

South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Area West Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Wednesday 21st March 2012

4.00 pm

(Please note earlier commencement time)

**The Shrubbery Hotel
Station Road
Ilminster
Somerset TA19 9AR**

(See location plan overleaf)

The public and press are welcome to attend.

Disabled Access is available at this meeting venue.



If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Andrew Blackburn** on Yeovil (01935) 462462
email: andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Monday, 12th March 2012

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

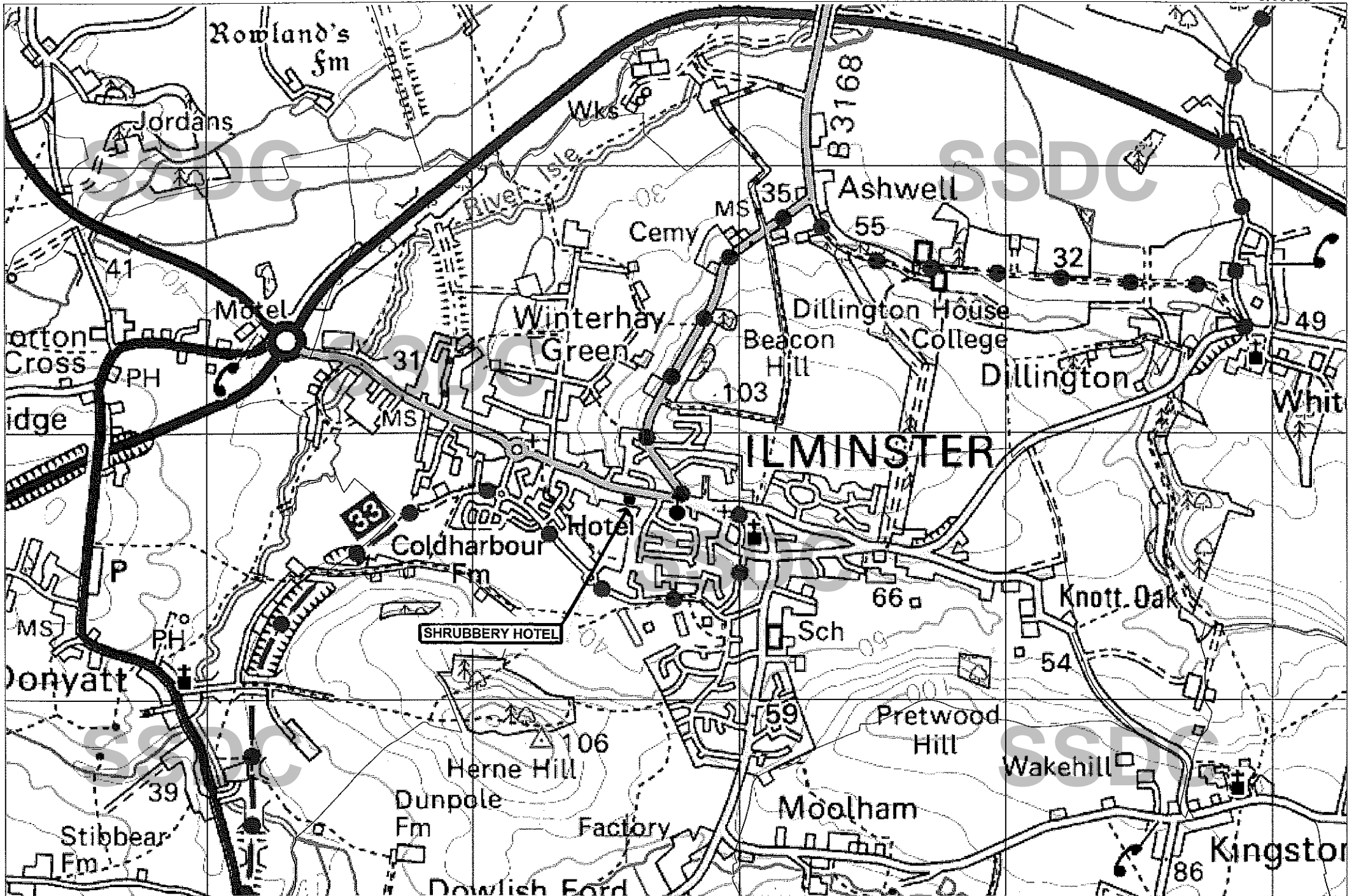


2007-2008
Neighbourhood and
Community Champions:
The Role of Elected Members
2006-2007
Improving Rural Services
Empowering Communities
2005-2006
Getting Closer to Communities

This information is also available on our
website: www.southsomerset.gov.uk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Area West Membership

Chairman: Angie Singleton
Vice-Chairman: Paul Maxwell

Michael Best
David Bulmer
John Dyke
Carol Goodall
Brennie Halse

Jenny Kenton
Nigel Mermagen
Sue Osborne
Ric Pallister
Ros Roderigo

Kim Turner
Andrew Turpin
Linda Vjeh
Martin Wale

Somerset County Council Representatives

Somerset County Councillors (who are not already elected District Councillors for the area) are invited to attend Area Committee meetings and participate in the debate on any item on the Agenda. **However, it must be noted that they are not members of the committee and cannot vote in relation to any item on the agenda.** The following County Councillors are invited to attend the meeting:-

Councillor Cathy Bakewell and Councillor Jill Shortland.

South Somerset District Council – Corporate Aims

Our key aims are: (all equal)

- Increase economic vitality and prosperity
- Enhance the environment, address and adapt to climate change
- Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens
- Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities
- Deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers

Scrutiny Procedure Rules

Please note that decisions taken by Area Committees may be "called in" for scrutiny by the Council's Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation. This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications.

Consideration of Planning Applications

Members of the public are requested to note that the Committee will break for refreshments at approximately 6.45 p.m. Planning applications will not be considered before 7.00 p.m. The public and representatives of Parish/Town Councils will be invited to speak on the individual planning applications at the time they are considered. Anyone wishing to raise matters in relation to other items on the agenda may do so at the time the item is considered.

Members Questions on Reports prior to the Meeting

Members of the Committee are requested to contact report authors on points of clarification prior to the Committee meeting.

Information for the Public

The Council has a well-established Area Committee system and through four Area Committees seeks to strengthen links between the Council and its local communities, allowing planning and other local issues to be decided at a local level (planning recommendations outside council policy are referred to the district wide Regulation Committee).

Decisions made by Area Committees, which include financial or policy implications are generally classed as executive decisions. Where these financial or policy decisions have a significant impact on council budgets or the local community, agendas will record these decisions as “key decisions”. Members of the public can view the council’s Executive Forward Plan, either online or at any SSDC council office, to see what executive/key decisions are scheduled to be taken in the coming months. Non-executive decisions taken by area committees include planning, and other quasi-judicial decisions.

At Area Committee meetings members of the public are able to:

- attend and make verbal or written representations, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- at the Area Committee Chairman’s discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to up to 3 minutes on agenda items; and
- see agenda reports.

Meetings of the Area West Committee are held monthly at 5.30 p.m. on the 3rd Wednesday of the month in venues throughout Area West.

Agendas and minutes of Area Committees are published on the Council’s website www.southsomerset.gov.uk

The Council’s Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in council offices.

Further information about this Committee can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

Public Participation at Committees

This is a summary of the Protocol adopted by the Council and set out in Part 5 of the Council’s Constitution.

Public Question Time

The period allowed for participation in this session shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Chairman of the Committee. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.

Planning Applications

Comments about planning applications will be dealt with at the time those applications are considered, rather than during the Public Question Time session.

Comments should be confined to additional information or issues, which have not been fully covered in the officer’s report. Members of the public are asked to submit any additional

documents to the planning officer at least 72 hours in advance and not to present them to the Committee on the day of the meeting. This will give the planning officer the opportunity to respond appropriately. Information from the public should not be tabled at the meeting. It should also be noted that, in the interests of fairness, the use of presentational aids (e.g. PowerPoint) by the applicant/agent or those making representations will not be permitted. However, the applicant/agent or those making representations are able to ask the Planning Officer to include photographs/images within the officer's presentation subject to them being received by the officer at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. No more than 5 photographs/images either supporting or against the application to be submitted. The Planning Officer will also need to be satisfied that the photographs are appropriate in terms of planning grounds.

At the Committee Chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each and where there are a number of persons wishing to speak they should be encouraged to choose one spokesperson to speak either for the applicant or on behalf of any supporters or objectors to the application. The total period allowed for such participation on each application shall not normally exceed 15 minutes.

The order of speaking on planning items will be:

- Town or Parish Council Spokesperson
- Objectors
- Supporters
- Applicant/Agent
- District Council Ward Member
- County Council Division Member

If a member of the public wishes to speak they must inform the committee administrator before the meeting begins of their name and whether they have supporting comments or objections and who they are representing. This must be done by completing one of the public participation slips available at the meeting.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chairman of the Committee shall have discretion to vary the procedure set out to ensure fairness to all sides.

The same rules in terms of public participation will apply in respect of other agenda items where people wish to speak on that particular item.

If a Councillor has declared a personal and prejudicial interest

Under the new Code of Conduct, a Councillor will be afforded the same right as a member of the public, except that once the Councillor has addressed the Committee the Councillor will leave the room and not return until after the decision has been made.

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Additional Guidance for the Public – Core Strategy

Please note:

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each. Further details are given below.

Registering to speak

If a member of the public wishes to speak to the committee about the Core Strategy item on the Area West agenda, a public participation slip must be completed and handed to the Committee Administrator before the meeting starts. Forms will be available at the meeting.

The forms ask for your name, the parish or village you represent and/or wish to speak about, and the relevant part of the Core Strategy item you wish to speak about – this will help the Chairman to call you forward to speak at the appropriate time. Don't worry if this sounds a little confusing as staff will be available at the meeting venue 30 minutes before the meeting starts to offer assistance and guidance on the completion of forms.

For the Core Strategy agenda item only

This agenda item is split into three sections – Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3. Members of the public will have the opportunity to speak on each section.

When the meeting commences

The officer will give a short presentation on Part 1. The Chairman will then call forward by name the people who have registered to speak to the committee (using the public participations slips) in the following order: Town/Parish spokesperson(s) first, followed by other members of the public. The committee will then debate/discuss Part 1 – during which time the public will not be permitted to speak.

The officer will then give a short presentation on Part 2, and the same process as above will be repeated, and the same again for Part 3.

IMPORTANT

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each - once in Part 1, once in Part 2 and once in Part 3. Where there are a number of persons wishing to speak about the same issue, they will be encouraged to choose a spokesperson. Speakers wherever possible should not repeat comments made by previous speakers.

A public participation slip must be completed in order to speak to the committee.

Area West Committee

Wednesday 21st March 2012

Agenda

Preliminary Items

- 1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th February 2012**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, which includes all the provisions of the statutory Model Code of Conduct, Members are asked to declare any personal interests (and whether or not such an interest is "prejudicial") in any matter on the agenda for this meeting. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 10. In the interests of complete transparency, Members of the County Council, who are not also members of this committee, are encouraged to declare any interests they may have in any matters being discussed even though they may not be under any obligation to do so under the code of conduct.

Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee

The following members of this Committee are also members of the Council's Regulation Committee:

Cllr. Mike Best
Cllr. Ros Roderigo
Cllr. Angie Singleton
Cllr. Linda Vijeh

Where planning applications are referred by this Committee to the Regulation Committee for determination, in accordance with the Council's Code of Practice on Planning, Members of the Regulation Committee can participate and vote on these items at the Area Committee and at Regulation Committee. In these cases the Council's decision-making process is not complete until the application is determined by the Regulation Committee. Members of the Regulation Committee retain an open mind and will not finalise their position until the Regulation Committee. They will also consider the matter at Regulation Committee as Members of that Committee and not as representatives of the Area Committee.

4. Public Question Time

This is a chance to ask questions, make comments and raise matters of concern.

Parish/Town Councils may also wish to use this opportunity to ask for the District Council's support on any matter of particular concern to their Parish/Town.

Anyone wishing to raise matters in relation to items on the agenda may do so at the time the item is considered.

5. Chairman’s Announcements

Page Number

Items for Discussion

6. Motion Submitted by Cllr. Andrew Turpin1

7. South Somerset Core Strategy – Consideration of Representations and Recommendations for the Proposed Submission Draft.....2

The appendices to this report have been circulated to members and are also available on the Council's website (www.southsomerset.gov.uk) under Agendas and Minutes and follow the link to Area West Committee.

A motion from Cllr. Andrew Turpin [see pages 99-100] relating to recommendations on Chard Junction will be taken as part of consideration of recommendation 2 in the draft report to District Executive (Page A1). The recommendations on Chard Junction appear in Appendix A, pages 50 and 346.

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THE SCHEDULE OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS APPEARS AFTER PAGE 105

Please note that the decisions taken by Area Committees may be called in for scrutiny by the Council’s Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation. This does not apply to decisions taken on planning applications.

Area West Committee – 21st March 2012

6. Motion Submitted by Cllr. Andrew Turpin

Being mindful of the Earth's finite resources, this Committee requests the Local Development Framework Project Management Board to consider what additional measures could be adopted to ensure that in South Somerset we preserve and protect them for future generations.

Area West Committee – 21st March 2012

7. **South Somerset Core Strategy – Consideration of Representations and Recommendations for the Proposed Submission Draft**

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Policy and Performance
Assistant Director: Martin Woods, Economy
Service Manager: Andy Foyne, Spatial Policy Manager
Lead Officer: Andy Foyne, Spatial Policy Manager
Contact Details: andy.foyne@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462650

Purpose of the Report

To give the Area Committee the opportunity to comment and make recommendations to District Executive Committee on proposals and recommendations arising from consideration of the public consultation stage on the South Somerset Core Strategy.

Public Interest

The South Somerset Core Strategy contains land use policies and proposals vital to the future of the District. This report gives Members of the Area Committee opportunity to make comments on the proposed changes to the Core Strategy in the light of extensive public consultation that took place during late 2010. Each Area Committee will only actively consider those development issues within their area boundaries.

Recommendation

That subject to any comments and recommendations they may wish to make for District Executive consideration, members endorse the recommendations contained in the draft report on the Core Strategy to the District Executive Committee.

Background

The draft Core Strategy was the subject of consultation in October – December 2010. Since that time work has been underway considering representations, new evidence base and emerging Government policy to derive a revised plan for publication. The outcome of this work is now available for consideration by the District Executive prior to consideration by full Council.

Report

The report to District Executive has been drafted and contains the recommendations of the Project Management Board (PMB - set up by District Executive to oversee the Core Strategy process). Members have an opportunity to consider the work done to date and the recommendations of the PMB prior to their consideration by the District Executive. The District Executive report is appended and is due to be considered on 26th March 2012.

Financial Implications

No direct implications although proposals in relation to policy on planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Strategy will affect moneys collected in relation to planning

applications for development and the level of development proposed generally will impact on the tax base of the Council.

Corporate Priority Implications

The Core Strategy is central to the delivery of the Corporate Plan by virtue of determining spatial policy for the Council.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Policy EQ1 presents strong policy support for the control of carbon emissions and the adaptation to Climate Change. The overall settlement hierarchy has been framed with minimisation of carbon impacts from travel to the fore

Equality and Diversity Implications

The rewording of the draft Core Strategy will be undertaken with a full Equalities Impact assessment undertaken and reported.

Background Papers: *None*

Draft Report to District Executive – 26th March

South Somerset Core Strategy – Consideration of Representations and Recommendations for the Proposed Submission Draft (Executive Decision)

Executive Portfolio Holder: Tim Carroll, Finance, Legal & Spatial Planning
Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Director, Policy and Performance
Assistant Director: Martin Woods, Economy
Service Manager: Andy Foyne, Spatial Policy Manager
Lead Officer: Andy Foyne, Spatial Policy Manager
Contact Details: Andy.foyne@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935 462650)

Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of the number and nature of responses to the Draft Core Strategy with Preferred Options document published for consultation in October 2010 and the key policy matters emerging, which have been considered by the Local Development Framework Project Management Board (PMB), to which the District Executive has delegated management of the Core Strategy process. The report will present PMB recommendations to amend the Core Strategy, where considered appropriate, in the light of representations received, further emerging evidence base and government policy. The report has been considered by Area Committees and their views are presented as a supplementary report to this in appendix L.

Forward Plan

This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of March 2012.

Public Interest

The South Somerset Core Strategy contains land use policies and proposals vital to the future of the District. This report gives Members of the Committee opportunity to make comments on the proposed changes to the Core Strategy in the light of extensive public consultation that took place during late 2010.

Recommendations

That the District Executive Committee:

- (1) Consider and endorse the recommendations made on key proposals and policy matters by PMB (set out in the body of the report in italics and presented in summary form in the Summary of Recommendations at the end of this report)
- (2) Note the comments received and endorse the responses made to the public consultation as set out in the attached Matrix of Responses received (Appendix A)
- (3) Note and endorse the summary document identifying resultant changes to the Core Strategy proposals and policies both major and minor in nature (Appendix B).
- (4) Review the PMB recommendations in the light of the formal Area Committees' comments and recommendations on this report as presented in supplementary report Appendix L (including oral reporting of comments from Area West Committee)

Background

In March 2008, the District Council published an Issues and Options report that resulted in 204 people or organisations responding and 8131 individual responses on the topics to be covered by the Core Strategy. Following the consideration of these representations, the District Council published the Draft Core Strategy (incorporating Preferred Options) in October 2010 for formal consultation, in line with statutory requirements. This generated 942 respondents with 2848 individual comments. A detailed report by the Area Development Manager East on the consultation process is set out as Appendix C. A further period of consultation was extended to those respondents who raised issues about traffic and highway infrastructure in and around Yeovil as a result of additional work on evidence gathering carried out by Parsons Brinkerhoff on behalf of this Council and Somerset County Council, the Highway Authority.

The comments made on this further consultation have been responded to under a separate report by Somerset County Council, which can be found at Appendix D. These comments have informed the review of Yeovil's growth both in terms of scale and location. Two subsequent revisions to this report reflecting technical issues and additional location scenarios have been taken into account.

All of the comments received on the draft Core Strategy have been summarised into an issues matrix (Appendix A) that sets out the main issues raised on a policy or paragraph basis reflecting the Core Strategy numbering. The Matrix sets out a summary of the comment made (by draft Core Strategy page order), the officer response and the officer recommendation.

It should be noted that the revised Core Strategy Plan to be referred to henceforth as the Proposed Submission Plan will be a shorter document setting out the policies and their justification with much of the detailed background not being needed.

Since the Council's publication of the draft Core Strategy the Government has enacted and promoted the Localism Bill, the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other sundry policy statements. These have had to be taken into account where possible. The Framework however has not been taken into account in detail given its consultation status only and how the Framework is to be taken account of is addressed at the end of this report. The Council also needs to take account of new emerging evidence base, and in this regard the following key reports are drawn attention to and their implications have been taken into account by the PMB and are presented within the appropriate sections of this report. They are the Baker Associates report on the Housing Requirement for Yeovil and South Somerset, and the first, second and third Parsons Brinkerhoff reports on the traffic implications of options for growth for Yeovil (non technical Forecasting report February 2011, its addendum of June 2011 and Addendum report 2).

The Council is required to submit an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) alongside the Publication Plan to indicate that the proposals within the Plan are deliverable. Consultants were appointed to establish infrastructure requirements and funding in order to deliver proposals within the Plan, and to identify development phasing requirements and to allow funding shortfalls to be addressed. The main findings of the IDP in relation to the Core Strategy are summarised within this report and the report itself is appended as appendix K.

The Consultants were also asked to review the Core Strategy planning obligations policy and recommend on the appropriateness of moving to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and they produced the “approach to developer contributions” report. As part of the consideration of the appropriate approach they also produced a report on Community Infrastructure Levy Evidence Base that is essentially the Market and Viability Assessment required to help decide on adopting a CIL and what rates might be charged in a future Charging Schedule. The Consultant’s reports on the appropriateness of proceeding to a CIL approach within South Somerset and what potential CIL charging rates are to be pursued has been concluded and considered by District Executive, and at the time of writing this report, the Executive are advocating proceeding to a CIL to Full Council and using existing saved policy on obligations in the interim. In doing so relevant representations on the matter were taken into account. A summary of the main recommendations is presented within this report for ease of comprehension. Recommendations not addressed (two of them) within the context of deciding to move to a CIL are specifically addressed in the subsequent section of this report and within the context of wider representations on planning obligations and the requirement still to pursue on site matters post the introduction of the CIL regime after April 2014 by planning obligations.

The responsibility for overseeing the Core Strategy process was delegated to the Local Development Framework Project Management Board (PMB) in 2007. The PMB consists of the Council Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder, Chairman of Scrutiny and relevant Area Chairmen when appropriate. The PMB is supported by several senior officers. The PMB has taken an active role in reviewing representations on the Strategy, considering new evidence and emerging Government policy and it is the recommendations of the PMB that are presented in this report. The PMB has met on 12 occasions together with the relevant corporate officers group there to advise them to oversee the process and deal with major issues raised in consultation on the draft Core Strategy. The papers presented to the PMB and the minutes of meetings are available for public inspection on the Council’s website and in greater detail than this report.

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K	Report on Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset
L	Consideration of Area Committee recommendations on the Core Strategy report to District Executive

Maps schedule (of proposed changes):

Chard, Ilchester, Ilminster, Langport / Huish Episcopi, Milborne Port, Somerton, Stoke Sub Hamdon, Wincanton and Yeovil.

1. Introduction

This report sets out the major strategic aspects of the Core Strategy on which people have commented and serves to summarise points made, provide consideration of the issues and present recommendations. The points and considerations are summaries of those presented to the PMB and the recommendations are those of the PMB. The report looks firstly at growth proposals and in particular the scale of growth for the District and the settlement hierarchy, the distribution of growth around the District and growth proposals for rural settlements. It then reviews, in the light of representations made, specific strategic proposals for Yeovil, Chard and the Market Towns.

The separate report on Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset (the IDP) is summarised within this main report here in terms of its implications for the Core Strategy settlement strategy and proposals for growth and is appended (Appendix K). The IDP report has been considered by the PMB and its implications taken into account and reflected in the recommendations made

Consideration is then given on the appropriateness of moving to a CIL regime within South Somerset. The prior consideration of this issue by District Executive has committed the Council to adopting CIL subject to Full Council approval (at the time of writing this report) and moving concurrently to its adoption with the Core Strategy on the basis of the Consultants report received. This was not countered by any representations received on the draft Core Strategy. The commitment to CIL and main argument is summarised in this report. This report also considers the matter of what interim policy on Section 106 planning obligations to adopt prior to CIL being implemented and what policy to apply once CIL is adopted.

The focus then shifts onto policies within the draft Core Strategy and what are considered to be the main areas of policy concern. Where relevant, on both proposals and policies, the implications of new evidence base available is brought to bear, as are the implications of changing government policy. The wider implications of the NPPF for the Core Strategy are set out and the report then concludes on the requirement to redraft the Core Strategy for the next stage of consultation, a review of the comments received on the Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment, and reference to finalisation of an Equalities Impact Assessment. Clarification of the need to apply the sustainability and appropriate assessment appraisal and equalities impact assessment to finalise the final proposed Submission text is given.

The full representations and responses to them are set out in the matrix at Appendix A and policies, proposals and supporting text are summarised in terms of those where a change is recommended (either major or minor) in Appendix B. Major changes are generally changes to policy and minor changes relate usually to supporting text (although there are exceptions to this rule). Major changes set out in the list in Appendix B are specifically addressed in this main report on the section on major policy matters. Additional policy changes are summarised at the end of the major policy matters section, and reflect a combination of minor wording changes to policies or substantive changes that have not been addressed directly, or in detail, by the Project Management Board.

The report throughout seeks to summarise representations and where relevant, further evidence base and emerging government policy, and then gives consideration of the matter in hand followed by recommendations. All these aspects are taken from the

reports and minutes of the PMB albeit in a number of places paraphrased in order to make this report legible.

2. Scale of Growth and Settlement Hierarchy

2.1 End date of Plan

The Government regulations require a 15 year time horizon for the Plan from the date of adoption. Date of adoption is likely in the early part of 2013. An April 2028 end date will therefore be required.

Recommendation 1: *An end date of April 2028 be adopted*

2.2 District Wide Scale of Growth

There have been many consultation responses in relation to Draft Core Strategy Policy SS3: District Wide Housing Provision. They fall into three camps, those who feel the housing target is too high, those who are happy with the target and those who feel it is too low.

Those who feel the target is too high believe that it is based on population estimates that are unrealistically high and was conceived at a time when economic conditions were much better.

Those who feel the target is too low, cite the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) target of 19,700 dwellings and question why we are not seeking to deliver this figure. They state that by providing 16% less than the target, we are in danger of undersupplying housing (and the implications of this) in the long-term and additionally of not being in conformity with the RSS, which is still a material consideration.

The PMB first considered the overall scale of growth issue on 26th May 2011 and endorsed the 16,000 dwelling provision recommended in the Baker report on Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil on the basis of the following argument presented to them in summary.

“Bakers report provides strong evidence that population, household and economic growth projections point to 16,000 dwelling provision for the District to 2026. There is some recent evidence of tail off of population projections, which if economic and demographic trends of recent times persist, will indicate a lower provision of 12,200 dwellings. The facts however that the plan period covers to 2026 and allows time for the economy to gain a normal trajectory, and that the higher projection will crucially enable delivery of the South Somerset's full job potential, point to adoption of the 16,000 figure”.

On the 4th July 2011, Area South Committee expressed concerns over the methodology used by Baker Associates to establish that figure. Members requested a workshop with John Baker for him to explain further the methodology used and discuss the housing numbers projected for the District in the Core Strategy to 2028.

Commentary

The main areas of concern expressed in the consultation were:

1. Economic Potential - there were concerns over the methodology used to establish the economic potential of the District.
2. Migration & Population Projections - the figures were criticised, primarily for being based on out-of-date projections, resulting in greater growth than now being projected.

The workshops took place on Monday 13th August and Friday 2nd September 2011.

The Consultant John Baker addressed the main areas of concern

- (1) Economic Potential - John Baker explained that the scenarios for growth relate to jobs growth as opposed to GDP growth, and making a direct comparison between the two is very difficult.

The methodology used to establish the scenarios was very much a bottom up approach, looking specifically at the local economy and making predictions for growth based on local evidence. The method involved looking at the composition of the economy and analysing the past performance of each sector to start to build a picture of its potential growth. Employers in these sectors were also interviewed to establish their view of their future performance. The local approach gives a robust view of the potential of the South Somerset and Yeovil economy.

The GDP based approach put forward by others suffers from a surfeit of projections from which to choose (15 long term projections by reputable organisations identified by the Government) and that it projects on the basis of the national economy and its structure. The South Somerset economy is different in many ways to the national economic structure and indeed is a more dynamic economy and better placed with representation of sectors that can and need to expand more rapidly over the coming years.

This approach has been used by other authorities and is not unique to the South Somerset approach.

- (2) Migration & Population Projections – John Baker explained that the report was based on 2008 household projection data, which is the latest published by the Government. Having revisited the report using the 2010 mid-year population estimates the Consultants have modified slightly the bottom end of the range of potential housing requirement. The population estimates show that whilst migration rates have been declining since 2007, natural change is now on the increase.

The projection information used is the latest available and the new Household Projections for 2010 are due out in May 2012. Once out in public the Core Strategy process, wherever it is at prior to adoption, will be duty bound to take these latest projections into account. Any such account would need to be endorsed by Members.

The point was reinforced that 16,000 dwellings requirement (2006 to 2026) is very much based on a range of evidence (household projections, natural change, migration, affordable housing requirement and economic potential). Failure to provide sufficient housing for the labour market will stifle the economy and cause additional housing hardship.

Recent discussions with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have indicated that they are yet to decide whether to undertake the 2010

household projections. The 2011 Population Projections are due to be published on 21st March from the Office of National Statistics and should these present any radical changes to trends then updating of the Council's Housing Requirement projections will be presented to District Executive orally on 26th March of this year and subsequently at full Council in April.

Concerns raised by Councillor Fysh in September and October 2011 in relation to growth issues were reviewed and found not to bear on South Somerset but with one exception. (see appendix E Response to Growth Issues raised by Cllr Fysh in September and October 2011). Updated employment information from the Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) for 2010 however required addressing. This latest figure was different from that estimated by the Consultants in the Housing Requirement for South Somerset Report and impacts on the starting figure from which the Consultants projected employment. This has led to a reappraisal of the overall growth figure for the District and a report on this was presented to the PMB at their Workshop 9. The key elements of this re-appraisal and resultant recommendation are presented verbatim in the following paragraphs

The Consultants, on the Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil Report, estimated employment growth for the period 2008 – 2011 and showed this in para 4.28 and table 4.3 of their report. The upshot of this was an estimated figure for employees in employment at 2010 of 68,200, which coupled with self-employment of 7,800, totalled 76,000 jobs for the District. This was 1,000 jobs more than existed in 2006, the Plan start date, and so these jobs were added to the projected jobs for the rest of the plan period to give the overall job growth 2006 to 2028 against which to derive the commensurate housing requirement.

In reality the figure for 2010 from the BRES survey was 72,900 (64,100 employees, 7,800 self employed and 1,000 agricultural employees not included in the BRES for definitional reasons). This is 2,100 jobs down on the 2006 employment provision at the start of the Plan period rather than the estimated 1,000 job increase over the 2006 starting point estimated in the Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil report. This clearly is to have a marked impact on final job provision and therefore housing need from the economic projection viewpoint (as demonstrated in tables 1 and 2 below).

The Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil report projections post 2010 remain unchanged. The survey work and engagement with businesses took place during the latter part of 2010 after the period of job retrenchment and when the economy and job growth had started to become positive again. The Consultant's projections do however demonstrate a slow upturn in provision in the early years post 2010 reflecting current circumstances.

The key tables in the report on economic led housing requirement (tables 4.8 and 4.9) are reproduced below for the period to 2028 with the amended net job growth figures in row (d).

Table 1 Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil - Table 4.8 reprised

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

Table 2 Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil - Table 4.9 Updated and Reprised

	Scenario 1: (11,500 jobs) ¹	Scenario 2: (7,100 jobs) ²
(d) Net gain of jobs 2006 – 2028	9,400 ³	5,000 ⁴
(e) Net increase in unemployment 2006 - 2028	300	200
(f) Economically active 2028 (f = a + d + e)	87,400	82,900
(g) Total population 2028 (g = f x 2.02)	176,500	167,500
(h) Private households population 2028 (h = g – 2.2%)	172,600	163,800
(i) Total number of households 2028 (l = h ÷ 2.1 persons per household)	82,200	78,400
(j) Number of additional homes 2028 (j = l – c)	14,200	10,000
(k) Population change 2006 - 2028 (k = g - b)	19,800	10,800

Note: to calculate the Economic Scenarios up to 2028 to reflect the amended end date of the Plan, Baker Associates undertook the following calculation –

- Calculated growth from 2016 to 2026 = 6,600 jobs & 4,400 jobs.
- Averaged the 6,600 over the 10 years = 660 jobs pa & 440 pa
- Added the additional jobs onto the total jobs growth for both scenarios (11,200 & 7,200) to obtain the additional 2-year estimations.

Therefore, to establish the new net gain of jobs figure for 2028, same calculation was undertaken (as growth adjusted down by 4,100 to account for lower baseline).

Scenario 1 - 10,200 + 1,320 = 11,500 (rounded)

Scenario 2 - 6,200 + 880 = 7,100 (rounded)

The updated and amended output from the two economic scenarios; the first showing private sector led growth and the second showing private sector led growth but slower, are then 14,200 dwelling growth from 2006 to 2028 and the 10,000 dwelling growth for the same period respectively.

¹ Jobs predicted by work of Baker Associates

² Jobs predicted by work of Baker Associates

³ Baker's job predictions minus 2,100 (net reduction in jobs of 2,100 between 2006-2010)

⁴ Baker's job predictions minus 2,100 (net reduction in jobs of 2,100 between 2006-2010) (rounded up)

Wider assessment of the appropriate housing requirement

In reassessing the economic projections in the light of up to date employment figures care should be taken in that BRES data is a different dataset from the Annual Business Inquiry survey and is not easily made compatible with the ABI data. Whilst the information has been made as compatible as possible this should be borne in mind in making comparison.

Economic projections are not the sole determinants of housing requirements. Population and household projections are crucially important and are particularly relevant in determining housing requirement. Whilst population and economic growth projections are the prime drivers for housing requirement additional factors to bear in mind include market capacity to accommodate housing, access to housing esp. affordable, and maintenance of communities and environment.

A range of requirements was set out in the Baker report to 2026 with a 13,600 dwelling to 16,000 dw range derived from household projections which is now amended to 13050 dw to 17,300 dw reflecting population change from 2006 to 2010 derived from population estimates and a 2028 end date. The derivation of these figures is shown in Table 3 below

Table 3: Population and Household Projections 2006-2028

Office of National Statistics (ONS)

	2008 based ONS population projections (+1200pa)	Actual change (06 –10) = ONS population projections 2010 – 28 (+1200pa)	Actual change (06 –10) = lower rates of change of migration 2010 - 28 (+855pa)
Total population 2006	156,700	156,700	156,700
Total households 2006	68,000	68,000	68,000
Actual population change (mid 06 – mid 10)		1,900	1,900
Projected population change (mid 2010 – mid 2028)		21,600	15,400
Projected population increase 06 -28	26,400	23,500	17,300
Total population 2028	183,100	180,200	174,000
Total projected private households population	179,100	176,250	170,200
No of additional households 09-28 (based on 2.1 persons per household)	17,300	15,950	13,050

The economic projections in the original report identified a range of 12,200 dw to 16,000 dw to 2026, which is now amended to 10,000 dw to 14,200 dw on the basis of the

updated employment information and to the later end date for the Plan. The revised economic projections have the effect of widening the overall range by providing a lower bottom to it and suggest a more moderate top of the range in the economic projection.

In determining where the housing requirement should be set within the range given of 10,000 dw to 17,300 dw it is suggested that the upper end of the range is to be preferred for the housing requirement provision choice because it:

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

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

It is clearly desirable to move on this basis towards the upper end of the projections, however, does one focus on the household projection of 17,300 dw or the economic projection of 14,200 dw or a figure somewhere in between as a compromise? Furthermore whilst 17,300 dw growth represents the top of the range of household projections it is felt more appropriate to use the middle column figure from table 3 of 15,950 as this has taken into account what has actually happened 2006 – 2010 (estimated from ONS) in the period 2006 – 2010.

Whilst the figure of 14,200 dw will serve to meet the needs of the local economy, the higher household projection based figure will do that also and meet anticipated household and population growth in full and ensure that in migration of older people of pensionable age (or shortly to retire) will not be at the expense of housing availability for economically active households offering South Somerset employers suitable workers. Adopting the higher provision figure will also serve to dampen any house price inflation associated with a tight housing provision, resulting in a higher proportion of house seekers for available housing stock. In a survey of 73 Local Authorities across England undertaken by the Spatial Policy Team in August 2011, less than 20% applied the economic projections directly to derive their housing provision.

A compromise figure between the two upper end figures has no evidential base to justify it. It is neither one thing nor the other.

Whilst not being direct determinants of the housing requirement for the District the market capacity for housing growth and the availability of land are factors that could constrain growth below what would otherwise be the case. However, The Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil report presents clear evidence of market capacity for the higher provision figure of 15,950 dw, and the District Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment presents evidence that there is sufficient land for development of this number.

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

There are several other factors that offer contextual evidence that the higher provision figure should be achieved. Firstly the population of South Somerset grew from 142,600 in 1991 to 156,700 at the 2006 start date for the Core Strategy an increase of 10% over 15 years. If the same growth rate occurred over the 22 years of the Core Strategy a final population figure of 179,682 would result. This is above the 176,500 figure produced by the higher economic based projection but just slightly below the 180,200 figure produced by the suggested household projection (applied after accounting for the 2010 population estimate).

Secondly past job growth from a figure of 47,482 in 1991 to 65,200 (including agricultural workers) in 2010 resulted in 17,718 extra jobs in 19 years. This compares with 9,400 jobs anticipated in the higher economic projection scenario over the 18 years from 2010 to 2028 or 5,000 jobs with the lower economic projection.

Thirdly past housing growth of 13,440 dw gross for the 20 years of the previous local plan 1991 – 2011 would equate to 14,784 dw over the 22 years to 2028. If one projects what has happened in first 5 years of the Plan (3435 dw or 687 dw pa) which includes some of the worst conditions for national house building since the 1920s, then a housing figure of 15,114 dwellings emerges. It is worth noting also that during 2008 –2010 when the loss of 2,200 jobs occurred there was a net increase of 1025 dw added to the total South Somerset stock.

There is the potential for the national policy objective of growing our way out of economic difficulties to be hindered by the adoption of local economic and housing targets based on low growth rates for both jobs and housing which will serve to deflate growth on a policy basis and produce a potentially self fulfilling prophecy of lower growth.

The 2010 Household projections will be published in May 2012 and this will entail a review of the upper end figure in the light of this latest information. This should be received before the Core Strategy Public Examination and its implications will be reported to Members for a decision to be taken. (Since these words were reported to the PMB the Government have indicated that the 2010 household projections may not be published in May 2012. The Council will continue to review relevant new projections or growth estimates to ensure its growth projections remain valid.

The PMB in endorsing the main elements of the re-appraisal of the housing growth figure saw and sought to emphasise the importance of the level of growth identified in order to meet communities' aspirations and achieve the Vision for South Somerset. In this regard the level of provision being sufficiently high in order to achieve aspirations was seen as a key determinant of scale of growth. Growth levels need to be sufficient to serve the economic needs of Yeovil as the engine of growth for the wider sub economic area, to

secure the Chard Regeneration Framework's Vision and aspirations, to allow for growth in the market towns and Rural Centres to retain their viability and vitality and to provide sufficient growth opportunity for the implementation of Policy SS2, and enable rural settlements to grow where it was possible to grow in a sustainable fashion.

Recommendation 2: *That a household requirement of 15,950 dwellings from 2006 – 2028 be endorsed for South Somerset and Policy SS1 amended accordingly.*

2.3 Review of the Status of Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres

Yeovil's status and category classification of settlements

Commentary

Whilst not an issue raised significantly in consultation it is considered Yeovil should be called a strategically significant town. Furthermore market town and rural centre terminology should be retained despite some concern relating to potential confusion with titles. All remaining settlements to which policy SS2 applies should be called rural settlements. As long as the terms are defined within the Core Strategy then the terms seem perfectly clear and fit for the identified purpose

Recommendation 3: *That the following terminology be adopted within the Core Strategy:*

- *Yeovil – a strategically significant town*
- *Market towns*
- *Rural Centres and*
- *Rural Settlements*

Review of Market towns' status

Chard: Several comments were received in support of Chard's status as a 'Market Town'. A comment suggested that it should be a Primary Market Town as in Policy HG2.

Crewkerne: Support was indicated for Crewkerne being classed as a Market Town.

Ilminster: There was support for Ilminster's status as a Market Town.

Wincanton: There was support for Wincanton being considered a Market Town

Ansford / Castle Cary: There were some comments which suggested that Ansford / Castle Cary should be categorised as a Rural Centre rather than a Market Town, as it has far more in common with the Rural Centres such as Bruton rather than Market Towns like Wincanton. However, other comments felt the settlement should be a Market Town as it performs an important employment function and retail and community service role.

- Somerton: Apart from Yeovil, Somerton received the highest volume of comments, with much concern at both its status in the settlement hierarchy and the scale of development. There was some support for Somerton being classed as a Market Town, and the resulting development would help to ensure the future prosperity of the town. However, the majority of comments objected to Somerton being a Market Town, and instead felt it should be a Rural Centre. Consultees felt Somerton is more comparable with the other Rural Centres in terms of employment levels, existing services and facilities, and sustainable travel opportunities
- Langport / Huish
Episcopi: Langport / Huish Episcopi was proposed as a Rural Centre in the draft Core Strategy (incorporating preferred options). Although there was some support for this, there were also comments that it should be classed as a Market Town as it has many shops and businesses, a large supermarket, secondary school with sports facilities, and a swimming pool – Somerton does not have many of these yet it is classed as a Market Town in the draft Core Strategy. Comments also stated that the Settlement Role and Function study recommended Langport / Huish Episcopi should be a Market Town.

Commentary

The South Somerset Role and Function Study was commissioned by the Council to identify the role, function and relationships of settlements and their potential future roles and provide recommendations on settlement hierarchy classification to inform decision making on where future growth should be proposed to achieve sustainable future growth within South Somerset. Market town, Rural centre and rural settlement designations indicate differing levels of growth from growth commensurate with maintaining employment and community centres (market towns), to growth for local needs (rural centres) and to little growth unless improved sustainability can clearly be demonstrated (rural settlements). The study has proved an important starting point and evidence base for determining settlements location within the District Settlement hierarchy.

There is general support for market town status for the draft designations except Ansford / Castle Cary and Somerton. The suggestion that Chard should be a primary Market town would require a change to the settlement hierarchy that is not considered justified in terms of any clear difference in role or function of Chard in relation to Yeovil or the other market towns. Whilst Chard is larger than other market towns it has a commensurately higher level of development provision proposed.

In relation to Castle Cary and Somerton the main points raised against their proposed status were lack of jobs, lack of strategic facilities e.g. secondary schools (Somerton) and large supermarkets (both) and lack of sufficient sustainable public transport.

It is not felt that these criticisms for Ansford / Castle Cary and Somerton are well founded in planning terms when taken in the round with all the facilities and criteria in which these towns scored to justify market town status in the original Consultant's report on settlement role and function hence there is no clear evidence given for demotion relating to status. Main concern for Somerton objectors appears more to be the scale of growth.

There is some support for higher status for Langport / Huish Episcopi including job provision and more strategic facility availability although the town council and Huish Episcopi Council are content with its draft rural centre status. A review of evidence clearly shows that the original Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil

report recommendation for market town status can be substantiated. Langport / Huish Episcopi has what Somerton has in terms of facilities and is close in terms of employment provision and crucially Langport / Huish Episcopi has the higher level facilities (superstore and secondary school). It is clear from the strategic housing land availability assessment that there are sites for development available away from flooding and other constraints (but closer to the town centre than the proposed growth option put forward for Somerton). It is considered that whilst the local communities have expressed a desire for a lower status than market town they clearly wish to maintain the community facilities already available in the settlements. Market town status and a commensurate scale of growth (see below section on Appropriate Growth) are considered to be the mechanism to help ensure that these facilities are maintained.

Recommendation 4:	<i>No change to Market Town status of all the proposed Market Towns (Ansford / Castle Cary, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Wincanton and Somerton).</i>
	<i>Change Langport and Huish Episcopi's status from Rural Centre to Market Town.</i>

Review of Rural Centres' Status

Bruton:	Comments were received in support of Bruton's status as a Rural Centre.
Ilchester:	There were comments both in favour of Ilchester being a Rural Centre, and against.
Martock:	There were no comments specifically on Martock's position as a Rural Centre in the settlement hierarchy.
Milborne Port:	Comments were received in support for Milborne Port's identification as a Rural Centre.
South Petherton:	There were no comments specifically on South Petherton's position as a Rural Centre in the settlement hierarchy.
Stoke sub Hamdon:	There were no comments specifically on Stoke sub Hamdon's position as a Rural Centre in the settlement hierarchy.

Commentary

No significant issues have been raised about designations and there has been general support (more concern has been expressed about scale of growth than with actual designations.)

Recommendation 5:	<i>No change to draft rural centres designations (other than the suggested promotion of Langport / Huish Episcopi to Market Town.)</i>
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2.4 Distribution of Growth Between Yeovil, Market Towns, Rural Centres and Rural Settlements

Yeovil

A range of comments was received regarding the scale of development that should be built at Yeovil. Several comments stated that the figure should be increased from the proposed 8,200 dwellings, with suggestions including 9,600 to be consistent with the draft Regional Spatial Strategy approach that 68% of development should be distributed to Strategically Significant Cities or Towns; 9,000 on sustainability grounds; and 5,000 houses should be built at the urban extension. However, there were many comments that the scale of housing proposed at Yeovil was too high. These comments included: there is no requirement for this scale of development as regional targets have been abolished; there is no local support; the proposals will result in infrastructure issues; negative impact on the local environment; the proposed completion rate is optimistic; and Yeovil is taking a disproportionate amount of development relative to its size i.e. it currently has 27% of the population, but is proposed to take 49% of growth.

Chard

There were comments that the urban extension proposed at Chard is excessive, and the strategic allocation should not be carried forward as it has consistently proven impossible to deliver. Some comments felt that the proposed 2200 housing provision at Chard should be reduced and more directed to Yeovil, whilst others suggested that the scale of housing should be increased at Chard. There were also concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development on the infrastructure in the town e.g. capacity of schools, medical facilities.

Crewkerne

Several comments felt that more than the 1030 houses suggested should be built at Crewkerne, reflecting its role in the District. However, there was also objection to the scale of proposed development, as it would put too much strain on the roads and services.

Ilminster

Although some comments accepted the level of development of 530 dwellings, there were more objections due to adverse impact on the character of the town and lack of infrastructure capacity (particularly schools, health facilities, recreation). There is not a need for additional employment given the existing allocations that have remained undeveloped for many years.

Wincanton

Much concern has been raised at the scale of housing. The existing commitments at New Barns Farm and Deansley Way should be built out first – there is no need for additional housing on top of existing commitments of 700 houses. The proposed level of growth (1050 dwellings) would have a detrimental impact on existing infrastructure such as town centre car parking. There was a wish to see more employment land to balance out the housing in the town.

Ansford / Castle Cary

Some consultees felt 500 dwellings proposed at Ansford / Castle Cary was about right, but there were several comments objecting as it was too high and concern over school capacity, car parking and traffic. Concerns were also expressed about growth encouraging superstore provision to the detriment of the town. One consultee has offered the prospect of a road linking Torbay Road employment area to Station Rd within the draft Core Strategy Preferred Direction of Growth.

Somerton

Many consultees felt that 500 dwellings was too high, with particular concerns about the impact on Somerton's historic character, the ability of the narrow roads to cope with additional traffic, and that services, jobs and facilities will not keep pace with housing. Although the provision of employment land was supported, the actual delivery of this was questioned.

Langport / Huish Episcopi

Some consultees suggested that more housing should be built than the 300 suggested, as flooding does not affect other edge of centre sites. Development of warehouses was not supported due to adverse impact on the road network.

Bruton

There were concerns about additional residential development (220 houses) given the current lack of community infrastructure. There were also comments that the road, pavement and parking issues at Bruton need to be addressed.

Ilchester

Some consultees felt that the scale of housing proposed should be higher, around 300 dwellings, consistent with some of the other Rural Centres. However, the significant flood risk, lack of car parking and traffic problems all limit the potential for further development. The Ministry of Defence suggested that up to 180 houses would be required to accommodate service personnel and their families within a 10 mile radius of RNAS Yeovilton.

Martock

Some concern that an additional 150 dwellings would just lead to more out-commuting and that the proposed 1ha of employment land would not counteract this. Any additional development at Martock should consider the need for an additional, larger food-shopping outlet.

Milborne Port

Slightly higher levels of housing (350) were suggested for Milborne Port, and parking issues were highlighted as a problem. The lack of indication as to the delivery of the employment land was also an issue.

South Petherton

Several comments were submitted objecting to no additional homes being identified for South Petherton, as without more housing the settlement will not flourish and continue to

grow, and that it is wrong to blame the poor internal road structure. Some clarification was requested regarding employment land provision.

Stoke Sub Hamdon

Some comments were content with the additional 50 dwellings, whilst others felt this should be increased to meet affordable housing need in the village.

Commentary (relating to distribution of growth for all settlements)

Half the overall housing growth should be in Yeovil to accommodate the 50% job provision in Yeovil, to maintain its economic health and prominence and to ensure that commuting movements into the town are not aggravated. Delivery of this growth can be achieved beyond the 7,300 dw capacity indicated by Bakers report on Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil due to extra 2 years of growth (an extra 520 dwellings) and the likelihood of a wider base to the urban extension so enabling better market perception and higher development (potentially an extra 1,440 dw over 12 years 2012-2028 as evidenced in the Baker report on Housing Provision for South Somerset and Yeovil).

The existing draft Core Strategy proposed scale of growth for the market town and rural centres generally meets the overall requirement for the Market towns and Rural Settlements. There are however some minor changes proposed including acknowledgement of 2 more years growth of the Chard growth allocation which extends beyond the Plan period. This is anticipated to be running at 120 dw per annum hence an extra 240 dw provision.

Langport / Huish Episcopi's change of status (see above) requires enhanced housing provision. Langport / Huish Episcopi is however considered to be one of the smaller size of Market Town settlement (including also Somerton and Ansford / Castle Cary) that should secure more growth than a rural centre but less than the larger market towns. The smaller scale of smaller settlements and changes to public bus provision point to a smaller provision in the three smallest market town settlements. The proximity of Langport / Huish Episcopi to Somerton and Ansford / Castle Cary to Wincanton mean that when respective growth provisions are combined there is appropriate scale of growth for these settlements. A provision in overall terms of 400 dw each is therefore proposed for Langport / Huish Episcopi, Somerton and Ansford / Castle Cary. Infrastructure concerns at these smaller market towns have been found not to be substantiated or are resolvable by current service providers. Concerns at possible coalescence with Wearne near Langport / Huish Episcopi are legitimate but can, and should, be precluded by policy. Concerns relating to the potential adverse retail impact associated with a larger scale of growth at Castle Cary can, and should, be managed through retail policy including the proposal to have a retail impact assessment for any development of more than 500 sq m (see Locally Derived Retail Threshold policy below).

There is a general point relating to the three smaller Market Towns of Langport / Huish Episcopi, Somerton and Castle Cary that the representatives of the settlements are reluctant to take growth commensurate with their status yet wish to maintain facilities. It is felt that a scale of growth commensurate with their status is necessary to ensure that facilities can be maintained.

To reflect the scale of Wincanton, and allow assimilation of significant growth in the recent past and present, and to have a more permissive approach to employment provision reflecting considerable loss of employment provision in the town in the past, it is proposed to take away the additional provision of 350dw set out in the draft Core Strategy and promote more employment land.

For South Petherton there are a notable body of objections seeking growth to sustain the settlement and evidence presented that road issues associated with access to the A303 can be overcome. It is difficult to sustain an argument for no development over current commitments in the town due to internal road constraints (and this argument is not consistent with the element of growth allowed at Martock which is similarly constrained by internal road issues). It is important to remove reference to internal road constraints limiting Stoke Sub Hamdon's growth for similar consistency arguments. Stoke's more limited scale of growth reflects its scale and nature.

The arguments for a change in growth levels in the remaining Rural Centres were not felt to be sufficient or of merit to require a change to Core Strategy levels.

For the rural settlements below rural centres in the settlement hierarchy, there is clear evidence in Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) that there are lots of sites that could come forward in Rural Settlements – it is felt that SHLAA identification can negate the government regulations precluding windfall estimations in Plans which was one of the reasons why increased provision beyond commitment for these settlements was not included in the draft Core Strategy. There is an element of arbitrariness in the assessment of the level of growth policy SS2 will encourage which is inevitable hence there is a need to monitor its implementation. The evidence in the latest Annual Monitoring Report points to a very significant arrest in the provision of additional houses in the Rural Settlements so making a provision figure of around 2,400 dw (i.e. double the current level of commitments for these settlements) a more realistic one than would have been considered a year ago. It is important that rural settlements can grow where sustainability can be achieved but there is also a need for a restriction on the total to ensure that excessive provision doesn't occur and undermine the settlement strategy and hierarchy. This point requires close monitoring that will take place (in any event) through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

The PMB sought to determine housing provision in workshop 1 and resolved growth levels for settlements as below:

1. Yeovil to grow by 8,600 dw housing provision.
2. No changes to scale of growth in most market towns and rural centres apart from
3. An extra 240 dwellings at Chard
4. Langport / Huish Episcopi to have increased provision to reflect higher status proposal to 400 dw
5. Somerton and Castle Cary to have scale of growth pared back from 500 to 400 dwellings
6. Wincanton to receive less growth (less 350dwellings) and to have more permissive approach to employment provision
7. South Petherton to take more growth (100 dwellings) given a review of justification of need to restrain its development.
8. Provide for 2,400 dw in the rural settlements to which policy SS2 will apply subject to policy addition seeking regular monitoring and restriction on cumulative total to stop excessive provision undermining the settlement strategy and hierarchy
9. Show additional housing requirement beyond commitments at present in the policy on housing provision policy (draft Core Strategy policy SS4)

The implications of the re appraisal of the District's overall provision in PMB workshop 9 (relating to the update required due to the latest BRES data) meant a reduction on overall provision to be achieved by removing 1,250 dwelling from the previously agreed level of provision. This reduction was to be achieved by removal on a 50:50 basis between Yeovil (625dw) and the rest of the District reflecting the distribution of the sub economy's job provision. 581 dw should be lost at Chard reflecting receipt of the Chard Eastern Development Area Feasibility Report and the consequent expected delay in likely commencement. This leaves little point in looking for reductions elsewhere.

The final provision derived from the bottom up consideration of growth options is in excess of the 15,950 dw requirement. It is considered however in the context of development uncertainties, the aspiration to retain a scale of growth at Yeovil of "an urban extension scale" and in the context of the overall scale of for the District to be in broad agreement with the requirement. It is not necessary or appropriate to be unduly precise.

The PMB sought a clearer expression in the policy SS4 showing levels of housing growth of the additional housing required beyond the current level (at April 2011) of commitments (built or under construction or with planning consent or currently allocated).

The outcome of all these changes is shown in Table 4 below (which is a redrafting of Policy SS4) which presents the draft Core Strategy housing provision by settlement. The table also includes the remaining requirement after commitments to date have been taken into account. This information has been updated to an April 2011 base date. Table 5 below shows this commitment in more detail.

Recommendation 6: *That Revised Settlement Policy SS4 set out below and presenting the distribution of housing growth about South Somerset is endorsed.*

Table 4: POLICY SS4 DELIVERING NEW HOUSING GROWTH

Housing requirement will make provision for at least 15,950 dwellings in the plan period 2006 – 2028 of which 7,975 dwellings will be located within or adjacent to Yeovil, including an urban eco town extension of 2,500 dwellings (to be part built out beyond the plan period)

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 line with the numbers below (next page):

Recommendation 6 continued:

Table 4: POLICY SS4 DELIVERING NEW HOUSING GROWTH

Settlement	Core Strategy 2006-2028 Total Housing Requirement	Existing Housing Commitments 2006-2011 (as at April 2011)	Additional Housing Provision required (Total Housing Less Existing Commitments) (as at April 2011)
Strategic Town			
Yeovil	7,975	3,704	4,271 ⁵
Market Towns			
Chard	1,861	521	1,340 ⁶
Crewkerne	1028	901	127
Ilminster	531	199	332
Wincanton	703	692	11
Somerton	400	235	165
Castle Cary / Ansford	400	127	273
Langport / Huish Episcopi	400	295	105
Rural Centres			
Bruton	217	113	104
Ilchester	151	0	151
Martock	246	101	145
Milborne Port	299	210	89
South Petherton	245	151	94
Stoke Sub Hamdon	55	6	49
Other			
Rural Settlements	2,400	1,267	1,133
Total	16,911*	8,522	8,389

* 15,950 for the purposes of the overall provision is the District requirement to 2028. The cumulative total of 16,911 is 6% in excess of requirement but is considered in the context of development uncertainties and overall scale of provision, to be in broad agreement with the requirement.

⁵ A further 625 dwellings are proposed at the Yeovil Urban Extension post 2028.

⁶ A total of 3,237 dwellings are proposed in Chard, of which 1,376 dwellings are proposed at the Chard Growth Area post 2028.

Table 5: Proposed Settlement Hierarchy and Scale of Housing Growth

Yeovil's proposed settlement status - Strategic Significant Town (SST)
Market Towns (MT) and Rural Centres (RC)

	Yeovil	Chard	Crewkerne	Ilminster	Wincanton	Somerton	Langport / Huish Episcopi	Ansford / Castle Cary	Ilchester	South Petherton	Martock	Bruton	Milborne Port	Stoke Sub Hamdon	Rest of South Somerset	Area Total
Settlement Status	SST	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	RC	RC	RC	RC	RC	RC	N / A	
1. South Somerset Spatial Strategy Requirement (Draft Core Strategy)	7975	1861	1028	531	703	400	400	400	151	245	246	217	299	55	2400	*16911
2. Completions (06 / 11)	1221	370	190	132	238	23	153	38	0	103	52	91	126	5	693	3435
3. Under Construction	28	29	120	8	18	10	12	4	0	6	5	9	19	0	131	399
4. Commitments (Not Started)	2455	122	66	59	436	48	77	55	0	42	44	13	47	1	443	3908
5. Allocated (without permission)	0	0	525	0	0	154	53	30	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	780
6. Total	3704	521	901	199	692	235	295	127	0	151	101	113	210	6	1267	8522
7. Residual Housing Requirement	**4271	1340	127	332	11	165	105	273	151	94	145	104	89	49	1133	8389

* 15,950 for the purposes of overall provision, is the District requirement to 2028. The cumulative total of 16,911 is 6% in excess of requirement but is considered in the context of development uncertainties and overall scale of provision, to be in broad agreement with the requirement

** Residual additional housing for Yeovil, including an urban extension of 2,500 dwellings, 625 of which will extend beyond the plan period.

2.5 Review of Policy SS2 (Development in Rural Settlements) Development Areas and Infilling

The loss of the development areas for so many villages listed in the Local Plan caused much concern, and the resulting uncertainty as to how the Council will determine what is justified and commensurate in any given location. Consultees felt that the 'Rural Settlements' should be identified by name, and existing development areas retained and reviewed. Comments also suggested that a level of development should be attributed to 'Rural Settlements', as it is unrealistic to identify nil additional dwellings. There were several comments stating that affordable housing in isolation cannot increase the sustainability of rural settlements. The inclusion of the 'rural exceptions sites' section made the policy confusing, lengthy and superfluous.

Commentary

Although there may be some uncertainty due to the loss of so many identified 'villages' and development areas, it is considered that Policy SS2 provides a flexible approach that allows appropriate development to be delivered in Rural Settlements. This aims to ensure the development needs of the rural settlements can be met, whilst restricting the scale of such growth to ensure development is concentrated at Yeovil, Market Towns and the Rural Centres. It is considered that no substantive arguments were made requiring a change to policy SS2 however it was accepted that there is a need for such a new and flexible policy approach to be explained further in supporting text to set out what the Local Planning Authority considers is sustainable development and what is appropriate infill and what isn't. This text was subsequently set out for PMB endorsement and the endorsed text is set out in Appendix F.

There is clearly some confusion in its wording in relation to exception sites that needs to be addressed. Furthermore once it is accepted that cross subsidy of affordable housing with market housing on the same site can occur then the rationale for exception sites fades and reference to exception sites should be removed. It should be made clearer that the policy allows a mix of market and affordable housing.

It is also accepted that a higher provision figure should be put forward for SS2 settlements in order to reflect the potential for additional housing development that the policy affords. The higher provision expectation rather obviates the need for a new tier of settlement as advocated by some representations and the flexibility within the policy means that an infilling policy becomes unnecessary, nor appropriate as a restraint on wider development management nor practical given the scale of work involved reviewing development areas (which furthermore would be inappropriate and difficult to justify in a strategic document such as the Core Strategy.)

It was felt that there had been no credible evidence for upgrading of settlements from Rural Settlement to Rural Centre. The closest argument being for Templecombe's upgrading but the previous Local Plan Inspector was dismissive of the argument and whilst there is the prospect of more jobs in the settlement in all other respects there are no enhancements of services and facilities since 2003 to justify upgrade. The vulnerability of Templecombe's job provision in that it is vested largely in 1 employer was also a relevant factor counting against its upgrading.

Recommendation 7:	<i>Retain policy SS2 but remove the exception site policy subsumed within it.</i>
	<i>Endorse the further explanation as to what is justified and</i>

commensurate in any given location, including further guidance / explanation as to how a development can be considered to increase the sustainability of a settlement set out in Appendix F.

Recognise that settlements below Rural Centre are a tier of the settlement hierarchy in their own right to be called rural settlements (to which policy SS2 applies).

Recognise that policy SS2 will allow for infilling where justified in sustainability terms and cross subsidisation of affordable housing within Rural Settlements.

Do not re-instigate Development Areas for Rural Settlements.

Do not add any additional rural settlements to Rural Centre status.

3. Strategic Development Proposed For Settlements

3.1 Yeovil – Direction for development – the Yeovil Urban extension

The Yeovil Urban Extension Policy YV2 received the largest number of individual responses having received 529 comments, the vast majority criticising the Yeovil Sustainability Appraisal and the preferred direction for growth. A further 15 comments specifically challenged the Brownfield / Greenfield split set out in Policy YV1. The Yeovil Urban Village (Policy YV3) was less contentious and received 8 comments. The top line issues raised were as below.

- Disagree with Sustainability Appraisal of Southern option.
 - Access to town centre / employment sites / train stations
 - Impact on landscape / historic environment
 - Loss of grade 1 agricultural land / biodiversity
 - Topographical barriers
 - Floodplain
- There is insufficient infrastructure to accommodate the Urban Extension
 - Hospitals / primary schools / sewage / parking
- Capacity on existing brownfield sites to accommodate required growth
- Agusta Westland proposes a Flight Safety Zone to protect their operations
- Disagree with population forecast for the District and Yeovil
- Insufficient transport evidence
- Highways Agency support southern option subject to detailed Cartgate testing
- Northwest option has not been accurately appraised
- A single direction for growth restricts build rates

The location of growth for Yeovil was undertaken by the PMB over two workshops after request for more work following the first. A decision making logic was identified within which the issues raised by representees were to be addressed. This changed slightly between workshops but in the final analysis the following process for decision making below was pursued.

In the course of establishing an indicative site for the urban extension it was recognised that to avoid co-alescence of the nearby settlements of North Coker and East Coker and for the further protection of the historic and natural environment a buffer zone was required. Two further PMB Workshops specifically addressed this matter leading to proposals for designation of an East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone. This matter is expanded on in the relevant section below.

Yeovil Urban Extension – Decision making process

- Scale of growth for Yeovil
- Potential Land available for development within the urban form
- Size of Potential Urban extension
- Urban extension potential land take
- Constraints mapping analysis
- Further Consideration of northern option for development
- Advantages of scale – one urban extension or several
- Wider planning issues: sustainability appraisal of options

- Initial siting (masterplanning) of urban extension
- Buffer Zone for East Coker and North Coker
- Traffic modelling and its implications
- Implications of Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Review of Eco town standards

Whilst each stage of the decision making process dealing with the Yeovil Direction for Growth – Yeovil Urban Extension ends with a conclusion, several of these and in particular sections 4 – 7 are conclusions moving towards a final recommendation on the location for growth and as such are means to an end rather than recommendations to present to members in their own right.

The sections on Traffic modelling and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan were effectively reviews of the emerging recommendation on the direction of growth for the Yeovil Urban Extension as these reports emerged later in the day and the decisions taken by that date were re-appraised against the contents of these reports.

Yeovil's Scale of Growth

The Baker Associates report on Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil identified a provision to 2026 of 16,000 dw (now updated to 2028 and 14,950 dw) and presented a rationale that 50% (now 7,975 dw) of this growth should be in Yeovil within the Plan period.. This was an economic led recommendation relating to the growth of South Somerset and Yeovil and sought to maintain the current high level of self-containment of the town. A recommendation to this effect was made in the first PMB workshop in the context of a review of growth in all settlements. The PMB sought a clearer explanation of why growth for Yeovil is needed as part of a stronger Vision Statement for the town.

A sustainability appraisal of the overall scale of growth going to Yeovil in relation to the rest of the District was undertaken and the 50 / 50 split for development was compared with a 25 / 75 split in favour of Yeovil and a 25 / 75 split in favour of the market towns and other settlements and a 37 / 63 split in favour of Yeovil. This concluded that a greater concentration of development in Yeovil would cause environmental issues for the town and outreach the Yeovil town job creation expectation whilst causing service retention issues elsewhere in the District. Greater concentration elsewhere in the District would be at the expense of regeneration potential for Yeovil town and would have potentially adverse impact on the character of the wider rural area and would be less sustainable in terms of trip to work issues. The PMB concluded to retain the 50 / 50 split for development

Recommendation 8:	<i>Confirm the 7,975 dwelling housing provision for Yeovil to 2028 in the context of a stronger clearer justification for the role of growth in the Vision statement for the town. Amend policy YV 1 accordingly.</i>
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Potential Land Availability within the Urban Framework

An assessment of the likely development within the Urban Framework has been made on the basis of completions, commitments as at April 2010, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment sites and an estimate of windfall provision post 2022

(Government guidance precludes consideration of windfall provision for the first ten years of a plan) and an estimate of provision from flats above shops. This is set out in tabular form below.

Table 6 Potential Dwelling Provision within Yeovil Urban Framework

	Achievable Capacity	Theoretical Potential (windfall at 58dw / ha)	Approved	Potential / Allocated
Completions	726	726		
Commitments	2906	2906		
Key sites				
KS / BRYM / 1	97	97	620 commitments	717
KS / YEWI / 1	150	150	*636 commitments	**786
KS / YEWI / 2			830 commitments	830
Yeovil Urban Village	196	278		
SHLAA sites	257	724		
Potential windfall sites 2022 - 2028	1200	1200		
Flats above shops and conversion of houses (Urban Capacity Study)	61	61		
Total	5593	6058		

The difference between the two figures in table 6 relates to a decision on whether the SHLAA sites identified by the Panel of Developers and other parties as suitable, available and viable is the appropriate figure. Alternately the figure of all sites put forward regardless of suitability, availability or deliverability could be used (the higher figure) on a presumption that over the period to 2028 obstacles will be overcome or that other sites may come forward. A higher figure was considered to be the more appropriate.

Recommendation 9:	<i>Endorse a Yeovil urban capacity of 6,100 dw and amend policies YV1 and 2 accordingly</i>
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Size of potential Urban Extension

At the time the Yeovil Urban Extension was being actively considered by PMB the agreed scale for District Growth was 17,200 dw and 8,600dw for Yeovil. The subsequent proposed reduction in overall District provision to 14,950 dw and 7,975 dw for Yeovil implied therefore a smaller urban extension of 1,875 dw. The scale of the extension was considered by PMB when determining the smaller overall scale of development for South Somerset and for Yeovil. It was considered appropriate to retain the scale of the extension to 2,500 dw and anticipate its build up being completed beyond the plan period

for a number of reasons. In particular:

- consistency with the approach adopted at Chard for the strategic allocation
- delivery of economies of scale
- enable a more sustainable community being developed with potentially more services
- provide for more certainty for the future for the development proposals for the south and west of Yeovil by providing for its natural expansion to the perceived (and in the case of East and North Coker the actual policy) constraints to further expansion.

Recommendation 10: *Endorse a total provision for the Urban extension of 2,500dw (with 625 dw to be developed beyond the plan period) and amend policies YV1 and 2 accordingly*

Urban Extension Potential Land Take

Land take for the Urban Extension is identified in the following table and is derived from assumptions about housing density, employment land provision and expected figures for associated land uses. The key decision to make is what is the appropriate density of an urban extension. It is considered that the range of 40 to 50 dw per ha set out in the original RSS document is appropriate reflecting recent experience elsewhere in developing urban extension of quality design. All other numbers for land take table reflect the smaller 2,500 dwelling size of the Urban Extension and the one density figure at 45 dw per ha.

Attention is drawn to high open space provision reflecting eco-town aspirations and the high amount of strategic landscaping to buffer development from existing settlements.

Table 7 Potential Land Take of a Yeovil Urban extension

Land type	Land take for 2,500 dw in ha
Housing at 45 dw ph	55.5
Employment (B uses) 1 job per economic active house=hold	13.5*
Education (1 sec and 1 primary school)	7.5
Health Centre	0.4
Local Centre	1.0
Energy Centre	0.2
Strategic roads (5% of housing / employment built form	3.4
Total built form	81.5
Strategic landscaping (25% of housing / employment built form)	20.3
Open space (40% of all land types excluding road and structural landscaping)	31.2
Total Land Take	133.0

- land take figure for employment uses now finalised at 11.5 ha

The extent to which structural landscaping and open space requirements will duplicate one another will be a matter for subsequent master planning. The figures above are therefore maximum figures and likely to be less in reality.

The PMB concluded that they would wish to endorse average density of 45 dw per ha in overall terms and a land take figure of 133ha and use to help determine potential options for the Urban Extension by ensuring locations have sufficient land in principle to accommodate the extension.

Constraints Mapping Analysis

Consideration of constraints has previously been considered within the draft Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal however it was considered worth re-visiting as a separate exercise to assist firstly as a more expansive geographical basis for decision making and secondly to confirm a satisfactory site can be found in the strategic location to be preferred for the Urban Extension.

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

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

A second stage is therefore required to prioritise constraints to deliver strategic land for development on the basis of the primacy of securing development for Yeovil. A decision is then considered appropriate not to apply lower priority constraints. Furthermore as these lower priority constraints are land extensive their removal as an inhibition to growth is expected to expose sites.

On this basis, stage 3 requires the removal of agricultural land and landscape constraints and 3 general areas with potential for development present themselves, North West, South West and an option to the north of Yeovil. These are shown in appendix G1. The northern option was discounted on the basis of remoteness and disconnection from Yeovil.

The downgrading of some constraints has produced a third multi site option. Whilst earlier analysis describes presents strong arguments against such an option it is felt appropriate to consider at this stage as the achievement of 2 options has already required compromise on constraints. This multi site option is contained on five sites and is shown in appendix G2 and is to be assessed against other options in principal, should the multi-option be put forward then an additional planning exercise will be required to establish the appropriate site for development and relevant land uses on individual sites to ensure sustainable Urban Extension will be realised. This would entail the requirement

for joint working with West Dorset. This will have significant time implications for the Core Strategy. The multi optional constraint like the other two does require compromising land on which landscape and agricultural land constraints exist.

The PMB concluded that the focus of further review of the proper location for the urban extension be a site to the north and west of the town and one to the south and west incorporating parts of the Council's preferred option and its Brympton and Coker area of search in the draft Core Strategy.

Further consideration of northern option for development

Members of the PMB expressed a desire to review the removal of the Northern Option around Yeovil Marsh. The original justification presented to Workshop 3 of the PMB stated that:

'Given the steep topography of the northern escarpment it would still seem prudent to locate any development at the foot of this hill to avoid the worst of the effects on the landscape. In avoiding the steepest points of the hillside, it could be argued that development is no longer technically contiguous with Yeovil although open space and strategic landscaping could be suitable in these locations. It is considered that the discontinuity to Yeovil, distance and proximity to the A303 make this site effectively a form of new settlement which is considered inappropriate for all forms of reasons focussed principally on lack of sustainability.'

A re-appraisal to provide a more robust set of evidence as to why a direct Northern direction of growth was provided.

The PMB concluded that the northern option (due north of Yeovil and to north of Yeovil Marsh) for the urban extension initial dismissal be confirmed

Advantages of scale; one extension or several

The advantages of scale and one over several sites were presented in detail to Members of the Project Management Board to decide whether 1 urban extension or several multi sites should be pursued. Assessment undertaken of the relative merits demonstrates the case for one Urban Extension. The key benefits were considered to be: -

- Better access for residents to jobs and facilities
- better CO2 reduction performance and cheaper energy
- more sustainable transport
- and potentially a cheaper overall cost for development

The PMB concluded to endorse preference for one site over a multi-site option.

Wider Planning Issues: Sustainability Appraisal of Options

An assessment of the 3 emerging options above against the Sustainability Assessment objectives, derived from the Sustainable Community Strategy, presents a clear case for determining a preferred location for growth. Key determining factors relate to accessibility to services, effects of traffic (traffic congestion) and reducing the contribution to climate change (renewable energy opportunities).

Additional considerations relate to infrastructure and development costs of options,

market capacity and ability to deliver the required dwellings on the urban extension up to 2028 and land availability in terms of landowner and developer intent.

The outcome of the Sustainability Appraisal presented to PMB (workshop 3) is a firm recommendation to develop the South and West Option because it:

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

The third option of several sites does not perform well in the Sustainability Appraisal and furthermore raises the prospect, if chosen, of additional work not previously required to establish that sustainable communities can be delivered on 2 or up to 5 sites.

It is considered that the South and West Option can deliver the required urban extension provision within the plan period to 2028, and there is evidence of substantive landowner and developer interest in the South and West option (and more so than in the North West option).

Recommendation 11: *Endorse South and West Option as the location of the urban extension subject to final confirmation following consideration of traffic impact derived from all traffic assessment reports and infrastructure costs after review of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Amend policy YV2 accordingly*

Initial Siting (masterplanning) of Urban Extension

In accord with the Project Management Board wishes an attempt has been made to site a potential urban extension to the south and west of Yeovil through a rudimentary master planning exercise to see if the amount of land required can reasonably be located. The Conservation Architect and Landscape Architect have undertaken this in support of Spatial Policy officers and for both a 2,500 dw and 3,000 dw extension. The outcome of this work for the eventually identified scale of 2,500 dwellings is set out in the plan attached to this report in appendix H that show both the potential development area and the appropriate limit to development and buffer area for the settlements of East Coker and North Coker.

The main implication is that an urban extension of 2,500 dw and associated employment and other land uses can be accommodated within the south and west quadrant of Yeovil (an amalgamation of parts of the draft Core Strategy Preferred Option of East Coker, Keyford and Barwick and the Brympton and Coker option to the south west). The

accommodation is possible without impinging on key local landmarks and constraints and without adversely affecting the overall setting of East Coker.

The initial siting exercise can only be used in an indicative way as the Core Strategy is seeking to establish a direction of growth not a strategic allocation however the boundary of built form and the broad clarification of direction of growth enables a refined direction of growth to be drawn on the Yeovil Insert the Proposals map. Whilst not part of the main masterplan area an area of land adjacent the Watercombe Lane and A30 junction was recognised in early masterplan work to have development potential and is shown as part of the Direction of growth.

Recommendation 12: *Endorse amended proposals map for Yeovil showing a revised direction of growth for the Yeovil Urban extension to the South and West of Yeovil (as shown on the amended plan in the map section)*

Buffer Zone for East Coker and North Coker

The PMB in considering the urban extension and the appropriate location for it took the view that in order to prevent co-alescence and preserve the character of the settlements of North and East Coker a buffer zone would be required to be defined. This would need to be justified and with an appropriate supporting policy and supporting text expanding on the justification. This conclusion was the subject of further consideration by PMB in two workshops (9 and 10). The upshot of these was a recognition that the purpose of the East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone is to provide a defined boundary to Yeovil's growth to the south and west of the urban extension to prevent the coalescence of the village of North Coker and part of East Coker and protect the historic environment in this location.

The 'East Coker & North Coker Buffer Zone' will act as a definitive boundary to development providing the community with reassurance that key landscape and historic features beyond this edge are protected and will not be compromised. The 'East Coker & North Coker Buffer Zone' should not be considered an area of constraint to all development as landscaping / green infrastructure proposals can benefit the natural environment and setting of nearby villages and should be encouraged where appropriate. Similarly all existing dwellings within the 'Buffer Zone' will retain their permitted development rights.

The proposed 'East Coker & North Coker Buffer Zone' seeks to perform the role of a strategic gap, which is to:

- Protect the setting and separate identity of these settlements, and to avoid coalescence;
- Retain the existing settlement pattern by maintaining the openness of the land; and
- Retain the physical and psychological benefits of having open land near to where people live.

A specific area shown on plan (appendix I) was endorsed by the PMB with clarification that 40% of land within the developable area be Greenfield and clarification that the identified built development edge was the limit to built development southwards and

westwards. The buffer zone goes further in moving the limit to development eastwards and northwards than the original masterplan reflecting site specific matters.

Recommendation 13: *That the East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone as shown in appendix I and on the Yeovil Proposals Inset Plan be endorsed and a new policy be presented.*

Traffic Modelling and its implications

A draft of the 3rd version of the Yeovil transport modelling study (produced by the consultants 'Parsons Brinckerhoff') was presented to Area South and all Members on October 13th 2011, and the final report was published in January 2012. This study has assessed 10 different options for the proposed Yeovil urban extension. In addition, a 'Highways Infrastructure Requirements for Yeovil urban extensions' report has been produced that assesses the preliminary cost estimates of the various options for the proposed Yeovil urban extension.

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

- There is generally limited difference between the options and so the traffic impact in considering the location of the urban extension is not as great as was previously thought. The 3rd study shows that background traffic growth (from growth in car use and growth in the size of Yeovil) is the main contributor to deterioration of the highway network performance.
- The successful implementation of sustainable travel at any location would mean less impact on the road network.
- All option locations have similar levels of traffic impacts across the whole Yeovil road network, but would cause some localised impacts in the vicinity of the location in question.
- Whilst the North West option has a similar traffic impact as the South and West option in general, 'eco town' standards (50% of travel by non-car means) cannot realistically be achieved in the NW and without these standards the option is less favoured. There is a likelihood of an increase in car-based travel if the NW option is pursued due to its relative remoteness (around 6km from the town centre), there are no bus routes near or adjacent the site, and it is poorly connected to walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Location options in the south of Yeovil are the only areas that are considered to have the potential to provide realistic opportunities for non-car based travel, due to being relatively close to the town centre (approx 2km), and the relatively flat terrain within the site will help to encourage walking / cycling (although it is recognised that Hendford Hill is a discouragement for such links to the town centre).
- The reduced scale urban extension development has greater transport impacts than the larger scale development in similar areas south of Yeovil, despite the overall level of development at Yeovil being the same for all option and scenario tests. This finding is of value as it shows that concentrating the development would have merits in transport terms.
- The Highways Agency have indicated that they would have *"significant and serious concerns about a proposal for direct access on to the A3088 Cartgate link because of its potential to have direct and detrimental impact on the operation of Cartgate Roundabout and traffic flows on the A303 on this part of the network."* In previous

consultation, the Highways Agency have stated that Yeovil's urban extension should be located as far away from the A303 as practicable, and supported the southern option for the urban extension in principle subject to the emergence of more detailed proposals.

- In terms of provisional cost estimates of strategic highways infrastructure, the South option is cheapest at £2m whilst the NW option incorporating a link onto the A3088 is most costly at £9.4m. The NW option without the link would be £7m (although Somerset County Council have indicated that such a major amount of development solely to be accessed off Thorne Lane would not be acceptable).
- All the various options can be accommodated by the Cartgate Roundabout, and do not indicate a major cost implication in terms of the scale of growth envisaged for the Yeovil area, although this may need to be verified by further work subsequent to the decision on the urban extension.
- There will be a noticeable adverse local traffic impact on Hendford Hill and Watercombe Lane from an urban extension to the south and west. There will be a similar adverse impact on Western Avenue should a north west option for growth be decided upon. Mitigation of such local impact is more realisable in relation to the development to the south and west of Yeovil rather than to the north and west.
- The traffic model assumes the improvement works proposed for the Western Avenue are completed by 2026. There is a risk that this will not be the case with a resultant increase in traffic load on Western Avenue should the Urban Extension be located to the North West.

Overall, given the baseline congestion that is forecast by 2026, there will be a general requirement for traffic demand management measures and highway infrastructure improvements across Yeovil whichever option is chosen, with several key junctions requiring attention as demand exceeds capacity leading to queues and delays. In this regard, the emerging preferred option to the south of Yeovil, which is capable of achieving eco town travel standards, is considered better in traffic terms than those other options where eco standards cannot reasonably be achieved (including options to the north west).

Recommendation 14: *Retain South and West option for the location of an urban extension as it has the best potential to achieve sustainable travel aspirations, and a much lower estimated provisional cost of strategic highways infrastructure.*

Implications of Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Opportunity has been taken within the context of the IDP to cost the infrastructure required for the preferred option for the urban extension against an emerging option to the north west of the town (from both the constraints mapping exercise and the representations received). The findings of the IDP were that

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

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

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

7.9 The study has identified that the direct costs of the urban extension have a significant impact on its development viability, but that this can be addressed to ensure delivery. The overall cost of the Council's southern option is cheaper and this has therefore been included within the schedule. "

Recommendation 15: *Retain the preferred option location to the south and west of Yeovil as the location for the urban extension.*

Review of Eco Town Status

It is felt that the Government's review of the Code 6 Zero Carbon Standard for dwellings is less onerous and cheaper to deliver standard and moves the goalpost and that there is little rationale in providing more aggressive standards in the urban extension which would be at a cost to occupiers and developers alike. However all other outputs of the Eco Town should be pursued and specifically:

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

Recommendation 16: *Maintain aspirations to achieve Eco Town Standards in the urban extension with the exception of construction standards beyond the Government's newly proposed Code and present these in the Core Strategy in the light of the Government's intended withdrawal of current eco town guidance.*

3.2 Market Towns - Direction for development

Having established the status and scale of growth for Yeovil and the Market towns the Core Strategy seeks for Yeovil (see above) and the market towns only to establish strategic directions for growth and in the case of Chard, where further work has been undertaken by Consultants, an actual strategic allocation. The representations on directions of growth are considered below

3.2a Chard - Direction for development

The Draft Core Strategy considered four options for the future growth of Chard based on the Chard Regeneration Plan;

- Option 1 - Town Centre Regeneration,
- Option 2 - Eastern Growth Area (part),
- Option 3 - Eastern Growth Area (Full Build Out),
- Option 4 - Growth to Natural Limits.

Option 3 was chosen as the preferred option. Policy CV1 therefore allocates land at Chard for a strategic allocation to be delivered within the plan period and beyond including approximately 3207 dwellings, approximately 17.14 hectares of employment land, 2 new primary schools, 4 neighbourhood centres, highway infrastructure and improvements and sport and open space provision. Policy CV2 identifies that 2191 of those dwellings, 13 hectares of employment land, 1 new primary school, 2 neighbourhood centres and sports and open space provision will be delivered within the plan period with the remainder coming forward later. To ensure that infrastructure is delivered to support growth, development phases are expected to be delivered in the order set out in the Chard Implementation Plan. Any deviation those phases should be justified and it should be demonstrated that the proposal will not compromise delivery of the total growth.

Key issues to arise out of the consultation process surround the deliverability of the strategic allocation, impact on the highway network and the non-inclusion of land at Mount Hindrance and Snowdon Farm in the preferred Option.

Commentary

The Council has sought specific advice and expertise to assist in facilitating the delivery of the strategic allocation. A Delivery Team headed by the Economic Development Manger was set up and a market brief prepared to invite 'expressions of interest' from appropriate developers together with a request for Specialist Economic Regeneration advice to ensure that the implementation of the Chard Eastern Development Area. Consultant's Thomas Lister were appointed.

In relation to the Chard Eastern Development Area both the Chard Regeneration Plan and Implementation Plan show how the roads within the strategic allocation could be set out and delivered in a phased approach that would minimise the impact on traffic flows within the rest of the town. The key driver of the phasing is the need to incrementally increase the capacity of the highways infrastructure to accommodate increased traffic as the town grows, in particular to relieve the Convent Signals Junction (Furnham Road / Fore Street / East Street). The phasing scheme suggested by LDA seeks to bring forward development in a number of phases in which the need for major upfront investment is minimised and, where possible, positive cash flow is maintained.

It is considered that the LDA Consultant's work and that of the Chard Project Board establishes overall viability and a governance framework to address implementation concerns in the long term. The key to delivery is seen to be commencement of Phase II of the allocation identified by LDA Consultants for some 446 dwellings, 1.24 ha of employment land, 0.43ha of retail and a link road between the A 30 and Millfield Lane. Thomas Lister consultants, working to the ED Manager and the Chard delivery officer team have sought to bring forward definite proposals for phase II with developers and landowners.

The Consultants have produced a Feasibility Report dated January 2012 and this is appended as Appendix J to this report. The key findings of the Feasibility Report are set out below:

1. The principle of SCC and SSDC seeking to deliver the Millfield Link, through acquisition of those interests necessary to provide the highways infrastructure. Identification of those enabling powers to be adopted would determine the lead partner.
2. Detailed research and investigations be carried out to confirm the viability and anticipated costs associated with construction of the Millfield Link in the location and design as identified in the CRF or some alternative suitable location.
3. Ensure that budgetary provision is made to procure an Environmental Impact Assessment, Acquire Land and Property Interests, Obtain Planning Consent and Procure Construction of the highways infrastructure.
4. The principle of utilising those funding mechanisms available to offset initial expenditure, considered most likely to be in the form of CIL contributions but with other sources potentially identified.
5. Seek to progress land acquisitions through negotiated settlements.
6. Seek to progress acquisition through the Compulsory Acquisition process in the event that negotiated settlements are not achievable within a reasonable timescale.

In short and in the absence of private sector take up over a number of years the Consultants advocate intervention by South Somerset District Council in order to make things happen and this would be by way of CPO proceedings.

This report was considered by the PMB which itself concluded on the feasibility work as follows:

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

In conclusion it was considered that a clear and workable mechanism to deliver the key immediate phase of the Chard strategic allocation has been established and in

recognition that there are risks in this a risk mitigation strategy is also proposed. It is considered that the Chard strategic allocation can be delivered if necessary through Council intervention and as such should be supported by virtue of the local support it has received and the benefits that it brings to Chard.

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

Whilst it is understood that the owner / promoters of the land at both Snowdon Farm and Mount Hindrance would want their land to be included within the growth proposals for Chard the combination of land use and phasing set of in the Implementation Plan has been designed with deliverability and viability in mind whilst trying to achieve the objective of delivering the Chard Vision. Neither respondent has demonstrated how their proposal will integrate with the rest of the growth proposals for Chard thereby putting at potential jeopardy the achievement of the wider vision and growth potential of the town.

The Sustainability Appraisal process showed that growth Option 3 presents the benefits of large scale of growth without the emerging disbenefits of undue traffic congestion and pollution

It has been noted that the ‘no development area’ around Holyrood School does not reflect the proposal of the Chard Regeneration plan, i.e. to relocate the football club to the north. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to amend the notation for the ‘no development area’ by deleting the existing Chard Town Football Club thus mirroring the Chard Regeneration Plan.

Recommendation 17: *Retain Option 3 presented in the Draft Core Strategy strategic allocation as a deliverable allocation.*

Endorse the findings of the Chard Eastern Development Area Feasibility Report including the principle that CPO powers should be considered to ensure the delivery of the Millfield Link road in Chard. This will be subject to a further report including any financial proposals, which will come forward once the Core Strategy Examination Inspector’s report has been received).

Amend the anticipated dwelling completion in the plan period for Chard to 1,861 dw (with a further 1,376 post plan period)

Amend no development area around Holyrood school to reflect Chard Regeneration Plan (as shown on the amended plans in map section).

3.2b Crewkerne – Direction for development

Provision is made in the draft Core Strategy for 1028 dwellings in Crewkerne to 2028, of these 1028 dwellings, 901 are already committed, including 525 which are part of the saved Local Plan allocation (CLR). This site received a resolution to grant planning

permission subject to completion of the section 106 planning agreement at Area West Committee on 14th December 2011 where the heads of terms of the agreement were also agreed. The additional 127 dwellings are considered deliverable through the Development Management process. Consequently unlike the other Market Towns, there is no new direction of growth to be identified for Crewkerne, as the location of the 'growth' has been predetermined by the planning permission resolution. This growth option has been reviewed and considered appropriate to retain as the preferred location for development.

Concerns were raised over the housing growth for Crewkerne, in that it relies largely on saved allocations. The objectors feel this is unnecessarily inflexible and would fail to be justified, effective and consistent with national policy tests of soundness. The objectors consider that it would be more appropriate to identify an additional larger housing requirement over and above commitments, to allow for a more responsive and flexible housing supply.

Commentary

The allocated site in eastern Crewkerne is a strategically significant allocation and is safeguarded as a residential key site under draft Policy HG1: Strategic Housing Sites. Area West committee have now made a resolution to grant planning permission subject to completion of the section 106 planning agreement.

Given that the allocation has been reappraised and planning permission given subject to final agreement on the section 106 agreement, it would be inappropriate to identify alternative land for significant growth in Crewkerne whilst the current application is being negotiated upon to secure appropriate section 106 contributions. A new direction of growth is therefore not needed and it is considered that the additional plus dwellings can come forward through the Development Management process, which has delivered, on average 50 dwellings per annum in the past (2004-2009).

In conclusion, given the commitment to the saved allocated site and the anticipated successful conclusions to negotiations on Section 106, no change is suggested to the proposed direction of growth for Crewkerne.

Recommendation 18: *No change to Policy HG1: Strategic Housing Sites in terms of Crewkerne (safeguarding the saved Local Plan allocation KS / CREW / 1).*

3.2c Ilminster – Direction for development

Three directions of growth were sustainably appraised to identify a preferred direction of growth for the suggested 332 new dwellings to be delivered in Ilminster over the Plan Period. These directions were:

- Option 1 - South East (Shudrick Lane)
- Option 2 - South West (Canal Way)
- Option 3 - North

The preferred direction of growth, following the sustainability appraisal, identified in the Core Strategy was Option 2, the South West, however, following receipt of the

consultation responses, it is clear that Ilminster Town Council favour Option 1 (Shudrick Lane), over Option 2 (Canal Way).

Commentary

When the direction of growth was previously considered through the Sustainability Appraisal Option 2 was preferred. The logic for this was based on the assumption that one comprehensive development may be able to 'afford' to deliver better community infrastructure than two schemes, and given the Town Council's desire to obtain much needed community infrastructure, this was considered to be a very influential factor.

Since the Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken, the Council has tasked consultants to explore the options for and against moving to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to deliver infrastructure. The recommendation in this respect is to move to a CIL (see below) and therefore the argument for one comprehensive residential development to deliver infrastructure, as opposed to a number of smaller schemes, combined delivering the 332 dwellings, is removed.

In considering the direction of growth further, issues have been raised regarding highways and viability. W S Atkins have been appointed to undertake an assessment of the capacity of the highway network to accommodate residential development at Shudrick Lane, and have indicated that the site can be reasonably accessed without undue impact on the road network nor requiring major off site works. Baker Associates have appraised the viability of the site as part of their CIL Evidence Base market assessments and the site appears to be viable.

Given the finely balanced nature of the Sustainability Appraisal in respects of Options 1 and 2, the potential changes that may be introduced through adoption of CIL, the support of the town council and the expectation that the south east option could meet the total housing requirement for the town it is considered that the preferred direction of growth for Ilminster be revised from Option 2 - South West to Option 1 - South East.

Recommendation 19: *Revise the preferred direction of growth to be Draft Core Strategy Option 1 – South East (as shown on the amended plans in Map section).*

Include a 'Direction of Growth' policy in the Core Strategy, which indicates that in Ilminster the direction of strategic growth will be to the South East.

3.2d Wincanton – Direction for development

Provision is made in the draft Core Strategy for the delivery of approximately 1053 dwellings over the plan period in Wincanton (703 already committed and an additional 350 dwellings to be accommodated). A minimum of 1.5 hectares of employment land is identified as being required. Four options for the direction of growth were considered with Option 1 on the western side of Wincanton extending to the north is identified as the preferred Option in the draft.

- Option 1 - West of New Barns Farm and north of Dancing Lane
- Option 2 - Hatherleigh Farm, south of A303, (for employment use only)
- Option 3 - Land at Wincanton Common, South of A303
- Option 4 - Land north of Bayford Hill

Option 1 - West of New Barns Farm and north of Dancing Lane

Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact of development on highways and social infrastructure, landscape, historic environment, amenity, flooding and level of housing need. Many respondents considered that the impact of existing commitments in Wincanton should be felt before considering more growth.

Option 2 - Hatherleigh Farm, south of A303, (for employment use only)

Concern was expressed regarding the potential impact of development on Great Hatherleigh Farm particularly in relation to biodiversity and flooding. Suggested that Development would destroy the integrity of the Royal Medieval Deer Park of Hatherleigh.

Option 3 - Land at Wincanton Common, South of A303

No issues were raised regarding this Option.

Option 4 – Land north of Bayford Hill

Concern was expressed regarding the potential impact of this option on the highway network, although the view was also put forward that this option is better related to the existing High Street and would result in a more balanced settlement.

Commentary

Following the reassessment of the levels of strategic growth required across the District in the light of the evidence in the Baker Report “Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil”, comments received and concerns regarding the area of land proposed for employment use; it is now proposed that the total housing provision for Wincanton is 703 dwellings which reflects the level of existing commitments and that Policy SS5 Strategic Employment Growth is amended to deliver a minimum of 8.61 ha of ‘B’ use employment land (3.61 ha of existing supply plus an additional 5 ha). As a result of this it was necessary to remove the existing options and preferred option for the direction of growth but to consider the specific spatial implications of employment use as opposed to mixed uses as originally proposed.

Option 1 remains the preferred direction for growth in Wincanton for employment purposes, as it includes the most appropriate location for employment growth in terms of accessibility to the strategic highway network thus minimising the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles on the rest of Wincanton. Locating the proposed additional employment growth to the south west means that the employment land will be well related to the uses on Wincanton Business Park resulting in a further concentration of employment uses in this area. It is considered that a more dispersed approach would be less strategic and may add to congestion in the Town Centre. The reduced size of the proposed direction of growth, as shown on the Plans set out in the Map schedule, reflects the change in the overall strategic approach. Its location to the south of the former mixed option reflects better road access and juxtaposition with existing industry. Consultation responses show a significant level of concern regarding the development of the land to the west of Dancing Lane in terms of impact on the landscape, topography and vehicular access. In view of the fact that employment growth only is now proposed, the south west of Option 1 provides the most accessible and logical area to be taken forward.

Recommendation 20: *That Draft Core Strategy Option 1 to the west of the town be retained but reduced in size and located to the immediate west of the employment site and New Barns Farm specifically as a preferred direction for strategic employment growth (as shown on the amended plans in Map section).*

Include a 'Direction of Growth' policy in the Core Strategy, which indicates that in Wincanton the direction of strategic employment growth will be to the south west as shown on the attached map.

3.2e Ansford / Castle Cary – Direction for growth

Three directions of growth were sustainably appraised to identify a preferred direction of growth for the suggested strategic housing and employment growth and were presented in the draft Core Strategy.

- Option 1: North of Torbay Road, and east and west of Station Road;
- Option 2: North of Ansford Hill and Ansford School; and
- Option 3: South of Ansford School & Solomans Lane.

Option 1 - North of Torbay Road . The overall Sustainability Appraisal findings for this option produces the most positive effects as it is well related to existing employment opportunities, the town centre and is only medium distances from both primary and secondary school provision whilst protecting the periphery landscape. Some negative effects are experienced from the loss of Greenfield land, noise & land pollution and impact on feeding grounds for bat populations.

Option 2 - North of Ansford Hill and Ansford School has several positive effect in its relationship with the secondary school and opportunities to link with the town's train station however this option experiences negative effects from the loss of Greenfield land, distance from services, noise & land pollution and impact on feeding grounds for bat populations and impact on landscapes of high value. For these reasons, this option is not a preferred location for growth.

Option 3 - South of Ansford School & Solomans Lane has many positive effects in terms of its relationship with Ansford School, the town centre, medium distance from primary School and health provision. Although negative effects are experienced from the loss of Greenfield land, noise & land pollution and impact on feeding grounds for bat populations.

The South Somerset Draft Core Strategy presented Option 1 as the Councils preferred location for development. Preference for this direction of growth is based partly on evidence presented in the Landscape Character Assessment that indicates that this area has a high-moderate capacity to accommodate built development. The Landscape Character Assessment suggests that land North of Torbay Road in Option 1 has potential for 4.5ha of residential land and 3.6ha of employment land.

Representations generally support the Council's preferred option for growth to the north west of at Castle Cary between Torbay Road Industrial Estate and Lower Ansford although general concerns have been raised about the potential loss of agricultural land for farming purposes.

Commentary

Ansford / Castle Cary is surrounded by large areas of Grade 1 & 2 agricultural land and all options would be located in areas of the highest Grades of agricultural land. This issue is not therefore considered a determining factor.

The Environment Agency note that the preferred option is subject to surface water flooding and suggest a strategic approach is taken for the site and that appropriate flood mitigation measures are included and that capacity exists within the network to deal with the extra run off.

As well as housing, Ansford / Castle Cary has also been allocated 3ha of employment land additional to commitment. Due to the preferred options location adjacent to the existing Torbay Road Industrial Estate it is considered that this location is also suitable for the required employment land allocation. Within this Option there will be a requirement for a distributor road to be provided to allow HGV traffic to access without undue impact on the residential area of Torbay Road, dependent upon the exact location of development. The County Council, as highway authority, have confirmed that this would be required and that a distributor road with a roundabout indicated at the junction with Torbay Road and a priority junction shown for Station Road would be appropriate and would be viable at the present time. Necessary arrangements would also be made for pedestrian and cycle access.

Discussions with the agent of the land in question indicates that a road linking Torbay Road and Station Road would be viable and could be provided

Given the Council's preferred option benefits from landscape capacity to accommodate built development and known developer interest in bringing forward a site in this area on a viable basis and incorporating an appropriate link road to enable better access to existing and proposed employment land it is recommended that this option remains the Council's preferred direction for growth.

Recommendation 21:	<i>That draft Core Strategy Option 1 to the north of Torbay Road, and east and west of Station Road is taken forward as the preferred direction for strategic growth at Ansford / Castle Cary (as shown on the amended plans in Map section).</i>
	<i>Include a 'Direction of Growth' policy in the Core Strategy, which indicates that in Ansford / Castle Cary the direction of strategic growth will be north of Torbay Road, and east and west of Station Road as shown on the following map.</i>
	<i>Incorporate the requirement for a link road between Torbay Road and Station Road to be achieved in association with the preferred direction of growth</i>

3.2f Langport / Huish Episcopi – Direction for growth

Directions for growth were not included within the draft Core Strategy (incorporating preferred options) by virtue of Langport / Huish Episcopi's proposed rural centre status at that time. However, the proposal to change Langport / Huish Episcopi from a Rural

Centre to a Market Town means it is necessary to consider potential directions of growth at the settlement.

As options for broad locations of development were not included, there were no representations on this issue at Langport / Huish Episcopi. Nevertheless, a specific site was suggested to the west of the town during the preferred options consultation. Given the lack of previous opportunity for comment on this issue, a meeting was held with Langport Town Council and Huish Episcopi Parish Council. Concern was raised at this meeting that the initially proposed direction of growth indicated possible coalescence with Wearne, and that flooding is an issue in the southern part of the land to the east of the settlement.

Commentary

The area to the west of the town was discounted as a direction of growth due to a lack of evidence of further land availability for development in this area, low landscape capacity, and high historic value with the presence of a Grade II* listed building. Much of the area surrounding Langport / Huish Episcopi has a high flood risk, which limits the potential for development – given this key constraint, two options were initially considered: Option 1 – north and east of Old Kelways and Option 2 – south of Old Kelways, area adjacent the railway line / cricket pitch and south of St Mary's Church (a combination of three areas). Overall, both options perform similarly in the Sustainability Appraisal; and there is evidence that land is available for development in both.

Recommendation 22: *Include a Direction of Growth policy in the Core Strategy that indicates a broad direction of growth for Langport / Huish Episcopi, encompassing locations to the north, east and south east of the town, with specific proposals within these options to come forward through the development management process (as shown on the amended plans in Map section) and to avoid co-alescence with Wearne.*

3.2g Somerton – Direction for growth

Three options for urban extensions to Somerton were proposed in the draft Core Strategy incorporating preferred options. The key sustainability appraisal findings of each option are highlighted below.

Option 1 (south of the town centre) – the close proximity of this location to the town centre brings several benefits through maximising access to existing shops and services by walking and cycling. However some travel beyond the town is likely to access the more 'strategic' facilities (e.g. secondary school). There are some negative environmental effects including impact on adjoining Conservation Area, landscape, bats / otters.

Option 2 (west of the town) – fewer negative environmental effects than Option 1, with less impact on flooding and landscape, biodiversity and historic interest. There is evidence of housing potential in this option. Distance to town centre (around 1km) may discourage walking / cycling to town centre for some, but there is closer access to local shops, primary school and employment opportunities at Bancombe Road Trading Estate. The bus stop on Langport Road offers potential to use the bus.

Option 3 (north west) – the general economic benefits that new development can bring are the same as Options 1 and 2. There is likely to be negative landscape and biodiversity impacts if the north west part of the option is developed, and there is no evidence that this part is available for housing. The distance of around 1km to the town centre may discourage walking / cycling to town centre for some, but there is closer access to local shops, primary school and employment opportunities at Bancombe Road Trading Estate.

Somerton received the highest volume of comments during consultation of any settlement apart from Yeovil, with a substantial number of these relating to the potential locations for extending the town. Option 2 (the preferred option) raised the most issues, and Option 3 had the most support.

Commentary

Option 1 should not be pursued due to environmental constraints, and due to a lack of evidence that the land is available and deliverable. The northern section of Option 3, where there would be a major landscape impact and there is a lack of evidence as to site availability, should be removed. But there is little to choose between the Option 2 and the southern section of Option 3.

Recommendation 23: *Include a direction of growth policy in the Core Strategy that indicates a combination of Option 2 and the refined Option 3 (excluding area north of Bradley Hill Lane) i.e. to the west of the town should be identified as the direction of growth at Somerton (as shown on the amended plans in Map section)*

4. Implications of Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset Report

A copy of the Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset Report incorporating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan was received and considered by the PMB at its workshop 11 on January 18th 2012. In relation to the emerging Core Strategy the IDP presents the requirements, phasing, costings and funding options for infrastructure required in association with development. Specifically the IDP has sought to:

- Highlight infrastructure capacity issues and existing capacity where possible, through the review of existing information and consultation with stakeholders.
- Identify the infrastructure impacts of additional development in generic and specific terms for main settlements and district basis.
- Illustrate the net infrastructure impact of new development and highlight significant issues.
- Provide information on the indicative cost of infrastructure.
- Identify public funding mechanisms and responsibility for delivery.
- Indicate which infrastructure is critical to delivery of development, which is necessary to establish sustainable growth and communities and which is desirable to
- Inform decision making on where growth should go and which infrastructure should be prioritised

From the report, it is evident that there are no overriding infrastructure issues associated with any of the proposed scale or locations of growth although there are differing cost

implications particularly associated with infrastructure for Yeovil's urban extension and the strategic allocation for Chard. The IDP database does give an indication of the phasing of delivery needed and this should be used to prioritise infrastructure projects in association with CIL or other funding. A brief overview of the main settlements is set out below:-

Yeovil

Yeovil's infrastructure requirements fall into two areas, that associated with growth of Yeovil within the urban area and that associated with the planned urban extension. To inform the appropriate direction of growth for an urban extension for Yeovil in terms of infrastructure costs, infrastructure considerations have been looked at for both an urban extension to the south as the preferred option and to the north-west. Infrastructure requirements and cost, where known, have therefore been included within the schedule of infrastructure for both sites even though only one would subsequently come forward. Clearly some of the infrastructure requirements would be common for any location of growth, such as schools, health centre, strategic sport and town centre highway improvements but there are some site specific works, mainly highways and utilities which do show a variation in cost. However, whilst there are some considerable infrastructure needs associated with Yeovil's growth there are none which would require any reconsideration of the location or phasing of the growth.

The cost of the infrastructure required for the urban extension is significant and it is clear that site viability, wherever the urban extension is to be located, will be an issue and significant external funding resources for infrastructure will be required. From the CIL report presented to District Executive and Full Council in February 2012, it can be seen that there is a recommended variation in the CIL rate to be applied to the urban extension at Yeovil (and Chard) as the result of need to ensure deliverability. Some of the infrastructure is critical in order to deliver the growth and timing will be key.

From the findings of the IDP, the preferred location of the Yeovil urban extension to the south will cost less from an infrastructure perspective and it can be seen that it is the physical infrastructure costs which make the difference (roads, utility services, public transport etc). This adds to and confirms the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal carried out as part of the draft Core Strategy that the location of an urban extension to the south is the preferred location.

Chard

Considerable detail on the infrastructure needs of Chard is known through the work on the Chard Regeneration Framework carried out initially by LDF Consultants with more recent updates by Thomas Lister Consultants. These have been factored into the database of infrastructure needed for the Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA) and it is clear that the critical infrastructure required is both substantial and costly. As a result the works at Chard, like Yeovil, would need to be prioritised for any funding if the growth is to be achieved in accordance with the trajectory. There is a decision to be made in relation to any CIL charge for Chard and whether the development can make any contributions to a CIL and still deliver affordable housing but it is clear that the cost implication of the physical infrastructure is substantial and that CEDA will only be deliverable if compromises are made or the infrastructure is supported in whole or in part by funding from external bodies in the initial stages of development. The infrastructure costs therefore, are most likely to require some form of initial public funding and furthermore it is likely that the developers would not be able to deliver 35% affordable housing and a full CIL charge in addition to funding the infrastructure and alternative solutions or compromises will be necessary.

In view of the benefits of the Chard Eastern Development Area (CEDA) to the overall growth proposed within the District it would be necessary to prioritise any funding for infrastructure to this area in order to ensure its timely delivery in accordance with the anticipated housing trajectory.

Other Market Towns

Ilminster and Castle Cary are the only other market towns, which have any identified critical infrastructure for delivering growth. In both cases the critical infrastructure identified are for transport (road) projects have had some initial viability testing carried out and it is expected that the developers would be able to fund this infrastructure as part of onsite S106 agreements for any new development.

The IDP identifies that infrastructure will be required alongside growth in all the market towns and this will need funding. It is anticipated that this will either be funded through onsite development costs or will need to be provided as part of the growth proposals as “necessary” but not “critical” infrastructure to deliver of growth. Such projects will need to be identified as part of an infrastructure plan for funding priorities but none of the infrastructure identified would prevent the growth proposed coming forward nor have any timing effects. Furthermore the IDP identifies in the case of all the towns bar Ilminster and Castle Cary that the identified infrastructure is non-site specific and would be required wherever the Market Town’s growth was shown. In the case of both Ilminster and Castle Cary whilst the road infrastructure is site specific the viability analysis has indicated that these two sites remain viable and so the additional cost associated with the proposed directions of growth for the two towns are not material in deciding where to recommend growth

The preferred options for each of the Market Towns as shown in the Draft Core Strategy therefore do not require changing as a consequence of the information coming from the IDP. The direction of growth now recommended for Langport / Huish Episcopi to the north, east and south-east as previously considered by PMB also remains unaffected in relation to the information within the IDP.

Rural Centres and Rural Settlements (Rest of the District)

Martock is the only other settlement that has any identified critical infrastructure. This is identified as fluvial flood alleviation, which would be funded by the Environment Agency through an on site planning obligation. Infrastructure requirements for the Rural Centres is non site specific and as no directions of growth are identified for these settlements there are no obvious implications as to where development can go and the levels of growth indicated for these settlements can be met in infrastructure terms. The infrastructure projects identified in other settlements, known collectively as the rural area, are those projects already identified in various capital programmes of infrastructure providers and identified deficiencies in leisure and open space.

The Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset Report (the IDP) is appended in full as appendix K. It is a statutory requirement that the IDP be placed alongside the Core Strategy proposed Submission document as an essential part of the evidence base for the document and Members are accordingly asked to endorse its publication.

Recommendation 24:	<i>That members endorse the Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset report for publication alongside the Core Strategy Proposed Submission document (appendix K).</i>
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5. Implications of Adoption of CIL and Interim Planning Obligation Policy

In April 2011 Consultants Baker Associates / Roger Tym and Partners both now part of Peter Brett's Associates were appointed in order to prepare an infrastructure Delivery Plan for South Somerset. The Consultants were also asked to review the Core Strategy planning obligations policy and recommend on the appropriateness of moving to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and they produced the "approach to developer contributions" report. As part of the consideration of the appropriate approach they also produced a report on Community Infrastructure Levy Evidence base that is essentially the Market and Viability Assessment required to help decide on adopting a CIL and what rates might be charged in a future Charging Schedule.

CIL takes the form of a charge per square metre (psm) of additional floorspace and can be charged on most new development. There are exemptions for charitable organisations and affordable housing together with some size thresholds for non residential uses. The level of the CIL charge or tariff is set by individual authorities based on the funding gap identified as part of the IDP but also tested against development viability to ensure that it will not affect the viability of all developments or adversely affect certain types of development or development in certain locations.

The Consultant's reports on the appropriateness of proceeding to a CIL approach within South Somerset and what potential CIL charging rates are to be pursued has been concluded and considered by District Executive and at the time of writing this report the Executive are advocating proceeding to a CIL to Full Council and using existing saved policy on obligations in the interim. In doing so relevant representations on the matter were taken into account.

A summary of the main recommendations is presented within this report for ease of comprehension.

The seven main recommendations of the Consultant's Approach to Developer Contributions report are set out below

- Recommendation - SSDC should implement the CIL
- Recommendation - SSDC should not consider an exceptional circumstances policy until the schedule has been in operation and if it appears that development proposals are not coming forward on the basis of viability.
- Recommendation - SSDC should reduce the number of policies (as currently set out in the draft policy) towards planning obligations. A single flexible policy should indicate the intention to implement CIL and the identification of other obligations that will be required.
- Recommendation - SSDC should develop realistic and deliverable policies. CIL is not able to fund all infrastructure requirements therefore other sources of funding should be identified or a review of proposed policy requirements should be undertaken to ensure that the Core strategy is deliverable.
- Recommendation - SSDC should prepare the CIL in line with the Core Strategy in order to minimise time lags and limit resource impacts
- Recommendation - SSDC should ensure that sufficient resource is made available to enable implementation as quickly as possible to minimise loss of CIL contributions

- Recommendation - SSDC should utilise existing policy and procedures to negotiate S106 agreements until the CIL is in place; taking into account the requirements to be more bespoke about its requirements and less formulaic.

With the exception of the third and fourth recommendation above all these recommendations are central to the issue of moving to a CIL approach for developer contributions and have been considered by District Executive in February. Recommendation 5 relating to resourcing has been addressed separately as a management matter and the last recommendation establishing how obligations will be dealt with prior to adoption of CIL has also been endorsed by District Executive.

Recommendations 3 and 4 above have not been addressed within the report considered by District Executive in February. These are specifically addressed in the subsequent section of this report and within the context of wider representations on planning obligations and the requirement still to pursue on site matters post the introduction of the CIL regime post April 2014 by planning obligations.

Recommendation 25: *That members note that the recommendations of the Consultants in relation to adopting a CIL, being resourced to deal with it and dealing with obligations through existing policy in the interim have been addressed at the District Executive and Full Council in February 2012.*

6. Planning Obligation Policy Post introduction of CIL

The Draft Core Strategy proposes to continue to seek S106 contributions for the provision of necessary infrastructure. The policies can be divided into specified planning obligations policies:

- Policy SS6 Phasing and Cumulative Impact
- Policy SS7 Planning Obligation
- Policy SS8 Viability

and location specific planning obligations policies

- Yeovil (Policies YV2, YV4, YV5)
- Chard (Policies CV1, CV2, CV3 CV4)

And topic area planning obligation policies which have been dealt with, where necessary, under their relevant topic areas:

- Policy HG4 Provision of Affordable Housing
- Policy TA1 Low Carbon Travel
- Policy TA3 Transport Impact of New Development
- Policy HW1 Provision of open space and outdoor playing space in new development
- Policy HW2 Provision of Sports, Cultural and Community

A number of representations were received to the general planning obligations policies, SS6 - SS8, primarily raising concerns that existing infrastructure is inadequate and new or additional infrastructure must be provided alongside growth, that the Council should move towards a tariff based approach to fund infrastructure and the need to ensure that

obligations are not so onerous as to prevent development coming forward (viability) and that the Council should seek other funding streams as development is unlikely to be able to fund all infrastructure in the future. There is also the need to remain consistent with both existing legislation, as set out in Circular 05 / 05, and emerging guidance on CIL. On the whole most representations supported the inclusion of obligations policies in principle where it meets the necessary tests, set out in the legislation and where projects are not rendered unviable.

In looking at the town specific obligations, most of the comments relate to the lack of existing infrastructure and little detail of proposed new infrastructure to serve any growth proposals. Specific comments are made in relation to perceived new infrastructure requirements. Some comments refer to the need for developers to fund new infrastructure and that a flat rate contribution would be beneficial and that all sites should pay rather than just large sites. There is also concern that money raised locally through S106 should be spent locally.

For the thematic policies, few directly comment on planning obligations although need for a roof tax or tariff and the need to combine planning obligations policies to a single policy are suggested. There are also concerns raised that affordable housing and nursing home schemes should not be required to fund the same level of obligations as market housing and that other uses than residential should also be required to fund infrastructure.

The introduction of a CIL would bring about a level of certainty for landowners and developers and allow for proper planning of infrastructure to support growth. CIL takes the form of a single tariff or roof tax which has been suggested and would be payable from most new development, not just the larger sites. Affordable housing and buildings for charities would not pay CIL, thus satisfying the objections raised in this respect. As recommended by the consultants, following viability testing of different uses, the proposed CIL would be charged on residential development and large format retail schemes at present time as other types of new development would not currently be viable with CIL.

Planning obligations will remain alongside CIL both for affordable housing and to cover those matters, which are site / development specific to mitigate the direct impact of a new development. A planning obligation policy will therefore be required in the Core Strategy to cover the provision of affordable housing and to make it clear that a planning obligation will be sought for site specific requirements for infrastructure and community benefits. This policy will also set out the intention to charge a CIL throughout the District to provide infrastructure of a more strategic nature and that this charge will apply to certain types of development although the detail of the charges and CIL rates will be covered in the CIL Charging Schedule itself. This approach has been used by other local authorities whose Core Strategies have been found sound and is an approach recommended by the consultants.

In terms of the impact on the town specific policies and thematic policies, minor rewording of Yeovil and Chard policies and supporting text may be needed to ensure that it is clear that the direct impact of any proposal will continue to attract planning obligations in addition to a strategic contribution through CIL. Policy CV3 is already recommended to be deleted (see below). The thematic policies remain relevant as they stand with exception of policies HW1 and HW2 which will need to be amended to be clear that planning obligations will be sought for mitigation of the direct impact of proposals and that CIL will be payable for sport and leisure of a strategic nature. Details of which specific proposals or themes will be funded through CIL will need to be made prior to the adoption of a CIL.

Recommendation 26:	<p><i>Delete Policy SS6 in light of proposed move to CIL.</i></p> <p><i>Include a revised planning obligation policy SS7 based on combining Policies SS7 and SS8 (Planning Obligations and Viability) in the Core Strategy to ensure the direct impact of development can be properly mitigated.</i></p> <p><i>Modify policies YV2, YV4, YV5, CV1, CV2, CV4 to ensure they reflect the need for mitigation of any direct impact through revised policy SS7 is reflected.</i></p> <p><i>Amend policies HW1 and HW2 to reflect need for planning obligations for mitigation of specific proposals only and to clarify that CIL will be sought for strategic infrastructure.</i></p>
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7. Major policy matters

7.1 Employment land

The majority of objections relate to the level of employment land attributed to certain settlements. The comments made fall into 4 broad categories:

1. Querying the economic projections, which underlie the policy.
2. Requesting that provision (either land and / or jobs targets) be made for non-B uses.
3. Requesting that a number of jobs be identified for each settlement.
4. Querying the distribution (and level) of jobs and housing attributed to individual settlements.

Commentary

a) Economic Projections

Since publication of the Draft Core Strategy, Baker Associates have reviewed the District's economic potential (Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil, February 2011). The report identifies the number of new jobs that could be supported in the District to 2028 (11,506 jobs) and these have been converted into a traditional employment land figure to update draft Policy SS5 (and account has been taken of the latest BRES data). There is therefore clear evidence to support the jobs and land provision identified in revised Policy SS5. The Consultant's higher estimate of job creation has been taken to establish job growth figures to reflect the Council's aspirations for the economy and to be consistent with the methodology used to produce housing provision figures.

Table 8 below sets out Policy SS5 and establishes a table of employment by settlement that reflect Baker Associates report "Housing Requirement for South Somerset and Yeovil" as updated and responds to Core Strategy representations on employment land.

b) Provision for non-B Uses

Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) marks a new departure in national policy, in that in its definition of economic development, it brings together all economic land uses, covering retail, leisure and public services (non-B uses) as well as the traditional employment uses (B uses).

Currently the South Somerset Employment Land Review (Stages 1-3) (ELR) and the South Somerset Retail Study Update are the two pieces of evidence base, which comply with PPS4. The ELR identifies the need for 'traditional' employment land (catering for activities which fall into the B Use Class of the General Permitted Development Order or GPDO) in Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres, whilst the South Somerset Retail Study Update provides guidance on retail floorspace capacity for Yeovil and the larger Market Towns.

Apart from retailing, the diverse nature of other non B-class use activities makes it difficult to generate a figure for the amount of land they require to the end of the plan period. Given the difficulties, and likely inaccuracies in calculating the amount of land required by non B-class uses over the plan period, it is suggested that no land is formally identified for this sector of the economy, but that the need for land is recognised through the identification of the number of jobs arising in the non B use sectors (see c below) and its location guided by the Development Management process.

c) Identifying the Number of Jobs

Identifying the total number of jobs to be delivered over the plan period, by settlement, will give a clear indication of the anticipated level of all economic growth that the Core Strategy is seeking to support, and will additionally address the concerns over the lack of consideration of non B-Uses. The number of new jobs is also an easy concept to understand by the public.

It is suggested that the distribution of new jobs be in line with past trends (Nomis 2006).

d) Distribution of Jobs and Housing across the District

The Core Strategy should seek to deliver balanced employment and housing growth, with employment taking the lead, to reflect the emphasis on economic-led development, as expressed by the withdrawn RSS. Additionally, in order to support economic expansion, a comparable level of homes is needed to support the growth of economically active residents. In basic terms it is suggested that the distribution of new jobs be in line with past trends (Nomis 2003 - 2010).

Recommendation 27: *Amend draft Policy SS5 as set out below (and relevant references within the Core Strategy text to reflect the economic projections arising from the Baker Report) to include jobs and floorspace targets for Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres. The distribution of jobs to be as follows - 50% (of jobs) to be attributed to Yeovil, 29% to the Market Towns, 8% to the Rural Centres and 13% to Rural Settlements (reflecting NOMIS evidence).*

Amend the employment land requirements in addition to existing commitments for Wincanton and the smaller Market Towns and Rural Centres to be as follows:

Wincanton – 5.0 hectares

Ansford / Castle Cary, Langport / Huish Episcopi and

Somerton – 3 hectares

Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon – 2 hectares.

No land to be allocated for non B use classes

Table 8 Policy SS5 Delivering New Employment Land (Revised 26 January 2012)

The Core Strategy will assist the delivery of 11, 506 jobs as a minimum, and approximately 618,180 sq metres net / 168 hectares gross of traditional employment land (Use Class B1, B2 and B8) to be directed to the following settlements for the period 1st April 2006 to 1st April 2028.

Settlement	Core Strategy 2006-2028 Total Employment Land Requirement	Existing Employment Land Commitments	Additional Employment Land Provision Required (total employment land less existing commitments) (As at April 2011)	Total Jobs to be encouraged 2006-2028 (numbers in brackets indicates jobs in traditional 'B' Uses as defined by the Use Classes Order reflecting the evidenced assumption that 66% of new job creation will be in traditional B uses)
Strategic Town				
Yeovil*	56.34	39.84	16.5**	5,750 (3,795)
Market Towns				
Chard*	17.14	17.14	0.0	1,036 (684)
Crewkerne*	10.10	10.10	0.0	507 (335)
Ilminster*	23.05	23.05	0.0	403 (266)
Wincanton	8.61	3.61	5.0	587 (387)
Somerton	4.91	1.91	3.0	288 (190)
Ansford / Castle Cary	13.19	10.19	3.0	254 (168)
Langport / Huish Episcopi	3.44	0.44	3.0	277 (183)

Table 8 is continued over the page

Rural Centres				
Bruton	2.56	0.56	2.0	909 (600)
Ilchester	2.02	0.02	2.0	
Martock	4.79	2.79	2.0	
Milborne Port	2.04	0.04	2.0	
South Petherton	3.80	1.80***	2.0	
Stoke Sub Hamdon	2.0	0.0	2.0	
Other				
Rural Settlements	13.86	7.86	6.0	1,495 (987)
Total	167.85	119.35	48.5	11,506 (7,595)⁷

* Yeovil, Crewkerne & Ilminster have strategic employment sites which are saved from the previous South Somerset Local Plan and Chard's strategic allocation based around Chard Regeneration Plan also includes employment provision, these sites combined equate to a total of 46.35 hectares, and this figure has been included in the overall floorspace figure cited in Policy SS5 above.

** within the 16.5 ha provision, 11.5 ha is expected for the Urban Extension reflecting the higher aspiration for employment provision here to potentially provide 1 job per household to meet eco town's aspirations

*** This figure relates to Lopen Head Nursery.

7.2 Yeovil Airfield Safeguarding

Agusta Westlands expressed concerns in representations to the draft Core Strategy in relation to prospective proposals for an urban extension for Yeovil in respect of the potential impact on safeguarding the Agusta Westlands (AW) flight zones. This prompted a series of meeting between the District Council and Agusta Westlands (AW) to clarify the representations and understand their technical basis and to ensure that the impact of new development would not compromise the safe operations of this important local employer. The consequence is the inclusion of a flight safety zone within the South Somerset Core Strategy. This proposed safeguarding area is shown on the Yeovil map in the Map schedule.

Flight Safety Zone Justification

In summary the following are key justifications for a safety zone being required:

- In order for AW to carry out test and development flying of both civil and military aircraft AW is required to operate from a civil licensed airfield to satisfy the regulatory process of the Civilian Aviation Authority as well as approval by the Military Aviation Authority in order to apply with military regulations.
- Although there are slight differences, the regulations are broadly the same and both require AW to have the aerodrome regularly surveyed to ensure potential hazards that may effect the safe operations of the airfield are removed or addressed. In particular this includes any hazards that would affect the departure of aircraft from the airfield.
- At present the lack of development to the south and south west of the aerodrome is not justification in itself for retention of AW's approval / licence but from a 'safety of operations' perspective a 'clearway' out after takeoff would drastically

⁷ Due to rounding of numbers they may not add up.

reduce the risks to the Aircrew and the surrounding environment from flying operations. Coupled with common sense reduction to risk the safeguarding map submitted with the representations is considered a defining factor in retaining future approvals / licences.

The proposed safeguarding map (as shown on the amended plans in Map section) indicates in red the safety zones that AW requires to be clear of any developments or buildings as far as practical. AW provided the following justification for these safeguarding zones.

- The safety zones are based on simulation work performed using a model, approved by the CAA, which is used to predict air craft flight profiles following an in flight emergency such as an engine failure at heights where a return to base is not possible.
- It would be dangerous to manoeuvre the helicopter other than by going in a straight line to maintain as much control as possible in bringing the helicopter down to the ground safely.
- The width of the safeguarding cone is based on practical experience and judgement of the pilot to provide as much lateral spread as possible to allow the pilot some limited flexibility to ensure a safe landing taking into account any wind or obstacles.

AW also highlighted the following additional issues for consideration in their justification:

- The South West area is the only area around the aerodrome, which has not been developed and is now the sole area in which helicopters can approach and depart the aerodrome safely in many situations.
- When there are unslung loads that need to be carried, this testing can only be conducted by departing and arriving to or from the south west as in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to jettison the load immediately and therefore the safeguarding zone is the only area where this can happen safely without risk to a third party.
- Development in the red zone would severely impact on the safe test flying activities of both current and future aircraft.
- AW does not own any other facility in the UK to permit such activities.
- Further development could create severe limitations on the planned development and expansion of the business at AW.
- Development in the red zone area would put at risk new programmes, which AW hopes to start.
- Absence of a safeguarding zone(s) would have a negative impact on a new business strategy that is being planned to provide a new maintenance centre for civil aircraft at the factory.

Commentary

It is considered that the justification submitted by Agusta Westlands provides a clear and reasoned argument for the inclusion of a specific policy that safeguards their flight safety zone from inappropriate development. Their letter is explicit in outlining the potential consequences of failing to protect this area from potential hazards when renewing their Civilian and Military Aviation Authority licence in which both bodies scrutinise flight safety. Their letter also outlines the potential consequences of development in this location on their current and future business interests that could again be seriously

compromised.

The flight safety zone has been drawn in a tight cone reflecting only the most dangerous point of take off and a margin of error corresponding to pilot judgement. Given the importance of Agusta Westlands to the Yeovil economy both directly as a major employer and indirectly through numerous suppliers it is certainly in the District Council's remit to ensure continued business success in association with the airport through control of potentially hazardous development to their operations.

Recommendation 28: *That a new flight safety zone policy is introduced into the Core Strategy along with an amendment to the Yeovil proposals map. The policy will seek to secure that Development in the flight safety zone will be strictly controlled and limited to that which can be justified as causing no hazard to the operational needs of Agusta Westlands Aerodrome.*

7.3 Policy CV3 Chard Obligations

Whilst there was some support for this policy in terms of it's link to viability and other comments regarding detailed issues relating to contributions, as more details have emerged regarding the operation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), set out above, it has become clear that the tariff approach based on the Chard Implementation Plan and set out in draft Policy CV3 will not be acceptable.

Commentary

Although it is proposed that a small proportion of CIL funds will be directed locally; CIL priorities will be set at a District level and Policy CV3 is no longer necessary. Furthermore it is not possible under the CIL regulations to ring fence moneys from specific developments.

Recommendation 29: *Delete Policy CV3 and accompanying text.*

7.4 Housing Density

Whilst some representations were supportive of the draft Policy HG2 most respondents were concerned about having high densities and felt that sufficient flexibility should be provided within the policy to ensure acceptable forms of development can come forward based on the character and context of the area where the development was to take place.

Commentary

Since the publication of the Draft Core Strategy and the deletion of the minimum net dwelling density of 30 dwellings per hectare from Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) further research has been carried out into the issue of net housing density (including a sample survey of the approximate net densities of 38 areas within Yeovil, the Market Towns, Rural Centres and rural settlements) which demonstrates that there is a diverse

range of net dwelling densities within South Somerset. In order to meet the demands of the housing market and to accord with PPS3 there is a need to provide a mix of housing types and tenures at a variety of net dwelling densities, depending on the character and location of the proposal. Draft Core Strategy Policy HG5 seeks to achieve that mix of market housing type and tenure based on the evidence in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

National guidance (PPS1 & PPS3) is clear that to achieve the objective of sustainable development, proposals should make the most efficient use of land whilst considering the impact on the character of the locality, with higher densities being located in places close to facilities. It is recognised that developers will not seek to bring forward proposals unless they are economically viable which in turn would suggest that they would seek to make the most efficient use of the land at their disposal. In the light of the issues discussed it is considered that it is no longer necessary or appropriate to retain Draft Core Strategy Policy HG2.

The suggested end to policy HG2 and specific targets makes it important to make the link with the criteria identified by the government in PPS3 for determining density levels. These are set out in para 46 of the PPS3 and include:

- level of housing demand, need and availability of sites
- infrastructure and services available locally including open space
- efficient use of land
- Accessibility
- local area characteristics
- detailed design considerations

Recommendation 30: *Delete Draft Policy HG2.*

Amend Policy “EQ2: Design” by the addition of criteria and relevant supporting text to address making the most efficient use of land whilst taking into account local infrastructure (including green), site accessibility, local area characteristics and detailed design considerations. Add supporting text making the link to established density criteria in PPS3.

7.5 The use of Previously Developed Land (PDL) for new housing development

Policy HG3 seeks to provide a minimum of 30% of new dwellings on previously developed land over the period of the Core Strategy. This paper highlights the key issues raised during the consultation and outlines a response in the light of proposed changes to national legislation.

There were 10 comments made on Policy HG3, comprising 2 in support, 5 objections and 3 observations – the issues raised are set out below:

- The low target of 30% is unjustified and the policy should be reworded to reflect national policy, which states 60%.
- To propose this amount of greenfield building is madness.
- Agricultural land must remain as such.
- Unoccupied properties should be used before greenfield sites are developed.

- object to the unrealistic reliance placed upon brownfield supply.
- The policy needs to be supported by a continued supply of greenfield land.
- Support maximising housing development on PDL, but not at expense of promoting uncharacteristic high-density development.
- Imposing significant planning obligations on landowners within urban area deters promotion of brownfield land for residential purposes.

It was announced in the March 2011 Budget that “⁸the Government is removing the centrally imposed target specifying the levels of development that should take place on previously developed land.” However, the same document also states “The Government expects a very significant proportion of development to continue to take place on previously developed land.” With the proposed revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy targets are expected to be determined locally. In addition the removal of garden plots from the PDL category will also affect the proportion of new housing built on PDL.

Commentary

It should be recognised that PDL is a limited resource in South Somerset due to the predominantly rural nature of the District. A high proportion of development over the past few years has been on PDL but sufficient housing for the projected future population would require more greenfield sites. The Draft Core Strategy target of a minimum of 30% of new development on PDL was derived locally from figures for housing completions and commitments during the first three years of the Core Strategy period, and predicted levels of brownfield land use for the residual housing requirement up to 2026. The policy allows for annual review of the figure through the Annual Monitoring Report. Strong protection for the environment will be maintained through a local policy that will keep pressure on PDL development as a priority over greenfield.

Recommendation 31: *Retain 30% target policy for previously developed land.*

7.6 Affordable housing

There was some concern that the need for affordable housing is over stated. There was a desire to see the definition of affordable housing extended to include other types of housing and an ambition to harmonise space standards at the earliest opportunity following a statement by Minister for Housing stating that for the meantime the Homes and Communities Agency will continue to use existing space standards. Some questioned why a target of 35% was being imposed when viability evidence shows that as at July 2008 generally 30% is viable (as at July 2008 based on a threshold of 15 dwellings), and the viability update (April 2010) is 20% (based on a threshold of 6 dwellings).

There was both general support and objection expressed for the threshold of 6 or more dwellings. It was pointed out that national policy sets an indicative threshold of 15 dwellings, which was considered to be appropriate for Yeovil, Market Towns, and Rural Centres although it was also suggested that a higher threshold should be set in Yeovil and Chard. Concern was expressed that such a low threshold will lead to more open book negotiations taking place. Objection was made to the site size threshold of 0.1 hectares for all sites apart from Rural Centres and rural settlements.

⁸

The Plan for Growth, HM Treasury / Department for Business, Innovation and Skills March 2011

Commentary

The District Council has no control over the national planning definition of affordable housing (set out in Annex B of PPS3, 2011 and proposed to be carried forward into the National Planning Policy Framework). The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) shows that there is a net annual need for 659 new affordable homes in South Somerset. Given the Minister's comments it is considered that the Core Strategy should not only refer to the prevailing HCA standards but also make reference to any standards the Council may adopt in the future.

The 35% target is based on the level of need and reasonable viability as summarised by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). In order to address the issue of viability a Strategic Housing Land Viability Assessment (SHLVA) has been undertaken. The SHLVA identifies that when taking into account market conditions the maximum target justifiable on strategic viability grounds across the District generally is 30% (as at July 2008). The SHLVA Annex (May 2010) updates this original work and indicates that the target had reduced to 20% reflecting the worsening housing market.

It is the intention that this and future SHLVAs should be used to guide affordable housing provision negotiations and the evidence will be updated periodically, approximately every 3 years allows for a flexible approach that takes account of market conditions and likely timescales. Whilst this evidence will be used to inform negotiation it is considered that Policy HG4 should have a target that reflects the level of need as viability may improve over the plan period.

The affordable housing threshold of 6 or more dwellings arises from the recommendations in the Strategic Housing Land Viability Assessment Annex (May 2010). The Annex builds upon and draws from the original SHLVA. It assesses a further 8 small sites using the same methodology as the original study and updates the viability assessment for the original 6 South Somerset SHLVA sites by allowing for changes in price and cost levels since spring 2008. Despite the national indicative minimum threshold of 15 dwellings it is considered that this document provides the additional evidence required to justify a departure from the threshold of 10 recommend in the original SHMA particularly given the potential cumulative impact of the delivery of dwellings on smaller sites across the District. Given that larger settlements such a Yeovil and Chard are expected to deliver a significant level of growth over the plan period it would not be beneficial to set a lower threshold in those settlements and there is no evidence to support doing so. Where viability is an issue then the Core Strategy is clear that the Open Book approach can be used to negotiate an appropriate viable level of affordable housing provision.

The SHLVA Annex (May 2010) suggests that the corresponding area equivalent based on a threshold of six dwellings should be 0.1 ha (based upon 60 dwellings per hectare (dph)). The density research paper suggests moving away from setting specific densities for specific settlement types instead opting for a development management led approach. The research paper findings show an average net density across the sample survey of approx. 28 dph, with the imminent demise of the RSS and the move away from very high density flatted development it is considered that an area based on 60 dph may be optimistic it is therefore suggested that a corresponding area of 0.2 ha across all settlements would be more appropriate (based on a density of 30 dph). The draft National Planning Policy Framework (2011) supports local authorities setting their own approach to housing density.

The Government's recent introduction of the affordable rent model for publically funded schemes has required supporting text to clarify how the Council will treat this new model.

Whilst the financial viability work in 2010 showed smaller sites were unviable to accommodate significant affordable housing provision the undertaking of a market / viability assessment for the possible introduction of CIL enabled a context for review of this work. Baker Associates were instructed by South Somerset District Council to carry out a Small Sites Affordable Housing Financial Contributions Viability Appraisal to investigate whether it is feasible to seek a financial contribution from smaller sites accommodating 1-5 dwellings. A key objective was to include all residential development in the affordable housing contribution process, thereby capturing a significant proportion of developments that would otherwise be exempt, without threatening viability or reducing housing delivery.

The Small Sites Affordable Housing Financial Contributions Economic Viability Appraisal (2012) examined 11 model small sites in different locations across the district, reflecting different types of development at the upper and lower ends of the market and tested them at the equivalent of 5%, 10% and 15% on site affordable housing provision.

The results of the modeling shows that all sites are viable at 5%, 8 are viable at 10% and only 3 are viable at 15%. All village sites that were modelled are viable at 10% therefore it is suggested that in order to maximise the affordable housing contribution a 5% equivalent on site contribution should be sought in Yeovil and Market Towns and 10% in Rural Centres and Rural Settlements (5% equates to £20 per sq m and 10% equates to £40 per sq m), this contribution would be in addition to the relevant standard CIL contribution and would need to be reflected in Policy. Affordable housing provision is outside of CIL regulations and therefore the requirement to seek a financial contribution from small sites would be under Section 106 as a commuted sum. Affordable housing is exempt in current regulations from the limit for pooling financial contributions from more than 5 sites.

Recommendation 32:

Retain 35% target for affordable housing.

Agree threshold of 6 dwellings at which affordable housing target policy applies.

Clarify in text the nature and role of affordable rent.

Amend Draft Core Strategy Policy HG4 to show a corresponding area to 0.2 ha for all settlements as an alternative threshold for small sites.

Amend Draft Core Strategy HG4 by the addition of the following text: "Small sites below the threshold for a full affordable housing contribution will be expected, where it is viable to do so, to pay a commuted sum equivalent to a percentage of affordable housing provision on site as set out below.

Settlement	% of affordable housing provision on site	Number of dwellings
<i>Yeovil and Market Towns</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>1-5</i>
<i>Rural Centres and Rural Settlements</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>1-5</i>

Amend paragraph 8.34 by adding "or any standard subsequently adopted by South Somerset District Council." at the end of the final sentence.

7.7 Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show people

Clarification needed of potential impact of sites for Gypsies and travellers and show people on sites with national or internationally recognised designations for protection

Commentary

Clarification is needed that such designations preclude gypsy and traveller sites as they do other developments.

Recommendation 33: *Amend second criteria point of HG6 accordingly to protect national and international designations.*

7.8 Specialist Housing Provision for Older People

It has been suggested that a specific policy is required to address the needs of elderly people in the district.

Commentary

It is considered that given the ageing population of South Somerset there would be some benefit in having a policy, which specifically addresses the provision of specialist care housing for the older people. In order to maximise sustainability the location of such facilities will normally be directed towards larger settlements. In some cases there may be a need for a countryside location but this will need to be explicit and justified against normal sustainability criteria.

Recommendation 34: *Add the following additional supporting text to paragraph 8.43: after "Challenging" insert in order to address this need specialist housing options will be required this could include care homes, Extra Care housing and Continuing Care Retirement Communities.*

Add a new Policy to allow for provision of Care Homes and other specialist housing accommodation to meet an identified need. Where in exceptional circumstances provision is proposed in the countryside, the Council will require clear justification for its location taking into account the nature of specialist care required and demonstration that alternative sites are unsuitable and / or unavailable and the economic benefit of the proposal to the locality.

Clarify in supporting text the nature of extra care and continuing care retirement communities.

7.9 Henstridge Airfield

Area East Committee has raised the issue about planning for development in a coordinated and timely manner at Henstridge airfield. The current Local Plan contains a policy; ME / HENS / 1 as set out below to control further development at the airfield, which would unacceptably intensify the level of activity or significantly increase built development on the site.

“Because of its remote, countryside location, permission will not be granted for further development at Henstridge Airfield that would unacceptably intensify the level of activity or materially add to built development.”

Whilst rural employment is welcomed through Policy SS2, this must be of a scale commensurate with the location. Given the need to maintain a tight control over further development and traffic generation in the vicinity of the Airfield, this policy should be retained. A masterplan has been agreed in accordance with a resolution by Area East Committee on 13th May 2009 in order to guide future development.

Recommendation 35: *Existing Local Plan Policy ME / HENS / 1 continue to be retained once the Core Strategy has been adopted.*

7.10 Employment Land Safeguarding

Concern was raised through the consultation responses, that Policy EP3 was not strong enough to protect existing employment land, sites and premises.

Commentary

The draft National Planning Policy Framework recommends that local authorities do not safeguard employment land, however as stated, there has been a significant loss of employment land in recent years across the District (monitoring illustrates that between 1st April 2006 and 31st March 2010, 10.14 hectares of employment land has been lost to other uses and planning permission has been granted for 6.68 hectares of employment land to change use to other uses) and therefore to prevent the further loss and subsequent need to replace with greenfield sites, Policy EP3, which is aimed at safeguarding land, should be strengthened from the previous South Somerset Local Plan Policy.

Despite the Government’s suggested approach to employment land, given local concern, employment land should continue to be safeguarded.

Recommendation 36: *Amend Policy EP3 to strengthen the protection of employment land by refining the uses to which it applies (B use classes), introducing a clause that prevents change of use occurring if the alternative use is incompatible with the surrounding (industrial) and detrimental to the operation of the existing businesses in the area and simplify the criteria of the policy.*

7.11 Live / Work facilities

There is no proposed change to the draft Core Strategy however given that the current policy is not in accordance with national policy it is felt that Members need to be aware of this fact. There is strong local evidence that this policy does not and is not working within South Somerset and on this basis it is felt that the current policy within the draft Core Strategy that seeks to preclude live / work facilities should be retained. Wording of text should be made clearer.

Recommendation 37: *Retain policy EP5 of the draft Core Strategy and make wording clearer.*

7.12 Major new tourist facilities

Whilst there was support for the policy in general terms there was concern as to whether it was needed.

Commentary

There is considered to be no need for a specific major tourism facility policy as major tourism policy applications can be addressed through the more generic policy EP7

Recommendation 38: *Delete policy EP8 Major new Tourist Facilities but incorporate the text into Policy EP7 supporting text.*

7.13 Ilchester, Milborne Port and Stoke Sub Hamdon town centre boundaries and primary shop frontages

The settlements of Milborne Port, Ilchester and Stoke Sub Hamdon do not have Town Centre or Primary Shopping Area boundaries. These settlements are identified as Rural Centres, and therefore they require these designations.

Commentary

PPS4 defines Town Centres and Primary Shopping Areas:

- Town Centre: defined area of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses.
- Primary Shopping Area (PSA): where retail development is concentrated. PSA is used to define 'Edge-of-Centre' for purposes of the sequential test.

The approach to drawing up these boundaries follows the PPS4 definition, and involved site visits to each of the settlements. On site, a judgement has been made as to the extent of the area predominantly in retail / town centre use and a boundary drawn up accordingly.

Given that each settlement's town centre area is relatively small, the Primary Shopping Area and Town Centre Boundary, are considered to be one and the same, this is

representative of many of the retail boundaries in the South Somerset Local Plan (that are all currently saved).

The proposed boundaries are drawn 'tightly' around the majority of the building footprints. This is representative of the boundaries in the South Somerset Local Plan. Drawing the boundaries in this way will not impede further town centre development, but should serve to protect the existing town centre.

Recommendation 39: *Amend the Proposals Map for Ilchester, Milborne Port and Stoke Sub Hamdon to include the Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area boundaries (as shown on the amended plans in Map section) and re-iterate the relevant local plan saved policies (MC1–7 within the Core Strategy in relation to these three settlements)*

7.14 Sequential approach policy for town centre uses

The draft Core Strategy at present does not include a policy requiring applicants to submit a sequential assessment for planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre, this is because PPS4 clearly sets out the requirements. Consultation responses have highlighted how reinstating national policy is not good practice.

Commentary

Whilst the sequential test is clearly set out in PPS4 and duplicating the PPS in the Core Strategy is unnecessary, the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2011) which reinforces the sequential test, does make some fundamental changes (omits offices and states Local Planning Authorities' should 'prefer' applications for uses to be located in the town centre). In light of this, this section should be reworded to illustrate the importance of the sequential test in making planning decisions (being mindful of the emerging NPPF) without duplicating national guidance and a New Policy should be introduced to cover applications for main town centre uses, which are not in an existing centre. This approach, including suggested wording, is recommended in the South Somerset Retail Study Update 2010.

Recommendation 40: *Rewrite paragraphs 9.82 - 9.86 to prevent duplication of national policy, but to illustrate the importance of the sequential test in making planning decisions amend policy EP12 covering the sequential approach in detail.*

7.15 Retail Hierarchy

The draft Core Strategy Retail Hierarchy reflects the Settlement Hierarchy (Draft Policy SS1) and based on National Guidance and evidence from the Retail Study and the Settlement Role and Function Study, this should be revised.

The South Somerset Retail Study Update 2009 identifies Yeovil as the largest centre in South Somerset, followed by the town centres of Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and

Wincanton, and then Castle Cary, Somerton and Langport, followed by Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke Sub Hamdon – effectively a 4-tier hierarchy. Furthermore, when applying the PPS4 definitions of centres to South Somerset, it clearly confirms that the South Somerset Retail Hierarchy differs from the Settlement Hierarchy as shown in table 9 below.

Table 9; Comparison of retail and settlement hierarchy

Core Strategy Settlement & Retail Hierarchy	PPS4 definitions of Retail Centres:	Suggested South Somerset Retail Hierarchy:
Strategically Significant Town - Yeovil	Town Centres - principle centre in the Local Authority Area	Yeovil
Market Towns - Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Wincanton, Castle Cary, Somerton and Langport / Huish.	Market Towns - in rural areas there are likely to be Market Towns and other centres of similar size and role, which function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for <u>extensive</u> rural catchment areas.	Given that these centres are to serve an extensive rural catchment, the settlements of Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster & Wincanton
Rural Centres - Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke Sub Hamdon.	District Centres - groups of shops containing at least one supermarket and a range of non-retail services, such as banks and local public facilities such as libraries.	In the South Somerset context, this would be the equivalent of the smaller Market Towns of Castle Cary, Somerton & Langport / Huish Episcopi.
	Local Centres - a range of small shops of a local nature serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres may include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagents, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. In rural areas, large villages may perform the role of a local centre.	Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton & Stoke Sub Hamdon fall into this category for whilst some have a bank and public facilities, they only have a small supermarket.
	Small parades of shops purely for neighbourhood significance are not regarded as centres for the purposes of PPS4.	

In terms of retail / service function, the Market Towns (as identified in Draft Policy SS1 and Draft Policy EP10) should be subdivided into Market Towns and District Centres for retail purposes and Policy EP10 be revised accordingly.

Recommendation 41: Amend retail hierarchy in policy EP 10 to reflect two-tier nature of market towns in retail terms.

7.16 Locally derived Retail Thresholds Policy

Local authorities are invited, through the Local Development Framework (LDF) process, to set local thresholds for the scale of applications for edge-of-centre or out-of-centre development that will require an impact assessment. Without a locally derived threshold, impact assessments are required for planning applications for retail and leisure developments over 2,500 sq metres gross floorspace (for context Morrisons, Lysander Road, Yeovil has a total net sales area of 2,787 sq metres, whilst Asda is 3,325 sq metres). The draft National Planning Policy Framework retains this approach.

The research report, *The Impact of Large Food Stores on Market Towns and District Centres (1998)* showed that large food stores can have an adverse impact on market towns and district centres, but the level of impact is dependent on the local circumstances of the centre concerned. In particular, smaller centres, which are more dependent on convenience retailing to underpin their function, are more vulnerable to the effects of larger food store development at edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations.

In the context of the above, whilst most of South Somerset's town centres are reasonably healthy (they are well used locally and have lower or the same vacancy rates compared to the national average apart from Wincanton, Langport & Somerton which have higher vacancy rates) they are relatively small, and given their size, and in some cases, lack of town centre sites, there is a need to protect the range of retail, service and other commercial facilities within these town centres from inappropriately scaled proposals and reinforce through appropriate development, their vitality and viability.

There is no exact science to define a methodology for establishing the scale of a local threshold. Planning for Town Centres: Practice Guidance on Need, and the Impact of the Sequential Approach (2009) that accompanies PPS4 specifies that, in setting floorspace thresholds for requiring an impact assessment, important considerations are likely to include the scale of known proposals, relative to the town centres. Therefore the basis to establish a scale for each geographic area is primarily based on the existing size of convenience retail units in each settlement and guidance from the Valuation Office's definition of foodstores (which are used to set rateable value).

In Yeovil, the retail study identifies a capacity of 924 sq m net (equivalent of 1320 sq m gross) to 2014, rising to 4017 sq m net (5739 sq m gross) to 2026. It is recommended that on the basis of the existing facilities in Yeovil, its capacity and its role and function in the retail hierarchy, the national threshold of 2,500 sq m should be applied. This would be used in conjunction with the sequential test that would guide development into the appropriate locations.

The Valuation Office defines hypermarkets / superstores (gross internal area over 2500 sq m) and large foodstores (gross internal area of 750-2,500 sq m), they do not subdivide or categorise shops below 750 sq m. It is recommended that the floorspace threshold in the Market Towns be set at 750 sq m gross, in line with the Valuation Office classification of a large foodstore. Therefore any applications for proposed retail development in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations that are in excess of 750 sq m gross should be subject to a retail impact assessment. The justification for this figure stems from the existing units in the Market Towns and the proposed retail strategy for

these as suggested in the South Somerset Retail study. The study highlights the need to focus on the town centres and maintain a constant market share approach for convenience retailing. It warns that future proposals for out-of-centre retail development could soak up significant amounts of identified capacity and should be carefully considered in terms of the potential harm to town centres. The Lidl store in Wincanton is 933 sq m gross internal area and it seems logical that a store of this size be subject to an impact assessment and hence the need for a local threshold.

Given that the smaller Market Towns (known as District Centres for retail policy purposes - Castle Cary, Somerton & Langport) perform a lesser retail / service role, and their town centres may be more vulnerable to the impact of a large foodstore, it is recommended that the floorspace threshold for District Centres be set at a lower rate. Establishing this a threshold requires a common sense approach, therefore using knowledge of store sizes that are present across the district and the size of the District Centres, it is suggested that a threshold of 500 sq m gross would be logical. Whilst the Tesco supermarket in Langport has according to the Valuation Office a 1,540 sq m gross internal area, which is considerably larger than 500 sq m, 500 sq m is the equivalent of twice the size of an average Tesco Express (in the District), and given the role and function of the District Centres, it is important that the impact of anything of this size on the existing centre can be assessed and addressed if needs be, as the impacts could potentially be negative. It is suggested that this threshold also be applied to in-centre proposals as the Retail Study was unable to provide capacity figures for these settlements based on their small size.

The Rural Centres (known as Local Centres for retail policy purposes - Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton & Stoke Sub Hamdon) generally have a range of small shops of a local nature serving a small catchment area. These centres are even more vulnerable to the impact of larger scale services and facilities. On the basis of the fact that a Tesco Express is roughly 250-260 sq m, it is recommended that the retail floorspace threshold in the Local Centres be set at 250 sq m gross.

Recommendation 42: *Establish a retail threshold policy for South Somerset that seeks retail impact assessments at the national level (2,500 sq m) for Yeovil, 750 sq m for market towns (in retail hierarchy terms), 500 sq m for District Centres and 250 sq m for local centres.*

7.17 Presumption against Major new Regional Shopping Facilities

The necessity of this policy is called into question

Commentary

It is considered that it can sit equally as supporting text to policy EP10 that establishes the retail hierarchy

Recommendation 43: *That policy EP11 seeking the presumption against Major new Regional Shopping Facilities be deleted and incorporated into supporting text in draft Core Strategy policy EP10.*

7.18 Policy TA1: To include reference to Rail Freight

It has been suggested that greater emphasis should be given to the potential for rail freight in the Core Strategy.

Commentary

Increasing freight traffic by rail can reduce CO₂ and HGV traffic on the strategic road network and there should be a general presumption for the protection of the rail network for future freight use. Modern rail freight can be very effective when rail freight terminals with dedicated sidings and / or container terminals can be designed into developments that manufacture or distribute goods. However facilities for rail transfer are needed at / near the point of origin of the goods and at the destination and this and the nature of the goods should be considered in any feasibility. The locations and layout of the rail stations in South Somerset are not always conducive to modern freight operation. The resulting additional lorry journeys where they occur on rural roads would impact on local congestion and it's difficult to see how this could be achieved without additional major highway works in often-sensitive locations. Rail Freight is therefore much better targeted where suitable Rail Freight hubs can easily be constructed to minimise the need for road transport or enable easy road / rail interchange.

In respect of existing stations it is important to protect opportunities where there is realistic potential. Whilst this is the case at Pen Mill & Castle Cary stations, it is likely to prove difficult to achieve at other stations in the district.

Recommendation 44: *Amendment to policy TA1 to include reference to Rail Freight and encourage Rail Freight terminals where feasible.*

7.19 Policy TA2: Travel Plans

Draft policy does not include specific reference to Use Classes B2, C2, D1, D2 and Sui Generis uses

Commentary

It is important not to imply that these classes do not require travel plans, therefore it would be helpful to clarify this point. SCC's draft guidance on Travel Plans (Enabling Smarter Travel through Travel Planning in Somerset) contains appropriate wording (p.16) - "any development site with 25 or more car parking spaces or more than 1000 sq m of floor area could be required to produce a travel plan as a general principle, which all occupiers will be expected to take part in delivering. This is used as a basic threshold to negotiate and determine a requirement for a travel plan document for land uses not listed above. However it is considered that the expectation that all occupiers would take part is unenforceable and so reference to "all occupiers" taking part should be removed from the policy

Recommendation 45: *Amend policy TA2 to ensure it is applicable to all forms of development and Use Classes that meet the minimum thresholds of 25 or more car parking spaces or more than 1000 sq m of floor area but that reference to "all occupiers" taking part should be removed from the policy.*

7.20 Car Parking Standards

There was some support for the proposed flexible approach to parking standards. New housing development should include adequate off-street parking, particularly flats in Yeovil, as insufficient parking has caused on-street problems. It should be accepted that every household will have at least 1 car. Much can be achieved by being creative with parking provision in terms of design, locations, pricing etc. The need for high quality, secure and convenient cycle parking and suitable motorcycle parking should be noted.

Commentary

It is logical and appropriate to apply the Highway Authority's car parking standards in South Somerset. A draft update of existing standards has been received and it is considered that the more relaxed proposed residential standards and the more evidenced based ones for non-residential operational parking standards can be supported. A representation to this effect on standards has gone off to Somerset County Council already from the relevant Portfolio Holder following a member workshop. The timing of the Core Strategy process should allow this Authority to re assess their support for accepting Highways Authority standards in the light of receipt and consideration of the finally approved standards.

Recommendation 46:	<i>Pursue the current Core Strategy policy to apply the updated Highway Authority's standards but review this upon receipt of the finally approved standards.</i>
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7.21 Viability of Open Space Standards in Light of Open Space Strategy

The current proposed policy contains various standards for open space provision, which is considered to lack flexibility throughout the plan period. Whilst including the Standards allows easier reference without having to look at supporting evidence, excluding them allows a more flexible and adaptable approach. The Standards have been arrived at through application of Government Policy through the PPG17 Assessment. Existing Strategies that currently inform the Core Strategy are written to cover the next few years (i.e. Open Space Strategy is adopted up to 2015) after which they will be reviewed. The plan period covers the next 15 years. Including the standards in the policy binds those standards over the length of the plan period. Having the standards informed by separate documents allows for the opportunity to review individual aspects of those standards without the need to review the Core Strategy Policy, which will need to go through the full consultation process before it can be changed.

The majority of objections relate to the level of requirements for open space provision. The comments made fall into 4 broad categories:

1. Lack of published standards
2. Wording and requirements too complicated to understand
3. Standards not comprehensive enough
4. Does not cover provision of facilities without development
5. Requirement for types of development to contribute too stringent
6. Requirement for types of development to contribute not comprehensive enough

Commentary

PPG17 states "Planning policies should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. The information gained from this assessment of needs and opportunities should be used to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities." This is in line with the proposed approach to remove the actual standards from the policy and to make reference to the separate standards in the PPG17 Assessment. The full assessment of needs will remain within the PPG17 Assessment and the Core Strategy policy will support the provision of facilities in line with those needs.

Recommendation 47: *Remove the PPG17 standards from policy HW1 and HW2 and cross-refer to the Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment for Standards.*

7.22 Climate change

The representations received included comments about the 10% renewable energy target which was felt to be too inflexible, as this reduction in CO₂ emissions can be achieved using energy efficiency measures without the need to use decentralised and renewable energy technologies. Some felt that the sustainable buildings requirements (Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM) are contrary to national policy as there are no exceptional local circumstances to justify this, and there should be more flexibility to allow feasibility and viability to be assessed on a site-by-site basis. The Environment Agency felt that flood risk should be a separate policy to give it a stronger position, and should refer to the Exception Test; although there were also comments that the policy should be deleted altogether as it replicates national policy. Further detail was also requested on biodiversity issues.

Commentary

The Government's 'energy hierarchy' does prioritise energy efficiency, and Building Regulations relate to CO₂ reductions rather than renewable energy. However renewable and low carbon technology should still be supported, although some clarity would be useful in relation to Building Regulations requirements. The Code for Sustainable Homes requirements correspond to the energy standards that would be required regardless through changes to the Building Regulations – the proposed amendments to the definition of 'zero carbon' should be reflected when finalised. As worded, the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM will only be required unless it is proven not to be feasible or viable. It is not agreed that simply moving flood risk to a separate policy would give it a stronger policy position, although some further 'local' detail and reference to the Exception Test should be added. Biodiversity is covered specifically in Policy EQ3 – some cross-reference would be useful.

Recommendation 48: *Clarify that 10% renewable and low carbon energy target is in addition to Building Regulations requirements.*

Await further confirmation of 'zero carbon' definition from Coalition Government – amend to Code for Sustainable

Homes level 5 rather than 6 in light of proposals.

Add reference to flooding Exception Test, and further detail on the application of the Sequential Test.

Add detail on biodiversity and cross-refer to specific biodiversity Policy EQ3.

7.23 Additional Policy Changes

Policy YV2

Primary Care Trust sought mention in policy of need for medical facilities within the urban extension.

Commentary

This representation reflects the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Recommendation 49: *Refer to need for medical facilities as part of the land requirement for the urban extension.*

Policy YV4 (and Policy CV4)

Representations from Somerset County Council wish to remove the restriction on the seeking of the provision of cycle and pedestrian route facilities solely within 400m of a development site from prospective developers in Yeovil and Chard.

Commentary

It is proposed to accept this amendment that makes for greater potential to seek provision further afield as conditions suit to link development to wider cycle and pedestrian routes in existence.

Recommendation 50: *Amend policy by removal of the 400-metre restriction to seeking appropriate provision of cycle and pedestrian links to development.*

Policy YV5

Concerns raised regarding need for adequate parking in the urban extension despite its eco status.

Commentary

It is recognised that a limitation to car parking provision in the urban extension would be at odds with the emerging Somerset County Council car parking strategy that is recommended for acceptance as part of the Core Strategy and which shows less restrictive residential parking standards.

Recommendation 51: Amend policy by deleting the word “limited” from the 4th bullet point of the policy.

Policy HG7

Replace word scale with size.

Commentary

Accept representees view that size is the appropriate word to use.

Recommendation 52: Amend policy HG7 by replacing “scale” with “size”.

Policy HG 8

Reference should be made for completeness to potential impact of dwellings on landscape character, visual amenity and ensure no adverse impact on AONBs.

Commentary

An appropriate change.

Recommendation 53: Amend policy HG8 by reference to landscape character, visual amenity and AONBs.

Policy EP2

Reference to other out of town centres was unnecessary and misleading.

Commentary

Agreed.

Recommendation 54: Remove reference to other out of town centres (bullet three).

Policy EP4

Conflict between EP3 and 4 brought to attention in that EP4 addressing conversion or re use of buildings in the countryside is less prescriptive than EP3 in safeguarding employment land. Also clarification of third bullet by adding reference to buildings being extended as well as converted

Commentary

Points are well made.

Recommendation 55: *Revise EP4 so as not to contradict EP3 and add the words “or extension” after “conversion” in third bullet point.*

EP7

Wording should be simplified in relation to national directive for protection of countryside and encouraging tourism in existing buildings where possible

Commentary

Points well made.

Recommendation 56: *Amend policy to be simpler and refer to promotion of tourism in existing buildings.*

EP9

Wording of 2nd bullet re protecting internationally designated sites should be expanded to include nationally designated sites for wildlife and landscape

Commentary

Point well made.

Recommendation 57: *Amend policy to protect nationally designated wildlife sites and landscape sites also.*

Policies EP10 – 14 – retail policies

All should be amended to reflect Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) and especially regarding other town centre uses being referred to.

Commentary

Points well made and are appropriate updating following publication of final PPS4.

Recommendation 58: *Amend policies EP10 – 14 (note EP11 recommended for deletion elsewhere) to incorporate references as appropriate to PPS4.*

Policy EP15

Make clear that the centres to which is refers are neighbourhood centres in terms of PPS4 terminology.

Commentary

Point well made

Recommendation 59: *Amend wording and title to clarify that the policy applies to neighbourhood centres.*

Policy EP16

Cultural facilities should be added to those, which the policy seeks to protect.

Commentary

Point well made.

Recommendation 60: *Add cultural facilities to the facilities being protected.*

Policy TA 1

16 amp not 13 amp charging points are now the norm. Clarity should be given of how Green travel vouchers should be operated and the policy should apply to a wider list of land uses.

Commentary

Points well made.

Recommendation 61: *Amend ref to 13 amp-charging points to 16 amps and clarify policy on how green travel vouchers should be operated and on which land uses.*

Policy TA3

Minor clarification of wording requested.

Commentary

A grammatical correction.

Recommendation 62: *Accept clarification to improve grammatical structure of the policy.*

Policy HW4

Policy objectives need to be amended to be clearer.

Commentary

Minor clarification.

Recommendation 63: *Amend policy to clarify objectives.*

Policy EQ3

Need to ensure that habitats used by bats and other wildlife are maintained and landscape designations of importance are suitably protected.

Commentary

Relevant points in context of Bracket's Coppice Special Conservation Area in particular.

Recommendation 64: *Add an additional bullet to the policy to ensure that the habitat features that are used by bats and other wildlife are maintained so that the design of development does not cause severance or is a barrier to movement and ensure that relevant wildlife and landscape designations are protected.*

Policy EQ7

Policy should have stronger reference to protection of landscape character.

Commentary

Point well made.

Recommendation 65: *Amend policy to provide stronger reference to wildlife and landscape designations.*

8. Drafting of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document

Upon confirmation of the PMB's recommendations by District Executive and Full Council the final wording of the actual Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document can be concluded. In order to progress rapidly to the next stage of the public consultation process it is proposed that the members delegate the final wording of the document, its presentational style, graphics and maps to the PMB.

Recommendation 66: *That Members delegate to PMB approval of the revised content of the Core Strategy prior to and for public consultation as the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document*

9. Sustainability and Appropriate Assessment

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) involves the identification and evaluation of the impacts of the Core Strategy upon social, economic, and environmental objectives – i.e. its compatibility with the three strands of sustainable development. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Core Strategy must be subject to SA. This incorporates the requirements of European law.⁹ An SA report was published for consultation alongside the draft Core Strategy (incorporating preferred options) in October 2010. This included the SA outcomes of the preferred options policies, directions of growth at the main settlements, and options for the distribution of development across the District.

Over 80 comments were made specifically on the Sustainability Appraisal report, the vast majority of which concerned the proposed Yeovil urban extension. The general comments included: development should be spread throughout the district as this would negate the need for urban extensions and the consequent adverse effects on the main towns; the SA does not comply with the necessary regulations; and a lack of discussion of different types of effect and evidence to justify the findings. There were also comments on the appraisal of the directions of growth at Chard, Crewkerne, Wincanton and Somerton. As previously explained, in response to comments received further SA work was carried out to assess the effects of proposing both higher and lower proportions of development at Yeovil which informed the final decision on the scale of growth appropriate for Yeovil. The other comments will be used, as appropriate, in undertaking the SA of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission plan. It is considered that there are no substantive objections that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated in the development of revised policies and proposals.

The Sustainability Appraisal report will be written up consistent with statutory requirements, including the key findings of the Core Strategy policy appraisal and any recommended mitigation measures to improve the sustainability of the policies. As with the Core Strategy 'Proposed Submission' plan, it is considered appropriate that the SA report be delegated to Project Management Board for approval, followed by Full Council. This is a practical approach given that the Sustainability Appraisal actually informs the detailed wording of policies and proposals.

Recommendation 67: *Consideration of the SA report is delegated to the PMB for approval in association with the detailed Core Strategy Proposed Submission text.*

European law also requires Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), in order to assess the potential impacts of development upon 'European' designations and ensure there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on these sites. Therefore, an assessment of the Core Strategy policies upon the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area / Ramsar, and Bracket's Coppice Special Area of Conservation (located south west of Crewkerne, just outside the District) has been carried out. The Somerset Levels and Moors HRA was published for consultation alongside the Core Strategy.

The RSPB submitted a comment disagreeing that recreational pressure is currently low, as stated in the Somerset Levels and Moors HRA, because part of the site experiences high levels of disturbance, and mitigation measures should be included in the Core Strategy to reduce recreational pressure on the Somerset Levels and Moors SPA /

⁹ Directive 2001 / 42 / EC, transposed into UK law by the SEA Regulations 2004.

Ramsar. However, statutory consultees at Natural England and the County Ecologist did not share these concerns, and the recommendation is not to agree with RSPB objections to the findings of the HRA, subject to final confirmation by consultants who will be reviewing the HRA to be undertaken to inform the 'Proposed Submission' Core Strategy. This would include clarification with Natural England and the County Ecologist that levels of disturbance are currently low, and resolving the difference in opinion between the RSPB and Natural England and the County Ecologist.

Recommendation 68: *The objections of RSPB to the HRA are not accepted and the HRA report to accompany the final revised publication plan is delegated to Project Management Board for approval in association with the detailed Core Strategy Proposed Submission text.*

10. Equalities Impact Assessment

The Council are required to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) of the emerging policies and proposals within the Core Strategy.

The Equality Analysis on the emerging Core Strategy, including the Yeovil Urban extension has been undertaken in advance of implementation, with a view to submission alongside the revised version of the Core Strategy (The Proposed Submission Document).

As part of the Equality Analysis process on the emerging Core Strategy, full and comprehensive engagement has been carried out with the general public as well as groups and forums representative of the protected characteristics. In addition to this, specific consultation has been undertaken with the South Somerset Equalities Steering Group (ESG). The ESG is chaired by a Cllr who is the Portfolio Holder for Equalities, and includes attendance by a range of community groups who represent the protected characteristics. It is the ESG's responsibility to oversee the successful functioning of the Equality Analysis process, acting as a 'critical friend' in assessing the likely impact on proposed strategies, policies, services and functions on equalities for staff and customers. The Equality Analysis on the Draft Core Strategy will be presented to the ESG in March 2012.

The EIA will be written up consistent with statutory proposals and in accordance with South Somerset District Council standard practice. It is considered appropriate that the EIA be delegated to the PMB for approval. This is a practical suggestion given that the EIA actually informs the detailed wording of policies and proposals.

Recommendation 69: *Consideration of the EIA is delegated to the PMB for approval in association with the detailed Core Strategy Proposed Submission text.*

11. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Government has published a draft National Planning Policy Framework to present national planning policy in one document (of 52 pages). The consultation period ended on 16th October with an initial indication that a final version will be published before the year-end although at the time of writing the final version had yet to be published.

The National Planning Policy Framework broadly reflects the existing Planning Policy guidance albeit in summary form but there are some significant changes. In relation to the Core Strategy the key changes are

- NPPF refers to an Environmental Strategy – we do not currently have one.
- NPPF does not protect employment land in it's own right
- There is a need to clarify in the supporting text the role of social rented and affordable rent.
- There is no longer a Brownfield land target - draft policy will need to be reviewed.
- There will be a need to review PPS policies that are not replicated in the NPPF.

The latest indication from the Government department of communities and local government is that the final Framework will be out before the end of March of this year (although possibly as a further consultation document). It is suggested that the implications of the NPPF for the Core Strategy be delegated for consideration by PMB and reported to Full Council prior to authorisation of the final Core Strategy Proposed Submission plan for publication.

Recommendation 70:

Proceed with the Core Strategy and delegate to the PMB consideration of the final version of the NPPF (if received prior to 31st March 2012) and its implications for the Core Strategy subject to authorisation by Full Council.

Should the NPPF not be received in final form by 31st March 2012 then PMB be delegated to review the likely timescale of receipt and submit a report to Full Council on how to deal with its receipt in the context of the Core Strategy timescale.

12. Next Steps

The recommendations of the District Executive will go forward for consideration to Special Full Council on 23rd April.

Upon endorsement of the recommended changes to the Core Strategy the PMB will finalise the reworded Core Strategy Proposed Submission draft. The revised Core Strategy will be deposited for statutory consultation complete with the IDP and accompanying SA and AA reports and EIA. This is anticipated to take place in May and June prior to Examination by a Planning Inspector expected towards the year-end after representations have been received and collated for the Examination Inspector's consideration.

Recommendation 71:

Note and endorse the next steps for progressing the Core Strategy.

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13. Summary of Recommendations (Rec.)

The recommendations are summarised below using the following format:

Rec. Number (page)	Summary of the recommendation	Relevant Area Committee(s)
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PART 1

2. Scale of Growth and Settlement Hierarchy

2.1 End date of Plan (page A7)

Rec. 1: (p.A7)	<i>An end date of April 2028 be adopted</i>	All committees
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2.2 District Wide Scale of Growth (page A7)

Rec. 2: (p.A14)	<i>That a household requirement of 15,950 dwellings from 2006 – 2028 be endorsed for South Somerset and Policy SS1 amended accordingly.</i>	All committees
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2.3 Review of the Status of Yeovil, Market Towns and Rural Centres (page A14)

Rec. 3: (p.A14)	<i>That the following terminology be adopted within the Core Strategy:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yeovil – a strategically significant town</i> • <i>Market towns</i> • <i>Rural Centres and</i> • <i>Rural Settlements</i> 	All committees
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Rec. 4: (p.A16)	<i>No change to Market Town status of all the proposed Market Towns (Ansford / Castle Cary, Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Wincanton and Somerton).</i> <i>Change Langport and Huish Episcopi's status from Rural Centre to Market Town.</i>	North, East & West
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Rec. 5: (p.A16)	<i>No change to draft rural centres designations (other than the suggested promotion of Langport / Huish Episcopi to Market Town.)</i>	North, East & West
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2.4 Distribution of Growth Between Yeovil, Market Towns, Rural Centres and Rural Settlements (page A17)

<p>Rec. 6 (p.A21)</p>	<p><i>That Revised Settlement Policy SS4 set out below and presenting the distribution of housing growth about South Somerset is endorsed.</i></p> <p><i>Table 4: POLICY SS4 DELIVERING NEW HOUSING GROWTH</i></p> <p><i>Housing requirement will make provision for at least 15,950 dwellings in the plan period 2006 – 2028 of which 7,975 dwellings will be located within or adjacent to Yeovil, including an urban eco town extension of 2,500 dwellings (to be part built out beyond the plan period)</i></p> <p><i>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</i></p> <p><i>The distribution of development across the settlement hierarchy will be in line with the numbers below (next page):</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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Rec. 6 continued

Table 4: POLICY SS4 DELIVERING NEW HOUSING GROWTH

Settlement	Core Strategy 2006-2028 Total Housing Requirement	Existing Housing Commitments 2006-2011 (as at April 2011)	Additional Housing Provision required (Total Housing Less Existing Commitments) (as at April 2011)
Strategic Town			
Yeovil	7,975	3,704	4,271 ¹
Market Towns			
Chard	1,861	521	1,340 ²
Crewkerne	1028	901	127
Ilminster	531	199	332
Wincanton	703	692	11
Somerton	400	235	165
Castle Cary / Ansford	400	127	273
Langport / Huish Episcopi	400	295	105
Rural Centres			
Bruton	217	113	104
Ilchester	151	0	151
Martock	246	101	145
Milborne Port	299	210	89
South Petherton	245	151	94
Stoke Sub Hamdon	55	6	49
Other			
Rural Settlements	2,400	1,267	1,133
Total	16,911*	8,522	8,389

* 15,950 for the purposes of the overall provision is the District requirement to 2028. The cumulative total of 16,911 is 6% in excess of requirement but is considered in the context of development uncertainties and overall scale of provision, to be in broad agreement with the requirement.

¹ A further 625 dwellings are proposed at the Yeovil Urban Extension post 2028.

² A total of 3,237 dwellings are proposed in Chard, of which 1,376 dwellings are proposed at the Chard Growth Area post 2028.

2.5 Review of Policy SS2 (Development in Rural Settlements) Development Areas and Infilling (page A24)

<p>Rec. 7: (p.A24)</p>	<p><i>Retain policy SS2 but remove the exception site policy subsumed within it.</i></p> <p><i>Endorse the further explanation as to what is justified and commensurate in any given location, including further guidance / explanation as to how a development can be considered to increase the sustainability of a settlement set out in Appendix F.</i></p> <p><i>Recognise that settlements below Rural Centre are a tier of the settlement hierarchy in their own right to be called rural settlements (to which policy SS2 applies).</i></p> <p><i>Recognise that policy SS2 will allow for infilling where justified in sustainability terms and cross subsidisation of affordable housing within Rural Settlements.</i></p> <p><i>Do not re-instigate Development Areas for Rural Settlements.</i></p> <p><i>Do not add any additional rural settlements to Rural Centre status</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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PART 2

3. Strategic Development Proposed For Settlements

3.1 Yeovil – Direction for development – the Yeovil Urban extension (page A26)

Rec. 8: (p.A27)	<i>Confirm the 7,975 dwelling housing provision for Yeovil to 2028 in the context of a stronger clearer justification for the role of growth in the Vision statement for the town. Amend policy YV 1 accordingly.</i>	South
Rec. 9: (p.A28)	<i>Endorse a Yeovil urban capacity of 6,100 dw and amend policies YV1 and 2 accordingly.</i>	South
Rec. 10: (p.A29)	<i>Endorse a total provision for the Urban extension of 2,500dw (with 625 dw to be developed beyond the plan period) and amend policies YV1 and 2 accordingly.</i>	South
Rec. 11: (p.A32)	<i>Endorse South and West Option as the location of the urban extension subject to final confirmation following consideration of traffic impact derived from all traffic assessment reports and infrastructure costs after review of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Amend policy YV2 accordingly.</i>	South
Rec. 12: (p.A33)	<i>Endorse amended proposals map for Yeovil showing a revised direction of growth for the Yeovil Urban extension to the South and West of Yeovil (as shown on the amended plan in the map section)</i>	South
Rec. 13: (p.A34)	<i>That the East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone as shown in appendix I and on the Yeovil Proposals Inset Plan be endorsed and a new policy be presented.</i>	South
Rec. 14: (p.A35)	<i>Retain South and West option for the location of an urban extension as it has the best potential to achieve sustainable travel aspirations, and a much lower estimated provisional cost of strategic highways infrastructure.</i>	South

Rec. 15: (p.A36)	<i>Retain the preferred option location to the south and west of Yeovil as the location for the urban extension.</i>	South
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Rec. 16: (p.A36)	<i>Maintain aspirations to achieve Eco Town Standards in the urban extension with the exception of construction standards beyond the Government's newly proposed Code and present these in the Core Strategy in the light of the Government's intended withdrawal of current eco town guidance.</i>	South
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3.2 Market Towns - Direction for development (page A37)

3.2a Chard – Direction for development (page A37)

Rec. 17: (p.A39)	<p><i>Retain Option 3 presented in the Draft Core Strategy strategic allocation as a deliverable allocation.</i></p> <p><i>Endorse the findings of the Chard Eastern Development Area Feasibility Report including the principle that CPO powers should be considered to ensure the delivery of the Millfield Link road in Chard. This will be subject to a further report including any financial proposals, which will come forward once the Core Strategy Examination Inspector's report has been received).</i></p> <p><i>Amend the anticipated dwelling completion in the plan period for Chard to 1,861 dw (with a further 1,376 post plan period)</i></p> <p><i>Amend no development area around Holyrood school to reflect Chard Regeneration Plan (as shown on the amended plans in map section).</i></p>	West
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3.2b Crewkerne – Direction for development (page A39)

Rec. 18: (p.A40)	<i>No change to Policy HG1: Strategic Housing Sites in terms of Crewkerne (safeguarding the saved Local Plan allocation KS / CREW / 1).</i>	West
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3.2c Ilminster – Direction for development (page A40)

Rec. 19: (p.A41)	<i>Revise the preferred direction of growth to be Draft Core Strategy Option 1 – South East (as shown on the amended plans in Map section).</i>	West
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	<i>Include a 'Direction of Growth' policy in the Core Strategy, which indicates that in Ilminster the direction of strategic growth will be to the South East.</i>	
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3.2d Wincanton – Direction for development (page A41)

Rec. 20: (p.A42)	<p><i>That Draft Core Strategy Option 1 to the west of the town be retained but reduced in size and located to the immediate west of the employment site and New Barns Farm specifically as a preferred direction for strategic employment growth (as shown on the amended plans in Map section).</i></p> <p><i>Include a 'Direction of Growth' policy in the Core Strategy, which indicates that in Wincanton the direction of strategic employment growth will be to the south west as shown on the attached map.</i></p>	East
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3.2e Ansford / Castle Cary – Direction for development (page A43)

Rec. 21: (p.A44)	<p><i>That draft Core Strategy Option 1 to the north of Torbay Road, and east and west of Station Road is taken forward as the preferred direction for strategic growth at Ansford / Castle Cary (as shown on the amended plans in Map section).</i></p> <p><i>Include a 'Direction of Growth' policy in the Core Strategy, which indicates that in Ansford / Castle Cary the direction of strategic growth will be north of Torbay Road, and east and west of Station Road as shown on the following map.</i></p> <p><i>Incorporate the requirement for a link road between Torbay Road and Station Road to be achieved in association with the preferred direction of growth.</i></p>	East
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3.2f Langport / Huish Episcopi – Direction for growth (page A44)

Rec. 22: (p.A45)	<i>Include a Direction of Growth policy in the Core Strategy that indicates a broad direction of growth for Langport / Huish Episcopi, encompassing locations to the north, east and south east of the town, with specific proposals within these options to come forward through the development management process (as shown on the amended plans in Map section) and to avoid co-alescence with Wearne.</i>	North
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3.2g Somerton – Direction for growth (page A45)

Rec. 23: (p.A46)	<i>Include a direction of growth policy in the Core Strategy that indicates a combination of Option 2 and the refined Option 3 (excluding area north of Bradley Hill Lane) i.e. to the west of the town should be identified as the direction of growth at Somerton (as shown on the amended plans in Map section.</i>	North
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4. **Implications of Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset Report (page A46)**

Rec. 24: (p.A48)	<i>That members endorse the Infrastructure Planning in South Somerset report for publication alongside the Core Strategy Proposed Submission document (appendix K).</i>	All committees
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PART 3

5. Implications of Adoption of CIL and Interim Planning Obligation Policy (page A49)

Rec. 25: (p.A50)	<i>That members note that the recommendations of the Consultants in relation to adopting a CIL, being resourced to deal with it and dealing with obligations through existing policy in the interim have been addressed at the District Executive and Full Council in February 2012.</i>	All committees
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6. Planning Obligation Policy Post introduction of CIL (page A50)

Rec. 26: (p.A52)	<i>Delete Policy SS6 in light of proposed move to CIL.</i> <i>Include a revised planning obligation policy SS7 based on combining Policies SS7 and SS8 (Planning Obligations and Viability) in the Core Strategy to ensure the direct impact of development can be properly mitigated.</i> <i>Modify policies YV2, YV4, YV5, CV1, CV2, CV4 to ensure they reflect the need for mitigation of any direct impact through revised policy SS7 is reflected.</i> <i>Amend policies HW1 and HW2 to reflect need for planning obligations for mitigation of specific proposals only and to clarify that CIL will be sought for strategic infrastructure.</i>	All committees
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7. Major policy matters

7.1 Employment land (page A52)

Rec. 27: (p.A53)	<i>Amend draft Policy SS5 as set out below (and relevant references within the Core Strategy text to reflect the economic projections arising from the Baker Report) to include jobs and floorspace targets for Yeovil, the Market Towns and Rural Centres. The distribution of jobs to be as follows - 50% (of jobs) to be attributed to Yeovil, 29% to the Market Towns, 8% to the Rural Centres and 13% to Rural Settlements (reflecting NOMIS evidence).</i> <i>Amend the employment land requirements in addition to existing commitments for Wincanton and the smaller Market Towns and Rural Centres to be as follows:</i> <i>Wincanton – 5.0 hectares</i> <i>Ansford / Castle Cary, Langport / Huish Episcopi and Somerton – 3 hectares</i> <i>Bruton, Ilchester, Martock, Milborne Port, South Petherton and Stoke sub Hamdon – 2 hectares.</i>	All committees
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No land to be allocated for non B use classes

Table 8 Policy SS5 Delivering New Employment Land (Revised 26 January 2012)

The Core Strategy will assist the delivery of 11, 506 jobs as a minimum, and approximately 618,180 sq metres net / 168 hectares gross of traditional employment land (Use Class B1, B2 and B8) to be directed to the following settlements for the period 1st April 2006 to 1st April 2028.

Settlement	Core Strategy 2006-2028 Total Employment Land Requirement	Existing Employment Land Commitments	Additional Employment Land Provision Required (total employment land less existing commitments) (As at April 2011)	Total Jobs to be encouraged 2006-2028 (numbers in brackets indicates jobs in traditional 'B' Uses as defined by the Use Classes Order reflecting the evidenced assumption that 66% of new job creation will be in traditional B uses)
Strategic Town				
Yeovil*	56.34	39.84	16.5**	5,750 (3,795)
Market Towns				
Chard*	17.14	17.14	0.0	1,036 (684)
Crewkerne*	10.10	10.10	0.0	507 (335)
Ilminster*	23.05	23.05	0.0	403 (266)
Wincanton	8.61	3.61	5.0	587 (387)
Somerton	4.91	1.91	3.0	288 (190)
Ansford / Castle Cary	13.19	10.19	3.0	254 (168)
Langport / Huish Episcopi	3.44	0.44	3.0	277 (183)
Rural Centres				
Bruton	2.56	0.56	2.0	909 (600)
Ilchester	2.02	0.02	2.0	
Martock	4.79	2.79	2.0	
Milborne Port	2.04	0.04	2.0	
South Petherton	3.80	1.80***	2.0	
Stoke Sub Hamdon	2.0	0.0	2.0	
Other				
Rural Settlements	13.86	7.86	6.0	1,495 (987)
Total	167.85	119.35	48.5	11,506 (7,595)³

* Yeovil, Crewkerne & Ilminster have strategic employment sites which are saved from the previous South Somerset Local Plan and Chard's strategic allocation based around Chard Regeneration Plan also includes employment provision, these sites combined equate to a total of 46.35 hectares, and this figure has been included in the overall floorspace figure cited in Policy SS5 above.

** within the 16.5 ha provision, 11.5 ha is expected for the Urban Extension reflecting the higher aspiration for employment provision here to potentially provide 1 job per household to meet eco town's aspirations

*** This figure relates to Lopen Head Nursery.

³ Due to rounding of numbers they may not add up.

7.2 Yeovil Airfield Safeguarding (page A55)

<p>Rec. 28: (p.A57)</p>	<p><i>That a new flight safety zone policy is introduced into the Core Strategy along with an amendment to the Yeovil proposals map. The policy will seek to secure that Development in the flight safety zone will be strictly controlled and limited to that which can be justified as causing no hazard to the operational needs of Agusta Westlands Aerodrome.</i></p>	<p>South</p>
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7.3 Policy CV3 Chard Obligations (page A57)

<p>Rec. 29: (p.A57)</p>	<p><i>Delete Policy CV3 and accompanying text.</i></p>	<p>West</p>
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7.4 Housing Density (page A57)

<p>Rec. 30: (p.A58)</p>	<p><i>Delete Draft Policy HG2.</i></p> <p><i>Amend Policy “EQ2: Design” by the addition of criteria and relevant supporting text to address making the most efficient use of land whilst taking into account local infrastructure (including green), site accessibility, local area characteristics and detailed design considerations. Add supporting text making the link to established density criteria in PPS3.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.5 The use of Previously Developed Land (PDL) for new housing development (page A58)

<p>Rec. 31: (p.A59)</p>	<p><i>Retain 30% target policy for previously developed land.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.6 Affordable housing (page A59)

<p>Rec. 32: (p.A61)</p>	<p><i>Retain 35% target for affordable housing.</i></p> <p><i>Agree threshold of 6 dwellings at which affordable housing target policy applies.</i></p> <p><i>Clarify in text the nature and role of affordable rent.</i></p> <p><i>Amend Draft Core Strategy Policy HG4 to show a corresponding area to 0.2 ha for all settlements as an alternative threshold for small sites.</i></p> <p><i>Amend Draft Core Strategy HG4 by the addition of the</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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<p>following text: "Small sites below the threshold for a full affordable housing contribution will be expected, where it is viable to do so, to pay a commuted sum equivalent to a percentage of affordable housing provision on site as set out below.</p>											
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Settlement</th> <th>% of affordable housing provision on site</th> <th>Number of dwellings</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yeovil and Market Towns</td> <td>5%</td> <td>1-5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rural Centres and Rural Settlements</td> <td>10%</td> <td>1-5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Settlement	% of affordable housing provision on site	Number of dwellings	Yeovil and Market Towns	5%	1-5	Rural Centres and Rural Settlements	10%	1-5	
Settlement	% of affordable housing provision on site	Number of dwellings									
Yeovil and Market Towns	5%	1-5									
Rural Centres and Rural Settlements	10%	1-5									
<p>Amend paragraph 8.34 by adding "or any standard subsequently adopted by South Somerset District Council." at the end of the final sentence.</p>											

7.7 Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People (page A62)

Rec. 33: (p.A62)	Amend second criteria point of HG6 accordingly to protect national and international designations.	All committees
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7.8 Specialist Housing Provision for Older People (page A62)

Rec. 34: (p.A62)	<p>Add the following additional supporting text to paragraph 8.43: after "Challenging"" insert in order to address this need specialist housing options will be required this could include care homes, Extra Care housing and Continuing Care Retirement Communities.</p> <p>Add a new Policy to allow for provision of Care Homes and other specialist housing accommodation to meet an identified need. Where in exceptional circumstances provision is proposed in the countryside, the Council will require clear justification for its location taking into account the nature of specialist care required and demonstration that alternative sites are unsuitable and / or unavailable and the economic benefit of the proposal to the locality.</p> <p>Clarify in supporting text the nature of extra care and continuing care retirement communities.</p>	All committees
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7.9 Henstridge Airfield (page A63)

Rec. 35: (p.A63)	Existing Local Plan Policy ME / HENS / 1 continue to be retained once the Core Strategy has been adopted.	East
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7.10 Employment Land Safeguarding (page A63)

<p>Rec. 36: (p.A63)</p>	<p><i>Amend Policy EP3 to strengthen the protection of employment land by refining the uses to which it applies (B use classes), introducing a clause that prevents change of use occurring if the alternative use is incompatible with the surrounding (industrial) and detrimental to the operation of the existing businesses in the area and simplify the criteria of the policy.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.11 Live / Work facilities (page A64)

<p>Rec. 37: (p.A64)</p>	<p><i>Retain policy EP5 of the draft Core Strategy.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.12 Major new tourist facilities (page A64)

<p>Rec. 38: (p.A64)</p>	<p><i>Delete policy EP8 Major new Tourist Facilities but incorporate the text into Policy EP7 supporting text.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.13 Ilchester, Milborne Port and Stoke Sub Hamdon town centre boundaries and primary shop frontages (page A64)

<p>Rec. 39: (p.A65)</p>	<p><i>Amend the Proposals Map for Ilchester, Milborne Port and Stoke Sub Hamdon to include the Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area boundaries (as shown on the amended plans in Map section) and re-iterate the relevant local plan saved policies (MC1–7 within the Core Strategy in relation to these three settlements)</i></p>	<p>North & East</p>
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7.14 Sequential approach policy for town centre uses (page A65)

<p>Rec. 40: (p.A65)</p>	<p><i>Rewrite paragraphs 9.82 - 9.86 to prevent duplication of national policy, but to illustrate the importance of the sequential test in making planning decisions amend policy EP12 covering the sequential approach in detail.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.15 Retail Hierarchy (page A65)

<p>Rec. 41: (p.A67)</p>	<p><i>Amend retail hierarchy in policy EP 10 to reflect two-tier nature of market towns in retail terms.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.16 Locally derived Retail Thresholds Policy (page A67)

<p>Rec. 42: (p.A68)</p>	<p><i>Establish a retail threshold policy for South Somerset that seeks retail impact assessments at the national level (2,500 sq m) for Yeovil, 750 sq m for market towns (in retail hierarchy terms), 500 sq m for District Centres and 250 sq m for local centres.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.17 Presumption against Major new Regional Shopping Facilities (page A68)

<p>Rec. 43: (p.A68)</p>	<p><i>That policy EP11 seeking the presumption against Major new Regional Shopping Facilities be deleted and incorporated into supporting text in draft Core Strategy policy EP10.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.18 Policy TA1: To include reference to Rail Freight (page A69)

<p>Rec. 44: (p.A69)</p>	<p><i>Amendment to policy TA1 to include reference to Rail Freight and encourage Rail Freight terminals where feasible.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.19 Policy TA2: Travel Plans (page A69)

<p>Rec. 45: (p.A69)</p>	<p><i>Amend policy TA2 to ensure it is applicable to all forms of development and Use Classes that meet the minimum thresholds of 25 or more car parking spaces or more than 1000 sq m of floor area but that reference to “all occupiers” taking part should be removed from the policy.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.20 Car Parking Standards (page A70)

<p>Rec. 46: (p.A70)</p>	<p><i>Pursue the current Core Strategy policy to apply the updated Highway Authority’s standards but review this upon receipt of the finally approved standards.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.21 Viability of Open Space Standards in Light of Open Space Strategy (page A70)

<p>Rec. 47: (p.A71)</p>	<p><i>Remove the PPG17 standards from policy HW1 and HW2 and cross-refer to the Open Space Strategy and PPG17 Assessment for Standards.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.22 Climate change (page A71)

<p>Rec. 48: (p.A71)</p>	<p><i>Clarify that 10% renewable and low carbon energy target is in addition to Building Regulations requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Await further confirmation of ‘zero carbon’ definition from Coalition Government – amend to Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 rather than 6 in light of proposals.</i></p> <p><i>Add reference to flooding Exception Test, and further detail on the application of the Sequential Test.</i></p> <p><i>Add detail on biodiversity and cross-refer to specific biodiversity Policy EQ3.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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7.23 Additional Policy Changes (page A71)

Policy YV2

<p>Rec. 49: (p.A72)</p>	<p><i>Refer to need for medical facilities as part of the land requirement for the urban extension.</i></p>	<p>South</p>
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Policy YV4 (and Policy CV4)

<p>Rec. 50: (p.A72)</p>	<p><i>Amend policy by removal of the 400-metre restriction to seeking appropriate provision of cycle and pedestrian links to development.</i></p>	<p>South & West</p>
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Policy YV5

<p>Rec. 51: (p.A73)</p>	<p><i>Amend policy by deleting the word “limited” from the 4th bullet point of the policy.</i></p>	<p>South</p>
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Policy HG7

<p>Rec. 52: (p.A73)</p>	<p><i>Amend policy HG7 by replacing “scale” with “size”.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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Policy HG 8

<p>Rec. 53 (p.A73)</p>	<p><i>Amend policy HG8 by reference to landscape character, visual amenity and AONBs.</i></p>	<p>All committees</p>
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Policy EP2

Rec. 54: (p.A73)	<i>Remove reference to other out of town centres (bullet three).</i>	All committees
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Policy EP4

Rec. 55: (p.A74)	<i>Revise EP4 so as not to contradict EP3 and add the words “or extension” after “conversion” in third bullet point.</i>	All committees
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EP7

Rec. 56: (p.A74)	<i>Amend policy to be simpler and refer to promotion of tourism in existing buildings.</i>	All committees
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EP9

Rec. 57: (p.A74)	<i>Amend policy to protect nationally designated wildlife sites and landscape sites also.</i>	All committees
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Policies EP10 – 14 – retail policies

Rec. 58: (p.A74)	<i>Amend policies EP10 – 14 (note EP11 recommended for deletion elsewhere) to incorporate references as appropriate to PPS4.</i>	All committees
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Policy EP15

Rec. 59: (p.A75)	<i>Amend wording and title to clarify that the policy applies to neighbourhood centres.</i>	All committees
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Policy EP16

Rec. 60: (p.75)	<i>Add cultural facilities to the facilities being protected.</i>	All committees
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Policy TA 1

Rec. 61: (p.A75)	<i>Amend ref to 13 amp-charging points to 16 amps and clarify policy on how green travel vouchers should be operated and on which land uses.</i>	All committees
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Policy TA3

Rec. 62: (p.A75)	<i>Accept clarification to improve grammatical structure of the policy.</i>	All committees
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Policy HW4

Rec. 63: (p.A76)	<i>Amend policy to clarify objectives.</i>	All committees
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Policy EQ3

Rec. 64: (p.A76)	<i>Add an additional bullet to the policy to ensure that the habitat features that are used by bats and other wildlife are maintained so that the design of development does not cause severance or is a barrier to movement and ensure that relevant wildlife and landscape designations are protected.</i>	All committees
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Policy EQ7

Rec. 65: (p.A76)	<i>Amend policy to provide stronger reference to wildlife and landscape designations.</i>	All committees
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8. Drafting of the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document (page A72)

Rec. 66: (p.A76)	<i>That Members delegate to PMB approval of the revised content of the Core Strategy prior to and for public consultation as the Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document.</i>	All committees
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9. Sustainability and Appropriate Assessment (page A72)

Rec. 67: (p.A77)	<i>Consideration of the SA report is delegated to the PMB for approval in association with the detailed Core Strategy Proposed Submission text.</i>	All committees
Rec. 68: (p.A78)	<i>The objections of RSPB to the HRA are not accepted and the HRA report to accompany the final revised publication plan is delegated to Project Management Board for approval in association with the detailed Core Strategy Proposed Submission text.</i>	All committees

10 Equalities Impact Assessment (page A73)

Rec. 69: (p.A78)	<i>Consideration of the EIA is delegated to the PMB for approval in association with the detailed Core Strategy Proposed Submission text.</i>	All committees
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11. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (page A74)

Rec. 70: (p.A79)	<p><i>Proceed with the Core Strategy and delegate to the PMB consideration of the final version of the NPPF (if received prior to 31st March 2012) and its implications for the Core Strategy subject to authorisation by Full Council.</i></p> <p><i>Should the NPPF not be received in final form by 31st March 2012 then PMB be delegated to review the likely timescale of receipt and submit a report to Full Council on how to deal with its receipt in the context of the Core Strategy timescale.</i></p>	All committees
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Next Steps (page A75)

Rec. 71: (p.A79)	<i>Note and endorse the next steps for progressing the Core Strategy.</i>	All committees
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Area West Committee – 21st March 2012

Motion Submitted by Cllr. Andrew Turpin

It is worthy of note that

- *Wellington station has been included in Taunton Deane's Core Strategy even though no viability studies have been carried out.*
- *Protection for Chard Junction's use as a freight rail head is already included in the South Somerset District Wide Local Plan.*

SSDC Core Strategy Proposal

Because of the benefits to future generations, there is a need to protect Chard Junction as a public transport interchange and as a potential freight rail head.

It is therefore proposed that in view of Taunton Dean's policy, SSDC's Area West Committee either

- a) **requests the District Executive to include the protection of Chard Junction in its Core Strategy and / or**
- b) **seeks partnership funding for a viability / feasibility / sustainability appraisal**

Through its Community Plan, drawn up through public consultation by the Residents Action Group, Tatworth and Forton Parish Council made the decision that the aspiration to re-open Chard Junction Station should be included. The plan for Chard Town completed by the 'Action for Chard Town' (ACT) group and recently reinforced by the Chard Regeneration group agreed with this aspiration. The reason for both teams to include this aspiration was that 'it enhances the sustainability of the regeneration plans for Chard and its neighbouring parishes'.

Following lobbying of the local MP at his surgery, 40 local residents achieved a meeting (using two representatives) with the then Rail Minister. He confirmed his total support for the station reopening and that reopening of stations was part of Government policy. A Steering Group embracing Network Rail, South West Trains, SCC, SSDC and the two supporting MPs – David Laws and Oliver Letwin was set up. The group was abandoned after the administrative change at County Hall.

This aspiration has recently been confirmed by Chard Town Council in the form of a planning application recommending refusal of a cement works on the site. 'Chard Town Council will recommend refusal of this application in the light of the SSDC Core Strategy and the future expansion of Chard and the necessity to reduce individual journeys by car to combat green house gas emissions. The development of this site would prejudice the reopening of Chard Junction Station.' The decision was unanimous.

Tatworth and Forton Parish Council responded in a similar vein and moved separately to request that the station be protected for passenger use and as a 'freight rail head'.

For those drawing up Neighbourhood Plans, it is implicit in the Localism legislation that the purpose of a Sustainability Appraisal is to 'appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the plan. In so doing, it helps to ensure that decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development'. Ref. 'How to shape where you live: a guide to Neighbourhood Planning'. NALC CPRE publication.

That there is public demand for the reopening of this station is not in question. Such a Neighbourhood Plan held through the Localism Act would undoubtedly have the support of residents in the whole of Chard and district locality, including communities over the border in Dorset and Devon.

Despite huge public demand, there is clearly a gaping hole in the evidence base for any re-opening of the station. It would appear that despite many years of talk no robust viability study has ever been commissioned and therefore any policies have been effectively written within a vacuum.

It would appear that there **has** been a political will but no real steer.

A Rail Consultant who provided a viability study in BANES and Warwickshire, where stations have and are being investigated for reopening, is suggesting that such a study at Chard Junction would cost £10,000.

It is possible that £500 could be raised from the Railfuture fighting fund and other sources of funding may be available.

Andrew Turpin

Area West Committee – 21st March 2012

8. Planning Appeals

Strategic Director: Rina Singh (Place and Performance)
Assistant Director: Martin Woods (Economy)
Service Manager: David Norris, Development Manager
Lead Officer: David Norris, Development Manager
Contact Details: david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462382

Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the appeals that have been lodged, decided upon or withdrawn.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Background

The Area Chairmen have asked that a monthly report relating to the number of appeals received, decided upon or withdrawn be submitted to the Committee.

Report Detail

Appeals Received

Written Representation

Crewkerne – The erection of a dwelling and alterations to access and parking, The Old Mill House, 47 North Street – Mr. F. & Mrs. M. Benson – 11/02405/OUT.

Appeals Dismissed

Written Representation

Iminster – Conversion of former stable and store into 1 no. dwellinghouse (revised application), land rear of 8 West Street – Mr. S. Maylor – 11/03054/FUL.

Delegated Decision – Refusal.

The Inspector's decision letter is attached at pages 102 - 104.

Background Papers: *Application files – 11/03054/FUL*



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2012

by Raymond Michael MBA BSc DipTP MRTPI ARICS MIM

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 6 March 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/A/11/2162052

Hilcombe House, 8 West Street, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9AB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Stephen Maylor against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 11/03054/FUL, dated 8 February 2011, was refused by notice dated 30 September 2011.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of former stable and store into self contained dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Although the site address given on the application form is set out in the heading above, the appeal concerns a detached building at the rear of that property, which is separated from the main curtilage of no. 8 by Piper's Alley. The Council considers that there is no objection in principle to residential use and, given the location in a residential area and within the development limits of Ilminster, I concur with that view.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the development on highway safety arising from the level of traffic using the junction at West Street and Rutter's Lane.

Reasons

4. The appeal concerns a small 2-storey detached building accessed by way of Rutter's Lane, a narrow private track leading to a number of mainly residential properties. The building was originally a stable block for Hilcombe House, and has subsequently been used for garaging and storage. It has also been used as a pet treatment area in conjunction with the nearby veterinary surgery in West Street. There is no provision for off-street parking within the site.
 5. Rutter's Lane has no footways on either side, although it is a public right of way. At some points it is too narrow for 2 vehicles to pass, and that difficulty is compounded by the existence of a marked parking bay adjacent to no. 8. West
-

Street and close to the junction with West Street. As a result there may be times when vehicles entering Rutter's Lane would need to wait on West Street or reverse into that road because of vehicles exiting the lane.

6. Rutter's Lane joins West Street at a right-angled junction at the point where West Street meets High Street. Visibility to the west is restricted by existing railings on the frontage of Hilcombe House, and there are pedestrian crossing signals immediately to the east of that junction. The combination of those factors leads to complex traffic manoeuvres at this point in the road system, adding to the normal level of danger on the highway.
7. The most recent use of the building as a pet treatment area is unlikely to have led to a high volume of traffic visiting the site, as most visits and deliveries would be likely to be made to the main surgery premises in West Street. The appellant indicates that at least twice-weekly deliveries have taken place to the building as a result of that use. That figure is below the typical number of vehicle movement generated by a residential development and, notwithstanding the lack of parking provision for the proposal, it is likely there would be an increase in vehicular movements to and from the premises, including occupiers and visitors, arising from the proposed residential use. Whilst the access currently serves several properties and garages, the factors highlighted above lead to concerns about an increase in danger on the highway at this point arising from a greater level of vehicle movements. The appellant has indicated that the continued use of the premises for commercial purposes would still generate vehicular movements. However, these are likely to remain lower than the level associated with a residential use.
8. The appellant has suggested that, because of its location close to the town centre, the proposed dwelling would be attractive to non car-owning households, and that arrangement could lead to a reduction in vehicles visiting the site. However, such limitations on occupation are very difficult to achieve over a long period of time, and it is unlikely that such a limitation could be adequately enforced. The appellant refers to a similar situation where residential conversion was approved in Ilminster without car parking, however, I have no details of that development, and I shall therefore deal with the current case on its merits.
9. In light of the above considerations I conclude that the proposal would lead to a reduction in highway safety arising from the level of traffic using the junction at West Street and Rutter's Lane, and would be contrary to Policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006), and Policy 49 of the Somerset & Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011, which require that traffic generated by development can be satisfactorily accommodated on the local transport network.

Other Matters

10. The site is adjacent to the Ilminster Conservation Area (CA), which is a mix of mainly residential and commercial properties faced in local stone or render, and is at the rear of 8 and 10 West Street, which are listed buildings. However, the proposal makes no material alterations to the external appearance of the building, and consequently it would preserve the character and appearance of the CA and the setting of the listed buildings.

11. I note the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the draft National Planning Policy Framework. However, that document is only at its consultation stage, and I attach little weight to its provisions at this time. I also note that the Council has approved the residential conversion of a barn owned by the appellant behind premises on East Street, but I have only limited information about the circumstances of that case, and I have attached little weight to it. I have also considered the decision reached by the Inspector dealing with a nearby appeal to the west of the current appeal site (APP/R3325/A/06/2013478). In that case the Inspector indicated that the site also had access by way of New Street, and the circumstances therefore differ from the current appeal. None of the above matters is sufficient to outweigh the conclusion I have reached on the main issue.

Raymond Michael

INSPECTOR

Area West Committee – 21st March 2012

9. Planning Applications

Strategic Director: Rina Singh (Place and Performance)
Assistant Director: Martin Woods (Economy)
Service Manager: David Norris, Development Manager
Lead Officer: David Norris, Development Manager
Contact Details: david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462382

The schedule of applications is attached following page 105.

The inclusion of two stars (**) as part of the Assistant Director's (Economy) recommendation indicates that the application will need to be referred to the Regulation Committee if the Area Committee is unwilling to accept that recommendation.

The Lead Planning Officer at the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Solicitor, will also be able to recommend that an application should be referred to Regulation Committee even if it has not been two starred on the agenda.

Human Rights Act 1998 Issues

The determination of the applications which are the subject of reports in the schedule are considered to involve the following human rights issues:-

Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life

- (i) Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his/her home and his/her correspondence.*
- (ii) There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interest of national security, public safety or the economic well being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others.*

The First Protocol

Article 1: Protection of Property

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interests and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.

Each report considers in detail the competing rights and interests involved in the application. Having had regard to those matters in the light of the convention rights referred to above, it is considered that the recommendation is in accordance with the law, proportionate and both necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and in the public interest.

Background Papers: *Individual planning application files.*

Area West Committee – 21st March 2012

10. Date and Venue for Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday, 18th April 2012 at 5.30 p.m. at Tatworth Memorial Hall, Kents Road, South Chard.

Planning Applications – March 2012

Members to Note:

*The inclusion of two stars (**) as part of the Assistant Director's (Economy) recommendation indicates that the application will need to be referred to the Regulation Committee if the Area Committee is unwilling to accept that recommendation.*

The Lead Planning Officer at the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Solicitor, will also be able to recommend that an application should be referred to Regulation Committee even if it has not been two starred on the agenda.

Page	Ward	Application	Proposal	Address	Applicant
1	Tatworth and Forton	11/01082/FUL	The erection of an agricultural workers dwelling.	Land at Barleclose Farm, Two Ash Hill, Tatworth	Mr Keith Robbins
14	Tatworth and Forton	11/04589/FUL	The change of use of land for the keeping of horses and the erection of stables, store and associated yard works.	Land OS 4050 Pop Lane, Tatworth	Mr M Perham

Area West Committee - 21st March 2012

Officer Report on Planning Application: 11/01082/FUL

Proposal:	The erection of an agricultural workers dwelling. (GR 332965/106878)
Site Address:	Land At Barleclose Farm Two Ash Hill Tatworth
Parish:	Tatworth and Forton
TATWORTH AND FORTON Ward (SSDC Member)	Mr A Turpin (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	John Millar Tel: (01935) 462465 Email: john.millar@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	4th May 2011
Applicant :	Mr Keith Robbins
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Mr Robert Rhys Ash Barn Station Road Charlton Mackrell Somerton TA11 6AG
Application Type :	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application is to be considered by Area West Committee at the request of the Ward Member, with the agreement of the Area Chair. It is felt that the application should be given further consideration by members, to consider the agricultural justification for the erection of a dwelling in open countryside.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



Barleclose Farm is sited on the south side of Two Ash Lane, to the west of the village of Forton and to the north of Tatworth. The application site is a farmyard comprising a group of agricultural buildings, with associated land of 15.14 acres, which together with other land farmed under a business tenancy agreement and freehold land in the immediate vicinity, forms a holding of approximately 140 acres. The site is located beyond any defined development area, in open countryside. There is one dwellinghouse immediately adjacent to the group of farm buildings, which was formerly associated with the unit but is now under different ownership being sold by the County Council in 2009.

The proposal is made for the erection of an agricultural workers dwelling with detached garage on land immediately to the east of the farm buildings and a former slurry lagoon. The proposed dwelling is a 3 bedroom, two-storey house to be finished with local natural stone and double Roman tiles.

HISTORY

04/01224/R3C: Erection of an agricultural general purpose building to replace fire damaged building - No objections.

20715 (1953): Proposed dwellinghouse and farm building - Approved.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Relevant Development Plan Documents

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan:

STR1 - Sustainable Development

STR6 - Development outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages

Policy 5 - Landscape Character

Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

South Somerset Local Plan 2006:

ST3 - Development Areas

ST5 - General Principles of Development

ST6 - The Quality of Development

EC3 - Landscape Character

EP9 - Control of Potentially Polluting Uses

HG15 - Agricultural and Forestry Dwellings

Policy-related Material Considerations:

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

Goal 5 - A competitive high performing economy that is diverse and adaptable.

Goal 8 - Sustainably sited and constructed high quality homes, buildings and public spaces where people can live and work in an environmentally friendly and healthy way.

Goal 11 - Protection and enhancement of our natural environment and biodiversity.

CONSULTATIONS

Parish Council:

December 2011: The Council had no further comments on this application.

3rd June 2011: The Parish Council does not support this application on grounds of: The application does not fulfil the required criteria of an agricultural dwelling.

3rd May 2011: The Council deferred this application as we are awaiting an answer on the ownership of sheep by the applicant. Although, the Council have changed this to ownership of livestock.

11th April 2011: The Council deferred this application as information in the appraisal does not concur with information, some of the councillors had previously been told.

The Council would like to be informed the ownership of the sheep, as stated in the appraisal, as it is believed that Mr Robins does not own the sheep.

The Council would like you to note that the council has not been previously consulted and the adjacent neighbour stated that she had not been previously consulted as stated in the Application for Planning Permission; No 8 Neighbour and Community Consultation.

SSDC Technical Services:

Surface water disposal via soakaways.

County Highway Authority:

The proposed development site is remote from any urban area and distant from adequate services and facilities, such as, education, employment, health, retail and leisure. In addition, public transport services are infrequent. As a consequence, occupiers of the new development are likely to be dependant on private vehicles for most of their daily needs. Such fostering of growth in the need to travel would be contrary to government advice given in PPG13 and RPG10, and to the provisions of policies STR1 and STR6 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (adopted policies: April 2000).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned comments, as this proposal is for the erection of an agricultural workers dwelling it must be a matter for the Local Planning Authority to determine whether there is sufficient justification/agricultural need or any other overriding planning need that outweighs the transport policies that seek to reduce reliance on the private car.

In detail, the proposal is seeking to make use of the existing access on to Two Ash Lane. It is clear that the visibility currently achieved by emerging vehicles is limited due to the presence of boundary hedges that front the highway in both directions. However, it appears that the applicant has ownership of sufficient land either side of the access and as such improvements can be made.

It is clear that there is sufficient room within the site for the turning and parking of vehicles in connection with the proposed residential unit.

The one area of concern is the standard of the junction of Two Ash Lane with the A358. The junction is restricted to single vehicle width not enabling two vehicles to pass and the level of visibility achieved is also restricted in both directions. As a consequence the Highway Authority would not wish to see a proposal that is likely to result in a significant increase in the use made of this junction. Whilst the proposal is likely to result in some additional traffic at this point it is considered that the increase is unlikely to be significant given the existing traffic movement in connection with the operational farms and recreational ground currently served off Two Ash Lane.

As a result, I would advise you that from a highway point of view there is no objection to the proposal. However, in the event of permission being granted I would recommend that the following condition be imposed:

1. There shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 900mm above adjoining road level forward of a line drawn 2.4m back and parallel to the nearside carriageway edge over the entire site frontage. Such visibility shall be fully provided before works commence on the development hereby permitted and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

SSDC Principal Landscape Officer:

I have reviewed the above application seeking the construction of an agricultural workers dwelling, and recollect pre-application discussion relating to this site.

This farm group is already characterised by the presence of an adjoining farmhouse, though the house and holding are no longer in the same ownership. Hence this application would seek to place a second house on the site. Whilst the placement of the house proposal is in close proximity to the farm building group, I am wary of the prospect of a second house in this location, and I am also mindful that this is countryside, thus PPS7 and policy ST3 apply, which seek to safeguard the countryside for its own sake, and requires that development, where it is permitted, should maintain or enhance the environment. Consequently, unless you believe the case for the farmhouse to be both justified, and convincing, to thus support the application, there is otherwise no landscape support for this proposal.

SSDC Economic Development Officer:

6th February 2012: I have now had the opportunity to read the most recent submission by the applicant's agent in respect of the application for a farm workers dwelling at Barleclose Farm, Forton. You will recall that my original concerns focussed predominately around the absence of a business plan and focussed information predicting the profit and loss of the business for the next three years (to March 2015), I can report now that this information has now been provided. This informs that the business will remain in profit for each of these years. Of particular note is that the applicants agent has taken a conservative view on income from stock sales based on the lower less profitable years leading up to the predicted period. Having read these accounts, business plan and predicted profit and loss estimates, I am now comfortable that the business will remain profitable and my original concerns on viability have been appeased.

If you recall, I also raised an original concern over the ownership of stock, particularly the flock of sheep. Whilst there has not been any evidence of ownership submitted, the inclusion of the stock in the profit and loss account in part demonstrates that the flock is owned by the applicant. Also to note is that it is not an uncommon practice for farmers to 'rent' stock, or farm other people's animals. This practice is often associated with

intensive rearing of pigs or poultry where the animals/birds are owned by the feed merchant and a fee is paid to the farmer based on low mortality rates, feed conversion rates etc. I do know of examples where cattle are owned by third parties. Not that the ownership of stock is questioned in this application. In the event that the ownership of stock is raised again through the consultation process, it should not form the basis of opposing this application.

I do not require any further information and am now content with the answers provided to my questions.

23rd December 2011: Having met yesterday with the applicant and his agent, I now provide you with a revised economic development summary of the application to build a permanent agriculturally tied dwelling at Barleclose Farm, Forton.

The economic concerns that I had initially raised were discussed in turn. The largest of these concerns related to the very small sums allocated to labour. The implication deduced from the accounts was that there is approximately only 200 hours of paid labour on the farm for each of the past three years. I had deduced from this that it was questionable if there was a need for a full time worker on the farm and therefore the need for a dwelling to support the needs of the worker. In response, the applicant's agent informed that there had been a bartering arrangement between a third party and his client, for which the payment was in stock, not cash.

I acknowledged that it is not unusual for farmers to 'rear' livestock for a third party. Many of the larger feed companies own stock, provide the feed and use the expertise of the farmer and his buildings to rear the animals. The explanation that this arrangement was practiced at Barleclose Farm helped me to understand the relationship between the applicant and the third party who has until recently been the owner of the sheep. I am informed that this arrangement has now ceased and the applicant now owns the sheep. What would prove incredibly helpful would be to have evidence of the fact that ownership of the sheep is with the applicant now and that the third party arrangement no longer exists. I can use this evidence to appease any concerns that councillors or members of the public may raise should the application be referred to Area West committee.

The absence of audited accounts, which clearly defines the functions of the farm, without the confusion of other enterprises owned by the applicant has also taken a little understanding. I would encourage the applicant to submit audited accounts for the activities of the farm from which it can be deduced that the farm is profitable and can afford the additional labour proposed. I would further encourage the applicant to submit projected forecasts for the next three years in the form of a business plan. This I would anticipate will demonstrate that the farm is likely to remain profitable, even though the bartering arrangements have ceased and the stock is now owned by the applicant. The business plan I would hope will include realistic labour requirements and costs and also help to appease the concerns raised, particularly if speaking to the application at committee.

Although the observations and concerns that I raised have been addressed. I would very much appreciate the supporting evidence that I have requested. Whilst both bartering arrangements and third party ownership of stock is not unusual, it would have helped me enormously with understanding this application if this information had been shared with the economic development service from the outset. Whilst my objections to this application have been removed, to assist me should this application be referred to Area Committee, I would appreciate receiving the additional information requested.

18th November 2011: On having read all of the information submitted in support of the planning application for a new farm workers dwelling at Barleclose, there are a number of discrepancies and concerns that I have identified.

The amount of land owned or tenanted by Mr Robbins is identified in the original planning application as being a total of 125 acres. Yet in the supporting appraisal, there is an amount of 83 acres identified as owned by the applicant and a further 24 acres on a ten-year farm business tenancy. This totals 107 acres! Further, there is an amount of 44 acres (total) purchased at annual grass keep auctions. Whichever combination I apply, I fail to arrive at the 125 acres claimed to be farmed in the original application. There is also mention of 70 - acres farmed by Mrs Robbins and whilst this has little bearing on the land farmed by the applicant, I am curious to know if this is within reasonable proximity and how it is farmed, by whom and why it was not included.

The accounts submitted in confidence also identify a few discrepancies, which concern me. In the last full year, the amount paid for labour/wages is shown as £1,200. At £6.10 (minimum wage) per hour, this suggests there was only 200 hours of paid labour used on the farm. This confuses me as it falls way short of demonstrating there to be a labour requirement, which indeed needs accommodating. Also in the accounts, there is a significant amount paid out for postage/telephone/subscription, totalling £2,600. Whilst there may be an explanation for this, it seems unjustifiably high, particularly when compared to sprays and fertiliser at only £845, less £263 application cost. The implication here is that less than 3 tons of fertiliser was applied to the whole farm, which seems incredibly low.

Another confusion in the accounts is an amount shown for the sale of mowing grass/keep of 32 acres. This seems strange that the applicant is purchasing grass keep and also selling grass keep. Whilst there may well be a perfectly reasonable and logical explanation for this, the fact that an explanation was not provided in the supporting appraisal raises concerns.

The Parish Council have raised an objection to the application in part based on doubts over the ownership of the sheep and cattle. The implication is that these are owned by a third party, which may explain in part the income from grass keep sales as shown in the accounts. I undertook a little research of my own and could not find any reference to Mr Robbins, the applicant as being registered with the relevant breed society.

This authority has to my knowledge always tried to be supportive of genuine applications from people who are trying to get a 'foothold' on the farming ladder. I accept that the sale of Barleclose farmhouse has denied the applicant a dwelling from which to manage stock etc at this location. However, I consider there to be too many discrepancies within the application to support the building of a permanent dwelling based on the detail provided. I would however recommend that consideration be given to permitting a temporary dwelling on the site of Barleclose Farm for a period of no more than three years. In that period, I would expect the applicant to demonstrate that the intention to grow stocking numbers of cattle and sheep is in keeping with the projections submitted with the application. I would also request that the question of ownership of stock is proved 'beyond all reasonable doubt', possibly through purchase receipts from market/private vendors. Also, evidence in the form of copies of Defra movement certificates would prove helpful.

I recommend refusal of this application based on the detail provided with this application. I would however look favourably on an application for temporary accommodation for a maximum of three years to allow time for the applicant to build his business up to the point of where a permanent dwelling is unquestioningly required.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been advertised by site notice for the requisite period. Two contributors have commented on the application, raising objections and questioning the supporting information provided. The main points are as follows:

- There is no justification for a permanent dwelling, based on either the appraisal submitted or the activity, which actually takes place. It is implied from the appraisal that Mr Robbins owns a number of sheep and cows, employs at least one full time farm worker and requires a full-time dwelling in order to operate.
- Any occasional need for overnight accommodation could be met by a caravan or similar temporary structure. Permission for a temporary mobile home should be given, if the applicant can prove his business need.
- The application form is filled in incorrectly, as the Parish Council have not been consulted prior to the application being submitted, as indicated.
- The applicant doesn't own the animals referred to in the appraisal and his main business is actually renting out houses. The applicant should submit details of his unique herd/flock numbers and the list of individual ear tags. DEFRA can identify the individual animals which he owns. Mr Robbins has only owned Barleclose Farm for a year and it was vacant before this time so the movement records will be available.
- The appraisal provides theoretical labour numbers based mainly on sheep. The actual owner of the sheep tends the sheep everyday and Mr Robbins does not employ any farm workers, undertaking the limited amount of farm work needed for his cows and horses himself from his existing farmhouse.
- Who will live in the house as Mr Robbins does not currently employ the farm manager, he suggests it will be for.
- Barleclose Farm has been owned by Mr Robbins for just over a year, before which it was vacant for 6 months. It cannot therefore be demonstrated that the unit indicated in the appraisal has been operating for at least 3 years, as required to show that the enterprise has been profitable for at least 1 of 3 years.
- The applicant owns two dwellings close by in Forton, which could be occupied. Also the former farmhouse adjacent to the site was bought by Mr Robbins at auction, along with the land, before being sold to the current owner. This is currently empty and may be available.
- The applicant's cows often escape but this is not justification for a new dwelling but as a result of poor fencing.
- How can the business be shown to be viable without fully audited accounts? The appraisal states that the accounts have been extracted from 'wider business activities' and that the cost of providing fully audited accounts would be unreasonably costly. The proposed dwelling is very large internally and in excess of houses that the County Council build to serve their holdings. The cost of this dwelling could be considered expensive to build in relation to the average wages earned by an agricultural worker.
- A site immediately next to the fields to the north of Two Ash Lane has come onto the market. With an existing bungalow and outbuildings, as well as permission for a new dwelling, this could be available to fulfil any proven need.

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

The application is made for the erection of a detached dwelling house to provide accommodation for a full-time agricultural worker at Barleclose Farm.

The main planning considerations in this case relate to the impact of the proposal on the local landscape character and the proposal's ability to meet the requirements of Annex A of Central Government Guidance Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7).

In regard to the requirements of PPS7, to justify a permanent agricultural dwelling, it has to be shown that it is supporting existing agricultural activities on well-established agricultural units. The following criteria, among others, have to be met:

- There is a clearly established existing functional need
- The need relates to a full-time worker
- The unit and the agricultural activity concerned has been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound and have a clear prospect of remaining so.
- The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit or any other existing accommodation in the area, which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned.
- Other planning requirements e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside, are satisfied.

A functional and financial test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times and to ensure that the farming enterprise is economically viable.

The applicant contends that there is an existing identified need on the existing farm enterprise, which forms a holding of approximately 140 acres, made up of freehold land and land farmed under a tenancy agreement. As of January 2012, the breeding numbers of livestock amounts to 56 suckler cows and 37 stores, as well as 167 breeding ewes and 25 chilvers. On average it is intended to retain a suckler herd of approximately 60 cows and a flock of 150 ewes.

The appraisal has used two recognised labour calculations, Standard Man Day (SMD) and Farm Business Survey (FBS). The SMD calculation indicates a requirement for 1.77 full-time workers for farming purposes at the current levels of stocking and cropping and FBS indicates an equivalent requirement of 1.98 full-time workers. This in itself identifies the labour needs of the holding, in line with the requirements of Annex A. There have however been objections received in regard to both the ownership of the animals forming the assessment and also towards the existing labour arrangements.

At the time of the application being made, it is noted that the applicant was not the sole owner of the sheep referred to in the appraisal and it is advised that the necessary labour was provided by the other identified party, the applicant himself and additional labour by two workers also employed in the applicant's wider business interests and paid as such. Another consequence of this arrangement was very low labour costs in the submitted accounts. In assessing the appraisal and the submitted supporting information, the Council's Economic Development Officer identified some other issues/discrepancies needing clarification. These relate to the details of the land holding and other costs included within the accounts. Initial advice to officers was to recommend refusal or to consider a temporary permission for accommodation for a period of three years pending. The applicant has provided additional supporting information and clarification for points raised by the Economic Development Officer, which have satisfied the questions raised. In terms of labour provision provided by the identified third party, it is advised that a bartering arrangement takes place, which is quite common in agricultural practice. The Economic Development Officer has also confirmed that the actual ownership of the sheep is not an issue in this case as it is not unusual for farmers

to rear livestock for third parties. Notwithstanding this information, the applicant has now informed the Local Planning Authority that he is now the sole owner of all the stock, with the previous arrangements ceasing. Over the course of this application, it is advised that the general labour provision has altered from the original arrangement, particularly as a result of a period of the applicant's ill health during 2011. Since this occurrence, the applicant has used the services of a farm contracting business to provide the additional labour requirement as a result of Mr Robbins health and a reduced labour provision by the third party. This arrangement is advised to continue since Mr Robbins became the sole owner of the livestock, until a full-time worker is employed. Ultimately, the Economic Development Officer has considered the submitted information, including an updated business forecast for the coming years and is satisfied that the requirements of Annex A have been met. Despite labour provision being provided by various sources, it has been shown that the requirement for a full-time worker has been properly identified. It should also be noted that despite the limited layout for labour shown in the accounts, they do indicate that there is adequate net profit to pay an agricultural wage of approximately £16,000 per annum.

Consideration has been given to whether a three-year permission for temporary accommodation should be granted at this stage. Paragraph 12 of PPS7 Annex A states that "if a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan, wooden structure which can easily be dismantled, or other temporary accommodation". In this case, it is contended that the agricultural enterprise is not a new farming activity on an established unit but the continuation of a long established activity. The business was slowed down up to and around 2009 due to uncertainty over the future of the County Council land and buildings held under a business tenancy agreement and forming a large part of the overall holding. Despite this, the business did not discontinue and is currently being grown again. The Economic Development Officer notes that the submitted accounts show profit for at least one year of the last three years, as required under Annex A. Furthermore, a more recently submitted business plan and projected forecasts give a clear indication that the enterprise is financially sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so.

Alternative Accommodation

As well as needing to satisfy the required functional and financial tests, it is appropriate to consider whether there are other available dwellings locally that can meet the required need. Observations have been made in relation to dwellings owned by the applicant within Forton and other available properties that may potentially be available, including the former farmhouse, previously associated with the unit. Firstly, the dwellings referred to in Forton are close by but not 'within sight and sound', as is generally accepted as being necessary. The applicant's existing dwelling is also not well related to the agricultural buildings at Barleclose Farm.

In reference to the former Barleclose Farm dwelling, consideration has been given as to whether this may have been disposed of, as it is suggested that the applicant purchased it before selling it on. In response to this, it is noted that the County Council owned the dwelling, not the applicant and it was sold at auction on the open market. In bidding for the land and buildings, the applicant has advised that a bid was made in conjunction with a third party, as the lot included the house also. Ultimately the final lot price was over what the applicant had assessed to be an appropriate amount, taking into account cost of the dwelling and the price for building a replacement dwelling or carrying out renovation works, it is felt that these costs would push the project beyond what may be expected to be reasonable in relation to the income the unit may be able to sustain in the long-term. Due to the circumstances of the land and buildings being sold on the open

market and the applicant not being the previous owner, it would be unreasonable to infer that the property was readily available to the applicant or has been deliberately disposed of to circumvent the planning system to acquire a new dwelling in the open countryside.

Design and Appearance

The dwelling is proposed to be sited within the boundaries of the existing farmyard, to the east of the former slurry pit. This is well located to the existing group of buildings and will have a minimal impact on local landscape character. The Council's Landscape Architect has raised no objections to the appearance and layout of the proposal, other than echoing local and national guidance that, unless the need for a new dwelling can be adequately justified, there is no 'in principle' support for new development in the open countryside. In this case, the Local Planning Authority has accepted the need and as such no landscape objection is raised. The proposed dwelling is to be constructed from local natural stone with Double Roman roof tiles, which are considered to be acceptable and appropriate for the location.

In terms of size of the dwelling, it appears relatively large, however the total internal floor area is about 160 square metres, which is well within the generally expected size for a new agricultural worker's dwelling, which are typically sized between 150 to 200 square metres in floor area.

Other Issues

There are no objections on highway grounds, subject to a condition relating to visibility at the site entrance. The Highway Authority have raised concerns in relation to the access from Two Ash Lane onto the A358 but it is considered that the proposal will not result in significant additional vehicle movements. Therefore subject to minor improvements to the access from the site onto Two Ash Lane, the proposal is considered to have no detrimental impact on highway safety.

The site is in a relatively isolated location with no immediately adjoining residential units and as such there are no residential amenity issues.

Conclusion

Overall, it is considered that the application has satisfied all the relevant criteria of PPS7 Annex A, in respect to the provision of a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling, and that the proposed dwelling will meet the functional and financial requirements of the existing agricultural enterprise. The size, scale, design and siting of the proposal is also considered to respect and relate to the surrounding area and have no adverse impact on local landscape character, residential amenity or highway safety. Therefore, the recommendation to Members is to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION

Approval with conditions.

JUSTIFICATION

The proposal, by reason of its size and scale and proven need, respects the character of the area and satisfies the criteria for agricultural workers dwellings in accordance with the aims and objectives of policies STR1, STR6, 5 and 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor

National Joint Structure Plan Review, saved policies ST3, ST5, ST6, EC3 and HG15 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 and guidance as set out in PPS7 - Annex A.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in the locality in agriculture or in forestry, or a dependent of such a person residing with him or her, or a widow or widower of such a person.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority would not have been prepared to grant planning permission but for this special need which is in accordance with the aims and objectives of PPS7 - Annex A and saved policy HG15 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: `3221/01' and `3221/02', received 9th March 2011.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the development authorised and in the interests of proper planning.

4. No development shall be carried out on site unless particulars of materials (including the provision of samples) to be used for the external walls and roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and saved policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

5. No development shall be carried out on site unless a sample panel of the local natural stonework, indicating colour, texture, coursing and bonding, has been provided on site for inspection and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The sample panel shall remain on site until building works are complete.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and saved policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

6. No development shall be carried out on site unless details of the colour and finish for all new doors, windows, boarding and openings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and saved policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

7. No development shall be carried out on site unless details of all new guttering, down pipes, other rainwater goods, and external plumbing have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and saved policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

8. No development shall be carried out on site unless details of the finished floor levels of the dwelling to be erected on the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such level shall be relative to an ordnance datum or such other fixed feature as may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and saved policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

9. No development shall be carried out on site unless foul and surface water drainage details to serve the development, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and such approved drainage details shall be completed and become fully operational before the dwelling hereby permitted is first brought into use. Following its installation such approved scheme shall be permanently retained and maintained thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to protect the local water environment, in accordance with STR1 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and saved policies ST5, ST6 and EP9 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

10. No development shall be carried out on site unless there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the development, as well as details of any changes proposed in existing ground levels; all planting, seeding, turfing or earth moulding comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the dwelling or completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

11. There shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 900mm above adjoining road level forward of a line drawn 2.4m back and parallel to the nearside carriageway edge over the entire site frontage. Such visibility shall be fully provided before works commence on the development hereby permitted and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy 49 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and saved policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

12. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), there shall be no extensions to the dwellings or outbuildings erected without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to reserve to the Local Planning Authority control over the size of the dwelling in relation to the needs of the agricultural holding, in accordance with policy 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and policies ST5, ST6, EC3 and HG15 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

13. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional windows, including dormer windows, or other openings (including doors) shall be formed in the dwelling without the prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policy 5 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Joint Structure Plan Review and policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

Area West Committee - 21st March 2012

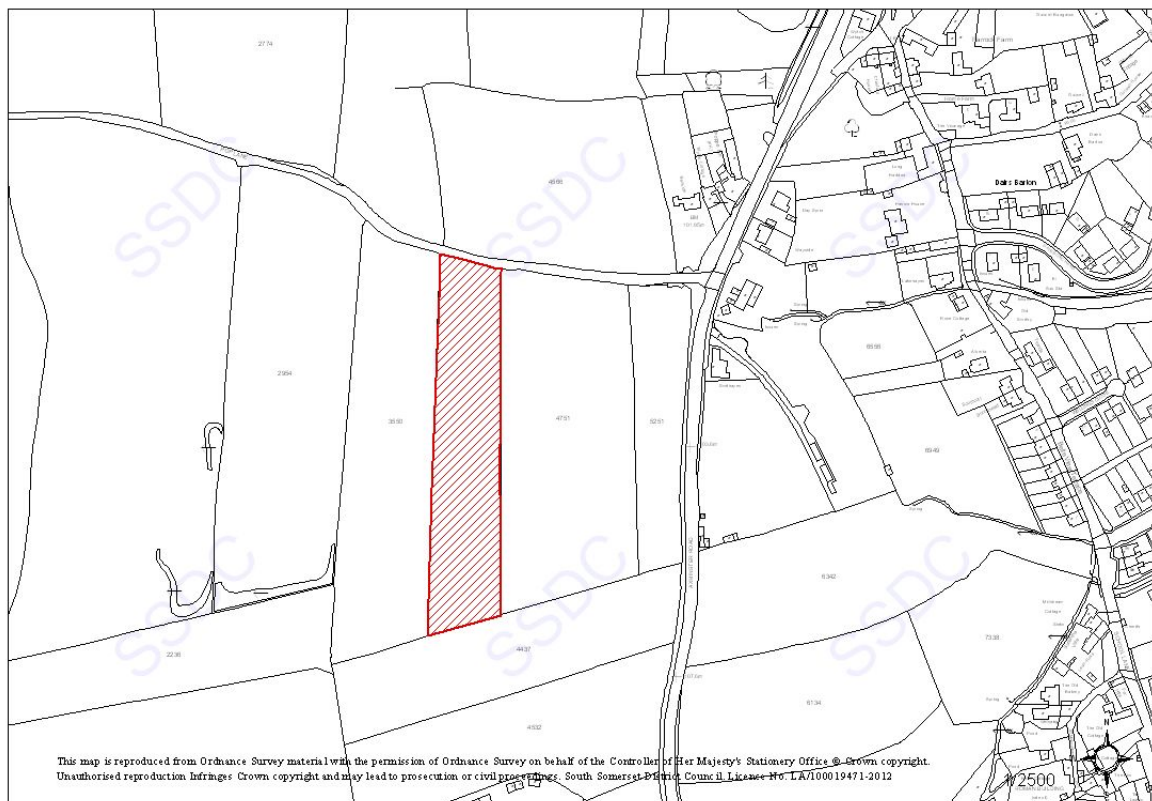
Officer Report on Planning Application: 11/04589/FUL

Proposal:	The change of use of land for the keeping of horses and the erection of stables, store and associated yard works. (GR 332385/105607)
Site Address:	Land Os 4050 Pop Lane Tatworth
Parish:	Tatworth And Forton
TATWORTH AND FORTON Ward (SSDC Member)	Mr A Turpin (Cllr)
Recommending Case Officer:	Diana Watts Tel: (01935) 462483 Email:diana.watts@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	28th February 2012
Applicant:	Mr M Perham
Agent:	Andy Woodward Equestrian Design 5 Wasley Close Fearnhead Warrington Cheshire WA2 0DH
Application Type:	Major Other f/space 1,000 sq.m or 1 ha+

REASON FOR COMMITTEE

At the request of the local Ward Member and as agreed by the Area Chair, to discuss the landscape impact.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The site is situated to the west of Tatworth village. The application site comprises a 2.5 acre field approximately 150m from the nearest house.

This application proposes to erect a 10.8m long x 3.6m deep double stable block with a tack and feed store beside the northern boundary of the field. The building would be 2.9m high to the ridge, with the walls clad in timber and corrugated onduline sheeting used on the roof. A concrete yard area would be provided below the roof canopy and adjacent to the building to form a parking/turning area. The application includes the change of the field for the keeping of horses, a non-agricultural use.

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted to support and explain the proposal:

- The applicant owns two horses which are currently kept on the outskirts of Forton, 2.4 miles away from the field and about 2 miles from his house in Watermead
- The stables would be used solely for the private use of the applicant and his wife, for the keeping of horses and for the storage of feed, tack and equipment
- They enjoy hacking out and pleasure riding
- The field is surrounded by hedgerows with the northern boundary hedge being between 3m and 4m high and the western hedge of a similar height giving the development excellent visual protection from the north and west and an extremely good backdrop when viewed from the south and east, therefore not affecting the openness of the surrounding area
- The stables would not be highly visible or easily seen from any public vantage point in the local area
- Pop Lane is not heavily used, giving access between Axminster Road and Brockhole Lane, and also a bridleway at Parrocks Lane
- An automated traffic count was carried out and on the busiest day there were only 23 movements and almost all were under 20mph
- The applicant intends to mainly (about 80% of total trips) walk or cycle from his home at Watermead to the field, about 1000m away, taking about 10 minutes
- Vet, farrier, dentist etc visits would be perhaps one visit every 7/8 weeks
- Feed deliveries about 1 visit every 8/10 weeks
- Manure trailer transport every 8/10 weeks
- Access has been improved by moving the gate back off the highway
- Stables would be stained brown
- The concrete area would not only allow access to the stables and store but would also provide an area for the applicant to park his manure trailer
- Security cameras and alarms would be fitted
- With regard to policy CR6, the site is not sensitive and is very close to Tatworth development

RELEVANT HISTORY

932541 - Erection of field shelter and timber shed - approved 2004 (a very modest building, used in connection with grazing animals and given a temporary permission until 1999)

2011 - Pre-application advice given that the current proposal would be likely to be refused on landscape and highway safety grounds.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Saved policies of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review 1991-2011:

Policy STR1 - Sustainable Development
Policy STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages
Policy 5 - Landscape Character

Saved policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006):

Policy ST3 - Development Areas
Policy ST5 - General Principles of Development
Policy ST6 - The Quality of Development
Policy EC3 - Landscape Character
Policy EP3 - Light Pollution
Policy CR6 - Horses and Development

National Guidance

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

Goal 3 - Healthy and Active
Goal 8 - Quality Development
Goal 11 -Environment

CONSULTATIONS

Tatworth and Forton Parish Council:

Supports the application.

SSDC Technical Services:

No comment.

County Highway Authority:

The site is located outside defined development limits and is considered to be in an unsustainable location in terms of transport policy. This would normally result in a recommendation of refusal, however it is noted that the site's end use i.e. stables is more suited to a location which is outside development limits. Therefore it might be considered to be unreasonable to raise objection on these grounds.

In terms of the detail, the application site is located on Pop Lane which is designated as an Unclassified Road. This is single width and sinuous in nature with high hedges on either side of the carriageway. In addition there are limited passing places between the junction and the application site. Therefore this is not a location where the Highway Authority would wish to see any development that would result in a significant increase in vehicle movements.

From the submitted documentation the applicant has indicated that the stables would be for private use only. As a consequence the likely increase in traffic would be minimal, therefore it would be considered unreasonable of the Highway Authority to raise objections on these grounds. Although it would be prudent that if planning permission were to be granted that a personal condition is attached, which limits the site to the applicants own personal use.

Therefore to conclude although the proposal is located in a remote location and the approach roads are considered to be substandard, it is accepted that the site would be utilised for the applicants own private use. Therefore it would be considered to be unreasonable for the Highway Authority to raise objection to this proposal.

Landscape Architect:

1) In this location to the west of the village of Tatworth, the landscape of the lower Blackdowns is emphatically rural, and characterised by its gradually rising hillsides and relatively open profile of pasture and arable fields. Other than occasional dispersed farmsteads, there is sparse development presence once to the west of the A358, and a sense of remoteness as one ascends the hillside - which is a further defining characteristic of the area. Hence development form in this general location would be at variance with the distinctive landscape character of the Blackdown's lower hillsides, and thus at odds with local plan policies ST5 para 4 and EC3.

2) Policy CR6 requires stables to be closely related to existing buildings or settlements if they are to be acceptable - in this instance there is no close relationship, and policy CR6 is not met.

3) There may be a need for lighting during winter months. Policy EP3 para 3 (light pollution) advises against the use of lighting where it will adversely affect the character of the locality. Lighting within the context of the Blackdown's hillsides would certainly be contrary to local character, and its possibility should be avoided.

4) Policy ST3 seeks environmental benefit from a scheme: I would contend that use of land for horses does not bring an inherent environmental benefit, for equestrian activity can result in substantial change to the character and condition of the countryside: Impacts include the subdivision of fields, which can change the scale and grain of the landscape; visual clutter created by polytape, fencing, jumps, security gates, field shelters and vehicle storage; damage to grassland habitat caused by poaching, compaction and overgrazing; as well as the landscape and visual impacts of arenas, maneges and stables. I note the intention to establish buildings and a yard on site, and by conferring an equestrian use, other (aforementioned) impacts can follow.

5) Clearly there will be a SCC Highways requirement to establish a new access, and achieve acceptable visibility lines in relation to the access. If the Highway's standard solution is deemed necessary, then this will lead to an adverse impact upon the character of the local lane network, by the provision of a hard surfaced frontage, which is usually circa 13 metres across the face of the access - over 3 x the width of the lane - and a removal/reduction in the hedgeline. This is also viewed as an adverse impact upon the landscape of the locality, contrary to local plan policies ST5 para 4 and EC3.

Given all these factors, there are clear landscape grounds for a refusal of this application.

REPRESENTATIONS

A site notice was posted (General Interest) and 2 letters of support have been received which include the following comments:

- I ride my horse daily around the fast and busy roads between Forton, Tatworth and Chard
- A desperate lack of 'off road' hacking forces riders onto the busy A and B roads
- Transport authorities, police and air ambulance would be delighted to see horses re-located across the A358 into Pop Lane where they can ride around the quiet lanes
- This parcel of land is of no consequence to the farming industry
- This is a well thought out application with the stables screened extremely well by the existing hedge
- Limited lighting for half an hour early morning and evening in a building hidden behind a hedge will not be contrary to local character
- The applicant will fence the field with wooden post and rails and not white 'electric' tape
- With regard to damage to grassland habitat. This can happen on any land with any animal
- Seems hypocritical that farms can erect huge metal buildings that stand out like a sore thumb whilst the applicant merely wishes to erect a tastefully built timber building which would be hardly noticeable.

CONSIDERATIONS

1. Landscape Impact

The stable building would be situated in a field in the open countryside, away from the village of Tatworth. The area is characterised by small-medium sized fields and a lack of development. As highlighted by the Council's Landscape Architect, the landscape of the lower Blackdowns is emphatically rural, and characterised by its gradually rising hillsides and a relatively open profile of pasture and arable fields. Other than occasional dispersed farmsteads, there is sparse development presence once to the west of the A358, and a sense of remoteness as one ascends the hillsides, which is a further defining characteristic of the area. Hence development form in this general location would be at variance with the distinctive landscape character of the Blackdown's lower hillsides, and thus at odds with local plan policies ST5 para 4 and EC3.

Policy CR6 requires stables to be closely related to existing buildings or settlements if they are to be acceptable. The application site is distinctly separate from the nearby settlement of Tatworth, there are no existing buildings in the field and the nearest buildings are more than 150m from the application site.

Whilst the building would be sited behind and partly screened by an established hedgerow, the impact on the wider landscape must be considered, and the new building would be seen particularly from the east/ south-east, including from Axminster Road and its junction with Pop Lane, and it would still be apparent from Pop Lane, especially in winter. It is considered that the proposed stable building would be unrelated to any built form, would appear out of context and uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape, contrary to Local Plan policies ST5, CR6 and EC3.

There are also a number of small-medium sized fields in the immediate area, where there could be significant pressure for similar equestrian based developments and

allowing stables here could be used as a precedent to justify others nearby, leading to cumulative harm to the countryside.

Furthermore, as pointed out by the Council's Landscape Architect, there may be a need for lighting during winter months. Policy EP3 para 3 (light pollution) advises against the use of lighting where it will adversely affect the character of the locality. Lighting within the context of the Blackdown's hillsides would certainly be contrary to local character, and its possibility should be avoided.

Policy ST3 seeks environmental benefit from a scheme and it is felt that use of land for the keeping of horses does not bring an inherent environmental benefit, as equestrian activity can result in substantial change to the character and condition of the countryside. Impacts include the subdivision of fields, which can change the scale and grain of the landscape; visual clutter created by polytape, fencing, jumps, security gates, and vehicle storage, together with damage to grassland habitat caused by compaction and overgrazing. There is no planning control over such matters and they would exacerbate the detrimental impact of such equestrian development on the landscape.

Similar issues have been assessed at appeal elsewhere in South Somerset and Inspectors have agreed that such sporadic development would be harmful, could set a precedent causing further cumulative harm to the countryside and acknowledged that the spread of unfixed structures and equipment associated with an equestrian use would not be possible to control by condition.

2. Highway Safety

Pop Lane is an unclassified road, which is single width and sinuous in nature with high hedges on either side of the carriageway. In addition there are limited passing places between the junction and the application site. Therefore this is not a location where the Highway Authority would wish to see any development that would result in a significant increase in vehicle movements. The Highway Authority however has taken the view that if the stables would be for private use only, the likely increase in traffic would be minimal, and it would be considered unreasonable to raise objections on these grounds.

The existing access into the field has already been improved and the Highway Authority does not feel it necessary to insist on further improvements through the provision of visibility splays.

3. Residential Amenity

This is an isolated site and it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to any adverse impact on the residential amenity of the nearest residential properties, some 150m away.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse permission

FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

1. The proposal, due to its siting remote from any settlement or built form, would be at variance with and detract from the distinctive landscape character of the Blackdown's lower hillsides, and would set an undesirable precedent making it difficult to resist similar development in the surrounding area, causing further cumulative harm to the countryside, contrary to policies ST3 (Development Areas),

ST5 (General Principles of Development), ST6 (Quality of Development), CR6 (Horses and Development), EP3 (Light Pollution) and EC3 (Landscape character) of the South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006), policies STR1 (Sustainable Development), STR6 (Development outside towns, rural centres and villages), and 5 (Landscape Character) of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan (Adopted April 2000).
