

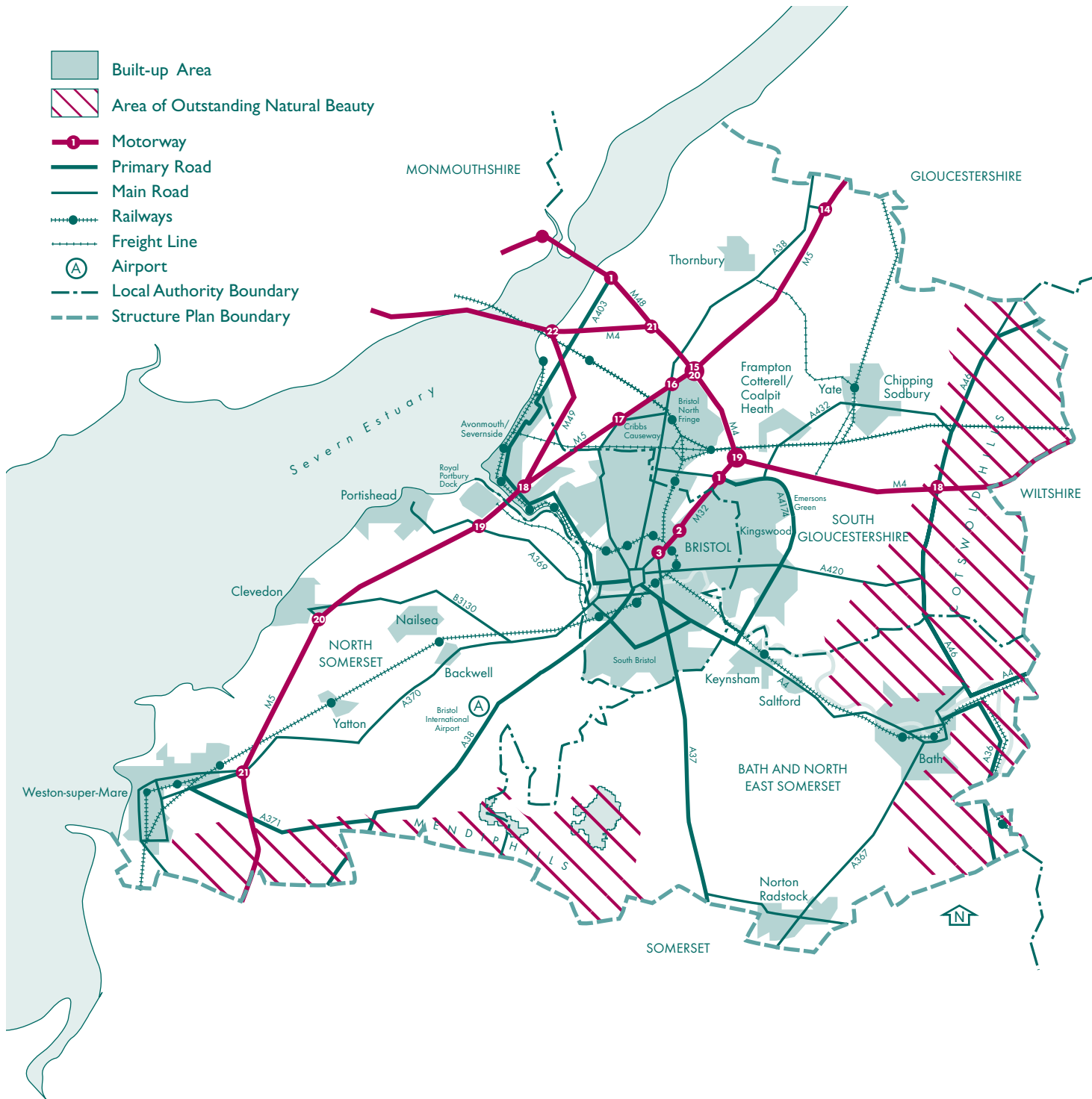
*Bath and North East Somerset
Bristol
North Somerset
South Gloucestershire*

Joint Replacement Structure Plan

Adopted September 2002



The Plan Area



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Joint Replacement Structure Plan

Adopted September 2002

*Published by the Joint Strategic Planning
and Transportation Unit (JSPTU)
on behalf of the four Councils and their Joint Committee for
Strategic Planning and Transportation*

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Key Diagram

Foreword

The Joint Replacement Structure Plan has now been formally adopted by each of our four unitary local authorities.

It will now be carried forward into our Local Plans and Local Transport Plans. It will provide the necessary strategic framework for a wide range of important decisions that will affect all our communities, both urban and rural, over the next decade.

Since our four authorities were set up in 1996, we have consistently sought, through our joint arrangement, to work together in the best interests of our residents and the shared environment of our sub-region.

That process of close working has now borne fruit in this document. But the story does not end here.

The next decade will bring with it new challenges, new pressures, and a new approach to planning.

The future is uncertain. But as local authorities we intend to build on the framework of this Structure Plan, and continue to lead the process of identifying the right policies for the sustainable future land use, transport needs and environment of our area.

Councillor Peter Burden

*Executive Member for Strategic Planning
North Somerset Council*

Councillor Pat Hockey

*Executive Member for Planning, Transportation and Strategic Environment
South Gloucestershire Council*

Councillor Helen Holland

*Executive Member for Environment, Transport and Leisure
Bristol City Council*

Councillor Peter Metcalfe

*Executive Member for Transportation and Planning Policy
Bath and North East Somerset Council*

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION



- 1.1 Structure plans provide a strategic policy framework for land use and transport planning decisions, looking some 15 years ahead. They make proposals about the future scale, distribution and type of development, and transport policy. These should be well integrated with each other, and should reflect the need for sustainable patterns of change.
- 1.2 Structure plans provide the link in the planning system between Government policy statements and local plans. They must be realistic, and consistent with national and regional policy. They are implemented through the guidance and direction which they give to local plans, to other local authority programmes and policies, and to the plans of the commercial and voluntary sectors. Together, structure and local plans comprise the development plan, which is the primary basis for decisions on planning applications.

Preparing this Plan

- 1.3 Plans need to be kept up to date and reviewed on a regular basis. The Avon County Structure Plan was originally approved in 1985. Alterations to the Plan changed some of the policies and rolled the Plan forward, so that the Third Alteration, approved in 1994, covered the period to 2001.
- 1.4 With the abolition of Avon County Council in 1996, the four new unitary local authorities became responsible for structure plan preparation. In line with Government advice they agreed to work together to prepare a new plan for the area. A Joint Committee for Strategic Planning and Transportation was set up, comprising members of the four authorities, and supported by a Joint Unit (JSPTU).
- 1.5 The process of preparing the Structure Plan to the point of adoption is summarised in the attached diagram on the next page. The Joint Replacement Structure Plan was placed on deposit in 1998. After considering consultation responses, and the views of the Panel which held an Examination in Public (EIP) into some of the issues arising, and after publishing Modifications to the policies, the Joint Committee decided in February 2000 that the Plan should be formally adopted.
- 1.6 In March 2000, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions issued a Direction preventing the authorities from adopting the Plan. In July 2000, a further Direction was issued, requiring the four authorities to raise the housing provision in Policy 33 to the level proposed by the EIP Panel, and to reconsider its distribution. Further information on this issue, and on the urban housing capacity studies subsequently carried out by the authorities, is set out in relation to Policy 33 of this Plan (pages 86-96).

Process and Timetable

1995	March	Avon CC consultation document “Our Sustainable Future” published PUBLIC CONSULTATION
1996	April	Joint Committee established following local government reorganisation
1997	March	Joint Replacement Structure Plan “Green Paper” published PUBLIC CONSULTATION
1998	June	Joint Replacement Structure Plan placed on Deposit PUBLIC CONSULTATION
1999	March	Examination in Public held
	June	Panel Report published
	November	Proposed Modifications placed on Deposit PUBLIC CONSULTATION
2000	February	Decision by Joint Committee to adopt Structure Plan
	March	Direction issued by Secretary of State, preventing adoption
	July	Direction on housing figures issued by Secretary of State
	October	Urban housing capacity studies initiated
2001	August	Joint Committee recommended Further Modification to four Councils
	December	Further Modification placed on deposit PUBLIC CONSULTATION
2002	February	Secretary of State “minded to lift” Directions
	March	Decision by Joint Committee to recommend adoption of Structure Plan
	May - July	Four Councils each agreed intention to adopt
	August	Secretary of State withdrew Directions
	September	Plan formally adopted

- 1.7 The Local Government Act 2000 required each Council, rather than the Joint Committee, to agree to subsequent stages of the process. In December 2001, a Further Modification to the Plan was placed on deposit. The Joint Committee considered objections in March 2002, and recommended the four authorities to adopt the Plan. Each authority then agreed that the Plan be adopted.¹ Following the decision of the Deputy Prime Minister to withdraw the Directions, notices of the authorities' intention to adopt were published in August 2002.
- 1.8 With the sole exception of Policy 33 which was agreed in 2002, the other policies set out in this Plan were agreed for adoption in 2000. Since then, there have been changes in national policy and in background, and the implementation of some policies. In particular, new Regional Planning Guidance for the South West was published in 2001.
- 1.9 Where appropriate, references to relevant developments since 2000 are made in the text. Although it has not been possible to take these into account in this Plan, they will be taken into account in reviewing it. All Structure Plan authorities are required to keep their plans under review, and a process and timetable for reviewing this Plan is being initiated by the Joint Committee. Progress towards a Review of the Structure Plan may be affected by changes to the development plan system which may be implemented following the Government's Green Paper on Planning issued in late 2001. The Joint Committee agreed an outline brief and timetable for the Review at its meeting in July 2002. Further details are available on the website www.jsptu-avon.gov.uk.
- 1.10 In accordance with national guidance, a process of sustainability appraisal has been incorporated into this Plan. In determining the Plan's overall strategy and policies, environmental and infrastructure constraints, and other issues, have been considered at an appropriate strategic level. The process of appraisal has involved three stages:
- Evaluating locational options by the appraisal of strategic locations against consistent environmental criteria (see Technical Report, March 1997);
 - Appraisal of the Deposit Draft by Baker Associates, summarised with a response from the JSPTU in the Technical Report Part 2, June 1998; and
 - Appraisal of Proposed Modifications and the Plan as proposed to be adopted.

The latter stage has involved responding to objections, the recommendations of Baker Associates in their appraisal of the Deposit Draft, and the report of the EIP Panel. A separate Sustainability Appraisal document is published at the same time as this Plan.

¹ *North Somerset Council, 7 May 2002, Bath and North East Somerset Council, 9 May 2002, South Gloucestershire Council, 22 May 2002, Bristol City Council, 16 July 2002.*

The policy context

- 1.11 Although Structure Plan policies need to relate to land use matters, they must also have regard to other relevant policies of local authorities and other organisations, as well as to national and regional planning policy guidance and advice.

International policy

- 1.12 In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the “Earth Summit”) adopted an action plan for sustainable development, known as Agenda 21. The UK Government considers that the planning system is “a key instrument in delivering land use and development compatible with the aims of sustainable development”.
- 1.13 In the European Union, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty placed new emphasis on environmental action, and also established social and economic cohesion as a key pillar of policies. This led to publication in 1999 of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), which is intended to pursue the three interacting goals of cohesion, sustainable development, and balanced competitiveness across Europe, through physical, economic and environmental planning.

National policy

- 1.14 The national policy context for Structure Plans is set out in circulars and Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) issued by the Government. The Structure Plan does not simply duplicate this national guidance, but interprets and implements it in the context of the local area. References are made to national planning guidance where appropriate in the text of this Plan. There are currently 24 PPGs, many of which have been revised since their original publication. Guidance on minerals planning is provided by a series of MPGs. Advice on the process of Structure Plan preparation, and on the topics which should be covered, is set out in PPG 12, ‘Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance’, originally published in 1992 and revised in 2000.

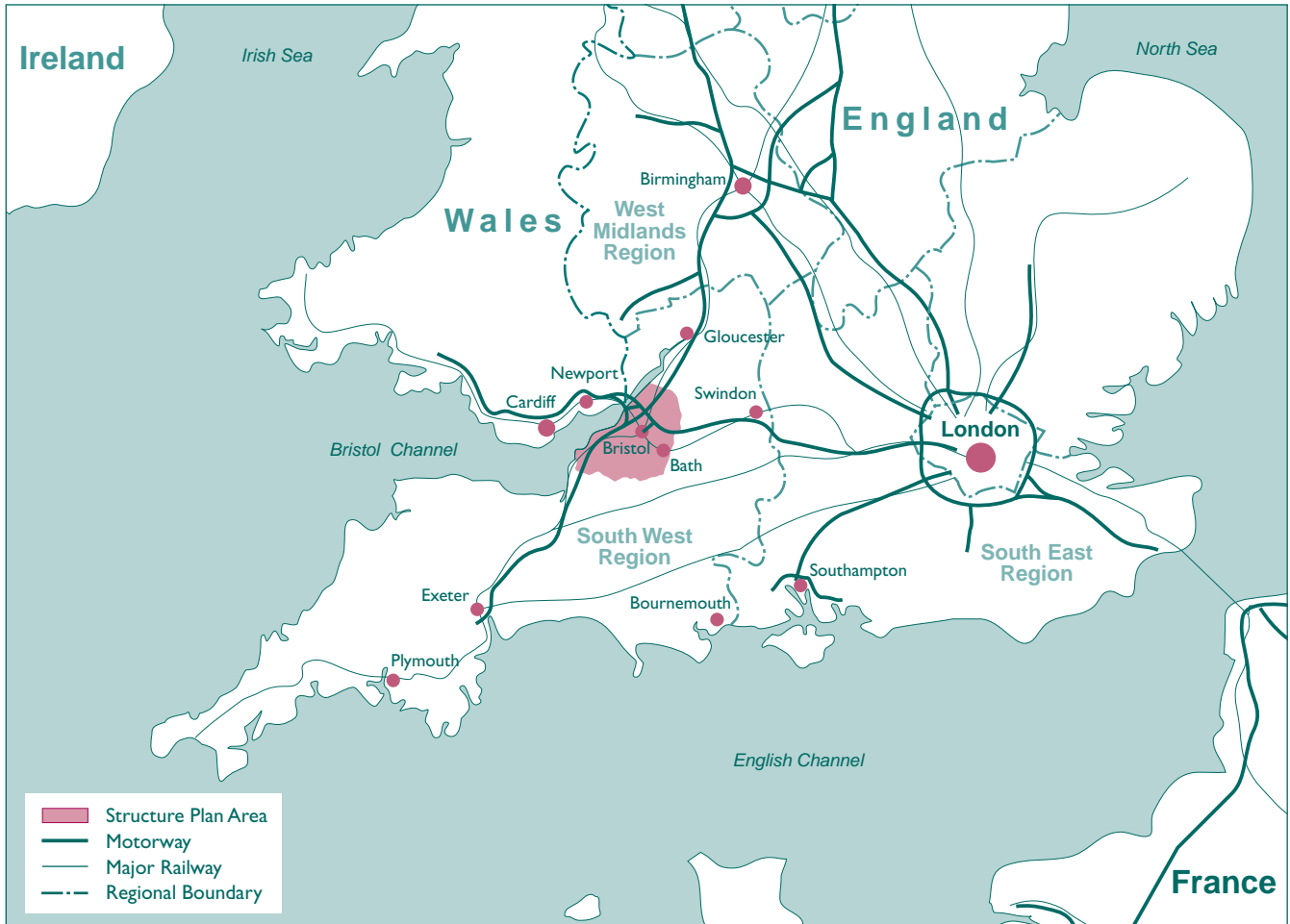
Regional policy

- 1.15 Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG 10) was first published in 1994 by the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). This stated that “*sustainability should be the cornerstone of the Region’s development plans and planning decisions*”. This initial version of RPG 10, covering the period to 2011, provided much of the basis for preparing the Joint Replacement Structure Plan.
- 1.16 The process of revising Regional Planning Guidance to cover the period beyond 2016 was initiated by the South West Regional Planning Conference (SWRPC), in which the four unitary authorities participated. In 1999, SWRPC published Draft Revised RPG for the South West, which was then subject to a Public Examination before an independent Panel. In July 2000, the role of SWRPC as regional planning body was taken over by the South West of England Regional Assembly (SWRA).
- 1.17 The Secretary of State published Proposed Changes to RPG in December 2000, and new Regional Planning Guidance in September 2001. As noted above, the new RPG10, published after the policies set out in this Plan (except Policy 33) were proposed for adoption, will be taken into account when the Plan is reviewed. The Regional Assembly is now responsible for monitoring how RPG is being implemented, and for its review.

Adjoining areas

- 1.18 The Structure Plan also takes account of the policies in neighbouring authorities. In 1999, Gloucestershire County Council adopted a Structure Plan Second Review with policies to 2011. In Somerset (including Exmoor National Park), a Structure Plan Review was adopted in April 2000. A joint Structure Plan for Wiltshire and Swindon was adopted in 2001. Monmouthshire County Council placed a unitary development plan (UDP), which will replace the former Gwent Structure Plan, on deposit in 2001; a new national planning policy framework for Wales was issued by the National Assembly in April 2002.

Regional Context



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Chapter 2

THE STRATEGY



Sustainable development

2.1 In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) defined sustainable development as “*development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”. In 1999 the Government set out, in its own sustainable development strategy document “A Better Quality of Life”, the following four themes to be pursued :

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment
- prudent use of natural resources
- the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

2.2 Although the term “sustainable development” is open to differing interpretations, it clearly implies conserving resources so that the quality of life and range of choices available to future generations are at least as good as those available now. A sustainable development approach means that environmental considerations should be more fully integrated into decisions, but not that priority should always be given to environmental objectives over development requirements. It means that the social and economic needs of both current and future generations should be met, while maintaining and where possible enhancing environmental resources.

What the Structure Plan can do

2.3 The planning system has a key role in helping to achieve a more sustainable approach to development. PPG 1 states that: -

“A sustainable planning framework should :

- *provide for the nation’s needs for commercial and industrial development, food production, minerals extraction, new homes and other buildings, while respecting environmental objectives;*
- *use already developed areas in the most efficient way, while making them more attractive places in which to live and work;*
- *conserve both the cultural heritage and natural resources (including wildlife, landscape, water, soil and air quality) taking particular care to safeguard designations of national and international importance; and*
- *shape new development patterns in a way which minimises the need to travel.”*

- 2.4 Many of these themes are not new. Plans have always sought to reconcile demands for development with the protection of the environment and the best use of the resources available. What has changed is the recognition of the need to address at local level the impact of change and development on global environmental resources. The objective of sustainable development points to the need for development patterns which conserve the use of land, which reduce the impact on resources, and which minimise travel, especially car use. Clear national policy guidance is set out in PPG 3: Housing, PPG13 : Transport, and elsewhere. One important aspect is the need to concentrate development within built-up areas, through the re-use of previously developed land. Another key set of aims seek to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys; to encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact; and reduce reliance on the private car. Such objectives as these are at the forefront of strategic planning, in this area as elsewhere in the country.
- 2.5 The original RPG 10 (1994), which formed a basis for preparing this Plan, stated that *“sustainability should be the cornerstone of the Region’s development plans and planning decisions.”* The revised guidance published in 2001, after most of the policies in this plan were agreed for adoption, sets out a vision of *“developing the region, in a sustainable way, as a national and European region of quality and diversity, where the quality of life for residents, the business community and visitors will be maintained and enhanced”*. It confirms that strategies should include promotion of sustainable development patterns, minimisation of the need to develop on greenfield sites and to travel, and an integrated approach to urban and rural areas.
- 2.6 This Structure Plan will play a leading part in efforts to deliver sustainable patterns of development, but also needs to be seen as one key element of a wider approach, as set out, for instance, in the Community Strategies (incorporating Local Agenda 21 programmes) being coordinated by the local authorities. The Plan is also intended to form a basis for decisions by investors and other agencies, responsible for implementing change in the area.
- 2.7 A process of Sustainability Appraisal has informed preparation of the Structure Plan. This is set out more fully in a separate document.

The aim and objectives of the Plan

- 2.8 In 1996, the Joint Committee for Strategic Planning and Transportation recommended an aim and several objectives for the Replacement Structure Plan, which were accepted by the four constituent authorities. Public consultations throughout the process of preparing the Plan indicated strong and continuing

support for these principles, particularly for their emphasis on sustainable development and the protection of the area's environment. Some minor amendments were made to the original wording of the overall Aim, and to several of the Objectives, as a result of these public consultations.

2.9 The overall Aim and Objectives form the basis for the locational strategy and policies set out in the Structure Plan. They are set out below:

AIM : Through the planning system, to secure sustainable development which will help improve the area's environment and the quality of life of all its present and future residents.

- OBJECTIVES :**
- A** To safeguard, conserve and enhance the quality of the natural and historic environment of the area as a whole, including its important local resources
 - B** To minimise the consumption of natural resources, including energy, water, minerals and soil, and the generation of waste and pollution, and to mitigate any damaging effects which arise directly and indirectly therefrom
 - C** To maintain and enhance economic prosperity through sustainable initiatives which meet the interests of current and future residents of the area and reflect the area's continuing regional economic importance
 - D** To meet the needs of all those living in the area for housing, community services and convenient shopping, in ways which are consistent with the aim of sustainable development
 - E** To establish a transportation pattern which enables convenience of access, and safe and efficient movement where necessary, particularly through seeking to minimise the need to travel by car; encouraging public transport, cycling and walking; and reducing road traffic
 - F** To conserve, regenerate and revitalise urban areas in order to maximise their environmental quality and economic and social vitality, particularly through integrated redevelopment and transport improvements
 - G** To conserve and enhance the character of rural areas through sustaining and enhancing their environment, social vitality and economy
 - H** To recognise the importance of existing communities and to retain and enhance their identity, variety and vitality

Changing direction towards sustainable development

- 2.10 The Structure Plan makes realistic proposals for land use, transportation, and the environment, to be implemented in the period to 2011, which apply the overall objectives set out above. Past policies and decisions will continue to determine many future changes in land use and transport patterns, for example through planning permissions not yet implemented. This Plan therefore establishes foundations for change in the medium and longer term, which will start to be put in place in the short term. It sets out a clear strategy which offers a flexible approach towards uncertainties surrounding future investment, in transport and other infrastructure, and social and economic changes.
- 2.11 Policy 1 sets out principles through which the Plan's objectives are translated into firm proposals across the whole plan area in the other, more specific, Structure Plan policies. They will also underpin Local Plans and Local Transport Plans, and should influence other areas of public and private corporate planning, so as to achieve more sustainable patterns of change.
- 2.12 The essence of these principles is to enable a range of economic and social needs to be met, and to provide for housing, associated activities such as shopping, leisure and community facilities, and for commercial and industrial development. This will be done by making the best and most effective use of land, buildings and existing physical infrastructure, particularly in urban areas where there is scope for regeneration and renewal; and to make use of and improve public transport systems and service facilities that already exist. This approach supports other main principles, of ensuring the conservation of non-renewable resources, and the protection of the diversity of wildlife and habitats, local character, and the countryside.
- 2.13 Key principles are the promotion of more sustainable forms of transport, and the better integration of land uses with transport in ways that reduce the need to travel. The intention is to achieve a long term shift in travel behaviour, lessening the dependence on private car journeys. This approach will have an important over-arching influence on future development patterns.
- 2.14 The Panel Report following the Examination In Public recommended that, in finalising the Plan, *"the Joint Committee should consider attaching one or more policy targets to each of the Principles in Policy 1"*. The Joint Committee agreed in principle with this approach, while recognising that, at this stage, it is difficult and in some cases impossible to identify firm targets. A series of indicators have been developed which are intended to show the general direction and impact of sustainable development policies in respect of the guiding principles of Policy 1. These are set out in Chapter 6.

POLICY 1

Planning and transport policies for the area will be based on the principles of sustainable development, and will seek to reconcile, balance and integrate the protection and enhancement of the environment, the maintenance and enhancement of economic prosperity and meeting the social needs and aspirations of the people of the area through the provision of opportunities for commercial and industrial development, housing and related services and activities.

The following guiding principles will apply within the area:

- 1 Promoting and developing the role of the urban areas as places to live and work by:**
 - **providing for housing, employment and a full range of facilities to enhance their social and economic vitality;**
 - **seeking mixed uses in city centres and higher intensity of use close to locations with high accessibility;**
 - **improving the built environment and character of towns by encouraging high quality urban design and conserving and making positive use of the cultural heritage;**
 - **involving local people in schemes to develop and regenerate urban communities.**
 - **providing for ease of movement of people within urban areas by means other than the car.**
- 2 Making the best possible use of existing resources and infrastructure, including existing planning commitments, particularly by urban regeneration initiatives and encouraging the re-use of land and buildings, including decontamination of land where appropriate.**
- 3 Conserving, and where possible reducing the consumption of, non-renewable resources including greenfield land, soils, minerals, water and fossil fuels, and protecting such resources for the future**
- 4 Providing for the housing and social needs of the population by residential development of a mixture of types, in locations with convenient access by means other than car to employment, services, facilities and open space.**
- 5 Securing the effective stewardship of the area's environmental assets by:**
 - **protecting the diversity of wildlife and habitats and where appropriate enhancing their value and viability and securing gains from development;**
 - **respecting and, where appropriate, enhancing landscape character and protecting the countryside from inappropriate development;**

- **protecting the water environment**
- 6 Reducing all forms of pollution and emissions, particularly of greenhouse gases, including noise and light pollution, and providing for the safe management and disposal of waste.**
 - 7 Promoting more sustainable transport and securing long term shifts in travel behaviour by:**
 - **co-ordinating development and transport measures to reduce the need for motorised travel and dependence on the car**
 - **locating and designing development to favour cycling and walking to work, school and other facilities**
 - **directing development to locations which have good public transport access or where practical opportunities to achieve it are demonstrated**
 - **improving the infrastructure and facilitating the operation of public transport and improving pedestrian and cycle networks**
 - **encouraging freight movement by rail or water rather than road**
 - 8 Improving the sustainability of rural settlements by providing for small scale local development which enhances their economic and social vitality and improving their accessibility by modes other than the car, while maintaining their character and distinctiveness.**
 - 9 Providing for business and industrial development in locations which respond to competitive needs, are readily accessible by a variety of means of transport, and which allow an improved relationship between housing and jobs**

The locational strategy

- 2.15 Policy 2 sets out the locational strategy of the Plan. It applies the key principles in Policy 1 to the land use and transport patterns which exist in the area. The Key Diagram (inside back cover) sets out the locational strategy, and key policies, in diagrammatic form.
- 2.16 The strategy was originally developed within the context of RPG10 published in 1994. This stated that *“In planning for the future development of Bristol and Bath, the aim should be to balance the need for economic prosperity with the protection of the cities’ environmental qualities, both within the built-up areas and in the surrounding countryside. The cities are bounded by an extensive green belt and by parts of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Careful and*

economic use of land already identified for development, as well as regeneration and enhancement within the urban areas, is essential if the needs of the existing and future population are to be met and the attractiveness of the cities is to be protected and enhanced.”

- 2.17 New RPG10 was published in 2001 after most of the policies in this Plan were agreed for adoption. The full implications of new RPG10 will be addressed in the next Structure Plan Review. However, the main principles of the Structure Plan’s locational strategy generally conform with the new guidance. RPG10 now emphasises the economic importance of the area, and states that the ‘Northern sub-region’ (which also includes Gloucestershire and much of Wiltshire) “*will continue to be the main focus for growth in the South West; its prosperity should be maintained and enhanced...*” It also stresses the importance of sustainable patterns of development focused on Principal Urban Areas (PUAs), which include the Bristol urban area, Bath and Weston-super-Mare.
- 2.18 The Structure Plan aims for closer integration between land use and transport, to reduce the average length and number of motorised journeys, especially in travelling to work; encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact; and reduce reliance on the private car. It therefore proposes that jobs and homes should be located in closer proximity within urban areas, and/or be more effectively linked by good public transport. This approach is fully in accord with national policy. As a first priority, housing and economic development should be concentrated within or, subject to Green Belt policy, immediately adjacent to the main urban centres of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare. Dispersing most development across a wider area would be more costly in terms of energy use, pollution, infrastructure, and impacts on the landscape and natural environment.
- 2.19 Fostering sustainable economic growth is an essential part of the strategy. Across the area as a whole there is more than enough employment land to match the expected increase in jobs over the period, although Local Plans will need to reflect local circumstances and address issues of site quality and availability, and provision to meet local needs. Most potential jobs will be located within or immediately adjoining the Bristol conurbation. The Plan seeks to restrain the rate of further economic development within the North Fringe of Bristol, by diversifying the use of existing employment commitments particularly for housing, and by prioritising job creation elsewhere in the Plan area. Given the amount of land already firmly committed to employment in the North Fringe and elsewhere, this approach will not significantly harm the economic well-being of the area, but will contribute towards achieving other sustainable development objectives, assisting the regeneration of Bristol City Centre and encouraging a better balance between jobs and housing in areas such as South Bristol and

Weston-super-Mare. It is important that the low density pattern of employment development, heavily reliant on car access and largely excluding other uses, which has been characteristic of the North Fringe, should not be repeated elsewhere if dependence on car travel is to be reduced.

- 2.20 The general need to protect, enhance and improve the environment of the area, and to meet wider environmental objectives through the minimisation of resource use and pollution, is a major concern of the Structure Plan. The environmental value of the area as a whole, including those parts designated as being of national and international importance, should be maintained and enhanced. Policy 2 sets out a positive approach which acknowledges that the proper control of development can ensure benefits to the environment; but also recognises that environmental considerations constrain the scope for development within parts of the area, both at strategic and local levels.
- 2.21 A key element of the Structure Plan strategy remains the Green Belt which surrounds and separates Bristol and Bath. The Green Belt exists to check the unrestricted sprawl of the major urban areas, help promote regeneration, and provide easier opportunities for access to the countryside. Detailed proposals for the Green Belt are set out in Policy 16. It will be for the next Structure Plan Review to address the implications of new RPG10, which places more emphasis on the need to review Green Belt boundaries and to remove land from the Green Belt *“if, on balance, this would provide the most sustainable solution for accommodating future development requirements”*. The Review will consider whether new urban extensions offer a more sustainable option than the current strategy for accommodating development pressures beyond 2011.
- 2.22 The successful implementation of the strategy depends upon making the cities and towns more attractive places in which to live for a wide range of households. The strategy supports the more efficient use of land and buildings within urban areas for housing and other development, to an extent consistent with improving environmental quality and improving the balance between homes and jobs. It will require investment to encourage the re-use of vacant or derelict land and buildings, and to make best use of the existing urban infrastructure, so maximising accessibility to existing facilities.
- 2.23 Most new housing within the Plan period should be located within or immediately adjoining the main urban areas, and a proactive approach in Local Plans is needed to ensure this. The capacity of urban areas to accommodate further housing development has been assessed by the local authorities in accordance with PPG3, and the conclusions of this work are summarised in Chapter 4 in relation to Policy 33.

2.24 Safeguarding and enhancing the quality of the environment in urban areas must complement proposals to concentrate development within and adjoining them. The fabric and environmental quality of existing centres needs to be improved and renewed. The regional and sub-regional centres of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare will be promoted as the priority locations for major retail, commercial and leisure investment, with Bristol City Centre in particular strengthening its role as a regional centre. Smaller town, district, suburban and local centres, where easily accessible and important local shopping and other facilities are provided, will also be enhanced. The maintenance of a wide range of facilities in such centres, their gradual renewal, and their promotion as focal points for public transport, will do much to discourage private car use and more lengthy journeys, and help reduce social exclusion.

2.25 Housing development proceeding out of step with employment in locations beyond but close to the main urban centres will lead to an increase in car-borne commuting. Requirements for new housing that cannot be met wholly within urban areas, or immediately adjoining them as urban extensions, should be met, in order of priority:

- firstly, at settlements which have significantly better public transport access to the major employment areas and other important services and facilities in comparison to other settlements in the Plan area; these will normally be located on the strategic public transport network which links Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Yate;
- secondly, at other settlements on routes which offer a firm and demonstrable potential for a comprehensive public transport service to the main centres; the intention being to avoid commitments which ultimately fail to produce an adequate public transport system.

2.26 The implementation of the strategy is crucially dependent on transport improvements. Influencing the location, mix and density of new developments will not on its own be sufficient to bring about new movement patterns which reduce reliance on the car. A fully integrated public transport system, in which light rapid transit, bus priority measures, rail improvements and other management schemes all feature, is therefore a key ultimate overall objective of the Plan. The strategy seeks to reduce reliance on the private car and encourage public transport, in particular to develop the strengths of the urban transport network. It also proposes that the public transport network linking the main urban areas should be significantly improved over the Plan period, with effective transport interchanges to serve the whole Plan area. Policies and schemes in Local Transport Plans will reflect these priorities.

- 2.27 The transport implications of Policy 2 are developed in Policy 4. This identifies a number of key centres and corridors where an integrated approach towards transport and development must take place to reinforce the locational strategy. Subsequent Policies 5-14 set out more detailed proposals for these areas at a level appropriate to a Structure Plan. Local Plans will apply the policies in greater detail. Policy 4 also details other corridors where transport improvements, not directly related to development proposals, need to be pursued.
- 2.28 Transport improvements will be particularly important to support housing development away from the three main urban areas on the existing main public transport corridors. Here, the network can already provide road and rail access to the areas where most jobs are concentrated and where major retail, leisure, commercial, health and education services are located, particularly central Bristol, the North Fringe and Bath. Additional improvements to public transport systems on these corridors, within the framework set out in Policy 4, will be jointly developed over the Plan period by Government, local authorities, transport operators and the business community, as part of the development process. Development within corridors should focus around existing settlements or nodes. As well as transport potential, such factors as the capacity of physical and social infrastructure, the ability of communities to support and sustain local services, and physical and environmental constraints also need to be taken into account.
- 2.29 Future development must more closely reflect the different levels of public transport accessibility achievable at different locations. Major developments which generate substantial traffic should be integrated with good quality public transport for passengers, preferably including rail access. Land uses attracting large numbers of people, such as major retail or leisure developments, should be located where there is good accessibility to the strategic public transport network. Lesser traffic generators, if not located near a major passenger transport hub, should be sited in or close to town or district centres, where there is good public transport and access for cycling and walking. Major freight generators such as regional warehouses, distribution centres, and low density manufacturing users, should be located close to the national road network, with direct access to railways and ports where appropriate, and should avoid heavy vehicles passing through residential areas.
- 2.30 Local Plans will need to ensure that new developments at all levels contribute towards an improved public transport infrastructure; better provision for cycling and walking; relief of traffic congestion. Public transport improvements will be pursued in conjunction with measures to control and reduce car use, including strategies for parking and traffic management. Specific policy approaches to support this objective include:

- balancing trip origins and destinations to achieve similar demand both ways on transport corridors.
- promoting development locations where public transport can be integrated into developments and provision can be made for walking and cycling between homes, jobs, community facilities and public transport points.
- mixed uses to reduce the number and length of trips and to increase off peak demand on public transport.
- limiting low density developments that encourage car use to areas where it will be most difficult to establish alternative public transport provision.
- ensuring that all new residential locations have good access to local facilities and services
- avoiding fragmented, isolated or ribbon forms of development
- co-ordinated reviews of car parking provision to discourage car use

2.31 Policy 2 recognises that rural areas in general - and specifically those areas covered by Green Belt policies - as well as some smaller towns, are unsuitable as strategic development locations. Such towns and villages will be considered for housing development only if practical opportunities to achieve good public transport access can be demonstrated, normally through a realistic and agreed programme of investment in any necessary infrastructure and services. Isolated and fragmented residential development must be avoided, and development must be within reasonable proximity to local facilities and services, including a range of local shopping, a local primary school, and other community facilities.

2.32 In realising the locational strategy, it will be particularly important for Local Plans to produce a comprehensive and integrated approach to land use and transport issues for three key strategic locations which have considerable potential for future economic development - Avonmouth/Sevenside, Royal Portbury, and Emersons Green. All three areas need a significantly improved transport infrastructure if development is not to increase traffic congestion; this will only result if the infrastructure is identified at an early stage and funded at least in part by the development process. More detailed proposals for these areas are set down in Policies 13, 14 and 15.

2.33 The locational strategy set out in Policy 2 is sufficiently flexible to accommodate development requirements up to 2011. An early review of the Plan will consider the implications of new Regional Planning Guidance, and will be particularly pressing if essential transport improvements are delayed.

POLICY 2

The locational strategy to be adopted in the structure plan area is:

- (a) to concentrate development for jobs, housing and facilities within and, in accord with Green Belt policies, immediately adjacent to the main urban areas of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare, in order to maintain and develop their vitality and quality as regional and sub-regional centres;**
- (b) to develop and significantly improve the infrastructure and services of the road and rail based public transport systems, particularly the strategic network linking Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Yate, and including the provision of effective interchanges;**
- (c) to secure a more balanced pattern of housing and employment across the plan area by:**
 - restraining the expansion of employment uses in the North Fringe of the Bristol conurbation by diversifying development on existing land commitments, particularly providing for more housing, and restricting new employment allocations**
 - prioritising the retention and creation of employment in central, inner and south Bristol, and Weston-super-Mare; maintaining and enhancing the economic role of Bath; and providing for smaller scale opportunities to meet local employment needs at other towns, in particular in the Norton Radstock area;**
 - integrating policies for housing with associated requirements for employment and transport infrastructure**
 - reviewing existing planning commitments in accordance with the locational strategy**
- (d) to steer residential development which cannot be accommodated within or immediately adjacent to the main urban areas, nor on other appropriate land with good access to jobs and local services which is already developed or committed to development, to the following areas in order of priority:**
 - those settlements which have significant existing advantages over other locations in respect of public transport access to major employment areas and other important facilities,**
 - those settlements where it can be demonstrated that there are practical opportunities to achieve good public transport access to major employment areas and other important facilities as part of the development; and**
 - to ensure that all new residential locations offer good access to a range of local facilities and services; avoid fragmented, isolated or ribbon**

forms of development; and enable a high proportion of journeys to be made by walking, cycling, or convenient public transport

- (e) to realise the economic development potential of the key strategic locations at Avonmouth/Sevenside, Royal Portbury, and Emersons Green, by means of a comprehensive and integrated approach to development at each location in conjunction with the provision of transport infrastructure, facilities for public transport services and the environmental framework**
- (f) to ensure that commercial, retail and leisure uses which involve large movements of people are steered to locations where their road vehicle movements will be minimised and public transport access maximised**
- (g) to improve and where necessary renew the fabric of centres within urban areas by:**
 - establishing city and sub-regional centres as priority locations for major investment in retail, office and major recreation and leisure facilities; in particular, to promote Bristol City Centre as a regional focus for major business uses, shopping and leisure facilities; and**
 - maintaining, developing and promoting other town, district, suburban and local centres as focal points for local services, jobs, housing and public transport, and improving their local accessibility**
- (h) to protect and enhance the character of the countryside and its settlements, and to maintain the economic and social vitality of rural areas, by allowing within or, subject to Green Belt policies, immediately adjoining settlements limited development which is appropriate to their character, setting and accessibility to local facilities and employment.**
- (I) to maintain the established Green Belt whilst providing for changes in the boundaries at Keynsham to contribute towards housing requirements and associated employment and associated social infrastructure, and between Portishead and Portbury to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and in the regeneration of urban land.**

Strategic environmental principles

- 2.34 The Structure Plan aims at sustainable development as part of a long term process to allow change which conserves and enhances the global and local environment for future generations. Setting sustainability as the cornerstone of the Plan implies a need to maintain and restore the environmental resources of the area and to prevent further depletion. This is necessary both because of their intrinsic value, and their contribution to the quality of life of present and future residents and visitors. Throughout the Plan, policies aim towards both conserving and enhancing environmental quality and minimising the consumption of non-renewable resources, for example through seeking the re-use of land and buildings.
- 2.35 Policy 3 sets out a framework to be applied across the structure plan area, for considering development proposals in terms of environmental character. Government guidance in PPG7 states that, in the past, *“conservation efforts have concentrated on designating and protecting those areas of the countryside which are most important for landscape and wildlife. The priority now is to find new ways of enriching the quality of the whole countryside whilst accommodating appropriate development, in order to complement the protection which designation offers...”*.
- 2.36 The Structure Plan places more emphasis than before on recognising the intrinsic value of the environment as a whole. The principle of “environmental capital” has informed the development of the Plan policies. This term is used to describe and value environmental assets such as landscape and biodiversity, but the concept has proved difficult to use in land use planning terms. In an attempt to overcome this, a number of statutory national environment agencies have suggested an approach based on the idea of “characterisation”. This is concerned with what makes one area different from another, rather than what makes it better or worse, and with maintaining that character. It is equally concerned with all areas, not just those designated as of high quality.
- 2.37 The characterisation approach has been developed further through a pilot project covering the South West Region. Across the region, the pilot study identified eleven character types, of which four - Hills and Ridges; Limestone Wolds; Levels and Moors; and Vales - are located in the structure plan area. These character types relate to both the Countryside Agency’s Character Areas and English Nature’s Natural Areas, and are consistent with them in both general extent and identified attributes. They are not designations, but areas identified by unique combinations of physical attributes, wildlife, land use patterns and human history, which give each locality a sense of place.

- 2.38 Policy 3 seeks to implement this characterisation approach by proposing that all development or land use change should conserve and enhance those environmental assets which make a significant contribution to character and distinctiveness, as well as those which are of local, national or international importance. In addition, Local Plans should set out a conservation and enhancement strategy which recognises distinct character areas.
- 2.39 The policy also requires local authorities to prepare a strategy for urban renaissance. The Plan's approach towards encouraging development within or closely associated with urban areas is only likely to be successful if the area's towns and cities themselves become more attractive places in which to live and work, as has been recognised in recent national policy initiatives and reports. The Urban Task Force report "Towards an Urban Renaissance" (1999) considered that towns and cities have been allowed to become spoilt by poor design, management, economic dispersal and social polarisation. It argued for an "urban renaissance" based on the belief that urban areas should be functionally and aesthetically well- designed, more compact and better connected, supporting a range of diverse uses and lifestyles and allowing people to live, work and enjoy themselves within a sustainable environment. Creating the conditions for such a renaissance, it suggested, would require sustained economic investment and regeneration; greater environmental responsibility; improved design; a priority towards social wellbeing; and investment in urban government.
- 2.40 Although many of these responses lie outside the development plan system, land use planning should be a positive mechanism for achieving change, particularly through regeneration, managing land supply to enable previously developed land and buildings to be put to new uses, and ensuring that land for greenfield development is not released before it is needed. These approaches are supported in Policy 3. The local planning authorities should develop an urban renaissance strategy for their towns and cities through targeted regeneration; increasing urban densities and intensification; promoting mixed uses and an accessible pattern of facilities; raising the quality of new housing; developing a public realm strategy; creating sustainable movement patterns and new travel choices; targeted parking policies; and investing in partnerships with the community. Policies developing these approaches are set out elsewhere in the Plan.

POLICY 3

Local Plans will :

- **identify areas which exhibit common environmental characteristics or elements following the characterisation approach supported by the Countryside Agency and English Nature, and identify in each area those characteristics and elements which make a significant contribution to local**

character or are of importance;

- **contain a strategy for the conservation and enhancement of all environmental assets, including landscapes, nature conservation and the built and historic environment, which make a significant contribution to that character and distinctiveness as well as those which are already recognised as of local, national or international importance through prior designation;**
- **contain an urban renaissance strategy for their urban areas, which sets out an integrated approach towards the application of relevant policies and initiatives.**

The Integrated Transport Strategy

2.41 The transport network, and the character and volume of travel it supports, have a major influence on development patterns, economic prosperity and the environment. Rising car ownership, linked with economic growth and greater occupational specialisation, has led to longer journeys and traffic congestion. It has encouraged lower density development and a dispersal of activity from many urban centres towards locations with less congestion and easier parking, which in turn often require car-based travel. Traffic volumes have risen rapidly, and the pattern of travel has become more complex, with less use being made of public transport and low-energy modes. Increases in road freight have occurred with improvements to the national road network, and the use of “just in time” methods of delivery. The continuation of these recent trends in road traffic growth threatens sustainability objectives related to reducing greenhouse gases, improving air quality, protecting landscape and habitats, reducing vehicle collisions, maintaining economic performance, and enhancing the role of cities.

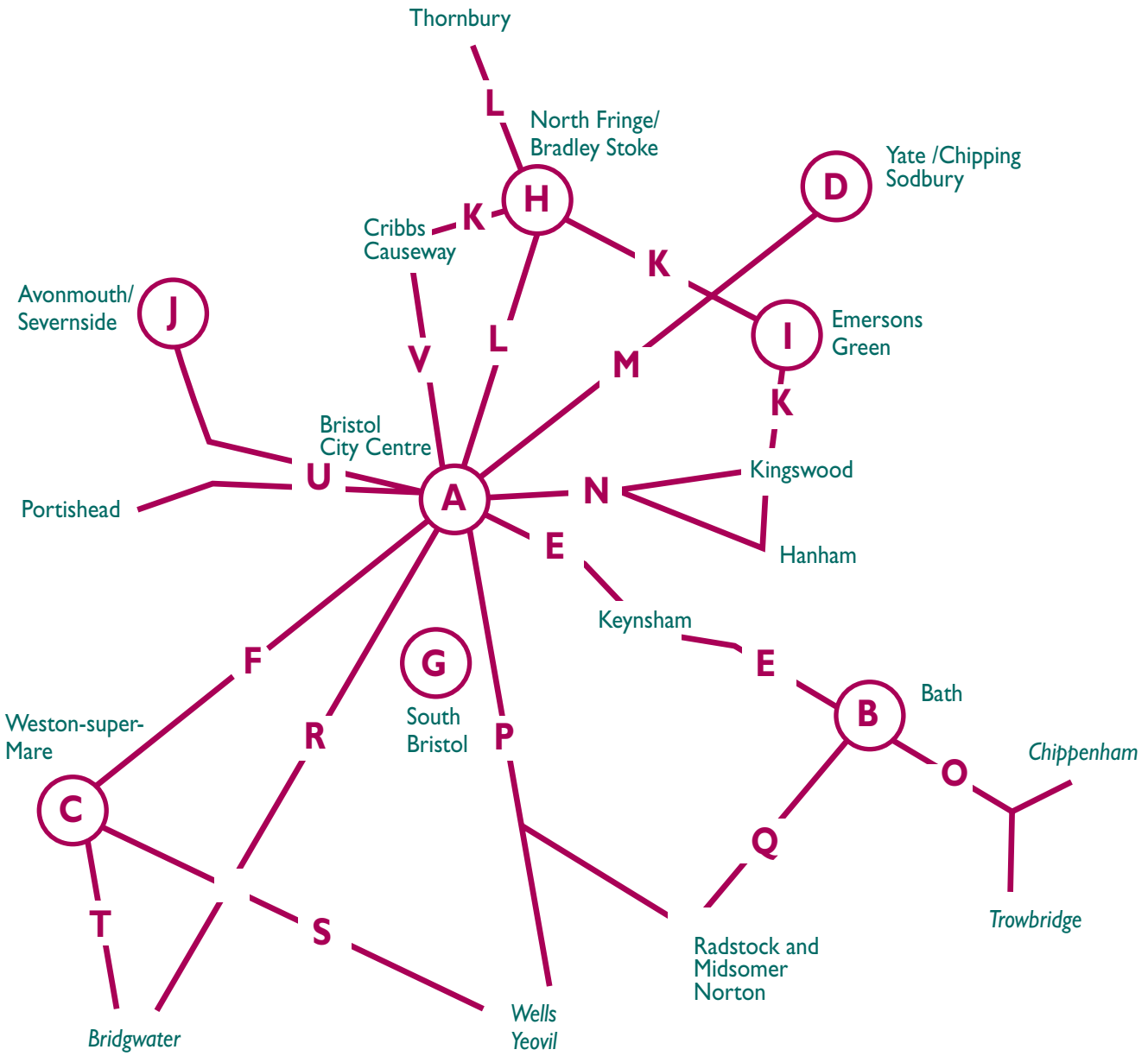
2.42 This Plan sets out an integrated approach to development and transport. The transport strategy and the specific transport policies set out in policies 47-62 are linked to a land use strategy which seeks to reduce the need to travel. New development should in general to be of a form that discourages car use, and developments which would attract or generate many trips should be located where there is good public transport and access for cyclists and pedestrians. Alternative modes of transport to the car are encouraged; and car use discouraged where appropriate alternatives are available.

2.43 Policy 4 sets out the transportation and development strategy for key locations and transport corridors. It identifies 22 areas and corridors important to strategic travel patterns, and identifies priorities for transport improvements in each corridor. These are shown on the Key Diagram and on page 28. Integrated policies for these locations provide guidance for local plans and local transport

plans on development and the type of transport schemes which need to be pursued. Investment will need to be cost effective, maximise benefits to the largest number of people, and maximise the shift in travel behaviour towards public transport and greater walking and cycling which is at the core of the Plan's objectives. Following the decision to adopt this policy in early 2000, actions already taken include the reopening of the Bristol-Portishead line (Corridor U) as far as Pill and into Royal Portbury Dock, for freight traffic.

- 2.44 Strategic priorities for transport improvements are generally located in those corridors and urban areas identified at A-J in Policy 4. Proposals for these key locations, which are important both for accommodating new development and in securing significant improvements to public transport, are detailed in Policies 5-14. In these corridors and centres, an integrated approach is needed to relate new development with improved transport, and so ensure that the strategy is implemented in line with the principles of Policy 1. These areas and corridors reflect the need to provide for a growing number of orbital movements around areas, as well as established radial movements.
- 2.45 Many of the corridors between Bristol and surrounding areas are characterised by recurrent congestion, and by shopping areas with poor environmental conditions and traffic domination. The latter include, in particular, Horfield, Bishopston and Filton along the A38 in Bristol (L); Redfield, St George, Kingswood and Hanham on the A420 and A431(N); Totterdown, Knowle and Whitchurch on the A39 (P); and The Triangle, Whiteladies Road, Westbury Park and Westbury-on-Trym on and near the A4018 (V). Similar though milder problems occur in the urban area of Bath, on the corridors to Bristol (E), Chippenham and Trowbridge (O), and Norton Radstock (Q); and in Weston-super-Mare on the corridors to Bristol (F), Wells (S), and Bridgwater (T). On all these corridors, an approach is required which uses innovative area traffic management to re-route through traffic; promote modal shift through introduction of corridor bus priorities and service upgradings; and allow environmental improvements to take place in shopping centres to make walking and cycling and local facilities more attractive.
- 2.46 In the corridors approaching the Bristol area, a pattern of new interchanges with park and ride facilities is needed to distribute trips by more sustainable modes to various main destinations in north and central Bristol. There will be several opportunities for this in association with completion of Bristol - North Fringe Rapid Transit in Corridor L, and full advantage of the scheme will be taken to secure modal shift by promoting the scheme and integrating bus services with it including use of interchanges. At this stage also a traffic management strategy for the corridor, as described above, should be brought forward. These strategies will reduce congestion, improve accessibility to the city centre and inner areas, and improve their economic performance.

Strategic Transport Corridors and Areas



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- 2.47 In Corridor K it is essential that a multi-modal approach is taken following completion of Avon Ring Road Stage II, improving accessibility from Kingswood to the North Fringe, promoting the rail service from Bath and avoiding reductions in journey time which are likely to promote further long-distance car commuting. In Corridor M the approach is a sustainable response to the current congested conditions on the approaches to both Bristol City Centre and the North Fringe, needing comprehensive improvement to public transport. Provision of train turnround facilities at Yate, and improvements at Westerleigh Junction and Bristol Parkway, will be needed for a more frequent local train service. Further bus priorities will be required on A4174, and A432 and M32 into Bristol, together with an increase in bus service levels and their integration into a pattern of interchanges including park and ride facilities alongside the ring road.
- 2.48 In rural parts of the corridors listed, apart from provision for better bus services and interchange, traffic management should continue to be used to improve road safety and reduce intimidation by action to reduce traffic speeds in villages and other environmentally sensitive locations.
- 2.49 Traffic reduction targets, and where possible modal split targets, should be set for sub-areas and corridors, coordinated with targets in the increasing number of Travel Plans introduced by various organisations in the area. The potential for traffic reduction will be limited until significant improvements to alternative modes are in place. The Plan assumes this will take effect by 2002-4. Across the area as a whole, holding car traffic flows at 2003 levels should be the aim across the area to 2011. More stringent targets than this should be set in urban areas to offset the smaller potential for modal shift in rural areas. In the areas and corridors defined below, still more stringent targets should be sought, with due allowance for areas where substantial housing growth may take place. The target for public transport use to 2011 is an increase of three percentage points in the modal share of both bus and rail for all trip purposes.

POLICY 4

Provision will be made for an integrated, corridor based approach to transport improvements which maximises opportunities to secure travel by alternatives to the car. Priority will be given to improvements which reinforce the locational strategy as required by Policy 2.

An integrated policy approach towards transport and development will be secured in corridors and urban areas important to strategic travel patterns, namely :

- | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| A | Bristol City Centre | see Policy 5 |
| B | Bath | see Policy 6 |

C	Weston-super-Mare	see Policy 7
D	Yate / Chipping Sodbury	see Policy 8
E	Bath - Keynsham - Bristol	see Policy 9
F	Bristol - Weston-super-Mare	see Policy 10
G	South Bristol	see Policy 11
H	North Fringe	see Policy 12
I	Emersons Green	see Policy 13
J	Avonmouth / Severnside	see Policy 14

Transport improvements will also be secured in the following areas and corridors important to strategic travel patterns :

K Bristol North Ring

Transport proposals will secure the management of traffic flows using the Avon Ring Road and roads in the surrounding area; the development of the existing bus corridor linking East Bristol/Kingswood, the North Fringe and Cribbs Causeway by implementing bus priorities and facilities to serve adjacent developing areas, including Emersons Green; the establishment and development of facilities for good interchange at main junction points along these routes; and the further development of the Bath to Filton/ Parkway rail service.

L Bristol - North Fringe - Bradley Stoke and Thornbury

Priority will be given to the implementation of Rapid Transit Line 1, between Central Bristol, Bristol North Fringe, and Bradley Stoke. On the parallel road routes including the A38 Gloucester Road, traffic and in particular through traffic, will be managed to achieve increased space for corridor bus priorities, better facilities for walking and cycling, and an improved environment in local centres for shopping, work and leisure. On the urban edge a transport interchange will be established to provide for trips from Thornbury and surrounding areas to give access to bus and rapid transit services.

M Bristol - North Fringe - Yate

Priority will be given to the provision of improved transport facilities in this corridor. The role of rail in the corridor will be enhanced by new facilities to enable an increase in train frequencies between Yate, Bristol Parkway, Bristol, and Weston-super-Mare. The M32 will be developed as an express bus corridor with appropriate interchange facilities. Cycle routes will be provided linking residential areas to the main employment areas.

- N Bristol - Kingswood/Hanham**
Bus development corridors will be developed along these routes, and traffic, especially through traffic, will be managed to achieve increased space for corridor bus priorities, better facilities for walking and cycling, and an improved environment in local centres. This strategy will form an integral part of the regeneration of Kingswood town centre, and of other local centres on these routes.
- O Bath - Chippenham and Bath - Trowbridge**
In these corridors modal shift will be achieved through new Park and Ride/ interchange provision, bus priorities and promotion of new rail infrastructure including cooperation with Wiltshire County Council.
- P Bristol - Norton Radstock and Yeovil**
A bus development corridor will be established with potential for new interchange/ park and ride facilities near the Bristol urban edge. Provision will be made in Local Plans for completing the National Cycle Network Link in the corridor and for reducing the environmental problems in Whitchurch, Clutton and Temple Cloud, against the provisions of Policies 48 and 58.
- Q Norton Radstock and Norton Radstock to Bath**
Local transport improvements will be promoted in Norton Radstock as part of a co-ordinated approach with economic regeneration and environmental enhancement. Provision will be made for improved facilities for walking and cycling focusing on routes to local centres, together with improved bus facilities including facilities for interchange at Radstock. A bus corridor will be developed on the route to Bath incorporating further bus priorities to increase the attractiveness of bus services and to include existing park and ride facilities, together with the construction of the Norton Radstock to Bath National Cycle Network link.
- R Bristol - Bristol Airport - Bridgwater**
Consideration will be given in Local Plans and Transport plans to the provision of better interchange facilities between car and bus, including the possibility of facilities at Bristol Airport. Proposals will be co-ordinated with other proposals for this corridor set out in Policies 61 and 11.
- S Weston-super-Mare - Wells**
Proposals for improving transport will be developed in conjunction with Somerset County Council including, as a priority, the development of solutions to the environmental problems of Banwell in the context of Policies 58 and 60.
- T Weston-super-Mare - Bridgwater**
Improved provision for rail and bus travel will be secured in this corridor, in liaison with Somerset County Council.

U Portishead and Avonmouth - Bristol

In this corridor a modal shift will be achieved through new interchange/ park and ride facilities, together with support for the reinstatement of the rail route on the south side of the River Avon for freight and passenger use, and improvement of the railway on its north side to support improved services.

V Bristol - Clifton Down - Cribbs Causeway

A bus development corridor, bus priorities, parking controls and the management of traffic will be used to secure an improved environment for local centres. Pedestrian facilities will also be a priority, alongside implementing the National Cycle Network in this corridor. Provision for interchange at Cribbs Causeway will be improved.

Key Strategic Locations

Bristol City Centre

2.50 Bristol is the largest urban area in the South West, a major regional economic centre, and a major focus for shopping, cultural activities, education, leisure and tourism. The promotion and development of these roles is essential to the prospects for regenerating inner and south Bristol, and the economic well-being of the whole plan area and wider region. Proposals set out in new RPG10 will need to be taken into account in the next Structure Plan Review.

2.51 There is a need for continued investment in the historic City Centre, to secure a range of improvements to the environment, transport and other facilities, and to promote new housing, employment and tourism. Important aspects of the strategy are :

- the continuing development of major sites such as Harbourside and Temple Quay, where substantial numbers of jobs and houses will be provided; and the regeneration and upgrading of older employment areas as part of the wider restructuring of the City Centre for a changing mix of employment, residential, leisure, cultural and retail uses;
- Improving the range and quality of shopping through extensions to the existing shopping core, whilst maintaining integration with existing City Centre facilities, and the renewal of ageing facilities; and
- Improving accessibility into the City especially by modes other than the car.

- 2.52 Policy 5 sets out an integrated approach towards Bristol City Centre. With the changing structure of the commercial and retailing sectors, and the existence of a number of vacant and derelict sites and buildings, there will be continuing physical and economic change. Major renewal projects under way or proposed are enhancing perceptions of the City Centre as a place for investment, business and leisure. Together with future schemes, they will allow it to meet the competitive challenges of Cribbs Causeway and other out-of-town locations for commercial development, and thereby encourage public transport use. The prime objective in managing this development process should be to maintain and strengthen the employment and retailing base of the central area, and to retain high density land uses where they can be most easily served by public transport. Policy 30 sets down the considerations that need to be taken into account in considering alternative uses for existing employment sites. Local plans should identify areas for comprehensive regeneration within, and in areas immediately adjacent to, the City Centre, in particular promoting the latter for increased residential use. They should provide a clear indication of the mix and scale of further development, associated transport proposals, and the means of implementation.
- 2.53 To sustain a growing level of activity and environmental quality, accessibility to the City Centre area must be improved. Priority schemes for public transport and improved facilities should form an integral part of all major development projects. There is clearly a limit to road capacity. Vehicular access particularly during peak periods needs to be limited to essential traffic to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce pollution and congestion. Restraint will be linked to the upgrading of public transport facilities within the City Centre and enhanced public transport capacity on the main corridors and routes. This will be done on a comprehensive whole corridor basis, linked to the provision of new transport interchange sites on some corridors.
- 2.54 Developing improved access between the City Centre and the major development areas to the north of the city is an important priority. The first phase of the light rapid transit system is an important part of the transport strategy. Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council are working together on the development of LRT for the north of Bristol, of both a City Centre - Parkway and a City Centre - Cribbs Causeway line. This should be supplemented by other schemes involving interchanges with good access to the Avon Ring Road and priority routes into the City Centre. The proposed de-trunking of the M32 could offer further opportunities for securing public transport priorities aimed at increasing the accessibility and attractiveness of the City Centre. Policy 5 sets out these priorities within an integrated strategy for the City Centre.

POLICY 5

The role of Bristol City Centre as the regional centre for business, shopping, leisure and cultural activity will be enhanced by:

- 1. Making provision for new and refurbished office developments, which strengthen its employment base;**
- 2. Improving the amount, range and quality of shopping, leisure and other visitor facilities;**
- 3. Increasing the diversity of uses in particular by expanding the residential role of the City Centre and its immediately adjacent areas in accord with Policies 30 and 34.**
- 4. Safeguarding and upgrading the environment, in particular through providing for high quality developments, reducing the impact of traffic and the consequent congestion and pollution, and maintaining and improving the historic character of its buildings and spaces**
- 5. Improving accessibility by**
 - upgrading public transport facilities including the strategic interchanges at the Centre, the Bristol Bus and Coach Station, Bristol Temple Meads Station and the links between them;**
 - developing traffic management measures and associated infrastructure to discourage non-essential private vehicular access and improve the environment for cyclists and pedestrians;**
 - improving provision for non car movements along the main corridors and routes to the City Centre by progressing a co-ordinated set of proposals in accord with Policies 48, 49, and 50, to include:**
 - bus priority measures and better facilities for bus operations integrated where appropriate with interchanges including Park and Ride sites,**
 - a rapid transit system initially linking the City Centre with Temple Meads and Bradley Stoke/Stoke Gifford, and**
 - the upgrading of rail passenger services within Bristol and to Bath, Yate, Weston-super-Mare and beyond.**

Bath

- 2.55 Bath is a major regional shopping and business centre defined as a Principal Urban Area in RPG10, as well as being designated in its entirety as a World Heritage Site. Large numbers of new jobs are arising in a range of small office-

based businesses and the retail, tourist and leisure sectors, and the City's economic buoyancy has been attracting rising numbers of commuters from the surrounding sub-region. However, policies need to address development pressures, which threaten the historic fabric by generating excessive traffic and are displacing both long established industries and the traditional local shops which form an important part of the City's character. Proposals set out in new RPG10 will need to be taken into account in the next Structure Plan Review.

- 2.56 Policy 6 sets out an integrated strategic framework for development and transport in Bath. The City must not be allowed to become a museum. Reinforcing its role as a regional centre and focus for international tourism will help to secure its future prosperity. Pressures need to be managed in order to reduce congestion, conserve character, maintain vitality, and attract necessary investment. A very careful balance needs to be set, which preserves Bath's architectural, historic and landscape quality while providing for investment in the development necessary to maintain both its physical fabric and its economic and social prosperity, and to accommodate some of the increase in the demand for new housing which will arise.
- 2.57 Policies need to ensure that local employment is retained within Bath, given concerns about maintaining traditional sources of employment, particularly with the relocation elsewhere of Ministry of Defence offices. Opportunities for regeneration and for maintaining and creating mixes of uses that reinforce the historic character and sustainability of the City will be realised, particularly within and immediately adjacent to the City Centre; these should not displace traditional patterns of development or generate large increases in traffic. The redevelopment of former employment sites such as the Western Riverside and Ministry of Defence sites will be important in achieving a mix of residential, employment and other uses which will help meet the job requirements of the surrounding sub-region and the rising demand for new housing. The precise mix of uses and the scale and form of development will be determined in the Local Plan.
- 2.58 A strategy dealing with traffic in the City Centre (CI:TE) has been developed and will be continued to secure environmental gains. Further measures will be needed in the radial corridors to the City Centre to make sustainable travel modes more attractive to meet growing demands. Routes of regional and sub-regional importance pass through and around the City's built-up area, contributing to the congestion arising from internal movements. Policy 4 provides for the development of bus corridors, additional Park and Ride facilities, and the development of the important rail infrastructure and services linking Bath to towns in West Wiltshire, and to Keynsham, Bristol, and the Bristol North Fringe. Policy 6 provides for through traffic to be progressively

directed away from the City Centre; the success of this policy will in part depend on proposals arising from the DTLR's corridor study of the A36/A350 and the ability to deal more effectively with through traffic.

POLICY 6

In Bath, development and transport proposals will maintain and enhance the City's economic and social prosperity, and its roles as a regional centre and a focus for international tourism, whilst safeguarding and contributing to its status as a World Heritage Site. This will require provision for:

- **the improvement of shopping and related facilities as required to safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the City Centre and its district and local centres;**
- **the enhancement of tourist and cultural facilities;**
- **employment uses to meet local requirements, in particular through the regeneration of previously used sites including mixed use schemes;**
- **additional housing, including mixed use schemes, in accord with Policies 34 and 35;**
- **traffic management and improvements to travel by non-car modes of a scale and form that secures reductions in vehicular traffic, pollution and traffic congestion, safeguards and enhances the environment, and conserves the historic character and diversity of activity in the City.**

Local Plans will address the problems of local and regional traffic movements in Bath and seek to achieve traffic reductions throughout the City as a whole by measures which will include:

- **providing for forms of development appropriate to secure the transport objectives of the City;**
- **substantially reducing through traffic in the City Centre by directing it to designated alternative routes and giving priority to public transport , pedestrians, and cyclists;**
- **controlling car parking in accord with the principles of Policy 54; and**
- **developing public transport on the corridors into Bath, and transport interchanges in accord with Policy 50, including upgrading the Bath bus / railway station.**

Weston-super-Mare

2.59 Weston-super-Mare is a Principal Urban Area of regional significance, and a key development location. Proposals set out in new RPG10 will need to be taken into

account in the next Structure Plan Review. In the recent past new jobs have not kept pace with residential expansion, and there has been a considerable increase in commuting to jobs elsewhere, particularly in road travel to Bristol and the North Fringe. Future development must be based on a two-pronged approach which emphasises both the creation of new jobs and the improvement of public transport links with other centres. This is necessary for the town to achieve more balanced growth, and reduce its reliance on the Bristol job market. Studies addressing the future role and economic base of Weston are now being undertaken and will inform the Local Plan process.

- 2.60 Prospects for securing the balanced development of Weston-super-Mare are improving. The town has good rail and motorway links, and the M5 - town centre link and new opportunities for economic development, have significantly enhanced the town's attractiveness to potential investors. The strategy to curtail further growth and congestion in the North Fringe should lead to more interest from relocating companies. Major employment and housing commitments already exist in the Locking Castle area, and further development opportunities may become available at Weston Airfield and the former RAF Locking.
- 2.61 The challenges are to ensure that new development can be effectively linked to the older parts of the town, that it offers a balance of uses to strengthen the town's self containment, and that it is accompanied by improvements in transport infrastructure. The scale and phasing of new housing development should be closely linked to the creation of local employment opportunities and improved transport infrastructure, in particular public transport. This will require local plans and local transport plans to identify schemes for the improvement of public transport within and to the town, including a new bus focus in the town centre. These plans should set out how major new areas of development would be expected to support such proposals in order for the development to proceed, in accordance with national Government guidance on planning obligations.
- 2.62 The regeneration of the older parts of Weston and of its tourist industry is a very important part of the integrated approach set out in Policy 7. It will be necessary to ensure that new development on the edges of the town is not at the expense of the inner areas. There need to be proposals to strengthen the quality and range of the town's shopping and leisure facilities, so that it continues to successfully fulfil its role as a sub-regional centre and to withstand the competition of the Cribbs Causeway regional shopping centre. Improving public transport access within and to the town will be an important part of this. Policies on upgrading tourist attractions, conference venues and accommodation may also be necessary.

POLICY 7

The role of Weston-super-Mare as an employment location and tourist destination will be reinforced; the vitality and viability of its town centre maintained and enhanced; and requirements for additional dwellings met only where supported

by increased local employment and significant improvements to public transport links both within the town and with the main employment areas in the Bristol area which together prevent unacceptable levels of congestion arising on the M5 and A370.

Local Plans will accordingly make provision for:

- **improving the choice and attractiveness of employment sites, especially at locations well-served by public transport or where the regeneration of previously used land would be secured;**
- **safeguarding and enhancing the attractiveness of the town as a resort, and making provision in the town for new or upgraded tourist attractions, conference venues and holiday accommodation which improve the overall quality of facilities and support the regeneration and environmental improvement of the town;**
- **improving the amount, range and quality of shopping and leisure facilities in the town centre through refurbishment, redevelopment and extensions; securing environmental improvements including traffic management to achieve reductions in pedestrian/traffic conflicts in the town centre and increasing its accessibility by public transport from surrounding areas;**
- **new housing, phased with increases in local employment and significant improvements to public transport links with the surrounding area, particularly between Weston-super-Mare and Bristol, which are in accord with Policies 10 and 62, in order to prevent further significant increases in lengthy car-based commuting; and**
- **improving public transport operation within the town, including bus priority measures, improved town centre bus facilities, the provision of improved interchanges including Weston-super-Mare Station , in accord with Policy 50.**

Yate/Chipping Sodbury

2.63 Over the last 20 years the population of Yate and Chipping Sodbury is estimated to have grown by nearly 10,000, and it is now the fourth largest urban centre in the plan area. Policy 8 acknowledges the pace of recent expansion, but also recognises the area's relatively good accessibility by road and rail and its level of services and facilities. Any substantial new housing provision should not take place before the later part of the Plan period, and only if it becomes impossible to meet housing requirements within or immediately adjoining the Greater Bristol conurbation. This will be assessed through the Local Plan process; the Deposit Local Plan, prepared after the decision to adopt Policy 8, states that such

development is not required. Any such development should be implemented in a way which ensures its integration into the community, adequate local facilities, and additional employment to provide for local needs, without aggravating existing environmental problems.

- 2.64 The town relies largely on the main Bristol conurbation, including the North Fringe and related areas, for employment. Improvements in public transport provision to these areas must therefore be a priority. Policy 4(M) sets out proposals to increase train frequencies on the strategic Yate - Parkway - Bristol Temple Meads - Weston-super-Mare route; and to develop the M32 as a bus corridor with interchanges. Similarly Policy 4(K) proposes measures to develop bus corridors on the northern section of the Avon Ring Road, improving access from Yate to the North Fringe and Emersons Green.
- 2.65 Proposals to extend the Green Belt around the north and east of Yate/Chipping Sodbury, in order to set a clear limit to the future expansion of the town, will be considered in the longer term as part of a future review of the overall locational strategy.

POLICY 8

At Yate/Chipping Sodbury, Local Plans will ensure an integrated approach which safeguards local amenity and which ensures that appropriate public transport and community facilities are in place or firmly committed before development is commenced.

Provision will be made for :

- **housing development in the later part of the Plan period, at an appropriate scale and with associated community infrastructure in a manner that ensures its integration into the existing community, and makes adequate provision for local shopping, leisure, educational and social facilities, with good access to them by non-car modes;**
- **the development of land for employment purposes to provide for identified local needs, to reduce the need for out-commuting and to minimise the conflict with other movements; and**
- **improvements to public transport, within the town, and to the main employment areas outside especially the main radial corridors to Bristol, and the developing orbital corridors between Emersons Green, the North Fringe and Cribbs Causeway, in accord with proposals in Policy 4: to include further bus priorities, provision for new or enhanced services, improvements in rail services and the development of multi modal interchanges to serve the main corridors**

Bath - Keynsham - Bristol

- 2.66 The Bath to Bristol transport corridor, comprising the rail line and A4, passes wholly through the Avon valley, which is of environmental importance as well as being designated Green Belt. The strategy recognises the need to maintain the open countryside and prevent urban coalescence in the area. The rail and bus services in the corridor, which are already relatively good, should be improved where possible, with better interchange facilities particularly in Keynsham, the possible reopening of Salford station, and further bus priority measures.
- 2.67 It is proposed that the Green Belt boundary at Keynsham be altered in the Local Plan, to provide for additional housing and related uses. The town is well placed in relation to the main Bristol and Bath employment centres, and development would be capable of being served by, and could help enhance, public transport services between Bristol and Bath. Development should not threaten coalescence with other settlements, but should stimulate investment in the town's facilities, be accompanied by some local employment, and support improved public transport. The timing of the release of this land for this development will depend in part on the practical contribution which can be made to housing requirements by previously developed land and buildings in Bath and any sustainable greenfield extensions around the city.

POLICY 9

In the Bath - Keynsham - Bristol corridor, the facilities already established for bus and rail travel will be enhanced by provision for improved rail infrastructure and improved services, better interchange, and further provision for bus priorities and promotion.

At Keynsham, the Local Plan will alter the Green Belt boundary in accordance with Policy 16 to provide primarily for new residential development and associated local employment and social infrastructure in a form and of a scale which maintains the existing character of the town, safeguards against coalescence with adjoining settlements, enhances the service and employment role of its centre, ensures access to local facilities and services in accord with Policy 2, and supports the development of public transport within the corridor.

Bristol - Weston-super-Mare

- 2.68 It is a key priority for the area as a whole to improve public transport systems in the corridor linking Bristol and Weston-super-Mare. Given the relative length of the corridor, the development of rail services will be particularly important in achieving a shift to public transport. The proposed upgrading of the rail line through Bristol will help achieve more frequent and reliable services, together

with improvements of platform and track facilities at Worle and Weston-super-Mare. Within Bristol, interchanges with the proposed Rapid Transit Line 1 will give better accessibility from the corridor to the City Centre and the North Fringe. In advance of this, bus access from Temple Meads to areas of city centre employment, and rail access to Filton Abbeywood and Bristol Parkway, must be improved. Reduced bus journey times and improved services will also be sought through priority measures on the approaches to Bristol and Weston-super-Mare.

2.69 This transport strategy should be achieved as part of a wider multi-modal approach addressing all movements between Weston-super-Mare, Bristol and the North Fringe. Policy 62 proposes that, as well as improving public transport, agencies need to co-operate in regulating development close to motorways and implementing measures to control motorway access.

2.70 The road and rail routes between Weston-super-Mare and Bristol pass through areas of acknowledged environmental importance. Future development associated with the corridor will be primarily focused on in Weston-super-Mare as set out in Policy 7, but the ability to develop sites in the town at the rate required must be taken into consideration. There may be a need to accommodate some development elsewhere in the corridor, not within the Green Belt. Such development must take account of environmental constraints and the capacity of the existing and proposed infrastructure; it should be close to existing railway stations and a range of existing services and facilities, and be accessible by public transport to the major job opportunities in the Bristol area and Weston-super-Mare. Although development would be predominately housing, local employment opportunities appropriate to local characteristics and transportation considerations will be encouraged. Proposals should be phased to ensure priority for brownfield sites, particularly the former docks at Portishead, and be associated with significant public transport improvements and the provision of additional facilities where appropriate.

POLICY 10

In the Bristol - Weston-super-Mare corridor, rail and bus services will be improved by means of:

- (a) the enhancement of rail infrastructure improvements as part of the Yate - Weston-super-Mare service upgrading and in accord with Policy 49;**
- (b) the enhancement of bus facilities in accord with Policy 48, and including priority improvements on the approaches to Bristol and Weston-super-Mare; and**
- (c) the development of interchanges with the Rapid Transit Line 1 to improve access to Bristol City Centre and the Bristol North Fringe.**

The enhancement and development of public transport will be achieved in conjunction with the management of M5 motorway traffic in accord with Policy 62. Provision for movements between Weston-super-Mare and the North Fringe will follow these transport policies.

Within the corridor, provision will be made for additional housing where supported by significantly improved accessibility by public transport to major employment centres that serves to prevent unacceptable levels of congestion arising on routes to Bristol, and where consistent with the locational strategy and policies to protect the environment

South Bristol

- 2.71 South Bristol lacks employment opportunities compared with the northern side of the City, having lost core manufacturing industries over the past 20 years and having been unable to attract major replacement business investment. As a result it has some of the highest concentrations of unemployment and social deprivation in the plan area. The range of issues needing to be resolved cannot be tackled through the planning system alone, but Policy 11 details land use and transport proposals that should form part of a more comprehensive and integrated approach towards community development in the area.
- 2.72 The proposals aim to ensure that a range of employment sites always remains available in South Bristol to attract new jobs and to retain existing ones. This will mean retaining existing employment sites, increasing the attractiveness of the older trading estates, and identifying new sites where possible whilst maintaining adequate open space for recreational and amenity use. The availability of rail-served sites in the area should be used to attract rail freight generating uses, where good road access can be secured. The maintenance of existing local and district centres also has to be pursued as part of the wider policy of economic and social regeneration. The refurbishment and limited redevelopment of the existing housing stock should also continue, together with new development, so as to broaden the range of housing and to replace redundant properties.
- 2.73 Policy 11 recognises the need to improve South Bristol's transport links with the wider area by upgrading access to the M32/M4/M5 through the construction of the A4 Bath Road/Callington Road link. The precise benefits would depend on the particular scheme chosen. Initial studies show a single carriageway road with cycleway, provision for an eventual light rapid transit route, and associated traffic restraint measures in adjoining areas as a preferred option. This would result in improved access from south west Bristol to the M32, in particular benefiting redevelopment sites important in the South Bristol regeneration strategy, improve bus service reliability and facilitate the enhancement of

Brislington district centre. A final decision on the scheme should pay particular heed to the impact on movements on the A4 and A37 corridors.

- 2.74 The construction of a road between the A38 and the A370, primarily to improve access to Bristol International Airport (BIA), may also benefit South Bristol by helping to relieve traffic congestion, providing better access to existing industrial estates in Ashton Vale, and in the longer term allowing the release of further potential employment sites in the area. The benefits of increased accessibility will need to be weighed against possible environmental impacts. Since Policy 11 was agreed for adoption in 2000, studies have been undertaken which have considered route options further west than that originally proposed. The final alignment of such a link road is to be determined, if necessary following a public inquiry.
- 2.75 It is essential that opportunities are taken to improve South Bristol's public transport links with the main employment areas in the city centre and the North Fringe through better bus and rail links, as well as improving public transport connections between employment and housing areas within South Bristol itself. A rapid transit loop through the area will be considered in the longer term, and route reservations need to be made as part of the development of the area.

POLICY 11

In South Bristol, the regeneration of the local economy will be progressed by an integrated and comprehensive strategy towards community development, which will include business development, employment retention and creation, education, training and better access to jobs, improved local facilities and public transport, enhancing the quality of life in general whilst maintaining adequate and accessible provision of open space for amenity and recreational use.

This will require provision for:

- **improving the choice and attractiveness of employment sites, especially through the refurbishment of the trading estates, realising the employment potential of major regeneration sites and providing new opportunities for smaller businesses as part of mixed use developments and regeneration schemes;**
- **safeguarding and enhancing the retail, leisure and other community facilities of the area, and the vitality and viability of the district and local centres of the area as set out under Policy 38;**
- **upgrading the housing stock and making provision for additional units, in particular through regeneration of brownfield sites, mixed use developments and higher densities;**
- **improving public transport within the area, in particular connections**

between the district centres, employment locations and the adjacent residential areas, and to Bristol City Centre, the North Fringe and Avonmouth/Sevenside, by means of bus priority measures, additional bus services, enhanced use of Parson Street and Bedminster stations with consideration to be given to an LRT extension from the City Centre;

- **constructing new highways linking Callington Road to the A4 Bath Road and St Phillips Causeway and, subject to resolution of any adverse environmental and traffic generation impacts, the A38 to the A370 in proximity to the Bristol/North Somerset boundary; and**
- **locating large freight generating users on rail-served sites in particular, the Parson Street/Ashton Vale and St Annes areas, in accord with Policy 57.**

The North Fringe

2.76 The “North Fringe” - that is, the area of South Gloucestershire to the north of the Bristol City boundary, within the lines of the M5, M4 and M32 - has attracted much of the new economic development in the Plan area in the last two decades. The availability of greenfield sites highly accessible to the motorway network has led to rapid commercial development, particularly of business parks. Although this has generated many jobs and contributed substantially to economic prosperity, much of the investment has relocated from elsewhere in the Plan area, in particular Bristol City Centre, with adverse consequences for regeneration and employment objectives. The North Fringe contains substantial sites developed as individual schemes for employment and other uses, not well related to adjoining developments and poorly integrated with public transport. Low density dispersed development in the area has favoured road traffic, led to congestion and made it more difficult to support public transport.

2.77 Policy 12 proposes a restructuring of the North Fringe through a new planning framework for the area. The intention is that centres are clearly identified through the Local Plan to provide local facilities and services. They would be linked to new higher density developments built in a more compact form than has recently been achieved in the area and able to support improved public transport. There should be a wider mix of land uses, with the emphasis on housing in accord with Policy 2. Restructuring will need to be primarily achieved through the development process and will include a comprehensive review of development patterns and commitments in the Local Plan, clear guidelines for new developments, and the positive integration of public transport proposals into all new developments.

2.78 As part of the strategy to achieve a better mix of employment and housing across the plan area, Policy 12 proposes to restrain further development for employment uses in the North Fringe. At April 1999 over 200 ha. of land were provisionally identified for further employment uses, including sites within the perimeters of existing businesses. Some economic restraint in the North Fringe can be accepted without harm to the economy of the plan area as a whole, because of the substantial existing commitments with the potential for higher densities. The continuation of current road-based patterns of development would add to congestion and ultimately inhibit growth. In the future the emphasis should be on new employment provision at sites where car commuting is restricted and where significantly improved public transport can be provided as part of the development. Opportunities for existing businesses to change and expand will be provided in accordance with Policy 30, which sets out criteria for safeguarding existing employment sites whilst allowing other uses to be considered. At the Cribbs Causeway regional shopping centre any future development falling within the criteria set out in Policy 40 would need to ensure that it led to significant public transport improvements and did not increase traffic congestion.

2.79 Improved public transport will be an integral part of this development pattern, and new development at higher densities will be needed to support this. Policy 12 identifies Bristol Parkway station, the University of the West of England and Cribbs Causeway as transport interchanges which can provide a focus for better public transport. These and additional transport hubs will need to be identified in the Local Plan, to provide coordinated and more comprehensive links for public transport services within the area and outside. Bus services will continue to be the core of the system, linking with heavy rail and ultimately with light rapid transit at Parkway and Bristol Temple Meads. Orbital routes across and around the urban area will also be developed, linking Kingswood, Emersons Green, the North Fringe and Cribbs Causeway, and eventually extending to Avonmouth /Sevenside. These will need to include road space allocated to bus priority measures to provide advantages over car travel. Improvements in movement around the area need to be accompanied by the development of the main corridors linking the North Fringe to Bristol to the south and to Yate and Thornbury to the north. Light Rapid Transit Line 1, and the upgrading of rail services on the Yate/Bristol/Weston-super-Mare line, will also enhance accessibility by non-car modes to the North Fringe. The dominance of car travel in the area also needs to be reduced by developing a network of safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists providing links between housing areas, local centres, main employment locations and public transport interchanges.

POLICY 12

In the North Fringe, provision will be made for a greater mix of land uses including in particular residential uses, of a compact form, focused around

identified centres that provide local facilities and jobs, which are better integrated with, and more able to support, public transport.

Local Plans will therefore :

- 1. make provision for a wider mix of higher density land uses, including housing, at locations which can be well served by public transport planned as an integral part of the development;**
- 2. identify and develop transport hubs which can act as interchanges, to include Bristol Parkway, the University of the West of England campus and Cribbs Causeway, and provide improved infrastructure on the routes serving them, to form parts of key links for better public transport services in the area;**
- 3. provide for the development of housing and associated local facilities in accordance with both the locational strategy and with Policy 30 on the safeguarding of existing employment sites;**
- 4. restrict provision for new employment to sites which are suitable only for employment uses and within those sites to office activities or other business uses where car use is actively restrained and where there is provision for improved public transport facilities;**
- 5. identify local centres to be developed as focal points for local facilities, convenient and accessible from adjacent residential areas by non-car modes;**
- 6. facilitate safe routes for pedestrian and cyclists that connect the identified key transport interchanges, local centres and adjacent areas;**
- 7. make provision for the development of the bus network including priority measures to provide:**
 - improved movement in the main corridors linking the North Fringe to the Bristol urban area and to Yate and Thornbury; and**
 - better orbital movements linking the main transport hubs with adjacent parts of the Plan area including Avonmouth/Sevenside, Emersons Green and Kingswood;**
- 8. provide for a light rapid transit line initially linking the North Fringe to the Bristol Central Area and integrated with heavy rail and bus operations network at identified interchanges including Bristol Temple Meads, Bristol Parkway and Filton Abbeywood;**
- 9. upgrade rail passenger services on the routes connecting the North Fringe with Yate/Gloucester, Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare; and**
- 10. provide sites for multi-modal interchanges, such as park and ride, linked to limited stop bus services or rapid transit on the M32, A432, and A38 corridors.**

Emersons Green

2.80 The Emersons Green area of South Gloucestershire, on the north-east side of the Bristol conurbation, is the focus of extensive development activity. A major housing development of some 3,100 dwellings is being completed. East of the A4174 Avon Ring Road, an International Science Park was originally proposed for some 136 ha of land. By 2001, outline planning permission had been granted for some 25 ha on part of this site for the Park with a detailed application pending for an Academic Innovation Centre. However, the overall scale of the Science Park was reconsidered in the light of confirmation that there can be no direct access from the site to the M4, and concerns that the development would produce a pattern of business uses that would harm regeneration prospects in Bristol or the expansion of local employment in Weston-super-Mare. Policy 13 proposes the creation of a mixed use development with a substantial residential element, and a mix of employment opportunities that provides for a smaller Science Park and addresses the local needs of the eastern part of the Bristol conurbation, including Kingswood. Mixed development at Emersons Green should also provide a better movement pattern which can be served by and will support the provision of good public transport services.

2.81 Provision is made for mixed use development on an area of some 185 ha, including land previously identified for longer term employment use and extending to the inner boundary of the Green Belt. The precise mix of uses will be determined by the Local Plan. A significant part of the site needs to be set aside for local employment in a way which minimises car based commuting. Non-residential parking policies and good public transport provision will be important in helping to achieve this. Any extension of the science park beyond the approved 25 ha should be on a scale that does not jeopardise the overall Plan strategy, in particular the creation of new employment opportunities elsewhere. Development should make an important contribution towards meeting local housing requirements. It is important that any residential development has good links with local facilities, providing safe routes for pedestrian and cyclists and convenient bus routes. Particular attention will need to be paid to securing such access to the district centre on the west side of the Avon Ring Road. Policy 13 also emphasises the need to develop public transport corridor services through Emersons Green from Bristol to Yate, and along the orbital corridor between East Bristol and the North Fringe, to accommodate significant journey to work movements.

POLICY 13

At Emersons Green, on land east of the Avon Ring Road and south of Westerleigh Road/M4, provision will be made for a major mixed use development comprising a science park, other business and industrial uses to meet local employment needs,

and residential development with associated facilities integrated into the wider Emersons Green residential development west of the Ring Road. The development will be planned on a comprehensive basis to integrate the different land uses and to maximise provision for public transport, walking and cycling.

The science park will:

- offer an attractive, high quality environment and accommodation for science, technology and research based uses, an academic innovation centre and other relevant facilities;
- be designed for and supported by public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes; and
- be on a scale that is compatible with the capacity of the transport network and does not undermine prospects for the regeneration of central and south Bristol and the achievement of a more balanced pattern of housing and employment uses at Weston-super-Mare.

A significant area for other employment uses at Emersons Green will be provided in a way that:

- meets identified local needs and does not generate large volumes of traffic;
- provides good access for the movement of goods, minimises potential conflict between residential and business uses; and
- ensures accessibility to residential areas and local neighbourhood centres by public transport, cycling and walking.

Residential development at Emersons Green will include a mix of types, in a form and at densities which will;

- support the provision and accessibility of public transport;
- relate well to local facilities particularly those existing at Emersons Green District Centre;
- maximise the potential for cycling and walking to employment and local facilities through the provision of safe routes; and
- enable the creation of useable and adaptable open spaces.

Provision will be made for a convenient public transport system within and to the Emersons Green developments by ensuring:

- good bus penetration and access, and provision for associated pedestrian movements, as an integrated part of the development strategy and subsequent detailed development proposals in accord with Policy 59;
- provision for enhanced bus movements including along the Yate-Bristol corridor through Emersons Green, and routes between Emersons Green, the

North Fringe, and the Kingswood/East Bristol urban area on a defined orbital route structure;

- **the safeguarding of lines on these corridors for possible future conversion to light rapid transit in accord with Policy 49;**
- **the creation of new bus priority measures on these corridors in accord with policy 48 including the extension of existing measures on the Avon Ring Road;**
- **the provision of bus interchange and associated passenger facilities within the Emersons Green development linked where appropriate to local multi modal interchanges;**
- **a reduction in the physical barrier created by the Avon Ring Road between the Emersons Green developments by providing safe and easy access across the road at convenient points for buses and pedestrian and cycle movements; and**
- **limitations on private non residential parking in accord with Policy 59.**

Avonmouth/Sevenside

2.82 The Avonmouth/Sevenside area includes some 2,000 ha of land, extending northwards from the River Avon to the main London-South Wales rail line to the north and the M5 to the east. Much of this area has been recognised for many years as a location for the expansion of industrial, distribution and port-related activities. The southern and western edges of the area contain port, metal smelting, chemical and pharmaceutical industries, and a mix of smaller scale manufacturing and distribution activities. Some of these constitute hazardous processes. Some 470 ha remain undeveloped at Sevenside within South Gloucestershire, with a consent for employment uses dating from the 1950s. Similarly, at Avonmouth over 400 ha are allocated for employment uses in the Bristol Local Plan.

2.83 Avonmouth/Sevenside now has the potential to become the region's premier location for manufacturing and distribution activity, and as such will perform a major role in meeting the future economic requirements of the Plan area. Past development of the area has been constrained by access problems, but some of these have been removed by the Avonmouth Relief Road while the attractiveness of the whole area to business has been significantly enhanced by the opening of the M49, the Second Severn Crossing, and expansion of trade at the port. There are further proposals for a junction on the M49 and a rail/freight terminal. This process of improving access has coincided with rising demand for extensive sites for large regional distribution centres, and a shortage of sites for major industrial development in the Plan area.

- 2.84 Realising the full economic potential of the area will require Bristol and South Gloucestershire, in conjunction with other agencies, to prepare a joint strategy for the comprehensive development of the whole area which clearly links land use developments to an agreed transport infrastructure and its funding. This is essential to avoid unacceptable levels of congestion on the surrounding trunk road network and at key junctions within the area itself. The area currently lacks the public transport infrastructure which could prevent such congestion arising, and studies suggest that there would be substantial and probably prohibitive costs in providing and running such a system. For this reason land uses need to be tailored to their impact on traffic generation in a comprehensive and coordinated way. This comprehensive planning framework should make provision for a broad range of employment uses, predominantly B2/B8, over a long-term period; promote regeneration; and safeguard the environment.
- 2.85 Agreement on the funding of a new M49 junction and improvements to the local road network, particularly a realigned A403, will be essential prerequisites to realising development potential. Outside funding separate from that provided by developments is likely to be required if the junction is to proceed, together with an agreed understanding of the land use patterns it will serve and the traffic that will be generated. A realistic package of public transport measures must form part of the overall development plan and should include facilities for new bus services and the selective development of the existing heavy rail network in a manner which would ensure substantially increased passenger usage to justify the investment and to provide relief to the road system. A previous proposal for an Easter Compton by-pass is not being pursued given the serious concerns about overloading M5 Junction 17 with east-west movements. The need to avoid such overloading will remain a constraint on development in the area.
- 2.86 Significant environmental constraints to development at Avonmouth/ Severnside need to be addressed. The development of important wetland areas would raise ecological and hydrological issues; the Severn shoreline is an SSSI; and the estuary is subject to SPA, Ramsar and NATURA 2000 designations, with other protective measures under consideration. The Environment Agency, while recognising that industrial development on land with extant planning permissions may occur, is concerned about the risk of tidal inundation particularly with rising sea levels. It has been particularly concerned to ensure that risks to human life are not increased by the substitution of residential development for employment; and that residential development conforms with national planning policy guidelines regarding development on floodplains.
- 2.87 Accordingly, neither Policy 14 nor the locational strategy propose residential development at Severnside of a strategic scale. Policies governing housing in settlements in rural areas apply. If housing were to be located at Severnside on a strategic scale, it would need to be in the form of a new settlement in order to

support a wide range of facilities and sustain public transport infrastructure; 3000 dwellings may be at the lower margins of viability. Such a scale of development in this location would need to be addressed in a review of the Structure Plan. Policy 14 states that if housing or other uses were to be pursued in future, proposals should address such factors as the need to provide a comprehensive public transport infrastructure and to resolve the dangers posed by flooding.

POLICY 14

At Avonmouth/Sevenside, provision will be made for the expansion of a broad range of employment uses over a long-term period, on a scale appropriate to the capacity of the transport network and the environment. The scale and nature of provision for such uses in the area will be identified and reviewed as development progresses, as part of an integrated, comprehensive approach to development, transport and the environment that reconciles:

- 1. the need to safeguard and enhance the natural environment and secure investment in new infrastructure at appropriate stages with the progress of development;**
- 2. the need to realise the development potential of both the Bristol and South Gloucestershire parts of the whole area;**
- 3. the need to enhance prospects for regeneration;**
- 4. the need to safeguard and realise long-term economic development potential;**
- 5. the need for extensive opportunities for the expansion of B2/B8 uses, in particular related to the use of the dock and rail facilities; and the need to maximise the use of rail through industrial location in accord with Policy 57;**
- 6. the need to promote the re-use of redundant and derelict sites;**
- 7. the role of Avonmouth/Sevenside as a major location for the processing and storage of hazardous materials and the associated health and safety implications for the location and type of new development;**
- 8. the need to link development with improvements in the transport infrastructure to prevent congestion on the highway network and in particular to avoid the overloading of (i) the adjacent trunk road network, particularly M5 junctions 16-18, and (ii) local roads, in ways which would seriously threaten safety and the environment; and**
- 9. the possible scope for residential and other uses in accord with the locational strategy and subject in particular to the implications for the capacity of the transport infrastructure serving the wider Avonmouth/ Sevenside area and to the provision of comprehensive public transport services, and the need to resolve any danger posed by flooding.**

Provision will therefore be made for:

- **the construction of the M49 Intermediate Junction, a Spine Road linked to the M49 junction between Avonmouth and Severn Beach and forming a realigned A403, the Kingsweston Lane links and other necessary local improvements, through development funding;**
- **a co-ordinated package of public transport measures to include facilities for new bus services along the main routes from the Bristol urban area and North Fringe, the selective development of the existing heavy rail system, including consideration of the Hallen/Henbury/Filton line for passenger use, and the future consideration of an LRT extension; the package to be integrated with the agreed pattern of land uses in a manner which ensures that the rate and type of development supports the transport proposals, provides a practical and viable alternative to the car and avoids congestion and environmental damage;**
- **safe cycling and walking into and within the area;**
- **a intermodal national rail freight terminal at Merebank, further development of rail sidings into industrial sites, and the development of opportunities for port related freight to be transported by rail; and**
- **the continued development of port operations and associated activities at Avonmouth provided there are no unacceptable environmental impacts, with priority being given to intensifying the re-use of land already developed.**

Royal Portbury Dock

2.88 The Royal Portbury Docks are an integral part of the Port of Bristol, lying on the south-west side of the River Avon, with access from M5 Junction 19. A considerable amount of economic development has been attracted to land adjacent to Royal Portbury Dock, largely related to port operations. Only a small amount of land remains unused, with options for expansion limited by environmental constraints, the Green Belt and the need to improve freight transport links from the Dock. However with much land currently used for open car storage there is significant future potential for more effective use of the port estate.

2.89 Policy 15 provides for the continued expansion of port operations and related development, subject to the resolution of environmental and Green Belt constraints and any problems associated with additional traffic generated, particularly on M5 Junction 19. It will be essential to promote the more intensive use of existing development sites. The establishment of a rail freight link to the port in 2001, utilising part of the former Bristol-Portishead line, was a

major step forward in the provision of improved transport. Policy 4(U) supports the full reinstatement of this rail line for passenger use to serve the growing population of Portishead and the route is proposed for safeguarding in Policy 15. It will be important to ensure that the development of the line for freight use to Royal Portbury does not prejudice future passenger use between Bristol and Portishead. Enhanced capacity for moving goods between Portbury and Avonmouth also needs to be considered if the port is to operate more effectively.

2.90 Policy 16 proposes that the Green Belt be extended to the shoreline of the Severn Estuary between Royal Portbury and Portishead. This will maintain the separation of the Dock and Portishead, prevent encroachment into the open countryside, and help safeguard the wildlife corridor linking the Gordano Valley with the Severn shoreline. The Local Plan will need to establish precise Green Belt boundaries having regard to these factors and the development needs of the Port.

POLICY 15

At Royal Portbury Dock, the continued expansion of port operations and associated activities will be supported where there are no unacceptable implications for the environment, traffic congestion, Green Belt objectives and purposes, and meeting other development requirements. This will require provision for:

- **the effective and efficient use of the land already identified for development, in particular under-used sites;**
- **linking the port with the rail network, including safeguarding the option of re-opening the Bristol- Portishead railway line for freight and passengers; and**
- **rail freight facilities and consideration of additional capacity for moving goods between Royal Portbury Dock and Avonmouth.**

Smaller towns

2.91 The four towns of Norton Radstock, Clevedon, Portishead, and Thornbury each have populations of between 15,000 - 22,000. They are identified in Policy 38 as major town centres, and their roles in servicing their surrounding areas will be maintained and enhanced. In addition, opportunities for investment and regeneration, and the provision of new local employment where transport and environmental concerns can be adequately overcome, will be promoted.

- 2.92 However, these towns are not identified as locations for significant additional housing development beyond existing commitments. They are not well connected to the main public transport network. A combination of environmental constraints, Green Belt policies, and limited opportunities to provide a comprehensive choice of transport modes to the main employment areas, makes them unsuitable as strategic development locations. Any development should be in character with the existing settlement, and the scale of any development should reflect accessibility to local facilities and wider employment opportunities.
- 2.93 The Plan supports a mix of development in Norton Radstock and the surrounding area, where there is a need to promote additional economic development to provide for local needs. Policy 4 provides for improvements in public transport between the area and the two cities of Bath and Bristol, particularly on the A37, tackling environmental problems and providing bus corridors. There is also potential for improving the area's links with Somerset and Wiltshire; Policy 53 proposes that the disused railway route between Bristol-Radstock-Frome be safeguarded for non-highway transport purposes. Such improvements could aid the take-up of the substantial existing residential commitments in the area.
- 2.94 At Portishead, priority needs to be given to ensuring that the substantial brownfield sites are brought forward in advance of any possible greenfield development which may be proposed. Policy 4 also proposes new park and ride facilities outside the town, and/or at Avonmouth, and the reinstatement of the rail route to Bristol.
- 2.95 In Thornbury, the need to improve public transport access to employment areas in Bristol is recognised, and Policy 4 proposes a new transport interchange on the northern edge of the Bristol conurbation.

Rural Areas

- 2.96 The relative proximity of all parts of the Plan area to major cities and towns means that the whole of its countryside is subject to urban influences. This is reflected in commuting patterns and trips for shopping, education, leisure and other purposes. Most of the rural area is covered by Green Belt policies as set out in Policy 16. In addition, substantial areas are designated as of national or international importance for their landscape character, wildlife importance, or agricultural quality.
- 2.97 The Structure Plan, taken as a whole, sets out an integrated approach towards rural areas in line with national guidance. It seeks to balance the conservation of

the character of the countryside with the maintenance and enhancement of a viable rural economy and sustainable communities. Policies 2 and 3 set out general policy principles to be adopted within rural as well as other areas. The Plan does not support the dispersal of development, which would be contrary to sustainability objectives, for example by adding to the need to travel. Rural areas will not make a major contribution to meeting the development requirements of the plan area as a whole, and villages should not become a focus for development which would generate substantial additional road traffic or detrimentally affect settlement character.

- 2.98 However, the vitality of rural areas must be maintained. The Plan therefore allows for limited housing development in line with Government guidance, where it strengthens local facilities, provides local employment opportunities, or contributes a mix of affordable and general market housing which is accessible to local facilities and helps to maintain public transport. Occasionally proposals for housing in rural areas will be covered by exception policies for specific groups.
- 2.99 Farming, mineral working, and a wide variety of established agricultural and other businesses in rural areas should be maintained to support local employment and services. Re-use of rural buildings can provide attractive small scale accommodation for businesses, as well as opportunities for conversion to housing or tourist accommodation. Development in and around villages for uses other than housing should strengthen local facilities, or provide local employment. Policies 26, 27 and 32 set out in more detail the approaches to be applied to rural economic activities and particularly recognise the need to support the diversification of agricultural activities.
- 2.100 A potential additional source of economic activity is the enjoyment of the countryside, although it is important to ensure that pressures of people, vehicles and development do not destroy environmental resources. Activities such as visitor attractions, tourist accommodation, countryside leisure facilities and craft industries contribute significantly and increasingly to the rural economy. Environmentally acceptable recreational opportunities should be provided particularly around the urban fringes, in association with the Forest of Avon and elsewhere.
- 2.101 In some areas and circumstances, the natural assets of coast, natural environment and landscape character will be paramount, often reflecting national and international designations and national guidance. Policies 17-27 set down many of these considerations, which will need to be incorporated into local plans. It will be particularly important for local plans to identify locations for development, and indicate in particular whether the best and most versatile agricultural land will need to be used for development in line with Policy 20 and PPG7.

The Green Belt

2.102 The Green Belt which surrounds and separates Bristol and Bath is a key element of the locational strategy. It was broadly established in the mid 1950s, and now covers some 47% of the Structure Plan area. National guidance states five purposes for the inclusion of land in Green Belt, all of which apply to this area :

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2.103 The general extent of the Green Belt is set out in Policy 16, and shown on the Key Diagram. The strategy set out in this Plan allows development within the period to be accommodated firstly within or immediately adjoining the major urban areas, or secondly at settlements beyond the Green Belt with good public transport, but in all cases outside the Green Belt. In general such locations are adequate to provide for the area's development needs over the Plan period. This Plan therefore does not alter the existing general extent of the Green Belt, except between Portishead and Royal Portbury Dock, and at Keynsham, where there are exceptional circumstances and good planning reasons that justify change. It will be for Local Plans to determine detailed boundaries which result from the policy. It will be for the next Structure Plan Review to consider the need to revise the general extent of the Green Belt, as proposed in RPG10, in order to consider sustainable development opportunities over the longer term.

2.104 An extension to the Green Belt is proposed in order to prevent the coalescence of Royal Portbury Dock with Portishead. The area of open land between the two provides a wildlife habitat linking the Gordano Valley with the Severn Estuary, and is experiencing pressures from development that is capable of being accommodated elsewhere. The designation of this open land as Green Belt would serve a number of purposes. It would check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; safeguard the countryside from encroachment; and assist in preserving the setting and special character of the town of Portishead. The precise detailed boundaries of the Green Belt will need to take account of the development needs of the Royal Portbury Dock in pursuing these objectives, subject to maintaining a viable Green Belt.

2.105 At Keynsham, the Local Plan should take land out of the Green Belt in order to provide primarily for housing, with some associated local employment and social

infrastructure. This would contribute towards meeting the housing needs of Bath and North East Somerset at a town within the Bristol-Bath transport corridor, which has relatively good rail and road transport links with both cities and the North Fringe. Development should encourage investment within the town centre and facilitate public transport improvements. Land identified for future development must be capable of being integrated with the existing town infrastructure and maintain the town's character and separate identity within its Green Belt setting.

2.106 Development which exceeds infilling will continue to be permitted at towns which are excluded from the Green Belt. In respect of the smaller settlements which lie within the general extent of the Green Belt, Local Plans may:

- include villages within the Green Belt where it is proposed to allow no new building beyond a limited number of categories (“washed over”);
- identify villages where infilling only is proposed; or
- identify “inset” villages where limited development is proposed.

In determining the status of each settlement within their area, Local Plans should refer to the Structure Plan policies governing development in rural areas, and particularly ensure that the scale and form of development does not prejudice the character of the settlement and the purposes of the Green Belt.

2.107 Within the Green Belt, there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. The type of development which may be appropriate within the Green Belt is set out in national policy guidance (PPG2). Local plans will make clear that inappropriate development in the Green Belt will not be approved except in very special circumstances, but should also consider ways in which Green Belt land could be used in a more positive manner. The value which local residents place on open areas for public access, amenity, and environmental benefits, will be safeguarded through the local plans, which will consider identifying urban fringe land in need of improvement and areas or corridors where public access could be improved. The successful achievement of this policy will require a proactive approach to the use and function of land within the Green Belt by local plans and the Community Forest plan.

POLICY 16

A Green Belt shall continue to surround and separate Bristol and Bath, and will be kept open in order to:

- **check the unrestricted sprawl of the Bristol conurbation and Bath;**
- **assist in safeguarding the surrounding countryside from encroachment;**
- **prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;**

- **preserve the setting and special character of villages, towns and historic cities; and**
- **assist in urban regeneration.**

Around the built-up areas of Bristol (including contiguous built-up areas within North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) and Bath, the inner boundary of the Green Belt shall follow generally the limits of existing development or that already committed.

Between Portishead and Royal Portbury Dock the Green Belt will be extended to the shoreline of the Severn Estuary, the detailed boundary to be established in the Local Plan having regard to development needs and the need to prevent coalescence, encroachment into the open countryside and to achieve a viable Green Belt between the two locations.

At Keynsham the Local Plan will make a change to the Green Belt boundary primarily to provide land for future housing needs and associated local employment and social infrastructure while maintaining the separate identity of Keynsham within the Green Belt.

The outer boundary of the Green Belt in South Gloucestershire shall run from the Severn Estuary and south of Thornbury to Rangeworthy, running to the west and south of Yate / Chipping Sodbury and continuing west of the A46 and south of Marshfield to the boundary with Wiltshire. In North Somerset and in Bath and North East Somerset, the outer boundary of the Green Belt shall run from the Severn Estuary north of Clevedon, north and east of Nailsea/Backwell, east of Yatton, Congresbury and Wrington, south of Chew Valley Lake, and north of Clutton, High Littleton, Timsbury and Peasedown St John to the boundary with the Somerset County Council area.

Within the Green Belt, the positive use of land will be promoted by:

- a) **allowing appropriate opportunities for improved access to the open countryside;**
- b) **allowing appropriate opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas;**
- c) **safeguarding attractive landscapes, enhancing landscapes, and improving damaged and derelict land around towns;**
- d) **securing nature conservation interest; and**
- e) **retaining land in agricultural, forestry and related uses; provided that the openness of the Green Belt is maintained.**

Chapter 3

POLICIES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

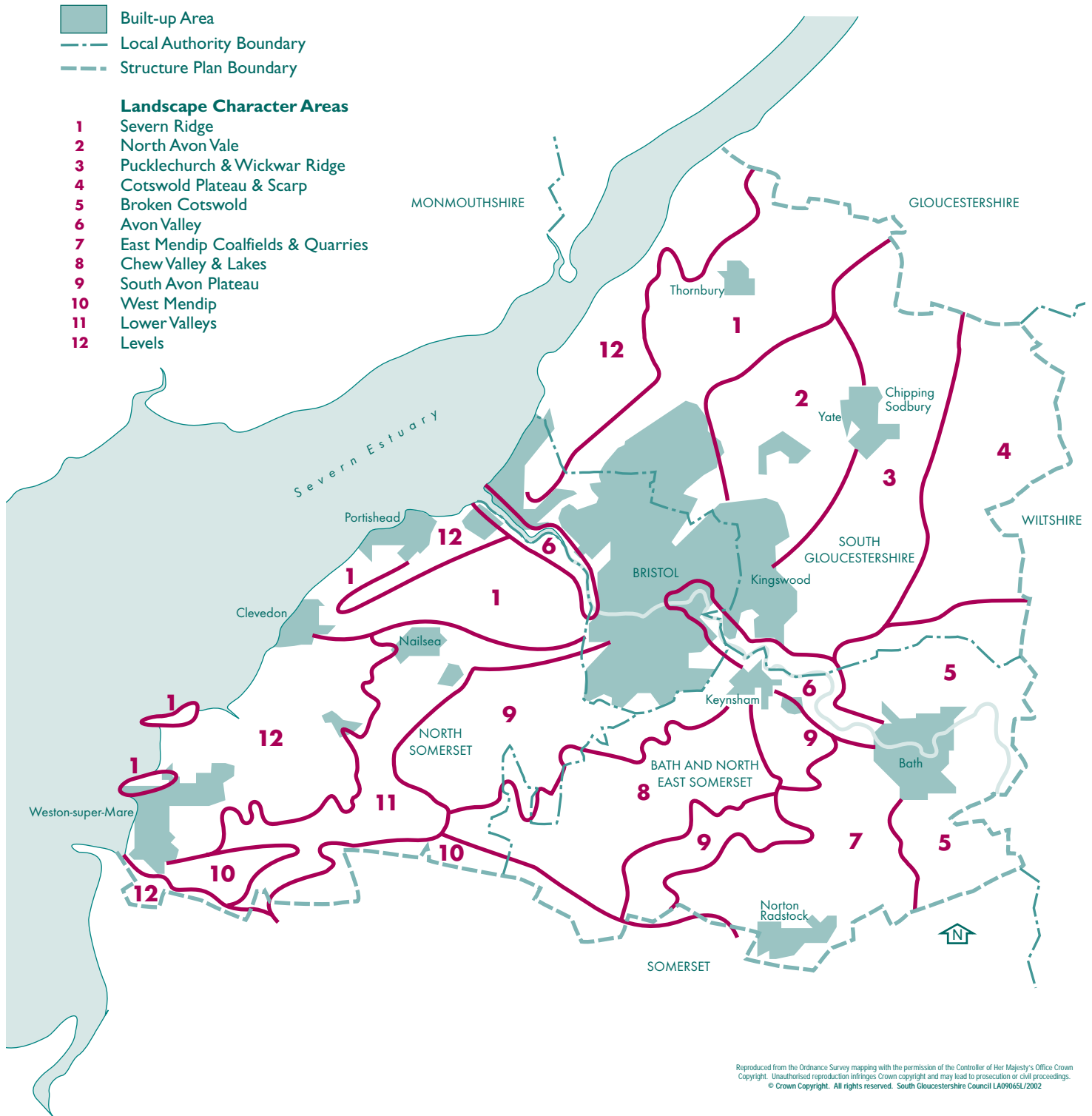


- 3.1 Environmental considerations constrain development within parts of the structure plan area. Equally, the Plan recognises that the proper control and direction of development can bring environmental benefits. The emphasis placed throughout the Plan on achieving more sustainable patterns of development requires that environmental considerations should be more fully integrated into decisions in the future than they have been in the past. Policy 3 sets out a strategic policy framework to be applied across the structure plan area, for considering development proposals in terms of the environmental character of individual localities.

Landscape

- 3.2 Over three quarters of the structure plan area consists of the countryside. For most residents and those who visit or travel through the area, the visual amenity, character and diversity of its landscapes, from the limestone uplands of the Cotswolds and the Mendips to the saltmarshes and coastal levels of the Severn Estuary, are seen as important elements that define the area. These landscapes represent a delicate balance between natural landforms and vegetation and the effects of human activity. In the last fifty years, changes in agricultural practices and the technology of the building industry, with moves towards standardisation of design, building materials and highway requirements, have significantly reduced local landscape distinctiveness and variety.
- 3.3 Past planning policies with regard to landscape centred on the need to protect those assets designated nationally as the most important and attractive, which in the Structure Plan area include parts of the Cotswold and Mendip Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Such designations are critically important, and current policies towards them should not be weakened. However, it is now recognised that it is equally important to maintain the character and quality of the landscape as a whole. Policy packages and management guidance need to consider all the natural and cultural elements that together create the unique assemblage of local character in each landscape area. As outlined in para 2.37, four distinct character types have been identified in the structure plan area. Within these, twelve “landscape character areas” have been identified, based on elements such as landform, field and road patterns, field boundary and vegetation type. These are shown diagrammatically on page 62 .
- 3.4 Local Plans are an important means of protecting and enhancing landscape character and quality across the area. Within each of the twelve landscape areas, the local authorities, in association with other relevant agencies and organisations, should identify those attributes of that landscape that are of particular importance to local distinctiveness. Local Plans should put in place

Landscape Character Areas



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appropriate policies - either designation or criteria-based - that aim to protect, manage and enhance those attributes.

POLICY 17

Within Local Plans, emphasis will be placed on ensuring the continued conservation and enhancement of the character and distinctiveness of the landscape, and where necessary the restoration or regeneration of degraded landscapes. Where development or land use change occurs and significant landscape impact cannot be avoided or mitigated, the creation of new landscape features or elements which contribute to the character of the locality may be considered.

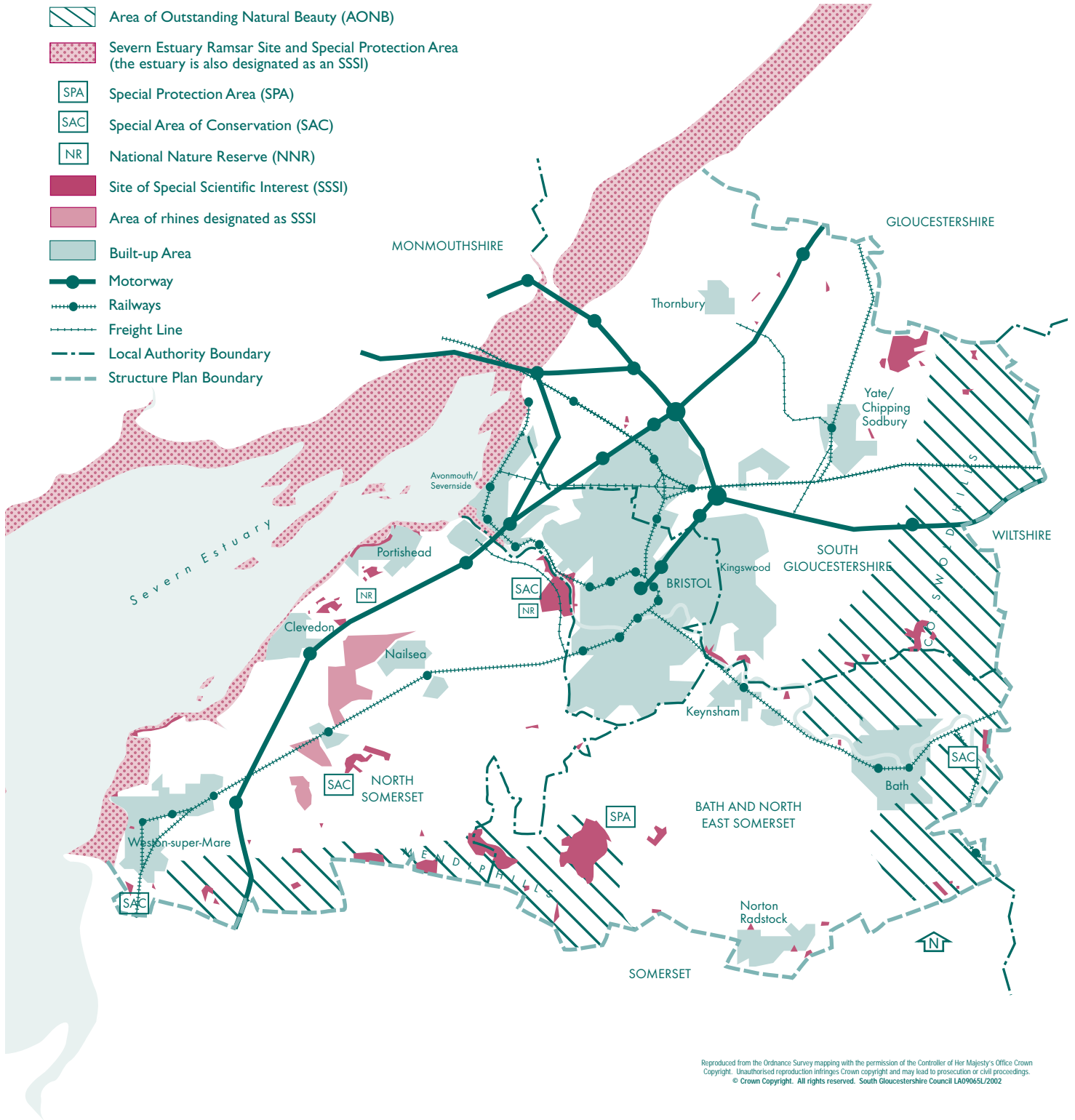
Local Plans will identify landscape character areas using a common characterisation approach and planning authorities should seek to coordinate policy approaches for such areas across administrative boundaries. Within individual landscape character areas, those features and elements of the landscape which make a significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the locality should be identified and appropriate strategies applied to guide the continued conservation and enhancement of that particular area.

Within the Cotswolds and Mendip Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty the priority will be the conservation of their particular landscape character and distinctiveness, with due regard to the continued economic and social well-being of the area. Major industrial or commercial development within an AONB or which would adversely affect it by virtue of proximity, will not be permitted unless an exception is justified by proven national need and a lack of alternative sites.

Nature conservation and biodiversity

3.5 One of the issues at the heart of sustainable development is the need to integrate the positive conservation of biodiversity into policy formulation and decision making. It is vital to maintain and enhance the richness of the area's biodiversity - that is, the range of plant and animal species in an area. This is not solely a matter of protecting sites and species of high wildlife value in the localities where they are best represented. It should also involve enhancing the status of the whole resource and its positive conservation, particularly through the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans. This requires the active management of change in both countryside and urban areas, including site protection, restoration and compensation where appropriate. The aim should be to maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the area in a condition which ensures that its range of habitats and species can be enjoyed by future generations.

National and International Environmental Designations



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3.6 The Government has accepted a number of important international conventions and directives in relation to biodiversity. These include European directives under which Special Protection Areas (SPAs) have been designated and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) have been proposed, and which together will form part of a Europe-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. National objectives, actions and targets are set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994), and have been developed further in the Regional Action Plan. The basis of national nature conservation policies remains the provision of species and site protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Where development would have an adverse effect on a species, measures will be necessary to ensure its survival, including minimising disturbance and providing adequate alternative habitats.

3.7 The structure plan area includes natural environment resources designated as being of national and international importance, including:

- the Ramsar and Special Protection Area of the Severn Estuary
- the National Nature Reserves of the Avon Gorge and the Gordano Valley
- 68 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Proposals for development or land use change which may affect these areas will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Local Plans should identify relevant international, national and local nature conservation interests, including designated areas of conservation importance.

3.8 The biodiversity of the plan area is heavily dependent on the natural and semi-natural habitat, of which patches remain as scarce fragments of what were once much more extensive habitat areas. Past changes have eroded the ecological links necessary to allow plant and animal dispersal, migration and genetic exchange. The protection, management and enhancement of ecological networks are recognised as important in the EU Habitats Directive and PPG9. Reversing such fragmentation requires the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; the protection of natural and semi-natural habitats; and their expansion through the management and enhancement of adjacent and intervening areas to increase the continuity of habitats.

3.9 Local Plan policies should aim to reduce or halt further fragmentation; guide new development or land use change away from locations where they would have a significant adverse effect; identify areas where the potential to reverse fragmentation is highest; and allocate development to sites which are less sensitive or where there are opportunities for enhancement. New development, well designed and executed, offers an opportunity to contribute towards biodiversity and landscape enhancement. Such opportunities are likely to arise

in association with the reclamation of former mineral workings and waste disposal sites; the redevelopment of brownfield sites; the establishment of public open space and major recreational features; and on sites elsewhere with the potential to create, restore or enhance habitats or which provide an opportunity to bring peoples' experience of nature closer to where they live.

POLICY 18

Local Plans shall seek to further the objectives of nature conservation through the protection of sites subject to existing national and international designations, together with other policies and initiatives designed to safeguard and increase the size and number of key habitats and species.

Major areas where the fragmentation of natural habitats should be halted and reversed should be identified in Local Plans. Habitats should be managed so as to maintain their conservation status, and their management should include such conservation measures necessary to ensure that sites and landscape features function as stepping stones or linear features capable of supporting the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild flora and fauna.

In order to ensure no net loss of biodiversity interest, Local Plans should set out policies to ensure that new development assists in the retention of existing habitats, important species, buffer areas and landscape features of major importance for wildlife. Priority should be given to enhancing the overall ecological quality, extent, capacity, structure and functioning of locations and the surrounding ecological network by creating new habitats, buffer areas and landscape features. Such effort should be concentrated in those locations where habitats and/or species have been identified as being particularly vulnerable.

The built and historic environment

3.10 Our built and historic environment is a finite and irreplaceable resource; its positive stewardship is an essential component of sustainability. Listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation areas are protected by national policy and legislation. Even when individual buildings are not in themselves protected, it is important that policies have regard to "townscape" - those elements that together make an essential contribution to the local character of a place. Proposals for new development and alterations to existing buildings should therefore demonstrate high design standards and sensitivity; and the maintenance and efficient use of buildings should be encouraged, with careful control over changes in use and alterations. Local Plans should contain policies to protect and enhance the historic environment, including settlements of regional or local historic significance; conservation areas and their settings; listed buildings; and artefacts of local historic importance.

- 3.11 The layout and form of groups of historic and other buildings, streets or spaces and patterns of circulation is important to engendering a “sense of place”, adding to the perception of quality in both town and country. Local plan preparation will help define local distinctiveness using the characterisation approach referred to previously, and this should be taken into account in assessing proposals for development and land use change. In particular, the distinctiveness of settlements needs to be enhanced by appropriate regeneration, traffic management, and improvements to open space and the “public realm”.
- 3.12 The plan area is rich in historic landscapes, including battlefields, historic parks and gardens, structures, and archaeological remains. In relation to sites of archaeological interest and their settings, PPG16 stresses that plans should reconcile the need for development with the necessary protection, enhancement and preservation. Although surviving archaeological remains are irreplaceable, not all are of equal importance, and policies towards their preservation should reflect a tiered response reflecting international, national, regional and local importance. Local plans should include policies to preserve such remains, including those not scheduled as of national importance. Scheduled Ancient Monuments are protected. Where other important remains, and their setting, are affected by development proposals, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ; where this cannot be justified, there should be proper investigation and recording of the site before damage or destruction occurs.

POLICY 19

Local Plans will, through existing national/international designations, and other policies and initiatives:

- **protect that part of the cultural heritage that consists of the built and historic environment of the area and manage development and land use change in a manner that respects local character and distinctiveness, ensuring that new development and other land use changes respect and enhance local character through good design and conform with any local character statement / guidance produced locally;**
- **protect Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains, which should be preserved in situ and their settings maintained and enhanced; and**
- **require development proposals affecting archaeological sites of local importance to demonstrate an overriding need for the development, to provide for a mitigation strategy where necessary, and to provide for appropriate prior investigation and recording of the site.**

Agricultural land

3.13 Across the structure plan area, agricultural activity is varied - ranging from predominantly arable land on the Cotswolds to the east, to the grassland of the Levels around Weston-super-Mare. Despite major changes over the last few years, farming will remain the single most significant force in shaping the rural environment. Recent emerging advice, following the Rural White Paper, recognises that traditional policies and activities in the farming industry are being rethought in response to economic pressures, and that in some circumstances the richness of the landscape and biodiversity may become more important than protecting agricultural land value itself. However, Government guidelines continue to emphasise that agricultural land should be safeguarded; and that where there is a choice between the development of sites of different classification, development should be directed towards land of the lowest classification.

POLICY 20

The best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will be safeguarded. Provision should be made for development which would lead to the loss of such land only if:

- **there are reasons of overriding public interest; and**
- **there are no suitable alternative sites on lower quality land, or such land is subject to statutory protective designations which outweigh agricultural considerations.**

The Forest of Avon

3.14 Although the proportion of land in the structure plan area which is wooded is well below the national average, the area has a remarkable diversity of woodland, and woods and hedgerows form a significant element in its landscape. In 1991, the Bristol/Avon Community Forest - now the 'Forest of Avon' - was launched by the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission, as one of twelve community forests across England. It covers some 57,300 ha, and its general extent is shown on the Key Diagram.

3.15 The Forest Plan (1995) aims to increase woodland cover in the forest area from 8% to 30% over a fifty year period. It sets out a range of corporate objectives, which include :-

- *“ to improve the landscape....*
- *to increase opportunities for access, sport and recreation and for artistic and cultural events....*
- *to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land*
- *to protect areas of high quality landscape, and areas of historical or archaeological interest....*
- *to regenerate the environment within Green Belt or equivalently protected areas, and help to ensure that it is permanently green and open....*
- *to protect sites of nature conservation value and create new opportunities for conservation...*
- *to provide new opportunities for educational use of the area...*
- *to ... encourage development of timber-based industries....*
- *to improve the economic well-being of towns and cities through the creation of more appealing locations for industry and commerce....*
- *to improve the environment near housing and local industry, enhancing the value of properties and businesses....*
- *to encourage a high level of local community involvement....”*

The role of the structure plan is to assist in achieving these objectives through strategic land use policies.

POLICY 21

The creation of the Forest of Avon will be supported and assisted. Where development is permitted within the Forest boundary, conditions or planning obligations may be used to ensure that the development respects and contributes to the woodland setting. Any development proposal within the Forest in the Green Belt will be subject to the normal policies controlling development in Green Belts.

The coast

3.17 The Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel present a unique combination of resources, constraints and opportunities, which need to be taken into account in both management and policy terms. The Severn Estuary is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest; a Special Protection Area and NATURA 2000 site under EU Directives; and a Ramsar site under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. It is also a possible Special Area of Conservation.

Further south, the coastline of the Bristol Channel has important features and habitats that require careful management at the local level. As well as landscape and natural environmental importance, the area as a whole has terrestrial and marine archaeological significance and is also important for the amenity of local residents, for recreation, for the tourist industry, for the minerals and waste management industries, and in terms of water resources. The Port of Bristol is of growing national and regional economic importance, and is now established as a premier car import/export facility. A management strategy for the Severn Estuary and part of the Bristol Channel has been published by a consortium of organisations under the umbrella of the Severn Estuary Strategy.

- 3.18 Government guidance sets out a clear policy context for the coastal zone. In particular it emphasises that the undeveloped coast should not be expected to accommodate any new development that does not require a coastal location. A co-ordinated and integrated approach for the estuary is essential, to set out a clear context for the future of the coastline, with particular emphasis on securing conservation objectives along the undeveloped coast whilst safeguarding the commercial interests of those activities requiring a coastal location.

POLICY 22

Local Plans covering the coastline should define a coastal zone based on the following broad criteria:

- a. both off-shore and near-shore natural processes, in particular, areas of potential tidal flooding and erosion;**
- b. natural habitats that are characteristic of a coastal location, in particular, inter-tidal mudflats, saltmarshes and wetlands;**
- c. the areas that are directly visible from the coast;**
- d. the extent of direct maritime influences and coast related activities; and**
- e. a landscape character assessment.**

Along the undeveloped coast, provision will not be made for development, unless it is necessary for habitat/landscape management. Along the currently developed coast, provision for new development, including redevelopment, will be restricted to those areas not liable to flooding or erosion during the lifetime of the development and to those activities requiring a coastal location.

Provision for development will be made in areas liable to marine or tidal flooding only where such development is needed in that location; where there is no adequate alternative; and where adequate protection measures which can be sustained for the lifetime of the development can be introduced, without those measures themselves having an adverse impact on the character or nature conservation value of the coastal zone.

Water resources

- 3.19 The water regime hinges on an integrated view of the natural and human water system - from resource management to river quality, groundwater, sewage and effluent. Quantitative water resource issues can be considered in terms of human demands, the need to protect ground water resources, and the need to ensure that natural river and watercourse levels and flows are adequately maintained. The Environment Agency seeks to encourage the efficient use of water; using existing resources efficiently before developing new sources; approving developments that cause the minimum of adverse effects on the surrounding environment; and investigating and seeking solutions to problems caused by abstraction. In the structure plan area, the principal sources of supply for the area covered by Bristol Water plc are the aquifers in the north and central parts of the area, underlying the upper Bristol Avon catchment.
- 3.20 River corridors and coastal margins are particularly fragile ecosystems, of great importance not only for the water resource itself, but also nature conservation, fisheries and recreation. In addition, they often make a significant contribution to the landscape character of a locality. Although development or redevelopment within river corridors and coastal margins can result in an enhanced environment by, for instance, improving water related habitats, landscape or water quality, improving public access or the restoration of natural and man-made features, new development should not place existing assets at risk.

POLICY 23

Provision will be made for development only where adequate water resources exist or can be made available, and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not cause a deterioration in the quality or quantity of underground, surface or coastal waters; nor pose a threat to the water environment including nature conservation, amenity, navigation or fishery interests.

Initiatives will be supported which assist in the conservation and reduction of water usage, particularly in new developments, or conserve, restore or enhance the natural elements of the water environment

Flood risk

- 3.21 Areas of low lying land adjacent to watercourses are liable to flood under certain conditions. These areas provide storage and/or conveyance for floodwater, and as areas at risk from flooding can pose severe constraints on development. In addition to the risk to the development itself, development in such locations may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere by reducing the storage capacity and/or

by impeding the flow of floodwaters. Land raising in the floodplain may have a similar effect.

- 3.22 Government guidance on development and flood risk is now contained in PPG25. This was published in July 2001, after the agreement to adopt Policy 24 as set out in this Plan. The guidance adopts a much stronger stance against development in areas liable to flood than previously, and introduces a sequential test for assessing proposals. Policy 24 will need to be reviewed to take the latest national guidance into account.

POLICY 24

Areas identified as being vulnerable to flooding will continue to be safeguarded from any development which could result in the net loss of flood storage capacity, interrupt the free flow of water, or adversely affect the area's environmental or ecological character or value. Consideration should be given to means of mitigating impacts on the existing land drainage regime to avoid exacerbation. Provision will be made for development which itself increases the risk of flooding only if environmentally acceptable mitigation measures are provided.

Renewable energy

- 3.23 More sustainable use of energy can be encouraged through the planning system, firstly through seeking improved efficiency in terms of the siting, design and layout of new development and transport; and, secondly, by encouraging the supply of energy in ways which have less environmental impact. Britain is well endowed with potential sources of renewable energy such as wind, wave and tidal power, which draw on resources which occur and reoccur naturally in the environment. However, studies of the prospects for renewable energy in the plan area have concluded that the best short-term options are landfill gas, the incineration of waste, biogas from sewage, and a small amount of onshore wind power. Proposals for a tidal barrage across the Severn estuary, which would have major implications for Weston-super-Mare and surrounding areas, are unlikely to go forward within the plan period.
- 3.24 Government programmes to develop renewable sources of energy date back to the oil crisis of the 1970's. Current Government guidance in PPG22 "Renewable Energy" advises local planning authorities to balance the need to increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources with the protection of the countryside and the coast. The direct environmental and other impacts of renewable energy development vary according to the type, scale and location of the particular scheme involved, but experience emphasises that there is no energy source (renewable or non-renewable) without its environmental impacts. At the

present time, wind energy is the most contentious because of the visibility of the turbines, concerns about noise and the fact that generally speaking the best on-shore locations are also associated with national landscape designations. PPG 22 advises that, when considering applications for wind turbines in areas subject to national or international environmental designations, local planning authorities should take into account the specific features or qualities which justified the original designation. In the longer term the Government has recognised that securing further reductions in carbon dioxide emissions and energy efficiency improvements after 2010 is likely to involve significant, far-reaching changes in energy production and use. Work is now being undertaken to assess the appropriate and realistic contribution the South West region could make to achieving national renewable energy targets, and this will need to be taken into account in reviewing Policy 25.

POLICY 25

Provision will be made in appropriate locations for renewable energy developments that seek to maximise the area's contribution to the national targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and assist in meeting the Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation targets.

Energy producing schemes relying on the use of waste materials, including incineration and combined heat and power plants, will be encouraged provided that such facilities cater primarily for waste materials generated within the area and are at locations easily accessible to the major sources of waste.

In considering development proposals for energy generating facilities, a high degree of importance will be given to the cumulative impact of wind turbines sited singly or in small groups in rural areas. Proposals for wind farms will not be permitted where they would adversely affect areas of environmental sensitivity recognised by designation at international and national level.

Mineral extraction

3.25 Minerals are essential for construction, industry, energy, food, water and a multitude of other uses. The overall strategy for the Plan area, in accordance with national guidance in MPG1, is to conserve primary resources whilst ensuring a contribution to regional and national needs; to protect areas of nature conservation or landscape quality from development; to minimise the production of waste; to encourage the efficient and appropriate use of high quality materials and recycling; and to encourage sensitive working practices within the industry.

3.26 The Plan area has an established and very important role to play in supplying minerals locally and further afield. There is a need to maintain supplies. The

production of aggregates, primarily crushed rock, for the construction industry dominates the winning of minerals in the area, and is centred on the limestone quarries of South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. MPG6 sets out the current framework for planning the provision of aggregates, and identifies indicative levels of supply for the period 1992-2006. In the South West, regional production of crushed rock is set at 610 M tonnes. The Regional Aggregates Working Party (SWRAWP) has apportioned these figures and has estimated that the structure plan area might have to produce about 98 M tonnes of crushed rock between 1992 and 2006. Whilst there are sufficient overall reserves to meet this figure, there may be considerable environmental problems associated with its extraction at some locations.

- 3.27 This fifteen year apportionment is equivalent to production of 65 M tonnes over the ten year period 1997-2006. Given that Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset provide a negligible contribution, this needs to be apportioned between the main production areas of South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. Applying the 60:40 ratio of recent years' sales to the residual apportionment figure of 65 M tonnes provides a figure of 39 M tonnes for South Gloucestershire and 26 M tonnes for North Somerset.
- 3.28 Beyond 2006, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset councils will seek, in their minerals local plans, to make appropriate contributions to the national, regional and local supply of crushed rock, at the best balance to environmental, social and economic cost, in accordance with MPG6. The preparation of minerals local plans provides the opportunity to test the environmental acceptability of applying the sub-regional apportionment beyond 2006. The appropriate contribution to be made will be apportioned between the two authorities on a continuing ratio of 60% South Gloucestershire : 40% North Somerset.
- 3.29 MPG6 requires mineral planning authorities to maintain landbanks of reserves with permission for extraction, to enable an adequate and steady supply of aggregates. The size of an aggregates landbank is determined by anticipated future requirements and by the period of time for which the landbank is to be maintained. Within the Structure Plan area 15 years represents an appropriate landbank period for crushed rock aggregate. The future requirement for such aggregate will be determined in accordance with Policy 26.

POLICY 26

In assessing the need for the release of land for mineral extraction during the Plan period, regard will be had to the need to make an appropriate contribution to national, regional and local supply, consistent with national and regional guidelines for particular minerals and the principles of sustainable development.

Particular account will be taken of the quality, quantity and location of the minerals and the period over which they are to be worked. Mineral Planning Authorities should identify preferred areas and areas of search for the future extraction of the particular minerals concerned where permitted reserves are unlikely to be adequate to meet their apportioned production requirements.

Consideration will be given to the degree to which the need for the particular mineral cannot be met, in whole or in part, from alternative and renewable, recycled or secondary sources.

The Mineral Planning Authorities should endeavour to maintain a landbank for crushed rock aggregate sufficient for at least 15 years. In the period 1997-2006 provision will be made for the release of 65 million tonnes of crushed rock for aggregate use, apportioned as follows :

North Somerset	26 million tonnes
South Gloucestershire	39 million tonnes

Beyond 2006, the appropriate contribution to crushed rock aggregate supply will be determined through minerals local plans, in the light of national and regional guidance prevailing at the time, apportioned between the two authorities on a ratio of 60% South Gloucestershire : 40% North Somerset.

3.30 Mining and quarrying create employment and wealth and contribute to economic activity; but important mineral resources often occur in areas of scenic or conservation value. Sites often have a considerable impact on the environment, due to their size and activity. Over-exploitation of minerals must be avoided, and, in order to minimise their environmental impact; operations should be within the capacity of the local environment to accommodate them.

POLICY 27

Proposals for mineral working will be assessed against the extent to which :

- **areas of international, European or national designations are protected from adverse environmental or social effects; and**
- **landscape character and environmental features are conserved and enhanced; and**
- **the environment is safeguarded by effective measures to prevent the pollution of land, air and water; and**
- **the least environmentally damaging and best practicable means of transport is selected; and**
- **the character of the local environment is maintained through the extraction programme and enhanced through landscaping and restoration proposals.**

Mineral deposits which appear to be significant should, where practicable, be safeguarded from development which would effectively sterilise them.

3.31 There is a need to place greater emphasis on a long-term strategy of moving towards more use of substitutes for primary minerals. Such a sustainable approach will require contributions from the minerals industry itself; industries which use minerals for both processing and end-products; conservation bodies, particularly through joint initiatives with the industry for site enhancement; and landowners through their responsibility for management, restoration and aftercare. Such an approach is likely to gain further ground following the introduction of the Aggregates Tax in 2002.

POLICY 28

Where environmentally acceptable, provision will be made for the production of secondary and recycled materials for use in substitution for primary aggregates.

Waste management

3.32 Waste - the unwanted by-product of processes that transform natural resources into food or other products for human consumption - cannot be eliminated. However, it is essential to minimise its production, and to treat and dispose of it efficiently and effectively and in a manner that protects the environment. Some 2.8 million tonnes of waste are produced annually within the Structure Plan area, 75% of which is landfilled. Just over one third of the waste arisings is inert excavation, demolition and construction waste.

3.33 Waste management is in a period of rapid change, with growing acknowledgement of the importance of waste in environmental degradation and resource depletion; changing attitudes and a higher public profile for waste management; the use of economic instruments including the 1996 Landfill Tax to influence practice; and the introduction of new procedures, processes and technologies.

3.34 Government guidance in PPG 10 "Planning and Waste Management", and the National Waste Strategy published in May 2000, sets out a "waste hierarchy". This sets out, at the top, waste reduction; followed by re-use; recovery, which incorporates recycling, composting and the recovery of energy from waste; and, at the bottom of the hierarchy, waste disposal without energy recovery (ie. landfill). The planning system has an important role to play in achieving sustainable waste management, by ensuring that adequate facilities are available to meet needs for the reduction, re-use, recovery and disposal of waste; by encouraging sensitive waste management practices in order to preserve or

enhance environmental quality and minimise risks to human health; by protecting natural resources; and by minimising environmental impact arising from the handling, processing, transport and disposal of waste. Policies will aim to secure, as far as possible, waste management at the top of the hierarchy in preference to those at the lower end; and, under the “proximity principle”, waste should be disposed of, or otherwise managed, close to the point at which it is generated. Policies should also recognise the contribution that site planning, the construction industry and the development control process can have on reducing “construction waste”.

- 3.35 The 1996 Avon Waste Management Plan put forward a strategy and detailed policies for the management of waste in line with Government policy. The four unitary authorities now need to ensure that their waste strategies enable a range of facilities to come forward which will encourage the management of the various waste streams through options towards the top end of the national hierarchy. Policy 29 provides a strategic policy context for the preparation of their waste strategies and detailed policy initiatives.

POLICY 29

In accordance with the principles of sustainable waste management, appropriate provision of land should be made for the safe management, recycling, treatment and disposal of forecast waste arising in the area, together with an appropriate proportion of regional waste flows as necessary, in the period to 2011.

Provision will be made for the development of waste management facilities employing the best practicable environmental option (BPEO), utilising previously developed land where appropriate, in locations where :

- **the facility is as close as practicable to the particular waste stream source;**
- **satisfactory access to the main / principal highway network can be provided, making use of non-road facilities where practicable;**
- **the nuisance to neighbouring land uses is minimised;**
- **suitable provision can be made for appropriate reclamation/aftercare;**
- **the proposals respect the character of the locality;**
- **no threat is posed to watercourses and surface/groundwater resources; and**
- **proposals for the recovery of value from wastes being treated, including energy generation, composting and recycling can be included where practicable and environmentally acceptable.**

Chapter 4

POLICIES FOR EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, SHOPPING AND RECREATION



Employment

- 4.1 The economy of the plan area benefits from the presence of growth industries, a skilled workforce, good communications, high standards of business and cultural facilities, an attractive environment, and proximity to the South East. Rapid growth of office-based businesses has more than matched the sharp decline of traditional industrial employment since 1970, and secured rising prosperity. Unemployment has generally remained below the national average. This economic success has contributed to inward migration, resulting in continuing pressures for housing development.
- 4.2 Forecasts by leading organisations in the field suggest that the local economy is likely to expand steadily at a rate that offers the potential to maintain low levels of unemployment and to support continuing population growth. Further major losses from manufacturing are not expected; prospects for attracting jobs in the expanding high technology and business services sectors are enhanced by the area's location and the expertise of its workforce; and rising expenditure is expected to support increasing employment in personal services. The economic strengths of the plan area are being reinforced by the enhancement of Bristol City Centre, further opportunities for economic expansion in the North Fringe, and progress with bringing forward important employment sites at Avonmouth/Severnside, Emersons Green, Weston-super-Mare and Bath.
- 4.3 However, achieving a level of growth that matches local population increases would not necessarily deliver low unemployment. Continuing automation, advances in computer based technology, and shifts towards flexible service sector work, are resulting in a rise of jobs requiring qualifications, and part-time and casual working. Individuals and local communities without adequate or up-to-date skills suffer from poor employment prospects, and unemployment in parts of inner and south Bristol, Weston-super-Mare and Bath remains high.
- 4.4 Government guidance emphasises the need for a wide choice of employment sites, located to minimise the need to travel and to facilitate energy-efficient modes of transport. Optimum use should be made of existing premises and potential sites in urban areas. Extensive distribution parks which generate large amounts of traffic should be located away from urban areas. RPG10, issued in 2001 after most of the policies in this Plan were agreed for adoption, urges local authorities in the north and east of the region to accommodate continued economic growth in sustainable locations; to encourage linkages with less favoured locations; to give priority to economic restructuring and regeneration in areas of special need; to make provision

both for major strategic employment sites suitable for significant inward investment and for locally significant sites; and to review existing employment land commitments and unused sites. The full implications of RPG10 will be taken into account in the next Review of the Structure Plan.

- 4.5 In line with national and regional policies, the Plan seeks a more equitable, prosperous and better balanced economy, while meeting sustainable development principles. The policies towards employment and economic development aim to secure a supply of employment land of a scale, distribution and quality required for an efficient, healthy economy; to safeguard and promote the full use of existing economic resources, including land, buildings and labour; to promote a pattern of employment that minimises the need to travel and maximises the opportunities to use alternatives to the private car; and to ensure that any new greenfield employment sites do not undermine prospects for regeneration, or lead to development that has unacceptable implications for the environment.
- 4.6 Economic development agencies will make an important contribution towards achieving the overall objectives of the Plan. The work of these agencies, and liaison with the South West Regional Development Agency, is coordinated by the West of England Strategic Partnership (WESP) which has been set up by the local authorities with other public and private sector partners. The strategic vision of the Partnership for the plan area is *“The development of the West of England sub-region as one of the more prosperous and technically advanced in Europe... with a sustainable and diverse economy... providing jobs and a high quality of life and physical environment... for all.”* The Structure Plan provides the strategic planning framework for sustainable development through which this overall vision can be implemented. The review of the Plan will acknowledge work currently being undertaken by SWRDA and others towards the identification and release of major strategic employment sites in the Plan area, as required by RPG 10.
- 4.7 As part of the overall Plan strategy, Policies 4-15 set out integrated approaches towards the major locations, centres and corridors in the area, including those key strategic locations of most importance for economic development and the provision of employment sites.

Safeguarding employment sites

4.8 Many existing employment sites and buildings will remain essential to the local economy, and their continued use or improvement as sites for employment uses will be safeguarded in Local Plans. This will maintain confidence in their future, promote investment, and stimulate new activities and jobs. Pressures for development for other uses will not be allowed to harm economic prospects, erode opportunities for local businesses and employment that contribute to sustainable development objectives, or discourage regeneration. Above all, pressures for the development of employment sites for other uses will not be allowed to lead to the loss of such land in the short term on a scale that leads to a need for the release of new, less suitable, greenfield sites in the long term.

4.9 There will be circumstances, however, where an alternative use or mix of uses for an existing employment site or building would be appropriate. Some may be unsuitable for modern business purposes, and development for other uses may facilitate investment in more appropriate locations elsewhere. In other instances, continuing employment use may add to traffic problems, conflict with urban amenity, or preclude an opportunity for securing greater benefit to the community. Above all, some of the considerable supply of employment land across the Plan area as a whole is surplus in relation to foreseeable requirements, and in appropriate areas should be considered instead for housing or mixed uses which would contribute to meeting the requirements for additional dwellings in accord with Policy 33.

POLICY 30

Local plans will safeguard existing employment sites and buildings for employment unless it is established that:

- (i) the site is no longer capable of offering accommodation for employment uses;**
- (ii) the use of the site for employment purposes raises unacceptable environmental or traffic problems; or**
- (iii) an alternative use or mix of uses offers greater potential benefits to the community and the site is not required to meet economic development or local employment needs.**

New greenfield sites for employment

- 4.10 The overall amount of employment land across the area as a whole greatly exceeds that likely to be developed over the Plan period. Its scale and distribution threaten prospects for regeneration and limit the scope to achieve sustainable development. For the period of this Plan, new greenfield employment sites will be limited in scale; they will need to be identified only where there would be clear benefits to the strategy, and where the take-up of brownfield sites or existing commitments would not be prejudiced. However, the availability of employment land across the Plan area and its adequacy in relation to local employment and business relocation requirements will be monitored, so that a subsequent Structure Plan review can determine whether new strategic sites are required.
- 4.11 Existing greenfield employment land commitments include some sites where there are severe development constraints, or where locational characteristics do not meet current business requirements. These latter circumstances have arisen especially where industrial restructuring has eroded the traditional economic base, leading to a need to update and improve opportunities to attract new employment. Committed greenfield employment sites will be kept under review, and consideration given to the potential for securing economic, employment, environmental or transport benefits through their replacement by new sites.
- 4.12 Local Plans may need to consider opportunities for the release of new greenfield employment sites where there are shortages of land for local employment and for relocating local businesses, or where further employment land may be needed in association with new housing provision.

POLICY 31

The provision of new greenfield sites for employment will be limited to a scale that does not prejudice the take-up of existing commitments or previously developed land and to the following circumstances:

- 1. the replacement of committed greenfield employment sites where there are difficulties bringing forward investment, or where there are substantial benefits for the environment and transport;**
- 2. realising small scale opportunities for meeting local employment needs, particularly in association with new residential development, provided there are transport benefits and no significant adverse consequences for the environment.**

The rural economy

- 4.13 Many traditional economic activities, including small scale manufacturing and food processing, make an important contribution to rural life. In addition, new opportunities for a more diverse rural economy are arising as a result of changes in agriculture, advances in information technology, and the growth of rural tourism, and can be accommodated without harm to the rural environment. Infilling and redevelopment in villages and other developed areas in the countryside can safeguard and improve local employment, enhance village character and reduce adverse impacts of existing development. Such opportunities will be safeguarded, and provision made at an appropriate scale for the expansion of existing premises as well as the establishment of new employment uses, provided that there would be clear benefits to local employment and no significant adverse consequences for the environment or the highway network.
- 4.14 However, the expansion of employment in the rural areas should not be of a form that would attract workers from a wide area, leading to additional traffic and the inappropriate use of country lanes. Inappropriate development in the open countryside, or with other adverse impacts on the rural environment or village character, will be avoided. Although former agricultural buildings may provide opportunities for accommodating new rural businesses, care is required in the use or extension of modern buildings which are unsympathetic with their surroundings.

POLICY 32

Provision will be made within and adjoining rural settlements for commercial and industrial development which contributes to maintaining the local economy and meeting employment needs, provided that such development is:

- a. appropriate in scale, character and appearance to its surroundings;**
- b. well-related to existing development, local services and infrastructure;**
and
- c. consistent with other policies in the Structure Plan, particularly those for reducing the need for motorised travel and dependence on the car, and re-using previously developed land and buildings.**

Commercial and industrial developments in the open countryside will be restricted to:

- 1. that which is essential to agriculture and other rural industries;**
- 2. the re-use of existing buildings, especially for farm diversification, including workshop, office and leisure uses, such as tourist accommodation, or**

- 3. limited expansion/intensification of existing premises; provided such development is compatible in scale and character with the surrounding area.**

Housing

4.15 The principles of sustainable development which underpin the Plan recognise that providing an adequate range of housing, with good access to jobs and services, is essential to maintaining and enhancing the prosperity of the area and the quality of life of its residents. This needs to be achieved while protecting environmental assets in both town and country, and making the most effective use of developed land and buildings.

4.16 Government planning guidance on housing is set out in PPG3, a revised version of which was published in March 2000. The Government has proposed that housing provision should be determined on the basis of a process of “plan, monitor and manage” rather than “predict and provide”. In accordance with national policy guidance, the Plan’s housing policies therefore address in particular :

- the appropriate overall level of housing for the area over the Plan period;
- the distribution of development, both in terms of location and its timing, recognising the need to give priority to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings in urban areas in preference to greenfield sites; and
- the need for a mixture of types of housing, including affordable housing and provision for travellers, and for high standards of design, accessibility and infrastructure provision.

The overall level and distribution of housing

4.17 The overall level of housing provision put forward in this Plan reflects its underlying aims and objectives, the sustainable development principles set out in Policy 1, and the locational strategy set out in Policy 2. It also recognises the need to take account of Government guidance. Guidelines on the numbers of additional dwellings for which provision should be made are set out in regional planning guidance (RPG).

4.18 The Deposit Structure Plan published in 1998 was based on the first version of RPG10, published in 1994. This proposed an annual average of 2,950

additional dwellings in the Plan area between 1991-2011; that is, a total of 59,000 dwellings, of which 14,900 had been developed over the five years 1991-96. The Deposit Plan proposed that 43,000 dwellings be provided over the period 1996-2011, compared with an RPG-based figure of 44,100. By way of comparison, some 54,600 new dwellings had been completed in the plan area over the fifteen years 1981-96.

4.19 Although projections are not the main determinant of future levels of housing provision, they are a very important part of the policy-making process. New “1992-based” population and household projections published in 1994/95 by OPCS and DoE showed a growth of 74,000 households in the area between 1991-2011, compared with an increase of 58,000 over the same period in the earlier projections used in preparing RPG10. In 1999, the ONS and DETR published “1996-based” projections which suggested an increase of 76,000 households in the area between 1991 and 2011. The Examination in Public Panel believed that these newer figures should form the framework for housing provision in the plan area, and proposed that provision should be made for 54,300 dwellings over the period 1996-2011; that is, a total 11,300 higher than in the Deposit Plan.

4.20 The Joint Committee at that time considered that this level of new provision could not be identified and implemented within the Plan period while still maintaining the underlying commitment to sustainable patterns of development across the area. It agreed that the Deposit Plan proposals should be modified by providing for some 43,600 dwellings between 1996-2011; that is, including an additional 600 dwellings within Bristol. In February 2000, the Joint Committee proposed the Structure Plan policies for adoption on that basis.

4.21 In March 2000, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions issued a Direction preventing the adoption of the Plan; and in July 2000 issued a further Direction specifying the need to modify Policy 33 to provide for 54,300 dwellings and a revised distribution. He stated that, although RPG10 stated that its housing figures should be a major consideration, it also stated that they should not be regarded as inflexible targets and should be subject to testing in the Structure Plan process taking into account the most up to date projections as well as other relevant considerations. He believed that there was important new information, and that provision of 43,600 dwellings did not meet the requirements of PPG3: Housing in a number of aspects. These were that the proposals :

- *“did not provide for sufficient housing to meet the likely requirements of the area;*

- *were insufficient to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home or to maintain the momentum of economic growth;*
- *were insufficient to meet the needs of the whole community including those in need of affordable and special housing; and*
- *were likely to lead to pressure for unmet requirements to be met in adjacent, more rural, counties where there are fewer opportunities to re-use previously developed land in urban areas and to create more sustainable patterns of development”.*

The Secretary of State considered that circumstances had changed so significantly since the 1994 RPG 10 that it was impractical to await its revision.

- 4.22 Revised PPG3: Housing, published in March 2000, signalled a new “plan, monitor and manage” approach to new housing supply, with a strong emphasis on maximising the contribution of previously developed land in urban areas. The new guidance required all planning authorities to undertake urban housing capacity studies (UHCS) in order to establish how much more additional housing could be accommodated within urban areas. The guidance specifically stated that *“planning authorities will also wish to draw on these studies in seeking to ensure that housing requirements are apportioned between local authorities in away which maximises the use of previously developed land”.*
- 4.23 The importance of regenerating urban areas was given added emphasis by the Urban White Paper, “Our Towns and Cities : The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance”, published in November 2000. This emphasised *“making towns and cities vibrant and successful places where people will choose to live, and helping protect the countryside from development pressure.”* This approach was also stressed in GOSW’s Proposed Changes to Draft RPG for the South West, published in December 2000. The final revised RPG10, published in September 2001, proposed the provision of an average rate of 3,700 dwellings per annum in the area between 1996-2016, in line with recent household projections.
- 4.24 In October 2000, the four authorities agreed jointly to undertake urgent studies of the capacity of the urban areas to accommodate additional residential development, and to review the statistical basis of the housing requirement and the constraints of the area to accommodate development. The studies, coordinated by the JSPTU, largely followed national guidelines contained in “Tapping the Potential. Assessing urban housing capacity: towards better practice” (DETR December 2000); and further guidance published by the South West Regional Assembly.

4.25 The results of the Urban Housing Capacity Studies were published in August 2001. They showed a total potential for some 31,600 dwellings within the defined urban areas - that is, the greater Bristol urban area, Bath, Weston-super-Mare, and the smaller towns of Clevedon, Keynsham, Nailsea, Norton Radstock, Portishead, Thornbury, and Yate / Chipping Sodbury - between 2000 and 2011. In summary :

- Vacant, previously developed sites and buildings accounted for 27% of the total. There were large sites in North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, as well as some medium and small-sized sites in Bath and Bristol.
- Vacant sites, not previously developed, within the urban areas (greenfield sites) accounted for 28% of the total. These are mainly sites in North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, which were allocated for housing in local plans. About 15% of previously undeveloped land with potential for housing was formerly allocated for employment uses and has been reviewed in accordance with PPG3.
- Redeveloping existing uses contributed 25% of the total. This is one of the most difficult categories to assess because of uncertainties about the viability of existing uses or the timing of site releases.
- Under-used car parks do not make a significant contribution. A number of car parks were surveyed, but they were often discounted because of the need to retain their use or because they were more suited to commercial uses.
- Converting commercial buildings into dwellings is significant only in Bristol.
- “Living over the shop” (converting upper floors of existing shops) is a relatively insignificant source, partly reflecting constraints imposed by ownership and commercial leases in some purpose-built shopping developments
- Subdividing existing housing into self-contained units is estimated to yield about 100 new homes a year for the rest of the Structure Plan period; half in Bristol.
- More intensive use of existing housing areas - mainly small sites including “infill” and “backland” development - contributes 14% of the total. This is consistent with recent trends and forms a much higher proportion in Bristol.

Estimated Urban Housing Capacity 2000 - 2011

	Bath & N.E Somerset	Bristol	North Somerset	South Glouc'shire	Structure Plan Area
1 Vacant, previously-developed land or buildings	740	1430	3810	2420	8400
2 Vacant land not previously developed	150	1590	3670	3290	8700
3 Redevelopment of existing uses	1040	4340	1160	1410	7950
4 Development of under-used car parks	20	20	0	0	40
5 Conversion of commercial buildings	10	730	0	50	790
6 Living over the shop	20	310	0	60	390
7 Sub-division of existing housing	130	550	60	330	1070
8 Intensification in existing housing areas	460	2350	800	660	4270
9 Empty homes	*	*	*	*	*

* *Note:* a reduction in empty homes is allowed for in the calculation of a net housing requirement for the Structure Plan. To avoid double counting, no separate allowance was included in the above estimates of urban housing capacity. Source: Draft Urban Housing Capacity Study August 2001

4.26 The “capacity” figures identified by the studies are not absolute maximum limits. The processes of urban change which create new opportunities for housing are dynamic, and views of “capacity” or potential will change. Further work on urban housing capacity will be undertaken and reported through the monitoring process. The studies of the position as at April 2000 identified appropriate, feasible and desirable levels at a point in time; they are intended as a foundation for Local Plan preparation and must be the subject of detailed monitoring. Factors which shaped the capacity figures included :

- the physical, environmental and social infrastructure needed to support additional housing;
- area regeneration policy frameworks which either existed or which might be necessary to influence the scale and rate of delivery of housing, and which might also introduce other land uses;
- the environmental implications of development on the immediate and wider area and the need to avoid “town cramming”;
- future market viability both in respect of the site and the wider housing market; and
- the need to continue to provide for other land uses in the urban areas in line with other Structure and Local Plan policies.

4.27 The Urban Housing Capacity Studies indicated that, over the period to 2011, development within the existing built-up areas, together with that already committed elsewhere, would be insufficient to meet in full the overall level of provision set out in the Secretary of State's Direction. However, the shortfall was substantially less than that previously agreed by the Joint Committee, and within acceptable margins of error in assessing requirements over the term of the Plan.

4.28 The possibility of meeting the Direction in full, by making additional provision at a level which would require the allocation of major new sites, including some "greenfield" sites not previously developed, was considered. However, the Secretary of State had accepted the EIP Panel's view that a higher level of development than that previously proposed could be accommodated in the area without the need to alter either the underlying strategy or any of the other Plan policies, such as Policy 16, setting out the general extent of the Green Belt, in this Plan. Other existing Plan policies list several key strategic locations outside currently built-up areas, and not within the Green Belt, in which housing development within the Plan period might, under certain specified circumstances, be appropriate. These include some areas immediately adjacent to the main urban areas; and settlements with significant advantages- either existing, or where it can be demonstrated that there are practical opportunities to achieve them - over other locations in terms of public transport accessibility to major employment areas and other important facilities. The Plan sets out policy approaches towards housing development in locations which meet these criteria. It is for Local Plans to identify the level of development- if any - which should be accommodated beyond existing commitments at each of these locations within the Plan period.

4.29 Further consideration of opportunities for such additional housing development indicated as follows :

- Bath and North East Somerset

Bath is tightly surrounded by Green Belt and on three sides by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Locations elsewhere within the authority do not in general meet the Plan criteria for acceptable greenfield development, because of the Green Belt designation over much of the area including those parts adjoining Bristol, and/or inadequate public transport provision. Exceptional circumstances exist at Keynsham where, in line with Policies 9 and 16, the Local Plan will propose the release of some Green Belt land for development.

- Bristol

Bristol is tightly surrounded by Green Belt, or by existing urban development in adjoining authorities. No scope therefore exists for urban extensions within the City Council area in advance of a Green Belt review.

- North Somerset

At Weston-super-Mare, current development commitments, combined with sites within the built-up area, could be sufficient to meet requirements until beyond the Plan period at historic rates of development. However, development to meet the urban capacity figure is dependent on improvements to the public transport network beyond those already proposed. Further development on uncommitted sites within the Plan period would be contrary to the Plan strategy. It would damage prospects for urban regeneration and for improving the balance between homes and jobs, especially given likely rates of development; and would generate a continuing increase in commuting from the town to the Bristol area, leading to overloading of M5 Junction 21 and objections from the Highways Agency based on road safety considerations. Elsewhere, no locations would meet the Structure Plan criteria for acceptable greenfield development, because of Green Belt designation over much of the area including those parts adjoining Bristol, and/or inadequate public transport provision.

- South Gloucestershire

The further development for housing of greenfield urban extensions beyond existing Local Plan proposals in the North Fringe or at Emersons Green, in advance of significant investment and improvements in transport infrastructure, would conflict with prospects for urban regeneration, and would be premature in advance of a comprehensive review of the scope for urban extensions. Although housing would be relatively close to employment areas and facilities, it would be likely to generate a continuing increase in road traffic, leading to overloading of motorway junctions and objections from the Highways Agency.

The North Fringe is subject to damaging and increasing levels of road congestion. A strategy is in place in the Local Transport Plan to introduce major new public transport infrastructure and services, which should significantly improve its modal share in the medium to long term, and reduce congestion. However, the timescale for implementing this strategy does not allow for further significant development in the Plan period without a marked adverse effect on congestion, with all the social and economic costs implied, contrary to the Plan strategy. Any new

greenfield housing development adjoining Yate in the Plan period should not exacerbate the existing imbalances between homes, local jobs and facilities, or lead to a rise in car-based commuting, adverse implications for the highway network or congestion. Additional residential development in such a location should not be considered in advance of a comprehensive review of the scope for extensions of the principal urban areas.

- 4.30 The relationship between homes and jobs should be an important consideration in determining the distribution of housing, especially in view of the aims of reducing the need to travel and encouraging a choice of travel mode. Studies have compared the estimated workforce associated with various housing figures, and forecasts of job growth based on recent trends and the supply of land for new business development. This analysis showed that the Bristol and South Gloucestershire job markets are closely inter-related. Both areas attract large numbers of in-commuters, and commuting into South Gloucestershire has increased rapidly with the growth of jobs in the North Fringe. For Bristol the net inflow at 2001 was estimated to be about 30,000; and for South Gloucestershire about 12,000. In Bath & North East Somerset, the numbers of jobs and employed residents are roughly in balance, whilst in North Somerset the large surplus of workers over jobs has been widening, to about 20,000 in 2001. This particularly highlights the importance of policies to attract additional jobs to Weston-super-Mare.
- 4.31 Up-to-date demographic and economic information and projections will need to be considered in a review of the Structure Plan. The Plan needs to take a long-term view, given that most recent estimates show the volatility of short-term variations in the components of change. DTLR estimates for the area suggest that recent growth in population and households has been faster than previously projected. They showed an average annual increase in households of 4,700 between 1996 and 1999, whilst the 1996-based household projections showed an annual increase of some 3,700 households between 1996 and 2011. Projections of the increase numbers of economically active population in the area also confirm pressures for additional housing. New DTLR sub-national household projections, using the results of the 2001 Census, are expected in 2004, following population projections in 2003.
- 4.32 On the basis of all this information, and in particular the Urban Housing Capacity Studies, the authorities jointly concluded that a total provision of 50,200 dwellings should be made in the Plan, over the period 1996-2011. This is made up as shown in the following table.

	Completions / net conversions (urban and non-urban) 1996-2000	Urban housing capacity - identified potential 2000-11 (gross)	Assumed non-urban sites 2000-11 (RLAS, LP, assumed small sites, brownfield windfalls)	Additional provision in urban extensions in accord with agreed strategy	Estimated net losses 1996-2011	Total net potential provision 1996-2011
B&NES	2,100	2,600	1,100	500	-100	6,200
Bristol	3,300	11,300	0	0	-1,600	13,000
N Somerset	3,400	9,500	2,100	0	100	14,900
S Gloucs	5,700	8,200	2,300	0	-100	16,100
Total	14,500	31,600	5,500	500	-1,900	50,200

4.33 This level of provision is for 6,600 more dwellings than previously proposed for adoption by the Joint Committee in February 2000. Although this level did not meet in full the Secretary of State’s Direction to accommodate a total of 54,300 dwellings, it reduced the shortfall from 10,700 dwellings (20%) to 4,100 (7.5%). It also showed a revised distribution, with the number of total dwellings to be developed within Bristol rising by 5,100 from that proposed in the Deposit Plan, to form 26% of the total provision.

4.34 Policy 33 also more fully takes into account the “plan, monitor and manage” approach of PPG3:Housing. The policy confirms the priority to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings in urban areas as part of the sequential approach to site identification in local plans. This will be particularly important in order to achieve the housing provision for Bristol, and if major sites such as those within the North Fringe, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Portishead are to be developed during the Plan period. Housing development on previously developed land and buildings must also accord with other policies, for example good access to a range of local facilities and services, enabling a high proportion of journeys to be made by walking or cycling.

4.35 Local authorities will need to manage the release of sites so that housing is accompanied by infrastructure and service improvements and the various elements of supply meet the components of demand and need. In determining policies for the release of sites. PPG3 reiterates the priority to previously developed land and buildings except where previously developed sites perform so poorly in terms of availability, infrastructure and other factors as to preclude their use for housing before greenfield sites. PPG3 also warns against prejudicing the development process by unreal expectations about the developability of particular sites. In the case of Bristol, where alternative greenfield alternatives will generally not be available, the progress in

implementing the proposed housing requirement will be a key feature in any reviews of the Structure Plan and Local Plan.

4.36 In addition, Policy 33 requires individual authorities to take account of the progress of meeting housing requirements across the wider plan area, including neighbouring authorities, in determining phasing policies. This will ensure that major greenfield developments only take place if there is no other realisable brownfield housing capacity. The DTLR guidance 'Planning To Deliver - The Managed Release of Housing Sites: Towards Better Practice', advises authorities to set out in Local Plans the circumstances in which, and the means by which, any re-phasing of sites would be achieved. Where events are so fundamental to a plan's strategy, an alteration or replacement of the Plan might be required; otherwise supplementary planning guidance might be used to re-assign sites. The guidance also points out the importance of structure plans in focusing new development on previously developed land in urban areas, and in providing a framework in which local authorities operate complementary approaches for releasing sites in order to maximise the use of previously developed land in urban areas. The jointly agreed monitoring process will be an important platform for initiating this process.

4.37 Revised Policy 33 was published in December 2001, as a Further Modification to the Plan. Following the consideration of representations received, the Joint Committee in March 2002 agreed to recommend no further substantial changes, and recommended to the four authorities that the Plan be adopted.

POLICY 33

New housing provision should :-

- **help maintain or create attractive, balanced and sustainable communities;**
- **contain an appropriate mix of housing types; and**
- **be compatible with other policies of the plan.**

Provision will be made in Local Plans for 50,200 additional dwellings between 1996 and 2011, in accordance with a sequential approach to site selection, the locational strategy of the Structure Plan and policies 34 and 35.

The distribution will be :

Bath and North East Somerset	6,200
Bristol	13,000
North Somerset	14,900
South Gloucestershire	16,100

Priority will be given to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas where housing development would accord with other Structure Plan policies.

The Joint Committee will monitor the supply and demand of housing in the area, together with changes in employment and the provision and programming of transport and other infrastructure. It will publish an annual monitoring report, and will keep under review the need for policy modification or supplementary strategic guidance arising from this process.

Each authority will: -

- **undertake a consistent and jointly agreed process of monitoring which will identify changes in stock, the contributions of different sources of supply, changes in housing requirements, and the provision of necessary infrastructure and services; and**
- **in considering the release of sites for housing through local plans, take account of progress in implementing the Plan's proposals across the Structure Plan area as a whole, including its neighbouring authorities.**

Local Plans will set out proposals for controlling the release of sites for housing development,

- **to minimise the use of sites not previously developed;**
- **to maximise the re-use of previously developed sites;**
- **to achieve a better balance between housing and local employment;**
- **to ensure that new infrastructure is co-ordinated with new housing development; and**
- **to achieve other planning requirements**

and will allow for the review of phasing proposals to take account of the joint monitoring process.

Priority sites for housing

4.39 Achieving a sustainable pattern of housing provision within the overall strategy depends on prioritising the re-use of previously developed land and buildings for housing or mixed uses in locations which meet the criteria of Policy 2, particularly in relation to accessibility to local jobs and services. Local plans will also need to consider redesignating sites for housing which are currently allocated for other uses such as employment, but where the prospect for such a use continues to diminish, or where housing or mixed uses would, in accord with Policy 30, help create a more rather than less

sustainable pattern of development. The development of brownfield sites or buildings so identified will be expected to be substantially under way before any new greenfield sites which are not already committed for other uses are released for housing development. The exceptions will be those brownfield sites which do not meet the locational criteria, or which have site or market constraints which make immediate development and/or development within the necessary timescale impossible, and where consequently greenfield sites may need to come forward.

- 4.40 In order to implement the strategy, the considerations set out in Policies 2 and 34 in particular will need to be applied to residential land already committed to development, both in revising local plans and in determining planning applications in the interim. PPG3 confirms this approach. This may result in the relinquishment of some identified residential sites in favour of ones that more closely match the criteria relating to location, accessibility and previous use. This will help ensure that existing greenfield sites are not developed before more suitable brownfield alternatives; and that new greenfield sites are only released for development where they accord with the locational strategy and where the necessary supply of housing land cannot be met from other preferred sources.
- 4.41 In preparing and reviewing local plans, authorities will take a number of practical steps to guide development to priority sites. PPG 12 allows local authorities to indicate where phasing of development over the plan period is required, identifying a broad timescale for the release of main areas or identified sites, where this is adequately explained and justified. Priority can therefore be given to selected brownfield sites in appropriate locations in development plans. Where there is a phasing policy in the development plan, PPG 1 allows the possibility of refusing planning permission on grounds of prematurity. PPG3: Housing (para.34) states that it is for each local authority to determine the form of its phasing policies and suggests dividing the release of land into three phases. The presumptions regarding the priority to previously developed sites and other considerations set down above can be matched to the phases.
- 4.42 Housing land supply will need to be monitored on a consistent basis across the structure plan area, in order that decisions in each of the four authorities on the release of sites can be based on agreed and consistent information. Annual reports will be prepared jointly by the four authorities. Local plan phasing policies will be reviewed, and if necessary the timing of land releases altered if land supply falls short of, or exceeds, expectations. The phasing of housing sites in local plans will need to ensure that planned provision is not exhausted in the early years of the plan; and to ensure that an

adequate supply of residential land is genuinely available and that account is taken of factors affecting local housing demand. Policy 34 sets down all these considerations.

POLICY 34

In making proposals to meet the provision in Policy 33, Local Plans will, within the locational strategy set out in Policy 2, give priority to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings. Priority sites for housing will be identified which, subject to other policies of the Structure Plan, will include:

- **vacant or derelict land or buildings;**
- **the re-use of previously developed land and buildings;**
- **the redevelopment or conversion of appropriate commercial premises;**
and
- **the re-allocation of sites identified for other uses which are unlikely to be developed for those uses and where housing or mixed development would accord with the policies of the Structure Plan.**

The priority accorded to sites in these categories, together with infrastructure provision, public transport improvements and other local considerations will be taken into account in any phasing of provision in Local Plans.

Additional housing development through conversions, infill and redevelopment will be encouraged within appropriate parts of urban areas, especially in town and suburban centres or other areas that can be well served by public transport.

Housing needs and development types

4.43 PPG3, Housing, urges local planning authorities, amongst other matters, to meet the housing requirements of the whole community; provide wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing; promote good design; and create attractive, high quality, living environments.

4.44 The Plan recognises the diversity of housing requirements, particularly changing household structures, and the fact that development must meet social needs as well as market demand. Around 63% of the increase in households in the area for the period 1996-2011, as projected by ONS, will be one person households, and the number of married or cohabiting couple households is only likely to increase marginally. Local plans should include policies to encourage the development of dwellings for smaller households,

including the promotion of development at higher unit densities than in the past. The redevelopment of well located urban sites and conversions of existing residential properties are likely to be particularly important in providing for this type of need in a range of housing types to meet local conditions.

- 4.45 A high proportion of the overall housing requirement will be for low cost market and subsidised housing, made available to people that cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market. Some estimates suggest that up to 40% of new dwellings would need to meet affordable housing needs. Local plans will need to provide detailed guidance on the provision of affordable housing. Local housing surveys and strategies need to underpin local plan policies on such matters as the amount of affordable housing to be provided in a given local area, enabling planning policies to focus on particular problems and opportunities. Local plans should therefore contain targets for affordable housing, based on up-to-date assessments of local need; and should also contain policies which seek planning agreements for mixed tenure schemes or other arrangements by which land costs are reduced to produce affordable housing. It is particularly important to ensure that new sites make a full contribution to affordable housing needs.
- 4.46 There is also scope to achieve affordable housing by using vacant commercial premises, by conversion of larger houses into flats, by redevelopment and by regenerating vacant and derelict sites. In smaller settlements and in rural areas, a small amount of affordable housing may also need to be provided on sites which otherwise would not gain planning consent for general market housing. Local plans should provide for the consideration of the release of small sites for affordable housing for local needs even though they would not otherwise gain consent for general market housing. PPG3 advises that such provision should be regarded as additional to provision in the development plan and emphasises that the release of such sites will be essentially a matter for local judgement.
- 4.47 The strategic objective of enhancing the environment requires improvements to the design and setting of buildings. Designing for sustainable new housing development will be encouraged by appropriate standards, which may include minimum rather than maximum densities and limits on car parking standards; accessibility by public transport; convenient access to local facilities by walking and cycling; and energy efficiency principles both in housing design and layout. Innovative solutions, such as car-free developments in city centres, should be encouraged in association with transport and environmental improvements.

POLICY 35

Provision will be made for a wide range of housing which reflects local conditions, including homes for families and small households; housing for elderly households and other households with special physical needs; and provision for people requiring community care, where appropriate planned in partnership with health and social service providers.

Local Plans will:

- **include policies and targets for specific locations and/or sites to meet the need for affordable housing identified by local assessments;**
- **in rural areas, provide for the consideration of the release of small sites for affordable housing, which would not gain consent for general market housing;**
- **provide for high standards of design and energy efficiency in buildings, layout and landscaping;**
- **set minimum net densities for new areas of housing development, generally not below 20-25 dwellings per hectare, subject to compatibility with local amenity, site characteristics, and the need to provide for a range of housing types, to make effective and economical use of land and provide support and access to local facilities; and**
- **provide for a range of densities in existing developed areas which will allow for appropriate infill, extensions and redevelopment schemes.**

Provision will be made specifically for densities considerably higher than 20-25 dwellings per hectare at selected locations with good public transport accessibility, with particular consideration being given to town, suburban and neighbourhood centres, and identified settlements along good public transport corridors where local facilities and public transport are within reasonable walking distance.

Residential Caravan Sites

4.48 Residential caravans, as distinct from touring or static holiday sites, may satisfy a need for affordable housing which cannot be met by permanent housing. Their location should be considered on the same basis as permanent housing; to achieve reasonable access to local facilities and transport and an acceptable impact on the local environment. The appearance of caravan sites may make them unacceptable in some locations where permanent housing would be permitted - for example, because they do not conform to the local character of existing buildings in traditional materials.

POLICY 36

The location of sites for mobile homes will generally be subject to the same planning policies as other residential developments, requiring access to local services and facilities, especially for sites in long-term use, and reflecting local environmental considerations.

A site for mobile homes is not normally appropriate in the Green Belt and may be unacceptable in some other locations where permanent housing would be permitted but where mobile homes would have a particularly detrimental effect upon local amenity.

Gypsies and Travellers

Policy 37 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan, as adopted (Gypsy and traveller sites) has been quashed following a legal challenge.

In the Court of Appeal on 30th October 2003, an order was made quashing Policy 37 of the Joint Replacement Structure Plan, which concerns provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers. This policy is therefore no longer part of the adopted structure plan and supporting paragraph 4.49 is no longer relevant. The four councils are taking legal advice before considering further action in relation to Policy 37.

The Court of Appeal judgement (11 pages) can be obtained from the Joint Unit or its web site:

<http://www.jsptu-avon.gov.uk/publications/documents/judgement.pdf>

**Joint Unit for Strategic Planning and Transportation
3 November 2003**

Town Centres and Shopping

- 4.50 The variety and intensity of activities in city, town and district centres, and the opportunity they offer for public transport use, help to minimise car travel and encourage the efficient use of infrastructure, land and resources. The sustainable development strategy of this Plan requires greater use to be made of such centres. There will need to be improvements to their environment and accessibility, and encouragement for new activities and investment.
- 4.51 Making better use of city and town centres also requires their success in competing with out-of-centre retail developments. Some 285,000 sq.m. net of shopping floor space is now provided by major out-of-town development in the area, including the Cribbs Causeway Regional Shopping Centre (The Mall), compared with an estimated 467,000 sq.m. net in traditional town centres. The Mall, opened in 1998, has added considerably to opportunities for shopping, attracts trade from the whole of the Plan area and beyond, and has increased competitive pressures on established centres in the area.
- 4.52 National policy guidance (PPG6) seeks to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres. They should be the focus of development, in particular retailing, where the proximity of businesses maximises opportunity to travel by alternatives to the car. A sequential approach should be adopted in selecting sites to meet the needs of retailers and other key town centre uses which attract many people. First preference should be given to town centre sites, followed by edge-of-centre and then sites in district and local centres; and only then out-of-centre sites that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

City, town and district centres

- 4.53 Policies in this Plan will enhance the role and well-being of existing town centres by improving their attractiveness and accessibility and establishing them as the priority location for investment in retail, office and major leisure and community facilities. In accordance with national guidance, policy 38 sets out the existing hierarchy of city, sub-regional, town, local and district centres in the Plan area. The city, sub-regional, and major town and district

centres identified by the policy offer a character that in general, is consistent with the description of ‘town centres’ in national guidance, PPG6. The minor town, district and local centres listed are in general consistent with the description of ‘district centres’.

- 4.54 The scale of shopping offered by Bristol and Bath city centres and Weston-super-Mare town centre has remained largely unchanged despite the rapid expansion of out-of-town retailing. The city centres offer high level comparison shopping that attracts visitors from a wide region. Bristol City Centre has secured investment in major retail, office and leisure developments and housing; and progress is being made with environmental and traffic improvements and further major development proposals. In Bath, the many specialist shops and the quality and range of leisure and cultural facilities reflect the regional, national and international importance of the City; but growing pressures need to be managed in order to reduce congestion, conserve the urban fabric and character, and attract investment to update facilities. Weston-super-Mare town centre fulfils a sub-regional role and is successfully withstanding competition from other centres, but priority needs to be given to increasing the range and quality of its facilities and so improve its performance. Policies 5, 6 and 7 set out integrated strategic frameworks for development and transport in these three centres.
- 4.55 Elsewhere in the Plan area, the major town and district centres (or ‘town centres’ in terms of PPG6) identified by policy 38, and shown on the key diagram, have in general also retained trade, often accommodating large modern food stores which contribute significantly to vitality and viability, as well as some multiple shops and a large variety of smaller shops. They provide substantial amounts of convenience and mainly small-scale comparison shopping, together with local service facilities. Car-borne shoppers, as well as trade from surrounding neighbourhoods, are important to these centres. In contrast, the smaller minor town, district and local centres (or ‘district centres’ in terms of PPG6), which rely mainly on “top-up” convenience shopping and services for their immediate neighbourhoods, have in general seen loss of trade and a decline in their role.
- 4.56 The general wellbeing of all the traditional city, town, district, local and village centres will be monitored and kept under review. Integrated transport strategies will facilitate the access and convenience of centres to visitors, and should be supported by complementary town centre management initiatives. Facilities and amenities essential to the role of a centre will be identified and safeguarded from inappropriate development, and opportunities for enhancement realised. In town, district and smaller centres, improvements should be made to facilities where consistent with the role of the centre and

the requirements of the catchment population. For most, this will require improvements to the range and quality of food and other convenience shopping. In many smaller centres, the emphasis will be on environmental improvements, reducing pedestrian/traffic conflicts, and realising opportunities to improve vitality and generate investment.

4.57 Policy 38 makes provision for local plans to identify additional centres where appropriate. Along with those listed in the policy, these will offer a broad range of facilities and services, a location and character that attract significant amounts of “walk-in” trade, and provide a focus for surrounding communities and, in larger centres, the public transport network. Such centres will be distinguished both from small parades of shops and individual outlets, and from large modern free-standing retail developments such as superstores and retail parks that serve predominantly car-borne customers drawn from a wide catchment.

POLICY 38

The vitality and viability of city, sub regional, town, local and village centres will be maintained and enhanced in making provision for meeting the changing requirements of the catchment populations. The hierarchy of existing centres comprises :

City Centres

Bristol City Centre;

Bath City Centre;

Sub-Regional Centre

Weston-super-Mare Town Centre

Major Town and District Centres

**Bath & North East Somerset - Keynsham Town Centre;
Midsomer Norton Town Centre;
Radstock Town Centre;**

**Bristol - Bedminster;
Clifton;
Fishponds;
Whiteladies Road;**

**North Somerset - Clevedon- Triangle;
Nailsea;
Portishead;**

**South Gloucestershire - Kingswood Town Centre;
Emersons Green District Centre;
Staple Hill;
Thornbury;
Yate;**

Minor Town, District and Local Centres

Bath & North East Somerset - Moorland Road;

**Bristol - Gloucester Road (North and South);
Henleaze;
St George;
Shirehampton;
Wells Road;
Westbury-on-Trym;**

**North Somerset - Clevedon- Hill Road;
Winscombe;
Worle High Street;
Yatton;**

**South Gloucestershire - Chipping Sodbury;
Downend;
Hanham.**

Local plans will identify other district, local and village centres, including proposed centres required to meet the requirements of large new residential or commercial developments, which offer a range of facilities and are readily accessed by alternatives to the car from the surrounding community.

For each of these centres, provision will be made for the retention of key uses and for reinforcing and improving their attractions, amenity and accessibility as required to maintain and enhance vitality and viability and meet the needs of the catchment population, where consistent with the role, scale and character of the centre and the strategy of the Plan, the characteristics of the transport network and the need to minimise travel by car.

For the city, sub-regional, major town and district centres, provision will be made to improve the range and quality of shopping, community, leisure and related facilities, and to encourage high density, mixed use developments, including residential and business units, integrated with improvements to access by public transport and for pedestrians (including those with special needs) and cyclists, and traffic management and car parking strategies. Further guidance on the provisions to be made for the city and sub-regional centres is set out under policies 5, 6 and 7.

For the minor town, district, local and village centres, provision will be made for environmental improvements, reductions in traffic/pedestrian conflicts including pedestrian access from adjacent communities and better facilities and a greater diversity of uses of a small scale, as required by the local community, where compatible with local amenity, traffic considerations and reducing the need to travel.

Cribbs Causeway

4.58 The Regional Shopping Centre at Cribbs Causeway, adjacent to the M5, has significantly altered the role of this location in meeting the shopping requirements of the area. The existing retail park at Cribbs Causeway already included a superstore and retail warehouse units, but The Mall now offers the type of comparison shopping previously only available in the plan area at the city and larger town centres. It competes for trade with Bristol City Centre, Weston-super-Mare and other centres.

4.59 Cribbs Causeway does not fall within the hierarchy of town centres identified in Policy 38. While its retailing role is similar to that of the city and larger town centres of the plan area, it does not offer the sustainability benefits of these established centres. It lacks a similar wide range of functions and is less successful in attracting shoppers travelling by alternatives to the car, as a result of its urban fringe location, its inaccessibility to pedestrians, and its relationship with much of the existing public transport network. The considerable volumes of traffic attracted to the Regional Shopping Centre generate significant congestion within and around the area, and on the motorway.

4.60 Further retail expansion at Cribbs Causeway would be likely to attract significant additional traffic from a wide area. Any expansion of shopping that otherwise could have been accommodated by other centres, or could affect their well-being, would conflict with the strategy of the Plan and national planning policy. Policy 39 therefore indicates that such expansion will be treated as out-of-centre development, and any further provision would need to realise a number of transport benefits. Regional Planning Guidance (RPG10), published after this policy was agreed for adoption, states that any proposal involving the extension or redevelopment of the existing regional shopping centre will need to be considered through a future review of RPG.

POLICY 39

Proposals for further retail development at Cribbs Causeway will only be permitted where compatible with the criteria for out-of-centre retailing in Policy 40 and where such development:

- 1 contributes to improving the integration of the area by providing opportunities for circulation by alternatives to the car;**
- 2 provides for significant improvements to public transport serving a wide area; and**

- 3 does not have adverse implications for traffic congestion within the area or on adjacent highway links and does not lead to an increase in private car use.**

New retail development

- 4.61 The policy framework for planning major new retail and related developments needs to recognise local requirements and the benefits of widening choice and competition, while giving priority to securing opportunities in town centres and realising sustainability objectives. National guidance supports a sequential approach to meeting identified needs for new retail development.
- 4.62 Studies suggest that existing and committed convenience shopping floorspace in the area is likely to be sufficient to absorb projected growth in spending over much of the plan period; although, towards 2011, rising expenditure should be sufficient to support some new food stores. For comparison shopping, rising expenditure in the Plan area beyond 2001 may support a further 150,000 sq.m net of development, with about 60% of this growth accounted for by the Bristol urban area, and much of the remainder by Bath and Weston-super-Mare. The projected growth in the Bristol area offers the potential to support a considerable expansion of retailing in the City Centre as well as proposed new district centres at Bradley Stoke and Emersons Green. These forecasts will need to be kept under review, with provision for any additional floorspace made in local plans.
- 4.63 Provision for forecast growth in the requirement for higher order comparison shopping should be met in the city and larger town centres. The opportunity to reinforce these centres should not be eroded by significant expansion of out-of-town shopping, and provision will therefore not be made for factory outlet centres, regional shopping centre development, or other major outlets for this type of shopping at out-of-town locations.
- 4.64 In providing for convenience shopping requirements, the significance of existing food stores to the role and well-being of town and district centres will be recognised. Proposals are likely to continue to come forward for large food stores and retail warehouses, often in the form of retail park developments, which are difficult to accommodate in town centres without adverse implications for the environment and congestion. Alternative forms of development within or on the edge of the town centres will therefore be considered. Expanded or new centres may also be required, to meet demands for increased shopping facilities arising from major new housing development.

4.65 It may not always be possible to meet requirements for additional shopping facilities within the town centres, but provision for out-of-centre shopping will recognise its potential adverse effects on the vitality and viability of existing centres, traffic congestion and car use. Locations identified for new out-of-centre shopping development will need to be accessible by a choice of travel mode to minimise traffic growth, and the range of shopping provided will be limited to types that do not threaten the well-being of nearby town centres.

POLICY 40

Provision to meet requirements for new retail development will be made within the city, sub-regional, major town and district centres where suitable sites are available, followed by edge-of-centre sites, and then minor town, district, local and village centres and where consistent with Policy 38.

Provision for factory outlet centres or for new regional shopping centres outside the centres identified under Policy 38 will not be made. Provision outside these centres to meet identified needs for other forms of retail development, including extensions to existing facilities, will be made where:

- (i) there are no suitable sites to meet these needs at the centres identified under Policy 38;**
- (ii) there are no unacceptable implications for regeneration and the strategy of the Plan, and for the vitality and viability of centres identified under Policy 38; and**
- (iv) the development serves to minimise travel demand and to facilitate access by public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and those with special needs.**

Local shopping

4.66 Local shops and facilities such as post offices and pharmacies help to maintain communities, reduce travel and car use, and secure the social and environmental objectives of the Plan. They often provide invaluable and irreplaceable services for local people without cars or ready access to public transport, both in rural and urban areas. Existing local facilities in small neighbourhood and village centres as well as on the 'high street' will therefore be safeguarded, especially where alternative provision is not available. Opportunities to meet deficiencies in local provision will be secured. In rural areas, such opportunities may arise with proposals for farm diversification and for tourism or leisure facilities, and will be supported provided the impact on local village centres, traffic and the environment is acceptable.

POLICY 41

Local shopping facilities will be safeguarded and new provision to meet the needs of the local community will be encouraged, subject to considering the implications for residential amenity, local environment, traffic and parking, and provided there are no adverse consequences for village or other local centres.

Recreation and Tourism

4.67 The recent rapid expansion of recreational and tourist activities reflects increasing leisure time, greater affluence, and rising interest in healthier lifestyles. It supports rising numbers of jobs in the provision of new services and facilities and, in the case of tourism, in support activities. Although considerable benefits to conservation and regeneration are being secured, large numbers of visitors at sensitive locations can cause environmental damage. Opportunities for recreation and tourism need to be planned in ways that are in harmony with the local environment, minimise travel and greenfield development, and secure urban regeneration, in particular town centre renewal.

Open space

4.68 Both the quantity and quality of open space should be safeguarded and enhanced. Open space of value to sport, recreation, amenity, settlement character and nature conservation interests, will be protected from development, and opportunities for its improvement, including better access, will be realised. Provision for the development of open space will be made only where there would be no adverse consequences for meeting future local recreational requirements, and for local amenity and nature conservation.

4.69 In recent years there has been erosion of open space in the main urban areas, especially where privately owned, with adverse implications for amenity, conservation, and meeting recreational requirements. Safeguarding and enhancing urban open space will therefore continue to be important, particularly where it is located some distance from the countryside and where there are substantial recreational and amenity benefits. It will also be important to realise opportunities for enhancing the recreational and amenity value of the open countryside adjacent to the urban areas, and for “green corridors” linking town with country.

4.70 New open spaces, or improved access to existing areas, will be provided to meet existing shortfalls and additional requirements arising from changes in the characteristics of the local population, including increased demands generated by new development. The potential which new development can offer for the provision and enhancement of open space will be recognised.

POLICY 42

Open spaces, including sports grounds, playing fields and public parks, which are of value to recreation, local amenity or nature conservation, will be safeguarded from development.

Local Plans will include proposals to meet shortfalls in open space provision and to enhance the value of open space and access by the public. Priority will be given to safeguarding and enhancing open spaces within major urban areas and the adjacent countryside. Proposals will be made for “green corridors” linking town with country where there are benefits to recreation, amenity and nature conservation.

New recreation and leisure development

4.71 Considerable investment in commercial recreation and leisure development is being undertaken in the Plan area, although deficiencies remain in provision for many activities. Some recent major commercial leisure developments have increased the burden on the highway network, and do not reinforce public transport networks or the well-being of the town centres.

4.72 Local Plans will provide for new and enhanced recreation and leisure opportunities in urban areas, town centres and other locations which serve to minimise travel and facilitate public transport operation. Such development should accord with the standards issued by organisations such as Sport England and other requirements, and be located where easily accessible to the catchment population by a variety of means including public transport and walking.

4.73 Future developments of major leisure or cultural facilities that attract large numbers of visitors will be located within or on the edge of the city or town centres. It will be especially important to enhance the facilities of Bristol City Centre, to match its regional role. When suitable town centre sites are not available, alternative locations which offer good public transport will be considered but locations which encourage car traffic will be avoided. Recreation and leisure facilities will be located in the urban fringe only when an urban location is not available; such development in the Green Belt or

open countryside will be allowed only if small in scale and when necessary to support outdoor recreation.

POLICY 43

Provision will be made in local plans for an appropriate range of facilities for recreation and leisure at locations well related to users and accessible by a choice of travel mode. In making provision for facilities attracting large numbers of visitors, first preference will be given to sites in the city, major town and district centres identified by, and consistent with Policy 38; followed by sites on the edge of these centres; and, only then, out of centre sites which are well related to the public transport network

New facilities serving large catchment populations will be located within the urban areas. When suitable sites within the urban areas are not available, provision on the edge of the urban area may be appropriate. New facilities will be located in the open countryside or the Green Belt only when related to appropriate outdoor recreation activities.

Major sports stadiums

- 4.74 Government guidance advises that major new leisure developments such as sports stadiums must be readily accessible by a choice of transport modes, and where possible should be sited in urban areas. There are requirements for major new sports facilities in both the Bristol area and at Bath. In the Bristol area, a stadium is required that offers all-seater accommodation for at least 20,000 spectators and provision for a variety of sporting events, including league football. In Bath, the UK Sports Institute is promoting a National Network Centre at Bath University, aimed at sports development and quality, and Bath Rugby plc is seeking to relocate to a new stadium.
- 4.75 Opportunities for stadium development in the Bristol area and Bath should be realised. These will need to contribute to urban regeneration, and be readily accessible by public transport. Considerations will also include the nature of any associated development; potential impacts arising from the scale of the facilities and large numbers of visitors; compatibility with adjacent land uses; and environmental and transport effects, including the potential for compensatory benefits. Any ancillary development will not include uses that otherwise could be accommodated in the city or town centres. Such development should not take place in the Green Belt or where there would be unacceptable implications for local communities or the environment.

POLICY 44

Opportunities will be considered for the development of major sports stadiums within Bath and in the wider Bristol area that provide all-seater accommodation for approximately 20,000 spectators and facilities for a range of sporting and other events. Appropriate opportunities will offer the following:

- **good public transport access; and**
- **adequate provision both on-site and off-site for the planned numbers of visitors; and**
- **no significant adverse impacts for adjacent users, the local environment, transport conditions and travel patterns.**

Associated uses should include only those activities which cannot be accommodated in the town centres and which do not threaten the vitality and viability of town centres.

Recreation in the countryside

4.76 The growing interest in visiting the countryside and participating in sports that require a rural location is leading to increased traffic and demand for visitor facilities and improved access. The Plan aims to increase the access of all groups in the community to the countryside for recreation and leisure, while protecting environmental quality and amenity and minimising the need for long journeys.

4.77 Outdoor recreation in the countryside needs to be accommodated in ways which safeguard its environment, character, openness and tranquillity. Provision will be made at locations, in particular on the edge of the urban areas, which are accessible by public transport and serve to minimise travel. Elsewhere, the emphasis will be on managing numbers of visitors and safeguarding the amenity of attractive landscapes, wildlife and other natural features of interest. Consideration will be given to safeguarding certain localities which are under pressure from large numbers of visitors, including the Avon Valley, the Cotswolds and Mendip Hills AONBs, the Chew Valley lakes, the Kennet and Avon Canal, and other water-based features.

4.78 The public rights of way network offers considerable opportunity for walkers, horse riders and cyclists to enjoy the countryside. This opportunity will be enhanced by improving the condition of the network, identifying small scale visitor amenities including car parks and picnic sites and realising the recreational potential of disused railway lines. In enhancing the

public rights of way network, priority will be given to routes in the countryside surrounding the urban areas and to the major recreational routes, especially where easily accessed by public transport. New development will contribute to these objectives.

- 4.79 In recent years, organised rural sports have expanded, facilitated partly by farm diversification. New golf courses should safeguard the environment and amenity of the countryside, and offer good public transport access. Such requirements should be met in urban fringe locations, including the Forest of Avon in accordance with Policy 21.

POLICY 45

Provision of facilities that promote the enjoyment of the countryside, including sports that require a rural location, will be made in ways which safeguard the environment and the amenity and character of the rural areas, facilitate access by all groups in the community, and minimise the need to travel.

Developments attracting large numbers of trips will be directed to locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

Priority will be given to realising the potential of the Forest of Avon and other localities adjacent to the towns and cities, and recreational routes linking town and country.

Elsewhere, the recreational value of waterways, disused railway lines, public rights of way network, especially where accessible by public transport, will be maintained and enhanced subject to managing visitor pressures, in particular, the potential for adverse effects on local environments, amenities and highways.

Tourism

- 4.80 Coastal tourism in the plan area is dominated by Weston-super-Mare. Its popularity for main holidays has waned with competition from overseas destinations, although more recently the increasing popularity of “second holidays” is leading to an upturn. The unique architectural heritage of Bath attracts many foreign visitors while constraining opportunities for improving tourist facilities. In Bristol, the buoyancy of tourism and the business conference industry is leading to an expansion of hotel development. Further hotel and major leisure related developments are proposed, with potential benefits to local economic and regeneration objectives. In the rural areas, tourism is supporting farm diversification and the re-use of redundant agricultural buildings.

4.81 National guidance advises that tourism often depends upon and can contribute towards a high quality environment. Tourist attractions and accommodation need to be safeguarded and upgraded in order to meet modern requirements and maintain a prosperous industry. Older resorts require new development in order to adapt to the changing tourism market.

4.82 The Plan therefore aims to increase the economic benefits of tourism, while improving the quality of life of residents, maintaining and enhancing the local environment and securing transport objectives. Tourist facilities should be planned in ways which reinforce the city and town centres, and support regeneration, transport and economic development objectives. Local amenity and the environment, together with the features which attract tourists, will be protected from inappropriate development. The special environmental qualities of historic cities, towns, villages, buildings, the countryside and the coast, will be safeguarded.

POLICY 46

In Bath, Bristol and Weston-super-Mare, provision will be made for new tourist and visitor attractions and accommodation, including conference facilities where they:

- **improve the quality of facilities and the attractiveness of these destinations;**
- **support regeneration and the vitality and viability of the city and town centres;**
- **support conservation or economic development objectives; and provided there are no adverse implications for the environment, local amenity and character, or travel conditions.**

In rural areas, provision will be made for small-scale tourism related facilities and accommodation where there are no adverse implications for the environment, local amenity and travel conditions.

Chapter 5
***POLICIES FOR
TRANSPORT***



- 5.1 Rising congestion, and its environmental implications, have resulted in a growing recognition of the importance of reducing the need to travel, arresting the growth of road traffic, and promoting alternative, more environmentally acceptable forms of transport. In the structure plan area, projections of car travel suggest growth of between 33% and 40% over the next 20 years, in the absence of new measures to discourage car use and provide transport alternatives. There is an urgent need to arrest and reverse these trends, which if they continued would jeopardise sustainability objectives. Concerted action is needed to break the linkages between economic prosperity and car travel, by making alternative modes preferable to use in relative terms.
- 5.2 The 1995 Environment Act on air quality, and the 1997 Road Traffic Reduction Act, indicated a new agenda for transport policy, confirmed in the 1998 White Paper “A New Deal for Transport” and the 2000 Ten Year Plan for Transport. The Structure Plan seeks to take this policy agenda forward, making use of promised new tools, including local authority powers for road user charging which could radically increase the resources available for improved transport. The work of the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) and the Strategic Rail Authority, and provisions for Bus Quality Contracts and Freight Partnerships, indicate the breadth of the new framework to which local policies must respond.
- 5.3 Land use policy is central to the new approach, and revised PPG13 Transport develops guidance for local authorities to adopt planning policies that reduce the need to travel and facilitate the operation of public transport, walking and cycling. This approach is also followed in RPG10, which indicates that structure plans should take account of the effects of major new development and land-use change on the transport system and balance the need for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods with the need to protect and improve the environment. Effective implementation of the transport strategy in the Plan area also requires implementation of the spatial land use strategy set out in Policy 2, based on encouraging development in the large urban areas or, where necessary, at other locations where public transport can operate effectively. In particular, peripheral and dispersed employment and shopping patterns need to be avoided as they are inherently difficult to serve by public transport.
- 5.4 The 1995 Avon Transport Plan recognised that it is neither desirable nor practical to attempt to cater for the projected increase in road traffic. It acknowledged that cars and heavy goods vehicles have an important role to play; but that, particularly in urban areas, unrestrained car use is not a sustainable option, and that people should have the choice of other modes to satisfy most of their transport needs. It put forward a strategy of encouraging alternatives to the car, discouraging car use where alternatives are available, reducing the adverse

impact of road traffic, supporting urban regeneration and economic prosperity and improving national and international links. The Avon Transport Plan provided the framework for an accepted TPP Package strategy from 1995-99, offering a phased programme of proposals for investment in infrastructure and operations, and this has been taken forward in Local Transport Plans.

- 5.5 In this Structure Plan, this strategy has been tightened, more finely targeted, and integrated with the land use strategy. In particular, priority is needed for measures which address road congestion, as this will release first the potential for urban regeneration which is suppressed by the reduced accessibility caused by congestion. New roads must be the solution of last resort, to eliminate the threat that easier driving conditions will lead to new traffic generation, eroding the benefits of investment and compromising policies to encourage alternative modes. Traffic restraint and the reallocation of roadspace should also be introduced.
- 5.6 The Structure Plan therefore seeks to encourage alternative modes of transport to the car, to discourage car use where appropriate alternatives are available, and to integrate transport with urban regeneration and planned development. The successful implementation of this strategy requires a four-way partnership between local authorities, the transport operators, developers and occupiers of property, and the travelling public. This comprehensive approach will include:
- a ‘carrot and stick’ approach to promotion of sustainable modes harnessed to parallel controls on car traffic;
 - infrastructure for a comprehensive and integrated pattern of rail and bus passenger services, incorporating better modal interchange;
 - traffic management measures, user charges, and controls on parking provision that restrict undesirable car use, give priority to non-car modes of travel and protect communities from the adverse effects of private motorised traffic;
 - transport and land use measures to make walking and cycling more attractive.
- 5.7 Policy 4 sets out the transportation and development strategy for key locations and transport corridors. It identifies 22 areas and corridors important to strategic travel patterns, and identifies priorities for transport improvements in each corridor. Integrated policy approaches for those locations which are important both for accommodating new development and in strategic travel patterns are detailed in Policies 5-14. Traffic reduction targets, and where possible modal split targets, should be set for all these sub-areas and corridors.

Encouraging alternatives to the car

- 5.8 The overall approach to transport in the Plan recognises the increasing level of road congestion in the area and the damage it does to accessibility. Even if it were environmentally acceptable, more road capacity would accelerate the growth in road traffic by accommodating trips previously suppressed by congested conditions. The solution will instead lie in better use of the existing transport infrastructure. Accessibility can be improved by ensuring that the more efficient transport modes are no longer hindered by congestion.
- 5.9 A key component of the overall strategy is to give greater priority to encouraging alternatives to the car and securing a greater range of transport choice. A combination of measures will be required, including provision by the public transport operators of a more frequent and wider choice of services, with fewer delays and greater convenience for the passenger. It also requires the reallocation of roadspace to provide congestion-free priority routes for buses and cyclists; more emphasis on rail routes immune from road traffic delay; full exploitation of the potential for water transport; and enhanced opportunities for walking and cycling particularly over short distances, including reduced conflict with motor vehicles and increased safety.
- 5.10 These priorities underlie the locational strategy and policies of the Plan. They must be supported by non-land use measures including appropriate travel and parking charges, information, education and the encouragement of commuter plans by employers. The transport priorities of the Plan also need to be underpinned by appropriate bids in Local Transport Plans, contributions from developers, parking controls, and financial measures to manage vehicle movement and to fund the provision of alternatives to private car use. The strategy cannot be achieved by local authorities alone, but will involve the co-operation of many bodies and the travelling public themselves. Following the agreement to adopt Policy 47, new legislation for traffic restraint has now been introduced in the Transport Act 2000; this includes reference to Travel Plans (previously known as Green Travel Plans).

POLICY 47

Priority will be given in transport programmes, and in planning new developments, to improving alternative modes of travel to the car, including public transport, walking and cycling, and encouraging their use; discouraging car use; and improving road safety.

This will be achieved through a partnership approach between local authorities, transport providers, commercial employers, including through planning obligations, and the general public. Programmes will particularly target areas

with most traffic congestion, following the area/corridor approach of Policies 4 and 48; and areas in which new development takes place.

The above priorities will be pursued through traffic management measures, parking controls and all other transport schemes, including traffic restraint measures becoming available through new legislation; in planning and implementing facilities for travel to and from new developments by non-car modes, particularly improved public transport, to which developers will be expected to contribute where appropriate; and in measures provided at workplaces, shops and leisure facilities in association with Green Travel Plans. Schemes will be implemented taking account of their likely impact on traffic reduction.

Bus Transport

5.11 The bus has a critical importance for transport policy as being the one type of motorised transport which is both space-efficient and flexible enough to offer good penetration of developed areas. However, it is necessary to overcome problems of poor reliability caused by traffic congestion, and a poor image which suffers by comparison with modern cars. The necessary upgrades can be most effective in coordinated packages on particular transport corridors, through quality partnerships between local authorities and operators. Crucial to such packages is the introduction of bus lanes, “bus gates”, and appropriate traffic controls to give buses a decisive advantage and reduce roadspace available for other traffic. Such bus priorities can stimulate increased bus use, and should be targeted on links with the worst congestion. Cyclists, taxis and motorcyclists should continue to be permitted to use bus lanes in the area.

5.12 A more frequent and comprehensive bus service network should be encouraged. Land use policies should secure new development patterns conducive to viable bus routes and convenient passenger access, including the introduction of services at an early stage in major new development. Alongside the funding of socially necessary bus services, attention needs to be given to corridors linking residential areas with high unemployment to employment locations. Priority should also be given to rural bus services, and to non-radial and cross-centre services in the urban areas, because of the facility they offer for through journeys avoiding changes.

POLICY 48

Local Transport Plans will provide for whole corridor improvements to bus transport, to offer bus travel a decisive advantage and achieve a key role for buses in meeting transport needs within the Structure Plan period. These will embrace, in tandem

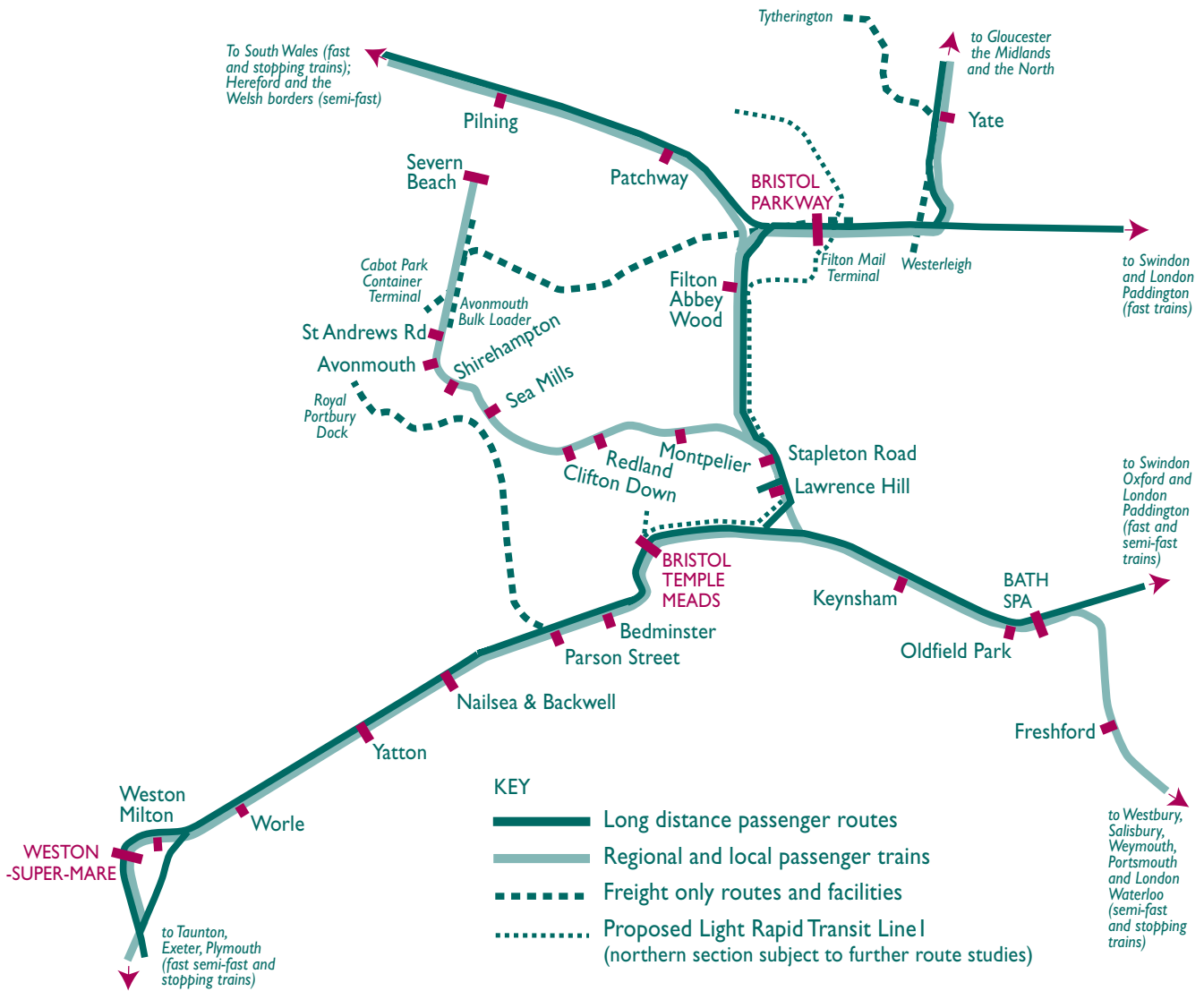
- a management of the road system to achieve bus priorities, including controls on car parking; and**
- b improved facilities at stops; better buses, more services, improved frequencies, interchange and information.**

Improvements will take place in corridors suffering the worst traffic congestion as a high priority, and wherever possible will also secure improvements for cyclists and pedestrians, and better environmental conditions. The use of bus priorities will normally be extended to cyclists, hackney carriages, motorcyclists, designated emergency vehicles, and where appropriate to cars with more than 1 occupant. Provision will also be made for bus routes linking areas of high unemployment, outlying towns and villages, and major residential developments to large employment centres. The principal bus development corridors for application of this policy are identified in the area policies in Policies 4-15.

Light Rail and Heavy Rail

- 5.13 Encouragement and support, sometimes financial, needs to be given to the improvement of rail passenger services and associated facilities. The local rail network is a valuable asset, unaffected by road congestion, which could be better used by means of some low cost improvements. Rail can offer a higher level of reliability than most other powered modes, but has inflexible routes. The opening of Filton Abbey Wood station, with new services to Bristol and Bath, has been successful, and the improvement of Weston-super-Mare - Bristol - Yate services is the subject of joint initiatives between local authorities and the rail industry. The Plan recognises the potential value of the rail corridors connecting Weston-super-Mare, Bristol, Gloucester, and Bath and Wiltshire in serving new developments.
- 5.14 Track and signalling improvements, increased rolling stock capacity, and the development of rapid transit are seen by Railtrack and the operating companies as necessary for the improved services which will justify new and upgraded stations. The formation of the new Strategic Rail Authority, and the prospect of more proactive future operating franchises, justify the inclusion in the policy of provision for new developments, including the safeguarding of future station sites. At Avonmouth/Severnside, further consideration should be given to the scope for enhanced rail services to the area, taking account of longer-term potential and the possibility of conversion to rapid transit. All rail service improvements should be complemented by promotion directed particularly at car users.

Rail Network



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5.15 The enhancement of bus services should be accompanied by the implementation where appropriate of rapid transit services. Since funding constraints mean that it will take a long time to develop a large rapid transit network, the main concern of the Structure Plan should be to offer safeguarding of routes and related infrastructure and sites. Transport studies have established a line between the North Fringe and Central Bristol, with park and ride facilities, as likely to secure a significant increase in the proportion of travel by public transport. This has emerged in evaluation against conventional bus, guided bus and heavy rail alternatives and other rapid transit routes. Currently, this is being taken forward by Bristol and South Gloucestershire Councils, with submission of a business case bid and a Transport and Works Act Order application. Completion of this line should be followed by detailed consideration of extending the network to the Long Ashton park and ride site, south Bristol, Yate, Emersons Green, Avonmouth/Sevenside and Portishead. Some potential for a rapid transit network for Bath has also been identified.

POLICY 49

Provision will be made in Local Plans and Local Transport Plans for improved rail transport by identifying, protecting and implementing proposals to promote and enhance rail services and improved infrastructure, and to introduce rapid transit systems, both as attractive alternatives to the car and to serve the Plan's locational strategy. These will include the proposals indicated in Policies 4-15.

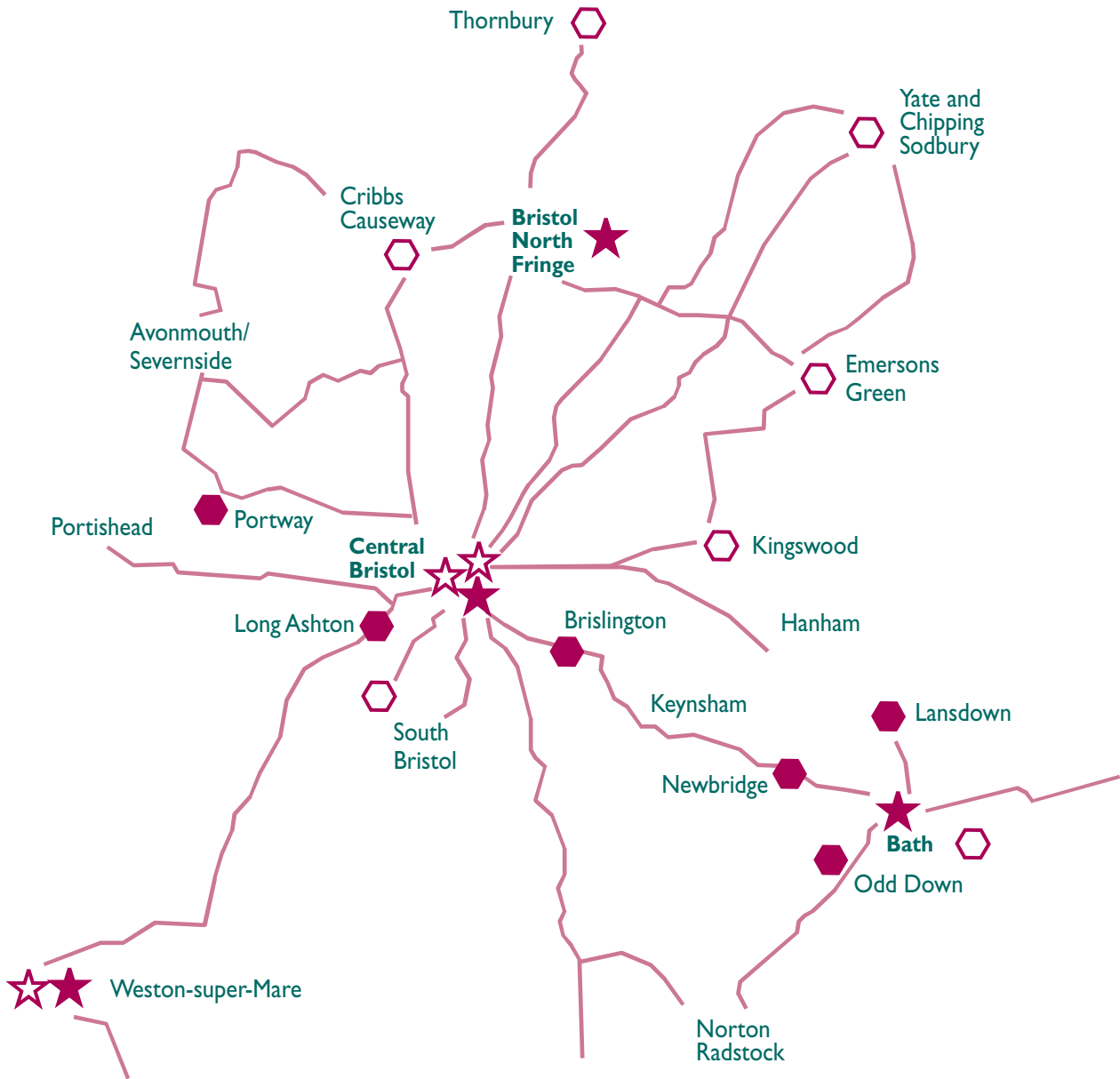
Provision will be made for increasing the capacity of rail infrastructure by improvements to track and signalling, and by safeguarding

- (a) land required for new stations and associated park and ride facilities with significant car to rail modal shift potential; and**
- (b) rapid transit routes planned as part of an integrated transport network.**

Improvement to heavy rail will be promoted for medium-long distance travel and commuting as an alternative to the car, in corridors of road congestion and heavy demand for travel.

Priority for developing an extended rapid transit network will be given to congested urban corridors with heavy bus flows which can be more effectively handled by a rail based system. Such proposals will be assessed and developed in the context of all the options for meeting movement demands.

Existing and proposed interchanges including park and rides



Bus Service Improvement Corridors



Existing Major Interchanges



Existing Park and Rides



Potential future Park and Rides and Interchanges



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Interchanges including Park and Ride

- 5.16 Good passenger interchange facilities are fundamental to an integrated transport network. Although the Plan area has a complex pattern of trips, the existing public transport network is relatively simple. While the variety of services needs to be increased, there are limits on the number of services which are practicable and viable, and on their complexity. Many journeys will still require a change of vehicle, and this can be a deterrent to bus travel in particular. However, park and ride has shown that interchange can be acceptable given good connections and quality. Opportunities for enhancing interchange facilities between public transport services, and between them and other modes, should be safeguarded and promoted. Such facilities will often be appropriate at rail stations, bus stations, groups of bus stops used by different routes, and at new park and ride sites.
- 5.17 Existing and proposed interchanges, including park and ride sites, are discussed in the locationally specific Policies 4-15, and are shown on page 124. Enhancing these facilities is essential to securing the comprehensive upgrading of the public transport network. Provision will vary from site to site, but should be accessible by walking, cycling and motorcycling, bus, taxi, and car. The essential features for successful interchanges, such as information, facilities, and good access, need to be accompanied by integrated through-fares agreements, and a significant improvement in area-wide public transport information.
- 5.18 Park and ride schemes serving Bath and Bristol have been successful in attracting former car users. These offer 4,500 spaces, and usage of all the schemes is increasing. Park and ride attracts people who would otherwise use a car for the whole journey, and helps demonstrate that bus is an acceptable transport mode, but in future must fit better with the pattern of existing public transport and interchanges. Car traffic in many cities has not reduced as a result of park and ride schemes, because new traffic has filled the road space and long stay parking spaces released by park and ride users. In some schemes, additional car trips have been generated between rural areas and the park and ride site. National guidance has identified a need to overcome these problems by promoting bus priorities, capacity reduction, and reduced city centre parking in association with the opening of sites. The introduction of smaller sites nearer to rural settlements, using ordinary bus services, will further reduce the need for car travel, but will require different management arrangements and service frequencies from established sites.

POLICY 50

Local Plans and Local Transport Plans will provide for the development and upgrading of passenger transport interchanges between different public transport services, private motor vehicles, cycling, and walking, to further the development of a fully integrated transport network. This will include bus stations, the airport, certain railway stations, city centre activity hubs, shopping and employment areas where bus services converge, and other multi-modal interchanges including park and ride sites. The principal locations with potential for developing interchange are included in Policies 4-15.

At these interchanges the provision of co-ordinated information and attractive facilities for travellers will be priorities. Approach routes to them will be upgraded, in particular by provision of bus priorities and improved routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Secure parking for cars and bicycles will be provided.

Where strong movement demand exists from a variety of trip origins to a centre of activity, park and ride schemes that secure an overall reduction in car use will be promoted in conjunction with plans for rail, rapid transit, and bus services. Such schemes will be assessed against the potential for improving conventional public transport.

In implementing such schemes, complementary measures will be introduced:

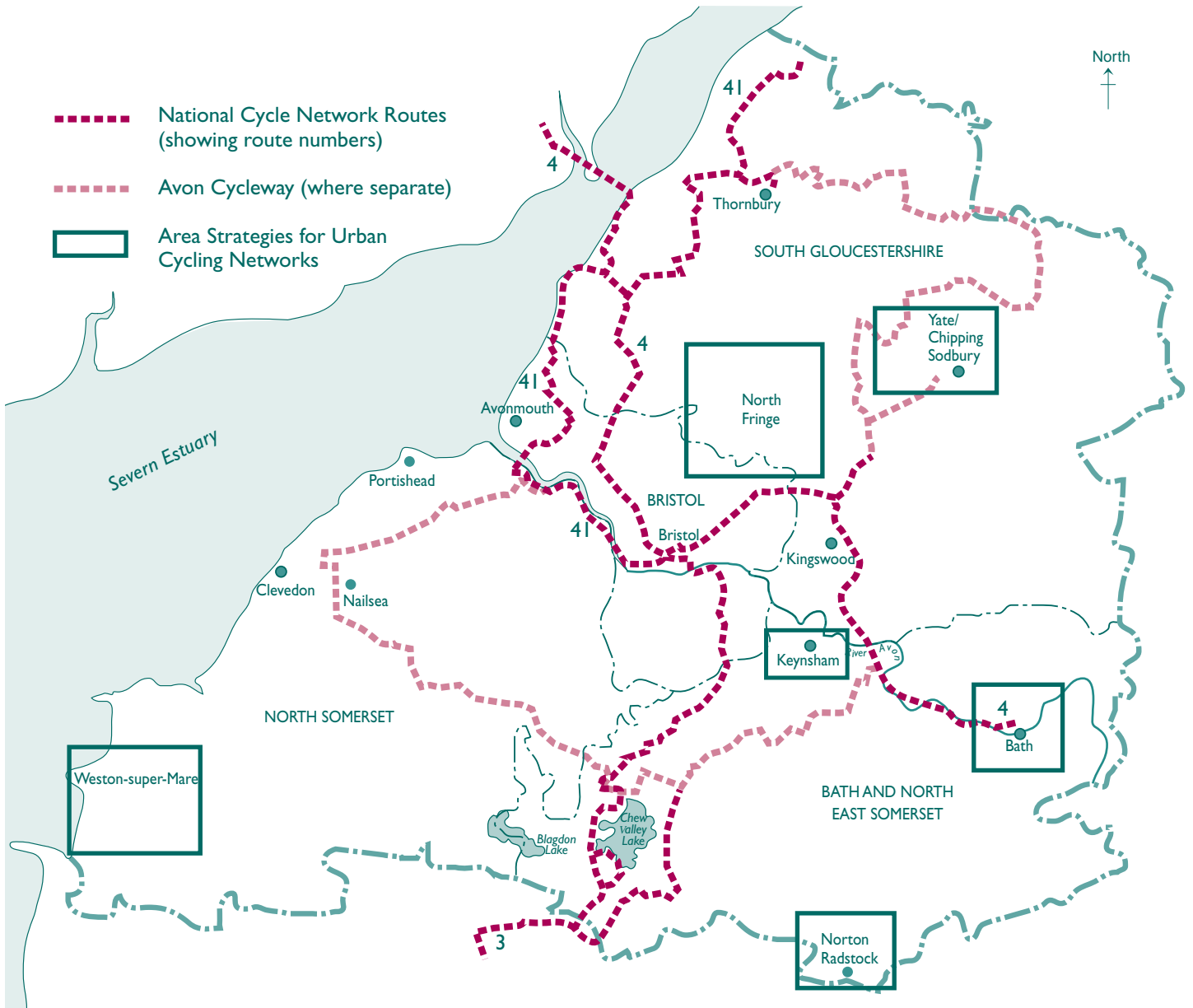
- i to give priority to buses, and reduce road space for general traffic, on substantial lengths of road between the park and ride site and the city or town centre, and**
- ii to manage central area car parking availability to ensure that the benefits of the park and ride scheme in reducing peak city centre traffic are realised.**

Opportunities will be sought for park and ride hub facilities serving more than one destination, and for park and ride sites nearer to rural settlements where trips originate, if these do not undermine existing rural transport provision.

Cycling and Walking

5.19 The Plan encourages provision for both walking and cycling. Both modes are important in implementing the Plan, and a common approach can be adopted at the strategic level. Walking, as the basic element of all transport, should be considered first in planning any scheme. Both walking and cycling networks should provide safe routes and minimise conflicts with motorised traffic. They should be readily accessible from residential areas and designed to link communities with local shopping centres, jobs, secondary schools and recreational areas. New residential development should include appropriate provision for both walking and cycling.

Strategic Provision for Cycling



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- 5.20 The physical environment for cyclists should be radically upgraded with primary cycle networks established as an integral part of the transport system. This will include that part of the National Cycle Network within the area. The National Cycle Strategy has set a target of doubling cycle trips between 1998 and 2002, and redoubling them by 2012; local targets should recognise these objectives. The main cycle networks in the area are shown on page 127.
- 5.21 Walking should be encouraged for short journeys in both urban and rural areas, with improved facilities for people with disabilities and mobility handicaps. Safe pedestrian routes to schools, local shops and other facilities, and to public transport, particularly for children, should be identified, safeguarded and enhanced. Where pedestrian volumes are recurrently large, such as in town centres, pedestrianisation and other improvements should be introduced. Severance resulting from wide and fast roads should be addressed by provision for crossings (normally surface) without imposing excessive pedestrian delay or circuitous routeing. Provision for convenient and safe pedestrian movement should be considered at an early stage in any transport or development scheme.
- 5.22 Recreational routes in the countryside will be encouraged in accordance with Policy 45. Strategic provision for walking routes, including the mainly recreational long-distance footpaths, is shown on page 129. The development of targets will be part of the strategy to encourage walking, for example on a corridor-by-corridor basis.

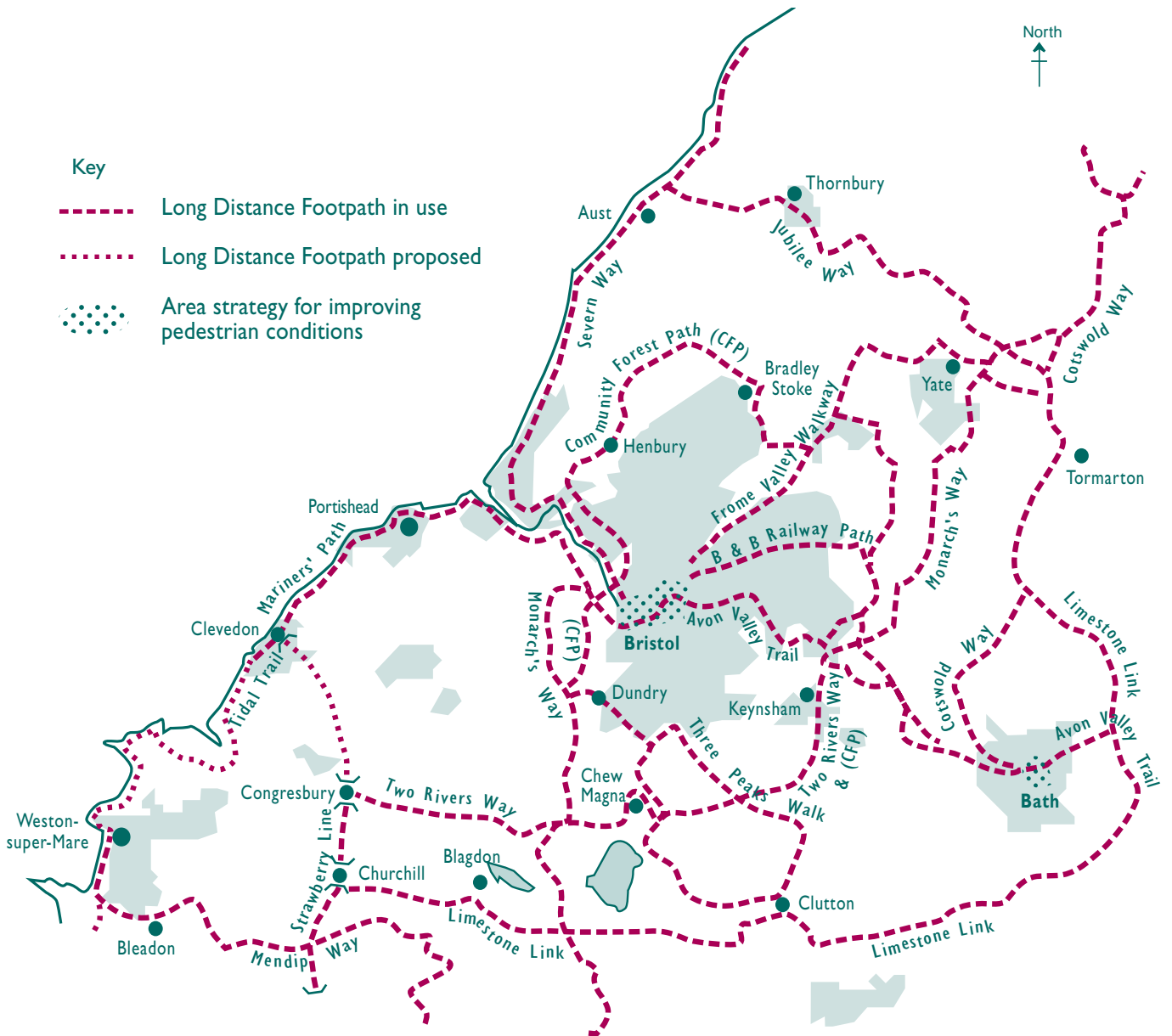
POLICY 51

The local planning authorities will promote walking and cycling to reduce energy use, pollution and traffic congestion and improve health. The priority given to walking will reflect its status as the basic element of movement in transport, and a positive strategy of developing walking routes pursued. Primary cycle networks, including the National Cycle Network will be defined, safeguarded, developed and enhanced, to include off-road sections and reallocated road space.

Pedestrian priority routes, other public rights of way, and routes in the cycle networks, will be developed that offer direct, convenient, attractive, and safe links from residential areas to local employment areas, shopping centres, community facilities, schools, public transport services, recreational facilities, and the countryside, resolving conflict with motorised traffic and accident risk, and in conjunction with building and access design and car parking control. The design of shared facilities will seek to resolve potential conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.

Pedestrian priority schemes and other measures will be introduced to improve the pedestrian environment, and reduce community severance and the threat of traffic, particularly in shopping areas and other areas with high pedestrian activity and/or a high level of danger to pedestrians.

Strategic Provision for Walking



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The road network will be managed to achieve integration of the cycle networks with it. Secure cycle parking will be provided. Targets for cycling and walking will be set in Local Transport Plans, to complement those of the National Cycling and Walking Strategies, and pursued, as a framework for implementing the networks. Provision will be sought for carriage of cycles on public transport .

Transport to overcome reduced mobility

5.23 The built environment and transport systems should aim progressively to meet the requirements of people with reduced mobility. Regulations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 will progressively affect the duties of employers, landlords, and providers of goods and services, including education and transport. Mobility may also be impaired by ill-health, old age, the need to transport children or luggage, or by low income alone. Many people have more than one of these disadvantages, and they tend to be compounded by lack of access to a car.

POLICY 52

Local Plans and Local Transport Plans will provide for facilities to help people with impaired mobility by securing:-

- i improvements in the pedestrian environment to overcome the effects of steep and uneven surfaces, narrow and obstructed footways and overhanging objects; and**
- ii appropriate facilities for transport including raised kerbs in association with accessible buses (on all services); ramps/ level access to trains and buses; easy access for wheelchairs to station platforms, taxi ranks, car parks, bus and coach stations and airport terminals; easily accessible car parking for disabled people; shopmobility centres; and community transport facilities.**

Disused Railways

5.24 Routes of disused and dismantled railways are invaluable for both long-and short-distance cycleways and footpaths, and being continuous over some distance they may also be valuable reserve assets for future powered transport. In general, therefore, they should be safeguarded from development for other uses, with allowance made for minor deviations from old trackbeds because of long-standing obstructions. Substantial lengths of such routes, evenly-graded compared with roads, remain in the plan area, and have strategic potential for a variety of transport purposes, although their use as highways will not generally be promoted. Since Policy 53 was agreed for adoption in 2000, the Bristol-

Portishead line has reopened for freight use, linking with Royal Portbury Dock. The Plan supports the future use of this line for passengers.

POLICY 53

Local Plans will safeguard routes of disused and dismantled railways as transport routes, with preference given to cycle/ walkways and public transport routes rather than highways, and these will include:

- i Bristol - Portishead**
- ii Bristol - Clutton - Radstock - Frome**
- iii Bristol - Mangotsfield - Yate and Bath**
- iv Bath - Combe Down**
- v Clevedon - Yatton - Winscombe**
- vi Hallatrow - Limpley Stoke**

Local Transport Plans will further progress the development of routes ii to vi as cycle/ walkways, on an interim basis if necessary.

Discouraging car use

5.25 Where there are acceptable alternatives, car use should be discouraged and reduced in order to maximise the scope for transferring trips to alternative modes, reducing congestion, environmental pollution and community severance. This is especially important for short journeys and for travel at peak times and along heavily congested corridors; in many rural areas, the car will remain the prime means of travel even at peak times. The approach requires land use policies that serve to minimise travel distances; measures to reduce the attractiveness of car travel where alternative modes are available or can be improved; and new initiatives such as road pricing and other fiscal measures not directly related to land use. When introducing such measures, it will be important that they occur in parallel with improvements to public transport, cycling and walking, and do not simply shift road traffic to other areas.

Car Parking

5.26 Discouraging car use requires, in particular, appropriate strategic parking policies to manage the relationship between land use and transport supply. Public and private parking provision should reflect the character or accessibility profile of the surrounding transport network, including public transport services and traffic congestion. In the centres of Bath, Bristol, Weston-super-Mare and other

locations where comprehensive public transport services are available and there is a need to restrain commuter traffic flows, long-stay car parking provision will need to take account of maintaining commercial viability, but should not extend significantly beyond operational requirements. Instead, public parking spaces should be aimed at short-stay, off-peak visitors required to support business, retail and leisure functions, while recognising the particular needs of those with reduced mobility.

- 5.27 Parking standards for new development will be set in cooperation between authorities, to avoid distortions of competition. In new residential development, the authorities will encourage developers to minimise parking and adopt “car free” areas. Harmonisation of pricing regimes should be achieved. Decriminalised parking controls, enforced by local authorities, should be adopted where appropriate to improve integration with other traffic and parking management measures.

POLICY 54

Car parking provision will be controlled by the local authorities, in co-operation, to discourage car use in tandem with encouraging travel by non-car modes, and to support the transport strategy by applying the following principles:

- i reducing public long-stay parking for urban centres;**
- ii limiting, and reducing where appropriate, private non-residential parking; (see Policy 59 for PNR parking in new developments); and**
- iii controlling and reducing commuter parking in residential areas.**

Opportunities for regulating parking and road space using new legislation will be kept under review, and exploited where these support the structure plan strategy. Authorities will not seek a competitive development advantage from the application of charges or controls in another authority, but will regulate development to prevent this occurring, and to prevent development trends undermining traffic reduction objectives.

Traffic Management

- 5.28 Traffic management measures should give priority to improving highway safety and air quality, discouraging car use, reducing traffic/ environmental conflicts and supporting the public transport, cycling and walking policies of the Plan. They will include the reallocation of road space, with the effect of reducing car traffic. Speed reduction measures, road narrowing and closures, and more circuitous routes, should be used to suppress car traffic, particularly for short journeys and where provision for alternative modes is adequate. Appropriate

traffic management measures will be implemented as priorities at locations with a high incidence of road accidents, and areas with recurring traffic congestion.

- 5.29 Traffic calming should be extended to the majority of residential areas, and required in all new developments to secure road safety and environmental benefits. “Rat running” to avoid congestion should be targeted. Priority will be given to communities adversely affected by the effects of existing road traffic, the impacts of new development and highway schemes, to the main shopping centres, routes to schools, and to other areas where there are large numbers of pedestrians. On country roads, excessive speeds and unsuitable traffic flows may be controlled using the Quiet Roads concept promoted by the Countryside Commission.
- 5.30 Traffic signals should include provision for pedestrians and those with disabilities, and priority for public transport and cyclists. Extending the urban traffic control system in Bristol City Centre will be considered, in particular to include radial routes. Systems to manage the highway network in favour of buses, cyclists and pedestrians wherever possible are being introduced in Bath, and will follow in all appropriate urban areas. Schemes to enhance the efficiency of highways will only be introduced after the implications have been addressed of any additional traffic generated.

POLICY 55

Traffic management programmes will give priority to discouraging unnecessary car use, reducing risk of collisions, and promoting walking, cycling, public transport and environmental improvement.

Lower speed limits, measures to slow traffic, and schemes to re-allocate road space, will be widely introduced in bus development corridors, in residential areas, rural settlements and shopping centres, on country lanes used by through traffic, on routes to schools (for which strategies should be developed with appropriate targets) and in other areas of high pedestrian concentration.

In pursuit of road safety targets, programmes will implement low-cost measures that do not encourage traffic growth, and incorporate safety audits of other transport proposals.

Reducing the adverse impact of motor vehicle use

- 5.31 Measures will be introduced to reduce the adverse environmental effects and safety hazards caused by continuing car use, heavy goods vehicles, and in some cases also public transport through the management and development of the transport network.

Route Hierarchies

5.32 The function of road, rail and footpath links in meeting transport and development objectives is important and will be kept under review. Highways for carrying long and short distance traffic need to be distinguished from each other, taking into account the requirements of the locational strategy. Routes with strategic significance in the Plan area are identified on the Key Diagram; current Trunk Roads and National Primary Routes on page 135. Existing highways, including cycleways, footways and footpaths, will need to be maintained to a standard sufficient to provide a safe network for the appropriate forms of travel.

POLICY 56

Local Plans and/or Local Transport Plans will include :

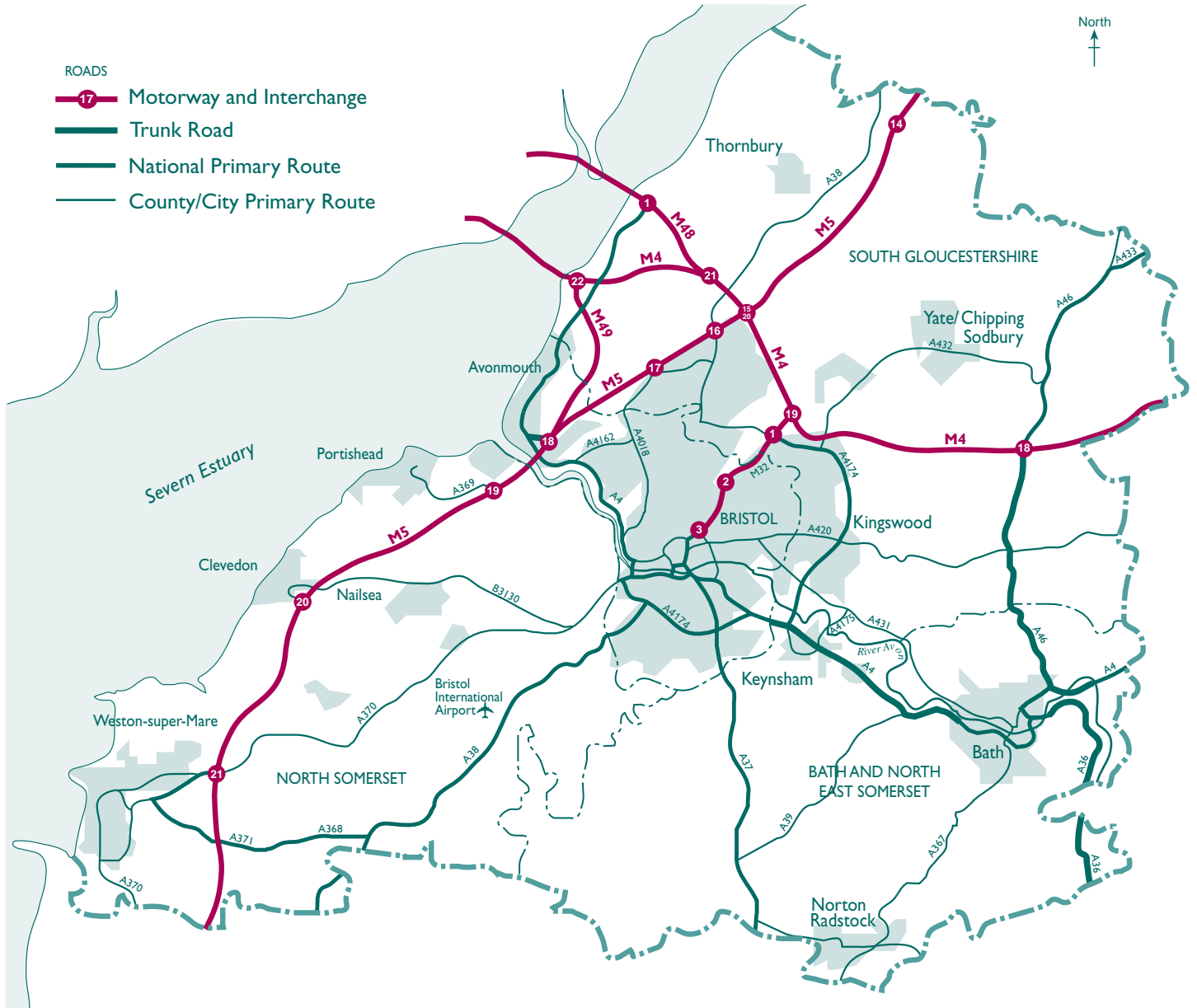
- (i) a route hierarchy that guides (a) the location of new development ; (b) usage appropriate to the local environment by different classes of traffic, through design, traffic management and signposting; and (c) highway maintenance priorities; to include**
- (ii) a heavy vehicle network, designated with due consideration given to the locations of large freight generators, distributors and users.**

The routes and areas of strategic importance shown on the Key Diagram, and included in Policies 4-15, are strategic corridors for long-and medium-distance through traffic, and priority development of bus and rail infrastructure. Within these areas and corridors, and elsewhere, the route hierarchy shown in Local Plans will identify railways, roads suitable for long- and medium-distance through traffic use, roads to be developed as bus development routes, and roads where local travel is to be given priority, showing the cycle and walking networks. These categories will be used to determine the relative allocation of road space to different modes. Local Plans will steer the siting of region-serving developments to the strategic areas and corridors.

Freight

5.33 European Union regulations now permit 44 tonne vehicles on British roads. The concerns of local communities about the effects of these heavier vehicles need to be addressed. The Government's "Sustainable Distribution", and positive attitudes in the rail industry, make possible a new consideration of freight transport policy. Many of the proposals in Policy 57 can be promoted under the new partnerships which need to be fostered between local authorities and freight operators. Support can also be brought to bear by local authorities through the consultation procedures on Track Access Grants and Freight Facilities Grants. Support should also be offered through land assembly and safeguarding.

Main Road Network Classification



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POLICY 57

Local Plans will include policies for the environmental impacts of freight transport to be minimised through provision for

- i large freight transport users to locate at sites with rail or water access, or easy potential for such access, and where this cannot be achieved at sites close to motorway junctions;**
- ii safeguarding of existing and potential freight accesses to operational rail tracks, where the potential exists for future use of rail or water transport;**
- iii new sidings, depots and railfreight services;**
- iv intermodal freight terminals, in the first instance at Avonmouth;**
- v break-bulk or transhipment facilities; and**
- vi heavy vehicle routes, and controls over HGV access on other routes, and at certain times.**

Road Improvements

5.34 Research has shown that, in the short term, people have relatively fixed time budgets for travelling, and, when offered time savings, tend to make longer journeys than before. Hence, on a congested road network, additional capacity will tend to lead to induced traffic growth and longer trips. This may conflict with traffic reduction objectives and makes it harder to promote alternative modes.

5.35 It is important to ensure that road investment does not prejudice the achievement of the Plan. Those major improvements to the non-trunk road network not already reviewed should be re-assessed, with priority given to public transport operation, safety, clear environmental benefits, prevention of new traffic generation or abstraction from public transport, and their ability to deal with the traffic consequences of the locational strategy. Improvements should be accompanied by appropriate traffic management measures to reduce traffic capacity elsewhere and, where appropriate, to safeguard local communities from the adverse consequences of additional traffic flows arising from road improvements.

POLICY 58

Proposals for alterations to the non-trunk road network will be assessed, and advanced only where:

- i the improved access will assist urban regeneration or address problems resulting from planned development; or**
- ii they are necessary for the solution of a severe road safety or environmental problem; and**
- iii the potential for benefits to safety, the environment and public transport operations are clear; and**
- iv no reduction is likely in existing, or future, public transport usage; and**
- v all alternatives giving priority to other modes than the car have been considered; and**
- vi no significant reduction in journey time will result from car traffic along a main road corridor used for commuting; and**
- vii facilities for pedestrians and cyclists are retained or enhanced.**

Transport in new developments

5.36 Conditions on the highway network and the potential for enhancing public transport will be major considerations in locating new development. Safe and convenient transport links should be provided between home, work, school and shopping locations and the wider transport network.

5.37 New development attracting many journeys will be located where there is the most potential to achieve a shift from car use. Locations offering railfreight facilities or good access to the strategic highway network, can support developments serving regional or national markets, including major freight distribution depots, that attract relatively few local trips but many lorry movements. This focus on the most appropriate locations will discourage traffic from using inappropriate routes and minimise conflict with local traffic and the disruption of local communities.

5.38 New development should contribute towards enhanced provision for travel by alternatives to the car. Travel Plans or Statements, which incorporate inducements to switch mode such as discounted public transport season tickets, should be adopted within commercial developments. Controls should ensure that shortages of car parking in such circumstances do not lead to on-street parking that creates congestion and safety problems and conflicts with the requirements of local residents.

POLICY 59

Local Plans will provide for new development to:

- i be located where the travel characteristics of the development are compatible with the character and capacity of, and conditions on, the existing and proposed transport network; and where the potential for minimising travel and maximising public transport use is realised, in particular through ensuring that trip intensive activities are readily accessible by public transport;**
- ii observe standards of density conducive to the viable operation of public transport;**
- iii secure the necessary improvements to transport supply, where appropriate on a phased basis, to deal fully with the effects of trips generated by the development, with an emphasis on providing additional facilities for public transport, walking and cycling, discouraging car and lorry use, and maintaining safety;**
- iv be designed to include within the development parking for cycles and motorcycles and land for public transport purposes; orientation of frontages to face existing public transport routes; safe, convenient access for pedestrians and cyclists; and direct access to local facilities and public transport, including for people with impaired mobility, to facilitate the operation of public transport including, where appropriate, enhancing existing routes without undue diversion;**
- v limit car parking provision to maximum levels related to land use, environmental conditions and the availability of alternative modes, and at the same time seek improvements in accessibility by non-car modes, with due regard to the needs of people who are mobility impaired;**
- vi meet only operational requirements where there are effective alternative means of transport or where highway congestion or traffic pollution have reached, or are forecast to reach, unacceptable levels or agreed targets; and**
- vii minimise the space devoted to parking and traffic circulation in order to achieve higher development densities.**

Local Plans will also encourage site owners to review existing provision on these criteria, and to examine the opportunities for regulating and constraining parking supply to discourage the use of cars.

Environmental impacts of transport schemes

5.39 Major new transport infrastructure will be conditional on consideration of its environmental impacts, including opportunities for environmental gain. When planning large public transport schemes, consideration will be given to the scope for reduced emissions and fuel usage through lower car use. Impacts on the environment, caused by pollution and the consumption of land and energy, should be identified, with provision made for appropriate safeguards and compensatory improvements.

POLICY 60

New transport facilities will only be permitted where the loss of environmental features, environmental disturbance and impact, and consumption of natural resources are minimised. This will cover noise, effects on air quality, light pollution, surface runoff, effects on wildlife habitats and on the cohesion of communities.

Environmental safeguards and compensating improvements will be identified. Consideration of the environmental effects of schemes, appropriate to their size, will include any associated works and opportunities for environmental gain, including modal shift effects. This will be achieved through Local Plan policies, planning conditions and obligations and design provisions.

Improving national and international links

5.40 The prosperity of the area will be reinforced by improvements to national and international transport links. As well as rail and road links, these include port and airport facilities. Policy 14 sets out proposals for the future of Avonmouth/Severnside, including the dock facilities; and Policy 15 sets out proposals for Royal Portbury.

Airports

5.41 Proposals are in hand for the improvement of Bristol International Airport, to maintain its role and meet the rising demand for air travel from a regional airport. Forecasts show demand rising rapidly, with perhaps 5 million passengers passing through an airport in the Bristol area in 2013 if capacity allows, compared with 2 million travelling through the airport in 1999.

5.42 Expansion at Bristol International Airport would meet the forecast demand for commercial travel up to at least 2011 without requiring the extension of development into the surrounding Green Belt. Diverting air traffic to locations

outside the area would lead to long journeys to more distant airports as well as to adverse consequences for local jobs and for the competitiveness of the local economy. Environmental safeguards and investment in improvements to transport links to the Airport will be needed to alleviate adverse effects on the local environment and highways. Improvements to aircraft continue to be developed to reduce noise, and strict emission controls on the ground will continue to be necessary. Other locations including Filton are not suitable for major civil airports, though the policy supports provision for general aviation subject to certain criteria.

POLICY 61

Commercial air passenger and freight services serving the requirements of the surrounding region will be handled by Bristol International Airport at Lulsgate, and proposals for such services at other locations in the Plan area will be resisted. Bristol International Airport will be encouraged to improve and maintain its role in services, provided:

- i appropriate transport measures, including improvements to access by public transport, are secured with a reduction in the proportion of trips to the airport by car; recurring congestion is not caused on the road network and**
- ii environmental impacts such as emissions are minimised, and noise is not an unacceptable problem for local residents; and**
- iii any development there respects the integrity of the surrounding Green Belt.**

Local Plans will contain provision for general aviation facilities on the basis of criteria which will include the safeguarding of aircraft operations at existing airfields, environmental impacts - particularly noise - and access.

Long distance surface travel

5.43 In relation to inter-regional or international travel by rail or road, the priority is to reduce congestion and emissions on the motorway network, without encouraging additional, more local, traffic. This objective needs to be achieved by a combination of access and other management solutions, and through improving and promoting long-distance rail and coach services. Development close to motorway junctions will need to be controlled, and measures introduced to minimise side effects on local roads. Promotion of rail and water freight is addressed in Policy 57.

5.44 The Government's Multi-Modal Corridor Studies conducted in 2001-2002 in this area will be a vehicle for such change. The local authorities are also committed to a solution of the environmental problems caused by heavy traffic on the main A36/A46 Trunk Road route, especially in Bath.

POLICY 62

On the major core motorway network in the Plan area, and the parallel long-distance rail routes, identified as TENS routes, provision for travel will be made through a multi-modal approach to corridor development, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions²; the Highways Agency; and rail companies, to develop route strategies and to identify and progress management measures for motorway traffic, avoiding new traffic generation, together with improvement and promotion of alternative modes. These are :

- **the London to Bristol to South Wales corridor**
- **the Midlands to South West corridor**
- **the Cardiff / Bristol to South Coast route currently passing through Bath.**

To limit congestion, and foster a modal shift from cars and HGVs on motorways to public transport, the Councils and the Highways Agency will co-operate in

- (i) regulating new developments close to motorway junctions to achieve modal split targets;**
- (ii) implementing measures to control the flow of traffic onto and off the core motorway network; and**
- (iii) facilitating measures to improve public transport.**

² *Now the Department for Transport*

Chapter 6

THE NEXT STEPS - GETTING THINGS DONE



Putting the Plan into effect

- 6.1 Responsibility for implementing the Structure Plan rests with the four local unitary authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, which have worked jointly together to prepare the Plan. However, most of the action required will involve some form of co-operation or partnership between local authorities, landowners, transport operators and other agencies. Most Structure Plan policies can be implemented in a variety of ways, so it is not always possible to identify which agencies will be involved in implementing each policy. Nor is it possible to provide meaningful estimates of the financial implications, such as the capital costs of new infrastructure or the revenue impacts of new development, or what resources will be available (see paragraphs 6.10 to 6.20 below).
- 6.2 Structure planning is not completed by the adoption of this plan. There will be a continuing need for liaison between the local authorities, Government, other public agencies and the private sector to explain and promote the policies, to pursue their implementation, to monitor their achievement, and to review the plan. A review of the plan, to update specific policies and roll it forward to 2016, is required by Regional Planning Guidance. This review is already under way. It should not need to change the underlying aims of this plan and may result in only limited alterations to some policies. However, the outcome of the review may also be affected by the Government's proposals for reform of the planning system in the Planning Green Paper ("Delivering a Fundamental Change", DTLR, December 2001), which may result in new strategic planning arrangements.

The local authorities

- 6.3 Structure Plan policies will be taken forward by the four unitary authorities through their Local Plans, Local Transport Plans, development control and other procedures. Community Strategies are also an important addition to the policy framework of local authorities. The authorities will need to certify the conformity of existing and new Local Plans with the Structure Plan. Proposals for specific areas or sites will be included in Local Plans and may be supported by planning briefs, urban design frameworks, area strategies, or other kinds of supplementary planning guidance to resolve details of implementation. In some cases, such as the Avonmouth/Sevenside area, a joint planning brief and agreements involving more than one authority will be needed (see Chapter 2). Local Plans will also contain policies on the means to achieve certain requirements, including the basis of contributions

by new development towards affordable housing, transport infrastructure and other facilities, through planning obligations. Following the Planning Green Paper, Local Plans may be replaced by Local Development Frameworks. Changes in the system of planning obligations have also been proposed which could have important implications for the provision of affordable housing and new infrastructure.

- 6.4 Many journeys within the Structure Plan area cross local authority boundaries. Extensive co-operation is therefore needed between local authorities, other public sector agencies, transport providers and developers to deliver the transport and other services which will be required for sustainable development. Implementing some Structure Plan policies will rely on powers and resources of the authorities that are held through functions such as housing, environmental management, education, social services or economic development. There are also local initiatives such as Local Agenda 21 or town centre strategies, which involve other partners. Increasingly, many local policies will be pursued through a Local Strategic Partnership.

The private sector

- 6.5 Implementing most planning policies depends on private sector investment. This is true of most house building, industrial and office accommodation, and most public transport infrastructure. The pace of development activity is therefore subject to economic conditions, which determine the growth of output and incomes, and changes in prices and interest rates. Development plans do, however, give the market some positive guidance about the long-term directions of development. They promote investment that is consistent with the objectives of sustainable development as well as control development that is inconsistent with those objectives. Increasingly, innovative solutions to problems such as traffic congestion and pollution rely on co-operation between local government and the private sector. Examples include travel plans (in which firms encourage their employees to travel to work by public transport, cycling or on foot); “quality partnerships” between public transport operators and local authorities to improve the services and their operating conditions; and planning agreements for new development. The four structure plan authorities are also seeking to implement with the rail industry a joint, long-term strategy for rail transport.

Other public agencies

- 6.6 Public agencies such as English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the Highways Agency have been consulted in preparing the Structure Plan. The Plan's policies are intended to help achieve their long-term plans and programmes and those of other agencies. The Highways Agency and Strategic Rail Authority also have important roles working with the local authorities to plan improvements in transport and help to ensure that development takes place in sustainable ways.
- 6.7 In the South West Region, economic and planning strategies are brought together through the Regional Assembly, which currently includes representatives from both local authorities and "social and economic partners". The Assembly is a scrutiny body for the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA). It is also the "regional planning body", which drafts and monitors RPG for approval by the Secretary of State. These arrangements are also subject to change following the Planning Green Paper and the White Paper on regional governance.
- 6.8 SWRDA is an important partner in several major developments in the area, including Temple Quay and Harbourside in Bristol and projects in Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Severnside. Its Regional Strategy, first published in April 2000, is a statement of general principles for development, which is consistent with the Structure Plan. Further details are contained in Frameworks for Action and sub-regional strategies, which are being developed with "sub-regional partnerships".
- 6.9 The sub-regional economic partnership for the area covered by this Structure Plan is the West of England Strategic Partnership (WESP). WESP draws on the participation of local authorities, economic development, training and other agencies, and the voluntary sector, to liaise with SWRDA on priority projects, strategic monitoring and other issues affecting this area.

Resources

- 6.10 Local Government funding has traditionally comprised a mix of locally-generated revenue from Council Tax and allocations from Central Government for capital and revenue: borrowing approvals and grants for specific projects or programmes, distributed according to various needs formulae. Funding regimes for local government are currently undergoing change, following the White Paper: "Strong Local Leadership - Quality Public Services" of December 2001.

- 6.11 In future, controls on local authority borrowing (credit approvals) will be replaced by a more flexible system of self-regulation in which local authorities will be able to borrow what they can afford (the “Prudential Capital Finance System”). Local authorities will have to present corporate capital strategies and a three-year revenue budget. Solutions are still being considered to the questions of how to deliver national investment priorities, contain overall spending and distribute revenue support for borrowing, without the system of credit approvals.
- 6.12 Government will continue to support local authorities’ capital investment by revenue or capital grants. There will also be special grants to support deals made under the Public Finance Initiative. Most of the Government’s support for capital investment will be provided through the “Single Capital Pot”: a cross-service allocation introduced in 2002/03, distributed mainly according to a needs-based formula. Capital funding for Local Transport Plans will be included in the Single Capital Pot as a block allocation, with the exception of major schemes.
- 6.13 Investment programmes of other public agencies, such as the Highways Agency, the Strategic Rail Authority and the Housing Corporation will also be important to the achievement of Structure Plan policies. The local authorities will be liaising with the Highways Agency on the implications of its national strategy for primary roads and the results of the Government’s Multi-Modal Transport Studies. The joint Rail Strategy, agreed by the Joint Committee in June 2000, forms a basis for bids to the Strategic Rail Authority for investment in the local rail network as well as negotiations on new rail passenger franchises. Officers of the four authorities and the Joint Unit are liaising on the assessment and monitoring of affordable housing, in response to the Housing Corporation’s move towards allocating funds on the basis of a Regional Strategy rather than a Housing Needs Index. There is also action through WESP to influence the investment programmes of SWRDA.
- 6.14 Revenue grants are also currently under review. Some 75% of local authority revenue is currently funded by centrally administered taxes (including Business Rates). The Standard Spending Assessment approach to distributing revenue grant will be replaced in 2003/04 by a mixture of ring-fenced, targeted and formula-based grants. There will be a move away from bidding for individual grants, based on specific plans or proposals, and area-based grants. There will be more emphasis on targeted grants directed to specific authorities (such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund) and the use of local Public Service Agreements to reflect local targets and outcomes, with extra freedom for high-performing authorities.

- 6.15 In future, formulae will be based more on trends and less on one year's figures. This should be fairer to authorities where, for example, there has been continuing population growth rather than a large change in a single year. There will also be floors and ceilings on formula grant to limit annual fluctuations. It remains to be seen whether this approach will solve the problem experienced by local authorities with fast-growing populations (such as South Gloucestershire) that SSAs failed to keep pace with the financial demands resulting from population growth.
- 6.16 Area and project-based bids will still apply to some funds distributed by the Regional Development Agency and European Union. Following changes in European Structural Funds from 2000 (the Fifth Community Framework), there is wider access to European funds for this area, for parts of Bristol which now qualify under the new Objective 2 programme and for other areas under Objective 3 for social funding.
- 6.17 The Government intends to introduce a measure of local influence on Business Rate revenues by means of Business Improvement Districts where an additional business rate may be levied by agreement between the local authority and a majority of business occupiers. Details are still to be worked up.
- 6.18 Most of the resources required to implement the Structure Plan will be those of the private sector, which will depend on conditions in the national economy and local markets. Private sector investment can be influenced through the planning system in a number of ways including obligations, which attach to planning permissions and can achieve a number of planning aims: ranging from the provision of transport infrastructure to the provision of affordable housing and contributions to social facilities.
- 6.19 Successive Governments have pursued a variety of initiatives to harness private sector investment in support of public projects, including the Private Finance Initiative and Public Private Partnerships. Private finance may therefore be involved in developing major public projects through a variety of financing and operating arrangements, which may involve transfer of ownership, leasing or other charging arrangements.
- 6.20 *"The 1990 Act requires planning authorities to have regard to the likely availability of resources when preparing the general policies and proposals in structure plans and UDP Part 1s. The plan will not give effective direction unless it is based on realistic assumptions about the resources likely to be available. In order to give consistency to market expectations, plans should take account of the financial policies of the various implementing agencies*

and the likely availability for use of land, labour and other material resources.” (PPG 12, Paragraph 6.27) It is clear that there is considerable uncertainty about the scale and nature of funding that will be available through local government, central government, other public agencies and the private sector. The availability of resources cannot therefore be confidently assessed to 2011. Continual monitoring and liaison between the local authorities, Government, other agencies and the private sector will be needed on the funding of structure plan policies.

Monitoring

6.21 National policy now places considerable emphasis on monitoring social, economic and environmental changes, and the effectiveness of policies. In accordance with the move towards sustainable development, the Government has published “A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the United Kingdom” (May 1999) which sets out suitable indicators that could be used to measure progress towards sustainable development. In relation to housing development in particular, the Government has laid stress on a “plan monitor and manage” approach in PPG 3: Housing and subsequent guidance.

6.22 The purposes of monitoring the Structure Plan include:

- to measure the achievement of policies, including the pace and location of development, transportation programmes and targets and other indicators of progress;
- to assess whether policies are helping to achieve the Plan’s objectives of sustainable development, or whether they need to be reviewed; and
- to consider whether the objectives remain necessary and sufficient to achieve sustainable development, in the light of events.

Monitoring will feed back into subsequent reviews of the Structure Plan, Local Plan reviews and development control decisions.

6.23 Arrangements for monitoring the Structure Plan include co-operation among the four authorities to monitor, as far as possible on a consistent basis, information relevant to the Plan. This will be co-ordinated by the Joint Strategic Planning and Transportation Unit, and will be linked with monitoring activity by central government, the Regional Assembly,

SWRDA, WESP, public agencies and other local authority departments, by sharing information and using common indicators wherever possible. A “Regional Observatory” is being developed to achieve better co-ordination of research and intelligence across the region.

- 6.24 Annual Structure Plan monitoring reports will be prepared in consultation with the unitary authorities, other public agencies, the private sector and voluntary organisations. Consultations with other agencies and the private sector will help to tap into all available sources of information available and encourage debate on the issues arising.
- 6.25 The Appendix provides a summary of key indicators and targets that will be used to monitor the guiding principles of the plan, as set out in chapter two. More detailed information on indicators in relation to specific policies, and on sources of information, methods and frequency of data collection and related national and regional targets, will be included in monitoring reports.

Appendix: Key Indicators used to measure the Guiding Principles of the Structure Plan

Main Principle Measured	Indicator	Other principles measured indirectly	Main Principle Measured
Principle 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● maintain the proportion of the Plan area's total population living in the urban areas of greater Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare; ● reduce the average length of journeys to work in urban and rural areas 	2,7,8,9	Urban areas as defined in Urban Housing Capacity Studies (UHCS) (or Principal Urban Areas when defined), small area population estimates, Census data, traffic surveys.
Principle 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● increase the proportion of new housing development taking place on previously developed land and buildings towards 60%; ● increase the proportion of new employment development taking place on previously developed land and buildings; ● reduce the total amount of previously developed land and building awaiting reclamation or re-use in urban areas. 	1,3	UHCS showing amount of previously developed vacant land and buildings, housing completions data (RLS), Employment Land Supply data (ELS) SqM of employment land developed by type of land use and location, land use change statistics.
Principle 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reduce the rate of use of non-renewable resources including land, water and minerals and reduce the amount of landfill waste generated. 	1,2,5,6	RLS/ELS (amount of greenfield land developed), South West Regional Aggregates Working Party, Grades 1,2 3a agricultural land lost, UA data on landfill waste and minerals, Environment Agency.
Principle 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● improve the ratio between numbers of households and dwellings within the plan area; ● reduce housing waiting lists and increase the numbers of affordable housing built. 		Census, UA housing waiting lists, RLS data on affordable housing provision and housing completions.

Main Principle Measured	Indicator	Other principles measured indirectly	Main Principle Measured
Principle 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● minimum net loss of biodiversity in the Plan area based on targets drawn from the Avon biodiversity action plan; ● reduction towards nil of development destroying or damaging conservation value of designated sites and areas liable to flood. 		Avon Biodiversity Partnership audit of priority species and habitats, English Nature, Environment Agency quality and quantity of water, RLS/ELS data of development on areas likely to flood, area of Forest of Avon and target species data.
Principle 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● stabilise and then reduce levels of pollution and emissions in the area; ● reduce the number of days when air pollution is moderate or high. 	3	Air Quality Management Areas, UA data on pollution levels, CPRE/Campaign for dark skies for information on light pollution.
Principle 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● increase the proportion of households that are within a 13 minute walking distance of a public transport service running at least hourly; ● reduce traffic growth caused by private and freight use and increase the proportion of trips by bus, rail, ferry and bike; ● increase the number of dwellings built within 800 metres of a centre, (as defined in policy 38). 	1,4,6,8	Local Transport Plans, frequency of public transport from ACCMAP/GIS, Road Traffic Reduction Act, First Group, RLS data.
Principle 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● stabilise then reduce the proportion and length of car trips from rural and urban settlements. 	1	Census, UA travel surveys.
Principle 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● maintain/increase the number and mix of jobs as a percentage of the economically active population in the sub area; ● increase ability to meet competitive needs of business and industry. 	1,4	Measure jobs in specific locations: North Fringe, central inner and south Bristol, WSM, Bath, Norton Radstock area and smaller towns, Annual Business Survey. Output per worker GNP, business start ups, employment in certain (high tec) SIC, value added per worker.

GLOSSARY

ACCMAP

Computer software package used to calculate and map levels of accessibility by public transport.

Affordable housing

New dwellings to rent or buy, which provide access to housing for those unable to compete in the open market

Agenda 21

Process of actions aimed at sustaining life for ourselves and generations to come, agreed by member states at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

AONB

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. An area of particularly attractive landscape and unspoilt character, designated by the Countryside Agency, under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, for protection and enhancement as part of the national heritage.

B2 / B8

Types of land use recognised in the Use Classes Order, which provides the framework for controlling changes of use. B2 refers to general industrial use, and B8 to storage and distribution uses including warehousing.

Biodiversity

The range of plant and animal species present in an area.

Biogas

A mixture of methane and carbon dioxide produced as a by-product of the treatment of sewage sludge or farm slurry.

Brownfield

Previously developed land, often proposed for redevelopment

CI:TE

City Initiative: Transport and Environment. A programme for improved environmental conditions in Bath city centre

Community Forest

An initiative launched in 1989 by the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) and Forestry Commission to encourage the development of multi-purpose new forests. The Forest of Avon is one of 12 nationally.

Community strategies

Strategies coordinated by local authorities to improve their areas' economic, social and environmental well-being and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Introduced by the Local Government Act 2000.

Comparison goods

Durable goods including clothing, footwear and textile goods, household goods (including electrical, DIY, furniture and carpets, glass and chinaware), and other non-food goods including stationery, books, pharmaceuticals, watches and jewellery, toys, florists and gardening equipment.

Convenience goods

Food, drink and grocery goods; newspapers; tobacco and confectionery.

CPRE

Council for the Protection of Rural England

DETR

Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. Government department between 1997-2001, responsible for administering the development planning system. Subsequently DTLR and ODPM / DfT.

DfT

Department for Transport. Government department established in 2002, previously part of DETR and DTLR.

DTLR

Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions. Government department between 2001-02. Subsequently ODPM / DfT.

Dwelling

A self-contained unit of accommodation occupied by a single household or a number of households which share basic facilities.

EIP

Examination in Public. Form of public inquiry into structure plan proposals, held by an independent appointed Panel.

ELS

Employment Land (Availability) Study. Monitoring report providing information on land available for development for employment uses, usually produced annually by a local authority.

GIS

Geographic Information System. A computer system for capturing, managing, integrating, manipulating, analysing, and displaying data which can be mapped spatially.

GOSW

Government Office for the South West. Integrated Government Regional Office for the South West, based in Bristol and Plymouth, comprising civil servants from a range of central government departments including ODPM / DfT.

Green Belt

A statutory planning designation, defined in structure and local plans, which is designed to prevent urban sprawl by protecting open land around or between urban areas.

Greenfield

Land not previously developed for urban land uses, most often comprising land last used for agriculture. Term often used in the context of land proposed for future development.

Habitats Directive

EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, adopted by member states in 1992. Each member state must compile a list of areas containing the habitat types and species listed in the Directive, which are to be protected for the purpose of conserving Europe's rarest flora and fauna species and habitat type.

Harbourside

A major regeneration area around the Floating Harbour in central Bristol.

Household

A person living alone, or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address and sharing either at least one meal a day or a living or sitting room.

Infrastructure

The utilities, transport and other communications facilities required to support housing, industrial and commercial activity, schools, shops and other services.

Interchange

Facility for passengers or goods to move between one vehicle and other, such as park and ride site, railway or bus station, bus stop or goods depot.

Joint Committee for Strategic Planning and Transportation

The committee of members of the four constituent unitary authorities which was set up in 1996 with the responsibility for jointly progressing structure plan and related work.

JSPTU

Joint Strategic Planning and Transportation Unit. Officer unit supported by the four unitary authorities, which is responsible for reporting to the Joint Committee on structure plan and related work.

Landscape character area

An area of shared visible characteristics, based on elements such as landform, field patterns and vegetation, usually defined on the basis of broad criteria initially proposed by the Countryside Agency and others.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

A set of proposals to focus resources by means of local partnerships to implement conservation action for the priority habitats and species and locally important wildlife and sites.

Local Plan

Development plan containing detailed, often site-specific, policies to guide change in a particular local authority area.

LRT

Light rapid transit. Fast modern tram system, usually running on rails.

Local Transport Plan

Statutory plan, made by Councils who are transport authorities, to set out their plans and programmes for the next 5 years and to bid for funding from central government. Introduced in 2000 to replace TPPs.

Modal shift

The process of change over time in the proportions using different modes of transport.

MPG

Minerals Planning Guidance note, issued by central government (now ODPM).

Multi-Modal Study

Study of transport by more than one transport mode, embodying computer forecasts and testing of future schemes and strategies

National Cycle Network

Network of cycle routes across Britain mainly using quiet roads and disused railways

Natura 2000

A network of protected sites across the European Union, including SPAs and SACs.

North Fringe

Term used for that part of South Gloucestershire lying north of the Bristol City boundary and within the M5, M4 and M32 motorways, including Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford and Cribbs Causeway.

ODPM

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Government department formed in 2002 and including the planning functions previously in DTLR.

ONS

Office for National Statistics, responsible for household projections and other national statistics. Before 1996, part was OPCS - Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

Park and ride

Dedicated car parking provision served by a bus or rail service, usually to a city or town centre.

Planning obligations

Agreements between local authorities and developers to ensure that necessary infrastructure would be provided as a result of any permission to develop.

PPG

Planning Policy Guidance note, issued by ODPM (or its predecessors) which set out the national policy context for structure and local plans.

PUA

Principal Urban Area, identified in RPG10. PUAs include the Bristol conurbation (that is, the contiguous built-up area including parts of South Gloucestershire), Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

Ramsar site

A wetland SSSI designated as being of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Regional Shopping Centre

Out-of-town centre, such as the Mall at Cribbs Causeway, generally over 50,000 sq.m. gross retail area, and typically enclosing a wide range of clothing and other comparison goods shops.

RLS

Residential Land (Availability) Study. Monitoring report providing information on land available for development for housing, usually produced annually by a local authority.

RPG

Regional Planning Guidance note issued by central Government. In the South West, RPG10 was published by GOSW in 1994, following advice by SWRPC. This was superseded in 2001 by new RPG10, which has an end date of 2016.

SAC

Special Area of Conservation. A site designated under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora as of special importance.

Severnside

Term used for that part of South Gloucestershire adjoining the Severn estuary, between the Bristol City boundary and the London - South Wales rail line.

SIC

Standard Industrial Classification. A classification of different types of economic activity and businesses used in national statistics.

South West

In relation to GOSW, SWRA, SWRDA and most other statutory bodies, the region is defined to include Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall as well as the former Avon area.

SPA

Special Protection Area, designated under EC Directive 19/409 as being of particular importance for the conservation of rare and/or migratory birds.

SSSI

Site of Special Scientific Interest. Area designated by English Nature under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, within which protection is afforded to ecological or geological features.

Strategic Rail Authority

National government body set up following the Transport Act 2000, with responsibility for supporting and co-ordinating the rail industry.

SWARMMS

London to the South West and South Wales Multi-Modal Study. Study of long term strategies to address transport needs on the corridors between London and the South West (and South Wales), which was undertaken by consultants for the Government and various agencies, and which reported in 2002.

SWRA

South West Regional Assembly. An organisation formed in 2000, comprising councillors and representatives of other sectors in the region, which is now responsible for reviewing RPG and scrutinising the work of the RDA.

SWRAWP

South West Regional Aggregates Working Party. Group formed to advise central Government in relation to the supply of, and demand for, aggregate minerals suitable for use as constructional or ballast material.

SWRDA

South West of England Regional Development Agency. Set up in 1998 with the aim of improving the competitive position of the South West and help ensure the region's increased and sustainable prosperity.

SWRPC

South West Regional Planning Conference. The predecessor of SWRA, responsible for drafting RPG during the period up to 2000.

TENS

Trans-European Networks, in particular of road, rail and sea facilities, promoted by the EU to improve infrastructure connecting European regions.

TPP

Transport Policies and Programmes. Formerly an annual bid document prepared by local councils for Government transport scheme funding. Now superseded by LTPs.

Travel Plan

Strategy by employers or schools to increase awareness of sustainable travel behaviour and encourage staff and pupils to use more sustainable modes.

UA

Unitary authority. An all-purpose local authority. In this area, four UAs were formed in 1996 to take over the functions of Avon County Council and the six District Councils.

Urban Housing Capacity Study

Study to examine the potential and likely eventual scope for additional housing within urban areas, including development in locations not currently committed or identified for housing but where it could reasonably be anticipated to occur in the future.

Urban Task Force

Group established by the Government in 1999, under Lord Rogers, to review policy in urban areas.

WESP

West of England Strategic Partnership. Organisation of local authorities, businesses and other agencies to promote inward investment in the former Avon area.

Wind farm

Group of wind turbines used to generate electricity.

World Heritage Site

A site designated under the 1972 World Heritage Convention, adopted by UNESCO and ratified by the UK Government.

WSM

Weston-super-Mare

Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire JOINT REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE PLAN : ADOPTED PLAN

Key Diagram

Structure Plan Area Boundary	
Local Authority Boundary	
Built-up Area	
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	
Green Belt (Policy 16)	
Royal Portbury Dock (Policy 15)	
Bristol International Airport (Policy 61)	
Forest of Avon (Policy 21)	
Town and District Centres (Policy 38)	
Cribbs Causeway (Policy 39)	

Transport :

Road	
Railway (passenger)	
Railway (freight only)	

Strategic Transport Proposals: (Policies 4 and 47 - 62)

Proposed new road and interchange	
Rapid transit route being promoted	
Freight-only railway proposed for passenger use	
Proposed intermodal freight terminal	

Corridors and areas for an integrated policy approach towards transport and development (Policies 4 - 14)

Areas: e.g **Bath**

- A - Bristol City Centre (Policy 5)
- B - Bath (Policy 6)
- C - Weston-super-Mare (Policy 7)
- D - Yate/Chipping Sodbury (Policy 8)
- E - South Bristol (Policy 11)
- F - North Fringe (Policy 12)
- G - Emersons Green (Policy 13)
- H - Avonmouth/Sevenside (Policy 14)

Corridors:

- I - Bath - Keynsham - Bristol (Policy 9)
- J - Bristol - Weston-super-Mare (Policy 10)



Other corridors important to strategic travel patterns (Policy 4)

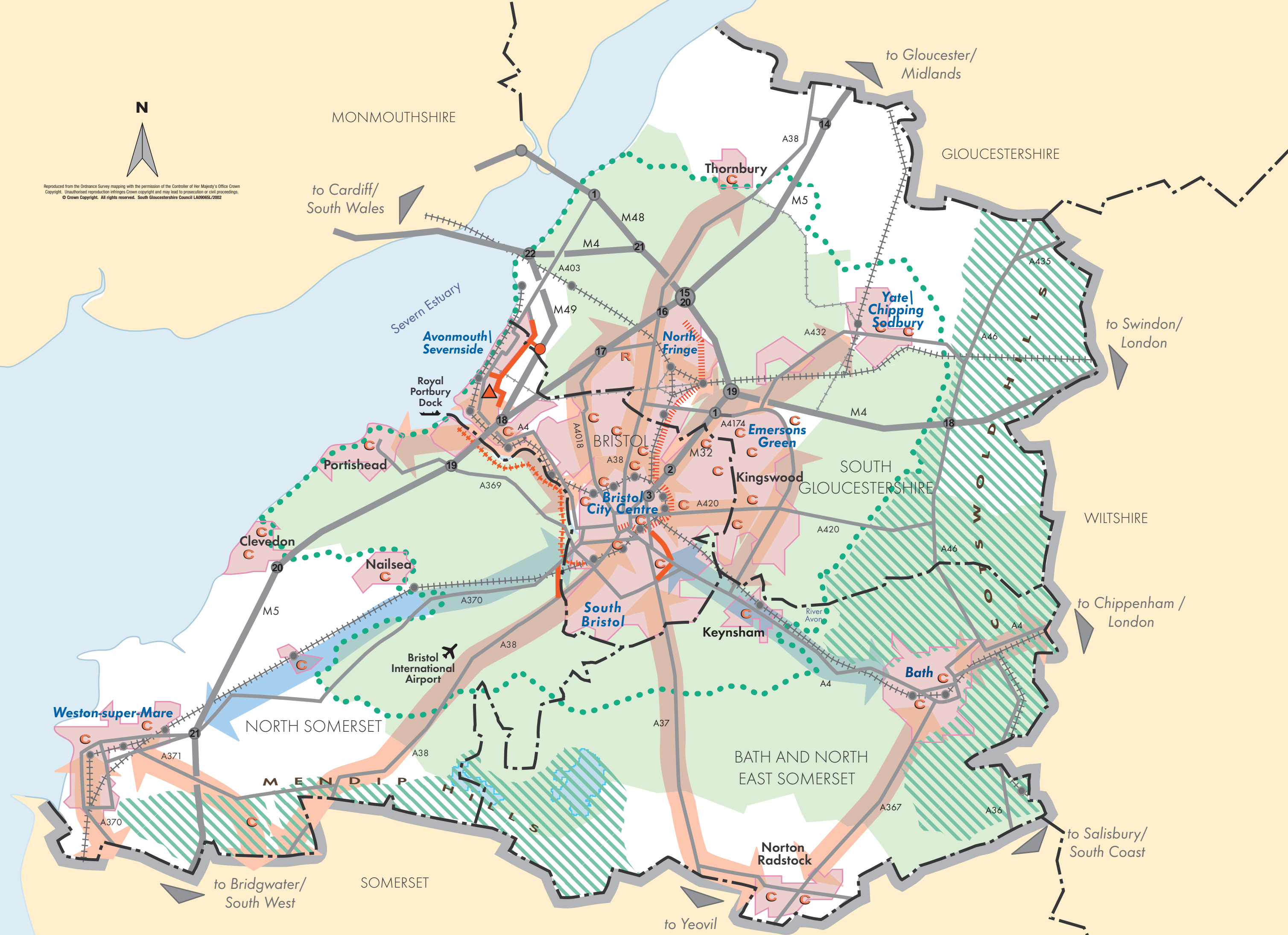
Corridors:

- K - Bristol North Ring
- L - Bristol - North Fringe - Bradley Stoke and Thornbury
- M - Bristol - North Fringe - Yate
- N - Bristol - Kingswood
- O - Bath - Chippenham and Bath - Trowbridge
- P - Bristol - Norton Radstock and Yeovil
- Q - Norton Radstock and Norton Radstock - Bath
- R - Bristol - Bristol Airport - Bridgwater
- S - Weston-super-Mare - Wells
- T - Weston-super-Mare - Bridgwater
- U - Portishead and Avonmouth - Bristol
- V - Bristol - Clifton Down - Cribbs Causeway





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MONMOUTHSHIRE

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

to Cardiff/
South Wales

to Gloucester/
Midlands

Severn Estuary

Avonmouth/
Sevenside

Thornbury

Yate/
Chipping
Sodbury

to Swindon/
London

Royal
Portbury
Dock

North
Fringe

Emersons
Green

SOUTH
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

WILTSHIRE

Portishead

BRISTOL

Kingswood

Bristol
City Centre

Keynsham

Bath

to Chippenham /
London

Clevedon

Nailsea

South
Bristol

Bristol
International
Airport

Weston-super-Mare

NORTH SOMERSET

BATH AND NORTH
EAST SOMERSET

to Salisbury/
South Coast

M E N D I P
H I L L S

to Bridgwater/
South West

SOMERSET

Norton
Radstock

to Yeovil



BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET



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