



Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan

2019-2036

January 2022

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Foreword

Since our small beginnings as a medieval market town, Thornbury has gone on to thrive as a vibrant, characterful and desirable place to live. There is a great sense of community in our town and it's this spirit and desire to preserve and enhance all that's best about Thornbury that has encouraged our residents to develop a neighbourhood plan. This plan gives communities such as Thornbury the opportunity to help shape the development and growth of our area.

Since confirming our commitment to develop the plan in 2017, a determined group of residents has been engaged in ensuring we tap into the views of the population of Thornbury so we can understand and articulate those views in our emerging plan. We have held public meetings, have staffed stalls at community events, have popped posters up in shops around the town and have produced surveys for local residents to complete. Our website has kept residents up to date with progress. We believe we have established a clear understanding of the views of our community through these events and have translated these views into policies that will help guide positive development of our town.

Once the neighbourhood plan has passed independent examination and community referendum, it will be used by South Gloucestershire Council to assist in the determination of planning decisions affecting Thornbury, allowing the voices of our community to be heard in the planning system.

Our sincere thanks go to all those in our community who have offered their views about the future of Thornbury and to those who have worked hard to bring this Plan to fruition including members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Thornbury Town Council and our advisors, Lemon Gazelle.

Tricia Hillier
Chair, Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Purpose

This document is the Neighbourhood Plan for Thornbury.

1.2 What is the Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood Plans are a key component of the Localism Act 2011 and offer communities the opportunity to shape their environment, so they have more influence over local planning decisions. A Neighbourhood Plan, once made, forms part of the statutory local development plan for the area. Planning applications are then determined in accordance with the policies set out in both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan. The Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan addresses a wide range of issues, all of which must be related to land use to be included in the Plan. These include:

- The development of housing (type, design, tenure etc.)
- Local employment and opportunities for businesses
- Protecting the character and identity of Thornbury
- Thornbury town centre and the provision of services and facilities
- Green and open spaces and connections
- Protecting the natural environment and mitigating against the impact of climate change
- Transport and access issues

Neighbourhood Plans must be prepared in conformity with the Planning Authority's current planning documents and must also follow the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 which sets out the structure for the planning of sustainable development. The Core Strategy and Policies, Sites and Places Plan for 2006-2026 remains the adopted local development plan in place, together with the Policies, Sites and Places Plan which was adopted in November 2017.

1.3 Preparing the Plan

The production of the Neighbourhood Plan has been led by a group of volunteers from Thornbury, together with members of the Thornbury Town Council. A Steering Group was formed to guide the development of the Plan, with engagement with local residents about how Thornbury should be shaped in the future informing the Plan.

1.4 Submitting Body

This Neighbourhood Plan is submitted by Thornbury Town Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

1.5 Neighbourhood Area

The Neighbourhood Plan applies to the Parish of Thornbury in the county of South Gloucestershire. It encompasses the area shown in Figure 1 (below)

1.6 Structure of this Document

This document is set out in the following sections:

- How the Plan was developed and how it seeks to address the views of our residents
- Information about the Parish of Thornbury
- The vision and strategic objectives that have been developed from listening to our residents
- Sections on policy areas including:
 - Identity and coherent development
 - Housing
 - Town centre and economy
 - Services and facilities
 - Sustainable development and connectivity
 - Travel, transport and parking

The way that the Vision, Objectives and policies are linked together is mapped in Appendix B.

- How the Plan will be implemented and compliance with the Plan monitored
- Issues which cannot be included in the Neighbourhood Plan but which we seek to address through separate processes
- Appendices



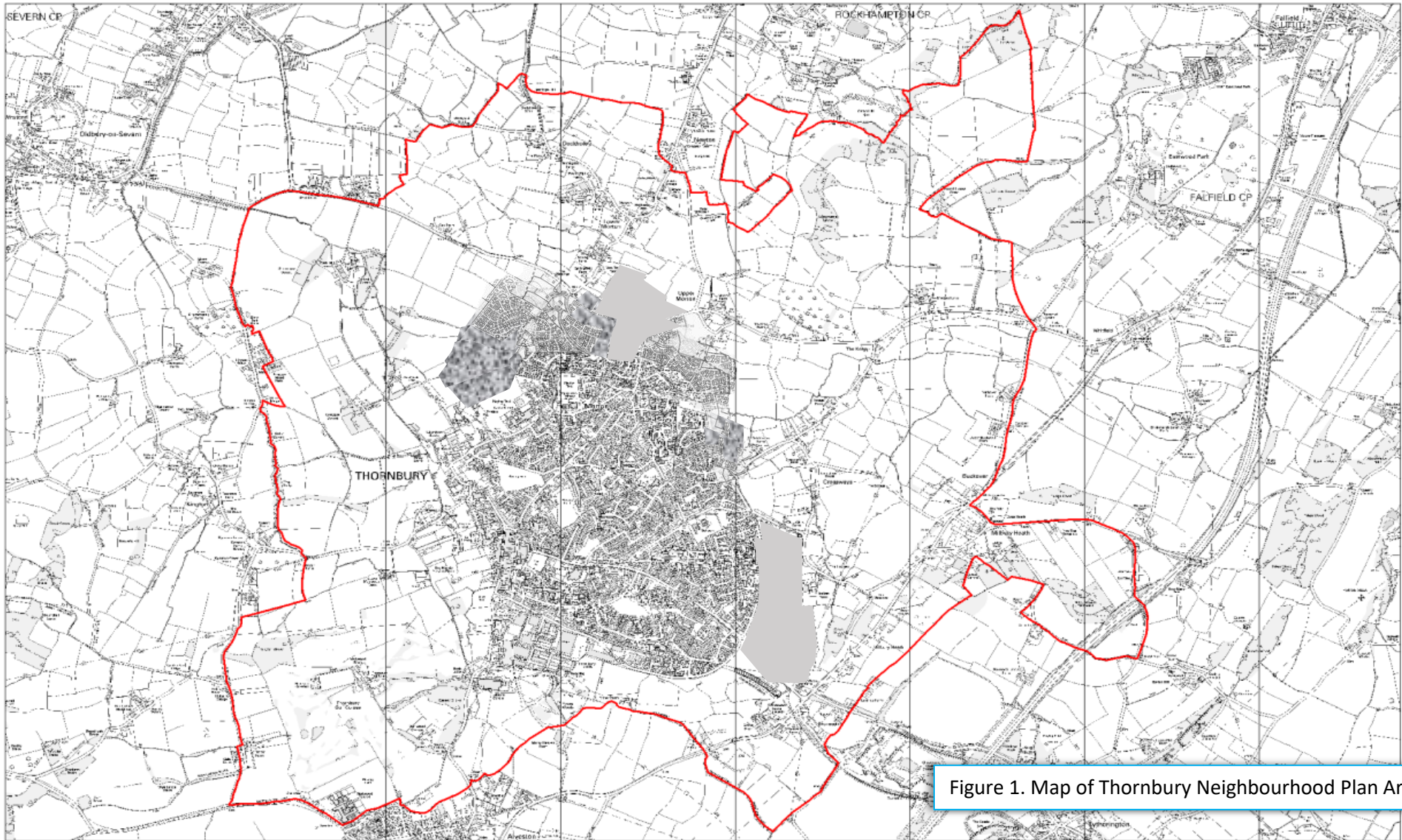




Figure 1. Map of Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan Area

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 Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right 2018.



 Development under construction

 Development approved

2 Developing the Plan

2.1 Launching the Neighbourhood Plan Process

The Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan process was started in April 2017 via a launch meeting held at the Armstrong Hall. The development of the Neighbourhood Plan has been led by residents and supported by Thornbury Town Council (the “qualifying body”) and supported by South Gloucestershire Council. Work has been undertaken by a Steering Group, comprising Town Council Members and staff, plus volunteer residents who have devoted significant hours of their time to develop this plan. Since December 2017, the Group has been assisted by external consultants who were brought in for their explicit expertise in Neighbourhood Plan development.

The Steering Group has met regularly throughout the period to progress the Neighbourhood Plan. The vision, aims, objectives and policies have been compiled using the evidence collected from the community at the various phases of engagement throughout the process. The data collected from the community and all subsequent stage reports can be found in the Evidence Base document.

2.2 Community Engagement and Consultation

Engagement with residents has been undertaken through a range of mechanisms. There has been publicity for the process in the following forms:

- A dedicated website (www.thornburyplan.co.uk) which included information about progress with the plan and emerging drafts, as well as records of all agendas, meetings and engagement events. The website included a contact page and a dedicated email address (thornburynp@gmail.com) was set up for feedback.
- Publicity and updates: progress updates to residents and publicity for surveys and feedback opportunities via local media. The media used include local newspapers (The Thornbury Gazette and The Thornbury Voice), the Thornbury Magazine (delivered to nearly all households), and the local news website MyThornbury. A dedicated Facebook page and a Twitter account have also been used.

There have been requests to the local public for opinions and feedback. The process was started with an event in the Armstrong Hall, Thornbury, on 12 April 2017, asking for volunteers to be actively involved in the process. Thereafter, the inaugural Steering Group meeting was held on 3 May 2017.

There was a series of stalls and engagement events in the second half of 2017, where members of the public were invited to write down what they liked about Thornbury and what they thought were the significant issues that needed addressing. Stalls were held at the Thornbury Carnival, The Family Fun Day, Farmers’ Markets and in the town centre.

These were followed by a survey at the beginning of 2018, which was available both online and on paper. The survey was publicised to all residents via the website, flyers in local premises including pubs and hairdressers, and in the local media, including Facebook and Twitter. The survey asked specific questions about what they felt was important in the development of Thornbury, and also asked open questions seeking general comments. The survey ran during January and February 2018 and the report of the findings was published on the website. At the end of 2018, a further series of stalls was held to publicise the draft aims and objectives of the Plan. In spring 2019, comments and

feedback from the local community were sought on the draft Plan as part of the process of consultation. The outcomes of the consultation were reviewed and a final Plan produced for submission to the Local Planning Authority.

2.3 Evidence Base

A wide range of information has been used to develop the Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan. First and foremost, we have taken the views of a qualitative survey of residents. This survey, carried out in January/February 2018, at the outset of the neighbourhood plan process, achieved 530 responses. The purpose of the survey was to identify the priorities and preferences of local people in shaping their future living, cultural, and leisure spaces, improving their experiences when moving around the town, and on the economic development of Thornbury. We wanted to know what sort of town they would like to live in and, in many areas, there was remarkable convergence of views.

The views offered in the survey were put into context with and supported by population and other census-based data from 2011, Office for National Statistics (ONS) generated data based on ward population estimates in 2015, as well as NHS data. Best practice guidance in relation to sustainability standards (e.g. BREEAM and Passivhaus) informed our development of some objectives and, whilst the policies in the plan have been framed with reference to national, regional and local guidance and planning strategies, they remain faithful to the views of the local community.

The activities and documents that particularly shaped the plan include:

- **Community engagement and consultation** including a survey of Thornbury residents
- **Population data** from the 2011 Census data and ward population estimates (ONS, 2015)
- **Employment data** from 2011 Census and subsequent South Gloucestershire analysis
- **Housing data** from 2011 Census and South Gloucestershire data on new dwelling completions
- **Transport data** including data derived from the 2011 Census
- **Official Documents:** including national and local planning documents such as South Gloucestershire Core Strategy 2013, South Gloucestershire Council's Landscape Character Assessment (2017), Outline Business Case for Sustainable Primary Healthcare Services in Thornbury, 2018.



Detailed information to support this Neighbourhood Plan is set out in the separate 'Evidence Base' document.

3 The Parish of Thornbury

3.1 History

Thornbury is a medieval market town situated at the edge of the Severn Vale some 3 miles east of the River Severn. The Parish covers both the town and its surrounding farmland as shown in Figure 1. It lies west of the A38 and M5, just north of the M4/M5 junction and approximately 10 miles north of Bristol. The town centre is focused around the picturesque High Street which contains a wide range of historic buildings and features, the earliest being 15th century. The mixture of periods and styles has also produced interesting street frontages such as Victorian revival styles including the neo-Georgian former Fire Station, a neo-Gothic Methodist chapel and a neo-Renaissance bank. The map of Thornbury Parish is shown in the Figure 1 above.

Thornbury's history can be roughly divided into three parts. From the granting of its Charter in 1252 up to the 1950s, Thornbury was a market town for the surrounding farms and hamlets on the road link between Bristol and Gloucester. There is evidence of the historic walls, closes and burgage plots (rental property owned by a king or lord) still remaining. The special historic character is reinforced by the simpler back lane areas of stone walls, twisting lanes, and terraced cottages as well as by the closes remaining to the west and north. It remained a small town, with only limited development.

In the latter half of the 20th Century, the town expanded to accommodate workers, first on the infrastructure projects of the nuclear power stations, the Severn Bridge and the M4/5 and later to support the aerospace industry, insurance and defence on the north Bristol fringes.

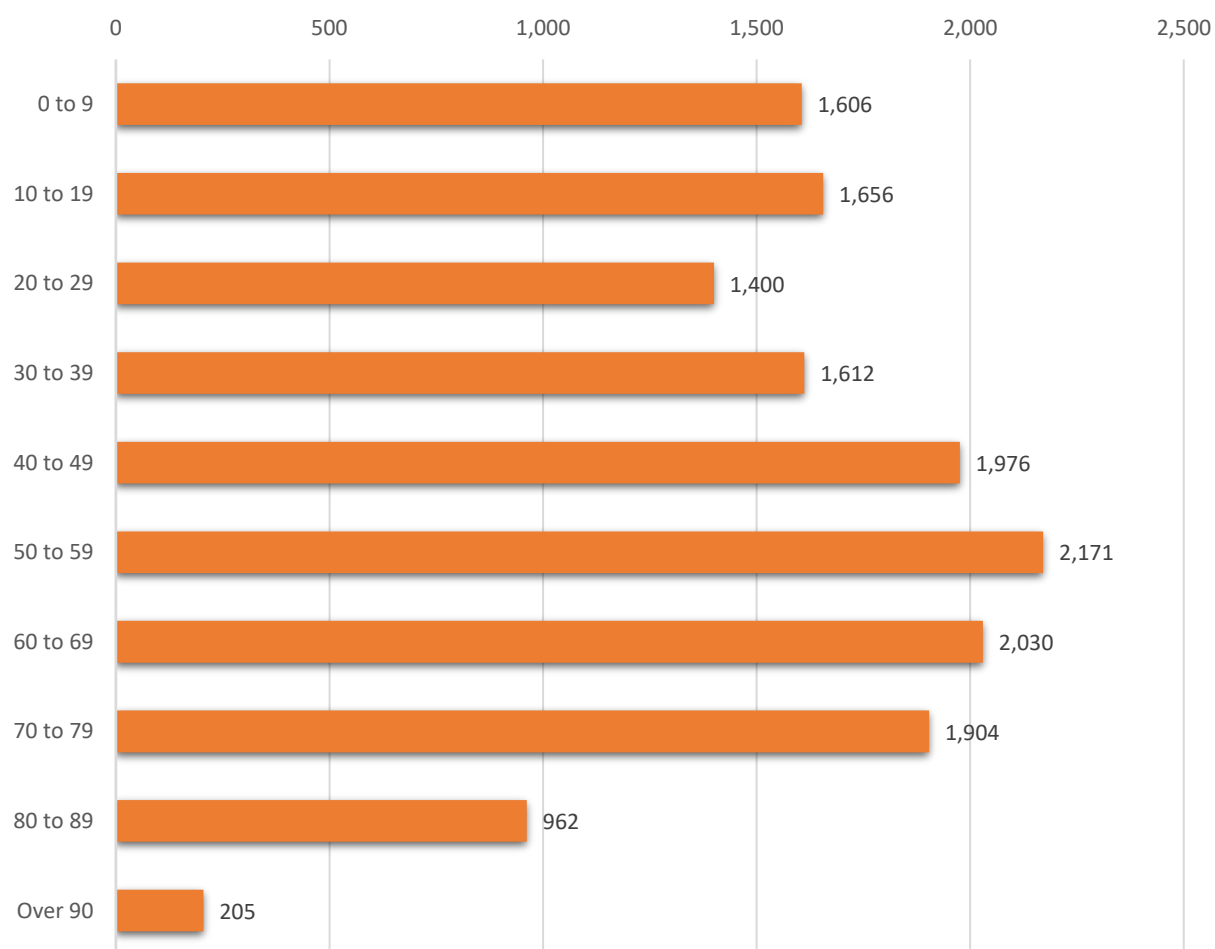
During this expansion, the residents of Thornbury managed to keep a sense of community by improving the facilities in the town (schools, leisure centre, industrial area and health centre) and complementing this by forming community organisations and informal groupings. Residents also shopped in the town. Town Centre shopping was supplemented by the addition of two supermarkets, one of which is within the 1960's built pedestrian area, St. Mary's Centre, and one built later on the site of the former Railway Station.

The older part of Thornbury was originally designated as a Conservation Area in July 1975 and this was expanded in March 1984 and again on the 4 July 2000. This designation defines Thornbury as an area of 'Special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

As the millennium closed, two factors had an important effect on Thornbury. The first was the opening of the Mall at Cribbs Causeway, which took almost all the comparison shopping from Thornbury. The second was the advent of two-parent working, which lessened community involvement and, as most of this additional employment was outside Thornbury, provided an opportunity during working hours to undertake convenience shopping out of the town

3.2 Thornbury Today

The 2011 census identified that there were 12,063 residents living within the Thornbury Parish. Using data on new house completions supplied by South Gloucestershire Council⁴ it is possible to calculate an estimate of the current population as 13,165. This represents an increase in population of 9.1%, most of the growth coming in the last two years. The same data predicts that by 2021 the population is likely to increase to more than 18% higher than 2011, just with the build out of current developments.



Wards of Thornbury North and Thornbury South / Alveston - Mid-2017 Population Estimates for 2017
Wards in England and Wales ..Experimental Statistics ONS Oct 2018

Figure 2. Thornbury Age Profile

Thornbury provides services (doctors, dentists, supermarkets, town centre, schools) not only for the Parish itself but also for outlying villages such as Alveston, Falfield, Tytherington, Olveston and Rockhampton/Hill, equating to an additional 7,477 residents in 2011² (a total of 19,540 residents). An estimate of the current population of Thornbury Parish plus its outlying areas is approx. 20,462.³ Assuming no growth in the outlying areas, this represents an increase of 5.6% from the 2011 census, the majority of which has taken place since 2016. The age profile for Thornbury in 2015 is shown in Figure 2.

Other key statistics regarding the population of Thornbury are set out in Figure 3 and are based on 2011 census data, source NOMIS⁴.

	Economically Active (% in 16-74 age group)	Number Households without car or van (%)	Retired (% in 16-74 age group)	Long Term Unemployed (%)	16-24-year-old unemployed (%)
England	69.9	25.8	13.7	1.7	1.2
Thornbury	69.9	13.7	19.7	0.8	0.8

Figure 3. 2011 Census data

Many residents of Thornbury commute into the greater Bristol area for work. This level of commuting places significant pressure on the road infrastructure and, in particular, the southbound A38. Thornbury's population area as a whole has a very high level of car ownership with 69.6% commuting to work by car, compared to only 2.5% using public transport.⁵

Today, Thornbury still retains its special historical character as a medieval market town despite much new residential and commercial development. Its significant town centre buildings are part of the Conservation Area and there is still a strong sense of community amongst the residents as evidenced by the huge interest in the Armstrong Hall development, the very high membership of the local University of the Third Age amongst the retired residents and the thriving coffee shop trade.

The need to ensure that the essence, community spirit and separate identity of Thornbury are retained as its population increases is seen by many to be the biggest challenge facing the town.

Thornbury continues to provide shops and services such as doctors, dentists and opticians for both its residents and those in the surrounding villages. Residents surveyed valued the town's history and its place in the local landscape but also its vibrant community spirit and access to the countryside.



3.3 Green Belt

Thornbury sits at the edge of the Green Belt which meets the southern edge of the town. The wider Green Belt area which abuts Thornbury is set out in Figure 4, below.

There have been several assessments of the Green Belt. The South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment⁶ that was undertaken in 2014 described Thornbury as *“an important planned medieval town, the historic, original linear form laid out along two main streets and their intersection”*. It is this sense of history that is cherished by the local community.



The green spaces within the town, including the Green Belt, are highly valued by residents. However, the Green Belt area within part of the Thornbury Parish has also had the effect of driving current development predominantly to the north of Thornbury and away from the town centre. In developing this Neighbourhood Plan, account has been taken of how to establish greater connections between existing and new communities through use of cycle and walkways, green and amenity spaces and by extending the important green threads that run through the town such as the Streamside Walks. Figure 5 shows the boundary of the green belt in Thornbury parish.

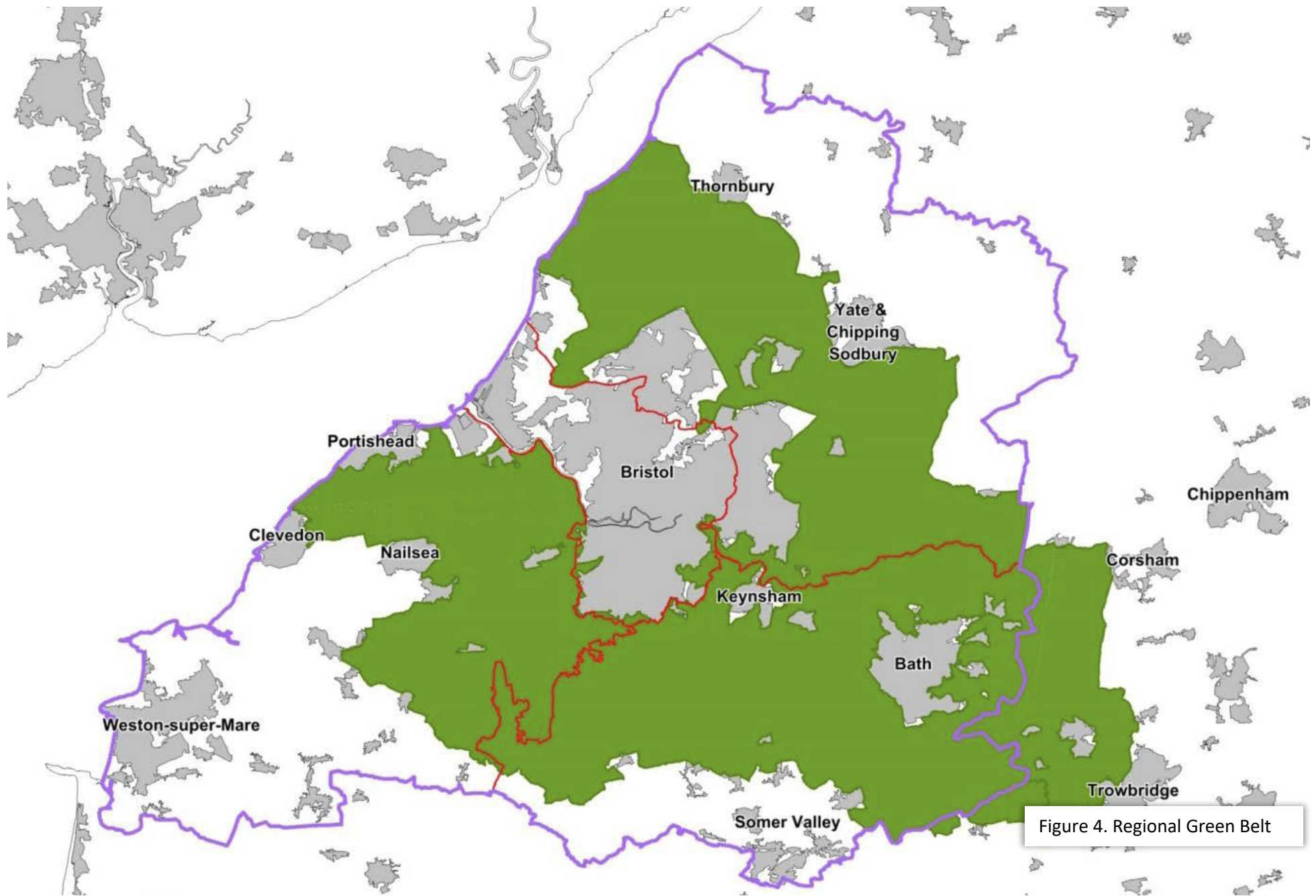


Figure 4. Regional Green Belt

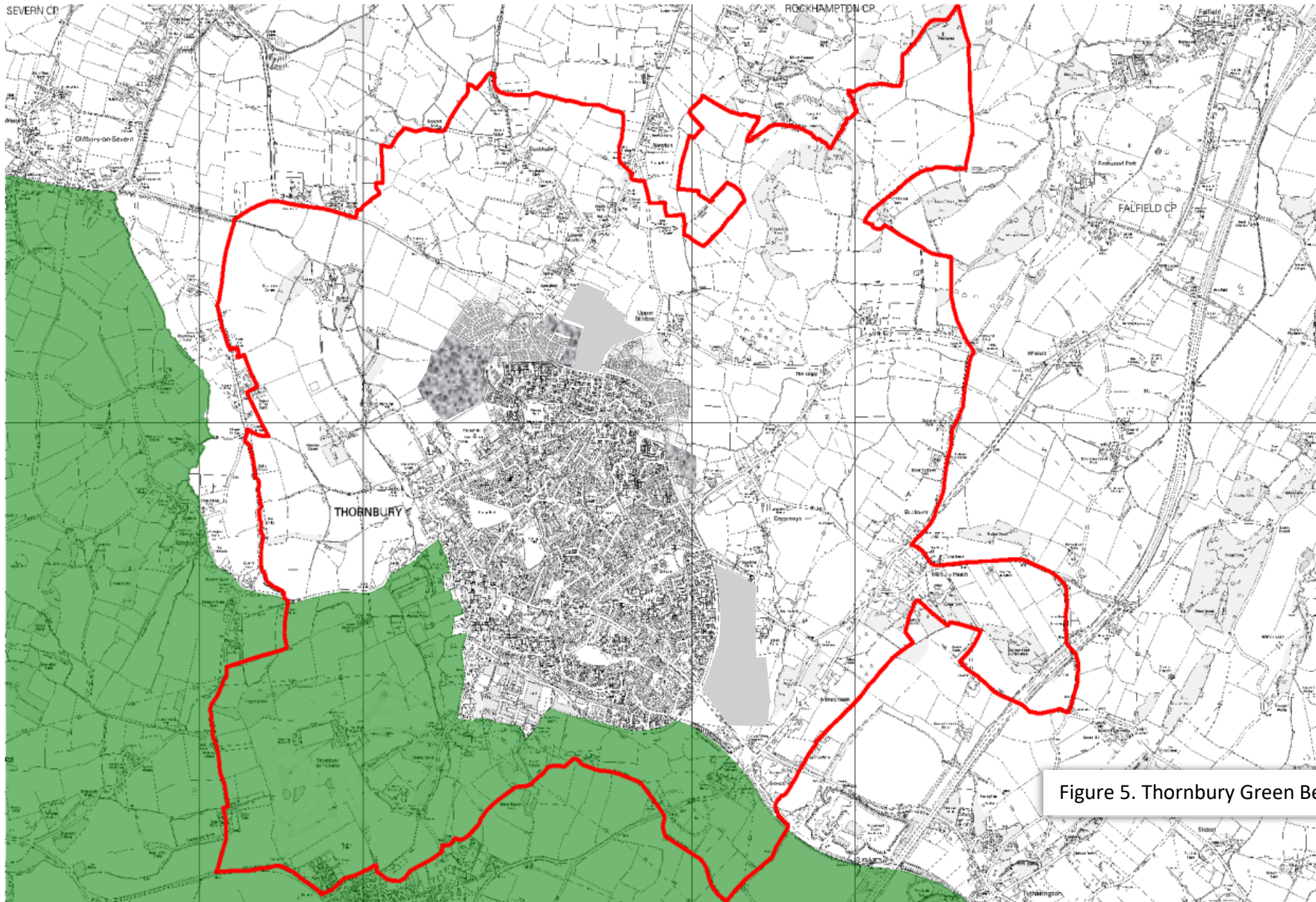


Figure 5. Thornbury Green Belt

3.4 Future Development outside Thornbury

During the course of the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan, proposals have emerged for developments in and around Thornbury which would significantly impact on the town. If they come to fruition, the impact of these developments will need to be addressed, particularly in relation to the need for supporting infrastructure and services requirements such as schools, healthcare facilities and road infrastructure given their scale and proximity to Thornbury. The need for services, infrastructure and transport impact assessments are addressed in this Plan. The developments that emerged, the status of which is currently unclear, are set out below.

3.4.1 Buckover Garden Village

During the drafting of the plan, it became clear that a proposal by the Tortworth Estate for a “garden village”, had the potential to make a major impact on Thornbury parish. Part of the development is within the Thornbury boundary. A total of 3,000 houses are proposed for the whole of this development. The Thornbury element includes a large proportion of the land bounded by Whitewall Lane, Crossways Lane, and Gloucester Road. At the time of drafting the Plan, there were already three separate development proposals for land bounded by:

- Crossways Lane and Gloucester Road
- Morton Way and Hacket Lane
- Crossways Lane, Hacket Lane and Clay Lane

Should one or more of these three proposals gain approval, then there would only be a short distance between Thornbury, with its current planned northerly developments and the proposed garden village. Any such significant potential development is likely to exacerbate the existing congestion on the A38, particularly as the proposal shows the village divided by this road. The proposal will potentially increase pressure on services and infrastructure in Thornbury.

3.4.2 Horizon Power

The Office of Nuclear Regulation has approved the Hitachi-GE reactor design that is to be built at Wylfa on Anglesey. This is the same type of reactor that has been proposed for Oldbury. A fundamental principle of the Horizon Nuclear Power developments is that Oldbury should learn from Wylfa. It is therefore unlikely that construction would start at Oldbury until the late 2020s at the earliest. The Central Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial strategy is looking to carry forward sites such as Oldbury to the next phase of development to produce energy by 2035. This proposal is expected to require improvements to the roads from Thornbury to Oldbury.

It is noted that, at the time of drafting the plan, both Wylfa and Oldbury projects have been placed on hold by the developer.

4 Vision and Objectives

4.1 What Matters Most to our Community

During the process of engagement, our community has clearly told us what they hold most dear about Thornbury and what should be retained in any future developments which take place within the Parish. Some of the issues raised do not relate to land use and cannot therefore form part of this Neighbourhood Plan. However, these issues are of concern to residents and are therefore addressed in Section 12.

The South Gloucestershire Core Strategy 2013 identified Thornbury as a location for housing growth and, as a result, developments have continued to emerge, particularly on the northern edge of the town. In addition to already determined planning applications, there are a number of significant planning applications in the pipeline which may see this growth accelerate if those new homes are built. Residents are concerned to ensure that new developments are affordable, suitable for younger and older people, of high-quality and are a good fit with the town. They have indicated that they would expect to see the necessary expansion of services being provided in line with that growth.

As with any market town, Thornbury supports many people from the surrounding villages. In turn, these people make a significant contribution to the town's economy. Our residents have told us that we need to ensure that Thornbury continues to provide an appropriate range of employment, shopping, and community facilities, including healthcare, education and leisure. We also need to ensure that people can access the town easily. This means sufficient parking, good public transport and safer streets, as well as easy walking and cycling options.

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that the features which make the town distinct and give it its identifiable character are maintained. The community told us they value the many streamside walks, paths and cycleways within the existing town, some of which connect different parts of the town to enable residents to move around easily. We want to further develop the walking and cycling networks and connect new developments with existing facilities, for health and sustainability benefits as well as establishing a greater community identity for outer lying areas within the town.

Thornbury is the largest town in the Severn Vale and is defined by its surrounding countryside. Most residents live within about 15 minutes' walk of open land. Our community wants to retain the existing fingers of green space that bring the countryside into our town and thus allow the town to 'breathe'. We also need to ensure that the size, form and location of new buildings does not cut us off from the views we enjoy of our surrounding landscape or detract unduly from the views that people enjoy when they view Thornbury from the surrounding areas.

In summarising the views gathered through engagement and consultation, our residents have told us what matters most to them includes:

- The historic character of Thornbury and the importance of its 'rural feel'.
- The spirit of 'community' in Thornbury with the active involvement of so many residents in clubs, learning, festivals and markets which all create a sense of belonging and connection.
- The need for Thornbury to retain its own identity and to avoid becoming part of an urban sprawl on the outer fringes of the large city of Bristol.

- The provision of adequate infrastructure and services to cope with rising demand including schools and healthcare facilities.
- The importance of the town centre and its viability and offering.
- The need for new homes to cater for younger and older people, be affordable, high-quality and tenure blind.
- The importance of access to the natural environment within the town including through its network of landscaped pathways such as the Streamside Walks as well as the easy access to the countryside and its varied wildlife.
- Sustainability and the desire for the town to reduce its carbon emissions and be resilient to the impact of climate change.
- The requirement for sustainable modes of travel including walking and cycling.
- Improving local employment opportunities, offering better life chances locally for younger Thornbury residents and easing the burden on the already challenged transport infrastructure by reducing the need to commute.

These views have been brought together into a vision and a set of objectives. These are set out in the sections below.

4.2 Our Vision

The views and feelings expressed by our residents about what is most important to them have been translated into a vision and a set of objectives. Our vision is:

Thornbury will retain its market town and historic character and its sense of community. It will keep and expand its green spaces, streamside walks, connections with nature and access to the countryside. It will be resilient to climate change and will provide well planned, high quality, sustainable and affordable homes. It will support the prosperity and wellbeing of its residents by providing a vibrant town centre, quality local jobs, a good choice of retail and employment facilities and appropriate services.

4.3 Our Strategic Objectives

A set of objectives has been developed to bring our vision to reality. Thornbury will:

- Preserve its unique character and historic identity and rural separation through well planned holistic high-quality placemaking and design. Provide high-quality, well designed, affordable, sustainable housing that meets the needs of people of all ages and which does not distinguish between owned or rented properties.
- Support a vibrant, unique and historic town centre with mixed retail, business and residential facilities and a thriving economy that provides jobs for local people to enable them to work where they live.
- Support the timely provision of appropriate services, infrastructure and community facilities to meet the needs of a growing population.
- Be resilient to climate change, support and protect the natural environment through sustainable development and strengthen its sense of community, creating connections to enhance integration between existing and new developments.
- Promote active, smarter and sustainable ways of getting around, establishing appropriate transport infrastructure to support population growth, developing the network of paths and cycleways and green corridors.



5 Identity and Coherent Development

5.1 Context

The value of Thornbury as a town with its own identity and rural feel and separation from other outer lying towns and villages is an important issue for residents. Thornbury's unique character and historic identity is valued by the community including its heritage buildings, its 16th century castle and St Mary's church which dates back to the 12th century. In their survey responses, they also stated their concerns that the development of Thornbury has progressed in an unplanned and un-coordinated way, leading to new housing developments that do not relate well to the rest of the town and are not supported by appropriate infrastructure. The need for developers to produce development frameworks for major planning applications should minimise the risk of unplanned development in future.

5.2 Aim

To preserve Thornbury's unique character and historic identity and rural separation through well planned, holistic, high-quality, placemaking and design.

5.3 Objectives

- To maintain the separate identities of Thornbury and its surrounding villages and hamlets both physically and through their unique characters.
- To ensure new developments are carefully planned and co-ordinated so that they place the proposed site within the wider context of the area.
- To create quality places for existing and new residents.

5.4 Character and Setting

5.4.1 Character

The Neighbourhood Plan boundary includes Thornbury and a number of surrounding hamlets and villages. Each of these areas has its own identity and character which is, in part, defined by its rural landscape setting and separation from the main built up areas of the town. There was a concern amongst the community that the continuing expansion of developments around the edge of the town threatens the individual setting and identity of these hamlets/villages to the detriment of the rural character of the area as a whole. The intention of Policy 1 is therefore to seek to ensure that new development preserves and enhances the identity and setting of the hamlets/villages surrounding Thornbury through the use of appropriate buffers, strategic landscaping and good design.

5.4.2 Setting, Views and Panoramas

Thornbury, as a market town in a rural setting, benefits from visual links to the surrounding countryside and gains some of its individuality from these views including expansive vistas over the Severn Vale and the escarpment. Preserving these countryside and architectural views, including towards Thornbury Castle and the 12th century St Mary's church, will help to maintain the essential

character of its market town ethos and history. The views and panoramas also contribute to the distinctive identity of the area in terms of ecological, amenity, recreational and agricultural value. It is important that key views of the town from the surrounding countryside are not impeded by future development, thereby maintaining its traditional setting in the Severn Vale landscape. A list of key views and panoramas can be found at Appendix C.

It was clear from survey results that access to open countryside is one of the main reasons people gave as wanting to live in Thornbury. Residents are keen to ensure that the landscape character of Thornbury is not diminished by new development which impacts on these visual amenities. The distinctive and valuable nature of Thornbury's surrounding landscape has been officially recognised. This view is supported by the South Gloucestershire Landscape Assessment, 2014⁷ which stated:

*"Further expansion of the town would become more prominent were it to extend over elevated slopes, visually increase the apparent expanse of Thornbury within the bowl landform, or spread out beyond the bowl. The ridgeline backdrop and skyline also currently provide an intact rural feature and setting to Thornbury. It is therefore sensitive to change which would visually erode this feature"*⁸.

It is also important that there are easy access routes into the open countryside which link in with the footpath networks within the town. The Rural Character and Landscape Setting Policy favours any future development to be on the flat, not the hillsides, to ensure Thornbury stays within the bowl of the Severn Vale and does not impinge on the Severn Ridges. Any future development proposals should take into account these amenities and ensure that the visual and access links to the countryside around are maintained. Thornbury's location within the bowl of the Severn Vale is shown in Figure 6.

Policy 1 - Rural Character and Landscape Setting

The rural character and the landscape setting of Thornbury Parish should be protected. Development proposals should demonstrate how they will:

- Protect, enhance or create easy access routes from Thornbury Town into the countryside for walking, cycling and riding (See Figure 8. Green Infrastructure within Thornbury)
- Protect key views and vistas as shown in Appendix C.
- Be sensitive to and reflect the character and identity of nearby and adjacent villages and hamlets and avoiding visual coalescence.
- Protect the rural character of Thornbury's local environs, taking into account Thornbury's location in the bowl of the Severn Vale (see Figure 6. Severn Ridges Plan).



Figure 6. Severn Ridges Plan

5.5 Neighbourhood Development Frameworks

The production of development frameworks for all major development will help to ensure that developments are well planned within the context of their wider environment and co-ordinate and connect with existing services and facilities. Development frameworks should establish the design principles for the sites, including integration with existing areas and neighbourhoods, connections and linkages allowing movement for all, the location and mix of uses, and provision of community infrastructure and green space. Development frameworks should help create places of distinct character and variety, responding to local building types and materials, how the place will be used and need to adapt over time.

Policy 2 - Neighbourhood Development Frameworks

Applicants for development schemes for any major development site within the Neighbourhood Plan area are encouraged to prepare Neighbourhood Development Frameworks for approval by The Local Planning Authority with the submission of any planning application. Where a site crosses multiple land ownerships, the different landowners are encouraged to work together to prepare a joint development framework that demonstrates how comprehensive development will be delivered.

The development frameworks should demonstrate how good placemaking can be achieved through establishment of:

- A clear vision and concept for the development
- A development and land use plan showing the mix and type of development to come forward, including the broad locations of necessary supporting services, including local centres, health and education
- Framework plans establishing the intended form and grain of development, character areas, densities and building typologies, which respond to local character and context
- A movement plan establishing the street hierarchy and typologies, and sustainable transport measures prioritising walking, cycling and public transport
- A green infrastructure plan setting out the network and typology of green spaces, links and areas of ecological importance
- A phasing and delivery plan, demonstrating a logical pattern of development that helps build community with supporting facilities provided at the right time

Neighbourhood Development frameworks should outline how infrastructure (physical, social and green) will be delivered and the mechanisms by which landowners will work together to deliver those infrastructure items. Provision of waste water treatment and appropriate drainage is essential and must be agreed with the relevant organisations, including the statutory water company and the Environment Agency, as well as the lead local flood authority. All infrastructure shall be well designed and accord with best practice and design principles outlined in the development plan and other relevant guidance.

The Neighbourhood Development Frameworks will be subject to a programme of community consultation and supported by a statement outlining feedback received during the process and how the framework has responded to this.

Consideration should be given to a sensible and logical approach to phasing, such that new development works well from the outset, with the impact of ongoing development on new and existing residents minimised.



6 Housing

6.1 Context

Whilst much of the development outside of the Conservation Area is relatively unassuming, the character of Thornbury derives from its uniformity of scale, its street layouts, its green spaces, its rural setting and the connectivity of its places. There are distinct areas within Thornbury including the historic centre that runs down to the Castle and up the High Street and a series of housing developments that are all generally connected by small pathways. There is concern from local residents as expressed in the survey that recent housing developments do not provide the variety of homes to support the needs of local people.

6.2 Aim

To provide high-quality, affordable, tenure-blind sustainable housing that meets the needs of people of all ages.

6.3 Objectives

The objectives for housing are:

- To ensure housing and its associated infrastructure is well planned and of high-quality.
- To make best use of the latest sustainable design and technology to create homes that minimise the use of environmental resources, mitigate against and be resilient to the impact of climate change.
- To provide a mix of housing types, tenures and levels of affordability to meet the varying needs of our population including younger and older people and be tenure-blind.
- To provide well integrated infill and brownfield development.

6.4 High-quality Design

Good design is highly important in Thornbury. The High Street and Conservation Area contain many fine buildings and form the core of the market town character which is valued by so many residents and visitors. However, much of Thornbury's housing stock is typical of the time when it was built and different eras of housing development can be easily traced through the streets.

As Thornbury continues to develop, the need to have clear policies that support great design become paramount. Our residents identified the need to consider housing density and layout and how the character of the homes ties in with the current 'feel' of Thornbury in terms of choice of materials and style. Great design should extend to subtler issues which have an effect on the quality of places such as signage and street furniture to create a cohesive and consistent environment.

Current residents of Thornbury benefit from its green spaces and wildlife corridors with these forming a network of routes running throughout the entire town. The value residents place on green spaces, landscape, biodiversity and wildlife came out clearly in the survey. Good design in Thornbury is therefore not just about the individual architecture of buildings, but also the spaces around and between them and how these new buildings are connected to the wider community.⁹

Creating footpath routes through housing estates, cul-de-sacs and closes allow opportunities for greater connection, supporting wellbeing and greater community interaction.

Using green spaces to create a rural landscape buffer around the edges of the town are a current feature of Thornbury. These are seen as important in order to retain the contained nature of the town and to avoid Thornbury bleeding into the next town along.

The need to design the spaces around the homes to adequately accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and vehicle users was also identified. Access to public transport, walking and cycling routes and green spaces were all key issues raised in the community survey. The current networks of pathways that connect different parts of the town are seen as a key Thornbury feature which should be preserved and expanded as it develops. These pathways create interesting green and urban routes which support faster access to the town centre as well as health and wellbeing activities as they are generally safe and quiet. Cycling routes are currently more limited in Thornbury but as interest in cycling grows, the need to ensure safe cycle routes increases. These issues are considered further in the Transport section below.

Policy 3 - High-quality Design

Development proposals must reflect principles of high-quality, sustainable design, in particular, it should:

- Contribute to the creation of high-quality places through a design-led approach underpinned by good design principles and reflecting a thorough site appraisal
- Ensure all buildings, spaces and the public realm are well-designed and display a high level of architectural quality which responds positively to local context, paying particular attention to traditional local character
- Provide parking to meet standards in the development plan and ensure the road infrastructure provides adequate space for on-street parking and road widths are adequate for bus, refuse and emergency vehicle access
- Seek to optimise the capacity of the site by responding appropriately to the scale, character, materials,
- Demonstrate how they respond to the landscape, local and longer-views, the environment and historic assets and market town character.
- Contribute to the creation of green and attractive environments, echoing Thornbury's linear parks, linked green spaces through the provision of high quality green space for recreation and biodiversity
- Integrate well with existing neighbourhoods, positively contributing to the public realm and street environment, creating well connected, accessible and safe places. This should include establishing a walkable environment which connects with Thornbury's many (urban and rural) public rights of way and contributes towards strengthening the connectivity of formal and informal routes through and around the town, encouraging sustainable transport, especially walking and cycling
- Have active frontages, particularly at street level, and provide a clear distinction between areas of public and private realm
- Demonstrate how they respond to and enhance the amenity value of an area through consideration of matters such as overlooking, natural light, microclimate, outlook and amenity space
- Be designed with flexibility and adaptability in mind, so that they can respond to changing social, environmental, economic and technological needs

Applications for major developments are encouraged to demonstrate how they respond to best practice through submission of a Building for Life 12 assessment (or a later equivalent).

Planning permission will not be supported for development of a poor design that does not respond to the opportunities for improving local character and quality.

6.5 Design Review

The NPPF reinforces the role and importance of design review, which is a way of assessing the design quality of new developments by an independent panel of experts to help support high standards of design. In Thornbury, it is envisaged that all major applications for development, as well as smaller schemes in sensitive or important locations, should be subject to design review. Schemes subject to review will include residential, commercial and mixed-use development proposals, infrastructure, community facilities, public space and open space proposals. Design review should take place at the pre-application stage to help inform the design process and again following submission of the application to help inform officer recommendations. The final proposals submitted should show how comments made during the design review have influenced the proposed development.

Policy 4 - Design Review

Emerging schemes for major development should be assessed through design review. Design review of smaller schemes is also encouraged including those in sensitive or important locations, such as the town centre and conservation areas.

It is envisaged that schemes will be referred to a recognised Design Review Panel. Design reviews should take place early in the process and engage the local community to allow scope for input into the emerging design. The final scheme submitted to the Council should include a report on the design review process and how the scheme has responded to this. Design review of live applications is also encouraged.

6.6 Sustainable Design and Construction

Many Thornbury residents are committed to protecting the environment and this theme came out through the survey. Residents recognise that communities will need to become more resilient and adaptable to cope with the effects of climate change. Opportunities to develop housing using sustainable and innovative building techniques and materials, and which take account of the best of technologies to reduce energy consumption, are a desire of Thornbury residents which are reflected in policy. However, residents also noted that re-using existing buildings is more sustainable than replacing them. This is considered further in the Sustainability and Connectivity chapter below.

Climate change will present many challenges, with changes to rainfall patterns and temperature norms. Higher temperatures and more extreme weather events are predicted. Responses to consultation show that Thornbury residents want any future developments to be resilient to any challenges presented by climate change and to make a positive contribution to reduction of carbon emissions through highly energy efficient construction. High levels of insulation within homes, acknowledgement of the need to orient homes for shade, solar gain and to enable generation of low carbon energy are ways to mitigate some of the likely challenges.

Consultation responses also referred to the need for provision for locally produced renewable energy to be within future developments. This could include community delivered renewable schemes. Residents were clear that it is more cost effective to deliver efficient new buildings with renewable energy integrated from the outset than to retrofit them once they are built. Survey

responses particularly drew attention to the current potential for solar energy generation within new developments.

The policy makes clear that adapting to or future- proofing housing developments against the challenges of climate change will be essential. This policy will also support the proposed new South Gloucestershire Climate Change Strategy which recognises that great effort needs to be put into all the new developments in order not to increase the area's carbon emissions.¹¹

All developments in Thornbury will be expected to make use of the best available sustainable design and technology. Proposals for development are expected to minimise the use of resources, mitigate against, and be resilient to, the impacts of climate change. Where possible the employment of local industry and construction businesses will be encouraged as this reduces mileage to site, reduces the carbon footprint of the development and helps the local economy. Current sustainability standards for new construction should be used for assessing the sustainability of new, non-residential buildings. The Home Quality Mark has been developed by BREEAM to provide an indication of the quality and environmental performance of a new home. Housebuilders are encouraged to use this assessment method.

Buildings should be designed to maximise solar gain in winter and shading in summer and incorporate technologies that maximise the use of energy from renewable sources. Proposals for new development are encouraged to incorporate the following:

- Solar photovoltaic panels
- Solar thermal panels
- Air source heat pumps
- Ground source heat pumps
- Combined heat and power
- Other domestic small-scale renewable technologies, including community delivered renewable schemes
- Shading

Proposals for new buildings that achieve zero or near zero net energy consumption (Passivhaus standards) are encouraged.

Policy 5 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Proposals for new development which embed sustainable design and construction techniques are encouraged including:

- Maximising energy efficiency and integrating the use of renewable and low carbon energy. Encouragement is given to proposals for development that maximise the opportunities for using on-site renewable forms of energy.
- Waste and recycling during construction and operation
- Conserving water resources and minimising vulnerability to flooding. All new dwellings will be expected to meet include measures to minimise water consumption including rainwater harvesting or other methods of capturing rainwater for use by the residents. The impact on flood risk from development should be minimised and opportunities maximised to implement sustainable urban drainage systems through use of green roofs, swales, planting and ponds etc.
- Choosing appropriate materials with consideration for the type, lifecycle and source.
- Flexibility and adaptability, allowing for future modification of use and layout, facilitating future refurbishment and retrofitting
- Opportunities to incorporate measures which enhance the biodiversity value of developments such as green roofs

Applications for development are encouraged to demonstrate a higher standard of energy efficiency than current Building Regulations or compliance with BREEAM, LEED or equivalent standards in use at the time of submission.

Encouragement is also given to schemes that meet Passivhaus standards.

House builders are encouraged to register for assessment under the Home Quality Mark. This should show how resource efficiencies and climate change adaptation measures will be incorporated through aspects such as the layout of the proposed development, orientation, massing, landscaping and building materials.

Waste, recycling and storage areas should be carefully designed into any new development and be in accordance with the South Gloucestershire Waste Collection: Guidance for new developments SPD 2015 (or successor guidance).

Policy 6 - Energy Efficiency

Development proposals which demonstrate that the proposed buildings have a net emission rate of zero or below, or are proposed to be certified Passivhaus buildings, are encouraged and will be considered favourably, subject to other policies.

Development which contributes to both mitigating and adapting to climate change and to meeting the national targets to reduce carbon emissions beyond the minimum requirements will be supported. All new housing development is encouraged to exceed the minimum energy standards in current Building Regulations.

Policy 7 - Renewable Energy

Proposals for small scale renewable energy installations, particularly domestic solar provision within new and existing residential and commercial development, will be supported in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation. Major developments should provide sufficient renewable energy generation to reduce carbon emissions from anticipated (regulated) energy use in new buildings by at least 10% unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this is not viable.

6.7 Housing Needs

Thornbury has a mixed demographic with a high proportion of older people in need of down-sizing opportunities and a growing younger population who will eventually want to get onto the property ladder. A common view expressed by the community is that recent housing developments have focused on larger homes and there has been more limited provision of mixed house sizes and a mix of tenures. The highest number of responses from residents regarding the importance of housing priorities over the next 10-15 years included the need for affordable, low cost and social housing, accommodation for people with disabilities and housing specifically designed for older and for younger people. A flexible approach to building design was raised which would enable homes to readily adapt to the needs of older and/or disabled people, as demand requires it.

Generally, Thornbury residents have identified a need for variety: for homes that are more compact (including low-rise apartments, terraces and bungalows) and which therefore take up less land and provide smaller homes for both ends of the age scale. The policy responds to this view.

The cost of housing was an issue of importance for residents, with affordable homes needed for first time buyers and smaller homes for people wishing to downsize.¹² This is in the context of high property prices in the town and a very limited rental market. The aspiration to keep people centred on Thornbury was seen as important and to discourage the relocation of younger people to areas where housing was more affordable. The need for a broad demographic in Thornbury to retain its

vibrancy and viability was clearly identified by residents. In designing more affordable homes, the need for a strong design code that showed no clear differentiation between types of tenure was seen as important.

The opportunity for new models of housing provision came up through the process including the provision of self-build homes and Build to Rent. A policy that encourages these more innovative models is actively supported.

Policy 8 - Mixed Development

For major housing developments (as defined in the NPPF 2021 (as updated)) a minimum of 35% affordable housing is expected in compliance with South Gloucestershire Core Strategy policy CS18 or any replacement policy. The provision of 35% affordable housing in terms of tenure & house type shall be in line with the West of England Strategic Housing Market Assessment or as updated by future housing market assessments. Reference should also be made to South Gloucestershire's Affordable Housing and Extra Care Housing Supplementary Planning Document May 2014 or as updated.

Preference will be given to residential schemes which offer a mix of dwelling types and tenures, including some or all of the following:

- Flats and apartments
- Smaller properties (studios, one and two beds) that provide homes that younger and older people can afford
- Accessible and adaptable housing development flexible to the needs of the elderly or those with disabilities
- Self-build
- Build-to-rent

The larger the proposal, the greater the number of the above elements will be expected to be included.

6.8 Brownfield and Infill Sites

Two of the most frequently raised specific items were the need to prioritise brownfield sites so that existing land could be re-purposed and minimising the impact on green spaces. Current sites that could offer the potential for brownfield development within the current boundaries have the advantage of being close to the town centre, making it easier for people to access shops and services.

Although a policy that encourages use of smaller pockets of land, ideally land that has previously been built upon is preferred, the need to retain the green connectivity of Thornbury and to retain its character came up frequently. This policy is criteria-based to ensure that the green infrastructure is not compromised by the proposed developments and such development in keeping with our built assets. Building of compact units that minimise land take-up was also identified as a preference by some residents.

Policy 9 - Brownfield and Infill Sites

Development of infill sites within the settlement boundary or redevelopment of previously developed sites, for example the Castle School Sixth Form Centre, will be supported where the following criteria have been met:

- The development is proposed at a high density, making good use of the available land whilst still respecting the character and appearance of the surrounding area including any heritage assets
- Opportunities to reinforce the existing green infrastructure network around and through the site have been taken in accordance with policy 17
- The development connects with existing walking and cycling routes within Thornbury and takes opportunities to create new links or routes through the site in accordance with policy 21
- The development does not result in the loss of locally important green space as set out in Policy 19: Local Green Space.

For previously developed sites in the town centre boundary as identified in PSP31 and defined on the South Gloucestershire Policies Map, such as Thornbury library, there is a preference for 'main town centre uses' other than residential.

7 Town Centre and Economy

7.1 Context

Thornbury town centre consists of The High Street, The Plain, the St Mary Centre and St Mary Street. The area has a high number of listed buildings. The St Mary Centre is pedestrian only and is owned by The Peer Group. The town centre serves the town residents and the rural area around the parish of Thornbury. There are a small number of shops located within residential areas in Thornbury and an industrial estate to the south of the town.

Thornbury residents clearly identified shopping as an important priority for the town. The consultation identified three main issues: the high proportion of empty shops, the recent loss of 'comparison' shopping (such as shoe, clothes and toy shops) and the growing number of coffee shops and restaurants. The local independent shops were highly valued.

The town centre contains a range of shops and other businesses, including small supermarkets, a traditional grocer, bakers, hardware stores, stationers, chemists, clothes shops, charity shops, gift shops, a local garden centre, banks, opticians, hairdressers, estate agents, coffee shops, restaurants and pubs. There are also shops outside the town centre, including a larger supermarket with a customer car park just outside the town centre, two small parades of local convenience and other shops, and a small number of single convenience shops. There is also a large garden centre outside the town and various retail businesses in the industrial estate. The Cribbs Causeway shopping centre, about 7 miles away, has been strong competition for 'comparison' shops in Thornbury.

Disused employment sites in the town centre are prime sites for redevelopment for new types of employment or retail. Some employment land in Thornbury has recently been redeveloped as high-density housing. Whilst some of this brings new residents within easy walking distance of the facilities in the town centre, there is concern that such redevelopment could be at the expense of local employment. It was recognised in the consultation responses that some residential development in the town centre can be beneficial. Allowing some residential flats above town centre shops brings security, as the town centre is not deserted at night.

Most survey respondents said encouraging retail uses on the ground floors in the town centre was important, as was encouraging a range of uses in the town centre.

7.2 Aim

Support a vibrant, unique and historic town centre with mixed retail, business and residential facilities and a thriving economy that provides jobs for local people to enable them to work near where they live.¹³

7.3 Objectives

- To protect and enhance the historic character of the town, in particular the town centre and the Conservation Area.
- To promote the vibrancy, uniqueness and viability of the town centre, providing a varied and comprehensive shopping experience for all.

- To encourage the increase of employment development to enable local people to work in Thornbury.

7.4 Town Centre Design

Survey respondents valued the historic style of the town centre and Conservation Area and this Plan seeks to establish stronger design principles to guide future development and to preserve unique features such as listed buildings. In order to do this, a number of key principles have been established that should guide development and which are intended to help deliver improvements in the town centre. Key opportunities for the town centre, some of which cannot be addressed in this Plan but will be picked up with the Town Council, include:

- Improving road layouts to mitigate against the impact of traffic through the High Street.
- Improving access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Policy 10 - Town Centre Design Principles

All proposed development will be required to reflect best practice design principles, responding positively to the character and qualities of the town centre as defined on the South Gloucestershire Policies Map. Key design principles for the town centre include the following:

- Active frontages and street level activity should be provided
- Generous floor to ceiling heights at ground floor level should be provided to allow for flexibility and change of use over time
- The principal points of access to buildings should be from the main street on to which it fronts
- Buildings should respect the prevailing building height in the town centre. Where building heights vary this change should be subtle and step up or down by no more than half to one storey between buildings
- Proposals for new development should respect local context through continuity of the building line, responding to adjacent building heights, roof and cornice lines and protecting important views or gaps.
- Buildings should be aligned with the back of the pavement edge and also provide space for activity within the public realm
- Corner buildings should be well articulated and blank gable ends avoided
- Blank walls and exposed back land areas, including servicing yards and car parking should be screened from view, preferably through the wrapping of these with active development edges. Alternatively, opportunities for green walls and artwork that enhances the quality of the townscape will be encouraged
- Development to the rear of existing buildings will be considered acceptable where it would be appropriate to enclose space, define the public and private realm or create new active frontages, and would not unduly impact upon the operation of existing units or the historic importance of the place.

Applications will need to demonstrate how they reflect local vernacular and urban grain/historic pattern of development through the scale and design for buildings and use of materials, contributing positively to the quality and character of the town centre, and the high-quality historic townscape of the conservation area. Applications will need to demonstrate how they reflect local vernacular through the scale and design for buildings and use of materials, contributing positively to the quality and character of the town centre, and the high-quality historic townscape of the conservation area.

- Enhancing public spaces within the centre and improving shop frontages facing into the public realm, making these spaces more vibrant, active and convivial.
- Bringing forward new development opportunities that make more efficient use of the land and help bring vitality and life to the town centre.
- Enhancing the quality of the public areas within the centre as a multi-functional and lively space that is active and welcoming throughout the day and in the evening.
- Optimising the use of land by exploring opportunities to bring forward more effective parking solutions, making better use of land.
- Ensuring new developments reflect and respond positively to the prevailing building heights and heritage assets in the town centre.

These principles are intended to help create active and interesting spaces that can be enjoyed by all, and which help Thornbury flourish by creating places where people want to go and spend time.

Policy 11 - Preserving Historic Identity

Any new development or improvements proposed in the town centre should be undertaken with a view to conserving and enhancing the historic market town character and identity of Thornbury. Within the Conservation Area, development should respect the provisions of the 2004 Thornbury Conservation Area Advice Note, produced by South Gloucestershire Council, the following elements of which are especially pertinent:

- Respect for the style and form of the town centre buildings and streetscape, enhancing the character and appearance of the historic market town and
- The use of materials which are sustainable and fit for purpose, but which blend with the existing colours and styles and
- A consistent and appropriate style of street furniture including benches, lighting, signage and bins and
- Maintain the views over the lowland levels and Severn Estuary and the open aspects to the west and north with the old town walls set within open space and the open spaces identified within the town development boundary.

7.5 Town Centre Vitality

The town centre has a persistently high number of empty premises over several years, especially in the St Mary Centre. The South Gloucestershire Council retail survey showed a vacancy rate of 7% in 2017.¹⁴ Empty shops reduce the range of shopping available and make the centre unattractive for both shoppers and potential retailers. There has been a steady spiral of lost shops and local shoppers going elsewhere.

The new housing may help to increase custom for town centre shops. However, the new housing is mostly farther away from the centre than many people would walk, so there is a real risk they will drive elsewhere. Some survey respondents expressed concern about retail shops being displaced by a growing number of coffee shops, cafes and restaurants, although it is not clear whether or not these businesses are in units that would otherwise be empty. Changing some units to employment use might be a last resort if there were no realistic prospect of a future retail use. On the other hand, many employment uses would not make attractive frontages, and could potentially block the premises from returning to retail use in the future.

Survey respondents stated a clear desire to maintain the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre through encouraging greater footfall and a diversity of uses, including more residential uses. Recent increases to Thornbury's population have the potential to add to the town's vitality if residents can be encouraged to shop locally. Vacant spaces within the upper floors of shop units along the High Street were identified as key opportunities for introducing more residential uses without compromising the retail offer within the town centre.

Since the draft Neighbourhood Plan went to consultation earlier in 2020, Central Government announced changes to the use class system in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. This change combined and merged use classes to allow greater flexibility for units to change use. The change came into force from the 1st September 2020. Policy 12 has been updated to reflect the new regulations.



Policy 12 - Town Centre Vitality

Development

Any proposals for development in the town centre should add to the vitality and viability of the centre and enhance its image as a destination for a rewarding and enjoyable shopping or leisure experience.

Proposals for retail development and other complementary uses within the town centre are welcome, particularly where they strengthen the retail offer and visitor experience. Applications for development will be required to demonstrate how they:

- Respond to good practice design principles
- Strengthen the core retail area in the town centre
- Optimise the use of land through the mixing of development and management of car parking provision
- Facilitate new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes
- Contribute to the delivery of an improved public realm within the town centre

Suitable town centre uses include:

- Retail development
- Leisure and entertainment
- Office development
- Arts, culture and tourism

Proposals for additional town centre retail provision and supporting facilities such as public toilets and changing facilities will be encouraged to promote a diverse retail offer in the town and encourage visitors to stay longer.

7.6 Employment Development Sites

Many survey respondents mentioned increasing the number of jobs available in Thornbury to help reduce out-commuting and to use the skills of local people. There has been a heavy recent loss of employment, with several big employers closing or reducing their workforce substantially, notably South Gloucestershire Council, Alexandra Workwear Limited and Oldbury nuclear power station. There has also been a significant loss of employment land as former employment land and buildings have been allowed to change use to housing.

Creating new jobs in Thornbury is important for the vitality of the town and its sustainability. There are job opportunities in the Bristol conurbation, but transport links between Thornbury and Bristol are already close to capacity at peak hours. Local jobs will not necessarily be taken by Thornbury residents, but it is desirable for there to be options for residents to work locally, especially for young people.

With the rapidly growing population, fewer local jobs would mean an even greater imbalance between homes and jobs, so Thornbury will increasingly become a dormitory commuter town. This

would cause much more congestion on the A38 into Bristol. Many residents raised congestion as an important issue.

The policy on employment, below, is designed to encourage more local jobs and help local small and start-up businesses that may provide jobs in the future.

Start-up businesses offer opportunities to provide local jobs or provide local services. Such businesses are likely to have links to the local area and have the potential to grow. This policy is designed to encourage and facilitate such start-ups.

Some start-up businesses may be blocked by a lack of affordable office space or may need the opportunity to try out a business idea without making a longer-term commitment such as signing a lease. The provision of flexible serviced offices may enable small and experimental office-based enterprises to start in Thornbury, with the possibility of growing into permanent businesses.

The provision of incubator units that could support start-up businesses who need affordable workshop or storage space may enable such small and experimental enterprises to start in Thornbury, with the possibility of growing into permanent businesses. Incubator units could be in existing premises or on existing employment land. Several small units could be created from one larger unit.

Many survey respondents said that new land for businesses was important. However, making better use of existing underused land is preferred over new greenfield sites by most survey respondents. Some expressed concern at the loss of more greenfield land following significant loss to earlier housing developments. There has been a loss of employment land to housing, especially office sites, which offer a higher density of jobs per hectare of land than, for example, warehouses.

The Core Strategy safeguards 19 hectares of employment land in Thornbury, some of which has been lost to residential development (former South Gloucestershire Council Offices, and other office accommodation on Midland Way), and other parts of which are vacant and underused (at Thornbury Industrial Estate).

Policy 13 - Provision of office and light industrial units

Applications for office and light industrial units are encouraged where they:

- Provide for local employment including small scale social enterprises, small and medium size businesses, and live/work units, particularly where they reduce out-commuting
- Provide flexible employment space and support small and medium sized businesses in the town centre and existing employment areas.

Applications for new business-related development should improve the quality of the environment and should accord with best practice design principles.

To support a thriving and diverse economy in Thornbury, proposals which will intensify the use of the remaining safeguarded employment land will be supported, provided HGV and other traffic/transport impacts of the proposal are adequately mitigated to avoid road safety hazards and harm to residential amenity.

This policy has been updated to reflect the new Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 which came into force on 1st September 2020.

8 Services and Facilities

8.1 Context

The adequacy of support services and facilities such as schools, health centre and facilities for younger people was identified in the survey as being of significant concern to Thornbury residents. There is considerable support for enhanced health and leisure services and increased community meeting spaces to manage the increase in population. In the survey, adding together those people who thought issues were either 'very important' or 'important', it is possible to show which parts of the infrastructure are of major concern. Some issues such as the provision of broadband, whilst important to residents, are not land issues and cannot therefore be addressed in this Neighbourhood Plan. Where possible, these will be addressed separately with the Town Council as set out in Section 12.

Total respondents answering "Extremely Important" and "Important"

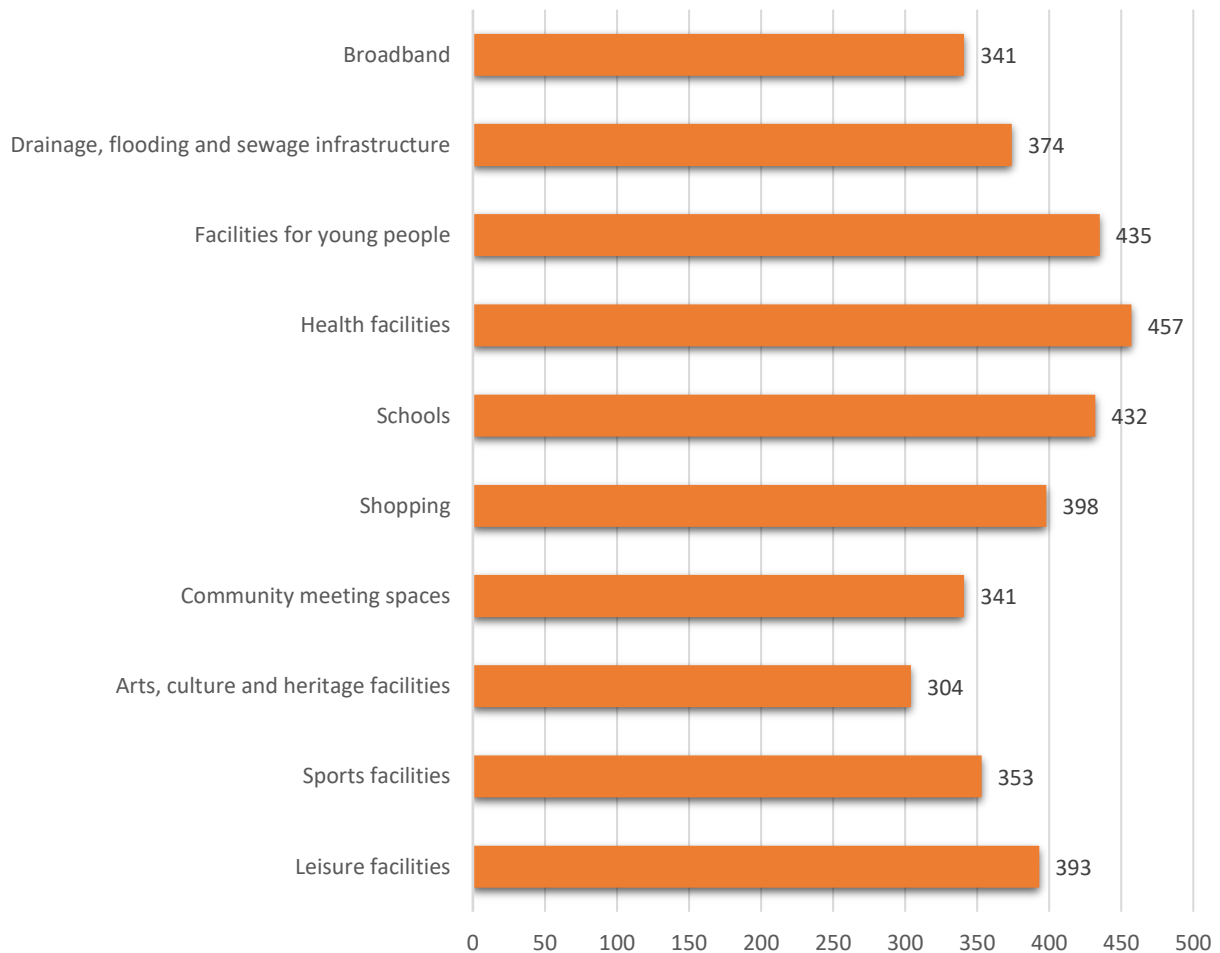


Figure 7. Survey respondents view on priorities for next 10-15 years

The priority service and facilities issues raised by survey respondents in relation to the next 10 to 15 years by volume of response are set in out Figure 7.

The provision of health facilities was identified as the most significant priority in the residents' survey particularly where concerns were expressed about how existing care facilities will cope with the growing number of houses. The Outline business case for sustainable primary healthcare services in Thornbury in June 2018 stated that the list size across the three practices in Thornbury was 21,135 in 2017. Forecast growth over a five-year period including demographic change and increased housing populations is estimated to bring the Thornbury population to 24,465 in 2022 and 32,486 by 2027.¹⁵

In relation to school population change, the South Gloucestershire Commissioning of Places Executive Summary 2017-2021¹⁶ states that *"It is anticipated that pupils generated by new house building over the next 2-3 years will be accommodated at existing primary schools across Thornbury Town. Pupil yield analysis indicates that additional places will be required, though the exact timing of these depend on a range of indeterminate factors. Given the uncertainty over the timing, the Council is currently working towards the provision of additional provision in the short to medium term in order to achieve expansion at a future date. In the longer term, the Council will need to look at options to expand the school estate though is unlikely that existing schools in Thornbury will have the capacity to expand further."* However, there is concern amongst local residents that the forecast numbers are based on a low estimate of additional housing being developed or built out.

8.2 Aim

To support the timely provision of appropriate services, infrastructure and community facilities to meet the needs of a growing population.

8.3 Objectives

- To ensure infrastructure to support growth is in place before new homes and businesses are occupied.
- To provide places for relaxation and play and draw different parts of the Thornbury community together through the creation of facilities that draw people to them.

8.4 Infrastructure and Phasing

The impact of the current level of development in the town is already putting pressure on Thornbury's infrastructure. The concerns expressed by residents in all consultation exercises reflect the difficulties of getting GP appointments and dentist appointments now, with the worry that further development will inevitably place more strain on health services. The concerns about adequate health provision are also matched by concerns about having sufficient school places and other facilities for children and young people.

There is a strong desire for development to be phased so that community infrastructure is in place before new homes and businesses are occupied and so that existing residents' enjoyment of their homes is not compromised.

Services such as power, sewerage, drainage and flood protection may need to be strengthened as many older houses outside the edge of Thornbury do not have access to mains sewerage and currently have to rely on oil powered heating. Consultation responses recalled instances of downstream flooding and power cuts as a result of new developments which put a strain on the existing infrastructure. More housing on the edge of Thornbury will inevitably place strain on the

current systems. The increase in population will also require more community facilities and improvements to leisure facilities if all residents are to continue to enjoy living in the town.

Policy 14 - Phasing of Community Infrastructure with Housing Development

The infrastructure necessary to ensure the sustainability of housing development must be delivered through phased arrangements in parallel with the housing to ensure that community infrastructure keeps pace with the demand generated by new occupiers as well as supporting existing residents. For example, this could apply to the provision of the following:

- Local transportation
- Public Open Space & landscaping schemes
- Landscaping and ecological mitigation and habitat creation/maintenance
- Highways improvements
- Contributions to, or provision of, educational and medical facilities contributions
- Formal and informal outdoor play and recreation space and facilities, including allotments and community gardens/orchards
- Contributions to or provision of community, cultural and leisure facilities

Section 106 agreements or planning conditions should ensure that infrastructure associated with a development is delivered at the earliest possible opportunity taking account of the forecast demand generated by the development, the need to ensure existing residents of Thornbury as well as early occupiers of a major or multi-phased development are adequately served by infrastructure and appropriate services.

8.5 Leisure and Culture

Thornbury's green spaces and play areas are highly valued by the community. Local residents consulted expressed the view that any new development should ensure that there is adequate provision for new public open space and play areas within it. It is acknowledged that new development can play a role in delivering new facilities and funding infrastructure. Consultation also revealed a wish for upgrade of current play areas and especially provision of facilities for older children and young adults. Development of new public open space gives scope to identify ways to provide new and varied play and leisure equipment and uses. Informal recreation areas as well as more formalised play areas are needed. However, concerns have been expressed that new open spaces within developments have not been adopted by the local authority and therefore their maintenance falls to residents within those developments. It is important to ensure that the new public open spaces are open to all residents so that they become part of the town's green infrastructure and assist in integrating the new residents with the rest of the area.

Policy 15 - Leisure Opportunities for Young People

Proposals which make provision for services and facilities for young people, in particular, recreation, sport, informal leisure and youth club provision, will be supported. Schemes to increase the recreation and play offer for all ages of children and young people at the Mundy Playing Fields will also be supported.

8.6 Community Facilities

Thornbury has a good range of community facilities including the Armstrong and Cossham Halls, the Chantry and Turnberries community centre as well as church halls and public houses which are used for community events. There is a library in the town centre which is planned to move away from its current location but the timescale is unknown. A consultation undertaken by the Town Council into the future of the Armstrong Hall attracted much interest from Thornbury residents many of whom are deeply engaged in providing community activities and resources.

Thornbury Town Council and the Armstrong Hall Trust undertook two extensive consultations to inform and understand the community's opinions on the future of the Armstrong Hall complex which is the significant set of community buildings in the centre of Thornbury. In the autumn of 2017, they asked the residents to give them their views on whether they preferred to see a future arts and community centre to be based at the Armstrong Hall complex or to take up the offer from South Gloucestershire Council of developing the future centre at Turnberries. The outcome of the consultation was a clear preference of 300 respondents by 70% to 30% in favour of the existing Armstrong Hall complex.

In the spring of 2018, a further consultation was undertaken including a shopping centre roadshow, presentations to user groups and a public meeting to identify the community's preference between a refurbishment of the existing hall or a more major redevelopment of the whole site. The consultation response included 339 survey replies, over 200 visitors to the roadshow and 250 attendees at the public meeting. The Town Council and Armstrong Trust subsequently approved the

major redevelopment option that was supported by the public consultation by 80% to 20%. Many residents and representatives of community groups have shown themselves willing to participate in what will be a major improvement project.

This Neighbourhood Plan notes South Gloucestershire Council's commitment "to provide additional, extended or enhanced community infrastructure" and to secure appropriate support from developers in securing this.¹⁷ Such resources to enable this major improvement project to go ahead would be welcomed by Thornbury residents.

There is a considerable distance from the main town park (Mundy Playing Fields) and skateboard area to the current and proposed new housing developments. Provision of adventurous play facilities and activities for older children and teenagers is limited within the town at present. Ensuring that such provision is made to the north of the town within the new developments would go some way to address this issue. Survey responses also noted that most new housing has smaller garden space than the older housing in the town and therefore high-quality outdoor sports, play and recreation space will become increasingly important.¹⁸ New developments also offer scope for creation of additional community meeting spaces to meet the needs of a growing population.

The creation of facilities in different parts of the town to encourage movement between different areas and to create new destinations that draw existing residents to new developments within Thornbury is supported by residents.

Policy 16 - Community Facilities

Applications to enhance and provide additional community facilities will be supported. Community facilities for the purposes of this policy include education, healthcare, younger people's facilities and community meeting spaces.

All facilities should be easily accessible to everyone, and provide for good walking and cycling connections, and where possible, be located close to public transport. Proposals for new development should provide for the appropriate level of parking provision in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's parking standards and, where appropriate, be subject to a Transport Assessment.

Where social and community facilities are to be provided as part of any major mixed-use development proposal the planning application should be supported by a statement establishing the phasing and delivery of these facilities. Wherever possible, new community uses should be delivered during the early phases of development to help build a sense of community and integration with existing surrounding communities.

Flexible multi-functional buildings that provide for future adaptability to allow for the widest possible use and activity will be supported.

Valued existing community facilities will be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that demand within the locality for the facility no longer exists or that suitable alternative provision of at least equivalent community value is made elsewhere.

9 Sustainable Development and Connectivity

9.1 Context

Thornbury's most welcome characteristic for its residents is the feeling of green space within and around the town. Its streamside walks, open green spaces, play areas and allotments are well used and significantly valued. They provide for biodiversity and wildlife habitats and promote access to the countryside. Local community groups maintain community gardens and orchard and wildflower meadows. All these are seen by residents as under threat by new developments, especially when built on greenfield land. There is significant support for ensuring that sustainable housing is built, including biodiversity net gain as well as the ability to live a low carbon lifestyle. Opportunities to generate low carbon energy locally must be enabled within new developments. Houses being built now must be resilient to any pressures which climate change may impose. New developments should be built with future risk in mind and put in place mitigation measures where appropriate. Tree planting and wildlife corridors, accessible green space and places to walk are minimum measures to ensure the character of Thornbury's environment is maintained. It is vital to ensure that within and around any new developments the housing is integrated with the environment so as to ensure that Thornbury's green infrastructure is protected and enhanced.

The many concerns expressed by residents about the potential loss of green space and biodiversity, the potential damage to wildlife corridors and the awareness of the need to move to a low carbon future, to mitigate climate change and have a healthy community in the future have indicated the need for this Plan to have sustainability policies against which any future developments will be judged in order to maintain and enhance the green infrastructure of our area.

9.2 Aim

Be resilient to climate change, support and protect the natural environment through sustainable development and strengthen its sense of community, creating connections to enhance integration between existing and new developments.

9.3 Objectives

- To ensure developments promote our community's resilience to, and ability to mitigate, climate change through careful design.
- To protect and enhance the natural environment, connecting wildlife corridors and taking care of wildlife and promoting biodiversity.
- To extend and enhance the Streamside Walks.
- To ensure the provision of green spaces through their formal designation as Local Green Space.
- To support the integration of new with existing communities through use of connections and recreational facilities.
- To support local food systems.

9.4 Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Wildlife

Flood risk is a concern raised in consultations. The potential for green space within new developments to contribute positively to reducing flood risk has been raised. There is interest in developing a policy of tree planting within areas known to have a risk of flooding. Providing a woodland area, rather than, for example, mown grass, on these areas, could mitigate risk and also provide positive expansion of Thornbury's biodiversity and leisure facilities. The policy seeks to ensure that the green spaces within and around new developments take the opportunity to mitigate any potential flooding, for example by planting trees within vulnerable areas. This has the added benefit of creating wildlife habitats and maintaining biodiversity. Areas such as these, connected by accessible footpaths, also provide valuable amenity spaces for informal recreation and would enhance community cohesion by making them positive destinations for all townspeople.

Within developments there is the opportunity to designate spaces as wildlife areas. The policy provides for retention and protection of mature trees and limits damage to hedges which function as vital wildlife corridors.¹⁹ New developments need to fit into the surrounding environment and provide links into surrounding countryside. Using best practice standards to demonstrate excellence in incorporating green infrastructure into a scheme, such as the Building with Nature standards, will show how developments can contribute to creating spaces where people and wildlife can thrive and impacts of building works on our environment are mitigated. A plan setting out the green infrastructure in and around Thornbury is provided at Figure 8, below.

Growing food locally provides both positive outdoor activity and reduces food miles. New developments can give the opportunity to provide food growing spaces, either in the form of allotments or community growing space.

Policy 17 - Planning for Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Food Production

Development will be expected to identify, retain and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors and other aspects of green infrastructure. Proposals should also avoid damage to mature trees and hedges, not only those subject to Tree Preservation Orders, and respect the pattern and form of the landscape. Creating links for wildlife within new developments, forming "bridges" across existing green spaces and wildlife corridors and the network of wooded paths in Thornbury will be essential to avoid creating environments hostile to biodiversity. Agriculture, tree planting and informal recreational uses will be encouraged on land known to be liable to flooding.

Developments should provide opportunities for gardening, for wildlife and for food production within existing and new residential areas including the utilisation of underutilised roadside verges. They should enhance the quality of public spaces and the streetscape within built-up areas including new tree planting, landscaping and suitable sustainable urban drainage.

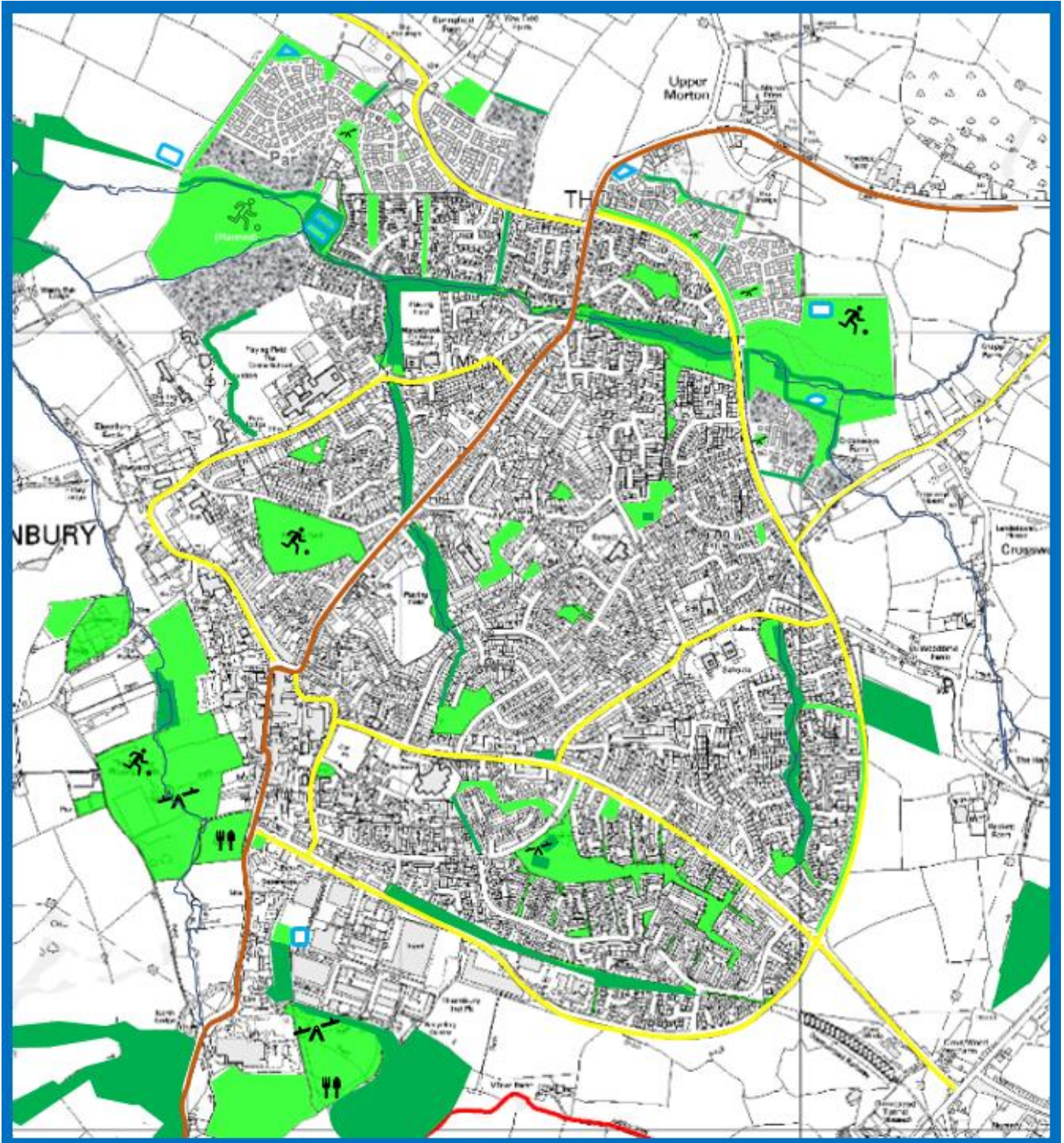


Figure 8. Green Infrastructure within Thornbury

- Legend:
- Grassland, possibly with young trees or shrubs
 - Woodland or hedge with mature trees
 - Development underway but unmapped (7/2020)
 - Sport pitches
 - Play equipment
 - Allotments
 - Ponds (normally wet or dry)

Designations on this map do not imply public ownership or right of access.

9.5 The Streamside Walks

Thornbury benefits from a number of routes that run alongside streams. These are collectively known as Streamside Walks. They are hugely important to the town providing places for leisure and recreation and importantly connecting the various communities of Thornbury. Whilst there are some parts of the Walks which do not connect together, it is an aspiration that this will be rectified in future. All developments must strengthen connections around Thornbury by connecting to and extending the Streamside Walks.

Policy 18 - Creating connections through Streamside Walks

Applications for development are encouraged to show how they will connect to and enhance the Streamside Walks so that these become a thread running all the way through Thornbury, connecting various areas of the town. The ecological impact of proposals should be clearly stated. The Walks should:

- Provide routes that support wildlife and biodiversity, are rich in tree and other planting and accessible by foot and bicycle
- Incorporate new links to and from the Streamside Walks to housing developments for pedestrians and cyclists, integrating with an enhanced walking and cycle network across Thornbury
- Create trails which enhance safety and security through natural surveillance
- Provide unobtrusive lighting along the Streamside Walks
- Enhance the environmental quality of the habitat, biodiversity and trees along the Streamside Walks

In the longer-term, development opportunities that provide scope to reconnect missing links along the Streamside Walks, creating a seamless connected route, will be welcome.

9.6 Local Green Space Designation

Some areas within Thornbury are designated as Local Green Spaces in the South Gloucestershire Policies, Sites and Places Plan (PSP). A Neighbourhood Plan is permitted to add to Local Green Space Designations. Given that this issue is of importance to Thornbury residents, two new Local Green Spaces have been added to the list of designated places.

Policy 19 - Local Green Space

The following area shown on Fig.9 is designated as a Local Green Space due to its importance for the leisure and recreation needs of the people of Thornbury as well as providing valuable habitats for a range of biodiversity:

- Land off Vilner Lane: Land adjacent to the sports centre including the area bounded by Vilner Lane, the Skate Park and the Leisure Centre Car Park within which the community composting site sits.

Inappropriate development on this site will only be supported in very special circumstances.

9.6.1 Land off Vilner Lane

The area adjacent to Thornbury Leisure Centre is currently designated as formal and informal Open Space. This area is noted in the PSP Plan as including a skate park, leisure centre parking and Filnore Woods. The much used and valued Community Compost Site is already designated as Local Green Space (LGSD964). However, there is also an adjacent area of woodland which the local residents consider should be designated as Local Green Space through this Neighbourhood Plan.

This small patch of broadleaved woodland (c 0.68 hectares) is recorded as such as far back as 1881²⁰ so it can be reasonably assumed that this woodland existed some years earlier. An Aerofilm photograph from 1956 in the local museum shows some twenty existing trees on the site. Over at least the last 30 years, the site was developed as a tree nursery for the local authority, initially North Avon District and then South Gloucestershire. However, since c2000 part of the area has been leased to local homeowners and part has been used by Thornbury Community Composting for processing wood waste into fuel.

The area backs onto local housing on Bristol Road and serves as a protective space between the housing and the Thornbury Industrial estate of Cooper Lane. It is special to the local community because of its tranquillity and the richness of its wildlife. There is a mixture of mature, semi-mature trees and whips. Some of the stock may be more than 130 years old. The tree nursery was established to provide trees for roadside verges in the late 1970s. In that respect the biodiversity is limited but the potential is great. Presently the main species include ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with walnut (*Juglans regia*), white poplar (*Populus alba*), lime (*Tilia x vulgaris*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), hawthorn (*Crataegus sp.*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), tree cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster sp.*) and beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) among others. There is one large very old crack willow (*Salix fragilis*)²¹ which broke in 2017 after heavy rain. The trunk is now protecting the boundary with Vilner Lane.

Access to the site is via rides that provide some habitat diversity with more open areas. The flowers provide a nectar source for invertebrates. Two stands of rotting tree roots provide good beetle

habitat. The woodland is partly used by Thornbury Community Composting to process wood salvaged from the compost site for reuse as kindling, seasoned soft and hard wood for fuel, and to supply local wood turners with material suitable for turning. The land provides a soakaway for large quantities of water which overflow down Vilner lane at various times during the year when heavy rainfall is experienced.

The Thornbury community takes pride in its active gardening community and is a regular finalist and winner of Britain in Bloom competitions. This woodland site, together with the Community Composting site, therefore holds a particular significance to the local community because of its history, its recreational and productive value, its importance in supporting biodiversity and as the only woodland area so close to the town centre.

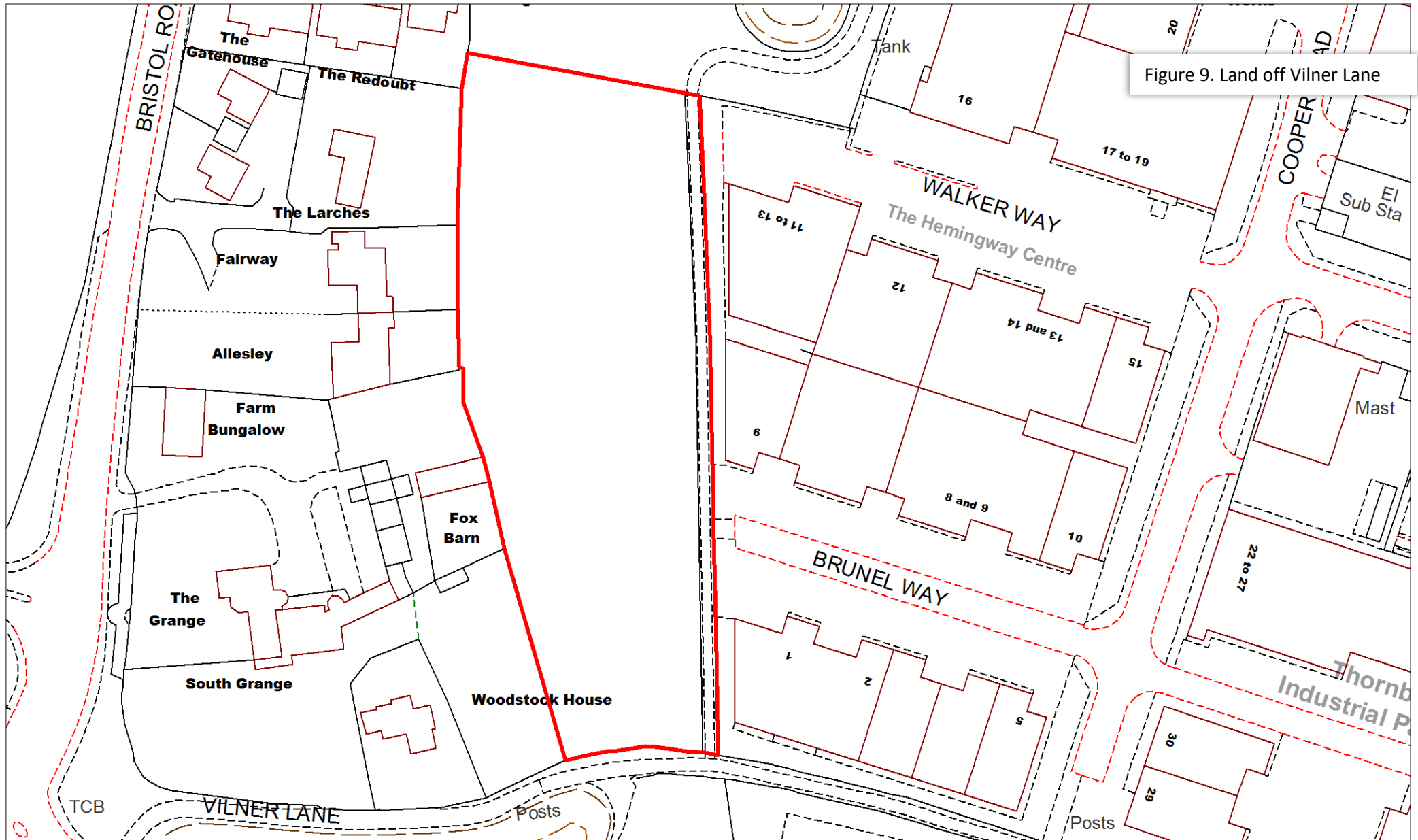


Figure 9. Land off Vilner Lane

10 Travel, Transport and Parking

10.1 Context

Thornbury is located in the Severn Vale off the A38 between the Falfield and Almondsbury junctions with the M5/M4. The A38 serves as a relief road for the M5 when the motorway is closed. At the time of writing the Plan, the town has a considerable number of housing schemes in various stages of development, ranging from partial occupation to initial planning stages. Although not all new residents have yet moved into the area, the additional traffic has already exacerbated capacity issues both within the town and on external links. In particular congestion on the A38/M32 corridor into Bristol is already severe at peak times. Feedback from the community engagement/consultation process in 2017 identified a number of key issues:

- Capacity of the existing road network and particular junctions to cope with the additional traffic generated by new large-scale housing development.
- Concerns over road safety, congestion and pollution.
- Desire for bus services to access essential facilities.
- The need for safe walking and cycling routes to help to allow for sustainable transport choices.
- A desire to bring back a railway station for Thornbury.
- Car parking availability in the town centre.

10.2 Aim

To promote active, smarter and sustainable ways of getting around, establishing appropriate transport infrastructure to support population growth, developing the network of paths and cycleways and green corridors.

10.3 Objectives

- To ensure that necessary improvements in road and path infrastructure are in place ahead of any new development to promote safety and ease of access, especially for public transport.
- To ensure development proposals include up-to-date traffic and movement impact assessments and that these are used to inform any required improvements.
- To create opportunities for sustainable modes of transport by creating high standards of cycle and walkways that connect communities within Thornbury and its surrounding area.²²

10.4 Road Safety, Traffic and Transport

Concern has been raised about the extent to which traffic assessments included with planning applications are able to take account of the full effect of developments. This is because the pace of development within Thornbury means that traffic assessments are likely to be based on information gained before previously approved developments are completed and fully occupied. Impacts on

road, cycle and pedestrian networks and transport requirements in the context of this and later planning applications is of concern to our community.

Cumulative impacts over the wider system need to be understood especially as a large part of Thornbury's travel to work volume is likely to feed into the already congested Bristol North Fringe area. Higher volumes of traffic increase risks to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as creating slower journey times. Proposals to mitigate these impacts need to be incorporated into any new development applications. It is essential that traffic impact assessments, based on the most up to date survey information, are submitted with all potential traffic-generating planning applications. This should include any planning applications that are resubmitted.

The extent of housing development around the town has created a number of pressure points on the local road system, especially at peak times. The junctions at Gloucester Road/Morton Way/Butt Lane and Grovesend Road/A38 are both difficult offset junctions that become dangerous with high traffic volumes as they already have difficulty coping at peak times. Strategically, the route down Butt Lane may become more significant should the development of the new Oldbury Power Station go ahead.

The junctions with the A38 at the top of Grovesend Road and at the top of Thornbury Road are already under pressure as the major commuter routes out of the town and have been pinch points for several years. The junctions come under even more pressure if there is an interruption on the M5. In view of the rapid increase in population, there is a clear requirement for a thorough study of traffic flows in the area to inform road safety improvements. This analysis could lead to the requirement for a package of measures such as traffic calming, speed restrictions and cycle lanes.

Policy 20 - Highway Impact

Major development proposals which create either individual or cumulative impacts on the highway network will be required to fully mitigate these impacts by highway improvements or contributions towards their mitigation. Contributions will be used to mitigate the congestion and safety impacts of the development. Highways infrastructure associated with new development should be delivered in accordance with Policy 14.

Proposals involving highway alterations or provision of new roads must ensure there is sufficient capacity to accommodate peak time traffic and that road safety, in particular for pedestrians and cyclists, is demonstrably factored into the scheme.

Development proposals which due to their scale, nature or location will adversely affect air quality especially within the town centre should demonstrate what measures will be taken to effectively mitigate emission levels in order to protect public health, environmental quality and amenity.

10.5 Neighbourhood Cycling and Walking Routes

The public engagement process identified that good provision for walking and cycling was a major requirement for safe and sustainable travel.²³ Within the town there are many footpaths but only a few joint footpath/cycle-ways that clearly identify shared use. There are no dedicated traffic-free cycle-routes that feed into the town centre from the residential areas. There is a desire to improve the road safety and create more sustainable travel options by extending and improving the current walking and cycling provision.

With the large number of houses being built on the periphery of the town, respondents commented that cycle routes should be built in new developments to a joint pedestrian/cycleway use standard and that these should be linked to the local and regional network. Through routes to areas beyond Thornbury could take advantage of this opportunity. Developers will be encouraged to make this an integral part of the proposal and be part of their own ground-works programme.

All new developments are expected to provide links into the network, with joint walking/cycling paths joining the existing networks to provide safe access both around the development and to key services such as schools and medical facilities²⁴. A major feature of the network will be that all footpaths and recreational paths will be accessible to disabled/elderly people and parents with young children. Concerns were also raised by residents about the poor maintenance of some footpaths. Developers will need to demonstrate how the paths created within any development will be maintained over the long term. Secure cycle parking must be a feature of all shopping/commercial/leisure developments in the town.

An illustrative plan for walking/cycling routes is set out in Appendix D. It identifies the opportunity to build on and improve existing routes and establish new ones in and around Thornbury to create better connection and make it easier for people to cycle or walk around the town.

10.6 Rail

Thornbury was connected to the national railway network by a branch line to Yate. Passenger services ceased in 1944 and goods traffic ceased in 1966. The line has remained in place as far as Tytherington Quarry for occasional mineral traffic but the cutting from the quarry to the tunnel under the A38 has been partly in-filled to create a level shunt for mineral trains. From the quarry to Thornbury town centre the route is mainly intact and the tunnel is in partial use for storage by the landowner. A section of the route is used as a foot/cycle path. Gardens and some houses have used part of the original alignment and the old station site has been commercially developed.

There was considerable support in the consultation for reopening the railway line and a desire not to allow development on land which would be required in future to enable this to happen. Within our neighbourhood plan area, it is considered important to preserve the remaining track bed in order not to reduce future options for the line. In the short to medium term consideration could be given to further development into an extended pedestrian/cycle route should further parts of the route become permanently disused.

The original railway line route is shown on Figure 11.

Policy 21 - Walking and Cycling

In order to encourage sustainable transport both within and outside the town, development proposals will be required to make provision for safe and attractive walking and cycling, appropriate to its size and scale. This may be in the form of contributions towards upgrading the existing network of paths and cycleways in Thornbury or in the case of large-scale development, ensuring pedestrian and cycle routes are provided which link into the existing network. Developers are encouraged to incorporate the design standards as set out by Sustrans in their infrastructure development guidance²⁹

All applications for development are encouraged to demonstrate how they support active travel through delivery of walking and cycling routes that reduce reliance on vehicular movement.

Where new walking and cycling routes are provided as part of new areas of development, they must be direct, safe and convenient to use. The layout of proposed new development should allow for the natural surveillance of routes through overlooking with active development frontages.

Proposals for new development are encouraged to demonstrate how they link into the existing footpath and cycle network, providing connections between residential, retail, leisure, commercial and community uses.

Proposals for commercial, leisure and community uses should support and enable active travel through inclusion of safe, secure and convenient cycle parking and changing facilities where appropriate.

Proposals for development that reduce the capacity or safety of existing active travel infrastructure, including footpath and pavement space, or which results in the removal of locally important facilities, will not be considered acceptable.

Policy 22 - Safeguarding former railway line

In order to allow for its potential future use as a transport link, the route of the former railway line shown in Figure 11, excluding that designated as Local Green Space, will be safeguarded.

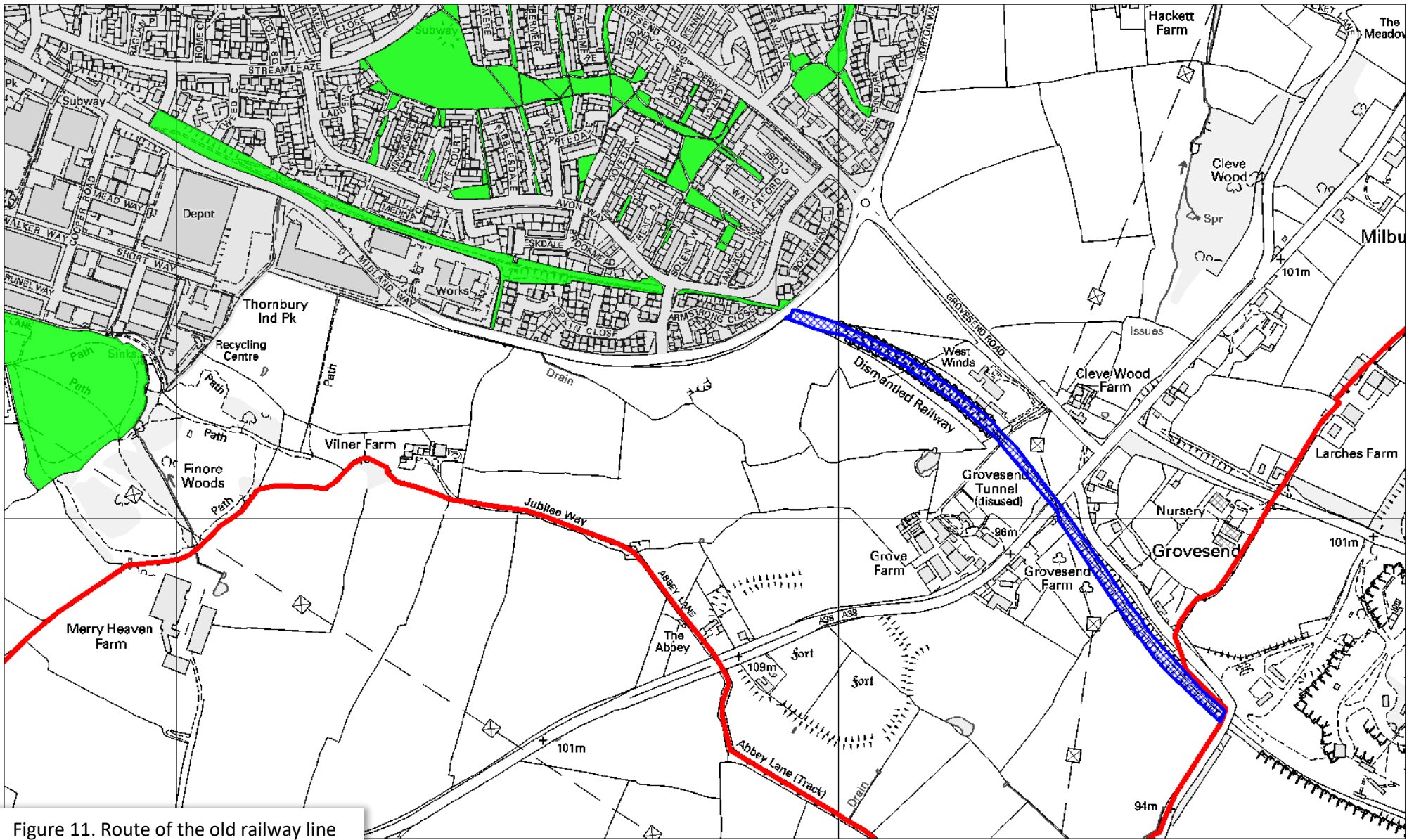


Figure 11. Route of the old railway line

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 Contains National Statistics data © Crown copyright and database right 2019.

10.7 Town Centre Parking

In the consultation, around 10% of respondents said that town centre parking was an issue. Specifically, there were insufficient parking spaces in the centre for workers and for shoppers at certain times of the day. This is likely to become more of a problem with the expected increase in Thornbury's population, with most of the new housing being beyond walking distance from the centre.

There are three free off-street car parks adjoining the town centre, at Rock Street, St Mary and Castle Court including long-stay, short-stay and disabled spaces. The supermarket just outside the town centre also has a large free car park. The, now very small, Saturday market is held in the St Mary's car park. There is also some on-street parking with waiting restrictions in the High Street and on The Plain. Most High Street premises have no service access, so delivery vehicles also stop on double yellow lines to unload, sometimes causing traffic congestion.

It is not clear where additional parking could be provided. Free parking can encourage driving to the centre, which is not sustainable, but on the other hand restricted parking or parking charges would make the town centre shopping and services less attractive.

There were suggestions from respondents regarding the creation of mixed-use parking with shops, employment space or housing. There were also suggestions for more on-street parking space and disabled spaces in the High Street and out-of-town parking with a park-and-ride.

This Neighbourhood Plan is not able to address the provision of additional parking but the issue has been included in Section 12 which identifies proposals for Thornbury Town Council and other partners to progress actions. This plan does, however, seek to protect the current numbers of car parking spaces within the town centre.

Policy 23 - Town Centre Parking

The loss of off-street parking within or adjoining the town centre as defined on South Gloucestershire Council's Policies Map will not be supported unless replacement off-street parking of equivalent quantity and quality is provided within or adjoining the town centre.

11 Implementation and Monitoring

11.1 Implementation

Implementation of the Plan will be on-going. Responsibility for determining planning applications rests with South Gloucestershire Council as the Local Planning Authority. South Gloucestershire Council are therefore responsible for applying the above policies.

As the Qualifying Body for Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan, Thornbury Town Council will establish mechanisms for ensuring that the Plan is being followed and work with South Gloucestershire Council in testing the continued conformity of this Plan's policies with local, regional and national planning policies.

11.2 Monitoring

The following monitoring plan will be adopted by Thornbury Town Council.

11.2.1 Twelve Month Review

Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed one year after its adoption at community referendum by the reconvened Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the town council.

The purpose of review will be primarily to assess the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan objectives have been implemented in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting the Neighbourhood Plan objectives. The Steering Group will give a report back to full Council on the findings of the review.

11.2.2 Five Year Review

Hereafter, Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed every five years. Review of policies will be led by the Town Development Committee, with input from community representatives including, possibly, members of the original Steering Group.

As above, the purpose of the review will be primarily to assess the extent to which the objectives have been achieved in practice and the contribution of the policies and projects contained within it towards meeting those objectives.

11.2.3 End of Plan Period Review

At least two years prior to the expiry of Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan (2036), a full-scale review will be undertaken by Thornbury Town Council, possibly by forming a new Steering Group. The purpose of this review will be to gauge the success of the plan in meeting its objectives and to put in place a succession plan for the Thornbury NP area.

11.2.4 Conformity with higher level plans

When South Gloucestershire revised Local Plan, together with any associated higher level plans, an informal review of Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan will be carried out by Thornbury Town Council, in liaison with South Gloucestershire Council, to ensure its conformity. Any issues arising will be dealt with through a more formal review process, potentially involving members of the Steering Group.

11.2.5 Updating the Plan

Should any of these above reviews identify that any changes (be they amendments or additions) are required, Thornbury Town Council will liaise with South Gloucestershire Council on how best to do this. Thornbury Town Council and South Gloucestershire Council will also monitor changes in planning legislation and national policy to identify any implications for the policies in the Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan. Similarly, any changes in local or regional planning policies will be monitored.

Any minor updates to the Neighbourhood Plan that do not materially affect policies or minor changes to correct any errors in the Plan, will be made by South Gloucestershire Council as the local planning authority, with consent from Thornbury Town Council as the neighbourhood planning body. However, if substantial revision to the Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan is required, current legislation requires that any such major revisions would need to go through the later stages of the neighbourhood planning process, from pre-submission consultation onwards. The responsibility for undertaking a major update will be shared between Thornbury Town Council and South Gloucestershire Council.

12 Matters Outside the Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan

12.1 Issues to be addressed outside the Plan

During the course of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, many comments were made by residents about issues that cannot form part of the Plan. This is because they do not relate to land use or are already covered by national or local planning policy. In particular the Plan cannot address the number of homes to be built at Thornbury as this will be addressed in the current, and future, South Gloucestershire Local Plan and any associated higher-level plans.

Issues which cannot be included in this Plan are identified in this Section together with proposals for how each will be taken forward by or with Thornbury Town Council.

12.1.1 The Revitalisation of the Town Centre

Issues

Some residents identified the following issues to be addressed:

- Markets and fairs – a request for the return of quarterly food fairs and consideration of an improved location for markets.
- A need to reduce the number of empty retail units, particularly in the St Mary Centre.
- A need to increase the diversity of shopping opportunities and respond to local shopping needs.
- Better toilets and changing facilities for the town. The absence of facilities is seen as discouragement to shop, especially for families, older and disabled people. It is also currently unclear which shops permit access without purchase, thus a better indication of scheme participation needed.

Actions

- Re-activation of markets and fairs is dealt with under the existing Town Centre Strategy which is due to end next year. Request the Town Council to ask the Town Centre Partnership (TCP) to produce a revised strategy.
- Whilst the number of empty retail units in the town had reduced in recent months, Thornbury Town Council will set up a working group to include the Town Centre Partnership to establish reasons why there have been issues with filling units and identify opportunities to improve unit take up going forward. The Town Council will also consider referral to the South Gloucestershire Council Economic Development Team if necessary.
- Encourage shopping diversity - this is problematic given this relates to a commercial, demand-led activity and shops are competing with online and large out of town retail opportunities. Town Council to explore whether the Town Centre Partnership could identify any evidence which might assist such as demand surveys.

- Town Council to engage with the Town Centre Partnership to consider provision of toilets, including for family/disabled use and to raise the need to improve identification of those outlets offering toilet facilities for non-customers.

12.1.2 Improve parking provision

Issues

Some residents identified the need for:

- the continuation of the current policy of free parking in the town centre.
- an increase in the availability of short and medium-stay parking through consideration of actions such as the adjustment of parking times, changing the balance of all day/ part-day spaces and relocation of worker parking.
- a review of long stay parking arrangements, possibly in conjunction with parking for commuters on the town periphery.
- Ensuring future parking arrangements comply with existing standards for disabled and family parking spaces.
- the provision of more cycle parking and electric vehicle charging in the town centre.

Actions

It is noted that parking cannot be isolated from other issues, such as public transport access, cycle and walking routes and speed reductions. With this in mind:

- Town Council is requested to initiate, with South Gloucestershire Council, a review of parking in the town, speed restrictions and bus routes/frequency/fare costs to and from centre and disabled parking facilities.
- Thornbury Town Council is requested to raise with South Gloucestershire Council the matter of better cycle parking and the introduction of electric vehicle charging points in the town centre.

12.1.3 Improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists

Issue

- Residents identified a need for further traffic calming / speed reduction measures, for example a 20-mph limit, particularly in the High Street.

Action

- Thornbury Town Council to consider this issue including possible referral to South Gloucestershire Council.

12.1.4 Strategic Walking, cycling and accessibility

Issues

Some residents identified the need for:

- safe cycling routes and junctions from the periphery of Thornbury into the town centre including modest gradients out of Thornbury. The current lack of appropriate routes was

felt to place a major constraint on the development of cycling as a sustainable form of transport.

- routes connecting with strategic cycle networks to other locations in South Gloucestershire (such as the A38/Grovesend Road junction).
- improvements in maintenance of footpaths and cycleways.

Actions

- Thornbury Town Council is requested to raise these issues with South Gloucestershire Council to ensure that routes for development are identified within the West of England-wide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, and request the commissioning of any necessary construction work. The discussions could include the possible use of CIL, and regular reviews of planning applications & construction progress to ensure appropriate network development progresses.

12.1.5 Quality of Life

Issues

Some residents wanted to see:

- improved facilities to provide increased recreation opportunities for children and young people, such as youth clubs and skate parks, including adventurous place facilities.
- extended use of existing community facilities.
- schools opening additional sports facilities and rooms into the evening.
- a reduction in anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- an increase broadband provision.

Actions

- Town Council to be requested to consult with the community on the issue of increased recreational opportunities. Following consultation, Town Council to discuss outcomes with South Gloucestershire Council, youth providers, churches, clubs, schools and other providers and to request use of CIL money to improve services.
- Some schools already open their facilities for community use in the evenings. If further availability is required, the Town Council is requested to explore further possibilities with Castle Schools Educational Trust.
- The Town Council will be requested to raise general policing matters regarding anti-social behaviour with senior police management.
- Broadband provision is not within the remit of the Town Council. However, the Town Council is aware of the issues raised and will promote increased broadband provision when opportunities emerge.

APPENDIX A – Glossary

Acronym	Name/Subject	Explanation
	Active Frontage	Street frontages where there is an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground and upper floors of buildings.
	Affordable Housing	References to 'affordable housing' refer to the definitions within the NPPF July 2021 (updated) and as required by South Gloucestershire's Policy PSP37 of the adopted Policies, Sites and Places Plan 2017
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	Method of assessing, rating and certifying the sustainability of buildings.
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy	A levy on developers made by the District Council which can be used for infrastructure development
	Core Strategy	Key document in the Local Plan which provides the strategic planning framework for South Gloucestershire's future development needs up to 2026. Main purpose to identify where new housing and jobs will go as well as protecting what is valued in the area.
	Infill	To fill in small gaps in an otherwise built up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings
	Design Review Panel	A multi-disciplinary panel of built environment experts assess the design of development proposals, the objective being to provide an independent, impartial evaluation process. The South West Design Review Panel is an example of this.
	Local Plan	Allocates sites for any strategic or non-strategic development identified through South Gloucestershire's call for sites, or identified within any agreed higher level plan.
	Main town centre use	The National (NPPF) defines main town centre uses as: 'Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Acronym	Name/Subject	Explanation
	Major Development	References in this Plan to 'major development' should be taken to mean as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015
NP	Neighbourhood Plan	A document drawn up in response to the views of residents that helps local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	A document setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied
	Passivhaus	Rigorous voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which reduces the building's ecological footprint.
PSPP	Policies, Sites and Places Plan	Detailed planning policies to manage new development, allocate and safeguard sites for various types of development. To be read alongside the Core Strategy.
PSP31	Policy PSP31 in PSPP	Policy within the PSPP which relates to 'Town Centre Uses' and directs strategic growth to individual centres and proposes town centre and primary shopping area boundaries.
	South Gloucestershire Core Strategy	Key planning document for South Gloucestershire setting out the general location of development, its type and scale, as well as protecting what is valued about the area.
SGLP	South Gloucestershire Local Plan	Sets out local planning policies for South Gloucestershire and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where.
	South Gloucestershire Policies Map	This is an online interactive map that displays the policies of the adopted development plan including 'Policies, Sites and Places Development Plan Document and the Core Strategy.
TCP	Town Centre Partnership	This partnership brings together representatives from the Town Council, South Gloucestershire Council and the Chamber of Commerce (which includes the Peer Group which owns St Mary Centre). Its aim is to work together to ensure that Thornbury thrives both commercially and socially.
	Tenure blind	Designing homes so that it is not easy to differentiate between homes that are private and those that are shared ownership or rented.

APPENDIX B - Mapping Thornbury Neighbourhood Plan Policies to Objectives

Vision	Objectives - Thornbury will:	Relevant Policies
<p>Thornbury will retain its market town and historic character, and its sense of community. It will keep and expand its green spaces, streamside walks, connections with nature and access to the countryside. It will be resilient to climate change and will provide well planned, high-quality, sustainable and affordable homes. It will support the prosperity and wellbeing of its residents by providing a vibrant town centre, quality local jobs, a good choice of retail and employment facilities and appropriate services.</p>	<p>Preserve its unique character and historic identity and rural separation through well planned holistic high-quality placemaking and design.</p>	<p>1,2, 3, 4, 9,11, 12</p>
	<p>Provide high-quality, well designed, affordable, sustainable housing that meets the needs of people of all ages and which does not distinguish between owned or rented properties.</p>	<p>3,4, 5 6,7, 8, 9</p>
	<p>Support a vibrant, unique and historic town centre with mixed retail, business and residential facilities and a thriving economy that provides jobs for local people to enable them to work where they live.</p>	<p>4,9,10,11,12,13,23</p>
	<p>Support the timely provision of appropriate services, infrastructure and community facilities to meet the needs of a growing population.</p>	<p>2,14,15,16,19</p>
	<p>Be resilient to climate change, support and protect the natural environment through sustainable development and strengthen its sense of community, creating connections to enhance integration between existing and new developments.</p>	<p>2,3,5,6,7,15,16,17,18,19, 21,22</p>
	<p>Promote active, smarter and sustainable ways of getting around, establishing appropriate transport infrastructure to support population growth, developing the network of paths and cycleways and green corridors.</p>	<p>2,3,4,9,14,16,18,20,21,22</p>

APPENDIX C - Key Views and Panoramas

Views to and from surrounding countryside



1. View taken from Mundy Playing Fields



1. Daggs Allotments. Corner of Midland Way and Bristol Road - facing towards Mundy Playing Fields and the river.



2. View from side of Bristol Road looking over allotments looking towards Mundy Fields



3. From Daggs Allotments looking up towards Thornbury Golf Course/Centre.



4. View from Filnore Woods showing Thornbury Bowl - looking down to Midland Way.



5. View from A38 over Severn Ridge taken between Whitewall Land and the White Horse Pub.



6. Grovesend Road (Top) looking towards Oldbury Power Station.



7. From Rock Street Car Park with view towards Charfield and Wotton Under Edge



8. View of Mundy Fields and Thornbury from Jubilee Way public footpath from Mundy Fields to Mumbly's Hill



9. Behind Yew Tree Farm looking towards Thornbury Fields and Grovesend Road/Cleeve Park. Shows Thornbury sitting in the Vale.

7. From Rock Street Car Park with view towards Charfield and Wotton Under Edge

1. Dags Allotments. Corner of Midland Way and Bristol Road - facing towards Mundy Playing Fields and the river.

1. View taken from Mundy Playing Fields

3. From Dags Allotments looking up towards Thornbury Golf Course/Centre.

2. View from side of Bristol Road looking over allotments looking towards Mundy Fields

9. Behind Yew Tree Farm looking towards Thornbury Fields and Grovesend Road/Cleeve Park. Shows Thornbury sitting in the Vale.

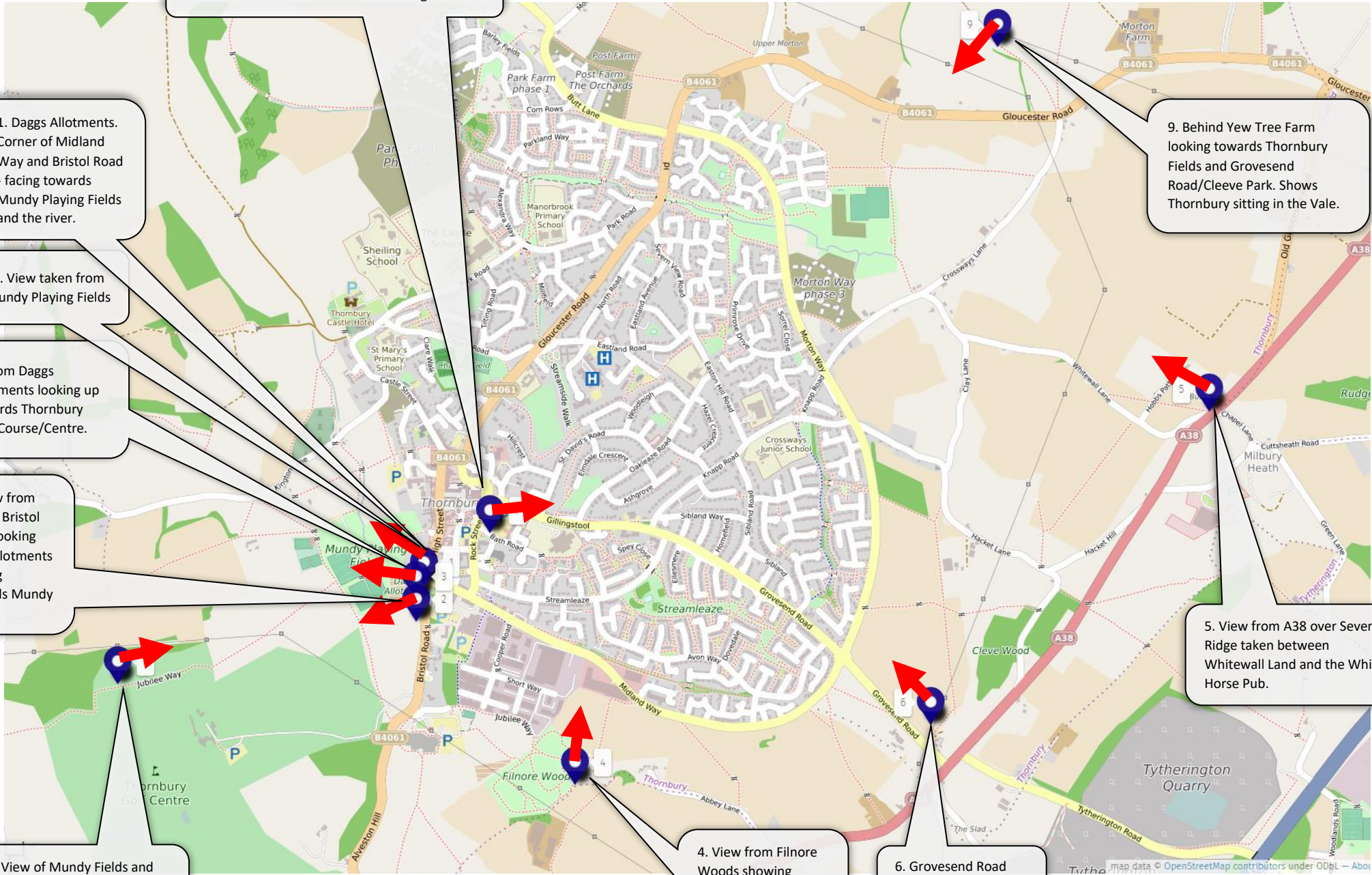
5. View from A38 over Severn Ridge taken between Whitewall Land and the White Horse Pub.

8. View of Mundy Fields and Thornbury from Jubilee Way public footpath from Mundy Fields to Mumbly's Hill

4. View from Filnore Woods showing Thornbury Bowl - looking down to Midland Way.

6. Grovesend Road (Top) looking towards Oldbury Power

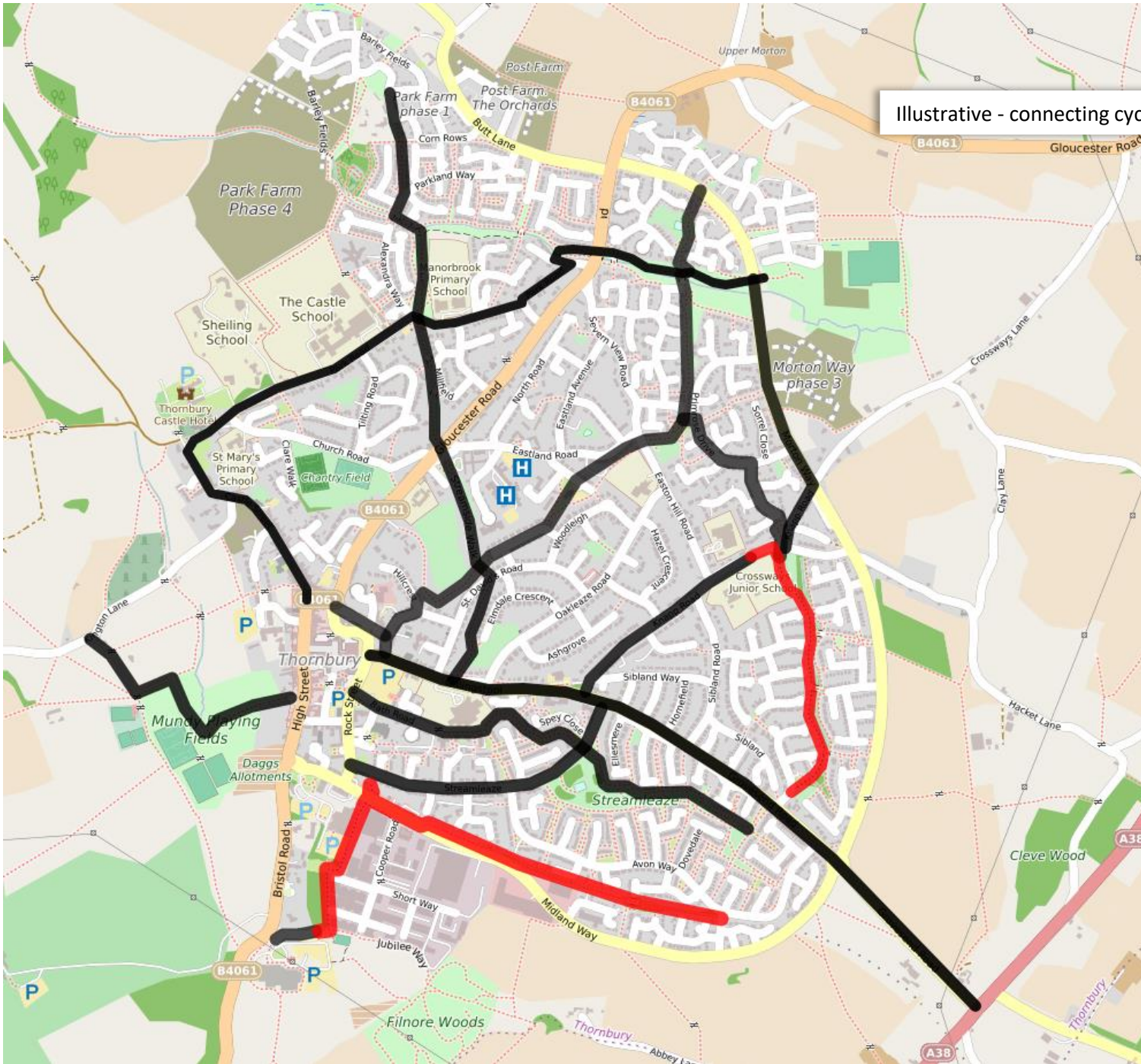
← = Direction of view



APPENDIX D - Illustrative Walking/Cycle Route

Thornbury has an extensive network of paths of varying quality, which would benefit from investment to encourage increased use by new and established residents of the town. The town's existing cycling infrastructure is limited, fragmented and in need of maintenance. There is scope to develop new wider off-road joint-use cycle/pedestrian routes linking residential areas with schools, employment and the town centre. However, the network will include on-road sections in order to complete through routes. Safety will require improved junctions, traffic calming measures, cycle lanes or reduced speed limits for on-road cycle routes.

The indicative development corridors shown in the figure below are to inform the process of developing the West of England wide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan so they should be seen as illustrative of potential routes rather than detailed proposals. When the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan has been agreed by South Gloucestershire Council it is hoped that this will unlock funding that can be used to improve our network. Improvements will create better connections and make it easier for people to cycle or walk around the town.



Illustrative - connecting cycle and pedestrian routes

Legend

Red Routes - Existing routes of shared use paths for cycles /pedestrians

Black Routes - Indicative development corridors for shared use. This includes cycles/pedestrians including dismount sections and roads that may require traffic calming or reduced speed limits.

APPENDIX E - References

¹South Gloucestershire Council Five Year Land Supply Assessment, Early Extract 21/12/2018, Appendix B

²Source Office of National Statistics 2011 Census Data

³This assumes there has been very little new housing in the outlying villages since the 2011 census data. The increase represents an estimate of the additional numbers of residents resulting from house completions (data provided by South Gloucestershire Council) mainly in the North Thornbury area. The number of house completions has been multiplied by the figure of 2.37 residents per household (as used in the 2011 census) has been used in deriving this estimate.

⁴ Source Office of National Statistics 2011 Census Data

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks601uk> and

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1170211837>

⁵ Source: South Gloucestershire Council Census Profile 2011

<http://hosted.southglos.gov.uk/census/wards/Wards-E05002071.pdf>

⁶South Gloucestershire Council: p.251 South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment 2014

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/LCA-Section-2-Area-18.pdf> Accessed 21/12/18)

⁷ "<https://www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/countryside/planning-landscape-character-assessment/>"landscape-character-assessment/"landscape The specific Character Areas which cover or are adjacent to Thornbury: 7 Falfield Vale, 18 Severn Ridges, 19 Oldbury Levels

⁸ South Gloucestershire Landscape Assessment 2014 p.260

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/LCA-Section-2-Area-18.pdf> Accessed 20/12/2018]

⁹A view supported by PSP2 Landscape policy in Policies, Sites & Places Plan SGC 2017 p.9

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/PSP-Plan-Interim-Web-Version.pdf>

¹⁰SGC 2017 p.47 Policies, Sites & Places Plan, <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/PSP-Plan-Interim-Web-Version.pdf>

¹¹It is further enforced in Policy PSP6 Onsite Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SGC Policies, Sites and Places, 2017 p.19 <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/PSP-Plan-Interim-Web-Version.pdf>

¹²Referenced by SGC Policy CS 18 -Affordable Housing SG Local Plan: Core Strategy 2013 p92.

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cleanversionforinterimpublishation2.pdf>

¹³In this aim, the Thornbury NP is in harmony with SGC's Policy CS14 Local Plan: Core Strategy 2013 p.80 <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cleanversionforinterimpublishation2.pdf>

¹⁴ Page 3 South Gloucestershire Council Town Centres and Retailing August 2017

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Town-Centres-and-Retailing-August-2017.pdf>

¹⁵Primary Care Commissioning Committee 25 September 2018: Item 6'Thornbury Health Centre outline business case'. <https://bnssgccg.nhs.uk>

¹⁶http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Executive-Summary-COP-Strategy-2017-2021-2-Nov-2017_.pdf paragraph 11.6

¹⁷Ref CS23 Community Infrastructure and Cultural Activity South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy 2013 p. 104) Accessed at

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cleanversionforinterimpublishation2.pdf>

¹⁸This is supported by Policy CSP 24 Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Standards, SGC (2013 p.106) Local Plan: Core Strategy. Accessed at

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cleanversionforinterimpublishation2.pdf>

¹⁹The goals in this section are supported by Policy PSP 3 Trees and Woodland, SGC, Policy, Sites and Places, (2017 p.13) <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/PSP-Plan-Interim-Web-Version.pdf>.

²⁰ 25" ordnance survey map plot 2389

²¹ 'Notes on Vilner Lane Woodland' by Avon Wildlife Trust, 1998.

²² Supported by SGC Policy CS32/9 p.149. Accessed at <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cleanversionforinterimplication2.pdf>

²³ This is further supported by Policy CS8 of the SGC Local Plan: Core Strategy [Policy CS3 Pt3.1 South Gloucestershire Council (2013 p.61) Local Plan: Core Strategy, Improving Accessibility Pt 3.1, Accessed at <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/cleanversionforinterimplication2.pdf>]

²⁴ Details of such routes can be found in Department for Transport 'Local Transport Note 1/12 September 2012 Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists.

²⁵ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/infrastructure/walking-and-cycling-infrastructure-design-guidance/>