# Foreword

As residents, the future of our villages, towns and communities is vital to how we live our lives. As councillors and officers, we have listened to other residents, to identify what matters to local people.

Our vision is of a South Gloucestershire that is greener, fairer and more inclusive. It is of a place where people have secure, warm and affordable homes, in which they can live happy and healthy lives in thriving communities.

The Local Plan is one of the most important tools available to us to help deliver this vision.

A Local Plan is about much more than just policies, or buildings, or roads. It is about our sense of community and our pride in where we live. It sets out how we will create the places and neighbourhoods where people can meet and enjoy spending time with friends and family, where we can be productive and creative and where we can learn and develop skills to make better, more independent futures for ourselves.

This Local Plan is underpinned by a desire to improve the lives of all our residents. We have applied our core priorities to the Local Plan, so that it can support our work to build a fairer, greener future. At its heart, it is about building better places with secure, affordable housing and good sustainable transport links. The policies are also shaped by our efforts to respond to the climate and nature emergency and the positive impact good development can have in helping reduce inequalities, supporting children and young people to succeed and improving wellbeing and independence.

We face many challenges. There aren't enough homes that are genuinely affordable, and thousands of local families are in desperate need of a secure home. Public transport can be unreliable and doesn't go to the places people need to get to. And we don't yet have the infrastructure in place to make walking, wheeling and active travel a viable alternative to getting about by car. This leads to over-reliance on private vehicles, resulting in frustrating delays due to congestion, health issues caused by poor air quality and unnecessary damage to the environment. Worse, it deepens inequalities by cutting people off from access to work, education, healthcare and leisure.

We're also very aware of concerns residents have voiced about the conflicting priorities of addressing housing needs and protecting green fields. We have needed to make difficult decisions, which we know will not please everyone.

But this Local Plan faces the challenges head on and is intended to build on the positive work we are doing through our transport plan, and health and wellbeing strategy.

The plan celebrates the beauty and diversity of our countryside and green spaces. It protects our green spaces from speculative development and 'planning by appeal' allowing nature to blossom and enhancing biodiversity. It helps open access to nature for all, strengthening our connections with the land.

It champions our rich history of innovation, from mining the coal that fired the industrial revolution, to building the aircraft that today link the world. It harnesses that same bold spirit as we move on from the era of fossil fuels to help us maximise the opportunities of clean energy, nature recovery, artificial intelligence and the life sciences, strengthening South Gloucestershire's position as the region's home of innovation.

The Local Plan includes ambitious ideas to capitalise on our unique connectivity and character that will help us make it an even better place to invest or start a business. And an even better place to live, learn and raise a family.

Thank you for sharing our passion for our place, and for taking the time to read and contribute to our Local Plan. Whilst the Local Plan is by necessity a technical document and the process to provide feedback at Regulation 19 stage is legally defined, we hope that no matter who you are, when you read through it, you will recognise how ambitious we are for our place and people.





**Cllr Chris Willmore**
Cabinet Member for Planning,
Regeneration and Infrastructure

**Cllr Matt Palmer**
Labour Lead for Planning,
Regeneration and Infrastructure