



South Somerset District Council

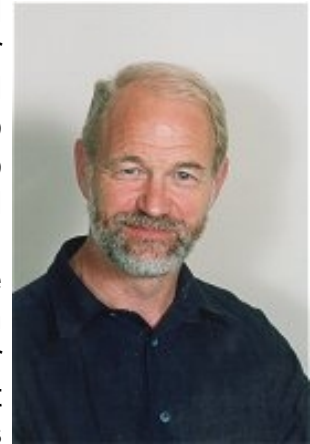


Proposed Submission South Somerset Local Plan 2006 - 2028

June 2012

Foreword

This Local Plan is designed to provide the vision and framework that will shape the future of South Somerset for decades to come. Despite having a focus on the period between now and 2028 it tries to place the need to accommodate growth within the way we want the District to look and feel as a place to live in 100 years from now and beyond. Bygone eras, particularly the Victorians, designed, laid out and built in a way that would endure and form the base of what today we value as the feel and look of South Somerset. It is the core of our Hamstone villages and our distinctive Market towns that still represent the best of the built form of this District. In the last 80 years we have not always done so well and demolition has often been the only answer.



We need to and can do better despite difficult economic times and the starting point has to be a sound Local Plan that is visionary but based on realism. Within the bounds of what is reasonable and realistic we should not settle for second best. Competing demands in relation to our Health, Homes, Jobs and the Environment all have to be balanced and at times there will be conflict as we try to ensure that we meet need in a way that is fair and broadly equitable to all our society, not just selected groups. The Ministerial foreword to the National Planning Policy Framework states that Sustainable means “better lives for ourselves does not mean worse lives for future generations”. This Plan seeks to endorse that statement for South Somerset.

Ric Pallister
Leader of the Council

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Table of Contents

1 Introduction	1
What is the Local Plan?	1
Purpose of the Local Plan	1
Stages so far	2
Sustainable Development	4
Habitat Regulation Assessment	6
Evidence Base	6
Policy Context	6
National Context	8
Regional Context	9
South Somerset Context	9
Next Steps	10
2 Spatial Portrait of South Somerset	12
Economic Prosperity	12
Rural Employment	14
Housing	14
Transport and Accessibility	15
Health and Well Being	16
Environmental Quality	16
Historic Environment	17
3 Strategic Objectives and Vision	18
Strategic Objectives	18
The Vision for 2028	19
4 Settlement Strategy	22
Settlement Hierarchy	22
Scale of Growth for the District and the Main Settlements	34
Distribution of Housing Growth	47
Infrastructure Delivery	56
Phasing of Development	60
5 Yeovil - Vision and Proposals	62
Spatial Portrait	62
Local Aspirations - the 'Yeovil Vision'	64
What should the Local Plan deliver?	66
6 Market Towns - Vision and Proposals	87
Primary Market Towns - Chard	88
Primary Market Towns - Crewkerne	99
Primary Market Towns - Ilminster	103
Primary Market Towns - Wincanton	107
Local Market Towns - Ansford/Castle Cary	112

Local Market Towns - Langport/Huish Episcopi	116
Local Market Towns - Somerton	121
7 Rural Centres - Vision and Proposals	125
Bruton	125
Ilchester	128
Martock/Bower Hinton	131
Milborne Port	134
South Petherton	137
Stoke sub Hamdon	139
8 Economic Prosperity	142
Job Growth and Employment Land Requirements	143
Offices	145
Safeguarding Employment Land	147
Delivering Employment Land in the Countryside	149
Communications Infrastructure	156
Tourism	157
Town Centre Uses	159
Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services	170
9 Housing	173
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	173
Previously Developed Land Target	175
Affordable Housing	177
Market Housing	182
Lifetime Homes, Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation	184
Park Homes	185
Empty Properties	186
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	186
Replacement dwellings and extensions in the countryside	188
Agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings in the countryside	189
10 Transport and Accessibility	192
A Generic District wide Modal Shift Policy	193
Travel Plans	202
Transport Impacts of Development	206
Parking Standards	208
11 Health and Well Being	210
Provision of Open Space, Outdoor Playing Space and Sports, Cultural and Community Facilities in New Development	211
Sports Zone	214
Existing Outdoor Sports, Play and Youth Provision	216
12 Environmental Quality	218
Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset	218
Design/General Development	225
Historic Environment	228

Biodiversity and New Development230
Green Infrastructure232
Woodlands and Forest235
Pollution Control237
Equine Development238
13 Implementation and Monitoring240
Proposals Maps241
Appendices 1-3245

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1 Introduction

What is the Local Plan?

1.1 This document is the latest stage in the preparation of the Council's Local Plan, which sets out the long term vision and strategic context for managing and accommodating growth within South Somerset until 2028.

1.2 This document is called the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2006 – 2028 and follows from the Draft Core Strategy including Preferred Options which was consulted upon in summer 2010 and the issues and comments made as part of that consultation have been incorporated into this version where appropriate. The change of name reflects the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) whilst the change of final date reflects the desire to retain a 15 year time horizon for the Plan upon adoption.

1.3 The Local Plan is one element of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and provides the framework for preparing all other types of documents in the LDF which will include other Development Plan Documents, such as a charging schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Neighbourhood Plans and supplementary Planning Documents which may be prepared to give greater guidance on the policies and proposals such as design guidance and Green Infrastructure strategy.

1.4 Following further public consultation on this Proposed Submission Local Plan the document will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent Examination.

Purpose of the Local Plan

1.5 The Local Plan provides the approach for development in South Somerset and sets out the spatial elements of the South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)¹. It sets out a long-term spatial vision, strategic objectives and policies to guide public and private sector investment up to 2028. It includes Development Management policies, which will be used along with national planning policy² to assess individual planning applications. Details on implementation and monitoring shows how the Local Plan will be delivered and sets out how individual policies will be delivered against the relevant policies.

1.6 The Local Plan has been set out to reflect the 5 Themes in the SCS³ and within each section linkages with the SCS are identified. The SCS has been produced by the Local Strategic Partnership and is a statement of the local communities'

1.[Shaping South Somerset, A Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026]

2.[National planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy framework published 27th March 2012, any additional policy documents and retained planning circulars and statutes.]

3.[The SCS themes are Wellbeing; Environmentally Sensitive; Thriving Economy; Well Run, Well Served and Well Connected; Well Designed and Well Built.]

aspirations, objectives and plans, which the Local Plan should deliver, where relevant, through its spatial policies and proposals. Spatial planning is not limited to things that the District Council control and therefore working with other partners to deliver the overall objectives for the District will be essential.

1.7 A major part of the Local Plan is planning for sustainable development with a strategy for delivering this within the District including identification of broad locations for employment and housing growth and policies for assessing development proposals. All policies include accompanying text, setting out the reason and need for the policy, and how the policy will be delivered and monitored where appropriate. It is important that the Local Plan be read as a whole. District wide policies and policies for settlements, for example, elaborate on and add to the spatial strategy.

1.8 A Proposals Map (Ordnance Survey based) is published alongside the written document. This identifies the spatial proposals of the Local Plan and inset maps show greater detail for individual settlements.

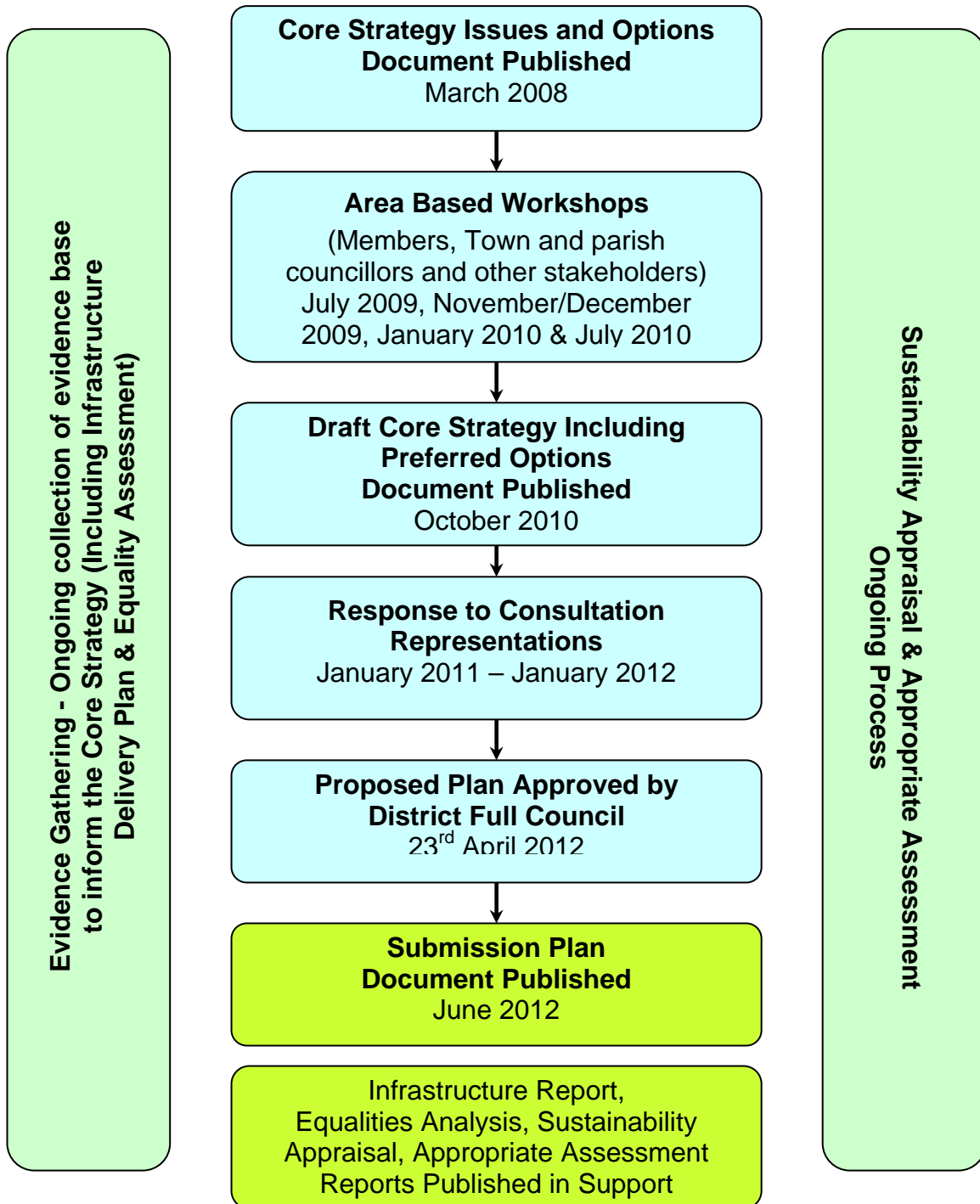
Stages so far

1.9 The Council published the Local Plan Issues and Options document in March 2008. Since its publication, gathering and updating of the Evidence Base has been ongoing and refinements made as a result of the consultation responses. There have been 'frontloading' exercises (early engagement) with the Town and Parish Councils and stakeholders. The Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options was published for consultation in October 2010 ending 3rd December. Following that the Council has reviewed the 950 responses with 2850 specific issues. These have then been considered by the Council's LDF Project Management Board (PMB), delegated by the Council's District Executive to oversee the plan process. The PMB has also considered the implications of the Localism Act, NPPF and other sundry policy statements and these have been taken into account in this document.

1.10 The Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset (IP) is published and available alongside this Proposed Submission Plan.

1.11 The emerging policies have been considered by the Council's 4 Area Committees, the District Executive Committee and Full Council. [Figure 1: Local Plan Progress to date](#) sets out the process that has taken place to reach this stage in the production of the Local Plan.

Figure 1: Local Plan Progress to date



Sustainable Development

1.12 The principles of 'sustainable development' are central to the planning system. A common definition of sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"⁴. The NPPF (paras 11-16) sets out what is meant by the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" and recommends that Policies in the Local Plan should follow this presumption.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

1.13 The Framework recognises that sustainable development is about change for the better. It is about positive growth, making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly. They are mutually dependent.

1.14 In line with Government policy advice, the Council has adopted a positive approach in seeking to meet the objectively assessed development needs of the District. The policies in the Local Plan provide a clear framework to guide development that creates positive, sustainable growth, therefore following the presumption in favour of sustainable development, enabling proposals that accord with the Plan objectives to be approved without delay. This policy is therefore at the heart of decision making when assessing planning applications.

1.15 There may be instances where the Plan is silent or in future years, policies become out of date. To enable the Council to continue to take a sustainably positive approach to decision making, the applicant will need to assist by submitting evidence to demonstrate how the benefits of the proposal outweigh any adverse impacts.

1.16 This is a significant challenge in a rural district such as South Somerset, where the population is so dispersed. The challenge here is to reconcile the need to deliver sufficient jobs and homes, supported by appropriate infrastructure to meet South Somerset's needs, whilst conserving the natural and built environment, minimising the need to travel and addressing climate change. National policy gives communities greater opportunities to engage in neighbourhood planning⁵, to assist in shaping their own local areas to achieve this objective.

1.17 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Local Plan has been undertaken, as required by Section 29(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as required by the SEA Directive⁶. SA and SEA are tools to ensure that the social, economic and environmental effects of the Local Plan are fully considered. The SA Report is

4.[World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987]

5.[Neighbourhood plans are defined in the NPPF as "a plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)]

published alongside the Local Plan and assesses proposed policies against sustainability criteria that have in turn been assessed against the 14 sustainability objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Local Plan has been shaped by the SA which also outlines the reasons for selecting proposals from alternatives considered and the measures needed to prevent, reduce and offset as far as practical any significant effects of implementing the Plan.

Policy SD1: Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a proactive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and seek to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions within the District.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:-

- **Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or**
- **Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted or refused.**

Where necessary the Council will work with applicants to improve proposals so that they are capable of being approved.

Delivery

1.18 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SD1:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Grant application within relevant target dates	Approved applications within target dates unless there are mitigating circumstances

6.[Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: European Directive 2001/42/EC “ on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment” – the SEA Directive]

Habitat Regulation Assessment

1.19 The need for a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) arises from a European Directive⁷ that is implemented in the UK by the Habitats Regulations. For plans or projects that are likely to have a significant effect on 'European sites' (i.e. sites of international importance for conservation) an Appropriate Assessment, which forms stage 2 of the HRA, is required of South Somerset's Local Plan due to the presence of the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar⁸ site in the district. The outcome of this has been published as a separate report, alongside the Local Plan.

1.20 The HRA covers matters previously raised as concerns at the Issues and Options and the Draft Local Plan stage including potential disturbance to birds in the Somerset Levels and Moors from increased recreation use, water quality impact to invertebrates due to potential changes in water quality as a result of new development and protection of bat species at Brackett's Copse Special Area of Conservation (SAC). A separate report about this area has been produced (by Somerset County Council) for the District Council.

1.21 The District Council through consultants Royal Haskoning and Somerset County Council have carried out a two stage assessment of the Local Plan, the first on emerging policies in the Draft Core Strategy and the second on amended policies following consultation and presented in final form in this Proposed Submission Plan. Mitigation to policy wording has been suggested on both occasions in order to ensure policies and proposals have no adverse impact upon the integrity of the Somerset Levels and Moors SPA, Ramsar designated sites and Bracketts Copse SAC. The policies in this document reflect the amendments recommended.

Evidence Base

1.22 The Government requires that policies and proposals are soundly based on current evidence. There has been considerable evidence gathering across the full range of issues and matters that has been used to shape the Local Plan policies and proposals. A list of the relevant Evidence Base is attached at Appendix 1.

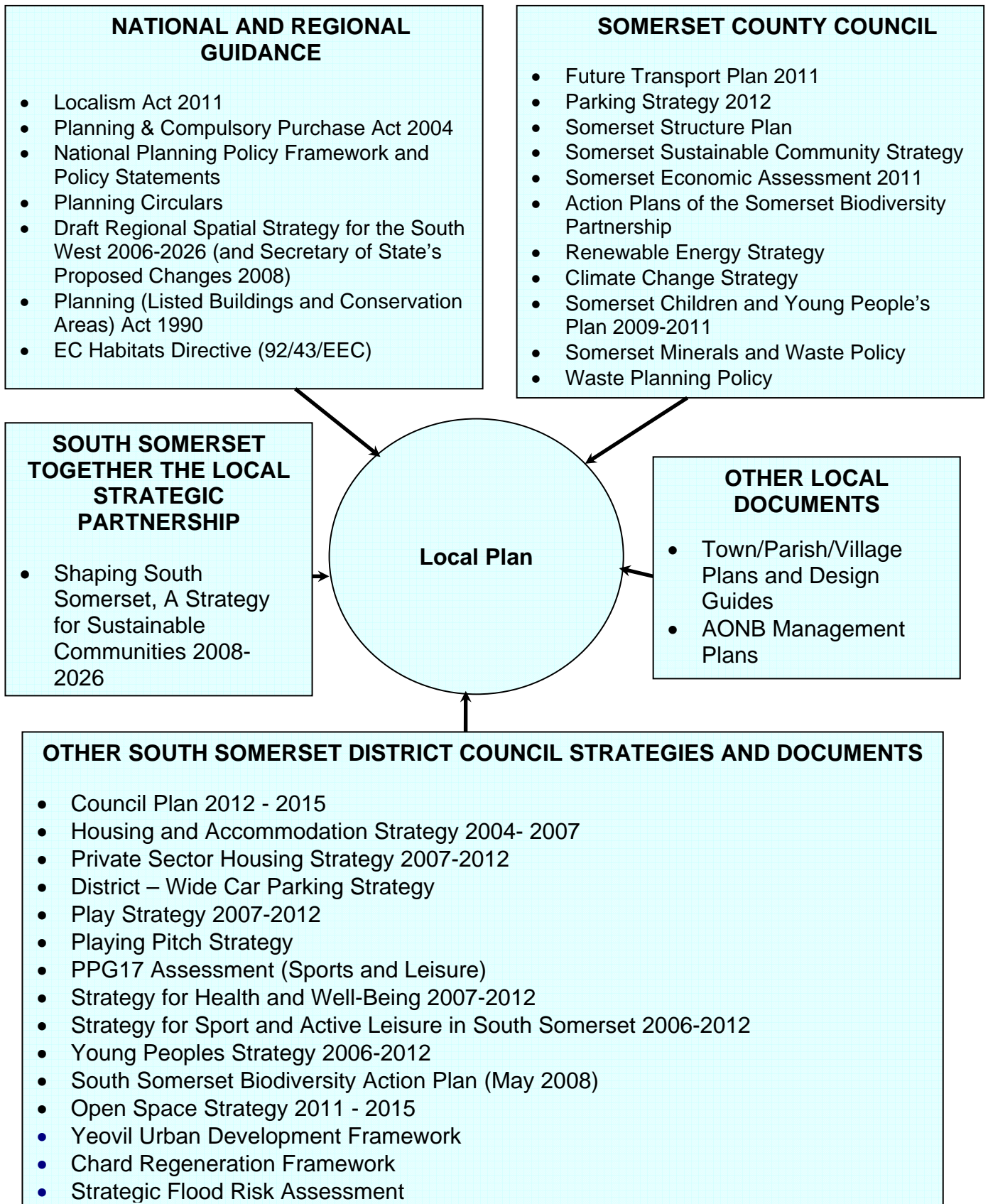
Policy Context

1.23 The role of the Local Plan is to set out a spatial strategy and policy agenda in the context of national policy as well as other local strategies and programmes at District and County level which are shown in [Figure 2: Important Influences on the Local Plan](#). All these strategies have informed the policies and proposals in this document.

7.[EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)]

8.[Wetlands of International importance designated under the RAMSAR Convention]

Figure 2: Important Influences on the Local Plan



National Context

1.24 The Government has published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012 which sets out the planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This provides the framework which local authorities and local communities can use to shape their areas and identify priorities. This NPPF needs to be read in conjunction with other national policy statements for major infrastructure, energy and specific policies for travellers sites and waste.

1.25 The purpose of the planning system is to provide for sustainable development and the national framework sets out in policy guidance what this means in practice. The three dimensions of sustainable development are identified as economic, social and environmental requiring the planning system to build strong and competitive economies, making land for employment uses available, coordinating infrastructure, providing a supply of housing to meet the present and future needs of the population within high quality environments, supported by community facilities and services whilst continuing to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, improving biodiversity, minimising use of natural resources and meeting the challenge of adapting to climate change.

1.26 The Government recognise that many social, environmental and economic issues can only be effectively addressed at a 'larger than local' scale. As people and businesses do not confine their activities to one council area. For example employees may live in one area and work in another, thus local plan-making will have a 'strategic' element to it. To respond to this issue the Government has introduced a 'duty to co-operate' between Local Authorities in England. In order to comply, the Government anticipates that joint working should occur on areas of common interest taking into account different geographical areas where appropriate for mutual gain.

1.27 In the making of this Plan, South Somerset District Council has worked collaboratively with Somerset County Council and its neighbouring Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in the preparation of evidence base documents and has specifically consulted adjacent LPAs on cross-boundary issues where they have been identified. The most significant cross-boundary planning issues being the growth agenda for Yeovil which could potentially impact across the administrative border of West Dorset District.

1.28 The limited scope of cross border issues for South Somerset relates to the fact that South Somerset Travel to Work Area (TTWA) and Housing Market Area (HMA) are very much favoured around the Districts borders.

1.29 The Government is particularly keen that local communities shape local development and this Local Plan has been informed by community engagement at early stages of preparation.

1.30 The Council is also committed to assisting those communities who wish to produce Neighbourhood Plans to shape their own areas. Provisions have now been put in place⁹ to allow local communities to set out their own policies in Neighbourhood Plans in relation to the development and use of land in their areas providing that these are in accordance with the adopted policies of the Local Plan and NPPF. Communities can also identify opportunities where neighbourhood development orders can be used to enable developments that are in accord with neighbourhood plans to proceed. Communities through these provisions will therefore be able to have influence over where development can go and what it might look like and to set out more detailed aspirations for their areas.

Regional Context

1.31 The South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) although never adopted, remains a material consideration and the policies and proposals of the Local Plan reflect the RSS where its key elements remain in line with current national policy. In particular, Yeovil is identified as a Strategically Significant Town, as originally identified in the RSS. The District's employment and housing growth provisions, as set out in this Local Plan, no longer reflect the RSS requirements, and have been derived from updated evidence base work which reflects trends in population and household projections for South Somerset and, in particular, the District's economic growth potential. The growth proposals are also reflective of the Council's engagement with local communities and their aspirations.

1.32 The Local Plan is based on an Employment-led approach to growth reflecting the NPPF and government commitment to support sustainable economic growth¹⁰. Jobs and homes are aligned in a balanced manner, providing better opportunities for local jobs and sufficient homes to improve levels of self-containment.

1.33 A bottom up approach to economic growth has been used, focusing on the potential for local growth and providing employment opportunities in the District's main settlements.

South Somerset Context

1.34 At a local level, the vision and spatial objectives of this plan are derived from the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). As the diagram at [Figure 2: Important Influences on the Local Plan](#) shows, there are many other local strategies at both District and County level which have informed the policies within this document.

9.[Schedule 9 of Localism Act, Section 38A Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012]

10.[Section 1 NPPF March 2012, Paragraphs18-22]

Replacement and Saved adopted Local Plan Policies and Proposals

1.35 Once adopted the Local Plan will replace most 'saved' Local Plan policies and proposals (formally retained as relevant in determining planning applications from the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011). Appendix 2 includes a list of all those replaced policies and proposals because they have:

- been replaced by this Local Plan; been completed (or have planning permission);
- not been implemented (in the case of proposals) and have no known prospect of being implemented; and
- have been otherwise superseded e.g. by land being granted planning permission for an alternative use or are now covered by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The appendix also shows those policies and proposals to remain saved.

Next Steps

This document is open for consultation until 10th August 2012. There are three ways in which you can submit your comments:

On-line via: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/localplan

Visit the website and fill out the electronic copy of the comment form and email to planning.policy@southsomerset.gov.uk

Fill out a paper copy of the form (available at Council and Community Offices and Libraries) and post to the address below:

Spatial Policy Team, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2HT

Telephone: 01935 462462 (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday)

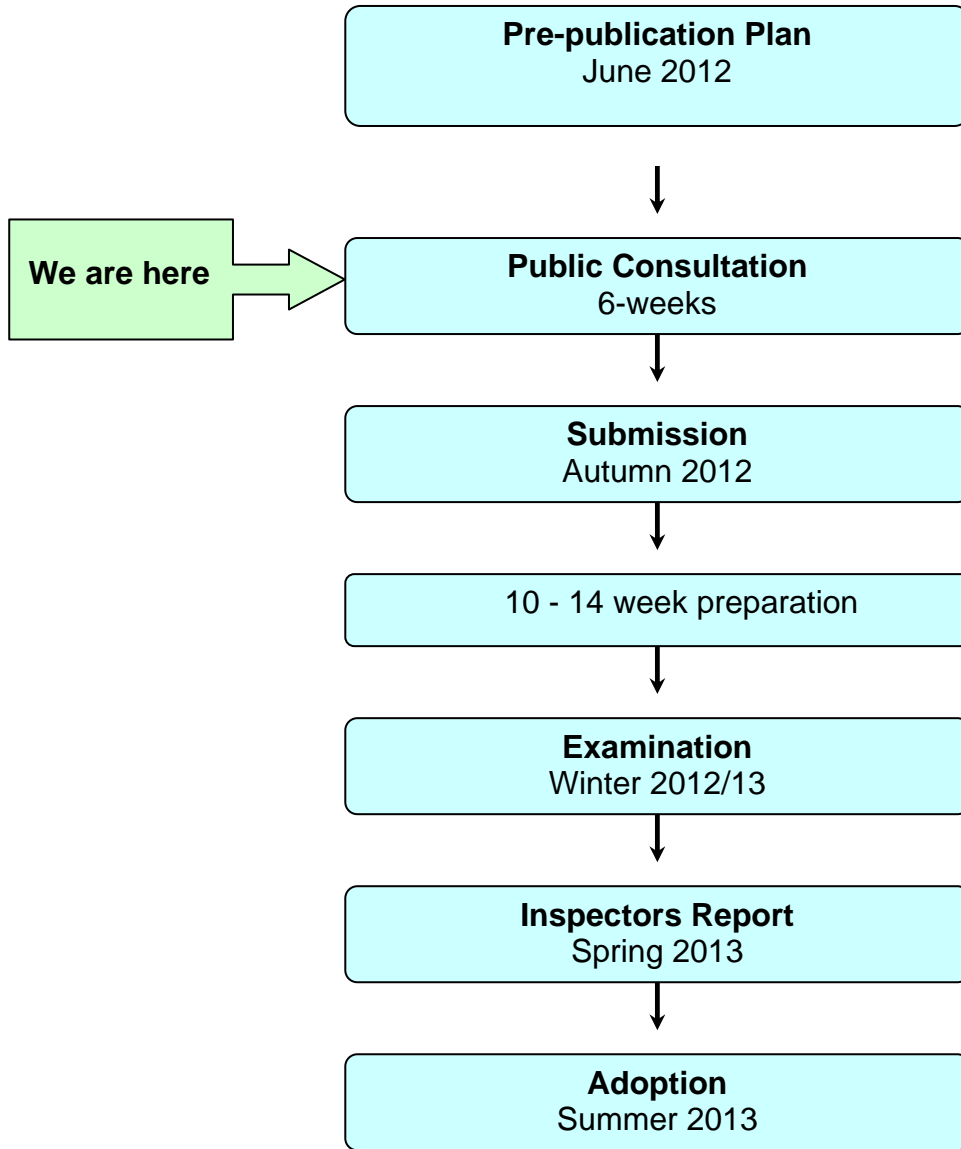
Or Email: planning.policy@southsomerset.gov.uk

If you have any queries regarding this document please contact the Spatial Policy Team using one of the methods above.

Comments received on this Local Plan will be summarised for submission to the Planning Inspector appointed to undertake the formal Examination of the Plan. The Examination is held into the Proposed Submission plan once formally submitted and comments received considered by the Inspector¹¹. Upon receipt of the Inspector's Report the Local Plan can be formally adopted. [Figure 3: Local Plan Progress - Next Steps](#) below illustrates these stages in general.

11.[The Inspector decides who should appear at the Examination.]

Figure 3: Local Plan – Next Steps



2 Spatial Portrait of South Somerset

2.1 South Somerset District has a population of around 159,700¹² distributed across many towns, villages and hamlets. It is one of the largest districts in the South West lying on the southern side of the County and accounts for nearly a third of Somerset's area covering an area of 958 sq km (370 sq miles). It is largely rural in nature with a population density of 1.7 people per hectare, less than half the national average. Yeovil is the second largest town in the County and has approximately a quarter of the District's population (44,000¹³) and lies in the south eastern corner of the District immediately adjoining Dorset. However, over 40% of the District's population live in settlements of fewer than 2,500 residents and the District is made up of a mixture of sparsely inhabited rural areas, a network of villages and a number of market towns of varying size and influence.

2.2 In order to devise an appropriate Spatial Vision for 2028 and a Local Plan that will help to deliver this, it is important to understand and appreciate what local characteristics make the district what it is. These are set out under the headings of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Plan Chapters which follow.

Economic Prosperity

2.3 Building upon the objectives of the Council's Plan 2012 - 2015, there is a commitment to delivering a strong and diverse economy within the District. Diversification of businesses and encouraging small businesses to grow are priorities together with support for existing firms and encouraging inward investment particularly of high value jobs.

2.4 The District has more people, employers and workers than other parts of the County with over 6,000 businesses employing around 64,100 people¹⁴. It has a manufacturing history and its strengths include a strong economy, despite the economic climate, based mainly on a relatively small number of large manufacturing companies in the food processing and engineering industries. A number of world-class companies are located in the District, as is an experienced workforce.

2.5 The number of jobs in the District has grown from approximately 47,500 jobs in 1991 to 65,200 jobs in 2010¹⁵, an average of 932 jobs per annum, although there have been fluctuations over this time. The rate of new business creation is similar to other parts of the County, but below national average (52% per 10,000 adults compared to 74% per 10,000 for England and Wales). On the other hand, failing business rates are lower than the national average, and new businesses have shown more resilience in South Somerset than in most parts of the County, region and country.

12.[ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 (published March 2012)]

13.[ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 (published March 2012)]

14.[BRES 2010 - number of employees in the District (excludes self employed persons)]

15.[ABI and BRES Employee Analysis 1991-2010]

2.6 Manufacturing is very important to the District - the proportion of those employed in the manufacturing sector is almost twice the national average. This is principally because of the importance of Defence industries and expenditure with Agusta Westland, Thales and associated industries playing a significant role.

2.7 South Somerset accommodates three military establishments (RNAS Yeovilton, RNAS Merryfield and Langport Range and Training Area) thus making the District subject to the pressures, needs and benefits associated with the Defence Sector. These establishments vary greatly in their size and function, however, collectively they are considered to be of significant economic value to the District and community. Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, 5 miles north of Yeovil, near Ilchester has a major impact in particular and employs around 2,500 people on the base and draws employees from a wide catchment area including beyond the District boundary.

2.8 Yeovil is the prime economic driver within the District, with almost 32,000 employees¹⁶ (equating to almost 50% of all of the District's jobs). It is the largest town and commercial and administrative centre in the 'A303 Corridor' economic zone identified in the Regional Economic Strategy and is a major employment centre providing many jobs in aerospace and associated engineering, including around 3,500 employees at 'Agusta Westland' in the manufacturing of helicopters. It is recognized as a "strategically significant town" particularly in terms of its economic role within the District and wider area.

2.9 Whilst the town has experienced strong employment growth, which has been driven by an increase in jobs in the business and financial services sector, the scale and value of the manufacturing economy to Yeovil cannot be understated. It is also notable that a high proportion of jobs in Yeovil are dependent upon Government expenditure within health (Yeovil District Hospital/ Primary Care Trust) and local government (the District Council / schools), in addition to defence spending. The local private sector economy is potentially capable of organic growth with positive factors such as a relatively stable economy with good skills and knowledge base.

2.10 Yeovil has a relatively high level of self-containment i.e. people living and working in the same settlement, 75%¹⁷ - one of the highest levels in the South West - although there is notable in-commuting from the surrounding hinterland¹⁸. Yeovil is close to Sherborne in Dorset, due to both towns lying on the A30 and a main rail line and there is a notable interconnection between the two towns as a result.

16.[BRES 2010 Employment figures]

17.[Settlement Role & Function Study (2009)]

18.[Travel to Work and Urban Areas of the South West Region (Analysis of 2001 Census data) South West Observatory 2005]

Rural Employment

2.11 With a large proportion of South Somerset's population living outside of Yeovil the way in which the District's Market Towns and Rural Centres act as focal points for local employment and services, and their significance to the economy, should not be underestimated. Whilst each of the identified Market Towns and Rural Centres has a unique set of characteristics each offers opportunities to build upon their complementary role as service and employment centres for their surrounding rural area. In addition, with the increasing technology now available, many people are able to work from home. Somerset is one of the locations which will benefit from the rollout of superfast broadband by 2015 for at least 85% of homes and businesses in mainly rural parts of the County.¹⁹

2.12 The smaller settlements in South Somerset vary widely in function and size, but generally are places that provide limited local services. These settlements often have a strong sense of community but these conditions also pose challenges in terms of their economic provision of services, jobs and facilities. This pattern of settlements, and their social and economic relationships with each other, presents a real challenge in providing good quality jobs and service provision across such a diverse area.

2.13 Tourism is also an important factor with 5% of local employment in this sector²⁰. The District has a wealth of environmental, industrial and cultural heritage with a varied landscape much valued by the residents. There are a number of visitor attractions within the District including museums, historic properties and an enviable natural environment all of which are a great draw to visitors.

Housing

2.14 There are approximately 71,400 dwellings in South Somerset District, 85.5% are owned by the private sector (owner occupied or private rented) and 14.5% by the public sector²¹. The housing stock is largely made up of detached (34.3%) and semi detached dwellings (31.3%) followed by terraced dwellings (23.8%) and flats/maisonettes (9.6%). Other types of dwelling make up the remaining 1%.²² The more urban areas of the District show a concentration of terraced housing and flats.²³

2.15 Around half the dwellings in the District are in Council tax bands B and C.²⁴ The number of second homes within the District is lower than has been found regionally but is marginally higher than the national average.²⁵

19.[‘Connecting Devon and Somerset’ project with government grant to Devon and Somerset County Councils, supported by Districts to rollout broadband within the two Counties]

20.[Value of Tourism 2010, South West Tourism Alliance 2011]

21.[South Somerset District Council Annual Monitoring Report April 2008-March 2009 (December 2009)]

22.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]

23.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]

24.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]

2.16 More recent development has started to raise the design standards of housing and their environments but there is a need to continue to seek improvements in architectural quality and the creation of housing with local distinctive character and a sense of place, taking advantage of new construction techniques and technological advances to improve performance and sustainability.

2.17 Like much of the south west, affordability is an issue within the District, with the average house price being over 9 times the average salary, which makes it very difficult for first time buyers to enter the housing market²⁶ particularly in the rural areas. The average house price in the 3rd quarter 2011 was £209,811.²⁷ Homelessness appears to be increasing with applications under homelessness rising from 37 in the 3rd quarter of 2008 to 70 in the 1st quarter of 2012 of which 48 were in priority need.

2.18 There is a need to find accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers, both transit and permanent sites²⁸ within the district. This reflects the requirements of the Government's planning policy for travellers sites²⁹ published alongside the NPPF.

Transport and Accessibility

2.19 The District is situated just inside the entrance to the South West peninsula and is often seen as being on the way to and from the South West holiday counties of Devon and Cornwall.

2.20 The area is well linked to other areas with 3 major railway lines with regular daily services to London, Exeter, Bristol and Weymouth. The A303 Trunk Road and A30 run east to west through the District, linking it with London and the South West peninsula and the cross country route from the Channel ports to the M5 motorway, via the A37/A358 dissects the district from south east to north west.

2.21 Coverage of public transport bus services is poor reflecting the geographically dispersed population and services are infrequent in all but the largest settlements. This compounds difficulties in accessing key services and facilities for the more vulnerable elements of the community, namely the elderly, young parents, children and mobility impaired.

2.22 Congestion issues are particularly concerning for settlements the size of Yeovil and Chard. Parking has been highlighted as problematic in several smaller settlements. The infrastructure plan identifies a number of key road and junction improvements which will be needed within the plan period particularly within Yeovil and Chard. There is heavy reliance on the car for journeys to work and services. This is a challenge for the District to move to more carbon friendly modes of travel.

25.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]

26.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]

27.[Land Registry (July - September 2011)]

28.[Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (January 2011)]

29.[Planning Policy for traveller sites' published 23 March 2012, CLG]

Health and Well Being

2.23 South Somerset is a relatively healthy district, with indicators used to measure health generally better than the England average. However there are general trends that bring health care challenges, such as increasing levels of obesity, declining physical activity levels and an ageing population.

2.24 Several wards in Yeovil and Chard are in the most deprived 20% in UK. 12% of the population of South Somerset live in the most deprived 25% Local Super Output Areas³⁰ in England and 11% of children under 16 live in low-income households. Average house price to wage ratio is approximately 9:1 based on house price figures in 2011.

2.25 Some residents, particularly in rural areas do suffer from barriers to housing and services, including access to a GP surgery, supermarket or convenience store, primary school and post office.

2.26 South Somerset has historically recorded lower crime levels compared with the regional and national averages, with trend data showing decreases over recent years³¹. Perceived personal safety is in line with the County and region, but there is a much higher fear of crime in Yeovil and Chard. Overall perceptions of community spirit are similar to the Somerset average, but they are relatively negative in Chard³².

Environmental Quality

2.27 The landscape is mainly undulating, agricultural land with some very fertile belts that have traditionally been farmed for top quality food production such as apples and dairy produce. Topography and agricultural practices have helped to secure special status for outstanding landscapes such as the rolling Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the south west, a small part of the Cranborne Chase and West Wilts AONB to the north east, and Dorset AONB running along the southern boundary of the District.

2.28 South Somerset is well known for its areas of high nature conservation value. The European designation of Special Protection Area and Ramsar³³ site applies to parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors in the north of the district, renowned for its wetland interest and extensive bird populations, and there are two other National Nature Reserves, at Hardington Moor and Barrington Hill, near Ilminster. In addition there are currently 39 Sites of Special Scientific Interest covering 2789 hectares and around 570 County Wildlife Sites covering 6291 hectares of semi-natural habitat, and together these represent just over 6% of the District's area. Broad-leaved and mixed woodland accounts for about a third of this area, while unimproved grassland

30.[Super Output Areas are units of area used by the Office of National Statistics to gather and compare data]

31.[SSDC Annual Monitoring Report 2010 - 2011]

32.[SSDC Place Survey 2008]

33.[Designated by the Ramsar Convention (The Convention on Wetland of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat) as a term to identify wetland sites of international importance]

accounts for about 15%. A further 54 Private Nature Reserves, covering 203 ha, are registered with the Somerset Wildlife Trust, to add to the rich ecological diversity of the district. Just west of Yeovil is the heritage site of Ham Hill Country Park.

2.29 There are air quality issues associated with traffic congestion in the middle of Yeovil with the entire town identified as an Air Quality Management Area.

Historic Environment

2.30 South Somerset has a rich and diverse historic environment with evidence of settlement dating back to prehistoric times. There are many Iron Age and Bronze Age sites and the Fosse Way Roman Road dissects the District at the Roman settlement of Ilchester. The area has a rich heritage including important associations with the tanning, rope, glove and lace making industries. The wool industry has also played a major historic role in the development of the area.

2.31 The villages and historic parts of larger settlements are built with distinctive local stones, including Ham Hill and Blue lias, and the area has a high concentration of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas as well as Country houses set in parkland. Large estates feature in the area including several owned by the National Trust. There are 94 Grade 1 listed buildings in South Somerset including many Norman or Medieval churches.

2.32 There is a strong link between the environmental quality and productivity of the area and the success of the local economy, through commerce, recreation, tourism and providing an environment where people want to work and live. The aim of the Local Plan is to ensure these are retained.

3 Strategic Objectives and Vision

3.1 The Local Plan must contain a long-term spatial vision that sets out what South Somerset should look like in the future and how places within it will change. The vision is an expression of where we want the district to be in 2028 and is derived principally from the South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategies³⁴.

3.2 The current Sustainable Community Strategy for South Somerset (SCS) 2008-2026 was adopted by the South Somerset Strategic Partnership and by the District Council in 2008. This document is the focal point for co-ordinating the policies that will achieve this strategy and its objectives, setting out, in spatial terms, the vision of the SCS to meet the needs and aspirations of the people who live, work and visit the district.

3.3 National planning policy objectives also affect these strategic objectives both directly and indirectly through their consideration and integration into both the SCS and Local Plan.

Strategic Objectives

3.4 The South Somerset SCS sets out 12 goals under 5 themes. Nine of these goals have a clear spatial element replicated in this Local Plan. Each goal of the SCS is a long-term aim to be achieved and there are close links between them. The objectives of the Local Plan are derived from these and from the national planning principles, as set out in the NPPF³⁵. The Strategic Objectives by which the Vision for South Somerset will be achieved are as follows:-

1. Safe, resilient, socially just, inclusive and sustainable communities providing employment, homes and services in close proximity with strong networks and confident people sharing respect for each other.
2. A health enhancing environment, promoting walking, cycling and non car based transport and access to leisure opportunities.
3. Access to quality services and facilities designed around the needs of the community, enabling everyone to have fair and equitable access to what they need in their local area.
4. An integrated sustainable transport system developed both within and between towns especially to and from Yeovil, whilst promoting enhanced delivery of services direct to rural areas through Information and Computer Technologies.
5. A comprehensive, high performing economy that is diverse, adaptable and provides jobs growth and inward investment through a thriving Yeovil, regenerated Chard and market towns and a diversified rural economy.
6. A natural and built environment able to attract and retain visitors, a vibrant tourism industry and encourage inward investment of high quality sustainable businesses.

34. [Shaping South Somerset, a Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026]

35. [The NPPF (March 2012) Paragraph 17 sets out 12 overarching principles of the planning system.]

7. A balanced housing market with a range of both general and affordable housing to meet the required growth and sited and built to support sustainable lifestyles with low carbon emissions, delivered through a sustainable district settlement strategy and hierarchy.
8. Address climate change through both mitigation and adaptation and move towards a Carbon Neutral economy by the Government target date of 2030 by delivering high quality and energy efficient development with exemplar development at Yeovil to move towards more sustainable, lower carbon consumption living and to provide a boost to new low carbon technologies.
9. Protection and enhancement of our natural environment and biodiversity, retaining the distinctiveness of settlements and reflecting known environmental constraints, including flood risks in locating growth.

The Vision for 2028

'South Somerset will be a thriving, attractive and affordable place to live and work in. It will be a far more sustainable place with more self sufficient towns with much better public transport links within and between them, therefore more and better community facilities will be available in each of them. The move to a low carbon economy and low carbon living will have been secured together with adaptation to the changing climate of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers expressed through appropriate changes in the built form and enhanced green infrastructure.

The District will have grown in population with a larger Yeovil and expanded market towns based on economic, cultural and educational strengths. There will be continued protection of distinctive urban and rural environments. The growth in population will be matched with growth in the economy in conjunction with the infrastructure provision needed to make this happen.

Residents will have greater opportunities to lead active and healthier lifestyles through greater access to open space and leisure opportunities and to facilities, services and jobs, without reliance on the car. The area will have a low crime rate and people will feel safe and happy in their environment.

New homes will be of the highest standard of design and locally distinctive. People can afford to either buy or rent and will want to live in these homes which can improve their quality of life, health and well-being. There will be economic growth in business and better wages will provide a more equitable standard of living and foster more socially inclusive communities throughout the district. Through promotion of the district, new inward investment will be attracted to South Somerset.

Yeovil will be the prime economic driver within the District and beyond, with a strong employment base and more high-tech and quality businesses. The town will have a better public transport network and be better linked to the District's

Market Towns. The town will be attractive for residents, workers, students and visitors. The workforce will be more highly skilled and motivated with improving higher education facilities including university level courses. Retailing will flourish in a thriving town centre which supports rather than competes with the role of the Market Towns. The night time economy in the town will flourish with quality social and leisure opportunities.

The Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension will be established and act as an exemplar of the benefits of more sustainable living with local job and service self sufficiency, high quality design of buildings, a high level of attractive open space, leisure facilities and parkland. These aspirations are in accordance with the aims of Paragraph 52 of the NPPF which refers to large-scale extensions to settlements following the principles of 'Garden Cities'³⁶.

South Somerset's Market Towns and Rural Centres will provide the basis of the thriving regenerated and diversified economy outside Yeovil. These places will have retained their distinctiveness and continue to provide a focus for their surrounding areas. They will have built upon their existing roles and functions and be thriving and vibrant places offering quality housing, job opportunities and a range of services to meet the needs of their communities and visitors and be more self-sufficient and with a better balance of jobs to dwellings.

The significant growth identified for Chard³⁷ will have addressed physical constraints to growth, economic regeneration and prosperity and moved the town to a higher level of service provision with much improved facilities throughout the town and better job opportunities.

The growth proposed at the other Market Towns and Rural Centres will provide economic regeneration, better housing and, with the maintenance and enhancement of commercial and community services across the District, allowing better access for all. The mix of employment, housing and associated land uses in these places will promote greater settlement self-containment.

Villages and smaller settlements will be able to provide for local provision of jobs, facilities and the affordable housing that they need which brings benefits to the rural economy. Farm diversification, more diverse local employment opportunities and support for tourism, tourism accommodation and attractions will also support a better experience of rural living, as will the ability to live and work from home through improved broadband provision.

South Somerset will have retained a viable agricultural base with high quality local food production reducing the need for imports and food miles.

Commitment to reducing the impact of climate change will be demonstrated by achieving high quality design and by the wider application of reduced CO2

36.[NPPF (March 2012) Paragraph 52 and Re-imagining Garden Cities for the 21st Century, TCPA July 2011]

37.[Chard Regeneration Framework, Implementation Plan LDA 2010]

emission targets for new development. Sustainable new development within Yeovil Urban Village (Summerhouse Village) and within the Sustainable Urban Extension will provide exemplar development to act as a driver for change and innovation in design and energy efficiency. Focus will be on economic and housing growth in the most sustainable locations, avoiding areas of high flood risk.'

3.5 The next section sets out the Settlement Strategy and the settlement hierarchy through which the Vision is to be implemented. The settlement strategy and hierarchy are fundamental to the delivery of the economic growth on which this Local Plan is based.

4 Settlement Strategy

4.1 The settlement strategy for South Somerset consists of two key elements:-

- A hierarchy of settlements identified on the basis of their current and potential role and function with growth concentrated at the higher end of the hierarchy; and
- An established scale of growth for employment and housing and associated land uses for the main settlements identified within the hierarchy.

Settlement Hierarchy

4.2 The Local Plan needs to make clear spatial choices about where development should go in broad terms and to identify broad strategic locations for new development reflecting sustainable development principles.

4.3 In planning for new growth for both employment and housing there needs to be evidence of demand and need for the growth proposed and it should be located to develop and support mixed and sustainable communities, reflecting the spatial vision for local areas. New development also needs to be accessible by all forms of transport wherever practical, designed to reflect advances in technology for renewable and low carbon forms of energy, be able to address any physical constraints and provide any additional necessary infrastructure.

4.4 It is important to ensure that the most sustainable option for growth is considered. Sustainability Appraisal of alternative settlement strategy options have been undertaken to ensure that the strategy is appropriate in terms of environmental, economic and social implications, and cost, benefit and risks. The Sustainability Appraisal for the whole Local Plan, including its policies, has been published alongside this Proposed Submission Local Plan as a separate report and appendices. The Sustainability Appraisal affirms the suitability and appropriateness of the hierarchy set out below.

4.5 The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) identified a requirement for the period 2006-2026 to deliver 19,700 (21,670 if projected to 2028) new homes in South Somerset - 6,400 in Yeovil urban area, a 5,000 dwelling urban extension to Yeovil and 8,300 elsewhere in the district. In addition to this there is a requirement to provide about 10,700 jobs in the South Somerset Housing Market Area³⁸ of which 9,100 should be within the Yeovil Travel to Work Area (TTWA). The report recommends that some 43 hectares of employment land should be made available mainly focussed on Yeovil.

4.6 The Government is committed to the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies and have made provision for this through the Localism Act. However, the Court of

38.[Corresponds with South Somerset District]

Appeal has confirmed that until legislative changes are enacted, development plan documents must be in general conformity with the regional strategy. The South West Regional Spatial Strategy therefore remains a material consideration but, given that it was never approved and the Government have indicated their intention to withdraw it (subject to Environmental Appraisal), the Council has considered it prudent to establish locally evidenced employment and housing targets to inform the Local Plan. It is therefore these locally evidenced figures which have informed this document.

4.7 The RSS principle of a hierarchy of settlements to meet sustainable development objectives accord with sound planning principles and remains appropriate. Most new development is proposed at Yeovil, identified as a Strategically Significant Town. Yeovil offers a wide range of services with good choice of retailing and leisure activities which are fundamental to quality of life. The need for travel can also be catered for by better and more reliable public transport. The town can achieve further development sustainably and promote a better balance between job growth and where people live and already has an existing high level of self containment. Critical mass, economies of scale and better use of existing infrastructure can be secured through Yeovil's continued designation as a Strategically Significant Town in this Local Plan.

4.8 Yeovil already acts as the focal point for economic activity in the district and has good manufacturing links with high tech industries and advanced engineering, building in particular, upon the strong links to the aeronautical industry. Growth in these sectors and in green technologies features prominently in the proposals of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) for the town.

4.9 Outside Yeovil there is to be more limited growth at the other larger settlements within the District which act as focal points for their area. These are identified as Market Towns and Rural Centres. Market Towns should provide locally significant development and meet the following criteria:-

- Have an existing concentration of business and employment with potential for expansion;
- Have shopping, cultural, faith, educational, health and public services;
- Have sustainable transport potential.

4.10 The designation of Market Town is based on identifying the important roles of settlements in their local settings in particular where they are able to provide jobs and services for their residents, and the residents of the surrounding areas and elsewhere³⁹. These towns should be the focal points for locally significant development including the bulk of the District housing provision outside Yeovil. This growth should increase the self- containment of these settlements and enhance their service role reflecting the aspirations of national policy in promoting stronger communities.

39.[Settlement Role and Function Study, Baker Associates, April 2009]

4.11 The Market Towns however, do differ significantly in their ability to accommodate further growth based on the scale of provision of services and employment opportunities and thus a differentiation has been drawn between the larger of these, to be called Primary Market Towns and the smaller centres identified as Local Market Towns and the levels of growth attributed to these reflect their smaller size.

4.12 It is considered that whilst the local communities of Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton have expressed a desire for a lower status than Market Town they clearly wish to maintain the community facilities already available in the settlements. Market Town status, but with a commensurate scale of growth, is considered to be the mechanism to help ensure that these facilities are maintained.

4.13 Development elsewhere in smaller but still sizeable settlements is likely to be less sustainable and so should be geared to meet local needs and address affordable housing issues. Small scale economic activity is not considered out of keeping in these settlements which, according to the soon to be revoked RSS, should accommodate development that:

- Supports economic activity that is appropriate to the scale of the settlement;
- Extends the range of services to better meet the needs of the settlement and immediate surrounds;
- Meets identified local needs.

These settlements are referred to as Rural Centres.

4.14 The RSS did not distinguish additional levels in the hierarchy merely drawing attention to strict control of development in the countryside⁴⁰ as set out in national planning policy and there is still a strong rationale for this. However, it is important to acknowledge that some growth in the countryside outside the identified settlements will be appropriate but limited to that which brings about local benefit. By allowing for some growth in these Rural Settlements⁴¹ this effectively provides an additional tier within the hierarchy, to be known as Rural Settlements.

4.15 The above hierarchy of settlements, based on their role and function, still presents a strong planning rationale for determining the settlement strategy for growth, based on the national policy principles of sustainability and aspirations of the community. As such it is considered that the basic principles of the settlement hierarchy framework are robust for continued application in the development of the settlement hierarchy for South Somerset.

4.16 The hierarchy of settlements reflects the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) which identifies Yeovil as the prime economic driver for the District and a centre for employment and services. Outside of Yeovil the SCS seeks Market Towns

40.[‘Countryside’ refers in this case to all locations outside of Yeovil and the Market Towns and Rural Centres]

41.[Rural Settlements is a generic terms for all smaller settlements not identified as Market Towns or Rural Centres]

and Rural Centres to promote the basis of a thriving and diversified economy and be a local focus for their surrounding areas.

4.17 The settlement hierarchy, by focussing development and growth in these settlements through the settlement hierarchy, will serve to help deliver this Vision. It will be through the settlement strategy and hierarchy that sustainable communities will be delivered, services provided, the economy promoted, jobs encouraged, access improved and a balanced housing market achieved to delivery key strategic objectives of this document.

Determination of the South Somerset Settlement Hierarchy

Evidence Base Review

4.18 The South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study⁴² was commissioned by the Council to:

- Develop a methodology to identify the current role and functional relationship of settlements and their potential future roles; and
- Provide recommendations on settlement classification as defined in the RSS.

4.19 The methodology employed was to undertake a statistical analysis of employment, housing, retail and community use provision within settlements and evidence of sustainable travel opportunities and self-containment (people living and working in the same place). Key indicators considered were:

- Settlements with a strong employment role;
- Identifying important retail and community services centres; and
- Sustainable travel opportunities and self-containment.

Population forecasts, employment growth and other anticipated changes have also been looked at to see how these indicators might change in the future.

4.20 The outcome of this analysis was a recommendation for settlements to be identified to accommodate growth of local significance (Market Towns) and other settlements (Rural Centres) identified where development meeting local need should be accommodated. The Market Towns are identified as having a strong employment, retail and community role and were identified as:

- Chard
- Crewkerne
- Ilminster
- Wincanton
- Somerton
- Langport/Huish Episcopi
- Ansford/Castle Cary

42.[Settlement Role and Function Study, Baker Associates, April 2009]

4.21 Other settlements with a defined retail and community role were put forward as Rural Centres and identified as:

- Ilchester
- South Petherton
- Martock /Bower Hinton
- Bruton
- Milborne Port
- Stoke Sub Hamdon

4.22 All other settlements would be considered to be within open countryside and identified in generic terms as 'Rural Settlements' but are not identified by place name⁴³.

4.23 This hierarchy forms the basis of this Local Plan as it is considered that the bulk of growth outside Yeovil should be in the Market Towns and Rural Centres in order to take advantage of employment and service opportunities available in these places, minimising the infrastructure investment requirements across the whole District and taking up the opportunities for improved self containment.

4.24 However, it is acknowledged that there is a significant difference between the functions and roles of these settlements and in particular there is a marked difference between the size and opportunities which can be offered by the Market Towns. Chard is the District's second largest settlement and has significant potential for growth based on the work undertaken as part of the Chard Regeneration Framework and as such has growth identified which will go beyond the current plan period of 2028.

4.25 Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton are the three smallest of the identified Market Towns and whilst their role and function in the provision of employment and service opportunities indicates that they fulfil this role in terms of their surrounding areas at present, their potential for growth is more limited than some of the other larger Market Towns.

4.26 The difference between Primary and Local Market towns status is therefore recognised in the lower scale of growth in housing, employment and retail provision that is proposed in these 3 settlements so that their role and function can still be strengthened and not be disproportionate to service and employment provision nor having an adverse impact on local infrastructure provision and recognising environmental constraints. As a result these three settlements are referred to as Local Market Towns with the 4 settlements of Chard, Ilminster, Wincanton and Crewkerne being called Primary Market Towns where a differentiation is required between the two.

43.[See section following titled Rural Settlements]

4.27 A similar difference in role and function is seen in the Rural Centres where Stoke Sub Hamdon and Ilchester have particular constraints to growth and the level of provision in these locations reflects local circumstances. Stoke Sub Hamdon has particular constraints in its road network and also lies in close proximity to Yeovil where higher level of services can be offered. In the case of Ilchester, there is significant influence from the nearby Royal Naval Air Station at Yeovilton, which is a major employer and some growth here can assist with supporting and maintaining existing services.

4.28 Rural settlements are considered as locations where there will be a presumption against development unless key sustainability criteria can be met. This is explained in more detail below under Policy SS2. These settlements will no longer have identified development areas and will be considered to be within open countryside for planning purposes.

Sustainability Appraisal

4.29 The determination of the settlement hierarchy by settlement role and function renders use of a sustainability appraisal for determination of the hierarchy inappropriate (although entirely appropriate for determining the distribution of growth within the hierarchy -see below). The settlement hierarchy for South Somerset is set out below in Policy SS1.

Policy SS1: Settlement Strategy

Yeovil is a Strategically Significant Town and the prime focus for development in South Somerset.

The following are Market Towns where provision will be made for housing, employment, shopping and other services that increase their self containment and enhance their roles as service centres:-

Primary Market Towns: Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton

Local Market Towns: Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton.

The following are Rural Centres which are those market towns with a local service role where provision for development will be made that meets local housing need, extends local services and supports economic activity appropriate to the scale of the settlement:-

Bruton, Ilchester, Martock/Bower Hinton, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon.

Rural settlements will be considered as part of the countryside to which national countryside protection policies apply (subject to the exceptions identified in Policy SS2).

4.30 The settlement hierarchy is shown in diagrammatic form in [Figure 4: South Somerset District Settlement Hierarchy](#).

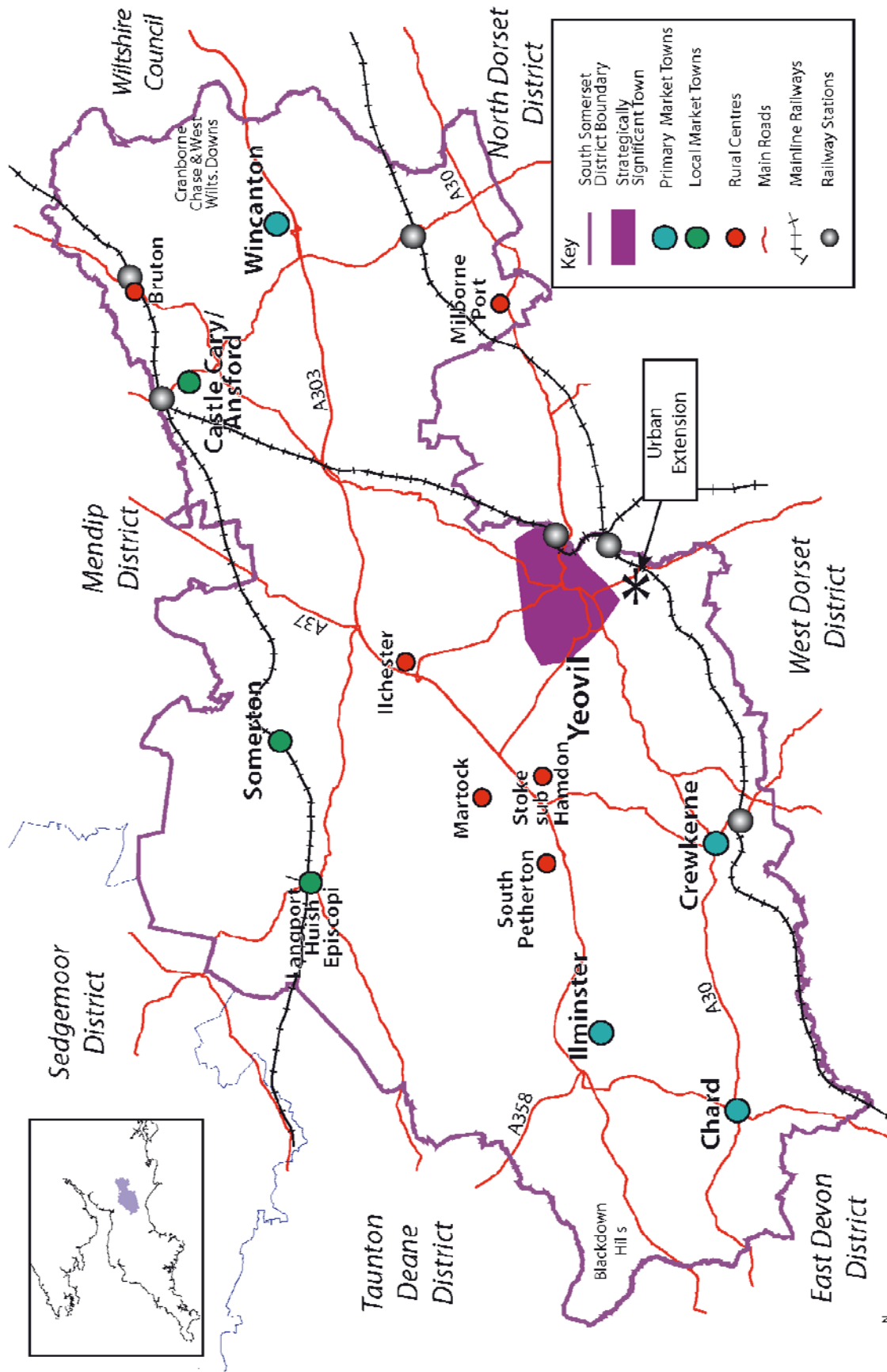


Figure 4 - South Somerset District Settlement Hierarchy

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Rural Settlements

4.31 The Local Plan focuses new development at the most sustainable locations in the District i.e. Yeovil, the Market Towns, and the Rural Centres. However, the rural nature of South Somerset means that there are many smaller settlements scattered across the District that do not meet the criteria necessary to be considered a Market Town or Rural Centre, but where some development to enhance their sustainability would be acceptable. The settlements in this tier of the hierarchy are known as 'Rural Settlements'.

4.32 Policy SS2 seeks to ensure the development needs of Rural Settlements can be met, whilst restricting the scale of such growth to be consistent with the spatial strategy of focussing most development at Yeovil, the Market Towns, and the Rural Centres.

4.33 The Rural Settlements tier of the settlement hierarchy covers a range of settlements that vary widely in size, role, function, local priorities, and constraints. Therefore, the interpretation of Policy SS2 will depend on applying these factors in considering proposals at each individual settlement; for example a proposal that is acceptable in one of the larger Rural Settlements such as Templecombe, which has a relatively strong employment function and good sustainable transport links with the presence of a train station, will be different to a smaller Rural Settlement such as Compton Dundon which does not have these features.

4.34 Applications for new development in Rural Settlements will need to include necessary supporting evidence to justify that the criteria of Policy SS2 have been met. Such proposals should be based upon meeting the needs of the Rural Settlement in question, and should undergo early engagement and preferably demonstrate support from the community, consistent with the Government's 'localism' agenda. Clearly the more types of development a proposal contains the more broad based a case can be made for sustainable development.

4.35 Given that Policy SS2 is starting from the premise of no development unless certain conditions are met, the evidence for development being of a strong sustainable nature is particularly important to provide. Furthermore the local community are best placed to determine local need and what will make their settlement more sustainable and there will be an expectation that development proposals have either come from the local community, or been tested and checked through local consultation and engagement.

4.36 There may be occasions when nearby settlements effectively provide local services for each other, acting as a 'cluster', meaning a case can be made for development in one settlement to meet the needs of the cluster. In these cases, clear evidence of the functional service relationship between the settlements will be needed.

4.37 The following sub-headings provide further explanation on meeting the three key criteria for the types of development that will be appropriate in Rural Settlements i.e. employment, local services and housing.

Employment opportunities

4.38 National Planning policy⁴⁴ states that policies should support sustainable economic growth in rural areas where it provides the most sustainable option in villages or other locations that are remote from local centres, even when public transport is not readily available. Some examples of employment opportunities that are likely to be acceptable in Rural Settlements include starter units to support individuals or small companies, workshops, and businesses that require a rural location e.g. farm diversification, tourism (see Policy EP5 and EP7 and EP8 for further detail).

4.39 The Government initiative to deliver high speed broadband across the country is likely to provide more opportunities for small enterprises to be located in rural areas; the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership believes this broadband initiative is a vital stimulus that businesses need in the area to help the economic recovery.

4.40 The scale of employment development that is acceptable in Rural Settlements will vary depending on the size and nature of each settlement. Policies EP4 and EP5 provide further detail on how applications for economic development in the countryside will be assessed.

Local services and facilities

4.41 Accessible local services that reflect community needs and support well-being are vital to creating strong, vibrant and healthy communities. National planning policy⁴⁵ supports the delivery and safeguarding of community facilities and services allowing established facilities to develop and modernise. Supporting local services and facilities is particularly important in Rural Settlements in South Somerset where car travel is often the only realistic way of getting around, which contributes to increased CO₂ emissions, traffic congestion, poor health, is costly for individuals, and makes it difficult for those without a car to access services.

4.42 Policy SS2 therefore generally supports proposals to create or enhance community facilities and services in Rural Settlements – this could include local shops; community halls; pubs; health and social care facilities; cultural, sports, recreation, faith and education facilities.

44. [NPPF (March 2012) Paragraph 28]

45. [NPPF (March 2012) Paragraph 69-78]

Housing

4.43 The NPPF states that policies should take into account the need to provide housing in rural areas, in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability; and although the focus should be on existing towns and identified service centres, some new housing should be provided to meet identified local need in other villages⁴⁶.

4.44 It is important to ensure that the occupiers of new homes in Rural Settlements are able to live as sustainably as possible by having easy access to basic facilities that provide for their day to day needs. Therefore, new housing development should only be located in those Rural Settlements that offer a range (i.e. two or more) of the following services, or that provide these within a cluster of settlements:-

- local convenience shop
- post office
- pub
- children's play area/sports pitch
- village hall/community centre
- health centre
- faith facility
- primary school.

In simple terms it is not realistic to expect a small hamlet with few services to be made a more sustainable location through new development.

4.45 Housing proposals should also, where possible, demonstrate how they would support existing facilities. The NPPF states that housing in rural areas should not be located in places distant from local services. The argument that extra housing units will support services is not considered tenable when there is clear evidence in the last 30 years of substantial rural settlement growth both nationally and in South Somerset, whilst rural services in both have continued to demonstrate steady decline⁴⁷.

4.46 Small infill development will not therefore be considered sustainable, however should it meet local need either for affordable housing, low cost market housing or a different form of housing in limited supply for locals (e.g. small bungalows for elderly local households to move to and remain in the village, or two bedroom accommodation for young households) then it may be considered more sustainable.

4.47 Meeting identified housing need refers to both market and affordable housing, although it will generally be expected that affordable housing is included as part of housing schemes proposed at Rural Settlements. National policy in the NPPF gives greater flexibility for local councils to set their own approach to delivering housing in rural areas. This includes considering whether allowing some market housing would enable the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.

46.[NPPF (March 2012) paragraph 54 - 55]

47.[Rural Services Report, SSDC, February 2012]

4.48 Residential proposals, including infill, will need to consider the current variety of housing in the Rural Settlement and ensure that they are making a positive contribution to the variety of housing in the settlement. For example, Rural Settlements that currently have a concentration of larger housing units would potentially benefit from a proposal for social rented, smaller family houses, and low cost market housing, which would help achieve a better overall variety of housing in the settlement and result in a more balanced community with better prospects for local people to obtain affordable housing or access a wider range of market housing. Policy HG5 specifically considers housing mix.

4.49 Affordable housing in Rural Settlements will generally be supported when accompanied with evidence of local need – further detail on affordable housing is set out in Policies HG3 and HG4.

4.50 Policy SS5 sets out the scale of housing development that should be delivered in the Rural Settlements tier of the settlement hierarchy. As a broad guide, and to be consistent with the spatial strategy, it is unlikely that development of 50 dwellings or greater will be acceptable in an individual Rural Settlement up to the year 2028, and in the majority of cases the scale will be much less. Each case must be assessed however on its merits and a development in excess of 50 dwellings could be justified in unusual circumstances. Annual monitoring of housing delivery in the Rural Settlements will be undertaken to ensure Policy SS2 is being applied as intended.

Policy SS2: Development in Rural Settlements

Development in Rural Settlements (not Market Towns or Rural Centres) will be strictly controlled and limited to that which:

- **Provides employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement; and/or**
- **Creates or enhances community facilities and services to serve the settlement; and/or**
- **Meets identified housing need, particularly for affordable housing.**

Development will be permitted where it is commensurate with the scale and character of the settlement, provides for one or more of the types of development above, and increases the sustainability of a settlement in general. Proposals should be consistent with relevant community led plans, and should generally have the support of the local community following robust engagement and consultation. Proposals for housing development should only be permitted in Rural Settlements that have access to key services.

Delivery

4.51 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SS2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Registered Providers.

Monitoring Indicator	Target
Net additional dwellings in Rural Settlements.	2,400 dwellings built in Rural Settlements over the Local Plan period.
Housing developments in Rural Settlements.	New dwellings only permitted in Rural Settlements with two or more key services.
Level of community facilities or services in Rural Settlements (Rural Services Survey).	Addition of new community facilities and services in association with development
Delivery of employment land in Rural Settlements.	6 hectares of employment land developed in Rural Settlements over the Local Plan period.

Scale of Growth for the District and the Main Settlements

Employment

4.52 There is an undeniable link between jobs and homes, economic changes are a key driver affecting housing demand, and in order to support economic expansion and investment in an area, new homes are required to support a growing workforce.

4.53 The distribution of jobs and homes across the District is derived from the presumption that the past economic performance of the District's settlements and rural areas is repeated into the future. The Council's economic geography is therefore projected into the future through this presumption and through the Council's Settlement Hierarchy, which reflects the District economic profile. The settlement strategy within this Local Plan presents a mechanism whereby the Council seeks to maintain and improve the economic function of Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres. The growth of businesses in rural areas should be focussed on the most sustainable and accessible locations and therefore the development of employment land will be strictly controlled in the open countryside away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated for development.

4.54 The Local Plan's approach to balancing the distribution of jobs and homes seeks to ensure more sustainable and self-contained communities that are better placed to offer a range of opportunities to all of their residents. This approach will support the retention of strong, vibrant and healthy communities.

Jobs and Employment Land Provision

4.55 Despite the recession and recent job losses, the District is in a strong position to recover and return to peak 2008 employment levels by 2015⁴⁸. Local growth projections undertaken by Baker Associates as part of their report on 'Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil' illustrate the robust nature of the District's employment structure, which is based on a resilient high technology manufacturing sector and prolonged growth in business services. They also demonstrate that indigenous companies are confident that they can grow over the longer-term.

4.56 The 'Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil' report presents two scenarios for future growth. The first scenario is for private sector led economic recovery and presents a more robust view of future growth, whilst the second scenario assumes a slower recovery in private sector investment and job creation. The first scenario is promoted by the Council because it is more optimistic, more reflecting South Somerset's approach to economic development and more appropriate to enable the potential the economy has for growth. The implication of this is that a total net employment growth provision of 9,200 jobs should be provided for South Somerset and provide the context for determining job growth for individual settlements.

4.57 Yeovil is the prime employment location in the District and its positive and strong economy has consistently supported almost half of the District's jobs (over the period 2003-2010, it has averaged 49% of the District's jobs). Based on these historic trends and the Council's aspirations for growth in Yeovil, it is anticipated that 49% of new jobs that will be generated over the plan period (approximately 4,500) will be based in Yeovil.

4.58 The Market Towns (both Primary Market Towns and Local Market Towns) and Rural Centres will also perform a strong employment function, which is based on an individual settlement's past performance (based on an analysis of jobs growth and its distribution from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) and Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) data between 2003-2010) and is commensurate with its role in the settlement hierarchy. Job creation in Rural Settlements is supported, and the growth and expansion of businesses and enterprises in rural areas should be focused on the most sustainable, accessible locations, re-using existing buildings where possible. Approximately 31% of new jobs (2,900 jobs) will be spread across the Market Towns, 9% (850 jobs) across the Rural Centres and 11% (950 jobs) across the Rural Settlements.

48.[Oxford Economics, March 2011]

4.59 Of the 9,200 new jobs anticipated in the District by 2028, Baker Associates identified in their analysis of growth sectors that approximately two-thirds (6,100) will be in 'traditional' sectors, i.e. those that fall within planning 'B' Use Classes (B1-offices/ light industry, B2-manufacturing and B8-warehousing and distribution), which is reflective of the District's strong and resilient manufacturing base.

4.60 To support the growth of these new 'traditional' jobs, there is a requirement for 162 hectares of employment land (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8). This requirement stems from a combination of quantitative and qualitative need and [Table 1: Employment Land Justifications](#) illustrates the case for each settlement.

4.61 As there is an existing supply of employment land in many of the settlements either from Saved Local Plan allocations, outstanding commitments (sites that either have planning permission or are currently under construction) or vacant land (land that has obtained planning permission for an employment use but the planning permission has lapsed/expired, yet the land is still suitable and available for an employment use), the amount of land to be identified through the Local Plan in reality it is much smaller in net terms - 42.5 hectares of new employment land.

4.62 Clearly land will be required for the 'non' traditional jobs that will come about over the plan period (approximately 3,100 of the 9,200 jobs), but the diverse nature of non B Use Class activities makes it difficult to generate a figure for the amount of land required to accommodate them. The Local Plan recognises that there is a need for land for activities such as main town centre uses, health, social services, education and other commercial uses, but no land is formally identified for these sectors of the economy, because the focus for such uses should be in and around the District's Town Centres, and it is felt that through the application of the sequential approach to development and other policies contained in the Local Plan and at a national level, the Development Management process can adequately deliver the required land.

4.63 The Local Plan does not make employment land allocations because the scale of additional land in each settlement is not of a significant level to be strategic in terms of the District wide Local Plan. The approach taken allows flexibility amongst both developers and the local community to bring forward sites.

4.64 The figures cited in Policy SS3 are not prescriptive or inflexible, but in general terms, provision of these levels of employment land will ensure that the economic potential of the District's economy and of the individual settlements within it can be enabled and potentially achieved. The gross land requirements are identified in the policy, as is an overall District equivalent floorspace figure (in net terms). This figure, which is derived from converting land into floorspace using English Partnerships Density Ratios, is given as a guide to what the land means in floorspace terms. It is only a guide as it is based on averages and past growth.

4.65 The preferred approach does not restrict the type (Use Class) of employment land in any of the settlements identified. There may be sound Development Management or highways reasons that will limit the use of land on certain sites and this will be established at pre-application stage.

4.66 The following saved South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011 employment allocations are contained within Policy SS3 and therefore form part of this plan's employment provision:

- Proposal KS/BRYM/1: Land at Luffton
- Proposal ME/WECO/1: Land off Bunford Lane
- Proposal ME/WINC/3: Land between Lawrence Hill and A303
- Proposal ME/CACA/3(l): Torbay Road
- Proposal ME/MART/2: West of Ringwell Hill
- Proposal ME/LOPE/1: Lopen Head Nursery
- Proposal ME/YEOV/4: Land south of Yeovil Airfield, Yeovil
- Proposal ME/CHAR/6: Land North of Millfield
- Proposal ME/CREW/4: Land North of Fire Station, Blacknell Lane

4.67 These are also set out in Appendix 2 which also shows the South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011 employment allocations that are no longer to be saved.

4.68 The floorspace figure cited in Policy SS3 gives an indication of what the employment land would equate to in floorspace terms. This figure has been derived by using average floorspace densities and plot ratios. The detailed calculations are contained in the evidence base.

Table 1: Employment Land Justifications

	Local Plan jobs growth (B Use jobs in brackets)	Employment land required for B Use jobs growth (ha) ¹	Existing employment land commitments (ha)	Quantitative and Qualitative justification for employment land	Local Plan additional employment land requirement (ha)
Yeovil Town	2943 (1942)	12.81	39.84	Existing commitments more than provide for the quantitative requirement for land, however, given the significance of Yeovil and the fact that there are only two strategic sites (one of which is for a specific use, a high quality business park - 11.5 hectares) and the remaining sites are small scale commitments and vacant land it is suggested that an additional 5 hectares of land be provided in Yeovil. This will be monitored and reviewed, as National Guidance is clear that Local Planning Authorities should facilitate economic growth in sustainable locations.	5.0
Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension	1565 (1033)	6.81	0	In the Sustainable Urban Extension the aspiration is to develop enough employment land to provide a job for each economically active resident, roughly one per dwelling. This land is location specific, so it all needs to be provided. 11 hectares are required in total with 7.0 hectares in the Plan period.	7.0
Chard	886 (585)	3.86	17.14	Employment land allocation carried forward from saved Local Plan proposals. No additional need. 6 hectares of Chard provision will be built beyond the Plan period.	0
Crewkerne	472 (312)	2.05	10.10		0
Ilminster	343 (226)	1.49	23.05		0
Wincanton	490 (323)	2.13	3.61	There is no quantitative argument for employment land, but from a qualitative perspective there is local concern that there is a lack of a balance between jobs and homes in Wincanton. The settlement has received a significant number of housing commitments, but unlike the other Primary Market Towns, it has no strategic employment allocation, yet its proximity to the A303 and the south east makes it well placed in terms of transport connectivity. Whilst Wincanton has a supply of 2.13 hectares, it is suggested that an additional 5 hectares be provided as a minimum. This will make Wincanton more attractive to potential developers, providing the opportunity to have a range and choice of sites and help to support a more balanced, self contained settlement.	5.0

Table 1: Employment Land Justifications

	Local Plan jobs growth (B Use jobs in brackets)	Employment land required for B Use jobs growth (ha) ¹	Existing employment land commitments (ha)	Quantitative and Qualitative justification for employment land	Local Plan additional employment land requirement (ha)
Somerton	251 (166)	1.09	1.91	There is no quantitative need for additional land, but to provide choice and aid self-containment, additional land is required. A minimum viable site size has been identified in consultation with Economic Development Officers, which will give scope for development to kick start employment growth - in the Local Market Towns the site size is considered to be 3 hectares.	3.0
Castle Cary/Ansford	223 (147)	0.97	10.19	Although there is no quantitative argument for an additional supply of land, and it is over inflated by development of the pet food factory. To provide choice and alternatives to Torbay Road, additional land is identified as required. A minimum viable site size has been identified in consultation with Economic Development Officers, which will give scope for development to kick start employment growth - in the Local Market Towns the site size is considered to be 3 hectares. Discussions with the Parish Council concluded that there is a need for 3 hectares of employment land to aid self-containment.	3.0
Langport/Huish Episcopi	233 (154)	1.01	0.44	There is no quantitative need for additional land, but to provide choice and aid self-containment, additional land is required. A minimum viable site size has been identified in consultation with Economic Development Officers, which will give scope for development to kick start employment growth - in the Local Market Towns the site size is considered to be 3 hectares.	3.0

Table 1: Employment Land Justifications

	Local Plan jobs growth (B Use jobs in brackets)	Employment land required for B Use jobs growth (ha) ¹	Existing employment land commitments (ha)	Quantitative and Qualitative justification for employment land	Local Plan additional employment land requirement (ha)
Bruton	828 (546)	3.60	0.56	It is difficult to accurately assess the amount of jobs growth that will occur individually in each Rural Centre, and therefore it is difficult to quantitatively assess the need for land in each settlement. From a qualitative perspective, to enable and support jobs growth and improve levels of self-containment, additional employment land should be supported in these settlements. A minimum viable site size has been identified in consultation with Economic Development Officers, which will give scope for development to kick start employment growth - in the Rural Centres the site size is considered to be 2 hectares.	2.0
Ilchester			0.02		2.0
Martock/Bower Hinton			2.79		2.0
Milborne Port			0.04		2.0
South Petherton			1.80		2.0
Stoke sub Hamdon			0.0		2.0
Rural Settlements	966 (6072)	4.20	7.86		The additional employment land requirement will provide for the job growth (B Uses) identified for the Rural Settlements and given that the Rural Settlements are spread over a wide geographical area, the figure allows for some choice. Most development will be very small scale.

¹This figure is derived by taking the figure for B Use jobs, applying a percentage for B1, B2 & B8 uses (based on past completions rates) and applying English Partnerships Employment Density Ratios to establish land requirements. An allowance for strategic infrastructure etc. is given.

Policy SS3: Delivering New Employment Land

The Local Plan will assist the delivery of 9,200 jobs as a minimum, and approximately 600,850 sq metres net/162 hectares gross of traditional employment land (Use Class B1, B2 and B8) to be directed to the following settlements for the period April 2006 to March 2028.

Settlement	Local Plan 2006-2028 Total Employment Land Requirement	Existing Employment Land Commitments	Additional Employment Land Provision Required (total employment land less existing commitments) (As at April 2011)	Total Jobs to be encouraged 2006-2028 (numbers in brackets indicates jobs in traditional 'B' Uses as defined by the Use Classes Order)
Strategic Town				
Yeovil Town*	44.84	39.84	5.0	2,943 (1,942)
Yeovil Urban Extension	7.0	0.0	7.0***	1,565 (1,033)
Market Towns				
Chard*	17.14	17.14	0.0***	886 (585)
Crewkerne*	10.10	10.10	0.0	472 (312)
Ilminster*	23.05	23.05	0.0	343 (226)
Wincanton	8.61	3.61	5.0	490 (323)
Somerton	4.91	1.91	3.0	251 (166)
Ansford/Castle Cary	13.19	10.19	3.0	223 (147)
Langport/Huish Episcopi	3.44	0.44	3.0	233 (154)
Rural Centres				
Bruton	2.56	0.56	2.0	828 (546)
Ilchester	2.02	0.02	2.0	
Martock/Bower Hinton	4.79	2.79	2.0	
Milborne Port	2.04	0.04	2.0	
South Petherton	3.80	1.80**	2.0	
Stoke sub Hamdon	2.0	0.0	2.0	
Other				
Rural Settlements	12.36	7.86	4.5	966 (638)

Total	161.85	119.35	42.5	9,200 (6,072)⁴⁹
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* Yeovil, Crewkerne and Ilminster have strategic employment sites which are saved from the previous South Somerset Local Plan and Chard's strategic allocation based around Chard Regeneration Plan also includes employment provision. These sites combined equate to a total of 46.35 hectares, and this figure has been included in the overall floorspace figure cited in Policy SS3 above.

** This figure relates to Lopen Head Nursery.

*** Yeovil and Chard will deliver additional employment land beyond the plan period. Chard will deliver 6 hectares and Yeovil will deliver 4 hectares beyond 2028, in association with their strategic residential growth.

Delivery

4.69 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SS3:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed employment land in the District (B1, B2 and B8 uses).	162 hectares of employment land built in the District between 2006 and 2028.
Number of new jobs in the District.	9,200 new jobs between 2006 and 2028.

Housing

4.70 The RSS (Proposed Modifications) proposed 19,700 dwelling completions from 2006 - 2026 with a breakdown of 11,400 for Yeovil of which 6,400 were to be within the urban frame and 5,000 as an adjacent urban extension(s). Some 8,300 dwellings remained as the provision for the rest of the District.

4.71 Whilst the Government have firmly indicated their intent to withdraw the South West Regional Spatial Strategy which has been stalled for some time at the stage of the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes it remains a live consideration until such time as it is withdrawn. The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes indicate a figure of 19,700 dwellings for South Somerset from 2006 to 2026 (21,670 dwellings pro rata to 2028). It is considered that this figure is inappropriate for South Somerset by virtue of the considerable local evidence gathered specifically in the knowledge that the South West Regional Spatial Strategy would be withdrawn.

4.72 The most important determinant of District Growth should be the employment growth projections set out on Tables 2a and 2b of this report. Of the two scenarios prepared by Consultants (explained above in paragraph 4.56) the higher job figure,

49.[Due to rounding of numbers they may not add up]

adjusted by figures relating to the recent period of recession, is to be used reflecting the Council's aspirations for growth and regeneration and the potential the economy has for growth. The resultant 14,000 dwelling figure however needs to be adjusted upwards to account for an anticipated 300 dwelling figure required in association with recently announced additional deployment to Yeovilton and a provision for non economically active in migrants who need to be accommodated to avoid new dwellings 'earmarked' for workers being occupied by more affluent older non economically active in migrants (potentially up to 5,000 dwellings - from data derived from the South Somerset Housing Market Assessment). Additionally an ageing population is likely to have the effect of reducing the future economic activity rate of the District's population requiring a higher population to provide the same number of workers.

Table 2a: Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil

a) Economically active 2006 (ONS Annual Population survey)	77,700
b) Population 2006 (ONS mid year estimates)	156,700
c) Households 2006 (ONS mid year estimates)	68,000

Table 2b: Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil

	Scenario 1 Positive Private Sector Led Growth	Scenario 2 Slower Growth
d) Net gain of jobs 2006 - 2028	9,200	4,800
e) Net increase in unemployment 2006 - 2028	300	200
f) Economically active 2028 (f = a + d + e)	87,200	82,700
g) Total population 2028 (g = f x 2.02)	176,100	167,100
h) Private households population 2028 (h = g - 2.2%)	172,200	163,400
i) Total number of households 2028 (i = h ÷ 2.1 persons per household)	82,000	77,800
j) Number of additional homes 2028 (j = i - c)	14,000	9,800
k) Population change 2006 - 2028 (k = g - b)	19,400	10,400

4.73 The second determinant should be likely population growth projected for the Plan period. [Table 3: Demographic Growth Projections](#) presents 5 figures in a range from 17,285 to 12,243 dwellings. The most appropriate figure in terms of resilience of approach is the 2008 based household projection figure of 17,000. The figure of 17,285 reflects the estimation for dwellings from the 2008 based population estimates which is understandable similar. The 16,434 dwelling figure reflects the previous one but with known growth 2006-2010 (derived from the latest population estimates) taken into account.

4.74 In determining where the housing requirement should be set within the range given of 9,800 (from the economic projection scenario 2) to 17,300 dwellings (from the 2008 based population projections) it is suggested that the upper end of the range is to be preferred for the housing requirement provision choice because of the economic justification set out above and because it:

- reflects more closely the Council's economic aspirations to encourage economic growth;
- maximises economic growth potential and avoids potential growth inhibition due to lack of workforce;
- minimises increased congestion and in commuting;
- maximises opportunities for affordable housing provision and CIL returns (given that the local building capacity appears in place following discussions with Developers and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identifies sufficient land);
- minimises upward pressure on house prices other things being equal; and
- avoids administrative issues and cost associated with early review of the Local Plan in the event of more rapid economic growth out of the recession than currently anticipated.

4.75 These advantages are principally at the expense, should a bottom end of the range be preferred of pre-committing levels of Greenfield growth prior to their requirement (in terms of the Local Plan this principally means the Yeovil Urban Extension and the Chard strategic allocation). In the event that growth doesn't materialise as assumed then housing provision will lay undeveloped but remain ready to take forward as and when events speed up.

4.76 It is clearly desirable to move on this basis towards the upper end of the projections, however, does one focus on the household projection of 17,300 dwellings or the economic projection of 14,000 dwellings with a supplement for additional dwellings for Yeovilton personnel and non economically active in migrants or some other figure? Furthermore whilst 17,300 dwellings growth represents the top of the range of household projections it is felt more appropriate to consider the middle column figure from table 3 of 16,434 as this has taken into account what has actually happened 2006-2010 (estimated from the Office of National Statistics) in the period 2006-2010. A judgement as to the appropriate level of provision around this resultant figure is now required and a figure of 15,950 dwellings is presented as a reasonable one within the upper range and taking into account the economic projections together with supplementary housing required.

4.77 The market capacity for housing growth and the availability of land are factors that could constrain growth below what would otherwise be the case. However, the Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil report presents clear evidence of market capacity for the higher provision figure of 15,950 dwellings, and the District Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment presents evidence that there is sufficient land for development of this number.

Table 3 Demographic Growth Projections

	Benchmark figure 2008 based CLG household projection (+1200 pa)	2008 based ONS population projections (+1200 pa)	Actual population change (2006- 2010) +2008 based ONS projections (+1200 pa)	Actual population change (2006- 2010) + lower rates of migration 2010-2028 (+ 700 pa) from 2010 population projection data	Actual population change (2006- 2010) + average rate of migration (2001-2010) for 2010-28 (+ 1033pa)
Total population 2006 a	156,700	156,700	156,700	156,700	156,700
Total households 2006 b	68,000	68,000	68,000	68,000	68,000
Actual population change (2006-2010: 159,700-156,700) c			3,000	3,000	3,000
Projected population change (2010-2028) No of years (18) x annual growth d			21,600	12,600	18,594
Projected population increase 2006 – 2028 (c + d) e			24,600	15,600	21,594
Total population 2028 (e + a) f		183,100	181,300	172,300	178,294
Total projected private households population (97.8% of total population) g		179,100	177,311	168,510	174,372
Number of total households (based on 2.1 persons per household) h	85,000	85,285	84,434	80,243	83,034
No of additional households 2006 – 2028 (h – b) i	17,000	17,285	16,434	12,243	15,034

4.78 The higher provision figure serves to maximise the opportunity to achieve affordable housing to meet need and serves to demonstrate that significant new community development can be achieved in Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster, and environmental impact can be contained to an acceptable level.

4.79 A Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken of three options for growth. The most sustainable option - the middle of the range at around 16,000 dwellings serves to vindicate the provision now advocated. There is the potential for the national policy objective of growing our way out of economic difficulties to be hindered by the adoption of local economic and housing targets based on low growth rates for both jobs and housing which will serve to deflate growth on a policy basis and produce a potentially self fulfilling prophesy of lower growth.

4.80 The re-appraisal of the housing growth figure saw and sought to emphasise the importance of the level of growth identified in order to meet communities' aspirations and achieve the Vision for South Somerset. In this regard the level of provision being sufficiently high in order to achieve aspirations was seen as a key determinant of scale of growth. Growth levels need to be sufficient to serve the economic needs of Yeovil as the engine of growth for the wider sub economic area, to secure the Chard Regeneration Framework's Vision and aspirations, to allow for growth in the Market Towns and Rural Centres to retain their viability and vitality and to provide sufficient growth opportunity for the implementation of Policy SS2, and enable rural settlements to grow where it was possible to grow in a sustainable fashion.

Policy SS4: District Wide Housing Provision

Provision will be made for sufficient development to meet an overall District requirement of at least 15,950 dwellings in the plan period April 2006 to March 2028 inclusive.

Delivery

4.81 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SS4:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Development of dwellings	Completion of 15,950 dwellings between 2006 and 2028

Distribution of Housing Growth

4.82 The key starting point for distributing the identified scale of housing growth across the District and throughout the Settlement Hierarchy is a Sustainability Appraisal of options. A Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken to assess the appropriate level of growth for Yeovil in comparison with the Market Towns, Rural Centres and Rural Settlements. It assessed three scenarios for growth:

1. Most of the District's growth (75%) in Yeovil;
2. 50% of the District's growth in Yeovil; or
3. Less than half (25%) of the District's growth in Yeovil.

4.83 The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that half of the District's growth is the appropriate level because it has the most economic benefits, enables a good level of accessibility to services and facilities, and helps to meet housing need where it is greatest at Yeovil. Negative environmental effects are likely from all options, and mitigation measures are proposed to overcome these, but a focus on development at Yeovil should reduce the need to travel, offers greater potential to use alternatives to the car and would avoid the character of the wider rural area being too adversely affected.

4.84 Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken of the revised distribution of housing growth for the rest of the District, from that presented in the Draft Core Strategy. This re-affirms the conclusions of the earlier appraisal, namely that balanced growth across the rest of the District, rather than growth spread amongst settlements generally, or an approach which concentrates on Market Towns solely is to be preferred. This approach presents better access to jobs, shops, facilities and services and helps to reduce the need to travel. Housing need will be better met and the environment of Rural Settlements will be better protected. A fuller justification of the distribution of growth is presented in the Sustainability Appraisal Report associated with the Local Plan.

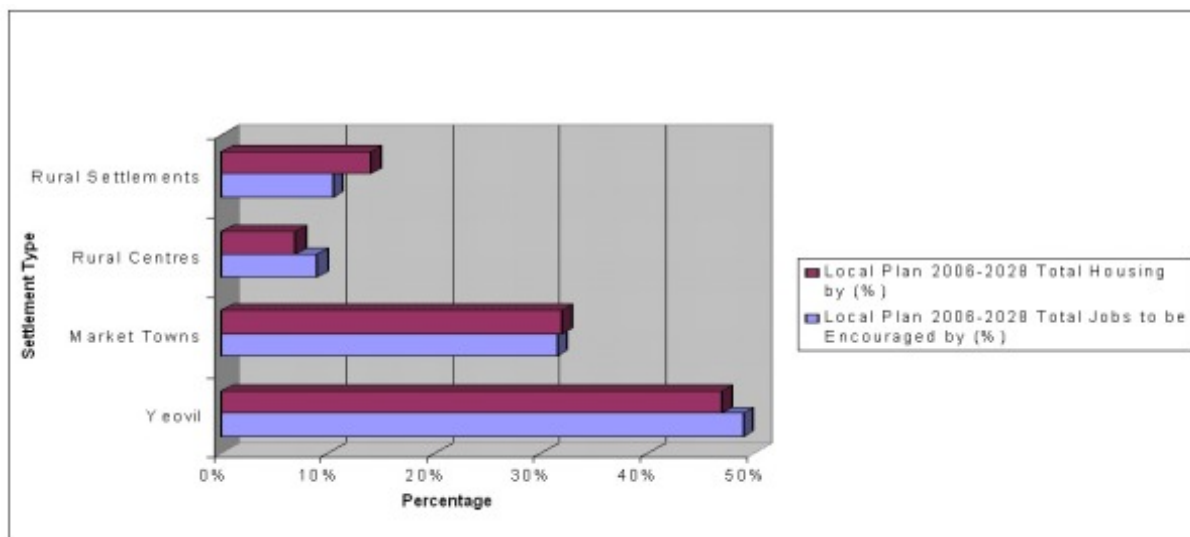
4.85 The distribution of growth between Yeovil, the Market Towns, Rural Centres and Rural Settlements has been refined from the broad approach presented in the Sustainability Appraisal using a range of evidence, which includes economic growth projections, settlement status and factors affecting each individual settlement such as local aspirations, land availability, existing commitments and market deliverability. These are detailed below and have resulted in the distribution of growth outlined in Policy SS5.

Balancing Jobs and Homes

4.86 The Local Plan strategy is economic led. The distribution of growth across South Somerset is based on balancing the projected economic performance, hence jobs growth potential of each settlement over the plan period with housing needs. The Local Plan's approach to balancing the distribution of jobs and homes seeks to ensure more sustainable and self-contained communities that are better placed to

offer a range of opportunities to all of their residents. This approach supports the retention of strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Figure 5 below illustrates the extent to which the Local Plan distribution of new jobs and homes is balanced and reflects the expected job growth of settlements explained above.

Figure 5: Balancing Jobs and Homes



Settlement Hierarchy

4.87 The District's economic geography is projected into the future through the settlement hierarchy. The status of a settlement in the settlement hierarchy therefore reflects its economic function and determines to a significant degree, the level of growth that will be attributed to that settlement over the plan period.

Land Availability

4.88 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a mechanism to establish potential housing sites. Whilst SHLAA sites do not have inherent policy approval, these sites were used to inform the distribution of growth across the District. Using the information in the SHLAA, the Council is satisfied that the housing provision put forward is realistic in land availability terms.

Local (Settlement Based) Factors Influencing Growth

4.89 In the context of the above, given that each settlement is unique and local aspirations for growth differ, the distribution of growth across the District has been further influenced by local factors.

Yeovil

4.90 Yeovil is the prime employment location in the District and its positive and strong economy has consistently supported almost half of the District's jobs, therefore half the overall housing growth is located in Yeovil. This distribution will maintain the economic health and prominence of the settlement.

Chard

4.91 In recognition of its size and potential because of its high degree of self containment, Chard's level of growth is greater than the other Primary Market Towns and reflects the Council's commitment to the growth proposals in the Chard Regeneration Framework. Policy SS5 recognises that as a result of the infrastructure requirements and phasing needed to deliver the Framework, and market limitations to development, the level of growth for Chard requires growth, which extends beyond the plan period. The approach reflects the findings of the Chard Eastern Development Area Feasibility Report (Thomas Lister 2012), which looks at the delivery of the Chard proposals. The report anticipates that development will not commence until 2016, and therefore 1,376 dwellings will be built beyond 2028, at a rate of 120 dwellings per annum. A total of 3,237 dwellings are proposed in Chard.

Crewkerne

4.92 The level of growth identified for Crewkerne is mainly a reflection of the existing commitment, the saved Local Plan Proposal, with some provision for alternative growth over the plan period.

Ilminster

4.93 The requirement of approximately 500 dwellings reflects the settlement's status as a Primary Market Town.

Wincanton

4.94 To reflect the scale of Wincanton and allow assimilation of significant growth in the recent past and present, and to balance employment growth/job creation with housing growth, no further significant development, beyond existing commitments is required in Wincanton over the plan period. This approach reflects local aspirations for a more balanced approach to housing and employment development in Wincanton. The housing trajectory anticipates a gradual build out of the housing committed in the town, resulting in a continuous provision throughout the plan period.

Somerton and Ansford/Castle Cary

4.95 Reflecting local aspirations the scale of growth has been pared back from 500 to 400 dwellings and is a reflection of status and provides an opportunity to maintain and enhance local services and facilities. Development at Ansford/Castle Cary also presents an opportunity to improve access to employment.

Langport/Huish Episcopi

4.96 The changing status of Langport from a Rural Centre to a higher order Local Market Town requires a higher housing provision from the 300 identified in the Draft Core Strategy, which is more akin to the level of growth for a Rural Centre. The 400 dwelling requirement reflects the settlement's status as a Local Market Town and provides an opportunity to maintain and enhance local services and facilities

Bruton, Martock/Bower Hinton, and Milborne Port

4.97 The requirement of between 200 - 300 dwellings in these settlements reflects their status as Rural Centres and provides an opportunity to maintain and enhance local services and facilities.

Ilchester

4.98 The change in status of Ilchester presents an opportunity to provide housing in the settlement, which is in close proximity to the economic opportunities of Yeovilton, and to support town centre services. The limited growth in Ilchester reflects the environmental constraints on future growth, namely archaeological remains and flooding.

South Petherton

4.99 To reflect its status as a Rural Centre and to aid self-containment and support local services, additional growth (approximately 100 houses) has been identified as needed in South Petherton.

Stoke sub Hamdon

4.100 The limited growth in Stoke sub Hamdon reflects the scale and nature of the settlement.

Rural Settlements

4.101 It is important that Rural Settlements can grow where sustainability can be achieved, but there is also a need for restriction on the total to ensure that excessive provision doesn't occur and undermine the settlement strategy and hierarchy. There is an element of arbitrariness in the assessment of the level of growth that Policy SS2 will encourage, hence there is a need to monitor its implementation. The evidence in the latest Council Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)⁵⁰ points to a very significant drop in the provision of additional houses in the Rural Settlements, so making a provision of around 2,400 dwellings, double the current level of commitments for these settlements, a more realistic level than previously contained in the Draft Core Strategy. There is clear evidence from the SHLAA that there are lots of sites that could come forward in Rural Settlements to deliver this level of provision.

50.[South Somerset District Council Annual Monitoring Report 2010-2011]

Existing Commitments

4.102 The distribution of growth reflects existing commitments at April 2011 as well as requirements for future growth as shown in [Table 4: Proposed Settlement Hierarchy and Scale of Housing Growth](#). This results in a level of growth in excess of 15,950 and this has been explained in relation to the scale of overall housing growth in Policy SS5. When adding up settlement specific provision, the overall requirement of 15,950 houses for the District is met with a small over provision within the range of likely variability over time. The main significance of the commitments is in the level of future growth in the latter stages of the plan period. In Wincanton's case the relatively high existing commitments mean little scope for provision in other locations. Just over half the plan's housing requirement is in known commitments to 2011.

Table 4: Proposed Settlement Hierarchy and Scale of Housing Growth

Yeovil's proposed settlement status - Strategic Significant Town (SST) Primary Market Towns (PMT), Local Market Towns (LMT) and Rural Centres (RC)

Settlement Status	Yeovil	Chard	Crewkerne	Ilminster	Wincanton	Somerton	Langport / Huish	Anstord / Castle Cary	Ilchester	South Petherton	Marlock	Bruton	Milborne Port	Stoke Sub Hamdon	Rest of South Somerset	Area Total
	SST	PMT	PMT	PMT	PMT	LMT	LMT	LMT	RC	RC	RC	RC	RC	RC	N / A	
1. South Somerset Spatial Strategy Requirement (Draft Core Strategy)	7815	1861	1028	531	703	400	400	400	151	245	246	217	299	55	2400	*16751
2. Completions (06 / 11)	1221	370	190	132	238	23	153	38	0	103	52	91	126	5	693	3435
3. Under Construction	28	29	120	8	18	10	12	4	0	6	5	9	19	0	131	399
4. Commitments (Not Started)	2455	122	66	59	436	48	77	55	0	42	44	13	47	1	443	3908
5. Allocated (without permission)	0	0	525	0	0	154	53	30	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	780
6. Total	3704	521	901	199	692	235	295	127	0	151	101	113	210	6	1267	8522
7. Residual Housing Requirement	**4111	1340	127	332	11	165	105	273	151	94	145	104	89	49	1133	8229

* 15,950 for the purposes of overall provision, is the District requirement to 2028. The cumulative total of 16,751 is 5% in excess of requirement but is considered in the context of development uncertainties and overall scale of provision, to be in broad agreement with the requirement

** Residual additional housing for Yeovil, including an urban extension of 2,500 dwellings, 935 of which will extend beyond the plan period

Market Deliverability

4.103 [Table 5: South Somerset Housing Trajectory 2006-2028](#) shows that the overall housing requirement for the District and the individual settlements can reasonably be achieved in market terms. Continuing provision of housing is anticipated throughout the plan period. The trajectory presents clear evidence that the housing distribution set out in Policy SS5 is realistic.

Policy SS5: Delivering New Housing Growth

Housing requirement will make provision for at least 15,950 dwellings in the plan period 2006 - 2028 of which 7,815 dwellings will be located within or adjacent to Yeovil, including a sustainable urban extension of 1,565 dwellings within the plan period, and a further 935 dwellings beyond the plan period.

This provision will include development and redevelopment within development areas, greenfield development identified within this Plan or to come forward through conversions of existing buildings, residential mobile homes and building elsewhere in accordance with the policy on development in rural settlements

The distribution of development across the settlement hierarchy will be in line with the numbers below:

Settlement	Local Plan 2006-2028 Total Housing Requirement	Existing Housing Commitments 2006-2011 (as at April 2011)	Additional Housing Provision required (Total Housing Less Existing Commitments) (as at April 2011)
Strategic Town			
Yeovil	7,815	3,704	4,111*
Market Towns			
Chard	1,861	521	1,340**
Crewkerne	1028	901	127
Ilminster	531	199	332
Wincanton	703	692	11
Somerton	400	235	165
Castle Cary/ Ansford	400	127	273
Langport/Huish Episcopi	400	295	105

Rural Centres			
Bruton	217	113	104
Ilchester	151	0	151
Martock	246	101	145
Milborne Port	299	210	89
South Petherton	245	151	94
Stoke Sub Hamdon	55	6	49
Other			
Rural Settlements	2,400	1,267	1,133
Total	16,751***	8,522	8,229

* A further 935 dwellings are proposed at the Yeovil Urban Extension post 2028.

** A total of 3,237 dwellings are proposed in Chard, of which 1,376 dwellings are proposed at the Chard Growth Area post 2028.

*** 15,950 for the purposes of the overall provision is the District requirement to 2028. The cumulative total of 16,751 is 5% in excess of requirement but is considered in the context of development uncertainties and overall scale of provision, to be in broad agreement with the requirement.

Delivery

4.104 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SS5:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Net additional dwellings by settlement	Completion of additional housing provision between 2006 and 2028

Table 5: South Somerset Housing Trajectory 2006 - 2028

Settlement/Year	2006-2011 (Completions)	2011-2016 (Commitments)	2016-2021	2021-2026	2026-2028	Achievable Local Plan Target	Derivation and Assumptions	
Yeovil	1221	2385	2045	1465	699	7815	Commitments, Key Site delivery + 123 dwellings pa windfall. Urban extension commences 2016. See Yeovil breakdown below	
Chard	370	151	500	600	240	1861	Projection based on the Lister Report for delivery for Chard with development commencing 2015/16	
Crewkerne	190	262	200	200	176	1028	262 dwellings reflect commitments of 142 + CLR commencement at a delivery of 40 dwellings per annum - fits previous delivery rate	
Ilminster	132	99	125	125	50	531	99 including currently with consent (some lapsed) assume new consent and steady build rate	
Wincanton	238	275	80	80	30	703	commitments of 474 to be built beyond 2011-2016 as Wincanton's growth housing provision on 2 large sites	
Somerton	23	191	75	75	36	400	191 including existing commitments and Northfield development anticipated to come forward within the next five years. Policy imperative to phase growth	
Castle Cary/ Ansford	38	136	100	100	26	400	136 Commitments/Under Construction, remainder over plan period, Policy imperative to develop brownfield, employment and infrastructure first, likely to result in development over a number of years	
Langport/Huish Episcopi	153	89	54	54	50	400	89 Commitments/Under Construction, remainder over plan period. Policy imperative to phase growth and Langport trajectory addresses implications of appropriate assessment	
Bruton	91	22	31	40	33	217	22 Commitments/Under Construction, remainder over plan period	
Ilchester	0	50	50	51	0	151	SHLAA sites available	
Martock	52	49	50	50	45	246	49 Commitments/Under Construction, remainder over plan period	
Milborne Port	126	66	40	40	27	299	66 Commitments/Under Construction, remainder over plan period	
South Petherton	103	48	34	30	30	245	48 Commitments/Under Construction, remainder over plan period	
Stoke sub Hamdon	5	1	25	24	0	55		
Rural Settlements	693	700	420	420	167	2400	700 Commitments/Under Construction, remainder over plan period	
* Represents Local Plan Target of 15950 + 5% and inclusive of windfalls during the plan period.							16751	
Yeovil delivery								
Commitments (minus key sites)		542						
Windfall		123	615	615	246		123 per annum, commencing 2015 - 2016 once commitments have been built out	
Lufton		450	180					
Lyde		481						
Brimsmore		430	400					
Potential Key Site Intensification		234						
Urban Village			75	75	128			
Urban Extension			650	650	265		Commencing 2017 - 100 first year, 200 second year, 260 thereafter	
Other intensification	1221	2385	2045	1465	699	7815	Aspiration beyond windfall provision	

Infrastructure Delivery

4.105 The growth planned in the Local Plan needs to be supported by infrastructure, community facilities and services that ensure the development of sustainable places. If infrastructure and the needs of the community are not achieved alongside growth there will be unacceptable impacts on local areas and residents and the quality of the environment will be adversely affected. The local authority is committed to ensuring that this does not happen and has successfully sought and used planning obligations to obtain the necessary resources to assist in the delivery of this vital infrastructure.

4.106 Planning Obligations are currently delivered by Section 106 Agreements which are legally binding agreements between local authorities and applicants/landowners which can form part of planning applications. Through their use, proper provision can be made to ensure that new development meets, or contributes to meeting, the infrastructure requirements necessary to enable the development to go ahead.

4.107 The requirements of a planning obligation must meet the following tests:

- be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- be directly related to the development; and
- be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.⁵¹

4.108 In order to find out the requirements for infrastructure to support the growth proposed, the Council has commissioned an Infrastructure Plan (IP)⁵² which sets out the likely infrastructure required to ensure sustainable development. This report is based on the scales of growth for individual settlements proposed after the Draft Core Strategy 2010 but prior to the finalisation of growth provision in this Proposed Submission Plan. However, the changes in growth now proposed are not significantly different in terms of the likely need for further infrastructure.

4.109 The Report on Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset is published in conjunction with the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The IP and database bring together infrastructure requirements identified by partner public and private sector service providers as being needed to support the growth proposed in the Local Plan to 2028. The report covers the existing status of infrastructure in individual settlements in terms of capacity for growth, the nature of additional infrastructure shown as needed to accommodate additional growth proposed, the likely costs of providing such infrastructure and any funding sources where known. The growth proposed in the Local Plan must be capable of being deliverable in the timescales or phases indicated and the Infrastructure Plan is a main tool in demonstrating deliverability of the strategy's proposals.

51.[S.I. 2010/948 Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations]

52.[Report on Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset January 2012, Roger Tym and Partners/Baker Associates]

4.110 The Council will also need to continue working in co-operation with other infrastructure providers to ensure timely delivery of services.

4.111 In addition to setting out services requirements, the Infrastructure Plan functions as a focus for long term decision making over financial spending on infrastructure and its coordination.

4.112 Three tiers of infrastructure have been identified:-

- critical - that needed to enable development to proceed at all;
- necessary at some point to support new development but not at the outset;
- desirable to ensure sustainable development.

4.113 In addition, the database has identified, where possible, those infrastructure elements which are expected to be provided for as part of new development proposals and which the developer will be expected to continue to pay for through S106 agreements. Other infrastructure provision of a strategic nature, not associated with an “on-site” development proposal, will need to be funded by other means.

4.114 In April 2010 the Government Introduced new legislation under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations⁵³ (as amended) which will affect the way in which strategic infrastructure can be funded in the future and modified the way in which planning obligations under Section 106 can be used. It is the intention to adopt a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) alongside the Local Plan to assist with the provision of strategic infrastructure. This will sit alongside on-site mitigation of infrastructure requirements through continued use of Section 106 planning obligations.

4.115 From the Infrastructure Report, it is evident that there are no overriding infrastructure issues associated with any of the proposed scale or locations of growth although there are differing cost implications particularly associated with infrastructure for Yeovil’s urban extension and the strategic allocation for Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA).

4.116 In terms of development in the first 5 years of the Local Plan it is clear from the Infrastructure Report that most of this funding, certainly on critical infrastructure, has been secured from existing section 106 agreements, is part of public utilities mainstream investment or is a reasonable call on the developer. It will be necessary for the Council to focus on Yeovil and Chard where there are specific infrastructure issues which may require additional funding.

4.117 Once a CIL Charging Schedule is adopted, funding for strategic infrastructure (as identified by the Council under Regulation 123⁵⁴) will be subject to the standard charges set out in that Charging Schedule. For infrastructure projects which are not to be funded through CIL and which are required as part of a planning application to

53.[S.I. 2010/948 Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, S.I. 2011/987 CIL Amendment Regulations, 2012]

54.[S.I. 2010/948 Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations , Regulation 123 requires the Council to publish a list of those types or individual infrastructure projects that will be funded or part funded b through CIL]

mitigate site specific issues, planning obligations under Section 106 will continue to be required.

4.118 The viability of a proposed development will continue to be carefully considered. In the case of enabling development, or where the development is unable to deliver all the policy requirements for reasons of viability, taking into account CIL as well, an open book approach to viability will be required to accompany any planning application and planning obligations will be reviewed in the context of such an approach and in line with adopted Council procedures.⁵⁵ Where the Council are required to seek independent financial advice to assess the viability issues, this will be funded by the developer or promoter of the scheme.

4.119 Where a site forms part of a wider site on which planning obligations will be sought, the Council will seek to apportion the necessary planning obligations to ensure that the cumulative impact of such proposals are properly mitigated and to avoid piecemeal development.

Policy SS6: Infrastructure Delivery

The Council will secure the provision of (or financial contributions towards) affordable housing, social, physical and environmental infrastructure and community benefits which the council considers necessary to enable the development to proceed. Proposals that form part of potentially wider sites will be assessed in terms of the capacity of the site as a whole and such requirements sought on a pro rata basis.

Planning Obligations (through S106 legal agreements) will be used to cover those matters which would otherwise result in planning permission being refused for an individual development and will be negotiated on a site by site basis.

The Council, in line with current practice within this and other Councils, will obtain payment from developers for legal and monitoring fees in association with Section 106 Agreements.

Affordable housing and infrastructure required as a result of a site specific planning obligation will normally be expected to be provided for on site where appropriate and delivered in timely manner alongside growth but may, exceptionally, be provided nearby or through financial contribution.

The types of infrastructure required will be considered on a site by site basis and may include the following, where appropriate and not otherwise funded in full or part through CIL (not exhaustive):

⁵⁵[The current Council procedure is set out in the 'Development Control Protocol for identifying and prioritising planning Contributions' adopted 15 June 2006]

- Affordable housing;
- Renewable and low carbon energy;
- Provision and enhancement of open space, sports facilities and play areas;
- Providing for and improving accessibility by a variety of modes of sustainable transport;
- Improvements to biodiversity assets and green infrastructure;
- Road and highway improvements;
- Community facilities.

The level of developer contribution will be proportionate to the nature, scale and viability of the project having regard to the:

- Scale and form of development;
- Capacity of existing infrastructure; and
- Potential impact of the development upon the surrounding area and its facilities.

Where viability of a scheme is contested the Council will adopt an open book approach to negotiations in line with adopted Council procedures.

A Community Infrastructure Levy will be charged throughout the District in accordance with the adopted Charging Schedule for the provision of infrastructure in the area.

The Council will work in partnership with other authorities and infrastructure providers to ensure coordination of infrastructure delivery to support growth.

Delivery

4.120 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SS6:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Achievement of identified infrastructure required with development	Delivery of identified infrastructure
CIL Payments	Collection of due payments

Phasing of Development

4.121 There are a number of aspects of development phasing:

1. Desire for employment land before housing development.
2. Incremental affordable housing.
3. Infrastructure required and sought before housing development (for example roads or schools before housing).
4. Incremental growth (too much too soon and associated assimilation problems for settlements and neighbourhoods).
5. Brownfield before greenfield land

4.122 The first four issues should not be addressed through policy but through other planning mechanism. Planning can not deliver employment i.e. jobs it can only enable provision of land. An embargo on housing whilst new employment is not generated would only delay housing (and the accommodation and temporary employment that provides) without delivering employment. It is difficult to address the uncertainties of affordable housing funding. A temporary imbalance of tenure mixes on a site due to the economics of its development is currently a symptom of the recession. When normal market factors apply affordable housing provision will become market led and this problem of too much affordable housing too soon should be resolved. Infrastructure requirements for new development is a planning issue but one that should be resolved through local policy (for example Masterplanning or neighbourhood planning) and the development management process. Incremental growth is a legitimate concern however the first means to address it should be clarification of the expected housing trajectory for development for each settlement.

4.123 The NPPF however states that planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. The NPPF therefore provides a national policy context in support of a brownfield (PDL) before greenfield phasing policy.

Phasing of Previously Developed Land

4.124 Brownfield development before Greenfield is sought through 'Policy HG2: The use of Previously Developed Land (PDL) for new housing development' which sets an overall target of 40% of development on PDL. However, this policy has not sought to phase development with a presumption of PDL before Greenfield land.

4.125 To achieve the Council's PDL target set out in Policy HG2 development will be guided towards the most sustainable locations available, which maximise social and economic benefits, minimise the loss of Greenfield sites to built development, reduce the need to travel and make the best use of land and other resources.

4.126 The Council will also consider a range of incentives or interventions that could help to ensure that previously developed land is developed prior to Greenfield including addressing obstacles to the development of vacant and derelict sites and buildings and encouraging innovative housing schemes that make effective use of public sector previously-developed land.

4.127 A necessary caveat to the application of the policy is that it must not hinder needed development and in particular that there is sufficient housing land available for development.

Policy SS7: Phasing of Previously Developed Land

A sequential approach to development will seek the early development of previously developed, derelict or underused land in settlements before the development of Greenfield land, where this would not prevent sufficient development of business, housing (particularly affordable housing) and other uses necessary to achieve the overall vision and strategy coming forward. A minimum target of 40% of new development should be on previously developed land and a 5-year land supply needs to pertain.

Delivery

4.128 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy SS7:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

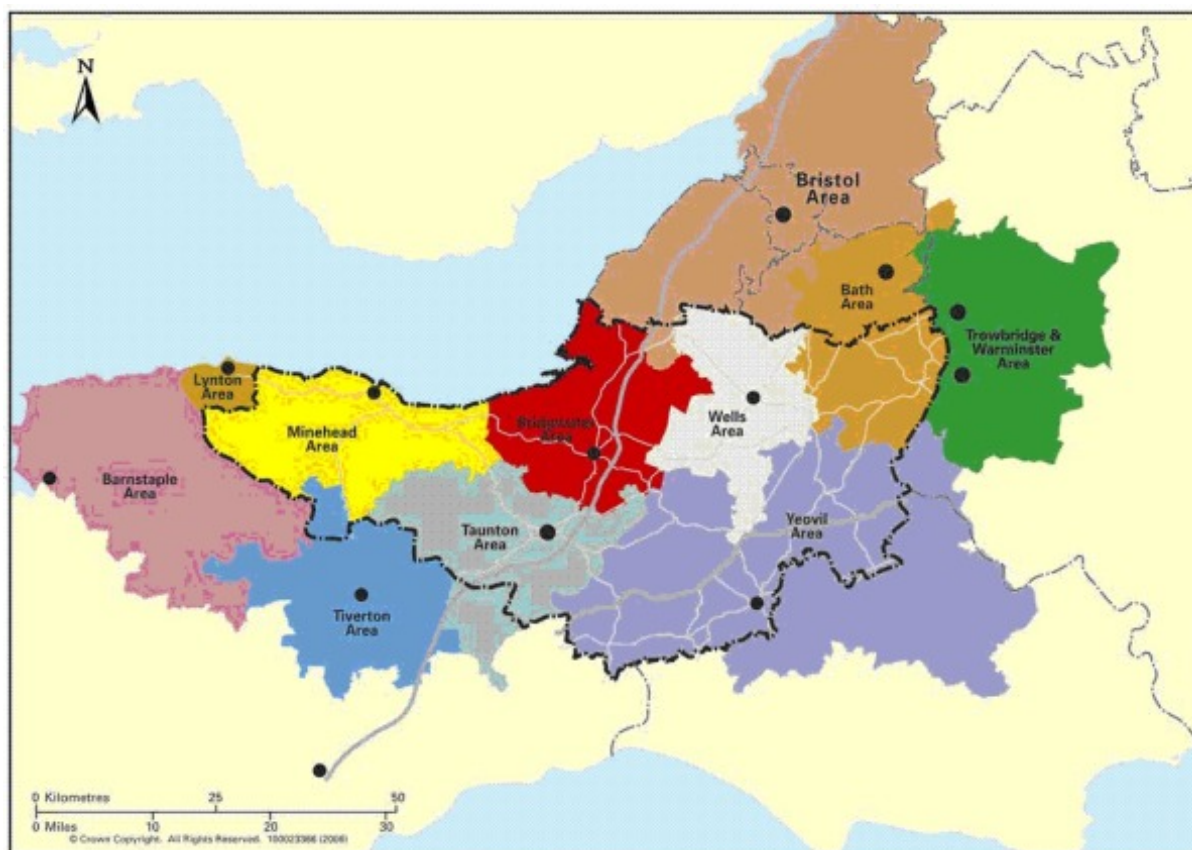
Monitoring Indicators	Target
Percentage of new development on PDL	40% of development to be PDL from all housing applications
Refusal of applications for Greenfield development where PDL is identified as readily available	100% of applications

5 Yeovil - Vision and Proposals

Spatial Portrait

5.1 As set out in the Settlement Strategy, Yeovil is by far the largest settlement in the district, and is the focus for employment, retail, services, and housing in South Somerset. Yeovil is located on the south eastern boundary of Somerset, adjacent to the Dorset border, and is surrounded by a large rural hinterland of smaller market towns and villages that extends across South Somerset and into northern Dorset. Taunton is the nearest larger settlement, around 28 miles away to the west. The map below shows travel to work areas in the Somerset area.

Figure 6: Travel to Work Areas in Somerset⁵⁶



5.2 Yeovil is closely linked to the A303 trunk road that runs east-west through the district, and the key routes of the A30 and A37 run through the town. The town has two mainline railway stations, Yeovil Pen Mill on the Weymouth - Bristol line, and Yeovil Junction on the Exeter - London Waterloo line. Neither station is in an ideal location, with Pen Mill on the eastern edge of the town and Junction two miles to the south of the town, but there is a regular (half hourly) bus service from the stations to

56.[Source: Somerset Economic Assessment, 2011]

the town centre, and Pen Mill has good pedestrian and cycle links with the town centre via an off road path.

5.3 Yeovil is an historic town with evidence of pre-Roman settlement, steady medieval growth, and a local economy based on cloth and leather manufacturing (with gloving a speciality) that promoted modest expansion into the 19th century. Increased growth came in the 20th century, with aerospace and its associated engineering becoming the town's main industry, and rapid housing development over the last 40 years which has now taken Yeovil's population to around 43,959 people⁵⁷. This residential growth has primarily spread north and west of the town centre, absorbing the small hamlets of Preston Plucknett and Alvington, and now extending to the edge of Lufton hamlet to the west and Brimsmore to the north. Development to the southeast has been limited due to a combination of the River Yeo's flood plain, steep hills, and historic homes and estates.

5.4 Today, Yeovil plays a very significant economic role in the county,⁵⁸ and is the prime economic driver in South Somerset. It is estimated that Yeovil generated £1.5bn of Gross Value Added in 2007.⁵⁹ Yeovil has nearly half of the jobs in the District, despite being home to just over a quarter of the population. Yeovil has a relatively high proportion of manufacturing jobs, and is one of the most important aerospace engineering areas in the country, with "AgustaWestland" particularly prominent, employing around 3,500 people. There are also lots of jobs in health and social work, and retail in the town. Yeovil is under represented however in private sector services such as banking and finance. Prior to the late 2000's recession, there was strong economic growth at Yeovil driven by an increase in jobs in the business and financial services sector that easily outstripped national and regional growth rates – economic forecasts suggest that Yeovil will be less severely affected by the economic slow down than other places, helped by the large manufacturing sector in the town which has proven more robust than other sectors. There is a requirement however to diversify the number of employees in the town.

5.5 Yeovil has a range of food and non-food shops, with numerous national multiple operators, and has four times the retail floor space of the next largest settlement in the District (Chard), although there are some empty shops in the town, evidence of the economic recession. The town has one of the highest levels of self-containment of any settlement in the region, with 75% of those living in Yeovil also working there.⁶⁰ However, there are also high levels of in-commuting with 1 in 3 workers in Yeovil travelling in to the town to work. Some of the key services and cultural activities in the town include Yeovil District Hospital, Yeovil College, the Octagon Theatre, and Yeovil Town Football Club. The town would benefit from greater provision of quality indoor sports and leisure facilities.

5.6 Some of the core town centre functions of Yeovil are currently located elsewhere in the town, which make trips to Yeovil more difficult than in a compact town centre

57.[2010 urban area population estimates, ONS]

58.[Somerset Economic Assessment, 2011]

59.[An Economic profile of Yeovil, Ekosgen 2010]

60.[A Functional Analysis of Settlements, SWRA, 2005]

where key functions are in one, walkable centre. For example, many offices (including the main District Council office) are now located outside the town centre, and neither of the towns' two train stations are within the town centre. The dispersal of some town centre functions, such as offices in the 'western business extension', is a further disaggregation of services and facilities.

5.7 The car currently dominates travel in the town, with 65% of Yeovil's residents driving to work. However two thirds of these trips are under 5km,⁶¹ which is short enough to offer potential for these trips to be made on foot, bike or by bus. Key traffic routes across the town suffer from congestion at peak times, although it tends to disperse outside peak periods – the A30 Sherborne Road is the one location where congestion is visible for most of the day.⁶² The A30 also acts as a barrier to pedestrian access to the town centre. As with most urban areas, traffic hotspots tend to be at the junctions. Road traffic is the prime cause of poor air quality in parts of Yeovil, which has led to the whole town being designated as an Air Quality Management Area. Although there are dedicated cycle routes around parts of Yeovil, much of this network is discontinuous meaning that it is difficult to cycle to key destinations across the town, particularly from northern parts of Yeovil.

5.8 Yeovil is located in an attractive rural setting, within a sensitive landscape defined by escarpments to both the north and south, which act to 'cradle' the town.⁶³ There is a particularly rich historic environment in close proximity to the town, including 5 registered Historic Parks and Gardens, 12 village Conservation Areas, numerous Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, and 9 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.⁶⁴ These offer important tourism opportunities. Other important natural assets include Best and Most Versatile agricultural land surrounding much of the town, several Local Wildlife Sites, European Protected Species (including dormice, bats, otters), and the River Yeo flood plain along the eastern edge of the town. The presence of Nine Springs Country Park just to the south of the town centre is one of Yeovil's key assets.

Local Aspirations - the 'Yeovil Vision'

5.9 The Yeovil Vision project involves a wide range of groups with an interest in the town, and is a statement of ambition reflecting the desire for the future development, regeneration, renewal of Yeovil to 2028 and beyond. It has the catch phrase '*Yeovil; the heart of the country... and the mind of a city*', supported by the following objectives:

- Developing a positive, confident and distinct image;
- A town centre which is safe and clean;
- Delivering quality new developments which are locally distinctive, sustainable and contribute to the development of the town centre as a whole;

61.[2001 Census]

62.[Yeovil Transport Strategy Review, 2006]

63.[Peripheral Landscape study of Yeovil, 2008]

64.[Yeovil Historic Environmental Assessment, 2010]

- Enhancing its close relationship with the country park and countryside beyond;
- Realising its full potential to meet the demands of its catchment area and in doing so attracting appropriate and quality inward investment;
- Developing distinct yet complimentary quarters (see Figure 7: Yeovil Vision Urban Quarters below) to improve the vitality and diversity of the town centre;
- Using a quality transport system which provides choice;
- A mixture of uses and activities providing a safe and vibrant environment for both daytime and night-time economies;
- Developing a strong community involvement in its future development and improvement;
- A town that embraces and celebrates cultural diversity.

5.10 The Yeovil Urban Development Framework (2005) details specific projects in the town centre that would help deliver the objectives and aspirations of the Yeovil Vision – the Local Plan supports these projects as helping to regenerate the town:

1. Radial routes – the re-establishment of the historic radial routes into the town centre.
2. The Avenue – the transformation of the Reckleford/Queensway bypass into an urban boulevard.
3. Urban Village – rationalisation of the street pattern to the south and the creation of locations for high quality mixed use development.
4. Green Fingers – a series of green corridors and links between the town centre and Country Park.
5. Promenade – the creation of a strong urban frontage to the Country Park which strengthens its relationship with the town centre.
6. Green Transport Corridor – a corridor of future sustainable transport opportunities which connects the east end of Yeovil with the Country Park.
7. Development Opportunities – a schedule of major opportunities for development in the town centre.

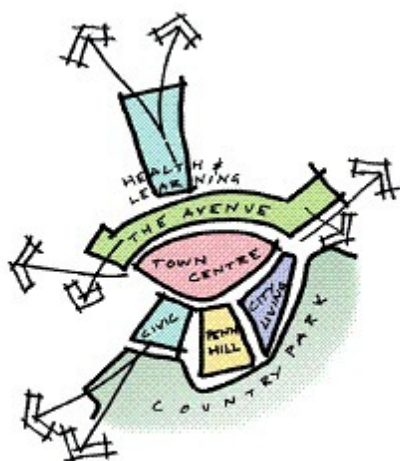


Figure 7: Yeovil Vision Urban Quarters

5.11 An updated overview⁶⁵ of the some of the schemes proposed in the Yeovil Vision has identified two key factors as being critical to the success of the town centre: residual town centre functions should better meet local need to reverse the "leakage of spend" from the Yeovil catchment area; and connectivity should be maintained and enhanced both within the town centre, and to key destinations elsewhere in the town. In the longer term, office based employment should increase in the town centre in order to increase its vitality and viability.

65.[Yeovil Place Review, Ekosgen, 2010]

What should the Local Plan deliver?

Housing

5.12 The spatial strategy proposes 7,815 new homes at Yeovil, based upon having an economic led approach to growth, as explained further in the Settlement Strategy section. This level of housing provision helps to maintain a balance with the town's potential job growth, will serve to maintain Yeovil as the focus for growth in the South Somerset economy, and will help to support a vibrant retail, leisure and service base for the town and wider area.

5.13 The extent to which housing development will occur within the existing urban area of Yeovil can be indicated by an assessment of the likely capacity of the town to accommodate growth. An initial assessment undertaken, taking into account the following sources, indicated a theoretical potential capacity of 6250 (rounded) dwellings for Yeovil for the plan period:

- Completions: 1221 dwellings
- Commitments: 2483 dwellings
- Intensification of key sites: 234 dwellings
- Yeovil urban village: 278 dwellings
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment sites: 724 dwellings
- Windfall development after 2022 and flats above shops: 1284 dwellings

5.14 An alternative assessment can be undertaken in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 48⁶⁶). This entails replacing the last two sources of supply above with an estimate of windfalls from 2015 (allowing windfalls contained within the commitments to be built out and assuming all are within the urban frame) of some 1,599 dwellings. This presents an alternative total of 5,815 dwellings. In the light of variability and uncertainty in the estimating sources, the potential to deliver more dwellings through higher quality higher density schemes and the flexibility afforded by the sustainable urban extension, it is considered appropriate to retain the provision of 6,250 dwellings for development within the urban framework of Yeovil as a target to aspire to and be monitored.

5.15 The overall level of growth for the town compared with the expected urban provision leads to the requirement for an urban extension. It is considered that one extension is preferred over several by virtue of:

- better access for residents for jobs and facilities;
- better CO₂ reduction performance and cheaper energy;
- more sustainable transport potential;
- and likely cheaper overall cost for development.

66.[NPPF March 2012 Paragraph 48]

5.16 The potential size of the urban extension is a minimum 1,565 dwellings to meet the overall Yeovil provision in the plan period. It is considered however appropriate to retain a scale of development of 2,500 dwellings and anticipate a build out beyond the plan period for a number of reasons. In particular:

- consistency with the approach adopted at Chard for the strategic allocation delivery of economies of scale;
- enabling a more sustainable community being developed with potentially more services;
- provide for more certainty for the future by reflecting the natural potential for the urban extension location (see below);
- should a lower urban framework figure materialise the Yeovil housing requirement;
- could still be met by a higher proportion of development within the Sustainable Urban Extension up to its full deliverable site capacity of 2,500 dwellings.

Policy YV1: Urban Framework and Greenfield Housing for Yeovil

Within the overall provision of 7,815 dwellings at Yeovil, 6,250 dwellings should be located in the urban framework of the town, and 2,500 dwellings at a sustainable urban extension. 1,565 dwellings in the sustainable urban extension should be built up to the year 2028, with the remaining 935 dwellings to be delivered after the plan period.

Delivery

5.17 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy YV1:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Net housing delivered at Yeovil	Approved 7,815 dwellings should be developed at Yeovil, including 1,565 dwellings in the sustainable urban extension between 2006 and 2028 (and an additional 935 dwellings after the plan period)

Employment

5.18 As set out in the Vision, Strategic Objectives and Settlement Strategy, Yeovil will continue to be the prime economic driver in South Somerset, as well as parts of surrounding districts. The Local Plan proposes for around 4,508 jobs being created in Yeovil over the plan period, of which it is likely that 2,975 jobs will be within the 'B' use classes. An additional 16 ha of 'B' use employment land is required in Yeovil, 11 ha of which should be delivered as part of the Sustainable Urban Extension in order to provide one job per household to meet the aspirations for a sustainable extension with 4 ha to be built beyond the Plan period.

5.19 The Local Plan seeks to build upon the strengths of Yeovil's economy, by encouraging new businesses that support aerospace and other high tech industries. Policy YV5 delivers an aspect of this through the designation of an 'airfield flight safety zone' that supports the continued use of the airfield for testing aircraft, and therefore supporting this key element of the town's economy. The strategic employment provision in Yeovil at Lufton and Bunford Lane continue to be



Aerospace engineering is key to Yeovil's economy

regarded as strategically important and supported. The allocation at Bunford Lane in particular will provide a high quality business park that will support the objective to encourage high tech industries.

5.20 Yeovil does need to ensure diversification within the high tech sector to avoid its heavy and historic dependence on the defence industry, and so that it is more robust to future economic changes. A supply of employment land will be critical to maintaining the needs of a changing sector and the inevitable drift from traditional engineering to smaller, high-tech, IT driven development.

5.21 One issue that the Local Plan will seek to tackle in Yeovil is the expansion of office space outside the town centre – over the last 20 years much of the office based employment growth has occurred outside of the town centre, and between 2006-11 only 10% of the office development in Yeovil has occurred in the town centre.⁶⁷ Therefore, new office development will be directed to Yeovil town centre, as set out in Policy EP2.

Retail

5.22 Yeovil is the largest and most successful town centre in the District with a reasonable presence of 'High Street' brands, although there has been an increase in the number of vacant properties across the town centre in recent years. The

67.[SSDC Employment Land Monitoring April 2006 to March 2010]

proposals⁶⁸ for a 23,000 sq m gross expansion of the Quedam Shopping Centre will considerably improve the retail offer of the town and provide a range of modern shop units to attract new retailers.



Shopping in Yeovil town centre

5.23 The South Somerset Retail Study Update (2012) recommends a strategy of retaining Yeovil's market share, which will secure its prominence in the retail hierarchy, whilst allowing sufficient retail provision in the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres. If Yeovil's market share were increased it would potentially unbalance this relationship at the expense of the other centres in the retail hierarchy. Therefore to retain Yeovil's market share in a managed way, an upper limit is placed on additional retail floorspace in Yeovil beyond existing retail provisions and commitments (see Policy EP10). The limits are 3,800sq m (or £47.7m retail expenditure) of convenience goods retail floorspace and 12,600

sq m (or £90.9m retail expenditure) of comparison goods retail floorspace to 2028.

5.24 The threshold at which retail proposals are required to prepare a Retail Impact Assessment is 2,500 sq m, which is in line with the NPPF.⁶⁹

Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension

5.25 As discussed above, an urban extension to Yeovil of some 2,500 dwellings (with 1,565 dwellings within the plan period) and 11 ha of employment land (with 7ha within the plan period) is required to deliver the proposed level of growth for the town. This would equate to around 5,500 people living in the urban extension when complete. This is a lower scale of development than proposed in the draft Core Strategy related to a lower overall provision figure for the town and a higher and stronger evidenced estimate for development within the town.

Location

5.26 The preferred direction of growth of East Coker, Keyford and Barwick from the draft Core Strategy has been affirmed albeit in modified form with more limited development to the east of the A37 Dorchester road and elements of the Brympton and Coker option to the immediate west of the preferred option being incorporated into the new direction of growth including land at the junction of the A30 and Watercombe Lane (see Yeovil inset map). This has emerged following consideration of representations, new evidence base relating to highways impact and infrastructure and further work on constraints mapping, sustainable appraisal and location scoping.

68.[The scheme has a resolution to grant planning permission (as at February 2012)]

69.[NPPF march 2012]

5.27 The main issues relating to location emerging from the consultation were:

- Disagreement with Sustainability Appraisal of Southern option especially in relation to:
 - Access to town centre / employment sites / train stations;
 - Impact on landscape / historic environment;
 - Loss of grade 1 agricultural land / biodiversity;
 - Topographical barriers;
 - Floodplain.
- Capacity on existing brownfield sites to accommodate all required growth;
- Insufficient infrastructure to accommodate the Urban Extension especially:
 - Hospitals / primary schools / sewage / parking.
- Insufficient transport evidence;
- Highways Agency support southern option subject to detailed Cartgate testing;
- Northwest option has not been accurately appraised;
- A single direction for growth restricts build rates.

5.28 In response to these concerns the Council undertook a constraints mapping exercise and review of the initial sustainability appraisal that established the preferred option but incorporating the north west option in greater detail. The merits of a single location established and the scale of growth deliverable within the urban framework (see above) the focus of further work was a constraints mapping exercise and revised sustainability appraisal.

5.29 The Constraints mapping analysis had five stages of site identification. The first stage considered all constraints and gave them equal weighting but failed to identify sufficient land to accommodate development due to the high level of constraints around Yeovil. The constraints considered were:

- Protection of Agricultural Land (Grade 1, 2 & 3);
- Protection against Flooding (Flood Zones 2 & 3);
- Protection of the Historic Environment (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Historic Parks & Gardens);
- Protection of Village Identity (East Coker, West Coker, Barwick & Stoford or Bradford Abbas, Chilthorne Domer, Thorne Coffin, Yeovil Marsh, Mudford, Over Compton & Odcombe);
- Protection of the Agusta Westlands Flight Path;
- Protection of Environmental Designations (Local Wildlife Sites, SSSIs);
- Protection of Landscape Character (Northern and Southern Escarpments).

5.30 A second stage was therefore required to prioritise constraints to deliver strategic land for development on the basis of the primacy of securing development for Yeovil. Agricultural land and landscape constraints were given lower priority to deliver sufficient land for the urban extension.

5.31 Three emerging options from the constraints assessment (northwest, south and west and a multi site option) were re appraised in terms of the sustainability criteria the Council had derived from the Sustainable Community Strategy. The outcome of this re appraisal presented a clear case for determining a preferred location for growth. Key determining factors related to accessibility to services, effects of traffic (traffic congestion) and reducing the contribution to climate change (renewable energy opportunities). Additional considerations related to infrastructure and development costs of options, market capacity and ability to deliver the required dwellings on the urban extension up to 2028 and land availability in terms of landowner and developer intent.

5.32 The outcome of the Sustainability Appraisal was a location for development to the South and West of Yeovil because it:

- is more accessible and gives better opportunities for sustainable transport;
- presents opportunities to rationalise education facilities across the town;
- is accessible to employment opportunities;
- provides the opportunity for more walking and cycling compared with car use and the cost of known traffic infrastructure is less (although the disbenefits of the Option to the northwest are less than previously thought following a re working of the Parson Brinckerhoff traffic modelling);
- has better environmental impact than the north west option (but only if impacts on neighbouring villages are seriously mitigated and the large-scale open space proposals on the site are used to beneficial effect in this regard);
- provides better opportunity to introduce combined heat and power technology and contribute to CO2 minimisation;
- has substantive landowner and developer interest in developing in the South and West (and more so than in a North West option).

5.33 To assure the Council that the key developmental aspects of the urban extension can be achieved in the emergent location and to refine the area to ensure that it is appropriate for the revised scale of development a scoping exercise (initial masterplanning) was undertaken. This served to refine the location for growth as shown on the proposals map incorporating part of the Brympton and Coker option for growth. The identified location enables accommodation of the required development without impinging on key local landmarks and constraints and without adversely affecting the overall setting of East Coker. There is an expectation that net residential density will be 45 dwellings per hectare over the extension to reflect economic use of the land and flexibility to adjust densities to reflect opportunities and constraints in the Direction of growth. The overall and specific densities of the urban extension will be a matter for the masterplan process to determine in the context of all relevant site related matters. On this basis sufficient land is identified in the Direction of growth to accommodate the scale of development proposed.

5.34 In undertaking this work it became clear that a buffer zone for East Coker and North Coker would be required (see below).

Traffic Matters

5.35 A final Yeovil transport modelling study was produced by the consultants 'Parsons Brinckerhoff' and assessed 10 different options for the proposed Yeovil urban extension. In addition, a 'Highways Infrastructure Requirements for Yeovil urban extensions' report was produced that assesses the preliminary cost estimates of the various options for the proposed Yeovil urban extension.

5.36 On the basis of these reports, the potential impact on the highway network of the different options for Yeovil's urban extension can be summarised as below:

- There is generally limited difference between the options in terms of traffic impact
- The successful implementation of sustainable travel at any location would mean less impact on the road network.
- Whilst the North West option has a similar traffic impact as the South and West option in general, 'eco town' standards (50% of travel by non-car means) cannot realistically be achieved and there is a likelihood of an increase in car-based travel if the NW option is pursued due to its relative remoteness (around 6km from the town centre).
- Location options in the south of Yeovil are the only areas that are considered to have the potential to provide realistic opportunities for non-car based travel, due to being relatively close to the town centre (approx 2km), and the relatively flat terrain within the site will help to encourage walking/cycling (although it is recognised that Hendford Hill is a discouragement for such links to the town centre).
- In terms of provisional cost estimates of strategic highways infrastructure, the south and west location is cheapest at £2m whilst the NW option incorporating a link onto the A3088 is most costly at £9.4m.
- There will be a noticeable adverse local traffic impact on Hendford Hill and Watercombe Lane from an urban extension to the south and west. There will be a similar adverse impact on Western Avenue should a North West option for growth be decided upon. Mitigation of such local impact is more realisable in relation to the development to the south and west of Yeovil rather than to the north and west.

5.37 The traffic conclusions above support the south and west location. Furthermore the Highways Agency have indicated that the Parsons Brinckerhoff modelling work is sound and clarified their view

'In summing up, our view is that options to the south and east of Yeovil are located in more sustainable locations and therefore on Highways grounds these should be promoted ahead of other urban extension locations.'... 'Our rationale was that the northern options are physically closer to the strategic road network and so traffic would be more likely to use the network for outbound commuting to neighbouring towns. We also concluded that, southern options for an urban extension were likely to offer better current and future opportunities to use

sustainable travel modes, which in turn would lead to less vehicular trips on the network.'

Infrastructure

5.38 Finally the opportunity was taken within the context of the Infrastructure Planning Report (IDP) to cost the infrastructure required for the preferred option for the urban extension against an emerging option to the north west of the town (from both the constraints mapping exercise and the representations received). The findings of the IDP were that:

'7.8 We have considered the different costs of the southern and northern urban extension locations. This is within the context of the separate sustainability appraisal undertaken by the Council, which has already indicated that the southern option is preferable.

There are a number of infrastructure items included within the schedule that are applicable to either of the urban extension locations, particularly the requirements for social and community infrastructure (which will include the new secondary school), and the green infrastructure requirement.

- *The differences in the costs relate to the different physical infrastructure required, with more requirements in the northern location (total £53.9m compared to £47.4m for the southern urban extension).*
- *The net effect is that on the basis of the infrastructure requirement identified to date, the northern urban extension is more expensive to deliver than the southern urban extension.'*

5.39 The Infrastructure Planning Report identified that highways improvements will be required in delivering the Sustainable Urban Extension, with initial work⁷⁰ indicating improvements to existing roundabouts at Keyford and Little Tarrat roundabout, and the creation of a new roundabout at Placket Lane. However, further detail on highways requirements will be included in the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension Area Action Plan.

5.40 In terms of other infrastructure requirements in locating the Sustainable Urban Extension to the south and west of Yeovil, alterations to overhead British Telecom lines are a 'critical' requirement. Infrastructure for health, leisure, education, open space and waste will also be 'necessary' in delivering the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension.⁷¹ ⁷²In particular there is a need for 2 primary schools (for the full scale development) a secondary school for Yeovil best located in the Sustainable Urban Extension and a Health Centre.

70.[Highway Infrastructure Requirements for Yeovil urban extensions, 2011]

71.[Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset, 2012]

72.[Delivering a Resources plan for Somerset's urban extensions report A: Waste Infrastructure Study, 2011]

Garden City Suburb

5.41 It was originally proposed that both the urban extension and the ‘Summerhouse Village’ (previously known as Yeovil urban village – see Policy YV4) would be developed to ‘eco town’ standards. The PPS: Eco-Towns Supplement to PPS1 is subject to review by the Government however the District Council still aspires for the urban extension and Summerhouse Village to achieve the highest sustainability standards possible. In particular the following standards are to be pursued for the two strategic locations for Yeovil.

- 40% greenspace – an aspiration in keeping with the Yeovil Vision and the high quality urban edge landscape of Yeovil;
- A minimum of 30% affordable housing to achieve the garden town aspirations of the Council for the Urban Extension – the Council’s target is 35%;
- More options for non-car travel (50% of trips should be non-car) – the high usage levels of traffic on Yeovil’s roads throughout the network point to retention of this standard to enable maximum development and development benefits at minimum adverse traffic impact;
- 1 job per household provided on site – this enables a new sustainable community less controlled by the need to use the car;
- Homes accessible to public transport – the need to promote viable public transport in Yeovil is clear.

5.42 It is felt that the Government’s current review of Level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes is a less onerous and cheaper to deliver standard, and that there is little rationale in providing more aggressive standards in the urban extension which would be at a cost to occupiers and developers alike. However all other standards expressed above should be pursued.

5.43 The Government’s aspiration in the NPPF⁷³ for the promotion of garden city principles is considered to fit well with the Sustainable Urban Extension and these principles will be pursued through the Extension:

5.44 Other standards for sustainable development should also be pursued where possible as set out below

- minimise vulnerability to the changing climate;
- meet lifetime homes standards;
- access to one employment opportunity per dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport;
- homes should be within a 10 minute walk of a frequent bus service and neighbourhood services;
- designed and planned to support healthy and sustainable environments;
- complement and enhance existing landscape character;⁷⁴

73.[NPPF March 2012]

74.[Further detail on this is included in the ‘Yeovil Peripheral Landscape study’ September 2008]

- conserve and, where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings;⁷⁵
- a net gain in local biodiversity;⁷⁶and contributes to the green infrastructure strategy and to the conservation objectives of nearby designated Natura 2000 sites.
- incorporate measures to ensure efficient use of water, improve water quality and prevent surface water flooding;
- include a sustainable waste and resources plan which sets ambitious targets for residual waste levels, recycling levels and landfill diversion.
- Long term governance structures should be in place to ensure high sustainability standards are achieved and change is effectively managed.

The achievement of these standards will establish the urban extension and Summerhouse Village as exemplars that will demonstrate the benefits of sustainable living.

5.45 The Council have undertaken detailed studies on waste efficiency and renewable energy delivery in association with the urban extension under the Government's former Eco Town Initiative. These have produced

- a site waste management plan for construction of the extension
- a range of sustainability targets for waste processing, management and recovery from household, commercial and construction waste sources
- and a series of measures by which these might be achieved
- an aspiration for district heating to achieve code for sustainable homes level 6 and promotion of a combined heat and power scheme (possibly biomass generated) to potentially be allied with other heat generating or heat demanding land uses within Yeovil
- Promotion of photo voltaic energy generation on rooftops of the extension

Future Masterplanning

5.46 These studies are moving into areas of more detailed planning of the urban extension that will require detailed masterplanning to develop the location of growth into a detailed scheme that can be implemented. This masterplanning is anticipated as a necessary process to be undertaken within the context of an area based development planning document and with the full engagement and ownership of the wider Yeovil community as well as the local communities immediately adjacent the direction of growth. The masterplan will be designed in such a way that will contribute to the green infrastructure strategy.

5.47 Further detail on all of the key issues in delivering the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension will be addressed in the Area Action Plan to be produced after the Local Plan is adopted.

75.[This is considered in the 'Yeovil Historic Environmental Assessment', July 2010]

76.[This will be informed by the 'Yeovil Ecotown biodiversity baseline and scoping report' July 2010]

5.48 The masterplan will be able to pick up on issues identified in the Council's Habitat Regulations assessment and ensure that the appropriate mitigation measures are taken in relation to the bat foraging features and routes from the Brackets Coppice special area for conservation some 6 to 8 miles to the south west. The assessment identifies the masterplan as the appropriate means to address these matters.

Policy YV2: Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension

The Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension should be located to the south and west of the town and should provide the following:

- **11.0 hectares of 'B' use class employment land;**
- **2,500 dwellings, 1,565 of which should be built in the plan period up to 2028, with the remaining 935 dwellings built after 2028;**
- **Two Primary schools and a Secondary school;**
- **A health centre;**

The Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension will be developed to the highest sustainability objectives and garden city principles, subject to viability.

Development within the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension will be permitted where features supporting bat movement are not severed and that access between feeding areas and roosts is maintained unless it can be proven that there would be no significant effect by the proposal on such features.

Delivery

5.49 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy YV2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Level of 'sustainability' achieved at the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension	Achieve the highest feasible sustainability standards and in particular <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of total development as greenspace • 35% affordable housing provided on site and at the least 30% • 50% of trips by non car means • 1565 jobs provided by 2028 on employment areas (1 job per economically active person)
Amount of 'B' use employment land delivered in the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension.	7 ha of 'B' use employment land delivered in the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension within the plan period with a further 4 ha post plan period
Number of dwellings built in the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension	1,565 dwellings developed in the Yeovil SUE up to the year 2028, and an additional 935 dwellings after the plan period.
Masterplan	Publication of masterplan for sustainable urban extension

East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone

5.50 In order to prevent coalescence with Yeovil and preserve the character of East Coker and North Coker a buffer zone between these settlements and the future sustainable urban extension is required. This would provide a defined boundary to Yeovil's growth southwards and prevent coalescence and protect the historic environment in this location. Environmental assets include the visibility setting and designation of the North Coker Conservation Area, the Grade I listed Naish Priory, and several Grade II listed buildings.

5.51 The outline of the 'East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone' is shown on the Proposals Map - Yeovil Inset Map. This zone should be dedicated to being a strategic landscape area and green open space

5.52 The NPPF⁷⁷ allows special protection green areas of local importance to be identified in Local Plans. The Local Green Space designation rules out new

77.[NPPF March 2012]

development other than in very special circumstances. The Council considers this status is appropriate for the East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone in that the buffer zone is:

- consistent with planning sustainable development and will compliment investment in houses, jobs and other services;
- capable of enduring beyond the plan period;
- in close proximity to the communities it serves and will serve;
- demonstrably special and holding a particular local significance;
- local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

5.53 Existing built development within the buffer zone will require special justification to extend or add built form beyond existing permitted development rights.

Policy YV3: East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone

An East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone is identified to the west of the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension, within which development that results in coalescence with the settlements of East Coker and North Coker and/or adversely affects the setting of historic assets is precluded. Development (not of a built form) within the Buffer Zone may be acceptable as long as the coalescence of settlements is not caused as a result nor the setting of historic assets adversely affected. Existing development within the buffer zone will require special justification to add built development beyond existing permitted development rights.

The development is compatible with features supporting bat movement; that access between feeding areas and roosts is maintained and any proposed lighting is compatible with the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site unless it can be proven that there would be no significant effect by the proposal.

Delivery

5.54 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy YV3:

- South Somerset District Council.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Development in the East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone	No built development beyond permitted development rights to be permitted in the East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone

Yeovil Summerhouse Village

5.55 The Yeovil 'urban village' site lies between Stars Lane, Park Street/South Street and Dodham Brook in Yeovil town centre, and is regarded as a major opportunity to bring investment back into an underused part of the town centre that is of a strategic scale justifying inclusion in the Local Plan. The Yeovil Urban Development Framework (UDF 2005) identified the site as a priority for regeneration, on land that is currently used as a car park and primarily owned by the District Council.

5.56 The Yeovil UDF established the underlying principles that have informed the Summerhouse Village draft Masterplan (August 2011) - this examines the viability of developing an urban village to the highest sustainability standards, and includes a draft masterplan and outline design codes. A mixed-use scheme involving housing-led regeneration of the site is currently proposed. The key principles of the Summerhouse Village are:

- Develop a mixed use income development that appeals to a range of markets, including people already living in Yeovil in unsatisfactory accommodation;
- Create a balanced community over time in terms of ages and incomes, starting with young families and following on with senior living and larger individual eco homes, with some accommodation for rent, and also home workers through larger than usual homes;
- Provide a better than usual level of infrastructure in terms of energy, waste and water;
- Replicate models that have worked elsewhere including involvement of community enterprises.

5.57 There are key viability issues including funding the replacement of car parking spaces and finding appropriate alternative sites; affordable housing provision; flooding mitigation and further assessment of proposals for a hotel and access arrangements. There is the expectation that the initial phase of 150 dwellings will be built starting later this decade with the further development of other potential residential sites to be built towards the end of the plan period to reach a higher overall capacity of 278 dwellings.

Policy YV4: Yeovil Summerhouse Village

Yeovil Summerhouse Village is identified as a strategic location for a mixed-use scheme of around 278 dwellings, retail and leisure uses in the town centre.

Summerhouse Village will be developed to the highest sustainability objectives, subject to viability.

Delivery

5.58 Given the scale of work still to be undertaken it is unlikely that the Summerhouse Village Masterplan will be deliverable until the later stages of the Local Plan period. The following issues will need to be resolved by the identified bodies in order to deliver the Summerhouse Village in full:

- Car park site search - South Somerset District Council; Yeovil Vision Board; landowners;
- Flood Risk Assessment (and subsequent mitigation measures) for sites on the edge of the flood plain and adjacent the Dodham Brook - developers; the Environment Agency; South Somerset District Council;
- The final Masterplan will need to be financially reappraised to assess project viability - South Somerset District Council; Yeovil Vision Board; developers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Delivery of the Yeovil urban village in line with the principles of the Summerhouse Village Masterplan	A mixed-use scheme of around 278 dwellings, retail and leisure uses on the urban village site delivered by 2028

Infrastructure

5.59 The Infrastructure Planning Report⁷⁸ identifies a number of infrastructure requirements for Yeovil and the Sustainable Urban Extension:

- Transport - critical

There are several infrastructure requirements relating to transport that are identified as being 'critical' when delivering new development in Yeovil.⁷⁹ Delivery of the highways infrastructure identified in the Eastern and Western Corridor studies are foremost among these highway improvements, including improvements to help alleviate congestion at the three major roundabouts in the town: Horsey, Hospital and Fiveways. Given the lack of public spending available for such schemes, it is likely that significant elements of 'critical' highways infrastructure will need to be funded from new development.

- Transport - necessary

Non-highways transport improvements are also proposed in Yeovil, often relating to promoting sustainable travel e.g. improving the walking and cycling network, although these are identified as being 'necessary' rather than 'critical'.

78.[Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset, 2012]

79.[Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset, 2012]

- Health - necessary

Replacement facilities are identified as being required for two surgeries, along with an extension of a medical centre. A new health centre is required for the urban extension.

- Leisure - necessary

New synthetic turf pitches, sports ground, equipped play areas, youth facilities, community hall.

- Education - necessary

2 new primary schools and a secondary school in Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension.

- Open space - necessary

Open space and natural green space provision reflecting enhanced aspiration for the urban extension.

5.60 In addition, many items of infrastructure are identified as being 'desirable' when delivering new development in Yeovil, relating to public realm improvements, green infrastructure, and non-highways transport improvements.

Yeovil Airfield Flight Safety Zone

5.61 The aerospace company 'Agusta Westland' is Yeovil's main employer and is of key strategic importance to the economy of the town. The company expressed concerns about the impact of development around Yeovil upon the safe operation and continued use of the airfield, which is vital for helicopter manufacture and design. Agusta Westland have explained their requirements to carry out test and development flying of both civil and military aircraft. This requires approval to operate aircraft from both the Civil and Military Aviation Authorities. If development was to take place on the main westerly and south westerly flight paths, the company could risk losing its aerodrome licenses (civil and military). Therefore, a flight safety zone has been set out to the south west and west of Yeovil (see Proposals Map - Yeovil Inset Map), where built development is precluded. This zone has been delineated on the basis of information supplied by Agusta Westland from simulation modelling of potential emergency procedures on take off (primarily giving horizontal length of the safety zone) and pilot judgement on avoidance of obstacles and impact of wind (giving a lateral spread for the safety zone).

Policy YV5: Yeovil Airfield Flight Safety Zone

Development in the Yeovil Airfield Flight Safety Zone will be strictly controlled and limited to that which can be justified as causing no hazard to the operational needs of Agusta Westland's Aerodrome.

Delivery

5.62 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy YV5:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Agusta Westlands.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Avoidance of development that will cause a hazard to the Yeovil Airfield Safety Zone	No built development in the Yeovil Airfield Flight Safety Zone

Delivering Sustainable Travel at Yeovil

5.63 With some key transport corridors already under significant pressure at peak times, it is important to ensure that Yeovil delivers its growth in a way that is as sustainable as possible to reduce the need for reliance on car movement in order to access vital goods and services. Access by sustainable travel modes to shops, jobs and health/leisure opportunities will be crucial if this expansion is to be achieved without further adding to the pressures that are already faced by the town, including issues of poor air quality, carbon dioxide emissions, severance and congestion at strategic junctions. Car traffic is the main cause of poor air quality that has meant the whole town being designated an Air Quality Management Area.

5.64 With an additional 7,815 dwellings envisaged for Yeovil between 2006 and 2028, and with the current highway network already close to capacity at peak times, there is a strong case for delivering sustainable transport alternatives to avoid the need for costly highway infrastructure improvements. Similarly there is huge potential to deliver health benefits.

5.65 The University of the West of England report on behalf of the Department of Health South West⁸⁰ advocates an innovative approach to integrated transport planning in Yeovil through eight 'seed project' proposals. The report recognises that local stakeholders do not alone have the capacity to act and that national and regional resources would need to be redirected to make this project a priority. At the same time it demonstrates that such investment can deliver a very high ratio of benefit to cost, which if implemented would be distributed across a wide range of objectives including improved access, social inclusion, health and well-being, economic development, traffic reduction, climate change, minimising noise and air pollution, and biodiversity.

5.66 The report recommends that a feasibility study be undertaken specifically focusing on determining the wider social benefits of implementation. Prior to such feasibility studies being carried out it is difficult to factor these projects into the Local Plan. However, there is a very strong link for building some of these projects into the

80.[Active and Low Carbon Travel a transport vision for Yeovil' (May 2010)]

Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension as these measures form an integral part in the delivery of the filtered permeability, infrastructure and routes/services required to deliver modal shift.

5.67 Since the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension modal shift policies will require feasibility and transport assessment work, it would be desirable for this work to be carried out in tandem. Also the emerging Yeovil Transport Strategy Review 2 (YTSR2) will consider the feasibility of Park & Ride⁸¹. Any eventual project needs to be costed and, subject to the business case being made, contributions sought through planning obligations/CIL in accordance with relevant policies.

5.68 The Transport and Accessibility chapter contains a policy for delivering sustainable travel in the existing towns of Yeovil and Chard, as well as district wide sustainable transport policies. The sections below relate to Yeovil's Sustainable Urban Extension.

Delivering Sustainable Travel at the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension

5.69 The proposals for the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension offer additional opportunities to deliver sustainable travel by further reducing the need and desire to use the private car. The policy aims for 50% of travel originating in the Urban Extension to be by sustainable (i.e. non car) means. Many of these measures are recommended in the study 'Delivering 21st century Sustainable travel in Yeovil'⁸². Measures to achieve 50% modal shift include:

- a. Through intrinsically linked well-designed infrastructure for footpaths and cycle ways ensuring filtered permeability (i.e. separating sustainable transport routes from those used by the car) within the site with journey times that are better or more comparable to those by car and in place from first occupancy. Sustainable links (walking, cycling and bus routes) beyond the site should enable easy access from the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension to the town centre, main employment sites, transport interchanges, health and educational establishments. As set out above, homes should be within a 10 minute walk of a frequent bus service and neighbourhood services.
- b. Reducing the need to use a car for bulk shopping journeys (e.g. the weekly grocery shop) by ensuring free deliveries by low emission/electric vans. This also alleviates the need for large car parking adjacent to the Urban Extension's shops and associated costs.

81. ['Park and Go' - Seed Project 2 'Active and Low Carbon Travel a transport vision for Yeovil' (May 2010)]

82. [Addison and Associates, 2011]

c. Car parking at the Urban Extension's facilities, employment sites and shopping centre should incorporate car park management measures, commensurate with SCC's parking strategy⁸³ including a charging regime ensuring that:

- Priority is given to electric vehicles;
- Car use for these short journeys is discouraged.

However charges need to be set at low rates to discourage the perverse incentive of travelling further in their car to access these services.

d. Offering a traffic-free immediate environment with residential parking separated from the residential areas and more distant than the nearest available public transport bus stop. This will need to overcome the anti-social behaviour issues common with 1970's style peripheral parking. One way forward could be to ensure that car parks are secure by design with access/egress using smartcard technology and with the cars being easily overlooked. The cars also should be easily accessed by the owners on foot, whilst any actual journey by car to access facilities both in the Urban Extension and in the town centre and the daily commute should take a longer route. The objective is to reduce the desirability of using the car for those short journeys, rather than restrict car ownership in itself.

e. Set up an Electric Car Pool scheme⁸⁴ (with provision for on-going management) to reduce the need for car ownership and its associated costs. The Electric Pool cars can give the flexibility required for those ad hoc journeys that practically can only be carried out by car.

f. Providing low emission bus routes separated from private motor traffic to deliver favoured bus access including designed in bus gates to establish quicker end-to-end journey times in comparison with the private car. Similarly these need to be in place and operational from first occupancy.

g. Providing real time public transport information (bus and train) in-House, in-Workplace, in-shops/shopping area, and at transport nodes (bus stops, stations etc).

h. Establishing a high quality bus service through a Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) to offer a frequent low emission bus service throughout the day with a demand responsive ('Nippybus' type) bus service to operate during the evenings at off-peak times. With the critical mass delivered with the Urban extension there is likely to be a strong business case for the operation of these routes on a commercial basis. However initial contributions will be required from the development as pump priming will be necessary to kick start and ensure induced travel habits from the start.

83.[SCC's parking strategy (March 2011) - Policy PM 5 'Management of Private Parking Policy']

84.[On a subscription and hire charge basis - with initial capital funding and management set up provided by the development.]

5.70 These measures will need to be fully costed and tested for viability through a Transport Assessment (TA). Subject to outcomes of the TA, all residential and employment sites within the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension would then be required to implement these policies.

5.71 In addition to the generic policies that support modal shift throughout the district (TA1 – TA6) and Policy YV6 below, specific schemes within the proposals for the SUE could include transport measures to ensure that an even greater number of journeys are by sustainable means through the incorporation of projects within the UWE report⁸⁵.

Policy YV6: Delivering Sustainable Travel at the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension

In order to deliver at least 50% of travel originating from the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension by non-car modes (with the potential to increase this over time to at least 60%), and in addition to the generic policies that support modal shift throughout the district and Yeovil, the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension should provide:

- i. Intrinsically linked well-designed infrastructure for footpaths and cycle ways ensuring filtered permeability that delivers journey times that are better or more comparable to those by car.**
- ii. Free deliveries for bulk shopping journeys using low emission/electric vans**
- iii. Car parking management at the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension facilities, employment sites & shopping centre, which gives priority to electric vehicles, low emission and shared vehicles and non car modes and which discourages car use for these short journeys.**
- iv. A traffic-free immediate environment with residential parking separated from the residential areas.**

Development at the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension should also contribute to:

- v. An Electric Car Pool scheme, with provision for on-going management.**
- vi. Low emission bus routes that are designed to establish end-to-end journey times that are better or more comparable to those by private car.**
- vii. A comprehensive network of real time public transport information for bus and train travel.**
- viii. A Quality Bus Partnership to deliver modern desirable bus routes with a frequent service and clean vehicle technology.**

85.[University of the West of England - 'Active and Low Carbon Travel a transport vision for Yeovil' (May 2010)]

Planning obligations will be used to ensure proper phasing of transport provision to maximise provision prior to first occupation of individual elements of the development.

These sustainable links shall be designed to enable easy access from the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension to the town centre, main employment sites, transport interchanges, health and educational establishments and other community facilities.

Proposals for infrastructure designed to support these measures will ensure that features supporting bat movement are retained and that access between feeding areas and roosts is not served and any proposed lighting is compatible with the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site unless it can be proven that there would be no significant effect.

Delivery

5.72 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy YV6;

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Travel modes from the Yeovil SUE	To deliver 50% of travel originating in the Yeovil SUE by non-car means

6 Market Towns - Vision and Proposals

6.1 There are seven Market towns within South Somerset established by the findings of the South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study⁸⁶ and the outcomes of the engagements in earlier stages of the plan process with town and parish councils and other interested parties. These are the settlements that should be able to play an important role in providing jobs and services for their residents and the residents of the surrounding countryside. They should be the focal point of locally significant development including the bulk of provision outside Yeovil.

6.2 The seven identified settlements are Ansford/Castle Cary, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Langport/Huish Episcopi, Somerton and Wincanton. The settlement hierarchy section above identifies a split between the 4 Primary Market towns of Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton and the other three Local Market towns.

6.3 The Market town category has been split to ensure that the smaller towns of Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton are recognised as Local market towns with a level of growth more commensurate to their smaller size.

6.4 It is considered that whilst the local communities of Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/ Huish Episcopi and Somerton have expressed a desire for a lower status than market town they clearly wish to maintain the community facilities already available in the settlements. Market town status and a commensurate scale of growth are considered to be the mechanism to help ensure that these facilities are maintained.

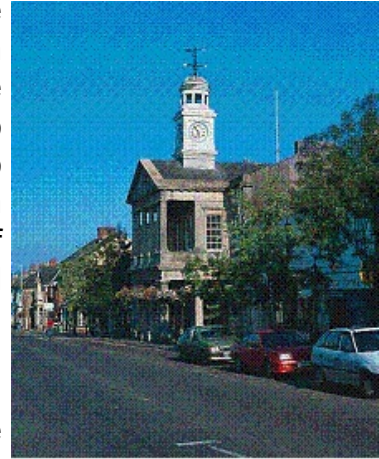
6.5 The key issues, aspirations, challenges and indications of what the Local plan will deliver for each settlement are discussed below under the separate headings of Primary Market town and Local Market town.

86.[South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study]

Primary Market Towns - Chard

Spatial Portrait

6.6 Chard is located in the west of South Somerset, close to the Devon and Dorset borders and only 12 miles from the English Channel. The town is surrounded by attractive countryside and in particular the Blackdown Hills AONB to the west and north which sets an important backdrop to the town and a contrast to development. It is South Somerset's second largest town with a population of 12,703⁸⁷ and has a strong heritage of innovation and manufacturing. The town is closely linked to the regional trunk road, the A303, and the A30 and A358.



Chard Guildhall, Fore Street

6.7 Chard has a history of being closely involved in the wool trade. In 1819 the manufacture of lace arrived from Nottingham and soon there were mills in and around the town producing bobbin lace net which was exported worldwide. This industry continued into the middle of the 20th century. A thriving engineering industry grew up alongside the lace mills⁸⁸.

6.8 The ongoing recognition of Chard's employment heritage, coupled with the high proportion of major manufacturers still operating in Chard means that the town is still an important centre for employment and manufacturing. Chard has an employment density of 0.98 (number of jobs to economically active population). The town has a reasonably high level of self-containment (61.2% of people live and work in the town) although as expected given its role and function, there is notable in-commuting from the surrounding area.



Holyrood Lace Mill, Holyrood Street

6.9 A number of the traditional industries within Chard are however in decline and currently the office market is weak, primarily supplying small office suites of converted accommodation occupied by local firms⁸⁹. There have been a number of schemes brought forward in recent years, which have resulted in the loss of employment land and community and leisure facilities have not kept pace⁹⁰. There is a lack of immediately available employment land. There is a low wage/low skill employment profile. Parts of

Chard are amongst the 20% most deprived in the United Kingdom.

87.[ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 - Urban Area]

88.[www.chardmuseum.co.uk]

89.[Chard Regeneration Plan (2009)]

90.[Chard Regeneration Plan and SSDC Employment Land Review - Stage 2, 2009]

6.10 Residential growth in Chard has spread primarily to the east and west, with growth to the north east contained by the Chard Reservoir Nature Reserve. Over the years the town has grown in a piecemeal fashion rather than as part of a strategic and planned approach. South Somerset Local Plan allocation KS/CHAR/1 has failed to be delivered therefore proposed new housing, employment and community facilities and supporting infrastructure have not come forward. A long standing issue at Chard has been to find a new location for Chard Town Football Club.

6.11 Traffic problems are a growing concern with certain elements of the town's highway network at or near capacity particularly the Convent traffic signals and Church Street. In order to accommodate further growth the creation of an alternative route between the A358 Furnham Road and the A358 Tatworth Road is required⁹¹.

6.12 Chard town centre has a varied range of food and non-food retail concentrated around High Street and Fore Street with a large Tesco store in an edge of centre location. As a destination for shoppers and people seeking leisure activities, it is beginning to lose out to nearby towns such as Taunton and Yeovil where there are more higher value retailers⁹².

6.13 The town has a good range of visitor attractions in the surrounding area including Cricket St Thomas Hotel, Ferne Animal Sanctuary, Forde Abbey and Chard Reservoir Nature Reserve.

6.14 Chard Junction railway station no longer operates but main line train connections are available at nearby Axminster.

6.15 Some of the key environmental issues at Chard include areas of high flood risk to the north east (around Chard Reservoir) and to the south east with delineated groundwater protection zones to the south. There is a high quality historic environment within the Conservation Area and European Protected Species are present.⁹³

Local Aspirations

6.16 The strategic approach to development in Chard is underpinned by the Chard Regeneration Plan (2009), this forms part of a master planning process⁹⁴ to prepare long term plans for the town that address the issues set out in the 'Chard Regeneration Framework'⁹⁵.

91.[Chard Regeneration Plan (2009)]

92.[Chard Regeneration Plan (2009)]

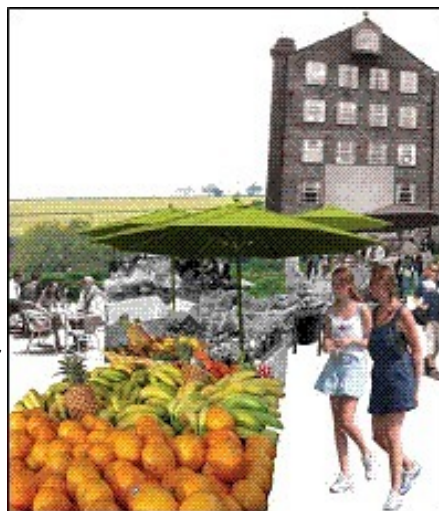
93.[The Distribution of European Protected Species in South Somerset, Guidance for Spatial Planning, November 2009]

94.[Prepared by LDA Design, consultants employed by South Somerset District Council]

95.[An autonomous planning exercise in the form of the Chard Regeneration Framework. The Chard Regeneration Framework is the result of many detailed discussions over a number of years about the challenges that face Chard and the regeneration opportunities that could be available. In January 2007 the District Council agreed the need to lead the development of a Chard Vision project that would allow the challenges to be met and the regeneration opportunities to be taken. Extensive negotiations with the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), Somerset County Council and Chard Town Council were concluded in October 2008. These established the Chard Regeneration Scheme.]

6.17 A vision for Chard has been developed in conjunction with the local community and stakeholders through the Chard Regeneration Framework; it presents a clear and concise Vision Statement:

'Make it in Chard' was promoted as an idea encapsulating the possibilities of simply making your life in the town, or as an exhortation to businesses to invest and develop. Chard offers a combination of qualities that make it a unique and special place. As a self contained working community where more than 50% of people live and work in a wonderful environmental setting, the town has everything needed for everyday life. Its local economy makes the best use of local produce and resources. Growth of the town will provide new housing and jobs and provide the investment needed to make it an even better place to live. The town will compete internationally and develop its strong tradition of innovation to build businesses that provide stable, skilled and well paid jobs. Chard will be successful because of what it does, and what it makes - you can 'make it in Chard'. Over time the town will come to be seen as a place of invention, craft and manufacture - from the agricultural produce sold in the town's market to high value added technological products.'



Source: Chard Regeneration Plan,
LDA Design

6.18 Underlying this Vision Statement are 3 key aims:

Aim 1: Chard should build on its long tradition of innovation and manufacturing excellence to develop and attract businesses associated with products and services of the highest quality that offer well paid, skilled jobs.

Aim 2: Regeneration and investment should strengthen the community and make the town increasingly self sufficient with all the services, facilities and events necessary to make it a great place to live.

Aim 3: Chard should develop and enhance its urban environment so that it has a quality that is comparable to its stunning natural setting and rich cultural heritage.

The Chard Regeneration Plan presents, in more detail, specific objectives and aspirations to help achieve these aims.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

6.19 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies Chard as performing an employment function, an identified retail and community role for the town and surrounding area and having self containment and sustainable travel opportunities. Chard is designated a Primary Market Town in this Local Plan and such designation will enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role.

6.20 Attention is drawn to the different scale of growth proposed for Chard, compared with the other Primary Market Towns, which is justified due to its size, economic self containment and the work undertaken by LDA Consultants for the District Council in establishing a Regeneration Framework for the Town.

Strategic growth

6.21 The Chard Regeneration Plan⁹⁶ presented 4 options for the future growth of Chard. Option 3 (Chard Eastern Development Area - CEDA) has been chosen as the most appropriate location for the strategic growth. This option presents the benefits of large scale growth, associated community and highway infrastructure and regeneration without the emerging disbenefits of undue traffic congestion and pollution. The strategic growth area provides a scale of growth that will enable Chard to achieve and maximise its need for employment, housing, retail and associated amenities as well as improved highway infrastructure.

6.22 In summary the growth proposals include:

- Approximately 3,237 dwellings (within and beyond the plan period)⁹⁷
- 19 hectares of employment land (within and beyond the plan period) of which 13 ha is included in existing commitments within the strategic growth area;
- 2 new primary schools (within and beyond the plan period);
- 4 neighbourhood centres (Avishayes, Stop Line Slopes, Millfield and Holbear - within and beyond the plan period);
- Highway infrastructure and improvements;
- Sports and open space provision.

6.23 The growth will also deliver:

- An improved range and quality of housing in the town centre including affordable housing;
- Improved permeability and connectivity of movements within the town centre;
- More employment opportunities resulting in additional land and jobs;

96.[Chard Regeneration Plan, October 2009, LDA Design]

97.[Includes Chard Regeneration Plan (2009) proposal for Option 3 and existing commitments];

- Improved leisure provision with new open spaces and facilities (including the re-location of Chard Town Football Club);
- Improved legibility and public transport provision including walking and cycling infrastructure;
- New education facilities;
- A significant increased in the critical mass of the town to attract some larger employers and retailers.

Figure 8: Chard Strategic Growth Area⁹⁸



6.24 The European Protected Species Assessment (2009) assessed the development options around Chard for any likely impact on species protected by European law. It identifies the presence of dormice and potential significant impacts on the local bat population in some areas of land identified as part of the strategic growth area. This will need to be taken into account and mitigation measures put in place, compensatory off site habitat creation may be required.

98.[Chard Regeneration Plan (LDA 2009)]

Policy PMT1: Chard Strategic Growth Area

Land at Chard is allocated for strategic growth to provide the following within the plan period and beyond:

- **Approximately 3237 dwellings;**
- **Approximately 19 hectares of employment land;**
- **2 new primary schools;**
- **4 neighbourhood centres (Avishayes, Stop Line Slopes, Millfields and Holbear);**
- **Highway infrastructure and improvements;**
- **Sports and open space provision.**

Employment

6.25 Chard is the second largest settlement in the District. It has a substantial strategic employment land allocation and through the Chard Regeneration Framework is expected to deliver more jobs than in the past. Over the plan period 886 jobs are to be sought with 585 of those being in traditional 'B' Uses as defined by the Use Classes Order.

6.26 The Employment Land Review⁹⁹ identifies that the employment need in Chard will arise from within the local market where there is a hub of well-established local manufacturing and food processing industries. Manufacturing in Chard will remain important but it may experience changes in form and intensity. It is likely that in the future, smaller industrial ventures will spawn from the current larger operations. It is important that once this occurs, the town is in a position to offer the space and support for accommodating these new ventures. Chard Regeneration Framework seeks to attract businesses into the town to increase the range of well-paid, skilled jobs on offer.

6.27 Over the plan period it is proposed to deliver 13 additional hectares of employment land within the CEDA.

Retailing

6.28 Chard currently accommodates a good range of convenience floorspace provision and it is not considered that there is a strong qualitative deficiency in provision or a need to plan for a substantially increased convenience shopping market share. As a consequence, the Retail Capacity Study Update 2012 quantitative assessment predicts there to be no additional convenience floorspace capacity necessary for Chard until after 2021. Any increases in convenience floorspace are likely to be based on the ability to provide increased competition and focusing new development within the town centre.

99.[South Somerset District Council Employment Land review (Revised November 2011) Stage 3]

6.29 There is a qualitative need for improved comparison floorspace within Chard, in order to improve the retention rate for this type of shopping, including the potential redevelopment of the Saved Plan¹⁰⁰ allocated site adjacent to Boden Street. The Boden Street site should be the focus for improving retail provision within Chard Town Centre, although it is important that development in this location does not harm the provision of adequate levels of car parking in the town centre and provides retail accommodation which can act as an extension to the town centre and not impact negatively upon existing provision.

6.30 The Retail Study's quantitative assessment indicates future comparison floorspace capacity for growth beyond existing provision and commitment of 469sq m (£1.9M expenditure capacity) net by 2017, rising to 1,688sq m (£8.2m expenditure capacity) net by 2028¹⁰¹ on the basis of a constant market share, although this could be increased if suitable town centre sites are made available to facilitate the clawback of leaked expenditure. It is considered that this growth is best accommodated through the Development Management process.

Rail

6.31 The potential re-opening of Chard Junction is considered within the Chard Regeneration Framework (CRF) and the Transport Assessment (TA) report recommends that the proposal be developed with more detailed costings and a viability assessment. Somerset County Council (SCC) as the transport authority would need to undertake such a study. However, SCC's decision not to purchase the land from the British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR) Ltd¹⁰² and the absence of a viability study indicating that there is a business case for the reopening of Chard Junction, mean that there is not sufficient evidence to protect the land for future rail use within the Local Plan. The land in question has now been sold. Policy TA2 will allow for protection of land for rail infrastructure where an economic case is made together with the existence of a sponsor(s) with access to appropriate finance.

Local Bus Services

6.32 A bespoke town bus service in Chard is unlikely to be commercially viable¹⁰³, although it is feasible to enhance existing bus services to ensure that any new development has effective access to services, and to fill gaps in existing provision such that all areas of Chard reach the similar levels of public transport accessibility. To do this the Chard Regeneration Framework Transport Assessment (TA) advocates:

100.[Adopted South Somerset Local Plan, March 2006]

101.[Retail Study Update, November 2010]

102.[Decision by SCC in February 2010. SCC state 'Whilst the re-opening of a rail station at this location is a stated long-term aspiration of the Council in its current Local Transport Plan, at present there is no agreed business case demonstrating that the re-opening of the station would be a viable proposition; there is no funding allocated for development or construction of such a scheme; and no obvious prospect of such funding being allocated in the foreseeable future as it would be likely to cost several million pounds.']

103.[Chard Regeneration Framework Strategic Transport Assessment (TA), Peter Brett Associates, 2010]

- Doubling the frequency of most services to neighbouring towns, thus making hourly services into half hourly services;
- Improving bus access within Chard by appropriate routing of those parts of the services that are in the built up area with the new doubled frequency services, having two route options within Chard where one bus takes more or less the existing route and one serves the new area.

6.33 The TA also recommends Chard Town Centre as a transport hub, where all routes stop within a short distance of each other providing ease of interchange between both bus routes and between other travel modes. Reference to a transport interchange is shown on the proposals map (see Proposals Maps 3 & 3a Chard).

Walking and Cycling

6.34 Chard is a compact settlement with an existing centre offering access to local services, facilities, education and jobs within walking and cycle distance thresholds of the main residential areas. However, the impermeable layout of residential areas currently serves to discourage walking and cycling.

6.35 The CEDA will require strong sustainable transport connections with the centre if it is to be fully integrated as an extension to the existing settlement form. It is important therefore to ensure that journeys on foot or by bike are attractive in comparison with car journeys, and contribute to, and form part of a coherent network of attractive-to-use pedestrian and cycle routes. With linkages, further increases in levels of cycling should be achievable¹⁰⁴.

6.36 In residential areas new homes should be designed to make cycle storage secure and convenient and there should be adequate levels of cycle parking at retail and employment areas. Cycle parking at the main public transport nodes should also be provided.

6.37 For Modal Shift see Transport Section Policy TA3.

Implementation

6.38 The Chard Regeneration Framework¹⁰⁵ sets out a phased approach for growth. It presents logical stages at which development in the town can conclude or simply pause if necessary before further growth or regeneration takes place¹⁰⁶. Unlocking the growth and regeneration opportunities highlighted in the report is complex and requires a phased approach to ensure viability and deliverability.

6.39 In support of the work produced as part of the Chard Regeneration Plan, the Chard Project Delivery Group commissioned a Feasibility Report¹⁰⁷ to demonstrate that the vision for Chard is both viable and deliverable. This included development

104.[Supports SCC's Cycling Policy SUS4 - SCC schedule of Policies - Transport Policies March 2011]

105.[Chard Regeneration Framework, Implementation Plan, October 2010]

106.[Detailed phasing is set out in the Chard Regeneration Framework, Implementation Plan, October 2010]

107.[Feasibility Report in respect of Chard Eastern Development Area, January 2012, Thomas Lister Ltd]

appraisal, financial modelling and consultation and discussion with landowners and developers. Market Assessment work undertaken as part of this Feasibility Report suggests that residential development in the eastern area of Chard should be viable taking into account both CIL and Section 106 contributions/requirements. This position is supported through appraisal work undertaken as part of the study.

6.40 The key driver of the phasing sequence is the need to incrementally increase the capacity of the highways infrastructure to accommodate the traffic flows as the town grows. Initial improvements to the Convent Link traffic lights have taken place and this is expected to create some additional capacity for strategic growth. This should be followed by a phased delivery of a continuous route to the east of the town from the A358 Furnham Road to the A358 Tatworth Road and connections into adjacent urban areas in order to achieve the capacity to allow Chard to grow. To achieve the strategic growth, four more steps are required to complete the necessary highway infrastructure:

1. A new link from the A30 near Oaklands House to the end of Millfield Avenue a new route to/from the town centre from the east which also delivers access to the growth area. (Millfield Link road).
2. A connection south from Millfield Road to Forton Road, allowing for greater permeability and linkage between the growth area and the town centre.
3. Linkage north from the A30 using Oaklands Avenue but also involving the creation of a new/upgraded route around the north east of the town as far as the A358 Furnham Road.
4. Completion of the link south between Forton Road and the A358 Tatworth Road to provide a continuous linkage around the eastern edge of the town.

6.41 As a first step towards the implementation of the wider plan, the Millfield Link road between the A30 and the Millfield Industrial Estate must come forward as it will help create capacity for initial growth. The Millfield Link provides access to Chard for people entering the town from the east and if implemented together with other highway improvements creates the capacity for additional homes, employment growth and retail development.

6.42 It is considered that the LDA Consultant's work and that of the Chard Project Board establishes overall viability and a governance framework to address implementation concerns in the long term. The key to delivery is seen to be the commencement of Phase II of the allocation, identified by LDA Consultants for some 446 dwellings, 1.24 ha of employment land, 0.43ha of retail and a link road between the A30 and Millfield Lane. Thomas Lister Consultants, working to the Economic Development Manager and the Chard delivery officer team have sought to bring forward definite proposals for Phase II with developers and landowners.

6.43 The key findings of the Feasibility Report are set out below:

1. The principle of SCC and SSDC seeking to deliver the Millfield Link, through acquisition of those interests necessary to provide the highways infrastructure. Identification of those enabling powers to be adopted would determine the lead partner.

2. Detailed research and investigations be carried out to confirm the viability and anticipated costs associated with construction of the Millfield Link in the location and design as identified in the Chard Regeneration Framework or some alternative suitable location.
3. Ensure that budgetary provision is made to procure an Environmental Impact Assessment, acquire land and property interests, obtain planning permission and procure construction of the highways infrastructure.
4. The principle of utilising those funding mechanisms available to offset initial expenditure, considered most likely to be in the form of CIL contributions but with other sources potentially identified.
5. Seek to progress land acquisitions through negotiated settlements.
6. Seek to progress acquisition through the Compulsory Acquisition process in the event that negotiated settlements are not achievable within a reasonable timescale.

6.44 In the absence of private sector take up over a number of years the Consultants advocate intervention by South Somerset District Council in order to enable development. This would be by way of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) proceedings.

6.45 The Council has concluded on the feasibility work as follows:

1. That the CEDA be affirmed by virtue of an appropriate mechanism for delivery being established by the Feasibility Report.
2. Note that the use of CPO powers may need to be considered to ensure the delivery of the Millfield Link road in Chard with further details to be presented once the Local Plan Examination Inspector's report has been received.
3. That the resources (financial and officer resources) required as part of any consideration of the use of CPO powers (as outlined in 2 above) are fully costed and considered as part of the Medium Term Financial plan process in close co-operation with the Council's Solicitor.
4. Negotiations to continue with perspective developers of Phase II to secure an agreed private sector development.

6.46 It is considered that a clear and workable mechanism to deliver the key immediate phase of the CEDA has been established and in recognition that there are risks in this, a risk mitigation strategy is also proposed. It is therefore affirmed that the Chard strategic allocation can be delivered if necessary through Council intervention and as such should be supported because of the local support it has received and the benefits that it brings to Chard.

6.47 The prospect of delay whilst a Local Plan is progressed to adoption as well as the potential CPO proceedings required would mean that the housing trajectory for Chard should be amended with an anticipated delay in construction to 2016. This would result in the prospective delivery of dwellings for Chard in the Plan period being 1,861 including 521 dwellings already committed with a further 1,376 dwellings after 2028.

6.48 The removal of the no development designations saved from the previous local plan removes the potential conflict between that designation and proposals for development from the Chard Regeneration Framework around Holyrood School.

Infrastructure

6.49 The Infrastructure Plan¹⁰⁸ (IP) reflects the infrastructure requirements set out in the Chard Regeneration Plan.

Policy PMT2: Chard Phasing

To ensure the timely delivery of highway and other infrastructure to support the proposed growth of Chard, a phased approach to delivery will be taken with the following to be delivered:

Within the plan period:

- **1861 dwellings**
- **13 hectares of employment land**
- **1 new primary school**
- **2 neighbourhood centres (Millfields & Holbear)**
- **Sports and open space provision**

Post 2028:

- **1376 dwellings**
- **6 hectares of employment land**
- **1 new primary school**
- **2 neighbourhood centres (Avishayes & Stop Line Slopes)**

In order to ensure the timely delivery of the necessary infrastructure to support the growth, phases will be delivered in the order set out in the Chard Implementation Plan. Any deviation from that phasing sequence should be justified and it should be demonstrated that the proposal will not compromise the delivery of the total growth.

Delivery

6.50 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy PMT2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

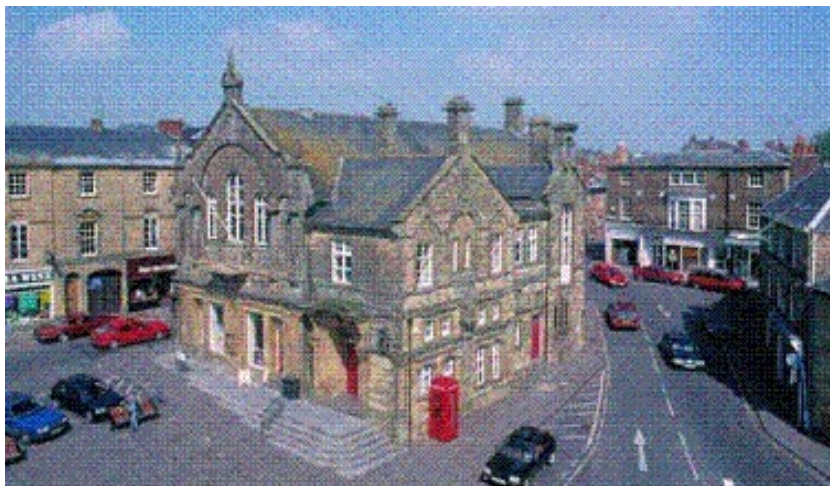
108.[South Somerset Infrastructure Plan, Tym and Partners, 2012]

Monitoring Indicators ¹⁰⁹	Target
Net additional housing in Chard	1861 dwellings built at Chard between 2006 and 2028
Net additional employment land ('B' uses) in Chard (2006-2028)	13 ha of 'B' use employment land built at Chard between 2006 and 2028
New primary school in Chard (2006-2028)	1 new primary school built at Chard between 2006 and 2028
New neighbourhood centres in Chard (2006-2028)	2 new neighbourhood centres built at Chard between 2006 and 2028
Sports and open space provision	Relocation of Chard Town Football Club, creation of 'Green Heart' between 2006 and 2028

Primary Market Towns - Crewkerne

Spatial Portrait

6.51 Crewkerne is a market town with Saxon origins. Its strategic location on the intersection of the A30 (London to Exeter) and A356 (Martock to Dorchester) encouraged steady and prosperous commercial growth from the 11th century onwards. Over time its commercial strength grew from an agricultural base to a successful cloth-manufacturing base by the 19th century.



The Market Square, Crewkerne

6.52 Today Crewkerne is the third largest settlement in South Somerset with a population of approximately 7406 people¹¹⁰. From its medieval market place origins the town spread south, east and north, with residential growth spreading along the main arterial roads from the late 18th Century.

The past 60 years, however, has seen the infill of the land between these roads, primarily in the form of large housing estates to the north (Wadham Park) and south east (Kithill and Park

109.[Monitoring indicators are provided for the plan period only]

110.[ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 - Urban Area]

View). The main employment area (Blacknell Industrial Estate) lies to the east of the town centre, concentrated to the north side of the A356 road to Dorchester.

6.53 Crewkerne is located in the south west of the District close to the county boundary with Dorset, 9 miles south west of Yeovil and 7 miles east of Chard. The town acts as a strong functional and service centre for the surrounding area, providing some 2950 jobs¹¹¹. In retail terms, the centre is healthy and includes a variety of national retailers. There are a variety of community services and facilities, including for example a library, doctor's surgery, banks, a range of education facilities, a hospital and swimming pool.

6.54 In addition to a regular bus service, residents in Crewkerne have access to rail services. The railway station, located in the parish of Misterton, just over a mile from Crewkerne town centre is served by South West Trains on the main south western railway line, and trains operate regularly to Yeovil, London and Exeter. A national cycle route passes through the town. The level of self-containment is satisfactory compared to the District as a whole with 49% of local residents working locally (District average 51%)¹¹². Crewkerne is one of the few settlements in the District that acts as a destination for work. Analysis of Travel to Work data illustrates that 3.7% of people who work in the town, commute in from other settlements, this is the fourth largest figure for the District (for comparison - Yeovil's figure is 33% and Chard 5.9%).

6.55 Key environmental issues include Crewkerne's attractive historic environment (the majority of the town centre is covered by Conservation Area status, and includes over 140 Listed Buildings), rich natural environment (there are numerous designated wildlife sites in close proximity to the centre, including Bincombe Hill Local Nature Reserve, on the northern outskirts of the town and Millwater Site of Special Scientific Interest by Westover Lane) and the presence of protected species in the town. There are delineated groundwater source protection zones in Crewkerne and a potential flood risk from the River Parrett and its tributaries, particularly in the Goulds Brook vicinity.

Local Aspirations

6.56 The Community Plan for Crewkerne and District (2006), produced by the community partnership 'A Better Crewkerne and District' (ABCD), recognises the economic benefits of developing the saved Local Plan Key Site. It also highlights that the movement of traffic through Crewkerne is of major concern to the community, and the ABCD group has been working in partnership with Somerset County Council to implement traffic management proposals. Other community aspirations include a greater range of shops, increased parking and the enhancement of the town centre, which would also improve the visitor experience.

111.[BRES Employment Data 2010]

112.[Settlement Role and Function Study 2009]

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

6.57 As set out in Policy SS1, Crewkerne is classified as a Market Town due to its strong employment, retail and community role¹¹³.

Housing

6.58 It is important to sustain and enhance Crewkerne's role as a Primary Market Town, with a level of development that is commensurate with the size, character, environmental constraints and accessibility of the town. The Local Plan will therefore support the development of around 1028 dwellings over the plan period, up to 2028. Of these 1028 dwellings, 901 are already committed¹¹⁴, including 525 which are part of the saved Local Plan allocation, which received a resolution to grant planning permission, subject to completion of the Section 106 planning agreement, at Area West committee on the 14th December 2011. The residual requirement for 127 new dwellings is considered to be deliverable through the Development Management process.

Employment

6.59 Crewkerne has a broad employment base for a Market Town of its size. There is a strong retail centre which plays host to various business services and an established industrial estate with a number of advanced engineering firms based there. This wider employment 'offer' underpins a more varied local socio-economic demographic. Despite good rail links with Waterloo and Exeter, vehicular congestion in the town is an issue to be addressed in bringing additional employment and housing forward through development of the CLR site.

6.60 As set out in Policy SS3, a minimum of 472 jobs should be delivered in Crewkerne to 2028, and approximately 10 hectares of 'B' Use Class employment land. This land has already been identified, with 9.8 hectares coming forward as part of the saved Local Plan allocation which proposes employment land for a range of employment uses, and through developments that have already been awarded planning permission. Whilst the employment element of the CLR site will deliver a sufficient supply of land in Crewkerne to cater for the identified employment land need, this should not prevent further land coming forward, especially in the short-term if the market requires and this can be delivered through the Development Management process.

Retailing

6.61 As set out in Policy EP9, Crewkerne is a Market Town in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be in the defined Town Centre. Given the recent supermarket developments that have taken place in the town, there is no

113.[South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study, 2009]

114.[Council's annual housing monitoring data, as at April 2011]

additional capacity to accommodate any substantial net increase in convenience goods (food) retail floorspace by 2028.

6.62 There is however additional capacity to accommodate a net increase in comparison goods retail floorspace beyond existing provisions and commitments, as there has been a loss of such uses from town centre over the past few years. Given the loss of comparison uses, there is a qualitative deficiency in current provision, which produces capacity for 120sq m net (or £0.5m retail expenditure) of additional comparison goods floorspace by 2017, rising to approx 570sq m net (or £2.7m retail expenditure) by 2028. The retail study also notes that consideration should also be given to the attractiveness of the existing units and whether they are the correct format for retailer requirements. Any additional provision can come forward under the Development Management process.

Infrastructure

6.63 The Infrastructure Plan (IP) does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure¹¹⁵ requirements to be provided in Crewkerne as a result of the proposed new development, because it is anticipated that the developer will deliver a new primary school, a link road between the A356 (Station Road) and the A30 (Yeovil Road), a link road between Blacknell Lane and the new A356/A30 link road and a dormouse bridge, through the CLR Section 106 Agreement. Should these requirements not form part of the Section 106 Agreement for any reason, they will become critical infrastructure, without which the development cannot go ahead. The IP identifies a number of 'necessary' infrastructure¹¹⁶ requirements, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities.

Direction of Growth

6.64 Unlike the other Market Towns, there is no new direction of growth to be identified for Crewkerne, as the location of the 'growth' has been predetermined by the planning permission for CLR and this is recognised in Policy HG1.

Delivery

6.65 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Crewkerne:

- South Somerset District Council
- Somerset County Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Developers and Landowners
- Environment Agency
- Natural England

115.[Critical infrastructure is defined as infrastructure that is critically needed to be able to deliver the proposed development. Without the infrastructure the development cannot go ahead.]

116.[Necessary infrastructure is defined as infrastructure that is necessary to be able to deliver the proposed development, it does not prevent development coming forward.]

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed housing development in Crewkerne	1028 homes built in Crewkerne between 2006 and 2028
Completed employment ('B' uses) floor space in Crewkerne	10.10 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Crewkerne between 2006 and 2028
New Jobs in Crewkerne	472 jobs between 2006 and 2028
New Primary School	Somerset County Council to deliver by 2028
New link road between the A356 (Station Road) and the A30 (Yeovil Road)	Developer to deliver in conjunction with Somerset County Council prior to occupation of 200 th house or 7 years from occupation of first house

Primary Market Towns - Ilminster

Spatial Portrait

6.66 Ilminster is situated in the west of the District, close to the Devon, Dorset and Somerset border. The town centre is approximately one mile to the east of both the course of the River Isle, and the major road intersection of the A303 and the A358, which provides links to the regional road network. It is an historic market town of Saxon origin, which prospered on cloth manufacture in the 17th century.

6.67 The town is primarily a linear settlement running along the east to west through route (Station Road to Bay Hill), settled in the Shudrick Stream valley. The core of the town is concentrated upon the Market Place and church, which lie between the stream and lower slopes of Beacon Hill. Whilst the settlement grew around this core, recent residential development has seen the town spread to the north, south and southwest. A large employment area exists to the west of the town, and due to its proximity to the A303/A358, additional employment growth was proposed here in the South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011, because of its strategic importance and potential to generate jobs, these allocations have been carried forward as Strategic Employment Sites in Policy EP1.



St Mary's Church (The Minster), Ilminster

6.68 Ilminster is the fourth-largest settlement in South Somerset with a population of approximately 4,499 people.¹¹⁷ This population has grown considerably in recent years, reflected in the fact that in seven years (2001-2008) the number of people living in the town increased by almost 20%.

6.69 Ilminster is located 12 miles from Taunton and 15 miles from Yeovil. The town acts as a strong functional and service centre for the surrounding area, providing

some 2,000 jobs¹¹⁸. In retail terms, the centre is healthy and includes a range of national retailers, including a large supermarket, which opened in 2007. There are a range of community services and facilities, including for example a library, doctor's surgery, banks and primary education (a first and middle school).

6.70 The immediate landscape setting of the town is defined by three hills, Beacon Hill to the north, and Herne Hill to the southwest and Pretwood Hill to the southeast. These hills broadly contain the spread of the town and its immediate rural edge. To the west, the setting is less defined, with the town extending toward the open land of the River Isle valley, and an edge that is reinforced by the A303 corridor.

6.71 There is a regular, albeit limited bus service in Ilminster to Taunton, Yeovil, Chard and Crewkerne. The South Somerset Cycle Route passes through the town. The level of self-containment is satisfactory, with 48% of residents working locally (District average 51%). In order to help retain and build upon this self-containment it will be important that additional housing growth is balanced with employment growth.

6.72 Like other settlements in South Somerset, a key environmental issue is the value of Ilminster's historic environment - the historic layout and rich building styles, which are prominent in the town centre, and dominated by the Minster and its tower, form part of the Conservation Area designated in 1973.

6.73 Flooding is also an issue for the town. It is constrained by flood zone 3B along the length of the River Isle and to the north and south of the A303.

117.[ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 - Urban Area]

118.[BRES Employment Data 2010]

Local Aspirations

6.74 The Town Council is currently in the process of completing a Strategic Vision for Ilminster. Of concern is the unbalanced nature of past growth in the settlement, and the Town Council would like the Local Plan to redress this by supporting the development of employment land and seeking community infrastructure, particularly a road linking Shudrick Lane to Townsend, which could alleviate some of the local concern regarding traffic in the town centre and indoor sports provision.



Community spirit in Ilminster

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

6.75 As set out in Policy SS1, Ilminster is classified as a Primary Market Town due to its strong employment, retail and community role¹¹⁹.

Housing

6.76 It is important to sustain and enhance Ilminster's role as a Primary Market Town, with a level of development that is appropriate to the size, character, environmental constraints and accessibility of the town. The Local Plan will therefore support the development of around 531 dwellings over the plan period, up to 2028. Of these 531 dwellings, 199 are already committed¹²⁰, the residual requirement is for 332 new dwellings (see Policy PMT3: Direction of Growth, below).

Employment

6.77 Ilminster displays a strong employment role relative to other settlements, it is host to a small cluster of high-tech businesses and key employers include Powrmatic, Daido and the Dillington Estate.

6.78 As set out in Policy SS3, a minimum of 343 jobs and approximately 23 hectares of 'B' Use Class employment land should be delivered in Ilminster over the plan period, this will be in association with the Strategic Employment Sites. Ilminster's strong locational advantage, being adjacent to A303 and in close proximity to the M5, should support the delivery of these jobs, and a challenge will be to increase the

119.[South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study, 2009]

120.[Council's annual housing monitoring data, as at April 2011]

number of micro-businesses in the town and adding to the town's existing employment base will be key.

6.79 Whilst the employment land identified for the Strategic Employment Sites will deliver a sufficient supply of land in Ilminster to cater for the identified employment land need, this should not prevent further land coming forward, especially in the short term if the market requires and this can be delivered through the Development Management process.

Retailing

6.80 Ilminster is a healthy and attractive centre with a Primary Shopping Area dominated by small-scale local independent traders and businesses. As set out in Policy EP9, it is a market town in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be in the defined Town Centre. Given the recent supermarket developments that have taken place in the town, there is no additional capacity to accommodate any substantial net increase in convenience goods (food) retail floorspace by 2028.

6.81 There is however additional capacity to accommodate a net increase in comparison goods retail floorspace above existing and committed retail provision. There is capacity for approximately 982sq m (£4.8m expenditure capacity) net of additional comparison goods floorspace by 2028, which should assist in the retention of shopping trips from the local population and benefit the health of the town centre. Any additional provision can come forward under the Development Management process.

Infrastructure

6.82 The Infrastructure Plan does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure¹²¹ requirements to be provided in Ilminster as a result of the proposed new development. It does however identify a number of 'necessary' infrastructure¹²² requirements, which generally relate to open space and leisure facilities.

Direction of Growth

6.83 In order to accommodate the proposed level of residential development in Ilminster, a 'Direction of Growth' has been identified to the south east of the town (see Proposals Map). The direction has been derived using evidence from the Sustainability Appraisal, Highway Capacity Assessment (2011), local consultation and an assessment of the potential deliverability of sites for development. It is anticipated that the majority of the residential requirement will be delivered within the 'Direction of Growth' as capacity within the existing urban area is limited.

6.84 There is a local aspiration for a road to be delivered as part of any residential development in the Direction of Growth. This would link Shudrick Lane and

121.[See Glossary]

122.[See Glossary]

Townsend/Long Orchard Hill and offer an alternative route through the town centre, alleviating local concerns over town centre traffic. Developers will be expected to deliver this road (see Highways assessment for detailed information¹²³).

Policy PMT3: Iminster Direction of Growth

The direction of strategic growth will be to the south east, of the town. As part of any proposed development within the Direction of Growth, a road will be expected to be provided between Shudrick Lane and Townsend/Long Orchard Hill prior to its completion.

Delivery

6.85 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Iminster:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed housing development in Iminster	531 homes built in Iminster between 2006 and 2028
Completed employment ('B' uses) floor space in Iminster	23 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Iminster between 2006 and 2028
Road between Shudrick Lane and Townsend/Long Orchard Hill	Prior to completion of development within the Direction of Growth

Primary Market Towns - Wincanton

Spatial Portrait

6.86 Wincanton is situated in the east of the District towards the north of the Blackmore Vale overlooking the Cale valley. The town originated in Saxon times on the east bank of the River Cale, in the vicinity of the Church, and spread up the hill to the current High Street where burgage plots were established in the 13th Century. The town's location on the main Exeter to London medieval coach route encouraged steady growth from the Middle Ages onwards, and cloth manufacture, clock making and the dairy industry further boosted the local economy.

123.[Proposed Residential Development East of Shudrick Lane, Iminster (October 2011)]



High Street, Wincanton

6.87 The A303 trunk road now defines the south edge of Wincanton and gives the town good road links to London and the south west of England. Nearby towns include Bruton, Castle Cary, Gillingham and Milborne Port within 10 miles, and Yeovil and Sherborne about 15 miles away. Wincanton's population of 4,978¹²⁴ makes it the 5th largest settlement in the District in terms of population. An area around the town centre and extending to the north is designated as a Conservation Area. Recent residential growth

has taken place to the east of the town centre and on the Key Site at New Barns Farm to the south west, the main employment areas of the town are located to the south and south west of the town.

6.88 Wincanton is located within a rural setting and alongside nearby Castle Cary and Gillingham in North Dorset District, is important in serving the needs of residents in the rural east of South Somerset. In terms of retail, Wincanton has a range of independent stores as well as a couple national retailers in the town centre and a large supermarket to the south west. Other key services to be found in the town include a doctor's surgery, a hospital, a leisure centre, a library, banks and primary and secondary schools. There is a local desire to retain and build upon the existing town centre services. Local Plan policies clearly promote the vitality and viability of the town centre.

6.89 Wincanton has historic connections with logistics and distribution and continues to feature elements of the dairy industry and food production. The town enjoys some particular tourism assets with its famous racecourse and connections with 'Discworld'. Growth in lifestyle business has occurred in the last decade, associated with proximity to the South East and good connectivity. However the town is not overly dependent on any one single employer. Wincanton Racecourse plays a role in the local economy by bringing people to the town.

6.90 Public transport to the larger settlements of Yeovil, Taunton and Gillingham is relatively good with a regular bus service, although links to other parts of the District are less good. However, self-containment is reasonably high with just over half the population living and working in the town¹²⁵.

124. [ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 - Urban Area]

125. [South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study Final report April 2009]

6.91 Some of the key environmental issues at Wincanton include areas of high flood risk to the south and to the north east, a high quality historic environment within the Conservation Area and the presence of European Protected Species.¹²⁶

Local Aspirations

6.92 The Wincanton People's Plan (2007)¹²⁷ provides a vision for the town over the period 2006-2026. The plan identifies six themes under each of which is a goal to be achieved through the delivery of priority projects, some of which have already been completed. The themes and goals are set out below.

Table 6: Wincanton - Local Aspirations

Theme	Goal
Employment and Business	Full employment, well paid jobs and thriving businesses
Shops	A wealth of interesting shops in a bustling High Street
Tourism & Leisure	A vibrant market town which is a hub for visitors
Health	A healthy population with well resourced healthcare
Community	An active, caring and inclusive population with facilities for all
Housing	Diverse housing to meet local needs, new build sympathetic to our heritage

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

6.93 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies Wincanton as performing an employment function and identified retail and community role for the town and surrounding area. Wincanton is designated a Market Town in this Local Plan and such designation will enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role.

Housing

6.94 It is important to sustain and enhance Wincanton's role as a Market Town in the rural east of the District, with a level of development that is relative to the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town. When compared with other Market Towns, Wincanton already has a significant number of existing

126.[The Distribution of European Protected Species in South Somerset, Guidance for Spatial Planning, November 2009]

127.[Wincanton's People's Plan 2006-2016, The Wincanton People's Plan Steering Group, 2007]

commitments with 692 dwellings having planning permission or already built as at April 2011. It is therefore recommended that around 703 dwellings are built in the town over the Local Plan period 2006-28. This is to ensure housing growth reflects the scale of Wincanton and allows assimilation of significant past growth. As the majority of these dwellings have already been built or committed this leaves a residual additional housing requirement of only 11 dwellings. The past build out rate indicates that this overall level of provision should last the plan period. These dwellings could be accommodated within the existing Development Area.

Employment

6.95 Demand for land is quite high, due to the good transport connections and being the eastern outpost of South Somerset. It is a key route to the economic hubs of London and the south east, whereas other parts of the county rely more on the M5 and routes to the Midlands and the North. Recent discussions with Somerset County Council have underlined an ambition to see the duelling of the entire A303 route, further improving Wincanton's connectivity 'offer' to potential inward investors. As well as bringing forward employment land (required to keep self-containment levels high), the type of employment usage also needs to be considered carefully, or logistics could bring a sparser number of jobs to the available land supply.

6.96 As set out in Policy SS3, a total of 8.61 ha of 'B' use class employment land should be delivered in Wincanton over the Local Plan period. 3.61 ha of this is already committed, leaving 5 ha still to be found. This should provide around 323 jobs in traditional 'B' uses, as part of a total of 490 jobs that should be delivered at Wincanton to provide the opportunity for residents to both live and work in the town.

Retail

6.97 Regarding new retail development, the Retail Study's quantitative assessment indicates future comparison floorspace capacity in Wincanton beyond existing retail provision and commitments of 156 sq m (£0.6m retail expenditure) net by 2017, rising to 687 sq m (£3.3m retail expenditure) net by 2028, with future convenience floorspace capacity of 1,003 sq m (£12.3m retail expenditure) net by 2017 rising to 1,314sq m (£16.4m retail expenditure) net by 2028¹²⁸. In order to achieve the goal of having a wealth of shops in a bustling High Street it will be important to retain and build upon existing retail provision and ensure that the potential for retail growth which does exist is directed towards the town centre given the past bias in provision towards out-of-centre locations.

6.98 There is also potential to improve the level and type of comparison retail provision in Wincanton, both in terms of quality and quantity however given the role of the centre, its catchment area and the level of retailer requirements, such improvements are likely to be modest.

128.[Retail Study Update, November 2010]

Infrastructure

6.99 The Infrastructure Plan¹²⁹ (IDP) identifies several items of infrastructure that are considered 'necessary' to provide at Wincanton. These include education, health, recreation and open space facilities. There are some flood issues relating to the River Cale so Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) will be required for development in order that the situation is not made worse.

Direction of growth

6.100 In order to accommodate the proposed level of employment development at Wincanton, a preferred 'direction of growth' has been identified to the south west of the town (see Proposals Map). This direction has been derived using evidence in the Sustainability Appraisal, access to the strategic road network, proximity to other business uses and avoidance of HGV impact on the town and the potential deliverability of sites for development. Given the limited supply of development opportunities within the existing urban area of the town, it is expected that the bulk of the remaining development requirements for Wincanton will be delivered within the direction of growth.

Policy PMT4: Wincanton Direction of Growth

The direction of strategic employment growth will be to the south west of the town, north of Lawrence Hill and west of Wincanton Business Park.

Delivery

6.101 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Wincanton:

- South Somerset District Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Developers and Landowners

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed employment ('B' uses) floor space in Wincanton	8.61 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Wincanton between 2006 and 2028
Net additional dwellings in Wincanton	703 dwellings built at Wincanton between 2006 and 2028

129.[Infrastructure Plan 2011]

Local Market Towns - Ansford/Castle Cary

Spatial Portrait

6.102 The settlements of Ansford and Castle Cary lie adjacent to each other on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels beside the River Cary. Ansford/Castle Cary has a rich historic environment that has been recognised by the towns four designated Conservation Areas and many Listed Buildings including most notably the Grade II* listed All Saints Church. The area around the settlement has high archaeological potential and the remains of a motte and bailey castle.



Castle Cary High Street

6.103 The combined settlements have a population of 3,421¹³⁰ making it the 10th largest settlement in South Somerset. The isolated nature of the town and its largely rural surroundings mean that it serves a more strategic service role than expected.

6.104 The town supports a full range of services including a secondary school, doctor's surgery, pharmacy, dentist, library, bank, convenience store, post office and public houses. The town's economically active population is half that of the town's

total population and largely matches the town's 1,200 jobs¹³¹. The town's major employers are based on the Torbay Road Industrial estate and include Centaur Services, Royal Canin and Snell 2000 Ltd. Travel to work data shows that 54% of the population 'out commute' and that this is principally to Yeovil, Wincanton and Bruton.

6.105 The town centre provides quality shopping with many niche and independent traders and a range of supplementary services. It is accessible by bus and has parking provision but there is congestion at peak times on Fore Street. The choice of convenience shopping is limited. The town centre is liable to flooding.

6.106 To the north of the town Ansford/Castle Cary benefits from access to its railway station located on the West of England and Heart of Wessex lines.

Local Aspirations

6.107 Consultation in 2005 for the Castle Cary and Ansford Community Plan (CanPlan) identified a number of issues for action including better facilities for young people; better traffic flow through the town; the resolution of parking problems

130.[ONS Mid 2010 estimate - Urban Area]

131.[BRES Employment data 2010]

(without charging); affordable housing for young families; only small scale appropriate industrial, retail and business development; maintaining the quality of the local environment; and improving the Market House to provide a comfortable multi-use centre for the whole community.

6.108 There is a local aspiration for employment opportunities such as light and high tech industry to increase settlement self-containment, one-bedroom and a range of family housing to address current imbalance in housing type and size, improvements to road and drainage infrastructure (including parking and the alleviation of congestion) and the protection of retail and educational facilities.

6.109 Rail connections are excellent in Ansford/Castle Cary, but road connections much less so. The town remains an important local employment centre in the East of South Somerset but employment land is now scarce and a small supply needs to be maintained and brought forward. The town enjoys a positive retail experience dependent on local niche businesses and attracts trade from a wide area. The town is dependent on local major employers and ongoing diversification of employment and growth opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises are to be encouraged.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

6.110 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies Ansford/Castle Cary as performing an employment function and identified retail and community role for the town and surrounding area. Ansford/Castle Cary is designated as a Local Market Town in this Local Plan and such a designation will enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role. In recognition of its small scale and nature, along with Somerton and Langport/Huish Episcopi is identified as a Local Market Town with a reduced scale of growth to match.

Housing

6.111 To maintain the town's service role, Ansford/Castle Cary is expected to deliver 400 new dwellings over the plan period. Existing commitments of 127 dwellings (April 2011), leaves a further 273 dwellings to be accommodated over the plan period. It should be noted however that the Planning permission for the BMI site, Cumnock Lane has recently lapsed and although it can't be considered a commitment at this present time there is an expectation that this important brownfield site will be developed within the Plan period and thereby reduce the future housing target by a further 89 dwellings. The phasing policy SS7 would be a key mechanism in addressing early delivery of this brownfield site prior to the greenfield direction for growth.

6.112 The additional level of growth reflects the town's role and function within the District's settlement hierarchy. This level of provision will support the town centre business role and help support community facilities such as the local secondary school and health centre.

Employment

6.113 To support the provision of an anticipated 223 jobs, with 147 of these being traditional B use industrial jobs, there is a need for approximately 3 hectares (147 jobs) of employment land in Ansford/Castle Cary. Since the start of the plan period in 2006, there has been approximately 9ha of employment land already delivered in the town through the building of the Royal Canin pet food factory in 2008 on a saved allocation from the previous Local Plan. This is not something that would readily be repeated, and artificially 'inflates' the employment land figures. Therefore to aid the self-containment of the settlement and provide employment opportunities for inhabitants of Ansford/Castle Cary in the later part of the Plan period the Local Plan should deliver approximately an additional 3 hectares of employment land outside the expansion of the Royal Canin site.

Retail

6.114 The South Somerset Retail Capacity Study update (2010) indicates that the ability to significantly increase the amount of comparison goods floorspace for Ansford/Castle Cary will be constrained by its size, natural catchment area and level of commercial market interest. Orientated towards a top-up food shopping function, in principle, it would be beneficial to increase the level of retention of main/bulk-food shopping trips. However like the comparison retail sector, the natural catchment and expenditure capacity of the centre will limit the potential for large-scale additional provision and there will also be concerns over the impact on existing retail provision. Therefore, for both convenience and comparison retailing, a general strategic approach for Ansford/Castle Cary is recommended which acknowledges the need to retain shopping trips within the town and supports proposals that increase retention via the promotion of realistic proposals.

6.115 The town centre is considered vulnerable to potential out of centre retail development by virtue of the fact that it does not possess an anchor store and contains many small size outlets. It is considered appropriate to have a local retail impact threshold of 250 sq meters above which any retail proposal would be required to provide an impact assessment.

Infrastructure

6.116 The Council's Infrastructure Plan¹³² demonstrates that these proposals are deliverable and that the necessary social, physical and green infrastructure is provided to support the proposed development. A road link between Station Road

132.[Infrastructure Plan (2012)]

and Torbay Road has been identified as appropriate and necessary for the implementation development in the strategic direction of growth. Submissions to the Council have indicated that it is viable and deliverable.

Education

6.117 Castle Cary Primary School has an estimated capacity of 206 places and is currently operating at full capacity. Future growth would result in an infrastructure need for further 2 to 3 classes. There are no opportunities for expansion at the current site and a new primary school would therefore be required to accommodate future substantial growth.

Flood Risk

6.118 The South Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies the town centre as a location liable to flood due to surface water run off from nearby hills. Planning applications will be expected to avoid contributing to the existing flooding issue by including adequate drainage measures and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). The Environment Agency has noted that there is delineated groundwater source protection zones in the vicinity of Castle Cary. This is not considered an issue by virtue of the distance between the strategic direction for growth and the delineated groundwater source protection zones.

Direction of growth

6.119 A North West direction of growth has been found to be the most sustainable location for Ansford/Castle Cary's future expansion of housing, employment and education proposals. A North West direction for growth has the advantages of being well related to existing employment opportunities, the town centre, the town's Schools and is located on land that will have the least impact in respect of periphery landscape¹³³. A road link between Station Road and Torbay Road will be required to improve access and egress to new and existing employment and better integration of the development within the town.

Policy LMT1: Ansford/Castle Cary Direction of Growth and Link Road

The direction of strategic growth (for housing, employment & education) will be north of Torbay Road and East and West of Station Road. As part of any expansion within the direction for growth, a road will be expected to be provided between Station Road & Torbay Road prior to completion of the expansion.

133.[Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2012)]

Delivery

6.120 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Ansford/Castle Cary:

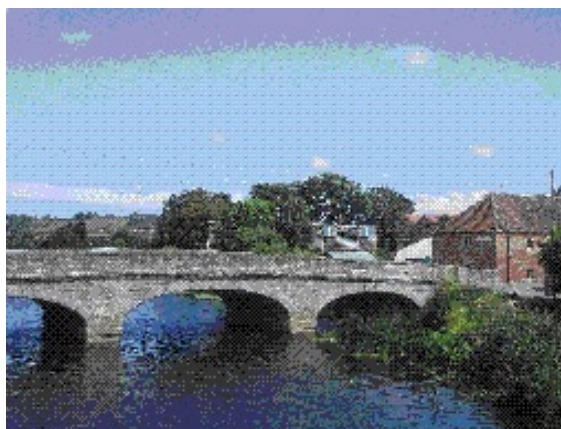
- South Somerset District Council
- Somerset County Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Developers and Landowners

Monitoring Indicators	Target
The total number of dwellings and amount of employment land built, under construction and committed at Ansford/Castle Cary within the Urban Area and in the preferred direction for growth	Delivery of 400 dwellings and 3 ha employment land between 2006 and 2028
The provision of appropriate road improvements	Delivery of a link road between Torbay Road and Station Road before completion of development proposal
The provision of a new Primary School at Ansford / Castle Cary	Deliver one new primary school

Local Market Towns - Langport/Huish Episcopi

Spatial Portrait

6.121 Langport/Huish Episcopi is a small town in the north of the District, located on the banks of the River Parrett by the intersection of major roads that link the town with Taunton, Bridgwater and the A303. The town has a long history that dates back to Roman times, and was established as a royal Saxon borough by the 10th century. Langport/Huish Episcopi prospered from its strategic location for river based trade from Saxon times onward, which lasted until the arrival of the railway in the 1850s.



Great Bow Bridge, Langport

6.122 There has been steady growth at Langport/Huish Episcopi throughout its history, which has accelerated over the last 60 years to a population of 2,699

people¹³⁴ today. Residential growth initially spread along the main roads from the early 18th century, with the residential infill of land between these roads with large housing estates occurring in the 20th century, primarily to the north of the original settlement. The main employment area is to the west of the town at Westover Trading Estate. A large part of the town, including the whole town centre is designated as a Conservation Area.

6.123 Langport/Huish Episcopi is located within a sensitive and rural landscape, largely defined by its proximity to the Somerset Levels and Moors. Much of the town is surrounded by areas of high flood risk due to its proximity to the River Parrett and its flood plain, much of which forms the Somerset Levels and Moors. The Somerset Levels and Moors are highly valued both in terms of wildlife, with parts being internationally recognised for its wildlife presence as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar, and cultural and recreation opportunities. Tourism is important for the town with many small businesses being linked to providing facilities and attractions for visitors attracted by the opportunities to walk, cycle and ride horses in the Somerset Levels and Moors and particularly along the Parrett trail.¹³⁵

6.124 As the wider area around the town is relatively sparsely populated, Langport/Huish Episcopi functions as an important settlement that serves the surrounding rural area. Some of the key services and community facilities include primary and secondary schools, sports hall, supermarket, library and bank. Langport/Huish Episcopi has a small town centre that provides a range of service goods to cater for the day-to-day needs of the residents; convenience retailing in the town is dominated by a single supermarket, whilst the comparison sector is mainly limited to independent and specialist stores.¹³⁶ There is a regular bus service to Yeovil and Taunton, and a national cycle passes through the town.

6.125 Langport/Huish Episcopi has a relatively elderly population with 24% of residents being 65 or older (compared to 20% average in the District, and 19% nationally),¹³⁷ which could have potential implications for health care needs and the type of housing provision that is required to meet the needs of the town.

6.126 Langport/Huish Episcopi has a good balance of jobs (1,200) to workers (1,250), a ratio of around 1:1, but roughly 60% of residents travel elsewhere to work, principally to Yeovil, Taunton, and Somerton.

134.[ONS mid 2010 urban area population estimate]

135.[Langport 2020]

136.[South Somerset Retail Capacity Study update, 2010]

137.[Census 2001]

Local Aspirations

6.127 The parish plan 'Langport 2020' sets out the vision for Langport to be 'The Heart of the Levels - a thriving, clean and revitalised market town and surrounding villages'. This vision is supported by the aim 'To increase prosperity in Langport and its hinterland and to improve the quality of life of its citizens'. Various projects are proposed to deal with the issues facing the town in the themes of economy and heritage; transport and housing; the river; youth and community.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

6.128 As set out in Policy SS1, Langport/Huish Episcopi is classified as a 'Market Town' due to the settlement having a strong employment, retail and community role.¹³⁸ Given its relatively smaller scale and nature compared to some of the larger Market Towns, Langport/Huish Episcopi is identified as a Local Market Town (alongside Somerton and Ansford/Castle Cary) with a reduced scale of growth to match.

Housing

6.129 In order to sustain and enhance Langport/Huish Episcopi's role as a Market Town, with a level of development that is relative to the size, accessibility, character and environmental characteristics of the town, around 400 dwellings should be built in the town in the Local Plan period. As most of these have already been built or committed in the first 5 years of the plan period (295 dwellings), new provision should be made for around 100 dwellings at the town (as set out in Policy SS5). There are few sites available within the existing urban area in Langport/Huish Episcopi,¹³⁹ meaning a 'direction of growth' is required to identify a broad location to accommodate new development on the edge of the town, as explained below.

Employment

6.130 As set out in Policy SS3, 3.44 ha of 'B' use class employment land should be delivered in Langport/Huish Episcopi over the Local Plan period. Only 0.44 ha has been provided in the first 5 years of the plan, leaving 3 ha still to be found. This should provide 154 'B' use jobs, as part of a total of 233 jobs that should be delivered at Langport/Huish Episcopi to provide the opportunity for residents to both live and work in the town.

Retail

6.131 The ability for new retail development to be delivered in Langport/Huish Episcopi will be limited by its size, natural catchment area, and level of commercial

138.[South Somerset Settlement Role and Function study, 2009]

139.[Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, 2009]

market interest.¹⁴⁰ There is no significant need for new convenience retailing given the existing large supermarket; and the natural catchment and expenditure capacity of the town will limit the potential for large scale additional convenience goods provision; such proposals would also cause concerns over the impact on existing retail provision in the town. Therefore, for both convenience and comparison retailing, a general strategic approach is recommended for Langport/Huish Episcopi that acknowledges the need to retain shopping trips within the town and supports proposals that increase this retention. Policy EP12 states that a retail impact assessment will be required for retail proposals above 500 sq m in Langport/Huish Episcopi, which is considered appropriate for the scale and character of the town.

Infrastructure

6.132 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies several infrastructure issues that are considered 'necessary' to support development at Langport/Huish Episcopi, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities. Some of the specific infrastructure requirements include a new 3G synthetic turf pitch at Huish Episcopi School, extension of community hall and a community swimming pool.

Direction of growth

6.133 The proximity of Langport/Huish Episcopi to the Somerset Levels and Moors SPA/Ramsar means that new development at the settlement should provide suitable open space provision, potentially together with other measures to encourage behaviour, to ensure that the development does not increase – and preferable decreases – existing pressures.

6.134 In order to accommodate the proposed level of housing and employment development at Langport/Huish Episcopi, a 'direction of growth' has been identified in three locations to the north east, east and south east of the town (see Proposals Map). These locations for the direction of growth have been chosen using evidence in the Sustainability Appraisal and the potential deliverability of sites for development.¹⁴¹ Although the priority is for development on brownfield sites, given the lack of development opportunities within the existing urban area of the town, it is expected that the bulk of the remaining development requirements for Langport/Huish Episcopi (i.e. 100 dwellings, 3 ha employment land) will be delivered within the direction of growth. Specific proposals within these locations should come forward through the development management process.

6.135 Concern relating to possible disruption of wildlife and especially Bewick Swans at Wet Moor by local residents from prospective development in the south east of the direction of growth (south of the A372) can be met by identifying that part of the direction of growth for employment use only. All developments in the direction of growth will need to show that they will not adversely impact on the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area.

140.[South Somerset Retail Capacity Study update, 2010]

141.[Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, 2009, 2010]

6.136 An alternative direction of growth to the west of the town has also been considered, but not taken forward mainly due to a lack of land available for development in this area and a sensitive landscape, but also due to the presence of an important historical building.

Policy LMT2: Langport/Huish Episcopi Direction of Growth

The direction of strategic growth will be to the north, east, and south east of the settlement. All development must avoid coalescence with the settlement of Wearne. Development in the south east is appropriate for employment use only.

Development at Langport/Huish Episcopi will not come forward until it can be demonstrated that, in total, it will not lead to impacts on the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area/Ramsar sites.

Additionally, open space will be required due to the proximity to sensitive (internationally designated) conservation areas, so as to alleviate potential development related pressure on these sites. Appropriate mitigation in the form of open space or other measures will be in place in advance of the development and agreed in advance with Natural England.

Delivery

6.137 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Langport/Huish Episcopi:

- South Somerset District Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Developers and Landowners
- Yeovil Town Football Club

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Net additional dwellings in Langport/Huish Episcopi	400 dwellings built at Langport/Huish Episcopi between 2006 and 2028
Additional employment ('B' uses) floor space in Langport/Huish Episcopi	3.4 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Langport/Huish Episcopi between 2006 and 2028

Local Market Towns - Somerton

Spatial Portrait

6.138 Somerton is a market town dating back over 1,000 years, with an important history including being the centre of a major royal estate in the 10th century and briefly serving as the county town of Somerset. The town has held a weekly market since the Middle Ages and long prospered as an agricultural centre and an attachment to local estates, reflected by the many fine 17th and 18th century houses in the town centre.



Somerton Buttercross

6.139 Today, Somerton is one of the larger settlements in South Somerset with a population of 4,274 people.¹⁴² It is a relatively compact settlement, set above the Cary valley with the core of the town concentrated upon the market place and church. The town centre and an area to the east of the town is designated as a Conservation Area. Recent residential growth has spread to the west of the town centre, and the main employment area is the Bancombe Road Trading Estate to the north west of the town.

6.140 Somerton is located in a rural setting and, alongside nearby Langport/Huish Episcopi and Street in Mendip District, is important in serving the needs of residents in the rural north of South Somerset. In terms of retail, Somerton has a reasonably healthy, well kept and attractive town centre with a range of independent stores including a small supermarket and specialist food stores that meet the day to day needs of local residents. Some of the other key services in Somerton are a library, doctor's surgery, banks, and primary and junior schools.

6.141 Public transport to the larger settlements of Yeovil, Taunton and Street is relatively good with a regular bus service, although links to other parts of the District are poor. A national cycle route passes through the town. However, self-containment is relatively low with over 60% of Somerton residents travelling to work elsewhere, mainly to locations in Mendip District and Yeovil.

6.142 Some of the key environmental issues at Somerton include areas of high flood risk to the north, east and south of the town; a high quality historic environment; and the presence of protected species near the town.

¹⁴²[ONS mid 2010 urban area population estimates]

Local Aspirations

6.143 Somerton Town Council updated its Community Plan in 2011, which describes how local people would like to see the town evolve in the next 5-10 years. The key areas for improving the town are set out in a series of 'project plans' that include broadening the range of cultural amenities, open space, sports and leisure facilities; attracting new businesses to the town; and producing a shared vision of how the people of Somerton would like their town to develop in the future.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

6.144 As set out in Policy SS1, Somerton is classified as a 'Market Town' due to the settlement having a strong employment, retail and community role.¹⁴³ Given its relatively smaller scale and nature compared to some of the larger Market Towns, Somerton is identified as a Local Market Town (alongside Langport/Huish Episcopi and Ansford/Castle Cary) with a reduced scale of growth to match.

Housing

6.145 It is important to sustain and enhance Somerton's role as a Market Town in the rural north of the District, with a level of development that is relative to the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town. Therefore, around 400 dwellings should be built in the town over the Local Plan period 2006-28. The majority of these (235 dwellings) have already been built or committed in the first 5 years of the Local Plan period, leaving a residual additional housing requirement of 165 dwellings. A 'direction of growth' to identify a broad location to accommodate new development on the edge of the town is required, as explained below.

Employment

6.146 As set out in Policy SS3, a total of 4.91 ha of 'B' use class employment land should be delivered in Somerton over the Local Plan period. Just under half (1.91 ha) of this has already been provided, leaving 3 ha still to be found, primarily within the direction of growth. This should provide 166 'B' use jobs, as part of a total of 251 jobs that should be delivered at Somerton to provide the opportunity for residents to both live and work in the town.

Retail

6.147 Regarding new retail development, the ability to increase the amount of comparison goods floorspace at Somerton will be constrained by its size, natural catchment area, and level of commercial market interest.¹⁴⁴ Somerton is orientated towards a top-up food shopping function and, in principle, it would be beneficial to increase the level of retention of main/bulk-food shopping trips. However, like the

143.[South Somerset Settlement Role and Function study, 2009]

144.[South Somerset Retail Capacity Study update, 2010]

comparison retail sector, the natural catchment and expenditure capacity of the town will limit the potential for large scale additional convenience goods provision; such proposals would also cause concerns over the impact on existing retail provision in the town. Therefore, for both convenience and comparison retailing, a general strategic approach is recommended for Somerton that acknowledges the need to retain shopping trips within the town and supports proposals that increase this retention.

6.148 The town centre has a delicate balance of shops, including a small supermarket, and is therefore considered vulnerable to potential out of centre retail development. It is considered appropriate to require a local retail impact assessment for retail proposals greater than a threshold of 250 sq m for Somerton given the scale and nature of the town.

Infrastructure

6.149 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies several infrastructure issues that are considered 'necessary' to provide as a result of new development at Somerton, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities. A replacement for the surgery is specifically identified, and this is being pursued with other development.

Direction of growth

6.150 To accommodate the proposed level of housing and employment development at Somerton, a 'direction of growth' has been identified to the west of the town. This direction of growth has been identified from evidence in the Sustainability Appraisal and the potential deliverability of sites for development.¹⁴⁵

6.151 Development to the north west section of the Direction of Growth would potentially lead to flooding problems, which will need to be addressed through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The costs of this infrastructure are not considered to be 'showstoppers' to new development in the town.

Policy LMT3: Somerton Direction of Growth

The direction of growth at Somerton will be to the west of the town.

¹⁴⁵[Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2009, 2010]

Delivery

6.152 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Somerton:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Primary Care Trust.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Net additional dwellings in Somerton	400 dwellings built at Somerton between 2006 and 2028
Additional employment ('B' uses) floor space in Somerton	4.9 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Somerton between 2006 and 2028

7 Rural Centres - Vision and Proposals

7.1 The Spatial Strategy identifies six Rural Centres based on the findings of the South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study and other evidence. These are the settlements that act as focal points for the surrounding area for retail and community service provision, and in some cases have an employment role. To promote greater self-containment and stronger local communities, the strategy requires these places to accommodate some housing and employment growth. Community facilities and services, which better meet the needs of the settlement and its surrounding area, will be encouraged.

7.2 The six identified Rural Centres are: Bruton, Ilchester, Martock/Bower Hinton, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon. The key issues, local aspirations, challenges and indication of what the Local Plan will deliver for each settlement are discussed below.

Bruton

Spatial Portrait

7.3 Bruton is a Rural Centre with Saxon origins. Once a royal estate of the West Saxon kings in the 7th century, in addition to its agricultural trade, the town had a flourishing cloth industry from the middle ages, succeeded from the late 18th century by silk production. Today the two main industries are farming and education. There are five schools in Bruton: King's School, founded in 1519, Bruton School for Girls, Sexey's School, a Primary School and the Meadow School for Steiner Education. A Conservation Area was first designated in 1973, which includes the historic core and much of the south western parts of the settlement.

7.4 Bruton is situated in the east of the District, in the Brue Valley a few miles north of the A303, about 4 miles from Castle Cary and 7 miles from Shepton Mallet. The A351 Frome-Yeovil road passes through the settlement and the B3081 crosses the river at Church Bridge. Today Bruton is one of the larger settlements in the District with a population of 2,974 residents¹⁴⁶. The topography and hence settlement has been heavily influenced by the River Brue. The majority of the settlement is built on the higher ground on the north side of the river



The Packhorse Bridge, Bruton

and in recent years residential development has occurred to the north east of the town.

7.5 Over 50% of the settlement's economically active residents travel to work outside the ward, mainly to settlements in Mendip, Wincanton and the surrounding villages, making the level of self-containment low. The major employment sector is education. The challenge for Bruton is to diversify the economy, resisting any further loss of employment land, thereby providing a range of opportunities to both live and work locally. In retail terms, whilst there is no large supermarket, there are a number of independent shops providing a range of convenience goods. There are a variety of community services including a doctor's surgery, library, bank and post office.

7.6 In addition to a regular bus service, residents in Bruton have access to rail services. The railway station, which is located on Station Road, is on the Heart of Wessex Line running from Bristol to Weymouth. A national cycle network runs through the settlement.

7.7 One of the key environmental issues in Bruton is the risk of flooding along the course of the River Brue and its tributary Combe Brook. As a result of a severe flood in 1982 a retention dam was built about one and half miles east of the town, the dam acts as a flow regulator to control the total amount of water in the river at Church Bridge without any human intervention.

Local Aspirations

7.8 Bruton - The Way Forward (2005) sets out a number of main issues and aspirations for the town. It is recognised that there needs to be a balance between maintaining the heritage assets of the settlement whilst adapting to modern needs through accepting a share of future development but seeking to control its impact, particularly in terms of traffic, pollution and impact on the environmental qualities of the town. Bruton benefits from being on the railway line but more needs to be made of this as an asset and there is also a need to manage the flow of vehicles through the historic core of the town where parking is also extremely difficult. A new enlarged surgery is also identified in Bruton - The Way Forward as existing facilities have been outgrown.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

7.9 As set out in Policy SS1, Bruton is classified as a Rural Centre due to its retail, community service and to a lesser extent employment role. Identification of Bruton as a Rural Centre will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for additional growth to encourage greater self-containment and broaden the employment base.

146.[ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 - Urban Area]

Housing

7.10 It is important to sustain and enhance Bruton's role as a Rural Centre, with a level of development that is commensurate with the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town. The Local Plan will therefore support the development of around 217 dwellings over the plan period, up to 2028. Of these 217 dwellings, 113 are already committed¹⁴⁷, with a residual requirement for 104 new dwellings, which is considered to be deliverable through the Development Management process. These dwellings need to be of mixed size although there is a locally perceived need for family housing and supported elderly person accommodation.

Employment

7.11 Bruton is very much a local centre with a high dependence on its strong, prestigious educational establishments. The supply of employment land is modest and in keeping with the settlement's scale and function. As set out in Policy SS3, a minimum of 2.56 hectares of 'B' Use Class employment land will be supported up to 2028. Of the 2.56 hectares, 0.56 is already committed, with a residual requirement for 2 new hectares, which is considered to be deliverable through the Development Management process.

Retailing

7.12 As set out in Policy EP9, Bruton is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. Proposals for retail development in excess of 250 sq m will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment.

Infrastructure

7.13 The Infrastructure Plan does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure¹⁴⁸ requirements to be provided in Bruton as a result of the proposed new development. It does however identify a number of 'necessary' infrastructure¹⁴⁹ requirements, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities.

Delivery

7.14 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Bruton:

- South Somerset District Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Developers and Landowners

147.[Council's annual housing monitoring data, as at April 2011]

148.[See Glossary]

149.[See Glossary]

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed housing development in Bruton	217 homes built in Bruton between 2006 and 2028
Completed employment ('B' uses) floor space in Bruton	2.56 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Bruton between 2006 and 2028

Ilchester

Spatial Portrait



Church of St Mary Major, Ilchester

7.15 Ilchester is situated 5 miles north of Yeovil, on the eastern fringe of the Somerset Levels and Moors, concentrated at the point at which the River Yeo crosses the Fosse Way. It is a Rural Centre with Iron Age origins and an important history, including serving as a small Roman fort settled by the Fosse Way and briefly serving as the county town of Somerset in the 12th Century, due to the presence of the county gaol. This settlement’s historic legacy is apparent in the concentration of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, archaeological sites, and historic buildings that are present in the settlement, and which include the 13th century St Mary Major and the Church of St Andrews, both Grade II* Listed Buildings.

7.16 In 1940 the Royal Naval Air Station was commissioned at Yeovilton, and since then it has grown to become one of the busiest military airfields in the UK, with both helicopters and jet aircraft operating out of the Station. Ilchester, being in close proximity to RNAS Yeovilton has accommodated development over recent years to provide housing for many service personnel and their families stationed at the air base.

7.17 As a result of its natural and historic constraints, and recent growth, the settlement is formed around two distinct points of growth. At the southern end the main commercial area is formed around the historic core and, to the north, Northover is a recent growth area. Both are linked by linear development along the Fosse Way. The Historic Core is virtually completely surrounded by land within Flood Zone 3B, the functional floodplain of the River Yeo, with certain parts of the built up area itself, including the linear development along Fosse Way being within Flood Zone 3A, an area of high probability of flooding. The northern growth area has developed over the past 50 years or so, on gently rising ground, is not subject to flooding or known archaeological constraints. This area includes the infant and junior schools (split

site), a factory, a shop and residential development, including housing for service personnel and their families stationed at nearby RNAS Yeovilton.

7.18 Today Ilchester has a population of 1,994 people¹⁵⁰ however the presence of RNAS Yeovilton, which currently has approximately 2,500 personnel on base nearly doubles the population. Given the presence of RNAS Yeovilton, Ilchester is a strong location for employment. As a result of the number of personnel living in Ilchester, the level of self containment is good with approximately 59% of people living and working in the same ward.



RNAS Yeovilton, a major employer near Ilchester

7.19 The settlement also provides a retail and community service role - there are a few convenience stores, a post office, infant and junior schools and a doctor's surgery. There are both regular and demand responsive bus services to Yeovil, Taunton and Street.

7.20 Key environmental issues affecting potential new development include flooding (the town is located within a significant flood risk area, as identified by the Environment Agency), presence of archaeological remains (much of the southern half of the town is an Area of High Archaeological Potential) and noise constraints from the airbase.

Local Aspirations

7.21 Consultation with Ilchester Parish Council has identified that the volume of traffic travelling through the settlement is an issue, together with parking and they have indicated concern in relation to the continuing viability of shops and commercial businesses in the town centre.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

7.22 As set out in Policy SS1, whilst Ilchester has a strong employment role due to its proximity to RNAS Yeovilton, it is classified as a Rural Centre.

7.23 In the past due to its environmental constraints, Ilchester did not have an identified Development Area, and housing and employment growth was significantly limited. The amendment to the noise contours provides the opportunity for some

150.[ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 - Urban Area]

growth, which will help to provide local employment and housing and help to retain local services. A Development Area is now identified on the Ilchester Proposals Map.

Housing

7.24 It is important to sustain and enhance Ilchester's role as a Rural Centre, with a level of development that is commensurate with the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town. The Local Plan will therefore support the development of around 151 dwellings over the plan period, up to 2028, which is considered to be deliverable through the Development Management process.

7.25 The MOD have identified that there will be a need for additional housing for service personnel and their families within a 10 mile radius of RNAS Yeovilton within the plan period.

7.26 Bureau Veritas were commissioned by South Somerset District Council to prepare noise contours to represent current typical aircraft activity at RNAS Yeovilton¹⁵¹. New noise contours have been identified (see Inset Map 6a) and these will be a material consideration used to guide planning decisions. The revised contours seek to minimise the adverse impact of noise, without placing unreasonable restrictions on development or adding unduly to the costs and administrative burdens of business.

7.27 The MOD can give no guarantee as to the type therefore, number and frequency of aircraft movements now or in the future. It is imperative that any further dwellings, be constructed to the highest levels of noise protection so as not to constrain the bases' future operational flexibility and provide an appropriate living environment for new residents. There are opportunities for development away from the flood risk areas in locations which the landscape character appraisal indicates could accommodate more housing.

Employment

7.28 Proximity to the A303 and good connections to the South and North, means that Ilchester will always enjoy the advantages brought by good road communications. There is likely to be a small local demand for employment sites, this should be supported to increase Ilchester's level of self-containment and offer an alternative to Yeovil.

7.29 As set out in Policy SS3, a minimum of 2.02 hectares of 'B' Use Class employment land will be supported up to 2028. Of the 2.02 hectares, 0.02 is already committed, with a residual requirement for 2 new hectares, which is considered to be deliverable through the Development Management process.

151.[Aircraft Noise Contours for RNAS Yeovilton, SSDC and Bureau Veritas (July 2010)]

Retailing

7.30 As set out in Policy EP9, Ilchester is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. Proposals for retail development in excess of 250 sq m will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment.

Infrastructure

7.31 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure¹⁵² requirements to be provided in Ilchester as a result of the proposed new development. It does however identify a number of 'necessary' infrastructure¹⁵³ requirements, which generally relate to open space and sports facilities.

Delivery

7.32 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Ilchester:

- South Somerset District Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Developers and Landowners

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed housing development in Ilchester	151 homes built in Ilchester between 2006 and 2028
Completed employment ('B' uses) floor space in Ilchester	2.02 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Ilchester between 2006 and 2028

Martock/Bower Hinton

Spatial Portrait

7.33 Martock is a small attractive town in central South Somerset, on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels and Moors and just off the busy A303. Mill Brook and Hurst Brook flow between Martock and Bower Hinton to the South, before joining the River Parrett to the west. The town is surrounded by gradual undulating hills that are regarded as having high landscape value. It is well connected to Yeovil, which is situated 7 miles to the southeast.

152.[See Glossary]

153.[See Glossary]

7.34 Martock and Bower Hinton have a joint Conservation Area incorporating various Listed Buildings along the main road between the two settlements. Listed buildings are concentrated at the historic centres of Martock, Hurst and Bower Hinton. Areas of flood risk run through the centre from east to west between Martock and Bower Hinton. The land either side of the streams has been identified as part of the functional flood plain.



Market House, the White Hart Hotel, Martock Pinnacle with All Saints Church in the background

7.35 The population of Martock parish is approx 4,378¹⁵⁴. The town has a good variety of services, however self-containment is an issue. The travel to work data shows that over 50% of the population out commute mainly to Yeovil, Taunton Deane, Crewkerne, and Ilchester and surrounds. Although the town is home to scores of small businesses that are clustered principally at Martock Industrial Park and the out of town Parrett Works. Redevelopment of sites, such as Paulls Court, have resulted in a loss of employment land. Providing more employment opportunities in Martock/Bower Hinton could potentially reduce the level of out commuting.

Local Aspirations

7.36 Engagement with Town and Parish Councils in preparing the Draft Local Plan have indicated that Martock is considered an appropriate location for additional growth but that employment opportunities in particular should be exploited to broaden the range of opportunities and to help assist with financing road improvements along the main spine road. Housing is required alongside the additional employment growth to help retain existing local facilities and services. Martock/Bower Hinton has a range of facilities that potentially could take more growth particularly for employment. Proximity to Yeovil and the potential impact on the A303 trunk road, however, are major constraints to significant housing growth due to out-commuting concerns and traffic impact on a national route.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

7.37 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies Martock/Bower Hinton as a Rural Centre this will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for additional employment growth, the provision of additional retail premises and modest housing growth all of which will encourage greater self-containment.

154.[2010 ONS Mid Year Estimates - Urban Area]

Housing

7.38 To enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role 246 dwellings are proposed over the Local Plan period 2006-28. Of these 246 dwellings, 101 are already committed¹⁵⁵, with a residual requirement for 145 new dwellings, reflecting a scale of growth commensurate with South Petherton and Milborne Port.

Employment

7.39 Additional employment and retail opportunities should be exploited to strengthen the service function of the settlement and additional employment land is required to be developed to 2028 in order to broaden the range of opportunities and to provide greater self-containment.

7.40 It is proposed a total employment provision for Martock/Bower Hinton of 4.79 ha. However it should be noted that 1.8 ha of this employment provision is the saved Local Plan allocation ME/MART/2, Land West of Ringwell Hill on which they are intending implementing. There is a further 0.99 ha in commitments or lapsed consents (demonstrating acceptability in principle). There is provision for an additional 2 ha of employment land to provide an alternative option for employment. This should be delivered through the Development Management process so providing a flexible and early response to the provision.

Retailing

7.41 As set out in Policy EP9, Martock/Bower Hinton is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. Proposals for retail development in excess of 250 sq m will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment. Proposals for retail development should similarly be considered through the Development Management process.

Infrastructure

7.42 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has identified a requirement for a fluvial flood risk defences, a community hall, new open space, sports facilities, play area and expansion of youth facilities for the settlement.

Delivery

7.43 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Martock/Bower Hinton:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

155.[Council's annual housing monitoring data, as at April 2011]

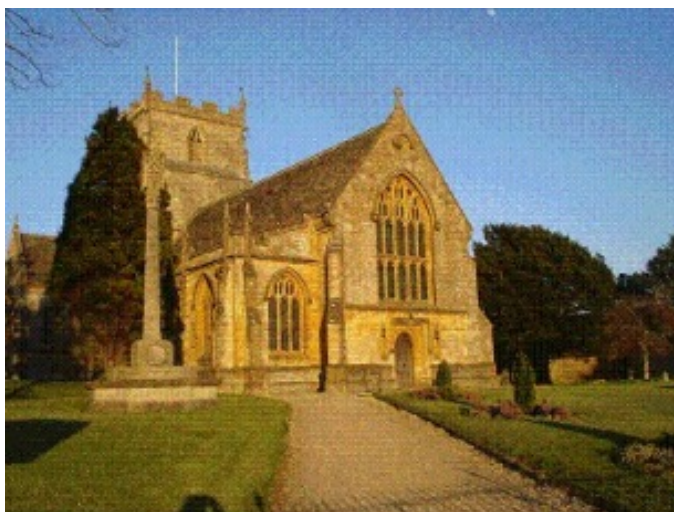
Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed housing development in Martock/Bower Hinton	246 homes built in Martock/Bower Hinton between 2006 and 2028
Completed employment ('B' uses) floor space in Martock/Bower Hinton	4.79ha of 'B' use employment land built in Martock/Bower Hinton between 2006 and 2028

Milborne Port

Spatial Portrait

7.44 Milborne Port is an historic settlement located in the south-east of the District near the Dorset border and the edge of the Blackmore Vale. The River Gascoigne flows south through the village, and the A30 runs west to east through the village centre, providing a direct road connection to the larger towns of Sherborne 3 miles away and Yeovil (8 miles), both to the west. There is access to railway stations at Yeovil and Sherborne.

7.45 Milborne Port is noted for its 'New Town' Conservation Area in the west of the village with a second Conservation Area encompassing the village centre. Much of the countryside surrounding the village is considered to be of high landscape value, including a Historic Garden to the south east. Areas of flood risk run through the centre from the north to the south and there are also groundwater protection zones in the vicinity of Milborne Port.



The Church of St John the Evangelist

7.46 The population of the parish is approximately 2,586¹⁵⁶. Self containment is an issue; there are approximately 1,300 economically active residents in Milborne Port but only 350 jobs, meaning only around a quarter of residents in the village who work are able to access jobs in the village¹⁵⁷. This suggests that more employment opportunities should be provided in Milborne Port. The lack of jobs in Milborne Port has consequently created high levels (71%) of out commuting. More employment opportunities in the village could potentially reduce the level of out-commuting.

156.[ONS Mid Year estimates 2010 - Urban Area]

157.[South Somerset Role and Function Study Final report April 2009]

Local Aspirations

7.47 As well as recognising the need to create employment opportunities and expressing a desire to see modest housing growth the community wish to see increased retail provision in Milborne Port.

7.48 The Milborne Port Community Plan¹⁵⁸ aims to:

- Support the maintenance and sustainable growth of existing businesses;
- Encourage the development of sustainable new business ventures and employment opportunities;
- Ensure a balanced rate of growth for the benefit of all residents whilst maintaining the unique character of Milborne Port;
- Support the various community groups active in the village;
- Make it a welcoming village for newcomers;
- Ensure that it is a safe village in which to live and work; and
- Encourage the village residents to play their part in creating a more sustainable environment.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

7.49 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies Milborne Port as a Rural Centre this will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for additional employment growth. The provision of additional retail premises and modest housing growth all of which will encourage greater self-containment.

Housing

7.50 To enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role 299 dwellings are proposed over the Local Plan period 2006-28. Of these 299 dwellings, 210 are already committed¹⁵⁹, with a residual requirement for 89 new dwellings, which is considered to be commensurate with the size of the settlement and deliverable through the Development Management process.

Employment

7.51 Additional employment and retail opportunities should be exploited to strengthen the service function of the settlement and additional employment land is required to be developed to 2028 in order to broaden the range of opportunities and to provide greater self-containment. There is a demand locally to strengthen the retail offer.

158.[Endorsed by South Somerset District Council, August 2010]

159.[Council's annual housing monitoring data, as at April 2011]

7.52 There is virtually no existing supply of employment land in Milborne Port (0.04 hectares), yet the settlement should see an additional 299 homes minimum over the plan period. In order to promote self-contained growth and cater for this additional housing it is considered that 2 hectares of new employment land should be delivered through the Local Plan to provide an option for employment. As this is not strategically significant the growth should be delivered through the Development Management process.

7.53 Retailing

7.54 As set out in Policy EP9, Milborne Port is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. Proposals for retail development in excess of 250 sq m will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment.

Infrastructure

7.55 The infrastructure Delivery Plan does not indicate the need for any 'critical' infrastructure¹⁶⁰ requirements to be provided in Milborne Port as a result of the proposed new development. It does however identify a number of 'necessary' infrastructure¹⁶¹ requirements, which generally relate to open space and sport facilities.

Delivery

7.56 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Milborne Port:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed housing development in Milborne Port	299 homes built in Milborne Port between 2006 and 2028
Completed employment land ('B' uses) in Milborne Port	2.04 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Milborne Port between 2006 and 2028

160.[See Glossary]

161.[See Glossary]

South Petherton

Spatial Portrait

7.57 South Petherton is a large attractive hamstone village in central South Somerset. It lies immediately to the north of the busy A303 road corridor amongst the shallow folds of low limestone hills, some 7 miles west of Yeovil. The town is surrounded by gradual undulating hills that are regarded as having high landscape value, especially to the west, north and east. A small stream flows north through the centre of South Petherton before it feeds into the wider River Parrett further along its course. The land either side of the stream has been identified as part of the functional flood plain.

7.58 Listed Buildings are concentrated in the historic core and are incorporated within the Conservation Area.

7.59 The population of the village is approximately 2,489¹⁶² with a higher than average percentage of people over 65 years (28%). A Parish survey in 2005 showed over 44% of the respondents had lived in the Parish for over 16 years indicating a low turnover of population. The village has a variety of services, however self-containment is an issue. The travel to work data shows that 64% of the population out commute and that this is mainly to Yeovil, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Ivelchester ward (mainly Yeovilton Air Base) and the surrounding area.



George Lane with the church of St Peter & St Paul beyond

Local Aspirations

7.60 The 2006 Parish Plan indicates that access to local sports provision would be desirable although the cost of providing such facilities within the settlement is acknowledged as prohibitive. Support for local shops and services are seen as important and improved car parking would assist. The Parish Plan also indicated the need for more starter homes and small family accommodation particularly for rent.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

7.61 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies South Petherton as a Rural Centre. This will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for additional employment growth, the provision of

162.[2010 ONS Mid Year Estimates - Urban Area]

additional retail premises and modest housing growth, all of which will encourage greater self-containment.

Housing

7.62 To enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role 245 dwellings are proposed over the Local Plan period 2006-28. Of these 245 dwellings, 151 are already committed¹⁶³, with a residual requirement for 94 new dwellings, reflecting a scale of growth commensurate with Martock and provision for the rest of the Plan period beyond the build out of current commitments and secure a level of provision capable of supporting local services.

Employment

7.63 Additional employment and retail opportunities should be exploited to strengthen the service function of the settlement and additional employment land is required to be developed to 2028 in order to broaden the range of opportunities and to provide greater self-containment.

7.64 In previous Local Plans, efforts were made to find a site to potentially meet the needs of local employment users in this part of the District. No acceptable alternatives at that time were found to the Lopen Head Nursery site (1.8 hectares). As such, historically it has been considered as part of the employment provision for South Petherton and other settlements.

7.65 It is proposed a total additional employment provision for South Petherton of 2 ha to promote an alternative option for employment. This is not a strategic issue and any land should be adequately delivered through the Development Management process. It will be through this process that the location of new employment land will be affirmed and in light of national and local policy this previous association of Lopen Head employment can't be presumed.

Retailing

7.66 As set out in Policy EP9, South Petherton is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. Proposals for retail development in excess of 250 sq m will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment.

Infrastructure

7.67 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan has identified a requirement for a replacement surgery, expansion of youth facilities, an extension to the community hall, new open space and expansion of formal pitches and changing facilities for the village.

¹⁶³. [Council's annual housing monitoring data, as at April 2011]

Delivery

7.68 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at South Petherton:

- South Somerset District Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Developers and Landowners

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed housing development in South Petherton	245 homes built in South Petherton between 2006 and 2028
Completed employment ('B' uses) floor space in South Petherton	3.8 ha of 'B' use employment land built in South Petherton between 2006 and 2028

Stoke sub Hamdon

Spatial Portrait

7.69 Stoke sub Hamdon lies to the west of Yeovil and south of the A303 with the steep slopes of Ham Hill forming a significant boundary to the south of the village. The character of the settlement owes much to the older individual buildings and groups of buildings found in the Conservation Area, many of them built in the local hamstone. The historic core of the village, dating from the 14th Century, is centred on the High Street and is characterised by tight development fronting directly onto the street.



The Fleur de Lis Inn, High Street, Stoke sub Hamdon

7.70 The population of the village is approximately 1,713¹⁶⁴. The village has a good variety of services including primary and secondary schools, doctors, pharmacy, dentist, outreach Post Office and sports facilities, and there are also a number of shops and restaurants. There are about 200 jobs in the village mostly in the manufacturing, wholesale and retail trades. However, there is a high level of out commuting and approximately 75% of the working population travel to work outside the ward.

Local Aspirations

7.71 The Parish Plan established that Stoke sub Hamdon was seen as a good place to live that could benefit from some improvements. The strong community spirit, comprehensive range of facilities, access to Ham Hill Country Park and Community Newsletter were seen as the most important features of living in Stoke sub Hamdon. Some of the areas of concern reflect national issues such as crime, litter and light pollution but the main concerns specific to Stoke sub Hamdon were the cost of housing, over development and lack of amenities for young people.

What will the Local Plan Deliver?

Settlement Status

7.72 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies Stoke sub Hamdon as a Rural Centre due to its' variety of services and community facilities. This will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for additional employment growth, the encouragement of additional retail premises and modest housing growth all of which will extend greater self containment.

Housing

7.73 It is proposed that up to 55 additional dwellings (of which 6 are already committed, leaving a residual of 49) will be delivered during the period of the Local Plan to assist with the self-containment of the settlement and meeting specific housing needs. Delivery will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). This more limited scale of growth reflects Stoke sub Hamdon's smaller scale and nature.

Employment

7.74 It is proposed that up to 2.0 hectares of employment land will be delivered during the period of the Local Plan to promote the self-containment of the settlement and cater for the proposed additional housing.

164.[2010 ONS Mid Year Estimates - Urban Area]

Retailing

7.75 As set out in Policy EP9, Stoke sub Hamdon is a Local Centre in retail terms and the focus for any new retail development should be within the defined Town Centre. Proposals for retail development in excess of 250 sq m will be required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment.

Infrastructure

7.76 The Infrastructure Plan (IDP) has identified the requirement for the extension of formal pitches & changing facilities, the expansion of existing youth facilities, play equipment and open space/natural green space provision.

Delivery

7.77 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing the proposed development at Stoke sub Hamdon:

- South Somerset District Council
- Town and Parish Councils
- Developers and Landowners

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Completed housing development in Stoke sub Hamdon	55 homes built in Stoke sub Hamdon between 2006 and 2028
Completed employment land ('B' uses) in Stoke sub Hamdon	2 ha of 'B' use employment land built in Stoke sub Hamdon between 2006 and 2028

8 Economic Prosperity

8.1 This section of the Local Plan deals with employment, town centres and tourism. The Government's overarching objective is sustainable economic growth, and the NPPF sees land-use planning as proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. 'Shaping South Somerset', the District's Sustainable Community Strategy (2008) contains three long-term goals, which seek to deliver sustainable economic growth and these are reflected in the Local Plan's Strategic Objectives 5, 6 and 8.

8.2 The NPPF identifies that the economic role of the planning system in achieving sustainable growth is to ensure that there is sufficient available land of the right type in the right place, at the right time to support growth and innovation, ensuring the vitality, viability and health of town centres and enabling a strong rural economy¹⁶⁵.

8.3 The Council's Plan (2012-2015) makes a commitment to seeking to deliver a strong and diverse economy, through the retention of existing, and creation of new high value jobs, promoting business diversification and innovation, fostering the growth of small and medium enterprises, lowering barriers for start-up businesses and attracting inward investment in partnership.¹⁶⁶ Whilst there is a focus on the delivery of the Yeovil Vision, and Chard Regeneration Scheme, revitalising the economy of the other Market Towns and Rural Centres is equally as important, as is supporting the farming community and aiding diversification in this area where appropriate.

8.4 The South Somerset economy is highly reliant on manufacturing, in particular high tech engineering and aerospace. This reliance should be viewed as a strength, past performance demonstrates that South Somerset has out-performed the UK and South West in terms of jobs growth over the last two decades¹⁶⁷, and there are opportunities to build on the strong manufacturing base in the future. Current Government policy at a national level is to halt and even reverse the decline in the manufacturing sector, and the assumption is that the measures to achieve this will be focussed on high-technology sectors, low carbon technologies and advanced engineering, all of which are well represented in South Somerset's employment structure and make the District well placed to take advantage of this growth in the future too. In addition to manufacturing, high quality local food production, agriculture and tourism industries illustrate how the District's economy is directly and indirectly linked to its high quality natural and built environment, and this is also recognised in the Council's Plan. RNAS Yeovilton is an important employer (both on and off the base) and wealth generator locally - see Ilchester (Chapter 7).

165.[NPPF March 2012]

166.[South Somerset District Council 'Our Plan - Your Future 2012 to 2015']

167.[Ekosgen, March 2010]

Job Growth and Employment Land Requirements

8.5 The Settlement Strategy sets out how the Council is pursuing an employment led approach to managing growth across the District - raising levels of self-containment by seeking to deliver balanced employment and housing growth.

8.6 Since 1991 South Somerset's economy has grown significantly from 47,500 jobs to 65,200 jobs in 2010¹⁶⁸, which is an average of 932 new jobs a year, although there have been fluctuations during this period (a loss of 2,100 jobs between 2006 and 2010 due to the recession). Despite these challenging economic conditions, it is anticipated, based on the local economy and economic structure, recovery will occur and lead to at least 9,200 new jobs over the plan period. The report 'Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil' (January 2011) provides further details on the South Somerset economy and jobs growth 2006-2028¹⁶⁹.

8.7 There is a requirement in Policy SS3: Delivering Employment Growth to therefore provide for at least 9,200 new jobs and 162 hectares of employment land within the District to 2028 (of which 42.5 hectares will be additional provision to existing employment land supply. Supply consists of saved allocations, land with planning permission, land previously with permission, now lapsed and land under construction).

Strategic Employment Sites

8.8 A key role for the Local Plan is to identify strategic sites for local and inward investment.¹⁷⁰ The South Somerset Employment Land Review (ELR) (2011) makes a recommendation as to which currently saved sites are strategically significant (sites that are critical to the delivery of the Local Plan Vision, and meet anticipated business needs over the plan period) and should be included in the Local Plan.

Land at Lufton

8.9 The site, which forms part of the wider Lufton 2000 business park, now benefits from planning permission. The wider business park is vibrant, providing good quality, general industrial employment land in the right location, with good access. The strategic significance of the allocation is that it provides much needed general industrial land in a prime employment location in Yeovil. The site has now received planning consent, which is being implemented, and is therefore not identified in Policy EP1.

168.[ABI and BRES Employee Analysis 1991-2010]

169.[as updated to 2028 by SSSDC and interpreting the 2010 Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) from Nomis]

170.[NPPF March 2012 Paragraph 21]

Land off Bunford Lane

8.10 The site, which is in an important gateway location at the edge of Yeovil, is allocated for employment to provide a high quality business park. The strategic significance of the allocation is that it seeks to widen the economic base of the town through the promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, high technology industries, therefore it is restricted to B1 uses only. This site has now received planning consent, and is therefore not identified in Policy EP1.

Crewkerne Key Site

8.11 The Crewkerne Key Site forms part of the comprehensive regeneration of the town and the employment element of the package is crucial to delivering a balanced development.

Land at Ilminster

8.12 The three Ilminster sites saved from the South Somerset Local Plan (1991-2011) cumulatively will deliver in the region of 21 hectares of employment land. Their location on the junction of the A303/A358 provides a strategically important opportunity to secure major investment into the District for a range of industries (including distribution).

Chard Key Site

8.13 Chard is a priority area for economic regeneration. The new strategic location for Chard's growth and role is set out within Policy PMT1: Chard Growth Area.

Yeovil Urban Extension

8.14 A new strategic location for development is proposed in Yeovil adjacent to the urban edge. A policy requiring employment provision in association with this wider proposal is set out in the Yeovil Chapter in Policy YV2: Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension.

8.15 Policy EP1 takes the sites identified in the ELR and identifies them as being strategically significant for local and inward investment. Their use will therefore be for employment purposes (unless specified for B1, B2 and B8 uses). See Policy SS3: Delivering Employment Growth identifies other sites saved from the South Somerset Local Plan and the sites that are not saved).

Policy EP1: Strategic Employment Sites

The following employment allocations are strategically significant for local and inward investment:

- Crewkerne Key Site (Saved Local Plan Allocation KS/CREW/1);
- Land west of Horlicks Ltd, Hort Bridge, Ilminster (Saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILMI/3);
- Land off Station Road, Ilminster (Saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILMI/4); and
- Land adjacent to Powrmatic, Hort Bridge, Ilminster (Saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILMI/5).

Delivery

8.16 Planning consent has been awarded for the Lufton and Bunford sites and the remaining sites have been granted in principle. The Council is committed to supporting economic development, and the occupation of these sites will be promoted through the Council's economic development and planning functions.

8.17 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP1:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Delivery of employment land in Yeovil, Crewkerne and Ilminster	Deliver approximately 21 hectares of strategic employment land in Yeovil, 10.5 hectares in Crewkerne and 21 hectares in Ilminster by 2028

Offices

8.18 Offices (B1 and A2 uses¹⁷¹) are defined as a main town centre use in national guidance¹⁷². Their location in the town centre is beneficial, on the basis that office buildings tend to be used more intensively than other forms of employment use (based on the average ratio of number of workers to floorspace¹⁷³) and therefore they generate more footfall in the town centre, thereby supporting its vitality and viability. Additionally, focusing office employment in a town centre location provides more

171.[Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended]

172.[NPPF - Glossary]

173.[English Partnerships Density Ratios]

people with greater opportunities to use public transport, thereby helping to reduce the need to travel by private car.

8.19 The ELR highlights that since 2006 of the 5.44 hectares (18,622 sq m) of office development that has taken place across the District, only 0.23 hectares (1,948 sq m) has taken place within the defined Town Centre.

8.20 In Yeovil over the last twenty years much of the office based employment growth has occurred outside the town centre (since 2006 approximately 10% of the office development has occurred in the town centre¹⁷⁴). The relocation of the civic offices out of the town centre and location of other professional organisations have created a 'Western Extension'¹⁷⁵ which is separated from the town by Agusta Westland airfield complex.

8.21 The displacement of office workers out of the District's town centres needs to be limited in the future, and whilst it is important not to deter economic activity, focusing office based employment growth in town centre locations will deliver greater benefits in terms of the District's overall sustainability, particularly by supporting the vitality and viability of our town centres.

8.22 The NPPF requires offices to be located in the defined Town Centre and applications for office developments that are not in the defined Town Centre will be required to undertake a sequential assessment. Sites outside the Town Centre will need to demonstrate that they have, or can be made to have good access to a range of modes of transport. Sites within 300-400 metres of a bus stop are considered to have good access.¹⁷⁶ In this context, preference is given to out-of-centre sites that are located next to an established industrial estate or business park over other out of centre sites, as this will provide the opportunity to maximise the use of public transport.

Policy EP2: Office Development

Proposals for office development should firstly be located within the defined Town Centre. Where this is not possible because a sequential test demonstrates that there is no suitable, available and viable site, office developments may be acceptable on less central sites in the following order:

- **Edge-of-centre sites (within 300m of the edge of the defined Town Centre) - preference is given firstly to edge-of-centre sites, which are well connected, to the centre by pedestrian access; and**
- **Out-of-centre sites with good access to sustainable transport modes - preference is given firstly to out-of-centre sites that are located next to compatible uses.**

174.[SSDC Employment Land Monitoring April 2006 to March 2010]

175.[Yeovil Place Review, Ekosgen (March 2010)]

176.[Based on Guidelines for Planning for Public Transport in Developments (1999)]

Delivery

8.23 The Council, through its economic development function will encourage office-based businesses to develop in Town Centres and through its planning functions will resist the loss of office accommodation from them.

8.24 Spatial planning will undertake a review of Town Centre boundaries and this will explore amongst other things the potential to include future office development within the Town Centre.

8.25 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Delivery of office development in Town Centres	Increase the percentage of office development delivered in the defined Town Centres and in particular Yeovil Town Centre. Increase the net amount of A2 and B1 Uses in the defined Town Centre.

Safeguarding Employment Land

8.26 Employment land in this context is defined as uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended. Nationally there is recognition that there is pressure to redevelop employment land for other more valuable uses, such as housing or retailing, and this is reinforced by local evidence. The Council's employment land monitoring data illustrates that since the beginning of the plan period approximately 12.5 hectares¹⁷⁷ of employment land has been lost to alternative uses.

8.27 The importance of maintaining the existing supply and protecting the overall distribution of employment land should not be underestimated - of the employment land lost since 2006, 5 hectares was redeveloped for residential purposes, if this land had been retained in employment use, it could have provided in the region of 1500 jobs¹⁷⁸. Existing employment sites provide the main supply of employment land and are required to meet the needs of the market by retaining a mix of older, more affordable premises, whilst maintaining a local balance between housing and employment.

177.[1st April 2006 to 31st March 2011]

178.[Calculations based on English Partnerships Density ratios]

8.28 By protecting employment land, Policy EP3 aims to retain locally accessible employment opportunities, which enable people to live and work in close proximity, aiding self-containment and reducing the need to travel to work by less sustainable travel modes. The retention of employment land and premises is important for job creation and the health of the economy. Second-hand premises are often cheaper, and so appeal to start-ups or small businesses trying to keep rental costs low, having such business premises readily available will allow job creation, which is vital in an area where almost 80% of its businesses are, small ones.

8.29 Whilst Policy EP3 seeks to protect valuable employment land and premises, in line with national policy¹⁷⁹ residential re-use will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there is identified need for additional housing which overrides the economic reasons in favour of retention of the land. To assist this process, any proposal to redevelop an existing employment site must provide robust and credible evidence of marketing to support the argument that the site is no longer required for B uses. The marketing exercise must demonstrate that the site/premises has been marketed at a realistic price for a minimum of 18 months (a period of which should be determined with the Local Planning Authority at the pre application stage). Details of the requirements for marketing are outlined in the Council's guidance document 'Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications' which will be reviewed and reproduced as SPD.

8.30 The location of employment sites should be considered carefully in the context of their potential to be redeveloped, as the Council is not supportive of the proliferation of unsuitable and unsustainable development in the countryside. Alternative uses will also need to be assessed to ensure that they are compatible with existing surrounding uses and designed to the highest standards in line with Policy EQ2.

Policy EP3: Safeguarding Employment Land

Employment land and premises* will be safeguarded and planning permission will not be granted for development to alternative uses unless it can be demonstrated that the loss would not demonstrably harm the settlement's supply of employment land/premises and/or job opportunities.

Applicants will be expected to submit a marketing statement with the planning application, which demonstrates that the site/premises has been actively marketed for a maximum of 18 months or a period agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to application submission.

Changes of use will not be permitted unless:

- The proposed use is compatible with existing surrounding uses and not detrimental to the operation of existing businesses in the area;**

179.[NPPF – Paragraph 51]

- Adequate access exists or can be achieved to serve the proposed development;
- The proposal would result in significant environmental improvements or enhancements to the character of the area; and
- The site is not in an unsustainable location for the land use proposed.

***Class B1 Business Use, Class B2 General Industrial Use, and Class B8 Storage or Distribution Use of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended.**

Delivery

8.31 The Council is committed to supporting employment opportunities locally. Planning and Economic Development officers will seek to retain appropriate sites and encourage alternative commercial/mixed uses where possible.

8.32 The ELR and employment land monitoring will provide the mechanism for managing employment land requirements to ensure that a continued supply of land is available and deliverable.

8.33 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP3:

- South Somerset District Council.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Amount of employment land and jobs across the District	Retain a supply of employment land in Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres
Losses of employment land to alternative uses	Refuse planning permission where no robust, credible evidence that the site is no longer required for economic purposes

Delivering Employment Land in the Countryside

8.34 In the context of protecting the countryside, national policy supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas.¹⁸⁰ Policy SS2: Development in Rural Settlements outlines the strategic approach to job creation in Rural Settlements and Policy SS3: Delivering Employment Growth identifies the amount of employment land to be delivered in these settlements over the remainder of the Plan period¹⁸¹.

180.[NPPF - Paragraph 28]

8.35 The Council supports a viable rural economy and its diversification, the District's Sustainable Community Strategy seeks to deliver a raised quality of life in rural areas by promoting thriving, inclusive and locally distinctive rural economies. Policies EP4: Expansion of Businesses in the Countryside and EP5: Farm Diversification, outline how the planning system will assist in delivering development which will promote the growth of new smaller scale business, expansion of existing businesses and diversification of the rural economy.

8.36 New employment land in the countryside should be of a scale that is appropriate to the surrounding area and should not lead to undue displacement of workers from nearby Market Towns and Rural Centres, as this will impact on the self containment of those settlements and the settlement hierarchy.

Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside

8.37 There are many businesses located in the countryside that provide a valuable source of local employment. These businesses have often made significant investments in existing sites and have limited relocation choices. Relocation may not be a desirable option for not only can it affect the individual business concerned in terms of its continuity and staff retention, but it can also result in the loss of jobs which may have been the most sustainable option for providing local employment in a particular rural area.

8.38 It is clear from the settlement strategy that away from Yeovil and the strategic employment sites located in the Market Towns, opportunities for significant job growth are likely to be generally more limited to a level of provision that supports the role and function of settlements. The development of employment generating activities throughout the countryside would be contrary to the strategy, as it would lead to unsustainable forms of development, but the expansion of existing, established rural businesses is supported as it is important not to jeopardise rural enterprise. Any proposed development must not adversely impact on the countryside, as national policy is clear that protection of the countryside is an overarching aim.

8.39 A business will need to demonstrate that it has operated successfully for a minimum of 3 years to ensure that it has an established presence in the particular area. The business will also need to demonstrate that it is viable and has reasonable prospects of remaining so. These requirements are to ensure that development does not lead to the proliferation of businesses and employment land in the countryside, when such development should be directed towards the Market Towns or Rural Centres.

8.40 It is essential to make efficient and effective use of land, which means prioritising previously developed land and reusing existing buildings where possible.

181.[Policy SS3 identifies a minimum requirement for 4.5 hectares of employment land in the District's Rural Settlements]

Policy EP4: Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside

Proposals for the expansion of existing businesses in the countryside will be permitted where:

- **The business has been operating successfully for a minimum of 3 years, and is a viable business;**
- **It is demonstrated that the proposal is needed in this location;**
- **The proposal is of a scale appropriate in this location and appropriate to the existing development;**
- **Existing buildings are reused where possible;**
- **Firstly, use is made of land within the curtilage of the development where possible, and outside of the curtilage only where it is demonstrated that additional land is essential to the needs of the business;**
- **There is no adverse impact on the countryside with regard to scale, character and appearance of new buildings and/or changes of use of land;**
- **There is no adverse impact upon designations for wildlife and conservation reasons, at either local, national or international level; and**
- **The proposed development ensures that the expected nature and volume of traffic generated by the development would not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area and would not compromise the safety and/or function of the road network in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated.**

Delivery

8.41 The Council is committed to supporting employment opportunities locally. Economic development and area development officers will seek to support local businesses to find suitable premises, but if there are no alternative options and the business complies with the criteria in Policy EP5, planning policy and development management officers will advise and support businesses to secure appropriately scaled expansions.

8.42 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP4:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Amount of employment land approved in Rural Settlements and countryside locations	100% approval for employment proposals in rural settlements and countryside locations where it is demonstrated that the proposed expansion is needed in such a location(s)

Farm Diversification

8.43 Farming employs a small proportion of the South Somerset workforce and employee numbers have steadily declined over the years, from approximately 3,189 jobs in 2007 to 3,035 jobs in 2010 (a reduction of 5%)¹⁸². The nature of the industry locally has also changed in recent years, and reflects the trends that are occurring at a national level - whilst there is a growth in the number of farm holdings, the size of holdings is declining and the amount of land farmed is declining (between 2007-2010, there has been an 8% reduction in the amount of land farmed in South Somerset¹⁸³) illustrating a shift in the rural way of life and the rise in 'hobby farming'¹⁸⁴.

8.44 Despite these changes, farming and its associated businesses remain integral to the present and future of South Somerset. Food security, local produce and reducing 'food-miles' remain nationally important, and an increasing onus on a low carbon economy, will provide opportunities for key sectors such as land based industries and renewable energy. It is therefore important to establish policy, which supports a productive countryside and the transition from traditional to new rural enterprises.

8.45 National Guidance recognises that farm diversification, the diversification from the dependence on production of agricultural commodities into non-agricultural activities, is vital to the continuing viability of many existing farm enterprises¹⁸⁵. The District Council is keen to support development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming enterprises, for example, farm shops, Bed and Breakfast and leasing of land or buildings to other non-agricultural businesses. It is important that proposals for diversification bring long-term and genuine benefits to individual farming enterprises and the wider rural area.

8.46 In encouraging economic diversity and agricultural diversification, it is important that the countryside is not spoilt by the unfettered development of an inappropriate and unwarranted nature. Therefore diversification proposals should be of a scale and nature appropriate for the location and be capable of satisfactory integration into the rural landscape. Such proposals should have regard to the amenity of neighbours,

182.[Source - Defra Agriculture and Horticulture Survey, June 2010]

183.[82,275 hectares in 2007 to 75,387 hectares in 2010 - Defra]

184.[A hobby farm is a smallholding/small farm that is maintained without the expectation of being a primary source of income]

185.[NPPF March 2012]

both residents and other businesses that may be adversely affected by new types of on-farm development.

8.47 In some instances when a scheme is successful it can grow to such a scale, which would make it unacceptable and whilst the Local Authority would not wish to limit the growth of a successful business, consideration should be given to the potential impact on the character of the rural location. Also, in more isolated locations, difficulties may arise in terms of access and traffic activity and development may require the need to promote and advertise and therefore signage may also become an issue.

8.48 Proposals must be accompanied by a comprehensive farm diversification plan, which indicates how new uses will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and the agricultural enterprise, and how it links with any other short or long term business plans for the farm.

8.49 National Guidance supports the development of equine enterprises¹⁸⁶ (see Policy EQ8: Equestrian Development).

Policy EP5: Farm Diversification

Proposals for development for the purpose of farm diversification within established agricultural holdings will be permitted if they comply with the following criteria:

- **The character, scale and type of proposal is compatible with its location and landscape setting;**
- **A development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impacts to the integrity of Natura 2000 sites and other national and international wildlife sites and landscape designations;**
- **They form part of a comprehensive farm diversification scheme and are operated as part of a viable farm holding and contribute to making the holding viable;**
- **Appropriately located existing buildings should be re-used where possible; and**
- **Where new or replacement buildings are required, the proposal is in scale with the surroundings and well related to any existing buildings on the site.**

Delivery

8.50 The AMR will monitor the number of farm holdings and amount of land farmed across the District and the data will be used to target the Council's approach to supporting agricultural businesses and their diversification.

186.[NPPF March 2012]

8.51 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP5:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Number of farm holdings in the District	Retention of farm holdings through appropriate farm diversification schemes
Amount of land farmed across the District	Maintenance of number of agricultural based businesses in the District. Maintenance and increase in land farmed in the District

Henstridge Airfield

8.52 Henstridge Airfield is a site extending to approximately 142 hectares. It is located in open countryside close to the Somerset/Dorset border. It is remote from any large centres of population, its nearest settlement being the village of Henstridge. It is served by a network of rural roads and lanes.

8.53 Henstridge Airfield has a long and complicated planning history, the particular circumstances of the airfield and its history of use has required detailed and comprehensive consideration resulting in the production of a Masterplan. This was produced in consultation with relevant Councillors and Town and Parish Councils in South Somerset and North Dorset Districts, representatives from Somerset County Council and statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency.

8.54 The Masterplan¹⁸⁷ identifies:

- areas where the 13 Masterplan spatial and development management criteria apply to general industry under use class B2¹⁸⁸;
- areas that should be kept free from built development;
- where there is a commitment to built development;
- where there should only be built development in connection with airfield use; and
- where there should only be built development in connection with recreational/ drainage use to the east.

The approved Masterplan informs the interpretation of Policy EP6, in particular the acceptability or unacceptability of proposed development.

187.[Henstridge Airfield Masterplan, 2009 (approved by South Somerset Area East Committee on 8 July 2009)]

188.[As defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Amendment (England) Order 2005]

Policy EP6: Henstridge Airfield

Because of its remote, countryside location, permission will not be granted for further development at Henstridge Airfield that would unacceptably intensify the level of activity or materially add to built development.

Delivery

8.55 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP6:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Built development at Henstridge Airfield in accordance with the Henstridge Airfield Masterplan	Planning applications for new built development (not amendments to existing consents) to be in accordance with Henstridge Airfield Masterplan

New Live/Work Units

8.56 A live/work property is one designed from the outset for dual residential and business use. It may be newly built or converted to create a professional workspace where one or more people can run a business. In planning terms, it has a unique status ('sui generis') as a property 'of its own type' incorporating residential and commercial use.

8.57 National guidance is supportive of new working practices such as live/work units¹⁸⁹, however new build live/work units are not supported as evidence from consented units in South Somerset demonstrates that live/work practices do not work in reality and result in residential development by default in locations where permission would not normally be granted. Monitoring of the Council's planning records identifies that between 1997 and 2010 there have been 36 applications for live/work units in the District, and 18 were approved. The 18 approvals were expected to deliver 36 live/work units, however to date only 1 unit has been delivered and is operating as a true live/work unit.

8.58 Locally it is felt that live/work units are not necessary and normal residences with the right configuration (spare bedroom, large garage or large garden shed) provide a more flexible and cheaper work base until such time as the enterprise

189.[NPPF March 2012]

outgrows its premises. In this case one would normally wish to see it located in more appropriate premises and locations.

Policy EP7: New Build Live/Work Units

New build live/work units will not be allowed in locations where residential development would not normally be permitted.

Delivery

8.59 Delivery of new live/work units will primarily be through private sector investment although the Council will support proposals in Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres through its wider economic development function.

8.60 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP7:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Number of live/work units across the District	100% refusal of applications for live/work units in the District. Increase in the number of businesses registered at private residential properties in the Rural Settlement and Countryside.

Communications Infrastructure

8.61 Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth.¹⁹⁰ The development of high-speed broadband technology and other communication networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services. The Council's Plan recognises the importance of delivering Super Fast Broadband to rural areas, and development should facilitate where possible the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems to ensure people have a choice of providers and services.

190.[NPPF March 2012]

Tourism

8.62 Tourism contributes significantly to South Somerset's economy, accounting for 5% of local employment and an estimated GVA of £103,354,000 in 2010. The general trend for short breaks in the district continues (as it does nationally), with the average UK visitor spending 3 nights per trip in South Somerset¹⁹¹.

8.63 South Somerset's 'product' is based primarily on the quality of its environment and charming market towns and villages, which offers much for the short stay tourist who generally seeks activities related to their hobbies and interests, and who require access to the countryside and locally distinctive cultural and historic activities.

8.64 In addition to its historic and environmental assets, South Somerset offers a number of dedicated visitor attractions such as Fleet Air Arm Museum, Yeovilton (113,400 visitors in 2009), Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford and Montacute House (110,529 visitors in 2009) to name but a few. These cater well for day visitors, who have increased in number since 2006 (4% increase)¹⁹². The District is also an excellent centre for other tourist destinations, given its proximity to the Dorset coast and Sherborne and its surrounds for example.

8.65 National Guidance is supportive of tourism development, and in rural areas advocates the provision and expansion of facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by facilities in existing settlements. New and/or enhanced facilities should benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors without harming the character of the environment¹⁹³.

8.66 The Council recognises that the gains that can be made from tourism need to be maximised in a way which both benefits the 'consumer' and the local population, particularly in rural areas where shops, services and employment opportunities are continuing to decline and farmers have to diversify their businesses to remain viable.

8.67 To improve South Somerset's tourism offer and to extend the tourism season, support will be given to sustainable tourism developments that benefit businesses, communities and visitors, subject to their scale and location. Major new tourism proposals should be assessed in terms of overall sustainable development objectives. These objectives include:

- enhancing the overall quality of the tourism offer in the District;
- developing new tourism markets;
- being readily accessible by non car means;
- helping to extend the tourism season;
- contributing significantly to the Districts economy;
- increasing rather than just displacing visitors from other areas and attractions;

191.[Value of Tourism 2010, South West Tourism Alliance 2011]

192.[Value of Tourism 2010, South West Tourism Alliance 2011]

193.[NPPF March 2012 Paragraph 28]

- being located within or near Yeovil or the District's Market Towns to ensure a local workforce that can access the attraction effectively and sustainably; and
- being well located to the national road route network.

8.68 Where proposals would result in the creation of accommodation that is capable of being occupied for residential purposes on a permanent basis, the council will impose conditions on any permission granted specifying its use as holiday accommodation only. Proposals that maintain the financial viability of existing tourist accommodation will be supported in accordance with Policy EP8. Minimising the visual prominence and landscape impact of expanded holiday and caravan sites or chalets will be important.

8.69 Statutorily designated natural or cultural heritage assets are recognised as having scope for tourism proposals subject to appropriate control that ensures the features for which they are designated are not compromised (see Policy EQ4: Biodiversity).

8.70 In all circumstances applications will have been expected to have considered sustainable transport opportunities and ensured access by foot, cycle and/or public transport where this is practical and achievable. Multi-use paths and bridleways also provide opportunities in rural locations to partake in tourist activities, and are a sustainable transport option in their own right.

Policy EP8: New and Enhanced Tourist Facilities

In order to sustain the vitality and viability of tourism in the District, new and enhanced tourist facilities will be supported where:

- **They are of a scale appropriate to the size and function of the settlement within which they are to be located;**
- **The proposal ensures that the District's tourist assets and facilities are accessible through sustainable modes of travel including cycling and walking;**
- **They do not harm the District's environmental, cultural or heritage assets;**
- **They ensure the continued protection and resilience of the District's designated nature conservation features;**
- **They benefit the local community through access to facilities and services; and**
- **There is no adverse impact on Natura 2000 and other internationally and nationally designated sites**

There must be an identified need for tourist facilities in the open countryside, which is not met by existing facilities.

Delivery

8.71 The Council will work in partnership to promote South Somerset through both 'Into Somerset' and the Somerset Tourism Partnership and will seek to obtain external funding to support the tourism industry. Planning will be supportive of appropriately located tourism facilities.

8.72 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP8:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Tourism Bodies.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Number of annual visitor trips	Strengthen the tourism offer of the District and increase the value of tourism in £s (increased GVA)
Average night per trip, per staying visitor. Estimated GVA of tourism.	Increased average night per trip per staying visitor

Town Centre Uses

8.73 The South Somerset Retail Study Update (June 2012) (known as retail study) outlines a number of economic and social trends that will influence the future pattern of retailing and hence the nature of South Somerset's town centres over the plan period. Clearly the population and employment growth that will be experienced in South Somerset to 2028 will mean that there is a need for more retail and leisure provision, but the District's town centres will need to adapt to changing circumstances, such as competition from internet shopping if they are to retain their customers over the coming years - town centres will need to focus on quality, offering a mix of retail, leisure and service facilities.

8.74 National guidance is clear that planning policies should support the vitality and viability of town centres as they are at the heart of their communities and they should be the preferred locations for retailing and other town centre uses. The Sustainable Community Strategy seeks to attract more, and a wider range of retail and other services into the District to maximise local spending and prevent leakage to other centres outside the District. Stemming from these aims, the key retail objective of the Local Plan is to retain and promote a range and mix of town centre uses within Yeovil, the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres (see below for definitions) to meet the needs of the community and retain and enhance the vitality and viability of those centres.

Retail Hierarchy

8.75 The retail study identifies Yeovil as the largest centre in South Somerset, followed by the town centres of Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton, then Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton, followed by Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon, effectively a four-tier hierarchy.

8.76 Yeovil is the principle centre, and will be the main focus for new retail and leisure investment that requires a high level of accessibility. Major new regional scale shopping facilities will not be supported outside Yeovil in order to retain the retail hierarchy, build on existing infrastructure and focus shops where people have the greatest access to them.

8.77 Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton, function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for an extensive rural catchment area, these settlements (identified as Primary Market Towns in the Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy) perform the role of Market Towns in retail terms.

8.78 Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton, contain groups of shops including a supermarket and a range of non-retail services such as banks and local public facilities (eg libraries) and these settlements (identified as Local Market Towns in the Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy) perform the role of District Centres in retail terms.

8.79 Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon (identified as Rural Centres in the Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy) function as Local Centres in retail terms, having a range of small shops of a local nature serving a small catchment, such as a small supermarket, newsagents, a sub-post office or pharmacy.

8.80 The retail hierarchy (Policy EP9) will determine how new net growth will be distributed over the plan period. Yeovil will be the main focus for new retail and leisure investment and the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres will accommodate development which will maintain their retail and service role and support their position in the retail hierarchy. Town Centres will also be the prime location for office development (Policy EP2).

8.81 The approach seeks to secure Yeovil's market share, thereby securing its prominence in the retail hierarchy, whilst allowing sufficient retail provision in the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres. Planning permission will not be granted for proposals which are out of scale with the retail hierarchy. If Yeovil's market share of convenience and comparison retailing were substantially increased, it could potentially unbalance this relationship at the expense of the other centres (see Policy EP10).

Policy EP9: Retail Hierarchy

Yeovil is the principle town centre in South Somerset. Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton are Market Towns in retail terms. Ansford/Castle Cary, Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton are District Centres in retail terms and Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon are Local Centres in retail terms.

The development of main town centre uses in Yeovil, the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres should be of a scale that is commensurate with the settlement role and function, and does not unbalance the town centre hierarchy.

Delivery

8.82 The Council will work in partnership to promote the District's town centres and encourage appropriately scaled retail development in those town centres.

8.83 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP9:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Amount of retail floorspace developed both within and outside defined Town Centres	Focus new retail development in town centre locations, in line with the South Somerset Retail Study 2012

Convenience and Comparison Shopping in Yeovil

8.84 The retail study has assessed the qualitative and quantitative need for convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) retail development across the District¹⁹⁴. The study recommends a strategy of retaining Yeovil's market share, which will secure its prominence in the retail hierarchy, whilst allowing sufficient retail provision in the Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres. If Yeovil's market share were increased it would potentially unbalance this relationship at the expense of the other centres. Therefore to retain Yeovil's market share in a managed way, an upper limit is placed on additional retail floorspace in Yeovil in Policy EP10.

194.[Retail Study Update June 2012]

8.85 The retail study made recommendations regarding the convenience and comparison retail floorspace capacity in other settlements in South Somerset, and these figures are quoted in the relevant settlement sections of the Local Plan.

Policy EP10: Convenience and Comparison Shopping in Yeovil

The cumulative net increase in convenience goods retail floorspace, beyond existing retail provision and commitments, to be completed in Yeovil is limited to a figure of 2400sq m (or £29.9m retail expenditure) by 2017, 3,050 sq m (or £37.8m retail expenditure) by 2022 and 3,800 sq m (or £47.7m retail expenditure) by 2028.

The overall net increase in comparison goods should be limited to a figure of 12,600 sq m (or £90.9m retail expenditure) by 2028.

The floorspace provision (and retail expenditure) is to be regularly monitored to take account of changing circumstances.

Delivery

8.86 The Council will work in partnership to promote the District's town centres and encourage appropriately scaled development in those town centres. The delivery of retail schemes will be private sector led.

8.87 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP10:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Amount of retail floorspace developed in Yeovil	Ensure that retail development in Yeovil is not at the expense of the health, vitality and viability of other settlement's town centres by ensuring that the net increase in comparison and convenience goods retail floorspace for Yeovil is within the identified figures contained in the policy

Location of Main Town Centre Uses (the Sequential Approach)

8.88 Town Centre¹⁹⁵ boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas¹⁹⁶ have been identified for Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Wincanton, Ansford/Castle Cary, Somerton, Langport/Huish, Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke Sub Hamdon, where it is expected that new town centre uses will be accommodated. Whilst the retail study broadly confirms these boundaries an early review of them is proposed to ensure they provide sufficient opportunities to support town centre vitality and viability.

8.89 The Local Plan does not allocate land for retailing as evidence in the retail study suggests there is sufficient land available in existing town centres to meet short-term needs. The Council may wish to consider identifying sites or extending the boundary of Town Centres through the review to accommodate the medium to long term need.

8.90 National guidance requires local planning authorities to apply the sequential approach to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan. Paragraph 25 of the NPPF¹⁹⁷ is clear however that the sequential test should not be applied to applications for small-scale rural offices or other small-scale rural development; applicants are urged to partake in pre-application discussions with the Local Authority in relation to such schemes.

8.91 The preferred locations for town centre uses are clearly set out in Policy EP11. The retail study clearly states future proposals for out-of-centre retail development should be carefully considered and prevented if it can be demonstrated that it could soak up significant amounts of identified capacity and/or harm opportunities for Town Centre redevelopment/expansion (to be demonstrated through an Impact Assessment - see Policy EP12).

8.92 In order to achieve the Government's aspirations for a strong 'High Street', retail proposals will be encouraged within town centres, subject to, their being of an appropriate scale for the role of the centre concerned, and their impact on other centres in meeting their communities' needs. Parking provision required in association with retail development should take into account the town centre context and its role for the wider community and be sufficient for the development itself and support additional provision so that the town centre's accessibility and viability is enhanced.

8.93 Applications for town centre uses that are not in an existing centre or in accordance with an up to date Development Plan should be refused planning permission where the applicant has not demonstrated compliance with the sequential approach to site selection or there is clear evidence that the proposal would seriously affect the vitality and viability of a nearby Town Centre.

195.[See Glossary for definition]

196.[See Glossary for definition]

197.[NPPF March 2012]

Policy EP11: Location of Main Town Centre Uses (the Sequential Approach)

In order to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, new proposals for town centre uses will be permitted firstly within Yeovil Town Centre Shopping Area and the defined Town Centres of Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres, followed by Edge-of-Centre locations, then Out-of-Centre sites that are, or will be well served by a choice of sustainable modes of transport, and are close to the centre or in relation to bulky goods retailing, are located immediately adjacent to existing retail warehousing.

Proposals should be of a scale appropriate to the size and function of the town centre and would help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre.

Applications for town centre uses which are not in an existing Town Centre and not in accordance with an up to date Development Plan should be refused planning permission where the applicant has not demonstrated compliance with the sequential approach to site selection, or there is clear evidence that the proposal, either alone or combined with other recent and outstanding planning permissions would seriously affect the vitality and viability of a nearby Town Centre.

Parking will serve the centre as a whole.

Delivery

8.94 The delivery of retail schemes will be private sector led, but the Council will work in partnership to promote the District's Town Centres as the first preferred location for town centre uses.

8.95 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP11:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Amount of retail floorspace developed both within and outside defined Town Centres	Focus new retail development in the defined Town Centre. 100% compliance with the sequential test for all relevant applications.

Impact Assessments

8.96 The research report 'The Impact of Large Food Stores on Market Towns and District Centres' (1998) illustrates that large food stores can have an adverse impact on market towns and district centres, in particular smaller centres which are more dependent on convenience retailing to underpin their function, are more vulnerable to the effects of larger food store development at edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations.

8.97 National guidance requires an impact assessment to accompany planning applications for retail and leisure development outside of Town Centres, which are not in accordance with an up to date Development Plan and exceed 2,500 sq m, or any locally set floorspace threshold¹⁹⁸.

8.98 Local research demonstrates that whilst most of the District's town centres are reasonably healthy, some are relatively small and lack Town Centre sites, and therefore could be vulnerable to the impacts of inappropriately scaled proposals. A gross floorspace threshold of 2,500 sq m would not be sufficient to assess the impact of convenience retail proposals on the District's centres as the majority of proposals over the last 10 years have fallen below this threshold¹⁹⁹.

8.99 The rural nature of the District and the size of its smaller centres, justifies a need to also look at the impact of any significant in-centre proposals, as these could also detract from the High Street and have an impact on its viability. LDF PMB paper 'Managing the Scale of Retail Development - A Methodology for Establishing a Local Retail Floorspace Threshold Policy for Impact Assessments'²⁰⁰ outlines the methodology for establishing a local threshold for impact assessments. The floorspace threshold was primarily based on the size of existing convenience retail units in each settlement and guidance from the Valuation Office definition of foodstores (which are used to set rateable value). Policy EP12 sets out the threshold for Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres. The national standard of 2,500 sq m applies to Yeovil, as it is the principal centre in the District.

8.100 The thresholds do not imply that anything above them are of an inappropriate scale and should not be awarded planning permission, but simply that anything at or

198.[NPPF March 2012]

199.[See LDF Project Management Board paper 'Managing the Scale of Retail Development - A Methodology for Establishing a Local Retail Floorspace Threshold Policy for Impact Assessments', Core Strategy Workshop 9: 23rd November 2011]

200.[See Core Strategy Workshop 9: 23rd November 2011]

above these would need to demonstrate that there would not be a significant adverse impact.

8.101 The requirement to undertake a retail impact assessment should not only be confined to major new developments, in some cases, extensions, redevelopment or variation of conditions can materially alter the effects of a development. The cumulative impact of recent/committed proposals may also be particularly relevant in some cases.

8.102 Where there is clear evidence that a proposal is likely to lead to significant adverse impacts, applications should be refused. The health of town centres (including vitality and viability indicators) and town centre or retail strategies should be considered as part of the assessment.

8.103 The floorspace threshold is generally related to the settlement classification for retail purposes, however both Ansford/Castle Cary and Somerton are exceptions. These District Centres both have a specific local justification to reduce the threshold from 500 sq m to 250 sq m. Neither Ansford/Castle Cary nor Somerton have a sizable 'anchor' supermarket in or on the edge of their town centre, and the range of shops that are present are generally small in nature, for example the largest comparison store in Castle Cary is 160 sq m. The delicately balanced nature of these town centres makes them more vulnerable to the impacts of large-scale retail and leisure developments than Langport which already has a large supermarket, hence their reduced threshold for Impact Assessments.

Policy EP12: Floorspace Threshold for Impact Assessments

In order to ensure that full consideration is given to the scale of development and whether this would have any significant adverse impacts, proposals involving additional retail floorspace, that is in excess of the following thresholds should be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment in accordance with national planning guidance.

Retail Hierarchy Settlement Classification	South Somerset Settlements	Retail Floorspace Threshold (gross)
Principal Centre	Yeovil	2,500 sq m
Market Towns	Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster & Wincanton	750 sq m
District Centres	Langport/Huish Episcopi	500 sq m
	Ansford/Castle Cary & Somerton	250 sq m

Local Centres	Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton & Stoke sub Hamdon	250 sq m
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Proposals for retail developments up to and including the above floorspace thresholds will generally be regarded as being of a scale that would not result in significant adverse impacts.

Where Impact Assessments present evidence of significant adverse impacts on an existing town centre, development will be refused.

Delivery

8.104 The delivery of retail schemes will be private sector led, but the Council will work in partnership to promote the District’s Town Centres as the first preferred location for town centre uses.

8.105 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP12:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Amount of retail floorspace developed both within and outside defined Town Centres	Focus new retail development in the defined Town Centre. 100% refusal of applications where Impact Assessments present evidence of significant adverse impacts on an existing town centre.

Protection of Retail Frontages

8.106 Primary Shopping Frontages are at the heart of the town centre, they contain streets that are dominated by shops and have the greatest pedestrian footfall. It is considered important to retain the function of Primary Shopping Frontages as dominant shopping areas, as large numbers of shops in close proximity to each other are important to the attractiveness of the centre and its convenience to shoppers.

8.107 There will be support for a diverse range of uses (such as residential or office space), particularly where it uses the upper floorspace in town centres or where it will

benefit the vitality and viability of the Districts town centres at all times of the day, but in order to maintain a core shopping area within the town centre, Primary Shopping Frontages will be protected.

8.108 As required in the NPPF, Primary Shopping Frontages have been identified for Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Langport and Somerton and these are shown on the Inset Maps. An early review of these existing frontages is proposed to reflect the importance of maintaining a core shopping area in these settlements and new Primary Shopping Frontages will be identified in the remaining Market Towns, District Centres and Local Centres where appropriate. There is also a requirement under the NPPF to identify Secondary Shopping Frontages and this too will be considered as part of the review.

Policy EP13: Protection of Retail Frontages

Development proposals resulting in the change of use from retail (class A1 of the use classes order) to non-retail on ground floors within the defined Primary Shopping Frontages will be permitted, except where the number or coalescence of such uses would undermine the dominant retail function.

In order to guide decisions relating to actual numbers and/or coalescence and the impact resulting the following criteria will be taken into account:

- **The location and prominence of the premises within the shopping frontage;**
- **The floorspace and length of frontage of the premises;**
- **The number, distribution and proximity to other non-A1 use class premises (or with consent for such use) within the frontage in question and throughout the town centre;**
- **The character and nature of the use proposed, including the level of pedestrian activity associated with it;**
- **The level of vacancies; and**
- **Whether the proposed use would give rise to noise, smell or other environmental problem.**

Delivery

8.109 The delivery of retail schemes will be private sector led, but the Local Authority will assist in negotiating appropriate town centre shopping proposals and seek to focus retail activity in the Town Centre and resist losses from Primary Shopping Frontages. Annual Monitoring Report will look at the uses in the Primary Shopping Frontage to ensure policy is being applied effectively.

8.110 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP13:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Amount of non-A1 uses in Primary Shopping Frontages	Increase and maintain the number and floorspace of A1 uses in Primary Shopping Frontages

Neighbourhood Centres

8.111 A Neighbourhood Centre is a small parade of shops of purely neighbourhood significance generally located within large residential estates and designed to give access to day-to-day, top-up items. New Neighbourhood Centres to serve proposed new developments should compliment rather than compete with the retail facilities in nearby town centres. This consideration is particularly relevant in relation to the local services and facilities that will be required as part of the planned Sustainable Urban Extension for Yeovil and the strategic allocation for Chard.

Policy EP14: Neighbourhood Centres

Development of Neighbourhood Centres shall be of a scale and type to meet the local needs of the area within which they will be located and must not adversely affect the vitality and viability of any town centres identified by the local authority.

Delivery

8.112 The delivery of retail schemes will be private sector led, but scale of facilities in Neighbourhood Centres should be limited through Development Management process.

8.113 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP14:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Size, range and type of facilities in Neighbourhood Centres	Successful establishment of a Neighbourhood Centre in Yeovil Urban Extension and 4 Neighbourhood Centres in Chard

Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services

8.114 Every settlement has buildings or amenities that play a vital role in local life, such as community centres, libraries, village shops, post offices or pubs. Local life would not be the same without them, and if they closed or changed to private use, it would be a real loss to the community.

8.115 National guidance requires local planning authorities to take into account the importance of local shops and services to communities when considering planning applications affecting such facilities. The guidance states that planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs²⁰¹.

8.116 Policy EP15 requires applicants submitting any proposal to redevelop an existing local amenity to an alternative use, which would not be of benefit to the community and would result in a significant or total loss of that service or facility, to either provide alternative provision or demonstrate that there are no suitable, viable alternative community uses. Details of the requirements for establishing viability and marketing are outlined in the Council's guidance document 'Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications' which will be reviewed and reproduced as SPD. Where decisions on viability are finely balanced, a third party will be expected to advise the District Council and this will be at cost to the applicant.

8.117 The Localism Act requires local authorities to maintain a list of assets of community value which have been nominated by the local community, and when listed assets come up for sale or change of ownership, the Act gives community groups the time to develop a bid and raise the money to buy the asset when it comes on the local market.

8.118 Prior to the establishment of a list, in addition to determining the commercial viability of a local service/facility or shop, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that a social enterprise model (community ownership²⁰²) for re-use has been explored where a significant loss of a facility is identified. By pooling efforts and finding out

201.[NPPF March 2012 Paragraph 70]

202.[A community-owned shop/service is one in which there is community involvement in either the setting up or the running of the shop/service]

what level of commitment the village can support, a community-owned shop/service is one way forward. Community ownership can succeed where a commercial enterprise has failed because:

- Staff costs can be reduced by volunteer involvement;
- The difficulty of finding and affording suitable premises can be overcome by community ownership;
- Community-run enterprises have a better chance of survival than independent shops because the community is usually keener to support a venture in which they have an economic and social interest.

8.119 The community will be expected to pay a fair price for any site/premises they wish to purchase, so that the landowner is not commercially restricted.

8.120 In terms of demonstrating that all reasonable efforts to secure a suitable alternative community re-use has been explored, applicants will firstly be expected to demonstrate that they have consulted the Parish and District Council, and used local evidence, such as the Parish Plan to identify deficiencies and establish the local need for services and facilities. Applicants will then be expected to demonstrate why, if there is an identified need for a certain type of community facility, the site/premises in question has not met that need. Applicants are encouraged to engage with the District Council during the early stages of any marketing exercise or when exploring alternative uses, as guidance and advice can be given on various aspects of economic and community development.

8.121 National guidance requires planning applications that promote the retention of existing and development of new local shops, facilities and services to be responded to positively by the local planning authority, Policy EP15 supports this approach.

Policy EP15: Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services

Provision of new community facilities and services will be supported. Proposals that would result in a significant or total loss of site and/or premises currently or last used for a local shop, post office, public house, community or cultural facility or other service that contributes towards the sustainability of a local settlement will not be permitted except where the applicant demonstrates that:

- alternative provision of equivalent or better quality, that is accessible to that local community is available within the settlement or will be provided and made available prior to commencement of redevelopment; or
- there is no reasonable prospect of retention of the existing use as it is unviable as demonstrated by a viability assessment, and all reasonable efforts to secure suitable alternative business or community re-use or social enterprise have been made for a maximum of 18 months or a period agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to application submission.

Delivery

8.122 Delivery will be private sector led, or through a social enterprise model.

8.123 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EP15:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Range and type of facilities available in Rural Centres and Rural Settlements	Reduce the number and rate of local shops, facilities and services lost over time
Changes of use of Listed Assets	Retain Listed Assets and facilities of importance to the local community to prevent social exclusion

9 Housing

9.1 National planning policy supports the creation of sustainable balanced and mixed communities²⁰³. For South Somerset this means the provision of a high quality, sustainable, balanced housing market, with a mix of housing types, tenures and prices with the flexibility to meet the needs of the changing population²⁰⁴. Key issues include the provision of sustainably sited and constructed affordable housing and meeting the needs of the ageing population.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

9.2 Key evidence for the policies and approach to housing in this section of the Local Plan comes from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)²⁰⁵. Updated versions of the document will be used to inform the application of core policies over the plan period. The SHMA provides guidance on:

- The likely overall proportions of households requiring market and affordable housing;
- The likely profile of household types requiring market housing and;
- The size, type and tenure of affordable housing required.

Strategic Housing Sites

9.3 Strategically significant housing sites need to be identified and, where necessary safeguarded from the existing Local Plan with other locally important housing sites identified as 'Saved' allocations. A strategically significant site is defined as one that is critical to delivery of the Local Plan as the vision could not be fulfilled without it. Without such sites there would not be sufficient land in the relevant settlements needed to deliver the required levels of growth across the District. In addition strategic locations for development are proposed at the 'Yeovil Summerhouse Village' in the centre of the town and at the 'Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension' to the south of Yeovil, and they are both the subject of specific policy in the Yeovil section. A major allocation for development at Chard is also proposed in the Chard section and this incorporates the land areas of the former Chard saved Local Plan allocation KS/CHAR/1. Details of the specific strategic locations are listed below:

Yeovil – North of Thorne Lane (Brimsmore)

9.4 The Brimsmore site benefits from outline planning permission granted in August 2007. Reserved Matters, for part of the site only, were granted in November 2011. Development of this site will provide additional housing, recreation and community facilities within the north of Yeovil with a new link road provided from Western

203.[NPPF March 2012 (paragraph 50)]

204.[Shaping South Somerset, A Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026 (2008)]

205.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Markets Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009 (HSSA and HIP data 1996-2007)]

Avenue to Brimsmore. A new 'village' centre will provide community facilities for daily needs and provide access to a new primary school. The existing bus service in Larkhill Road can be extended to serve the site.

Yeovil – Lufton

9.5 The Lufton site benefits from outline planning permission granted in May 2007. The site lies close to existing employment opportunities on the west of Yeovil and also to the Bunford and Lufton strategic employment sites. A local centre will provide for residents' daily needs.

Yeovil – Lyde Road

9.6 The Lyde Road site was one of the strategic Key Sites in the adopted Local Plan²⁰⁶ and housing on this site is currently under construction. The scheme also provides an extension to the existing country park along the flood plain, a primary school site, play facilities including a multi use games area (MUGA) and linear park. The site remains important for delivering a mixture of housing types and tenure in Yeovil.

Crewkerne

9.7 Development of Crewkerne Key Site (Saved Local Plan Allocation KS/CREW/1) is part of the comprehensive regeneration of the town and the site will provide a wide package of land uses. This site has convenient links to town centre and will provide a link between the A30 (Yeovil Road) and A356 (Station Road). This site is also saved as a strategic employment site.

Policy HG1: Strategic Housing Site

The following housing allocation is strategically significant and will be safeguarded as a residential Key Site:

- **CLR Site, Crewkerne (saved South Somerset Local Plan 1991 - 2011 allocation KS/CREW/1)**

Delivery

9.8 Planning permission has been given for the Lufton and Thorne Lane sites and Crewkerne has been agreed in principle subject to the signing of a legal agreement²⁰⁷ (at the time of writing). The Council is committed to delivering this housing growth and they will be supported through the Development Management function. The Housing Monitoring Database will provide the mechanism for monitoring the supply of housing land within the District.

206.[South Somerset Local Plan, 1991 - 2011]

207.[Section 106 Agreement]

9.9 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HG1:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Infrastructure Providers.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Delivery of strategic housing growth on sites at Crewkerne	To deliver identified dwellings at Crewkerne

Previously Developed Land Target

9.10 Previously developed land (PDL), often called brownfield land, is the land that was developed but is now vacant or derelict, or currently in use but with known potential for redevelopment. The NPPF²⁰⁸ in paragraph 111 indicates that Local Authorities may continue to consider the case for setting locally appropriate targets for the use of PDL. It also encourages the effective use of land by re-using that which has been previously developed. It is considered that a locally set target is the effective means to secure re-use of land. The mechanism and rationale for the South Somerset Local Plan PDL target is set out below.

Determination of Previously Developed Land Target

9.11 The PDL target is determined on the basis of an assessment of existing commitments in Yeovil and the rest of the District given known information up to April 2011 and beyond to the point where existing planning consent are built out. These assessments have excluded garden plots from the definition of PDL in accordance with the guidance in the NPPF.²⁰⁹

9.12 The likely PDF delivery for the rest of the Plan period is estimated in the case of Yeovil where there is a clear indication of Greenfield development. This consists of the Sustainable Urban Extension (Greenfield), the intensification of existing key sites (Greenfield), the Summerhouse Village (in the heart of Yeovil) (PDL) and an estimate based on past windfall provision (assuming 100% PDL) and enhanced anticipated provision. These are set out in the Yeovil Chapter.

9.13 The likely PDL delivery for the rest of the Plan period and rest of the District is based on a simple projection of past PDL build rate. The results of these calculations are set out below.

208.[NPPF March 2012 Paragraph 111]

209.[NPPF March 2012]

Table 7 : PDL Estimation for the Plan Period

	PDL Dwellings (%)	Greenfield Dwellings (%)	Total Dwellings
Yeovil - Housing Completions & Commitments (April 2006-March 2011)	1,136 (31%)	2,579 (69%)	3,706
Yeovil - Residual Housing Requirement (April 2011 – March 2028)	2,312 (56%)	1,799 (44%)	4,111
Yeovil - Total	3,448 (44%)	4,369 (56%)	7,815
Rest of the District - Housing Completions & Commitments (April 2006-March 2011)	1,928 (40%)	2,890 (60%)	4,818
Rest of the District - Residual Housing Requirement (April 2011 – March 2028)	1,649 (40%)	2,471(60%)	4,118
Rest of the District – Total	3,575 (40%)	5,361(60%)	8,936
District Total	7,023 (42%)	9,730 (58%)	16,751

9.14 It is therefore anticipated that a target of new housing on PDL over the Plan period of 40% is challenging but justified because it is based significantly on known information and reasonable future estimations and the following factors:

- The predominately rural nature of the District;
- The impact of Yeovil Urban Extension;
- National change in the definition of garden plots from PDF to Greenfield over the whole Plan period;
- The impact of large Greenfield sites in the form of key sites from the previous local plan coming forward and lowering the PDL development in the immediate future;
- The planning case for Greenfield development at the key sites and the Urban Extension to delivering communities and community benefits;
- The expected greater difficulty to deliver PDL sites on time.

Policy HG2: The use of Previously Developed Land (PDL) for new housing development

South Somerset District Council will seek to provide a minimum of 40% of new dwellings on previously developed land over the period of the Local Plan. This will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report and reviewed as necessary.

Delivery

9.15 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HG2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Percentage of new dwellings built on PDL	40%

Affordable Housing

9.16 Meeting the housing needs of the district and tackling homelessness are key objectives in South Somerset District's Sustainable Community Strategy²¹⁰. "Focus Three: Homes, of the Council Plan"²¹¹ aims to minimise homelessness, enable additional homes to meet the needs of the district and identify a temporary stopping point for Gypsies and Travellers.

9.17 The definition of affordable housing can be found in National Planning Policy Guidance²¹² and includes social rented housing, affordable rented housing and intermediate housing.

9.18 The Taunton and South Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 (SHMA), provides key evidence for developing the approach to affordable housing policy in the Local Plan. The SHMA estimated that there is a net annual affordable housing need in South Somerset for 659 dwellings and particularly for 1 and 2 bedroom properties. The SHMA is supported by viability evidence in the form of the Strategic Housing Land Viability Assessment (2009) and Annex (2010) (SHLVA)²¹³.

9.19 The Local Plan approach seeks to maximise the provision of affordable housing across the District in urban and rural locations. Whilst seeking to ensure that this

210.[Shaping South Somerset A Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2029 (Strategic Objectives 26 and 27)]

211.[Our Plan - Your Future 2012 to 2015]

212.[NPPF March 2012, Annex 2: Glossary]

213.[Affordable Housing Threshold Viability Study Annex, May 2010]

happens, the Council accepts that there can be viability issues associated with the delivery of affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Policy Target

9.20 The SHMA suggests that the maximum District wide target, based on the evidence of need and viability is 35% of housing development, (on a nil subsidy basis). However, economic circumstances are likely to change over the lifetime of the Plan. In order to address the issue of the changing housing market the SHMA suggests adopting a 2 staged flexible approach to policy by having an overall District-wide target but implementing a process of repeat viability analysis to derive a viable (at the time of negotiation for planning permission) target.

9.21 The SHMA shows that wherever possible two thirds (67%) of affordable housing should be provided as social rented, normally this is through a Registered Provider (RP). The remaining third (33%) should be other forms of affordable housing such as intermediate rent, affordable rent, shared ownership or other affordable home ownership products. The involvement of the community and private sectors in providing rented, shared ownership or alternative intermediate schemes running along those more traditionally built by RPs are welcomed. They will of course need to comply with the same terms and conditions of management, maintenance and Scheme Development Standards (SDS) as those set out for affordable rented units by the Homes and Communities Agency or any successor organisation.

Affordable Housing Thresholds

9.22 In order to maximise the delivery of affordable housing the threshold should be set as low as possible so that as many sites as possible contribute towards the delivery of affordable housing, where it is viable to do so.

9.23 South Somerset has traditionally delivered a significant proportion of its new housing on small sites²¹⁴. Evidence shows that on supply and viability grounds a threshold of 6 dwellings would be acceptable in general terms across the District. Whilst this evidence also suggests that the corresponding area equivalent should be 0.1 ha, this is based upon 60 dwellings per hectare (dph)²¹⁵. However, the average net density across the District is approximately 28 dph²¹⁶ therefore a threshold of 0.2 ha has been applied reflecting a net dwelling density of 30 dph. This means that any development proposal for 6 dwellings or more (or on a site of 0.2 ha or more irrespective of the number of dwellings) will be expected to make on site affordable housing provision in accordance with Policy HG3.

9.24 In order to maximise affordable housing delivery there is an objective to include all residential development in the affordable housing contribution process, thereby capturing a significant proportion of developments that would otherwise be exempt, without threatening viability or reducing housing delivery. Viability evidence²¹⁷ shows

214.[9 dwellings or less]

215.[Affordable Housing Threshold Viability Study Annex May 2010]

216.[Housing Density discussion paper presented to Planning Management Board (PMB) on 7th June 2011]

that a 5% equivalent on site contribution in Yeovil and the Market Towns and 10% on site equivalent contribution in Rural Centres and Rural Settlements is viable in addition to the relevant standard Community Infrastructure Levy contribution. Affordable housing provision is currently outside CIL regulations and therefore the requirement to seek a financial contribution from small sites (1-5 dwellings) is under Section 106 as a commuted sum²¹⁸. Affordable housing is exempt in current regulations from the limit for pooling financial contributions from more than 5 sites.

Policy HG3: Provision of Affordable Housing

Planning permission for the erection of new dwellings will be permitted provided that, where it is viable to do so, the scheme provides affordable housing in accordance with the following:

Settlement	Affordable housing target	Threshold	OR Hectares (irrespective of number of dwellings)
Yeovil Urban Extension Yeovil Primary Market Towns Local Market Towns Rural Centres Rural Settlements*	35%	6 dwellings	0.2ha

- All affordable housing contributions shall enable the provision of the number of affordable dwellings without the need for public subsidy;
- Affordable housing will be provided on the application site except where there are good planning grounds that indicate that the provision of affordable housing would not be appropriate on that site. It is preferable in such circumstances that a financial or other contribution should be made towards the provision of affordable housing on another site in the settlement or nearby settlement;
- Where the above level of affordable housing provision renders a site unviable a reduction of provision will be accepted on the basis of an 'open book' submission in accordance with Policy SS6 and the Planning Obligations Protocol 2006.

* Threshold only applies to those developments considered to be acceptable by nature of their sustainability as permitted by Policy SS2.

217.[Small Sites Affordable Housing Financial Contributions Economic Viability Appraisal (2012) - builds upon the Affordable Housing Threshold Viability Study Annex May 2010]

218.[At January 2012 5% equates to £20 per sq m and 10% equates to £40 per sq m]

Policy HG4: Provision of Affordable Housing - Sites of 1-5 Dwellings

Small sites below the threshold for a full affordable housing contribution will be expected, where it is viable to do so, to pay a commuted sum equivalent to a percentage of affordable housing provision on site as set out below. This will be over and above the relevant standard CIL contribution.

Settlement	Percentage equivalent of affordable housing provision on site	Number of dwellings
Yeovil, Primary Market Towns and Local Market Towns	5%	1-5
Rural Centres and Rural Settlements	10%	1-5

Delivery

9.25 Affordable housing will be delivered within the framework of this Local Plan and the Council's Housing Strategy. Developer and RPs will be expected to deliver the affordable housing requirements through the planning process, with the Council securing appropriate affordable housing through legal agreements.

9.26 Affordable rent is the model which the Government expects RPs to deliver when receiving Homes and Communities Agency funding (HCA) for the period to 2015. Rents are set at 'up to 80%' of the market rent and so are usually higher than social rent, and subject to a different rent setting formula. National planning policy guidance²¹⁹ defines 'affordable rent' as separate from 'intermediate rent' but in reality it is an intermediate product.

9.27 The number type and tenure of affordable housing will be negotiated on a site by site basis informed by the SHMA, contemporary information from the housing register and taking into account local imbalances. The number of units to be provided should be delivered at nil public subsidy as there is no guarantee that any form of public funding will be available for development projects. Developers and landowners should therefore, in the first instance, calculate the cost of contributions to affordable housing on the basis that public subsidy will not be available²²⁰. Factors such as local need, market and site conditions, and site-specific development costs will be taken into account and an 'open-book' approach will be taken to negotiation where necessary.

219.[NPPF March 2012, Annex A: Glossary]

220.[The SHLVA assumes nil public subsidy]

9.28 The most up to date viability assessment will clearly present key evidence in any negotiation on site viability. To ensure that changing economic circumstances are taken into account the viability assessment/s will be updated approximately every 3 years.

9.29 All affordable housing produced through planning obligations is required to meet prevailing minimum space standards as determined by the Homes and Communities Agency (or any successor organisation) or any other standard subsequently adopted by the Council.

9.30 Government guidance²²¹ recognises that when seeking affordable housing contributions the provision should be made on the application site. This is in order to ensure that developments provide a reasonable mix and balance of housing types and sizes. However, there may be particular circumstances where the Council and developer agree, where it has been adequately justified, that a commutation scheme may be acceptable, either by way of off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision (this should be broadly of an equivalent value). Off site provision should be made in accordance with the settlement strategy set out in this document and arrangements must be made to secure the transfer of the site to a RP or other affordable housing provider at a value that ensures the delivery of affordable housing.

9.31 In cases where 'open book' valuations point to a reduced affordable housing provision on site publicly funded options may be used if available and if considered appropriate to restore affordable housing provision on site towards target levels (ie 35% of the total number of dwellings).

9.32 In terms of developability, and for ease of management, affordable housing should be dispersed throughout a development site although small clusters of affordable housing are acceptable in some circumstances.

9.33 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policies HG3 and HG4:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Registered Providers.

221.[NPPF para 50 March 2012]

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Affordable housing completions	Delivery of 35% of the total number of dwellings on developments of 6 dwellings and above (or 0.2 ha irrespective of the number of dwellings). The provision of additional affordable housing through commuted sums collected on site of 1-5 dwellings.
Dwelling size, type and tenure of affordable housing	The housing mix of new affordable housing should correspond with the requirements as set out in the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment or Successor document or alternatively a Local Housing Needs Assessment.

Market Housing

Dwelling size and type for market housing

9.34 As well as making provision for affordable housing it is also important that the right mix of market housing is provided based on current and future demographic trends, the needs of the market and the community, this is recognised in national guidance²²².

9.35 The SHMA identifies the profile for new market housing in South Somerset taking into account supply and demand for each type and size. The profile is based on examining the difference between the supply and demand for homes. It suggests that in terms of housing type in South Somerset there is a greater requirement for detached and semi detached houses than for terraced housing and flats. In terms of size there is a much smaller requirement for 1 bedroom properties compared with the other house sizes with three quarters of the requirement being for 2 and 3 bedroom properties.

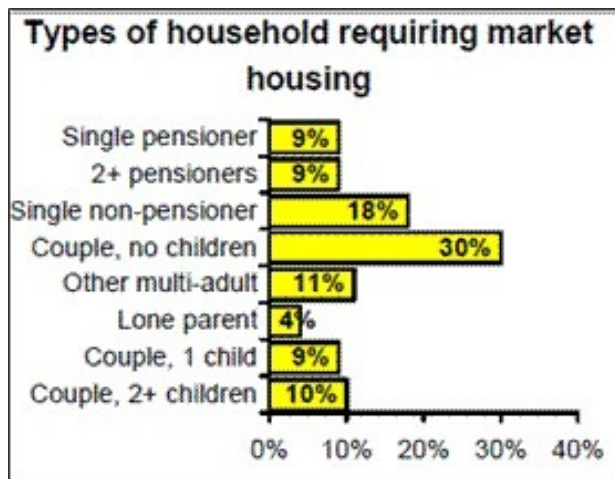
9.36 The over arching principle of creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities will particularly be applied when negotiating housing mix on large site applications (10 dwellings or more). The SHMA or successor documents will be used to inform the mix of housing to be provided as well as more local information relevant to any specific development proposals.

²²². [National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012]

Likely profile of household types requiring market housing

9.37 The SHMA identifies the types of household requiring market housing and developers should take this evidence into account when bringing proposals forward for market housing; the findings for South Somerset are set out below. It is noteworthy that 18% of that demand comes from pensioner households:

Figure 9 Households requiring market housing²²³



9.38 It should be noted that the planning system cannot address the tenure of market housing nor the households who occupy those homes but it can influence size and number of bedrooms and provide for a sustainable and mixed form of development. The NPPF promotes a mix of sizes, types and tenure to meet current and future demographic and market trends and the needs of different people.²²⁴

Policy HG5: Achieving a Mix of Market Housing

A range of market housing types and sizes should be provided across the district on large sites that can reasonably meet the market housing needs of the residents of South Somerset, based on the evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or successor documents. The mix should contribute to the provision of sustainable and balanced communities.

On small sites, housing types and sizes should be provided that, taken in the context of existing surrounding dwellings, contribute to that provision of sustainable, balanced communities.

223.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessment Executive Summary 2009]

224.[NPPF paragraph 50, March 2012]

Delivery

9.39 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HG5:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Dwelling size (beds) and type in new market housing developments	To deliver a range of market housing that meets the requirements set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or successor documents

Lifetime Homes, Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation

9.40 Evidence shows that the age of the population in the south west is going to increase significantly²²⁵ and preparing the District to cope with this change will be challenging. The SHMA²²⁶ shows that there are 70,800 households with support needs²²⁷ in South Somerset, 20,934 are older person only households, some 32% of all support needs households. In order to help address this need, specialist housing options will be required, this could include care homes, Extra Care housing²²⁸ and Continuing Care Retirement Communities²²⁹.

9.41 Opportunities to adapt the existing housing stock should be maximised. With regard to new build, the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes (December 2006) includes the consideration of Lifetime Homes Standards. It is mandatory to include all 16 design criteria of Lifetime Homes at CSH Level 6.

225.[Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, CLG, 2008]

226.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments Report 2: Analysis of household survey data for South Somerset District Council Final Report February 2009. Older people are defined in the document as persons of pensionable age (60 and over for females and 65 and over for males)]

227.[Support needs categories are frail elderly, medical condition, physical disability, learning difficulty, mental health problem, severe sensory disability and other.]

228.[See Glossary for definition]

229.[See Glossary for definition]

Policy HG6: Care Homes and Specialist Accommodation

Proposals for care homes or similar specialist accommodation that meets an identified local need will be supported where it is consistent with the Settlement Strategy. In exceptional circumstances, where development is proposed in a countryside location, the Council will require clear justification for its location. This will take into account the nature of specialist care required and demonstration that alternative sites are unsuitable and/or unavailable and the economic benefit of the proposal to the locality.

Where the District Council seek to negotiate affordable housing in respect of development that already meets a specified housing need, such as sheltered housing or Care Homes, the Council will take into account that such sites may be inappropriate for a mix of affordable housing and general market housing or that such sites have met, by their nature, affordable housing requirements.

Delivery

9.42 Care homes and other specialist accommodation that meets an identified local need will be delivered through the Development Management process. Where such a development is proposed in a countryside location, applicants will be expected to provide justification for that location in accordance with the policy.

9.43 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HG6:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Number of care homes or similar specialist accommodation approved to meet local need	To approve planning applications for care homes or similar specialist accommodation, where there is an identified local need

Park Homes

9.44 Park Homes provide housing for around 450 households in South Somerset. Mainly the residents that occupy them are within the 50 plus age bracket and have chosen to down size to this low maintenance housing option. They provide a valuable supply of low cost market accommodation and their maintenance, expansion and promotion can be supported where it accords with Policy HG5.

Empty Properties

9.45 Bringing empty properties back into use can make a contribution to the housing stock within South Somerset. The Council provides grant aid to bring empty properties back into occupational use, particularly in town centre locations, including flats over shops. Empty property grants are designed to assist in market town and town centre regeneration by bringing people back to live in properties, which are currently empty. Any (potential) private sector landlord can apply. Grants are available where there is a clear demonstrable need for accommodation. If a property is empty it is exempt from council tax for 6 months thereafter the owner must pay 90% of the council tax bill. Within town centres bringing such homes back into use can assist in delivering an active night time economy through establishing a residential element within the area.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

9.46 The accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers should be considered along with the housing needs of the whole community. Government guidance makes it clear that local authorities should consider the needs of the travelling community through the local plan process²³⁰. A countywide assessment of the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation has been undertaken²³¹. This identifies that in South Somerset there is a need for 18 residential pitches between 2010 and 2020, 10 between 2010 and 2015 and 8 between 2015 and 2020. As well as the need for residential pitches there is also a need to provide transit capacity for 10 caravans within South Somerset by 2015 and for 4 additional Showmen's yards across Somerset²³². The Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment will need to be updated in order to establish need post 2020.

9.47 Advice on the design and layout of Gypsy and Traveller sites can be found in Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide²³³. The guidance explains that although there is not one ideal site size, past experience of residents and managers suggest that a maximum of 15 pitches provides a comfortable environment within which to live and is easy to manage. Smaller sites of 3 and 4 pitches can also work well, particularly when designed to accommodate an extended family.

9.48 Experience in South Somerset suggests that applicants favour small family owned sites. The Council will be seeking to establish such small pitch sites on any publicly provided sites within the District. There may be instances where it is appropriate to have a mixed residential and employment use, this is particularly the case for Showmen's yards.

230.[Planning policy for traveller sites, CLG, March 2012]

231.[Somerset Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, Final Edit January 2011 (GTAA)]

232.[At the time of writing South Somerset has 2 showmen's yards. This figure is based on 1 interview therefore the GTAA recommends that further consultation takes place between Local Planning Authorities and the Showmen's Guild.]

233.[Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites, Good Practice Guide, CLG, May 2008]

9.49 Planning policy for traveller sites²³⁴ defines 'gypsies and travellers' and 'travelling showpeople' these definitions or any successor definitions will be applied for planning purposes.

Policy HG7: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

The accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be met by ensuring that they are accommodated in sustainable locations where essential services are available. The following criteria will guide the location of sites:

- **Significantly contaminated land should be avoided;**
- **Development should not result in an adverse impact on internationally and nationally recognised designations (for example: Natura 2000 sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty);**
- **The development should not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area;**
- **The site is reasonably well related to schools and other community facilities;**
- **The health and safety of occupants and visitors will not be at risk through unsafe access to sites, noise pollution or unacceptable flood risk;**
- **There should be adequate space for on site parking, servicing and turning of vehicles;**
- **The option of mixed residential and business use on sites will be considered where appropriate.**

The number of pitches provided should be appropriate to the size of the site and availability of infrastructure, services and facilities in accordance with the general principles set out in the settlement hierarchy.

Delivery

9.50 Much of the need for residential pitches in South Somerset to 2015 has already been met through private planning applications. In order to address outstanding need and to provide a policy context for a site allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) a development management policy will be required to address site identification and assessment should planning applications not come forward to meet established need.

9.51 The criteria set out in this policy will guide the allocation of sites in any future DPD and any planning applications that may come forward either before the DPD is prepared or in addition to sites allocated. Whilst it is recognised that Travelling Showpeople sites require more storage and maintenance space for their equipment,

234.[CLG, March 2012]

the same criteria will need to be met by all groups regarding accommodation provision.

9.52 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HG7:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Traveller Communities.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Net additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet identified need	To deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches by 2020, 10 between 2010 and 2015 and 8 between 2015 and 2020; • Capacity for 10 transit caravans by 2015.

Replacement dwellings and extensions in the countryside

9.53 National Planning Policy Guidance seeks to deliver a wide choice of homes and widen opportunities for ownership to create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities²³⁵. The replacement of small country dwellings with more grandiose houses can radically change the character of a site to one of a more suburban nature and also reduce the supply of the smaller rural dwellings. To help protect the character of South Somerset's countryside, extensions and replacements of dwellings need to be controlled in terms of scale and design. The erection of replacement dwellings and extensions to existing houses can individually, and cumulatively over a period of years, have an adverse impact both on the character of individual properties and the surrounding countryside.

9.54 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has identified that the greatest difference in the District between supply and demand for housing, is for smaller 1 and 2 bedroom properties. This policy aims to give protection to traditional smaller properties in the countryside, therefore helping to meet the objective of providing appropriate housing for the needs of the population.

9.55 In determining what constitutes "disproportionate scale", account will be taken of the extent to which the dwelling has been previously extended, or could be extended under Permitted Development rights²³⁶ and the character of the area. For the purposes of this policy 'original' is defined as the dwelling as it was built or as it existed as of the 1st July 1948.

235.[NPPF, March 2012 para 50]

236.[The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended, makes provision for a certain scale of development without need for planning permission subject to certain criteria]

Policy HG8: Replacement dwellings in the countryside

The replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted where:

- The scale of the replacement would not result in an unacceptably large increase in the height or size of the original dwelling; and
- The development is compatible with and sympathetic in scale, design, materials, layout and siting to the character and setting of adjoining buildings, and to the landscape character of the location; and
- The replacement is on a one for one basis and evidence is provided that the use of the existing dwelling has not been abandoned.

Extensions to existing dwellings in the countryside will be permitted where the extension does not result in a dwelling that is disproportionate to the scale of the original dwelling and the size and design of the extension are appropriate to the landscape character of the location.

Delivery

9.56 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HG8:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Number of applications approved contrary to Policy HG8. Review through the development management process.	Increased retention of traditional small properties in the countryside. The housing mix of new development should correspond to the requirements as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment or successor documents.

Agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings in the countryside

9.57 In many instances it will be possible for workers in agricultural and land-based occupations to live in a town or village near to their business location. However, occasionally the nature of agricultural and other rural businesses make it essential for someone to live on, or in close proximity to the business. National Planning Policy Guidance allows for this²³⁷.

9.58 Such dwellings should be commensurate with the needs of the holding and not the person requiring the accommodation. Unusually large dwellings in relation to the needs of the unit, or expensive construction in relation to the income it can sustain, should not be permitted. As such it is considered that an indicative guideline to the floor area of proposed dwellings of approximately 175m² would adequately serve most holdings (based upon national statistics, which show the average floor area of a detached 3 bedroom property is 143m²).

9.59 The potential for abuse with the submission of applications for 'replacement dwellings' on agricultural holdings exists, therefore in order to minimise that potential, the history of the holding will be examined to establish the recent pattern of land use and whether any dwellings or buildings suitable for conversion or occupation have been recently sold separately from the farmland.

Policy HG9: Housing for Agricultural and related workers

A development proposal in the countryside to meet the accommodation needs of a full-time worker in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian activities or other business where a rural location is essential should demonstrate that:

- **There is a clearly established existing functional need;**
- **The enterprise is economically viable;**
- **Provision on-site (or in the immediate vicinity) is necessary for the operation of the business;**
- **No suitable accommodation exists (or could be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity;**
- **It does not involve replacing a dwelling disposed of recently as general market housing;**
- **The dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the operational needs of the business;**
- **The siting and landscaping of the new dwelling minimises the impact upon the local landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside and ensures no adverse impact upon the integrity of nationally and internationally designated sites, such as AONB.**

Where a new dwelling is permitted, this will be the subject of a condition ensuring the occupation will be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working in the locality in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian activities or other rural business (or a surviving partner of such a person, and any resident dependants).

237.[NPPF, March 2012. Paragraph 55]

9.60 In order to retain the property for its intended use, a restrictive condition will be included on any such planning approval limiting its occupation to a person solely or mainly, or last working in agriculture, forestry or a rural enterprise. It is accepted that there will be circumstances where these dwellings are no longer required for the purpose for which they were originally intended. However, to ensure the planning concession for this type of dwelling is not abused, any application to remove a restrictive occupancy condition for any dwelling in the countryside will need to demonstrate that the need for which the dwelling was approved originally, no longer exists. An applicant would be expected to appropriately market the dwelling for a reasonable period at a realistic market price for an agricultural tied dwelling [normally a discount of at least 35% against open market price] to establish whether it could meet the existing functional needs of another local farm or rural business. Evidence demonstrating how this requirement has been investigated will need to be included to support any application to vary or remove a restrictive occupancy condition.

Policy HG10: Removal of Agricultural and other occupancy conditions

Planning permission for the removal of a restrictive occupancy condition for an agricultural, forestry or other similar worker on a dwelling will only be given where it can be evidentially shown:

- **That there is no longer a continued need for the property on the holding or for the business;**
- **There is no long term need for a dwelling with restricted occupancy to serve local need in the locality;**
- **The property has been marketed locally for an appropriate period (minimum 18 months) at an appropriate price and evidence of marketing is demonstrated.**

Delivery

9.61 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policies HG9 and HG10:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Review through the development management process	Retention and provision of specialist accommodation where it is identified to meet the needs of the local community

10 Transport and Accessibility

10.1 South Somerset is a predominantly rural district with subsequent diverse travel patterns meaning the car will remain an essential mode of travel. However, considerable benefits can be delivered by enabling travel by other means than the car. These include improved health through increased walking and cycling, reductions in carbon emissions, enabling social inclusion and reducing the impact of congestion. The latter is particularly relevant for Yeovil and Chard in light of highway capacity issues arising from the projected growth.

10.2 Other measures such as home working (with the significant increases in broadband speed predicted by 2015)²³⁸, encouraging the use of low emission, alternative fuel, electric vehicles, demand responsive public transport (using alternative fuel/hybrid/electric vehicles) and car share schemes should therefore be considered on a scale and degree appropriate to the site proposed for development.

10.3 Whilst new technologies will, in time, play an important part in reducing CO₂, they are unlikely to be sufficient in isolation and will not address health (particularly in tackling obesity) and congestion issues. Additional dwellings in and around Yeovil will have an adverse effect on the highway network. Consequently substantial investment in measures to promote sustainable travel will be needed.

10.4 There is potential to achieve this in Yeovil particularly in the Urban Extension Development. District wide achieving modal shift (see paragraph 10.8 for a definition) will be more challenging, although new technologies, improved design, and greater awareness of choice through more robust travel planning will reduce the need to travel and achieve an increase in more sustainable modes where travel is necessary. A reasonable aim for the modal shift policy in Chard and Yeovil would therefore be to reduce the number of cars being used for short journeys to local shops and facilities, the town centre and travelling to work and maintain car use at current levels in our Market Towns, Rural Centres and Rural Settlements. For the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension the aim is to ensure that at least 50% of travel is by sustainable means.

10.5 There has been a significant growth in rail travel in recent years. Infrequent and unsuitable timings for commuting on the Bristol to Weymouth and London (Paddington) to Penzance Line and the actual location of the stations on these and the London (Waterloo) to Exeter line means that achieving modal shift to rail for short journeys will be challenging to achieve. However, there are opportunities to improve sustainable links to rail stations and in particular the Yeovil stations, especially if more appropriate arrival and departure times are provided at Yeovil Pen Mill²³⁹.

10.6 Modern rail freight can be effective at reducing HGV traffic on the strategic road network and there should be a general presumption for the promotion of the rail

238.[‘Connecting Somerset and Devon Programme’- SCC May 2011]

239.[The Heart of Wessex Line - Case for Service Improvement - Image Rail November 2011]

network for future freight use. However facilities for rail transfer are needed at or near the point of origin of the goods and at the destination. Subsequently the locations of stations in South Somerset are not always conducive to modern freight operation as the likely consequence would be additional lorry journeys on rural roads. Rail freight is therefore much better targeted where suitable rail freight hubs can easily be constructed to minimise the need for road transport or enable easy road/rail interchange. The District Council will encourage and promote the development of both passenger rail facilities and rail freight hubs if a suitable business case is presented.

10.7 The needs of people with disabilities should be considered for all modes of transport.

A Generic District wide Modal Shift Policy

Low Carbon Travel

10.8 These district wide measures are aimed at reducing single car occupancy and the need to travel or encouraging the use of more sustainable travel or alternative fuels where travel is necessary. They include:

a. Providing Good Information

Travel Information Packs²⁴⁰ detailing:

- Car share schemes - benefits and how to join;
- Public transport information - timetable and maps of nearest bus routes and interchanges (including interchange with rail) and details connecting local bus, and longer distance travel such as express coach and trains;
- Maps showing local footpaths and cycle ways, bus stops, and facilities – health, education, shops, employment, churches, recreation & leisure etc;
- Details of cycle training, cycle/equipment sales & repairs, cycle clubs, health benefits etc;
- Information on the health benefits of walking;
- Benefits and advice on working from home.

The requirement to provide travel information packs should apply to all residential and employment developments.

b. Encouraging Electric Car Use

Encouraging the use of electric cars through the provision of a 16 amp charging point (or greater capacity as deemed appropriate) adjacent to each parking space and within the curtilage of the site and also for each garage within the development.

240.[Planning for Public Transport in Developments (The Institute of Highways and Transportation) cites lack of information as one of the major barriers to public transport use. Promoting lower carbon transport choices is one of the 3 key themes in the DfT's - Low carbon Transport a Greener Future (July 2009)]

The requirement to provide charging points for electric cars should apply to all residential and employment developments

c. Incentivising Sustainable Travel

A Green Travel Voucher for use on sustainable transport²⁴¹ to an agreed amount per dwelling to be given to each set of occupants at the time of first occupation and repeated for a maximum of 3 tenures per unit up to 5 years following the first occupation of that unit. Similarly for employment sites a Green Travel Voucher should be provided for each employee²⁴² at commencement of employment. In respect of public transport the vouchers should be non-operator specific and should be available for exchange for passes for one year's travel on local bus routes, including Demand Responsive Routes within a 10 mile radius of site, but within Somerset (to encourage interchange).

The requirement to provide Green Travel Vouchers should apply to all residential and employment developments.

d. Home Working

Encouragement to work from home applying to all residential development through improved design commensurate with the type of dwelling and by enabling easier access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). These should include:

- Designed in specific work area (e.g. space to desk, pc, phone);
- Broadband connections

e. Public Transport

Improved public transport connections should be made by developments in Market Towns, Rural Centres and Rural Settlements increasing accessibility through enhancements to either existing conventional bus routes, existing Demand Responsive Transport Schemes or the provision of new services and new bus stops, bus timetables and bus shelters. The developer to provide funding commensurate with the size of the site that enables good on-going connections with the public transport network and where the scale of new residential development or employment sites would have an impact on existing public transport planning obligations will be sought.

f. Travel Planning

Travel Planning measures over and above those measures listed above but commensurate with the site and in relation to land use site thresholds set out in the tables in the Travel Plan Policy TA4.

241. [May include bus, train travel or cycle purchase]

242. [Part-time staff and temporary staff with a contract of employment should receive such a voucher on a pro-rata basis, although provision would not be expected for casual staff]

g. Timing of Provision

Ensuring that sustainable travel habits are established from the start. This means that sustainable transport measures need to be in place and operational concurrent with first occupancy.

Policy TA1: Low Carbon Travel

All new residential and employment developments in South Somerset should:

- i. Provide Travel Information Packs;**
- ii. Provide for the charging of electric vehicles with an external charging point of at least 16 amps adjacent to each parking space and within the curtilage of the site. Such charging points should also be provided for garages within the development;**
- iii. Provide a Green Travel Voucher for each occupier/employee valid for 1 year for use on sustainable transport;**
- iv. Include Travel Plans (commensurate with Policy TA4);**
- v. Ensure that sustainable transport measures are in place and operational concurrent with first occupancy.**

Additionally, developments of all new residential dwellings should:

- vi. Enable ease of working from home by providing a designed in specific work area with broadband connections.**

Where the scale of new residential development or employment sites would have an impact on existing public transport planning obligations will be sought to:

- vii. Deliver improved public transport connections increasing accessibility through enhancements to either existing conventional bus routes or existing Demand Responsive Transport schemes or the provision of new services and new bus stops, bus timetables and bus shelters. These should be commensurate with the scale of the development that enable good on-going connections with the public transport network. The developer will be required to enter into a planning obligation in accordance with Policy SS6 to ensure provision of such facilities, which shall be provided prior to first occupation of the new development.**

Delivery

10.9 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy TA1:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators²⁴³	Target
Providing Travel Information Packs	100% of applications with a Travel Information Pack
The provision of charging for electric vehicles	100% of developments to have 1 x 16 amp charging point per parking space
The provision of Green Travel Vouchers	The number of Green Travel Vouchers issued should equate to the number occupiers/employees. Take up should be in the region of 20%
The provision of Travel Plans (commensurate with Policy TA4)	100% delivery of appropriate Travel Plans with relevant planning applications
Ensuring that sustainable transport measures are in place and operational concurrent with first occupancy	100% sustainable transport measures are in place and operational concurrent with first occupancy
Enabling home working in residential dwellings	100% of new dwellings providing a designed in specific work area with Broadband connections
Improvements to public transport	100% delivery of appropriate public transport improvements with relevant planning applications

243.[Monitoring indicators are provided for the plan period only]

Rail

10.10 To further encourage modal shift the Council should, promote and protect land to enable the development of both passenger rail facilities and rail freight hubs where a suitable business case for such provision has been presented. The prerequisite for Council support would be:

- A business case (to meet 'Network Rail' or successor body criteria);
- An active promoter;
- Evidence of financial wherewithal and a reasonable prospect of infrastructure implementation in the foreseeable future.

Until such prerequisites are met the Council will not seek to protect specific land for passenger or freight use owing to lack of evidence and potential blight.

Policy TA2: Rail

The Council shall encourage, promote and protect the development of land for both passenger rail facilities and rail freight hubs where there is robust evidence in support of developing infrastructure to widen transport choice.

Delivery

10.11 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy TA2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Rail Bodies.

Monitoring Indicators ²⁴⁴	Target
The promotion of passenger facilities and rail freight hubs.	Delivery of appropriate rail facility once a business case has been proven

Measures to Encourage Sustainable travel at Chard and Yeovil

10.12 In addition to the generic policy TA1 the more urban nature of Chard and Yeovil means that further measures should be in place to offer greater choice to use more sustainable transport modes and reduce the need and desire to use the car. These measures are commensurate with the Somerset County Council's (SCC) transport policies²⁴⁵ and include:

²⁴⁴. [Monitoring indicators are provided for the plan period only]

a. Cycling and walking

The encouragement of cycling and walking by

- Providing cycle and pedestrian routes to link the new development with new/existing routes by utilising lightly trafficked or off-road links for pedestrians and cyclists. These routes should permeate the site to ensure ease of access around the development. Developments should seek to protect and improve existing cycling and pedestrian routes to facilitate site links to the wider network;
- Providing facilities for cycle parking within the new development commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the County Wide Parking Strategy as set out in Policy TA6.

The Chard Regeneration Framework Strategic Transport Assessment (CRFSTA) considers using a network of lightly trafficked and off-road links for pedestrians and cyclists between residential areas, the town centre and employment sites. If new infrastructure is carefully targeted on the flatter parts of the town, such as the A358 (northern approach), to link residential areas with the main trip attractors, further increases in levels of cycling should be achievable.²⁴⁶

b. Public Transport (Frequency and standard)

Direct contributions commensurate with the scale of the development to either enhance existing public transport services (frequency and standard) or in the case of larger developments consider new routes or for larger employment sites consider bespoke works buses or demand responsive works buses. Additionally it will be necessary to generate greater passenger numbers on local bus services. This can be accomplished by delivering more frequent and higher quality bus services that serve the town centre, employment health and education establishments through Quality Bus Partnerships (QBP).

The QBPs should include improvements to the routes themselves through bus priority measures, real time passenger Information at stops and improved accessibility at stops. Similarly the QBPs should provide real time passenger information at health, employment, leisure and shopping facilities, and through tickets (for other routes/operators including train) using enhanced Smartcard technologies.

In respect of Chard improvements to public transport are sought by either improving the existing bus services and/or establishing a Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) to deliver more frequent and higher quality bus services. Such services should provide for the doubling of frequency as recommended in the CRFSTA, and serve the town centre, employment health and education establishments.

Contributions to QBPs should apply to all residential and employment developments. The measures to deliver QBPs need to be costed and are dependent on the SCCs transport implementation plans emerging from the

245.[SCCs Transport Policies - schedule of policies March 2011, Chapter 3 Sustainable Transport Policies SUS2 to SUS10 inclusive]

246.[Supports SCC's Cycling Policy SUS4 – SCC schedule of Policies – Transport Policies March 2011]

County Council's FTP and also in the case of Yeovil the YTSR2. Subject to those outcomes, the business case can then be made and development contributions sought through CIL.

c. Public Transport (Bus Stops)

Promoting improvements in public transport by providing bus stops, dependent on the scale of the development and existing provision, where a bus route exists or can be provided within a reasonable distance.

Where the scale of new residential developments and employment sites would have an impact on existing traffic and these sites are located within a reasonable distance of an existing bus route (or where the scale of such developments means that a route can realistically be diverted or introduced) then a bus stop should be provided. Each stop should include timetable information on inbound routes for residential developments and outbound routes for employment sites or Town Centre developments a bus shelter should also be provided with a commuted sum to the relevant Town or Parish Council to provide for on-going maintenance & cleaning.

A reasonable distance for the provision of bus stops would be:

- Within 400 metres of the development²⁴⁷
- Or in the case of larger developments where the provision of a new bus service is justified within 400 metres of each dwelling or unit in the development.

However care should be taken to ensure bus routes are not distorted to satisfy this criterion as direct and simple bus routes are more important than walking distances a little more than 400 metres for a few passengers.

d. Sustainable Transport Interchange

Supporting the integration of transport modes to ensure ease of interchange (e.g. walking and cycle links to public transport) and reliability of interchange between various bus, rail and express coach routes, enabled by 'through ticketing' or 'off-bus ticket' purchase (to reduce load times) with Smartcard technologies, real time information etc.

This can be achieved by development contributions to sustainable transport interchange within the towns. The prime interchange sites at Yeovil are currently the Borough and the Bus Station, and the existing bus stops at Boden Street and the Guildhall in Chard lend themselves to the delivery of a sustainable transport interchange. References to these interchanges are shown on the Proposals Maps (See Chard and Yeovil Insert Maps) reflecting aspirations to provide such an interchange. All residential and employment developments should contribute to the improvements of transport interchange. The measures to improve transport interchanges are dependent on the SCCs transport implementation

247.[Planning for Public Transport in Developments - The Institution of Highways and Transportation March 1999 - page 98, Paragraph 6.20]

plans emerging from the County Council's Future Transport Plan (FTP)²⁴⁸ and also in the case of Yeovil the YTSR2.

e. Personalised Travel Planning

Achieve greater modal shift through Personalised Travel Planning specifically targeted at individuals (residents and employees) to ensure complete awareness of travel choices and respective benefits. This would include a personal consultation to assess the individual's travel needs and opportunities. This should be carried out on all new residential and employment developments in Chard and Yeovil. It requires a specific Personalised Travel Plan Coordinator to deliver the service and the resource funded through CIL, thereby ensuring that any such contribution would be commensurate with the scale of development for each town.

f. Car Sharing

Where the scale of new employment sites would have an impact on traffic, car sharing should be further encouraged through the provision of preferential and quality spaces in car parks for car sharers at employment sites.

Policy TA3: Sustainable Travel at Chard and Yeovil

In addition to the generic policies that support modal shift throughout the District all new residential and employment developments in Chard and Yeovil should:

- i. Provide facilities for cycle parking within the new development commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the SCC cycle parking strategy.**
- ii. Contribute to sustainable transport interchange within the town.**
- iii. Contribute to either:**
 - a) The improvement of existing public transport services or**
 - b) New services and the establishment of a Quality Bus Partnership (or enhancement of an existing QBP) to ensure frequent and high quality routes serving the development and developers would be required to provide funding for the general provision of public transport.**
- iv. Contribute to funding the resource needed for Personalised Travel Planning**

248.[Somerset County Council's Future Transport Plan 2011 - 2026]

Where the scale of new residential developments and employment sites would have an impact on existing traffic these sites should:

v. Provide cycling and pedestrian routes both to and permeating the site and protect and improve existing cycling and pedestrian routes where necessary to facilitate site links to the wider network.

vi. Provide bus stops, bus shelters and timetable information, dependent on the scale of the development, existing bus stop provision and where a bus route either exists or can be provided as set out below:

a) Within 400 metres of the development

b) Or in larger developments where the provision of a new bus service is justified within 400 metres of each dwelling or unit in the development.

vii. Where the scale of new employment sites would have an impact on traffic preferential and quality spaces in car parks for car sharers should be provided.

Delivery

10.13 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy TA3:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Provision of cycle parking facilities	The number of cycle parking spaces to be commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the SCC cycle parking strategy
The improvement of existing public transport services or the establishment of new services and Quality Bus Partnerships	Increase in patronage on existing routes and the number of new bus services delivered
Contribute to funding the resource needed for Personalised Travel Planning	Establishment of a Personal Travel Planner

Provision of cycling and pedestrian routes	Increased mileage of cycling and pedestrian routes
Provision of bus stops, bus shelters and timetable information	Increased number of bus stops within identified catchments
Provision of preferential and quality spaces in car parks for car sharers	Increase on the number of car sharers/car sharing schemes

Travel Plans

10.14 SCC has produced 'Travel Planning Guidance'²⁴⁹ and this has been offered to Local Planning Authorities as a basis for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as part of the Council's development plan. Key elements of this guidance have been taken on board in producing the Travel Plans Policy TA4.

10.15 To reinforce the measures in Policies TA1 and TA2, dependent on the scale of the development, one of 3 types of Travel Plan (a Measures-only Travel Statement, or a Travel Plan Statement or a Full Travel Plan) should be in place to encourage modal shift, deliver subsequent health benefits from more active travel modes and reduce the impact of congestion.

10.16 The differences between these types of Travel Plan are fully explained in SCCs 'Travel Planning Guidance' and illustrated within this plan by reference to policy TA4, which indicates the different contents required by each type and the thresholds where respective types will apply.

10.17 Policy TA4 is very close to the County Council Travel Plan Guidance, although there are 3 key differences in the interpretation of thresholds and measures. These are:

1. The SCC guidance refers to employee numbers and gives an indicative Gross Floor Area (GFA) equivalent²⁵⁰. Predicting the number of employees for a site is extremely difficult. In respect of employment sites Policy TA4 therefore considers the type of Travel Plan required in relation to the Gross Floor Area (GFA) based on indicative employment densities²⁵¹.
2. The SCC guidance refers to a parking management strategy and this includes measures such as charging, Controlled Parking Zones and Traffic Regulation Orders²⁵². This is too prescriptive as there is a need to ensure flexibility of the respective site and such measures should be determined through negotiation as and when pertinent to that site.

249.[SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - adopted as formal technical guidance Nov 2011 (Thresholds for Travel Plans in Somerset page15 and Table 1.2)]

250.[SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - TVS 6 chapter 3 Tables 3.2 and 3.3 pages 39,40 & 41]

251.[Employment Densities: A Full Guide. Final Report, English Partnerships and the RDAs (2001)]

252.[SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - Table 2.2 page 17 'Measures expected in a travel plan document' a. 'Measures only Travel Statements']

3. SCCs Travel Planning guidance promotes safeguarding measures with bonds and ESCROW accounts²⁵³. An ESCROW account is where a deposit, usually in this instance money, or possibly a deed, stock, or written instrument is put into the custody of a third party and is retained until the agreed actions have been delivered. SSDC has concerns regarding the additional cost implications for developers and the consequent impact on the viability of a development. An s106 agreement is in itself legally binding and any safeguarding through bonds or ESCROWS should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and should only be in respect of financial default by a developer.

10.18 SSDC expects concurrence with their interpretation of these thresholds and measures.

10.19 Travel Plans for specific sites shouldn't be seen in isolation. There is greater potential for the delivery of the more significant measures through joint working with other Travel Plans, both new and existing. Travel Plan Forums should therefore be set up to include key stakeholders (developers, public transport, occupiers, employers, residents etc. as well as SSDC and SCC).

10.20 In respect of speculative developments including outline planning applications a Framework or Umbrella Travel²⁵⁴ Plan to cover the entire development site in accordance with SCCs 'Travel Planning Guidance' should be provided. This also applies to the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension for which additional specific measures are included in Policy YV6.

Policy TA4: Travel Plans

i. Travel Plans will be required commensurate with the scale of the development. The 3 broad types of Travel Plan are:

1. **Measures-only Travel Statements;**
2. **Travel Plan Statements;**
3. **Full Travel Plans.**

The content of the Travel Plan document and the measures expected therein are indicated in Table 1 below. The measures should ensure that modal shift is maximised for developments with good levels of accessibility.

ii. The thresholds for development size determining which type of Travel Plan should be in place are shown in Table 2 below.

253.[SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - Policy TVS 14, page 62]

254.[SCC Transport Policies Travel Plan Guidance - Chapter 3 Action Plans for speculative development sites, page 41]

Table 1

Content of Travel Plan Document:	Travel Plan Type		
	Measures-only Travel Statement	Travel Plan Statement	Full Travel Plan
Site Audit Report		Yes (Residential developments only)	Yes
Action Plan	Yes Table of Measures (See below)	Yes On-site measures	Yes
		To be supplemented with Tables of Measures for each phase at reserved matters stage and post-occupation	
Monitoring Strategy and Modal share Targets		Yes (Excluding residential developments)	Yes
		Completed modal share targets table attached to travel plan	
SCCs iOn Travel registration and completion prior to travel plan approval		Yes	Yes
Site Specific Travel Information Leaflet	Yes	Yes	Yes
Smarter Travel Policy Dossier	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel Website	Yes	Yes	Yes
Details of Parking levels/locations for every mode of transport	Yes	Yes	Yes
Travel Plan Coordinator		Yes	Yes
Promotional Activity		Yes	Yes
Travel Plan Forum to work with neighbouring sites		Yes	Yes

Table 2

Land Use Type	Lower Development Size threshold (Sq m Gross Floor Area unless indicated)	Type of Travel Plan Required
A1 –food	>100	Measures only Travel Statement
	>500	Travel Plan Statement
	>800	Full Travel Plan
A1 – Non-food	>100	Measures only Travel Statement
	>500	Travel Plan Statement
	>1500	Full Travel Plan
B1	>500	Measures only Travel Statement
	>1000	Travel Plan Statement
	>1500	Full Travel Plan
B8	>1000	Measures only Travel Statement
	>2000	Travel Plan Statement
	>5000	Full Travel Plan
C3	> 10 dwellings	Measures only Travel Statement
	> 30 dwellings (or where car parking allocation is fewer than 1 space per dwelling for any dwelling in the development)	Travel Plan Statement
	> 50 dwellings	Full Travel Plan

iii. All development within the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension will be required to meet the Framework Travel Plan criteria and be commensurate with Policy YV6.

iv. Any development site with 25 or more car parking spaces or more than 1000 sq m of floor area could be required to produce a travel plan as a general principle. This is used as a basic threshold to negotiate and determine a requirement for a travel plan document for land uses not listed above.

Delivery

10.21 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy TA4:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Town and Parish Councils;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Delivery of Travel Plans	100% delivery of appropriate travel plans with relevant planning applications

Transport Impacts of Development

10.22 All new development is required to address its own transport implications. Larger schemes are required to prepare Transport Assessments²⁵⁵ and, where required, Travel Plans to illustrate how the amount of trips generated will be minimized, how the impacts will be accommodated, and how accessibility to the site by all modes of transport will be achieved.

10.23 The Strategic Road Network is formed by Motorways and Trunk Roads, National Primary and County Routes in Somerset. National Primary Routes and County Routes accord with the routes identified in the local Highway Authority's (Somerset County Council) route hierarchy. In order to prevent the unnecessary interruption of traffic flow and to prevent increase of highway hazard, the formation of new direct accesses onto these roads will not be permitted. Exceptions will only be made where the type of development is such that it requires a high order (of route hierarchy) route location, such as roadside service stations or freight transfer facilities.

10.24 Access to development proposed that will connect to rural roads carrying relatively high speed traffic should be designed according to the needs of drivers and other users to enter safely into such traffic. The advice and guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges will be appropriate in these environments, mostly rural locations. This is likely to be the case for developments related to farm diversification or for tourist attractions specific to rural locations.

10.25 Development proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing transport infrastructure where this is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms²⁵⁶.

255.[In compliance with the requirements set out in DfT circular 02/2007 (Guidance on Transport Assessment)]

256.[In compliance with the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework]

10.26 Contributions may also be required to meet the management and maintenance of services and facilities provided. The appropriate range and level of contributions will be assessed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account strategic infrastructure requirements and using standard charges where appropriate.

10.27 The nature and scale of any planning obligations sought will be related to the form of development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area. In determining nature and scale, specific site conditions and other material considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination may be taken into account. The timing of provision of infrastructure and facilities will be carefully considered in order to ensure that appropriate provision is married against occupation of the development.

Policy TA5: Transport Impact of New Development

All new development shall be required to address its own transport implications and shall be designed to maximise the potential for sustainable transport through:

- i. Safeguarding existing and new transport infrastructure, which is important to an efficient and sustainable transport network from development that would prejudice their transport use**
- ii. Securing inclusive, safe and convenient access on foot, cycle, and by public and private transport that addresses the needs of all;**
- iii. Ensuring that the expected nature and volume of traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development would not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area and would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local or strategic road networks in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated;**
- iv. Ensuring that proposals, which specifically require a location with direct access to the strategic road network due to the volumes and quality of traffic generated, are well located on these networks. There is a presumption against direct access from the strategic road network. Exemptions will only be made where the type of development is such that it requires a high order (of route hierarchy) route location, such as roadside service stations or freight transfer facilities;**
- v. Assessing the transport impact of development and ensuring delivery of the necessary transport infrastructure for the proposal and requiring larger schemes to prepare Transport Assessments.**
- vi. Requiring car parking and vehicle servicing at levels appropriate to the development and its location, in accordance with the approved/ adopted standards identified in Policy TA6.**

Delivery

10.28 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy TA5:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Delivery of appropriate access for new development	100% endorsement of planning applications by Highways Authority (Subject to mitigating circumstances)

Parking Standards

10.29 Owning a car is an essential part of daily life for many people in South Somerset. This is shown by higher than average car ownership levels in South Somerset where just 16% of households do not have access to a car, compared to a national average of 27%²⁵⁷. The rural nature of South Somerset must be considered in setting appropriate levels of parking provision in new development.

10.30 The amount of parking provided in new developments should strike an appropriate balance that considers various issues. Enough car parking needs to be provided to help support the local economy and allow people to make necessary trips, particularly for those whose only realistic travel option is the car. Too much car parking can encourage car use and lead to congestion and increased CO₂ emissions, and can waste land and result in poorly designed places; whilst too little parking can lead to parking in inappropriate places, making the streets more cluttered.

10.31 Other key issues in setting parking standards include car ownership; the accessibility of the development; the type, mix and use of development; and the overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.²⁵⁸

10.32 Cycling is supported for many important reasons, including improving health and well being, minimising CO₂ emissions, and reducing traffic congestion. A fundamental part of encouraging people to cycle is by providing high quality, secure and convenient cycle parking in new developments. Somerset County Council's (SCC) Travel Planning guidance (November 2011) includes further detail on this. The County Council's Future Transport Plan cycling strategy is yet to be concluded and its policies and proposals will be taken on board where they accord with policies in this document.

257. [Source Census 2001 data]

258. [NPPF March 2012 (Para. 39 page 11)]

10.33 SCC has adopted the Countywide Parking Strategy (March 2012), which includes parking standards for cars, cycles and motorcycles for both residential and non-residential development. It is logical and appropriate to apply the Highway Authority's car parking standards in South Somerset and the District Council has endorsed their use.

10.34 The adopted Countywide Parking Strategy will therefore be applied when considering parking provision for new developments in South Somerset. The County Council has clarified that urban extensions (such as Yeovil and Chard) should adopt the parking standards of the adjacent settlement.

Policy TA6: Parking Standards

Parking provision in new development should be design-led and based upon site characteristics, location and accessibility. The parking standards within the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy will be applied in South Somerset.

Delivery

10.35 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy TA6:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Somerset County Council.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Development complying with adopted SCC Parking Strategy car, cycle and motorcycle parking standards	100% achievement (Subject to mitigating Circumstances)

11 Health and Well Being

11.1 Open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities can make a major contribution to ensuring that villages and towns are places in which people will choose to live. They play a key role in enhancing the health and sense of well-being of the local community.

11.2 A main role of the planning system in association with development is to ensure there are sufficient open space and outdoor play space, formal sports, cultural and community facilities and that they are in the right places. But there is also a need to ensure they are of a quality to meet local standards, attractive to users, meet expectations, and are well managed and maintained. By undertaking local assessments of need and audits of provision, it is intended that the following objectives are set for the District:

- Networks of accessible, quality open spaces, sport and recreation facilities, in both urban and rural areas, which meet the needs of residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and are economically and environmentally sustainable;
- An appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision;
- Clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and land owners in relation to the requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space and sport and recreation provision

11.3 Design of the built environment should encourage physical activity and enable the development of on site facilities/opportunities for exercise/relaxation/play.

11.4 A definition of Open Space includes informal recreation open space, formal parks and gardens, country parks, natural open space, woodlands and allotments. Outdoor Playing Space is defined as pitches, equipped play areas and youth facilities. Greater access to open space, parks, allotments, playing fields and provision for children and young people is clearly beneficial to the health and well being of a local community. Networks of green spaces and corridors provide opportunities for recreation, walking and cycling.

11.5 In addition to the more obvious formal sports and cultural facilities, community halls also provide opportunities for social and recreation provision. Community halls are multipurpose buildings provided by the community for the community. They provide space and facilities for a range of local activities and increasingly for community services. It is therefore important that community halls are maintained and enhanced and where new communities are being formed or expanded through new development, there is an intention to ensure adequate provision of community hall space.

Provision of Open Space, Outdoor Playing Space and Sports, Cultural and Community Facilities in New Development

Local Standards and Planning Obligations

11.6 Government guidance ²⁵⁹ requires local authorities to have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, to identify deficiencies in facilities and set appropriate local standards in order to justify planning obligations. Once this is completed, local standards can be applied and planning obligations used to secure additional provision or enhancement where required.

11.7 The quantitative, qualitative, accessibility and catchment standards are set out in the Council's needs assessment. Further advice on the Council's design standards for open space is found in the Landscape Design Guide Addendum and the Play Policy produced by the Council.²⁶⁰

11.8 In accordance with Policy SS6, these standards are used to assess the level of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities that would be needed to meet the reasonable requirements of a development's future occupants, providing that the obligation meets the three statutory tests in paragraph 204 of the NPPF²⁶¹.

11.9 The provision of 'dual use' open space may be considered but only where open access can be secured and where the District Council is satisfied that long term open access can be achieved.

11.10 The viability of the proposed development will also need to be taken into account in accordance with Policy SS6. In the case of an enabling development, or where the development is unable to deliver all the policy requirements for reasons of viability, an open book approach will be required in line with the Policy and the Council's adopted Protocol²⁶².

11.11 In calculating the amount of space required, the type of development and make-up of individual housing schemes will need to be taken into account in order to determine likely household size. It is accepted that not all types of development generate the same demand for open space, outdoor playing space, and sport and recreational facilities, such as single bedroom accommodation, rest homes, nursing homes, sheltered accommodation, special needs housing.

259. [(NPPF March 2012 Paragraph 73)]

260. [SSDC Play Policy and Strategy (2007-2012) and Open Space Strategy (2011-2015)]

261. [(NPPF March 2012 Paragraph 204)]

262. [SSDC Planning Obligations Protocol 2006]

Site Specific Mitigation

11.12 Contributions for site specific mitigations will be sought through a S106 agreement. This will be necessary where it has been proven that the new development increases local needs. The provision of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities may be required on-site or may form part of a contribution towards off-site provision of either new or improved facilities. The requirement for an off-site contribution may arise because of the following:

- The size, layout and topography of the development;
- There may be other opportunities within the appropriate distance of the site which could better meet the needs of the development.

11.13 Provisions for future maintenance can be sought towards such provision to ensure the continued availability of the open space, equipped play space, youth facilities and playing pitches and changing rooms. Planning Obligations can include maintenance payments towards the provision of facilities that are predominately for the benefit of the users of the associated development.

11.14 The provision of on-site (or contribution towards off-site) play and youth facilities, playing pitches and changing facilities, public open space and landscaped areas will require developers to agree the future management of this space with the Council. This will normally be by adoption by the Local Authority, Town or Parish Council or through a management company set up by the developer. The Council will need to be satisfied that any management company is suitably financed. The former will require an initial landscape maintenance plan to be implemented prior to adoption, with a commuted sum paid to the local planning authority to cover maintenance for the 10 years following adoption. The latter will require a formal management plan, including timescale for adoption and maintenance schedule, to be agreed as part of a Section 106 planning obligation.

11.15 In areas of particular sensitivity, it is recognised that there is a role for open space provision in alleviating pressure on existing natural areas. This is particularly the case at Langport/Huish Episcopi, where more open space provision for activities such as dog walking can alleviate pressures on Somerset Moors and Levels sites, given their close proximity.

Strategic Contributions

11.16 The contribution towards strategic facilities, which, by their nature cannot be provided within the appropriate distance threshold of every development and have a large effective catchment area and high distance threshold, will be sought through the collection of a Community Infrastructure Levy. This will be in accordance with the strategic priorities as identified by the Council when collecting and assigning CIL.

Policy HW1: Provision of open space, outdoor playing space, sports, cultural and community facilities in new development

Where new housing development generates a need for additional open space, outdoor playing space, local and strategic sports, cultural and community facilities, provision/contributions will be made in accordance with the standards set out in South Somerset District Council's published adopted assessments and needs strategies. The need for additional open space may be required due to the proximity to sensitive (internationally-designated) conservation areas, so as to alleviate potential development-related pressure on those sites.

Housing provision consisting of sheltered housing, rest and nursing homes, special needs housing will be exempt from these standards with exception of informal recreational open space.

Developments of one bedroom dwellings will not be required to provide equipped play provision and youth facilities but will be required to provide for other open space and outdoor playing space.

Dependent upon the size and layout of the development, the provision of open space, outdoor playing space, local and strategic sports, cultural and community facilities, may be required on site or may form part of contribution towards off site provision of either new or improved facilities. In such circumstances off-site provision towards local facilities should be made in a location, which adequately services the new development and a planning obligation may be used to secure this.

Provision should be made for future maintenance to ensure the continued availability of the facilities.

Green Corridors, Public Rights of Way, Civic Spaces, Cemeteries, Private Open Space and Community Allotments are other aspects of Green Infrastructure, which need to be given full consideration.

Open space is defined as informal recreational open space, formal parks and gardens, country parks, natural open space and woodlands.

Outdoor Playing Space is defined as playing pitches, equipped play areas and youth facilities.

Delivery

11.17 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HW1:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Levels of open space, outdoor playing space, local and strategic sports, and cultural and community facilities	Achievement of open space standards with new development
CIL funding towards strategic infrastructure	CIL funding identified towards strategic open spaces infrastructure in accord with Council priorities

Sports Zone

11.18 The Yeovil Sports Zone is the working title for the South Somerset District Council project aiming to provide residents with first class sport and recreation facilities, which will meet both present and projected future needs as the population grows. It will widen the range of opportunities for people of all ages to participate in leisure, stimulate healthy lifestyles, increase participation in active sport, enable more young people to achieve their potential in sport and create a sub-regional sports venue within the District and focuses on 4 key strategic areas

- Supporting community sport;
- Developing active communities;
- Enhancing facility provision;
- Raising the profile of Sport and Active Leisure.

11.19 The project fits within the local and regional strategic context. It will play a major role in addressing key policies and aspirations through provision of increased opportunities for improving health of residents and educational programmes for health promotion, active participation in sport and recreation for all ages from disadvantaged groups to high performance athletes. By raising the profile of sports provision within the District, the facility will enable local, county and sub-regional level competitions to be staged in the town, increasing the profile of Yeovil as a sporting destination as desired by the business community leaders behind the Yeovil Vision.

11.20 The intention is to seek an appropriate location within or adjoining Yeovil to provide specialist strategic facilities that will meet the needs of those living in the area of Yeovil and throughout the District. It will take sports and leisure facilities in South Somerset to the next level and help Yeovil to become a destination of choice for

leisure, shopping and entertainment, supporting the Council's economic regeneration agenda. In addition, provision of this facility will be in conformity with Yeovil's perceived role and function within the regional context. The site will need to be accessible from all modes of transport from both within Yeovil itself and from other destinations within the District and sub-region, which will then enable this to be used as a venue for hosting local and sub-regional events.

11.21 Consideration of the different strategic options to deliver the new provision in Yeovil has identified that the lowest capital cost, most affordable, most sustainable, and appropriate solution to meet these deficiencies would be through the adoption of a single site approach, being £1m per year cheaper to operate than through the adoption of a multi-site dispersed approach.

11.22 Although various locations have previously been appraised as potential sites to accommodate the Sports Zone, no decision on a location has been taken by the Council. At this stage sites are being considered both for the indoor provision alone and at larger sites, which could accommodate additional outdoor facilities in close proximity to the indoor provision as well. Various factors will inevitably affect the suitability of sites for both indoor and outdoor provision with topography, and the need for flat land, a key consideration and the chosen site also needs to be accessible to residents in Yeovil by walking, cycling and public transport as well as accessible to residents within the whole District and sub-region.

11.23 For the built facilities, a sequential approach to the location of development is required, starting with the re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land within the urban area, then on the edge of the urban area and finally outside the urban area. There is a presumption in favour of the redevelopment of previously developed land and greenfield land should only be considered for development where there are no previously developed sites available for development of the required size in a suitable location.

Policy HW2: Sports Zone

In order to increase the range of opportunities for people of all ages to participate in indoor leisure, promote healthier lifestyles, allow for improved potential in sport and create a sub regional sports venue, the Council and its partners will seek a suitable location for the provision of a sports Zone of at least 1.5ha. In identifying a suitable location the following locational factors will be taken into consideration;-

- **Preference will be given to a site within the existing town of Yeovil;**
- **If there is no suitable, available and viable site available within the town which can accommodate the development, the site selection should follow a sequential approach with preference given to the location of the Sports Zone on the edge of Yeovil close to public transport links and other sustainable transport modes.**

Delivery

11.24 This is primarily a development management policy and therefore delivery will be through the individual consideration of development proposals and their need to provide additional facilities. Detailed requirements would be achieved through S106 contributions and community infrastructure levy.

11.25 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HW2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Delivery of the Sport Zone	Submission of a planning application for the scheme and subsequent completion

Existing Outdoor Sports, Play and Youth Provision

11.26 Existing outdoor sports, play and youth provision will be protected from inappropriate future development which would result in the loss of these facilities. This includes:

- LAPs - Local Areas for Play;
- LEAPs - Locally Equipped Areas for Play;
- NEAPs - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play;
- MUGAs - Multi Use Games Areas;
- 'Destination playgrounds';
- Youth facilities, including skate parks, hard surfaced courts, areas for ball play (including multi use games areas – MUGAs, rebound walls, basketball courts), skate parks, BMX tracks and youth shelters

11.27 There may however be instances, where there is a proven oversupply of equipped play areas and youth facilities, or where they are not appropriately located. In this instance it may be desirable to remove the facilities and not relocate them.

11.28 NPPF para 74²⁶³ provides a wider context for the Policy HW3 below and includes playing fields and recreational buildings.

263.[NPPF March 2012 Para 74]

Policy HW3: Protection of Play Spaces and Youth Provision

Development which would result in the loss of equipped play areas and youth facilities will only be permitted where;

- There is a partial development of a site and the remaining site will be retained at its current provision and improved;
- Alternative provision of equivalent community benefit of a similar nature which is accessible and made available locally within the same catchment;
- There is a proven oversupply of equipped play areas and youth facilities, or they are not appropriately located.

Delivery

11.29 It is anticipated that the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy is relevant and will contribute to the protection and enhancement of play spaces and youth facilities and therefore support delivery of the policy objectives.

11.30 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy HW3:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Retention of existing outdoor sports, play and youth provision through development management process and S106 agreement	Retention of existing outdoor sports, play and youth provision (unless mitigating circumstances identified in accord with para 74 of NPPF March 2012)

12 Environmental Quality

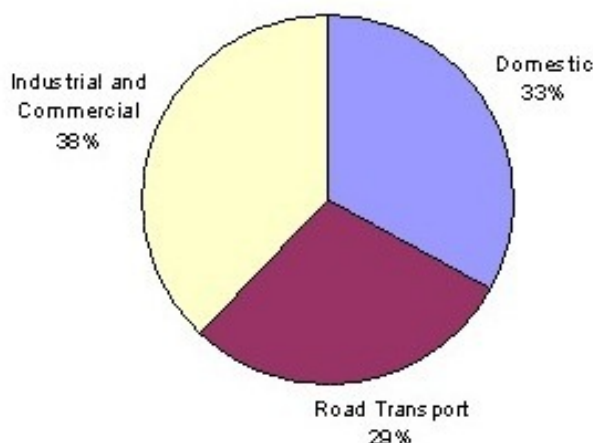
12.1 Maintaining and enhancing environmental quality in South Somerset will require the Council to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, design quality of new development, protection and enhancement of the historic environment, landscape and biodiversity, development of green infrastructure and pollution control.

Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

12.2 The release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from human activity is changing the world's climate, and national Government policy clearly supports taking action to tackle this issue. This 'action' involves mitigation through reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and adaptation by ensuring development can cope with the predicted impacts of climate change and helping biodiversity to adapt to a changing climate. Taking action to address climate change will be much less costly than not taking action over the medium to long term.²⁶⁴

12.3 Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are 7.2 tonnes per person in South Somerset, compared to the neighbouring Districts of Taunton Deane (5.8 tonnes), Sedgemoor (6.8 tonnes) and Mendip (7.7 tonnes), and slightly less than the county average of 8.3 tonnes per person. Industrial and commercial sources produce the highest amount of CO₂ emissions per person (2.7 tonnes) in South Somerset, followed by domestic sources (2.4 tonnes) and road transport (2.1 tonnes) with similar proportions.²⁶⁵

Figure 10: Source of CO₂ emissions in South Somerset



264. [Stern Review on the economics of climate change, HM Treasury, 2006]

265. [2009 UK Carbon Dioxide emissions within the scope of influence of Local Authorities]

12.4 The Climate Change Act 2008 requires an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (upon 1990 levels) - a key element of the Local Plan is to ensure South Somerset makes a full and appropriate response to climate change. South Somerset's Sustainable Community Strategy sets out more ambitious targets though a 'year on year reduction in the District's carbon footprint towards a carbon neutral economy in 2030.' The Council have also adopted (March 2010) a 'Carbon reduction and climate change adaptation strategy', which focuses on mitigation and adaptation measures that can be achieved through the Council's operations, including requiring more sustainable buildings through the spatial planning process.

12.5 The Local Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives support a low carbon economy, and promote greater self containment by focussing most new development at the main settlements in the District, with a balance of employment and housing provision, ensuring communities have good access to shops and community services and facilities. This should ensure the need to travel is minimised, especially by car, and therefore limit the growth of CO₂ emissions from travel.

12.6 Even if the world were to go 'zero carbon' straight away, there is likely to be 30-40 years of climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions already released.²⁶⁶ This makes it vitally important to ensure that new development is adapted to cope with the effects of climate change that will happen regardless of measures taken now to reduce emissions of CO₂.

12.7 By the 2050s, climate change in South Somerset is likely to mean more extreme weather events including:²⁶⁷

- Summers being 2-3 degrees centigrade hotter, and 20-40% drier;
- Winters being 2-3 degrees warmer, and 10-20% wetter.

12.8 Changes to the summer climate may have some positives in South Somerset from increased tourist numbers, which would benefit the local economy. But hotter, drier summers could damage wildlife in the district and reduce levels of water supply. Wetter winters could cause more flooding and greater risk to property and people.

Renewable and low carbon energy

12.9 This term describes energy supply from 'renewable' sources such as from the wind, the fall of water, the sun, and biomass; and 'low carbon energy' that can help to reduce CO₂ emissions e.g. Combined Heat and Power, air/ground source heat pumps and energy-from-waste. National policy strongly supports renewable and low carbon energy, with the UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009) setting a target of 15% of energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2020 – a challenging target that will require a seven-fold increase from 2008 levels. The Government's current 'feed in tariff' provides a financial incentive for renewable and low carbon electricity generation, e.g. solar photovoltaic panels, wind turbines.

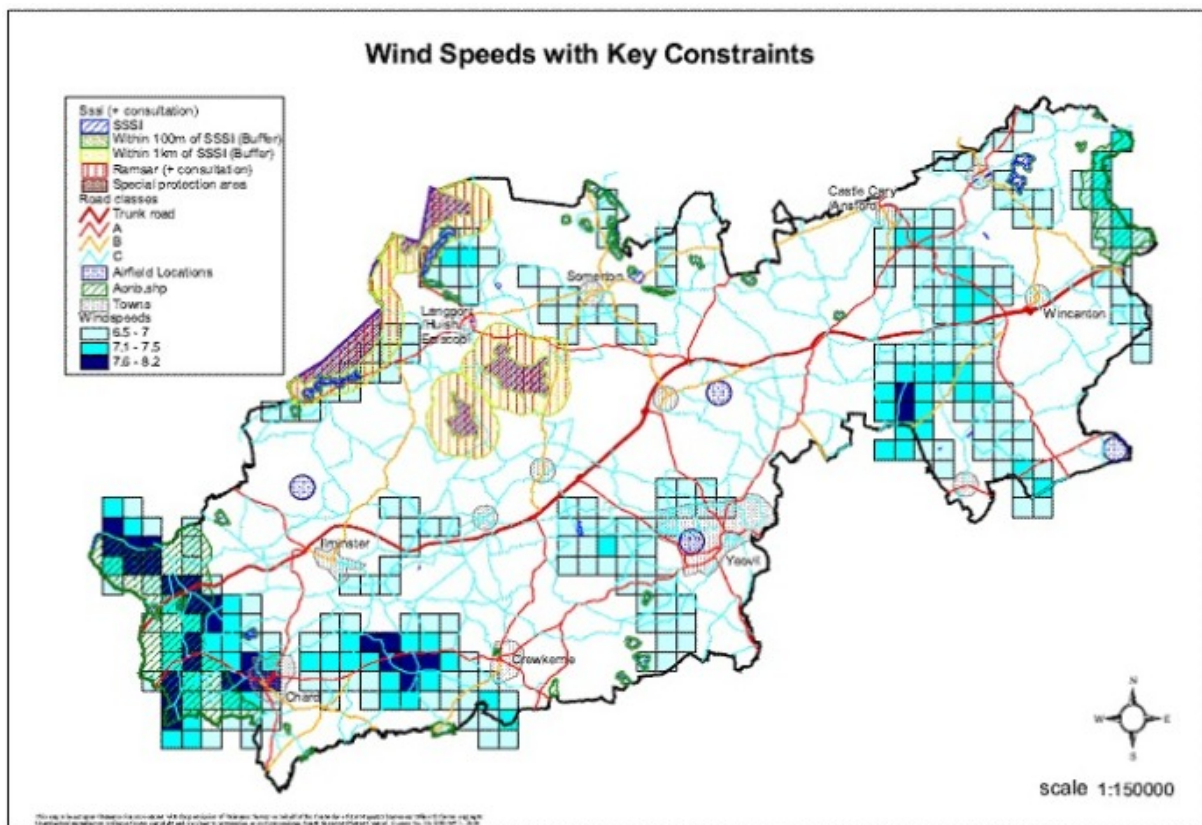
266.[Adapting to climate change: UK Climate Projections, Defra, 2009]

267.[Central estimate under medium emissions scenario, UK Climate Projections 2009]

12.10 Policy EQ1 fully supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy, consistent with national policy. However, in some cases there may be unacceptable impacts that could preclude renewable and low carbon energy development, such as large wind turbines on bird flight paths in or around the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar, and impact upon protected landscapes such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB),²⁶⁸ or designated heritage assets. The Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Somerset Levels and Moors makes clear that wind farm developments are likely to be unacceptable within 800 metres of the internationally designated sites.

12.11 The following map highlights areas with wind speeds in South Somerset of at least 6.5 metres per second at 40m above ground level (usually considered the minimum economic wind speed) along with the key constraints: AONBs, SPA/Ramsar, SSSIs, and airfields. Applying these key constraints along with wind speeds identifies the potential for wind turbines in the district subject to more detailed site specific issues including practical access to sites, landowner willingness, political will, and economic distance to the nearest appropriate grid connection.

Figure 11: Wind speeds (metres per second) with key constraints²⁶⁹



268.[For example, a study has been produced to assess renewable energy potential in the Blackdown Hills AONB: 'Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills AONB (2010)']

269.[NB the scale of this map applies at A3 size]

12.12 In terms of other potential renewable and low carbon energy resources in South Somerset, there is good potential to develop solar photovoltaic panels as the District has relatively high levels of sunshine duration compared to the rest of the UK, with around 1,500 sunshine hours per year. There are also numerous weirs and mills that generate electricity as part of the South Somerset Hydropower Group - albeit at a relatively small-scale - with further potential sites yet to be developed. Wood chip, wood pellet or logs can be used to generate heat in biomass boilers, stoves and combined heat and power systems, heating individual buildings or to power district heat systems. As wood is a bulky material, it is most viable to use a local supply. Farmers tend to use Grade 3 agricultural land (which covers most of South Somerset) for energy crops such as Miscanthus or willow, and there are also areas of unmanaged woodland and coppice that could yield wood fuel.

Sustainable construction and minimising carbon dioxide emissions in new development

12.13 New development has the potential to increase CO₂ emissions through the construction of buildings and their subsequent use. Therefore, it is vitally important to use high standards of sustainable construction. National policy, to be delivered through gradual improvements to Building Regulations, is for new homes to be 'zero carbon' from the year 2016, and non-domestic buildings to achieve this standard from 2019. In order to meet these stringent requirements to reduce CO₂ emissions, there will be a need for on-site measures through energy efficiency and renewable and low carbon energy (e.g. solar PV, wind, Combined Heat and Power); and Allowable Solutions for those emissions that cannot be mitigated on-site. The Government have not yet formally announced what will constitute an Allowable Solution, but they could include:

- Improving the energy performance of existing buildings;
- Exporting low or zero carbon heat to other buildings;
- Investment in off-site low or zero carbon technology;
- Energy efficient appliances fitted into homes.

12.14 The Council will actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings in particular, in line with national policy. National sustainable construction standards are set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes (measured from level 1-6), and by the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) (resulting in either a 'pass', 'good', 'very good', 'excellent' or 'outstanding') for non-domestic buildings. Although energy is a key aspect, these sustainable construction standards cover a range of other issues such as water, waste, health and well being, and ecology. Although 'water stress' (potential lack of water supply) has not been identified as a particular issue for South Somerset, climate change and population growth will require more efficient use of water through measures such as rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling and water efficient appliances.

12.15 National policy²⁷⁰ allows local requirements for a building's sustainability to be set, as long as it is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopts nationally described standards. Given that the cost of meeting the energy requirements in the Building Regulations represent a significant proportion of the total cost of achieving Code for Sustainable Homes standards,²⁷¹ it is proposed that the Code levels equivalent to Building Regulations are required. The extra costs and technical possibility of achieving these standards is an important consideration, and they will not be required if the applicant has robust evidence to indicate that the particular circumstances of the proposal make it not feasible or viable to deliver the development as a whole. The large-scale development proposed at Yeovil and Chard in particular offer opportunities to incorporate decentralised and renewable technologies such as Combined Heat and Power. The Government proposals to change the definition of 'zero carbon' to the equivalent of energy level 5, means that Policy EQ1 specifies level 5 rather than level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Flood Risk

12.16 As described above, climate change is likely to mean wetter winters and more extreme weather events in South Somerset and therefore potentially more frequent flooding. National planning policy²⁷² states that a sequential, risk-based approach should be applied to avoid development in areas of flood risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change.

12.17 South Somerset's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) highlights areas at risk of flooding from rivers (see relevant Proposals Map Inset maps), and identifies flooding incidents that have occurred in the past from rivers, surface water, sewer flooding, and groundwater. Some areas in and around Yeovil are within Flood Zone 3 (high flood risk), as are parts of many of the Market Towns and Rural Centres. Langport/Huish Episcopi and Ilchester are settlements where flood risk is a particular issue.

12.18 The aim of the Sequential Test set out in the NPPF²⁷³ is to steer new development to areas at the lowest probability of flooding i.e. Flood Zone 1. Proposals in Flood Zones 2 or 3 will need to consider alternative sites that have a lower risk of flooding. In the first instance the area to which the 'search' for reasonably available alternative sites will apply will be District-wide, but there will be cases where this area of search will be smaller. Some examples of justifying a reduced 'area of search' include it potentially being impractical to suggest that extensions of existing business premises, such as farm holdings, could be developed elsewhere in the District; and where there is a need for new development that has a defined catchment area such as a school, hospital, or doctor's surgery.

12.19 Surface water flooding is also an issue at many of the main settlements in the District, particularly Yeovil. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are encouraged

270.[NPPF March 2012]

271.[Cost of building to the Code for Sustainable Homes - updated cost review, CLG, August 2011]

272.[NPPF March 2012]

273.[NPPF March 2012]

as they mimic natural drainage by reducing the amount and rate of water flow following rainfall, therefore reducing the risk of surface water flooding. SuDS have several other benefits such as removing pollutants from urban run-off at source, ensuring that new developments do not increase flood risk downstream, and combining water management with green space which can increase amenity, recreation and biodiversity value (known as green infrastructure – see Policy EQ5). The SFRA states that there is a relatively high potential for SuDS in South Somerset due to the permeable underlying geology.

12.20 The Environment Agency produce Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) to identify strategic flood risk management policies in river catchments over the long term (50-100 years). The River Parrett CFMP covers most of South Somerset, and states that in the future the main problems in Yeovil may be related to higher intensity summer storms that overwhelm the local sewers and smaller streams.

Biodiversity and climate change

12.21 The distribution of habitats and species will be affected by the changing climate, so it is important to ensure that this issue is addressed when considering proposals for new development. An example of delivering this is through the creation of new natural habitats around existing habitats, and linking such areas together, wherever possible. Policies EQ4: Biodiversity and EQ5: Green Infrastructure contain further detail on the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including the creation of such wildlife 'corridors'.

12.22 It is important to note that some measures to combat climate change can potentially have adverse effects on biodiversity. Bats, all of which are afforded protection at a European level, are vulnerable to mortality from incorrectly located wind turbines, such as those along flight lines, close to feeding areas or roost sites. It is expected that any proposal for wind turbines, including micro turbines, will be submitted with full survey data and assessment including for effects to populations of bats in order to ensure that the 'favourable conservation status' of European protected species is maintained.

Policy EQ1 Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

The Council will support proposals for new development where they have demonstrated how climate change mitigation and adaptation will be delivered, through inclusion of the following measures (as appropriate).

- New development will ensure that carbon dioxide emissions are minimised through energy efficiency measures, renewable and low carbon energy, and where necessary Allowable Solutions;
- The following sustainable construction standards will be required, unless it is proven not to be feasible or viable:
 - Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 from 2013;
 - Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 from 2016;
 - BREEAM rating of 'excellent' for non-domestic buildings.
- Development of renewable and low carbon energy generation will be encouraged and permitted, providing there are no significant adverse impacts upon residential and visual amenity, landscape character, designated heritage assets, and biodiversity. The presence of several airfields in South Somerset will mean the impacts of wind turbines upon electromagnetic interference and aviation radar will be a particular consideration;
- Developers must demonstrate that proposed wind turbines do not pose a risk to bat populations, and will not pose a barrier risk to migratory bird species, in particular to birds moving from key sites such as the Severn Estuary;
- Development will be directed away from medium and high flood risk areas through using South Somerset's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as the basis for applying the Sequential Test. The area of search to which the Sequential Test will apply will be South Somerset wide, unless adequately justified otherwise in relation to the circumstances of the proposal;
- Where appropriate, the Exception Test can be applied if it is not possible to pass the Sequential Test, if this is consistent with wider sustainability objectives;
- Development should reduce and manage the impact of flood risk by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems, and through appropriate layout, design, and choice of materials;
- Climate change should be considered in the design of new development, incorporating measures such as solar orientation, maximising natural shade and cooling, water efficiency and flood resilience;
- Susceptibility to climate change should be taken into account on all proposals to develop sites with biodiversity interest.

Delivery

12.23 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ1:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Environment Agency;
- Ministry of Defence.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Renewable energy generation installed by capacity and type	Increase in renewable energy generation installed capacity
Per capita reduction in CO ₂ emissions in South Somerset	Reduce per capita CO ₂ emissions in South Somerset
CO ₂ emissions in South Somerset	Reduce CO ₂ emissions in South Somerset
Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds	No planning permissions should be granted where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome

Design/General Development

12.24 Paragraphs 56-68 of NPPF²⁷⁴ set a clear national policy framework for promoting good design as a key element to achieving sustainable development and emphasises the indivisible link between good design and good planning.

12.25 It is self evident that all development in all locations should be designed to the highest standard. This is essential if we are to create functional, attractive places that people want to live in, work in and visit. Well designed buildings and places can contribute to the quality of life, increase economic vitality, achieve high environmental standards, reduce emissions and deliver a high quality public realm.

12.26 This principle is carried throughout the Local Plan, which sets the objective to develop new homes, infrastructure and all other land uses to the highest possible design standards. Future specific design guidance will come forward as supplementary planning documents or other appropriate planning documents.

12.27 Policy EQ2 aims to ensure that development contributes to social, economic and environmental sustainability and makes a positive difference to people's lives to help to provide homes, jobs, and better opportunities for everyone. At the same time, it aims to protect and enhance the natural environment, and conserve the countryside and open spaces that are important to everyone.

274.[NPPF March 2012 Paragraphs 56-68]

12.28 All development will be expected to achieve high quality architectural and urban design standards, creating places that are attractive, durable and function well. All developments will be expected to achieve high environmental standards and levels of sustainability. All buildings should be designed to be fit for purpose, and adaptable in their use to suit changing occupier needs over time.

12.29 Development proposals also need to demonstrate a commitment to designing out crime through the creation of safe environments (both private and public) that benefit from natural surveillance, well overlooked streets and open spaces, appropriate lighting and other security measures.

12.30 South Somerset has published a range of Development Management advice guides to give guidance on how design should complement local architectural traditions and how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated within the context of the existing built heritage. These and others produced during the plan period should be taken into account when considering development proposals. The Council also apply specific guidance from Government and Government sponsored organisations. The Landscape Character Assessment, and Town and Village Design Statements provide a more detailed local context for the evaluation and consideration of development proposals and should be taken into account where they have been produced. The Development Management advice will be reviewed and revised during the lifetime of the Development Plan and the most up to date material should be referred to.

12.31 To comply with climate change objectives the design of new development will change significantly over the coming years. Sustainable construction principles will affect layout, orientation of buildings, materials, design for minimum waste and conservation of water resources as well as fundamental appearance. It will be a challenge for the development industry and the local planning authority to both respect local context and distinctiveness and embrace new design principles. The Council will look to radical design solutions, where appropriate, to compliment and evolve local distinctiveness and recognise that respect for local context does not preclude contrasting modern design that can work with local context to provide a desirable and high quality living environment which can present the evolving historical and architectural story.

12.32 All development should ensure the most efficient use of land through the size and arrangement of plots, further determining the position, orientation, proportion, scale, height, massing and density of buildings as well as the treatment of the spaces around and between the buildings themselves. Consideration of the relationship to adjoining buildings and landscape features will be encouraged. Density should be justified as part of the overall design concept of development proposals and will also include appropriate consideration of private amenity spaces. Particular regard should be had for levels of housing demand and need and availability of sites, infrastructure and service availability, efficient use of land, accessibility, local area characteristics and other detailed design considerations (as indicated above) in the determination of

the appropriate density on a particular site. Where appropriate proposals should include design codes and/or master plans.

12.33 The NPPF²⁷⁵ requires strategic policy to deliver conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including the landscape. The District Council values the character and diversity of the South Somerset Landscape, and places particular emphasis upon the conservation of protected and designated landscapes. The Council thus intends to produce a Landscape Strategy, which will set out the key characteristics of the South Somerset Landscape, and provide guidance to developers and landowners on how the overall character of the district can be conserved and enhanced; and how the pattern and form of development can be sympathetically located and shaped. This will complement similar work in prospect, relating to the historic environment.

Policy EQ2: General Development

Development will be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district.

Development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings, structures and places will be considered against:

- **Sustainable construction principles;**
- **Creation of quality places;**
- **Conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the area;**
- **Reinforcing local distinctiveness and respect local context;**
- **Creating safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;**
- **Having regard to South Somerset District Council's published Development Management advice and guidance; and**
- **Making efficient use of land whilst having regard to:**
 - **Housing demand and need;**
 - **Infrastructure and service availability;**
 - **Accessibility;**
 - **Local area character;**
 - **Site specific considerations**

Innovative designs delivering low energy usage and/or wastage will be encouraged.

- **Developers must not risk the integrity of internationally, nationally or locally designated wildlife and landscape sites;**
- **Development Proposals should protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties; and**
- **New dwellings should provide acceptable residential amenity space in accordance with Policy HW1.**

275.[NPPF March 2012]

Delivery

12.34 It is anticipated that the Council will produce and update design guidance to ensure the highest possible standard of development throughout the District, which will maintain environmental quality, protect and enhance the character and landscape assets of the area. This will be delivered through the Development Management process.

12.35 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ2:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Avoidance of development that will impact on landscape areas	There should be no net loss of landscape assets
Peer review of design achieved in development	A conclusion that development generally achieved at a minimum good standard but preferably very good

Historic Environment

12.36 The National Planning Policy Framework²⁷⁶ sets out the Government's objective for the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by conserving the historic environment and its assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

12.37 The historic environment is a valuable part of South Somerset's cultural heritage and contributes significantly to the local economy and identity of the district, adding to the quality of life and well-being of residents and visitors. Whether in the form of individual buildings, archaeological sites, historic market towns or landscapes, the conservation of this heritage and sustaining it for the benefit of future generations is an important aspect of the role the Council plays on behalf of the community and, as the local planning authority, fulfilling the Government's core planning principles.

12.38 The richness of South Somerset's historic environment is indicated by its high number of designated assets including 4,600 Listed Building list entries, over 80 Conservation Areas, 14 Historic Parks and a high number of scheduled monuments and other archaeological sites.

276.[NPPF March 2012]

12.39 The District Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate enhancing this irreplaceable heritage. All designated assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and archaeological sites together with other heritage assets that contribute positively to the significance of the historic environment will be protected from demolition or inappropriate development that affects the asset or its setting. The Council will seek to work with owners and developers to ensure historic assets are properly managed and cared for and remain in a viable use.

12.40 The Council will develop a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment that will include:

- Guidance and advice for owners and developers in relation to the historic environment and how its assets should be conserved;
- An approach to identifying and managing heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, and to their conservation and return to sustainable use where appropriate;
- A programme of Conservation Area Assessments and management plans;
- Encouragement for the development of local skills, crafts and the production of local materials relevant to the historic environment;
- Support for communities to identify locally significant historic buildings and in their preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

12.41 It is expected that once a Strategy is produced that all new development will be compliant with it.

Policy EQ3: Historic Environment

All new development proposals relating to the historic environment will be expected to:

- **Safeguard or where appropriate enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets;**
- **Make a positive contribution to its character through high standards of design which reflect and complement it and through the use of appropriate materials and techniques;**
- **Ensure alterations, including those for energy efficiency and renewable energy, are balanced alongside the need to retain the integrity of the historic environment and to respect the character and performance of buildings, adopting principles of minimum intervention and reversibility.**

Delivery

12.42 It is anticipated that the Council will produce and update the Heritage Strategy, providing comprehensive advice to ensure the highest possible standard of development throughout the District, which will maintain, protect and enhance the character, or the heritage assets of the area. This will be delivered through the Development Management process.

12.43 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ3:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Avoidance of development that will impact heritage areas	There should be no net loss of heritage assets

Biodiversity and New Development

12.44 National policy²⁷⁷ promotes sustainable development whilst conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Plan policies should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology by sustaining and where possible improving the quality and extent of natural habitat and the populations of naturally occurring species which they support. This should be based on up to date information of resources in the area and should promote opportunities within the design of the proposal for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological interests.

12.45 The District Council recognises the value of our natural assets and has been working with Somerset County Council, the District/Borough Councils, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Natural England, RSPB and other conservation agencies as part of the Somerset Biodiversity Partnership to identify species²⁷⁸ and habitats that are important in Somerset and to draw up plans to assist in their conservation.

12.46 'Wild Somerset' is the Strategy that covers the whole area of Somerset and describes how the partnership will work together and involve local communities and other agencies in activities to protect and enhance wildlife. In addition to the habitats and species covered in the Countywide Wild Somerset Strategy, the South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan describes the actions that the District and other partners will take locally to protect and enhance wildlife in the District.²⁷⁹ All proposals should consider protection and enhancement of biodiversity from the outset and have regard to Local and Regional Biodiversity Strategies, taking into consideration the findings as identified in 'The Distribution of European Protected Species in South

277.[NPPF March 2012]

278.[Somerset Priority Species List]

279.[South West Nature Map (evidence for RSS) is also useful]

Somerset' and 'European Protected Species in South Somerset'.²⁸⁰ Priority Species are defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act and in Somerset Priority Species List, and are to be protected from the adverse implications of new development. The Brackets Coppice Special Conservation Area near Crewkerne merits particular consideration of its resident bat population and their foraging area in consideration of local biodiversity in that area. The implications for bats of lighting associated with development will need to be borne in mind when determining planning applications.

12.47 There are significant consequences for the long-term protection and adaptability of biodiversity and the ability of wildlife and habitats to respond to climate change. There is a need to expand and re-connect the existing areas and restore habitats where they have been destroyed. Development proposals should be accompanied by sufficient information to assess the effects of development on protected sites, species, biodiversity or geology, together with any proposed prevention, mitigation or compensation measures. They will need to demonstrate that they will not adversely impact nationally and internationally designated sites.

Policy EQ4: Biodiversity

All proposals for development, including those which would affect sites of regional and local biodiversity, nationally and internationally protected sites and sites of geological interest, will:

- **Protect the biodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats and promote coherent ecological networks;**
- **Maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats;**
- **Incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate;**
- **Protect and assist recovery of identified priority species; and**
- **Ensure that Habitat Features, Priority Habitats and Geological Features that are used by bats and other wildlife are protected and that the design including proposals for lighting does not cause severance or is a barrier to movement.**

Where there is a reasonable likelihood of the presence of protected species development design should be informed by, and applications should be accompanied by, a survey and impact assessment assessing their presence. If present, a sequential approach to the design of the proposal should be taken that aims first to avoid harm, then to lessen the impact, and lastly makes compensatory provision for their needs.

280.[Produced by Somerset County Council, 2009]

Development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impact on the integrity of national and international wildlife and landscape designations, including features outside the site boundaries that ecologically support the conservation of the designated site.

Delivery

12.48 It is anticipated that the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy is relevant and will contribute to the protection and enhancement of areas of biodiversity importance and therefore support delivery of the policy objectives.

12.49 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ4:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Natural England.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Changes in areas of biodiversity importance	There should be no net losses of biodiversity habitat areas due to development

Green Infrastructure

12.50 Green Infrastructure is the mosaic of natural landscape features, spaces and corridors that lie within and between developed areas. They are essential elements of the character and appearance of an area and contribute positively to cultural heritage, the health and well being of the local community and the general quality of life. In addition to enriching visual amenity they offer opportunities for informal recreation and provide wildlife habitats and the connectivity between them. They can also contribute to natural drainage and reduce surface water run off, helping mitigate for the consequences of climate change. Green Infrastructure assets include open spaces such as parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands and natural open space, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, playing fields, as well as footpaths, cycleways and rivers.

12.51 The provision of properly integrated Green Infrastructure can enhance the amenity of an area and promote a sense of place and community identity. Greater access to open space, parks, playing fields and provision for children and young people are clearly beneficial to health and the sense of well-being of the local community. Networks of green spaces and corridors provide opportunities for recreation, walking and cycling and also benefit wildlife by conserving and enhancing

habitats, and providing buffers from development to important wildlife sites and watercourses. Green infrastructure can also serve to deflect visitor pressures on nationally and internationally important wildlife sites.

12.52 Trees are essential to the value of Green Infrastructure. The retention of trees and woodland; their appropriate management; and provision of new tree planting, can help to combat climate change and flooding. Trees help to alleviate pollution and modify microclimate.

12.53 Attenuation ponds and other sustainable drainage systems, together with larger water bodies, can also provide valuable aspects of Green Infrastructure, with a potential for enhancing ecological and landscape value.

12.54 Clear priorities will be established through an overarching Green Infrastructure Strategy. This will incorporate local open space standards and requirements for developments to contribute towards the delivery of a comprehensive network of Green Infrastructure. In particular, the strategy recognises the need to integrate Green Infrastructure within the Yeovil Sustainable Extension and to ensure that all communities have access to quality green areas.

12.55 Where loss of green infrastructure as a result of development is unavoidable the Council will seek mitigation in accord with Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGST).

Policy EQ5: Green Infrastructure

The Council will promote the provision of Green Infrastructure throughout the District, based upon the enhancement of existing areas including public open space, accessible woodland, and river corridors, and by ensuring that development provides open spaces and green corridor links between new and existing green spaces.

The overall aim will be to provide a network of connected and multi-functional open spaces that:

- **Create new habitats and connects existing wildlife areas to enrich biodiversity & promote ecological coherence;**
- **Provide an accessible network of green spaces and improve recreational opportunities, including environmental education, local food production and support physical health and mental wellbeing;**
- **Ensure that all children and young people have reasonable access to a range of play and leisure opportunities;**
- **Provide opportunities for enhanced, attractive walking and cycling routes linking urban areas and the wider countryside;**
- **Enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape;**
- **Contribute to local identity and sense of place;**

- Increase the District's tree cover;
- Help mitigate the consequences of climate change (sustainable drainage systems, shade etc.); and
- Alleviate current and future potential visitor and recreation pressure/ disturbance to internationally designated conservation areas.

Existing Green Infrastructure will be protected against any adverse impact of development proposals. If loss of existing green infrastructure assets is unavoidable in order to accommodate necessary development, appropriate mitigation for the loss will be required. All residential development should be designated at least to meet Natural England ‘Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard’ (ANGSt) or otherwise appropriately contribute to improving access to natural greenspace such that the overall aims are met.

12.56 It is anticipated that the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy will identify specific actions for the short, medium and long term. The Council will work with other partners and bid for available funding opportunities to bring Green Infrastructure projects to fruition.

12.57 There will be opportunities for the provision of new Green Infrastructure, or improvement of existing facilities, in association with new development. It is essential that this should be an integral part of the design process to ensure the multifunctional aspects are incorporated. This is of particular significance in consideration of major development sites.

12.58 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ5:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners;
- Somerset County Council;
- Infrastructure Providers;
- Town and Parish Councils.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Provision of new and improved open space, outdoor playing space, and sport and recreational facilities	There should be no net loss of Green Infrastructure assets as a result of development
Access to Natural Greenspace	All new development should comply with Natural England’s ‘Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt)’ wherever possible

Enable improved connectivity and access to services by the provision of footpaths and cycleways	Increased patronage on public transport and increased take up of walking and cycling
Change in areas of biodiversity importance	There should be no net losses of biodiversity habitat areas due to development
Number of planning permissions granted contrary to environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds	No permission should be granted in cases where an Environment Agency objection cannot be overcome
Green Infrastructure Strategy	Production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy

Woodlands and Forest

12.59 South Somerset has only 5% coverage of woodland, which is significantly below the County average of 9%. This is a reflection of the rolling lowland character of the District, where good soils have led to the land being cleared for agriculture over past centuries. There are a few exceptions to this such as the Eastern scarp boundary, which is well wooded, the hills East of Bruton, South of Crewkerne and the edge of the Blackdown Hills around Chard. Over the remainder hedgerow trees, small copses and locally significant old orchards, often on the edge of villages, dominate the landscape. Significant linear woodlands such as those along the Fivehead and Somerton ridges also define the Western edge of the District. These both have a high proportion of Ancient Woodland²⁸¹.

12.60 Traditional old orchards and veteran trees are important features of the region providing good habitats for wildlife. The Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework (RWFF)²⁸² is the regional expression of Government policy on woodland and forest setting out what is needed to help secure the future of these assets.

12.61 Areas of woodland should be expanded where appropriate and as indicated in the RWFF, to support other habitats, act as carbon sinks, enhance landscape character and as a key part of providing green infrastructure in and around new development. Any unavoidable loss of woodland should be replaced via agreements with developers and other mechanisms. The removal and management of trees and woodland may be necessary where this is needed to meet conservation objectives for open habitats, such as heathland and grassland.

12.62 Sustainable tourism development opportunities presented by woodlands and forests should be promoted, particularly in rural areas. The wider economic use of woodlands and forests should also be promoted, for example with regards to wood

281. [Ancient woodland is defined as land continually wooded since at least AD1600, Natural England and Woodland Trust]

282. [South West regional Woodland and Forestry Framework: South West England Forestry Commission, 2005]

fuel. The procurement of locally grown timber products to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)²⁸³ should be supported, particularly in relation to development, in order to achieve improved sustainability of construction and in support of local supply chains.

Policy EQ6: Woodland and Forests

South Somerset District Council will support the implementation of the South West Woodland and Forestry Framework, ensuring the environmental, social and economic value and character of the district's trees, woods and forests are protected and enhanced in a sustainable way. Woodland areas, including ancient and semi-natural woodland should be maintained at least at 2005 levels and expanded where possible to provide a buffer to core areas of woodland.

The loss of ancient and woodland as well as ancient or veteran trees should be protected against loss wherever possible. Where secondary woodland is unavoidably lost through development it should be replaced with appropriate new woodland on at least the same scale.

Delivery

12.63 It is anticipated that the forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy will identify specific actions for the short, medium and long term, including the provision of additional woodland areas.

12.64 In conjunction with the aims and objectives of the Green Infrastructure Policy and consideration of individual planning applications, care should be taken to ensure existing woodland is not lost through development.

12.65 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ6:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Levels of woodland and forest within the District	There should be no net losses of woodland or forests due to development
Number of planning application requiring the planting of additional woodland	Net increase in woodland in the District

283.[The UK Woodland Assurance Standard was developed by a group of forestry and environmental organisations to provide a standard for certification relevant to UK woodlands and which satisfies the standards required by both the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Pan European Forest Certification (PEFC)]

Pollution Control

12.66 Paragraphs 120 - 125 of the NPPF²⁸⁴, set out the need for Local Authorities to consider the impact of new development on noise, air and light pollution. This aims to ensure that new developments do not harm existing residents, future residents or the natural environment. This includes minimising air, noise, light, water quality or odour pollution, that would be harmful to other land uses, human health, tranquillity or the natural and built environment. The NPPF states that plan policy aims to avoid and mitigate the impacts of potential pollution associated with development.

12.67 Potentially noisy developments will be expected to be accompanied by an appropriate noise assessment. Developers will be required to demonstrate the potential impact of proposals on the environment and on residential amenity and the ability to mitigate to an acceptable level.

12.68 Light pollution refers to the effect of excessive or intrusive lighting arising from poor or insensitive design. The Council will seek to reduce light pollution by encouraging the installation of appropriate lighting and only permitting lighting proposals which would not adversely affect amenity or public safety. Lights should be appropriately shielded, directed to the ground and sited to minimise any impact on adjoining areas, and of a height and illumination level of the minimum required to serve their purpose.

12.69 Air quality is generally good in South Somerset, with low levels of sulphur, oxides of nitrogen and particulates in comparison to the rest of England, although one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared in Yeovil, where national air quality objectives are not likely to be achieved. It is shown on the Proposals Map (Yeovil Inset). This AQMA is within the urban area where air pollution results mainly from traffic. Air quality should be considered when assessing development proposals, particularly in or near the AQMA and where significant doubt arises as to the air quality impact then a cautious approach should be applied.

Policy EQ7: Pollution Control

Development that, on its own or cumulatively, would result in air, light, noise or other environmental pollution or harm to amenity, health or safety will only be permitted if the potential adverse effects would be mitigated to an acceptable level by other environmental controls, or by measures included in the proposals. This may be achieved by the imposition of planning conditions or through a planning obligation.

284.[NPPF March 2012]

New development should not exacerbate air quality problems in existing and potential AQMA's. This should include consideration of the potential impacts of new developments and increased traffic levels on internationally designated nature conservation sites, and adopt mitigation measures to address these impacts.

Delivery

12.70 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ7:

- South Somerset District Council;
- Developers and Landowners.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Number of days of air pollution exceeding 40ug/m ³	Meet or exceed relevant Air Quality objectives as set out in Air Quality regulations

Equine Development

12.71 By its nature equestrian development requires a countryside location but the cumulative impact of development can have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area. New buildings can adversely affect landscape character and natural beauty where they detract from existing characteristics e.g. due to scale or materials or design. Therefore it is important to consider the current character of the countryside and how equine development can ultimately impact upon it. Consideration for such proposals should have regard to such aspects as:

- Whether the site is located within or adjacent to an existing settlement;
- It should avoid exposed skyline locations;
- It should avoid the loss of existing vegetation;
- The existing landform and vegetation should be utilised to integrate development with the surrounding landscape;
- Vernacular design and building hierarchy must be respected;
- Materials that blend with the surrounding landscape should be considered. Bright finishes and unsuitable materials should be avoided;
- New native planting can help to integrate buildings with their surroundings;
- The proposals should be close to the bridleway network; and
- Conflict could arise between road users due to horse transportation, deliveries and horses using narrow lanes.

Policy EQ8: Equine Development

Horse related facilities and equestrian enterprises in the countryside will be permitted provided:

- New stables/field shelters closely relate to existing settlements or groups of buildings and should not interfere with the amenities of the adjoining residents;
- Their design, scale, siting and materials respect the landscape character of the locality;
- Development will not be allowed to proceed unless it can be demonstrated that it will not result in any adverse impact to the integrity of national and international wildlife and landscape designations, including features outside the sites boundaries that ecologically support the conservation objectives of designated sites;
- Any proposal for equestrian development including apparatus, jumps, maneges, schooling areas and field sub division should respect or enhance the characteristic pattern and features of the surrounding landscape.

Proposals for larger scale private or commercial enterprises should not be unacceptably harmful to highway safety. This should be demonstrated by means of a traffic impact assessment.

Delivery

12.72 The following delivery bodies will be key in implementing Policy EQ8:

- South Somerset District Council.

Monitoring Indicators	Target
Changes in areas of biodiversity importance	There should be no net losses of biodiversity habitat areas due to development
Number of planning applications for equine development	Assessment of the potential cumulative harm to landscape character

13 Implementation and Monitoring

13.1 Monitoring and review are key components of the planning system. Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) need to be continually reviewed and revised, partly to be able to assess the success of the Local Development Document (LDD) and partly to ensure the components of the framework are updated to reflect changing circumstances nationally, regionally and locally.

13.2 The Local Plan's role is to provide a clear and robust framework for development in order that investment and action can be co-ordinated and geared to efficient and effective delivery. The need to monitor comes from the requirement to check that the plan is being successfully implemented and that the outcomes are as intended. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will be the principle mechanism for monitoring the Local Plan and other documents in the LDF, bringing together all the necessary information in one place.

13.3 Each strategic objective and each policy of the Local Plan are linked to one or more monitoring indicators and targets have been established for each to show the level of progress to meet Local Plan objectives.

13.4 The AMR will also report the ability to provide a 5 Year Housing Land Supply, a key factor in the potential ability of the Core Strategy to deliver growth. This will be based upon the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which identifies land that is suitable, available and viable for housing development and will be updated on an annual basis.

13.5 In the event that monitoring identifies insufficient progress to meet the objectives of the Local Plan, the Annual Monitoring Report will identify the relevant issues, analyses the problems and propose remedial action as necessary. In addition a five yearly comprehensive review of the Local Plan and subsequent implementation will be undertaken.

PROPOSALS MAP

INSET MAPS

INSET MAPS: TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Area Wide Proposals Map Key Map: Location of Inset Maps](#)

[Map Key](#)

[Inset Map 1 Ansford/Castle Cary](#)

[Inset Map 2 Bruton](#)

[Inset Map 3 Chard](#)

[Inset Map 3a Chard Town Centre](#)

[Inset Map 4 Crewkerne](#)

[Inset Map 4a Crewkerne Town Centre](#)

[Inset Map 5 Henstridge Airfield](#)

[Inset Map 6 Ilchester](#)

[Inset Map 6a Ilchester Noise Contours](#)

[Inset Map 7 Ilminster](#)

[Inset Map 7a Ilminster Town Centre](#)

[Inset Map 8 Langport/Huish Episcopi](#)

[Inset Map 9 Martock](#)

[Inset Map 10 Milborne Port](#)

[Inset Map 11 Somerton](#)

[Inset Map 12 South Petherton](#)

[Inset Map 13 Stoke sub Hamdon](#)

[Inset Map 14 Wincanton](#)

[Inset Map 15 Yeovil](#)

[Inset Map 15a Yeovil Town Centre](#)

Note:

The Area Wide Proposals Map, Key Map shows the location and extent of all relevant subordinate Inset Maps for Yeovil, the Market Towns and the Rural Centres as well as the place specific designations at Henstridge (Inset Map 5) and Ilchester (Inset Map 6a).

Town Centre Inset Maps have been provided for Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Yeovil.

Conservation Areas, Historic Parks & Gardens, Archaeological sites of National importance, areas of High Archaeological potential, Wildlife/Geology designations, flood plains and other constraints will be incorporated into the final Proposals Map upon adoption.

Inset Maps 1–15a show policies and proposals relevant to the Local Plan alongside saved policy and proposal designations from the out-going Local Plan 1991-2011.

The Yeovil, Market Town & Rural Centre Inset Maps depict the saved Development Areas of settlements, strategic sites and directions for growth alongside relevant designations and constraints including Conservation Areas and flood plains. Primary

Shop frontages are also shown where present (and in town centre insets for Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Yeovil).

Inset Map 6a depicts the Ilchester Noise Contours and Inset Map 5 shows the extent of Henstridge Airfield, to which a specific policy applies.

The remaining Lopen Head saved employment allocation will appear in the final full scale Proposals Map upon adoption.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Evidence Base Documents

Details documents used in drafting the Local Plan

Appendix 2: Replaced and Saved Local Plan Policies and Proposals

A list of the saved Policies and Proposals of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted 2006) and reasons for their being no longer saved. A small number of policies and proposals remain saved and are shown.

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains a comprehensive glossary of national planning terms that should be read in conjunction with this glossary. The NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary can be viewed on the Government website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>