

# **Proposed Main Modifications to the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028)**

*Executive Portfolio Holder:* Tim Carroll, Finance and Spatial Planning  
*Lead Officer:* Paul Wheatley, Principal Spatial Planner  
*Contact Details:* paul.wheatley@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462598

## **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to approve the four further Main Modifications and minor amendments to the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) and recommend the submission to the Planning Inspectorate. The further Main Modifications stem from the Planning Inspector's Preliminary Findings letter of 16th July 2014<sup>1</sup>.

## **Public Interest**

An adopted Local Plan provides the mechanism to guide the development industry and inform the public about the future strategy for growth in South Somerset. The Local Plan is the principal planning tool for South Somerset District Council (SSDC) to encourage investment, protect the environment, create jobs, and deliver sustainable development.

The Council has prepared four further Main Modifications to address the concerns raised by the Inspector following the resumed Examination Hearing Sessions held in June 2014. Addressing these concerns will allow the Council to progress towards an adopted Local Plan.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**N.B.** The full set of Main Modifications for approval is set out at **Appendix A**

1. Recommendation 1: Approve modified Policy YV2: Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions (Main Modification 9).
2. Recommendation 2: Approve the deletion of Policy YV3: East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone (Main Modification 10).
3. Recommendation 3: Approve modified Policy SS3: Delivering New Employment Land (Main Modification 11).
4. Recommendation 4: Approve modified Policy SS5: Delivering New Housing Growth (Main Modification 12).
5. To delegate final editing of the text for submission to the Planning Inspectorate to the Project Management Board, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Spatial Planning, and Assistant Director – Economy.

## **1. Report**

1.1. This report sets out the further Main Modifications to the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028). These are set out in full at **Appendix A**.

1.2. The further Main Modifications are supported by:

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<sup>1</sup> Inspector's Preliminary Findings letter (16<sup>th</sup> July 2014):  
[https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/674198/inspector\\_s\\_preliminary\\_findings\\_post\\_resumed\\_examination\\_hearing.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/674198/inspector_s_preliminary_findings_post_resumed_examination_hearing.pdf)

- Further Main Modifications Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report (November 2014) at **Appendix B**;
- Further Main Modifications Habitats Regulation Assessment Addendum Report (November 2014) at **Appendix C**;
- Further Main Modifications Equality Analysis (November 2014) at **Appendix D**; and
- Analysis of Consultation Responses on Main Modifications (November 2014) at **Appendix E**.

1.3. This work has been reviewed via the Council's Project Management Board at Workshop 32: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/pmb32>; and Workshop 33: [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/local-plan-\(formerly-core-strategy\)-project-management-board-reports/](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/local-plan-(formerly-core-strategy)-project-management-board-reports/)

## 2. Background and Context

- 2.1. The South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) is currently subject to an Independent Examination carried out by the Planning Inspectorate. Examination Hearing Sessions were held from 07 May to 18 June 2013 and from 10 June to 13 June 2014. The resumed Examination Hearing Sessions held in June 2014 discussed the Council's proposed MMs<sup>2</sup>.
- 2.2. The Inspector has now considered all of the evidence put forward by the Council and other participants. He has formally written to the Council setting out his 'Preliminary Findings' and proposed next steps relating to the resumed Examination Hearing Sessions. This communication has been distributed to all SSDC Members as well as being displayed on the SSDC Website.
- 2.3. In his letter, the Inspector identified that based on the evidence he considers there remain four *"small shortcomings...relating to soundness, which the Council should address through the agreement of Main Modifications (MMs)"*.
- 2.4. The Council has sought to discharge its duties under Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), and its own Statement of Community Involvement<sup>3</sup>, by making the Proposed Main Modifications available to both specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies. It has also sought to discharge the "Duty to Co-operate" as prescribed under Regulation 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), by actively engaging with the "Prescribed Bodies"<sup>4</sup>.

## 3. Summary of Main Modifications

- 3.1. The further MMs have been written to directly address the Inspector's remaining concerns. The further MMs proposed are related to the following policies:

<sup>2</sup> South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) – Proposed Main Modifications (March 2014): [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/648229/south\\_somerset\\_local\\_plan\\_proposed\\_main\\_modifications\\_submission\\_to\\_pins.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/648229/south_somerset_local_plan_proposed_main_modifications_submission_to_pins.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> South Somerset District Council: Statement of Community Involvement, Appendix 2 (July, 2007)

<sup>4</sup> A detailed account of the Duty to Co-operate process can be found here: [http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/457227/10\\_duty\\_to\\_cooperate\\_report.pdf](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/457227/10_duty_to_cooperate_report.pdf), with an update note scheduled to be tabled to District Executive and Full Council for approval prior to use at the resumption of the Examination.

- **Policy YV2: North East Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension** – Policy YV2 is amended to include detail on landscape mitigation measures at the North East Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extension.
- **Policy YV3: East Coker and North Coker Buffer Zone** – Policy YV3 is deleted, and in so doing removes the east Coker and North Coker buffer zone.
- **Policy SS3: Delivering New Employment Land** – the specific employment land figure for Rural Settlements is deleted from Policy SS3. An explanation of the Council's approach to employment proposals in Rural Settlements and Rural Centres is added, and reference to an early review of housing and employment provision Wincanton is added.
- **Policy SS5: Delivering New Housing Growth** – Policy SS5 is amended to improve clarity on housing delivery in Crewkerne and Wincanton. Reference to an early review of housing and employment provision at Wincanton is added.

3.2. These further MMs require consequential changes to supporting text, and in the case of Policy YV3, to the proposals map.

3.3. The further MMs have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), and Equality Analysis (EqA). The SA and HRA have been undertaken by Enfusion Ltd.

#### 4. Consultation on Further Main Modifications

4.1. The further MMs were subject to public consultation between 28 August 2014 and 10 October 2014. In total 54 respondents provided 101 comments to the public consultation. A breakdown of the number of comments received against each of the further Main Modification is set out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Number of Comments Received for each Main Modification**

Main Modification	Support	Object	Observation	Total
Introduction	2	6	3	11
MM9	3	30	2	35
MM10	4	35	0	39
MM11	1	3	1	5
MM12	2	7	2	11
Next Steps	0	0	0	0
Total	12	81	8	101

4.2. All of the consultation responses have been reviewed and considered. Analysis of the consultation responses has highlighted a number of main issues. The Council's consideration of the main issues is set out in the PMB Report (November 2014)<sup>5</sup>. A detailed analysis and response to these main issues is set out in Appendix E.

#### 5. Conclusion on Further Main Modifications

5.1. The analysis of the consultation responses has resulted in two minor amendments to the further Main Modifications:

- To simplify the text within Main Modification 9 to better define the landscape mitigation requirements for the North East Sustainable Urban Extension as part of Policy YV2; and

<sup>5</sup> Project Management Board Workshop 33: Consideration of further Main Modifications (November 2014): [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/local-plan-\(formerly-core-strategy\)-project-management-board-reports/](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/local-plan-(formerly-core-strategy)-project-management-board-reports/)

- To alter Main Modification 12 so that the early review of housing and employment provision in Wincanton will be completed within 3 years after the date of adoption of the Local Plan.

## **6. Next Steps**

- 6.1. If the further Main Modifications are approved, they will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 07 November 2014. The modifications will then feature in the 'Inspector's Report'. Based upon the current timetable, it is anticipated that the Inspector's Report will be received by the end of 2014, and that the Local Plan could be adopted by early 2015.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. If District Executive were minded to endorse the Main Modifications for consideration by Full Council, this would allow the Council to proceed towards adoption of the Local Plan. Financial resources would be allocated to complete the Local Plan, but these have been included within existing budgets.

## **8. Corporate Priority Implication**

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

## **9. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

- 9.1. None.

## **10. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 10.1. The Main Modifications have been prepared in accordance with the legislative and statutory requirements of an Equality Analysis, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal.

## **11. Background Papers:**

*Appendix A – South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) Further Main Modifications (November 2014)*  
*Appendix B – Further Main Modifications Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report (November 2014)*  
*Appendix C – Further Main Modifications Habitats Regulation Assessment Addendum Report (November 2014)*  
*Appendix D – Further Main Modifications Equality Analysis (November 2014)*  
*Appendix E – Analysis of Consultation Responses on Main Modifications (November 2014)*

Project Management Board – Workshop 32: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/pmb32>  
 Project Management Board – Workshop 33: [https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/local-plan-\(formerly-core-strategy\)-project-management-board-reports/](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan-2006-2028/local-plan-(formerly-core-strategy)-project-management-board-reports/)

Inspector's Preliminary Findings Letter (16 July 2014):  
[https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/674198/inspector\\_s\\_preliminary\\_findings\\_post\\_resumed\\_examination\\_hearing.pdf](https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/674198/inspector_s_preliminary_findings_post_resumed_examination_hearing.pdf)