South Somerset District Council

Draft Core Strategy

(incorporating Preferred Options)

October 2010
Foreword

The Core Strategy is the most important Planning Policy Document for South Somerset setting the strategic context for growth in South Somerset and the development policies by which development will be managed. This draft version incorporates options for development proposals and policies and presents the Council's presently preferred options.

The Strategy will be our community's vision of how and where we want future growth to take place and reflects the South Somerset Partnership's Community Strategy. It should safeguard the most important features of the District, yet enable employment, houses and associated services to be developed in the right places and well designed to meet our needs. We need to make provision for the Businesses that provide for future jobs. We must invest in our towns and villages to make them better places to live in and we must take seriously the fact that we are living longer. We have to plan for those changes in ensuring that support needs can be met, so that older residents can continue to live within our communities.

It is vital however that development is controlled so that growth and the physical and community services supporting it proceed in balance. If we go wrong we will have houses but no jobs, choked up roads, no space for new businesses and a lack of local play areas for our children. Uncontrolled growth can destroy much of what we value about where we live. The Pyramids, one of the seven Wonders of the World, now have ugly housing and flats as their background! This mustn't happen here.

We value our countryside, villages and market towns but these have evolved over the years to what we see today. As employment patterns change we have to change if we are to be more than a retirement complex. Whilst the argument for no growth or growth elsewhere has its supporters, it is not an option if we are to change again to meet future needs. It will not be possible to preserve every field and green space, but in making decisions we must look at the needs of the larger community and make the right decisions even if they may not be popular with those most affected. That means that every resident of South Somerset must have the opportunity to be heard and that is why every household has been invited to express their views and thoughts. We want to be told where we have got things wrong but we also want constructive ideas and suggestions.

This draft strategy upon which we are seeking your views is just what it says it is, a draft. Despite providing preferred options for consultation, no decisions have been made and no decisions will be made until the full public consultation is complete.

We now need your views and comments to this Strategy and I would urge everyone to consider it carefully if South Somerset is to continue to be place where we want to live and work.

Ric Pallister
Portfolio Holder for Planning Economic Development and Transport
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Proposals Map: Inset Plans

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1 Introduction

What is the Local Development Framework?

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 established a new spatial approach to local development planning in England, replacing local plans with Local Development Frameworks (LDF). The LDF is a series of documents, which together will provide the planning policy context for South Somerset.

1.2 This document is the Draft Core Strategy (incorporating Preferred Options) and includes Development Management policies. It sets out the key elements of the planning framework for South Somerset that will be used when considering individual planning proposals. It will cover the period to 2026, but can be reviewed on a regular basis during that time if necessary.

1.3 Once adopted the Core Strategy Document will replace most 'saved' Local Plan policies (policies formally retained as relevant in determining planning applications from the South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011. The adopted document will include a list of all those saved policies and proposals that have been replaced and those that remain saved.

Purpose of the Core Strategy

1.4 South Somerset is already set to see significant change through the development of land within and on the peripheries of its larger towns, in particular Yeovil, through the implementation of the 'saved' policies and proposals for development of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 1991-2011. This development will help to meet the needs up to the year 2011, but greater change and levels of development will be needed to accommodate the needs of the community up to the year 2026. The Core Strategy provides the overarching approach for development in South Somerset. It sets out a long-term spatial vision, strategic objectives and policies to guide public and private sector investment up to 2026. The Core Strategy includes Development Management policies, which will be used along with national planning policies to assess individual planning applications more specifically. The section on implementation and monitoring shows how the Core Strategy will be delivered and monitored in practice and how development will be phased to address infrastructure constraints.

1.5 The Core Strategy delivers the spatial elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). It has been set out to reflect the 5 Themes in the SCS 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' aspirations, objectives and plans, which the LDF should deliver where relevant through its spatial policies and proposals.

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1.[Shaping South Somerset, A Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026]
2.[The SCS themes are Wellbeing; Environmentally sensitive; Thriving economy; Well run, well served & well connected; Well designed & well built.]
Figure 1 - Core Strategy Progress

Core Strategy Issues and Options Document Published
March 2008

Area Based Workshops (Members and town and parish councils)
July 2009

Evidence Base Tour (Town and parish councillors and other stakeholders)
September/October 2009

Issues and Options Report: Report on the Core Strategy Consultation Responses Received
December 2009

Parish Cluster Workshops (Town and parish councillors and other stakeholders)
November/December 2009
January/March 2010

Area Workshops
July 2010

Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options
Approved by Full Council
September 2010
Stages so far

1.6 Since the publication of the Core Strategy Issues and Options document in March 2008 the outcome of that consultation has been reported to the District Executive Committee of South Somerset District Council and there has been ongoing evidence gathering and engagement with officers, Town and Parish Councils and other key stakeholders. The Core Strategy Progress diagram sets out the process that has taken place to reach this stage in the production of the Core Strategy reflecting the early statutory stages required to produce a Core Strategy and conforms with ‘front loaded’ engagement. This is the early involvement of people and key stakeholders in shaping the options for development before proposals are presented in more formal form.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.7 The Council is presenting here, for consultation, a clear indication of the options for growth and development, and for the policies that have been considered necessary, together with the reasons for the recommendations. This is considered to provide for a more expansive consultation process and a better final plan.

1.8 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". 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 housing, jobs, education, recreation and health care opportunities to meet South Somerset's needs, whilst conserving the natural and built environment, minimising the need to travel and addressing climate change.

1.9 In order to ensure that sustainable development is achieved, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is used to appraise the social, economic and environmental effects of the Core Strategy. SA is a legal requirement which is carried out alongside preparation of the Core Strategy, and is a key part of the evidence which demonstrates that the approach in the Core Strategy is the most appropriate given 'reasonable alternatives'.

1.10 The findings of the Sustainability Appraisal of the 'Draft Core Strategy incorporating Preferred Options' have been published alongside the Core Strategy in a separate Report with Appendices.

1.11 This Sustainability Appraisal follows the methodology set out at national level and provides an appraisal of the emerging options for both levels of growth and development locations, and for proposed policies, judged against the 14 sustainability objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It is important that the objectives of the Core Strategy and Sustainability Appraisal are consistent.

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3.[World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987]
**Appropriate Assessment / Habitats Regulations Assessment**

1.12 The need for an Appropriate Assessment (AA) arises from a European Directive\(^5\) 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 AA of South Somerset's Core Strategy is required due to the presence of the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar\(^6\) site in the district. The outcome of the AA has been published as a separate report, alongside the Core Strategy.

1.13 The AA Scoping Report assessed the options within the Core Strategy 'Issues and Options' report and identified the following key issues that require further investigation:

- Increased recreational disturbance to birds within the Somerset Levels and Moors SPA due to population growth within the district, particularly at Yeovil.
- Increased water quality impacts to invertebrates within the Somerset Levels and Moors due to changes in water quality arising from run-off and increased sewage treatment works that could arise from development at Langport / Huish Episcopi, South Petherton, Somerton and Martock.

1.14 An AA of the Core Strategy 'Issues and Options' has also been carried out for Brackett's Coppice Special Area of Conservation (near Crewkerne) and concluded that the Core Strategy would not adversely affect this site.

1.15 The final Appropriate Assessment report concluded that the scale of growth proposed for South Somerset was not likely to have a significant impact on the Somerset Levels and Moors and recommended that a number of policies have wording included to ensure the requirements to protect the international designations are taken on board. These recommendations have been taken on board.

**Evidence Base**

1.16 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 Core Strategy policies and proposals.

**Policy Context**

1.17 This Draft Core Strategy has been prepared in the context of national policy expressed as Planning Policy Statements as well as other local strategies and programmes as shown in the Important Influences on the Core Strategy diagram. All these strategies have informed the draft policies and proposals in this document. The Regional Spatial Strategy, whilst never concluded, has none the less informed and influenced policies and proposals but only those retaining relevance with current (at time of drafting) national policy have influenced policies and proposals within the Core Strategy.

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5.\[EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)\]
6.\[Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention\]
Figure 2 – Important Influences on the Core Strategy

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GUIDANCE
- Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- Planning Policy Guidance and Statements
- Planning Circulars
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026 (and Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes 2008)

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL
- Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2) being revised and will be called Future Transport Plan
- Structure Plan
- Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy
- Somerset Economic Strategy 2005
- The Somerset Children and Young People’s Plan 2006-2009

SOUTH SOMERSET TOGETHER THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
- Shaping South Somerset, A Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2026

OTHER LOCAL DOCUMENTS
- Town/Parish/Village Plans and Design Guides

OTHER SOUTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND DOCUMENTS
- Corporate Plan 2009-2012
- Accommodation Strategy 2004
- Housing Strategy 2007-2012
- Gypsy and Traveller Strategy
- District Wide Car Parking Strategy
- Play Strategy 2007-2012
- Strategy for Sport and Active Leisure in South Somerset 2006-2012
- South Somerset Tourism Strategy 2004-2007
- Draft South Somerset Biodiversity Action Plan
- Yeovil Urban Development Framework
- Chard Regeneration Plan
Local Context

1.18 At a local level, the vision and spatial objectives set out in the Draft Core Strategy are derived from the SCS. As the diagram Important Influences on the Core Strategy shows many other local strategies at both District and County level have informed the policies within this document.

Regional Context

1.19 The now revoked South West Regional Spatial Strategy (SWRSS) remains a material consideration in planning decisions and in the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy where its key elements remain in line with current Government planning guidance. The RSS policies and proposals have been reviewed in the context of national policies and the Council's evidence base and emerging Core Strategy policies to identify whether Core Strategy policies should be removed or whether other policy areas previously covered in the RSS should be added to the Core Strategy. Crucially the housing and employment growth provisions within the District have been derived from local engagement with key communities within South Somerset and relevant evidence base reassessed in the light of the RSS's revocation.

National Context

1.20 At the national level, the Government sets out the planning policy approach to development that Councils should follow in preparing their plans in a series of national "Planning Policy Guidance Notes" and "Planning Policy Statements". These cover a broad range of planning-related topics such as housing, transport, climate change, flood risk, biodiversity and geological conservation, town centres, sustainable development in rural areas and economic prosperity.7

1.21 The "Communities and Local Government" department within central government is aiming to create thriving, sustainable, vibrant communities that improve everyone's quality of life. To achieve this, it is driving forward a programme of building more and better homes, reducing homelessness, improving local public services, regenerating areas to create more jobs, working to produce a sustainable environment and tackling anti-social behaviour and extremism. The Government is particularly keen that local communities shape local development.

Next Steps

This Draft Core Strategy document is open for consultation until 3rd December 2010. There are three ways in which you can submit your comments:
On-line via our consultation system - visit our website: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/corestrategy where you can access the system.

7.[Full details of national planning policy can be found at www.communities.gov.uk, the Communities and Local Government website]
Visit the website [www.southsomerset.gov.uk/corestrategy](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/corestrategy) - fill out the electronic copy of the comment form and email to [planning.policy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto: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 (8.45am to 4.45pm Monday to Friday)

Or email: [planning.policy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto: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 as part of this consultation process will be summarised and reported to the Council along with an officer response and recommendation. The Core Strategy will then be amended, where appropriate, in the light of those comments and other relevant evidence and published for formal consultation (Publication⁸) for a period of at least 6 weeks. Comments received will be summarised for submission to the Planning Inspector appointed to undertake the formal Examination of the Core Strategy. The Examination is held into the published plan and those comments received considered by the Inspector⁹. Upon receipt of the Inspector’s Report the Core Strategy can be formally adopted. The Core Strategy Process diagram overleaf illustrates these stages. The timescale for the remainder of the process will be set out in a revised Local Development Scheme.

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⁸[Regulation 27 of The Town and Country Planning (Local development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended]
⁹[The Inspector decides who should appear at the Examination]
Figure 3: Core Strategy Process

Core Strategy Issues and Options Document Published
March 2008

Draft Core Strategy (incorporating Preferred Options)
October 2010

Public Consultation
8 October to 3 December 2010

Consideration of responses & assess updated evidence

Publication Plan
September 2011

Public Consultation for at least 6 weeks (comments to pass direct to the Planning Inspector without modification)

Examination by Planning Inspector
Winter 2011/12

Adoption
Spring/early Summer 2012
2 Spatial Portrait of South Somerset

2.1 What follows is a brief description of the District and some of its defining characteristics. An appreciation and understanding of what makes South Somerset the place it is and how it works is essential to devising a Spatial Vision, and a Core Strategy that will help to deliver the type of District we want by the year 2026.

Geography, Population and Settlement Pattern

2.2 South Somerset is one of the largest Districts in the South West, forming the southern side of the County of Somerset. It accounts for nearly a third of the County's area, covering an area of 958 sq km (370 sq miles) and is predominantly rural in nature.

2.3 South Somerset has a population of around 158,000 and has a population density of 1.7 people per hectare, less than half the national average which illustrates its rural nature. South Somerset is a fast growing District, with population growth being almost twice the national average over the past 10 years with even larger increases predicted over the next 10-20 years. Yeovil is home to approximately a quarter of the District's total population, having some 43,000 residents; other larger settlements include Chard, Crewkerne, Wincanton and Ilminster. However, over 40% of the District's population lives in settlements of fewer than 2,500 residents. South Somerset has a higher proportion of elderly people (over 65's) than the national average, but Yeovil and Chard do have a relatively young population. The District has a low black and minority ethnic (BME) population at 2.7% compared with 13% nationally.

2.4 South Somerset consists of a mixture of sparsely inhabited rural areas, a network of villages, and a number of market towns of varying size and influence. South Somerset's principal town, Yeovil, is situated on the south eastern boundary of the County some 130 miles west of London, 40 miles south of Bristol and 25 miles south east of Taunton. The Regional Spatial Strategy, now revoked, proposed that Yeovil should be designated as one of 21 "Strategically Significant Cities or Towns" (SSCTs) across the South West region, by virtue of the sub-regional role and function that it performs. Yeovil's status as the largest settlement and key economic driver for South Somerset is clear.

Housing

2.5 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 sector. 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%. The more urban areas of the District show a concentration of terraced housing and flats.

10.[ONS Mid 2007 estimate]
11.[ONS Mid 2007 estimates]
12.[Census 2001]
13.[South Somerset District Council Annual Monitoring Report April 2008-March 2009 (December 2009)]
14.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Markets Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]
15.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Markets Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]
2.6 The size of dwellings in the District is above average with nearly half having 6 or more rooms (46.3%) compared with 44.3% in the South West and 40.3% nationally. The largest concentrations of housing are to be found in Yeovil and the Market Towns. Around half the dwellings in the District are in Council tax bands B and C. The number of second homes within the District is lower than has been found regionally but is marginally higher than the national average.

2.7 Affordability is an issue within the District, with the average house price being 8.4 times the average salary, which makes it very difficult for first time buyers to enter the housing market particularly in the rural areas. The average house price in 2008 was £206,900. Homelessness appears to be increasing with applications to register rising from 37 in the 3rd quarter of 2008 to 103 in the 2nd quarter of 2009.

2.8 There is a need to find accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers, both transit and permanent sites.

**Economic Prosperity**

2.9 South Somerset is the largest District in the County; with over 6,000 businesses employing around 64,000 people, it has more people, employers and workers than any other part of Somerset. It has a manufacturing history and its strengths include a strong economy, 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.

2.10 Average household income in South Somerset is only slightly lower than the County and regional average, but quite significantly lower than the national average (£434 per week in South Somerset, compared to £522 for England). The proportion of people qualified to degree level or above in South Somerset is also lower than the County, regional and national averages. However South Somerset has relatively few claimants for Job Seekers Allowance, at less than half the average for England and Wales.

2.11 The rate of new business creation in South Somerset is similar to the County average, but much lower than the 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. Manufacturing is a relatively dominant employer in 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.

2.12 Yeovil is the largest town and commercial and administrative centre in the 'A303 Corridor' economic zone identified in the Regional Economic Strategy. Yeovil is a major employment centre providing many jobs in aerospace and associated engineering, including around 3,500 employees at 'AgustaWestland' in the manufacturing of helicopters. Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, 5 miles north of Yeovil near Ilchester also employs around 3,500 people. It is notable that a high proportion of jobs in Yeovil are dependent upon Government

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16. [Taunton and South Somerset Housing Markets Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]
17. [Taunton and South Somerset Housing Markets Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]
18. [Taunton and South Somerset Housing Markets Areas Housing Market Assessment 2009]
20. [South Somerset District Council Annual Monitoring Report April 2008-March 2009 (December 2009)]
expenditure within health (Yeovil District Hospital/ Strategic Health Authority) and local government (the District Council / schools), in addition to defence spending. In recent years, the development of the "Yeovil Vision" and its complementary "Urban Development Framework" have started to address the outdated image of the town and build on its strengths and assets. Yeovil has a relatively high level of self-containment i.e. people living and working in the same settlement - one of the highest levels in the South West - although there is notable in-commuting from the surrounding hinterland. Yeovil is close to Sherborne in Dorset, both geographically and in travel time due to both towns lying on the A30 and a main rail line.

2.13 Yeovil is the prime economic driver within the District, with almost 33,000 employees (equating to almost 50% of all of the District's jobs). 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. Yeovil is one of the most significant aerospace engineering locations in the UK, although it is very dependent upon the operation of AgustaWestland. In light of this, the Yeovil Vision (see Vision section in Chapter 5) seeks to maintain the industrial base whilst growing the service sector.

2.14 With 60% 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. Each town has a uniquely distinctive heritage, culture and assets and global trends including climate change, the increasing cost of commodities (especially fuel) and advancing technology (broadband etc.) offer opportunities to build upon this complementary role as service and employment centres for the surrounding rural area. In addition, with the increasing technology now available, many people are able to work from home.

2.15 There are a number of business parks and trading estates across the District accommodating a wide range of smaller businesses - 86% of businesses employ 10 or fewer staff. In particular, the Market Towns of Chard, Crewkerne, Wincanton, Ilminster, Somerton, and Castle Cary provide a broad range and mix of services and facilities and act as general service and employment hubs for the more rural population as well as their own populations.

2.16 The 7 Rural Centres of Bruton, Ilchester, Langport, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon act as focal points in their areas for local employment and shopping, social and community activity, serving the day-to-day needs of their own populations and the more dispersed populations in the villages and hamlets in their hinterlands.

2.17 The smaller settlements in South Somerset vary widely in function and size, but generally are places that provide limited local services. Having said that, their generally small size and localised function can be beneficial in encouraging a strong sense of community and participation in local affairs but these conditions also pose challenges in terms of the economic provision of services and facilities. This pattern of settlements, and their social and economic relationships with each other, presents a real challenge in providing an equal level of service provision across such a diverse area.

2.18 Along with its many strengths, the South Somerset economy has weaknesses. Economic conditions have changed not only locally, but globally since April 2008 when the UK officially entered a recession, all sectors have been affected and as a result, growth prospects worldwide have sharply declined. Although employment in the District held up well
until the onset of the recession, it will be difficult to maintain the very strong employment growth rate of recent years as economic forecasts suggest that over the next ten years employment will grow at much slower rates than in the past and some further employment decline, particularly in manufacturing (an already declining sector) is likely in the long run.

2.19 The District is well placed to contribute to efforts to reduce carbon emissions by capturing a share of new markets in low carbon technologies and products. These technologies and products will contribute significantly to addressing issues of climate change and also, by developing their design and manufacture in the District, will diversify the manufacturing base, maximise supply chain linkages, strengthen the economy and provide much needed jobs.

Transport and Accessibility

2.20 The District has a fascinating environmental, industrial and cultural heritage with an enviable and varied landscape, valued by residents and which are a great draw to visitors. 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.

2.21 Three major railway lines with regular daily services run through the District, with an hourly service on the Exeter - London Waterloo line and a regular service on the Paddington - Castle Cary - Exeter line. Services are less frequent on the Bristol - Weymouth line. The A303 Trunk Road and A30 run east to west through the District, linking it with London and the South West peninsula.

2.22 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. There is a pioneering Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service within the District which is helping to tackle the shortcomings of existing, traditional bus transport.

2.23 Congestion issues are particularly concerning for settlement size at Yeovil and Chard. Yeovil's radial routes and inner relief road are struggling to accommodate increasing traffic levels and Chard has a particularly acute problem of capacity at the central A30/A358 junction through which most traffic in the town must flow and this is impacting on the potential to grow. There is heavy reliance on the car for journey to work and services and this is a challenge for the District to move to more carbon friendly modes of travel.

Health and Well-Being

2.24 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.

2.25 The population of the area is growing steadily, due to the many attractions of the District as a place to live and work with Yeovil being the main focus for this growth. Although

21.[Reference Ekosgen BDP Oxford Economics]
generally a healthy District, 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% Super Output Areas\(^\text{22}\) in England and 11% of children under 16 live in low-income households. As a whole, the District is in the top 50% most income deprived Districts in England. The house price to income ratio across the whole District is shown in the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment published in February 2009 to be around 8:1, although in certain more rural areas it reaches 14:1, compared to 6:1 for England and Wales.

2.26 The most prevalent form of deprivation in South Somerset relates to barriers to housing and services, including access to a GP surgery, supermarket or convenience store, primary school and post office. This is largely an issue in the rural fringes of the District, with the South Somerset average broadly similar to England, and lower than Somerset as a whole.

2.27 South Somerset has historically recorded lower crime levels compared with the regional and national averages, with decreases over recent years. 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 Chard.

**Environmental Quality**

2.28 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. The flat lands of the Somerset Levels and Moors in the north west are internationally protected for their wetlands and bird species, being a Special Protection Area and Ramsar\(^\text{23}\) site. Just west of Yeovil is the heritage site of Ham Hill Country Park.

2.29 Many villages and historic parts of larger settlements are built from local hamstone or lias stone, and the area has a high concentration of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas as well as grand country homes and estates, some of which are now owned by the National Trust. 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.

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

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22. Super Output Areas are units of area used by the Office of National Statistics to gather and compare data
23. 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
3 Vision and Strategic Objectives

3.1 The Vision for South Somerset derives principally from the Sustainable Community Strategy informed by national policy, the Issues and Options report on the Core Strategy and comments received and key information derived from the Council's evidence base.

3.2 The Vision is expressed in terms of how the District will look and be perceived in 2026 should aspirations be achieved.

The Vision for 2026

3.3 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 and more and better community facilities 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.

3.4 The District will have grown in population with a larger Yeovil and expanded market towns based on its economic, cultural and educational strengths, and will continue to protect its distinctive urban and rural environments and high landscape character areas reflected in the high number of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. The growth will have been achieved in conjunction with the infrastructure provision needed to make it happen, and to service it once built, over the 20 year period of the Plan and at a scale supported by the wider community. The housing to accommodate this growth will be of the highest standard that people are pleased with and can afford (either to buy or rent), and which improves their quality of life. An improved environment for business, better wages and better quality housing, both private and public sector, will have provided a better and more equitable standard of living and fostered more socially inclusive communities throughout the District. Businesses will be attracted from further afield to South Somerset through inward investment promotion and the improved economic assets of the District.

3.5 Yeovil will be the prime economic driver within the District (and for parts of West Dorset) with a stronger employment base and more high tech and quality businesses. The town will be attractive to existing and new businesses and workers through continuing investment and promotion of its existing manufacturing and service bases. Encouragement of new businesses in support of aerospace and other high tech industries will assist in providing a more resilient, diverse, higher wage economy with low carbon use.

3.6 Yeovil will be better linked to the District's market towns and within itself through more integrated and sustainable public transport. The town will be attractive for residents, workers, students and visitors with ever improving higher education facilities including university level courses and better health care. A more vibrant town centre with quality retailing on offer (but not at the expense of the market towns' retail roles) and expanded night time economy will have been achieved.

3.7 The Yeovil Eco Town urban extension will be established and act as an exemplar for the benefits of more sustainable living with local job and service self sufficiency, better quality
and more desired housing, a high level of attractive open space and parkland and all with zero carbon impact.

3.8 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. The settlement hierarchy and strategy established in this Core Strategy, by building on settlements’ existing facilities and functions, will have secured their continued vibrancy and service provision. A better balance of jobs to housing will be evident. The significant growth identified in this plan for Chard 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 (including visitor growth) proposed at the other Market Towns and Rural Centres will provide economic regeneration and better housing and, with the maintenance and enhancement of commercial and community services across the District, allow for better access for all. The mix of housing, employment and associated land uses in these places will promote greater settlement self containment.

3.9 A viable agricultural and rural economy will have been supported through policies supporting village development for local provision of jobs, facilities and affordable housing and greater growth where a sustainable case can be made. Farm diversification and more diverse local employment opportunities and support for tourism and tourism accommodation and attractions will also support a better experience of rural living, as will the ability to live and work from home.

3.10 The Council's commitment to reducing the impact of climate change will be demonstrated by the eco town and by the wider application of reduced CO2 emission targets for new development throughout the District along with development secured throughout the District at the highest practical levels of sustainability, whilst development in areas of high flood risk will have been avoided.

**Strategic Objectives**

3.11 A fundamental role of the Core Strategy is to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for South Somerset through the implementation of spatial policy where the SCS can be implemented by such means. The current Sustainable Community Strategy for South Somerset 2008-2026 was adopted by the South Somerset Strategic Partnership in September and by the District Council in October 2008. It therefore follows that the goals and targets of the current Sustainable Community Strategy from the starting point of the Core Strategy strategic objectives.

3.12 National planning policy objectives also affect the strategic objectives both directly and indirectly through their consideration and integration in the Sustainable Community Strategy for South Somerset.

3.13 The strategic objectives for the Core Strategy are therefore derived from the local Sustainable Community Strategy and national planning policy and expressed in spatial terms. The generation of alternative options is therefore inappropriate. The Strategy Objectives by which the Vision for South Somerset will be achieved are as follows:-
1. Safe, resilient, socially just and inclusive and sustainable communities (with a higher proportion of jobs locally available) with strong networks and confident people sharing respect for each other.
2. A health enhancing environment developed by promoting walking and cycling and non car based transport.
3. Low Carbon quality services and facilities focused on Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres (and in particular their centres) are designed around the needs of the Community, enabling everyone to have fair and equitable access.
4. An integrated sustainable transport system developed both within and between towns and 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 the required jobs growth and upward wage levels through a thriving Yeovil, regenerated Chard and market towns and a diversified rural economic environment able to attract and retain visitors (through a vibrant tourism industry), consumers and high quality sustainable businesses.
6. A balanced housing market with a range of general housing and affordable housing to meet the required numbers and sited and built to support sustainable lifestyles with low carbon emissions, delivered through a sustainable District settlement strategy and hierarchy.
7. An Eco Town for Yeovil to deliver on the balanced housing market objective, provide an exemplar to move towards more sustainable, lower carbon consumption living and provide a boost to new low carbon technologies and industries.
8. Movement toward a Carbon Neutral economy by 2030 (for new and existing buildings).
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 development.

3.14 The next section sets out the Settlement Strategy and the settlement hierarchy through which the strategic vision is to be implemented. The settlement strategy and hierarchy are fundamental in the delivery of the Vision and objectives and in particular objectives 5 and 6 which are the drivers for growth and development in the District.
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.
- An established scale of growth for housing, employment and associated land uses for the main settlements identified within the hierarchy.

Settlement Hierarchy

4.2 Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12)\(^{24}\) requires Core Strategies to make clear spatial choices about where development should go in broad terms whilst Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS 3)\(^{25}\) requires Regional Spatial Strategy to identify broad strategic locations for new housing development so that need and demand for housing can be addressed in a way that reflects sustainable development principles. PPS3 goes on to require that a strategy for the planned location of new housing be made which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. It requires the following criteria to be taken into account:-

- Spatial vision for a local area (reflecting objectives in the RSS)
- Evidence of need and demand for housing and viability of sites
- Accessibility and opportunities for renewable and low carbon forms of energy supply
- Physical constraints
- Infrastructure and service availability and their viability
- Need to provide housing in market towns and villages in order to maintain and enhance their sustainability
- Need to develop mixed and sustainable communities

4.3 As set out in Chapter 1, it is important to ensure that the most sustainable option is considered. Sustainability Appraisal of alternative settlement strategy options is required 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 Core Strategy, including its policies, has been published alongside this Draft Core Strategy as a separate report and appendices.

4.4 The revoked RSS for the South West (Proposed Modifications) looked to provide policies on the location and scale of development to be taken forward by Local Authorities in their LDFs. The overall policy established that across the region, provision would be made to:

- Meet identified housing need
- Improve connectivity, accessibility and the functional efficiency of places
- Enhance economic prosperity within environmental limits

4.5 To accommodate and manage growth in the most sustainable way, most new development will be provided for at Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs) (for South Somerset this refers to Yeovil) with provision for more limited development to be made at market (and coastal) towns and in small towns and villages where this will increase self-containment and promote stronger communities.

\(^{24}\)[PPS12: Local Spatial Planning, June 2008]
\(^{25}\)[PPS3: Housing, June 2010]
This policy approach fully reflected the aspirations of national policy expressed through PPS3 and PPS12. The RSS identified Yeovil as a Strategically Significant Town because it is a focal point for economic activity and a wide range of services which are fundamental to quality of life. The need for travel can also be catered for by better and more reliable public transport. It is seen as a town that can achieve further development sustainably and promote a better balance between job growth and where people live. It has a high level of self containment. Critical mass and economies of scale and better use of existing infrastructure can be secured through Yeovil's continued designation as a Strategically Significant Town in this Core Strategy.

4.7 The RSS left designation of other settlements within a settlement hierarchy to the local planning authorities. It made a distinction between towns that play important roles in their local settings, that are able to provide jobs and services for their residents, and the residents of the surrounding areas and elsewhere. These towns and larger villages 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. These settlements should 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.

4.8 Development elsewhere in smaller villages 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 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.

4.9 The RSS did not distinguish additional levels in the hierarchy merely drawing attention to strict control of development in the countryside as set out in Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) and throughout national planning policy.

4.10 Whilst the RSS is now revoked it still presents a strong planning rationale for determining settlement hierarchies based on fundamental national planning policy and aspiration. 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. The larger towns accommodating locally significant development are to be called Market Towns whilst other settlements which act as focal points for their areas are to be called Rural Centres. The terms Market Towns and Rural Centres used in this Core Strategy refer specifically in planning terms to the different scale and nature of development and growth and service provision sought in the two categories of settlement.

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26. 'Countryside' refers in this case to all locations outside of Yeovil and the Market Towns and Rural Centres
27. [PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, August 2004]
4.11 The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies the importance of Yeovil and the towns to be able to attract and retain visitors, consumers and high quality sustainable businesses and employment. The emerging Spatial Strategy and Vision for South Somerset recognises Yeovil as the prime economic driver within the District and a centre for employment and service provision well linked to the rest of the District.

4.12 Outside Yeovil the Sustainable Community Strategy seeks Market Towns and Rural Centres to promote the basis of a thriving and diversified economy and be a local focus for the surrounding area.

4.13 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, access improved and a balanced housing market provided hence contributing to delivery of strategic objectives 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this Core Strategy.

**Determination of the South Somerset Settlement Hierarchy**

**Issues and Options Report and Consultation**

4.14 The Issues and Options report sought views on potential settlements as to suitability for the respective levels in the hierarchy and how growth (non Yeovil) should be distributed amongst these settlements. A number of settlements were suggested for positioning in the hierarchy and these broadly represented the status quo represented by the former District Wide Local Plan and a range of views expressed about the levels of growth in respective settlements. It was considered best to take these comments forward in the context of the evidence provided by the Settlement Role and Function Study \(^{28}\) commissioned by the Council as a key part of its Core Strategy evidence base.

**Evidence Base Review**

4.15 The South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study was commissioned by the Council to:

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

The report was concluded in April 2009.

4.16 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:

1. Settlements with a strong employment role:
   - level of employment (no of jobs);
   - economically active population and employment density.

\(^{28}\)[Settlement Role and Function Study, Baker Associates, April 2009]
2. Identifying important retail and community services centres:
   - Level of retail provision;
   - Position in the retail hierarchy;
   - Level of community service provision.

3. Sustainable travel opportunities and self containment:
   - Employment self containment;
   - Travel to work pattern;
   - Cycling, bus and rail services including demand responsive services.

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

4.18 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. Settlements with a strong employment, retail and community role should be recommended for Market Town status and were identified as:

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

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

- Ilchester
- South Petherton
- Martock
- Bruton
- Milborne Port
- Stoke Sub Hamdon

4.20 It is considered that the bulk of growth outside Yeovil and the Market Towns should be located in 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. This issue is addressed further below when dealing with other settlements. The Settlement Role and Function Study makes clear that RSS development criteria for lower order settlements (i.e. Rural Centres or Policy C as originally identified in the RSS) are open ended and if clear justification for additional development can be identified that meets the relevant criteria then future development could be directed towards other settlements with similar roles and functions.

Consideration of the Settlement Role and Function Study

4.21 The findings of the Settlement Role and Function Study have been discussed with Town and Parish Councils in a series of workshops (Cluster Workshops) that were focussed
around establishing a settlement hierarchy for the District and the distribution of growth within that hierarchy. The implications of not being one of the named settlements in the hierarchy, in terms of limitations to development, were also discussed.

4.22 There was, and is, broad (but not complete) support for the settlement hierarchy put forward by the Settlement Role and Function Study. In relation to Market Town designation Somerton has been supported as such, despite some local concern raised, by virtue of its breadth of employment and service provision. It is also important to have a settlement to take growth in the north of the District to secure the benefits of growth and maintain services in that area. The absence of a secondary school in the settlement is mitigated by the closeness of the school at Huish Episcopi.

4.23 Langport/Huish Episcopi conversely is considered too constrained by flooding issues near its centre to sustainably take the level of growth expected of a Market Town, and is thus considered more suited to Rural Centre status.

4.24 Castle Cary/Ansford Market Town status, whilst locally queried, is considered fully merited by its good retail, employment and services provision.

4.25 In relation to Rural Centres, the limited level of growth proposed at Stoke Sub Hamdon is considered to reflect and mitigate concerns relating to the settlements’ setting, its Conservation Area status and internal road capacity. Ilchester is proposed for Rural Centre status and a level of provision that is constrained to reflect local circumstances. It is felt that some growth will support the maintenance of local services and take advantage of the large local employment opportunities associated with the Royal Naval Air Station nearby. Any growth will be subject to caveats explained in Chapter 7.

Sustainability Appraisal

4.26 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 Hierarchy

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:-

- Castle Cary and Ansford, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Somerton and Wincanton

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 a settlement:-

- Bruton, Ilchester, Langport and Huish Episcopi, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon.
All other settlements will be considered as part of the countryside to which national countryside protection policies apply (subject to the exceptions identified in Policy SS2).

4.27 The settlement hierarchy is shown in diagrammatic form in the key diagram below which also shows key characteristics of the District and main constraints.
Figure 4: Key Diagram of District
Rural Settlements

4.28 The Core Strategy 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 are not considered to be Market Towns or Rural Centres, but where some development to enhance the sustainability of these rural settlements would be acceptable. Examples of how the sustainability of rural settlements can be enhanced include the provision of local employment space, community facilities and housing to meet local needs.

4.29 In rural areas, most new development should be located in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing (including affordable housing), services and other facilities can be provided close together.29 Government policy states that policies should take into account the need to provide housing in rural areas (including the consideration of a Rural Exception Site Policy), in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability;30 and although the focus should be existing towns and identified service centres, some new housing should be provided to meet identified local need in other villages.31 At small rural settlements in particular, this should include consideration of the relationship between settlements to ensure growth is distributed in a way that supports informal social support networks, assists people to live near their work and benefit from key services, and minimise/improve environmental impact.32

4.30 Recent housing development in South Somerset has been dispersed across the District, with around 24% of new dwellings built between 2006-09 being located outside Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres. In order to meet the objectives of the Core Strategy, the criteria for allowing some development in the rural settlements must be carefully restricted to ensure that this dispersal of development does not continue, whilst allowing some appropriate development that will enhance the sustainability of the villages. The overall argument for delivering more sustainable development through the settlement hierarchy is explained above.

4.31 Small scale economic development should be supported where it provides the most sustainable option in villages or other locations that are remote from local centres, recognising that a site may be an acceptable location for development even though it may not be readily accessible by public transport.33

4.32 In 2008, Matthew Taylor MP carried out a review of how planning can support businesses and affordable housing in rural areas.34 This study identified that regional and local plans have tended to prioritise certain narrow environmental indicators (namely to reduce energy use and emissions, measured almost exclusively by transport use) when interpreting what constitutes sustainable development. This emphasis on environmental criteria has been a particular barrier for rural development, at the expense of otherwise potentially beneficial housing and economic development. The study argues that a better balance of social, economic and environmental characteristics should be sought so that truly sustainable communities are created in rural areas (such as South Somerset).

29.[PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth]
30.[PPS 3: Housing]
31.[PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas]
32.[PPS 3: Housing]
33.[PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth]
34.[Living Working Countryside: Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, 2008]
4.33 The South Somerset Settlement Role and Function study states that development could be appropriate for settlements not identified under (now revoked) RSS Development Policy C (Rural Centres) if there is a clear justification, which could include:

- supports rural diversification and provision of small scale employment opportunities in settlements with relatively high economically active population, a young population or limited sustainable transport opportunities;
- maintains the viability of existing community services or adds justification for additional facility provision where there is an identified need;
- meets identified affordable housing need.

4.34 National policy guidance recognises that the opportunities to deliver affordable housing in rural settlements can be more limited, and that the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs is important in rural areas where significant housing growth is not expected. An exceptions policy based approach is a well-recognised mechanism to enable the provision of affordable housing in rural settlements, in locations where housing may not generally be allowed.

4.35 For the purposes of this policy on rural settlements below, affordable housing is social rented housing and intermediate affordable housing as defined in PPS3. Developments solely for affordable housing should remain affordable in perpetuity, enabling local people to continue to benefit from those homes in the long term, and should be limited to the number and type of housing which can be justified based on relevant available evidence. 'Local people' are either current residents or those who have an existing family or employment connection. On occasion there may be sufficient evidence from the Council's housing need register, however, this will need to be supplemented by a Local Housing Needs Survey to identify any additional need not identified in the register (often referred to as 'hidden need'). New and innovative ways of delivering affordable housing in perpetuity, that are acceptable within the national planning policy framework, will also be considered.

4.36 It is important to ensure that the occupiers of the new homes in rural settlements are able to live as sustainably as possible and that they are able to access basic facilities that provide for their day to day needs such a local shop or a primary school when family housing is proposed.

Rural Clustering

4.37 Justification as a Rural Centre could also apply to groups of small rural settlements in the countryside as is made clear in PPS4 where these settlements demonstrate an affinity with each other in the provision and use of services. These general principles have informed the following draft policy.

4.38 Home working is also growing in importance within the rural area as are small-scale live/work units. These are considered further in Chapter 9: Small Scale Economic Development in the Countryside.

4.39 For planning purposes, land outside Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres is considered as 'open countryside'.

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35.[Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2006)]
Policy SS2 Development in Rural Settlements

Development in rural settlements (not Market Towns or Rural Centres) within the open countryside will be strictly controlled and limited to that which justifies a rural location and restricted to that which:

- provides employment opportunities appropriate to the scale of the settlement and/or
- creates, contributes to or enhances community facilities and services to serve the settlement; and/or
- meets identified housing need, particularly for affordable housing.

Development which is commensurate with scale and nature of the settlement, increases the sustainability of the settlement and provides for one or more of the types of development above will be permitted.

Proposals for affordable housing solely on 'rural exceptions sites' will be subject to the following criteria:

- The proposal is limited to the number and type of housing to that which can be justified based on the evidence from a local housing needs survey or the housing need register*;
- There is access to a basic range of services appropriate to the scale and nature of housing proposed;

Appropriate safeguards will be in place to ensure that the housing will remain affordable in perpetuity.

*Indicators to be used in defining local need within the parish or group of parishes are:

- The need for affordable housing should be quantified through a local housing needs survey or the Council’s housing needs register as appropriate. Local is defined as being the parish or immediately adjoining parishes forming a contiguous group around a central parish.
- Existing residents needing separate accommodation in the area (new couples, people leaving tied accommodation on retirement);
- People whose work provides important services and who need to live closer to the local community;
- People who are not necessarily resident locally but have long standing links with the local community, (e.g. people who needed to move back to a village to be near relatives);
- People with the offer of a job in the locality, who cannot take up the offer because of lack of affordable housing; and
- Existing residents who would otherwise qualify for housing or re-housing under the criteria used by the District Council in respect of its housing register including those who by reason of age, infirmity or disability are in need of special housing.
Scale of Growth for the District and the Main Settlements

Housing

4.40 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.

4.41 The revocation of the RSS requires a review of the overall scale of growth appropriate for the District. This review must be informed by local evidence and aspiration to comply with Government aspirations for new "Localism". The Council has reappraised the options formally considered at the RSS Examination in Public (EIP) namely 13,600, 16,600 and the Proposed Modification figure of 19,700 dwellings. Current projections of the Office of National Statistics (2008) still point to a requirement for meeting housing need of 19,700 dwellings, whereas projections of past building rates would suggest the lowest figure, and projections with an anticipated increase (reflecting large greenfield sites now to come forward to boost construction rates) would suggest the middle figure.

4.42 Sustainability Assessment has been undertaken of these three options for growth and the conclusions in relation to the three options are set out below:

13,600 dwelling provision - Conclusion:
Significant under provision of housing compared to household projections would mean the needs of the community are not met, particularly in relation to identified affordable housing need, although this scenario does have the benefit of being an economic-led approach which balances housing with forecast job creation. Less development means that the environmental effects are the lowest of the three options, although negative effects on the landscape and biodiversity will require mitigation. Increase in CO2 emissions is likely, but lower than the other two options due to less development.

16,600 dwelling provision - Conclusion:
Under provision of homes compared to household projections, but evidence suggests that the economy can support this level of housing development. Likely to be negative environmental effects, including development of green field land, increase in CO2 emissions, and additional car traffic. Mitigation measures are recommended to ensure these effects are minimised, such as prioritising sustainable transport modes, avoiding the development of sites of biodiversity value, and sensitive landscaping and design.

19,700 dwelling provision - Conclusion:
Positive effect of meeting the community's need for new homes, and the potential to provide high levels of affordable housing. High level of development could help to make services and facilities more viable, although infrastructure improvements will be required to ensure the effect is not negative. Relative increase in homes compared to job creation in this option will make it harder for those living in South Somerset to access suitable local employment opportunities, and potentially exacerbate outward commuting. Potential for significant environmental impact (particularly at Yeovil) and increased CO2 emissions - negative effect on landscape and townscape, biodiversity, historic environment, pollution, loss of high quality agricultural land, and increased traffic levels.
4.43 On this basis the preferred option for the Core Strategy is for the middle figure of 16,600 dwellings.

4.44 In the light of major economic changes and changes in national policy it would seem prudent to recheck the economic, population and household projections that underlay the 16,600 dwelling option which this Council presented in its response to the now revoked RSS. The Council are now undertaking this work to inform its final view of the appropriate provision figure for housing in the District to be taken into account along with responses to this draft Core Strategy for the Core Strategy Publication document that is to be submitted for examination.

4.45 The early engagement with Town and Parish Councils in determining the appropriate settlement hierarchy outside Yeovil allows a reasonable degree of certainty that the resultant housing provision figure of 8,400 dwellings reflects local aspiration and the new localism agenda. There is also a significant element of pre commitment with houses built since 2006, or under construction or with planning permission. 16,600 dwellings is considered a challenging but achievable figure. The figure remaining for growth in Yeovil will therefore be 8,200 dwellings, to be provided by a mix of brownfield and greenfield development as explained in the Yeovil section of this document. This figure for Yeovil is presented as a provisional figure subject to local views and aspirations and clarity about economic projections and brownfield supply. A higher figure of 11,400 dwellings for Yeovil was originally proposed under the higher District Wide provision figure of 19,700 in the revoked RSS whilst a Yeovil provision of 5,300 would be suggested by the lowest figure of 13,600 dwellings for South Somerset.

4.46 The split between brownfield and greenfield provision for Yeovil is set out and explained below in the Yeovil section. In relation however to the provision outside Yeovil and its immediate environs an assessment has been undertaken starting from responses to the Issues and Options report and taking matters forward through Sustainability Appraisal.

**Policy SS3 District Wide Housing Provision**

Provision will be made for sufficient development to meet an overall District requirement of about 16,600 dwellings in the plan period April 2006 to March 2026 inclusive. Some 8,400 dwellings provision will be made for the Market Towns and Rural Centres and any provision in other settlements justifiable on grounds of enhanced sustainability. Some 8,200 dwellings provision will be made for Yeovil on both brownfield and greenfield sites.

**Development outside Yeovil**

4.47 The Issues and Options report presented, in Option S3, three scales of growth for development below Yeovil in the settlement hierarchy (the level for Yeovil being fixed at that time by the RSS). These were development in the Market Towns only, development in a limited number of both Market Towns and Rural Centres and development more evenly spread across all Market Towns and Rural Centres. A mixed response was received. Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken as a key mechanism for choosing a preferred option.
4.48 Three detailed options were appraised as illustrated in Figure 5:

- **Option 1:** Dispersed growth (current dispersed development rates occurring 2006 - 2009 were projected over the plan period)
- **Option 2:** Balanced growth (Development focussed in Market Towns and Rural Centres/other settlements in a 2:1 ratio hence Rural Centres would achieve around 5,800 dwelling completions in the plan period)
- **Option 3:** Concentrated growth (concentrated in the Market Towns solely after accounting for the development that has occurred within the District to date since 2006).

**Figure 5: Options for Spatial Distribution of Growth outside Yeovil**

4.49 The main findings of the Sustainability Appraisal were that:

**Option 1:** Dispersed growth
The outcomes of a dispersed approach to development leads to mostly negative effects, including lack of access to services, increasing the need to travel, increase in CO₂ emissions, and the impact on the landscape and townscape of rural settlements. There is greater scope to meet affordable housing need in rural areas, but this may mean the need in Market Towns and Rural Centres is not met. This option scores most poorly of the three strategic options.

**Option 2:** Balanced growth
This more balanced approach to the distribution of development has many advantages over Option 1 by ensuring better access to jobs, shops, and facilities and services. This
should help reduce the need to travel in the District. The focus on Market Towns and Rural Centres will allow housing need in the larger settlements to be met, whilst limiting new housing in rural settlements where there is generally poor access to jobs, services etc. The landscape and townscape of rural settlements should be better protected than Option 1. Overall, this option performs best of the three strategic options in terms of sustainability.

Option 3: Concentrated growth
Greater concentration at the Market Towns would enable good access to services, facilities, jobs and shops for new residents. However the economic benefits of new development would be limited to Market Towns and not spread as widely as Options 1 and 2 - potentially to the detriment of jobs and services in other settlements, which could mean travel is increased in rural areas. This option would result in limited housing provision in rural areas, particularly affordable housing, which would mean rural needs are not met, and housing affordability worsens.

4.50 On the basis of this assessment the second option for balanced growth is preferred.

4.51 In moving from the broad strategy of balanced growth existing commitments need to be reviewed, and potential and constraints to growth considered in line with the settlements' identified roles and functions and local aspirations for growth. This work was undertaken in the context of the workshops with Town and Parish Councils and other stakeholders on a settlement by settlement basis and is set out in more detail in the next section.

4.52 The overall outcome is set out in summary form in Figure 6: Proposed Settlement Hierarchy and Scale of Growth (housing) and in policy SS4 below. The key parameters emerging from this work and determining the outcome in terms of proposed growth for settlements and in particular the Market Towns and Rural Centres are :-

- Housing development within the District will be through redevelopment and infill development as well as through conversion of buildings and, on occasion, residential mobile homes;
- Greenfield development will be required for both Yeovil and Chard and these are the subject of strategic location and allocations provisions within this Strategy;
- Other Market Towns and Rural Centres are expected to require greenfield development at some time over the plan period and indications of location are given;
- These will come forward as and when required in time to provide a continuing supply of housing land through appropriate planning applications that will have been trailed in the first instance by the identification of suitable, available and viable land through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) process in partnership with key stakeholders and, crucially, private sector developers and registered affordable housing providers;
- Chard's larger scale development is in recognition of its size and potential, due to its high degree of self containment and is reflected in the positive planning proposals emerging from the Chard Regeneration Framework. Recognition is also made of the infrastructure phasing and requirements and the market limits to development rates that would indicate that development of the appropriate scale for Chard would entail a build out of the whole site beyond the plan period, with a realistic provision within the plan period of 1,700 dwellings;
Delivering New Housing Growth

4.53 Development areas are identified for Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres and are shown on the proposals map accompanying the Core Strategy

Policy SS4 Delivering New Housing Growth

Provision will be made for at least 16,600 dwellings in the plan period 2006 - 2026 of which 8,200 will be located within or adjacent to Yeovil including an urban eco town extension of 3,700 dwellings

This provision will include development and redevelopment within developed areas, greenfield development identified within this strategy or to come forward through strategic housing land availability assessments, conversions of existing buildings, residential mobile homes and development elsewhere in accordance with the policy on development in rural settlements.

The distribution of development across the settlement hierarchy will be in accordance with the indicative numbers below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SETTLEMENT</th>
<th>HOUSING COMMITMENT (Autumn 2009) - (including saved allocations) - dwellings</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL HOUSING PROVISION - dwellings</th>
<th>TOTAL HOUSING PROVISION - dwellings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSCT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil</td>
<td>3725</td>
<td>4,475</td>
<td>8,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARKET TOWN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chard</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>2,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crewkerne</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilminster</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wincanton</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>1,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerton</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Cary and Ansford</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4,142</td>
<td>1,661</td>
<td>5,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RURAL CENTRE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruton</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilchester</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langport/Huish Episcopi</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martock</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milborne Port</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Petherton</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke Sub Hamdon</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>1,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural settlements</td>
<td>1,199</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>1,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (excluding Yeovil)</td>
<td>6,066</td>
<td>2,349</td>
<td>8,415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No actual figure for provision is made but it is expected that further growth will be permitted where appropriate in line with Policy SS2
Figure 6: Proposed Settlement Hierarchy and Scale of Housing Growth

Yeovil

Proposed settlement status – Strategically Significant Town: Total housing commitments as at Autumn 2009 – 3725 dwellings: Residual additional housing provision (additional to existing commitments including allocations) – 4475 dw: Location of development – 4481 dw within the urban framework and 3,719 dw in an adjacent Greenfield location, preferred option of Greenfield location is land to the south of Yeovil in the vicinity of East Coker/Keyford/Barwick (one of three options considered).

Market Towns (MT) and Rural Centres (RC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Settlement Status</th>
<th>Castle Cary/Ansford</th>
<th>Chard</th>
<th>Crewkerne</th>
<th>Ilminster</th>
<th>Somerton</th>
<th>Wincanton</th>
<th>Bruton</th>
<th>Ilchester</th>
<th>Langport/Huish Episcopi</th>
<th>Martock</th>
<th>Milborne Port</th>
<th>South Petherton</th>
<th>Stoke sub Hamdon</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Commitment at Autumn 2009 (1)</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>RC</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>1863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual additional Housing Provision (Additional to existing commitments including allocations) (2)</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>2191</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1199</td>
<td>8415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Footnotes:
(1) including dwellings built from April 2006 to autumn 2009, dwellings under construction, planning consents and allocations proposed to be carried forward
(2) additional housing proposed for settlements over and above dwellings to come forward from current consents and from allocations proposed to be carried forward.
Employment

4.55 PPS4 is clear that the planning system should facilitate and support sustainable development by making suitable land available for development in line with environmental, social and economic objectives to improve people's quality of life. A fundamental element of the strategy for generating new and better jobs is, therefore, that there will be a ready supply of the right amount and kind of employment land, at the right time and in suitable locations. 'Employment land' refers to those uses falling within planning 'B' Use Classes\(^38\) (B1-offices/light industry, B2-manufacturing and B8-warehousing and distribution), considered employment in its 'traditional' sense.

4.56 There are clearly other major employment sectors, which present different spatial planning issues and are addressed elsewhere, these include town centre retail/leisure uses, health, social services and education and other commercial uses.

4.57 The preferred approach seeks to deliver sufficient employment land, in accordance with the Core Strategy settlement hierarchy, to achieve a broad balance between homes and jobs in a bid to raise the level of self-containment in our settlements and reduce the need to travel. Yeovil will continue to be the prime employment location and so will have a greater proportion of employment land, and the Market Towns and Rural Centres will perform an employment function, which is commensurate with their role in the settlement hierarchy. The growth of businesses in rural areas should be focussed on the most sustainable and accessible locations, therefore the development of employment land will be strictly controlled in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development.

4.58 The key evidence for determining employment land provision is the Employment Land Review (ELR). Stage 3 of the South Somerset ELR brings together the conclusions of Stages 1 and 2 to provide a picture of future employment land requirements for the District's main settlements to 2026, refining a final requirement by taking account of the future housing growth, geography, market conditions and consultation with Town and Parish Councils in each settlement. Stages 1 and 2 of the ELR present a number of sources of information informing the employment requirement of the District.

4.59 The ELR demonstrates that 'traditional' employment land\(^39\) will be required to 2026, particularly for expanding local firms and aspirationally, as the District diversifies and moves towards a low carbon economy.

4.60 Policy SS5 identifies the gross minimum employment requirement up to 2026.

4.61 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). Consequently whilst the amount of land to be delivered through the Core Strategy appears to be substantial, in reality it is much smaller in net terms.

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38.[Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended]
39.[B1, B2 & B8 of the Use Classes Order]
4.62 The preferred approach does not restrict the type (Use Class) of employment land in any of the settlements identified. Responses to the Issues & Options consultation were clear that the Core Strategy should lay the foundations for economic growth, but should not set out prescriptive requirements for sites. The Core Strategy should provide a good supply of land, which will meet the differing needs of business whilst being flexible enough to respond to changing market conditions, including new sectoral requirements. In the spirit of flexibility, designating sites for single or restrictive uses is avoided. 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.

Delivering New Employment Land

4.63 Policy SS5 distributes employment land according to the role and function of each settlement and having regard to the location of proposed housing. The aim is to provide additional employment land in the locations identified in order to improve the jobs to working population ratio. This will enhance the economic self-sufficiency of the District as a whole and the towns, villages and countryside within it, in accordance with the Vision and Spatial Strategy. Increasing the total available employment land in South Somerset will ensure the creation of local jobs, vital for the economic prospects of the District.

4.64 The figures cited in Policy SS5 are not prescriptive or inflexible, but in general terms, delivery of these levels of employment land will ensure sufficient job creation in line with population growth from the new house building proposed within the settlement hierarchy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Employment Land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil:</td>
<td>51 ha (23ha of which will be associated with the Eco Town) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chard:</td>
<td>13 ha *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crewkerne:</td>
<td>10.53 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilminster:</td>
<td>19.4ha *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wincanton:</td>
<td>1.5ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerton:</td>
<td>1.0ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langport/Huish Episcopi:</td>
<td>1.5 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Cary/Ansford:</td>
<td>3.0 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilchester:</td>
<td>1.0 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Petherton:</td>
<td>1.0 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martock:</td>
<td>1.0 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruton:</td>
<td>1.0 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milborne Port:</td>
<td>2.0 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke Sub Hamdon:</td>
<td>0.5 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>107.43 hectares</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy SS5 Delivering New Employment Land

The Core Strategy will deliver up to 107.43 hectares gross of employment land (use class B1, B2 and B8) distributed to the following settlements as a minimum, for the period from April 2006 to April 2026:
* The need identified in these settlements is already committed or partially committed through saved Strategic Employment Sites (Policy EP1) excluding supply already achieved for Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster.

4.65 The figures in SS5 are expressed in gross terms and do not take into account existing supply, (namely any land that is currently under construction or has been committed to employment use either through approval of planning permission or as a Saved Local Plan allocation or vacant land). The net requirement for employment land for the main settlements in the District is explained more specifically in the sections of this document on Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres.

Planning Obligations

4.66 New development usually creates a need for additional or improved infrastructure and community services/facilities, without which there would be unacceptable impacts on local amenities and the quality of the environment. The local authority is committed to ensuring a high quality environment as part of the Sustainable Community Strategy and planning, through the use of planning obligations, is a prime way that the Council can gain the necessary resources to assist in the delivery of this vital infrastructure.

4.67 Planning Obligations are currently delivered by Section 106 Agreements, legally binding agreements between local authorities and applicants/landowners or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer and can be attached to a planning permission. Through their use, proper provision can be made to ensure that new development meets, or contributes to meeting, all of the infrastructure requirements necessary to enable the development to go ahead. It is envisaged that the S106 system will be amended to allow for tariffs or other forms of levy to be applied to development types to assist in funding infrastructure in an area.

4.68 Infrastructure Planning is the process for ensuring that the physical needs of an area can be delivered to keep pace with its population's requirements. The list of possible requirements for a development is not exhaustive and may include cycleways, footpaths, roads, amenity open space, sports and play provision, structural planting and landscape provision and other community infrastructure requirements or be used to replace existing facilities lost through the development. Planning obligations may also include measures for meeting the more strategic needs of the community generated by the development which may require to be met off-site, e.g. health or community facilities including sports and recreation, schools, public transport, utilities or other such community uses.

4.69 Planning obligations can also be used to prescribe the nature of a particular development, for example the proportion of affordable housing to be provided or the mix of facilities or particular uses or the appropriate phasing of development. Most importantly, planning obligations should be directly relevant to the proposed development and should not be used to make good existing deficiencies.

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40.[Vacant land has been granted planning permission (for employment use) but that permission has lapsed as no development has commenced on site]
Phasing and Cumulative Impact

4.70 In order to ensure that infrastructure is delivered at the same time as new development developers will be required to provide phasing plans to demonstrate how necessary services and community facilities will be brought forward. Major infrastructure should be provided in accordance with the timescales indicated within an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and in accordance with specific strategic allocations. Delivery of required infrastructure in a timely manner will be secured through use of appropriate planning obligations.

Policy SS6 Phasing and Cumulative Impact

To ensure that development is properly phased in relation to the provision of infrastructure and to prevent the fragmentation of new neighbourhoods, the Council will make use of planning obligations or other appropriate legal agreements, to ensure that infrastructure is delivered alongside future growth.

Planning Obligations

4.71 Detailed advice on the use of obligations is provided now by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations,\(^41\) which came into force on 6\(^{th}\) April 2010. These regulations place into law, for the first time, the tests for securing planning obligations previously set out in Circular 5/05. This seeks to "reinforce the purpose of planning obligations in seeking only essential contributions which are better suited to use of CIL" (Para 61 CIL Overview).\(^42\) It is now unlawful for a planning obligation to be taken into account when determining planning applications, whether or not the authority has introduced a CIL or not, unless the following 3 tests are met:

a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
b) Directly related to the development; and
c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

4.72 On 25 March 2010, the Department of Communities and Local Government also published a consultation document seeking views on a new policy document on the use of planning obligations. In its final form, this policy document is intended to replace Circular 05/05: Planning Obligations and form an annex to the new Development Management Planning Policy Statement on which the Government launched a consultation on 21 December 2009.

4.73 Use of CIL or a similar tariff based approach, will allow for extending the scope for which contributions can be sought in a more general way and is being considered partly due to the inability of the current system to contribute effectively to large infrastructure needs, particularly where there has been the incremental effect of a number of developments in a locality. Sound infrastructure plans are needed to support the Local Development Framework and to provide a robust base for developing planning obligations, and are a pre-requisite to introducing a tariff based charge.

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41. [SI No. 948, 2010 Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010]
42. [Community Infrastructure Levy An Overview, CLG March 2010. Crown Copyright]
4.74 In the Overview document which accompanied the Statutory Instrument, the Government advises that local planning authorities who wish to levy CIL will need to set out the CIL rates in a charging schedule. This will not form part of the statutory development plan but will sit alongside other documents within the LDF. The Council already has in place a Protocol for Planning Obligations, adopted on 15th June 2006. This currently provides guidance and clarity in relation to common place obligations which are sought in relation to residential development, namely:-

- Affordable Housing
- On site open space and play requirements
- Strategic sport and leisure facilities
- Education
- Travel Plans
- Renewable energy
- Adoption and Maintenance Agreements

4.75 Highways and drainage improvements are an essential element of any scheme, and do not fall within the scope of the current Protocol but will form an integral part of discussions in the formulation of major development proposals. It is the intention that the current Protocol for Planning Obligations will be used to form the basis of a future charging schedule and all existing obligations will be reassessed as part of that document.

4.76 The Council are preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) with partners and infrastructure providers, which will be regularly monitored and reviewed, forming the basis of site specific requests for infrastructure as part of development proposals. The Council are awaiting clarification of the Government's intentions on CIL prior to undertaking further work on a CIL schedule or local tariff.

4.77 Until a tariff based approach or CIL schedule has been adopted, the Council will seek to ensure deliver of necessary infrastructure through use of planning obligations under S106 Agreements.43

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**Policy SS7 Planning Obligations**

Planning obligations will be sought to secure a range of house types and community infrastructure in line with the appropriate policies in the Core Strategy. These will include but not be limited to:-

- Affordable housing
- renewable energy provision and reduction in CO2 emissions
- provision and enhancement of open space and outdoor playing space
- providing for and improving accessibility within the District by a variety of modes of sustainable transport
- improvements to biodiversity assets
- road and highways improvements
- community facilities

Planning obligations may also be sought, where appropriate, from developments to contribute to the delivery of strategic infrastructure to enable the cumulative

---

43.[refers to Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990]
Viability

4.78 The viability of a proposed development will also be taken into account. 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 to viability will be required to accompany any planning application and planning obligations will be reviewed in the context of such a study and in line with the adopted Planning Obligations Protocol June 2006. 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 SS8 Viability

In determining planning applications, the Council will take into consideration the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, and where the need arises for physical and/or community infrastructure from the development either because of its individual or cumulative impact, will use planning obligations to seek prescriptive, compensatory or mitigation measures to secure the necessary social, physical, green or environmental infrastructure 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 contributions sought on a pro rata basis.

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

1. scale and form of development;
2. capacity of existing infrastructure provision;
3. potential impact of the development upon the surrounding area and its facilities.

The appropriate range and level of contributions will be assessed in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the above criteria and, where appropriate, the Council will make use of standard charges and formula.

Where viability of a scheme is marginal the Council will adopt open book negotiations in line with the Planning Obligations Protocol 2006.
5 Yeovil - Vision and Proposals

Spatial Portrait

5.1 The town of Yeovil is located in the south of the County of Somerset, 40 miles south of Bristol and 20 miles east of Taunton and on the Somerset and West Dorset border. Yeovil is South Somerset’s largest town with a population of 43,658.\textsuperscript{44} The town is closely linked to the regional trunk roads of the A303, A37 & A30 and has prospered as a strong economic and cultural base. It is an historic town with evidence of a pre-Roman settlement, medieval growth and a local economy based on cloth and leather manufacturing.

5.2 Yeovil’s residential growth has spread primarily north and west from the town centre and now extends to the edge of Lufton hamlet in the west and Brimsmore in the north. Growth in the Southeast has been contained in most part by a combination of the River Yeo’s flood plain, incised hillsides and historic estates; and the administrative boundary of Dorset.

5.3 Yeovil is an important employment centre within South Somerset, with an employment density of 1.40 (number of jobs to economically active population). The town has a high level of self-containment with over 74.5% able to live and work in Yeovil although there is notable in-commuting from the surrounding area. Yeovil accounts for a fifth of the County’s manufacturing employment, which includes a high proportion of jobs in the aerospace industry. Although Yeovil has a higher than average employment in manufacturing the town is also strong in health and retail employment alongside other sectors.

5.4 The town centre is almost four times the size of the next largest town centre in the District (Chard) and has the widest range of in-centre and out-of-centre retail facilities in South Somerset. The town centre has a good range of food and non-food retail uses, including a large Tesco Extra store and range of national multiple operators. There are two purpose built shopping centres in Yeovil town centre: the Quedam Centre and Glovers Walk. The Quedam Centre is by far the larger of the two centres and is occupied by national multiple retailers and covers a significant part of the northern area of the town centre.

5.5 The town has two mainline railways stations, Pen Mill on the Weymouth - Bristol Line, located in the Southeast corner of the town, and Yeovil Junction on the London Waterloo – Exeter Line, located a mile to the south of the town. The two stations are not connected by rail.

Local Issues

- National and regional population projections indicate significant new demand for housing over the Plan period through natural growth and internal migration;\textsuperscript{45}
- The high cost of housing is pricing a growing section of society out of the housing market, stressing the need for more affordable housing;\textsuperscript{46}
- The edge of Yeovil is rich in flora and fauna with several European protected species of bats being found in the town’s periphery;\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{44}[ONS Mid 2007 estimate]
\textsuperscript{45}[Implications of ONS Household Projections for Somerset 2007 & 2010]
\textsuperscript{46}[Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009]
\textsuperscript{47}[Strategic Ecological Assessment October 2009]
• Yeovil is located within a highly sensitive landscape with the town’s growth now nearing its natural limits within the containment of the river valley to the South and East, escarpment ridge to the north and historic landscapes to the west and south;\textsuperscript{48}

• The town’s retail sector is struggling with the impact of the recession characterised by empty shops in the town centre;\textsuperscript{49}

• Yeovil’s economic base is dependent on a few large employers and must diversify into new markets to retain its employment role and function;\textsuperscript{50}

• Yeovil’s transport infrastructure is reaching its natural capacity (both key routes and junctions around the town) reducing the efficiency of movement around the town;\textsuperscript{51}

• The town’s mainline station at Yeovil Junction is located outside of the town and Pen Mill Station is on the edge not providing an accessible rail access;

• Opportunities for cycling within the town are restricted by the lack of dedicated routes;\textsuperscript{52}

• There is an undersupply of quality sports provision including swimming pool, Synthetic Turf Pitches and indoor facilities;\textsuperscript{53}

• The town centre is not currently meeting its considerable potential as an attractive location for living and for expansion of the town centre. \textsuperscript{54}

**Vision**

5.6 The Yeovil Vision project, commissioned by the South Somerset Local Strategic Partnership is a statement of ambition for the future of Yeovil. The Vision reflects the desire for change in the town; looking to 2025 and beyond with the strapline:

‘Yeovil; the heart of the country… and the mind of a city’

5.7 More specifically, the Vision for Yeovil includes:

• 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;

• 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 so doing attracting appropriate and quality inward investment;

• Developing distinct yet complementary quarters 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.

\textsuperscript{48}[Yeovil Peripheral Landscape Study 2009 & Yeovil Historic Environmental Assessment (2010)]

\textsuperscript{49}[Retail Assessment 2010]

\textsuperscript{50}[Employment Land Review 2010]

\textsuperscript{51}[Yeovil Transport Strategy Review]

\textsuperscript{52}[Yeovil Urban Development Framework 2005 & University of West of England Study - Active and Low Carbon Travel, a Transport Vision for Yeovil]

\textsuperscript{53}[Draft Playing Pitch Assessment 2010]

\textsuperscript{54}[Yeovil Urban Development Framework 2005]
5.8 Supplementing aspirations set out in the Yeovil Vision and emerging from the sustainable Community Strategy (through consultation on the Issues and Options Report) and of further aims and objectives that are set out in the District wide Vision above. In summary these include:

- Being the prime economic driver for the District with a growing manufacturing and service base increasingly characterised by high tech, high wage companies;
- Better linkages within the town and with its surrounding market towns;
- Improved recreation facilities;
- Improved retail and leisure facilities;
- Better linkages with its immediate countryside environment.

**What will the Core Strategy Deliver?**

**Appropriate Scale of Growth**

5.9 The now revoked South West Regional Spatial Strategy envisaged major growth of housing and employment for Yeovil. (11,400 dwellings and 43 hectares of employment land) including an appreciable greenfield urban extension in order to maintain the towns' role and function as a strategically significant town. With this scale of growth looking unrealistic in terms of practical house building rates and limited potential for development within the built up urban area, a significant scale of growth beyond the existing built up area is required to service and enable the Yeovil economy to grow to its expected potential. For Yeovil as a whole a scale of growth of some 8,200 dwellings can be justified to ensure 16,600 dwellings for the District overall. This is the level of growth identified by Baker Associates in their work on appropriate growth levels within Somerset to enable maximum employment growth potential for Yeovil's travel to work area. This work is being reviewed currently in the light of changing economic circumstances and changing government policy. The outcome will inform the process of determining the provision and will be put forward in the Publication Plan for submission for examination.

**Development within the Urban Framework**

5.10 The Urban Capacity Study provides a likely figure for development within the urban framework of Yeovil that, when projected to 2026, presented a figure of 4,481 dwellings in total capable of being achieved.

5.11 As at April 2009 housing monitoring confirms that the Yeovil Urban Area has a total commitment of 3,725 (net) dwellings including those completed, under construction, allocated or committed. The majority of this commitment is within the three Key Sites identified in South Somerset Local Plan 2006. The Key Sites have all gained Outline Planning permission; approximately 830 dwellings at Brimsmore, 620 dwellings at Lufton and 717 dwellings at Lyde Road, part of which is now under construction following submission of two Reserved Matters applications. A Reserved Matters application is currently (at the time of drafting) being considered for the Lufton site.

5.12 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies a further 533 dwelling capacity within the framework of Yeovil. Combining the current commitments with that emerging from the SHLAA gives a figure of 4,179 dwellings as a potential housing provision within Yeovil Urban Framework. Given the opportunity for additional windfall sites
as well, the 4,481 dwelling figure emerging from the Urban Capacity Study therefore appears substantiated. The boundary of the urban area, to which the provision of 4,481 applies, is set out in the Proposals Map.

**Greenfield Development**

5.13 The importance of protecting the countryside for its own sake indicates that the provision of 4,481 dwellings should be taken forward as the appropriate level of development within the urban area of Yeovil. The requirement for 16,600 dwellings overall for South Somerset to meet economic aspirations, together with the local aspirations in the Market Towns and Rural Centres and elsewhere for 8,400 dwellings means that a greenfield requirement of 3,719 dwellings is to be sought adjacent to Yeovil. Evidence indicates that such a scale of growth can be accommodated.

5.14 The overall provision of 16,600 dwellings for South Somerset has been Sustainability Appraised and is considered appropriate. Figures for the Market Towns and Rural Centres have also been appraised.

5.15 The policy principle to protect greenfield land means that a Sustainability Appraisal of the figure for urban land is not appropriate and the resultant 3,719 figure for the greenfield eco-town extension is the residual requirement to meet economic aspirations. The evidence behind these economic aspirations is being revised in light of the changing figures to ensure that it retains credibility given its importance in determining overall employment and housing provision levels.

5.16 To comply with the Government’s localism agenda the appropriateness of these figures in the policy below and potentially higher or lower alternative are a question that this document is seeking to elicit from direct community and stakeholder response.

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**Policy YV1 Brownfield and Greenfield Housing Provision for Yeovil**

Within the overall provision of 8,200 dwellings for Yeovil 4,481 dwellings are to be located within the Urban Framework of the town and 3,719 in an adjacent Greenfield location.

**Location for Urban Extension**

5.17 The now revoked South West RSS planned for an urban extension(s) located in an area of search on the edge of Yeovil. This considered a ‘360 degree’ area of search unconstrained by County or District boundaries. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process has been used to identify the proposed urban extension for Yeovil and demonstrates that the chosen location is the most appropriate given reasonable alternatives.

5.18 Using the SA objectives developed by Scott Wilson within the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report the first stage of the SA of Yeovil’s Strategic Growth Options was carried out in December 2009. This report identified a 360-degree area of search for study, divided...
the search area into six growth options for further analysis and carried out a constraints mapping exercise. The six growths then went through the SA process to provide a provisional score for further discussions.

5.19 In December 2009 the Council invited Yeovil Town Council, neighbouring Parish Councils and local stakeholders including West Dorset District Council to a pair of workshops to identify potential growth options for an urban extension, or extensions, and to use the SA process to consider advantages and disadvantages of possible locations. As an outcome of this process eight possible locations for an urban extension were identified. A further three locations were also identified at a later stage to ensure the full ‘360 degree’ area of search was maintained.

5.20 An updated SA of Yeovil’s Strategic Growth Options was prepared in February 2010 forming a continuation of the SA process by developing and refining options and assessing effects. Through the deletion of duplicate layers and adjustments to reflect constraints boundaries, the eleven options were reduced to six that were then Sustainability Appraised. The report recommends that the northern two options towards Lufton and Yeovil Marsh/ Mudford were least favourable to take new development and would potentially have a detrimental impact on the setting of Montacute House Park and Garden. It can be anticipated that any new development to the north of Yeovil will need to be access via the A3088 at Lufton, due to insufficient capacity on existing roads, and that such a new road would, in turn, generate significant road infrastructure improvements and traffic movements within the vicinity.

5.21 Growth to the north of Yeovil is discounted principally because these locations would significantly increase private transport use, having a detrimental impact on existing road congestion. The County Highway Authority have indicated that any road option traversing the northern fringe accessing to the A3088 would perform poorly because of the huge cost of necessary highway works, the distance from the town centre, and the likelihood of this leading to an overtly car-bound travel behaviour pattern that would not be conducive to the sustainable extension aspirations of the Core Strategy.

5.22 The Highways Agency have indicated that the further away growth can be located from the A303 the less impact it is likely to have on its safety and effectiveness. They have also indicated that any improvements needed to the A303 would need to be entirely funded by the developer(s). The northern options would have a detrimental impact on the setting of Brympton D’Evelcy and Montacute House and its Parkland as indicated above. The northern options are also located furthest from existing community facilities within the town centre and there are few opportunities to improve town centre connectivity via walking or cycling or encourage a healthy lifestyle through use of non car borne modes.

5.23 These options would also have little benefit to existing education deficit in secondary education in the south of the town and be least accessible to the towns' existing employment centres in the south, east and west. Development at Lufton and Yeovil Marsh / Mudford would be located furthest from the mainline railway stations and are least likely locations to encourage public transport use. These directions for growth also present difficulties from a landscape perspective with limited opportunity to avoid impact on high landscape settings. These locations were considered least likely to achieve benefits from passive solar gain or promote energy efficiency. The full assessment of the different locations is set out in the Sustainability Appraisal.

58.[South Somerset, Sustainability Appraisal of Yeovil’s Strategic Growth Options (February 2010)]
5.24 Through further consultation with key stakeholders, two of the remaining four southern options were combined to remove overlaps. In addition land immediately to the west of AugustaWestland airfield needs to be safeguarded from built development. The SA of Yeovil's Strategic Growth Options (August 2010) concludes that the most sustainable three growth options are; Brympton / Coker; East Coker / Barwick / Keyford and Dorset / Over Compton. Figure 7: Yeovil Urban Extension Areas of Search shows these three options. It should be recognised that for any expansion of the urban area difficult decisions will need to be made.

5.25 The three growth Options are not fixed but are indicative and there is flexibility for the final option to sit astride the border of two options should this be considered a more appropriate course of action.

5.26 The following section summarises some of the positive and negative effects for each of the three Yeovil Growth options emerging from the Sustainability Appraisal process, but the full SA should be referred to for the wider picture. The points made are not in any order of priority.
Figure 7: Yeovil Urban Extension Areas of Search
Option: East Coker/Keyford/Barwick

5.27 Positives

- The Highways Agency considers option acceptable;
- Option is considered viable by Somerset County Council Transport Department;
- Option is located in close proximity to Goldenstones Leisure Centre and the Yeovil Country Park maximising opportunities to encourage healthy living;
- Option offers an opportunity to redress the secondary education in-balance within the town;
- Option is located a short distance from the town centre (albeit via Hendford Hill /Ninesprings escarpment which will form a barrier) this option is considered to offer opportunities for walking and cycling;
- Option would facilitate linkages to the National Cycle Network Route 26;
- Option is located on a south facing slope maximising opportunities for passive solar gain and energy saving measures through Passivhaus standards;
- Option is located in an area of medium to high capacity to accommodate built development from a landscape perspective;
- Option is located in close proximity to the Lynx Trading Estate and AgustaWestlands encouraging local employment opportunities;
- Option will bring Yeovil Junction Station into the Yeovil Urban Area strengthening use of rail, economic development prospects and business case for bus links;
- Option also offers links with Yeovil Pen Mill Station;
- Option presents an opportunity to enhance Yeovil Country Park as an Urban Park maximising community use;
- Option presents an opportunity to establish a high frequency figure of eight bus route between the outlying stations, town centre and Urban Extension;
- There is sufficient land available for development;
- Historic Environmental Assessment identified land to accommodate the urban extension can be found without detriment to the historic asset within the wider option area.

5.28 Negatives

- Option will result in a loss of Grade 1 agricultural land;
- Option is located in close proximity to Barwick Country House a Grade II* Listed Building and Newton Surmapville a Grade I Listed Building, both houses are within designated Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Option will impact on the separate identity of the nearby villages of North Coker, Barwick and Stoford. Note: settlement coalescence will be avoided;
- Option will have a negative impact on local biodiversity including resident bat populations;
- Option is constrained by steep topography;
- Option constrained in part by flooding;
- Option is constrained by a single 'A' road access (but has multiple unclassified road links);
- Cost of southern bypass is prohibitive for a road around the south.
Option: Brympton/Coker

5.29 Positives

- The Highways Agency considers option acceptable;
- Option is considered viable by Somerset County Council Transport Department;
- Option is located on in part low-grade agricultural land;
- Option is not unduly constrained by flooding;
- Option is located on an area of medium to high capacity to accommodate built development from a landscape perspective;
- Option has easy access to cycle routes encouraging healthy lifestyle choices;
- There is sufficient land available for development.

5.30 Negatives

- Option may constrain operation of the AgustaWestland Airfield with unknown economic consequences. Development would be constrained to meet noise, bird and other requirements;
- Option is located in close proximity to Brympton D’Evercy Manor House a Grade I Listed Building and designated Historic Park & Garden as well as West Coker Manor;
- Option is not located near any mainline Railway Stations and would not encourage sustainable commuting opportunities;
- Option presents few opportunities to establish viable bus routes;
- Option is located largely on a north-facing slope offering only limited opportunities to maximise passive solar gain;
- Option is constrained by a single A road access and costs of potential Highways Agency requirements and Western Corridor Strategy;
- Option is poorly related to the town centre;
- Option will have a negative impact on local biodiversity including resident bat populations;
- Option will result in the loss of some Grade 1 agricultural land;
- Option will impact on the separate identity of the nearby villages of Montacute, Odcombe, East Coker and West Coker. Note: settlement coalescence will be avoided;
- Historic Environmental Assessment identifies difficulties in accommodating the Urban Extension directly adjacent the urban area without undue impact on the historic assets of the wider option area.

Option: West Dorset/Over Compton

5.31 Positives

- Option is located in an area of medium to high capacity to accommodate built development from a landscape perspective;
- Option is located in close proximity to the Yeovil Pen Mill Trading Estate encouraging local employment opportunities, subject to access being provided;
- Option will benefit from close proximity to Yeovil Pen Mill Train Station maximising opportunities for sustainable commuting.
5.32 Negatives

- Option will impact on the separate identity of the nearby villages of Over Compton & Bradford Abbas. Note: settlement coalescence will be avoided;
- Option will have a negative impact on local biodiversity including resident bat populations;
- Option has unknown transport implications having not been fully surveyed by Somerset County Council Transport Department (as it lies within the remit of Dorset County Council as Highway Authority);
- Option is bisected by rail and river, requiring bridges to access and introducing safety/noise constraints;
- Option is located largely on a west facing slope offering only limited opportunities to maximise passive solar gain;
- Option constrained in part by flooding;
- Option is constrained by a single ‘A’ road access which also bisects the site;
- Option is located in close proximity to Newton Surmaville a Grade I Listed Building a designated Historic Park and Garden;
- Option is constrained by steep topography;
- Insufficient land has been identified for development;
- Historic Environmental Assessment identifies difficulties in accommodating the Urban Extension directly adjacent to the urban area.

5.33 The West Dorset/ Over Compton Option is located in West Dorset and would require consent of the adjacent Local Planning Authority and significant cross border working arrangements; the urban extension would need to be promoted within the West Dorset Core Strategy.

What is the Council's Preferred Option for Growth?

5.34 The Council’s preferred direction for growth is the East Coker/Keyford/Barwick Option. This southern direction has not been developed in the past in favour of the less constrained north, east and western directions because of the steep topography and Historic Country Parks in the southerly direction.

5.35 This long-standing presumption against development to the south is now being challenged by this Core Strategy because all the other directions have reached similar natural barriers. Development to the north has reached the top of the escarpment; a key visual barrier, to the east development boarders the railway and River Yeo divorcing any development from the rest of the town and to the west Brympton D’Every and Montacute House are of great historical value and require protection.

5.36 As Yeovil has now expanded within its natural limits there is a circle of physical, natural and historical barriers that have taken significant consideration by the Council before they are breeched. The southern option is, however, considered the most preferable because amongst the range of positives listed above this Option presents the best opportunity to readdress the balance of development around the town centre although the constraints in this area, including high grade agricultural land, are recognised.

5.37 The Preferred Option for the strategic location for growth for Yeovil is set out in the Proposals Map (relevant Inset).
Policy YV2 Yeovil Urban Extension

Land is required for the Yeovil Urban Extension for strategic growth to provide for the following within the plan period;

- 3719 dwellings;
- 23 hectares of employment land;
- Secondary and primary school provision;
- Identified community and transport infrastructure within the South Somerset Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The preferred option for the strategic location for Yeovil Urban Extension is located on land to the south of Yeovil (in the vicinity of East Coker/Keyford/Barwick).

The Yeovil Extension will be developed to Eco-town standards as listed with the Eco-town PPS the supplement to PPS1. Adoption of Eco-town standards is subject to viability assessment.

Yeovil Urban Village

5.38 The Yeovil Urban Development Framework (YUDF) completed in 2005 identifies a triangle of land between Stars Lane, Park Street / South Street and Dodham Brook for regeneration/re-development. The YUDF proposes this area suitable for around 400 dwellings including a mix of leisure and retail uses at ground floor level. This is a major opportunity to bring investment back into an underused part of the town centre and is considered to be of a strategic scale justifying inclusion in the Core Strategy. The location of the Urban Village is shown on the proposals map.

Policy YV3 Yeovil Urban Village

The Yeovil Urban Village is identified as a strategic location for a mixed-use scheme including 400 dwellings, retail and leisure uses in the town centre.

The Yeovil Urban Village will be developed to Eco-town standards as listed with the Eco-town PPS the supplement to PPS1 and defined within the Core Strategy. Adoption of Eco-town standards is subject to viability assessment.

Urban Village and Extension Eco-town

5.39 The Council are seeking to explore Eco-town standards within Yeovil for two principal reasons:

- the Eco-towns programme fulfils Council aspirations to achieve the highest environmental standards within new development; and
- the standards meet the Council’s commitment to tackle climate change head on.
5.40 The Council have now received a funding commitment from Government to enable it to promote higher standards for energy conservation and CO₂ reduction. This funding applies both to the Urban Extension, irrespective of its final chosen location, and the Urban Village. In addition, money to promote an exemplar project within the Urban Village on the former Glove Factory (Foundry House) site has also been secured.

5.41 A summary of Eco-town standards is presented below for information however a full list of the Eco-town standards can be found in PPS: Eco-towns, a supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1.59

5.42 A summary of Eco-town Standards

- Achieving zero carbon status across the development, including commercial and public buildings as well as homes - a significantly tougher threshold than any existing or agreed targets;
- Allocating 40 per cent of the area within the 'town' to be green space, at least half of which should be open to the public as parks or recreation areas;
- Requiring individual homes to reach the Building for Life silver standard and also achieve 70 per cent carbon savings above current building regulations in terms of heating, hot water and lighting;
- Providing a minimum of 30 per cent affordable housing to provide more homes for social rent and assist those struggling to get on the housing ladder;
- Creating more options for travel so that residents are able to make the majority of their journeys without a car, such as by public transport, walking and cycling;
- Ensuring a minimum of one job per house can be reached by walking, cycling or public transport to reduce dependence on the car;
- Locating homes within ten minutes walk of frequent public transport, a primary school, and everyday neighbourhood services (allowing for the natural geography of the sites);
- Raising the threshold for individual homes so that they must all achieve at least level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which includes standards for household waste recycling, construction waste, water efficiency measures and reduced pollution.

5.43 The study work for the funding secured includes:

- Urban Village Masterplan & Viability Assessment;
- Urban Extension Masterplan & Viability Assessment;
- Renewable Energy Studies;

5.44 These studies will explore, in detail, the viability issues of reaching Eco-town Standards within the Yeovil Urban Village and Extension. Should viability be confirmed the principle of adopting Eco-town standards will be confirmed within the Core Strategy with the design and delivery mechanisms managed through a subsequent Yeovil Urban Extension Area Action Plan.

The Benefits of Eco-town Development

5.45 The Yeovil Urban Village & Extension being established to eco-town standards will act as a National exemplar and will demonstrate the benefits of more sustainable living.

59.[CLG, PPS: Eco-towns a supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 (July 2009)]
Residents of the Urban Extension and Urban Village will have access to green space of the highest quality and in close proximity to the natural environment through Green Infrastructure, offering opportunities for space in and around buildings and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Links to and through the Yeovil Country Park will enable residents to fully experience the benefits of countryside living.

5.46 Housing will be of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of residents and of the highest quality in terms of design standards, water retention and energy efficiency. Zero Carbon will be achieved through low and zero carbon energy generation, minimising waste and maximum solar orientation.

5.47 Access to and through the Urban Extension and Urban Village will give priority to walking, cycling and public transport, reducing reliance on private cars. Services within the Urban Extension will be integrated to ensure that the eco-development will be a genuine mixed-use community, so minimising journey trips and travel times. Accessibility to the retail opportunities within the town centre and transport hubs at the bus and mainline railway stations at Yeovil Junction and Yeovil Pen Mill will be maximised.

5.48 All these are further detailed justification for developing this Urban Extension and Village as part of an Eco-town initiative.

**Yeovil Employment Land Requirement**

5.49 To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 51 hectares

- **Gross Need** - 51ha
- **Supply** - 38.78ha
- **Net Need** - 12.22 ha

5.50 In Yeovil, the identified requirement through the Employment Land Review (ELR) is for 51 ha of gross employment land, 23ha of which will be in the Urban Extension. This is set out in more detail within the figure below. The Urban Extension is proposed to follow Eco Town principles, meaning that the development will comprise much higher, minimum standards than would normally be required and so this high level of employment land is provided on the basis that as a driver of change, the Eco Town needs to act as an exemplar and it is important to ensure that there is sufficient employment land for those persons living there, to encourage them to live and work in close proximity should they so desire. The planning process can only provide the land for a place designed along eco-town standards but sustainable living is about encouraging a shift in lifestyle for those who choose it and thus it is necessary to provide employment opportunities for people who want to live more sustainably through living and working in close proximity.

5.51 In addition to the Eco Town requirement, 28ha of land is required to support the rest of Yeovil with employment. There is currently a supply of approximately 39ha, leaving no quantitative shortfall for the LDF period up to 2026. Land off Bunford Lane (Saved Local Plan Proposal ME/WECO/1) will deliver a high quality business park, which is strategically significant for the District (see Policy EP1).

5.52 The Yeovil Urban Area net need figure of 12.22 hectares is not considered a prescriptive or inflexible figure but instead represents a minimum target to which Yeovil should aspire. Further land and premises with potential to accommodate employment
development maybe expected to become available during the plan period and where appropriate these will be supported. The proposed Eco-town extension will be the main location for the identification of additional employment land. Other sites over and above existing supply and new Eco-town provision maybe appropriate to ensure a suitable range of sites will be available. These should be located within the framework of the town and can be delivered through the Development Management process. This approach reflects Yeovil’s importance as the main economic driver within the District.

5.53 The amount of employment land required for 4,500 dwellings within the urban area of Yeovil is 28ha and for the 3,700 dwellings to be located in the urban extension is 23ha. These are gross figures without regard for existing supply and are derived by:

1. estimating population likely to occupy the dwellings;
2. converting this population to economically active persons;
3. splitting the economically active persons between B class employment and non-B class (non-industrial) employment (land provision for non B class employment is not being sought as part of Policies SS5 and YV2);
4. for B class employment, converting each job into an estimated amount of employment floorspace (with a different conversion factor for different types of employment, ie light industrial, general and warehousing);
5. converting employment floorspace into wider employment land requirement by established floorspace to employment plot ratios.

The Employment Land Review (ELR) sets out this process and associated figures in detail.

5.54 Whilst some of the new residents in Yeovil will work outside Yeovil the high self containment of the town and high propensity for inward commuting from the wider Travel to Work area to Yeovil town makes provision to accommodate all economically active persons appropriate. The aspiration for self containment in the urban extension similarly justifies this assumption.

5.55 The saved Local Plan allocation at Bunford Lane will contribute towards meeting the gross land requirement as will other existing sites.

**Yeovil Community Infrastructure**

5.56 The Council is preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for South Somerset that will identify what infrastructure is needed for Yeovil, what is proposed and what funding is required. The District wide IDP, when formally published, will assist in identifying suitable provision for community and transport infrastructure opportunities for Yeovil.

**Yeovil Retail Capacity**

5.57 The retail capacity study update (2010) presents information about the retail provision and prospects for Yeovil. A strategy emerging from this study and taking funding into account is set out below.

5.58 Attempts to plan for a further increase in Yeovil’s market share for convenience and comparison shopping have the potential to unbalance the retail hierarchy in the District and have impacts upon other centres. A constant market approach to retail provision will be the most suitable for Yeovil and allow sufficient retail provision to be provided to serve the
planned new housing growth in the town. The focus for new retail development should be on the plans to extend the Quedam Centre (although the Council’s resolution to approve its development subject to a detailed section 106 agreement being concluded renders a specific strategic allocation unnecessary). The existing allocation for improvements to the eastern side of the Town Centre should also be retained and the cattle market area should also be identified. There will be capacity for an additional 900sq m net of convenience floorspace by 2014, rising to 2,200sq m net by 2021 and 3,100sq m net by 2026. The extension of the Quedam Centre will soak up any significant short to medium term comparison capacity, although there will be longer term capacity of 10,000sq m net by 2026. The identified sites within and around the town centre identified above will be able to accommodate the short-term convenience need and short to medium term comparison floorspace need.

Modal Shift for Yeovil

5.59 With some key transport corridors already under significant pressure particularly at peak times it is important to ensure that Yeovil delivers its growth in a way that is as sustainable as possible and reduces the need for reliance on car movement in order to access vital goods and services. Sustainable access to the retail centre in town as well as to strategic employment sites 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 air quality, severance and congestion at strategic junctions.

5.60 With an additional 8,200 dwellings envisaged for Yeovil 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.

Active and Low Carbon Travel a Transport Vision for Yeovil

5.61 The University of the West of England have recently completed a report on behalf of the Department of Health South West - "Active and Low Carbon Travel a transport vision for Yeovil" (May 2010). The report advocates an innovative approach to integrated transport planning aimed specifically at Yeovil. 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 & well-being, economic development, traffic reduction, climate change, minimising pollution (noise & emission exposure), and biodiversity.

5.62 The report proposes 8 'seed' projects:

1. 'Winning Hearts and Minds' - an initial project with a high profile physical works programme and marketing campaign focussing on a core walking and cycling network aimed at convincing key organisations and residents that Yeovil will become a healthier and more positive place to live, work and visit.
2. ‘Park and Go’ - focuses on reducing congestion in the town centre. The report advises that this needs to be seen in tandem with Project 3 ('Public transport figure of 8”) and differs from traditional park and ride.60

60.[Yeovil Transport Strategy Review 2, Paragraph 5.8]
3. 'Public transport figure of 8' - seeks to provide a frequent and reliable public transport route providing links between residential areas and key local destinations achieving short journey times and actually "going where people want to go".

4. 'Safe and Liveable Residential Streets' - aimed at ensuring that the programme of active travel reaches deep into neighbourhoods.

5. 'Green and Complete' - the establishment of green corridors to complete the walking and cycling network. The project switches from easy wins to the important desire lines and routes not yet catered for.

6. 'Lysander Road improvements' - aims at achieving a better balance between car drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users along this key Yeovil radial road.

7. 'Active Access over the A30' - looks at reducing the severance between the residential areas to the Northwest and Northeast and the town centre caused by the A30.

8. 'Journey to work' - a programme of education and direct intervention designed to encourage employees to use alternative modes of travel to the car when travelling to work.

5.63 The report recommends that a feasibility study be undertaken specifically focusing on determining the wider social benefits of implementation. It also calls for the creation of an adaptable funding plan to implement the projects over a 10 - 15 year period from a variety of sources, including regional and national sources.

5.64 Prior to such feasibility studies being carried out it is difficult to factor these projects into the Core Strategy. However, there is a very strong link for building some of these projects into the Eco Town and the Urban Extension. In particular the concepts of projects on Park & Go, public transport for journeys to work, Safe and Liveable Residential Streets and Green and Complete (a walking and cycling network) have the potential to be included in the modal shift options for the Eco Town. These measures form an integral part in the delivery of the permeability, infrastructure and routes/services required to deliver modal shift.

5.65 The Eco Town modal shift policies will require feasibility and transport assessment work in any case and it would be desirable for this work to be carried out in tandem.

5.66 The Yeovil Transport Strategy Review 2 (YTSR2) will consider the feasibility of Park and Ride. Any eventual project needs to be costed and, a means of securing money established. The YTSR2 will look at these measures and the outcome will be fed into the Core Strategy Publication Plan for submission for Examination.

Measures to Encourage Modal Shift

5.67 In addition to the generic policies that support modal shift throughout the District, the urban nature of Yeovil means that further measures can and should be in place to offer greater choice and ability to use more sustainable transport modes and reduce the desire to use the car. These measures include:

1. The encouragement of cycling and walking by:
   a. Providing cycle and pedestrian routes to link the new development with new/existing routes. 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 within 400 metres of the site to facilitate links to and from the site to the wider network. The requirement for the provision of walking and cycling routes should apply to all residential developments of 10 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 1000 sq m; and

b. Providing facilities for cycle parking within the new development commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the SCC cycle parking strategy.

2. Promoting improvements in public transport by providing bus stops, where a bus route exists or can be provided within a reasonable distance, dependent on the scale of the development and existing provision. All new residential developments of 20 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 2400 sq m should provide a bus stop and each stop should include a bus shelter with timetable information. Smaller residential developments with less than 20 dwellings and employment sites with a floor space less than 2400 sq m should contribute a set figure per dwelling or employee respectively towards this provision. Planning obligations will be sought for such infrastructure where this is required for smaller developments in accordance with Policy SS7. A reasonable distance for the provision of bus stops would be:
   Within 400 metres of the development
Or in the case of larger developments of greater than 50 dwellings or with a floor space greater than 3600 sq m 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.

3. Further encouraging car share by providing preferential and quality spaces in car parks for car sharers at employment sites. This should apply to all employment sites with a floor space greater than 1000 sq m.

4. Supporting the integration of transport modes to ensure ease of interchange (e.g. walking and cycle links to public transport and ease and reliability of interchange between various bus, rail and express coach routes, enabled by ‘through ticketing’ and ‘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 interchanges within the town. The prime interchange sites currently are at Yeovil Borough and the Bus Station, and reference to the Bus Station interchange is shown on the Proposals Map (relevant Inset Map) reflecting aspirations to provide such an interchange. All residential and employment developments should contribute to the improvements of transport interchange on a cost per dwelling basis. The measures to improve transport interchanges are dependent on the County Future Transport Plan (FTP) & YTSR2. These need to be costed and the business case can then be made and a contribution based on per dwelling (and for employment floorspace) based on a proportion of the additional residents travelling sustainably.
5. 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 also 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’ using enhanced Smartcard technologies. Contributions to QBPs should apply to all residential and employment developments. The measures to deliver QBPs in Yeovil need to be costed and are dependent on the outcomes from the County Council FTP and the YTSR2. Subject to those outcomes, the business case can then be made and a contribution based on per dwelling (and for employment floorspace). In some cases this will be specific to site where they are major developments and either new or major enhancements to routes are required. In other smaller developments it is more appropriate that they contribute to the general improvements to the town network.

6. Personalised Travel Planning has been very successful in achieving modal shift in other areas. Schemes in Brighton, Bristol, Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester have delivered significant modal shift typically reducing car driver trips amongst the targeted population by around 11% and the distance travelled by car by 12%. Individuals (residents and employees) are specifically targeted 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 Yeovil. It requires a specific Personalised Travel Plan Coordinator to deliver the service, (development in both Yeovil & Chard will potentially contribute) and be funded on a per dwelling (and for employment floorspace) basis.

Policy YV4 Modal Shift for Yeovil

In addition to the generic policies that support modal shift throughout the district all new residential and employment developments in 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:
• The improvement of existing public transport services; or
• New services and the establishment of a Quality Bus Partnership (or enhancement an existing QBP) to ensure frequent and high quality routes serving the development.
• 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

New residential developments of 10 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 1000 sq m should:

v. Provide cycling and pedestrian routes both to and permeating the site and protect and improve existing cycling and pedestrian routes where necessary within 400 metres of the site to facilitate links to and from the site to the wider network.

All new residential developments of 20 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 2400 sq m should:

vi. Provide bus stops, bus shelters and timetable information, dependent on the scale of the development and existing provision, within 400 metres of the development or in the case of larger developments of greater than 50 dwellings or with a floor space greater than 3600 sq m within 400 metres of each dwelling or unit in the development where a bus route exists or can be provided within that distance. Planning obligations will be sought for such infrastructure where this is required for smaller developments less than 20 dwellings and employment sites with a floor space less than 2400 sq m in accordance with Policy SS7.

All employment sites with a floor space greater than 1000 sq m should:

vii. Provide preferential and quality spaces in car parks for car sharers at employment sites

Modal Shift for Yeovil Eco Town and Urban Extension

5.68 The proposals for the Eco Town and Urban Extension offer additional opportunities to deliver modal shift by further reducing the need and desire to use the private car. Government guidance seeks 50% of travel originating in Eco Towns to be by sustainable means. Measures to achieve this level of modal shift include:

1. Through intrinsically linked well-designed infrastructure for footpaths and cycle ways ensuring separate 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. These should be in place from first occupancy.

2. 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 areas adjacent to the Eco Town's shops and associated costs.

3. Car parking at Eco Town facilities, employment sites and shopping centre including the supermarket should incorporate car park management measures including charging ensuring that priority is given to electric vehicles and car use for these short journeys is further discouraged due to parking costs. Charges also need to be set at low rates to discourage the perverse incentive of travelling further by car to access these services within town centre.
4. Offering a traffic-free environment immediately adjacent to housing at designated secure locations with limited residential parking separated from the residential areas. This will need to overcome the anti-social behaviour issues common with 1970’s style peripheral parking in garage courts. 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 visible. The cars also should be easily accessed by the owners on foot, whilst any actual journey by car to access facilities both in the Eco Town and in the town centre and the daily commute should take a longer route. The object is to reduce the desirability of using the car for those short journeys, rather than restrict car ownership in itself. The thresholds for car parking should be no greater than those designated for town centre sites.

5. Set up an Electric Car Pool scheme (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 infrequent journeys that practically can only be carried out by car.

6. Providing low emission bus routes separated from private motor traffic to deliver segregated routes 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.

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

8. Designing sustainable links (walking, cycling & bus routes) beyond the site to enable easy access from the Yeovil Eco Town and urban extension to the town centre, main employment sites, transport interchanges, health and educational establishments.

9. 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 in order to kick start and ensure induced travel habits from the outset. 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 Eco Town & Urban Extension would then be required to implement these policies.

5.69 In addition to the generic policies that support modal shift throughout the District, Yeovil Policies YV4 and YV5, possible schemes within the proposals for the Eco-town and Urban Extension could include transport policies to ensure that an even greater number of journeys are by sustainable means.

5.70 These specific policies could incorporate projects from the UWE’s “Active and Low Carbon Travel a transport vision for Yeovil” study. (The 8 seed projects referred to in the Modal Shift for Yeovil Section). Similarly, as envisaged in the UWE study, these major
sustainable transport projects will be dependent on national funding through the prioritisation of low carbon transport schemes.

Policy YV5 Modal Shift for Yeovil Eco Town

(To deliver 50% of travel by sustainable means)

In addition to the generic policies that support modal shift throughout the district and Yeovil the Eco Town developments should provide:

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

In addition the Yeovil Eco Town developments should contribute to:

• An Electric Car Pool scheme, with provision for on-going management.
• 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.
• A comprehensive network of real time public transport information for bus and train travel.
• A Quality Bus Partnership to deliver modern desirable bus routes with a frequent service and clean vehicle technology.

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 Eco Town and urban extension to the town centre, main employment sites, transport interchanges, health and educational establishments and other community facilities.
6.1 The preferred Spatial Strategy identifies six Market Towns based on the findings of the South Somerset Settlement Role and Function study and the outcomes of the Town and Parish Council "Cluster meeting" workshops. 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 six identified settlements are Castle Cary/Ansford, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Somerton and Wincanton. Growth reports of the individual settlements have been undertaken by the District Council and these form part of the LDF Evidence Base. The key issues, local aspirations, challenges and indications of what the Core Strategy will deliver for each settlement are discussed below.

6.3 Attention is drawn to the different scale of growth proposed for Chard, 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.

**Castle Cary/Ansford**

**Spatial Portrait**

6.4 The settlements of Castle Cary and Ansford lie adjacent to each other on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels beside the River Cary. The charm of Castle Cary/Ansford lies in intimate groupings of buildings, changes in ground level and the alignment of buildings on the medieval streets.

6.5 Castle Cary/Ansford 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. Built after the Norman Conquest a motte and bailey castle also overlooks the town. The area around the settlement has high archaeological potential.

6.6 The combined settlements have a population of 3,095 making it the 10th largest settlement in South Somerset. The isolated nature of the town and its largely rural surroundings mean that its serves a more strategic service role than its population would usually demand.

6.7 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 2001 Census confirms that the town’s economically active population is half that of the town's total population and largely matches the town's 1,100 jobs. The town’s major employers are based on the Torbay Road Industrial estate and include Centuar 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.

61. [ONS Mid 2007 estimate]
6.8 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.

6.9 To the north of the town Castle Cary/Ansford benefits from access to its railway station located on the West of England and Heart of Wessex lines. The town is not a major tourism destination although visitor attractions including a museum, small circular eighteenth century gaol and traditional market hall do attract tourist interest. The town is on the Monarch’s Way long-distance footpath.

Local Issues

6.10 From engagement with local representatives in the Town and Parish Council "cluster workshops" undertaken in producing this draft Core Strategy local issues identified are:

- Maintenance of the town’s services;
- More employment land for small-scale industries;
- Affordable housing for young families;
- A greater range of family housing;
- Improved road infrastructure and introduce parking enforcement to reduce on street parking issues;
- The town centre is liable to flooding;
- Maintaining the quality of the local environment especially the town’s high landscape quality;
- To protect Secondary education provision from falling numbers; and
- To maintain Castle Cary train station and encourage links with the town.

Local Aspirations

6.11 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 (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.

6.12 The Town and Parish Cluster Meeting workshops in late 2009 identified the need 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 tenure imbalance, improvements to road and drainage infrastructure (including parking and the alleviation of congestion) and the protection of retail and educational facilities.

What will the Core Strategy Deliver?

6.13 The South Somerset Role and Function Study (April 2009) identifies Castle Cary/Ansford as performing an employment function and identified retail and community role for the town and surrounding area. Castle Cary/Ansford is designated a Market Town in this Core Strategy and such designation will enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role.
Section: 6 Market Towns - Visions and Proposals

6.14 To maintain the town’s service role, Castle Cary/Ansford is expected to deliver 500 new dwellings over the plan period. Existing commitments of 238 dwellings (October 2009), leaves a further 262 dwellings to be accommodated over the plan period. The additional level of growth reflects the town’s role and function within the District’s settlement hierarchy.

6.15 This level of provision will support the town centre business role and help support community facilities such as the local secondary school and health provision.

6.16 The outcome of the Employment Land Review Stage 3 (ELR) of Castle Cary/Ansford is summarised below.

**Castle Cary/Ansford**

To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 – 3.0 hectares

- **Gross Need**: 2.86ha
- **Supply**: 10.09ha
- **Net Need**: 0ha

6.17 To support an additional 500 dwellings over the plan period there is a need for approximately 3 hectares of employment land in Castle Cary/Ansford. 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 on saved Local Plan allocation ME/CACA/I in 2008. 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 Castle Cary and Ansford the Core Strategy should deliver approximately 3 hectares of employment land. The 3 hectares is required in order to provide Castle Cary/Ansford with opportunities for employment growth outside the expansion of employment on the Royal Canin site.

6.18 Sustainability Appraisal of Castle Cary/Ansford identifies three areas as potential locations for strategic growth. Option 1 is located to the north of Torbay Road, and east and west of Station Road; Option 2 is located to the north of Ansford Hill and Ansford School; and Option 3 is located to the south of Ansford School & Solomans Lane.

6.19 The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that Option 1 has the advantages of being well related to existing employment opportunities and the town centre. This Option is only a medium distance from both primary and secondary school provision and is located on land which will have the least impact on the periphery landscape. Option 2 is well related to the secondary school and has opportunities to link with the town’s train station. However, this Option has negative impact on a landscape of high value and for this reason is not a preferred location for growth. Option 3 is again well related to Ansford School and the town centre. This Option is a medium distance from the primary school and health provision. All Options will result in a loss of greenfield land and have a negative impact on feeding grounds for bat populations in the local area. Option 1 is the preferred option and is shown with the alternatives on the Proposals Plan and greater detail on determination of the appropriate Option of development is contained in the Sustainability Appraisal explanation of the Report.

6.20 The South Somerset Retail Capacity Study update (2010) indicates that the ability to significantly increase the amount of comparison goods floorspace for Castle Cary/Ansford 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 Castle Cary/Ansford 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.

6.21 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.

6.22 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).

Chard

Spatial Portrait

6.23 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 to the west and north which set an important backdrop to the town and a contrast to development. It is South Somerset’s second largest town with a population of 12,98362 and has a strong heritage of innovation and manufacture. The town is closely linked to the regional trunk road of the A303 and the A30 & A358.

6.24 Residential growth in Chard has spread primarily to the east and west with growth to the north east being contained by the Chard Reservoir Nature Reserve.

6.25 The ongoing recognition of Chard’s employment heritage, coupled with the high proportion of major manufacturers 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, given it’s role and function, there is notable in-commuting from the surrounding area.

6.26 Chard town centre has a varied range of food and non-food retailing concentrated around the High Street and Fore Street with a large Tesco store in an edge of centre location.

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

6.28 Chard Junction railway station closed during the 1960’s but main line train connections are available at nearby Axminster.

62.[ONS Mid 2007 estimate]
Local Issues

- National and regional population projects indicate that through natural growth and internal migration there will be significant new demand for housing over the plan period. (Census 2001 and Mid Year updates);
- The high cost of housing is pricing a growing section of society out of the housing market, stressing the need for more affordable housing. (Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2009);
- Over the years Chard 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 not bringing forward proposed new housing, employment and community facilities and supporting infrastructure;
- A number of the traditional industries within Chard are in decline and currently the office market is weak, primarily supplying small office suites of converted accommodation occupied by local firms. (Chard Regeneration Plan);
- There have been a number of schemes brought forward in recent years, which has resulted in the loss of employment land and community and leisure facilities have not kept pace. (Chard Regeneration Plan & SSDC Employment Land Review – Stage 2, 2009);
- Lack of immediately available employment land. (SSDC Employment Land Review – Stage 2, 2009);
- Chard has a low skill/low wage employment profile therefore there is scope for developing a strategy for improving the basic skills base in the town. (Chard Regeneration Plan);
- As a destination for shoppers and people seeking leisure activities, it is losing out to nearby towns such as Taunton and Yeovil where there are more higher value retailers. (Chard Regeneration Plan);
- 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 required (Chard Regeneration Plan);
- Utilities infrastructure will have to be changed and improved to accommodate growth. (Chard Regeneration Plan);
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004 shows that some areas in Chard are amongst the 20% most deprived in the UK.

Chard Regeneration Framework

6.29 An autonomous planning exercise in the form of the Chard Regeneration Framework has been running whilst the Core Strategy evidence base has been under preparation and the ‘cluster workshops’ undertaken with local communities. 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.
6.30 The plans to transform and regenerate the town of Chard moved forward in early 2009, when it was announced that South Somerset District Council, the South West RDA, Somerset County Council and Chard Town Council had appointed LDA Design - a leading masterplan consultancy - to prepare long term place-making plans for the town that addressed the issues set out in the “Chard Regeneration Framework” brief for consultants.

6.31 As part of a master-planning process LDA Design produced the Chard Regeneration Plan (October 2009 - 1st draft) and have now concluded a final consultation draft.

6.32 The intention from the outset was to ensure that the main strategic aspects of the Framework would be taken forward through the Core Strategy to ensure the Core Strategy’s primacy and clarity for developers and public alike and ensure statutory underpinning of the main output from the Framework.

6.33 The Chard Regeneration Framework exercise has involved pro-active local engagement with key stakeholders and the local community and developers in the context of the South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy and in particular the aims and objectives of that document.

6.34 The Vision, scale and location of growth, land use, nature of growth, phasing and planning obligation policies emerging from the Framework have all been incorporated as an integral part of this Core Strategy. This will receive wide spread public engagement and consultation and statutory underpinning as a consequence. The consultation process in relation to the Core Strategy (principle phasing elements) and the Chard Regeneration Framework is being co-ordinated to ensure consistency between the 2 plans and understanding by the public of the relationship between them.

**Chard Vision**

6.35 A Vision for Chard has been developed in conjunction with the local community and stakeholders through the Chard Regeneration Framework. The Chard Regeneration Framework 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.”

6.36 Underlying this Vision Statement are 3 key aims:
What will the Core Strategy Deliver?

Scale and Location of Growth

6.37 Behind each of these aims the Regeneration Framework presents, in more detail, specific objectives and aspirations to help achieve them and these are available to view in the Framework document.

6.38 The Chard Regeneration Plan presents 4 options for the future growth of Chard. These options arose out of the desire to focus regeneration and growth on those areas that have the greatest need for, and capacity to accept change. Those areas were identified as generally being those that fall into the following categories:

- Capable of contributing to the creation of an urban pattern that strengthens and enhances the existing urban form of the town;
- Areas that are fragmented or with a poor urban quality within which there is opportunity for change;
- Sites that are available for change due to development opportunities arising from relocation and/or change of use;
- Streets and spaces with opportunity for enhancement to improve the pedestrian experience.

6.39 Impacts on areas of recognised townscape and heritage interest and valuable areas of green spaces were avoided. In addition to these constraints the ability to accommodate growth was also examined in terms of the topography and hydrology, landscape and visual sensitivity, nature reserves, vegetation and open space within Chard.
6.40 Four options for growth are presented:

**Figure 8: Chard Growth Option 1 - Town Centre Regeneration**

6.41 This development option would focus on regenerating the town centre and only deliver low levels of housing growth. This option would include:

- Implementing the regeneration initiatives in the town centre such as the Back Plots/Boden Mill, Green Heart, East End and public realm enhancements to High Street/Fore Street;
- The relocation of the Chard Town Football Club to the north of the town and associated employment development;
- Some development of the eastern growth area (previously identified in the South Somerset Local Plan and developed further through the Framework Plan) to fund traffic signalling improvements in the town centre. Options for the location of this development are indicated on the Phase 1 development plan;
- Housing development on the vacant football club site;
- This option would consist of approximately 410 dwellings.
6.42 This option would follow on from the town centre improvements and continue the development of the eastern growth area, focusing on place making in the Millfield area to create a new district centre and delivering some additional highways links to the east of the town to improve highways capacity. This option would include:

- Creating a highways link from the A30 to the Millfield Industrial Estate with additional housing growth immediately south of the A30;
- Improving the Millfield road from town to the new mixed use district centre south of Millfield;
- Completing the highways link from the A30 to the A358 plus associated housing development;
- This option will deliver approximately 1366 dwellings.
6.43 This option would continue from Options 1 and 2 and complete the growth to the east of the town, creating a second highways link and deliver maximum housing growth to the east of the town. This option would include:

- Delivering additional housing to complete the new communities at Holbear and Millfield;
- Fill out final development plots around Avishayes and;
- Complete the second highways link around the eastern edge of the town;
- This option would deliver approximately 2716 dwellings.
6.44 This option takes the level of development to the full build out scenario of the masterplan and delivers additional housing sites to the north and west of the town. This option would deliver approximately 3485 dwellings. The natural limits to growth are principally dictated by landscape constraints to development.

**Chard Employment Land Requirement**

6.45 In relation to employment land the requirement for Chard to the end of the plan period only is 13 hectares:

Chard
To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 13 hectares
- Gross Need - 13ha
- Supply - 16.39ha
- Net Need - 0ha
6.46 In Chard, this target of 13ha of employment land is derived from the ELR. Within the preferred Option 3 there is provision for this land which will be delivered in phases through the Chard Regeneration Plan. The remaining available supply comes from lapsed planning permissions (2.76 ha) as 0.63ha of land has been completed. As an immediate need for the delivery of some employment land has been identified in Chard, if this cannot be achieved through the Chard Regeneration Framework, or existing permissions, the town will need local provision to provide for the short-term (circa. 2.5 ha), to ensure a range and choice of sites are available. This can be delivered early through the Development Management process.

6.47 The work undertaken by LDA Design identifies up to 14 hectares of employment land as appropriate for Chard. The 1 hectare difference between the ELR and LDA work is not considered significant. However, whilst enough employment land has been identified to meet the need within the plan period, there is still a need to identify employment land to meet housing growth post 2026. Derived from the ELR 6 hectares are required to accommodate that additional residential growth (1 hectare of which has already been identified by LDA) leaving a further 5 hectares of employment land to be identified in the future. This is an issue to be addressed in the long term and should not constrain the growth of Chard over the plan period.

**Sustainability Appraisal of Options**

6.48 Sustainability Appraisal of each growth option for Chard has been carried out using the 14 objectives set out in the South Somerset Sustainability Appraisal Framework. The table below summarises the findings of that appraisal by recording the number of occasions each effect was “scored” for each option:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Significant Positive effect</th>
<th>Positive effect</th>
<th>Negative effect</th>
<th>Significant negative effect</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Uncertain effect</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Option 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.49 The above indicates that Options 3 & 4 bring about the most positive impacts for the town. The 2 areas where significant negative impacts have been identified from Option 4 are objective 8. “Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment” and objective 12. “Minimise pollution (including air, water, land, light, noise) and waste production”. The level of growth proposed by Option 4 results in significant increases in traffic congestion on several key junctions throughout the town and an additional link around the western side of the town would be difficult to achieve and would require additional masterplanning. Option 3 presents the benefits of large scale growth without the emerging disbenefits of undue traffic congestion and pollution and has been selected therefore as the preferred option and is shown as an allocation on the Proposal Map (relevant Inset Plan). The Proposals Map also shows the identified Development Area of the town. The former Key Site KS/CHAR/1 is subsumed in its entirety within the proposed new allocation.
6.50 Option 3 provides a scale of growth that will enable Chard to achieve and maximize its need for employment, housing, retail and associated amenities whilst not re-introducing undue congestion within the internal road network of the town. Option 3 will provide 2716 dwellings in total. In the Plan period to 2026 it will provide 1700 dwellings which, together with existing commitments in Chard, will result in 2191 being built in the plan period and 1016 dwellings beyond 2026.

Chard Growth Area

6.51 In summary proposals for Preferred Option 3 include:

- Approximately 3207 dwellings (within and beyond the Plan period. Includes LDA proposals and existing commitments);
- 19 hectares of employment land (within and beyond the Plan period. Includes LDA proposals plus additional need identified by the ELR post 2026);
- 2 primary schools (within and beyond the plan period);
- 4 neighbourhood centres (Avishayes, Stop Line Slopes, Millfield & Holbear) (within and beyond the plan period);
- Highway infrastructure and improvements;
- Sports and open space provision.

6.52 Growth will also deliver:

- Improved town centre and retail facilities;
- An improved range and quality of housing in the town centre including affordable housing;
- Permeability and connectivity of movements within the town centre will be improved;
- More employment opportunities – additional land and jobs;
- Improved leisure provision with new open spaces and facilities;
- Improved legibility and public transport provision;
- New education facilities;
- Critical mass of the town will be increased significantly to attract some larger employers and retailers.

6.53 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 coming forward as part of Option 3. Mitigation measures will have to be put in place to address this.

Policy CV1 Chard Growth Area

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

- Approximately 3207 dwellings;
- Approximately 19 hectares of employment land;
- 2 new primary schools;
Phasing and Delivery

6.54 LDA consultants have developed a phased approach for growth. The ‘development options’ represent logical stages at which development in the town can conclude or simply pause if necessary before further growth or regeneration takes place. Unlocking the growth and regeneration opportunities highlighted in the report is complex and requires a phased approach to ensure viability and deliverability. The detailed phasing is set out in the Chard Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan prepared by the Consultants.

6.55 The key driver of the phasing sequence set out in the Chard Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (2010) is the need to incrementally increase the capacity of the highways infrastructure to accommodate the traffic flows as the town grows. This requires 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 Option 3, five steps are required to complete the necessary highway infrastructure:

1. Improvements to the A358/A30 Convent Signals in the town centre and East End Gateway improves the operation of the junction and flow of traffic sufficient to allow initial development without major highways infrastructure provision;
2. 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, and also delivering access to the growth area;
3. A connection south from Millfield Road to Forton Road, allowing for greater permeability and linkage between the growth area and the town centre;
4. 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;
5. Completion of the link south between Forton Road and the A358 Tatworth Road to complete the continuous linkage around the eastern edge of the town.

6.56 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. On current build out rates the Millfield Link will need to come forward in approximately 2-3 years time to ensure the growth of Chard is not again curtailed. The Millfield Link provides access to Chard for people entering the town from the east and if implemented together with MOVA (a signal control strategy) will create the capacity for approximately 445 additional homes, employment growth and retail development. South Somerset District Council have taken steps to secure funding to implement MOVA, however in order to bring the whole of Option 3 to fruition and fund the Millfield Link, a level of public sector investment is likely to be needed, as well as private sector contributions. Steps have been taken by the District Council to make a bid seeking to secure that public sector investment (from the Homes & Communities Agency) a decision on whether the bid has
been successful or not is expected later this year (2010) through the emerging Somerset Local Investment Programme and discussions directly with the HCA. If the funding or an alternative provision arrangement is not forthcoming this will have a significant impact on the ability to deliver this level of growth in Chard, and other approaches to delivery will have to be investigated.

6.57 Given that the growth of Chard is dependent on the implementation of the MOVA enhancements to the Convent Signals and the delivery of the Millfield Link it is considered that the following approach should be taken:

- Developments will be able to come forward within the capacity of MOVA subject to a Traffic Impact Assessment;
- At the point at which the capacity created by MOVA is reached all subsequent development phases will be required to contribute to the creation of infrastructure in the growth area and specifically the Millfield Link.

### Policy CV2 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:**

- Approximately 2191 dwellings;
- Approximately 13 hectares of employment land;
- 1 new primary school;
- 2 neighbourhood centres (Millfields & Holbear);
- Sports and open space provision .

**Post 2026:**

- Approximately 1016 dwellings;
- Approximately 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 that the proposal will not compromise the delivery of the total growth.

### Chard Obligations

6.58 The current lack of certainty over Community Infrastructure Levy and Tariff policies of the Government and the likely requirement for a preparatory charging statement require that a more traditional planning obligation requirement for the early phase of development at
Chard is needed. Thereafter, a more formalized tariff or levy approach will be considered appropriate to ensure that the necessary infrastructure required to deliver the overall growth can be achieved and reasonably incurred by the different perspective plans and development of the overall allocation.

6.59 There is wide scale impact of development across Chard on the traffic constraints associated with the central A358/A30 Convent Link junction. The resolution of such issues identified through road development to the east of the town associated with new development will logically mean the application of contributions (and in due course levy or tariffs) to all development in Chard to deliver this effectively and fairly.

6.60 The long build-out period for the overall allocation will necessitate regular re-assessment of appropriate contributions (or levy or tariffs).

**Policy CV3 Chard Obligations**

**Development within phases 1 and 2 of the strategic growth area and other development within Chard will be expected to make contributions (subject to viability) towards essential infrastructure (and in particular the MOVA traffic signalling software and “Millfield Link Road” ensuring continuing traffic flow and circulation within the town) and augmenting sought public funding for the infrastructure.**

**Subsequent phases of the strategic growth area and other development within Chard will be expected to pay an appropriate contribution (tariff) towards necessary infrastructure provision to enable all remaining phases of the strategic growth area and continuing traffic circulation in the town (by virtue of that infrastructure) subject to individual site viability. The contribution (tariff) will be determined in the light of land values and identified public funding that are to be regularly re-assessed over the period of strategic growth area build out and will be specific to delivering infrastructure within or otherwise servicing the town.**

**Retail Provision**

6.61 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 2010 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.

6.62 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 Plan 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. The Retail Study's quantitative assessment indicates future comparison floorspace capacity of 300sq m net by 2014, rising to 1,500sq m net by 2026 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.

Transport Matters

Rail

6.63 The potential re-opening of Chard Junction is considered within the emerging 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 as the transport authority would need to undertake such a study. However it is noted that in their decision not to purchase the land from the British Rail Board (Residuary) (BRBR) Ltd in February 2010 the County Council state that:

"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."

6.64 In the absence of a viability study indicating that there is a business case for the reopening of Chard Junction there is not sufficient evidence to protect the land for future rail use within the Core Strategy.

Local Bus Services

6.65 The Chard Regeneration Framework Transport Assessment concludes that a bespoke town bus service in Chard is unlikely to be commercially viable because both journey times and costs would not be attractive in comparison with what are easily walked trips. It also indicates that "the main thrust of any development of bus services will be 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 same level of public transport accessibility as far as possible." It is indicated that this will need to be achieved through enhancing services between Chard and other towns and proposes that improved services for Chard should be pursued by the following means:

- 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 that part of the services that are in the built up area with the new doubled frequency services, having two route options within Chard such that one bus takes more or less the existing route and one serves the new area.
6.66 In addition to this the Transport Assessment also recommends Chard Town Centre as a transport hub, where all routes stop within a short distance of each other, and where public transport information is freely available. This could establish greater ease of interchange between both bus routes and between other travel modes. Reference to a transport interchange is shown on the proposals map (relevant Inset Map).

Walking and Cycling

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

6.68 The proposed new development allocation is located mainly to the east of the town and 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 bicycle are attractive in comparison with car journeys, and contribute to and form part of a coherent, pleasant and safe network of pedestrian and cycle routes.

6.69 The Chard Regeneration Framework Transport Assessment Report considers using a network of lightly trafficked and off-road links for pedestrians and cyclists between residential areas, the town centre and employment sites. The Cycling Strategy in the Local Transport Plan \(^{63}\) indicated that whilst generally the topography in Chard means that it is unlikely to have very high levels of cycling, 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.

6.70 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.

Measures to Encourage Modal Shift in Chard

6.71 In addition to the generic policy for modal shift the measures needed to achieve significant modal shift in Chard should include:

1. Supporting the integration of transport modes to ensure ease of interchange (e.g. walk or cycle links to public transport, through ticketing etc.) through contributions to a sustainable transport interchange within the town. Currently buses stop at Boden Street and the Guildhall dependent on their direction of travel and the relative close proximity of these sites lend themselves to the delivery of a sustainable transport interchange. As the benefits of an enhanced Transport Interchange in Chard would apply to all new developments, the requirement to contribute to interchange improvements will apply to all residential and employment developments. Developers will be expected to contribute to achievement of an interchange through planning obligations.

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\(^{63}\) [LTP2 produced by Somerset County Council]
2. Improvements to public transport by either improving the existing public transport services and/or establishing a Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) to deliver more frequent and higher quality bus services that aim to provide the doubling of frequency as recommended in the Chard Regeneration Framework Transport Assessment, and serving the town centre, employment health and education establishments.

Contributions to QBPs should apply to all residential and employment developments. The measures to deliver QBPs in Chard need to be costed and are dependent on the outcomes from the County Council Future Transport Plan. Subject to those outcomes, the business case can then be made and a contribution based on per dwelling (and for employment per floorspace) can be sought. In some cases this will be site specific where there are major developments and either new or major enhancements to routes are required. In other smaller developments it will be more appropriate that they contribute to the general improvements to the town network.

Given the compact nature of Chard the benefits of improved public transport will be reaped by all new developments and the requirement to contribute to public transport improvements should therefore apply to all new developments.

3. 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.
   - All new residential developments of 20 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 2400 sq m should provide a bus stop and each stop should include a bus shelter with timetable information (with a commuted sum to provide for on-going maintenance & cleaning).
   - Smaller residential developments with less than 20 dwellings and employment sites with a floor space less than 2400 sq m should contribute a set figure per dwelling or employee respectively towards this provision. Planning obligations will be sought for such infrastructure where this is required for smaller developments in accordance with Policy SS7.
   - A reasonable distance for the provision of bus stops would be:
     - Within 400m of the development;
     - Or in the case of larger developments of greater than 50 dwellings or with a floor space greater than 3600 sq m within 400m 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.

4. The encouragement of cycling and walking by:
   Providing cycle and pedestrian routes to link the new development with new/existing cycling and pedestrian routes by utilising lightly trafficked and off-road links for pedestrians and cyclists. The routes should permeate the site to ensure ease of access around the development. Developments should also seek to protect and improve existing cycling
and pedestrian routes within 400m of the site to facilitate links to and from the site to the wider network. The requirement to provide for cycle and pedestrian routes should apply to all new residential developments of 10 dwellings or more and to employment site developments with a floor space greater than 1000 sq m.

Providing facilities for cycle parking within the new development commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the County Council's cycle parking strategy. The requirement to provide cycle parking should apply to all new residential and employment proposals.

5. 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. This approach also applies to Yeovil development and the resource can be funded by new development in the 2 towns and work across the two towns. The requirement to contribute to personalised travel planning should apply to all residential and employment developments.

6. Further encourage car share by providing preferential and quality spaces in car parks for car sharers at employment sites. This is a requirement for all employment sites with a floor space greater than 1000 sq m.

**Policy CV4 Modal Shift for Chard**

In addition to the generic policies that support modal shift throughout the district the policies for Chard are:

**All residential and employment developments in Chard should:**

i. Contribute to a sustainable transport interchange within the town;

ii. Make contributions to either the improvement of existing public transport services and/or the establishment of a Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) that aim to provide the doubling of frequency of buses on identified routes and offer higher standards. To take effect at first occupancy to enable ‘pump-priming’ of these routes. Developers would be required to provide funding for the general provision of public transport;

iii. Provide facilities for cycle parking within the new development commensurate with the levels and standards designated in the SCC Cycle Parking Strategy;

iv. Contribute to the resource needed for Personalised Travel Planning.

**All residential developments of 10 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 1000 sq m should:**

v. Provide cycling and pedestrian routes both to and permeating the site and improve existing cycling and pedestrian routes where necessary within
All residential developments of 20 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 2400 sq m should:

vi. Provide bus stops, bus shelters and timetable information, dependent on the scale of the development and existing provision, within 400 metres of the development or in the case of larger developments of greater than 50 dwellings or with a floor space greater than 3600 sq m within 400 metres of each dwelling or unit in the development where a bus route exists or can be provided within that distance;

vii. Planning obligations will be sought for such infrastructure where this is required for smaller developments less than 20 dwellings and employment sites with a floor space less than 2400 sq m in accordance with Policy SS7.

All employment sites of more than 1000 sq m should:

viii. Provide preferential and quality spaces in car parks for car sharers at employment sites.

Crewkerne

Spatial Portrait

6.72 Crewkerne, located in the south-west of the District close to the County boundary with Dorset, sits in a headwater valley of the River Parrett in an area of diverse landscape character that includes rolling hills and steep valleys.

6.73 The town lies at the intersection of the A30, London to Lands End road, and the A356 that links the town with the A303 trunk road some five miles to its north and Dorchester to its south-east. Crewkerne is served by the London Waterloo to Penzance railway line, the station being located on its south-eastern side just over a mile from the town centre.

6.74 The town has Saxon origins, with its strategic location for market trade having encouraged steady growth from the 11th century onwards. Cloth manufacture contributed to the local economy through the middle ages, which later grew to encompass sail-cloth and webbing.

6.75 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 C18, as reflected by the extensive Crewkerne Conservation Area. Local limestone buildings plus buildings in golden Hamstone are strong features of local character. The past 60 years, however, has seen the infill of land between these roads, primarily in the form of large housing estates to the north and south. The main employment area lies to the east of the town centre, concentrated to the north side of the A356 road to Dorchester.

6.76 Crewkerne had a population of 7,511 (ONS Mid Year Estimates 2007) making it South Somerset District’s 3rd largest town. The town acts as a strong functional and service centre for the surrounding area, providing some 2500 jobs, a busy town centre and a range of
community services and facilities. In terms of employment self-containment the town is about average compared to the District as a whole with 48% of local residents working locally. Crewkerne does have a higher than average level of manufacturing, which could be subject to decline and undermine its employment role unless replaced by new industry.

6.77 Recent investment in shops in the town centre is helping to support its traditional retail town centre function.

Local Issues and Constraints

6.78 Consultation with representatives of the local community identified the following issues:

- The ‘Peripheral Landscape Study – Crewkerne’ 2008 confirms that there is limited land available beyond the town’s existing footprint, which is taken to include land already allocated for development, that has the capacity to readily accommodate built development;
- Recognition of the special quality of the Conservation Area;
- Town Centre traffic congestion and adverse impact upon the town centre environment;
- Out commuting;
- Condition of Ashlands Primary School;
- Long-term car parking for the town centre;
- New residential development should deliver good quality, sustainable housing;
- Good services and amenities to be provided – not just housing estates;
- No further land to the north east being developed without current saved local plan allocation being completed first – this is imperative;
- Additional light and heavy industry necessary.

Local Aspirations

6.79 The Community Plan for Crewkerne and District (2005/6), produced by the community partnership ‘A Better Crewkerne and District’, reports that the economic benefits of the proposed future development on the Local Plan Key Site saved allocation (CLR site) are recognised. It also reports that the local community would like to see a greater range of shops, increased parking and the enhancement of the town centre, which would also improve the visitor experience of Crewkerne.

What will the Core Strategy Deliver?

6.80 Crewkerne is identified in the South Somerset Role and Function Study – Final Report April 2009 as having a key role in the provision of shopping, cultural, education, health, leisure and financial services and as such is recommended for Market Town status. This classification is supported by representatives of the local community in the "Cluster workshops" held during the preparation of this draft Core Strategy. Identification under this policy will enable the settlement to grow, increase levels of self-containment and continue to provide services to meet the needs of the existing and surrounding communities.

6.81 In line with this status, it is recommended that a total of 1028 dwellings be provided over the plan period. These include 525 on the ‘CLR’ site to the east of the town and 114 on the ‘Maiden Beech’ site to the south of the town. Both of these sites are Saved Local Plan allocations. Maiden Beech has now been granted planning consent and the ‘CLR’ site
has a resolution to grant permission, subject to viability and environmental issues being agreed. Ongoing active negotiations to secure Section 106 Planning Obligations for the 'CLR' site are expected to be concluded successfully and enable development to be achieved. These sites are indicated on the proposals map.

6.82 The 928 dwellings committed provision and 100 dwellings already achieved will secure continued vitality and support for town centre retailing and town centre traffic relief and provide opportunities to manage traffic to the benefit of pedestrians and other town centre users. Additional affordable housing should be forthcoming together with improved access to the existing employment area at Blacknell Lane (also relieving the town centre of HGV traffic) and a replacement Primary School.

6.83 The outcome of the Employment Land Review for Crewkerne is summarised below.

Crewkerne
To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 10.53 hectares
Gross Need - 6ha
Supply - 10.83ha
Net Need - 0ha

6.84 In Crewkerne, 6 hectares of land is sought to enable self-contained growth, this will be delivered through saved Local Plan allocation (KS/CREW/1), which provides 10.53 ha of land. Whilst there is sufficient supply 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.

6.85 The South Somerset Retail Study Update (2010) indicates that based on a constant market share for convenience shopping, Crewkerne is not expected to generate quantitative capacity for additional floorspace up to 2026. Having considered the qualitative aspects of provision, including the level of convenience floorspace which is now provided within Crewkerne, there is no overriding need to plan for an increased market share for the town in order to generate capacity for additional provision. Given the loss of comparison uses from the town centre over the past few years, there is a qualitative deficiency in current provision. There is capacity for 100sq m net of additional comparison goods floorspace by 2014, rising to 500sq m net by 2026 based on constant market shares. 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.

Ilminster

Spatial Portrait

6.86 Ilminster is situated in the west of the District, close to the Devon, Dorset and Somerset border. The town lies just south of the A303, 12 miles from Taunton and 15 miles from Yeovil. 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. The population in Ilminster has grown considerably in
recent years, reflected in the fact that in seven years the number of people living in the town has grown by almost 20% to 4,455.\textsuperscript{64}

6.87 The immediate landscape setting of the town is defined by three hills, Beacon Hill to the north, and Herne and Pretwood Hills to the southwest and southeast respectively, all of which rise to a little above 100 metres, and 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.

6.88 Ilminster has been identified as having a key role in the provision of shopping, cultural and financial services. The town is identified as one of the nine settlements across the District, which account for 77% of all job provision and therefore displays a strong employment role relative to other settlements.\textsuperscript{65} The parish has the 6th highest level of self-containment in the District at 47.7% of local residents working locally and ranks highly in terms of employment density with 0.86 jobs per economically active person, which means it is a balanced settlement in terms of jobs to economically active population.\textsuperscript{66} In order to help retain and build upon this self-containment it will be important that additional housing growth is balanced with employment growth.

Local Issues

- The town is constrained by flood zone 3B along the length of the River Isle and to the north and south of the A303;
- A requirement for additional community infrastructure, especially a road to relieve the town centre and indoor sports provision;
- A desire to rebalance jobs to people ratio;
- Provision of additional employment land.

Local Aspirations

6.89 The Town Council is currently in the process of completing a Strategic Vision for Ilminster. The vision identifies six aims under each of which are objectives to realise those aims. The draft aims and objectives are set below:

**Figure 13: Ilminster - Local Aspirations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>• Enhance the vitality of the town centre as a complimentary mix of commercial, office, retail and housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop industrial sites to the west for commercial, light industry and warehousing, but not retail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve engagement of industrial concerns in the life of the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Environment</td>
<td>• To put a scheme in place of enhancement within the Conservation Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To establish a balance between old and new.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{64}[ONS 2007 Mid Year estimate]
\textsuperscript{65}[South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study Final Report April 2009]
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<th><strong>South Somerset District Council</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Structural Layout</td>
<td>• To add ecological value to the environment of the town and emphasise its rural nature.</td>
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<td>• To ease the flow of pedestrians and disabled vehicles.</td>
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<td>• Establish the town's parking needs.</td>
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<td>Quality of Life</td>
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<td>Leisure</td>
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<td>• Promote our cultural assets whilst developing new opportunities for the expression of local arts and culture.</td>
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<td>• Encourage a coherent approach to the provision of cultural experiences.</td>
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<td>Sustainability</td>
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<td>• Increase the quantities of locally grown food.</td>
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6.90 The identification of Ilminster as a Market Town by virtue of its strong employment, retail and community role will enable the settlement to grow, increase levels of self-containment and continue to provide and enhance services to meet the needs of the existing and future population. This should be supported by the delivery of approximately 531 dwellings over the plan period; 191 already committed and an additional 340 dwellings to be accommodated. As an indication of the scale of growth, 340 dwellings at 40 dwellings per hectare (dph) would require 8.5 hectares of land.

6.91 Approximately 19.5 hectares of employment land is also required to be developed to 2026 (already identified through Saved Local Plan allocations ME/ILMI/3, ME/ILMI/4 & ME/ILMI/5). 16.7 hectares of land incorporating saved Local Plan allocation ME/ILMI/4 (which totals 12.9 hectares) has recently been granted planning permission for mixed use employment development, consisting of B1, B2 and B8 uses. The delivery of this housing and employment will contribute to increasing self-containment and delivering community facilities and infrastructure, and should be located to the south west of the settlement because this is the most sustainable location being closest to existing services and facilities, where growth would most likely result in reduced local car use. This direction is closest to employment land allocations and the town centre. The direction of growth is indicated on the Proposals Map (relevant inset), which shows the alternatives considered. The accompanying Sustainability Appraisal document presents the detail as to why the preferred direction is suggested.

6.92 The South Somerset Employment Land Review Stage 3 (ELR), 2010, identifies a requirement of 3 hectares of additional employment land to support self-contained population growth and create a more sustainable settlement. There is an existing gross supply of 23.59
hectares therefore there is currently a sufficient supply in Ilminster to cater for both the long-term and short-term need. 19.5 hectares of this supply comes from Saved Local Plan allocations ME/ILMI/3, ME/ILMI/4 & ME/ILMI/5 which provide employment land not only for Ilminster, but land which is strategically significant for the District. These allocations will continue to be saved through policy EP1: Strategic Employment Sites.

Ilminster
To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 19.4 hectares
Gross Need - 6ha
Supply - 23.59ha
Net Need - 0ha

6.93 Located on the junction of the A303/A358, the existing saved Local Plan allocations provide a strategically important opportunity to secure major investment into the District. Whilst there is sufficient land to satisfy the identified strategic need in Ilminster, there is also sufficient land to cater for the ‘local’ market in the short-term.

6.94 The South Somerset Retail Study Update (2010) indicates that overall Ilminster is a healthy and attractive centre. The land use composition of the centre has stayed stable over the past few years and vacancy levels have been falling. The study identifies that there will be capacity for additional comparison goods floorspace by 2026 but there will be no capacity for additional convenience goods floorspace over the LDF period. Based on a continuation of the current market share, Ilminster will have capacity for an additional 700sq m of additional comparison goods floorspace by 2026, although there will be no capacity for additional convenience goods floorspace over the LDF period. The majority of convenience shopping trips from the local population are retained within Ilminster although there may be opportunities for small-scale improvements, which should benefit the health of the town centre. The same conclusion can be drawn in relation to the comparison floorspace on offer within the town. Further trips can also be retained within the town if appropriate new town centre development can be identified. The Housego building within the town centre offers the opportunity to provide a mixed use scheme which could include some retail uses at ground floor level.

Somerton

Spatial Portrait

6.95 Somerton is an historic town dating back over a thousand years, located in a rural setting in the north of the District, although Street is only 5 miles to the north in Mendip District. Somerton, alongside nearby Langport / Huish Episcopi, is important in serving the needs of local residents and a wider catchment area in the north of the District. Somerton is one of the larger settlements in the District with a population of around 4,663 people according to ONS Mid Year Estimates (2007) but currently has low self-containment with over 60% of residents travelling to work elsewhere, mainly to locations in Mendip and Yeovil. Some of the key services in Somerton are a supermarket, library, doctor’s surgery, banks, and primary and junior schools. Public transport is relatively good with an hourly bus service to Yeovil, Taunton and Street, and a national cycle route passes through the town. Somerton has a close relationship with Langport / Huish Episcopi, exemplified by many children in Somerton attending the secondary school in Langport / Huish Episcopi.
Local Issues

6.97 Due to Somerton’s proximity to the Somerset Levels and Moors, the impact on water quality from development at Somerton was identified as having a potential impact on the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area / Ramsar. However, further analysis in the Appropriate Assessment has concluded there will not be an adverse impact. Some of the other key environmental issues in considering the future development of Somerton include:

- areas of high flood risk to the north, east and south around the town;
- the high quality historic environment, including the Conservation Area extending from the town centre out to the east of the town;
- the presence of European Protected Species with otters (at the main watercourses) and bats (to the east/south east).

Local Aspirations

6.98 The Somerton Town Plan (2005) recognises a number of challenges that need to be resolved to enable Somerton to maintain its position as a prosperous rural centre. These include the:

- loss/disuse of retail premises;
- parking and traffic management in the town centre;
- the lack of public transport;
- the lack of facilities for children and teenagers;
- sports facilities;
- the lack of business refuse recycling facilities; and
- inappropriate use of some buildings.

6.99 The Town and Parish Cluster Meeting workshops held as part of the preparation of this draft document raised further issues including:

- a lack of open space, allotments;
- a lack of railway station and routes for walkers and cyclists within the town;
- pressure on the doctors surgery;
- pressure on the drain/sewerage system; and
- the loss of good quality agricultural land if development takes place to the west of Somerton.  

What will the Core Strategy Deliver?

6.100 The South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study concludes that Somerton has a strong employment, retail and community role which has been reflected in its status as...
6.101 In order to sustain and enhance Somerton’s role as a Market Town in the rural north of the District, at a level commensurate with the size, accessibility, character and environmental constraints of the town, it is recommended that around 500 dwellings are built in the town over the Core Strategy period 2006-26. 219 dwellings have already been built or committed within the plan period, leaving a land requirement for around 281 additional dwellings for the period to 2026. Evidence from the Sustainability Appraisal suggests that major development should be located to the west of Somerton as this is the best location to extend the town. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) indicates a site accommodating around 300 dwellings could be delivered here. This direction of growth is indicated on the Proposals Map/relevant inset map which also shows other alternatives considered.

6.102 Around 1.8 hectares of employment land has already been built or committed leaving an additional supply of 1 ha of employment land required for the remainder of the plan period.

Somerton
To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 1 hectare
- Gross Need - 2.77ha
- Supply - 1.91ha
- Net Need - 0.86ha

6.103 The addition of at least 1 hectare of employment land in and around Somerton will support greater self-containment, meet need during the plan period. This is not a strategic issue and any land should be adequately delivered through the Development Management process.

6.104 The South Somerset Retail Capacity Study update (2010) indicates that the ability to significantly increase the amount of comparison goods floorspace for Somerton will be constrained by its size, natural catchment area and level of commercial market interest. 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 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 provision. Therefore, for both convenience and comparison retailing, a general strategic approach for Somerton 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.

6.105 The delivery of this level of development (housing and employment) will bring several key benefits to Somerton, including meeting housing need particularly for affordable housing, supporting the vitality and viability of the town centre and other local business, and improvements to the infrastructure in the town. Some of the key infrastructure issues that have been raised in early consultation with the Town Council include pressure on the local road system, insufficient capacity at the doctor's surgery, and lack of capacity of the drainage / sewage system. The close relationship with Langport / Huish Episcopi may mean increased capacity at Huish Episcopi Secondary School would be required as a result of new development at Somerton. The emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan will consider the
necessary infrastructure to accompany new development in more detail but at this time and in general it is considered that these concerns can be addressed.

Wincanton

Spatial Portrait

6.106 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. The A303 now defines the south edge of Wincanton and affords 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 5,034 according to ONS Mid Year estimates (2007) makes it the 5th largest settlement in the District in terms of population.

6.107 Wincanton has been identified as having a strategic role in the provision of shopping, cultural, education, health, leisure and financial services. The town is identified as one of the nine settlements across the District, which account for 77% of all job provision and therefore displays a strong employment role relative to other settlements. The parish has the 4th highest level of self-containment (59% of people live and work in the town) in the District and ranks highly in terms of employment density with 1.24 jobs per economically active person, which means it will attract workers from surrounding settlements. In order to help retain and build upon this self containment it will be important that additional housing growth is balanced with employment growth.

Local Issues

- The town is constrained by flood zone 3B to both the south of the A303 and to the north east;
- Proximity to the A303 trunk road;
- A requirement for a new/improved health centre;
- A desire to support and build upon the existing retail provision and enhance the environment of the town centre;
- A desire for the requisite amount of employment land to be delivered with additional housing growth.

Local Aspirations

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

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69. [South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study Final Report April 2009 ]
70. [South Somerset Settlement Role and Function Study Final Report April 2009 ]
6.109 Many of the goals seek to address the local issues identified above including enhancing Wincanton High Street in order to make it an attractive location with an enhanced shopping experience, using planning gain to expand health facilities as the town grows and ensuring that local housing and employment needs are met. These issues were also identified at the ‘Parish Cluster Meetings’ held by the Council as part of the preparation of this draft document.

What will the Core Strategy Deliver?

6.110 The identification of Wincanton as a Market Town will allow the settlement to grow, increase levels of self-containment and continue to provide and enhance services to meet the needs of the existing and future population. This, in turn, will present opportunities for growth and will help to deliver the Vision to 2026. The justification for Wincanton’s status as a Market Town is set out in the Settlement Strategy and the Key Diagram illustrates its status.

6.111 The Vision for Wincanton should be supported by the delivery of approximately 1053 dwellings over the plan period (703 already committed and an additional 350 dwellings to be accommodated). A minimum of 1.5 hectares of employment land is also required to 2026. The delivery of this housing and employment will contribute to increasing self-containment and should be located to the west of the settlement as this is the area that has fewest constraints. This growth will help to deliver more affordable housing, provide employment opportunities and community benefit. The direction of growth is identified on the Proposal Map (relevant Inset) which also shows the alternatives considered. The accompanying Sustainability Appraisal document presents the detailed case on why the preferred direction is suggested.

6.112 The Employment Land Review (ELR) Stage 3 (2010) identifies that there is a need for an additional 7.29 hectares of employment land to be delivered through the Core Strategy to cater for the increased population growth and local identified business need. Existing supply (5.81ha) comes from either land already built (0.29ha), sites with existing planning permissions (2.37ha), allocated sites (0.90ha) or lapsed planning permissions (2.25ha), leaving a residual need for an additional 1.48ha of employment land in Wincanton.
6.113 The Core Strategy will need to deliver in addition to existing supply at least 1.5 hectares of additional employment land in and around Wincanton. This will ensure that the minimum land required to meet need is delivered. This is not a strategic issue and land should be adequately delivered through the Development Management process.

6.114 The South Somerset Retail Study Update (2010) indicates that there is capacity for 1050 sq m net of additional convenience goods floorspace by 2014 in Wincanton town centre, rising to 1,650 sq m net by 2026. 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 quantitative expenditure which does exist is directed towards the town centre given the current bias in provision towards out-of-centre locations, although the re-occupation of the Cooper's store with the Co-operative foodstore should assist in boosting the town centre retail function.

6.115 There is also potential to improve the level and type of comparison retail provision in Wincanton, both qualitatively and quantitatively. There is capacity for 710 sq m net of comparison goods floorspace by 2026, although given the role of the centre, its catchment area and the level of retailer requirements, such improvements are likely to be modest.
7 Rural Centres - Visions and Proposals

7.1 The Spatial Strategy identifies seven Rural Centres based on the findings of the South Somerset Settlement Role and Function study and the outcomes of the Town and Parish Council "Cluster workshops". 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 seven identified Rural Centres are: **Bruton, Ilchester, Langport/Huish Episcopi, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke Sub Hamdon**. Growth reports of the individual settlements have been undertaken by the District Council and these form part of the LDF Evidence Base. The key issues, local aspirations, challenges and indication of what the Core Strategy will deliver for each settlement are discussed below.

**Bruton**

7.3 Bruton is primarily a linear settlement that has developed alongside the course of the River Brue. There is a risk of flooding along the course of the river and its tributary Combe Brook. Much of the town is designated a Conservation Area and there are also areas of National Archaeological and Wildlife/Geological importance to the south of the town, which will be particularly sensitive to new development.

7.4 The population of the Parish was identified as just under 3000 (2920) in the ONS Mid Year estimates (2007) but there are also large numbers of younger people in attendance at the local schools which take boarders.

7.5 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.

7.6 Self-containment is an issue, over 50% of economically active residents travel to work outside the ward, mainly to Mendip District, Wincanton and its surrounding villages, and Castle Cary. The job opportunities that exist in the town are mainly in the education sector (there are 3 boarding schools within the town in addition to state schools) with other main employers being the wholesale and retail trade, concentrated on the High Street, and manufacturing, centred in a small employment area by the railway station. There is a need to provide some additional employment land to diversify the economy and provide more local job opportunities. A new enlarged surgery is also identified in Bruton – The Way Forward as existing facilities have been outgrown.

7.7 The Town and Parish Council Cluster Meeting workshops undertaken in preparation of this draft document identified a priority for family housing (3-4 bedroom houses) and some elderly persons units. They also highlighted the need to diversify the economy (through
provision of starter units) and prevent the further loss of employment land to other uses. The provision of additional car parking is an on-going concern of the Town Council because of the impact on-street parking has on the town centre. The District Council are actively seeking additional sites to address the issue. The provision of indoor and outdoor leisure facilities are sought through developer contributions.

**What will the Core Strategy Deliver?**

7.8 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.

7.9 To enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand modestly its role 120 houses and 1 hectare of employment land are required to be developed to 2026. The additional 120 dwellings reflects the level of growth identified as required beyond existing commitments from the Cluster workshops. These dwellings need to be of mixed size although there is a perceived need for family housing and supported elderly person accommodation. The level of employment growth is derived from the employment needs for Bruton from the Employment Land Review (ELR) and will assist in strengthening the range of employment opportunities in the town.

**Bruton**

To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 1 hectare

- Gross Need - 1.17ha
- Supply - 0.56ha
- Net Need - 0.61ha

7.10 There is virtually no supply of employment land in Bruton, but additional land is required to support the additional housing growth and widen the employment base. As this 1 hectare is not strategically significant it should be delivered through the Development Management process so providing a flexible and early response to provision.

**Ilchester**

7.11 Ilchester lies at the eastern fringe of the Somerset Levels and Moors where the Roman road, the Fosse Way, crosses the River Yeo, a tributary of the River Parrett. By virtue of its natural setting and history, both ancient and more recent, the town is significantly constrained in terms of its capacity to expand and this has resulted in a settlement form of two distinct nodes of growth, one to the south of the river and the other some way to its north, linked by linear development along the Fosse Way.

7.12 The town is located within a significant flood risk area, as identified by the Environment Agency. The southern node, which includes the historic and commercial core of the town, 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.

7.13 During Roman times Ilchester grew to be an important town and this legacy is apparent by the concentration of scheduled Ancient Monuments and archaeological sites that
surround the southern node. Much of this historic core has also been designated as a Conservation Area.

7.14 The northern growth node has developed over the past 50 years or so on gently rising ground 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.

7.15 Since its commissioning in 1940 the Royal Naval Air Station has grown to become one of the busiest military airfields in the UK, with both helicopters and jet aircraft operating out of the Station. The noise generated from these aircraft can have a significant impact on the environment and the quality of life for communities within the surrounding area with military jet aircraft capable of generating very high noise levels, particularly during take off. Helicopter noise, having different characteristics from that of fixed wing aircraft, also needs to be taken into account.

7.16 In order to avoid adding to the number of people subject to noise disturbance, development in the vicinity of RNAS Yeovilton, including at Ilchester, is controlled in accordance with PPG24: ‘Planning and Noise’ which restricts the nature of development that might be permissible within defined noise exposure zones. The extent of the noise exposure zones have been subject to review as noise emissions may vary over time as a result of operational changes at the Air Station and the last survey was held in 1998. A recent review has been undertaken by Consultants Bureau Veritas on behalf of the District Council and with the knowledge and assistance of the M.O.D. and has informed proposals for the town.

7.17 The population of the village at ONS Mid Year Estimates (2007) was around 2036, however the presence of RNAS Yeovilton, together with outlying villages including Mudford and Limington, nearly doubles the population figure for Ivelchester Ward to some 4050.

7.18 Ilchester is identified as having a strong employment function together with a good range of retail and community facilities. At 2006 Ilchester/RNAS Yeovilton, provided 2700 jobs, accounting for 4.3% of all employment across the District; this figure closely comparing to those for Wincanton (4.6%) and Crewkerne (3.9%). At 2001, 81% of the population were economically active, which was significantly greater than the District average of 69%. The ward of Ivelchester has the third highest level of employment self-containment in the District with 58.6% of the population living and working in the Ward at 2001. It has both regular and demand responsive bus services to Yeovil, Taunton and Street.

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

**What will the Core Strategy Deliver?**

7.20 Identification of Ilchester as a Rural Centre will enable the settlement to expand its identified role by allowing for additional growth to encourage greater self-containment and provide support for existing services. The good employment base is also an advantage indicating that additional population can be supported.

7.21 New development in Ilchester has been extremely restricted over the last 15 years due to the presence of the noise contours, particularly in light of the stationing of Harrier jets at
RNAS Yeovilton. Whilst these aircraft are no longer stationed here the Naval Base remains fully operational and noise contours remain in place for the protection of the residents. These noise contours have now been reviewed and indicate a "shrinkage" of the noise contours from those of 1998. This in turn means that it might now be possible to locate housing and other development within the urban framework of the town and closer to the town centre facilities such that non-car modes of accessing the town centre are more realistic and retention of any additional expenditure within the town centre thus more likely. It is therefore proposed that 150 additional dwellings be allocated to support Ilchester’s role as a Rural Centre to 2026 but it would be prudent to await the outcome of the Strategic Defence Review which will establish the role of RNAS Yeovilton in operational terms ( and thereby confirming or otherwise the relevance of the new noise contour information).

7.22 Although new noise contours are likely to result, it is imperative that any further dwellings which are built be constructed to the highest levels of noise protection so as not to constrain the bases’ future operational flexibility and provide 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 providing the new noise contours are confirmed.

7.23 With an already strong employment role at the air base there is considered to be no need to allocate large amounts of additional employment land to support the proposed housing.

Ilchester
To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 1 hectare
Gross Need - 1.04ha
Supply - 0.44ha
Net Need - 0.6ha

7.24 Away from the Air Base there is very little supply of employment land in the town itself. To cater for the increased population and to promote self-contained growth an additional 1 hectare of land is proposed in Ilchester. This level of growth is not a strategic issue and any land should be adequately delivered through the Development Management process.

7.25 Whilst having a long-term aspiration to consolidate the split school site into one, Somerset County Council advises that a new site would not necessarily be required to support the additional housing growth.

Langport/Huish Episcopi

7.26 Langport/Huish Episcopi is a small town of just under 3000 people according to ONS Mid Yer Estimates (2007) situated in the north of the District. The town has a long history, originally prospering from its strategic location for river-based trade from the River Parrett. The Bow Street causeway originated in Roman times and the town was established as a royal Saxon borough by the 10th Century.

7.27 Much of Langport/Huish Episcopi is surrounded by high flood risk due to the proximity to the Somerset Levels and Moors, and this is a major constraint to the growth of the town. The Levels and Moors are also important for wildlife with internationally protected sites near the
town. Much of the town is designated as a Conservation Area and there is limited landscape capacity to provide new development on the edge of Langport itself.

7.28 As the wider area around the town is relatively sparsely populated, Langport/Huish Episcopi functions as a Rural Centre beyond its size - the key services and community facilities include a secondary school, sport's hall, swimming pool, supermarket, library and bank. Although a mainline railway runs through the town, the station closed in the 1960's.

7.29 The town has a relatively elderly population with 24% of residents being 65 or older (compared to a 20% average in the District, and 19% nationally), which could have potential implications for health care needs and type of housing provision needed in the town.

7.30 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. The main employment area is to the west of the town at Westover Trading Estate. 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.

7.31 In retail terms, Langport/Huish Episcopi has a reasonably healthy, small town centre with a varied mix of building types and sizes. However, vacancies are noticeable and some of the buildings are in need of physical improvements to make the centre a more appealing shopping experience. Convenience shopping in the town is dominated by one major supermarket, and the comparison sector is mainly limited to independent and specialist stores.72

7.32 Early engagement with the Town/Parish Councils at the "Cluster workshops" indicated a desire for some control over the future development of Langport / Huish Episcopi in order to ensure that locally needed development, that would be of benefit to the community, should be allowed, but local facilities and services are limited and would not support substantial growth. Other key issues raised by the Town/Parish Councils included traffic congestion and consequent safety risk in the town centre, and a desire for more local industry and employment opportunities.

What will the Core Strategy Deliver?

7.33 In order to allow Langport / Huish Episcopi appropriate development to fulfil its role as a Rural Centre within the constraints highlighted above, it is recommended that 118 dwellings are built in the settlement over the period 2006-26, in addition to the 182 dwellings already committed. In order to ensure a balance of homes and employment, this level of housing growth would create the need for approximately 270 jobs and require around 1.5 ha of employment land in the ‘B’ Use Classes.73 Opportunities for this provision are relatively limited due to the constraints to development at Langport / Huish Episcopi, however alongside development at nearby Somerton, the needs of the wider rural north of the District could be met.

72.[Draft South Somerset Retail Study update, 2010]
73.[B1, B2, B8 of the Use Classes Order 1987, as amended; these relate to light industry, general industry and warehousing/distribution]
Langport & Huish Episcopi
To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 – 1.5 hectares
Gross Need - 2.02ha
Supply   - 0.69ha
Net Need  - 1.33ha

7.34 There is very little supply of employment land in the town, the majority of the supply has already been built (0.44 hectares), therefore to cater for the expected need generated from increased population growth and to promote self-contained growth, an additional 1.5 ha of land is proposed in Langport. This is not a strategic issue and any land should be adequately delivered through the Development Management process.

7.35 The ability to significantly increase the amount of comparison goods floorspace for Langport will be constrained by its size, natural catchment area and level of commercial market interest. For convenience retailing there is no need for additional provision in Langport given the existing Tesco store. However, like the comparison retail sector, the natural catchment and expenditure capacity of Langport will limit the potential for large-scale additional provision and there will also be concerns over the impact on existing provision. Therefore, for both convenience and comparison retailing, a general strategic approach for Langport is recommended which acknowledges the aspiration to retain shopping trips within the town and support proposals that increase retention via the promotion of realistic proposals.

7.36 The constraints on development close to the town centre suggest a more limited amount of development here than in nearby Somerton. It is recognised that there is a functional relationship between the two settlements with employment, secondary school and social interconnections. Greater growth is proposed at Somerton to reflect the lesser constraints at that town.

Martock

7.37 Martock is a small attractive town positioned in central South Somerset, on the southern edge of the Somerset Levels and Moors and just off the busy A303. It is well connected to Yeovil, which is situated 7 miles to the southeast. The town is surrounded by gradual undulating hills that are regarded as having high landscape value. A small stream flows through the southern part of Martock separating the village of Bower Hinton to the south 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.

7.38 Martock and Bower Hinton have a joint Conservation Area incorporating various Listed Buildings strung out along the main road between the two settlements. Listed buildings are concentrated at the historic core of Martock, Hurst and Bower Hinton.

7.39 The population of Martock parish is approx 4,700 according to ONS Mid Year Estimates (2007).

7.40 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 and that this is mainly to Yeovil, Ilchester and surrounds, Taunton Deane and Crewkerne. Although the town is home to scores of small business that are clustered principally at Martock Business 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 could potentially reduce the level of out commuting. The Employment Land Review (ELR) indicates that although the Parish have indicated that further employment is needed to improve self-containment there is no need for any additional allocation and any further proposals can be met through a Development Management approach.

7.41 The "Cluster workshops" with Town and Parish Councils undertaken in preparing the Draft Core Strategy 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 has a range of facilities that potentially could take more growth particularly for employment but proximity to Yeovil and the potential impact on the A303 trunk road is a major constraint to major housing growth as this would lead to undue out commuting.

**What will the Core Strategy Deliver?**

7.42 Identification of Martock as a Rural Centre will enable the settlement to grow and expand its identified role by allowing for modest housing growth which will encourage greater self containment and support for local services. An additional 150 dwellings in addition to existing commitments (96 dwellings) is proposed to be developed to 2026. Impact on the B3165 through Martock and concerns re out commuting act as constraints to provision and total levels of provision reflect these issues.

7.43 There is no specific requirement for any additional employment provision in pure quantitative terms as demonstrated below:-

**Martock**

To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 1 hectare  
Gross Need - 1.49ha  
Supply - 2.14ha  
Net Need – 0.65ha

7.44 Martock has a supply of 2.14 hectares of employment land, 1.17ha coming from saved Local Plan allocation ME/MART/2, Land West of Ringwell Hill. However due to the nature of the allocated site, it is being developed as a mixed-use employment and residential site, so not all of this allocation will come forward for employment land. The Parish Council is seeking additional employment land to compensate for this loss. To cater for the loss, for additional housing growth, and to promote self-contained growth it is suggested that 1 hectare of additional employment land be delivered through the Core Strategy. As this is not strategically significant it should be delivered through the Development Management process so providing a flexible and early response to provision.

**Milborne Port**

7.45 Milborne Port is a 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.

7.46 The village 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 an Historic Garden to the south east. Areas of flood risk run through the centre from the north to the south. The population at 2007 ONS MId Year estimates is 2651.

7.47 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 village. This suggests that more employment opportunities should be provided in Milborne Port. The village was a thriving glove and leather manufacturing area before the last factory closure in 1970. The lack of jobs in Milborne Port has consequently created high levels (71%) of out commuting, principally to Yeovil, Sherborne, and Wincanton. Providing more employment opportunities in the village could potentially reduce the level of out-commuting.

7.48 As well as recognising the need to create employment opportunities and expressing a desire to see modest housing growth the Town and Parish Council “Cluster workshops” identified the need for increased retail provision in Milborne Port.

7.49 The Milborne Port Community Plan 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 Core Strategy Deliver?

7.50 Identification of Milborne Port as a Rural Centre 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.

7.51 To enable the settlement to grow and continue to expand its identified role 100 dwellings are proposed beyond existing commitments (199 dwellings) reflecting a scale of growth commensurate with Bruton and Martock. 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 2026 in order to broaden the range of opportunities and to provide greater self-containment.

74.[South Somerset Role and Function Study Final report April 2009]
75.[Endorsed by South Somerset District Council, August 2010]
7.52 There is virtually no existing supply of employment land in Milborne Port, yet the settlement will see an additional 299 homes minimum over the plan period, therefore to promote self-contained growth and cater for this additional housing it is suggested that 2 hectares of employment land be delivered through the Core Strategy. As this is not strategically significant this should be delivered through the Development Management process. Delivery should be monitored and reviewed through the next ELR.

7.53 Proposals for retail development should similarly be considered through the Development Management process.

South Petherton

7.54 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 12km 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.

7.55 The village has grown in all directions from its Saxon core, though its centre and main commercial area remains concentrated on St James Street. During the 19th century, residential growth spread initially along the local lane network extending out from the village centre, whilst the past 60 years has seen the infill of land between these lanes, in the form of moderately-scaled housing estates. Listed Buildings are concentrated in the historic core and are incorporated within the Conservation Area. The main employment area lies approximately 2 km to the south west of the village, at Lopen Head.

7.56 The population of the village (3186 ONS Mid Year Estimates 2007) and the population profile indicates that the settlement has a higher percentage of people over 65 years (28%) than the Somerset average of 20% and from the survey carried out by the Parish in 2005 over 44% of the respondents had lived in the Parish for over 16 years indicating a low turnover of population. 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 is 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.

7.57 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 (mainly Yeovilton Air Base) and the surrounding area.
What will the Core Strategy Deliver?

7.58 Identification of South Petherton as a Rural Centre will enable the settlement to maintain its identified role by allowing for additional modest employment growth and the existing committed level of housing growth which will encourage greater self containment.

7.59 In terms of housing growth the settlement could take a level of growth of about 150 dwellings within the plan period which would assist in supporting existing services. The proximity of the settlement to the Hayes End junction on the A303 would put an unacceptable constraint on this junction if a higher level of housing were proposed.\(^7\) The poor internal road layout within the town is another justification for constraining housing growth. The "Cluster workshop" with Town and Parish Councils held in preparing this draft Core Strategy agreed this level of growth as appropriate however, as 145 dwellings have already been committed in the settlement in the plan period there is no intention to seek a further provision of dwellings.

7.60 To enable the settlement to grow and continue it’s identified role, 1.0 ha of employment land are required to be developed to balance the 145 dwellings already committed within the plan period.

South Petherton
To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 1 hectare

| Gross Need | 0.77ha |
| Supply     | 0ha   |
| Net Need   | 0.77ha |

7.61 The Core Strategy should deliver at least 1 hectare of additional employment land in and around South Petherton to ensure that the minimum land required to meet need is delivered. This is not a strategic issue and any land should be adequately delivered through the Development Management process.

7.62 Recent planning approvals have given consent for further employment development at the main employment centre at Lopen Head Nurseries, which will provide sufficient development to meet the projected strategic requirements for the plan period.

Stoke sub Hamdon

7.63 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 is centred on the High Street and is characterised by tight development fronting directly onto the street.

7.64 The village has a good variety of services including primary and secondary schools, doctors, pharmacy, dentist, 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.

7.65 Consultation for the Village 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 Core Strategy Deliver?

7.66 Identification of Stoke sub Hamdon as a Rural Centre will enable the settlement to maintain its identified role and support for local services by allowing for additional housing and employment growth. The settlement is, however, constrained by the existing road through the village but there is a need to provide some housing, particularly to meet affordable housing needs in the village. Growth of a modest amount of housing and employment to assist with self containment and meeting the settlements specific housing needs is therefore proposed.

7.67 To enable the settlement to maintain its’ identified role, a further 50 additional dwellings are proposed, with 5 already committed to meet need to 2026.

7.68 It is proposed that a further 0.5ha of employment land be delivered to promote self-contained growth and cater for the additional proposed housing growth of 55 dwellings. This can be delivered through the development management process so providing a flexible and early response to provision.

Stoke sub Hamdon
To be delivered through the Core Strategy 2006-2026 - 0.5 hectare
   Gross Need - 0.34ha
   Supply - 0ha
   Net Need - 0.34ha

7.69 Other services and community provision can be delivered where appropriate through the Development Management Process.
8 Housing

8.1 National policy\textsuperscript{77} requires local planning authorities to use evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to enable them to set out:

- The likely overall proportions of households requiring market or affordable housing
- The likely profile of household types requiring market housing and;
- The size and type of affordable housing required.

8.2 The Housing Market Area for South Somerset was defined in preparation of the now revoked Regional Spatial Strategy and follows the District boundary\textsuperscript{78}. A Housing Market Area Assessment has been prepared jointly with other Somerset Districts resulting in the Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments (2009). The evidence arising from this assessment is key to the formulation of the policies set out below.

Strategic Housing Sites

8.3 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\textsuperscript{79}. A strategically significant site is defined as one that is critical to delivery of the Core Strategy where 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 housing growth across the District. In addition new strategic locations for development are proposed at Yeovil Urban Village and Yeovil Urban Extension and these are the subject of specific policies 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 Chard Local Plan allocation KS/CHAR/1. Details of the specific strategic sites which are safeguarded are listed below:

Yeovil - North of Thorne Lane (Brimsmore)

8.4 The Brimsmore site benefits from an existing outline planning permission granted in August 2007. 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 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

8.5 The Lufton housing site benefits from outline planning permission granted in May 2007. The site lies close to existing employment opportunities on the west of Yeovil and the provision of housing and recreation facilities will provide balance to the west of the town. The site also lies close to the Bunford strategic employment allocation. A local centre will provide

\textsuperscript{77} [Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2010)]
\textsuperscript{78} [The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy For The South West Incorporating The Secretary Of State's Proposed Changes - For Public Consultation July 2008]
\textsuperscript{79} [Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Local Spatial Planning, 2008]
for residents' daily needs. The employment part of the Lufton site, Oak Farm, is also saved as a strategic employment site under Policy EP1.

**Crewkerne (CLR)**

8.6 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 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.

**Chard**

8.7 Chard keysite is also saved as a strategic allocation. This forms part of the new strategic location for Chard’s growth set out within Policy TV3, Chard Growth area, as it has been absorbed into the Chard Regeneration Area.

**Policy HG1 Strategic Housing Sites**

The following housing allocations are strategically significant and will be safeguarded as residential keysites:

- Land at Lufton (Saved Local Plan Allocation KS/BRYM/1)
- Land North of Thorne Lane (Saved Local Plan Allocation KS/YEWI/2)
- CLR Site, Crewkerne (Saved Local Plan Allocation KS/CREW/1)

**Housing density**

8.8 Over recent years planning policy at a national and regional level has sought to increase housing densities in order to make the best use of land and therefore minimise the amount of greenfield land lost to housing development. Recent publication of the amended Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing has now removed the national density guidance figure. However, it remains appropriate to set a minimum density level to ensure efficient use is made of land.

8.9 The now revoked RSS suggested that a density of 40 dph should be achieved across the whole of the South Somerset Housing Market Area (HMA) and higher densities of 40-50 dph achieved in Yeovil and potentially higher in the planned urban extension(s). High density, high quality, sustainable places to live can be achieved in town centres and urban extension(s) through careful planning including the incorporation of public and private amenity space and access to public transport. The options of having one broad density across the whole District, or a range of densities depending on the function of the settlement have been considered. However, in a rural District such as South Somerset, which includes settlements ranging from Yeovil, a Strategically Significant Town within the region to a number of market towns, rural centres, villages and small rural settlements, a range of densities based on the settlement hierarchy is the preferred option. This should ensure that the general design of development is in sympathy with its locality, thus contributing towards overall design and sustainability objectives. It is recognised that there may be instances
where particular environmental or historic issues may justify a lower density. It is suggested that densities should generally be set at between 30 (the former national indicative minimum80) and 50 dwellings per hectare (dph)81

8.10 It will be necessary to do some further assessment work on this to ensure sites are viable and deliverable at such densities, and that they deliver well-designed and attractive places that people want to live in. This work will inform the Core Strategy Publication plan for submission for examination.

**Policy HG2 Housing Density**

To ensure the most efficient use of land, the Council shall seek (net) housing density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) on all new housing developments or on the residential element of a mixed use development. Housing densities of between 30-50 dph of the net developable area will be sought at (net) densities as set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Density (dwellings per hectare)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil urban extension</td>
<td>50 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Market Towns</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Market Towns</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Settlements</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different densities may be justified where there are particular site circumstances which require consideration.

**Previously Developed Land**

8.11 Previously developed land (PDL), often called brownfield land, is land that was developed but is now vacant or derelict, or currently in use with known potential for redevelopment82.

8.12 National guidance83 promotes the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed and establishes a national target of at least 60% of new housing being provided on PDL. However, PPS3 does not presume that all PDL will necessarily be suitable for housing, in particular, due to sustainability issues. The now revoked Regional Spatial Strategy84 (RSS) sought to achieve at least 50% of new housing development on PDL, lower than the national target, in recognition of the rural nature of the region. This target has been exceeded in the South West in recent years in spite of the lack of well located, PDL in the region.

80.[Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2010)]
81.[The Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy For The South West Incorporating The Secretary Of State’s Proposed Changes - For Public Consultation July 2008]
82.[Previously-developed land that may be available for development: England 2007 – CLG August 2008]
83.[Planning Policy Statement 3 – CLG November 2006]
84.[Draft Revised Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West incorporating the Secretary of States Proposed Changes – July 2008]
8.13 The South Somerset Local Plan\(^{85}\) (SSLP) set an indicative target of 45% of housing to be built on PDL. This was an objective not a policy, and is no longer extant but it clearly has some relevance as the most recent stated target for the District.

**Figure 15: Percentage of New Homes Built on Previously Developed Land in South Somerset**

8.14 The graph above (Figure 15) illustrates that this target of 45% for the Local Plan period, to 2011, has been well exceeded over the past few years, partly due to the application of the PDL policies advocated by PPG3/PPS3, and partly due to delays in the delivery of Local Plan housing allocations that are mainly greenfield sites. However, this percentage of brownfield build is anticipated to decrease substantially in South Somerset due to a reduction in housing commitments on brownfield land (22% in 2008/9 as opposed to 48% in 2007/8) and as the Local Plan allocations on greenfield land come forward. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2009 also provides evidence of a reduction in PDL sites with potential for housing development. Of the sites identified as being suitable for housing only 14% are considered to be existing brownfield land and this reduces to 10% when availability and deliverability are taken into account. It is therefore considered unlikely that the current national target over the period to 2026 can be achieved within South Somerset.

8.15 The District has achieved an average of 79% of housing on PDL between 2006-2009 and would need to achieve about 45% each year for the 17 years remaining for the Core Strategy to provide a 20-year average of 50% (the target in the now revoked Regional Spatial Strategy).

8.16 The table below (Figure 16) collates monitoring information to give existing housing supply/commitments/allocations as at April 2009 and shows that approximately 33% of these are on PDL. This illustrates the significant effect of the greenfield Local Plan allocations as the percentage on PDL is halved when they are taken into account.

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85.[South Somerset Local Plan adopted April 2006]
Figure 16: Existing housing completions and commitments 2006-2009 (April 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PDL</th>
<th>Greenfield</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Completions 2006-2009</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Construction at 31/03/2009</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitments with Permission at 31/03/2009</td>
<td>1457</td>
<td>2083</td>
<td>3540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocations awaiting S106 Agreements</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocated without permission</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2335</td>
<td>2335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Supply as at April 2009</td>
<td>3177</td>
<td>6487</td>
<td>9664</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.17 Following the revocation of the RSS and the decision to revert to the figure of 16,600 for the housing requirement for the District between 2006 and 2026 the residual housing required is detailed below. It is known that the 3719 dwelling urban extension will be 100% greenfield. However it is proposed to seek a minimum of 50% of the additional 934 dwellings required in Yeovil and 2282 dwellings required in other settlements, but not already committed by April 2009, to be on PDL in accordance with the former RSS target.

Figure 17: Residual housing requirement 2009 (April) - 2026

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PDL</th>
<th>Greenfield</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield urban extension for Yeovil</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3720</td>
<td>3720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirement within Yeovil</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>4187</td>
<td>4654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocations to be made in Market Towns and Rural Centres</td>
<td>1141</td>
<td>1141</td>
<td>2282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Supply required as at April 2009</td>
<td>1608</td>
<td>5328</td>
<td>6936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.18 The above table (Figure 17) therefore shows total additional dwelling supply based on the 50% PDL target. These figures would result in a total of 4785 new dwellings on PDL over the whole period of the RSS, 29% of the total dwellings to be provided. However, if the greenfield urban extension for Yeovil is omitted from the figures this percentage rises to 37%.

8.19 From the above results it is considered that a target of 30% over the period of the Core Strategy for the use of PDL should be set.
8.20 Although a target of 30% of new dwellings on PDL is lower than both the national and revoked regional targets it is considered to be challenging for the remaining years of the Core Strategy period but can be justified for a number of reasons:

- The predominantly rural nature of the District; (60% rural)\(^86\)
- The over-achievement of PDL development over the past few years, due to delays in allocated sites being developed;
- The 3719 dwelling greenfield urban extension for Yeovil will account for 22% of the District’s 16,600 growth up to 2026.

### Policy HG3 The use of Previously Developed Land (PDL) for new housing development

South Somerset District Council will seek to provide a minimum of 30% of new dwellings on previously developed land over the period of the Core Strategy. This will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report and reviewed as necessary.

### Affordable Housing

8.21 Meeting the housing needs of the District is a key objective in South Somerset District’s Sustainable Community Strategy.\(^87\) The Well Designed and Well Built theme, Goal 9: Homes, includes strategic priorities to increase the number of affordable homes to meet the needs of residents and to recognise and support the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

8.22 Homelessness is a major cause of concern in the District. As of September 2009 there were approximately 4,500 households on the Housing Register.

### Definition of Affordable Housing

8.23 PPS3 defines affordable housing as follows:

‘Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices;
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.’

Social rented housing is:
‘Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords,\(^88\), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent

\(^{86}\)[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) 2008]
\(^{87}\)[Shaping South Somerset A Strategy for Sustainable Communities 2008-2029 (Strategic Objectives 26 and 27)]
\(^{88}\)[As of 1st April 2010, Registered Social Landlords (RSL’s) are referred to as Private Registered Providers (PRP’s)]
regime. The proposals set out in the Three Year Review of Rent Restructuring (July 2004) were implemented as policy in April 2006. It may also include rented housing owned or managed by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Housing Corporation as a condition of grant.’

Intermediate affordable housing is:
‘Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents, and which meet the criteria set out above. These can include shared equity products (eg HomeBuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.’

These definitions replace guidance given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3) and DETR Circular 6/98 Planning and Affordable Housing.

The definition does not exclude homes provided by private sector bodies or provided without grant funding. Where such homes meet the definition above, they may be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing. Whereas, those homes that do not meet the definition, for example, ‘low cost market’ housing, may not be considered, for planning purposes, as affordable housing.

The terms ‘affordability’ and ‘affordable housing’ have different meanings. ‘Affordability’ is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. ‘Affordable housing’ refers to particular products outside the main housing market.\(^8^9\)

Affordable Housing need

8.24 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) shows that there is a net annual affordable housing need in South Somerset of 659 dwellings.

8.25 The preferred approach seeks to maximise the provision of affordable housing across the District in urban and rural locations. Whilst seeking to ensure that this happens the Council accepts that there can be viability issues associated with the delivery of affordable housing on, for example, brownfield sites. In such circumstances financial appraisals and ‘open-book’ negotiations will be required to consider a departure from the target set out below.

Mix of Affordable Housing

8.26 It is vital that the right mix and type of affordable housing is provided for the residents of the District. The SHMA\(^9^0\) estimates a particular need for 1 and 2 bedroom affordable housing units (75%). The Table below sets out the findings:

---

**Figure 18: Estimated size requirement for additional affordable housing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 bedroom</th>
<th>2 bedrooms</th>
<th>3 bedrooms</th>
<th>4+ bedrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Somerset HMA</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

90.[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]
8.27 The evidence from the SHMA shows that wherever possible 67% of affordable housing should be provided as social rented, normally through a Private Registered Provider (PRP) normally a Registered Social Landlord. The remaining 33% should be intermediate affordable housing such as 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 alongside those more traditionally built by PRP’s are welcomed so long as they 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 Home and Communities Agency.

Affordable Housing Policy Target

8.28 The evidence in the SHMA suggests that the maximum District wide affordable housing target, based on the evidence of need, is 35% of a housing development. The Strategic Housing Land Viability Assessment (SHLVA)\(^1\) (which forms part of the SHMA), tested the viability of a number of ‘real’ and notional sites, with scenarios with no affordable housing and at 15%, 30%, 35% and 40% affordable housing. In each case the affordable housing was assumed to be a combination of social rented and intermediate affordable housing with the options for a 60/40 split and an 80/20 split were both tested. The calculations were carried out on the basis of zero Social Housing Grant available to spend towards provision. Taking into account market conditions the viability analysis suggests that the maximum target justifiable on strategic viability grounds across the District generally, is 30% (as at July 2008). This data has since been updated\(^2\) and shows that as of April 2010 that target has reduced to 20% reflecting the worsening housing market.

8.29 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 repeating the viability analysis on an annual basis to derive a viable (at the time of negotiation for planning consent) target.

8.30 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment recognises that an affordable housing target cannot be viable on all sites\(^3\) and there must be scope for an applicant for a specific site to demonstrate that the application of the general affordable housing target would not be viable. This issue can be addressed by taking an open book approach to negotiation as referred to earlier. Whilst the 2 stage flexible approach may present a degree of flexibility it could also create problems that may impact on deliverability, such as creating uncertainty for developers. Taking this into consideration the Council will pursue a policy that seeks the appropriate requirement, based on justifiable need, but recognising that viability considerations could result in reduced provision being achieved. The current Strategic Housing Land Viability Assessment will clearly present key evidence in any negotiation. The option of undertaking an up-date of the viability assessment every 3 years has been chosen by the Council rather than on an annual basis as a pragmatic approach and reflecting likely timescales for changes in economic circumstances. The latest information produced will be used to inform negotiation on affordable housing delivery. Where an open book approach is taken regarding viability, the Council has adopted Protocol\(^4\) for dealing with Planning Obligations as outlined in the Strategy section and in Policies SS6-SS8 of this document.

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91.[Strategic Housing Land Viability Assessment, Final Report, February 2009]
92.[Affordable Housing Threshold Viability Study, South Somerset District Council, Annex, May 2010]
93.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing market assessments Final Report February 2009]
94.[South Somerset District Council Planning Obligations Protocol, 2006]
Affordable Housing thresholds

8.31 National planning policy provides an indicative minimum site size threshold for the provision of affordable housing of 15 dwellings, however it also accepts that local planning authorities can set lower minimum thresholds where viable and practicable i.e. such smaller sites will cumulatively deliver more affordable homes. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment indicates that, in light of the evidence gathered, a case can be made for a general threshold of 10 dwellings on supply and viability grounds in South Somerset. Any lower threshold would require further evidence of likely provision forthcoming from both market sites and viability of smaller sites before it could be justified.

8.32 Additional data analysis of past completions and where those completions (on smaller sites) have occurred has been undertaken and the findings are set out in the tables below:

**Figure 19: Net dwelling completions by site size; 2004/5 to 2008/9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site size (dwgs)</th>
<th>08/09</th>
<th>07/08</th>
<th>06/07</th>
<th>05/06</th>
<th>04/05</th>
<th>Total no. of dwgs over last 5yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>915 (26.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>409 (11.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>317 (9.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>526 (15.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1301 (37.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>3468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 20: Net completions for development of 1-4 dwellings by settlement category; 2004/5 to 2008/9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total dwellings completed</th>
<th>Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres</th>
<th>Rural Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/05</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>104 (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/06</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>96 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/07</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>76 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/08</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>92 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/09</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>95 (52%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

95. [Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2010)]
96. [South Somerset District Council's Monitoring Database]
Figure 21: Net completions for development of 5-9 dwellings by settlement category; 2004/5 to 2008/9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total dwellings completed</th>
<th>Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres</th>
<th>Rural Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04/05</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>23 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/06</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/07</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/08</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/09</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.33 The analysis demonstrates that on average over the last 5 yrs over half of the dwellings completed each year in Rural Settlements have been delivered on sites of 1-4 dwellings. This evidence would therefore confirm that in order to maximise the delivery of affordable housing the threshold should be set as low as possible and that such low thresholds will indeed deliver cumulatively a significant number of affordable dwellings. However, whilst a low threshold can be justified numerically it also has to be viable, so additional viability assessment work has been undertaken. The updated assessment builds on the work previously undertaken for the SHLVA by considering the viability of 8 smaller sites of between 3 and 12 dwellings and, in order to provide a basis for comparison, the 6 South Somerset SHLVA sites were updated to April 2010 market conditions. For consistency the same development assumptions were used as in the original SHLVA. The findings show that in current market conditions (April 2010) a threshold of 6 dwellings would be viable in general terms across the District.

**Affordable Housing provision**

8.34 The number, type and tenure of affordable housing will be negotiated on a site by site basis informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment which indicates that there is a requirement for 75% of affordable homes to be 1-2 bedrooms with the remaining 25% to be 3 - 4 bedrooms. 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 available. 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. 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).

8.35 Government policy recognises that, when seeking affordable housing contributions, the presumption is for the provision to be made on the actual 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 and 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

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97. [Affordable Housing Threshold Viability Study Annex, May 2010]
98. [The SHLVA assumes nil public subsidy]
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 PRP or other affordable housing provider at a value that ensures that the delivery of affordable housing is viable.

8.36 In cases where open book valuations point to 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.

8.37 In terms of developability, and for ease of management, affordable housing should be dispersed throughout a development site although clusters of affordable housing are acceptable in some circumstances.

### Policy HG4 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Affordable housing target</th>
<th>Threshold (number of dwellings)</th>
<th>OR Hectares (irrespective of the number of dwellings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil Urban extension</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.1ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.1ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Towns</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.1ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Centres</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.2ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp;Rural Settlements</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.2ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 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 and it is preferable 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. It is not applicable to 100% affordable housing only rural exception sites.
Market Housing

Dwelling Size and Type for Market Housing

8.38 As well as making provision for affordable housing it is also important that the right mix of market housing is provided (this is recognised in national policy\textsuperscript{100}). The table below shows the possible profile for new market housing in South Somerset taking into account supply and demand for each type and size of dwelling as identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment\textsuperscript{101}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling type</th>
<th>Percentage required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detached house</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-detached house</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced house</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungalow</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat/maisonette</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedrooms</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ bedrooms</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 22: Possible profile for new market housing

8.39 This evidence is based on examining the difference between the supply and demand for homes. The report indicates that the proportion of demand for detached houses, semi-detached houses and bungalows is in excess of the supply whereas in the case of terraced houses and flats/maisonettes supply is in excess of demand. The evidence also shows that demand is greatest for 2 and 3 bedroom detached or semi-detached homes. However, there should be a degree of caution exercised when considering evidence of demand as it masks householders aspirations to live in homes larger than those that meet their basic needs. But it does suggest that an approach encouraging more 2 and 3 bedroom semi-detached and detached homes should be taken in the Core Strategy. There may, however, be specific local circumstances where this profile will differ.

8.40 The over arching principle of creating sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities will be applied when negotiating housing mix and tenure on large site applications (10 dwellings or more).

Likely Profile of Household Types requiring Market Housing

8.41 National\textsuperscript{102} policy expects local planning authorities to set out the desired profile of household types requiring market housing based upon the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 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

\textsuperscript{100}[Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2010)]
\textsuperscript{101}[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]
\textsuperscript{102}[Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2010)]
is noteworthy that 36% of that demand comes from households consisting of persons of pensionable age:

**Figure 23: Households requiring market housing**

![Households requiring market housing chart]

8.42 It should be noted that the planning system cannot control the tenure of market housing or the households who occupy those homes but it can and should influence size and number of bedrooms and provide for a sustainable and mixed form of development.

**Policy HG5 Achieving a mix of Market Housing**

A range of market housing types, tenures 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.

**Lifetime Homes and Empty properties**

**Lifetime Homes**

8.43 Evidence shows that the age of the population in the south west is going to increase significantly by 2026 and preparing the District to cope with this change will be challenging. Opportunities to adapt the existing housing stock should be maximised. With regard to new

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103.[Taunton and South Somerset Housing Market Areas Strategic Housing Market Assessment Executive Summary 2009]
104.[Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, CLG, 2008]
build, the Government’s Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) (December 2006) includes the consideration of Lifetime Homes standards. It is mandatory to include all the 16 design criteria of Lifetime Homes at Code Level 6.(CSH)

Empty Properties

8.44 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 of up to £11,000 are available from the District Council\[105\] 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

8.45 The accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers should be considered along with the housing needs of the whole community. Their specific accommodation needs are recognised in Circular 01/2006: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites (2006) which requires local authorities to set out in their Core Strategies the criteria to be used to guide the allocation of gypsy and traveller sites in a relevant development plan document. It is important that such sites are in locations that provide residents reasonable access to adequate health and education facilities and are outside areas that have a high risk of flooding. The Circular also expects local authorities to carry out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)\[106\] in order to find out the need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in their area. The Government also provides advice on the design of Gypsy and Traveller sites.\[107\]

8.46 The Somerset Councils are in the process of preparing a County-wide GTAA which is due for publication in October 2010. The data collected through this process will inform any future development plan documents. The GTAA will provide information on the level of need in the District. Having undertaken this work, if it is clear that there is still an unmet requirement for sites then the Council will consider allocation of sites in a subsequent development plan document. The aspiration is however, is through positive action, to encourage private planning applications and to identify public land to accommodate any shortfall in provision so that need is met without recourse to a further Development Plan Document.

8.47 Circular 04/2007 Planning for Travelling Showpeople (August 2007) requires the housing needs of Travelling Showpeople to also be assessed by the GTAA and a figure will be derived from this exercise. In general, Travelling Showpeople do not share the same cultural traditions as Gypsies and Travellers and their sites are normally mixed use, both business and residential use in order to accommodate the need to store and repair their vehicles. Because of this their sites may have more of an impact on the surrounding area both visually and acoustically.

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105.[Housing Standards Team]
106.[This is also required by The Housing Act 2004]
107.[Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites, Good Practice Guide, CLG, May 2008]
8.48 It is recognised that land within settlements which is suitable for the housing needs of the settled community may also be suitable for the Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople however the cost of this land may often be beyond their reach.

8.49 The District Council monitors the delivery of sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople through the planning application process and this practice will continue. Circular 01/2006 defines Gypsies and Travellers whilst Circular 04/2007 defines Travelling Showpeople and for planning purposes these definitions will be applied. The criteria set out in this policy will guide the allocation of sites in any future development plan document and any planning applications that may come forward as rural exception sites either before the development plan document is prepared or in addition to sites allocated.

8.50 Options considered included a policy incorporating criteria relating to site access, parking and road safety of occupants, landscaping and visual amenity, proximity to contaminated land and access to the highway network, or to include all these with the addition of a criteria relating to proximity to local services such as shops and schools. In order to ensure the most sustainable option is taken forward, the preferred approach is to have a policy incorporating proximity to schools and community facilities as this is key to helping to promote an integrated co-existence between the occupants of the site and the settled community. ODPM Circular 01/2006 states that in assessing the suitability of sites in rural locations, local authorities should be realistic about the availability, or likely availability, of alternatives to the car in accessing local facilities.

8.51 Circular 01/2006\textsuperscript{108} expects issues such as safe access from the public highway and the provision of space for parking, turning and on site servicing of vehicles to be taken into account as well as the road safety of occupants and visitors. The Circular also expects local planning authorities to identify sites that might be suitable for mixed residential and business uses, or where this is not possible, consider having separate sites for residential and business use close to each other although mixed use sites are not permitted on rural exception sites.\textsuperscript{109}

8.52 Advice on the design and layout of Gypsy and Traveller sites can be found in Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide (CLG, 2008). The guidance states 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. Experience in South Somerset suggests that small family owned sites are favoured by applicants. The Council will be seeking to establish such small pitch sites on any publicly provided sites within the District.

### Policy HG6 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;

\textsuperscript{108}[Annex C – Good Practice - Criteria]\n\textsuperscript{109}[Paragraph 56]
Replacement dwellings and extensions in the countryside

8.53 Extensions and replacement dwellings in the countryside are not specifically covered by the national guidance but local development plan policies should reflect the national policy for the protection of the countryside. PPS7\textsuperscript{110} states that local planning authorities should set out the policy criteria they will apply to replacement of countryside buildings, which seeks to avoid dwellings which are disproportionate to the original dwelling; that is excessive in scale or massing and thereby which are physically and visually intrusive.

8.54 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.

8.55 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.

8.56 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 rights\textsuperscript{111} 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.

\textsuperscript{110} [Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)]
\textsuperscript{111} [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.]
Agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings in the countryside

8.57 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.

8.58 Annex A of Planning Policy Statement 7, Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, identifies that new houses in the countryside require special justification for planning permission to be granted. This policy sets out the criteria to be considered where a new dwelling in the countryside is claimed as being necessary. The requirements for clear evidence of need and an appropriate size of dwelling seek to prevent possible abuse of the concession, and comply with national guidance. This section aims to give greater detail on this issue and provide more guidance and certainty for prospective developers and occupants.

8.59 PPS7 identifies that such dwellings should be commensurate with the needs of the holding and not the person requiring the accommodation. It further stipulates that 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). This is consistent with the suggestion in PPS7 which states that Local Authorities may wish to consider the removal of Permitted Development rights for such dwellings to enable the continued viability of maintaining the property for its intended use.
8.60 PPS7 also identifies the potential for abuse with the submission for applications for ‘replacement dwellings’ on agricultural holdings. It suggests that local authorities should investigate the history of the holding 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.

8.61 Policy HG8 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:

- 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 character and appearance of the countryside and ensures no adverse impact upon the integrity of internationally designated sites.

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.

8.62 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 HG9 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.
9 Economic Prosperity

9.1 Sustainable economic growth is the Government's overarching objective and Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4: 2009) aims for Local Planning Authorities to adopt a positive approach to economic development in both urban and rural locations and ensure a good supply of economic land.

9.2 PPS4 requires local planning authorities to undertake an Employment Land Review (ELR) and a Retail Assessment in order to establish the need for employment land and main town centre uses locally.

9.3 "Shaping South Somerset", the District's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) contains three long-term goals of direct relevance to the economic prosperity section of the Core Strategy. They are to be achieved by 2026 and are:

- Goal 5: High performance local economy - a competitive, high performance economy that is diverse, adaptable and resource efficient.
- Goal 7: Distinctiveness - a thriving Yeovil, market town and rural economy environment able to attract and retain visitors, consumers and high quality sustainable businesses.
- Goal 10: Energy - move towards a carbon neutral economy.

9.4 These goals are taken forward in the Strategic Objectives of this Core Strategy and in particular numbers 5, 7 and 8.

9.5 Each SCS goal has linked strategic priorities, which are medium-term objectives to achieving the long-term goals. Those of relevance, which the Core Strategy will support, are:

- Strategic Priority 15: Improve the diversity and adaptability of businesses (including rural businesses) as we move towards a low carbon economy.
- Strategic Priority 19: Support the continued development of distinctive local economies.
- Strategic Priority 20: Deliver the Visions for Yeovil, Chard and the other market towns and rural communities supported by high quality community involvement.

9.6 This chapter of the Core Strategy will support the Sustainable Community Strategy's goals and priorities through policies and develop the themes in PPS4, which will ensure the provision of land for employment, measures to ensure the vitality and viability of our Town Centres, the diversification of the rural economy and support for sustainable tourism.

9.7 PPS4 sets out the uses which are considered appropriate for town centres which include retailing and leisure uses, both of which are important to the economic well-being of the area. Evidence from the Retail Study shows that incomes and expenditure have grown strongly in South Somerset over the last 20 years with retail expenditure growing faster than incomes. The current economic downturn will, however, make the continuation of such trends much less likely. There has been a trend of increased mobility leading to larger centres being favoured over smaller ones with a corresponding loss of market share for the smaller centres in the District. This trend is re-enforced by the growing number of retailers especially convenience retailers requiring larger shop units to meet their shop format needs.
9.8 Growth in leisure spending points to the need for a mix of land uses within centres and the importance of choice for shoppers to draw them to centres. Coffee shops, quality restaurants, bars and leisure opportunities are increasingly important in drawing people into a centre and keeping them longer and in encouraging return trips. This is also important to combat the growth in internet competition, as is more direct management of centres to address the challenges in a focussed way. All of these trends are favouring larger centres over smaller ones.

9.9 Rural businesses and agriculture are an integral part of the economy and the decline in the agricultural economy has stimulated many farm businesses to seek new ways to remain viable, which has led to real successes through tourism, adopting new crops or farming methods and developing a growing local produce market.

9.10 Tourism contributes 4% of the District's employment and has the potential to generate more income in light of the need to promote 'greener' more local holiday opportunities. It is an important part of the economy within the District particularly in the more rural areas and plays an important role in farm diversification schemes. Schemes promoting the District tourism uses and boosting the economy through provision of tourist attractions, supporting facilities and accommodation will be supported subject to appropriate location and design and where in line with other policies of the Core Strategy.

9.11 There is no up-to-date South Somerset Economic Development Strategy at the present time, although one is in the process of being undertaken. There is also a Yeovil Economic Assessment being prepared. Key findings from the initial assessment highlight that diversification of the manufacturing base, attracting new investment and upskilling of the workforce are all of crucial importance, whilst changing the perception of Yeovil so that it can attract new investment and retain talented people.

9.12 The Economic Development Strategy will develop these economic themes further by setting out a vision for the future of economic development across the District and Yeovil in particular and by identifying the skills required by the population to achieve that vision. As with the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Core Strategy and Economic Development Strategy will support each other to deliver their joint aims.

9.13 The need for the provision of employment land has been established in the Settlement Strategy chapter of this document.

9.14 The Core Strategy does not allocate employment land in all settlements, only the strategic sites are identified (see Policy EP1 and explanatory text). The settlement visions suggest broad locations for the growth of both employment and residential development, but specific sites, unless strategic, are not identified. Depending on the circumstances, bringing employment land forward through mixed-use schemes may be supported. The Development Management process and monitoring should ensure sufficient land comes forward.

9.15 The figures identified in Policy SS5 provide the 20-year supply of employment land required by Policy ES2 of the now revoked RSS. In line with the Government's 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to managing the supply of land, employment land will be monitored annually and the ELR will be critically reviewed on a 3 year rolling basis with the supply of employment land revised accordingly. This will ensure that supply continues to meet the needs of businesses and the District's current and longer-term needs for economic development.

112 [SSDC Recession Strategy, May 2009]
Strategic Employment Sites

9.16 One of the key roles for the Core Strategy is to identify strategically significant sites safeguarded for employment use.

9.17 A strategically significant site is defined as one that is critical to delivery of the Core Strategy Vision and could not be fulfilled without it. Most of the sites that fall into this category are saved Local Plan allocations, without these there would not be sufficient employment land in the relevant settlements to match housing growth. This would result in settlements becoming unsustainable as travelling to work from such settlements would naturally have to increase as people occupy the new residential development coming forward.

9.18 The South Somerset ELR identifies the following 'saved policy' sites as 'high quality' or 'strategic sites', which must continue to be safeguarded for employment development:

**Yeovil**

9.19 The Lufton employment site, Oak Farm, benefits from outline planning permission granted in March 2010. The site lies adjacent to existing employment areas to the west of Yeovil and forms the employment part of the Lufton Key Site (KS/BRYM/1), a saved Local Plan allocation. The residential element of the Key Site is identified as a strategic housing site under Policy HG1.

9.20 Land off Bunford Lane (Saved Local Plan Allocation ME/WECO/1) will provide a much-needed high quality business park in Yeovil. The delivery of this employment land will assist in the delivery of a range and mix of quality sites in Yeovil and the District as a whole and the types of business that will occupy the site will diversify the economy.

**Crewkerne**

9.21 Development of Crewkerne Key Site (Saved Local Plan Allocation KS/CREW/1) is part of the comprehensive regeneration of the town. The employment element of the package of land uses is crucial to achieving a balanced development.

**Ilminster**

9.22 Station Road and land adjacent to Powrmatic, Hort Bridge (Saved Local Plan allocations ME/ILMI/4 and ME/ILMI/5) are both retained from the Local Plan allocations. These two sites were originally part of three employment land allocations in the South Somerset Local Plan, which together amounted to 21ha of land. Together they were a strategically important opportunity to secure major investment into the District and whilst the other site, saved proposal ME/ILMI/3, has planning permission, the remaining sites have yet to come forward. There is a recent planning resolution to approve mixed employment use on ME/ILMI/4 subject to the conclusion of a Section 106 agreement. It is important that this site and ME/ILMI/5 be retained to deliver the strategic employment land envisaged in the previous Local Plan. Whilst there has been local concern over flooding, the revision of Flood Zone 3B does not encroach either site and so the delivery of employment land should not be affected. The strategic employment sites are shown on the Proposals Map (relevant inset maps).
Yeovil Urban Extension

9.23 In addition to the saved sites a new strategic location for development is proposed at the Yeovil Urban Extension to the south of Yeovil and adjacent to the urban edge. A policy proposing employment provision associated with this proposal is set out in the Yeovil section of this document (Policy YV2 Yeovil Urban Extension). A major allocation for housing and employment and associated land uses for Chard is also proposed and presented in the Chard section of the document (Policy CV1 Chard Growth Area).

9.24 There are other saved sites from the South Somerset Local Plan which are not considered of strategic importance although they will provide important employment locally.

Policy EP1 Strategic Employment Sites

The following employment allocations are strategically significant and will be safeguarded for employment use:

- Land at Lufton (Saved Local Plan Allocation KS/BRYM/1);
- Land off Bunford Lane (Saved Local Plan Allocation ME/WECO/1);
- CLR Site, Crewkerne (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);
- Land adjacent to Powrmatic, Hort Bridge, Ilminster (Saved Local Plan Allocation ME/ILMI/5).

Offices

9.25 Offices are defined as a main town centre use in PPS4. Office uses encompass both B1a office units and A2 financial and professional service units. Office buildings tend to be used more intensively than any other forms of employment use (in terms of numbers of workers per given area of floorspace), therefore as key generators of movement, to help reduce the need to travel by private car, it is important to locate offices where there is good access by public transport. PPS4 stresses the importance of locating new office developments in town centre or edge of centre locations. In addition to reducing the need to travel, locating office development in the town centre promotes vitality and viability.

9.26 The ELR highlights that across the District 44% of office development has taken place on business parks and 56% elsewhere. Nothing was developed on town centre sites between 2005/06 and 2008/09. Ekosgen who are undertaking an Economic Profile of Yeovil for the Council have highlighted that more recently in Yeovil, planning permissions and Saved Local Plan allocations have supported the development of offices outside the town centre, which in the future will further displace office workers to less central locations.

9.27 It is important not to deter economic activity and there will be pressure from certain types of business uses, such as research and development, to develop more commercially attractive locations on prominent sites at the edge of towns, but at the same time planning policy is seeking to ensure that our town centres are vibrant service centres (Policy EP12). Therefore in accordance with PPS4, a sequential assessment is required for planning

113.[Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended]
applications for office development where not in an existing defined town centre and where they are not in accordance with the policies in this Core Strategy and any relevant Saved Local Plan policies. If sites are identified outside the preferred location, they will need to be, or can be made to be, highly accessible by a range of transport methods. 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 limits of Town Centres.

Where this is not possible because a sequential test demonstrates that there is no available, suitable and viable site, office developments may be acceptable on less central sites in the following order:

1. Edge-of-centre sites (within 200m 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;
2. 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;
3. Other out of centre sites.

Safeguarding Employment Land

9.28 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. Evidence demonstrates that there has been considerable pressure for local employment sites to be redeveloped for other uses, particularly housing and retailing. Data for the ELR illustrates that since the beginning of the plan period (1st April 2006 - 31st March 2010) 10.8 hectares of employment land has been lost to uses other than 'traditional' employment uses (B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order). Looking back over a longer timeframe, since 1991 47.09 hectares of employment land has been lost, demonstrating how cumulative losses of land can add up over time to have a significant impact on the supply of employment land in an area.

9.29 The importance of maintaining existing supply and protecting the overall availability and distribution of employment land should not be underestimated. 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. It must also be remembered that any loss of sites/premises will necessitate an increase in the amount of new floorspace required over the plan period, which could include Greenfield land. On this basis, it is crucially important to safeguard those existing sites that remain fit for purpose.
9.30 Through Stage 1 of the ELR, an assessment of business parks and trading estates was undertaken to judge which are likely to remain fit for employment use in the longer term. The assessment identifies that whilst a small number of sites are clearly no longer suitable, the majority are well suited to continued employment use and should be safeguarded.

9.31 Exceptions are where existing sites or premises are no longer suited to modern commercial needs; they are poorly located for economic development and where conflicts of use exist between the employment activity and its neighbours.

9.32 Any proposal to redevelop an existing employment site for non-employment uses must provide robust and credible evidence of viability and marketing, to support the argument that the site is no longer fit for purpose as an employment site. All applications that would result in the loss of employment floorspace must demonstrate that effort has been made to retain the site or buildings in employment use. The Council has produced a guidance document "Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications" which outlines that applicants will need to demonstrate, in a marketing statement, that a reasonable attempt has been made to continue the present use, or (where appropriate) find suitable new or mixed uses that are compatible with the buildings or land. In summary, the document requires the following:

- A marketing strategy illustrating a realistic price for the land/premises;
- Evidence to demonstrate that the property has been actively marketed for a minimum of 12 months;
- A record of all enquiries and inspections, along with reasons for lack of progress; and
- A marketing statement explaining how the guidelines have been met and summarising the outcomes of the marketing exercise.

9.33 It is worth noting that whilst the document "Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications" requires a marketing period of 12 months, in order to have a consistent approach across the Core Strategy, Policy EP3 requires active marketing for a period of 18 months.

9.34 Where decisions on viability are finely balanced, a third party will be employed to advise the District Council and the cost will be recovered from the applicant where appropriate.

9.35 In addition to any supporting evidence concerning viability, it must be demonstrated that the site is in a sustainable location for the proposed new land use. Allowing uses that are unsustainable or incompatible with the wider surrounding area would not be desirable simply because it brings about the redevelopment of an employment site.

9.36 There has been pressure in the past to lose 'traditional' employment sites (B Use class) to food retailing activities such as supermarkets (A1 Use), this has been resisted on planning grounds, on the basis that food retailing should be undertaken from preferably Town Centre locations and because the number and quality of full time equivalent jobs achieved through the retail activity are arguably less and not of the same quality as more skilled manufacturing/industrial/office jobs (‘traditional’ employment activities). Food retailing obviously provides valuable jobs for many, but they should be in town centre locations wherever possible and given that employment land is being lost across the District, the provision of jobs in retailing should not be at the expense of traditional employment sectors, especially if we are seeking to provide a range and mix of sites to support economic diversification.

114.[This is available on the Council's website.]
Policy EP3 Safeguarding Employment Land

Sites and premises which:

- No longer meet the needs of businesses;
- Are poorly located for economic development purposes; or
- Create conflicts of use with neighbouring users.

Should be considered for development of alternative uses in the following sequence:

- Non B use-class employment generating uses (e.g. retailing or leisure uses such as day care nurseries or gymnasiums);
- Community use;
- Mixed-use redevelopment including residential;
- Residential.

Changes of use will not be permitted unless:

- A marketing strategy and statement is submitted with the planning application;
- Thorough evidence is submitted that demonstrates that the commercial units are no longer needed, are poorly located for economic development or are not viable for an employment use;
- Evidence has been submitted with the application which demonstrates that the site/premises has been actively marketed locally at a reasonable price or rent for at least 18 months prior to application submission;
- It is quite clear that the above sequence has been applied to the redevelopment of the site;
- 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.

 Delivering Employment Land in the Countryside

9.37 Whilst the focus for employment land is on Yeovil and the Market Towns and Rural Centres, a viable rural economy is an overarching strategic aim of the Core Strategy. Supporting economic development and allowing agricultural and land based industries to take up appropriate economic diversification is key to sustaining the rural economy, and maintaining and enhancing the environment and distinctive quality of the landscape.

9.38 The rural economy will be supported through policies which support small-scale economic development, re-use of existing buildings in the countryside, extensions to existing businesses and farm diversification.
Small-scale Economic Development in the Countryside

9.39 The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing "Living, Working Countryside" (2008) reported that all types of business and enterprise can be appropriate for rural areas, subject to assessment of their impact based on local circumstances and conditions. This does not mean that all forms of economic activity are acceptable in rural areas. As stated in PPS4, economic development should be strictly controlled in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development. Whilst there is a need to provide good quality jobs, it is important that the environmental quality of the District is not damaged and consequently it is necessary to limit the amount of new development in the countryside in accordance with the Core Strategy.

9.40 Policy SS2 Development in Rural Settlements states that in rural settlements within the open countryside, small-scale employment opportunities will be supported although they may not be readily accessible by public transport, as long as the development is commensurate with the scale and nature of that settlement. This approach recognises the need to diversify the economy, to develop sectors in the rural area that are not necessarily land based, such as creative industries, but which help to diversify the economy as a whole, as long as they are of suitable size and type.

Re-use and Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

9.41 PPS4 is clear that the re-use of buildings in the countryside for economic development purposes will usually be preferable to new build or residential use and is explicit in its guidance for such development.

9.42 In South Somerset, traditional agricultural and industrial buildings are a significant part of our historic and landscape heritage. They are fundamental to our sense of place and local distinctiveness. "Traditional" is a term often used to describe farm buildings pre-dating 1940, after which modern building materials and revolutions in farming technology and farmstead planning marked a sharp divide with previous practice.\textsuperscript{115} The re-use and conversion of these buildings presents an opportunity to secure their continued presence in the wider landscape. If new uses and buildings are paired sensitively and if any changes planned will preserve the buildings, their features of interest and their setting, then these buildings can go on to tell the story of our past and present, albeit with a new use.

9.43 PPS4 is clear that the re-use of buildings applies not only to traditional buildings, but also to other buildings in the countryside and PPS5 highlights how this contributes toward a more sustainable form of development, as in energy terms it is better to reuse a building, than demolish it and rebuild it. In addition low carbon conversions offer greater sustainability rewards and are thus supported.

9.44 Policy EP4 supports the residential re-use of buildings in the countryside only where there is no suitable alternative economic use that can lead to the preservation of the building(s) and where there is no adverse impact on the countryside and wildlife. It must be noted that any proposed conversion of a traditional building must be achieved without substantial rebuilding, the converted building must retain its character after conversion otherwise the primary aim of preserving and finding a reuse of the building will be lost. The purpose of this is to protect the wider landscape of South Somerset and the features (hence the traditional buildings) that give the landscape its special character.

\textsuperscript{115}[English Heritage Guidance: The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings, A Guide to Good Practice]
9.45 Any proposal to re-use or convert an existing building for residential purposes must demonstrate that sequentially business and community uses have firstly been considered and discounted, then live/work units, prior to sole residential re-use. Developers must provide robust and credible evidence of viability and marketing, to support the argument that the site has no suitable, alternative commercial, community or live/work use.116

9.46 In addition to any supporting evidence concerning viability, it must be demonstrated that the site is in a sustainable location for the proposed new land use. Allowing uses that are unsustainable or incompatible with the wider surrounding area would not be desirable simply because it enables the redevelopment of a site.

9.47 In addition to the above Council guidance, "The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings, A Guide to Good Practice: English Heritage" and design guidance "The Conversion of Traditional Farm and Other Buildings" should be considered alongside Policy EP4, as they set out further information in respect of the re-use of traditional buildings and what information may assist submission of a planning application.

9.48 Many buildings are important habitats for legally protected wildlife such as bats, owls, swifts or swallows. In addition to the potential direct impacts of converting buildings already occupied by such species, the widespread conversion of simple agricultural and industrial buildings is resulting in fewer potential roosting and nesting sites thereby limiting opportunities for these beneficial species to re-colonise and increase their populations in areas of suitable countryside. Conversions should therefore aim to accommodate any existing wildlife, and should also aim to provide opportunities for future accommodation by wildlife.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy EP4 Conversion or Re-use of Buildings in the Countryside</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for the reuse of buildings in the countryside for residential purposes will be permitted provided that every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a suitable:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• business or community re-use firstly; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• live/work unit on site secondly, prior to consideration for sole residential re-use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In addition to the sequential approach outlined above, the following criteria will need to be satisfied:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The buildings are structurally sound and capable of conversion without demolition;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The proposed re-use preserves the established historic and/or architectural value of the building;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use is made of land within the curtilage of the development where possible and outside the curtilage only where it is demonstrated that additional land is essential for domestic amenities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is no adverse impact on the countryside with regard to scale, character and appearance;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The proposed re-use has regard for protected wildlife species and their habitats, in particular internationally designated sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and</td>
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</tbody>
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116.[Guidance document "Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications" is available on the Council's web site]
New Live/Work Units

9.49 Live/work units are dwellings with provision for on site employment use as well as residential occupation. These are supported nationally, and whilst they are an attractive proposition in theory, local experience shows that there are considerable difficulties in bringing schemes to fruition and ensuring that developments continue to function as planned and do not revert to solely residential accommodation. New build live/work units in the countryside will only be supported in South Somerset where the accommodation is essential to enable the enterprise to operate. The primary purpose of the live/work unit should be economic and not residential.

Policy EP5 New Build Live/Work Units

New build live/work forms of development will not be allowed by virtue of the fact that there is an employment element to the development in locations where residential development would not normally be permitted.

Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside

9.50 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.

9.51 It is clear from the settlement strategy that away from Yeovil and Chard, the 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 PPS4 is clear that protection of the countryside is an overarching aim of national policy.

9.52 Any such 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.

9.53 In accordance with PPS4 it is essential to make efficient and effective use of land, which means prioritising previously developed land and reusing existing buildings where possible.
Policy EP6 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 sites designated 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.

Tourism

9.54 Tourism is changing. People are increasingly more interested in the experience rather than the destination. Today, people are seeking to take shorter breaks related to their hobbies and interests, good health and well-being, access to natural environmental assets and locally distinctive cultural and historical activities.

9.55 The South West Regional Tourism Strategy (Towards 2015 - A Tourism Strategy for the Region)\textsuperscript{117} identifies three priorities: sustainable tourism, increased quality and improved destination management. The core objective is to develop a quality, year round, sustainable tourism sector and to achieve sustainable tourism, enhancing the tourism offer by investing in existing attractions and destinations and promoting the provision and quality of accommodation.

9.56 The Government Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism states that the planning system, by taking a pro-active role in facilitating and promoting the implementation of good quality development, is crucial to ensuring that the tourism industry can develop and thrive in the most sustainable manner possible.

9.57 PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth contains Policy EC7: Planning for Tourism in Rural Areas. This policy supplements the Good Practice Guide by providing additional guidance for tourism applications in rural locations. The guidance is clear that tourism proposals in rural locations should be supported subject to appropriate protection of

\textsuperscript{117}[South West Councils and Regional Development Agency publication]
the countryside. Tourist facilities will be expected to be within existing or replacement buildings and located as far as possible in close proximity to rural service centres. Existing tourism accommodation will continue to be supported to maintain financial viability. Minimising the visual promenance and landscape impact of expanded holiday and caravan sites or chalets will be important. Statutory 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.

9.58 Locally, tourism is important to the economy. In 2008, visitors spent £154 million in South Somerset and 5% of the workforce are employed in tourism. South Somerset has many strengths in this sector such as a diverse countryside with many designated landscapes, award winning local produce and its relative accessibility from other parts of the UK. However, it also has its weaknesses, for example it has a lower profile compared with other destinations in the South West, it lacks iconic attractions, accommodation and service quality is patchy and the District is mostly used as a ‘passing through’ destination.

9.59 The South Somerset Core Strategy Issues and Options document sought to identify tourism issues within South Somerset and to explore the most appropriate policy approach to be taken. The consultation comments raised a number of new tourism issues relevant to South Somerset including the contribution made by the historic environment, tourism accommodation and the need for environmental protection.

9.60 Whilst national guidance set out in the Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism and PPS4: Planning for Economic Growth covers many of the substantive issues associated with tourism applications in rural areas such as South Somerset, local policies are required to reflect the District’s development strategy and clarify advice for Major New Tourism applications.

New Tourism Proposals

9.61 Policy EP7 seeks to maintain the District’s development strategy by directing tourism proposals towards settlements in the countryside and at the appropriate scale. Applications will be, by preference, located within either Yeovil, the Market Towns or Rural Centres. Proposals will be allowed in the open countryside where a rural location is essential or where the tourism facility is associated with a rural business or land use and will be subject to suitable protection of the District’s environmental, cultural or heritage assets. 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. 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.

Policy EP7 New Tourism Proposals

In order to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of tourism in the District
new tourism proposals will be permitted provided that:
Major New Tourist Facilities

9.62 Major new tourism proposals will be permitted in or near to Yeovil and the District’s Market Towns subject to a number of criteria. Applications will be expected to provide evidence that the proposal will enhance and develop the tourism opportunities within the District, significantly contribute to the economy and that it does not displace visitors from existing attractions. Proposals must also be well related to the national road route network and be accessible by public transport, where practically achievable, or suitable alternative public transport arrangements can be made.

Policy EP8 Major New Tourist Facilities

Major new tourism facilities 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 District’s economy;
- increasing rather than just displacing visitors from other areas and attractions;
- 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.

Farm Diversification

9.63 Planning Policy Statement 7, Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and PPS4, Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, recognise that diversification from the dependence on production of agricultural commodities into non-agricultural activities, is vital to the continuing viability of many existing farm enterprises. 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.

9.64 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, both residents and other businesses that may be adversely affected by new types of on-farm development.

9.65 In some instances when a scheme is successful it can grow to such a limit, 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.

9.66 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.

**Policy EP9 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 internationally designated sites;
- 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 development is required it is in scale with the surroundings and well related to any existing buildings on the site.
Retailing and Town Centre Uses

Policy and Trends

9.67 The main town centre uses are identified in PPS4 ‘Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth’ (2009) as:

- retail development;
- offices;
- leisure, entertainment facilities and the more intensive sport and recreation uses; and
- arts, culture and tourism development.

9.68 The town centres of South Somerset have been identified by the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 which additionally identified ‘Primary Shopping Frontages’, ‘Primary Shopping Areas’ and the ‘Yeovil Town Centre Shopping Area’ on the Adopted Proposals Map. These defined areas have been saved as current Local Plan policies. Work undertaken as part of the South Somerset Retail Study 2009, updated in 2010, in its early phase indicated general support for the validity of the current town centre boundary and primary frontages for Yeovil, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton with some minor updates recommended. These town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas should be reviewed as an early priority as part of a future Development Plan Document. In those Rural Centres where such town centre boundaries have not been identified work will be undertaken to determine where they should be identified for the submission document. These settlements are Ilchester, Milborne Port and Stoke Sub-Hamdon.

9.69 PPS4 seeks to secure viable and vital town centres that are the focus of development and that provide a wide range of services for the community in an attractive, safe and accessible environment. Competition and choice should be secured through innovative efficient shopping, leisure and tourism and service provision and the historic heritage of centres needs to be conserved and enhanced.

9.70 PPS4 seeks the positive planning of centres and, in establishing a policy framework, flexible policies which are able to respond to changing circumstances whilst encouraging high density accessible development, and a defined hierarchy of centres and identified sites capable of securing the centres' growth. Planning applications for main town centre uses including any that create additional floorspace, including internal alterations where consent is required, and applications to vary or remove conditions changing the range of goods sold will be considered against PPS4.

9.71 A diverse range of uses, strong retail mix, supporting shops and services, vibrant markets, identified growth sites together with conservation and enhancement of town centre character, where appropriate, are all to be encouraged. The night time economy is to be encouraged through a complimentary range of uses appealing to a wide range of age and social groups making provision for leisure, cultural and tourism activities such as cinemas, theatres, restaurants, public houses, bars, nightclubs and cafes.

9.72 For larger town centres PPS4 encourages the identification of potential redevelopment sites in the centre. A number of these are identified in the Retail Study and also set out later in this section.
9.73 A goal of ‘Shaping South Somerset: A Strategy for Sustainable Communities (2008-2026)’ is ‘Distinctiveness’ which has the objective of:

“A thriving Yeovil, market town and rural economy environment able to attract and retain visitors, consumers and high quality sustainable businesses.”

9.74 The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sees a key challenge in achieving this as:

“attracting more and a wider range of retail and other services to maximise local spending and overcome competition from Taunton (within Somerset) and the cities of Exeter, Bristol, Bath and Bournemouth.”

9.75 Yeovil Vision seeks to broaden the range of retail provision in Yeovil; this aspiration being articulated through the Yeovil Town Centre Strategy and also the Yeovil Urban Development Framework 2005, which seeks retail use in association with others on several sites.

9.76 The Chard Regeneration Framework aims to create a regenerated town centre with a variety of shops and services in a safe, accessible and pleasant environment. It seeks a recapture of consumer spending for comparison goods with the provision of larger units to meet market needs through redevelopment and an improved environment to improve the retail experience.

9.77 Responses to the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report identified that rather than allocate land for retailing, or an alternative option, a criteria based policy that positively encourages retailing in appropriate locations is needed. Support for retail in towns generally was recorded and specific support for farmers’ markets. There was a mix of views in respect of the retail and leisure opportunities that Yeovil lacks/needs however a common feeling was the need for an improvement in the quality of both facilities on offer and environment, and consideration of a development of retail niches within the town. Potential for retail growth would be determined by the Retail Capacity Study and priority for redevelopment on brownfield sites should be promoted.

**Retail Hierarchy**

9.78 The basis for the hierarchy of town centres in the District required by PPS4 is set out in Policy EP10 below. Position within the hierarchy will define how new growth in general is to be distributed. Yeovil is to be the main focus for new investment in retail and other major facilities requiring high levels of accessibility. Town centres are also to be the prime location for B1a office development (Draft Policy EP2).

9.79 At Market Towns the range and quality of central area facilities need to be maintained to meet future needs and to allow for growth. Their retail and service role should be considered relative to the major regional centre, Yeovil, to help avoid greater concentration of these facilities at larger places. Rural Centres also need to maintain their retailing and office functions to support their position within the hierarchy of settlements.

9.80 The Evidence Base of the updated Retail Capacity Study builds on the evidence from the Baker Associates Settlement Role and Function Study for the hierarchy.
Policy EP10 Retail Hierarchy

Proposals to broaden the range of retail and leisure facilities in Yeovil town centre are encouraged.

Proposals that maintain and/or enhance retail facilities in the Market Towns of Castle Cary/Ansford, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Somerton and Wincanton are encouraged subject to the role of Yeovil in the retail hierarchy being safeguarded.

Proposals that maintain and/or enhance retail facilities in the Rural Centres of Bruton, Ilchester, Langport/Huish Episcopi, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke Sub Hamdon are encouraged subject to the relative roles of Yeovil and the Market Towns in the retail hierarchy being safeguarded.

9.81 Major new regional scale shopping facilities will not be supported outside Yeovil in order to retain the validity of the retail hierarchy and focus shops where people have best access to them and to support and build on existing infrastructure investment.

Policy EP11 Presumption against Major New Regional Shopping Facilities

The development of major new regional-scale shopping facilities outside Yeovil town centre within South Somerset will not be supported.

The Sequential Approach to Development

9.82 The Government within PPS4 has confirmed use of the sequential approach to site selection for town centre uses. Under this approach planning authorities should identify sites that are suitable, available and viable in the following order:

- appropriate locations in existing centre where sites or buildings for conversion are, or are likely to become, available within the plan period;
- edge-of-centre locations with preference going to sites that are or will be well connected to the town centre;
- out-of-centre sites, with preference given to sites that are or will be well served by a choice of transport, and which are closest to the centre and have a higher likelihood of forming links with the centre.

9.83 The definitions of centre, edge of centre and out of centre are set out in Appendix B to PPS4.

9.84 PPS4 sets out in some detail what is required to comply with the sequential test for proposals outside centres and how the impact assessment is to be conducted. Proposals must exceed 200 sq m gross for retail and leisure uses for the sequential approach to be required.
9.85 PPS4 also requires an impact assessment to be applied for all developments outside town centres and for schemes above 2,500 sq m gross floorspace. In advance of development plan clarification of this floorspace limit the impact assessment must apply to all developments of this type. (An impact assessment also applies to proposals within centres that are not in accordance with the development plan whose impact may adversely affect other centres). Work is ongoing to establish a relevant threshold at which to set the impact assessment threshold level for the South Somerset town centres (to be available for the Submitted Core Strategy document).

9.86 Applications for town centre uses that are not in an existing 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 where there is clear evidence that the proposal is likely to lead to significant adverse impact on the existing centre. Where no significant adverse impacts have been identified, planning applications should be determined by taking account of the positive and negative impacts of the proposal, any other material considerations and the likely cumulative effect of recent permissions, developments under construction and completed developments.

**Development within Town Centres**

9.87 In order to achieve the government and local communities’ aspirations within town centres, retail proposals will be encouraged 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.

**Policy EP12 Retail Vitality and Viability**

In order to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres, new shopping proposals will be permitted within Yeovil town centre shopping area and the town centres of Market Towns and Rural Centres provided that:

- The proposals are of a scale appropriate to the size and function of the town centres and would help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre;
- The proposals, either alone or combined with other recent and outstanding planning permissions, would not seriously affect the viability of the town centre of another nearby settlement; and
- Parking will serve the centre as a whole.

9.88 In Yeovil and some of the identified Market Towns for South Somerset, and for Langport, primary shopping frontages have been identified encompassing streets dominated by shops, having the greatest pedestrian footfall and forming the heart of the town centre. It is considered important to retain the compactness of these areas in order to maintain the centre’s attractiveness and convenience to shoppers. There is evidence that non retail uses fragment, and thus make less attractive and convenient, the core shopping streets. It is necessary therefore to protect these frontages. Protected frontages are shown on the
Proposals Map (insert relevant Inset Map reference). An early review of these frontages is proposed to reflect the importance of maintaining a core retail area both functionally and spatially as is the identification of those in Rural Centres where appropriate.

9.89 PPS4 seeks to encourage the use of upper floor floorspace in town centres for residential or office use to minimise vacant and underused space and to encourage a night time economy within town centres.

**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.

**Retail Study Update 2010 and Development Implications for Main Centres**

9.90 The Spatial Strategy in respect of town centre development is informed by the South Somerset Retail Study Update 2010\(^{118}\), commissioned to assess the quantitative and qualitative needs for retail development across the District and affirm the retail hierarchy for the District. This has been informed by a household telephone survey plus an analysis of retail trends and town centre health of the District's key town centres. The key town centres are those of Yeovil, the Market Towns and Langport:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yeovil</th>
<th>Crewkerne</th>
<th>Wincanton</th>
<th>Castle Cary/Ansford</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chard</td>
<td>Ilminster</td>
<td>Somerton</td>
<td>(Langport/Huish Episcopi)(^{119})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.91 The Study has assessed two policy options for Yeovil, Chard and for the towns (both Market Towns and Rural Centres) and applied them to the main initial findings from its component surveys. The assessment undertaken considers separately convenience and comparison goods (including bulky goods) retailing in the individual settlements:\(^{120}\)

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\(^{118}\)[Prepared by GVA Grimley Ltd to update the South Somerset Retail Study 2006 (DPDS Consulting)]

\(^{119}\)[Langport/Huish Episcopi is now identified as a Rural Centre but was previously identified in the Role and Function Study as a Policy B Settlement (see Settlement Strategy section)]

\(^{120}\)[Prepared by GVA Grimley Ltd to update the South Somerset Retail Study 2006 (DPDS Consulting)]
• Option 1 - The ‘constant market share’ approach, which assumes that existing shopping patterns (and market share) will continue at the same level over the lifetime of the LDF.
• Option 2 - The ‘revised market share’ approach which looks at rising and falling market share for the settlements and identifies the implications that this may have.

9.92 For Yeovil a policy to enhance market share in convenience goods expenditure serves to further polarise retailing in the District to the detriment of the smaller towns whilst a reduced share has no basis in policy terms and does not yield major re adjustments in the towns. For comparison goods expenditure a raised share of growth for Yeovil would cause problems related to scale, accessibility and impact and adversely affect the ability of the other towns to retain their own viability.

9.93 For Chard there is no strong reason to increase the convenience goods market share given the level of current provision whereas for comparison expenditure a pre-requisite is the identification of a town centre site properly integrated to take growth to the benefit of the centre overall.

9.94 For the Market Towns of Crewkerne, Ilminster and Wincanton the assessment again indicates sufficient convenience goods provision to make any increase in share unlikely through increased floorspace provision (there is sufficient in the centre of these towns already and any increase would be at the expense of unrealistic sales loadings). Comparison goods provision could be pursued but again only where realistic site availability is identified.

9.95 For the smaller centres of Castle Cary/Ansford and Somerton the ability to increase expenditure levels in convenience and comparison spending is not realistic due to their size, natural catchment and levels of commercial market interest and more than likely would be at the expense of existing floorspace in the towns in question.

9.96 An upper limit on the future convenience and comparison goods floorspace in Yeovil which corresponds to the constant market share approach is therefore recommended and the figures articulated in the policy below derive from the detailed assessment in the Retail Study Update. The Retail Study Update indicates that the sites it has assessed within and around the town centre are able to meet the short to medium term level of need.

**Policy EP14 Comparison Floorspace in Yeovil**

The cumulative net increase in convenience goods retail floorspace to be completed in Yeovil is limited to a figure of 900sq m by 2014, 2,200 sq m by 2021 (i.e. an increase of 1,300 sq m since 2014) and 3,100 sq m by 2026. The overall net increase in comparison goods should be limited to a figure of 10,000 sq m by 2026. The floorspace provision is to be regularly monitored to take account of changing circumstances.

9.97 PPS4 requires that an appropriate range of sites are identified through a sequential approach that are suitable, viable and available to meet at least the first five years of

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120.[In undertaking the quantitative assessment two scenarios were tested in respect of the distribution of housing development; one assumed that all housing development outside Yeovil would be provided within Chard and the other that it would be divided between Market Towns and Rural Centres.]
identified need. The Retail Study Update considers a number of sites within the key town centres and the opportunities offered by these sites were taken forward into the assessment of the broad policy options for retailing in the District. The sites are:

**Yeovil**
1. Cattle Market
2. Quedam Shopping Centre extension area
3. Glovers Walk
4. Stars Lane North
5. Stars Lane South
6. Petters Way
7. Ambulance/Fire Station area

**Chard**
8. East End
9. Land between Boden Street and Silver Street
10. Area around Football Club

**Wincanton**
11. Carrington Way car park
12. Memorial car park

**Ilminster**
13. Gooch & Housego building, Silver Street

9.98 These sites have been identified as having potential for retail use to a greater or lesser extent (or intensification of use in the case of Glovers Walk and with High Street frontage in the case of Memorial Car Park, Wincanton) and for either sole retail use or as a mixed use within the site in question. Petters Way, Yeovil is the one site identified that is viewed as not having potential due to its dislocation from the main shopping area of Yeovil, and opportunities for the Stars Lane site will be assessed within the context of the proposals for the Urban Village strategic location (see Yeovil Section).

9.99 Those sites with retail potential would be expected to come forward in the course of the plan period and would be expected to be part of any sequential assessment in the event of a non town centre site being proposed for development for retailing.

9.100 The preferred retail strategy options for main settlements are set out in the respective settlement profiles above. Based on these preferred retail options for main centres it is felt that there is no need to establish allocations to provide sufficient sites in the Core Strategy to meet at least the first 5 years of identified need. The scale of growth identified, with the exception of Yeovil, is not sufficiently large in either convenience or comparison goods floorspace terms to justify a strategic allocation and opportunities for development will come forward to accommodate need. Yeovil’s strategic need is accounted for in the proposed Quedam extension. Should this not come forward a number of other sites have been put forward and these would need to be actively pursued either on their own or together, either as part of retail developments or mixed use developments. The mixed use development allocation at the eastern end of Chard town centre will serve to promote retail uses as part of the wider proposal for that area and as appropriate for an edge of town location.
Out-of-centre Retail Development

9.101 The Retail Study Update has not identified any need for future out-of-centre retail allocations in South Somerset, particularly given the opportunities presented by a range of potential development and redevelopment sites within, and on the edge of, the main town centres.

Local District Centres

9.102 New District or Local Centres (as defined in Annex B to PPS4) to serve proposed new development areas should compliment rather than compete with the retail facilities in the relevant strategic centre. This consideration is particularly relevant in relation to local centre facilities to be planned in association with the Urban Extension for Yeovil, within existing major strategic site development proposals currently with consent, and with the centres associated with the major development at Chard.

Policy EP15 District and Local Centres

Development of the District Centre and Local Centres associated with the Yeovil urban extension and existing major development proposals currently with consent, and the Local Centres associated with development at Chard should be of a scale and nature to meet local needs of the developments within which they will be located but not such that they adversely affect the viability and vitality of Yeovil and Chard town centres.

Retention of Services and Facilities

9.103 For some years, rural shops and services have been in much faster comparative decline than equivalent services across the country. The loss of the sole local shop, post office, public house or other service within a village can significantly affect the ability of local residents to access services. Such losses can threaten the viability and vitality of rural communities and have serious social and economic impacts upon residents especially certain groups such as the low paid, young and elderly. PPS4 requires local planning authorities to take into account the importance of local shops and services to local centres and villages when considering planning applications affecting such facilities. The guidance states that planning applications that fail to protect existing facilities that meet communities’ day-to-day needs should be refused. In addition planning applications for the conversion or extension of shops which are designed to improve their viability are to be positively supported.

9.104 In line with national guidance, Policy EP16 requires applicants submitting any proposal to redevelop an existing local shop, post office, public house or other service such as church hall or sports/leisure facility for an alternative use to either provide alternative similar provision or provide robust and credible evidence of viability and marketing particularly if this would result in total loss of the service or facility. The argument that the use/site is no longer viable and there are no suitable, viable alternative community uses will not be accepted without proper evidence.
9.105 All applications which would result in significant or total loss of a service or facility must demonstrate that a reasonable attempt has been made to continue the present use, or (where appropriate) find suitable new or mixed uses that are compatible with the buildings or land and location. The key elements required by the document are set out above in the ‘Safeguarding Employment Land’ section of the chapter.\textsuperscript{121}

9.106 In addition to establishing the commercial viability of shops or services on the open market, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that a social enterprise model for re-use has been explored. Increasingly, villages have become determined to do something about the closure of their village shop, public house or other services and a tried and tested solution is for these communities to set up their own community-owned shop/service. 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. By pooling efforts and finding out what level of commitment a village can often succeed where a commercial enterprise 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.

9.107 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.

9.108 In terms of demonstrating that all reasonable efforts to secure a suitable alternative community re-use have 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.\textsuperscript{122}

9.109 PPS4 also requires any identified deficiencies in local shopping and other facilities that serve people’s day-to-day needs to be remedied and action taken to help address social exclusion, and planning applications for the conversion or extension of shops which are designed to improve their viability, are to be responded to positively by the local planning authority and Policy EP16 supports this approach.

9.110 A local Parish Plan may assist in informing the need for services and facilities.

\textsuperscript{121}[The Council has produced a guidance document which is available on the Council’s web site: "Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications"]

\textsuperscript{122}[The Council has produced a guidance document which is available on request: "Commercial Marketing of Property in Relation to Planning and Listed Building Applications"]
Policy EP16 Protection and Provision of Local Shops, Community Facilities and Services

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 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 at least the previous 18 months (as set out in Policy EP3 Safeguarding Employment Land).
10 Transport and Accessibility

10.1 South Somerset is a predominantly rural District. In our smaller towns and villages 66% of the economically active population travel to work in single occupancy car/van, in Chard 58% travel to work in single occupancy car/van, and in Yeovil the figure reduces to 57% (2001 census). Because of our dispersed pattern of settlements, the car will remain an essential mode of travel, because, in many instances these locations are remote from key services, facilities and employment with subsequent diverse travel patterns.

10.2 The Climate Change Act 2008 requires an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. 30% of CO₂ emissions in South Somerset are due to transport. ‘Shaping South Somerset’, the South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy sets out a more ambitious target of a "year on year reduction in carbon footprint towards a carbon neutral economy in 2030" and identifies an action to support the development of an integrated, low carbon transport infrastructure (Strategic Priority 13), as part of a wider goal to achieve low carbon quality services and facilities to include transport & ICT enabling everyone to have fair & equitable access to satisfy their needs.

10.3 Considerable benefits can be delivered by enabling travel by means other than the car. These include improved health from more active travel modes, reductions in carbon emissions arising from transport, 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.

10.4 Other measures such as home working, encouraging the use of low emission, alternative fuel, electric vehicles, demand responsive public transport and car share schemes should therefore be considered on a scale and degree appropriate to new sites proposed for development.

10.5 The Department of Transport (DfT) guidance “Low Carbon Transport – A Greener Future” cites that the domestic transport sector should contribute to a 16% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020 (on 2005 levels). 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) or congestion issues. The Yeovil Infrastructure Impact Assessment¹²³ recognises the significant adverse effect on the highway network of additional dwellings in and around Yeovil and whilst this assessment considers the original growth level for Yeovil as 11,400 dwellings, the 8,200 now envisaged is still considered to have a significant impact. Consequently substantial investment in measures to promote sustainable travel will be needed if the alternative of major highway infrastructure investment is to be avoided and the specifics of this will emerge in the County Council’s Future Transport Plan (FTP) and Yeovil Transport Strategy Review 2 (YTSR 2) in time to inform the Publication document for submission to an Inspector.

10.6 There is potential to achieve this in Yeovil through the Eco Towns Urban Village and the Eco-Towns Urban Extension development. District wide, achieving modal shift 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 model 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 other towns and villages. For the Eco Town and Urban extension it is a requirement that measures are included to ensure 50% of travel is by sustainable means, with 60% sustainable travel being the eventual goal.

10.7 There has been a significant growth in rail travel in recent years. However this has generally been for longer journeys where shorter journey times compared to the private car are achieved. 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 difficult to achieve. However, there are opportunities to improve sustainable links to rail stations and in particular the Yeovil stations.

**Generic District Wide Modal Shift**

10.8 These District wide measures are aimed at reducing single car occupancy, the need to travel or encouraging the use of more sustainable travel or alternative fuels where travel is necessary. They include:

a. Improving transport choice through raising awareness and encouraging travel to work and school by public transport, cycling and walking. This can be achieved through the provision of Travel Information Packs that include:
   - Car share schemes – details of benefits and how to join;
   - Local bus information – timetable & maps of nearest 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 location of facilities such as health, education, shops, employment, churches, recreation & leisure;
   - Details of cycle training, cycle/equipment sales & repairs, cycle clubs and health benefits;
   - Information on the health benefits of walking.

The information required to produce these Information Packs is available either on line or through SCC (Transporting Somerset or 'Moving Somerset Forward'). The requirement to provide Travel Information Packs should apply to all new residential and employment developments.

b. Encouraging the use of electric cars through the provision of an external 13 amp charging point adjacent to each parking space and within the curtilage of the site. Similarly garages within the development should also include a 13-amp socket to enable vehicle charging. The requirement to provide charging points for electric cars should apply to all residential and employment developments.

c. A Green Travel Voucher for use on sustainable transport to an agreed amount per dwelling to be made available to each set of occupants repeated to a maximum of three tenures per unit offered at the first occupation of each tenure and continually for 5 years following the first occupation of each unit. Similarly for employment sites a Green Travel Voucher should be provided for each employee at commencement of employment. In respect of public transport the vouchers should be arranged through Transporting

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124.[Eco Town Supplement to PPS1; Objective ET11 ]
Somerset (the public transport section at SCC), 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 to or from a destination in Somerset (to encourage interchange). The requirement to provide Green Travel Vouchers should apply to all new residential and employment developments.

d. Encouragement to work from home applying to all residential development through improved design and by enabling easier access to Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). These should include:
   • Designed-in specific work area (e.g. space for desk, computer, phone);
   • Broadband connections.

e. Improved public transport connections should be made by developments in Market Towns, Rural Centres and villages 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 should provide funding for these commensurate with the size of the site to enable good on-going connections with the public transport network. The requirement for direct contributions to public transport should apply to residential developments of 10 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 1000 sqm and the appropriate level of contributions will be sought through planning obligations. (see Policies SS6-SS8)

f. Further travel planning measures over and above those delivered in the above list of promoted measures, commensurate with the size and location of the site and in relation to land use site thresholds set out in the tables in the Travel Plan Policy TA2.

g. Ensuring that sustainable travel habits are established from the start. This means that sustainable transport measures need to be in place and operational at first occupancy.

Policy TA1 Low Carbon Travel

All new residential and employment developments in South Somerset should:

• Provide Travel Information Packs
• Provide for the charging of electric vehicles with an external 13-amp charging point adjacent to each parking space and within the curtilage of the site. Garages within the development should also include a 13-amp socket.
• Provide a Green Travel Voucher for each occupier/employee for 1 year for use on sustainable transport
• Include Travel Plans (commensurate with Policy TA2)
• Ensure that sustainable transport measures are in place and operational concurrent with first occupancy.

Additionally, developments of all new residential dwellings should:

• Enable ease of working from home by providing a designed in specific work area with Broadband connections.
Residential developments of 10 dwellings or more and employment sites with a floor space greater than 1000 sq m should also:

- 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 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 SS7 to ensure provision of such facilities, which shall be provided prior to first occupation of the new development.

Travel Plans

10.9 To reinforce the above policies, dependent on the scale of new 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.

10.10 Measures-only Travel Statements (MoTS) are suitable for smaller sites where the level of investment is less and unlikely to include large scale measures such as off-site works. MoTS are therefore focussed on on-site actions such as cycle parking, and information/incentive packages for occupiers. There is very little difference between Travel Plan Statements (TPS) and Full Travel Plans with TPS being slightly less onerous than Full Travel Plans to reflect the scale of the development.

10.11 The differences between these types of Travel Plan are best illustrated by reference to Policy TA2, which indicates the different contents required with each type. A summary of the Travel Plan type, its content and when used in applications in relation to a particular land use for outline, full and hybrid applications is shown in table 1 in the policy.

10.12 Similarly the thresholds for each of the travel plan types are set out in the policy. This considers the type of Travel Plan required in relation to the Gross Floor Area (GFA) and employment densities.125

10.13 There are cost benefits to both the developer and end user in providing greater choice in travel modes. For the developer this often equates to more efficient land use, whilst to the end user the reduced need to use a car can lead to significant monetary savings.

10.14 Somerset County Council has been preparing a guidance document on travel plans and the key elements of this have been taken on board in producing the Policy TA2.

10.15 A summary of the measures is:

- A Site–Specific Travel Information leaflet

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- A Smarter Travel Policy Dossier (more in depth than SSDC’s Travel Information Packs)
- Cycle Parking (included in proposed Chard & Yeovil policies)
- Motor Cycle Parking
- Management of car parking at employment sites to seek to prioritise car sharing and minimise use by those employees living within walking or cycling distance or with good public transport links.
- Travel Website
- Travel Information Notice boards (Real-time versions included for Chard & Yeovil)
- Promotional Activity – on street event, fair or other occasion
- Travel Plan Coordinator (Resource included in Chard & Yeovil Policies in respect of Personalised Travel Planning)
- An additional measure should involve the setting up of a Travel Plan Forum to work with neighbouring sites and key stakeholders (or join one if already in existence) to achieve the critical mass necessary to offer significant modal shift.

10.16 The lesser requirement for Travel Plan Statements and Measures only Travel Plans are included in the Policy itself.

10.17 Travel Plans for specific sites should not 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, as well as SSDC & SCC). Setting up a new Travel Plan Forum or joining with an established Travel Plan Forum is a central role for the Travel Plan Coordinator. The subsequent cooperation between different sites can achieve the critical mass for zonal travel planning to deliver Quality Bus Partnerships (QBPs) for bus routes, car share schemes, infrastructure improvements and other benefits.

10.18 In respect of the Yeovil Eco Town and Urban Extension a Framework Travel Plan (as set out below) should be used to address transport system design issues. This will lay down how the policy measures discussed above can be put in place and delivered. The guidance for transport in eco towns¹²⁶ advocates that it should be “articulated in a planning document and its contents will be implemented and subsequently reviewed and revised”.

10.19 The eco-town Framework Travel Plan should set out the following:

- The outcomes to be sought.
- The indicators used and targets to be achieved.
- The means of achieving the outcomes and targets sought using hard and soft measures in the form of an action plan, and the subsequent relationship with lower order travel plans, e.g. for particular activities or sites.
- The monitoring regime.
- The implementation process, considering deliverability and accessibility for different client groups and ages in relating to the location of services and facilities. The Commission for Accessible Transport evaluation methodology should be used.
- The ongoing management arrangements for the construction, occupation and post occupation phases to ensure long-term sustainability.
- The financial provisions.
- The review process.

¹²⁶.[Design to Delivery: eco towns transport worksheet, TCPA May 2010]
Policy TA2 Travel Plans

i. Travel Plans will be required commensurate with the scale of the development. The 3 broad types of Travel Plan are:

- Measures-only Travel Statements
- Travel Plan Statements
- Full Travel Plans

The content of the Travel Plan document and the measures expected therein are indicated in the first table below. The measures should ensure that modal shift is maximised for developments with good levels of accessibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Plan Type</th>
<th>Content of Travel Plan Document:</th>
<th>Measures-only Travel Statement</th>
<th>Travel Plan Statement</th>
<th>Full Travel Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Audit Report</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes (Residential developments only)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Plan</td>
<td>Table of Measures</td>
<td>yes On-site measures</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Strategy and Modal share Targets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Completed modal share targets table attached to travel plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCC’s iOn Travel registration and completion prior to travel plan approval</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Specific Travel Information Leaflet</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smarter Travel Policy Dossier</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Website</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of Parking levels/locations for every mode of transport</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Plan Coordinator</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional Activity</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transport Impacts of Development

10.20 All new development is required to address its own transport implications and larger schemes are required to prepare Transport Assessments 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.

10.21 The Strategic road network is formed by Motorways and Trunk Roads, National Primary and County Routes in Somerset. National Primary Routes and County Routes

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**Travel Plan Forum to work with neighbouring sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Type</th>
<th>Lower Development size threshold (Sq m GFA unless indicated)</th>
<th>Type of Travel Plan Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1 - food</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>Measures only Travel Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;500</td>
<td>Travel Plan Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;800</td>
<td>Full Travel Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 - Non-food</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>Measures only Travel Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;500</td>
<td>Travel Plan Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;1500</td>
<td>Full Travel Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>&gt;500</td>
<td>Measures only Travel Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;1000</td>
<td>Travel Plan Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;1500</td>
<td>Full Travel Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>&gt;1000</td>
<td>Measures only Travel Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;2000</td>
<td>Travel Plan Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;5000</td>
<td>Full Travel Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>&gt; 10 dwellings</td>
<td>Measures only Travel Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 30 dwellings (or where car parking allocation is fewer than 1 space per dwelling for any dwelling in the development)</td>
<td>Travel Plan Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 50 dwellings</td>
<td>Full Travel Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ii. The thresholds for development size determining which type of Travel Plan should be in place are shown in the following table.**

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*Somerset County Council, Travel Plan Monitoring Tool*
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 route location (in the route hierarchy), such as roadside service stations or freight transfer facilities.

10.22 Access to any 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 ensure users can enter safely into such traffic. The advice and guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges will be appropriate in these environments, which are mostly rural locations. This is likely to be the case for developments related to farm diversification or for tourist attractions specific to rural locations.

10.23 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 terms through planning obligations where necessary.

10.24 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.

10.25 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. (see Policies SS6, SS7 and SS8)

10.26 Transport related contributions that may be required for a range of developments include:

- Transport (including footpaths, bridleways, cycleways, highways, public transport and related infrastructure, charging points for electric cars, facilities for home working, car parks and travel planning);
- Physical requirements for access for emergency and other essential services; and
- Drainage / flood prevention and protection (relating to the highway).

### Policy TA3 Transport Impact of New Development

All new development shall be required to address its own transport implications designed to maximise the potential for sustainable transport through:

- Safeguarding existing and new transport infrastructure, which is important to an efficient and sustainable transport network from development that would prejudice their transport use;
- Securing inclusive, safe and convenient access on foot, cycle, and by public and private transport that addresses the needs of all;
Parking Standards

10.27 The availability of car parking is a key factor for people when choosing their means of transport, and can be more significant than the level of public transport available. South Somerset is a largely rural District where owning a car is an essential part of daily life for many people. 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%.

10.28 A balance needs to be struck between encouraging sustainable transport modes through lower car parking levels that could help tackle congestion and reduce CO₂ emissions, and providing necessary car parking spaces for those whose only travel option is the car. The rural nature of much of South Somerset must be considered in setting appropriate levels of car parking provision in new development.

10.29 Other key issues in setting car parking standards include: expected levels of car ownership, the need to use land efficiently, the promotion of good design, and the need to provide adequate levels of good quality secure parking in town centres to encourage investment and maintain their vitality and viability. South Somerset's District-wide Parking Strategy outlines that within settlements other than Yeovil it is essential to meet demand with adequate parking provision in order to support their vitality and viability. However at Yeovil, a rationalisation of car parks is sought in order to enable the redevelopment of town centre sites. The Government publication 'Manual for Streets' (DfT, 2007) should be used to inform the high quality design of residential parking.

10.30 The promotion of cycling is supported for many important reasons, including improving health and well being, reducing CO₂ emissions, and reducing traffic congestion. The amount of good quality cycle parking in developments should be increased to promote more cycle use. The Somerset Cycling Strategy (March 2006) states that the provision of cycle

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127.[PPG 3: Housing, 2006; PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, 2009]
128.[PPG 13: Transport, 2001]
parking is arguably the single most important element of any cycling strategy - if there is nowhere safe and convenient to park at the journey's end, the journey will not be made by bicycle, and if there is no residential bicycle parking provided, occupiers will either not own a bicycle or use it infrequently. Minimum standards for cycle parking spaces in new development are set out in the Somerset Countywide Parking Strategy.

10.31 Draft Government policy encourages opportunities for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles at new developments with parking facilities. The opportunities for doing this are likely to be greater at major urban extensions, particularly at Yeovil if the urban extension is developed to Eco Town standards.

10.32 The Local Transport Planning and Highway Authority, Somerset County Council (SCC) are responsible for providing guidance on the levels of parking provision that will be required for different types of development. This advice is set out in the Somerset Countywide Parking Strategy. This strategy is currently being revised and is expected to be published alongside the Somerset Future Transport Plan in Spring 2011. The revised parking standards will be referenced at the submission stage of the Core Strategy.

**Policy TA4 Parking Standards**

Parking provision in new development should be design-led and based upon site characteristics, location and accessibility. Parking standards should be consistent with the Somerset Countywide Parking Strategy and encourage more sustainable travel choices.
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 the 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 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, compliant with the policy requirements of PPG17130, it is intended that the following objectives are set for the District:

- Networks of accessible, quality open spaces and 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 The Sustainable Community Strategy has as one of its main goals the aspiration to:

"Develop a health-enhancing environment to offer support to enable all residents to choose a healthy lifestyle."

11.4 Priorities supporting this goal include ensuring the design of the built environment encourages physical activity and encouraging the development of on site facilities/opportunities for exercise/relaxation/play.

11.5 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.

11.6 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. Buildings falling under the banner of community halls include rural village halls, town halls, neighbourhood centres in urban areas, Women’s Institutes, British Legion halls, memorial halls, and halls belonging to uniformed groups, churches and chapels.

11.7 There are over 100 community halls in South Somerset, run by voluntary management committees, hosting a range of groups and services. Halls are often the only focus for the local community; they can be the hub of social activity including volunteer groups and contribute significantly to the health, well-being and sustainability of the local community.

11.8 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 a requirement 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**

11.9 PPG17 advises that planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space, sports and recreational provision. Local authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity and quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs. It is essential that local authorities have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, and set appropriate local standards in order to justify planning obligations.

11.10 Once this is completed, local standards can be applied and planning obligations used to secure additional provision or enhancement where required.

11.11 Paragraphs 12 and 33 of the PPG indicate that it is reasonable for existing deficits in provision in both quantity and quality to be addressed through planning obligations and where surpluses of one type of provision is identified, for obligations to be used to secure an alternative type of provision. Paragraph 33 states:

"...Planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space, sports and recreational provision. Local authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity and quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs. It is essential that local authorities have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, and set appropriate local standards in order to justify planning obligations."

11.12 In terms of the provision of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities in South Somerset, local standards for quantity, quality and accessibility have been developed as part of the Council’s emerging Green Space Strategy and PPG17 assessments. These standards have then been used to identify areas where there is a shortfall/overprovision in these areas. It is important to ensure that any new development does not exacerbate any existing deficiencies and that opportunities are taken to secure improvements both in quantity and the quality of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community provision where appropriate.

11.13 The quantitative standards are set out below in Policies HW1 and HW2. However, the quality and location of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and
community facilities are of equal importance to the quantity provided and the local standards for quality and accessibility and their application can be found in the Council’s emerging Green Space Strategy and PPG17 assessments. 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.131

11.14 In accordance with Policy SS7, these standards can then be applied and 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 62 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Overview.132

11.15 The provision of ‘dual use’ open space associated with schools to meet standards 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.

11.16 The viability of the proposed development will also need to be taken into account in accordance with Policy SS8. 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 Protocol133.

Exemptions

11.17 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. The specific requirements for these types of developments are listed in Policies HW1 and HW2.

On or Off Site Provision and Contributions

11.18 If the new development has been proven to increase 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;
- Because there may be other opportunities within the appropriate distance of the site which could better meet the needs of the development; and
- The contribution is 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

11.19 The Council will normally expect the Parish or Town Council, or appropriate voluntary body to be involved in any discussions if they are the landowners of the proposed open space or facility.

131.[SSDC Play Policy and Strategy (2007-2012)]
132.[Community Infrastructure Levy An Overview, CLG, March 2010.]
133.[SSDC Planning Obligations Protocol 2006.]
11.20 PPG17 advises that in principle, planning authorities will be justified in seeking either on-site provision or contributions towards off-site provision, for the full range of open spaces or sport and recreation facilities for which they have standards.\textsuperscript{134}

11.21 Where development meets a required threshold so that an open space requirement such as a playing field is needed, the Council will seek early discussion with developers and local councils to consider how best to provide the facility in question. This could include provision on-site or off-site where there are appropriate opportunities for amalgamating facilities to provide all round better facilities for the whole community. Any such off site provision must be accessible and beneficial to the residents of the new development in question.

11.22 Within the categories of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities covered by the Council’s emerging PPG17 Assessments and Green Spaces Strategy, there is a mixture of local provision and strategic facilities. These all have adopted accessibility standards, which identify the catchment areas of each type of provision. PPG17 identifies that residents in rural areas cannot realistically expect to have the same level of access to the full range of different types of open spaces and sport and recreation facilities normally available in more densely populated urban areas. This means that residents of rural areas usually have to travel further than most urban residents to some forms of provision.

11.23 Where the Council’s PPG17 assessments identify deficiencies in provision of strategic facilities, off-site contributions may be requested in accordance with the catchments and distance thresholds of each facility type and the strategic priorities identified in the assessments.

11.24 Where off site contributions towards facilities are required, this will usually be implemented through a Section 106 Agreement between the Council and the developer.

\textbf{Commuted Sums for Future Maintenance}

11.25 Provisions for future maintenance can be sought towards on-site provision or contributions towards off-site 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.

11.26 The provision of on-site, and 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.

\textsuperscript{134}[PPG17 – Assessing Needs and Opportunities A Companion Guide, CLG, 2002 Para 9.11.]
To determine commuted sums, in accordance with ‘Assessing Needs and Opportunities: a Companion Guide to PPG17’, the Council calculates the annual cost of maintaining each landscape feature on a proposed site from the Council’s maintenance rates, or the annual cost of maintaining facilities based upon the Council’s known costs of managing similar facilities. From these figures, which are periodically reviewed, the Council then calculates the 10 Year Commuted Sums.

Other open space facilities include Green Corridors, Public Rights of Way, Civic Spaces, Cemeteries, Private Open Space and Allotments are other aspects of Green Infrastructure, which need to be given full consideration, however there are no standards currently developed for this type of provision.

Policy HW1 Provision of open space and outdoor playing space in new development

Where new housing development generates a need for additional open space and outdoor playing space, provision/contributions will be made in accordance with the standards set out in the SSDC PPG17 Assessments of Outdoor Playing Space and Sports, Cultural and Community Facilities, 2010 and Green Spaces Strategy, 2010. The quantitative standards are summarised in the table below.

Housing provision consisting of sheltered housing, rest and nursing homes, special needs housing will be exempt from these standards with the exception of informal recreational open space in accordance with Section HW1.2 in the table below.

Developments of one bedroom dwellings will not be required to provide equipped play provision (HW1.2.1 below) and youth facilities (HW1.2.2) 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 and outdoor playing space may be required on site or may form part of a 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 serves the new development and a planning obligation may be used to secure this.

Provision should be made for future maintenance to ensure its continued availability as open space and outdoor playing space.

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, however there are no standards developed for this type of provision.

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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Number</th>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Sub - Typology</th>
<th>Quantity Standard (ha per 1000 pop.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HW1.1</td>
<td>Playing Pitches</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.2</td>
<td>Children and Young People's Provision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.2.1</td>
<td>Children and Young People's Provision</td>
<td>Equipped Playing Provision</td>
<td>0.2ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.2.2</td>
<td>Children and Young People's Provision</td>
<td>Youth Facilities</td>
<td>0.05ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.3</td>
<td>Informal Recreational Open Space</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.55ha*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.4</td>
<td>Parks and Public Gardens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.4.1</td>
<td>Parks and Public Gardens</td>
<td>Formal Parks and Public Gardens</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.4.2</td>
<td>Parks and Public Gardens</td>
<td>Country Parks</td>
<td>1.32ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.5</td>
<td>Natural Open Space</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW1.6</td>
<td>Woodland</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.024ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* currently 0.5 ha in saved Local Plan policy CR2. New standard equivalent to Fields in Trust standard for informal playing space for children

Policy HW2 Provision of Sports, Cultural and Community Facilities in new development

Where new housing development generates a need for additional local and strategic sports, cultural and community facilities, provision/contributions will be made in accordance with the standards set out in the SSDC PPG17 Assessments of Sports, Cultural and Community Facilities, 2010. The quantitative standards are summarised in the table below.

Housing provision consisting of sheltered housing, rest and nursing homes, special needs housing will be exempt from policy HW2.

Developments of one bedroom dwellings will normally be required to provide for sports and recreational facilities in accordance with policy HW2.

Dependent upon the size and layout of the development, the provision of 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. In such circumstances off-site provision towards local facilities should be made in a location, which adequately serves the new development and a planning obligation may be used to secure this.

Provision should be made for future maintenance of changing rooms to ensure its continued availability to support outdoor playing space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Number</th>
<th>Type of Provision</th>
<th>Quantity Standard (m² per 1000 population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Facilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW2.1</td>
<td>Changing Room Provision</td>
<td>347.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW2.2</td>
<td>Community Halls/ Village Halls</td>
<td>Rural Parishes 353</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres 119</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW2.3</td>
<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>46.88</td>
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<td>HW2.4</td>
<td>Swimming Pool</td>
<td>10.86</td>
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<td>HW2.5</td>
<td>Indoor Tennis</td>
<td>23.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HW2.6</td>
<td>Synthetic Turf Pitch (STP)</td>
<td>255.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW2.7</td>
<td>Theatres and Arts Centres</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sports Zone

11.29 The Regional Cultural Infrastructure Strategy recommends that Local Authorities work together with other cultural agencies to ensure high quality cultural facilities are accessible and available to all.

11.30 The District Council’s publication “the NEXT LEVEL Strategy for Sport and Active Leisure in South Somerset 2006 – 2012” sets out the vision for the provision of sport and leisure throughout the District. This document focuses on 4 key strategic areas developed from the National Framework for Sport, the South West Plan for Sport and the key drivers emerging from detailed surveys and consultation carried out within South Somerset:

- Supporting community sport
- Developing active communities
- Enhancing facility provision
- Raising the profile of Sport and Active Leisure

11.31 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 thus will meet the above 4 objectives.

11.32 The project fits within the local and regional strategic context and 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.

11.33 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. Reference to its location within or adjoining Yeovil is set out in the Proposal Map.

11.34 In order to fund this provision it will be necessary and appropriate to seek contributions from developers through the planning system relative to the sport and active leisure impacts emerging from new developments. This will be achieved through establishing clear guidance on the level of obligation to be sought from new development within South Somerset. This may be within a CIL Statement or tariff structure to be established once clarity is provided on the Government's way forward for obligations.

11.35 In 2006 Knight Kavanagh and Page carried out consultation work on behalf of the Council to ascertain the public aspirations for sports provision within the District. This study, called the South Somerset Sport and Recreation Built Facilities Assessment Report (Draft) (June 2006) did not quantify the levels of provision to see if there was over or undersupply of the sports provision or address projected growth in the area so in 2007 PMP Genesis were appointed to consider the possibility of providing a dedicated sports “zone” within Yeovil to serve the Yeovil catchment, which includes part of North Dorset, and the wider sub-region.

11.36 This work, carried out initially in March 2007, looked specifically at the demand and supply for each major sports facility and demonstrated that there was a clear need for additional facility provision and for the Council to put plans in place for delivering the required sports infrastructure. Following the increase in projected housing growth for Yeovil as a result of the changes made following the Regional Spatial Strategy Examination in Public Report the PMP work was updated in February 2008. The document, titled Yeovil Sports Zone Supply and Demand Modelling sets out the levels of projected unmet demand, which would be as set out below in the period to 2026.

- A shortfall of **765 m² of swimming pool provision in 2026**
- A shortfall of **12 badminton courts in 2026**
- A shortfall of **93 fitness stations in 2026**
- A shortfall of **4 indoor tennis courts in 2026**

11 Health and Well Being
11.37 These figures relate to the higher growth option of 19,700 dwellings for the Core Strategy period to 2026 and will be smaller in relation to a provision of 16,600 as now proposed. Revised figures are in process of preparation and will be available to inform the Consultation process and the Publication Plan for submission to the Core Strategy Examination.

11.38 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.

11.39 As a consequence of the work undertaken through Leisure Services, a revised development footprint of approximately 1.5 hectares is now proposed within which it would be the intention to accommodate:

- 4 court indoor tennis hall
- 8 court multi purpose sports hall
- Full sized synthetic turf pitch
- Climbing wall
- Pool hall, 8 lane, 50m length
- Leisure water/learner pool
- Fitness suite with 125 stations
- Aerobics/Dance studio
- Health consultation rooms
- Pool and dry changing facilities
- Spectator galleries for pool and sports halls
- Plant and associated staff, and administrative areas and reception.
- Crèche
- Parking and servicing provision.

11.40 This level of provision would allow for “future-proofing” of development beyond 2026 and takes account of both the projected growth of Yeovil and within the catchment and also for the anticipated increase in levels of sports participation over the next 40 or so years.

11.41 Although various locations have previously been appraised as potential sites to accommodate the Sports Zone, no decision on 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.

11.42 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. Any planning application made for the Sports Zone would need to be accompanied by the necessary impact test under PPS4.
Policy HW3 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.

Existing Outdoor Sports, Play and Youth Provision

11.43 PPG17 provides a safeguard to ensure that existing playing pitches are protected from inappropriate future development and existing Saved Local Plan Policy CR1 sets out the criteria against which any proposals which would result in loss of playing fields should be considered. The supporting text to Saved Local Plan Policy EH10 identifies “no development areas” which includes areas for both informal and formal recreation but there is no explicit protection within the Saved Policy for existing equipped play areas or youth facilities.

11.44 An additional policy for protection of such areas is considered necessary. This would cover the following forms of play provision as identified by Fields in Trust, formerly the National Playing Fields Association:-

- LAPs - Local Areas for Play
- LEAPs - Locally Equipped Areas for Play
- NEAPs - Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play
- MUGA’s – Multi Use Games Areas
- ‘Destination playgrounds’135
- 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.

11.45 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, that it is desirable to remove the facilities and not relocate them.

135.[Destination playgrounds is defined by Fields in Trust as a play space within a key site aimed at attracting family and similar groups for longer visits (Para 6.2.15 Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play – Fields in Trust 2008)]
### Policy HW4 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:

- Current provision can be retained and enhanced by partial development of the site
- Alternative provision of equivalent community benefit of a similar nature is made available locally within the same catchment.
12 Environmental Quality

Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

Greenhouse Gases

12.1 The release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere from human activity is changing the world’s climate, and national planning policy describes climate change as the greatest long term challenge facing the world.\textsuperscript{136} Taking action to address climate change will be much less costly than not taking action over the medium to long term.\textsuperscript{137} 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.

12.2 In South Somerset, carbon dioxide emissions equate to 7.7 tonnes per person each year, which is similar to the neighbouring Districts of Sedgemoor and Mendip, and slightly less than the regional average of 8.2 tonnes per person. Industrial and commercial sources produce the highest amount of CO\(_2\) emissions (38% of total) in South Somerset, followed by domestic sources (32%) and transport (30%) with similar proportions (Figure 24 below).

\textbf{Figure 24: Source of Carbon dioxide emissions (CO\(_2\)) in South Somerset}\textsuperscript{138}

12.3 The Climate Change Act 2008 requires an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (upon 1990 levels) – a key element of the Core Strategy 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

\quad 136.\textsuperscript{[PPS: Planning and Climate Change, supplement to PPS1, 2007.]}\textsuperscript{136}
\quad 137.\textsuperscript{[Stern Review on the Economics of climate change, HM Treasury, Nov 2006.]}\textsuperscript{137}
\quad 138.\textsuperscript{[Local and Regional CO\(_2\) Emissions Estimates for 2005-2007, DECC, November 2009.]}\textsuperscript{138}
Council have also recently 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.

12.4 The Core Strategy Vision seeks to promote greater self containment in settlements by focussing most new development at the main settlements in the District, promoting a balance of employment and housing provision, and ensuring communities have good access to shops and community services. This Vision should ensure the need to travel is reduced, especially by car, and therefore limit the growth of carbon dioxide emissions from travel.

12.5 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. 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 carbon dioxide.

12.6 By the 2050’s, climate change in South Somerset is likely to mean more extreme weather events including:

- Summers being 2 – 3 degrees centigrade hotter, and 20 – 40% drier.
- Winters being 10 – 20% wetter, and 2 – 3 degrees warmer.

12.7 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 also damage wildlife in the District and reduce levels of water supply. Wetter winters could cause more flooding and greater risk to property and people.

**Decentralised Energy and Sustainable Buildings**

12.8 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy sets 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. This strategy suggests that more than 30% of our electricity could be generated by renewables (up from 5.5% today), 12% of our heat generated from renewables (up from very low levels today), and 10% of transport energy (up from 2.6% today).

12.9 The term ‘decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy’ incorporates energy supply from renewable sources such as wind and solar energy, and low carbon energy including Combined Heat and Power, air/ground source heat pumps and energy-from-waste. The development of these technologies is clearly encouraged in national Government policy and Policy EQ1 is supportive of these developments subject to there being no unacceptable adverse effects. Some examples of unacceptable adverse effects could include the impacts of large wind turbine installation on bird flight paths in or around the Somerset Levels and Moors, or on protected landscapes such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In this regard the Appropriate Assessment (Habitat 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.

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139.[Adapting to climate change: UK Climate Projections, Defra, 2009.]
140.[Central estimate under medium emissions scenario, UK Climate Projections 2009.]
12.10 Policy RE5\(^{141}\) within the now revoked RSS stated that 10% of the energy requirements for new larger scale development (10 or more dwellings or 1000 sq m of non-residential floor space) should come from such decentralised energy sources. In advance of the anticipated adoption of this policy, South Somerset’s ‘District Executive’ approved the application of this policy as a ‘material consideration’ in dealing with all relevant planning applications. More recent draft Government policy\(^{142}\) states that such policies will not be necessary from 2013 when the proposed improvements to Building Regulations requiring reduced carbon emissions come into force, as set out in the Table below.

**Figure 25: Proposed Carbon improvements to Building Regulations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>2010 (October)</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon improvement as compared to Part L (Building Regulations 2006)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>Zero carbon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non residential development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zero carbon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.11 In order to meet the stringent requirements necessary to achieve zero carbon homes, the Government have set out a preferred energy hierarchy (see Figure 26 below) that firstly requires high levels of energy efficiency, followed by minimum standards for reduction in CO\(_2\) emissions to be achieved onsite and/or through directly connected heat. These measures should achieve a 70% reduction in CO\(_2\) emissions per dwelling. In order to ensure zero carbon homes can be achieved, a range of mainly off-site “allowable solutions” can be introduced to deal with residual emissions after taking account of on-site technologies and connections to low and zero carbon heat networks. The Government is currently considering the scope and delivery mechanisms for allowable solutions, but has stated that allowable solutions will include:\(^{143}\)

- Further carbon reductions on site beyond the regulatory standard;
- Energy efficient appliances meeting a high standard which are installed as fittings within the home;
- Advanced forms of building control system which reduce the level of energy use in the home;
- Exports of low carbon or renewable heat from the development to other developments;
- Investments in low or zero carbon community heat infrastructure;
- Other allowable solutions which remain under consideration.

12.12 A background paper on Sustainable Energy and Buildings has been prepared by the Council (with Somerset County Council), which suggests that wind turbines, incorporation of Combined Heat and Power(CHP) at major urban extensions, and solar technology have

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\(^{141}\) [Draft Revised RSS incorporating the Secretary of States Proposed Changes, July 2008.]
\(^{142}\) [PPS: Planning for a low carbon future in a changing climate: consultation, March 2010.]
\(^{143}\) [Ministerial Statement by John Healey, July 2009.]
greatest potential for decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy generation in South Somerset.¹⁴⁴

**Figure 26: The Government’s preferred energy hierarchy***

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12.13 The Government are encouraging the delivery of sustainable buildings via the planning system.¹⁴⁵ The term ‘sustainable buildings’ requires consideration of the sustainability of a building more generally including issues such as water demand, use of materials (including local sourcing), and quality of life, as well as energy use. The most recognised national sustainable buildings standards are the ‘Code for Sustainable Homes’ (measured from level 1 – 6¹⁴⁶), and ‘BREEAM’¹⁴⁷ (resulting in either a ‘pass’, ‘good’, ‘very good,’ ‘excellent’ or ‘outstanding’) for non-residential development. The Code for Sustainable Homes measures the sustainability of new dwellings against the following nine categories:

- Energy/CO₂
- Water
- Materials
- Surface water run off
- Waste
- Pollution
- Health and well being
- Management
- Ecology.

12.14 It is important to note that although reductions in CO₂ emissions from new dwellings will be required through changes to the Building Regulations, required levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes needs to be set out in local planning policies in order to be applied. The following figure summarises the mandatory requirements for water and energy use in the Code for Sustainable Homes – if these requirements are not met, then that code level cannot be achieved. Although “water stress” (potential lack of water supply) has not been identified

¹⁴⁴[Sustainable Energy and Building Background Paper, SSDC October 2010]
¹⁴⁵[PPS: Planning and Climate Change, CLG, December 2007.]
¹⁴⁶[Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes is already required for publicly funded homes.]
¹⁴⁷[Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method.]
as a particular issue for South Somerset, climate change and population growth will mean the need to use water more efficiently is of great importance. Measures such as rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling and water efficient appliances all help to minimise water use.

**Figure 27: The Code for Sustainable Homes: minimum entry requirements for energy and water use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code level</th>
<th>Required energy improvement compared to Building Regs (2006)</th>
<th>Water litres / person / day</th>
<th>Total points score required to achieve Code level (out of 100)</th>
<th>Building Regs energy improvement (year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>October 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Zero carbon</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.15 Feasibility and viability are key issues in considering the achievement of decentralised energy and sustainable buildings requirements. Feasibility refers to the technical issues involved in achieving the standards such as sufficient wind speed to install wind turbines; whilst viability refers to the costs of meeting these higher sustainability standards. Draft Government policy\(^{148}\) makes it clear that requirements for decentralised energy and sustainable buildings should not make new development unviable.

12.16 Government policy allows local requirements for sustainable buildings to be set, which should relate to development areas or specific sites, rather than across a whole local authority area unless justification for this can clearly be shown.\(^{149}\) The additional costs of meeting BREEAM standards or Code levels are an important consideration, particularly in tough economic times. The ‘economies of scale’ associated with the major urban extension(s) proposed at Yeovil, Chard and potentially development at some of the other Market Towns, should make it more cost effective for the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM standards to be achieved in these locations. At these ‘preferred development options’ it is proposed that the levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes equivalent to the CO\(_2\) reductions in the Building Regulations should be required i.e. Level 3 from October 2010, Level 4 from 2013 and Level 6 from 2016. Evidence\(^{150}\) states that level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes would not make development unviable in many cases, and would not inhibit housing supply, including affordable housing. The Council has also recently been successful in a bid for Government money to investigate whether Yeovil’s urban extension could be developed to Eco Town standards, which requires a minimum of Code Level 4 to be achieved for new homes.

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\(^{148}\) [PPS: Planning for a low carbon future in a changing climate: consultation, March 2010.]

\(^{149}\) [PPS: Planning for a low carbon future: consultation; PPS: Planning and Climate Change, supplement to PPS1.]

\(^{150}\) [South Somerset Strategic Housing Market Assessment, February 2009.]
Flood Risk

12.17 As described above, climate change is likely to mean wetter winters in South Somerset and potentially more frequent flooding. National planning policy\(^{151}\) makes clear that flood risk should be taken into account at all stages in the planning process; inappropriate development should be avoided in areas of flood risk, and development should be directed away from areas with a medium and high risk of flooding.

12.18 South Somerset’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) highlights areas at risk of flooding from rivers, and also identifies flooding incidents from all sources (e.g. rivers, surface water, groundwater flooding) that have occurred in the past. 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 in South Somerset (particularly at Langport / Huish Episcopi and Ilchester), although in most cases the area affected is small. The Proposals Map Inset Plans show, in relation to the upper levels of the settlement hierarchy, areas of high (flood zone 3) and medium (flood zone 2) flood risk where national policy prescribes the sequential test and, where necessary, the exception test that should be applied in these areas before development is considered acceptable.

12.19 Surface water flooding also affects most of these settlements, particularly Yeovil. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) are encouraged as they mimic natural processes by slowing down the volume and rate of run off following heavy rainfall, therefore reducing the risk of surface water flooding. The SFRA states that there is a relatively high potential for SUDS in South Somerset due to the permeable underlying geology. 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

12.20 A key objective of national planning policy in responding to climate change is delivering spatial strategies that conserve and enhance biodiversity, recognising that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change. The final bullet point in the policy below specifically ensures climate change is addressed in considering biodiversity interest.

12.21 Policy EQ1 seeks to incorporate the range of measures necessary to ensure that climate change, biodiversity and flood risk is fully addressed in South Somerset both in terms of mitigation measures to reduce our CO\(_2\) emissions, and ensuring new development is adapted to accommodate the anticipated changes in the climate. This deals with mitigation measures through CO\(_2\) reduction and promotion of decentralised energy; seeks to ensure that all development generally minimises CO\(_2\) emissions through applying the three criteria in the energy hierarchy; requires large-scale development across South Somerset to reduce its CO\(_2\) emissions by 10%, up to the year 2013, when the proposed revisions to the Building Regulations will mean this element is no longer necessary; focuses on opportunities for the urban extensions at Yeovil and the Market Towns, and sets levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM that will be required for these developments – (these

\(^{151}\) [PPS 25: Development and Flood Risk, revised in 2010.]
standards will also require climate change adaptation methods e.g. water efficiency); and encourages developments of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy.

Policy EQ1 Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

All new development in South Somerset should demonstrate how it has fully mitigated and adapted to climate change through inclusion of the following measures (as appropriate):

- New development will ensure CO₂ reductions are maximised by complying with the following energy hierarchy:
  1. energy efficiency measures;
  2. on-site decentralised energy and directly connected heat technologies; and finally
  3. 'allowable solutions' to achieve carbon reduction.
- As an interim measure until 2013, in large-scale development*, the provision of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy should ensure that carbon dioxide emissions are reduced by at least 10% (compared to Building Regulations 2006) unless, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, this is not feasible or viable.
- At major development of urban extensions to Yeovil and the Market Towns, at least BREEAM® ‘excellent’ for non-residential, and the following Code for Sustainable Homes levels will be required, unless it is proven not to be feasible or viable:
  - At least Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 from October 1st 2010
  - At least Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 from 2013
  - At least Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 from 2016.
- Development of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy generation will be encouraged and permitted, providing there are no unacceptable adverse effects on residential amenity, the landscape, townscape, historic features, and biodiversity interest. 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 in the District.
- Developers must demonstrate that proposed wind turbine developments will not pose a barrier risk to migratory bird species, and in particular to birds moving from key sites such as the Severn Estuary.
- All development will be directed away from medium and high flood risk areas by using the South Somerset Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to apply the Sequential Test.$
- Development should reduce and manage the impact of flood risk through location, layout, design, choice of materials and the use of sustainable drainage systems.
- Climate change should be considered in the design of all new development, incorporating measures such as solar orientation, maximising natural shade and cooling, water efficiency and flood resilience.
- Ensure that susceptibility to climate change is taken into account on all development sites with biodiversity interest.
Design/General Development

12.22 PPS1\(^{152}\) provides 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. Paragraph 35 of PPS1 advises that good design should:

- address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;
- be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;
- be an integral part of the process for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;
- create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society; and
- consider the direct and indirect impacts on the natural environment.

12.23 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.

12.24 This principle is carried throughout the Core Strategy, which sets the objective to develop new homes, infrastructure and all other land uses to the highest possible design standards in order to ensure that places are shaped as sustainable, and are socially, economically and environmentally responsive. Future specific design guidance will come forward as supplementary planning documents or other appropriate planning document.

12.25 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 and historic environment, and conserve the countryside and open spaces that are important to everyone.

12.26 All development will be expected to achieve high quality architectural and urban design standards, and address Building for Life objectives creating places that are attractive, durable and function well. Building for Life is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods published in 2008 by the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE) on behalf of the Building for Life Partnership, which includes amongst others the House Builders Federation. It presents 20 key criteria against which good design can and should be judged. 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.

\(^{152}\) [Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)]
12.27 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, following the principles highlighted within the Home Office Safer Places guidance. Achieving Secured by Design certification will help to demonstrate how designing out crime has been taken into account.

12.28 The District Council is committed to protecting and enhancing the unique historic environment of the area. All designated assets including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and archaeological sites together with other heritage assets that contribute positively to the significance of the historic environment need to be protected from demolition or inappropriate development that affects the asset or its setting.

12.29 South Somerset has published Development Management advice guides to give guidance on how design should complement local architectural traditions, how sustainable construction techniques can be incorporated within the context of the existing built heritage and the significance of historic environment conservation. The Council also apply specific guidance from Government and Government sponsored organisations.\[153\] Conservation Area Appraisals, the Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Environmental Assessment for Yeovil 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 Local Development Framework and the most up to date material should be referred to.

12.30 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 and 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 local distinctiveness and evolve it and recognize 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. Further guidance on general design principles has been produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the relevant government departments and are relevant guidance on which to draw.

Policy EQ2 Design

Development will be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves the character and appearance of the district.

Development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings, structures and places are expected to:

- Address Building for Life objectives and criteria
- Incorporate sustainable construction principles including appropriate layout and orientation
- Create quality places
- Conserve and enhance the heritage assets of the area
- Complement and consolidate the landscape character of the area
- Reinforce local distinctiveness and respect local context
- Create safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety
- Have regard to South Somerset District Council’s Development Management Advice

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 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.

Biodiversity and New Development

12.31 Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out the Government’s objective to “promote sustainable development whilst conserving and enhancing biodiversity”. It requires plan policies to 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 proposal for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological interests.

12.32 An indication of the variety and biodiversity interest of South Somerset is given by the number of designated sites: there are three National Nature Reserves within the District, (Hardington Moor, Barrington Hill and part of the Somerset Levels and Moors, which is also a European Special Protection Area), along with 39 nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest and nearly 600 Local Wildlife Sites. The Somerset Wildlife Trust manages fourteen Nature Reserves, while much other land of conservation value is owned or managed by the National Trust, RSPB and other conservation organisations, and by individual landowners. There are also currently four Local Nature Reserves looked after by District or Town Councils and two award-winning Country Parks.
12.33 A wide range of habitats are represented from flower-rich limestone grassland to acid heathland; wet fen and grazing marshes rich in invertebrate and bird life to hay meadows; bluebell woods to parkland with veteran trees supporting rare insects and lichens. These reflect the varied landscape and topography, which is in turn underlain by a variety of geological formations from clay to greensands and limestones. In terms of species, South Somerset is thought to hold some 20% more rare or threatened species that its size would predict, indicating its species richness.154

12.34 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 species and habitats that are important in Somerset and to draw up plans to care for them.

12.35 ‘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.

12.36 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.155

12.37 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 Somerset’ and ‘European Protected Species in South Somerset’.156

12.38 This has 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.

12.39 The Appropriate Assessment Report identified the following potential impact of development proposed on the Somerset Levels and Moors:

- increased disturbance to birds from recreational activity;
- impact upon invertebrates owing to reduction in water quality; and
- impact upon birds from renewable energy infrastructure (especially wind turbines) along or in proximity to flight paths.

12.40 The Appropriate Assessment suggested changes to policies within the Core Strategy to ensure appropriate mitigation of effects and all these have been incorporated in the relevant policies.

154.[South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan, 2009]
155.[South West Nature Map (evidence for RSS) is also useful.]
156.[Produced by Somerset County Council, 2009]
Policy EQ3 Biodiversity

All proposals for development, including those which would affect sites of regional and local biodiversity and geological interest, will seek to:

- Protect the biodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats;
- Maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats; and
- Incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features where appropriate, with particular reference to the objectives of the South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Where there is reason to suspect the presence of protected species applications should be accompanied by a survey assessing their presence and if present the proposal must be sensitive to and make provision for their needs.

Green Infrastructure

12.41 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. They can also contribute to natural drainage and reduce surface water run off, helping mitigate for the consequences of climate change.

12.42 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.

12.43 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. They filter air-trapping pollutants as well as absorb Carbon Dioxide and release Oxygen during photosynthesis. They filter rainwater and slow down surface run off, which helps to reduce soil erosion as well as reduce costs to the drainage infrastructure. Trees also help to reduce wind speeds and provide shade from ultra violet rays as well as reduce noise levels from adjacent developments.

12.44 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.
12.45 Clear priorities are being established through the overarching Green Infrastructure Strategy, which incorporates local open space standards (Policy HW1) 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 urban extension and to ensure that all communities have access to quality green areas.

**Policy EQ4 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
- Improve access and recreational opportunities
- Ensure that all children and young people have reasonable access to a range of play and leisure opportunities
- Link urban areas to the 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.

Existing Green Infrastructure will be protected against development proposals, which would cause an adverse impact.

**Woodlands and Forest**

12.46 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 has 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 Woodland.\[^{157}\]

12.47 Traditional old orchards and veteran trees are important features of the region and provide good habitats for wildlife. The Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework

\[^{157}\] Ancient woodland is defined as land continually wooded since at least AD1600, Natural England and Woodland Trust.
Air Quality

12.49 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 (AQMAs) 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.

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158.[South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework: South West England Forestry Commission, 2005]
159.[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)]
Policy EQ6 Air Quality

The impacts of development proposals on air quality must be taken into account. New development should not unduly exacerbate air quality problems in existing and potential AQMAs. 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.

Equine Development

12.50 Planning Policy Statement 4, Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, recognises that where appropriate, equestrian enterprises should be supported. Within South Somerset, horse related rural activities have become increasingly popular over recent years and PPS 4 advises that Local Planning Authorities should set out their policies in Local Development Documents for supporting equine enterprises that maintain environmental quality and countryside character.

12.51 Planning Policies should provide a positive framework for facilitating sustainable development that supports traditional land-based activities and makes the most of new leisure and recreational opportunities that require a countryside location. Planning authorities should ensure that any policies, which support equine enterprises, also maintain environmental quality and that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced.

12.52 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 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;
- Conflict could arise between road users due to horse transportation, deliveries and horses using narrow lanes.
Policy EQ7 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 rural character of the locality
• 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 internationally 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 harmful to highway safety. This should be demonstrated by means of a traffic impact assessment.
13 Implementation and Monitoring

13.1 This section sets out the key objectives to be achieved in line with each of the 9 Strategic Objectives, together with the indicators for monitoring the implementation of the plan. The list of relevant indicators is a full one and preferred indicators will be identified from analysis in order to provide concise monitoring in a resource effective way. A more refined list will be prepared for the Publication Plan for submission for examination.

13.2 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. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)\textsuperscript{160} will be the principal mechanism for monitoring the Core Strategy and other documents in the LDF, bringing together all the necessary information in one place.

13.3 Within the context of the AMR will be a report identifying the ability to provide a 5 Year Housing Land Supply, a key factor in the potential ability of the Core Strategy to delivery 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.

13.4 Implementation of the policies contained in the Core Strategy will require action by a range of public, private and voluntary sector bodies working in partnership. In particular, parish and town councils, voluntary and community groups, local businesses and public sector agencies that work actively in our communities. The Council works with a wide range of partners, both statutory and non-statutory. It is anticipated that the partnerships that are formed will vary throughout the period of the Core Strategy.

13.5 The Core Strategy'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.

\textsuperscript{160}[[The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act introduced the statutory requirement to submit an AMR to the Secretary of State by 31 December of each year that reports on performance for the preceding period 1st April to 31st March.]]
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Safe, resilient, socially just and inclusive and sustainable communities (with a higher proportion of jobs locally available) with strong networks and confident people sharing respect for each other.</td>
<td>Policies: SS1, SS2, SS5, SS6, SS7, SS8, EP10, EP16, HW1, HW2, HW3, EQ2</td>
<td><strong>Local Indicator</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Delivery of housing, employment and green infrastructure in accordance with settlement hierarchy.&lt;br&gt;- Delivery of retail in accordance with retail hierarchy.&lt;br&gt;- Numbers of local shops, facilities and services lost.&lt;br&gt;- Number of benefit recipients&lt;br&gt;- Number of SOAs within the 20% most deprived nationally for crime and disorder&lt;br&gt;<strong>Core Indicator</strong>&lt;br&gt;- H6: Housing quality - building for life assessments.</td>
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<td>2. A health-enhancing environment developed by promoting walking and cycling and non-car based transport.</td>
<td>Policies: TA1, YV4 YV5, CV4, TA2 TA3, TA4, EQ4, HW1, HW2, HW4</td>
<td><strong>Local Indicator</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Increased patronage on public transport and increased take up of walking &amp; cycling.&lt;br&gt;- Provision of new and improved open space, outdoor playing space and sport and recreational facilities.&lt;br&gt;- Number of Super Output Areas within the 20% most deprived nationally for health and disability&lt;br&gt;- Healthy life expectancy at age 65</td>
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<td>3. Low Carbon quality services and facilities focused on Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres (and in particular their centres) are designed around the needs of the Community, enabling everyone to have fair and equitable access.</td>
<td>Policies: TA1, YV4, YV5, CV4, TA2, TA3, TA4, EP16</td>
<td><strong>Local Indicator</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Increased patronage on public transport and increased take up of walking &amp; cycling.&lt;br&gt;- Numbers of local shops, facilities and services lost through planning decisions.&lt;br&gt;- Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling (% of parishes covered by Demand Responsive Transport)</td>
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4. An integrated sustainable transport system developed both within and between towns and especially to and from Yeovil whilst promoting enhanced delivery of services direct to rural areas through Information and Computer Technologies.

| Policies: TA1, YV4, YV5, CV4, TA2, TA3, TA4
| **Local Indicator**
| • Increased patronage on public transport and increased take up of walking & cycling.
| **National Indicator**
| • NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling may also be useful in monitoring accessibility.

5. A comprehensive, high performing economy that is diverse, adaptable and provides the required jobs growth and upward wage levels through a thriving Yeovil, regenerated Chard and market towns and a diversified rural economic environment able to attract and retain visitors (through a vibrant tourism industry), consumers and high quality sustainable businesses.

| **Local Indicator**
| • Development of a minimum of circa 107 additional hectares of employment land, distributed to Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres
| • Amount of office development in Town Centres.
| • Losses of employment land.
| • Amount of employment land lost to residential development.
| • Employment Land in the Countryside and Expansion of existing businesses in the countryside.
| • Proportion of new economic development built in 'rural settlements' (not Market Towns or Rural Centres).
| • Number of new Live/Work Units.
| • Number of Tourism Applications granted in accordance with policy.
| **Core Indicator**
| • BD1: Total amount of additional employment floorspace - by type.
| • BD2: Total Amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land - by type.
| • BD3: Employment land available - by type.
| • BD4: Total amount of floorspace for 'town centre uses'.

6. A balanced housing market with a range of general housing and affordable housing to meet the required numbers and sited and built to support sustainable lifestyles with low carbon

| Policies: SS2, SS3, SS4 YV1, HG1, HG2, HG3, HG4
| **Local Indicator**
| • Delivery of about 16,600 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026 across the district
| • Proportion of new residential development built in 'rural settlements' (not Market Towns or Rural Centres).
emissions, delivered through a sustainable District settlement strategy and hierarchy.

- Minimum 35% affordable housing on sites of either 6 or more dwellings.
- Delivery of a mix of housing types sizes to meet the needs of the district and contribute towards the creation of balanced and mixed communities.
- New homes built at a net density between 30-50 dwellings per hectare that seek to make efficient use of land.
- At least 30% of new housing built on previously developed land.
- Increased retention of traditional small properties in the Countryside.
- House price to income ratio
- Number of homeless in the district
- Provision of gypsy and traveller sites in relation to identified need

**Core Indicator**
- H1: Plan Period and Housing Targets.
- H2: Net Additional Dwellings.
- H4: Net additional Pitches (Gypsy and Travellers).
- H5: Gross Affordable Housing Completions.
- H6: Housing quality - building for life assessments and Local Indicator Progress on Housing Allocations.

**National Indicator**
- NI 154 Net additional homes provided.
- NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross).

**Local indicator**
- Provision of 1 job per economically active person living in the Eco Town.

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7. An Eco Town for Yeovil to deliver on the balanced housing market objective, provide an exemplar to move towards more sustainable, lower carbon emissions, delivered through a sustainable District settlement strategy and hierarchy.
consumption living and provide a boost to new low carbon technologies and industries.

| EQ4, EQ6, HW1, HG4 | • Increased patronage on public transport and increased take up of walking & cycling over the district average towards a 50% modal shift target.  
• Minimum 35% affordable housing on sites of either 6 or more dwellings.  
• Average annual net carbon dioxide emissions from all energy use of zero or below within the buildings on the eco-town development as a whole.  
• 40% of the eco-towns total area should be allocated to green space, of which at least half should be of which is public and consists of a network of high quality green/open spaces which are linked to the open countryside.  
• Percentage gain in Biodiversity within Eco-development.  
• Residual waste levels, recycling levels and landfill diversion levels within the Eco-development against development targets (to beset out in the Waste and Resource Plan being proposed).  
• Number of applications approved within the Eco-development that increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and that do not use opportunities to address and reduce existing flooding problems.  
• Applications granted in accordance with the Yeovil Village Masterplan.  
• Average earnings of employees  
• Overall employment rate  
• VAT registered businesses in the area showing growth |

| Policies: TA1, YV4, YV5, CV4, | Core Indicator  
• H5: Gross Affordable Housing Completions.  
• E2: Change in areas of biodiversity importance.  
• E3: Renewable energy generation. |

| Policies: TA1, YV4, YV5, CV4, | Local Indicator  
• Increased patronage on public transport and increased take up of walking & cycling. |

8. Movement towards a Carbon Neutral economy by 2030 (for new and existing buildings).
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 development.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies: EQ1, EQ2, EQ3, EQ4, EQ5, EQ6, EQ7</th>
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<tr>
<th>Core Indicator</th>
<th>National Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>E3: Renewable energy generation.</td>
<td>NI 185 CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NI 186 Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area.</td>
<td>NI 188 Planning to Adapt to climate change.</td>
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<th>Local Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance of development that will impact on the landscape character of the area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of days of air pollution exceeding 40ug/m³ in Yeovil AQMA River Quality (% of very good or fair).</td>
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<th>Core Indicator</th>
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<td>E1: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E2: Change in areas of biodiversity importance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H6: Housing quality - building for life assessments.</td>
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<tr>
<th>National Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>NI 197 Improved local biodiversity - proportion of local sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented.</td>
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13.6 Indicator references are current at the time of this consultation but are anticipated to be rescinded.