New planning policies are being developed for South Somerset. These policies will determine the way South Somerset develops up to the year 2026.

The Local Development Framework is a folder of documents, including the Core Strategy, which will replace the existing Local Plan.

The first stage of public consultation is the Core Strategy ‘Issues and Options.’ It is important that you have your say now – it is more difficult to introduce new issues or topics or suggest changes the longer you leave it, although there are opportunities for comment later in the process (see diagram on page 2).

The Core Strategy lies at the heart of the Local Development Framework and will set out the long term planning framework for the district up to the year 2026.

It has to work within guidance from national and regional development requirements, and will be informed by other studies and council strategies, as well as your responses. It is about meeting the needs of people up to the year 2026 by providing enough homes, jobs and services, in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way.

Once adopted, the Core Strategy will be the key, overarching policy document for development within South Somerset, directing how much development is needed and where it should go. It will contain development management policies setting out the criteria against which planning applications will be considered; so all planning applications will refer to it.

In this leaflet you can find out:
What the Core Strategy is…
The Core Strategy themes…
Where you can find the Core Strategy…
How to get involved…

Award winning new housing design, Great Bow Yard, Langport

Vibrant shopping centre, Yeovil town centre
Core Strategy public consultation stages

THE STAGES

Core Strategy Issues & Options
March / April 2008:
Public Consultation

Core Strategy Preferred Options
September 2008:
6 week Statutory public consultation period

Core Strategy Submission to Government
June 2009: 6 week Statutory public consultation period

Core Strategy Expected adoption date
October 2010

The new planning system places a lot of emphasis on ‘local distinctiveness’ and the Core Strategy contains a vision, objectives and possible options on how South Somerset should develop in the future, informed by the Sustainable Community Strategy produced by the South Somerset Together partnership.

We would like to hear what you think of the Core Strategy, which is based around the following themes:

Strategy
This chapter sets out what the needs of the community are likely to be in terms of additional development, and how and where their needs can best be met. For example, how many homes and jobs need to be provided? And to which settlements within South Somerset should new housing and employment development go? What should the density of new housing developments be? How much development should be built on brownfield land?

Housing
It is recognised nationally there is a shortage of housing, and in particular affordable housing. Between 2006-2026 South Somerset may be expected to provide 19,700 new dwellings in the district. Questions and issues we want you to consider include how many of these should be ‘affordable’ (provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market?). Should there be more affordable housing in Yeovil and in the other market towns and in rural areas? Where should Gypsy and Traveller sites be provided?

Economic Prosperity
South Somerset has a buoyant economy. However, whilst the service sector is expanding, it is heavily reliant on manufacturing and large engineering companies, which are declining. Skilled young people are leaving the district because of a lack of job opportunities; there is a lack of inward investment; and a shortage of suitable employment land and premises. What type of employers should we be encouraging into the district – smaller employers or larger ones? How can we look after the employment land we already have? Do we need more retail space in towns and villages? How can we support farmers? What sort of tourism facilities do we want in the area?

Transport and accessibility
Climate change and obesity are seen as two of the key issues of public policy facing the UK in the 21st century – shifting travel patterns from the car to walking and cycling addresses both these issues. The rural nature of the district means that for most people there is a need to travel some distance to get to work, school, shops, healthcare, leisure facilities and other key services. However we could reduce the need to travel if these services were close to all homes. Should we encourage more public transport, more cycling and walking, or the development of car clubs? When new houses are built should we limit parking spaces according to the size of the house, or how close it is to shops and services, or how well served it is by public transport?

Health and well being
Reducing the reliance on private cars may encourage people to cycle and walk more, and so benefit their health – after all obesity and lifestyle related illnesses are on the increase. It is important that there are open spaces, sport and recreation areas, leisure and cultural facilities, outdoor play areas and allotments to help to improve the health and well being of South Somerset’s residents. As towns and villages develop, these facilities should be provided to cater for the growing population. What sorts of ‘community facilities’ are required – play areas, open space, playing pitches, health centres, schools, churches?

Environmental Quality
This theme covers the issue of climate change and reducing carbon emissions and encouraging renewable energy, the quality of design, potential building on flood plains and the protection of wildlife and the landscape, which all need to be addressed and balanced as new development takes place. What percentage of renewable energy should we ask for within new developments – bearing in mind that this may increase the initial cost of building and buying houses, and should it be for all development, or just the larger developments?
How to get involved:

You can read the full document on our website at www.southsomerset.gov.uk/corestrategy or at any of our council offices or local libraries.

The consultation period has now begun and runs until Friday 25 April 2008.

Please tell us whether we’ve got the issues right or whether you think we have missed something important. And tell us which option(s) you think are the best ways to tackle these issues.

Put your local knowledge of the area to good use and say how you would like the district to develop over the coming years.

You can make comments on-line at www.southsomerset.gov.uk/corestrategy or fill out a comment form (available in Council Offices and libraries) and return it to us by email at planning.policy@southsomerset.gov.uk or post to:
Planning Policy Team,
The Council Offices,
Brympton Way,
Yeovil,
Somerset BA20 2HT.

The core strategy is issue based so, if you wish, you can go straight to the theme you are interested in and only comment on that.

The Nippy Bus service links many of the villages and communities of South Somerset.

If you need this publication in large print, Braille, audio cassette or another language or would like to talk to a member of staff to discuss details, please contact 01935 462462.