

Yate & Chipping Sodbury – FAQs

Introduction

The Council is beginning the process of producing a new Local Plan that will guide planning decisions across South Gloucestershire over the coming years. The South Gloucestershire Local Plan will be informed in part by the final Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), which is being produced by the four West of England councils (South Glos, Bristol City, Bath & North East Somerset and North Somerset). The JSP will identify areas known as Strategic Development Locations (SDLs), which will describe where larger scale growth should happen to accommodate growing populations and the need for space to build businesses and employment opportunities. The updated draft of the JSP is expected to be published for a final round of public consultation this winter.

Although the JSP is still in draft form, South Gloucestershire Council is keen to begin the process of producing its new Local Plan as good planning requires that local communities are consulted early and kept well informed about how they would like new development to come forward.

This is one of five locations in South Gloucestershire: Charfield, Coalpit Heath, Buckover Garden Village, Thornbury, Yate and Chipping Sodbury, identified as potential suitable and sustainable locations for new strategic development in the current draft JSP.

Events are now planned around those key areas. Details are as follows:

- Charfield – Wednesday 20 September, Charfield Memorial Hall, 2-8pm
- Coalpit Heath – Friday 22 September, Coalpit Heath Village Hall/Miners Institute, 2-8pm
- Thornbury – Friday 29 September, Armstrong Hall, 2-8pm
- Yate and Chipping Sodbury – Wednesday 4 October, Sodbury Town Hall, 2-8pm
- Buckover Garden Village – Friday 6 October at Falfield Village Hall, 2-8pm

What is happening today?

This is a non-statutory public consultation event, i.e. the Council is not required under planning regulations to undertake it. It is an additional opportunity for members of the public to attend and engage with on a without prejudice basis. i.e. you can still object in principle through the forthcoming JSP and new Local Plan consultations. The intention is therefore to record local people's views about what the priorities, character and type of new development should be if decisions are taken in the future to place growth in that area. Feedback from this event will be fed into the first draft new South Gloucestershire Local Plan, which will be published for full consultation across South Gloucestershire in the first half of 2018.

Why is it important we do this?

The JSP process is not yet complete and final decisions have not been made about where the Strategic Development Locations will be, but we want to start the conversation with communities to say, if there is growth, what do you want it to look like and what infrastructure and community facilities should we make sure are delivered alongside new housing or business premises. We are also aware that already there is developer interest in some of the locations, and it is important to begin the early thinking about the master-planning of the locations in consultation with local and community interests. This is in order to avoid piecemeal and un-coordinated development that may not then deliver the benefits

of good place-making and investment in necessary infrastructure. It can also give the Council a 'stronger hand' in resisting inappropriate proposals in advance of a robust master-planning process.

So the Council has decided everything then?

No. The JSP will be subject to further public consultation this winter and public inquiry next year, and the new South Gloucestershire Local Plan is still at a very early stage. You can still continue to object in principle if you so wish and contributing to this event today will not impact on that at all. You are free to make full and independent representations within the JSP process and object to the principle of including this location. This event is the beginning of a conversation about the nature of the development should the location be adopted by the JSP. Further information on the new Local Plan can be found at:

www.southglos.gov.uk/newlocalplan

What is the status of the Diagrams being presented at the Exhibition?

The very simple draft 'Concept Diagrams' are a starting point for this consultation. The aim is to obtain reaction and feedback on the diagrams and to understand how the existing qualities (both good and bad) of Yate & Chipping Sodbury might usefully influence new development. Of equal, if not greater, importance is to understand what aspirations local people have for the type of place and community that will eventually be created. You can still object in principle but are also invited to view the boards and talk to the facilitators about your views, concerns and ideas.

Why Yate & Chipping Sodbury?

Yate and Chipping Sodbury together comprise the 4th largest settlement in the West of England sub-region. Yate's new town characteristics, comprised of a modern thriving town centre and strong green infrastructure, foot and cycle network and local employment base, aligned with its proximity to the employment areas of the north and east fringe of the Bristol urban areas, provide an extremely strong basis on which to focus a whole town approach to new investment and growth, complimented by Chipping Sodbury's strong historic character.

Strategic regenerative growth would consolidate Yate's longer term role as one of the principal urban areas in the sub-region, benefiting from good existing accessibility & service provision, and particularly the area's accessibility by rail. Alongside proposed growth at Coalpit Heath together, would support justification for investment into rail and Metrobus extension along the A432 Badminton Road, including new strategic and cycle infrastructure, improving access to Bristol City Centre, the Bristol North Fringe, Science Park and Emersons Green Enterprise Area.

There is also major opportunities for change in Yate in the form of potential redevelopment of the older areas of the Beeches Industrial estate and along Station Road. In combination with new employment land releases along the western edge of Yate to provide land to relocate existing and attract new business, the opportunity exists to create a new 'western gateway' into the town that enhances the image of Yate and increases the mix and intensity of uses in the locality so driving economic growth.

A new distinctive high quality, higher density modern residential neighbourhood around the northwest of the town would also benefit from its proximity to the station, support continued investment in the town and make the case for regeneration of the Beeches Estate and new green infrastructure connections, realising the potential of the Frome, and new foot and cycle connections adding to the existing network.

Subject to this being confirmed through the JSP, a new greenbelt boundary will be established along the north western & western edge of the neighbourhood and employment areas. In addition, the role and function of the green gap between it and Coalpit Heath & Iron Acton, and the high quality landscape north of Mission Lane at Engine Common will also need to be examined to enhance its recreational and ecological functions and ensure their permanence. To give time for the New Neighbourhood north of Brimsham Park to substantial build out and land assembly, development is expected to commence in the late 2020's and extend beyond the plan period.

Growth at Yate could also potentially be complemented by a new high quality neighbourhood south of Chipping Sodbury. Within walking distance of the town centre it would assist maintain and build on its vitality. a new greenbelt boundary would need to be established around Kingrove Common with improved recreational and biodiversity opportunities made possible in this prominent locality with extensive views of the surrounding area. Subject to this being confirmed through the JSP, to prioritise other strategic locations and to provide time to secure funding for new rail crossings, and land assembly, it is currently considered that development would be held back until the latter part of the plan period.

More information on the Joint Spatial Plan can be found at: www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk

How do you decide how many new homes are appropriate?

We first consider constraints such as the high quality landscape and ecological assets at Engine & Kingsgrove Common, flood risk along the Frome, the setting of any listed buildings and conservation areas and any existing trees and hedges etc. We then weigh this with existing and potential infrastructure capacity, local and wider housing needs and the type and density of development that is likely to be appropriate to the locality.

What about the schools?

The Local Education Authority (LEA) has stated that there are few surplus places across existing primary schools in the Y&CS area. They have indicated that should development be approved one or possibly two new schools will be required within the NW Yate development area (1 primary and 1 all through primary & secondary school) & a new primary school in the Chipping Sodbury development area and expansion of a secondary school will be required to serve the new residents.

What about the doctors?

The Council has consulted the NHS Trust and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group. They are consulting the local practices and we are awaiting their further considerations.

What about the traffic?

A WoE Joint Transport Study was also consulted on in November 2016. Further information can also be found at: www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk. A package of strategic transport mitigation have been identified to support any new growth. We understand people have very strong concerns about how any new strategic transport infrastructure can be delivered. However, today, we would like people to focus on local access issues, i.e. where are the local paths and cycle routes that may need improvement and where should new links be provided? Where new facilities would be best placed to encourage more people to walk and cycle?

Why are consultants being used?

In addition to the particular skills, knowledge and experience that their team can offer, Design Action are providing an independent 'critical friend' role and from this position of neutrality will be more able to lead/chair the discussions + explore and speculate creatively with the attendees. Indeed they may question some of the detail of the Concept Diagrams in their current form. Afterwards, Design Action will compile the evidence and summarise the feedback from each of the events, making independent recommendations for what are the key messages and themes that have emerged. These reports should then be used by the Council in formulating the briefs for the more technical master-planning and drafting of more detailed policy that will follow within the Local Plan process. The independence of Design Action should help to further convince participants that the engagement process is a genuine one.

What happens next?

Feedback from this exhibition will help the council and local community to plan for new development that may be needed in Yate & Chipping Sodbury. A good, strong Local Plan, based on sound evidence and local community input, means we are much better placed to demand that developers deliver what we want and need. The events will be 'written up' and the evidence and summary conclusions from the consultation will feed into the new South Gloucestershire Local Plan when it begins to emerge during 2018. There will also be other opportunities to shape that through further consultation events and we will let you know further details about these as we go into next year. It is expected that a masterplan will evolve for each location and some specific policies to manage the development within it set out in the JSP and new South Gloucestershire Local Plan. Comments can also be made after the event until Friday 13th October 17 via: PlanningPolicy@southglos.gov.uk .