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Gloucestershire First/SWRDA

**Gloucestershire
Workspace
Policy Framework
Technical Appendix 3:
Policy Context**

March 2005

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Gloucestershire Workspace Policy Framework Technical Appendix 3: Policy Context

A Final Report

by

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3 TECHNICAL APPENDIX 3: POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This Technical Appendix provides an overview of the relevant policy and initiative-based documents and identifies the possible contributions and implications for the Workspace Strategy.

The aim of the Workspace Strategy is to provide a key input into the statutory plan and strategy making process, as well as directing the priorities for support programmes being implemented by the public sector.

3.2 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

The Urban Task Force report *Towards an Urban Renaissance: Final Report of the Urban Task Force, 1999* was the precursor for the Government's Urban White Paper setting out the urban regeneration agenda to make towns and cities more attractive as places to live, work and socialise.

The report presents a series of recommendations on planning, design, participation, management and investment issues. In particular the report assesses the Government's 60% brownfield housing target, endorsing the need to maximise the re-use of previously developed land.

Table 3.1: Urban Task Force Report - Key Points

<p>Recycling land and buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable the Government to meet its 60% target by making best use of derelict, vacant and under-used land and buildings <p>Improving the urban environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create attractive urban neighbourhoods by improving the quality of design and movement, creating compact developments, with a mix of uses, better transport, and a density which supports local services and fosters a strong sense of community and public safety <p>Achieving excellence in leadership, participation and management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local authorities to lead urban renaissance with strengthened powers, resources and democratic legitimacy and undertake this role in partnership with the citizens and communities they represent <p>Delivering Regeneration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public investment should be used to lever large amounts of institutional investment into the process of regenerating our towns and cities
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The Government's Urban White Paper *'Our Towns and Cities: The Future'* published by ODPM 2000 sets out how the recommendations of the Urban Task Force are to be implemented.

The vision of the White Paper as presented in Table 3.2 is designed to create a high quality of life for all, especially those disadvantaged and excluded.

Figure 3.2: Urban White Paper - Vision

A New Vision of Urban Living

- **People shaping the future** of their community, supported by strong and truly representative local leaders;
- People living in **attractive, well-kept towns and cities** which use space and buildings well;
- Good design and planning which makes it practical to live in a **more environmentally sustainable** way, with less noise, pollution and traffic congestion;
- Towns and cities able to create and share prosperity, investing to help all their citizens reach their full potential; and
- Good quality services, health, education, housing, transport, finance, shopping, leisure and protection from crime that meets the needs of people and businesses wherever they are.

The Government *Rural White Paper 'Our Countryside: The Future'* Published by former MAFF in November 2000 set out the strategy for the countryside with the aim to evolve rural areas in ways which enhance landscape and biodiversity.

The vision for the Countryside, as set out in the Rural White Paper is as follows:

Table 3.3: Rural White Paper - Vision

A New Vision for Living in the Countryside

- **A living countryside**, with thriving rural communities and access to high quality public services;
- **A working countryside**, with a prosperous and diverse economy, giving high and stable levels of employment;
- **A protected countryside**, in which the environment is sustained and enhanced, and which all can enjoy; and
- **A vibrant countryside** which can shape its own future and whose voice is heard by government at all levels.

Key Components:

1. For Country Residents:

- Investment in better public services – schools, health, transport and crime reduction – and a rural service standard, reviewed annually;
- 3,000 new affordable homes every year in small settlements;
- Access to a wide range of day-to-day transactions through post offices, internet and local small businesses;
- A bigger say in community planning.

2. For Rural Businesses:

- Investment in market towns and more targeted help from RDAs;
- Better transport, ICT coverage, skills training and business advice;
- Potential reduction in rate bills.

3. For Farmers:

- More money for agri-environment schemes, marketing grants and tailored business advice to help modernise and improve agricultural, horticultural and forestry holdings;
- Help with planning to enable farmers to use surplus farm buildings and, less burdensome regulation generally;
- Help with diversification, marketing and skill training;
- Support for small and medium sized abattoirs.

4. For Everyone:

- Stronger protection for our most valued landscapes, and for wildlife and habitats;
- More access and a better rights of way network;
- A living, working countryside maintained for the benefit of us all, wherever we live.

The Rural White Paper makes reference to “a new commitment to market towns” to tackle issues of poverty and deprivation and create opportunities for regeneration. The Rural White Paper refers to the funding available to Regional Development Agencies to lead market town regeneration plans. SWRDA’s Market and Coastal Town Initiative is implementing the aims and objectives of the Rural White Paper to enhance the role and economic performance of key market towns.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, August 2004 sets out the review of the existing PPG7 – The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development published in February 1997, although this pre-dates the publication of the Rural White Paper and other Government initiatives.

The key policies relating to development in rural areas are set out in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: PPS7 – Key Points

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outside urban areas, planning authorities should focus most new development in or near to local service centres, where employment, housing (affordable housing) services and other facilities can be provided close together. This should help to ensure that these facilities are served by public transport and provide some potential for access by walking and cycling. These centres should be identified in the development plan as the preferred location for such development.• Away from these centres, planning authorities should allow some limited development to meet local business, community and identified local housing needs, particularly in order to maintain the viability and vitality of smaller towns and villages.• In terms of business development, planning authorities should support a wide range of economic activity in rural areas, particularly where traditional rural-based industries are in decline.• In addition the PPS7 promotes the re-use of existing buildings within or adjacent to country towns and villages for business or community uses, as well as promoting farm diversification and tourism and leisure development in sustainable locations, having regard to the rigmaroles of PPG13 – Transport. |
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Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) – Planning for Town Centres, March 2005 replaces the existing Revised PPG6 – Town Centres and Retail Developments, June 1996 and includes policies for offices, which are relevant to the workspace strategy.

PPS6 reinforces the sequential approach to the selection of sites for development within Local Plans relating to retail and leisure uses, and also offices. The order of the sequential approach is town centre, the first choice for development, taking into account the scale of development being promoted in the centre, second edge-of-centre sites and thirdly out-of-centre sites.

In rural areas, local planning authorities are urged to focus development in or near local service centres, such as market towns and key villages, to maximise accessibility by public transport including walking and cycling, whilst ensuring that the lack of public transport facilities should not preclude small-scale retail or service development where these would serve local needs.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 4 PPG4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms, November 1992 is now over ten years old, and has not been significantly updated over this period, although it remains the principal national guidance for

employment planning. Table 3.5 sets out the key points that are relevant to the development of a workspace strategy for Gloucestershire.

Table 3.5: PPG4 - Key Points

<p>In planning land for industry and commerce, planning authorities should ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A sufficient supply of available land;• Land that is capable of development and well served by infrastructure;• A variety of sites available to meet differing needs;• A choice of suitable sites to facilitate competition between developers;• New development in locations that minimise the length and number of trips;• New development in locations that can be served by more energy efficient modes of transport;• The discouragement of new development where it would be likely to add unacceptably to congestion;• The location of development, requiring access to mainly local roads, away from trunk roads to avoid unnecessary congestion;• The identification of under-used or vacant employment land with appropriate alternative uses to optimise these sites and premises in inner city areas.
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The Government released its Scoping Study for the revised **Planning Policy Guidance 4 (PPG4) 'Planning for Economic Development'** in May 2004 to update the existing PPG4. The Scoping Study was undertaken on behalf of the ODPM by ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd and Roger Tym and Partners.

The key recommendations highlighted in the report are as follows:

Table 3.6: ODPM Planning for Economic Development

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of the demand and supply of employment land is to be co-ordinated at the regional level;• Sites of national, regional and sub-regional significance to be identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy;• Criteria-based approach to be used to identify sites based upon a range of factors including market realism and sustainability;• Planning departments should undertake a review of sites at least every three years;• Wholesale review of sites as part of the LDF/UDP review;• De-allocate or change of use of sites, where they are unlikely to come forward in the medium term;• Use safeguarding policies including the criteria upon which change of use will be considered, which should be reviewed regularly;• Use of Supplementary Planning Guidance both on a site basis and as an articulation of policy;• Utilise mixed use;• Promotion of business clusters/sectors and types of groups of firms at the local level, acknowledging the problem of the Use Class Orders not fitting easily with these categories;• Steering development towards market towns and the identification of priority areas.

Proposed Coverage of the Revised PPG4, includes the following potential key policies:

Table 3.7: Revised PPG4 – Key Points

<p>1. Ensuring an adequate supply of sites and premises through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. Assessing the amount of land required;ii. Assessing the suitability of potential sites and premises;<ul style="list-style-type: none">- location and accessibility;- availability of previously developed sites;- capacity of existing and potential infrastructure;- physical and environmental constraints on the development of land;- building communities;- Needs of different economic sectors and different types of business.iii. Location criteria – where appropriate new development is channelled towards existing urban areas. Where urban locations are not appropriate, sites should be assessed on the basis of their proximity to public transport networks. Authorities will need to reflect the needs of different economic sectors and formulate appropriate policies. In general:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offices – a sequential search for sites will be appropriate;• R&D – a sequential search for sites is likely to be appropriate with connections to key R&D centres an appropriate consideration;• Industry – site location criteria are likely to vary by the nature of proposed use;• Distribution – sites are likely to be in out-of-town locations. <p>When assessing the location of sites, planners should not seek to separate residential, commercial and industrial activity unless there are strong reasons for doing so.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Reusing sites and premises – over and above those (sites) which have not been previously developed;3. Ensuring a suitable range of sites and premises – for small business expansion, start-ups and inward investment;4. Ensuring an adequate supply of sites throughout the lifetime of the plan – not just a certain period, say 5-years;5. Supporting sustainable communities – mixed-use development is encouraged where the relationship between residential and employment uses is appropriate;6. Supporting sustainable economies – planning policies can have a role in supporting the promotion of economic strategies focused around identified clusters or networks of firms;7. Linking developments with public transport – minimising the need to travel and promoting sustainable modes of transport, locating commercial developments around major nodes along good transport corridors;8. Identifying certain industrial activity on particular sites that supports the Regional Economic Strategy.
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3.3 REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will provide a shift from land-use based policies to spatially based policies within the development plan. The Act will reinforce the plan-led system with statutory development plans remaining the starting point in the consideration of planning applications.

The existing regional planning guidance note, including RPG10 will be replaced by **Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS's)** with statutory status reinforcing the Government's regional agenda and setting a more certain planning framework for each region. The new RSSs are set to be similar in content to the existing RPGs, but will provide a more detailed sub-regional strategy to replace the County Structure Plans that are due to be abolished

under the new Act. In recognition of the difficulties of tackling sub-regional issues through the new planning system the Regional Planning Body has identified six Joint Study Areas where a clear strategic policy is required to inform the RSS. Within the County policies for the **Cheltenham and Gloucester Joint Study Area (a ‘City Region’ area that incorporates Principal Urban Areas and surrounding hinterland)** are to be formulated in the next 12 months as part of the new Regional Spatial Strategy. A consultation document ‘Shaping the Future of Cheltenham and Gloucester to 2026’ was published in January 2005 setting out some growth options for the area. The options within the document are:

- Option 1: Main focus on North of Gloucester;
- Option 2: Main focus on North/West Cheltenham;
- Option 3: Main focus on Central Green Belt around Junction 11 of the M5;
- Option 4: Dispersed Smaller Sites option including Green Belt and Non-Green Belt.

The Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) together with the **Gloucestershire Structure Plan Third Alteration** and **District Local Plans** currently set out policies for sustainable employment growth, recognising the need to provide local job opportunities for local residents.

RPG10 sets out the regional sustainable development framework, which together with SWRDA’s Regional Economic Strategy sets the strategy for the implementation of employment policies.

The spatial strategy outlined in the RPG and the County Structure Plan provides the context for delivering the sustainable development framework, identifying a hierarchy of centres to focus development plan making. The key development areas identified in Gloucestershire, taken from the Structure Plan Third Alteration Proposed Modifications, July 2004 include:

- **Principal Urban Areas (PUAs)** – Gloucester and Cheltenham, where the majority of development should be concentrated (Policies SD.1);
- **Major Towns** - Tewkesbury/Ashchurch, Stroud/Stonehouse and Cirencester where the level of growth accommodated relate to the role and function of the settlement rather than accommodating growth that should be provided for in the PUAs (Policy SD.4);
- **Market Towns** – are identified for smaller scale development to support local services and the social and economic well-being of local communities (Policy SD.5);
- **Other Rural Settlements** – Outside of the PUAs, Major Towns and Market Towns commercial and industrial development should be limited to those settlements that are well served by public transport services (Policy SD.6);
- **Forest of Dean Southern Area** – where priority is given to physical regeneration and improved accessibility to key market towns such as Cinderford, Coleford and Lydney through the provision of balanced, mixed use developments. Lydney and Cinderford in particular are identified in the Structure Plan Third Alteration as foci for growth (Policy SD.8). The regeneration of the Southern Area of the Forest of Dean is supported by programmes such as the SWRDA’s MCTI initiative and EP/RDA National Coalfields Programme.

The development strategy as set out in the Structure Plan Third Alteration Proposed Modifications will for three years following its adoption continue to inform the preparation

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of Local Plans/Local Development Frameworks, although it is anticipated that the Cheltenham and Gloucester JSA is likely to gain prominence within the Regional Spatial Strategy over the existing RPG10 Principal Urban Areas definition.

Guidance on employment sites is set out in Policy EC 3 of RPG10, advising local authorities, SWRDA and other organisations to provide a range and choice of employment sites to meet the needs of local businesses and inward investment, focusing on:

- Major strategic sites – usually more than 12 hectares according to RPG10 and identified in the Structure Plan Third Alteration Proposed Modifications, July 2004 as Gloucester Business Park – Brockworth/Hucclecote; Tewkesbury Business Park; and RAF Quedgeley/Waterwell’s Business Park;
- Locally significant sites – usually less than 12 hectares according to RPG10, and identified in the Local District Plans. The Structure Plan Proposed Modifications, July 2004 also creates a policy for Other Strategically Significant Employment Sites (SD.16) where small sites can play a significant role through high job densities, especially within Use Classes A2 and B1;
- Regional and local economic clusters;
- Expansion of other businesses and needs of the public sector;
- Particular users.

In identifying employment sites, each authority needs to have regard to the sustainable development criteria of the strategy by:

- Preference to urban areas, particularly previously developed land;
- Well integrated and accessible to sources of labour and business services;
- Providing a realistic choice of access, including public transport;
- Supporting programmes of regeneration in urban and rural areas and coastal towns;
- In rural areas, being primarily at the most accessible locations;
- Supporting sustainable farm diversification schemes, particularly where these are accessible by public transport.

RPG10 also sets specific policies for the PUAs of Gloucester and Cheltenham at Policy SS12 as follows:

- Economic and housing development at sustainable locations, either through the intensification of development within the urban areas or, if all development needs cannot be met in this way, through planned urban expansions;
- A review of the Green Belt...;
- Investment in public transport and in other measures to reduce road traffic and congestion in and around the urban areas.

In relation to the review of the Green Belt Policy SD.9 of the Structure Plan Third Alteration Proposed Second Modifications sets out the following policy:

“The Green Belt between Gloucester and Cheltenham and north of Cheltenham will be maintained. Within the Green Belt only appropriate development which would not compromise the open character of the Green Belt or which would not contribute to the coalescence of settlements will be permitted. The boundaries of the Green Belt will be reviewed in order to provide for future sustainable patterns of development for the PUAs

post-2016. The County's Green Belt review will be finalised through the Regional Spatial Strategy, which will supersede this policy".

The work being undertaken for the Cheltenham and Gloucester Joint Study Area, which will feed into the Regional Spatial Strategy is likely to update the policies as set out in RPG10.

The role of rural areas is also a key theme of RPG10 with market towns the principal focus for development, supported by the provision of small-scale rural employment, especially where sustainable farm diversification is achievable in close proximity to settlements and providing sustainable commuting patterns.

As well as the sustainable principles expressed in RPG10, there are a number of sustainable policies and strategies that SWRDA and other bodies in the South West endorse. Key sustainable initiatives include:

- The Sustainable Development Framework: A Sustainable Future for the South West produced by Sustainability South West and South West Regional Assembly;
- The Sustainable Construction Charter for the South West promoted by Sustainability South West and Future Foundations;
- Local Agenda 21 and community strategies produced by local authorities;
- Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) adopted by developers to ensure good environmental performance of buildings;
- CABE's Design Review Committee providing free advice on the design of significant developments.

3.4 LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

At the local level, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 replaces the existing District Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). LDFs comprise a series of Local Development Documents (LDDs) some of which have development plan status with others having the status of supplementary planning guidance. Local planning authorities are required to draw up a Local Development Scheme, setting out the LDDs that they intend to produce. The LDDs include a set of core policies; site-specific policies; and Area Action Plans (AAPs). The AAPs will provide a clear focus for the development of local areas and a mechanism for promoting the assembly and delivery of sites for employment uses.

All Local Plans in Gloucestershire not only allocate appropriate amounts of employment land but set out policies to protect existing uses and allocations. Local planning authorities are advised by Government that they should ensure that their local plans contain clear land-use policies for different types of industrial and commercial development and positive policies to provide for the needs of small businesses.

3.5 REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

SWRDA's Regional Economic Strategy (RES) is intended to provide clarity for decision-makers and stakeholders across the south west and is an important tool in guiding investment decisions. The overall vision of the RES is to ensure that *'The South West of England will have an economy where the aspirations and skills of our people combine with*

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the quality of our physical and cultural environment to provide a high quality of life and sustainable prosperity for everyone.'

The Strategy states that the vision can be achieved through three economic drivers, namely:

- Innovation and enterprise;
- Skills and learning; and
- Environment.

In order to achieve the vision, a mission has been developed which aims to increase the sustainable prosperity and productivity of the region. The mission statement has been translated into three strategic objectives:

- To raise business productivity;
- To increase economic inclusion; and
- To improve regional communications and partnership.

To deliver the aims of the Regional Economic Strategy, the following important and emerging sectors are identified are being targeted for development.

Important Sectors:

- Tourism;
- Food & drink;
- Advanced engineering;
- ICT; and
- Marine.

Emerging Sectors:

- Environmental Technology;
- Creative Industries; and
- Biotechnology.

The Workspace Strategy can contribute towards their achievement. It is an important tool in securing an appropriate supply of land and premises for business needs. The Strategy must ensure that a range of sites are provided that encourages the growth of businesses whilst promoting brownfield development.

The Gloucestershire Economic Strategy has been prepared in response to the Regional Economic Strategy. The Economic Strategy translates the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy into specific aims and objectives for Gloucestershire.

The Vision of the strategy is to create 'a high value-added economy with a balance between sectors, a wide geographical spread of wealth and a highly skilled and motivated workforce living in sustainable communities in a quality environment'.

The Strategy identifies key issues as priorities to be tackled over the lifetime of the Strategy as set out in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Key Issues in Gloucestershire

- Creating new jobs;
- Supporting our key employment sectors;
- Improving productivity;
- Identifying new economic opportunities;
- Innovation and research;
- Using the opportunities presented by our academic and research institutions;
- Identified skill shortages and the need to deliver training more effectively;
- Recruitment problems in particular business sectors;
- The growing importance of the social economy;
- Infrastructure deficiencies and the need to modernise the County's communications;
- Land and premises issues;
- Persisting problems of deprivation and social exclusion;
- Problems of low rural incomes, unemployment, housing and accessibility;
- Defining the future role of our major centres;
- The desire for a more sustainable economy;
- The importance of Gloucestershire's character and culture.

In association with the Regional Economic Strategy, the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy identifies a number of target sectors for development. The important and emerging sectors are as follows:

Important Sectors:

- Leisure & tourism;
 - Food supply chain;
 - Advanced engineering;
 - ICT;
 - Financial Services.
- Emerging Sectors:**
- Environmental Technology;
 - Media/Publishing (Creative Industries).

The Workspace Strategy is an important tool to create a high value-added economy in Gloucestershire. It is an important tool in ensuring that an appropriate range of sites and premises are available, in order to encourage and not constrain the growth of businesses, which meet the requirements of modern, high value occupiers.

The Rural Economic Strategy for Gloucestershire has been prepared with the aim 'to provide clear strategic objectives and priorities for the development of the Gloucestershire rural economy during the period 2003-2010'.

The Vision of the Strategy is that 'Rural Gloucestershire will have an economy where the aspirations and skills of the people combine with the quality of the physical and cultural environment to provide a high quality of life and sustainable prosperity for everyone'.

This Vision will be delivered through four strategic objectives for rural Gloucestershire, as follows:

- To raise business productivity;
- To increase economic inclusion;
- To strengthen rural communities; and

- To realise fully the economic potential of the rural environment.

A number of key strategic actions are identified in the Strategy to deliver the four objectives. The most relevant actions for this study are set out in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Key Issues for Rural Gloucestershire

- The retention of the manufacturing sector using advanced engineering and innovation;
- Nurturing and growth of micro-businesses;
- Expansion of future growth sectors;
- Reinvigorating market towns as centres of economic activity;
- Supporting villages, particularly isolated ones;
- Improving physical communications and access;
- A planning system that enables appropriate economic development.

It is important that the Workspace Strategy considers the needs and aspirations of rural communities, ensuring appropriate sustainable development to meet the needs of local business and workers.

A number of rural issues affecting the farming community are being tackled through the **Agricultural Strategy for Gloucestershire 2002-2005**. The key strategic objectives of the Strategy are set out in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10: Strategic Objectives of the Agricultural Strategy

- Help the agricultural sector in Gloucestershire manage the inevitable changes over the next decade successfully so that it is competitive, forward looking and profitable;
- Assist the agricultural sector in Gloucestershire market itself so that customers are more aware of agricultural issues and more local produce is used locally;
- Ensure that those working in the land-based sector in Gloucestershire have the skills needed to compete in world markets;
- Increase the recognition of the role that the farmer and land manager does and can play in maintaining a diverse countryside and in sustaining the wider rural economy; and
- Make diversification a reality rather than a theory.

SWRDA's Innovation Strategy sets out the framework for stimulating innovation across the region through a variety of mechanisms to develop a culture of entrepreneurship. The objectives of the study are:

1. To create a culture within the region that encourages innovation in all sectors of business, public sector, education, research organisations and the voluntary sector;
2. To strengthen the skills and capabilities of businesses, especially within the priority sectors, to operate in an innovative manner; and
3. To develop greater understanding of foreseen changes and potential for innovation in the region's businesses.

Within the Strategy there are specific actions to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship through the network of Higher and Further Educational Institutions, including the further development of technology transfer, developing of expertise in innovation methods and their implementation, and developing entrepreneurial skills of students.

There are opportunities within Gloucestershire to increase innovation and development of new entrepreneurs through HE and FE institutions such as University of Gloucestershire, Royal Agricultural College, GlosCAT, and Hartpury College.

Gloucestershire First are to formulate an Innovation Strategy for the County.

SWRDA's Incubation and Science Parks Strategy focuses on and supports the development of innovative high growth start up businesses in the region. The strategy concentrates on improving the provision of incubation units and science parks.

The Vision of the Strategy is to ensure that 'by 2012 the South West is a leading region for facilitating the development, attraction and retention of high growth companies within its economically important sectors, through the provision of world class incubation facilities and industry clustering'.

The Strategy states that the Vision can be delivered through five key drivers:

- Demand and profile;
- Supply;
- Mentoring;
- Networking; and
- Cluster development.

The Strategy sets out the existing provision of science parks and incubation units in the south west and future planned developments. Gloucestershire has an existing innovation centre - Cotswold Innovation Centre at Rissington Business Park, Upper Rissington managed by Oxford Innovation Ltd. There are no science parks in Gloucestershire and no current plans to provide such development.

There may be additional opportunities to provide incubators/networks or innovation centres in Gloucestershire to nurture and develop new businesses. Existing clusters, educational or research & development hubs, such as Cheltenham Film Studios, GCHQ, Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association, and University of Gloucestershire, Royal Agricultural College, Hartpury College could play an important role in the development of this type of workspace linked to the key elements of SWRDA's Innovation Strategy and the impending Gloucestershire Innovation Strategy.

3.6 SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

SWRDA's 'Sites and Premises Initiative' is the principal public sector funding mechanism available to deliver sites and premises across the South West. The basis for assessing bids for financial support will be the Workspace Strategy. The Sites and Premises document sets out the physical investment priorities of SWRDA. Three priority strands have been developed:

- Knowledge Economy (High-growth companies) – providing a range of high support business environments which foster the growth of knowledge transfer;
- New and Expanding Businesses – aimed at projects within the key sectors or target regeneration areas;
- Rural Businesses – creating employment opportunities in rural areas with the aim of helping to tackle rural deprivation.

The overall aim of the Agency's initiative is to improve the region's economic performance by providing a high quality business environment, which attracts and retains companies in the region.

Gloucestershire is a predominately rural County and there is a need to ensure that the requirements of the rural community are met. The aim of **SWRDA's Rural Renaissance** is to help and encourage the sustainable economic development of rural communities. The programme identifies three strategic priorities:

- Priority 1: To assist the development of a dynamic and sustainable economy in rural areas;
- Priority 2: To improve access to work, education, training and retraining opportunities;
- Priority 3: To encourage innovative service delivery through the development of multi-use facilities, support for social enterprise and improved access to and use of ICT.

In terms of the rural economy, any employment property scheme identified through SWRDA's Rural Renaissance programme should apply for funding through the Sites and Premises Initiative, say for example in converting redundant farm buildings. There is no limit on funds for individual projects and SWRDA are seeking to implement schemes through a combination of direct delivery, partnership, joint ventures and grants.

3.7 OTHER INITIATIVES

In addition to the two key support programmes for workspace within the region, there are other important initiatives with the potential to deliver employment uses within the County.

SWRDA's Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI) is a community based enabling programme which provides initial funding for communities to develop a framework for the future development of their towns. Any town in Gloucestershire can apply for support under the MCTI, but only those that have significant economic issues receive any funding to help develop a community framework.

The Vision for the Initiative is to create vibrant, healthy and sustainable market and coastal towns in the South West by helping local communities and their partners to:

Table 3.11: MCTI - Vision

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare plans for the future that cover all aspects of community life in their towns and surrounding rural areas;• Develop the skills and strengths needed to be effective partners;• Share good ideas and learn from local, regional, national and international experience; and• Secure the funding and professional help to turn these plans into reality. |
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The Lister Petter site at Cam is currently being developed through the MCTI.

Within the community plans formulated, there is the potential for workspace to be identified as a key spatial priority. It should be noted that an 'arm's length' company is to be set up to oversee the MCTI.

In addition to the MCTI there are other community plans being prepared by Parish/Town Councils that may provide an opportunity to bring forward workspace.

English Partnerships National Coalfields Programme operated with the regional development agencies began in 1996 to address economic, environmental and social issues within former coalfield communities in England. Through a ring-fenced budget of over £385m during its 10-year lifetime, the National Coalfields Programme aims to deliver:

- Environmental improvements and development infrastructure to help realise the potential of coalfield communities;
- Added value through links with complementary initiatives; and
- New mechanisms for a holistic application of government policy e.g. a recently established working arrangement with the Forest Commission, which aims to bring the benefits of managed woodland to coalfield communities.

The Forest of Dean is the only area in Gloucestershire that is eligible for support in regenerating coalfield communities. There are six sites identified within the Forest of Dean for support – Cannop, Lightmoor, Northern United, Park End Sidings, Princess Royal and Steam Mills.

The development of employment opportunities in the form of new workspace could be a key output of the National Coalfields Programme in the Forest of Dean.

The Gloucester Urban Regeneration Company (URC) established by the ODPM in February 2004 to unlock brownfield sites and deliver regeneration projects in central Gloucester has a budget of £750,000 per annum for the first three years, provided by its principal partners – SWRDA, EP, Gloucester City Council and Gloucestershire County Council. Key schemes identified for renewal include, Blackfriars, development of the Docks and Western Waterfront and the scheme for the former cattle market.

As part of the regeneration, under-utilised traditional employment sites are likely to be redeveloped for mixed-use development incorporating new workspace to promote target and emerging growth sectors within the heart of the city.

3.8 PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

The role of the Workspace Strategy is to provide a key input into the new planning documents to be produced as part of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as well as helping to deliver the objectives of the current planning policies and economic strategies.

The formulation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks should incorporate the aims and objectives of the Workspace Strategy presented in this report.

The strategy needs to take into account the focus of existing policy direction. In terms of the economic strategies the need to raise business productivity through the identified important and emerging sectors and business clusters is a priority. In terms of development planning, a sliding scale of priorities is set out in the RPG and the County Structure Plan with the Cheltenham and Gloucester Joint Study Area to become the key area within which major development is to be located. In terms of regeneration, the

Gloucestershire Workspace Policy Framework
Technical Appendix 3: Policy Context

Southern Area of the Forest of Dean is identified as a priority area, along with the Gloucester URC area and market towns within the Market & Coastal Towns Initiative.

The new planning system and support programmes offers the public and private sector the opportunities to promote, assemble and deliver a variety of workspace schemes in sustainable locations across the County in urban and rural areas. Access to employment opportunities in rural locations continues to be a key theme in Gloucestershire with the newly adopted Rural Economic Strategy promoting appropriate business development, especially of micro-businesses.