process, and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Regulation 12(3)).	This Scoping Report and the Environmental Reports will adhere to this requirement.
<b>Consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the environmental report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies (Regulation 12(5)).</li> </ul>	Consultation with the relevant statutory environmental bodies is being undertaken between October and November in 2020.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every draft plan or programme for which an environmental report has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 12 and its accompanying environmental report shall be made available for the purposes of consultation (Regulation 13(1)) and the period must be of such length that the consultation bodies and the public consultees are given an effective opportunity to express their opinion on the relevant documents (Regulation 13(3)).</li> </ul>	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process (i.e. when the Draft Local Plan is consulted upon).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Regulation 14).</li> </ul>	Not relevant. There will be no effects beyond the UK from the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020.



SEA Regulations	Where covered in the SA Scoping Report?
<b>Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Art. 8)</b>	
<b>Provision of information on the decision:</b> As soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme, the responsible authority shall inform the consultation bodies, the public consultees and the Secretary of State that the plan or programme has been adopted and provide a copy of a statement (Regulation 16(4)) that sets out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;</li> <li>- how the environmental report has been taken into account;</li> <li>- how opinions expressed in response to the invitation in Regulation 13(2)(d), action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with Regulation 13(4) have been taken into account;</li> <li>- how the results of any consultations entered into under Regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;</li> <li>- the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</li> <li>- the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.</li> </ul>	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
<b>Monitoring:</b> The responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action (Regulation 17).	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

Under Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) land-use plans, including Development Plan Documents, are also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land-use plan against the conservation objectives of a European site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site.

The HRA for the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 will be undertaken and reported on separately to the SA. If appropriate and relevant, the findings will be taken into account in the SA.

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

The purpose of the EqIA is to analyse the likely impact of Local Plan policies on different groups of people in the community and how the needs of such groups have been taken into account in relation to the development of policies.

The Equality Impact Assessment and SA are two separate processes. The EqlA will be carried out alongside the SA to assess the impact on equality of the Local Plan as it progresses.

## **Structure of the Scoping Report**

This section has set out the background to the production of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 and the requirement to undertake SA. The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the other plans, policies and programmes of relevance to the SA of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020;
- Section 3 presents the baseline information which will inform the assessment of the policies and sites in the emerging South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020;
- Section 4 identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues in South Gloucestershire of relevance to the Local Plan Review and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation;
- Section 5 presents the SA framework that will be used for the appraisal of the Local Plan Review and the proposed method for carrying out the SA;
- Section 6 describes the next steps to be undertaken in the SA of the Local Plan Review.

## **What further information is available?**

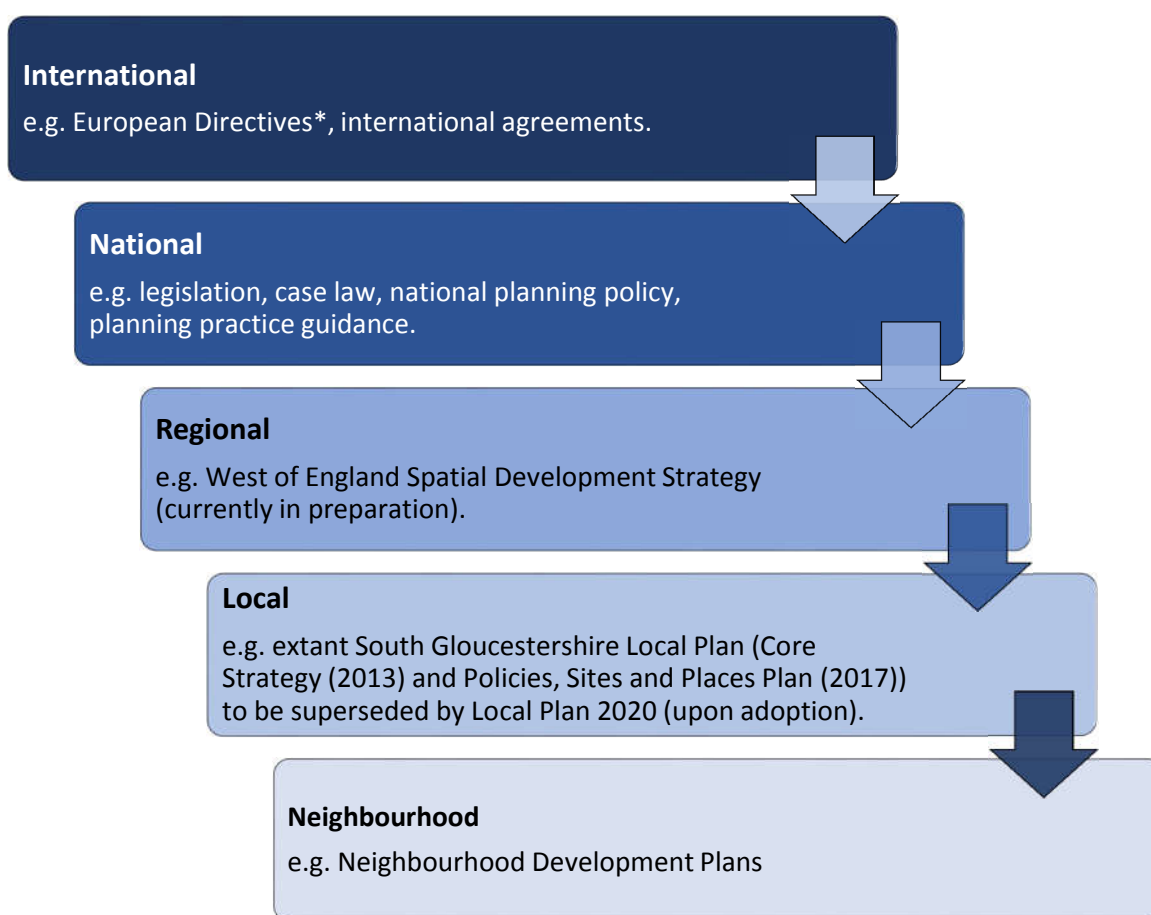
If you have any queries on this report or any other aspect of the SA process, please contact the Strategic Planning Policy and Specialist Advice Team at [planningpolicy@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@southglos.gov.uk).

## 2) Review of relevant Plans and Programmes

Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires:

- (a) “an outline of the...relationship with other relevant plans or programmes”; and
- (e) “the environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation”

In order to establish a clear scope for the SA it is necessary to review and develop an understanding of the environmental, social and economic objectives contained within international and national policies, plans and strategies that are of relevance to the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020. Given the SEA Directive requirements above, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 and other relevant plans, policies and programmes.



This section summarises the relevant international and national policies, plans and programmes which should be taken into consideration during preparation of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 and its SA, as well as those plans and programmes which are of relevance at a regional and local level. The objectives of these plans and programmes have been taken into account when drafting the SA framework in Section 5.

As of the end of January 2020 the UK left the EU. A transition period is in place until 31st December 2020. During this period EU rules and regulations will continue to apply to the UK.

As set out in the Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Brexit amendments, the purpose of the Brexit amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the EU. No substantive changes are being made by this instrument to the way the SEA regime operates. Relevant international plans and policy (including those at the EU level) are transposed into national plans, policy and legislation and these have been considered. We recognise that this list below may need to be updated.

## **International**

**United Nations (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention (1972)** - Promotes co-operation among nations to protect heritage around the world that is of such outstanding universal value that its conservation is important for current and future generations.

**International Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention) (1976)** - International agreement with the aim of conserving and managing the use of wetlands and their resources.

**European Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) (1979)** Aims to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats, to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to regulate the exploitation of those species (including migratory species).

**European Nitrates Directive (1991)** - Reduce water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources and prevent further such pollution.

**European Urban Waste Water Directive (1991)** - Protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water collection, treatment and discharge, and discharge from certain industrial sectors.

**European Habitats Directive (1992)** - Sets the standard for nature conservation across the EU and enables all 27 Member States to work together within the same strong legislative framework in order to protect the most vulnerable species and habitat types across their entire natural range within the EU.

**European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1992)** - Protection of the archaeological heritage, including any physical evidence of the human past that can be investigated archaeologically both on land and underwater. Creation of archaeological reserves and conservation of excavated sites.

**International Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)** - International commitment to biodiversity conservation through national strategies and action plans.

**European Air Quality Framework Directive (1996) and Air Quality Directive (2008)** - Put in place measures for the avoidance, prevention, and reduction in harmful effects to human health and the environment associated with ambient air pollution and establish legally binding limits for the most common and harmful sources of air pollution.

**United Nations Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) (1998)** - Established a number of rights of the public with regard to the environment. Local authorities should provide for:

- The right of everyone to receive environmental information,
- The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making,

- The right to challenge in a court of law public decisions that have been made without respecting the two rights above or environmental law in general.

**European Drinking Water Directive (1998)** - Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean.

**European Landfill Directive (1999)** - Prevent or reduce negative effects on the environment from the landfilling of waste by introducing stringent technical requirements for waste and landfills.

**United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000)** - Sought to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; develop a global partnership for development.

**European Water Framework Directive (2000)** - Protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater.

**United Nations Declaration on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Declaration) (2002)** - Sets broad framework for international sustainable development, including building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency.

**European Environmental Noise Directive (2002)** - Sets out a hierarchy for the avoidance, prevention and reduction in adverse effects associated with environmental noise, including noise generated by road and rail vehicles, infrastructure, aircraft and outdoor, industrial and mobile machinery.

**European Landscape Convention (2002)** - Promotes landscape protection, management and planning. The Convention is aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes and raising awareness of the value of a living landscape.

**European Floods Directive (2007)** - Establishes a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks, aiming at the reduction of the adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods.

**European Waste Framework Directive (2008)** - Sets out the waste hierarchy requiring the reduction of waste production and its harmfulness, the recovery of waste by means of recycling, re-use or reclamation and final disposal that does not harm the environment, including human health.

**European Birds Directive (2009)** - Requires the maintenance of all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state in the European territory at a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational requirements.

**European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (2010)** - Aims to promote the energy performance of buildings and building units. Requires the adoption of a standard methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance.

**European Industrial Emission Directive (2010)** - Lays down rules on integrated prevention and control of pollution arising from industrial activities. It also lays down rules designed to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the

generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment taken as a whole.

**United Nations Declaration on Forests (New York Declaration) (2014)** - Sets out international commitment to cut natural forest loss by 2020 and end loss by 2030.

**United Nations Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015)** - International agreement to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

## National

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** is the most significant national policy in the context of Local Plan preparation. The document sets out the Government's planning policy for England and how these policies should be applied. Each Local Plan is required to set out policies to be in conformity with those principles described in the NPPF. Essentially, the NPPF *"provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced."* (NPPF 2019, para:1).

Paragraph 16 of the NPPF also notes that Plans should be:

- *prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;*
- *be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverables;*
- *be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees;*
- *contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals;*
- *be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation; and*
- *serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area.*

As the NPPF requires Local Plans to be aspirational but deliverable, the opportunities for appropriate development should be identified in order to achieve net gains in terms of sustainable social, environmental and economic development; however significant adverse impacts in any of these areas should not be allowed to occur. National policy of the most relevance to the Local Plan has been summarised below.

### **Population growth and housing requirements**

The NPPF contains, as part of its three overall overarching objectives, a social objective to *"support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment."*

Local planning authorities should significantly boost the supply of homes and that it is *'important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay'* (para 59).

In order to determine the number of homes required, a Housing Market Assessment should be completed to assess the full housing needs of the area, including the scale, mix and range of tenures

required. It is also noted that *‘any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for’* (para 60).

In relation to the provision of affordable housing, local plans should specify the type required, and expect it to be met on site unless off site provision or an appropriate functional contribution in lieu can be fully justified, and the agreed approach contributes to creating sustainable communities. Sites that are selected in the Local Plan will need to ensure that they are available, suitable and economically viable to be delivered.

### **Economic Development**

Specific reference is made to the protection and allocation of employment sites within the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF July 2019). The NPPF acknowledges that there are three overarching objectives that need to be pursued in a mutually supportive way; Economic, Social and Environmental. Within the Economic segment of this framework, the objective is to help build strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity, and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

The role of planning in shaping the economy is therefore to ensure that it contributes to building a strong, competitive economy. It also requires that planning seeks to *“create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt”* with policies required to *“to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment.”* Planning policies are also required specifically to address support for the rural economy.

NPPF requires that planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to the Local Industrial Strategy and other local policies for economic development and regeneration. In addition it should seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure.

Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.

### **Ensuring the vitality of town centres**

In conjunction with the NPPF and NPPG requirements for the economy, town centres and high streets play a critical role both as service and community focal points, as well as providing employment opportunities.

The NPPF seeks to create competitive town centre environments that are prioritised over edge of town developments, which should only be considered where they have good access and do not compromise the viability of town centres in the long term. A definition and network of town centres is required in order to allow them to grow and diversify in a way that they can respond to rapid changes in retail and leisure industries. Plans must allocate and provide sufficient land for town centres and high streets to ensure that they remain suitable.

The NPPF encourages the retention and enhancement of existing markets – introducing new ones when required. Development outside of town centres also needs to meet the sequential test to ensure that the vitality and viability of existing centres is not compromised through development. In addition to this, NPPG notes that ‘A wide range of complementary uses can, if suitably located, help to support the vitality of town centres, including residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare and educational development. The same is true of temporary activities such as ‘pop ups’, which will often benefit from permitted development rights’<sup>7</sup>.

Furthermore, evening and night time activities have the potential to increase economic activity within town centres and provide additional employment opportunities. They can allow town centres to diversify and help develop their unique brand and offer services beyond retail. In fostering such activities, local authorities will also need to consider and address any wider impacts in relation to crime, noise and security.

### **Promoting healthy and safe communities**

Planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places that promote social interaction; are safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lifestyles. As such, in order to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies should proactively plan for shared spaces and protect against the loss of valuable community assets (para 91 and 92).

Furthermore, it is important that a sufficient choice of school places area available to meet the needs of existing and new communities (para 94).

There should also be ‘*access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity [in that it is] important for the health and well-being of communities*’ (para 96). As such, existing open spaces, sports and recreational business and land, should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken that shows the site as being surplus to requirement; that the site is re-provided.

### **Promoting sustainable transport**

Given the complexity and intrinsic nature of transport, these issues should be considered from the earliest stages of the plan making process to ensure that the potential impacts on transport networks can be addressed, and that plans to incorporate sustainable modes of transport are sought early on (para 102). The scale, location and density of development should reflect the ‘*opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure*’ (para 102). To help reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health, the planning system should be ‘*focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes*’ (para 103).

In addition, the NPPF encourages an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.

The Local Plan should also identify and protect ‘*where there is robust evidence*’ the sites and routes which are essential to developing infrastructure to broaden the transport choice and realise the opportunities for large scale development (para 104).

### **Supporting high quality communications**

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<sup>7</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Town centres and Retail Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 2b-001-20190722



Advanced, high quality and reliable infrastructure is vital for economic growth and social well-being. Local planning policies should therefore 'support the expansion of electronic communication networks', and should set out how high quality digital infrastructure is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time (para 112). This expansion should also prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments.

The NPPF also encourages the sharing of masts, buildings and other structures for new electronic communications where it will enhance connectivity and coverage (para 113).

#### **Making effective use of land and achieving well-designed places.**

Local plans should promote effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (para 117). In addition to this, the NPPF reiterates that 'undeveloped land can provide many functions, such as wildlife, recreation, flood-risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production' (para 118).

Furthermore, the NPPF encourages Local Planning Authorities to promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings '*especially if this would help meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively*' (para 118).

Planning policies should support development that makes efficient use of land taking into account the different types of housing and development required; local market conditions and viability; the capacity and availability of infrastructure and services; the character of the area and its potential future development and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places (para 122).

Plans should contain '*policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible*' (para 123).

However, the efficient use of land should be balanced with the notions of achieving well designed places. Good design is 'a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'.

The plan should set out a clear design vision with design policies reflecting local aspirations which should be grounded in an understanding of the areas defining characteristics and distinctive areas. The NPPF also requires developments to create safe and accessible environments where 'crime and disorder, and fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or social cohesion' (para 127).

#### **Protecting Green belt land**

The NPPF notes that the 'fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence' (para 133). Green belts therefore serve 5 purposes; to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging; protect the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the re-use of derelict and brownfield sites (para 134). The Green Belt also assists in supporting sustainable development, in that it directs developments towards the urban areas inside the green belt, to towns and villages within the Green belt, or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

Once these boundaries are established, the NPPF notes that they '*should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of*

plans' (para 136). Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and/or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land (para 138).

#### **Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change**

The key emphasis for the NPPF is to ensure that the planning system helps support the transition to a low carbon future... taking full account of flood risk and coastal change'. The local plan should aim to move towards a low carbon future to address the implications of a changing climate and take full account of flood risk and coastal change in order to encourage resilient communities.

There is a need for local plans to take a '*proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to Climate Change- taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes... Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure*' (para 149).

Further to this, the NPPF is clear on the needs to resist inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding (para 155).

#### **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (including biodiversity)**

The local plan will need to have consideration for the conservation and enhancement of landscape characters within the district. The NPPF also states that Planning should take into account the different roles and the character of different areas; and contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment (para 170). Protection and enhancement of valued landscapes is also required, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance, as well as the natural and historic environments more generally.

The NPPF also places great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of outstanding Natural Beauty (para 172).

With regards to biodiversity, the NPPF includes as part of its environmental objective that the planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural environment including helping to improve biodiversity, and using natural resources prudently. In support of this aim the framework states that Local Plans should "*identify and map components of local wildlife-rich habitats*" and should also "*promote the conservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity*" (para 174).

#### **Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

The local plan needs to consider the historic environment as there are many assets which are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. In order to do this, plans should '*set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats*' (para 185).

The NPPF also highlights the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation can bring, as well as the opportunities for new developments to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment.

#### **Sustainable use of Minerals**

It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods needed. Within South Gloucestershire, there are a number of mineral extraction locations. The NPPF requires Local Plans to provide for the extraction of these minerals; consider the contribution that substitute or secondary and recycled materials could make to the supply chain; and safeguard mineral resources by defining Mineral Safeguarding Areas to ensure that resources are used appropriately (para 204).

### **Additional National Plans & Programmes**

#### **DCLG Housing White Paper - Laying the Foundations: Fixing our broken housing market (2017) -**

The proposals in the white paper set out how the government intends to boost housing supply; create a more efficient housing market whose outcomes more closely reflect the needs and aspirations of all households and which supports the wider economic prosperity. Key objectives/steps:

- Planning for the right homes in the right places
- Building homes faster
- Diversify the housing market
- Helping people now

The Government is also setting out goals for managing and improving the environment within the next 25 years within its environment plan titled **A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment** (2018)<sup>8</sup>. This document seeks to influence planning at a local level and therefore will be relevant to the scope of the SA and sets out goals for improving the environment over the next 25 years. It details how the Government will work with communities and businesses to leave the environment in a better state than it is presently. The South Gloucestershire Local Plan will need to make reference to the 6 key goals outlined, which include the following ambitions:

- clean air;
- clean and plentiful water;
- thriving plants and wildlife;
- reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought;
- using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently; and
- enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

**UK Clean Growth Strategy - leading the way to a low carbon future (2017):** Sets out the desire to achieve clean growth by growth growing our national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions

#### Objectives:

- 1) To meet our domestic commitments at the lowest possible net cost to UK taxpayers, consumers and businesses.
- 2) To maximise the social and economic benefits for the UK from this transition.  
In order to meet the objectives, the strategy sets 3 goals:
  - a) To nurture low carbon technologies, processes and systems that are as cheap as possible.
  - b) Secure the most industrial and economic advantage from the global transition to a low carbon economy.

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<sup>8</sup> [A Green Future: our 25 year plan to improve the Environment \(2018\)](#)

- c) Low carbon technologies that are cheaper and to offer more value than high carbon ones, so that other countries, particularly developing countries, follow our example.

**Key areas for action:**

- 1) Improving Business and Industry Efficiency and Supporting Clean Growth
- 2) Improving Our Homes
- 3) Accelerating the Shift to Low Carbon Transport
- 4) Delivering Clean, Smart, Flexible Power
- 5) Enhancing the Benefits and Value of Our Natural Resources

**CIRIS – Delivering better water management through the planning system (2019)** - Sets out how an integrated management approach will reduce the risk from flooding; increase water efficiency; provide clean and good quality water environment; enable new housing; facilitate economic growth and regeneration; enhance biodiversity; provide better blue-green infrastructure; provide accessible public open spaces; mitigate and adapt to climate change; and use resources more efficiently and effectively.

**Planning White Paper- Planning for the Future (March 2020 and consultation August 2020)** - The government is proposing a series of changes to the planning system in order to make it less complicated, easier for the public to access and transforms the way that communities are shaped, and essentially for it to deliver more homes. The new system will mean that local areas will develop plans for land to be designated into three categories- Growth areas; renewal areas; and protected areas. As consultation into this document is currently ongoing, no legislative changes have yet been enacted. The Planning White Paper also proposes significant changes to the way Local Plans are produced and what they should contain. This will impact on how we progress our new Local Plan and what we consult you on, in future years

**The Environment Bill (2020)** - The Environment Bill brings about urgent and meaningful action to combat the environmental and climate crises we are facing and acts as a key vehicle for delivering the bold vision set out in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#). It is expected that the Environment Bill will require **all** development (except householder applications and permitted development) to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain and sufficient information to demonstrate this will be required to be submitted as part of the planning application. **Biodiversity Net Gain** will require developers to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and requires a demonstrable increase in habitat value compared to the pre-development baseline. By measuring the value of existing habitats in Biodiversity Units the Net Gain approach firstly encourages habitats of high biodiversity value to be avoided or preserved, given the difficulty and cost in compensating for them. It also leads to new developments integrating wildlife-enhancing features into plans in order to boost their score of biodiversity units. Such enhancing features might include: trees, hedges, wildflowers, ponds and other habitats. Net Gain follows the principle of the mitigation hierarchy which seeks to: enhance habitat, avoid habitat loss, minimise habitat loss, restore habitat loss, compensate for habitat loss, or as a final option if on-site mitigation cannot be achieved, offset habitat loss. On sites where biodiversity value is increased through offsetting, either on existing sites of biodiversity value or new sites with enhanced biodiversity value, they should all be protected into the future.

## Regional

**West of England Strategic Green Infrastructure Framework (2011)** – The purpose of this plan is to maintain a functional and connected strategic Green Infrastructure network and maximise opportunities for enhancing the network.

**West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2011)** - The four West of England unitary authorities (South Gloucestershire, Bristol City, Bath & North East Somerset and North Somerset Councils) adopted the Joint Waste Core Strategy in March 2011. This sits alongside the South Gloucestershire Core Strategy, adopted in December 2013. It sets targets for which household landfill waste should reduce, and increasing the amount of waste recycled.

**Avonmouth/ Severnside Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2011)** - The aim of the study was to provide evidence to avoid areas of highest flood risk in the Avonmouth area. It also estimated the likely flood risk from the sea and river network to various development sites.

**Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2013-2018 - The Cotswolds Conservation Board** - The purpose of this plan is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, and to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

**West of England Strategic Economic Plan 2015 – 2030 (2014)** - This Plan seeks to:

- Create the right conditions for business to thrive. Give confidence and certainty to our investors to attract and retain investment to stimulate and incentivise growth.
- Ensure a resilient economy, which operates within the environmental limits. That is low carbon and resource efficient economy, increases natural capital and is proofed against future environmental, economic and social shocks.
- Create places where people want to live and work, through delivery of cultural infrastructure, including broadband, transport and housing to unlock suitable locations for economic growth.
- Shape the local workforce to provide people with skills that businesses need to succeed and that will provide them with job opportunities.
- Ensure all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap.

**West of England Strategic Economic Plan 2015 – 2030 (2014)** - The SEP looks to create the right conditions for business to thrive. Give confidence and certainty to our investors to attract and retain investment to stimulate and incentivise growth; ensure a resilient economy, which operates within the environmental limits. That is low carbon and resource efficient economy, increases natural capital and is proofed against future environmental, economic and social shocks; Create places where people want to live and work, through delivery of cultural infrastructure, including broadband, transport and housing to unlock suitable locations for economic growth; Shape the local workforce to provide people with skills that businesses need to succeed and that will provide them with job opportunities; Ensure all our communities share in the prosperity, health and well-being and reduce the inequality gap.

**WoE Sustainable Drainage Developer Guide (2015)** - A sustainable approach to drainage mitigates the impact of new development on flood risk and builds our resilience to flooding. It also provides opportunities to remove pollutants from urban runoff at source, and combines water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife. This guide signposts to existing policy and guidance to support the delivery of a sustainable approach to the drainage of new development in the West of England.

**Local Industrial Strategy (2019)** - Invest in infrastructure that reduced energy demand, lowers carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change; Strengthening innovation and driving productivity; Supporting all residents to contribute to and benefit from economic success; Providing businesses with the space, networks and skills they need to boost productivity, grow and thrive.

**West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2020-2036)** – seeks to prioritise improvements which will bring about the greatest increases in walking and cycling (which tend to be in urban areas) across the West of England authorities.

This Plan proposes improvements to the walking environment focussing on 30 local high streets (totalling £105 million), as well as improvements along 55 continuous cycle routes (totalling £306 million), with the aim of providing high quality infrastructure to support our transition to a region where walking and cycling are the preferred choice for shorter trips and to access public transport. The plan seeks to make it accessible for all users, including those using mobility aids, kick scooters, and adapted cycles, whilst simultaneously future proofing for new modes such as electric scooters and other forms of sustainable, individual transport modes to travel around the area.

**West of England Joint Transport Plan 4 (JLTP 4) – 2020-2036** - The Joint Local Transport Plan aims to ensure that transport is carbon neutral by 2030. To do this, there has to be a substantial shift towards cleaner and greener and more sustainable forms of transport. The JLTP 4 seeks to maximise every opportunity and work in partnership with sustainable transport organisations, bus and rail operators, to encourage and help people switch from cars to cycling, walking and public transport. The aim is that by 2036, the West of England will be a carbon neutral community where walking and cycling are the preferred choice for shorter journeys, and the vast majority of vehicles on the road are decarbonised and no longer powered by fossil fuels. The plan aims to increase the choices available for travel.

**West of England Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (Currently being compiled)** - As part of the development of the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), regional work is currently being undertaken to establish the housing requirements for the area. The LHNA should estimate housing need and demand in terms of affordable and market housing, determine how the distribution of need and demand varies across the area, consider future demographic trends and identify the accommodation requirements of specific groups and the likely mix of housing. The LHNA is a key evidence document and also provides baseline information for SA.

## **Local**

### **Neighbouring Local Plans**

**B&NES Core Strategy (Adopted 2014) and Placemaking Plan (Adopted 2017)** - The Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan both have a number of key objectives. These are:

- Pursuing a low carbon and sustainable future in a challenging climate;
- Protect and enhance the District's natural, built and cultural assets and provide green infrastructure;
- Encourage economic development, diversification and prosperity;
- Invest in our city, town and local centres;
- Meet housing need;
- Plan for development that promotes health and well-being; and
- Deliver well-connected places accessible by sustainable means of transport.

In addition to this, work is currently underway on the revised Local Plan 2016 to 2036.

**B&NES Local Plan 2016-2036 (Options Consultation- 2018)** - ongoing work into the replacement plan sees the spatial priorities remain similar to those of the Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan.

**Bristol Core Strategy (Adopted June 2011)** - The main objectives here are:

- Ensuring a sustainable future for Bristol
- Mixed, balanced and sustainable communities
- Ambitious and sustainable economic growth
- Appropriate housing provision
- Better health and wellbeing
- High quality built environment
- High quality natural environment
- Improved accessibility and connectivity
- Effective waste management
- Adapting to climate change and promotion of renewable energy
- Community involvement and engagement.

**Stroud's Local Plan (Adopted 2015)** – The Local Plan sets out a number of key objectives. These are:

- Maintaining and improving accessibility to services and amenities (healthcare for all residents' affordable housing and decent housing for local needs; active social, leisure and recreation opportunities; and youth and adult learning opportunities).
- Providing for a strong, diverse, vibrant local economy that enables balanced economic growth, coupled with enhanced job opportunities across the district;
- Improving the safety, vitality and viability of our town centres, which link to and support the needs of their rural hinterlands;
- Promoting healthier alternatives to the use of the private car and seeking to reduce CO2 emissions by using new technologies, active travel and/or smarter choices, working towards a more integrated transport system to improve access to local goods and services.
- Promoting a development strategy that mitigates global warming, adapts to climate change and respects our environmental limits by:
  - o Securing energy efficiency through building design
  - o Maximising the re-use of buildings and recycling of building materials
  - o Minimising the amount of waste produced and seeking to recover energy
  - o Promoting the use of appropriately located brownfield land
  - o Supporting a pattern of development that facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport
  - o Minimising and mitigating against future flood risks, recycling water resources and protecting and enhancing the quality of our District's surface and groundwater resources; and
- Conserving and enhancing Stroud District's distinctive qualities, based on landscape, townscape and biodiversity

**Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)** - The Wiltshire Core Strategy notes six key objectives; deliver a thriving economy; address climate change; provide everyone with access to a decent, affordable home; help build resilient communities; protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment; and ensuring that adequate infrastructure is in place to support the communities.

## **Other South Gloucestershire Plans and Strategies**

### **South Gloucestershire Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Level 1 (2009) and Level 2 (2011)**

Level 1 of this study defines extent of Flood Zones 3 and 2, as well as Historic flood events and incidents/call outs. However, the climate change extents not defined. Level 2 provides guidance and advice on flood risk management and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and Specific Flood Risk Assessments. Again, it defines extent of FZ 3 and 2, depth, velocity, hazard and surface water (30yr and 200yrs) and with climate change and historic flood events.

**South Gloucestershire Council Plan 2016-2020** - The Council plan has a number of high level objectives that the Council is seeking to address. These are:

- to enhance our natural and built environment, develop low-carbon, health promoting, integrated communities with a strong sense of place connected by well-planned transport networks
- maximise opportunities to access first class education, reduce the attainment gap and prosper through a balanced economy, a well-trained workforce and sustainable jobs for all
- engage people of all ages so they feel they belong and can help provide local solutions; support communities so they are safe and feel safe and have access to services of an optimum quality
- promote personal well-being, reduce health inequalities and deliver high quality physical and mental health and social care services which protect our most vulnerable and offer people greater choice and control within strong, self-supporting communities

### **South Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-21)**

Improve educational attainment and raise aspirations through promotion of health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.

- Promote and enable positive mental health and wellbeing through the life-course.
- Promote and enable good nutrition, physical activity and a healthy weight through the life course.
- Maximise the potential of our built and natural environment to enable healthy lifestyles and prevent disease

**South Gloucestershire Council Economic Development Strategy 2012 – 2016 (2012)** sets out a number of strategic objectives that are:

- To improve production and competitiveness, and safeguard and increase jobs in key sectors;
- To increase the number, survival rates and growth rates of starter and small enterprises including social enterprises to maintain a diverse, vibrant, sustainable economy.
- To raise aspirations and skill levels throughout schools, colleges and universities and meet the skill and workforce needs of local employers;
- Improve standards in our schools so young people realise their aspirations and are well prepared for the future;
- Ensure that all parts and groups of the district share the benefit of economic development;
- To meet the land, premises and infrastructure requirements of businesses where it is sustainable and consistent with employment and regeneration objectives.

**South Gloucestershire Council Rural Affordable Housing Pledge (2013)** - The aim of this document is to encourage rural communities to consider their current and future housing needs and long term sustainability.



### **Housing Strategy for South Gloucestershire 2013 – 2018**

The aim of the strategy is for everyone in South Gloucestershire to be able to live in a good quality home that meets their needs and that they can afford. The Council will work with partners to tackle the range of housing issues that affect residents to achieve the following ambitions:

- Quality, choice, right for you;
- affordable, sustainable and investing in communities; and
- Friendly, safe communities we are proud of Well-planned places for a greener future.

**Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)** sets out a list of objectives in order to minimise and mitigate against the impact of flooding, such as prioritising and implementing improvements to local flood infrastructure; increase public awareness of the level of flood risk; improve understanding about how drainage will influence the risk of flooding, and how climate change will influence future flood risk.

**SGC Sustainable Community Strategy (2016)** - Ensure resources are used wisely, reduce carbon emissions, prevent pollution and waste, and conserve and enhance the environment for future generations. Its purpose is to promote a greater understanding and mutual respect between different sectors and a selection of the community; empower all people to participate and become involved in decisions which affect the area. In addition, to find simple and effective ways of working together that improve efficiency, make the most of the resources and ensure value for money

### **South Gloucestershire Biodiversity Action Plan (2016-2026)**

Focuses on creating ecological networks and enhancing ecosystem services, and now forms part of the UK's commitment under the CBD. It should be read in conjunction with the previous BAP (2006-2015), which still contains relevant information on the biodiversity of South Gloucestershire.

### **South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy 2018- 2023 – Looks to:**

- Increase resilience to climate change - a safe and healthy place to live and do business;
- Enable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from energy consumption in homes, transport and businesses in South Gloucestershire;
- Enable the development of secure supplies of renewable and low carbon energy by individuals, community groups and industry;
- Support new development to minimise additional associated greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Develop the low carbon economy.

Since adoption of this strategy, the Council has declared a Climate Emergency. A new strategy is currently being developed that will set out new targets and aims to align with our declared Climate Emergency.

The **Commissioning of School Places Strategy 2019/2026** pulls together the information required to form a strategic view of the need for school places across South Gloucestershire. It provides a summary analysis of current provision, identifies gaps and over-provision and sets out how the LA intends to address these. Specifically, the strategy provides a revised and updated policy framework for considering the following:

- statutory proposals, (opening, closing and defining the size and organisation of schools);
- planning and commissioning new school provision; and

- supporting the development of school organisation change including informal and formal school partnership arrangements which support school to school improvement and make efficient use of resources

**Small and Rural Schools Strategy (June 2020)** - helps to build on the aims and objectives of the COPS especially for small and rural schools as there are very specific pressures faced by them, mostly as a result of relatively low numbers of children on roll. The Small and Rural Schools Strategy sets out the sustainability of those schools (defined under this category) by developing collaborative models of leadership and a joined-up approach to planning and housing delivery.

**Draft South Gloucestershire Council Plan, 2020-2024** - The Council is in the process of updating its current Council Plan and as part of this, public consultation was held from May to July 2020 to gauge the views of residents. In this updated plan, the Council is proposing the following key priorities for the future: Creating the best start in life for our children and young people; helping people to help themselves; promoting sustainable inclusive communities, infrastructure and growth and realising the full potential of people and assets. The comments received from the consultation will help further shape content of both the Local Plan 2020 and information in the Scoping Report and future sustainability objectives.

### 3) Baseline Information

Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring the likely sustainability effects of a plan and helps to identify key sustainability issues and means of dealing with them.

Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires information to be provided on:

- (b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan;
- (c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected; and
- (d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC [the 'Birds Directive'] and 92/43/EEC [the 'Habitats Directive'].

Data referred to has been chosen primarily for regularity and consistency of collection, in order to enable trends in the baseline situation to be established, and also subsequent monitoring of potential sustainability effects.

Owing to the reporting patterns of datasets, most of the data referred to predates the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had far-reaching impacts. Examples of this are likely to include data on, for example, public transport usage, air quality, town centres/ retailing, employment etc. Census data is from 2011 and mid-year estimates, including 2018. Council data is often based on sources collected in previous years. Through future stages of preparing the Sustainability Appraisal and, more widely the Local Plan 2020, we will need reflect the latest data from national and local sources as it is released, to ensure we understand the impacts of COVID-19, and what the short, medium and longer term implications are likely to be going forward.

#### **Geography**

South Gloucestershire is situated within the West of England Combined Authority area, located immediately to the north east of Bristol. The district has close links with Bristol along with some other neighbouring communities, namely Wiltshire, Bath & North East Somerset, Gloucestershire and South Wales.

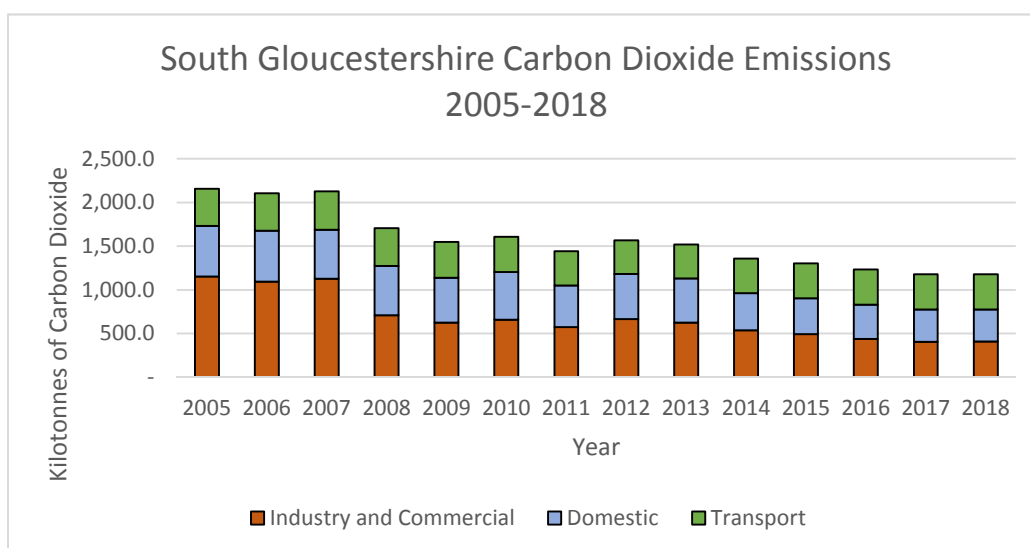
South Gloucestershire covers an area of 497 square kilometres and is comprised of 36 wards and 48 parishes. There are over 30 villages in the rural area of South Gloucestershire, many of which have a mining or manufacturing heritage. These range from small hamlets to settlements with several thousand people. The physical characteristics of the villages also vary greatly. A number of rural settlements are within the River Severn flood plain, while others are within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and/or Green Belt.

#### **Climate Change**

The South Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership is committed to reducing CO2 emissions arising from local road transport, industrial, commercial and domestic sources. The UK national target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions was updated in 2019 and requires emissions to be net zero by 2050. Net zero means any emissions would be balanced by schemes to offset an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as planting trees or using technology like carbon capture and storage. However, many local authorities and other organisations consider that more rapid action is needed to reduce emissions sooner and have declared a Climate Emergency. South Gloucestershire Council made its declaration on 17 July 2019, and pledged to provide the leadership

to enable South Gloucestershire to become carbon neutral by 2030. The South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy has been updated to include this revised target.

Each year the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) provide a breakdown of CO2 emissions by local authority area (published 2 years in arrears) and this is used to measure progress against the aim of South Gloucestershire becoming carbon neutral by 2030. We report it as a percentage reduction from the 1990 baseline emissions figure of 2,073.3 kt Co2e. In 2018 (the most recently available data), carbon dioxide emissions totalled 1177.6 kt which is 43% lower than in 1990<sup>9</sup>.

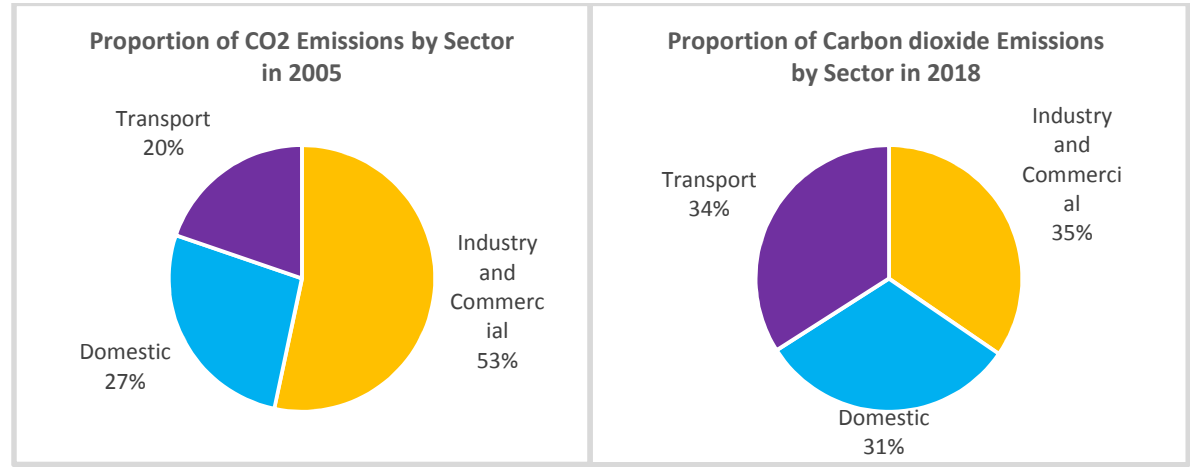


Year	Industry and Commercial	Domestic	Transport	Grand Total	Per Capita Emissions (t)
2005	1,151.1	580.9	426.5	2,158.5	8.5
2006	1,095.4	583.3	426.0	2,104.7	8.2
2007	1,125.4	564.2	439.3	2,128.9	8.3
2008	711.0	562.9	431.0	1,705.0	6.6
2009	625.2	511.7	413.4	1,550.3	6.0
2010	657.1	545.3	404.6	1,606.9	6.1
2011	573.1	476.7	393.1	1,442.9	5.5
2012	665.0	516.2	384.3	1,565.6	5.9
2013	625.2	506.4	386.4	1,518.0	5.6
2014	535.5	426.9	396.7	1,359.0	5.0
2015	491.8	412.1	397.8	1,301.6	4.8
2016	438.7	391.8	402.5	1,232.9	4.5
2017	405.2	369.3	403.3	1,177.8	4.2
2018	407.1	369.6	401.0	1,177.6	4.2

<sup>9</sup> The South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy targets and the local area emissions data presented relate to the 'subset' of total local area emissions which is deemed to be within the scope of influence of Local Authorities. The data excludes emissions from aviation, shipping and military transport, and emissions from motorways, diesel railways, and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry.

Data for 2018 shows a 0.02% reduction in local emissions when compared to the previous year. This indicates that progress has stalled. This latest reduction is less than the national situation, where there was a reduction of 2% in UK emissions between 2016 and 2018. According to the latest statistical release, the main drivers of the decrease in UK emissions in 2018 were a change in the fuel mix for electricity generation, with a decrease in the use of coal and more use of renewables. Annual emissions are also influenced by factors such as weather conditions, local and national policies as well as the wider economy (including the offshoring of emissions from manufacturing), and new development.

In South Gloucestershire, since 2005 the proportion of emissions coming from the transport sector has risen to account for 34%, whilst the share coming from the industrial and commercial sector has dropped to 35%. The domestic sector makes up the remaining 31% of emissions. This highlights the need to make progress in reducing emissions from the transport and the domestic sectors in particular.



An important element of the transport emissions referred to above result from commuter flows in to and out of South Gloucestershire, shown in the diagram below<sup>10</sup>.



Becoming carbon neutral by 2030 will therefore help reduce the severity of the impacts of global warming. This will be done thorough decarbonising transport by planning for growth so that people

<sup>10</sup> Source: ONS, Census WU03UK - Location of usual residence and place of work by method of travel to work.

can access key services and facilities by walking, cycling and effective public transport, to minimise the need for private car use.

### **Population**

South Gloucestershire is an attractive area which has successfully attracted and sustained investment and growth. There has been substantial population increase over the past half century with an increase of 33,500 people over the last 15 years. Like many other places South Gloucestershire has an ageing population, with an increasing number of older residents<sup>11</sup> who have associated needs in terms of access to appropriate housing and services.

### **Housing**

South Gloucestershire currently has a housing supply of 5.21 years. In 2018/19 1,573 houses were completed on sites across South Gloucestershire. 1,310 of these were on large sites of 10 or more homes and the remainder were completed on small sites of fewer than 10 homes. The Core Strategy aimed to deliver a minimum of 28,355 houses between 2006 and 2027 which leaves a remainder of 14,317 to be completed over the next 8 years. The plan set out the key areas decided for large scale development, most of which is planned to take place within the North and East Fringes of the Bristol Urban Area, predominantly at Emerson's Green, Cribbs/Patchway and Harry Stoke sites. Yate and Thornbury will also see appropriate large scale development.

In 2018/19, 624 affordable homes were delivered in South Gloucestershire, including 199 Extra Care homes. Of the 624 completed homes, 220 are social rent, 139 are affordable rent and 265 are shared ownership.

Current monitoring of dwelling completions indicates that in the year to April 2019, 21.7% of dwelling completions in South Gloucestershire took place on previously developed land (PDL). The Quality of Life Data Report shows that the average house price in the South-West was £270,000, 8.8 times the average national salary (£30,720) and in England the average house price was £250,000.

### **Deprivation and inequality**

There are pockets of deprivation within the authority which are recognised areas of multiple of deprivation where evidence from a range of measures show that residents experience social deprivation and lower life expectancy.

South Gloucestershire is on the whole a relatively affluent area. A good measure of this is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which takes data from the census and other routinely held sources to provide a score for small areas. South Gloucestershire has an average IMD score for 2015 of 11.4 (national average range 5.0 – 42.0). It is ranked 274th of 326 local authorities (1st being most deprived and 326th being least) – only sixteen per cent of local authority areas in England are estimated to be more affluent than South Gloucestershire.

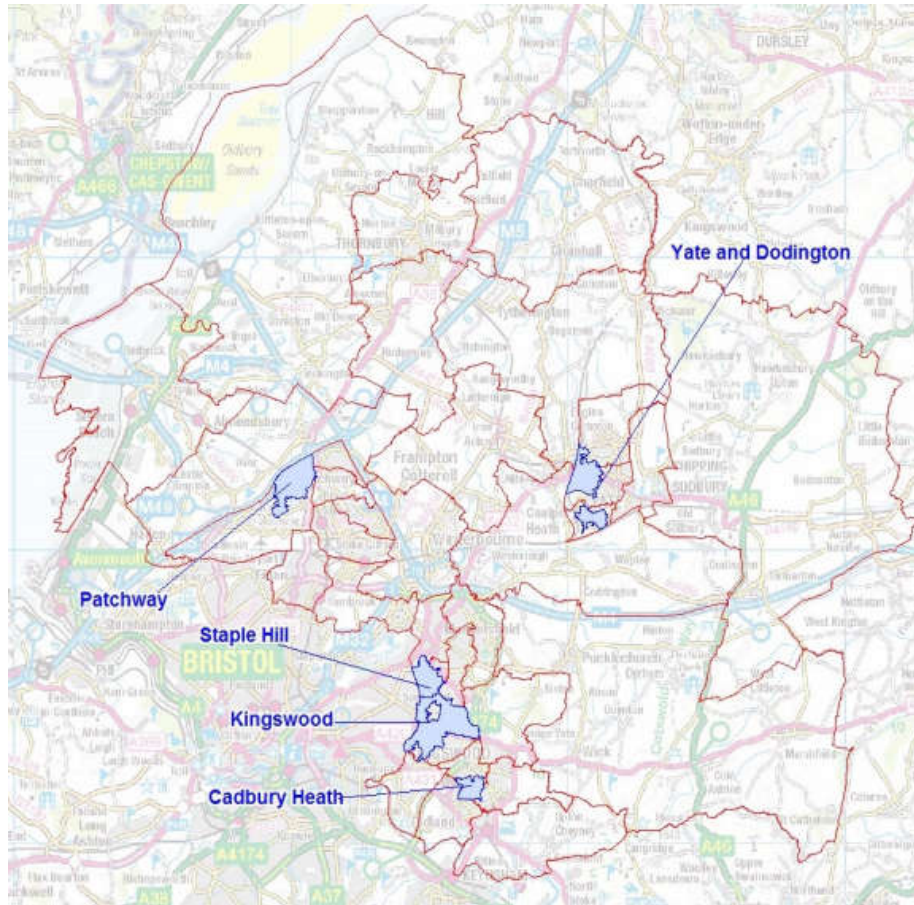
South Gloucestershire has no small areas, known as Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that rank in the 10% most deprived nationally. 30% of LSOAs in South Gloucestershire are in the 10% least deprived nationally. There are pockets of deprivation with the most deprived LSOAs generally being clustered within the urban wards of Staple Hill, Kings Chase, Patchway, Parkwall and Woodstock, though some more isolated areas exist.

The following map shows the location of the priority neighbourhoods<sup>12</sup> in South Gloucestershire.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/2018-SNPPs-briefing-note.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/IOD-2019-Priority-Neighbourhood-Analysis.pdf>



The relative deprivation experienced by older people in South Gloucestershire, like that for children and the population as a whole is low, with 11% of the population aged 60+ being within the 40% most deprived nationally. Looking at deprivation affecting children only, a similar though slightly less extreme pattern persists with 54% of children being among the least deprived 40% in England and 21% being in the most deprived 40% nationally.

It is noteworthy in that nearly one third (32%) of the population live in areas with the poorest scores (quintiles 1 & 2) for educational attainment, skill level and level of training. The picture for children's education and skills subdomain is also of concern, with 41% of the South Gloucestershire under 16 population being among the most deprived nationally – contrasting sharply with overall IMD.

Another domain in which South Gloucestershire is relatively deprived is that of geographical barriers, which relates to the physical proximity of local services. Almost exactly half of the population (50.1%) are rated as amongst the 40% most deprived nationally in terms physical access to services – a reflection of the rural nature of much of South Gloucestershire.

### **Health**

Residents of South Gloucestershire are generally healthier and have a better life expectancy than the national average, reflecting the relative affluence of the area. However, there is an upward trend in chronic diseases, which have a big impact on quality of life, partly due to the increases in the elderly population and to the increase in child and adult obesity. Poor air quality has a direct effect on health, and traffic related pollution is an issue in parts of South Gloucestershire. In general, residents of South Gloucestershire are healthier than the national average. Results from the 2011 census show that 84% of the population (220,816 residents) described themselves as being in “good” or “very good” health, this is above the national average of 81.2%. There are however, differences in health between different groups with those living in deprived areas experiencing poorer health.



Men in the 10% most deprived areas in South Gloucestershire live on average 6.3 years fewer than those in the 10% least deprived, and in women the gap is 5.1 years (2011/13). The conditions that contribute most to the gap in life expectancy are cancer in men (27%) and respiratory disease in women (28%). Health outcomes are consistently worse in deprived areas, with premature mortality and lung cancer rates almost twice as high in the 20% least affluent areas compared to the 20% most affluent.

There is a strong association between deprivation and poor health outcomes. In the most deprived areas there are significantly higher levels of premature deaths, particularly deaths from heart disease. Deaths from cancer is also strongly associated with deprivation, particularly for lung cancer which reflects levels of smoking rates. If all parts of South Gloucestershire had the same rates of lung cancer mortality as the least deprived area there could be an average of 58 fewer deaths per year.

There is a strong relationship between healthy lifestyle and deprivation. Significantly lower levels of breastfeeding and higher rates of excess weight, tooth decay, injury in children in young people and childhood poverty have been observed in more deprived areas. Hospital admissions for alcohol and smoking are also highest in the most deprived areas, and emergency hospital admissions for mental and behavioural disorders show the clearest gradient related to area deprivation of all health indicators.

### **Community facilities**

Within South Gloucestershire, there are 8 Leisure Centres, 12 libraries and 81 community centres. This is in addition to the number of sports and playing pitches, as well as clubs that are run independently from the Council.

To gauge the facilities in the district, between 2016 and 2018 the authority produced Sustainable Access Profiles (SAPs) that sought to clarify the key services and facilities within walking, cycling and public transport access from 54 rural settlements. As part of the work undertaken to inform the Local Plan 2020, the Council is updating the SAPs and is producing Data Access Profiles (DAPs) that will also look at urban areas. This work aims to provide an understanding of the level of sustainable access to key services and facilities from South Gloucestershire's urban and rural areas (including villages and settlements), to enable a detailed understanding of the facilities available for communities.

In addition to this, the Council recently undertook a detailed consultation on community centres, venues and sports clubs to ascertain the needs of these key community facilities. The Council is currently analysing results but hopes it will help to further understand the facilities available to communities across the district and promote discussions about approving new applications that could have positive impact for community needs. This work builds on the Community Meeting Space surveys (which ran from 2005 – 2008).

The information from the various surveys will assist in guiding the priorities for the Local Plan 2020.

### **Open Space and Green/Blue Infrastructure**

The 2010 Open Space Audit recognises that 2398ha of land in South Gloucestershire accounts for open space. Much of this provision takes the form of natural and semi-natural green spaces which cover 1461 ha of the unitary authority area. While 0.14 ha of parks and gardens are currently provided per 1,000 residents across the unitary authority area, Thornbury currently does not provide access to this type of provision. Furthermore rural locations including Severnside provided a notably limited level of access to this type of provision in comparison to the other areas assessed.

Thornbury, Yate/Chipping Sodbury and East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area provide the lowest level



of access outdoor sports facilities excluding school sites and golf courses. However, only the East Fringe of the Bristol Urban Area provides access to a level of provision which is lower than the recommended quantity standard for the unitary authority when schools sites and golf courses are taken into consideration.

The West of England and South Gloucestershire Green Infrastructure Strategies will set out priorities, projects and areas for enhancing and protecting connectivity of ecological, landscape, access and recreational assets. This will include making connections between urban and rural areas, for people for nature and enhancing water quality, ecosystems and functions of our 'Blue Infrastructure' such as the River Frome. Through making decisions on the location and design of new development will need to respond to these strategies, to build in Green Infrastructure connectivity and functions and avoid harming key sites and corridors.

### **Education**

As of the 2020 spring education census, there were 39,767 students enrolled at school in South Gloucestershire (which encompasses the following faculties; Primary, Secondary, Infant, Junior, Academies and Special) and of those, there were 23,904 students aged <2 – 10 and 15,863 that were aged 11 - 19+. The Council is therefore responsible for supporting a high number of pupils across a number of different educational facilities throughout the district and it is important that every child and young person can access high-quality school provision in South Gloucestershire.

Information contained in the Council's Commissioning of School Places Strategy notes that new house building development contained in the adopted Local Plans have impacted on the pattern of demand for school places, and has shaped proposals for additional school provision. New education infrastructure arising from development of the Local Plan sites has been successfully commissioned/delivered for 4 of the total 5 sites. These include:

- A new primary school on Wallscourt Farm;
- A new primary school provision at Charlton Wood;
- Expanding Frenchay CE Primary School on a new site to provide an additional 280 places, 420 places in total.
- The remaining Local Plan site at Harry Stoke sets out provision for a new 1.5FE primary school.

Council has also made some progress with the delivery of new school provision arising from the delivery of new neighbourhoods sets out in the Core Strategy. To date this refers to the new primary school at Lyde Green providing 420 places (delivered).

Based on current information, it is estimated that development scheduled over the next 5 years will generate the need for the equivalent of 3 new primary schools and 1 new secondary school as follows:

- A new primary school at North Yate New Neighbourhood (in line with the terms of the S106);
- New primary school provision at Harry Stoke or on land East of Harry Stoke. The two sites provide for 1.5FE and 3FE primary schools respectively;
- Plans to provide a further 420 places at Lyde Green by expanding the existing Lyde Green Primary School on a satellite site at Lyde Green; and
- Plans for a new secondary school through the DfE's Wave 14 Free Schools Programme to provide 900 secondary school places.

### ***Economic development***

Through the Core Strategy, the authority allocates and protects approximately 1267Ha of employment and through a series of policies:

- CS11 Distribution of economic development land; and
- CS12 Safeguarded areas for economic development.

In addition to this, policy CS13 also provides guidance for non-safeguarded economic development sites. The Core Strategy aims to ensure that there is an adequate mix of employment uses in order to cater for the range of local employment needs, and to reduce the economy's dependence on any one sector.

The overarching aim of these allocations is to protect and where possible, enhance the employment portfolio within South Gloucestershire within both rural and urban areas.

In addition to these allocations, there are three Enterprise Areas (EA's) located at Filton, Emerson's Green and Severnside (part of Avonmouth Severnside EA). Policies within the Policies, Sites and Places Plan (adopted 2017) encourage the use of these EA's to bring forward the development of new technologies and products, energy generation and in contribution to national economic recovery (from the 2007/8 recession), ensure that there is a provision towards education, skills development and training, as well as providing high quality public spaces and provision for sustainable growth for the EA and the surrounding communities.

There were an estimated 152,000 jobs in South Gloucestershire in 2018<sup>13</sup>. Whilst our authority benefits from a strong economy and investment generally, there is an inequality of job opportunities across South Gloucestershire as the ratio of local jobs to resident workers, which is a measure of the relationship between where people live and work, varies widely. These patterns are dynamically changing due to new working practices and this will likely continue due to the impact of COVID-19, including greater levels of working from home.

However, some areas have long standing issues with uneven numbers of people to local jobs. For example there are almost half as many 'jobs' in the East Fringe than the number of resident workers (ratio of 0.4), whilst in the North Fringe there are almost twice as many 'jobs' as the number of resident workers (ratio of 1.8).

The lack of access to job opportunities in some areas, and strong concentration of jobs in other parts of the authority and in central Bristol has resulted in significant patterns of commuting across the area, predominantly by the private car. This has resulted in significant congestion, adding to the issues highlighted above around climate change and air pollution, and also the perpetuation of inequalities in our region and our own area.

For many years the economy of South Gloucestershire has been closely associated with the aerospace industry with Airbus UK and BAE Systems based at Filton and Rolls Royce at Patchway. The aerospace industry is a key economic sector, however the economic downturn caused by the COVID pandemic has negatively impacted the aviation sector.

The older urban areas of Staple Hill, Kingswood and Hanham have experienced a loss of economic vitality and enterprise created by employment closures, rationalisation programmes, relocations and changing shopping patterns.

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<sup>13</sup> [Nomis – Labour Market Profile for South Gloucestershire](#)

The development at Emerson's Green is predominantly completed, with only a few employment parcels left to be developed to the north, and within the science park. Since 2011, Emerson's Green has seen in excess of 48,000 sqm developed for employment generating purposes (including B1, B2, B8 as well as a primary school and care home).

Warehousing and distribution uses is also a sector experiencing significant growth and expansion. Over recent years the Severnside area has seen considerable activity and development by this market sector, and is recognised as a strategic location for distribution warehousing and industrial uses. However, a balance needs to be maintained between development and protection and enhancement of the ecologically important, fragile and visually prominent coastal zone.

Since 2013, there has been an approximate net gain of 85,900 sqm of traditional 'B' use floorspace across the district. However, as employment floorspace can also include uses that have an employment generating use (such as retail, care homes, leisure activities), since 2013 there has been an additional approximate 167,500 sqm of 'non B-use' employment generating floorspace. In total, this equates to 253,400 sqm of employment floorspace across South Gloucestershire.

This overall figure disguises overall churn of all floorspaces. The following table highlights across losses within the B1 and B2 use classes, where the floorspace has fallen by 9,400 sqm and 73,479 sqm respectively. These losses have occurred throughout the district, across all different employment use classes. The following table highlights the overall churn, through gains and losses.

Employment type	Gain (sqm)*	Loss (sqm) *	Grand Total (sqm) *
B1. Office	17,300	-26,700	-9,400
B2. Industrial & Warehousing	120,100	-73,400	46,700
Mixed B-use	30,700	-4,400	26,300
Mixed (B-use & Non B-use)	22,300		22,300
Non-B Use (including C1, C2, D1 & D2)	208,400	-40,900	167,500
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>398,800</b>	<b>-145,400</b>	<b>253,400</b>

*Table showing breakdown of floorspace (Sqm) gained and lost from 2013/14 AMR by high level employment use. \*Please note figures are rounded down to the nearest 100.*

What this table also does not highlight are the developments that are occurring at Severnside, where the 1957/58 permission is still being used to build new industrial and warehouse units. As such, only some applications within the CS12 allocation for Severnside are requiring planning permission, and this data is therefore not included within the above table.

In the year to March 2020, 85.4% of South Gloucestershire's working age population (those aged 16-64) were in employment. The employment rate locally is considerably higher than the national and regional averages (81.9% and 79.1% respectively).

From April 2019-March 2020, the official unemployment rate in South Gloucestershire was 2.8% of the economically active population, which is considerably lower than the corresponding rates for both England (3.9%) and the West of England (3.2%).

However, Covid-19 has impacted the overall employment and job rates. As reported by Nomis, in May 2020 7,260 residents are claiming unemployment related benefits; 4.1% of the working age population. This is a 39% increase on last month's figure and a 240% increase on the number recorded at the same point last year.

At this moment it is difficult to compare the lasting impact that the pandemic will have on the employment industries across the UK, the West of England and then more locally within South Gloucestershire.

In 2018, the average annual earnings for a full time worker living in South Gloucestershire was £31,148; representing a 6.8% increase on the 2015 figure (£29,031). South Gloucestershire's average earnings are above the national average (£30,524) and West of England average (£28,503).

### **Town centres and High Streets**

The Core Strategy safeguards 10 town centres and 2 district centres through policy CS14 (and later allocated in policy PSP31). It also includes 48 centres/parades within table 3, however no allocation is given to these local centres/parades.

Further to this, policy PSP31 identifies the acceptable uses in town centres and encourages A1 usage within the allocated Primary Retail Areas (PSP31). Shopping frontages are allocated through (PSP33), and local centres, parades and facilities and their protection is contained in PSP32.

This suite of policies seeks to ensure that town and local centres remain relevant, vital and viable for both residents and business owners. These policies are monitored through the AMR, and an annual (now bi-annual) retail survey is undertaken. This helps create a snapshot of what the retail occupancy is like across the town and district centres.

Since 2013, there has been a total of 15,215 sqm of A1 and A2 retail development completed across South Gloucestershire. However, this figure disguises losses that have occurred through the prior notification permitted development changes of commercial units to residential.

The number of vacant retail units across South Gloucestershire's allocated town centres has fluctuated over time. The following table indicates the percentage vacancy rates by each town centre, for each year from 2013.

<b>Percentage vacant units by AMR year</b>					
	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
<b>Chipping Sodbury</b>	4.3	2.2	2.9	5.8	3.6
<b>Downend</b>	1.7	5.1	3.4	1.7	1.7
<b>Emersons Green</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.5
<b>Filton</b>	10.5	13.2	18.4	15.8	10.5
<b>Hanham</b>	12.8	19.1	19.1	12.8	6.4
<b>Kingswood</b>	13.0	14.9	12.4	12.4	13.0
<b>Patchway*</b>					0.0
<b>Staple Hill</b>	8.0	8.0	4.0	4.0	3.3
<b>Stoke Gifford*</b>					0.0
<b>Thornbury</b>	10.9	12.2	9.0	10.3	5.8
<b>Willow Brook Centre</b>	0.0	3.4	3.4	3.4	0.0
<b>Yate</b>	11.5	12.4	9.7	8.0	13.3

Source: SGC AMR

\*note Patchway and Stoke Gifford have only been surveyed since 2019.

The table indicates that there is a great disparity between vacancy rates across the authority, with Kingswood and Yate having the highest vacancy rates. Conversely, Hanham and Thornbury have successfully managed to reduce their vacancy rates by half since 2013.

With regards to the provision of leisure facilities within the town and district centres, no new facilities have been completed in the district since 2013. All new leisure developments that are completed have been outside of the town centre boundaries, and total 37,400sqm.

New use classes and what this could mean for our retail centres in the future.

The amended Use Classes Order<sup>14</sup> is designed to increase flexibility of units by changing the classification of a significant proportion of them. The changes will combine existing use classes into a single E Class. The current use classes that will be combined include:

- Shops (A1);
- Financial/professional services (A2);
- Cafes/restaurants (A3);
- Indoor sports/fitness (D2 part);
- Medical health facilities, Crèche/nurseries (D1 part); and
- and office/business uses (B1).

The following uses will be combined into a single F.2 Class:

- Shop (A1) (Not more than 280sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food and at least 1km from another similar shop);
- Hall or meeting place for the principal use of local community (D2); and
- Indoor or outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms (D2).

The following uses will be combined into the Sui Generis Class:

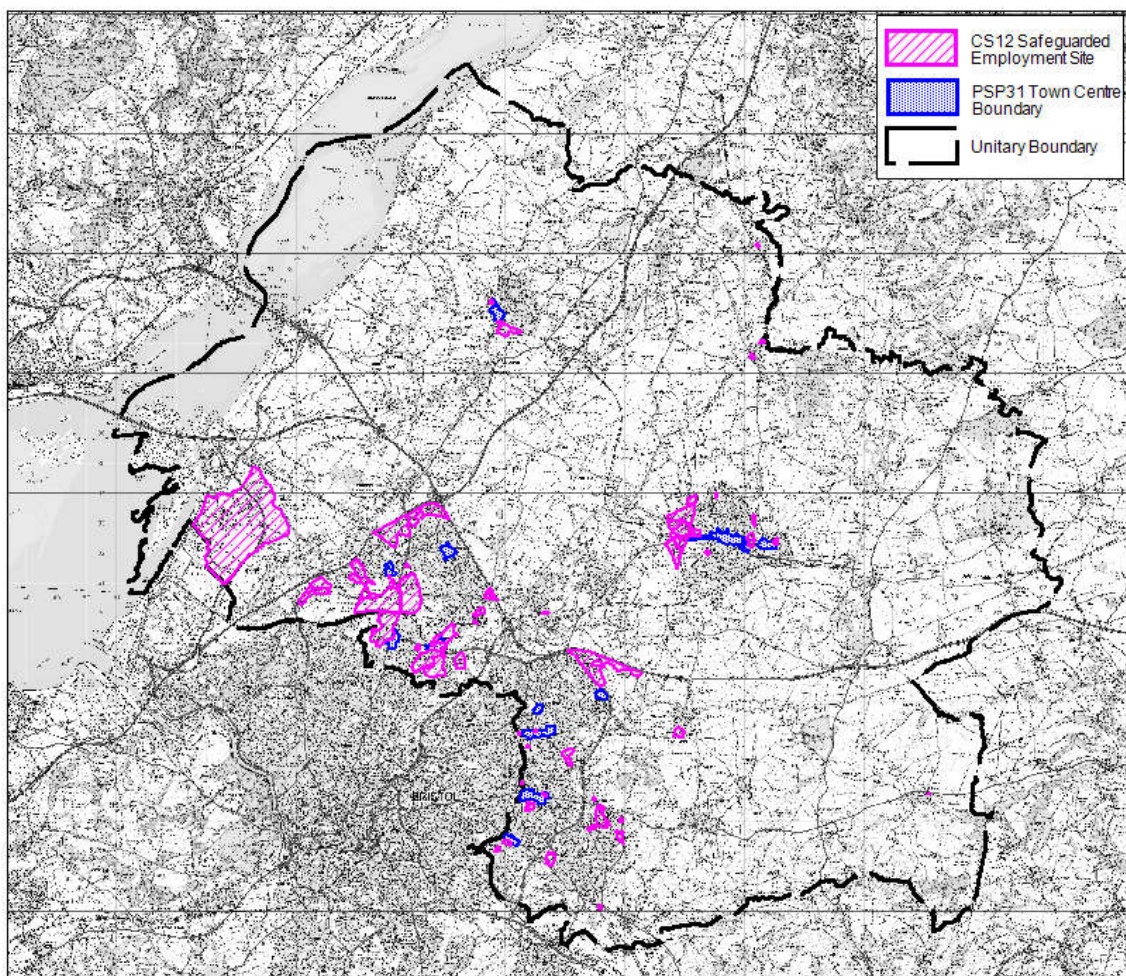
- Pub or drinking establishment (A4);
- Take away (A5); and
- Cinema, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls (D2).

These changes came into being on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020, for all new applications. The hopes of these changes is that town centres will begin to thrive, with the removal of planning controls.

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<sup>14</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Use Classes\) \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)





*Map showing CS12 Safeguarded Employment Sites and PSP31 Town Centre Boundaries*

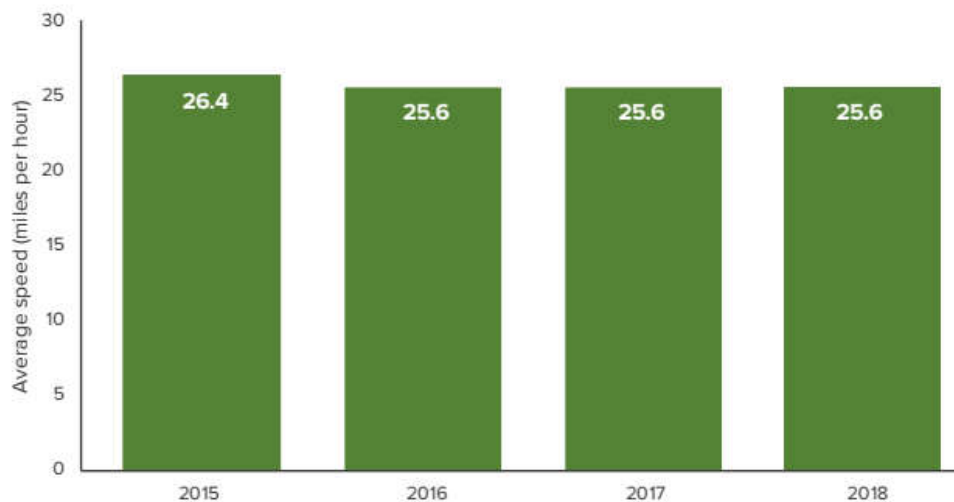
### **Transport**

Transportation in the South Gloucestershire is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. The ability of individual communities to sustainably connect to existing key services and facilities by walking, cycling and the availability of suitable public transport connections varies significantly across urban and rural areas.

South Gloucestershire's location next to a major city, its significant employment opportunities and position on the strategic road and rail network has historically encouraged high levels of investment and growth in housing and employment. This has led to high rates of traffic growth, increasing congestion, air pollution, unsustainable commuting patterns and longer journey times. A high quality of digital connectivity and broadband access can assist in reducing peoples need to travel. However, there is a need to increase people's ability to walk and cycle to access key services and facilities, including community centres, some types of shopping, health, education, and certain types of employment.

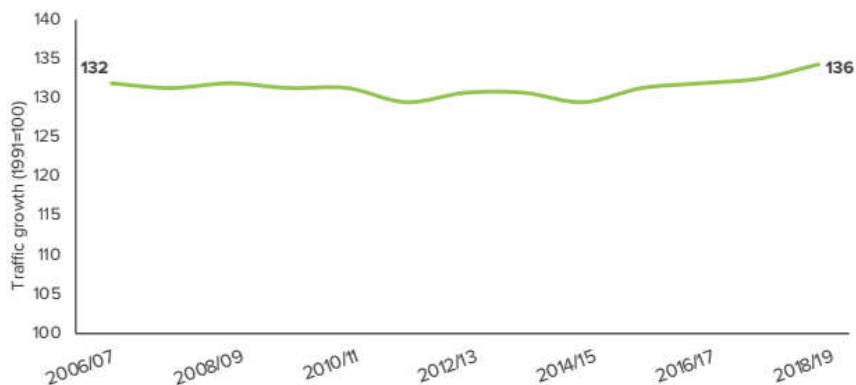
The economic prosperity of South Gloucestershire and high levels of employment, housing and population growth make tackling congestion a major challenge for the Council. Congestion is a feature of many of the major roads, particularly in the urban areas of South Gloucestershire. The Department for Transport's preferred measure of congestion is to use average speed on South Gloucestershire's locally managed A roads. This data source has now been available for four years, the past three of which have seen the figure remain the same after a 3% reduction in average speed between 2015 and 2016.

#### Average speed when travelling on South Gloucestershire A roads (Department for Transport)



Furthermore, general traffic levels within South Gloucestershire appear to have increased in the past year, and are currently at their highest level since 2006.

#### South Gloucestershire traffic growth (1991 = 100) (Department for Transport)



Much of South Gloucestershire is rural in nature and a higher than average car ownership and usage. The 2011 Census identified that 87% of households had at least 1 car or van compared with 74% in England and Wales. The 2011 Census also revealed that there were 158,289 cars or vans in the area.

As is demonstrated on the commuter flows diagram (see Climate Change section), Bristol remains an important hub for commuting to work, and that commuting patterns are complex and trips across local authority areas are common. Data on travel to work patterns from the ONS shows that nearly 60,000 people travel into South Gloucestershire for work, with nearly 54,000 traveling out of South Gloucestershire for the same purpose.

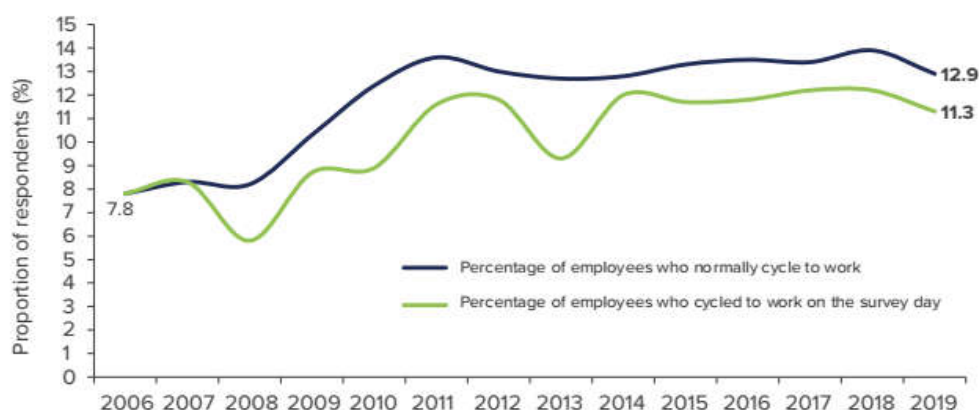
The importance of delivering travel improvements, and in particular improved transport infrastructure to support the growth are also key themes within the Strategic Economic Plan. Over the past few years there has been significant new transport infrastructure delivered over the past few years, including the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN), MetroBus, the expansion of Smart Motorways on the M4, M5 and M49 junction, as well as a host of improvements to the strategic cycle network.

There are also major road improvements planned in South Gloucestershire, such as the works to such as the works to the Great Stoke Roundabout and Wraxall Roundabouts. However it is

acknowledged that the Local Plan will need to continue to encourage the shift to more sustainable and active modes of transport, through the approach it takes to growth and development.

The proportion of people cycling to work is measured in a snapshot survey undertaken by the council in March each year. The survey asks employees from a number of major employers within South Gloucestershire how they normally travel to work, and also how they travelled on the actual day of the survey. The graph below shows that the overall trend is fairly flat. Any deviations from this are potentially influenced by a range of factors including the number of employers taking part in the survey, and the weather on the day of the survey.

Proportion of employees who cycle to work (Travel to work survey 2019)



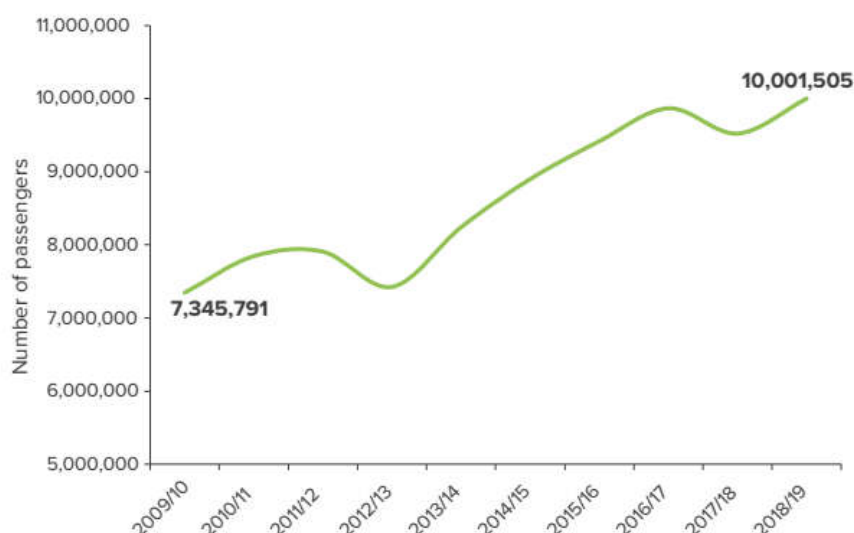
In 2018/19, just over 10 million journeys were made by bus. This is an approximate 5% increase on the previous year and continues the overall trend in the West of England for increasing bus use in recent years.

Over the last year there has been continued work aimed at encouraging bus use and improving the customer experience. These include continued investment by local bus companies in improved vehicles and services. There has also been ongoing investment by South Gloucestershire Council in supporting the bus service network and improving infrastructure.

The bus patronage figures include metrobus boardings in South Gloucestershire. Since the staggered introduction of the metrobus routes in 2018/19, they have seen 1.7 million passenger journeys between them as of the end of March 2019. The number of passengers on the m3 has resulted in the operator increasing the frequency of the service in the peaks and introducing a new, faster journey in the form of the m3x.

Number of bus passengers boarding buses in South Gloucestershire (South Gloucestershire Council)





### **Access to services and facilities**

Due to the varied nature of South Gloucestershire (in that it is part urban and part rural), access to services and facilities varies greatly.

In 2018, the Council produced Sustainable Access Profiles (SAPs)<sup>15</sup> of its rural areas to help provide an understanding of the unique differences the different rural communities face in access services and facilities. These profiles looked at how key services could be accessed, sustainably (through walking, cycling and/or using public transport). The Sustainable Access methodology (2018) set out the rationale for choosing certain key services and facilities, evidence used to determine the walking and cycling distances to reflect “reasonable access” and also the criteria for assessing whether or not rural villages and settlements have suitably frequent and timely public transport connections to locations containing key services and facilities. The SAPs showed that there are a number of key villages and settlements with varying degrees of sustainable access, from minimal walking and cycling access to key services and facilities, but at least one suitable timely and frequent public transport connection, to other settlements such as Yate our largest market town, where nearly all key services and facilities accessible by walking and cycling and a high number of public transport connections.

Using the baseline information obtained from the SAPs, it is possible to conclude that generally many smaller rural villages in the authority are likely to have lower levels of key services and facilities in close proximity, which means less people can safely walk and cycle too them. They can have lower quality digital connections, along with fewer and less frequent public transport connections. Based on the current distribution of key services, facilities and transport infrastructure there are however, significant variations between communities within rural South Gloucestershire. Our rural area contains some villages and rural locations with key services and facilities in close proximity to enable walking and cycling, particularly in market towns, surrounding market towns or immediate adjacent the north and east urban areas. Some of these locations also have regular public transport connections to destinations with further key services and facilities, often these locations are close to the North and East Fringe of the district or on the main public transport corridors of the Badminton Road and A36.

As part of the Local Plan 2020, the Council is in the process of supplementing the 2018 information, with updates and profiles for urban areas. The intention is for an updated set of profiles covering all rural and urban communities, called Data Access Profiles (DAPs) to be released. These will assist

<sup>15</sup> [Sustainable Access Profiles Methodology](#)

understanding the current level of sustainable access to key services and facilities as a whole and will assist the understanding of what might need to be enhanced to achieve 'walkable neighbourhoods' within individual communities. The information will assist aid understanding and investigation of where growth of homes or jobs might be placed to be in close proximity to key services and facilities to encourage walking, cycling or public transport use as opposed to private car journeys.

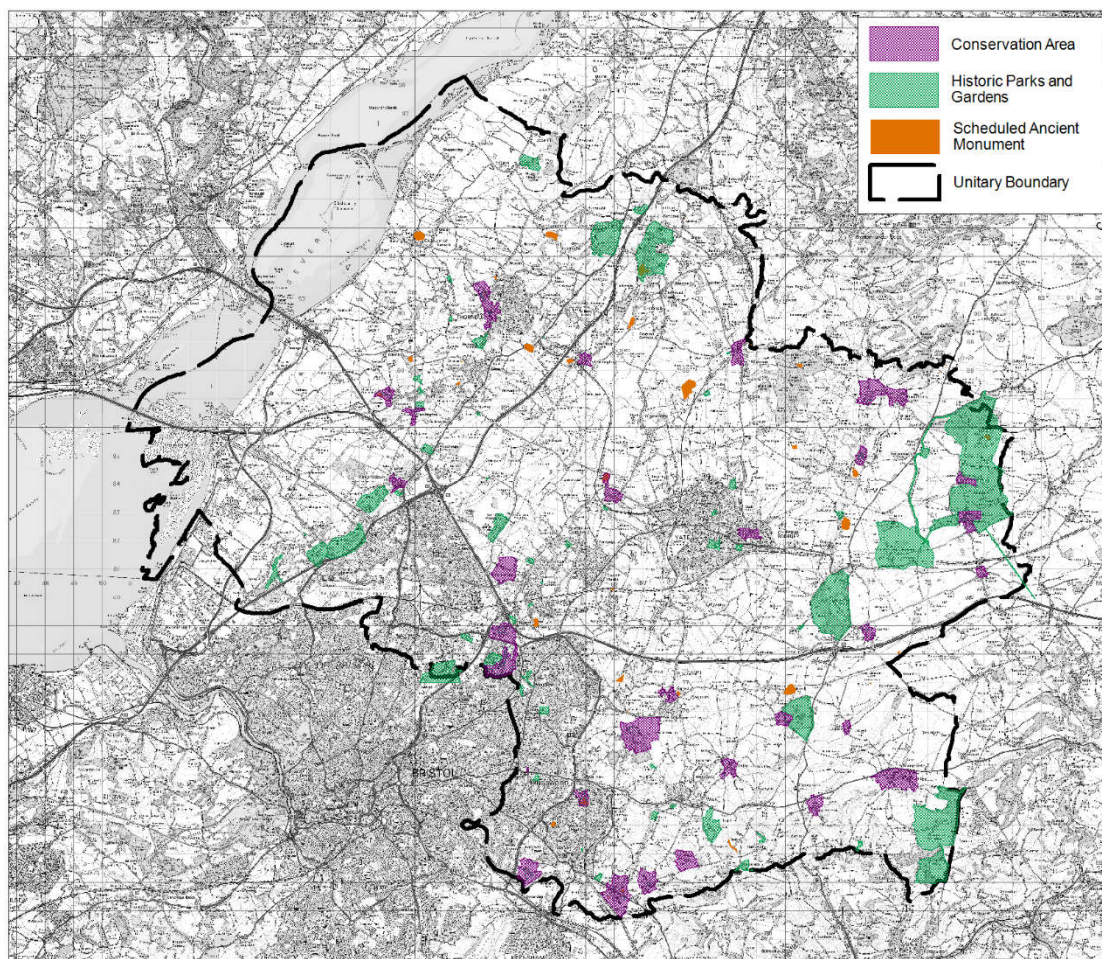
### **Historic environment and cultural assets**

South Gloucestershire possesses a diverse heritage, ranging from the lowland waterlogged landscapes of the Severn Levels, through the coalfields of north Bristol to the prominent and often exposed archaeology of the Cotswolds, interspersed by areas of rural, semirural/ urban and urban settlement. Its archaeology ranges from paleo-environmental deposits to prehistoric hillforts, Roman towns, Saxon burial grounds, medieval planned settlement and nationally significant historic mining.

Historical assets include:

- 38 Scheduled monuments;
- 8 Registered historic parks and gardens;
- 1 Registered battlefields (part);
- 2,085 Listed Buildings entries of which 2% are Grade I, 6% are Grade II\* and 92% are Grade II; and
- 30 Conservation Areas.

South Gloucestershire also hosts many cultural attractions including the Aerospace Bristol Museum, Bristol Zoo's Wild Place and The Wave surfing lake as well as more traditional assets such as the National Trust's Dyrham Park. Planning permission has recently been approved for a new circa 42,000sqm arena and events space at Filton to serve the wider sub-region.



*Map showing Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Ancient Monuments*

### **Landscape**

South Gloucestershire has many contrasting landscapes, ranging from the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (which covers 11,828 hectares or 22% of the land area in South Gloucestershire), to the urban area within the edge of Bristol. The landscape is predominantly rural and agricultural comprising of landscape ridges, hillsides and views that frame the urban area and provide the setting for rural villages and settlements.

South Gloucestershire's landscape is greatly influenced by large-scale scarp, ridges, vales, levels and estuary landforms, overlain by a variety of land cover, in places comprising unique natural or historic features. Trees and woodlands currently cover approximately 11% of South Gloucestershire.

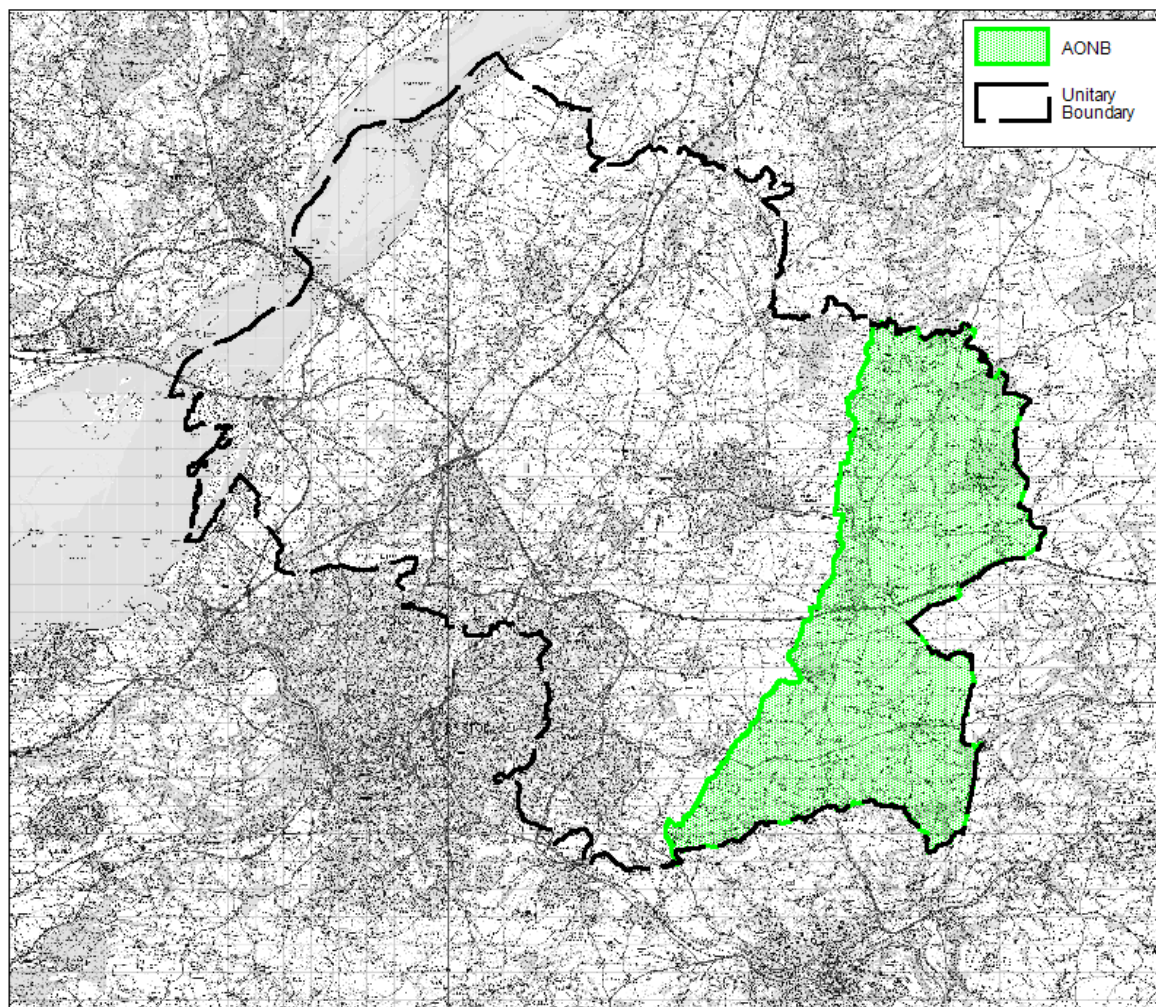
South Gloucestershire's landscapes are covered by three of the National Character Area descriptions: the Severn and Avon Vales (No. 106), the Cotswolds (No. 107) and the Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges (No. 118), while there is a visual interrelationship across the estuary with Forest of Dean and Lower Wye (No. 105).

The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) SPD (2014) provides a statement of the character of South Gloucestershire's landscapes, their distinctive attributes and features, together with an assessment of the changes that are taking place in the landscape and strategic guidance to help steer future evolution. It describes in detail the 21 landscape character areas in South Gloucestershire which, following the identification of relevant National Character Areas, are the



result of a more detailed assessment of South Gloucestershire's landscapes and identify unique areas which have their own particular identity.

The pressure for growth and change across South Gloucestershire will have an impact on the existing landscapes and their character

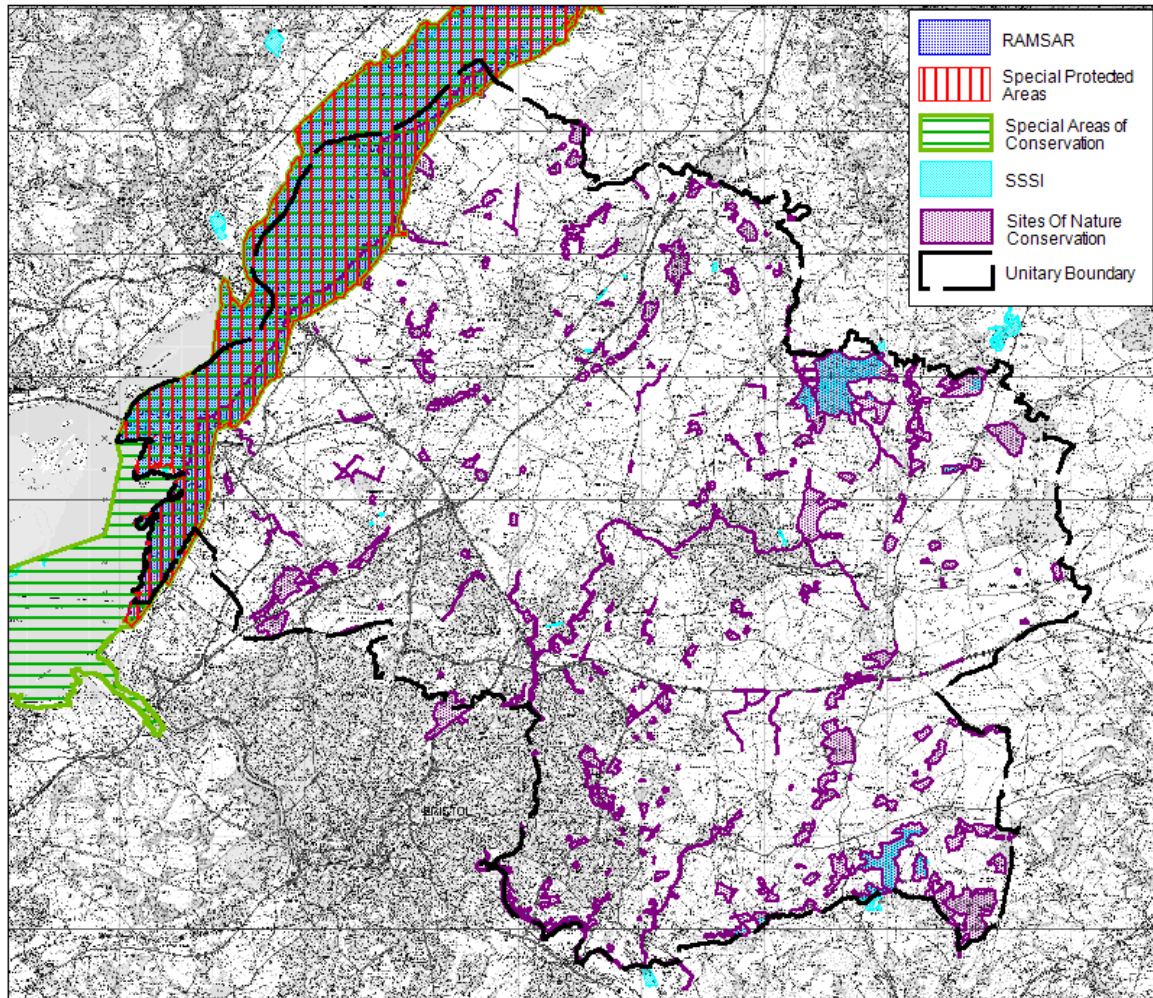


*Map showing the extent of the Cotswolds AONB*

### **Biodiversity, flora and fauna**

South Gloucestershire has 11 Local Nature Reserves, covering a total of over 109 hectares, and 22 SSSIs covering 553 hectares. The South Gloucestershire shoreline between Chittening Warth (Avonmouth) and the unitary authority boundary with Gloucestershire forms part of the Severn Estuary and is subject to a series of additional over-lapping nature conservation designations. The Estuary is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), covering a total of 4,104 hectares. It is also designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and RAMSAR site, which collectively form one Natura 2000 site.





*Map showing the International, National and local Ecology constraints*

South Gloucestershire also contains a rich array of wildlife and geology outside these legally protected sites. There are some 271 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) and 64 Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS), both non-statutory designations but these sites contain the best examples of wildlife habitats, rare species or geological features in South Gloucestershire outside the network of SSSI's and European Sites and of critical importance for local biodiversity. South Gloucestershire's wildlife includes a diverse variety of species of flora and fauna, from the locally notable (Wild Service Tree, Slowworm and Barn Owl), to national rarities (Bullfinch and Adder's Tongue Spearwort) to internationally protected species (such as Great Crested Newt, Dormice, Otter and the Lesser Horseshoe Bat).

Further to this, the Council is working in conjunction with the West of England Nature Partnership to help develop a Nature Recovery Network in South Gloucestershire, which will identify ecological networks for woodland, grassland and wetland and aims to restore and reconnect wildlife habitat and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. The Nature Recovery Network will also contain areas of designated habitat, identify the best connections between them and highlight any existing gaps in ecological connectivity.

### **Soil**

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. The principal factors influencing agricultural production are climate, site and soil.

These factors together with interactions between them form the basis for classifying land into one of five grades, where 1 describes land as 'Excellent' (land of high agricultural quality and potential) and 5 describes land as 'Very Poor' (land of low agricultural quality and potential). Land falling outside of these scores is deemed to be 'primarily in non-agricultural use', or 'land predominantly in urban use

Most of the land in South Gloucestershire is classed as Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) Agricultural Land, with Grade 2 (Very Good) distributed in pockets throughout the area. For comparison, out of the areas classified as Grades 1 to 5, 84% of the land falls within Grade 3, 6% at Grade 2 and 8% at Grade 4<sup>16</sup>

The Council maintains a list of the previously developed land in the District which is considered appropriate for residential development as per The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. This register contains brownfield land that is at least 0.25 hectares, or capable of supporting at least 5 dwellings and considered appropriate for residential development.

### **Mineral**

South Gloucestershire has a long history of mineral working. Today's mineral activity is dominated by working of the Carboniferous Limestone from a small number of quarries across South Gloucestershire.

The ability to use the valuable aggregate mineral resources that exists in our area in a sustainable way play an important part in the economic, environmental and infrastructure goals for South Gloucestershire. The resources in our area are an important contributor to the sub region and nation's mineral requirements and prosperity. They provide the critical raw material for built development and other construction, manufacturing and the maintenance of infrastructure, through their use as concrete, mortar, finishes, roadstone, constructional fill and railway ballast.

About 3.59 million tonnes of crushed rock aggregate was produced at quarries in the West of England in 2017, a small decrease of 0.13mt (3.5%) on the 3.72mt that was produced in 2016. Similarly, the ten year average crushed rock production (sales) figure for 2008-2017 of 3.37mt represents a small decrease on the levels seen in the previous two years (3.4mt and 3.41mt). The three year (2015-2017) average for crushed rock production (sales) is 3.64mt, so is higher than the 10 year average.

Total permitted reserves in WoE at the end of 2017 were 127.96mt giving a landbank of just under 38 years based on the average annual production over the 10 year period 2008 – 2017 (3.37mt). However this does not take account of factors which could affect the deliverability of the permitted reserves, for example the fact that a significant proportion of the permitted reserves at that time were at mothballed quarries.

Minerals are a diminishing, finite, and often constrained resource and can only be worked where they are found. It is therefore important that through the Local Plan we plan to maintain a steady and adequate supply of minerals, but also ensure minerals are extracted in a sustainable way and restoration of former mineral extraction areas within South Gloucestershire is progressed over the coming years.

### **Air quality**

Clean air is a basic requirement for health and wellbeing and can be affected by a variety of sources, including transport and industry activity. In South Gloucestershire, traffic related pollution is an issue in our urban areas, which can exacerbate conditions of people with pre-existing respiratory diseases

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<sup>16</sup> Please note that it has not been possible to obtain the layer distinction between Grade 3a and 3b.

such as asthma. Due to the potential effects caused from poor air quality, South Gloucestershire Council has a duty to review and assess air quality within the district under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. Pollutant levels are assessed against health-based national air quality objectives and where the objectives are not met, Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) must be declared and an Action Plan put in place to improve the air quality in these areas.

Currently, there are two Air Quality Management Areas in effect, one in Staple Hill and the other in the Kingswood-Warmley area. Following the declaration of the AQMAs and further assessment, the Council extended the initiatives in May 2012 and produced an Action Plan with aims on how to improve air quality in the Kingswood and Staple Hill AQMAs. As a result of this, Kingswood has undergone previous public consultations for the “*love our high street*” project, which aspires to create cleaner, safer and active streets with high quality public spaces and cleaner air.

The Air Quality Annual Status Report <sup>17</sup>for the authority (published in September 2019) notes that there have been declining trends in nitrogen dioxide levels and only one exceedance of the annual mean objective within the AQMAs shows that air quality is improving. However, given that there are continuing pressures on the transport systems coupled with the need for housing growth, significant challenges are faced.

### **Noise**

Excessive or persistent noise can have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing. The main impacts are on raised blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, sleep disturbances, annoyance hearing impairment and tinnitus that affects mental health and cognitive impairment. Locally 7.8% of the population are affected by night time noise, the same as the England rate and higher than the regional rate of 5.1%. Within South Gloucestershire the total number of noise complaints has risen steadily over the last 10 years to just under 1000 for 2014/15

The population affected by day time noise from road, rail or air, at or greater than 65 dB(A) in 2011 was 4.1%, lower than the England average of 5.2% but higher than the South West average of 3.5%. Noise mapping highlights that those living close to the main vehicular arterial routes (M4, M5, M32, A4174, A38) are exposed to the greatest noise volumes.

Within South Gloucestershire the total number of noise complaints has been steadily rising over the past 10 years, from 857 in 2004/2005 to just under 1000 for 2014/15. However the rate of complaints about noise is lower than the national average.

### **Water**

In total, there are 22 river waterbodies that flow through South Gloucestershire. Under the Water Framework Directive, the overall status of each water body is assessed as a combination of ecological status and chemical status. For a water body to be in overall ‘good’ status, both its ecological and its chemical status must be at least ‘good’.

In 2016, 3 of the 22 water bodies in South Gloucestershire were described as having an overall ‘good’ status, with 14 ‘moderate’ and 5 ‘poor’. In this instance, it was found that Phosphate, Fish, Invertebrates and Dissolved Oxygen were the main causes of failure.

In 2019, the Environment Agency changed these classifications to incorporate the way that persistent chemicals are assessed. As a result, all waterbodies in the UK now fail the Water Framework Directive standards, primarily a result of flame retardants and Mercury.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/2019-SGC-Air-Quality-Annual-Status-Report.pdf>

The 2019 assessment therefore showed a different overall picture, with no 'good' classifications, 17 'moderate' and 5 'poor'.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs notes that there is one water quality priority area in South Gloucestershire, located east of the A38 and north of the M4 up to Yate and Thornbury. This area is also a surface water nitrate 'high priority' area, as well as 'high priority' for sediment and phosphates. There is only one Nitrate Vulnerable Zone in the authority, and no drinking water safeguard zones according to the Environment Agency.<sup>18</sup>

The 2016 Bristol Avon Catchment Plan (of which South Gloucestershire lies within) notes that only 24% of the catchment is classified as having 'good ecological status. Although this is typical of other similar catchments, it demonstrates the scale of the challenge to meet the Water Framework Directive targets. In addition:

- 76% fail to meet the targets due to factors including physical modification, phosphate levels, sediment load and low fish populations;
- Some landowners are losing valuable topsoil, nutrients and pesticides due to erosion, run-off or leaching; sometimes linked to poor soil structure and compaction.;
- Heavy rainfall running off rural and urban areas causes surface water and river flooding in specific locations. Tidal flooding continues to be a threat in the lower reaches of the catchment.

Whilst these issues span a much larger geography than the authority itself, any development within South Gloucestershire will have a direct impact on the water catchment area.

There is also the 'River Frome Reconnected' partnership project which South Gloucestershire is involved in. The objective of this project is to deliver improvements and benefits for the water environment through a more strategic and joined-up approach at sub-catchment level. It is looking to improve water quality and increase fish populations which have been steadily declining. It will also be aiming to improve flood risk from all sources (fluvial/tidal, surface water and groundwater) along the river, and also takes into account planned asset works for the next five years to enable an integrated planning and delivery solution.

### **Flood Risk**

South Gloucestershire is primarily at risk of flooding from surface water, rivers and the sea. The River Severn and its tributaries are prominent features in South Gloucestershire and as such areas of the district particularly to the west display a high risk of fluvial flooding. The 2012 SFRA notes that the authority can be divided into two catchments; the Bristol Avon catchment, and the Severn Tidal catchment.

- **Bristol Avon Catchment** - Approximately 60% of land within the boundaries of South Gloucestershire Council drains into the River Avon Catchment. This catchment is bounded by the Mendip Hills to the south the Malborough Downs and the Salisbury Plains to the east, the Cotswold Hills to the North and the Severn Estuary to the west. The direction of the River Avon is influenced by the topography and consequently flows from its source to the east in the Cotswolds, west through Bath and Bristol to the Severn Estuary. The longitudinal gradients vary significantly within the major tributaries of the Bristol Avon Catchment.
- **Severn Tidal catchment**- Approximately 40% of South Gloucestershire drains into the River Severn, and thus into a tidal environment. The low lying land in this catchment is generally flat. Many of these low lying areas have been influenced by man over many centuries,

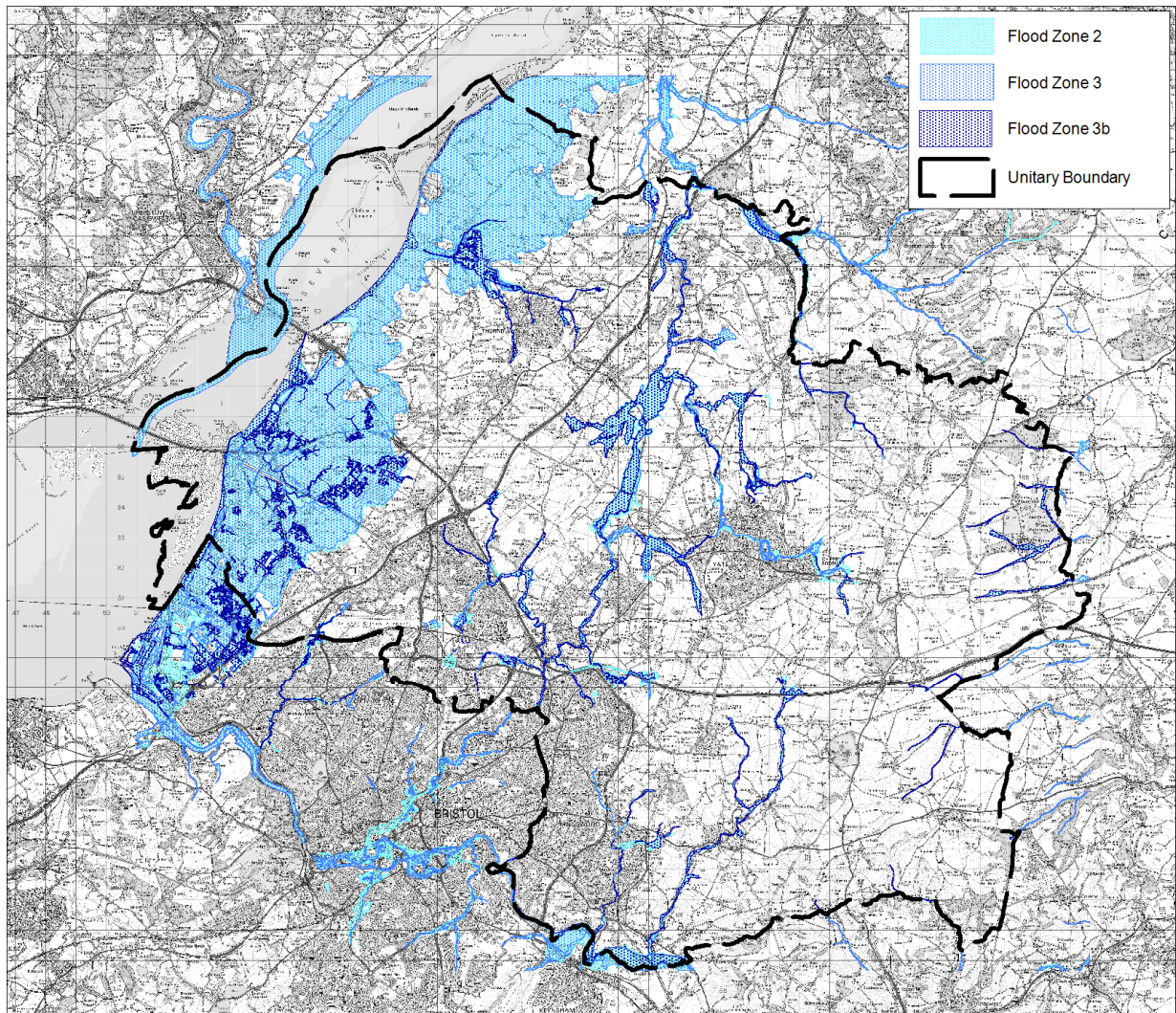
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<sup>18</sup> <https://environment.data.gov.uk/farmers/>



including straightening of channels, dredging or bank stabilisation. This area is characterised by the Rhines, streams and ditches that discharge into the Severn Estuary.

The areas of Zone 2 and Zone 3 flooding are indicated on the map overleaf.



Map showing the various Flood Zones

Flooding risks from rivers and the sea in South Gloucestershire are relatively well understood and have been managed for many years by the Environment Agency. These risks are mapped and are used to guide planning decisions. However flood risk from other local sources are less well understood; these are typically localised events which are often difficult to predict.

The risk of flooding from groundwater can be difficult to predict due to the 'hidden' nature of the source of flooding and the longer period of onset, as groundwater flooding can occur several days or weeks following heavy rainfall.

Parts of South Gloucestershire are particularly susceptible to surface water flooding. Recent data published by the Environment Agency shows that locations within the urban fringes of north and north east Bristol, such as Filton and Kingswood, as well as Thornbury and southern parts of Yate are predicted to be at greatest risk of surface water flooding. A sustainable approach to drainage mitigates the impact of new development on flood risk and builds resilience to flooding. It also provides opportunities to remove pollutants from urban runoff at source, and combines water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife

## **Energy**

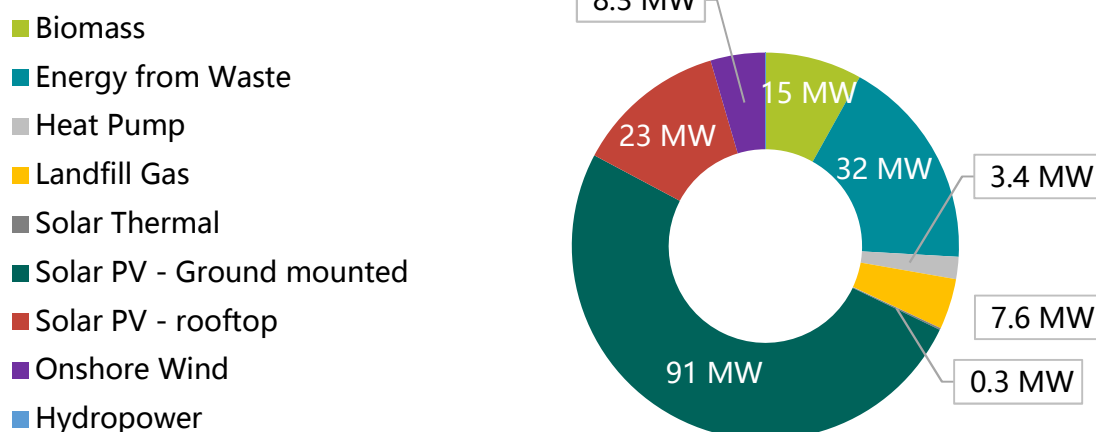
An estimated annual total of 329.5 Gigawatt (GWh) hours of energy is generated from renewable sources within South Gloucestershire (as of September 2019)<sup>19</sup>. The largest contributors to renewable energy generation was solar photovoltaic (PV), and energy from waste (EFW), electricity only. The vast majority of renewable generation comes from renewable electricity. Progress on renewable heat has been far slower.

The proportion of annual energy demand currently generated from local renewable energy generation is 4.8%. This remains a similar proportion to that shown for last year, and reflects the low level of increase in installed capacity. Between September 2018 and September 2019, there were 102 new renewable energy projects installed in South Gloucestershire but the total capacity increase was only 0.7 MW, which is less than 10% of the previous year's increase. This period has seen no projects commissioned that are above 50 kW. Only four types of renewable technology were installed: a single biomass boiler and single solar thermal project, as well as multiple heat pumps and rooftop solar PV projects. In September 2019, South Gloucestershire had a total of 179MW of installed renewable energy capacity, including heat and electricity from 4,610 installations. Solar PV is the largest technology type, making up two-thirds of the capacity installed.

South Gloucestershire Council declared a Climate Emergency on 17 July 2019, and pledged to provide the leadership to enable South Gloucestershire to become carbon neutral by 2030. The South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy has been updated to include this revised target. In order to meet this target it will be necessary to maximise the generation of renewable energy from installations located within South Gloucestershire to enable local energy consumption (heat, electricity and transport) to be met from renewable energy sources. The Climate Emergency action plan will support the delivery of increased renewable energy generation capacity in the area. Progress is monitored through the renewable energy annual report prepared by Regen on behalf of the Council.



### Installed renewable energy capacity by technology in South Gloucestershire



## **Green Belt**

The extent of the designated Green Belt in South Gloucestershire is estimated to cover over 40% of the total land area (23,026ha). The Green Belt in South Gloucestershire is part of the wider Avon

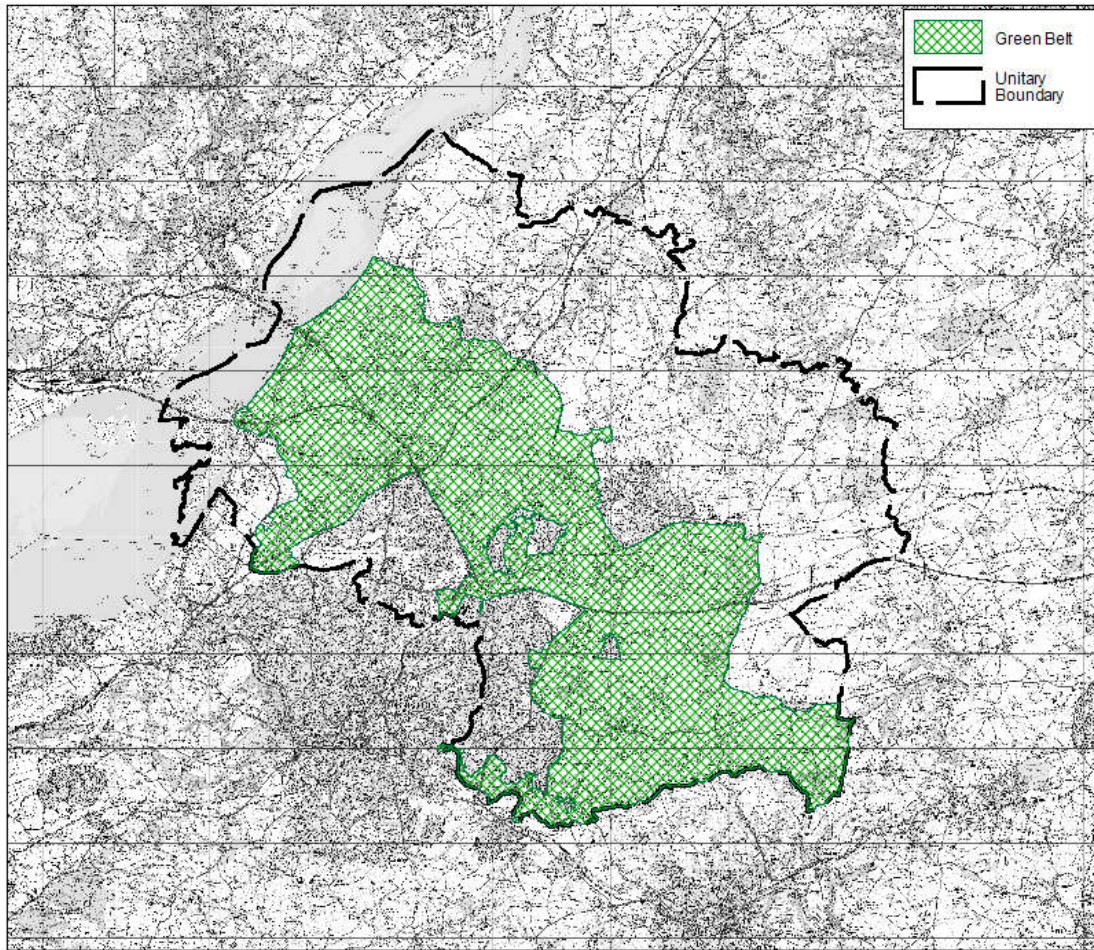
<sup>19</sup> South Gloucestershire Renewable Energy Progress Report (Regen, March 2020) Note: data is up to September 2019)

Green Belt which surrounds Bristol and Bath and also intersects at the following major settlements in the South Gloucestershire district; Chipping Sodbury, Severn Beach, Thornbury and Yate. The main objective of the Green Belt is to control urban growth and keep land permanently open to allow agriculture, forestry and outdoor leisure to develop. It is important to note that Green Belt is not given planning protection because of landscape or ecological quality, or because areas of land have open space and recreation function. There are also several key policies already in place in South Gloucestershire, such as CS5 (location of development) and PSP7 (development in the Green Belt) help to achieve the control of urban growth by setting out clear circumstances as to where development is both appropriate and permitted.

Given the levels of growth that South Gloucestershire has experienced over the previous years and likely to experience in the future as part of Local Plan 2020, the role and current extent of the Green Belt is likely to come under investigation and pressure. Ensuring the overall purpose of Green Belt in our area is protected and the recreational value of the Green Belt is enhanced will be a key consideration for the Local Plan.

Following the adoption of the Core Strategy in December 2013, the area of GB within South Gloucestershire has been reduced from 23,231.62 hectares (ha) to 23,026.15ha. This figure accounts for the planned release of GB at land east of Harry Stoke (EoHS), and west of the A4018 as part of the Council's commitment to supporting sustainable development up to 2026/27. In total these areas represent a net loss of 205.47 ha – less than 0.9% of total GB land, and is split between 144.35ha at EoHS and 61.12ha west of the A4018. This release of land from the Green Belt is in accord with the Council's wider objectives as set out in the Core Strategy for new sustainable communities and infrastructure delivery (Stoke Gifford Transport Link) at the East of Harry Stoke and the delivery of Cribbs/ Patchway New Neighbourhoods.





*Map showing the extent of the Green Belt*

## 4) Key sustainability issues and likely evolution without the Plan

Analysis of the baseline information has enabled a number of key sustainability issues facing South Gloucestershire to be identified. Identification of the key sustainability issues and consideration of how these issues might develop over time if the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 is not implemented help to meet the requirements of Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations to provide information on:

(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan; and

(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan.

An initial set of key sustainability issues for South Gloucestershire is presented in Table 4a (below).

It is also a requirement of the SEA Regulations that consideration is given to the likely evolution of the environment in the plan area if the plan (in this case South Gloucestershire the Local Plan 2020) was not to be implemented. This analysis is presented in Table 4a in relation to each of the key sustainability issues.

The information in Table 4a shows that, in general, the current trends in relation to the various social, economic and environmental issues affecting South Gloucestershire would be more likely to continue without the implementation of the Local Plan 2020, although the policies in the adopted South Gloucestershire Local Plan (detailed above) would still go some way towards addressing many of the issues. In most cases, the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 offers opportunities to directly and strongly affect existing trends in a positive way, through an up-to-date plan which reflects the requirements of national planning policy and other key considerations.

**Table 4a – Key Sustainability issues for South Gloucestershire and the Likely evolution without the Local Plan**

Key sustainability issue for South Gloucestershire	Likely evolution without the Local Plan 2020
<p><b>Climate Change</b> is likely to affect biodiversity, increase hazards from fluvial flooding and also affect the social and economic aspects of life. The diverse character of South Gloucestershire (in that it neighbours Bristol City and the draw this creates for jobs, tourism, accommodation etc. is in stark contrast to the rural areas that are dispersed). These differences means that there are likely to be difficulties with regards to the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.</p>	<p>Climate change is likely to have on-going effects regardless of the Local Plan. The Adopted Core Strategy already includes policies seeking to address this issue, and these would continue to apply in the absence of the local plan through the NPPF.</p> <p>However, the Local Plan 2020 offers the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increase the requirement for zero carbon, energy efficient building design and construction in new development, and supporting the retrofitting to decarbonise heating;</li> <li>- increase renewable and low carbon energy generation;</li> <li>- minimise the need to travel and decarbonise travel where it is needed.</li> </ul> <p>Having declared a Climate Emergency within the authority, inclusion in the Local Plan helps strengthen the ability to reduce our impact.</p>
<p>New development in the district will mean there will be increasing demands for <b>energy provision</b> in the future.</p>	<p>The delivery of new homes and other development over the plan period could increase demand for energy consumption in South Gloucestershire. At present, the Core Strategy includes policies seeking to address this issue, and these could continue to apply in the absence of creating a review. Policies CS3 and CS4 encourage sustainable and low carbon energy generation, as well as encourage district heat generation to be explored.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2020 offers the opportunity to update these policies to encourage improved energy efficiency across the unitary authority, and increase the proportion of energy which is supplied by renewable sources.</p>
<p>South Gloucestershire contains many areas of <b>high ecological value</b> including sites of international and national importance. These are under</p>	<p>Pressures on the natural environment in the authority are likely to continue regardless of the Local Plan update, particularly given the likely requirement for more housing and employment development to meet</p>

Key sustainability issue for South Gloucestershire	Likely evolution without the Local Plan 2020
<p>threat from urbanising pressures, including disturbance and damage from recreational use</p>	<p>growth projections through the SDS. The adopted Core Strategy and Policies, Sites and Places Plan already includes policies seeking to address these pressures, including CS9: Managing the environment and heritage; PSP18: Statutory Wildlife Sites: European Sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and PSP19: wider biodiversity.</p> <p>However, without the site allocations to be made through the later stages of the Local Plan, further development may not come forward in the most appropriate locations and impacts on biodiversity could be amplified. The Local Plan also offers the opportunity to update planning policy in relation to the protection of areas which are of importance in terms of their biodiversity and geodiversity with consideration for the future evolution of development in the District. The SA for the Local Plan Review will, in time, incorporate the findings of Habitat Regulations Assessment which will provide further insight into biodiversity impacts specifically at European sites presenting the opportunities to limit adverse impacts at such locations.</p>
<p>The <b>countryside</b> is under pressure from urbanising influences which are driven by a need for new housing provision and economic growth and infrastructure improvements to support new growth.</p>	<p>Pressures on the countryside are likely to continue regardless of the implementation of a new Local Plan. The Core Strategy sets out the areas of growth, mainly within or adjacent to larger settlements.</p> <p>However without the allocations that the Local Plan 2020 will eventually include, further development may not come forward in the most sustainable and appropriate locations, and therefore the impacts on the countryside could be more significantly adverse.</p>
<p>The reliance on the private car for commuting has resulted in areas within South Gloucestershire with poor air quality and Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) being designated. This is compounded due to the</p>	<p>Without intervention, development could happen in an unplanned and ad hoc manner, which has the potential to not be in the most sustainable location, and compound the air quality issues in South Gloucestershire.</p>

Key sustainability issue for South Gloucestershire	Likely evolution without the Local Plan 2020
<p>authority's position in relation to the M4, M5 and M32, multiple A Roads and a wide range of industrial activity in the authority.</p>	<p>The Local Plan 2020 seeks to minimise the need to travel and decarbonise travel where it is needed. Having declared a Climate Emergency within the authority, inclusion in the Local Plan helps strengthen the ability to minimise development's impact.</p>
<p>The district has a varied and distinctive <b>landscape character</b> from the nationally designated Cotswold AONB to more local hillsides, valleys and features, which are under pressure from new development.</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plans already include policies to protect and enhance the landscape, such as policy CS9: Managing the environment and heritage, and PSP2: Landscape. Here, development proposals are only deemed acceptable where they conserve and where appropriate, enhance the quality, amenity, distinctiveness and special character of the landscape.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2020 offers the opportunity to update the current policy position in response to the evolution of the area, and development pressures it faces through more specific development management policies and site allocations that are selected following consideration of their impacts on landscape character through the SA.</p>
<p>The district includes a number of <b>historic assets</b> of designated importance which are under pressure from new development.</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plans include policies that seek to protect and enhance the historic environment. Policy PSP17: Heritage Assets and the Historic Environment sets out the criteria by which proposals should protect, and where appropriate, enhance the heritage assets.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2020 provides the opportunity for development to be located in areas which are less sensitive in terms of their impact on heritage assets (with consideration for other sustainability issues) through the SA process applied to potential site allocations. The Local Plan Review provides a way of updating the policy position the Council has taken with regards the protection of heritage assets and their setting through appropriate development policies.</p>



Key sustainability issue for South Gloucestershire	Likely evolution without the Local Plan 2020
<p>There are areas of high flood risk, particularly around the Severn Estuary and main river corridors. Parts of South Gloucestershire are liable to <b>flooding</b>.</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plans already include policies that seek to reduce flood risk through the appropriate siting of development, supporting the provision of SuDS and other proposals which would reduce vulnerability to flood risk.</p> <p>New development supported through the Local Plan 2020 can increase the risk of flooding, however it also offers the opportunity to provide development in locations which present the lowest flood risk.</p>
<p>Parts of the authority fall within a nitrate vulnerable zone, which indicates that some water bodies are exposed to significant levels of nitrates, with a potential impact on local <b>water quality</b>.</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plans include policies to protect and enhance water quality. Policy CS9: Managing the Environment and Heritage notes that developments will be expected to protect the quality and quantity of the water environment and its margins.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2020 presents the opportunity to allocate new development at sites which are less likely to have adverse impacts in terms of their local water quality following their consideration through the SA process. There is also the opportunity to include new development management policies thereby updating the planning policy provision in protecting water quality.</p>
<p><b>Demography of the area</b> – An increasing number of people live in the district and our population is increasing in age. An aging population will require careful consideration of the adaptability and accessibility of new homes, infrastructure, services and facilities.</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plans through policy CS18: Housing Diversity seeks to encourage new developments to contribute to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities meeting needs of residents including older people and also provide range of different types, tenures and sizes of housing, to create mixed communities</p> <p>The Local Plan 2020 offers the opportunity to build on this policy approach through development management and site allocation policies which will help to meet the requirements of the future age structure of the District. In addition to development management policies which promote the provision of homes suitable for all sections of the community this will</p>

Key sustainability issue for South Gloucestershire	Likely evolution without the Local Plan 2020
	include the consideration of sites in terms of access to existing services centres and services and facilities through the SA process.
<p><b>Inequalities and Deprivation</b> – Despite being a relatively affluent authority there are inequalities relating to access to employment, educational attainment and health, which are focused in certain areas which are designated as priority neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Although not explicit in the adopted Local Plans, opportunities to consider access to healthcare, open spaces and other recreational facilities would have been taken into account during identification and allocation of sites</p> <p>The Local Plan Review presents further opportunities to allocate new housing development sites at locations which are in close proximity to existing healthcare facilities, open spaces and other facilities which might encourage healthier lifestyle choices including increased levels of physical activity. The Local Plan Review might also be used to allocate open spaces and local green spaces to protect them from development.</p> <p>Without the implementation of new site allocations to be included in the Local Plan 2020 there may be less certainty about the delivery of housing and employment land and therefore deprivation in South Gloucestershire would be less likely to be addressed.</p>
<p>There is a need to ensure that there are <b>employment sites</b> available to accommodate businesses of all sizes, including key local sectors in a rapidly changing economic and retail environment.</p>	<p>Without the implementation of new site allocations to be included in the Local Plan review there may be less certainty about the delivery of employment land and necessary transport infrastructure and therefore any potential for economic stagnation would be less likely to be addressed.</p>
<p>Ensuring there are is a <b>balanced range of safeguarded employment land</b> across South Gloucestershire, so that all communities have access to job opportunities that are accessible by walking, cycling and effective public transport in order to create and maintain sustainable communities. Areas in the East Fringe have a lower job to population ratio, consequently commuting patterns are higher.</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plans provide guidance for where development should go across the authority, as well as preventing the loss of employment land. However, due to continual pressure for additional housing, employment land is being lost throughout South Gloucestershire. This results in more people having to travel further for employment.</p>

Key sustainability issue for South Gloucestershire	Likely evolution without the Local Plan 2020
	<p>There is therefore a need for the local plan 2020 to limit the loss of employment land and to rebalance the jobs to resident ratio by allocating land in key areas, order to ensure that there are sufficient jobs in local areas, to minimise the impacts of commuting on the environment. There is also a requirement to amend and strengthen the policies surrounding the loss of employment land.</p>
<p><b>Town Centres and High Streets</b> face evolving pressures in terms of outside retail offers and the continued importance of e-retailing and the provision of services online. This has led to an increase in vacancies in the town centres.</p>	<p>There are a number of policies in the Local Plans that seek to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres, such as CS14: Town Centres and Retail and PSP31: Town Centre Uses. This includes setting out the town centre boundaries, and primary retail areas.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2020 provides the opportunity to incorporate updated policies to protect the evolving role of the town centres. As the plan is looking to also incorporate Urban Lifestyles, it is looking to regenerate areas as well as provide accommodation and an increase in footfall to these areas. This will enhance the opportunities within these centres as areas for economic growth, job provision and housing.</p>
<p><b>Promoting Healthy Lifestyles</b> – facilitating travel by walking, cycling and active modes, and ensuring access to open space, recreation and a high quality environment are all important considerations for future planning of the district.</p>	<p>Locating growth in close proximity to existing or new key services and facilities, to create walkable and cycle able neighbourhoods and growth which avoids a reliance on private car travel, will be important for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- climate change mitigation;</li> <li>- Sustainable travel;</li> <li>- Air quality; and</li> <li>- Health and wellbeing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Providing enough new homes</b> for the growing and changing population of the district (including affordable and to meet the needs of different groups) is an issue. This directly impacts the ability of the authority to ensure it</p>	<p>The Core Strategy seeks to increase the number of houses in South Gloucestershire by providing a minimum of 28,355 new homes, of a diverse and affordable range. The majority of this housing is provided through</p>

Key sustainability issue for South Gloucestershire	Likely evolution without the Local Plan 2020
<p>meets the government planning requirements to have a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land.</p>	<p>strategic allocations (such as North Yate New Neighbourhood, and Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood). However alongside the need to increase housing provision in the future, there is the need to improve the diversity and affordability of stock being delivered.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2020 will continue to build on the strengths achieved through the Core Strategy, and will seek to allocate land that is sustainable, adaptable and affordable. Without the Local Plan 2020, housing supply issues will intensify, and house prices will continue to rise unsustainably. Without the implementation of the site allocations to be included as part of the Local Plan there may be less certainty about the delivery of affordable housing at site allocations.</p>
<p><b>Lack of suitable land remaining</b> within existing settlement limits for development causes additional growth pressures in urban areas. This needs to be balanced with achieving a high quality of life and safeguarding our built and natural assets in urban locations.</p>	<p>The adopted Local Plans carefully allocated land that was deemed the most sustainably suitable for development, through its spatial strategies and then PSP47. However, there is increasing pressure for land outside of existing settlements to be developed.</p> <p>The Local Plan 2020 will look at refreshing the settlement boundaries where appropriate, in order to protect the countryside from inappropriate development.</p>
<p>There has been an increase in <b>growth pressures for rural areas</b>, and an increased amount of speculative development, particularly outside the Green Belt. This has negatively impacted the unique character, natural and built assets in rural South Gloucestershire.</p>	<p>Given the housing requirements for the region, an updated plan is required in order to prevent speculative and ad-hoc development.</p> <p>Well planned and located rural growth can assist in providing new homes, affordable housing and support rural services, facilities and long term sustainability, which may be needed by some communities.</p>

Key sustainability issue for South Gloucestershire	Likely evolution without the Local Plan 2020
Need to <b>safeguard land for infrastructure needed</b> to support growth, from cycle routes, public transport routes, roads, community, education and health facilities.	In order to achieve sustainable communities, it is important to ensure that sufficient land is available to enable the provision of infrastructure. Without the Local Plan 2020, speculative developments could sterilise future infrastructure aspirations.
The need to ensure a steady and adequate supply of <b>minerals</b> , and avoid the needless sterilisation of mineral resources.	Without the Local Plan 2020, there is the potential for essential minerals to become sterilized through inappropriate development, causing detrimental effects on the aggregates industry in South Gloucestershire. The Local Plan 2020 needs to make provisions to ensure that minerals can continue to be worked in South Gloucestershire.

## 5) Sustainability Appraisal Framework

The development of a set of SA objectives (known as the SA framework) is a recognised way in which the likely environmental and sustainability effects of a plan can be described, analysed and compared.

South Gloucestershire's previous Local Plan Sustainability Appraisals provided the starting point for the development of a set of SA objectives for the Local Plan 2020. Those SA objectives have been reviewed in light of the revised and updated review of plans, policies and programmes, baseline information and key sustainability issues for South Gloucestershire and amendments have been made to a number of objectives to ensure that they are appropriate for the SA of the Local Plan 2020.

The proposed SA framework for the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 is presented in Table 5a (below). All of the topics specifically required by the SEA Regulations (set out in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations) are clearly addressed by the headline SA objectives, as shown in the third column of the table. The example Effects Criteria (see columns 4 and 5) show how sustainability effects, and in particular significant effects will be identified for potential site options that are considered for allocation at a later stage in the plan preparation process.

The review of the SA objectives has sought to avoid duplication and any single SA objective covering too many issues (as this would result in a high number of mixed effects being identified for that SA objective). The SA objectives are now also positively structured emphasising what the Local Plan 2020 should set out to achieve.

**Table 5a: Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
Climate Change	<b>1a. To minimise the District's contribution to climate change through a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from all sources and facilitate the aim of carbon neutrality by 2030</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Promote energy efficient and water efficient design</i></li> <li><i>Encourage the provision and use of renewable energy infrastructure</i></li> </ul> <p>NB: Greenhouse gas emissions associated with travel were covered under another SA objectives</p>	Air  Climatic factors  Material assets	TBC	TBC
	<b>1b. To support the District's adaptation to unavoidable climate change.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Promote design which will help to mitigate the effects of climate change (for example through appropriate building orientation and appropriate incorporation of SuDS)?</i></li> <li><i>Support the protection, restoration, creation, enhancement and the multi-functionality of the green/blue infrastructure network?</i></li> </ul>	Air  Climatic factors  Material assets	TBC	TBC
Improve the health, safety and wellbeing of all	<b>2a. Achieve reasonable access to public open space</b> (Designated Open Spaces, Town and Village Greens) <b>and Public Rights of Way</b> , taking into account quality	Landscape  Human Health  Population	<b>Significant positive</b> Provision of public open space or Public Rights of Way as part of development that is easily accessible <b>AND/OR</b>	<b>Uncertain significant negative</b> Development on public open space which could reduce quantity, quality <b>AND/OR</b> accessibility (which could result in mixed effects overall)

Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
	and quantity  <b>Reasonable Distance</b> <i>In line with South Gloucestershire planning policy quality standards established in the Open Space Audit</i>		Development in location within reasonable distance to two public open spaces <b>AND</b> immediately accessible to a Public Rights of Way.  <b>Minor positive</b> Development within reasonable distance to a public open space <b>AND/OR</b> immediately accessible to a Public Right of Way.	<b>Minor negative</b> Development does not include provision of open space that is easily accessible <b>AND</b> Development not within reasonable distance to a public open space <b>OR</b> Public Right of Way.
	<b>2b. Minimise the impact of noise on sensitive receptors</b> Sensitive uses = residential, schools  <b>Relevant Distance</b> <i>Adjacent to noise generating uses</i>	Human Health  Population	None	<b>Significant negative</b> Sensitive developments located adjacent to noise generating uses e.g. major roads and infrastructure, heavy industry
	<b>2c. Minimise impacts on air quality and locate sensitive development away from areas of poor air quality</b> Sensitive uses = residential, schools, children's facilities, nursery's, elderly people accommodation  <b>Relevant Distance</b> <i>Sites that are directly within or on routes that lead directly to an AQMA (both within and outside of the District)</i>	Air  Climatic factors  Human health  Population	<b>Significant Positive</b> TBC	<b>Significant negative</b> No consideration or inclusion of mitigation techniques/methods proposed for sensitive development in areas of high air pollution and AQMAs Development which will significantly increase pollution as a result of traffic in and around AQMAs Development that will place sensitive uses within AQMAs



	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
		Positive Effect	Negative Effect
<p>Distance</p> <p>Less than 20 minutes</p> <p>20 to 30 minutes</p> <p>More than 30 minutes</p>	<p>Material assets</p> <p>Human health</p> <p>Population</p>	<p><b>Significant positive</b> Development generating need for health facilities located within reasonable walking and cycling distance of all types of health facilities <b>OR</b> public transport to places containing health services and facilities, with journey time under 20 minutes.</p> <p><b>Minor positive</b> Development within reasonable walking and cycling distance of some, but not all health services and facilities, <b>AND/OR</b> public transport to places containing health services and facilities, with a journey time between 20 and 30 minutes</p>	<p><b>Significant negative</b> Development generating need for health facilities beyond reasonable walking and cycling access to any health facilities <b>AND</b> public transport to places containing health services and facilities that takes over 40 minutes</p> <p><b>Minor negative</b> Development beyond reasonable walking and cycling access to any health facilities <b>AND</b> public transport to places containing health services and facilities, which takes 30 – 40 minutes</p>
<p>High</p>	<p>Material assets</p> <p>Population</p>	<p><b>TBC</b> Contribute to meeting housing requirement - target and criteria to be established. Informed by approach taken at sub regional level in the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).</p>	<p><b>TBC</b> Contribute to meeting housing requirement - target and criteria to be established. Informed by approach taken at sub regional level in the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).</p>
<p>Quality of life</p> <p>Quality of life</p> <p>Quality of life</p>	<p>Material assets</p> <p>Population</p>	<p><b>Significant positive</b> Development that assists meeting affordable housing target Development that delivers a well-integrated mix of homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes. .</p> <p><b>Minor positive</b> Contributes on a limited basis to meeting affordable housing target Development that contributes on a limited basis to delivering well-integrated mix of homes of</p>	

	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
		Positive Effect	Negative Effect
		Sites that would accommodate fewer than 10 homes <sup>20</sup> .	
<p>le</p> <p>ost</p> <p>ntre,</p> <p>stance</p> <p>800m</p> <p>ess</p> <p>minutes</p> <p>s</p> <p>utes</p>	<p>Material assets</p> <p>Human health</p> <p>Population</p>	<p><b>Significant positive</b></p> <p>Development generating need for community facilities are within reasonable walking and cycling distance of all facilities, <b>OR</b> public transport to places containing community facilities, with a journey time under 20 minutes.</p> <p>Provision of community facilities as part of any allocation</p> <p><b>Minor positive</b></p> <p>Development within reasonable walking and cycling distance of some, but not all community facilities, <b>AND/OR</b> public transport to places containing community services and facilities, with a journey time between 20 and 30 minutes</p>	<p><b>Significant negative</b></p> <p>Development generating need for community facilities beyond reasonable walking and cycling access distance of any <b>AND</b> public transport to places containing community facilities, which takes over 40 minutes</p> <p>Loss of currently used and valuable community asset</p> <p><b>Minor negative</b></p> <p>Development beyond reasonable walking and cycling access to any community facilities <b>AND</b> public transport to community services and facilities, which takes 30 – 40 minutes</p>
<p>le</p> <p>primary</p> <p>stance</p>	<p>Material assets</p> <p>Population</p>	<p><b>Significant positive</b></p> <p>Development generating need for education facilities are within reasonable walking and cycling distance of primary and secondary schools</p> <p>Development which adds to capacity of educational facilities.</p> <p><b>Minor positive</b></p> <p>Development within reasonable walking distance of a primary <b>OR</b> secondary school but not both.</p>	<p><b>Significant negative</b></p> <p>Development generating a need for educational facilities beyond a reasonable walking and cycling distance to a primary and secondary school.</p>

Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
	<b>3e. Achieve reasonable sustainable access to retail and food buying services and facilities</b> (Town and District Centres or local comparison stores, supermarkets and local convenience stores)  <i>Reasonable walking and cycling distance</i> Town and District Centre: 1200 metres Supermarkets: 1200 metres Local convenience and comparison stores: 1200metres  <i>Reasonable public transport</i> Significant positive – Under 20 minutes Minor positive – Under 30 Minor negative – 30 to 40 minutes Significant negative – Over 40 minutes	Material assets  Population	<b>Significant Positive</b> Development generating need for retail and food buying within reasonable walking and cycling distance of all retail and food buying services and facilities <b>OR</b> public transport to town centre and food buying facilities, with journey time under 20 minutes. <b>AND/OR</b> Development which adds to the retail and leisure services and facilities within a town or district centre.  <b>Minor positive</b> Development within reasonable walking and cycling distance of some, but not all retail and food buying services and facilities, <b>AND/OR</b> public transport to town centre and food buying facilities, with journey time between 20 and 30 minutes	<b>Significant Negative</b> Development generating need for retail and food buying beyond reasonable walking and cycling distance of any retail and food buying services and facilities <b>AND</b> public transport to town centre and food buying services and facilities takes over 40 minutes  <b>Minor negative</b> Development beyond reasonable walking and cycling access to any retail and food buying services and facilities <b>AND</b> public transport to town centre and food buying services and facilities, which takes 30 – 40 minutes Development that would reduce the retail and leisure services and facilities within a town or district centre
	<b>3f. Reduce poverty and income inequality, and improve the life chances of those living in areas of concentrated disadvantage around Kingswood; Staple Hill and Yate</b>  <i>Relevant distance</i> Significant Positive – Within areas identified as most deprived 20% Minor positive - Adjacent to areas identified as most deprived 20%	Material assets  Population	<b>Significant Positive</b> Development that provides employment opportunities within areas identified as the most deprived 20% of areas in England Development (i.e. residential or other types of development) that helps to regenerate the areas identified as the most deprived 20% of areas in England  <b>Minor positive</b> Development that provides good access to employment opportunities (i.e. is adjacent to) for the areas identified as the most deprived 20% of areas in England	
	<b>3g. Improve access to high speed broadband</b>	Population	<b>Significant Positive</b> Potential for access to super-fast broadband  <b>Minor positive</b>	<b>Significant Negative</b> No access to broadband coverage

Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
			Potential for access to good broadband coverage	
Develop a diverse and thriving economy that meets people's needs	<b>4a. Deliver a reasonable quantum of employment floorspace</b>	Material assets  Population	<b>Significant Positive</b> Development provides significant (1.0ha) additional employment land <sup>21</sup> Development increases diversity of work opportunity  <b>Minor positive</b> Development provides enhanced or a minor amount of additional employment land (i.e. less than 1.0ha)	<b>Significant negative</b> Development leads to loss of current active or suitable employment site, Development leads to loss of diversity of work opportunity
	<b>4b. Achieve reasonable sustainable access to major employment areas</b>  <i>Employment Areas within 2km walk or 5.6km cycle</i> Enterprise Areas/Zones (EAs) Major Employer (100+ employees) Safeguarded Employment Areas Town Centres  <b>Reasonable public transport</b> Significant Positive – Under 20 minutes Minor positive – Under 30 Minor negative – 30 to 40 minutes Significant negative – Over 40 minutes	Material assets  Population  Air  Climatic factors	<b>Significant Positive</b> Development generating need for employment within walking/cycling distance of an Enterprise Areas/Zones, or a wide range of unique Safeguarded Employment Areas, Major Employers or Town Centres, <b>AND/OR</b> public transport to an EZ, or a wide range of unique Major Employers, Safeguarded Employment Areas or Town Centres, with journey times under 20 minutes.  <b>Minor positive</b> Development generating need for employment within walking/cycling distance of one or more unique Safeguarded Employment areas, Major Employers or Town Centres, <b>OR</b> public transport to any of an Enterprise Areas/Zones, with a journey time between 20 and 30 minutes but not both.	<b>Significant negative</b> Development generating need for employment beyond walking/cycling distance of any employment areas <b>AND</b> public transport to any employment areas which takes over 40 Minutes  <b>Minor negative</b> Development generating need for employment outside walking and cycling distance of a Safeguarded Employment Area, Major Employer or Town Centre <b>AND</b> public transport to employment areas which takes 30 – 40 minutes

<sup>21</sup> The threshold for identifying the significance of the effects in relation to this SA objective has been set in line with national planning policy guidance. For non-residential development, major development is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as development where a site is 1ha or larger.

Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets	<b>5a. Designated Assets: Minimise impact on and where appropriate enhance the historic environment, national heritage assets and their settings</b>  <i>Designated Assets</i> <i>Listed Buildings, Grade 1, Grade 11*, Grade II</i> <i>Conservation Areas</i> <i>Scheduled Ancient Monuments</i> <i>Registered Historic Parks and Gardens</i> <i>Registered Battlefields</i>	Cultural heritage	<b>Designated Assets</b> <b>Significant positive</b> Development that has been assessed as presenting opportunities for the enhancement of any affected heritage asset, historic townscape or landscape  <b>Minor positive</b> Development that has been assessed as presenting opportunities for safeguarding and protection the significance of any affected heritage asset, historic townscape or landscape	<b>Designated Assets</b> <b>Significant negative</b> Development that has been assessed as having the potential to lead to loss of significance of or substantial harm to any affected heritage asset, historic townscape or landscape Development in a location that has been assessed as having the potential to lead to loss of character and substantial harm to setting of an asset  <b>Minor negative</b> Development that has been assessed as having the potential to lead to harm or change of significance to a heritage asset Development in a location that has been assessed as having the potential to lead to harm of character and setting of an asset
	<b>Negligible</b> Development that has been assessed as having no potential to have adverse impacts relating to designated heritage assets.			
	<b>5b. Undesignated Assets: Minimise impact on and where appropriate enhance the historic environment, local heritage assets and their settings</b>  <i>Local Assets:</i> <i>Unregistered Historic Parks and Gardens</i> <i>Non-designated heritage assets</i> <i>Locally Listed Buildings</i>	Cultural heritage	<b>Significant positive</b>  <b>Minor positive</b> Development that has been assessed as presenting opportunities for the enhancement of the significance of any affected local heritage asset, historic townscape or landscape Development which has been assessed as presenting opportunities to bring into use an existing built local heritage asset Development that has been assessed as presenting opportunities to safeguard and protect the significance of any affected local heritage asset, historic townscape or landscape	<b>Significant negative</b>  <b>Minor negative</b> Development that has been assessed as having the potential to lead to loss of significance of any affected local heritage asset, historic townscape or landscape Development in a location that has been assessed as having the potential to lead to loss of character and setting of a local asset Development that has been assessed as having the potential to lead to harm or change of significance to a local asset Development in a location that has been assessed as having the potential to lead to harm of character and setting of a local asset

Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
			Developments that has been assessed as presenting opportunities to take account of local unregistered, non-designated or locally listed assets of importance to the local community	
			<b>Negligible</b> Development that has been assessed as having no potential to having adverse impacts relating to undesignated heritage assets.	
	<b>5c. Minimise impact on and where possible enhance habitats and species (taking account of climate change)</b>  <i>International and European designated sites</i> Special Areas of Conversation (SAC) Special Protection Areas (SPA) RAMSAR <b>Note:</b> The HRA will consider these in more detail. SA will recognise where a European Protected Sites might be affected and therefore an Appropriate Assessment as part of the HRA may be required. <b>National Sites and assets</b> SSSI National Nature Reserves Local Nature Reserves UK Priority Habitat <b>Local Sites</b> SNCI Ecological Networks	Biodiversity  Climatic factors  Fauna & Flora		<b>Significant negative</b> Development that is within 250m of one or more internationally or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites <b>Minor negative</b> Development that is between 250m and 1km of one or more internationally or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites, that is within 250m of a locally designated site (including priority habitat identified by South Gloucestershire Council) or is within 15m of an area of ancient woodland
			<b>Negligible</b> Development that is outside of the distances specified above from any internationally, nationally, locally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites and ancient woodland	
	<b>5d. Minimise impact on and where appropriate enhance valued landscapes</b>  <b>National designations</b> AONB	Cultural heritage Landscape	<b>itive Effects - TBC</b>	<b>Significant Negative</b> Development on land which is mostly assessed as having high landscape sensitivity <b>Uncertain Significant Negative</b>

Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
	<p><i>Ancient Woodland</i>  <b>Note:</b> The South Gloucestershire Adopted Landscape Character Assessment SPD (Revised 2014) will be used to assess the plan utilising the 21 identified Character Areas and the Landscape Strategy developed for each character area.</p>			<p>Development on land which is mostly assessed as having medium to high landscape sensitivity</p> <p><b>Minor Negative</b>  Development on land which is mostly assessed as having medium landscape sensitivity</p>
	<p><b>5e. Deliver a range and quality of, and increased access to new green infrastructure across South Gloucestershire AND protect and enhance existing GI</b></p> <p><b>Green Infrastructure typology:</b>  <b>Parks and Gardens</b>  <b>Amenity Greenspace</b> – including: informal recreation spaces, domestic gardens, village greens, green roofs  <b>Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces</b> – including: woodland and scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water  <b>Green corridors</b> – rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way  <b>Other</b> - allotments, community gardens, city farms, cemeteries and churchyards.</p>	<p>Biodiversity  Climatic factors  Fauna &amp; Flora  Landscape  Soil  Water</p>	<p><b>Uncertain for all sites</b>  At present limited up to date information is available in relation to GI corridors and key assets in South Gloucestershire. Therefore, an ‘uncertain’ effect is recorded for all sites in relation to this SA objective.</p>	
	<p><b>5f. Promote the conservation and wise use of land, maximising the re-use of previously developed land.</b></p>	<p>Fauna &amp; Flora  Landscape  Soil</p>	<p><b>Significant positive</b>  Major Development (sites that would provide 10 or more homes or sites of 1.0ha or more for non-residential uses) which would proceed on land which is mostly previously developed land/brownfield</p>	<p><b>Significant negative</b>  Major development (sites that would provide 10 or more homes or sites of 1.0ha or more for non-residential uses) which would proceed on land which is mostly previously undeveloped greenfield</p> <p><b>Minor negative</b></p>

Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
			<b>Minor positive</b> Minor development (sites that would provide fewer than 10 homes or sites smaller than 1.0ha for non-residential uses) which would proceed on land which is mostly previously developed land/brownfield	Minor development (sites that would provide fewer than 10 homes or sites smaller than 1.0ha for non-residential uses) which would proceed on land which is mostly previously undeveloped greenfield
	<b>5g. Minimise the loss of productive land, especially best and most versatile agricultural land.</b>	Landscape  Soil		<b>Significant Negative</b> Development on land resulting in loss of agricultural value Grade 1 to 2  <b>Uncertain Significant Negative</b> Development on land that results in loss of Grade 3 agricultural value or of local food growing land of demonstrable value
			<b>Negligible effect</b> Development on greenfield which has been identified as containing Grade 4 or Grade 5 soils or on brownfield land	
	<b>5h. Minimise vulnerability to tidal/fluviat flooding (taking account of climate change), without increasing flood risk elsewhere</b>	Climatic factors  Water		<b>Significant Negative</b> Development mostly on land that is within flood zones 3a or 3b.
			<b>Negligible effect</b> Development mostly on land that is outside of flood zones 3a or 3b.	
	<b>5i. Minimise vulnerability to surface water flooding and other sources of flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere</b>	Climatic factors  Water		<b>Significant Negative</b> Development proposed mostly within identified areas at high risk from surface water or ground water flooding.  <b>Minor negative</b> Development on greenfield land which has potential to increase surface water flood risk.
			<b>Negligible effect</b> Development on brownfield land outside areas at risk from surface water or ground water flooding.	



Theme	Sustainability Objective	SEA Topic	Example Effect Criteria	
			Positive Effect	Negative Effect
	5j. Minimise harm to, and where possible protect and enhance (surface and groundwater) water quality and quantity/availability	Water		<b>Minor Negative</b> Development within a Source Protection Zone.
			<b>Negligible effect</b> Development outside of a Source Protection Zone.	
Use of natural resources	6a. Reduce waste	Material Assets	<b>Uncertain Minor Positive</b> Location of development on or mostly on brownfield land may provide opportunities to reuse and recycle buildings and materials onsite as well as demolition waste	
			<b>Negligible effect</b> Location of development on or mostly on greenfield land is unlikely to provide opportunities to reuse and recycle buildings and materials onsite as well as demolition waste	
	6b. Minimise consumption and extraction of minerals	Material Assets		<b>Minor negative</b> Development located within or mostly within a Minerals Safeguarding Area
			<b>Negligible effect</b> Development located outside or mostly outside of a Minerals Safeguarding Area	
Protect and enhance valuable Green belt	7a. Protect and enhance valuable Green Belt	Material assets	<b>Positive Effects - TBC</b>  <b>Significant negative</b> Development on land within the Green Belt making contribution to Green Belt purpose(s), leading to urban sprawl, physical merger between towns or settlements or loss of open countryside	

## Use of the SA Framework

The findings of the SA of the policy and site options for the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 will be presented in SA matrices and/or summary text as appropriate. Where matrices are used they will include a colour coded symbol showing score for the option against each of the SA objectives along with a concise justification for the score given. The detailed SA matrices will be presented as an appendix to the full SA report.

The key to SA scoring and the colour coding to be used for the appraisal matrices is shown in Table 5b (below).

**Table 5b: SA Scoring Key**

Score	Effects
++	Significant positive effect likely
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely
+	Minor positive effect likely
+/-	Mixed minor effects likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
0	Negligible effect likely
?	Likely effect uncertain

The dividing line between sustainability scores is often quite small. Where significant effects are distinguished from more minor effects this is because the effects of the option on the SA objective are considered to be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect compared with other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

In determining the significance of the effects of the options for potential inclusion in the Local Plan 2020 it will be important to bear in mind its relationship with the other documents in the planning system such as the NPPF, as these may provide additional safeguards or mitigation of potentially significant adverse effects.

SA inevitably relies on an element of subjective judgement. However, in order to ensure consistency in the appraisal of the site options, detailed sets of assumptions will be developed and applied for each of the types of sites considered (these will be presented in the full SA Report).

For each of the SA objectives in the SA framework, a clear set of decision-making criteria and assumptions for determining significance of the effects will be set out. These assumptions will be applied through the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data.

## Proposed Structure of the SA Report

A Sustainability Appraisal Report for each of the relevant consultation stages of the Local Plan Review still to be undertaken will be produced as a key output of the appraisal process. The SA Report will contain information on the effects of the proposed plan options, policies or site allocations (depending on the stage) and will be published for formal public consultation. It will include the updated table 'signposting' where each of the requirements of the SEA Directive has been met (as shown in Table 1a of this Scoping Report).

The SA Report will be written in a user-friendly way in order to ensure that it will be understood by as wide an audience as possible. It will include a non-technical summary and is likely to be structured as set out below:

- Non-technical Summary;
- Introduction;
- Sustainability objectives, baseline and context;
- Local Plan Review Options;
- Local Plan Review policies/ site allocations; and
- Conclusions and monitoring.

As described above, the detailed SA matrices presenting the assessment of certain options, policies or site allocations against each of the SA objectives will be presented as appendices to the main SA Report. Information about how any consultation responses received in response to earlier stages of the SA have been addressed will also be presented in an appendix.

Once the appraisal work is undertaken, it may be necessary to make refinements to the proposed report structure described above, in order to present the findings of the SA in the most easily understandable way. However, the content of the report will reflect the above list of issues, and will be fully compliant with the reporting requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations.

## 6) Next steps

In order to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the views of the three statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) are being sought in relation to the scope and level of detail to be included in this initial SA Report.

This SA Scoping Report is being published for consultation with the three statutory bodies for a five week period between 8 October 2020 and 12 November 2020.

In particular, the consultees are requested to consider:

- Whether the scope of the SA generally is appropriate as set out.
- Whether there are any additional plans, policies or programmes that are relevant to the SA and should be included in Chapter 2.
- Whether the information provided in Chapter 3 is robust and comprehensive, and provides a suitable baseline for the SA of the Local Plan 2020.
- Whether there are any additional key sustainability issues (Chapter 4) that should be included.
- Whether the SA framework (Chapter 5) is appropriate and includes a suitable range of objectives.

As the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2020 is drafted, it will be subject to the later stages of the SA using the SA framework presented in Chapter 5. An initial high level Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out and published alongside the Phase 1 consultation document.

A full SA Report (incorporating the later stages of the SA process) will then be produced and made available to other stakeholders and the general public for wider consultation alongside the emerging Local Plan.