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# Our Future, Our Choice

Cheltenham's sustainable community strategy  
2007-2010

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CHELTENHAM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



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# Introduction

Welcome to Our Cheltenham, Our Future, Cheltenham's sustainable community strategy which follows on from Our Future, Our Choice, Cheltenham's first community strategy that was published in October 2003.

The strategy has been prepared by Cheltenham Strategic Partnership (CSP) which brings together operational and strategic partnerships, core partners, community and voluntary sectors involved in the delivery of the community strategy. The aims of the CSP are

- To be the partnership of partnerships for Cheltenham, providing strategic co-ordination, ensuring linkages with other plans and bodies established at the regional, sub-regional and local level and agreeing a community strategy that sets the vision and priorities for the area and gaining consensus about the way forward.
- To develop and drive the effective delivery of the community strategy action plan through effective performance management and holding delivery partners to account

The strategy has four key aims;

- To set out local communities' needs and aspirations;
- To provide an assessment of the future challenges facing Cheltenham and what we collectively need to do to respond;
- To set out an aspirational long term vision for the achievement of sustainable development in Cheltenham
- To focus and shape existing and future activity of public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally so that they effectively meet community needs and our longer term aspirations;

The strategy is rooted in the needs and aspirations of those that live and work in Cheltenham. During 2006, the CSP undertook an extensive programme of consultation called Cheltenham 2020 which led to the identification of key challenges and issues for Cheltenham that the CSP needs to tackle. Secondly, it led a programme of consultation on the form and content of the draft strategy in order that there was agreement across all partners and stakeholders about how we work together to respond to the future challenges facing the borough.

The strategy sets out a long-term, sustainable vision for Cheltenham backed up by cross-cutting principles and ambitions. This long term framework will influence all other plans and strategies produced by Cheltenham Strategic Partnership's partner organisations such as the council, county council, police, health services and our partners in the voluntary and community sector.

There is well-established relationship between the strategy and the emerging local development framework (LDF). The LDF will provide a spatial vision which will guide development proposals to meet the needs of Cheltenham, providing a vehicle to deliver the vision and ambitions of the community strategy in partnership with service providers. Preparation of the LDF will be informed by the views of the CSP and its respective partnership groups to ensure that the cross cutting agenda of the community strategy is embodied within LDF policies and proposals.

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<sup>2</sup> Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership is a partnership of partnerships which has the responsibility for developing a long-term vision and sustainable community strategy for the county.

## **The format of the strategy**

The strategy starts by setting the context in which it has been prepared. First, we have looked at the here and now of Cheltenham which is supported by a summary of the results of the community consultation that was carried out in 2006. Second, we have looked to the future and assessed the risks and opportunities that Cheltenham is likely to face over the next twenty years.

Given this context, the CSP has prepared an aspirational long-term vision that sets out a course of action for all partners to work towards over the next 20 years. This is supported by three underlying principles that will underpin everything we do:

- The principle of community engagement and participation
- The principle of tackling inequalities and promoting cohesion
- The principle of tackling climate change

Having consulted widely with the community, we have identified the following longer-term ambitions where, over the next twenty years, we will take concerted and coordinated action through partnership working and the local development framework to turn our vision into a reality:

- Promoting community safety
- Promoting sustainable living
- Promoting a strong and sustainable economy
- Building healthy communities and supporting older people
- Building stronger communities and supporting housing choice
- A focus on children and young people
- Investing in environmental quality
- Investing in travel and transport
- Investing in arts and culture

For each of these nine ambitions, the strategy sets out what the current situation is, what community views are, what our aspirations are, and where we feel that partnership working and the local development framework can make a difference to that objective.

The CSP has also agreed an action plan that sets out how it will deliver its vision, principles and ambitions.

Finally, there is a glossary of technical jargon towards the back of the document.

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# **The context for the development of the strategy**

## **Cheltenham today**

Until the late 1700s, Cheltenham was a small market town, but rapidly changed when it became a fashionable regency resort. Over the years it has attracted major employers and has developed the reputation as a festival town of international repute. This together with its architectural heritage, educational facilities and quality environment makes Cheltenham an attractive place to live, work and play.

Lying at the foot of the Cotswold Hills, Cheltenham is often regarded as a garden town. Its parks, gardens and tree-lined boulevards have been nationally recognised as some of the best in the country.. Whilst being known as the garden town of England, these spaces are not evenly distributed across the borough and there are pockets within communities Cheltenham that do not have local access by walking to green spaces.

The borough itself is quite compact – it has the second smallest area of all the six Gloucestershire districts, but has the largest population of 111,700 (2005 mid-year estimates, ONS) There are also a number of villages within the borough with their own identity and their own specific needs.

Although Cheltenham's economy outperforms the national economy and our per capita income stands some 35% above national average, this wealthy image sometimes obscures the fact that we have areas of poverty and deprivation and the town is increasingly divided between the more affluent areas to the south and east, and poorer areas to the north and west. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD) illustrate the extent to which some of our communities are falling behind the rest of the town as the cumulative impacts of unemployment, poverty, crime, low educational attainment and poor health create a cycle of deprivation.

The borough is home to many schools, further education and higher education establishments that are promoting lifelong learning and celebrating excellent levels of educational attainment. The University of Gloucestershire is also the leading English University in the field of sustainability.

The attractiveness of the borough and its surroundings has encouraged many organisations to locate here. Along with GCHQ, Cheltenham is home to the head offices of the Chelsea Building Society, and Kraft Foods. It has been voted the most desirable postcode in the results of a survey published in October 2006 by the property valuation website [Propertypriceadvice.co.uk](http://Propertypriceadvice.co.uk).

Cheltenham has an international reputation as a thriving centre for culture. It is home to a number of festivals that take place throughout the year which includes the world-renowned Jazz, Music, Science and Literature Festivals. Cheltenham Racecourse is home to the National Hunt festival season and hosts sixteen events every year including the Gold Cup Festival. The borough also plays host to the Everyman Theatre and the Playhouse Theatre, both of which put on a rich and varied programme of professional and amateur performing arts and Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum has national recognition as a museum with an outstanding collection.

## **Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy**

The Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA) is an agreement between the government and a partnership of local public and voluntary organisations, led by Gloucestershire County Council through the Gloucestershire Conference<sup>2</sup>. It sets out how local partners will use a range of government funding streams to deliver real improvements in outcomes for local people.

The Gloucestershire LAA is built around five important themes for Gloucestershire.

- Promoting safer and stronger communities
- Promoting healthier communities and supporting older people
- Improving the wellbeing of children and young people
- Supporting economic development and enterprise
- Improving and protecting the natural and built environment

The Gloucestershire Conference, produced their sustainable community strategy "Our place, our future" in 2007 sets out a broad framework for collaborative working

Cheltenham Strategic Partnership is committed to the successful delivery of the LAA and we have incorporated the five themes into our vision, principles and priorities. We also support the county's sustainable community strategy and recognise our role in delivering its five aims.

## **Gloucestershire Urban Economic Strategy**

The developing urban economic strategy provides the potential to drive forward collaborative working between the four local authorities, their respective LSPs and other partners in the private, public and voluntary sector to enhance the economic wellbeing of the county. The strategy recognises that Gloucestershire is competing in a global market place, yet when seen from far away the county seems insignificant because its towns and cities are relatively small. Collaborative working is needed to put forward a cohesive vision for the county that is rooted in the contrasts and diversity that make Gloucestershire a special place and which will address the gaps in our "offer" to ensure that we can out-perform our competitors on the global stage.

Cheltenham Strategic Partnership supports the principles of collaborative working and will help shape the development of the urban economic strategy.

## **Finding out what is important – Cheltenham 2020**

Throughout 2006, we undertook a comprehensive programme of consultation to inform this draft strategy and the local development framework. The consultation programme was called 'Cheltenham 2020' and people were asked to think about the borough in the future and what their long-term aspirations for the borough were.

We consulted with a wide range of people from different sections of the community, and the activities we held included:

### **Resident workshops**

We consulted a representative sample of 70 residents about their priorities for the borough.

### **Household survey**

We received 2,800 surveys back (6%) from residents from across the borough.

### **Neighbourhood roadshow events**

We held 20 roadshow events and talked to over 580 local people about their neighbourhoods.

### **Talking to young people through schools and youth clubs**

We visited seven schools and one youth club and talked with a range of young people aged 12-25.

### **Talking to our communities through local groups, parish councils and residents' associations**

We consulted all five parish councils as well as the pensioners' forum, disability forum, Indian Association and three residents' associations.

The results of the consultation confirmed that Cheltenham is regarded as a good place to live, and that the future should be about pushing the boundaries and improving standards. It was repeatedly stated that Cheltenham should aim to provide an excellent quality of life for all its residents, whilst also respecting its architectural and cultural heritage.

The consultation identified the following key issues where local people and groups want coordinated and concerted action;

- Action to ensure people feel safer in their communities
- Action to enable more people to lead sustainable lifestyles
- Action to ensure people lead healthy lifestyles and have access to local health services
- Action to give children and young people can take part in a wide range of free-time activities in their communities
- Action to improve and protect Cheltenham's environmental quality

As local people felt that taking action on these five issues will help create an excellent quality of life in Cheltenham, we have used these results as a basis for developing this sustainable community strategy.

The results also identified the challenges of accommodating new development and whilst there was general support for developing within the urban area, support for developing on greenfield sites and within the green belt was limited. This will be a key challenge in the context of considering the most sustainable way to meet Cheltenham's long term needs as identified by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West<sup>3</sup>.

More information on community views is provided for each of the nine long term ambitions.

## **Future challenges**

Cheltenham will be subject to much change over the next 20 years and an important role for this community strategy is to provide a vision that takes account of these future challenges whilst recognising the importance and need to continue to deliver priorities arising from local communities.

Forum for the Future, a national sustainable development charity based in Cheltenham, organised a future-proofing event in May 2007 to help Cheltenham Strategic Partnership explore issues and challenges that could impact on Cheltenham over the next ten to twenty years, and consider how this strategy should respond.

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<sup>3</sup> The Regional Spatial Strategy sets out the framework for development in the south west in the context of sustainable development

The event identified the following risks and opportunities as key challenges facing Cheltenham.

### **Risk - Access to energy supplies and climate change**

The event identified access to energy supplies and the link to climate change as the single most important issue that will affect Cheltenham over the next 20 years. The assumption that oil and natural gas will remain plentiful and affordable has underpinned decision-making over the past few decades. Recent evidence has emerged that casts doubt on this assumption and suggests that production of both oil and natural gas is likely to reach its historic peak soon (or may already have done so). This phenomenon is referred to as "peak oil". Given the rise in global demand for oil-based products and the role they play in social and economic activities, the consequences of such an event are clearly significant.

There is growing scientific evidence that carbon emissions from mankind's use of energy and in particular oil and natural gas is exacerbating climate change. Measures that we take now to reduce our dependence on declining carbon-based energy sources will support our aims to reduce our impact on climate change. In Cheltenham, we have adopted a climate change strategy that will provide the framework for achieving this. What is needed now is to take this work to the next level where the need to reduce carbon emissions underpins everything we do.

The challenge for this strategy is to provide a long term framework for Cheltenham to reduce its reliance on carbon-based energy sources and make adaptations in response to the changes occurring through climate change. This requires a coordinated approach at many levels:

- Using land use planning frameworks and urban design to reduce travel and promote sustainable transport options
- Promotion of better building designs with a focus on becoming zero carbon
- Promotion of energy efficiency in all buildings
- Promotion of local and renewable sources of energy
- Promotion of local food production and distribution and encouraging less wasteful consumption of resources
- Positive ways of strengthening the local economy, building social and economic connections at the local level and increasing community self-reliance.

### **Risk - An ageing population**

A population is said to be 'ageing' when older people account for an increasing proportion of the total. In the UK, the population is ageing due to a combination of falling birth rates, the ageing of the baby boom generations of the late 1940s and early 1960s and improved life expectancy. By 2040, it is predicted that the number of people over 64 in Britain is expected to grow from 9.5 million to 15 million with a decline in people under the age of 15 from 11.2 million to 8.7 million (*Source: Catalyst Report*). This can be seen in Cheltenham where 17.1% of people are aged 65 or over compared to just 16.2% nationally.

Whilst some of the impact of this change in population structure will be mitigated by rising incomes and advances in medicine so that older people remain active for longer, there is still likely to be significant demands placed on health, social care and housing services with a corresponding demand placed on the public purse to service this demand. Falling birth rates when coupled with high house prices in Cheltenham could also lead to a reduction in the numbers of young people living and working in Cheltenham.

The challenge for the community strategy is to provide a long term framework to improve health and well being, care and support and protection for older people, whilst providing appropriate housing, social, education, employment and transport services to meet their needs whilst also recognising the vital contribution they make to the ongoing life of the borough

### **Risk and opportunity- Social cohesion**

The UK today has 60 million people, speaking over 300 different languages, and practising at least 14 different faiths. It could be a richly diverse and stable society. However, there is evidence that diversity is dividing some communities and that attitudes towards people from different community groups are hardening. Net immigration into the South West will be 780,000 – 835,000 people in the next 20 years and is now seen as the main driver of population change in the UK (Crossing borders, Audit Commission January 2007).

In Cheltenham, our ethnic profile from the 2001 census showed that our largest ethnic minority group was of Indian origin and numbered 1,100 and had been successfully present in Cheltenham for 50 years now. However in between 2003 and 2006 2,675 migrant workers registered for work in Cheltenham, with 1,800 coming from Eastern Europe. So in the space of four years, our ethnic profile has significantly changed. This diversity within Cheltenham brings advantages including increasing skills and availability of labour within our local economy, together with sharing different cultures but it also brings pressures including demands on the housing stock.

Despite our population being relatively wealthy, there are still problems of exclusion which has many causes both in terms of an individual's circumstances; unemployment, poor health, social housing, lack of learning opportunities etc. or maybe based on an individual's background; their race, gender, age, faith, sexual orientation, of whether they have a disability or not.

The challenge for this strategy is to provide a long-term framework which encourages those from all backgrounds and circumstances to have similar life opportunities, and to live and work confidently alongside each other. Our policies and projects must not exclude people, nor make access to services difficult for any section of the community and they must promote strong and positive relationships between people in schools, in work places, in leisure and cultural activities and in neighbourhoods in general.


### **Risk and opportunity - Development**

One of the most pressing issues that will affect Cheltenham over the lifetime of this strategy is the need for Cheltenham to accommodate substantial planned growth. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West identifies Cheltenham as one of 21 urban areas which will play an important role in meeting the growth needs of the region. For instance, the RSS sets us a challenge of accommodating a provisional figure of 12,500 new homes over the next 20 years. The risk from this is that local people do not want to see the unique character of the borough and their local identity undermined by this additional growth

However, there are opportunities from new development, particularly around the potential to provide significantly more affordable housing, improved supporting infrastructure for both new and existing communities and provide additional employment land and retail and leisure opportunities all within the context of low carbon development. We will ensure that any new developments meet latest eco standards. By this we mean

(i) ensuring that new communities are planned for in close consultation with existing communities taking into account through place shaping the local and wider environment, character of existing communities and requirements for infrastructure. The focus will be on providing good links to the rest of the borough for jobs, leisure and services;

(ii) ensuring that the new developments and redevelopment takes into account the sustainable code and the aim of achieving zero carbon. In larger developments, to be an exemplar in at least one area of environment technology;

 ensuring that at least 40 per cent affordable housing with a good mix of tenures and size of homes in mixed communities; and

(v) where large new communities are required, ensuring that an appropriate not for profit delivery organisation manages the new community and its development and provides support for people, businesses and community services.

The growth proposed by the RSS will need to be accompanied by associated infrastructure, investment into drainage and sewerage provision, services and facilities and we need to ensure that local people are able to access local jobs.

The challenge for this strategy is to set out a sustainable vision for Cheltenham that will be taken forward in the preparation of Cheltenham's Local Development Framework (LDF) which will guide development proposals to meet the needs of Cheltenham and provide the vehicle to deliver some of the priorities and ambitions of the community strategy in partnership with service providers. The LDF also needs to set out how Cheltenham can retain its unique character.

### **Opportunity – Health**

Given that participants had identified an ageing population as a significant risk for Cheltenham, the fact that health trends are improving was conversely identified as an opportunity. With growing life expectancy, people should be able to make a net contribution to society for longer; either through employment or through community work/volunteering and caring work. But we know that Cheltenham does have significant differences in life chances; a baby born in one part of the borough will die nine years before a baby born in a more affluent part of the borough.

The challenge for this strategy is to provide a long term framework which recognises the importance of improving health for all through a range of preventative measures, whilst ensuring that health inequalities across Cheltenham are reduced.

### **Opportunity - Popular support for environmental issues**

Given that participants had identified access to energy supplies and the link to climate change as the most significant risk, they also identified increasing popular support for environmental issues as a significant opportunity that will ease the introduction of measures to reduce carbon emissions in Cheltenham. We know that from the 2020 consultation there is clearly an appetite among local residents for more activities to promote sustainable development. The high priority given to waste and recycling and to a slightly lesser extent to being at the forefront of green and sustainable innovation in the household survey provides this steer.

The challenge for this strategy is to provide a long term framework which builds on the popular support for measures to promote sustainable living. The strategy should be at the forefront of this movement and should set the framework for radical

solutions to reduce Cheltenham's reliance on carbon-based energy sources. This may include consideration of becoming a transition town<sup>4</sup>

### **Floods and building resilience in Cheltenham**

On 25 June 2007 Cheltenham was affected by torrential rain that led to localised flooding problems throughout the borough. 25 days later on 20 July Cheltenham was once again hit by torrential rain that resulted in flooding of 1,100 properties throughout the borough. This was compounded by floodwaters in the Rivers Severn and Avon rising to unprecedented levels which led to the flooding and closure of the Mythe Water Treatment work. Not only did the borough have to cope with the evacuation of many homes, closure of businesses and damage to infrastructure as a result of the floods but also the loss of fresh drinking water to its population for 16 days.

It is crucial to recognise that the changing climate may bring more extreme events such as this and that we need to learn from this experience and equip ourselves to cope better with other events and draw out the learning points.

- First and foremost there is a clear need to build resilience at individual, neighbourhood and at the borough level to reduce dependencies on support infrastructure that is beyond our control. Tie this into support for localism
- There is a need for a significant improvement in the maintenance regime of drains, ditches and culverts and also investment to increase the capacity of certain watercourses to prevent flash flooding
- There is a need to collect detailed information through a strategic flood risk assessment to inform the location of new development and develop solutions that can assist with minimising flood risk in areas already developed.
- Many community issues emerged; there were many positive with communities rallying around and helping those more vulnerable people, but there were some concerns that there was a lack of understanding between different communities.
- There is a strong community desire to re-think the approach to providing new housing in Gloucestershire particularly in terms of avoiding more houses being built on the flood-plain and improving drainage arrangements to reduce flood risk and including grey-water recycling and renewable energy sources within new housing to build resilience.
- We have a much greater awareness now of vulnerable people in our communities and the difficulties we have in providing continued support in times of crisis.
- There is a need for improved business continuity measures with businesses and voluntary community sector to improve their resilience

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<sup>4</sup> Transition town – a network of towns and cities across the UK and Ireland that are developing plans to reduce their dependency on carbon-based energy sources

# Our vision, principles and ambitions

## Our vision

Our 20 year vision statement sets out our aspirational goal for the long-term future of Cheltenham.

**We want Cheltenham to deliver a sustainable quality of life, where people, families, their communities and businesses thrive; and in a way which cherishes our cultural and natural heritage, reduces our impact on climate change and does not compromise the quality of life of present and future generations.**

By a sustainable quality of life we mean a place where:

- We have a strong, healthy and just society, and
- We all live within the environmental limits of our planet

We will achieve this by:

- Building a strong, stable and sustainable economy
- Promoting good citizenship
- Investing in sustainable infrastructure

Achieving a sustainable quality of life is an overarching theme of this community plan and is one that all partners will be working towards. We will take action locally to ensure that we build a stronger society in Cheltenham without increasing our ecological footprint, aiming to be a carbon-neutral borough.

## Our principles

### **The principle of community engagement and participation**

We want Cheltenham to be a place where all our communities feel engaged and where there is participation by local people, groups and businesses across the borough in the long term stewardship of their community. The people of Cheltenham should be actively engaged in the democratic process and have a right to be kept informed and consulted on the major issues that face our borough.

#### **To deliver this principle, we commit to the following;**

- Develop a shared approach to consultation across the CSP to be set out in an agreed community engagement strategy
- Ensure that the CSP, its partner organisations and delivery partnerships adhere to the principles of the Hear By Right<sup>5</sup> to inform engagement with children and young people
- Consider where statutory partners can devolve powers to the voluntary and community sector and parish councils in line with the local government white paper
- Develop a neighbourhood management approach to consultation and engagement which will be based around the police's neighbourhood policing structures
- Develop specific channels of communication with parishes through the Stronger Communities Partnership and with businesses through the Economic Development Partnership

### **The principle of tackling inequalities and promoting cohesion**

<sup>5</sup> Hear by Right is a standards framework for organisations across the statutory and voluntary sectors to assess and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people.

We want Cheltenham to be a place where everyone across the borough has similar life opportunities regardless of where they live or their background or circumstances. We will continue to tackle deprivation wherever it occurs in the borough through a co-ordinated approach to physical, social and economic regeneration.

**To deliver this principle, we commit to the following;**

- Ensure that the CSP's community engagement strategy sets out an effective framework for consulting with geographic communities and communities of interest
- Develop a cohesion and integration group that will lead on cohesion issues that will sit under the stronger communities partnership
- Ensure that the CSP and its constituent partners and partnerships all adopt equality impact assessment processes and a common set of standard equality and demographic monitoring and evaluation procedures

**The principle of tackling climate change**

Recognising that climate change is a key issue for Cheltenham, we will strive for Cheltenham to be a carbon-neutral borough where all our residents, businesses and community organisations do their bit to live within the environmental limits of our planet, and are able to adapt to the inevitable consequences of the changing climate. We will therefore make sure that all of our actions contribute to this ambitious goal.

**To deliver this principle, we commit to the following;**

Partners will ensure that issues such as reducing carbon emissions and our dependency on carbon-based energy sources, and adapting to the inevitable consequences of climate change are embedded into their decision-making processes, especially for

- Purchasing decisions, particularly of local goods and services
- Travel and transport
- Waste and recycling
- Development projects
- Energy and water use
- Land management

**Long-term ambitions**

Having consulted widely with the community, we have identified the following ambitions where, over the next twenty years, we will take concerted and coordinated action through partnership working and the local development framework to turn our vision into a reality:

Promoting community safety

Promoting sustainable living

Promoting a strong and sustainable economy

Building healthy communities and supporting older people

Building stronger communities and supporting housing choice

A focus on children and young people

Investing in environmental quality

Investing in travel and transport

Investing in arts and culture

In order to tackle these ambitions we need to identify what the important issues are within each one, and what we can do to make things better. The next section focuses on the challenges that face the borough within each of these ambitions, and our proposals to respond to these.

## Nine long-term ambitions for Cheltenham

Under each of the nine ambitions identified in the last section there are a number of key challenges that this sustainable community strategy will focus on tackling. These have emerged from a consideration of the current situation and an analysis of the Cheltenham 2020 consultation results to find out what our community wants.

### Promoting community safety

#### the situation

Community safety and the perception of crime is the highest priority for residents in Cheltenham. Between 2005 and 2007, perceptions of safety in Cheltenham have marginally decreased during the day (90.7% to 89.7%), but increased at night (37.5% to 42.5%), although both figures remain below the county average (Source Glos County Council 2007)

In the period 2003-04 to 2006-07, personal robbery rates increased by 29%, (84 crimes in 2003-04 to 108 crimes in 2006-07) which in the main is attributable to thefts of iPods and mobile phones which are generally worn or displayed by individuals in a prominent position on their person. Common assault was up by 22%, (565 crimes to 689 crimes) which in the main is attributable to the crimes associated with the night time economy and domestic violence. Theft from vehicles was up 24% (939 crimes to 1161 crimes) which can be attributable to the increase in thefts of satellite navigation systems from vehicles.

In comparison, over the same period domestic burglary was down by 2% (771 crimes to 758 crimes), theft of vehicles was down 40% (651 crimes to 390 crimes), and vehicle interference was down 25%. (201 crimes to 151 crimes) (Source Home Office)

The priority crimes identified by the Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership are tackling criminal damage, anti-social behaviour, theft of bicycles, violence against the person, robbery of personal property and theft from vehicles.

Para on hate crime..

#### community views

Community safety came out as a top priority in nearly every consultation activity that was carried out with Cheltenham residents. Key concerns for local people were minor crimes such as vehicle damage, alcohol and substance misuse, and anti-social behaviour. Many of these were linked to the problem of young people not having enough to do. This is backed up by the latest fear of crime survey (Glos County Council 2007) which shows that residents are most concerned with teenagers hanging around the streets, parents not being made to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children and people not treating other people with respect and consideration.

Prevention was felt to be the most effective way of tackling crime, , primarily with young people but also through providing additional support for parents and families. Relationship-building between the police and communities was also felt to be an important and underdeveloped tool for tackling crime and disorder.

#### our ambition

We will take action to ensure that our residents feel safe, that crime and disorder is kept to a minimum and where investment is made in preventative measures to deter people from committing crime, but that is backed up by a vigorous enforcement regime.

#### where partnership working can make a difference

The CSP and Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership will lead on initiatives to address the following issues:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Preventative work with young people
- Reducing alcohol and substance misuse

#### Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference

- Measures to ensure that new developments take account of best practice in urban design

practices and are built to the "Secured by design" standards

- Encourage community-based facilities, particularly youth centres and clubs supported by support workers within existing and new developments

## Promoting sustainable living

### the situation

If everyone on the planet used as many resources as we do in Cheltenham we would need three planets to support life on earth (measured in terms of our ecological footprint). We need to shift towards *'one planet' consumption* with more resource efficient lifestyles so that we don't consume the earth's resources at a faster rate than they can be replenished.

This means ensuring that we reduce and recycle waste, conserve energy and natural resources in the way we live, work and play, and reduce the need to travel by encouraging walking and cycling, use of local shops and investment in our local economy. We also need to reduce our dependency on carbon-based energy sources to improve our security over energy supplies and to reduce our carbon emissions and the impact on climate change. This is an ambitious agenda, but support for environmental issues was identified as a key opportunity at the future-proofing event which should help to drive this agenda forward.

Our energy consumption overall is growing. Virtually all of our energy comes from outside the borough and there is very little electricity generated from renewable sources within the borough. Activities in the borough are estimated to contribute 642,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere each year (2004/5 data).

We need to rethink the way that we construct new buildings and refurbish existing ones to ensure that their impact on the environment and carbon emissions is minimised, and that they are resilient to the impacts of climate change. This means encouraging developers to use sustainable construction techniques so that they consider issues such as the building materials they use, how waste is dealt with during construction and occupation, designing for energy and water efficiency and incorporating renewable energy schemes. We should also be trying to maximise opportunities for the local labour force in development schemes.

Partners on Cheltenham Strategic Partnership have considerable spending power and the purchasing decisions we all make, whether at home or at work, have an impact on our planet. We all need to move towards more sustainable procurement and purchasing where we consider not only value for money, but also the social, economic and environmental impacts of those decisions. This could include buying local goods and services to reduce environmental impacts and benefit the local economy, buying ethically to ensure that we don't harm people or the environment or simply deciding whether we need something or not.

Recycling has been a key priority for Cheltenham Borough Council for the past few years and kerbside collections have been rolled out across the borough. Figures collected from April-December 2006 show that 29.5% of all waste collected was recycled or composted (16.2% recycled, 13.3% composted), but there is more we need to do to reduce the amount of waste we create.

### community views

In the household survey, there was clearly an appetite among local residents for more activities to promote sustainable living. The high priority given to waste and recycling and to a slightly lesser extent to being at the forefront of green and sustainable innovation in the household survey provides this steer and to certain extent, including both questions in the household survey may have split the "green" vote.

In terms of waste minimisation and recycling, Cheltenham was felt to be lagging behind and more investment in kerbside plastic and cardboard recycling was felt necessary. The possibility of extending the service to offer more commercial recycling was also suggested.

Comments linked to sustainable living also covered the ways in which new developments could make a contribution to sustainable living. Concerns were also raised over the trend for exclusive housing developments rather than building affordable housing, but the practice of building on brownfield sites was welcomed and encouraged to continue.

#### **our ambition**

In order to reduce carbon emissions and our dependency on carbon-based energy sources we will encourage and support sustainable construction techniques and sustainable energy processes and raise awareness of more sustainable ways of living. We will minimise our impact on the environment through the sustainable management of resources and delivery of services, where little waste is sent to landfill and most is re-used, recycled and composted and where food and goods produced locally are readily available.

#### **where partnership working can make a difference**

The CSP and Low Carbon Partnership will lead on initiatives to address the following issues:

- Reducing the amount of waste we create
- Promoting sustainable construction
- Promoting sustainable procurement and purchasing, especially food and other local products
- Promoting sustainable energy; in terms of saving energy and encouraging the use of renewable sources of energy to reduce dependency on carbon-based energy sources
- Promoting the concept of personal responsibility to ensure that Cheltenham's residents have an understanding of what they can achieve, in their own right – e.g. carbon off-setting, transport choices, repairing rather than purchasing new goods

#### **Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference**

- Ensuring sustainable construction via implementation of the 'sustainable code' ensuring that all types of new development and redevelopment meet the latest eco-standards
- Promoting sustainable energy; by maximising the energy efficiency of all types of new developments and encouraging renewable energy
- Identify sustainable sites to meet Cheltenham's development needs
- Making the most efficient and appropriate use of land
- Ensuring that waste minimisation and recycling opportunities are integrated into communities
- Making provision for and promoting walking and cycling
- Promoting a mix of uses in new developments and existing developments to reduce the need for car dependency

## **Promoting a strong and sustainable economy**

### **the situation**

Cheltenham has a relatively affluent economy. In 2004 Cheltenham's Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices stood at £2,384 million and GVA per head in Cheltenham stood at £21,480, 123% of the national average. Cheltenham's rate of growth for the period 1994 to 2004 was similar than that of national GVA rising at an average of 5.4% per annum compared to a growth rate of 5.5% per annum for Great Britain.

But the economy of Cheltenham is facing new challenges, and changes in global, national, regional and local economic conditions will impact on Cheltenham and affect the prosperity and quality of life of the businesses and residents of the town. It is critical that Cheltenham remains competitive and is able to attract and embrace new opportunities. Economic development also needs to reflect climate change issues and the need to reduce carbon emissions so that our prosperity can be enjoyed by future generations

Cheltenham boasts an attractive and vibrant town centre with a long-standing reputation for quality shopping, eating and drinking. In November 2005 the Promenade was voted as Britain's favourite high street in an online vote organised by search directory Touch Local.

Finance and business sectors contribute the most to our economy in Cheltenham with new technologies changing the nature of products and services with economic value based increasingly on knowledge. New sectors, such as environmental technologies and creative

industries are growing and it is anticipated that these will contribute more to our prosperity in the future.

In order for the borough to secure a sustainable and prosperous future, it is important that Cheltenham and its surrounding areas complement each other and build on their strengths. Cheltenham needs to play its role in working with other urban areas in the South West and Midlands to realise its full economic potential.

As well as many successful larger businesses in Cheltenham there are significant numbers of small businesses all of which contribute to our economy. We need to foster a culture of innovation and provide continued investment in skills development to enable these businesses to flourish. Cheltenham has relatively highly qualified residents with 27,600 (40.4%) with qualifications relating to NVO4 (higher education level) which is significantly above the South West and national percentages of qualified residents at this level which, for both areas, are 26.5%. But as the population of the borough ages there will also be challenges around re-skilling an older population, and the decline in traditional industries will also provide challenges for the borough's economy.

Tourism is an important element of the Cheltenham economy which as a sector employs around 8,000 people bringing in some £235m to the local economy. It attracts national and international visitors to its various sporting and cultural festivals as well as for its parks gardens and shops.

#### **what our community wants**

Although important to people in the borough, the economy of Cheltenham was felt by most of the community to be on the right track and not in need of major investment or improvement. However, this does not necessarily reflect Cheltenham's role and the contribution it makes to the economy of the South West.

Results from the residents' workshops showed a clear desire for future development of sports, leisure and entertainment based buildings as well as a greater mixture of retail options in the borough. Festival events and other cultural pursuits were also felt to be integral to the character of the borough and something that needs to be enhanced further and promoted.

Although unemployment was not felt to be a major issue in Cheltenham, it was felt that there is a gap in the 'mid-range' jobs – lower white collar/upper blue collar. Generally the graduate economy was valued and seen as the future for ongoing economic development in the borough. There was also a strong feeling that Cheltenham should not turn into another generic shopping centre and should retain its independent retail character.

#### **Our ambition**

We will take action to ensure that Cheltenham has a vibrant and sustainable low carbon economy with a diverse employment base and a commitment to excellence and innovation in our key sectors and in our growth sectors. This will require a co-ordinated approach to physical, social and economic regeneration and development to ensure that growth respects environmental limits and the need to reduce carbon emissions and the dependency on carbon-based energy sources, while also taking into account the development needs of the business community now and in the future. We will engage, inform and support businesses in the borough helping them grow and we will work to provide a first class education system to ensure skills development and lifelong learning opportunities are available to all residents to enhance their economic prosperity and quality of life.

#### **where partnership working can make a difference**

The CSP and Strategic Economic Partnership will lead on initiatives to address the following issues:

- Increasing business investment including skills development, lifelong learning and reskilling
- Engaging and informing businesses helping them to grow and develop in Cheltenham in a sustainable way.
- Ensuring employers are able to meet their future business needs by being able to help

shape the skills development of young people

- Addressing employment needs and opportunities
- Supporting growth sectors, including creative industries and green industries
- Creating an entrepreneurial culture to support small business growth
- Reducing the carbon footprint of existing economic activity/businesses

#### **Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference**

- Ensuring that the economy develops in a sustainable way which reflects environmental limits and the need to reduce carbon emissions
- Helping to ensure that Cheltenham is an attractive environment where businesses can grow, develop and invest
- Providing sufficient land to enable flexibility to the local economy and attract new businesses to Cheltenham
- Promote adaptable employment space that is responsive to changing needs and technological advances
- Ensuring continued investment into our tourism infrastructure
- Ensuring Cheltenham and Gloucester are complementary in their roles

## **Building healthy communities and supporting older people**

### **the situation**

Cheltenham is perceived as being a healthy place to live, and many of the statistics related to health outcomes support this perception. Results from the 2001 Census show a higher proportion of people in Cheltenham being in 'good health' compared to the rest of Gloucestershire and the proportion of the district's population providing some form of unpaid care was below the county and national average. Overall life expectancy is increasing for both men and women and infant mortality rates continue to fall in line with national expectations. Death from the 'big killers' such as circulatory disease and cancer continue to fall, although deaths from suicide and accidents require further effort if we are to meet key government targets by 2010. Other measures of health behaviour such as the number of people who smoke and the number of people eating 5 portions of fruit and veg a day all show favourable signs of improvement when compared with other districts in Gloucestershire and the England average.

However, good health is not universally shared by everyone living in Cheltenham. Geographical variation of health differs considerably, for example, 9% of areas in Cheltenham rank along side the 20% of most deprived areas in England with 16% of children living in low income households. There is an average 5.3 years difference in life expectancy in people living in the fifth of most healthy electoral wards compared to the fifth of least healthy electoral wards. In addition, research from the Commission for Race Equality shows that ethnic minority groups generally have poorer health, lack access to some form of health provision, and have lower levels of satisfaction with health provision.

The national Active People survey conducted on behalf of Sport England showed that 22.5% of adults in Cheltenham participated in the recommended 3 x 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity, which is slightly above the national and regional average (ranked 115<sup>th</sup> out of 352 local authorities in England). When analysed, the figure is shown to be higher for men than women, and there are also very significant variations between different age groups, socio economic groups and for people with a limiting disability.

People in Cheltenham have good access to health and social care services, but we need to ensure there is greater opportunity to work together to provide choice and when required highly responsive services that are closer to home. We must also accept that people have a part to play in maintaining and improving their own health and well being and where we can we must ensure that we make it easier for people to choose good health. The government White Paper, Choosing Health, reinforces the need for closer working relationships at a local level between statutory bodies and partner agencies to enable people to make healthier choices and adopt healthier lifestyles.

Health also forms an important factor in designing and planning new developments. We must ensure that these encourage greater levels of walking and cycling and use of open spaces which are important factors in improving health and well being of residents.

As noted above, Cheltenham has an ageing population with 17.1% of people are aged 65 or over compared to just 16.2% nationally and this figure is likely to increase as more older people live longer and as young people continue to move out of Cheltenham. On current trends the population aged 65 and over will increase by 2,600 people between 2001 and 2026 to 21,700 which is 21% of the population compared to 17.4% in 2001. The overall effect of these changes (in conjunction with a decline in the under 65 age group) is to age the population of the Cheltenham Borough over the next 20 years. By 2026, just over a fifth of the population in Cheltenham will be aged 65 or above, compared to 17% in 2001.

We know that in 2005, over 3,000 adults aged over 65 had been referred to social services, indicating the degree of vulnerability in this age group. In addition we know that in the 2007 flood and water crisis, the borough council alone supported over 800 vulnerable older people who were not in a position to fend for themselves. A key priority for this strategy is to provide better support for older people so that they can lead independent lives in their own homes.

### **community views**

Health care, and in particular local community-based health care, emerged as a high priority for many residents who were consulted. It came second only to community safety in the household survey, as well as the consultations with parish councils, schools and the pensioners' forum. It also featured in the top three of the disability forum results.

Having local health services that all communities can access was very important to local people that were consulted, with access to hospitals being of particular concern. Teenage pregnancy was felt to be a general problem not unique to Cheltenham, but one that should be tackled.

It was felt that the focus should be on providing local community healthcare facilities and promoting healthy lifestyles. Tackling substance misuse was another key area, and consultees proposed that authorities would need to work together to address the longer-term problems with health.

The potential to link healthy lifestyles to the provision of local food and increasing the use of allotments to improve fitness and provide fresh and healthy food was highlighted as well as the need to ensure that sport and active leisure opportunities need to be affordable and accessible.

### **our ambition**

We will take action to ensure that everyone, from cradle to grave has equitable access to locally-provided community based health and care services and provide investment in promoting active and healthy lifestyles, whilst working in partnership to tackle health inequalities.

### **where partnership working can make a difference**

The CSP and Health and Wellbeing Partnership will lead on initiatives to address the following which will be delivered in partnership with organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector:

- Reducing health inequalities
- Reducing obesity and increasing physical activity
- Reducing smoking and drinking
- Improving mental health
- Improved sexual health
- Supporting independent living for older people

### **Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference**

- Create opportunities in new and existing developments to improve access to local health

and care facilities

- Through encouraging walking and cycling and access to green spaces
- Increasing sport and active leisure opportunities particularly in those communities who do not have sufficient provision
- Promote the provision of lifetime homes<sup>6</sup>
- Explore the opportunities for a dedicated care village for older people in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council
- Ensure that all major developments to be subject to a health impact assessment

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<sup>6</sup> Lifetime Homes incorporate 16 design features that improve accessibility and adaptability to enable the elderly and disabled people to remain in their homes for longer.

## **Building stronger communities and supporting housing choice**

### **the situation**

We know that Cheltenham is a borough with a great diversity of communities. We have well established neighbourhood-based communities which have a range of structures to represent them including resident and tenant associations, neighbourhood projects and parish councils. We also have many communities of interest; including those that have representation through established groups such as Cheltenham Disability Forum, Making a Difference Young People's Council and Cheltenham Pensioners Forum, but there are also many communities of interest that do not have any representation. We have recognised the need to support black and other minority ethnic communities in the borough and the council is employing an outreach worker to improve links with both well-established groups and the emerging communities from the eastern European accession states.

We also know that although Cheltenham is a relatively wealthy town, there are still residual problems of poverty that particularly affects are those who are excluded or who are the weakest in the labour market including older people, disabled people, lone parents, the unskilled, the homeless and those suffering from discrimination. These groups are therefore more likely to suffer than those in work and who have an income

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 clearly shows a broad band of deprivation running from Hester's Way and Springbank and crossing the town centre through St. Pauls and then across to Oakley, but that within that, there are five deprivation hot-spots that are amongst the 20% most deprived areas in the country. These hotspots are found in St Paul's, Springbank, Oakley and two in Hester's Way. These areas correspond closely to areas of social housing, and in this we can begin to see a direct correlation between housing tenure and concentrations of deprivation which is a result of the relationship between people's earning power and where they live. The promotion of home-ownership and the view that those in greatest need must have priority to council stock has led to concentrations of deprivation on council estates and latterly in housing association property.

The stronger communities theme responds directly to these challenges through setting out the importance of partnership working to improve community engagement for all our communities and using the police's proposals for neighbourhood policing as a basis for improving engagement with geographic communities. The stronger communities theme also includes work to improve community cohesion, reduce inequalities and promote volunteering and community regeneration.

In terms of housing choice, Cheltenham has a well documented lack of affordable housing and increasing supply a huge challenge for the borough; a housing needs study carried out in 2004 concluded that to meet the total demand for affordable housing, would require the provision of 2,675 affordable dwellings every year for the next five years. Recent figures from 2006 show the average house price in Cheltenham to be £224,972 (Source Land Registry of England and Wales Oct – Dec 2006).

The continued attractiveness of the borough is a contributory factor to population growth. The demand for housing is increasing due to in-migration and increasing number of single person households, increasing the demand for access to all choices of housing. Mainly due to the constrained environment established by the Cotswolds AONB and Green Belt surrounding Cheltenham the supply of affordable housing has not been met. A key factor in delivering affordable housing is negotiation on sites delivering market housing. However many development sites in Cheltenham are on sites of less than 15 houses and therefore are not required to provide affordable housing.

As set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy, over the next 20 years Cheltenham will need to identify sites to accommodate 12,500 new homes to meet the needs of both existing communities and new residents. This provides an opportunity to expand the housing choice available within Cheltenham.

The Government is attaching increasing emphasis to the use of sustainable construction methods in new housebuilding to reduce resource use and carbon emissions; we will need to ensure that both public and private sector housing developments incorporate more sustainable construction techniques, aiming for zero carbon schemes by 2016.

#### **what our community wants**

In terms of the need for regeneration, Cheltenham was felt by workshop participants to trade on its cultured image rather than be inclusive to all communities. There was recognition that people from lower socio-economic groups tend to live in certain wards and that the continued regeneration of these areas and the development of community projects should continue as priorities for the borough.

Both accommodation and house prices were key issues raised through the residents' workshops, and there was a feeling of exclusion from the housing market from many residents on lower incomes. There was also a feeling that the 'affordable housing' developments being built were still too expensive. However, the recent developments in regeneration areas were welcomed.

In many of the other consultation exercises carried out, housing emerged as only being of moderate concern to local residents. This perhaps reflects the fact that the majority of respondents to the consultation events were already home-owners or tenants. It may also be attributable to the desire to stop housing developments being built on open spaces and the green belt which, it is believed by many, will result in Cheltenham losing much of its character.

#### **Our ambition**

We will invest in the development of mixed tenure communities that offer a choice of sustainable, quality, accessible and well-managed affordable homes that meet the needs of all the residents of the borough now and in the future.

#### **where partnership working can make a difference**

The CSP and Stronger Communities Partnership will lead on initiatives to address the following issues:

- Developing a shared approach to consultation across the CSP to be set out in an agreed community engagement strategy that links to the emerging neighbourhood management proposals
- Developing a community cohesion group that will lead on cohesion issues that will sit under the stronger communities partnership
- Supporting community regeneration in areas of multiple deprivation
- Developing sustainable education, training and employment opportunities for hard to reach groups
- Supporting initiatives to encourage and promote volunteering
- Promoting independent living for older people
- Gaining partner commitment to use their land holdings to provide more affordable housing

#### **Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference**

- Identify sustainable locations for housing
- Specify the range and type of affordable, intermediate and market housing
- Provide more affordable housing informed by the Gloucestershire Housing Market Assessment
- Ensuring that new developments contribute to building stronger communities
- Promote the environmental performance of new housing, aiming for the government's goal of all new housing being zero carbon by 2016

## A focus on children and young people

### the situation

According to the Office of National Statistics 2005 mid-year population estimates there are 26,200 children and young people in Cheltenham (age 0 to 19), this accounts for almost a quarter of the population of the town (23.4%). Despite this high proportion, it is often claimed that there aren't enough safe places to play, getting around can be difficult and expensive, and many children live in disadvantaged families and deprived areas. It is therefore essential for joint working to continue to take place between the council and other organisations, both private and voluntary, to ensure that these issues are addressed to make growing up in Cheltenham easier and more enjoyable for every child and young person.

The policy framework for children and young people's work is set nationally by the Every Child Matters: Change for Children which is a shared programme of change to improve outcomes for all children and young people. The aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

Locally, the new three-year Gloucestershire Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), is a single plan shared between all children's services, reflecting national and local priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people.

The CSP supports the vision in the CYPP that children and young people have the right to 'thrive and reach their full potential' and the need, not just to continue to improve outcomes for all children and young people but to focus on improved outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people and to reshape services to provide the right mix of high quality universal, targeted and specialist services.

In Cheltenham, we have established a children and young people's partnership to improve coordination between partners involved in planning and delivering services for children and young people, particularly around the delivery of the five every child matters outcomes for local children and young people and the county Children and Young People's Plan. This will sit under the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership and will also link to the county's Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

Information on NEETs here

### what our community wants

There was a clear steer that we should be investing more in services and facilities for children and young people and that this has come from all age ranges and particularly from communities in more outlying areas where there has been a traditional lack of things to do for young people. People realise that much of the anti-social behaviour attributed to young people is caused by boredom and that if there were more activities and safe places to go linked with work to increase aspirations and life chances we would be making a genuine investment in the next generation. There is also a desire to see more support for parents and families, particularly our most vulnerable families as well as investment into better early years provision in recognition of the critical role that Cheltenham's playgroups, nurseries and childminders play in shaping our children's futures.

### Our ambition

We wish to foster the talent and energy of Cheltenham's young people so that they may play a full and active part in the cultural and economic life of the borough. They should be provided with the education and life skills to allow them to live healthy prosperous and safe lives and to make an active contribution to this borough.

**where partnership working can make a difference**

The CSP and Children and Young People's Partnership will lead on initiatives to address the following issues:

- Ensure that the CSP, its partner organisations and delivery partnerships adhere to the principles of the Hear By Right<sup>7</sup> campaign
- Deliver a programme of preventative measures with young people to protect their safety and health while also investing in better learning, employment, housing, recreation and cultural opportunities for young people.
- Improving access to services for children with disabilities and care leavers
- Improving the safety of children and young people through the prevent and deter agenda and reducing bullying in schools and neighbourhoods
- Prevention of homelessness
- Support for parents and families
- Better early years childcares
- Support for schools to be a focus of their communities

**Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference**

- Ensure that children and young people are active participants in the development of the local development framework
- Encouraging the provision of community facilities for children and young people in existing communities supported by appropriate support workers
- Ensuring that new developments/redevelopments are equipped with the very best community, childcare, education youth, sporting and recreation facilities and that there are appropriate resources to fund service deliver


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<sup>7</sup> Hear by Right is a standards framework for organisations across the statutory and voluntary sectors to assess and improve practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people.

## Investing in environmental quality

### the situation

Cheltenham has a wonderful tradition of municipal parks and gardens, tree-lined streets, natural green spaces, allotments, sports pitches and play areas which bring pleasure and value to where people live and provide valuable habitats for wildlife. This helps to lift local spirits, boost the local economy, bring pleasure and create civic pride. But we know that the borough's heritage of green space is coming under increasing threat through the increase in housing developments on infill sites, including rear gardens. There is also the challenge of responding to the impacts of climate change which means that planting schemes and maintenance regimes will have to evolve to ensure that we can continue to have excellent floral displays in a sustainable fashion.

Cheltenham contains many habitats that harbour wildlife, plants and the natural systems that support them. A Biodiversity Audit has recently been carried out by consultants on behalf of the Council to identify the range of habitats, species and areas of nature conservation within Cheltenham. This audit will be used to set objectives, goals and measurable targets in order to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the borough and will inform the Council's Green Space Strategy and Local Development Framework - 

Cheltenham also has one of the largest conservation areas in Europe. It is famous for its elegant Regency architecture (with many buildings dating from between 1800 and 1840) and it has a reputation as the most complete Regency town in England. But the older buildings lead to problems with maintenance, repairs and saving energy.


Cheltenham's town centre has streets and squares that were designed for people to walk in groups without the interruption of traffic. As a result, our most famous street is called 'The Promenade'. However, in more recent times Cheltenham, like many urban areas of similar size, has had to manage increased numbers of vehicles, which has led to parts of the town being affected by heavy traffic, congestion and pollution. The council is promoting a comprehensive approach to resolving traffic problems in the town centre while bringing about significant improvements in the public realm through its Civic Pride Scheme.

### community views

Comments received from the consultation exercises focussed very much on the local effects of environmental quality. Environmental quality is, however, much broader and links to transport, climate change, planting of open spaces etc and these too are built into the priorities of the community strategy as these will assist in delivering the vision.

The cleanliness and maintenance of streets and pavements was a big concern for consultees and features strongly in many consultation results. The character of Cheltenham in terms of its buildings, architecture and heritage was important to many people and something that they would wish to preserve and enhance. Therefore litter, graffiti, vandalism, and other cleanliness and maintenance issues were felt to be most important.


In terms of the types of environment people thought were most important, formal parks and gardens were identified as being of particular importance. However, maintaining and creating new spaces needs to be considered within the context of sustainable landscape management

Many groups and individuals have expressed continuing concern about the loss of gardens to elopment; this situation has arisen due to gardens being classed as brownfield land in planning guidance. Whilst there may be opportunities where development in rear gardens can be implemented sensitively it is important that inappropriate development is not allowed to occur. In addition, there are concerns that these gardens are valuable habitats for urban wildlife and can also soak up water in times of severe weather.

### our ambition

We will promote quality of design in the public realm and take action to invest in the

cleanliness and maintenance of all of our streets and open spaces and where streets are free from clutter so that people can move around easily. We also need to ensure that new development enhances Cheltenham's assets and improves biodiversity and that our parks and open areas are managed to reduce resource use and encourage wildlife. We also need to ensure that our infrastructure and built and natural environment assets are resilient to the changing climate and the weather extremes, such as water shortages and flooding, that this will bring.

Recognising that Biodiversity is one of the core components of sustainable development, underpinning economic development and prosperity with an important role to play in developing locally distinctive and sustainable communities, we will work in partnership to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the borough. 

#### **where partnership working can make a difference**

The CSP and Low Carbon Partnership will lead on initiatives to address the following issues:

- Adapting to the impacts of climate change
- Improving parks and gardens and informal open spaces and play areas in line with the Green Space Strategy
- Promoting sustainable landscaping and protecting and enhancing biodiversity

The CSP and Built Environment and Transport Group will lead on initiatives to address the following issues

- Supporting improved cleanliness and maintenance of the public realm
- Supporting the design and implementation of the civic pride project
- Promoting high and consistent urban design standards across the borough
- Promoting improved accessibility across the borough for disabled people

#### **Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference**

- Promoting quality design of the public realm, overall built environment and provide new spaces where appropriate
- Improving parks and gardens and informal open spaces and play areas
- Improving accessibility to parks and gardens and informal open spaces and play areas and identify areas where there is a deficiency
- Providing a clear definition of the role of infill within the Government's interpretation of previously developed land
- Promote the importance of gardens to local amenity, wildlife and to soak up rainwater
- Adapting to the impacts of climate change within the built environment and open spaces
- Improving access for all

## **Investing in travel and transport**

### **the situation**

According to the 2001 Census around 77% of households in Cheltenham owned one or more cars, but overall there was a drop in average yearly traffic volumes between 1996 and 2005.

Data on cycling to be included...

There are over 180,000 vehicle movements in and out of Cheltenham every weekday, which combined with the large number of short car journeys within the borough, place great strain on the highway network, particularly during the morning and evening peaks. This creates congestion and affects environmental quality, adding to carbon emissions which cause climate change.

We need to resolve the dilemma of providing adequate and affordable parking and access for our residents and visitors on the one hand, while working to reduce traffic flows through the town centre on the other. This will require a greater emphasis being placed on sustainable transport and more effective traffic management.

New developments will need to be supported by both new transport infrastructure and

improvements to existing infrastructure with an emphasis on modal shift from the private car to public transport, walking and cycling.

### **what our community wants**

In general, travel and transport didn't feature strongly in terms of what local people viewed as being important for the future of the borough, and in fact came out as the least important issue from the results of the schools consultation work carried out.

Whilst travel and transport did not feature strongly within the results of the public consultation exercises, the CSP recognises that investment in sustainable transport will help deliver our vision and therefore it is important that the sustainable community strategy and the local development framework work help set the framework for travel and transport for the borough.

Many consultees are willing to switch to sustainable transport alternatives but did not feel confident in options currently available. Public transport, in particular, was felt to need to improve in reliability, affordability and in the provision of bus shelters and timetable information. There is a concern that bus services to our outlying communities may not be viable in the longer term.

The existing park and rides in Cheltenham were praised by workshop participants who also expressed a desire for such schemes to be increased and new schemes to be introduced across the borough. Better facilities for disabled passengers were a particular area for improvement. In general 'green' transport initiatives were well-received, promotion of this was felt to be important as part of achieving healthier lifestyles as well as benefiting the environment, but cycling provisions in the Borough were criticised for not delivering consistent cycling routes.

The level of parking charges were seen as a particular issue for some residents. When combined with a lack of confidence in the public transport system in the borough, many consultees believed that there was a lack of transport choice in Cheltenham. Congestion was another problem affecting the town centre, and in particular the problems encountered when driving round the inner relief road.

Accessibility is another issue that came up through the consultation in relation to transport as a whole, with both disabled people and people with pushchairs indicating that the public transport operators in the borough have not made adequate provision for these specific users.

### **Our ambition**

We will take action to ensure that everyone can get around easily, where cycling and walking is encouraged, where there is good public transport, and where car use is limited (or discouraged) to reduce congestion and carbon emissions.

### **where partnership working can make a difference**

The CSP and Low Carbon Partnership and the Built Environment and Transport Group will lead on initiatives to address the following issues:

- Improving local public transport services
- Providing safe and easy travel
- Promoting more environmentally-friendly transport and reducing carbon emissions from road and air transport

### **Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference**

- Promoting a mix of uses in new developments and existing developments to reduce the need for car dependency
- Locate and design new developments/redevelopments and infrastructure to promote walking and cycling
- Ensuring public transport is provided to meet the needs of new and existing developments
- In major developments ensure that public transport, walking and cycling is at the core of all proposals and that public transport is affordable and viable within the development

## Investing in arts and culture

### the situation

Cheltenham is extremely fortunate to have a wide range of cultural facilities backed up by a vigorous and successful programme of internationally recognised festivals arts and sports festivals running throughout the year. The borough is home to the Everyman Theatre and the Playhouse Theatre, both of which put on a rich and varied programme of professional and amateur performing arts. Other venues, such as the Town Hall, Pittville Pump Room and the Centaur, host live music as well as festival and community events.

Cheltenham has a wide-range of festivals that take place throughout the year which include the world-renowned Jazz, Music, Science and Literature Festivals, as well as the smaller Fringe and Folk Festivals. The borough is also home to Cheltenham Racecourse which hosts a number of nationally important national hunt race meetings as well as the Gold Cup festival which brings in significant number of overseas visitors to Cheltenham. The borough also boasts a thriving community of independent artists as well as a considerable amount of voluntary sector activity, under the umbrella of Cheltenham Arts Council. Cheltenham Town FC are also a successful football club.

The provision of arts and culture is essential to supporting Cheltenham's quality of life. The generate community vitality and a sense of belonging while also bringing an annual contribution of some £34 million to the economic well-being of the town and its residents. This represents 0.8% of the total business turnover in the town. Around one day in five is a festival day in Cheltenham; over 300 jobs are sustained by the festival programme and a wide range of businesses benefit from the trade the festivals generate.

However, maintaining the town's cultural heritage and developing new services that respond to the emerging needs of artists and more sophisticated demands of audiences represents a substantial challenge. Following the Cultural Review undertaken by an independent consultant for the Borough Council and Cheltenham Festivals in 2006, the Council is considering development proposals for the Town Hall and the development of the Art Gallery and Museum has been agreed. At the same time, the festivals are being asked to be more commercially minded about income generation to reduce their dependency on the public purse.

### what our community wants

Consultees generally felt that the cultural life in Cheltenham was rich and diverse and something that the borough could be justifiably proud of. However, residents identified the need for more young people's projects related to arts, sports and play which were felt to be particularly important to stop the progression from boredom to anti-social behaviour.

Our community recognised that culture has the power to contribute positively to a wide range of agendas including education, economic regeneration, health education and promotion, crime reduction and community development through developing citizenship, confidence and self-esteem.

One suggested area where cultural provision could be increased was in the areas outside the town centre, particularly in deprived communities where there are gaps in cultural opportunity and take-up.

### Our ambition

We will take action to maintain our vibrant and stimulating cultural life and where everyone has access to a wide variety of social, sporting and cultural opportunities.

### where partnership working can make a difference

The CSP and the Cultural Partnership, the Stronger Communities Partnership and the Children and Young People's partnership will lead on initiatives to address the following issues:

- More inclusive and accessible arts and culture activities
- Reviewing areas where providers can work together and embed culture where provision is sparse or in areas where people are not participating

### Where we expect the local development framework to make a difference

- Seeking contributions from developers for public art projects and improvements to the

public realm

- Encouraging the provision of community facilities
- Promote an innovative and creative use of open spaces
- Protect existing assets, such as the Racecourse and encourage new assets that will contribute to the tourism economy of Cheltenham and ensure that the borough continues to play an important role nationally and worldwide in terms of its contribution to arts and culture.

## **Taking it forward – how will we deliver our ambitions**

To deliver the ambitions identified in the previous section, we will ensure that we develop a set of actions and priorities for the sustainable community strategy, local development framework, partners' business plans, and strategies produced by other partner agencies.

### **Sustainable Community Strategy action plan**

The sustainable community strategy action plan is the mechanism by which the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership will deliver its vision, principles and ambitions.

The previous section identified nine long-term ambitions that are important for the sustainable development of the borough as a whole. From these ambitions, the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership has identified five projects that cut across a number of partnership agendas and that it will concentrate on for the next three years. These projects will support different groups of people in Cheltenham where we feel there is a real priority to take coordinated action.

- Parenting and family support
- Children and young people
- Older people
- Community cohesion

Plus the CSP will provide strategic leadership on issues that affect the borough of Cheltenham through working with other partners to help deliver the local area agreement, the urban economic strategy and support the development of Cheltenham's and other neighbouring authorities local development frameworks.

However the CSP recognises that at the time of writing (September 2007) it is not possible for organisations to make definite commitments to taking on new initiatives as we are halfway through the financial year. Instead the priority for the CSP has been to identify a handful of projects where there is potential to gain future partner commitment as part of their annual budget setting processes.

In this we also acknowledge the increasing importance of the Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement in setting the framework for partnership working in the county. The second version of the LAA, to be agreed in June 2008, will specify funding and performance arrangements for many of the partnership activities described in this strategy.

### **Thematic partnership action plans**

The six partnerships will all have their own action plans which will set out how they are delivering the issues set out in the sustainable community strategy

### **Local Development Framework**

Cheltenham has a statutory duty to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is made up of development documents that outline how planning will be managed in Cheltenham and together with the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West forms the statutory development plan for Cheltenham.

The Cheltenham borough LDF will deal with development, helping to conserve the special environment of Cheltenham and identifying land which will be needed for future development. The policies and proposals set out in the plan will influence decisions on planning applications.

The vision and ambitions established by the community strategy will be taken forward in the preparation of the LDF which will form part of the statutory development plan for Cheltenham and will guide development proposals to meet the needs of Cheltenham, providing the vehicle to deliver some of the priorities and ambitions of the community strategy in partnership with service providers. The approach adopted by the CSP and Borough Council in co-ordinating the community strategy and LDF reflects the Government agenda set out in the local government white paper.

## **New partnership structures**

The CSP has agreed that it will need to restructure to ensure that it is in the best possible position to deliver the new community strategy and add value to existing work to enable better and smarter working within and between organisations. The CSP will be restructured around a two-tier model.

Cheltenham Strategic Partnership will be a broad partnership bringing together all operational and strategic partnerships, core partners, community and voluntary sectors involved in the delivery of the community strategy. This group will meet bi-annually to agree the community strategy and annual action plan and to take a bi-annual report from the management group.

A smaller more focused management group comprising core partners and representatives of the six delivery partnerships will meet every two months to hold the six delivery partnerships to account, ensure effective performance management of the action plan and ensure resources are in place to enable successful delivery of the community strategy

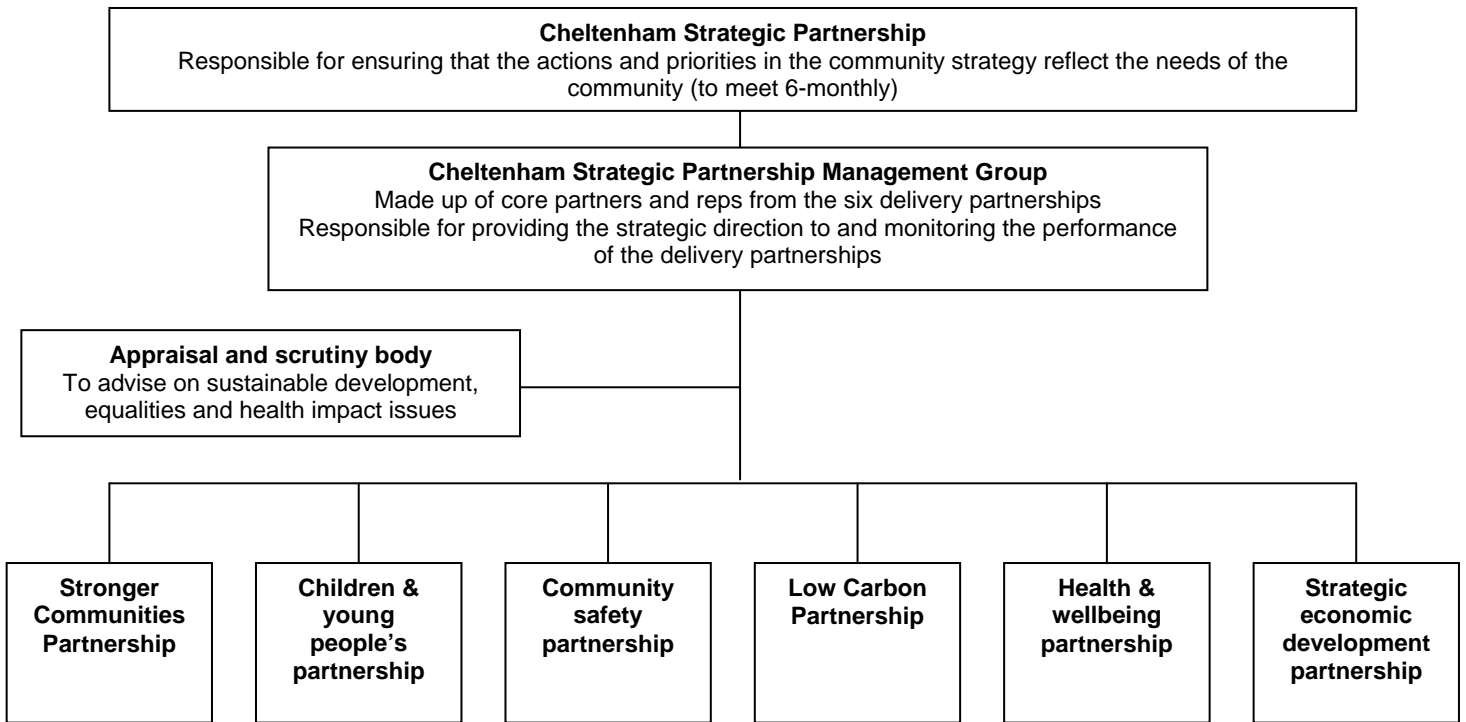
The core partners are:

- Gloucestershire County Council (nominated county councillor and director)
- Cheltenham Borough Council (leader and Chief Executive)
- Gloucestershire Police (senior officer)
- Gloucestershire PCT (senior officer)
- Learning and Skills Council (senior officer)
- Cheltenham Voluntary and Community Action

The following are the delivery partnerships for the community strategy which directly link to the ambitions of this community strategy:

- Stronger Communities Partnership
- Children and Young People's Partnership
- Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership
- Low Carbon Partnership
- Health & Wellbeing Partnership
- Strategic Economic Development Partnership

The CSP is pleased that the six partnerships align closely to the partnership arrangements for the county and that there is an emerging relationship between our district partnership and its county counterpart.



## **Summary**

We hope you have enjoyed reading Our Cheltenham, Cheltenham's sustainable community strategy

As you will recall, the draft strategy has four key aims;

- To set out local communities' needs and aspirations;
- To provide an assessment of the future challenges facing Cheltenham and what we collectively need to do to respond;
- To set out an aspirational long term vision for the achievement of sustainable development in Cheltenham
- To focus and shape existing and future activity of public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally so that they effectively meet community needs and our longer term aspirations;

## More information

### Community planning and the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership:

<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cheltenhampartnership.org.uk">www.cheltenhampartnership.org.uk</a>
<b>Address</b>	Richard Gibson Policy and Performance Cheltenham Borough Council Municipal Offices Cheltenham GL50 1PP
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:Richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk">Richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Telephone</b>	01242 235 354

### The Local Development Framework:

<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/libraries/templates/thefuture.asp?FolderID=305">www.cheltenham.gov.uk/libraries/templates/thefuture.asp?FolderID=305</a>
<b>Address</b>	Tracey Crews Policy and Performance Cheltenham Borough Council Municipal Offices Cheltenham GL50 1PP
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:ldf@cheltenham.gov.uk">ldf@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Telephone</b>	01242 264 382

### Gloucestershire Local Area Agreement

<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/laa">www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/laa</a>
<b>Address</b>	Rob Ayliffe Gloucestershire County Council Shire Hall Westgate Street Gloucester GL1 2TG
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:rob.ayliffe@gloucestershire.gov.uk">rob.ayliffe@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Telephone</b>	01452 426 613

## Glossary of terms

Alternative transport	methods of transport other than the private car
Affordable housing	
Antisocial behaviour	public behaviour that lacks judgement and consideration for others and may cause them or their property damage
Brownfield	land previously used for industrial or commercial uses
Built environment	manmade surroundings that provide the setting for human activity
Carbon emissions	carbon released into the earth's atmosphere largely as a result of man-made processes such as energy use or agriculture
Carbon-neutral	an activity that has no net carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ) emissions. CO <sub>2</sub> contributes to climate change and so, for an activity to be carbon neutral, its CO <sub>2</sub> emissions must have been measured, reduced as much as possible and then any remaining emissions 'offset' through government approved carbon offsetting projects
Climate change	usually refers to changes in temperature, wind and rainfall patterns that have been observed since the early 1900s. The observed changes in global climate are almost certainly due to human activities leading to a build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which is disrupting climate patterns
Cohesion	groups living in a local area getting together to promote or defend a common local interest
Community engagement	process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people to address issues affecting the well-being of those people
Deprivation	a person or community is deprived of, or lacks the essentials for a minimum standard of well-being and life
Ecological footprint	a tool to measure the total quantity of land and sea area needed to provide and absorb the natural resources we use, and to accommodate our lifestyles. This includes the land needed to produce resources such as food and timber, to absorb the waste we produce (including carbon emissions) and to provide homes, jobs and infrastructure. Our footprint is the sum of all these areas, wherever they are on the planet (measured in global hectares). Cheltenham's ecological footprint in 2005 was 5.39 global hectares per person, but there were only 1.8 hectares per person available around the world to support the global population
Economically active	the population that furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services during a specific period

energy efficiency	reducing energy use by changing behaviour and/or replacing products and systems that consume energy with ones that use less energy for the same or higher performance
Environmental limits	the limit to which an environment, natural resource or an ecosystem can cope with the population, resource exploitation and pollution pressures placed on it. There is a risk of causing long term damage to the health and productivity of an environment if the environmental limit is exceeded
Greenfield	a piece of undeveloped land, either currently used for agriculture or just left to nature
Housing tenure	the financial arrangements under which someone has the right to live in a house or apartment (e.g. tenant, owner, etc)
Index/Indices of Multiple Deprivation	several indicators combined into a single deprivation score and rank for different Super Output Areas
Lifelong learning	providing people with learning opportunities at all ages and not just through formal educational channels
Lifetime homes	
Local Area Agreement	a three year agreement between central government and that sets out the priorities for a local area
Local Development Framework	a folder of local development documents that outlines how planning will be managed in Cheltenham
Local Development Scheme	outlines a proposed timetable for the preparation of planning policies and priorities for bringing forward documents which will deliver the strategies of the council where these relate directly to land use or influence the nature of places and how they function
Key stage	a stage of the education system that sets the educational knowledge expected of students at various ages
multiple deprivation	The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2004 combines indicators across seven domains (Income, Employment, Health deprivation and disability, Education, skills and training deprivation, Barriers to Housing and Services, Living Environment deprivation and Crime) into a single deprivation score and rank for each area.
'one planet' consumption	ensuring that our consumption of natural resources is within the planet's overall environmental limits; using the resources of the one planet we actually have rather than those of the three that we currently consume in the UK
Quality of life	the overall well-being and standard of living of a community
Renewable energy	energy that is produced from renewable sources such as wind, wave and solar power, rather than energy from depleting fossil fuel sources such as oil, coal and gas

Regional Spatial Strategy	a review of the current Regional Planning Guidance and the key document for planning, monitoring and managing future development
Super Output Areas	a new geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales
Sustainable Community Strategy	sets out a long term vision for an area, with an emphasis on integrating social, economic and environmental issues, and tackling the longer term and global impacts of communities to create an area where people genuinely want to live in the long term
Sustainable construction	new building and refurbishment that promotes environmental, social and economic gains now and for the future
Sustainable development	development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the UK, this means living within the environmental limits of our planet and ensuring a strong, healthy and just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal wellbeing. We will achieve this by means of a sustainable economy, promoting good governance and using sound science
Sustainable economy	an innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment over the long term, but which is achieved in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible
Sustainable energy	using energy more efficiently and from renewable sources, such as solar or wind power
Sustainable procurement	purchasing which supports wider social, economic and environmental objectives in ways that offer real long-term benefits
Sustainable transport	modes such as walking, cycling or public transport which are less damaging to the environment than using the car
Sustainability	the goal of sustainable development, which will enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.
Wards	an electoral district used in local politics
Zero carbon homes	dwellings which produce zero net carbon emissions per annum as they are well insulated and use small amounts of energy produced from on-site renewable technologies