

**South Staffordshire
Local Development Framework**



**Shaping a Sustainable Future
for South Staffordshire**



Core Strategy

**Development Policies
Consultation Paper**

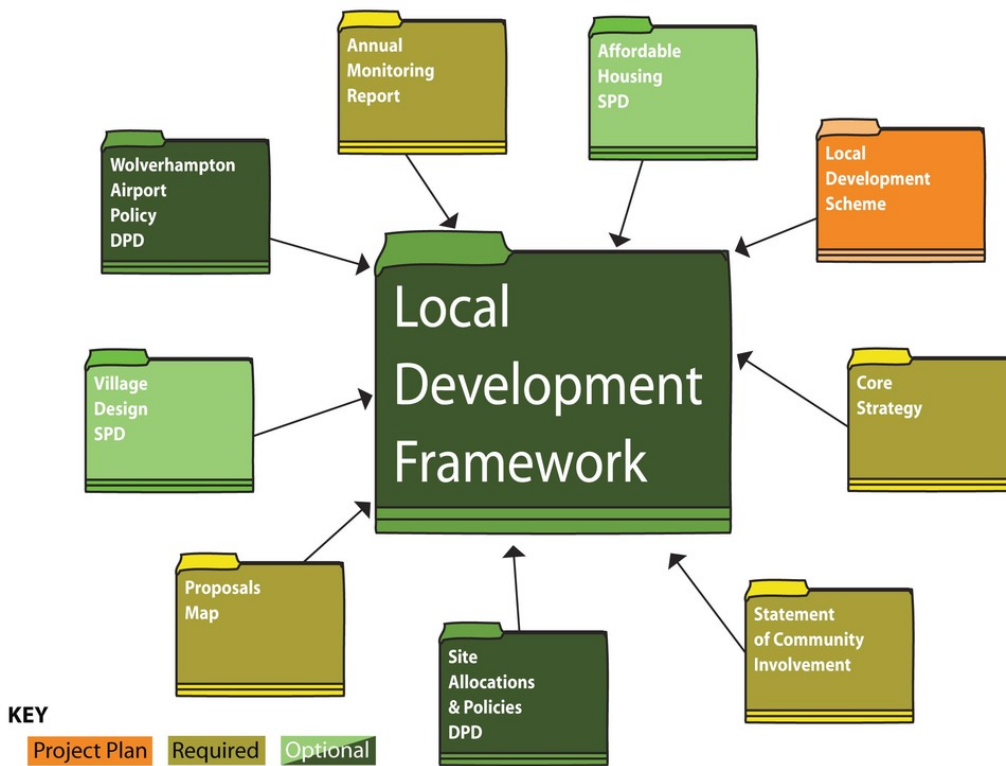
August 2008



South Staffordshire Council

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The Council is preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) to help shape a sustainable future for South Staffordshire. It will replace the existing adopted Local Plan and set out the spatial planning strategy for the District up to 2026. The Local Development Framework will consist of a number of statutory and non-statutory documents that together will set out the planning policies to guide the development of the District.



The Core Strategy document will be at the heart of the Local Development Framework for South Staffordshire. It will set out the long-term vision, objectives and planning policies to deliver a better environment in the future. All other documents prepared for the Local Development Framework must help to deliver the vision and be in conformity with the Core Strategy. It will be informed by and draw upon other strategies produced by the Council and other organisations, particularly the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Core Strategy will contain the core spatial policies for the District together with detailed policies for the delivery and management of development. The development policies in the Core Strategy will be supported by guidance on individual planning policy themes contained within separate Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) including documents on affordable housing, village design guidance, developer contributions and sustainable development.

The development policies in the Core Strategy will replace the saved policies in the adopted Local Plan but the existing policies will continue to be used in determining planning applications until the Core Strategy has been adopted. A list of the currently saved policies can be found in Appendix A. You can access further information on the Local Development Framework and the Local Plan saved policies on our website at <http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk>.

As the Core Strategy takes shape, its preparation is being informed by an on-going Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. SEA is a process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed policies, plans or programmes to ensure that environmental issues are fully integrated and addressed at the earliest stage of decision making. SA's are broader and promote sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations into the plan's preparation. The SEA process is incorporated in the SA process for the Core Strategy.

A Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report has been produced for the Local Development Framework which sets out the baseline information and key sustainability issues and objectives for South Staffordshire. The scoping report also sets out the sustainability framework against which the Core Strategy and other LDF documents will be assessed.

2 The Purpose of this Consultation Exercise

The Council is committed to involving local communities and key stakeholders in the Local Development Framework and sees consultation as an ongoing activity, which feeds the views of residents and consultees into the plan process. In particular, the Council published a Core Strategy 'Issues and Options Paper' in October 2006 which was made widely available to all interested parties and received 165 responses.

The Council's decision to include development policies within the Core Strategy has led to the need for further consultation on detailed policy issues. The purpose of this consultation exercise is to explore the issues and promote discussion on the key topic areas that will need to be addressed in the formulation of development policies for the Core Strategy.

To assist in the consideration of possible development policies, a summary of the key points arising from the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation is included in this Paper as Appendix B.

The Council would like the views of local communities and key stakeholders on the type of development policies that should be included within the Core Strategy. A response form is included with this Consultation Paper and we welcome any comments or suggestions you may wish to make on development policies. Please note that any comments you make are not confidential and may be made publicly available.



3 Potential Issues to be Addressed



In formulating development policies for the Local Development Framework, the Council must take into account the framework provided by national and regional policy and guidance, particularly in respect of sustainable development. The Council must decide whether the policy themes and principles in the existing Local Plan policies are still relevant and whether new policies are required to deal with key issues such as sustainable development, climate change and the delivery of housing development.

As a general principle, development policies should be included when, and only when, they are needed to provide local expression and interpretation of national and regional guidance and to provide support for the core policies. It will be important therefore that policies do not repeat national and regional policies, and that they are relevant and reflect the character and local distinctiveness of South Staffordshire.

In order to provide a sound basis for the delivery and management of development in South Staffordshire, it is expected that locally based development policies will be needed in the Core Strategy covering the following policy areas:

- Development boundaries including Green Belt and Open Countryside
- Special policy areas covering specific sites or locations such as Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt
- Housing development – including phasing, density, brownfield targets, affordable housing, exceptions sites, gypsies and travellers



- Economic development - including employment sites, rural diversification, tourism, village centres and retailing
- Transport - including rural transport and accessibility to services
- Community facilities - including sole facilities and services

3 Potential Issues to be Addressed

- Historic Environment – heritage assets including Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, rural buildings, historic landscapes and locally important buildings
- Landscape – including landscape character and Cannock Chase AONB
- Natural Environment – natural assets including areas of biological importance



- Natural resources - including renewable energy, water resources and waste
- Flooding and flood plains
- Recreation and open space - including standards of provision
- Design and layout of new development including movement, form and space
- Community Safety - including designing out crime
- Protecting public amenity including space about dwellings
- Developer Contributions

4 How to make your comments

We are seeking your views on the type of development policies you think that should be included in the Core Strategy. The best way to comment on the Core Strategy is on-line at <http://sstaffs-consult.limehouse.co.uk>

Key benefits of making comments online include:

- Update personal details instantly, such as change of address or email.
- Specify preference - how any future contact should be made regarding document updates or mail shots.
- Save time - view documents/comments online.
- Optional instant updates of new drafts available for consultation.
- Environmental - electronic systems save paper.
- Ability to view other consultees' comments once they have been processed by the council.
- Search - to view other comments on different items within a particular document.

You can also respond to this consultation paper by completing a representation form and sending it to:

Development Plans Manager
South Staffordshire Council
Council Offices
Wolverhampton Road
Codsall
South Staffordshire
WV8 1PX

Email: developmentplans@sstaffs.gov.uk
Fax: 01902 696705

A response form is available via our website at <http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk>

Your comments need to be received by us by 5pm on 26th September 2008.



We will use the comments received in response to this consultation exercise to help us in preparing draft development policies for inclusion in the Core Strategy which will be published for consultation later this year.

If you have any comments or queries about this Paper or the South Staffordshire Local Development Framework please contact a member of the Development Plans Team on: 01902 696317/6423/6244.

DIRECTION UNDER PARAGRAPH 1(3) OF SCHEDULE 8 TO THE PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

POLICIES CONTAINED IN THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN ADOPTED DECEMBER 1996

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in exercise of the power conferred by paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 directs that for the purposes of the policies specified in the Schedule to this direction, paragraph 1(2)(a) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 does not apply.

SCHEDULE OF POLICIES CONTAINED IN SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN ADOPTED DECEMBER 1996

Policy Number	Policy Name
GB1	Green Belt (General)
GB4	Long Term Development Needs
GB5	Land Safeguarded under Policy GB4
GB6	Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt
OC1	Open Countryside (General)
C1	Re-Use of Rural Buildings
C2	Use of Agricultural Land
C3	Development on Agricultural Land
C4	Dwellings in the Countryside
C8	Extensions
C13	Expansion of Businesses.
HG1	Halfpenny Green Airport
HG2	Support Uses
HG3	Other Non-Aviation Uses
HG4	Cessation of Use
SB1	Smestow Bridge Policy Area
H6	Affordable Housing Provision
H11	Local Needs Housing in Rural Areas
H12	Local Needs Assessment Criteria
H15	Financial Contributions to Infrastructure
H16	Character of Surroundings
H17	Spaces about Buildings
H18	Density of New Development
H19	Infilling
H21	Travelling Showmen's Permanent Quarters

Policy Number	Policy Name
E1	Premium Sites (North of Wolverhampton)
E3	General Employment Proposals
E4	Royal Ordnance Factory Featherstone
E6	Outside Storage
E8	Relocation of Non-Conforming Uses
TR3	New Development Access and Highway Improvements
TR4	New Development Vehicle Parking and Manoeuvring
BE5	Listed Buildings -Applications for Listed Building Consent
BE7	Conservation Areas - Planning Applications
BE9	Conservation Areas - Demolition Prior to Redevelopment
BE12	Conservation Areas – Removal of Intrusive Features
BE14	Retention of Shop Fronts
BE15	Replacement of Shop Fronts
BE16	Security Screens
BE17	Internally Illuminated Signs
BE18	New Advertisements
BE19	Existing Signs
BE20	Re-Use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings – Physical Suitability
BE21	Re-Use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings – Planning Applications
BE22	Re-Use and Adaptation of Rural Buildings – Permitted Development
BE25	Location of New Buildings
BE26	New Development – Design Criteria
BE27	Protection of the Natural Watercourse System
BE28	Protection of Ground Water Resources
RE1	Renewable Energy
R1	Provision of Recreation and Leisure Facilities
R2	Sports Pitches – Protection of Pitches and Replacement Facilities
R4	Open Space – Protection of Open Spaces and Parks
R5	Open Space – Provision of Open Space and Children’s Play
R6	Recreation and Open Space Proposals
R8	Bratch Policy Area – Land East of Canal
R10	Countryside Recreation – Noise Nuisance
R16	Hatherton Branch Canal
LS1	Landscape Character – Protection and Enhancement
LS2	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection

Policy Number	Policy Name
LS5	Retention and Protection of Trees
LS6	Reinstatement of Hedgerows and Woodlands on Development Sites
LS7	Special Landscape Area
LS9	Landscape Improvement Areas – Tree and Shrub Planting
LS10	Landscape Improvement Areas – Development Proposals
LS11	Historic Landscapes – Protection of Character and Setting
LS12	Cannock Chase AONB – Landscape Conservation and Development Proposals
NC2	Protection of National Sites of Nature Conservation and Ecological Importance
NC3	Protection of Sites Designated Locally of Nature Conservation and Ecological Importance
NC4	Site Protection – Retention of Features and Replacement Habitats
NC5	Green Lanes
NC7	Habitat Creation
NC8	Wildlife Corridors
NC9	Wetlands and Watercourses

The responses received to the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation that are relevant to the consideration of Development Policies are summarised below under the Sustainable Community Strategy Themes.

Environmental Quality

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy	Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of Development Policy
Theme: Environmental Quality		
Green Belt and Open Countryside		
<p>Green Belt Policy - 87% of respondents felt that some form of strict maintenance of the Green Belt was a key issue. Of those, 88% felt that the Council should maintain strict Green Belt policies in accordance with national and regional policy and only consider changes to boundaries in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>White Land/Major Developed Sites/Green Belt Boundaries - White land, major developed sites and detailed greenbelt boundaries are identified as key issues that need to be addressed. Consultation responses suggest that in order to establish those major developed sites and areas of white land that should be maintained and those that should be returned to the Green Belt a review and analysis at both a strategic and more detailed level is required. It is highlighted throughout the consultation responses that any allocated housing sites should be those that are most sustainable and located close to existing settlements.</p>	Green Belt and Open Countryside	To ensure that development within the Green Belt and Open Countryside is limited to that which is appropriate in those areas.
		Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt
	Development Boundaries	To define the appropriate boundaries of settlements, taking into account the need to ensure that development needs of the area can be met, whilst protecting the countryside.
Natural and Historic Environment		
<p>It was evident during the Issues and Options consultation that the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment was one of the most supported themes out of all raised during consultation, with the largest response rate to any question. There was very high general support for all of the options, and not one single option stood out as being more important than any other.</p>	Protecting and Enhancing Heritage Assets	To protect and enhance built or landscape features which contribute to the heritage, character and local distinctiveness of the District.
	Protecting and Enhancing Natural Assets	To protect and enhance areas of nature conservation or geological importance.
	Protecting Public Amenity	To ensure the protection of the amenity of those affected by and users of new development.

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy	Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of Development Policy
<p>Historic Environment – nearly 2/3 of all respondents felt that it was very important for the Council to encourage the restoration and reuse of locally important buildings through the LDF. This option was in the top five of all issues commented on.</p> <p>Wildlife Sites - The options to protect designated sites, and to encourage the efficient management of existing and new wildlife habitats were the two single most supported response out of all questions asked during the consultation process. The need to take a strategic approach to ecological/habitat networks is also identified in the responses and the use of Biodiversity Enhancement Areas as a means of taking this forward is suggested. Support was expressed for the important role the District's canals play in enhancing biodiversity and the need to effectively manage the environment around canals.</p> <p>Landscape - It was also evident from the consultation that the need to identify areas for landscape improvement is key, and support for small-scale renewable energy generation schemes was apparent in the consultee responses. In addition, the need to positively promote woodland and tree planting was highlighted. Wide recognition of the need to define Historic Landscape Areas was also identified in the responses as well as strong support for the reuse of historic buildings for alternative uses where it would contribute to their retention and restoration.</p> <p>Climate Change and Renewable Energy - There was a very high level of general support for all of the options concerning climate change and renewable energy. This included reducing the need for people to travel, ensuring that there are alternatives to the car and encouraging the development of renewable energy schemes including community based projects. Encouraging higher standards of energy efficiency in developments was the most popular option within this issue, and had the joint third highest level of support for any question asked throughout out the consultation questions. However, no option stood out as being more important than any other.</p> <p>Flood Risk - There was a very high level of support for measures to reduce contributions to climate change and reduce the risk of flooding. Consultees also identified that limiting development on flood plains is a significant issue to be addressed in the LDF.</p> <p>Design - There was very high general support for all of the options to promote good design from all respondents, and not one single option stood out as being more important than any other. Respondents identified a number of measures to ensure quality design including the use of 'life time homes' and 'active design' principles. Other suggestions included architectural competitions for public building design, solar panels and the need for good canalside design. The importance of robust design policies and the need for new development to be</p>	<p>Waste</p> <p>Protecting the Character and Appearance of the Landscape</p> <p>Landscaping</p> <p>Utilities and Infrastructure</p> <p>Sustainable Energy</p> <p>Flooding and Flood Plains</p> <p>Hazardous and Environmentally Sensitive Operations</p> <p>General Design Considerations</p> <p>Impact of Noise</p>	<p>To promote the reduction and reuse of waste and ensure that provision is made in new development for recycling and collection.</p> <p>To protect and where possible enhance the landscape of the district.</p> <p>To ensure that landscaping is an integrated part of new development, which complements and enhances the local environment.</p> <p>To ensure the provision of adequate utilities and infrastructure in a timely and sustainable manner without detriment to the local community.</p> <p>To promote the minimisation of energy use and the incorporation of renewable energy measures within new development.</p> <p>To ensure that future development is safe from flooding and in no way increases the risk of flooding elsewhere.</p> <p>To protect human health and safety from potentially hazardous activities in relation to new development.</p> <p>To ensure that development proposals seek to achieve creative, innovative and sustainable designs that take account of local character and distinctiveness.</p> <p>To ensure that development likely to generate significant noise is directed away from noise sensitive land uses and that noise sensitive land uses are directed away from existing noisy activities.</p>

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy	Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of Development Policy
<p>in keeping with local vernacular was also a key theme from the consultation responses. Village Design Statements were identified as having an important role to play.</p>	<p>Securing Developer Contributions</p>	<p>To secure the provision of new services and facilities required in relation to new development or the improvement and enhancement of existing facilities. This may include public open space, affordable housing, flood protection measures, education facilities, highway and transport infrastructure and any other local needs identified.</p>

Housing

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy	Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of the Development Policy
Theme: Housing		
Housing Development		
<p>Location of Housing - 84% of consultees to the Issues and Options Consultation felt that new housing development should be shared between villages across the District and considered that the Council should develop an approach to distribution that will provide for local needs in villages. Only 16% of those who responded considered that development should be focused solely on the main villages of South Staffordshire.</p>	<p>Phasing of Housing</p>	<p>To ensure that housing is delivered in line with the time frames outlined in the WMRSS and PPS3, to promote the development of previously developed land and to ensure that infrastructure needs in relation to new development are delivered in a timely and appropriate manner.</p>
<p>Respondents advocated that locations for growth should provide good accessibility to a range of facilities and services by modes of transport other than the car, as a priority over whether the land is previously developed. The need to identify locations for growth to 2026 was recognised as well as the need to illustrate these location in a visual diagram for further comment.</p>	<p>Gypsy and Traveller Sites</p>	<p>To ensure that appropriate locations are found for Gypsy and Traveller sites that meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers without causing harm to the natural, historic or built environment or compromising the amenity of existing communities.</p>
<p>Housing Needs - Almost 2/3 of those who responded to the Issues and Options consultation felt that it was very important for the Council to meet a mix of housing needs by encouraging a mix of house types and densities. A number of respondents recommend identifying sites up to 2026 and including a mix of housing types, tenures and densities. The needs of gypsies and travellers, the elderly, single parents and young families were all highlighted as important issues to be addressed.</p>	<p>Achieving and Maintaining the Right Mix of Housing</p>	<p>To guide new housing development in relation to the mix of size, type and tenure both on windfall and allocated sites.</p>
<p>Specialist Housing - The provision of more specialist housing for our elderly population was also considered an important issue with over half of all respondents naming this priority group.</p>	<p>Delivering Affordable Housing</p>	<p>To provide guidance on the provision of affordable housing including guidance on affordability and ensure that affordable housing is secured in perpetuity.</p>

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy	Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of the Development Policy
<p>Affordable Housing - There was some support for affordable housing provision in South Staffordshire, with the option to allow small-scale affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites being the most popular of all options. Rural exception sites were mentioned by a number of respondents as an important mechanism for delivering more affordable housing.</p>		
<p>Housing Density - There was general support for taking a locally distinctive approach to housing density within the different villages of South Staffordshire by adopting different density targets for different villages or areas in order to protect the character of existing settlements.</p>	Delivering Housing on Brownfield Land	To promote the reuse of land and buildings for housing development in line with the target % on previously developed land identified in the WMRSS.
<p>Reuse of Land and Buildings - The opportunity for residential development provided by redundant farmland and buildings, and greenfield sites on the edge of existing settlements was also discussed in the responses.</p>		

Economic Vibrancy

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy		Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of Development Policy
Theme: Economic Vibrancy			
Local Economy			
<p>Supporting the Local Economy – In the response to the Issues and Options consultation, there was general approval for measures to support the local economy within South Staffordshire, with the option to support the refurbishment of existing buildings, the regeneration of underused sites and improvements to the environment of existing employment areas being the most popular of all options. There was also general support for the LDF to provide a mix of employment uses within employment sites to meet local needs, and to protect good quality employment sites, with over half of all respondents advocating these priorities. Support was expressed for having a portfolio of employment sites including a mix of sizes and types. A number of respondents would like to see specific sites being allocated in the plan period. Some respondents recognised the need for a balance between housing and employment development. Respondents felt that South Staffordshire Council should facilitate and encourage local employment opportunities. Various respondents expressed the opinion that employment development should be focused within existing settlements. The need to identify new regional employment sites to meet regional need and to minimise the impact on green belt were two further issues highlighted.</p>	<p>Measures to Support the Local Economy</p> <p>Rural Employment</p> <p>Retention of Employment Sites</p> <p>Tourism</p>	<p>To support economic development, employment opportunities and the development of skills.</p> <p>To ensure that employment development in rural locations is appropriate in scale and type to the locality.</p> <p>To safeguard land and buildings used or allocated for employment use and to protect existing businesses.</p> <p>To ensure that tourism makes a positive and sustainable contribution to the local economy without compromise to the quality of the built and natural environment or the amenity of local residents.</p>	
<p>Tourism - Tourism within South Staffordshire was also given some support from respondents with the option to allow existing tourist attractions and facilities to expand given the greatest support. It was suggested that there was the need for other tourist facilities such as eating establishments, in order to support and enhance existing tourism facilities. Specific mention was given in the responses to the need for a policy on canals and their benefits as a tourist attraction. Protecting sport and recreational facilities and the local environment was identified as an issue especially in the case of large-scale tourism development.</p>	<p>Agricultural Matters</p>	<p>To encourage farm diversification and the reuse of farm buildings for appropriate uses, to guide new agricultural development and to promote sustainable agricultural practice.</p>	
<p>Rural Diversification – Rural diversification also received general support from respondents with over half stating that the Council should support existing businesses in the rural areas and allow limited expansion. A number of respondents would like to see support for appropriate new and small-scale businesses, and the reuse of redundant farm buildings for employment use.</p>			

Community Safety

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy	Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of Development Policy
Theme: Community Safety		
Community Safety		
<p>Designing Out Crime - There was a high level of general support for promoting safer communities, with the option to designing out crime being marginally the most popular of all options, however the high level of overall support for this theme shows that not one single option stood out as being more important than any other.</p>	<p>Designing Out Crime</p>	<p>To promote design which reduces the opportunities for, and fear of, crime and anti-social behaviour.</p>
<p>Other Issues - A number of respondents felt that maintaining small village communities, a sense of belonging, and community identity, contributed to safer environments. Good lighting and promoting the introduction of facilities for young people was also identified as important.</p>		

Health and Wellbeing

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy	Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of Development Policy
Theme: Health and Well Being		
Leisure, Recreation and Culture		
<p>Protecting Open Spaces - It was evident from the consultation responses that all the issues surrounding open space, green areas, leisure facilities, recreation and culture were universally and highly supported. Defining policies to protect existing open spaces and green areas was marginally the most supported issue, but overall there was very high general support for all of the options, and not one single option stood out as being more important than any other.</p> <p>New Facilities - The importance of locating new leisure and recreation facilities in locations that are accessible by modes of transport other than the car was highlighted in the responses. Other respondents mentioned the benefits of locating facilities in the heart of a village not in developments in the outskirts. The need for an open space assessment to identify where needs are not being met was also highlighted.</p> <p>Canals - Support was also expressed for greater commitment to improving the canal network including the footpaths and cycle ways alongside the canal.</p> <p>Other Issues - The opinion that public art should not be a priority due to cost and problems of vandalism was expressed on a number of occasions. A policy to promote and protect existing cultural facilities and allow for the development of new arts and cultural facilities was also suggested.</p>	<p>Open Space, Sport and Recreation</p> <p>Recreational Links</p> <p>Hatherton Branch Canal</p>	<p>To support open space, sport and recreation by the protection and enhancement of open space and land and buildings currently in sport and recreation use. To set out new open space standards and to facilitate the delivery of new open space, sport and recreation facilities.</p> <p>To establish and maintain a green network of open spaces, which provide opportunities for leisure walking and cycling, promotes sustainable forms of transport and enhance wildlife corridors.</p> <p>To support the restoration of the Hatherton Branch Canal and protect the route of the canal from development.</p>

Children and Young People

Development Policy Issues from the Core Strategy		Suggested Development Policy	Purpose of Development Policy
Theme: Children and Young People			
Children and Young People			
Provision of Facilities - More facilities catering for 9-16 year olds was identified as a need in all villages for example the provision of a bowling alley or cinema was suggested.	No specific policy suggested - covered by other development policies such as open space, sport and recreation and developer contributions.		