Annex 10 g
to
SeGI Scientific Report

Case Study Report | England, UK (South Gloucester)

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This report presents the interim results of an Applied Research Project conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

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This basic report exists only in an electronic version.

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1. Introduction to the case-study report:

1.1 Description (characterisation) of the UK

The United Kingdom (population approx. 62 million) is a unitary state governed under a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary system, with its seat of government in the capital city of London. It consists of four countries: England, and the devolved national administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Recently, the Open Public Services White Paper[1] set out how the Government will improve public services. The White Paper sets out the government's approach to public services by applying five key principles:

- Choice – wherever possible we will increase choice
- Decentralisation – Power should be decentralised to the lowest appropriate level
- Diversity – Public services should be open to a range of providers
- Fairness – We will ensure fair access to public services
- Accountability – Public services should be accountable to users and taxpayers.[2]

According to the White Paper, total public spending increased by 57 per cent in real terms from 1997/08 to 2010/11 – from 38 per cent to 48 per cent of GDP. Yet on key international comparisons such as school results, cancer survival rates and crime rates, the UK has been treading water. The differences in the social outcomes experienced by the most and least well-off have remained static over the last ten years.

The White Paper sets out the Coalition government's vision and agenda for public service reform. This is an ongoing debate and will impact most of the services detailed here.

Since the publication of the White Paper the Government issued an Open Public Services update in March 2012. This update highlighted the increase of fiscal pressures on the UK and the UK Governments medium to long-term strategies, focusing on public sector reform, introducing competition, choice and accountability. Fundamental reform to the delivery of education and healthcare is set out in more detail below.

The Paper also sets out a decentralisation of power from central to local government and from higher levels of local government to neighbourhoods. The Localism Act has devolved power, removed ring-fencing from central government revenue grants (with the exception of education and public health), legislated for referendums on mayors in major cities – a process which is already in progress – and legislated to allow local government the power to engage in tax incremental financing with the aim of allowing local communities to finance infrastructure projects by means of local tax revenues[3].

According to the update, the package of reforms aims to improve and open up the public sector in the UK.

The UK government also published a National Infrastructure Plan in 2011, outlining 40 priority infrastructure projects and programmes led by a Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure. Projects and programmes include:

- Local transport projects with a £1.7 billion package of investment in local transport projects;
- Super-connected cities project which will deliver ultrafast broadband coverage to 1.7 million households and 200,000 businesses as well as high-speed wireless broadband for 3 million residents in 10 major UK cities. An additional £50 million will fund a second wave of ten smaller super-connected cities;
- Mobile coverage will be extended to 60,000 rural homes and at least ten key roads by 2015;
- Granting energy development consent to 16 projects across the UK since 2011;
- A feasibility study into ownership and financing models for the national road network;
- Tackling congestion, improving connectivity and supporting cycling in and around London:
- Additional funding of £220 million for projects to ease bottlenecks;
- £50 million distributed to all local transport authorities outsde London through the Intregrated Transprot Block; and
- Reforms to planning and consent for infrastructure development[4].

[1] http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/open-public-services-white-paper.pdf
[2] http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/open-public-services-white-paper
[3] http://files.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/HMG_OpenPublicServices_web.pdf
[4] http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/infrastructure_delivery_update.pdf

1.2 Description of South Gloucestershire

South Gloucestershire has a population of around 259,000 and has three distinct types of communities with approximately 80% of households in the built up 'urban' areas to the north of Bristol, 10% in market towns and a further 10% in more rural areas. Much of the population is in the northern and eastern suburbs of Bristol, although there are also large population centres in the Yate-Sodbury, Winterbourne-Frampton Cotterell and Thornbury areas. All the villages are within the commuting belt for Bristol, Bath, Gloucester and Chletenham.

The population is projected to rise to around 272,000 by 2013 and to 313,000 by 2028. Local planning policy sets out an expectation of an additional 7,000 households over the next five years, although this immediate growth may have been affected by the current economic downturn the projection remains of much greater growth to follow. The elderly population will grow particularly fast and projections suggest there will be an additional 15,100 people aged over 75, over the next 25 years. The biggest rise will be in the over-85 age group where numbers are expected to more than double.

The current student population of around 30,000 is expected to grow as the University of the West of England attracts an increasing number of students from the UK and from overseas. The recent downturn in the economy may affect the timing of the rise in population. The flow of migrant workers to the UK may slow as they choose to migrate to other European Countries which have better economic outlooks.

The major employers are the South Gloucestershire Council, Airbus UK, the North Bristol NHS Trust, Rolls Royce and the University of the West of England.

1.3 Overview of the case-study report

This report will consider services of general interest at both a national and regional level with focus on the region of South Gloucestershire. Essential services of general interest will be considered at a national level, grouped into economic and social categories. Economic services of general interest will focus on: gas; water; waste and sewage; electricity; transport; electronic communications and ICT. Social services of general interest will focus on: education; labour market services; public administration and defence; cultural and recreational services; care services; social housing and social security.

For the purposes of this case study national focus will centre around service provision in England as this is the location of our regional case study, South Gloucestershire. Devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have not been considered in-depth in this case study as this was considered to be beyond the scope of this project.

Having established a national overview of services of general interest, this study will then consider the regional case study area of South Gloucestershire in-depth. Background information will be provided to understand the region in context, providing an overview of those services analysed at national level. Economic and social services of general interest will then be considered in-depth and with the input of expert interviews undertaken for each in-depth service area.

The following economic services of general interest will be examined: sewage and sewage treatment facilities; transport and broadband/internet. Social services of general interest examined in-depth comprise: secondary education; tertiary education; healthcare – hospitals and housing.

Transcripts from interviews undertaken are included in the appendices of this document.

2. National analysis of services

2.1. Description of the welfare regime of the UK and its particular effects on various services

The United Kingdom is a unitary state in which central government substantially directs most government activity. However, the structure of services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland differs in certain respects. Each region has both a Secretary of State and administrative department situated in central government, and its own assembly and executive, which take on the role in the region of certain central government ministries. The laws which apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland are different from those in England and Wales. The Scottish parliament has in consequence very much more influence than the Welsh Parliament, and the Scottish Government (a name confusingly used for both government and executive) has the role of a civil service for Scotland, with a social policy in its own right. The administrative structure in Northern Ireland is significantly different: personal social services are the responsibility of the Health Board (as they are in the Republic of Ireland), and public housing is managed by Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

This framework changes frequently. The most important changes in recent years have been the reformation of the Department of Social Security into the Department of Work and Pensions, the significant transfer of income maintenance to the Inland Revenue (now HMRC, for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs), and the demolition of the Department of Transport, the Regions and Local Government, whose key social policy responsibilities were placed in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and have now been relocated mainly into Communities and Local Government.[5]

The United Kingdom's current welfare system began to take shape after World War II and has continued to change for the following thirty years. Welfare benefits in the UK include five separate groups of services, which are cash benefits, health care, education, housing, and the personal social services. The most widely used form in the UK is cash benefits. Health care is the second major part of the UK's welfare system. It is organized through the National Health Service (NHS) and financed by taxes. Education is available to all school age children through the ages of five to sixteen.[6]

Major reform to the public sector currently being implemented will fundamentally change the nature of the UK's welfare state.

2.2. Overview of all services of general interest in the UK

2.2.1. Economic services of general interest

GAS

Gas is an essential part of the UK's energy mix and provides 50% of the country's primary energy (excluding transport). In 2009, two thirds of the UK's net annual gas demand was met from gas produced domestically. The Government is encouraging investment in indigenous production to ensure that the UK's substantial remaining oil and gas reserves are exploited to the full. However, after four decades of North Sea extraction, domestic reserves of oil and gas are inevitably declining. In 2004, the UK turned from being a net gas exporter to net gas importer and is likely to become increasingly reliant on gas imports over the coming years.

The UK's competitive gas market operates within a strategic framework set out by the Government. This framework maintains security by:

- maximising economic production from indigenous resources;
- utilising well-functioning commodity and capital markets to deliver a high quality service to consumers and to provide necessary levels of investment across the system;
- ensuring that appropriate resilience measures are in place;
- through regulation to complement and strengthen the operation of the market; and
- promoting strong and diverse markets, both in the EU and internationally.

The Government, working with Ofgem (Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets), has taken steps to facilitate increased investment in domestic gas infrastructure and to improve market signals:

- *Facilitating a substantial increase in import capacity*
  There has been a 500% increase in the UK's gas import capacity in the last decade, the majority of which has been built since the winter of 2005/06. The UK's infrastructure is now capable of importing around 125% of annual gross demand. This allows the UK to import gas from a wider range of sources and to increase gas flow in response to high demand.

- *Facilitating an increase in storage capacity*
  Storage capacity has been increased over the last decade by around 25%. This enables the UK to store more gas, which can be used to meet peak demand or if there are difficulties bringing in imports.

- *Improving information to the market*
  Changes to market rules and improved information flows have made it easier for market participants to plan ahead and to limit the impact of technical difficulties in any particular facility.

Meanwhile, retail gas prices for both household and industrial customers have, in general, have tended to be the lowest in the EU. In recent years, domestic and industrial users have also benefited from having the lowest rates of tax on gas consumption in the EU.

[5] http://www2.rgu.ac.uk/publicpolicy/introduction/uk.htm
[6] http://www.scribd.com/doc/20291991/A-Comparison-of-Welfare-Regimes-Germany-UK-and-Sweden

The Government continues to work with industry to identify and remove any barriers to further investment in gas infrastructure. For example:

- The Planning Act (2008) updates the consents regime for onshore projects (including gas storage). The new Infrastructure Planning Commission, under this Act, opened to receive planning applications on 1 March 2010.

- The Energy Act (2008) establishes a fit-for-purpose consents regime for offshore facilities; the first Gas Storage Licence under the Energy Act was issued, for a major proposed gas storage project, in February 2010.

These reforms should facilitate faster and more effective consents regimes for the additional gas supply infrastructure that we shall need. Meanwhile, in Budget 2009, the Government confirmed that cushion gas, which is required to maintain pressure in most gas storage facilities, is eligible for tax relief.

Currently, 22 commercial gas storage projects are planned, which could quadruple the UK's gas storage capacity by around 2020. The Government will continue to monitor closely the progress of individual projects, in case any further barriers emerge that require Government intervention.

The UK's gas market has been tested by extreme circumstances with harsh winter temperatures. Prolonged cold spells led to unprecedented levels of demand at the same time as a major external supplier in Norway experienced technical difficulties. Nonetheless, supplies continued to meet demand and the system demonstrated its resilience. Local interruption on commercially agreed terms (through interruptible contracts) preserved the flexibility and security of the system, in particular helping to alleviate pressure on local pipelines dealing with record flows of gas.[7]

WATER

In England and Wales water and sewerage services are provided by 10 private regional water and sewerage companies and 16 mostly smaller private "water only" companies. In Scotland water and sewerage services are provided by a single public company, Scottish Water. In Northern Ireland water and sewerage services are also provided by a single public entity, Northern Ireland Water.

Each day the UK water industry collects, treats and then supplies more than 17 billion litres of high quality water to domestic and commercial customers and then collects and treats over 16 billion litres of the resulting wastewaters, returning it safely to the environment[8]

In England and Wales the economic regulator of water companies is the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat). The Environment Agency is responsible for environmental regulation, and the Drinking Water Inspectorate for regulating drinking water quality. The economic water industry regulator in Scotland is the Water Industry Commission for Scotland and the environmental regulator is the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Drinking water standards and wastewater discharge standards in the UK, as in other countries of the European Union, are determined by the EU (see Water supply and sanitation in the European Union).

The water industry depends upon the natural environment in order to provide water and recycle wastewater. In Northern Ireland environmental impact is regulated by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), in Scotland via the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and in England and Wales by the Environment Agency and Natural England.

Supplies are continually monitored to EU and UK standards – by the Drinking Water Inspectorate within the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the Drinking Water Quality Regulator in Scotland and the Drinking Water Inspectorate in England and Wales.

WASTE AND SEWAGE

The Government's first National Infrastructure Plan (NIP)[9], prepared by Infrastructure UK and published in October 2010, began to set out a consistent and coordinated policy towards national infrastructure, including waste infrastructure. Within the context of the regulatory framework and the planning system, waste infrastructure provision is largely left to market mechanisms and local government contracting and procurement. The one major exception to this is the reducing provision of PFI credits. Rather than direct further intervention, Government aims to ensure that there are not unnecessary

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[7] Gas Securuity of Supply: Policy Statement from the Department of Engergy and Climate Change. April, 2010. http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/What%20we%20do/UK%20energy%20supply/Energy%20markets/gas_markets/1_20100512151109_e_@@_gassecuritysupply.pdf

[8] http://www.water.org.uk/home/resources-and-links/waterfacts/waterindustry

[9] National Infrastructure Plan. http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/nationalinfrastructureplan251010.pdf

barriers to the market delivering the necessary infrastructure – either as a result of market failures or wider government policy.[10]

ELECTRICITY

The electricity supply industry has three components:

- Generation is dominated by large power stations. A typical large station has a maximum electrical power output in the range 0.1 to 4 'GigaWatts' (GW). 1GW is enough to power ten million 100W lightbulbs.

- The transmission network or Grid transmits electricity across the UK from power stations, via 25,000 km of 'high-voltage' overhead lines. High-voltage transmission minimises energy loss over distance.

- Regional distribution networks: Over 800,000 km of overhead lines and underground cables deliver lower voltage power (132kV and below) from Grid 'supply points' to consumers. There is potential for 'distributed generation' where small-scale generators feed power directly into the distribution networks.

Much of the Grid was built in the 1950-60s, when it was deemed efficient to build large coal-fired plants, mainly close to mines, and transmit electricity to where it was needed. Consequently, the Grid is heavily reinforced in former coal-mining regions. By contrast, there are no high voltage transmission lines in many areas suitable for renewable electricity generation (like North West Scotland where wind speeds are high, or Mid-Wales). The net flow of electricity is from North to South. There are bottlenecks limiting the total power that can be transmitted. For example, flow from Scotland to England is limited to 2.2GW. The Grid is linked to France and Northern Ireland via high-voltage undersea cables.

In 2006, most of the UK's electricity was generated by gas, coal and nuclear stations. Thirty large (>1GW) power stations meet the majority of electricity demand, which is 40GW at a typical point in time and 60GW at peak. The contribution from coal and nuclear plants will fall as stations close, leaving a 'gap' of 15GW by 2015. This will be filled in the short-term by new gas and wind generation.

In 2006:

- Gas provided 39% of electricity. This figure has grown from 1% in 1990 and is predicted to grow further. Gas is also used to heat approximately 70% of homes;
- Coal-fired stations provided one-third of the UK's electricity, down from two-thirds in 1990. Around one third of existing stations will close by 2015 to comply with European law restricting emissions of sulphur dioxide;
- Nuclear stations provided a fifth of electricity; but, most existing UK nuclear plants are due to close in the next decade; and
- Renewable energy provides a small (4.2%) but growing proportion of electricity. There is also growing interest in Combined Heat and Power (CHP), which involves, for example, making use of the heat which arises as a by product of electricity generation.

The UK currently has around 82,272 MW of electricity generation capacity. In 2008 total electricity demand was 399,619 GWh (gigawatt hours). Total supply was 400,671 GWh. Electricity demand is mainly from final consumers (85%) with the remaining 14.5% split between 8% to energy industries and 7% to losses. In 2008 industry consumption accounted for 33%, household consumption for 35% with the remainder being made up of transport, storage, communications and services (32%). Of the electricity produced 91.4% comes from major power producers and 8.6% is from other generators (companies who generate electricity but that is not their main business (e.g. oil refineries and chemicals industry). The composition of the UK's generating capacity is currently dominated by coal and gas. A considerable number of new gas fired power stations were built during the second half of the 1990s when the economics of new gas power stations were partiuarly compelling. Since that time gas prices have been on an upward trend. Since 2000 relatively few new gas power stations have been commissioned. Most of the new installed generating plants have been renewables, largely wind based and mainly in Scotland, Wales and Northern England.[11]

The British (GB) electricity industry was privatised in 1990. There are numerous stakeholders: generators, suppliers, network companies, and a System Operator, all overseen by the regulator Ofgem.

[10] Government Review of Waste Policy in England, 2011. http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf
[11] http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/7796/Electricity-Generation.pdf

UK electricity industry main stakeholders:

- Ofgem regulates the gas and electricity markets in the UK;
- Generators own and operate large power stations;
- Suppliers purchase electricity from generators and sell to business/domestic customers. Under British Electricity Trading and Transmission Arrangements (BETTA) suppliers may purchase from anywhere in Britain;
- Network Companies maintain, operate, and reinforce the electricity networks. They are: Transmission Network Owners (TNOs). National Grid is the TNO in England & Wales; Scottish Power (SP) and Scottish and Southern (SS) are TNOs in Scotland;
- Distribution Network Operators (DNOs). The fourteen regions in the UK are managed by seven companies (EDF Energy; Central Networks; CE Electric; Western Power Distribution; United Utilities; SP; and SS).
- National Grid (NG) acts as System Operator, responsible for balancing electricity supply with demand (POSTnote 203). Over times scales of up to a few hours, NG use fast-response services like the hydro-electric facility at Dinorwig to do this. For long term fluctuations (such as increased demand during cold winters) 'back up' generation is needed.[12]

Also see the Department of Energy and Climate Change annual statistics:
http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/stats/publications/dukes/2307-dukes-2011-chapter-5-electricity.pdf (map of transmission across the UK)

ROAD TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In England, the Highways Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT) responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport. The network is made up of England's motorways and all-purpose trunk roads (the major A roads). Valued at over £88 billion, the network carries a third of all road traffic in England and two thirds of all heavy goods vehicle traffic
(See: http://www.highways.gov.uk/aboutus/6151.htm)

AIR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Aviation is a major UK industry, carrying over 235 million passengers a year and over 2.3 million tonnes of freight. Demand for air travel is projected to grow in the medium to long-term. DfT has put in place a long-term framework that balances the delivery of social and economic benefits from aviation, with the need to reduce and mitigate the environmental impacts of air transport and airport development.

Aviation is an industry that operates essentially without subsidy, and all key players are either in the private sector or operate commercially. The Department's role is therefore to develop policies and long-term strategies; to facilitate their implementation; and to lead international negotiations in the aviation sector.

To do this the DfT works with a number of different individuals and organisations including airlines, airports, regulators, other government departments, international governments, trade associations, embassies and consumer representatives.

The industry is regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), an independent body with responsibility for economic, safety and consumer protection regulation, and airspace policy. In addition, the CAA advises the Government on aviation issues, represents consumer interests, conducts economic and scientific research and produces statistical data.

RAILWAY TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Government's role in the running of the railways is to provide strategic direction and to procure rail services and projects that only it can specify. Transport Scotland and the Welsh Assembly Government have devolved rail responsibilities. The Department for Transport is responsible for specifying and letting contracts to train operating companies to run franchised passenger services in England and inter-city services to and from Scotland and Wales. The DfT also works with local and regional bodies, the rail industry and passenger transport executives.

MARITIME TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (PORTS)

UK ports handled 501 million tonnes (Mt) of freight traffic in 2009, 61 million tonnes (11 %) less than in 2008, and 65 million tonnes (11 %) less than in 1999.

Compared with 2008, inward traffic fell by 43 Mt (12 %) to 304 Mt and outward traffic fell by 19 Mt (9 %) to 197 Mt. Inward traffic was 1 % lower than ten years ago and outward traffic 24 % lower.

[12] http://www.iop.org/education/higher_education/fellowship/file_43354.pdf

Liquid bulk traffic accounted for 46 per cent of the total, dry bulks 21 %, container and roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) traffic 29 %and other cargo 4 %. Liquid bulk traffic was 5 % lower than in 2008, and 20 % down on 1999. Dry bulk traffic was 21 p% down on 2008, and 7 % down on 1999. Container and ro-ro traffic was 9 % down on 2008, and 8% up on 1999. The leading ports by tonnage in 2009 were:

Grimsby & Immingham	54.7 Mt
London	45.4 Mt
Milford Haven	39.3 Mt
Tees and Hartlepool	39.2 Mt
Southampton	37.2 Mt

Dover, the leading ro-ro port, handled 2.3 million road goods vehicles and unaccompanied trailer units (marginally down on 2008). Felixstowe, the leading container port, handled 1.86 million containers (3.0 million TEU), a 4 % decrease on 2008.

POSTAL SERVICES

Postcomm was set up in 2000. It is the independent regulator for postal services in the UK and its primary aim is to safeguard the provision of the Universal Postal Service in the UK. On 1 October 2011, Ofcom officially took over regulation of the UK's postal services from Postcomm and is now responsible for safeguarding the UK's Universal Service Obligation on postal services[13]

The Universal Service is provided by Royal Mail. It enables people in the UK to send letters and parcels to any part of the UK for the same affordable prices. It also includes a daily postal collection from all post boxes and post offices, and daily delivery to every address in the UK, every working day.

Royal Mail is currently its sole provider in the UK, and the following comprise the key parts of the Universal Service that Royal Mail currently provides:

- Royal Mail's First and Second Class services: priority and non-priority letters and packets weighing up to 2kg
- Royal Mail's standard parcel service: non-priority delivery of parcels weighing up to 20kg
- Royal Mail's Special Delivery: a registered and insured next-day delivery service
- Royal Mail's international outbound service, its international public tariff, and international signed-for products - the UK is also subject to the Universal Postal Union's requirement to deliver mail coming from abroad
- Mailsort 1400, First and Second Class: pre-sorted mail of all formats up to 2kg
- Cleanmail, First and Second Class: the 'entry level' bulk mail product most often used by smaller businesses[14]

The number of post offices has stabilised after the end of the Network Change Programme last year. There are now 11,905 post offices, down 47 from the previous year. The network includes 772 outreach points. In 2010-11 16 billion letters were delivered to 28.8 million addresses. Royal Mail was responsible for delivering 99% of these.

The Coalition Government has published a Postal Services Bill which allows for the privatisation of Royal Mail and the retention of Post Office Ltd in public ownership, with the possibility of Post Office Ltd being mutualised.

Central to the role that post plays in society is the universal service obligation. This requires Royal Mail to deliver and collect letters six days a week, and that prices for services that are part of the universal service must be affordable and uniform throughout the UK.

Nonetheless, the sector faces major challenges. The volume of mail in the UK has fallen by over a quarter since 2006. The revenue loss due to this volume decline has been compounded by customers moving away from higher value traditional products (such as First and Second Class mail) and towards lower value services, such as bulk mail (post sent in high volume typically by business customers). Together these factors have meant that Royal Mail's revenues have fallen by more than 35% over the same period.

(see also: PostComm's 10th annual report on the network of post offices in the UK, 2009-10. http://www.psc.gov.uk/documents/1072.pdf)

[13] http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/post/
[14] http://www.psc.gov.uk/universal/what_is_the_universal_service

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND ICT

The Office of Communications (Ofcom) is the independent regulator and competition authority for the United Kingdom communications sector which encompasses broadcasting, telecommunications and wireless communications. Ofcom was formed in 2003 from the merger of five previous regulators. Its operating expenditure in 2009-10 was £122 million, funded through broadcast licence fees and charges, and grant-in-aid from two government departments: the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (£75.7 million in 2009-10); and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (£0.6 million).

The Digital Economy Act 2010, which came into force in June of this year, gives Ofcom a new duty to report to the Secretary of State every three years on the UK's communications infrastructure.

Figure 1: Digital communications service availability, 2008 and 2009

Platform	UK 2009	UK 2008	UK change		England	Scotland	Wales	N Ireland
Fixed line	100%	100%	0%		100%	100%	100%	100%
2G mobile[1]	97%	n/a	n/a		99%	87%	89%	89%
3G mobile[2]	87%	n/a	n/a		91%	66%	69%	40%
DSL[3]	99.6%	99.6%	0.0%		-	-	-	n/a
Cable broadband[4]	48%	49%	-1%		51%	37%	23%	30%
LLU[5]	85%	84%	1%		87%	71%	77%	69%
Digital satellite TV	98%	98%	0%		-	-	-	-
Digital terrestrial TV[6]	73%	73%	0%		82%	82%	98%	66%

(*source: Ofcom, 2011*)

TELEPHONE

The telephone service in the United Kingdom was originally provided by private companies and local city councils, but by 1913 all except the telephone service of Kingston upon Hull, Yorkshire and Guernsey had been bought out by the Post Office. Post Office Telephones was reorganized in 1981 with the British Telecommunications Act, which created British Telecom as a public corporation. The industry was privatised in 1984 with the Telecommunications Act.

MOBILE

Consumers sent a record number of texts (over 100 billion) in 2009 equivalent to 1700 for every person in the UK (compared to 1200 in 2008). Data volumes over mobile networks increased by 240 per cent in 2009. Over a quarter of people in the UK (26.5 %) said they have a smartphone, more than double the number two years ago. Nearly a quarter of adults (23 %) accessed content or sent emails on their mobile phones. Among 15-24s this rises to 45 %. UK consumers who have internet-enabled phones are also spending almost as much time surfing the net on their mobiles (1.3 hours per month) as they do texting (1.5 hours per month). Facebook accounted for almost half (45 %) of total time spent online on mobiles in December 2009.

TELEVISION

Consumer survey results for the first quarter of 2011 show that take-up of digital television in UK households stood at 93.1%, up by 1 percentage point year on year. Consumers are continuing to convert additional sets in the home. 75.7% of all secondary TV sets had been converted to digital by the end of March 2011, up by 5.2 percentage points in a year. Taking these figures together, 83.3% of all TV sets had converted to digital television by the end of Q1 2011[15].

The availability of most key communication services remained largely unchanged during 2009, reflecting near-universal levels of coverage of most services. The largest rise in availability came from the digital terrestrial television signal (DTT) which rose to 81% as the country's switchover to digital gathered pace. Nearly a quarter (24%) of homes no longer receive

[15] OfCom, the communications market Digital Progress report, 2011. http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/tv-research/tv-data/dig-tv-updates/Q1_2011_DTV_Update.pdf)

an analogue signal and over the next 12 months a further 4.5 million homes will complete the switch, bringing the programme to 40% completion.[16]

2.2.2. Social services of general interest

EDUCATION

The education system in the UK is divided into four main parts, primary education, secondary education, further education and higher education. Children in the UK have to legally attend primary and secondary education which runs from about 5 years old until the student is 16 years old.

The education system in the UK is also split into "key stages" which breaks down as follows:
Key Stage 1 - 5 to 7 years old
Key Stage 2 - 7 to 11 years old
Key Stage 3 - 11 to 14 years old
Key Stage 4 - 14 to 16 years old

Generally key stages 1 and 2 will be undertaken at primary school and at 11 years old a student will move onto secondary school and finish key stages 3 and 4.

Students are assessed at the end of each stage. The most important assessment occurs at age 16 when students pursue their GCSE's or General Certificate of Secondary Education. Once students complete their GCSE's they have the choice to go onto further education and then potential higher education, or finish school and go into the working world.

Primary Education
Primary education begins in the UK at age 5 and continues until age 11, comprising key stages one and two under the UK educational system.

Secondary Education
From age 11 to 16, students will enter secondary school for key stages three and four and to start their move towards taking the GCSE's. Primary and secondary education is mandatory in the UK; after age 16, education is optional.

Further Education
Once a student finishes secondary education they have the option to extend into further education to take their A-Levels, GNVQ's, BTEC's or other such qualifications. UK students planning to go to college or university must complete further education.

Higher Education
The UK has a vast variety of higher education opportunities to offer students with over 100 universities offering various degree programs for students from the UK and around the world. In the UK about one-third of all students go on to some form of higher education and this number is well over 50% for students from Scotland.

Each level of education in the UK has varying requirements which must be satisfied in order to gain entry at that level.

A programme of educational reform has begun in the UK with the promotion of autonomous schools, directly answerable to parents. Over 1,500 academies have been established. Free Schools and University Technical Collages are also proposed. Academies and Free Schools have autonomy over resources, staffing and curriculum. New academy chains and federations are also proposed by the government. Such entities can purchase services from external organisations, however the commercial ownership of schools will not be permitted[17].

Please note that Scotland has a separate education system and does not conform to the above structure.[18]

(See also http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/ukco.htm)

LABOUR MARKET

The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for welfare and pension policy and is a key player in tackling child poverty. It is the biggest public service delivery department in the UK and serves over 20 million customers.

[16] http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/cmr/753567/CMR_2010_FINAL.pdf)
[17] http://files.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/HMG_OpenPublicServices_web.pdf
[18] http://uk.internationalstudent.com/study_uk/education_system/

Jobcentre Plus is part of the Department for Work and Pensions. It provides services that support people of working age from welfare into work, and helps employers to fill their vacancies.

Jobcentre Plus supports people of working age from welfare into work and helps employers to fill their vacancies. It is part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and plays a major role in supporting the Department's aim to promote opportunity and independence for all through modern, customer-focused services.[19]

For May to July 2011:
The employment rate was 70.5 per cent and there were 29.17 million employed people. The unemployment rate was 7.9 per cent and there were 2.51 million unemployed people. The inactivity rate was 23.3 per cent. There were 9.38 million inactive people aged from 16 to 64. Total pay (including bonuses) rose by 2.8 per cent on a year earlier. Regular pay (excluding bonuses) rose by 2.1 per cent on a year earlier.[20]

In its Open Public Services White Paper update, the UK Government committed to the delivery of at least 250,000 Apprenticeships, 40,000 incentive payments for small firms to take on young apprentices and a £1 billion Youth Contract providing further opportunities for the young unemployed.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The UK Civil Service helps the Government of the day to develop and deliver its policies as effectively as possible. The Civil Service incorporates departments, agencies, and non-departmental government bodies (NDPBs) and operate across a wide range of areas such as education, health and policing.

The Civil service employs 453,000 civil servants on a full-time basis and 489,000 on a full time equivalent basis, almost three-quarters of whom work outside London and the south-east. Civil servants are politically impartial. The workforce includes people who deliver crucial services direct to the public across the UK, such as Jobcentre Plus staff and coastguards. We also have staff working on policy development and implementation, including analysts, project managers, lawyers and economists.

The public administration select committee (PASC) examines the quality and standards of administration within the Civil Service in the UK.

The UK government have set out plans to opening centrally commissioned services in place of agencies which will be paid in accordance with results[21].

DEFENCE

The Ministry of Defence has dual roles as a Department of State and responsibility for the UK's armed forces. More specifically, key responsibilities comprise:

- Defence policy, comprising the definition of the military capability and other objectives required of Defence to meet the Government's overall policy aims within planned resources; and
- Military capability needed to deliver Defence policy and to support wider Government policy objectives.

Defence includes the whole set of organisations, people and activities, both military and civilian, which Parliament funds to ensure military capability is delivered effectively and efficiently, both in current operations and in preparation for potential future ones. This includes organisations, people and activities involved in:

- contributing to the formulation of Government policy and setting Defence policy and strategy;
- providing military capability and supporting infrastructure and services;
- using military capability to meet agreed military tasks; and
- managing Defence activities, including commanding and administering the Armed Forces and managing, controlling and accounting for the resources voted by Parliament.

The Ministry of Defence is the organisation, funded by Parliament, responsible for delivering Defence. It is a department within Government, and is headed by a Cabinet Minister, the Secretary of State for Defence, who is accountable to the Prime Minister and Parliament for all its activities. It also has an Accounting Officer, the Permanent Secretary, who is separately accountable to Parliament for managing the Department, and for the proper use of the funds voted by Parliament.

[19] http://www.dwp.gov.uk/about-dwp/
[20] http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/september-2011/statistical-bulletin.html
[21] http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/

Defence includes the Armed Forces, which are the professional organisations responsible for delivering military capability on the ground. The Chief of the Defence Staff is the professional head of the Armed Forces as a whole, and is responsible for the delivery of military capability, including the direction of military operations. The Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force each has a Service Chief of Staff as its professional head, who is responsible, among other things, for ensuring the fighting effectiveness, efficiency and morale of the Service[22].

CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are the Department responsible for the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, and help drive the Digital Economy. DCMS's purpose is:

- To ensure the communications, creative, media, cultural, tourism, sport and leisure economies have the framework to grow and have real impact on people's lives;
- To create the conditions for growth by removing barriers, providing strategic direction and supporting innovation and creativity; and
- To publicly fund cultural heritage, free access to world-class cultural institutions, art, the BBC and sports.

DCMS is accountable to Parliament and the public and is responsible for Government policy on:

- the arts;
- broadcasting
- creative industries including: advertising, the arts market, design, fashion, film, the music industry and publishing;.
- historic environment ;
- internet and international ICT policy;
- licensing and gambling;
- libraries;
- museums & galleries;
- the National Lottery;
- press freedom and regulation;
- sport ;
- telecommunications and broadband; and
- tourism.

Responsibilities also include listing of historic buildings, scheduling of ancient monuments, export licensing of cultural goods and management of the Government Art Collection. The Royal Parks Agency is an agency of DCMS.

DCMS work jointly with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on design issues, including sponsorship of the Design Council, and on relations with the computer games and publishing industries.

CARE SERVICES - HEALTHCARE

The National Health Service (NHS) was set up in 1948 to provide free healthcare. For its founders, the most important feature was that it was free at the point of need. This means that every time you go to the doctor or receive treatment at hospital, it is provided free of charge. The NHS is funded through general taxation and is run by the Department of Health. There are also private healthcare providers in the UK. People pay for private healthcare either through insurance or when they use their services.

Over the last few years the structure of the NHS has undergone considerable change. The private sector now has a role in supplying and funding some buildings and services within the NHS. The power to make important decisions about local healthcare is also being devolved to local communities in some areas.

Key decisions about local healthcare are taken by local branches of the NHS but overall strategy is left to the Department of Health and other regional bodies. The list below sets out the structure of the NHS.

Secretary of state for health: This is the government minister responsible for the NHS in England, and he or she is answerable to Parliament for the work of the NHS.

Department of Health: The Department of Health is responsible for the overall planning, regulation and inspection of the health service. It develops policies and decides the general direction of healthcare.

[22] http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/08C7EF38-F51E-4F6D-BBFB-C7ED8315E8B6/0/defenceframework_dec10.pdf

Strategic health authorities: There are 10 strategic health authorities in England. They look after the healthcare of their region. They are the link between the Department of Health and the NHS. They make sure that national health priorities (such as cancer programmes) are integrated into local health plans. The NHS website provides a list of strategic health authorities in England.

Health services in the UK are divided into primary and secondary and are provided by local NHS organisations called trusts and these are directly accountable to the strategic health authorities. Primary care covers everyday health services such as GPs surgeries, dentists and opticians and these are delivered by primary care trusts. Secondary care refers to specialised services such as hospitals, ambulances and mental health provision and these are delivered by a range of other NHS trusts.

The private healthcare sector is much smaller than the NHS and does not have the same structures of accountability. It mirrors the NHS by providing GPs (many doctors in the NHS also have private practices), nursing homes, ambulances, hospitals and medical specialists, but it does not have to follow national treatment guidelines and health plans and it does not have responsibility for the health of the wider local community.

Membership of private health insurance schemes, such as BUPA, accounts for a large proportion of private health treatment. Many employers offer membership of such schemes or people pay for it themselves.

Secondary care, which refers to more specialised health treatment such as hospitals, mental health provision and care for the elderly, is well served by the private sector.

There are over 300 private hospitals in the UK. Private hospitals are provided by private hospital groups and the NHS also provides a number of private patient units within its hospitals. Private hospitals are licensed by the local healthcare authority, which conducts two inspections a year. They are not regulated by the national inspection bodies that monitor NHS organisations.

The Health and Social Care Act is the precursor for major NHS reform. The act will lead to the setting up of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to deliver heathcare services in place of Primary Care Trusts. CCGs will comprise GP's and nurses and will offer patients treatment from alternative providers.

CARE SERVICES - CHILDCARE

The Department for Education was formed on 12 May 2010 and is responsible for education and children's services. Sure Start Children's Centres (in England) are undergoing reform[23].

The Childcare Act July 2006 provided a regulatory framework for childcare in England. The Act formalised the strategic role of local authorities, requiring them to:

- work with their NHS and Jobcentre Plus partners to improve the outcomes of all children up to five years of age and reduce inequalities;
- secure sufficient childcare for working parents;
- provide a parental information service; and
- provide information, advice and training for childcare providers.

The Act sets out registration and inspection arrangements. The Early Years Register (EYR) and the General Childcare Register (GCR) provide a regulatory framework for children. Both registers are regulated by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted).

EYR is applicable to childcare from birth to 5 and the GCR for childcare providers over 5. The GCR is part compulsory (5-7) and part voluntary (8+).

SOCIAL CARE

The Department of Health (DoH) sets out its vision to "define policy and guidance for delivering a social care system that provides care equally for all, while enabling people to retain their independence, control and dignity"[24].

The DoH is responsible for looking after and allocating public money to the NHS and adult social care services in England. Andrew Lansley, Secretary of State for Health, set out a new vision for health and social care focused around five key priorities:

[23] http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Preschooldevelopmentandlearning/NurseriesPlaygroupsReceptionClasses/DG_173054
[24] http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/category/policy-areas/social-care/

- A patient-led NHS
- Delivering better health outcomes
- A more autonomous and accountable system
- Improved public health
- Reforming long-term and social care

The DoH is responsible for standards of healthcare and sets the strategic framework for adult social care and influences local authority social care expenditure. The DoH takes responsibility for working with the wider public sector, the third and private sectors on issues such as health protection, lifestyle choices and integrating Government policy at regional level through regional teams.

The DoH also works in conjunction with the European Union, World Health Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The Dilnot report, published in 2011 considered social care reform. The report argued for the capping of lifetime costs for social care and council-funded home help and care places for the elderly and disabilities. A social reform bill is anticipated in 2013[25].

SOCIAL HOUSING

(England only) Social housing is housing that is let at low rents and on a secure basis to people in housing need. It is generally provided by councils and not-for-profit organisations such as housing associations.

The Government department currently responsible for overseeing the social housing sector is Communities and Local Government (CLG). CLG has direct oversight of local authority housing. Housing associations are funded by the Government through the Homes and Communities Agency, which is responsible for the construction of new social homes.

2.3. Analysis of the national context.

The UK Government published the Open Public Services White Paper in July 2011. The White Paper sets out the Government's vision for public services reform, based on 5 principles:

- Choice and control – wherever possible increase choice;
- Decentralisation – power should be decentralised to the lowest appropriate level;
- Diversity – public services should be open to a range of providers;
- Fairness – ensure fair access to public services; and
- Accountability – accountable to users and taxpayers[26].

These five principles are linked. Their combined effect is that for the majority of public services, power will be placed in the hands of individuals and local communities where appropriate. The Government states that this displacement of power will allow individuals to choose the service they want and find the best provider to meet their needs.

The shift from centralised to localised decision-making is embodied in the Department of Communities and Local Government's Business plan which sets out the following structural reform priorities:

Decentralise power as far as possible
Free local government from central and regional control; decentralise power; provide greater freedom and flexibilities to local government so that they can genuinely lead their communities; provide local communities with a powers and flexibilities with which to accelerate economic growth; and simplifying and deregulating local government finance;

Reinvigorate accountability, democracy and participation
Trust people to take control of the decisions that affect them by devolving power closer to neighbourhoods, increasing citizen participation, promoting community ownership, lifting inspection burdens on councils and unnecessary regional administration;

Increase transparency by letting people see how their money is being spent
Let local people know who is spending their money and what it is being spent on by publishing financial and performance data online;

[25] http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm
[26] http://www.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/

Meet people's housing aspirations
Meet people's housing aspirations and promoting social mobility, including by providing local authorities with strong and transparent incentives to facilitate housing growth, as well as making the provision of social housing more flexible; and

Put communities in charge of planning
Give local people and communities far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which they live by radically reforming the planning system and ensuring that local communities and certificate regimes support our ambition to drive sustainable economic growth and development, including our ambitions for a low carbon and eco-friendly economy[27].

The Localism Bill, passed in November 2011, will give greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give greater control to local communities. The principle measures set out in the bill are to provide:

- new freedoms and flexibilities for local government;
- new rights and powers for communities and individuals;
- reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective; and
- reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally[28].

The UK Government has also set out a new strategy for meeting the country's infrastructure needs in it's National Infrastructure Plan. The vision for improving infrastructure performance includes detailed committments to: improving transport networks; achieving a secure, diverse and reliable energy supply while reducing carbon; increasing superfast broadband coverage; maintaingin security and performance of water and sewage systems whille reducing environmental impacts; mitigating impacts of flooding and coastal erosion; and reducing waste[29].

Financing infrastructure projects will be delivered by public and private funding, with approximately two thirds of the required investment expected to be privately funded. The Government sets out a number of steps to address funding limitations including facilitating long-term lending in the context of current instability in the financial markets and reforming the Private Finance Initiative.

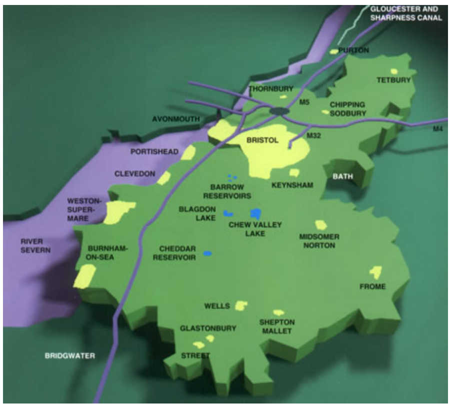
3. Regional analysis of SGI

3.1 Economic SGIs

South Gloucestershire is a unitary district in the county of Gloucestershire in the South West of England. In the 2001 census the population was 245,000 (2007 estimate of 260,000). Much of the population is in the northern and eastern suburbs of Bristol, although there are also large population centres in the Yate-Sodbury, Winterbourne-Frampton Cotterell and Thornbury areas. All the villages are within the commuting belt for Bristol, Bath, Gloucester and Chletenham.

WATER

BRISTOL WATER[30] plc supplies water to over 1.1 million people and businesses in an area of almost 2,400 square kilometres centred on Bristol. The company is a regulated business and subject to economic regulation by the Water Services Regulation Authority ("Ofwat") through a price cap mechanism



(Map: Bristol Water service area)

[27] Department for Communities and Local Government, Business Plan 2011-15 http://www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/CLG-Business-Plan1.pdf (May 2011)
[28] http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation
[29] National Infrastructure Plan 2011 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/national_infrastructure_plan2011.htm
[30] http://www.bristolwater.co.uk/pdf/aboutUs/companyReports/bwAnnualReport11.pdf

Wessex Water[31] is the regional water and sewage treatment business serving an area of the south west of England, covering 10,000 square kilometres including Dorset, Somerset, Bristol, most of Wiltshire and parts of Gloucestershire (including S. Glos) and Hampshire.

WASTE AND SEWAGE

Since 2000, South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) and SITA UK have been working in partnership to deliver a high quality, cost effective and sustainable integrated waste management service, proving the following services:

- Collection of household waste (green recycling boxes, green and black bins, food waste, plastic bottles);
- Provision and operation of Household Waste Recycling Centres (known as SORT IT!* Centres);
- Processing materials separated for recycling/composting;
- Transport of bulk waste;
- Residual waste treatment and landfill disposal; and
- Publicity, promotions and awareness raising.[32]

The service is provided through a long term Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Contract which started on 31st July 2000 and ends on 30th June 2025. A summary of the contract, along with other waste PFI contracts is given on the Defra website (http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/localauth/funding/pfi/documents/project-gloucs-sth.pdf)

There are four Sort It!* centres in South Gloucestershire. These are also called civic amenity sites or household waste recycling centres. You can deposit waste for recycling, composting or landfill here.

The Sort It!* Centres at Yate, Mangotsfield, Little Stoke and Thornbury are provided for the sole use of residents of South Gloucestershire to deposit their household waste. Commercial and industrial waste must be disposed of through the waste transfer stations next to the Sort It!* centres at Yate and Mangotsfield or taken to other licensed commercial

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[31] http://www.wessexwater.co.uk/about/threecol.aspx?id=72

[32] http://www.southglos.gov.uk/NR/exeres/a90a4bd5-80b5-4f12-aa59-3c95453710b1

disposal sites. Householders that do not live in South Gloucestershire are not allowed to use these sites and must use the facilities provided by their local council.[33]

South Gloucestershire landfilled 138,472 tonnes of waste (56%). This was the 8th highest amount of tonnes to be landfilled in the South West. An average of 4,363kWh was used per customer in South Gloucestershire during 2008 which was also the highest reported in Avon. During 2008/09, South Gloucestershire had a recycling rate of 39.84%. This was the 2nd highest figure achieved in Avon; South Gloucestershire produced the 2nd highest amount of both domestic and industry and commercial emissions, and the highest amount of road transport emissions in the South West Region.[34]

ELECTRICITY

An average of 4,363kWh was used per customer in South Gloucestershire during 2008, lower than the regional average of 4,481kWh and higher than the national average of 4,198 kWh. There were an average of just over 106,000 domestic electricity meter points in South Gloucestershire in 2008, 4.5% of the regional total of 2.3 million.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects[35]
There are currently 3 proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in or partly in South Gloucestershire. These applications would be submitted to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (or its successor). Although South Gloucestershire will be consulted on these proposals, they will not decide on whether consent should be given. The proposed projects that are currently registered with the Infrastructure Planning Commission are:

<u>Hinkley to Seabank Grid Connection</u>
This project provides a new grid connection to the proposed new build power station at Hinkley in Somerset. While the main works are in other local authority areas, National Grid have advised that this scheme would include a replacement sub station on the site of the existing substation at Aust.

<u>Oldbury New Nuclear Power Station</u>
Horizon Nuclear Power propose to build a new nuclear power station on land adjacent to the existing nuclear power station near Oldbury. Their proposals are at an early stage of development.

<u>Avon Power Station</u>[36]
Scottish Power propose to build a 950MW Gas Fired Power Station on the former Terra Nitrogen/Growhow site at Severnside.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND ICT

South Gloucestershire Council is responsible for permitting sustainable telecommunications development whilst minimising impact on interests of acknowledged importance including: landscape and nature conservation, historic environments, archaeological sites, and residential and visual amenity. The Council must assume the role of landowner of potential sites and Local Planning Authority.

Some telecommunications equipment require planning permission which is guided by national planning policy. The Government has also licensed operators to undertake smaller scale telecommunications development without planning application requirements.

South Gloucestershire Council is also involved in the delivery of the Government's aim for Superfast Broadband. Further detail of this scheme and broadband delivery in the region is set out in the detailed analysis below.

3.2 Detailed Analysis of selected economic SGIs in South Gloucestershire

3.2.1. Sewage systems & sewage treatment facilities

Current South Gloucestershire Sewage provision

Sewage services in England and Wales are provided by 10 private regional water and sewerage companies. Water is largely provided by smaller, private companies. Sewage and sewage treatment in South Gloucestershire is undertaken by Wessex Water. Bristol Water supplies potable water for the majority of the area with the exception of an area to the South,

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[33] http://www.southglos.gov.uk/Environment/RubbishWasteandRecycling/
[34] http://www.swenvo.org.uk/south-west-local-profiles/west-of-england-profiles/south-gloucestershire/
[35] http://www.southglos.gov.uk/NR/exeres/2b302f4d-ac35-410b-a684-dc45a9ebc414
[36] http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/Plans-gas-fired-power-station/story-12832387-detail/story.html

supplied by Wessex Water and to the north, supplied by Severn Trent. The map attached at Appendix 1 sets out service provision divisions.[37]

Wessex Water is owned by the YTL Corporation, a Malaysian utilities group. Wessex Water Limited Group is a family of interconnected infrastructure companies, including the waste water company. Wessex Water Enterprises, for example, operate within the renewable energy field running renewable energy plants (food digestion plants which have synergies in the processes involved with the waste water processes) which then sell discounted electricity to Wessex Water.

Around 75% of the water supplied by Wessex Water is sourced from underground boreholes and the remaining 25% from reservoirs. 300,000 tests on drinking water are undertaken annually in compliance with EU and UK regulations. Wessex Waters water supply network comprises:

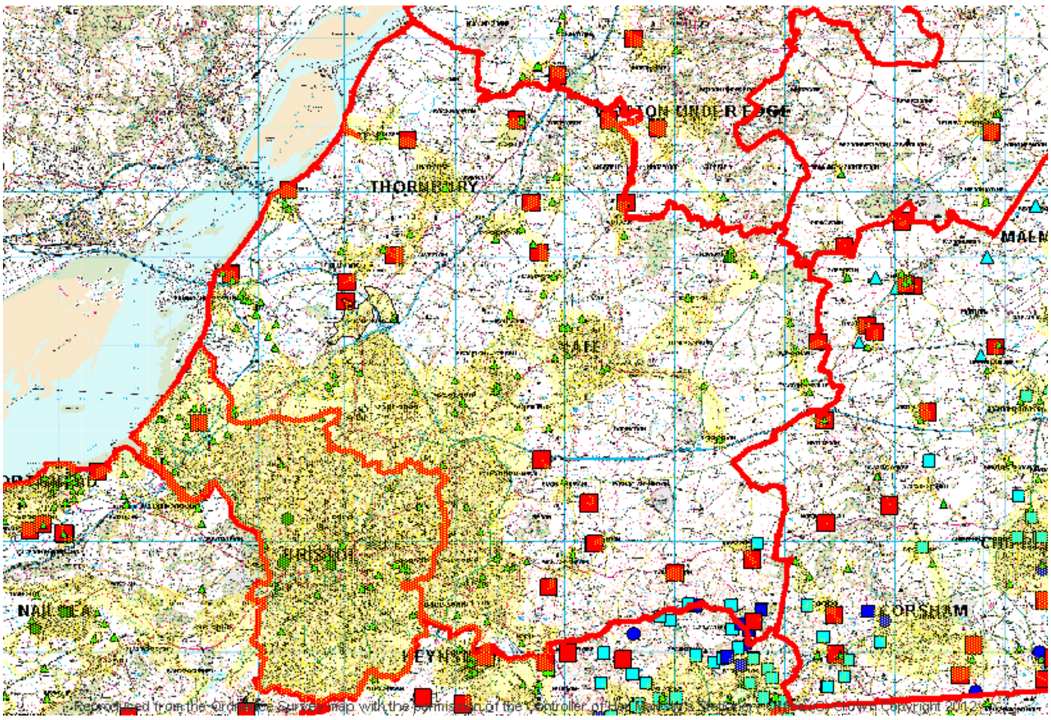
- 97 Water sources
- 110 water treatment works
- 209 booster pumping stations
- 340 service reservoirs and water towers
- 11,509 km of water mains

Wessex Water are responsible for removing and treating 475 million litres of sewage from 2.7 million customers per day. Wessex Water have a sewerage system which comprises:

- 17,443 km of sewers
- 405 sewage treatment works
- 1,003 combined sewer overflows
- 1,515 pumping stations[38]

South Gloucestershire is a mix of urban and rural and the spatial nature of the area is such that the sewerage network is not uniform in relation to the scale of infrastructure installation. The clearest demonstration of this is the gap between the Avonmouth sewerage works, which serves 830,000 people, and the smallest site which serves 7 people:

Figure 2: South Gloucestershire sewerage network



[37] Wessex Water - http://www.wessexwater.co.uk/
[38] Wessex Water Sustainability Indicators 2011 *ww.**wessexwater**.co.uk/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=7596*

Figure 3: South Gloucestershire Treatment Works:

SiteName	NewCouncilAreas	Treatment 17x	BodSizeGrp	Total PE
THORNBURY	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	5	13,517
ALVESTON	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	4	2,092
REDWICK	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SAE	4	3,769
PUCKLECHURCH	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	TA1	4	2,717
CHARFIELD	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SAE	4	4,017
ALMONDSBURY	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	4	2,707
GREAT BADMINTON	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	3	578
AUST	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	3	860
CROMHALL	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SAE	3	1,949
EASTWOOD PARK	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	TB1	3	512
WICK	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	3	1,671
MARSHFIELD	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	TB2	3	1,736
TOCKINGTON	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	3	1,606
COLD ASHTON	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	1	83
PARKFIELD	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	1	132
ASHWICKE - OAKFORD LANE SEPTIC TANK	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	PRI	1	7
DOYNTON	SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE	SBI	1	243
			Sub-total PE served	**38,196**
AVONMOUTH	BRISTOL	SAE	6	830,472
			Address Point - Avonmouth	293,901
			Address Point - South Gloucsestershire	99,937
			Avonmouth catchment within South Gloucestershire	34%
			Sub-total PE served	**282,391**
			Total PE served	**320,587**

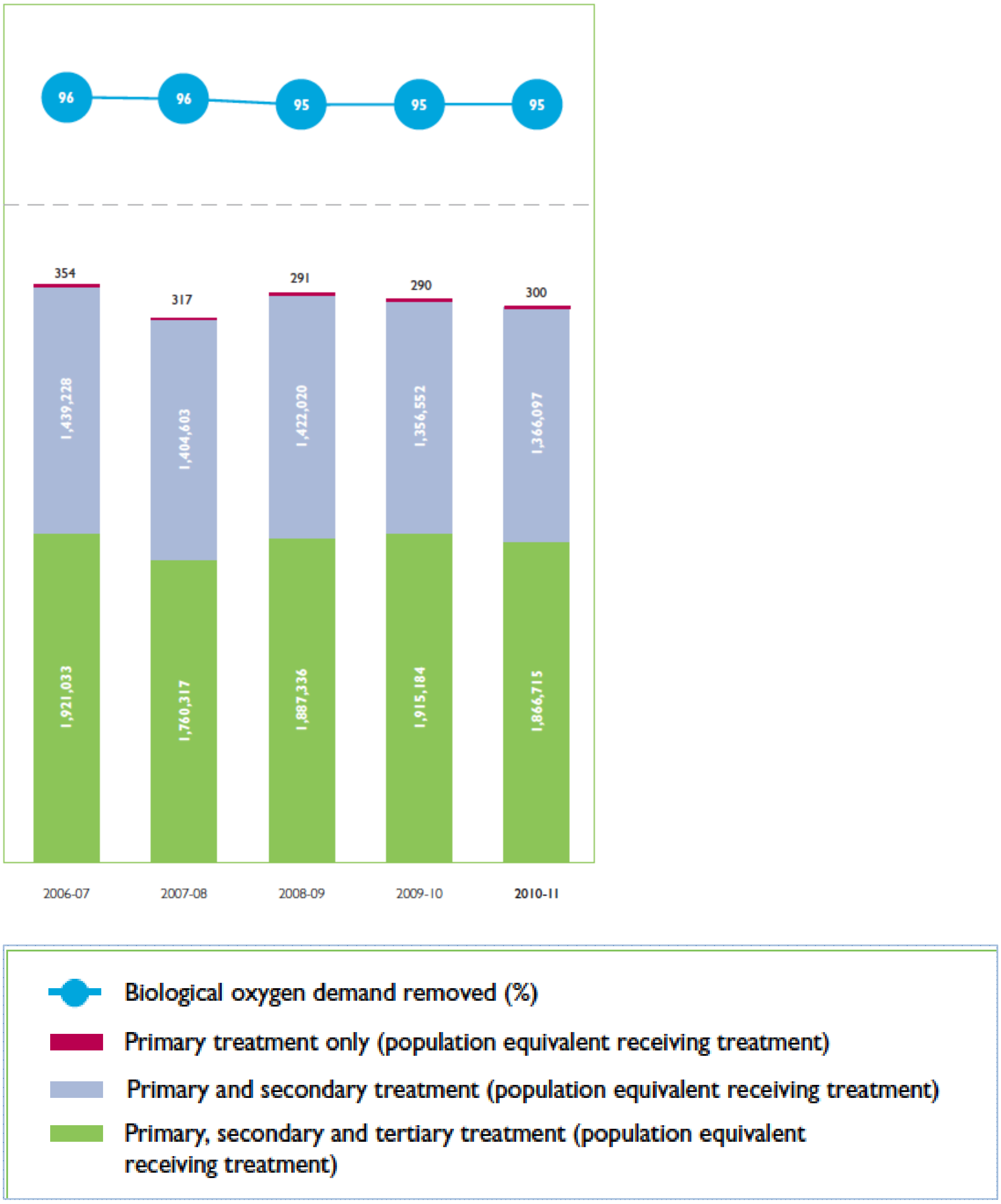
Wessex Water are responsible for maintaining public sewers in South Gloucestershire. Residents were previously responsible for the maintenance of private drains including pipework within the boundary of their property in the UK. However, on 1 October 2011, Wessex Water became responsible for the ownership and maintenance of private sewers and lateral drains connected to the public sewer network which were previously in resident ownership following statutory changes. Responsibility for pipes connected to private treatment tanks, soakaways and private treatment works or other systems which do not connect to the public sewer will remain with homeowners. Since the transfer of responsibility

Wessex Water has seen the customer contact rate increase by 36% since October 2011. The financial implications are still being understood but will likely be factored into the next price control in 2015-16.

The level of treatment sewage receives is driven by legislation such as the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Bathing Water Directive designed to improve the quality of river and coastal waters. 99.9% of sewage treated by Wessex Water receives secondary or tertiary treatment. The remaining sewage is treated at small sites providing primary treatment through septic tanks serving an average of nine people.

Figure 4: Primary, Secondary treatment and BoD (Biochemical oxygen demand)

((BOD) is a measure of the polluting potential of the organic matter in the sewage removed[39])



[39] Wessex Water Sustainability Indicators 2011 www.**wessexwater**.co.uk/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=7596

Connections

The water infrastructure operated Wessex Water is connected to other systems, for example those in Bristol, Bournemouth and the Thames; however these are for small scale localised transfers of water.

Further interactions occur between Wessex Water and companies servicing septic tank systems. This is a private business activity which operates on a competition model; sewerage and other waste can therefore be brought into the area by tanker from other companies for treatment at the Avonmouth sewerage works. This business is limited by commercial limitations associated with geography and associated transport costs.

In addition to connections between Wessex Water and other water and sewerage infrastructure providers there are further relationships with other Services of General Interest. Of particular significance is the relationship with the highway authorities (national and local) due to the need to manage surface drainage. Liaison with the local authority is also important having regard to the planning of urban growth and change and the implications of this upon water and sewerage demands. In addition, strong connections exist with other governmental departments and bodies involved in water and waste management, particularly DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) with regards policy and legislation, and the Environment Agency for the protection and enhancement of the environment.

Regulation

The Environment Agency (EA) are the environmental regulator. The EA are a non-departmental public body responsible for protecting and improving the environment of England and Wales. The EA also have responsibility for flooding risk protection and managing water resources[40].

The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) exists to provide independent oversight with regards water supplies in England and Wales; specifically to ensure that supplies are safe and drinking water quality is acceptable to consumers. Drinking water is tested daily by the water companies and these tests are subsequently checked by the DWI, who also audit water company laboratories. The DWI can require improvements and, when accidents have occurred, pursue prosecutions and make recommendations to ensure this is not repeated[41].

Ofwat (The Water Services Regulation Authority) is the economic regulator of the water and sewerage sectors in England and Wales. The level of bills paid by customers to Wessex Water is governed by what Ofwat allow with regards to increases in bills since, as a monopoly, customers need to be protected from bills being increased inappropriately. Every five years water and sewerage infrastructure operators go through a price control where an agreement is made with Ofwat for the next five years prices based on how efficient the operator is and what is required in order to meet the environmental requirements on the legislative changes from Europe or Westminster, together with any improvements required for customer service purposes[42].

Wessex Water also produces a Code of Practice. All providers in the industry are required to provide a Guaranteed Standard Scheme (GSS).

Affordability

Customer billing for both water and waste services are provides through a joint venture called Bristol Wessex Billing Service (BWBSL). This venture is jointly owned by Wessex Water and Bristol Water and enables a single bill to be sent to customers.

Water and sewerage services to South Gloucestershire residents are provided on a metered or unmetered basis. Metered charges are based on a fixed standard charge together with the volume of water used measured by a meter. Unmetered charges are based on the rateable value of the property - an assessment of the annual rental value of a property made by the Local Authority (last updated in 1973)[43].

[40] EA http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/
[41] http://dwi.defra.gov.uk/
[42] http://www.ofwat.gov.uk/
[43] Ofwat http://www.ofwat.gov.uk/consumerissues/chargesbills/prs_inf_rvalues

Wessex Waters charges for 2012-13 are as follows including % change from 2011:

Changes in unmetered charges for 2012-13 (including inflation of 5.2%)

Unmetered	Fixed charge % change	RV charge % change	Annual bill for property with RV of £100	Annual bill for property with RV of £150	Annual bill for property with RV of £200
Water	0%	10.1%	£173	£256	£340
Sewerage	0%	7.5%	£149	£221	£292
Combined	0%	8.9%	£322	£477	£632

Changes in metered charges for 2012-13(including inflation of 5.2%)

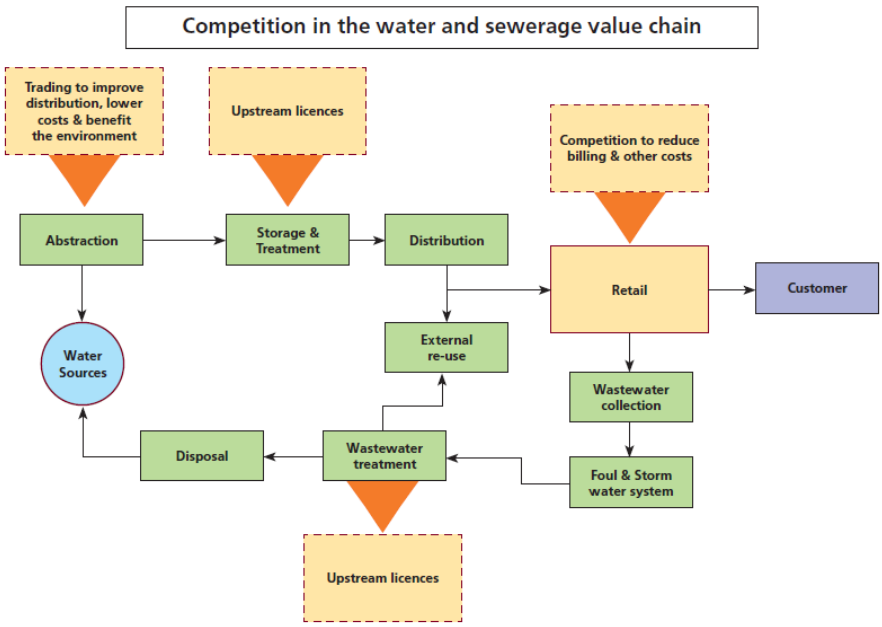
Metered	Fixed charge % change	Volumetric change	Bill for customer using 50m3/year	Bill for customer using 100m3/year	Bill for customer using 150m3/year
Water	5.6%	8.1%	£122	£224	£327
Sewerage	7%	5.8%	£130	£215	£299
Combined	6.6%	7.0%	£252	£439	£626

Ofwat's latest analysis shows that 23% of 2.4 million households in England spend more than 3% of their income on water and sewerage bills (after housing costs) and 11% spend more than 5% of their income.[44]

In its Water for Life White Paper, the UK Government sets out its commitment to reducing water bills across the UK by working with Water companies and through increased competition and innovation[45].

Wessex Water launched their Assist Tariff in 2007 and 8,000 customers currently benefit. The company works with independent debt advisors who provide customers with independent debt advice, benefit checks and assess their ability to pay. Recommendations can then be made to Wessex Water to reduce bills allowing customers to get into a regular payment routine aimed at benefitting the company and other customers.

Figure 5: Competition in the Water and Sewerage Value Chain



[44] Water Today, Water Tomorrow: Ofwat's report on high water and sewerage bills in the South West Water area http://www.ofwat.gov.uk/future/customers/metering/res_ofw_201101defraswtsup.pdf
[45] Water for Life White Paper http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf (December 2011)

Future South Gloucestershire Sewage provision

The UK Government aims to improve the quality of the water environment by means of reduced pollution and sustainable abstraction, improving the status of water bodies in line with the EU Water Framework Directive.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD), requires improvements in the environmental quality of water bodies and allows for the improvements to be phased ending in 2027. Water and sewage companies will be required to ensure essential services continue to be provided to a growing population without causing unacceptable environmental impacts[i].

The UK Government set out plans in the National Infrastructure Plan (2011) to support the water industry in implementing a £22 billion programme of investment over 2010-15. This investment will be directed at balancing supply and demand and maintaining assets, improving environmental protections and delivering service improvements.

South Gloucestershire may also face challenges where the capacity of the drainage systems to cope with an increasing population has been exceeded and new infrastructure is required to meet current and future needs. Resilience to likely increased intensity of rainfall as a result of climate change must also be addressed, as must leak reduction, albeit at a rate which ensured affordability for the customer. The interviewee noted:

"...predicting rainfall is just, you know it's the big unknown, how is climate change going to affect weather patterns, when you get a one in a hundred year storm and then three years later you get a one in eight years storm your statistics are all being thrown up in the air by what's happening in the environment and you can't ... invest proactively for years because to do so your bills would quadruple and no one would see any benefit for a hundred years."

On the 8th December 2011 the 'Water for Life' White Paper was published followed, in the Queen's Speech on 9 May 2012, by an announcement of a draft Bill that will be published to reform the water industry in England and Wales. The draft Water Bill will fulfil the remaining legislative commitments in 'Water for Life'. The Government has outlined the intentions of this Bill as follows:

- Introduction of a reformed water abstraction regime, as signalled in the Natural Environment White Paper earlier this year;
- Measure to deal with the legacy of over-abstraction of rivers;
- Re-affirm the catchment approach to dealing with water quality and wider environmental issues;
- Removal of barriers to the greater trading of abstraction licences and bulk supplies of water to make our supply system more flexible;
- The Environment Agency and Ofwat will provide clearer guidance to water companies on planning for the long-term, and keeping demand down;
- Consultation on the introduction of national standards and a new planning approval system for sustainable drainage;
- Government payments to address the historical unfairness of high bills in the South West;
- Encouraging water companies to introduce social tariffs to support vulnerable customers;
- Extending competition in the water sector by increasing choice for business customers and public sector bodies and by making the market more attractive to new entrants;
- Collaboration by the Government on a campaign to save water and protect the environment, working with water companies, regulators and customers to raise awareness of the connection between water is used and the quality of rivers.[46]

Of the above, the potential for increased competition is of note however there is scepticism concerning the potential for this strategy having regard to the implications of a third party operating between the customer and the SeGI.

The transcript of the interview is included at Appendix 1.

3.2.2. Transport (including urban and suburban)

South Gloucestershire Council is a designated Centre of Excellence for the quality of its transport work and is currently the second-highest rated transport authority in the country.

[46] http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/water/legislation/whitepaper/ [URL accessed 09/05/12

To ensure a consistent approach to transport in the region the Council has worked with neighbouring councils - Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City and North Somerset, to produce a joint local transport plan for the period from 2011-26.

Improving transport is one of the council's key corporate objectives to move towards the development of a safe, clean and sustainable transport system.

Traffic growth in South Gloucestershire is well above the national average and car ownership high. Traffic jams at rush hour can be severe, particularly along the A4174 Ring Road where many major employers are based. Research carried out by South Gloucestershire Council shows that the public shares concerns about air quality and congestion. The Council are therefore taking measures aimed at reducing the number of cars on the roads.

South Gloucestershire Council support public transport, cycling, motorcycling and walking. Steps have also been taken to make car-sharing easier and to support employers and schools who want to encourage their staff or pupils to find more sustainable ways of getting to work or class.

The Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) includes a range of integrated strategies to tackle congestion, improve road safety, air quality and accessibility, and enhance the overall quality of life of all people living and working in the West of England.

The backbone of South Gloucestershire's public transport system is the bus and most places in South Gloucestershire can be reached by bus. The bus transport system in South Gloucestershire is deregulated and privatised. South Gloucestershire is not a bus operator and does not run public transport services. Rather, they work with public transport operators such as First Group (bus operator) in the development of its transport system. Nevertheless, the council plans for transport needs and commonly invests in transport infrastructure. At the foundation of this infrastructure is the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) – a sub-regional project between South Gloucestershire, Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, the West of England Partnership and First Group – the intent of the GBBN is to reduce traffic congestion and pollution by making bus travel easier and more attractive. This programme includes the development of bus rapid transit corridors which improve the public transit connections across the sub-region.

Typically, the bus operators will provide services where they are commercially viable. However, the council will subsidise bus services where there is an identified need, typically outlined within the local transport plan. This might be to provide transport services for disadvantaged segments of the community (e.g., people of pension age- and many disabled people can get a bus pass that lets them travel for free), or to 'pump prime' service to developing areas. Funding for these programmes comes directly from the local authority's budget.

Explaining the general approach to bus service, the interviewee from the Transport and Strategic Projects Department for South Gloucestershire Council noted that:

'...what we are trying to do is create the environment and you know work with bus operators to ensure there are bus services that are running as far as possible as your commercial bus services so they are not a drain on the public purse which meets the needs of the travelling public.'

Currently South Gloucestershire is working with other local authorities and the West of England Partnership to improve and enhance the sub-regional rail network. Unlike the fully deregulated bus network, rail franchises are bid for by private operators at the national level (through the Department of Transportation). Within South Gloucestershire, the Council is working with sub-regional partners to increase rail capacity through new tracks and rail stations. As rail a nationally-regulated service, the council is seeking to include these improvements within the Greater Western franchise. The interviewee suggested that sub-regional partnering (e.g., through the West of England Partnership) and central government funding were critical to success of the project.

In terms of other transport modes, South Gloucestershire Council's Local Transport Plan includes a strategy to encourage walking and improve accessibility. Schemes include:

- Controlled crossing facilities - including zebra, puffin and toucan crossings
- Build-outs to reduce crossing distances
- Pedestrian refuges
- Dropped kerbs and tactile paving
- New footways
- Widened footways
- Raised kerbs at bus stops
- Replacing steps with ramps
- Removing barriers that prevent use of paths by wheelchair and pushchair users
- Disabled parking bays

South Gloucestershire Council has introduced several measures to encourage people to cycle more, including safety measures such as controlled crossings and printed guides to cycling routes. Schemes include Cycle path maintenance (gritting,cutting back foliage, clearing rubbish from paths etc).

Betterbybike (www.betterbybike.info) provides information on cycling, including:

- local cycle maps, leisure routes, and mountain bike routes
- cycling news and events
- details on how to start cycling and get around conveniently by bike, including a facility that allows you to plan your journeys by bike
- helpful advice on how to get more involved in cycling, including a list of all the local cycle clubs
- the achievements of the Cycling City project

In recent years, the council has worked alongside Bristol City Council and central government to improve the sub-regional cycle network through a project called 'cycle city'. Now complete, the council is looking to expand this programme through the local sustainable transport fund. Cycle City is part of a wide-ranging programme to address transport needs in a sustainable way. Through these and other projects, the council encourages people to move away from car based travel, particularly the single occupancy car based travel onto public transport, walking and cycling

SGC's Highway Maintenance Department is responsible for maintaining public roads (except for motorways or trunk roads) in South Gloucestershire to a good standard, so that they are safe for all road users.

Looking to the future, the interviewee identified a range of transport challenges related to growth projections, environmental concerns and funding. The council is seeking to maximise the number of people who travel by a sustainable mode. However, the interviewee recognised:

"...if you've got growth in travel demand, a result of growth in jobs and growth in housing, then that potentially increases congestion. You won't get 100% of new trips on public transport so there is bound to be some really increasing congestion."

Within this context, the council is also cognisant of the wider climate change agenda and the need to reduce carbon emissions.

"... sustainable modes are not just about trying not to allow the network to become congested and the impacts that has on the economy, but also about trying to minimise carbon emissions through the transport modes and again walking, cycling and public transport, when used efficiently, is more carbon efficient than a private car, particularly if it is single occupancy so one of the key challenges linked to that is actual behavioural change."

The transcript of the interview is included at Appendix 2.

3.2.3 Broadband/Internet

Current South Gloucestershire Broadband services

The UK Government Department for Culture Media and Sport ("DCMS") set out its commitment to delivering "the best superfast broadband network in Europe by 2015" in December 2010 through investment of:

- £530 million allocated during the current Spending Review period to stimulate commercial investment to roll out high speed broadband in rural communities;
- £100 million to create up to ten 'super-connected cities' across the UK; and
- up to £150 million to improve mobile coverage in the UK for consumers and businesses that live and work in areas where coverage is poor or non-existent. [47]

The UK Government aims to provide superfast broadband to at least 90% of premises in the UK and to provide universal access to standard broadband with a speed of at least 2Mbps.

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), a unit within DCMS, is responsible for managing the Government's broadband funding. DCMS estimate that the private sector broadband market will supply approximately two thirds of communities with superfast broadband access. The aim of the broadband funding is to use public investment to subsidise the provision of infrastructure required for faster broadband in those areas where it will not be provided by the private sector market.

[47] http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/telecommunications_and_online/7763.aspx

South Gloucestershire has joined Wiltshire and Swindon councils to work together on a BDUK initiative. This partnership means that SGC aim to be among the first in the country to sign up a commercial broadband infrastructure provider to improve broadband coverage. By working with Wiltshire, SGC will be able to benefit from an earlier roll out of broadband and savings in project costs.[48]

There is also an opportunity to secure European funding (from ERDF funding) for broadband-related business support activities in South Gloucestershire A Superfast Broadband Business Support Programme for the South West is in the process of being developed using European Regional Development Fund money to complement the BDUK infrastructure projects. SGC are currently working with other local authorities in the south west region of England (but not Cornwall) to bid for these funds. SGC has been allocated £255,000. The money would be spent on encouraging business to take up the opportunity of superfast broadband by means such as: focus groups; individual sessions; online portal for advice; open days etc.

Future South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) Broadband services

An interview was undertaken with a key member of SGC staff involved in this project (the interview was undertaken on 3rd May 2012 at SGC Thornbury Offices and lasted for one hour). The information presented below has been derived from the interview.

BDUK has confirmed that SGC is entitled to receive £710,000 in capital grant for this project. In order to receive this grant, the council must match-fund this amount. SGC have approved investment of £2.2m in support of the scheme. Of this, £2m would be for the capital infrastructure with the remaining £200,000 being used by SGC for supporting the project (e.g. administrative support costs, surveys, publicity etc.). The overall amount of funding available will depend on the contribution made by the successful supplier.[49]

The European Commission requires that local authorities can only use public money to invest in areas where they can demonstrate there is no current, or planned (within the next three years) deployment of either standard or superfast broadband. These are known as “white areas”. This project will therefore be limited to the “white areas” only. Broadband providers are therefore being consulted on their existing superfast broadband networks in South Gloucestershire and whether they have any plans to deploy superfast broadband in South Gloucestershire over the next three years. The responses provided by the service providers are commercially sensitive and were not able to be disclosed in respect of this interview.

SGC have a commissioning role in the project, rather than one in which they physically provide the hardware and actual service:

“...our role as a council is, is to procure and gap fund a wholesale broadband network. But the council won’t actually own it or run it. We are literally the gap funders.”

In fulfilling this role they are ‘gap funding’ the provision of superfast broadband in parts of their area that have not been deemed financially viable by private sector providers. It is currently around two thirds private sector coverage with SGC aiming to make up the difference in the remaining one third. SGC do not have any remit beyond their administrative boundary.

The price, affordability and regulations for broadband provision are all governed nationally by OFCOM[50]. In terms of customer interface (service maintenance and complaints) these are all undertaken directly by the internet service provider (ISP). SGC does not get involved in these aspects of the service provision.

Currently in South Gloucestershire there are two fixed service ISPs and one wireless ISP. Customer information for these three ISP’s is held by SGC but is not publically available. There were seen to be three main barriers to uptake of broadband in South Gloucestershire: user skills and confidence; the useable speed of the broadband service – which is related to the distance of the user from the telephone exchange providing the link; and accessibility and affordability of the necessary hardware (laptops, PCs etc).

“Well, to start, if we think about infrastructure first of all, the barrier, as you can see from this map, is if you are in a rural area it’s harder to get a good speed, a useable speed is what residents will tell you. They have all got broadband but it’s not suitable for the type of applications that we all like to use. So that’s the first thing, it’s your location if you’re in a rural area. And not only rural areas, it’s really down to distance from your telephone exchange is what causes the problem. So we’ve got some pockets here, as you can see. This is Bradley Stoke central, which is quite a large town now, but some of them are

[48] http://www.southglos.gov.uk/NR/exeres/b8067c55-297d-4b76-8fcf-50c12f3396dd
[49] http://www.southglos.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4BC835B9-B495-4A7D-8856-4F56F002EDF3/0/CEX120008.PDF
[50] http://www.ofcom.org.uk/

receiving a really poor service and it's because their exchange is up here in Almondsbury, so it has to... all the copper lines are going quite a distance, so that's the first barrier. But if we talk about the more social things, it's probably accessibility to equipment, computer equipment, laptops, being able to afford those, being able to afford a broadband connection."

Where new premises (businesses) and houses (residents) are being constructed there remains an issue as to how these will be provided with superfast broadband under the BDUK project. There is currently some survey work being undertaken by SGC (currently around 4,000 responses have been received to a web-based survey and deliberation has also occurred on the issue as part of a citizens' panel). It is anticipated that a publically available report will be published by SGC during summer 2012.

The works required to implement superfast broadband are dependent on the technology being employed. SGC have not been technology specific in their tender, with ISPs required to demonstrate instead how they would meet the Council's required 90:10 outcome:

"In terms of...State Aid, we're not allowed to, as a council and as a public funder...specify what technology we want to use during the procurement. So all we're allowed to do is say what's the outcome that we want, which is the 100% two-megabyte and 90% superfast, and then it's up to the commercial supplier to tell us how they can do that."

The level of disruption new broadband customers will experience depends on the technology being used: wireless systems will involve less physical works/alterations than a cable based system.

Timetable

At the time of the interview the council had just reached the tender stage with the documentation expected to be issued before the end of May 2012. The preferred bidder is likely to be announced at the end of the summer with survey work expected to begin during the winter of 2012 and onsite works beginning in spring 2013. The first residents and businesses should be able to sign up for superfast broadband from mid 2013. However, the scale of the engineering works means that they are expected to take until April 2015 to be completed. The government has set an ultimate deadline of March 2015 for the service to be completed and live.

" It has to be fully live by March 2015 or the end of March 2015. That's the government target. So all the infrastructure has to be in place by then...the good thing about South Gloucestershire now is that we are working with Wiltshire and Swindon councils. Now Wiltshire have been – they're called the Wave Two – so they are the second wave of the whole BDUK scheme, so and then the first ones to be using the BDUK framework. So we are actually, by partnering with Wiltshire, we're one of the first in the country to go through the BDUK framework. So if we can't achieve the 2015 target then the rest of the country is going to have a difficulty, so we're pretty confident."

Partnership working

SGC have entered into the BDUK project in partnership with Wiltshire and Swindon Councils. The former having already been involved in earlier superfast broadband roll-out under 'wave 2'. The BDUK project grouped councils initially into consortia, however the position of SGC meant that it was better for them to partner with Wiltshire/Swindon to the east rather than the unitary authorities around Bristol. It made sense for SGC as there needed to be a larger scale of geographic coverage to interest potential market ISPs. The size of the partnership is considered to be such that it offers a good market area that would interest the industry, but it is not so large as to be unmanageable administratively.

The partnership functions as a meeting of equals, albeit that Wiltshire take the lead (as they have 18 months previous experience). Decisions are taken via a steering board. If problems arise then they are settled at a high level by the contract board. Funding between the partners is kept totally separate, so that it is transparent what each authority as to spend on their areas. In terms of survey work and administrative duties, the board decides who does what and a reciprocal arrangement is maintained whereby authorities take on different tasks and subsume costs within their budgets.

Currently the partnership is believed to be working well:

"*Wiltshire's the lead, because obviously they've been working on this as a partner of BDUK for the last 18 months. In terms of being more dominant, we've all got a seat at the programme board, we've all got voting rights at that board, so no decision can be made without all of us signing up to it.*"

In terms of lessons for new partnerships being set up between authorities, there is limited advice from the SGC approach to date as the situation is still fairly new to them, however: it is easier if all of the authorities are starting together; there really needs to be geographically adjacent border. Notably the partners are willing to share their experiences with other authorities who are just staring up.

"Definitely and I think that's one of the ambitions from BDUK is that the Wave Two projects will act as – mentor is probably a too strong a word – but if other councils that are coming behind us in this process need advice or guidance then the Wave Two projects will provide that support. And I think Wiltshire certainly are already having calls from other councils who are going through the same type of issues."

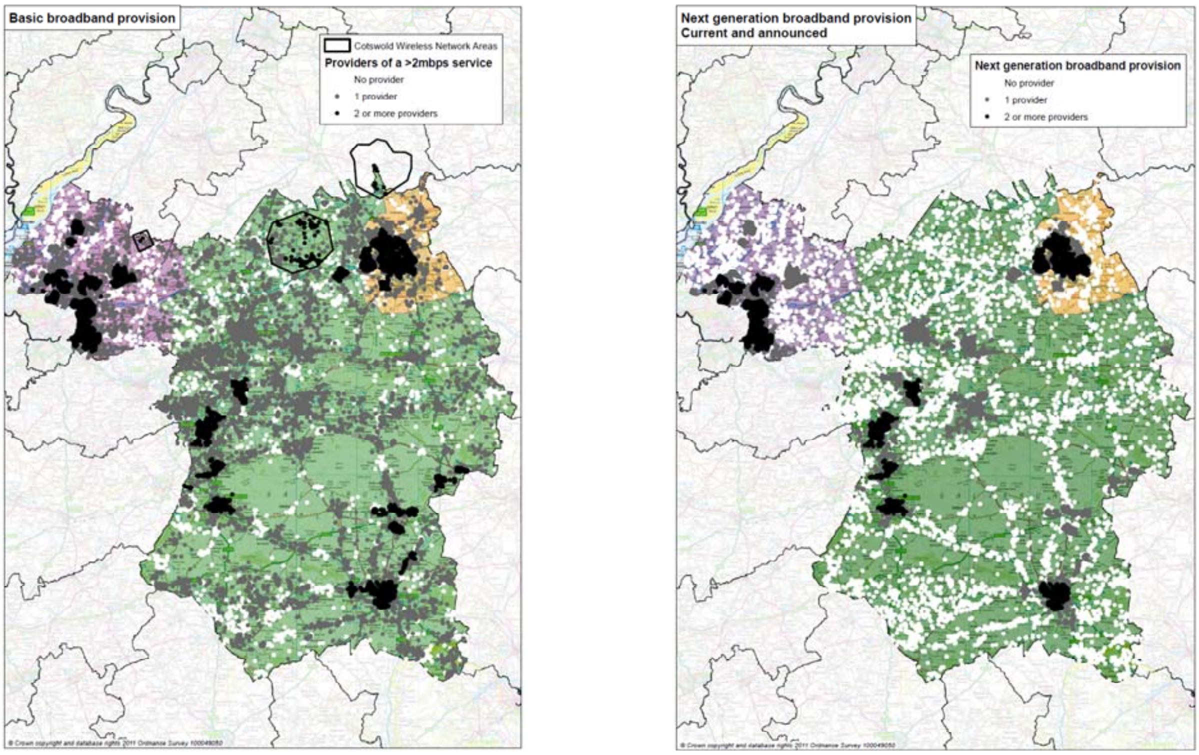
The future

It is likely that the services available by websites will drive the required broadband speeds, for example the BBC's popular I Player requires a fairly high speed input, if there were to be subsequent iterations/developments that further increased the broadband requirements then customer demand is likely to require the service to be upgraded.

The main challenges looking ahead are likely to be addressing the tension between commercial viability and social desirability of widespread coverage. This is particularly likely to be the situation in rural as opposed to urban areas:

"I think it's this tension between what's commercially viable and what's not and it's that urban/rural split. I think what worries me is the way the market operates now, the commercial providers will only go where it's commercially viable for them to do it and that's where you're hearing in the Digital Britain report, it talks about a lot of the Final Third and it's how much intervention is that Final Third going to need to make sure that it is constantly at the same level as the commercially viable areas. And I don't think that's going to be a one-off investment from the government. I'm not sure. We'll have to wait and see, but..."

Figure 6: Basic and Next Generation Broadband Provision



The transcript of the interview is included at Appendix 3.

3.3 Social services

3.3.1 Detailed Analysis of selected social SGIs in South Gloucestershire

3.3.1.1 Secondary education

Current South Gloucestershire secondary education provision

The education system in the UK is divided into four main parts, primary education, secondary education, further education and higher education. Children in the UK have to legally attend primary and secondary education which runs from about 5 years old until the student is 16 years old.

Education provision in the UK has traditionally been delivered through a mixed of public (maintained) and private providers. The 'maintained schools' sector has undergone significant change over the last 15 years. The maintained school sector provision is now primarily delivered by community, foundation and faith schools. These schools all deliver the National Curriculum and receive funding from the Local Education Authority (LEA). Of these school types community schools are run, staffed and funded by the LEA, while faith and foundation schools have great autonomy and ownership of buildings and admissions. LEA Grammar schools also remain popular in some areas, offering selective entry based upon academic performance[51]. No grammar schools operate in South Gloucestershire.

Academy schools are a further 'state sector' offering. These schools are different to those noted above as although they are state funded, they fall outside of the control of the LEA and received their income directly from central government. These are therefore independent schools but are publically funded and fun. They are not required to deliver the National Curriculum[52].

Academies may be individual schools or can be groups of schools managed together. This may occur at a local level or, in some circumstances, academies may be run by national 'chains'. Organisations such as Oasis (http://www.oasiscommunitylearning.org/home/) operate academies across the UK, including in the neighbouring Bristol area. Currently the academies operating in South Gloucestershire are local partnerships.

The most recent addition to the former state schools section is the 'free school'. These schools are effectively academies but whereas academy schools will be former LEA maintained schools, free schools will be newly established by parents, teachers, voluntary groups and/or charities without consultation with the local authority. As with academies, free schools are not required to deliver the national curriculum. There is concern that new free schools will be disruptive to the spatial delivery and planning of education provision within each LEA area given the local of control placed over them.

Finally, Private schools (known as 'public schools' in the UK) are a further provider of education. These are privately funded and run and operate outside of the LEA schools system.

The education system in the UK is also split into "key stages" which breaks down as follows:

Key Stage 1 - 5 to 7 years old
Key Stage 2 - 7 to 11 years old
Key Stage 3 - 11 to 14 years old
Key Stage 4 - 14 to 16 years old

Generally key stages 1 and 2 will be undertaken at primary school and at 11 years old a student will move onto secondary school and finish key stages 3 and 4. Students are assessed at the end of each stage. The most important assessment occurs at age 16 when students pursue their GCSE's or General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Primary Education
Primary education begins in the UK at age 5 and continues until age 11, comprising key stages one and two under the UK educational system.

Secondary Education
From age 11 to 16, students will enter secondary school for key stages three and four and to start their move towards taking the GCSE's. Primary and secondary education is mandatory in the UK.

The Education and Skills Act 2008 (England and Wales. Statues 2008) sets out a timescale to ensure all young people continue in education or training over the age of 16. Participation age will be raised in a phased process: to age 17 from 2013; and to age 18 from 2015. Young people will choose to remain in full time education, continue to work-based learning or undertake part-time education or training if they are employed or undertaking voluntary work for more than 20 hours per week. South Gloucestershire Council will lead strategy for planning, commissioning, funding and organising 14–19 education and training within the local area.

South Gloucestershire Council is under a statutory requirement to produce a single plan covering all services for children and young people aged 0-19 in the area, and certain vulnerable young people aged between 19 and 25 receiving services. The single Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) is an overarching plan and has replaced the previous range of individual Local Authority plans[53].

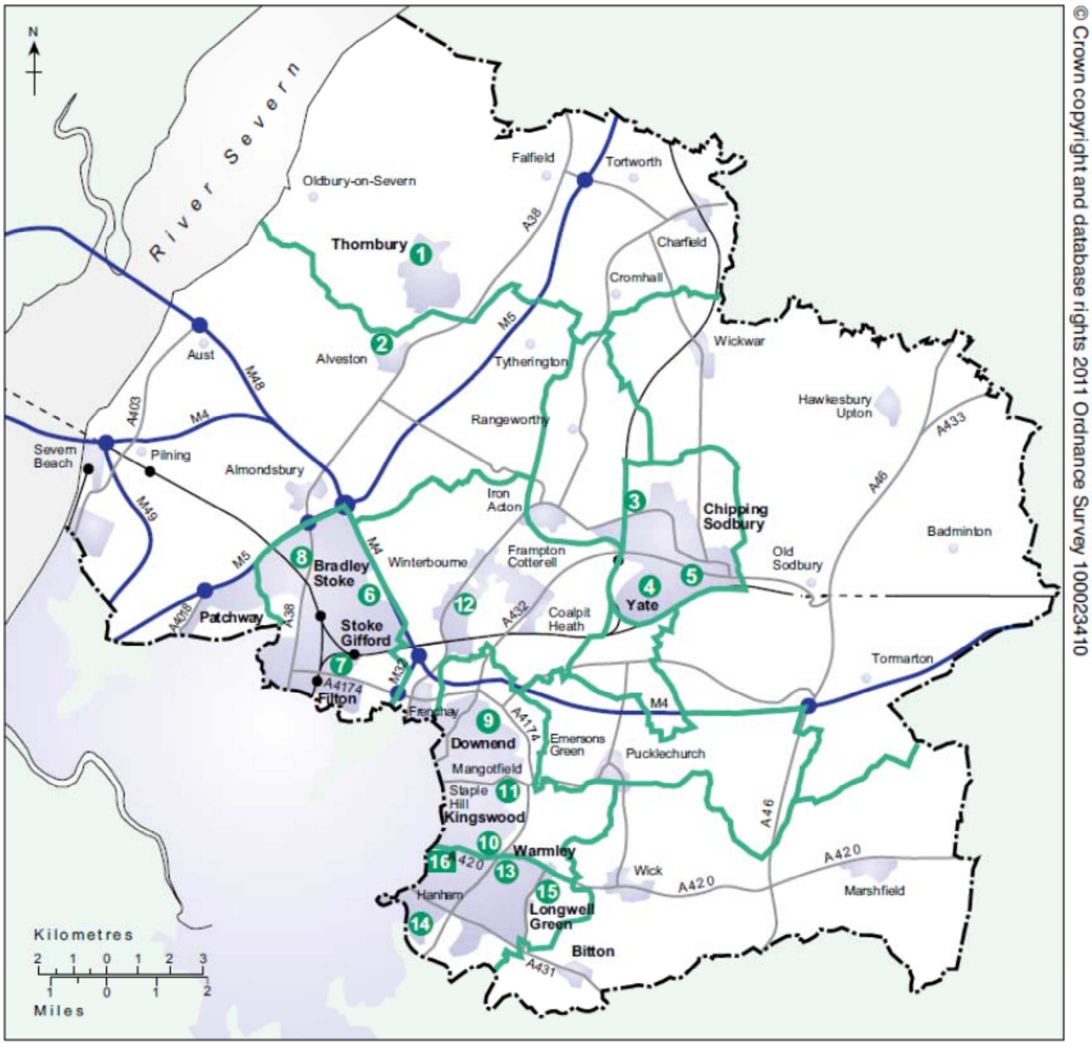
[51] http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools
[52] http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools
[53] South Gloucestershire School Organisation Plan 2007-12 (www.southglos.gov.uk/SOP)

Five key outcomes are defined by the Children Act 2004 to form the basis of each Local Authority's Children and Young People Plan:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic well being

All South Gloucester secondary schools are co-educational day schools. South Gloucestershire currently provides 5 secondary schools which have Academy status with a further school in the process of becoming an academy in partnership with an existing local school of this type. All secondary schools have sixth form provision.

Figure 7: shows South Gloucestershire secondary schools by location



1 The Castle School
2 Marlwood School
3 Brimsham Green School
4 The Ridings' Federation Yate International Academy
5 Chipping Sodbury School
6 Bradley Stoke Community School
7 Abbeywood Community School
8 Patchway Community School
9 Downend School
10 King's Oak Academy

11 Mangotsfield School
12 The Ridings' Federation Winterbourne International Academy
13 The Grange School and Sports College
14 Hanham High School
15 Sir Bernard Lovell School
16 John Cabot Academy

Figure 8: Specialisms, status, age range served, expected number of pupils aged 11-15 at September 2011 in South Gloucestershire secondary schools

School	Specialism	Status	Age range	Expected number of pupils on roll 11-15 (09/11)
The Castle School	Visual Arts and Special Educational Needs: Cognition and Learning	Community	11-18	1363
Marlwood School	Science	Voluntary Controlled	11-18	978
Brimsham Green School	Humanities	Community	11-18	
The Ridings' Federation Yate International Academy	Science and Health & Sport	Academy	11-18	482
Chipping Sodbury School	Technology	Controlled	11-18	712
Bradley Stoke Community School	Performing Arts and Languages	Academy	11-18	893
Abbeywood Community School	Humanities	Community Academy (pending)	11-18	683
Patchway Community School	Business and Enterprise	Community	11-18	666
Downend School	Technology	Community	11-18	1211
King's Oak Academy (Olympus Academy Trust)	Mathematics and Computing	Academy	11-18	643
Mangotsfield School	Engineering and Science	Community	11-18	1196
The Ridings' Federation Winterbourne International Academy	Mathematics and Modern Foreign Languages	Academy	11-18	1506
The Grange School and Sports College	Sports	Community	11-18	794
Hanham High School	Performing Arts	Community	11-18	854
Sir Bernard Lovell School	Language	Community	11-18	1000
John Cabot Academy	Science, Technology & Inclusion	Academy	11-18	799

Future South Gloucestershire secondary education provision

South Gloucestershire Council's Draft Commissioning Strategy 2010-14 sets out projected numbers of secondary pupils in South Gloucestershire.

Figure 9: Secondary pupil numbers in South Gloucestershire:

Secondary Pupil Projections		Year				
Area	Age	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Group 1 (Thornbury and Alveston)	Age 11-15	2,381	2,361	2,338	2,292	2,267
	Age 16+	620	585	583	589	599
Group 2 (Yate and Chipping Sodbury and Surrounding Area)	Age 11-15	2,303	2,235	2,188	2,104	2,072
	Age 16+	369	370	364	364	365
Group 3 (Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke and Stoke Gifford)	Age 11-15	2,319	2,160	2,070	1,975	1,913
	Age 16+	372	436	403	375	370
Group 4 (Winterbourne, Downend, Mangotsfield and Emersons Green)	Age 11-15	4,784	4,641	4,496	4,348	4,296
	Age 16+	908	870	869	859	836
Group 5 (Kingswood, Hanham, Longwell Green, Oldland Common and Warmley)	Age 11-15	2,793	2,720	2,657	2,603	2,546
	Age 16+	490	490	486	471	482
South Gloucestershire Total	Age 11-15	**14,580**	**14,117**	**13,748**	**13,322**	**13,094**
	% +/-		-3.2%	-2.6%	-3.1%	-1.7%
	Age 16+	**2,758**	**2,751**	**2,706**	**2,658**	**2,651**
	% +/-		-0.3%	-1.6%	-1.8%	-0.3%
	Total	**17,339**	**16,868**	**16,454**	**15,980**	**15,745**
	% +/-		-2.7%	-2.5%	-2.9%	-1.5%

South Gloucestershire Council must address future provision needs whilst promoting choice and diversity in fulfilling their school place planning policy. This can be achieved through the provision of:

- specialist schools and a balance of specialisms
- academies and Free Schools
- federation and collaborative arrangements running competitions for new schools
- create new providers of schools through schools becoming foundation schools and acquiring a Trust[54]

Education provision for students aged 16-18 may be provided outside of the secondary school system through Further Education insitutions. Higher level education, together with adult education, may be provided through either FE or HE institutions.

The transcript of this interview was unavailable due to technical issues.

3.3.1.2 Tertiary education

Current South Gloucestershire tertiary education provision

The following Further Education Institutions are based in South Gloucestershire:

Filton College(South Gloucestershire and Stroud College from February 2012)

Filton and Stroud Colleges merged on 1st February 2012 to become South Gloucestershire and Stroud College ("SGS") with the aim of extending and protecting provision for learners, employers and local stakeholders[55]. The merged colleges will provide:

Total college income of £33m in 2011/12

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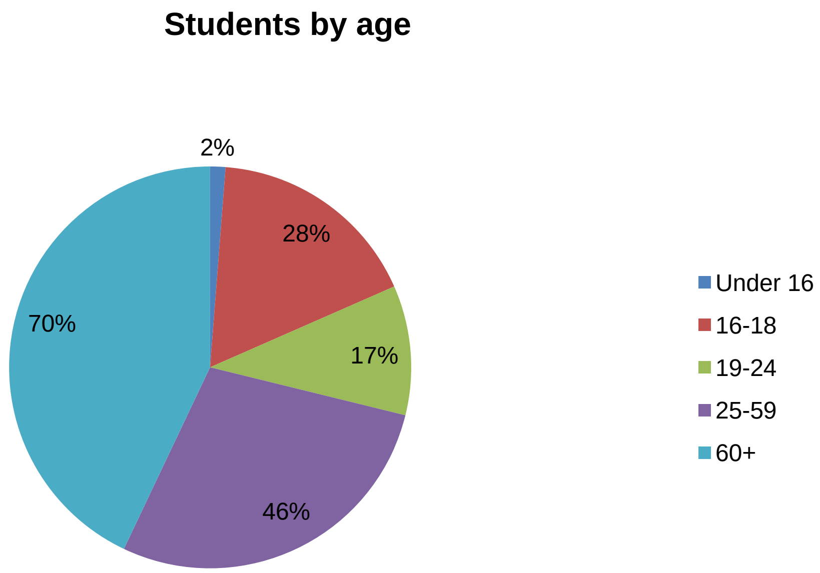
[54] Draft Commissioning of School Places Strategy 2010-14, http://www.southglos.gov.uk/_Resources/Publications/CYP/10/0200/CYP-10-0115

[55] South Gloucestershire and Stroud website: http://www.sgscol.ac.uk

992 employees, over 70% are teaching staff
total staff costs £21.3m (65% of total income)

Figure 10: Students attending SGS by age



The FIlton College campus of SGS provides a vast range of further education full-time courses for over 2,500 14-19 year olds in both academic and vocational areas in South Gloucestershire. Over 10,000 adult learners study part-time courses at the College or at over 50 locations within the community that are delivered by a team of community based tutors.

The College reports an expected overall success rate of 86% for all qualifications delivered in academic year 2011, placing it in the upper 10% of all Colleges in the UK.

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS), Gloucestershire College and the University of Gloucestershire are coming together to scope the development of a new strategic partnership for higher education in the county. The partnership aims to develop stronger links between the further and higher education sectors in the regions and will formulate a joint higher education strategy. An initial project will review patterns of demands and access to higher education, trends in higher education policy and requirements of employers in the regions and beyond.

City of Bristol College

With 8 faculties offering over 1,000 full and part-time day and evening courses, the City of Bristol College offers courses that include provision in all 15 subject sector areas and at all levels – from pre-entry through to higher education in South Gloucestershire.

City of Bristol College ranks in the top 10 per cent of colleges in the UK for quality, achievements and student experience. The College is one of the largest in the UK with over 30,000 students (7,000 full-time) and over 2,000 members of staff. With around 400 international students[56].

Higher Education

Only a single HE institution is based in South Gloucestershire; the University of the West of England. It should be remembered, however, the post-16 education may be provided through online learning via FE and HE institutions across the UK. Of particular note in the HE sector is the Open University, who offer online only FE, HE and adult education provision.

[56] City of Bristol College website: http://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk

University of the West of England

The University of the West of England (UWE), located in South Gloucestershire offers more than 600 courses at undergraduate, postgraduate, professional and short course levels. With around 30,000 students and 3,000 staff, UWE is the largest provider of Higher Education in the South West of England. UWE is based in South Gloucestershire on the Frenchay campus, but has locations falling within Bristol and Gloucestershire administrative areas. UWE also accredits degrees through international partners.

UWE is the only HE establishment in South Gloucestershire, but Bath Spa University and Gloucestershire University both have links into the area through partnerships with local schools and colleges.
Students

Figure 11: Student and Staff Numbers at UWE 2009/2010

Figures for 2009/2010 academic year. *
Total student numbers

Part time / full time	**Number**
Part time	9,148
Full time / sandwich	20,921
Total	**30,069**

Undergraduate / postgraduate

Status	**Number**
Undergraduate	22,943
Postgraduate	7,126
Total	**30,069**

International students

Origin	**Number**
EU	954
Overseas	1,682
Total	**2,636**

** Data only shows students that have fully enrolled for 2009/10 for all years and levels of study, all income status' and all modes of attendance.*
** Data also excludes partnership institutions (except Hartpury).*

Staff (Figures correct at 31 December 2010*)

Post	**Number**
Lecturing	1,527
Dedicated research	177
Administration	1,182
Technical	284
Manual	270
Senior mangement	81

Post	Number
Total	**3,521**

** Data excludes temporary staff from the Temporary Staff Unit.*

Regulatory control

Oversight of education provision differs between schools/FE and HE. The key body for secondary level education and further education is the Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). This body is independent and reports directly to parliament. Ofsted are responsible for ensuring both educational standards and the welfare of children in education. The LEA also plays a key role in ensuring standards in maintained schools.

Where a complaint exists in an LEA (maintained) school, the LEA is the first level of review. If this is not sufficient, the school governors may be involved. Beyond this, Ofsted become directly involved. In the case of academies and free schools where LEA oversight is not present, the governors are the first level of review, followed by Ofsted. A matter for review may, however, be taken to Ofsted directly if this is deemed appropriate by the school or parent/carer. Ofsted inspect schools and colleges on a regular basis and publish reports on their findings upon which remedial action may be required.

At the HE level, regulation is somewhat different. The quality of education provided is overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The QAA are an independent body who offer advice, guidance and support ensure standards of welfare and education. The QAA operate on a peer review basis, including student reviewers. The QAA will review institutions and publish their findings to help improve standards. The QAA also provide oversight of the accreditation of international degrees offered by partner universities outside the UK.

At the HE level a separate body exists to manage student complaints. The Office of Independent Adjudication (OIA) is an independent body which all universities in England and Wales must subscribe to as the body of oversight in the management of student complaints. The OIA do not, however, have any direct powers over universities.

Secondary education provision is free at the point of contact except where a parent choses to send their child to an independent school, which may charge fees as they see fit. Schools are otherwise either centrally funded (academies and free schools) or are funded via the LEA. The funds are drawn from taxation.

The HE fee regime has changed significantly since the end of the 1990's. Initially HE was funded centrally, but student fees were first introduced in 1998 and, since this date, the balance of fee income paid by the student has increased to the current level of up to £9000. HE fees are set within fee boundaries established by central government. The level of fees set is determinant upon the universities profile with regards the entry grades of incoming students, and the level of financial support provided to less affluent students through bursaries. UWE currently charges £9000 per year to incoming UK students, with bursaries provided. UWE accredited Foundation degrees provided through partnership institutions, such as SGS College, are set at £7500. The market has not proved sensitive to student fee increased, however nationally imposed student number caps, linked to the entry grades of incoming students, means that some universities, including UWE, are reducing their student numbers.

Fees for 'adult education', provided by FE and HE establishments may be locally set.

Partnership

A key dynamic with the complex education environment found across the UK today is that of partnership working and this is also the case in South Gloucestershire. The University of the West of England is involved in research and knowledge exchange with schools across the region and is involved in a number of partnership and sponsorship arrangements with local schools and colleges. This includes the offering of UWE accredited Foundation degrees at the nearby South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, and working with the City of Bristol College. Furthermore, UWE has recently agreed to sponsor a new primary level academy school and is in the process of establishing a University Technical College for 14-19 year olds (see below). Relationships also exist with other sectors, for example UWE is involved in a partnership with the National Health Service (NHS) to deliver nursing training. Partnership between institutions across all levels of education provision is a primary characteristic of delivery in the UK.

The Future

Partnership, together with 'co-opetition', will typify the education sector in South Gloucestershire and the wider UK today and tomorrow. Joint working between intuitions at different levels of education provision can be seen as a necessary response to the changing nature of secondary education, and the increased levels of competition for students and funding seen within the FE and HE sector.

A recent development in the education sector is the development of University Technical Colleges (UTC). These are intended to deliver vocational courses with a college specialism in two academic areas. These colleges will be sponsored by local businesses and universities and will offer traditional GCSE qualifications alongside technical qualifications. Only two are current in operation in the UK (as of June 2012), but one is in the process of being established in South Gloucestershire under the sponsorship of the University of the West of England. Operationally, the UTC will operate in the same manner as academies. The further growth in the number of academies, and particularly partnership academies, is anticipated over the coming years following on from successes demonstrated where this has already taken place. Free schools may form in the South Gloucestershire area in the future, a factor that may prove disruptive to the spatial planning of education provision. It is suggested, however, that a good level of satisfaction with the current education provision in South Gloucestershire has removed the incentive for a parent or teacher group to move to establish such an institution thus far. This changing education landscape is clearly a managerial challenge, including the growth of the 'co-opertition' dynamic within education provision. New streams of funding following the recent changes to student fee arrangements in the HE sector is also seen as a key driver for change, with alumni, trusts, research and third stream funding all being seen as important potential sources of funding.

A cultural shift is also in progress which will continue into the future. Students are increasingly being seen as customers purchasing a service from an educational institution. The increase in student fees has had an impact upon student expectations and universities, including UWE, need to respond to this in consideration of the support and standards offered.

The transcript of this interview was unavailable due to technical issues.

3.3.1.3 Healthcare - Hospitals

Current South Gloucestershire Healthcare services

The provision of public health services for South Gloucestershire is undertaken by the South Gloucestershire Primary Health Care Trust. The SG PCT currently plans and provides health services for the approximately 259,000 people who live in South Gloucestershire.[57]

The area is healthy and almost in the top ten percent of healthy outcomes. The main ill health or deprivation lies on the urban fringe of Bristol, and as a consequence there are substantial differences in health outcomes across South Gloucestershire and inequalities in health. Key groups for poor health include gypsy travellers, and prisoners (three prisons).

Funding received is based on a formula which because of relatively good health of the local population means that instead of receiving funding for £260,000 this is scaled back to £210,000. The budget is used to place contracts or have arrangements with a range of providers for all health services from primary care, to general practice, to hospital services, through to community services, and SG PCT collaborates with other PCT's across the South West to commission more specialised services.

The health needs of the population are specified in a Director of Public Health Report (to become the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment), Commissioners then buy services based on the specified health needs. However, a key driver of local provision is also need expressed directly in demand to GPS who define whether the demand is something that the NHS should address. In the context of budget reductions, the prime challenge is how to de-commission with minimal health impact and how to achieve that with political and community support.

On 1 June 2011, Primary Care Trusts streamlined their management teams as part of new cluster arrangements. NHS Bristol joined with NHS North Somerset and NHS South Gloucestershire to form the BNSSG cluster. The cluster is not a statutory organisation. All PCT's remain as individual statutory organisations and retain their statutory powers and obligations but work together as a 'cluster' under a single chief executive and management team.

The cluster is a formalisation of a set of existing working relationships where a key focus is on the process of reviewing services, and defining future strategy (5-10 years). Review outcomes, for example, the current review of mental health services strategy, are reflected in the procurement process.

The primary function of the SG PCT is to commission a range of primary, community, intermediate, mental health, acute and clinical assessment and treatment services for the local population. It also provides a range of primary and community services through a separate provider service arm.

There are a multiplicity of providers and competition amongst providers, manifest firstly in the state, the NHS (traditional NHS provision), that is evolving towards more independent provision. For example UHB, the central Bristol Hospital Trust,

[57] http://www.sglos-pct.nhs.uk/

has become a foundation trust with certain freedoms of operation. GP's are the gatekeepers of care with universal access to primary care, and access to secondary care via GP referral. This underlies the logic of current reform placing GP's at the centre of the commissioning process, as they can control referral and have good knowledge of local services.

All health systems are grappling with ways of managing a service free at the point of access and thereby creating almost infinite demand. Management restraint of this demand requires rationing, and there is a consensus within the NHS of procedures which are not normally funded by the NHS. At the same time there are procedures or interventions which are effective but not good value for money, and assessments of provision in these cases is formalised around NICE. Assessment is based upon the principle embedded throughout the NHS of the requirement for a certain return to be identified in order to justify any given spend. Furthermore, certain procedures and processes will benefit some people more than others, so with individual patients there is an element of tailoring according to individual patient characteristics. Overall, there's a framework of logic but this depends also on individual judgement and negotiation with patients.

PCT's role is to commission a range of services and it's an increasing obligation to make sure that private providers have an opportunity to be part of that provision. So for example if you want dietary advice and support this can be provided by Slimming World, Weight Watchers as well as NHS dieticians. Since the last Labour Government (2010), there has been a drive to support independent providers particularly in respect of elective care, where there is now much more competition, even though this remains very artificial at the moment. Commissioners are obliged to go through a formal pre-procurement commissioning process so that independent providers have an option to bid for services that have traditionally been provided by the NHS.

The SG PCT is served by two main acute trusts, the North Bristol NHS Trust at Southmead and Frenchay Hospitals and the University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust. Elective surgery procedures are also commissioned from the Emersons Green NHS Treatment Centre. Ambulance provision is commissioned from the Great Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust and mental health services from Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

The SG PCT most recent data on healthcare provision in the region is as follows:

- 29 standard GP Practices
- primary care service and facilities in 2 prisons
- 49 Pharmacies
- 30 Optometrists
- 28 Dental Practices (including prison and orthodontic services)
- Hospital beds

The most recent range of service providers published by SG PCT is set out below:
Figure 12: SG PCT Service Providers:

Primary Care	**Community Services**	**Secondary care and acute and specialist hospital services**	**Clinical assessment and treatment services**	**Mental Health**	**Specialist commissioned services**
General practice	NHS South Gloucestershire Provider Arm	North Bristol NHS Trust	UK Specialist Hospitals (Shepton Mallet)	Avon & Wiltshire Partnership Mental Health Trust	Various providers – administered through the South West Specialist Commissioning Team
General Practice – prescribing	Continuing Health Care – various providers	University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust	UK Specialist Hospitals – (4 sites including Emersons Green)	Learning Difficulties – various providers	
Dental practices		Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust			
Optometry practices					
Pharmacy services					

The SG PCT employs 773 individuals (519.72 Full Time equivalent) 24% of which are Commissioners (including finance and public health staff) and the remainder are staff within the provider service. Within the provider service over 470 employees are clinical staff such as nurses, physiotherapists and podiatrists.

The majority of staff (74%) are aged between 31 and 55, a further 9% are aged between 56 and 60 and therefore heading to retirement and 5% are 60 or above and therefore eligible for retirement. The PCT has in place two separate workforce planning groups designed to develop an understanding of the workforce and identify key risk areas.[58]

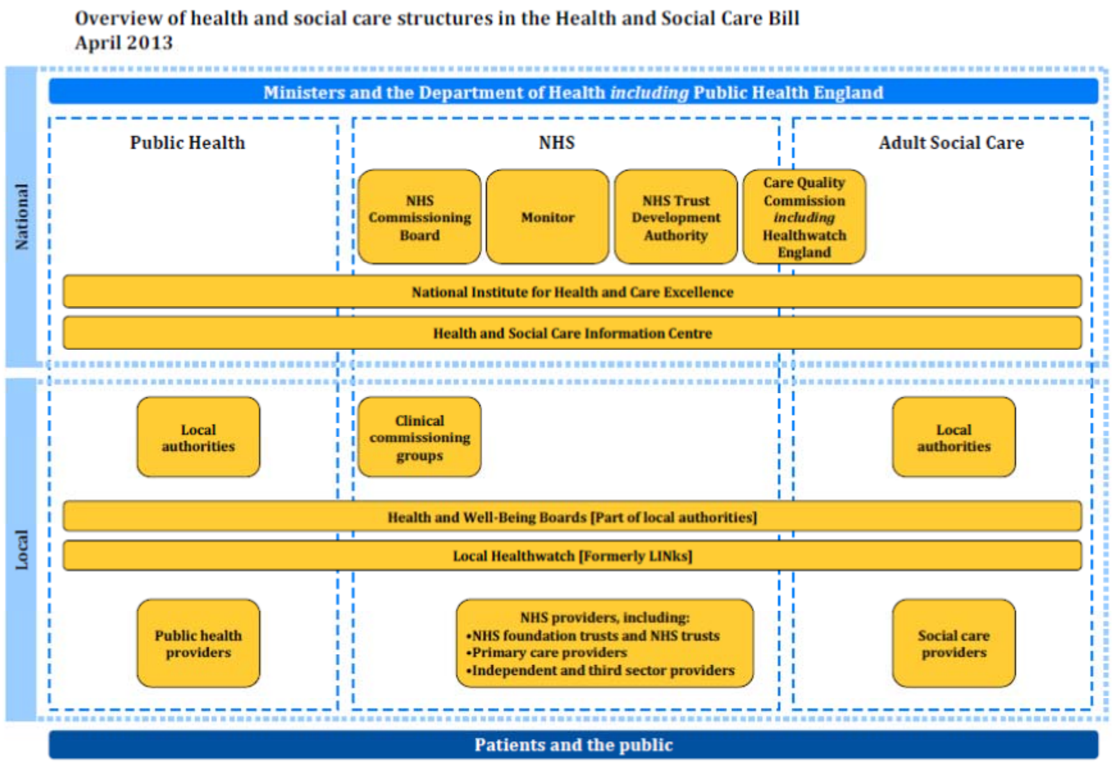
Future South Gloucestershire Healthcare services

The passing of the Health and Social Care Bill in March 2012 will lead to major changes in the NHS.[59] The bill sets out restructuring of the NHS in England, an overview is provided at Figure 1[60].

PCT clusters will continue to commission health services until April 2013 when commissioning will pass to Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Currently the NHS is going through a period of substantial reform in relation to the nature of delivery of the service in the context of continuing budget reductions. As a consequence health care needs to continue to be rationed and the favoured approach continues to be that practised you over the past ten years, with rationing directed towards the frontline as much as possible. At the same time there is a continuing need for national rationing, involving in particular the role of NICE. At the heart of the reform process, in the context of reduced funding for all service provision, is the mismatch between wants and desires and potential interventions.

Figure 13: Overview of Health and Social Care Structures in Health and Social Care Bill



The transcript of this interview is included at Appendix 4.

[58] Overview of current providers 2009/10, NHS South Gloucestershire Strategic Plan 2010/11-2014/15 , http://www.sglos-pct.nhs.uk/About%20Us/our-strategy.htm)
[59] http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/03/The-month_Mar-12_FINAL1.pdf
[60] Appendix 1 Source: http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/02/A3-Overview-of-health-and-care-structures1.pdf

3.3.1.4 Housing

The UK Government set out its strategic housing approach in its report "Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England" on 21 November 2011. The Housing Strategy sets out reforms to:

- get the housing market moving again;
- lay the foundations for a more responsive, effective and stable housing market in the future;
- support choice and quality for tenants; and
- improve environmental standards and design quality.

The strategy sets out its aims as to address concerns across the housing market to facilitate mortgages on new homes, improve fairness in social housing and reduce empty home rates.[61]

South Gloucestershire

South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) is a unitary authority which covers an area of 49,700 hectares with a population of 254,400 living in approximately 106,000 individual households. It is one of the fastest growing areas in the country, with over 30,000 jobs and 18,000 homes created since 1991[62]. By 2013 it is expected that:

- Approximately 44,000 people living in South Gloucestershire will be aged 65 or over;
- Of these, over 11,000 people will be over 80 years of age or over;
- The number of 15 – 24 year olds will have increased by nearly 12,000 to 38,000, a rise of approximately 46%.

Currently, approximately 60% of the total population of South Gloucestershire live in the built-up areas immediately adjoining Bristol, namely Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Downend, Staple Hill, Kingswood and Hanham. A further 19% live in the towns of Yate, Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury and the remaining 20% live in the more rural areas.

Throughout the interview undertaken with as senior member of South Gloucestershire Council's Community Care and Housing Deparment, the buoyancy of the area was referred to:

"it's an area that people and business want to move to and in this respect it's been easier to keep things going compared to other parts of Bristol, or the wider sub-region. The north side of the city has a stronger market; the links to the motorway are far better for one".

Given these particular circumstances, South Gloucestershire faces the following challenges in meeting housing need:

- A large affordability gap between house prices and average earnings;
- Significant need for additional affordable housing in a climate of high land values and pressures on land use with particular problems in rural areas;
- Ensuring the sustainability of new communities;
- Preventing homelessness arising from economic uncertainties; and
- Identifying and meeting the housing, service and support needs of older and other vulnerable people.

Particular aims include the need to:

- Deliver 30,800 homes across South Gloucestershire between 2006 and 2026; and
- Enable 1047 additional affordable homes through housing partnerships between 2008 and 2011.

SGC's Local Area Agreement target provides that 33.3% of all housing on sites with 15+ units are affordable, mix of rented (77%) and low cost home ownership (23%), well managed and sustainable (meeting the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3). SGC also aim to enable 15 ExtraCare Housing Schemes for older people by 2016.

Owner occupation is the main form of tenure in South Gloucestershire, making up 79.7% of the housing stock; private lets account for 10.5% of the total and social rented housing 9.8%. The proportion of privately rented housing has increased slightly in recent years, with the Interviewee noting that this figure has increased to 13% (with a slight decrease in the proportion of owner occupation as a result).

[61] http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/2033676.pdf
[62] South Gloucestershire Housing Strategy 2008-2013 http://www.southglos.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/442BD76F-8098-43BF-94AE-22F38DCBEDAC/0/HousingStrategyComplete3.pdf

Within South Gloucestershire there are approximately 83 authorised pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, although an assessment in August 2007 indicated the need for 58 additional pitches by 2011.

Based on Land Registry figures published in April 2008, the average house price in South Gloucestershire in February 2008 was £207,270, approximately 5% higher than the South West average of £197,191 and almost 12% higher than the average house price in England and Wales (£185,616)[63].

South Gloucestershire Housing Strategy 2008-13

In February 2007 SGC's housing stock was transferred to Merlin Housing Society, a private social housing company, which fundamentally changed the way in which the Council's Housing Department worked. Strategic housing services were amalgamated with the Council's Community Care Department to create a new Community Care and Housing Department. The transfer of housing stock provided capital receipts of £26.6m and, as part of the Council's asset management plan, there is a commitment to invest this in affordable housing and community schemes over the next few years.

Since SGC is no longer a landlord, strategic housing functions and responsibilities now focus on the following:

- Providing housing advice and support;
- Managing the housing register;
- Assessing whether someone is homeless and needs help with finding a home;
- Providing disabled facilities grants to adapt homes to help people live independently;
- Ensuring that private rented housing is well maintained by landlords;
- Working with providers to support vulnerable people to live independently; and
- working with housing associations and developers to provide more affordable homes.

A year after this transfer SGC published its strategy for housing. The document, which covers the period to 2013, sets a variety of goals for tackling major local housing issues, as identified by local people. The overall aim for the strategy, which followed an extensive period of consultation, is summarised as "More Housing, More Choice – Affordable, Sustainable & Better Quality''.[64] Particular priorities focus on:

- Accessing high quality services;
- Ensuring the delivery, affordability and sustainability of new homes;
- Ensuring people in rural communities can meet their housing needs;
- Improving the condition of homes in South Gloucestershire;
- Maximising people's ability to live independently; and
- Reducing homelessness.

It was noted that SGC's strategy was in line with government's expectations concerning both policy and the type of priorities to be pursued. However, maintaining this alignment was often quite difficult given the time-lags involved. For example, while the government had made a change to the affordable rent tenure, from social rent to 80% of market rent, as part of its comprehensive spending review, it was difficult to administer such a change with any great speed given that this policy position was set out in local planning and housing documents.

With respect to pursing particular priorities, the interviewee felt that SGC had been particularly successful in helping to 'Get Britain Building' by helping to unlock the delivery of affordable housing that had become stalled with the onset of the recession. Indeed, the local authority had been nominated for an award by the Chartered Institute of Housing for its work in this area. Although a number of sites had the benefit of planning permission to deliver affordable homes, the delivery of these sites had become disrupted due to changing market conditions. The Interviewee therefore explained how the local authority had been asking developers, 'okay, what can we do to get this site underway?'.

The interviewee referred to the work of the authority's Housing Enabling Team who had been able to become involved on a site by site basis to identify the types of barriers being encountered. It was noted that whilst the authority's Core Strategy, the statutory development plan for the area, required some 35% of homes on a new development site to be affordable, the team was able to negotiate directly with development teams to identify the level of affordable housing that could be delivered. Viability assessments, as undertaken by the district valuer in London, were seen as a particularly important tool for delivering transparency for both sides. The interviewee also felt that the delivery of affordable homes had been largely maintained: *"It's surprising how close you can still get to 35% and some of the deals we've done have been 28%, 28 ½ %; that sort of level".*

[63] http://www.landregistry.gov.uk/

[64] South Gloucestershire Housing Strategy 2008-2013 http://www.southglos.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/442BD76F-8098-43BF-94AE-22F38DCBEDAC/0/HousingStrategyComplete3.pdf

It was felt that the buoyancy of the area in the past had been helpful in keeping the momentum of developers going and, where developments had stalled, to facilitate a quicker recovery than elsewhere. The fact that developments had been able to continue, either with or without assistance, meant that SGC was able to continue addressing the issues that had been identified. As the Interviewee noted:

"If you have got development underway you have a chance; you can begin to make a difference in terms of what goes on them and the type of challenges they should be helping to address".

In addition to being innovative in terms of the processes the local authority adopted in helping to deliver its housing strategy, the Interviewee also spoke of SGC's attempts to be innovative with respect to the products being delivered. For example, the opening of three extra care units across the district over the last 18 months was cited as providing significant benefit (in resource and quality terms) to both customers and SGC itself.

Strategy review

Two action plans have been published to help deliver the strategy by adding further clarity as to how certain goals are to be met. The first action plan covered the period 2008 to 2010, the other for the period 2011 to 2013. Both action plans have been subjected to a six month review, with the results being fed to a wider group of stakeholders known as the Strategic Housing Partnership for South Gloucestershire. The interviewee referred to the composition of this group and explained how it included:

"developers, housing associations, private sector landlords, voluntary agencies, support service providers, and housing support service providers".

Steps are currently being taken to review the overall strategy. The partnership will have an important role in setting the vision and basic parameters for the plan, but a wider stakeholder event is planned in the summer or autumn of 2012. The replacement strategy is expected to be published late spring in 2013. The interviewee explained that the replacement strategy was likely to build upon current goals rather than starting afresh:

"Of course we won't want to throw away any of the good stuff that has happened already. However, we will start to ask ourselves as to what appears to be missing or where the gaps appear to be. We certainly won't be taking the easy option and just repeating the contents of the existing with little thought or reflection".

Care would be taken to build upon, and help deliver, the goals set out in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment that the new health and wellbeing boards are responsible for producing.

The review would be based upon the latest evidence and analysis. Indeed, a West of England Housing Stock Survey has just been completed. In reviewing this, it was noted how the review team would be looking to identify key relationships within the data, such as between the standard of housing and the frequency that these residents have with respect to accessing health care.

The replacement strategy would also respond to feedback received on particular services. It was clear that the authority's services were reviewed in a variety of ways using a range of frequencies, from customer reviews following the undertaking of work at their property to more in-depth, but less frequent, surveys. In terms of obtaining feedback, The Interviewee acknowledged that it was important to:

"Plan such a service carefully; not only due to the potential numbers involved (c. 9000), but also to help try and go beyond the type of response that might be expected given their position in the process. So, people who have their consent approved are likely to say the service is wonderful; those that received rejections will say it's awful. People will respond with enthusiasm, but only when the survey is well constructed. Rather than surveying at particular points, we are trying to encourage more iterative forms of feedback. That should reduce the pressure on resources too.

While officers have consistently sought to act on the responses received it was noted by the interviewee that some complaints were a mere consequence of the fact that the demand for affordable housing does not equal supply. In making this point, it was highlighted how the:

"latest thinking is that we need to deliver 900 affordable homes each year to respond to need and identified levels of backlog. The reality is that we're delivering 300".

Key areas of action

In elaborating on the key goals of the latest strategy, the interviewee referred to some of the key issues, namely to:

"Deliver as many affordable homes as you can, stop people being in temporary accommodation, provide supported living for those who are vulnerable, compliment the adult social care agenda by providing supported living for people with learning difficulties or for older people, and to compliment the domestic violence and safer and stronger agenda by making sure we have got the right provision of domestic violence refuges in place. Of course there are many others too".

While the strategy was relevant to the whole of the district, it was acknowledged that there were certain spatial priorities. For instance, pockets of deprivation have been identified in Kingswood, Staple Hill, Cadbury Heath, Patchway and Filton as Priority Neighbourhoods and attract much of SGC's activity.

South Gloucestershire is also becoming increasingly diverse. There is a significant population growth anticipated, particularly in the older and younger age groups. Due to recent changes in immigration policy there has also been an increase in the number of migrant workers living locally. Particular attention has been given to minimise homelessness, the threat of which is heightened during a recession. It was noted by The Interviewee that the numbers living in temporary accommodation had fallen from 410 five years ago to 79 today.

Bringing empty properties back into use

SGC has adopted both 'carrot' and 'stick' policies to help minimise the number of empty homes across the district. This has helped to ensure that the number of empty homes across the district is less than half the national average. The authority was also one of the first in the south west to pursue an empty property management order which allowed the home to be taken under the control of the council and be used to accommodate families on the housing needs register.

Improving the housing stock

In the past, SGC has received government money in the form of a private sector renewal grant which was used to improve the condition of homes in South Gloucestershire. This money was used to set up and operate a gearing fund known as the Wessex Reinvestment Trust which provides residents with low-interest loans for delivering home improvements. All loans are secured by using either an equitable mortgage or an equitable charge on the property. The loan is registered at the Land Registry, meaning the property cannot be sold or change ownership without the Wessex loan being re-paid. An alternative scheme, known as Warm and Well, offers householders the potential to receive cavity wall or roof insulation at low cost or free of charge. All householders are eligible for at least a partial grant (typically 40%) although those in receipt of benefit are typically able to have the work undertaken without cost.

Maximising vulnerable residents ability to live independently

Another key aspect of SGC's service was directed to helping disabled households appropriately adapt their property. The Interviewee referred to how some £1.6 million had been spent in the last financial on this one aspect alone. Despite the budget constraints in place, it was noted that authorities were under a statutory duty to undertake the works so money had to be found, even if it meant taking funds from another funding stream.

The transcript of this interview is included at Appendix 4.

3.3. Summary of the general results of questionnaire survey – general conclusions from the survey.

Questionnaires were issued to all Councillors in the case study area, South Gloucestershire. In total, 73 questionnaires were issued both electronically by email and by post in a hard copy version. Councillors were contacted directly by mail, email and two follow-up emails. Unfortunately response rate was very poor: less than 10%.

Such a low response rate is indicative of both the context and time constraints placed upon Councillors in England and in South Gloucestershire. Many Councillors are employed on a part-time basis or undertake duties in conjunction with additional occupations. Whilst Councillors are involved in the delivery of services of general interest and decisions regarding accessibility and provision, the extent of detailed knowledge required to accurately complete the questionnaire was insufficient. A number of respondents stated that they did not have the expertise or time to complete the questionnaire.

Further to a poor response rate, this case study has focused on research and interviews with key individuals who are better equipped to discuss services of general interest in-depth.

3.4. Political contextualization of services of general interest in South Gloucestershire

As touched upon in the introduction to this report, in July 2011 the UK's coalition Government published the Open Public Services White Paper setting out the most dramatic reforms in the country's approach to public service provision since the establishment of the welfare state.

The Paper argues that:

"*Good public services are an essential part of everyday life and being able to access those services is one of the most basic requirements that we as citizens demand from government in return for our taxes.*"[65]

Whilst total public spending increased by 57% in real terms from 1997/8 to 2010/11, key international comparisons including school results, cancer survival rates, crime rates have not reflected these spending increases. The Paper contends that current organisation of the public sector is socially and economically inefficient.

The Paper argues that the current economic climate and need to stabilise the economy and reduce national debts requires a new approach to public services: opening up public services markets, giving users more control and encouraging innovation. The Paper proposes breaking down fiscal and regulatory barriers, to provide a level playing field, fair funding on the grounds of quality and accountability to all publically funded organisations.

The Paper's five driving principles are as follows:

- Increased choice wherever possible – giving direct control over services to citizens where possible, through direct payments, personal budgets, entitlements or choices;
- Public services should be decentralised to the lowest appropriate level – many services will be controlled by community groups and neighbourhood councils with others the responsibility of local authorities and elected bodies such as Police and Crime Commissioners;
- Public services should be opened up to a range of providers – high quality services may be provided by the public sector, the voluntary or community sector or the private sector;
- Fair access to public services – the State should provide additional assistance and targeted resources to ensure disadvantaged sectors of the community are not overlooked; and
- Public services should be accountable to users and to taxpayers – accountability should be either directly to citizens or through elected representatives, with specific mechanisms put in place based on the characteristics of particular public services.

The paper classifies public services into three categories:

- Individual services – personal services used on an individual basis (e.g. education, social care);
- Neighbourhood services – local services provided on a collective basis (e.g. community safety);
- Commissioned services – local and national services that cannot be devolved to individuals; or Communities (e.g. tax collection, prisons, welfare to work).

Putting the principles into practice, the Paper proposes devolving control to the lowest appropriate level. For individual services this means service users; for neighbourhood services this could mean elected councils; and for commissioned services the government will open up, and decentralise, where appropriate, commissioning to drive up the quality and diversity of provision from all sectors.

For individual services the paper proposes:

- Funding should follow user choice under frameworks derived from the five driving principles;
- Key service data (including provider performance) must be transparent;
- Providers will be licensed or registered to the relevant regulator to ensure minimum standards providing the opportunity for individuals to redress any issues, potentially through service ombudsmen and independent consumer champions;
- The government will consult on how to drive continual service improvement.

For neighbourhood services:

- The Localism Bill will give people new rights to deliver services and take control of assets;

[65] http://www.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/OpenPublicServices-WhitePaper.pdf

- Government will consult on how to promote decentralisation and assist Neighbourhood Councils to undertake responsibility for key local services; and
- Community Budgets and Local Integrated Service models are viewed as pivotal drivers to change.

For Commissioned Services:

- Government will examine where the separation of purchasers from providers makes most sense to encourage innovation and diversity of provision. They will also consult on where there is a clear case that decentralisation would improve value for money;
- Government will consult on an 'open commissioning' policy for specific services;
- Government will consult on establishing accreditation bodies, explore the creation of independent expert bodies in public services and create an annual prize for public service innovation. Payment by results will be critical to drive up the quality of central government services. For longer term services, commissioners will need to identify proxy outcomes.

The central state will continue to have an essential role in the provision of public services, however this role will be redifined as overseeing core standards and entitltements, fair funding and equality of access.

The local administrative area of South Gloucestershire will of course be impacted by public sector reforms as has been examined in the in-depth analysis above.

South Gloucestershire Unitary Authority area was previously administered by Avon County Council between 1974 and 1996 and until 1974 was part of the county of Gloucestershire. Bristol has been a city and county in its own right since 1373, apart from the years it was part of the county of Avon (1974-1996). On the abolition of Avon in 1996, Bristol reverted to its separate status. The River Avon which flows through the city and traditionally marked the border between Gloucestershire and Somerset. In 1974, Bristol became the centre of the new county of Avon, and remained so until 1996, when Avon was abolished. Bristol regained its county status, and the unitary authority of South Gloucestershire was created out of the borough of Kingswood and the district of Northavon.

The area is also part of the West of England Partnership which comprises four unitary councils: Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council. The Partnership operates in collaboration with a range of social, economic and environmental partners to ensure the future well-being of the West of England area. The overall vision of the Partnership is set out in its report "The vision for the West of England in 2026"[66].

The report sets out goals for the area for 2026:

- To be one of Europe's fastest growing and most prosperous sub regions which has closed the gap between disadvantaged and other communities – driven by major developments in employment and government backed infrastructure improvements in South Bristol and North Somerset;
- To have a buoyant economy competing internationally, based on investment by innovative, knowledge-based businesses and a high level of graduate and vocational skills;
- To have a rising quality of life for all, achieved by the promotion of healthy lifestyles, access to better quality healthcare, an upturn in the supply of affordable housing of all types and the development of sustainable communities;
- Easier local, national and international travel, thanks to transport solutions that link communities to employment opportunities and local services, control and reduce congestion and improve strategic connections by road, rail and through Bristol International Airport and seaport;
- Cultural attractions that are the envy of competitor city regions across Europe, making the West of England the place of choice for talented, creative workers and affluent visitors;
- Success secured in ways that are energy efficient, protect air quality, minimise and manage waste and protect and enhance the natural and built environment;
- To have built upon the benefits of its distinctive mix of urban and rural areas.
- Real influence with regional and national government, by demonstrating vision and leadership and delivering these achievements.

South Gloucestershire Council is also preparing for the introduction of the Localism Act which aims to provide communities and local government with greater powers and freedom to ensure that services are much more responsive to local circumstances. Some legislation may come into force in 2012 including 'the community right to build', general powers of competence for local authorities, planning reforms and changes to social housing tenure, with other measures to follow.

[66] http://www.westofengland.org/media/66721/about_partnership_19-08-08_thevisionoct05.pdf

Broadly the Act covers measures under the following key areas:

- New freedoms and flexibilities for local government;
- New rights and powers for communities and individuals;
- Reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective; and
- Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally.

A series of workshops involving the community and the voluntary sector are currently being held in Town and Parish Councils to introduce and discuss the main elements of the Act.

3.5. Conclusions of the regional case & elements of prognosis

This case study report has considered the administrative area of South Gloucestershire, which is under the control of the Unitary Local Authority South Gloucestershire Council. The UK is on the brink of major public sector reform, the most far reaching reforms the welfare state has experienced. This transition from welfare state towards a free market model was reflected in the detailed analysis undertaken. This concluding section of the report will review research findings in the context of each detailed analysis in the region.

Sewage systems & sewage treatment facilities

Sewage services in England and Wales are provided by 10 private regional water and sewerage companies. Sewage and sewage treatment in South Gloucestershire is undertaken by Wessex Water. The geographical features of the area translates to a varied scale of infrastructure installation, serving hundreds of thousands of people at one site; a handful at another.

The nature of provision is such that the South Gloucestershire provider, Wessex Water, must operate in collaboration with: the highway authorities (national and local) due to the need to manage surface drainage; the local authority having regard to the planning of urban growth and change and the implications of this upon water and sewerage demands. Further connections exist with other governmental departments and bodies involved in water and waste management, particularly DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) with regards policy and legislation, and the Environment Agency for the protection and enhancement of the environment.

The UK Government aims to improve the quality of the water environment by means of reduced pollution and sustainable abstraction, improving the status of water bodies in line with the EU Water Framework Directive.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD), requires improvements in the environmental quality of water bodies and allows for the improvements to be phased ending in 2027. Water and sewage companies will be required to ensure essential services continue to be provided to a growing population without causing unacceptable environmental impacts[ii].

South Gloucestershire may also face challenges where drainage capacity is exceeded by demand due to population growth and where increased rainfall as a result of climate change must be addressed.

The Water for Life White Paper increases competition in the SGI, however research findings highlighted scepticism around the implications of a third party operating between the customer and SGI.

Transport (including urban and suburban)

South Gloucestershire Council is a designated Centre of Excellence for the quality of its transport work and is currently the second-highest rated transport authority in the country. The main mode of public transport in the area is bus, a service which has been fully privatised with only the Council's involvement limited to providing appropriate routes and subsidising those which are not commercially viable.

The Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) is a sub-regional project between South Gloucestershire, Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, the West of England Partnership and First Group. The Network aims to reduce traffic congestion and pollution by improving ease of travel and promoting bus travel. The development of bus rapid transit corridors is included in the network to improve transit connections across the region. The interviewee, a senior member of South Gloucestershire Council's Transport Department highlighted:

'...what we are trying to do is create the environment and you know work with bus operators to ensure there are bus services that are running as far as possible as your commercial bus services so they are not a drain on the public purse which meets the needs of the travelling public'

South Gloucestershire is working with other local authorities and the West of England Partnership to improve and enhance the sub-regional rail network. Within South Gloucestershire, the council is working with sub-regional partners to increase rail capacity through new tracks and rail stations. The interviewee suggested that sub-regional partnering (e.g., through the West of England Partnership) and central government funding were critical to success of the project.

South Gloucestershire Council's Local Transport Plan also includes a strategy to encourage walking and improve accessibility.

The interviewee identified key future transport challenges related to growth projections, environmental concerns and funding:

"...if you've got growth in travel demand, a result of growth in jobs and growth in housing, then that potentially increases congestion. You won't get 100% of new trips on public transport so there is bound to be some really increasing congestion."

The council is also cognisant of the wider climate change agenda and the need to reduce carbon emissions:

"... sustainable modes are not just about trying not to allow the network to become congested and the impacts that has on the economy, but also about trying to minimise carbon emissions through the transport modes and again walking, cycling and public transport, when used efficiently, is more carbon efficient than a private car, particularly if it is single occupancy so one of the key challenges linked to that is actual behavioural change."

Broadband/Internet

The UK Government aims to provide superfast broadband to at least 90% of premises in the UK and to provide universal access to standard broadband with a speed of at least 2Mbps. Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK), a unit within DCMS, is responsible for managing the Government's broadband funding.

South Gloucestershire has joined Wiltshire and Swindon councils to work together on a BDUK initiative. This partnership means that SGC aim to be among the first in the country to sign up a commercial broadband infrastructure provider to improve broadband coverage.

BDUK has confirmed that SGC is entitled to receive £710,000 in capital grant for this project. In order to receive this grant, the council must match-fund this amount. SGC have approved investment of £2.2m in support of the scheme. Of this, £2m would be for the capital infrastructure with the remaining £200,000 being used by SGC for supporting the project (e.g. administrative support costs, surveys, publicity etc.). The overall amount of funding available will depend on the contribution made by the successful supplier.[67]

"...our role as a council is to procure and gap fund a wholesale broadband network. But the council won't actually own it or run it. We are literally the gap funders."

The interviewee idnetified three main barriers to uptake of broadband in South Gloucestershire: user skills and confidence; the useable speed of the broadband service – which is related to the distance of the user from the telephone exchange providing the link; and accessibility and affordability of the necessary hardware (laptops, PCs etc).

"Well, to start, if we think about infrastructure first of all, the barrier, as you can see from this map, is if you are in a rural area it's harder to get a good speed, a useable speed is what residents will tell you. They have all got broadband but it's not suitable for the type of applications that we all like to use. So that's the first thing, it's your location if you're in a rural area. And not only rural areas, it's really down to distance from your telephone exchange is what causes the problem. So we've got some pockets here, as you can see. This is Bradley Stoke central, which is quite a large town now, but some of them are receiving a really poor service and it's because their exchange is up here in Almondsbury, so it has to... all the copper lines are going quite a distance, so that's the first barrier. But if we talk about the more social things, it's probably accessibility to equipment, computer equipment, laptops, being able to afford those, being able to afford a broadband connection."

The main future challenges are likely to be addressing the tension between commercial viability and social desirability of widespread coverage. This is particularly likely to be the situation in rural as opposed to urban areas:

"I think it's this tension between what's commercially viable and what's not and it's that urban/rural split. I think what worries me is the way the market operates now, the commercial providers will only go where it's commercially viable for them to do it and that's where you're hearing in the Digital Britain report, it talks about a lot of the Final Third and it's how much intervention is that Final Third going to need to make sure that it is constantly at the same level as the commercially

[67] http://www.southglos.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4BC835B9-B495-4A7D-8856-4F56F002EDF3/0/CEX120008.PDF

viable areas. And I don't think that's going to be a one-off investment from the government. I'm not sure. We'll have to wait and see, but..."

Secondary education

Education provision in the UK has traditionally been delivered through a mixed of public (maintained) and private providers. The 'maintained schools' sector has undergone significant change over the last 15 years and is now primarily delivered by community, foundation and faith schools.

The introduction of Academy schools are a further 'state sector' offering. These schools are different to those noted above as although they are state funded, they fall outside of the control of the local authority and receive their income directly from central government. These are therefore independent schools but are publically funded and run. They are not required to deliver the National Curriculum[68]. South Gloucestershire currently provides 5 secondary schools which have Academy status with a further school in the process of becoming an academy in partnership with an existing local school of this type.

The most recent addition to the former state schools section is the 'free school'. These schools are effectively academies but whereas academy schools will be former local authority maintained schools, free schools will be newly established by parents, teachers, voluntary groups and/or charities without consultation with the local authority. As with academies, free schools are not required to deliver the national curriculum.

South Gloucestershire Council must address future provision needs whilst promoting choice and diversity in fulfilling their school place planning policy.

Education provision for students aged 16-18 may be provided outside of the secondary school system through Further Education insitutions.

Tertiary education

Tertiary education provision is offered through higher and further educational institutions. South Gloucestershire has two further education establishments: Filton College and City of Bristol College. Only a single HE institution is based in South Gloucestershire; the University of the West of England. Post-16 education may be provided through online learning via FE and HE institutions across the UK. Of particular note in the HE sector is the Open University, who offer online only FE, HE and adult education provision. Bath Spa University and Gloucestershire University both have links into the area through partnerships with local schools and colleges.

Quality of education is overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency, an independent body. The HE fee regime has changed significantly since the end of the 1990's with the introduction of student fees up to the current level of up to £9000. HE fees are set within fee boundaries established by central government. The level of fees set is determinant upon the universities profile with regards the entry grades of incoming students, and the level of financial support provided to less affluent students through bursaries. UWE currently charges £9000 per year to incoming UK students, with bursaries provided. UWE accredited Foundation degrees provided through partnership institutions, such as SGS College, are set at £7500. The market has not proved sensitive to student fee increased, however nationally imposed student number caps, linked to the entry grades of incoming students, means that some universities, including UWE, are reducing their student numbers.

A key dynamic with the complex education environment found across the UK today is that of partnership working and this is also the case in South Gloucestershire. Partnership between institutions across all levels of education provision is a primary characteristic of delivery in the UK.

Partnership, together with 'co-opetition', will typify the education sector in South Gloucestershire and the wider UK today and tomorrow. Joint working between intuitions at different levels of education provision can be seen as a necessary response to the changing nature of secondary education, and the increased levels of competition for students and funding seen within the FE and HE sector.

The development of University Technical Colleges, delivering vocational courses over a two year period represent a significant change in the education sector. One such UTC is being developed in South Gloucestershire and is sponsored by the University of the West of England.

New streams of funding following the recent changes to student fee arrangements in the HE sector is also seen as a key driver for change, with alumni, trusts, research and third stream funding all being seen as important potential sources of funding.

[68] http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools

A cultural shift is also in progress which will continue into the future. Students are increasingly being seen as customers purchasing a service from an educational institution. The increase in student fees has had an impact upon student expectations and universities, including UWE, need to respond to this in consideration of the support and standards offered.

Healthcare - Hospitals

The provision of public health services for South Gloucestershire is undertaken by the South Gloucestershire Primary Health Care Trust. The SG PCT currently plans and provides health services for the approximately 259,000 people who live in South Gloucestershire.[69]

The passing of the Health and Social Care Bill in March 2012 will lead to major changes in the NHS.[70] The bill sets out restructuring of the NHS in England. Commissioning of health and social care services will pass to Clinical Commissioning Groups in April 2013.

Currently the NHS is going through a period of substantial reform in relation to the nature of delivery of the service in the context of continuing budget reductions. As a consequence health care needs to continue to be rationed and the favoured approach continues to be that practised over the past ten years, with rationing directed towards the frontline as much as possible. At the same time there is a continuing need for national rationing, involving in particular the role of NICE. At the heart of the reform process, in the context of reduced funding for all service provision, is the mismatch between wants and desires and potential interventions.

"There is certainly, there's a failing around the quality of everyday experience in health care unless you happen to have a neatly packaged elective procedure where it can be run like Virgin or some other carefully planned process. If you've got any complex problems it's a very, very sub-optimal experience and again I don't see the current reforms really addressing that. There's a risk of providers cherry picking the profitable bits and leaving the patients with complex problems to – there's not a move in the current system I think to improved care co-ordination or – but we do need to get patient experience into the commissioning process in a very real way rather than just a tokenistic way, yes."

Housing

South Gloucestershire is a popular and increasingly diverse area. The area anticipates significant population growth, particularly in older and younger age groups and also an increase in migrant workers due to changes in immigration policy. In an interview undertaken with a senior stakeholder in Bristol City Council's Housing department, the interviewee emphasised:

"it's an area [South Gloucestershire] that people and business want to move to and in this respect it's been easier to keep things going compared to other parts of Bristol, or the wider sub-region. The north side of the city has a stronger market; the links to the motorway are far better for one".

South Gloucestershire Council transferred its owned housing stock to a Merlin Housing Society, a private social housing landlord in 2007. Merlin Housing Society is a not-for-profit organisation regulated by the Homes and Community Agency and has adopted the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance and Code of Conduct.

Since the transfer of housing stock the role of the Coucil has evolved. Strategic houising functions and responsibilities now focus on:

- Providing housing advice and support;
- Managing the housing register;
- Assessing whether someone is homeless and needs help with finding a home;
- Providing disabled facilities grants to adapt homes to help people live independently;
- Ensuring that private rented housing is well maintained by landlords;
- Working with providers to support vulnerable people to live independently; and
- working with housing associations and developers to provide more affordable homes.

South Gloucestershire Council, has identified key challenges based on demographic and economic particularities of the area in responding to housing needs:

- A large affordability gap between house prices and average earnings;

[69] http://www.sglos-pct.nhs.uk/
[70] http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/03/The-month_Mar-12_FINAL1.pdf

- Significant need for additional affordable housing in a climate of high land values and pressures on land use with particular problems in rural areas;
- Ensuring the sustainability of new communities;
- Preventing homelessness arising from economic uncertainties; and
- Identifying and meeting the housing, service and support needs of older and other vulnerable people.

Owner occupation is the main form of tenure in South Gloucestershire, making up 79.7% of the housing stock; private lets account for 10.5% of the total and social rented housing 9.8%. The proportion of privately rented housing has increased slightly in recent years, with the Interviewee noting that this figure has increased to 13% (with a slight decrease in the proportion of owner occupation as a result).

With respect to pursing particular priorities, the interviewee felt that SGC had been particularly successful in helping to 'Get Britain Building' by helping to unlock the delivery of affordable housing that had become stalled with the onset of the recession. SGC's Housing Enabling Team were identified as managing barriers to development on a site by site basis. Despite the current econmic downturn, the interview held that the delivery of affordable homes had been maintained:

"It's surprising how close you can still get to 35% [target percentage of affordable housing in new developments] and some of the deals we've done have been 28%, 28 ½ %; that sort of level".

Although the overall supply of affordable housing was still insufficient:

"latest thinking is that we need to deliver 900 affordable homes each year to respond to need and identified levels of backlog. The reality is that we're delivering 300".

In elaborating on the key goals of the latest strategy, the interviewee referred to some of the key issues, namely to:

"Deliver as many affordable homes as you can, stop people being in temporary accommodation, provide supported living for those who are vulnerable, compliment the adult social care agenda by providing supported living for people with learning difficulties or for older people, and to compliment the domestic violence and safer and stronger agenda by making sure we have got the right provision of domestic violence refuges in place. Of course there are many others too".

4. Conclusions

It is clear from this case study and taking into account national context, that public sector reform is pivotal to the current and future provision of services of general interest in the UK. Since the publication of the Open Services White Paper in July 2011, a deterioration of the global and European economies has led to increased fiscal pressure on the UK. The UK Government in its progress report on implementing public sector reform as set out in the White Paper states:

"As we strain every sinew to promote growth and employment against the enormously difficult economic background, it has become increasingly clear that the medium- and long-term prospects for the UK's competitiveness, growth and jobs depend heavily on public service reform. To make the UK more competitive, we need to deliver improved infrastructure, improved education and training, improved healthcare, and increasing transfer from welfare into work. This can be achieved only by improving the public services that provide these public goods."[71]

In practice, Government contends that the only way to improve public services is through competition, choice and accountability. The pace of public sector reform has increased, moving towards decentralisation in the provision of public services. Government will provide annual progress reports to Parliament with individual Government departments reporting.

The launch of the 'You have the right to choose' campaign aims to highlight public sector reform and the contention that individuals will benefit from greater control and choice in the provision of services of general interest. The establishment of Choice Champions is also underway. Champions will promote public sector reforms and provide support to citizens, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The following key conclusions have been drawn from the research findings:

- Projected population growth in the UK will lead to challenges in the provision of SGI's;
- Public sector reform will have an overarching and spectacular effect on the current provision of services;
- Public sector reform has not yet been fully rolled out however some measures have already been undertaken and many essential services of general interest are subject to preparation for reform;

[71] http://files.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/HMG_OpenPublicServices_web.pdf

- The guiding vision of a decentralised state in the context of services of general interest will be the underlying principle in reform;
- Services of general interest will increasingly be administered and controlled at a local level;
- The Localism Act will enshrine local invovlement in services of general interest;
- Investment is being undertaken to address poor provision of services and connectivity of rural areas iof the UK and to increase competition and innovation;
- NHS reforms will have a dramatic impact on the service and will fundamentally alter how healthcare is delivered across England;
- Reform of schools system in England – move to 'Academies' and free schools will change the way education is delivered, moving away from a national curriculum administered at national level to more localised provision;
- Many major changes are not yet in place – 'time will tell' where this leads South Gloucestershire and England.

[i] National Infrastructure Plan 2011 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/national_infrastructure_plan2011.htm (November 2011)

[ii] National Infrastructure Plan 2011 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/national_infrastructure_plan2011.htm (November 2011)