



Issues Report

For

Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan

by

Lemon Gazelle Community Interest Company

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Context

The aim of this Issues Report is to bring together the information gathered over the past year of consultation and engagement, and to examine what it says about the aspirations of the people of Thornbury for the future of their town and its surroundings. Information and views have been sought by means of a range of community events which have taken place in the Town, culminating in a community survey in early 2018, to which over 500 residents responded.

The information received has been collated into the following theme headings;

- Housing
- Town Centre and Employment
- Services and Facilities
- Transport and Getting Around
- Environment and Open Space

Under each topic heading, the report briefly summarises the comments and views received and sets out the relevant policies, plans and evidence, to guide the Neighbourhood Planning process in terms of the framework within which it will operate.

Full data with all the comments received can be found in the Community Survey Results Report March 2018.

The plans, policies and evidence underpin Neighbourhood Planning in Thornbury include;

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Neighbourhood Planning Regulations
- South Gloucestershire Core Strategy 2013 (currently under review)
- South Gloucestershire Council Policies, Sites and Places Development Plan Document (adopted November 2017)

- South Gloucestershire Council's Local Transport Plan
- South Gloucestershire Council's Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2013) and recent Call for Sites (Feb 2018)
- South Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2021

The Issues Report, in the context of the surrounding policy framework, is the basis for developing options for testing and ultimately policies in the Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan. Some of the issues which residents raised are not land use planning matters, and so to ensure that these are not lost, they are collected and analysed with the intention of forming an "Action Document" which examines these issues and looks at ways they can be progressed or resolved, identifying the relevant agencies to take these on. The Section "[Action Document Issues](#)" on page 12 lists the topics collected towards the Action Document. The Community Survey asked about how Thornbury could be a more welcoming town to visitors, and much of the rich and varied data received in response to this question will contribute towards the Action Document.

Issue 1: Housing

The Community Survey asked residents a variety of questions in relation to future housing development, including where it should be located, the type and design needed, affordability and energy efficient buildings.

Whilst some individuals opposed new housing development, others suggested locations around the town that could meet housing needs and proposed that affordable housing that reflects the character and appearance of the town is required. Energy efficient housing that can generate some of its own energy was felt to be important, as was housing that can meet the needs of older people.

The loss of greenfield sites and the need to prioritise brownfield land was also a concern for many. High quality design, incorporating plenty of green space for wildlife and for recreation and play were priorities for some.

Many of those who took part in the consultations felt that the provision of infrastructure such as roads, schools and medical facilities would be an essential part of any new development due to problems they identified with capacity these facilities at present.

Plans and Policies which relate to Housing

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

This document sets Planning Policy for England and gives a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It provides high level planning policy across all areas of land use planning, including housing, employment, retailing, transport and environmental issues.

South Gloucestershire Local Plan - Core Strategy 2006-2026

The South Gloucestershire Core Strategy sets the housing numbers and allocates strategic housing sites and is a document with which the Neighbourhood Plan must be in conformity, and so it is therefore an important document to look at next to the aspirations and concerns of residents, as raised through the community engagement. The first part of the Core Strategy contains General Core Strategy policies, and covers themes such as sustainable housing development, good design, community infrastructure, congestion and environmental protection. The Core Strategy should be read as a whole, reviewing the theme based general policies and those relating to specific locations.

The following policies are particularly relevant to the development of the Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan;

Policy CS5 – Location of development

Policy CS15 – Distribution of housing

Policy CS16 – Housing density

Policy CS17 – Housing diversity

Policy CS18 – Affordable housing

Policy CS19 – Rural housing exception sites

Policy CS20 – Extra care housing

Policy CS32 - Thornbury

Policy CS33 – Housing opportunity (Thornbury)

South Gloucestershire Council Policies, Sites and Places Development Plan Document (adopted November 2017)

Policy PSP37 – Internal space and accessibility standards for dwellings

Policy PSP38– Development within existing residential curtilages, including extensions and new dwellings

Policy PSP39– Residential conversions, subdivisions and houses in multiple occupation

Policy PSP40– Residential development in the countryside

Policy PSP42– Custom Build Dwellings

Policy PSP43– Private amenity space standards

Strategic Housing Availability Assessment (SHLAA), 2013

The SHLAA is a record of land that developers/landowners wish to develop for housing and is put together following “calls for sites” by the local authority. The inclusion of a site in the SHLAA does not determine whether a site is allocated for future development and therefore it will have very limited weight in decision making, but it is a useful document in Neighbourhood Plan development.

Issue 2: Town Centre and Employment

Issues concerning the town centre, employment and economic development were commented upon by many people in the community survey. The key themes raised were as follows:

Town Centre/Retail

Those who completed the Community Survey expressed a for a greater range and variety of shops and fewer empty shops to allow Thornbury to be more self-contained and reduce the need to travel elsewhere for goods such as clothes, shoes and furniture.

Various people commented on the type of retail, with many supporting independent retailers whilst others feeling that large retail chains should be encouraged.

Town Centre car parking was raised by many individuals, who wanted an increase in free car parking to serve the town.

The best used services were the shops, cafes and sports/leisure facilities, with many individuals commenting they use these daily or weekly.

Employment

Residents felt that job opportunities need to grow at the same rate as the town to reduce the need to travel elsewhere for work, with a wide range and variety of jobs and workspaces.

It was felt that changes should be made to make Thornbury a more attractive location to investors and employers, so that empty units in the town centre and industrial estate can be filled. Many individuals felt that making better use of existing units and brownfield sites would be more appropriate than providing new employment land.

Plans and policies which relate to the issues of Town Centre and Employment

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Encouraging town centre retailing and improving the economic health of centres are covered by the NPPF, which sets a sequential test for the development of retail proposals, with the intention of guiding them towards the most sustainable central locations.

Economic growth which helps deliver more jobs and more investment is encouraged in the NPPF. Whilst the allocation of employment land which delivers investment is supported, the NPPF states that employment sites which there is no “reasonable expectation” of being developed for employment uses should be considered for other uses.

South Gloucestershire Local Plan - Core Strategy 2006-2026

- Core Strategy Objective – Maintaining economic prosperity
- Policy CS11 – Distribution of economic development Land (Thornbury 19ha)
- Policy CS12 – Safeguarded areas for economic development
- CS13 – Non-safeguarded economic development sites
- CS14 – Town centres and retail
 - Thornbury – Town Centre - Market Town
 - Oakleaze Road – Local centre/parade
- Policy CS32 – Thornbury
 - Bullet point 3

South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places DPD

PSP27 – B8 Storage and distribution uses

PSP28 – Rural economy

PSP31 – Town Centre Uses

PSP32 – Local Centres, Parades and Facilities

PSP33 – Shopping frontages

PSP34 – Public Houses

PSP35 – Food and drink uses (including drive through takeaway facilities)

Issue 3: Services and Facilities

Residents were concerned that services and facilities in town should keep pace with the development of new houses, especially health facilities and schools. Many people felt that there should be improved facilities for children and young people, and would like to see the provision of community meeting spaces, leisure and cultural opportunities increased. Some individuals were concerned about flooding, sewerage and drainage issues, and how these may be exacerbated by new development. Maintaining and improving green spaces, and concerns over transport and parking were also raised in this section.

Plans and Policies which relate to the issues of Services and Facilities

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 8 of the NPPF provides policy on promoting healthy communities and proposes that provision is made for the social, cultural, and recreational facilities needed by the community, and that planning has a key role to play in building strong and resilient communities.

South Gloucestershire Local Plan - Core Strategy 2006-2026

The Core Strategy requires new (larger scale) development to make contributions towards infrastructure, services and community facilities, commensurate with its scale. This infrastructure may include the following:

- Affordable housing;
- Strategic utilities
- Education facilities
- Health facilities
- Police, fire and ambulance facilities
- Community and cultural facilities and activities
- Transport infrastructure
- Sustainable transport measures

- Green Infrastructure
- Ecological mitigation
- Flood risk management measures
- Waste facilities
- District heating networks and other renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure
- Local energy efficiency initiatives
- Local climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives
- Public realm provision/improvements
- Local employment and training initiatives
- Telecommunications infrastructure
- Cemeteries
- Management and maintenance of facilities provided.

It is important to note, however, that many developer contributions will now be covered by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments and the Neighbourhood Plan will not be able to request contributions which are covered by CIL.

Once a Neighbourhood Plan is in place, the Town Council is eligible for a greater proportion of the CIL payment, which contributes towards community infrastructure.

Policy CS6 – Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

Policy CS23 – Community Infrastructure & Cultural Activity

This policy specifically requires new development to provide or contribute towards additional, extended or enhanced community and cultural infrastructure.

Policy CS32 – Thornbury, Bullet points 4, 6 and 8

This relates to the Armstrong Hall and local improvements for education and health.

Emerging Policies, Sites and Places DPD

Policy PSP9 – Health Impact Assessments

Policy PSP36 – Telecommunications
Infrastructure

Policy PSP44 – Open Space, Sport and
Recreation

Issue 4: Transport

Residents had many concerns about traffic and transport which they raised through the community survey. The main issues raised are summarised below.

- There were many concerns over the capacity of the existing road network to cope with the additional traffic generated by new large-scale housing development. Concerns over road safety, congestion, pollution and public transport provision were raised. In particular, the need for bus services to access essential facilities such as shops and doctors was a concern raised by many.
- The need for safe walking and cycling routes to help to ease congestion and allow for sustainable transport choices was felt to be important by some residents.
- Concern over road safety and peak time congestion, with suggestions that traffic calming measures and lower speed limits may help address some of the problems.
- The desire to bring rail services back to the town to reduce car dependency.
- Car parking, in the town centre and in residential areas, was raised as an issue by a large number of residents, who felt that more free car parking was needed for the town.

Plans and Policies relating to the issue of Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

The Sustainable Transport section of the NPPF sets out the Government's commitment to encouraging economic growth and improved

travel options whilst cutting carbon emissions. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that,

"All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. Plans and decisions should take account of whether:

- *the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;*
- *safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and*
- *improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe."*

This is important in the context of Plan-making at the Neighbourhood Plan level, and these factors need to be integral to decision/policy making.

South Gloucestershire Local - Plan Core Strategy 2006-2026

Policy CS8 Improving Accessibility

This policy sets out measures for improving non-car transport options, particularly focussed on:

- Accessibility
- Off Site Mitigation
- Provision and Promotion of Sustainable Transport
- Parking and Vehicular Access

Residential Parking Standards SPD – Dec 2013

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Residential%20parking%20JAN%202014.pdf>

Joint Local Transport Plan 3 2011 – 2026

The Local Transport Plan sets out the high-level strategy for transport over the Plan period, across the West of England area. It prioritises supporting economic growth and reducing carbon emissions (also national priorities), and provides a strategic direction for the following objectives;

- Reduce carbon emissions
- Support economic growth
- Promote accessibility
- Contribute to better safety, security and health
- Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

Issue 5: Environment and Open Space

Residents expressed a wide range of views on the environment and open space topic;

The protection of biodiversity and wildlife habitats, and the provision of urban open space were considered highly important by many of those who completed the community survey. Access to play areas and open countryside was also highly valued, and many residents supported the idea of generating low carbon energy locally. Residents noted that since many new developments offer smaller gardens, the provision of high quality outdoor sports, play and recreation space will be increasingly important.

Plans and Policies relating to Environment and Open Space

National Planning Policy Framework

Sustainable development is an underpinning principle of the NPPF, which has sections on the natural environment, historic environment, climate change, flooding and good design. Each of these policy statements will need to be reviewed in more detail as the Neighbourhood Plan develops to ensure conformity with all parts of the NPPF.

South Gloucestershire Local Plan - Core Strategy 2006-2026

As with the NPPF, sustainability and environmental concerns underpin the policies and the overarching strategic direction. There are also specific policies on the protection of the natural and historic environment, renewable energy, biodiversity, air quality and landscape which the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be mindful of throughout its development.

Policy CS2 – Green Infrastructure

Policy CS5 – Location of Development

Policy CS9 – Managing the Environment and Heritage

Policy CS24 – Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Standards

Policy CS32 – Thornbury, Bullet points 1, 2 and 9

Policies, Sites and Places DPD, November 2017

Policy PSP2 – Landscape

Policy PSP3 – Trees and woodland

Policy PSP4 – Designated Local Green Spaces

- The Chantry Playing Field
- Land adj to Sports Centre
- Mundy and Poulterbrook Playing Fields
- Basil Harwood Memorial Tennis Courts
- Oakleaze Green Open Space
- Play Area off Chantry Road
- Play Area off Thicket Walk
- Play Area off Osprey Park
- The Streamside Walk
- Rock Street Green
- Kington Lane Cemetery
- Daggs Allotments
- Steamleaze Green up to Tamar Close
- Eastland Tump
- Railway Land between the Link and Morton Way
- Land to south of the Streamside Walk

Policy PSP5 – Undesignated open spaces within urban areas and settlements

Policy PSP6 – Onsite Renewable & Low Carbon Energy

Policy PSP10 – Active Travel Routes

Policy PSP19 – Wider Biodiversity

Policy PSP20 – Flood Risk, Surface Water and Watercourse Management

Policy PSP44 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Natural England Resources

MAGIC map resources will be used to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan develops in a way that is consistent with local and national designations such as local nature reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Environment Agency Resources

Flood zone mapping will be used to ensure that areas of highest probability of flooding are not allocated for development in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Action Document Issues

The comments listed below are those which do not directly relate to the development of a Neighbourhood Plan but which are of importance to some Thornbury residents. As further comments and issues are received through the community engagement process, these issues will be considered to examine whether there are ways of addressing them outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

- Bus services
- Litter/vandalism/emptying of bins
- Bus fares
- Parking charges
- Disabled car parking
- Replacement/upgrading of play equipment at existing playgrounds
- The need for lollipop crossing patrols at schools
- Tree planting
- Better signage and maps for visitors
- Policing
- Community Events, many of which were raised in relation to making Thornbury a more welcoming place.

APPENDIX 1 – Policies and Plans Relating to Neighbourhood Plan Development

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group compiled a checklist of relevant policies and plans as part of their early phase of empirical evidence gathering, as shown below. This will be an important point of reference throughout the process of Neighbourhood Plan development to ensure that the emerging Neighbourhood Plan remains in conformity with higher level policy.

- **National Planning Policy Framework**

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

- **National Planning Practice Guidance**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

- **South Gloucestershire Local Plan - Core Strategy 2006-2026**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cleanversionforinterimpublishment2.pdf>

- **South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places (PSP) November 2017**

https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/PSP_Submission/consultationHome

- **Revised Landscape Character Assessment SPD – Nov 2014**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/countryside/planning-landscape-character-assessment>

- **Residential Parking Standards SPD – Dec 2013**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Residential%20parking%20JAN%202014.pdf>

- **Shopfronts & Advertisements design guidance SPD – April 2012**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Shopfronts%20and%20Advertisements%20SPD.pdf>

- **Local list of buildings SPD – March 2008**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/pte070152.pdf>

- **Design checklist SPD – August 2007**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/pte070705.pdf>

- **Development in the green belt SPD – May 2007**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/pte070388.pdf>

- **Waste Collection: guidance for new developments SPD – Jan 2015**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Waste-SPD-Feb-2015-1.pdf>

- **Renewables SPD – Nov 2014**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Renewables-SPD1.pdf>

- **Affordable housing and ExtraCare SPD – May 2014**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/AH-ECH-SPD-FINAL-V13-2.6.14-sc-links.pdf>

- **CIL Charging Schedule and the CIL and S106 SPD – March 2015**

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/CIL-S106-Guide-SPD-March-15.pdf>