

Further Main Modifications to the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028)

Lead Officer: Paul Wheatley, Principal Spatial Planner
Contact Details: paul.wheatley@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462598

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the further Main Modifications required for the Local Plan (2006 – 2028). The further Main Modifications stem from the Planning Inspector's Preliminary Findings letter of 16th July 2014¹.

2. Public Interest

- 2.1 An adopted Local Plan provides the mechanism to guide the development industry and inform the public about the future strategy for growth in South Somerset. The Local Plan is the Council's principal planning tool to encourage investment, protect the environment, create jobs, and deliver sustainable development.
- 2.2 The Council has prepared four further Main Modifications to address the concerns raised by the Inspector following the resumed Examination Hearing Sessions held in June 2014. Addressing these concerns will allow the Council to progress towards an adopted Local Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Council:
 1. Approve the further Main Modifications (see Appendix A) for public consultation; and
 2. Note that the further Main Modifications have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulations Assessment and Equality Analysis as required.

4. Background

- 4.1 The South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) is currently subject to an Independent Examination. Examination Hearing Sessions were held from 07 May to 18 June 2013 and from 10 June to 13 June 2014. The resumed Examination Hearing Sessions held in June 2014 discussed the Council's proposed Main Modifications².
- 4.2 The Inspector has considered all of the evidence put forward by the Council and stakeholders, and has formally written to the Council setting out his 'Preliminary Findings' and proposed next steps.
- 4.2 In his letter, the Inspector identified that based on the evidence he has read and heard he considers there remain four "*small shortcomings...relating to soundness, which the Council should address through the agreement of Main Modifications (MMs)*".

¹ Inspector's Preliminary Findings letter (16th July 2014):
https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/674198/inspector_s_preliminary_findings_post_resumed_examination_hearing.pdf

² South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) – Proposed Main Modifications (March 2014):
https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/648229/south_somerset_local_plan_proposed_main_modifications_submission_to_pins.pdf

5. Report

- 5.1 The further Main Modifications have been written to directly address the Inspector's remaining concerns. The Council's Project Management Board (PMB) has overseen the production of the further Main Modifications and approved them for submission to District Executive at a meeting on the 24 July 2014³. District Executive endorsed the further Main Modifications and recommended that Council approve for public consultation⁴.
- 5.2 The further Main Modifications proposed are related to the following policies:
- **Policy YV2: North East Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension** – is amended to include detail on landscape mitigation measures at the North East Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension.
 - **Policy YV3: East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone** – Policy YV3 is deleted, and in so doing removes the east Coker and North Coker buffer zone.
 - **Policy SS3: Delivering New Employment Land** – the specific employment land figure for Rural Settlements is deleted. An explanation of the Council's approach to employment proposals in Rural Settlements and Rural Centres is added, and reference to an early review of housing and employment provision Wincanton is added.
 - **Policy SS5: Delivering New Housing Growth** – is amended to improve clarity on housing delivery in Crewkerne and Wincanton. Reference to an early review of housing and employment provision at Wincanton is added.
- 5.3 These further Main Modifications require consequential changes to supporting text, and in the case of Policy YV3, to the proposals map.
- 5.4 The further Main Modifications have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), and Equality Analysis (EqA). The SA and HRA have been undertaken by Enfusion Ltd. The documents are attached as Appendices B, C and D.

6. Consultation on Further Main Modifications

- 6.1 If approved, the further Main Modifications will be subject to public consultation for a six week period, provisionally commencing on 28 August 2014 and ending on 10 October 2014. The consultation strategy will include sending an email / letter to all those on the Planning Policy Consultation database (this includes all Local Plan respondents, Parish and Town Councils, adjoining Local Planning Authorities and other consultation bodies), placing notices in local newspapers and sending out a press release.
- 6.2 As well as being on the Council's web site the consultation documents will be placed in main Council Offices and in libraries across the district. The public will be able to make representations online through the iNovem system.

7. Next Steps

³ Project Management Board Workshop 32: Consideration of further Main Modifications (July 2014): [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/local-plan-\(formerly-core-strategy\)-project-management-board-reports/pmb-24-july/](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/local-plan-(formerly-core-strategy)-project-management-board-reports/pmb-24-july/)

⁴ District Executive (07 August 2014): <http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=43>

- 7.1 Once the consultation period has ended all representations will be considered. Any subsequent proposed amendments will be discussed through the usual internal processes. It is envisaged that the final further Main Modifications will be presented to District Executive and Full Council in November 2014.
- 7.2 If the final further Main Modifications are approved by Full Council, they will be submitted to the Inspector. The modifications will then feature in the Inspector's Report. Based upon the current timetable, it is anticipated that the Inspector's Report will be received by the end of 2014. If this timetable occurs it is anticipated that adoption of the Local Plan could be achieved by early 2015.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The finalisation of the Local Plan will require continued use of internal resources and external consultancy support. This expenditure has already been factored into existing budgets.
- 8.2 If the Local Plan was to be found 'unsound' there could be medium term financial impacts on the Council, but this represents a low risk given the latest progress.

9. Corporate Priority Implications

- 9.1 Adopting the Local Plan in 2014 is a priority in the Council Plan "Our Plan - Your Future 2012 to 2015" and remains a high priority. The progress of the Local Plan is important, principally to achieve adopted policies that will assist in the achievement of the Council's Corporate Aims relating to increased economic vitality and prosperity, improvement in the health and well-being of citizens, creation of safe, sustainable and cohesive communities and the promotion of a balanced natural and built environment.

10. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

- 10.1 None.

11. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 11.1 The Main Modifications have undergone Equality Analysis, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal.

12. Background Papers:

Appendix A – South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) Further Main Modifications (August 2014)

Appendix B – Further Main Modifications Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report (August 2014)

Appendix C – Further Main Modifications Habitats Regulation Assessment Addendum Report (August 2014)

Appendix D – Equality Analysis (August 2014)

Project Management Board – Workshop 32: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/pmb32>

Inspector's Preliminary Findings Letter (16 July 2014):

https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/674198/inspector_s_preliminary_findings_post_resumed_examination_hearing.pdf